

# EMPEROR, ARMY, AND SOCIETY

# ANTIQUITAS

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# EMPEROR, ARMY, AND SOCIETY

Studies in Roman Imperial History  
for Anthony R. Birley

edited by

WERNER ECK, FEDERICO SANTANGELO, AND  
KONRAD VÖSSING



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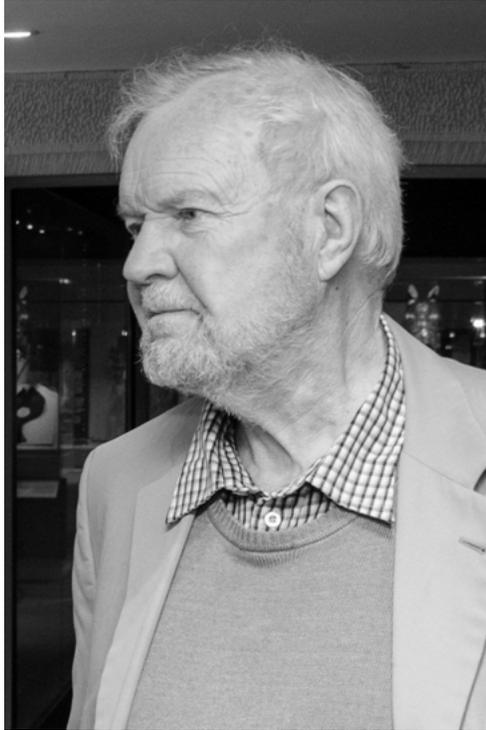
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ANTHONY R. BIRLEY  
(1937 - 2020)



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## A BOOK FOR TONY BIRLEY

Anthony R. Birley died in Newcastle upon Tyne on 19 December 2020. His bond with the history of Rome and its provinces went back to his childhood. He was born on 8 October 1937 in Chesterholm, Northumberland, the ancient auxiliary fort of Vindolanda, just 34 miles to the west. His father Eric had bought the house where the Vindolanda Museum now is. Tony grew up there together with his older brother Robin. That ancient place was to shape both their lives.

At Clifton College in Bristol, where his father had been educated decades earlier, Tony's interest in, and talent for the classical languages soon became apparent, and he absorbed them with an energy and depth almost unimaginable today. Anyone who came into contact with him later could feel the self-evident familiarity with which he approached the lived historical experience of the Greek and Roman world. He then went up to Oxford, where he studied Classics from 1956 onwards, in the years 1960-1962 as a Craven Fellow; during that time, he not only completed his MA, but also had the chance to study for several months in Paris with Hans-Georg Pflaum at the *École des Hautes Études*. Pflaum had been in close contact with Tony's father Eric since the end of the Second World War, just like Sir Ronald Syme. Those three great scholars were bound by many common interests, including their efforts to revive the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* at the Berlin Academy in 1952. In light of that family and intellectual background, the topic Tony worked on in his dissertation (begun in 1963) was not such a surprise: 'The Roman High Command from the Death of Hadrian to the Death of Caracalla, with Particular Attention to the Danubian Wars of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus'. His supervisor was Ronald Syme, with whom he retained a very close connection throughout his life; his last major publication was an edition of Syme's select correspondence.

After holding positions at Birmingham and Leeds and a visiting professorship at Duke University in North Carolina, he was appointed Professor of Ancient History at Manchester University (1974-1990). He was later elected to the Ancient History Chair at the Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf, succeeding Dietmar Kienast (1990-2002). After his retirement he was Visiting Professor at Newcastle and Durham. His integration into the German academic world was considerably facilitated by his longstanding and close connection with several colleagues, such as the archaeologist and director of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn, Harald von Petrikovits, an old friend of his father's, Géza Alföldy, who worked first in Bonn and Bochum and later in Heidelberg, and Johannes Straub, the Bonn ancient historian, in whose *Historia Augusta* Colloquia Tony took part early on. His second wife, Heide Birley (1938-2022), was a Roman archaeologist, with a strong expertise in the material

culture of the Rhine limes, and is mentioned in the acknowledgments of many of his publications; she also took care of the German translation of *Hadrian*.

The centre of Tony Birley's scholarly life, however, always remained Britain, not least because of his early involvement in the excavations at Vindolanda, which were led by his brother Robin. When a large number of wooden tablets began to be discovered in the Roman auxiliary fort, shedding light on the lives of its military and civilian inhabitants, he took an early interest in the task of deciphering and interpreting them, and in what they could reveal about Roman life in Britain. Birley had dealt with the Roman province of Britannia in its many aspects at an early stage of his career, not least in a book intended for the general public, first published as early as 1964: *Life in Roman Britain*, a subject that he later developed – with partly different aims – in *The People of Roman Britain* (1979) and *Garrison Life at Vindolanda. A Band of Brothers* (2002).

In his DPhil dissertation Britain had only played a minor role. However, the topic of the Roman High Command from the death of Hadrian to the death of Caracalla gave rise to several monograph projects, which soon made him known beyond the narrow circle of his peers. That was especially the case with the biography of the Roman emperor who had played a central role in his doctoral work: Marcus Aurelius. First published in 1966 (second edition in 1987), the work was translated into German as early as in 1968, and later into Italian and Spanish. The most fascinating aspect of his portrayal was the choice to place the emperor within a wide-ranging account of Roman ruling class: he was not shown as a lonely ruler, but as part of the elite with whom and through whom the empire was governed. Birley achieved this through his profound knowledge of imperial prosopography, expertly putting to fruition what his father Eric, Syme, and Pflaum, among others, had worked out. By carefully combining a large body of epigraphic and numismatic evidence with the relatively many literary sources of the period, an in-depth picture of a time of transition emerged, with an emperor who could appear so different from many of his predecessors and his successors. This first impressive imperial biography was followed by *Septimius Severus* in 1971 and finally by *Hadrian. The Restless Emperor* in 1997. In a unique synthesis of the evidence, a vivid picture of such a distinctive and complicated ruler emerged, along with a fascinating portrait of the ruling class of the empire since Trajan's reign, including the intellectuals who came into contact with Hadrian. It is especially remarkable to see how Birley includes the *Vita* of Hadrian from the *Historia Augusta* in his account of Hadrian's life: a feat that was made possible by decades of engagement with that important and problematic work.

