

# A Letter of Antoninus Pius and an Antonine Rescript concerning Christians

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**A**N INSCRIPTION FROM EPHESES discovered in 2013, and recently published by Hans Taeuber, bears on several debated problems of Roman and early Christian history. It contains the beginning of a letter from Antoninus Pius written in one of the last years of the reign, after a period of seismic activity that has caused other cities of Asia to feel alarm for Ephesus.<sup>1</sup> The imperial titles show that Pius was in a year of his tribunician power between the twenty-first and the twenty-fourth; the just visible kappa representing 20 is followed by a letter that is probably alpha or delta, so either 21 (KA) or 24 (ΚΔ), giving as dates 10 December 157 to 9 December 158 or 10 December 160 to 7 March 161, the day of the emperor's death. The new inscription invites reconsideration of a letter to “all the Greeks,” attributed in different sources to Antoninus Pius or to Marcus Aurelius. In this the emperor refers to an ongoing series of earthquakes that has caused a wave of panic, and he forbids the prosecution of Christians except on the charge of acting contrary to the interests of the Empire.

The following is Taeuber's text:

Ἀγαθῆ Τύχη.  
Ἀὐτοκράτωρ Κα[ῖς]αρ [θε]οῦ Ἀδριανοῦ  
υἱός, θεοῦ Τρά[ιαν]οῦ [ἢ Παρ]θικοῦ υἱῶ[νός],  
4 θεοῦ Νερούα [ἔκγο]γος, [Τί]τος Αἴλιος  
Ἀδριανὸς [ἄντω]νεῖν[ος] Σεβαστός,

<sup>1</sup> H. Taeuber, “Ein Kaiserbrief des Antoninus Pius zu einem bisher unbekanntem Erdbeben in Ephesos,” *JÖAI* 84 (2015) 301–310. I am very grateful to Prof. Taeuber for having shown me this text ahead of publication, to Glen Bowersock for much help, to the editors of *GRBS*, and to the external reader.

- ἀρχιερεὺς [μέγιστος], δημαρχικῆς ἐξου-  
 σίας τὸ κ[ . ], ἀ[ὕτ]ο[κρ]άτωρ τὸ β', ὕπατο[ς]  
 8 τὸ δ', πατή[ρ] πατ[ρί]δος Ὑφεσίων τοῖς  
 ἄρχουσιν καὶ [τ]ῆ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ  
                         vacat χαίρειν vacat  
 Οἰκεῖον ἦν [κ]αὶ ἀρόττον κοινῇ τε τῷ  
 12 ἔθναι καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστη τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ  
 πόλεων ἐπὶ τοῖς συμβάσι τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ  
 πόλει σεισμοῖς καὶ ταραξάσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς  
 εὐλάβειαν καὶ δέος περὶ ὑμῶν καταστήναι·  
 16 ἀκόλουθόν δ' ἔστι τούτῳ τοῦ φόβου παρελ-  
 [θόντο]ς ἀκινδύνου καὶ μηδενὸς δυσκό-  
 [λου . . . . . ἐπι?]πεσόντος ἡσθῆναι ΔΙΑ . .  
 [.....]ΝΩΝΑ . . . . ΚΛΙ . .

In line 18, [ἐπι]πεσόντος is very likely: LSJ s.v. ἐπιπίπτω II, “fall upon, of grief, misfortune, etc.,” cite Thuc. 3.82, ἐπέπεσε πολλά καὶ χαλεπὰ κατὰ στάσιν ταῖς πόλεσι; cf. Polyb. 5.56.7, σκοτωμάτων (“dizzy-fits”) τινῶν ἐπιπεπωκότων τῷ βασιλεῖ. Between δυσκό[λου] and [ἐπι]πεσόντος there is room for five or six letters, and ὑμεῖν is tempting, whereas τῇ πόλει seems too long. After ἡσθῆναι, ΔΙΑ could represent δι’ ἄ, introducing some decision or recommendation. I translate:

With good fortune. Emperor Caesar, son of the divine Hadrian, grandson of the divine Nerva, T. Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, tribune for the twenty- – time, imperator for the second time, consul for the fourth time, father of his country, to the magistrates, council, and assembly of the Ephesians, greeting.

