

IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN THIS JOURNAL I made some observations concerning the organizations of mimes.¹ One relevant inscription needs clarification and, in addition, an interesting inscription has appeared to shed more light on *ILS* 5196, the decree of a theatrical association at Bovillae for the archimimus L. Acilius Eutyches.

Even in the fourth century B.C., the citizens of the Piraeus leased their theatre for 3300 drachmai to a group of entrepreneurs;² these will have had to employ middlemen to hire entertainers and other staff to recoup their risky investment from the tickets sold. The theatre business had already begun, but was to become a vast industry supplying the infrastructure to the often mandatory euergetism of imperial times. Regrettably we have and can have very little good evidence as to how this complex networking was effected,³ though stray finds continue to accumulate, emphasising the role of local *collegia*, whether in Stobi or Side or Aquincum,⁴ some of them in turn loosely affiliated with larger organizations of athletes, performers, and those who appeared in the great imperial spectacles. Rome was necessarily different, and even more so when the imperial authorities possessed their own resources. Recently M. Malavolta has usefully discussed these middlemen of the theatrical industry, who filled the organizational gap between those who put on *ludi* and *munera* and those who performed in them, whether they called themselves *negotiatores*, *mancipes*, or *locatores*.⁵ He is particularly concerned with a well-known inscription from the Albanus Ager, *ILS* 5206, for an imperial freedman, probably of Marcus and Verus, [M.] Aurelius Plebeius, a *locator* and *magister* of the *corpus scaenicorum latinorum*; these would at this date have included principally mimes. The relation of this group with their more prestigious colleagues, the *Parasiti Apollinis*, is unknown, but obviously this particular group included non-performing members of the industry. The inscription has been damaged both on top and below, and has suffered more damage since it was first recorded in the eighteenth century, as one can see from the excellent photo of

¹ Slater 2002: 315–329. Correct there Chr. Chaniotis to Angelos Chaniotis; and a *kotylistes* or *acetabularius* may have been a shell-game expert in early imperial times but he was probably a musician by late antiquity, as Böhm 1998 has shown.

² Stroud 1974; Eric Csapo has made observations on this document in the forthcoming publication of an Oxford conference.

³ Aubert 1994: 347–368 on public entertainments and 363–365 on gladiators.

⁴ *SEG* XLVII 954 for a *kollegion* at Stobi, criticized effectively by Nigdelis *SEG* L 635; cf. *Inscripfien von Side* no. 31 with the good comments of J. Nollé on these *topikai synodoi*. A *monitor* belongs to the *collegium scaenicorum* in *CIL* III 3423.

⁵ Malavolta 2000.

Frascati, reprinted also by Malavolta (who, however, partially confuses the present state with the version of *CIL* XIV 2299).⁶ The decree is in honour of M. Aur. Plebeius, freedman of the Augusti:

ELECTO LOCATORI D[I]
[VR]NO SCRIBAE ET MA[G]
ISTRO PERPETVO COR[PO]
RIS SCAENICORVM L[A]
7 TINORVM INCOMP[ARABI]
LI FIDE REM PVB[LICAM GE]
R]JENTI CORPOR[IS SVpra]
10 SCRIPTI MANC[*vv* 5–8]
GREGVM DO[*vv* 9–11]
AVG[G]

... appointed manager on permanent salary, scribe and magister for life of the college of Latin *scaenici*, managing the affairs of the above-mentioned college with incomparable honesty...

The earliest person to mention the inscription, Bianchi, thought he saw the beginning of another line with ET below. Now after recent damage Frascati's photo shows only [GR]EGVM DO[. . .] and nothing below that is preserved. All those who saw the inscription before its most recent damage attest to GREGVM not [GR]EGVM, but no other supplement is likely in any case, and some mention of performers as troupes seems indicated. The inscription is obviously one of the most important in any study of the Roman theatre industry.

