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Empire of virtue? normative language and the legitimation of power in Roman North Africa

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Chapter V

SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS

In the previous chapters I have focussed on the reception of three interlocking levels of power: imperial, administrative and civic. On all these levels of power, virtues played an important role in the legitimation of power relationships. As a comparison to the civic material, I will take a closer look at military dedications. My motivations are two-fold, concerned with the impact of imperial ideology on the one hand and the unique characteristic of civic power relationships on the other. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, consent of the Roman army – together with the Senate and the people of Rome – formed an important cornerstone of legitimate imperial rule. Since imperial rule depended to a considerable degree on military force, army loyalty was a primary concern, particularly given the ever-present threat of overly-ambitious commanders. Emperors could opt for direct interactions with the legions to boost support for the regime, for example through *donativa* upon their ascension or on the occasion of significant events during their reign. Though most *donativa* were reserved for the Praetorian Guard, ascension *donativa* in particular seem to have been paid out to all legions in a bid to cement imperial authority.[829] In exceptional circumstances, the emperor might pay a personal visit to a legionary base, as Hadrian did when he visited Legio III Augusta in Lambaesis on his travels through North Africa.[830] On a daily basis, the imperial state was forced to rely on more diffuse means to instil loyalty in the troops. Soldiers were confronted with, and (re)produced, some of the same imperial media as civilians. The army was likely primarily paid in silver coinage, already noted to be a potential carrier of imperial ideological messages. Officers and soldiers erected statues to the emperor and the imperial family in very similar ways to their civilian counterparts, though with the obvious absence of civic institutions. Lastly, we may also point to holidays, oaths of loyalty and participation in the imperial cult as means through which ideals of imperial rule entered the army camp. Given these points of ideological contact, it is unsurprising to find traces of the virtue discourse in major legionary bases such as Lambaesis or in the forts dotted along the *limes Africanus*, though often following epigraphic traditions different from their civic counterparts.

A second motivation to study the epigraphic culture of the troops is that it presents a different cultural environment than that of the African urban communities. Individual soldiers and contingents of soldiers erected dedications to their emperors, legates, direct commanders and personal patrons. Although the clearly defined military hierarchy placed military power relationships on a very different footing than the relationship between, for example, a magistrate and his community, military dedications still include normative language that points to concerns over legitimacy and representation. In both cases, we can ask the question to what extent normative

[829] Watson 1969: 108–114; Hebblewhite 2016: 72–74.

[830] See CIL VIII 2532 = CIL VIII 18042 = D 2487 = D 9134 = D 9135 = D 9135a = Freis 79 = Exercitatio = Speeches p. 7 = AE 1899, 126 = AE 1900, 35 = AE 1952, 20 = AE 1974, 724 = AE 2000, +77 = AE 2002, +1689 = AE 2003, 2020c-h = AE 2004, +105 = AE 2006, 1800 = AE 2010, +1829 = AE 2010, +1829, with a critical edition of the text in Speidel 2007.

language in military dedications overlaps with dedications from the civilian sphere, and to what extent it differs. These similarities and differences not only highlight the spread and influence of imperial ideology within two very different cultural domains within North Africa, but also tell us more of what makes the legitimation of civic power relationships unique.

Before turning to the inscriptions, there are two points that need to be taken into account. Firstly, given the broad similarities between imperial media in civilian and military settings, the question of possible contact and influence between both spheres becomes unavoidable. North Africa had a relatively light military presence: estimates vary between 20,000 and 30,000 men for the provinces of Mauretania Tingitana, Mauretania Caesariensis and Africa Proconsularis.[831] The majority of these troops were *auxilia*: Legio III Augusta, the only legion garrisoned in North Africa, consisted of some 5,000 legionaries. The legion moved from Ammaedara to Theveste in the year 75, while in 81 the first construction activity started at the site of Lambaesis.[832] Under Trajan, the legion was most likely permanently transferred to Lambaesis, where two older camps were abandoned and a large new fortress was constructed nearby.[833] With only one legion present in North Africa, Lambaesis acted as the main military command centre of Africa, under the leadership of an imperially-appointed legate with wide-ranging responsibilities.

Interactions between the army in North Africa, particularly along the Numidian frontier, and the local population have been the topic of heated debate.[834] Cherry, in a monograph on the subject, follows the arguments set out by Shaw that the army was a 'total institution', to a large extent closed off from the civilian world. Before Hadrian, the majority of new recruits for the legion came from outside of North Africa. The situation changed in the later second century, but still new recruits were mainly drawn from the civic centres to the north, far from the Numidian frontier.[835] On the basis of onomastics, Cherry has also pointed to the lack of intermarriages between legionaries and locals.[836] The impression is that Legio III Augusta was an organisation somewhat separated socially and culturally from civilian life, a separation that seems to have been encouraged by the imperial authorities.[837] This is not to suggest that soldiers did not interact with civilians. Phang notes that marriages between soldiers and local civilians were on the rise across the second and third century.[838] Egyptian papyri furthermore make it clear that soldiers could, potentially, have extensive social networks among the civilian population.[839] For many legionaries, however, interactions with

[831] Daniels 1987: 235–236; Cherry 1998: 53.
[832] Daniels 1987: 240–242; Le Bohec 1989: 360–364.
[833] Daniels 1987: 248; Le Bohec 1989: 363, 405–416; Cherry 1998: 43–44; Janon 1973: 200–201 however assumes a Hadrianic date for the 'Grand Camp'.
[834] Most notably the exchange between Shaw 1983; Fentress 1983. See also, in general, Cherry 1998; Mattingly 2011: 59–63.
[835] Cherry 1998: 93–95.
[836] Cherry 1998: 101–140. Some nuance is in order however: as Cherry himself admits, the study of onomastics leaves much to be desired. "The methods are crude, and no doubt imperfect. For one thing, they cannot adequately describe the partially Romanized", Cherry 1998: 117.
[837] Alston 2003: 53–60.
[838] Phang 2001: 153–159.
[839] Alston 1999: 179–187.

civilians involved taxation, administration and policing.[840] Soldiers may have been loathed by many, but some soldiers were worth befriending as valuable points of contact with the imperial administration.[841] The latter seems to have been particularly true for those higher up in the chain of command of the legion, most notably the imperial legate. Of note in this regard is the fact that legates and their family members appear in the epigraphic record of towns such as Verecunda and Thamugadi as both honorands and patrons of the community.[842] Both communities were situated close to Lambaesis and had ties to Legio III Augusta through veteran resettlements.

A second point to raise is the legion itself. Although the *auxilia* were active as dedicators in their own right, the bulk of what I have conveniently termed 'military dedications' were set up by the officers and sometimes the legionaries of Legio III Augusta. It is difficult to estimate how many legionaries were stationed in Lambaesis exactly since parts of the legion were dispatched to other forts along the *limes* and to the governor's staff[843]; numbers would furthermore have most likely fluctuated with the usual influx and outflow of soldiers through recruitment, death or retirement, as well as in periods of expansion of the *limes Africanus* such as under Septimius Severus. Nevertheless a significant portion of the legion was permanently stationed in Lambaesis. Although this might seem the ideal basis for the evolution of a strong local military identity, it is worth remembering that the legion was far from homogenous. Soldiers were recruited from a wide range of communities across and even beyond Africa.[844] The top of the legion's command consisted mostly of equestrians, while centurions – particularly the *primipili* – were a cut above the average soldier in rank and possibly education.[845] Despite these hierarchical differences, we may reasonably expect a distinct epigraphic culture at Lambaesis and other military sites which may tell us something about the legitimation of imperial power from an army perspective, albeit mostly through the lens of the officers and centurions who usually took the initiative to erect dedications to the emperor.

A more fundamental issue is the 'military' nature of dedications. We can quite safely state that a dedication from Lambaesis set up by a local *signifer* or a *collegium* of veterans falls under the rubric of 'military'. The same is true for the forts and fortlets along the *limes* where contingents of the legions and the auxiliaries were stationed, such as Castellum Dimmidi, Calceus Herculis and

[840] Cherry 1998: 55–57. *Beneficarii* in particular acted as important cogs in the Roman bureaucratic apparatus, with a wide variety of administrative tasks, see Nelis-Clément 2000: 211–268. *Stationarii* – outposted military units, usually soldiers – on the other hand seem to have been responsible for the security of occasionally far-flung locations through police work and guard duties; a task similar to the *regionarii*, albeit that the *regionarii* were drawn from the centuriate and thus of higher importance and status, see Fuhrmann 2011: 211–216, 222–223.

[841] Fuhrmann 2011: 228–237; Alston 2003: 179–189, though Alston is critical of literary sources and the *topos* of the greedy and abusive soldier: 190–193.

[842] A number of legates as their family members were honoured with statues in Verecunda: CIL VIII 4228 = AE 1946, +64; CIL VIII 4229; CIL VIII 4230; CIL VIII 4232. In Thamugadi, numerous legates are recorded as patrons of the community, see for example Sextus Iulius Maior (AE 1954, 149 = Timgad-01, 16; AntAfr-1989-192); Titus Caesernius Statius (AE 1954, 150; CIL VIII 17850 = AE 1954, +150); Marcus Valerius Etruscus (CIL VIII 17854 = CIL VIII 17856 = CIL VIII 17902 = Timgad-01, 20 = Saastamoinen 148 = AE 1954, 151 = AE 1985, 876b; CIL VIII 17855; Saastamoinen 151 = AE 1985, 876a) and Marcus Aemilius Macer Saturninus (Saastamoinen 251 = Bergemann 89 = AE 1985, 880b; CIL VIII 17869 = Saastamoinen 258).

[843] Cherry 1998: 54–55; Fuhrmann 2011: 226–227.

[844] Le Bohec 1989: 494–517.

[845] Le Bohec 1989: 119–123, 149–150; for the educational levels of centurions, see Adams 1999.

Rapidum. The case is more difficult for some of the *vici* and veteran settlements that have been included in the selection. Lambaesis was surrounded by multiple *vici*, some of which were heavily monumentalized – including multiple temples and a bathhouse – and gained municipal rights in the second century.[846] Close to Lambaesis, the veteran settlement of Verecunda grew into a town with its own *ordo* and magistrates.[847] Strictly speaking such towns would fall under the rubric of 'civic sites' that formed the main focus of earlier chapters. As noted by Janon, we should be careful about drawing too sharp a distinction between the 'civic' *vici* on the one hand, and the 'military' camp on the other.[848] Not only was there a considerable contingent of veterans in both Lambaesis and Verecunda, military matters most likely played an important role in the life of both towns. The situation is less clear for towns such as Auzia, a fort with a flourishing *vicus*. Although Auzia likely retained its military importance – as seems to be suggested by epigraphic sources[849] – it is difficult to gauge to what extent the town's epigraphic practices remained under the influence of the military as Auzia gained municipal and colonial rights in the late second and early third century respectively. As a way of sidestepping the issue of how strongly a given community was influenced by the military, I have adopted a slightly different tactic in this chapter, opting to focus on the self-declared identities of the dedicators rather than on the geographical location. Thus, dedications set up by members of the military – including legates, officers, contingents of soldiers and occasionally veterans – from across Africa Proconsularis, Mauretania Caesariensis and Numidia have been included in this chapter. Although the vast majority can be traced to military fortresses and camps, this also allows us to include dedications that were set up by members of the military in (largely) civilian communities, such as Auzia, Lepcis Magna or Sicca Veneria. These criteria have resulted in a list of 167 inscriptions, from 28 locations.[850] With its large and permanent contingent of soldiers, Lambaesis dominates the selection. Of many fort(let)s only a handful of inscriptions remains. An attempt to deduct larger trends in the military conception of imperial legitimation threatens to mostly reflect the practices current at Lambaesis. The problem is to some extent unavoidable given the huge and well-preserved record of Lambaesis, but nevertheless has to be taken into account.

5.1. – Defining the bond between emperor and legion

As with the civic sites in North Africa, a large share of military dedicatory epigraphy was erected in honour of the emperor. Though the majority of these imperial dedications were produced in the late second and early third century, there are a considerable number of antecedents. Despite the presence of Legio III Augusta in the region from the early first century onwards, very few first century dedications have survived (or were ever put up) and none of these seem to contain any additional

[846] Gascou 1972: 224.

[847] Janon 1973: 219–220; Kehoe 1988: 203.

[848] Janon 1977: 5.

[849] A number of epitaphs mention soldiers and veterans residing in the town: CIL VIII 9051; CIL VIII 9053; CIL VIII 9056; CIL VIII 9058; CIL VIII 9061; CIL VIII 20754. Other inscriptions suggest the active involvement of veterans in civic life and politics: CIL VIII 20747 = Saastamoinen 514 = Hygiae p. 173 = BonaDea 141; CIL VIII 9052; CIL VIII 20751 = AE 2012, +61.

[850] Sites: Ala Miliaria, Altava, Auru, Bezereos, Bu Njem, Caesarea, Calceus Herculis, Casae, Castellum Dimmidi, Castellum Vanarzanense, Cirta, Cohors Breucorum, Columnata, Cuicul, El Agueneb, Gemellae, Lambaesis, Lepcis Magna, Lucu, Madauros, Oppidum Novum, Rapidum, Ras el Ain Tlalet, Rusicade, Rusuccurru, Thuburbo Maius, Verecunda, and Vescera.

normative language beyond the imperial titles.[851] This development is largely similar to civilian dedications, which likewise rarely included anything other than imperial titles and offices before the second century. Dedications to Trajan are surprisingly rare in Lambaesis; if the legion moved there in the last years of his reign, as the current consensus holds, we would perhaps have expected more dedications to commemorate the event.[852] Hadrian features much more prominently in the early record of Legio III Augusta in Lambaesis. The emperor visited the camp in 128 and gave a speech (*adlocutio*) in the presence of the legion, praising their skill and discipline. Hadrian's soldiers saw it fit to praise their emperor in return. The emperor's visit was commemorated by the legion with a great column, built on the site of the so-called Western Camp, an older incarnation of the Lambaesis camp.[853] The block-shaped base of the column contained the text of the *adlocutio* on its pilasters. In between the pilaster texts however, is the text of the dedication proper, inscribed in much larger letterling. The dedicatory text is heavily damaged, but enough remains to make a reconstruction possible:

> *Imp(eratori) Caesari Traiano Hadriano Augusto for*[*ti*]*ss*[*im*]*o libera*[*lissimo*]*que* [[[*le*]*g*[*io III Aug(usta)*]]] *adprob*[*atis ca*]*mpo* [*et exe*]*rcitu*
>
> "To the imperator Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, bravest and most generous, the third legion Augusta, when the training field and army had been approved."[854]

Fortissimus and *liberalissimus* continue to appear in dedications from the second century in Lambaesis, though both terms are absent in contemporaneous dedications from other military sites. A series of very similar dedications, set up under three different emperors, all employ the phrasing *fortissimus liberalissimusque*. In 138, the legate Publius Cassius Secundus erected an inscription in the *principia* of the camp listing the veterans leaving the legion in which Hadrian is once again praised with the same honorifics.[855] Two very fragmentary inscriptions, both possibly set up by legates under Antoninus Pius, also seems to record the release of veterans and seem to have contained both honorifics for the emperor.[856] We are on more solid ground with two inscriptions set up under Marcus Aurelius. Both are once again lists of released veterans set up by the then-current legates. One was set up in the *principia* lauding the emperor as *fortissimus liberalissimusque*, while another was found near the North Gate and praised the emperor as *liberalissim*[*oq(ue) p*]*rincipi*.[857] A third, badly damaged inscription dedicated to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus after renovation work on the towers and walls of the camp, may have read "*f*[*ortissimi principes*]".[858]

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[851] See for example: CIL VIII 10165 = CIL VIII 22172 = ILAlg-01, 3950.

[852] A damaged inscription from the early second century appears to be dedicated to Nerva and Trajan, though it most likely pre-dates the construction of the Grand Camp; see AE 1917/18, 28.

[853] Janon 1973: 210–211.

[854] ZPE-175-243 = Tyche-2010-228 = Speeches p. 7 = AE 1900, 33 = AE 1903, +202 = AE 1904, +88 = AE 1942/43, 90 = AE 1942/43, 112 = AE 2003, 2020a = AE 2006, 1800a.