It was proper and fitting, both for the province generally and for each of the cities of Asia individually, in consequence of the earthquakes that befell your city and disturbed you, to feel anxious and fearful for you. And it is consistent with this, now that the terror has passed and nothing unpleasant has befallen [you?], to rejoice. Therefore (?) . . .

As Taeuber notes, this letter is relevant to a passage of Aelius Aristides referring to panic caused by a series of earthquakes under a proconsul of Asia named Albus (*Or.* 49.38):

καὶ χρόνῳ ὕστερον οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ πυκνοὶ σεισμοὶ γίνονται ἐπὶ Ἄλβου ἄρχοντος τῆς Ἀσίας, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν δὴ Μυτιλήνη κατηνέχθη μικροῦ πάσα, τοῦτο δὲ ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων πολλὰ ἐκινήθη, κῶμαι δὲ ἄρδην ἀπώλοντο, Ἐφέσιοι δὲ καὶ Σμυρναῖοι παρ' ἀλλήλους ἔθειον θορυβούμενοι, ἢ [ἦν?] δὲ συνέχεια θαυμαστῆ καὶ τῶν σεισμῶν καὶ τῶν φόβων. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν εἰς Κλάρον θεωροὺς ἔστελλον καὶ περιμάχητον ἦν τὸ μαντεῖον, τοῦτο δὲ ἰκετηρίας ἔχοντες περὶ τοὺς βωμοὺς καὶ τὰς ἀγορὰς καὶ τὰ κύκλω τῶν πόλεων περιήεσαν, οὐδεὶς οἴκοι μὲνιν θαρρῶν, καὶ τελευτῶντες ἰκετεύοντες ἀπέιπον.

And some time later there occurred the many severe earthquakes when Albus was governing Asia. Mytilene was almost entirely flattened, and moreover many (buildings) in many of the other cities were shaken, villages were utterly destroyed, the Ephesians and the Smyrnaeans ran to one another in alarm, and there was an astonishing succession of earthquakes and terrors. They sent sacred envoys to Claros, there was a general rush to the oracle, and with branches of supplication in their hands they went around the altars and the agoras and the surrounding cities, since no-one dared to remain at home, and they finally gave up making supplication.

This sounds like the situation described in the new inscription; in particular, Aristides' phrase, "astonishing succession of earthquakes and terrors," recalls "the earthquakes that happened to your city" and "the terror has passed." The date of the events described by Aristides is disputed, some putting the proconsulate of Albus in the late 140's, while Glen Bowersock argued for 160/161. That date now seems likely, though 159/160 is not excluded.<sup>2</sup>

The new text recalls a previously known imperial rescript, which Taeuber preferred not to adduce because of its inherent problems.<sup>3</sup> Eusebius in his *Church History* attributes it to Pius, but

<sup>2</sup> G. W. Bowersock, "The Proconsulate of Albus," *HSCP* 72 (1968) 289–294, esp. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *JÖAI* 84 (2015) 307 n.28, "Ungeachtet möglicher Reminiszenzen an tatsächliche historische Ereignisse lässt es der Charakter dieser Zeugnisse nicht ratsam erscheinen, sie zur Argumentation heranzuziehen."

as transmitted in his text it is issued by Marcus as sole ruler in his fifteenth tribunician year, that is, between 7 March and 9 December 161, and Rufinus' translation shows that he had this version of the letter before him.<sup>4</sup> Codex *Paris.gr.* 450, a collection of texts connected with Justin Martyr and the archetype of his surviving works, transmits a different version and ascribes it to Pius; here the date is corrupt, and Schwartz emended it to correspond with Pius' twenty-fourth tribunician year, 10 December 160 to 7 March 161.<sup>5</sup> One of the many questions attached to these two versions is whether Eusebius' originally included the rescript in the form transmitted in his manuscripts; if so, he must have overlooked the fact that the imperial titulature was that of Marcus, not of Pius. Otherwise it will have to be assumed that his text was tampered with, and the titulature of Marcus substituted for that of Pius, and perhaps other changes made, before Rufinus made his translation early in the fifth century. In a thorough treatment of the two versions, Adolf von Harnack argued that an authentic rescript of either Pius or Marcus, but more probably of Marcus, lay behind the Eusebian version, but had suffered from Christian interpolation, while the version in the Paris codex derived from on the Eusebian one and had been further interpolated. C. H. Haines accepted von Harnack's arguments in his Loeb edition of Marcus' *Meditations*, and printed a text of the rescript underlining those parts that von Harnack had attributed to the original.<sup>6</sup>

