

DUNCAN FISHWICK

EXTRAVAGANT HONOURS AT MELLARIA

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 128 (1999) 283–292

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

EXTRAVAGANT HONOURS AT MELLARIA*

A C(aio) Sempronio Sperato
 flamini Divorum Augg(i.e. Auggustorum)
 provinciae Baeticae
 Imp(eratore) Nerva Traiano Caes(are) Aug(usto) Germ(anico) II{I}
 <A(ulo) Vic'i'rio 'Martiali' et L(ucio) Ma'e'cio Postumo co(n)s(ulibu)s
 hic provinciae Baeticae consensu flaminif's'
 munus est consequutus peracto honore
 flamininico e'i' FECIALI omn(is) concilii consensus
 statuam decrevit.
 huic ordo Mellariensis decreverunt sepult(urae locum)
 impens(am) funeris laud(ationem) statuas equestres duas
 [- - -] Venusta uxor honore accept(o)
 imp(ensa) remissa p(osuit)
 CIL 2/7, 799 = AE, 1987, 539 = CIL 2, 2344

With the whereabouts of the original base unascertainable, this curious inscription is known today only from the copies that have come down since the early nineteenth century, when the stone may still have been visible, built into the inner wall of Sta. María del Castillo, the parish church of Fuente Ovejuna, province of Córdoba¹. The main features of the document have been brought into focus in recent years by A. U. Stylow, whose fundamental analysis provides what is presently the established version of the text and the standard survey of its principal characteristics². According to the manuscript tradition the characters of ll. 1–3 were of larger size, but Stylow suggests that the rest will have been inscribed in smaller, closely written litterae librariae like those of the honorific dedications on statue pedestals of later provincial flamines at Corduba. Notable features include such idiosyncracies as the construction *ad sensum ordo . . . decreverunt*, the use of *posuit* preceded by two ablative absolutes, and the word *munus* for a priestly office, anomalies that can nevertheless be paralleled elsewhere in Baetica or at Mellaria itself. Of particular interest is that into the middle of the record has been inserted what looks to be, at least in part, a paraphrase or resumé of the honorific text that stood below the statue which the provincial council unanimously decreed at Corduba (ll. 5–9). These lines aside, however, the sense of the Mellaria inscription is perfectly clear. The local ordo has decreed extravagant honours to C. Sempronius Speratus, flamen Divorum Augg(ustorum) provinciae Baeticae³, including not only funeral expenses

* I am very much indebted to Profs. W. Eck and A. U. Stylow for helpful criticism and generous assistance with suggestions and corrections.

¹ A. U. Stylow kindly writes that the base of Speratus may still be embedded in the wall of the church porch, opposite the statue base of his relative Sempronia Varilla (CIL 2²/7, 800), though the inscribed stone could be simply the front part of a base composed of various pieces. Whether the version published by friends in the book of L. M. Ramírez y de las Casas-Deza (1838) depends on autopsy or is derived in part from Morales, *Antigüedades . . .* (1556) is uncertain, but the version of Morales is any event based on a MS letter of Fernández Franco from 12 September, 1571 (ll. 1–3 and 10 only), perhaps itself derived from the text of Ginés de Sepúlveda, who came from nearby Pozoblanco. For the manuscript tradition see Stylow ad CIL 2²/7, 799, Hübner ad CIL 2, 2344, both noting that in the version of Morales the lines are divided differently. While Franco and Casas-Deza preserve a reliable line division of ll. 1–3, the remaining lines were transmitted in continuous writing. Their present (plausible) division goes back to Hübner.

² *Id.*, *Beiträge zur lateinischen Epigraphik im Norden der Provinz Córdoba*, MDAI(M) 28, 1987, 57–126 at 100–103, giving the text now largely reproduced as CIL 2/7, 799 (above). In ll. 10f. W. Eck kindly suggests *sepult(uram)*, *l impens(am) funeris, laud(ationem)* . . . ; cf. D. Fishwick, *Flavian Regulations at the Sanctuary of the Three Gauls?*, ZPE 124, 1999, 249–260 at 254f., n. 40. See now briefly C. Castillo, *Los flamines provinciales de la Bética*, REA 100, 1998, 437–460 at 453.

³ This is the commonest form of the priestly title, appearing in twelve of the approximately twenty-three records of

and a eulogy but also two equestrian statues, the base of one of which bore this dedication in his honour. Whether one or more *statuae pedestres* might have also have been mentioned in the gap before the name of Sempronius' wife Venusta, who supported the costs (l. 12), must remain uncertain⁴.

I

A preliminary difficulty arises from the allusion in l. 4 to the consulship of Trajan, recorded in the tralatician version as his third⁵. As this is juxtaposed with the consulships of <A.> Vicirius Martialis and L. Maecius Postumus in l. 5, the *suffecti* for July-August of A.D. 98⁶, R. Étienne proposed that the figure III should be emended to II so as to accord with Trajan's second term of office in A.D. 98⁷; on this supposition the supposed third stroke of Trajan's consulship would be the misread praenomen A(ulo) of Vicirius Martialis⁸. The suggestion was accepted by A. Degrassi in a written response to Étienne's correction and has been subsequently adopted by all later commentators⁹. As Stylow rightly emphasizes, however, to combine the *ordinarii* who began the year with a pair of *suffecti* who served for part of it is "ganz ungewöhnlich" – especially so when only the second *ordinarius* is mentioned, in this case none other than the emperor Trajan, who strictly speaking assumed the consulship in *absentia* and did not in fact become emperor until the death of his adoptive father, Nerva, on 27th January A.D. 98¹⁰. In fact one might question whether such a combination is possible at all. In 98 Trajan laid down the fasces at the end of June, whereupon he was succeeded in July and August by Vicirius Martialis and Maecius Postumus. As the priesthood of Sempronius Speratus is firmly dated under these – <A.> Vicirio Martiali et L. Maecio Postumo *co*ss. | *hic* provinciae Baeticae *consensu* flaminis | *munus* est *consequutus* (ll. 5–7) – a preliminary reference to the months from January to June makes no apparent sense. It is true that instances of double dating occasionally occur but none of these provides a plausible equivalent to the Mellaria example¹¹. A possible explanation might be that the Mellarians have added

