

# THE ERA OF THE PROVINCE OF ASIA

KENT J. RIGSBY

*In memory of D. O. Robson*

IN 1851 THE NUMISMATIST M. PINDER deduced from certain coins the existence of an era of the province of Asia, beginning in the year 134/3 B.C.<sup>1</sup> His characterization of the era has since found almost universal acceptance, although this has at times been expressed with caution.<sup>2</sup> Despite such a consensus, two objections must be urged against a provincial era of Asia starting in 134/3. First, amid the unusual wealth of evidence from Republican Asia, only the coins of Ephesus attest the existence of this era; its use is therefore strangely restricted for a provincial era.<sup>3</sup> But what is more disturbing about the era is that in 134/3 the province of Asia did not exist. It is a technical carelessness common in modern writings to date the beginning of the province from the moment when Attalus III of Pergamum died early in 133 and bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman people. In fact the war against Aristonicus inter-

<sup>1</sup>*Beiträge zur älteren Münzkunde* 1 (Berlin 1851) 26–28, cf. *Abh. Berlin* 1855, 544–545. A. X. Panel, *De Cistophoris* (Lyon 1732) 26–42, cf. 60–62, had thought the coins festival issues dated by the celebrations of the Sabazia; J. Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum* 1.4 (Vienna 1794) 363–364, rejected this interpretation and hoped rather that the mention of Romans on some of the coins would someday fix and explain the era. In 1822 B. Borghesi accordingly fixed the beginning of the era to about 133 B.C. by recognizing the Romans as provincial governors; he considered this an Ephesian era and did not speculate about its explanation: *Œuvres complètes* 1 (Paris 1862) 271–274.

<sup>2</sup>Omitting the standard numismatic catalogues, I may cite: Th. Mommsen, *Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens* (Berlin 1860) 704 n. 133; B. V. Head, *NC* n.s. 20 (1880) 149, cf. *Historia Numorum*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1911) 575; F. Lenormant in Daremberg-Saglio, *Dictionnaire* 1 (Paris 1887) 1212; F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Griechische Münzen* (Munich 1890) 194 (“the era of the cistophori”); W. Kubitschek, *RE* 1 (1893) 637–638 s.v. “Aera,” cf. *Grundriss der antiken Zeitrechnung* (Munich 1928) 76; V. Chapot, *Province romaine proconsulaire d’Asie* (Paris 1904) 382–383; G. Colin, *Rome et la Grèce de 200 à 146* (Paris 1905) 658; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* 3 (Leipzig 1914) 36–37 (“Cistophoren-Ära der Provinz Asia”); E. Lommatzsch in *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> pp. 761–763; D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950: hereafter “Magie”) 1131; D. Kienast, *JfNG* 11 (1961) 160 (“die Ära von 133”); E. Badian, *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (Pretoria 1967) 27 n. 23; F. S. Kleiner, *Museum Notes* 18 (1972: hereafter “Kleiner”) 17–32, cf. Kleiner and S. P. Noe, *The Early Cistophoric Coinage* (*Numismatic Studies* 14: 1977: hereafter “Kleiner-Noe”) 54; H. Kaletsch, *Der Kleine Pauly* 5 (1975) 1488; J. Hopp, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der letzten Attaliden* (Munich 1977) 140 n. 87. For other opinions see note 12 below.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Kleiner 29; I cannot follow Kleiner-Noe 84 in seeing a provincial date also on one coin only of Sardes. Magie’s assertion (1131) that the provincial era appears on the coins of some half-dozen cities seems to derive from a wrong reading of *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup> 761–763.

vened, and Rome did not formally organize the province until 129 B.C. Even if we might speak of a province existing in some sense from the day a magistrate with *imperium* arrived in Asia, that day would come only in 131 with the expedition of the consul Crassus against Aristonicus, or possibly in 132 with the Roman commission of five to inspect the inheritance.<sup>4</sup> In any case, a "provincial era" attested in use in 134/3 ought to give pause.

