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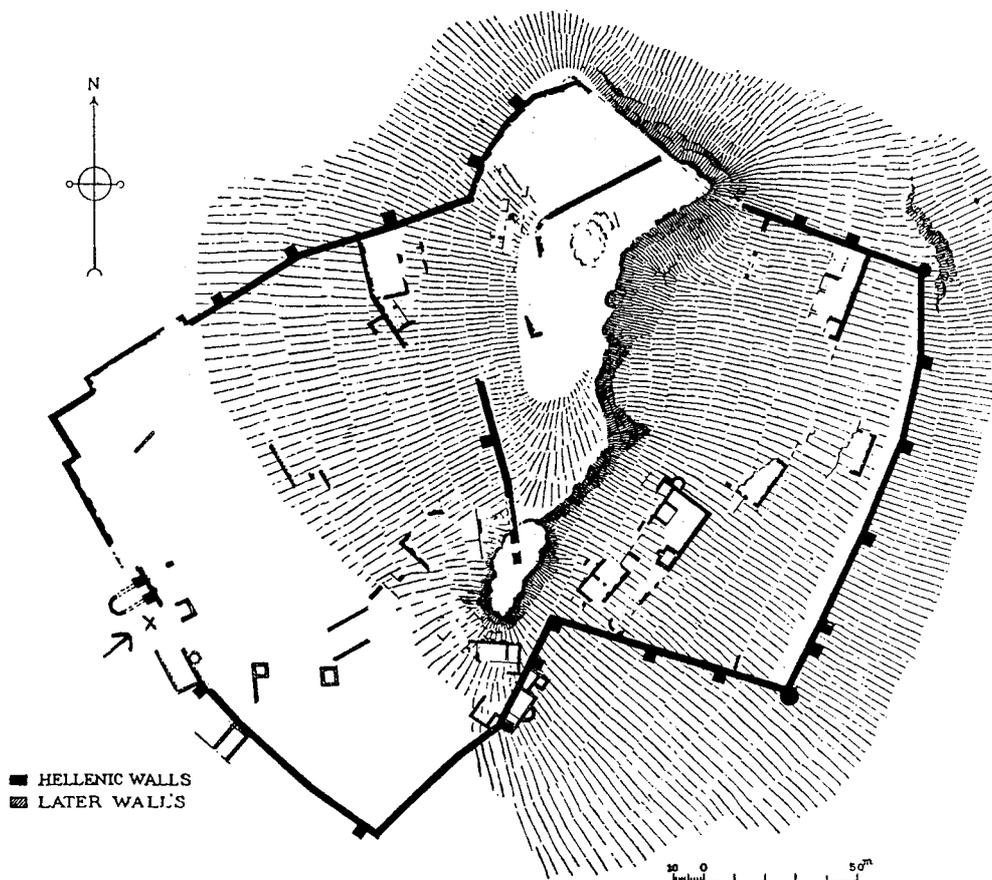
THE EMPRESS JULIA DOMNA AT EPIDAUROS LIMERA

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THE EMPRESS JULIA DOMNA AT EPIDAUROS LIMERA

The statue base we publish here lies in thick underbrush on the lower southwestern slopes of the acropolis of Epidaurus Limera.¹ Its exact position is indicated by an X on Wace and Hasluck's plan of the site, which we reproduce.²



¹ For ancient testimonia, travellers, and modern literature on this city see *IG* V.1.931-934; p. 306; *SEG* XI 894; XIII 259. W.M.Leake, *Travels in the Morea* 1 (London 1830) 211-217; K.Philippson, *RE* 6 (1907) 50-51; A.B.Wace, F.W.Hasluck, *BSA* 14 (1908) 179-182; H.Schall, *Die Insel des Pelops* (Bremen 1943) 115-117; A.C.Oikonomakos, *Ἀρχαία Ἐπίδαυρος Λιμερά* (Athens 1957); H.Waterhouse, R.Hope Simpson, *BSA* 56 (1961) 136, 167; K.Demakopoulou, *Arch Deltion* 23 (1968) A.145-194; G.L.Huxley in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton 1976) 314; S.Grunauer von Hoerschelmann in S.Lauffer ed. *Griechenland: Lexikon der historischen Stätten* (Munich 1989) 221.

