Abstract: The epigraphic abbreviation MAG, when referring to the secular leaders of gentes and unprivileged towns, has been inconsistently interpreted by various authors as mag(ister), mag(istratus) or mag(isterium). A study of the meaning and usage of the terms magistri and magistratus suggests that the officials of vici, pagi and castella were called magistri, while those of gentes and unprivileged towns (oppida, civitates) were known as magistratus. This finding provides reliable criteria for determining the meaning of MAG in particular cases.

Keywords: castella, élites, magistrates, oppida, pagi, peregrine towns, vici.

Resumen: La abreviatura epigráfica MAG, cuando se refiere a los líderes políticos de gentes y de comunidades no privilegiadas, ha sido interpretada de manera inconsecuente como mag(ister), mag(istratus) o mag(isterium) por varios autores. Un estudio del uso y de la significación de los términos magistri y magistratus concluye que los responsables de vici, pagi y castella se llamaban magistri, mientras que los dirigentes de gentes y de comunidades no privilegiadas (oppida, civitates) se llamaban magistratus. Este resultado proporciona criterios fiables para establecer la significación de MAG en determinados casos.

Palabras clave: castella, comunidades peregrinas, élites, magistrados, oppida, pagi, vici.

Anyone who studies the Latin epigraphy of Hispania will be familiar with the problem of the ambiguous abbreviation MAG, which can mean either magister or magistratus. In a phrase such as “per mag.” or “mag. Ilvir”, which is the correct solution? Too often this question has been decided arbitrarily by educated guess or an editor’s opinion, rather on sound principles. In some cases, scholars have disagreed as to the meaning of this abbreviation in a particular inscription. In others, the published expansion is couched in a query such as “mag(istrum?)” or “mag(istratus?)”.

1 According to the list of epigraphical abbreviations on the website of the American Society of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (http://classics.case.edu/asgle/bookshelf/abbreviations-in-latin-inscriptions/), MAG can stand for mag(ister), mag(isterii), mag(isterio), mag(isterium), mag(istrum), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istratus), mag(istrats)
indicating that the editor is not really certain. In one inscription, from Idanha-a-Velha (discussed below), various authors have proposed four possible solutions for MAG. While in recent years there has been an increasing tendency to interpret the MAG officials as “mag(istratus)”, a considerable number of scholars still see them as “mag(istri)”. Moreover, there are circumstances in which the interpretation “mag(istratus)” is not appropriate. The purpose of this article is to establish the difference between magistri and magistratus, and to provide a basis for deciding which expansion of MAG is appropriate in particular cases.

1. MAG: Inventory and Previous Interpretations

The abbreviation MAG, referring to civic officials, occurs on inscriptions in stone or bronze dating from the Augustan era to the end of the first century A.D. Oddly, there are no examples of magistri or magistratus in Hispano-Latin coin legends. In this section we list 14 inscriptions in which local officials are designated as MAG. Most of these refer clearly to non-religious office holders, although four of the inscriptions are votive, and in a few of these cases it is unclear whether MAG is a magistrate or a cult official.

1.1. Provincia Lusitania


b) Álvega (Aritium Vetus); A.D. 37. CIL II, 172 = ILS 190: Oath of allegiance to the emperor Gaius, dated by the Roman consuls and by MAG | Vegeto Taltici f., V[ibio] [Marioned]s f.]. On this inscription, Hübner commented “Magistri duo fuerunt”, thereby implying that MAG should be expanded “mag(istris)”, a reading adopted by ILS. D’Ors (1953, 21) supplied “mag(istratibus)”. The equivocal reading “mag(istris vel istratibus)” offered by Encarnação (1984, nº. 647) has been retained by Rosado Martín (2010, 343), although Encarnação himself subsequently opted for “mag(istris)” (Encarnação 2007, 357). Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 nº. 12) and Melchor Gil (2013, 146 nº. 28) regard Vegetus and Vibius as magistratus. Aritium Vetus at this time had the status of oppidum (“in Aritiense oppido vetere”, according to the same inscription).

c) Idanha-a-Velha (civitas Igaeditanorum); 16 B.C. HAE 1063 = AE 1967, 144 = AE 1992, 951 = HEp 2, 770: Commemoration of the donation of a sundial (horologium) by Q. Iallius of

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2 Des Boscs 2005, 202 nº. 16, assumes that Fidius Macer was magister of some religious college. He could have been magister of the cult of Trebaruna. However, given the Flavian date and his subsequent career, it is more probable that MAG refers to a civic office which Macer held prior to Capera becoming a municipium.
Emerita, per MAG | Toutoni Arci f. | Malgeini Manli f. | Celti Arantoni f. | Ammini Ati f. Almeida (1956, 140), Lambrino (1956, 18) and Mantas (1988, 421-422) construed MAG as “mag(istros)”. However, the editors of AE 1967 felt that the genitives following MAG demanded a development “mag(isterium)” or “mag(istratum)”, and so printed “mag(isterium?)”, a reading later adopted by Bonnin (2010, 186). Étienne (1992, 356-357) read “mag(istros)” but expanded the personal names as accusatives “Toutoni(um)”, “Malgeini(um)”, and so on. Ferrer Maestro (1991, 110) considered that the magistri in this inscription were the artificers who produced the sundial for the donor. However, Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 n. 12), Melchor Gil (2011, 156), Pérez Zurita (2011, 209) and Ortiz de Urbina (2013, 291) interpreted these same men as magistratus.

