

## A STATUE FOR THE SENATOR A. IULIUS POMPILIUS PISO AT EPHEOS?

A 5<sup>th</sup> century AD verse inscription found in the Stadion Street at Ephesos records that the Roman proconsul Flavius Anthemius Isidorus had the statue of a certain Piso repaired and re-erected, most likely during his proconsulship of Asia in c. 405/10 AD.<sup>1</sup> The epigram on the base of the restored (but no longer extant) statue praises the governor in the form of a ‘speaking statue’. The inscription reads as follows:

X(ριστὸς ἐκ) M(αριάς) γ(εννηθείς)· / λοιπὸν ἐγὼ Πείσω(ν) / τελέθω{ν} νέος;<sup>2</sup> / Ἀνθεμίδης γὰρ  
/ τεῦξ’ / Ἰσίδωρος ὄλον χαρίεν/τά με, ὡς πάρος ἦα / ἦ καὶ ἀρ(ε)ιότερον· γῆρας δ’ ἐμὸν ὄκα  
δίωξεν· / ἄψ μ’ Ἰσίδωρος ἔχεν χαρί/εν γέρας ὥπασεν ἤβης, / καὶ μ’ ἀνάειρε πεσόντα, ὀρῶ δ’  
ἐμὰ ἔνπεδα γυῖα· / νειόθε δ’ ἐκ κρυφίων / μελέων βαρὺν ὄγκον / ἔλασεν.

*Ch(rist) B(orn of) M(ary). At last I Piso come new into being. For Isidore, the son of Anthemius, has made me entirely graceful, as I was before – or even better. He swiftly drove away my age; Isidore gave me again the gift of youth and raised me up after I had fallen. I see my limbs firm; he has entirely driven away the heavy burden from my hidden body (e.g., which was hiding my body) [transl. C. Roueché].<sup>3</sup>*

There are two major issues to be discussed with regard to this inscription: the first concerns the identity of the Piso mentioned in line 2, the second the motive of a 5<sup>th</sup> century governor to have this dilapidated statue restored without dedicating it anew. D. Knibbe, the first editor of the inscription, identified Piso with the distinguished 2<sup>nd</sup> century notable Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos,<sup>4</sup> who had played the decisive role in securing the second neokorate for Ephesos under Hadrian and had served as the first high priest of the two provincial temples for the imperial cult at Ephesos.<sup>5</sup> However, doubts have been raised about this identification,

\* I am grateful to G. Petzl and W. Eck for their helpful editorial suggestions and R.R.R. Smith for kindly providing me with a photo of the inscription.

<sup>1</sup> *SGO* 1, 304f., 03/02/13 (= *SEG* 43.795). On Flavius Anthemius Isidorus: *PLRE* II (Cambridge 1980) 631-633, s.v. Isidorus 9; *RE* IX.2 (Stuttgart 1916) col. 2062, s.v. Isidoros, no. 15 (O. Seeck); J. Keil, *Die Familie des Prätorianerpräfekten Anthemius*, *AAWW* 79 (1942) 185-203; B. Malcus, *Die Prokonsuln von Asien von Diokletian bis Theodosius II*, *Opuscula Atheniensia* 7 (1967) 91-159, at 127-129. The statue of Piso was presumably destroyed during one of the earthquakes that struck Ephesos in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. On this series of earthquakes and their effects on the urban landscape see S. Ladstätter, *Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit*, in: S. Daim – S. Ladstätter (eds.), *Ephesos in byzantinischer Zeit* (Mainz 2011) 3-39.

<sup>2</sup> τελέθω{ν} νέος; ΤΕΛΕΘΩΝΝΕΟΣ *lapis*; τελέθω νέος *edd*. This observation has been made by G. Petzl, who notes: „In dieser Zeit kann τελέθων statt τελέθω stehen (vgl. etwa παραγέλων statt παραγγέλλω in: G. Petzl, *Die Beichtinschriften Westkleinasiens*, *EA* 22, 1994, Nr. 110 [3. Jh. n. Chr.], mit Hinweis auf C. Brixhe, *La langue comme critère d'acculturation: l'exemple du grec d'un district phrygien*, in: E. Lebrun (ed.), *Hethitica VIII: Acta Anatolica E. Laroche oblata*, Louvain-Paris 1987, 56 und vergleichbaren Fällen im Index S. 165). Es ist aber auffallend, dass bei Πείσω andererseits das Schluss-Ny vermisst wird. Ich nehme also an, dass dieses in der schriftlichen Vorlage so gestellt war, dass der Steinmetz es missverstehend zwischen ΤΕΛΕΘΩ und ΝΕΟΣ geben konnte.“