In all these studies, the province of Britannia was represented in one form or another, especially since the island had the largest army contingent in the whole empire since the time of Hadrian, and its governor had a weight commensurate to the

importance of that brief. However, the province of Britannia only became the focus of Birley's scholarly work through the detailed analysis of the governors, their careers and their actions, as well as the other high officials who worked there. That seemed an urgent and indeed necessary task, because the senatorial and equestrian officeholders of this province, despite their extraordinary importance in the fabric of the empire, had not yet received a full-scale discussion, unlike those of other regions, whose importance was not fully comparable to that of Britannia.

Birley had already presented a first very brief attempt in 1967 in the fourth volume of *Epigraphische Studien: The Roman Governors of Britain*. But the extensive, masterly treatment of the topic followed only in 1981 under the title *The Fasti of Roman Britain*. In contrast to all other discussions of the governors (and other officials) of a province, he did not confine himself to the first three centuries (pp. 37-309), but included all those who were active there after Diocletian's reform (pp. 309-353). Nevertheless, the period from AD 43 to the first Tetrarchy dominated the study: the choice was dictated by the nature of the evidence base. That was also evident in the special examination and description of the senatorial career which precedes the actual prosopographical analysis. In just under 32 pages, building on the body of work on the senatorial *cursus honorum* that had appeared in German in the previous years, he succeeds in presenting a solid and balanced description of the many aspects that no one else had worked out so expertly and so comprehensively. But Birley turned again to the officeholders of the province after almost a quarter of a century, this time under the title *The Roman Government of Britain* (2005). Although he refrained from producing a new analysis of the *cursus honorum*, he included the same group of people as in the 1981 work; wherever possible, he gave considerably greater weight to individual trajectories. In many respects the prosopographical discussions almost give rise to something approaching a new account of the history of the province as a whole, which goes far beyond the individual histories of the various officeholders. One of these governors, Cn. Iulius Agricola, who took up a great deal of space in both books, separately received his fair share of interest, not surprisingly, in a series of articles, but above all in a translation of and extensive commentary on the biography by Tacitus, together with the *Germania* (1999).

This steady stream of volumes effectively gives the measure of Tony Birley's scholarship. Yet he also published a large number of articles in journals, edited collections, and Festschriften, which further reveal the extent of his learning: studies on new documents from Vindolanda, on individual emperors, especially Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, on the problems of the Roman external borders, especially in the north of the island, on the *Historia Augusta* and Marius Maximus, and on deities of the Roman world, often embedded in daily life in Britain. They are a treasure trove for any student of the Roman Empire, and cannot be fairly summarised in a few lines;

yet they are especially significant to the appreciation of his trajectory as a scholar of the imperial period.

Along with his great work as an historian who could produce authoritative accounts and insightful analysis, a further achievement is worth mentioning, both because of its distinctive importance and for the spirit with which Birley took it upon himself: his work as editor of many contributions of his most influential teacher, Sir Ronald Syme. The first two volumes of the *Roman Papers* were published in 1979, but the wealth of those complex, mostly prosopographical articles was difficult to access and make proper use of without an index. Things changed radically when Birley took over the editing of the subsequent volumes, from *Roman Papers* III in 1984 to *Roman Papers* VI-VII in 1991, two years after Syme's death. Volume III contained the index to the first three volumes, and the following ones were equipped with their own sets. Those who had often dealt with Syme's immense oeuvre readily appreciated what a gift Birley had made to the scholarly world. It was a comprehensive and time-consuming work, which he carried out to the point of self-denial. But other tasks were to follow.

Fergus Millar, Syme's literary executor, asked Birley to take care of almost all the manuscripts that Syme had partially written in the 1930s and during the Second World War, but had never published. He took on that task too: *Anatolica. Studies in Strabo* (1995) and *The Provincial at Rome and Rome and the Balkans 80 BC-AD 14* (1999) were the results. In the process, Birley added literature where possible, and supplemented both works with later shorter manuscripts by Syme that had not yet been published. In the course of this time-consuming work, he also came across numerous letters written to Syme by other scholars, including Münzer, Groag, and Stein, whom Syme held in high esteem as masters of prosopographical research, as well as many other colleagues with whom he had corresponded. Birley transcribed those manuscripts and published them in April 2020 as his final tribute to this outstanding figure: *Select Correspondence of Ronald Syme, 1927-1939*. Its introduction offers characteristically rich insights into Syme's personality and work, and is a powerful testimony to the place that the history of scholarship had to Birley's approach to his subject and his craft. His deeply generous work on the towering figure that Syme was, however, reveals a characteristic trait that distinguished Tony's personality: his openness to others, young and old alike, and his willingness to share what he knew and mastered, in conversation and in correspondence. Many have benefited from his helpfulness; both his stature as an historian of imperial Rome, and his open and unfailingly friendly personality left a deep impression on those with whom he came into contact.

Birley had a very distinguished standing in the field. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and an Ordinary Member of the Deutsches

Archäologisches Institut and of the Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Künste. He had also served as a member of the Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik in Munich, had been a Member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, and sat on the advisory boards of *L'Antiquité Classique* and *Ancient Society*, as well as of the *Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien* (Steiner Verlag). He remained closely connected with Vindolanda since the early 1970s, serving as Chair of the Vindolanda Trust for two decades (1996-2016), and lately as its Patron.