Encarnação (2013a, 213; 2013b, 127) has defended the reading “per mag(istros)”, arguing that the magistri who accept the donation are representatives of four gentilitates, and that the personal names in the genitive are not the names of the magistri (who, being merely representatives, remain anonymous) but the names of the eponymous ancestors of each gentilitas (e.g. the gentilitas of Toutonus son of Arcus). By contrast, Castillo (2013, 300) suggests that “per” may not be a preposition but an abbreviation, and that we should understand “per(missu) m(agistratuum)”. The town of the Igaeditani, possibly named among the Lusitanian municipia in a Trajanic inscription from the Alcántara bridge (CIL II, 760 = ILS 287)3 was still an unprivileged civitas in the time of Augustus (AE 1961, 350). Numerous inscriptions mentioning the tribe Quirina show that it received Latin rights under the Flavians (Wiegels 1985, 80).

1.2. Provincia Baetica4

a) Villanueva del Río y Minas (Munigua); early first century A.D.5. HAE 1922 = AE 1962, 287 = CILA 2/4, 1053: Tabula hospitalis of Sex. Curvius Silvinus, quaestor pro praetore, with the senatus populusque Muniguensis, concluding: egerunt | L. Lucceius L. f. MAG | leg(atus) L. Octavius M. f. Silvanus. Nesselhauf (1960, 146) considered “mag(istratus)” likelier than “mag(ister)”, while Galsterer (1971, 42) suggested “Mag(nus)”, construing “leg(ati)” as referring to both men. D’Ors (1961, 203), González Fernández (1990, no. 20), Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 n. 12), González Román (2002-2003, 91), Balbín Chamorro (2006, no. 72), Melchor Gil (2013, 147), Dopico Caínzos and Santos Yanguas (2013, 177 n. 21) all support “mag(istratus)”. Munigua, amply attested as a Flavian municipium, would still have been an unprivileged town at the time of this inscription.

b) Cauche el Viejo (Aratispi); A.D. 38. CIL II/5, 732 = AE 1994, 923 = HEP 6, 647: Tabula hospitalis between Q. Lucius Fenestella and the senatus populusque civitatis Aratispitanana, concluding: egit | P. Vibius Rufinus MAG. Corell Badía and Corell i Vicent (1994) read “mag(istratus)”, followed by Balbín Chamorro (2006, n. 73), Dopico Caínzos and Santos

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4 I exclude the oath of loyalty to Augustus from Las Cabezas de San Juan (Conobaria) (AE 1988, 723 = HEP 2, 623, HEP 5, 694 = CILA 2/3, 990), issued by T. Quinctius T. f. Silo, P. [--- MAG ---] senatus et populus Conobarianum, since the reading MAG here is only conjectural.

5 D’Ors 1961, 206-207, dated this inscription to A.D. 5/6, on the basis of its similarity to CIL II 1343 = ILS 6097 (from Lacilbula, A.D. 5) and AE 1952, 49 (from Emerita, A.D. 6). Nesselhauf (1960, 148) placed it between 27 B.C. and A.D. 40, while Alföldy 1969, 182-183, dated it to Augustus or Tiberius. On the career of Sex. Curvius Silvinus, see Schäfer 2000, 91.
Yanguas (2013, 177 n. 22). CIL prints “mag(istratus?)”, noting that one could equally understand “mag(ister)”.  

C) Bienvenida (Sisapo); first century A.D. AE 1991, 956 = HÉp 1, 81: Dona(e) [A]ttae(na)e | [T]uubriga(e) | [cul]tirius suis | collectis | MA(G) f(ecerunt?) | s(---). For MA in the penultimate line, López Melero (1986) suggested, among other possibilities, “ma(gistri)”, a proposal adopted by AE and HÉp. While the inscription is clearly dedicated (with some variation in spelling) to the amply attested deity Ataecina of Turobriga, it is unclear whether the MA(G) are magistri of the cult, or magistrates of Sisapo. Pliny (NH 3,14) lists Sisapo as an oppidum.

1.3. Provincia Tarraconensis

a) O Courel (also spelled Caurel), Lugo; A.D. 28. HAE 1965 = AE 1961, 96 = AE 2000, 748: Tabula hospitalis between Tillegus Ambati f. Susarrus of the castellum Aiobrigaecum and the Lougei castellani Toletenses, enacted by Tillegus Ambati ipse | MAG Latino Ari (f.) et Aio Temari (f.). Arias Vilas et al. (1979, n°. 55), Zeidler (2007, 45) and Gómez Vila (2009, n°. 18) read “mag(istris)”. However, D’Ors (1960, 144) and Rodríguez Neila (1995, 236 n. 12) believed these officials were magistratus. Balbín Chamorro (2006, n°. 50), Martínez Melón (2006, 124 n. 138), Dópico Caínzos and Santos Yanguas (2013, 176 n. 17) likewise read “mag(istratibus)”, while García Martínez (1997, 43) lists both possibilities.

