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A DOMITIANIC FLEET DIPLOMA

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 120 (1998) 250–252

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T. Aurelius Fulvus, consul for the second time (L. Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses* [Prague² 1982] 78). A recently published diploma naming Fulvus and issued during the same period served as the basis for our reconstruction (M. Roxan and W. Eck, *ZPE* 96 [1993] 67-74). On March 1, 85, two *suffecti iterum* consuls, Rutilius Gattilius and Valerius Messalinus, took over from Domitian and Fulvus (L. Vidman, *Fasti Osti.* [see n. 3] pp.44 and 78ff.). Since military diplomas do not continue to carry the names of the consuls *ordinarii* into the year when they have been replaced by *suffecti*, the consular name on our fragment indicates a date of issue within the first two months of AD 85.

The nature of the diploma (fleet, *auxilia*, urban cohort or praetorian guard) is more elusive. However, on the basis of typological arguments, it may be determined by using the process of elimination.³ Witnesses of diplomas issued specifically to veterans both of the praetorian guard and the urban cohorts appear to have signed only once in their lifetime. This is clearly not the case in our fragment since the names of its witnesses can be found on several other diplomas spanning at least a four year period. In diplomas issued to veterans of the *auxilia*, the space in tabella II between the consular names and the recipient's name is usually filled with three lines of text: the first one mentions the unit of the recipient followed by the words *cui praest.*, the second line has the unit commander's name in the nominative,⁴ the third and final line gives the status of the recipient in the dative (*pediti, equiti*, etc.) or with *ex* and ablative (*ex pediti, ex equite*, etc.; cf. indices to *CIL XVI*, p. 188ff.). The words within those three lines are almost always centered. Had our diploma been delivered to a veteran of the *auxilia*, at least part of this information would have appeared, since our fragment covers just a little less than half of the standard diploma's width.

After eliminating all other possibilities the only option left at this point is that of a fleet diploma. Positive evidence comes from the standard practice in fleet diploma of either leaving a line blank between the consular names and the identity of the recipient⁵ or filling it with a few words indicating the soldier's rank or function. In the case of our fragment, the sailor's rank could have easily fit on the lost left half of line 2. In a fleet diploma from the time of Vespasian (AD 79), for instance, the words *ex remigibus* appear on tabella II in the line directly above the veteran's name and are centered more to the left than to the right (*CIL XVI* 24; see drawing in *JRS* 1926). In addition, one of the lines below has exactly the same word break as our fragment's line 4: *Descriptum et recognitum ex tabu-*; if one draws a vertical line starting from where *remigibus* stops down into this particular line below, one notices that it cuts through the text almost exactly where our own fragment begins (*nitum ex tabu-*). This demonstrates beyond doubt that there was sufficient space to accommodate the sailor's rank on the lost part of our diploma.

If the soldier had carried a peregrine name only, by far the most common occurrence on Roman diplomas, the line mentioning his name, father's name and geographical origin would have opened with: the peregrine name proper in the dative, the name of his father in the genitive followed by *f(ilio)*, and finally the ethnic, oftentimes abbreviated.⁶ Considering what is left on the line (i.e. *-cisso, Maron.*), our veteran could only have had a full Roman name. The whole line would have included successively: the abbreviated *praenomen*, the *nomen gentile* in full (in the dative), the name of the soldier's father (in the genitive) followed by *f(ilio)*, the recipient's *cognomen* and finally the ethnic, both of them in the dative.⁷ Among *cognomina* ending in *-cissus*, Narcissus is by far the most common in the first two centuries of the empire, including among soldiers.⁸ A member of the praetorian cohorts in Rome bears the name of Q. Aufelinus Narcissus (*CIL* 6.3250A.III.1, 32520A.III 1).

³ I am particularly indebted to Margaret Roxan for the following discussion (letter from March 8, 1995).

⁴ See, for instance, M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977* (London 1978) #3, tab. II, lines 24-26 (p. 32): *Alae Phrygum cui praest. | M. Helenius Priscus | Gregali*.

⁵ *CIL XVI* 32; for a photo, see A.E. Gordon, *Illustrated Introduction to Latin Epigraphy* (Berkeley 1983) #51, pl. 32.

⁶ For this type of sequence, see tab. II, line 27 of the diploma quoted in n. 5. *Dassio Dasentis f(ilio), Pannon(io)*.

⁷ For another example of this sequence, see M. Roxan, *Rom. Mil. Dipl.* 1985-1993 (London 1994) #38, line 16.