provincial priests of Baetica. See further CIL 2²/7, 282, 291, 292, 293, 295, 296, AE 1974, 376, CIL 2, 1475, 3395, ILPGr 8, AAC 7, 1996, 251–264. Other variants of the formula are *flamen Augustalis* in Baetica (CIL 2, 3271); *flamen provinciae Baeticae* (CIL 2, 1614); *flamen designatus provinciae Baeticae* (CIL 2²/7, 294); *flaminialis provinciae Baeticae* (AE, 1982, 520, EE 8, 89, CIL 2²/7, 297); *flamen Aug. provinciae Baeticae* (AE, 1974, 369); *flam. provinciae Baeticae* (CIL 2²/7, 221); two other texts give only the word *flamonium* (CIL 2²/7, 255, 259). The flamine of Sempronius Speratus is the first priesthood of Baetica that can be dated with any precision. On the earlier record at Castulo, probably to be dated under Domitian, see D. Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West* (EPRO 108), Leiden 1987, I, 2, 219–239 ad CIL 2, 3271. See further Castillo (n. 2) 443–457, listing twenty-five priests and one priestess, to whom should now be added L. Licinius L. f. Gal. Montanus Sarapio, AAC 7, 1996, 251–264. Three of these priesthoods are doubtful cases as the provincial affiliation depends upon a restoration.

⁴ Stylow (n. 2) 101, 102.

⁵ A. Degrassi, *I Fasti Consolari dell'Impero Romano* (Sussidi Eruditi 3), Rome 1952, 30, A.D. 100: Imp. Traianus III, Sex. Iulius Frontinus III.

⁶ Degrassi (n. 5) 29; L. Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses*², Prague, 1982, 45, 93; W. Eck in *RE Suppl.* 14, 1974, col. 853, Vicirius 3.

⁷ R. Étienne, *Le Culte impérial dans la Péninsule ibérique d'Auguste à Dioclétien* (BEFAR 191), Paris, 1958, 127f. Degrassi, *ibid.*, gives the *ordinarii* for A.D. 98 as Imp. Nerva IIII, Imp. Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus II.

⁸ J. Deininger, *Zur Begründung des Provinzialkultes in der Baetica*, *MDAI(M)* 5, 1964, 167–179 at 175, n. 53.

⁹ Étienne (n. 7) 128, n. 7; Deininger, *loc. cit.*; Stylow (n. 2) 102f. with n. 119. noting the convincing suggestion of Étienne, *loc. cit.*, that the lapicide (*ordinator*?) looks to have telescoped the titulature of Nerva and Trajan in giving the formula Imp. Nerva Traiano Caes. Aug. Germ. . . . The title of Nerva was in fact Imp. Caesar Nerva Aug. or Imp. Nerva Caesar Aug., that of Trajan Imp. Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus: cf. R. Cagnat, *Cours d'épigraphie latine*, Paris 1914, 192f.

¹⁰ Stylow (n. 2) 102f. with n. 120, observing that the *Fasti* seem not to be concerned with such technicalities: Degrassi (n. 6) *loc. cit.*; Vidman (n. 6) *loc. cit.*

¹¹ For a dating by a double pair of consuls, first *suffecti* then *ordinarii*, see W. Eck, *Consules Ordinarii und Consules Suffecti als eponyme Amtsträger*, *Epigraphia: Actes du Colloque en mémoire de Attilio Degrassi* (Coll. de l'École franç. de Rome 143), Rome 1991, 15–44 at 23f., citing CIL 6, 2120 (= ILS 8380): November 3, A.D. 155. The explanation in this instance looks to be that this is an extract from the official day-book of the pontiffs, which was arranged year by year under *ordinarii* with entries during a year listed according to the *suffecti* in office at the time. A double dating at the end of the s.c.

the name of the emperor to the dating by *suffecti* in order to add lustre to the occasion when a local citizen was elected to the distinguished office of provincial priest (see below, p. 286)¹², but no appropriate parallel suggests itself. Given the uncertain reading of ll. 4–9, therefore, not to mention various other oddities of a very provincial text a final determination is best left sub iudice¹³.

The central section, ll. 5–9, is equally problematic. Since ll. 8–9 are garbled in the manuscript copy, analysis must largely be based on ll. 5–7, the greater part of which is preserved. On Étienne’s view the *suffecti* consuls of July–August, A.D. 98, will have dated the honorific inscription on the pedestal of Sempronius’ statue at Corduba, so have given “l’entrée en charge” of Sempronius as provincial flamen. “C’est donc que l’élection des prêtres comme la fin de leur charge se place en juillet, soit en août.” Étienne consequently takes the priestly year to have run from July to June and infers that Sempronius served A.D. 98/99¹⁴. On the view of Stylow in contrast, it is uncertain whether the consular dating was taken over from the Corduba text or is of local inspiration. In any event the latter part of the central section resumes the formula employed in honorific inscriptions at Corduba to indicate the close of a priest’s term: *consummato honore flamonii* (see below, pp. 288f.). As a result, he infers a connection between the consular dating and the decree of honours *peracto honore* and takes Sempronius to have *completed* his mandate in July/August, A.D. 98. By this reckoning Sempronius will have served A.D. 97/98¹⁵.

