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DIONYSUS OR HERACLES:  
MARK ANTONY’S RELIGIOUS POLICY  
IN 41 BCE IN THE LIGHT OF  
*EPISTULA MARCI ANTONII AD KOINON ASIAE*

1. Introduction

After the Battle of Philippi, triumvir Mark Antony spent the winter in Athens. In the spring of 41 BCE, he marched through the central part of Greece, Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace to the Bosphorus at the head of a significant army, eventually crossing to Bithynia.<sup>1</sup> According to Plutarch (*Ant.* 24. 3 f.),

εἰς γοῦν Ἐφεσον εἰσιόντος αὐτοῦ γυναῖκες μὲν εἰς Βάκχας, ἄνδρες δὲ καὶ παῖδες εἰς Σατύρους καὶ Πᾶνας ἡγοῦντο διεσκευασμένοι, κιττοῦ δὲ καὶ θύρσων καὶ ψαλτηρίων καὶ συρίγγων καὶ αὐλῶν ἢ πόλις ἦν πλέα, Διόνυσον αὐτὸν ἀνακαλουμένων Χαριδότην καὶ Μειλίχιον. ἦν γὰρ ἀμέλει τοιοῦτος ἐνίοις, τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς Ὠμηστής καὶ Ἀγριώνιος.

at any rate, when Antony made his entry into Ephesus, women arrayed like Bacchanals, and men and boys like Satyrs and Pans, led the way before him, and the city was full of ivy and thyrsus-wands and harps and pipes and flutes, the people hailing him as Dionysus Giver of Joy and Beneficent. For he was such, undoubtedly, to some; but to the greater part he was Dionysus Carnivorous and Savage.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Buchheim 1960, 11 f. For Antony’s stay 41–40 BCE in the East in details, see App. *BCiv.* 5. 15–44; Joseph. *AJ.* 14, *BJ.* 1. 12; Plut. *Ant.* 24–30; Dio 48. 24–27; *SB* I 4224, as well as the following studies: Tarn 1934a, 31–40; Magie 1950, 427–430, 1278–1281; Rossi 1959, 119–128; Buchheim 1960, *passim*; Bengtson 1977, 161–165; Huzar 1978, 151–154; Chamoux 1986, 238–248; Roberts 1988, 179–185; Hekster–Kaizer 2004; Pelling 2008, 9–13; Halfmann 2011, 110–129, 237–239; Van Wijlick 2021, *passim* etc.

<sup>2</sup> Transl. Perrin 1959. For Νέος Διόνυσος as an official title, see Śnieżewski 1998, 133 f.

In Ephesus, Antony was probably persuaded to grant extensive privileges and immunities to “the Association of Wreath-Bearers and Victors in the Sacred Games from the Inhabited World” (Σύνοδος τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν), mainly consisting of athletes. Representatives of this association had in all likelihood previously enjoyed broad privileges officially granted by Roman senators.<sup>3</sup> However, the resumption of civil wars in the Roman republic gave rise to doubts about the inviolability of honors and privileges granted earlier. Concerned about their status and also wishing to obtain additional rights, association members sent to Antony a certain priest, a native of Ephesus and representative of the *Koinon* of the Greeks from Asia. The priest came to the triumvir, enlisting the support of Antony's “friend”, the gymnastics teacher Artemidoros, as evidenced by the letter of Antony to the *Koinon* of the Greeks from Asia concerning the privileges of ἱερωνῖκαι and στεφανῖται (*PLond* 137v = *SB* I 4224).<sup>4</sup>

Previous scholars have not paid close attention to this letter in the context of Antony's 41 BCE sojourn in the East,<sup>5</sup> especially in the context of his religious policy.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the connection between *Epistula Marci Antonii ad Koinon Asiae* and Antony's religious policy in the East in 41 BCE requires further consideration, as it might shed light on some very significant features of the triumvir's eastern policies at that time.

## 2. Antony's religious policy in 41 BCE

There is a disagreement as to whether Antony was guided to some extent by his Dionysian policy or Herculean one in the East after the Battle of

<sup>3</sup> For the person who could grant these privileges, see Fauconnier 2016, 79.

<sup>4</sup> For Antony's stay in Ephesus in 41 BCE, see *RDGE* 57; Rogers 1991, 7 f.; id. 2012, 95 f.; Knibbe 1998, 107 f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Magie 1950, 428 and 1279 n. 4; Roberts 1988, 180; Pelling 2008, 11; Halfmann 2011, 120 and 238 n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> The exception was my article: Krivolapov 2021 [Г. Л. Криволапов, “Epistula Marci Antonii triumviri ad Koinon Asiae как источник по изучению пребывания Марка Антония на Востоке в 41 г. до н. э.”, *Античный мир и археология*]. Nevertheless, that study has incorrectly linked granting privileges to the Association with Antony's Dionysian policy (*ibid.* 136 f.). This paper makes an argument in favor of Heracleism based on Antony's origin from Heracles.

Philippi.<sup>7</sup> Since scholars pay most attention to Antony's Dionysianism in the context of his religious policy in 41 BCE, let us consider this issue in more detail at first. Antony's opting for Dionysus as a deity with whom he would later be identified seems to have been intentional.<sup>8</sup> The inception period of his Dionysian policy has been a topic of serious discussion among scholars.<sup>9</sup> The first mention of the link between Antony

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<sup>7</sup> Some scholars believe that Antony's stressing his mythical ancestor Heracles influenced, at least subliminally, his political decisions in the East (e. g., Kienast 1969, 441–444; Felten 1985, 136 f.; Huttner 1995, 108; Perez 2009, 182). However, most scholars are inclined to believe that Antony was guided to some extent by his Dionysian policy rather than Herculean one beginning in 41 BCE (e. g., Weippert 1972, 200 f.; Śnieżewski 1998, 133; Hekster 2004, 174; Beacham 2005, 154 f.; Rogers 2012, 95 f.). H. Halfmann, in turn, believes Antony, already during the first sojourn in the East as a triumvir, appealed to both Heracles and Dionysus in his eastern policies (Halfmann 2011, 110–112). As K. Erickson concludes, the propaganda of Antony's political opponents made it almost impossible to trace his connection with Heracles after rapprochement with Cleopatra (Erickson 2018, 261 f.).

<sup>8</sup> See Poloczek 2021: "On the one hand, Mark Antony clearly adapted a peculiar element of Hellenistic monarchic ideology, thus introducing himself as the successor of Ptolemies – the notion of Νέος Διόνυσος – but on the other hand, he also created a quite new model of 'personal relationship' to the god based on the political aspirations to be the conqueror, benefactor and true Lord of the East".