<sup>3</sup> C. Roueché, *Seeing Statues*, in: D. D'Andria – I. Romeo (eds.), *Roman Sculpture in Asia Minor* (Portsmouth 2011) 91-100, at 95.

<sup>4</sup> D. Knibbe, *Die statuarische Wiederauferstehung des Kaiserpriesters Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos unter dem christlichen Statthalter Fl. Anthemius Isidorus*, in: D. Knibbe – H. Thür (eds.), *Via Sacra Ephesiaca II: Grabungen und Forschungen 1992 und 1993* (Vienna 1995) 100-102. Knibbe speculates that *I.Eph.* 428, which was found rebuilt in the Byzantine aqueduct, may have served as the original base for the statue. However, there is no secure archaeological evidence for this assumption.

<sup>5</sup> On Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos: *I.Eph.* 428; M. Domitilla Campanile, *I sacerdoti del koinon d'Asia (I sec. a.C. – III sec. d.C.)* (Pisa 1994) 87-88 (no. 77); B. Burrell, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (Leiden 2004) 67; *ibid.*, *Temples of Hadrian, not Zeus*, *GRBS* 43 (2002/3) 31-50, at 45.

particularly because of the question of why a Christian governor should have restored the statue of a former key representative of the imperial cult.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this note is to suggest a different candidate for this statue, to re-examine the motive for the governor's 'unusual' restoration act and to shed some new light on the proposed honorand's stemma.

The apparent paradox in connection with Knibbe's identification leads us to the question of whether another Piso, who is not so overtly associated with the imperial cult, may have lent his voice to this 'speaking statue'. As regards Roman officials who maintained a special relationship to Ephesos, the family of the Calpurnii Pisones immediately comes to mind. Two Calpurnii Pisones served as governors of Asia during the Augustan period: L. Calpurnius Piso Pontifex, proconsul of Asia in c. 9/8 BC or 8/7 BC, and L. Calpurnius Piso Augur (*cos.* 1 BC), proconsul of Asia in c. 6 AD or 9/10 AD.<sup>7</sup> However, if we assume that the statue for our Piso was originally set up in the Stadion Street, where the inscription was found,<sup>8</sup> it becomes less likely that it should be associated with an Augustan governor. All the inscriptions found in the Stadion Street date from the High Roman Empire or later, when the Stadion Street had developed into an important commercial centre and served as a place for the public representation of the local elite.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a 'Piso' of the Antonine period (or later) would make a more suitable candidate for the statue.

This consideration brings into focus an Ephesian whom Knibbe has neglected in his analysis of the inscription: A. Iulius Piso, who is known from *I.Eph.* 1103 as the son of the consul A. Iulius Proculus and Claudia Basilo.<sup>10</sup> He was born in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and spent his early years at Ephesos, where he is attested as an *agonothetes* of the *Artemisia*.<sup>11</sup> He then pursued a distinguished career in the imperial service. As has plausibly been demonstrated, he is identical with the senator recorded in other inscriptions under the full name of Aulus Iulius Pompilius Piso T. Vibius Laevillus [---]atus Berenicianus.<sup>12</sup> He had

<sup>6</sup> Reservations have been expressed by C. Roueché, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 95. Likewise A. Sokolicek, in: *Last Statues of Antiquity (LSA) Database*, no. LSA 662: <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/database/discussion.php?id=1034>.

