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SEPTIMIUS ACINDYNUS, CORRECTOR TUSCIAE ET UMBRIAE. NOTES ON A NEW
INSCRIPTION FROM AUGUSTA EMERITA (MÉRIDA, SPAIN)

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 129 (2000) 281–286

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In September 1994 the police confiscated a large number of archaeological items from several individuals in an operation directed against the illegal trade in antiquities carried out in Mérida (Spain). Among these, there was a fragment of an statue-base with the remains of two different inscriptions which are the subject of this paper.

The fragment is made of local marble, possibly from the Portuguese quarries of Borba (Estremoz) which belonged to the territory of *Emerita*.¹ The exact circumstances surrounding its discovery are unknown, but it probably came to light during the construction of a building in Mérida.² At present it can be found in the store of the Museo Nacional de Arte Romano of Mérida.

The shape of the fragment is irregular. It preserves two faces, part of an original side, and a short portion of the cornice that crowned the pedestal.

On its main face, framed by a wide moulding, there was an inscription which can be dated palaeographically to the Imperial period. The overall depth is 0.40 m. (0.44 m. at the cornice); max. height (at the cornice), 0.40 m.; max. width, 0.29 m.

This pedestal was re-used in the Later Roman Empire for another inscription: on the opposite face, a straight mark shows that the cornice was polished up to the level of the inscribed field, and a new text was inscribed. Its maximum measurements are as follows: height, 0.45 m.; width, 0.365 m. In this second inscription, it is possible to completely restore the second line (see below); it preserves eight letters and is missing nine letters (two of them are I), so that we can affirm that the fragment retains half of the complete width, that would be about 0.72–4 m.

The earliest text retains the end of the first two lines of an inscription in finely carved capital letters:



]LIO	7–7.5 cms.
]AVR[.]	4 cms.
[---]	

Since we know the full width (0.72–4 m.) and the width of the moulding (0.11 m.), we can estimate that the inscribed field was about 0.50–2 m. If we take into account that the first line has three letters (one of

* I am indebted to Prof. J. Arce, Prof. F. Millar, Dr. J. Berry, Dr. N. Pollard and particularly Prof. W. Eck for their useful comments, and to Mrs. Priscilla Lange for improving the English text. Any faults which remain are mine. This paper was written during my stay in Oxford with the aid of a post-doctoral grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education.

¹ I thank Dr. J. L. de la Barrera at the Museum of Mérida for his remarks about the origin of the marble.

² All the archaeological materials confiscated with the pedestal had a local origin. The piece is very dirty, and apparently it had never been cleaned since it was found, so perhaps it was discovered not much earlier than 1994.

them is I) in the 0.18 m. of preserved width, we can calculate by direct proportion that it originally would have had between seven and nine letters. In the same way, the second line has four letters in the preserved space, and originally could have had about ten to eleven letters.

At first sight, given the proposed length of the first line (7–9 letters), it could be the end of a *nomen*, and it might be restored [Corne]lio, [Caeci]lio, [Aemi]lio, [Aure]lio, [Ati]lio, [Tuti]lio ..., ([Iu]lio is perhaps too short). The filiation would have been written in the second line; then, probably his tribe (*Papiria*, *Quirina* or *Galeria*, the most frequent in the colony) and the *cognomen*. The latter could be *Aurus*, *Scaurus*, *Laurus*, *Taurus*, or *Maurus*. All these names are well documented in *Hispania* and also at Mérida,³ although obviously the person could have come from anywhere.

It is likely that the text was engraved between the first and the third centuries AD on the basis of the letter forms, and most likely it was a honorific dedication to an unknown person in one of the public places of the colony. In spite of many gaps, it might be restored in this way:

[--- ca 4/6 ---]lio
 [? f(ilio), --- ca 3/5 ---]aur[o]
 [---]

When the pedestal was re-used in the Later Empire, a second inscription was carved on its opposite face. The letters are capitals, and most of them are damaged from erosion, particularly in the lower and right edges. It runs as follows:



SEPTIMIO.A[8/9]	5 cms.
CORRECTO[9]	4.5–4.3 cms.
ET.VMBRI[8/9]	4.8–5 cms
++XV.++R[---]	3.6 cms.
[---]	

It is clear that it is an honorific dedication for an important person, datable to the IV century AD. The *cursus honorum* of the individual is recorded starting from the post of *corrector Tusciae et Umbriae*. This means that nine letters are missing in l. 2. At the end of the first line, and after the *cognomen*, as is normal in this type of inscription, there followed his rank, which in this case would have been *v(ir) c(larissimus)*, since all *correctores* known in this province had this title.⁴ Therefore, the full *cognomen* must have had about seven or eight letters, although eight letters is more probable, because the characters are very closely spaced in this line.