<sup>9</sup> A number of scholars believe that the starting point of Antony's Dionysian policy was his stay of 41 BCE in the East and the events that took place in Ephesus and Tarsus (e. g., Jeanmaire 1924, 243 f.; Taylor 1931, 108 ff.; Täger 1957, 90 ff.; Weippert 1972, 201 f.; Huzar 1978, 195; Cresci Marrone 1993, 16 f.; Hekster 2004, 174; Beacham 2005, 155 f.; Halfmann 2011, 110–112, 120). Other scholars argue that the Ephesian manifestation was just a sporadic episode that had no practical consequences, and that a stable political line for identification with Dionysus begins only from the time of Antony's second stay in Athens and marriage to Octavia (e. g., Craven 1920, 57; Tarn 1932, 148 f.; id. 1934a, 33; id. 1934b, 69; Pelling 1988, 179; id. 2008, 10; Buchheim 1960, 15, 100 n. 24; Osgood 2006, 240 f. and n. 138). R. F. Rossi stands apart, asserting that the beginning of Antony's interest in Dionysus dates back to the time of his first stay in Athens in the winter of 42–41 BCE (Rossi 1959, 112, 161). Developing this idea, E. V. Smykov suggested that in this city Antony was initiated into the mysteries, organized to a large extent by the Athenian community of Dionysian Technites (τεχνίται). Then the triumvir arrived in Asia, which was the area of responsibility for other representatives of this religious community – Dionysiac Technites of Asia and Hellespont. The members of this union took over the responsibility for greeting him and were behind the organization of Asian celebrations and magnificent ceremonies during Anthony's procession to Ephesus, in the provincial capital itself, and later in Tarsus (Smykov 2002 [Е. В. Смыков, "Антоний и Дионис (из истории религиозной политики триумвира М. Антония)"], 85–87).

and Dionysus dates back to the spring of 41 BCE, when, according to Plutarch, he was greeted in Ephesus as Θεὸς Νέος Διόνυσος.<sup>10</sup> Plutarch then reports a rumor spread during the meeting of Antony and Cleopatra in Tarsus the same year “that Venus was come to revel with Dionysus for the good of Asia”.<sup>11</sup>

Since we have no other references to Antony's Dionysianism in 41 BCE except for Plutarch's previously-mentioned testimonies, the situation seems to be quite obvious. There is no doubt that Antony's appeal to the cult of Dionysus, his notorious “Dionysianism”, was not a homogeneous phenomenon; rather, it manifested differently at different stages of his career. And even if Antony had participated in the dedication into the mysteries of the Dionysian cult in Athens (as E. V. Smykov assumes<sup>12</sup>), he evidently did not place much political value on it throughout his first stay in the East as a triumvir in 41–40 BCE. Most scholars rightly believe that Antony viewed the divine honors paid to him, namely his initiation into the Dionysian mysteries in Athens and his role in the Ephesian procession and in Tarsus, as a matter of course, which seems consistent with his character. In any case, these festivities could not have had a significant impact on his policy, as scholars have remarked that the colorful descriptions of these occasions, teeming with detail, are found only in Plutarch, who is not considered the most reliable source due to his tendency toward excess. Appian and Cassius Dio did not even mention the events in passing. They were, in all likelihood, only minor episodes in the kaleidoscope of events in 41 BCE for everyone, including the triumvir himself.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the Dionysianism of Antony in 41 BCE can hardly be called a full-fledged religious policy. In this regard, Cassius Dio's testimony is more accurate. Some shocking features of Antony's behavior that did not correspond to *mos maiorum*, including his identification with Dionysus, became apparent during his stay in Athens in the winter of 39–38 BCE (Dio 48. 39. 2).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. above n. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 26. 3: καὶ τις λόγος ἐχόρει διὰ πάντων ὡς ἡ Ἀφροδίτη κωμάζοι παρὰ τὸν Διόνυσον ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ τῆς Ἀσίας.

<sup>12</sup> Smykov 2002, 85–87.

<sup>13</sup> See inter alios Buchheim 1960, 15, 100 n. 24; Weippert 1972, 201 f.; Pelling 1988, 179 ff.; id. 2008, 10; Smykov 2002, 86 f.; id. 2017 [E. В. Смыков, “Марк Антоний в мире эллинистических монархий: государь или магистрат?”], 92–94; Osgood 2006, 240 f. and n. 138; Tisé 2006, 175 f.; Pfeiffer 2019, 310–312 etc.

<sup>14</sup> See Socr. Rhod. *FGrH* 192 F 2; Sen. *Suas.* 1. 6; *IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 1043 ll. 22–24 (esp. l. 23: Ἀντῶν[?]νίου θεοῦ νέου Διονύσου).

Other information regarding Antony's religious policy deserves greater attention. First is Plutarch's message that Antony was initiated into the mysteries during his stay in 42–41 BCE in Athens (*Ant.* 23. 2):<sup>15</sup>

τὸ παῖζον αὐτοῦ **πρὸς** ἀκροάσεις φιλολόγων καὶ θεάς ἀγώνων καὶ **μυήσεις** ἔτρεπε...

...for his entertainment he was content to listen to the discussions of scholars, watch the games, and **be initiated into the mysteries**.

Although many scholars considered this as a reference to the Eleusinian Mysteries,<sup>16</sup> Smykov and W. J. Tatum have suggested that in this phrase of Plutarch the word “initiations” (μυήσεις) should be understood to mean Lesser Mysteries.<sup>17</sup> Lesser Mysteries “were founded in order to purify Heracles and lead him on to his initiation at Eleusis”,<sup>18</sup> said Tatum. At the same time, as is well known, Antony traced his ancestry from Heracles.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the triumvir stressed his mythical ancestor Heracles through participation in Lesser Mysteries, as well as his deeply respectful, deeply Hellenic attitude to Athens by establishing ties of συγγένεια.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Plutarch was the only one who talked about Antony's stay in Athens after the Battle of Philippi in the winter of 42–41 BCE (*Plut. Ant.* 23. 2–4). For Anthony's pastime activities in Greece and in particular Athens at this time, see inter alios Craven 1920, 20 f.; Rossi 1959, 107–108; Bengtson 1977, 155 f.; Pelling 1988, 175 f.; Kienast 1995, 193 f.; Habicht 1997, 360; Fontani 1999, 194 f.; Halfmann 2011, 105–106; esp. Tatum 2020, 456–460.

<sup>16</sup> So e. g. Craven 1920, 20; Bengtson 1977, 155; Pelling 1988, 176; Kienast 1995, 193 n. 14; Habicht 1997, 360. Cf. Fontani 1999, 194 f. n. 4. For detailed information about the Eleusinian Mysteries, see Parker 2005, 344–346.

<sup>17</sup> The scholars noted that the time of Antony's stay in Athens did not allow him to be initiated into the Greater Mysteries, and it can therefore be assumed that he was initiated into the Lesser Mysteries (Smykov 2002, 85; Tatum 2020, 462–464). For detailed information about the Lesser Mysteries, see Parker 1996, 188 ff.; id. 2005, 341 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Tatum 2020, 464 and n. 50. See in more detail Parker 1996, 98–100.

