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# ATTALOS III, KING AND SCULPTOR. AN APPENDIX TO VOLLKOMMER'S *KÜNSTLERLEXIKON*

**Abstract:** *In his epitome Justin related Pompeius Trogus' story, who apparently wanted to convince his readers that Attalos III, who was insane, accused his relatives of poisoning Berenike and Stratonike. Before he died he had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. Sallust adduced the words of Mithridates VI, who considered Attalos' testament a Roman forgery. What we know from Justin's version is the Roman version, which was produced to justify the annexation of a foreign country and the seizure of the Attalids' immense treasures. Attalos was one of the best educated Hellenistic monarchs, a lover and patron of the arts and sciences, a sculptor and a man of letters. With the slaying of Attalos III and his closest relatives the Roman senators also terminated the last great project of patronage over the Hellenic arts, letters and sciences.*

**Keywords:** *Attalos III; Berenike; Stratonike; sculptor; Pergamon; Rome*

All we have inherited from the manuscript tradition on Attalos III, the last king of Pergamon, is a short Latin account by Justin, a writer of the late Imperial period (Just. *Epit*. 36.4). It is a well-known fact that Justin made a summary of Pompeius Trogus' voluminous world history. In his *Historiae Philippicae* Justin related the story disseminated by Pompeius Trogus, who apparently wanted to convince his readers that Attalos III had accused his relatives and servants of poisoning his young wife Berenike and subsequently his mother Stratonike (*caedibus amicorum et cognatorum suppliciis foedabat, nunc matrem anum, nunc Beronicen sponsam maleficiis*

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*eorum necatam confingens*). Attalos was insane, Justin continued his story – he liked gardening! However, he was not a gardener. Actually he was occupied with the production of different lethal poisons (*hortos fodiebat, gramina serebat et noxia innoxiis permiscebat*), Justin claimed. After the deaths of the Queen Mother and his wife the king's psychiatric condition deteriorated. He dressed in mourning, avoided company, and did not even hold feasts (*squalidam vestem sumit, barbam capillumque in modum reorum submittit, non in publicum prodire, non populo se ostendere, non domi laetiora convivia inire aut aliquod signum sani hominis habere*). Attalos was a bronze-worker and a sculptor (*aerariae artis fabricae se tradit, cerisque fingendis et aere fundendo procudendoque oblectatur*). He decided to construct a magnificent tomb for his mother (*Matri deinde sepulcrum facere instituit*). This is how Justin enumerated all the 'symptoms' of the king's insanity. He died young and unexpectedly in his early thirties, allegedly of sunstroke, when he was working on the construction of the Queen Mother's monument (*cui operi* [*sc. Sepulcro Matri*] *intentus morbum ex solis fervore contraxit et septima die decessit*). However, before he died he had managed to bequeath his kingdom to the people of Rome (*huius sc. Attali, testamento heres populus Romanus tunc instituitur*), which is the version of his demise in agreement with the almost unanimous Roman historical tradition as we know it today (Livy, *Per*. 58, 59; Strabo 13.4.2; Vell. Pat. 2.4.1; Flor. 1.35 [2.20]; Plut. *Ti*. *Gracch*. 14; App. *Mith*. 62).[1] What a moving story by the old liar and propagandist Pompeius Trogus, and his diligent student Justin!

A special senatorial commission was sent from Rome to Pergamon to confiscate the royal treasury and take over the kingdom (132 BC). The immense treasure of the young monarch, one of the wealthiest kings of the Greek Eastern Mediterranean, flowed into Rome. It cannot be a coincidence that the images of Asclepius and Hygieia by the Pergamene sculptor Nikeratos appeared in Rome at around that time (Plin. *HN* 34.80) (Overbeck 1868, 917-920; Pape 1975, 155; in the Temple of Concordia, Andreae 2007b). I have always had the feeling that his young wife and mother must have died simply because they were the only persons at court whom the young king could trust absolutely. The young and wealthy monarch was surrounded day and night by treacherous servants and Roman agents. It must have also been the same during the reign of Attalos II, who trained his nephew for the role of future king of Pergamon. The elimination of the Queen Mother and Berenike removed the last obstacles to

[1] All the quotations collected together in *OGIS*, vol. 1, 533.