<sup>7</sup> On L. Calpurnius Piso Pontifex's proconsulship in Asia (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 289): C. Eilers, C. Sentius Saturninus, Piso Pontifex and the Titulus Tiburtinus: A Reply, *ZPE* 110 (1996) 207-226, at 218-223; R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy* (Oxford 1986) 337. The proconsulship of L. Calpurnius Piso Augur (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 290) has been dated by several scholars as follows: B.E. Thomasson, *Laterculi Praesidum, vol. 1* (Göteborg 1984) col. 208 (no. 15) [5-12 AD]; C. Marek, *Geschichte Kleinasiens in der Antike* (Munich 2010) 826-828 [c. 5-13 AD]; Eilers, *op.cit.* (n. 7) [c. 6 AD]; K.M.T. Atkinson, The Governors of the Province Asia in the Reign of Augustus, *Historia* 7 (1958) 300-330, at 329 [perhaps 9/10 AD]. As regards L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (*cos.* 15 BC), Atkinson, *op.cit.* (n. 7) 323-324 rejects the idea that he served as proconsul of Asia.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. Auinger – A. Sokolicek, Ephesus, in: R.R.R. Smith (ed.), *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford 2016) 161-173, at 170. Their statistical overview of late antique statue bases shows that the overwhelming majority was found *in situ* or in close proximity to the original location of the statue.

<sup>9</sup> On the development of the Stadion Street ('Hallenstraße') see D. Knibbe, Der Asiarch M. Fulvius Publicianus Nikephoros, die ephesischen Handwerkszünfte und die Stoa des Servilius, *JÖAI* 56 (1985) 71-77, at 73-75. Inscriptions found in the Stadion Street: D. Knibbe – B. Iplikçioğlu, Neue Inschriften aus Ephesos IX: Fundjahre 1981/82, *ÖJh* 55 (1984) 107-135 (Inv. 4279, 4282, 4291, 4297, 4298, 4301, 4346, 4349), and Auinger – Sokolicek, *op.cit.* (n. 8) 173 n. 59: LSA 748 (emperor Julian), 2086 (emperor Constantius II), 661 (governor Democharis), 662 (governor Isidorus), 745 (empress Aelia Flacilla), 2084 (unnamed governor).

<sup>10</sup> A. Iulius Pompilius Piso (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 477): G. Alföldy, *Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninen: Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Führungsschicht* (Bonn 1977) 297 n. 81; J. Marcillet-Jaubert, Le légat de Numidie A. Iulius Pompilius Piso T. Vibius Laevillus ...atus Berenicianus, *Arheoloski Vestnik* 28 (1977) 346-359; H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem östlichen Teil des Imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Göttingen 1979) 190 (no. 116); H. Müller, Claudia Basilo und ihre Verwandtschaft, *Chiron* 10 (1980) 457-484, at 478-481. A. Iulius Proculus: Alföldy, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 168-169; Halfmann, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 167 (no. 82). Claudia Basilo: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> B 63; *RE* Suppl. XIV (Munich 1974) col. 103, s.v. Claudia Basilo (no. 410a) (W. Eck); Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) (with a stemma of the family).

<sup>11</sup> *I.Eph.* 1103.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Halfmann, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 191 (no. 116). Likewise Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 468-477 with further arguments supporting this identification.

served as legate in the wars along the Danube in the 170s AD and in Numidia (c. 176-8), before reaching the consulship at the height of his career (c. 178 AD). That this eminent man of senatorial rank would be honoured with a statue in his hometown, Ephesos, is more than likely.<sup>13</sup> It is, therefore, obvious that associating the statue with this Antonine senator would neatly fit in with the wider epigraphic context of the Stadion Street. There is, moreover, no evidence that A. Iulius Pompilius Piso ever occupied a leading role in the imperial cult and thus the problem of a ‘highly unusual’<sup>14</sup> restoration commissioned by a Christian governor is no longer relevant.