<sup>19</sup> *Plut. Ant.* 4. 1, 36. 4, 60. 2–3; App. *BCiv.* 3. 60, 72; *RRC* 494/2. For an overview of Antony's Heracleian origins and his supposed relationship with Heracles, see inter alios Michel 1969, 114–125; Weippert 1972, 197–200; Huttner 1995; Cresci Marrone 1993, 18 f.; Hekster 2004; Perez 2009; Erickson 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Tatum 2020, 464. For the establishment ties of συγγένεια in the Greek world and the political significance of mythical kinship in antiquity, see Musti 1963, esp. 225 f. and 230–235; Schmitt 1988, esp. 539 f.; Elwyn 1993, esp. 262–267; Lücke 2000, esp. 29 and 119–122; Erskine 2003; Papazarkadas, Thonemann 2008, esp. 82; Kuhn 2014, esp. 83–87.

According to U. Huttner, Antony also established ties of *συγγένεια* with Ptolemaic Egypt and Cleopatra. Similar to the Hellenistic kings, Alexander the Great was an important role model for the triumvir. Alexander was also a Heraclide, bound to his progenitor by intensely strong ties, and the Ptolemies, who felt themselves to be Alexander's successors and represented themselves accordingly, thereby derived from Heracles (*OGIS* 54; *Satyr. FGrH* 631 F 1) as well. Their common descent from Heracles created a family relationship between Antony and Cleopatra, *συγγένεια*, after all.<sup>21</sup>

In my opinion, this circumstance played a significant role during the meeting of the triumvir and the Egyptian queen in Tarsus in August–September 41 BCE.<sup>22</sup> Cleopatra, whose goal was to preserve the *status quo* for Egypt, sought to depict herself as an independent and all-powerful ruler by appearing in the guise of Aphrodite or Venus. The political meaning of Cleopatra's diplomatic reception for Antony on her ship in Tarsus was also most understandable. The Egyptian queen sought to emphasize her closeness to the triumvir in both divine and political contexts, which should have been conducive to a close and mutually beneficial union (*Plut. Ant.* 26).<sup>23</sup> In this regard, appealing to their common origin and emphasizing their kinship with Heracles seems a natural step.

When Antony in 41 BCE provided support to Sisinna, who had been in contention for power in Cappadocia against Ariarathes X (*App. BCiv.* 5. 31), the triumvir was probably strengthened in this decision by the fact that Sisinna claimed to be a Heraclide. Flavius Josephus described the heritage of Archelaus (Sisinna). According to the ancient author, Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus, trying to derive her nobility and genealogy from great people, claimed to descend from Temenus on her father's side and from Darius I the Great on her mother's side.<sup>24</sup> At the same

<sup>21</sup> Huttner 1995, 108. W. J. Tatum agrees with him (Tatum 2020, 464 n. 52). H. Bengtson also does not disregard this aspect, but does not present it clearly (Bengtson 1977, 166 f.). For the link of Ptolemaic dynasty both to Alexander and Heracles, see in details Palagia 1986, 143 f.

<sup>22</sup> The story of this meeting is contained, in addition to Plutarch, in Socrates of Rhodes (*Socr. Rhod. FGrH* 192 F 1), as well as briefly mentioned in Appian (*BCiv.* 5. 1, 32), Cassius Dio (48. 24. 2) and Josephus (*AJ.* 14. 13. 1, *BJ.* 1. 12. 5). For this meeting, see inter alios Buchheim 1960, 22–25, 102–103; Lindsay 1971, 155–163; Grant 1972, 115–120; Hölbl 2001, 240–241; Huß 2001, 729–730; Osgood 2006, 182–183; Tisé 2006, 172 f.; Pfeiffer 2019; Van Wijlick 2021, 126–128 etc.

<sup>23</sup> Buchheim 1960, 23; Huß 2001, 730; Osgood 2006, 183; Egorov 2012 [А. Б. Егоров, *Антоний и Клеопатра*], 188.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph. *BJ.* 1. 24. 2: ...Γλαφύρα γενεαλογοῦσα τὴν ἑαυτῆς εὐγένειαν ... κατὰ πατέρα μὲν ἀπὸ Τημένου, κατὰ μητέρα δὲ ἀπὸ Δαρείου τοῦ Ὑστάσπεως οὔσα. For Glaphyra, the daughter of Archelaus I Ktistes, see Sullivan 1980, 1161–1166.

time, Temenus himself claimed to be a great-great-grandson of Heracles.<sup>25</sup> Archelaus began declaring his Heracleian heritage soon after the death of Antony, even issuing hemidrachms with the hero's head on the reverse.<sup>26</sup> Thus, mythical συγγένεια is a factor that cannot be underestimated in the relations between Antony and Sisinna in 41 BCE.<sup>27</sup>

The analysis of several developments taking place in 41 BCE indicates that Antony consciously saw himself to a greater extent as a descendant of Heracles rather than a manifestation of Dionysus at that time. The question of whether Antony did practice a full-fledged religious policy rooted in ties to his mythical ancestor Heracles is at least debatable. However, several indirect pieces of evidence discussed herein show that several features of Heracleism were at least present in Antony's religious policy during his stay in the East in 41 BCE.

### 3. *Epistula Marci Antonii ad Koinon Asiae*

We will focus further on the triumvir's letter to the *Koinon* of the Greeks from Asia. The copy of Antony's rescript is written at the back of cols. 6–7 on the *recto* of a medical papyrus in the Greek papyri collection of the British Museum (*PLond* 165).<sup>28</sup> This papyrus of unknown provenance (generally believed to be from Hermopolis, in Middle Egypt) is traditionally referred to as “London Anonymous” and dated to the second half of the first century CE. It is the longest Greek medical papyrus known to date, being approximately 336.5 cm long by 23.5 cm high, for 39 columns of text.<sup>29</sup>

The letter of Antony was discovered by Frederick George Kenyon in 1892.<sup>30</sup> It consists of 33 lines of text, given in a single column (18.5 × 10 cm) and written in a fairly large, semi-cursive print. The rescript is almost completely preserved, with the exception of a few letters

<sup>25</sup> For Temenus, see Mayer 1934, 437–458.

<sup>26</sup> *BMC Cappadocia*, 45, nos. 3–4; Head 1911, 752; Simonetta 1961, 48, nos. 7–8; id. 1977, 46, nos. 7–8.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Huttner 1995, 108 f. For Antony's policy towards Cappadocia in 41 BCE, see Craven 1920, 29 f.; Levi 1933, vol. II, 101 f. n. 3, 132; Tarn 1934a, 34; id. 1934b, 69; Jones 1937, 176, 430 n. 3; Magie 1950, 435, 1286 n. 26; Buchheim 1960, 55 f., 110 f. n. 123; Simonetta 1961, 19, 47; id. 1977, 45; Hoben 1969, 176 ff. and n. 163, 181 n. 177; Sullivan 1980, 1147 ff.; id. 1990, 182 f., 397 n. 129, 131 etc.