Even though the spacing of the letters is not entirely consistent, it is clear that in this well crafted inscription neither Dessau's MANC[IPES] nor Rostovtzeff's MANC[IP] will fill line 10, as the inscription requires. As a result GREGVM DO[minorum] AVG(VSTORVM duorum) did not directly follow the preceding MANC[IP] or MANC[IPES] as implied by Dessau's text, which has been regularly repeated and is even assumed by the title of Malavolta's article, "*manceps gregum*."⁷ Worse still, DO[minorum] does not fill the line either, so that DO[minorum]| AVG(ustorum) is in fact a very improbable restoration.⁸ The conclusion from this evidence must be that *manceps gregum Augustorum* is an illusion, and that we may not assume the existence of those who hire out or lease imperial troupes (of actors), nor build further arguments on this assumption, as Leppin and others have done.⁹ There are many other possible restorations and the syntax is uncertain.

⁶Frascati 1997: tav. XXXVI fig. 141 = Malavolta 2000: 543, fig. 1

⁷For example, *R.E.* 27 (1928) s.v. Manceps (Steinwenter) col. 993: *manceps gregum dominorum Augg.*, probably derived from Hirschfeld, below, n. 10.

⁸An experiment with Photoshop suggests that there is plenty of room for AVGG in the line above, if DOMINORVM AVGG were intended. One would in any case expect DD AVGG, and DO[NATO] is only one possibility among many.

⁹Leppin 1992: 177.

Malavolta preferred the supplement MANC[IP] first proposed by Rostovtzeff.¹⁰ If so, and ignoring the commas inserted randomly by editors, the honours would seem to be set out as follows:

1. *electus locator diurnus*: elected (to the association) as an impresario on regular salary
2. *scriba et magister perpetuus* of the *corpus scaenorum latinorum*.
3. *gerens rem publicam corporis supra scripti incomparabile fide*.
4. *manceps* <2–5 letters> *gregum do[. . .]*

There is much that we do not know here, including the identity of the actual group who issued this inscription; but the difficulty is with this last clause, and its assumption of a *manceps gregum*, which cannot now be justified. In fact nothing prevents us arguing on the contrary that the inscription was set up by the *manc[ipes]* and/or *gregum do[mini]* either of that association or of the *ordo adlectorum (scaenorum)* of ILS 5196. That not only suits the run of the inscription, which concludes his past honours with the mention of his honest administration, but also frees us (and Malavolta) from having to explain how he is a salaried *locator*, lifetime officer in the association, and an (imperial) *manceps* at the same time. One cannot insist on this reading, but its possibility vitiates attempts to build administrative schemes relating the imperial service to the theatre network.

We find an equestrian *ludi procurator* among the Piso conspirators in 48 A.D. This was a permanent imperial institution as early as Gaius, part of an organization responsible for the staffing of the games and spectacles which developed such offices as the aptly named *procurator a voluptatibus*.¹¹ The *summum choragium* and its staff were firmly in the hands of imperial managers, and later an imperial school of pantomimes provided complete control over that fractious department. It may be doubted therefore that the imperial service¹² had ever any need for its own *mancipes* any more than its own *lanistae*. Hadrian¹³ could afford to put on all sorts of drama in the public theatre using his court performers, the *aulici histriones*. A better hypothesis would be that the associations of actors and their impresarios were primarily available to those magistrates and collegia who wanted to produce *ludi* or *munera*, but did not have such imperial resources. The many imperial freedmen like Plebeius or the pantomime Pylades who had grown up in the system either as performers or managers were closely connected with the imperial

¹⁰The supplement can be found attributed to Rostovtzeff in *TLL*, s.v. *manceps*, and it was this that first led the author to suspect the text of ILS; but Rostovtzeff's own interpretation in *Diz. Epig.* II.558 s.v. *conductor* was that Plebeius was in charge of the imperial flocks. This view (and Dessau's *manc[ipes]*) was quietly corrected by Hirschfeld 1905: 137, n. 6; cf. 287, n. 3 (but with the misleading *manc[ipi] gregum do[minorum]* in both places); his view is now supported in detail by Malavolta 2000 with a brief history of these readings in his note 19.