the assassination of the king himself. After hardly five years on the throne Attalos III died unexpectedly in early 133 BC, as a young man, and a member of a royal family known for its longevity. This fatal sequence of events also provokes other doubts and questions. Was his wife expecting an heir to the king's immense fortune? Did the king really die of sunstroke? In point of fact Pergamon is quite far away from the refreshing breath of the Aegean. Sunstroke may kill you in the interior of Anatolia. Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa labelled Attalos III 'a Hamletic hero'. I think she was right. This investigation is certainly not my invention. Sallust, a high-ranking Roman official and a well-informed member of the senatorial caste, adduced the words of Mithridates VI, king of Pontus, who considered Attalos' last will and testament a Roman forgery (Ep. *Mithr*. 6, fr. 69[2]) (Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 101). Mithridates literally labelled it 'a shameless fake' (*simulatoque impio testamento*). I am going to discuss the so-called *Testamentum Attali* later on. Now I would like to focus on one selected 'symptom' of the king's insanity: his artistic skills and activities. Justin and Pompeius Trogus, who shared the Roman aristocracy's contempt for artists, writers and researchers disseminated this information to denigrate and discredit the king. And in this way they offered us material which qualifies the last Pergamene king for a place on the pages of Vollkommer's learned lexicon. The king practised the art of bronze smithery. He also worked with wax (*cerisque fingendis*), which is part of bronze-casting technology, which – like many other Greek sculptors of the Classical and Hellenistic period – Attalos espoused with skill and passion (*aere fundendo procudendoque oblectatur*).

Attalos III died at work on his sculptures. Justin unintentionally and with a different purpose in mind saved this beautiful anecdote, which probably testifies to the king's rising literary and artistic legend. This legend, ironically preserved by a representative of a literary tradition hostile to Attalos, sounds as if quoted from Duris of Samos' biographies of the Greek sculptors and painters.[3] What was the grave monument like? Attalos was wealthy and we can be sure that it must have been a very impressive work of sepulchral architecture and sculpture in bronze and stone, worthy of the Queen Mother, a king's daughter and wife of the Attalid monarchs Eumenes II and Attalos II. The great altar of Zeus and the Gallic monument raised by Eumenes II on the Pergamene acropolis testified to the highest

[2] Maurenbrecher B., *C. Sallusti Crispi Historiarum reliquiae*. Leipzig 1891-1893.

[3] Cf. the still invaluable chapters on Duris of Samos as the art historian in Jex-Blake and Sellers 1976, XLVI-LXVII.

standards in the Hellenic figural arts. The best Greek sculptors of the time were at hand. The patrons were generous and wealthy, and precisely in the reign of Attalos III (138-133 BC) the Attalid court became a unique refuge for researchers and artists, offering patronage on an incomparable scale in the eastern Mediterranean, at a time of decline and rapidly diminishing chances for the development of the arts and sciences. In 167 BC the magnificent library and art collection of Perseus was confiscated in Pella and transported to Rome. The first lamp on the Greek cultural map was extinguished. In 145 BC Ptolemy VIII closed down the academic institutions of Alexandria. In those years Antioch on the Orontes was in the eye of a political storm. The Seleucid kingdom had been rent for decades by an incurable domestic power struggle for the crown. The city of Antioch passed from hand to hand. It was no longer a safe haven for painters and sculptors. After 166 BC the mercantile republic of Rhodes, which played the role of a local patron of the arts and letters, was brought to ruin by the Romans and eventually eclipsed once and forever. In the reign of Eumenes II (197-160 BC) Pergamon became the most developed and most advanced centre for the figural arts and architecture in the whole of the Mediterranean Basin. The Attalid votive monuments in Pergamon and on the Athenian acropolis were made by the Pergamene sculptors Phyromachos, Antigonos, Isigonos, and Stratonikos (Plin. *HN* 34.84; Andreae 2007a; Andreae 2007c, with his own bibliography of monographs and papers; Andreae 2007d; Onash 2007). One of the most admired divine images in the Greek world, the seated statue of Asclepius in the temple of that god in Pergamon, was made by Phyromachos (Polyb. 32.25; Diod. Sic. 31.35). The magnificent head of the god can still be seen on the coins of Attalos III (Andreae 2007c). When Eumenes II commissioned the great altar of Zeus his son was already a big boy – big enough to remember it. The future king might have personally known one or another of these artists, and other great Pergamene sculptors, who until now have remained anonymous, obliterated by the dust of oblivion. It seems that Attalos learnt a lot from the Pergamene sculptors and scientists congregated around the library and royal palaces of Eumenes II (197-159 BC) and his brother Attalos II (159-138 BC). In contrast to his image as a dangerous poisoner and evil wizard, Attalos' treatises on agriculture, gardening and medicinal herbs were later consulted by specialists (Varro, *Rust*. 1.1.8; Columella, *Rust*. 1.1.8; Plin. *HN* 1.8.11.14-15.17-18, 18.22) (Volkmann 1964, 719).[4]

[4] Pliny the Elder quoted Attalos' treatises on agriculture in his books: 8 (mammals), 11 (insects, birds, reptiles), 14,15,17,18 (trees, gardening – olive trees, vineyards, medicines).