<sup>28</sup> Ricciardetto 2016, CXXVI.

<sup>29</sup> Ricciardetto 2012, 43 f.

<sup>30</sup> Kenyon 1893.

at the end, and the orientation of the writing is upside-down as compared with the text on the *recto*.<sup>31</sup> Although its presence on the papyrus is thought-provoking, there is no indication of what motivated the owner of the medical work to record Mark Antony's edict.<sup>32</sup>

The opening lines of this rescript (ll. 1–7) were also preserved on a white marble stele found at Tralles (second–third century CE), though in a distorted form.<sup>33</sup> The corresponding fragment of the inscription is as follows (with matching fragments highlighted in bold):

(...)

- A.10 [—] ἐπιστολὴ [— Μάρκου Ἀντωνίου —]  
 [Μᾶρκος Ἀν]**τώνιος αὐτοκρά**[τωρ τριῶν ἀνδρῶν δημοσί]-  
 [ων πραγμάτων]**ων ἀπὸ καταστά**[σεως τῷ κοινῷ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀ]-  
 [σίας Ἑλλήνων]γ καὶ τοῖς προέδ[ροις .c.6.. χαί]-  
 [ρειν· καὶ πρότε]**ρον ἐντυχόν**[τος μοι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ Μάρκου]  
 15 [Ἀντωνίου Ἀρτεμιδώρου τοῦ ἐμοῦ φίλου —].<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ricciardetto 2012, 45 f.; id. 2014, LVI n. 417; Saumell 2018, 139.

<sup>32</sup> Kenyon 1893, 476. In the opinion of A. Ricciardetto, the letter of Mark Antony could have a relationship with the medical world and its practices which might have been a reason for recording the triumvir's edict on the reverse side of a medical papyrus (Ricciardetto 2012, 60). Later, Ricciardetto gave a new interpretation by linking Mark Antony's letter with the existence in Ephesus of a Mouseion, in which an association of doctors organized competitions in honor of Asclepius (id. 2016, CXXX–CXXXVIII). Developing this idea, J. C. Saumell suggested that the owner of the papyrus may have been one of the participants in the medical competition, who recorded the decree of Antony on the *verso* of this papyrus in order to remind the jury about the privileges he could acquire after winning (Saumell 2018, 156). However, these assumptions are criticized by D. Manetti (Manetti 2019, 39), who noted that “sia l'interpretazione del testo della lettera di Marco Antonio sia la sua presenza sul verso di P. Lond. inv. 137 non abbiano ancora trovato una soluzione soddisfacente e continuano a suscitare dubbi” (*ibid.*, 40). See also Fauconnier 2016, 78 f.

<sup>33</sup> Keil 1911 = *I. Tralleis* 105 = *PHI* 262861 = *AGRW* 13181. Only two fragments (A and B) that formed part of a larger monument containing several documents have been preserved. The inscriptions are too fragmentary to translate. Fragment A mentions the letter of Mark Antony (ll. 10–15). Fragment B, which appears to be part of this letter, notes a “synod” (ll. 11 and 14) and probably provides a reference to the ἱερονῖκαι and στεφανῖται in the opening lines (l. 2). Both fragments were stored for a long time in the museum of the Evangelical School of Smyrna after their discovery in the 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They disappeared during the fire of this school in 1922. See in more detail Keil 1911, 123 ff.; Ebert 1987, 41 f.; Ricciardetto 2012, 46 f.; *AGRW* 13181.

<sup>34</sup> The Greek text is taken from the following edition: *AGRW* 13181.

The rescript of Mark Antony itself dates from 41 or 33/32 BCE.<sup>35</sup> The paleographical comparison demonstrates that the part of the copy of Antony's rescript concerning the second request to him from M. Antonius Artemidoros (ll. 24–33) cannot be dated earlier than the last quarter of the first century CE. The copy of the rescript itself is definitely later than the writing on the *recto*. That is how we discover *terminus ante quem* of the medical papyrus itself, namely the second half of the first century CE.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> There are only two possible dates for this decree (41 or 33/32 BCE), since Antony only visited Ephesus twice after having become triumvir: after the Battle at Philippi in the spring of 41 (Plut. *Ant.* 24. 3; App. *BCiv.* 5. 15; 28; Joseph. *AJ.* 14. 12. 2–4) and in the company of Cleopatra shortly before the final war with Octavian in the winter of 33/32 BCE (Plut. *Ant.* 56. 1). F. G. Kenyon believed that the rescript of Mark Antony was written in 41 BCE (Kenyon 1893, 477). C. Brandis, on the other hand, suggested that honors and privileges granted to the *Synodos* by Antony should be associated with the triumvir's visit to Ephesus in 33/32 BCE. His conclusion is based on the grounds that the concessions to "the Association" would have had particularly great value in the 30s BCE (Brandis 1897, 516–518). This viewpoint prevailed in historiography until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e. g., Ziebarth 1900, 518; Poland 1909, 150; Oehler 1913, 1535; Klaffenbach 1914, 8; Gardiner 1930, 107; Forbes 1955, 239). Later the same belief was shared by Br. Le Guen and L. Del Corso (Le Guen 2001, 32; Del Corso 2008, 44). Nevertheless, as D. Magie pointed out in 1950, it seems more likely that privileges granted by the triumvir were more relevant before the inevitability of a new civil war; i. e. during Antony's visit to Ephesus in 41 BCE (Magie 1950, 1279 n. 4). As a result, most historians were skeptical about the dating proposed by C. Brandis until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (e. g., *RDGE*, 292 f. and n. 4; Millar 1973, 55, no. 4, id. 1977, 456). However, another version based on linguistic analysis of the text of the letter (to be more precise, ll. 18–19) was suggested in 1987. According to J. Ebert, the first appeal to Antony by Artemidoros and Charopeinos occurred in 41 BCE, while the second (by Artemidoros only) took place in 33/32 BCE, since there seemed to be a considerable time lapse between these events. The letter itself summarizing both of these meetings should be dated by 33/32 BCE (Ebert 1987, 39 f.). Thus, most modern scholars recognize the possibility of both dates (e. g., Pleket 1973, 201; Cugusi 1979, pt. 2, 289; West 1990, 84; Manetti 1994, 57; ead. 2019, 38; Pelling 2008, 11 n. 31; Ricciardetto 2012, 45, 51 n. 26; id. 2016, CXXVI; Fauconnier 2016, 78 and n. 28). For instance, Saumell writes: "the position taken by these two authors [Kenyon and Brandis] seems reasonable considering that in ll. 11–12 the rescript makes allusion to some grants already conferred on the association, allegedly in 42–41 BCE" (Saumell 2018, 139 and n. 55). D. S. Potter even favors the higher date, i. e. 43 BCE (Potter 1998, 271 n. 34).