This volume gathers thirty-four contributions from a number of friends and colleagues of Tony Birley. They are devoted to topics that we think he would have found of interest, and often engage directly with aspects of his work. The four sections into which they are organised – *Roman Britain, Emperors and Empresses, Administrative and Military History of the Roman Empire*, and *Ancient and Modern Historiography* – may fairly be seen as the key headings around which Tony's own work focused: readers are warmly invited to pursue their own itineraries through the collection. These studies are intended to serve, first and foremost, as a sign of the breadth of Tony Birley's interests and of the range and quality of his intellectual and scholarly impact on the field. They are also testimony to the range of connections that he built, across countries, specialisms, and generations. They revolve around the discussion of specific pieces of evidence, old and new, and on the interplay between the elucidation of matters of detail and the exploration of big-picture problems. They are offered to the memory of a great scholar, mentor, and friend, in gratitude and admiration.

Werner Eck  
Federico Santangelo  
Konrad Vössing

We are very grateful to the editors of the *Antiquitas* series, Frank Kolb and Winfried Schmitz, for giving this project favourable consideration. We should like to warmly thank Julius Schwarz for the invaluable work he has been doing on the typesetting of the volume. Manfredi Zanin has offered crucial assistance in compiling Tony Birley's bibliography, and Susanne Biegert at Habelt-Verlag has given helpful advice on various editorial matters.



# SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS AND THE SUPPLY OF ROME. A DEBATED ISSUE

JOSÉ REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ

Several passages from the *Historia Augusta* have given rise to a long debate on Septimius Severus' confiscations in Baetica and on the organisation of supplies to Rome in the time of Septimius Severus:

*HA Sev. 12, 1-6: interfectis innumeris Albini partium viris, inter quos multi principes civitatis, multae feminae inlustres fuerunt, omnium bona publicata sunt aerariumque auxerunt; tum et Hispaniorum et Gallorum proceres multi occisi sunt. denique militibus tantum stipendiorum quantum nemo principum dedit. filiis etiam suis ex hac proscriptione tantum reliquit quantum nullus imperatorum, cum magna partem auri per Gallias, per Hispanias, per Italiam, imperatoriam fecisset. tuncque primum privatarum rerum procuratio constituta est.*

The study of this text and the analysis of the archaeological material have been handled as two different approaches and two parallel debates. In this paper I will try to set out the current state of research by integrating as many elements as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion of these texts has been further enriched by a series of stamps and *tituli picti* on Baetican olive-oil amphorae (Dressel 20 type) found both in Baetica and on Monte Testaccio (Rome) and in western Europe.<sup>2</sup> The passage quoted above refers to the intervention of Septimius Severus in *Gallia* and *Hispania* after the defeat of Clodius Albinus, whom, as the *Historia Augusta* itself points out, the Senate had supported. In my opinion, part of the Gallic and Hispanic elites were reacting against the preponderance of Africans in the Roman Senate. In this vein, I have argued

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<sup>1</sup> D. VERA, La tradizione annonaria nella *Historia Augusta*. *HAC Genevense*. Bari 2010, 211-227, with a summary of the earlier bibliography. W. BROEKAERT, Oil for Rome during the second and third century AD: A confrontation of archaeological records and the *Historia Augusta*. *Mnemosyne*, 64, 2011, 591-623.

<sup>2</sup> On the meaning of the stamps and *tituli picti* of the Testaccio I refer to J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Sellar para qué. In: M. BUORA, S. MAGNANI (eds.), *Le iscrizioni con funzione didascalico-esplicativa. Committente, destinatario, contenuto e descrizione dell' oggetto nell' Instrumentum Inscriptum*. Trieste 2016, 73-90. IDEM, Monte Testaccio. Un archivo único. In: J. REMESAL, V. REVILLA, D.J. MARTÍN-ARROYO, A. MARTÍN (eds.), *Paisajes productivos y redes comerciales en el Imperio Romano / Productive Landscapes and Trade Networks in the Roman Empire*. Barcelona, 2019, 11-28, with previous bibliography. On Testaccio see A. AGUILERA MARTÍN, *El monte Testaccio y la llanura subaventina. Topografía extra portam Trigeminam*. Roma 2002. On the distribution of the materials see the websites: [ceipac.ub.edu](http://ceipac.ub.edu) and <https://romanopendata.eu>.

elsewhere that there was a manifest provincial competition in the Severan period.<sup>3</sup> In the Life of Clodius Albinus, the idea that the proceeds of the sales of the auctioned goods were paid into the *aerarium* is restated: ... *nec his pepercit, sed et ipsos interemit et bona eorum proposuit atque in aerarium publicum rettulit* (HA Clod. 12, 4). Since Severus had declared Albinus and his supporters to be public enemies, he thus complied with the law and paid the proceeds of the sales into the *aerarium*. However, it is difficult to reconcile this statement with the other one in the text: that he gave large sums of money to the soldiers and made his sons immensely rich. Today we know that Severus was not the creator of the *ratio privata*.<sup>4</sup>

Septimius Severus was appointed quaestor of *Baetica* in AD 171. He did not have the chance to hold this office since, on the one hand, he had to attend to personal matters due to the sudden death of his father (HA Sev. 2, 3-4) and, on the other hand, *Baetica*, being invaded by groups of Mauritians, was placed under the control of the governor of *Tarraconensis*, *C. Aufidius Victorinus legatus Augusti pro praetore provinciarum Hispaniae Citerioris et Baetica simul*.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, *P. Cornelius Anullinus*, an Iliberitan and a close friend of Severus, proconsul of *Baetica* perhaps around AD 170/171, was presumably placed in command of the *legio VII Gemina* to fight against the *Mauri*.

We do not know what information Septimius Severus may have had on the economy of *Baetica* when he was expected to take care of his quaestorship. At least he could have known that properties belonging to Trajan, Hadrian and other members of the Ulpian-Aelian family were under imperial control. His friend, *Cornelius Anullinus*, no doubt, could inform him well of another Iliberian family, that of the *Valerii Vegeti*, who had donated all or part of their properties to the emperor Marcus Aurelius, a donation made by *L. Mummius Niger Q. Valerius Vegetus Severinus*

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<sup>3</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, L'Afrique au Testaccio. *L'Africa romana XV, Tozeur 2002*, Roma 2004, 1077-1090. IDEM, *La Bética en el concierto del Imperio Romano*. Madrid 2011, 142.