[855] CIL VIII 2534.

[856] See AE 1967, 564 and CIL VIII 18081 with Thomasson 1996: 148.

[857] CIL VIII 2547; CIL VIII 18067.

[858] CIL VIII 2548 = Saastamoinen 269.

Imperial bravery, noble-mindedness and generosity appear as the most important imperial qualities in second-century Lambaesis, at least for the legates and officers responsible for the erection of the monument to Hadrian and the various inscriptions around the camp. The introduction of the titles *fortissimus liberalissimusque* under Hadrian is unique: nowhere else in the western empire does Hadrian appear to be associated with *fortitudo*, or with related virtues such as (military) *virtus*.[859] Possibly, this represents a local response to specific imperial themes. It is interesting to note that although Hadrian's mint produced coinage celebrating imperial triumph – most notably in the form of Victoria[860] – personal martial virtues such as *virtus* appear mainly on a small number of bronze types. This is a surprising development in comparison to Trajan, whose mint-masters preferred silver *denarii* for their *virtus*-types.[861] Starting from the assumption that bronze coinage generally had a more limited distribution than silver, we might tentatively suggest that Hadrian's mint officials were less interested in propagating the emperor's martial virtues, possibly given the lack of major campaigns. That the emperor's bravery mattered to the command of Legio III Augusta is in and of itself not particularly surprising. Yet the appearance of a fairly unique term such as *fortissimus* in a monumental inscription suggests a level of active involvement with imperial ideology by local actors. Of particular note is also that this normative language takes precedence over the more usual elements of the imperial titulature in the monumental Lambaesis inscription, including Hadrian's consulships, his tribunician powers and, assuming that the chronology of Hadrian's visit in 128 is correct, his recently adopted title of *pater patriae*.

Liberalissimus, the second element of the title, may be more in line with Hadrianic ideology. Klingenberg has argued that Hadrian placed an emphasis on *liberalitas* in his public image, particularly in his relations with the Senate.[862] This may have also influenced the choice of wording in Lambaesis. *Liberalissimus* might point towards a variety of expenditures by the emperor on the legions, ranging from generous *donativa* during his visit or the start of his reign, via additional financial expenditures towards the new Grand Camp, to the emperor's generosity and nobility as displayed in his *adlectio* to the troops, in which the emperor praises the discipline and dedication of the legion. *Liberalissimus* may have been chosen precisely because it was open to multiple interpretations. In either case, it is a virtue that, like *fortissimus*, was evidently felt to define the relationship between emperor and army from the legion's point of view, and took precedence over other imperial titles in the Lambaesis monument.

Under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, the dedications follow similar lines. Perhaps because of the precedent created by the Hadrianic veteran-list, later iterations of the same type of document followed the honorifics already applied to Hadrian. Yet there is also reason to assume that the praise of imperial *liberalitas* had a more tangible meaning to both veterans and their officers. Imperial

[859] A possible exception may be a damaged inscriptions from Rome set up by an unknown party where Hadrian is referred to as *r*[*estitutori rei publicae atq*]*ue virtu*[*tes omnium*].

[860] For silver issues in particular, see for example: RIC II Hadrian 77a-c, 101a-c, 182c-d, 183c-d, 184, 282d.

[861] Hadrianic *virtus*-types: RIC II Hadrian 287 (*aureus*), 605, 614a-d, 638, 696. Trajanic *virtus*-types: RIC II Trajan 202 (*aureus* and *denarius*), 203, 204, 268 (*aureus*), 288, 289, 334, 353, 354, 355.

[862] Though Klingenberg argues it did not meet with a wholly positive response among the senatorial elite, see Klingenberg 2014.

donativa have already been mentioned, but were not the only form of imperial support for the troops. As legionaries fulfilled their service and transferred back to civilian life, the emperor's generosity was displayed through the grant of land or money awarded to honourably discharged veterans. From the second century onward money grants became dominant. Imperial authority also granted various legal privileges to veterans, such as an exemption from civic duties. And although the discharge of veterans became standardized to some degree over time, it formally remained an imperial prerogative.[863] Imperial *liberalitas* was part of the tacit agreement between military and emperor: years of loyal service would be generously rewarded by the emperor through the extension of material benefactions and legal privileges. And for Marcus Aurelius at least, we might also note the renovation work on the walls and turrets of the fort: a clear sign of the emperor's *liberalitas* towards his legion. By way of contrast we can point to a set of inscriptions from various non-military *castella* found near the town of Sitifis in which a similar imperial benefaction is mentioned. The inscriptions record the strengthening of walls and garrisons under Severus Alexander and praise the emperor for his *infatigabilis indulgentia*.[864] The *castella* around Sitifis were prosperous rural settlements, rather than military outposts; like the new walls of Lambaesis the walls of the *castella* around Sitifis were most likely financed by the emperor but constructed with local resources and local labour. Despite the general similarities in the actual act of imperial munificence, there is a clear difference in the wording employed to acknowledge and praise these imperial activities.

Imperial munificence was a value that also featured in civic dedications. Whether we should read too much in the preference for *liberalitas* in Lambaesis and *indulgentia* in non-military contexts such as the *castella* around Sufetula is another matter altogether. The preference for *liberalitas* over *indulgentia* may perhaps be simply a local rhetorical variation on a similar theme. *Indulgentia* in this case might point to the right of a local civic community to employ money or resources originally intended for taxation in the construction of a given building – a considerable boon given the high costs of the building works. Yet as noted in the second chapter, *indulgentia* is also more freely employed in civic dedications and is not exclusively associated with building activities. Although the context of the munificence undoubtedly played a role, we should not discount the loaded meaning of both terms in their cultural context. Many of the dedications in Lambaesis were dedicated by the legates, who we may assume to have had some influence on the wording of the inscriptions set up in their name. Although the legates of Legio III Augusta were drawn from the equestrian classes rather than the senatorial elite[865], the inclusion of *indulgentia*, with its overtones of subservience and paternal authority, may have been considered inappropriate for the head of command of the legion; unlike *liberalitas* which, as noted earlier, seems to have retained something of its aristocratic quality and was perhaps a more acceptable alternative. The idea appears to be contradicted by a dedication from Verecunda, a veteran settlement several kilometres from Lambaesis that over the

[863] Wesch-Klein 2007: 439–440.

[864] Saastamoinen 495 = AE 1917/18, 68; CIL VIII 20486 = RAA p.237 = Saastamoinen 497; Saastamoinen 496 = Afrique p.258 = AE 1966, 593; Saastamoinen 493 = AE 1966, 594; CIL VIII 8729. For the debate on the nature of the fortifications and their purpose, see Bénabou 1976: 186–199; Horster 2001: 157–160.

[865] Thomasson 1996: 17, who also notes that the careers of most legates of Legio III Augusta were respectable but not particularly impressive.

second century adopted some of the trappings of other civilian communities, including a town council. Here, the *divus Antoninus* is thanked by the legate Frontinianus and the *ordo* of Verecunda for an aqueduct system which was built *ex cuiu*[*s*] *indulgent*[*ia*]. Yet it could also be argued that the newly divine status of Antoninus Pius, as well as the involvement of the town council of Verecunda, created an acceptable context for Frontinianus to praise the dead emperor's *indulgentia*.

Both *fortissimus* and *liberalissimus* appear throughout the second century as key values of the imperial relationship with the army: an emperor who mirrored the martial zeal of his troops and who acted as a generous patron by providing for his soldiers or fortifying camps at considerable expense. While imperial generosity is a virtue praised by both civilians and the military, albeit in different wording, the praise for imperial bravery appears unique, at least until the Severan era. The choice is in and of itself not particularly surprising, though it can be pointed out that other virtues with a military connotation and propagated on imperial coinage – such as *providentia* – do not seem to appear in our record. But rather than reflecting a 'local tradition' among the troops in Lambaesis, it is rather reflective of the tastes and interests of the legion's command. It was most likely the equestrian officers and legates who were the driving force behind the inclusion of virtues such as *fortissimus* and *liberalissimus*. Through their education and career, these men were familiar with both literary conventions and the normative language of imperial communications. And given their relatively high standing, at least within Lambaesis, they were in a position to introduce new epigraphic conventions, particularly concerning such a delicate subject as the emperor. Like their civilian counterparts, the normative language in these dedications was more than simple rhetorical convention. To praise the emperor as *fortissimus* or *liberalissimus* is a marker of consent by the command of Legio III Augusta, even if the inscriptions themselves had other functions beyond honouring the emperor. By highlighting both virtues, the implicit message was that the emperor lived up (and should live up) to normative beliefs and was therefore deserving of the loyalty of the legion command and by extension the legion, 'earned' through his bravery and generous disposition.

5.1.1. – Imperial health and well-being

The dedications of the second century in Lambaesis seem to be dominated by the praise of both imperial generosity and bravery. Yet the honorific discourse in Lambaesis and various army camps was wider than these terms alone. As discussed in the second chapter, *salus* is not an honorific term or an imperial character trait. Yet, as argued earlier, dedicating an altar, a statue base or a monument to the *salus* of the imperial family is an important consent action. It is a public and 'voluntary' expression of belief in the legitimacy of the regime, and therefore of some value to the aims of my research. Like their civilian counterparts, many military inscriptions feature a dedication to the *salus* of the emperor and the imperial family. One early example is the building dedication of a temple to Jupiter Dolichenus erected in Lambaesis.[866] The structure was dedicated "*pro s*[*alute*] *et incolumitate*" by the Hadrianic legate Sextus Iulius Maior. Although not the first appearance of

[866] CIL VIII 2680 = CIL VIII 18221 = D 4311a = CCID 620 = Saastamoinen 99; CIL VIII 2681.

salus in North Africa – several dedications from the civic sphere are known for the reign of Trajan[867] – it is a prominent early example in the military context of Lambaesis. As noted at length for civic sites, dedications to the *salus* of the emperor and imperial family can be read as more than simple convention. This is perhaps most clearly expressed by a peculiar dedication erected in 157-159 to the *salus* of Antoninus Pius, the Roman Senate and people, the legate Fuscinus, the legion and the auxiliaries, also from Lambaesis.[868] The wording of the name of the dedicator has led to differing readings. As opposed to some older readings, Camps maintains the more logical reading of *Catius sacerdos Mauris* which can be translated as "Catius, priest of the (Dii) Mauri".[869] Catius was not a member of the military, but the inscription nevertheless serves as a good example of the way in which *salus* could be employed to express loyalty and consent. Catius was likely a native of Mauretania and, as priest of a local cult, may have been a figure of local importance in the urban settlement close to Lambaesis. Catius put up his inscription to the well-being of the major institutions of imperial power: the emperor, the Senate and the army. Some, like the Senate or the people of Rome, may only have appeared as vague, far-away entities to Catius, but the same cannot be said for the legate Fuscinus and the legion. By setting up a dedication to the well-being of the chain of power from the imperial court in Rome down to the army camp in Lambaesis, Catius not only declared his loyalty to the emperor but positioned himself as an element in the imperial order, in a similar way to his compatriots in urban centres like Dougga or Cuicul.

Military dedicators soon joined in this new epigraphic convention. In the forum of Lambaesis, the legion constructed a small temple to Aesculapius and Salus which also mentions the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, albeit in the nominative.[870] The temple is not directly dedicated *pro salute*, yet nevertheless we can see the dedication in a similar light, with the worship of both Aesculapius and Salus directly associated with both emperors through the prominent building inscription. It is under Marcus Aurelius that we also see the first examples of dedications *pro salute* at military sites outside of Lambaesis. In El Agueneb the officers of two auxiliary units set up a votive inscription after an expedition, dedicated *pro salute* of the *sacratissimus imperator* Marcus Aurelius and the legate Marcus Aemilius Macrus.[871] In Vescera, a centurion placed in command of Syrian auxiliaries erected an altar to Mercurius Augustus, invoking divine protection not only for imperial well-being but also that of himself and his family or possibly his unit (*pro salute sua et suorum*).[872]

For civilian dedicators, I noted that the phrase *pro salute* functioned both as a sincere wish and as a form of self-representation of loyal citizens of the empire within the wider context of elite competition. Unsurprisingly, we find similar motivations here, although competition played a far smaller part. The expedition undertaken near El Agueneb – which may have either been a lion hunt

[867] See CIL VIII 17841 = D 6842; CIL VIII 22796 = ILTun 72 = AE 1906, 17; ILAlg-01, 1230 = Saastamoinen 75 = Epigraphica-2008-234 = AE 1909, 239 = AE 2013, +110; ILAlg-01, 1232 = Saastamoinen 77.
[868] CIL VIII 2637 (p.1739) = D 342.
[869] An alternative reading is offered by Birley 1988: 416. Camps 1990: 149; followed by Thomasson 1996: 152.
[870] CIL VIII 2579a-c = CIL VIII 18089a-c = D 3841a-c = Horster p. 424 = Saastamoinen 198 = Hygiae p. 121. On the religious dedications of the legion and their impact on the region, see Hilali 2007.
[871] CIL VIII 21567 = CBI 820 = Epigraphica-2015-208 = AE 1948, +208 = AE 2011, +1782 = AE 2011, 1783 = AE 2014, +1588 = AE 2014, + 1589.
[872] CIL VIII 2486 = CIL VIII 18007 = D 2625.

or an expedition to suppress local tribes[873] – appears to have been perilous enough for the officers of the auxiliary units to make a vow for their safe return. Even in such a relatively isolated location – or perhaps, because of it – the officers of the *cohors VI Commagenum* and the *ala Flavia* evidently felt the need to begin their inscription with an invocation of the health and well-being of their legate and their emperor, tying even that most distant location to the army and the centre of power. The centurion from Vescera mentioned above may have been in a more comfortable position, but he too made a vow. The resulting inscription perhaps highlights his priorities: the well-being of the emperor, but also that of himself and his associates. The epigraphic convention of including a *pro salute* in dedications was evidently wide-spread or at least sufficiently well-known enough among dedicators with a military background to be included in these isolated inscriptions, separated over great distances.

Salus, *fortitudo* and *liberalitas* appear as the dominant themes in second-century dedications from a military environment. One notable exception is formed by a pair of building dedications from Auzia, erected by the procurator Claudius Perpetuus.[874] The dedications commemorate the construction and renovation of towers in the fort of Auzia by the military, as ordered by Commodus. Although the emperor is not praised directly, the decision to finance construction work is attributed to Commodus' concern for the "security of his provincials" (*securitati provincialium suorum*). *Securitas* here has a very definite military association, particularly given the context of the dedication. The emphasis on imperial concern with military *securitas* once again serves as an expression of consent to the legitimacy of imperial actions and as a way of highlighting the close bond between emperor and military. The *securitati provincialium suorum* of this inscription is reminiscent of the Hadrianic *sermo* from the Bagradas Valley, mentioned in earlier chapters. The wording differs but betrays a similar message: where the Hadrianic *sermo* stressed the tireless work and care of Hadrian for his subjects, the Commodian text suggests that imperial expenditures on military building projects were chiefly motivated by the desire of the emperor to protect his subjects. These were not officially mandated texts, but rather creations of high-ranking officials for a local provincial audience, presenting the Roman emperor as a caring monarch who toiled for his subjects.

5.1.2. – Expressing loyalty to the Severans

As with civilian sites, military sites generally see a considerable increase in both the total number of inscriptions and the use of normative language from the Severan era onwards. Some 31 inscriptions, taken from nine different sites include either normative terms referring to the emperor Septimius Severus and the imperial family, or employ some form of *pro salute* as an expression of loyalty to the imperial family.[875] The latter category is by far the most common. With the reign of Septimius

[873] Le Bohec 1989: 380–381.

[874] AE 1902, 220 = AE 1952, +15; CIL VIII 20816 = D 396 = Saastamoinen 282 = AE 1952, +15.