¹¹Tac. *Ann.* 11.35; Plin. *NH* 11.144. Cf. the *epitropos epi loudon* IGUR 1060 etc.; Lim (1996: 163–173) gives many examples.

¹²See Hirschfeld 1905: 285–297.

¹³*SHA* Hadrian 19.6: *histriones aulicos publicavit*; cf. for these 26.4.

service and with the main associations, and that was sufficient for delicate collegial networking.

These *mancipes* (or *locatores*, or *negotiatores*)¹⁴ were indeed a necessary part of the ancient theatrical world, especially in Rome. Even in Republican times the *societas cantorum Graecorum* and their associates and hangers-on (*et qui in hac synodo sunt*) buried each other amidst the dependents of the Stilii Tauri, the owners of the only Roman amphitheatre, and honoured their patron, the citizen Maecenas,¹⁵ a *dissignator* (*designator* in the inscription) presumably of the theatre, and so doubtless influential in theatrical circles. Retired mimes could eventually become impresarios, like Uttiedius Venerianus¹⁶ at Philippi, and perhaps Plebeius¹⁷ had been one too. But what is particularly interesting is that Plebeius had been honoured in the Albanus Ager, immediately adjoining Bovillae and its mime-friendly¹⁸ Anna Perenna. From Bovillae comes the splendid list¹⁹ of sixty theatrical *adlecti* who honoured the archimimus L. Acilius Eutyches in 169 A.D. Now, by a fortunate accident, from the recently discovered Anna Perenna fountain and sanctuary²⁰ on the Pincian come two interesting inscriptions, the first dated to 5 April 156:

*Nymphis Sacratīs. | Suetonius Germanus | Licinia coniuge | Annae Perennae votum | quod
susceperant si se victo- | res statuerent aram mar- | moream se posituros, denuo | victores facti,
votum me- | riti solvimus*

For the consecrated nymphs: Suetonius Germanus with his wife Licinia <fulfil> the vow, which they had undertaken to Anna Perenna—that they would set up a marble altar, if they (the Nymphs) deemed them victors. Being made victorious again, and gaining our wish, we fulfil our vow.

Who won these victories? With a dedication to Anna Perenna, one assumes that these are mimes, and they won mime competitions. The second inscription in iambs, unfortunately undated, comes from the same source:

¹⁴Malavolta discusses the terms, which are confusingly employed for brokerage generally, as well as more precisely applied in legal language. When Pliny (*Ep.* 2.14.4) complains of lawyers with their clauques, he uses the words *manceps convenitur* as if to say, “a deal is struck.”

¹⁵*CIL* I² 2519, now illustrated with a commentary in Friggeri 2001: 62. For the Stilii Tauri, see also Caldelli 1999. A *dissignator* is not of course just someone “who shows people to their places,” as in a modern cinema, but who announces loudly (and may decide) where privileged people sit, which in the Roman theatre and elsewhere was a source of great emolument and political influence; cf. the *dissignator et praeco* of *CIL* I² 2997 and Shackleton-Bailey’s note on *Cic. Att.* 4.3.2 = his 75, on Clodius’ lieutenant Decimus. A commanding voice was useful in rioting as well as in the theatre.

¹⁶*ILS* 5208, on which see Malavolta’s discussion.

¹⁷The name is notable. C. Nasiennus Plebeius appears in the album of the mime association in *CIL* XIV 2408 and is noted by Leppin (1992: 314) as heir of C. Iulius Unio (*CIL* VI 20328), which is very much a stage and circus name, “Pearl.”

¹⁸Wiseman 1998: 72–74.

¹⁹*CIL* XIV 2408 = *ILS* 5196, which omits the list.

²⁰Piranomonte 2002: 26 and 30.