<sup>4</sup> D. NONNIS, *Procurator praediorum Tiburtinorum, procurator rationis priuatae*: un liberto di Traiano a Casole d'Elsa. In: S. DEMOUGIN, M. NAVARRO CABALLERO (ed.), *Se déplacer dans l'Empire romain: approches épigraphiques*. Bordeaux 2014, 189-203. K. KLÓDZIŃSKI, *Procurator rationis patrimonii*: An Autonomous Equestrian Procuratorship or an Alternative Title of the *procurator patrimonii*?. *Klio* 102(2). 2020, 665-675.

<sup>5</sup> The references to these characters are made through the work of A. R. BIRLEY, *Septimius Severus*. I use the English edition, A. R. BIRLEY, *Septimius Severus. The African Emperor*. London 1971, 1988 (there is a Spanish edition: *Septimio Severo: el emperador africano*. Madrid 2012), given the comprehensive indexes of the volume the reader will have no difficulty in finding the pages in which A. R. Birley refers to these personages. I also refer to G. ALFÖLDY, *Fasti Hispanienses*. Wiesbaden 1969. In the Spanish-speaking historiography, see A. CABALLOS RUFINO, *Los senadores hispanos y la romanización de Hispania*. Écija 1990. For the equestrians see the works of H.-G. Pflaum and H. Devijver, On Roman Spain to J.M. OJEDA TORRES, *El servicio administrativo imperial ecuestre en la Hispania romana durante el Alto Imperio*. Seville 1993.

*Caucidius Tertullus*.<sup>6</sup> The property given to the emperor must have been considerable, for it was necessary to appoint a procurator, of centenary rank, defined as *ad kalendarium Vegetianum*, whose first known procurator was *T. Claudius Proculus Cornelianus* in AD 166, so that the *kalendarium Vegetianum* was created at this date or perhaps earlier. The last known procurator is *M. Lucretius Iulianus* in AD 209.

The *kalendarium Vegetianum* has been interpreted, in keeping with the meaning of the word *kalendarium*, as the administration of the rents of some capitals, but we do not know the system of management of the administered properties and if some of these properties were managed directly by the procurator. We should not only think of the administration of some borrowed capital, but also of the management of the properties that were given to the emperor. Manacorda, and somewhat later myself, came, by different paths, to propose that the abbreviation KV known on some stamps on Baetican oil amphorae was the abbreviation of *k(alendarium) V(egelianum)*. This opinion has been generally accepted and has produced an extensive bibliography.<sup>7</sup>

GRUPO	<i>Barba(---)</i>	<i>Ceparia</i>	<i>Grume(n)se</i>
A <sub>1</sub>	AVGGGNNN/ FIGVLBARBA (CIL XV 2559)	AVGGGNNN/ FIGVLCEPA (CIL XV 2564)	-
A <sub>2</sub>	AVGGGNNN/ COLEARIFBARB (CIL XV 2560)	AVGGGNNN/ COLEARIFCEPA (CIL XV 2565)	AVGGGNNN/ COLEARIFGRV (CIL XV 2570)  FGRVMESEA/ GGGNNNCE (CIL XV 2569)
B	IIAVRHERACLAE/ PATETFILFBAR (CIL XV 2561a-b)	IIAVRHERACLAE/ PATETFILFCEPAR (CIL XV 2566)	IIAVRELHERACLAE/ PATETFILFCRVM (CIL XV 2571)
C	KVFIGBAR/ COLSICEASI (CIL XV 2562)	KVFICCEPA/ COLLEOPAR (CIL XV 2567a)	KVFIGGRVM/ COLSICETASI (CIL XV 2572)
D	FIGBAR FBAR (CIL XV 2563)	FIGCEP (CIL XV 2568)	FGRV (CIL XV 2573)

**Fig. 1.** Stamps from the *figlinae Barba, Ceparia et Grumensis*.

<sup>6</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, *Mummius Secundinus*. El *Kalendarium Vegetianum* y las confiscaciones de Severo en la *Baetica* (*HA Severus 12-13*). *Gerion* 14. 1996, 195-221. IDEM, Senadores en el comercio de aceite bético. In: G. BARATTA, A. BUONOPANE, J. VELAZA (eds.), *Cultura epigráfica y cultura literaria. Estudios en homenaje a Marc Mayer i Olivé*. Faenza 2019, 351-372.

<sup>7</sup> D. MANACORDA, *II Kalendadum Vegetianum e le anfore della Betica*", *MEFRA* 89, 1977/1, 313-332. J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Reflejos económicos y sociales de la producción de ánforas olearias béticas (Dressel 20). In: J. M<sup>a</sup>. BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ (Ed.), *Producción y Comercio del aceite en la Antigüedad. Primer Congreso Internacional, Madrid 1978*, Madrid 1980, 131-160.

Figure 1 shows a set of series of stamps relating to Severus and his sons, from three Baetican *figlinae*. In two of them, series A1 and A2, there is a direct reference to the *Augustorum nostrorum trium*. In series B there is a reference to two individuals, father and son, the *Aurelii Heraclae*, related to the three *figlinae*; and series C, relates to the *k(alendarium) V(egelianum)* which share the COL(---) element with the specimens of series A2. Until now, those of us who have been working on these stamps have been trying to establish their chronological sequence. However, during the 2011 excavation campaign on Mount Testaccio we found examples of the A1, A2 and B series in strata dating to AD 204 and 205.<sup>8</sup> In the 1998-1999 campaigns we had already found examples of the A1 and A2 series with contextual dates of AD 207 and 208.<sup>9</sup> The first finding, as I had already proposed, is that in the case of the amphorae stamps, one of Severus' sons, Geta, was attributed the rank of Augustus before his official proclamation. The second observation is that these stamps are from a same date and, therefore, do not indicate a succession in the management model of these *figlinae* and the *fundi* linked to them, as we have all argued up to now, but rather diverse contemporary systems of properties that came into the hands of the emperors under different conditions (plate 1).