In general von Harnack's views have not found much agreement. Among those who rejected the document was T. D. Barnes, who suggested that a forger concocted both versions, but that there was "a genuine imperial letter in that proconsular

<sup>4</sup> Eus. *HE* 4.13, ed. E. Schwartz, *Eusebius: Die Kirchengeschichte* (GCS n.F. 6.1 [Leipzig 1903]).

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted by Schwartz, *Eusebius* 328. On this codex, D. Minns and S. Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr* (Oxford 2009) 3–5.

<sup>6</sup> A. von Harnack, *Das Edict des Antoninus Pius* (*Texte u. Unters.* 14.4 [Leipzig 1895]); C. H. Haines, *The Communings with himself of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* (Cambridge [Mass.]/London 1916) 383–391.

year, occasioned by the earthquakes or their aftermath. (It may even have mentioned Christians).<sup>7</sup> I will propose here that a letter sent by Pius to the *koinon* of Asia while the earthquakes were still continuing lies behind the version in Eusebius and in *Paris.gr.* 450; I will further suggest that the authenticity of that letter receives some support from the new, epigraphical one. I give here the version of the Paris codex, omitting some minor emendations of Schwartz and noting the more important divergences of the Eusebian version in the apparatus, and after that I offer a translation, similarly omitting minor divergences.

Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ Τίτος Αἴλιος Ἀδριανὸς Ἀντωνεῖνος Σεβαστὸς Εὐσεβῆς, ἀρχιερεὺς μέγιστος, δημαρχικῆς ἑξουσίας τὸ κδ', ὑπατος τὸ δ', πατὴρ πατρίδος, τῷ κοινῷ τῆς Ἀσίας χαίρειν.

- 5 ἐγὼ ᾧμην ὅτι καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιμελὲς ἔσσεσθαι μὴ λανθάνειν τοὺς τοιοῦτους· πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον ἐκείνους κολάσειεν, εἴπερ δύναιτο, τοὺς μὴ βουλομένους αὐτοῖς προσκυνεῖν. οἷς ταραχὴν ὑμεῖς ἐμβάλλετε, καὶ τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν ἤπερ ἔχουσιν ὡς ἀθέων κατηγορεῖτε καὶ ἕτερα ἅτινα οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀποδεῖ-  
10 ξαι. εἴη δ' ἂν ἐκείνοις χρήσιμον τὸ δοκεῖν ἐπὶ τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ τεθνάναι, καὶ νικῶσιν ὑμᾶς, προιέμενοι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς ἤπερ πειθόμενοι οἷς ἀξιοῦτε πράττειν αὐτούς.

- περὶ δὲ τῶν σεισμῶν τῶν γεγονότων καὶ τῶν γινομένων, οὐκ ἀπεικὸς ὑπομνησαι ὑμᾶς ἀθυμοῦντας ὅταν περ ᾧσι, παραβάλλ-  
15 οντας τὰ ὑμέτερα πρὸς τὰ ἐκείνων, ὅτι εὐπαρρησιαστότεροι ὑμῶν γίνονται πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ ὑμεῖς μὲν ἀγνοεῖν δοκεῖτε παρ' ἐκείνων τὸν χρόνον τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἀμελεῖτε, θρησκευίαν δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸν θεὸν οὐκ ἐπίστασθε· ὅθεν καὶ τοὺς θρησκευόντας ἐξήλακατε καὶ διώκετε ἕως θανάτου. ὑπὲρ τῶν  
20 τοιούτων καὶ ἄλλοι τινες τῶν περὶ τὰς ἐπαρχίας ἡγεμόνων τῷ θειοτάτῳ μου πατρὶ ἔγραψαν, οἷς καὶ ἀντέγραψε μηδὲν ἐνοχλεῖν

<sup>7</sup> T. D. Barnes, "Legislation against the Christians," *JRS* 58 (1968) 38. For more recent views J. J. Walsh, "On Christian Atheism," *VigChr* 45 (1991) 260, "It is uncertain whether the letter is genuine, partially a forgery or totally fabricated." A new set of studies devoted to Antoninus Pius, Chr. Michels and P. Fr. Mittag (eds.), *Jenseits des Narrativs: Antoninus Pius in den nicht-literarischen Quellen* (Stuttgart 2017), does not mention the letter.