Votum sacratis quondam | nymphis feceram | boni patroni meritis ob victoriam | C.Acili Eutychetis reddimus | et esse sanctas (i.e., Nymphas) | confitemur versibus | aramque gratis dedicamus fontibus | Eutychides libertus.

The vow to the consecrated nymphs which (*sic*; understand *quod* for *quondam*) I had made, we fulfil by the just reward for the victory of my good patron C. Acilius Eutyches; and we acknowledge in verse that <the nymphs> are sacred, and we dedicate this altar freely to their waters: the freedman Eutychides.

The appearance of another Acilius Eutyches, whose victory as a mime is recorded, is striking. These two Acilii Eutychetes were obviously from a prosperous and influential family of citizen mimes, not imperial freedmen, and it would seem more certain than before that Bovillae along with the Ager Albanus and the sanctuary outside Rome on the Pincian were places of importance to mime associations because of the old connection with Anna Perenna. It is also now clear beyond a doubt that some mimes and their families were of high status in the citizen community despite their practice of *ars ludicra*. Perhaps the lead tablets found in her spring will tell us more when they can be read.²¹

Another aspect of theatrical organization is raised by M. G. Schmidt's interesting suggestion *manu[ductor] scaenae latinae* in a well carved inscription (*AE* 1926,51) from the first century A.D.²² The last two lines can be safely supplemented from the parallel *CIL* VI 29458:

M. VOLCIVS M. F. E[*SQ.*]
 BITHYNICVS MANV[*DVCTOR*]
 SCAENAE LATINAE[*V. . .*]
 M. VOLCIVS M. F. APR[*ILIS*]
 FILIVS EIVS V.A. I. ME[*N. III*]

M. Volcius Bithynicus, son of Marcus, of the Esquiline tribe, *manu[ductor]* of the Latin stage [lived. . .] M. Volcius Aprilis, son of Marcus his son lived one year and three months.

Mingazzini, who first published it, suggested MANV[*ALIS*], because he saw “a destra dell’ultima lettera della seconda riga tracce di una lettera che puo essere stata una V, una X o una Y.”²³ On these grounds Malavolta and Leppin also felt obligated to read with Mingazzini.²⁴ But Schmidt rejects MANV[*ALIS*] as giving an unparalleled meaning, and confirms Mingazzini’s reading, adding that MANV[*DVCTOR*] is the only possible supplement available in the lexicon.²⁶

²¹ Until this is done, further discussion is premature. At present the tablets are partly on display in Rome. One remembers with alarm that the many inscriptions of oracular consultation at Dodona that were given to the Berlin Museum a hundred years ago have still to be published.

²² Schmidt 2000: 137–140.

²³ Mingazzini 1923: 63–145; quote from 74.

²⁴ Malavolta 2000: 541–547 = *AE* 2000 no. 270; Leppin 1992: 178, n. 53.

²⁶ Schmidt 2000: 138: “am Ende von Zeile 2 ist noch eine schräg abfallende Haste zu erkennen, die in diesem Kontext nur zu einem V vervollständigt werden kann.”

Suspicious may arise first from the rarity of this word, which occurs only on a relatively elegant Pompeian graffito, discussed in detail by E. Risch, and in a glossarium, as noted by Schmidt.²⁷ But in both places there is some suggestion of a connection with the theatre. In the graffito, there is of course no explanation; but the brother of the man's wife is called in the same inscription a *monitor*, which can be a theatrical profession, though its exact nature is unknown. Likewise the glossarium explains *manuductor* as *μεσόχορος*, which can mean "claque leader"²⁸ and so *dux* (as at Tac. *Ann.* 1.16.3: *dux theatralium operarum*) of a *manus*, as suggested by Bulhart's paraphrase in his *TLL* article on the word, "dux plausorum." This seems preferable to simply "guide" or *cheiragogos* as the *OLD* suggests, though Schmidt is unwilling to say what his supplement actually means. The inscription would then be a unique testimony to the organization of theatrical clagues at Rome, and one may note that the name Aprilis also appears on our theatre list from Bovillae.