<sup>36</sup> Saumell 2018, 139 f. Saumell summarizes the established view on the dating of the copy of Anthony's rescript and "London Anonymous" itself. See Manetti 1994, 57; Andorlini 2010, 44; Ricciardetto 2012, 45 and n. 13; id. 2014, LV and n. 408, LVI n. 416; id. 2016, CXXVI f. n. 408, CXXIX n. 416–417; Dorandi 2016, 200 n. 9 etc. As for the paleographical comparison of Antony's rescript and two papyri from the first century CE, see Saumell 2018, 139 n. 56.

As for the events mentioned in Antony's decree, I guess the meeting between Antony, Artemidoros and Charopeinos (ll. 1–23) described in the first part of the letter could have taken place more likely in 41 BCE. Several arguments support this point of view. First is D. Magie's statement, with which I am inclined to agree, that triumvir-conferred privileges were more relevant when a new civil war was not imminent.<sup>37</sup> Second is the fact that the triumvir hosted numerous embassies (πρεσβεΐαι) in Bithynia and Ephesus in 41 BCE (Joseph. *AJ.* 14. 12. 2, *BJ.* 1. 12. 4; Plut. *Ant.* 24. 1), creating both the political context and opportunity for Artemidoros and Charopeinos's appeal to him.<sup>38</sup> Finally, as A. Raggi revealed, "there is clearly a documentary vacuum in the period of Antonius' effective government in the East, after his final departure from Italy in 37 BCE".<sup>39</sup>

Actually, the bulk of Antony's Eastern decrees – which he wished to have ratified in Rome – are dated 41–39 BCE, a period in which they were necessary in the light of various threats to the triumvirs but Antony had not yet lost his political power due to the actions of Octavian.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the proposed argumentation does not contradict the proposal put forward by J. Ebert.<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, we admit that both dates of the first appeal to Antony by Artemidoros and Charopeinos (41 and 33/32 BCE) are beyond proof; the arguments advanced here are not conclusive. Nevertheless, the first date is much more preferable.

This is what the content of *Epistula Marci Antonii ad Koinon Asiae* reads:

Μάρκος Ἀντώνιος αὐτοκράτωρ  
 τριῶν ἀνδρῶν δημοσίων πραγμάτων  
 ἀποκαταστάσεως τῷ κοινῷ τῶν ἀ-  
 πὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἑλλήνων χαίρειν. Καὶ  
 5 πρότερον ἐντυχόντος μοι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ  
 Μάρκου Ἀντωνίου Ἀρτεμιδώρου, τοῦ  
 ἐμοῦ φίλου καὶ ἀλείπτου, μετὰ τοῦ ἐ-  
 πωνύμου τῆς συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς

<sup>37</sup> Magie 1950, 1279 n. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Raggi 2020, 433. With regard to the privileges granted earlier (ll. 11–12: τοῦ (τὰ) προὔπαρχοντα), they could have been officially provided by some of the Roman politicians preceding Antony (see, for example, two letters of Sulla concerning the Dionysiac Artists, written approximately in 84 and 81 BCE – *RDGE* 49). See also Fauconnier 2016, 79.

<sup>39</sup> Raggi 2020, 443.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 443–447.

<sup>41</sup> Ebert 1987, 39 f.

- οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανι-  
 10 νιτῶν ἱερέως Χαροπείνου Ἐφεσίου,  
 περὶ τοῦ <τὰ><sup>42</sup> προϋπάρχοντα τῇ συνό-  
 δῳ μένειν ἀναφαίρετα, καὶ περὶ τῶν  
 λοιπῶν ὧν ἡτεῖτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τιμίων  
 καὶ φιλανθρώπων τῆς ἀστρατευσίας  
 15 καὶ ἀλειτουργεσίας πάσης καὶ ἀνεπι-  
 σταθμείας καὶ τῆς περὶ τὴν πανή-  
 γυριν ἐκεχειρίας καὶ ἀσυλίας καὶ  
 πορφύρας, ἵνα † συνχωρησῇ γραψαὶ †  
 παραχρῆμα πρὸς ὑμᾶς συνχωρῶν,  
 20 βουλόμενος καὶ διὰ τὸν ἐμὸν φί-  
 λον Ἀρτεμίδωρον καὶ τῷ ἐπώνυ-  
 μῳ αὐτῶν ἱερεῖ εἰς τε τὸν κόσμον τῆς  
 συνόδου καὶ τὴν αὔξησιν αὐτῆς χα-  
 ρίσασθαι. Καὶ τὰ νῦν πάλιν ἐντυ-  
 25 χόντος μοι τοῦ Ἀρτεμιδώρου ὅπως  
 ἐξῆι αὐτοῖς ἀναθεῖναι δέλτον χαλ-  
 κὴν καὶ ἐνχαράξαι εἰς αὐτὴν περὶ  
 τῶν προγεγραμμένων φιλανθρώπων,  
 ἐγὼ προαιρούμενος ἐν μηδενὶ καθ-  
 30 υστερεῖν τὸν Ἀρτεμίδωρον περὶ τῶν  
 30a < >  
 ἐντυχόντος ἐπεχώρησα τῇ[ν ἀνά-]  
 θεσιν τῆς δέλτο(υ) ὡς παρακαλεῖ [± 3].  
 ὑμῖν δ(ἐ) γέγραφα περὶ τούτων.<sup>43</sup>

*Marcus Antonius imperator*, triumvir for the state's organizing, to the *Koinon* of the Greeks from Asia, greetings! Earlier I was petitioned in Ephesus by Mark Antony Artemidoros, my friend and gymnastics teacher, along with the eponymous priest of the Association of Wreath-Bearers and Victors in the Sacred Games from the Inhabited World,

<sup>42</sup> <τὰ> Kenyon, addition adopted by all publishers except P. Cugusi (Cugusi 1979, pt. 1, 262); according to Ebert, π(άντα τὰ π)ροϋπάρχοντα would also be possible.

<sup>43</sup> The Greek text follows the most authoritative edition of the letter of Mark Antony by Ricciardetto: Ricciardetto 2016, 66 f. The most important editions of this rescript are: Kenyon 1893, 477; Brandis 1897, 509 f.; Ehrenberg–Jones 1949, 123, no. 300; Vandoni 1964, 114 f.; *RDGE*, 290, no. 57; Cugusi 1979, pt. 1, 261–263; Ebert 1987, 38 f.; Ricciardetto 2012, 48 f.; id. 2014, LXII; id. 2016, CXLVIII; Saumell 2018, 137 f. For a detailed commentary on the rescript, see Ricciardetto 2016, CXXV–CXXXVIII, CXLVIII, 66–67, 187–188.