τοῖς τοιοῦτοις, εἰ μὴ ἐμφαίνοντό τι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν Ῥωμαίων ἐγχειροῦντες. καὶ ἐμοὶ δὲ περὶ τῶν τοιούτων πολλοὶ ἐσήμαναν, οἷς δὴ καὶ ἀντέγραψα κατακολουθῶν τῇ τοῦ πατρὸς μου γνώμῃ.  
 25 εἰ δέ τις ἔχοι πρὸς τινὰ τῶν τοιούτων πρᾶγμα καταφέρειν ὡς τοιοῦτον, ἐκεῖνος ὁ καταφερόμενος ἀπολελεύσθω τοῦ ἐγκλήματος κἂν φαίνεται τοιοῦτος ὢν, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ὁ καταφέρων ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ δίκῃ.

1–2 Τίτος ... Εὐσεβής: Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος Ἀντωνῖνος Σεβαστός Ἀρμένιος Eus.

2–3 δημαρχικῆς ... πατρίδος: ἐξουσίας ὑπατος πδ πρ πριδος τὸ κα cod. Paris., em. Schw.: δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ πέμπτον καὶ τὸ δέκατον, ὑπατος τὸ τρίτον Eus.

5 ἐγὼ ᾄμην: ἐγὼ μὲν οἶδ' ὅτι Eus.

6–7 εἶπερ δύναιντο om. Eus.

7 προσκυνεῖν: προσκυνεῖν ἢ ὑμεῖς Eus.

8 ἐμβάλλετε: ἐμβάλλετε βεβαιοῦντες Eus.

9 καὶ ... ἀποδείξει om. Eus.

10 χρήσιμον: αἰρετὸν Eus.

10–11 ἐπὶ τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ ... ὑμᾶς: κατηγορουμένοις τεθάναι μᾶλλον ἢ ζῆν ὑπὲρ τοῦ οἰκείου θεοῦ ὅθεν καὶ νικῶσι Eus.

14 ἀπεικός: εἰκὸς cod. Paris., em. Schw.: ἄτοπον Eus.

15 τὰ ὑμέτερα: τὰ ἡμέτερα Eus.

16–19 ὑμεῖς ... τοὺς θρησκευόντας: ὑμεῖς δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν χρόνον καθ' ὃν ἀγνοεῖν δοκεῖτε τῶν τε θεῶν τῶν ἄλλων ἀμελεῖτε καὶ τῆς θρησκείας τῆς περὶ τὸν ἀθάνατον ὃν δὴ τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς θρησκευόντας Eus.

25–26 ἔχοι ... ὡς: ἐπιμένοι τινὰ τῶν τοιούτων εἰς πράγματα φέρων ὡς δὴ Eus.

(29) προετέθη ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐν τῷ κοινῷ τῆς Ἀσίας add. Eus.

The Emperor Caesar, T. Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Pontifex maximus, with (tribunician) power for the twenty-fourth time, imperator for the second time, consul for the fourth time, father of his country, to the council of Asia, greeting.

[“The Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus Armenicus, Pontifex maximus, with tribunician power for the fifteenth time, consul for the third time,” Eus.]

I would suppose [“I know,” Eus.] that it is the gods’ concern that such people not escape notice, for they would be much more likely to punish those unwilling to adore them, if they could [“adore them than you are” Eus.]. You throw them into confusion, and you denounce the opinion that they have as (that) of atheists and other things that we cannot divulge [“confirming the

opinion that they have, accusing them as atheists,” Eus.]. In their eyes it would be advantageous [“desirable,” Eus.] to seem to die for the charge alleged [“to die for their own god when charged rather than to live,” Eus.], and they prove superior to you, sacrificing their lives rather than obeying what you ask them to do.

