

THE SEVERAN DYNASTY IN LUCANIA, SOUTHERN SAMNIUM AND APULIA

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Abstract: *The analysis of the epigraphic documentation concerning the Severans in Lucania, southern Samnium and Apulia showcases the vitality of these regions during the reigns of Septimius Severus (193–211), Caracalla (211–217), Elagabalus (218–222) and Severus Alexander (222–235). City councils set up an impressive number of dedications to these emperors, and, in particular, honorary statues. This phenomenon is not casual. In fact, several inscriptions reveal that Severus and Caracalla paid a certain attention to the communities located in these regions. Restorations of roads and public buildings at the emperors' expense are well documented, as well as, perhaps, interventions in the disputes between cities. Furthermore, the epigraphic evidence attests to many individuals from this area that achieved prestigious positions in the imperial administration, thus establishing valuable connections between local communities and the imperial court.*

Keywords: *Latin epigraphy, Severans, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Julia Domna, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, honorary monuments, Lucania, Samnium, Apulia.*

From the start of the reign of Septimius Severus, in 193, to the death of Severus Alexander and Julia Mamaea in 235, the Severan dynasty left numerous traces in the epigraphic evidence from all over the Empire. This is especially true for the provinces, where imperial officials, city councils, and private citizens set up a considerable quantity of monuments in honour of both Septimius Severus and the other members of his family. The popularity of the dynasty, for instance, is very well documented in the cities of North Africa, and particularly in Leptis Magna, the home city of Severus. Scholars have counted at least one thousand inscriptions with the name of the Severans from Africa Proconsularis, Numidia and the two Mauretaniae.¹ Further hundreds of texts, however, are documented in many other areas of the Empire.² Such numbers are, in a sense, hardly surprising. Severan emperors paid considerable attention to issues related to the administration of the provinces.³ The *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which was released during the reign of Caracalla, is perhaps the best example of this exceptional care.

Although in Italy the same fervour in displaying loyalty to the dynasty that characterizes the African provinces is not documented, the abundance of inscriptions mentioning Severan rulers demonstrates that Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander enjoyed considerable favour in this area of the empire. This is probably a consequence of the fact that during this period the imperial government did not ignore Italian communities.⁴ In this regard, the documentation from

southern Italy is particularly worth investigating, since inscriptions concerning the Severan household do not record only regular honours such as, for example, the placement of statues in public places, but also extraordinary interventions like public works.

In the next paragraphs the documentation from Lucania, Apulia and southern Samnium will be chronologically reviewed starting from Lucania and the area of Grumentum. Later, similar texts from the neighbouring regions will also be examined in order to better understand the general context in which southern Italian monuments were set up.

Lucania

The most relevant number of inscriptions is documented in the city of Atina, the modern Atena Lucana. Here, with exception for the family of Augustus, honorary monuments for other imperial personalities are not so far documented.⁵ In 200, the *ordo decurionum* decreed the placement of a statue in honour of Caracalla.⁶

¹ MASTINO 1999, 359; see also SEARS 2013. On the inscriptions from Leptis Magna cf. BARTON 1977; WILSON 2007; MAHY 2009.

² For a general idea about the number of inscriptions mentioning the sole Caracalla and Geta cf. MASTINO 1981, 83–177.

³ OLIVER 1989, 428–545, for example, reports an impressive amount of letters by Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander to the Eastern communities.

⁴ During the last decades, several studies have highlighted relationships between Severan emperors and Italian cities and territories, especially in Central–Southern Italy. Among the most interesting cases, it is worthwhile to mention Septimius Severus' bestowal of the colonial status to Helvia Ricina, his renewal of a *foedus* between Rome and

Camerinum (cf. MAYER 2007, 12–18), the reconstruction of a bridge of the via Aurelia (together with Caracalla) (*AE* 1973.226). With regard to Caracalla, it is important to stress the restoration of the Via Iulia Augusta (cf. SALOMONE GAGGERO 1989) and the restoration of the baths in Pinna Vestina (*AE* 1968.157 = *AE* 1997.462). Other interesting cases are the restoration of roads in the territories of Anagnina (*CIL* 10.5909), Minturnae and Aquae Vescinae (*CIL* 1989.144), Capua (*CIL* 9.5980 = 10.6908) and the rebuilding of a bridge on the Via Aurelia (*AE* 1973.226) by Severus, Caracalla and Geta; the restoration of large sections of the via Appia by Caracalla (*CIL* 10.6854, 6876); and the reconstruction of a bridge on the river Liris (Via Latina) by Severus Alexander (*CIL* 10.6893); cf. the list provided by Silvio Panciera in PANCIERA 1998). Finally, the extensive restorations of the Via Traiana by Severus and Caracalla will be examined *infra*. Cf. also the coins with the legend *INDULGENTIA AUGG IN ITALIAM* minted for Severus, a probable allusion to generous distributions of olive oil (PERA 1979).

⁵ A barely legible fragment (*EE* 8.1.582), which reports the expression *[- - - Caes]aris Aug[ust]i - - -*, could perhaps allude to a relative of the emperor.

⁶ App. no. 1.



Pl. 1. Map of Apulia, Lucania and southern Samnium

The monument was probably set up in the forum, or at least in an important public place, a circumstance that is stressed by the adverb *publice*. It is not impossible that the statue was originally put up together with other similar monuments to Septimius Severus, Geta and Julia Domna. Another statue to the Divus Severus was erected a decade later, possibly soon after the death of the African emperor in 211 (Fig. 1).⁷

Some decades ago, another statue base to the deified Severus was found in Grumentum (Fig. 2). The monument was discovered near the access staircase belonging to the so-called temple B, a two-cell sanctuary located in the area of the theatre, south west from the forum.⁸ Unlike Atina, Grumentum boasts a tradition of statues dedicated to emperors. In this city, statues dedicated to Tiberius and Hadrian had already been set up soon after the accession of these emperors, in 15–16 and 119–120, respectively.⁹ Since the statue base to the Divus Severus has been found near a temple, this sanctuary might have been dedicated to the cult of this emperor after his death in 211 or shortly after. Massimiliano Munzi, who has recently published the base, stressed the similarities between this monument and the equivalent one from Atina.¹⁰ According to Munzi, both the formulary and the layout of the two inscriptions attest to the standardisation of the honours that Lucanian cities paid to the deceased emperor. However, at some time after the placement, the inscription on the statue base from Atina was modified with the addition of the

titles *Pius* and *Augustus*, which sharply contrast with the symmetry of the lines.