[875] CIL 9833 = IdAltava 1; AE 1920, 27; Saastamoinen 413 = AE 1962, 304 = AE 1992, 1761; ILAfr 28 = AE 1909, 152; ILTun 57 = ILAfr 27 = AE 1922, 54 = AE 1978, 886 = AE 1980, 901; Saastamoinen 373 = LibAnt-1976/77-57 = GeA 483 = AE 1976, 700; Saastamoinen 414 = AE 1933, 47; CIL VIII 4323 = CIL VIII 18528; CastDim 18; CastDim 5 = AfrRom-04-02-494 = GeA 540 = AE 1948, 211; CastDim 15 = AE 1939, 215 = AE 1940, +143 = AE 1948, 217; CastDim 17 = AE 1940, 144 = AE 1948, +218; CIL VIII 2705 (p.954) = Saastamoinen 422; CIL VIII 2558 = CBI 770 = Ant-Afr-01-73 = AE 1920, 12 = AE 1967, 568;

Severus the number of dedications erected *pro salute* expands dramatically. By far the most common normative term under the Severans, *salus* appears in some 21 dedications to Septimius Severus from all nine locations.[876] The majority were set up in Lambaesis but this epigraphic tradition was evidently widespread among the military. *Salus* almost always appears as *pro salute* in inscriptions, though occasionally variations such as *pro salute et incolumitate*[877] appear. As in the second century, we see inscriptions bearing *pro salute* set up by the legates and/or the army as a whole[878], but there is an increasing number of army units and individual officers erecting dedications to the well-being of the emperor.[879] Whether this is simply a result of the increase in total epigraphic output under the Severans – with units and individuals copying the epigraphic conventions employed by their superiors – or a sign of a shift in attitudes is difficult to ascertain. In any case, under Septimius Severus *salus* gained a much stronger presence in military inscriptions, particularly in Lambaesis. Public expressions of loyalty to the emperor and concern for the well-being of the imperial family were evidently considered to be important, though perhaps for different reasons than those which prompted civilians to set up dedications *pro salute*.

Soldiers and officers alike had, ideologically speaking, a direct relationship with the emperor, who acted both as head of the army and as patron of its members. Although loyalty was fostered through a variety of means – from public oaths to the donatives – in practice the legions could be swayed to support the cause of usurpers, particularly when coming from their midst. In the early years of his

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CIL VIII 9096 = AE 1906, 10 = AE 1907, 183 = AE 1907, 184 = AE 1927, +51 = AE 1983, 977 = AE 2006, +73; CIL VIII 2552 = CIL VIII 18070 = Saastamoinen 331; AntAfr-1967-76 = AE 1967, 569; CIL VIII 2551 = CIL VIII 18046 = D 2397 = CBI 767; CIL VIII 2550; CIL VIII 18252 = Saastamoinen 404 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21 ; CIL VIII 2671 = CIL VIII 18107 = Saastamoinen 396; AE 1908, 9; CIL VIII 18078 = D 9101; CIL VIII 17890a = Saastamoinen 312 = AE 1920, 34 = AE 1967, 566; CIL VIII 2706 (p.1739) = Saastamoinen 427; CIL VIII 2553 (p.954) = CIL VIII 18047 = D 2438 (p.178) = AE 1906, 9; CIL VIII 9098 = Saastamoinen 415 = AE 1895, 204; CIL VIII 2585 = CIL VIII 18091 = Horster p.424 = Saastamoinen 421 = Hygiae p.135 = AE 1967, 571; CIL VIII 2557 = CIL VIII 18050 = D 2354 (p.177) = ILCV +3303a = Louvre 139 = AfrRom-16-02-745 = AE 2006, +73; EpThess 45 = Saastamoinen 379 = Legio-XXX, 151 = AE 1957, 123 = AE 2010, 1834; CIL VIII 22602 = CIL VIII 22603 = CIL VIII 22604 = D 5850 = AE 1892, 116 = AE 1893, 105.

[876] AE 1920, 27; Saastamoinen 413 = AE 1962, 304 = AE 1992, 1761; ILTun 57 = ILAfr 27 = AE 1922, 54 = AE 1978, 886 = AE 1980, 901; ILAfr 28 = AE 1909, 152; Saastamoinen 373 = LibAnt-1976/77-57 = GeA 483 = AE 1976, 700; ZPE-36-207 = AE 1926, 145 = AE 1934, +163 = AE 1979, 676 = AE 1992, 1850; Saastamoinen 414 = AE 1933, 47; CIL VIII 4323 = CIL VIII 18528; CIL VIII 4322 = CIL VIII 18527 = D 2484; CastDim 18; CastDim 17 = AE 1940, 144 = AE 1948, +218; CastDim 15 = AE 1939, 215 = AE 1940, +143 = AE 1948, 217; AE 1908, 9; CIL VIII 2706 (p.1739) = Saastamoinen 427; CIL VIII 2585 = CIL VIII 18091 = Horster p.424 = Saastamoinen 421 = Hygiae p.135 = AE 1967, 571; CIL VII 2671 = CIL VIII 18107 = Saastamoinen 396; Thomasson 1996: 177, 52b; EpThess 45 = Saastamoinen 379 = Legio-XXX, 151 = AE 1957, 123 = AE 2010, 1834; CIL VIII 18252 = Saastamoinen 404 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21; AntAfr-1967-76 = AE 1967, 569; CIL VIII 4197 = CIL VIII 18492 = D 450.

[877] CIL VIII 2585 = CIL VIII 18091 = Horster p.424 = Saastamoinen 421 = Hygiae p.135 = AE 1967, 571; CIL VIII 17890a = Saastamoinen 312 = AE 1920, 34 = AE 1967, 566; CIL VIII 18252 = Saastamoinen 404 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21; AE 1920, 27; Thomasson 1996: 177, 52b; IRT 292.

[878] *Legates, see for example*: CIL VIII 4323 = CIL VIII 18528; CIL VIII 2585 = CIL VIII 18091 = Horster p.424 = Saastamoinen 421 = Hygiae p.135 = AE 1967, 571; CIL VIII 17890a = Saastamoinen 312 = AE 1920, 34 = AE 1967, 566; CIL VIII 18252 = Saastamoinen 404 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21; EpThess 45 = Saastamoinen 379 = Legio-XXX, 151 = AE 1957, 123 = AE 2010, 1834. *The army jointly*: CIL VIII 2706 (p.1739) = Saastamoinen 427; CIL VIII 2671 = CIL VIII 18107 = Saastamoinen 396.

[879] *Army units*: see for example AE 1920, 27 (*cohors II Sardorum*); Saastamoinen 413 = AE 1962, 304 = AE 1992, 1761 (*vexillationis* and the *cohors I Syrorum*); CastDim 17 = AE 1940, 144 = AE 1948, +218; ILTun 57 = ILAfr 27 = AE 1922, 54 = AE 1978, 886 = AE 1980, 901 (*vexillationis*); *individuals*: Saastamoinen 373 = LibAnt-1976/77-57 = GeA 483 = AE 1976, 700; ILAfr 28 = AE 1909, 152; Saastamoinen 414 = AE 1933, 47; CastDim 15 = AE 1939, 215 = AE 1940, +143 = AE 1948, 217; AE 1908, 9.

reign, Septimius Severus himself was forced to deal with both Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger, both of whom depended on their command of significant forces in their bid for the throne. Expressions of loyalty by the army, always important, gained a renewed urgency during and after a period of political crisis, particularly for an emperor who, according to Cassius Dio, placed "his hope of safety in the strength of his army rather than in the goodwill of his associates".[880] As with the civilian context, however, the main audience for the various dedications to the well-being of the imperial family was the army itself, rather than the emperor. Most of the dedicators acted as commanding officers (legates or centurions) or represented army units (auxiliary cohorts or the legion as whole). Costs were a significant factor and may go some way to explaining why officers and collectives are so well-represented in the epigraphic record. But beyond the cost of dedications, there are also ideological reasons to consider. The inclusion of *pro salute* on altars, statue bases and monuments within the camps also acted as public statements of loyalty to the Severan imperial family; statements that gained additional force when made by commanding officers, military collectives or even the army as a whole.

The surge of invocations to imperial well-being can perhaps also be attributed to the emperor's generous support of the African troops. Several dedications from Lambaesis mention donatives awarded to the troops by Severus, though in a language that is reminiscent of civilian munificence. An inscription detailing the regulations of a *collegium* of army clerks in Lambaesis notes "the most generous stipends and liberalities which they [*the imperial family*] confer on them" (*ex largissimis stipendi(i)s et liberalitatibus quae in eos conferunt*).[881] Other dedications too speak of the *largissima stipendia* and *liberalitates* – presumably a reference to donatives – that Septimius Severus bestowed upon his troops.[882] The phrases are more than simply rhetoric: both literary texts and papyri suggest that soldiers received a significant pay raise under Septimius Severus.[883] The identification of imperial donatives with *liberalitas* was certainly not limited to North Africa, just as generous imperial handouts were given to troops across the empire.[884] Furthermore, only one of the inscriptions that mention donatives was dedicated *pro salute*.[885] Nevertheless, the liberal support of the emperor for his troops was clearly intended to foster loyalty and adherence to the Severan imperial family. The sharp increase in the number of dedications erected *pro salute* – though undoubtedly tied to broader epigraphic trends – may be a reflection of a more tangible sort of adherence to the emperor among his troops.

The same adherence to the imperial family was also expressed through the use of normative language. In the civilian sphere we saw dedications erected to Severan *concordia* and *pietas*. We find a military equivalent in Lambaesis, where a group of veterans erected a hexagonal altar to

[880] Cassius Dio, 75.2.3-4.

[881] D 9100 = MEFR-1898-451 = Saastamoinen 450 = Saastamoinen 451 = AE 1898, 108 = AE 1898, 109.

[882] CIL VIII 2552 = CIL VIII 18070 = Saastamoinen 331; CIL VIII 2553 (p.954) = CIL VIII 18047 = D 2438 (p.178) = AE 1906, 9; CIL VIII 2554 (p.954) = CIL VIII 18048 = D 2445 (p.178) = Saastamoinen 401 = AE 1937, +157; BCTH-1905-229; D 9099 = Saastamoinen 433 = AE 1899, 60 = AE 1899, +162.

[883] Speidel 1992: 98–99.

[884] Wesch-Klein 1998: 54.

[885] See CIL VIII 2554 (p.954) = CIL VIII 18048 = D 2445 (p.178) = Saastamoinen 401 = AE 1937, +157.

Jupiter on behalf of the co-emperors Geta and Caracalla in 211, characterizing them as *Augusti nostri pietissimi*.[886] Although the altar is the only one of its kind – *pietas* not appearing elsewhere in the dedications in Lambaesis in connection to emperors until the fourth century – the dedication nevertheless reflects similar concerns with imperial well-being as displayed in the many dedications erected *pro salute*. Furthermore, singular as this altar may be, it suggests that the preoccupation with (dynastic) stability in evidence in many provincial dedications was not wholly limited to the civilian sphere.

5.1.3. – The bravest emperors?

As we saw in chapter two, the title *fortissimus felicissimus* gained sudden traction in civic dedications to Septimius Severus and appears with surprising regularity across North Africa. At the same time, we saw several second-century emperors honoured as *fortissimus* in dedications within a military setting. Therefore it is all the more surprising that the title *fortissimus felicissimus* rarely appears in military dedications to Septimius Severus. Among the inscriptions that form the basis of this chapter, *fortissimus felicissimus* never appears together, a striking departure from the trend evident in civic dedications across North Africa and beyond. On their own, the honorifics *fortissimus* and *felicissimus* only appear on rare occasions. The military connotations of *felicitas* were already discussed in chapter two; where they remained implicit in most civic dedications, the association is much more explicit in some of the dedications from Lambaesis from the reign of Septimius Severus. In 203 the legate Claudius Gallus financed the completion of a temple to Dea Caelestis in Lambaesis, a project which had been left unfinished by the previous legate. The building dedication records Gallus' career in some detail, noting that he was "awarded military honours by the invincible emperors in the second felicitous Parthian campaign" ([*d*]*onatus donis militarib(us)* [*ab In*]*victis Imperr(atoribus) secunda Par*[*t*]*hica felicissima expedi*[*tio*]*ne*).[887] The Parthian campaign also appears in another building dedication from Lambaesis, set up in the years 209-211. After the return of a contingent of soldiers who had taken part in the campaign, a meeting hall for a military *collegium* (*schola*) was constructed in the camp, dedicated to the imperial family and filled with their images ([*cum im*]*aginib(us) sacris fece*[*r(unt) et ob eam sollemnitat(em) d*]*ec(reverunt)*).[888] The building dedication mentions the "most felicitous Mesopotamian campaign" (*exp(editione) fel(icissima) Mesopo*[*tamica*]), again clearly associating *felicitas* with military campaigns and martial success. For several dedicators in Lambaesis then, the connection between *felicitas* and Septimius' military triumphs was clear, at least with regard to the emperor's campaign in the East. And yet surprisingly, no surviving dedications set up by members of the legion appear to associate the emperor himself with *felicitas*, either as a personal quality or as an imperial title.

The same is not quite true for *fortitudo*: five dedications to the Severan emperors praise imperial bravery. The legion in Lambaesis erected two building dedications to the Severans in response to imperially sponsored building activity, including the refurbishment of a local bathhouse and the construction of a road leading from the camp to the civilian settlement at Lambaesis,

[886] CIL VIII 2618.
[887] EpThess 45 = Saastamoinen 379 = Legio-XXX, 151 = AE 1957, 123 = AE 2010, 1834.
[888] CIL VIII 9098 = Saastamoinen 415 = AE 1895, 204.

commemorated on a monumental inscription which was most likely part of an arch.[889] On the arch, both Septimius and Caracalla are lauded as *fortissimi principes* and *propagatores imperii*, while the bathhouse dedication was erected *pro salute* and praises Caracalla as *maximus fortissimusque princeps iuventutis*. In both cases, however, *fortissimus* was not included in the imperial titulature when the inscriptions were created, but inserted after the erasure of Geta's titles somewhere after 211. The same is true for a third dedication from Lambaesis, set up by Quintus Anicius Faustus and the cavalry detachments of the legion.[890] As in the bathhouse dedication, Caracalla is praised in a retroactively appropriate manner as *fortissimus princeps iuventutis* even though at the time of Geta's *damnatio* the title was no longer relevant. This suggests a certain level of awareness, at least among those responsible for the re-cutting of the inscriptions, of changes in the imperial titulature and their development over time: only through knowledge of Caracalla's previous titulature could the inscriptions be successfully 'retro-dated'. The dedication was part of a flurry of dedicatory activity in Lambaesis under Faustus, in many cases involving Faustus (nominally) as co-dedicant through the inclusion of the term *dedicante*, much like in the civilian setting. None of these however appear to contain praise for the emperor's *fortitudo*. Only two inscriptions mentioning imperial *fortitudo* can be securely dated to Severus' reign. One is a heavily damaged text from Lambaesis praising Septimius Severus and Caracalla as *A*[*ugg(ustis) et*] *fortissi*[*mis principibus*]; the other an altar to Jupiter Conservator from the *principia* of Castellum Dimmidi, set up by the legate Quintus Cornelius Valens, which praises Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta as *fortissimi imperatores*.[891] Interestingly, both dedications envision imperial *fortitudo* as a quality shared by Severus and his sons, whereas civic dedications sometimes went out of their way to attribute the virtue solely to Septimius himself. Although this may potentially represent a difference in the way that the army envisioned the imperial family, the small sample makes such a conclusion hazardous.

The same caution should be applied to any general conclusions drawn from the military material: the total number of surviving inscriptions is much lower than in the case of contemporary civilian sites, with the notable exception of Lambaesis. This may reflect different rates of survival between military and civilian localities, though the fact that the surviving military material follows a similar temporal spread and shows a similar variety of epigraphic categories suggests that the surviving material is roughly representative, while the dominant presence of Lambaesis is unsurprising given the congregation of troops and officers there. We may perhaps tentatively conclude that whereas *felicissimis fortissimus* was one of the main honorary titles in a civilian context, the title and its constituent parts (*fortitudo* and *felicitas*) played a much smaller role in military dedications. Naturally, dedications are unlikely to reflect the opinions and ideological worldview of the army as a whole. Nevertheless, it remains remarkable that praise of imperial *fortitudo* and *felicitas* should be lacking in important inscriptions carved on statue bases or building dedications, even when such honorific inscriptions were not uncommon in forts and army camps and so clearly seem to align with martial values. We would after all expect the legion, and particularly its rhetorically-educated command, to attach considerable value to the emperor's bravery and divinely supported success on

[889] *Arch*: CIL VIII 2705 = Saastamoinen 422. *Bathhouse*: CIL VIII 2706 = Saastamoinen 427.
[890] *«fortis(simo) princ(ipi) iuventutis»*, CIL VIII 2550.
[891] CIL VIII 18071; CastDim 5 = AfrRom-04-02-494 = GeA 540 = AE 1948, 211.

the battlefield, particularly when both terms appear to be widely associated with the emperor in contemporary civilian dedications.

