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

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EMPIRE OF VIRTUE?

Normative language and the legitimation of power
in Roman North Africa

S.M.H.J. Penders

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Detail of IRT 322, dedication to Augustus by Annobal Rufus, Lepcis Magna. Picture credits: joepyrek (Joe Pyrek), Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

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EMPIRE OF VIRTUE?

Normative language and the legitimation of power in Roman North Africa

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"A PhD thesis is a marathon, not a sprint", a friend told me at the start of my doctorate. At the time it sounded like a platitude, but I have come to appreciate the wisdom of her words in the years since. After seven years of doubts and new-found confidence, frustration and breakthroughs, dead-ends and insights, the project nears completion. That achievement is as much owed to the help and support of others as it is owed to any academic work on my part.

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INTRODUCTION

From Augustus to Augustulus, the Roman Empire was characterized by a remarkable longevity. For several centuries, Rome ruled over an extensive and – for a considerable part of its existence – more or less stable empire. The question of how Rome managed to not just keep the inhabitants of its territories in check, but compliant to Roman rule, has been one of the integral questions driving the Romanization debate which took up so much scholarly attention in the twentieth century. The pendulum of the Romanization debate has swung back and forth between embrace and opposition, between acquiescing provincials and colonized subjects that offered resistance. The debate on the usefulness of Romanization, as a term and a concept, has reached a dead end. Opinions differ whether there is a way forward for the concept, and if so how.[1] Despite the impasse and the fatigue, even otherwise antagonistic historiographical movements agree that to some extent Rome employed a web of ideological persuasion to rule its empire. This could take the form of certain aspects of material culture that we now consider typical of imperial society: the monuments, dwellings and everyday items that make up the archaeological landscape. But it also took on a more intangible form through changes in the social, economic, political and religious organization of imperial society, such as the distinct political practices, including civic magistracies and the imperial cult, which served to bring provincial communities into the fold. Naturally, the material and the mental spheres in which Roman imperialism was active were deeply intertwined, for example in the epigraphic texts that graced monuments and public spaces, commemorating civic magistrates, priests and wealthy benefactors in a language and with phrasing derived from Roman examples.

Behind the transformation of conquered territories into (more or less) peaceful provinces, looms an even more difficult question: why did provincials accept Roman rule? Part of the answer undoubtedly lies with the military force the Roman state could yield to further its goals. As Mattingly notes: “the facade of civil government was underpinned by violence, both real and latent”.[2] The Roman state could rely on its soldiers and administrators to punish disobedience and quell rebellion, using a variety of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to pacify territories.[3] That various provincial rebellions and uprisings did occur across the empire is historical fact – from the Batavian Revolt in the west to the Jewish Wars in the east. Although some of these booked considerable short-term successes, revolts usually ended with Roman forces exacting brutal retribution. Coercion, in others words, was an integral part of imperial authority. The *potential* threat of violence was undoubtedly a motivating factor for provincial behaviour and Roman administrators had a keen eye for possible sources of unrest.[4] Yet despite the importance of violence, the empire was incapable of policing its subjects in the manner of a modern totalitarian state. Heavily populated provinces such as North Africa and Spain were guarded by a single legion, with Roman military forces being largely concentrated along

[1] Mattingly 2011: 38–41; Woolf 2014; Revell 2009: 5–10.
[2] Mattingly 2011: 4. See also Morley 2010: 41–48.
[3] Gambash 2015: 20–61.
[4] See for example the well-known exchange by Pliny and Trajan on the founding of an association of firemen, *Letters* 10.33-34. On policing and keeping order in the provinces in general, see Fuhrmann 2011: 147–238.

the frontiers in the north and east. If the Roman state rested solely on coercion, we would expect to see breakaway states as soon as the coercive capacity of the Roman state was sufficiently diminished, for example in times of crisis or civil war. The fact that this happened only once, with imperial authority at its absolute nadir in the mid-third century, suggests that Rome's provincial subjects were usually motivated by more than just the fear of violence. Placing too much emphasis on the coercive capabilities of the Roman state furthermore uncritically accepts the Roman state's self-representation as an unconquered and unconquerable military superpower.

The reality on the ground was that Roman administrators depended on military force but, to some extent at least, also on the collaboration of provincials. The situation is neatly illustrated by the frustrated letters of a late third-century *strategos* from Panopolis, who complained to his superiors about the crippling lack of cooperation from the local city council.[5] The repeated complaints of the *strategos* and the implication that the city council of Panopolis evidently did not feel overly worried about refusing his demands is telling of the limited influence of lower-ranking Roman administrators. Local assistance, particularly by the elites that played a dominant role in their respective communities, was a necessity. As an otherwise critical account of Roman imperialism acknowledges: "Roman government would have been entirely impossible without such local assistance."[6] As the Panopolis case highlights, military threats are not a sufficient explanation of Roman imperial rule. The Roman imperial state was to some extent considered legitimate by its subjects. Provincials accepted their place in the imperial power structure to such a degree that they usually paid their taxes and obeyed requests without the necessity of direct threats of violence. But some provincials – and by no means only the 'local elites' – went further than that, voluntarily erecting statues to the emperor, dedicating temples to his well-being, decorating everyday items with images of Victoria Augusta or participating in rituals of the imperial cult. This behaviour makes little sense if we hold on to the idea that the empire ran solely on coercion and violence. There was no reasonable expectation that the emperor would ever see the multitude of statues and temples dedicated to him across the empire, nor did the Roman state ever demand such honours from its subjects. In the day-to-day functioning of the empire, the Roman state was perceived by some provincials at least to make legitimate claims to the money, time, energy and occasionally even adulation of its subjects.

For imperial rule to be considered legitimate does not imply that it met with approval – that much is evinced by the rebellions and uprisings mentioned above. But if not full approval, what does legitimacy entail? Here we tread on well-worn though complex ground. Most common definitions of legitimacy are influenced in some way or other by Weber's *Legitimitätsglaube*. For Weber, belief is the decisive factor in the legitimation of power. These beliefs are dependent on their cultural context, but can generally be categorized into a number of 'archetypes': traditional, charismatic and rational-legal *Herrschaft*.[7] Each one of these types of dominion entails a different type of belief and a different role for belief in strategies of legitimation. Traditional authority derives its legitimacy from the strength of custom and tradition, thus binding would-be rulers in a society based on traditional authority to follow existing power structure and safeguard the status quo. Authority of the rational-legal type on the other hand depends on rules that are perceived by subjects as

[5] See P.Panop.Beatty 1.170–179, 1.230-240, 1.264-271; Adams 2010.

[6] Morley 2010: 48.

[7] Weber 1976: 124ff.

'rational', as well as state actors that display a level of professional competence. Most interesting to Weber – and much subsequent scholarship since – is the third form of legitimate authority: charismatic authority. This form of authority is made possible by a special personal gift of a leader-figure (*"als außeralltäglich (…) geltende Qualität einer Persönlichkeit"*) which not only attracts followers but also forms the basis for the charismatic leader's authority.[8]

A point of particular interest is Weber's assertion that charismatic leadership is based on some form of consent. Of course, a certain measure of consent is present in all three forms of archetypical authority by virtue of Weber's definition of legitimacy as a form of belief. Belief after all implies a relationship between those in power and those ruled over which is not set in stone but can, potentially, break down. Even the staunchest traditionalist or rational-legalistic regime depends on some form of acquiescence through uncompelled belief in its legitimacy. Yet the aspect of consent is far more explicitly present in the case of charismatic authority. By its very nature, the charisma on which the legitimacy of charismatic leaders depends cannot be claimed or appropriated. It has to be recognized by followers and subjects, and this recognition in turn is based on the leader's display of his or her unique *Gnadengabe*.[9] Without recognition, charismatic authority quickly crumbles. Adding to the instability of charismatic regimes is that Weber envisioned them as based on personal bonds of loyalty, a lack of administrative or bureaucratic rules and a redistribution of resources on the basis of donations, war gains and other temporary forms of income. Charismatic leadership offers little in the way of long-term, multi-generational prospects. Because of this, charismatic leadership will naturally seek to transform itself into a more stable, rule-bound system by the 'routinization' (*Veralltäglichung*) of charisma.[10] The consent of subjects and followers retains its important position but is no longer based on the unique qualities of a singular individual, but rather on institutionalized expressions of charisma. Weber himself remarked on the transformative role of the charismatic leadership of Augustus, even though he did not explicitly typify the empire as a form of charismatic *Herrschaft*.[11]

As Weber himself notes, the traditional-legal-charismatic divide is a strictly theoretical one, and does not reflect the actual functioning of different historical states.[12] Rather they are tools to define structures of power and critically observe strategies of legitimation. The Roman Empire can easily be said to share elements of all three forms of power legitimation. Of particular interest here, however, is the figure of the emperor, who comes closest to Weber's conceptualization of charismatic *Herrschaft.* The fit is by no means perfect. For Weber, the element that separates charismatic leaders from traditionalist or legalistic ones is the strong emotional relationship with their subordinates, without formal hierarchy or command structure: "*Es gibt keine "Anstellung" oder "Absetzung", keine "Laufbahn" und kein "Aufrücken"".*[13] This is a description more suitable to a warlord and his warband or a prophet and his followers than the leader of an empire stretching across continents. Yet there is some overlap to be found here with Rome. Although the emperor hardly had a personal bond with all members of his administration – let alone all of his subjects –

[8] Weber 1976: 140.
[9] Weber 1976: 140-142.
[10] Weber 1976: 142-148.
[11] Cited and discussed in Ando 2000: 29–33.
[12] Weber 1976: 124 n.2.
[13] Weber 1976: 141.

our sources nevertheless betray a keen interest in imperial character and behaviour as a measure of legitimate rule. As the attention in ancient sources for imperial behaviour attests – from the theatre to the Senate floor to the imperial bedroom – the emperor's personal actions and behaviour mattered to his contemporaries and subjects. And although the empire had ranks and hierarchies, the emperor's authority could lift up or demote individuals on the basis of sometimes arbitrary judgement.[14]

As noted above, charismatic leadership depends on consent. Although a charismatic leader might claim to be full of *pietas* or *virtus*, such a claim has to both be displayed and recognized as truthful by the followers and subjects of said leader. Here Weber's argument on consent intersects with my points in the beginning of this chapter on the practicalities of Roman rule. Although the imperial state had a powerful arsenal at its disposal to coerce provincial subjects into compliance, ubiquitous use of military force was impractical and costly. At the same time, the transition of power from Republic to empire institutionalized a type of *Herrschaft* with strong charismatic elements that demanded some form of consent, if not by provincial subjects than at least by influential factions such as the army or the Senate. This is not to imply that emperors – and by extension, their governors, commanders and courtiers – ever envisioned themselves as jostling for the approval of target audiences in the sense of modern campaign strategists. Rather, Roman emperors since Augustus made claims to the legitimacy of their rule on the basis of their charismatic qualities - in the Weberian sense of qualities that went well beyond the *alltäglich*. These qualities demanded some form of recognition and agreement to be considered true. Failing to gain lasting consent from at least some powerful groups in imperial society could have dire consequences for imperial authority, as the assassinations of Nero, Caligula, Domitian and others suggest. Of course, what bodies constituted 'powerful groups' in imperial society shifted over time. Provincial elites never formed as direct a threat to the emperor as the army and its generals or the Senate. Rather than focussing on whether or not provincial subjects were ever an intended audience for imperial claims to legitimacy, we can simply note that the same claims to legitimacy directed towards the army or the Senate eventually also made their way to the provinces through coinage, oratory, administrative documents, literature, sculptural trends and other media – a point that we shall delve into deeper in the next chapter.

Weber's ideas on charisma and legitimation are useful analytical tools, but they can be further refined. For all its interplay between leader and followers, Weber's treatment of charismatic rulership is still relatively static and one-dimensional. Belief in the legitimacy of charismatic leadership is something of a binary choice: subjects and followers recognize the legitimacy of the charismatic leadership of a given leader, or they do not. Yet Weber does not describe how leaders may accrue (charismatic) legitimacy, or how it erodes over time. The beliefs that underpin legitimate rule shift and change, something which Weber's typology has difficulty mapping. This begs the question how subjects and followers give form to their relationship with a charismatic *Herrschaft* in a landscape of changing beliefs and values.

[14] On the emperor's *droit subjectif*, see Veyne 1976: 553.

0.1 – Towards a new definition of legitimacy

Weber's concept of legitimacy has come under criticism by political philosophers and social scientists alike. Among a wide range of critiques and re-evaluations, the work of the Beetham is of particular interest to this research. Beetham has attempted to lay a stronger theoretical foundation for the concept of legitimacy, arguing against the Weberian notion of legitimacy as being both too static and lacking in explanatory power.[15] Legitimacy may crumble even when the beliefs about what constitutes legitimate authority remain the same. To take one modern example: the widespread distrust of established political parties and the rise of populism does not necessarily signal a change in beliefs about the legitimacy of representative democracy. In fact, it is precisely because parts of the electorate perceive a gap between reality on the one hand and their ideals of legitimacy on the other that established parties have come in for intense criticism. Clearly then, there is more to legitimacy than only belief. Beetham argues for a definition of legitimacy as a continuously morphing relationship between powerholders and subordinates, which are expressed on three distinct levels: rules, normative beliefs and actions.[16] Each element of this 'trinity of legitimation' exists in a different dimension from the others, taking different forms and working on different levels of a given power relationship. The result is a more nuanced and complex notion of legitimation than Weber's strict focus on belief. Firstly, legitimate power must uphold the rules of power current in a society, whether codified in law or based on time-held informal agreements. In the Roman context, those rules of power could be expressed in a very broad way: the emperor (and more generally still, 'Rome') was supposed to protect the empire from hostile incursion and provide a measure of internal stability and peace. These were the kind of assumptions about Roman rule that we find in for example Aristides' *On Rome*. But beyond such 'agreements' between emperor and provincial elites, the empire could also count on its laws to provide a more specific, defined set of rules to govern power relationships. When these were broken, for example by a negligent governor or a corrupt tax collector, provincials could theoretically take recourse to judicial courts or, in exceptional cases, the emperor. This is not to paint an overly rosy image of the Roman judicial system: access to justice was far from universal and with the odds stacked heavily in favour of the wealthy and the well-connected. Yet in general, the system was believed to work well-enough for emperors to continue to create laws and for provincial communities to continue to resort to courts and petitions to claim justice.

Rules alone are not enough to constitute legitimate power. Normative beliefs form essential ingredients for legitimacy, for they justify sources of authority. Naturally, society is never monolithic. 'Proper authority' is always open to interpretation and furthermore prone to change – even if normative beliefs usually act on a deep, systemic level. But in a functioning system of power, there will usually be some level of agreement between the majority of powerholders and subordinates on what constitutes a legitimate form of power. This agreement is important since – barring systems of pure exploitation such as slavery – normative beliefs explain and justify exclusion and appropriation and thus induce cooperation. In Beetham's words: "The simple answer is that power relations involve negative features – of exclusion, restriction, compulsion, etc. – which stand in need of justification if the powerful are to enjoy moral authority as opposed to merely de facto power, or validity under a given system of law."[17]

[15] Beetham 2013: 8–12, 23–24.

[16] Beetham 2013: 15–16.

[17] Beetham 2013: 57.

In the Roman context, the emperor's authority was not based on a singular claim to authority but rather a variety of interlocking claims. The emperor could point to his illustrious ancestry – real or fictitious – or a direct hereditary claim to the throne; he courted success on the battlefield, thereby protecting and expanding the empire; he dutifully fulfilled prestigious civic offices that ensured the security of the state; he enjoyed the favour of the gods which in turned safeguarded the prosperity of the empire; last but not least, the emperor was believed to possess a virtuous character which was not only a source of prestige in its own right but helped him to fulfil his duties as a ruler. Underlying these various claims are concerns for prestige and protection: the emperor was supposed to live up to ideals of aristocratic character, while also ensuring the protection and prosperity of his subjects. The crucial aspect for Beetham is that these normative beliefs are shared by subordinates. Imperial literature certainly echoes many of these claims, either in the praise of 'good' emperors or inverted as a form of chastisement for 'bad' emperors, who are portrayed as the negative image of legitimate authority. Imperial claims to legitimate authority were also repeated in honorific dedications set up by provincial elites across the empire. Though such public texts tell us little about the private opinions of their dedicators, the repetition of imperial claims to authority by influential members of provincial communities in and of itself conferred legitimacy.

This brings us to the final aspect of Beetham's theory: actions. Subordinates need to show some form of consent to the power relationship with a given powerholder for it to be considered legitimate, specifically through actions visible to others. This should not be confused with a modern, democratic definition of consent. Consent here is shaped both by cultural context and by existing power relationships.[18] Despite the sometimes arbitrary despotic power of the emperor, consent and the related concept of consensus were a political necessity.[19] Acclamations and other shows of vocal support in public settings were an integral part of imperial politics, not only for the emperor but also for governors and other administrators. It was the Senate that, officially at least, bestowed honours upon the emperor and built monuments in his name in Rome.[20] And throughout the provinces statues, monuments and cults were dedicated to the emperor, often naming or incorporating explicit elements of the normative beliefs mentioned above. Weber of course also pointed to the importance of consent, particularly in his charismatic *Herrschaft*. Yet Weberian consent is to be found in the inwards beliefs of subordinates. For Beetham on the other hand, consent lies in outward action expressed through the public deeds of a subordinate rather than his or her inward beliefs. Subordinates may of course hold their own opinions on the normative beliefs underpinning their political system, but these opinions only matter for the study of legitimacy when expressed in public actions. This is a more fruitful approach than Weber's, since it frees us of the need to read historical minds. What a Roman provincial *really* thought of his emperor is to some extent inconsequential: a statue placed on the forum in the emperor's honour contributed to the legitimacy of the empire, regardless of the inward beliefs of the dedicator.

0.2 – Imperial ideology and propaganda

Beetham's analysis of legitimacy is helpful in that it presents legitimacy as a diachronic entity that is to be situated in the shifting relations between powerholders and subordinates, rather than the

[18] Beetham 2013: 90–97.

[19] For the creation on the imperial ideal of rule by consent and consensus, see Lobur 2008.

[20] De Jong 2006: 92; Mayer 2010.

more static Weberian notion of belief in legitimacy. Yet it is precisely the latter interpretation that has been common in the interpretation of 'imperial ideology'. Imperial ideology is, broadly speaking, understood by scholars as the collective of ideas, rituals and images employed by the imperial court to foster loyalty to individual emperors and imperial rule, as expressed by imperial coinage, sculpture, pageants, panegyrics and more. The persuasive powers of the media originating close to the imperial court have long been recognized (famously so in Syme's *The Roman Revolution*). But this aspect of imperial power was brought into sharper relief by the works of Niels Hannestad (*Roman Art and Imperial Policy*) and Paul Zanker (*Augustus und die Macht der Bilder*), both of whom subjected the idea of 'imperial propaganda' to a more sustained examination and both of whom placed particular emphasis on the visual arts. Well-received and influential as both works have been, the idea of persuasive imperial propaganda has not been greeted with the universal agreement.[21] In the social sciences, the hypodermic needle theory of propaganda – suggesting that individuals can simply be 'injected' with propagandistic ideas which take an immediate effect – has long since been rejected.[22] The scepticism surrounding the concept of imperial propaganda specifically can be summed up in two broad strands of criticism: the technological and the cultural-political. On the one hand, sceptics argue that the empire never possessed the technological means necessary to produce and spread propagandistic messages. Unlike the Nazi or Soviet regime, the Roman imperial court did not have a large state apparatus or mass media at its beck and call. The limited control over information and media that the imperial court did have, was furthermore constrained by turgid travel times and dependent on the cooperation of state officials and provincial subjects 'on the ground'. The second line of critique questions the ability of the Roman state to envision something akin to a modern propaganda campaign. Beyond the reactive nature of the imperial administration – intervening only when pressed by external factors, rather than proactively trying to steer Roman society towards the fulfilment of a given goal or policy – the empire lacked the political ideologies that necessitated the employment of persuasive or even deceptive messaging. Some have even wondered whether the Roman emperor ever felt a need to legitimise his rule and whether the various images and objects we associate with imperial rule were intended to convey any sort of persuasive message.[23]

Although the idea of imperial propaganda has beaten something of a retreat, that does not mean that we should abandon the notion that the Roman state projected a positive, even persuasive, self-image towards its subjects. Following Beetham's theoretical model, powerholders almost universally rely on normative beliefs to justify their superiority and by extension states usually rely on some form of cooperation between subordinates and powerholders to function effectively.[24] Normative beliefs can be expressed in more or less coherent ideologies, which are distinctly different from propaganda. Ideologies can of course make use of propaganda to fulfil their goals, while propaganda is unthinkable without some form of ideology behind it. Yet there is a subtle though important distinction between the two. Propaganda is considered *intentionally* manipulative, to the point of being deceitful. It is also usually envisioned as part of a top-down, orchestrated campaign to persuade or manipulate a population. Ideological expressions on the

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[21] Wallace-Hadrill 1986; Veyne 1990; Galinsky 1996: 20–41; Cumberland-Jacobsen 1999; Weber and Zimmermann 2003: 12–40; Eich 2003; Seelentag 2004: 18–21.

[22] McCombs 2014: 88.

[23] Veyne 1990; Veyne 2002.

[24] Beetham 2013: 28–31.

other hand may be skewed but need not be intentionally manipulative or deceitful, nor are they always part of a larger, concerted effort by powerholders to persuade large swaths of citizens. The dividing lines between ideological expressions and propaganda become decidedly more blurry when the ideology in question is closely tied to the ruling power.[25] Some have therefore argued for a more nuanced evaluation of imperial propaganda, noting that critics have too often employed a simplistic, rigid and state-focussed understanding of the nature of propaganda, both in the modern and the ancient world.[26]

The last two decades have seen a blossoming of interest in ancient expressions of imperial ideology. One of the most expansive and persuasive treatments of the topic is Clifford Ando's *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*. For Ando, the combined forces of imperial images, textual resources, provincial administration and communicative acts between government and public created a charismatic tradition which allowed successive emperors to acquire, display and transfer the charisma on which the legitimacy of their rule depended.[27] Text and image work in tandem to spread imperial values and to create a culture of loyalty to the emperor. Ando cites the law books, inscribed decrees, copies of senatorial acts, written petitions, urban archives and monumental calendars as key tools which not only allowed the Roman administration to govern effectively but, more importantly, reshaped provincial ideas about time, place and society.[28] Communicative acts such as acclamations, shows of imperial munificence or the public punishment of corrupt governors helped cement the ideological image of the emperor as an omnipresent and neutral arbiter who laboured for the good of the empire with his subjects' consent. The flip side of the coin, Ando argues, is the destruction of old, pre-imperial identities. Such identities – which might have included cooperation between various socio-economic groups or between cities in unified resistance to Rome – were broken down while competition for the attention of the emperor and his administration were encouraged. Around the figure of the emperor a new society congealed, functioning according to Rome's political and normative script.[29]

Where Ando takes a fairly broad interpretation of ideology, Carlos Noreña more explicitly focuses on the persuasive nature of imperial images. In *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power* Noreña argues for an expansive ideological system of ideas and values harnessed to legitimise Roman rule, again centring around the person of the emperor. For Noreña, local elites were the primary supporters and adopters of imperial ideology, using it as a tool to strengthen their own positions within provincial communities, thereby entrenching Roman imperial hegemony.[30] Noreña constructs his arguments on the basis of a large database of imperial coinage, but takes into account a much wider program including sculpture, inscriptions and other forms of ancient media.[31] Using this visual and textual program, (personified) imperial virtues and benefits could be expressed to a wide provincial audience.[32] Noreña argues that imperial virtues played a crucial role in binding local elites to imperial authority by giving them a more or less circumscribed set of values to repeat

[25] On the blurriness of propaganda and ideological expressions: Lobur 2008: 6–7.
[26] Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005: 1–9; Noreña 2011a: 17–18.
[27] Ando here subscribes to Weber's interpretation of charisma, Ando 2000: 27.
[28] Ando 2000: 73–130.
[29] An idea developed more explicitly in a later article, see Ando 2013.
[30] Noreña 2011a: 8.
[31] Noreña 2011a: 199.
[32] Noreña 2011a: 102–105.

and adopt to meet the demands of a new political status quo.[33] By taking part in the semiotics of imperial virtues and ideals, provincial elites gave themselves a place within the Roman landscape of power by blurring the lines between divine, imperial and local authority, using both honorific language and imagery.[34]

Ando and Noreña are but two prominent examples in a much longer list of scholars studying imperial ideology from a wide variety of specializations. Hekster has written repeatedly about the importance of various legitimising tools for imperial power, from the emperor-as-military-commander to imperial ancestors[35]; Manders, Claes and Kemmers have each done extensive work on the importance of imperial coin motifs[36]; Seelentag has compared the claims of Trajanic media to reality[37]; De Jong has called attention to the importance of imperial titulature in papyri[38]; Rowan has explored Severan ideology from a numismatic perspective[39]; Rees focussed on the world of late antique panegyrics[40]; Lobur analysed the value of *concordia* for Augustan ideology through literature[41]; Fishwick carried out a grand survey of the imperial cult in three multi-part volumes; several edited volumes have appeared delving deeper into aspects of imperial ideology while the individual papers on the subjects are too numerous to mention.[42] As these diverse examples show, the study of imperial ideology can hardly be called a 'field'. Given the omnipresence of the figure of the emperor in Rome art and textual sources and the nebulous nature of imperial ideology itself, imperial ideology may entail anything from subtle word play in the work of Augustan court poets to epigraphic evidence for the rites of the imperial cult in third-century Spain.

Perhaps given the vast range of possible sources and approaches, there is little in the way of an overarching consensus on the workings of imperial ideology – and some would argue that such a consensus would be unhelpful. Where some scholars place heavy emphasis on the role of the imperial court as creator and sender of messages[43], others suggest that we should envision imperial (self-)representation rather as an exchange between emperors and various groups in imperial society, such as the Senate, the army or the provincial elites.[44] Likewise, while some scholars almost exclusively focus on the media output of the imperial court or those closely tied to it, others place their work in the context of provincial society and the broader impact of Roman imperialism. This fragmented approach is understandable given that 'imperial ideology' is a modern label, and the concepts and symbols modern scholars gather under this label, persuasive though they might have been to an ancient audience, never formed a unified theory of imperial legitimacy. It is also understandable given the nature of a source material. Whereas the numismatist focusing on the

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[33] Noreña stresses the various layers of communication between imperial court and provincials and sees a decisive role for governors and other bureaucrats in spreading ideas from the capital to various regions of the empire, Noreña 2011a: 240; see also Noreña 2011a: 251–266.

[34] Noreña 2011a: 273–275.

[35] Hekster 2007; Hekster 2011; Hekster et al. 2014; Hekster 2015.

[36] Manders 2007; Manders 2012; Claes 2015; Kemmers 2006.

[37] Seelentag 2004.

[38] De Jong 2003; De Jong 2006; De Jong 2007.

[39] Rowan 2011; Rowan 2012.

[40] Rees 2002; Rees 2012.

[41] Lobur 2008.

[42] *Edited vollumes*: Weber and Zimmermann 2003; Blois et al 2003; Enenkel and Pfeijffer 2005.

[43] Noreña 2011a; Manders 2012.

[44] For the latter, see for example Seelentag 2004: 18–21; Mayer 2010; Rowan 2012: 84–107; Hekster et al. 2014.

output of the imperial mint will invariably lay heavy emphasis on the imperial representation from the perspective of the centre of power, the archaeologist in Asia Minor will logically focus on the adaptation of imperial models to local monuments.[45]

Considering Beetham's model of legitimacy, however, several lines of criticism open up. In focussing on either court culture or the provincial reception on their own, we lose sight of the diachronic relationship between powerholder and subordinate that formed the basis of legitimate power. Both Ando and Noreña explicitly incorporate provincials in their accounts of imperial ideology but do so from a macro approach, placing a large share of the formative agency behind imperial ideology in the hands of the Roman state. For both scholars, provincials interacted with imperial ideology mainly through a process of reception: adopting images, symbols and customs rather than being part of an ideological exchange between emperors and subjects. Noreña's suggestion that scholars have been too quick to dismiss the notion of imperial propaganda is telling in this regard.[46] Although the macro approach is valuable and informative in studying the broader structures and systems of empire and imperial ideology, this type of analysis tells us little about local and regional contexts. A case in point is Noreña's catalogue of inscriptions which is used to gauge provincial reactions to key ideological concepts. Though informative, Noreña only selects those texts that fit his argument for effective ideological communication, leaving out the many local variations, quirks or absences that would have considerably nuanced his narrative.[47]

I would argue that it is precisely these local variations and 'mistakes' that shine a valuable light on provincial responses to imperial ideology. Outside of Egypt – where papyri are abundant – epigraphic material is one of the few remaining media which offer any detailed information on provincial attitudes towards both Roman and local rule. Dedications to emperors, imperial officials and local powerholders give expression to the normative beliefs that form the basis of legitimate authority. Although taking an empire-wide approach might seem like taking full advantage of the occasionally fragmentary epigraphic material, I would argue that the opposite is in fact true. By focussing on broad patterns in Roman epigraphy, we lose sight of the local deviations that do not easily fit in with empire-wide developments. And it is exactly the dedication that does *not* include a common honorific phrase, that praises a virtue not usually associated with a given emperor or that utilizes recherché wording, that is as valuable to the study of imperial ideology as a dedication that neatly follows expectations. This current research therefore focuses on a smaller area than the empire-wide approach of for example Noreña. Although I am far from the first to study the appearance and changes of honorifics in epigraphy[48] the focus on local epigraphic variations within the context of imperial rule and legitimacy offers a fresh perspective on the provincial experience of empire.

0.3 – Contextualising imperial power

A key element of my research revolves around the question of how we should envision the relationship between powerholders and their subjects. To what extent can powerholders set the rules of power, define normative beliefs on legitimacy and enforce consent? Ando, Noreña and

[45] On the latter, see for example the papers by Smith on the Sebasteum of Aphrodisias Smith 1987; Smith 1988.
[46] Noreña 2011a: 17–18, though nuanced on p.300.
[47] Noreña 2011a: 245–297.
[48] See for example Neri 1981; Chastagnol 1988; Salomies 1994; Salomies 2000.

others adopt a centrist perspective where the emperor and his court have a dominant influence. But there are other ways to envision the formation of legitimacy. Scholars have started to explore the space of exchange between the imperial court and a large number of stakeholders – "*Herrscherdarstellung*" in the words of Seelentag.[49] Extending the formative forces of imperial ideology beyond the court alone allows us to see provincial representations of the emperor as more than variations on a fixed theme. Dedicators eager to proclaim their loyalty to the emperor and the imperial family in communities throughout the empire may have turned to 'official' imperial media, such as imperial coinage, to find the correct phrases and images. But they are just as likely to have considered dedications by their contemporaries, conferred with their fellow-decurions or even turned to a governor or other official for advice. It is on the level of the civic community that provincials can be said to have shaped imperial ideology, by reinforcing particular ideological beliefs or adopting particular epigraphic customs. By taking the local civic context into account we gain a more nuanced understanding of the expressions of consent which helped shape ancient ideals of legitimate power.

The flip side of a very strong focus on local contextualisation of imperial power is that we again risk losing sight of the dynamic between Rome and the provinces. Although provincials had some freedom and flexibility in how imperial power could be represented, the imperial court had an outsize voice in the ideological conversation. It was capable, via the state apparatus, of making its wishes known and of punishing transgressions, if only occasionally. Local contextualisation of imperial power was furthermore not conceived in a vacuum, but sprang from the everyday realities of imperial rule – from the collecting of taxes to the enforcement of imperial edicts. Although provincial experiences of imperial rule may have greatly differed, the forces of imperialism and the normative beliefs that underpinned them originated, in large part, from Rome. Only in considering the connection between the nodes of 'Rome' and 'local community' can we more fully appreciate the impact of imperialism on the provinces; not just in material culture or political institutions, but also in ideals of legitimacy and power.

Beetham's interpretation of legitimacy as an aspect of continuously evolving power relationships also opens up the study of imperial ideology, allowing us to find relevant connections and parallels with other power relationships in the empire. Hitherto I have mostly spoken of provincials as a unified group for the sake of convenience. Yet it bears little arguing that provincial communities had complex social hierarchies of their own.[50] In the western provinces at least, the top of the community was usually formed by the decurions, members of the town's socio-economic elite who through their membership of the city council also controlled most of its magistracies. Groups such as the *Augustales* and the *apparitores* claimed a position in the liminal area between elite and non-elite; the former often consisting of upwardly mobile freedman, the latter supporting magistrates in a variety of roles.[51] Beyond that, the *plebs*: the majority of the inhabitants of a given community. Although usually presented in Roman literary sources as a faceless mob, the *plebs* had its own social distinctions and hierarchies – between freeborn, freedmen and slaves, between citizens and non-

[49] Seelentag 2004: 18–21; see also Hekster 2011.

[50] For a basic overview, see Edmondson 2010: 272–278.

[51] Edmondson 2010: 273, although Mouritsen warns against treating the *Augustales* as a 'middleclass' and points to considerable local variety, see Mouritsen 2011: 249–261. But, as noted by Mouritsen, one of the few shared features among the local variants is that the *Augustales* commonly acted as benefactors to their communities, thus suggesting wealth and economic influence above that of the common *plebs*.

citizens and between various types of professions. Naturally, such a schematic overview does not do justice to the social mobility within provincial communities. It only serves to give an impression of the various microcosms of power and hierarchy present in every community across the empire. Complicating matters further are the many ways in which the communal bubble was penetrated and influenced by outside forces. Regional forms of cooperation and interaction – such as the various 'leagues' in the Greek-speaking east, provincial assemblies or important provincial cult centres – cut across communities. Roman administrators cajoled and coerced city councils to collect taxes or meet the demands of the imperial state, despite pretensions to local autonomy. And wealthy and well-connected members of a given community could try to make the leap from civic politics to regional priesthoods, the army or the imperial administration – or alternatively, to extradite themselves from civic and fiscal responsibilities altogether.

The legitimation of imperial power has usually been studied in isolation from other forms of power in the Roman Empire, but I would argue that it is much more fruitful to study it as part of a far larger chain of interlocking and interdependent power relationships. Although the emperor on rare occasions directly intervened in local politics, the bulk of the actual governing of the empire was done by imperial administrators in cooperation with civic authorities. As the representatives of the state, governors, army commanders, procurators and other officials were tasked with overseeing the more negative aspects of the imperial power structure: Beetham's "exclusion, restriction, compulsion", to which list we may add the extraction of resources or labour in service of the imperial state. As representatives of the emperor, Roman administrators had a mandate to perform their duties without a need to legitimise their position within the Roman administrative apparatus. Or, to put it differently, we may say that governorship as such was rarely questioned. Yet the legitimacy and authority of individual governors was a different matter. A governor's authority (and standing) could be badly damaged by going over his head to the emperor or by indulging in foot-dragging in the fulfilment of obligations.[52] Together with their relatively short terms of office and lack of local expertise, this made governors to some extent dependent on cooperation with influential provincials.[53] Naturally, through their connections and the forces under their command, governors had the upper-hand in such power relationships. Yet a governor who was completely at odds with his subjects risked imperial displeasure as well as potentially damaging lawsuits.[54]

Legitimacy also mattered on the local level. Noreña notes that it was above all the elites of various provincial communities that showed a strong attachment to imperial ideology. It provided them with "a useful vehicle for class cohesion and social differentiation".[55] This conclusion certainly is part of the explanation why provincial elites set up countless dedications to their emperors without direct inducement by imperial authorities. By publicly aligning themselves with a legitimate system of power, members of the local elite also legitimised their own position within that system. For Noreña, the question whether non-elites accepted this discourse is ultimately an irrelevant one, since they were in no position to object.[56] But, as we shall see in the following chapters, the elite reception of imperial ideology was not straightforward. Not all aspects of imperial ideology received

[52] Referring to the emperor: Kokkinia 2004: 53-55.
[53] Kokkinia 2004: 55-58.
[54] Fuhrmann 2011: 177–178.
[55] Noreña 2011a: 311.
[56] Noreña 2011a: 312.

endorsement on a provincial level. Instead, provincial epigraphy betrays a more complex and nuanced reality that gave expression to local concerns and preoccupations as much as it reflected imperial claims to power.

As the representatives of their communities, local elites were held responsible by Roman authorities for keeping the peace and fulfilling the demands of the Roman state. This privileged access to the Roman authorities not only pushed out other voices further down in the communal hierarchy, but also had some more practical perks. As long as they kept their communities under control, Roman authorities were not overly concerned with local elites profiting from their privileged positions, for example by an unfair distribution of the tax burden. Yet this dominant role was a double-edged sword. As we shall see in greater detail in later chapters, there is copious evidence for the often troubled relationship between elites and their fellow-citizens over fiscal mismanagement, forced labour and taxation. Elites that did not manage to keep their communities in check could count on Roman authorities stripping their privileges and employing other sanctions as forms of punishment. Nor were city councils always the unified and harmonious civic bodies that we find in epigraphic texts, implied by stock phrases such as *decreto decurionum* or *ordo splendidissimus*. Such language hides the starker realities of elite differentiation and rivalry, with some members of the city council barely meeting the entry requirements, while others towered far above their fellow-decurions in terms of wealth, status or connections. Provincial elites were neither an omnipotent force within their own communities, nor a unified political body. Although provincial elites did not directly copy imperial forms of legitimation, they did draw from some of the same normative beliefs and consent actions to legitimise their position at the head of communities.

0.4 – Legitimacy and honour

The focus of this book shall be on the normative beliefs that underpinned these imperial roles and their appearance in consent actions. One way to fruitfully approach this topic is through the study of the honorific language used to praise or commemorate certain imperial character traits or actions. Roman ideals of legitimate power were deeply entwined with Roman ideals of honour. For ancient elite audiences, honour played a crucial role within all dimensions of Beetham's definition of legitimacy. Honour and praise not only formed the basis of interaction between the Roman state and its subjects but also between subjects themselves, as an all-embracing cultural outlook which, as Lendon has phrased it, "saw a world where all human affairs and interactions breathed with glory and disgrace".[57] The expression of honour encompassed, among others, personal behaviour, political offices, ancestry, education, and social relationships.[58] Honour was not limited to individuals. Collectives such as city councils, *curiae* or *collegia* were also considered moral agents: behaving (dis)honourably of their own accord, recognizing honourable behaviour in others and 'giving' honour to those worthy of it through statues and inscriptions, festivities, orations and the like.[59]

The praise of virtues offers a prime example of the legitimising force of honour in action. In Roman political thinking, virtues were both deeply tied to generalized roles that legitimate rulers were expected to fulfil and to the unique character of the individual acting as emperor. The emperor's

[57] Lendon 1997: 267.
[58] Lendon 1997: 36–52.
[59] Lendon 1997: 73–90.

martial success depended on his bravery (*virtus*) as well as his far-sightedness (*providentia*); as a civic leader and judge he should display moderation (*moderatio*), clemency (*clementia*) and generosity (*liberalitas, munificentia, indulgentia*) towards his subjects; towards the gods the emperor had to act with the correct display of piety (*pietas*) or risk divine anger; his illustrious ancestry was made evident not only in all of the above virtues, but also in his noble character (*nobilitas*) and his comportment (*humanitas*). The emperor's virtues could be explicitly called attention to, for example by depicting a personified *pietas* on the reverse of an imperial coin. Or they could remain implicit, for example in depictions of the emperor at sacrifice, *capite velato*.

Imperial virtues fulfilled a legitimising role. When praising an emperor for his *virtus* or *pietas*, the individual or group expressing praise also expressed their belief that the emperor in question fulfilled (some) of his expected duties, and thus formed a legitimate leader. It is in these reflections of imperial claims to legitimacy that we find a meaningful sense of consent – not necessarily in full or enthusiastic agreement with Roman imperial rule, but in underwriting the basic presumptions or normative beliefs on which legitimate power rested. In the words of Beetham, "[i]t is in the sense of the public actions of the subordinate, expressive of consent, that we can properly talk about the 'legitimation' of power, not the propaganda or public relations campaigns, the 'legitimations' generated by the powerful themselves."[60] Whether or not a dedicator truly believed in the unique connection between Antoninus Pius and *pietas*, his or her dedication to the *pietas* of the emperor – accompanied by a personified image of that virtue – nevertheless underlined the importance of publicly recognizing and commemorating such virtues. The status of the one praising the emperor mattered, as did the context. Praise from the Senate might generally be said to have carried more weight and prestige than the praise of a provincial magistrate; although it could be argued that in the magistrate's own community, the situation may have been different. Imperial virtues did not form a fixed corpus: although some virtues received clear emphasis in imperial media, the emperor could theoretically be praised for a vast range of positive qualities. This allowed for a certain level of flexibility and even preference within a realm of otherwise highly formulaic texts. The choice of which virtues or qualities to include in a dedication was likely determined by a range of factors – the context of the dedication, the dedicators involved and previous dedications in the community. Although they may not help us in discovering deeply-rooted private opinions on imperial rule, they do offer a reflection of what was expected and acceptable within the public sphere of a given community.

Measuring the impact of ideas and ideals in the ancient world is always an undertaking fraught with potential missteps. Literary sources written from a provincial perspective are scarce, at least for the western provinces of the empire. Statues and other forms of sculpture have been found in large quantities, but are often damaged, fragmented or without archaeological context. Given the more or less fixed portraits and body types it is furthermore not always clear to what extent they convey a provincial perspective. Epigraphy, however, does offer such a perspective. In epigraphic texts virtues are present in abundance, appearing regularly in connection to the emperor, imperial administrators and local powerholders. Naturally, epigraphic evidence has its own restrictions: texts are often highly formulaic, bound by conventions and almost exclusively produced by members of the elite. And, as noted above, these texts are unlikely to be accurate reflections of the complex, contradictory and ambivalent provincial attitudes towards imperial rule. Yet there is also much to

[60] Beetham 2013: 19.

be said for these souces. Epigraphic texts were often highly visible within the community. Many epigraphic texts bearing virtues are inscribed on statue bases and were placed in prominent, high-prestige locations in the community. The high costs, prestigious honorand and relative permanence of these statues also suggest that the wording of their inscriptions was carefully selected.

Despite the prominence of virtues, it would be a mistake to focus solely on virtues as defined in the narrow sense of personal character traits of the honorand. Firstly, the Roman understanding of virtue was not limited to praiseworthy character traits but encompassed a much wider range of meaning. Of particular note is the worship of deified virtues from the period of the Middle Republic onwards, receiving cultic worship throughout Rome.[61] The founding of such cults was often the result of *vota* and connected to episodes of social tension or war.[62] Because Pietas, Honos or Mens expressed the fears and desires of the entire Roman community, appropriating such qualities became a powerful tool in political struggles between various individuals and groups, as argued by Clark.[63] Far from emphasizing the difference between the private and the communal, or between personal attributes and non-personal qualities, the political struggles around deified virtues highlight the blurry boundaries between such concepts. Those blurry boundaries were maintained, at least to some extent, in the empire. An episode from Tacitus illustrates my point. During the height of Sejanus' power and influence, the Senate erected a number of altars to the emperor and his favourite:

> *Neque senatus in eo cura, an imperii extrema dehonestarentur: pavor internus occupaverat animos, cui remedium adulatione quaerebatur. Ita quamquam diversis super rebus consulerentur, aram clementiae, aram amicitiae effigiesque circum Caesaris ac Seiani censuere, crebrisque precibus efflagitabant visendi sui copiam facerent.*
>
> "The Senate, too, had other anxieties than a question of national dishonour on the confines of the empire: an internal panic had preoccupied all minds, and the antidote was being sought in sycophancy. Thus, although their opinion was being taken on totally unrelated subjects, they voted an altar of Mercy (*Clementia*) and an altar of Friendship (*Amicitia*) with statues of the Caesar and Sejanus on either hand, and with reiterated petitions conjured the pair to vouchsafe themselves to sight."[64]

The deified virtues invoked are not directly ascribed to Tiberius or Sejanus, but rather both men are placed in an explicit relationship with Clementia and Amicita by the Senate at a point of political crisis. Although the general gist of the Senate's gesture is clear, the precise nature of the bond between Amicitia/Clementia (the goddesses), *amicitia*/*clementia* (the virtues), the statues of

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[61] This tradition might have been inspired by similar Greek cults of personified concepts through early contact with the Greek cities in Italy, but their ultimate origin remains unclear. Fears 1981: 846–848 n.76 for more extensive discussion; Clark 2007: 30 emphasizes the complex and vague origins of these cults and warns against reading them as either a purely Roman invention or as Greek imports. Among the first virtues to be worshipped was Concordia (367 B.C.), followed by Spes and Fides (264-241 B.C.), Honos (233 B.C.), Fortuna Primigenia (204 B.C.), Pietas (191 B.C.) and Felicitas (after 146 B.C.). For a full chronology and testimonia, Fears 1981: 833–835.

[62] Fears 1981: 835–837.

[63] See for example Clark 2007: *Pudicitia*: 39–49; *Concordia*: 170–174; *Libertas*: 150–153. Cognomina: Fear (1981) 877-878. And these virtues were not only the domain of the elite, see Clark 2007: 84; 197; see also 19-20.

[64] Tacitus, *Annals* 4.74. Translation: Jackson 1937.

Sejanus and Tiberius, and Sejanus and Tiberius themselves is left ambiguous. Are we to envision Sejanus and Tiberius having a particularly close bond to Amicitia and Clementia or to possess a noteworthy measure of *amicitia* and *clementia* in their relationship to each other and to the state? Although virtues as a personal characteristic and as deified concepts were differentiated, both could be exploited for their ideological potential.

A second argument against too strict a focus on personal virtues is the wider field of Roman ethical thinking. This is illustrated by the appearance of the adjective *Augustus* and the genitive *Augusti* which becomes increasingly common from the reign of Augustus onwards. As Fishwick has argued, there are subtleties at play between the two, the former marking the relationship between the virtue and the reigning emperor indirectly, the latter making the association much more explicit.[65] Both *Augustus* and *Augusti* were attached to personal virtues, for example on coinage and in dedications. But the label *Augustus*/*Augusti* was also attached to a host of positive ethical concepts, ranging from goddesses such as Victoria Augusta to favourable concepts such as harmony (*concordia*) or felicity (*felicitas*), or to positive effects of imperial rule such as peace (*pax*). Some scholars have argued for a separation of these ethical concepts and personal virtues proper.[66] From the perspective of classification this is entirely understandable. Yet my argument throughout this thesis is concerned with the legitimation of imperial power. Although *concordia* was not a personal virtue, the fact that it was commonly employed on imperial coinage legends and in provincial dedications reflects the value *concordia* held as a normative belief underpinning legitimate imperial power.

From the Roman perspective furthermore the categories of 'personal virtue' and 'ethical concept' were far from distinct. On Roman coinage both virtues and imperial blessings appear in the same, personified visual format; in cult, both are worshipped in personified form through familiar cultic means; in Roman literature, both are considered closely linked to the person of the emperor and the success of his reign; in epigraphy, both appear in honorific texts without clear delineations between the personal and the impersonal qualities of an emperor's reign. The dividing line between personal virtues and impersonal qualities could also change on the basis of context in which the virtue in question was employed. Imperial *felicitas* may be an abstract notion on some occasions – such as Severan coinage bearing the reverse legend FELICITAS SAECULI[67] – but can become a personal quality on others – such as dedications to Septimius Severus lauding him as *felicissimus princeps*. Clark's research on Republican virtues is helpful in this regard. Instead of overtly schematic divisions between virtues, deified virtues and ethical concepts, it is more fruitful to envision them as broad ethical qualities which political actors could lay claim to, ascribe to others or contest. That is not to say that there was no difference in the Roman mind between these different categories, but rather that it was a difference of gradations rather than absolutes. The imperial mint might decide to place images of the personified *pietas* on imperial coinage; the emperor might finance a lavish refurbishment of a temple to Concordia; a wealthy African benefactor might praise an emperor as *felicissimus princeps*. Disparate though these actions may be, each nevertheless

[65] Fishwick 2016: 78–80.

[66] Noreña 2011a: 59; following Wallace-Hadrill 1981a: 308–310; Fishwick 1993: 85–86; see also Kousser 2006: 222–229; Ando 2000: 292–296.

[67] See for example RIC IV Septimius Severus 175. The coin also bears images of the imperial family on its reverse, linking the new golden age to the imperial family.

associates the emperor with desirable ethical qualities in a public setting. These ethical qualities betray normative beliefs about legitimate power, regardless of whether they were considered a part of the emperor's character.

All the more reason therefore to include not only personal virtues but also a number of ethical concepts that are not personal qualities. The downside of this approach is that it would open up the present study to a huge range of legitimising ideas, including the victory titles or *cognomina ex virtute* which appear in almost every dedication to the emperor. Given my professed aims, a much more fruitful approach would be to focus on unique or at least non-standardized expressions of praise that betray some of the perceptions and choices of provincial dedicators. Although imperial titles were far from uniformly applied throughout the empire, they nevertheless were standardized to a degree that the praise of individual virtues or ethical concepts was not. Or to put it differently: the praise of imperial *pietas* in a given dedication is generally speaking more telling of the preferences of a dedicator than the inclusion of *Germanicus* or *Pater Patriae* among the emperor's titles. In the remainder of this work, therefore, I will focus on a variety of non-standardized virtues, honorifics and others items of praise that explicitly refer to individual powerholders (or specific groups of powerholders, such as the imperial family) while simultaneously illustrating local choices in what aspects of legitimate rule to praise. The focus on individual powerholders will allow us to create some order in the otherwise chaotic landscape of personal virtues, deified concepts, honorific titles and imperial benefits. As noted, some ethical concepts or imperial benefits were broadly associated with imperial rule. A dedication to Pax Augusta may of course have been intended to praise the reigning emperor but might also have been construed as praise for the imperial family, the reigning dynasty, or imperial rule in the broadest sense of the word. This is not to argue that the praise of imperial benefits did not have a role in legitimising the status quo. Yet the vagueness of imperial benefits leaves considerable room for interpretation in determining the recipient of praise. By limiting my sources to only include instances of epigraphic texts explicitly associating powerholders with various virtues, honorifics and ethical concepts, we gain a clearer understanding of how these tools of legitimation were employed.

In my wording thus far I have chosen to use a variety of terms: virtues, ethical concepts, honorifics. These terms are not interchangeable. As noted, the dividing lines between these terms could often be blurry and change depending on context. Yet that does not mean that ancient audiences could not differentiate between, for example, Concordia as a goddess and *concordia* as a quality existing between two co-emperors. Some concepts, such as *pietas* and *virtus* were quite clearly character traits belonging to an individual person. Others, such as *felicitas* or the aforementioned *concordia* stood in relationship to an individual, but were not strictly speaking personal qualities. The aim of this thesis, however, is to shed light on the legitimation of power on a provincial level. Given this aim, he differences between *pietas* as a personal virtue and *felicitas* as an ethical concept ascribed to the imperial family or to a governor are ultimately of a lesser importance than the fact that they both serve to give voice to normative beliefs about legitimate rule and both act as a form of consent to existing power relationships. For this reason, I have chosen to use the moniker 'normative language' to encompass both personal virtues and ethical concepts ascribed to others. The motivation is in part a practical one, intended to promote the readability of the text. But it also serves a methodological purpose, in moving beyond too strict a divide between 'virtue' and 'ethical concept' and allowing me to include a wider range of phrases, terms and concepts.

0.5 – Praise in practice

My main research question has so far been defined as an investigation into the formation of shared normative beliefs of legitimate power in the empire. Before pursuing this line of argument further, the epigraphic texts merit a short contextualisation. The importance of epigraphic material for the study of the ancient world needs no further discussion. Yet what of the actual language employed in inscriptions? As one handbook of Latin epigraphy helpfully points out, it was the honorific statue – not the inscription – that formed the source of honour.[68] The point has been duly noted by scholars in the last decades. The spatial turn in epigraphic studies has focussed strongly on the placement of statues and statue bases within the civic context, occasionally at the cost of an in-depth study of the actual wording of the dedications.[69] This might lead us to assume that the wording of the inscription was perhaps of lesser importance. An impression that, given the measure of repetition and – to modern ears – empty praise inherent in many inscriptions, seems at first sight to be confirmed. Yet the inscriptions mattered to ancient (elite) audiences. The wealth of surviving honorific inscriptions – only a fraction of the total number of honorific inscriptions erected in antiquity – in and of itself attests to the continued importance that ancient communities attached to them. With statues often adopting a highly similar visual language, the explanatory information offered by inscriptions was vital to the identification of the honorand but also served as more than simply a label, often containing additional praise of the honorand and some sort of motivation for the honours, from munificent activity to just governance to lengthy stints in local politics. Both praise and motivation were often encased in elaborate encomiastic clauses.

The normative language employed on statue bases furthermore had direct links with the vocabulary of praise present in literary culture including philosophical tracts, poetry, history writing, political theorizing and more – a point treated at length in the next chapter. Importantly, normative language was not an ossified element of literary culture, but also a mainstay of elite rhetoric on a far more common basis. From private letters to superiors to discussions in the *curia*, normative language found its way into daily communications. A prime example is offered by a third-century statue base from Lepcis Magna, honouring local benefactor Plautius Lupus. The inscription is particularly interesting because it reports in some detail on the discussions in the municipal council of Lepcis Magna. Though set in a context that all but obligates normative language (and undoubtedly edited before being transcribed to the statue base), the inscription is nevertheless suggestive of the pervasive role of honour and praise in elite communications. The inscription records the words of one Lucius Cassius Longinus, *duumvir* designate, who made the following motion before the city council:

> "Since Plautius Lupus, **one of the best men of our city council** (*o(ptimo) o(rdinis) n(ostri) uir(o)*), willingly undertook the flaminate which was offered to him by universal agreement, and gave very splendid games, and, most remarkably, also served with **magnificent liberality** (*magnificentissima liberalitate*) in the office of the duumvirate in accordance with the **splendid tradition of his family** (*splendorem natalium [s]uorum*) and the status of our colony, and with **lavish disposition** (*[e]ffusissimis adfectibus*) again

[68] Cooley 2012: 145.

[69] Zimmer 1989; Zimmer 1992 are fundamental in this regard. Among the many possible examples, Cordon 1998; Kleinwächter 2001; Boschung 2002; Gilhaus 2013; Gilhaus 2015. For a good 'thick description' of wording, placement, sculpture and historical context, see Smith 1999.

> gave most splendid games; moreover, not content with this **generosity** (*liberalitatibus*), he ornamented the bathhouse *cella* with Numidian marbles and mosaic work; subsequently on every occasion he was **unusually meritorious** (*singuḷ(ariter) [p]romeruerit*), and most recently, when he had been elected as a *curator* to give a public show in accordance with the bequest of Junius Afer, deceased, splendid man, he was **unsparing of his care and omitted no effort** (*sollicitudini laboriq(ue) suo non pepercerit*), and having observed the wishes of the honourable council, ensured that the games given were of the most splendid (…)."[70]

Not all of the positive words expended on Plautius Lupus necessarily fall into the category of personal virtues, but they do unequivocally count as normative language. Longinus, the speaker of the above text, employed a variety of praise to build up an idealized portrait of Lupus before the gathered city council. Given Lupus' actions, generosity naturally forms a recurring feature. But note also praise for Lupus' family history, his zeal in his public duties as *curator* and his general excellence as member of the city council. Elsewhere in the text, Lupus is furthermore praised for his blamelessness (*integritas*) and modesty (*modestia*), while Lupus himself speaks highly of the dedication of the city council and the people of Lepcis Magna towards him (*ne oneraret urbem cuius pubes fid(em) stadium in[··· d]ecurionum adoraret*).

Normative language was pervasive in elite circles, at least in the 'genres' highlighted in the above inscription: public rhetoric and commemorative inscriptions. The function of normative language however went deeper than only rhetorical convention. To erect a statue to a benefactor, governor or emperor is to publicly proclaim consent with the political and social hierarchy. Although ancient dedicators lacked modern theorizing on consent actions, the idea is not wholly alien to the ancient mindset. By placing a statue of a local benefactor, an emperor or an imperial official on the forum, dedicators both public and private expressed their approval of the honorand. And yet, such honours could be enforced under threat of violence or be retracted at a later date for reasons of political or economic expediency.[71] Worse yet were the honours awarded to the patently unworthy, as in Pliny's well-known critique of the honours awarded to the imperial freedman Pallas.[72] Normative language added an additional motivation to the consent action, acting as a rhetorical proof of both the sincerity of the dedicator and the deservedness of the honours. Indirectly it also highlighted the elevated position of the dedicator. A dedicator praising a magistrate or emperor for a given virtue or other laudable quality not only showed himself capable of discerning virtue but also willing to expend material resources and personal effort in publicly acknowledging it. Normative language played to several different levels of the ancient 'honour economy', being a suitable rhetorical device to address one's elite equals and superiors, a way to highlight one's sincerity and a means of indirectly casting light on oneself as a worthy moral agent. This makes normative language not simply an interesting angle of research, but a necessary one if we wish to grasp the complexities of political legitimacy in the Roman Empire.

An additional advantage of the study of normative language – as already shown by the dedication to Plautius Lupus – is that it was never solely the reserve of emperors. Earlier I expressed my desire

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[70] IRT 601a, translation Reynolds et al. 2009.
[71] *Threat*: Cassius Dio, 58.5.2-3. *Removal*: Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 31.
[72] Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 8.6.

to not only study the responses to imperial power, but also to the various levels of power with which it was deeply intertwined. Emperors, governors and local magistrates were all honoured through the same means: honorific statues. Although there are clear differences between these statues, they operate on the same underlying honorific logic. Likewise, powerholders of various stature were all praised with normative language in honorific inscriptions. The use of normative language in reference to political actors is certainly not exclusive to Roman political thought. However, Roman imperialism presented this idea in a new political context, and was accompanied in some regions by a new cultural phenomenon – the aforementioned dedicatory inscription. Studying normative language not only allows us to track imperial representation in the provinces, but also allows us to contextualise and compare it with other power relationships within a given provincial community. In doing so, we not only gain a better understanding of the shifting concepts of legitimacy within these communities, but also a better understanding of the impact of imperial ideology on civic life and politics.

Many scholars have focussed on the formation and change of these various claims to imperial legitimacy across some five centuries of imperial rule. Yet as has hopefully become clear by now, my interest lies not with the imperial court but rather with the relationship between the court and its subjects, both in a direct sense as well as in the many intertwining links of power and authority. Using normative language as a guideline, I will take a closer look at the way in which various levels of power were legitimised through honours and dedications in the provinces. Although a special role will be reserved for the emperor and imperial ideology, I also propose to look at other power relationships within the community. This study will take a closer look at both governors and benefactors, military patrons and magistrates, and a number of key questions will give shape to the disparate material:

- To what extent did key imperial virtues and other forms of legitimising normative language find their way into provincial dedications?
- Did normative language play a role in the legitimation of other power relationships within provincial communities?
- And what does the appearance of certain encomiastic phrases in dedications tell us of the legitimation of power relationships and the ideals of power in provincial communities?

To explore these questions further, I propose to focus on a region of the empire with a dense urban network, active civic politics and a wealth of surviving epigraphy. The Roman provinces in North Africa, notably Africa Proconsularis, Mauretania Caesariensis and, from the early third century onwards, Numidia fit all of these criteria. Despite the similarities in monumental build-up or municipal organization, the civic landscape of North Africa was heterogeneous. Cities such as Lepcis Magna, Cirta or Dougga existed before the arrival of Roman imperial rule and had a Punic heritage; Thamugadi, Cuicul and other communities were either founded on orders of the emperor or benefited greatly from the settlement of Roman veterans; Lambaesis formed a category of its own as an army camp with a particularly large *vicus* and monumental embellishments. And in matters of size, imperial patronage and the influence of its elite, cities such as Carthage dwarfed settlements such as Bulla Regia or Oea. It is not surprising to find numerous epigraphic and ideological differences between such diverse communities. What interests us here is not so much that there are differences between the epigraphic conventions of cities, but rather the forms those differences

took and what they tell us of the way in which power relationships were linguistically embedded within various cities.

In the next chapter I begin by taking a closer look at the relationship between normative language and legitimate power, not only to strengthen my argument that normative language is a valuable avenue of research, but also to argue that we might reasonably assume that African provincials were familiar with Roman ideals of virtue, honour and power. In chapter two, three and four I will shift my attention to three distinct layers of power – emperors, governors and local elites – and the ways in which their relationships with both communities and private individuals are represented in the epigraphic record. In chapter five I will provide a comparison with a distinct cultural group with its own epigraphic traditions within North Africa: Legio III Augusta. Lastly, I will attempt to draw a number of comparisons between these various chapters and to arrive at some broader conclusions on the role of normative language in legitimising power relationships as well as providing a means of self-representation and even empowerment.

CHAPTER I

MEDIA AND IDEOLOGY

A study of the relationship between legitimacy and normative language in the Roman Empire invariably must start in Rome itself. This is not to imply that the Romans were the first to develop a system of political legitimacy which rested on normative beliefs about honour and virtue. Nor does it imply that the peoples conquered by Rome had no normative beliefs about the legitimacy of their local rulers before their incorporation into the empire. Rather, I would argue that the emergence of the Roman Empire as an imperial power under the leadership of a single monarch fundamentally altered all three levels of legitimacy as identified by Beetham. Roman emperors subtly but determinedly rewrote the rules of power and propagated new normative beliefs of legitimate power; provincials responded with new types of consent actions adopted after Roman models – notably statues, monumental dedications and the imperial cult. The innovative nature of this change differed from region to region. In the Greek East, honorific statues and ruler cults were a mainstay of political culture long before the advent of the empire and as such influenced the ways in which Roman imperial legitimation took shape. Nor should we envision the change in beliefs on legitimacy as a revolution, but rather as a drawn-out process with considerable local variations. Despite the slow and disparate pace, this transformation was predominantly shaped by the imperial court and the political developments in Rome.

To take Rome as a point of departure for the study of North African beliefs on legitimate power may seem counterintuitive. Given the limited reach of the Roman state and the continued vitality of local cultures under its banner, pre-Roman concepts of legitimacy in the region may seem a more sensible place to start. But here we run into a two-fold problem. Firstly, some areas of the empire have an extensively documented political culture stretching back well before Roman rule. Greece and Egypt are key examples, both providing us with a great many sources on political ideals, beliefs and forms of consent. Yet for many areas of the empire, including North Africa, we are far less well-informed. African archaeological sources provide limited evidence for ideals of political legitimacy, while literary accounts of pre-Roman North African political history are almost universally written from a later Greco-Roman point of view.

Secondly, the Latin epigraphic material that constitutes my main evidence is a defining feature of Roman imperial culture, both in its choice of language and its format. It is true that Punic remained a popular language throughout the region well into Late Antiquity and a modest corpus of inscriptions employ Punic in their writing.[73] Most Late Punic inscriptions – erected following the fall of Carthage in 146 B.C. and continuing until the fourth century A.D. – fall into the realm of votive offerings, epitaphs and building dedications.[74] Although votive offerings and epitaphs could of course be on full display within public spaces, of the above three categories only building inscriptions fall securely within the realm of the public inscriptions that form the basis of this study. It is noteworthy that from the Roman imperial era onwards, Punic building dedications often include

[73] Jongeling 2005: 2–6.
[74] Jongeling 2005: 9.

a Latin version of the same dedication, particularly when making reference to the emperor.[75] Statue bases – whether dedicated to the emperor or local powerholders – are almost ubiquitously inscribed in Latin, and consistently so from the reign of Augustus onwards. The spread of Latin, the rise of public inscriptions and the changed political realities of Roman imperial rule were intrinsically linked, at least in North Africa. This is not intended to deny the influence of locally held cultural beliefs on power and its legitimacy. I would argue, however, that the honorific inscriptions featuring normative language were, in part at least, a new development deeply affected by Roman imperial power. From this perspective, Rome is both a necessary and logical point of departure if we wish to understand why North African provincials cited the emperor's *pietas* or the governor's *integritas* in their public dedications.

The continued importance of (spoken) Punic brings us to a last important caveat. The focus of this thesis will be on the written rather than the spoken word – and by extension on elite expressions rather than those of all North African provincials. Written sources rarely take into account the many oral expressions of normative beliefs and consent. The words spoken during a sacrifice to the emperor, an panegyric by a little-known provincial orator on the occasion of the emperor's birthday or the advice given by a governor on the preferable words of praise to be included in a dedication: all may have played a decisive role in provincial perceptions of imperial legitimacy, but they have left few traces in our source material. This is an important caveat, since it highlights the variety of dynamics at play on the local level of a given community. Written sources are imperfect substitutes for these lost oral expressions and in many cases the elite Latin of a public inscription was likely far removed from the local Punic dialect of the region. Nevertheless, the spoken and written word were not wholly disconnected. The importance of rhetoric in the development of Latin literature, the publishing and circulation of speeches by famous orators, the recording of acclamations and other oral expressions of 'the people' by Greek and Roman historians: there are points of contact between the literary and oral world, at least within elite culture. More importantly perhaps, the spoken and the written word both drew from shared (elite) ideals of power and legitimacy, although those ideals may have been given different expression depending on genre, context and speaker. Although epigraphic evidence alone can never offer us a full overview of the panoply of ancient opinions and beliefs on legitimate authority, it also is unlikely to have been disconnected from lived reality in the ancient world.

1.1. – A prince of purity and virtue: the literary tradition

Latin and Greek literature offer us many examples of theorizing about political legitimacy, in which ideals of honourable behaviour often play a dominant role. Since the emperor and members of the imperial family were praised in one way or another in a vast number of texts, I shall limit myself to a select number of illustrative genres: panegyrics, prince's mirrors and works of political philosophy. Although these texts were sometimes written in direct praise of a specific emperor, they often moved beyond the reigning emperor to include historical examples or to expound on the concept of the ideal ruler. As such, these genres offer an explicit and systematic treatment of the normative beliefs of power. An added benefit is that many of the writers maintained close connections to the imperial court. Although they did not necessarily adopt the perspective of the court, their works

[75] Particularly so in Lepcis Magna, see IRT 318, 319, 321, 322, 323.

nevertheless suggest something of the range of normative concepts that were considered acceptable in courtly circles.

Intellectuals of the imperial era could look back to a long and varied Greek literary tradition on the virtues and benefits of monarchy.[76] With the rise of virtue ethics in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. we see the first critical efforts to define the nature of virtue and, in its wake, the characteristics of good rulers and legitimate political systems. It may be tempting to link the rise of this intellectual trend to the intrusion of new, powerful entities into the political life of the polis, particularly such figures as Mausolus of Caria and Philip II of Macedon. Yet the Greek world had always known monarchs and other sole rulers, and the earliest examples of the princes' mirror genre unsurprisingly predate the Hellenistic era. They are to be found in the works of Isocrates (*Evagoras*, *Nicocles*) and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia, Agesilaus*) both writing in the late fifth century and the first half of the fourth century B.C. Isocrates and Xenophon played a pioneering role in their exploration of the relationship between personal virtues and political legitimation. Though their support for monarchical systems was perhaps an oddity at the time of writing, the basis that they laid – together with Plato's and Aristotle's more systematic and influential endorsements of the importance of virtue within political systems – proved persuasive in a Greek world that saw a dramatic rise in monarchical states.[77]

Although the connection between normative language and the legitimacy of leadership is prominent throughout Hellenistic theories on kingship, its development over time remains somewhat unclear. Many systematic treatises on kingship – by Epicurus; the Peripatetics Theophrastus, Demetrius of Phalerum and Strato; the Stoics Zenon, Cleanthes, Sphairus and Persaius – have been lost and are only known through references in the third-century work of Diogenes Laertius.[78] Extant works – including some passages in Diodorus Siculus which may have been based on the early Hellenistic author Hecataeus of Abdera[79], as well as the more complete *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates* from the second century B.C. – show a clear preoccupation with morality-based normative beliefs about good rulership and legitimate power. Typical royal qualities include piety (*eusebia*), magnanimity (*megalopsyche*), self-control (*enkrateia*) and justice (*dikaiosyne*), among others.[80] This is not to suggest that virtues were the sole source of legitimacy in Hellenistic political thinking. Great deeds and actions – usually of a military nature – received equal, if not greater, emphasis in literature, royal documents and art.[81] Yet normative language nevertheless remained an important legitimising force. As argued by Eckstein, mirrors of princes were deeply responsive in nature.[82] Rather than direct expressions of royal ideology, such texts are a reaction to the presence of monarchies, attempting to mould kingly behaviour. As such, they are

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[76] For a compact overview, see Noreña 2011a: 37–55.

[77] Isocrates' two works on Nicocles in particular are quoted extensively in Greek works until the Byzantine era while *Evagoras* is cited as late as Menander Rhetor's third-century guide to imperial orations (see below), see Walbank 1984: 75. For a general introduction to Hellenistic political theory, Dvorník 1966: 205–277; Balot 2006: 266–297; Hellenistic monarchies in general: Walbank 1984.

[78] Hadot 1972: 586; Noreña 2011a: 42; though in complete agreement that Hellenistic works on kingship may have existed in abundance, Walbank is sceptical of their impact: see Walbank 1984: 77.

[79] Murray 1970: 143, 153; Walbank 1984: 77.

[80] Diodorus Siculus, *History*, 1.70.5-6; Anonymous, *Letter of Aristeas*, 229; 211; 189; 225; 226; 190; 188.

[81] See in general Eckstein 2009; Balot 2006: 271.

[82] Eckstein 2009.

part of a delicate literary construct, both teaching the monarch to live up to certain normative ideals about good rulership while also lauding him for already acting out these ideals. Far from being a piece of propaganda in the traditional sense, Hellenistic mirrors of princes are not straightforward in their praise for monarchs. By writing a guide to virtue, or by lauding the kings' actions in general, the author implicitly claims to be a capable judge and advisor; the praise for a king is also implicitly a form of praise for the author. At times, Hellenistic kings took an active part in the shaping of their own image, for example through their decrees or monuments. But monarchs were never alone in representing royal power, relying – willingly or not – on courtiers, poets and others to shape the royal image.

Greek normative beliefs about legitimacy made their way to Rome in a piecemeal fashion over several centuries of military, diplomatic and cultural contact.[83] Roman military leaders, administrators, diplomats and private individuals had intimate contacts with Hellenistic courts and Greek cities. A select number of Romans received honours from Greek communities[84] and Greek intellectuals – such as Timagenes and Philodemos in the Late Republic – found their way into the households of the Roman elite. But it would be a mistake to envision the connection between normative language and legitimacy as a purely Greek transplant to Rome, through Greek ideas may certainly have influenced the development of Roman concepts of virtue and legitimacy.[85] As noted in the introduction, Rome had a vibrant tradition of deifying virtues and ethical concepts and contesting their meaning in the political arena. Claims of having a special relationship to a certain deified virtue, or any other normative standard of behaviour and action for that matter, had to be recognized by others to be effective. This left room for a variety of individuals – from courtiers to clients – to participate in the representation of political actors.

With the closing of the Republican period and the early years of empire, political power was increasingly concentrated within a small subset of Rome's elite. Though leaders such as Pompey or Caesar may have laid an outsize claim to certain virtues and ethical concepts, it would be wrong to envision them as monopolising the discourse.[86] What does appear to be the case, however, is that the use of normative language seems to expand, showing clear overlap with the normative language found in praise of Hellenistic monarchs. Cicero offers two telling examples.[87] In *De imperio Cn.*

[83] For several centuries the Republic was deeply involved with Hellenistic states, through war, alliances and protectorates. Following friendly contact with Egypt in (273 B.C.) and an alliance with Syracuse during the Punic Wars (264 B.C.), Rome came into ever closer contact with Macedon and the Greek cities after defeating the Illyrian pirates in 228 B.C. What followed were two centuries of regular wars and conflicts, including a series of protracted struggles with Macedon (between 215-205, 200-197 and 171-168 B.C.), a war with the Seleucid Empire (190-188 B.C.), the formation of the Roman provinces of Macedonia and other provinces in the Greek heartland (148 B.C. onwards), the incorporation of Pergamon (133 B.C.), the Mithridatic Wars (89-63 B.C.) and finally the events of the civil wars, extensive parts of which were fought out in the Greek world and which ended with the incorporation of Egypt (49-30 B.C.).

[84] Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 155; in general Price 1984: 40–47. See for example Syll.[3] 616, 607; IG 11.4.712; IDelos 1520.

[85] See Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 3–37, especially 7 on the hazards of natural metaphors for cultural change. For a discussion on the introduction of Republican cults, Beard et al. 1998: 61–66, 87–90.

[86] Clark 2007: 263–264.