b) La Milla del Río, León; first century A.D. CIL II, 2636 = ILS 4509: Deo | Vagodonnaego (or Vago Donnaego) | sacrum res p(ublica) | Ast(urica) Aug(usta) | per MAG G(aium) Pacatum | et Fl(avium) Proculum | ex donis || curante Iulio Nepote. CIL, followed by Diego Santos (1986, n°. 63) and Hernández Guerra (2008, 418 n. 53), expanded “mag(istros)”. Fernández Aller (1978, n°. 14), followed by Mañanes Pérez (1982, n°. 108), Wiegels (1985, 93), Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 n. 12) and González Rodríguez (2014, 210) read “mag(istratus)” (cf., ineptly, “mag(istratos)” in Rabanal Alonso 1998, 118). According to Reid (1913, 236), magistri is a title of the chief magistrates, indicating that Asturica was at first organized as a native rather than Roman town. Similarly, Olivares Pedreño (2002, 102; 2002-2003, 214) read “mag(istros)” but believed they were magistrates. On the contrary, Pastor Muñoz (1977, 172), followed by Curchin (1990, 239-240), considered it likely that magistri referred to a religious college of Asturica. Mangas (1997, 194) saw them as officials in charge of cult places, citing Lex Ursonensis chapter 128, which provides that the duovirs, aediles or prefects will arrange for the appointment of “mag(istrus) ad fana, templa, delubra” (CIL II/5, 1022 = ILS 6087). However, it does not follow that the religious institutions in a Roman colony like Urso would necessarily be found in the towns of Asturica. Also, although several magistri fani are attested in central Italy, our inscription says only MAG, not MAG fani. Two magistri collegi(i) are named on another inscription of Asturica (AE 1928, 167).
though without indication of the nature of the *collegium*. The *MAG* inscription was carved on four marble plaques found in 1816 at La Milla del Río (about 20 km north-east of Astorga), a site with mosaics and remains of buildings, but there is nothing (apart from the inscription itself) to suggest that it may have been a *fanum, templum* or *delubrum*. It may have been a Roman villa (Tranoy 1981, 299). Pliny (*NH* 3,28) describes *Asturica Augusta* as *urbs magnifica*, which gives no clearer indication of its juridical status than the ambiguous term *res publica* in this inscription. Several inscriptions mentioning the tribe Quirina suggest that the city was a Flavian *municipium* (Wiegels 1985, 92).


d) Paredes de Nava, Palencia; 2 B.C. *Eph. Epig.* I (1872), 141 = *CIL* II, 5763 = *ILS* 6096: *Tessera hospitalis* between Acces Licirni (f.) of *Intercatia* with the *civitas Palantina*, *per MAG Elaisicum*. Emil Hübner in *Eph. Epig.* expanded *MAG* as “mag(istratum)”, but in *CIL* changed it to “mag(istrum)”, explaining that the *hospitium* was enacted “*per magistrum sive magistratum*”. The fact that “magistratum” is not in italics signifies that it is Hübner’s explanation of *magistrum* rather than an alternative expansion of the abbreviation. More recently, D’ors (1953, 369), Solana Sainz (1981, 39 n. 48), Hernández Guerra (1994, no. 112), Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 n. 12), Beltrán Lloris (2001, 43), Balbín Chamorro (2006, no. 51), Pérez Zurita (2011, 209), Dopico Caínzos and Santos Yanguas (2013, 172 n. 2) read *mag(istratum).* Palantia eventually received municipal status under Vespasian, as disclosed by the tribe Quirina (Wiegels 1985, 127).

e) Peñalba de Castro (*Clunia*); early first century A.D. 11. *CIL* II, 2782 = *Clunia II*, 28: *C. Calvisio Aiionis f. Gal(eria) | Sabino MAG, flamini Romae | et divi Augusti*. Calvisius was “mag(istro)” according to Hübner, followed by Palol and Vilella (1987, no. 28), but *magister* of what? There is no attestation anywhere in the Empire of a *magister Romae et Augusti*. The balance of probability is that Calvisius is a local magistrate; thus Gómez-Pantoja (2003, 254) reads “mag(istratus)”. Mention of the tribe Galeria, together with indication of his father’s indigenous name, shows that C. Calvisius Sabinus, who is also honoured in a first-century inscription at *Uxama* (*CIL* II, 2822), acquired Roman citizenship in the Julio-Claudian period. *Clunia* may have received municipal status under Tiberius (Galsterer 1971, 35), since local coinage under that emperor designates *IIIi viri* and *aediles*, or possibly under Augustus (Wiegels 1985, 162). Perhaps significantly, it was not until late in the reign of Tiberius that a road was built linking *Clunia* to *Caesaraugusta*12. In any event, the title *flamen Romae et divi Augusti* cannot be earlier than Tiberius, though it is possible that the office of *MAG* was held earlier.

10 To the two examples cited by Wiegels, add “C. Antonio Calaedii f. Q(uirina) Festo” (*AE* 1987, 615a = *HEp* 2, 607).

11 Reign of Tiberius, according to Étienne 1958, 205 and Gómez Pantoja 2003, 252.

12 Three milestones in Soria province attest construction of this road in A.D. 33/34 (Lostal Pros 1992, 42-44 and Mapa 3).
f) Arellano, Navarra; mid-first century A.D. *AE* 1951, 281: Altar with metric inscription recording successful completion of a vow to Iuppiter Appennis during a trip to Rome by one *Flavus MAG victor et laetus*. Navascués (1934, 193-195) interpreted *MAG* as the cognomen “Mag(ilo?)”, followed by Mariner (1952, 213-214), Castillo *et al.* (1981, n. 18) and Cugusi (1985, 20). However, Mayer and Velaza propose reading “Flavus mag(istratus)”, explaining that the inscription alludes to «una legatio por cualquier motivo realizado por un comisionado de una comunidad» (Mayer and Velaza 1994, 521). While it is not known to which community Flavus might have belonged, the likeliest candidate is *Curnonium*13, plausibly identified with the 25-hectare archaeological site of El Castillo at Los Arcos, 11 km south-west of Arellano14. It should be noted that there were no privileged towns in Navarra in the mid-first century15.