The evidence on the era can be stated with precision, thanks to Professor Kleiner's valuable study of the dated Ephesian cistophoric coins. Cistophori of Ephesus bear dates running from the year 1 to year 86, with only a few years not represented.<sup>5</sup> The Julian translation of these numbers (134/3 to 49/8) is certain because the latest series of coins also name the contemporary provincial governors (as Borghesi first saw), whose dates we know independently in several cases. I may add that we know now why the last attested date falls in 49/8 B.C.: after the battle of Pharsalus in August 48, Caesar passed through this part of Asia in pursuit of Pompey, and during his progress several cities of the region instituted an era "of the victory of Caesar;" Ephesus was among these, as an inscription has recently made clear.<sup>6</sup> Thus in 48 Ephesus chose to replace the alleged provincial era with what we call a Caesarian era—that is, with a locally-inaugurated era anchored to the year of Pharsalus; we may fairly wonder at the freedom with which a city discarded a provincial era. Finally, some other cities of the province issued cistophori quite similar to and contemporary with those of Ephesus, as is proved by their all naming the same governor; but this common gesture of naming the provincial governor did not extend to using on the same coins the "provincial era," which remains peculiar to Ephesus.

Taken together, these considerations show that the era in question cannot be provincial, that in fact there was never such a thing as an era of the province of Asia. Rather this is a civic era, unique to Ephesus and therefore deriving from events that were unique to Ephesus. Civic eras

<sup>4</sup>B. Schleussner, *Chiron* 6 (1976) 97–112, has argued that the *senatus consultum* OGIS 435 [Sherk, *Roman Documents* no. 11, with T. Drew-Bear, *Historia* 21 (1972) 75–79], of late 133, sends to Asia legates with *imperium*, thus implying that a *provincia* already exists; he suggests (101 n. 24) that this "provincialization" may have preceded the death of Tiberius Gracchus in summer 133. Even if this be true, there would still not be time for Ephesus to issue coins within the year 1 of the province (see below). In an odd phrase, he invokes as possible support for his thesis "the Pergamene provincial era of 134/3" (109 n. 57): Pergamum did not use the era, but dated its acts rather by its annual *prytanis* (see note 20 below).

<sup>5</sup>Kleiner 23–30, omitting the late series, on which the provincial governors are named: on the hiatus between these issues and their predecessors see T. R. S. Broughton, *AJA* 41 (1937) 248–249.

<sup>6</sup>D. Knibbe, *JOAI* 50 Beibl. (1972–75) 1–6 no. 1, with J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1972.388.

are normally regarded as commemorating the liberation of the city (whatever that meant concretely),<sup>7</sup> and as one such, the Ephesian era of 134/3 demands a specific explanation. The fact that Attalus III died during the Ephesian year 1 is not a sufficient explanation: that event ended Attalid rule for all the cities of the kingdom, but only Ephesus inaugurated an era during this year. Moreover, civic eras tended to mark the positive rather than the negative: we should expect the Ephesian era to commemorate not simply the passing of a dynasty, but the city's acquisition of a concrete new status. Why should the year 134/3 have brought something new to Ephesus alone—in what circumstances and under what logic?

In theory there are three possible ways in which the Ephesians can have obtained what they regarded as liberty during 134/3: either Attalus granted the new status during the last months of his life, or it was provided in the terms of his famous will, or it was granted by the Romans soon after his death. This last option is by far the least likely. The cycle of the Ephesian year is not known with certainty, but the year may well have begun on the autumnal equinox, and certainly not later than this.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, the Ephesian year 1 would have ended in September 133 at the latest. Attalus apparently died in the spring of 133, and the fact was reported in Rome by the beginning of summer.<sup>9</sup> At the time the news reached Rome, the Ephesian year 1 will have had at most some five months left to run. If the liberty of Ephesus was granted by Rome, we should need to fit within those months some senatorial framing of policy toward the former kingdom, an Ephesian embassy to Rome requesting the benefaction, a hearing, the senate's response, the report of this at Ephesus, and the issue of the several coins of year 1 that have survived.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the fragmentary *senatus consultum* at Pergamum that is usually understood as the initial acceptance of the will by Rome in 133 is dated to the late months of the year— $\pi\rho\acute{o}\ \eta\mu[\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}\nu\text{---}] \epsilon\mu\beta\rho\iota\omega\nu$ , mid

<sup>7</sup>See for example H. Seyrig, *Syria* 28 (1951) 215–216.