[87] For other examples of virtues and politics, *De Re Publica* is particularly insightful. Cicero continually touches on the relationship between (monarchical) power and virtue throughout the treatise: I.2; I.33; I.42-43; I.47; I.55; II.24; II.43; II.69. For virtues and aristocratic character more generally, Cicero's judicial speeches are insightful: Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, 3-5 (the virtuous character of Caelius' father as a defence of the son) and 9-14 (the high-standing character and moral qualities of Caelius, even in his friendship with Catilina); *Pro Milone*, 36-38, and especially 95-98, noting that Milo is

Pompei, delivered before the Senate in 66 B.C., Pompey is praised for his *virtutes imperatoriae* including his hard work (*labor*), bravery (*fortitudo*) and zeal (*industria*); beyond such martial qualities Cicero also presents him as having a unique claim to blamelessness (*innocentia*), temperance (*temperantia*), faithfulness (*fides*) and cultivation (*humanitas*).[88] In the *Pro Marcello* of 46 B.C., also delivered before the Senate, Caesar is lauded for his gentleness (*mansuetudo*), clemency (*clementia*), wisdom (*sapientia*), fairness (*aequitas*), compassion (*misericordia*), magnanimity (*magnitudo animi*) and generosity (*liberalitas*).[89] The differences between the two orations are noticeable. Many of Pompey's virtues appear closely tied to his roles as senator and general, emphasizing his dutiful fulfilment of both roles. Caesar's virtues on the other hand appear of a different nature altogether, emphasizing hierarchy and power and more akin to the kingly virtues we see in Hellenistic tracts. Unsurprisingly, the *Pro Marcello* draws heavily upon Hellenistic encomiastic literature, particularly panegyrics.[90] That Cicero consciously drew from such literature, particularly in front of the Senate, suggests that Hellenistic normative language was becoming increasingly common, possibly as a result of the rise of a select group of domineering political actors in the Late Republic. Yet it must also be emphasized here that this is not a case of *self*-representation: it is Cicero, rather than Pompey or Caesar, who attributes these qualities to both Republican leaders. Both *De imperio Cn. Pompei* and *Pro Marcello* therefore not only hold up a mirror to their respective recipients, suggesting ideals of behaviour to which both leaders should strive, but also underline Cicero's own role as a political actor and moral arbiter.

Greek influence (particularly Hellenistic literature on kingship and political theory), the importance of deified virtues in Republican political culture, and the rise of ever more dominant political actors in the Late Republic: all worked in tandem to lay the groundwork for an imperial ideology that placed great emphasis on the normative qualities of a given ruler. As the sole ruler at the head of the Roman state, the emperor had an outsized claim on virtue – at least when compared to other political actors. The theme was picked up repeatedly by imperial literary figures, both in Latin and Greek. Like their Hellenistic predecessors, these authors helped mould imperial representation. Yet this process did not start in earnest until well into the first century. Personified virtues appear on Augustan imperial coinage and normative language abounds in 'official' documents such as the *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* of 20 A.D., both of which we shall explore in greater detail below. Yet panegyrics and prince's mirrors appear to be absent. This absence may possibly be explained in the unease felt in moulding the new dynasty along the lines of Hellenistic monarchies, by both authors and emperors. It is in Seneca's *On Clemency* that we find the first Roman equivalent of the Hellenistic princes' mirror. In this treatise, Seneca envisions the emperor not just as a model to his subjects but the *spiritus vitalis* of the empire, the *mens imperii* that leads the Roman body and the *vinculum* that keeps its many disparate parts together.[91] Seneca carefully turns his laudatory prose about Nero into imperial self-representation by making the emperor himself state his virtuous character and near omnipotence in the introduction to the work.[92] This clever literary technique is added praise for the emperor: whereas in Greek treatises on royal virtue the author implicitly acted

brave (*fortis*), wise (*sapiens*) and seeks only glory (*gloria*) through his defence of the state; *Pro Rege Deiotaro*, 26 (citing the kingly virtues of Deiotarus).

[88] Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompei*, 29; 36.

[89] Cicero, *Pro Marcello*, 1-2, 12, 19.

[90] Tempest 2013 in general, on virtues specifically p.309.

[91] Seneca, *On Clemency*, 4.1.

[92] Seneca, *On Clemency*, 1.2-4.

as judge of character, Seneca disavows any such role and merely hold up his mirror to the emperor, who is already virtuous.[93] Seneca stresses that all men are capable of virtuous qualities, though some virtues are more suited and more accessible to certain people. Thus while *magnanimitas* is open even to the lowliest of men, *clementia* is far better suited to princes for "when princes rage there is war."[94] Clemency sets the king far above women, beasts and lowly men, for "[c]ruel and inexorable anger is not seemly for a king, for thus he does not rise much above the other man, toward whose own level he descends by being angry at him."[95] Although the gods had a hand in appointing Nero *deorum vice*[96], the clear implication is that Nero stands above others through his own virtuous behaviour, and that his conduct is linked to the fate of the empire as a whole. In *On Clemency* legitimate power is clearly and inextricably connected with personal virtues and normative qualities – an idea widely echoed in other media, as we shall see below. It would, however, be wrong to consider *On Clemency* as simply a neutral rendition of widely-shared beliefs. Seneca approaches questions of power from a Stoic perspective, explaining the great emphasis on mildness and tranquillity versus violent emotions such as anger throughout *On Clemency*. More importantly still, the text is as much a statement about Seneca as it is about Nero. Although Seneca might employ literary techniques to conceal his authorial voice in *On Clemency*, the philosopher nevertheless positions himself not just as a moral agent but as a moral authority, of such status and standing as to be able to advise an emperor.

The same mechanism of explicit praise for the emperor and implicit self-praise of the author can be found in Pliny the Younger's *Panegyric*, dedicated to Trajan. Pliny's expressive and excessive praise for the personal virtues of the emperor make the oration a key example of the political importance of normative language under the Principate. The *Panegyric* was composed in gratitude for awarding Pliny the suffect consulship in the year 100. Like Seneca, Pliny is keen to open his panegyric with a declaration of Trajan's unique position. Trajan is put on equal footing with the gods themselves through his virtue: "For what gift of the gods could be greater and more glorious than a prince whose purity and virtue make him their own equal?".[97] *Moderatio* forms the key theme throughout the *Panegyric*. With the rise and fall of two consecutive dynasties – the members of which were also lauded for their virtues – Pliny sees himself confronted with a challenge: his panegyric must be filled with independence, sincerity and truth (*libertas, fides, veritas*), can contain no signs of flattery or constraint and must break with the past in which such sincerity was not commonplace.[98] This not-so-subtle reference to Domitian casts a long shadow over the *Panegyric* and is continued throughout the text. *Moderatio* is consistently defined in opposition to the actions of Domitian. Where Domitian was a spendthrift whose endless building endeavours made the walls of the city shudder, Trajan is praised for his lack of building activities; where Domitian dedicated endless statues to himself, Trajan is satisfied with but a few; where Domitian placed himself above the law, Trajan places the

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[93] See also the comments by Hales 2010: 237: "The real power (and indeed danger) of the mirror was precisely the opportunity it afforded to change the image of whoever stepped in its sights under the protest that it merely offered a true reflection. In this sense, they could not only reflect but actually aid in the creation, manipulation and *memoria* of *personae*."

[94] Seneca, *On Clemency*, 5.2-3. See also 7.2; 9.1.; 7.2; 5.4.; 5.5; 5.5-5.6 for further definitions of *clementia*.

[95] Seneca, *On Clemency* 5.6, see also 5.5, 7.4. Translation: Basore 1928.

[96] Seneca, *On Clemency*, 1.1.

[97] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 1.4.

[98] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 1.6, 2.

law above himself.[99] Although *moderatio* forms a red thread throughout the oration, Pliny goes on to list some thirty other virtues which he ascribes to Trajan, from his sense of duty (*pietas*) to his restraint (*abstinentia*); from his modesty (*modestia)* to his generosity (*liberalitas*); from his truthfulness (*veritas*) to his kindness (*benignitas*) and his bravery (*fortitudo*).[100] It is through his impeccable virtuous character that Trajan is capable of being a model for his citizens, where previous emperors ("with the exception of your father and one or two more (and that is saying too much)") preferred the vices of their subjects over their own virtues.[101] The *Panegyric* uses both critical remarks on Trajan's predecessors as well as a colourful array of different personal qualities to make the emperor stand out, thereby creating an ethical imperial profile that continuously stresses the individuality of these virtues in Trajan. However, like Seneca, Pliny uses his panegyric as a way of defining his own position in relation to the emperor and the court. His emphasis on the virtue of friendship (*amicitia*) – here once more defined in opposition to the feigned affection (*amoris simulatio*) under Domitian – hints strongly at the personal friendship between emperor and Pliny.[102] By discussing and rating the emperor's various policies[103], Pliny is not only lauding the emperor but, like Seneca, positioning himself as a political actor capable and worthy of making judgements on virtues or matters of state.

Both Pliny and Seneca were writing from the direct environs of the court. Contemporary Greek literature provides us with a number of authors more rooted in provincial life. Although they too consistently couch legitimate power in normative terms, there are nevertheless a number of interesting differences. Working around the same time as Seneca, the philosopher Musonius Rufus, whose work betrays a keen interest in ethics and virtue, dedicated one of his lectures to the theme *That Kings Also Should Study Philosophy*. In this short lecture, Musonius refers to the Platonic virtues of justice (*dikaiosyne*), self-control (*sophrosyne*), courage (*andreia*), though instead of wisdom or foresight, he prefers to add reason (*logos*) as the fourth virtue in the canon.[104] In addition to these virtues, Musonius cites a host of supplementary virtues which define a good king: intelligence, patience, beneficence, helpfulness and humanity, among other qualities.[105] What stands out in the work of Musonius, however, is his conception that these kingly virtues are not necessarily limited to kings but available to all men, to such an extent that any man who acts in this virtuous manner might call himself a king.[106] At first sight this may seem a strikingly 'democratic' re-interpretation of the normative language usually applied to rulers. But for Musonius it is the virtuous subject who becomes statesman-like – not the other way around. Virtues remain a royal prerogative and uniquely associated with monarchs.

Normative treatments of power also have a strong presence in the works of Dio Chrysostomos, who wrote a number of orations *On Kingship*. These are traditionally attributed to the reign of Trajan, with whom Dio seems to have been fairly close. All four of these orations return time and again to royal virtues as the basis of a prosperous reign, including justice, bravery, moderation, prudence,

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[99] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 51.1, 52.1-5, 65.1-2. See also Hadot 1972: 609–610; Roche 2011a: 48–50.

[100] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 2.6-7, 3.2, 33.2, 54.5, 3.4.

[101] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 45.

[102] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 85, Noreña 2011b: 31–32.

[103] Particularly his fiscal policies: Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 37-41.

[104] Lutz 1947: 60 (l.25-26), 62 (l.10-13), 62 (l.24), 62 (l.32).

[105] Lutz 1947: 66 (l.7–11).

[106] Lutz 1947: 66 (l.13–26).

and gentleness.[107] Dio is more explicit about his role as arbiter, emphasizing the role of the wise man to instruct kings on virtue.[108] In his first oration on kingship, Dio uses Homer to stress the essential role of moral worthiness in successful rule.[109] This moral worthiness takes the form of piety, love of fellow men, love of work and toil, benefactions, sincerity and truthfulness, love of honour, being measured in peace and war, and showing kindness to soldiers and subjects.[110] Key terms from Hellenistic treaties on kingship such as *eusebeia, philanthropia* or the variations on *megalomereia* and *megalopsychia* are lacking; virtues such *sophrosyne*, *dikaiosyne* or *andreia* are wholly missing. Rather interesting in this regard is the emphasis on toil, which stands in contrast to the types of virtues traditionally propagated in Hellenistic panegyric. In the second oration *On Kingship*, Dio again emphasizes kingly character as the foundation of good rule, as opposed to the trappings of kingship.[111] In this oration, taking the form of a dialogue between Alexander and Philip II, Alexander argues:

> *οὐδ᾽ αὖ φιλοσοφίας ἅπτεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἀκριβέστατον, ἀπλάστως δὲ καὶ ἁπλῶς βιοῦν ἐνδεικνύμενον αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἔργοις φιλάνθρωπον ἦθος καὶ πρᾷον καὶ δίκαιον, ἔτι δὲ ὑψηλὸν καὶ ἀνδρεῖον, καὶ μάλιστα δὴ χαίροντα εὐεργεσίαις, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐγγυτάτω τῆς τῶν θεῶν φύσεως*.
>
> “Nor, again, is it necessary that he study philosophy to the point of perfecting himself in it; he need only live simply and without affectation, to give proof by his very conduct of a character that is humane, gentle, just, lofty, and brave as well, and, above all, one that takes delight in bestowing benefits—a trait which approaches most nearly to the nature divine.”[112]

As in the first oration on kingship, Dio continually invokes Homer as a standard for kingly virtue. When Alexander once more identifies courage (*andreia*) and justice (*dikaiosyne*) as the two prime kingly virtues, he does so with explicit reference to Homer, as in many other topics throughout the oration.[113] These virtues and their grouping are much closer to the kind of virtues that appear in earlier Hellenistic sources. In both these orations – most likely written under Trajan – the emperor is only alluded to. In his third oration, Dio is much more direct. Whereas the first two orations dealt with the general ideals of virtuous kingship, in this third oration Dio sees himself confronted with the same problem as Pliny. The issue of flattery is treated extensively, with Dio at pains to denounce the practice and free himself from any suspicion of it.[114] Whereas Pliny tried to evade charges of flattery by formulating new virtues for Trajan and emphasizing differences between Trajan and Domitian, Dio looks to both Homer and Socrates for an image of the ideal king and strongly implies that Trajan meets this ‘objective’ standard. Besides virtues such as equity, diligence and kindness, Dio also makes explicit reference to the Platonic virtues of wisdom (here in the practical sense of

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[107] *Piety*: Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 1.15-16; *justice*: 2.26, 3.32-33, 4.24-25; *bravery*: 2.26, 3.32-33, 3.58, 4.24-25; *moderation*: 2.54, 3.58; *prudence*: 3.7, 3.58; *gentleness and humanity*: 1.17, 1.20, 2.26, 4.24-4.25.

[108] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 1.8.

[109] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 1.14.

[110] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 1.15-32.

[111] See for example *Discourses*, 2.34-43 against material display in palaces or 2.49-51 against excessive costumes and armour.

[112] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 2.26, translation Cohoon 1932. Note also the list of ‘anti-virtues’ in 2.75.

[113] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 2.54.

[114] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 3.17-26.

prudence, or *phronesis*), justice (*dikaiosyne*), temperance (*sophrosyne*) and courage (*andreia*) and their political necessity, for "[an ideal king] considers virtue a fair possession for others but an absolute necessity for himself".[115] The ideal of the virtuous king is not only a form of praise for the individual ruler, but forms the bedrock of a just monarchy. As Dio states, the dividing line between tyranny and legitimate kingship is the virtue and good judgment of the ruler.[116] For Dio, the virtues of the king not only lead to a happy reign but also flow from the king to find those that lack in virtue:

> *τοῦ γὰρ πάντων ἄρχοντος καὶ κρατοῦντος ἡ μὲν φρόνησις ἱκανὴ καὶ τοὺς ἄφρονας ὠφελεῖν· βουλεύεται γὰρ ὁμοίως ὑπὲρ πάντων. ἡ δὲ σωφροσύνη καὶ τοὺς ἀκολαστοτέρους σωφρονεστέρους ποιεῖ· ἐφορᾷ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἅπαντας. ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη καὶ τοῖς ἀδίκοις αὑτῆς μεταδίδωσιν· ἡ δὲ ἀνδρεία καὶ τοὺς ἧττον εὐψύχους οὐ μόνον σῴζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ θαρραλεωτέρους ποιεῖν δύναται.*
>
> "For when a man governs and holds sway over all mankind, his prudence avails to help even the imprudent, since he takes thought for all alike; his temperance serves to restrain even the intemperate, since his eye is over all alike; his justice gives of itself even to the unjust; and his courage is able, not only to save the less valiant, but even to fire them with greater courage."[117]

The fourth oration on kingship, taking the form of a dialogue between Alexander and Diogenes, expands on the theme of the innateness of virtue. Again, the virtuous character of the monarch is singled out as the defining aspect of a legitimate monarchy.[118] For the fictional Diogenes, the recognition of legitimate kingship not only rests on the observer's ability to recognize virtue, but also sets that observer apart from "all the Greeks and barbarians" who lack an understanding of legitimate kingship and by extension, proper virtue. It is questionable whether we should directly equate Diogenes and Alexander with Dio and Trajan. Yet the implicit conclusion here nevertheless seems to be that the recognition of virtue and legitimate kingship is in itself noteworthy and even laudatory; something that sets the author apart from his peers. The role of the orator/teacher shifts across the four orations, with Dio implicitly taking the role of tutor, but also adopting elements of the prince's mirror genre. Dio lists a range of virtues, at times in direct association with Trajan such as in the third oration. But his list is far more limited than Pliny's *Panegyric* and in several instances directly harkens back to Plato's virtues. The never-ending toil which Dio mentions in several of his orations is to some extent alien to Hellenistic literature on virtues and kingship. For the most part, however, Dio seems to present a steady continuation of earlier Greek theories on kingship. The king sets himself apart from his followers through virtue, and virtue acts as an important means of monarchical legitimation. At the same time, Dio's role as an orator comes close to that of Pliny in his panegyric. Dio's virtuous parables and references to Homeric models not only underline his abilities as a judge of character and an ethical thinker, but also emphasize the importance of ancient Greek models for contemporary politics.

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[115] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 3.5-8, 10-11, 9.
[116] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 3.45-46.
[117] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 3.7-8, translation Cohoon 1932.
[118] Dio Chrystomos, *Discourses*, 4.24-25.

Dio Chrysostomos was at the vanguard of a new surge in Greek works on kingship, all falling within the broader cultural movement of the Second Sophistic. A prime example are to be found in the works of Plutarch. In his *To an Uneducated Ruler*, Plutarch compares bad rulers to statues which have "a heroic and godlike form on the outside, but inside are full of clay, stone, and lead — except that in the case of the statues the weight of those substances keeps them permanently upright without leaning, whereas uneducated generals and rulers are often rocked and capsized by the ignorance within them."[119] Through this unusual metaphor, Plutarch describes familiar sentiments: the character of the ruler is the essential factor for a successful reign. The king should fashion himself – like a statue – in the likeness of a god through his virtue[120], while vices are immediately apparent in the powerful and Fortune makes sure to punish them.[121] Though justice and law play an important role in this divine likeness, Plutarch is much less explicit about other virtues. The same can also be said for Aelius Aristides' oration *On Rome*. The oration is more a panegyric on imperial rule in general, rather than on an individual emperor, and therefore strictly speaking falls outside the purview of this chapter. It is nevertheless interesting to note that references to imperial character are continuously described, directly or indirectly, in normative language.[122]

Two examples of imperial orations from the third century are more explicit in the way they relate legitimate rule with normative concepts. First is Pseudo-Aristides, whose oration *On the Emperor* has been dated to the reign of Philip the Arab on the basis of circumstantial biographical information presented in the text.[123] By all accounts, the work of Pseudo-Aristides seems to be by an unremarkable author, whose work found its way, by accident or confusion, into a collection of orations by Aristides.[124] Far from being detrimental to its value as a source, the very mediocrity of *On the Emperor* makes its particularly interesting as an example of the more run-of-the-mill oratory, compared to such leading lights as Dio Chrysostomosus or Aelius Aristides. The emperor's sense of justice in both financial and judiciary matters is praised by Pseudo-Aristides: "he has a precise knowledge of justice (*dikaiosyne*), as if he himself were its legislator and discoverer."[125] The emperor's generosity, gentleness and accessibility are treated with due reverence, as are his moderation and self-control when it comes to pleasures, in which he outshines Homeric monarchs such as Agamemnon.[126] His wisdom and foresight find their expression in his dealings with the Parthians, while his conquest of the Celts is a sure sign of his courage.[127] Pseudo-Aristides stuck close to tradition in his praise for the emperor, although his approach is far more schematic than for example the works of Dio Chrysostomosus or the actual Aristides. One remarkable feature of Pseudo-Aristides is his explicit treatment of the tension between orator, emperor and the object of

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[119] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 780A-B. Translation: North Fowler 1936.

[120] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 780E-F.

[121] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 782E-F.

[122] See Aelius Aristides, *On Rome*, 38 (the emperor as the greatest of judges), 51 (the emperor is wise enough to have invented the correct way to govern), 72-74 (the emperor is an expert in military matters), 90 (the emperor stands high above his officials in worth and virtue), 92 (the emperor is generous), 96 (the emperor guides the Greeks with moderation and great care).

[123] Other candidates include Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Pertinax, Macrinus, Decius, Gallienus, see Behr 1981: 185, n.1.

[124] See Behr 1981: 185 n.1 for a short critique and commentary on the piece.

[125] Pseudo-Aristides, *On the Emperor*, 17. Translation here and following: Behr 1981.

[126] Pseudo-Aristides, *On the Emperor*, 21-23; 26-28.

[127] If Philip the Arab is indeed the intended emperor, this could refer to his Germanic wars in 246. Pseudo-Aristides, *On the Emperor*, 32-34; 35.

praise. According to Pseudo-Aristides, the magnitude of imperial virtue is too great to describe. He berates those orators who make excuses about their limited capabilities and preparation, which suggests that with due time and effort they could have matched the magnitude of the imperial deeds: "[w]hen they grant this, they claim for themselves the ability to speak on the greatest matters, and they bestow on themselves this excessive praise."[128] Pseudo-Aristides emphasizes that no oration can ever be worthy of the emperor, and thus he toils to the best of his abilities without shame. We find the same tension in Seneca, Pliny and Dio. Each tried to mask or resolve this tension differently, from the literary construct of a mirror to the use of parables from Greek myth and legend. The orator is elevated above others in his ability to properly praise the emperor, but in this very ability also lurks the danger of usurping that praise, especially in the case of a great orator or a particularly brilliant oration.

The schematic nature of Pseudo-Aristides' use of virtues, is also reflected in the rhetoric manual by Menander Rhetor, possibly written in the late third century. Menander's work provides (amongst other texts) a manual for writing panegyrics to visiting emperors. It serves as a fitting illustration of the pervasiveness of normative language in the third century, further underlined by the matter-of-factly, schematic approach of *The Imperial Oration*. Normative appraisals of imperial rule are not the only element in Menander's rhetorical treatise, yet it infuses the entirety of the guide: from the emperor's birthplace ("you must inquire whether his nation as a whole is considered brave and valiant, or is devoted to literature or the possession of virtues, like the Greek race"[129]), to his virtuous character in youth (at which point Menander explicitly cites Isocrates' *Evagoras*)[130], to imperial actions in times of war and peace, which should form the bulk of the oration. For Menander, the source of great deeds is ultimately to be found in the imperial character. He thus advises to "always divide the actions of those you are going to praise into virtues (there are four virtues: courage (*andreia*), justice (*dikaiosyne*), temperance (*sophrosyne*), and prudence (*phronesis*)) and see to what virtues the action belongs (…)".[131] Courage, prudence and justice are wartime virtues for Menander ("Then add: "Through your prudence, you discovered their traps and ambushes (…)""[132]); peace is better suited for temperance, wisdom and justice, which should each receive separate treatment.[133] The connection between virtue and imperial legitimacy is so commonplace it needs no further comment or explanation; Menander expects his readers to understand the link.

Roughly contemporaneous with Menander is a collection of panegyrics in Latin, simply known as the *Panegyrici Latini*. The eleven orations in the collection are usually dated from 289 to 313 A.D., chronicling the tetrarchy and the rise of Constantine as sole emperor, and written by a variety of orators mostly of Gallic origin.[134] Curiously, the collection also includes Pliny's *Panegyric* which seems to have served as a source of inspiration for the authors of the *Panegyrici Latini.*[135] It is not

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[128] Pseudo-Aristides, *On the Emperor*, 2.
[129] Menander Rhetor, *The Imperial Oration*, 369.27-30, translation here and following (with small adjustments): Russell and Wilson 1981.
[130] Menander Rhetor, *The Imperial Oration*, 372.1-12.
[131] Menander Rhetor, *The Imperial Oration*, 373.5-9.
[132] Menander Rhetor, *The Imperial Oration*, 373.23-24.
[133] Menander Rhetor, *The Imperial Oration*, 375.5-376.23
[134] Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 3-10.
[135] Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 18.

my goal to delve too deeply in the nuances of each oration or their various interconnections, but rather the expanded normative language on display throughout the *Panegyrici Latini*. Ware claims to have found some ninety virtues and virtue-like qualities throughout the eleven orations.[136] Among these we repeatedly find variations on the four Platonic virtues which also appear in Menander: military strength or courage, justice, prudence or providence, and temperance.[137] These include classic imperial virtues such as *providentia*, *virtus* and *fortitudo*, *temperantia* and *patientia*, *iustitia* and *sapientia*. The imperial virtues of *pietas* and *felicitas* likewise appear side by side.[138] But the *Panegyrici Latini* go much further than only typical imperial virtues. In the *Panegyric of Maximian and Constantine* the latter's youth (*pueritia/adulescentia*), sexual purity (*continentia*) and bashfulness (*verecundia*) are praised in order to act as a contrast with the aged and powerful Maximian.[139] In the later *Panegyric of Constantine*, it is the emperor's *severitas* and ferocious slaughtering of barbarians that come in for praise, to highlight both his military profile and his service to the well-being of the state.[140] The orators of the *Panegyrici Latini* show clear signs of the changing ideals of power under the tetrarchy, for example in stressing the *concordia* present among the emperors[141], repeatedly pointing to the inability of the orator to do justice to the greatness of the emperor[142], or emphasizing the insurmountable power differences between civilians and the emperor[143]. A far more wide-ranging lexicon of virtues is employed to give expression to this new power balance, but we should not overestimate such rhetorical devices. The orations still share fundamental similarities with earlier panegyrics and prince's mirrors: the flexibility of virtues to suit the rhetorical needs of orator, the role of the panegyric in setting out ideals of imperial behaviour and, despite the authors' protestations, the role of the orator as moral arbiter. Other fourth-century texts, such as Themistius' *Letter to Julian*[144] and Synesius' *On Kingship*[145], attest to the continued vitality of the virtue discourse in Late Antiquity which, in the case of Synesius, could easily be adopted to a Christian context.

A number of key themes have continued to pop up under very different cultural and political circumstances. The most obvious perhaps is the continued normative belief that legitimate rulers are also virtuous rulers, following aristocratic precepts of honourable behaviour. Although this may not be a particularly surprising conclusion, the persistence with which this idea was ingrained into elite rhetoric and literature suggests something of the fundamental importance attached to honourable behaviour within Greco-Roman political cultures. By praising imperial virtues or recognizing imperial honour, writers and orators tacitly gave their consent to the reigning regime and to imperial rule in a more general sense. But this should not be interpreted as simply passive agreement. Orators, philosophers and authors adapted a flexible normative language to their immediate political context and personal needs. The sneaking suspicion that panegyrics and prince's mirrors might implicitly contain as much praise for the author as for the one being praised, is keenly

[136] Ware 2014: 89.
[137] *Panegyrici Latini* 11.19.2; 7.3.4; 4.1-5; 6.6.1-4; 3.5.4; 3.21.4; 2.40.3; cited in Nixon and Rodgers 1994: 23 n.85.
[138] *Panegyrici Latini* 11.6.1; 6.8.6.
[139] Ware 2014: 91-92.
[140] Ware 2014: 95-96, on *severitas* as a virtue: 102-106.
[141] For example *Panegyrici Latini* 10, with commentary Rees 2002: 60–66.
[142] See for example *Panegyrici Latini* 3.1.1, 8.1.1-4, 9.1.1-2, 6.1.1-5.
[143] See for example the repeated references to the emperor as *numen*, *Panegyrici Latini* 10.1.1, 9.8.1, 7.8.3, 5.1.3, 6.1.1.
[144] Themistius, *Letter to Julian*, 33-34.
[145] Fitzgerald 1930: 110 (l.20)-113 (l.10).

felt and mentioned in a number of texts. And by arguing for the importance of certain values and virtues, authors and orators also helped shift beliefs of legitimate rule over time. The creation of legitimacy was not a one-way street, but rather a complex interaction between author, subject and audience. Although ancient literature had only a fraction of the reach of modern-day media, we should not discount ancient audiences altogether. These texts were in some cases performed before elite audiences, such as in the case of Pliny's *Panegyric* or Aristides' *On Rome*. And they were preserved and read well beyond the immediate context of their creation, as suggested by the various echoes of the *Panegyric* in the *Panegyrici Latini*, or the citations from Isocrates in Menander Rhetor. Although written for a specific event or context, literary texts reverberated among elite audiences. They were accessed, discussed and copied, shaping the normative beliefs of legitimate power along the way.[146]

1.2. – Paperwork: administrative documents and normative language

Literature was not a direct mode of communication between Rome and the provinces. For that purpose, the imperial court had other forms of communication available to it. From private letters from the emperor to his governors, to imperial edicts promulgated across the empire: the Roman state produced large quantities of 'paperwork'.[147] Both the range and the surviving quantities of this material are vast.[148] These documents were usually created from practical incentives: to instruct, to share information or to codify into law. Yet they also had a pervasive ideological influence. For Ando that ideological influence can be found in the demands it made on provincial civic governments, which in turn adopted a range of Roman documentary practices.[149] Beyond this meta-level, we see clear traces of another kind of legitimation in the actual wording of documents. Imperial letters to governors, senatorial edicts, official communication between administrators: all employed strikingly normative language to motivate, threaten and enforce. These administrative documents existed in a very different realm from the literary texts we saw earlier. Although not devoid of literary considerations, they were not written in a highly-polished literary style or primarily concerned with following the rules and expectations of literary genre. It should also be noted that personal praise was rarely the main purpose of these documents. It is therefore unsurprising that the type of normative language employed in non-literary documents differs from that of, for example, Pliny or Seneca. Yet below the surface-level differences we can see the same commonplace notion within the imperial administrative system that legitimate authority depends on certain standards of honourable behaviour.

Possibly the most important way in which Rome – in the sense of both the emperor and major political organs such as the Senate – communicated with the provinces was through the promulgation of various types of regulatory texts. These usually took the form of edicts or imperial letters setting out new laws or civic privileges. Not all correspondence took such form however. In the year 20 A.D. the Senate passed a decree following the indictment of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso for sedition. The *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* was ordered by the Senate to be set up in the winter quarters of each legion and in the most frequented (*celeberrimus*) places of the busiest city

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[146] On the spread of ancient literature through libraries and private collections: Nicholls 2017: 33–40.
[147] For a general overview, Corcoran 2014.
[148] Corcoran 2014: 173.
[149] Ando 2000: 73–130.

of each province.[150] The proconsul of Baetica, Vibius Serenus, went one step further and ensured that copies of the text were placed in every town in his province.[151] In and of itself, this is a remarkable intervention by the Roman state into the provincial civic landscape. What makes this decree of particular interest is its deeply normative language; "moral didacticism on a grand scale", in the words of Cooley.[152] Among the many virtues that are named and praised, Tiberius is lauded for his fairness (*aequitas*) and forbearance (*patientia*) during the trial of Piso, his piety towards both Livia and Germanicus (*pietas*) as well as his justice (*iustitia*)[153]; Germanicus for his moderation (*moderatio*) and forbearance (*patientia*)[154]; Livia for her kindness to others and her moderation (*moderatio*)[155] while the Senate describes itself as "mindful of its own clemency, justice, and magnanimity, which virtues it learned from its forebears and especially from the deified Augustus and Tiberius Caesar Augustus"[156]. The equestrian order, the people of Rome and the emperor's soldiers are furthermore singled out and praised for their virtuous behaviour during the crisis.[157] Reading the text, the virtuous nature of the imperial family – particularly in contrast to the lengthy list of Piso's vices – is inescapable and positioned as a model to follow, not only by the Senate, but all ranks of Roman society.[158]

With its lavish praise for imperial conduct, the political value of the decree seems clear. As with the literary texts discussed above, however, we are not dealing with a direct form of imperial self-representation. Rather it is the Senate demarcating its own position in Rome's moral landscape by singling out and praising individual members of the imperial family. The direct praise for the equestrian order, the people of Rome and the army, as well as the decision to publish the decree throughout the empire, leave little doubt regarding the intended audience of the decree. In a similar fashion to many of the literary authors cited earlier, the decree speaks of expectations for future imperial behaviour while underlining the moral and political authority of the Senate. Despite the occasionally subservient language, it is the Senate which appears as an active agent in the text: praising, condemning and calling upon the people of the empire to follow the imperial lead.

This type of normative language was not limited to senatorial decrees. An example (slightly) down the administrative ladder can be gleaned from the imperial regulation of various *saltus* in North Africa. The inscriptions – amended and re-published on several occasions – record a number of imperial decrees pertaining to the *lex Manciana* and a *lex Hadriana de rudibus agris*, both concerned with the use of vacant lands. Copies of the Hadrianic document and later amendments under Commodus have been found at a number of locations in the Bagradas Valley.[159] The dossier has proven immensely valuable for the study of land use and ownership on imperial estates; the laws themselves have been interpreted as the driving force behind Africa's economic success in the

[150] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 171-173.
[151] Cooley 1998: 209.
[152] Cooley 1998: 209.
[153] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 17; 119; 124; 133.
[154] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 26.
[155] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 116-117; 132-133.
[156] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 90-92, translation Potter and Damon 1999.
[157] *Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* 151-165.
[158] Cooley 1998: 207–208.
[159] See also CIL VIII 25902, 25943, 26416, 14428; for full testimonia on the inscriptions and their implication, see Erdkamp, Verboven, and Zuiderhoek 2015: 228 n.70.

second and early-third century.[160] Often overlooked is its value documenting the language prevalent in Rome's imperial administration. Of particular interest are the fragments of a procuratorial speech (*sermo*) which appear in two of the inscriptions and in a later Severan copy of the document. One version of this *sermo* comes from an inscription (CIL VIII 25934) set up in Lella Dreblia, some thirteen kilometers south-west of Aïn el-Djemala, close to the city of Dougga:

> *sermo procurato*[*rum Im*]*p(eratoris) (C)aes(aris) Hadriani Aug(usti) quia Cae*[*sar n(oster) pro*] *infatigabili cura sua per qu*[*am adsi*]*due humanis utili(ta)tibus excu*[*bat om*]*nes partes agrorum quae tam oleis au*[*t*] *vineis quam frumentis aptae sunt e*[*x*]*coli iubet i(d)circo permissu{m} prov*[*iden*]*tiae eius potestas fit omnibus e*[*tia*]*m eas partes occupandi quae in c*[*entu*]*ri(i)s elocatis saltus Blandiani e*[*t Ude*]*nsis (et) in* [*illi*]*s partibus sunt q*[*uae ex saltu Lamiano et Domitiano iunctae Tuzritano sunt nec a conductoribus exercentur*] (…)
>
> "Speech of the procurators of the emperor Caesar Trajanus Hadrianus Augustus: because our Caesar [in keeping with] his tireless diligence, because of which he is assiduously vigilant for the interests of humankind, orders all of the fields that are suited for both olives and wines as well as cereals to be brought under cultivation; therefore by the permission of his providence the authority accrues to everyone to occupy even those parts which are in the leased out centuries of the estate of Blandus and Udens and in those parts which have been joined to the Tuzritan estate from the Lamian and Domitian estate, and are not being worked by the lessees (...)."[161]

Hadrian's diligence, his unwavering commitment to human prosperity and his providence give the impression of an ever-watchful and energetic emperor. Through the use of *quia*/*quam* the imperial decree is presented by the procurators as conceived and enacted through Hadrian's virtuous disposition. Normative language here plays a legitimising role after the fact, but it could likewise be used to motivate (or perhaps threaten) others into action. In a later addition to the dossier, the emperor Commodus himself instructs his procurators to "contemplate my discipline and my practice" (*contemplatione discipulinae et instituti mei)* in making sure that the *coloni* are not overworked.[162]

1.2.1. – Imperial correspondence

Beyond laws and decrees, emperors communicated with their staff and subjects through letters, taking the forms of answers to petitions, letters of appointment, instructions to officeholders and general items of legislation.[163] A telling example has been preserved in an inscription from Bulla Regia. The letter in question is a letter of appointment sent by Marcus Aurelius to his new procurator Quintus Domitius Marsianus. Given the prestige attached to a personal, laudatory letter by the emperor, the brother of Marsianus had the document appended to a statue base set up in Marsianus' honour. The text of the letter is clear about the emperor's expectations of his procurator:

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[160] Erdkamp, Verboven, and Zuiderhoek 2015: 229–230, who are however sceptical of such claims.

[161] Translation: Kehoe 1988: 89.

[162] CIL VIII 10570, CIL VIII 14464 IV, l.4-5; translation Kehoe 1988.

[163] Corcoran 2014: 175–176.

> (…) *Caesar Antoninus Aug(ustus) Domitio Marsiano suo salut(em) ad ducenariae procurationis splendorem iamdudum te provehere studens utor opportunitate quae nunc [o]btegit succede igitur Mario Pudenti tanta cum spe perpetui favoris mei quantam conscientiam retinueris innocentiae diligentiae experientiae vale mi Marsiane karissime mihi*[164]
>
> "(…) Caesar Antoninus Augustus sends greetings to his friend Domitius Marsianus. I have long been eager to advance you to the distinction of a procuratorship of two hundred thousand sesterces and take advantage of the opportunity that now presents itself. Succeed then to the post of Marius Pudens, with a hope of enjoying my uninterrupted favour proportionate to the scrupulous regard that you will pay to the need for integrity, diligence and experience. Farewell, Marsianus, my dearest friend."[165]

Innocentia and *diligentia* are fortified by Marsianus' *experientia*; the emperor furthermore suggests that Marsianus possesses the right *conscientia* to bring his virtues into practice. However, this is not straightforward praise. The clear suggestion is that Marsianus' position is dependent on his continued good behaviour in office. In a similar fashion to the edict of Commodus, Marcus Aurelius employs normative language to motivate and enforce.

Imperial correspondence in Greek shows a similar employment of normative language. Because of the far greater body of surviving material, we also find numerous examples of rather terse imperial documents, particularly when dealing with legislation.[166] Yet others indulge in the same normative language as the letter to Marsianus, often as a way of motivating imperial favours shown to certain high-ranking individuals. Antoninus Pius for example speaks of the noble character of a local benefactor from Ephesus named Vedius Antoninus and of the zealous public spirit of Opramoas in a lengthy series of inscriptions from Rhodiapolis.[167] Marcus Aurelius likewise lauds Herodes Atticus for his cultural zeal and munificence.[168] Septimius Severus and Caracalla in their turn offer high praise for the sophist Claudius Rufinus, a citizen of Smyrna, "because of his ever present concern for education and his life continously spent in practice and study of disciplines" (*ὀ διὰ τὴν προαίρεσιν ᾗ σύνεστιν ἐπὶ παιδείᾳ, καὶ τὸν ἐν λόγοις συνεχῆ βίον*).[169] Normative language was not limited to individuals, but could also be applied to communities that had served the Roman state well. In a letter to the city of Bubon in Lycia, Commodus commends the city "for its bravery and zeal" (*τῆς προθυμίας καὶ τῆς ἀνδρείας*) in bringing local bandits to justice, an act which the emperor believes will entice other cities to follow the same virtuous course of action.[170]

It was not only the emperor who employed normative language in official correspondence. Unsurprisingly, we find the same language both in petitions and in exchanges with the court. When the former *strategos* and *archidikastes* of Alexandria, Aurelius Horion, petitioned the emperors

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[164] AE 1960, +167 = AE 1962, 183 = AE 1971, 491 = AE 1972, +687 = AE 2005, +25.
[165] Translation, with slight changes, Levick 2002: 148.
[166] Kokkinia 2003: 200.
[167] IEph 1491, Oliver 1989: 300–303, 138 and TAM II 905, Oliver 1989: 307-320, 142-153.
[168] Oliver 1989: 366–388, no.184.
[169] ISmyrn 602 = IG II2 p. 376; Oliver 1989: 485–488, no.255.
[170] Schindler 1972, no. 2 = BullÉp 1973, 451= AE 1979, 624 = Milner 1998: 2, 1.18.

Septimius Severus and Caracalla, he addressed his petition "To the most beneficent emperors, Severus and Caracalla, saviours and benefactors of all mankind" ([*τοῖς εὐμενεστάτοις Αὐ*]*τοκράτορσιν* [*Σ*]*εο*[*υή*]*ρῳ* [*καὶ Ἀντωνίνῳ τοῖς*] *πάν*[*τ*]*ων* [*ἀ*]*νθρώπων* [*σωτῆρσι καὶ εὐερ*]*γέταις*).[171] Both Severus and Caracalla are further on in the letter named "most humane emperors" ([*ὦ φιλανθρωπ*]*ότατοι Αὐτοκράτορες*).[172] The city of Alexandria also receives due praise in the petition: Aurelius presents it as a place of "goodwill, reliability and friendship to the Romans" (*ἡ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους εὔν*[*οι-*]*ά τε καὶ πίστις καὶ φιλία*) and one that has "the best and most generous spirit and most conscientious [in dealing with the] fiscus" (*τοῖς καλλίσ[το]ις καὶ ἐλε*[*υθερω*]*τάτους ἔχουσαν τοὺς ἐνοικο*[*ῦν*]*τ*[*ας κα*]*ὶ π*[*ερι τα*] *μεῖο*[*ν*] *ἐπιεικεστάτους*).[173] Pliny's letters offer an additional glimpse of correspondence directly addressed to the emperor. In the very first letter of the collection, Pliny praises Trajan for his filial piety and his *virtus* and calls him *optimus princeps*.[174] Elsewhere, Trajan's *indulgentia* is repeatedly lauded for various services rendered.[175] His reign is described as "most fortuitous" (*felicissimus*) and Trajan as an excellent (*bonus*) prince.[176] Trajan's answers are famously terse in comparison, but he too occasionally couches his subordinate's conduct in strongly normative terms.[177]

Interestingly, we find normative language not just in direct correspondence with the emperor, but also in the correspondence between administrators. In a well-known inscription, the military engineer Nonius Datus recounts his travails in supervising the construction of an aqueduct.[178] The long inscription was found re-used in a later construction a few hundred meters outside of Lambaesis.[179] We will treat the case of Nonius Datus in more detail in a later chapter; what concerns us here are the two letters from high-ranking members of the imperial administration which were included in the inscription, dating to the late 140's and early 150's. In the longest of the two letters, the equestrian procurator Quintus Porcius Vetustines addresses Lucius Novius Crispinus, senator, legate of Numidia and commander of Legio III Augusta. Virtuous language appears in Vetustines' address to Crispinus: "My lord, you acted most benignant and from your kindness and benevolence in sending me Nonius Datus (...)" (*Benignissime, domine, fecisti et pro cetera humanitate ac benivolentia tua, quod misisti ad me Nonium Datum evocatum*).[180] Both Vetustines and Crispinus were aristocrats and high-ranking officials in their respective provinces. Egyptian papyri offer an interesting counterpoint in this regard. Second- and third-century documents such as a petition to a local prefect, petitions to *strategoi* and communications between a prefect and a *strategos* make no use of normative language or elaborate praise, instead preferring a rather sober, matter-of-fact style even when addressing superiors.[181] Only in the much later Panopolis papyri, dating to the closing years of the third century, do we see some normative language appear in the communication between officials. Among the documents, the local *strategos* of the Panopolite nome addresses his

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[171] P. Oxy. 4.705 l.15-17.
[172] P. Oxy. 4.705 21; Oliver 1989: 475–481, nos. 246–247.
[173] P. Oxy. 4.705 l.31-32, 40-42.
[174] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.1.1-2. See also 10.14.
[175] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.3a.1., 10.4.1, 10.13.
[176] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.2.2, 10.13.
[177] See for example Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.9 or 10.16.
[178] CIL VIII 2728.
[179] Lassère and Griffe 1997: 14.
[180] Translation here and below (with small adjustments) after Oleson 2008: 331.
[181] See BGU XV 2460, 2461, 2463, 2467.

procurator with titles such as Your Diligence (ὁ σός ἐπιμέλειος) and Your Clemency (ὁ σός ἐπιείκειος).[182]

These few examples only serve to highlight a more general trend. Different though these various documents may be in their intentions and their contexts, they all reflect basic Roman beliefs on how the state functioned. Emperors and officials considered themselves first and foremost to be moral agents, rather than cogs in an administrative system. The Roman state believed it could motivate its agents not primarily through force or material goods, but through appeals to honour.[183] The fulfilment of administrative duties was on the one hand envisioned as a burden of honour which imperial aristocrats were to take upon themselves in the service of the state, and on the other hand contributed to individual honour if suitably prestigious.[184] Naturally, such an envisioning of the Roman imperial apparatus also tied in deeply with normative beliefs about the legitimacy of power. By employing normative language in everything from edicts to state correspondence, the imperial administration presented itself as a system based on considerations of (aristocratic) honour and virtue. The extent to which provincials shared this view of the Roman state is another matter altogether. However, I would argue that by acknowledging the honourable qualities of a community or of high-ranking members of the local elite, the imperial court fostered loyalty to the state by co-opting provincials in the honour-based project of empire. It should be noted here that state correspondence – particularly when in favour of a local community – was rarely confined to the archives. Favourable letters from the emperors, grants of special rights or recognition of age-old privileges: these types of documents could be inscribed and displayed in public settings. A well-known example is to be found in Aphrodisias, where in the year 230 the city council had a curated selection of sixteen documents pertaining to the city's privileges and status inscribed upon a theatre wall.[185] The imperial administration believed itself to operate on the basis of honour, and this belief spread beyond the immediate environs of the court and the Roman aristocracy.

1.2.2. – Imperial titulature

Imperial titles were inextricably a part of 'official' communications.[186] Because they are so ubiquitous in ancient sources and often of a highly formulaic nature, it is easy to underestimate their persuasive nature. Yet imperial titles were important signifiers of honour, prestige and power. The imperial titulature consisted of several set elements, including the emperor's imperial titles, personal names, *cognomina ex virtute*, honorific epithets, dynastic references and political offices. Each of these elements neatly encapsulated imperial claims to legitimacy: illustrious ancestry (through the inclusion of lines of descent from previous emperors), military successes (through the inclusion of *cognomina ex virtute* commemorating the emperors' campaigns) and civic leadership (through the naming of the emperor's prestigious civic offices). Of particular interest to us, however, are titles referring to the emperor's character and honourable behaviour, often appearing in the form of virtue-epithets. These epithets are a relatively late development, starting with Antoninus

[182] See for example P.Panop.Beatty 1.85, 1.88. Translations Skeat 1964.
[183] Lendon 1997: 13–29.
[184] Lendon 1997: 176–236.
[185] Chaniotis 2003: 251.
[186] For official imperial titulature, see Hammond 1957; Syme 1958; Peachin 1990. Beyond the official titulature of the emperor, imperial subjects also occasionally adopted a host of unofficial titles, on which Frei-Stolba 1969; Scheithauer 1988; De Jong 2003. The 'correct' implementation of titles was far from universal however: see the wavering use of *nobilissimus Caesar* for Geta, Mastino 1992: 154–157.

being awarded the epithet *Pius* by the Senate and followed by Commodus' adoption of the titles *Felix* and (later) *Pius.*[187] After Commodus, the inclusion of *Pius Felix* became a more regular feature of the imperial titulature, though it was far from universal. Septimius Severus adopted *Pius* but not *Felix*; while Caracalla and Elagabalus adopted both. After Elagabalus the titles do not reappear until the coinage of Philip the Arab, though from Philip onwards they become commonplace elements of the imperial titulature, a situation lasting until the reign of Valentinian III.[188] Other titles were more short-lived but nevertheless telling in their ideological implications. Early Hadrianic coinage adopted the Trajanic title *Optimus*, for example, while Pescennius Niger employed the title *Justus* ("The Just/Rightful") in his titulature.[189]

The exact process of conferring or claiming imperial titles is not recorded in our sources.[190] In the first and second centuries the Senate appears to have been the political institution that, officially at least, bestowed titles upon the emperor. The Senate is explicitly named as offering the title of *Optimus* to Trajan and *Pius* to Antoninus.[191] Peachin has suggested that third-century emperors simply adopted titles, to be confirmed by the Senate at a later date.[192] Although the authority of the Senate may have suffered, it nevertheless appears to have retained its importance as a legitimising institution. Again, it was political actors close to the emperor which helped shape imperial representation, though naturally the succession of emperors also created strong precedents for what kind of imperial titles should be awarded at specific points in an emperor's reign. Neither should we forget the unofficial titles and nicknames bestowed upon emperors which played as much a role in imperial representation as the official titles awarded by the Senate.[193]

Though many provincial sources follow the set elements of imperial titulature in a manner that closely resembles 'official' usage, there was room for considerable flexibility. The space available in a given document likely played a role, as did the context of the document.[194] A large honorific inscription paid for by the community and placed on the forum would likely have included much lengthier imperial titles than a piece of tax documentation. Beyond such ad hoc choices, imperial titulature also shows more long-term changes across time in the provinces. Imperial titles grew in length between the first and third centuries, reaching their maximum length – in absolute numbers as well as percentage of the total inscription – under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, after which they became dramatically shortened.[195] Honorific epithets added an additional element of flexibility to the imperial titulature. Working with third-century Egyptian papyri, De Jong has argued that the linguistic choices made by scribes in Roman Egypt were not simply erroneous or random, but reflect both the communication of 'official' honorifics by the imperial court and the small but meaningful 'unofficial' choices which gave form to imperial power in a provincial context.[196] In both cases virtues and virtue-like honorifics appear with regularity, praising the emperor as 'invincible'

[187] Hammond 1957: 46–47.
[188] Hammond 1957: 49–50; Chastagnol 1988: 16–17.
[189] Hammond 1957: 44–45, 34.
[190] De Jong 2006: 92.
[191] Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric*, 2.7-8, 88.4; Cassius Dio, 70.1.2.
[192] Peachin 1990: 3; De Jong 2006: 92–93.
[193] Frei-Stolba 1969; Scheithauer 1988; Bruun 2003.
[194] De Jong 2006: 91.
[195] Saastamoinen 2010: 79–85.
[196] De Jong 2006: 98–135.

(*aettetos*/*aniketos*), 'most godloving' (*theophilestatos*) or 'most manifest' (*epiphanestatos*), among others. Some of these terms are likely Greek translations or interpretations of Latin titles such as *invictus* or *nobilissimus*, but others appear to be wholly local creations. Although such titles did not receive official backing, they nevertheless suggest the strong association throughout the empire between legitimate power and honorific titulature.

1.3. – What belongs to Caesar: imperial coinage

Imperial correspondence and other forms of administrative writing were an important way for the imperial court to communicate with its subjects in the provinces. But it would be wrong to see the written word as the sole medium of communication between Rome and the provinces. Combining words and images, imperial coinage has long played an important role in debates on the spread of imperial ideology and, more specifically, ancient notions of propaganda. The interest is easily explained. With time-consuming production methods and relatively low literacy rates, the direct impact of literature or administrative documentation is generally considered to have been fairly limited. Visual media such as sculptures or monuments were costly, time-consuming to produce and tied to a single location. Coinage on the other could be produced in bulk and could travel with relative ease between persons, cities and regions. And unlike panegyrists or provincial sculptors, the mint appears to have been under direct court control. While the obverse of imperial coinage traditionally bore the portrait of the emperor, the reverse could be filled with imagery, text or both. It is precisely the reverse which is usually interpreted as the canvas where individual rulers could propagate specific messages about their character, achievements and reign. The propagandistic potential of coinage has been the subject of fierce debate. Where scholars in the past have been highly critical of the propagandistic impact of imperial coins[197], the debate has moved to a more nuanced interpretation of their ideological potential.

At the core of this debate are two seemingly simple questions: who was responsible for the design of imperial coinage? And how were imperial coins interpreted, if at all? Both questions are, to some extent, irresolvable. Where agency is concerned, there are a number of cases where we might suspect a direct imperial interference in the coin design. One prominent example is the IMPER(ATOR) RECEPT(VS) PRAETOR(IANIS) RECEPT(IS) series, dated to the early days of the reign of Claudius. The coin series highlighted the reliance of Claudius on the Praetorian Guard in a direct and, to the emperor at least, somewhat unflattering way. As Reinhard Wolters notes, given the politically delicate nature of the image it is hard to conceive of such a coin being minted and distributed – possibly to the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard whom Claudius supposedly promised some fifteen thousand sesterces per person for their support[198] – without some form of imperial consent.[199] Such scenarios are, however, quite rare and involve a-typical issues. The responsibility for routine coinage designs are usually placed with the imperial mint and the mint officials[200], or the imperial court.[201] The two categories might well overlap. We know of various mint officials: *triumviri monetales* from Augustus (when their title appears on coinage) up until the Severan era, as well as the *procurator monetae* who appears from the time of Trajan onwards. How these various offices

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[197] Jones 1974; Wallace-Hadrill 1981a.
[198] Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars V, The Divine Claudius*, X.4.
[199] Wolters 2003: 187.
[200] Levick 1999: 48–49.
[201] Noreña 2011a: 240.

differed from one another, and how they might have been involved in the design of coinage, unfortunately remains a mystery given our limited evidence. But although the emperor may not have personally approved of each and every coin type – let alone design them – it at least seems reasonable to presume that the mint or court officials responsible for coin types would both be aware of the general expectations of good imperial rule, as well as the ideological trends in and around the imperial court.[202]

A short-lived provincial branch of the imperial mint was active in Lugdunum, though mostly following the types set out by the master-mint in Rome.[203] Western provincial coinage was equally short-lived. Under the Julio-Claudians, especially Augustus, an attempt was made to kindle a western tradition of civic coinage which had the most impact in Spain.[204] By the mid-first century, however, the western provinces more or less exclusively used imperial coinage minted in Rome.[205] It would be wrong to envision the coins produced there as being disseminated into a provincial vacuum. Once released, new issues would have joined a host of older coin issues that remained in circulation. Coinage had a slow turnover rate in the Roman world, as evinced by numerous hoards containing coins of one or two centuries old. Taxation and state expenditure – primarily through the payment of troops and large-scale building projects – have been suggested as important mechanisms behind the distribution of coinage.[206] It is unlikely that the Roman administration solely or even primarily used newly minted coins to pay for the salaries, building projects and other expenditures it incurred, instead paying with 'old' coinage which had ended up back in the treasury through taxes collected in the provinces.[207] If the army – by far the largest point of expenditure for the Roman state – had been paid in newly-minted coinage, this would have resulted in a massive expenditure in precious metals for the Roman state.[208] The necessary continuous production of new coinage would have been untenable. This is not to suggest that topical messages found no home on imperial coinage. The IVDEA CAPTA types of Vespasian were minted in large quantities in May, June and July of 71, to coincide with the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in June of that year.[209] Cassius Dio also mentions the coinage minted by Brutus depicting two daggers and the freedom cap to commemorate his assassination of Caesar.[210] These types are however the exceptions that prove the rule. Generally speaking, imperial coinage was better suited to the slow dissemination of broad imperial ideals about just and legitimate power.

[202] Manders 2012: 32–33.

[203] For the east the picture is very different: mints under direct control of the (local) Roman administration are attested in Pergamon, Caesarea in Cappadocia, Ephesus, Nikomedia, Antioch and Alexandria, see Wolters 1999: 48; Heuchert 2005: 30.

[204] Spanish elites seem to have issued coin series with some gusto in various *coloniae* and *municipia*, often staying very close in their imagery to imperial issues, see Ripollès 2005.

[205] The reasons for this shift from civic to solely imperial coinage, and the reasons why a similar development did not take place in the eastern provinces, are complex. Placing coinage within a wider societal spectrum, Burnett has noted that the reason for this change might have its root in rather practical considerations, arguing that most civic coinage would not have been freely exchangeable with other denominations (see Burnett 2005: 174–176). Beyond such practical considerations, Burnett also argues that it was the general outlook and aspirations of various civic communities in east and west which made for such different patterns of imperial coin usage (Burnett 2005: 176–179).

[206] Hopkins 1980.

[207] Noreña 2011a: 194.

[208] Duncan-Jones 1994: 176.

[209] Kraay 1978.

[210] Cassius Dio, 47.25.3.

The slow turnover of imperial coinage was further compounded by its methods of dissemination. Most imperial coinage found its way to the provinces via government expenditure and redirection through provincial and civic treasuries, and above all by soldiers who received their payment from these treasuries and subsequently spread coinage through local communities in the form of various transactions. Money-changers, bankers and other financial figures also played their part in the circulation of newly minted coinage through the empire. In none of these cases was the distribution of coinage evenly spread across the empire. Rather, coins most likely 'pooled' in those places where they were used most: army camps and urban environments.[211] Their mobility was limited, with a high heterogeneity between coin hoards even within the same regions, suggesting that coin issues did not spread evenly across (areas of) the empire.[212] This does not necessarily mean that audience targeting was unfeasible in the ancient world: clearly, the inhabitants of Rome or the various army communities were important elements for any emperor to placate, as well as conveniently in reach of imperial coinage distribution. Yet the distribution patterns of imperial coinage, much like the relatively low production of new coinage, set limits on the ability of coins to have a direct political impact throughout a wide area of the empire.

Far from weakening the ideological power of coinage, the slow turnover and non-topical imagery may in fact have been its greatest strength as a medium. Coins have been titled 'monuments in miniature' because of their commemorative potential, depicting imperial virtues and achievements in much the same way as a triumphal arch or some other imperial monument, although at a fraction of the cost and effort.[213] On a deeper level, the repetition of imagery between different emperors contributed to the legitimacy of the system as a whole, suggesting it functioned on a rational and moral basis.[214]

Imperial virtues in particular are a common motif on imperial coinage throughout the first three centuries A.D. That much is corroborated by the large database collected by Noreña, containing a sample of 179.285 coins, 142.798 of which are silver coinage and 36.487 bronze coinage, all dating from 69 to 235 A.D.[215] Noreña's database is problematic in some regards: his coin hoards are strongly skewed towards specific regions in the empire. His collection of silver coinage for example shows a geographical distribution lopsided towards the Balkans, where the majority of the silver coins (71%) on which his analysis is based were found.[216] His bronze sample on the other hand is most heavily focused on what Noreña terms "the West Continent", incorporating the vast area of Hispania, Gaul and both Germania Inferior and Superior.[217] Nevertheless, the data collected by Noreña is immensely valuable for gaining an understanding of the long-term pictorial trends in Roman imperial coinage. On the basis of his data, Noreña concludes that personified virtues were generally speaking a mainstay of imperial coinage, appearing on around 13% of all silver types and 11% of all bronze types. His conclusions grow stronger when we consider that coin legends – not

[211] Noreña 2011a: 195.
[212] Duncan-Jones 1994: 174–177.
[213] Cheung 1998: 56–58.
[214] One of the main arguments throughout Noreña 2011a: 101–177.
[215] Noreña 2011a: 30.
[216] Noreña 2011a: 30–32.
[217] Noreña 2011a: 32.

taken into account by Noreña – could also make explicit reference to the emperor's virtues independent of a personification on the reverse. Noreña divides his virtues in the following types:

Personifications of virtues on imperial coinage[218]			
Silver (Sample: 18,187)		**Bronze (Sample: 4,141)**	
Aequitas	24%	Pietas	26%
Pietas	20%	Virtus	23%
Virtus	13%	Aequitas	19%
Liberalitas	12%	Providentia	12%
Providentia	12%	Liberalitas	6%
Pudicitia	11%	Pudicitia	3%
Indulgentia	4%	Indulgentia	3%
Clementia	2%	Clementia	3%
Iustitia	2%	Iustitia	3%
Munificentia	<1%	Munificentia	2%
Patientia	<1%	Patientia	0%

Beyond personal virtues, Noreña also traces the development of a large number of normative concepts on imperial coinage.[219] As rightly emphasized by Noreña, these normative concepts were not considered personal virtues but were nevertheless intended to reflect positively on both the individual reign of the current emperor and the empire more generally. Naturally, there were changes from reign to reign. Moneta, the personification of the mint and a fair-handed monetary policy in general, comes in at 4% of all bronze coinage in the western provinces in Noreña's calculations. A closer look at Noreña's data, however, reveals that the majority of the finds (497 out of a total of 781) are not evenly distributed over time but originate from the reign of Domitian, who instigated widespread monetary reform in Rome. The Moneta issues can therefore be seen in a similar vein to other 'topical' coin issues, propagated during a single reign. Other normative ideals equally go through peaks and valleys, changing importance from one reign to the other. Yet beyond such shifts and changes on a reign-by-reign basis, the general picture is clear: normative ideals of power played an important pictorial role on coinage.

The subtle differences between bronze coinage and silver coinage, if reflective of actual minting practices, have interesting implications. Possibly, different values were systematically broadcast to different groups in imperial society by use of coinage designs. It is common knowledge that the Roman emperor had to generally fulfil the expectations of a number of important stakeholders in society, mainly the army, the Senate and the people of Rome. But the topic of a more systematic

[218] Taken from Noreña 2011a: 60.
[219] Noreña 2011a: 101–177.

kind of audience targeting in ancient coinage has been taken up repeatedly.[220] It has been argued that personifications on silver coinage were intended for a more highly educated audience, while the depictions on bronze coinage were targeted at the urban and uneducated lower classes that supposedly were less capable of understanding such abstract creations.[221] Certainly, silver coinage was not the type of coin used for daily expenses by the vast majority of the empire's population. Yet as Noreña's database suggests, normative ideals related to the emperor generally appear as frequently on bronze coinage as on the silver. This broad general pattern should not obscure more specific case studies which do imply that the imperial mint may have designed coinage with potential audiences in mind. The work of Kemmers, for example, suggests that the troops stationed along the Rhine frontier were targeted with specific ideological messages by the Flavian mint masters, while Marzano has argued for a differentiation of coin types in the commemoration of Trajanic building projects.[222]

This leads us to a second main question concerning coinage which has important implications for our understanding of the ideological potential of the medium: did provincial subjects in the Roman Empire actually look at the images on their coins? A.H.M. Jones scathingly compared Roman coinage to modern postage stamps in their overall use for analysing governmental policies and self-image.[223] Yet the designs of some coin types strongly point to the possibility that the mint was working from the assumption that the inhabitants of the empire looked at their coinage. Under Nero, a radiate crown was introduced to the imperial portrait on the *dupondius* (valued at two *asses*), while the imperial portrait on the *as* remained crowned with a laurel wreath. The coins are of roughly equal size, suggesting that the crown iconography was intended to play a role in the identification of the coinage. For additional visual contrast, the *dupondius* received the new mark 'II', a reference to the value of the coin. Although both coins were minted from different metals (copper for the *as*, brass for the *dupondius*) and thus could likely also be identified by their hue, the metallurgic aspects of coinage tended to be variable, producing coins of different hues and colours.[224] The marks on the *dupondius* were not always strictly enforced and we know of numerous issues from the third century where the visual distinction is not upheld. Yet the same radiate crown seems to also have been used to differentiate the *denarius* and the *antoninianus* or 'double-denarius', both silver coinage.[225] It should be noted however that the *antoninianus* was (initially at least) slightly larger and heavier than the *denarius*, suggesting that the visual depiction of the laureate crown was not the only means of identification. Still, the choice to use the visual means of expressing the value of *dupondii* and *antonininani* is telling: the imperial mint expected coin users – and not only learned coin users, given the low value of the *dupondius* – to look at the images on their coins and to comprehend their meaning. As stated above, the pictorial markings on both *dupondii* and *antoniniani* were not uniformly upheld, and both coin types did not just differ from *asses* and *denarii* in their imagery but also their metallurgic specification. Even given this nuance, however, the addition of the radiate

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[220] Metcalf 1993; Hekster 2003; Kemmers 2006; Marzano 2009. A special take on the idea of audience-targeting is presented by Levick, who suggests the emperor was the main audience for coinage designs: Levick 1982; Levick 1999.

[221] Metcalf 1993: 344; supported by Marzano 2009: 128.

[222] Kemmers 2006: 219–244; Marzano 2009.

[223] Jones 1974: 63. The scathing remarks fall flat when considering that postage stamps can, indeed, be used to reinforce nationalistic sentiments: Deans and Dobson 2005; Brunn 2011; Reeves 2015.

[224] Vagi 1999: vol. 2, 89.

[225] Vagi 1999: vol. 2, 83.

crown to imperial coinage does seem a conscious decision to differentiate both types through imagery as well.

Ancient literature suggests that the interpretation of coinage was a relatively commonplace affair.[226] Macrobius notes that the god Janus was the first to mint coins, using the image of a ship on the reverse to commemorate his co-ruler Saturn[227]; Epictetus advocates refusing coinage stamped with Nero's image[228]; Cassius Dio reports two cases – under Tiberius and Caracalla – of men taking a coin with the emperor's image into an indecent location (a latrine and a brothel, respectively) and being charged with *lèse-majesté* as a result[229]; he also describes the aforementioned coinage issued by Brutus after the murder of Caesar in specific detail[230]; Ephraem Syrus condemns the depiction of pagan symbols (a bull and two stars) on the coinage of Julian[231]; Suetonius notes that Augustus liked to hand out coins as gifts "including old pieces of the kings and foreign money"[232]; Herodian mentions that Commodus was only willing to believe that his trusted praetorian prefect Perennis had betrayed him after he had been shown a coin with the usurper's image[233]; most famously of all, the evangelist Matthew mentions imperial coinage in an encounter between Christ and the Pharisees.[234]

A further piece of evidence is the re-use of old coin designs which by necessity implies that the minter of such coins was aware of the images on other coinage. Such occasions are admittedly rare. With Nero's effective fall from power in 68, a series of anonymous coins were minted in Spain that have been attributed to Galba.[235] These coins include a striking set of personifications which were last minted under the Republic, even the typology is in a number of cases taken directly from their Republican predecessors. In other cases, earlier imperial coinage was copied, but with different legends, for example changing the SECURITAS AUGUSTI which was first minted under Nero to SECURITAS R.P.[236] Whoever was in charge of these peculiar coin designs not only had seen Republican coinage, but managed to adequately copy issues in the expectation that the Republican messages on his coinage would be read. An even more extreme case can be found in the coinage of the late-third century British usurper Carausius, whose coinage not only included visual symbols of

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[226] See also Wolters 2003: 193–195; Fears 1981: 911–912, n.395.
[227] Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.22.
[228] Arrian, *Discourses of Epictetus*, 4.5.17. In the passage, Epictetus suggests that it was general practice to refuse Neronian coinage because, like his character, it was supposed to be worthless. This statement might have some basis in fact: among the 1300 bronze coins found in a bar in Pompeii, less than one percent bore Nero's image, while Claudius and Tiberius were well represented: Rowan 2012; Duncan-Jones 2003: 174. Epictetus contrasts Nero to Trajan, whose coinage is widely accepted because he was a good ruler. The moral lesson is one of human nature, and how the influence of a person with a negative 'imprint' should be shunned. His numismatic example might therefore be a somewhat light-hearted pun comparing a person's character to the imprint on a coin, as suggested by Rowan 2012: 21.
[229] *Caracalla*: Cassius Dio, 78.16.5. *Tiberius*: Cassius Dio, 58, fragment 2.
[230] Cassius Dio, 45.22.3.
[231] Ephrem Syrus, *Hymn against Julian*, 1.16-1.18.
[232] Suetonius, *The Divine Augustus*, 75.
[233] Herodian, *History of the Empire*, 1.9.6-8, the Greek is not clear on whether the coin bore Perennis' image or that of his son (who would have been pushed forward as emperor); Hekster 2011: 112.
[234] Matthew 22.15-22.
[235] Wallace-Hadrill 1981b: 33–34.
[236] Wallace-Hadrill 1981b: 34.

imperial power (notably the she-wolf and the suckling twins) but also seems to make reference to lines from Virgil.[237]

It seems fair to conclude that at least some inhabitants of the empire (including the imperial administration) looked at their coinage and expected coins to bear images which carried meaning. But looking is of course a very different thing from understanding. When normative ideals were depicted in visual form on coinage, they almost universally took a female form. These personified figures were differentiated primarily through their attributes and their legends – though the latter did not always make reference to the personification depicted. To the modern eye, the host of draped female figures with an array of different attributes makes a bewildering impression. Yet the images on coins formed part of a broader visual language, expressed not only in coinage types but in all forms of imperial art.[238] This shared visual language did not limit itself solely to imperial monuments or coins. Victoria is a great example of a key element of imperial ideology that found its way into countless media, from terracotta lamps to fresco's, while retaining the same iconography.[239] We should also refrain from ascribing a singular meaning to the images on coinage. As Cheung points out, viewers with different levels of intellectual sophistication may draw different messages from coinage; whereas an uneducated viewer might simply pick up on the association between the imperial bust on the obverse and the personified virtue on the reverse, a member of the elite may be able to appreciate the finer points of the intended association.[240]

1.4. – The imperial gaze: the image of the emperor

The imperial court spread normative ideals of legitimate rule both through its administrative documents and its coinage. Yet it could also employ a more indirect medium: portraiture and sculpture. Like other media considered thus far, sculpture gives expression to normative beliefs about legitimate rule, though rarely as explicit as for example a panegyric. When sculptures and reliefs depict the emperor together with personified concepts, such as the Cancelleria Reliefs from Rome, the Arch of Benevento or the Parthian Monument from Ephesus, they show mostly personified places or institutions rather than, for example, imperial *pietas* or *virtus*. But this does not mean that the imperial image was wholly without any underlying normative claims to legitimacy, which could be expressed through stylistic choices and contextualisation. Consensus view holds that imperial images were a common sight throughout the Roman world, ranging from small busts to large-scale equestrian sculptures. The oft-cited numbers of Pfanner – who estimated that between 25,000 to 50,000 imperial portraits were present in the empire at any given time – are vague at best but serve to give an impression of scale.[241] These thousands of portraits and sculptures existed in a living urban context. Its presence changed the civic landscape – for example by claiming prestigious spaces in town, such as the forum or the interior of the town's basilica, which might otherwise have been the preserve of local rulers and civic elites. Statues conferred authority and legitimacy through their physical dimensions: their prestigious location, large size and specific shape set them apart from other sculptures. Yet statues also fostered legitimacy through consent, given that the vast majority of statues in the provinces were erected by wealthy provincials rather than imperial agents.

[237] De la Bédoyère 1998.
[238] Toynbee 1956; cited in Cheung 1998: 54.
[239] Noreña 2011a: 307; see in general Hölscher 1967.
[240] Cheung 1998: 54–55.
[241] Pfanner 1989: 178. See also Højte 2005: 102–111. For more on production methods, see Fejfer 2009: 404–425.

As stand-ins for the emperor they conferred authority and legitimacy upon magistrates and courts.[242] Imperial statues provided sanctuary to runaway slaves or about-to-be-lynched bureaucrats.[243] Damaging, moving or even undressing in front of an imperial statue was fraught with danger, since it could lead to severe punishments.[244] Conversely, in times of crisis, imperial statues could become the target of various forms of public anger and violence.[245]

Roman thinking associated certain physical qualities with virtue and leadership, and the idea crops up continuously in imperial sources, perhaps most explicitly in the minute descriptions of imperial bodies in Suetonius.[246] Although there does not appear to be any sort of direct correlation between physiognomic treatises and imperial portraits, the attention for imperial bodies does alert us to the potential layers of ideological meaning inherent in imperial portraiture. This conclusion is not new, of course: (art) historians have long tried to connect broader ideological trends of an emperor's reign to his portrait types. Thus, Nero's Hellenistic decadence is to be found in his luxurious locks, Trajan's martial success and *virtus* in his sober appearance and military cut[247], while Hadrian's philhellenism was displayed through his bearded portrait.[248] Whether this was as obvious to ancient viewers as it appears to modern ones, remains an open question. Specific imperial virtues – let alone broad normative concepts of legitimate rule – are difficult to pinpoint in a portrait alone. This is not to suggest that the emperor's idealized features had no ideological value: they undoubtedly suggested his moral character, strength and charisma. Near-identical portraits of imperial princes – Gaius and Lucius, Caracalla and Geta – displayed the imperial *concordia* among the emperor's successors.[249] Such similarities in style could also be retained across dynasties to suggest continuity between the greatness of one emperor and that of his successor; the resemblances between portraits of Septimius Severus and the later Antonines are a case in point. Conspicuous breaks in style on the other hand could signal a change in ideological course for the new emperor, the veristic portraits of Vespasian being the most well-known example. But beyond such general ideological notions the ability of the imperial portrait to communicate specific normative beliefs on legitimacy remained limited.

Like imperial portraits, the ideological reach of sculpted imperial bodies was also limited. Still, the stock bodies employed for imperial sculpture were clearly aligned with specific imperial roles and the legitimacy that the successful fulfilment of these roles implied. Imperial statuary bodies fell into a set number of categories, which could differ in their individual details but were nevertheless

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[242] Severian, *In Cosmogoniam*, 6.5.

[243] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.74; Philostratos, *Vita Apolloni*, 1.15.2; Perry 2015: 663–664.

[244] Cassius Dio, 67.12.2.; Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.70; Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.74.3; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 58. It stands without question that the damaging of imperial statues was a serious offense in Roman law: *Digesta* 48.4.4-5. Note however that the literary anecdotes almost always involve emperors that were considered bad or cruel in ancient historiography: Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian and Caracalla. Some anecdotes cross into the absurd – such as Caracalla punishing a man for bringing one of the emperor's coins into a brothel (Cassius Dio, 78.16.5). This suggests that we should perhaps read the worst excesses of this type as part of the *topos* of the 'bad emperor': petty and overly concerned with his images. Such is also the case with Domitian, whose love of golden statues is compared unfavourably with Trajan in no uncertain terms: Pliny's *Panegyric* 52.1-5.

[245] Stewart 2003: 267–298.

[246] Evans 1969: 48–58; Trimble 2014: 124–129.

[247] Fejfer 2009: 270.

[248] Zanker 1995: 217–233.

