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A DOMITIANIC FLEET DIPLOMA

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tabella II: intus

A DOMITIANIC FLEET DIPLOMA

The piece is roughly rectangular and measures 7.2 x 6.5 cm. It presents the usual greenish discoloration typical of corroded bronze and is incribed on both sides. When looking at the inner side (*intus*), only the right and lower edges are original. The left straight edge is the result of later cutting while the upper, jagged, edge shows traces of breaking. The outer side (*extrinsecus*) has a border of two deeply engraved parallel grooves running along the original edges; they clearly belong to the original manufacturing. After the fragment was cut out, its inner side was punched violently at least twice in the middle using an instrument approximately 1 cm. in diameter, which may account for the slightly concave shape of the fragment as a whole.

This fragment of a Roman military diploma, more specifically the lower right corner of tabella II, appeared in 1993 on the antiquities market. It is in the process of being purchased for the Corine Alice MacDaniel collection at Harvard.¹

tabella II: extrinsecus

LONGINI COS LVO • II **SEVERI** CISSO • MARON **IUSTI** ITUM • EX • TABU SU EST • ROMAE intus: ca. 22 lines [Imp. Caes. Domitiano Aug. Germanico XI] T. Aurelio Fullvo II co(nsulibu)s. 2 [vacat Nar]cisso, Maron(eio). 4 [Descriptum et recogn]itum ex tabu-[la aenea quae fixa] est Ro(vv)mae 6 [in Capitolio. vacat] vacat extrinsecus: C. Iuli] Longini 2 C. Iuli]Severi [M. Calpurni] Iusti 4 Q. Iuni]Sy[llae] 6

The issuing date of the diploma can be safely narrowed down to AD 85, probably between January 1 and February 30, by moving from more general to more specific arguments. The names inscribed on the outer side are those of witnesses who signed diplomas on a regular basis between 84 and 88. Both C. Iulius Longinus and C. Iulius Severus appear together on a diploma dated to 85 (cf. *CIL* XVI 31); M Calpurnius Iustus appears first on a diploma dated to 86 (*CIL* XVI 32), then, again, two years later, on at least three other diplomas.² Our restoration of the fourth name, although quite precarious compared to that of the three first names, is based on the witness list of a diploma issued in AD 84 (*CIL* XVI 30). Finally, the consul mentioned in our fragment was Domitian's *ordinarius* during the first two month of 85:

¹ I am grateful to David G. Mitten, curator of the collection, for his permission to publish the piece. I also thank Christopher Jones and Margaret Roxan for their editorial support.

² CIL XVI 35 and M. Roxan, Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977 (London 1978) #3 and #5, pp. 32 and 35.

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 pedite*, *ex pedite*, 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.

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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. However, from Mommsen's time up to now, no fleet diploma was known showing a recipient's *tria nomina* before AD 129. 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. 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).