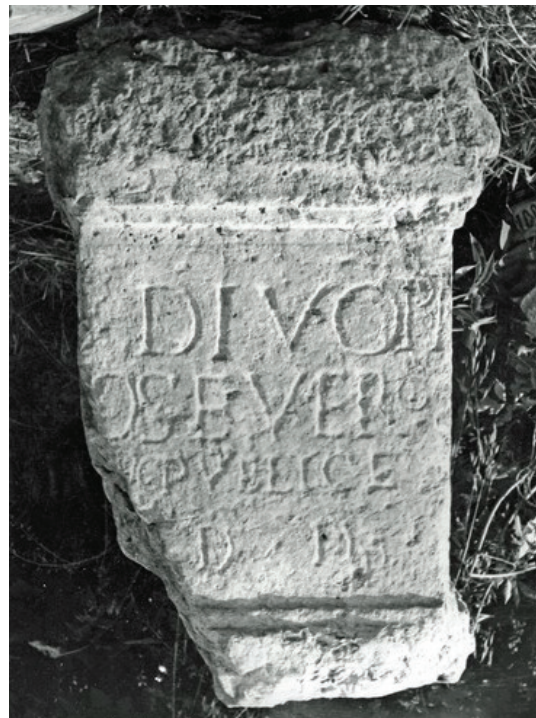


Fig. 1. Statue base to the Divus Severus from Atina. Credit: Epigraphic Database Roma

In my view, it is possible to interpret this supplement as a sign of the particular care with which the citizens of Atina honoured Septimius Severus. As in the case of Grumentum, the citizens of Atina could have dedicated a temple to the deified emperor. The placement of another statue dedicated to Severus Alexander represents a

⁷ App. no. 4.

⁸ App. no. 5. On the temple cf. BOTTINI 1997, 168–169, 179–182. Attilio Mastrocchino, who received the information from Liliana Giardino, communicated to me the place where the monument was discovered.

⁹ AE 2006.357 (Tiberius); CIL 10.208 (Hadrian).

¹⁰ MUNZI 1998, 93–94.

further indication of the favour enjoyed by the Severan household in Atina.¹¹



Fig. 2. Statue base to the Divus Severus from Grumentum

This phenomenon can be better understood when considering that at least one personality from Atina seems to have been particularly close to the Severans. This is M. Tillius Rufus, who was honoured by his freedmen with a statue base set up in Atina.¹² The descending *cursus honorum* reported by the dedicatory inscription relates that he was awarded the *equus publicus*, the *dona militaria*, the *hasta pura* and the *corona aurea* by Septimius Severus and Caracalla. All these decorations were probably obtained during his service in the garrison of Rome, where he held the prestigious positions of *centurio trecenarius* and *princeps castrorum*. Also, Tillius Rufus himself dedicated the monument in 208 after having been awarded the title of *patronus municipii*, presumably on account of the prestige that he had enjoyed in Rome. Considering that he had already served as *evocatus* during the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (177–180), it is possible to presume that in 208 he was at the end of his career. Almost certainly he was one of the decurions who a few years later decreed statues for both Septimius Severus and Severus Alexander. It is also interesting to observe that the dedicatory inscription of the statue to Severus Alexander pays an indirect homage to Severus and Caracalla, since Alexander is called *Divi Severi Pii nepos* and *Divi*

Antonini Magni Pii filius.¹³ Other inscriptions dedicated to Severus Alexander from southern Italy do not report this extended titulature, which could consequently be interpreted as a further proof of Atina's strong devotion towards Severus and his successors.

A certain abundance of honours paid to the Severan household can be also observed with regard to the city of Paestum, where at least three dedications are documented. Unfortunately, all three of them survive in a very fragmentary state. It is therefore difficult to obtain detailed information about the circumstances in which the monuments were set up. The first inscription consists of five fragments of a slab, which the *ordo decurionum* dedicated to Caracalla and, probably, to Severus as well.¹⁴ The second one is another slab with the titulature of Caracalla.¹⁵ The third text is an inscription in honour of Severus Alexander.¹⁶ It seems possible that the first and the third inscriptions, that is, the one dedicated to Severus and Caracalla and the one to Severus Alexander, belonged to statue bases. The text of the inscription to Severus and Caracalla, although fragmentary, appears to be quite similar to those of the other Lucanian statue bases that the *ordines decurionum* set up as homage to these emperors. The text to Severus Alexander is distributed in a narrow space, which could have hardly hosted a more complex inscription such as, for example, the execution of public works. The case of the second inscription to Caracalla is more problematic. The fact that it was found not far from the temple of Neptune could perhaps suggest the realisation of some building works during the reign of this emperor, but the poor state of preservation does not allow certain conclusions. These inscriptions represent the continuity of the good relationships between Paestum and the imperial house during the Severan age. The city, in fact, had already dedicated monuments to Hadrian, Lucius Verus and Faustina Minor, the latter being honoured because of her many benefactions towards the city (*ob plurima beneficia eius erga patriam*).¹⁷ It should also be noted that another fragmentary inscription mentions a flamine for either one of the Antonine emperors or, perhaps, Caracalla himself.¹⁸

Lastly, the *ordo decurionum* of Cosilinum decreed a statue in honour of Elagabalus.¹⁹ This is the only inscription from the area examined in this contribution that mentions this emperor, and it is also one of the few

¹³ Although Severus Alexander was the son of Domna's niece, Julia Mamaea, and the knight M. Julius Gessius Marcianus, Julia Maesa, Soaemias' mother and sister of Domna, spread the rumour that both he and his cousin Varius Avitus Bassianus (better known as Elagabalus) were the illegitimate sons of Caracalla (Dio 79 [78].32.3; Herod. 5.3.10–11; *HA, Macr.* 9.4–5). On the topic cf. in general ICKS 2012, 11–12.

¹⁴ App. no. 2.

¹⁵ App. no. 3.

¹⁶ App. no. 8.

¹⁷ MELLO, VOZA 1968, 60–61 no. 41 (Lucius Verus), 67–68 no. 46 (Hadrian); *CIL* 10.473 (Faustina).

¹⁸ *AE* 1975.257.

¹⁹ App. no. 6.

¹¹ App. no. 7.