As for the earthquakes that have happened and are happening, it is not unreasonable [“out of place,” Eus.] to remind you that you despair while they occur, comparing your [“our” Eus.] situation to theirs, because they use more freedom of speech with god, while you seem not to know the gods during that time, you neglect the rites, and do not understand the worship of god, and hence have expelled (his?) worshippers and persecute them to death. [“while for the whole time during which you seem to be in ignorance, you neglect the other gods and the worship of the immortal (one), whose worshippers the Christians you have expelled and persecute to death,” Eus.]

About such people other governors too in the provinces wrote to my most divine father, and he answered them that they should not be harassed unless they were proved to be plotting something against the Roman empire. Many have also given information to me about such people, and I have replied to them following the decision of my most divine father. But if anyone is able to bring a charge against any such people [“persists in bringing any such people into trouble,” Eus.]<sup>8</sup> for being such (i.e. a Christian), the defendant shall be acquitted of the charge even if he appears to be one, and the person bringing the charge shall be liable to the penalty.

[Eusebius adds: “It was displayed in the League-building<sup>9</sup> of Asia in Ephesus.”]

If there was an authentic original, it was probably dictated by the emperor in Latin and translated at Rome (or wherever he

<sup>8</sup> The Latin of the original seems to have been *causam deferre* (*OLD defero* 9 e); assuming that the letter was translated into Greek before being sent, the translator rendered the phrase literally as *πρᾶγμα καταφέρειν*, which Eusebius or the interpolator misunderstood.

<sup>9</sup> This seems to be the meaning of *ἐν τῷ κοινῷ*: Eliza Gettel draws my attention to *IG IX.1 101.8* (Elateia, 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE), *ἀναθέμεν ἐν τῷ κοινῷ ἐν Ἐλατεΐᾳ εἰκ[όνα γραπτάν]*.

was residing) before being sent to the recipients; so also Marcus Aurelius, despite his perfect knowledge of Greek, used Latin to dictate his long letter to the Athenians concerning their disputes with Herodes Atticus.<sup>10</sup> But it cannot have begun as it is made to do here, with nothing to indicate who “such people” are, or what has led the emperor to write. In their letters of reply, emperors usually begin by stating the topic of the letter they are answering, as Trajan does with Pliny, so that both versions here reproduce an extract. The content is generally the same, but with certain marked differences. The Paris version makes the emperor non-committal about the beliefs and motives of the Christians. For the Christians “it would be advantageous [to them] to seem to die for the charge alleged,” whereas the Eusebian version says, “it would be desirable to die for their own god when charged rather than to live.” The Paris version makes Pius say, “You neglect the rites, you do not understand the worship of god, and have expelled (his?) worshippers and persecute them,” whereas the Eusebian version emphasizes the Christians’ devotion to their god and almost makes Marcus a believer: “You neglect the other gods and the worship of the immortal (one), whose worshippers, the Christians, you have expelled.” But this passage is certainly corrupt in Eusebius’ version and may be so in the Paris one, and it cannot be made to bear too much weight.

Both versions therefore derive from a single original, and both contain several difficulties, especially the Eusebian one. Eusebius introduces the rescript as one of Pius, yet in his text it is attributed to Marcus; his version also gives Marcus the title of *Armeniacus*, which he did not take until 164. While Pius could well say that “many people” had written to him on the subject of the Christians, it would be odd for Marcus to say the same within months of his accession. Writing under Marcus, the apologist Melito (in Eus. *HE* 4.26.5–11) says that Pius like Hadrian before him had followed a comparatively tolerant policy towards the

<sup>10</sup> F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca 1977) 225–228. Marcus: J. H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors* (Philadelphia 1989) no. 184.94–95.