**Plate I.** Stamps linked to the *figlinae* confiscated by Severus.

<sup>8</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Nuevos datos sobre las confiscaciones de Septimio Severo en la Bética. In: J. LÓPEZ VILLAR (ed.), *Tarraco bienal*, Tarragona 2013, 233-245. IDEM, I provvedimenti annonari: la Baetica, l'olio per Roma e il Monte Testaccio. In: PANELLA, C. (Ideazione di), D'ALESSIO, A., PANELLA, C., REA, R. ( a cura di). *I Severi. Roma Universalis. L'Impero e la dinastia venuta dall'Africa*. Milan 2018 232-241.

<sup>9</sup> J.M<sup>a</sup>. BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ, J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Estudios sobre el monte Testaccio (Roma) V*. Barcelona 2010, n<sup>o</sup>s 315, 316.

The oil contained in the amphorae presenting these stamps could hypothetically come from old imperial properties, others from the new confiscations, others, perhaps, linked to the properties of the *kalendarium Vegetianum*. Other stamps, such as the specimens from CIL XV. 2, 3189, which now we know are linked to the *kalendarium Vegetianum*, broaden our understanding of the imperial properties in *Baetica*.<sup>10</sup> To all these should be added the stamps PORTO and POPVLI –which appear on the same amphora, and sometimes even as one single stamp PORTOPOPVLI (CIL. XV. 2, 3094), produced in La Catria (Lora del Río, Seville), dating to the Severan period and, in my opinion, also linked to imperial propaganda, as both stamps appear on the same amphora.<sup>11</sup>

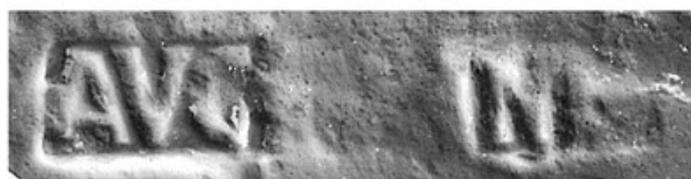
We also know of another group of stamps (CIL. XV. 2, 2558) in which the formula AVGGGNNNN (*Augusti tres*) is known, later a G and an N were dropped (*Augusti duo*) and finally another G and N (*Augustus noster*) (Plate II).



CIL XV 2558a



TESTACCIO 2010: n° 314a1



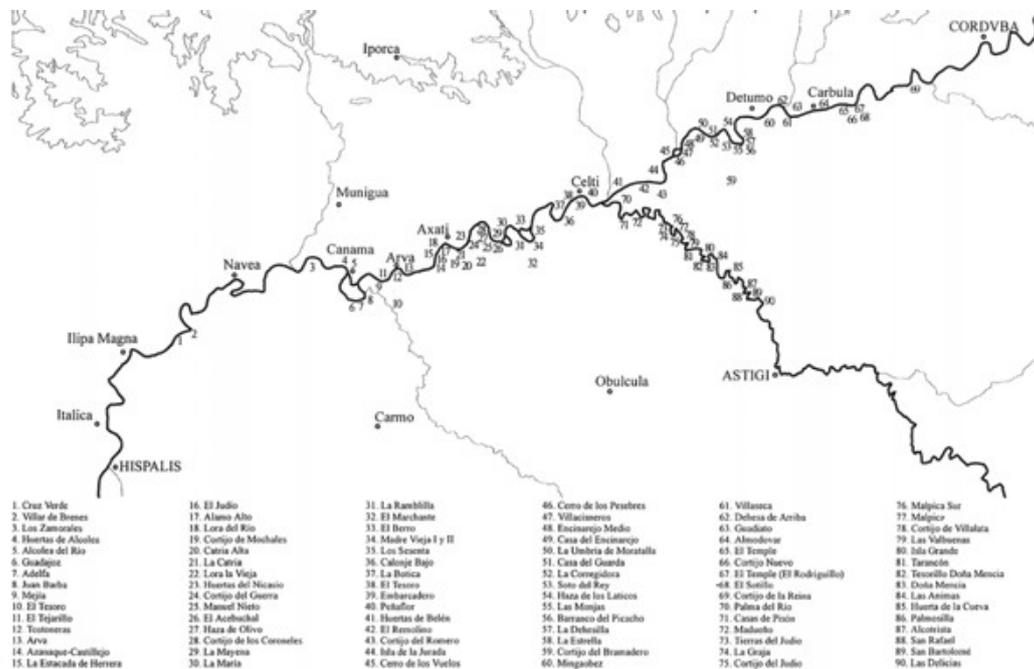
(Los Villares) TESTACCIO 2010: 504, fig 139

**Plate II.** Stamps of the *Augusti tres*.

<sup>10</sup> A synthesis of the state of the question in J. MOROS DÍAZ, La intervención severiana en la producción del aceite bético. In: J. M<sup>a</sup> BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ, J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ (eds.), *Estudios sobre el monte Testaccio (Roma) VI*. Barcelona 2014, 773-859. IDEM, Transformations of the Baetican olive oil production area in the Severian period. In: J. PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, J.M. BERMÚDEZ LORENZO (eds.), *The Romans before adversity: forms of reaction and strategies to manage change*. Rome 2021, 99-121.

<sup>11</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, La economía oleícola bética: nuevas formas de análisis. *AEspA* 50-51, 1977-1978, 87-142. (= *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 38.1982, 30-71).