Discussion can conveniently begin by noting that the wording *flaminis munus est consequutus* must surely mean that Sempronius attained the provincial priesthood. This the normal signification of the verb *consequi*¹⁶, which is used in precisely this sense at Corduba to record that a priest has gained the highest honours including a statue: *honores quantos quisque maximos consecutus est cum statua* (below, B, C, D). Whether the consular date refers to his election, to his entry on office, or to both, depends on when the priestly year began and ended. In any event a year that supposedly ran from July/August to June/July looks excluded by two external testimonia.

The first is an inscription from the putative provincial forum at Corduba dated to A.D. 152 and recording that on completion of his term C. Antonius Seranus, flamen Divor. Aug. provinc. Baeticae, was awarded the highest honours, including a statue, by decree of the council:

B C(aio) Antoni[o -] fil(io) Gal(eria) | Serano Iporcens(i) | flamini Divor(um) Aug(ustorum)
 provinc(iae) | Baeticae | huic consummato honore flamoni P(ublio) Cluviō Maχ<imo> | M(arco)
 Servilio Silano co(n)s(ulibus) consensu concil[i] pro]vinc(iae) | Baetic(ae) dec[re]ti sunt honores

de nundinis saltus Beguensis (CIL 8, 11451: A.D. 138), first by *suffecti* then by *ordinarii*, looks open to a similar explanation: Eck, o.c. 28. Neither of these examples, justifies, therefore, the apparent double dating in the Mellaria inscription.

¹² Kindly suggested by A. U. Stylow in correspondence.

¹³ For the proposal that the third consulship of Trajan (served in A.D. 100) might date the inscription, so connect in sense with ll. 10–13 see Fishwick (n. 2) 255, n. 42. On this interpretation the figure III, handed down in all manuscript copies, would be retained and the praenomen of Vicirius Martialis will have been omitted either in the original text or, more likely, in the transcription. To name only the emperor as one of the *ordinarii* would then be in line with occasional usage attested elsewhere; cf. CIL 2, 1610, 5763; CIL 10, 7852. A. U. Stylow kindly writes that in his opinion this would be impossible as any reader would have taken Trajan’s consular date to refer to the flaminiate of Speratus, not the decree. If the Mellarians had wanted to date the inscription, as rarely the case, they would rather have placed the date at the end of the text as in CIL 2, 1332, for example. But see below, n. 33.

¹⁴ Id. (n. 7) 128.

¹⁵ Id. (n. 2) 101–103 with n. 118: “. . . Daß nicht das Jahr des Amtsantritts, sondern das des Ausscheidens aus dem Amt und damit der Ehrung durch den Landtag das entscheidende Datum darstellte, belegen mit aller Klarheit die Inschriften der baetischen Provinzflamines des 2. und 3. Jhs. . . ., in denen die Datierung stets auf die Standardformel *huic consummato honore flamoni* folgt und mit ihr sprachlich engstens verbunden erscheint. Dieser Zusammenhang zwischen der Datierung und dem Ehrenbeschluss *peracto honore* besteht auch in der Inschrift von Mellaria, zugegebenermassen weniger eng als in den späteren Formularen: die Praxis der Ehrung der Provinzflamines nach Ende ihres flamonium dürfte somit bereits seit der Einrichtung des baetischen Provinzialkults bestanden haben. Das Amtsjahr des Speratus war daher 97/98 und nicht 98/99.”

¹⁶ For *consequi* in the sense of ‘gained’, ‘achieved’, ‘reached’ see ThLL IV s.v. B3, cols. 407–409; OLD 413 s.v., 8–9. Both entries cite in particular Cic., Pro Mur. 24: *consulatum consecuti sunt*.

quantos q[uis]que | maximos c[ons]ecutus est cum statua cu[ius h]onore | [a]ccepto inpensam remi[sit] CIL 2²/7, 291: A.D. 152

Whether the consular dating is to be taken with consummato honore flaroni or decreti sunt honores can be left for detailed discussion later (below, pp. 288f.). On the former interpretation the priesthood will have come to an end under the suffect consuls P. Cluvius Maximus Paullinus and M. Servilius Silanus, who served from October to December, A.D. 152 – presumably for the entire three months as the year has four pairs of consuls of which these are the last¹⁷. It follows that, whether the priestly year ended in October, November or December, it must have closed later than July/August. On the latter view the council will have decreed honours to Gaius Antonius Seranus a month at the very least after the close of his term if the priestly year ended in July/August, surely an unlikely eventuality.

This possibility looks excluded in any case by a second text that has been overlooked in all previous discussion of the priestly year. A late first/early second century dedication at Corduba records that C. Cosanus Rusticus was flamen designatus provin(ciae) Baet(icae) (CIL 2²/7, 294): evidently he died before taking office as his inscription belongs amongst a group of tituli sepulcrales. One might compare L. Aufidius Celer(?) Masculinus, flamen designatus p(rovinciae) H(ispaniae) c(terioris), to whom by decree of the decurions his respublica set up a statue at the provincial centre at Tarraco (RIT 259); the term designatus presumably indicates that he too had died before taking office¹⁸. Similarly [C? I]ulius Fidus, flamen des(ignatus) pro(vinciae) H(ispaniae) c(terioris), received an honorific dedication at Asturica before he entered on office at Tarraco (CIL 2, 5124)¹⁹. Quite clearly, then, the term designatus implies an interval – whether of weeks or months – between election and entry on office. It follows from the combination of these testimonia that consequutus est in the Mellaria inscription in all probability indicates the date when Sempronius Speratus was elected. His accession to office on the other hand must have taken place at some later juncture if he either completed his year's term in October to December or a period intervened when a flamen elected for the coming year was officially termed designatus. When that juncture occurred remains to be determined.