<sup>8</sup>When in 1857 Borghesi narrowed the year 1 of the era to 134/3, he assumed the Ephesians to have used the Macedonian year, beginning upon the autumnal equinox, September 24: *Œuvres complètes* 2 (Paris 1864) 435–447. His assumption has generally been treated as an acquired fact and applied (which he did not intend) to the “provincial era” rather than the civic calendar of Ephesus. Chapot (note 2 above) 383 was skeptical.

<sup>9</sup>The arguments for these dates go back to Borghesi, *Œuvres* 2 443–447, as modified by W. H. Waddington, *Fastes des provinces asiatiques* 1 (Paris 1872) 19–20; for bibliography see Magie 781; Hopp (note 2 above) 129. A. N. Sherwin-White, *JRS* 67 (1977) 68, is confused in placing Attalus' death in September 134, arguing from “the dating-back of the Roman era on republican *cistophori*” to that date (see note 8 above).

<sup>10</sup>The coins of year 1 (cf. Kleiner, and Kleiner-Noe 53) give no impression of a sharply abbreviated year; we have one variety of tetradrachm known in eight examples, and two varieties of a fractional weight. This yield is neither abundant nor meager by comparison with subsequent years, some of which show several varieties extant in a dozen examples, some none; the fractional issues are most unusual, repeated only once.

August at the earliest.<sup>11</sup> This initial act in Rome would fall, on a best case, some six weeks before the end of the Ephesian year 1. Thus the chronology seems impossibly tight to admit of any Roman action.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, this summer saw the troubled last months of Tiberius Gracchus in Rome and the beginnings of the revolt of Aristonicus in Asia, surely not a time for an Asian city to be disputing solemn matters of privileges before the senate; too much else was in the air.

The liberty of Ephesus therefore was probably a gift of Attalus III. It is unlikely that the status was gained and the era begun under the living king. The Attalids watched their cities closely, and there appears to be no case of a civic era initiated under the monarchy. And while the era of Ephesus is without parallel in either case, the event of the year obviously is the death of Attalus; for the sake of efficiency we might better look to the event that we know rather than construct a second. I would propose, therefore, that the freedom of Ephesus was expressly provided in a clause of the will of Attalus.

We are told very little about the will beyond the general statement that Attalus bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman people.<sup>13</sup> A subsequent decree of Pergamum refers to an individual provision of the will in stating that Attalus left Pergamum free and enlarged its territory: ἀπολέλοιπεν τῇ[μ πατρ]ίδα ἐλευθέρα[μ], προσορίσας αὐτῇ καὶ πολε[ιτικῇ] γ[α] χώραν ἣν ἔκρινεν.<sup>14</sup> This favor to Pergamum provides a close parallel to the suggested liberation of Ephesus: close but not exact, for the question arises why Pergamum did not also initiate an era upon the death of Attalus. I suggest that this difference in the behavior of the two cities reflects a

<sup>11</sup>See note 4 above; Schleussner does not suggest that any Roman delegation went to Asia earlier than this decree, and we should doubt that the Ephesians instituted a provincial era under their own knowledge of the provincialization that he places in 133.

<sup>12</sup>It is the existence of coins of years 1 and 2, and not any fault of reasoning, that invalidates a suspicion expressed by Waddington (note 9 above, 21), whose sense of the political import of Greek coins was unrivalled: troubled by the restriction of the era to Ephesus, he called it an "era of Ephesus" and was "tempted to think that the true point of departure was not the death of Attalus but the day of the victory over Aristonicus [the Ephesian sea-battle off Cyme, see below], a victory which the Romans were obliged to reward by the granting of some privileges." This suggestion was rejected on chronological grounds by Chapot (note 2 above) 383 n. 1, and has since been ignored; the use of the era precedes the battle by one or more years. Borghesi, even after Pinder's work, continued to regard the era as Ephesian, thinking it a display of adherence to Rome upon the publication of Attalus' will (cf. note 8 above). Recently Kleiner (29) has suggested that the use of the provincial era by Ephesus alone "possibly reflects a readier acceptance of Roman rule than at other Attalid cities," invoking the Ephesians' opposition to Aristonicus.