The so-called *Testamentum Attali* fills the upper part of a stele found in the Pergamene theatre (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338). The text can be divided into several sections. The first contains a statement on the authorship and date. The document was issued by the leaders and people after the death of Attalos Philometor and Euergetes (Attalos III). In the second section we find an opening formula which also points to the Romans as executors of the will. This part contains the following words: *δεῖ δὲ ἐπικυρωθῆναι τὴν διαθή*[*κην*] *ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων* [*ἀναγκαῖ*]*ον* (Kaibel) *sive* [*ἐπιτήδει*]*ον* (Fränkel) (which essentially makes no difference) *τέ ἐστιν ἕνεκα τῆς κοινῆς ἀσ*[*φ*]*αλείας καὶ τ*[*ὰ ὑπο τετα*]*γμένα γένη μετέχειν τῆς πολιτε*[*ίας*] *διὰ τὸ ἅπα*[*σαν εὔ*]*νοιαμ προσενηνέχθαι πρὸς τὸν δῆ*[*μο*]*ν*. I have the feeling that this passage is syntactically incongruent with respect to the previous one, as well as with the following part. Dittenberger's note (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338, 534 note 8) testifies to his feeling of uncertainty: *sententiam non integram ratus Fränkelius lapicidae culpa* (*δεῖν ἰσονομεῖσθαι*) *omissa suspicatus est*. The phrase *δεῖ δὲ ἐπικυρωθῆναι* disrupts the syntactic order of the discourse, which is otherwise perfectly coherent. The third part contains a list of the royal donations and decisions on behalf of his servants, citizens and soldiers. The fourth part denounces those citizens of Pergamon who had left or were going to leave the city and its territories. The end of the text is unknown because the lower part of the stele is damaged. Of those four parts, the first and the second do not refer to the king's will. They are not part of any testament. Part 3 may reflect the king's will in the event of his death: the liberation and prosperity of his servants and citizens. Part 4 is a public notice announcing decisions taken by an 'interim government' composed of some pro-Roman high-ranking functionaries and Roman officials who arrived in Pergamon to confiscate the royal treasures and carry out the annexation of the kingdom. This operation must have been decided in Rome. Section 4 implies that its makers feared an attack by the new king, Eumenes III/Aristonikos.

C. Préaux was convinced of the authenticity of Attalos' will, which was, as she put it, contested by Sallust. '*Une inscription de Pergàm elève les doutes qu'on pouvait avoir à ce sujet*' (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338), she concluded, and added one more proof: Ptolemy VIII's testament engraved on a stele found in Kyrene (Klaffenbach *et al*. 1944, no. 7). According to that document Ptolemy bequeathed Kyrene to Rome (Will 1966-1967, vol. 2, 305; Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 101). Similarly

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In the book 18 Pliny adduced the names of some leading Greek experts in agriculture: Philometor, Hiero, Attalos, Archelaus, Xenophon, Mago.

H. Volkmann (1964, 719) in his interesting paper on the Attalids simply referred to Justin's version without a word of critical commentary. Volkmann also inferred the authenticity of the *Testamentum Attali* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338) and the Roman Senate's resolution (*OGIS*, vol. 2, no. 435). He did not name Eumenes III as the last rightful king of Pergamon in his lexicon entry on the Attalids. The burden of the Roman propaganda can still be felt on our necks.[5] However, Volkmann concluded his paper with words which may raise doubts in his readers' minds as to his methodology based on a purely archivist interpretation of the written sources. His conclusion seems to contradict his hypothesis: '*Trotzdem Testament brach der Aufstand des Aristonikos aus*.' A predilection for written documents shared by many ancient and modern historians cannot justify a lack of criticism. Forged documents are still documents. In some cases they may be even more interesting than authentic ones.

