NOTES • KORT BYDRAES

SCIPIO AEMILIANUS' EASTERN EMBASSY — THE RHODIAN EVIDENCE

ABSTRACT

In the controversy over the date of the embassy — 144/3 or 140/39 BC — the evidence on the career of Panaitios of Rhodes, who accompanied it, provides unexpected support for the earlier date. Cicero's testimony is vindicated against those who have preferred to rely on interpretation of Diodoros and his source Poseidonios.

The Stoic philosopher Panaitios of Rhodes accompanied Scipio Aemilianus on his famous embassy to Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. In the controversy about its date — 144/3 or 140/39 BC — the evidence of Panaitios' career has been neglected. In 1941 C. Blinkenberg published a list of Lindian priests and hierothytai, who included Panaitios Nikagora — certainly the Stoic. Unfortunately the name of the priest of Athena Lindia is missing at the top of the stele, so that the year cannot be fixed precisely. Since two hierothytai were known to be men of advanced age in c.115 BC, with grown-up sons, and two more were dead by then, leaving adult heirs, Blinkenberg saw that we could ignore the latter part of Panaitios' long life and he placed the list a generation earlier than the contribution list of c. 115 BC. It sometimes happened that Athena's priest managed to include one or two of his relatives among his hierothytai. Now Nasiotas Pausistratou could be related to Sosikles Pausistratou, the priest of 149 BC — perhaps his brother — and Blinkenberg was tempted to put the list with Nasiotas and Panaitios precisely in this year. One serious objection rules this out. Panaitios is known to have been a hieropatos at the Ptolemaia in Athens in Lysiaides' archonship, almost certainly in 149/8 BC.

We know that he had left Rhodes and come to settle in Athens in the late 150s. He studied first under Diogenes of Seleukeia on Tigris, who was dead by 150 BC, and then under Antipatros of Tarsos, the new scholarch. A passage in the papyrus Index Stoicorum (col. 56) has been skilfully deciphered by Hiller to show that Panaitios served for a year in the Rhodian navy under Telephos, then took part in a voyage of scientific discovery, before being allowed to emigrate to Athens with certain doctors. The account
follows the treatment of Panaitios' family and background in the Index (col.55) and surely belongs to his early years. His naval service may indeed have been in the Cretan War of 155/4 BC. Once at Athens, Panaitios presumably stayed there continuously until the Ptolemaia of 149/8 BC. He would have wanted to get to know the new scholarch and his doctrines at leisure and meanwhile the Athenians clearly came to know and appreciate him. They had already honoured him with an olive crown and the title of prozexnos before the flattering appointment — as one of only five foreigners — for the Ptolemaia.

Can Panaitios' service as hierothytas at Lindos be put back to c.154 BC, before he left the island on naval service? This hypothesis also meets a formidable objection. One of his fellow hierothytai, Damatrios Klemeneus, had a son Kleumenes Damatriou, who became priest of Apollo Olios — a rather junior post in 98 BC. A fifty eight year gap between the posts of father and son is surely impossible. We must return to the 140s. The earliest possibility is 147 BC, since another list of priests and hierothytai is known for the previous year. Now the hierothytas Kleisthenes Eratophaneus, another colleague of Panaitios, was priest of Athena in 136 BC. Gaps between tenure of the two posts are normally fairly long, averaging about twenty seven years. But shorter intervals are known, as my Table demonstrates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierothytas</th>
<th>Priest</th>
<th>Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praxon Timokritou (B I, col. 122)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaxitimos Anaxitimou (col. 131)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aristocles Aristodorou (col. 118)</td>
<td>c.182-178</td>
<td>c.173-171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timopolis Aleximbrida (col. 138)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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With these parallels Kleisthenis as hierothytas could be dated anywhere in the period 147–143 BC.

Now let us turn to Cicero. In Acad. Prior. 2.5 he set Scipio’s embassy before his censorship and this must mean 144/3 BC. The Rhodian evidence now seems to confirm that this was not a lapse of memory. The envoys certainly visited Rhodes before going on to Pergamon and Greece. I would suggest that they reached Rhodes in autumn 144 BC and that Panaitios was there honoured with the post of hierothytas; the envoys then will have overwintered at Athens, where Panaitios will probably have stayed. The envoys had to return to Italy to report to the Senate and resume their normal careers.

