

RICCARDO BERTOLAZZI

FROM THE CIL ARCHIVES: A NEW STATUE BASE OF JULIA DOMNA
FROM *MUSTIS* (TUNISIA)

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 184 (2013) 304–308

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

FROM THE CIL ARCHIVES: A NEW STATUE BASE OF JULIA DOMNA
FROM *MUSTIS* (TUNISIA)*

The photographic archive of CIL contains numerous photos of inscriptions from North Africa. They were taken by Hans-Georg Kolbe during an epigraphic survey in Algeria and Tunisia in the spring of 1966 and some of them refer to texts which are still unpublished. A couple of these pictures reproduce inscriptions found in *Mustis* (today known by the modern name of Henchir el Mest), a Roman city in northern Tunisia, about 120 kilometers south-west of Tunis and 13 km south-west of Dougga, not far from the modern town of Al Karib¹.

The pictures taken by Kolbe concern two statue bases reused in the walls of the byzantine citadel. The first of them belongs to Septimius Severus and was published some years ago in an article by Attilio Mastino written in collaboration with Azedine Beschaouch²:

Divo L. Septimio Seve-
ro Pio Pertinaci patri
Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aureli Severi
Antonini Pii Felicis
5 *Augusti Parthici, Ara-*
bici Maximi, Britanni-
ci Maximi, pontificis
max(imi), patris patriae,
ordo Mustitanus paca-
10 *tori deo d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ecunia) p(ublica).*

The second one is located a few centimeters below, in direct contact with that; however, as far as I know, this one remains still unpublished.

This base is completely identical to the one of Septimius Severus. It's a rectangular block of local marble with the inscription surrounded by a simple frame, which is partially damaged on the right side and in the lower right corner. Moreover, the right side of the inscription shows signs of erosion and wear almost everywhere; consequently many letters at the end of the lines are lost or difficult to read. The layout of the text, however, is very accurate and the letters are regular.

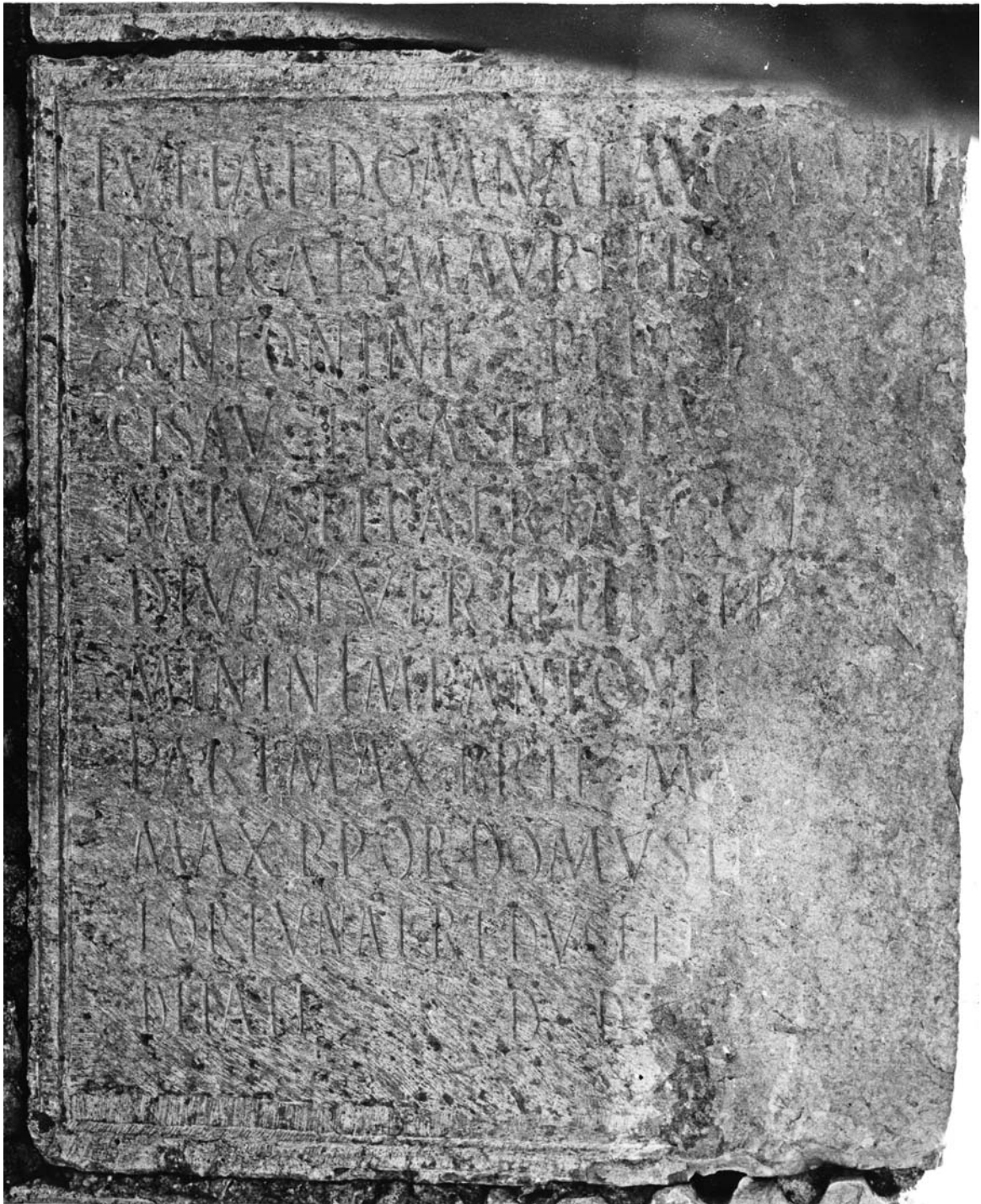
I would suggest the following reading:

Iuliae Domnae Aug(ustae), matri
Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aureli Se[v]e[ri]
Antonini Pii F[eli]-
cis Aug(usti) et castroru[m et se]-
5 *natus et patriae, [co]n[iugi]*

* 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 stored in the archive and for helpful comments. I also would like to thank Prof. Werner Eck, Prof. Hanne Sigismund Nielsen and Dr. Erica Filippini for useful suggestions. Any remaining errors are mine alone.

¹ About the city see R. Cagnat, A. Merlin, *Atlas archéologique de la Tunisie*, 2e série, Paris 1914, folio 25 Jama n. 3; A. Beschaouch, *Mustitana*. Recueil des nouvelles inscriptions de *Mustis*, cité romaine de Tunisie, in *Karthago* 14, 1968, 121–224; S. Bullo, *Provincia Africa. Le città e il territorio dalla caduta di Cartagine a Nerone*, Roma 2002, 128–134; M. G. Schmidt, *Walking in Mustis: Monumentale Versinschriften einer afrikanischen Stadt im urbanen Kontext*, in X. Gómez Font, C. Fernández Martínez, G. Gómez Pallarès (edd.), *Literatura epigráfica: estudios dedicados a Gabriel Sanders*, Zaragoza 2009, 309–310.

² A. Mastino, *I Severi nel Nord Africa*, in *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina. Roma, 18–24 settembre 1997*, Roma 1999, 381–382 (AE 1999, 1844).



*Divi Severi Pii, patr[is do]-
mini n(ostri) Imp(eratoris) Antoni[ni Aug(usti)]
Part(hici) Max(imi), Brit(annici) Ma[x(imi), pont(ificis)]
max(imi), p(atris) p(atriciae), ordo Musti[tanus]
10 Fortuna Reduci et [Fecun]-
ditati d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) [p(ecunia) p(ublica)].*

Critical notes: l. 7. The supplement *Aug(usti)* is preferable to *Pii*: the name of Caracalla as *Imp. Antoninus Augustus* is widely attested, while *Imp. Antoninus Pius* without other names so far has not been documented³. l. 8. At the end of the line the supplement *pont(ificis)* is based upon the evidence from the titles from the inscription for Septimius Severus. l. 10. As far as I can see, *Fecunditas* as a goddess is not yet documented in any inscription; however, she frequently occurs on coins as a personification of Julia Domna herself⁴. l. 11. The supplement is based upon the evidence from the contemporary inscription for Septimius Severus.

The base was put up at public expense by the town council of *Mustis* in honour of Julia Domna, called *Fortuna Redux* and *Fecunditas*, mother of *M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus* (Caracalla), of the encampments, of the senate, of the country and wife of the deified Septimius Severus, father of Caracalla, who is subsequently called *Parthicus Maximus*, *Britannicus Maximus*, *pontifex maximus* and father of the country.