³ H. Solin, O. Salomies, *Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum Latinorum*, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York, 1994², 469; J. M. Abascal, *Los nombres personales en las inscripciones latinas de Hispania*, Murcia, 1994, 397, 421 and 525.

⁴ On this province and its governors, see A. Chastagnol, L'administration du diocèse italien au Bas-Empire, *Historia* 12, 1963, 358 ff.; W. Kuhoff, *Studien zur zivilen senatorischen Laufbahn im 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr. Ämter und Amtsinhaber in Clarissimat und Spektabilität*, Frankfurt, 1983, 68–9. The most recent list is in G. A. Cecconi, *Governo imperiale e élites dirigenti nell'Italia tardoantica*, Como, 1994, 213.

The reading of l. 4 is more complicated. Firstly, there is a trace of a vertical line, which could belong to several letters (I, N, R, B ...), followed by the remains of two oblique strokes which cross. At first sight this could be a V, but if we observe the height of the remaining letters on this line and specially the R at the end, this V is too small, and the strokes do not have the same inclination as that of the V in l. 3. In fact, it is very likely that it is an X, whose strokes cross below the centre.⁵ After this, there is an oblique line from left to right (perhaps a V), followed by a point that seems to indicate an interpunct. Finally, there are three incisions (the first inclined, and the last two vertical) which could belong to two letters not clearly recognizable, and then there are traces of an R, very much eroded, but still visible.

In these circumstances, the restoration of the third line (where seven to eight letters are missing), and fourth line is difficult to determine. There are many possibilities, because, as is known, the careers of the Roman senators in the IV century AD did not observe a rigid scheme. Although there is a series of *cursus* that follow the same guidelines, careers could evolve in very different ways, taking into consideration administrative flexibility in this period and the various factors which influenced appointment to office.⁶ In fact, a survey of the known governors of Tuscia and Umbria, and the development of their *cursus*, all of them different, confirms this. Thus, if the interpretation above is accepted, the group XV and the interpunct reduce the options, and accordingly XV *vir(o) [s(acris) f(aciundis)]* or XV *vir[o sac(ris) faciundis]* might be restored in l. 4. The odd space in l. 3 (eight letters) and the beginning of l. 4 (two letters) could be restored, perhaps, with another priesthood, like [*pont(ifici) mai(o)r*]i. According to the proposed restoration, one word is divided between two lines, and the remaining three lines start with a new one; however this is a frequently attested practice found in the inscriptions of this century.⁷ Unfortunately, there is not enough evidence in the inscription, and this interpretation can only be considered an hypothesis.

At first sight, the positioning of at least one priesthood after the Italian *correctura* would seem strange. Generally, these religious posts were mentioned in inscriptions either at the beginning (after the name and title), at the end (after the administrative responsibilities), or, particularly, following the quaestorship and the praetorship.⁸ This could indicate that the person honoured in the inscription from *Emerita* was in the first stages of his career, and perhaps no more offices were cited after the priesthood.⁹ However, as we know, there were no rules about this and although it is not the most usual practice, the religious posts could be intercalated between the administrative ones, as, for example, in the case of another *corrector Tusciae et Umbriae*, C. Iulius Rufinianus Ablabius Tatianus (*PLRE I* 875).¹⁰

Who then was the person honoured in the inscription from *Emerita*? Given our present knowledge,

⁵ The same type of X appears in the known Constantinian inscriptions from the circus of Mérida (*AE* 1927, 165) dated between 337–340.

⁶ G. Clemente, Le carriere dei governatori della diocesi italiana dal III al V secolo, *Latomus* 88, 1976, 617 ff.; A. Chastagnol, La carrière sénatoriale du Bas-Empire (depuis Dioclétien), *Epigraphia e Ordine Senatorio, Tituli* 4, 1982, 167 ff. On administrative flexibility, see A. Giardina, Lettura epigrafica e carriere aristocratiche, *RFIC* 111, 1983, 172.

⁷ Other long inscriptions in which a single word is divided between two lines are, for example, *CIL* VI 1658, 1671, 1673 (= *ILS* 1211), 1683 (= *ILS* 1221), 1702 (= *ILS* 1251), 1703 (= *ILS* 5715), 1717 (= *ILS* 1227), 1727 (= *ILS* 1275), 1730 (= *ILS* 1277), 1749 (= *ILS* 809), 1767 (= *ILS* 1282), 1768 (= *ILS* 1229), 1769, 1778, or several from *Tarraco* also dated to the fourth century AD, *CIL* II 6083, 4102, 4103, 4106, 4107, 4108, *AE* 1929, 233 (= *RIT* 86, 89, 90, 95, 97, 96, 91 respectively), some of them linked to our inscription (see below).