¹² *CIL* 10.5064.

texts that were not subject to the erasure of his name.²⁰ As in Atina, this is the first documented emperor who was awarded a statue by this city. Moreover, the mention of the lineage, with Caracalla as the father and Severus as the grandfather of Elagabalus, also in this case reveals the devotion of the city towards these emperors.²¹

In short, a good number of Lucanian cities appear to show a notable devotion to the Severans. This is, so far, one of the most documented dynasties by the inscriptions from this area. Statues to Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus and Severus Alexander were set up in the most important public places of Atina, Cosilinum, Grumentum and Paestum. In the first two centres, in particular, Severan emperors are the first imperial personalities whose honorary monuments are attested. Moreover, if the attribution of a base to the Divine Severus to the temple B of Grumentum is correct, it is also possible that city councils erected temples to the deified members of the dynasty. Admittedly, no inscriptions record either legislative interventions of these emperors or the realization of public works. The majority of monuments are in fact honorary statues, a circumstance that can be explained with the desire to attract the benevolence of the emperors. Atina had at least one personality that was familiar with Severus and Caracalla, M. Tillius Rufus. The fact that he was *patronus municipii* cannot be regarded as a coincidence. Other characters, however, might have played a role in representing the interests of the Lucanian cities at the Severan court. In this regard, the famous Lucanian senatorial family of the Bruttii deserves a special mention. This family owned extensive properties around Volcei and Grumentum, and Bruttia Crispina, the spouse of Commodus, was a member of this *gens*.²² Although there are no inscriptions that attest to special connections between the Bruttii and the Severans, it is important to stress that a few members of this family still held important positions during the reigns of Severus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander. A C. Bruttius Praesens was appointed *salius Palatinus* in 199 and ordinary consul in 217.²³ A L. Bruttius Crispinus was ordinary consul in 224.²⁴ The *Album Canusinum* reports that both of them were *patroni* of Canusium (Apulia) in 223.²⁵ In view of this, the possibility that they also patronised Lucanian cities seems plausible. The examination of other documents from the nearby Samnium and Apulia can provide further food for thought.

Southern Samnium and Apulia

Several inscriptions from the area of Beneventum and northern Apulia indicate that Septimius Severus and Caracalla displayed a notable interest in these regions. The first contacts between the regime and some communities from this area should be dated to the very first years of the reign of Severus. After having eliminated Didius Julianus in the late spring of 193, the emperor left Rome to fight Pescennius Niger's troops in Thrace and Asia. Severus travelled by land, since he had to face a rebellion of his soldiers at Saxa Rubra, on the Via Flaminia.²⁶ However, part of the contingents that were being enlisted in Italy was probably marching to Brundisium through the Via Appia and the Via Traiana.²⁷ During this period, the Ligures Baebiani and Aecae displayed their loyalty to the new regime by setting up statues dedicated to the emperor.²⁸

Four years later, a well-known inscription from Beneventum records that both Septimius Severus and Caracalla rebuilt a bridge (today known as Ponte Leproso) *vetustate dilapsum* at their own expense.²⁹ The text is dated to 198, certainly after January 28th. On this day, in fact, Severus celebrated the capture of Ctesiphon after a successful campaign against the Parthians.³⁰ The emperor thus became *Parthicus maximus* and *imp. XI*, and awarded his son Caracalla the title of Augustus. Since our inscription mentions all these titles, it follows that the monument was set up a few months after the imperial court had passed through Beneventum on its way to Brundisium and the East during the summer of 197.³¹ The passage of Severus and his entourage should have been the occasion for special celebrations, since a fragmentary text from the city records the *[profec]tio orientalis Augustorum [per Asiam e]t Coeles[yriam]*.³² During this period a statue for Caracalla is also documented.³³ The monument was set up by the city, and in the dedicatory inscription Caracalla is still called Caesar and *imperator destinatus*. The statue was thus erected between the second half of 196 and the first weeks of 198, viz. when Caracalla was holding the title of designated emperor.³⁴ The possibility that the statue was decreed when the imperial court passed through the city

²⁰ Only one other base to Elagabalus is documented in Southern Italy. This is a monument from Minturnae (*AE* 1935.22), where the emperor's name, M. Aurelius Antoninus, is erased. It is also true, however, that statue bases for personalities who incurred the *damnatio memoriae* were usually reused; cf. HØJTE 2005, 56–62.

²¹ On Elagabalus as the alleged son Caracalla cf. n. 13 above.

²² On the topic cf. DI GIUSEPPE 2010.

²³ *PIR*² B 166.

²⁴ *PIR*² B 160.

²⁵ *CIL* 9.338 I.13–14. The text has been republished in CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI, 1990, 45–68 no. 35 (*AE* 1990.199).

²⁶ *HA*, Sev. 8.9. Cf. BIRLEY 1999, 108.

²⁷ LETTA 1991, 653.

²⁸ App. nos. 9–10.

²⁹ App. no. 17.

³⁰ On the topic cf. LETTA 1991, 664; BIRLEY 1999, 129–131.

³¹ I.e. after the defeat of Clodius Albinus at Lugdunum, on Feb. 28th, 197. Embarcation in Brundisium: *HA*, Sev. 15.2.

³² *CIL* 9.1560.

³³ App. no. 11.

³⁴ According to MASTINO 1981, 29–30 and KIENAST 1996, 162, the title *imperator destinatus* should be dated to 197, possibly after the battle of Lugdunum between Severus and Clodius Albinus (Feb. 28th, 197). Nonetheless, some inscriptions (*CIL* 3.12123 and 8.5699) report this title when Severus was still *trib. pot. V* and *imp. VIII*, i.e. between Dec. 196 and Feb. 197. For this reason, LETTA 1991, 659 has proposed to date the bestowal of the title *imperator destinatus* to the autumn of 196, when Severus and the court spent a few weeks in Rome.

(or a little before) is certainly attractive.³⁵ During the same period two other statue bases to Caracalla are documented along the Via Traiana, a circumstance that seems to confirm this interpretation.³⁶ One statue was set up in Vibinum, where Caracalla is still holding the rank of Caesar (Jun. 196–Jan. 198),³⁷ and another one in Canusium, where, like in Beneventum, he is called Caesar and *imperator destinatus*.³⁸ Some months after the passage of the emperors, in 198, the city of Gnathia, which is also located on the Via Traiana, honoured Severus and Caracalla.³⁹ Although Severus is already called *Parthicus maximus* and Caracalla *Pius Augustus*, the expression *pro salute salute et victoria* indicates that Severus' second Parthian campaign was still on-going.