[249] Fejfer 2009: 271–273.

consistently upheld across the empire. The emperor could be represented in toga (occasionally *capite velato*), in cuirass and as heroic nude; corresponding to idealized roles of the emperor as civic leader, triumphant commander and semi-divine hero.[250] These static body types could, in and of themselves, represent ideals of legitimate rule, at least from a Roman elite perspective. Statues depicting the emperor veiled and with *patera* in hand not only denoted his function as *pontifex maximus* but also clearly suggested his *pietas* towards the gods and the state. And it was no major leap of imagination to connect the image of the emperor in martial attire with both his actual successes on the battlefield and his innate *virtus* and *providentia*. The specific setting of the emperor in for example reliefs could furthermore add to the reading of the piece of sculpture: perhaps depicting the emperor showing *clementia* to conquered foes, *liberalitas* to his people or *concordia* by being depicted clasping hands with his heir(s).[251] And lastly, each statue was usually accompanied by an inscribed base, which could present further ways in which the emperor lived up to his role as legitimate monarch. As Trimble remarks of imperial statues: "Each one identified a need (e.g. for *pietas Augusti*) and at the same time demonstrated it being fulfilled."[252]

Given the limited number of stock bodies and types, imperial statues were less expansive in their expression of legitimacy than, say, a panegyric. The association between imperial image and for example an imperial virtue rested on the viewer's ability to interpret the piece and connect the dots. Yet it is beyond doubt that sculpture could play a legitimising role, presenting both individual emperors and the institution of emperor-ship as meeting the requirements of good rule. This ideological importance, coupled with the great similarity between portraits over vast distances, has led some past scholars to the conclusion that the imperial court strictly controlled the creation and distribution of imperial sculpture.[253] This view is now generally considered untenable given not only the immense logistical effort involved but also the variations in technical quality and style clearly present, even in copies of the same portrait type. Others have underlined the role of the provincial workshops which received one or more imperial prototypes from Rome and copied these for further distribution in the provinces[254]; and provincials with an interest in art and a fondness for expressing their loyalty to the emperor could order portraiture from one of the imperial workshops in Rome or elsewhere.[255] Current consensus suggests that we should take into account elements of all of these 'models'.[256] It is likely that provincial workshops played an active role, either in requesting prototypes from Rome or in creating their own variations on approved imperial portraits. The variety in portrait styles for any given emperor, as well as the varieties in quality and technique, suggest that workshops employed a number of different models. These indirectly conformed to the wishes of the court by adjusting or replicating 'approved' models, but nevertheless opened the imperial image up to local variation in material, size, style and finish.

The imperial court set the standards of visual representation of the emperor, but its reach was limited. The vast majority of dedications to the emperor outside of Rome were set up by civic office

[250] Niemeyer 1968; see Lahusen 1983: 46–56 for ancient literary recognition of these types.
[251] Trimble 2014: 147.
[252] Trimble 2014: 147.
[253] Hannestad 1988: 49.
[254] Pfanner 1989: 178–180.
[255] Zanker 1983: 9.
[256] Fejfer 2009: 408–425.

holders, benefactors or city councils. Perhaps more so than in other expressions of imperial ideology – which were more closely tied to Rome and the imperial court – statues and sculpture offered provincials a chance to participate in the shaping of imperial ideology. Though the ideological 'range' of a portrait may have been set by the imperial court, the specific elements of a statue offered provincials some leeway. The most obvious example is the inscription accompanying the statue, which could contain widely differing epithets, honorific clausulae and other local additions. But in visual aspects, too, we see some room for provincial adaptation, from the choice of body-type for the statue to the physical context the statue was to be placed in. One prominent example is the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, where the early Julio-Claudian emperors are depicted as divine rulers and military conquerors, though in a style and sculptural context that is decidedly Greek.[257] Likewise, the *quadrifrons* in Lepcis Magna, to which we shall return in greater detail in the next chapter, depicts the Severan imperial family in virtuous scenes of *concordia* and *pietas* while under the protection of Lepcitan civic deities. Of course, provincials were bound by tradition and convention. It was unthinkable for a statue of the emperor to be placed in anything other than a highly visible and prestigious location. And the choice for an armoured stock body may be motivated as much by the available output of a local workshop as it is by a desire on the part of the dedicator to honour the emperor's *virtus*.

[257] Smith 1987; Smith 1988.

CHAPTER II

PRAISING EMPERORS

The previous chapter surveyed a range of different media – from literature to coinage – which all in one way or another gave expression to normative ideals of legitimate power. Each of these various forms of media had the capacity for travel well beyond the confines of the imperial court. Whereas the spread of literary works was admittedly limited, administrative documents often travelled great distances and could play a very public role in civic life. Few provincials will have ever held an *aureus*, yet bronze and silver coinage found a wider audience. And the spread of sculptural trends, particularly in the imperial portrait, is in evidence throughout the empire. It is debatable to what extent these various media were ever consciously intended to convince provincial subjects of the legitimacy of imperial rule. Nevertheless, these media spread throughout the provinces, accompanied by a host of non-material claims to legitimacy – from rituals of the imperial cult to a governor's speech in honour of the emperor. Together they not only made persuasive claims about the legitimacy of imperial rule, but also transmitted Roman normative beliefs of what legitimate rule should look like.

To gauge whether these persuasive claims and normative beliefs found fertile ground in the provinces, I turn to the epigraphically-rich communities of North Africa. The comparison between African communities that forms the basis of this chapter is founded on the epigraphic material of cities with a sizeable number of inscriptions which employ normative language with reference to the emperor. Colonies – in most African cases, honorary colonies – provide a first point of departure. Through the granting of colonial status, we can be assured that these communities stood, for a short while at least, in contact with the Roman imperial administration. Major non-colonial settlements, such as Gigthis or Dougga, were likewise included for their clear signs of interaction with members of the imperial administration and their rich epigraphic record. The current chapter is based on a collection of 632 inscriptions from 35 communities, which contain some form of normative language referring to the emperor or the imperial family or include more general expressions of loyalty to the regime.[258]

As noted above, the differences between the epigraphic record of each of these cities are large. Whereas Tacape only yields two honorary inscriptions dedicated to the emperor and containing some form of normative language, Lepcis Magna counts 57 such dedications.[259] As with the number

[258] Cities and sites included in the dataset: Gigthis, Thysdrus, Capsa, Sufetula, Cillium, Sufes, Ammaedara, Mactar, Thuburbo Maius, Vaga, Bulla Regia, Thugga, Sicca Veneria, Theveste, Thamugadi, Madauros, Thubursicum Numidarum, Calama, Thibilis, Caesarea, Cirta, Rusicade, Milev, Cuicul, Sitifis, Hadrumetum, Carthago, Thigibba, Uchi Maius, Zama Regia, Tacape, Hippo Regius, Sabratha, Lepcis Magna, Uthina.

[259] In stylistic regards too, Lepcis Magna occupies a somewhat peculiar position from an epigraphic perspective, though the city shares a number of epigraphic trends with its Tripolitanian neighbours Oea and Sabratha. The detail and variety of Lepcis' epigraphic record means that the city often provides useful illustrative material, even if some of the features of the city's inscriptions are unique.

of surviving inscriptions, the differences in preservation and archaeological excavation of the various cities is considerable. While Lepcis Magna, Dougga and Cuicul make frequent appearances in discussions on urbanism and civic life in North Africa, the same cannot be said for communities such as Tacape, Vaga or Zama Regia. By taking a large number of cities into account, we may be able to perceive some of the larger trends current throughout North Africa. With this goal in mind, I will also occasionally include inscriptions from other cities and towns in the region to illustrate certain points and arguments. Although this investigation will mostly focus on the second and third century, inscriptions from the first and fourth centuries will make a regular appearance, either within a chronological arrangement or as comparative material. The epigraphic record of North Africa by and large follows Macmullen's well-known bell curve, with a distinct peak in the Severan era – perhaps partially influenced by the wide-spread grants of municipal rights in Africa Proconsularis under Septimius Severus.[260] The number of surviving inscriptions from the first century and fourth century dedications is usually limited in comparison to second and third-century material, although some sites, such as Cirta/Constantine and Lepcis Magna, diverge from this general trend. As I nevertheless hope to show, this need not necessarily prevent us from making more quantitative arguments about the surviving epigraphic material, if properly contextualised.

2.1. – Early responses – the second century

Of the various African communities under investigation, Lepcis Magna in particular has provided us with a large number of early imperial statue bases, building dedications and other forms of honorary dedications to the emperor spread out over a number of locations throughout the city. Among the most prominent of these, particularly in the first century, was the Forum Vetus. Also known as the Old Forum, the forum received its definite form in the late first century B.C. Together with the theatre, built in the same period, the Forum Vetus formed the main focus for dedicatory activity in the city until the completion of the Severan Forum in the early third century A.D. Besides temples to Liber Pater, Hercules and Augustus and Roma, the Forum Vetus housed a multitude of dedications to the Julio-Claudian emperors, occasionally in the form of dynastic 'group portraits' consisting of various statues, placed there at different intervals during the first century.[261] The dedications include statues of Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius, as well as various members of the imperial family such as Livia, Germanicus and Antonia Minor. The accompanying dedications were set up by various dedicators, including the citizen body as a whole, elite families such as the Italian Fulvii as well as Roman officials.[262] None of these dedications mention the virtues of the emperor or the imperial family, instead only highlighting the official titles of the reigning emperor or the dynastic ties between the various members of the imperial household. We see the same trend in the dedications to Augustus in the theatre and the so-called Punic Market of Lepcis.[263] The relative lack of normative language is cast into sharper relief by the importance of *pietas, concordia* and other virtues in Augustan ideology in Rome.[264] Lepcis certainly was not immune to ideological impulses from the

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[260] Macmullen 1982: 243; Gascou 1982: 207–220.
[261] Boschung 2002: 8–21.
[262] *Citizens*: IRT 334; *Fulvii*: IRT 328; *officials*: IRT 338.
[263] IRT 321-323, 319.
[264] Zanker 1990: 102–104,111; Lobur 2008.

centre: besides the number of dedications to Augustus, local Lepcitan coinage featured the imperial portrait and on occasion adopted Augustan imagery such as the *capricornus* with a globe and cornucopia.[265] Although visual aspects (such as the imperial portrait) and textual aspects (such as the presence of imperial titles in epigraphy) of Augustan ideology were adopted in Lepcis Magna, imperial virtues were not among them. We see a similar lack of honorific language in dedications to Tiberius, Vespasian and Titus, Domitian, Trajan, and Antoninus Pius.[266] In the first two centuries of imperial rule, we find numerous expressions of consent, but in a conservative, formulaic format: only in Latin and repeating imperial titulature with great uniformity. Normative beliefs on the importance of virtues in legitimate rulers may well have been shared in Lepcis Magna, but there was evidently no strong need to give explicit expression to these beliefs.

Yet Lepcis Magna has a number of surprising exceptions to this paucity which suggests that some dedicators were at least familiar with the importance of imperial virtues and similar honorifics. One of these exceptions comes in the shape of a large inscription (some 4.5 meters wide) mentioning Augusta Salutaris, dedicated by the proconsul Caius Vibius Marsus around 30 A.D.[267] Pieces of the inscription were found beside the base of an arch spanning the *decumanus*. Ward-Perkins describes it as a statue base, while Di Vita considers it part of a gate, under the name of *porta Augusta Salutaris*.[268] Given the location at the edge of the city's new monumental core, surrounded by the Punic Markets, the Chalcidium and the theatre, we are most likely dealing with a monumental entrance way to the city, though the large inscription also had a honorific function. Augusta Salutaris is worded in the nominative, not the traditional dative of dedications. The adjective Salutaris furthermore suggests that we are not dealing with a personified concept such as Salus Augusta, but with a 'health-giving Augusta'. Given the building date of the structure, the only realistic candidate is Livia.[269] Livia died in the previous year and although the construction of the arch may have begun before her death, it could have been intended as a commemoration of the recently passed Augusta. Tiberian coinage places no strong emphasis on *salus*, with the only known issue bearing Salus Augusta being a *dupondius* struck between 22-23.[270] On this coin however, the profile of Salus bears a strong resemblance to Livia, who had recovered from a major illness in the same year.[271] After her death, Livia was voted an arch by the Senate; a unique honour that appears to have been vetoed by Tiberius together with many other honours awarded to Livia.[272] The Lepcitan arch may have been conceived in this ambiguous climate, honouring the deceased Augusta but in a circumspect way. The dedication mentions no other dedicators or financiers beyond the proconsul, suggesting that the dedication and its wording might have been influenced or perhaps specifically chosen by the governor. Marsus may have had a general association between Livia and Salus in mind while

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[265] As on a Lepcitan *semis* (RPC I, nr.845), Kreikenbom 2008: 198–199.
[266] *Tiberius*: IRT 332, 333; *Vespasian and Titus*: IRT 345; *Domitian*: IRT 318, 347; *Trajan*: IRT 354, 355; *Antoninus Pius*: IRT 368-370.
[267] IRT 308.
[268] Di Vita 1977: 137.
[269] Bullo 2002: 179.
[270] RIC I Tiberius 47; see also an issue from the same year from the mint of Augusta Emerita, RPC I 72 no.38-39.
[271] Wood 2000: 109–110.
[272] Severy 2004: 242.

dedicating his gate, or may simply have felt it an appropriate wording to commemorate the empress-mother. In either case, the wording of the inscription is highly idiosyncratic.

A second exception comes in the form of two statue bases, dedicated to Augustus and Hadrian respectively, each lauding the emperor as "defender/saviour" (*conservator*).[273] This honorific title is peculiar, in that it does not appear in the epigraphic record of other African cities until the third century.[274] Naturally, we should be careful in drawing statistical conclusions from the epigraphic data – the record is incomplete and may not have been representatively preserved. It is equally possible, however, given the expenditure and nature of the dedications, that the title held some sort of local resonance and that the use of *conservator* was a deliberate inclusion by the dedicators of both statues. The statue of Augustus was dedicated by the Fulvii, an Italian family who had settled in Lepcis and quickly rose to prominence in the city.[275] The base was placed in the city's theatre in the year 2 B.C., one of the earliest dedications at the site. It is tempting to connect the title *conservator* to the honorific Greek title *soter*, which appears in Athenian dedications.[276] Yet *soter* had a decidedly religious component and is often found within the context of the imperial cult in the Greek East.[277] If the find spot of the base corresponds to its original location, the Lepcis statue had no direct association with the imperial cult in the city, which at the time of dedication was focussed on the Temple of Augustus and Roma in the Forum Vetus. Rather, the choice for *conservator* may have been intended to underline the loyalty of the Fulvii to the new emperor. In this they did not differ from a host of other leading elite families in Lepcis who were keen to include the emperor and the imperial family in their personal benefactions.[278] Yet the title itself seems lifted from Augustan ideology, which placed heavy emphasis on the new emperor's role in restoring and preserving the *res publica*. An Italian provenance of the title is possible, especially given the family's Italian origins. Expanding our horizon, the title seems to appear in only three early imperial inscriptions, from Brundisium and Capena in Italy and Anticaria in Spain.[279] In all three cases, *conservator* appears in dedications to Tiberius. The Capena inscription for example, dedicated by the *Augustalis* Aulus Fabius Fortunatus, was set up "to the greatest emperor and most just protector of the fatherland" (*principi optumo* [sic] *ac iustissimo conservatori patriae*). Although other, lost dedications may have contained this title, the surviving material indicates that it was never particularly prominent in either Italy or the provinces. Returning to Lepcis Magna, the inclusion of *conservator* appears to betray the influence of the dedicators. Given that other typically Augustan imagery appeared on for example local coinage, it is possible that the Fulvii were consciously

[273] IRT 320, 362.

[274] CIL VIII 2620 (a dedication to Severus Alexander from Lambaesis), CIL VIII 2346 = CIL VIII 17813b = D 632 = AE 1893, +115 and CIL VIII 2347 = CIL VIII 17813c = D 631 = AE 1893, 115 (paired dedications to Diocletian and Maximian from Thamugadi) and CIL VIII 7010 = ILAlg-02-01, 581 = D 691 (a dedication to Constantine from Cirta). In other cities, including Bulla Regia, Cuicul, Thugga and Gigthis, the term does not appear. Variations on *conservator* do appear in a number of Spanish towns: See CIL II 5486 (from Iluro); CIL 3732 (from Valentia); CIL II 2054 (from Aratispi); Noreña 2011a: 246.

[275] Birley 1988: 3–5; Fontana 2001: 162.

[276] See for example SEG 29 (1979) no.178; IG II^2 3266; IG II^2 3173, with discussion in Schmalz 2009: 80–82.

[277] See Foerster 1964; Clauss 1999: 342–343.

[278] See for example the building dedications of the theatre (IRT 321-323), the Chalchidium (IRT 324) and the market (IRT 319).

[279] AE 1965, 113; CIL XI 3872 = ILS 159; CIL II-V 748 = CIL II 2038.

responding to ideological concepts from Rome. If so, they appear as something of an exception within their community from an epigraphic standpoint.

The Hadrianic dedication using the same honorific title, dating to the year 132-133 A.D., was set up by "the Lepcitans publically" in the Temple of Liber Pater in the Forum Vetus. This location might suggest some connection to the imperial cult, but the base could also have been moved to the temple environs during the building of the Byzantine defences around the forum.[280] The wording of the inscription implies the use of public funds to erect the statue, but the text is silent on the precise motivation behind the dedication. The wording of the honorific (*per omnia conser*[*v*]*atori suo*) nevertheless suggests a considerable benefaction. It likely refers to one or more benefactions by Hadrian (including allowing the city to construct an aqueduct, IRT 358-359), which in turn may be related to Hadrian's tour of the region some years earlier.[281] Few other dedications to Hadrian survive from Lepcis Magna (see IRT 361), making it difficult to estimate exactly how unique the use of *conservator* was. It is nevertheless noteworthy that no other dedications appear to honour the emperor as *conservator* between Augustus and Hadrian, again suggesting that the title was employed only in exceptional circumstances. Rhetorically, this exceptional honorific serves to highlight the relationship between honorand and dedicator, suggesting the emperor's active involvement in the community and the lives of the Lepcitans.

Elsewhere in North Africa we find the first examples of normative language in honorific inscriptions during the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. In two dedications from Calama, Trajan is praised as an *optimus Augustus*.[282] One of these texts is heavily damaged while the other was set up by the city council. The inclusion of *optimus* may have resulted from Trajan's official adoption of the title. Although the title only starts appearing on Trajanic coinage from 114 onwards, Pliny's *Panegyric* suggests that it was offered to the emperor already before his suffect consulship in the year 100.[283] It is the only occurrence of *optimus*, or other forms of normative language for that matter, in any of the dedications to Trajan in my epigraphic database. Unsurprisingly, the title appears after the emperor's cognomen but before his *cognomina ex virtute*, suggesting that the city council of Calama was following official precedent. In the previous chapter, we noted the *sermo* praising Hadrian's virtues in the Bagradas Valley, highlighting the emperor's *providentia* and *cura* in particular. Among the civilian dedications however, only a single dedication from Gigthis contains personal praise for Hadrian, lauding him as *conditor municipii*, "founder of the community". The title could have been devised as a response to Hadrian promoting the city to *municipium*, though opinion is divided whether the full *ius Latii* was awarded under Hadrian or Antoninus Pius.[284] In Dougga and Thubursicum Bure, cities close to the Bagradas Valley, no extant dedications to Hadrian praise any of the emperor's virtues, let alone his *providentia* or his *cura*.

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[280] Kleinwächter 2001: 237.
[281] Halfmann 1986: 188–210.
[282] ILAlg-01, 238; CIL VIII 5289 = ILAlg-01, 178.
[283] See Pliny the Younger, *Panegyric* 88.4; the title was also adopted on Trajanic coinage from 114 onwards, see for example: RIC II Trajan 315-317, 323-335, 340-342, 345, 346, 349, 350.
[284] CIL VIII 22707 = ILTun 17 = ILS 6779 = Freis 00118 = BCTH-1993/95-89 = AE 1902, 00163 = AE 1953, +220 = AE 2003, +1924. See Guédon 2018: 143 and n.52.

Normative language became a somewhat more common feature of dedications under Antoninus Pius, with examples scattered across a number of North African sites. In Carthage, we encounter a possible building dedication set up to Antoninus Pius and dated to the years 145-161.[285] The badly fragmented plaque mentions construction work on a bathhouse, possibly financed (indirectly) by the emperor. It praises Antoninus Pius with the 'Trajanic' titles *optimus maximusque princeps* and mentions his "benefactions" (*beneficia*). Although one of the fragments records *Val*[...], who may have been responsible for the production of the inscription, the dedication seems to have been decreed by the city council acting in name of the community.[286] Far to the west of Carthage, outside of the city of Milev, two milestones praise the emperor's "indulgence" (*indulgentia*) for allowing the city to levy a toll (*vectigal rotare*) to secure the local road network.[287] In Hadrumetum, a damaged inscription dedicated to Marcus Aurelius records road repairs; the emperor appears to be honoured for his "farsightedness" (*providentia*), most likely for ordering or financing the repairs.[288] Another damaged inscription, this time from Thysdrus, may have been dedicated to the *concordia* of Antoninus Pius, although its dedicator and motivation remains unknown.[289] A consistent element in all of the dedications is their reactive nature: they were set up after some form of imperial benefaction. The emperor's benefactions not only gave a direct impulse to praise the emperor's virtuous qualities, it also narrowed down a wide field of potential linguistic choices. *Indulgentia* and *providentia* were obvious options to express gratitude for investments in local building projects.

2.1.1. – Worshipping imperial virtues

As discussed in the previous chapter, Rome had a lengthy tradition of worshipping deified virtues. By the second century, the tradition appears to have spread to Africa. In Ammaedara the local priest [...] Pinarianus Arator C[...] paid for the construction of a temple to Concordia Augusta between 125-149.[290] As recorded by the temple's dedicatory inscription, Arator attained equestrian rank and was placed on the honorary roll of jurors (*in quinque decurias*) by the emperor Hadrian. The inscription not only notes the large sum expended upon the temple – some 30,000 *sestertii* – but also its richly decorated interior and accompanying gladiatorial games, suggesting that Arator was a prominent member of the civic elite in Ammaedara. The Ammaedara temple is a reflection of a broader African interest in the cult of Concordia: Carthage, Dougga, Gales, Gigthis and possibly Madauros featured temples to the deified virtue.[291] However, not all of these sanctuaries were necessarily dedicated to Concordia Augusta or related to imperial *concordia*. Only in Gigthis did a local decurion pay for the erection of a temple to Concordia Panthea Augusta, making the intended association between Concordia and emperor explicit.[292] In Dougga, the goddess seems to have held strong local connotations and was not associated with either emperor or imperial cult, a point we shall return to in a later chapter. Whether the same can be said for Carthage, Gales or Madauros is unclear, but

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[285] CIL VIII 12513 = ILS 345 = ILPBardo-A, 9 = ILTun 890 = Horster p. 416 = Saastamoinen 167.
[286] Suggested by the fragmentary *colonia Con*[*cordia Iulia Karthago*].
[287] CIL VIII 10327-10328.
[288] CIL VIII 10026 = CIL VIII 21980 = AE 2014, +1455.
[289] ILTun 102 = AE 1928, 33.
[290] NDEAmmaedara 5 = Saastamoinen 146 = AE 1999, 1781. See commentary Benzina Ben Abdallah 1999: 8–11.
[291] Benzina Ben Abdallah 1999: 10.
[292] CIL VIII 22693 = ILPBardo 3 = ILTun 19 = Saastamoinen 280 = AE 1908, 119.

the lack of the epithet Augusta does seem to suggest it. Concordia Augusta did not receive the reception in North Africa which its importance to numerous emperors may seem to suggest, yet the deified *concordia* was clearly familiar enough to receive cult in both Gigthis and Ammaedara.[293]

It would be a mistake to view temples as the only possible form of cult. The *pagus* and *civitas* of Dougga, the two civic components of which the community consisted, erected a now broken dedication to Concordia Augusta in the second half of the second century.[294] The exact nature of the dedication remains unknown. It may have been an altar or a statue base. The stone was found near the so-called Dar Lachhab and possibly stood in the small square in front of the structure. If this was the original location of the stone, the placement is peculiar; especially given that it was erected with public funds. A publicly funded altar or statue with such strong imperial connotations is usually found in the forum area. Although the dedication offers evidence for the veneration of Concordia Augusta in Dougga, the modest size of the inscription and the relatively low-key setting suggest that this particular cult of Concordia was less prominent than the local cult of Concordia, to which several temples were erected.

Concordia was not the only virtue to receive an active cult in North Africa. In Dougga, the local benefactor Caius Pompeius Nahanus financed the construction of a small, semi-circular temple to Pietas Augusta. The dedicatory inscription notes that it was dedicated by Pompeius Rogatus, in accordance with the will of his brother Nahanus, with Marcus Morasius Donatus and Caius Pompeius Cossutus acting as curators.[295] The dating of the inscription and the temple is contested, with dates ranging from the late first to the early third century, but the building was most likely constructed during the reign of Commodus, on the basis of stylistic evidence and other building activity around the site.[296] The small temple is a rarity: despite the prominence of *pietas* in the repertoire of imperial virtues, few African communities feature cults of Pietas.[297] But the temple is also unique within the urban landscape of Dougga itself: *pietas* is almost exclusively associated with the funerary sphere in the city, where it appears in the ubiquitous formula *pius vixit*. Because of its uniqueness and insecure dating, the motives of Pompeius Nahanus remain somewhat nebulous. A desire for the continued prosperity of the empire and by extension a display of loyalty to that empire obviously played their part. But as with the sources mentioned in the previous chapter, the inscription also signals messages about the authors of the inscription. The Pietas Augusta is echoed in the *pietas* of Pompeius Nahanus himself for having the temple built at his personal expense, as well as Pompeius Rogatus' observance of his brothers' will. Another member of the Pompeii appears as curator of the building project, making the temple as much a monument to the ambitions of the members of a local elite family as to the divine virtues of the emperor. In size and decoration, the temple was dwarfed by other elite dedications in the city. The uniqueness of the dedications and

[293] Concordia and emperors: Fishwick 2016: 77.

[294] CIL VIII 26466, with commentary Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 153–154.

[295] CIL VIII 1473 = CIL VIII 15522 = Saastamoinen 126 = CIL VIII 15543 = CIL VIII 15246e = CIL VIII 26493 = Dougga 30 = AE 1904, 120; with commentary Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 80–86.

[296] Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 86.

[297] Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 86. A possible example is a damaged inscription from Sicca Veneria (CIL VIII 15849); the editor's reading is, however, contestable.

the cult, as well as its prominent location along the thoroughfare leading to the theatre, may have gone some way towards offsetting this imbalance by calling attention to the structure and its builders.

2.1.2. – The forum of Cuicul

The presence of virtues both in cult and in dedications to the emperors suggests that North African dedicators were well aware of the normative language employed in imperial media. Yet the somewhat scarce appearance of virtues across North African sites also suggests that second-century African dedicators were disinclined to include explicit descriptions of imperial virtues in epigraphic texts. This impression is further strengthened by the responsive nature of many dedications, set up after imperial interventions within the community. We may speculate that this reflects a mixture of both political caution and the conservative influence of local epigraphic traditions. Yet not all communities shared these epigraphic conventions. The forum of Cuicul offers an interesting example of a community where normative language appears in a more consistent manner in local dedications. Here, we find several statue bases – all located in the city's administrative centre, the North Forum – which directly praise the personal virtues of reigning emperors. The first of these is a statue base dedicated to Antoninus Pius in 156-157 by the city council of Cuicul.[298] The base stood beside the entrance to the *curia* in the town's Old Forum and had a distinct presence in the forum – the remains of the inscription alone stand at 1,65 meters.[299] The base is dedicated to the *pietas* of the emperor and this virtue receives special visual prominence in large lettering in the first line of the inscription. The visual emphasis on *pietas* is further enhanced by a *patera* carved into the left side of the base and by the statue of a personified Pietas which most likely stood on top.[300] After the dedication to *pietas*, the city council also seems to have erected a statue base to the *concordia* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, found close to the city's Capitol.[301] There is some confusion on the identification and reading of the inscription, but the titulature of both emperors makes a date of 165-166 most likely.[302] The dedication finds an interesting parallel in a dedication set up a few years later. This statue base, again of considerable height and rediscovered on the western side of the forum, was set up *ob honorem* by the local aedile Lucius Gargilius Augustalis.[303] The inscription is dedicated to the Concordia Augusta of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus and was set up by Gargilius between 166-169, in other words several years after the dedication by the city council. Finally, a dedication to the *virtus* of Commodus was found in the ruins of the Capitol.[304] The original dedicator – a local *duumvir* named Cornelius Iustinus – died before the statue could be set up, leaving his son Cornelius Pudentius to complete the project with additional funds.

The statue bases of Cuicul are of a different order than the dedications we have seen thus far. In addition to being directly dedicated to imperial virtues, they were likely accompanied by statues of

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[298] ILAlg-02-03, 7688 = AE 1916, 17.
[299] Zimmer 1989: 18, no.2.
[300] Zimmer 1989: 30.
[301] CIL VIII 8301.
[302] See the discussion in Kleinwächter 2001: 129.
[303] Zimmer 1989: 57, C9; with additional commentary by Kleinwächter 2001: 133–134.
[304] Zimmer 1989: 67, C51; with additional commentary by Kleinwächter 2001: 135.

personified virtues, and bear no known relation to imperial benefactions in the city. The motivation behind this local trend – beyond general motives of loyalty and allegiance – remain unclear. In the first dedication of its kind, the city council may simply have given expression to the long-standing association between Antoninus Pius and *pietas*.[305] In a similar fashion, the dedications to the *concordia* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus may have been the product of broader ideological trends current under the joint reign of both emperors. Contemporary imperial and provincial coinage for example regularly include images and legends referring to *concordia* and orations such as Aelius Aristides' *On Concord* or *Panegyric in Cyzicus* equally place emphasis on the virtue.[306] And through Commodus' association with Hercules and participation in gladiatorial combat, the significance of *virtus* was likely clear to the emperor's subjects.[307] *Pietas*, *concordia* and *virtus* were far from the only virtues associated with Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and Commodus, but each of these virtues received emphasis in their respective reigns. Whether the Cuicul dedicators sought to align their dedications with key values of the imperial regime, is a question that is impossible to answer conclusively. Given the cost of the dedications and the importance of the honorands – especially for private individuals – we may assume that some thought went into the text of the inscription and its implications. However, this holds true of all dedications, including the many North African dedications which make no mention of imperial virtues. The explanation is perhaps to be found in the influence of epigraphic traditions at a local level, impacted by both imperial ideology and the authority of civic institutions such as the city council. The dedication to the *pietas* of Antoninus Pius by the city council may have set a precedent for later dedications. Dedications to divine personifications in general seem to have had a strong presence in the public spaces of Cuicul, with statues to the local *genii*, Fides Publica and Victoria Augusta set up throughout the second century.[308] Private dedicators such as Gargilius and the Cornelii may have followed this more-or-less authoritative precedent.

Beyond following epigraphic precedents, the language of these dedications intertwined local and imperial authority. The dedications employ a language that is open to multiple interpretations. The dative in *Pietati Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)* or *Concordiae Augustor(um) Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)* for example makes it absolutely clear the city council of Cuicul recognizes the close relationship between the reigning emperor(s) and a given virtue. Yet the inscription leaves open what the exact nature of this relationship is. Are we to imagine the emperors always being in possession of these virtues, or are these more general qualities to which emperors can only lay a claim? The act of dedicating a statue *to* imperial *pietas* or *concordia* implies recognition and honour, but also implies a wish on part of the city council of Cuicul that the close relationship between virtue and emperor will be retained in the future, in a similar way to the panegyrics we saw in the previous chapter.
It is at the level of private dedicators that imperial virtues really take on a local political importance. Both Gargilius and Cornelius senior publicly vowed the erection of the statues while 'campaigning'

[305] Wesch-Klein suggests that the base was set up in response to the imminent *vicennalia* of the emperor in 158, Kleinwächter is critical of the notion. See Zimmer 1989: 54, C2; with additional commentary by Kleinwächter 2001: 133.
[306] Coinage: as argued for imperial coinage by Zimmer 1989: 29; see also Heuchert 2005: 53–54 on the popularity of the *concordia* theme on provincial coinage in the East. See also Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 23.78; 27.22-45.
[307] Hekster 2002: 162, 200. See also Cassius Dio, 73.20.2.
[308] Zimmer 1989: 21–31.

for civic offices. It is within this context that we should also place the above dedications. Although we do not know the exact details of the vow and how explicit both men were in what type of statue they were going to erect, we can nevertheless imagine that a vow to erect a statue to the *concordia* or *virtus* of the emperor would paint the candidate as both a loyal citizen of the empire and a sound moral arbiter, capable of recognizing virtue. Even though neither Gargilius nor Cornelius senior may have met with much competition for their civic offices, such markers of respectable behaviour were important in a political system that revolved around the display and recognition of honour. The statues may reflect the types of claims to legitimacy originating from the imperial court, yet they are as much a product of the ambitions of both Gargilius and Cornelius senior.

2.1.3. – Safeguarding the emperor

My definition of normative language as set out in the introduction was purposefully wide-ranging. It allows for the inclusion of a variety of terms, concepts and phrases that gave expression to normative beliefs about power. Yet even within this wide-ranging definition, the inclusion of the term *salus* is not a clear fit and demands some justification. *Salus*, denoting well-being, health and success, is not a personal quality or a honorific, but rather a state of being that is wished for in others. Countless inscriptions throughout North Africa and the empire begin with the phrase *pro salute*, occasionally supplemented with additional expressions of well-being such as *pro salute et incolumitate*[309] or *pro salute et victoria*[310]. The main subject of these wishes for well-being and success is in almost all cases the reigning emperor, sometimes accompanied by members of the imperial family. And it is precisely because *salus* is almost universally associated with the emperor and the imperial family that it falls within the scope of my analysis. My stated aim is to delve deeper into legitimacy and its expressions in language from a provincial perspective. The decision of dedicators to include *pro salute* in their dedications is a clear expression of consent. By dedicating costly objects such as altars, statues and even entire buildings to the well-being and continued success of the emperor, dedicators sent out a powerful message of loyalty. Although they may have held far more ambivalent opinions on the nature of imperial power, in their dedications – often prominently placed in the civic landscape – dedicators made public statements on the legitimacy of the reigning emperor and by extension the empire.

The popularity of *salus*, particularly in the second and third centuries, is generally acknowledged even if explanations for the trend are scarce. Perhaps this is the result of the common appearance of *pro salute* on a wide range of monuments and dedications without particular motivation. For Cooley it is a development that can be traced from altars and other votive offerings to an increasingly large range of buildings and monuments that had little to do with harnessing the emperor's safety, including baths and cisterns – a development she describes as "beyond logical

[309] CIL VIII 625 = CIL VIII 11819 = CIL VIII 11821 = CIL VIII 11822 = CIL VIII 11892 = CIL VIII 23412; CIL VIII 307 = CIL VIII 11531 = Saastamoinen 337 = Saastamoinen 338 = Haidra-05, 6; BCTH-1951/52-196 = BCTH-1953-46 = Hygiae p. 65 = Epigraphica-2002-94 = AE 1955, +49 = AE 1955, +54 = AE 1957, 54 = AE 2002, 1667; CIL VIII 23405; ILAlg-01, 1256 = Saturne-01, p. 369 = Saastamoinen 392.

[310] CIL VIII 20138 = ILAlg-02-03, 7824 = Saastamoinen 500 = AE 1913, 120 = AE 2012, +49; CIL VIII 17841 = ILS 6842; CIL VIII 10625; CIL VIII 18894 = ILAlg-02-02, 4638.

limits".[311] This judgement however immediately raises the question as to why communities and elites would participate in an epigraphic tradition for such a long period of time for no apparent reason. For Fishwick "[p]roliferation of the formula reflects a realization on the part of the dedicator that he is a member of the empire and that loyalty should be expressed to its head since the life of the individual and his successful conduct is dependent on the ruler of the *orbis Romanus*."[312] Although Fishwick is surely right in tracing the impulse behind *pro salute* to expressions of loyalty to the emperor, he perhaps overemphasizes the personal agency of dedicators. This point of criticism is also raised by Saastamoinen, who only offers the additional explanation that some *pro salute* dedications may have been set up with ulterior motives.[313]

The *pro salute* phrase first appeared in the late first century, became common under Hadrian and reached a peak under the Severans; in the third century it declined, appearing only occasionally in the fourth century.[314] Within this general pattern, however, there is considerable local variation which tends to be overlooked by scholars. Among the many second- and early-third-century dedications in Lepcis Magna, only two include the phrase *pro salute*.[315] In Sabratha, only one dedication bearing the phrase *pro salute* has been found.[316] For Lepcis Magna and Sabratha, with their extensive number of dedications to the Severan emperors, the argument that *pro salute* has simply not been preserved in the epigraphic record is weak. Rather, we are dealing with an epigraphic tradition that never seems to have gained a foothold in the Tripolitanian region. A sharp contrast is provided by Africa Proconsularis and Mauretania Caesariensis, where *pro salute* regularly appears in dedications.

In Thuburbo Maius, the first extant dedication containing the phrase *pro salute* is a statue base to Diana Augusta which was set up *ex voto* by a Lucius Romanius Gallus.[317] Soon after, however, it also appears on building dedications, such as that of a possible temple to Frugifer Augustus set up by the prominent Carthaginian Lucius Decianus Extricatus.[318] In Uchi Maius, *pro salute* appears in a particularly early case on a temple to Saturnus Augustus set up for the *salus* of Nerva by a local freedman.[319] Later it is included in the building dedications of, among other monuments, Hadrianic and Severan temples set up by members of the local elite.[320] But it is Dougga in particular that stands out in terms of the presence of *pro salute* on most of the city's major monuments. One noteworthy example includes the dedicatory text on the Capitol temple built by Lucius Marcius Simplex and Lucius Marcius Simplex Regillianus, consecrated around the year 168 and part of a grand urban

[311] Cooley 2012: 156–157.
[312] Fishwick 2004: 357; see in general Fishwick 2004: 352–360.
[313] Saastamoinen 2010: 90–91.
[314] The evidence for building dedications provided by Saastamoinen 2010: 91–93 is also borne out in honorary dedications to the emperor, which show a broadly similar pattern.
[315] IRT 292, 316.
[316] IRT 2.
[317] ILAfr 237 = AE 1917/18, 20.
[318] ILAfr 238 = ILPBardo 334 = Saastamoinen 132 = AE 1915, 22; see also the commentary in Abdallah 1986: vol. 92, 125–126.
[319] CIL VIII 26241 = Uchi-01-Rug 1 = Uchi-02, 9 = Saturne-01, p. 272 = Saastamoinen 58 = AE 1907, 153.
[320] CIL VIII 26245 = Uchi-01-Rug 3 = Uchi-01-Ugh 2 = Uchi-02, 16 = Saastamoinen 154; CIL VIII 25484.

building scheme which also included the adjacent forum.[321] The large dedicatory inscription running along the front of the temple mentions not only the Capitoline Triad, but is also dedicated to the *salus* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Various second- and early-third-century temples are likewise dedicated to the *salus* of emperors from Hadrian to Gallienus.[322] Although the dedication of temples to the *salus* of the reigning emperor is an understandable extension of the small-scale votive offerings to the *salus* of the emperor, the inclusion of *pro salute* was far from limited to religious monuments. The theatre of Dougga was completed around the year 166 by Publius Marcus Quadratus, a priest of the imperial cult and a decurion. The theatre features a number of large inscriptions commemorating both the financier of the project and features a dedication to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.[323] The highly visible inscription running along the *summa cavea* is dedicated to the *salus* of both emperors as well as listing Quadratus' expenditure on the project.[324] The forum *porticus* was dedicated to the *salus* of Antoninus Pius, while another possible building dedication, commemorating the construction of a *porticus* and the pavement of the local market, was dedicated to the *salus* of Commodus.[325] Likewise, the completion of the aqueduct of Dougga under Commodus was commemorated with a monumental inscription, possibly dedicated to the *salus* of the emperor.[326] Two large inscriptions – one dedicated to the *salus* of Severus Alexander and his father-in-law Seius Sallustius, the other to the *salus* of Severus Alexander, his wife Sallustia Barbia Orbiana and Julia Mamaea – graced the circus of Dougga, possibly at the location of the *meta*.[327] Other inscriptions mentioning *salus* can't be connected to particular monuments, but due to their size likewise point to a prominent public setting.[328] Smaller dedications – usually statue bases – follow building dedications in their use of *pro salute*, though not as frequently.[329]

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[321] Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 73–80, 87–90.

[322] Among others: CIL VIII 1483 (dedication of a temple to the Victoria Germanica of Caracalla, to the *salus* of Caracalla), CIL VIII 26471 (a temple dedicated to Fortuna Augusta, Venus, Concordia and Mercurius Augustus, to the *salus* of Hadrian), ILAfr 555 (a temple dedication to an unknown god/goddess, to the *salus* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus), CIL VIII 1482 (an architrave frieze found in the portico of the temple of Saturn, to the *salus* of Septimius Severus, Clodius Albinus and Julia Domna), CIL VIII 1505 = 15510 (a frieze found in the portico of the temple of Tellus, to the *salus* of Gallienus), CIL VIII 26479 (dedication of the temple of Mercurius, to the *salus* of Marcus Aurelius).

[323] Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 90–92.

[324] CIL VIII 1498 = CIL VIII 26528 = Saastamoinen 233.

[325] CIL VIII 26524 = ILAfr 521 = Dougga 29 = Saastamoinen 194 = AE 1914, 175 = AE 2011, 1760; CIL VIII 26530 = CIL VIII 26533 = ILAfr 523 = Saastamoinen 303 = AE 2011, 1760.

[326] CIL VIII 1480, Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 102–109; the first part of the inscription is missing, and although the formula *pro salute* would make sense given the size and length of the inscription, its inclusion is far from certain.

[327] CIL VIII 1492, with commentary Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 39–42; CIL VIII 26548 with commentary Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 38–39.

[328] CIL VIII 15246l = CIL VIII 15528 = CIL VIII 26527 = ILTun 1404 = Saastamoinen 207 = AE 1899, 214 (containing a dedication to the *salus* of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus); CIL VIII 26535 = ILAfr 524 = Dougga 9 = Saastamoinen 304 = ZPE-175-290 = AE 2010, +1810 (to the *salus* of Commodus); possibly CIL VIII 1489 = CIL VIII, 26562 = ILTun 1497 = ILAfr 531 = Saastamoinen 632 = Dougga 134 = CCCA-05, 87 = AE 1941, 158 (to the *salus* of Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius Chlorus, Galerius).

[329] See for example CIL VIII 26479 = ILTun 1395 (a dedication to Mercurius for the *salus* of Marcus Aurelius and the *domus divinae*); ILAfr 562 (a dedication to the Severan family by the people of Dougga). A further noteworthy feature of Douggan epigraphy is an altar to the Divi Augusti, the genius of Dougga, Aesculapius, Salus and Victoria, set up by a local *sodalis* named Tiberius Claudius Abascantus, in his name and that of his fellow-*sodales* (ILAfr 546). The altar is dated to the middle of the first century by Marin on the basis of onomastics, though this dating is far from certain. The inscription was read by Fishwick as referring not to a range of separate deities, but specifically to the 'Augustan' deities

Dougga's adoption of *pro salute* differs from that in other cities in North Africa primarily through its sheer quantity.[330] Part of the explanation for this discrepancy is to be found in the number of surviving building dedications from Dougga, which is exceptional in comparison even to much larger sites such as Carthage or Caesarea. This cannot, however, be the full explanation. Other cities with a considerable number of extant building dedications from the second and early third century – such as Theveste, Cuicul or Cirta[331] – have a far lower number of monuments dedicated to imperial *salus*; in some cities, *salus* hardly appears at all in the epigraphic record, either in honorific inscriptions to the emperor or building dedications.[332] According to Saastamoinen, only about 15% of all African building dedications from the second and third centuries included the phrase *pro salute*.[333] It should be noted that Saastamoinen's statistics offer a slightly skewed image: since the phrase did not become popular until the later second century, inscriptions from the first half of the second century drag down the total percentage for the second century. Nevertheless, it is clear that the popularity of the phrase *pro salute* in Dougga is not simply a formality of imperial building dedications, but an indication of local preferences and influences. Most privately-sponsored monuments in Dougga bore a dedication to imperial *salus*, an indication that imperial well-being was an important concern for high-ranking members of Dougga's elite.

To formulate an answer to the question what motivated this trend, we must delve deeper into the chronology of *salus* in the city's epigraphy. The first mention of the phrase *pro salute* in Dougga dates from the reign of Hadrian and appears on two major elite-sponsored building projects. One dedication appears on the temple to Fortuna Augusta, Venus, Concordia and Mercurius Augustus, financed by Quintus Maedius Severus and his daughter Maedia Lentula.[334] Whereas Maedia is listed as a *flaminica perpetua*, Maedius is praised as a patron of the *pagus et civitas*. It is unclear where the temple structure might have stood, but the inscriptions inform us that the Maedii paid at least 70,000 *sestertii* for the construction and decoration of the temple. The second known use of *pro salute* dates from approximately the same period and appears on a large cultic complex dedicated by one of the most prominent clans of Dougga, the Gabinii.[335] Unlike the dedication by the Maedii, which starts with a dedication to the gods and only afterwards follows with a *pro salute*, the dedicatory inscription by the Gabinii opens with a prominent *pro salute*. The exact function of the

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ensuring the success and protection of the emperor, in this case the genius of Dougga, Aesculapius, Salus and Victoria. The hypothesis is an attractive one, though the dedication nevertheless has a strong local aspect and the invoked deities may as well be read as protectors of the local community as much as the empire. Of particular interest is the inclusion of both Aesculapius and Salus, which hints at a strong identification by Abascantus and his associates of Salus with Hygeia. See Fishwick 1989: 113, Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 263–264.

[330] For other examples, see *Thuburbo Maius*: ILAfr 238 = ILPBardo 334 = Saastamoinen 00132 = AE 1915, 22; ILAfr 237 = AE 1917/18, 20. *Mactar*: 11799 = ILAfr 200 = Saastamoinen 227. *Uchi Maius*: CIL VIII 26241 = Uchi-01-Rug 00001 = Uchi-02, 9 = Saturne-01, p 272 = Saastamoinen 58 = AE 1907, 153; CIL VIII 26264 = Uchi-01-Rug 27 = Uchi-01-Ugh 13 = Uchi-02, 50 = Saastamoinen 553.

[331] Of the three, only Cuicul has a surviving inscription dedicated *pro salute*: CIL VIII 20138 = ILAlg-02-03, 7824 = Saastamoinen 500 = AE 1913, 120 = AE 2012, +49.

[332] Such as Gigthis (CIL VIII 22715), Tacape (CIL VIII 22796 = ILTun 72 = AE 1906, 17) and possibly Capsa (CIL VIII 100 = CIL VIII 11228 = Saastamoinen 599).

[333] Saastamoinen 2010: 90.

[334] CIL VIII 26471 = ILTun 1392 = Dougga 136 = Saastamoinen 123 = AE 1904, 116 = AE 2011, +1760.

[335] CIL VIII 1493 = CIL VIII 15520 = CIL VIII 26467 = CIL VIII 26469a = CIL VIII 26469b = Saastamoinen 120 = ILTun 1389 = ILAfr 515 = Dougga 27. On the Gabinii, see also Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 194–198.

monumental complex of the Gabinii – which includes several cultic spaces and an auditorium – is not clear, but included a sanctuary to Concordia, Frugifer and Liber Pater. Marcus Gabinius Bassus is mentioned in the inscription as a *flamen Augusti*, and both he and his brother Aulus Gabinius Datus are honoured as patrons of the *pagus* and *civitas*.

In both cases, we are dealing with benefactors with important roles in the local community who spent considerable sums on prominent monuments in Dougga. The lack of a civic *cursus honorum* in these dedications is not a sign of the unimportance of the benefactors in question, but is rather explained through Dougga's unique civic constitution consisting of a *pagus* and a *civitas*. This constitution seems to have included two *sufetes*[336], but of other civic magistracies we know very little.[337] Within a different and perhaps more limited system of civic politics in a polity whose civic life was to a considerable extent dominated by Carthage, even more emphasis might have been placed on priesthoods and munificence as ways towards local prestige. Both the Maedii and the Gabinii were influential figures in their community and acted as early adopters of a new epigraphical custom, possibly along with other benefactors whose dedications have not survived. Their choice to include the phrase *pro salute* in their building dedications may have helped the new trend take root in the local epigraphic traditions of Dougga, whereas the same did not happen in for example in Tripolitania. As we have seen, later elite benefactors in Dougga would regularly incorporate *pro salute* in their building dedications. The forces that were to safeguard the emperor and the empire are often left implied: whereas altars tend to invoke specific deities for the protection of the emperor, building dedications generally do not. Nor are dedications which include the phrase *pro salute* limited to temples and sanctuaries. The architrave inscriptions running along the forum *porticus* set up by Quintus Gabinius Felix Faustinianus between the years 138-161, also included a dedicatory *pro salute*, despite the structure having a mostly decorative function.[338] An answer perhaps lies in the uncoupling of monument and text: *pro salute* was an epigraphic convention which acted in relationship to other inscriptions, but need not directly invoke the gods or have a 'logical' relationship with the monument on which it was inscribed. Rather, what seems to have mattered was that dedicators showed their willingness to act on behalf of the emperor's well-being. Large, monumental inscriptions dedicated *pro salute* signalled a wish by the dedicator for the continued success of emperor and empire, as suggested by Fishwick. Largely implicit in Fishwick's explanation, however, is the role of the benefactor: inclusion of *pro salute* also expressed an active part for the benefactor in safeguarding the empire through his actions and expenditures. Such a declaration transformed a potential deed of self-aggrandizement in the local civic context into an act for the public good of the empire and by extension the community. Elite competition around the empire is usually envisioned in terms of *munificentia* or the jostling for civic offices. I would argue that expressions of consent to imperial rule also served their purpose within this inter-elite dynamic. By erecting statues to imperial virtues, or by dedicating ever more lavish monuments to the well-being of the emperor, members of the elite in Dougga and elsewhere outdid one another in expressions of loyalty to the empire. Note for example the monumental features throughout

[336] The highest-ranking among the traditional Punic magistracies; see also chapter 4.3.
[337] Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 141.
[338] CIL VIII 26524 = ILAfr 521 = Dougga 29 = Saastamoinen 194 = AE 1914, 175 = AE 2011, +1760, see also Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 73–80.

Dougga: a temple to Pietas Augusta, a temple to Victoria Germanica and an altar to Concordia Augusta.[339] Although there was likely an external motivation involved – perhaps gaining a positive reputation with the local governor, procurator or other official – such displays of consent also by necessity had a local, communal audience. With their shows of loyalty and consent to a legitimate regime, members of the local elite not only claimed honour for themselves but also gave a clear expression to the close relationship between local elite power and imperial rule.

2.2. – Central message, local response

In the last few pages we saw normative language appear in relation to various emperors. On the one hand, this normative language appears irregularly and does not correlate closely with the virtues and benefits most often propagated in imperial media, such as *virtus*, *pietas*, *aequitas* or *iustitia.* On the other hand, dedicators clearly show a familiarity with normative language and its appropriate context, for example in response to imperial benefactions or in the dedication of a statue of the personified *pietas* of Antoninus Pius. We can trace a clear chronological development with normative language becoming more pervasive from the second half of the second century onwards. Although undoubtedly the result of a general rise in epigraphic texts towards the end of the second century, normative language also became a more entrenched aspect of dedications with precedents set by city councils and private dedicators. And as argued earlier, we should not discount the idea that increasingly explicit expressions of consent to imperial power could also be part of inter-elite competition and the entrenchment of elite power in general. With the rise in dedications towards the late second century, elite dedicators may have sought for new and more varied means of expressing their loyalty to the empire in sincere terms, spurring the use of normative language. Noticeably lacking, however, appears to be any form of top-down influencing of preferred ideological phrases or imagery. As noted, even dedications by governors and other imperial officials often lack normative language. Beginning with the reign of Septimius Severus, however, we can trace a clear shift in epigraphic conventions: virtues and honorifics become far more common.

The clearest example is undoubtedly the title *fortissimus felicissimus*, which in a few years spread across North Africa and the empire in general.[340] *Fortissimus felicissimus* usually appears coupled,

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[339] *Pietas Augusta*: CIL VIII 1473 = CIL VIII 15522 = Saastamoinen 126 = CIL VIII 15543 = CIL VIII 15246e = CIL VIII 26493 = Dougga 30 = AE 1904, 120. *Victoria Germanica*: CIL VIII 1483 = CIL VIII 15505 = CIL VIII 26546 = CIL VIII 26639 = CIL VIII 26650 = Saastamoinen 444 = ILAfr 527 = Dougga 39 = Dougga-01, p 51 = AE 1997, 1654 = AE 2003, 2013 = AE 2005, 1686 = AE 2007, 1741. *Concordia Augusta*: CIL VIII 26466.

[340] Lepcis Magna is not included here given the city's preference for only the title *felicissimus*; a point to which we shall return below. *Gightis*: CIL VIII 22715. *Cirta*: CIL VIII 19495 = ILAlg-02-01, 566; CIL VIII 6944 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 473; CIL VIII 6969 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 537; CIL VIII 6998 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 563; CIL VIII 7000 = CIL VIII 19418 = ILAlg-02-01, 569 = Saastamoinen 407 = AntAfr-2007-86; CIL VIII 10304 = ILS 471; CIL VIII 10305. *Bulla Regia*: BCTH-1953-57. *Cuicul*: ILAlg-02-03, 7806 = Saastamoinen 341 = AE 1911, 106; ILAlg-02-03, 07805 = Saastamoinen 340. *Hippo Regius*: AE 1958, 142 = AE 1959, +187. *Mactar*: BCTH-1951/52-196 = BCTH-1953-46 = Hygiae p. 65 = Epigraphica-2002-94 = AE 1955, +49 = AE 1955, +54 = AE 1957, 54 = AE 2002, 1667; BCTH-1946/49-371 = Saastamoinen 377 = AE 1949, 47; CIL VIII 11801 = ILS 458. *Sicca Veneria*: CIL VIII 15857. *Rusicade*: CIL VIII 7961= ILAlg-02-01, 7 = ILS 3074 = Louvre 22; CIL VIII 7970 = ILAlg-02-01, 18 = Louvre 95; CIL VIII 7972 = ILAlg-02-01, 19. *Thibilis*: AE 1895, 83. *Thubursicum Numidarum*: CIL VIII 23993; ILAlg-01, 1260. *Sitifis*: AE 1951, 37. *Thamugadi*: CIL VIII 17871 = AE 1985, 881c; CIL VIII 2437 = CIL VIII 17940 = AE 1985, 881a; BCTH-1932/33-195 = Saastamoinen 333 = AE 1894, 44; AE 1985, 881b = AE 1987, +1074 = AE 1988, +1125. *Uchi Maius*: Uchi-02, 40 = Posters p. 119 = AE 2000, 1733 = AE 2007, +1718.

but occasionally both qualities appear separate from one another. *Felicissimus* on its own only appears three times in the epigraphic record, while *fortissimus* appears as a separate virtue in ten dedications.[341] The conspicuous spread of these terms under the Severans has drawn the attention of scholars. For Noreña, the inclusion of both titles is a sign of an imperial ideological message sent to the provinces through coinage and other media and given local response in dedications.[342] He emphasizes the military aspects of *felicitas* and points to the large output of *felicitas* types under Severus as the impulse behind the sudden rise of *felicissimus* in epigraphy.[343] Septimius Severus is the first emperor in the epigraphic record of North Africa to be honoured for either virtue and both *felicissimus* and *fortissimus* regularly appear either among the emperor's regular titles or at the end of the imperial titulature. Hence it is tempting to see *fortissimus felicissimus* as an official title much akin to *Pius Felix*, yet there is no indication that *fortissimus* or *felicissimus* were ever voted for by the Senate or adopted by the emperor. The triumphal arch of Septimius Severus on the Roman Forum for example, dedicated by the Senate and the people of Rome in 203 is as official an inscription as we may expect. The text praises the outstanding virtues (*insignes virtutes*) of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta, but does not include *fortissimus felicissimus* among the imperial titles.[344] Although a similar phrase is included in the inscription (*optimi fortissimique principes*), this was only added after the *damnatio* of Geta in 211. The near-contemporary Arch of the Argentarii on the other hand, erected in 204 by the moneylenders and cattle-traders of the Forum Boarium, does praise Septimius Severus as *fortissimus felicissimus*.[345] This suggests that although the title may not have received official backing, it was nevertheless strongly associated with the emperor by his subjects in Rome.

The sudden and consistent appearance of *fortissimus* and *felicissimus* in dedications from across the empire is a strong argument in favour of some form of transmission from the Severan court which emphasized both qualities in its self-representation and communicated their importance to provincial audiences through administrative contact or media such as imperial coinage. There is certainly something to be said for this perspective. Beyond *fortissimus felicissimus* we might for example also point to the sudden surge in 'shared' dedications to the imperial family, with inscriptions often simultaneously praising Septimius Severus, his sons and Julia Domna. Although dedicating a statue to multiple rulers was not unheard of – see the dedications to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus – the appearance of the entire imperial family together is an ideologically loaded representation that finds clear reflection in imperial art works such as the Severan Tondo and Severan coinage, once again suggesting that the Severan court was successful in communicating specific forms of self-representation.

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[341] *Felicissimus*: CIL VIII 10304 = ILS 471; CIL VIII 22715; AE 1958, 142 = AE 1959, +187. *Fortissimus*: CIL VIII 2368 = CIL VIII 17872 = Timgad 23 = Saastamoinen 381 = AE 1954, 153 = AE 2007, +51; CIL VIII 6996 = ILAlg-02-01, 562 = AntAfr-2007-86; CIL VIII 11802 = ILPBardo 101; CIL VIII 17837 = AE 1888, 28; CIL VIII 18902 = ILAlg-02-02, 4663; CIL VIII 19493 = ILAlg-02-01, 564 = ILS 439 = BCTH-1982-175 = AE 1947, +48; BCTH-1941/42-130 = AE 1941, 49; ILAlg-02-03, 7803 = AE 1917/18, 70; ILAlg-02-03, 7804; Thomasson 1996: 174, no.50ee.

[342] Noreña 2011: 225–227, 235–236, 260–261.

[343] See however the rather different definition of *felicitas* employed in Noreña 2011a: 165–174.

[344] CIL VI 1033 = CIL VI 31230 = CIL VI 36881 = ILS 425 = AE 2003, +267.

[345] CIL VI 1035.

While some influence from the court may be assumed, a fully top-down, one-sidedly centrist approach passes over a number of important inconsistencies and ambiguities. Firstly, it suggests that there was a singular Severan conception of *fortitudo* or *felicitas*. Yet Severan sources paint a very fragmented image. *Fortitudo* is perhaps the easiest to contextualise. Even when not taking into account Severus' successful military campaigns to become emperor, his position like that of all emperors leaned heavily on military support and the ideological importance of imperial bravery and victory.[346] The personified *virtus* is regularly depicted on Severan coinage and some 23% of all Severan *denarii* depict Victoria on the reverse, suggesting that martial themes retained their ideological importance under Septimius Severus.[347] Yet it is striking to note that neither the title *fortissimus* nor the virtue *fortitudo* appear on Severan coinage. It could be argued that Victoria, *virtus* and *fortitudo* are related concepts and all served to give expression to a general idea of imperial triumph and martial success. Even so, it is interesting to note that where Severan coinage stressed Victoria and *virtus*, provincial epigraphy stressed *fortitudo.* Though Noreña speaks of "ideological convergence"[348], these three concepts remain separate in our epigraphical sources and were apparently not interchangeable for ancient audiences. Victoria Augusta gains no particular prominence under the Severans and *virtus* is nearly non-existent in the Severan dedications of North Africa, in contrast with *fortitudo*.[349] It should also be noted that the Severans did not differ in this regard from other emperors before them, whose martial virtues are also consistently propagated on coinage, in statuary form and in literary texts without, however, receiving the same enthusiastic reception in provincial epigraphy.

More ambivalent in meaning is *felicitas*. This quality is usually associated with good fortune, prosperity and happiness, with a clear implication of divine favour.[350] Republican sources also highlight a more militaristic interpretation of *felicitas*, as the kind of 'battlefield luck' that was an important attribute of the ideal general.[351] This militaristic interpretation was retained in imperial times, though as part of the wider notion of *felicitas* as an ideal of imperial prosperity or *Kaiserglück*.[352] *Felicitas* appears in Severan literature and on Severan coinage, but both of these media highlight slightly different interpretations of the concept. The sources are vague on why the emperor should identify with this quality in particular. Cassius Dio describes the spectacular *adventus* of Septimius Severus in Rome in the year 193, where "the crowd chafed in its eagerness to see him and to hear him say something, as if he had been somehow changed by his good fortune (*tyche*)".[353] The term *tyche* is not a direct translation of *felicitas*, but it could be argued that the

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[346] For the emperor's ideological role as military leader, see Hekster 2007.

[347] Noreña 2011a: 235, 262; Rowan 2012: 44.

[348] Noreña 2011a: 235.

[349] The sole exception seems to be a triumphal arch set up by a local benefactor from Cirta, whose dedication makes mention of a statue to *Virtus domini nostri*, in this case Caracalla. See CIL VIII 7095 = CIL VIII 19435 = ILAlg-02-01, 675 = ILS 2933 = AntAfr-2007-88 = Saastamoinen 463; CIL VIII 7096 = ILAlg-02-01, 676 = Saastamoinen 464; CIL VIII 7097 = ILAlg-02-01, 677 = Saastamoinen 465; CIL VIII 7098 = CIL VIII 19436 = ILAlg-02-01, 678 = Saastamoinen 466.

[350] Erkell 1952: 50–54.

[351] Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompei*, 28; the most famous example being the *felicitas* of Sulla: Plutarch, *Sulla*, 34.2; Velleius Paterculus, 2.27.5; Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 22.12. For the equally militaristic role of *felicitas* in Livy, see Wistrand 1987: 15–26.

[352] Erkell 1952: 43-128; Manders 2012: 193,196.

[353] Cassius Dio, 75.1.5, translation Cary 1927; see also Langford 2013: 56.

concept is nevertheless closely related in meaning as a state of good fortune, success and divine favour.[354] The praise of fortunateness was current before Severus: Cassius Dio notes that he and his senatorial colleagues hailed Commodus as “of all men most fortunate” (*πάντων εὐτυχέστατος*).[355] Septimius Severus himself seems to have associated his rise with divine favour in his autobiography, which is referred to by a number of ancient authors, including Cassius Dio, Herodian, the author(s) of the *Historia Augusta* and Aurelius Victor.[356] Herodian notes that the work was filled with dreams, portents and omens: “Severus has given an account of many of them himself in his autobiography and by his public dedications of statues”.[357] *Felicitas* is not mentioned by name, but the literary sources seem to suggest that the emperor placed a personal emphasis on the divine favour he enjoyed, traditionally strongly associated with *felicitas*. Again it can be noted that Septimius stood in a long line of emperors who also emphasized their close connection to the gods and divine right to rule.[358] If the Severan court placed much emphasis on *felicitas* in the sense of divine support, we would expect to find some trace of this on the many coin types bearing images of deities, particularly those of the emperor’s chosen deities Liber Pater and Hercules. Yet allusions to divine *felicitas* are sparse.[359] This suggests that *felicitas* may perhaps have held further meaning for the court beyond divine protection in the strict sense of the word.

A closer look at the Severan *felicitas*-types reveals a different interpretation. Despite the prominence of the quality in Severan epigraphy, there is no great numerical difference in the *felicitas*-coinage of Severus and that of his immediate predecessors, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.[360] But there is a striking difference to be found in the designs and obverses of the *felicitas*-type. Several Severan coin types in both silver and gold associate *felicitas* with Victoria or other images of military success, though similar coins were minted under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.[361] Far more prominent are the *felicitas*-types with a dynastic intent. Both Caracalla and Geta are regularly depicted on the obverse with a personified Felicitas on the reverse in silver and gold coinage. Severan coinage also depicts the imperial family – alone or in ‘group portraits’ – with legends noting FELICITAS PUBLICA, FELICITAS TEMPORUM and FELICITAS SAECULI.[362] The dynastic intent of such messages is clear: the secured succession of Septimius Severus (as opposed to his

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[354] As argued by Langford 2013: 66.

[355] Cassius Dio, 73.20.2.

[356] Cassius Dio, 75.7.3; Herodian, 2.9.4; *Historia Augusta*, ‘Severus’, 3.2, *Albinus* 7.1; *Pescennius Niger* 4.1.; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 20.22.

[357] Herodian, *History of the Roman Empire*, 2.9.4; translation Whittaker 1969.

[358] Rowan 2012: 11–14.

[359] *Felicitas* does appear in the legends of several Isis- and Fortuna-types. *Fortuna*: RIC IV Septimius Severus 154, 552, 553, 554 (*denarius*, *aureus*), 854, 875 (*as*, *dupondius*), 876 (*as*, *dupondius*). *Isis*: RIC IV Septimius Severus 577 (silver and gold), 645 (silver and gold), 865 (bronze). The goddess has been identified as Isis by Mattingly, though Rowan has recently questioned that interpretation, arguing that an identification with Fortuna is more likely, see Rowan 2011: 252–253.

[360] Based on the coinage database in Noreña 2011: 334–345. For Marcus Aurelius, bronze coins with *felicitas*-designs make up 3,3% of the total bronze coinage; for silver 4,8%. Under Commodus, *felicitas* appears on 5% of the bronze and 7,2% of the silver coinage. For Septimius Severus, 6,5% of the bronze and 6,5% of the silver coinage.

[361] See (among others) RIC III Marcus Aurelius 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328; RIC III Commodus 552, 555, 181, 530; RIC IV Septimius Severus 138, 144A-B, 165A-C, 516.

[362] See for example RIC IV Septimius Severus 159, 175, 181, 629; RIC IV Caracalla 14, 18, 34, 35, 127; RIC IV Geta 1, 2, 8, 9A, 9B, 22, 29, 69A, 69B, 94, 95, 97.

predecessor Commodus) which was to lead to a prosperous golden age. Literary sources – which in all cases post-date Septimius Severus – remain silent about this dynastic aspect of *felicitas*, perhaps as a consequence of the negative reputation of Caracalla's reign. This literary silence highlights the lack of a singular 'message' sent from the court and the plurality of images, messages and media. The divergent readings of Severan *felicitas* – divine favour, battlefield success, continuous prosperity – were certainly not in opposition to one another. They shifted in meaning for different audiences, including the senatorial elite, (military) officials and provincial elites. The Severan court may have propagated or preferred specific ideological concepts but, as Severan *felicitas* suggests, different ideological readings were always possible.

In the previous chapter we saw the prevalence of virtuous language among the higher ranks of the imperial administration. The context of that discussion was limited to communication within the administrative network, but naturally imperial agents did not operate in a vacuum. Through petitions, justice, socialising and a variety of other situations, imperial administrators of various ranks interacted with provincials on a regular basis. Noreña suggests that governors played an important role in the transmission of ideological values, but adds that evidence for such a thesis is scarce.[363] North African epigraphy may in fact offer a rare example of an administrator leaving his mark on local epigraphic traditions, in the form of Quintus Anicius Faustus. Faustus was likely a *homo novus* within the Severan administration, who became commander of Legio III Augusta and was possibly at the head of the newly created province of Numidia between 197 and 201.[364] Even if Faustus was never officially made governor of Numidia, he held an influential position. Already under Caligula, all military affairs of Africa Proconsularis were placed in the hands of the legate of Legio III Augusta, who acted independently from the governor of Africa Proconsularis and in some respects may have acted as the *de facto* governor of the Numidian frontier region, even though matters of the civilian administration officially remained under control of the governor of Africa Proconsularis.[365] Faustus also seems to have played an active role in the expansion of the *limes Africanus* under the Septimius Severus.[366] Unsurprisingly, this dominant figure in Severan Africa has an equally dominant presence in African epigraphy. Beyond the army camp in Lambaesis, Faustus features prominently in six statue bases and dedicatory plaques from Thamugadi and two building dedications and a statue base from Cuicul.[367] One example is the large statue base from the southern edge of the forum of Thamugadi:

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[363] Noreña 2011a: 269.

[364] Mennen 2011a: 86–89; the exact date of the creation of the province Numidia is a point of dispute and the title *legatus* seems to have also been applied to the Numidian governor, see Thomasson 1996: 176. Faustus is the most well-attested legate in the North African material; for a full overview, see Thomasson 1996: 170–176.

[365] Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.48; Cassius Dio 59.20.7. Dio however seems to confuse the division of powers enacted by Caligula with the actual creation of the province Numidia, a Severan development. See Shaw 1983: 142–143, who, however, also emphasises that the civil administration of the Numidian regions remained *de iure* under the control of the governor of Africa Proconsularis.

[366] See Guédon 2018: 111ff.

[367] *Thamugadi*: CIL VIII 2437 (p. 952) = CIL VIII 17940 = AE 1985, 881a; CIL VIII 2438 = CIL VIII 17941; CIL VIII 17871 = AE 1985, 881c; AE 1985, 881b = AE 1987, +1074 = AE 1988, +1125; BCTH-1932/33-195 = Saastamoinen 333 = AE 1894, 44; CIL VIII 17870 = ILS 446. *Cuicul*: ILAlg-02-03, 7805 = Saastamoinen 340; ILAlg-02-03, 7806 = Saastamoinen 341 = AE 1911, 106; Thomasson 1996: 174, 50ee.

Imp(eratori) Caesari M(arco) Aurelio Antonino Aug(usto) Parthico m[*a*]*ximo trib*[*uniciae potes*]*tatis bis proconsuli Imperatoris Caesar*[*is*] *L(uci) Septim*[*i Sev*]*eri Pi*[*i Pertinacis Aug(usti)*] *Arabici Adiabenici Parthici maximi fortis*[*simi f*]*elic*[*issmique principis filio*] [[[*P(ubli) Septimi Getae nobil(issimi) Caesaris fratri*]]] «*et Iuliae Aug(ustae) matr(i) cast(rorum) et sen(atus) ac patriae*» *divi M(arci)* [*Antonini Pii Germ(anici) Sarm(atici) nepoti divi*] *Antonini pronep(oti) divi Hadriani abnepot*[*i divi Traiani Parthici et divi Nervae*] *abnepoti dedicante Q(uinto) Anicio Fausto* [*leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pro praetore consuli am*]*plissimo pat(rono) col(oniae) et Saevinio Proculo tri*[*buno laticlavio curatore r(ei) p(ublicae) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ecunia) p(ublica)*][368]

"To Imperator Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus Parthicus, the Greatest, holding tribunician powers for the second time, proconsul, son of Imperator Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus Arabicus Adiabenicus Parthicus, the Greatest, most brave and most fortuitous princeps, [[[brother of Publius Septimius Geta, most noble Caesar]]] «and Julia Augusta, mother of the camp and the Senate and the fatherland», grandson of the divine Marcus Antoninius Pius Germanicus Sarmaticus, great-grandson of the divine Antoninus, great-great-grandson of the divine Hadrian, great-great-grandson of the divine Trajan Parthicus and the divine Nerva, dedicated by Quintus Anicius Faustus, *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, most honourable consul, patron of the colony, and Saevinius Proculus, *tribunus laticlavius*, curator of the republic, by decree of the decurions, with public money."

Faustus' name appears in the ablative absolute and the inscription, like several others, notes that the dedication was set up and paid for with public funds. The present participle *dedicante* testifies to Faustus' active involvement in the inception and erection. In the context of imperial religion, Várhelyi has suggested that the inclusion of *dedicante* not only highlights the important role of senators and other high-ranking officials in provincial religious life but also acts as a powerful stamp of approval for the dedication and the dedicatee.[369] The same might be suggested for this dedication to the Severan imperial family. Faustus' dedications were set up over the course of the years 197-200, with the majority falling within the period of Septimius Severus' seventh year of *tribunicia potestas*, dating to the period between the tenth of December 198 and the tenth of the following year. The accents of the inscriptions occasionally shift: although most are dedicated to Severus and both his sons, two dedications – including the one above – are set up in honour of the young Caracalla. In all cases *fortissimus* and *felicissimus* are only associated with Septimius Severus. Their position at the end of Severus' titulature strongly suggests that they were conceived as titles rather than as general praise. This makes *fortissimus felicissimus* rather different in nature than, for example, a dedication to the *pietas* of Antoninus Pius: although both praise imperial virtue, the former is embedded within an existing structure of officially sanctioned honorifics.

[368] CIL VIII 17871 = AE 1985, 881c.
[369] Várhelyi 2010: 131.