⁸ For instance, *CIL* X 1700 = *ILS* 1231, *CIL* VI 1690 = *ILS* 1240, *CIL* X 5061 = *ILS* 1217, *CIL* VI 1741 = *ILS* 1243, *CIL* X 4752 = *ILS* 1223, *CIL* X 1695 = *ILS* 1224a, *CIL* VI 1768 = *ILS* 1229; see also the tables of W. Kuhoff (n. 4).

⁹ This is the case with Marcus Aurelius Consius Quartus in *CIL* VI 1700 = *ILS* 1249, where only his *correctura* in Flaminia and Picenum occurs followed by his priesthoods, contrasting clearly to *AE* 1956, 150, which sets out his full *cursus* with no mention of his priesthoods.

¹⁰ *CIL* X 1125 = *ILS* 2942: ... *legato provinc(iae) Asiae correctori Tusciae et Umbriae consulari Aemiliae et Liguriaie pontifici Vestae matris et in collegium pontificum promagistro sacerdoti Herculis consulari Campaniae* ...

he might very well be otherwise unknown; nevertheless, a possible identification exists. The inscription refers to a person who held the previously undocumented office of *corrector Tusciae et Umbriae*, and who had some link with *Hispania*. Furthermore, he must have been a Roman or Italian member of the senatorial aristocracy; the governorship of the Italian provinces was generally concentrated in the hands of this aristocracy, many of whom had origins or economic interests in these regions.¹¹ A review of known governors and *vicarii* in the fourth century AD in *Hispania* leads us to focus immediately on Septimius Acindynus. Son of the *praefectus urbi* of the same name in the Tetrarchic period, Septimius Acindynus was *consul ordinarius* in 340,¹² praetorian prefect in the East in 338–340,¹³ and also *agens vices praefectorum praetorio* in the *Diocesis Hispaniarum*.¹⁴ The period of his stay in the Iberian peninsula is not well established, since the only inscription from *Tarraco* which mentions him is lost (*CIL II 4107 = RIT 97*). In his commentary to *CIL II 4107*, Hübner dated this inscription between 317 and 326, on the basis of a *damnatio memoriae* attributed to Crispus. The authors of *PLRE* (I 11) fixed the date to 324–326, because its formula is the same as an inscription dedicated to Constantius Caesar (*CIL II 4108 = RIT 96*), and is linked chronologically with another to Constantine (*CIL II 4106 = RIT 95*). Since then, most scholars have accepted this date.¹⁵ However, A. Chastagnol thinks that the name erased was that of Constantinus II, thus dating the inscription to between 324 (based it on its resemblance to the Constantius one) and 337; in his opinion, the stay of Acindynus in *Hispania* can be placed without doubt to between 330 and 337.¹⁶ Therefore, the chronological question remains open.¹⁷

¹¹ G. A. Cecconi (n. 4), 136 ff.; *id.*, I governatori delle province italiane, *AnTard* 6, 1998, 153 ff.; G. Clemente (n. 6), 641 ff.

¹² R. S. Bagnall *et alii*, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, Atlanta, 1987, 214–215, plus *P. Oxy.* 3984.

¹³ *CTH II* 6, 4, VIII 5, 3, and IX 3, 3; *PLRE I* 11 and R. S. Bagnall (n. 12), 215.

¹⁴ *CIL II 4107 = RIT 97*. On his father and his origins, see A. Chastagnol, *Les Fastes de la Préfecture de Rome au Bas-Empire*, Paris, 1962, 21, who considers him to belong to an Eastern family, due to the Greek character of his *cognomen* (from Ἀκίνδυνος), which later settled in Rome.

¹⁵ So G. Alföldy, *RIT*, 97; J. Arce, *El último siglo de la España romana (284–409)*, Madrid, 1982, 59, W. Kuhoff (n. 4), 115 and 235; J. Vilella, Rang i procedència geogràfica dels vicaris i governadors de la Diocesis Hispaniarum (300–409), *Fonaments* 8, 1992, 85.