A number of possible explanations for this rather puzzling observation present themselves. Firstly, there are issues of communication. As discussed earlier, the appearance of *fortissimus felicissimus* in a large number of civic dedications was likely in response to developments in Rome or even the imperial court, though the exact mechanisms of transfer can only be speculated on. It seems likely that the new governor Quintus Anicius Faustus and his circle had some part in transmitting ideas from the capital to the provinces as he consistently appears as a co-dedicator, though we can also imagine written media such as imperial petitions or senatorial decrees and other administrative documents playing a role. It could be argued that the army did not partake to the same degree in this ideological traffic, given its separate command structure and the absence of the petition-and-reply model of interaction with imperial authority that was so typical of civic communities. Adding to these circumstances is the physical distance of some of the fortresses along the *limes Africanus*, located in relatively isolated regions. Yet this argument is unlikely to apply to Lambaesis as the centre of military command in North Africa. Even at Bu Njem, one of the more isolated fortresses of North Africa and home to an illuminating cache of ostraca, we find a few hints that point to a slow but steady trickle of imperial information.[892] In his letters to the commanding *decurio*, a soldier named Aemilius Aemilianus ends each missive with the consular dating. This posed some issues at the beginning of 259, when news of the new consuls had not yet reached Bu Njem and Aemilianus saw himself forced to use the phrasing "the consuls in office after the consulship of Thuscus and Bassus" (*Consules futuros post Thusco et Bas*[*so cos(ulibus)*]).[893] Nevertheless, news did arrive somewhere before or in July of the same year, and later letters are dated correctly. Although this is only one example, the Bu Njem letters point to the transfer of information from centre to the very edge of the periphery. It should be noted that the vast majority of the documents found at the site seem to have concerned local affairs only.[894] Still, when dedications were erected in Bu Njem, they followed standard epigraphic conventions including the emperor's current victory titles and political offices, again suggesting a steady stream of information even to relatively far-flung locations.[895] The inclusion of such titles was prompted by a variety of motives, ranging from social pressure and epigraphic tradition to the assertion of imperial identity and 'Roman-ness' in a frontier region, but this makes the lack of such militaristic titles as *fortissimus* and *felicissimus* no less surprising. From the perspective of information transmission throughout the empire, there does not seem to be any apparent reason why popular honorific titles such as *fortissimus felicissimus* should not appear in a military context. The major caveat here is that these titles do not appear to have been included into the official imperial titulature. Although the same holds true for many civic sites, cities could boast

[892] Bu Njem is one of the few forts in the region where the existence of a scribe's quarter can be proven with some certainty: Rebuffat 1974: 204–207; cited in Cooley 2012: 275. In Lambaesis, too, the existence of an administrative office, possibly with archive, is confirmed by the mention of a *tabularium legionis* and several inscriptions mentioning army clerks, see D 9099 = Saastamoinen 433 = AE 1899, 60 = AE 1899, +162; D 9100 = MEFR-1898-451 = Saastamoinen 450 = Saastamoinen 451 = AE 1898, 108 = AE 1898, 109.

[893] Adams 1994: 92–96. Translation by Adams 1994: 92.

[894] Marichal 1979: 438, 450–452.

[895] See for example CIL VIII 6 = IRT 916 = Saastamoinen 372 = AE 1929, +6; CIL VIII 10992 = IRT 914 = Saastamoinen 370; IRT 913 = Saastamoinen 378 = AE 1987, 994; IRT 915 = Saastamoinen 371.

of both rhetorically trained elites and (intra-)regional social and economic networks – through provincial assemblies, trade or personal relationships – which may have been more conducive to the spread of such non-official epigraphic conventions.

If errant communications are not a particularly feasible reason for the lack of *felicissimus fortissimus*, it might be argued that the praise of imperial military success might simply be expressed in a different idiom within a military context. The relation between Septimius Severus and (improved) military discipline is expressed through an altar from Lambaesis, dedicated to *Disciplina Militaris Augustor(um)* by the legate Faustus and his *singulares*; a fairly unique deity rarely attested beyond Africa and Britain.[896] It is also possible that direct dedications to Victoria Augusta or deities with strong martial associations, such as Mars or Hercules Invictus, may have been preferred over praising the emperor's personal *fortitudo*. Military communities did erect numerous dedications to Victoria Augusta, but the dating of such dedications is often difficult to ascertain, particularly when the ruling emperor is not included in the text of the dedication. A handful of dedications can be more or less securely dated to the reign of Septimius Severus. However, only one of these dedications was set up by an actual member of the military – in this case a centurion from the fortress of Ala Miliaria.[897] Other deities with strong connotations to imperial martial prowess, such as Mars Augustus, also appear with some frequency in the epigraphic record, though these inscriptions, too, are often difficult to date precisely.[898] A particularly interesting example in this regard is a series of five dedications set up by a local civilian from Lambaesis, Publius Aelius Menecrates.[899] The inscriptions – all dedicated to Hercules Invictus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Julia Domna – presumably functioned as statue bases: large fragments of statues of both Hercules and equestrian figures were found nearby.[900] All five dedications are dedications *pro salute et victoria* of the imperial family. Menecrates was the son of an African centurion who benefited greatly from his sister's marriage to the procurator Publius Maevius Saturninus Honoratianus.[901] The marriage produced a son who held the tribunate in Legio XI Claudia. Both father and son Honoratianus are honoured alongside Hercules and the imperial family in the inscriptions. Presumably as a result of his prestigious family ties, Menecratus himself was granted equestrian rank[902] while his brother D[...] Aelius Menecratianus climbed up the military ranks to hold a legionary tribunate; Menecratus' son may have held the rank of *vir perfectissimus*.[903] The costly set

[896] AE 1957, 122 = AE 1971, 507 = AE 1973, 629. See for commentary Speidel 1978: 39–40.

[897] *Centurion*: AE 1902, 4; *other*: CIL VIII 9024 (set up by an aedil from Auzia); CIL VIII 9025 = AE 2002, +86 = AE 2014, +1467 (set up by a dedicator with an unknown background); CIL VIII 2677 (set up by an quenquennial *duumvir* from Lambaesis); *likely Severan*: CIL VIII 18241 = D 6847a (set up by a *duumvir* from Lambaesis); AE 1916, 22 = AE 1917/18, +16 (set up by a veteran from Lambaesis in honour of his priesthood).

[898] *For examples of Severan date, see* D 9102a = GeA 505; CIL VIII 2465 (p.952) = CIL VIII 17953 = D 2485; ILAlg-02-03, 7674 = CBI 759 = AE 1916, 29.

[899] AE 1911, 97 = AE 1913, +10 = AE 1992, +1762; BCTH-1911-100; BCTH-1912-348 = AE 1911, 98 = AE 1913, +10; BCTH-1912-349; BCTH-1912-350.

[900] Bayet 1974.

[901] Saller 1982: 201.

[902] Menecratus is mentioned with the title *exornatus equo publico*, though the exact meaning of that term – was it a grant from the emperor or simply a recognition that Menecratus met the requirements for entry into the equestrian ranks? – is unclear; Saller 1982: 51–53.

[903] Weydert 1912: 353.

of dedications to safeguard both imperial health and military victory sent a clear signal of Menecratus' own allegiance and loyalty to the Roman state, again highlighting that imperial ideology and personal consideration could be closely intertwined.

The appearance of dedications to Victoria Augusta, Mars Augustus or Hercules Invictus is telling of the importance attached to the (preservation of) imperial military triumph, but again does not readily explain why a honorific title such as *fortissimus felicissimus* should not appear in military dedications. After all, the dedication of altars to the aforementioned deities was not limited to the Severan era, nor was it confined to military circles. Perhaps the surprising element is not the fact that honorifics such as *fortissimus felicissimus* are lacking in a military setting, but that they are so strongly present in a civilian setting. As was noted earlier, a noticeable number of civilian dedications featuring *fortissimus felicissimus* were set up by city councils, nominally the representatives of the community. Not only were there more occasions for the promising and erecting of statues in a civic context, dedications set up by the city council also had the very practical advantage of being set up with public funds, allowing for lengthier inscriptions including more titles and honorifics than a dedication set up by individuals, whether civilians or army officers. It was also argued that the dedicators of such public honorific inscriptions may have felt greater pressure to include a lengthy version of the imperial titulature compared to private individuals, both as a display of enthusiasm for imperial rule and their ability to follow 'correct' epigraphic conventions. To this we may add the prevalence of rhetoric in local political culture. As noted in the previous chapter, civic communities had active political cultures in which normative language played a vital role. Imperial virtues and other honorifics may have simply found a much more receptive audience among the civilian elite, trained in rhetorical theory and confronted with its importance on a regular basis within local politics. And where civilian dedicators had authoritative examples to turn to for instruction on the wording of their dedications, such examples were lacking in military communities, with few if any officers employing the honorific *fortissimus felicissimus*, thereby making it difficult for this epigraphic trend to take hold.

Beyond *fortissimus felicissimus*, a second marked feature of Severan honorifics in civilian dedications was the shift between the reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, particularly in the title *super omnes retro principes*. As with *fortissimus felicissimus*, the phrase *super omnes retro principes* does not seem to appear among the dedications erected by members of the military that form the basis of this chapter. The title is also absent from civilian communities around or close to military bases.[904] This is not to suggest a lack of enthusiasm for the emperor's reign as military dedicators continue to erect dedications *pro salute*, displaying a concern for imperial well-being and a clear expression of loyalty to the regime, both urgent topics given the troubles between Caracalla and Geta.[905] Occasionally, imperial well-being is asked for through divine intervention, for example

[904] Note for example ILTun 66 = ILPBardo 20 = AfrRom-04-02-486 = AE 1934, 35; CIL VIII 2670 = D 4439 = Saturne-02, p.82 = Saastamoinen 469 = AE 1908, +260; AfrRom-13-02-1141 = AE 1967, 572a = AE 2000, +1775; CIL VIII 271; CIL VIII 4197 = CIL VIII 18492 = D 450; CIL VIII 4202 = CIL VIII 18494.

[905] ZPE-36-207 = AE 1926, 145 = AE 1934, +163 = AE 1979, 676 = AE 1992, 1850; CIL VIII 4322 = CIL VIII 18527 = D 2484; CIL VIII 2670 = D 4439 = Saturne-02, p.82 = Saastamoinen 469 = AE 1908, +260; AfrRom-13-02-1141 = AE 1967, 572a =

by dedicating an altar to Jupiter and the nymphs for the well-being of Caracalla and Julia Domna, set up by a detachment of soldiers of Legio III Augusta in Casae.[906] More often, it is simply included as a declarative statement at the beginning of an inscription, such as the dedication to the well-being and safety of Caracalla and Julia Domna set up by the worshippers of the Palmyrene sun-god Yarhibol (*cultores dei Ierhobolis iuniores*), presumably members of the Palmyrene forces stationed in the region.[907] Unlike his father, Caracalla is honoured with the title *felicissimus fortissimus*, though again by a civilian from Lambaesis.[908]

We already saw a number of re-cut dedications which also employed honorifics to fill in the gaps left by Geta's titles. Newly erected dedications to the emperor do not seem to include personal honorifics, again underlining the difference between civic and military epigraphic conventions regarding imperial honorific titles. We do, however, find a dedication to Juno and Concordia Augusta set up for the well-being of the emperor and Julia Domna from Verecunda.[909] The dedication was set up *ob honorem* for a priesthood held by the veteran Lucius Propertius Victor, but appears to have been completed posthumously by his brother (also a veteran) and son. Mention of the fifteen times the emperor held tribunician powers seems to suggest a date of 211, though the inclusion of *imp(eratoris) II co(n)s(ulis) IIII* suggest a date of 213. The dedicators may have had difficulty asserting the correct imperial titulature to be included in their dedication, or were anticipating the consulship in 211/212. With a possible date of 213, the argument that the dedication to Concordia Augusta was erected after the troubled purge of Geta and his followers seems less convincing, though it is entirely possible that Victor publicly promised the dedication around 211 or even earlier. Whatever the precise dating, Juno and Concordia are surely also intended to safeguard the well-being – and, we assume, by extension the harmony and success – of the imperial family in more general terms.[910]

As in the case of Caracalla, the dedications to the last two Severans are of a diminished number when compared to Septimius Severus, but there remains a small but steady stream of dedications set up by military personnel. Of the few dedications to the usurper Macrinus, only a single dedication includes honorifics of any sort, in this case the title *nobilissimus* for Macrinus' son and designated successor Diadumenianus.[911] With the re-establishment of the Severan dynasty under Elagabalus dedications resume. As was noted in the civilian context, few traces of the emperor's supposedly outlandish shift in ideological representation can be found in the epigraphic record. If the shift in imperial representation was noted by soldiers, it appears to have made little difference:

AE 2000, +1775; CIL VIII 2712; CIL VIII 4197 = CIL VIII 18492 = D 450; ILTun 66 = ILPBardo 20 = AfrRom-04-02-486 = AE 1934, 35.

[906] CIL VIII 4322 = CIL VIII 18527 = D 2484.

[907] AfrRom-13-02-1141 = AE 1967, 572a = AE 2000, +1775. Palmyrene troops: Smith 2013: 168–169.

[908] ILTun 66 = ILPBardo 20 = AfrRom-04-02-486 = AE 1934, 35, erected by a local *duumvir*.

[909] CIL VIII 4197 = CIL VIII 18492 = D 450.

[910] Also from Verecunda comes a dedication to Victoria Germania Augusta set up by a local civilian priest and several male relatives, CIL VIII, 4202 = CIL VIII, 18494. The dedication was presumably conceived after Caracalla's triumph and his adoption of the title Germanicus Maximus in late 213. The dedicator, however, does not seem to have any direct connection to the military.

[911] AE 1964, 229.

general expressions of loyalty to the emperor continue in the form of *pro salute*.[912] We saw that the title *sacerdos amplissimus* only appeared once a civilian context; likewise it only appears once in a military context. A dedication honouring the building activities of the soldiers stationed at Bu Njem refers to Elagabalus and Severus Alexander as a *sacerdos amplissimus* and *nobilissimus Caesar*, respectively.[913] The text, to which we shall return in more detail later, praises the virtues of the troops but does not extend the same normative language to both imperial dedicatees, who are not praised for their imperial virtues nor receive any further honorific titles in the text of the inscription.

Under Severus Alexander, military dedicators continue to give preference to generally-worded expressions of consent and loyalty, rather than strong normative language. The phrase *pro salute* remains a mainstay of military epigraphy across the region, appearing in eight inscriptions from Castellum Dimmidi, Lambaesis and Bu Njem.[914] In a similar vein is a dedication from Lambaesis which, if the editor's reading is correct, was set up "[*pro aeternitate imp*]*erii*", again underlining the importance attached to the well-being of emperor and empire for many military (as well as civilian) dedicators.[915] Beyond *salus* however, a few interesting observations can be made. Under Severus Alexander martial epithets begin to find their way into military dedications. *Invictus* in particular becomes a more standardized element of the imperial titulature, appearing regularly in dedications before or after the emperor's official titles *Pius Felix*.[916] One dedication from Castellum Dimmidi furthermore lauds Severus Alexander as *restitutor orbis*.[917] This is one of the first North African inscriptions to employ the title, which would gain considerably in popularity during the third and fourth century. Unfortunately, the names of the dedicators do not survive. The choice for *restitutor orbis* is an interesting one, given that the title does not appear to have been heavily propagated on the young emperor's coinage. The legend RESTITVTOR VRBIS can be found on the coinage of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, but the closest analogue under Severus Alexander is a series of *dupondii* styling the emperor as RESTITUTOR MON(ETAE), an alleged but dubious reference to monetary reforms.[918] Perhaps the dedicators in Castellum Dimmidi harkened back to an earlier Severan example in an attempt to find new praise for Severus Alexander after the turbulent reign of Elagabalus. In that sense, the dedication might be read as an act of consent and legitimation for

[912] CIL VIII 2496 = AE 1933, 45, set up by a centurion in Calceus Herculis; CIL VIII 2564 = CIL VIII 18052 = D 470 = CBI 782 = AE 1947, +201 = AE 1978, 889, set up by the *duplarii* of Legio III Augusta in Lambaesis.