Charopeinos of Ephesus, for previously existing [privileges] of the Association, that they remain inalienable, as well as for the rest of what it asked of me honors and privileges: exemption from military service, exemption from every liturgy, exemption from billeting, and during the festivals [the right of a] truce, inviolability, [wearing] purple raiment;<sup>44</sup> [asking] that I agreeing [with this petition] agree to write immediately to you [about it]. I agree with that, wishing because of my friend Artemidoros and [in the favor of] their eponymous priest both for the decoration of the Association and for its prosperity to shew [them] this favor. And now again I was petitioned by Artemidoros in order that they be allowed to set up a bronze tablet and to engrave on it previously written privileges. I, preferring that Artemidoros, who petitioned for it, would not have any delay, gave my consent for setting this tablet up in public, as he asks me. That is what I have written to you.<sup>45</sup>

The rescript of Mark Antony belongs to a broad epistolary genre known as “official letters” and includes only the triumvir’s response to the request concerning the granting of privileges.<sup>46</sup> In the letter, Antony mentions two appeals to him by Artemidoros and Charopeinos.

The first was the request made in Ephesus to grant “the Association” certain honors and privileges they had previously held, which resulted in Antony reinstating the previously-granted privileges and agreeing to bestow some new ones. The second appeal occurred when Artemidoros asked permission to fix the privileges on a bronze tablet, which could then be hung up in a prominent place to make it official. The letter itself was written to notify the members of the *Koinon* about the triumvir’s decision, and as an additional guarantee for preserving “the Association’s” privileges.<sup>47</sup>

Lastly, let us turn to the individuals mentioned in Mark Antony’s letter. The triumvir was approached in Ephesus with a request from M. Antony Artemidoros and Charopeinos of Ephesus. Antony describes

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<sup>44</sup> For the possible meaning of this particular privilege, see Saumell 2018, 138 n. 50. Cf. Sherk 1984, 86 n. 4.

<sup>45</sup> This is my own translation of the letter of Antony with an eye on English translation by R. K. Sherk (Sherk 1993, 105 f.) and French translation by Ricciardetto (Ricciardetto 2012, 49 f.).

<sup>46</sup> Saumell 2018, 140. For a general typology of letters in the Graeco-Roman World, see Sarri 2018, 65–70. For the types specifically of Greek letters on papyrus (as well as letters itself), see Hutchinson 2007; Luiselli 2008 (esp. 678). For official letters from the Roman period, see Luiselli 2008, 690 f.; Sarri 2018, 170–176.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Millar 1973, 55; Ebert 1987, 39 f.; Saumell 2018, 140; Raggi 2020, 443.

Artemidoros as his friend and gymnastics teacher, but his given name suggests that Artemidoros or one of his ancestors was a freedman of Mark Antony's family. M. Antony Artemidoros is also mentioned in one Ephesian inscription in a list of officials honoring emperor Hadrian in 123–124,<sup>48</sup> which implies that the triumvir's ἀλείπτης had direct descendants in the second century CE. In this inscription Artemidoros is characterized by the epithet πυθιονίκης, i. e. as winner at the Pythian Games.<sup>49</sup>

As for Charopeinos of Ephesus, he was ἐπώνυμος ἱερεὺς τῆς συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερονικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν. At the head of the Association under consideration was ἀρχιερεὺς, who held this post for life. However, the organization's priest was elected only to a one-year term and was called ἱερεὺς ἐπώνυμος. The duties of this priest were apparently performed in 41 BCE by Charopeinos.<sup>50</sup> He is also mentioned in the inscription from Ephesus dated to the twenties of the first century BCE (27–25 BCE) as one of the officials, mainly other priests, responsible for establishing the worship of Augustus.<sup>51</sup> His full name is as follows: “Perikles, son of Heracleides, by birth of Charopinos, Charopinos, hieronica, member of the *Synodos*”.<sup>52</sup>

#### 4. “The Association of Wreath-Bearers and Victors in the Sacred Games from the Inhabited World”

The next point concerns the organization to which Antony's letter was addressed. The name of this *Synodos* (ll. 8–10: Σύνοδος τῶν ἀπὸ

<sup>48</sup> *IEph* 276: (...) οἱ τὸν | [χρὺ]σεον κόσμον βαστά[[ζον]τες τῆς μεγάλης θεᾶς | [Ἀρτέ]μιδος πρὸ πόλεως ἱερεῖς | [καὶ] ἱερoneῖται ἐπὶ ἀνθυπά[[το]υ Πομπηίου Φάλκωνος | ψηφισαμένου Ἀρτεμιδώρου | [τ]οῦ Ἀσκληπιάδου τοῦ Ἡρακλείδου | γραμματέως αὐτῶν | ἐργεπιστατήσαντος Μάρκου | Ἀντωνίου Ἀρτεμιδώρου πυθιο|νείκου ἱερέως. Cf. Engelmann 1977, 202–203, no. 2; Højte 2005, 449 f., no. 318. See also J. Robert, L. Robert 1977, 404 f., no. 438. Date: Q. Pompeius Falco was governor in 123/124 (Eck 1970, 237).

<sup>49</sup> See Kenyon 1893, 477; West 1990, 87. As suggested by R. K. Sherk, “he had received Roman citizenship through the auspices of Marcus Antonius” (Sherk 1993, 106 n. 2). However, our available sources do not confirm this claim.

<sup>50</sup> Kenyon 1893, 477.

<sup>51</sup> *IEph* 902. See also J. Robert, L. Robert 1977, 393, no. 416. Charopinos indicated here can with confidence be identified with the Charopeinos from Antony's letter, as clearly demonstrated by W. C. West (West 1990, 87 and n. 8).

<sup>52</sup> *SEG* XXXVI. 1020 ll. 8–10: Περικλῆς Ἡρακλείδου φύσει δὲ Χαροπίνου Χαροπῖνος, ἱερoneίκης | ἀπ[ὸ] συνόδου.

τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν) is similar to that of other synods found in different inscriptions. Some of them were recorded on papyri, others were preserved in inscriptions on stones and objects of monumental architecture. Was there any connection between these organizations? Who were the members of the Association mentioned in the triumvir's rescript? These questions have been the subject of lengthy discussion by scholars.<sup>53</sup>

W. C. West was the first to suggest that "the Association of Wreath-Bearers and Victors in the Sacred Games from the Inhabited World" was a well-known and respected brotherhood of ἱερωνῖκαι and στεφανῖται in Ephesus devoted to Herakles. The organization's members were athletes who won the sacred contests and received the right of χρυσοφορία.<sup>54</sup>

The essence of his theory is approximately as follows. These "sacred victors" (ἱερωνῖκαι) were members of the χρυσοφόροι at Ephesus, a corporation (συνέδριον). They shared this high status with particular priests "in behalf of the city". They had the privilege of carrying Artemis' golden crown in processions in her honor. The