<sup>13</sup>For references see T. R. S. Broughton, in T. Frank, *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* 4 (Baltimore 1938) 507–511; A. H. J. Greenidge and A. M. Clay, *Sources for Roman History*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1960) 11–12.

<sup>14</sup>OGIS 338.5-7 (Niese's restoration); on the status of Pergamum under the Republic see Chr. Habicht, *Alt. Pergamon* 8 3 pp. 4–6 and 23; D. M. Lewis, *CR* 20 (1970) 407–408.

difference in their prior status, that the freedom of Pergamum was a continuation of its status under the monarchy, while that of Ephesus was new, an improvement over its previous condition.

This deduction is supported by the little that we know about the status of the two cities under Attalid rule. Ephesus had stood with Antiochus III against the Romans in 190, and was one of the few great cities of the coast to be given over to the Attalids rather than declared free in the settlement of 188.<sup>15</sup> Strabo reports that "the kings" deprived the Ephesian Artemis of the revenues of some sacred lakes, revenues which the Romans restored to the goddess.<sup>16</sup> Although Ephesus was clearly important to the royal administration and policies,<sup>17</sup> no epigraphical evidence has survived to reveal more precisely the juridical condition of Attalid Ephesus.<sup>18</sup> But Professor Kleiner has isolated a group of Ephesian cistophori dated by the years 20, 21, 1, and 2, with those of years 21 and 1 closely associated in style; the evidence of the hoards places these coins earlier than about 130 B.C., and he has concluded that these numbers can only be regnal years of Attalus II and Attalus III, equivalent to 140/36.<sup>19</sup> This striking discovery separates Ephesus from those Attalid cities possessed of an ordinary autonomy, which dated their decrees and sometimes their coins by civic magistrates. Pergamum was among these cities, its decrees and

<sup>15</sup>Polyb. 21.46.10, Livy 37.45.1; cf. E. J. Bickermann, *REG* 50 (1937) 217–239; E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique* 2 (Nancy 1967) 191; E. V. Hansen, *Attalids of Pergamum*<sup>2</sup> (Ithaca and New York 1971) 172 (Ephesus "subject to stricter controls than other Greek cities").

<sup>16</sup>14.1.26 (642): then publicans seized these revenues, but the local geographer Artemidorus obtained their restoration once again. This Ephesian flourished at the end of the second century B.C. (*GGM* 1 566.31–33), and presumably the claims of the publicans were made only after 123: the initial Roman restoration probably dates from the organization of the province in 129.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Strabo 14.1.24 (641) on the harbor project of Attalus II—an anecdote hostile to the monarchy, doubtless deriving from Artemidorus again. Somewhat earlier was an Attalid commander "over Ephesus and the places around Ephesus and the Cayster valley and the Kilbianon," στρατηγὸν ἐπὶ τε Ἐφέσου καὶ τῶν κατ' Ἐ[φέσου] τόπων καὶ Καύστρου πε[δίου] (rather than πεδίου) καὶ τὸ Κιλβιανόν: D. Knibbe, *JOAI* 50 Beibl. (1972–75) 11–13 no. 4. This was a regional governor, not an *epistates* placed over the civic government of Ephesus; therefore his office does not of itself prove Ephesus a subject or unfree city.

<sup>18</sup>Degrassi has shown that the "liberation" of Ephesus and other Asian cities by Rome (*ILLRP* 176) belongs in the first century with the Mithridatic wars, not in 167 B.C. (the earlier date still in the useful article "Ephesos" by D. Knibbe, *RE Suppl.* 12 [1970] 259).