Scipio’s fellow envoys were L. Metellus Calvus (cos. 142) and Sp. Mummius. Cicero presents Spurius as a convinced Stoic and he is probably the Σπύριος 'Πομπαίος who was hieropoios at the Ptolemaia with Panaitios and Mnasagoras of Alexandreia Troas, another leading Stoic. He would be
an early example of the young Roman noble completing his education at Athens before starting a career of honours. He was followed in the late 130s by L. Metellus' son and a decade later by T. Albucius. In 146 BC Sp. Mummius was on his brother's staff at Corinth and that would have allowed him to resume Panaitios' acquaintance. Indeed it was possibly through Spurillus that Panaitios gained entrée to Scipio's circle and soon after that he received the flattering invitation to join the embassy as the only private individual. 

Those modern scholars who date the embassy to 140/39 BC put the supposed testimony of Poseidonios — transmitted murkily through the Diodoran fragments — to one unequivocal statement by Cicero. They have moreover either been unable to find sufficient justification and work for the embassy at their date or they blame Scipio for failing to see that the real danger in the East was Parthia. This would be most surprising in a man of Scipio's calibre and experience and the criticism fails at the earlier date. Only a really inspired prophet could have foreseen how completely within five years the near eastern situation would be transformed by Parthian opportunism, exploiting Seleucid divisions and weakness.

The 144/3 BC dating also settles a minor puzzle. Why was Panaitios preferred by Scipio over Polybios, whom he had known so much longer and who was with him at Carthage and Numantia? In spring 145 BC Polybios was left behind in Greece, when L. Mummius and the ten commissioners returned to Italy; Mummius entrusted him with the delicate task of helping the country settle down under the new Roman dispensation. He was presumably still heavily engaged in Greece a year later, when Scipio was preparing for the embassy. Polybios was clearly not available for it and Panaitios was an admirable alternative choice.

The correct dating of the eastern embassy is important for the study of Scipio's career, his mind and his achievements. Set in the right context it also makes better sense of the development of Roman policy in the east, especially towards Egypt, Syria and Pergamon. I hope elsewhere to examine these larger matters.

NOTES

Works often cited:
C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos* 2, Inscriptions, Copenhagen-Berlin 1941, 1–2 = Blinkenberg 1,2
F.W. Walbank, *Historical Commentary on Polybios* 3, Oxford 1979 = Walbank

2. See Blinkenberg 1, no. 223 with coll. 498-502. For Panaitios see line 17. The chronology of the priests of Athena Lindia is firm from 170 BC to AD 27, with very few uncertainties. K.F. Kinch argued for dates two years earlier than Blinkenberg, who refuted him conclusively in 1, coll. 90-5. Only IG 12, 1. 841 caused him some embarrassment. His priest of 170 BC (Theukles Philostratou) shared a statue-base with a boy Olympic victor, apparently in 172 BC. He was unnecessarily worried. The priest's title breaks off on the stone. It might well have included the priesthood of Artemis Kekoia, regularly held by priests of Athena two years later and often chosen as the point at which to honour them. See Blinkenberg 1, nos. 92, 93b, 100-1, 106a, 111b, 118, 137, 150, 157, 168, 197. Theukles will have been priest of Artemis in 168 BC, another Olympic year.

3. For Nashiotas see no.223.19. On priests' relatives see Blinkenberg 1, nos.70.11 and 247.2: 2, nos.324.3 and 343.16. All these were sons. I have found only one example of brothers (1, no.228. 17-18). For Blinkenberg's dating of no.223 see coll. 122 and 498.

4. See IG 22 1938. 25. Blinkenberg followed Roussel in dating Lysiades vaguely 'vers 150' (col. 501). But see B.D. Meritt, Hesperia 33 (1964) 207 and 34 (1965) 90 with Historia 26 (1977) 184. He concluded that Lysiades must be the immediate predecessor of Archon — as IG 1505.31-4 naturally suggests — but dated Archon wrongly 147/6 BC. Ch. Habicht (Hesperia 57 [1988] 238-9) is surely right to put Archon in 148/7 BC — but he inclined to put Lysiades in the late 150s (p. 242). The case is not strong and even at 150/49 BC Lysiades would bar Panaitios' presence at Rhodes in 149 BC.

5. See M. Pohlenz 'Panaitios' RE 18 (1949) 418-21. Cato in Cic. De sen. 7.23 (with 5.14) talks of Diogenes as dead at the dialogue's dramatic date.