We can certainly date the stamps of the *Augusti duo* between the death of Severus and that of Geta and the indication of *Augustus noster* after the death of Geta, but we do not know if the stamps of the *Augusti tres* began to be used from AD 209 or if they were already used before that date, as is the case with the group described above. Initially it has been generally accepted that these stamps were also linked to the *figlinae* referred to above, but we now know that they were not. These stamps were produced in the region of Arva (*municipium Flavium Arvense*), in a *figlina Paterni* (Fig. 2), in which, at the same time, amphorae were produced for other individuals.<sup>12</sup> In this region, a change in the production of Dressel 20 amphorae can be seen in the Severan period, with many more characters than before appearing on the stamps, perhaps indicating that confiscated plots of land were sold in smaller units.<sup>13</sup>



**Fig. 2.** Location plan of the amphora-producing *figlinae* Dr. 20.

To date we thought that the confiscations in *Baetica* were done all at once, after the defeat of Clodius Albinus. It is probable that these two systems of marking are indicating a temporary process in the application of confiscations and the corresponding auctions. Three of those who were *procuratores ad kalendarium Vegetianum* in Severan times later held the office of *procurator provinciae Baeticae*:

<sup>12</sup> J. MOROS DÍAZ, P. BERNI MILLET, Novedades sobre epigrafía anfórica bética para la zona productora de Adelfa (Carmona, Sevilla). *SECAH* 3. 2011, 34-45.

<sup>13</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Reflejos económicos y sociales de la producción de ánforas olearias béticas (Dressel 20). In: J. M<sup>a</sup>. BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ (ed.), *Producción y Comercio del aceite en la Antigüedad*. Madrid 1980, 131-160.

*P. Magnius Rufus Magonianus, L. Cominius Vipsanius Salutaris and M. Lucretius Iulianus*.<sup>14</sup> While *Cominius Vipsanius Salutaris* was provincial procurator, an imperial slave, *Irenaeus*, acted as *dispensator portus Ilipensis* (CIL. II, 1085).<sup>15</sup>

They were surely the ones who promoted and were responsible for the changes that we can detect in the management of the imperial properties through the stamps. There must have been some problems, since we know of a *procurator, Licinius Donatus, ad causas fiscales tuendas in provinciam Baeticam electus* (CIL. VIII, 9249) and a *Pomponius L(---) Murianus, advocatus fisci Hispaniarum trium* (CIL. VIII, 11341= 23219), for whom there is only a general dating in the first half of the third century AD, although it is likely that they are related, especially the former, to the changes produced in the time of Septimius Severus, which cannot be proven by now.

Although Septimius Severus acted energetically against some groups of the Gallic and Hispanic elite, we know that two of his prominent friends were of Baetican origin. One was the Iliberitan *Publius Cornelius Anullinus*, mentioned above. His other great Baetican friend was *Lucius Fabius Cilo*. Years ago, I proposed that under the Dressel 20 amphora stamp: LFCCVFS the name of *L(ucius) F(abius) C(ilo) c(larisimus) v(ir) F(iglina) S(calensia)* was concealed (CIL.XV.2, - 2588-2597).<sup>16</sup> Another specimen has recently appeared, with the name given in full, which confirms my proposal: LFAB(i)CILONIS.<sup>17</sup> Both obtained two consulships, *Anullinus* was suffect before AD 176 and ordinary in AD 199. *Cilo* suffect in AD 193 and ordinary in AD 204. Both obtained the *praefectura urbi*, both received gifts from Septimius Severus, but *Fabius Cilo* must have acquired some of the auctioned properties, as the found of his stamps on amphorae demonstrates. Amphorae bearing his name were stamped on numerous *figlinae* in *Baetica*, and his stamps are very abundant in Testaccio and the western Roman provinces. Another character, hidden under the initials P. N(---) N(---), (CIL XV 2, 3041), also acquired great prominence in this period, and his stamps are equally abundant in Testaccio and throughout Western Europe. The stamps linked to the imperial series are rare in Rome and very scarce in Europe, which is striking in some way, according to the statistical knowledge available to us today, as it would show that, in spite of everything, the volume of oil transported in these amphorae was relatively small.

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<sup>14</sup> W. ECK, *M. Lucretius Iulianus, procurator Augustorum*. Zur Funktion und sozialen Wertschätzung von Provinzialprokuratoren. *ZPE* 100. 1994, 559-576.

<sup>15</sup> M. CHRISTOL, La carrière de *Lucius Cominius Vipsanius Salutaris*, procurator of Bétique. *Habis* 46. 2015, 297-313.

<sup>16</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Tres nuevos centros productores de ánforas Dressel 20 y 23. Los sellos de *Lucius Fabius Cilo*. *Ariadne* 6, 1989, 121-153.

<sup>17</sup> O. BOURGEON, *La production d'amphores à huile dans la Vallée du Genil. (Ier- Ve s. ap. J.-C.)*. Barcelona 2021, 123-124. A. R. BIRLEY, *Septimius Severus...* 70, had considered the Hispanic origin of this person, proposing that he originated from *Iluro* (Mataró, Barcelona).

It should be noted that the same phenomenon occurred in the province of Tripolitania, since in the Testaccio we find stamps on Tripolitanian amphorae representing the same series: AVGGG; AVGG; AVG. In any case, in the strata from the Severan period excavated from the Testaccio, the proportion of African amphorae, whether from the Byzacena or Tripolitania, does not increase in relation to the volume found in the mid-second century AD: +/- 15%, although it does increase in the mid-third century AD.<sup>18</sup> However, it is interesting to note that in other contexts found in Rome, African material does noticeably increase.<sup>19</sup>

The other notable question regarding Baetican olive oil is that of its transport to Rome. H. Dressel had discovered some *tituli picti* relating to the *fiscus rationis patrimonii provinciae Baeticae* (CIL XV 2, 4097-4142).<sup>20</sup> On the meaning of these inscriptions he wrote the following: "... si può dubitare se nelle iscrizioni sopra riferite si abbia l'indicazione, che il contenuto dell'anfora fosse una contribuzione dovuta al fisco dall'affittuario d'una parte del patrimonio imperiale (fiscale) situato in provincia, oppure se fosse un prodotto ricavato dei beni imperiali (fiscali) della provincia amministrati dallo stesso fisco." Dressel proposes that, if the first case, a contribution from the lessee of fiscal property, were to occur, the name of the lessee should appear on the opposite side of the amphora, and that this would be verified if the amphorae were to be found intact.<sup>21</sup> Neither he nor we have found names of individuals in the Severan-era strata in which the *tituli* of the *ratio patrimonii* appear, so his proposition does not seem acceptable. These *tituli* have been widely discussed, and the discovery by Rodríguez Almeida, and later by us, of *tituli picti* in *beta* position in which the names of Severus and his sons appear has considerably modified our perspective.<sup>22</sup>