[913] CLEAfr-01, p.94 = CLEAfr-01, p.132 = CLEAfr-01, p.143 = CLEAfr-02, 5 = Actes-11-2, p. 367 = LibAnt-1995-82 = JRS-1999-111 = Saastamoinen 480 = AE 1995, 1641 = AE 2014, +1476.

[914] GeA 546 = CastDim 8 = AE 1940, 148 = AE 1948, +213; GeA 525 = AE 1902, 11 = AE 1902, +147; LibAnt-1974/75-219 = AE 1979, 645; CIL VIII 8795 = CIL VIII 18020 = D 4340 = GeA 545 = CastDim 9 = AE 1940, 149 = AE 1948, +213; CIL VIII 8797a = CastDim 21 = AE 1940, 151 = AE 1948, +218; CIL VIII 2638 = D 9293 = LibAnt-1995-97 = AE 1914, +124; GeA 543 = CastDim 1 = AE 1906, 124 = AE 1940, +145 = AE 1940, +153 = AE 1948, +208; CastDim 23 = GeA 548 = AE 1948, 219.

[915] CIL VIII 18254 = CIL VIII 18257 = AntAfr-1967-78 = AE 1967, 573.

[916] See GeA 546 = CastDim 8 = AE 1940, 148 = AE 1948, +213; CIL VII 2620; LibAnt-1974/75-219 = AE 1979, 645; CIL VIII 8795 = CIL VIII 18020 = D 4340 = GeA 545 = CastDim 9 = AE 1940, 149 = AE 1948, +213; CIL VIII 8797a = CastDim 21 = AE 1940, 151 = AE 1948, +218.

[917] CIL VIII 8797a = CastDim 21 = AE 1940, 151 = AE 1948, +218.

[918] See for example RIC IV Septimius Severus 140, 167a, 167b, 288-290, 512a, 753, 755, 757a-b, 825a-b; RIC IV Caracalla 41, 142, 166, 167, 228, 323a, 461, 475; RIC IV Severus Alexander 601.

the return to an ideologically-speaking more traditional emperor, a theme heavily emphasized by the imperial court in Rome.[919]

The martial epithets of Severus Alexander stand in contrast with the honorifics used to praise his predecessor. Only one military dedication associates Elagabalus with a martial epithet: a centurion from Castellum Dimmidi praises the emperor as *fortissimus imperator*.[920] This development is not without precedent: as noted, North African dedicators often associate Caracalla with invincibility, at least in civic inscriptions. In the case of Caracalla, however, the term does not appear as a fixed element of the imperial titulature but rather as an optional honorific, open to variation.[921] It is in civilian dedications and milestone-inscriptions set up under Elagabalus that *invictus* becomes a regularly recurring element of the imperial titulature in North Africa. This trend is picked up in building dedications from the reign of Severus Alexander onwards, a discrepancy that can be explained due to the low number of privately financed buildings erected during the reign of Elagabalus.[922] Although the role of the emperor as a successful military commander was familiar to civilians and soldiers alike, the Severan emperors and particularly their third-century successors placed more explicit emphasis on the army as a legitimising audience. This explains the adoption of martial epithets on their coinage and in their official documents – the appearance of such titles as *fortissimus* or *propagator imperii* under Septimius Severus being a case in point. To what extent this reflects a conscious strategy on the part of the court is another matter: it is only during the third century that *invictus* appears with any regularity on imperial coinage (though in many cases in connection to deities rather than the emperor) and becomes a standardized part of the imperial titulature.[923] What is often understated is the extent to which the spread of such martial epithets also depended on a receptive audience amongst civic and military dedicators, at least in the Severan era when martial epithets such as *invictus* had a far more flexible status. It was after all dedicators across North Africa as well as other provinces who, with possible intervention from the Roman administration, opted to include phrases such as *invictissimus* (or *fortissimus*, or *restitutor orbis*, or *super omnes retro principes*) in the texts of their dedications. If, as Storch suggests, *invictus* could express universal military victory, its increasing popularity among dedicators becomes clear.[924] Its nonspecific nature made an epithet such as *invictus* an ideal form of praise for any emperor, regardless of actual military accomplishments. It could also express a belief in the future victories of a given emperor, as well as a hope for the future success of the empire more generally, in a time of increasing uncertainty on the military front.[925] From a practical perspective, such open-ended normative language increased the relevance of dedications, which need not be tied to specific

[919] Rowan 2012: 219–245.

[920] GeA 539 = CastDim 6 = AE 1948, 212.

[921] At least, in North Africa: Storcher notes that the titles *Pius Felix Invictus* appear in dedications to Caracalla from Britain and Italy, see Storcher 1968: 200.

[922] AntAfr-2015-127 = AE 2015, 1843 = EpRom 2015-59-1; CIL VIII 10381 = CIL VIII 22418; CIL VIII 10118 = CIL VIII 22247 = D 5836 = ILAlg-01, 3892; CIL VIII 10267; CIL VIII 10334; ILAlg-02-01, 572; CIL VIII 10250 = AE 1981, 910 = AntAfr-1980-180, 33; CIL VIII 22248 = ILAlg-01, 3893; CIL VIII 10418 = CIL VIII 10419 = CIL VIII 22521 = RAA p.125. *Building dedications*: Saastamoinen 2010: 84.

[923] Hebblewhite 2016: 54–55; Storcher 1968: 200–203; Blois 2018: 234–238.

[924] Storcher 1968: 197.

[925] As suggested by Hebblewhite 2016: 55.

campaigns or conquests. Furthermore, for civilian dedicators under Elegabalus, when the term *invictus* first appears as a common element in the imperial titulature, the epithet offered a solution to a problem: not only did it suggest an ideological connection between Elagabalus and his 'father' Caracalla, it also allowed dedicators to praise the martial virtues of an emperor without military experience or noteworthy victories; martial virtues that in previous emperors would have been primarily expressed through their victory titles. Military dedicators appear to have been less eager, either because of the lack of any major campaigns under Elagabalus or simply as the result of the generally much smaller pool of surviving dedication by military dedicators from his reign. Perhaps due to the increased military activity under Severus Alexander, the title *invictus* gained firmer footing in military epigraphic conventions.

5.1.4. – An impoverished third century

The fifty years between the assassination of Severus Alexander and the rise of the tetrarchy was a troubled time for the military forces in North Africa. Legio III Augusta supported the local governor Capellianus in quelling the uprising of Gordian I and his son, who were in their turn supported by African elites – revealing fault lines between army and provincials.[926] As a result, Gordian III disbanded the legion in 238; it was not reinstated until the reign of Valerian and Gallienus in 253. The epigraphic record of the period is, understandably, limited. Exactly what happened to the troops stationed in Lambaesis and who took over their military duties remain open questions. Le Bohec suggests that some of the legion's responsibilities were taken over by the auxiliaries in the region, and some fortresses and camps were evidently maintained in the period between 238 and 253.[927] For much of the third century, at least until the tetrarchy, the use of normative language in military dedications is rather meagre. Imperial legates are well-represented in the surviving epigraphic record, soldiers and others troops less so. Instead of using normative language, military dedicators continued to opt for the more general *salus*, which perhaps gained renewed meaning in a time of great uncertainty along the North African frontier. Dispatched units of Legio III Augusta stationed in Castellum Dimmidi and Bu Njem erected altars to Jupiter and the *salus* of the emperor Maximinus and his son; in Bu Njem at least, the altar was set up in the *principia*, the heart of the camp.[928] Of the inscriptions, only one of the texts from Castellum Dimmidi can be precisely dated, to early May 235, slightly more than a month after the ascension of Maximinus to the imperial throne.[929] It suggests something of the speed with which the Castellum Dimmidi altar was erected and the importance evidently attached to making a public display of consent to the new emperor: although the altar was consecrated by a local centurion, the inscription makes it clear that it was set up in the name of all of the standard bearers (*vexillarii*) of the locally dispatched cohort. *Invictus* is missing

[926] Dossey 2010: 16.

[927] Le Bohec 1989: 453–456; see also Bénabou 1976: 214–217.

[928] AfrRom-02-228 = LibAnt-1978/79-114 = GeA 485 = AE 1972, 677; CastDim 3 = GeA 541 = AE 1948, 209 = AE 1948, +213 = AE 1950, 120 = AE 1950, 186 = AE 1954, +258; CastDim 4 = GeA 542 = AE 1940, 153 = AE 1948, 210 = AE 1949, 13; Hilali 2007: 487.

[929] CastDim 3 = GeA 541 = AE 1948, 209 = AE 1948, +213 = AE 1950, 120 = AE 1950, 186 = AE 1954, +258.

from the titulature of Maximinus though it does appear in dedications and milestones elsewhere in North Africa, including Lambaesis.[930]

The dedications to Maximinus are emblematic for much of the third century when it comes to inscriptions set up by members of the military. Military dedications, never particularly loquacious with regard to normative language, mostly clung to established imperial titles such as *Pius Felix Invictus*. Throughout the third century, the title *Invictus* in particular appears regularly in dedications and on milestones, for example under Gordian III, Gallienus and Aurelian.[931] Military dedicators from legates to soldiers likewise continue to profess their concern for imperial *salus*, including that of the emperors Philippus, Gallienus and Aurelian.[932] And following the official imperial titulature, heirs to the throne are generally designated as *nobilissimus Caesar*.[933] In this sense, military dedications are similar to dedications from the civic context, which likewise saw a clear diminishing of the more free-form normative language of the Severan era to more circumspect and repetitive epigraphic conventions.

As in the case of the civic inscriptions, a handful of exceptions to this rule can be cited. One of the altars placed in the *principia* of Castellum Dimmidi praises emperor Maximinus as *sanctissimus imperator*, a honorific that first appears under the Severan emperors. In a variation on the theme of imperial well-being, one imperial legate erected an altar to *aeternitas imperii*.[934] Both examples are fairly unique, at least in the surviving epigraphic record, suggesting some consideration by the dedicators for the wording of their dedication. Yet neither *sanctus* nor an expression of concern for the longevity of the empire stray very far from the more usual wording of contemporaneous dedications. Despite the supposedly martial character of much third-century imperial ideology, martial honorifics such as *fortissimus*, *invictissimus, propagator* and *restitutor urbis/orbis* are largely missing. Dedications to the emperor set up with the involvement of imperial legates, who are epigraphically attested until 284, also rarely feature honorifics. Only one dedication, set up by the legate Caius Iulius Sallustius Saturninus Fortunatianus to emperor Gallienus, includes the phrase *fortissimus princeps.*[935] In a roughly contemporaneous building dedication from the fort at Ras el Ain Tlalet, the soldiers of *cohors VIII Fida* include Gallienus' imperial titles of *Pius Felix Invictus*, but reserve the honorific *fortissimus* for themselves (*fortissimis militibus suis*).[936] Although part of the answer lies in changing epigraphic trends across North Africa, preferring shorter titles after the

[930] CIL VIII 10203 = D 491; CIL VIII 10254 (p.2137); CIL VIII 10214; CIL VIII 10215; AE 1981, 897 = AntAfr-1980-168, 16; BCTH-1951/52-227; BCTH-1951/52-228. See also Peachin 1990: 106–115.

[931] CIL VIII 2665 (p. 1739) = D 584; CIL VIII 2676 (p. 1739) = CIMRM-01, 135 = Saastamoinen 596; CIL VIII 2716; BCTH-1902-329 = GeA 526; CIL VIII 22765 = D 8923 = ILTun 3 = Saastamoinen 583 = AE 1895, 17 = AE 1902, 46.

[932] CIL 2665 (p. 1739) = D 584; CIL VIII 2676 (p. 1739) = CIMRM-01, 135 = Saastamoinen 596; CIL VIII 2626 = CIL VIII 18099; BCTH-1902-329 = GeA 526; AE 1992, 1861; CIL VIII 2657 = CIL VIII 18105 = D 5626 = Saastamoinen 565 = AE 1973, +645. See in this context also ILAlg-02-01, 8 = D 9073 = AE 1909, 15, an altar to Jupiter and the Genius of Claudius Gothicus.

[933] AfrRom-02-228 = LibAnt-1978/79-114 = GeA 485 = AE 1972, 677; CastDim 4 = GeA 542 = AE 1940, 153 = AE 1948, 210 = AE 1949, 13; AE 1992, 1861.

[934] AE 1967, 563.

[935] AE 1971, 509.

[936] CIL VIII 22765 = D 8923 = ILTun 3 = Saastamoinen 583 = AE 1895, 17 = AE 1902, 46.

extravagant lengths of the Severan dynasty, a more prosaic reason might be that the standardization of *Invictus* as an imperial title dampened the need to include further martial honorifics.

Other elements of the emperor's martial ideology continued to find a receptive audience amongst the military. The dedications in the *principia* of the fortress at Gemellae offer an illustration. In the autumn of 253, Valerian had defeated the usurper Aemilianus and secured the imperial throne for himself and his son Gallienus. Legio III Augusta was refounded and a number of fortresses restationed. Upon their return to Gemellae on the 22nd of October 253, the centurion Marcus Flavius Valens and his *optiones* set up a dedication to Victoria Augusta and the *salus* of Valerian and Gallienus in the *principia* of the camp, commemorating the legion's return to the fort.[937] Like the epithet *invictus* the dedication to Victoria Augusta and imperial *salus* can be read in several ways, once more closely associating martial success with imperial well-being, congratulating the new emperors on their success over their rivals as well as tying the re-occupation of the camp to the wider story of Roman imperial triumph. In 256-258, the legate of the legion, Lucius Magius Valerianus, had an altar erected "to the Victory of our most noble emperors Valerian and Gallienus and Valerian Caesars and Augusti" ([*Vi*]*ctoriae nob(illissimorum) pr*[*in*]*cipum nostro*[*rum V*]*aleriani et* [*Gallie*]*ni et Valeriani Caes(arum)* [*Auggg(ustorum)*]), at the center of the *principia* courtyard.[938] Though the envisioned victory may relate to the Germanic campaigns of the emperors, the dedicator evidently felt no need to further define imperial *victoria* through references to specific triumphs or victories. In the centre of the court, the altar was accompanied by an altar to Disciplina, most likely put up some time after the return of the legion to Gemellae.[939] The placement of these dedications in close proximity both in time and space is in and of itself not particularly surprising. The *principia* was the administrative and religious heart of the camp and the customary location for dedications and altars by members of the stationed unit(s).[940] The various altars and dedications together created an interwoven fabric, not only by associating broad ideals of universal imperial triumph (Victoria Augusta) and military behaviour (Disciplina), but also by making such broad ideas visible and present in the heart of a military community at the edge of the empire. The dedications illustrate the continued importance of the ideal of imperial triumph in a military context in the mid-third century.

This ideal could gain additional urgency in times of crisis. The years 253-260 saw a number of 'barbarian' incursions and considerable unrest in Mauretania Caesariensis.[941] After some preliminary successes, the governor Marcus Aurelius Vitalis erected an inscription in Ain Bou Dib alongside Ulpius Castus, *decurio* of the *ala Thracum*. The inscription states that it is dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the Genii, the immortal gods, and "to the Victories of our invincible lords"

[937] CIL VIII 2482 = CIL VIII 17976 = D 531 = GeA 537 = AE 1946, +39. A visual parallel can be found in Lambaesis: one of the arches of the large *quadrifrons* in the center of the camp, constructed under Gallienus, had a depiction of Victoria on its keystone, see Rakob and Storz 1974: 263.