g) Alcalá de Henares (*Complutum*); late first century A.D. *CIL* II, 2033: Cn. Nonio fil. | Quir(ina) Crescent[i] | *MAG*, flamin[i] | *Romae et Aug(usti) | d(ecreto) d(ecurionum). González-Conde (1985, 135), Knapp (1992, n. 120), Ruiz Traperó (2001, n. 14) and Royo Martínez (2010, 380 n. 6) all read “mag(istro)”. The tribe Quirina reflects the status of *Complutum* as a Flavian *municipium*. As in the inscription from *Clunia* discussed above, we have the formula *MAG*, flamin *Romae et Augusti*. According to G. Alföldy, it is unlikely that *MAG* indicates the magistr of a collegium. Therefore, he argues, since the title *magister* is inappropriate to a *municipium*, either Nonius was *magister* of a *vicus* in the territory of *Complutum*, or he was *magister* at *Complutum* before it became a *municipium*, and *flamen* afterward (Alföldy 1987b, 63). While Alföldy does not consider the possibility that *MAG* represents “mag(istratui)”, Rodríguez Neila (1995, 263 n. 12), Andreu Pintado (2003, 170) and Melchior Gil (2011, 157) all accept the identification of Cn. Nonius Crescens as a *mag(istratus)*.

h) Caracuel de Calatrava (*Carcuvium*); first century A.D. *AE* 1987, 686 = *HEp* 2, 280: [*---* | *M. C*[---] | Gal(eria) Flavu[s] | *M. Valeriu[s] Proculus | *MAG* II. According to Alföldy (1987, 236-237), *Carcuvium*, a *mansio* known from the Antonine Itinerary (*IA* 445,1), would have been a *vicus* in the territory of *Oretum*. Therefore the two named men would be *magistri vici*. One of them belongs to the tribe Galeria, assigned to persons receiving Roman citizenship under the Julio-Claudians.

2. **Magistri**

The term *magister* (apart from *magistri grammatici*)16 most often refers to an official of a religious college, such as the *magistri Larum (Augustales)*17 or, at Saguntum, the *magistri Saliorum*18. Not infrequently, *magistri* were also *seviri Augustales*19. The presence of *magistri* in some other cults may be suspected, for instance in the dedication to (Sol) Deus Invictus by Messius Artemidorus,

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13 Ptol. 2,6,66; *CIL* XIII, 621, Bordeaux (*Curnoniensi*); cf. *HEp* 7, 479, Tafalla (*Cur(noniensi)*).  
14 Armendáriz Martija 2006; cf. Ramírez Sádaba 2006, 191 and Mapa n.° 4, who places Arellano in the territory of *Curnonium*.  
15 Pliny (*NH* 3,24), writing in the time of Vespasian but using earlier sources, lists the *Andelonenses, Carenses* and *Pompeolenses as populi stipendarii*. *Pompeyo* was still a *civitas* in A.D. 57 (*CIL* II, 2958 = *ILS* 6104).  
16 *CIL* II²/7, 336; *CIL* II²/14, 377, 1282.  
17 Baetica: *CIL* II, 1133; *CIL* II²/5, 773; *CIL* II²/7, 204, 323, 324, 327; *HEp* 9, 508. Tarraconensis: *CIL* II, 3113; *CIL* II²/14, 1242, 1247, 1251, 1253, 1261, 1262, 1264, 1266, 1267; *HEp* 10, 292.  
18 *CIL* II²/14, 349, 364, 365, 690. On the role of the *magister* as president of the college of *Salii*, see Delgado Delgado 2014, 159.  
19 *CIL* II²/14, 1242, 1243, 1251, 1253, 1256, 1259, 1261, 1263, 1266, 1267.
magister (AE 1984, 465). There are also inscriptions in which an individual is designated magister collegii (referring to either a religious, professional or funerary association) or simply magister; in nearly all cases this involves a slave or freedman20.

Magistri can also appear in a civil context, denoting the officials in charge of a vicus or pagus21. These types of settlement, because of their small size and consequent lack of dignitas, were not autonomous entities but were rather attached to larger civitates22. Consequently, their officials lacked the dignitas of magistrates, and were instead known as magistri. This would explain the title MAG in the inscription from Carcuvium (vicus). A bronze decree of Hadrianic date from Ágón (Zaragoza) prescribing irrigation regulations for several pagi (pagus Gallorum, pagus Belsinonensis, pagus Segardinensis) in the territories of Caesaraugusta and Cassantum, contains both the abbreviated phrase MAG pagi and full mention of magistri pagi23. At Garlitos (Mirobriga) in the late first or early second century we have explicit mention of two magistri pagi. Later in this article it will be argued that castella also had magistri, a fact with possible implications for the O Courel inscription.

The abbreviation MAG for magister in these contexts poses no problem. The difficulty arises when MAG refers to the officials of a peregrine community (such as a gens, civitas or oppidum stipendiarium)25. Much of the confusion is due to Emil Hübner, editor of CIL II, who seems to have subscribed to the belief that unprivileged political entities did not have magistratus. Despite the explicit mention of magistratus Zoelarium on a tabula hospitalis from Astorga with consular dating of A.D. 27 (see below), Hübner insisted on expanding MAG as mag(istri) in the inscriptions from Aritium Vetus, La Millà del Río, and Paredes de Nava. His auctoritas undoubtedly inspired later investigators to interpret MAG, referring to civil officials, as mag(i stri) in other inscriptions discovered subsequently.

3. MAGISTRATVS

Apart from mentions of magistratus in colonial and municipal laws (such as the Lex Uronensis and Lex Irnitana) and on the Tabula Siarensis26, where the word is used as a generic term embracing the duovirs, aediles and, where applicable, questors of privileged cities, several literary

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21 Magistri vici are mostly found in neighbourhoods of cities like Rome and Pompeii, but occasionally in provincial villages, such as the magistri vici Eburomagi in Narbonensis (AE 1969/70, 388) and a magister vici Bodattii in Belgica (CIL XIII, 4310). Magistri pagi, by contrast, are widely attested. Cf. Tarpín 2001, 278-281 (magistri vici), 287-289 (magistri pagi).

22 “Vici, castella et pagi hi sunt qui nulla dignitate civitatis ornantur sed … propter paravitatem sui maioribus civitatis attribuuntur” (Isid. Etym. 15,2,11).