² Wace and Hasluck, *op.cit.* 180. The presence of a prominent Imperial monument in this location suggests to us that the large gap here in the fortification wall might mark the position of the main gate into the city on its lower southwestern side. Such a gate would provide the most convenient approach to Epidaurus Limera for the road that comes down the stream bed to the southwest of the acropolis. For the position of this road, marked by surviving rock-cut wheel ruts, see the plan in Waterhouse and Hope Simpson 1961, p. 137.

It lies *ca.* 6 m. southeast of the prominent ruins of an apsidal building and *ca.* 21 m. northwest of the inscribed monument published by M.H.Jameson, *Hesperia* 22 (1953) 170-171, no. 18.³ The base, which is of blue-gray limestone, is embedded in the ground, its top projecting only *ca.* 0.20-0.25 m. above the modern surface. Except for the inscribed face and part of the top, most of the rest of the block is hidden in thick undergrowth. It sits level, however, and may be *in situ*, for the back of the base appears to have been set against a retaining wall whose large, squared limestone blocks probably indicate ancient construction. (Tafel X d).

The front of the block is slightly concave, perhaps because it once formed part of an exedra or a curved monument. It was certainly attached originally to two other, probably similar blocks on either side, for still preserved in its top surface are two clamp cuttings *ca.* 0.035 m. deep and *ca.* 0.075-0.08 m. in length, which are set roughly parallel to the front of the base at a distance of *ca.* 0.11 m. from it on the left and *ca.* 0.135 m. on the right. The small section of the right lateral face that is now exposed has been roughly dressed and preserves no trace of anathyrosis or any features other than the clamp cutting at its top. The left side of the base is now almost completely hidden. Although excavation would be required to expose the full dimensions and the nature of the top surface of the base, it seems large enough to have supported a statue of roughly life-size.

The text is inscribed on a smooth, projecting band 0.10 m. in height, at the top of the block, which is preserved, with only a few chips missing, for the full original width of the base, 0.70 m. Below it, set back from the inscribed band, is a convex moulding, *ca.* 0.08 m. in height, whose surface is much more roughly dressed than that of the inscribed band. In its present low position, the inscription is difficult to read, but after close examination of the stone on April 14 and 15, 1994, supplemented by study of squeezes and photographs, we print the following text with some confidence. Height of letters, *ca.* 0.013-0.015m.; lunate epsilons and sigmas. (Tafel X e).

Ἰουλίαν Δόμναν Σεβασ[τῆ]ν [Ἀὐτοκρ]άτορος Καίσα-
ρος Λουκίου Σεπτιμί[ο]υ Σεουήρου Περτίνακος Σε-
βαστοῦ γυναῖκα *vacat*

Line 1: The lower part of the lunate letter in the 15th letter-space, after the sigma, is preserved but a break has removed the center of the letter.

Line 2: Of the dotted iota, only the free-standing top of a vertical stroke survives. At the bottom of the 27th letter-space there is a segment of a circular letter; enough is preserved to exclude the lunate letters epsilon and sigma and to limit the possible readings to O or Θ. Of the dotted epsilon only the bottom half of a centered vertical is visible.

³ Since Jameson's visit, a large piece of the moulding above the inscription has been broken off and is lying on the ground in front of the monument. The inscription, however, is still perfectly legible and seems not to have suffered. For this text, which never appeared in *SEG*, see J. and L.Robert, *BE* (1954) 123. It will be reprinted in *SEG* XLI.

Although the text of this statue base is straightforward and does not supply any new information about the Empress Julia Domna or her husband, Septimius Severus, the inscription is important testimony to the existence of her portrait statue at Epidauros Limera. To judge from the size of the base and from the clamp cuttings on its top, she was probably joined by at least two life-size statues, one to her right and another to her left, which most likely represented her husband and at least one other member of the Imperial family.⁴ A base for a Severan statue-group consisting of three portraits has been found elsewhere in the Peloponnesos in the Asklepieion at Epidauros, *IG IV² 1.610*: Caracalla, Septimius Severus, and Julia Domna. It is also possible that the base at Epidauros Limera formed part of a larger, multiple monument which supported statues of several members of the Imperial family. A good parallel, though on a much larger scale, lies close to hand in Sparta, if we can accept the persuasive reconstruction by A.J.S.Spawforth of *SEG XXXIV 309*.⁵ Ours is the third statue base of Julia Domna from Lakonia known to us.⁶ Other Peloponnesian sites which erected statues of her include Megara, *IG VII 80*; Hermione, *IG IV 704, 706*; and Olympia, *IvO 387*.