In this context a prosopographical observation on A. Iulius Pompilius Piso should also be taken into account. We know that A. Iulius Pompilius Piso’s mother, Claudia Basilo, descended from the Claudii Pisones of Synnada (Phrygia), who played an influential role not only in their hometown but also beyond: Ti. Claudius Piso Tertullinus served as asiarch of the provincial imperial cult, Ti. Claudius Attalos Andragathos is on record as Athenian archon and priest of the Hellenes, and Claudia Basilo herself is attested as a θεωρός τῶν Ὀλυμπίων at Ephesos.<sup>15</sup> Even though the stemma of this family has been well reconstructed, an interesting genealogical link has received hardly any attention and has not been properly considered in the prosopographical discussion of this family. On onomastic grounds a strong case can be made to regard the Ephesian imperial priest Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos (see above) as a member of the Claudii Pisones family.<sup>16</sup> From a chronological perspective it seems most likely that Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos, who is attested at Ephesos in Hadrianic times, was a brother of Ti. Claudius Attalos Andragathos and Ti. Claudius Piso Tertullinus. If this assumption is correct, it further underlines that the Claudii Pisones maintained a strong link with the capital of the province of Asia. H. Müller argued on rather vague grounds that Claudia Basilo was the daughter of Ti. Claudius Piso Tertullinus.<sup>17</sup> However, once we add Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos to the stemma of this family, another possibility emerges: it is equally plausible to argue that Claudia Basilo was the daughter of Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos. It seems that Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos had his main base at Ephesos and, if Claudia Basilo was his daughter, she was presumably born and raised there. This suggestion would enable us to account for the fact that in the epigraphic record Ephesos appears as Claudia Basilo’s πατρίς.<sup>18</sup> The stemma of the senator A. Iulius Pompilius Piso can, therefore, be amended and modified as follows:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Halfmann, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 167 and Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 477-478 take the view that A. Iulius Proculus (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 493) is identical with the Proculus (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 492) who, according to the *Historia Augusta* (*Comm.* 7.7), fell victim to the purges of Commodus in c. 190/2 AD. This identification, however, remains beyond certainty. The epigraphic record of A. Iulius Proculus and his family does not show any traces of *damnatio memoriae*.

<sup>14</sup> Sokolicek, *op.cit.* (n. 6).

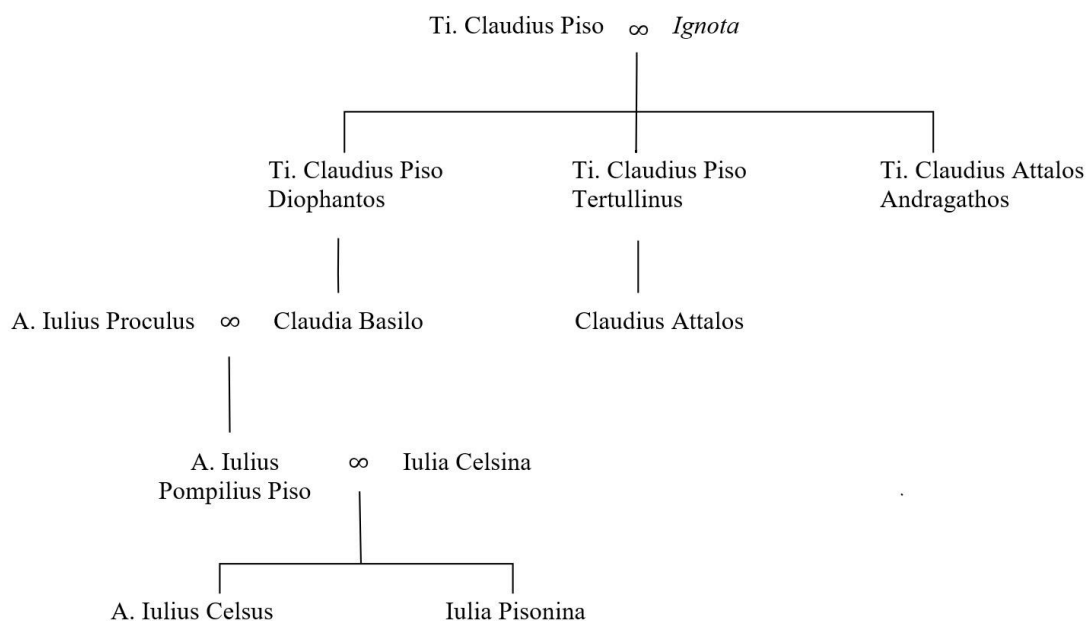
<sup>15</sup> Cf. *MAMA* 6.374; *IG* 5.1.452; *I.Eph.* 891. On Ti. Claudius Piso Tertullinus see also Domitilla Campanile, *op.cit.* (n. 5) 88-89 (no. 78).