25 The bizarre notion of A.M. Canto 1996, 318, that Pliny’s oppida stipendia were not “unprivileged” or “peregrine” towns but rather municipia which had recently received Latin status under Vespasian, has been convincingly refuted by García Fernández 2000.

and epigraphic sources provide explicit evidence for unprivileged towns or peoples of Hispania having magistratus:

a) In 49 B.C., Caesar summoned the magistratus principesque omnium civitatum of Hispania Ulterior to a meeting at Corduba (Caes. Bell. civ. 2,19). At this time, most of the towns in this province would have been peregrine.

b) Las Merchenas, Salamanca; Late Republic. HAE 1051 = CIL i2, 3466: Tes(s)era | Caurie(n) sis | magistratu | Turi. While previous editors (Alonso Ávila and Crespo Ortiz 1999, n°. 184; Hernández Guerra 2001, n°. 195) understood “magistratu Turi(ō)” “when Turius was magistrate”, it is possible to construe magistratu Turi as “during the magistracy of Turos” (so Balbín Chamorro 2006, no. 28). Alternatively, Turi might be a toponym, cognate with Turiaso, Turibriga and the river Turia (cf. Abascal 1995, 100). Caurium, modern Coria, is listed as a stipendiary town in Pliny, NH 4,118.

c) Astorga (Asturica Augusta); A.D. 27. CIL II, 2633 = ILS 6101: Renewal of hospitium between two gentilitates of the gens Zoelarum, enacted per Abienum Pentili magistratum Zoelarum. Both the magistrate of the Zoelae and the six men who conclude the agreement have peregrine names. The Zoelae are listed by Pliny (NH 3,28) as one of the 22 populi of the Astures, together with the Gigurri, who are called gens on the El Bierzo decree (gente Gigurrorum: HÆp 7, 378 = AE 2000, 760). Pliny later (NH 19,10) refers to the Zoelae as a civitas of Gallaecia. The near-synonymous terms populus and gens refer to a suprafamilial group occupying a particular district, with a town (oppidum) or place of assembly (forum, e.g. Forum Gigurrorum: Ptol. 2,6,37; Rav. 320,8) at their centre. The Zoelae eventually had their own senate, the ordo Zoelar(um) (CIL II, 2606). The word civitas is more ambiguous, referring to anything from an unurbanized tribal district to a city-state (Mangas 2000, 57-58). A parallel for the magistratus Zoelarum as official in charge of a gens, populus or civitas is afforded by “Flav(u)s Vihirmatis fil(ius) summus magistratus civitatis Batavorum” in Germania Inferior in the first half of the first century A.D. (CIL XIII, 8771). The Batavi are listed by Pliny (NH 4,106) and Tacitus (Germ. 1,29) as one of the gentes of Germania.

d) Botorrita (Contrebia Belaisca), 87 B.C. Tabula Contrebiensis (AE 1979, 377 = HÆp 5, 914): This famous inscription records a judgement (sententia) by the senate of Contrebia, with the approval of the provincial governor, concerning the right of the Sosinestani to sell land to the Salluienses, and of the latter to dig a canal. The magistratus Contrebienses who witness the decision consist of one praetor and five others who are simply styled magistratus.

Inscriptions from Africa provide explicit evidence for magistratus as the title of civic magistrates in peregrine towns: C. Arruntius Faustus Arrunti Proculi f., magistratus of the res publica Silensis in Numidia (CIL VIII, 5884 = ILS 3906 = ILAG. II, 6865); P. Ligarius Potitus Ligari Maximi f., decurion and magistratus annualis of the civitas Goritana in Africa Proconsularis (CIL VIII, 12421 = ILS 5071); P. Cornelius Viator and Iustus Bithes, magistratus of the civitas Sivalitana in the same province (AE 1996, 1706). As Tissot (1883, 216-218) pointed out long ago with reference to the first two examples, the term magistratus designated the officials of a unit that was superior to a pagus but inferior to a municipium; in other words, an unprivileged town.

27 Although civitas theoretically denotes a political entity while gens and populus refer to social groups, the Romans applied these terms unsystematically to indigenous organizational units, often referring to the same people by all three terms (see Rodríguez Álvarez 1993, 456 with n. 19-21). On the distinction between gens and civitas Zoelarum, see González Rodríguez 1994, 162-163; González Rodríguez 2006, 70-71.
In section 1 we listed 14 inscriptions in which local officials are designated MAG. These officials occur sometimes individually (at Capera, Munigua, Aratissi, Palantia, Clunia and Complutum), sometimes in pairs (Aritium Vetus, Asturica and the castellum Toletensium). They number three at civitas Maggaviensium, and four at civitas Igaeditanorum. The contexts in which these officials are recorded include votive inscriptions (Capera, Sisapo, La Milla del Río, Arellano), honorific inscriptions (Clunia, Complutum), hospitality agreements (Munigua, Aratissi, the castellum Toletensium, Herrera de Pisuerga and Paredes de Nava), oath of loyalty to the emperor (Aritium Vetus), and donation of a sundial (civitas Igaeditanorum). Although many of the inscriptions come from Galicia or the northern Meseta, one can no longer subscribe to the view of Galsterer that mag(istri) or mag(istratus) are found only in the North-west, in what he calls “the still rather barbaric part of Tarraconensis”.28

While some scholars have advocated the reading “mag(istratus)” in these inscriptions, others have insisted on retaining the traditional reading “mag(istri)”. What particularly strikes the attentive observer who studies these inscriptions is the inconsistency of the approach: scholars have often been content to repeat the solution offered by their predecessors, which has become the communis opinio, even when it defies logic. Why, for instance, should the representatives of the Maggavienses in the inscription from Herrera de Pisuerga be universally accepted as mag(istratus), when the MAG officials of larger towns such as Clunia and Complutum have been identified by the majority of scholars as mag(istri)? While those who advocate the interpretation of MAG as mag(istratus) undoubtedly feel that their solution is the correct one, there are other recent scholars (e.g. Mantas 2000; Ruiz Trapero 2001; Salinas de Frías 2001; des Boscs-Plateaux 2005; Zeidler 2007; Encarnação 2007 and 2013a-b, Gómez 2009; Royo Martínez 2010) who do not share this view and who favour the expansion mag(istri) in some of these inscriptions. Of course, it is possible that MAG could mean mag(istratus) in some inscriptions and mag(istri) in others, but if so, we would need reliable criteria for deciding the correct solution in each case.