It is not clear what role Faustus played in these dedications: did he push for the dedications, or was he simply consulted on multiple occasions by the city councils of Thamugadi and Cuicul? Did he intervene in the composition of the text, or was he only actively involved during the dedication ceremony, if at all? Eck has noted that throughout the empire, governors were increasingly consulted on building projects from the second century onwards.[370] The common appearance of Faustus in the above dedications may be a reflection of this growing gubernatorial involvement, particularly given the great increase in construction projects across North Africa under the Severans. However, many of the above dedications took the form of statue bases rather than building dedications. Perhaps part of the answer is also tied to Faustus' position as a decorated *homo novus*. It is noteworthy that the spate of dedications by Faustus falls within the early years of his tenure, possibly closely related to his suffect consulship which he held in absentia in late 198 or the first half of 199.[371] Faustus, the first of the Anicii to reach the consulship and clearly favoured by the emperor, may have displayed his gratitude and elevated position through a flurry of dedicatory activity in important towns in the Numidian region. Regardless of the motivation, it is likely that Faustus (or his staff) had some involvement regarding the final wording of the dedications. The city councils of Thamugadi and Cuicul may have contacted Faustus in order to ask his advice on which honorific formulas were to be employed. A similar dynamic may be at play in the inscriptions of two earlier statue bases dedicated by the legate Caius Iulius Lepidus Tertullus and the city council of Cuicul.[372] The bases, set up in 194, appear to predate the rise of the formula *fortissimus felicissimus*: here, Septimius Severus is *optimus fortissimus princeps*. The association between Septimius Severus and *optimus* is exceedingly rare in North African epigraphy and may reflect the hand of Tertullus.[373]

Thamugadi and Cuicul are not the only places where Faustus appears in the epigraphic record, though it is not always clear if he was involved in the dedicatory process. A public dedication from Cirta for example is dedicated to Caracalla, Septimius Severus and Faustus, the latter as patron of the colony.[374] This text, too, praises Septimius Severus as *fortissimus felicissimus*, but Faustus' involvement in the erection of the dedication remains unclear. Some further nuance is in order: other dedications in which Faustus is recorded as co-dedicator do not feature *fortissimus felicissimus.* Together with the city council of Thamugadi, he dedicated a large equestrian statue base to Caracalla in the forum of that city, possibly in response to Caracalla's elevation as official heir to Septimius Severus in 197.[375] The text of the inscription mentions both Caracalla's and Severus' titles though it omits their political offices. The emperor is honoured as *vindex et conditor Romanae disciplinae*, "protector and establisher of Roman discipline". This unique title lays heavy emphasis on Severus' role as a successful military leader. Because of its one-of-a-kind nature it is tempting to read this once again as the influence of Faustus, who as legate at the head of Legio III

[370] Eck 2000: 276–277, see also Dondin-Payre 1990: 340–343 on the relationship between the governors and building dedications.
[371] Thomasson 1996: 176.
[372] ILAlg-02-03, 7803 = AE 1917/18, 70; ILAlg-02-03, 7804.
[373] See also BCTH-1901-107; CIL VIII 6305 = CIL VIII 19294 = ILAlg-02-03, 9437 and ILAlg-02-01, 3394. In each case however, *optimus* is an editorial addition; the two dedications by Tertullus are the only North African dedications to Severus in which the presence of *optimus* is undisputed.
[374] CIL VIII 19495 = ILAlg-02-01, 566.
[375] CIL VIII 17870 = ILS 446.

Augusta had an interest in army discipline. Missing from the text are *fortissimus felicissimus,* as they are in other dedications in which Faustus acts as a fellow-dedicator together with a number of city councils.[376] An element of choice and variation was evidently involved. Although we may suspect the influence of Faustus in the many dedications including *fortissimus felicissimus*, neither he nor the city councils of North Africa ever applied these honorific titles as strictly as for example the emperor's *cognomina ex virtute*.

Another interesting anomaly comes to the fore in reviewing the appearance of *fortissimus felicissimus* in North African epigraphy. As noted above, the titles do not always appear in unison. Of the 29 inscriptions that employ *felicissimus* (26 of which in unison with *fortissimus*), only 20 name their dedicators. In this group, there is not a single dedication by a private dedicator. For *fortissimus* the situation is not much different: within the pool of 33 dedications that praise the emperor as *fortissimus*, only three were set up by private dedicators, all from Cirta.[377] The lack of private dedication featuring *fortissimus felicissimus* is intriguing. Naturally, a considerable number of dedications have survived in a damaged state, and in many cases it is no longer possible to determine the dedicators. However, when reviewing the private dedications of the early Severan era, we find some 15 dedications – ranging from statue bases to building dedications – which include normative language or were erected *pro salute* without mentioning *fortissimus felicissimus*; many others include neither.[378] For private dedicators, these titles seem to have been of considerably lesser importance than public dedicators, such as town councils erecting a dedication to the emperor with public funds. Again some nuance is in order: a considerable number of the above private dedicators functioned as priests or magistrates in their communities and were either a member of the city council or had strong ties with its councillors.[379] Yet in their capacity as individual dedicators, members of the civic elite seem to make different epigraphic choices as when acting as a collective body. Likewise, we should take location into account: private benefactors operating in communities with relatively few local dedications mentioning *fortissimus felicissimus*, such as Bulla

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[376] See for example CIL VIII 6048 (a honorary dedication from Arsacal); CIL VIII 18256 = AntAfr-1967-77 = AE 1967, 567; CIL VIII 2527 = 18039; CIL VIII 2528 (dedications from Lambaesis); Saastamoinen 324 = AE 1975, 870 (a building dedication from Tillibari); CRAI 1909, 98 = Thomasson 1996: 172, u (a building dedication from Siaoun).

[377] See CIL VIII 6944 = ILAlg-02-01, 473 (set up by the local aedil and benefactor Caius Sittius Flavianus); CIL VIII 6996 = ILAlg-02-01, 562 = AntAfr-2007-86 (set up by the local *triumvir* Marcus Caecilius Natalis); CIL VIII 7000 = CIL VIII 19418 = ILAlg-02-01, 569 = Saastamoinen 407 = AntAfr-2007-86 (a building dedication by the local knight, *triumvir* and benefactor Marcus Seius Maximus).

[378] *Bulla Regia*: AE 2004, 1875; AE 2004, 1876; CIL VIII 25515 = ILPBardo 239 = ILTun 1242 = Saastamoinen 326 = Alumnus 80 = AE 1907, 25 (a building dedication set up by testament). *Cuicul*: ILAlg-02-03, 7813 = AfrRom-16-04-2131 = AE 1989, 900. *Mactar*: CIL VIII 23405. *Thamugadi*: CIL VIII 17829 = ILS 434; BCTH-1954-165 = Saastamoinen 416 = AE 1957, 82; CIL VIII 17837 = AE 1888, 28; Epigraphica-1980-93 = AnalEpi p. 119 = AE 1948, +112 = AE 1982, 958 = AE 2009, +1764; BCTH-1941/42-130 = AE 1941, 49 (the inscription contains *fortissimus*, but as a later addition inscribed over the name of Geta after his *damnatio memoriae*). *Thubursicum Numidarum*: BCTH-1941/42-130 = AE 1941, 49; ILAlg-01, 01256 = Saturne-01, p. 369 = Saastamoinen 392. CIL VIII 26547 = ILAfr 528 = Saastamoinen 484; CIL VIII 1482 = CIL VIII 15504 = CIL VIII 26498 = Saturne-01, p. 215 = Dougga 38 = Saastamoinen 318 = ILTun 1400. *Vaga*: CIL VIII 10569 = CIL VIII 14394 = Saastamoinen 325 = AE 2002, +1679. *Dedications by private benefactors without virtues, see for example:* CIL VIII 9352; CIL VIII 9353 = CIL VIII 20985; CIL VIII 10980 = CIL VIII 20983; ILAlg-01, 2087; ILAlg-01, 2088.

[379] See for example: AE 2004, 1875 (set up by the *duumvir* Marcus Agrius Ulpius Primanus from Bulla Regia), AE 2004, 1876 (set up by the *duumvir* Quintus Domitius Pudens from Bulla Regia) or LAlg-01, 1256 = Saturne-01, p. 369 = Saastamoinen 392 (a building dedication set up by the *flamen perpetuus* Marcus Fabius Laetus and his wife, from Thubursicum Numidarum).

Regia, would perhaps have been less inclined to include the title in their dedication. Nevertheless, the same pattern repeats itself even in places where prominent local dedications by the city council or Faustus did include the title *fortissimus felicissimus*, such as in Thamugadi.

Where *fortissimus felicissimus* appears, it is almost exclusively in dedications set up by either Quintus Anicius Faustus or various city councils – occasionally in direct conjunction with Faustus.[380] This raises a number of interesting questions on the spread of imperial ideology and its influence on local epigraphic traditions. Although we may suspect that Faustus played an important role in disseminating the new ideological currents of the imperial court, city councils could also fall back on other forms of contact with the court, such as official documentation, that was not always readily available to private dedicators. Imperial titles for example are usually included in the dedications by private benefactors, but not always to the same degree, varying from only including regal names to full titles and political offices.[381] Beyond financial concerns based on the length of the inscription, private dedicators may have also faced uncertainty on what titles to include, or may have felt the inclusion of all but the most important imperial titles to be optional, but not necessary in their dedications. In both scenarios the inclusion of unofficial titles such as *fortissimus felicissimus* would have been a less attractive option. Dedications by the city council on the other hand had a much stronger official aspect, being set up by the representative body of the community with public means in highly visible and prestigious locations. In this scenario, there was conceivably more pressure to include the emperor's full titulature and unofficial-but-sanctioned titles such as *fortissimus felicissimus*. Noreña's thesis of ideological dissemination finds support in the epigraphic material, but to a limited extent. Though Faustus seems to have played a role in the diffusion of *fortissimus felicissimus*, these titles remained at the official level of public dedications. This is not to suggest that the inclusion of *fortissimus felicissimus* in such dedications was of lesser importance or that such dedications had less impact than private dedications. Nevertheless, their influence on epigraphic habits was limited: our group of private dedicators may have associated Septimius Severus with *fortitudo* and *felicitas*, but felt no strong urge to commemorate these imperial virtues in their dedications. Evidently, the public ideological reception of Septimius Severus was different from that of private dedications.

Lepcis Magna was not included in the above discussion, although not for a lack of dedications. Septimius Severus was a native of Lepcis Magna and unsurprisingly the emperor looms large in the epigraphic record of the city. The emperor left his mark on the city in a very tangible sense by granting it *ius Italicum* and initiated a major building program, including the Forum Severianum (featuring a basilica and a temple), a colonnaded street and a large nymphaeum.[382] Although the emperor is unlikely to have overseen the minutiae of the building project, Severus' intervention in the urban fabric of the city presented a radical transformation of its monumental core. The Lepcitan elite responded with enthusiasm to the new opportunities presented by the close contacts to the

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[380] Though it should be noted that not all North African city councils necessarily included *fortissimus felicissimus* in their dedications to Septimius Severus; see for example AE 1991, 1680 (a dedication from Thibaris) or CIL VIII 1481 = CIL VIII 15523 (a dedication from Dougga).

[381] Compare for example CIL VIII 23405 to CIL VIII 9352.

[382] For an extensive description and analysis of the materials, see Ward-Perkins 1993.

imperial court, but not quite in the same way as their African compatriots. Only a single dedication, set up by a Lepcitan centurion of the *cohors urbana* honours Septimius Severus as *fortissimus felicissimus*.[383] The vast majority of Severan dedications only include *felicissimus*.[384] I have already argued that normative language could act as a way for dedicators to claim a close relationship with the imperial court. With 'their' emperor in power and imperial money flowing into the city, imperial *felicitas* may well have appeared as a tangible quality to many members of Lepcis' elite. The military success of Septimius Severus' reign was far from ignored in Lepcis: official titles such as *imperator*, *Parthicus* or *Adiabenicus* directly referred to the military victories of the emperor and were duly repeated in Lepcitan epigraphy. But instead of *fortissimus*, such martial qualities appear to have found expression in other honorific titles, such as *invictus* and *propagator imperii*, both of which appear in small number inscriptions.[385]

Another part of the explanation might be found among the dedicators. As noted, *fortissimus felicissimus* seems to appear mostly in dedications which involved Faustus and/or various city councils. In Lepcis however, neither Faustus nor the city council appear as dedicators. Lepcitan dedicators instead show a relatively wide social variety, including the citizen body as a whole and a number of private dedicators including a centurion, a (possible) local decurion and his son, as well as an imperial procurator. Among the Lepcitan dedicators we also find several *curiae*, a civic institution not to be confused with the local municipal senate.[386] The earliest securely dated dedications praising imperial *felicitas* come from a series of statue bases, dedicated to the individual members of the Severan imperial family and most likely placed in an exedra in the southwestern area of the Forum Vetus.[387] The four statues were set up by Marcus Calpurnius Geta Attianus and his son Marcus Calpurnius Attianus between 199 and 200. The dedications offer no further information on the dedicators beside their names; given the cost involved in financing the four dedications, the Attiani were however most likely members of the local elite. Shortly after, in 201, Marcus Junius Punicus set up a similar group of four statues in Lepcis' theatre, near the western edge of the orchestra. Punicus, likely of Lepcitan descent on the basis of his cognomen, was an imperial procurator stationed in Thrace and Alexandria. Both sets of dedications share interesting similarities: the dedications to Septimius Severus lack *felicissimus*, *invictus* or any other kind of 'unofficial' honorifics, the dedications to Julia Domna praise her as *coniunx invicti Imperatoris* while

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[383] IRT 439.

[384] See IRT 435 (dedicated by the 'Septimian' Lepcitans), IRT 433 and 419 (dedicated by Marcus Calpurnius Getta Attianus and his son Marcus Calpurnius Attianus to both Geta and Caracalla), IRT 436 (dedicated by the *curia Matidia*), IRT 434 and 422 (dedicated by the procurator Marcus Iunius Punicus), IRT 420 (dedicated by the *curia Severiana*), IRT 421 (dedicated by the *curia Ulpia*), IRT 426 (a building dedication from the Forum Severianum), IRT 439 (dedicated by the centurion Messius Atticus).

[385] *Invictus*: IRT 402, 405, 406; *propagator imperii*: IRT 395, 424. The latter term is played on in a number of Severan coin-types from 202-203, showing the young Caracalla and his wife Plautilla with PROPAGO IMPERI legends. *Propago*, meaning so much as 'tree', 'root' and, by extension 'family line', suggest the continued prosperity of the empire through the Severan dynasty as well as the physical military expansion of the empire's frontiers, see Daguet-Gagey 2004: 189. In Lepcis however, such a conjugal interpretation of *propagator imperii* is lacking.

[386] *Curiae* appear across the empire but are particularly prominently attested in North Africa. The African *curiae* were modeled on the division of citizens in Rome into voting units, and were usually instituted when African communities gained the status of *municipium* or *colonia.* Their precise nature and influence within African communities is a point of contention, as will be discussed in chapter four.

[387] Kleinwächter 2001: 238 n.1572.

on the dedications to both Geta and Caracalla, Septimius Severus is praised as *felicissimus*. These two sets of dedications by members of the local elite in highly visible and highly prestigious locations associate Septimius Severus only with *felicissimus* in dedications to his sons. Part of the explanation is to be found in the size restriction of the dedications: both dedications to Septimius Severus elaborate on the emperor's titles and offices, while in the dedications to Julia Domna, Caracalla and Geta, the titles of Septimius Severus are shortened to his military victories and the title *pater patriae*. The moral praise of the emperor as *felicissimus* or *invictus* may have functioned as an acceptable stand-in for the full list of the emperor's titles and offices. It is possible that both Punicus and Attianus included *felicissimus* in response to Severan media or to other dedicators propagating the emperor as *felicissimus*. The specific context of *felicissimus* in the dedications – present in dedications to Geta and Caracalla, but absent from dedications to Septimius Severus and Julia Domna – may also suggest an association with a dynastic interpretation of *felicitas*, though in a more indirect manner than the dynastic messages on Severan coinage. Later dedications by the *curiae* and the citizen body of Lepcis may have opted to follow the precedent set by these prominent dedications by members of the local elite.

2.2.1. – Noble and indulgent princes

Beyond *fortissimus felicissimus*, loyalty to the Severans was expressed through other forms of normative language as well. Some of these normative epithets straddle the divide between 'official' and 'unofficial' – to the extent that such a divide existed in antiquity. The clearest example is *nobilissimus*, a title adopted by Geta when he became Caesar in January 198. *Nobilissimus* was an officially-sanctioned title, and therefore falls somewhat outside the scope of this thesis. Yet a short review of *nobilissimus* does suggest something of the normative representation created for the young prince and the ways in which that representation was adopted in the provinces. Geta is the first member of the imperial court to be explicitly associated with *nobilitas* in North African epigraphy; the term does not appear before the Severan era and is exclusively associated with emperors thereafter.[388] *Nobilitas* carried implications of political office, cultural education, virtuous behaviour, public eminence and civic commitment; a short-hand for quintessentially aristocratic qualities. The superlative adjective *nobilissimus* occasionally appears as a personal quality, either as a direct reference to the high rank of individual aristocrats or in the wider, more general sense of fame and recognition.[389] Why the title was adopted remains uncertain – possibly it was intended to bolster Geta's status as compared to that of his brother Caracalla, who was raised to the rank of *imperator* in the same year.

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[388] A concise overview incorporating Egyptian papyri: Mitthof 1993: 97–102. For Geta, see Mastino 1981: 155–157.

[389] Among the many possible examples from Cicero: *De Haruspicum Responsis* 54, *Pro Caelio* 73, *Post Reditum Ad Quirites* 9; Seneca the Elder, *Controverisae* II.11. Important foreigners, too, could be *nobilissimus*: Caesar, *Bellum Gallico*, I.2; Cicero, *In Catilinam* IV.21. Fundamental on the Republican *nobiles*: Gelzer 1912; Gelzer 1915; for more recent explorations of the debate, see Hill 1969; Brunt 1982; Badel 2005. For Pliny the Younger, cultural attainment is closely related to *nobilitas*: see *Letters* 5.17. For Apuleius, *nobilis* is mostly associated with fame in a broad sense, see *Florida*, 4.2 (about the piper Antigenidas) or 16.10, (about the comedic playwright Philemon; for a more traditional interpretation of *nobilis*, see *Florida* 14.2 (a high-born virgin) or *Apologia* 22.3 (a Theban noble). Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* 9.27 calls the sturgeon a *piscium nobilissimus*.

Official though the title may have been, the inclusion of *nobilissimus* in the provinces is far from universal. A large number of inscriptions dedicated to Geta in the years 198 and 209 do not feature *nobilissimus* among the princes' titles.[390] Both Herodian and Cassius Dio remain silent on the subject of Geta's honorific titles, but coinage offers a more promising line of inquiry. Like *fortissimus* and *felicissimus*, *nobilissimus* never appears on imperial coinage despite the title's official nature. Geta is however associated with the virtue of *nobilitas* on a number of coin issues[391], much more strongly so than either his father or brother.[392] The production of *nobilitas*-types ended in 208, right before Geta was elevated to the rank of *Augustus*. It is tempting to see an attempt by the imperial mint to enforce the association between the young prince and *nobilitas*. However, both in number and types, the *nobilitas*-types are far from dominant. Geta is associated with *nobilitas* on only 13 out of 319 known types minted with the prince on the obverse. The *quinarius* and *aureus quinarius* preferred by the mint for this particular type of design were furthermore minted inconsistently and in much smaller numbers than for example the *felicitas*-coin types. The imperial titles of Geta – like those of his father and brother – were communicated through a variety of means, primarily through a range of different official documents. The lack of *nobilissimus* on coinage suggests that different avenues of communication between provinces and centre – be it in the form of media such as coinage or immaterial expressions such as a governor's speech – placed different accents in their communication of imperial ideological values. Although there is the occasional overlap and convergence in message between these various outlets, this is far from a purposeful campaign of persuasion. The spread of *nobilissimus* in North African epigraphy most likely rested on both its official status and its appearance in local dedications by previous dedicators, similar to *fortissimus felicissimus*.

It is interesting to note that normative language mostly appears in the form of honorific titles within Severan-era epigraphy in North Africa. Septimius Severus was associated with a number of less prominent titles in the epigraphic record that highlight both his role as victorious commander (akin to *fortissimus*) and his munificent activities. One of the new honorific titles coming to the fore is *propagator imperii* ("propagator of the empire"), a title that was initially used to honour Septimius Severus but occasionally also appears in the plural to honour both Severus and Caracalla.[393] The martial themes of *propagator* are repeated in other militaristic titles, such as *invictissimus*.[394] To what extent these titles reflect local choice is difficult to ascertain: only four dedications preserve

[390] For a full list, see Mastino 1981: 154–155.

[391] RIC IV Geta 13a (*aureus*, *denarius*, *quinarius*); 13b (*aureus*, *quinarius*); 32 (*aureus*, *quinarius*); 48a (*quinarius*); 48B (*quinarius*); 49 (*aureus quinarius*, *quinarius*); 120 (*as*, *dupondius*).

[392] RIC IV Septimius Severus 320 (*denarius*, *quinarius*); 596 (*denarius*); RIC IV Carcalla 162 (*quinarius*).

[393] CIL VIII 6969 = ILAlg-02-01, 537 (a dedication by an unknown dedicator from Cirta); CIL VIII 7970 = ILAlg-02-01, 18 = Louvre 95 (a dedication from an unknown dedicator from Rusicade); ILAlg-01, 1255 = Saastamoinen 334 = AE 1917/18, 16 (a dedication by a local priest from Thubursicum Numidarum); ILAlg-02-03, 7813 = AfrRom-16-04-2131 = AE 1989, 900 (a dedication two members of the local elite of Cuicul); AE 1895, 83 (a dedication by an unknown dedicator from Gigthis).

[394] Epigraphica-1980-93 = AnalEpi p. 119 = AE 1948, +112 = AE 1982, 958 = AE 2009, 1764 (a dedication by the *curia Commodiana* from Thamugadi). See also the rise in inscriptions dedicated *pro salute victori(i)sque et incolumitate*: BCTH-1951/52-196 = BCTH-1953-46 = Hygiae p. 65 = Epigraphica-2002-94 = AE 1955, +49 = AE 1955, +54 = AE 1957, 54 = AE 2002, 1667 (an altar from Mactar) and possibly CIL VIII 623 (p. 2372) = CIL VIII 11800 = CIL VIII 23411 = AE 1949, +58 (a fragmentary inscription from Mactar).

the names of their dedicators. These include the *curia Commodiana* of Thamugadi, a priest from Thubursicum Numidarum and two members of the local elite of Cuicul. The inclusion of martial themes in dedications may have fitted well with Severan ideology, but it is nevertheless noteworthy that titles such as *propagator imperii* or *invictissimus* were not nearly as ubiquitous as *fortissimus felicissimus*. Unsurprisingly, while the latter appears regularly in dedications set up by Faustus, the former do not. We need not read too much into the disparity: in all cases, Septimius Severus is praised for his martial success and it is unlikely that the preference for *fortissimus felicissimus* over *invictissimus* had a deeper-lying ideological motivation. It does once again suggest the influence of authoritative voices such as that of Faustus on local epigraphic traditions. At the same time, local dedicators may have searched for ways to express the same ideological message in new terms. With the boom in epigraphic texts under the Severans, a certain measure of repetition in the wording of inscriptions inevitably set in. This repetition potentially undermined the value of dedications as sincere expressions of loyalty and consent. Beyond the type of dedication and the specific details of the form – such as the type of statue to choose – dedicators could use new types of normative language as a way of differentiating their contributions from those of others in the civic landscape, thereby displaying their sincere attachment to emperor and empire and publicly presenting themselves as loyal subjects.

Military power was but one part of the equation. Dedications from across North Africa praise Septimius Severus for his *indulgentia*.[395] The praise of *indulgentia* is not new: two milestones found near Milev, mentioned earlier in this chapter, note that Antoninus Pius restored the local roads *ex indulgentia*. But while Antoninus Pius is praised for his *indulgentia* as a response to specific act of munificence, the Severan dedications are silent on the motivation behind the praise, the virtue is even occasionally coupled with *fortissimus* in the imperial titulature. *Indulgentia* is also evident in Lepcis Magna, where the virtue appears in dedications across various prominent locations in the city.[396] Three were set up by the "Septimian Lepcitans"[397], two by the procurator Decimus Clodius Galba who was an imperial agent in the region Theveste and Hippo and responsible for the imperial estates in Flaminia, Aemilia and Liguria[398]. Like the dedications from elsewhere in Africa, these dedications are vague on the details of imperial munificence. The three public dedications thank the emperors for their outstanding and god-like indulgence (*ob eximiam ac divinam in se indulgentiam*); Galba praises the Severan indulgence as god-like (*ob cael[est]em in se indulgentiam eius*). The communal dedications may have followed as a response to the grant of the *ius Italicum* in 202, though the dedication to Geta dates from years later, in 209.[399] Galba's dedication is equally vague

[395] CIL VIII 6996 = ILAlg-02-01, 562 = AntAfr-2007-86 (a dedication by a member of the local elite from Cirta); CIL VIII 7970 = ILAlg-02-01, 18 = Louvre 95 (a dedication by an unknown dedicator from Rusicade); CIL VIII 18902 = ILAlg-02-02, 4663 (a dedication by an unknown dedicator from Thibilis); CIL VIII 18903 = ILAlg-02-02, 4664 (a dedication from an unknown dedicator from Thibilis); ILAlg-01, 1301 (a dedication which mentions the *indulgentia* of Septimius Severus, Geta and Caracalla from Thubursicum Numidarum). It should be noted here, however, that in two of the above cases (CIL VIII 6996 and 18902) the inclusion of *indulgentia* results from editorial choices.

[396] IRT 423, 441 (Forum Severianum); IRT 393 (Hadrianic Baths); IRT 395 (portico behind the theatre); IRT 424 (the theatre).

[397] IRT 393, 423, 441.

[398] IRT 395, 424.

[399] See Bartoccini 1929: 82 and the commentary of Ward-Perkins 2009, IRT 393.

on the exact nature of the indulgence shown to him, though it may possibly be related to a personal promotion.

The vagueness in evidence across these various dedications is undoubtedly the result of practicalities: presumably the community knew exactly which benefaction was referred to, at least at the point in time when the dedications were erected. Yet the appearance of *indulgentissimus* as part of the emperor's titulature or the praise of god-like indulgence in Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta suggest a more conscious effort to present imperial benefactions as a permanent imperial blessing of sorts, rather than a response to individual actions of the emperor. A notion that was of course particularly apt in Lepcis Magna, which could count on continued imperial favour. Just as importantly perhaps, *indulgentia* suggested a close relationship between patron and client. *Indulgentia* derives from family life and the relationship between an (indulging) father and his children.[400] Cotton has argued that the political use of *indulgentia* leans on its original familial association, with the emperor as benevolent father-figure in stark hierarchical contrast to his provincial 'children'. Whereas imperial coinage generally projects aristocratic virtues of munificence (*liberalitas*) or a general sense of fairness (*aequitas*), it consistently eschews *indulgentia*.[401] The choice for *indulgentia* appears to be a local one, casting imperial munificence in stark hierarchical terms in which provincials assume a submissive position. Although it emphasized the increasing ideological gap between the emperor and his subjects, the familial aspect of *indulgentia* also allowed for a more positive spin. The idea of the emperor as an indulgent father-figure was apt for a promoted official such as Galba, but also served to emphasize the close bond between the city of Lepcis and the imperial court. Note for example that a number of the dedications praising Severan *indulgentia* were set up by the *Lepcitani Septimiani*. This newly-adopted name is in itself an honorific of sorts, suggesting the devotion and loyalty of Lepcis towards its emperor; a message strengthened by the unanimous *Lepcitani*, without mention of the *ordo*, the *populus* or any other of the traditional civic categories appearing in epigraphic texts.

The same close relationship between emperor and city is evident on a statue base from the cella of the temple of Liber Pater in the Forum Vetus, erected by the Lepcitans in 197.[402] The base lauds the emperor for his virtues as a protector of the world (*conservator orbis*) – the same praise afforded to Augustus and Hadrian, albeit with far more wide-ranging connotations through the addition of *orbis*.

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[400] Cotton 1984. For a more general approach to the 'infantilization' of imperial citizens through benefactions (specifically *alimenta*), see Jongman 2002.

[401] Based on the Roman Imperial Coinage database, *munificentia* seems to appear only once, on RIC III Antoninus Pius 861. *Indulgentia* appears from Hadrian onwards and until the mid-third century, though only on about fifty issues: see for example RIC II Hadrian 212a, 213a-c; RIC II Antoninus Pius 904, 907, 914; RIC III Marcus Aurelius 1493; RIC IV Septimius Severus 80; RIC IV Caracalla 214; 300; RIC V Gallienus 46, 106, 205, 206, 368. *Liberalitas* on the other hand appears on hundreds of issues, either in the legend or in personified form, from Nero until Constantine; see for example: RIC I² Nero 151, 152, 153, 154; RIC II Nerva 56, 57; RIC II Hadrian 131a-c, 132a-c, 216a, c-f; RIC III Antoninus Pius 75a-d, 142, 150, 151, 169a-d; RIC III Marcus Aurelius 166, 167, 318, 319, 320, 568, 597; Commodus 132, 133, 134, 202A-Bd, 300a-b; RIC IV Septimius Severus 18, 81a-b, 275. 276, 277, 279, 399; RIC IV Caracalla 158, 159, 160, 302, 303, 304, 305; RIC IV Elegabalus 352, 353, 354; RIC IV Severus Alexander 147, 149, 150, 204, 205, 206; RIC IV Gordian III 36, 42, 45, 53; RIC IV Trajan Decius 120, 121, 122, 123; RIC V Valerian 164, 165, 166, 167, 168; RIC V Diocletian 469, 470, 471. Although these results are necessarily impressionistic, they nevertheless suggest that *liberalitas* was by far the preferred choice to propagate imperial largesse.

[402] IRT 387.

Also mentioned are the acts of *pietas* towards the Lepcitans in public and private (*ob publicam et in se privatam pietatem*). *Pietas* may refer to a number of obligations: that of a child to its parent, a citizen to the state, the emperor to his subjects or a mortal to the gods. This semantic range enhances the meaning of the dedication: it can refer to the obliging acts of Septimius-as-emperor towards his subjects, but also hints at the special relationship of Septimius-as-Lepcitan to his *patria*. The differentiation between *publicus* and *privatus* furthermore enhances the sincerity of Septimius' *pietas* towards his native city (suggesting that the emperor went beyond official largesse), and again underlines the personal bond between city and emperor. Lastly, we can point to the dedicators, who are recorded as "the Lepcitans, publicly" (*Lepcitani publice*), a term which in itself underlines the unanimous and communal nature of the dedication. In Lepcis Magna we see a form of communal self-representation through the relationship with the emperor, presenting the city as unanimously devoted to Septimius Severus and being privileged by the court in turn.

Whereas the Lepcitans emphasised the closeness of bonds between the emperor and their city, elsewhere we see normative language employed in a manner that is more reminiscent of the dedications in the forum of Cuicul, discussed earlier in this chapter. There, we saw dedicators opting for a wide variety of virtues that were not directly connected to imperial interventions in the community. In Thamugadi, Lucius Licinius Optatianus paid for statues to Mars and Concordia Augusta, handed out *sportulae* and financed theatrical spectacles in honour of his perpetual priesthood.[403] Both statues stood in a prominent location in town, directly in front of the Arch of Trajan which formed one of the main entry-points into the city proper. The inscription on the statue base to Mars names the god as *conservator dominorum nostrorum*, mirroring the praise of (and concern for) martial success found in other Severan dedications. The dedication to Concordia Augusta also features the names and titles of Septimius Severus, his sons (with Geta's name erased) and his wife in the genitive, leaving no doubt as to the association between Concordia and the imperial family. We see a similar concern in Cirta, where two dedicators praise Severan piety. One dedication, set up by the local *triumvir* Caius Settius Flavianus to Fortuna Redux for the well-being of the Severan imperial family, lauds Caracalla and Geta as *piissimi filii*.[404] The other, set up by the city council of Cirta, lauds Geta as a *piissimus filius* and Caracalla as *sanctissimus*.[405] With two heirs, one of whom co-emperor with Septimius Severus, the *concordia* of the imperial family and the *pietas* present in their relationships to one another and to the state was an important element of Severan ideology. It received direct visual representation on a number of coin types, but also suffuses the countless depictions of the princes together on Severan coinage.[406] Praise for imperial *pietas* and *concordia* tied in directly with Severan self-representation and claims to legitimacy as a dynasty. Yet it is easy to see how this imperial ideological theme also had a very tangible quality for provincials after years of civil war following the death of Commodus. Harmony between the two

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[403] CIL VIII 17829 = ILS 434; CIL VIII 17835.

[404] CIL VIII 6944 = ILAlg-02-01, 473.

[405] CIL VIII 19493 = ILAlg-02-01, 564 = ILS 439 = BCTH-1982-175 = AE 1947, +48. See also the fragmentary dedication from Sicca Veneria which lauds Septimius Severus and Caracalla as *[san]ctissimis maxi[misq(ue)] [Imp]eratoribus*, CIL VIII 15869.

[406] Concordia Augusta: see RIC IV Septimius Severus 330A; RIC IV Caracalla 152; RIC IV Geta 134a-b, 164. Group portraits, see among others: RIC IV Septimius Severus 155a-c; 159, 174, 175, 177a-b, 178aa-ab, 181a-c.

heirs apparent would ensure prosperity and stability for the provincial elites responsible for the above dedications. At the same time, much like the dedications from Cuicul, these dedications are also the product of local politics. Both Optatianus and Flavianus erected their respective statues *ob honorem*, and most likely in fulfilment of vows made before gaining office. The promise of a statue was as much part of the political competition as for example Optatianus' gifts and spectacles. By setting up dedications to Fortuna Redux and Concordia Augusta, both Optatianus and Flavianus not only demonstrated their concern for the continued well-being and prosperity of the imperial family to their fellow-decurions, but also showed that they were willing to expend considerable resources to obtain this blessing. The dedications, although ostensibly concerned with the imperial family, marked both Optatianus and Flavianus out as men of honour and therefore suitable for their respective offices.

2.2.2. – Virtues in the flesh: the Severan quadrifrons of Lepcis Magna

Up to this point I have almost exclusively focussed on epigraphic texts. Of course, many of the above inscriptions were to be found on statue bases. Ideological messages in the inscriptions may have been strengthened or expanded upon through images. Most of these statues do not survive; where they do, they can rarely be connected to specific bases. Yet the city of Lepcis Magna offers us a fairly unique opportunity to study a Severan sculptural program in relative detail. The monumental *quadrifrons* was one of the most prominent new additions to the city during the Severan era, placed on the intersection of two major roads in the south-eastern section of the city. The monument was most likely erected by members of the elite of Lepcis Magna, though it is unclear whether it was built with public or private funds. Given the close connection between emperor and city, the Lepcitans responsible for the sculptural program most likely chose themes and imagery that were perceived to be in line with Severan imperial ideology.[407] Although it is a medium very different from an honorific inscription, I will argue that we can once again clearly see how imperial virtues are adopted and adapted to give expression to local concerns over imperial stability, prosperity and communal self-representation.

The arch contained four exterior friezes running along the top of the monument, as well as a number of reliefs placed on the interior of the supporting pillars. These pieces were joined by decorative sculpture, including putti and vines, captured barbarians and trophies, and pairs of Victories crowning the four passageways of the arch.[408] It is not my intention to give a detailed account of the compositional techniques employed in these reliefs, nor their full ideological program, both of which have been discussed extensively in a number of studies.[409] Of interest here is the way in which imperial virtues are given visual form on the monument. The four exterior friezes, each 1,72 meters high and between 6,3 meters and 7,4 meters wide, present Septimius Severus and his family in distinct ceremonial settings. One of the best preserved friezes, originally placed on the north-western side of the monument, shows the imperial family in a triumphal setting with Septimius Severus and his sons riding a triumphal chariot. The scene includes imagery typically associated with

[407] Rowan 2012: 86.
[408] *Victories*: Bartoccini 1931: 65–67 fig.36-38. *Barbarians and trophies*: Bartoccini 1931: 62–63 fig.32-34.
[409] Bartoccini 1931; Townsend 1938; Strocka 1972; Faust 2011; Rowan 2012: 84–99.

the triumph, but also depicts a number of interesting deviations.[410] Among them is a lighthouse, which has prompted debate over the setting of the triumph, with answers ranging from Ostia to Alexandria to Lepcis itself.[411]

Directly below the emperor, on the front of the triumphal chariot, are depicted Liber Pater and Hercules, garlanding an image of Tyche. The result is an image of an a-historical, eternal Severan triumph put through a provincial filter. The message of imperial triumph and, by extension, *virtus* is further underlined by the possible inclusion of the personified Virtus at the head of a triumphal chariot in a second, and badly damaged, triumphal frieze, located on the south-eastern side of the monument.[412] The same Virtus also appears on the third, southwestern frieze, depicting Septimius Severus and (presumably) Caracalla in a scene of *dextrarum iunctio*, with Geta placed in between. The scene – the focal point of the composition – sends a clear message of imperial *concordia*, visualising the cooperation and harmony at the centre of the imperial family. The inclusion of the deities Hercules, Liber Pater and the Tyche of Lepcis Magna directly behind Severus and his sons links this particular instance of imperial *concordia* directly to the fortunes of the city itself. The scene is flanked by both Julia Domna and Virtus, watching over the *dextrarum iunctio* scene.[413]

The fourth, northeastern frieze shows Julia Domna (and possibly other members of the imperial family) at sacrifice. Though the centre of the frieze is missing, several gods can nonetheless be identified, including Juno, Jupiter and Roma. Their presence further emphasizes the central message of this frieze: Severan *pietas* and the divine favour enjoyed by the new dynasty. The inner reliefs of the arch are of more modest size, but would have been in closer proximity to the ancient viewer. On these interior reliefs, the thematic lines of the friezes are extended. Besides a number of fragments depicting various deities (including Apollo, Diana, Cybele, Aesculapius, Mercurius, Venus and Mars), the imperial family once again is prominently depicted. In one scene Septimius Severus and Caracalla clasp hands, possibly performing libation with their heads covered.[414] The pair will most likely have been offset on the now missing pieces of the panel by Julia Domna and Geta. Hercules and Roma/Virtus stand in the background, possibly joined in the now lost fragments by Liber Pater and Tyche.

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[410] Strocka 1972: 165–167.

[411] Rowan 2012: 87–88.

[412] Strocka 1972: 155.

[413] Here and elsewhere on the monument, the female figure in Amazonian costume has been identified as both Virtus and Roma, given the great similarity in iconography, see Strocka 1972: 158 n.3 (who prefers Virtus). Roma would be a suitable figure given the *concordia*-scene of the imperial family. Even if we read the scene as taking place in Lepcis Magna, the figure of Roma may have made sense for a local audience: the cult of Roma had – at least in the first century – a strong presence on the Forum Vetus. However, an identification with Virtus seems more likely for two reasons. Firstly, the figure is represented on level height with Julia Domna, while the patron deities of Lepcis Magna seem to be depicted as statues – though the damage to the relief makes it uncertain whether the deities were indeed placed on pedestals or simply placed in a higher position as a result of the crowded composition of the scene. In either case, the Amazonian figure is represented as separate from the patron deities of the city. Secondly, the figure of Roma is never depicted with a *vexillum*, while the figure in the relief quite clearly seems to hold a standard, making an identification with Virtus (often depicted with a *vexillum*) more likely.

[414] Bartoccini 1931: 73 fig.44; Faust 2011: 115–119.

Directly below this relief, a second relief depicts the sacrifice proper, surrounded by military and togate figures. The imperial family is positioned before a large, classical temple; other panels show Julia Domna in front of another sanctuary and fragments of an Egyptian sanctuary. One suggestion is that the Severans are being depicted at sites meant to invoke actual sanctuaries in the city of Lepcis Magna.[415] If so, the various scenes of sacrifice not only suggested imperial *pietas* but also tied that virtue to tangible sites in the city. Other reliefs depict Julia Domna and Septimius Severus in the guise of Juno and Jupiter, Geta and Caracalla crowned by Victories and attended by a number of deities including Liber Pater, Heracles and Virtus.[416] It has been argued by Faust that the reliefs depict a divine hierarchy, with the intention of once again invoking the close relationship between the imperial family and the city of Lepcis Magna.[417] Lastly, a case can be made that *felicitas* also played a key role in both epigraphy and the sculptural program of the *quadrifrons*. Despite not taking a distinctive form in the monument, *felicitas*, as a multifarious sign of divine favour and military success, suffuses the various scenes. The large number of gods – in particular the patron deities of Lepcis Magna – depicted in conjunction with the imperial family and the friezes filled with a triumphal procession: all point to the divine favour enjoyed by Septimius Severus and the Severan dynasty more generally.

Virtus, *pietas, concordia* and perhaps *felicitas* played key roles in the iconography of the *quadrifrons*. There are areas of overlap with the epigraphic record, but to a limited extent. Martial epithets and virtues do appear in Lepcis Magna, but are not of particular prominence in local dedications. Imperial *pietas* played a major role in the dedication set up to Septimius Severus by the Lepcitans, but is otherwise not attested in relation to the emperor. Imperial *concordia* might possibly be attested by a large inscription, found close to the temple on the Severan Forum. It is unclear what deity the temple was dedicated to; the large inscription may have functioned as the building dedication. Only the letters [...]ONCO[...] survive, which has led Ward-Perkins to suggest that the temple may have been dedicated to Concordia Augustorum.[418] Although a very prominent monument within the city, it nevertheless forms an exception: neither the cult of Concordia nor dedications mentioning Severan *concordia* are otherwise attested in the city. In other words, there appears to be a clear discrepancy between the normative language employed in epigraphy and the imperial virtues depicted on the *quadrifrons*. The cause of this discrepancy is partially to be found in the differences between the two media. Triumphal arches – on which the *quadrifrons* appears to be based – were commonly associated with martial imagery. To find this aspect of imperial ideology prominently on display in both the friezes and reliefs, as well as in the more incidental decorations such as Victories and captured barbarians, is therefore unsurprising.

Some of the deviation between epigraphy and monumental iconography may, however, also betray the influence of the Severan court. Although Septimius Severus is unlikely to have interfered directly in the building project – particularly given that the *quadrifrons* seems to have been locally-financed

[415] Faust 2011: 118, 120–122.
[416] Faust 2011: 123–129.
[417] Faust 2011: 128–129; a similar conclusion is reached by Rowan 2012: 98–99.
[418] Ward-Perkins 1993: 53; although Townsend 1938: 515 suggests that the temple may have been dedicated to the Gens Septimia, similar to the large temple newly erected on the Forum Novum of Cuicul.

– it is not inconceivable that the Lepcitan builders sought to align themselves closely with ideological trends current at court for a monument that so prominently celebrated the Severan dynasty. Yet even if the monument sought to align itself with imperial self-representation, it did so through a strongly local filter. Similar mechanisms of representation are at play in for example the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, which employs imperial portraiture but places it in an overtly Greek context, both through its visual language and through the subject matter of its sculptural program.[419] Throughout the friezes and reliefs of the Lepcitan *quadrifrons*, imperial virtues are exalted but always with the city of Lepcis Magna as a backdrop. The Severan dynasty is placed in close connection to the city through various visual cues, from the Lepcitan patron deities to local sanctuaries and possibly the city's very own lighthouse. Through these visual cues, local and imperial representations merge together, suggesting the prominent place of Lepcis Magna and its elite – who were most likely responsible for the building project – within the empire.

2.2.3. – Caracalla and the later Severans

Caracalla offers a case study of the ideological changes between an emperor and his successor, as well as their effect on provincial epigraphy. Under Caracalla, the honorific *super omnes (retro) principes,* "above all (earlier) emperors" gains sudden traction. Although the title already appeared under Marcus Aurelius, it was strongly associated with Caracalla, appearing in 16 dedications across the province of Numidia, both from a military and civilian context.[420] Scheithauer suggests that in many cases the term was a 'filler', added after the *damnatio memoriae* of Geta.[421] Yet precisely for this reason it offers a valuable insight in the epigraphic choices made by provincial dedicators. The title may have been part of a general effort to rehabilitate the emperor's image after the large-scale purge of Geta's followers. Yet like much of the actual practice of the *damnatio*, this was not necessarily a command that was strictly imposed from the centre. As Scheithauer suggests, countless individuals who participated in the *damnatio memoriae* actively contributed in the spread of the title to show their support for the 'correct' imperial faction.[422] Through adoption of the title, dedicators effectively gave their consent to the legitimacy of Caracalla's coup – although we need not equate such consent with personal opinion.

Caracalla followed in his father's footsteps by being praised for his martial virtues, though in different wording than Septimius Severus. The decurions and citizens of Tamzoura, for example, praise the emperor as *invictissimus ac felicissimus*, a variation on the familiar coupling of *fortissimus* and *felicissimus* current under Septimius Severus.[423] Caracalla is honoured as *invictissimus* by other dedicators across the region as well.[424] Both Cassius Dio and Herodian note that Caracalla

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[419] Smith 1987; Smith 1988.

[420] Scheithauer 1988: 156,158. For only civic examples in my database, see CIL VIII 6969 = ILAlg-02-01, 537; CIL VIII 6998 = ILAlg-02-01, 563; CIL VIII 7000 = CIL VIII 19418 = ILAlg-02-01, 569 = Saastamoinen 407 = AntAfr-2007-86; CIL VIII 10305.

[421] Scheithauer 1988: 167.

[422] Scheithauer 1988: 167–168.

[423] BCTH-1954-70 = AE 1957, 68.

[424] Epigraphica-1980-93 = AnalEpi p 119 = AE 1948, +112 = AE 1982, 958 = AE 2009, +1764 (a dedication to Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Julia Domna by the *curia Commodiana* from Thamugadi); CIL VIII 2368 = CIL VIII 17872 = Timgad 23 = Saastamoinen 381 = AE 1954, 153 = AE 2007, +51 (a dedication to Septimius Severus by the *res publica* of Thamugadi, with a later addition of *invictissimus* after the *damnatio* of Geta); CIL VIII 10305 (a dedication to Caracalla

increasingly presented himself as a new Alexander the Great, which Weinstock relates to the rise of *invictus* as an epithet for the emperor.[425] At the same time, we can see *invictissimus* as a natural development from the traction of *fortissimus* under Septimius Severus, particularly when taking into account Caracalla's emphasis on military exploits and the provincial concern with presenting the emperor as *super omnes retro principes.* In any case, *invictissimus* does not appear with the same consistency as *fortissimus*. Despite being strongly associated with Severus, the latter occasionally appears in the altered dedications which followed the *damnatio* in 211: here, *fortissimus* is employed to fill the gaps left by the erasure of Geta.[426] In the confusion following the murder and *damnatio* of Geta, dedicators may have grasped back to tried and tested ideological expressions that received semi-official approval under Caracalla's predecessor. The break with the titulature of Septimius Severus is more pronounced in dedications set up to Caracalla as a sole ruler. Only a single dedication to Caracalla from Cirta – CIL VIII 10305, set up by an unknown dedicator – lauds the emperor as *fortissimus*. The inscription contains a number of revealing mistakes in the imperial titulature. Although it mentions the 19th time Caracalla took *tribunicia potestas* in December 215, it makes no mention of his fourth consulship in 213. Likewise, the inscription mistakenly includes *imperator IIII*, an honour that does not appear to have been included among the emperor's official titles. The dedicator seems equally confused in his application of honorific titles. Beyond *fortissimus*, the inscription also praises Caracalla as *felicissimus*, *invictissimus, sanctissimus*, *super omnes principes* and *indulgentissimus*. Both ideological change and continuity are at play in this inscription, with the dedicator opting for 'new' honorifics such as *super omnes retro principes* but also using honorifics typical of Septimius Severus. Whether we should read this inscription as an exercise in linguistic caution is a question that must remain unanswered, though the text does once again suggest that the spread of new honorific titles and epithets was far from even across the provinces.

This also holds true for *indulgentia*, which also appears prominently in dedications to Caracalla. Like *super omnes retro principes*, *indulgentia* is usually employed to fill in the erased name and titles of Geta.[427] Dedications set up after the *damnatio* however also mention Carcalla's *indulgentia*.[428] In these inscriptions, *indulgentia* is often coupled with the phrase *super omnes principes*, further highlighting the exceptional nature of Caracalla's *indulgentia*.[429] Given that the instances of *indulgentia* usually appear to fill in the erasures of the *damnatio*, it is unlikely that *indulgentia* here

from Cirta); CIL VIII 10304 = ILS 471 (a dedication to Caracalla from Cirta); CIL VIII 7973 = ILAlg-02-01, 20 (a dedication to Caracalla by a member of the local elite of Rusicade); possibly ILAlg-02-01, 572 from Cirta, where the editors have included *Invictus* in the imperial titulature.

[425] Cassius Dio 77.7.1-9; Herodian 4.8.1-3; Weinstock 1957: 242.

[426] See BCTH-1932/33-195 = Saastamoinen 333 = AE 1894, 44; CIL VIII 2368 = CIL VIII 17872 = Timgad 23 = Saastamoinen 381 = AE 1954, 153 = AE 2007, +51; CIL VIII 6969 = ILAlg-02-01, 537; CIL VIII 6996 = ILAlg-02-01, 562 = AntAfr-2007-86; CIL VIII 6998 = ILAlg-02-01, 563.

[427] CIL VIII 6969 = ILAlg-02-01, 537; CIL VIII 7000 = CIL VIII 19418 = ILAlg-02-01, 00569 = Saastamoinen 407 = AntAfr-2007-86; CIL VIII 19493 = ILAlg-02-01, 564 = ILS 439 = BCTH-1982-175 = AE 1947, +48; BCTH-1932/33-195 = Saastamoinen 333 = AE 1894, 44.

[428] See the above dedication CIL VIII 10305 from Cirta, or CIL VIII 7095 = CIL VIII 19435 = ILAlg-02-01, 675 = ILS 2933 = AntAfr-2007-88 = Saastamoinen 463; IRT 429; CIL VIII 7096 = ILAlg-02-01, 676 = Saastamoinen 464; CIL VIII 7097 = ILAlg-02-01, 677 = Saastamoinen 465; CIL VIII 7098 = CIL VIII 19436 = ILAlg-02-01, 678 = Saastamoinen 466: a series of building dedications set up by the aedil and triumvir of Cirta, Marcus Caecilius Natalis.

[429] See also Scheithauer 1988: 165 for an empire-wide view.

refers to specific acts of munificence by the emperor. Some dedications in any case were not adjusted until several years after the *damnatio*.[430] The choice for *indulgentia* can be seen in light of the Constitutio Antoniniana of 212, which Imrie has argued formed part of an attempt to rehabilitate the Severan dynasty after the murder of Geta.[431] With this supreme act of munificence, the praise for Caracalla's *indulgentia* was an obvious alternative for dedicators looking to replace lines of text that were earlier reserved for Geta. Like the phrase *super omnes retro principes*, the association between Caracalla and *indulgentia* again betrays a provincial awareness of the ideological trends current at the court.[432]

The precarious nature of Caracalla's reign – at least in the years after the conflict with his brother – strongly comes to the fore in a set of dedications from Cirta, where the local *triumvir* Marcus Caecilius Natalis set up a tetrastyle *aediculum* with four inscriptions.[433] The inscriptions not only record the financing of theatrical spectacles and a triumphal arch, but also the erection of golden statues to *securitas saeculi*, *indulgentia domini nostri* and *virtus domini nostri*. Given the context of Caracalla's reign, the choice for *indulgentia, securitas* and *virtus* may well have been made with an eye towards the political and ideological developments within the imperial court. By emphasizing the emperor's military capabilities (in the statue as well as the triumphal arch), his munificence towards his subjects through the Constitutio Antoniniana and the stability he brought after the eradication of the 'enemy' Geta and his supporters, Natalis gave powerful expression to the legitimacy and success of Caracalla's reign. Yet, as with earlier dedications, each of these qualities also highlights common provincial expectations of imperial rule. As I have argued for several cases, these statues were not only expressions of loyalty and consent, but also objects with a local political importance. Natalis had a lengthy career in Cirta, eventually becoming a *duumvir quinquennalis*. It was only during or after his tenure as *quinquennalis* that Natalis fulfilled his obligations: the spectacles, arch and statues were erected *ob honorem aedilitatis et IIIvir(atus) et q(uin)q(uennalitatis) rei p(ublicae)*. Although outwardly concerned with Caracalla's virtues and *securitas*, the dedications simultaneously form a commemoration of Natalis' wealth and involvement in local politics, not least because of the precious material of the statues.

The reign of Caracalla provides examples of both discontinuity and continuity compared to his father. Coinage offers an opportunity to gauge if these 'mixed messages' were part of the wider ideological program under Caracalla. Manders has provided decisive evidence for an ideological shift in the coin types after Caracalla's ascension to sole rule.[434] The shift is intriguing: whereas coin types depicting personified virtues and military representations play a prominent role in the years of co-rulership with his father, the coin types of Caracalla's years as sole ruler give strong precedence to depictions of a wide range of divinities.[435] Rowan likewise argued for a decisive shift towards divine

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[430] See for example CIL VIII 17829 = ILS 434, re-inscribed in 213.
[431] Imrie 2018: 113–133, on *indulgentia* see specifically Imrie 2018: 127–130.
[432] As also noted by Imrie 2018: 128.
[433] CIL VIII 7095-7098.
[434] Manders 2012: 225–252.
[435] Manders 2012: 231.

associations on the basis of a study of Severan *denarii*.[436] Interestingly, there is little overlap between the coin types and the epigraphic tradition. Instead of a decline in martial or munificent honorifics in the epigraphy, we see the rise of *invictissimus* and *indulgentissimus*. At the same time, the divine associations that form such a strong factor in Caracalla's coinage do not translate to a rise in the number of dedications to imperial *pietas* or epithets such as *felicissimus*. *Fides*, with 4% the most prominent virtue on Caracalla's silver coinage according to Rowan's data, does not appear in any attested dedication within my database. Naturally, we would not expect a direct overlap between numismatics and epigraphy, and the divergence between both types of media undoubtedly reflects the multifaceted nature of imperial ideology, as well as the diffuse ways in which it reached the provinces. Still, the differences between courtly coinage and provincial epigraphy do point to a more fundamental divide. The spread of phrases such as *invictissimus* and *super omnes retro principes*, or the association between Caracalla and *indulgentia*, suggest that provincial audiences were to some extent in touch with changes in imperial self-representation, but were selective in their choices. A possible explanation is that titles such as *invictissimus* and *super omnes retro principes* may have been more easily transmitted by various forms of official documentation and through oratory. The longstanding association between imperial munificence and *indulgentia* also made that virtue an obvious choice for dedicators responding to the Constitutio Antoniniana. The various divine associations on the other hand were conceptually much more diffuse, particularly given the large number of deities involved.[437] Caracalla's relationships with the divine may have been important to his provincial subjects, but did not form the motive behind provincial dedications – in the way of for example imperial munificence – nor was it translated into new imperial titles beyond the already existing *Pius Felix*.

Dedications to the later Severans continue trends already evident under Septimius Severus and Caracalla. It is perhaps tempting to search for a clear ideological break between Caracalla and Elagabalus, but Icks has argued that the priest-emperor showed considerable ideological continuity with earlier Severans.[438] The title *sacerdos amplissimus deus Invictus Sol Elagabal* appears only once within a civilian context, in a lengthy inscription containing a decree on water distribution from Lamasba.[439] A regulatory document rather than an honorific dedication, the official and public nature of the Lamasba-decree may have engendered the inclusion of the title where it is missing in contemporary dedications. This once again suggests knowledge and awareness of ideological trends at the capital, which nevertheless were not felt to be necessary to include in honorific dedications elsewhere. Elagabalus is furthermore honoured as "*felicissimus adque* [sic] *invictissimus ac super omnes* [*re*]*tr*[*o p*]*rincipes indulgentissimus*" for his restoration of a road and bridge near Cirta, honorifics that are very similar to those employed for earlier Severan emperors.[440]

Severus Alexander is likewise honoured with fairly traditional honorifics. Martial honorifics only appear in a single dedication; a stark contrast with contemporary military dedications, to which we

[436] Rowan 2012: 111–112.
[437] Manders 2012: 233–242.
[438] Icks 2008; Icks 2011.
[439] CIL VIII 4440, see also Shaw 1982.
[440] CIL VIII 10304 = ILS 471.

will return later.[441] Munificent virtues on the other hand are more abundant. Unsurprisingly, North African provincials continued to respond to the emperor's benefactions and expenditure in the province by praising imperial *indulgentia*.[442] In Uchi Maius the city council of the nearby *civitas Bencenna* set up a dedication in the city to Concordia Augusta, accompanied by a statue of Concordia Perpetua.[443] The dedication was set up after Severus Alexander – who is honoured for his *indulgentia* – bestowed colonial status upon Uchi Maius, thereby elevating and honouring (*lata honorataque*) the city. Imperial *concordia* is here invoked with a double meaning: both to safeguard the tranquillity and harmony at the imperial court (Concordia Augusta) but also, and perhaps more importantly, to safeguard the good relationship between the now-favoured colony of Uchi Maius and the nearby *civitas* of Bencenna (Concordia Perpetua). Once again, imperial ideals serve to give expression to local concerns.

The same can also be said for a victory arch in Dougga, erected in honour of Severus Alexander by the city of Dougga in the years 231/232.[444] In the dedicatory inscription, the emperor is lauded with the new honorific title *conservator libertatis*. Why Severus Alexander was associated with the title is unknown, yet the existence of the arch and the fact that the city adopted the name *Alexandriana*[445] may point to a major benefaction towards the city. The title *Liberum* also appears in the official name of the city of Dougga (*municipium Septimium Aurelium Liberum Dougga*) after 205, but disappears when it is granted the status of *colonia*.[446] *Libertas* again appears in connection to an ambassador to the imperial court who undertook a mission *pro libertate publica*[447], while the emperor Probus is honoured by the city in 268 as a *conservator dignitas et libertatis*[448]. *Libertas*, the recurring theme in these third-century inscriptions, most likely refers to Dougga's exemption from taxation and other imperial duties as a direct result of the city having become a *municipium* under Septimius Severus in 205.[449] Under Severus Alexander, an attempt to rescind this favourable status may have been averted, though sometime in the years after the erection of the arch, Dougga nevertheless lost its exemption. The mission to the imperial court, as well as the dedication to Probus, may be read as attempts to (partially) restore the old *libertas* of the city. As with the dedication to Concordia Augusta, both emperors might be honoured as preservers of liberty but this *libertas* has a very specific local meaning. It reflected both a grand normative belief about legitimate power ('emperors should preserve *libertas*') and a more tangible, beneficial status for the local community bestowed by legitimate imperial authority.

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[441] CIL VIII 20138 = ILAlg-02-03, 7824 = Saastamoinen 500 = AE 1913, 120 = AE 2012, +49.
[442] CIL VIII 15447 = Uchi-01-Rug 23 = Uchi-02, 3 = AE 1892, +94 = AE 1908, +264 = AE 1941, +73 = AE 1999, +1846; CIL VIII 26262 = Uchi-01-Rug 22 = Uchi-02, 44 = Saastamoinen 505 = AfrRom-14-03-2349 = AE 1908, 264 = AE 2006, 1688; IRT 41; CIL VIII 15447 = Uchi-01-Rug 23 = Uchi-02, 3 = AE 1892, +94 = AE 1908, +264 = AE 1941, +73 = AE 1999, +1846. See also Saastamoinen 496 = Afrique p. 258 = AE 1966, 593 from Perdices.
[443] CIL VIII 15447 = Uchi-01-Rug 23 = Uchi-02, 3 = AE 1892, +94 = AE 1908, +264 = AE 1941, +73 = AE 1999, +1846.
[444] CIL VIII 1484 (p 938) = CIL VIII 26552 = ILTun 1415 = Dougga 57 = ILS 6796 = Saastamoinen 506; CIL VIII 1485 (p 1494) = CIL VIII 26551 = ILTun 1414 = ILS 483; see also Johne 2008: 694–696.
[445] CIL VIII 1487 (p 2616) = CIL VIII 15506 = Dougga 16 = ILTun 1378 = ILS 541; Johne 2008: 694.
[446] Lepelley 1997: 105.
[447] CIL VIII 26582 = ILTun 1424 = Dougga 70 = ILS 9018 = AE 1911, 76 = AE 1957, 255.
[448] CIL VIII 26561.
[449] Lepelley 1997; Johne 2008: 695–696.

2.3. – A permanent shift? Normative language in the third century

The Severan dynasty is traditionally considered a turning point in the change from Principate to Dominate. The normative language that we have encountered thus far – usually in the form of honorific titles – seems to confirm this assertion, not only in the rise of *dominus noster* but also in the increasingly autocratic language of the honorifics, praising imperial might, majesty and munificence in superlative terms. In this light, it is interesting to see whether the third-century dedications continue this trend. The North African cities under review have provided us with a generous number of dedications that can be dated to the third century with various degrees of certainty. The nature of the epigraphic material changes in the early third century. Saastamoinen notes that the length of the imperial titulature in building dedications drops dramatically after Caracalla, as complex genealogies and *cognomina* disappear.[450] Extant honorific inscriptions offer a more nuanced view: genealogies do indeed largely disappear but many *cognomina ex virtute* are retained, while the political offices of the emperor are also usually included.[451] Not all third-century emperors are equally well-attested in the epigraphic record of North African communities. Many dedications are furthermore fragmentary and/or impossible to date precisely. Of the dedications that can be dated (with some measure of precision) to the third century, 86 include some form of normative language or explicit expressions of loyalty in the form of *pro salute*. By far the most commonly used epithets are *invictus* (*Augustus*) and *nobilissimus Caesar*. The former gradually becomes a standard part of the imperial titulature, similar to *Pius* and *Felix*, after Severus Alexander.[452] With some 59 appearances among a total of 86 dedications across different communities, the title is the most prominent of all third-century honorifics. Only a single dedication from Sufes employs the superlative *invictissimus*; as *invictus* became a standardized element of the imperial titulature, it may have replaced *invictissimus*.[453]

Nobilissimus is mostly applied to sons and heirs such as Maximus, Philippus the Younger, or Carinus.[454] The title appears in some 18 dedications across African communities.[455] Despite the *damnatio* of Geta, *nobilissimus* was quickly rehabilitated and used for the sons of usurpers (Diadumenianus) and Severans (Severus Alexander) alike. The title remained in use throughout the third century for designated successors. Philippus the Younger in particular is well-represented with the title in the epigraphic corpus, the result of the relatively long (in comparison to other mid-third-

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[450] Saastamoinen 2010: 83–85.

[451] See for example: CIL VIII 12522 = ILS 600 (a dedication to Carus); AE 1914, 35 = AE 2013, +110 (a dedication to Gordian III and his wife Tranquillina); AE 1905, 179 (a dedication to Maximinus and his son Maximus); CIL VIII 21952 = ILTun 1724 (a dedication to Philip the Arab and his son Philip II); CIL VIII 7022 = CIL VIII 19420 = ILAlg-02-01, 575 = AE 1959, 69c (a dedication to Trebonianus Gallius); CIL VIII 10317 = CIL VIII 22381 (a dedication to Philip the Arab and his son Philip II); AE 1912, 158 (a dedication to Pupienus, Balbinus and Gordian I); AE 2003, 1972 (a dedication to Maximinus and his son Maximus); CIL VIII 848 = ILPBardo 356 = ILS 498 (a dedication to Gordian III); ILTun 719 = AE 1923, 16 (a dedication to Carus and his son Carinus).

[452] Hammond 1957: 51.

[453] CIL VIII 257 = CIL VIII 11420 (a dedication to an unknown third century emperor by the city council).

[454] AE 1905, 179; CIL VIII 21952 = ILTun 1724; ILTun 719 = AE 1923, 16; IRT 453; IRT 460.

[455] AE 1905, 179; CIL VIII 21952 = ILTun 1724; CIL VIII 10317 = CIL VIII 22381; IRT 48; AE 1912, 158; AE 2003, 1972; ILTun 370 = ILPSbeitla 30; BCTH-1894-362; BCTH-1893-159; AE 1981, 899; AE 1981, 893; CIL VIII 2383 = AE 2012, +1912; CIL VIII 2382 = AE 2012, +1912; ILTun 719 = AE 1923, 16; CIL VIII 1220 = ILTun 1225; CILVIII 5332 = CIL VIII 17486 = ILAlg-01, 247 = ILS 606 = AE 2014, +39; ILAlg-01, 2047; AE 1981, 897.

century emperors) reign of his father Philippus, in which Philippus the Younger was clearly pushed forward as a successor on coinage and – presumably – other media.[456] Like all honorific titles, *invictus* and *nobilissimus* helped to shape and reinforce ideas on imperial power at a local level. But in both cases, the titles were also increasingly part of the fixed canon of imperial titles, based on existing traditions first put in place by the Severan emperors. This makes their value as a window on provincial attitudes increasingly limited the further we move into the third century.

The phrase *pro salute* remains a common expression of loyalty to the reigning emperor throughout the third-century epigraphy, although in considerably smaller numbers than in the late second and early third century.[457] Imperial well-being remained a concern of both civic institutions and private dedicators: the city council and people of Uchi Maius erected a triumphal arch to Gordian III which was dedicated *pro salute*; on a more modest scale, the priest and equestrian Quintus Arellius Optatianus from Mactar erected a dedication to Magna Mater for the *salus* of Probus.[458] Despite the numerical reduction, there is a strong sense of continuity in its appearance on building dedications and in honorific inscriptions.

The same sense of continuity is also present in honorific epithets regularly applied to emperors: *fortissimus* and *indulgentia*. Martial themes appear in three dedications that include *fortissimus*, always in superlative form and in combination with other honorific epithets. A dedication to Gordian III set up by the city council of Thuburbo Maius employs the Severan phrase *fortissimus felicissimus*.[459] A second dedication to Gordian III from Thysdrus likewise includes the Severan phrasing *fortissi*[*mo et super omne*]*s retro principes in*[*dulgentissimo*].[460] It is only under Probus that we see something of a shift in the associations connected to martial virtues. A statue base, set up by city of Dougga and its curator Julius Italicus, couples *fortissimus* with *piissimus* and notes that "that in his age the entire world may flourish" (*saeculo eius universus orbis floreat*), the type of normative language more typically associated with the fourth century.[461] Other references to the emperor's military prowess are rarer: Maximinus Thrax is lauded as a *conservator orbis* in Lepcis Magna, Carus for his "honour and bravery" (*honori et virtuti*) in Sicca Veneria and a dedication from Sabratha praises either Claudius Gothicus or Probus as a "restorer of the world" (*restitutor*[*i orbis*]).[462]

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[456] See for example RIC IV Philip 215-217, 219-220, or 223-224, depicting Philippus the Younger on the obverse of his father's coinage with titles and a radiate crown.

[457] CIL VIII 23400 = ILPBardo 100 = ILTun 538 = ILCV +364 = CCCA-05, 79 = AE 1892, 18 = AE 1955, +49; BCTH-1954-120; CIL VIII 10620 = CIL VIII 15521 = CIL VIII 15246a-b = CIL VIII 26559 = Saastamoinen 586 = ILTun 1416 = Dougga 62; CIL VIII 26264 = Uchi-01-Rug 27 = Uchi-01-Ugh 13 = Uchi-02, 50 = Saastamoinen 553. In the following dedications, the *pro salute* is wholly the emendation of the editors: CIL VIII 100 = CIL VIII 11228 = Saastamoinen 599; CIL VIII 7022 = CIL VIII 19420 = ILAlg-02-01, 575 = AE 1959, 69c; ILTun 719 = AE 1923, 16; CIL VIII 26246 = Uchi-01-Rug 28 = Uchi-02, 14; ILAlg-01, 2047.

[458] 26264 = Uchi-01-Rug 27 = Uchi-01-Ugh 13 = Uchi-02, 50 = Saastamoinen 553; CIL VIII 23400 = ILPBardo 100 = ILTun 538 = ILCV +364 = CCCA-05, 79 = AE 1892, 18 = AE 1955, +49.

[459] CIL VIII 848 = ILPBardo 356 = ILS 498.

[460] ILTun 110 = AE 1942/43, 40.

[461] CIL VIII 26560.

[462] IRT 452; CIL VIII 1626 = CIL VIII 15829 = ILS 3798; IRT 51. For the latter, see also the badly damaged inscription IRT 508 from Lepcis Magna.

Munificent honorifics are rarer than martial virtues, undoubtedly because of the curtailed financial benefactions and building activity of third-century emperors in the African provinces. Nevertheless, imperial *indulgentia* appears in several dedications. Beyond the aforementioned dedication to Gordian III, another dedication from Thysdrus mentions imperial *indulgentia* in the context of a restored aqueduct.[463] The building project was undertaken *ex indulgentia principis*, though the damaged plaque fails to mention which emperor. A panel from Sabratha meanwhile praises an *indulgentissimo* [*principi*].[464] At least one of these dedications can be tentatively connected to an imperial act of munificence, though in the two other cases the context is unclear. Virtues vaguely related to munificence, prosperity and good rule also make their appearance. The aqueduct-inscription from Thysdrus not only mentions imperial *indulgentia* but also lauds the *felix saeculum* in which the dedication was set up. A milestone from Sufes thanks Maximinus and Maximus "for their unflagging foresight" (*pro sua infatigabili (p)rovidentia*) in restoring a bridge.[465] An inscription set up by the city of Uchi Maius under Gordian III may have been dedicated to Pietas Augusta, but the dedication is incomplete.[466]

Of course, these dedications offer only an impressionistic sketch of the developments of normative language within epigraphy during the third century. Yet the sheer variety of inscriptions from communities across North Africa suggests that normative language was still an important form of legitimation and that provincials continued to consent to these claims by repeating them in their dedications. Unlike the *fortissimus felicissimus* of Septimius Severus or the *invictissimus* and *super omnes retro principes* of Caracalla, there are no new honorifics which are consistently applied to particular emperors. What we do see, however, is that emperors well into the third century were honoured with honorifics and epithets that were introduced or popularized under the Severans. *Invictus* and *nobilissimus*, followed in lesser numbers by *fortitudo*, *super omnes retro principes*, *indulgentia* and *felicitas* remained a common form of praise for reigning emperors. Although there was a stronger emphasis on martial honorifics, there appear to have been no major shifts in normative language until the late third century, at least on the basis of our limited evidence.

It is tempting to read the conservatism of the epigraphic record as a reflection of both the political chaos in the centre of power during large periods of the third century, and the relative peace of North Africa in that same period. While provincials kept erecting dedications, continuing and reinforcing existing epigraphic trends, the relatively short reigns of many emperors may have made the implementation of distinct ideological programs difficult. Again, coinage offers context and nuance. Manders has convincingly shown that third-century emperors were as much interested in propagating a variety of imperial virtues and general 'benefits' of imperial rule on their coinage as their second-century forebears.[467] Differences in output and types furthermore suggest that the mints of individual emperors made considered choices in what images to project; choices that often differed from those of the Severan mint masters. The key virtues that Manders traces on third-

[463] CIL VIII 51 = ILS 5777 = Saastamoinen 654 = AE 1947, +138 = AE 2008, +1611.
[464] IRT 85, though the dating is insecure.
[465] AE 2003, 1972.
[466] CIL VIII 26246 = Uchi-01-Rug 28 = Uchi-02, 14.
[467] In general see, Manders 2012: 155–220 with corroborating graphs on 159, 161, 190, 194, 202, 207, 213.

century coinage, however, make few appearances in North African epigraphy. Standard imperial virtues such as *providentia*, *liberalitas*, *virtus*, *pietas* and *aequitas* appear consistently across third-century coinage, but are mostly absent from dedications. Again there is some room for nuance: *virtus* and *liberalitas* do strongly overlap with *fortissimus*/*invictus* and *indulgentia*, respectively. A few third-century coin types even bear the legend VIRTUS INVICT AUG, or variations thereof.[468] *Virtus* is occasionally found in African epigraphy, most prominently in a number of dedications to Honos and Virtus Augusta.[469] These dedications suggest that *virtus* was mostly considered a deified virtue of imperial power rather than as a personal quality of the emperor. The difference in wording is more pronounced in the case of *liberalitas*/*indulgentia*. Yet as argued above, this can be read as a reflection of the clear differences in rank and hierarchy between the imperial court on the one hand and provincial dedicators on the other; whereas *liberalitas* was an aristocratic virtue of generosity, *indulgentia* suggested fatherly authority and superiority.

Manders also charts the prominence of coin types mentioning beneficial concepts and conditions that ostensibly originated from just imperial rule, including *pax*, *felicitas*, *securitas* and *salus*. Here we might see clearer examples of overlap between imperial coinage and provincial epigraphy. As noted earlier, dedicators kept erecting dedications for the well-being of the emperor throughout the third century. Although the *salus* on imperial coinage and the *pro salute* of the dedications are closely related concepts, it should be noted that the imperial coinage refers to the *salus* of the empire as a whole, while dedicators employed the phrase *pro salute* with specific reference to individual emperors. Furthermore, as noted earlier in this chapter, *pro salute* and similar expressions of loyalty were part of a much older epigraphic tradition in existence well before the third century. The same can be said for *felicitas*, which seems rather a continuation of earlier epigraphic practices than a response to new ideological currents. *Pax* and *securitas,* finally, do not appear to be attested at all among the cities included in this study.

My point here is not that these qualities were ignored or unimportant to provincial audiences; *pax*, *securitas*, and *felicitas* had propagandistic value exactly because they were desirable concepts in times of political chaos. Dedicators evidently felt little need to express this desire in their honorific dedications, either out of caution given the sometimes rapidly shifting political situation in Rome or because the formulaic format of the honorific inscription was not considered suitable for this purpose. Another possible explanation may be found in the lack of contact with governors and other officials. Unlike the Severan period or the tetrarchy[470], third-century legates and governors rarely appear as (fellow-)dedicators in inscriptions. Among my data, which includes only dedications with honorifics and virtues, there are only two instances of third-century officials acting as dedicators, both only employing the official honorific title *invictus*.[471] Compare this to the Severan legate

[468] Manders 2012: 176–177.

[469] See for example CIL VIII 302 = NDEAmmaedara 6 = Haidra-5, 1 = AE 1999, 1782; CIL VIII 6951 = ILAlg-02-01, 482; CIL VIII 7094-7098.

[470] For governors as dedicators under the tetrarchy, see for example Valerius Florus (CIL VIII 2345-2347), Valerius Antoninus (CIL VIII 5526 = CIL VIII 18860 = ILAlg-02-02, 4672 = ILS 651 = AE 1895, 80; ILAlg-02-02, 4671) or Valerius Concordius (ILAlg-02-03, 7859 = Saastamoinen 631 = AE 1920, 15).

[471] CIL VIII 7002 = ILAlg-02-01, 576 = ILS 607; ILAlg-02-01, 24.