<sup>16</sup> Domitilla Campanile, *op.cit.* (n. 5) 88 hinted briefly at a possible kinship between Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos and Ti. Claudius Piso Tertullinus, but without specifying it in more detail. On the infrequency of the cognomen Piso in the epigraphy of Asia Minor see Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 474 n. 125. He points to Ti. Claudius Piso Diophantos but does not discuss the possibility of kinship with the Claudii Pisones from Synnada.

<sup>17</sup> Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 476-477.

<sup>18</sup> *I.Eph.* 891.

<sup>19</sup> Modified on the basis of the stemma in Müller, *op.cit.* (n. 10) 484. In a stemma, C. Settapani has shed light on the paternal grandparents of A. Iulius Piso, whom he identified as C. Iulius Lupus T. Vibius Varus Laevillus (*quaest. Asiae* 132 AD) and Iulia Quadratilla, a member of the distinguished Iulii Quadrati family (cf. C. Settapani, *Continuité gentilice et continuité familiale dans les familles sénatoriales romaines à l'époque impériale* (Oxford 2000) 457-458).



Finally, the practice of statuary dedication warrants closer consideration. Why was the restored statue of A. Iulius Pompilius Piso not dedicated anew as was common practice in late antiquity? C. Roueché has suggested that the governor Isidorus may have ‘carried out the restoration as a public benefit’ because ‘Piso’ ‘had become a toponym in the city’ – possibly for a location where food distributions took place.<sup>20</sup> While at first glance Roueché’s hypothesis seems attractive, it must be noted that there is no further evidence for the existence of a location called ‘Piso’ in the city of Ephesos. An alternative explanation for the restoration of the statue can be provided by focussing our attention on the content and special format of the epigram. It honours the governor Flavius Anthemius Isidorus by letting the statue praise him as its restorer. It is this special feature of a ‘speaking statue’ which makes the governor’s restoration of this specific statue particularly graphic, while at the same time he can display his respect for the city’s past and monuments. Indeed, what could be a more effective way of extolling the governor as a restorer of the city than having a revived statue express its gratitude for its resurrection? ‘Speaking statues’ – let alone restored ones – which address the viewer directly in epigram form are rarely found in Ephesos. There are few honorific inscriptions in the corpus of Ephesos’ epigrams which show this special feature: besides our epigram for Piso (*SGO* 1, 304f., 03/02/13), there is an epigram of a hitherto unidentified (late antique?) governor (*SGO* 1, 312, 03/02/25), and another inscription, discovered *in situ*, in which a certain Tertullinus is speaking in the first person (*SGO* 1, 319, 03/02/33).<sup>21</sup> Remarkably, these three epigrams were found in the Stadion Street, which suggests that it was used as a favoured place to bring this distinct epigraphic feature to the fore. One of the epigrams (*SGO* 1, 319, 03/02/33) seems to date from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and it was

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Roueché, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 95.