¹⁶ A. Chastagnol, La carrière du Proconsul d'Afrique M. Aurelius Consius Quartus, *Libyca* 7, 1959, 198; *idem*, Les espagnols dans l'aristocratie gouvernementale à l'époque de Théodose, *Les empereurs romains d'Espagne*, Paris, 1965, 274. We must note that the date established by Prof. Chastagnol in these articles was linked to his claim that the *vicarii* (*virii perfectissimi* at the beginning) were only *virii clarissimi* since just a little time before 337. This is an hypothesis that he corrected later to 326 (in Constantin et le Sénat, *Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana, Atti II Convegno Internazionale*, Perugia, 1976, 57), and at the conference on *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio* (n. 6), 175, where he accepts the existence of some *vicarii virii clarissimi* before 326.

¹⁷ According to the formula (including the use of *adque* in the first line) and layout of the texts, the number of letters in each line should be the same on the pedestal with the *damnatio memoriae* and the other one dedicated to Constantius Caesar. The width of the inscribed field should be also very similar, if not the same. If we compare both inscriptions, the second line should have a similar number of letters, and we can observe that Crispus fits rather than Constantinus (too long in this case) in the cancelled space.

CIL II 4108 = RIT 96 (pl. LXVIII 4) *CIL II 4107 = RIT 97* (lost)

*Pio adque inclyto
d. n. Constantio nobilissimo ac fortissimo et felicissimo*

5 *Caesari, Badius
Macrinus v.p., p.p.H.T.,
numini maiestatique eius semper
devotissimus*

*Pio adque inclyto
d. n. [[Crispo]] nobilissimo ac fortissimo et felicissimo*

5 *Caesari, Septimius
Acindynus v.c., a-
gens per Hispanias
v.c.p.t. vice sacra cognoscens, numini
10 maiestatique eius
semper dicatissimus*

Nevertheless, another problem arises. The lost inscription from *Tarraco* has been given different, inconsistent, layouts

The name of Acindynus fits perfectly in the first line of the inscription from *Emerita*, particularly if one takes into account that the letters are closer in this line than in the remainder. If this interpretation is accepted, his stay in Italy, before his arrival in *Hispania*, would date to before 337. This is clearly a possibility, since only two *correctores* are known in this province between 306 and 337.¹⁸

Even though the existence of some intermediate post between the two offices cannot be absolutely rejected, governing an Italian province before the vicariate is frequent.¹⁹ On the other hand, the proposed restoration informs us about the pagan beliefs of Acindynus, unknown until now.²⁰ As a son of the former prefect of the City from 293 to 295 (a pagan himself), Acindynus was a senator by birth, so his priesthood is not a surprise, and this confirms his membership to a family that was already prominent, at least in the last decades of the third century AD.

Therefore, the text of the inscription could be restored as follows (with the help of *CIL* II 4107 = *RIT* 97):

1 *Septimio A[cindyno, v(iro) c(larissimo)]*
 2 *correcto[ri Tusciae]*
 3 *et Vmbri[ae, pont(ici) maio]*
 4 *[r]i?, XV [vi]r[o s(acris) f(aciundis), agenti?]*
 5 *[per Hispanias vices?]*
 6 *[praef(ectorum) praet(orio), vice s(acra) c(ognoscens)?]*
 7 [---]

or 5 *[vices praef(ectorum) praet(orio), v(ice) s(acra) c(ognoscens)?]*
 6 [---]

The *correctura Tusciae et Umbriae* allow us to understand rather more about the progression of Septimius Acindynus' career. The governorship of this Italian region at some time before 337 (as said above) is a logical first step in the *cursus* of a senator belonging to a Roman aristocratic family of the fourth century AD. He would have acquired experience for subsequent posts, and he may also, though it cannot be confirmed, have had economic interests there.²¹ After that, he held either an intermediate unknown office or the vicariate of the *Diocesis Hispaniarum* (at some time between 324 and 337), thus being the earliest attested *clarissimus* to occupy a vicariate, a post originally held only by *viri perfectissimi*.²² Later, he went to the East as praetorian prefect from 338 until 340, although we do not know if he held any office between his arrival in *Hispania* and his departure for the East. Obviously, some doubts remain about Acindynus' *cursus* and its chronological evolution. He may have held other

by the editors of the XVth. century. So, Hübner (*CIL* II 4107) and Alföldy (*RIT* 97) basically follow I. Strada, *C. Iulii Caesaris Rerum Gestarum Commentari XIV*, Frankfurt, 1575, 134,12; however other authors show different dispositions of lines (for instance, I. Gruterus, *Inscriptiones Antiquae Totius Orbis Romani in corpus absolutissimum redactae*, Heidelberg, 1602, 246 – *ex Verderii et Schotti schedis* –; E. Flórez, *España Sagrada*, Madrid, 1769, vol. 24, 250; J. F. Masdeu, *Historia crítica de la España y la cultura española*, Madrid, 1789, vol. 19, 143,1516 and 442,424; and A. Laborde, *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne*, 1806, vol. 1, pars II, on the cover). A survey of other preserved inscriptions from *Tarraco* also gathered by these antiquaries demonstrates that we cannot be absolutely sure about the disposition of the lines on *CIL* II 4107 = *RIT* 97. Thus, we cannot confirm if it was dedicated to Crispus or Constantinus II.