Quintus Anicius Faustus, or such fourth-century governors as Valerius Paulus, who praises Constantine as a *triumphator omnium gentium* and a *domitor universaru*[*m factionum*].[472]

The explanation for this lack of administrative intervention is difficult to ascertain. There was no shortage of public dedications in the third century: some 36 of the 86 dedications in the database record that they were set up with public funds by local city councils. The real number is likely higher, since many inscriptions are damaged and their dedicators are now impossible to ascertain; not to mention the dedications that did not survive. If Noreña's thesis that governors and other officials helped in the spread of ideological claims to imperial legitimacy, this system may have either partially broken down or changed form in the third century. Perhaps the Severan era is the true aberration here: the incredibly active Quintus Anicius Faustus not only helped spread new honorifics and epithets but also foreshadowed the intensified presence of the imperial bureaucracy in the fourth century, when we see a similar bloom of honorific and virtuous epithets.

2.4. – In praise of late antique monarchs

Late antique dedications from North Africa are both numerous and employ a far wider lexicon of praise. This expanded use of normative language has not gone unnoticed. The appearance of virtues in fourth-century dedications has been the subject of detailed study in several articles.[473] My reading of the material here will not offer a radical departure from the general conclusions drawn by Kotula, Chastagnol or Salomies. Nevertheless, this chapter would not be complete without the inclusion of epigraphic material from the fourth century, albeit in a slightly more condensed form than that from the second and third century. The first changes towards a new style of normative language are apparent in the dedications to Carus and Probus from the late 270s and early 280s, cited earlier. Whereas earlier third-century dedications retained many features of the Severan era, normative language slowly starts to incorporate a wider number of terms and concepts. The move to a more expansive normative language does not constitute a clean break with the past: many of the same honorifics, virtues and more general expressions of loyalty are retained. Rather, they are accompanied by new and varied terms that give voice to new normative beliefs on legitimate imperial power.

The years of the tetrarchy – from its first foundation in 293 to its final collapse in 324, coincided with a flurry of epigraphic activity in North Africa. Some 67 dedications from 24 communities were set up in honour of the various emperors within the tetrarchic system.[474] In these dedications there is

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[472] CIL VIII 7006 = ILAlg-02-01, 582 = ILS 688 = Saastamoinen 679.

[473] See for example Kotula 1985; Chastagnol 1988; Salomies 1994; Salomies 2000.

[474] *Ammaedara*: ILTun 461 = ILPBardo 35 = Saastamoinen 665 = Haidra-05, 224 = AE 1927, 29; CIL VIII 308 (p.1198) = D 6786 = Haidra-05, 7; *Bulla Regia*: CIL VIII 25520 = ILPBardo 244 = D 9358 = Saastamoinen 622 = AE 1907, 24; *Calama*: CIL VIII 5333a-e = CIL VIII 17487 = CIL VIII 17520i = ILAlg-01, 250 = ILAlg-01, 297 = Saastamoinen 623 = AE 2012, +1902; *Carthage*: AE 1934, 31; *Cirta*: CIL VIII 7005 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 584; CIL VIII 10301 = CIL VIII 22366; CIL VIII 7003 = ILAlg-02-01, 579; CIL VIII 10265; *Cuicul*: AE 2000, 1799; AE 1992, 1885; ILAlg-02-03, 7860; ILAlg-02-03, 7862; ILAlg-02-03, 7869; ILAlg-02-03, 7856; ZPE-43-185 = AE 1982, 963 = AE 2001, +2065; ILAlg-02-03, 7865 = AfrRom-16-04-2134; ILAlg-02-03, 7858 = AE 1916, 18; ILAlg-02-03, 7861; ILAlg-02-03, 7863; ILAlg-02-03, 7864 = AfrRom-16-04-2133; ILAlg-02-03, 7867; *Dougga*: CIL VIII 1488 (p.2616) = CIL VIII 15507 = CIL VIII 26574a = ILAfr 513 = Saastamoinen 613; CIL VIII

a considerable level of continuity, not least because of the retention of a number of older honorific titles among the imperial titulature. Within the tetrarchic system, *nobilissimus* was retained as an official honorific title for the two Caesars while the title *invictus* was mostly – but not exclusively[475] – limited to the two Augusti. Unsurprisingly, we find both titles as fixed elements in the vast majority of dedications.[476] As with their third-century predecessors, the continuous repetition of these titles will undoubtedly have played its ideological part in reinforcing shared beliefs on legitimate power, continuously underlining the great nobility (*nobilitas*) and martial success (*invictus*) of the tetrarchs. Yet, as argued earlier, both titles are of limited use for the purposes of this thesis.

Two major new developments typify the use of late antique normative language in epigraphy. Firstly, we see praise for the dawning of a new 'golden age'. The first attested North African use of this type of temporal praise comes from an inscription from Zarai, dedicated to Maximinus Thrax.[477] Yet it is only in the late third century that temporal praise becomes a more standard feature of North African epigraphy. The same argument I employed for *pro salute* holds in this case as well: although not a reference to the personal qualities of either emperor, the presentation of the reign of Diocletian and Maximian as an exceptionally happy age is a clear expression of the legitimacy of their dual reign. A number of dedications from different communities record this new, prosperous age in florid prose.[478] Two dedications explicitly mention restoration works, and in general the phrase appears to be strongly represented on building dedications.[479] In Madauros a building

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1489 = CIL VIII 26562 = ILTun 1497 = ILAfr 531 = Saastamoinen 632 = Dougga 134 = CCCA-05, 87 = AE 1941, 158; CIL VIII 15516a (p.2616) = ILPBardo 227 = ILTun 1380 = Saastamoinen 672; CIL VIII 26472 = Dougga 139 = Saastamoinen 673 = AE 1902, 5 = AE 1904, +121; CIL VIII 26563 = Dougga 19; CIL VIII 26566 = Dougga 21 = AE 1908, 165 = Aounallah-2016, p.252; CIL VIII 26567 = CIL VIII 26573 = ILAfr 532 = AE 1907, 161 = AE 1908, 66 = AE 2016, +1901 = Aounallah-2016, p 254; AE 1907, 161; *Lepcis Magna*: IRT 468; IRT 466; IRT 464; IRT 465; *Mactar*: CIL VIII 21962 = ILTun 1726; CIL VIII 624 = CIL VIII 11782 = AE 1946, +62 = AE 1946, 119; *Madauros*: ILAlg-01, 2048 = Saastamoinen 617; *Milev*: ILAlg-02-03, 8540; CIL VIII 10329 = CIL VIII 22394; *Sicca Veneria*: CIL VIII 22188 = ILTun 1733 = BCTH-1932/33-246; CIL VIII 22187 = ILTun 1733 = AE 1949, +256; *Sitifis*: CIL VIII 8474 (p.1920); CIL VIII 10367; Saastamoinen 661 = AE 1928, 39 = AE 1949, 258 = AE 1992, 1908; *Sufes:* Saastamoinen 629 = AE 1992, 1763 = AE 2003, +1889; *Sufetula*: ILPSbeitla 230; CIL VIII 232 (p.926, 2354) = CIL VIII 11326 = ILPSbeitla 32 = Saastamoinen 669; *Tacape*: CIL VIII 21916 = ILPBardo 474 = ZPE-149-250; *Thamugadi*: CIL VIII 22318; CIL VIII 17882; BCTH-1951/52-232; BCTH-1907-274 = Saastamoinen 662; *Theveste*: CIL VIII 1862; CIL VIII 10958; CIL VIII 10959; ILAlg-01, 3947; ILAlg-01, 3948; ILAlg-01, 3949; *Thibilis*: CIL VIII 18904 = ILAlg-02-02, 4670; CIL VIII 22276; ILAlg-02-02, 4671; *Thubursicum Numidarum*: ILAlg-01, 1272; ILAlg-01, 1228 = D 9357b = AE 1904, 5; ILAlg-01, 1241 = Saastamoinen 628 = AE 1914, 243 = AE 1915, +67; *Thysdrus*: CIL VIII 22852; *Uchi Maius*: CIL VIII 26266 = Uchi-01-Rug 31 = Uchi-02, 64; *Vaga*: CIL VIII 14401 = ILAfr 441 = AE 1920, 26; *Zama Regia*: CIL VIII 16457.

[475] See the damaged inscription CIL VIII 16457, where all members of the tetrarchy may have been honoured as *invictus*: "[*Magnis et Invictis*] *dddd(ominis) nnnn(ostris)*".
[476] For *nobilissimus*, see for example: BCTH-1907-274 = Saastamoinen 662; IRT 466; CIL VIII 1489 = CIL VIII 26562 = ILTun 1497 = ILAfr 531 = Saastamoinen 632 = Dougga 134 = CCCA-05, 87 = AE 1941, 158; CIL VIII 624 = CIL VIII 11782 = AE 1946, +62 = AE 1946, 119. For *invictus*, see for example: CIL VIII 232 (p.926, 2354) = CIL VIII 11326 = ILPSbeitla 32 = Saastamoinen 669; ZPE-43-185 = AE 1982, 963 = AE 2001, +2065; CIL VIII 26472 = Dougga 139 = Saastamoinen 673 = AE 1902, 5 = AE 1904, +121.
[477] CIL VIII 4515.
[478] CIL VIII 624 = CIL VIII 11782 = AE 1946, +62 = AE 1946, 119; CIL VIII 5333a-e = CIL VIII 17487 = CIL VIII 17520i = ILAlg-01, 250 = ILAlg-01, 297 = Saastamoinen 623 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 14401 = ILAfr 441 = AE 1920, 26; ILAlg-01, 2048 = Saastamoinen 617; ILTun 461 = ILPBardo 35 = Saastamoinen 665 = Haidra-05, 224 = AE 1927, 29.
[479] CIL VIII 5333a-e = CIL VIII 17487 = CIL VIII 17520i = ILAlg-01, 250 = ILAlg-01, 297 = Saastamoinen 623 = AE 2012, +1902; ILAlg-01, 2048 = Saastamoinen 617. On the phrase on building dedications, see Saastamoinen 2010: 93–97.

dedication was set up "in the most prosperous age of our lords Diocletian and Maximian, Augusti" (*beatissimo saeculo dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)* [[*Diocletiani*]] *et* [[*Maximiani*]] *Augg(ustorum*) while a building dedication from Ammaedara records the new *florentissimum saeculum* under the tetrarchs.[480] The fact that this phrasing is attested in Madauros, Mactar, Calama, Vaga and Ammaedara suggests that we are not dealing simply with an isolated rhetorical flourish, but rather with a more wide-spread ideological notion. Saastamoinen points to an interesting correlation between a dedication from Mactar and two from Mididi, which are all dedicated "in the most felicitous age of our lords" (*felicissimo saeculo dominorum nostrorum*) and were set up with involvement from Titus Claudius Aurelius Aristobulus, governor of Africa from 290 to 294.[481] Saastamoinen's suggestion that the identical appearances of the phrases in two different communities betrays the influence of Aristobulus fits well with similar cases of gubernatorial influence we have seen from the second and early third century. Other dedications also bear the marks of involvement by imperial officials. The inscription from Madauros cited above was dedicated by Caius Macrinus Sossianus, legate of Numidia under Aristobulus, while a damaged dedication from Vaga may have referred to the involvement of proconsul Lucius Aelius Helvius Dionysius.[482] The appearance of officials in these dedications has a prosaic explanation: late antique governors were required to restore damaged buildings and carry out new building projects where necessary with public funds.[483] Yet this also meant that governors and other officials could have greater influence on the wording of building dedications. Possibly, governors such as Aristobulus helped reinforce an epigraphic trend that later also appeared in privately-funded dedications.[484]

A second trend that first comes to the fore under the tetrarchy is a greater variety in the normative language employed towards emperors. Some are variations on older virtues and honorifics. Given the rise in prominence of martial epithets in the third century, it is for example not surprising to find several dedications praising imperial *fortitudo*. Diocletian and Maximian are honoured by the governor of Numidia as "most brave and most pious" (*fortissimi et piissimi*) as well as "pacifiers of the world" (*pacatores orbis*), while a dedication set up by the *res publica* of Cuicul honours Constantius I as "best and most brave" (*optimus fortissimusque*) and a statue base from Lepcis Magna praises Constantius I and Galerius as "bravest and most unconquerable emperors" (*fortissimi et invictissimi imperatores*).[485] Other familiar qualities regained a new importance, as appears to be the case with *pietas*. The title *Pius* is not among the official titles of Diocletian on coin legends and appears to have been inconsistently applied in epigraphy.[486] This perhaps left room for *pietas* as a

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[480] ILAlg-01, 2048 = Saastamoinen 617; ILTun 461 = ILPBardo 35 = Saastamoinen 665 = Haidra-05, 224 = AE 1927, 29.

[481] Saastamoinen 2010: 95; CIL VIII 608, CIL VIII 11774; CIL VIII 624 = CIL VIII 11782 = AE 1946, +62 = AE 1946, 119. On these and similar phrases as imperial propaganda, see generally Kotula 1985.

[482] See ILAlg-01, 2048 = Saastamoinen 617; CIL VIII 14401 = ILAfr 441 = AE 1920, 26.

[483] Lepelley 1996: 217–218; Slootjes 2006: 77–84.

[484] Such as for example CIL VIII 5333a-e = CIL VIII 17487 = CIL VIII 17520i = ILAlg-01, 250 = ILAlg-01, 297 = Saastamoinen 623 = AE 2012, +1902, and possibly the badly damaged ILTun 461 = ILPBardo 35 = Saastamoinen 665 = Haidra-05, 224 = AE 1927, 29.

[485] CIL VIII 7003 = ILAlg-02-01, 579; ILAlg-02-03, 7862; IRT 462.

[486] It does not appear among the official imperial titulature of Diocletian of Maximian: see Kienast 1996: 266–269, 272–275. In North African epigraphy too, the title is common but not consistently. See for example: CIL VIII 1550 (p.1499) = CIL VIII 15552 = Saastamoinen 66; CIL VIII 309 = CIL VIII 11532 = D 5649 = Saastamoinen 634 = Haidra-05, 8; AfrRom-19-521 = Saastamoinen 678 = AE 1966, 600; CIL VIII 501 = Saastamoinen 627.

distinct virtue to be included in dedications. Two prominent examples are a set of two dedications to Galerius and Constantius, set up by the city of Dougga in 295. The large inscriptions, which were most likely accompanied by statues, were possibly part of a larger monument to the tetrarchy.[487] Both inscriptions were dedicated "to the most brave and most noble Caesar, exceptional in virtue and in piety" (*fortissimo ac nobilissimo Caesari, virtute etiam ac pietate praecipuo*).[488] Similar to *pietas*, other virtues that dominated imperial media for centuries but were hardly represented in the epigraphic record become more common from the tetrarchy onwards. One prominent example is the aforementioned building dedication from Mactar set up by the legate Sossianus, which presents imperial *providentia* and *virtus* as the source of societal renewal *([q]uorum virt[ute et provi]dentia omnia in melius refo[rmantur]*). A building dedication set up with involvement of the governor Valerius Concordius in Cuicul was put up "in the most clement times" (*clementissimis temporibus*) of Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius and Galerius, while a building dedication set up by an unknown dedicator from Sitifis directly praises the four emperors as *clementissimi principes*.[489]

As with the honorific phrases praising the glorious spirit of the times, we may possibly suspect the hand of imperial officials in the spread of a more elaborate, virtue-laden normative language. The types of virtues praised closely match those present in other imperial media under the tetrarchy.[490] Some even directly record the involvement of imperial officials, mostly in the case of building activities or restoration works. Others, such as the statuary inscriptions from Dougga and Cuicul, do not appear to have been set up with direct involvement from the governor. Although imperial officials may have given a strong impulse to the adoption of a new type of normative language, these civic dedications suggest that it had a receptive audience. Whether this superlative style of honorifics is a reflection of genuine provincial enthusiasm for the new imperial regime or rather of the dire state of affairs in the late third and early fourth century, is ultimately a question that can't be answered conclusively.[491] More important here is that these honorifics point to a new conception of imperial authority that saw imperial virtues as immanent rather than as expressed through deeds. Whereas in the second century emperors might be honoured for their *indulgentia* on the basis of specific benefactions, honorific praise now seems detached from actual imperial actions. The virtues of the tetrarchs suffused their reign to the point of it being a *felicissimum saeculum* or a *clementissimum tempus*.

In rare cases the normative language employed seems to refer to current events. Prime examples are two statues bases dedicated to Maxentius, set up by a governor of Tripolitania and an *agens*

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[487] Lepelley 1981: 219.

[488] CIL 26566 = Dougga 21 = AE 1908, 165 = Aounallah-2016, p.252; CIL VIII 26567 = CIL VIII 26573 = ILAfr 532 = AE 1907, 161 = AE 1908, 66 = AE 2016, +1901 = Aounallah-2016, p.254.

[489] ILAlg-02-03, 7859 = Saastamoinen 631 = AE 1920, 15; Saastamoinen 661 = AE 1928, 39 = AE 1949, 258 = AE 1992, 1908.

[490] Kolb 2001: 56–57.

[491] A point of contention for Saastamoinen, who argues against the positive impressions of Lepelley and Warmington (cited in Saastamoinen 2010: 95).

vices praefectorum praetorio in Lepcis Magna.[492] Though in control of large swaths of Italy and North Africa, Maxentius was never officially recognized as part of the tetrarchy. As loyalists to the regime, the governor Volusius Donatianus and the *agens vices* Valerius Alexander erected two statues in Maxentius' honour, possibly to contribute to the legitimacy of Maxentius' claim to power in the region. The normative language used in both dedications is identical and clearly inspired by the titles of the tetrarchy, for example through the inclusion of *invictus Augustus*. The inscription is dedicated "To the most indulgent emperor, who is moreover a restorer of freedom and most victorious" (*indulgentissimo ac libertatis restitutori victoriosissimoque imperatori*).[493] The latter two titles most likely refer to Maxentius' defeat of Galerius in 307. The praise for *indulgentia* in this context is more puzzling, given that it does not appear to be attested in contemporary dedications and it barely attested for the fourth century in general.[494] Tantillo and Bigi suggest the tentative possibility that Galerius may have planned fiscal reforms to tighten administrative finances, which may have stripped Lepcis Magna of its *ius Italicum*.[495] If this hypothesis is correct, Donatianus' and Alexander's choice of normative language appears to have been carefully worded to reflect court ideology, presenting Maxentius not only as a successful military leader but also as a protector of African privileges. A similar case is in evidence in Cirta, where the usurper (between 308 and 310) Domitius Alexander is hailed by two governors as a "restorer of public liberty and one who extends the entire human race and the name of Rome" (*restituto*[*ri*] *publicae libe*[*r*]*tatis ac propagatori totius generis human*[*i*] *nominisque Romani*).[496]

We see a continued use of increasingly florid normative language and the heavy involvement of imperial officials with the reign of Constantine, first as co-emperor with Licinius and later as sole ruler. The martial themes present under the tetrarchy appear throughout. We might point to the continued epigraphic presence of the standard imperial title *Invictus*, which Constantine officially carried until 324, when it was abandoned in favour of *Victor*.[497] More interesting are the manifold variations on this theme. Under Constantine, the city of Cirta was made capital of the province of Numidia and renamed after the emperor. As a result, the city not only came to host the governors of the province but also saw a flurry of dedicatory activity by imperial officials. One statue base, erected by the governor Valerius Paulus between 314 and 315, was dedicated "to the triumphant victor over all peoples and tamer of all factions, who, by his happy victory, illumined with new light the freedom obscured by the darkness of servitude, our lord, Flavius Valerius Constantinus"

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[492] There is some discussion on the nature of the *agens vices praefectorum praetorio*: Arnheim sees it as interchangeable with the title *vicarius*, while Noethlichs argues that the *agens vices* represented the first stage of a developing imperial office, which eventually transformed into the *vicarius*. Hence there is also debate on the exact nature of the rank and responsibilities of the *agens vices* in relationship to *praesides*; I have focused here on the rank of Dracontius and (below) Valerius Alexander, rather than on their offices; see Arnheim 1970: 593–603; Noethlichs 1982: 74–76; Slootjes 2015: 179–182.

[493] IRT 464; for its counterpart see IRT 465.

[494] With the exception of a dedication to Julian from Thamguadi: CIL VIII 2387 = IIulian 175 = AE 1949, +134.

[495] Tantillo and Bigi 2010: 43.

[496] CIL VIII 7004 (p.1848) = CIL VIII 7067 = CIL VIII 19419 = ILAlg-02-01, 580 = D 674 (p.171).

[497] See for example CIL VIII 1016; CIL VIII 7005 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 584; CIL VIII 7006 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 582 = D 688 = Saastamoinen 679; CIL 7007 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 583; CIL VIII 7008 = ILAlg-02-01, 585; CIL VIII 8476 = CIL VIII 20346; CIL VIII 8477 (p.1920) = D 695. For the change to *Victor* and later *Victor ac Triumphator*, see Lenski 2016: 38, 42–43.

(*triumphatori omnium gentium ac domitori universaru*[*m factionum qu*]*i libertatem tenebris servitutis oppressam sua felici vi*[*ctoria? nova*] *luce inluminavit* [*d(omino)*] *n(ostro) Flavio Valerio Constant*[*ino*]); the same honorific formulae were copied in a second, contemporary dedication by an unknown *rationalis*.[498] Another *rationalis* praises Constantine as a *restitutor libertatis* and a *conservator totius orbis*, while a third *rationalis* hails the emperor as "triumphant victor over all peoples and founder of peace, outstanding in virtue, fortune and piety" ([*triumphatori omnium gentium*] *et fun*[*dato*]*ri* [*pacis? v*]*irtute felici*[*t*]*at*[*e pie*]*tate praestanti*).[499] As a last example, we might point to the governor Iallius Antiochus, who lauds Constantine as "perpetual author of security and liberty" (*perpetuae securitatis ac libertatis auctori*).[500] Cirta was by no means the only place where Constantinian officials used increasingly florid language to praise their emperor. In Dougga, for example, a legate erected a statue, its base possibly inscribed "to the emperor of divine virtue, extinguisher of the faction of the tyrant, and victor, defender of his provinces and of the cities" ([*divi*]*nae virtutis* [*principi? extinctori? ty*]*rannicae factionis et v*[*ictori? defensori? pro*]*vinciarum suarum atque urb*[*ium?*]).[501] Not all dedications by Constantinian officials are of the same florid nature[502] but the above examples nevertheless highlight a general trend towards increasingly varied honorific formulae.

It is interesting to compare the above dedications with those erected by provincial dedicators. Although privately-financed statues to the emperors became increasingly rare in the fourth century, civic institutions throughout North Africa continued to erect them with public funds. Interestingly, the majority of statue bases set up with public funds do not follow the florid style noted above. The majority of statue bases dedicated to Constantine, like those set up by the cities of Thamugadi and Cuicul, only included official honorific titles such as *Invictus*.[503] A small number, however, do employ more elaborate honorific formulae that come close to the type of normative language employed in the dedications by imperial officials. A base set up by the city of Uchi Maius was dedicated "to the lord of triumph and freedom, and our restorer of the well-being of the people and the state by his unconquered efforts" ([*Do*]*mino triumfi libertatis et nostro restitutori invictis laboribus suis privatorum et publicae salutis*).[504] Although it makes no mention of personal virtues, the honorific intent of the dedication is clear. The Uchi Maius inscription almost certainly directly postdates Constantine's victory over Maxentius.[505] Perhaps the city council felt the need to respond to the moment of political upheaval through an emphatic statement of loyalty to Constantine, for which additional honorific formulae were employed. On the basis of the Uchi Maius dedication it may be tempting to hypothesize that North African communities responded to such moments of crisis with a greater emphasis on normative language, yet the small number of bases employing the florid style suggest otherwise. The only other example is a base set up by the city of Thamugadi, which also

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[498] CIL VIII 7006 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 582 = D 688 = Saastamoinen 679, translation LSA-2230 (G. de Bruyn); CIL VIII 7007 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 583.

[499] CIL VIII 7010 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 581 = D 69; CIL VIII 7008 = ILAlg-02-01, 585, translation LSA-2232 (G. de Bruyn).

[500] CIL VIII 7005 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 584.

[501] AfrRom-15-01-126 = AE 2003, 2014 = AE 2007, +1718, translation LSA-92 (U. Gehn).

[502] See for example CIL VIII 18905 = ILAlg-02-02, 4673 = AE 1890, 21; CIL VIII 8476 = CIL VIII 20346;

[503] BCTH-1906-214 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ILAlg-02-03, 07867a.

[504] CIL VIII 15451 (p.2595) = D 690 = Uchi-01-Rug 32 = Uchi-02, 53, translation LSA-1173 (G. de Bruyn).

[505] Lepelley 1981: 234.

employed elaborate formulae to honour Constantine. The emperor is praised as "great in virtue, exceptional in piety, always and everywhere victor" (*virtute magno pietate praecipuo* [*se*]*mper et ubiqu*[*e*] *victori*).[506] Unfortunately, the dating of the Thamugadi base is far from certain, with the lack of the title *Invictus* possibly pointing to a far later date in Constantine's reign. The dedications from Uchi Maius and Thamugadi may betray the influence of a normative language as propagated by imperial officials across the African provinces. Yet this normative language did not become a fixed element of local epigraphic traditions throughout North Africa as a whole, with many communities preferring to stay close to official honorific titles such as *Invictus* or (*Triumphator ac*) *Victor*.

With the end of the reign of Constantine, the epigraphic material moves further and further away from this study's focus on the second and third century. The epigraphic record of Lepcis Magna offers a condensed overview of developments in the later fourth century, when the city saw a spurt in dedicatory activity. The new centre for imperial dedications was the Forum Severianum, although a number of statues were still erected in old prestigious locations such as the Forum Vetus and the theatre, or thoroughfares such as the Punic Market or the street running between the Chalcidium and the Hadrianic Baths. The political landscape of Lepcis changed dramatically with the administrative reforms of Diocletian, when Lepcis became part of the newly formed province of Tripolitania and may have acted as its capital. The presence of a governor in the city cannot be proven with certainty, but is usually presumed on the basis of the large amounts of dedications to governors and other high-ranking officials.[507] Unsurprisingly, these officials also constitute an important group of dedicators in Lepcis Magna. Two prominent examples are the statue bases set up in the northern portico of the Forum Severianum and dedicated to Valentinian I and Valens by an *agens vices* named Antonius Dracontius.[508] The two emperors are honoured in an elaborate honorific formula: "to (those) equally godlike in justice and piety and perpetual founders of Roman good fortune, our lords Valentinian and Valens, most victorious emperors and Augusti of the whole world" (*iustitia pariter ac pietate caelestibus adq(ue) Romanae felicitatis perpetuis fundatoribus d(ominis) n(nostris) Valentiniano et Valenti uictoriosissimis principibus ac totius orbis Aug(ustis)*).[509] The same Antonius Dracontius erected two highly similar dedications on the forum of Sabratha.[510] The presence of a governor and his staff not only provided a new pool of dedicators, but also made Lepcis an interesting stage for men like Antonius Dracontius to be noticed by superiors. The new political status of Lepcis also coincided with a dramatic change in local epigraphic traditions. Although the fortunes of various political institutions of Lepcis such as the *curiae* and the *ordo* may have waxed and waned, the civic body responsible for public dedications – presumably still the city council – did not identify itself as such in imperial dedications.[511] Instead, local epigraphic tradition shifts to an ever greater emphasis on unity and unanimity, with the majority of public dedications

[506] CIL VIII 2386 = CIL VIII 17885.
[507] Mattingly 1995: 171–173, 181–182.
[508] IRT 472, 473.
[509] IRT 472, translation Reynolds & Ward-Perkins 2009.
[510] IRT 57, 58.
[511] The sole exception seems to be IRT 477, a dedication to Theodosius I where the dedicators are clearly referred to as *ordo Lepcimag(nensis)*.

to emperors set up in name of the *Lepcitani*.[512] As in other communities in North Africa, the honorifics included in the dedications set up by the Lepcitans tend to stay close to official imperial titulature, with an emphasis on martial themes. Theodosius I is lauded as a "propagator of the Roman world" (*propagatori Rom[ani] orbis*) in the east portico of the Forum Severianum; Arcadius is praised as a "a peace-making consul throughout the world" (*toto orbe pacifico consuli*), as well as with the title "victor and triumphator" (*victori ac triumfatori*) in the southern portico of the same forum; Valens, Gratian and Valentinian are honoured for their good fortune as well as their universal victory (*vigente fortuna dominorum principumq(ue); ubiq(ue) vincentium*) while Honorius is solely honoured with the title "victor and triumphator" (*victori ac triumfatori*).[513] When personal virtues and non-martial honorifics appear in dedications set up by the Lepcitan community, governors are often involved, such as in the case of IRT 471 (*pietas*, *iustitia*) or IRT 468 (*clementia*).

Across this chapter we have seen a slew of examples of provincial dedicators, across four centuries of imperial rule, making choices in their normative language that differed from the precedent set in imperial media. At the same time, however, we also saw examples of honorific inscriptions that closely followed courtly ideological trends. Throughout this chapter, the involvement of imperial officials was suggested as a possible explanation. These officials on occasion acted either as dedicators in their own right, or as ideological brokers between the court and the African communities in the spread of normative language. A separate argument throughout this chapter pointed to the often highly-localized context of normative language, pointing as much to local concerns about imperial rule as to they do to expressions of imperial ideology from centre of power. The following chapter will see these two arguments merge as we turn to the dedications erected in honour of imperial officials, in which local concerns gain a new and acute dimension.

[512] The latest dateable use of 'Lepcitani Septimiani' seems to be on a statue base to Gallienus, dated to 267; see IRT 457.
[513] IRT 477, 478, 475, 479.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNORS AND OFFICIALS

Where the emperor-as-symbol had a strong presence in provincial communities, the emperor-as-leader was a faraway figure. Although he could receive petitions, grant privileges and enact punishments, most emperors were content with a reactive style of ruling. Imperial interventions could have a major impact on civic life – from grand building schemes to the stripping of privileges – these interventions were exceptional. On a daily basis, the direct impact of the emperor on any given community was minimal. The same cannot be said for imperial officials, both civic and military. From the senatorial governor of Africa Proconsularis down to the *beneficiarius* on policing duty, Roman officials were the day-to-day face of imperial power. Although subordinate to the emperor, high-ranking officials nevertheless were considered powerholders in and of themselves. The decisions of governors, legates and to some extent procurators influenced communal life in everything from taxation to construction work. It is therefore not surprising to find large numbers of dedications to Roman officials, set up by both communities and private dedicators. In the current chapter, I turn my attention to the governors, legates and procurators of North Africa and the ways in which they were honoured by their provincial subjects. Although the term 'subjects' might suggest a great distance between officials and the communities they governed, this was not always the case. Some procurators, and even legates and governors, were of local extraction, though stationed elsewhere in North Africa.[514] But whether local or not, Roman officials were considered moral agents. These were men of equestrian or senatorial rank and were expected to act according to aristocratic codes of honour – although many undoubtedly did not always live up to that standard. Like emperorship, the institutional nature of the Roman administrative apparatus was rarely questioned. Questions of legitimacy focussed on individual officials and their conduct in office. And as the dedications across North Africa show, provincial elites held clear beliefs about what ideal conduct in office should look like. These beliefs were expressed in a normative language that diverged from that employed for Roman emperors, highlighting a different aspect of the relationship between provincial communities and empire.

3.1. – Blameless men: early gubernatorial virtues

North African provincials erected a considerable number of dedications to governors and legates between the second and fourth century. Dedicators in Mauretania Caesariensis turned to their procurator, while those in Africa Proconsularis turned to a proconsular governor. The latter was *de iure* in control of all civilian matters in the province, though *de facto* the legate in charge of Legio III Augusta most likely held considerable influence in the Numidian region.[515] With the creation of the province of Numidia under the Severans, the governing of the province was handed to the legate.

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[514] See for example CIL VIII 16542a;16452b, a procurator in charge of Tripolitanian estates but most likely from Theveste; ILAlg-02-03, 7898 = ILS 9488 = AE 1911, 107 = AE 2013, +2143, a legate governing Numidia originating from Cuicul; ILAlg-02-03, 7895 = ILS 9489 = AE 1911, 112 = AE 1911, +123, a governor of Mauretania Caesariensis from Cuicul.

[515] Thomasson 1996: 15–18; see also Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.48.

Of the various dedications erected to Roman procurators, governors *pro consule* and legates in the African provinces of the second and third centuries, some 30 employ normative language with reference to the honorand. This includes a wide variety of dedicators, from city councils to men who enjoyed the private patronage of a governor or procurator. The former category will play a dominant role in this chapter, though I shall also include a number of examples of the latter to provide contrast and comparison.

Similar to the dedications to emperors, normative language begins to play an increasingly prominent role in dedications to imperial administrators from the later second century onwards. Although the exact words of praise may differ from the one dedication to the other, there are a number of noticeable trends. An early example is provided by a dedication to the procurator of Mauretania Caesariensis, Titus Caesernius Statius Quinctius Macedo from the year 107.[516] The dedication was erected by the Maccues, a local people, and placed in the provincial capital of Caesarea. The inscription praises Macedo as "most blameless governor" (*praeses innocentissimus*). Although the title *praeses* can be employed with honorific intentions – a source of considerable confusion during the High Empire[517] – in Macedo's example it quite clearly refers to his position as *procurator pro legato*. The praise for his blameless actions with regard to the Maccues highlights a key gubernatorial virtue that appears time and again throughout our period: *innocentia*. Macedo presents us with a particularly early example of a value that gained considerable traction later in the second century, mostly in the dedications to Severan governors and procurators. In Auzia, the Severan procurators Lucius Alfenius Senecio and Caius Octavius Pudens Caesius Honoratus were honoured for their *innocentia*, while the procurator Nunnus is lauded as "most righteousness and blameless governor" (*praeses iustissimus et innocentissimus*).[518] Marcus Aemilius Clodianus, a procurator in charge of the imperial estates in the Tripolitanian region, seems to have maintained a good relationship with the cities of Oea and Sabratha, given that both communities erected dedications to Clodianus in his (presumed) home town of Theveste.[519] The texts of both dedications praise Clodianus for his "unprecedented blamelessness" (*singularis innocentia*). A fragmented dedication from Uchi Maius appears to honour the procurator Quintus Marcius Macrinus during the reign of Severus Alexander, who was in charge of the grain supply and later the *tractus Carthaginensis*, praising him "for his singular blamelessness" ([*o*]*b* [*innoc?*]*entiam singula*[*rem*]).[520] The virtue is not limited to governors and procurators alone: from the third century onwards, we also see the appearance of a small number of *curatores rei publicae* who are praised in public dedications for their *innocentia*.[521] Finally, we may note a variation on the same concept appearing in the dedication to a *procurator a censibus*, who is praised as being "most abstentious" (*abstinentissimus*).[522]

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[516] D 9008 = AfrRom-15-01-278 = AE 1904, 150 = AE 2002, +1715 = AE 2004, +1885 = AE 2012, +1931; Thomasson 1996: 199.

[517] Slootjes 2006: 20–21 with n.22.

[518] CIL VIII 9046; CIL VIII 9049 = CIL VIII 20737 = D 1357; CIL VIII 9369.

[519] CIL VIII 16542a;16452b.

[520] Tribu p.378 = AE 2010, 1809 = AE 2012, 1885.

[521] ILAfr 44 = ILPBardo 80 = AE 1914, 207; CIL VIII 11332 = D 6836 = ILPSbeitla 41.

[522] CIL VIII 20997.

Numerous Republican and imperial literary sources use the term *innocentia* to denote uprightness and moral integrity.[523] In the above epigraphic texts, *innocentia* appears deeply tied to administrative tasks, a suggestion reinforced by its common appearance in dedications honouring civic magistrates from the late second century onwards – a point to which we shall return in the following chapter.[524] The fact that *innocentia* appears to be mostly associated with procurators is interesting. They fall into two distinct groups: praesidial procurators and procurators in charge of imperial estates. The former group acted as governors of Mauretania Caesariensis, but did not have the same rank, influence or prestige as a proconsular governor of Africa Proconsularis or the legates in charge of Legio III Augusta (and later the province of Numidia). Provincial interest in gubernatorial *innocentia* becomes clearer when we take into account the manifold tasks of the praesidial procurator. Like other governors, the praesidial procurators were saddled with a wide array of judicial, administrative and fiscal responsibilities as well as the command of local auxiliary forces. They heard court cases, inflicted corporal punishments and fines, decided in disputes within or between civic communities, quelled unrest through military intervention, received petitions of subjects in their province and kept an eye on civic finances, among other tasks. And although the taking of the census and the collecting of taxes usually fell to lower-ranking officials, civic authorities or tax-farmers well into the Severan era, they most likely cooperated closely with the praesidial procurator.[525]

Provincials across the empire were sensitive to the power of local governing officials. Eck has signalled a decided increase in the petitioning of governors across the empire during the first and second centuries, with provincials preferring to place their petitions and problems before a high-ranking Roman official rather than the local civic authorities.[526] Whether that trust was well placed is another matter altogether. The influential position of the governor within his province left considerable potential for abuse, in the form of financial mismanagement and embezzlement, overly harsh punishment of provincials or preferential treatment of favourites among the provincial elites.[527] More specific complaints range from governors who abused their right to hospitality to

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[523] Salust, *The Jugurthan War*, 85.4; Cicero, *Phillipics*, 3.25-26; *De Lege Manilia* 13.36; *Ad Familiares* 111.1.; *Tusculanae Disputationes* 3.8; Velleius Paterculus, 2.29.3. In later Christian sources – notably Augustine and Tertulian – *innocentia* resurfaces with strong Christian connotations; see for example: Tertulian, *Apologeticus*, 18.2; Augustine, *Confessiones*, 2.10.

[524] See for example ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59; CIL VIII 5367 (p. 962) = CIL VIII 17496 = ILAlg-01, 288 = Louvre 117 = AE 2000, +68; CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62.

[525] Eck 2000: 283–288.

[526] Eck 2000: 288–289.

[527] For a concise overview of the responsibilities of governors in North Africa during the Principate, see Dondin-Payre 1990: 337–344. As an aside, it can be noted that the potential for abuse was not limited to governors but stretched down the administrative ladder, from fiscal procurators to common soldiers. Herodian offers an illustrative example in recounting how the actions of one overly zealous fiscal procurator in Africa Proconsularis formed the incentive for the Gordian uprising of 238. The procurator “used to exact absolutely savage sentences and confiscations from the people, hoping his name would be favourably noted by Maximinus”, leading to considerable anger among the local elite. The procurator was murdered by a number of prominent locals, which ultimately led to the proclamation of Gordian I and II as emperors and the downfall of Maximinus. Herodian, *History of the Empire*, 7.4.2-6; Brunt 1966: 483. See also Tacitus, *Agricola*, 15.2-3 on the avarice of procurators.

visit the local hot springs[528], the extortion of gifts from provincials by the governor Bassus of Bithynia[529], and governor Flaccus of Egypt who displayed clear signs of favouritism towards his Greek subjects and provoked ethnic violence against the Jews of Alexandria.[530] This is not to suggest that corrupt governors went wholly unpunished for their crimes, or that there were no repercussions to overt corrupt behaviour. Maladministration could lead to severe rioting and unrest, which in the case of the Egyptian governor Flaccus directly contributed to his downfall. And after a governor's tenure, there could be judicial repercussions for gubernatorial mismanagement as provincials tried to have injustices redressed, going so far as petitioning emperors and bringing their cases for the Senate.[531] But with the high costs involved in legal actions and the governor's close connections in the upper-echelons of Roman society, the odds were nevertheless firmly stacked in the governor's favour. Exactly this potential for abuse – and the difficulty of redressing injustice – explains *innocentia*'s appeal as a virtue praised in the praesidial procurators. "Blamelessness'' directly refers to good governance, fair treatment of provincial subjects and integrity in administrative tasks. But we may go one step further and suggest that it was also in the governor's interest to at least appear as *innocens* towards his provincial subjects, in order to prevent impressions of corruption and mismanagement and by extension further troubles during and after tenure.

The question remains how the *curatores rei publicae* and the non-praesidial procurators fit into this narrative, given that their offices were of a very different nature to that of the praesidial procurator. In Sufetula, the *curator rei publicae* Lucius Caelius Plautius Catullinus was treated to excessive praise by the city's *curiae*.[532] Catullinus earned his honours through his management of the grain supply (*frumentariae res*), possibly lowering the price of grain or procuring additional supplies. According to the *curiae* Catullinus acted with "remarkable clemency" (*insignem eius clementiam*), "outstanding innocence" (*praestantia innocentia* [sic]) and as "a man of outstanding excellence in all virtues" (*prestantiam* [sic] *singularem omnium virtutum viro*). The praise of integrity in *curatores rei publicae*, responsible for the fiscal health of public finances in various communities[533], is an obvious choice, but the context of the inscription seems to suggest that *innocentia* can also be understood here as upright behaviour in a more general sense.

Of a somewhat different nature are the dedications to Marcus Aemilius Clodianus and Quintus Marcius Macrinus, both procurators in charge of the imperial estates in Africa and both honoured with dedications. As noted above, Clodianus was praised for his *innocentia* by the people of Sabratha

[528] One of the complaints in a petition by the villagers of Scaptopara and Griseia from 238, which furthermore notes that complaints about the abuse of hospitality by lower-ranking officials fell on deaf ears with the local governors, CIL III 12336 = IGBR-04, 2236 = IGRRP-01, 674 = Freis 142 = Chiron-1994-415 = Petition p.84 = AE 1892, 40 = AE 1994, 1552 = AE 1995, 1373 = AE 2010, +1106 = AE 2012, +50 = AE 2014, +85a.

[529] See Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 4.9, where the central argument in the case against the former governor Bithynia, Julius Bassus, was that he either accepted or extorted gifts from his subjects.

[530] See for example Philo, *Flaccus*, 43, 73-74. For a rhetorical analysis of the portrait of Flaccus in this oration, see Yoder 2014: 93–128.

[531] For the legal framework in the early principate, see Brunt 1961: 189–206.

[532] CIL VIII 11332 = D 6836 = ILPSbeitla 41.

[533] On the increasingly important role of the *curatores* within civic life, see Lepelley 1996: 215–217.

and Oea in his (presumed) hometown of Theveste, while Macrinus was honoured for the same virtue by the city of Uchi Maius. The jurisdiction of these procurators was limited and in Africa mostly revolved around settling disputes between tenant-farmers (*coloni*) and their overseers (*conductores*).[534] Again, there was considerable opportunity for the unlawful exploitation of the *coloni*, both by the *conductores* and by the procurator in charge turning a blind eye to the complaints of the farmers – the motivation behind a petition from the *coloni* to Commodus.[535] The dedications to Clodianus and Macrinus were not set up by *coloni* but rather by civic communities, which technically fell well outside the jurisdiction of a procurator of the imperial estates. Yet, the lack of jurisdiction pertaining to local towns does not mean a lack of contact. In the case of Macrinus in particular, we are dealing with a man who straddles the boundaries between local involvement and an imperial career. Macrinus may have originated from Uchi Maius; a *congiarium* he paid for is explicitly mentioned in the text. His generosity may have provided additional incentive to erect a statue in his honour, but this is unlikely to be the sole motivation, given the strong association between the virtue of *innocentia* and administrative tasks, both on a provincial and on a civic level. Although there is little direct evidence for the relation of both men with the communities that honoured them, we might hypothesize a different type of official contact. Cities occasionally clashed with the imperial administration over *munera*.[536] The tenant farmers of the imperial estates were officially exempt from mandatory labour duties in neighbouring communities, but this did not stop hard-pressed communities from trying to exploit their labour. The procurators of imperial estates played a key role in this context. Even if they were not particularly high-ranking administrators, these procurators were not powerless either. Both Macrinus and Clodianus would have been provided with a small military force to safeguard imperial interests.[537] In the case of our procurators, a conflict over *munera* may have been resolved amicably with 'impartial' interference from the procurator, motivating the city council of Uchi Maius and the peoples of Sabratha and Oea to erect the honours.

3.1.1. – Clemency and justice

Innocentia is perhaps the most common 'occupational virtue' praised in officials, but provincials employed a wider normative vocabulary to praise their superiors. Praesidial procurators and proconsular governors were expected to fulfil a range of judicial duties, both in criminal and civil cases. Surprisingly, the praise of gubernatorial *iusititia*, *clementia* and broader virtues denoting mild-mannerliness in judgments such as *moderatio* or *mansuetudo* are rare. Two dedications from Caesarea praise the governor for his *iustitia*; one of which may have been set up by a private dedicator rather than by a community.[538] *Clementia* appears once during the Severan era, on a statue base set up by the city council of Cuicul to Tiberia Claudia Subatiana Aquilina and Tiberia

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[534] Brunt 1966: 485.

[535] CIL VIII 10570, = CIL VIII 14464 = D 6870 = Freis 110 = ILTun 1237 = Petition p.7 = Louvre 174 = Alumnus 1035 = Chiron-1978-470 = AE 2015, +1797; Kehoe 1988: 123–127.

[536] A type of dispute discussed in the fifth-century tract on land surveying by Agennius Urbicus; the relevant passage however is believed to be derived from Frontinus. See Campbell 2000: 42–43, with n.59; Kehoe 1988: 74, 222.

[537] Fuhrmann 2011: 194–199.

[538] CIL VIII 9367 = CIL VIII 20995 = AE 1939, +163 = AE 1982, +968; *possibly set up by private dedicator*: CIL VIII 9369 (p. 1983).

Claudia Digna Subatia Saturnina, daughters of the legate of Numidia, Tiberius Claudius Subatianus Proculus. Although the base is dedicated to both girls, it supported only a single statue while in the inscription it is their father who receives most praise. The council praises Proculus as a "good man" (*homo bonus*), a "most merciful governor" (*praeses clementissimus*) and notes that the dedication was set up "because of his remarkable excellence with regard to his fatherland" (*ob insignem eius in patriam suam praestantiam*).[539] Again we have a blurring of lines between 'imperial official' and 'member of the local elite'. As legate-governor of Numidia, Proculus held jurisdiction over Cuicul and may have intervened on behalf of the city or ruled in its favour, as suggested by the praise of both his *clementia* and his contributions to the *patria*. Nevertheless, it is also possible that Proculus was simply honoured for qualities typical of the model governor and model citizen.

Whereas *iustitia* or *innocentia* praised in governors and other officials seem to refer to their judicial and administrative responsibilities, civic dedicators were also keen to praise gubernatorial *munificentia*. Governors and legates could act as patrons to communities and are explicitly addressed as such in honorific dedications. As Erkelenz has argued at length, gubernatorial honours were awarded for actions during the governor's tenure, rather than as a result of his high societal rank and influence; actions that need not be limited to administrative tasks or judicial verdicts.[540] Thus, a mid-second-century governor of Africa Proconsularis is praised as a *patronus optimus* in Thubursicu Numidarum, a roughly contemporary military official is honoured for his *liberalitas* in Lepcis Magna, while a legate of the legion is lauded as a *patronus coloniae bene merens* in Cuicul.[541] The judicial and administrative responsibilities of a governor were unique to his station, and were praised with specific normative terms. Munificence, however, was not limited to imperial officials. The language of gubernatorial munificence is almost identical to the language employed for wealthy benefactors of local extraction.[542] Roughly coinciding with the rise in the number of dedications to governors, local benefactors appear with increasing prominence in the epigraphic record from the mid-second century onwards, as does the normative language of munificence. Given that munificent governors formed but a small minority within this broader development, dedicators either did not develop a normative register specific to gubernatorial munificence, or felt that there was no need to linguistically differentiate the munificence of imperial officials from that of local benefactors.

The patronage of cities also brings us to the patronage of individuals. A considerable number of second- and early third-century dedications to imperial officials were erected by private agents. The majority of these were erected by military personnel, and will be treated in more detail in the last chapter. Civilian dedications appear to be relatively rare, which may not be particularly surprising given the relatively restricted access to and position of the governor within his province. It should,

[539] ILAlg-02-03, 7898 = ILS 9488 = AE 1911, 107 = AE 2013, +2143.

[540] Erkelenz 2003: 172–188. Commendable actions could range from successful military operations to interventions on behalf of the city to avoid ruinous financial burdens being imposed by the imperial government, see Erkelenz 2003: 192–197. Even the completion of a term of office without major mismanagement could be a cause for celebration, see Brunt 1961: 222.

[541] ILAlg-01, 1283 = AE 1917/18, 60 = AE 1919, +46 = AE 1967, +536; IRT 552; ILAlg-02-03, 7917 = ILAlg-02-03, 7918.

[542] For a more extensive treatment of the language of munificence in praise of local benefactors, see the following chapter.

however, be noted that a number of inscriptions are simply too damaged to determine the dedicator.[543] In the few extant civilian dedications, munificence appears to be the prime motivation behind the honours. One is the provincial quaestor Lucius Terentius Aquila Grattianus, who served under the governor of Africa Proconsularis. Grattianus is honoured by his *amici* for his *aequitas*.[544] And in a badly damaged inscription from Cuicul, a local lawyer seems to have erected a dedication to the Numidian legate, praising him as an exceptional (*rarissimus*) governor and a patron.[545]

Innocentia and, to a lesser extent, munificent virtues appear to have been the primary modes of praise for Antonine and Severan governors, at least where communities are concerned. Both express broader provincial ideals of official behaviour, from generous support to communities (or individuals) in need to scrupulousness in office. Governors and legates were in part bound by the same normative beliefs that formed the basis of legitimate imperial power. The imperial benevolence, justice or piety propagated in decrees, on coinage or in panegyrics must implicitly also include the officials responsible for the day-to-day running of the empire. But beyond such generalities, the words of praise employed for imperial officials appear very different than those for contemporary emperors. Although we should not draw too distinct a line between 'personal' and 'occupational' virtues, it is nevertheless noteworthy that virtues closely related to the governor's character make few appearances. Governors were not honoured as *felicissimus*, were not praised for their *pietas* or *virtus* and were not awarded with honorific titles such as *conservator*; *indulgentia* does not appear even where governors are praised for their munificence. And despite the legate's command of Legio III Augusta, martial virtues are missing. This suggests a differentiation in the virtue lexicon, with some virtues being the sole prerogative of the emperor while others could be employed more widely. It is noteworthy that *innocentia* appears both in dedications to governors and local civic magistrates, but not emperors: despite its wholly positive meaning, it was evidently considered to be unsuitable for imperial praise.

The occurrence of virtues in African dedications to imperial officials shows only partial overlap with contemporary dedications to governors from elsewhere in the empire. Erkelenz singles out *optimus*, *iustitia* and *merentia* as particularly prominent in dedications to governors from across the Latin West ranging from the late first century B.C. to the third century A.D.[546] Although we saw examples of *iustitia* and munificent virtues, these were not particularly prominent. We find some local contextualisation in the works of Apuleius. The *Florida*, the collection of rhetorical works attributed to Apuleius, preserves two honorific speeches to local governors, the proconsuls Severianus Honorinus and Scipio Orfitus. Both men seem to have been addressed in the presence of the Carthaginian city council and chronological hints in the *Florida* suggests that both speeches date to the 160s.[547] In his speech to Severianus Honorinus, Apuleius addresses the governor in deliberately

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[543] See for example BCTH-1954-135 = AE 1957, 78; CIL VIII 7073 = ILAlg-02-01, 660; CIL VIII 9357 (p. 1983).
[544] CIL VIII 60 (p. 924, 979) = CIL VIII 11139. Thomasson 1996: 132 notes the impossibility of dating the inscription but suggests a date in the second half of the second century or the third century.
[545] CIL VIII 8327 = ILAlg-02-03, 7911 = AfrRom-16-04-2136 = AE 2006, +1808.
[546] Erkelenz 2003: 172–173.
[547] Lee 2005: 5.

affectionate tones, praising his goodness (*bonitas*) and moderation (*moderatio*).[548] The latter is the source for Honorinus' dignity (*gravitas*), austerity (*austeritas*), steadfastness (*constantia*) and gentle energy (*blandus vigor*).[549] Apuleius also refers to the popular trope of the good governor, who is loved rather than feared.[550] In the speech to Scipio Orfitus gentleness and moderation are again key values. Apuleius praises Orfitus' generosity (*indulgentia*), his "moderate wishes and gentle corrections" (*temperatum desiderium et moderatum remedium*) and his "noble modesty" (*generosa modestia*).[551]

It is unclear how much importance we should attach to the dating of Apuleius' speeches. The speeches seem to predate the increase in honorific language in epigraphy at the end of the second century. It is unlikely that Apuleius was the only orator active in the genre of encomium in North Africa in the second century. If his style is any indication of the kind of encomium usually delivered to governors, the praise of virtues must have played an important role in the relationships between African communities and their governors well before it appears in epigraphic texts. Apuleius' extensive praise is furthermore far removed from the much shorter and more sober praise evident in many inscriptions. As always, the limited preservation of both the literary and epigraphic record make comparisons hazardous. Although the speeches of Apuleius show some overlap with virtues such as *innocentia* or *clementia* in their stress on moderation and kindness, it is not a perfect fit. The context of the oration may provide for some answers: for Apuleius, facing the governor personally during his tenure, even the suggestion of corruption may have been considered inappropriate.

The 'imperial' virtue of *indulgentia* praised in the governor Orfitus merits some further comment. As noted in the previous chapter, *indulgentia* had strong suggestions of paternal authority and perhaps this may be the effect Apuleius intended. In the text preceding the praise of the governor's *indulgentia*, Apuleius speaks of the nature and ideal use of the human voice, eventually leading to a comparison of blackbirds to children, nightingales to youths and swans to the elderly. The orator continues:

> *Enimvero qui pueris et adulescentibus et senibus utile carmen prompturus est, in mediis milibus hominum canat, ita ut hoc meum de virtutibus Orfiti carmen est, serum quidem fortasse, sed serium, nec minus gratum quam utile Carthaginiensium pueris et iuvenibus et senibus, quos indulgentia sua praecipuus omnium proconsul sublevavit temperatoque desiderio et moderato remedio dedit pueris saturitatem, iuvenibus hilaritatem, senibus securitatem*.
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> "And yet one who hopes to produce a song useful to children, youths, and old men should sing before humans in their thousands, as is this song of mine about Orfitus' virtues—tardy perhaps, but yet heartfelt, and as pleasing as it is profitable for the

[548] Apuleius, *Florida*, 9.34-35.
[549] Apuleius, *Florida*, 9.35.
[550] Apuleius, *Florida*, 9.36.
[551] Apuleius, *Florida*, 17.20, 22.

> children, youths, and old men of Carthage. All of these this proconsul without peer has supported by his generosity, and by his moderate wishes and gentle correction he has brought abundance to children, joyfulness to the young, security to the old."[552]

Orfitus generosity, as well as his moderation and gentleness, are placed in direct connection to three distinct societal groups that were in need of his aid – an impression underlined by Apuleius' use of the verb *sublevo*. Conspicuously absent from this list are the adult male citizens of Carthage, who also made up the majority of the city council. We may speculate that any suggestion of the adult citizens of Carthage, and members of the city council specifically, depending on the generosity of Orfitus was considered unbecoming. Rather, by associating Orfitus' *indulgentia* with 'weaker' age groups, Apuleius may have sought to portray Orfitus as a gentle *pater familias* who generously supports both his 'children' and his elderly subjects in need of aid. Within this carefully constructed literary fiction, the presence of *indulgentia* not only underlined the exceptional nature of Orfitus, but also stressed the ideal qualities of a good governor from a provincial perspective.

The options available to Apuleius were not always available to those working in the epigraphic medium. The images and inscriptions dedicated to governors shared the same public space with local benefactors and emperors, and were subject to longstanding epigraphic traditions. Among these epigraphic traditions was a clear preference to honour men of equestrian or senatorial rank with relatively short dedications, that highlighted a few key virtues rather than a lengthy *cursus honorum* or honorific formulae.[553] Epigraphic texts were furthermore commemorative, erected after a governor's tenure in office and, ostensibly at least, intended to last. Orations such as those in the *Florida* were performed before incumbent governors and could comment directly on current gubernatorial policies and actions. Epigraphic texts on the other hand were of little to no value in addressing the actions of an incumbent governor, thus making the extensive praise of gubernatorial actions obsolete. Perhaps we should rather envision oratory and epigraphic praise working in tandem. Whereas incumbent governors could be honoured extensively by local orators during their time in office, epigraphic texts served as a final acknowledgement of excellent behaviour in office, while also presenting an example to future governors. *Innocentia*, with its broader suggestion of excellent and exemplary behaviour while in office, served as a suitable stand-in for a variety of praiseworthy qualities that better served the commemorative nature of the epigraphic medium.

Although these considerations may go some way towards explaining why provincials opted for *innocentia* or other virtues from a rhetorical point of view, it does not answer the underlying question of why dedicators chose to honour their governors for their virtues at all. Beetham's idea of consent is again valuable here, in a similar way to dedications to the emperor. By erecting dedications to their praesidial procurators, proconsular governors or legates, provincials assented to existing power relationships between themselves and the representatives of imperial rule. This aspect of consent is underlined by the fact that most dedications were either erected in name of

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[552] Apuleius, *Florida*, 17.18-21, translation Jones 2017. Lee 2005: 167 suggests that the indulgence in question may have connected to lenient taxation.

[553] Erkelenz 2005: 90–91.

the community or by the city council acting as a representative of the community. Although this had fairly prosaic reasons – governors were more likely to interact with a city's governing bodies than individual members of the municipal elite – the impression was nevertheless one of communal consent and unanimous approval. In this sense, dedications to governors are not markedly different from communal dedications to emperors. Yet there was also a crucial difference: the governor was a far closer figure than the emperor, during his tenure and after. Augustus forbade the erection of statues to governors within sixty days after their departure, a ruling which seems to have been upheld throughout our period.[554] Yet this ruling did not prevent former governors from receiving honours in their own communities. Some officials were drawn from the African elite and had their statues erected in their hometowns, a permanent reminder to their local compatriots of their excellence in office. Although a large number of dedications to Roman officials were erected during the second and early third centuries, not all governors were honoured equally or in similarly praising terms. *Innocentia* in particular also carried within it an implicit tension, suggesting that some governors at least *could* be corrupt. The praise of gubernatorial virtues, and gubernatorial honours in general, gave a measure of agency to provincials in their power relationship with imperial officials. It cast the elite representatives of civic communities not just as moral agents, but as moral arbiters. And unlike dedications to the emperor, current and future governors were far more likely to be confronted with these dedications and the ideals of good governance they contained. It is precisely this dual role of normative language in dedications – evaluating the previous governor while also setting an example for future governors – that would grow increasingly important in the changing ideological landscape of Late Antiquity.

3.2. – A man of all virtues: governors in Late Antiquity

Although there are a number of surviving dedications to fourth century officials across North Africa, I propose to turn our attention once again to Lepcis Magna. The city offers a unique and well-studied ensemble of dedications from across the fourth century, which allows for a more detailed case study of honorific language in the changing world of Late Antiquity. Thirteen governors and three former governors are honoured with either marble plaques or statue bases.[555] The splitting up of provinces into smaller units and the expansion of the state apparatus led to a proliferation of governors and other officials in North Africa. Lepcis Magna likely became the capital of the newly formed province of Tripolitania, governed by a man of equestrian rank (*vir perfectissimus*) under the now-formalised title of *praeses*. The *praeses* dealt solely with civic and judicial matters; military responsibilities fell to the *comes Africae*, a position usually filled by men of senatorial rank (*viri spectabiles*).[556] These administrative changes were reflected in the civic landscape. Like their imperial counterparts, the dedications to fourth-century governors found their home in the Forum Severianum. The dedication to Flavius Archontius Nilus from the years 355-360, found near the entrance to the Severan basilica, offers a particularly prominent example:

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[554] Cassius Dio, 56.25.6.

[555] IRT 529, 562, 563, 565, 566, 569, 570, 571, 574, 575, 576, 577, 610; see also the erased text of statue base 611, dedicated to an unknown figure but similar to other dedications to governors in its superlative use of virtues.

[556] Mattingly 1995: 172.

Nilii Nili[*i ...*] *Vigiliis atque consilio domi forisque praestanti integritate praecipuo iustitia et iudiciorum moderatione perpenso instauratori moenium publicorum ordinis ci(vi)umque omnium salutis providentissimo custodi veritatis honestatis et fidei amicissimo Flavio Archontio Nilo v(iro) p(erfectissimo) comiti et praesidi prov(inciae) Trip(olitanae) patrono optimo ob infinita eius beneficia quibus vel separatim vel cum omni provincia sublevati ac recreati Lepcimagnenses gratulamur uno consensu ordinis viri secundam statuam decreverunt eamque propter praecipuum eius meritum singularemque praestantiam in Severiano foro ad sempiternam prosperitatis memoriam constituendam curaverunt*

"(In honour) of Nilius. Of Nilius. To one who is outstanding in vigilance and good counsel at home and abroad, exceptional in integrity, balanced in justice and in the carefully weighed moderation of his judgments, rebuilder of the city walls, most provident guardian of the security of the city council and of all citizens, strongly attached to truth, rectitude, and good faith, Flavius Archontius Nilus, excellent man [i.e. of equestrian rank], *comes* and *praeses* of the province of Tripolitania, our very good patron, on account of his innumerable benefactions by which we, the citizens of Lepcis Magna, separately or in common with the whole province, have been raised and revived, we offer our thanks; with every member of the city council in agreement they have decreed a second statue to the man which, in view of his outstanding merits and unexampled excellence they took care (to set up) in the Severan forum, with a view to establishing an enduring memory of his favourable influence."[557]

Immediately notable are the elaborate honorific formulae and the extensive praise of virtues that mark a clear contrast with the much sparser style of earlier dedications. The dedication lays heavy emphasis on the personal qualities of Nilus: *integritas*, *iustitia*, *moderatio*, his attachment to *veritas*, *honestas* and *fides*, and his general *praestantia*. Nilus acted as *praeses* and as *comes*, a pairing of functions that gave Nilus both administrative and military responsibilities.[558] The latter are reflected in the martial overtones that appear in *vigilia*, *providentia* and by more general expressions of praise such as *ordinis ci(vi)umque omnium salutis* (...) *custodi*.

When comparing the various dedications to fourth-century governors from Lepcis Magna, a select number of virtues noticeably jump out. *Moderatio* (nine dedications), *integritas* (eight dedications) and *iustitia* (eight dedications) appear regularly as praiseworthy qualities in numerous governors. Occasionally, these virtues are paired. Flavius Archontius Nilus was honoured as *iudiciorum moderatione perpenso*; his *moderatio* was explicitly tied to his execution of *iustitia*. The dedications

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[557] IRT 562, translation Reynold & Ward-Perkins 2009.

[558] A similar dual function was held by Flavius Nepotianus, whose Lepcitan dedication employs similarly martial language, noting that the honorand is *cultori rei etiam militaris peritissimo armis consili(i)sq(ue)* ("very knowledgeable also in military affairs, experienced in arms and councils of war"), and deserved the honours "because he wore down the arrogance of the barbarians by the exercise of military skill; because he provided permanent defence and protection of the frontier even for future times and secure against every hostile invader" (*quod barbarorum insolentiam exercitio scientiae militaris adtriberit quod limitis defensionem tuitionemq(ue) perpetuam futuris etia(m) temporibus munitam securamq(ue) ab omni hostile oncursione praestiterit*). See IRT 565, translation Reynold & Ward-Perkins 2009.

to Flavius Victorinus and Laenatius Romulus likewise suggests that *moderatio* and *iustitia* were intertwined virtues for the citizens of Lepcis.[559] But the semantic range of *moderatio* appears to have been wider, since the virtue also appears separate from *iustitia*. *Integritas* likewise appears combined with *iustitia* (*iustitia et integritati praecipuus*[560]), but more often stands on its own. These three key virtues are closely followed by *merentia*, which appears six times; *fides*, which appears on five occasions; *honestas* which appears four times; *benignitas*, *aequitas* and *innocentia* which appear in three dedications each. Other virtues – including *prudentia* and *providentia*, appear only in exceptional cases but are nevertheless indicative of the ethical profile of the ideal late antique governor.[561]

The proliferation of virtues fits neatly into a well-attested epigraphic trend, in which governors and other officials were gradually honoured in ever more elaborate phrases from the late third century onwards.[562] Yet the regularity with which *iustitia*, *integritas* and *moderatio* appear in dedications, as well as the motivation behind the sharp increase of normative language in inscriptions, bears contextualisation. The normative beliefs behind the power relationship between imperial bureaucrats and provincials appear to have shifted, with a much greater emphasis on administrative virtues as well as a greater emphasis on the recognition of those virtues in the display of consent. An answer is to be sought in the fundamental changes of the fourth-century state, which brought governors in much closer vicinity to their provincial subjects. In the second and third century the effective reach of the empire had strong communicative and administrative limitations, further circumscribed by a host of local customs. Although provincial elites could not completely disregard imperial commands – especially when backed with military force – they could obstruct, delay or ignore within a reasonable margin.[563] On a local level, city councils were in charge of public order in their communities and occasionally oversaw local taxation. These responsibilities, together with the limited capacity of the ancient state to check and verify archival data, left ample room for manipulation.[564] With the tetrarchy's administrative and financial reforms, this situation changed. Old civic privileges were suspended and census-taking was reintroduced after disappearing in the second half of the third century.[565] The exact nature of Diocletian's tax reforms is a point of contention.[566] What does seem clear is that the tetrarchy made a concerted effort to streamline taxation on a universal scale, while still accounting for local customs, weights and sizes. After 312, fifteen-year census cycles were introduced, placing the imperial tax administration on a more stable

[559] Flavius Victorinus: *moderatione iu[dici]*, IRT 570; Laenatius Romulus: *moderationem iudiciorum*, IRT 574.
[560] IRT 565
[561] *Prudentia*: IRT 566; *providentia*: IRT 562, 563.
[562] See for example: Ševčenko 1968: 30–33; Christol 1983; Salomies 1994: 69–70; Smith 1999: 174–175; Horster 1998: 51–53; Salomies 2000; on the changes in Roman bureaucratic language in the fourth century: MacMullen 1990.
[563] Kelly 2004: 108–110.
[564] Corbier 2005: 370–373; Kelly 2004: 117–120.
[565] Corbier 2005: 370–371; Carrié 2005: 282.
[566] For a concise discussion, see Corbier 2005: 376–381.

footing.[567] These financial reforms went hand in hand with reforms that saw the division of the empire in new administrative units, overseen by a vastly expanded bureaucracy.[568]

Local elites still played a major role in the collection of taxes and the maintaining of public order. In several North African communities, *duumviri* were responsible for undertaking the local census. The practice persisted until the age of Constantine, after which the responsibility fell more and more on the shoulders of appointed curators.[569] Despite their continued importance local elites now dealt with an expanded Roman state based on a far more universalist footing, at least when compared to the ad hoc proliferation of judicial privileges and tax exemptions that characterized the early empire. Governors were responsible for the collection of taxes in their province and had multiple officers in their staff directly responsible for the oversight of tax collection in cash and kind.[570] Although the late Roman state was far from omnipotent – as evinced by the archive of the *strategos* Apollinarius[571] – it was capable of more systemic interference in local fiscal matters and civic politics.[572] The proliferation of dedications to local governors in Lepcis Magna is in itself a strong sign of their increased importance in local civic life. Although it is not quite certain that the governor had his seat in Lepcis Magna, the city's historic prominence in the region and the epigraphic evidence do seem to suggest that this was the case. The interference of governors in Lepcitan civic life was in itself nothing new. Note for example the erection of the arch to Augusta Salutaris by the first-century governor Marsus, as discussed in the previous chapter. But interventions by governors were rather piecemeal in nature throughout much of Lepcis' history. Although governors and their staff could and did travel throughout their province, Lepcis was part of the large and densely urbanized Africa Proconsularis, leaving limited opportunity for officials to get directly involved with the community. In the fourth century, with the creation of Tripolitania, governors would spend considerably more time in Lepcis, aided by an expanded staff of about a hundred notables, who were likely permanently positioned in Lepcis Magna and often had local origins.[573]

Although the bureaucratic apparatus expanded, this does not mean that it was necessarily more accessible to the average citizens of Lepcis Magna. Administrative fees were a common occurrence in Late Antiquity.[574] This in spite of the sometimes vehement wording of imperial edicts, such as that of Constantine in 331:

[567] Harries 2012: 59–64.

[568] Kelly 2004: 110–111. Estimates of the size of the late antique bureaucracy place it at a two- to threefold increase in comparison with preceding centuries. See Jones 1964: 341–342 n.44; Heather 1997: 189–190; MacMullen 1988: 144; cited in Kelly 2004: 111 n.10.

[569] Carrié 2005: 282–283.

[570] Slootjes 2006: 34–37.

[571] See in general Adams 2010.

[572] Whitby 2016: 137.

[573] Kelly 2004: 145; Slootjes 2006: 28–29.

[574] See Kaser 1996: 557–558. For a North African example, see also CILVIII 17896 = Tyche-2007-151 = AE 1948, +00118 = AE 1949, 00133 = AE 1956, 00134 = AE 1978, +00892, an inscription from Thamugadi regulating the charges of judicial services of the governor. On the prices mentioned in these and similar edicts, see Jones 1964: 497; Slootjes 2006: 67; Dillon 2012: 139–146.

Cessent iam nunc rapaces officialium manus, cessent, inquam: nam nisi moniti cessaverint, gladiis praecidentur. Non sit venale iudicis velum, non ingressus redempti, non infame licitationibus secretarium, non visio ipsa praesidis cum pretio.

"Let the rapacious hands of the *officiales* now cease, let them cease, I say: for if, now warned, they do not cease, they will be cut off by swords. Let not the curtain of the judge be for sale, let not access (to him) be bought, let not his private chamber be notorious for bidding, let not sight of the governor himself come at a price."[575]

For MacMullen, the language and repetition of these edicts is a sign of the limited ability of the late Roman state to curb systemic abuses of power, despite the occasional checks on individual cases of (financial) misconduct.[576] Kelly on the other hand argues that the imperial decrees were a way for imperial power to undermine the bargaining position of local bureaucrats[577], while Dillon suggests that given the harsh punishments involved, governors will most likely have made some effort to keep their *officiales* in check, at least in the first years after they were promulgated.[578] In either scenario, however, the legislation betrays a common suspicion that governors and their staff exploited provincial subjects for their personal gain; a sentiment also found in other late antique sources.[579] Whether such behaviour was common is another matter altogether, but clearly it formed part of the familiar conception of gubernatorial behaviour.

It is against this background of more direct interference in civic politics and anxiety over official corruption that we must read the importance of *iustitia*, *integritas* and *moderatio*. All three virtues are related to the key responsibilities of a governor while in office: court cases, fiscal affairs and maintaining provincial order. Despite the attempts of Constantine and others to curb litigation fees, such fees eventually became a legal practice in the course of the fourth century, barring many from seeking justice. Although it was easier for members of the city council and other high-ranking locals to get in touch with the governor, some cases were tried in secret or otherwise non-public settings.[580] The difficulty of obtaining access to the governor was compounded by the possibility of a corrupted judicial process, where money, gifts or influence were suspected of buying a favourable judgement.[581] In fiscal matters, governors could press local decurions to pay back outstanding debts, force them to take up local curial duties and demand the early collection of local taxes.[582] Also of note here is that late antique governors undertook construction projects with public funds of the

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[575] *Codex Theodosianus* 1.16.7, translation Dillon 2012: 140.
[576] MacMullen 1988: 148–170.
[577] Kelly 2004: 139–142, 156–157.
[578] Dillon 2012: 145–146.
[579] The venality of governors is a common complaint in Libanius, see for example *Orations* 2.42, 4.28, 48.11, see also 33.38-39 where the governor's household is complicit. See also Synesius, *Letters*, 79.3 where the governor Andronicus is accused of a similar practice; Zosimus, *New History*, 5.2, where one Lucianus gains office through financial means (but turns out to be a virtuous governor).
[580] A practice banned by the *Codex Theodosianus* 1.16.9, see Slootjes 2006: 53–54.
[581] Harries 1999: 153–157 provides an overview of the ancient sources.
[582] Such seem to be the crimes of Tisamenus in Libanius, *Orations*, 33.13-19. For governors collecting communal debts the evidence is of a relatively early date; see also Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.17a.

community, as noted in the previous chapter. Reason for Menander Rhetor to gather the "encouragement of city development" under the header of gubernatorial justice.[583] And in maintaining order, governors could act harshly, from violently suppressing disorder to leaving prisoners to waste away without a trial.[584] References to corrupt officials are abundant in fourth-century sources, but this does not necessarily imply that imperial officials were more venal or cruel than in previous centuries.[585] As Harries points out, late antique sources should be taken with a pinch of salt.[586] Neither should we envision late antique North African communities as oppressed by a rapacious imperial bureaucracy; archaeological data shows continued vitality and even prosperity in the fourth century.[587] Yet the fourth century nevertheless also saw a number of new political crises that had the potential to further exacerbate the damage of official corruption. Perhaps the most egregious case is that of the *comes Africae* Romanus, treated at length by Ammianus Marcellinus.[588] In the early 360s, the territory of Lepcis was raided by the Austuriani, a nearby tribe. The Lepcitans sought the help of the *comes Africae* Romanus, who refused to commit troops. The city instead sent an embassy to Valentinian in the hope of an imperial intervention. Romanus used his influence at court to have people speak in his favour; an investigation was promised but delayed. Further raids by the Austuriani followed, and the emperor sent the tribune Palladius to investigate, who was promptly bribed by the agents of Romanus. Palladius testified against the Lepcitan ambassadors before Valentinian. Both a number of Lepcitan ambassadors as well as the *praeses* Ruricius – who reported on the raids – were put to death for their 'false' testimony while Romanus remained in office. The truth of the case only came to light some years later, when incriminating evidence against Romanus and Palladius was produced before emperor Gratian.

