

Literature Year 2
Lesson 7
Patrons and Clients



The picture above shows the inscription on an arch dedicated to Virgil's patron Augustus in the city of Ephesus. See if you can decipher the letters before you look at my attempt on the next page.

I came up with:

*IMP · CAESARI · DIVI · F · AVGVSTO · PONTIFICI
MAXIMO · COS · XII · TRIBVNIC · POTEST · XX · ET
LIVIAE · CAESARIS · AVGVSTI
MAZEVS · ET*

We can make more sense of this by changing some of the *Vs* to *Us*. I have done this below [and also put in some words from the other side of the arch which are not visible in the picture.]

*IMP · CAESARI · DIVI · F · AUGUSTO · PONTIFICI
MAXIMO · COS · XII · TRIBUNIC · POTEST · XX · ET
LIVIAE · CAESARIS · AUGUSTI [M · AGRIPPAE · L · F · COS · TERT · IMP · TRIBUNIC ·
POTEST · VI ET IULIAE CAESARIS FIL]
MAZEUS · ET [MITHRIDATES PATRONIS]*

Inscriptions are usually very abbreviated using standard abbreviations.

IMP · CAESARI · DIVI · F · AUGUSTO · PONTIFICI · MAXIMO

These are the formal titles of Augustus. Look at the word for Augustus itself. What case is it in?¹ *IMP* is *imperatoris*. You can probably “guesslate” this especially if you change the first letter to *e*. The word also means “general” or “commander” and this is important lower down the inscription. *CAESARI* is obvious. *DIVI* is related to divine and *F* is short for *filio*. The *Pontifex Maximus* was the most important priest of the pagan Roman religion. Do you know who bears the title today?²

This information gives us the first part of the inscription. Have a go at it before you look at my answer on the next page.

1 Answer on the last page

2 Answer on last page.

I get:

“To³ The Emperor Augustus son of the divinity Pontifex Maximus”

If we expand the abbreviations we get next:

CO[n]S[uli] XII TRIBUNIC[ia] POTEST[ate] XX

Notice two Roman numerals here. They tell us how many times something happened. What Roman office would *Consuli* be? The number tells how many times Augustus held that office. *Tribunicia potestate*⁴ is another Roman office. You can guess what it is from the first of the two words. Again the number tells how many times he held the office.

ET LIVIAE CAESARIS AUGUSTI

Et is easy. *Liviae Caesaris Augusti* is just another name in the dative. You can guess who she is from her name.

The abbreviations in the next phrase give us:

M[arco] AGRIPPAE L[uci] F[ilio] CO[n]S[uli] TERT[ium] IMP[eratori] TRIBVNIC[ia] POTEST[ate] VI

Here is another name in the dative with the name of his father. How often was he consul? How often a tribune? He is also described as an *imperator* but he was not an emperor so what was he?

ET IVLIAE CAESARIS FIL[iae]

Another name in the dative but careful look at the gender *filiae* it is not who you might think!

MAZEAUS ET MITHRIDATES PATRONIS

Two more names – in the nominative case this time so the arch is not dedicated “to” them. However, *patronis* is dative plural. Take the *i* out of the word to get the English word.

Now answer the questions below (answers and full translation on the last page):

To how many people was the arch dedicated?

Who had it erected?

What was their relationship to the dedicatees?

3 Because of the dative case of all the words

4 Literally “tribunal authority.”

Answers:

Dative case so this is "to Augustus."

The Pope is *Pontifex Maximus*

My translation:

To the Emperor Caesar Augustus, the son of the divine, Pontifex Maximus,
who was consul twelve times and tribune twenty times;

and to Augusta Livia;

and to Marcus Agrippa, the son of Lucius, who was consul three times, general, and tribune six
times;

and to his daughter Julia Caesar,

Mazeus and Mythridates to their patrons.

To how many people was the arch dedicated? 4

Who had it erected? Mazeus and Mythridates

What was their relationship to the dedicatees? They were clients; that is the dedicatees were their
patrons. They were probably freedmen of Augustus sent to Ephesus in some administrative rôle.