E. Will (1966-1967, vol. 2, 351) was more cautious. Although he wrote that the *Testamentum Attali* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338) '*authentifie du même coup le testament entier*,' nonetheless he resorted to the judicial statement of U. Wilcken (1896, 2176), who reflected that the reasons behind the king's decision still remain unknown.[6] Will (1966-1967, vol. 2, 350) labelled the king's behaviour as '*mystérieux*' and added that the literary sources had created '*une atmosphère du roman noir*' around Attalos III. He suspected that the king's decision to write such a testament might have been related to a visit to Pergamon by Scipio Aemilianus and a Roman embassy *c*. 133 BC. The young king might have written a will under duress from the Roman visitors. And he supposedly agreed to bequeath his kingdom in the event of his death without issue. Attalos was young. His beloved Berenike was young as well. The young king did not think it could ever happen (Will 1966-1967, vol. 2, 352). Rostovtzeff

[5] The reader can certainly find the entry on Aristonikos, cf. Kiechle 1964.

[6] Will also epitomised the discussion on the motives behind the testament: 1. The psychological explanation which refers to the king's alleged emotional lability. 2. The king's fear of Aristonicus as an unworthy successor to the Pergamene crown. 3. The king's fear of the social unrest, in Rostovtzeff 1941, vol. 2, 757 and 806ff, and Vavrinek 1957, 189ff; 4. The king wrote the testament in fear of Rome. He was actually a vassal of the Roman state. This state of affairs was inherited of his predecessor Attalus II, in Bloch and Carcopino 1952, vol. 1, 217ff. It is clear that explanations 1 and 2 were strongly influenced by the Roman propaganda (the king's mental illness, Aristonicus, the son of a prostitute), 3 is a *vaticinium ex eventu*. The revolution was brought about by the king's death. 4 can actually be regarded as a very likely explanation. Attalos II was a Roman client or satellite monarch. Whoever Attalos III actually was, he must have been regarded as such by the Roman senate.

(1932, 226, note 1; cf. Luzzatto 1941, 259ff) suggested that a series of similar royal wills actually smacked of Roman imperialism in disguise. His opinion is worth considering. From the perspective of centuries it seems – and I think it must have looked the same to many of Attalos' contemporaries – that too many of the Greek kings of the eastern Mediterranean in the late 2nd and early 1st century BC suffered from a mysterious and incurable *morbus testamentalis*. In 162 BC Ptolemy VIII bequeathed the land of Kyrene to the Roman Senate (Klaffenbach *et al*. 1944, no. 7). In 133 BC Attalos III was to do the same with his prosperous kingdom. In 74 BC Nicomedes IV followed their example.[7] In fact the three quoted cases of royal wills were very different. Ptolemy VIII and Attalos III cannot be put on a par (as it was done by Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 101). Ptolemy VIII bequeathed Kyrene, a distant province of the Lagid maritime empire, for the price of the crown in its centre, Alexandria. He hated his brother so much that he felt ready to ask a foreign power for assistance to depose his brother. And he managed to do it. The document fits well into the pattern of the power struggle between the siblings, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII, and Cleopatra II. All of them were mean, greedy and cruel individuals. The case of Attalos III is different. From 166 BC on relations between Pergamon and Rome were never good. The Romans had never forgotten Eumenes II's neutrality and his efforts to mediate between them and Perseus. I think the Roman forgers made use of Ptolemy VIII's case as a good propagandistic argument to hoodwink onlookers in the East and as a tried and tested recipe for new annexations. If Ptolemy VIII had bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, why should Attalos III not do the same? The case of Nicomedes IV and his testament may be different again. Nicomedes IV, who found himself between two powers might have invented a way to fuel a lingering conflict between them. If you go down, spark a war between your enemies. If so, he was successful. Since he hated Mithridates VI, he turned to Rome.

The practice of testamentary forgeries was well known to the Roman courts of the Republican and Imperial periods. W. Speyer adduced a quotation from the *Lex Iulia testamentaria* (*Corpus iuris civilis*: *Dig.* 48.13, 48.10): '*Qui tabulam aeream legis ... refixerit vel quid inde immutaverit, lege Iulia peculatus tenetur ... eadem lege tenetur, qui quid in tabulis publicis deleverit et induxerit*.' The legal regulation clearly refers to forgeries, the manipulation and destruction of public documents engraved

[7] Will (1966-1967, vol. 2, 411): '*Comme les autres testaments royaux celui de Nicomède IV a parfois été consideré dès antiquité, comme un faux*'; Magie 1950, 1201, note 49.