The Romanus case was extreme, but nevertheless reflects the dangers of late antique gubernatorial abuse and corruption for provincials. With increased stakes also came an increasingly vocal challenge. Harries has argued for a 'culture of criticism' in Late Antiquity, in which both emperor and subjects join in highly rhetorical condemnation of corrupt official behaviour in decrees, acclamations, orations, literature and other forms of expression.[589] Such criticism highlighted the supremacy of the emperor and gave legitimacy to his claim to rule by universal consensus and in service of his subject.[590] The contemporary praise of virtues acted as the mirror image of this culture of criticism, highlighting the ideal qualities of good governors and praising them in a similarly lavish rhetorical style. Although the exact meaning of *iustitia*, *integritas* and *moderatio* for a fourth-century Lepcitan audience may be impossible to trace, we can nevertheless be fairly certain of the general modes of conduct to which they refer: a fair system of justice without excessive fees or long waiting times; uprightness in handling fiscal matters, without an eye towards personal gain;

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[583] Cited and discussed in Roueché 1998: 33.
[584] The latter forms the main charge in Libanius, *Orations*, 45.
[585] Fuhrmann 2011: 177–181.
[586] Harries 1999: 157–158.
[587] The argument of Lepelley 1992.
[588] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 28.6.1-30, see also Warmington 1956; Mattingly 1995: 182.
[589] Harries 1999: 97; Slootjes 2006: 176–177.
[590] Harries 1999: 97.

moderation in tax collection, punishment of (fiscal) maladministration and the recalling of public debts. This was the ideal image of a governor, at least as envisioned by the Lepcitan elite.

Though they appear less often than *iustitia*, *moderatio* or *integritas*, virtues such as *fides* and *benignitas*, *aequitas*, *innocentia* nevertheless tie in seamlessly with this trinity of gubernatorial virtues and offer further indications of what Lepcitans expected of their governors. Like the other virtues mentioned above, *fides* is multifarious in meaning. In the case of IRT 569, governor Flavius Victor Calpurnius is praised as more affectionate towards the city of Lepcis Magna than its own citizens and as "outstanding in reliability and devotion" (*inclita fide devotione*). When Nilus is praised for his *fides* on the other hand, the virtue is grouped together with *veritas* and *honestas*, suggesting the personal quality of trustworthiness. Flavius Ortygius, *comes et dux* for the province of Tripolitania in the reign of Honorius and Theodosius II, is honoured by the city council for his "labour and reliability shown" (*labore(m) fidemque exhibitam*, IRT 480) in suppressing the Austuriani; the *comes et praeses* Flavius Nepotianus had demonstrated his *fides* in the proper application of justice (*iuridicendo fide*, IRT 565). The various contexts of *fides* display a Lepcitan desire for a governor who not only showed devotion to his post and his subjects, but who was also of trustworthy and reliable character. As such, *fides* is closely related to *integritas* but also suggests a bond of good faith and trust between provincials and their official. The same sense of trust and scrupulous behaviour also appears in *innocentia*, which retains much of its original meaning from the second century, though its importance as the gubernatorial virtue *par excellence* had been superseded. Still, the proconsul Titus Claudius Aurelius Aristobulus is honoured as a man of "unblemished integrity" (*innocentis integritatis*, IRT 522), closely associating *innocentia* with *integritas*; the same combination is also found in the dedication to an unknown *praeses* of the fourth century (IRT 610). Governor Magnius Asper Flavianus on the other hand is praised as a "high priest of innocence" (*antistiti innocentiae*, IRT 575) and the praise of his blamelessness appear alongside personal virtues such as *mansuetudo*, *benignitas* and *patientia*, each of which emphasizes Flavianus' soft and mild character towards his provincial subjects.

Benignitas has some overlap in meaning with *innocentia*, suggesting upstanding and incorrupt(ible) behaviour, though it usually appears as a noun rather than an adjective. *Benignitas* appears throughout a variety of authors as an important quality of a statesman and an aristocrat, in line with *liberalitas*, *munificentia* and other virtues concerned with generosity and magnanimity.[591] Although associated with matters of state since the Late Republic, it is fairly uncommon before the fourth century.[592] In the dedication to Flavius Nepotianus, *benignitas* is coupled with *moderatio* (*moderatione ac benignitate praestantissimo*, IRT 565). The dedication to Magnius Asper Flavianus, mentioned above, connotes *benignitas* with *mansuetudo*, *patientia* and *innocentia*. In both cases,

[591] See for example *De Officiis* I.14, II.15; see also *De Finibus* 5.23.65 with *benignitas* as one of the cornerstones of justice, the foundational virtue of human society. For Pliny, see *Epistulae* 3.11.8, 3.15.1, 6.21.6, 7.28.2; as an imperial quality: *Panegyricus* 3, 21, 25, 32; Fronto, *Ad Amicos* 1.3, 2.4; *Ad M. Caes.*2.15. For a later, Christian interpretation with a much stronger focus on softness and kindness: Jerome, *Commentarii in epistolam Pauli apostoli ad Galatas*, 5.22. *Benignitas* as a quality of Christ: Augustinus, *De Civitate Dei* 9.15.

[592] An exception is the second-century procurator Lucius Alfenus Senecio, who was praised by the city council of Cuicul for his kindness in services rendered to the city (*quod promptissima benignitate sua utilitates coloniae suae splendidissime iuvit*), see ILAlg-02-03, 7895 = D 9489 = AE 1911, 112 = AE 1911, +123.

the emphasis seems to be on *benignitas* as a personal quality denoting kindness and a soft-hearted character, rather than an explicit link with generosity or liberality. Possibly, the intention of the Lepcitan dedicators was to praise the mildness of a governor's verdicts and his sympathetic disposition towards the city: the dedication to Nepotianus also praises the governor for his benevolence in fairly dispensing justice. This association with a soft and lenient character does not necessarily stand in contrast to *benignitas*' association with munificence; rather, the former can act as the source of the latter. The two are directly linked in a dedication to the unknown *praeses* which, besides praising his *integritas* and *innocentia*, also honours the governor as a *patrono benign(o)* (IRT 610), though it is unknown which, if any, benefactions the governor bestowed upon the city. Lastly there is *aequitas*, which repeats the by now familiar theme of the fair and even-handed governor. *Aequitas* appears throughout Roman legal history as a principle of judicial 'fairness', and this is the way the term is most often employed in both Roman literature[593] and our epigraphic evidence. The *comes et dux* Flavius Macedonius Patricius is honoured as a man of "admirable equity" (*aequitati miravili*, IRT 529); Caius Valerius Vibianus as a "man of singular equity and benevolent vigour" (*singularis aequitatis et beniboli vicoris*, IRT 577); and an unknown *praeses* as a governor of "absolute equity" (*totius aequitatis*, IRT 610). Given the general importance of the judicial activities of the governor and the concern with just and incorrupt tenure on display throughout these dedications, *aequitas* easily fits in with virtues such as *iustitia*, *integritas* and *innocentia*.

The concern for fair judgement, moderation and integrity is also in evidence in dedications to other Roman officials. Beyond the statues of governors, the Forum Severianum also housed statues dedicated to *agentes vices*, officials to which the governors of Tripolitania were officially beholden.[594] The dedication to an unknown *agens vices* (IRT 558) thanks the honorand for the moderation of his judgements (*moderatione iudicior(um)*) while the *agens vices* Caeclius Severus (IRT 519) is praised for his manifold virtues (*omnium virtutum*) and his goodness (*supra documenta bonitatis insigni adque magnifico*), though his dedication was set up specifically for his moderation in judgements (*ob multiformem iudiciorum eius in se moderationem*). Although governors were responsible for judicial and fiscal matters on a provincial level, in exceptional circumstances a case might be brought before the *agens vices*, for example in cases where the impartiality of the governor may have been in question, or which involved a highly complex legal situation.[595] Despite the higher rank of the *agentes*, the dedications betray many of the same concerns for fair judgement as with lower-ranking governors.

The repetition of virtues such as *moderatio* or *iustitia* may give the impression of a fixed corpus. Yet an important feature of fourth-century Lepcitan epigraphy is its rhetorical variety.[596] The praise of *iustitia* for example is expressed in a great number of ways: *laudavilis iustitiae* (IRT 522), *per gradus et merita gloriar(um) optionorim* [sic] *iustitiae [...] exhibuit* (IRT 526), *praecipuo iustitia* (IRT 562, IRT 563), *iustitia et integritati praecipuo* (IRT 565), *benivoli vigoris iustitiae singularis* (IRT 570), *te*[*n*]*aci*

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[593] Schiemann 2006; Wallace-Hadrill 1981b: 24–31.

[594] On the *agentes vices* in Tripolitania, see Mattingly 1995: 172.

[595] Kaser 1996: 535–536, who also notes that the exact legal circumstances were never set down in law.

[596] A trait shared with contemporary honorific inscriptions from throughout the empire, see Salomies 1994; Salomies 2000.

iustitia[*e*] (IRT 571). Even within a dedication a single virtue may be highlighted in many different ways. Flavius Vivus Benedictus is not only steadfast in justice (*te*[*n*]*aci iustitia*[*e*]), but also an interpreter of the law ([*in*]*terpraeti iur*[*is*]), a defender of the innocent ([*i*]*nnoce*[*n*]*tium* [*f*]*autori*) and a scourge of criminals (*noxiorum omnium* [*pe*]*rcussori*).[597] And, as discussed above, governors could be honoured for a far wider range of virtues than just *iustitia*, *integritas* or *modestia*. In addition to repeated virtues such as *fides*, *aequitas* or *innocentia*, many dedications also make use of singular terms of praise that do not appear elsewhere in the epigraphic record of Lepcis: “most salubrious foresight” (*provisionesque saluberrimas*, IRT 574), “vigorous mildness” (*vigoratae laenitatis* [sic], IRT 610) or “absolute goodness” (*totius bonitatis*, IRT 566). At the same time, typical features of late antique honorific language elsewhere in the empire – most notably the praise of eloquence and literary talent – are not present in the Lepcitan dedications.[598] The coupling of virtuous adjectives and nouns, the variety of terms to express the same virtue and the inclusion of new or recherché expressions of praise: all give the strong impression of an epigraphic tradition that placed heavy emphasis on the public display of unique, personalized virtues that nevertheless fall within the wider normative beliefs of what constituted good governance. Those wider normative beliefs appear to have been shared to some extent across North Africa. Lepcis Magna is exceptional in the large number of preserved dedications to governors, but dotted across North Africa other examples can be found. Many of the same virtues also appear in neighbouring Sabratha for example, where governors are also honoured for their *integritas*, *iustitia* and *moderatio*.[599] In Calama, too, a local governor is honoured for his *iusitia* and *moderatio*.[600] Further west, in Bulla Regia, we also find governors honoured for their *iustitia* and their *integritas*, while in Cirta a Constantinian governor is honoured rather lavishly for his *continentia*, *patientia*, *fortitudo*, *aequitas*, *integritas* and *liberalitas*.[601]

Like their second-century counterparts, fourth-century Lepcitan dedications are expressions of consent to contemporary power relationships between governors and provincials. They state in unequivocal terms that the honorands meet the requirements of both legitimate and good governance. But these late antique dedications nevertheless also betray tensions in the power relationships between the civic institutions of Lepcis Magna and the imperial officials to which they were subordinate. Whereas contemporary dedications to the emperors are almost invariably presented as dedicated by “the Lepcitans”, dedications to governors are more likely to publicize the active involvement of both the city council and the people. The dedication to Flavius Nepotianus for example was set up by the *ordo civitatis Lepcimag(nensis) cum populo* (“the council of the city of Lepcis Magna with the people”, IRT 565); that of Laenatius Romulus *sufragio quietissimi populi et dec[r]eto s(plendidissimi) o(rdinis)* (“in accordance with a vote by the most peaceful people and by a decree of the most splendid council”, IRT 574). In the dedication to Nicomachus Flavianus the voting process for the honours is emphasized (*votis omnibus conlocavit*), in the case of Bassus

[597] IRT 571.

[598] For the praise of these qualities in Greek dedications, see Ševčenko 1968: 32.

[599] See IRT 101, 103, possibly 104.

[600] CIL VIII 5348 = CIL VIII 17490 = ILAlg-01, 271 = D 1228 = AE 1926, +119.

[601] CIL VIII 25524 = AE 1906, 141; AE 2002, 1676 = AE 2012, +1872. *Cirta*: CIL VIII 7012 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 589 = D 1235; CIL VIII 7013 (p. 1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 590 = D 1236.

Cerialis the honours are awarded *ex decreto* and the dedication to Caecilius Severus was set up *ex decreto et sufragio*. In the dedication to the unknown *agens vices*, the city council and the people likewise play an active role in expressing their zeal to commemorate the deeds of the *agens vices* (*ut incomparabilium beneficiorum eius memoria etiam ad posteros mitteretur*), and by awarding the same official with a gift of friendship (*hospitalem tesseram*).

The city council of Lepcis seems to have presented itself differently when working in different honorific registers. When commemorating the emperor, the city of Lepcis presented itself as a community within the empire, free from dissent and unified by its praise for the emperor and his military successes. In the case of governors, however, dedicators more often tend to identify themselves as civic institutions rather than as *Lepcitani*. The inclusion of the city council and the people of Lepcis in honorific dedications to governors is as much an ideological statement as it is a factual assertion of the continued existence of municipal institutions. Through honorific dedications the city council of Lepcis Magna asserted its authority as a decision-making body at the heart of Lepcitan life.[602] The fourth century may even have seen a resilient Lepcitan elite taking a more active part in local politics, as argued by Tantillo and La Rocca.[603] Some dedications furthermore explicitly mention a *suffragium*, employing the rhetoric of public voting.[604] The inclusion of these procedural elements – often lacking in for example contemporary Greek dedications – is not simply a formality, but emphasized civic participation, zeal and harmony. They also imply a possibility of choice. That this implication was not accidental is suggested by the occasional reference to the specific deeds of various governors in the inscriptions. Flavius Archontius Nilus, for example, is praised as a *instaurator moenium*, a reference to his activity in building or restoring the city's walls. Other governors too were thanked after specific benefactions to the city, such as Decimius Hilarianus Hesperius who spoke on behalf of the city before the imperial court or Flavius Nepotianus who defended the city against barbarian incursions.[605]

The vast majority of Lepcitan governors likely would have never seen their own statue. Augustus' ruling on gubernatorial statues mentioned earlier in this chapter was upheld by a late antique law from 398, which threatened governors with severe financial punishments if they were to accept statues in their honour during their time in office.[606] As noted above, the effect of a honorary dedication on the current behaviour of a governor was therefore limited: other forms of public expression – such as orations or acclamations – were preferred to influence an incumbent governor. Yet the potential of a statue could nevertheless form a powerful tool for provincials. The late antique

[602] This is expressed not only in the wording of inscriptions, but also in rhetorical style: Lepcitan dedications usually include the traditional phrasing of *quod*, *ob*, *ab* and *ut*, in contrast to contemporary Greek dedications which often prefer verse. See for example IRT 562, 563, 565, 566, 569. On this basis, Horster has described these dedications as having a "Dekretcharakter", see Horster 1998: 52.

[603] Tantillo 2010b: 32–37; La Rocca 2010: 91–95. For contrasting opinions on the continued vitality of Lepcis Magna in the fourth century, see Mattingly 1995: 185, Di Vita 1990: 492 and Caputo 1987: 49.

[604] A Constantinian decree curtails the rights of African communities to choose the candidates for local magistracies but otherwise leaves the act of municipal voting intact; *Codex Theodosianus* 12.5.1, Dossey 2010: 18. This may suggest that public voting on honours was similarly left intact.

[605] IRT 529, 565.

[606] Codex Justinianus 1.24.1; Horster 1998: 57.

culture of criticism not only encouraged vocal criticism of official behaviour, but also entailed that the recognition and praise of virtue grew in importance as a form of political leverage. Honours not only had intrinsic value but also served to advance careers. The imperial court took note of the honours awarded to various governors and officials: a statue in a prominent city could be a helpful tool of advancement in the imperial administration.[607] Even when taking into account that a large proportion of the epigraphic material has been lost, it is clear that not all governors were awarded statues. The possibility of withholding such public honours from a governor was one of the ways in which cities could influence their officials, although prominent and prestigious cities were perhaps more successful in this respect than their smaller, less prestigious counterparts. But when it was awarded, a statue was a source of continued honour. As worded by Gregory of Nazianus: "there is glory in the cities for good governors and an image to be seen by the people in the future."[608]

The purpose of dedications was two-fold for the inhabitants of Lepcis Magna: not only did they provide an incentive for good governance, they also set a standard for future governors to follow. The vast majority of dedications to fourth-century governors come from the Forum Severianum. Unlike for example Aphrodisias – with six preserved statues of governors with corresponding bases in situ[609] – few of the preserved statue bases in Lepcis were found in their original locations and even less is known of honorific statues.[610] The majority of statue bases seem to have been placed in the southern portico of the forum, close to the main monumental entrance to the complex from the Severan 'Colonnaded Street', and the eastern portico, adjacent to the Severan basilica.[611] The porticoes leading up to the basilica were not only an appropriate setting in the sense that they formed a suitably monumental space for honorary dedications, but they also formed part of the spatial setting in which the governor performed his activities. Our limited knowledge of the original placement of these sculptures – both because of the deprivation of the forum area post-antiquity and poorly documented early excavations – makes any detailed case study impossible, yet some general remarks can be made. The basilica adjacent to the forum may have been used for the administration of justice in the fourth century, which may explain the placement of governor's statues along the southern and eastern portico.[612] Where other Lepcitan locations, such as the Forum Vetus or the theatre, gained an increasingly museum-like quality, the Forum Severianum was an evolving space with a high rate of re-use, instigated and regulated by local magistrates and the city council.[613] Although it is possible that the forum may have been associated with Septimius Severus and Lepcis' glory days by the city's fourth-century inhabitants, such an association is not evident from the dedicatory activities. Second- and third-century dedications in particular seem to have been re-appropriated on a large scale. The result was a forum space that was dominated by relatively recent dedications. On a deeper level, the Forum Severianum formed a 'virtue-landscape'

[607] Slootjes 2006: 153.
[608] Gregory of Nazianus, *Carmen* II.2.7.17; translation and commentary by Slootjes 2006: 121.
[609] Smith 1999.
[610] For the problem of re-use, see Bigi and Tantillo 2010: 269–271 and below.
[611] Though Tantillo rightfully warns that we should not attempt to read a strict hierarchy of space in the distribution of the statue bases in the Forum Severianum: the statues of governors seem to intermingle with those of emperors and local elites alike, see Tantillo 2010a: 178.
[612] Tantillo 2010b: 31.
[613] Tantillo 2010a: 178–181, Bigi and Tantillo 2010: 294.

where the expectations of fourth-century Lepcis Magna resonated strongly. Acting governors would have been confronted with the best practices of their predecessors and by extension the wishes and expectations of the city. Whether governors acted on those expectations was another matter, but honorific statues nevertheless formed a persistent reminder of the possible rewards of virtuous behaviour.

The bombastic style of the inscriptions, the continuous repetition of virtues such as *iustitia* or *integritas* and the frequent re-use of statues has led some to question whether such praise – in Lepcis and elsewhere in the empire – was genuine or meaningful; similarly, a frequently heard complaint is that these dedications are vague and say little of the governor's actions while in office.[614] I would argue that the consistent praise of virtues such as justice, integrity and mildness of character was not simply a rhetorical gloss but reflected shared beliefs about the basic qualities of good governance. Such virtues retained a certain level of ambivalence – a governor's *iustitia* could show in many different kinds of verdicts – but nevertheless the motivation behind the choice of virtues and their connection to the honorand's tenure as governor was clear. Although there is overlap between the types of virtues praised and the florid style may seem uniform to a modern audience, the ancient intention seems to have been quite the opposite: the persistent diversity and the deployment of unique recherché terms clearly expresses a desire to differentiate dedications. On the one hand, individual governors were idealized and their actions abstracted to fit an epigraphic and ideological tradition of praise – a tradition that in the fourth century placed ever greater emphasis on the public display of virtue. On the other hand, each dedication claimed to represent the unique character of a single governor and occasionally hinted at their specific actions and backgrounds. One way to resolve this tension was through the use of variation and descriptive *clausulae*[615], which employed a wide vocabulary of virtues and honorific terms to give the impression of individual character while at the same time staying close to an established epigraphic tradition. The tension between formalism and diversity is not new to the fourth century, nor is it unique to Lepcis Magna. It does, however, allow us to better appreciate the ambiguity and nuance inherent in such dedications. Lepcis' fourth-century dedications are not set within "una sfera atemporale, quasi metafisica"[616], nor are they part of a "make-believe world"[617]. They were important formulations of consent to existing administrative power structures. They formed a potentially powerful bargaining chip between the community and the governor whilst also acting as an avenue for civic self-representation.

Similarly, the re-use of honorific sculpture hints both at the desire to fit honorific dedications in a traditional mould and the apparent need – expressed in the re-sculpting of heads and other body parts – to differentiate various honorands. Though the Lepcitan city council tended to re-use second- and third-century bases, it was not unheard of to re-use even relatively recent dedications: one of the dedications to Flavius Archontius Nilus (IRT 562) was re-used within twenty years to

[614] Ševčenko 1968: 31; Salomies 1994: 69–70; Slootjes 2006: 152; Tantillo 2010a: 191–192.
[615] See further Salomies 1994: 99–106.
[616] Tantillo 2010a: 192.
[617] Ševčenko 1968: 31.

honour the *agens vices* Nicomachus Flavianus (IRT 475), despite the inscription's vow to establish "an enduring memory" of Nilus.[618] Though this may again lead to questions concerning the genuineness of the dedications[619], it would be wrong to see honorific dedications as any less potent because of re-use. The re-use of sculpture may in itself be a distinguishing mark of honour, with a contemporary governor or benefactor occupying the place of a venerated figure of the city's past.[620] The value of honorific inscriptions was to some extent ephemeral. The explicit vow of the Lepcitan city council to eternalize the memory of Nilus was in that sense as much part of the highly stylized rhetoric as the praise of his virtues. For city councils, the thought of retaining countless dedications to governors of decades past may have held little appeal. Not only did such statues potentially take up prime, prestigious locations that could be used for new dedications, the re-use of the statue also saved costs. City councils may conceivably have waited until the honorand in question had passed away, or until his bond with the city had weakened over the years. This is not to suggest that honorific statues had lost their value either to the community or the honorands. Rather, large numbers of honorific statues dedicated to governors in Lepcis Magna served as a display of virtue and excellence for successive governors to follow; a display that was not diminished by the occasional re-use of older statues.

Throughout this chapter I have argued that normative language was deeply intertwined with governance and politics on a provincial level, reflecting the concerns of provincials and acting as a possible avenue to influence the behaviour of powerful officials. There was very little chance of emperors ever seeing the many dedications erected in their honour, but governors and other officials came in direct contact with their provincial subjects and were faced with the dedications praising their virtuous predecessors, often in a normative language that was distinctly different from that used for emperors. Both the intertwined nature of normative language and local politics, as well as the guiding role of normative language to express expected standards of behaviour, become even clearer when the normative language in question was applied to a host of influential figures within the community itself, as we shall see in the following chapter.

[618] On re-use in Lepcis Magna, see in general Bigi and Tantillo 2010.
[619] Slootjes 2006: 152.
[620] Bigi and Tantillo 2010: 300–301.

Chapter IV

BENEFACTORS AND MAGISTRATES

In the previous chapters we noted that normative language often appeared in reference to both the emperor and his officials, albeit that the actual content of that normative language differed considerably between the two. The focus of this chapter shifts towards civic elites. City councils were responsible for local taxation, sent embassies to the imperial court, voted on honours to the emperor and officials, kept order in their communities and were in general the primary point of contact for imperial administrators in the provinces. In exceptional cases, individual members of the civic elite climbed the ranks of the imperial administration, took a seat in the Senate or cultivated contacts with high-ranking imperial bureaucrats. City councils and civic elites more broadly acted as the connective tissue between the imperial state and the mass of imperial subjects throughout the empire. Among civic elites, layers of power and influence, both local and imperial, overlapped and intermingled; through personal and institutional networks, but also in a more tangible sense. In any given forum, honours to emperors or governors occupied the same space as those to local benefactors and magistrates, though the latter were usually of somewhat more modest dimensions. Because of these strong connections, it is worthwhile to consider how communities represented local power relationships, and how such representations might differ from those referring to emperors or imperial officials.

The push for honours among members of the local elite did not happen in a vacuum, nor was the position of a magistrate or benefactor beyond contention. The praise for certain members of the civic elite played out against a background of elite rivalries over economic and political opportunities, from conflicts over land ownership to competition for magistracies. Tensions and rivalries found fertile ground in the marked social and economic differences among members of the civic elite. Some councils, particularly in large cities such as Carthage, would primarily have consisted of men of great wealth and influence, who could pay for the exorbitant costs of tenure.[621] But in many of the smaller cities of North Africa, councils may have consisted of a far more mixed group of individuals, with considerable differences in wealth and rank – not to mention the great differences between the means of the average decurion and the general populace – which could form a source of conflict.[622] This inter-decurional hierarchy appears to have become more formalized over time. From the fourth century onwards, there are clear traces in literature, epigraphy and legal texts of a small group of *principales* (sometimes also referred to as *decemprimi*) which were differentiated from the majority of decurions, both through their influence within the community and their favoured treatment before the law.[623] Coupled with the competition for magistracies, honour or resources it is easy to imagine that conflicts within the elite were not

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[621] See in general Hugoniot 2006.

[622] *Differences in rank*: Duncan-Jones 1963: 165–166. *Conflict*: Aelius Aristides, *Oration* 24.32; 34-35.

[623] See De Ste Croix 1981: 471–473 for a general overview, Kotula 1982 specifically for North Africa.

uncommon, and normative language formed part of the negotiations over legitimate power and influence. One particularly detailed example can be found in Apuleius' *Apologia*. The oration was intended to defend Apuleius against the charges brought against him before the governor, the result of a long-standing conflict pitting Apuleius against local elite rivals over the wealth of his new wife. The conflict that formed the origin of the court case may have revolved around finances and dynastic ambitions, yet the court case itself is fought through the idiom of honour.[624] Throughout the oration, Apuleius targets the honour of his opponents through vitriolic derision and ridicule, including their family members and associates, even where there is no direct connection to the charges brought against him.[625] At the same time, Apuleius defends his own honour by invoking his learning, the reputation of his family and glowing testimonials such as a letter from the former governor Lollianus Avitius.[626] We may imagine similar, if perhaps less dramatic, conflicts being played out across North Africa. And as the *Apologia* makes clear, honour was one of the weapons of choice for resolving these types of conflicts in a public setting.

4.1. – Conflict and the city

At first sight, the suggestion of widespread conflict may seem unlikely. Honorific inscriptions after all give the impression of smoothly run communities and rarely record cases of civic strife or social tension. The commemorative role of honorary epigraphy places heavy emphasis on uncontroversial and successful events in civic life, almost universally from an elite perspective. Other ancient sources, however, paint a different picture. North African communities faced a variety of internal struggles and difficulties, from political tensions to financial strains. In an article on the changing fortunes of the Carthaginian decurions in the third century, Hugoniot points to the 'monument hunger' of small towns in the Carthaginian hinterlands.[627] Monumental architecture constituted a significant drain on civic finances, either through the depletion of public finances or, more often, through the depletion of elite fortunes, which would make it harder for elite individuals to fully partake in civic life. According to Hugoniot this is one of the main reasons why Carthaginian *curatores rei publicae*, in charge of public finances, start appearing in the epigraphic record in the Severan era, as an attempt to dampen the overheated building activity. Hugoniot's argument is based on the developments in the territory of Carthage and the heavy competition to join its decurional elite. It is questionable whether other African cities suffered from overspending to quite the same degree. As Scheding has argued, the communities in the north of Africa Proconsularis represent a specific model of urban development that differed from other parts of the province due to the density of the urban network around Carthage, resulting in increased elite competition and an emphasis on the creation of monumental spaces for elite self-representation.[628] Nevertheless there is reason to suspect that the problem of public overspending was far from limited to the hinterlands of Carthage. A well-known example is Pliny's account of the building troubles in

[624] See in general Kehoe and Vervaet 2015.
[625] See among others *Apologia* 10.6, 16.7-8, 74.3-7, 76. On the shame culture among the Roman elite, see also Lendon 1997: 36–47.
[626] Apuleius, *Apologia*, 24; 94-95.
[627] Hugoniot 2006: 398.
[628] Scheding 2019.

Nicomedia and Nicaea, which cost both towns millions of *sestertii* in public funds.[629] Closer to home, we find the inscription of Nonius Datus, a military engineer sent out to oversee a faltering aqueduct construction project begun by the city of Saldae and which prior to the intervention of the local procurator was about to be abandoned.[630] Although the inscription gives no concrete information on the amounts of money involved in the project, we may safely assume it represented a considerable investment for the community that risked being wasted altogether through a lack of necessary skills and faulty planning. It should be noted that the above cases deal with large-scale prestige projects which would certainly not be a common expenditure for communities. However, precisely because of their high-cost, high-risk nature the financial burdens of such projects could be crippling. The potential for municipal overreach was not limited to major building projects, but also present in the more humdrum responsibilities of civic government, from financing religious festivals to the upkeep of public buildings.[631] Provincial governors were ordered to keep a watchful eye on the fiscal health of their communities, while imperial control of municipal building activity seems to have increased throughout the second and early third centuries.[632] The appointment of *curatores rei publicae* across the empire during the first three centuries of the Principate furthermore suggests that financial mismanagement was a concern for imperial authorities.

Private munificence could be equally problematic. Some members of the decurional elite were less than eager to keep the promises made during their political campaigns.[633] The fulfilling of such pledges was compulsory in Roman law; those who reneged could be held liable.[634] However, it was not uncommon for benefactors to postpone the fulfilment of their pledges, judging from the number of benefactions fulfilled by later generations.[635] This was not necessarily the result of duplicity: prospective magistrates, whether on the campaign trail or not, may have overpromised beyond their means or suffered financial setbacks that made the fulfilment of their promises difficult.[636] In Thamugadi, the mid-second-century governor Fonteius Frontinianus enforced the dedication of a statue to Victoria Augusta, while in Cuicul the same governor enforced the building of an exedra by the son of a deceased priest who had promised the monument *ob honorem*.[637] Only campaign pledges were considered enforceable under Roman law; pledges made in different contexts could not be enforced through legal means. If the material from Asia Minor is indicative of wider trends, the promises and pledges of officials played only a relatively minor role compared to the many pledges made by private benefactors outside of a campaign context.[638] Although reneging on such promises undoubtedly came at a considerable social cost, it was fully legal for benefactors

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[629] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.37, 39.
[630] CIL VIII 2728 = CIL VIII 18122 = D 5795 = Freis 101 = JRS-2011-144 = Buonopane-2016b, p.39 = AE 1941, 117 = AE 1942/43, +93 = AE 1996, 1802 = AE 1999, +80 = AE 2012, +1797.
[631] For a general overview of the financial obligations and responsibilities of cities, see Garnsey and Saller 2014: 46–47.
[632] Burton 2004: 325–331.
[633] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 47.19; possibly Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.23.
[634] Ulpian, *Digest*, 39.5.19.
[635] Duncan-Jones 1963: 161, n.8.
[636] Duncan-Jones 1963: 161.
[637] See CIL VIII 2353 = ILS 5476; CIL VIII 20144 = ILAlg-02-03, 7653 = Saastamoinen 175 = AE 1892, 39 = AE 1964, 225 = AE 1971, +482.
[638] Dmitriev 2005: 151.

to break earlier vows if forced by circumstances. And this is not taking into account the many other financial obligations a member of the civic elite might seek to avoid. Apuleius preferred to marry his Pudentilla in her suburban villa, since the couple feared that a marriage in Oea would lead to another round of expensive donations to the local population.[639] Not following through on pledges and promises was a relatively benign form of financial neglect. More malicious was the misappropriation of public funds, the unwillingness to repay debts to the community and other forms of private meddling with public funds by the local elite. Such behaviours were far from uncommon, judging by their repeated appearance in literary sources.[640] Dio Chrysostomos records some of the typical accusations: appropriating public lands, unwillingness to pay rent or taxes and the avoidance of public service in the community.[641] In times of increased food prices and scarcity, such criticisms could lead to outright revolts and anti-elite violence.[642]

Problematic behaviour by the civic elite did not go unnoticed, particularly in literary sources from the Greek East.[643] Plutarch chided his compatriots for their greed and petty conflicts, which necessitated the intervention of Roman authorities.[644] With a governor nearby, it was tempting for personal rivals or discontented elements within the city's elite to report on the misappropriation of public funds or other crimes.[645] Such seems to have been the case with a prosecutor from Amisus who approached Pliny about a dubious donation bestowed upon a local benefactor.[646] When the governor Varenus Rufus was about to visit Prusa, Dio urged his fellow-citizens to appear harmonious.[647] Public discontent in Prusa was rife, due to the embezzlement of public funds by several of Dio's peers, as well as his own unfinished building project.[648] Dio exhorts:

> *"ἡμεῖς ἄρα τὰ αὑτῶν ἀπολέσωμεν;" οὐθείς φησιν· ἀλλ᾿ εὖ ἴστε ὅτι ἐν πάσαις ταῖς πόλεσίν ἐστι χρήματα δημόσια, καὶ ταῦτα ἔχουσιν ἔνιοι, τινὲς μὲν δι᾿ ἄγνοιαν, τινὲς δὲ ἄλλως· καὶ δεῖ προνοεῖν καὶ σῴζειν, οὐ μέντοι μετὰ ἔχθρας οὐδὲ μετὰ διαφορᾶς. Οὗτοι φιλοτιμοῦνται, πολλάκις ὑμῖν παρ᾿ αὑτῶν εἰσενηνόχασιν. πείθετε αὐτούς, παρακαλεῖτε· ἂν ἀντιτείνωσι, δικαιολογεῖσθε πρὸς μόνους μηθενὸς παρόντος ἔξωθεν.*
>
> "Shall we, then, lose what belongs to us?" someone retorts. No one is suggesting that; on the contrary, you may rest assured that in all our cities there are public funds, and a few persons have these funds in their possession, some through ignorance and some otherwise; and it is necessary to take precautions and try to recover these funds, yet not with hatred or wrangling. These men are generous; they have often made contributions

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[639] Apuleius, *Apologia*, 87.10.
[640] Burton 2004: 318–319, 325, 331–332.
[641] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 7.27-28, a fictional case where a hunter is mistaken for a wayward member of the local elite. For a contextualisation of the oration, see Ma 2000.
[642] Erdkamp 2002.
[643] Sheppard 1986; Salmeri 2000: 77–81.
[644] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 814F-815B.
[645] See for example the charges brought to Pliny against Flavius Archippus, *Letters*, 10.58-60.
[646] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.110-111; Burton 2004: 325.
[647] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 48.6-7.
[648] Although the problem did not escape the attention of governors entirely, see Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10.23.

> to you out of their own resources. Use persuasion on them, appeal to them; if they are stubborn, urge the justice of your claims before them privately, with no outsider present.”[649]

Dio’s message is a simple one: corruption scandals should be resolved amicably among the citizens of Prusa, far removed from the prying eyes of Roman officials. The latter might not only further curtail the city’s rights, but might also make life difficult for Dio’s peers.

Given this potentially fraught landscape of civic conflict, it is unsurprising to find Dio and Plutarch pointing to the centrality of honour and concord (*homonoia*) for the functioning of civic life. For Dio concord is the divinely ordained foundation of the universe and the natural world, an idea also found in Aelius Aristides.[650] This universal concord translates into the structure of civic life: only when the various elements in a community know their place, *homonoia* can flourish – a situation that is compared to musical performances, the household and the military.[651] Plutarch notes that “the honour of an office resides in concord and friendship with one's colleagues much more than in crowns and a purple-bordered robe” and expresses the wish that his elite readers mould the public into their own, superior image.[652] Civic discord was a realistic prospect and a situation that civic leaders, according to Plutarch, should strive to avoid at all costs. Importantly, such discord could not only exist within the ranks of the city’s elite, but also between the elite and the rest of the community. Plutarch advises his would-be statesman to compromise both with the people and fellow-magistrates to preserve harmony and to resolve enmities in times of crisis, Dio calls upon his fellow Prusans to trust their leaders and Aristides lectures his audience on the ills of discord, which are greater than either tyranny or war.[653] All three men also hint at the consequences of failing to preserve harmony: the curtailing of civic freedoms and rights by Roman authorities.[654]

For these Greek authors, *homonoia* was an essential feature of a healthy civic community, made possible by the moral behaviour of magistrates. As Salmeri notes for the orations of Dio Chrysostomos: *“*he saw [*homonoia*] as a guarantee for the continued power of the notables, his peers, and for that degree of the autonomy the *poleis* might still enjoy under the empire.”[655] Although the communities of North Africa were situated in a very different cultural environment than second-century Asia Minor, these Greek sources nevertheless offer a valuable insight into civic life not offered – at least not in the same amount of breadth and detail – by the works of Apuleius or Augustine. Some of the same factors that fuelled civic conflict in the Greek-speaking East were

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[649] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 48.9-10, translation: Lamar Crosby 1946.

[650] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 48.14; Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 23.76, 24.42*; discord among the Rhodians is an insult to Helios*: 24.50.

[651] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 48.7, 9, 13; Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 24:32-35; *household and military*: Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 23.34; 24.7-9.

[652] Plutarch, *Moralia* 816B; *molding behaviour*: 800B, 814B-C.

[653] Plutarch, *Moralia* 815A-B, 809B-810A; Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 48.10; *a lack of trust in leadership leads to calamity*: 48.13; Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 24.19-21.

[654] Plutarch, *Moralia*, 814F-815B; Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 48.13; Aelius Aristides, *Orations* 24.22.

[655] Salmeri 2000: 77, see in general 77-81.

also present in North African cities.[656] These included elite control of civic institutions and taxation, competition over resources and offices, and differences in wealth and rank between decurions, among other factors. Adding to the potential for conflict were the *curiae*, which are attested across North Africa. Their role in municipal politics is not exactly clear and may have included voting rights, though this is a point of contention.[657] Yet even if they did not retain such rights, the *curiae* remained important organisational bodies where citizens met and participated in civic life through, for example, feasting or the setting up of dedications.

We find some explicit traces of a western version of the idea of *homonoia* as well. Hurlet has pointed to the importance of *concordia,* not only in Roman imperial ideology but also in the epigraphic cultures of western communities.[658] He notes that inscriptions could be erected *consensu populi* or *consensu universa*, to name but two examples, emphasizing communal cohesion. But the concern for civic cooperation and harmony is perhaps best illustrated by dedications to communal *concordia*, which are found at several sites in North Africa.[659] Most explicit are two bases set up near the entrance to the Great South Baths of Thamugadi, dating to the mid-third or the early fourth century. Both bases were dedicated to the *concordia populi et ordinis* after "they had reduced the expenses to the community by labour and wealth" (*quod sum(p)tus rei p(ublicae) manibus copiisque relevaverint*).[660] The precise context of the dedications is unclear, though it seems to have involved a number of private benefactions and mandatory communal labour, perhaps, as suggested by Lepelley, for the restoration of the bathhouse.[661] In any case, the *ordo* and the people are presented as working in harmony. Although the inscription seems a factual reflection of cooperation, *concordia* here has a strong ideological bend, particularly when we realize that it was the city council that decided on the duration and nature of the *munera sordida* that the inhabitants of Thamugadi had to perform.

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[656] See also Jacques 1984: 535–538 with case studies 538-562.

[657] Kotula (Kotula 1968; Kotula 1972) has argued for their waning political influence over the second and third century. Jacques on the other hand argues that the *populus* retained a strong influence in municipal politics (Jacques 1984: 379–425; followed by Lepelley 1992: 64.) To what extent *populus* and *curiae* overlap is a point of contention. Duncan-Jones 1982: 279–280 argues for selective recruitment of the *curiae* while Jacques 1990: 391–401 argues that the *curiae* likely consisted of a far broader swath of a given community's population. See in general also the Constantinian decree *Codex Theodosianus* 12.5.1 which strongly suggests that some form of popular election of magistrates was still current in early-fourth-century Africa.

[658] Hurlet 2002, particularly 168-178. For a slightly different take on the concept of *concordia* from the perspective of imperial ideology, see Lobur 2008.

[659] We can also note here the cult of Concordia that flourished in communities such as Cirta and Dougga. In both cases, the worship of Concordia appears to have been deeply linked with the peculiar constitutions of both cities, with Cirta at the head of a confederation of four *coloniae* and Dougga divided between a *pagus* and a *civitas* until it gained its status as *municipium* in 205. In both cases, the worship of Concordia appears to have been intended to safeguard harmony *between* the communities. For Cirta see CIL VIII 6942 = ILAlg-02-01, 471 = D 6854. In Dougga, several sanctuaries were erected to Concordia, in conjunction with other deities. See Dougga 26 = BCTH-1969-218 = Saastamoinen 42 = AE 1969/70, 650, with commentary Khanoussi and Maurin 2000: 67–68; CIL VIII 1493 = CIL VIII 15520 = CIL VIII 26467 = CIL VIII 26469a = CIL VIII 26469b = Saastamoinen 120 = ILTun 1389 = ILAfr 515 = Dougga 27, with commentary by Brouquier-Reddé and Saint-Amans 1997: 185–189; CIL VIII 26471 = ILTun 1392 = Dougga 136 = Saastamoinen 123 = AE 1904, 116 = AE 2011, +1760. For further discussion on the *pagus*/*civitas* divide and its relationship to the composition of Dougga's elite, see Aounallah and Maurin 2008: 232–233; Beschaouch 2011: 1809–1815; Chastagnol 1997: 56–57.

[660] CIL VIII 2342.

[661] Lepelley 1981: 447–448.

It is with the great potential for civic conflict in mind that we once again turn to Beetham's ideas on legitimacy. Beetham's model might at first sight appear an awkward fit when it comes to civic elites. After all, civic elites were as much subjects as they were powerholders. However, although Beetham mostly appears to draw examples from a national or supra-national level, there is no reason why his ideas cannot be fruitfully applied to smaller power structures within the overarching power structures of the empire – as has been done by Zuiderhoek in his study of Greek elites in Asia Minor.[662] As I have argued above, the various power relationships that constituted the empire were intertwined, forming chains between powerholders and subordinates, from the emperor down to the municipal authorities. The links in this chain, and the chain itself, inherently demanded legitimation. To this we may add the two-pronged potential for conflict. Firstly, within the ranks of the elite over magistracies, resources (material or social) and influence; secondly, between members of the elite and the communities they governed. In both cases, some form of legitimation of existing power relationships was necessary.

On a civic level, just as on the imperial level, legitimate power relationships were built upon shared normative beliefs. Civic ideals of legitimate power shared a fundamental feature with imperial ideals of legitimate power: individual powerholders were expected to act according to the precepts of (aristocratic) honour. But as we shall see in greater detail throughout this chapter, local communities from an early date onwards held normative beliefs unique to their civic setting. That such civic normative beliefs differed from imperial ideals of power is perhaps not very surprising. For example, local elites did not command military forces and can hardly be expected to be praised for their *fortitudo* or military *virtus.* But in others fields, such as performance in office and munificence, there are interesting points of overlap and difference in the normative language employed to honour civic elites, imperial officials and emperors. The current chapter is based on 352 dedications from 36 communities that in one way or another include normative language to refer to members of the civic elite. Throughout this chapter, I will further develop several arguments already presented in the previous chapters, particularly on the relationship between honorands and dedicators within the civic landscape. At the same time, I will also touch upon a number of themes that are distinct for civic dedications, including the role of the community as moral arbiter in close proximity to the honorand, the potential tensions between honorand and dedicator in preferred forms of representation, and lastly the markedly stable categorization and hierarchization of municipal virtues over several centuries.

4.2. – In praise of generosity

One of the main ways in which Greco-Roman civic elites interacted with their communities and earned public honours was through munificence of various sorts. The range of benefactions, both in terms of form and financial investment, was wide. Munificence could consist of the financing of gladiatorial or theatrical shows, donations in cash or kind to members of the community, the construction of buildings, the erection of statues and other forms of beautification, the acquisition of grain and other amenities in times of crisis or the undertaking of embassies at personal cost.[663]

[662] See in general: Zuiderhoek 2009: 71–153

[663] Wesch-Klein 1990.

Although the average donation came in below 10,000 *sestertii*, donations of over one million are attested. It is no surprise then that African cities employed a variety of terms to praise benefactors for their generosity. The most common term is *liberalitas*, which appears in 49 dedications from 18 communities, with dates ranging from the mid-second century to the early fourth century.[664] While some are dedicated to members of the military or civic administration with ties to the community[665], the vast majority were dedicated to local benefactors with careers in civic politics. *Munificentia*, which appears in 32 dedications from 14 communities, appears almost exclusively in connection to benefactors with local roots between the second and third century.[666] This tallies to a total of 79 dedications, given that two dedications cite both *munificentia* and *liberalitas*.[667] The majority of dedications were set up by the city council with public money, though a considerable number of dedications involve the people, the community or the *curiae* as dedicators.[668] The count of both *munificentia* and *liberalitas* includes not only the cases in which those virtues appear as personal qualities, but also a small number of dedications which use both virtues in a more passive sense

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[664] CIL VIII 1223 (p.932, 2526) = CIL VIII 14387; CIL VIII 1474 = CIL VIII 15502 = CIL VIII 26459 = ILTun 1386 = Saastamoinen 527 = Dougga-01, p. 160 = AE 2005, +1686; CIL VIII 1495 (p.938) = CIL VIII 26590; CIL VIII 1500 = CIL VIII 1501 = CIL VIII 1502 = CIL VIII 15509 = ILAfr 514 = Dougga-01, p.183 = AE 2005, 1689; CIL VIII 2032; CIL VIII 2411 = CIL VIII 17913 = Timgad 13 = AE 1954, 147; CIL VIII 5365 = CIL VIII 17495 = ILAlg-01, 286 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 6965 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 531 = D03181 = Saastamoinen 436; CIL VIII 6995 (p.965) = ILAlg-02-01, 560 = D 411; CIL VIII 7116 = ILAlg-02-01, 721; CL VIII 7983 (p.1879) = CIL VIII 7984 = ILAlg-02-01, 34 = Louvre 190 = AntAfr-2007-85 = Saastamoinen 349; CIL VIII 11340 (p.2354) = ILPSbeitla 48; CIL VIII 11343 = ILTun 353 = ILPSbeitla 52; CIL VIII 11345 = D 7796 = ILTun 354 = ILPSbeitla 55 = Gummerus-01, 305; CIL VIII 11348 = ILPSbeitla 58; CIL VIII 11349 = ILPSbeitla 60; CIL VIII 11813 (p.2372) = D 1410 = AfrRom-09-01-265 = AE 1899, 112 = AE 1992, +1774; CIL VIII 15880 = ILTun 1593; CIL VIII 16555; CIL VIII 16556; CIL VIII 17535 = ILAlg-01, 310; CIL VIII 26273 = Uchi-01-Ugh 12 = Uchi-02, 68; CIL VIII 26458; CIL VIII 26459; CIL VIII 26460; CIL VIII 26608; CIL VIII 26618 = CIL VIII 26626 = ILAfr 539 = Dougga 88; CIL VIII 26625; AE 2005, 1681; AfrRom-18-01-359 = AE 1906, 26; AntAfr-2010/12-164 = Epigraphica-2015-175 = AE 2010, 1796 = AE 2013, +1785; BCTH-1905-95; BCTH-1905-96; BCTH-1984/85-65; D 9362 (p.192) = Saastamoinen 651 = AE 1908, 12; Dougga 74; ILAfr 134 = ILPSbeitla 53; ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59; ILAlg-01, 2035 = Saastamoinen 598 = AE 1907, 238 = AE 1959, +72; ILAlg-01, 2121 = Saastamoinen 534; ILAlg-01, 2172; ILAlg-01, 2185b; ILAlg-02-03, 7946 = Saastamoinen 240 = AE 1920, 114; ILAlg-02-03, 8003 = Saturne-02, p.208 = Alumnus 101 = AE 1966, 544; IRT 138; IRT 139; IRT 601; Uthina-02, 74 = ZPE-178-290 = AE 2004, 1821.

[665] See CIL VIII 11343 = ILTun 353 = ILPSbeitla 52 (dedicated to the Syrian tribune Marcus Valgius Aemilianus); CIL VIII 11813 = D 1410 = AfrRom-09-01-265 = AE 1899, 112 = AE 1992, +1774 (dedicated to the military tribune and procurator Caius Sextius Martialis).

[666] CIL VIII 32 (p.921) = CIL VIII 11034; CIL VIII 1494 = CIL VIII 26609 = Dougga 83; CIL VIII 1495 (p.938) = CIL VIII 26590; CIL VIII 1496 (p.1494, 2616) = Dougga 137; CIL VIII 1647 (p.1523) = D 9192; CIL VIII 5368 (p.1658) = AE 1950, +145 = ILAlg-01, 289 = Louvre 182; CIL VIII 7103 = CIL VIII 19438 = AE 1938, +38 = ILAlg-02-01, 682; CIL VIII 7119 (p.1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 693; CIL VIII 11348 = ILPSbeitla 58; CIL VIII 18912 = D 6856 = ILAlg-02-02, 4686; CIL VIII 22728 = CIL VIII 22733 = ILTun 37; CIL VIII 22737 = D 6780 = Freis 118 = ILTun 41 = BCTH-1993/95-89 = AE 1902, 164 = AE 1903, +200 = AE 1953, +220 = AE 2003, +1924; CIL VIII 22739 = ILTun 42 = MEFR-1915-334; CIL VIII 22740 = ILTun 43; CIL VIII 26279 = Uchi-01-Ugh 11 = Uchi-02, 89 = AE 1908, 268; CIL VIII 26591 = ILTun 1427 = Dougga 73; CIL VIII 26604 = Dougga 82 = AE 1893, 101; CIL VIII 26605; AE 1917/18, 23; AE 2012, 1913; AfrRom-07-02-757; BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ILAfr 280 = Hygiae p.86; ILAfr 570 = Dougga 84 = AE 1914, 183; ILAlg-01, 2158; ILAlg-02-01, 755; ILAlg-02-03, 7936 = AE 1916, 34 = AE 1917/18, +16; ILAlg-02-03, 7937 = AE 1956, 126; ILAlg-02-03, 7943 = AE 1913, 159; IRT 117; IRT 790; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833.

[667] CIL VIII 11348 = ILPSbeitla 58; CIL VIII 1495 (p.938) = CIL VIII 26590.

[668] *Populus*/community: AntAfr-2010/12-164 = Epigraphica-2015-175 = AE 2010, 1796 = AE 2013, +1785; CIL VIII 11349 = ILPSbeitla 60; ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59; Dougga 74; CIL VIII 11340 = ILPSbeitla 48; BCTH-1905-95; BCTH-1905-96; D 9362 = Saastamoinen 651 = AE 1908, 12; CIL VIII 7119 = ILAlg-02-01, 693; CIL VIII 22728 = CIL VIII 22733 = ILTun 37; CIL VIII 22739 = ILTun 42 = MEFR-1915-334; CIL VIII 22737 = D 6780 = Freis 118 = ILTun 41 = BCTH-1993/95-89 = AE 1902, 164 = AE 1903, +200 = AE 1953, +220 = AE 2003, +1924; CIL VIII 32 = CIL VIII 11034; IRT 117. *Curiae*: CIL VIII 11813 = D 1410 = AfrRom-09-01-265 = AE 1899, 112 = AE 1992, +1774; CIL VIII 11348 = ILPSbeitla 58; ILAfr 134 = ILPSbeitla 53.

(usually in the accusative plural) to denote the gifts of the benefactors as personal 'liberalities' or 'generosities'.

As noted in the previous chapters, *indulgentia* appears to be limited to emperors: it only appears in a handful of dedications from across North Africa, almost all in the context of a parent-child relationship.[669] A dedication to Caius Ummidius Sedatus from Gigthis for example was set up by his sons, while a dedication to Quintus Servaeus Macrus was set up by his son and the city council. Both fathers are praised as *pater indulgentissimus*, precisely the hierarchical parent-child relationship that was alluded to in the dedications to imperial *indulgentia*. It is interesting to note that despite the occasionally lavish language of North African dedications, *indulgentia* is never employed for the praise of local benefactors across four centuries of dedications. Part of the explanation is surely to be sought in the strong hint of subservience in *indulgentia*. Such subservience may have been appropriate for the relationship between subjects and their emperors, or sons and their fathers. For benefactors however, the case was different. Some benefactors undoubtedly towered above their compatriots in terms of wealth and influence and may have had a dominant role in local civic life. The normative language of African communities, however, sought an ideological balance between the exceptional nature of the benefactor and his or her attachment to the civic community. The suggestions of hierarchy and deference implicit in *indulgentia* were too strong to be an appropriate form of praise within this context, since they would imply that the city council and the community as a whole were subservient to the benefactor in question.

Liberalitas and *munificentia* offered better alternatives, precisely because they suggested some level of equality and attachment between benefactor and community. Although *liberalitas* may have been more closely associated with a generous disposition and *munificentia* with the actual benefactions, the differences between both terms appear relatively small.[670] Nevertheless, a choice was usually made between the two, and African communities clearly preferred *liberalitas*, whereas Italian cities show a strong preference for *munificentia*; a choice possibly related to the Late Republican association between *liberalitas* and corruption which may have been less keenly felt in North Africa.[671] Both virtues usually appear on their own, as the sole motivation behind either the

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[669] CIL VIII 22736; CIL VIII 29 (p. 921) = CIL VIII 11043; IRT 598; similar but slightly different is IRT 675, erected by heirs to their deceased patron. The only exception appears to be a late antique dedications from Carthage: ILAfr 276 = AE 1914, 57 = AE 1923, +106.

[670] Although there has been some debate on the precise meaning of both terms. Kloft argued for a differentiation between the two words, with *liberalitas* denoting a character trait, while *munificentia* refers to the material results of generosity. On the basis of her Italian material, Forbis however argued that both terms could be used interchangeably. Kloft 1970: 46–47; Forbis 1996: 37–38. Forbis' opinion seems to hold true for North Africa as well: *liberalitas* could be associated with specific benefactions, such as the dedication to the wealthy doctor and aedile Quintus Julius Rogatianus from Sufetula, who was particularly generous in his funding of games (*"largamq(ue) liberalitatem duplicis editionis ludorum in sacerdotio liberorum*)"; see CIL VIII 11345 = D 7796 = ILTun 354 = ILPSbeitla 55 = Gummerus-01, 305. *Munificentia* on the other hand may also denote a more general sense of generosity, as in the case of Victor, a centurion honoured simply for his generosity ("*ob munificentiam"*) without any additional context by the city council of Sicca Veneria; see CIL VIII 1647 = D 9192.

[671] Forbis claims that late republican and early imperial literature associated *liberalitas* with corruption, bribery and damaging *ambitio* which she sees as the main reason for the avoidance of the term in Italian inscriptions until well into the second century. Only through its association with imperial largesse did the term receive a more positive connotation; see Forbis 1996: 34, 38–41.

honours or a building project erected with private money. The latter appears to be the case with the library of Marcus Julius Quintianus Flavius Rogatianus, who left 400,000 *sestertii* in his will for its construction.[672] The opening words of the building dedication declare that the library was constructed *ex liberalitate*. Elsewhere, however, *munificentia* and *liberalitas* are paired with adjectives and other signifiers that highlight the 'communal' aspect of both virtues. They may be strengthened through the inclusion of broad modifiers such as *eximius*, as in the case of Valeria Marianilla ("[*ob*] *eximiam eius liberalitatem*").[673] But dedications also include more specific modifiers. In the late second century the city council of Thuburbo Maius erected a statue base to the priest Publius Attius Extricationus and his mother Julia Bassilia. Although the statue was most likely set up for her son who had attained equestrian rank, it is Basslia who is honoured "*ob honestam munificentiam*".[674] The Douggan benefactress Asicia Victoria is likewise honoured "*ob munifi*[*c*]*entiam lib*[*er*]*a*[*le*]*m et singulare*[*m*]".[675] And the generosity of Marcus Valgius Aemilianus from Sufetula is explicitly presented as being in service to the community ("*ob eximiam in rem publ(icam) suam liberalitatem*").[676] Through terms such as *honestus* and *liberalis*, or by presenting generosity as targeting the *res publica*, the texts of the dedications underline the noble intentions behind the display of generosity. Such emphatic statements of intent, ascribed to benefactors by the city council responsible for dedicating their statue bases, are admittedly rare. Still, they point to an underlying concern with presenting benefactions as motivated by sincerity and concern for the community. The language of sincerity is a first indication of the way in which city councils and other civic bodies presented benefactions in a more equalising light. Although the distinguished position of the benefactor was beyond question, the choice to present his or her generosity as sincere or of benefit to the community implies that the benefactor was motivated by virtuous behaviour and sincere zeal towards that community, rather than by an eye towards personal prestige or profit. Although the latter is not a motivation often ascribed to benefactors, a dedication from Cirta nevertheless notes how one local benefactor managed to make enough from the ticket sales of his sponsored gladiatorial combats to finance a second round of benefactions.[677]

On the basis of inscriptions listing the expenditures of benefactors, Duncan-Jones came to the tentative conclusion that more than half of the total amount of *sestertii* spent on munificence in North Africa was funded by only 6% of the total recorded benefactors.[678] A tiny minority of those wealthy enough to even consider dedications could display their generosity on a scale far beyond the average decurion. Although this disparity in wealth would have been an inescapable reality in most communities, the question here is whether this wealth disparity is evident in the language of dedications. Among the 79 dedications that cite either *munificentia* or *liberalitas*, fourteen dedications are recorded with prices; some of these prices come from building dedications inscribed on the paid for monuments while others were lifted from honorific inscriptions set up by the city

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[672] D 9362 = Saastamoinen 651 = AE 1908, 12.
[673] CIL VIII 26273 = Uchi-01-Ugh 12 = Uchi-02, 68.
[674] ILAfr 280 = Hygiae p.86.
[675] CIL VIII 26591 = ILTun 1427 = Dougga 73.
[676] CIL VIII 11343 = ILTun 353 = ILPSbeitla 52.
[677] See CIL VIII 6995 (p. 965) = ILAlg-02-01, 560 = D 411.
[678] Duncan-Jones 1963: 169.

council or other parties.[679] The most expensive benefactions are the theatre financed by Annia Aelia Restituta in Calama and the library of Marcus Julius Quintianus Flavus Rogatianus in Thamugadi, both at an expense of 400,000 *sestertii*.[680] At 5,000 *sestertii*, the statue to the Genius of Thamugadi set up by an unknown benefactor is the most modestly priced gift among the fourteen.[681] Such relatively small gifts are however exceptional: the second lowest priced benefaction seems to have been a series of statues in the basilica of Cuicul for a minimum of 30,000 *sestertii*.[682] On average, those dedications in our *liberalitas*/*munificentia*-group which list expenditures appear to have been of high to very high cost.

Despite covering only a relatively small proportion of the total number of dedications under discussion, these lavish displays of elite generosity raise the question as to whether the praise of such virtues was in some way tied to the size of the donation involved. The majority of dedications praising *munificentia* and *liberalitas* simply do not make any explicit mention of the financial contributions of the benefactor. We can only conjecture on the extent to which a benefactor could influence the wording of his or her honours; in the case of building dedications the benefactor had far more leeway than on a statue base set up by the city council. Many dedications are furthermore silent on the nature of the benefactions involved, and hence their approximate costs. One third-century benefactor, for example, sponsored "magnificent games and manifold generosities" ([*lu*]*dorum magnifi[cent]iam et multiform*[*es libera*]*li*[*tates*]), while another paid for a sanctuary (*aedes*) with golden statues of Venus and Cupid.[683] Other benefactors praised for their *liberalitas* or *munificentia* appear to have operated on a much more modest scale. A dedication set up by the ordo of Madauros praises a generous benefactor for his *sportulae*, while the abovementioned dedication to the Genius of Thamugadi cost 5,000 *sestertii*.[684] Although these were undoubtedly very large sums of money for the average inhabitant of Thamugadi or Madauros, they nevertheless pale in comparison to the expenditure of Rogatianus on his library. Briand-Ponsart has called attention to the modest scale of dedications in the hinterland of Carthage, where some benefactors were nevertheless praised for their *liberalitas*.[685] Large-scale benefactors furthermore do not seem to have been singled out for more lengthy praise: while the wealthy benefactress Restituta is praised for her munificence and *amor patriae* in lengthy wording, a similarly wealthy equestrian who spent 350,000 on an unknown building project in Uthina is only briefly praised for his *liberalitas*. The

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[679] *Building dedications*: ILAlg-02-03, 7946 = Saastamoinen 240 = AE 1920, 114; ILAlg-01, 2121 = Saastamoinen 534; ILAlg-01, 2035 = Saastamoinen 598 = AE 1907, 238 = AE 1959, +72; CIL VIII 7983 = CIL VIII, 7984 = ILAlg-02-01, 34 = Louvre 190 = AntAfr-2007-85 = Saastamoinen 349; see also CIL VIII 2411 = CIL VIII 17913 = Timgad 13 = AE 1954, 147; CIL VIII 1500 = CIL VIII 1501 = CIL VIII 1502 = CIL VIII 15509 = ILAfr 514 = Dougga-01, p. 183 = AE 2005, 1689. *Erected by others*: CIL VIII 5365 = CIL VIII 17495 = ILAlg-01, 286 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 1495 = CIL VIII 26590; CIL VIII 26591 = ILTun 1427 = Dougga 73; IRT 117; Uthina-02, 74 = ZPE-178-290 = AE 2004, 1821 = AE 2011, +1678; CIL VIII 11813 = D 1410 = AfrRom-09-01-265 = AE 1899, 112 = AE 1992, +1774; CIL VIII 26458; the dedications on the library in Thamugadi form a special case, since they were placed there by the community: BCTH-1905-95; BCTH-1905-96; D 9362 (p 192) = Saastamoinen 651 = AE 1908, 12.

[680] BCTH-1905-95; BCTH-1905-96; D 9362 = Saastamoinen 651 = AE 1908, 12.

[681] CIL VIII 2411 = CIL VIII 17913 = Timgad 13 = AE 1954, 147.

[682] ILAlg-02-03, 07946 = Saastamoinen 240 = AE 1920, 114.

[683] CIL VIII 26618 = CIL VIII 26626 = ILAfr 539 = Dougga 88; CIL VIII 6965 = ILAlg-02-01, 531 = D 3181 = Saastamoinen 436.

[684] ILAlg-01, 2158.

[685] Briand-Ponsart 1999; see for example CIL VIII 12421 or 14855.

implication is that the praise of *liberalitas* and *munificentia* may have been suitable to large-scale benefactions, but that these virtues were certainly not limited to the builders of theatres, temples and libraries. Instead of a wealthy upper-layer of the elite differentiating itself through normative language, it seems that in the field of munificence even decurions with relatively modest means could hope to be praised for their generosity.

A second major division between benefactors is their gender: munificence was one of the few ways through which (wealthy) women could attain public honours. Out of 79 dedications, 14 include references to women, of which 11 are directly dedicated to female benefactors. Like other forms of public honours, female benefactors are nearly always placed in relation to male relatives, such as Surdina and her grandfather or Aelia Beneaucxidi and her husband.[686] Yet the virtues associated with female benefactors show no major differentiation from that of their male counterparts. Both are honoured for their *munificentia* and *liberalitas* without a clear difference in the choice or wording of both terms. Hemelrijk has pointed to several dedications from across the Latin West where benefactresses were honoured for typically feminine virtues, such as *pudicitia* and *castitas*.[687] In North Africa and elsewhere throughout the empire these virtues are far more commonly found in the private, funerary sphere than in public dedications.[688] Forbis signalled a similar trend in Italian cities, where benefactors of both genders were also honoured for the same munificent virtues.[689] She attributes this egalitarian use of *munificentia*/*liberalitas* to the dire straits of municipal governments, which were more interested in the financial means of their benefactors than their moral virtues. The argument is not wholly convincing, since the praise for generosity does not preclude the praise of feminine virtues, as also suggested by the dedications cited by Hemelrijk. An explanation must rather be sought in the context of the public honours. Beyond the fact that city councils tended to praise honorands for virtues that were appropriate to the circumstances of the honours – and thus chose *munificenta*/*liberalitas* rather than personal virtues unrelated to the benefaction – public honours were a field dominated by men and male concepts of virtue. Feminine virtues such as *pudicitia* may have been public in nature[690], but they did not fit easily into the male-oriented honorific register of public inscriptions, which revolved around contributions to the community through benefactions or a career in civic politics. With both an eye towards context and ‘genre’, African city councils likely adopted a more male-oriented lexicon of praise that was fitting for their public honorific setting.

The vocabulary of *munificentia* and *liberalitas* is distinct from the language of patronage. Both private and communal patrons are often distinctly marked as *patroni* or *amici*; when they are associated with additional honorifics, it is rarely *munificentia* or *liberalitas*. Rather, patronage is

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[686] CIL VIII 1223 = CIL VIII 14387; CIL VIII 16555.
[687] Though these benefactresses could also be honoured for their *innocentia* and *pietas*, see Hemelrijk 2015: 155–156, compare also 313.
[688] See Tod 1951; Curchin 1982; Curchin 1983.
[689] Forbis 1996: 85–86.
[690] Langlands 2006: 37–77.

usually associated with more general terms of personal praise, particularly *optimus*[691] but also *praestantissimus*[692], *incomparabilis*[693], *benignissimus*[694] and *amantissimus*[695]. In the context of patronage – particularly private patronage – such terms served to highlight the exceptional nature of the individual patron and his bond with the client/dedicator. Evidently, dedicators across North Africa did not consider *munificentia* or *liberalitas* as a suitable form of praise for either communal or private patrons. Both virtues seem to have had a distinctly public quality, reinforced by the fact that *munificentia* and *liberalitas* mostly (but not exclusively) appear in public dedications. Both virtues not only had a wide semantic range – suitable for just about any form of munificence – but through their public nature they also tied specific benefactors to the community in a way that, for example, *patronus optimus* did not. We saw a number of dedications where munificence was framed explicitly within a civic context, for example by denoting the beneficiaries as (fellow-)citizens or the recipient of benefactions as the *patria*. Although it could be argued that all dedications set up with public funds place benefactions in a civic context, a substantial number of honorary inscriptions are quite explicit on the civic nature of the generosity shown.[696] Some dedications were erected "because of the unequalled generosity he showed to his fellow-citizens" (*ob eximiam eius in cives suos liberalitatem*) or "for her distinguished generosity towards her fellow-citizens" (*ob egregiam in* [*s*]*uos cives libera*[*l*]*itatem*).[697] Others make note of the benefactor's "munificence to the community" (*munificentiam eius res p(ublica)*) or the "proofs of his exceeding generosity towards his fatherland" (*eximiae liberalitatis suae in patriam* [*documenta*]).[698]

Munificentia and *liberalitas* seem to have been closely associated with an ethos of civic participation. And here we return to the argument made earlier. While the patronage-related dedications underline the exceptional nature of the patron's character and actions, dedications praising *munificentia* and *liberalitas* tend to place the benefactor on a more equal footing with his or her fellow-citizens as well as other benefactors within the community. Although we can imagine that the differences in size and stature of dedications were clear to ancient audiences, the language of the honours nevertheless suggests that benefactors of different means operated from the same principle of generosity towards the community. This suggests two complimentary readings of the

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[691] *Private*: CIL VIII 22741; CIL VIII 11041 = ILTun 16; IlAfr 22 = AE 1915, 44; BCTH-1946/49-679 = IDRE-02, 426 = AE 1951, 52; ILTun 720 = RHP 171 = IDRE-02, 424 = AE 1939, 81a. *Public*: CIL VIII 629; AE 1931, 40; ILAlg-01, 1283 = AE 1917/18, 60 = AE 1919, +46 = AE 1967, +536; Uchi-02, 86 = AE 2006, 1692. *Possible patronage:* CIL VIII 7112 = ILAlg-02-01, 690; CIL VIII 7050 = CIG 5366 = D 1102 = ILAlg-02-01, 634; CIL VIII 629; CIL VIII 17907; CIL VIII 26589.
[692] IRT 102; CIL VIII 2395 = Alumnus 93.
[693] CIL VIII 627 = D 1315.
[694] CIL VIII 2394 = Alumnus 92;
[695] CIL VIII 26272 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app 6 = Uchi-02, 73 = Alumnus 81.
[696] IRT 117; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833; BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ILAfr 570 = Dougga 84 = AE 1914, 183; CIL VIII 26591 = ILTun 1427 = Dougga 73; CIL VIII 1494 = CIL VIII 26609 = Dougga 83; CIL VIII 25515 = ILPBardo 239 = ILTun 1242 = Saastamoinen 326 = Alumnus 80 = AE 1907, 25; CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902; BCTH-1984/85-65; CIL VIII 210 = CIL VIII 11299 = D 5570 = Saastamoinen 541 = Saastamoinen 680; CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902; BCTH-1984/85-65; CIL VIII 7963 = CIL VIII 19849 = ILAlg-02-01, 10 = D 5473 = Saastamoinen 531 = AntAfr-2007-84; CIL VIII 11340 = ILPSbeitla 48; CIL VIII 11349 = ILPSbeitla 60; CIL VIII 11343 = ILTun 353 = ILPSbeitla 52; AfrRom-18-01-359 = AE 1906, 26; Dougga 74.
[697] Dougga 74; CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902.
[698] ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833; CIL VIII 25515 = ILPBardo 239 = ILTun 1242 = Saastamoinen 326 = Alumnus 80 = AE 1907, 25

continued popularity of *munificentia* and *liberalitas*. Firstly, although virtues undoubtedly served to place wealthy benefactors on a figurative pedestal, the inclusion of *liberalitas* and *munificentia* in dedications to both wealthy and more modest benefactors can also be read as an attempt to represent the power differences between the most wealthy and influential members of the elite and the rest of the community in a softer light. Both wealthy and not-so-wealthy benefactors were honoured for the same virtues; although the size of the benefaction is occasionally mentioned, the emphasis is nevertheless on the principle of generosity shared with others in the community. By wielding this shared praise for benefactors, the city council could not only entice future benefactors of varying wealth to invest in the community, but also retained for itself a defining role as moral arbiter.

Secondly, the large-scale interventions in civic life could draw ire and envy in the close-knit, competitive and honour-focussed elite communities of North Africa. While most epigraphic sources tend to only reflect an entirely enthusiastic response to elite-sponsored monuments, literary sources such as Dio Chrysostomos suggest that such praise was far from universal. Dio, intent on beautifying his native Prusa with a colonnade, met considerable resistance:

> *ὡς ἐγὼ βουλόμενος ὑμῖν ἀρέσκειν πάντα τρόπον ἀπορῶ. νῦν γὰρ ἐὰν ἅπτωμαι τοῦ πράγματος καὶ σπουδάζω γίγνεσθαι τὸ ἔργον, τυραννεῖν μέ φασί τινες καὶ κατασκάπτειν τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ πάντα.*
>
> "For though it is my desire to please you in every way possible, I am at a loss. For as things are now, if I take the business in hand and try to get the work done, some persons say I am acting the tyrant and tearing down the city and all its shrines."[699]

In his quest for beautification, Dio seems to have removed buildings that were close to the heart of the average citizen of Prusa, and the orator tellingly compares the situation in Prusa with that in other cities, such as Antioch, Tarsus and Nicomedia, where old tombs and shrines were removed from the city centre in a push towards monumentalization.[700] Equally telling are Dio's continued protestations that his motivation is not self-glorification, but a sincere desire to beautify his native city; evidently, the orator was aware of the fact that munificence could be interpreted otherwise.[701] Whether the citizens of Dougga or Camala were quite so outspoken as Dio's fellow-Prusans is another matter, but it is not a stretch of the imagination to suppose that some construction projects and other forms of elite munificence were received with less than complete enthusiasm. In the relatively densely populated urban environment of Africa Proconsularis inner-city space was at a premium. Although some monumental features were constructed at the edges of the built environments – most notably such large-scale construction projects as amphitheatres and circuses – many private benefactors opted to construct or enlarge monuments within the urban core. These elite-led urban developments appear to have come at the cost of public space. In Thuburbo Maius

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[699] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 47.18, translation: Lamar Crosby 1946. The case was brought before Pliny the Younger by one of Dio's rivals and ultimately made its ways to the emperor, see *Letters*, 10.81-82.
[700] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 47.16-17.
[701] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations*, 47.14-15, 16, 17.

a monumental market built in the late second or early third century blocked part of the main thoroughfare of the town, while in Thugga the Severan expansion of a temple incorporated a pre-existing alleyway into the *temenos*.[702] Although our sources remain largely silent on the matter, we can speculate that at least some new building projects were also accompanied by an intrusion of private space through forced sales of property and evictions. And even in towns where the majority of monuments and public amenities were financed with public funds, such as Thamugadi, the decision-making process for these construction projects still lay with the city council, consisting of the city's elite.[703] It fell to the city council and other civic institutions to formulate some kind of legitimation for the elite encroachment on public space. The praise of generosity dampened suggestions of communal disagreement or self-promotion by wedding elite generosity to an ideal of civic commitment, thereby placing benefactors in a favourable light as patriotic citizens. Combined with the softening of differences among benefactors, this emphasis on pure motives helped preserve the civic ideal of *concordia*.