[938] GeA 536 = AE 1947, 201 = AE 1950, +63 = AE 2014, +1456. Leschi 1949: 224.

[939] Baradez 1953: 157–160.

[940] GeA 534 = AE 1954, 132. *Principia*: Erdkamp 2011: 403–405.

[941] Bénabou 1976: 214–227; Le Bohec 1989: 466–473; Witschel 2006: 164–172.

([*Vict*]*oriisq(ue) dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)* [*I*]*nvic*[*t*]*or(um)*).[942] The motivation behind the inscription, "because the barbarians were cut down and overcome" (*ob barbaros c(a)esos ac fusos*), has attracted considerable attention and is believed to refer to the above-mentioned local troubles, rather than to some faraway imperial victory.[943] Yet rather than contrasting the local with the imperial, both are intertwined in the inscription, making local military successes part of the wider story of imperial triumph. This intertwining of the local with the imperial was not limited to dedications by high-ranking officials, as a dedication to Victoria Augusta by a *beneficiarius* from Lambaesis attests.[944] The name of the honoured emperor has been chiselled away; the editor of the inscription supplements Carus while Le Bohec suggests the dedication could be of a later date.[945] Whatever the correct dating of the dedication might be, the dedication appears to have been set up out of an act of personal devotion, as implied by the addition of "*libent(i) animo*".

To give this seeming impoverishment of normative language in epigraphy some context, we may turn to dedications set up by civilians in or near military settlements such as Lambaesis, Rapidum or Altava. Even a superficial comparison makes clear that civilian dedications show considerable overlap with dedications by military personnel. *Invictus* and *nobilissimus* appear as standardized elements of the imperial titulature, while dedications and milestones alike are dedicated *pro salute*, similar to epigraphic traditions across third-century North Africa. More interesting are those dedications that show subtle differences between military and civic dedicators living in close proximity to the military. Without wanting to draw too strong a line between these two groups, dedications from the latter appear to employ a slightly more varied normative vocabulary. An anonymous dedication – most likely set up by the decurions of Rapidum – invokes Jupiter for the well-being, safety and victories (*pro salute atque incolumitate victoriisque*) of Decius and his wife Herennia Etruscilla.[946] Another example dating from the second half of the third century comes from the veteran colony at Verecunda, where a dedication to an unknown emperor reads "[t]o the most brave and most victorious emperor" (*Fortissimo ac vic*[*torio*]*sissimo Imp(eratori)*).[947] Auzia, another veteran colony, saw a spurt in building activity during the first half of the third century.[948] These new buildings included a platform for the cultic statue of *Virtus dea sancta Augusta* in 241, erected by a priest and his wife.[949] A second possible dedication to *Virtus dea sancta Augusta*, also by a priest and his wife, has proven more difficult to date.[950] Although the worship of Virtus may at first seem like a typical feature of military religious expression, the cult of the goddess does not appear in any of the military sites under investigation. Rather it is a mostly civic development that is also in evidence elsewhere in North Africa.[951]

[942] CIL VIII 20827 = D 3000.
[943] Cagnat 1913: 60; Romanelli 1959: 474; Pflaum 1960: 910–911; Bénabou 1976: 219–220; Le Bohec 1989: 468.
[944] BCTH-1955/56-123 = AE 1960, 106.
[945] Le Bohec 1989: 219–220.
[946] BCTH-1950-129 = MEFR-1951-56 = AE 1951, 142. See also Laporte 1989: 234.
[947] CIL VIII 4225.
[948] Witschel 2006: 193.
[949] CIL VIII 9026 = D 3801 = Saastamoinen 552.
[950] CIL VIII 9027 (p. 1960) = Saastamoinen 999.
[951] For an overview, Cadotte 2007: 244–250.

5.1.5. – Virtues resurgent

In the late third century, the city council of Lambaesis praised Numerian as the "most conscientious and most merciful, noblest Caesar" (*piissimus ac clementissimus nobilissimus Caesar*).[952] The dedication to Numerian, though singular, is telling of a trend that came to full fruition under the tetrarchy. After helping to suppress a revolt by a local governor under Diocletian, the legion left Lambaesis and was moved to an unknown location in North Africa.[953] As a result, dedications from members of the military almost completely disappear in the late third and early fourth century. Under Diocletian the legion is mentioned in a building dedication as working on a restoration project, possibly a Severan road; the governor responsible for the dedication praises the emperor for his *indulgentia*, presumably for allowing use of the troops in the restoration work.[954] An unknown dedicator, though presumably a member of the military, invoked the Genius of the camp to protect the *salus* of Diocletian and Maximian.[955] One of the last appearances of the legion in Lambaesis as a dedicating body is a set of two sparsely worded dedications set up to Maximian and Constantius, honouring the former as *Invictus Augustus* and the latter as *fortissimus Caesar*.[956] In these same years, governors begin to play an increasingly prominent role in the epigraphic record of Lambaesis, either as dedicators or as co-dedicators in projects undertaken by local magistrates.[957] One example is the governor Aurelius Diogenes, who set up two identical dedications to the co-emperors Diocletian and Maximian:

> *Piissimo* [[[*Imp(eratori) Diocletiano*] *Invicto*]] [[[*Aug(usto)*]]] *ac super ommes retro principes fortissimo principi suo Aurelius Diogenes v(ir) p(erfectissimus) p(raeses) p(rovinciae) N(umidiae) numini eius dicatissimus*
>
> "To his most pious emperor Diocletian, Unconquered Augustus bravest emperor and greater than all previous emperors, Aurelius Diogenes, *vir perfectissimus*, governor of the province of Numidia, most devoted to his divine majesty."[958]

The difference with earlier, third-century dedications is clear: under the tetrarchy, virtues regain their foothold in epigraphic traditions. Unlike the dedications of the third century, many of which included *Pius Felix Invictus* in the imperial titulature, the dedications set up by fourth-century governors show a renewed emphasis on varied expressions of praise in dedications. Although this emphasis might be considered a new development, the vocabulary contains familiar imperial virtues

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[952] ZPE-72-104 = AE 1991, 1688

[953] On the changes to the legion under Diolectian, see Cagnat 1913: 728ff.

[954] CIL VIII 2718 = Saastamoinen 675. See also the restoration work on an aqueduct which involved the legion: CIL VIII 2572 (p 1723) = D 5786 = Saastamoinen 615.

[955] MEFR-1898-458.

[956] CIL VIII 2576 (p. 954, 1723) ; CIL VIII 2577 (p. 954, 1723).

[957] Saastamoinen 737 = ZPE-69-213 = AE 1987, 1062 = AE 2003, +1889; CIL VIII 18328 = D 5520 = Saastamoinen 774 = AE 2011, +1524 = AE 2012, +149; AE 2014, 1566. *Without virtue honorifics, see for example*: CIL VIII 2717 = CIL VIII 18228 = CIL VIII 18270 = CIL VIII 18339 = BCTH-1990/92-81 = AE 1993, 1769 = AE 2014, 1565; CIL 08, 2717 (p.1739) = BCTH-1990/92-84; CIL VIII 2571a = CIL VIII 18057a = Saastamoinen 592 = AE 1974, 723b; CIL VIII 02571 (p. 954) = CIL VIII 18057 = AE 1974, 723a.

[958] CIL VIII 2575.

(*fortitudo*[959]*, indulgentia*[960]) alongside new expressions (*inclytus*[961], *divinus princeps*[962]). As noted with reference to the civilian sphere, epigraphic formulas concerning the happiness or beauty of the time make their appearance, such as a building inscription dedicated "to our most felicitous and most blessed times" ([*felicissimis et b*]*eatissimis temporibus suis*).[963]

The new vocabulary is shared by the civic authorities of Lambaesis, who in this period come to the fore as a dedicating body. Here we see considerable overlap with other civic communities. Like Lepcis Magna, Lambaesis starts to present itself more strongly as a unified civic entity, even after losing its status as capital of Numidia and the later, short-lived province of Numidia Militania. Furthermore, like communities across North Africa, it employed a wide-ranging vocabulary to praise the emperors. Both Diocletian and Maximian were honoured as *piissimus et victoriosissimus*.[964] Constantius I Chlorus, Constantine and Julian were all praised for their *providentia* and their martial virtues in similar phraseology: *providentissimo et cum orbe suo reddita libertate triumfanti d(omino) n(ostro)*.[965] Constantius was furthermore honoured as a *florentissimus Caesar* and his dedication was raised "to (one) born for the good of human race" (*bono generis humani progenito*).[966] And when Valentinian and Valens sponsored restoration works in the town, these actions were seen to be motivated by imperial *indulgentia*.[967] The themes of these late-antique dedications strongly overlap with those observed in other communities across North Africa: the all-encompassing power of the emperor, expressed in terms of his military dominance, his divine nature and virtuous personal rule. After the departure of the legion, the epigraphic culture of Lambaesis shows strong similarities with civic epigraphical traditions. Whether the absence of the legion played a factor in this shift, is another matter: the meagre number of dedications does not allow for much insight in contemporaneous military epigraphic trends, at least in the field of normative language. However, it seems significant that the few surviving military dedications employ similar normative language, suggesting that the epigraphic shift towards a more virtue-laden style of praise happened on a wide scale, irrespective of boundaries between civic and military epigraphic conventions.

5.2. – Networks of patronage

Like their civilian counterparts, members of the military moved in networks of power and patronage that were expressed in normative language. In the day-to-day life at Lambaesis soldiers, centurions and members of the legate's staff were arguably more concerned with their direct superiors than with the emperor. At the top of the military command chain we find the imperial legate, who unsurprisingly features as a recurring honorand. Local governors, too, were common recipients of honours. Though the governors of Africa Proconsularis and the legate in charge of Legio III Augusta

[959] CIL VIII 2573 (p.1723) ; CIL VIII 2574 ; CIL VIII 2575 ; AE 1916, 21 = AE 1917/18, +16.
[960] CIL VIII 2718 = Saastamoinen 675.
[961] Saastamoinen 737 = ZPE-69-213 = AE 1987, 1062 = AE 2003, +1889.
[962] CIL VIII 18328 = D 5520 = Saastamoinen 774 = AE 2011, +1524 = AE 2012, +149.
[963] CIL VIII 20836 = D 638 = Saastamoinen 663 = AfrRom-07-02-907 = AE 1991, 1736 ; see also CIL VIII 2656 (p. 1739) = Saastamoinen 738.
[964] AE 1920, 13; ZPE-188-284.
[965] CIL VIII 2721; CIL VIII 18260; IIulian 171 = AE 1916, 11; IIulian 170 = AE 1916, 10.
[966] CIL VIII 2720 (p. 1739), translation LSA-2260 (G. de Bruyn).
[967] CIL VIII 2722 = CIL VIII 18119 = D 5358 = Saastamoinen 739.

were of senatorial rank, the governorship of Mauretania Caesariensis fell to an equestrian procurator.[968] As Birley noted, the legates of the third century seem to be of lower status and rank (or, in Birley's words, 'second-raters').[969] The dedications are mostly silent on the motivations behind their creation, though promotion most likely played an important role. To rise to the rank of centurion, let alone to a legate's staff or a governor's military retinue, was a substantial promotion; one which typically involved considerable effort, networking, luck and bribery.[970] Although the emperor had the final authority, the governors of provinces with stationed legions most likely had "a good deal of freedom in filling casual vacancies", while the governors in turn might be advised by their legates about suitable candidates.[971] In North Africa things were slightly different, given the separated roles of the civilian governor of Africa Proconsularis and the imperial legate at the head of Legio III Augusta.[972] This probably allowed the legate stationed at Lambaesis a more independent role in promotions, given the large number of dedications honouring the legates as personal patrons by various members of the military. This suspicion is further strengthened by the clear geographical split between the dedications. Beneficiaries were keen to honour their patrons in those places where they were stationed (and, possibly, the beneficiary's new place of employment), with dedications to governors and other civilian administrators being placed in Caesarea[973], the provincial capital of Mauretania Caesariensis, while dedications to the imperial legate and other military officials were set up in Lambaesis. Due to the limited survival rate of inscriptions from the centre of Roman Carthage, extant dedications to the governors of Africa Proconsularis mostly appear from outside of the provincial capital. Beyond promotions, however, officers might honour their superiors for a variety of reasons, including the potential for future benefactions, financial or legal aid, or simply as a display of loyalty.

The first extant dedications to legates of Legio III Augusta by members of the military date to the mid-second century[974], while the first military dedications to the governors of Mauretania Caesariensis belong to the reign of Marcus Aurelius.[975] It is only at a slightly later date that we also see the first honorifics appear in such dedications. Unsurprisingly, legates are by far the best represented of the two groups with some eighteen dedications – generally statue bases – from Lambaesis.[976] Dedications are particularly prominent from the Severan era onwards and dry up in the second half of the third century. The rebuilding of the *principia* in Lambaesis under Septimius Severus seems to have had a major impact on the extant epigraphy of the site, but the surge in epigraphic activity may also be connected to the expanded official powers of the legates as heads

[968] Who, as noted earlier, received the title of *praeses* from the Severan era onwards; Thomasson 1996: 18–19.
[969] Birley 1950: 67.
[970] Saller 1982: 157–158. On the promotion of centurions more generally: Birley 1988: 206–220.
[971] Birley 1988: 207; see also Saller 1982: 131–132.
[972] Watkins 2002: 85–86.
[973] See Benseddik 1979: 107–112; Leveau 1984: 98–101.
[974] CIL VIII 2747 (p. 1739) = D 1070 (p. 174) ; CIL VIII 18273.
[975] CIL VIII 9363 (p. 974, 1983) = D 1351.
[976] CIL 2732 = CIL VIII 18124 = D 1154; CIL VIII 2734 = CIL VIII 18125; CIL VIII 2742 (p. 954, 1739); CIL VIII 2749 (p. 954, 1739); CIL VIII 2750 (p. 1739); CIL VIII 2753 = CIL VIII 18128; CIL VIII 2754 = CIL VIII 18129 = BCTH-1970-227
2797 (p. 1739) = D 2413 = CBI 772; AE 1917/18, 71; AE 1917/18, 77; AE 1917/18, 78; AE 1954, 138; AfrRom-04-02-496 = AE 1969/70, 706; BCTH-1916-CCXLI = AE 1917/18, 51; BCTH-1938/40-273 = AE 1939, 38 = AE 1942/43, +7; CBI 768 = AE 1917/18, 72; CBI 774 = AE 1917/18, 76 = AE 1992, 1869 = AE 2003, +2016; ZPE-69-208 = AE 1915, 16.

of the newly-formed province of Numidia.[977] Most dedicators were officers of the legion from the centurionate upwards, rather than legionnaires. The most common phrasing of gubernatorial honorifics can be illustrated with a statue base in honour of Marcus Valerius Senecio, legate of the legion under Caracalla:

> *M(arco) Valerio Senecioni leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) praesidi provinc(iae) German(iae) inferior(is) c(larissimo) v(iro) L(ucius) Fabius Silvanus cornicul(arius) eius praesidi praestantissimo*[978]
>
> "To Marcus Valerius Senecio, *legatus Augusti pro praetor*e, governor of the province of Germania Inferior, *clarissimus vir*, Lucius Fabius Silvanus, his *cornicularius*, to a most excellent governor."

The designation *praeses* for all men in governor-like positions irrespective of their actual office and title also featured in civic dedications to praesidial procurators and proconsular governors. Yet the choice of normative indicators in this otherwise set pattern is remarkably wide. Many dedicators opted for a broad and somewhat generic normative language: *praeses rarissimus*[979], *praeses incomparabilis*[980], *praeses benignissimus*[981] or *praeses optimus*[982]. We saw a similar broad-ranging vocabulary at play in the dedications to civilian benefactors and patrons. Yet here the relationship between dedicator and honorand is slightly different, since we are dealing with displays of personal patronage and loyalty, rather than with communal patronage with a strong munificent bend. The general preference for the phrase *praeses* rather than for example *patronus* is noteworthy since governors are regularly addressed as *patronus* in civic dedications. Given the ubiquitous nature of patronage in Roman society, it is unlikely that dedicators felt a need to conceal or gloss over acts of personal patronage by avoiding the term *patronus* or overly extravagant normative language. Dedicators may have opted for more general normative language because the vocabulary was all-encompassing and did not tie a honorand to a single act of patronage or a single excellent character trait. The title *patronus*, with its overt suggestions of personal involvement on part of the benefactor, may have been considered inappropriate within a formal, hierarchical relationship between a subordinate officer and his superior. The title *praeses* on the other hand could denote personal patronage while still underlining the clear difference in status between honorand and dedicator.