What these MAG inscriptions have in common is that they all refer to communities that, to the best of our knowledge, were unprivileged prior to the Flavian period. All except two of the inscriptions are probably pre-Flavian. The two Flavian examples, from Capera and Complutum, involve men who could have been MAG prior to the grant of municipal status by Vespasian, and certainly prior to the receipt of their city’s charter under Domitian. The four unabbreviated mentions of magistratus cited in section 3, as well as the African parallels, similarly refer to unprivileged communities.

The case of M. Fidius Macer of Capera is important, because after being MAG he was subsequently duovir. This suggests he served as magistrate when the town was still unprivileged; after it received Flavian grant of municipium, he held the duovirate, thereby receiving Roman citizenship per honorem.29 Cn. Nonius Crescens of Complutum also seems to have been MAG before the Flavian grant of municipium to his town, after which he became a priest of the imperial cult. The inscription of C. Calvisius Sabinus of Clunia cannot be earlier than the reign of Tiberius,

28 “handelt es sich immer um Inschriften aus dem nordwestlichen, im 1. Jh. noch ziemlich barbarischen Teil der Tarraconensis” (Galsterer 1971, 43 n. 48).
29 A possible parallel is provided by an inscription from Volubilis in Mauritania (AE 1916, 42 = AE 1992, 1943), concerning a Punic magistrate (sufes) who became duumvir and received Roman citizenship under the emperor Claudius when the city was made a municipium.
since he was priest of the deified Augustus, but his office of MAG presumably antedates the grant of municipal status to that town. Since Tiberian coins of Clunia were issued by IIIiviri and aediles, Calvisius Sabinus must have been MAG either in the earlier part of Tiberius’ reign, or else under Augustus. These three men (Fidius Macer, Nonius Crescens, Calvisius Salvinus) are the only MAG officials displaying a voting tribe, emblematic of Roman citizens. However, it is unclear how Nonius Crescens and Calvisius Sabinus received Roman citizenship. According to the Flavian Municipal Law (AE 1986, 333, chap. 21) citizenship was granted for holding a magistracy after the town became a municipium. There is no legal provision for citizenship grants to flamines, nor to those who had been local magistrates when the town was still peregrine. Nevertheless, these two individuals may have been recipients of viritim grants in recognition of their civic service. C. Calvisius Sabinus, for instance, was a noted benefactor who distributed grain to the people of Clunia when the price was high (“populo frumentum annona cara dedit”) and was also honoured by the decurions of Uxama “ob plurima in rem publicam merita” (CIL II, 2822).

Rodríguez Neila (1993, 387) explained the title magistratus as belonging to a town’s “pre-municipal” phase. Similarly, Melchor Gil (2011, 154) has proposed that the term magistratus was used to refer to those who held power in unprivileged communities, although these could also be known by indigenous titles. In view of the unprivileged status of the towns in the MAG inscriptions, as well as the explicit term magistratus in several other texts, these interpretations would serve to explain the MAG officials as magistratus. Obviously, the magistrates of peregrine communities could not legitimately call themselves duoviri or quattuorviri, as they had not yet received a grant of colonial or municipal status. For the civic officials of these towns, the more general term magistratus was appropriate. None the less, it is noteworthy that in several towns they are attested in pairs, and at civitas Igaeditanorum in fours, as if in emulation of duoviri and quattuorviri. The solution magistratus, a title appropriate to the civil officials of unprivileged towns, seems to fit most of our examples.

The position of magistratus in the local political hierarchy varied from place to place. Caesar, already cited, mentions magistratus principesque in all the civitates of Hispania Ulterior. In the Tabula Contrebiensis, the six local magistrates (all with indigenous names) comprise one praetor and five magistratus. This unusual number perhaps reflects a pre-Roman institutional structure, like the three magistrates of Maggavia(?) in the inscription from Herrera de Pisuerga. The office of praetor is attested at Saguntum in 219 B.C. (Livy 21,12,7), while a pair of praetors appear at Bocchoris in A.D. 6 (CIL II, 3695). In the hospitality tablet from Munigua, it is unclear whether the town is represented by one magistratus and one legatus, or whether the legatus (with the very Roman-looking name L. Octavius M. f. Silvanus) is the representative of the honorand, Sex. Curvius Silvinus.

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30 On the evidence for the Roman voting tribe (tribus) as an indicator of municipal promotion in the imperial period, see Le Roux 2010; Fasolini 2012.

31 It can be deduced from a famous letter of Vespasian in A.D. 77 (CIL II, 1423 = CIL II/5, 871 = ILS 6092), addressed to the quattuorviri and decurions of Sabora but published by the duoviri, that the title quattuorviri included both duovirs and aediles. This supposition is verified by the title IIIivir aedilicia potestate in an inscription from Gades (CIL II, 1728 = ILS 8131).