4.3. – Integrity in office[704]

While the previous section mostly focussed on economic power relationships in the form of benefactors and their communities, virtues also gave expression to ideals of civic governance. Naturally, the two are not exclusive. A member of the local elite could simultaneously be honoured for his *liberalitas* as a benefactor and for his *clementia* while in office, to name but one example.[705] Dividing the honorifics of munificence from those referring to civic politics is therefore a somewhat arbitrary choice, since honorific inscriptions could and often did accommodate both. Nevertheless, different virtues had different connotations: although *liberalitas* and *clementia* may appear in the same dedication, they each referred to different realms of ideal behaviour on the public stage. Some dedications simply stress the civic attachment of their honorand. The city council of Sufetula for example expressed their admiration of the local priest Marcus Magnius Severus through the phrases *ob merita* and *civis incomparabilis*.[706] Likewise, the *curiae* of Mactar set up a statue to Lucius Julius Victoris Optatianus commending him as a *civis optimus*, without further motivation of the honours.[707]

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[702] Scheding 2019: 358.

[703] On Thamugadi and public funding, Duncan-Jones 1990: 182–183.

[704] For a similar treatment of these virtues in the political context of Africa Proconsularis, see Dawson 2016: 399–433. Our reading of the material overlaps, but differs somewhat in the details. Interestingly, Dawson (among other explanations) links these virtues to Roman ideals of mild-manneredness, see p.420-428. In the epigraphic material, virtues of mild-manneredness are mostly limited to emperors and imperial officials, rarely appearing in praise of magistrates. One exception is the town of Sufetula, where three magistrates appear to be praised for their *clementia*. One dedication (CIL VIII 11349 = ILPSbeitla 60) associates *clementia* with familial bonds (*et in utroque honoris gradu fidam clementiam filiorumque eius*). The other two dedications (ILAfr 134 = ILPSbeitla 53, CIL VIII 11340 (p. 2354) = ILPSbeitla 48) speak of the general *mos clementiae* of the honorand. CIL VIII 11340 furthermore makes separate reference to the integrity of the honorand in office (*et administrationem IIviratus innocuam*). Of note is also a priest and *duumvir* from Sufetula, honoured for his exceptional *simplicitas* (CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62). In the above cases the virtues of *clementia* and *simplicitas* certainly reflect positively on the honorand's time in office, but can also be read as more general praise for the honorand's aristocratic character; both virtues are less explicitly tied to civic office as *innocentia* or *integritas*.

[705] ILAfr 134 = ILPSbeitla 53.

[706] CIL VIII 11346 = ILPSbeitla 57.

[707] CIL VIII 629.

Yet normative language with more explicitly political overtones also appears in dedications to members of the local elite, pointing to a vocabulary of praise more closely bound to the realm of civic politics. An early example comes from Lepcis Magna, where two prominent citizens are honoured as *amatores concordiae*.[708] Annobal Rufus and Tiberius Claudius Sestius both acted as *sufetes*, traditionally the highest-ranking position among the Punic magistracies, and are the only attested individuals who were associated with the title *amator concordiae* in Lepcitan history. Historically, *sufetes* were responsible for a wide variety of financial and administrative tasks within the city and presided over meetings of the city council.[709] Balancing various local factions and interests within the community was one of the primary tasks of the *sufes*. The importance of harmony and cooperation as ideals to keep the city running smoothly have already been highlighted above. But such ideals were not only suitable for Annobal and Tiberius while in office. Both men held a string of important political and religious offices in the city while setting new levels of prestige and honour within Lepcitan politics: Annobal through his grand building program and Tiberius through the great privileges shown to him, "on account of his merit and those of his ancestors". Within an environment of elite competition, a title such as *amator concordiae* played down suggestions of strife, instead emphasizing the harmony between exceptional men such as Annobal and Tiberius and their compatriots. *Amator concordiae* appears to have remained closely associated with the Punic identity of the city, or at least the Punic magistracies of Lepcis. Around the time the city gained full colonial status in 109, the titles disappear from the epigraphic record.

Elsewhere in North Africa we observe the steady rise of *innocentia* from the early second century onwards. We already noted the importance of *innocentia* in relation to imperial officials, but it appears with equal prominence in dedications to local magistrates. *Innocentia* is praised in fifteen individuals from nine communities throughout North Africa, set up between the second and fourth century, mostly with public funds.[710] Unlike the *innocentia* of officials, the blamelessness of magistrates is often placed in the direct context of the civic community. The equestrian priest and benefactor [...] Iulianus is praised by the *Augustales* and the *curiae* of Theveste "for the sincere faithfulness and blamelessness with which he conducted himself to his fellow-citizens" ([*ob si*]*nceram fidem et inno*[*centiam*] *qua cum civibus agit*).[711] Julius Sabinus Victorianus, a late third-century priest of equestrian rank from Madaurus, was honoured by a group of fellow-priests for his "glorious blamelessness and esteemed trustworthiness" (*gloriosae innocentiae probatae fidei*).[712] Likewise, Lucius Pompeius [...], a military tribune and priest of the imperial cult, was honoured by the people and the *curiae* of Sufetula for setting an example with his generosity (*ob singularem ac novi erga se exempli liberalitatem*); Pompeius himself is complimented as a "most blameless citizen"

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[708] IRT 321-323; IRT 318; IRT 347.

[709] Krings 1995: 295–296.

[710] *Public funds:* CIL VIII 240 = CIL VIII 11344 = ILPSbeitla 54 = AE 1957, 75; CIL VIII 1223 (p. 932, 2526) = CIL VIII 14387; CIL VIII 11340 (p. 2354) = ILPSbeitla 48; CIL VIII 11814 (p. 2372); CIL VIII 16558; CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62; Bergemann 87 = AE 1949, 38; ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59; IRT 567; IRT 595; CIL VIII 22852. *Private funds*: CIL VIII 5367 (p. 962) = CIL VIII 17496 = ILAlg-01, 288 = Louvre 117 = AE 2000, +68; CIL VIII 16560; Bergemann 79 = AE 1960, +167 = AE 1962, 183 = AE 1971, 491 = AE 1972, +687 = AE 2005, +25; ILAlg-01, 2118 = AE 1920, 17 = AE 1957, 248 = AE 1959, +72.

[711] CIL VIII 16558.

[712] ILAlg-01, 2118 = AE 1920, 17 = AE 1957, 248 = AE 1959, +72.

(*innocentissimus civis*).[713] *Innocentia* also appears in the company of other virtues that stress the integrity and purity of the honorand. Caius Turranius Silvanus acted as priest of the imperial cult, quaestor, *praefectus iure dicundo* and *duumvir* in his native community of Sufetula. On his statue base, the *curiae* of Sufetula congratulate Silvanus on his outstanding honesty and simplicity (*ob insignem simplicitatem eius*) and his blameless attitude to his fellow-citizens during his duumvirate (*in IIviratum erga omnes inn[ocenti]am*).[714] *Innocentia* does not usually appear in direct relation to munificence, but there are exceptions: a late third-century dedication from Thysdus set up by the *curiae* of the city praise a generous benefactor as "an example of innocence, munificence and benevolence" (*innocentiae munificentiae* [*benig?*]*nitatis exemplo*); the implication here could be that the unnamed benefactor kept his vows while in office.[715] Also noteworthy is that *innocentia* appears to be an exclusively male virtue in the sphere of public honours. Benefactresses and other female honorands do not appear to be honoured with the virtue in any of the dedications under scrutiny in this chapter. One benefactress from Vaga, for example, is honoured by the city council with a statue, but it is her grandfather who may have been praised for his outstanding integrity (*ob ins*[*ignem atque singula*]*rem av*[*i innocentiam*]).[716]

Just as we may group both *munificentia* and *liberalitas* under the general heading of 'generosity', so too can virtues close to *innocentia* be grouped together under the broader concept of 'integrity'. *Innocentia* is the most prominent virtue associated with office and continues to appear well into the fourth century. From the third century onwards it is joined by a related term: *integritas*, which also played a prominent role in the praise of imperial officials. A single exception notwithstanding, *innocentia* and *integritas* do not appear together in the same inscription.[717] Similar to *innocentia*, however, *integritas* is strongly associated with male officeholders.[718] *Curatores rei publicae* in particular are singled out for their *integritas*, with one dedication from Sicca Veneria being erected "to the worthy preserver of justice, (a man of) highest integrity and singular excellence" ([*s*]*umm(a)e integritatis adque aequitatis servat*[*ori d*]*i*[*gn*]*o ac singularis praestan*[*tiae*]), while a *curator rei publicae* from Calama is praised for his "exceptional justice and integrity with regard to the community and likewise so the citizens" (*ob insignem iustitiam et integritatem eius erga rem publicam pariter et cives*); a third dedication bears witness "to a man of wonderful goodness and integrity" (*mirae bonitatis adque integritatis*).[719] All three dedications are difficult to date precisely, but seem to fall in the late third or first half of the fourth century. In the second and early third centuries, *curatores* were irregularly appointed by the emperor, with the first African examples of this office in evidence in the reign of Septimius Severus in Sufetula.[720] From the administrative

[713] ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59.
[714] CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62.
[715] CIL VIII 22852.
[716] CIL VIII 1223 = CIL VIII 14387.
[717] See IRT 567; for a concise overview of *integritas* in Latin literature, see Forbis 1996: 64 n.11.
[718] CIL 5356 = CIL VIII 17494 = ILAlg-01, 00283; CIL VIII 17535 = ILAlg-01, 310; IRT 564; IRT 567; CIL VIII 1651 = CIL VIII 15883; CIL VIII 15881 (p. 2707) = D 5505 = ILCV +4328 = ILPBardo 366 = AE 2011, +88.
[719] CIL VIII 1651 = CIL VIII 15883, translation LSA-2465 (U. Gehn); CIL VIII 5356 = CIL VIII 17494 = ILAlg-01, 283; CIL VIII 15881 (p. 2707) = D 5505 = ILCV +4328 = ILPBardo 366 = AE 2011, +88. The latter inscription was erected by the followers of Venus (*Venerii*) after a cultic statue of the goddess was stolen and replaced on orders of the curator.
[720] ILAfr 130 = ILPSbeitla 22; Lepelley 1979: 168.

changes of the tetrarchy onwards, the *curator* increasingly became a purely civic office, taken up by men from the community itself.[721] Regardless of appointment, the *curatores* were primarily concerned with keeping a close watch on civic finances, which gave them a particularly influential role in civic life.

Beyond *integritas*, a few inscriptions mention *abstinentia* ("disinterestedness"). A priest and former *duumvir* from Carthage for example displayed his *abstinentia* during his curatorship, for which he may have been praised by the city council (*curatori suo ab*[*sti*]*n*[*e*]*n*[*t*]*i*[*ssimo*?]).[722] *Abstinentia* was not limited to tenure: the former *duumvir* Lucius Instanius Commodus Asicius A[...] received honours from his native Dougga for undertaking an embassy "with greatest pleasure and with absolute disinterestedness" (*libentissime adque abstinen*[*tissime*]).[723] *Industria*, another typical administrative virtue, appears only once in a dedication from Gigthis, set up to a provincial priest named [...] Caecilius Claudianus Aelianus, who undertook an embassy with great zeal (*ob* [*le*]*gat*[*io*]*n*[*e*]*s* [*magna cum in*]*dustri*[*a*] *ges*[*tas*]).[724]

Why was it important for African magistrates to be honoured for their *integritas*, *innocentia*, or *abstinentia*? Perhaps even more so than in the case of wealthy benefactors, the position of powerful magistrates needed legitimation. Even though a *duumvir* from Sufetula or Dougga may not have struck a particularly imposing figure within the empire at large, within their community these individuals could wield considerable influence. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, some members of the elite tried their best to avoid the heavy financial burdens associated with magistracies. Even if a member of the local elite willingly took civic offices upon him, individual magistrates could drag their feet in the fulfilment of their vows, up to the point where a governor had to intervene. But these are relatively minor misdemeanours when considering the potential influence of acting magistrates on their community. Some undoubtedly helped their contacts and clients to the detriment of others or the community as a whole, for example in legal disputes, in financial settlements or through nepotism. Mismanagement of public funds – an offence which landed Dio Chrystosom's compatriots in trouble – was equally common. On a more systemic level, magistrates held important control over taxation and forced labour (*munera*) within the boundaries of their communities.[725] Magistrates were also expected to keep order. In imperial literary sources, mostly from the Greek East, senior magistrates have suspects apprehended, beaten, tortured and locked-up.[726] In the west, *duumvir* jurisdiction is explicitly addressed in Spanish municipal charters such as the *Lex Irnitana*. Though it is clear from the *Lex Irnitana* that *duumviri* operated only in the field of civilian cases, it has been argued that their judicial powers were more significant than usually assumed.[727] Local authorities also kept a strong hold over market regulations, from checks on the

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[721] Lepelley 1979: 168–169.
[722] CIL VIII 1165.
[723] CIL VIII 26601 = Dougga 78 = AE 1993, 1754.
[724] CIL VIII 31 = CIL VIII 11032 = ILPBardo 13.
[725] Burton 2004: 313-314; Corbier 2005: 371–372.
[726] Fuhrmann 2011: 55–61.
[727] Metzger 2016.

correct weights and measurements to the collecting of market taxes.[728] Given the high costs associated with obtaining magistracies – including vows to erect monuments or statues – as well as those incurred during tenure, we may imagine the temptation of wielding magisterial authority and influence for personal ends. Although there was ostensible oversight from imperial agents in the fields of taxation and jurisdiction, it is clear that there was considerable room for personal abuse at the cost of the non-decurional classes within the community. With this in mind, it is unsurprising to find *innocentia* being explicitly coupled to the duumvirate in some cases. The aforementioned Caius Turranius Silvanus was honoured for "his blamelessness towards all during his duumvirate" (*in IIviratum erga omnes inn*[*ocenti*]*am*) while Lucius Caecilius Atheneaus was praised for the "blameless administration of the duumvirate"(*administrationem IIviratus innocuam*).[729]

Such positions of power and influence demanded some form of legitimation, particularly if we take the potentially influential role of the African *curiae* in choosing the candidates for magistracies into account. Dawson, also pointing to the influence of the *curiae*, cites a number of programmatic graffiti from Pompeii which praise the *innocentia* of local candidates for the aedileship.[730] Although these graffiti clearly show the close association between *innocentia* and civic politics, there is a major difference with the African material: Pompeiians seem to associate *innocentia* mostly with the youthful innocence of their candidates (*innocens iuvenis*); *integritas* likewise appears in association with youth.[731] The dedications in North Africa have a very different context: they are not associated with youthful innocence nor awarded to potential candidates, but rather to senior magistrates. Dawson is right in stressing the political influence of the *curiae* in African communities: their prominence becomes particularly evident when considering that a large number of dedications praising *innocentia* or *integritas* were erected by the *curiae* or the *universus populus*.[732] Yet the dedications that praise *innocentia* and *integritas* are much further removed from the 'political process' than their Pompeiian counterparts and work on a different level. Like governors – also honoured for their *innocentia* and *integritas* – these dedications contributed little to a magistrate's legitimacy while in office. Rather, they give consent to the broader system of power within the community through praise of model (senior) magistrates. The praise of *innocentia* and *integritas* is not limited to the *populus* or the *curiae*. The city council, too, often appears as a fellow-dedicator or a dedicator in its own right and employs the same normative language for the magistrates it honours.[733] That we find these various civic institutions praising magisterial integrity is not particularly surprising. Leading magistrates could act in accordance with the wishes of members of the *curiae* or the *populus* but were also capable of enforcing unpopular measures in for example

[728] Fuhrmann 2011: 59–61.

[729] CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62; CIL VIII 11340 = ILPSbeitla 48. See also CIL VIII 240 = CIL VIII 11344 = ILPSbeitla 54 = AE 1957, 75.

[730] Dawson 2016: 429–430.

[731] See for example CIL IV 671; CIL IV 3741. For youthful innocence in Africa, see for example the fourth-century inscription IRT 595.

[732] *Curiae*: CIL VIII 240 = CIL VIII 11344 = ILPSbeitla 54 = AE 1957, 75; CIL VIII 11340 (p. 2354) = ILPSbeitla 48, naming both the *curiae* and the *universus populus*; CIL VIII 11814 (p. 2372); CIL VIII 16558; CIL VIII 23226 = ILTun 363 = ILPSbeitla 62. *Populus*: ILAfr 138 = AE 1989, 792 = ILPSbeitla 59.

[733] CIL VIII 1223 (p. 932, 2526) = CIL VIII 14387; CIL VIII 11340 (p. 2354) = ILPSbeitla 48; CIL VIII 11814 (p. 2372); Bergemann 87 = AE 1949, 38; IRT 567; IRT 595; CIL VIII 1651 = CIL VIII 15883; CIL VIII 5356 = CIL VIII 17494 = ILAlg-01, 283; IRT 564; IRT 567.

taxation, *munera*, market regulations or even water distribution. Similar to the relationship between governors and communities, this was an uneven power relationship but nevertheless one where the wishes of the people could not be completely ignored without repercussions. The city council likewise had a stake in praising magistrates for their integrity. The municipal authorities had a keen interest in keeping the peace within the community, at least to the extent that it would not threaten the community's responsibilities to Rome. We have already noted the differences in status and wealth between members of the *ordo* and the presence of inter-elite conflict. While even the lowest-ranking members of the *ordo* would have been spared from compulsory physical labour, they could very much be impacted by administrative abuse.

As with governors, the suggestion that these public honours were voted on not only showed some measure of consent to the existing political system, but could also act as a form of leverage. We don't know who was finally responsible for the actual wording of the dedication, what influence the honorand may have had on the text and to what extent the honorific inscription correlated to acclamations and other verbal displays of public support and approval. Nevertheless, within the text of the inscriptions themselves 'the people' are represented as an active political force and as a moral agent, which repeatedly singles out *innocentia* and *integritas* as a form of praise for their own magistrates. Beyond the possibly genuine attachment to outstanding magistrates, the praise of *innocentia* and *integritas* had a two-fold function within the civic community. It acted as an expression of consent, suggesting that the civic political system was based on honourable behaviour and met the requirements of legitimacy. Secondly, it set norms for the behaviour of future magistrates by implying that certain types of moral behaviour were rewarded with a honorific statue, a particularly coveted prize for civic elites. In this sense, the praise of magistrates was not fundamentally different from that of governors. As communities could spell out their expectations of gubernatorial behaviour in office, so too on a municipal scale could *curiae* and other civic parties give voice to their expectations of magisterial conduct to try and influence future behaviour.

It is important to note that these expectations of ideal magisterial behaviour to some extent remained fluid and open-ended. The inscriptions usually tell us very little about the deeds and actions of the magistrates in question. Presumably, they earned their praise for active measures taken while in office, such as the lowering of the grain price – as may have been the case with the third-century curator Lucius Caelius Plautius Catullinus.[734] Contemporaries would have had some understanding of the precise actions referred to when a dedication was set up. Nevertheless, it could be argued that there is a similarity here with the relative vagueness of dedications praising *liberalitas* or *munificentia* without mentioning the prices or types of benefactions involved. Honorific inscriptions were a commemorative medium, concerned with presenting an uncontroversial and laudatory image of the honorand. And as with the occasionally controversial elite building efforts, the decisions of even the most blameless *duumvir* may not have earned unanimous support within the community, especially given the potential for abuse. *Innocentia* and *integritas* shifted the emphasis from potentially controversial deeds to intent; to exemplary conduct in office and commitment to upright behaviour, just as *liberalitas* and *munificentia* shifted the

[734] CIL VIII 11332 = D 6836 = ILPSbeitla 41.

emphasis from the potentially controversial benefactions themselves to a broader ideal of generosity towards the community. The suggestion of service to the community implicit in *innocentia* and *integritas* as well as its apparent lack of hierarchical overtones softened differences in wealth, rank and influence, not least between local families capable of repeatedly shouldering the burdens of multiple magistracies and other, less fortunate members of the elite. Perhaps most important of all is the prominent role of the *curiae* and the *populus* in these dedications, appearing as co-dedicators alongside the city council. As was argued for fourth-century Lepcitan governors, the inclusion of such parties is an ideological statement as much as it is a factual recording. Not only did the explicit inclusion of the people or the *curiae* emphasize the strong relationship between the magistrate and the community he governed, it also created an image of consensus: both the city council and the *curiae*, or the *populus universus* unanimously agreed in their praise for a model magistrate. This is not to argue that such unanimous agreement actually existed within a given community, but rather that dedicators were keen to present the distinct civic organs of the community as joined in praise, both adding additional honour to the magistrate for managing to elicit such a unanimous response and emphasizing the communal harmony that existing between the various civic bodies.

4.4. – Straddling the divide?

Munificentia/*liberalitas* and virtues of political integrity such as *innocentia* were closely associated with distinct spheres of elite action within the community: benefactions and civic government. Yet other dedications point to wider, more over-arching virtues that escape the confines of specific elite actions and instead seem to present broader ideals of legitimate power and influence. The most common of these is *merita*, an honorific prevalent in dedications across the empire. In North Africa, some 78 dedications from 25 communities praise the merits of honorands.[735] It is associated particularly with members of the local elite and is applied to members of the imperial administration

[735] CIL VIII 27 (p.921) = CIL VIII 11025 = ILTun 11 = D 787; CIL VIII 76 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app.1 = AE 1997, 1665; CIL VIII 1224 = CIL VIII 14388; CIL VIII 1641 (p.1523, 2707) = D 06818 = ILPBardo 00367 = AntAfr-08-01-321 = DEFTest 00006 = AE 1991, 01685 = AE 2004, +01877; CIL VIII 1882; CIL VIII 1884; CIL VIII 4252 (p.1693, 1769) = ILAlg-02-03, 7905 = AE 1914, 41; CIL VIII 5365 = CIL VIII 17495 = ILAlg-01, 286 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 5368 (p.1658) = AE 1950, +145 = ILAlg-01, 289 = Louvre 182; CIL VIII 7032 (p.1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 616 = AE 2002, +1650 = AE 2005, +1658; CIL VIII 7041 = CIL VIII 19423 = ILAlg-02-01, 626 = D 6857 = AntAfr-1998-98; CIL VIII 7112 (p.1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 690; CIL VIII 7118 = CIL VIII 19441 = ILAlg-02-01, 692; CIL VIII 9402 (p.1984); CIL VIII 9409 = CIL VIII 21066; CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472; CIL VIII 11036; CIL VIII 11039; CIL VIII 11040; CIL VIII 11346 = ILPSbeitla 57; CIL VIII 12459 = ILTun 866 = AE 1888, 120; CIL VIII 22726 = ILPBardo 15 = ILTun 35; CIL VIII 22729 = D 9394 = ILTun 38 = AE 1908, 123 = AE 2011, +1518; CIL VIII 22732 = ILTun 39; CIL VIII 22737 = D 6780 = Freis 118 = ILTun 41 = BCTH-1993/95-89 = AE 1902, 164 = AE 1903, +200 = AE 1953, +220 = AE 2003, +1924; CIL VIII 22738; CIL VIII 22739 = ILTun 42 = MEFR-1915-334; CIL VIII 24017 = Uthina-01, 27; CIL VIII 26276 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app.2 = Uchi-02, 83 = AE 1908, 267 = AE 2004, +1873; CIL VIII 26281 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app.4 = Uchi-02, 84 = AE 1951, +81; CIL VIII 26485 = CIL VIII 26595a = CIL VIII 26631 = CIL VIII 26635 = ILAfr 517; CIL VIII 26517 = ILPBardo 224 = D 6797 = Dougga 46 = AE 1899, 124 = AE 1952, 106 = AE 1967, 548 = AE 1976, 702 = AE 2002, +1682 = AE 2006, +107; CIL VIII 26582 = ILTun 1424 = Dougga 70 = D 9018 = AE 1911, 76 = AE 1957, +255; CIL VIII 26594; CIL VIII 26605; CIL VIII 26622 = ILTun 1437 = Dougga 56 = Bergemann 88; AE 1902, 13 = AE 1902, +148b = AE 1902, +256c; AE 1931, 40; AE 1931, 41; AE 1960, +167 = AE 1962, 184b = AE 1972, +687; AE 1991, 1639; AE 1996, 1700; AE 1997, 1652; AE 1997, 1653; AE 2005, 1681; AE 2012, 1883; AE 2012, 1886; AntAfr-2010/12-164 = Epigraphica-2015-175 = AE 2010, 1796 = AE 2013, +1785; BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; BCTH-1914-316 nr.27; Dougga 37; ILAfr 21 = AE 1915, 43 = AE 1915, +97; ILAfr 276 = AE 1914, 57 = AE 1923, +106; ILAfr 568 = Dougga 59 = AE 1921, 24 = AE 1922, +114; ILAlg-01, 1295 = AntAfr-1998-73 = AE 1998, 1580; ILAlg-01, 1298; ILAlg-01, 1301; ILAlg-01, 2168; ILTun 1514; IRT 118; IRT 119; IRT 120; IRT 121; IRT 122; IRT 123; IRT 124; IRT 182; IRT 249; IRT 318; IRT 347; IRT 578; IRT 588; IRT 598; IRT 600; IRT 601; IRT 95; IRT 96; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833.

only in a small number of dedications.[736] The honorific is applied to men and women alike, though slightly less so than *munificentia*/*liberalitas*: of the 78 dedications only six directly attribute *merita* to women.[737] For both men and women, *ob merita* is by far the most typical expression. Interestingly, *merita* appears more commonly on dedications to personal patrons than *munificentia* or *liberalitas*. The *amici* of Publius Sittius Velox for example erected a statue for him *ob merita*, while in Cirta Publius Paconius Cerialis erected a statue for his *amicus optimus et merens*.[738] Nevertheless, by far the majority of dedications lauding the merits of their honorands were public dedications set up by city councils, *curiae* or the community as a whole.

Merita doesn't pertain to any particular character trait, yet it is undeniably honorific. It furthermore often appears on its own, without further addition of virtues or honorifics; the implication being that it was clear to ancient audiences – at least at the time of the dedication – what exactly the merits in question were. Such is the case in a series of dedications set up by the *curiae* of Sabratha to the benefactor and priest Caius Flavius Pudens:

> [*C(aio) Fl(auio) Q(uinti) fil(io)*] *Pap(iria tribu) Pudenti flam(ini) perp(etuo) curia Au*[*g*]*usta ob m*[*er*]*ita*[739]
>
> "To Caius Flavius Pudens, son of Quintus, of the Papirian tribe, perpetual priest, the *curia Augusta*, for his merits."

Occasionally, *merita* is combined with other honorifics to give more specific meaning to the term. It can be magnified with other general honorifics, as may be the case with a benefactor from Madauros who may have been honoured *ob mul*[*ta et praeclara m*]*eri*[*ta*].[740] More common however is the combination of *merita* and munificence. The *duumvir* Caius Marius Fides is honoured *ob merita et liberalitam* while the priest Caius Servilius Maurinus is praised *ob merit*[*a et*] *munificentiam*.[741] Ocassionally, the context of the dedications points to the connection between munificence and *merita*: Marcus Julius Puteolanus, for example, undertook an embassy to Rome and paid for the expenses; reason for the city council to praise him *ob multa in rem pub(licam) m*[*erita*].[742] Similar are dedications that associate *merita* with patronage, such as an unknown benefactor who is honoured by the city of Dougga as a patron for his merits (*ob merita patronus*), while the benefactor Lucius Pullaienus Lectus was likewise praised by the *pagus* of Uchi Maius as a

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[736] See for example MEFR-1957-137 = MEFR-1959-281 = MEFR-1960-223 = AE 1958, 156 = AE 1960, 245 = AE 1961, 227; ILAlg-02-03, 7917 = ILAlg-02-03, 7918; CIL VIII 26594.

[737] CIL 7032 (p. 1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 616 = AE 2002, +01650 = AE 2005, +01658; CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472; CIL VIII 11036; AE 1902, 13 = AE 1902, +148b = AE 1902, +256c; AE 1991, 1639; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833.

[738] CIL VIII 7118 = CIL VIII 19441 = ILAlg-02-01, 692; CIL VIII 7112 = ILAlg-02-01, 690.

[739] IRT 118; the same texts is repeated in dedications by the other *curiae*, IRT 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124 and 125. Note however the stark difference with the text set up by the city council, IRT 117.

[740] AE 1931, 41.

[741] AntAfr-2010/12-164 = Epigraphica-2015-175 = AE 2010, 1796 = AE 2013, +1785; CIL VIII 22739 = ILTun 42 = MEFR-1915-334. See also CIL VIII 5368 = AE 1950, +145 = ILAlg-01, 289 = Louvre 182.

[742] ILAfr 21 = AE 1915, 43 = AE 1915, +97.

deserving patron (*patronus ob merita*).[743] The majority of cases suggest that 'merit' for most North African city councils meant material benefactions, from *sportulae* to *alimenta* and from embassies to the construction of monuments and other civic amenities.[744] It should be noted however that monuments appear to form only a small minority.[745] The more explicit phrasing of *munificentia*/*liberalitas* seems to have been preferred for major donations, particularly of monuments. Many dedications featuring *merita* furthermore lack any indication of the nature of the benefactions involved – or whether benefactions were involved at all. As noted by Forbis, merit can refer to "those things, be they innate virtues, noteworthy actions, or both, by reason of which a person deserves recognition".[746] Although some level of abstraction is present in all public dedications, the explicit praise of personal qualities appears to be a key element in many of them. The vagueness of *merita* therefore demands further contextualisation.

Forbis, following Hellegouarc'h, sees *merita* as denoting the result of a benefaction and emphasizes its strong euergetic connotations.[747] Given the examples cited above, this certainly holds true in many cases. Yet the question remains why North African city councils opted for a broad term such as *merita* when a far more direct vocabulary for the praise of munificence was available. A first hint is to be found in the use of phrases such as *ob merita et liberalitam*: the use of *et* suggest that *merita* encompassed more than the generosity denoted by *liberalitas*. As in Italy, some dedications accentuate the civic dimensions of *merita*, through phrasing such as *ob multa in rem pub(licam) m*[*erita*] or *ob merita in cives patriamque.*[748] They point to a wider semantic range for *merita* which seems to also include a spirit of civic engagement. Avitius Rufus, a *duumvir* and military tribune from Sabratha, was honoured by the city council "for his outstanding merits towards the community" (*ob merit(a) eius erga rem publicam ex*[*imia*]), while in Gigthis the city council and people decided to erect a statue to Quintus Satrius Lupercus "for his many merits towards the community and his distinguished tenure as *duumvir*" (*ob multa in rem p(ublicam) merita et insignem IIviratus administrationem*).[749] We can read the dedication to the equestrian Lucius Memmius Messius Pacatus in a similar vein: he was honoured by the Chinithi "for his merits and the remarkable piety

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[743] ILTun 1514; AE 2012, 1883. See also: CIL VIII 26281 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app 4 = Uchi-02, 84 = AE 1951, +81; CIL VIII 7032 = ILAlg-02-01, 616 = AE 2002, +1650 = AE 2005, +1658; CIL VIII 76 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app 1 = AE 1997, 1665; AE 1997, 1653; CIL VIII 9409 = CIL VIII 21066; AE 2012, 1886.

[744] Although *sportulae*, embassies and the construction of monuments were relatively common occurrences, privately funded *alimenta* appear to have been a rarity in North Africa, though some are attested: see CIL VIII 22904, CIL VIII 980 (p.1282) = ILTun 838 = D 6817 (p.188); CIL VIII 1641 (p.1523, 2707) = D 6818 = ILPBardo 367 = AntAfr-08-01-321 = DEFTest 6 = AE 1991, 01685 = AE 2004, +1877; CIL VIII 22721 = D 8978 = ILTun 33 = IDRE-02, 440 = AE 1908, 125. See also Duncan-Jones 1982: 290–291; Wesch-Klein 1990: 19–20.

[745] *Temple:* CIL VIII 26485 = CIL VIII 26595a = CIL VIII 26631 = CIL VIII 26635 = ILAfr 517. *Theatre*: CIL VIII 5365 = CIL VIII 17495 = ILAlg-01, 286 = AE 2012, +1902 (though combined with *liberalitas*). *Aqueducts*: IRT 117.

[746] Forbis 1996: 16.

[747] Forbis 1996: 12–17, 20–21.

[748] ILAfr 21 = AE 1915, 43 = AE 1915, +97; BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; see also ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833; IRT 96; CIL VIII 11039; CIL VIII 22737 = D 6780 = Freis 118 = ILTun 41 = BCTH-1993/95-89 = AE 1902, 164 = AE 1903, +200 = AE 1953, +220 = AE 2003, +1924; CIL VIII 11040; CIL VIII 26582 = ILTun 1424 = Dougga 70 = D 9018 = AE 1911, 76 = AE 1957, +255.

[749] IRT 96; CIL VIII 22732.

which he showed to his people/homeland" (*ob merita eius et singularem pietatem quam nationi suae praestat*).[750]

Merita could be employed to praise direct expressions of munificence, but could equally denote a wider range of services rendered to the community. Above, I argued for the civic context of *liberalitas* and *munificentia*, and their role in softening power relationships within communities. *Merita* takes this idea to its logical conclusion. *Liberalitas* and *munificentia* could still be claimed as a personal quality of the honorand, and both virtues clearly hinted at the nature of the honorand's laudable deeds. *Merita* alone says little on the honorand's rank, benefactions or services to the community beyond a vague sense of excellence. It could be employed for forms of generosity that straddled the divide between civic munificence and civic politics, such as the embassy to Rome paid for by Puteolanus. This flexibility of the term *merita* undoubtedly contributed to its popularity across North Africa and the empire, since it could suggest a range of benefactions and services in few words without tying honorands or dedicators to specifics.

Beyond being a concept that could be employed fruitfully in many different contexts, the honorific phrase *ob merita* served the secondary purpose of highlighting the strong bond between honorand and the civic community. More so than personal virtues, which expressed general aspects of intent and character, *merita* suggests services rendered by which the honorand had rightly 'deserved' his or her dedication. *Merita*, particularly when coupled with references to the *res publica*, created the impression that the honorand had actively laboured for his or her native community and sincerely engaged with civic life, either through benefactions, a lengthy civic career or some other service. Precisely this sense of engagement may have made the praise of *merita* an obvious choice for city councils and civic institutions seeking to honour members of local elite. Moreover, the suggestion of closeness and engagement may also explain why *merita* was a popular choice in dedications to private patrons, since it could equally stress the sincere effort of the patron and his close bond with the client.

4.5. – In service of the patria

Civic commitment has played a major role in this chapter. Time and again, city councils, *curiae* and other civic institutions drew attention to the active involvement of honorands in their community by placing personal virtues and honorifics within a municipal context. Yet North African civic institutions also had a direct vocabulary of civic engagement at their disposal. Expressions of love for the fatherland (*amor patriae*) appear throughout North Africa. The praise of *amor patriae* is unique to the region: with the exception of Italy, the language of civic love does not appear elsewhere in the Latin-speaking West.[751] Yet the praise of *amor patriae* ultimately hinges on a notion of *patria*, a concept with a far older pedigree. The first traces of the idea in North African epigraphy are to be found in Lepcis Magna, where a number of first-century benefactors are honoured with the title *ornator patriae*. The earliest attested "adorner of the fatherland" is Annobal Rufus, financer of the city's stone theatre whom we encountered earlier as an *amator concordiae*. Rufus was

[750] CIL VIII 22729 = D 9394 = ILTun 38 = AE 1908, 123 = AE 2011, +1518.
[751] Le Roux 2002: 144–145.

commemorated alongside Augustus in three large, nearly identical plaques, positioned prominently over entryways. Two of the inscriptions (IRT 321, 322) are bilingual, featuring both Latin and Neo-Punic:

> *Imp(eratore) Caesare Divi f(ilio) Aug(usto) pont(ifice) max(imo) tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) XXIV co(n)s(ule) XIII patre patr(iae) Annobal Rufus ornator patriae amator concordiae flamen sufes praef(ectus) sacr(orum) Himilchonis Tapapi f(ilius) d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) fac(iendum) coer(avit) idemq(ue) dedicavit*
>
> *ḤNBʻL MYŠQL ʼRṢ MḤB DʻT HTMT ZBḤ ŠPṬ ʼDR*
> *ʻZRM BN ḤMLKT ṬBḤPY RʼPS BTʼRM BTM PʻL WʼYQDŠ*
>
> [Latin] "When Imperator Caesar, son of the deified one, Augustus was pontifex maximus, invested with tribunician power for the 24th time, consul for the 13th time, father of his country, Annobal Rufus, decorator of his home city, lover of concord, flamen, *sufes*, prefect of sacred rites, son of Himilcho Tapapius, had this made from his own money, and dedicated it."
>
> [Neo-Punic] "Annobal, who adorns the country, who loves friendship, sacrificer, *sufes*, lord of the ʻZRM offering, the son of Himilcho Tapapi, Rufus, made it according to plan at his own expense and consecrated it."[752]

Somewhat later, around the year 35, a temple dedicated to Ceres Augusta was added to the theatre, placed at the top of the *cavea* and perpendicular to the stage. Though the building was officially dedicated by the proconsul Gaius Rubellius Blandus, the temple was financed by a local benefactress named Suphunibal, wife of Annobal Russo. The monumental, twelve-meter-long inscription (IRT 269) running along the front of the theatre-temple proclaims her *ornatrix pat*[*ria*]*e*, though in slightly smaller and more cramped lettering than either the goddess or the governor. This Lepcitan title again appears at the end of the first century, also from the theatre. Tiberius Claudius Sestius, priest, *sufes* and *amator concordiae*, was awarded the exceptional honour of wearing the *latus clavus* by the city – in this case a local honour expressed in Roman terminology, although the exact nature of Sestius' achievements remain unclear.[753] To commemorate the occasion, an altar and a monumental inscription along the parapet of the orchestra were erected in 92 A.D., each with similar texts (IRT 318 and 347). The octagonal altar features both Neo-Punic and Latin texts denoting Sestius as an "adorner of his fatherland". One of the last inscriptions to mention *ornator patriae* was found near the temple of Liber Pater on the Forum Vetus. A dedicatory panel of modest dimensions, it can be dated to the late first or early second century. The plaque, set up by the marble-merchant Marcus Vipsanius Clemens, is dedicated to the *Dibus* [sic] *Lepcis Magnae* but also notes that it was placed "under the administration of Quintus Servilius Candidus, lover of his fatherland, lover of the

[752] IRT 321/IPT 24a (=Labdah 16), translations (with small adjustments): Wilson 2012: 279–280.
[753] See Pflaum 1968: 215, who notes a similar honour being awarded in Thubursicu Numidarum (ILAlg-01-1290).

citizens, adorner of his fatherland" (*sub cura Q(uinti) Seruili Candidi amatoris patriae amatoris civium ornatoris* [*patriae*]).[754]

With a single attested exception, the title *ornator patriae* is unique to Lepcis Magna.[755] The early dating too is remarkable, given that *amor patriae* did not become a common feature of the epigraphic cultures of North Africa until the late second century. But perhaps the most important feature is that these dedications were not set up by the city council or the civic institutions of Lepcis Magna, but rather by the benefactors themselves. Annobal Rufus, Suphunibal and Tiberius Claudius Sestius were all three responsible for their respective dedications including, we may presume, the wording. It is possible that *ornator patriae* was a title claimed by these individuals, with or without agreement of the city council of Lepcis. Yet circumstantial evidence suggests that this title was awarded, rather than claimed. Firstly, Annobal Rufus financed the so-called Punic Market several years before his theatre, yet the building dedications makes no mention of *ornator patriae*.[756] If the title was simply claimed, we would expect it to appear either in the Punic Market inscription, or in building dedications set up by contemporaries. Furthermore, honorific titles were usually awarded by civic institutions. We have copious evidence for the practice from the Greek cities in Asia Minor and – of a much later date – in Lepcis Magna too.[757] It is possible – but can't be definitively proven – that Annobal Rufus, as one of the most prominent early benefactors of the city, was awarded the title for his lavish building schemes in the years between the construction of the market and the theatre.

With a title such as *ornator patriae* the link to munificence and euergetism is an obvious one, particularly when attached to privately financed monuments. The dedications of Tiberius Claudius Sestius and Quintus Servilius Candidus, however, make no mention of any kind of euergetic activity.[758] The full context of these dedications is lost to us. Although *ornator patriae* may have referred to a wider range of services rendered to the community, it is equally possible that the link between both men and munificence may have been clear to contemporaries. It is furthermore noteworthy (if not particularly surprising) that all those awarded with the titles *ornator patriae* were

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[754] IRT 275, translation by Reynolds & Ward-Perkins 2009. See also IRT 698, a second- or third-century dedication to a husband by his wife, a later example and containing the phrase *[o]rnator simul mortalitati*. The text is however very fragmented and the precise context of the phrase is unclear.

[755] A second- or early-third-century dedication from Gigthis honours a local benefactor as *ornator patriae*, CIL VIII 22743 = ILTun 44.

[756] IRT 319.

[757] *Asia Minor*: Zuiderhoek 2009: 117–133; Heller 2017. *Lepcis Magna*: see IRT 601a-c, which records the honours awarded to the benefactor Plautius Lupus, in which Lupus is praised by local decurions and acclaimed with titles such as *optimus ordinis nostri vir*.

[758] Furthermore, in a set of dedications commemorating Candidus' financing of Lepcis Magna's new aqueduct – euergetic activity *par excellence* – the title is equally missing. See IRT 357, 358, 359. These dedications were set up in the year 120 and likely post-date both the dedication by Marcus Vipsanius Clemens and the awarding of colonial status to the city. If so, this might form an explanation for the title's absence in the aqueduct inscription, given that *ornator patriae* seems to disappear from the epigraphic record after Lepcis adopts a colonial charter.

members of the upper echelons of Lepcis' elite.[759] Roman officials involved in building activity were not awarded with the same or similar honorifics.[760]

The title *ornator patriae* – as well as the *amator concordiae* discussed earlier in this chapter – are usually regarded as traditional Punic titles.[761] Others have argued that they are Greco-Roman in origin, given the similarity with other expressions of civic love and patriotism in Hellenistic and imperial Italian dedications, as well as the supposedly Latin structure of the Neo-Punic dedications.[762] I would argue that instead of having either an exclusively Punic or an exclusively Greco-Roman origin, titles such as *ornator patriae* are more likely to have come into being as a local Lepcitan response to a new cultural stimulus to commemorate powerful individuals with honorific titles in politics. Lepcis Magna saw a host of new honorific statues and inscriptions being erected around the turn of the first century. The linguistic structure of official imperial titles and Latin epigraphic formulae more generally may have had its effect on local practices. In the case of Annobal Rufus in particular, the position of the local titles in the inscriptions seems to act as a mirror image of the imperial titles of Augustus. Although I do not wish to suggest that there is any direct correlation between imperial titles and local honorifics, the Latin epigraphic conventions may have spurred the creation of local variants.

We are on firmer ground in stating that Lepcis grew dramatically in the early first century and saw a proliferation of monumental building activities, including the aforementioned theatre, the Forum Vetus, the Punic Market, the Chalcidium and a monumental arch. Though the wealth and influence of individuals such as Annobal Rufus were perhaps not new, they were expressed in a new cultural idiom: monumental building activity after a Roman model. The city council and other representative bodies within Lepcis responded in the political sphere by employing a new honorific idiom, also following a Roman model. Titles such as *ornator patriae* expressed local ideals and expectations of civic commitment, awarded to exceptional local patrons and reflecting local civic identity. The emphasis is on the close bond between the powerful honorand and their service to the *patria*. Annobal Rufus, Suphunibal, Tiberius Claudius Sestius and Quintus Servilius Candidus all seem to have stood out from the remainder of the city's elite through their influence, wealth and building activity. The outsized position of some members of the elite, who played a dominant role in civic politics and significantly altered the civic landscape, could more easily be legitimated if presented as an act of civic commitment rather than of an expression of personal ambition.

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[759] Annobal Rufus was a member of the Tapapii, a highly influential local family which is well represented in Lepcis' epigraphic record (see for example Labdah N14, IRT 273, IRT 341); Tiberius Claudius Sestius is not only honoured for the exceptional right to wear a toga with *latus clavus* but also lauded for his illustrious local ancestry; the wealth of Quintus Servilius Candidus is underlined by his financing of an aqueduct (IRT 357, 358, 359). Less is known of Subhunipal, but her financing of the Ceres temple through her own funds and the involvement of the governor as dedicator once again suggests that she and her husband belonged to a particularly prominent subset of Lepcis' elite.

[760] See for example IRT 308, an arch dedicated to Augusta Salutaris by the Roman governor Caius Vibius Marsus.

[761] Levi della Vida 1949: 405–406; Lepelley 1981: 348 n.63; Mattingly 1987: 74; Wilson 2012: 299.

[762] *Greco-Roman origin*: Giardina 1988: 67–78. We know of at least one important Italian family active in the city (the Fulvii), though the honorific titles seem to be employed for benefactors of Punic/African extraction. A Greek-speaking community is attested from the second century onwards and only in a religious context, though this does not necessarily preclude their earlier involvement in Lepcitan politics (see the Greek dedications from the Serapeum, Di Vita et al. 2003: 271–285). *Latin construct*: Amadasi Guzzo 1988.

It is interesting that we find these titles particularly well-represented in the theatre space. The Forum Vetus was the location of the city's major cults – including the imperial cult – and a host of dedications to the emperor. The theatre of Leptis on the other hand provided more space for elite self-representation, not only in the form of dedications to members of the local elite but also in the form of elite-sponsored games. Annobal Rufus, Suphunibal and Tiberius Claudius Sestius commemorated their benefactions and their titles in a location that was not only associated with elite display, but also with interaction with the wider community. We should not underestimate the legitimising role of these dedications in such a prominent location. In the theatre, Lepcitans of all ranks gathered to enjoy spectacles and festive events, surrounded by expressions of civic commitment by several of the most prominent members of the city's elite from across the first century. It is exactly in this setting that *patria* gained a more explicit meaning as a shared sense of community, and the legitimation of the exalted position of a select few within that shared community was most effective.

The title *ornator patriae* is last attested around the turn of the second century, more or less coinciding with Lepcis' rise to colonial status in 109. As with *amator concordiae*, it is tempting to see a correlation between the two, even if there is no conclusive evidence. As large-scale building projects became rarer towards the end of the first century and the city officially adopted the colonial charter and Roman magistracies, the appeal of this native title may have waned. Nevertheless, we still find echoes of the same concept in later dedications. The priest and *duumvir* Gaius Flavius Pudens from Sabratha received the exceptional honour of a *quadriga* for his own benefactions and those of his father, Flavius Tullius.[763] The city council notes of Tullius that he "adorned his country" (*patriam suam exornavit*) with "many liberalities" (*multas liberalitates*), including an aqueduct and several lavishly decorated fountains. Similar wording was used in the dedications to the benefactress Annia Aelia Restituta from Calama, praised "because of the exceptional liberality to her fellow-citizens, she adorned her fatherland with a theatre of her own money" (*ob egregiam in* [*s*]*uos cives libera*[*l*]*itatem theatro pecunia sua exornanda*[*e pat*]*riae*).[764] These dedications suggest that the association between elite munificence and adornment of the *patria* was not an isolated Lepcitan phenomenon. The differences between the wording and the date of these dedications does, however, point to differing epigraphic traditions. As argued, the specific circumstances of Lepcis Magna at the turn of the first century – adapting to the conventions of the Latin epigraphic tradition and going through a process of civic monumentalisation – may have stood at the genesis of the title *ornator patriae*. Other North African communities, where efforts towards monumentalisation generally occurred at a later date and within a cultural setting that was much more familiar with the conventions of Latin epigraphy, responded through a different idiom.

[763] IRT 117.

[764] CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902.

4.5.1. – Loving the fatherland[765]

Although the notion of 'adorning' the fatherland was mostly – but not completely – limited to Lepcis Magna, the idea of 'loving' the fatherland finds much broader purchase in our epigraphic sources. Some 35 dedications from nineteen communities praise civic love in members of the local elite, from literal expressions of love and affection to praising commitment to the *patria* in more general terms.[766] Some dedications make an explicit link between *amor patriae* and munificence which led Le Roux to conclude that "[p]atriotisme et évergétisme sont associés et indissociables".[767] Drawing on parallels with Greek epigraphy, Le Roux mostly focuses on the munificent aspect of *amor patriae*, seeing it as a way for benefactors to present themselves (or be presented by the city council) as defenders of the community in times of communal crisis.[768] Le Roux is right in emphasizing the link between *amor patriae* and munificence, but his argument can be further expanded and nuanced. *Amor patriae* could include a wider variety of services to the community and, I would argue, is closely related to issues of consent and legitimation.

City councils and other civic bodies often praise *amor patriae* and munificence in the same honorific inscription. Yet, like *ornator patriae*, some dedications give reason to suspect a broader meaning. An early-third-century dedication from Dougga, set up by the city council for Caius Sedius Africanus, praises Africanus "for his outstanding munificence and his love for his country, which was demonstrated by numerous and brilliant proofs" (*ob insignem m*[*uni*]*ficentiam eius et am*[*o*]*rem in patriam mul*[*tis*] *ac magnis documentis declaratum*).[769] In the case of Africanus, *amor patriae* is clearly associated with munificence, but the use of the differentiating *et* suggests that Africanus' *amor patriae* stretched beyond generosity. Unfortunately, no further offices or benefactions are mentioned. A second dedication from Dougga, set up for an unknown equestrian in 205/206, likewise distinguishes between affection and munificence. The unknown equestrian is honoured "for his outstanding love for his fellow-citizens and his benevolence towards his country" ([*ob exi*]*mium amorem* [*in ci*]*ves et in patriam* [*bon*]*itatem*). The inscription notes that he is an "exemplary citizen and patron" (*civi et patro*[*no exemp*]*lario*), and a "good citizen" (*boni civis*).[770]

[765] As with the administrative virtue *innocentia*, I come to a similar reading here as Dawson 2016: 367–399. Dawson, however, places emphasis on the lengthy Latin literary tradition of aristocratic love and affection in social relationships. My reading of the dedications is slightly different in its political implications and consequences, see below.

[766] CIL VIII 33 (p.922) = CIL VIII 34 = CIL VIII 11038 = CIL VIII 22731; CIL VIII 210 (p.925, 2353) = CIL VIII 11299 = D 5570 = Saastamoinen 541 = Saastamoinen 680; CIL VIII 1887; CIL VII 5356 = CIL VIII 17494 = ILAlg-01, 283; CIL VIII 5366 = ILAlg-01, 287 = AE 2012, +1902; CIL VIII 5530 = CIL VIII 18864 = D 2956 = ILAlg-02-02, 4722 = CLENuovo p.89 = CLEAfr-02, 226; CIL VIII 11810 (p.2372) = ILPBardo 102 = ILTun 527 = AE 1888, 101; CIL VIII 11814 (p.2372); CIL VIII 14334 = CIL VIII 25428 = ILTun 1190; CIL VIII 15454 = CIL VIII 26270 = D 1334 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app 3 = Uchi-02, 69 = AE 1951, +81 = AE 2002, +1679; CIL VIII 15880 = ILTun 1593; CIL VIII 22856; CIL VIII 26271 = Uchi-02, 72; CIL VIII 26582 = ILTun 1424 = Dougga 70 = D 9018 = AE 1911, 76 = AE 1957, +255; CIL VIII 26622 = ILTun 1437 = Dougga 56 = Bergemann 88; CIL VIII 26630 = ILTun 1441; AE 2012, 1886; BCTH-1893-162 (2); BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ILAfr 276 = AE 1914, 57 = AE 1923, +106; ILAfr 570 = Dougga 84 = AE 1914, 183; ILAlg-01, 1296 = AE 1917/18, +26 = AE 1917/18, 35; ILAlg-01, 2145 = AE 1907, 234 = AE 1919, 37; ILAlg-02-02, 4661; ILAlg-02-02, 4729 = CLEAfr-01, p.59 = CLEAfr-02, 108; ILAlg-02-03, 7949 = ILAlg-02-03, 7950 = Saastamoinen 987; ILTun 574 = AE 1949, 110; IRT 132; IRT 55; IRT 564; IRT 568; IRT 578; IRT 603; IRT 95; IRT 979.

[767] Le Roux 2002: 147.

[768] Le Roux 2002: 149–154. Note however the criticism of Dawson 2016: 383–399, who argues that Le Roux places too much emphasis on both munificence and moments of communal crisis.

[769] ILAfr 570 = Dougga 84 = AE 1914, 183.

[770] CIL VIII 26622 = ILTun 1437 = Dougga 56 = Bergemann 88.

Repeatedly, the honorand's roles as patron and citizen are presented as closely affiliated but nevertheless distinct. In the reciprocity expressed by the city council (*ob amoris mutui memoriam sempiternam*), too, *amor* is set slightly apart from the unilateral *munificentia*. Outside of Dougga the roles of benefactor and citizen are equally differentiated. The equestrian priest Marcus Cornelius Fronto Cornelianus received a posthumous *biga* from the city council and the people of Madauros.[771] The motivation behind the exceptional honour was "because of his exceptional love and the abundance of grain he bestowed in time of scarcity" (*o*[*b in*]*signem in se amorem et frumenti copiam t*[*emp*]*ore inopiae sibi largiter*). Although the generosity shown to his fellow-citizens was surely understood to be prompted by Cornelianus' civic love, the dedicators nevertheless felt it necessary to differentiate benefactions and *amor patriae*. Where *munificentia* and *liberalitas* were directly linked to acts of munificence, *amor patriae* appears to have been intended to express a slightly different message, dealing with the honorand's good intentions and commitment towards the community.

In other cases, the references to munificence are left out altogether, for example in a dedication to a former *duumvir* from Mactar.[772] The dedication was set up by the city's *curiae*, rather than by the city council. The *duumvir* is praised "for his exceptional blamelessness and love for the community" (*ob* [*singulare?*]*m inno*[*centia*]*m et* [*erga*] *rem p*[*ublica*]*m amorem*). A last example is the decurion Lucius Attius Exoratus, who was awarded a statue by the *ordo* of Uchi Maius "because of his exceptional love for his country and his unpretentious life" (*ob singularem amorem in patriam et simplicem vitam*). In both cases, the use of *et* separates *amor patriae* from other forms of normative language. *Amor patriae* may well have referred to munificent deeds in both dedications, and to contemporaries the relation may have been obvious. However, I think it is important to note here that the language of *amor patriae* leaves these conclusions implicit, in a similar way that praising a honorand for his or her *merita* left the exact nature of the services rendered to the community implicit. *Amor patriae* was broad enough to incorporate a variety of laudable activities, stressing sentiment and intent rather than particular benefactions or services.

The question rises why city councils and other civic institutions would be interested in stressing zeal, sincerity or civic commitment above other, more direct virtues. A first answer lies in the sense of a shared *patria*. Throughout this chapter, I have cited Greek sources on both civic strife and personal attachment to one's native community. Hypothetically, it could be argued that such civic ethos was unique to the Greek world. However, there can be no doubt that it existed in a similar manner in African communities.[773] Epigraphic sources strongly imply that North African communities did envision themselves as distinct civic entities. As we have seen above, clauses underlining the communal nature of public honours abound in North African inscriptions. We already saw the early existence of a notion of *patria* in Lepcitan dedications, but later examples are equally abundant. In Gigthis, a dedication to a local benefactor was set up "by demand of the people and with unanimous support from the order of decurions" (*expostulante populo consensu decurionum ordo*); a

[771] ILAlg-01, 2145 = AE 1907, 234 = AE 1919, 37.
[772] CIL VIII 11814.
[773] See Le Roux 2002: 159, who also compares the civic ethos of North African cities to the Greek world.

magistrate from Mactar received a dedication by the "ordo and the people of Mactar" ([*ordo populusq(ue) M*]*act(aritanus)*); a local benefactor from Sabratha was honoured by his "fellow-citizens" ([*c*]*ives*).[774] Beyond the epigraphic evidence, literary sources also refer to the affection the civic elite could feel for their native city. In his *Apologia*, Apuleius mentions that his father fulfilled all the magistracies in his native Madauros while he too remains a member of the city council, despite his fame and travels.[775] Even men who attained high-ranking positions in the imperial administration kept close ties to their native cities, such as for example the praetorian prefect Marcus Attius Cornelianus from Uchi Maius.[776]

Within the context of civic commitment and devotion, *amor patriae* becomes a call for cohesion within the civic community, both closely tying powerful members of the elite to their communities and simultaneously legitimising their benefactions or powerful positions. Unlike *liberalitas* or *innocentia*, which tied the honorand to a specific type of idealized elite behaviour, the discourse of *amor patriae* presented individual members of the elite as model citizens, transcending specific virtues. It is likely from this overarching meaning that the honorific not only drew its popularity across North Africa, but also its potential. By praising civic love, the African city councils stressed the emotional commitment of the honorands to the community; honorands that could potentially far outstrip the average decurion in wealth and influence. *Amor patriae* presented elite motives in seeking office or erecting monuments as noble and disinterested, motivated by the common good rather than by self-aggrandizement, prestige or financial gain. This was far from empty rhetoric. We should not be too cynical about the importance attached to civic commitment by members of the elite. I already pointed to the words of Apuleius, but it also finds reflection in the epigraphic record. One prominent example is the large number of dedications set up to the *genii* of various communities, from Lepcis Magna to Cirta.[777] Although not every dedication records or preserves the name of the dedicator, the dedications to local *genii* that do were often set up by members of the local elite. Erecting statues to the *genius* of the community expressed a wish for the continued well-being and success of that community. While such dedications undoubtedly had their function in civic politics, claiming a close connection between the dedicator and the community, this nevertheless suggests that such a connection was considered important. Nor should we be too cynical about the feelings of gratitude among dedicators: in the elite view at least, magistrates and monuments were essential features of 'proper' cities. Influential members of the local elite who were willing to shoulder the financial costs of office or the construction of temples, arches and porticoes provided a tangible boon to their city. This highlights an important feature of *amor patriae*: to be praised for *amor patriae* implied not only words but deeds. It is telling that in many cases *amor patriae* was seldomly praised in isolation but usually combined with the description of the deeds involved –

[774] CIL VIII 22743 = ILTun 44; CIL VIII 11810 = ILPBardo 102 = ILTun 527 = AE 1888, 101; IRT 95.

[775] Apuleius, *Apologia*, 24.

[776] CIL VIII 15454 = CIL VIII 26270 = D 1334 = Uchi-01-Ugh-app 3 = Uchi-02, 69 = AE 1951, +81 = AE 2002, +1679; see also an unnamed third-century official from Mactar: CIL VIII 11810 = ILPBardo 102 = ILTun 527 = AE 1888, 101.

[777] CIL VIII 6947 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 478 = AntAfr-2007-87; CIL VIII 6948 (p.1847) = ILAlg-02-01, 479 = D 6858 = AntAfr-2007-85; CIL VIII 1206 = CIL VIII 14333 = CIL VIII 25417 = D 6782 (p 188) = AE 1908, +194 = ILPBardo 197 = ILTun 1181; IRT 282; IRT 280; IRT 281; CIL VIII 8202 = CIL VIII 19980 = ILAlg-02-03, 8523 = AE 2002, +1654; CIL VIII 2411 = CIL VIII 17913 = Timgad 13 = AE 1954, 147; Alumnus 90 = AE 2008, 1697; BCTH-1893-162 (2); AntAfr-1968-202; Timgad 8; CIL VIII 26473; CIL VIII 26495; CIL VIII 26496.

either explicitly or through the mention of *documenta* – or with other virtues that point towards the services of the honorand to the community. The implication is that civic love should be shown through actions motivated by a sincere desire for the common good.

The language of civic love in North African epigraphy was in other words not simply another rhetorical flourish to honour important members of the elite, but had a strong ideological significance. It legitimized existing power relationships in a community by representing the dominant position of (a small-subset of) the elite as compassionate attachment to the public good. It should be noted that some benefactors were praised for their *amor patriae* posthumously. This did not negate the value of the honour. The posthumous praise of civic love not only acted as an *exemplum* for future benefactors and magistrates to follow, it also added to the deceased's good standing in communal memory, which reflected positively on living family members and relations. In some cases family members are either directly mentioned in the inscription but even when not mentioned, later generations would profit from the favourable association.[778] The communal attachment associated with *amor patriae* is also evident in the way that civic institutions presented themselves within the text of the dedications. As with political virtues such as *innocentia*, the explicit inclusion of the *populus* or the *curiae* as dedicators next to the city council suggested a close bond between the honorand and the civic institutions of his or her native community. And, like virtues such as *liberalitas*, *munificentia* or *merita*, *amor patriae* softened hierarchical differences between honorands. On the one hand *amor patriae* emphasized civic commitment rather than personal prestige, suggesting the sincerity of the honorand's actions. On the other, the relative vagueness in the wording of *amor patriae* could indicate a wide range of services rendered to the community. The specific deeds of individual members of the elite could be singled out in the text of the inscription, but city councils usually opted for broad descriptions or pointed to *documenta*. By praising services rendered without tying the dedication to specifics, dedicators left room for future benefactors to follow (in deeds and motivation) the example set by the honorand.

Amor patriae was a negotiation strategy between powerful members of the elite, the city council and other layers of the community. The title pointed to the exemplary status of a few members of the elite and conferred that most coveted of elite-resources: honour. Contemporary literary sources suggest that civic love was an important elite quality. The sentiments expressed by Dio Chrysostomos may have found their reflections among some African provincials: "this is the one particular in which we rival practically all the world, namely, our having men competent both to act and to speak, and, what is the most important of all, men who love their country."[779] Apuleius, as noted above, points to the commitment of himself and his father to his native community, presented as an unequivocally positive thing. The relatively limited number of dedications bearing *amor patriae* in the epigraphic record suggests that only a handful of citizens in any given community were ever honoured for their civic love, although admittedly this does not take into account the oral praise in the *curia* and other public spaces that would have accompanied any major benefaction. By praising powerful local actors for their civic love, civic institutions not only set

[778] ILAlg-01, 2145 = AE 1907, 234 = AE 1919, 37; possibly CIL VIII 26271 = Uchi-02, 72, IRT 117.
[779] Dio Chrysostomos, *Orations* 48.4. Translation: Lamar Crosby 1946.

boundaries for good elite behaviour but also reinforced the importance of actively engaging with one's community through benefactions or other services. Promoting such behaviour was in the interest of both the city council and other civic institutions such as the *curiae*. It reminded members of the local elite of the honour that awaited those who kept their financial promises and spelled out the correct way to approach dedications: with sincerity and an eye towards the needs and honour of the community.

4.6. – Pious sons, caring fathers: elite (self-)representation

City councils and *curiae* have played a dominant role in this chapter and for good reason: the majority of dedications were erected with public funds. Yet there is a sizeable category of dedications which were set up by private dedicators. These dedications were placed in a public setting, typically with the approval of the city council, but the initiative behind the dedications seems to lie in the personal relations between dedicator and honorand. It is impossible to trace the original locations of a considerable number of these dedications, but the common appearance of *decreto decurionum* makes it fairly certain that the majority were intended for public display. Private dedications include a considerable variety of honorific titles and virtues. Yet unlike dedications set up with public funds, honorands in these cases had a particularly close relationship to the dedicator. Because of this increased influence over the text of their honours, private dedications offer a valuable insight in elite self-representation and self-legitimation in the civic landscape, with a particular focus on elite familial relationships. The focus in the following pages will shift to terms of address that clearly designate familial relationships, such as *pater*, *frater* or *filia*. Also included is the term *amicus* and similar terms that emphasize the close bond between two individuals. Although *amicus* could denote patron-client relationships based on material benefits, it is also occasionally used in an affectionate manner, as we shall see below. Throughout the follow paragraphs I will use the term 'familial honorifics' as a convenient shorthand, though the term is somewhat misleading: it should be kept in mind that 'familial honorifics' in this case were included in public dedications, sometimes set up with involvement from the city council, that could incorporate other honorifics as well.

Unsurprisingly, the most popular term of praise in privately-funded dedications was *pietas*, the quintessential familial virtue with its emphasis on the commitment and fidelity to one's parents or offspring. *Pietas* appears in some 29 dedications from eleven communities.[780] A dedication from Thamugadi set up by Claudia Marciana to her son, Marcus Papius Marcianus, praises his *pietas* and *obsequentia*.[781] Other examples include the dedication to Publius Marcius Felix from Bulla Regia, paid for by his son and dedicated "to a most pious father" (*patri piissimo*); and a dedication to the mother of the Servaei-brothers, who is praised as "a most pious mother, for her exceptional piety"

[780] CIL VIII 854 (p.1272); CIL VIII 1224 = CIL VIII 14388; CIL VIII 8340 = ILAlg-02-03, 7955 = D 9500 = AE 1913, 158 = AE 1914, +188 = AE 2013, +2143; CIL VIII 11037; CIL VIII 15969 = CLE 1903 = ILTun 1595; CIL VIII 22722; CIL VIII 22734 = CIL VIII 22735 = ILTun 40; Alumnus 90 = AE 2008, 1697; BCTH-1946/49-28 = AE 1946, 65; BCTH-1946/49-29 = AE 1946, 66; CNSATunisie-147-103; ILAfr 457 = AE 1916, 79; ILAlg-01, 2161; ILAlg-02-02, 4694; ILAlg-02-02, 4698; ILAlg-02-03, 7943 = AE 1913, 159; ILAlg-02-03, 7952; IRT 594; IRT 630; IRT 631; IRT 633; IRT 637; IRT 640; IRT 641; IRT 642; IRT 643; IRT 644; IRT 649; IRT 725.

[781] CIL VIII 8340 = ILAlg-02-03, 7955 = D 9500 = AE 1913, 158 = AE 1914, +188 = AE 2013, +2143.

(*matri piissim(a)e ob singularem pietatem*).[782] Within this context, two sets of dedications from Thamugadi stand out in particular. One Marcus Pompeius Quintianus was at some point adopted by Marcus Plotius Faustus, an influential equestrian benefactor of whom we shall hear more later in this chapter. Quintianus set up independent dedications to both his foster parents and his biological parents. Whereas Quintianus praises his adoptive parents-benefactors as *parens optima* and *parens carissimus*, he addresses his biological parents as *pater piissimus* and *mater piissima*. This careful use of *pietas*, coupled with the differing use of *parens* and *pater/mater*, seems to underline the strong association between the virtue and blood relations.

The consistent praise of familial *pietas* is in itself of interest. Within Roman literary sources *pietas* is traditionally associated with the filial sense of duty towards parents and other family members, besides piety towards the gods and loyalty towards the state.[783] *Pietas* is among the most often propagated values on imperial coinage, at least for the second and early third century.[784] Yet it rarely appears in contemporary imperial dedications. A prominent exception is a statue base dedicated by the people of Lepcis Magna to Septimius Severus which thanks him for his continued *pietas* in public and private (IRT 387), discussed in chapter two. Yet even here the dedication suggests a semi-familial interpretation of *pietas* through the emperor's special relationship to his *patria*. If we compare the use of *pietas* in North Africa with the epigraphic record of Italian cities, there are a number of further notable differences. Forbis found nineteen dedications mentioning *pietas* in her database of public inscriptions from across Italy. While African inscriptions usually feature *pietas* as the sole virtuous quality of the honorand, Italian inscriptions almost always pair *pietas* with other virtues.[785] And while the majority of Italian inscriptions feature *pietas* within the context of service towards and love for the community, African inscriptions feature *pietas* in relationship to family members of the dedicators.

This familial aspect of *pietas* does not stand alone. Other dedications, too, lay emphasis on the close relationships between honorand and dedicator, but turn to other honorifics. These include adjectives such as *optimus*[786] and *rarus*[787] and motivating clauses such as *ob merita*[788]. *Merita* on several occassions appears in relation to *amici*, such as in the dedication to Publius Sittius Velox, the *amicus* of an unknown dedicator who earned his honours *ob merita*.[789] In these cases, we may suspect some sort of patron-client relationship which earned the honorand his statue. Yet *merita* was not limited to munificence in this context. Fathers and mothers alike could be praised for their

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[782] ILAfr 457 = AE 1916, 79; CIL VIII 22722.

[783] Liegle 1932; Fears 1981: 831, 835, 841; Saller 1988.

[784] Noreña 2011a: 347, 349.

[785] Forbis 1996: 56–59.

[786] CIL VIII 7058 = CIL VIII 19427 = D 1001 = ILAlg-02-01, 644 = AE 1914, 247 = AE 1915, +67 = AE 1925, +65 = AE 2007, +106; CIL VIII 7112 = ILAlg-02-01, 690; CIL VIII 631 = CIL VIII 11783; CIL VIII 15872 = Legio-XXX, 35; CIL VIII 18907 = ILAlg-02-02, 4684 = AE 1890, 39; CIL VIII 26275 = Uchi-01-Ugh 14 = D 9405 = Uchi-02, 79 = AE 1908, 266 = AE 1951, +81; CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472; CIL VIII 17905; IRT 602; IRT 647; IRT 717.

[787] ILAlg-02-03, 7944 = AE 1914, 45 = AE 1914, 46; ILAlg-02-03, 7947 = AE 1920, 115 = AE 2013, +2143; ILAlg-02-03, 7952; CIL VIII 7978 = ILAlg-02-01, 29 = D 1147 = IDRE-02, 441; BCTH-1941/42-99 = AE 1941, 45; IRT 270; IRT 525; IRT 606.

[788] IRT 598; CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472; CIL VIII 9402; CIL VIII 7041 = CIL VIII 19423 = ILAlg-02-01, 626 = D 6857 = AntAfr-1998-98; CIL VIII 7112 = ILAlg-02-01, 690; CIL VIII 7118 = CIL VIII 19441 = ILAlg-02-01, 692; Dougga 37.

[789] CIL VIII 7118 = CIL VIII 19441 = ILAlg-02-01, 692.

merita by their children[790], perhaps consciously associating the relationship between parent and child with that of benefactor and community, or patron and client. The association remained rare however, and beyond a small number of potential patrons and clients, *merita* remained mostly confined to the sphere of public benefactions and commitments.

Optimus, too, is sometimes associated with personal patronage[791], but it is equally common in familial honorifics. A relatively early example comes from late-first- or early-second-century Cirta, where a priest and prefect is honoured as *pater optimus*.[792] Quintus Iulius Aquila, a centurion from Sicca Veneria who managed to attain equestrian rank, was praised by his brother as a *frater optimus*.[793] The last of the above three honorifics, *rarus*, seems to be more often associated with wives than close kin. Claudia Galitta, to name but one example, was praised by her husband as a *coniunx rarissima* in a dedication set up by decree of the city council of Rusicade.[794] The honorific was not limited to women only: although not strictly speaking familial dedications, the governor's son Quintus Sallustius Marcininus is nevertheless honoured as a *commilitio rarissimus,* while a pantomime dancer from Lepcis Magna is praised as an *amicus rarus*.[795] Beyond these oft-recurring expressions, North African elites also employed a far wider range of epithets to praise close kin. Some of these terms of praise are highly unique, appearing only rarely in the epigraphic record of North Africa. One young man was praised for his "admirable temperance" ([*admirabi*]*lis con*[*tinent*]*ia*); one woman acted as "a most reliable wife" (*uxor probatissima*); a priest had showed himself a "most honest friend" (*amicus simplicissimus*).[796]

The sheer variety of dedications praising virtues in members of the local elite should not blind us to their general similarities: whether someone was praised as a *mater piissima* or *frater rarissimus*, honorifics served to elevate private relationships in a public setting. The generic nature of the honorifics involved stands in contrast to the more strongly delineated honorifics we have seen thus far. Whereas benefactors and those active in civic politics could be praised by crediting them with virtues referring to specific spheres of action, this possibility was not open to the familial honorifics discussed above. *Pietas* is the only example of a virtue that seems more or less limited to the family sphere, rarely being applied to other social bonds. *Optimus*, *rarus* and references to *merita* on the other hand could be applied in a variety of different contexts. The association between *merita* and benefactions has already been noted. *Optimus* meanwhile might apply to emperors, communal patrons and citizens[797]; while *rarus* was suitable for governors and patrons as well.[798] The wide

[790] See CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472 or Dougga 37.

[791] Sometimes even within family networks: see for example the two statue bases to members of the Pacati family from third-century Gigthis, CIL VIII 22741; IlAfr 22 = AE 1915, 44.

[792] CIL VIII 7058 = CIL VIII 19427 = D 1001 = ILAlg-02-01, 644 = AE 1914, 247 = AE 1915, +67 = AE 1925, +65 = AE 2007, +106.

[793] CIL VIII 15872 = Legio-XXX, 35.

[794] CIL VIII 7978 = ILAlg-02-01, 29 = D 1147 = IDRE-02, 441.

[795] CIL VIII 9371 = D 1355; IRT 606.

[796] *Conintentia*: ILAlg-01, 2147; though the term is also applied once to a community, though in that case *continentia* seems to refer to the urban environs, see CIL VIII 1641 = D 6818 = ILPBardo 367 = AntAfr-08-01-321 = DEFTest 6 = AE 1991, 1685 = AE 2004, +1877. *Probatissimus*: CIL VIII 7080 = ILAlg-02-01, 695 = D 6855. *Simplicissimus*: CIL VIII 2408.

[797] ILAlg-02-03, 7803 = AE 1917/18, 70; ILAlg-01, 1283 = AE 1917/18, 60 = AE 1919, +46 = AE 1967, +536; CIL VIII 629.

