



## [Honorific Inscription for a local patron in Arles \(CIL XII, 594\)](#) [1]

**Typology (Honorific / Funerary / etc.):** Honorific

**Original Location/Place:** Gémenos (Bouches-du-Rhône)

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** Reused in a chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Plan in the church of Saint-Jean-de-Garguier, but lost since the nineteenth century.

**Date:** 138 CE to 161 CE

**Physical Characteristics:** Marble tablet, reused in a church where its details were recorded in the seventeenth century by Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Pereisc. Now lost.

**Material:** Marble

**Measurements:** Height: 129 cm

Width: 162 cm

Depth: 7.2 cm

**Language:** Latin

**Category:** Roman

**Publications:** *CIL* XII, 594

EDH: [HD047633](#) [2]

**Commentary:** This inscription is known only from a manuscript record dating to the seventeenth century; it is an honorific text that appears to have been erected in order to celebrate the efforts of a successful and prominent freedman in the colony of Arles, who acted on behalf of a local community in order to guarantee their right to use a bathhouse for free. It is a useful text for understanding how a sense of law and common self-interest manifested itself in provincial locations, as well as illustrating the problematic legal statuses and rights of the different kinds of communities.

The inscription, perhaps originally on a marble pillar, was erected by the inhabitants (*pagani*) of the *pagus Lucretius*, which was included in the territory of the *colonia Iulia Paterna Arelatensium*, or modern Arles. The *pagus Lucretius* was an *oppidum attributum* that probably belonged originally to Massilia, but was later taken away and awarded to Arles as part of the division of Massilia's territory following their failure to support Caesar in 49 BCE (Abbott and Frost, *Municipal Administration*, p. 427). A military colony of veterans from the *legio VI* was founded there, with a further colony founded with veterans from the *legio X* at Narbonne (Suetonius, *Tiberius*, VI.1). As well as the colonies, a range of other municipal structures of varying status can also be found in the territory that they governed, including *oppida* (towns), prefectures, *vici* (neighbourhoods or settlements), *pagi* (rural district) and *loci* (regions), as well as the autonomous and independent settlements that continued to exist outside of them (Faudot, "Le *pagus Lucretius*," p. 116). The exact origins of the *pagus Lucretius* are unclear, but it was likely a rural settlement in the valley of the Huveaune to the east of the colonial territory of Arles. The name of the *pagus* is that of a Roman *gentilicium*, 'Lucretius', which was probably the name of the Roman citizen who owned the land on which the *pagus* was settled. Nicolas Tran has suggested that at its start, the *pagus* was likely populated by peregrine families, whose access to Roman citizenship led to the settlement's incorporation into the Arlesian civic body; an incorporation effective under Antoninus Pius and which may have dated back to forty years before if we actually accept the idea that these *pagani* started to have free access to oil and to the bath dispensed in Arles (Tran, "*Coloni et incolae de Gaule méridionale*," p. 495-496; on the debate about the location of the bath in question see below).

The text of the inscription records that the *pagani* (inhabitants) of the *pagus Lucretius* set it up in order to honour and thank Quintus Cornelius Zosimus, a freedman, who had come to their assistance in settling a local dispute. Quintus Cornelius Zosimus had "pursued [an] injustice with the government of the province at his own expense" (*praesides provinciae perse/cutus est iniuriam nostram suis impensis*), he donated the same expenses to the *pagus* (*donavit nobis impendia quae fecit*), and even acted on behalf of the *pagus* in sending letters to Rome (*ter Romae / misit*) and notifying the emperor, Antoninus Pius, of the dispute (*notum fecit / iniuriam nostram ... Antonino Augusto Pio*) (for contrasted analysis of the text, see Gasco, "L'inscription de Saint-Jean-de-Garguier," p. 279-295; Christol, "Notes d'épigraphie," p. 85-102). The dispute appears to have centred on two rights of the



inhabitants of the *locus* Gargarius (a settlement within the *pagus Lucretius*) that had been recently denied. The first one is their right, recently denied to them, to use a bathhouse for free, whereas they had had free access to it for more than forty years (*frueremur / aquis et balineo gratuito quod ablatum erat paganis / quod usi fuerant amplius annis XXXX*). The second right is connected to another benefit granted to them, formulated in the lacuna of line 12 and which has been usually restored as *aquis*. Michel Christol has convincingly proposed to fill the lacuna of line 12 with another term, *oleo*. Thus, the inhabitants of the *locus* Gargarius would have also been denied another advantage that had been previously granted to them, that of using free oil in this bath (see Christol, "Notes d'Épigraphie," p. 91-95).