32 Possible pairs of praetors are named on coins of Calagurris and Celsa in the latter half of the first century B.C. (Curchin 1990, no. 523-524, 606-613), but it is unclear whether to read “pr(aetores) IIVIR(i)” or “pr(aefecti pro) IIIVIR(is)”. Both solutions pose problems: how could the coining magistrates be praetors and duovirs at the same time? Or why have both duovirs been replaced by prefects?
In a few instances we find the prepositional phrase “per MAG”. At Pisoraca, where this is followed by three names, we should understand “per mag(istratus)”. In the inscription from Paredes de Nava, where it is followed by a single name, “per mag(istratum)”. The example from the civitas Igaeditanorum is more complicated because “per MAG” appears to be followed by four genitives. While I am convinced that we are dealing here with magistratus, not magistri, and that “per” is a preposition rather than an abbreviation for “per(missu)”, it remains doubtful whether to read “per mag(istratum) Toutoni, etc.”, understanding “mag(istratum)” in the sense of “magistracy”, or “per mag(istratum) Toutoni(um), etc.”, expanding the genitives into accusatives. However, the wording “per magistratum + genitive” is awkward and does not appear in inscriptions anywhere in the Empire. And while the name Celtius is amply attested, we have epigraphical evidence in Lusitania for the nominative forms Toutonus, Malgeinus and Amminus (never Toutonius, Malgeinius, Amminius, though the genitives Toutoni, Malgeini, Ammini are ambivalent); so the accusatives would not be Toutonium, etc. but Toutonum, Malgeinum, Amminum. In place of the existing hypotheses, I would suggest that the drafter of this inscription was not entirely fluent in Latin and inadvertently used the wrong grammatical case (genitive instead of accusative) after “per”. Therefore, using the standard epigraphical convention for correction of letters inscribed erroneously, we should read: “per mag(istratus) Touton<um> arci f., Malgein<um> Manli f., Celti<um> arantoni f., Ammin<um> ati f.”.

Mentions of MAG in the votive inscriptions from Sisapo and La Milla del Río are more ambiguous, since they could be either magistri or magistratus. The altar from Sisapo dedicated to the indigenous goddess Attaegina Turubriga by two MA(G) might certainly refer to magistri of her cult rather than to local magistrates. In the inscription from La Milla del Río, considering that the officials who act on behalf of the res publica Asturica Augusta make a dedication to the indigenous god Vagodonnaegus, and that the inscription was found in a rural setting some distance from the town, it could be argued that they are magistri of the god’s cult. However, just as religion in Latin municipalities was the responsibility of the duovirs, so in peregrine communities—particularly if they were endeavouring to emulate the institutional models of privileged towns—religion may well have been the responsibility of their counterparts, the magistratus. The mention of “ex donis” in the La Milla del Río inscription suggests that the dedication may be the result of a public subscription by the inhabitants of Asturica Augusta (en las comunidades latinas ... los responsables de la religión municipal fueron los duumviri). However, just as religion in Latin municipalities was the responsibility of the duovirs, so in peregrine communities—particularly if they were endeavouring to emulate the institutional models of privileged towns—religion may well have been the responsibility of their counterparts, the magistratus. The mention of “ex donis” in the La Milla del Río inscription suggests that the dedication may be the result of a public subscription by the inhabitants of Asturica Augusta (es incontestable el carácter público y oficial de la dedicación al dios Vago Donnaego por parte de la ciudad de Asturia Augusta a través de sus magistrados). In support of this hypothesis, it can be argued that the magistri of an indigenous deity would not likely wield sufficient authority to act as official representatives of a res publica.

A special problem is posed by the tabula hospitalis from O Courel, issued by the Lougei castellani Toletenses (“the Lougei of the castellum of the Toletenses”, or “the castellani Toletenses


34 Vallejo Ruiz 2005, 132 and Grupo Mérida 2003, 84 list a nominative Amminus, but the only evidence they cite is the MAG inscription from Idanha-a-Velha.

35 “[E]n las comunidades latinas ... los responsables de la religión municipal fueron los duumviri” (Le Roux 2009, 278).

36 “es incontestable el carácter público y oficial de la dedicación al dios Vago Donnaego por parte de la ciudad de Asturia Augusta a través de sus magistrados” (González Rodríguez 2014, 212).
belonging to the Lougei”)37. The Lougei, in whose territory this castellum was located, were an ethnic subdivision of the Astures, attested as civitas Lougeberorum on a tabula hospitalis of A.D. 1 (AE 1984, 553 = HEP 1, 458). The document from O Courel is signed by two MAG officials, Latinus Ari f. and Aius Temari f. Are these men “the magistrates of the Lougei castellani Toletenses” (Salinas 2013, 27), or are they magistrates of the civitas Lougeberorum who act as guarantors of the transaction (Beltrán Lloris 2003, 45-46)? Scholars have equivocated on this question. Balbín Chamorro (2006, 144) says these magistrates are “quizás ... ájenos ... [a] los castellani toletenses”. Rodríguez Colmenero (1996, 175 and n. 280) asserts that they are magistrates of the castellum, the counterparts of magistri pagi, unless they are magistrates of the civitas Lougeberorum38. Melchor Gil (2011, 156) calls them “magistrados ¿de los lougei?”. Dopico Caínzos and Santos Yanguas (2013, 185) describe them as “los principales de la comunidad”: but of which community, the civitas or the castellum39. The unfortunate truth is, we cannot know for certain. If these MAG officials are representatives of the civitas Lougeberorum, they should be magistratus, just like those of the Zoelae40.