The difficulty one faces here is sheer lack of usable evidence. Two other pedestals, both from the provincial forum at Corduba, are of central interest to the discussion in recording texts honouring a provincial priest:

C L(ucio) Cominio L(uci) f(ilio) Gal(eria) Iulian(o) | Ilurconensi flaroni | Divorum Augg(ustorum) provinc(iae) | Baetic(ae) huic consummato honore flaroni | Aproniano et Maurico | co(n)s(ulibus) consensu concili pr(ovinciae) | Baetic(ae) decret(i) sunt honor(es) | quant(os) quisq(ue) max(imos) consecutus | est cum statua cuius honor(e) | acc(e)pt(o) inpensam remisit CIL 2²/7, 293: A.D. 191.

D [- Fabio M(arci) f(ilio) Gal(eria) ---]do | [flam]ini Divor(um) Aug(ustorum) | provinc(iae) Baet[ic(ae)] | huic consummato hono[re flam]oni | Cattio Sabino II Cornel(io) Anull[in]o co(n)s(ulibus) | consensu concili universae prov(inciae) Baet(icae) | decreti sunt honores quantos quisque | maximos plurimosque flamen est | consecutus cum statua | (vac. v. 1) M(arcus) Fab(ius) Basileus Celt(itanus) pater | honore accept(o) impens(am) remisit CIL 2²/7, 295: A.D. 216.

As in the inscription of C. Antonius Seranus (B), both C and D contain a consular dating, yet neither throws light on the close of the priestly year as the consuls recorded are the ordinarii of A.D. 191 and

¹⁷ Degrassi (n. 5) 43, registering only the name of M. Servilius Silanus; cf. Vidman (n. 6) 51, 131; Eck (n. 6) col. 105, no. 10c. For earlier discussion see A. García y Bellido, *Inscripciones de Corduba*, *Bol. Real Academia de la Historia* 168, 1971, 181–183.

¹⁸ On the term designatus see J. Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage der römischen Kaiserzeit von Augustus bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Vestigia 6), Munich, 1965, 150 with n. 4 and refs.; G. Alföldy, *Flamines Provinciae Hispaniae Citerioris* (Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología 6), Madrid 1973, 44; L. A. Curchin, *The Local Magistrates of Roman Spain*, Toronto, 1990, 29.

¹⁹ The honorific dedication was set up in his patria to both Fidus and his wife Iulia, who conceivably would have been provincial flaminica had he eventually taken office. Presumably Fidus died when still designatus though this is not clear from his inscription.

A.D. 216 respectively²⁰. In a fundamental article W. Eck has demonstrated that the system of dating by *suffecti* proved eventually unworkable by reason of the ever-increasing number of supplementary consuls²¹. In A.D. 190, for example, the year immediately before C was drafted, Commodus named no less than twenty-five consuls (SHA, Comm. 6, 9). As a result, it became the practice, introduced at different times in different areas of public and private life, to date an event by the *ordinarii* who began the year rather than by the pair of *suffecti* who happened to be in office for the particular weeks during which the event took place. This is plainly the case in C and D, where mention of the *ordinarii* means simply “at some point in the year begun by x and y”. It follows that neither of these texts is serviceable for present purposes²². Whether the priestly year ended in October, November or December of A.D. 191 or 216 the priest’s term would have been dated by the same pair of *ordinarii*. Equally, if the consular dating goes with the decree of the council, this could have been passed in any month of the year begun by the *ordinarii* in question.

A final decision on the parameters of the priestly year must wait upon the appearance of some future epigraphical text that records a pair of more closely datable *suffecti*. In the meantime one can only argue on the basis of the three months span, October to December, as attested in B. In favour of October is that a terminal or initial date at some point in this month would be consistent with a protracted annual meeting that lasted from, say, late August to early October. Conceivably a priest could have been elected early in the proceedings and taken office at their close, having been *designatus* in the interval. Against this is the relatively short, though not impossibly short, period in which a *flamen designatus* could have died. More generally, why should a priestly year begin or end in October at all? There seems to be no obvious chronological landmark one can point to unless a date in October coincided with the (unknown) anniversary of the foundation of the provincial cult.

The likelier alternative is surely that the priestly year ran from January 1 to December 31²³. This would accord with the Roman year just as election in the previous July/August would correspond with the election of Roman officials (under both the Republic and the early Empire) several months before they entered office²⁴. A four or five months interval before taking office would certainly be in keeping with the term *designatus*. More to the point, a calendar year is known to have been operative in the provincial cult of Lycia, where the election of officers for the coming year took place at the annual meeting in autumn²⁵. As it is inconceivable that the annual meeting of the council lasted until December, however, one would in that case have to suppose a supplementary meeting when the *legati* voted on whether the retiring priest should be given honours including a statue (see below, pp. 289f.)²⁶.

²⁰ Degrassi (n. 5) 53, 60.

²¹ Id. (n. 11) 18ff.

²² This negates the inference drawn from the dating by *ordinarii* in Fishwick (n. 2) 255, n. 45. While this argument is now withdrawn, the same conclusion – that the priestly year ran from 1 January to 31 December – is established below on better grounds.

²³ Cf. the official year of municipal *duoviri*, which in Baetica at least corresponded to the calendar year: A. U. Stylow, *Änderungen in Kaiserinschriften. Zwei Beispiele aus Hispanien*, *Chiron* 19 (1989) 387–405 at 404 with n. 57. See now R. Atencia Páez ad CIL 2²/5, 789, ll. 14f.

²⁴ *Diz.-Epig.* 2, 1910 (1961), 689f. s.v. *consul* (Vaglieri). See further Curchin (n. 18) 28, observing that the colonial charter of Urso (FIRA I², 21) shows a magistrate’s term of office coincided with the calendar year (Urs. 63), from which it follows that elections must have been held at some point in the previous year.

²⁵ Deininger (n. 18) 150 with n. 5, cf. 72f., noting that provincial ruler cult in this province may date from the reign of Vespasian just as in various provinces of the Latin West.