⁸ H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch* (Berlin 1982) vol. 2, 1100-1102. For Narcissus as a gladiator's name, cf. L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris 1940) 296, 301, 330, n. 5.

Mommsen noticed very early on how sailors tend to retain their native, peregrine, name in all fleet diplomas issued until at least AD 79 (*Hermes* 16 [1881] 467ff.). Later on, some rather debatable epigraphic evidence emerged outside of the realm of diplomas seemingly pointing to a slightly earlier date (ca. AD 71) than the one chosen by Mommsen for the adoption of the *tria nomina* by sailors.⁹ However, from Mommsen's time up to now, no fleet diploma was known showing a recipient's *tria nomina* before AD 129.¹⁰ Around this chronological conundrum revolves a much thornier issue: do *tria nomina* indicate that their bearer enjoyed full Roman rights as well? This is not the place to engage in this debate, but providing our reconstruction of a full Roman name for our sailor is right and our estimated date of issue is accurate, our small fragment might very well be the earliest attestation of a sailor bearing a full Roman name *on his diploma*.

The veteran's hometown, abbreviated *Maron.*, is otherwise unknown in military diplomas; it is probably Maroneia, a Greek port city on the coast of Thrace which was a *civitas libera* linked to Rome by treaty since the 2nd century BC.¹¹ The ancient city is currently under excavation.¹² Notably, the soldier's place of origin is highly specific instead of being absorbed in the usual abbreviated ethnic as in most diplomas.¹³ Here, for instance, one would expect *Thrac.* instead of *Maron.* There are two possible explanations that could account for this oddity. First, because Maroneia was a free Greek city in Thrace, bound to Rome by treaty, it was not officially part of the province of Thrace. The second explanation is far more convoluted and is based on the assumption that Narcissus served in a provincial fleet. As a rule, provincial fleets would draft extensively from their home province (C.G. Starr, *op. cit.* [n. 10] 108) and their diplomas tend to be more specific when it comes to naming the veteran's hometown than in those of the more cosmopolitan Italian fleets.¹⁴

The last two lines on the inside fragment contain the standard formula usually incised at the end of *tabella II* in the reign of Domitian. It was a reminder that the document delivered to the soldier was only the individualized copy of the original Imperial decree on display in Rome on the Capitoline. Such formulas are traditionally less specific on *tabellae II* than those on *tabellae I* which can be extremely detailed in their description of the publication site.¹⁵ The question raised by our fragments is how did the text end, with *Romae* at the end of line 5 or with *in Capitolio* in an hypothetical line 6? *Tabellae II* of Domitianic diplomas, at least until 88, always mention *in Capitolio* (*CIL XVI* 29, 31, 32, 33, 35); it is only from 90 onwards that *Romae* alone begins to appear (*CIL XVI* 36, 38, 39). Since our diploma dates to AD 85, one can reasonably assume that it ended with a mention of the Capitoline. The formula *in Capitolio*, incidentally, did not have to be centered even with a whole line's space available; it could be confined to the left hand side of the line, as exemplified in another, earlier, fleet diploma (*CIL XVI* 24).

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⁹ C.G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy: 31 BC - AD 324* (New York 1941) 71, nn. 19 and 20; criticized by D. Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn 1966) 28.

¹⁰ A. Mocsy, "Die Namen der Diplomempfänger" in *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*, W. Eck and H. Wolff eds. (Köln 1986), 437-466.

¹¹ D. Triantaphyllos "Symmakhia Rhômaiôn kai Marônitôn", *Praktika tou H' Dienthous synedriou Hellenikês* 1 (Athens 1984) 278-280.

¹² Reports published in *Praktika tês en Athênais Arkhaiol. Hetair.* 1971-; for ancient sources and geography, see D. Lazarides, *Marôneia kai Orthêgoria*, Ancient Greek Cities, 16 (Athens 1972).

¹³ See M. Speidel, "The Soldiers' Homes" in *Heer und Integrationspolitik* (above, n. 10) 467-481.

¹⁴ In diplomas of the *Classis Alexandrina*, for instance, Egyptian sailors' Latin names are followed by their individual *nomes* (cf. C.G. Starr, *op. cit.* [n. 10] 111).

¹⁵ For a list of specific publication sites on *tabellae I* of Domitianic diplomas, cf. M. Roxan - W. Eck, *ZPE* 96 (1993) 73-74: e.g. *Romae in Capitolio in tribunali Caesarum Vespasiani, T(iti), Domitiani* (*CIL XVI* 28), *Romae in Capitolio in latere dextro tabularii publici* (dipl. dated 21/21 Feb. AD 85, published in same article).