It is also interesting that before Julia Domna and Septimius Severus all the emperors of the second century, with the only exception of Didius Iulianus, were honoured in *Mustis*: statue bases and dedications to gods *pro salute* were put up to Trajan⁵, Hadrian⁶, Antoninus Pius⁷, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus⁸, Commodus⁹ and Pertinax¹⁰. Moreover, a statue in honour of Lucilla¹¹ was erected too.

This is the second attestation of Julia Domna found in *Mustis*: the first one is a dedication by the *duumvir* *P. Perellius Saturninus* to the *Dii Mauri Castori* for the safety of the members of the imperial family¹². In North Africa the wide diffusion of the dedications to the Severian family is well known. Towards Julia Domna, in particular, Attilio Mastino has counted 150 inscriptions which report the name of the Empress¹³. Moreover, from the environs of *Mustis* there are several attestations of inscriptions placed for Julia Domna only: on a stone slab found in the forum of *Uchi Maius* a text which is quite similar to this one of *Mustis* is documented¹⁴ and from *Thugga* are two other bases with more simple texts¹⁵.

Concerning the two last lines of the inscription, it is important to emphasize that the assimilation of Julia Domna with a divinity is a very rare phenomenon in African epigraphy. The only cases known to me are two inscriptions from *Leptis Magna*¹⁶ and *Zama Regia*¹⁷, in which the Empress appears as the goddess Iuno. Nevertheless, the representation of Julia Domna as a goddess is very common in iconographical and numismatic sources¹⁸. The latter are particularly interesting because in her coinage the legends *Fortunae*

³ A. Mastino, *Le titolature di Caracalla e Geta attraverso le iscrizioni (indici)*, Bologna 1981, 85–87 and 91–93.

⁴ See below.

⁵ AE 1968, 599.

⁶ AE 1968, 589.

⁷ AE 1968, 595, 596.

⁸ CIL VIII 1574 = CIL VIII 15576 = ILTun 1538 = AE 1933, 33a; AE 1968, 600.

⁹ CIL VIII 16417.

¹⁰ CIL VIII 1576 cfr. p. 2698.

¹¹ CIL VIII 15579.

¹² AE 1968, 590.

¹³ Mastino, *I Severi* (n. 2 above), 359.

¹⁴ CIL VIII 26257 = P. Ruggeri, *La casa imperiale*, in M. Khanoussi, A. Mastino (edd.), *Uchi Maius 1. Scavi e ricerche epigrafiche in Tunisia*, Sassari 1997, 146 n. 15 = A. Ibba (ed.), *Uchi Maius 2. Le iscrizioni*, Sassari 2002, 124–125 n. 37 (A. Ibba): *Iuliae Domnae Aug(ustae) / matri castrorum, / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L. Septimi(i) Selveri Pii Pertinacis / Ar[a]bic[i] Adi[ab]enilci [Aug(usti) coniugi] / d(ecreto) [d(ecurionum)] p(ecunia) [p(ublica)]*.

¹⁵ CIL VIII 26544: *Iuliae Domnae / Augustae matri / Augustorum et / castrorum*; CIL VIII 26545: *Iuliae Augustae*.

¹⁶ IRT 291 = AE 1926, 159 = AE 1951, 230 = AE 1954, 201b = AE 2005, 1662: *Iuliae Domnae / Aug(ustae) deae Iunoni / orbis terrae / Q. Fulvius Dida / Bubulianus / vot(um) sol(vit)*.

¹⁷ AE 1949, 109: *[Iovi Optimo Maximo L. Septimio Seve]ro Aug(usto), Iunoni Reginae Iuliae Domn[ae Aug(ustae) - - -] / [Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) L. Septimio Severo Pio Felici Aug(usto) p(ontifici) m(aximo), tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) - - - imp(eratori) X]I, co(n)s(uli) III, p(atri) p(atriciae), Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) M. Aurelio Antonino Aug(usto) Pio, Felici, P[arthico Maximo? - - -] / [- - -] Iuliae Domnae Aug(ustae), matri Aug(ustorum) et castrorum vicani [- - -]*.

¹⁸ On the topic F. Ghedini, *Giulia Domna tra Oriente e Occidente. Le fonti archeologiche*, Roma 1984, 121–160.