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<sup>53</sup> Some scholars saw them as Dionysian artists (τεχνῖται), comprising poets, musicians and actors (e. g., Klaffenbach 1914, 8 f.; Magie 1950, 428, 1279 n. 4; Mileta 2008, 108). Others considered them as exclusively athletes (e. g., Gardiner 1930, 107; Pleket 1973, 200–202; Fauconnier 2016, 78 f.). However, most scholars agreed that the Association included both athletes and the winners of poetry, music and theater contests (Brandis 1897, 521; Ziebarth 1900, 518 f.; Poland 1909, 150 f.; Oehler 1913, 1535 f.; Amelotti 1955, 133 f.; Forbes 1955, 240, 250 n. 10; Sherk 1969, 293; Pelling 2008, 11; Le Guen 2010, 228 n. 56; Raggi 2020, 443 et al.). A. Pickard-Cambridge and H. W. Pleket were among the first to point out that although the presence of athletes in this Association is almost certain, since ἀλείπτῃς (the triumvir's friend Artemidoros) is mentioned in the letter of Antony, nothing indicates the presence of Dionysian artists (Pickard-Cambridge 1991, 297; Pleket 1973, 200 ff.). Besides that, according to H. W. Pleket, at the time when Mark Antony wrote his letter, these athletes did not even represent a permanent association (Pleket 1973, 203 f.). In the view of F. Millar (who analyzed different inscriptions mentioning other synods), it is extremely difficult to determine whether we are dealing with different associations, branches of the same organization, or, finally, with a single union that used different honorary titles (Millar 1977, 456). For a detailed analysis of all surviving references to similar associations, see *ibid.*, 456–463.

<sup>54</sup> West 1990, 84 ff. The scholars' position was accepted to different extents in many studies on the topic (e. g., Le Guen 2001, 32 f.; Ricciardetto 2012, 52 f. and n. 39; Fauconnier 2017, 450 and n. 49). Χρυσοφορία is "a privilege to bear gold in a procession or ceremony in honor of a divinity granted by decree of a city to eminent benefactors, or enjoyed by ex-officio by certain priesthoods and magistracies" (West 1990, 88 n. 9).

Association had its permanent headquarters at Ephesus, which made it possible for ἱερονῖκαι to enjoy the right of χρυσοφορία. The Mark Antony papyrus represents an early document of this athletic *Synodos* which moved its headquarters to Rome in the second century on the initiative of M. Ulpius Domesticus.<sup>55</sup> This *Synodos* had the formal title as the originator of official correspondence, which is given in letters of Hadrian and Antonius Pius,<sup>56</sup> as well as in a variation form as the dedicator of a statue with honorary inscription for M. Ulpius Domesticus, in which the *Synodos* names itself.<sup>57</sup> Thus, according to West, “the official title of the organization, ἡ ἱερὰ ξυστική σύνοδος τῶν ἀθλητῶν περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἱερονεικῶν στεφανειτῶν, combines all the elements of athletes and sacred victors”.<sup>58</sup>

By extension of this theory, A. Ricciardetto linked Mark Antony’s letter with the existence in Ephesus of a Mouseion,<sup>59</sup> in which an association of doctors organized competitions in honor of Asclepius,<sup>60</sup> which J. C. Saumell supported.<sup>61</sup> C. Samitz, by contrast, opposed West’s theory, noting that the city’s privileged treatment of the ἱερονῖκαι was not uncommon and not unique to Ephesus, so the evidence West relies on does not imply the location of “the Worldwide Association of Athletes” headquarters.<sup>62</sup> While the association of the Dionysiac τεχνῖται, i. e. the participants in musical agons, has been attested from the early Hellenistic period, worldwide athletes’ association appears for the first time in presumably the honorary inscription from Erythrae dated to the first century BCE (*I.Erythrai* 429). There we find among other wreath-bearers οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀθληταὶ and οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερονεῖκαι. Thus, at least

<sup>55</sup> West 1990, 89. See also Rogers 1991, 56 ff.; Le Guen 2001, 33; Golden 2003, 171; Hervás 2017, 85 ff.

<sup>56</sup> *IG* XIV.1054, letter of Hadrian dated 134: συνόδῳ ξυστικῇ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἀθλητῶν ἱερονεικῶν στεφανειτῶν. *IG* XIV. 1055, letter of Antonius Pius dated 143: συνόδῳ ξυστικῇ τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἀθλητῶν ἱερονεικῶν στεφανειτῶν.

<sup>57</sup> *IG* XIV.1110, honorary inscription for M. Ulpius Domesticus: ἡ ἱερὰ ξυστική σύνοδος τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἀπὸ καταλύσεως ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι Πρώμῃ κατοικούντων.

<sup>58</sup> West 1990, 86. “The Sacred *Xystic Synodos* of athletes who are Victors in the Sacred Games and Wreath-Bearers dedicated to Heracles”.

<sup>59</sup> For the Mouseion in Ephesos, see Holder 2020, 96 ff.

<sup>60</sup> Ricciardetto 2016, CXXX–CXXXVIII. *Contra* Fauconnier 2016, 78 f.; Manetti 2019, 39–40.

<sup>61</sup> Saumell 2018, 156.

<sup>62</sup> Samitz 2018, 391. For skepticism towards West’s theory, see Pleket (*SEG* XL. 1003); Lehner 2004, 69 f.

in this early period, there might have been two associations of athletes: one only for ἱερωνῖκαι and one open to all athletes.<sup>63</sup> The mention of the first of these two associations (τῆς συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανειτῶν), according to C. Samitz, can also be found in Antony's letter.<sup>64</sup>

To sum up, today there is no way to know precisely to which association ἱερωνῖκαι and στεφανῖται mentioned in Anthony's letter belonged. It can be only argued with high probability that this association consisted exclusively of athletes since nothing indicates the presence of Dionysian artists, winners of poetry, music and theater contests, or doctors.

Another probable assumption is that *Synodos* mentioned in the letter had some connection to Heracles. The inscription dated 27–25 BCE, where Charopeinos (ἐπώνυμος ἱερεὺς τῆς συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν) is listed as the son of Heracleides (*IEph* 902), indirectly indicates it. The letters of Hadrian and Antonius Pius (as well as the honorary inscription for M. Ulpius Domesticus), where Σύνοδος τῶν ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν is called to be τῶν περὶ τὸν Ἡρακλέα, also confirm this idea (*IG* XIV. 1054–1055 and 1110). Nevertheless, the alleged cult of Heracles was not documented before the imperial period.

## 5. Conclusion

The triumvir's motivation when granting privileges to the Association remains a mystery. It might have been influenced by a desire to show favor to Artemidoros and Charopeinos.<sup>65</sup> Or perhaps, by bestowing privileges upon this organization, Antony provided broad honors and rights to the

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<sup>63</sup> Cf. Keil 1910 70 f.; Forbes 1955, 238 ff. (esp. 239); Pleket 1973, 199 f.; Samitz 2018, 381 f. H.W. Pleket assumes, in contrast to established opinion, that the process of awarding with a wreath mentioned in this inscription did not concern a permanent organization but a particular group of athletes or ἱερωνῖκαι present in Erythrae (Pleket 1973, 199 f.). However, we agree with C. Samitz that the terminology used concerning these athletes alludes to the fact that they saw themselves as part of an existing, full-fledged organization (Samitz 2018, 381 n. 56).