<sup>19</sup>Kleiner 18–23, who has now attributed, on I think less firm grounds, the same usage in this period to Apamea and to "KOR" (Kleiner-Noe 94, 100–101). Ephesus had dated its acts by its eponymous *prytanis* before Attalid rule (*Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 364.65 with note 31), and would revert to that usage, abandoning the Pharsalan era, in Augustan times (*IGBM* 3 528, probably of A.D. 4, with page 82). Accordingly, it would seem that the decree, dated by a *prytanis*, which L. Robert has assigned on stylistic grounds to some time after the mid-second century B.C. (*RevPhil* 41 [1967] 7–14) must be Imperial in date; it remains to be seen whether the palaeography will support such a late date.

its cistophori dated by the eponymous *prytanis*.<sup>20</sup> The use of regnal years associates Ephesus rather with the military colonies of the kingdom,<sup>21</sup> villages whose juridical subordination to the king was altogether more direct than that of the nominally free cities under Attalid rule. Whatever content or title we may attribute to this condition, the Ephesian dating by Attalid regnal years shows that, during 140/36 at least, the city was markedly less free than Pergamum and many other cities of the kingdom. Whether its disadvantage endured beyond those four years is unknown;<sup>22</sup> in any event, it may be said that the restriction of the city's rights is clearly documented in the last years of the monarchy.

It is uncertain what Attalus intended his legacy to mean for the cities of the kingdom in general, and the eventual Roman settlement was made in the light of their various behavior during the war of Aristonicus. In the first generation of the province, not many cities are expressly attested as free.<sup>23</sup> Pergamum, however, was one of the free cities, as the will specified, and we find the city continuing to date its documents by the annual *prytanis*. There is indirect evidence that Ephesus was another, for in the 90's Ephesus and Sardes entered on a dispute, choosing Pergamum as arbiter. This, as several scholars have observed, is the behavior of free cities.<sup>24</sup> If Ephesus was in some sense a subject city in the last generation of the monarchy but a free city in the early years of the province, these facts are consistent with the implication of the Ephesian era of 134/3, that the will of Attalus declared Ephesus free.

Perhaps the matter should rest here. Some scholars have thought that the will declared all the cities free;<sup>25</sup> if that is so, then it is conceivable that the new freedom which Ephesus celebrates stems not from any

<sup>20</sup>For the inscriptions see Magie 1005–1006; for coins, examples in Wroth, *BMC Mysia* pp. 124–126. At least some of these coins have been dated securely to the Mithridatic period (C. P. Jones, *Chiron* 4 [1974] 202), but it is not known how early this series began.

<sup>21</sup>These dated their decrees by regnal years, cf. L. Robert, *Villes d'Asie mineure*<sup>2</sup> (Paris 1962) 36: For civic status under the Attalids see M. Holleaux, *Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques* 2 (Paris 1938) 122–125; Bickermann (note 15 above); various references in Magie 1004–1005; Hansen (note 15 above) 169–177.

<sup>22</sup>Kleiner-Noe 52–53 attribute to the years 137/4 some undated cistophori of Ephesus; their argument seems to me weak.

<sup>23</sup>Magie 155–156 with references; R. Bernhardt, *Imperium und Eleutheria. Die römische Politik gegenüber den freien Städten des griechischen Ostens* (Diss. Hamburg 1971) 103 ff. I shall comment elsewhere on the identity of the “free and allied” city of Syll.<sup>3</sup> 694 (J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1968.441). The difficulty created by the mention of *φόροι* paid by Pergamum in *IGRR* 4 292 has been removed now that C. P. Jones has redated Diodorus Paspurus and his inscriptions to the time of the Mithridatic wars: *Chiron* 4 (1974) 183 ff. This lower date is an absolute certainty (*pace* D. Kienast, *Historia* 26 [1977] 250 n. 2).

<sup>24</sup>*OGIS* 437: P. Foucart, *MémAcInscr.* 37 (1904) 336; Broughton (note 13 above) 509; the inference is dismissed without justification by D. Kienast, *ZRG* 85 (1968) 344. For later evidence of the freedom of Ephesus see Bernhardt, (note 23 above) 106 n. 96.