The location of the bathhouse in question has been debated, yet it is very important to fully understand the reasons of the complaints of the *pagani*. Following a traditional interpretation, Jean Gascoü has suggested that the inscription referred to a local bathhouse (Gascoü, "L'inscription de Saint-Jean-de-Garguier," p. 290-292). In a different perspective, François Jacques and Michel Christol have brought relevant arguments which suggest that the bathhouse in question must have been rather located in the chef-lieu of the colony, that is Arles (see Jacques, *Les cités*, p. 64; Christol, "Notes d'Épigraphie," p. 85-102). If the bathhouse in question was actually located at Arles, it can be deduced that the colony of Arles may have benefitted from one or various foundations (that is euergetic donations that were characterised by the fact that they were vowed to be repeated and to last perpetually for a long period of time) that forecasted that, in some uncertain circumstances probably connected to festivals, the access to the public baths of the colony was free and the oil furnished at this occasion would be furnished by some donators. The *pagani* living in the *pagus Lucretius* may have benefitted for forty years of this free access for the bathhouse of their colonial centre, when they were present at Arles for some special occasions, as for instance for festivals (see Christol, "Notes d'Épigraphie," p. 95). It is easy to imagine that when this right had been denied to them, they must have experienced this decision as the proof that they were relegated out of the Arlesian community; they were denied the right to be considered as real *coloni* of Arles, being thus reduced to rural inhabitants of the colony of an inferior rank (Jacques, *Les cités*, p. 64).

The *pagani* had enlisted the help of a prominent citizen from the more important *colonia* of Arles, who owned lands in the *pagus* (see Jacques, *Les cités*, p. 64; Christol, "Notes d'Épigraphie," p. 100), in order to add strength to their claim. Quintus Cornelius Zosimus had clearly acted generously as the patron of this cause, first pursuing it himself with the local administration before taking the dispute to Rome where he petitioned for them with the emperor. The most interesting aspect of this inscription is the extent to which it shows that the *pagani* shared a sense of law and common self-interest with the communities that surrounded them. By appealing to Quintus Cornelius Zosimus for help, they demonstrated the extent of their common culture and social system; Zosimus must have had interests and networks in the *pagi*, and he may have been a prominent citizen in the prestigious *colonia* of Arles, but his community shared the same communal interests and rights (see Christol, "Notes d'épigraphie 7-8," p. 99-100). The insistence on the right to bath free of charge shows that both communities saw bathing as essential to civilised living, and one that should be defended. It should be noted that Gargarius appears to have been the administrative centre of the *pagus Lucretius*; the archaeological remains suggest that it was a prosperous village, which was therefore potentially closer to the 'centre', in terms of ideology and culture, than more rural areas (Benoit, "Informations archéologiques," p. 695). The notion of imperial justice was also clearly engrained in the cultural conscience of the *pagus*; an appeal had been made to a high-ranking figure, who had in turn taken the dispute to the highest level, in a further example of the Roman emperor's role as the supreme judiciary figure and patron. The role of the emperor in dispensing judgement like this is well attested, but in this inscription we are presented with the additional layer of civic process; Quintus Cornelius Zosimus had approached the local administration (*praesides provinciae*) first, who had failed to resolve the issue, leading him to take the dispute to the central administration in Rome.

Finally, the inscription offers a useful insight into the reality of the different statuses of settlements in Roman provinces, and how these were exploited to further the spread of Roman influence. The administrative territory of Arles is a particularly complicated case, owing to its size and the extremely rural nature of some of its districts. Michel Tarpin identified a total of twenty different *pagi* in the region from epigraphic evidence alone, concluding that each designation essentially represented a "Celtic reality" within an Italian context (Tarpin, *Vici et pagi*, p. 33-34). They were instituted to create hierarchies between the different Gallic tribes without relying on their population size, which could then be manipulated politically to suit Rome's purposes (*ibid*, p. 219). However, as more and more of the *pagani* came into contact with Roman citizenship, the *pagus* began to evolve, until the various 'benefits' of Rome were fully integrated to the community, as demonstrated by this inscription.

Keywords in the original language:



- [paganus](#) [3]
- [pagus](#) [4]
- [fines](#) [5]
- [colonia](#) [6]
- [Gargarius](#) [7]
- [honor](#) [8]
- [iniuria](#) [9]
- [saeculum](#) [10]
- [Antoninus Pius](#) [11]
- [provincia](#) [12]
- [impensa](#) [13]
- [beneficium](#) [14]
- [dono](#) [15]
- [aqua](#) [16]
- [balineum](#) [17]
- [gratuitus](#) [18]

Thematic keywords:

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- [colony](#) [20]
- [Arles](#) [21]
- [Narbonne](#) [22]
- [rural community](#) [23]
- [baths](#) [24]
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- [appeal](#) [26]
- [Roman citizenship](#) [27]
- [Roman law](#) [28]
- [imperial justice](#) [29]
- [provincial elites](#) [30]

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