<sup>64</sup> Samitz 2018, 381 f.

<sup>65</sup> It is indicated by the triumvir's other actions during his time in the East in 41 BCE as described by Plutarch (*Ant.* 24. 1–6). See also cases with Anaxenor (Plut. *Ant.* 24. 1–2; Strab. 14. 1. 41; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> II 766) and Boëthus (Boeth. *FGrH* 194 F 1; Strab. 14. 5. 14).

city of Ephesus and its citizens.<sup>66</sup> It cannot be ignored, however, that Antony simply acted in accordance with the existing Philhellenic policy of the Roman Republic in the East, because such rescripts were part of everyday Roman diplomacy.<sup>67</sup> All these reasons had some influence on the triumvir's decision.

However, be that as it may, we cannot discount the religious component of Antony's eastern politics. The triumvir's bestowal of rights and privileges on "the Association", if it has already been under the special patronage of Heracles, can be considered as indirect evidence of another manifestation of Antony's religious policy, which, as the examples highlighted earlier show, might be linked to his origin from Heracles. There is no doubt that this conclusion includes two assumptions, which are believed to be reasonable but have not been proven completely yet:

1) the meeting between Antony, Artemidoros and Charopeinos (ll. 1–23) described in the first part of the letter is dated 41 BCE;

2) the Association described in the letter had already been under the special patronage of Heracles at the time of Antony's 41 BCE sojourn in the East.

The subject under research requires further consideration since available data concerning Antony's religious policy is fragmentary and confusing. However, several indirect pieces of evidence in the sources would be interpreted as manifestations of Heracleism, which can be attributed to Antony's religious policy rooted in ties to his mythical ancestor Heracles. While Antony apparently did not place much political value on activities relating to his role as Νέος Διόνυσος at this time, he did practice a religious policy, which at least contained some features of Heracleism. The influence of Antony's Herculean policy on his relations with Sisinna (the future Cappadocian king Archelaus) and Cleopatra in Tarsus can only be assumed. Still, the triumvir's participation in Lesser Mysteries in Athens may be solid evidence supporting this hypothesis. The granting of privileges to the Σύνοδος τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν can also be considered as an argument for moving in this direction, albeit with certain reservations.

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<sup>66</sup> So, Antony doubled an area of refuge provided by the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. For the privileges granted by Antony to Ephesus in 41 BCE, see App. *BCiv.* 5. 15; Strab. 14. 1. 23. The connection between the triumvir's bestowal of rights and privileges on the Association and his policy towards Ephesus is emphasized, for example, by F. G. Kenyon (Kenyon 1893, 477).

<sup>67</sup> See Eckhardt 2019, 131–135.

## List of Abbreviations

- AGRW* = R. S. Ascoug, P. A. Harland, J. S. Kloppenborg, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* (Berlin–Waco 2012).
- BMC Cappadocia* = W. Wroth (ed.), *Catalogue of the Greek coins of Galatia, Cappadocia and Syria*, A Catalogue of the Greek coins in the British Museum X (London 1899).
- IEph* = H. Engelmann, H. Wankel, R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos I–VIII* (Bonn 1979–1984).
- I.Erythrai* = H. Engelmann, R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai I–II* (Bonn 1972–1973).
- I.Tralleis* = F.B. Poljakov, *Die Inschriften von Tralleis* (Bonn 1989).
- OGIS* = W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae I–II* (Leipzig 1903–1905).
- PHI* = Packard Humanities Institute numbers for Greek inscriptions. The Greek texts are available online at: <<http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>>
- PLond* = *Greek Papyri in the British Museum I–VII* (London 1893–1974).
- RDGE* = R. K. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (Baltimore 1969).
- RRC* = M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage I–II* (Cambridge 1974).
- SB I* = F. Preisigke et al. (eds.), *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten I* (Strasbourg 1915).
- SIG<sup>3</sup> II* = W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum II* (Leipzig 1915).

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In 41 BCE, following the Battle at Philippi (October 42 BCE), the triumvir Mark Antony toured the eastern provinces of the Roman Republic. During this trip, he restored the authority of Rome, levied contributions upon the cities, and appointed several rulers. The analysis of several developments after the Battle of Philippi (the triumvir’s participation in Lesser Mysteries in Athens, as well as his relations with Sisinna and Cleopatra) indicates that Antony stressed his mythical ancestor Heracles several times. It follows that while Antony did not place much political value on activities relating to his role as Νέος Διόνυσος at this time, he did practice a religious policy, which at least contained some features of Heracleism

based on Antony's origin from Heracles. In Ephesus (spring 41 BCE), Antony was persuaded to grant broad privileges and immunities to the Association of Wreath-Bearers and Victors in the Sacred Games from the Inhabited World, as evidenced by his letter to the Κοινὸν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἑλλήνων on the privileges of the συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν. What emerges is that the letter may shed light on Antony's religious policy during his stay in the East in 41 BCE since the association of athletes mentioned there could have some connection to Heracles. Thus, the events mentioned in the letter of Mark Antony are, with certain reservations, additional evidence in favor of the existence of Antony's religious policy rooted in ties to his mythical ancestor Heracles during his visit to the East in 41 BCE.

После битвы при Филиппах (октябрь 42 г. до н. э.) триумвир Марк Антоний в 41 г. до н. э. совершил поездку по восточным провинциям Римской республики. Во время этой поездки он восстановил власть Рима, обложил города налогами и назначил нескольких правителей. Анализ ряда событий после битвы при Филиппах (участие триумвира в Малых мистериях в Афинах, а также его отношения с Сисинной и Клеопатрой) свидетельствует о том, что Антоний несколько раз открыто подчеркивал свою связь с мифическим предком Гераклом. Из этого следует, что, хотя Антоний в то время не придавал большого политического значения деятельности, связанной с его ролью "Нового Диониса", он проводил религиозную политику, которая, по крайней мере, содержала некоторые черты гераклидизма, основанного на происхождении Антония от Геракла. В Эфесе (весна 41 г. до н. э.) Антония убедили предоставить широкие привилегии и иммунитеты "Союзу победителей священных игр и обладателей венков со всего обитаемого мира", о чем свидетельствует его письмо к Κοινὸν τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἑλλήνων о привилегиях συνόδου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἱερωνικῶν καὶ στεφανιτῶν. В статье делается вывод, что данное письмо может пролить свет на религиозную политику Антония во время его пребывания на Востоке в 41 г. до н. э., поскольку упомянутая в письме ассоциация спортсменов могла находиться под покровительством Геракла. Таким образом, события, упомянутые в письме Марка Антония, являются, с некоторыми оговорками, дополнительным свидетельством в пользу существования у Антония во время его визита на Восток в 41 г. до н. э. религиозной политики, уходящей корнями в связь Антония с его мифическим предком Гераклом.

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