A few years later, in 203, Luceria decreed a statue to Caracalla.⁴⁰ In 204, the city of Aeclanum, another centre on the Via Traiana located a few kilometres south of Luceria, set up another similar monument in honour of Caracalla to commemorate the *decennalia* of Severus (which had been celebrated in Rome in 202).⁴¹ Considering that in Apulia numerous statues to Caracalla had been placed during 197–198, this monument is a confirmation of the popularity that the young emperor was still enjoying in these regions.

In 207, the municipality of Beneventum set up two statues to Caracalla and Julia Domna,⁴² which were probably part of an arch placed on the Via Appia.⁴³ The formula at the end of Domna's dedication, *in territorio suo quod cingit etiam Caudinorum civitatem*, seems a reference to a territorial dispute between the cities of Caudium and Beneventum, an issue that was probably resolved by an intervention of the emperor.⁴⁴ The erection of the arch, therefore, should be interpreted as a manifestation of gratitude towards Caracalla and his mother.

Vast restorations of the Via Traiana are again documented around the year 210, when the imperial family was staying in Britain during the Caledonian campaigns of Severus. A milestone from the territory of Aequeum Tuticum, more or less 30 kilometres east from Beneventum, relates that in this period the road was completely reconstructed.⁴⁵ This is indicated by the expressions *amplissimis operibus* and *obiectis molibus*, which refer to the realisation of works of a certain importance, and in particular bridges. Another inscriptions from Aecae, some 40 kilometres further east, records the restorations of the *labentem viam*.⁴⁶ A

fragmentary slab from Canusium in Apulia, which is located on the same road, reports that in 210 the two emperors financed the construction of another bridge (presumably on the river Ofanto), and, probably, an arch.⁴⁷ It is important to note that the emperors financed all these works at their own expense. In fact, the expression *sua pecunia*, which is already documented for the reconstruction of the bridge in Beneventum, is also attested in the inscription from Aequeum Tuticum. *Sua pecunia* is probably a reference to the *fiscus Caesarum*, i.e. the private purse of Severus and Caracalla, which was clearly separated from the *aerarium* of the state.⁴⁸ Considering that in Rome and Italy the attestations of building projects directly financed by emperors are not very common, the decision of Severus and Caracalla to restore *sua pecunia* ample portions of the via Traiana reveals the importance that they attributed to the regions surrounding this road.⁴⁹ The city of Herdonia, which was located along the Via Traiana, dedicated a statue to Caracalla between 208 and 211.⁵⁰ It is plausible that the monument was placed on the occasion of the restorations financed by the emperors.

Finally, a recently published inscription from Compsa, ca. 70 kilometres south east from Beneventum, documents another intervention of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta.⁵¹ Although the poor state of preservation makes the reading of the text difficult, after the titulatures of the three emperors it is possible to recognise the expression *vetustate delapsam restituerunt*. Unfortunately, the lacuna that precedes these words does not permit us to determine what was the object of the restoration. The monument, however, was found in the forum, and its typology, a block measuring almost one meter and a half long, suggests a placement in the walls of a public building, perhaps as an architrave.

All these inscriptions indicate that the attention paid by Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta to the needs of the communities from southern Samnium and Apulia was not an episodic phenomenon. Their interventions did not affect only the maintenance of the road system, but also restorations of public buildings and administrative matters such as the regulation of city boundaries. Although after the death of Severus imperial initiatives are not documented anymore, honorary monuments to the Severan emperors continued to be placed. Herdonia honoured the Divus Severus with a statue (whose base is similar to those from Atina and Grumentum) (Fig. 3).⁵² Venusia dedicated a statue to Caracalla between 213 and 217.⁵³ In 213, an officer of the legion II Traiana who served under Caracalla set up a dedication to this emperor in the environs of

³⁵ Several studies have underlined the connection between imperial visits and placement of honorary statues, cf. HØJTE 2005, 159–165, and FEJFER 2008, 426–427.

³⁶ Cf. CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI, 1990, 20.

³⁷ App. no. 12.

³⁸ App. no. 13.

³⁹ App. no. 14.

⁴⁰ App. no. 15.

⁴¹ App. no. 16.

⁴² App. nos. 18–19.

⁴³ CARFORA 2006, 317–318.

⁴⁴ Cf. TORELLI 2002, 224.

⁴⁵ App. no. 20.

⁴⁶ App. no. 21.

⁴⁷ App. no. 22.

⁴⁸ On the topic cf. PANCIERA 1998, 141–146 (= *Epigrafi*, 456–459).

⁴⁹ PANCIERA 1998, 149–160 (= *Epigrafi*, 461–467) enumerates 35 Italian inscriptions from Augustus to Theodosius where expressions such as *pecunia sua*, *sumptibus eius* or *sua impensa* are documented.

⁵⁰ App. no. 23.

⁵¹ App. no. 24.

⁵² App. no. 26.

⁵³ App. no. 28.

Aecae.⁵⁴ Finally, Luceria decreed a statue to Severus Alexander at some point during his reign.⁵⁵

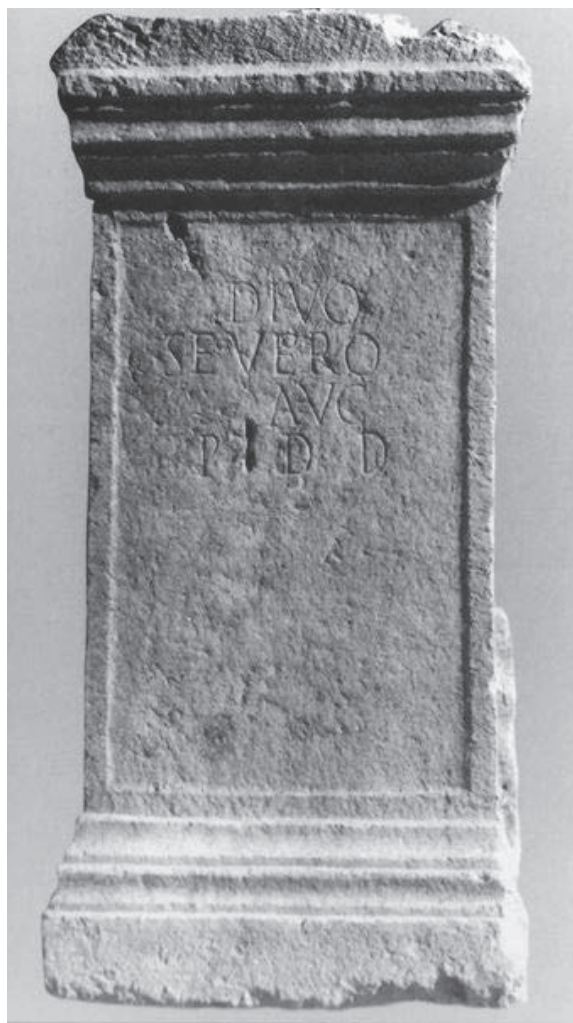


Fig. 3. Statue base to the Divus Severus from Herdonia. Credit: Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (BBAW)