Lacking in the inscription from Epidauros Limera are any of Julia Domna's customary titles such as μήτηρ κάστρων / τῶν στρατοπέδων, which she acquired on April 14, 195 A.D., or μήτηρ Αυτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Μάρκου Αύρηλίου Ἀντωνείνου Σεβαστοῦ, etc. Her husband, the Emperor Septimius Severus, also appears here without any of his victorious titulature such as Ἀραβικός, Ἀδιαβηνικός (after 195 A.D.), Παρθικός μέγιστος (after January 28, 198 A.D.), Βρεττανικός μέγιστος (210 A.D.), etc. Even though there was room on the base from Epidauros Limera to inscribe at least some of these titles, we must resist the temptation to draw chronological inferences from their absence. The presence of such titles on an inscription or coin can, of course, provide valuable evidence

⁴ On one of the reverse types of Julia Domna's bronze coinage, 196-211 A.D., the empress stands facing between Geta and Caracalla; see H.Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* 5 (London 1950) 310. Jameson, *Hesperia* 22 (1953) 155, postulates a similar group at Hermione.

⁵ See *BSA* 81 (1986) 313-327; *SEG XXXVI 360*. We do not find the efforts of S.N.Koumanoudes and D.C.Gofas to date this monument to ca. 205-221 A.D. convincing; for these see *SEG XXXIV 309*; *XL 349*.

⁶ For the other two see note 5 above (Sparta) and *SEG XXIII 199* (Tainaron). For an excellent catalogue of Greek and Latin inscriptions concerning Julia Domna, with detailed discussion, see E.Kettenhofen, *Die syrischen Augustae in der historischen Überlieferung*, *Antiquitas*, Reihe 3, vol. 24 (1979) 75-143, 299-310. The list of 120 inscribed bases in Greek and Latin for portrait statues of Julia Domna published by J.Fejfer, *ARID* 14 (1985) 129-138, must be used with care, for it has many lacunae (four at least from Athens) and cannot be effectively correlated with her histogram on p. 135 because she has failed to provide the entries in her catalogue with dates. Still useful, though outdated, is M.G.Williams, *AJA* 6 (1902) 259-305. Helpful in general - though not for the Peloponnesos - is F.Ghedini, *Giulia Domna tra Oriente e Occidente: Le fonti archeologiche* (Rome 1984). It is disappointing to find in M.Bonello Lai's otherwise elaborately documented study of "I viaggi di Giulia Domna sulla base della documentazione epigrafica," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Cagliari* N.S. 2 [39] (1978-9) [1981] 13-45, no mention whatsoever of any inscribed monument of Julia Domna in Greece. For worship of this empress in Athens and her statues in two temples on the Acropolis, see the inscriptions mentioned by R.S.Stroud, *Hesperia* 40 (1971) 200-204, no. 53.

for a *terminus post quem*. But the fallacy of attempting to establish a *terminus ante quem* from their absence is graphically illustrated by the inscribed base from the Asklepieion at Epidauros mentioned above,⁷ which has exactly the same items as our inscription, albeit in a slightly different order: Ἰουλίαν Δόμναν Σεβ. γυναῖκα Αὐτοκράτορος Λ. Σεπτιμίου Σεουήρου Περτίνακος Σεβ., *I.G.* IV² 1.610. To infer, however, from the absence of μητέρα κάστρων for the Empress and Ἀραβικοῦ, Ἀδιαβηνικοῦ for the Emperor that the inscription must be dated before 195 A.D. would be to err dramatically, for on the same base, the inscription below the statue of Septimius Severus reads: Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα Λ. Σεπτίμιον Σεουήρον Περτίνακα Ἀραβικὸν Ἀδιαβηνικὸν Σεβ. Moreover, the presence of a third statue of Caracalla as Σεβαστός on the same base places the monument after 198 A.D. We must be content, therefore - until the accompanying blocks are found - with a general date of 193-211 A.D. for Julia Domna's new portrait from Epidauros Limerá⁸

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⁷ An instructive example of drawing mistaken inferences from the absence of Imperial titlature for Septimius Severus is provided by the heavily restored text of a small fragment from Athens by A.N.Oikonomides, *BASP* 21 (1984) 179-180, no. 1; *SEG* XXXIV 184.

⁸ We are thus precluded from speculation that our base may reflect "local goodwill for the Imperial family...fuelled by an act or acts, otherwise unknown, of Imperial benefaction," Spawforth, *BSA* 81 (1986) 327.

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b)

a)–b) Statue Base from Epidauros Limera