<sup>25</sup>Most recently Sherwin-White, (note 9 above) 67.

specific allusion to Ephesus in the will but from the universal grant, which will have altered this one city's status for the better. But it is improbable that Ephesus was the only subject city in the kingdom; the Pergamene allusion to their increased territory suggests in their case a specific and detailed provision regarding Pergamum; and the speed and confidence with which Ephesus inaugurated its era suggest that this city too received, *suo nomine*, a benefaction that was equally specific and of clear intent.

It appears, then, that the will of Attalus, whatever its intent for the cities in general, specified that Pergamum should remain free and that Ephesus should become free. About his motives naturally we can only speculate. It is easy to imagine his concern to protect the status of his capital city Pergamum. But what did Ephesus mean to the last Attalid? An inscription found at Ephesus a number of years ago suggests a possible answer.<sup>26</sup> Attalus II, uncle and predecessor of the last king, writes to the city as follows:

- [Βασιλεὺς Ἀτταλὸς Ἐφεσίων τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χαίρειν.  
 Ἀρίστοδ[.....]  
 [τῶν φίλων:] πολίτης θ' ὑμῶν κριθεὶς ἄξιός ἐστι ἡμῶν εἶναι τῆς  
 Ἀττάλου τὰδε[φοῦ]  
 [νιὸς ἐπιμε?]λείας μετεπέμφθη καὶ συσταθεὶς αὐτῷ τῆς καθ[κ]ούσης  
 παιδείας  
 4 [προενόη]σε, πολὺ δὲ μάλλον ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἀπεδέχθη διὰ τὸ μὴ μόνον ἐν  
 τῇ τῶν λόγων ἐνπαι-  
 [ρίαι καὶ π]αραδόσει προέχειν πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τῷ ἥθει τοῦ  
 παντὸς ἐφαίνεται ἄξιός  
 [ἐπαίν]ου καὶ ἐπιτηδεύτατος νέῳ συναναστρέφεσθαι ὅτι γὰρ ζηλοῦσι  
 τὰς ἀγωγὰς  
 [τῶν ἐ]πιστάτων οἱ ἐκ φύσεως καλοκαγαθικοὶ τῶν νέων, παντὶ  
 πρόδηλόν ἐστιν, δι' ὃ  
 8 οὗτος οὐ μόνον ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ Ἀττάλου σφόδρα προσηνῶς  
 [ἀ]ποδεχθεὶς δικαίως παρ' ἡμῶν καὶ παρὰ τούτῳ ἐτύγχανεν ἐπισημασίας.

King Attalus to the council and people of Ephesus, greetings. Aristod——, [one of the 'friends'?<sup>27</sup>] and your citizen, whom we judged worthy to supervise my brother's son Attalus, was summoned, and, after being recommended to Attalus, he [took charge of] the appropriate education; but he has found even greater approval from us not only because he surpasses so many in the knowledge and instruction of literature, but also because in his character he has shown himself worthy of every [praise] and most suitable to consort with a young man. Now because those young men who are excellent by nature pursue with zeal the instructions of their trainers, it is obvious to everyone why this man has been so warmly approved not only by us but also by Attalus himself and why he has obtained, with us and with him, the distinction he deserves.

<sup>26</sup>D. Knibbe, *JOAI* 47 Beibl. (1964–65) 1–6 no. 1, with the corrections and restorations of J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1968.464; H. Engelmann, *ZPE* 19 (1975) 224 (on line 6); P. Herrmann, *ZPE* 22 (1976) 233–234 (on lines 2/3 and 4). My copy shows ς at the end of line 1.

<sup>27</sup>I suggest the court title in thinking that τε implies that πολίτης is balanced by a

Since the future Attalus III is here a *νέος*, in his teens, the letter probably dates from the middle 140's, eight or ten years before his accession to the throne.<sup>28</sup>

The letter reveals that the final stage of Attalus' education, that which brought him to an adult's learning and wisdom, was supervised by an Ephesian. One should be cautious of connecting too much our fragmentary evidence, but there is some slight reason to press the relevance of this inscription to the Ephesian era of 134/3. First, we are obliged to accept the old king at his word, that the young Attalus was extraordinarily devoted to his Ephesian teacher; if he were not, this letter, which has no practical purpose or instruction, would not have been written. Moreover, the literary sources have left us a portrait of Attalus III that is striking and particular: he was a scholar and scientist who personally conducted experiments in botany and in chemistry (the last of which poisoned him) and studied various forms of animal life; medications that he concocted are reported in the medical writers, and his tract on agriculture was read in Roman times.<sup>29</sup> This picture is consistent with the new inscription, for we may fairly suspect that this peculiar monarch would especially value that teacher who had introduced him to the scholarly pursuits of an adult.