As in the case of Atina in Lucania, it is interesting to note that also some communities from Samnium and Apulia could boast personalities who achieved a certain prominence during the Severan age. The most important one is a member of the ruling class of Beneventum, Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus, whose *cursus honorum* is reported by several inscriptions not only from this city, but also from Abellinum, Ostia and Rome.⁵⁶ After a series of military assignments in the garrison of Rome and in Syria, he was put in charge of the conscription in Northern Italy, presumably before Severus' campaign against Clodius Albinus. Later, he was appointed procurator of Syria Coele. On the occasion of the Parthian campaign of 197–198, he was responsible for the supplies for the army and commander of the fleets of Ravenna and Misenum. He eventually became *praefectus vigilum* during the years following the return of the imperial family from the Eastern provinces. It was more

or less at this time that in the territory of Caudium the city of Beneventum set up the aforementioned statues to Caracalla and Julia Domna in order to reaffirm its control over this area. The dedication to the Syrian Augusta is, in my view, extremely interesting, since Marcius Rustius Rufinus had served in Syria and in Arabia on several occasions. He was in fact *centurio primipilus* in the legions III Gallica (which was stationed near Domna's home city, Emesa) and III Cyrenaica during the years preceding the accession of Severus. After the latter had become emperor, he was again in Syria Coele as procurator. It is plausible that in the course of this period he acquired some familiarity with the Middle Eastern affairs. Therefore, his proximity to the imperial family could have also given him proximity to Julia Domna. It is perhaps significant that he was still *praefectus vigilum* and *vir eminentissimus* during the years from 205 to 207, that is to say after the disappearing of Domna's archenemy Fulvius Plautianus, the prefect of the Guard who was eliminated by Caracalla together with all his numerous supporters.⁵⁷ Consequently, while setting up a statue in honour of Julia Domna – the only statue base for this imperial woman so far documented in the area examined in this contribution – the citizens of Beneventum had presumably in mind the good relationships between their eminent fellow-citizen Rustius Rufinus and Julia Domna. In this regard, it is worth noting that, along with the Divus Severus and Caracalla, the Augusta appears again in 213 on another monument set up by the nearby city of Telesia.⁵⁸

During the reign of Severus and Caracalla, another personality from these territories acquired notable prominence. This is one of the ordinary consuls of 206, M. Nummius Umbrius Primus, who belonged to a family from Compsa with numerous connections to the other cities of Irpinia.⁵⁹ Umbrius Primus was, in fact, *patronus* of Beneventum, where some of his relatives were also elected to important municipal offices. Besides the regular steps of the senatorial *cursus honorum*, his career includes other prestigious appointments, which showcase the favour that he enjoyed at court. These offices include legations in Africa, the juridical office *ad cognoscendas sacras appellationes*, and the governorship of Hispania Citerior and Dalmatia. Although inscriptions never record him as *patronus* of Compsa, it is plausible that he played a role in the decision of Severus, Caracalla and Geta to finance the restoration of a public building in this city.

As for the Apulian area, a fragmentary inscription from Venusia reports the offices of a senator who made a brilliant career under Commodus and Severus.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, many lacunae make it impossible to know the identity of this personality. This senator was *quaestor candidatus* under Severus, i.e. directly chosen by the emperor for this task. Later, he became also governor of

⁵⁴ App. no. 27.

⁵⁵ App. no. 30.

⁵⁶ PIR² M 246. Cf. TORELLI 2002, 225–226.

⁵⁷ On Julia Domna and Plautianus cf. LEVICK 2007, 74–86.

⁵⁸ App. no. 29.

⁵⁹ PIR² N 238. Cf. TORELLI 2002, 228–229; MENNEN 2011, 112–114 with further references.

⁶⁰ App. no. 25.

Africa Proconsularis and *praetor candidatus*, presumably during the reign of Severus or, at the latest, under Caracalla. Another famous inscription from Canusium represents a very interesting piece of evidence concerning the connections between an Apulian city and the Severans. This is the aforementioned *Album Canusinum* dating to 223, which includes a list of personalities that at the time of the engraving were recognised as *patroni* of Canusium.⁶¹ The first five names in the list belong to important ministers and politicians of the reign of Severus Alexander. These are the *praefectus urbi* Appius Claudius Iulianus (I.2), and four other personalities who have been variously identified as *praefecti praetorio*, *Aegypti* or *vigilum* (I.3–6).⁶² Although none of these individuals was from Canusium (nor from Apulia), the fact that they were patronising this community well illustrates the vitality of Canusium during the Severan age and its capacity to forge links with the politics in Rome. Also, the names of other *patroni* mentioned in the list provide further causes for reflection. M. Antonius Balbus (I.7) belonged to a family from Canusium, and should be probably identified with the Antonius Balbus who was *leg. Aug. pr. pr.* in Cilicia during the reign of Severus and suffect consul at some point before 223.⁶³ M. Statius Patruinus (I.8), who belonged to a family with properties in Luceria and Aecae, might have been the legate of Moesia Inferior between 217 and 218.⁶⁴ L. Lucilius Priscilianus (I.20) is particularly interesting. His family was from Ausculum (40 kilometres west from Canusium), and, according to Cassius Dio, Caracalla made him senator and proconsul of Acaia on account of his services as informer and skills as hunter of wild beasts.⁶⁵ Finally, C. Sulpicius Arrenianus (I.25), who might have belonged to a family from Herdonia, was legate of Moesia; Dio mentions him as another informer during the reign of Caracalla.⁶⁶ This rapid examination of the *patroni* of Canusium demonstrates that, as in the case of Lucania and Samnium, during the Severan age the cities of Apulia could count on prominent men of senatorial rank whose local origin should have represented a precious asset to improve their relationship with the emperors. Therefore, the presence of many honorary inscriptions to Severus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander is, in this area, fully justified.