Reduci and *Fecunditas* are well documented¹⁹. With regard to *Fortuna Redux*, the correct interpretation in this inscription is that of Julia Domna as tutelary deity²⁰, as well as Septimius Severus, who on the other base is called *Deus Pacator*, that is guarantor of the prosperity of the state. An interesting comparison could be a Greek inscription from Nicopolis, in the province of *Moesia Inferior*, where Julia Domna was honoured by the town council and the citizens with the title of Τύχη τῆς Οἰκουμένης²¹, whose sense should be found in a tutelary goddess (*Fortuna*/Τύχη precisely) in which the Empress can be identified. On the other hand, the term *Fecunditas*, which is typical on coins of women from the Antonine and Severian dynasties²², has evidently the purpose of underlining the role of the Empress as mother and guarantor of the succession of the dynasty. In the inscription this concept is already present in the word *mater*, which, through the expression *matri castrorum et senatus et patriae*, acquires also the role of protector of the state²³. Ultimately, it appears that both names mean something quite similar. The purpose of the citizens of *Mustis* was evidently to honour Julia Domna as a sort of semi-divine entity bearer of wellness and prosperity, and, at the same time, to express loyalty to the Imperial house and in particular to the ruling emperor, namely Caracalla, to whom a third statue should have been dedicated.

In fact it is necessary to notice that three statues in honour of the deified Severus, Caracalla and Julia Domna were erected by the town council in the Algerian city of *Uzelis*²⁴. Without doubt these monuments were put up at the same time. Thanks to Caracalla's *tribunicia potestas*, which is identical on all the three inscriptions, they must be dated between 10 December 211 and 9 December 212²⁵, just after the death of Septimius Severus. Moreover, three statue bases are still visible upon the triumphal arch dedicated to Caracalla in *Cuicul* between 214 and 215, whose inscription mentions his parents too²⁶. Finally, other three

¹⁹ *Fortuna Redux*: RIC IV 1 p. 175 n. 622, p. 176 nn. 623–626; BMCRE V p. 103 nn. 416–417; *Fecunditas*: RIC IV 1 p. 165 n. 534, p. 167 n. 549, p. 207 nn. 838, 844, p. 208 n. 852, p. 210 nn. 872–873, p. 272 n. 374; BMCRE V pp. 27, 124 n. 494, p. 159 nn. 20–21, p. 307 n. 766, p. 311 nn. 783–784, p. 627 n. 4A, p. 629 n. 205A*; see also LIMC VIII 1 p. 583; A. Alexandridis, *Die Frauen des römischen Kaiserhauses. Eine Untersuchung ihrer bildlichen Darstellung von Livia bis Iulia Domna*, Mainz am Rhein 2004, 353, 355.

²⁰ Cfr. I. Kajanto, Interpreting *Fortuna Redux*, in D. Kremer (ed.), *Homenagem a Joseph M. Piel por ocasião do seu 85.º aniversário*, Tübingen 1988, 46: "(...) the interpretation of *Fortuna Redux* as the bringer back to Rome of the Emperor is overly restricted. There are certainly numerous cases in which this is literally true. But even when referring to the Emperor and the Imperial house, *Redux* often suggests general protection more than home-bringing."

²¹ V. Pârvan, *Histria IV. Inscriptii găsite în 1914 și 1915*, in *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, II 38, 1915–1916, 644 n. 34 = E. Kettenhofen, *Die syrischen Augustae in der historischen Überlieferung*, Bonn 1979, 107–108: Ἀγαθῆι τύχηι. Ἰουλίαν Δόμναν Σε(βαστήν), Ἰ Τύχην τῆς Οἰκουμένης, μητέρα τοῦ θειοτάτου καὶ ἀνεικήτο[υ] Ἰ αυτοκράτορος Ἀντωνεῖνου, βουλή, δῆμος ἰ τῆς λαμπροτάτης Ἰστριανῶν πόλεως.

²² J. Melville Jones, *A Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins*, London 1990, 113; see also K. Fittschen, *Die Bildnistypen der Faustina minor und die Fecunditas Augustae*, Göttingen 1982, 27–33.

²³ Cfr. A. L. Morelli, Il ruolo della *mater* come simbolo di continuità nella moneta romana, in M. G. Angeli Bertinelli, A. Donati (edd.), *Misurare il tempo, misurare lo spazio. Atti del Colloquio AIEGL – Borghesi 2005*, Faenza 2006, 70–71; ead., *Madri di uomini e di dei*, Bologna 2009, 142–144.