in bronze or stone. A similar formula is offered by the Republican *Cornelia testamentaria* (*Dig*. 48.10) (Speyer 1971, 89). We have already mentioned Sallust's '*simulatumque impium testamentum*,' allegedly of Attalos III. Sallust's passage fortunately emerged from among the fragments salvaged from his regrettably lost history of Rome (78-67 BC). M. Meier (1842, 414ff; cf. *OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338 and p. 533, note 6) shared this opinion with Sallust. And I share it with them. The testamentary formula quoted from the so-called testament of Attalos by Florus (1.35 [2.20]),'*populus romanus bonorum meorum heres esto*' is not to be found in the text of the *Testamentum Attali* discovered in Pergamon (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338).

According to the narrative of Justin and Pompeius Trogus Attalos III was an insane, alienated wizard, a dangerous poisoner, while Aristonikos had a prostitute for his mother (Just. 36.4.6) ('*non iusto matrimonio, sed ex paelice Ephesia, citharistae cuiusdam filia, genitus*'). These are blatant invectives. This is outright denigration. S. Longosz (1971) summarised the principles of the ancient pagan and Christian invective. Descent from a prostitute alongside animalisation, paedophilia, insanity, primitivism, black magic, poisoning, theft, and homicidal mania in particular, directed against relatives, make up the most popular, most useful, and most frequent components of ancient invective. They are the commonplaces, the matrices for every efficient slur. We can see it again and again in the ancient history and throughout the centuries. The victims of the powerful are first deprived of their human characteristics, then their very humanity is denied and they are treated as animals; finally they are killed. This is a frequently observed sequence. We know a number of model Graeco-Roman invectives. Lucian of Samosate (*De mort. Peregr.*), a satirist who never had trouble with the powerful and the influential, denigrated and dehumanised Peregrinus, a respected philosopher and Sophist, who committed suicide in an act of protest against Roman rule in Greece. Lucian (*Alex*.) also attacked Alexander of Abonuteichos, a religious leader from Pontus who won great popularity and authority in the decades of wars and epidemics which killed thousands throughout the Empire. Both of them challenged the authority of the Roman state in the period of crisis. Except for Lucian's invectives we know very little about them.

Heliodorus' Bukoloi in the *Aethiopica* were brigands operating in the most inaccessible parts of the Delta. In fact the Bukoloi were Egyptian insurgents who rose up against the Romans under Antoninus Pius. The Bukoloi – along with the African *circumcelliones*, the Celtic Bagaudae, or the Egyptian guerrillas who fought their long and determined peasant

war in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC against their Macedonian rulers, and the partisans of Aristonikos/Eumenes III of Pergamon – all belong to the forgotten histories of the Classical world (Préaux 1936, 522-552; Alliot 1951, 421-443; Thompson 1952, 11-23; Eddy 1961; MacMullen 1966). The Bukoloi did not merit a place in the new edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* or in the *Kleine Pauly*, our excellent reference books. Eumenes III did not find a place in the *Kleine Pauly* under his correct royal name. 'Mighty rulers always use the term *latrones* in speaking of those whom they slay...' MacMullen (1966, 224) remarked. In the Western historiography Attalos III too is still a '*kinderloser Sonderling, der Freunde mordete, denen er den Tod seiner Mutter und seiner Braut Berenike zuschrieb*,' the king who '*ohne sich um Staatsgeschäfte zu kümmern, trieb botanische Studien über Giftpflanzen*' (Volkmann 1964, 720). I would like to return to the language of the *Testamentum Attali*, which in some points is intriguing and gives rise to suspicion. The royal cult of the Hellenistic monarchs is a well-known phenomenon.[8] Attalos I's name was adorned with the epithet *Soter*, the Saviour, after his victory over the Gallic invaders. This is documented by the inscriptions identified in Heraclea Latmos, an archaeological site in Caria memorable for its enchanting mountainous landscape (Fränkel 1890, nos 43-45). We read *Βασιλεῖ Εὐμένει θε*[*ῶι*] *Σωτῆρι* on an inscription found in Athens (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 308, 477, note 2; Prott and Kolbe 1902, 94, no. 86; a similar inscription Prott and Kolbe 1902, 95, no. 87). The epithet *Soter* was in general reserved for the divine names of Zeus, Asclepius and the Dioscuri (Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 250). And conversely, Aphrodite of Smyrna received the epithet *Stratonikis* from the name of the Attalid queen, the mother of Attalos III (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 229, l. 12; other similar examples in Robert 1937, 18). The Zeus of *Tralleis* was also called Zeus Eumenes (Hansen 1971, 415; Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 252). Apollonis, the wife of Attalos I, who was famous for her marital and royal virtues, was also venerated as a *synnaos* in the gymnasion of Pergamon (Hansen 1971, 414; Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 254). The eulogy dedicated to her by the three Pergamene generals and rediscovered in the Phrygian Hierapolis speaks of her death in the following words: *γυνὴ μὲν θεοῦ βασιλέως Ἀττάλου ... μεθέστηκεν εἰς θεούς* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 308, ll 3-4). 'When the wife of the divine Attalos went to the gods,' or 'joined the society of the gods.' We would simply say 'when the queen died'. Dittenberger (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 308 and p. 477, note 4)