Conclusions

This overview of the epigraphic documentation regarding members of the Severan household from Lucania, southern Samnium, and Apulia showcases the considerable popularity that the dynasty enjoyed in these areas. The frequency with which Septimius Severus and Caracalla are honoured in many important cities does not

seem to be only a consequence of the imperial propaganda, but also the result of the active interest that their government demonstrated for these areas. In this regard, the monumental restoration of Via Traiana is the most evident proof. Further interventions such as the rebuilding of an unknown edifice in Compsa are also documented. A certain number of personalities from the cities of Lucania and Samnium acquired a remarkable prominence during the rule of Severus, Caracalla, and Severus Alexander, thus representing a valuable connection between the southern Italian communities and the imperial government. The praetorian high officer M. Tillius Rufus from Atina, the *vir eminentissimus* Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus from Beneventum, and the senator and consul M. Nummius Umbrius Primus are the most interesting cases. In this context, the placement of statues dedicated to Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Julia Domna, Elagabalus, and Severus Alexander is easily understandable. The fact that specific temples were probably constructed to worship deified members of the dynasty, as the case of Grumentum could demonstrate, is also noteworthy. All this evidence seems to corroborate the idea that at the beginning of the third century local communities from southern Italy still show a notable vitality not only in demonstrating their loyalty and attachment to the imperial house, but also in contributing to the governance and administration of the empire with their best elements.

APPENDIX

I include below the inscriptions mentioning members of the Severan dynasty from Lucania, and, then, southern Samnium and Apulia. In each section the texts are distributed in chronological order.

LUCANIA

1. – CIL 10.5052, Atina (yr. 200): *Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) L. Sep(timi) Severi Pii Perti(nacis) Aug(usti), Arab(ici), Adiab(enici), / Part(hici) max(imi) fil(io), divi M. Antonin[i] / Pii Germ(anici), Sarmat(ici) nep(oti), divi Pii / Antonini pron(epoti), divi Hadriani / abnep(oti), divi Traiani et divi / Nervae adnep(oti), M. Aurelio / Antonino Aug(usto), trib(unicia) pot(estate) III, proco(n)s(uli). / D(ecreto) d(ecurionum) publice.*

2. MELLO, VOZA 1968, 62–64 no. 43, Paestum (yrs. 198–217): *[Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) L. Septimio Severo] Aug(usto) / [- - et imp(eratori) Caes(ari) M. A]ure/[lio Severo] Anto/[nino Aug(usto)] [o]rdo / [decurionu]m.* Despite the fragmentary state of the inscription, the word *Aug(usto)* in l. 1 seems to indicate the presence of Severus' name before that of Caracalla. An attribution to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus is not plausible, since the first is normally mentioned before the latter.

3. – CIL 10.474, Paestum (yrs. 209–213): *[Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) divi? Septimi Severi fil(io), divi M. Antonini Germanici Sarmatici nep]ot(i), divi [Antonini Pii pronep(oti)], / [divi] Hadriani ab[nep(oti), divi Traiani] / [Par]th(ici) et divi Nerv[ae adnepoti], / [M. Aur]ellio*

⁶¹ Cf. n. 25 above.

⁶² Cf. the discussion in SALWAY 2000, 148–170.

⁶³ PIR² A 816, cf. CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI (eds.) 1990, 50.

⁶⁴ CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI 1990, 50–51.

⁶⁵ Dio 79 (78).21.3–5. PIR² L 392, cf. CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI 1990, 51.

⁶⁶ PIR² S 986. Dio 79 (78).21.2. Cf. CHELOTTI, GAETA, MORIZIO, SILVESTRINI 1990, 52.

Antoni[no Pio Fel(ici) Aug(usto)], / [Parth(ico) max(imo)], Brit(annico) max(imo), pont(ifici) [max(imo) - - -].

The *CIL* reports the temple of Neptune as the find spot of this inscription. Caracalla was awarded the title *Britannicus maximus* in 209. The absence of *Germanicus maximus*, which was obtained in 213, could represent a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of this text (cf. KIENAST 1996, 163). For these reasons, it is impossible to ascertain whether Severus was still alive when the inscription was set up. On Caracallas' *cognomina ex virtute* cf. MASTINO 1981, 51–53.

4. – *CIL* 10.334 = *InscrIt* 3.1.128 = *AE* 1986.123, Atina (from yr. 211 onward): *Divo Pi/o Severo / [A]ug(usto). Publice / d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

5. – *AE* 1998.385, Grumentum (from yr. 211 onward): *Divo / Severo / publice.*

6. – *InscrIt* 3.1.225, Cosilinum (yrs. 218–222): *Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) / divi Magni / Antonini Pii / fil(io), divi Seve/ri nep(oti), M. Aure/lio Antoni/no Pio Fel(ici) Aug(usto) / d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

7. – *InscrIt* 3.1.129 = *AE* 1969/70.171, Atina (yrs. 222–235): *[Imp(eratori)] Caes(ari) M. Au/[relio] Severo / [Alex]andro Pio / [Fe]l(ici) Aug(usto), div[i] Seve/ri Pii nep[ot]i, divi / [Ant]onini Magni Pii / [fili]o, pon(tifici) max(imo). / D(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

8. – MELLO, VOZA 1968, 67–68 no. 46, Paestum (yrs. 222–235): *[D(omino) n(ostro) Im]p(eratori) [Caesari] / M. Aurell[i]o Severo / Alex[a]ndr[o P(io) F(elici) Aug(usto)].*

SOUTHERN SAMNIUM AND APULIA

9. – *AE* 1988.390, Ligures Baebiani (yr. 194): *Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) / L. Septimio S[e]vero Pertin[a]ci Aug(usto), pont(ifici) ma[x(imo)], / trib(unicia) potest(ate) II, imp(eratori) III, co(n)s(uli) II, / proco(n)s(uli), p(atri) p(atriciae), / d(ecreto) / d(ecurionum).*

10. – *CIL* 9.950, Aecae (yr. 195?): *[Imp(eratori)] Caes(ari) L. S[e]ptimio / [Sev]ero Pertina[ci] Aug(usto), p(ontifici) m(aximo)], / [tr]ib(unicia) pot(estate) III, imp(eratori) III, [co(n)s(uli) II], / p(atri) p(atriciae), / p(ublice) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum), / [col(onia) Au]gusta Apu[lorum?].*

There are a few issues with the dating of this inscription. *Trib. pot. III* refers to the period Dec. 194–Dec. 195, but Severus became *imp. IV* in the spring of 194 after the defeat of Niger (KIENAST 1996, 212), cf. SILVESTRI 1999, 42–44 no. A9.