²⁶ Presumably this additional meeting would in that case have taken place in January, when the new *flamen* had entered on office. According to the relevant clause of the *Lex Narbonensis*, the new priest is to put the question of whether the *ex-priest* shall have the honour of a statue: [Si is qui *flamen* fue]rit adversus hanc legem nihil fecerit, tum is qui *flamen* erit c[ur]ato ut . . . 27 . . . l . 3 . per tabell]as iurati decernant placeatne ei qui *flamoni* abierit permitti st[atu]a[tuam intra fines templi . . . ponere. (CIL 12, 6038 = ILS 6964, ll. 10f.) If the priestly year did in fact coincide with the calendar year, this would swing the balance decisively in favour of taking the consular dating October-December in B with *consummato honore flamonii*, given that the decree of the council plainly took place following the close of the priest’s term. See further, below, n. 34.

There seems to be no evidence to confirm such an additional meeting – even the annual meeting of a province is of uncertain date except in *Tres Galliae*²⁷ – but some details of the activities of the council of *Baetica* are known, notably the processes it launched against the proconsuls *Baebius Massa* and *Caecilius Classicus*²⁸. Each of these may well have required one or more special meetings of the council. Whatever the facts in this regard, we have an extensive list of events that entailed a decision on the part of the council of *Tres Galliae*, taken in some instances at least at times other than the regular annual assembly²⁹. At the very least, then, there is precedent in *Tres Galliae* for meetings of the *concilium* held outside its annual convention. Further than that one can hardly go at present. Final resolution of the question must await upon new evidence that places the discussion upon a fresh basis.

II

The three honorific texts at *Corduba*, dated A.D. 152 (B), 191 (C) and 216 (D), are consistent in employing a closely similar formula to record the grant of honours to a retiring priest: *huic consummato honore flamonii . . . et . . . consulibus consensu concili provinciae Baeticae / consensu concili universae provinciae Baeticae decreti sunt honores quantos quisque maximos consecutus est cum statua / quantos quisque maximos plurimosque flamen est consecutus cum statua*. How precisely the consular dating is to be understood is unclear. *Hirschfeld* followed by *Deininger*, apparently the editors of *AE* (1971) 183, and more recently *Stylov* have all taken the consuls to date the completion of the *flamonium*³⁰ – in other words a virtual comma is to be placed after *cos.*: *huic, consummato honore flamonii x (et) y cos., consensu provinciae . . .* In favour of this interpretation is the fact that the names of the consuls follow as closely as possible upon the ablative absolute *consummato honore flamonii*. One might compare the records left by the *curatores aedium sacrarum et operum locorumque publicorum*, in all of which the consular dating follows upon a main verb or, much more frequently, the participial form *dedicata / dedicatum* placed at the end of the text³¹. The alternative would be to place a virtual comma after *consummato honore flamonii*, in which case the consular dating belongs with the main verb *decreti sunt*, as *Étienne* holds³². A point which supports this is that in the *Mellaria* inscription in particular the consular names precede the finite verb *est consecutus* (ll. 5–7). Often enough, a dating by consuls stands at the head of an epigraphical text, as for example in a local dedication at *Cornus* to *M. Cominius Crescens, sacerdotalis provinciae Sard(iniae)* (CIL 10, 7917; cf. CIL 12, 3637), but comparison with a broad range of texts produces no recognizable pattern; inconsistency is rather the rule³³. Which of the

²⁷ For the annual meeting of the council of *Tres Galliae* at the festival of August 1 see *Deininger* (n. 18) 144f.; *D. Fishwick, The Imperial Cult in the Latin West* (EPRO 108), Leiden 1987, I, 1, 118; II, 1, 578 with n. 632 (hereafter ICLW). The yearly synod of the Macedonian and Asiatic *koina* looks to have taken place in October and autumn respectively: *Deininger*, o.c. 145.

²⁸ *Deininger* (n. 18) 129f. See further below, n. 50.

²⁹ For the list see *P. Wuilleumier, Lyon, Métropole des Gaules*, Paris 1953, 39. A case in point is that on the death of *Agrippina* in A.D. 59 the council dispatched the orator *Iulius Africanus*, who wished *Nero* the courage to support his good fortune (*Quintilian. Inst. Orat.* 8, 5, 15). As *Agrippina* was murdered at *Baiae* in March, this decision can hardly have waited upon the next annual meeting held the following August.

³⁰ *Hirschfeld*, CIL 13, p. 229, n. 2; *Deininger* (n. 8) 175; *Stylov* (n. 2) 103, n. 118 (see above, n. 15). The editors of *AE*, 1971, 183 place a comma after *co(n)s(ulibus)*, which plainly links the consular dating with the absolute phrase, yet remark: “La date où le *concilium* de la province lui a décerné les honneurs . . . est, comme l’éd. l’établi très justement, l’année 152 . . .” – which seems to take the consular dating with *decreti sunt*.

³¹ *Eck* (n. 11) 25.

³² *Id.* (n. 7) 130 ad CIL 2, 2221 (= CIL 2²/7, 295). Kindly suggested independently by *W. Eck* and *G. Di Vita-Evrard*.

³³ A glance at the numerous texts assembled by *Eck* (n. 11) suggests that in military diplomas (*Eck* 19) the consular dating as a rule comes almost at the end of the document; in imperial decisions recorded epigraphically (*Eck* 21f.) the consular dating can be at the beginning, in the middle, or at the close of the text; in records of municipal *decreta decurionum* (*Eck* 29 with n. 42) the consular dating is more often at the beginning but frequently also at the end of the document; in private dedications in the provinces from the first and second centuries A.D. (*Eck* 40) the consular dating is sometimes at the

two versions happens to be correct is therefore a matter of the reader's 'Gefühl' based on wide acquaintance with similar texts. A priori one would have thought it more important to date the completed year of office (*consummato honore*) than the decree of honours that were a consequence of meritorious tenure. For present purposes it is sufficient to note that, while the distinction is real enough in syntax, it makes little difference in practice. On the former view the consuls date the closure of the priesthood to which the decree of the council is consequent, on the latter the consuls date the decree of honours consequent to the closure of the priesthood³⁴. So on either interpretation the priesthood is dated, whether directly or indirectly.