[8] The bibliography of the subject is extensive, cf. Hansen 1971, 410-426 and a concise chapter in Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 238-271.

described this language as the '*usitata formula de regum regiaeque familiae hominum mortibus*.' This is the usual phrase in the royal honorific inscriptions invoked by the Attalids. For example, *τῶν τε βασιλέων εἰς θεοὺς μεταστάντων*, 'when the kings joined the gods', is a phrase which occurs on the autobiographic stele commissioned by Menas of Sestos, a high-ranking functionary of the last Attalids (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 339, l. 16).[9] If we compare a parallel section from the *Testamentum Attali* we will observe the striking lack of reverence for Attalos III: we only get the not very deferential expression *μεθι*]*στάμενος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338, l. 4), 'he left the world of the living'. A far cry indeed from the standard honorific *titulus*.

The question arises why is it so that a great benefactor of the Roman state and Senate, a king who bequeathed his kingdom and immense treasures to the Romans had such a bad reputation with the Roman historians. Justin did not invent the hostile Roman tradition. He inherited it from others. We have already seen that it was unanimous in the evaluation of the last king of Pergamon. I think this may be explained by a basic psychological law: if you assassinate someone you must hate him to justify the killing in your own mind. In this light it does not seem amazing that Attalos III sank into even deeper isolation after the death of his mother and wife, as we know from Justin's narrative. The king had every reason to be apprehensive and distrustful. His unexpected, premature death in his early thirties soon after the poisoning of his mother and wife speaks for itself.

Recent archaeological research carried out in the sanctuary of Kybele in Pessinunt has added corroborative substance to the suspicions shared by Mithridates VI and Wilcken, to which I, too, subscribe. An intriguing extensive inscription incised in a stone slab in the late 1st century BC reproduces the contents of a secret exchange of letters between the high priest of Pessinunt and two Attalid kings, Eumenes II and Attalos II (Wells 1934, 61; Marek and Frei 2010, 301). It discloses inside information on the pro-Roman faction at court, in particular in the royal council, which was made up of the monarch's relatives and influential aristocrats. They were powerful enough not only to influence the king's decisions, but actually to stonewall them. Chloros, one of the king's counsellors, made no attempt to disguise his hostile, arrogant attitude to the monarch, and could well serve as the embodiment of what Rostovtzeff called

[9] The inscription was made before 120 BC, after the death of Attalos III.

the long fingers of Rome. Chloros seems to have had all the features required in a conspirator, especially one intent on removing the last members of the royal family.

Menas of Sestos also alluded to the death of Attalos III and the subsequent war between Eumenes III and Rome, using ambiguous, highly euphemistic and metaphorical language: *καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἐκ τῆς αἰφνιδίου περιστάσεως ἐπιστάντων χαλεπών* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 339, l. 18). *ἡ αἰφνίδιος περιστάσις* means 'an unexpected, unforeseen bad course of events'. The state of Pergamon suffered hard times 'as a result of an unexpected ill-fated course of events'. In this reticent language Menas is clearly referring to the sudden death of Attalos III and the subsequent war of Eumenes III, the heir to the throne, with Rome.

Th.-M. Schmidt (1990, 141-162) showed in his brilliant paper that the work to construct the great altar of Pergamon was abruptly halted and its sculptures were never completed.[10] The sudden abandoning of such a grandiose undertaking more than suggests foul play against its patron – the third successive Attalid king financing the project. The only viable explanation is that cessation of work on the monument must have coincided with the sudden death of its patron. The artists must have left their oeuvre and never returned.

