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FROM THE CIL ARCHIVES (II):
A NEW STATUE BASE FROM *LAMBAESIS* (ALGERIA)

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The photographic archive of CIL contains a great number of photos of inscriptions from North Africa. They have been taken by Hans-Georg Kolbe during an epigraphic survey in Algeria and Tunisia in the spring of 1966 and some of them are still unpublished. Among these there is an inscription kept in the lapidary of the ancient Roman city of *Lambaesis*, identified not far from the modern town of Lambèse-Tazolut, in the Algerian region of Aurès, 11 km southeast of Batna and 27 km west of Timgad. As far as I know, this text is still unpublished.

The monument is a slab in local marble or limestone which should have been originally placed in front of a statue base. The inscription is surrounded by a simple frame and the upper left corner is lacking. The text seems to have been carved very hastily, probably after a previous inscription had been erased, as can be seen by the surface, which is not completely smooth. Moreover, the letters are not formed on a monumental style and in the last three lines they tend to be not horizontal.

I suggest the following reading:

- Piissimo*
ac victori-
osissimo
M. Aurelio
5 *Valerio*
[[[- - - - -]],
invicto, p(io), fel(ici)
Aug(usto) ordo co-
loniae Lambae-
10 *sitanorum de-*
votus n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) [eius].

The inscription testifies that the city council of *Lambaesis* set up a statue in honour of an emperor whose identity cannot be ascertained. In fact, after the titles *piissimus* and *victoriosissimus* and the first three onomastic elements *Marcus Aurelius Valerius*, line 6, which contained the *cognomen*, has been erased because of the *damnatio memoriae*. The surviving names could be attributed either to Maximian or to his son Maxentius, since both suffered from *damnatio* in 311 (but the date is uncertain) and in 312 AD¹,



* This work is the continuation of R. Bertolazzi, *From the CIL Archives: a New Statue Base of Julia Domna from Mustis (Tunisia)*, in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 184, 2013, 304–308. I would like to thank Dr. Manfred G. Schmidt, Arbeitsstellenleiter of the Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, for the permission to study the materials kept in the archive. I also warmly thank Prof. Werner Eck and Prof. Peter Toohey for helpful suggestions. Any remaining errors are mine alone. For the investigation on the inscriptions from *Lambaesis* I used the Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby (EDCS).

¹ For Maximian: D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle*, Darmstadt 1996², 269; for Maxentius: *ibid.* 287.

respectively. For this reason line 6 could be supplemented by the name *Maximiano* as well as by *Maxentio*. However, it seems also that line 5, which contains the name *Valerius*, has been subject to an attempt of erasure. In fact, traces of chiseling are visible along the whole line, although the name is still legible. For this reason it is possible to conjecture that initially the stonecutter planned to delete both lines, but later decided to erase only line 6. In any case, it is not possible to recognize the emperor to whom the statue had been dedicated, a phenomenon occurring more frequently during the Late Empire². It is also possible that the name *Valerius* has not been erased because the same name occurs also in Constantine's nomenclature. This same course of action, in fact, seems to have been made in regard of some inscriptions dedicated to Galerius³. However, according to Mika Kajava, provincial cities were allowed to act with a certain degree of autonomy regarding the erasure of names of individuals who suffered from *damnatio memoriae*⁴. With regard to Maximian, for example, it is possible to observe how his name has been deleted in various ways in different cities of North Africa: in *Cuicul* (Numidia), his whole nomenclature has been completely erased⁵, while in Batna (Numidia)⁶ and *Emerita Ammaedara*⁷ (Africa Proconsularis) only the name *Maximianus* has been deleted. Moreover, from *Lambaesis* there are attestations to the erasure of the entire nomenclature⁸ and, at the same time, of only the cognomen *Maximianus*⁹.

It should be noted that *invictus pius felix Augustus* is used in North Africa both for Maximian¹⁰ and Maxentius¹¹. For this reason, the titles cannot be decisive in the identification of the Emperor. Moreover, the formula *piissimus ac victoriosissimus* is used, at the beginning of the text, only in two inscriptions from *Lambaesis* dedicated to Constantius Chlorus¹² and Diocletian¹³. In this regard, it is interesting to stress that Diocletian, whose *praenomen* is *Caius*, could not be the recipient of the dedication, despite the correspondence between some parts of his nomenclature with the titles engraved on the monument in question¹⁴. Furthermore, it is unlikely that both inscriptions have been made at the same time in order to celebrate Diocletian and Maximian, since the form of the letters is markedly different. Finally, the formula *devotus numini maiestatique eius* is frequently used from the beginning of the third until the end of the fourth century AD¹⁵.

² S. Lefebvre, *Condamnation de la mémoire et espace civique; pour une pédagogie du martelage en Afrique*, in S. Benoist (ed.), *Mémoire et histoire: les procédures de condamnation dans l'Antiquité romaine*, Metz 2007, 212.

³ CIL VI 1137; VIII 10430; AE 1995, 1561c. Cf. R. Delmaire, *La damnatio memoriae au Bas-Empire à travers les textes, la législation et les inscriptions*, in *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 15, 2004, 212.

⁴ M. Kajava, *Some Remarks on the Erasure of Inscriptions in the Roman World*, in H. Solin, O. Salomies, U.-M. Liertz (edd.), *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini Helsingiae 3.–6. sept. 1991 habiti*, Helsinki 1995, 204. See also Delmaire, *La damnatio memoriae* (n. 3), 303–305.

⁵ ILAlg II 3, 7858 = AE 1916, 18.

⁶ BCTH 1902, p. 512 nr. 18.

⁷ CIL VIII 308 = ILS 6786.

⁸ AE 1916, 21.