Detailed archaeological notes are unfortunately lacking in the case of Caesarea. We may assume that the dedications were set up close to the procurator's residence or perhaps on the forum, though the former is perhaps more likely given the lack of *decreto decurionum* in these inscriptions.

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[977] Le Bohec 1989: 58.
[978] AE 1917/18, 77.
[979] AfrRom-04-02-496 = AE 1969/70, 706; BCTH-1916-CCXLI = AE 1917/18, 51; CIL VIII 2749 (p. 954, 1739); ZPE-69-208 = AE 1915, 16.
[980] BI 774 = AE 1917/18, 76 = AE 1992, 1869 = AE 2003, +2016.
[981] AE 1917/18, 71; CIL VIII 2753 = CIL VIII 18128.
[982] AE 1954, 138.

For Lambaesis we are on slightly firmer footing. Though imperial dedications were usually set up in the *principia*, Cagnat notes that several dedications to legates were found on the northern edge of the Capitolium, outside of the camp proper.[983] This suggests that at least some of the dedications from Lambaesis received a distinctly public setting. Although their setting may have been public, the dedications to legates and governors nevertheless strictly revolve around the relationship between an individual honorand and dedicator. Whereas public dedications were to some extent expected to praise and judge, private dedicators were likely more interested in giving a public display of their relationship with a patron of superior rank and status. As such, the elements of praise are important but they do not play the same prescriptive role as elements of praise in public dedications. It undoubtedly helped that terms such as *rarissimus*, *incomparabilis* or *optimus* kept a respectful distance between dedicator and honorand (in all cases the dedicator's superior), of particular importance perhaps in a lasting inscription. In this respect, dedications to private patrons in the military sphere are not much different from those in the civic sphere. There, too, we saw that private patrons tended to be honoured with all-encompassing and vague terms of praise such as *praestantissimus*, *incomparabilis* or *benignissimus*.

Yet while most officers opted for broad honorifics, others included a more varied and precise language of praise in their dedications, a fact highlighted by a set of mid-third-century inscriptions. Despite the disbandment of the legion in the years 238-253, the imperial administration still appointed officials to Lambaesis, governing the province of Numidia and retaining the title *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. One such governor-legate was Marcus Aurelius Cominius Cassianus, in office in the years 247-248. Cassianus appears prominently as a recipient of honours, both by remaining members of the military, including members of his staff, and by members of the civilian community of Lambaesis. Most of these dedications use similarly generic honorifics. Two *cornicularii*, for example, set up a dedication to Cassianus praising him as a "most benign governor" (*praeses benignissimus*), while the high-ranking Memmius Valerianus (*a IIII militiis*[984]) praises his superior as "a man abundant in all virtues" (*omnibus virtutibus abundans vir*).[985] Cassianus' *beneficiarii* erected a statue base to their superior, set up "to a man of remarkable endurance and admirable integrity as well as the highest virtues" (*Insignis patientiae et admirabilis integritatis ac summarum virtutum viro*).[986] The *beneficiarii* fulfilled a wide range of functions, ranging from military intelligence to fiscal administration from within the governors personal staff.[987] Although still open to considerable interpretation, the honorifics in their dedication are more specific on Cassianus' actions in office and his personal qualities than for example *rarissimus* or *incomparabilis*. *Integritas* is a quality we saw associated with governors in a civilian context, usually referring to the good governance and a lack of abuse of powers; a similar meaning is undoubtedly intended here. *Patientia* on the other hand is a virtue that has no equivalent in contemporary dedications, only appearing in a set of

[983] BCTH-1916-CCXXXIX-CCXLIV.

[984] On this title, see Demougin 2000: 136; Davenport 2018: 516–519.

[985] AE 1917/18, 71; CIL VIII 2732 = CIL VIII 18124 = D 1154. On the latter, see also the dedication BCTH-1938/40-273 = AE 1939, 38 = AE 1942/43, +7 by a *praefectus classis*, and possibly AE 1917/18, 73, set up by an *advocatus*.

[986] CBI 768 = AE 1917/18, 72.

[987] For a general overview, Nelis-Clément 2000: 208–266.

Constantinian dedications from Cirta at a much later date.[988] *Patientia* was something of a double-edged sword, used both in praise and condemnation, but surely only the former can apply here.[989] In the positive sense, *patientia* is closely related to *fortitudo* in expressing a sense of (male) endurance, a virtue befitting a dedication honouring a legate by his military personnel. But it also came close to *clementia* and *moderatio*[990], qualities familiar from civilian dedications to governors.

In other military dedications, too, we see typical gubernatorial virtues in the dedications to the legate of Numidia, including *innocentia*, *iustitia* and *providentia*.[991] Such virtues start appearing from the Severan era onwards, presumably with the founding of Numidia as a province. With the legate now officially in charge of both civilian and military matters, the praise of typical gubernatorial virtues may have become appropriate in the eyes of dedicators. The choice for such virtues is interesting, since they have little to do with the patronage relationships of which the dedications are usually the product. Military dedicators may have opted to draw from a set of virtues that were becoming stock elements in the praise of the archetypical 'good governor'. The majority of dedicating officers nevertheless still preferred broad honorific terms. In some cases, the praise of specific virtues may also have suggested the close bond between a legate and members of his staff – at least from the dedicator's perspective. The above-mentioned *beneficiarii* for example not only praised specific personal virtues in their superior, but also underlined their close relationship with him through the phrase *beneficiarii eius*.[992] The same emphasis on the close relationship between honorand and dedicator also finds an expression in an Antonine dedication from Cirta. There, the *legatus pro praetore* Publius Iulius Geminius Marcianus found himself the recipient of honours dedicated by an army officer who served under him in Arabia, with the approval of the local city council.[993] Marcianus is praised as "the best and the most steadfast" (*optimus constantissimus*), presumably a reference to his actions as a legate in Arabia. The great distance involved not only serves to highlight the exceptional character of Marcianus but also elevates the dedicator as a loyal and devoted subordinate.

Though the legate-governors in Lambaesis were the primary recipients of honours, we also have several cases of military personnel – in this case auxiliary forces under the control of the governor – setting up dedications to the civilian governor of Mauretania Caesariensis in the provincial capital of Caesarea.[994] Several of the virtues praised in the governors of Mauretania are similar to those singled out in dedications to their legate colleagues in Lambaesis. The Severan governor Caius Octavius Pudens Caesius Honoratus is honoured by one of his officers, a *decurio* of the *ala Thracum*, as a *praeses innocentissimus*.[995] More pronounced in these dedications from Caesarea is the term

[988] CIL VIII 7012 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 589 = D 1235 ; CIL VIII 7013 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 590 = D 1236.
[989] On the ranges of *patientia*, see Kaster 2002.
[990] Kaster 2002: 143–144.
[991] AE 1917/18, 78 ; CIL VIII 2742 (p.954, 1739) ; CIL VIII 2750 (p. 1739).
[992] A common feature of dedications by *beneficarii*, see Nelis-Clément 2000: 66–67.
[993] CIL VIII 7050 (p. 1848) = CIG 5366 = D 1102 = ILAlg-02-01, 634.
[994] CIL VIII 21000 = AE 1900, 125 = AE 1954, 136 = AE 2003, +2016; AE 1966, 596; CIL VIII 9370 (p. 1983) = D 1357a; MEFR-1957-137 = MEFR-1959-281 = MEFR-1960-223 = AE 1958, 156 = AE 1960, 245 = AE 1961, 227; CIL VIII 9359 (p. 1983); CIL VIII 9371 (p. 1983) = D 1355; CIL VIII 20996 = D 1356 = AE 1889, +159 = AE 1889, 187.
[995] CIL VIII 9370 (p. 1983) = D 1357a.

dignissimus. The third-century procurator Titus Licinius Hierocletus and his family are honoured by the veteran Marcus Aurelius Saturninus as a *patronus dignissimus*.[996] The choice for *patronus* rather than *praeses* in this case may perhaps be explained by Saturninus' veteran status, which placed him outside of a formal hierarchical relationship with the honorand. The honorific *dignissimus* is repeated in a dedication to Hierocletus and his family by a member (or members) of the *ala Sebastena Severiana*.[997] Marcus Popilius Nepos, former prefect of the *ala Gemina Sebastena*, set up a dedication to the early-third-century procurator Publius Aelius Peregrinus Rogatus, lauding him as an *omnium virtutum vir* and a *praeses dignissimus*.[998] *Dignissimus* appears to express the deserved nature of the honours and the worthiness of the honorand. In literature, *dignissimus* is occasionally applied to stress that important political figures are deserving of their high reputation and rank.[999] In the case of our provincial dedications, this idea of deservedness was not so much applied to high political office but to patronage by superiors. It is interesting to note that instead of the more usual *praeses*, governors in these dedications are explicitly named *patronus.* Patronage may in this case entail promotions of military men into the governor's staff, or other forms of personal benefaction. Governors also appear as patrons of cities, but here *dignissimus* is absent.[1000] Private dedicators may have wanted to emphasise the dominant position of their governor/benefactor and their own subservient position as beneficiaries, whereas this may have been inappropriate for civic communities who generally reserved such language for emperors. The distance inherent in *dignissimus* may have also made it an interesting option for dedicators, suggesting respectful recognition of rank but also implying that the dedicator had connections with superiors well above his station.

Other dedications stressed the closeness between honorand and dedicator more directly, as in a curious dedication set up to a Severan governor of Mauretania Caesariensis and his family by Anullius Geta, former prefect of the *ala Parthorum*.[1001] Geta singles out the governor's son as an "exceptional fellow-soldier" (*commilito rarissimus*). Though this seems to imply a certain level of equality between the two men, it should be noted that the term *commilito* could be used with reference to army commanders, including the emperor.[1002] Geta furthermore included in his dedication that it was erected "because of their remarkable kindness towards him" (*ob insignem* [*eo*]*rum erga se humanitatem*). Like *nobilitas* or *liberalitas*, *humanitas* is a typical aristocratic virtue with a wide range of meaning. It denotes kindness, gentle manner and cultivation but also comes quite close to *mansuetudo* and *clementia*, virtues typically associated with officials in civilian communities. The exact nature of the favours shown to Geta remains unclear, but that the governor and his son acted as Geta's patrons seems beyond question. As noted earlier, one of the main

[996] CIL VIII 20996 = ILS 1356 = AE 1889, +159 = AE 1889, 187.
[997] AE 1966, 596.
[998] CIL VIII 9359.
[999] For example, Lucius Philippus is a man most worthy of the reputation of his father and grandfather (Cicero, *Philippics*, 3.25); Trajan has deserved his place as worthy successor to Nerva (Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*, 4); and emperor Carus seemed most deserving of imperial power after the death of Probus (Historia Augusta, *Carus, Carinus, Numerian*, 5.4).
[1000] See for example IRT 102; ILAlg-01, 1283 = AE 1917/18, 60 = AE 1919, +46 = AE 1967, +536.
[1001] CIL VIII 9371 (p. 1983) = D 1355.
[1002] Campbell 1984: 38–40.

motivations behind dedications to private patrons was to publicly display the relationship between the high-ranking patron and his client. Through the use of *commilito* and *humanitas*, Geta took this one step further by respectfully suggesting the closeness between himself and the governor's family.

Whereas imperial legates were mostly the recipients of honours set up by their officers, in the case of the governors of Mauretania Caesariensis we find dedications from military and civilian dedicators. It is interesting to draw a comparison between military dedicators and civilian dedicators from communities with a military presence, such as Auzia. The same governor Caius Octavius Pudens Caesius Honoratus we saw appearing earlier as a *praeses innocentissimus* was also the recipient of honours paid for by the city of Auzia. Within this civic setting, the language is much more verbose: Honoratus is honoured as "an incomparable governor, outstanding in blamelessness and a man of all virtues" (*praesidem incomparabilem innocentia praecipuum omniumque virtutum virum*).[1003] In the late second century, the governor Lucius Alfenus Senecio was also honoured by the Auzian city council "for the extraordinary assiduousness of such a great man and for his singular blamelessness" (*ob egregiam tanti viri industriam proque singulari eius innocentia*).[1004] Such lofty virtues are not limited to governors alone: a first century prefect of the *ala Thracum* and the *gens Mazicum* is honoured by the town of Oppidum Novum *ob debita virtute et industria*.[1005] As noted in the chapter on civilian dedications, *innocentia* and *industria* are virtues typically associated with governors and magistrates alike, conferring consent and legitimacy by marking the honorands as exceptional officials who met the requirements of ideal behaviour in office. Naturally, we expect these virtues to appear in dedications set up by the community or the city council as a reflection of the specific relationship between honorand and dedicators. What is striking here is the difference in length and style between civic and military dedications. Whereas dedications set up by private dedicators in either the military or the civilian sphere are broadly similar in their emphasis on general honorifics and differences in hierarchy, there is a much stronger contrast between the virtues employed in these private dedications and those referred to in the public dedications cited above. It could be argued that private dedicators were much more concerned with the length of their inscriptions for financial reasons, though this argument is not fully convincing. Not only do many officers of various rank appear to have been capable of financing the erection of statues and inscriptions, length does not seem to have been a matter of concern for the often expansive *cursus honorum* included in some private dedications. Rather it appears to be a matter of genre and epigraphic tradition. In a civic context, the community or the city council employed normative language to act as moral arbiters towards their local and imperial officials, recognising honourable behaviour and setting out expectations for good governance. As we saw in the third chapter, the decisions of governors could have a large impact on communities and the possibilities for abuse were large. As a result of this subservient position civic communities seem to have developed a relatively consistent normative vocabulary geared specifically towards governors, intended to highlight ideal behaviour in office through stock virtues such as *iustitia*, *innocentia* or *integritas*. In

[1003] CIL VIII 9049 = CIL VIII 20737 = D 1357.
[1004] CIL VIII 9046.
[1005] AntAfr-1973-153 = AE 1973, 654.

the case of our military dedicators, however, we see an entirely different power dynamic. The result is an honorific register that is less detailed and expansive and instead gives greater preference to broad honorifics – though, as shown throughout, there are exceptions. There was little need for the type of normative vocabulary employed in civic dedications. Rather, the choice for honorific terms such as *incomparabilis*, *rarissimus* or *dignissimus* signalled both the gratitude of the dedicator and, in some cases, the hierarchical relationship between honorand and dedicator.

Military dedicators rarely make reference to the martial virtues of their honorands. This is not wholly surprising, given that patronage and munificence often formed the primary motivations behind the dedications. Yet these dedications also point to broader Roman conceptions of the ideal qualities to be sought in military commanders. By way of comparison with the military epigraphic evidence, we may turn to Pliny the Younger. Among Pliny's letters we find several letters of recommendation for men aspiring to officer's posts within the army. The letters predate most of the above dedications and furthermore mostly concern communication between Pliny and his social equals, writing in a genre that favoured honorific niceties. Nevertheless, the letters offer valuable insight in the honorific conventions in relation to military personnel in elite circles. Although our dedicating officers were not on the same level of societal prestige as Pliny's senatorial peers, they nevertheless often held equestrian status. When Pliny recommends his clients and friends to others, it is usually through an honorific vocabulary that is devoid of martial virtues but nevertheless detailed in its descriptions. Voconius Romanus, for example, is praised for his faithfulness and pleasantness as a companion (*fidelius amico aut sodale iucundius*), his voice and features are very agreeable (*suavitas*) and he has a sharp intelligence (*ingenium excelsum subtile*).[1006] Cornelius Minicianus on the other hand is not only wealthy, of high birth and a lover of literature, he also "a most upright judge, a most brave lawyer and a most loyal friend" (*rectissimus iudex, fortissimus advocatus, amicus fidelissimus*) – note that *fortissimus* is applied here in a civilian setting.[1007] For Pliny (and presumably his addressees) standards of aristocratic behaviour were far better indicators of suitability for military command than 'mere' experience. An interesting contrast is formed by Pliny's description of the military man Vestricius Spurinna. Here, martial virtues do crop up when Pliny praises Spurinna as someone who properly deserved his honorific statue, because it was earned through blood, sweat and actions (*qui decus istud sudore et sanguine et factis adsequebantur*) as well as *virtus*.[1008] The main reason for this difference is that Spurinna had already proven himself on the battlefield and was awarded his statue with imperial approval. For Pliny, the praise of typical martial virtues seems to have been of lesser importance in comparison to more general personal qualities that signified excellence and integrity – a pattern that was also followed by many dedicators in military circles. On the one hand, martial virtues such as *providentia*, *virtus* and *fortitudo* might have been more often associated with the emperor than with his officials; on the other, dedicators may have felt that the inclusion of broad honorifics was more befitting given both the circumstances of their dedication and the aristocratic rank of their honorands.