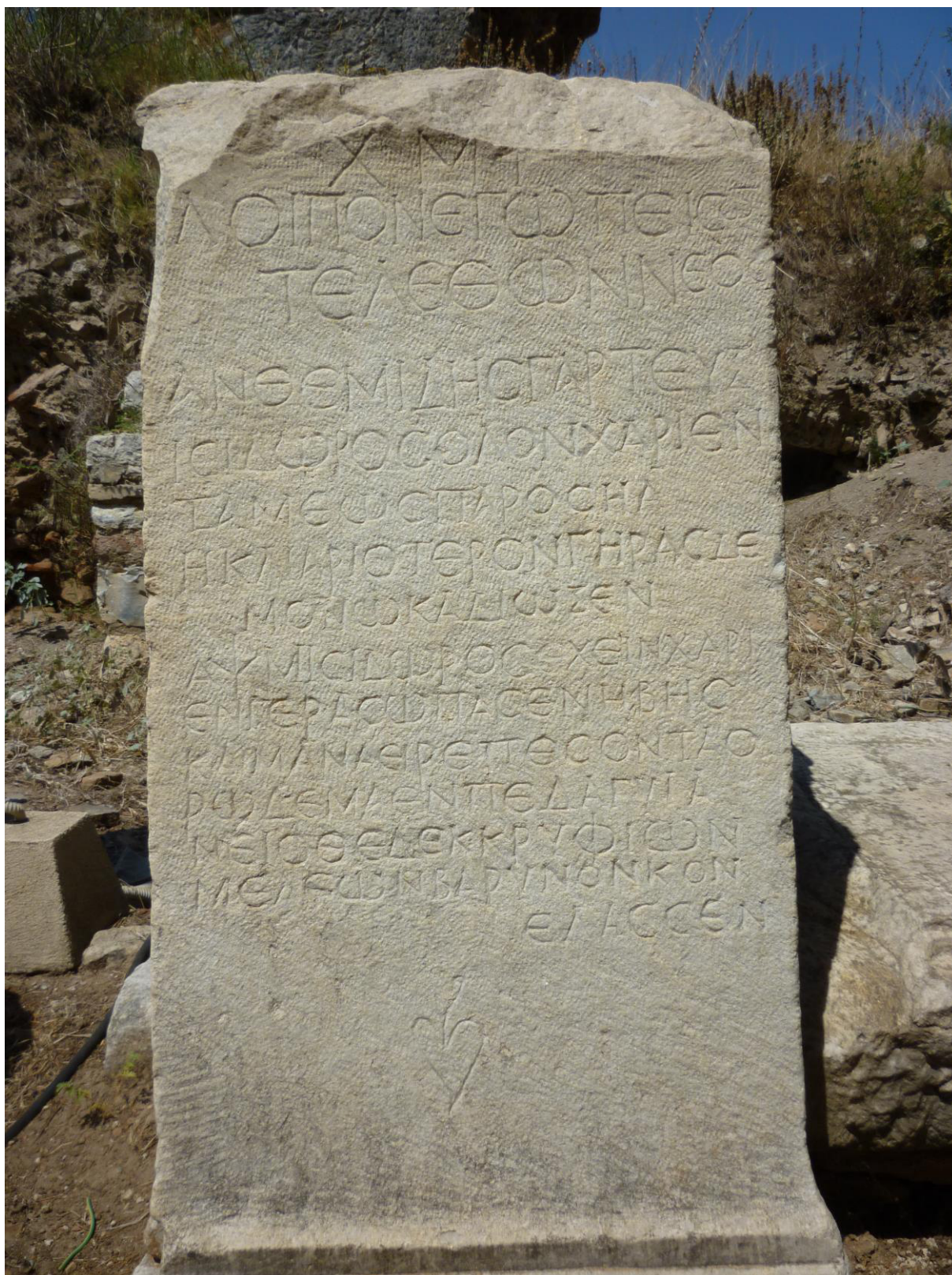
<sup>21</sup> Two Tertullini are attested in Ephesos: M. Antonius Tertullinus (*I.Eph.* 47, 180/192 AD) and C. Iulius Antonius Tertullinus (*I.Eph.* 894, 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD). The two Antonii Tertullini served as civic magistrates in Ephesos in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. One of them may well be the honorand of the epigram for Tertullinus (*SGO* 1, 319, 03/02/33).

presumably still in place when the governor Isidorus conducted his restoration programme in the Stadion Street. Was the creator of the Piso epigram possibly inspired by this 2<sup>nd</sup> century epigram? By imitating the form and style of this inscription,<sup>22</sup> the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD author of the Piso epigram could demonstrate witty playfulness and aesthetic awareness with a view to the wider archaeological environment to which the statue belonged and in which it was to be re-erected. If this assumption is correct, it sheds interesting light on the governor's act of restoration: it was not necessarily the significance of the Piso statue as an urban landmark which may have motivated the governor to re-erect the statue without re-dedicating it, but his artistic and literary appreciation of the statuary display and epigraphic culture as featured in the Stadion Street, and his desire to engage with it creatively in order to be honoured as a restorer of the city in a highly memorable and eye-catching way.

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<sup>22</sup> On the phenomenon of imitation see L. Robert, *Hellenica IV* (Paris 1948) 43-44.



SGO 1, 304f., 03/02/13; photo: R.R.R. Smith