11. – *AE* 1969/70.168, Beneventum (yrs. 196–198): *M. Aurelio / Antonino Caes(ari), / Imp(eratoris) Caes(ari) L. Septimi / Severi Pii Perti/nacis A[u]g(usti) filio, / imp(eratori) destinat[o], / Colonia Iulia / Concordia Au[g(usta)] / Felix / Beneventum.*

12. – *AE* 1991.518, Vibinum (yrs. 196–198): *M. Aurelio / Antonino / Caesari, / Imp(eratoris) Caes(ari) L. Septimi Severi Pii Per/tinacis Aug(usti) Arabi/ci Adia/benici p(atris) p(atriciae) filio, / colonia Vibina.*

13. – *AE* 1924.134, Canusium (yrs. 196–198): *M. Aurelio An/tonino Caes(ari), / imp(eratori) destinato, / Imp(eratoris) Caes(ari) L. Septimi Severi Pii Per/tinacis Aug(usti) Arabi(c)i / Adiabenici, pontiff(ici) / max(imi), fortissimi ac / maximi et super om/nes providentissimi / principis filio, voto / numini Minervae / suscepto, / ordo populusque / Canusinus.*

14. – *Suppl. It.* 23 (1993): 31–32 no. 4 (Marcella Chelotti) = *AE* 1993.503, Gnathia (yr. 198): *Pro salute / et victoria / domin(or)um nn(ostorum) Imp(eratoris) / Caes(ari) L. Septimi Se/ve[ri] Pii Pertina/cis Aug(usti) Arab(ici) Adiab(enici) Part(hici) m(aximi), [tr(ibunicia) po]t(estate) / VII, imp(eratoris), co(n)s(uli) II, et / Imp(eratoris) Caes(ari) M. Au/reli Antonini / [P]ii Aug(usti), [trib(unicia) po]t(estate), / publice.*

15. – *CIL* 9.788, Luceria (yr. 203): *[Imp(eratori) Caesa]/[ri] M. Au[relio] An/tonino Au[gusto] Pio], / trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, [co(n)s(uli), pro]/co(n)s(uli), [- - -] / col(onia) Lu[ceria].*

16. – MARTINIELLO 1996, 85, Aeclanum (yr. 204): *Imp(eratori) Caesari / M. Aurelio / Antonino Pio / Felici Augusto, / trib(unicia) potest(ate) VII, co(n)s(uli) desig(nato) II, / Imp(eratoris) Caes(ari) L. Septimi Se/veri Pii Pertinac(is) Aug(usti) / Arab(ici) Adiab(enici) Parth(ici) max(imi), / trib(unicia) potestat(e) XII, imp(eratoris) XI, / co(n)s(uli) III, p(atris) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(uli), filio, / ob vota decennalia.*

17. – *CIL* 9.2122 = 5995 = 10.6923, Beneventum (yr. 198): *Imp(erator) Caesar L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax / [Aug(ustus), Arabicus, Adiabenicus, Parthicus maximus], / pontif(ex) maximus, trib(unicia) potest(ate) VI, imp(erator) XI, co(n)s(ul) II, p(ater) p(atriciae), proc(o)n(sul) et / Imp(erator) Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus Aug(ustus), Imp(eratoris) Severi Aug(usti) f(ilius), / trib(unicia) potest(ate), proco(n)s(ul), / pontem vetustate dilapsum a solo sua pecunia restituerunt.*

18. – CARFORA 2006, 316–318 no. 63, Caudium (yr. 207): *Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) / L. Septimi Severi Pii Perti/nacis Aug(usti) Arab(ici) Adiab(enici) / Parth(ici) maximi f(ilio), divi Marci / Antonini Pii Germ(anici) Sarm(atici) / nep(oti), divi Antonini Pii pro/nepoti, divi Hadriani abnep(oti), / divi Traiani Parth(ici) et divi / Nervae adnepoti, M. Aurelio / Antonino Pio Felici Aug(usto) / trib(unicia) pot(estate) X, imp(eratori) / II, co(n)s(uli) II, design(ato) III, / Colonia Iulia / Concordia Aug(usta) / Felix Beneventum, / devota maiestati eius, / [in territorio / suo quod cingit / etiam Caudinorum / civitatem muro tenus].*

The reconstruction of the last three lines is possible thanks to the comparison with no. 19.

19. – CIL 9.2165, Caudium (yr. 207): *Juliae Aug(ustae), / Imp(eratoris) Caesaris / [L.] Septimi Severi Pii / Pertinac(is) Aug(usti) Arab(ici) / Adiab(enici) Part(hici) max(im)i, / matri Augusti / et castrorum, / colonia Iulia / Concordia Aug(usta) / Felix Beneventum, / devota maiestati / Augg(ustorum), in territorio / suo quod cingit / etiam Caudinorum / civitatem muro tenus.*

The comparison with no. 18 (Caracalla's trib. pot. X) provides the dating of this inscription.

20. – CIL 9.6010, Aequum Tuticum (yr. 210): *[I]mp(erator) Cae[sar] / [L.] S[e]ptimius Se[verus] / [P]ius Pertinax Aug(ustus), / [A]rab(icus), Adiab(enicus), Par[t(hicus) max(imus)], / [B]ritannic(us) max(imus), [fortis]/[s]i[m]us, feliciss(imus), pon[tif(ex)] / [m]ax(imus), trib(unicia) potest(ate) X[VIII], / [im]p(erator) XII, co(n)s(ul) III, p(ater) p(atriciae), p[roco(n)s(ul)], / [et I]mp(erator) Cae(sar) M. Aure[lius] / [A]ntoninus Aug(ustus) Pi[us] Fe[l]ix, Britannic(us), trib(unicia) [po]/[tes]t(ate) XIII, co(n)s(ul) III, p(ater) p(atriciae), [proc(onsul)], / [l]abentem viam [am]/[pl]issimis operib[us] / [s]usceperunt ob[ie]/[c]tis[m]ue molib[us] / [su]a pecunia mu[n]ierunt.*

21. – AE 1972.139 = AE 1981.246, Aecae (yr. 210): *[Imp(erator) Cae(sar)] / [L.] Septimius Severus] / [Pius Pertinax Aug(ustus), Arab(icus)] / [Adiab(enicus) Part(hicus) max(imus), Britann(icus)] / [max(imus), pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate)] / [XVIII, imp(erator) XII, co(n)s(ul) III, p(ater) p(atriciae)] / proco(n)s(ul) et Im[p(erator) Cae(sar)] / M. Aurelius Antoninus / Aug(ustus) Pius Felix, Britann(icus), / trib(unicia) potest(ate) XIII, [co(n)s(ul) III], / p(ater) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(ul), / labentem vi[am] - - -]*
The inscription has been republished in SILVESTRI 1999, 45–46 no. A10.