[1006] Pliny, *Letters*, 2.13.
[1007] Pliny, *Letters*, 7.22.
[1008] Pliny, *Letters*, 2.7.

Martial virtues were rarely praised in times of peace or during periods of internal unrest, such as the Year of the Five Emperors or the troubles following the Gordian uprising in North Africa. The situation differed during military crises with a more conventional 'barbarian' enemy. As was noted earlier, the years 253-260 saw a number of incursions from local ethnic groups into the urbanized region of North Africa, among them the Bavares, the Quinquegentanes and the Fraxinenses.[1009] The troubles seem to be referred to in several letters by Cyprian, and in a number of inscriptions from the period 253-260.[1010] The nature of the conflict is unclear, but it most likely involved localized raiding, looting and destruction rather than a full-scale assault on the Roman provinces. In response to the crisis, we find dedications honouring (former) members of the military for their martial virtues. An inscription from Auzia honours Publius Aelius Primianus, a man of equestrian rank who held several military positions before transitioning to a life as decurion in the three colonies of Auzia, Rusguniae and Equizeto.[1011] Primianus is honoured by his daughter as a *pater piissimus* and by the title *defensor provinciae suae*. Although it is tempting to read the latter epithet as a reflection of the troubles of 253-260, opinions are divided.[1012] Only around 260 did peace return to the region. Auzia, which appears to have been a focal point for much of the fighting, erected a statue to Quintus Gargilius Martialis, a local citizen of equestrian rank who held several military posts but had also acted as a decurion in Auzia and Rusguniae.[1013] The inscription includes both normative language associated with civic elites and magistrates (*ob insignem in cives amorem et singularem erga patriam adfectionem*) but also clearly refers to Martialis' role in the conflicts of 253-260, with martial virtues such as *virtus* and *vigilantia* in particular being singled out (*et quod eius virtute ac vigilantia Faraxen rebellis cum satellitibus suis fuerit captus et interfectus*).[1014] Interestingly, these dedications were set up to members of the civic elite rather than to active officers. We may draw a parallel here with Vetricius Spurinna mentioned in Pliny's letter, who was also praised for his military services after the fact. In all three cases we are dealing with officers who had already proven themselves on the battlefield. This may have made the praise of martial virtues more acceptable, particularly in a civic context where the praise of personal virtues and other qualities was a more important element of epigraphic culture.

5.3. – Commemorating the self

Most honorifics in this chapter were directed at superiors – emperors, legates, patrons. But in a few military dedications the main subject of praise is the dedicator himself, or his military compatriots, leading to a very different honorific dynamic. Such dedications not only offer a glimpse of the kind of normative language that was current among officers, but also suggest what elements of this

[1009] Bénabou 1976: 214–227; Le Bohec 1989: 466–473; Witschel 2006: 164–172.

[1010] Cyprian, *Letters*, 62.2.2 speaks of Christians in barbarian captivity, while in *Ad Demetrianum* 10 Cyprian mentions barbarian incursions, among other disasters.

[1011] CIL VIII 9045 = D 2766 = AE 2002, +86 = AE 2006, +1790.

[1012] Bénabou 1976: 220; though Witschel 2006: 165 seems to believe (together with Salama) that the inscription refers to a later period of tribal incursions.

[1013] CIL VIII 9047 = CIL VIII 20736 = D 2767 = AE 1987, +1059 = AE 2002, +86 = AE 2015, +51.

[1014] The name Faraxen has been interpreted as a personal name, possibly a tribal chieftain or a leader of a band of robbers (Le Bohec 1989: 471; Gutsfeld 1989: 130–131) – though in the eyes of the elite of Auzia, the two might have been considered the same.

language found broader purchase outside of the conventions of honorific inscriptions. In particular, I want to focus on two inscriptions set up by members of the military, one concerning an Antonine engineer from Lambaesis, the other a Severan centurion stationed in Bu Njem.

One of the more well-known inscriptions from Lambaesis was set up by Nonius Datus, a military engineer connected to Legio III Augusta.[1015] The long inscription – carved on a three-sided semi-column of about 1.7 meters in height – was found re-used in a later construction a few hundred meters outside of Lambaesis.[1016] It includes not only an account of the building of a local aqueduct, but also appends several letters by superiors of Datus. It is unclear whether the primary function of the inscription was funerary or honorific; the stele lacks the typical stylistic elements of funeral epigraphy of the mid-second century as seen in and around Lambaesis. The inclusion of letters from high-ranking officials is also something that is much more often associated with honorific inscriptions and inscribed edicts rather than with funerary stelae. It has furthermore been suggested that the stele was a votive dedication to an unknown deity, possibly named on the now missing half of the inscription.[1017]

Regardless of the precise context of the inscription, it is without a doubt that the text has a strong element of public representation, possibly even self-representation. In the early 150s Nonius Datus was requested by the local procurator to oversee the completion of the aqueduct in the port town of Saldae; a project which had run into considerable technical difficulties. The large stele provides a detailed, if incomplete, account of Nonius' work on the problematic aqueduct; as such, it has been a much-used source for the technical aspects of aqueduct construction. More interesting for our purposes, however, is the addition of three virtues above the text proper: *patientia*, *virtus* and *spes.* The shape and decoration of the monument emphasize the virtues on display. The lettering of each virtue is several times larger than the other lettering in the inscription and stands out from within a *tabula ansata*. Each virtue is furthermore accompanied by a personified female bust. The original inscription may have been hexagonal: the text is incomplete and a matching hexagonal base was found nearby.[1018] The decorative pattern of the remaining half may have continued on the now missing half of the inscription. The three virtues cited evidently held a great importance to the engineer: visually and textually they form the focal point of the stele. Yet at the same time, the relationship between the prominently placed virtues and Nonius Datus is left vague. Are we to see *patientia*, *virtus* and *spes* as qualities of Nonius himself, or as personified divinities that presided over Nonius' travails? The stele itself gives no conclusive answer and perhaps no such answer was intended. Yet a close relationship between the engineer and the virtues is certainly implied. The three virtues play an important role in Nonius' account of the project: *patientia* (perseverance, endurance) and *virtus* (courage, but in this context also efficacy, 'getting things done') are illustrated not only by his successful completion of the aqueduct, but also by the lengthy descriptions of the troubles he encountered along the way, including robbers and a misaligned tunnel. The meaning of

[1015] CIL VIII 2728.
[1016] Lassère and Griffe 1997: 14.
[1017] Cuomo 2011: 160.
[1018] Grewe 2009: 329; Cuomo 2011: 144.

spes (hope) is less clear from the surviving text, but Grewe suggests it can be read as Nonius' continued commitment to and confidence in the successful outcome of the project.[1019] When compared to the epigraphic landscape of Lambaesis, the inscription is remarkable for its association of an individual officer with 'military' virtues, given that such virtues were usually only associated with the emperor or on very rare occasions with legates and other commanding officials.

The self-representative value of the document is underlined by the fact that it was set up in Lambaesis, and not in Saldae: the intended audience was among Nonius' fellow-soldiers, most likely the community of military engineers and technical experts associated with the legion. As Cuomo points out, the inscription on the actual aqueduct would most likely have included mention of the emperor, governor and possible members of the local civic elite, but it is unlikely to have included Nonius Datus.[1020] The stele in Lambaesis was a way for Datus to publicly reclaim his part in the endeavour. Included in the inscriptions are two letters from high-ranking officials: the governor of Mauretania Caesariensis and the imperial legate. The choice to include such texts is reminiscent of a number of honorific inscriptions from the Greek East which included gubernatorial documents for purposes of self-promotion.[1021] Nonius was the subject of correspondence between multiple procurators and legates, in itself a further testimonial to Nonius' claim to virtue. As noted in chapter one, the appended letters offer a glimpse of the type of normative language employed among high-ranking military officials. In the longest of the two letters, Quintus Porcius Vetustines, governor of Mauretania Caesariensis, addresses the legate Lucius Novius Crispinus. Normative language appears prominently in Vetustines' address to Crispinus: "My lord, you acted most benignantly and in accordance with your humanity and benevolence in sending me Nonius Datus, reservist" (*Benignissime, domine, fecisti et pro cetera humanitate ac benivolentia tua, quod misisti ad me Nonium Datum evocatum*).[1022] Vetustines' praise for Crispinus shows similarities with the language of patronage found in our dedications, citing typical aristocratic virtues of generous behaviour that stress Crispinus' superiority in the social hierarchy. Crispinus, of senatorial rank and *consul designatus* was not only Vetustines' social superior but had effectively acted as a patron in sending him the retired engineer. Virtues also appear in the correspondence about Nonius Datus himself – likely an important reason why the letter was included in the inscription. Vetustines describes Nonius as someone "who handled the job both diligently and faithfully" (*qui it simul diligenter et fideliter tractavit*); both ideal qualities of a subordinate. Although Nonius indicated that he included the letters to give greater clarity on his role in the building project, they also act as an additional tool of (self-)representation. For the reader of the inscription, Vetustines' words of praise not only lent prestige to Nonius, but also lent credence to his projected image as a successful engineer with a unique claim to *patientia*, *virtus* and *spes*.

[1019] Grewe 2009: 333. See also Shaw 1984: 123 who signifies *patientia*, *virtus* and *spes* as "three virtues of hard colonial endeavour if ever there were any."
[1020] Cuomo 2011: 162.
[1021] See in general Kokkinia 2009.
[1022] Translation here and below (with small adjustments) after Grewe 2009: 331.

We see a similar role of virtues in self-representation in a lengthy poetic inscription from the camp at Bu Njem, dating to the year 222.[1023] The text of the inscription was composed by a centurion named Marcus Porcius Iasucthan, a name of Libyan origin.[1024] The dedication of Iasucthan shows both similarities and differences with that of Nonius Datus. Both texts commemorate a construction project and both prominently feature virtues. Unlike Nonius, who makes no reference to the emperor, Iasucthan begins his lengthy poem with a dedication to the emperors Elagabalus and Severus Alexander. The inscription was found broken to pieces in the baths of the camps, though given its size and dedication to the emperors it is likely that it originally had a different, more prominent setting.[1025] Much has been made of the bad Latin of the inscription and of the faulty hexameter of the poem in particular.[1026] It is likely that Iasucthan was of African origin and spoke Latin as a second language, though he evidently felt familiar enough with Latin poetic conventions to try his hand at hexameter verse.[1027] Artistic qualities aside, the poem is interesting as an indicator, however tangential, of the levels of literacy and literary education among centurions and by extension the use of normative language.[1028] The poem details the renovation of a gate in the camp, including descriptions of the effort and zeal expended by the local contingent (*vexillatio*) of the legion. Thus, Iasucthan praises "the valour of a few soldiers" (*virtus militum paucorum*), "under the arches, the valour of the soldiers, with hempen ropes drawn tight" (*sub arcata militum virtus funib cannabinis strictis*), "by extreme (?) valour they did their eternal work" (*arta virtute sua opera aeternale fecerunt*) and the "rushing valour of Legio III Augusta Pia Victrix" (*torrens virtus leg(io) III aug(usta) p(ia) v(ictrix)*).[1029] The impression of energetic activity is enforced by the other praiseworthy qualities associated with the troops: zeal (*tantus fuit eis zelus*), vigour (*rigido vigore iuvenum*), dedication (*florida tertia augusta legio cum magna virtute curavit faciendum devotionis suae honorem*) and speed (*velocitas ingens*).

Iasucthan's poem leaves us with a strong impression of the energy and effort involved in constructing the gate. The soldiers at Bu Njem are represented throughout the text as a harmonious unit; the glory they have achieved with their effort is presented as to the credit of the legion as a whole. The efforts of the soldiers are presented as exceptional, with the construction works being presented in terms more reminiscent of a battlefield than of camp maintenance. *Virtus*, which is repeated seven times in the 33 line poem, in particular stands out, snaking through poem, always in association with the troops. Although usually associated with manly courage, in the verses of Iasucthan its meaning shifts to encompass the effort and hardship endured by the troops during the construction efforts. By repeatedly reminding the reader of the direct connection between the local

[1023] CLEAfr-01, p. 94 = CLEAfr-01, p. 132 = CLEAfr-01, p. 143 = CLEAfr-02, 5 = Actes-11-2, p. 367 = LibAnt-1995-82 = JRS-1999-111 = Saastamoinen 480 = AE 1995, 1641 = AE 2014, +1476.

[1024] Adams 1999: 109. He was not the first to try his hand at poetics in the camp. A centurion by the name of Quintus Avidius Quintianus set up a poetic inscription dedicated to Salus in the years 202-203. IRT 918 = IRT 919 = Zarker 21 = Saastamoinen 547 = Hygiae p.44 = GeA 488 = AfrRom-02-227 = JRS-1999-110 = CLEAfr-01, p. 116 = CLEAfr-01, p. 90 = CLEAfr-02, 4 = AE 1929, 7 = AE 1987, +993 = AE 1995, +1641 = AE 1999, 1760 = AE 2014, +1476.

[1025] Rebuffat 1995: 108–109.

[1026] Adams 1999: 113–114.

[1027] Adams 1999: 123–124.

[1028] Rebuffat 1995: 110–111; Adams 1999: 125–134.

[1029] Translations after Adams 1999.

contingent and the legion, as well as the *virtus* and *zelus* involved in the work, Iasucthan constructs an image of an ideal army unit involved in a prestigious undertaking, giving his troops (and himself) a place in the history of the legion akin to the position of honour earned by winning of a battle or some other martial success. It seems likely that the centurion either wrote the composition himself or at the very least approved it before it was inscribed. Unlike the case of Nonius Datus, his role in the text of the inscription is relatively minor and his unit plays a much more prominent role. Given the size of the endeavour and its successful resolution, Iasucthan may simply have sought to commemorate his men's efforts. Yet, as with Nonius Datus' attempt to lay claim to his work, Iasucthan also had an eye for his contemporaries and successors at the camp, noting that his predecessors had avoided repairing the gate (*omnes praeteriti cuius labore vitabant*); the clear implication being that under his direction, his men succeeded where other had not even tried. The excessive praise for the troops likely acted as a morale booster, emphasizing harmonious unity, soldierly virtues and the close bond between the centurion and his men.[1030]

In the cases of both Nonius and Iasucthan we have two lower-ranking officers who would have been denied the opportunity for public commemoration afforded to emperors, legates and governors. Almost all of the epigraphic examples we have seen in this chapter directed praise or loyalty from the dedicator to various categories of superiors. In the cases of Nonius and Iasucthan, however, the communicative dynamic is radically different. By making use of a vocabulary usually reserved for their superiors, both men claim a place for themselves within the public landscape, for an audience of their fellow-soldiers. Yet, as with other dedications, neither Nonius nor Iasucthan could simply claim to possess certain virtues or honourable qualities. Rather, the possession of these qualities had to be substantiated with 'proofs', such as letters written by superiors or the successful reconstruction of a camp gate through hard labour.

[1030] As suggested by Cooley 2012: 284.