I would speculate, therefore, that Attalus III, in bequeathing to Ephesus its liberty, was motivated by gratitude to his Ephesian teacher. If this seems a personal and trivial motive for changing the status of a city, then we are in a political setting that we know well, into which the Roman dynasts of the next century will step so easily when we find them rewarding the native cities of their Greek friends and advisers.<sup>30</sup>

If the motive for Attalus' favor to Ephesus may have been trivial, its results were not. The role of the city in the war against Aristonicus, the pretended king Eumenes, was unique, like its era. In the beginning Aristonicus fared rather well: during 133 and 132 he fortified Leucæ at the head of the gulf of Smyrna and won over Phocæa to the north, to the south Colophon, which borders on Ephesus, and, more impressive, Samos, which faces Ephesus, and Myndus on the Carian coast; he was in friendly negotiation with Smyrna. These successes testify to the power of his navy and to the fact that he did not scandalize the bourgeoisie.

---

stronger qualification than a patronymic; patronymics are in any case little used in the royal letters, see in this instance Welles, *Royal Corres.* no. 45.3 (*I Syrie* 3 1183). Perhaps the court rank is recalled with polite indirection at the end by *ἐπισημασία*. Attested Attalid "friends" (Hansen [note 15] 202 n. 227) include an Ephesian: Welles, *Royal Corres.* nos. 49.2, 50.7, of 182 B.C., remarkably soon after Ephesus was given to the Attalids.

<sup>28</sup>For the age of Attalus III see Hansen, *ibid.* 471-474.

<sup>29</sup>Hansen, *ibid.* 141-145.

<sup>30</sup>Cf. G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965) 1-13.



Aristonicus was Ephesian on his mother's side (Justin 36.4.6). Ephesus might well expect his good will, and was in any case hemmed round by his allies: there was every reason to join him. Faced with this situation, Ephesus, apparently without assistance, manned a fleet and in 132 or 131 confronted and destroyed the fleet of Aristonicus off the coast of Cyme. Smyrna broke off negotiations with the pretender, and we hear of no further success of his along the coast. After the battle off Cyme he was increasingly driven to the interior, where he allegedly declared his City of the Sun, freed the slaves, and scandalized the bourgeoisie.<sup>31</sup> If as I suggest the will of Attalus granted a new freedom to Ephesus and apparently to Ephesus alone, then it is clear why Ephesus opposed Aristonicus with unique vigor. To join him would be to overturn the will, from which the city's freedom derived.

Ephesus turned the tide of the war, confining Aristonicus to the land and greatly simplifying the task of the Roman forces that began to arrive in 131. Rome, whatever the Ephesians' motives had been, owed the city a singular debt of gratitude. In the new province, the freedom of Ephesus was confirmed; this we would expect, and the same was done for several other cities. But another Roman favor was extraordinary: Ephesus, not Pergamum, was made the provincial capital. This diplomatic coup, of great political and economic advantage to a city, must reflect Ephesus' unparalleled service against Aristonicus and the claim the city thus had to Roman favor. It is pleasant to speculate that all these good things for Ephesus had their ultimate origin in the labors of a philologist.

#### DUKE UNIVERSITY

<sup>31</sup>Our only connected account of these events is Strabo 14.1.38 (646), whose order is in doubt only as regards the stages of the Roman intervention (see in general Magie 1033–1038). The fact that Crassus faced no resistance at sea suggests that the battle off Cyme should be assigned to 132. For the voluminous literature on the social implications of the rebellion see F. C. Thomes, *Rivolta di Aristonico* (Turin 1968).