If, however, the MAG officials on the O Courel tablet are representatives of the castellum, a different solution is in order. Since most towns of pre-Roman origin were situated on hilltops and would have been protected by circuit walls, the basic difference between a castellum, or fortified hilltop settlement, and an oppidum was one of size. There is no way that the castellum Toletensium can be compared with substantial towns like Munigua or Asturica Augusta. Castella were not independent towns with magistrates, but were part of a gens or civitas whose political hierarchy (to judge from the surviving evidence) probably consisted of a princeps41 and magistratus. A castellum is more closely comparable to a vicus; indeed, some inscriptions refer to the inhabitants of castella as vicani (never oppidani)42. It is therefore to be expected that castella, like vici and pagi, would have had magistri. An example is provided by the mag(ister) castelli Phuensium in Numidia (CIL VIII, 6292, 19281 = ILAlg. II, 8962, 8956)43. Although some African castella became sufficiently large or important by the Late Empire to assume the title of res publica44, this phenomenon is not attested in Hispania. Thus, if the MAG officials in the inscription from O Courel are representatives of the castellum Toletensium, they should probably be seen as mag(istri).

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37. Cf. “los Lougeis del castello Toletense” (Santos Yanguas 1985, 19); “los castellani Toletenses pertenecientes al pueblo de los Lougei” (Orejas et al. 2001, 91).
38. “poseen [magistrados] también, a su nivel, los castella, como parece deducir de la primera de las tabulae del Caurel, viniendo a ser una réplica de los contemporáneos magistri pagi... A no ser Latinus Ari y Aius Temari fuesen los magistri de la civitas de los Lougei que... podrían ser que verdaderamente sancionan el pacto.”
39. The same article (p. 181, table) lists both the castellum Toletum and civitas Lougeberorum as the “comunidades” involved in this transaction.
40. Note, however, that in the inscription of A.D. 1 cited above, the civitas Lougeberorum is represented by legati, not magistratus.
41. E.g. “[Vec]o Veci f. princeps Co[pororum]” (CIL II, 2585); “Nicer Clutosi (f.) principis Albionum” (AE 1946, 121); “Doviderus Amparani f. princeps Cantabrorum” (AE 1997, 875 = HEP 7, 380). But the supposed “pr(incep) Argailo(rum)” (CIL II, 5762) is a misreading: see AE 1994, 1006 = HEP 5, 656(b). See above, n. 22, on castella being attached to civitates.
42. E.g. the vikani consistentes castell[i] Veluniate on the Antonine Wall in Britain (AE 1958, 105 = AE 1962, 249 = RIB 3503) or the vicani veteres consistentes castelli Mattiacorum near Mainz (CIL XIII, 6740a, 7250, 7301, 11804). Of course, not all vici were hillforts: Florus Epit. 2,7 distinguishes “vicos, oppida, castella” in Sicily.
43. On the equivalence of magister castelli and magister pagi in the context of the Phuenses, see Gasco 1983, 203-204.
44. E.g. castellum Birascaccarenseum (AE 1904, 145 = CIL VIII, 23849); castellum Mastar(ensium) (CIL VIII, 6356 = ILAlg. 10130); castellum Subzuaritana- num (CIL VIII, 6002 = ILAlg. 7384); castellum Tidditanorum (AE 1969/70, 693); castellum Zagal (AE 1930, 55 = ILAlg. 8377). On Late Roman castella see Martínez Melón 2006, 123-125.
5. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the abbreviation MAG, when referring to the officials of religious or professional collegia, stands for mag(istri). The civil officials in charge of a vicus, pagus or castellum would also be mag(istri). But Hübner and many subsequent scholars have assumed that MAG, when referring to the civil officials of a peregrine town, likewise represents magistri. While Rodríguez Neila (1995) and some later investigators have championed the idea that MAG in this context means magistratus, there has been no consensus on the issue, nor a formal argument in favour of such an interpretation. On the contrary, as we have seen, a large number of recent scholars persist in seeing these MAG officials as magistri. This article has endorsed the concept that peregrine towns, variously known as civitates, res publicae or oppida stipendiaria, had magistratus, not magistri, at their helm. This idea is reinforced by several examples in which local officials are explicitly labelled magistratus. These towns had not yet received municipal status, which in most cases would have been granted under the Flavians, and their magistrates were not Roman citizens, except in three cases where a magistrate’s career seems to have spanned the transition from peregrine town to municipality. Therefore, in the inscriptions from Capera, Aritium Vetus, civitas Igaeditanorum, Munigua, Aratispi, Herrera de Pisuerga (referring to the civitas Maggaviensium), Paredes de Nava (referring to the civitas Palantina), Clunia, Arellano (referring perhaps to Curnonium) and Complutum we should understand mag(istratus). That gentes (also known as civitates) had magistratus is unequivocally demonstrated by the inscription of the Zoelae. If the guarantors of the O Courel tablet are officials of the civitas Lougeiorum, they too should be mag(istratus).

However, in situations involving officials of a vicus, pagus or castellum rather than an oppidum, we should interpret MAG as mag(istri). This would apply to the inscription from the probable vicus of Carcuvium, and also to the O Courel inscription if the officials named are those of the castellum Toletensium. The pagus officials on the Agón bronze are called both MAG and magistri. Although the votive inscriptions from Sisapo and La Milla del Río (referring to Asturica Augusta) might involve cult officials (magistri) rather than magistrates, a good argument can be made that they are actually magistratus, since these officials were, in peregrine communities, the equivalent of the duovirs who were in charge of religion in privileged municipalities.

In the case of the inscriptions from Capera, Complutum and possibly Clunia, the careers of these officials began before the grant of privileged status and continued after, so that they were mag(istratus) while the town was still unprivileged, and duoviri or flamines of the imperial cult thereafter. The inscriptions of these three men, all of whom acquired Roman citizenship, furnish valuable evidence for the romanization of local élites45.

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