⁹ CIL VIII 2573.

¹⁰ CIL VIII 10280 = 22425, 10396 = 22499 = ILS 616, 10407, 22170 = ILAlg I 3938, 22412, 22422, 22443, 22513; AE 1981, 906; ILAlg I 3947, 3948; ILAlg II 3, 7861, 7867; maybe also BCTH 1901, p. CCVIII.

¹¹ CIL VIII 10034 = ILAlg I 3971; CIL VIII 20989, 22417, 22038 = ILTun 1732; ILAlg I 3949; IRT 464.

¹² CIL VIII 18262.

¹³ AE 1920, 13.

¹⁴ AE 1920, 13.

¹⁵ On this topic see D. M. Pippidi, *Recherches sur le culte impérial*, Paris–Bucarest 1939, 9–46; H. G. Gundel, 'Devotus numini maiestatique eius'. Zur Devotionsformel in Weihinschriften der römischen Kaiserzeit, in *Epigraphica* 15, 1953, 128–150; W. Pötscher, 'Numen' und 'numen Augusti', in *ANRW* II 16, 1, Berlin–New York 1978, 355–392, esp. 380–392; R. Turcan, *Le culte impérial au III^e siècle*, in *ANRW* II 16, 2, Berlin–New York 1978, 996–1083, esp. 1000–1003 and 1017–1021; W. Eck, *Devotus numini maiestatique eorum. Repräsentation und Propagierung der Tetrarchie unter Diocletian*, in H. v. Hesberg, W. Thiel (edd.), *Medien in der Antike. Kommunikative Qualität und normative Wirkung*, Köln 2003, 51–62.

So far, *Lambaesis* has not handed down inscriptions dedicated to Maxentius, while Maximian is honoured by several statues together with Diocletian¹⁶ or alone¹⁷. Although none of these inscriptions has been placed by the decree of the *ordo decurionum*, it is however possible that the decurions have decided to dedicate a monument to Maximian, as they have already done for Magnia Urbica¹⁸, for Numerianus¹⁹, for Constantius Chlorus²⁰ and for Diocletian²¹. But the municipality of *Lambaesis* might also have dedicated a monument to Maxentius, as was the case in the nearby town of *Thamugadi*²². It is also possible that two distinct monuments bearing the same text have been dedicated to both Emperors. This has been suggested for the forum of *Cuicul*²³, whose inscriptions present erasures in the nomenclature, hampering the identification of the Emperors.

In *Lambaesis*, the numerous dedications to Maximian are probably the result of the campaigns that he conducted in North Africa in the years 297–298²⁴. At that time the city certainly played an important role in military operations. This is demonstrated by an inscription in his honour set up by the *legio III Augusta*²⁵. Unlike the case of Maximian, there is no evidence of Maxentius as a visitor in North Africa. Nevertheless, during the period of his reign, these territories were strategically so important that he sent over an expedition to crush the rebellion of the *vicarius* Domitius Alexander²⁶. Although *Lambaesis* is not mentioned by the literary sources that refer to the events of this period, it is not unlikely that, after the victory of Maxentius' troops, the ruling class of the city wanted to ingratiate itself to the emperor, especially when he started to punish the African cities for having supported the rebellion²⁷.

In conclusion, despite the difficulty involved in trying to establish which Emperor received the honour of a statue, it is at least possible to state that the monument can be dated to at least two different periods. If the monument refers to Maximian, it has probably been set up between April 1, 286, when he has been proclaimed Augustus, and November 308, when he definitively abdicated at the Conference of Carnuntum²⁸. Otherwise, in case of Maxentius as the dedicatee, the date would be between the beginning of 307, when he was acclaimed Emperor in Rome, and October 28, 312, when he was defeated and killed by Constantine²⁹.

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¹⁶ CIL VIII 2571a = 18057a = AE 1974, 723b, 2572 = ILS 5786, 10233 = 10234 = 22336 = AE 1942/43, 76; AE 1916, 21 = AE 1917/18, 16.

¹⁷ CIL VIII 2573, 2574.

¹⁸ BCTH 1918, p. 143.

¹⁹ AE 1991, 1688.

²⁰ CIL VIII 2720.

²¹ See above n. 14 and n. 16.

²² CIL VIII 17886.

²³ ILaIlg II 3, 7864, 7865; on the topic see G. Zimmer, *Locus datus decreto decurionum. Zur Statuenaufstellung zweier Forumsanlagen im römischen Afrika*, München 1989, 60–61; S. Lefebvre, *Le forum de Cuicul: un exemple de la gestion de l'espace public à travers l'étude des inscriptions martelées*, in *L'Africa romana* 16, 2004, 2132–2134.

²⁴ About this topic see P. Maymó y Capdevila, *Maximiano en campaña: matizaciones cronológicas a las expediciones hispanas y africanas del Augusto Hércúleo*, in *Polis* 12, 2000, 229–257; W. Kuhoff, *L'importanza politica delle province africane nell'epoca della tetrarchia*, in *L'Africa romana* 12, 1998, 1510–1515 with previous bibliography.

²⁵ CIL VIII 2576.

²⁶ On the topic see also R. Donciu, *L'empereur Maxence*, Bari 2012, 72–76; H. Leppin, H. Ziemessen, *Maxentius, der letzte Kaiser in Rom*, Mainz am Rhein 2007, 25–26; Kuhoff, *L'importanza* (n. 24), 1515–1519 with previous bibliography.

²⁷ *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40, 19; *Zos. Hist. Nov.* II 14, 3–4.

²⁸ Kienast, *Kaisertabelle* (n. 1), 268–269.

²⁹ Kienast, *Kaisertabelle* (n. 1), 287.