The Mellaria text presents similar problems of interpretation. A first possibility is that ll. 5–9 as a whole resume the honorific text placed by the provincial council on the pedestal of Sempronius' statue at Corduba: while not a verbatim extract, the passage gives the gist of the provincial dedication, which will have begun with the consular dating: <A.> Vicirio Martiali et L. Maecio Postumo co(n)s(ulibu)s. This interpretation looks ruled out by two considerations. In the first place the council would in that case have decreed a statue in July/August, yet it is clear from the combined evidence of B and CIL 2²/7 294 that the end of the priestly year and the consequent grant of honours took place later. A second objection is that ll. 6–7 record that Sempronius attained the provincial flaminiate, no mention of which occurs in the Corduba inscriptions. In light of this consideration it looks far more likely that ll. 5–7 were drafted by the *ordo* of Mellaria, which drew upon the vocabulary of the formula at Corduba: in particular *provinciae Baeticae consensu* corresponds to *consensu concili provinciae Baeticae*. The remainder of ll. 7–9 clearly echoes the provincial formula: *peracto honore flaminico* corresponds to *consummato honore flamoni*, while *omn(is) concilii consensus statuam decrevit* resumes *consensu concili provinciae . . . consecutus est cum statua*. Evidently much the same formula was in use at Corduba by the end of the first century as in the second and early third centuries. If this interpretation is correct, only part of the insert, ll. 7–9, can be considered a summary extract from the formula at Corduba. The passage as a whole is rather an adaptation in which the *ordo Mellariensis* has added a new element, the election of Sempronius at Corduba in July/August of A.D. 98, as the *suffect consuls* show³⁵. Presumably the new detail has been added because the entire period from the election of Sempronius in midsummer 98 to the end of his mandate in December 99 was of interest in the context of the extravagant honours decreed by the *ordo* of Mellaria. Why this was the case remains to be elucidated.

The relevance of this analysis is that the Corduba inscriptions patently reflect the operation in Baetica of a provision similar to one of the regulations of the *Lex de flamonio provinciae Galliae Narbonensis: De honoribus eius qui flamen f[uerit]. | [Si is qui flamen fue]rit adversus hanc legem nihil fecerit, tum is qui flamen erit c[urato ut . . . | . . . per tabell]as iurati decernant placeatne ei qui flamonio abierit permitti sta[tuam intra fines templi . . . ponere. Si placulerit ius sta]tuae ponendae nomenque suum patrisque et unde sit et quo anno fla[men fuerit inscribendi permitti, ei | Narbo]ni intra fines eius templi statuae ponendae ius esto, nisi cui imperator [Caesar . . . (CIL 12, 6038 = ILS 6964, ll. 9–13). According to this rubric, the provincial flamen for the following year is to introduce a motion as to whether the past incumbent should be honoured with a statue following the close of his mandate. If the latter is in good standing and the vote is favourable, he shall be permitted to set up a statue to himself with an inscribed pedestal giving his name, filiation, origin and year of office³⁶. Gallia Narbonensis itself has produced no trace of the operation of such a provision but similar regulations were plainly followed at Corduba, where in one way or another the year of the provincial flamen is explicitly dated on the three surviving pedestals of statues erected to a provincial priest. The sole discrepancy is that in D the place of origin is for some reason omitted in contrast to the practice of B and C. In the local*

beginning, sometimes at the end.

³⁴ This would be possible in B only if the priestly year began, say, in October; see above, n. 26. C and D could accommodate either view.

³⁵ The consular dating cannot refer to the decree of the council for the reasons already stated.

³⁶ C. H. Williamson, *A Roman Law from Narbonne*, Athenaeum 65, 1987, 173–189 at 184f.

dedication at Mellaria (A) mention of the filiation, tribe and place of origin is excluded, presumably as superfluous³⁷, but the circumstance that the election of Sempronius is dated by consuls surely reflects indirectly the formula attested by B, C and D. If so, A confirms that a regulation similar to that of the *lex Narbonensis* was operative in Baetica at the close of the first century, so no doubt from the installation of the provincial cult under Vespasian³⁸. There is a slight difference of emphasis in that according to the Narbonese law the council shall decide whether the priest himself should be permitted to put up his own statue. In the Corduba texts the council has decreed the greatest honours including a statue³⁹, but it is certainly in keeping with the spirit of the same regulation that the priest (in D his father) supports the costs of the statue. E. Kornemann remarked that this is entirely consistent with a law passed under so parsimonious an emperor as Vespasian⁴⁰.

As argued in detail on a previous occasion, Baetica was by no means the only province to have followed similar regulations. At the sanctuary of the Three Gauls two inscriptions of the Flavian period look to attest the early operation of a comparable prescription before the federal council went its own way under the Antonines⁴¹. In *Proconsularis* not a single inscribed statue set up at the provincial centre of Carthage has so far come to light but the application of a similar clause looks to be reflected in local texts at Simitthus, Bulla Regia and Furnos Maior, all dated by a local era beginning in A.D. 70–72⁴². In some ways the most interesting case is *Hispania Citerior*, which has yielded by far the largest number of inscribed bases of this kind, seventy-six in honour of provincial priests with another eleven to provincial priestesses. While these omit to date the priest's term and give the priestly *cursus*, which is not required by the *lex Narbonensis* and omitted at Corduba, their striking feature is that the epigraphical record begins suddenly *ca.* A.D. 70, therefore early under Vespasian, who to all appearances founded the provincial cult of Narbonese Gaul⁴³. Otherwise *Lusitania* like *Proconsularis* or *Narbonensis* itself has so far failed to produce a single base inscribed in honour of a provincial priest. Similar circumstances may be responsible in all three provinces, the obliteration of the provincial centre beneath the constructions of later ages before full-scale archaeological exploration could take place. If so, it is remarkable that Corduba, where similar conditions applied, has produced the relatively numerous traces that have been the focus of the present discussion. Future epigraphical discoveries may yet fill out the picture in this regard.