²⁴ CIL VIII 6341 = ILAlg II 3, 8797: *Imp(eratori) Caes(ari), divi Septimi Severi Pii Arabici Ἰ Adiabenici Parthici Maximi, Britanici (!) Maximi filio, divi M. Antonini Pii Germanici, Sarmatici nepolti, divi Antonini Pii pronepoti, divi Hadriani abnepoti, divi Traiani Parthici adnepoti, M. Ἰ Aurelio Severo Antonino Pio Felici Aug(usto) Ἰ Parthico Maximo, Britanico (!) Maximo, Ἰ pontifici maximo, tribuniciae potes(tatis) Ἰ XV, imp(eratori) II, co(n)s(uli) III, p(atr) p(atriciae), Ἰ res pub(lica) Uzelitanorum. ILAlg II 3, 8798: *Di[vo] Pio L. Septimio Severo Ἰ Ar[abi]co Adiabenico Parthico Maximo, Brit(annico) Maximo, patri Ἰ Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aureli Severi Antonini Ἰ Pii Felicis Aug(usti), Parthici Maximi Ἰ Britanici (!) Maximi, pontifilcis ma[xi]mi, tribuniciae Ἰ potes<ta>tis XV, imp(eratoris) II, Ἰ co(n)s(ulis) II, res publica Uzelitanorum. ILAlg II 3, 8799: [Iuliae] Aug(ustae) Piae Felici, matri Ἰ [Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)] M. Aureli Severi Antonini Ἰ [Pii Fe]licis Aug(usti), Brittanici(!) Maximi, pontif[icis] maximi, trib(unicia) pot(estate) XV, imp(eratoris) II, co(n)s(ulis) III, Ἰ p(atris) p(atriciae), divi Septimi Severi Pii Arabici Adiab(enici) Ἰ Parthici Maxim(i), Brit(annici) Max(im)i filio (!), divi M. Ἰ Antonini Pii Germ(anici), Sarm(atici) nepoti (!), divi Antonini Pii pronepoti (!), divi Hadriani abnepoti (!), divi Traiani Parthici adnepoti (!) et Senatus et castrorum et Ἰ patriae, r(es) p(ublica) Uzelitanorum.**

²⁵ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle*, Darmstadt 1990², 163.

²⁶ CIL VIII 8321 cfr. p. 968 = CIL VIII 20137 = ILAlg II 3, 7818: *Imp(eratori) Caes(aris) M. Aurelio Severo Antonino Pio Felici Aug(usto) Ἰ Parth[ic]o Maximo, Britanico Max(imo), Germanico Max(imo), Ἰ pontif(ici) [m]ax(imo), trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVIII, co(n)s(uli) III, imp(eratori) III, p(atr) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(uli) Ἰ et Iul[iae] Domnae Piae Felici Aug(ustae)*

statues were probably erected upon the arch of the deified Septimius Severus built in the meanwhile in *Assuras*, as recorded by the dedicatory inscription²⁷.

Therefore it seems that at the time of the death of Septimius Severus and the succession of Caracalla many African cities felt the need to confirm their loyalty to the Imperial house. For this reason the statue bases from *Mustis* should be dated, as those from *Uzelis*, between the years 211 and 212. This is not in contradiction with the dating of the arches in *Cuicul* and *Assuras*, whose construction should have necessarily required more time.

Riccardo Bertolazzi, University of Calgary
rbertola@ucalgary.ca

matri eius et senatus et paltriae et [cas]trorum et divo Severo Aug(usto) Pio, patri Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aureli Selveri Ant[onini] Pii [Felic]is Aug(usti), arcum triumphalem a solo d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) res p(ublica) fecit.

²⁷ CIL VIII 1798 cfr. p. 939 = CIL VIII 16466 = ILS 437: *Divo [Se]ptimio Severo Pio Aug(usto) Arab(ico) [Ad]iab(enico) Part(hico) Max(imo) [- - -] | et Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) M. Aurelio Antonino Pio Aug(usto) Felici Part(hico) Max(imo) [- - -] | Brit(annico) Max(imo), Germ(anico) Max(imo), pont(ifici) max(imo), fil(io), trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVIII, imp(eratori) III, | co(n)s(uli) IIII, p(atrici) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(uli), optimo maximoque principi et | Iuliae Domnae Piae Felici Aug(ustae), matri Aug(usti) et castrorum et senatu[s] | et patriae, uxori divi [Se]veri Aug(usti) Pii, col(onia) Iul(ia) Assuras devota numini | eorum d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ecunia) p(ublica).*