22. – AE 1969/70, 135, Canusium (yr. 210): *[Imp(erator) Cae(sar) L.] Septimi/[us Severus] Pi[us] Pert(inax) Aug(ustus), / [Arab(icus), Adiab(enicus), P]art(hicus) max(imus), / [Britannic(us) ma]x(imus), pont(ifex) max(imus), / [trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVIII, im]p(erator) XII, co(n)s(ul) III, / [p(ater) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(ul)] et / [Imp(erator) Cae(sar) M. Au]relius An[toninus] Aug(ustus) Pi[us] Fel[ix], trib(unicia) / [pot(estate) XIII, co(n)s(ul) III, p(ater) p(atriciae)] / [- - -] fundam[en]ta (?) ar[is] / [cus - - -] um pon[unt] / [tem - - -] vi flu[m]i[nis] - - -].*
The inscription has been republished in SILVESTRI 1999, 100–101 no. Cb2.

23. – AE 1967.92, Herdonia (yrs. 208–211): *[Imp(eratori) Cae(sari)] / M. Au[r]elio / [Ant]onino / [Pi]o Felici Aug(usto), / co(n)s(uli) III, / Imp(eratoris) Cae(saris) L. Septimi / Severi Pii Pert(inacis) Aug(usti) / filio, / p(ublice) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

24. – AE 2010.354, Compsa (yrs. 209–211): *[Imp(erator) Cae(sar) divi M. Antonini Pii Germanic(i), Sarmatic(i) fil(ius), divi Antonini Pii nep(os)], / [divi Hadriani pronep(os), divi Traiani Parthici et divi Nervae ab]nep(os), / [L. Septimius Severus Pertinax Aug(ustus) Arabic(us), Adiab(enicus), Parthicus(us)] max[imus] / [- - -]*

et] / [Imp(erator) Cae(sar) divi M. Antonini Pii Germanic(i), Sarmatic(i)] nep(os), divi An[tonini] Pii pronep(os), divi Hadriani abnep(os), divi] Traiani Parthici et divi Nervae ad]nepos, [- - -] / [M. Aurelius Antoninus Aug(ustus) Parthicus(us) max(imus) [[[et P. Septimius Geta, nob(ilissimus) Cae(sar)]]] <<Britannic(us) max(imus)>>, tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) [- - -] / [- - -] vetusta]te delapsu[m] restituerunt.

According to BUONOPANE 2011, 334, who published the inscription, the layout of the text is approximate owing to the poor state of preservation.

25. – CIL 9.431 = 437 = AE 1969/70.143 = Suppl. It. 20 (2003): 127–128 no. 11 (Marcella Chelotti) = AE 2003.365, Venusia (ca. yrs. 200–217): *- - - - - / [III]vir(o) viar(um) curanda]r(um) trib(un)o mil(itum) [leg(ionis) - - -] / [donato donis militari]b(us) ab Imp(eratore) Co[m]modo Aug(usto) - - -] / [- - -] has]tis puris d[uabus] - - -] / [quaest(ori) candi]dato Imp(eratoris) Seve[ri] Aug(usti) - - -] / [leg(ato) pr(o) pr(aetore) provin]ciae Africae [- - -] / [praetor(i)] candidato [- - -] / - - - - -*

26. – AE 1967.90, Herdonia (from yr. 211 onward): *Divo / Severo / Aug(usto) / p(ublice) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

27. – ILS 5433, Aecae (yr. 213): *[Imp(eratori) Cae(sari)] M. Aurelio Antonino] / [Parth(ico) max(im)o, Brittann(ico) max(im)o], / [Germ(anico) max(im)o, pontifi]ci max(im)o, trib(unicia)] / [p]ot(estate) XVI, imp(eratori) II, co(n)s(uli) II[II], / [p]roco(n)s(uli), patri patria[e], / M. Aurelius Nigrinu[s, e]/vocatus Aug(usti) n(ostri) impo[situs] / ordinibus in leg(ione) II Tra(iana), [de]/votus numini eius, eu[ndem] / lucum Aquilonensem in[co]/luit et consecrav[it] III Idus Au[g(ustas)], / Aurelio Antonino Pio Felic[e] Aug(usto) IIII co(n)s(ule).*

28. – CIL 9.429, Venusia (yrs. 213–217). Fragment a: *Imp(eratori) Cae(sari) / M. Aurelio / Antonino Pio / Fel(ici) Aug(usto) Parth(ico) - - -].* Fragment b: *- - - - - / co(n)s(uli) IIII, p(atri) p(atriciae), proco(n)s(uli), / divi Severi fil(io), / p(ublice) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).*

29. – CIL 10.3835, Telesia (yrs. 213–217): *[Divo Septimio Seve]ro Pio Per[stinaci] Aug(usto) Arab(ico) Adiab(enico) Par[thico] / [maximo et Imp(eratori) Cae(sari) M.] Aurelio A[ntonino] Pio Felic[i] Augu[sto], Par[thico] / [max(im)o, Britannico max(im)o, Germanico m]ax(im)o, p(atri) p(atriciae) et Iul[iae] Aug(ustae), matri Aug(usti) n(ostri) et c[astroru]m], / [colonia] Telesia d[evotissima] num[ini] eoru[m].*

The supplement *Divo Severo* should be preferred to *Imp. Caes. L. Septimio*, which is proposed by Mommsen in CIL. In fact, the titles *Parth. max.*, *Brit. max.* appeared in Caracalla's titulature after the death of Severus. *Germ. max.* was bestowed on the emperor in 213, cf. MASTINO 1981, 50–57; KIENAST 1996, 163.

30. – CIL 9.789, Luceria (yrs. 222–235): *[Imp(eratori) C]aes(ari) M. / [Aureli]o Seve[ro] / [Alex]and[r]o [- - -] / Pio Fe[l]ici A[u]g(usto), / pont(ifici) [m]ax(im)o,*

tri[b(unicia) pot(estate)], / [- - -] p(atri) p(atriae), / d(ecreto) d(ecurionum).

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