It remains to add that other rubrics of the same law appear to have been in force elsewhere. In Sardinia provincial priests at Cornus and Bosa were 'adlected' with the consent of the province to the local *ordo* of Carales, the seat of the provincial cult; at Cornus this was with the assent of the provincial council, whose approval is possibly to be restored in the Bosa text⁴⁴. By a provision of regulations like those of the *Lex Narbonensis* (l. 4) these would have been temporary members of the *ordo Caralitanorum* during their term as high priest, so it would appear that they took the opportunity to put this temporary privilege on a permanent basis. A similar situation probably lies behind an appendix to a decree of the provincial council of Hither Spain in which the *ordo* of Tarraco has decreed honours to a past provincial flamen, evidently "adlection" to the town council⁴⁵. Lastly, an inscription at Emerita

³⁷ Stylow (n. 2) 101, n. 111, citing D. Fishwick, *Hermes* 92, 1964, 357; Deininger (n. 8) 176.

³⁸ Deininger (n. 30) *ibid.*

³⁹ Stylow (n. 2) 102, n. 118.

⁴⁰ *Id.*, *Zur Geschichte der antiken Herrscherkulte*, *Klio* 1, 1901, 51–146 at 126.

⁴¹ Fishwick (n. 2) ad CIL 13, 1675, 1713.

⁴² For detailed discussion see Fishwick, *ICLW* I 2, p. 262; *id.*, *The Provincial Priesthood of L. Calpurnius Augustalis*, *Mélanges G. Souville: AntAfr* 34, 1998, forthcoming.

⁴³ Alföldy (n. 18) 10–19. See further below, n. 56.

⁴⁴ D. Fishwick, *Un sacerdotalis provinciae Sardiniae à Cornus (Sardaigne)*, *CRAI* 1998, 449–459 ad CIL 10, 7917: Cornus; *id.*, *A Priestly Career at Bosa, Sardinia*, in *Imago Antiquitatis: Mélanges R. Turcan*, Paris 1999, forthcoming, ad CIL 10, 7940 (*Bosa Vetus*).

⁴⁵ D. Fishwick, *A Municipal Decree at Tarraco*, *ZPE* 126, 1999, 287–291. On "adlection" see Curchin (n. 18) 26.

records that in A.D. 77/78 the province – in the presence of the provincial legatus Augusti pro praetore and the provincial priest, who jointly performed the rite – dedicated a five-pound gold bust or statue to Titus, at this time virtual co-emperor⁴⁶. This seems to follow in the closest detail a stipulation of the Lex Narbonensis that on termination of his mandate a provincial priest might, at the discretion of the provincial governor, expend surplus(?) provincial funds on statues and images of the emperor (ll. 26–28). What all this amounts to, therefore, is overwhelming confirmation that similar *leges de flamonio provinciae* were introduced across a broad range of provinces in the Western Empire during the early years of the Flavian regime. Plainly this was at the instigation of the central imperial administration⁴⁷: that is, unless one can believe that in every instance similar regulations to the Lex Narbonensis were requested by each province independently, a scenario which has left no trace in the surviving sources.

III

The inscription of C. Sempronius Speratus puts on record that exceptional honours were voted on his death, an event that must have occurred after January A.D. 100, almost certainly under Trajan given the prominence accorded that emperor in the inscription (l. 4)⁴⁸. Stylow has underlined just how extravagant these honours were. Funeral expenses and a eulogy are common enough but equestrian statues, while appropriate to the imperial house, senators and knights, or other members of the provincial and municipal elite were rarely erected to provincial priests⁴⁹. At Tarraco, for example, only two of the more than seventy known flamines were so honoured (RIT 295, 303), while at Corduba a single equestrian statue found by the colonial forum was decreed to a duumvir and provincial priest by the *ordo c(olonorum) c(oloniae) P(atriciae)*, perhaps in the first third of the second century (CIL 2²/7, 282). The only other example in Baetica occurs here at Mellaria, where no less than two equestrian statues, perhaps with one or more standing statues (above, p. 2), were decreed to Sempronius by the local *ordo* – no doubt in the full knowledge that his widow Venusta would pay the costs.

Exceptional honours presuppose exceptional service. What this might have been was proposed thirty-five years ago by J. Deininger, who pointed to the successful process brought by the provincial council against Caecilius Classicus, proceedings in which the provincial flamen, chairman of the concilium of Baetica, must have played a leading role⁵⁰. Deininger put this whole affair under A.D. 98 with the result that his proposal was rejected by Stylow, who notes that on the view of G. Alföldy, the process will have taken place in A.D. 99⁵¹. According to the arguments of the present paper, however, the year in which Sempronius Speratus served his term as provincial priest was neither 97/98 nor 98/99 but the calendar year 99. In that case his mandate would have coincided exactly with the council's prosecution of the odious Caecilius Classicus, its preliminary stages having begun no doubt in 98, when

⁴⁶ D. Fishwick, *Two Priesthoods of Lusitania*, *Epigraphica* 61, 1999, forthcoming, ad CIL 2, 5264.

⁴⁷ The nearest comparison is with the Flavian *lex municipalis*, which was evidently drafted at Rome as a master document, then reproduced – with minor details of the prototype adapted – as the town charter of numerous municipalities of Baetica (Malaca, Salpensa, Irimi, Basilipo, Corticata?, Ostippo, *Fragmenta Villonensia*), apparently also of other provinces of the empire (Lauriacum, Noricum). So, convincingly, Curchin (n. 18) 14–16 with refs. For the opposing theory of a passive emperor see F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (31 B.C.–A.D. 337), London 1977, *passim*.