The uprising and war of Aristonikos/Eumenes III, the son of Attalos II, has drawn quite a lot of attention in Hellenistic studies (Broughton 1938, 505ff; Magie 1950, vol. 2, 1033ff; Robinson 1954; Rostovtzeff 1955--1956, vol. 2, 635ff, vol. 3, 1295f.; Vogt 1959; Eddy 1961, 177f.; Will 1966-1967, vol. 2, 352-356; Kiechle 1964, 571f.; Hansen 1971, 142ff; Wörrle 2000, 543ff; Daubner 2006), including an illuminating and inspiring book by S. Eddy (1961). Aristonikos' war also throws some light on the circumstances of King Attalos' death in 133 BC. Vogt (1959; cf. Will 1966-1967, vol. 2, 355) argued that Aristonikos was crowned king of Pergamon immediately after the death of Attalos III. Aristonikos must have had access to some royal reserves of money, to some military garrisons and strongholds which kept arsenals, otherwise he would not have been able to win control of such vast territories of Asia Minor. He managed to win the Battle of Leukai against the Roman army under the command of the consul P. Licinius Crassus (131 BC). The consul lost his life. If Eumenes was so successful he must have been recognised by many

[10] The beginnig of the construction work after 166 BC (vs. traditional chronology 180-170 BC); Marek and Frei 2010, 708, note 96. The early date corroborated by Rodt's study of pottery findings, *c*. 170 BC (Marek and Frei 2010, 307).

as the rightful heir to the kingdom. Thanks to E. Robinson (1954) we know that for four years he struck coins as Eumenes III in Stratonikeia and Thyateira. Stratonikeia is on the Upper Caicus, in the very heart of the Pergamene kingdom, and not far from the city of Pergamon. It is clear from the sequence of events that Attalos III's subjects were convinced that their king had fallen victim to assassination by the Romans. Some forty years later, in the aftermath of the first victories of Mithridates Eupator, the citizens of many Greek towns in the coastal region of Asia Minor attacked and killed thousands of Romans in an act of revenge for occupation, injustice and exploitation. It is surely no coincidence that the *pogroms* in Pergamon and Adramyttion, once the harbour town of the kingdom, were extremely brutal and cruel.

What can we do when we generally have at our disposal only worthless, fragmentary and strongly biased written sources? All we can do is to reduce them to the essential sequence of facts, even if there are not many. Attalos III came to the throne in 138 BC as a rightful heir to his father Eumenes II and his uncle Attalos II. He was a natural scientist and author of learned treatises on gardening, agriculture, and medicinal herbs. He was also a sculptor who worked in stone and bronze. He died suddenly and prematurely in early 133 BC, when he was in his early thirties. It happened very soon after the death of the Queen Mother Stratonike, and Attalos III's young wife Berenike. The Roman army immediately invaded his kingdom and annexed it to the Empire after a war with his successor and rightful heir Eumenes III/ Aristonikos, the son of Attalos II. The war lasted four years. The treasure was loaded on ships and transported to Rome, where Eumenes III himself was murdered soon afterwards.

I feel uneasy on discovering that intelligent writers who specialise in Hellenistic history and culture refer so uncritically to Justin's lies and invectives, which still resound with the slogans and images coined for the needs of war propaganda and the Roman imperialism which crushed a large part of the Graeco-Oriental world, together with the essential part of its cultural heritage. Justin produced an *epitome* of a more extensive and, I am sure, more ambitious historical account by Pompeius Trogus, which has not been preserved. Justin concocted a simplified, easy course in Roman history for members of the imperial bureaucracy, and in particular for those who apparently did not like to read, but were obliged to know something. The story of Attalos III and Aristonikos/Eumenes III by Justin is worthless. I do not blame him. He followed his authoritative, more

comprehensive sources. What we know from Justin's account is the Roman version, which was produced to justify the annexation of a foreign country and the seizure of the Attalids' immense treasures. The mean purpose behind the assassination of the whole royal family looms large over the Roman imperial historiography: '*Perpenna consul ... Attalicasque gazas, hereditarias populi Romani, navibus inpositas Romam deportavit*' (Just. 36.4.8).