The specification "of the Latin stage" is just as odd a limitation for a claque leader as for a guide, for such people were useful wherever there was a crowd: one would expect that a theatrical claque leader and his gang would be equally at home in the circus or amphitheatre, in the law courts or the *contio*. The only Latin semi-professional known, Percennius,²⁹ allegedly demonstrated his versatility by applying his earlier theatrical training to inciting riots in the Roman army. The end of the Republic³⁰ was distinguished by intensive mobilization of clagues both in the theatre, perhaps especially in mime, and in the political arena, while their skills, for example in handclapping, became ever more refined.³¹ Nonetheless, one may concede that since entertainers themselves according to Plautus³² sponsored clagues, the chiefs of these *fautores* could have been specialized within the Latin theatre—though they often shouted in Greek—and the notoriously ill-behaved pantomime clagues were established already under Augustus in the new permanent theatres of Rome.³³ Yet one is more surprised that a citizen would

²⁷ *CIL* IV 3905, with Risch 1975: 107–114: *Hirta Psakas C Hostilio (coniuge suo added later) | Conopi manuductori et | Clementi monitori fratri | et Diodote sorori et Fortuna | to fratri et Celeri suis | salutem semper ubique* ("Hirta Psakas for her husband Gaius Hostilius Conops *manuductor*, and her brother Clement *monitor* and Diodote her sister and Fortunatus her brother; always everywhere good health"); and *Gloss. Lat.* 2 Philox. MA 73, noted in *TLL* VIII col. 337 s.v. *manuductor* (Bulhart). All these are noted by Schmidt (2002). Droplet (cf. Gutta) and Gnat are an oddly comic pair.

²⁸ Plin. *Epist.* 2.14.2; *χορός* is in Greek a claque: Luc. *Rhet. pr.* 21 with Rohde 1960: 335.

²⁹ Tacitus (*Ann.* 1.16.3) is, however, a hostile witness.

³⁰ For a perceptive discussion of clagues, see Morstein-Marx 2004: 119–159, with reference to the techniques of Clodius and Cicero. A useful collection of material for this period can be found in Parker 1999. Both have large bibliographies.

³¹ *Ov. Ars am.* 1.113. By 65 A.D. the Roman people were well trained in the art (Tac. *Ann.* 16.5), and by the time of Commodus even more expert (Cass. Dio 73.2.3).

³² Plaut. *Ampb.* 65–70; cf. *Poen.* 36–39.

³³ Slater 1994.

put this profession on his gravestone than that his wife would scribble it on a Pompeian wall.

A more serious criticism is that the supplement is longer by at least three or four letters than is required not only by lines 4 and 5, where the total of the letters is known, but also by line 1, for in the first line the letters of E[SQ] were spaced more widely,³⁴ to judge by the gap between the initial E and the break. Ideally, therefore, if the lines were roughly equal in length, we would need about three letters only after MANV and this would exclude Schmidt's supplement. These thoughts made the author in the company of Prof. P. Burke revisit the inscription in April of 2004, and a well-placed table in the church of San Silvestro allowed us to examine and photograph the inscription at eye level, where it is built into a wall. Words are separated by raised points; lines are aligned on the right; there are no visible ligatures. At first we thought MANC[EPS] | SCAENAE LATINAE, proposed by Jory,³⁵ was likely; but though it fits the space admirably, on revision of our photographs it does not fit the traces. The problem remains.

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS
TOGO SALMON HALL 706
McMASTER UNIVERSITY
1280 MAIN STREET WEST
HAMILTON, ONTARIO
L8S 4M2

slaterw@mcmaster.ca

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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³⁴Schmidt preferred the less normal E[SQVIL(INA).

³⁵Jory 1970: 247, n. 1.

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