Christians, and had written to this effect to Larisa (presumably Thessalian Larisa), Thessalonica, Athens, and “all the Greeks (πρὸς πάντας Ἑλληνας),”<sup>11</sup> whereas under Marcus, by contrast, the “race of the religious” was being harassed by “new decrees” (καινὰ δόγματα) as never before; these are giving informers an opportunity to cheat Christians out of their possessions; if this is happening by Marcus’ order, it must be accepted, but if he is not responsible for “this new decision and this new decree (ἡ καινὴ αὐτὴ βουλή καὶ τὸ καινὸν τοῦτο διάταγμα), which is not fitting even against barbarian enemies,” he should not allow Christians to be subjected to “public plunder.”

Even if the Paris version is closer to the source-document, that document is not thereby proved authentic, and some phrases seem impossible to defend. One such is omitted in the Eusebian version, “you denounce ... *other things that we cannot divulge*.”<sup>12</sup> It is also difficult to believe that an emperor could have drawn a favorable contrast between the Christians’ trust in their god and the ordinary population’s neglect of religion. On the other side, the statement that it was for the gods to avenge their own injuries, famously encapsulated in Tiberius’ *deorum iniuriae diis curae*, was “an old maxim of Roman law.”<sup>13</sup> It is also likely enough that Pius had received many inquiries from governors about how to proceed in dealing with Christians. Pliny’s exchange with Trajan is an early example of such an inquiry, and another is the rescript of Hadrian to Minicius Fundanus as proconsul of Asia, though some have doubted its authenticity.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> “All the Greeks” might denote the Panhellenion, but might equally denote a provincial or regional league like the Asian one: for simple Ἑλληνας designating the Asian *koinon*, L. Robert, *RevPhil* 41 (1967) 47 = *OMSV* 387.

<sup>12</sup> The syntax is difficult and I am not sure of the translation.

<sup>13</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.73; H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*<sup>2</sup> I (Oxford 1896) 276. Cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.8.19, *ad diuos adeunto caste, pietatem adhibento, opes amouento; qui secus faxit, deus ipse uindex erit*; 2.9.22, *periurii poena diuina exitium, humana dedecus <esto>*.

<sup>14</sup> Trajan: Plin. *Ep.* 96, 97. Hadrian: Eus. *HE* 4.9, originally appended to Justin’s *First Apology*; it is uncertain whether Rufinus’ Latin version (Schwartz, *Eusebius* 319–321) represents the original.

Pius' statement, "You despair while (the earthquakes) occur," finds a curious echo in Aristides' description of the earthquakes that caused such panic in Ephesus and Smyrna: "and they finally gave up making supplication." A series of earthquakes could well have caused people to suppose that Christian impiety had closed the ears of the gods. Tertullian in a famous paragraph observed that pagans "suppose the Christians to be the cause of every public disaster, every misfortune of the people. If the Tiber comes up to the walls or the Nile does not come up to the fields, if the sky stands still [i.e. there is a prolonged dry spell] or the earth moves, if there is a famine, if there is a pestilence, immediately, 'The Christians to the lion.'"<sup>15</sup> A similar demonstration of religious despair occurred on the day of Germanicus' death: "Temples were stoned, the altars of the gods overturned, and some flung their household gods into the street."<sup>16</sup>

If these arguments are correct, the imperial rescript addressed to the *koinon* of Asia and ascribed to Pius by *Paris.gr.* 450 derives from an authentic original, probably of 160/161. At the time of writing, the continuous earthquakes had caused a general panic, and this in turn had led to attacks on Christians. Eusebius intended to cite Pius' rescript, but for unknown reasons the version that he cites ascribed it to Marcus, and gave it a strongly Christian coloring. For equally unknown reasons *Paris.gr.* 450 preserves a less interpolated version, ascribing it correctly to Pius. The newly published letter of Pius to the Ephesians was written slightly later, when the panic had subsided, and tends to corroborate the authenticity of the lost original.

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<sup>15</sup> Tert. *Apol.* 40.1–2. For the Christians' supposed impiety as a primary cause of persecution, G. E. M. de Sainte-Croix, "Why were the early Christians persecuted?" *PastPres* 26 (1963) 6–38 [repr. *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom and Orthodoxy* (Oxford 2006) 105–152].

<sup>16</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 5.1. Suetonius must mean in Antioch, where Germanicus died: he does not say what form the public mourning took in Rome, except that it lasted for several months (*Cal.* 6.2).