For Justin Attalos III was a crank and a weakling, although I am not convinced at all by that, but he was certainly an immensely rich weakling. It is interesting to turn to one of the inscriptions which praises King Attalos III for his heroic courage on the battlefield (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 332). This inscription is also of great value to the art historian. It was found in Kilise Köy. The inscription was dedicated to the honour of Attalos III for his military victory. The upper part of the stele was destroyed. Consequently we do not know anything about the king's victorious expedition. We can read of *χώραν πολεμίαν*, which is a reference to a hostile country, and then of *τὰς καταξίας χάριτας τῶν εὐημερημάτων* (ll 5-6). The words refer to tokens of gratitude for the king's valour, decreed by the city of Pergamon for the king's military successes (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 332 and p. 514, note 5). The grateful citizens resolved to raise a votive statue of the king clad in armour and standing on the spoils (*ἄγαλμα πεντάπηχυ τεθωρακισμένον καὶ βεβηκὸς ἐπὶ σκύλων*) (ll 7-8). The statue would be erected in the temple of Asclepius the Saviour, where the king would be worshipped as *σύνναος τῶι θεῶι*, he would share the sanctuary with the god. *ἄγαλμα* means a cult statue (Robert 1937, 17; Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 252). I emphasise the title: *σύνναος τῶι θεῶι*, which testifies to the king's heroic, half-human and half-divine nature, a popular expression of the Hellenistic royal cult. The degradation the king suffered after his death in the light of the language of the *Testamentum Attali* (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 338) is once again clearly visible. The citizens also determined to raise a golden image of the mounted king, which would stand on top of a marble column (*εἰκόνα χρυσῆν ἔφιππον ἐπὶ στυλίδος μαρμαρίνης*), next to the great altar of Zeus the Saviour (*παρὰ τὸν τοῦ Διὸς* [*τ*]*οῦ Σωτῆρος βωμόν*) (ll 9-10). The wealthy Attalids became benefactors of many urban communities and sanctuaries. We read in Polybius' history of the statue of Attalos I which stood next to the sanctuary of Apollo in Sikyon (Polyb. 18.16). The Delphic inscriptions attest to the votive statues of Attalos II and Eumenes II which once stood by the wall of the terrace of the Athenian portico (*SIG*, vol. 2, nos 670-671; Préaux 1978, vol. 1, 252).

We can also read of *χρυσὸς στέφανος ἀριστεῖος*, a golden wreath signifying the king's valour (ll 7-8). The citizens also resolved to celebrate an annual feast in honour of the king on the anniversary of his triumphal entry into Pergamon (ll 12-13). The honours bestowed on the king included the assignation of his own priests, sacrifices of incense, processions, and prayers. The great inscription also quotes two minor honorific inscriptions which were to be incised: one on the *ἄγαλμα* and the second on the *εἰκων*. According to the dedicatory epigram the first statue was founded by the people in honour of King Attalos Philometor and Euergetes, the son of the divine Eumenes Soter, who defeated the enemy, for his courage and valour shown during the war (ll 22-24) (*Ὁ δῆμος βασιλέα Ἄτταλον Φιλομήτορα καὶ Εὐεργέτην θεοῦ βασιλέως Εὐμένου Σωτῆρος ἀρετῆ*[ς] *ἕνεκεν καὶ ἀνδραγαθίας τῆς κατὰ πόλεμον, κρατήσαντατῶν ὑπεναντίων*). The second inscription on the column spoke of the king's valour and prudence, which resulted in the enlargement of the state (*ἀρετῆς ἕνεκεν καὶ φρονήσεως τῆς συναυξούσης τὰ πράγματα*) (ll 25-26). The great inscription's elegant literary Greek (*OGIS*, vol. 1, no. 332), rich in religious content, remarkable for its ecphrastic style (description of artworks), and the china box composition (two minor inscriptions within the frame of the main inscription), and the *lex sacra* call to mind the great inscriptions of Antioch I Epiphanes on Nemrud Dagh with their noble tone, sense of dignity, ancient wisdom and religious essence. The difference between the king's portrait commemorated by the noble and religious tone of this text and the official Roman propaganda image full of mean invectives is striking.

Attalos III was one of the best educated Hellenistic monarchs, a lover and patron of the arts and sciences, a gifted sculptor and a man of letters. In comparison with him the contemporary Roman aristocrats looked exactly as they were: poorly educated semi-illiterates. And this was probably one more reason to hate him and get rid of him. I think there were probably only two other Hellenistic kings who stand comparison with Attalos III, artist and intellectual on the throne: Antigonos Gonatas the philosopher king, and Antioch I Epiphanes the religious reformer of Kommagene. With the slaying of Attalos III and his closest relatives the greedy and aggressive Roman senators also terminated the last great project of patronage over the Hellenic arts, letters, and sciences.

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