¹⁸ C. Vettius Cossinius Rufinus (*PLRE* I 777) and C. Iulius Rufinianus Ablabius Tatianus (*PLRE* I 875). G. Cecconi (n. 5), 213.

¹⁹ This is one of the general tendencies discussed by G. Clemente (n. 6), 633 ff.

²⁰ R. Von Haehling, *Die Religionszugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des Römischen Reiches seit Constantinus I*, Bonn, 1978, 58.

²¹ On the properties of this family we know only that they had a villa at Bauli, in Campania, which was bought by Vitrasius Orfitus and later it was handed down to Symmachus as matrimonial dowry (*Ep.* I, 1,2 y 5). Further, see above n. 11.

²² W. Kuhoff (n. 4), 115; A. Chastagnol (n. 6), 175.

offices unknown to us, but a period of inactivity between offices would not be a major problem, and would conform well with the substantial intervals observed in the senatorial careers of this period.²³ Obviously, his paganism did not interfere with the development of his career, and we must note that his praetorian prefecture in the East took place in the difficult times following Constantine's death. This indicates the confidence placed in him by Constantius II, who nominated Acindynus to occupy the ordinary consulship, performed along with another important aristocratic pagan, L. Aradius Valerius Proculus Populonium (*PLRE* I 747).

The fragmentary character of the inscription does not permit us to know who dedicated the statue in *Augusta Emerita*, or what his motives were. If we take into account the dedications to governors and vicars documented in the fourth century, we observe that the great majority of them were put up in places where the officials carried out their duties, so the pedestal may well have been erected by the community of *Emerita*.²⁴ Thus, the *splendidissima colonia Emeritensium* (as it appears in other inscriptions of this period, *AE* 1927, 165), with its *ordo decurionum* at the top, might have dedicated a statue to Septimius Acindynus, the highest authority in *Hispania* and resident in the colony, which is considered to have been the capital of the *diocesis* from the fourth century AD onwards.²⁵ As regards the motives, gratitude for performance of his duties as *vicarius* may be postulated.²⁶ However, we cannot exclude the existence of links of patronage, a custom widely extended in this century, and attested at *Emerita*, which, like every provincial capital, could have direct contact with governors, and co-opt them as *patroni*.²⁷ In any case, the dedication of the pedestal must be placed at a time when the *vicarius* was known in the colony, so that it would have been erected near the end of his term of office.²⁸

Finally, the Acindynus inscription takes its place as the first epigraphic testimony of a *vicarius Hispaniarum* found in *Augusta Emerita*.

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²³ G. A. Cecconi, Aviano Simmaco, Costante e l'andamento delle carriere senatorie nel tardo impero, *SDHI* 62, 1996, 342, relates these inactive phases not to problems between senators and the imperial power, as scholars usually have done, but with the different rhythm of the senatorial *cursus* in this period. It was characterized by a few offices of high prestige at the disposal of members of the aristocracy, who thus were obliged to have long periods of *otium*.

²⁴ On these circumstances, see M. Horster, Ehrungen spätantiker Statthalter, *AnTard* 6, 1998, 37 ff.

²⁵ R. Etienne, Ausone et l'Espagne, *Mélanges J. Carcopino*, Paris, 1966, p. 319 ff.; *idem*, Merida, capitale du vicariat des Espagnes, *Homenaje a Sáenz de Buruaga*, Madrid, 1982, p. 201 ff.; J. Arce (n. 15), 37 ff.

²⁶ In the same way as the statue dedicated in Rome to *Flavius Sallustius*, *vicarius Hispaniarum* in 357, by a Spanish legation (*CIL* VI 1729 = *ILS* 1254).

²⁷ So *Sex. Furnius Iulianus* (*AE* 1952, 116), provincial governor of Lusitania in 210–213 and patron of the colony. On this tendency in the Later Roman Empire, J.-U. Krause, Das spätantike Städtepatronat, *Chiron* 17, 1987, 25 ff.; for Italy, see G. A. Cecconi (n. 4), 141 ff.

²⁸ M. Horster (n. 24), 38.