⁴⁸ Stylow (n. 2) 103; *id.*, ad CIL 2/7, 799.

⁴⁹ Stylow (n. 2) 101f. with n. 115 and statistics.

⁵⁰ Pliny, *Ep.* 3, 9, 1ff.: . . . in Classicum tota provincia incubuit. Ille accusationem vel fortuita vel voluntaria morte praevertit; cf. 3, 4, 2ff.; 6, 29, 8. For discussion see Deininger (n. 8) 178f. with n. 71, arguing that by *tota provincia* must be meant the representatives of the concilium who had been sent to Rome. See further J. F. Rodríguez Neila, *Sobre los procesos de la Bética contra los gobernadores romanos*, in *Actas del I Congreso de Historia de Andalucía* (Córdoba 1976), Córdoba 1978, Vol. I, 231–238; P. Guichard, *Sénat de Rome et concilium de Bétique. Les relations entre les deux assemblées de 92 à 99 ap. J.-C. à l'occasion des procès de Massa, Gallus et Classicus*, *MCV* 25 (1989) 31ff.

⁵¹ Stylow (n. 2) 103, n. 120a; G. Alföldy, *Fasti Hispanienses*, Wiesbaden 1969, 162 with n. 72. A correction to Fishwick (n. 2) 255, n. 42, noting that the process took place in A.D. 99, not 98, arrived too late to be incorporated in the text.

Sempronius was flamen designatus⁵². Deininger's proposal looks justified therefore. Equally, Mommsen's suggested emendation et ¹l¹e¹g¹a¹t¹i (l. 8), approved by Hübner, gains new credibility despite the awkward Latinity of the sentence peracto honore flaminic(o) et legati omn(is) consensus statuum decrevit⁵³. For as provincial flamen Sempronius would in all probability have undertaken a legation to Rome to represent the province in the process against Cecilius Classicus; the circumstance that he served as legate at the time he was provincial priest explains the singular honore rather than honoribus. How precisely Sempronius was honoured by the provincial council at the end of his term is uncertain as his inscribed pedestal has yet to be recovered but, if the Mellaria text incorporates an accurate resumé of the formula at Corduba, the statue he received will have been pedestrian rather than equestrian – this despite the exceptional contribution of Sempronius to the outcome of the process (anticipated by the death of Classicus).

Aside from recording the personal distinctions of Sempronius Speratus, the Mellaria text preserves other details of considerable historical interest. In the first place it documents how a man from the small town of Mellaria, some eighty kilometres north-west of Corduba, attained the provincial flaminiate as early as A.D. 99, little more than twenty-five years after the cult had been founded. This fact alone is sufficient to explain the posthumous honours and statues accorded by a local council dominated no doubt by the Sempronii and their clique and not averse to the glorification of a rich local worthy who had made a name for himself – and his *patria* – at the provincial level⁵⁴. For this achievement he could no doubt thank his family connections, above all his private wealth as attested by the financial resources of Venusta⁵⁵. One might compare Sempronius in this respect with Q. Trebellius Rufus, who was elected first flamen of Gallia Narbonensis despite his origin in Tolosa and later in life could afford to shoulder the liturgies of the Athenian archonship⁵⁶. A similar example is C. Iulius Rufus of Mediolanum, who financed construction of the first amphitheatre at Lugdunum (ILA 7). Secondly, if correctly interpreted, the inscription confirms that the provincial council met for a period of unknown duration in July/August of each year, when it elected the incumbent for the next priestly year. Whether this ran from, say, October to September or, as proposed above, coincided with the calendar year January 1 to December 31, like the term of Roman magistrates, remains to be confirmed or discounted by future epigraphical discoveries. One final point of broader reference accrues – that is, unless our limited range of documents is unrepresentative or in some way exceptional. In combination with the Corduba inscriptions the Mellaria text confirms that *suffecti* consuls were used for purposes of dating down to the middle of the second century whereas by the Severan period *suffecti* had evidently been replaced by *ordinarii*, who date any event that took place within the year they had inaugurated. In that case the practice at the provincial centre of Corduba will have been in conformity with the procedure of state-administrative documents at Rome rather than of local decrees in the municipalities of Italy.

All in all, a considerable haul of information from what looks at first sight an unpromising, defective document.

University of Alberta

Duncan Fishwick

⁵² Cf. ICLW I, 2, 219, where the priesthood of Sempronius is assigned to A.D. 98.

⁵³ In alerting me to Mommsen's ingenious conjecture, Stylow notes that *et legati* would make an almost perfect fit palaeographically; as *ei* is implicit, it can tolerably be omitted. For the use of *consensus* Stylow adduces the contemporary text of Tac., *Hist.* 1, 30: *Galbam consensus generis humani . . . Caesarem dixit*; cf. Cic., *Epp. ad fam.* 10, 12, 4: . . . *et omnium generum ordinumque consensus ad liberandam rem p. conspiravit*.

⁵⁴ Stylow suggests in correspondence that the equestrian statues at Mellaria may indicate Sempronius was expected to enter an equestrian career (a rare achievement of past provincial priests) or at least deemed worthy of one – had he lived. Castillo (n. 2) 441, 443, thinks Sempronius may already have equestrian rank despite omission of his status in the inscription, but see RIT 295, 303.

⁵⁵ Stylow (n. 2) 101, noting that as a leading member of the gens Sempronia he will have belonged to the local élite. For the importance of family connections in furthering the careers of provincial priests in Hither Spain see Alföldy (n. 18) 25–27. No doubt similar considerations will have applied in Baetica.

⁵⁶ D. Fishwick, *Our First High Priest: A Gallic Knight at Athens*, *Epigraphica* 60, 1998, 83–112.