Our excavations have made it possible to gather *tituli picti* of Severus and Caracalla, which undoubtedly correspond to the period between AD 197 (the year of Caracalla's accession to the status of Augustus), and AD 209 (the date of Geta's accession). The *tituli picti* that bear the names of Severus, Caracalla, and Geta are to be dated from AD 209 to the death of Septimius Severus in AD 211; those with the

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<sup>18</sup> J.M<sup>a</sup>. BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ, *Estudios sobre el monte Testaccio (Roma) IV*. Barcelona 2007, 17-26.

<sup>19</sup> For the topographical contexts close to Testaccio see: T. BERTOLDI, Le anfore. In: A. CAPODIFERRO, P. QUARANTA (a cura di), *Alle pendici dell' Aventino. Gli scavi di via Marmorata*. Roma 2011, 148-170.

<sup>20</sup> The *tituli picti* of the amphorae from the Testaccio contain four main pieces of information, designated by the Greek letters *alpha*, the tare weight of the amphora, *beta*, the name of the person or persons involved in the transport or marketing of the amphora, *gamma*, the net olive oil content, *delta*, customs and fiscal control, the main elements of which are the district where the amphora originated (*Hispalis, Corduba, Astigi*), confirmation of the net oil content, the names of the agents involved in the control of the amphora and the consular dating of the year of issue of the amphora.

<sup>21</sup> H. DRESSEL, Ricerche sul Monte Testaccio. *Ann.Inst.* 50, 8178, 157.

<sup>22</sup> E. RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA, Novedades de epigrafía anforaria del Monte Testaccio. In: *Recherches sur les amphores romaines*. Rome 1972, 107-240. IDEM, *Los Tituli Picti de las Anforas Olearias de la Betica, I: Tituli Picti de los Severos y de la Ratio Fiscis*. Madrid 1989.

names of Caracalla and Geta date until the death of the latter in AD 212, as was already known thanks to the studies of Rodriguez Almeida; the recently discovered ones that only feature Caracalla's name may be dated from that year onwards. On stamps appears the formula *Augustorum NNN*, whereas on *tituli picti* both the formulae *Augustorum NNNN* and *Dominorum NNNN AVGGG* appear (Fig. 3).

Di Severo e Caracalla:

AVGVSTORUM NN / SEVERI ANTONINI (1 esemplare)  
 [AVGVSTORUM? NOS]TRORVM/[SEVER]I ET ANTONINI (1 esemplare)  
 DOMINORVM NOSTRORUM / SEVERI ET ANTONINI (3 esemplari)  
 DOMINORVM [NN?] SEVERI / [ET AN]TON[INI AVG]VSTRVM (1 esemplare)

Dei "tre Augusti" Severo, Caracalla e Geta:

[D]OMINORVM NOSTRORVM SEVERI / ANTONINI ET GETAE AVGGG (7 esemplari)  
 DOM[INORVM NOSTRORVM] / SEVERI / A[NTONINI ET GETAE AVGGG] (3 esemplari)

Di Caracalla e Geta:

[DDNN?] ANTONINI ET GET[AE AVGG?] (1 esemplare)

Per parte nostra, durante le campagne del 1998-1999 abbiamo trovato i seguenti formulari:

Di Severo e Caracalla:

[II] AVGVSTRORVM / SEVERI ET ANTONINI (1 esemplare)  
 DOMINORVM NN / SEVERI ET ANTONINI AVGG (4 esemplari)

Dei "tre Augusti" Severo, Caracalla e Geta:

DOMINORVM NNN SEVERI / ANTONINI ET GETAE AVGGG (1 esemplare)  
 DOMINORVM NNN AVGGG / SEVERI ANTONINI ET GETAE (1 esemplare)

Di Caracalla:

DOMINI N ANTONINI AVG (1 esemplare)

**Fig. 3.** *Tituli picti beta* of Severus and his sons.

There is no doubt that on the *tituli picti beta* the normative process of the rise of Severus' sons to the title of Augustus was rigorously observed, whereas on the stamps it was not observed with this degree of rigour apparently.

It had been considered previously that the *tituli picti* of the *ratio patrimonii* appeared in AD 217, with the death of Caracalla. However, our recent work allows us to consider that the *tituli* of the *ratio patrimonii* appeared as early as AD 214, or perhaps even earlier. In other words, it was Caracalla who administratively restructured the organisation of the transport of Baetican olive oil to Rome. I have proposed that the disappearance of the private characters in the *tituli picti beta* of our amphorae and their replacement first by the names of the emperors and later by the *ratio patrimonii* meant for the state, at least, the saving of the *vecturae* that the state had to pay private individuals for the transport of olive oil. We do not know whether

Severus' confiscations also included ship owners and, if so, whether these were auctioned and sold again. I have proposed that these "savings" were probably integrated, in principle, into the *ratio privata*, and we know now that, shortly after the death of Severus, they passed into the *ratio patrimonii* and not at the death of Caracalla, as Rodriguez Almeida had originally proposed, interpreting a text from the life of Severus Alexander as evidence that this emperor allowed the return of private agents to the transportation of olive oil to Rome – a view that we had followed.<sup>23</sup>

The other texts quoted refer to the creation of an *olearium* canon by Severus and the consequent granting of free oil to the plebs of Rome:

*Tripolim, unde oriundus erat contusis bellicosissimis gentibus securissimam reddidit ac populo Romano diurnum oleum gratuitum et fecundissimum in aeternum donavit* (HA Sev. 18, 3).