6. See Pohlenz (above n. 5) 422 and 440 (with Hiller's text); Walbank 371 and 637. Walbank conceded that Telephos could be the envoy sent to Aemilius Paullus and Perseus in 168 BC (Pol.29.10.4), but judged this quite uncertain. He might rather be the envoy's son. The name is found in only one Rhodian family and is born by fathers and sons in succession. See Blinkenberg 1, no. 160 with coll. 416-7. On the Cretan War see Pol.33.4.1-4 and 15.3-4 with Walbank 545-6 and 558; Blinkenberg 2, coll. 1007-10 (SIG 570 + M. Segre, Riv. Pal. NS 11 [1932] 380-92).

7. The proxeny grant was in Panaitios' youth (Index col. 68). It was modest compared to the honours voted to benefactors. There are good parallels c. 150 BC in IG 22984.14-8 and 985.8-10 (olive crown only).

8. For these men see Blinkenberg 1, no.223.8 and 2, no.282.21.

9. Blinkenberg 1, no. 224 (securely dated by its Athena priest).

10. For Kleisthenis see no. 223.16. For the normal gaps see J. Winand, Mémoires Acad. Roy. de Belgique, Cl. des Lettres 68 (1990) fasc. 4, 35. Blinkenberg assigns Aristolochos' priesthood to c. 173, but it could come down to 171 BC: the continuous list of priests begins only in 170. He cannot have been hierothytas any earlier than 182 BC: the statue dedicated in his year was by the sculptor responsible for the statue of the Athena priest of 154 BC. See Blinkenberg 1, no. 167.20 and 40 with no. 207. One more signed base of his is known. (M. Segre, Clara Rhodos 2 [1934] 192-3, no. 20). It should date c. 170 BC: the man honoured had several years before he commanded troops in Karia (before 167 BC, when Rhodes lost both Karia and Lydia). Astymedes Polycharmon was hierothytas with Aristolochos (no. 167. 32); his father was priest of Athena in 166 BC. A man could be hierothytas aged eighteen (see Winand, 41 f.). But even if Astymedes was no older, his father would still be
about fifty nine as priest, if we keep no. 167 c. 182 BC, and fifty five, if we drop its date to c. 178 BC. Even at fifty five Polycharmos would be unusually old for an office normally taken about forty five (Winand, 40).

11. In De rep. 6.11 (published in 55 BC) Cicero seems to put the embassy after the censorship. This is not the only possible interpretation of the passage. But it could be a lapse of memory corrected ten years later in Acad. Prior. 2.5.

12. For the calls on Rhodes and Pergamon see Cic. De rep. 3.35.48 and 'Lucian' Makro- 


14. See Cic. De orat. 3.18.68 (Q. Metellus [cos. 100]; he heard Karneades in his last years) and De fin. 1.3.8–9 with Brut. 35.131 (T. Alcibiades).

15. For Corinth see Cic. Ad Att. 13.30.2 with 5.1 and 6.4. Astin (Scipio Aemilianus, Oxford 1959, 296) argued that Scipio, much older than most in his circle, must have been the one to bring in Panaitios.


17. Though the Seleucids lost Media-Susiana c.148, the real rot set in only with the loss of Babylon in 141 and the defeat and capture of Demetrios II, trying to restore the position in Mesopotamia. See G. le Rider, Sous sous les Séleucides et les Parthes, Paris 1965, 361–80: Ch. Halsch, CAH 8°, 362–71.


19. See Pol. 39.4.1–5.6 with Walbank 733–5: Gruen (above n. 16) 523–7: Kallet-Marx (above n. 1, 2) 63–96 (the Mummian settlement). Kallet-Marx has shown conclusively (above n. 1, 1, 141–53) that Q. Fabius Maximus Servilianus (cos. 142) was proconsul in Macedonia after his praetorship at Rome, either in 145/4 or 144/3. In the earlier year Servilianus would have been collaborating with Polybios, an old family friend, in settling Greece and indeed a fascinating dossier (still largely unpublished) shows him intervening in Dyne, Argos and Sikyon. If the date should be 144/3 BC, Scipio and his brother’s adoptive brother will have had an intriguing reunion in Greece and L. Metellus and Servilianus could have concerted strategy for the consular elections in the late summer. Kallet-Marx prefers this date and assumes — perhaps wrongly — that Polybios would have still been heavily engaged on the commission given him by L. Mummius.

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