*moriens septem annorum canonem, ita ut cotidiana septuaginta quinque milia modium expendi possent, reliquit; olei vero tantum, ut per quinquennium non solum urbis usibus, sed et totius Italiae, quae oleo eget, sufficeret* (HA Sev. 23, 2).

This has led us to think that olive oil was not included as an annonary product until this period. However, I have argued that Baetican olive oil was already included as an annonary product from the time of Augustus.<sup>24</sup> It has traditionally been stated that it was only from the middle of the second century AD that the control of Baetican olive oil began to be taken into account by the emperors<sup>25</sup>. The fact that the known materials from the Testaccio date from between AD 145 and 257 has had a great influence on the birth of this idea. However, we only know the "skin" of the Testaccio and, as Dressel already pointed out, under what we know there are dozens of meters before reaching the base of the Testaccio: for this reason he thought that the Testaccio must have begun in the time of Augustus. What we can affirm, according to the *Historia Augusta*, is that Severus gave a certain quantity of free olive oil to the population of Rome, but before that time, I have argued, the emperor had at his disposal certain quantities of the product received as tax payment in kind, another amount coming from imperial estates and, in case of need, through the dreaded *indictiones*, so that he

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<sup>23</sup> E. RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA, Vicissitudini nella gestione del commercio dell'olio betico da Vespasiano a Severo Alessandro. In: J. H. D'ARMS, E. C. KOPFF (eds.) *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome*: Rome 1980, 277-290.

<sup>24</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, *La annona militaris y la exportación de aceite bético a Germania*. Madrid 1986. I have defended my proposals, accepted by some and criticised by others, in numerous other works.

<sup>25</sup> On this subject see the work of H. PAVIS D'ESCURAC, *La préfecture de l'annone, service administratif impérial d'Auguste à Constantin*. Rome 1976, which remains the most authoritative discussion.

could intervene on market prices in Rome. In addition, the prerogatives granted from Claudius onwards to those who transported products to Rome helped to keep the market supplied, which contributed to maintaining social order in Rome, as the emperors intended.

Recent estimates suggest that the Testaccio is made up of around 25 million amphorae, the contents of which would be equivalent to half the diet, in olive oil, of a million people for 250 years. As we know, though, the Testaccio has lost a large part of its volume over two thousand years, which allows us to assume that at the time it might have housed the equivalent of the entire diet. That Testaccio was a controlled dump is demonstrated by the fact that only olive oil amphorae are preserved there, more than 80% of which are Baetican amphorae, the rest from Byzacena and Tripolitania, and a very small proportion of amphorae from the eastern provinces. It is interesting to note that despite the expansion of imperial property in Africa with the confiscation of the goods of Clodius Albinus and his supporters, in the Testaccio, the Baetican material continues to predominate over the African in the first half of the third century AD, as I have pointed out. We have no evidence after AD 257, the latest attested date in Testaccio.

With the documentation available to us, we can consider that Septimius Severus integrated the goods of his enemies into the *ratio privata*,<sup>26</sup> but that on his death Caracalla, and not Severus Alexander as had been argued, linked them to the *ratio patrimonii*.<sup>27</sup> This fact was demonstrated by the change from the *tituli picti beta* of the amphorae mentioning the emperors to the reference of the *fiscus rationis patrimonii provinciae Baeticae*. At any rate, the system must have been inefficient, as it was necessary to entrust transport to private individuals. In the 2001 survey of the Testaccio, we found the names of some private individuals in the *tituli beta* alongside those of the *ratio patrimonii*. We do not know if this return of the privates took place during the short reign of Macrinus, but it is certainly attested as early as AD 220 under Heliogabalus. The most notable of the characters found in this survey is *M. Iulius Hermesianus*, whom we already know by an inscription from *Astigi* (Écija) (CIL. II,1481) and another recently found in *Hispalis* (Seville). We know of three people: *M. Iulius Hermesianus (pater)*, *M. Iulius Hermes Frontinianus (filius)* and *M. Iulius Hermesianus (nepos)*. The *titulus beta* found at Testaccio, dated contextually to 221 AD, represents, in my opinion, *M. Iulius Hermesianus (pater)*, as a *titulus beta* of *M. Iulius Hermes Frontinianus* has been found in Mainz linked to a P. N(---) N(---)

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<sup>26</sup> See in general M. MAIURO, *Res Caesaris. Ricerche sulla proprietà imperiale nel Principato*. Bari 2012.

<sup>27</sup> E. RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA, *Vicissitudini nella gestione del commercio dell'olio betico da Vespasiano a Severo Alessandro*. In: J. H. D'ARMS, E. C. KOPPF (above note 23) 277-290.

stamp.<sup>28</sup> In the inscription of *Hispalis*, dedicated by the *corpus oleariorum* of which he was *curator*, he is named as *diffusor olearius ad annonam Urbis*, while in the inscription of *Astigi* he is mentioned only as *diffusor olearius*, which is the formula that appears in other inscriptions.<sup>29</sup>

The study of the so-called canon *frumentarius* created by Septimius Severus according to the *Historia Augusta* (HA *Sev.* 8, 5; *Alb.* 12, 7) and the already mentioned news about the canon *olearius* have produced much discussion. The new evidence from the Testaccio makes it necessary to review all that has been written on the subject.

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<sup>28</sup> U. EHMIG, Pinselaufschrift und Stempel auf einer südspanischen Ölamphore aus Mogontiacum, Mainz. Who is who in *familia M. Iulii Hermes Frontiniani*. *Pyrenae* 29, 1998, 237-248.

<sup>29</sup> J. REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ, Olearii. *Atti della XIV<sup>e</sup> Rencontre sur l'Épigraphie in onore di Silvio Panciera con altri contributi di colleghi, allievi e collaboratori*. Rome 2008, 349-373, with bibliography and new reading suggestions.