[798] CIL VIII 8327 = ILAlg-02-03, 7911 = AfrRom-16-04-2136 = AE 2006, +1808; IRT 113.

semantic reach of such generic honorifics fitted well with the nature of the honours. The majority of individuals honoured with statues at public expense gained their honours as a result of concrete actions in civic life. Although many of the fathers, brothers and, occasionally, wives presented in this paragraph undoubtedly played an active role in civic life, such actions do not appear as the main motivation behind the honours. Although the normative language of these dedications differs from public dedications, it should be noted that few familial honorifics praise specific character traits of the honorand. Some private virtues such as *continentia* and *simplicitas* appear, but the majority of dedicators opted for more general markers of excellence such as *optimus* or *rarus*. It is noteworthy for example that no female honorand, at least within the confines of our database, is honoured for her *modestia*, *pudicitia* or *castitas*, and very few male honorands for their *virtus*, *moderatio* or other personal character traits.[799] Rather, honorands throughout various communities opted for terms that were strongly related to ideal family relationships, or drew from the vocabulary of public honorifics, particularly from the field of patronage. Rather than the personal character of the honorand, the relationship between honorand and dedicator seems to have been the central focus of these dedications. This is to some extent true for all honorific dedications, but whereas public honours are usually motivated by some reference to actions, these familial dedications seem to revolve much more around the relationship itself as the motivation for the honour.

A significant minority of dedications were set up by decree of the city council, implying not only a further degree of effort on part of the dedicator but also a public setting for the statue. Others do not bear the mark of city council involvement, but nevertheless seem to have been erected in a (semi-)public setting. This is certainly the case for the dedications to Marcus Plotius Faustus and Cornelia Valentina Tucciana, benefactors from Thamugadi, which stood in and around their market building.[800] For other statues the situation remains unclear. A further complication is the fact that some of the above dedications may well have been set up posthumously. One example is Lucius Cornelius Quietus, whose dedication not only notes that he was a *parens optimus* but also includes his testamentary munificence to the community.[801] Like other honours, however, the value of both statue and statue base stretched beyond the individual honorand. In the case of Quietus, it was his son – himself a priest and dedicator of the inscription – who profited from the favourable association with his father.

This brings us to the question as to why elite families would pour such expenditure in presenting their family relationships in an idealized fashion within a public setting. Beetham's work on legitimation once again offers a useful tool for analysis, though one that has been employed before with regard to local elites. Zuiderhoek argued on the basis of analogous material from the Greek cities of Asia Minor that honours and honorific language for civic elites were an attempt to safeguard existing hierarchies in the face of social mobility.[802] High mortality rates meant a high turnover of

[799] Forbis 1996: 85–88 notices a similar pattern for Italy where women are concerned, though I do not follow her explanation that the lack of personal virtues in dedications to female honorands is tied to the increasingly dire financial straits of Italian municipal councils.
[800] CIL VIII 2394; CIL VIII 2395; CIL VIII 2936; CIL VIII 2397; CIL VIII 2398; CIL VIII 2399; CIL VIII 17905; CIL VIII 17904.
[801] CIL VIII 26275 = Uchi-01-Ugh 14 = D 9405 = Uchi-02, 79 = AE 1908, 266 = AE 1951, +81.
[802] Zuiderhoek 2009: 133–146.

members in Greek city councils, even if new recruits from well-off middling classes were still far removed in status and wealth from the most important members of the *ordo*.[803] Honours and normative language – in particular so-called ancestor clauses – underlined the prestige and right to rule of the top layers of the civic elite over multiple generations.

There are a number of major differences between the Greek and the African material, first among them that Zuiderhoek's Greek dedications were in many cases set up with public funds. There is furthermore no direct equivalent to the long-winded ancestor clauses found in Greek honorific inscriptions in the African material. North African honorific inscriptions in general rarely include references to previous generations, and where they do the references seldomly stretch further than the honorand's parents.[804] And while Greek ancestors clauses place heavy emphasis on the civic commitment of previous generations, North African dedications by 'private' dedicators tend to have a relatively terse *cursus honorum* and rarely list the civic achievements of previous generations. However, I would argue that the familial honorifics of North Africa can be considered an analogous development to the Greek ancestor clauses. Although more research is necessary in the field of regional life expectancy patterns, the situation in North Africa is unlikely to have been dramatically different from the Greek world.[805] Even when taking into account that local municipal senates could fluctuate in size, we may hypothesize that African elites saw a relatively high turnover among their ranks. Despite their differences, the Greek ancestor clauses and the North African familial honorifics both place heavy emphasis on the familial relations of the honorand and both highlight those familial relations as a source of honour. North African familial honorifics in particular use honorifics such as *pietas*, *optimus* or *rarus* to draw further attention to and idealize the relation between dedicator and honorand. The inclusion of *decreto decurionum* was not only a bureaucratic obligation but also added a measure of truth-value to dedications that generally cite little in the way of munificence or civic achievements to justify their existence as public monuments. And although many African dedications contain only a relatively curt *cursus*, the included information makes clear the elite status of their honorands. Among the honorands are men with careers in the imperial administration or the military[806], *duumviri*[807] and a large number of priests[808]. Even when no direct

[803] Zuiderhoek 2009: 136.
[804] See IRT 117, also AE 1997, 1652 and 1653.
[805] On ancient demographics, see Hopkins 1966; Duncan-Jones 1990: 93–104; Scheidel 1999. For a succinct assessment of some of the main issues in using ancient demographic data, see Tacoma 2006: 163–174.
[806] CIL VIII 7058 = CIL VIII 19427 = D 1001 = ILAlg-02-01, 644 = AE 1914, 247 = AE 1915, +67 = AE 1925, +65 = AE 2007, +106; ILAlg-02-03, 7947 = AE 1920, 115 = AE 2013, +2143; CIL VIII 15872 = Legio-XXX, 35; CIL VIII 2394 (p.1693) = Alumnus 92.
[807] ILAfr 457 = AE 1916, 79; CIL VIII 9402 (p. 1984); CIL VIII 7112 (p. 1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 690; CIL VIII 7118 = CIL VIII 19441 = ILAlg-02-01, 692; ILAlg-02-03, 7943 = AE 1913, 159; ILAlg-02-03, 7947 = AE 1920, 115 = AE 2013, +2143; CIL VIII 631 = CIL VIII 11783.
[808] CIL VIII 7041 = CIL VIII 19423 = ILAlg-02-01, 626 = D 6857 = AntAfr-1998-98; CIL VIII 7058 = CIL VIII 19427 = D 1001 = ILAlg-02-01, 644 = AE 1914, 247 = AE 1915, +67 = AE 1925, +65 = AE 2007, +106; CIL VIII 7112 (p.1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 690; ILAlg-02-03, 7943 = AE 1913, 159; ILAlg-02-03, 7946 = Saastamoinen 240 = AE 1920, 114; ILAlg-02-03, 7947 = AE 1920, 115 = AE 2013, +2143; ILAlg-01, 2147; ILAfr 139 = ILPSbeitla 64 = AE 1917/18, 61; CIL VIII 2394 (p.1693) = Alumnus 92; CIL VIII 2395 (p.1693) = Alumnus 93; CIL VIII 2408; CIL VIII 17904 = D 2751 = AE 1889, 11; BCTH-1946/49-29 = AE 1946, 66; CIL VIII 10580 = CIL VIII 14472; CIL VIII 7080 (p.1848) = ILAlg-02-01, 695 = D 6855; CIL VIII 2396 = CIL VIII 17823 = Alumnus 98; CIL VIII 2397 = D 2752; CIL VIII 2398 (p.1693); BCTH-1941/42-99 = AE 1941, 45; IRT 598; IRT 602.

achievement or *cursus honorum* is mentioned, we can deduce the influential position of the honorands from their family relations such as husbands and fathers.[809]

In this chapter, I have emphasized the differences between members of what is usually termed the 'local elite', as well as the potential conflicts between the elite and the rest of the community. In both cases, the positions of relative newcomers and of dominant members of the elite needed legitimation, towards other members of the city's elite and the community as a whole. Through their direct involvement in civic politics and strong ties to their native community, the local civic stage mattered to these honorands. At first sight, many of the above honorands do not seem to have 'needed' the familial honours: with respectable careers in local politics or in the army, they had demonstrated their merit to the community. Some, like the Thamugadian benefactors Marcus Plotius Faustus and his wife Cornelia Valentina Tucciana, were also honoured with public dedications.[810] Dedications set up by family members may have offered more room for self-representation, of which Faustus and his wife are perhaps the most extreme example, as we shall see below. Yet the motivations behind familial honorifics cannot be limited to a desire for more self-representation on the part of the honorand. The statue base of Lucius Cornelius Quietus, cited earlier, alerted us to the possibility that some of the above dedications may have been set up posthumously. Individual motives therefore remain a matter of conjecture, but we can place family honorifics in a wider perspective. The association between virtues and family roles (*pater piissimus*, *frater optimus*) enhanced elite standing by presenting elite family relations in a highly idealized light. In the case of dedications set up by direct family members, familial honorifics also emphasized closeness. Even in long-lived and healthy families, elites saw themselves faced with a number of problems, including the dispersal of fortunes over generations and the inability to retain important civic offices. Honorific language played its role in safeguarding the dominance of powerful families in the face of competition from other members of the elite. The underlining of family bonds in dedications stressed continued civic commitment over the generations, the persistence of existing power relationships and the legitimacy of these elite families at the heart of civic life. Illustrious fathers with lengthy careers were honoured in a public setting by their sons, who thereby underlined their own active participation in civic life. In this way, the honorific capital accrued by members of the previous generation could be exploited by the next. The very act of setting up a statue to a parent in itself brought honour upon the dedicator, who displayed his own *pietas* in the act. The same maximization of 'honour profits' can perhaps also be traced in the considerable number of dedications to women. Although some held priesthoods, these women were in general barred from the kind of honourable civic achievements that were praised in their male kin. Dedications to these women – praising them as outstanding wives and mothers – provided an acceptable avenue to exploit their otherwise latent honour potential in the public sphere. Male relatives of these female honorands are almost invariably included with name and *cursus honorum*, thereby in effect sharing in the honours.

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[809] See for example the (possibly) third-century honorand Servilia [...] from Gigthis, whose father and husband were both of equestrian rank.

[810] BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833.

Of course, we should not discount genuine emotional attachment or culturally-influenced expectations of appropriate parent-child or husband-wife behaviour. Yet we might equally imagine a decurion invoking the positive reputation of his father to further his own agenda. For an example we can again turn to Apuleius and his *Apologia*, where the orator remarks on the distinguished civic career of his father:

> *splendidissima colonia sumus, in qua colonia patrem habui loco principis duoviralem cunctis honoribus perfunctum, cuius ego locum in illa re publica, exinde ut participare curiam coepi, nequaquam degener pari, spero, honore et existimatione tueor.*
>
> “[W]e are a most distinguished colony, in which colony my father had the position of mayor in the emperor’s place, when he had held every office. I have maintained his position in that city from when I first began to be a member of the city council, not at all unworthily of him and, I hope, with equal honor and repute.”[811]

Apuleius employs this information explicitly as a defence against slander. Elsewhere in the *Apologia*, Apuleius employs the undignified behaviour of the daughter and wife of Herennius Rufinus as an avenue of attack against his opponents.[812] Although not quite as dramatic as the courtroom drama of the *Apologia*, many of the above dedications seem to be based on a similar conception of family-based honour, especially in relation to civic commitment. There are a number of dedications in which honours are shared between fathers and sons, or where familial honorifics are clearly connected to munificence or other activities in the community. An inscription from Sabratha (IRT 117), already mentioned earlier, records the erection of a *quadriga* to Caius Flavius Pudens. The inscription honours both father and son simultaneously, praising their benefactions to the city and implying that the *quadriga* was awarded to Pudens both for his own honourable behaviour and that of his father. A second example can be found in Dougga, where Caius Terentius Iulianus Sabinianus joined the city in dedicating a statue to his father, who is praised for his munificence to the city (*ob aquae curam pro meritis eius*) but also for his role as father (*pater carissimus*).[813] Similarly, one [...] Flavius Sempronianus from Cuicul is honoured for his lengthy civic career, his munificent actions during a grain crisis and his role as a *pater piissimus* in a dedication by his son.[814]

Familial honorifics existed in a much wider honorific framework, often in the same dedication. Nevertheless, they represent a different strand of normative language, separate from the praise of munificence or civic commitment. There is a noticeable overlap with the language of funerary epigraphy[815], and some statues may have been set up posthumously. But the value of familial honorifics was very much in the present. In the public spaces of numerous North African communities, elite families propagated their idealized family bonds. These families seem to have belonged to the higher ranks of the local elite and may have been eager to fortify their position from

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[811] Apuleius, *Apologia*, 24, translation Jones 2017.
[812] See for example *Apologia* 60, 76, 97-98.
[813] Dougga 37.
[814] ILAlg-02-03, 7943 = AE 1913, 159.
[815] For an overview of epithets in the funerary material from Britain and Spain, see Curchin 1982; Curchin 1983.

one generation to the next in the face of competition and demographic pressure. Naturally, familial honorifics were far from the only strategy of legitimation employed by these elite families. Yet the survival of the epigraphic material throws light on a wider ideological strategy of differentiation and idealization of elite relations that also found its expression in, for example, monumental building activity and the funeral sphere.

4.6.1. – Self-promotion in Thamugadi

Perhaps the most outspoken example of elite self-representation in an African city is not to be found among familial dedications, but in the form of a monumental market building in Thamugadi, which highlights the potential differences between elite communal representation and *self*-representation. When awarded public honours, members of the elite might foot the bill of the honorific statue, but we have little evidence to suggest that they also dictated the content of the accompanying inscription. Such an action would have undermined the value of the praise included and by extension the prestige of the public dedication. In other settings, however, members of the elite likely had greater freedom to directly formulate and influence epigraphic texts.

Both Marcus Plotius Faustus and his wife Cornelia Valentina Tucciana were important actors in the civic life of Thamugadi in the late second and early third century. Faustus completed the *tres militiae* of the equestrian order and acted as *flamen perpetuus*, a position also held by his wife Tucciana.[816] For their services to the community, the city of Thamugadi erected two statues to the couple by decree of the city council; though their original location is lost, presumably both statues stood in a representative place such as the forum.[817] Both Faustus and Tucciana are honoured in identical wording: "for his/her merit to his/her fellow-citizens and fatherland, and for his/her generosity" (*ob merita in cives patriamque et munificentiam eius*). Like other benefactors in the city, they are praised for their generosity and commitment to their community; the image is one of dutiful citizens who nevertheless do not particularly stand out among other members of the municipal elite. The public representation of the couple can be contrasted with their representation in a monumental market building they financed, the so-called Market of Sertius. Faustus and Tucciana erected the building on the eastern edge of the original urban plan of Thamugadi, facing the *decumanus*. Notably, the couple built the market on their own land with no official involvement from the city council. Such lavish building programs by private benefactors are rare in Thamugadi, and only appear from Severan times onwards.[818] As noted earlier in this chapter, Thamugadi funded most of its monumental building projects with communal funds, which would have made the market stand out even further.

The market served as a prime avenue for the self-representation and outright self-promotion of the couple; a personal forum of their own making. It is noteworthy that the personal monikers (*signa*) of both Faustus (Sertius) and Tucciana (Sertia) are referred to in many of the inscriptions in the

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[816] For the relationship of this office the imperial cult, see Fishwick 2002: 190–193. See also Witschel 2013: 95; Hemelrijk 2005: 139–144.
[817] BCTH-1896-285 = BCTH-1932/33-196; ZPE-69-216 = AE 1987, 1072 = AE 1992, 1833.
[818] Witschel 1995: 272; Gilhaus 2013: 26.

market, whereas they are absent from the official honours set up by the city council. The main entrance of the structure was flanked by two statue bases of Faustus and Tucciana.[819] Both statue bases mirror each other in length and composition, including the names of the dedicators: while the dedication to Faustus was set up by "*Plotius Thalus et Plotia Faustiana, filia eius*", the dedication to Tucciana reads "[*P*]*loti*[*a Fa*]*ustiana et Plotius Thalus, pater eius*". Plotius Thallus was a freedman and client of the Sertii. Both inscriptions mention the virtues of the Sertii as patrons, one praising Faustus as a "most distinguished patron" (*patronus praestantissimus*), the other lauding Tucciana as "most benign patron" (*patrona benignissima*). The Sertii are the only individuals to whom these terms of praise are applied in the epigraphic record of Thamugadi. In conjunction with the mirroring of the names of the dedicators, this suggests that the wording of the texts was carefully chosen. In the interior plaza of the market, six more statues of the couple were found, once again divided into pairs. On the interior side of the entrance, mirroring the two statues on the exterior, stood a second pair of statues dedicated by Faustus to himself and his wife; although the inscriptions contain no superlative personal virtues they do make mention of the couple's attachment to their *patria*.[820] A third pair of statues – both of Tucciana – stood opposite one another at the edges of the plaza, set up by Faustus and the adopted son of the couple who was mentioned above, Marcus Pompeius Quintianus.[821] In the inscriptions Tucciana is lauded as a "most missed wife" (*coniunx desiderantissima*) and as "very good parent" (*parens optimus*). The last pair of statues – both of Faustus – stood along the central axis of the building, in a prominent place along the front of the row of columns separating the plaza from the exedra-like structure at the back of the complex. The two dedications were set up by the freedman Thallus, who lauds Faustus' role as a patron (*patronus benignissimus*), and by Quintianus, praising Sertius as a beloved parent (*parens carissimus*).[822]

Whereas the dedications to Faustus and Tucciana cast them in the roles of citizens and benefactors, the Market of Sertius puts a far wider array of identities on display. In addition to being good citizens and benefactors, the couple are also represented as parents, priests, patrons, spouses and officers in the imperial army (in the case of Faustus).[823] Through virtues, the exemplary nature of each of these roles is highlighted. The variety present in the inscriptions would undoubtedly have been replicated in the (now missing) statues, which may have depicted the couple in various guises, highlighting their offices and relations. We might expect some influence from Faustus on the wording in the dedications by his son and freedman. Yet even in such a blatantly self-promoting monument, virtues were associated with relationships between honorand and dedicator, rather than claimed by the individuals seeking to promote themselves.

Gilhaus has called attention to the disproportionality behind the market: although it is usually presented as a gift to the city, the market was built on Faustus' own land (which would negate the

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[819] CIL VIII 2395, 2396; Boeswillwald 1905: 185–186.
[820] CIL VIII 2398, 2399; Boeswillwald 1905: 187–188.
[821] CIL VIII 2397, 17905; Boeswillwald 1905: 190–191; Zimmer 1992: 312–313.
[822] CIL VIII 2394, 17904; Boeswillwald 1905: 192–193; Zimmer 1992: 312–313. The use of *desiderantissimae* here and *bonae memoriae feminae* in CIL VIII 2398 suggest that Sertia passed away before the completion of the project. See also Boeswillwald 1905: 188.
[823] Hemelrijk 2015: 299.

need for approval of the city council) while the decoration revolves fully around the couple and their immediate family, with hardly a reference to the community.[824] The market highlighted the immense wealth of the Sertii, which was further underlined by their *domus*, the largest private residence in Thamugadi.[825] The couple also paid for the building or refurbishment of the large Capitoline temple, located in the south-east of the city.[826] Their great wealth, in other words, was inscribed onto Thamugadi's civic landscape in a way that was rivalled by only a few other families in the city's history. The Sertii did not operate in a vacuum. Thamugadi had several senatorial families, whose prestige and influence likely outstripped that of the Sertii. Few, however, adorned the city with monuments, a field in which equestrians like Faustus were much more active.[827] Building activity therefore formed an avenue through which Faustus could increase his prestige and standing within the community, especially given that relatively few benefactors appear to have been active in Thamugadi. Yet it also offered a stage for further acts of (self-)representation. The market dedication claims that "they built it for their fatherland" (*patriae siae* [sic] *fecerunt*).[828] As with the praise of *amor patriae* by the city council, the *patria* is here invoked by the benefactors themselves to present a building project that might potentially be regarded as an obvious act of self-aggrandizement as much as a service to their home city. The market in and of itself made a clear statement not only about the prestige and wealth of the Sertii, but also concerning their civic commitment. The statues erected by close kin offer little in the way of civic engagement, but they do underline the Sertii as model members of Thamugadi's elite, praised for their ideal qualities in a variety of roles. The community or city council does not feature as moral arbiter. Rather, both Sertius' freedman and his adopted son not only act as dedicators but themselves profit from their close connection to the Sertii. The tightly knit display of the virtuous familial relations of the Sertii was not necessarily in conflict with the dedications set up by decree of the city council. The fact that the city council erected public honours to Faustus and Tucciana in itself signals that the building activity of the couple was met with a positive response. But the Sertii presented themselves in their market in a way that clearly differed from that of the city council; normative language formed one of the ways in which such differences were expressed.

In the previous chapter, we saw how normative language set out expectations of good behaviour from imperial officials. The prescriptive nature of normative language has further come to the fore in this chapter, particularly with regard to local politics. This chapter has laid bare a poignant contradiction in the use of normative language within a public setting: whereas some dedications attempt to create distinction and differentiation, others employ a language of civic commitment and selflessness intended to foster unity and harmony. Throughout the last three chapters, we have drawn conclusions on the basis of civic dedications, often set up by public bodies. As a form of comparison, we will turn to a sizeable group of dedications by a very different societal group in North Africa, to see if some of these conclusions hold true for a non-civic setting as well.

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[824] Gilhaus 2013: 26–27.

[825] Boeswillwald 1905: 326–333; Gilhaus 2013: 26–27.

[826] Saastamoinen 488 = AE 1980, 956 = AE 2013, +2143.

[827] Witschel 1995: 282.

[828] D 5579 = Saastamoinen 489.

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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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"

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[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]

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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

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[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.

CONCLUSIONS

As we saw throughout the first chapter, the Roman imperial state – and those members of the social and cultural elite with close relations to the state – had a distinct vision on the rules and normative beliefs that made up legitimate power. The emperor was expected to effectively fulfil a number of roles, from successful military commander to conscientious statesman to generous benefactor. It goes without saying that no emperor ever managed to fulfil all of these various roles to perfection, particularly given that different audiences attached value to different aspects of imperial behaviour. Virtuous behaviour was both a distinct aspect of legitimate imperial rule and an overarching method of indicating that a given emperor fulfilled the requirements of legitimate power. In other words, an emperor praised for his *providentia* or *virtus* clearly displayed his skill as a military commander while an emperor who was lauded for his *nobilitas* and *humanitas* clearly fulfilled his role as an aristocrat among his fellow-senators. Naturally, the legitimacy of power was not solely based on character. But even though virtuous behaviour was in and of itself not a guarantee of power, it was nevertheless an essential element of the normative beliefs that formed the basis of legitimacy.

Legitimacy depends on consent; no form of power can be legitimate without some form of consent of those under its sway. Consent need not be expressed through voting or flag-waving, nor need it entail enthusiastic approval: each political system has its own forms of consent, unique to the power relationships within that system. Imperial coinage or edicts may propagate the emperor's honorific titles and virtues, but these cannot in and of themselves enforce legitimacy; they only offer persuasive iterations of the rules and normative beliefs of legitimate power in general, and more or less explicit claims on the current regime's ability to live up to these rules and normative beliefs. Through their literary value and the high societal standing of their authors, texts such as Seneca's *De Clementia* or Pliny's *Panegyricus* are powerful expressions of consent with an impact beyond the immediate relationship between Seneca or Pliny and their respective monarchs. At the same time these texts also attempted to mould the future behaviour of emperors by setting out desired patterns of behaviour, thereby shaping the normative beliefs on which legitimacy rested. The North African dedications – in the form of statue bases, building dedications, altars and more – have offered us a different perspective. Their authors were, generally speaking, not powerful political actors with close relations to the imperial court. Still, these dedications were freely set up and show great variety in the normative language they employed. This suggests that they can be meaningfully considered expressions of consent, although within the boundaries of a strongly hierarchical and exploitative Roman imperial system. It should be kept in mind that many dedications did not employ normative language in any way, beyond honorific elements propagated in officially sanctioned titles such as *Pius Felix*. Yet those dedicators that did opt to include additional elements in their inscriptions offer us a window – no matter how limited and incomplete – on to provincial responses to both imperial and local claims to legitimacy.

In the past few chapters we have seen emperors, officials, benefactors and magistrates praised with rich and varied normative language. I have aimed to contextualise this language in distinct ways,

pointing to peculiarities and features unique to their specific circumstances. In the introduction of this thesis, I posed three questions: To what extent did key imperial virtues and other forms of legitimising normative language find their way into provincial dedications? Did normative language play a role in the legitimation of other power relationships within provincial communities? And what does the appearance of certain normative language in dedications tell us about the legitimation of power relationships and the ideals of power in provincial communities? The epigraphic material has provided us with a sometimes bewildering or disparate number of trends, exceptions, unique quirks and commonplace features. In an attempt to distil some measure of order from this seeming chaos, I propose to contextualise the inherent contradictions and uncertainties that have popped up throughout the previous chapters, looking for contact between various layers of power and rhetoric. I will approach this on the basis of four paradoxes: normative language is both flexible and bound by traditions; it is both reactive and prescriptive; it closely follows imperial trends and yet ignores common features of imperial ideology; it is ostensibly intended for the honorand yet often more telling of the dedicator.

6.1. – Authoritative examples

In both a civilian and a military context we saw clear signs of epigraphic trends, either across the region or within a single community. The appearance of *fortissimus felicissimus* in dedications to Septimius Severus across North Africa is an example of the former, the propagation of purely local titles such as *ornator patriae* in Lepcis Magna an example of the latter. Naturally, imperial honorifics travelled much more easily given the wide-ranging influence of the emperor and the imperial administration. Yet we saw equally wide-spread honorifics – *innocentia* in particular – employed to honour both imperial officials and local magistrates. The latter use in particular points to shared ideals of just and legitimate power that crop up across the province. Why some honorifics spread across the region while others appear only on rare occasions is a matter of speculation. Undoubtedly, some aspects of normative language were simply broad enough to cover a wide range of desirable behaviours, such as *ob merita*. Others reflect widely-held ideals of praiseworthy behaviour, such as imperial invincibility or *indulgentia*, or municipal *liberalitas* and *amor patriae*, which made them obvious choices for dedicators seeking an appropriate form of praise. Although it might be argued that panegyrists such as Pliny worked in a far more sophisticated rhetorical milieu than a member of the provincial elite, we find the same normative tradition of panegyric in North Africa, as we have seen in several of the speeches of Apuleius to imperial governors, or for that matter in the council deliberations on the honours of Plautius Lupus in Lepcis Magna. Literary and rhetorical culture facilitated the strong association between virtuous behaviour and legitimate power, and not just in connection with the emperor. Yet at the same time there remained distinct differences between epigraphic and literary cultures: whereas Apuleius (or Pliny, or Menander Rhetor) incorporated a striking range and variety of virtues and honorifics in his orations, epigraphic texts are usually far more limited in their wording. Beyond practical considerations such as the size and cost of the inscription, this may also reflect different rhetorical strategies of praise. In the case of the emperor or the imperial family, dedicators may have wished to stick closely to ideological concepts propagated by the regime, or else opted for virtues that were deemed appropriate to the context, for example an imperial benefaction. The repetition of certain aspects of normative language in dedications to governors, magistrates and benefactors may furthermore suggest the development of epigraphic 'genres' of praise. By consistently associating *innocentia* with good governance or *liberalitas*/*munificentia* with acts of munificence, both virtues became stock

elements in the praise of good governors or benefactors respectively, further entrenching their position in local epigraphic traditions.

The question of variety and flexibility is also tied to the authorship of the inscriptions. The precise dating of inscriptions is often uncertain which, coupled with the limited survival rate of epigraphic material, makes it difficult to create a detailed chronological overview. Given this limited information, it remains an open question to what extent the dedications by city councils and other civic organs influenced the dedications by private dedicators. Presumably the city council, as an authoritative civic institute, set a precedent within a community. And the city council may have turned to either imperial officials or documents (in the case of the emperor) or the honorand himself for additional information. Given the high costs of erecting statues or monuments, as well as the public setting of these inscriptions, we may safely assume that dedicators carefully chose the wording of their dedications. An outdated title, incorrect information in a *cursus honorum* or a word of praise that rang false: although not life-threatening, such blunders nevertheless could undermine the commemorative potential of the dedication – and have a negative impact on the status of the dedicator. Copying some of the wording employed by the city council or an imperial official may have been considered a safe bet for some dedicators.

At the same time, however, we also found copious examples of private dedicators employing unique or rare honorifics, from the veterans of Lambaesis erecting an altar to the *pietissimi* Geta and Caracalla to Plotius Thalus, freedman of the wealthy Sertius from Thamugadi, who praised his former master as *patronus praestantissimus*. Unique honorifics suggested sincerity by avoiding tired formulas and praising the honorand in a novel way. This not only reflected positively on the honorand, but also highlighted the dedicator's devotion or close relationship with the honorand. The honorific language offered the flexibility to include flourishes and variations that stressed the exceptionality of the honorand, without in most cases deviating too far from the precedent set elsewhere. As an added benefit, the dedicator could display his literary skill in finding a fitting form of praise for his honorand.

6.2. – Responses and wishes

Some dedications were erected as a direct response to interventions within the community, such as the dedications erected in response to imperial benefactions. From financially contributing to the building projects to grants of colonial rights, we have seen various examples of emperors interfering in the civic landscape of North Africa. The dedications recording these benefactions uniformly praise imperial *indulgentia*, irrespective of the type of benefaction. The choice for *indulgentia* was not a surprising one – particularly given its hierarchical associations – but as an honorific it appears to have been almost exclusively associated with imperial munificence. In the field of the local elite, we see an equivalent in the dedicators who are honoured for their *liberalitas* or *munificentia* after their benefactions. Perhaps this is only to be expected in the case of munificence, given that these dedications were often rooted in specific, concrete acts within the community.

Other dedications, however, take a more proactive approach. From the modest statue base set up by the Fulvii of Lepcis Magna to Augustus the *conservator* to the lavish dedications set up by the wealthy Marcus Caecilius Natalis in Cirta to the *virtus* and *indulgentia* of Caracalla and the *securitas* of the age: many if not most dedications to the emperors were erected independent of imperial

intervention within the community. In a similar fashion, the many dedications *pro salute* are expressions of loyalty, in the vast majority of cases set up independently from any imperial intervention. We have seen local magistrates promising statues *ob honorem* to the emperor or to deified concepts such as Pietas Augusta or Concordia Augusta, while members of the local elite could be honoured for a variety of services to the community without being tied to any one specific act.

In both cases, however, normative language set a standard of laudable behaviour within a given context, from emperor down to local benefactor. This is true even for the most reactive of dedications. Praising the emperor for his contributions to a local aqueduct may seem like little more than an formulaic acknowledgement after the fact, but it nevertheless gave expression to the idea that legitimate rulers should show *indulgentia*, that the individual emperor in question had admirably met this standard and that the community had profited from imperial virtue. Although honorific epigraphic language was at times formulaic and limited, it nevertheless spelled out normative beliefs of legitimate power and gave consent to existing power relationships by recognition of those normative beliefs in the current powerholders. Although this might seem a rather extravagant claim for texts that may have only been readable or even accessible to a small portion of the population, I would argue that normative language was not limited to statue bases and building dedications. Normative language features in orations, literature, cult, funerary epitaphs, law courts, honorific names and titles, coinage, imperial edicts and personal communications. Our honorific inscriptions are but one aspect of a much wider discourse. This is not to suggest that normative discourse was indistinguishable from medium to medium, but rather that these various media drew from an underlying cultural logic that was formed by, and in turn helped shape, existing power relationships.

This discourse was not only concerned with the emperor but also with local power relationships. Benefactors were lauded for their generosity, their merits or their civic love with a great variety of adjectives. Such language not only idealized the actions of the honorand, but also enticed future dedicators to contribute to the community. Or, in the explicit words of the city council of Lepcis Magna: “since behaviours of this kind ought to be rewarded so that others too could be stimulated to (give) the same pleasure”.[1031] This mechanism of attempting to set standards for ancient elite behaviour was not limited to the context of munificence, but was just as relevant – if not more so – for civic politics. By praising *innocentia* in exceptional magistrates, the *curiae* not only endorsed a general normative belief that magistrates were supposed to act according to the standards of *innocentia*, but also set out expectations of future behaviour from other magistrates.

Equally important to note is that the praise of virtues was far from static but susceptive to broader societal changes, particularly in the expectation of legitimate power and good governance. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the praise of governors. Throughout the imperial period, communities singled out specific virtues for praise in their governors – most notably *innocentia*, *iustitia* and a variety of virtues of mildmanneredness such as *moderatio* – to give voice to their hopes and expectations on gubernatorial governance. With the emergence of a more vocal culture of criticism in Late Antiquity however, these virtues gain a sharper political edge. Although there were clear and unequivocal power differences between the governor and his subjects, African

[1031] IRT 601b.

communities were now much more willing to elaborate on expected standards of character and behaviour in office for their governors. And again, it bears repeating that we find a similar system of thought in late antique oratory, literature and law, which makes epigraphic texts part of a much wider cultural phenomenon.

Whether intentional or not, dedicators took on the role of moral arbiters. After all, it was the dedicator who judged the honorand's deeds and character worthy of honours and who included specific points of praise to characterize the relationship between honorand and dedicator. The community (or private dedicator) showed itself to be a moral agent, capable of recognizing, judging and praising virtuous behaviour. This may in part explain the often detailed and precise normative vocabulary in public dedications which is so often lacking in private dedications, particularly to personal patrons. Given the closer and more equal relationship between civic institutions and powerful members of the community, public dedicators could more easily claim this role of moral arbiter, praising magistrates and benefactors for specific virtues and setting standards of behaviour. The power dynamic between clients and patrons – whether a freedman and his former master, or an officer and his governor – favoured a different, more generic type of praise.

The praise of virtues had an ancillary function in softening suggestions of strife, mostly in the relationship between the community and its most wealthy or influential members. Ancient elites attached great value to the preservation of *concordia*/*homonoia* within their community, which had practical as well as ideological reasons. Corruption, mismanagement, taxation, abuse of (judicial) power, encroachment upon public space and the domination of civic life by a small number of families: all were potential sources of communal unrest. Honorific language presented elite behaviour in office or in changing the civic landscape as wholly motivated by honourable desires: civic love, generosity, blameless service to the community. Specific deeds and actions were in a sense 'internalised' as the natural result of the elite honorand's superior character. But at the same time, such virtues were not solely the reserve of the elite upper crust. By praising *liberalitas* or *munificentia* in benefactors of strongly varying means, the city councils and other civic institutions presented all forms of euergetic activity as motivated by the same honourable incentive. The emphasis here is on the choices made in representation and public commemoration. For contemporaries, the differences between a theater-building Annia Aelia Resituta and a decurion who 'merely' erected a statue would have been clear. Nevertheless, by praising various benefactors for their generosity and honourable intent, city councils may have hoped to entice benefactors of various means to contribute to the community with the expectation of receiving public honours on a more or less equal footing.

6.3. – Following the court?

Dedications to the emperor or the imperial family appear to closely follow ideological concepts formulated in and around the court, while at the same time also appearing to ignore key virtues propagated on, for example, imperial coinage. The Severan honorific phrases *fortissimus felicissimus* and *super omnes retro principes* are a key example of the former. And although it is perhaps more indirect, private and public dedicators in Cuicul erected statues to the *pietas* of Antoninus Pius, the *concordia* of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius and the *virtus* of Commodus; all qualities closely related to each of these emperors in their public (self-)representation. The fact that imperial virtues

and titles in epigraphic texts shifted over the decades and centuries is in and of itself a sign of influence from Rome.

Whereas dedications to Roman officials, local magistrates and benefactors undeniably show signs of change between the second and fourth century, there is considerable consistency in the kinds of virtues praised. Both Severan and Constantinian governors were honoured for their *innocentia* and *iustitia* while magistrates from the early second to the late fourth century could be lauded for their *amor patriae*. The comparison with imperial dedications is striking. Even though we see similar ideas appear across centuries – the emperor as triumphant general in particular – the honorific phrases associated with these ideas differ markedly. Honorific epithets such as *fortissimus felicissimus* and praise-filled phrases such as *beatissima tempora* belong to clearly differentiated epochs of imperial rule and epigraphic rhetoric. Whereas the ideals and concepts associated with local power relationships remained fairly constant, those associated with imperial power shifted and changed over time. To explain some of these changes, we can point to the increasingly elevated position of the emperor within the state, to changes in imperial ideology and ideals of imperial power, or to late antique rhetorical culture that placed ever more emphasis on the recognition and praise of virtue. Yet the main point remains clear: honorifics and praise associated with the emperor changed between reigns and dynasties in a way that the honorifics associated with other powerholders did not. Although local epigraphic traditions weighed strongly in the choices dedicators made, they appear to have weighed less strongly in relation to the emperor. Imperial ideology, in other words, appears to have had some impact on provincial epigraphy.

Although dedicators across North Africa clearly responded to key elements of contemporary imperial ideology, they did not do so consistently. Many virtues and ethical qualities that appear regularly on imperial coinage are absent or only rarely appear in dedications. Some of this lack can be explained by the inclusion of honorific titles such as *Pius* or *Felix* within the imperial titulature, but this does not explain why virtues such as *providentia, aequitas* or *virtus* are so rarely praised, even when they are prominent on coinage and appear regularly in literary works praising the emperor. Part of the answer is to be found in the reactive nature of some dedications, responding to specific imperial interventions within the community by for example praising imperial generosity. As was noted above, however, many dedications to the emperor or imperial family were not necessarily set up as a response to imperial interventions. Under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, dedicators appear to closely follow imperial self-representation, not only in honorifics but also by underlining the Severan ideological notion of the imperial family as a harmonious unit in group dedications. An explanation for this phenomenon might be found in the prominent role of Roman imperial officials, particularly the Severan legate Quintus Anicius Faustus, who appears as a co-dedicator in dedications across North Africa. It is entirely plausible, though ultimately unprovable, that Faustus may have helped spread the title *fortissimus felicissimus*, directly or indirectly, through his involvement in the dedications. The title's appearance elsewhere in the empire, however, makes it clear that Faustus can only have been a contributing factor, as other forms of interactions with the imperial court and administration may also have provided avenues of dissemination. The expansion of municipal rights in North Africa under Septimius Severus, for example, brought many communities in fleeting contact with the court. It should also be kept in mind that Faustus was something of an anomaly. Other governors and legates are not nearly as prominent in our epigraphic record, although this need not imply that they were not consulted by provincials. Lastly we may

point to moments of political crisis, such as in the months after the murder of Geta, when large numbers of dedicators throughout the empire altered old epigraphic texts to reflect new political realities. We can suspect that in such moments of crisis, many provincials closely followed officially sanctioned honorifics to display their loyalty to the new regime.

There is no one definite answer to the question as to why a given dedicator opted to praise the emperor as *invictissimus* over *pietissimus*, or *fortissimus* over *providentissimus*. Such choices might depend on a host of factors, from personal preferences, to the response to an act of imperial munificence, to drastic political changes in the capital, to a dedication to the emperor set up by the city council in the year before. But although it is futile to speculate over the motivations of individual dedications, a more general look reveals that dedicators generally responded to important ideological features of a given reign without necessarily adopting a wide lexicon of praise for emperors – at least not until the early fourth century. This implies an aspect of choice in representation. The average African decurion may perhaps not have wielded quite as wide a normative lexicon as Pliny, but the epigraphic evidence makes clear that provincial dedicators were familiar with a wide range of honorific expressions. Despite this familiarity, key imperial virtues barely feature in the epigraphic record, while dedications repeatedly include imperial *concordia*, *indulgentia* or martial honorifics, among others. We could also mention the many dedications erected *pro salute* in this context, which profess a clear concern with imperial well-being and thus loyalty to the empire. Societal expectations and epigraphic precedents of course played their part in these choices. It nevertheless remains fair to conclude that provincials appear to have emphasized some features of imperial ideology over others. Occasionally, these choices can defy easy explanation, such as the lack of *fortissimus felicissimus* in military circles. Yet in general, they betray a concern with harmony, well-being, munificence and imperial triumph: themes that reflect the outlook of the provincial elite, concerned with stability and continued prosperity. For provincial elite audiences at least, some of these stereotypical imperial roles appear to have been of a much higher priority than others. The emperor as a conscientious civic administrator, munificent patron and triumphant general reigned supreme in the provincial conception of legitimate imperial power.

Though in some cases the emperor may have been informed of the intention to erect a new statue or monument in his name, he can hardly be considered the main audience for these dedications. We should not discount the intrinsic motivations of dedicators in singling out values that appeared meaningful to them, particularly given the cost and effort involved in erecting statues to the imperial family or dedicating monuments in their name. Yet at the same time the dedicators – often city councils filled with members of the local elite, or otherwise wealthy private dedicators – sent out a clear message on the legitimacy of the current reigning emperor. As an act of both praise and consent, erecting a dedication lauding the virtues of the emperor conferred legitimacy on existing power structures from which local elites ultimately derived their own position and power.

6.4. – Virtues and self-representation

The fourth and last paradox again involves the relation between honorand and dedicator. I already argued for the dedicator's role as moral agent and arbiter, but normative language could also define dedicators in a more direct way. Lepcis Magna offers a number of prime examples of normative language serving to define local, communal identity. Whether claimed or awarded, titles such as *ornator patriae* or *amator concordiae* served to create a sense of community within Lepcis Magna,

specifically as a Punic community. When the city received municipal rights and took over Roman magistracies and other civic institutions, the titles disappeared. Normative language could also be employed to form a sense of communal identity through interactions with the imperial administration. Under the Severans, both public and private dedications stress the strong relationship between city and emperor, for example by praising imperial *pietas* towards Lepcis. Although ostensibly praising for the emperor, the dedication also strongly suggests that Lepcis Magna was a community with a unique and favoured connection to the imperial court. In the fourth century, when the city may have gone through something of a resurgence, civic institutions stepped to the foreground as moral arbiters, awarding or withholding honours to local governors and reinforcing the notion of Lepcis Magna as an active political community.

We find echoes of the same principle elsewhere in North Africa, by both private and public dedicators. Praising a patron as *benignissimus* or *dignissimus* stressed the hierarchical nature of the relationship between patron and client, but also suggested something of the uniquely plentiful benefactions the patron had (supposedly) shown his client. For communities, stressing *amor patriae* in wealthy and powerful benefactors likewise suggested civic commitment and a close bond between the honorand and his or her native community. Members of the civic elite seeking to be elected to office could promise statues to the virtues or well-being of the emperor, markers of their loyalty to the empire as well as their own moral standing. In each of these cases we find dedicators elevating their own position by ostensibly praising the virtues of others by both stressing their close bond with high-ranking individuals as well as by displaying themselves as worthy moral arbiters. The praise of virtues, and honours in general, inherently carried an aspect of self-representation. By awarding a statue or dedicating a monument, the dedicator publicly declared his or her relationship to the honorand, as well as giving important qualifiers to that relationship. This was not simply a question of self-aggrandizing on part of the dedicator: the praise of the honorand ultimately depended on the honour of the dedicator for it to have effect.

This element of self-representation could remain largely latent, but we have also seen clear examples of dedicators more explicitly propagating their relationship to the honorand. Prime examples are the many dedications to members of elite families, instigated by their relatives. These dedications gave eloquent expression to ideals of familial behaviour and placed members of the communal elite on a pedestal in both a literal and figurative sense, suggesting their exceptional character and by extension that of their relatives. Perhaps the most egregious example of such familial self-representation is the Market of Sertius in Thamugadi. The monument gives clear expression to the various roles of Sertius and his wife within the community and as model members of the elite, all through the lens of laudable virtues. On a more modest scale, Nonius Datus sought to commemorate his contribution to a major engineering project to a military audience through the key virtues of *patientia*, *virtus* and *spes*; a contribution that would likely have gone unmentioned on the large dedicatory inscription on the aqueduct itself.

6.5. – Vibrant rhetoric

Returning to our main questions, it should be clear by now that no singular answer can be given that holds true for every community across several centuries of Roman rule, particularly when taking into account the influence of local epigraphic traditions. Yet we can deduct general patterns that hold true for many communities to some degree. Firstly, we saw that key imperial virtues found

their way into provincial dedications though in an inconsistent manner. Although eager governors, moments of crisis or imperial interventions certainly played their role in spreading elements of imperial ideology, these were intermittent influences. That fact that many dedications to the emperor or the imperial family contain praise for imperial virtues in spite of these exceptional circumstances suggests expressions of imperial ideology emanating from Rome had their effect. Yet this effect was if anything broad and unguided: while it emphasized the association between legitimate power and virtue, it left considerable room for flexibility and local interpretation. Where some dedicators appear to closely follow trends at the imperial court, others opt for honorifics that reflect their own concerns and wishes. It is at this level that we may place some aspect of the 'co-creation' of the imperial image that I wrote of in the introduction. Most dedicators, whether public or private, were influenced by local epigraphic traditions and precedents, which adhered to general trends seen throughout the empire but at the same time allowed for a local interpretation of those broader trends.

Secondly, there can be no doubt that normative language played an important role in power relationships across all layers of the community. Governors, magistrates and benefactors alike were praised with a wide lexicon of virtues. But we have also seen clear signs of differentiation: some virtues were clearly reserved for imperial authority, including martial virtues and specific terms such as *indulgentia*. Virtues fitted in 'genres' that were sometimes closely connected with the office of the honorand. Thus, governors and local magistrates alike were honoured for their *innocentia*, a virtue so deeply connected with ideals of good administration that it transcended the large hierarchical differences between the two groups. Likewise, benefactors of vastly differing economic means were all honoured for their *liberalitas* or *munificentia*. Here, too, flexibility was of key importance, if only to underline the impression of sincerity and zeal on the part of the dedicator. Thus we find countless variations, intended to keep the language of praise fresh. The very fact that dedicators often tried to verbalize an old idea in a slightly different and new way already suggests something of the importance attached to normative language.

Lastly, what does the praise of virtues and honorifics tell us of the legitimation of power relationships and ideals of power? Throughout this thesis we have seen normative language wielded for purposes of legitimation, manipulation and self-representation. Legitimation through the praise of emperors, governors and magistrates; manipulation by dampening suggestions of strife or enticing future benefactors; self-representation by stressing the close bond between honorand and dedicator. In their preference for some imperial virtues and honorifics over others, provincials betrayed their concern over public displays of loyalty to the imperial family and the continued prosperity of the empire. Through their praise of exceptional governors, provincial communities tried to ensure that future governors would adopt a similar approach to provincial administration, while private dedicators might wish to stress their close relationship to a powerful gubernatorial benefactor. And through the praise of magistrates and benefactors, communities lauded the exceptionality of their citizens while enforcing communal *concordia*. In these varied ways, normative language served as a powerful tool to navigate the ambiguous and fraught realities of provincial life under the empire.

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SAMENVATTING

Dit proefschrift behandelt de legitimering van machtsrelaties in Romeins Noord-Afrika aan de hand van deugden, ethische concepten en andere vormen van *normative language*. Het proefschrift traceert hoe Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen uiting gaven aan machtsidealen in publieke inscripties gericht aan keizers, Romeinse beambten en leden van de lokale elite. Het poogt te verklaren of ideologische concepten vanuit het keizerlijk hof weerklank vonden in Noord-Afrikaanse epigrafie en of soortgelijke machtsidealen een vormend effect hadden op andere machtsrelaties in Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen. Ook probeert het te beantwoorden waarom deze gemeenschappen uitvoerig gebruik maakten van normatief taalgebruik.

Het proefschrift vertrekt vanuit een fundamentele vraag: hoe en waarom kon het Romeinse keizerrijk als politieke entiteit gedurende bijna vijf eeuwen blijven voortbestaan? De provincies van het Romeinse Rijk bleven, ondanks rellen en opstanden, grotendeels trouw aan hun Romeinse machthebbers. Het proefschrift betoogt in lijn met eerdere historici dat het Romeinse keizerrijk, als pre-industriële staat met beperkte logistieke, administratieve en militaire mogelijkheden, ten dele afhankelijk was van de medewerking van haar onderdanen. Echter, deze medewerking was niet simpelweg het resultaat van dwang. De militaire overmacht van Rome en ook de impliciete dreiging van geweld speelden hun rol in de fundering van Romeinse hegemonie, maar zijn niet op zichzelf afdoende om de handelingen van keizerlijke onderdanen te verklaren.

De Romeinse staat had in de ogen van haar onderdanen een mate van legitimiteit. Om dit cruciale begrip verder te verkennen, wordt de legitimiteitstheorie van Beetham aangehaald. Beetham maakt een onderscheid tussen verschillende niveaus waarop legitimiteit opereert, waaronder *rules*, *normative beliefs* en *actions.* Met *rules* verwijst Beetham naar wetten en andere formele of informele regels die de correcte uitoefening van de macht bepalen. *Normative beliefs* zijn de diepliggende ideeën over het ideale gedrag van legitieme machthebbers, gedeeld door zowel machthebbers als onderdanen. Ten slotte wijs Beetham op *actions*, de handelingen waarmee onderdanen hun steun aan een bepaald regime publiekelijk betonen. Met name deze laatste twee begrippen, *normative beliefs* en *actions*, zijn behulpzaam in het ontwikkelen van een beter begrip van legitimiteit in de antieke wereld. *Normative beliefs* wijzen ons op brede idealen betreffende legitieme heerschappij die gedeeld werden tussen heersers en (sommige) onderdanen in het Romeinse Rijk. De aandacht voor *actions* verlost ons daarnaast van de noodzaak om antieke gedachten te lezen: wat provincialen in Noord-Afrika of Klein-Azië daadwerkelijk over hun keizer of gouverneur dachten is van minder belang dan hun vele publieke steunbetuigingen.

Aandacht voor de ideologische overtuigingskracht van de Romeinse staat, en meer specifiek het keizerlijk hof, is geen nieuw verschijnsel. Waar in het verleden de suggestie werd geopperd dat Romeinse keizers zich konden beroepen op een uitgekiende propagandamachine, heeft dit idee inmiddels voor veel oudhistorici afgedaan. Wel is er hernieuwde aandacht voor het brede concept *imperial ideology*, een modern label dat verwijst naar de veelheid aan concepten en symbolen in

verschillende media die uitdrukking gaven aan de legitimiteit van keizerlijk gezag. Het werk van Ando en Noreña wordt uitgelicht, maar daarnaast wordt er gewezen op een verscheidenheid aan oudhistorici, classici en archeologen die zich met dit thema bezighouden. Door de verscheidenheid aan invalshoeken en de veelomvattendheid van het label lijkt er weinig consensus te zijn over de precieze werking en invloed van *imperial ideology*. Daarnaast ligt de nadruk vaak op ófwel het perspectief van het keizerlijk hof als 'zender', ófwel het perspectief van de provinciale gemeenschappen als 'ontvangers' van ideologische boodschappen. Dit proefschrift betoogt dat juist de wisselwerking tussen beiden van groot belang is in de studie van legitimiteit. Ook wordt beargumenteerd dat het keizerlijk hof niet strikt als 'zender' en de provincies niet slechts als 'ontvanger' gezien moeten worden, maar dat *normative beliefs* over legitieme macht gedeeld en beïnvloed worden door verschillende groepen in de Romeinse samenleving. Ten slotte wordt betoogd dat deze *normative beliefs* onlosmakelijk verbonden zijn met alle lagen van de macht, inclusief gouverneurs, procuratoren, lokale magistraten en leden van de elite met meer informele vormen van macht en invloed binnen provinciale gemeenschappen.

Het werk van Lendon toont aan dat (legitieme) macht in het Romeinse Rijk diep verbonden is met antieke debatten over eer, deugd en waardigheid, zowel op keizerlijk als op lokaal niveau. Keizerlijke deugden, gepropageerd op keizerlijke munten en in oraties van beroemde redenaars, zijn een goed voorbeeld van de manier waarop eerzaam gedrag werd aangewend om bestaande machtsposities te legitimeren. Het proefschrift beargumenteert dat deze deugden dan ook een nuttig beginpunt zijn voor het onderzoek. Ter bevordering van de leesbaarheid wordt de term *normative language* geïntroduceerd om te verwijzen naar taalgebruik dat uiting geeft aan *normative beliefs* over legitieme macht. Daarnaast wordt de keuze gemaakt om het onderzoeksgebied te beperken tot de provincies Africa Proconsularis en Mauretania Caesariensis, provincies met een rijk stedelijk netwerk en een grote hoeveelheid bewaard gebleven epigrafisch materiaal. Temporeel is het proefschrift afgebakend van de eerste tot de vierde eeuw na Christus, met een zwaartepunt in de late tweede en begin derde eeuw.

Het eerste hoofdstuk geeft een algemene schets van de rol van normatief taalgebruik in verschillende 'keizerlijke' media. Hoewel de nadruk van het proefschrift op Noord-Afrika ligt, worden de wortels van het normatief taalgebruik, zoals dat wordt gebezigd in Noord-Afrikaanse inscripties, gezocht in Rome. Het is zeer waarschijnlijk dat Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen ook voor de inlijving bij Rome opvattingen over legitieme machtsverhoudingen hadden, maar deze pre-Romeinse opvattingen zijn niet of nauwelijks traceerbaar. Daarnaast beroepen Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen onder Romeins gezag zich op de taal, gebruiken en literaire stijlfiguren van hun Romeinse overheersers. Rome is dan ook een noodzakelijk startpunt, hoewel de wortels van normatieve taalgebruik verder terug gaan. Als gevolg van de opkomst van de deugdethiek in de vijfde en vierde eeuw voor Christus wordt in het klassieke Griekenland de eerste verbinding gelegd tussen deugd, legitimiteit en monarchale macht. Deze periode ziet ook de eerste voorbeelden van het genre van de vorstenspiegel van de hand van Isocrates en Xenophon. Met de verspreiding van monarchieën rond het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied in de Hellenistische periode wordt deze tendens verder versterkt door prominente filosofen en redenaars. Vermoedelijk kwam de Romeinse Republiek vanaf de derde eeuw voor Christus in contact met het discours rond deugdzaamheid en legitieme macht in het Hellenistisch oosten. Vanaf een eveneens vroeg stadium dateert het

Romeinse gebruik om deugden en andere abstracte concepten te vergoddelijken en te eren met culten. Deze culten konden een belangrijke rol spelen in momenten van crisis of in de strijd tussen verschillende politieke actoren in de Republiek. In de herfsttij van de Republiek, met de opkomst van een kleine groep politieke actoren die ver boven hun mede-senatoren uitstegen in macht en invloed, zien we in het werk van Cicero elementen uit de Griekse vorstenspiegels opduiken, gericht op generaals als Pompeius en Caesar. Pas met de intrede van het Romeinse keizerrijk zien we echter meer systematische bespiegelingen op de relatie tussen (legitieme) monarchale macht en deugd. In het werk van Seneca en Plinius de Jongere wordt de ideale keizer stelselmatig geassocieerd met deugdzaam gedrag. We vinden soortgelijke ideeën in het werk van Griekse auteurs tijdens de Tweede Sofistiek, zoals Plutarchos en Dio Chrysostomos. Opvallend zijn de accenten die de verschillende auteurs leggen, en de implicaties daarvan richting hun publiek. Ondanks de grote politieke veranderingen in de late derde en vierde eeuw, blijft de associatie tussen keizers en deugd ook in de late Oudheid onverminderd sterk. Laatantieke bronnen zoals de *Panegyrici Latini* tonen een breed lexicon aan deugden die vorm gaven aan de nieuwe politieke realiteit. En, zoals blijkt uit bijvoorbeeld het werk van Synesius, kon de van oorsprong heidense vorstenspiegel worden aangepast aan de nieuwe, christelijke context van het keizerlijk hof.

De associatie tussen legitieme (keizerlijke) macht en deugd was niet voorbehouden tot de literatuur. Uit een verscheidenheid aan administratieve bronnen, zoals keizerlijke correspondentie, edicten en petities, blijkt dat normatieve taal gebruikelijk was in de communicatie tussen het keizerlijk hof, het bureaucratisch apparaat en elites in de verschillende gemeenschappen van het rijk.

Net als literaire en administratieve teksten verkondigden keizerlijke munten de deugdzaamheid van het keizerlijk hof; anders dan literaire en administratieve teksten maakten munten met name gebruik van afbeeldingen om hun boodschap over te brengen. Numismatici hebben lang gedebatteerd over de mate waarin antieke munten dienden ter verspreiding van politieke boodschappen. De huidige consensus stelt dat munten weliswaar niet vergelijkbaar zijn met moderne propaganda, maar wel degelijk politieke boodschappen met zich meedroegen. Met uitzondering van een reeks lokale munten in verscheidene Griekse steden in het oostelijk Middellandse Zeegebied, was de muntproductie vanaf het midden van de eerste eeuw na Christus in handen van de keizerlijke munt te Rome. Hoewel de keizer hoogstwaarschijnlijk niet direct betrokken was bij het ontwerp van zijn munten, is het waarschijnlijk dat de keizerlijke muntmeesters werkten met motieven die konden rekenen op keizerlijke goedkeuring. Tussen de verscheidenheid aan motieven was een belangrijke plaats weggelegd voor de personificaties van deugden en abstracte concepten. Deze personificaties, vrijwel altijd in vrouwelijke vorm, verschenen aan weerszijde van het keizerlijk portret op zowel bronzen, zilveren als gouden munten. Als gevolg van de voortschrijdende monetarisering van de Romeinse economie verspreidde muntgeld zich over grote delen van het Romeinse Rijk, en daarmee ook de beeldassociatie tussen keizers en deugden.

Naast keizerlijke munten speelden ook keizerlijke standbeelden een belangrijke rol om ideologische boodschappen op beeldende wijze te verspreiden over het rijk. Portretbustes en standbeelden van de keizerlijke familie waren wijdverspreid en maakten vast onderdeel uit van het straatbeeld in provinciale steden. Deze portretbustes en standbeelden konden op hun eigen manier uitdrukking geven aan de relatie tussen deugden en legitieme macht, bijvoorbeeld door de keizer te verbeelden als gedecoreerd generaal of plichtsgetrouwe staatsman.

Literatuur en retorica, administratieve documenten, munten en standbeelden: deze verscheidene media functioneerden onafhankelijk van elkaar. Hoewel er wel enige mate van overlap kon optreden, was de intentie nooit om één consistente ideologische boodschap over te dragen. Desalniettemin gaven deze verschillende communicatiekanalen gezamenlijk vorm aan *normative beliefs* over legitieme macht, in Noord-Afrika en elders in het rijk.

In het tweede hoofdstuk verschuift de aandacht naar Noord-Afrika. Een corpus van meer dan zeshonderd inscripties, opgericht in de provincies Africa Proconsularis en Mauretania Caesariensis tussen de eerste en vierde eeuw na Christus, vormt de basis van het hoofdstuk. De inscripties in dit corpus zijn allen gericht aan de keizer of leden van de keizerlijke familie, en bevatten een of meerdere vormen van normatief taalgebruik.

Uit het relatief rijke materiaal van Lepcis Magna in de eerste eeuw na Christus komen weinig tot geen deugden of ander normatief taalgebruik richting de keizerlijke familie naar voren. Elders in Noord-Afrika is het epigrafisch materiaal veel summierder, maar vertoont het eveneens een gebrek aan niet-gestandaardiseerd normatief taalgebruik. De oprichters van de standbeeldbases en monumentale inscripties houden zich juist veelal aan 'officiële' vormen van normatief taalgebruik zoals keizerlijke titels. In deze ontwikkeling komt vanaf het midden van de tweede eeuw na Christus verandering. Zo verschijnen in Cuicul standbeeldbases met daarop inscripties die de *pietas* (vroomheid, plichtsbesef) van Antoninus Pius eren, of de *concordia* (eendracht) die heerst tussen keizers Marcus Aurelius en Lucius Verus. Toch blijft het normatief taalgebruik over Noord-Afrika als geheel relatief beperkt. Het proefschrift haalt de ontwikkeling van de frase *pro salute* (voor het welzijn) aan, die gedurende de tweede eeuw opkomt in Noord-Afrikaanse inscripties en sterk geassocieerd wordt met de keizerlijke familie. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat de frase geen normatief taalgebruik in de strikte zin van het woord is maar desalniettemin wijst op het groeiend belang van publiek vertoon van affectie en trouw jegens de keizerlijke familie.

Een belangrijk schakelpunt, aldus dit proefschrift, is de regeringsperiode van keizer Septimius Severus en diens directe opvolgers. Onder Septimius Severus zien we een belangrijke uitbreiding van het normatief taalgebruik in Noord-Afrikaanse inscripties. Van bijzonder belang is de frase *fortissimus felicissimus* (meest dappere, meest fortuinlijke), die veelvuldig verschijnt op standbeeldbases en in monumentale inscripties. Het proefschrift wijst op de mogelijkheid van een bovengemiddeld aantal interventies in Noord-Afrika van de in Lepcis Magna geboren keizer. Ook wordt beargumenteerd dat de legaat Quintus Anicius Faustus, een nieuwkomer in het keizerlijk administratief apparaat, mogelijk een actieve rol speelde in de disseminate van de normatieve frase. Nadere studie van beide begrippen (*fortitudo* en *felicitas*) binnen andere media, zoals keizerlijke munten, laat zien dat er verschillen in nuance lijken te bestaan in de interpretatie van beide deugden aan het keizerlijk hof en in provinciale epigrafie. Naast *fortissimus felicissimus* worden Septimius Severus en zijn zonen Geta en Caracalla ook in verband gebracht met een aantal andere deugden, waarvan de opvallendste de officiële titel *nobilissimus* betreft. Na de dood van Septimius Severus lijkt er een vrij snelle wisseling van normatief taalgebruik op te treden die er op zou kunnen duiden dat de Noord-Afrikaanse oprichters van inscripties de ideologische ontwikkelingen aan het hof nauw volgden. *Fortissimus felicissimus* verdwijnt vrijwel volledig en wordt vervangen door de frase *super omnes retro principes* (beter dan alle eerdere keizers). Toch zien we ook fundamentele overlap tussen beide keizers in de nadruk op keizerlijke *indulgentia* (vrijgevigheid) of militaire waarden zoals

invictissimus. Beide thema's komen eveneens regelmatig terug in de inscripties ter ere van de latere Severische keizers, Elagabalus en Severus Alexander.

Gedurende de derde eeuw loopt het aantal inscripties ter ere van de keizers sterk terug, mogelijk het gevolg van de instabiliteit van de centrale macht in Rome. Nieuwe elementen worden vast onderdeel van derde-eeuwse inscripties. Zo wordt de titel *Invictus* een officieel onderdeel van de keizerlijke titulatuur en verschijnt dan ook met grote regelmaat in Noord-Afrikaanse inscripties. Maar op andere vlakken lijken Noord-Afrikaanse provincialen met name de conventies van hun voorgangers uit de Severische tijd te volgen. Inscripties blijven vaak de nadruk leggen op keizerlijke *fortitudo*, *felicitas* en *indulgentia*. Dit staat in contrast met de vaak gevarieerde ideologische boodschappen op derde-eeuwse keizerlijke munten, wat mogelijk wijst op een discrepantie tussen de ideologische ontwikkelingen aan het hof en in de provincie.

Vanaf de tetrarchie is een opleving in het epigrafisch materiaal zichtbaar die gepaard gaat met een sterke uitbreiding in het normatief vocabulair. Keizers worden niet alleen geprezen om een brede keur aan persoonlijke deugden, maar er is ook een duidelijke opkomst zichtbaar in het lof voor een nieuw aangebroken 'gouden tijd'. Opvallend is dat een groot deel van deze inscripties worden opgericht door keizerlijke beambten. Noord-Afrikaanse stadsraden en civiele oprichters van inscripties bezigen over het algemeen veel soberdere taal, al moet daarbij worden opgemerkt dat het epigrafisch bestand duidelijke lacunes vertoont.

Concluderend wijst het proefschrift op de discrepantie tussen de nadruk op deugden in keizerlijke media en de relatieve schaarste in provinciale epigrafie. Opvallend is dat periodes waarin normatief taalgebruik wel sterk naar voren komt in de Noord-Afrikaanse inscripties gepaard lijken te gaan met verhoogde activiteit van keizerlijke beambten.

Deze keizerlijke beambten staan centraal in hoofdstuk 3. Gouverneurs, procuratoren en andere beambten fungeerden als representanten van het keizerlijk gezag in de provincie. Gegeven de korte ambtstermijn en gebrekkige professionele ervaring, was de gemiddelde gouverneur in zekere mate afhankelijk van de hulp en ondersteuning van provinciale elites. En ook hier speelden *normative beliefs* en provinciale *actions* een rol. Net als bij keizers vinden we voor het midden van de tweede eeuw relatief weinig normatief taalgebruik in standbeeldbases en andere honorieke inscripties gericht aan gouverneurs. Vanaf de tweede helft van de tweede eeuw zien we echter dat gouverneurs en andere hoge beambten in de provincie met regelmaat worden geprezen om hun *integritas* (integriteit) en *innocentia* (onberispelijkheid). Er wordt beargumenteerd dat gouverneurs en andere hoge beambten veel mogelijkheden hadden tot uitbuiting en andere vormen van corruptie. Juist tegen deze achtergrond van potentiële corruptie vormen eerbetonen aan gouverneurs geen lege retoriek, maar een belangrijke manier voor Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen om hun verwachtingen van ideaal ambtelijk gedrag kenbaar te maken en daarmee gouverneursgedrag te beïnvloeden. Buiten integriteit verschijnen ook een klein aantal andere deugden ten tonele, maar het normatief lexicon voor gouverneurs blijft relatief beperkt. Daarnaast wordt opgemerkt dat er een duidelijk verschil lijkt te zijn tussen de deugden die met keizers en met gouverneurs worden geassocieerd. Net als bij keizers ondergaan de inscripties ter ere van gouverneurs en andere beambten een duidelijke verandering in de late derde en vierde eeuw. Ook hier zien we een grote uitbreiding van het normatief taalgebruik, met lange en complexe retorische frasen die de deugden en acties van individuele beambten bezingen. Lepcis Magna wordt

wederom als casus gebruikt om deze ontwikkelingen verder uit te lichten. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat de toename van lange honorieke formules voor gouverneurs samenhangt met zowel een grote uitbreiding van het ambtelijk apparaat in de Late Oudheid, als de opkomst van een 'kritiekcultuur' die veel waarde hechtte aan het publiekelijk prijzen dan wel bekritiseren van beambten, onder aansporing van laatantieke keizers. De stadsraad en bevolking van Lepcis Magna profileren zich actief als politieke entiteiten ten opzichte van hun gouverneurs. De inscripties impliceren dat er gestemd werd op het al dan niet toekennen van standbeelden aan gouverneurs, en dat deze eerbewijzen ook onthouden konden worden. Door goede gouverneurs te eren voor hun specifieke daden en deugden, en door te impliceren dat eerbetonen niet aan elke gouverneur waren voorbehouden, hadden de lokale autoriteiten in Lepcis Magna een troef in handen om gouverneursgedrag te sturen.

In het vierde hoofdstuk staan zowel de machtsverhoudingen binnen Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen centraal, als hun verwevenheid met de bredere machtsverhoudingen in het keizerrijk. Het dagelijks gezag over Noord-Afrikaanse steden lag voor een belangrijk deel in handen van lokale elites, zolang deze elites aan hun verplichtingen jegens Rome konden voldoen. Contemporaine bronnen uit het Griekse oosten maken echter duidelijk dat het stadsleven verre van harmonieus was. Elitefamilies verschilden onderling in status, rijkdom en invloed. Gemeenschappen kenden dan ook de nodige strijd tussen leden van de elite onderling, bijvoorbeeld in het bekleden van lokale ambten, het financieren van monumenten of het buitensluiten van nieuwkomers. Ook de relatie tussen magistraten en de stadsraad enerzijds en de rest van het bevolking anderzijds was een bron van frictie in veel gemeenschappen, bijvoorbeeld door ambtelijke corruptie of een onevenredige verdeling van de *munera*. Het proefschrift beargumenteerd dat deze Griekse voorbeelden waarschijnlijk ook tekenend zijn voor de situatie in Noord-Afrikaanse gemeenschappen.

Om kwesties rond legitimiteit op lokaal niveau nader te onderzoeken, focust het hoofdstuk op een aantal specifieke vormen van normatief taalgebruik die met regelmaat verschijnen in inscripties. De grootste groep eert de vrijgevigheid van lokale weldoeners met de termen *liberalitas* en *munificentia*. Beide termen worden geassocieerd met zowel zeer grote als relatief beperkte donaties en lijken een duidelijke associatie te hebben met euergetisme in de publieke (in plaats van de private) sfeer. Niet alleen verhulde dergelijk taalgebruik de aanzienlijke verschillen tussen weldoeners, ook presenteerde het controversiële monumentale bouwplannen van lokale weldoeners als gemotiveerd door onbaatzuchtigheid.

Innocentia en de aanverwante deugd *integritas* keren ook terug op lokaal niveau. Magistraten (met name *duumviri*) worden geregeld geprezen om hun onberispelijkheid door stadsraden en de *curiae*. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat er net als bij keizerlijke beambten ruimte was voor corruptie en misbruik, aangezien magistraten onder meer verantwoordelijk waren voor het toezicht op publieke gelden en het afdragen van belastingen aan Rome. Door standbeelden op te richten voor hun magistraten en deze te eren voor hun *innocentia*, droegen stadsraden en de *curiae* bij aan de legitimering van het bestaande politieke bestel maar maakten ook hun wensen en verwachtingen kenbaar jegens toekomstige magistraten.

Waar *liberalitas*/*munificentia* en *innocentia* zich duidelijk beperkten tot bepaalde sferen van elite-activiteiten (namelijk euergetisme en de lokale magistratuur), is er gelijktijdig een categorie

aan breder normatief taalgebruik. Een goed voorbeeld daarvan is de frase *ob merita* (voor zijn/haar verdiensten), die veelvuldig op standbeeldbases verschijnt. De term wordt vaak in verband gebracht met weldoeners, maar de 'verdiensten' in kwestie konden ook wijzen op bijvoorbeeld een glanzende ambtelijke carrière in de lokale gemeenschap. Juist door het gebrek aan een precieze definitie of associatie kon de term *ob merita* ingezet worden voor zeer verschillende leden van de lokale elite, vergelijkbaar met het gebruik van *liberalitas*/*munificentia.*

Een tweede voorbeeld van breed normatief taalgebruik zijn de vele honorieke frasen rond het concept *amor patriae* (liefde voor het vaderland, in dit geval de stedelijke gemeenschap). De eerste wortels van dit idee zijn te traceren in Lepcis Magna in de eerste eeuw na Christus, waar bijzonder welvarende leden van de lokale elite geëerd worden met de titel *ornator patriae*. In de tweede eeuw na Christus zien we leden van de elite in gemeenschappen door heel Noord-Afrika geëerd worden voor hun vaderlandsliefde. Soms wordt deze vaderlandsliefde expliciet in verband gebracht met euergetisme, maar dit is lang niet altijd het geval. Het proefschrift beargumenteert dat met name machtige leden van de elite geprezen werden om hun vaderlandsliefde. Daarmee vormde het een belangrijk retorisch middel voor stadsraden en andere civiele instituten om de bovenlaag van de lokale elite aan de gemeenschap te binden, maar ook om de dominante aanwezigheid van dergelijke individuen in de gemeenschap te legitimeren als gedreven door liefde en onbaatzuchtigheid.

Normatief taalgebruik verschijnt meestal op standbeeldbases opgericht met publieke gelden door de stadsraad. Toch kennen we ook voorbeelden van meer 'familiair' normatief taalgebruik in de openbare ruimte. Sommige standbeeldbases werden opgericht voor en door leden van de lokale elite (hoewel vaak met goedkeuring van de stadsraad) en legden sterke nadruk op geïdealiseerde familieverbanden en persoonlijke deugden. Het proefschrift stelt dat deze 'familiaire' teksten dienden om het prestige van vooraanstaande families in de openbare ruimte te verankeren, een reactie op de demografische en economische schommelingen die zorgden voor een relatief hoge *turnover rate* onder de lokale elite. Deze tendens komt tot zijn meest extreme uiting in de stad Thamugadi, waar Marcus Plotius Faustus een monumentaal marktgebouw financierde met verwijzingen naar de deugdzaamheid en status van hemzelf en zijn naasten.

Concluderend kan gesteld worden dat ondanks de verscheidenheid aan normatieve termen, er een zekere mate van overlap optreedt in hun functie. Keer en opnieuw zien we met name lokale instanties zoals de stadsraad of de *curiae* optreden als oprichters. Het normatief taalgebruik in de inscripties poogt daarbij zowel te verheffen als te verbinden, en uiting te geven aan *normative beliefs* over gewenst gedrag van machtige individuen met een buitengewone invloed over hun gemeenschap.

Ter vergelijking met de situatie in Noord-Afrikaanse civiele gemeenschappen richt hoofdstuk vijf zich op de epigrafische tradities van het in Lambaesis gestationeerde Legio III Augusta en de hulptroepen in de regio. Deze vergelijking is niet alleen nuttig om de unieke elementen in civiele epigrafie te belichten. De Romeinse troepen hadden een hechte ideologische band met de keizer. Waar civiele inscripties de nodige schommelingen vertonen wat betreft het volgen van de ideologische ontwikkelingen aan het hof, mogen we redelijkerwijs verwachten dat deze situatie anders is in militaire epigrafie. De inscripties opgericht door militairen vertonen een aantal opvallende gelijkenissen en verschillen met civiele inscripties. Net als in Noord-Afrikaanse

gemeenschappen blijken de militaire inscripties gedurende de tweede eeuw na Christus weinig gebruik te maken van normatief taalgebruik, met een aantal prominente uitzonderingen die de keizer prijzen om diens *liberalitas* en *fortitudo*. Ook de frase *pro salute* verschijnt op inscripties, al zij het in mindere mate dan in civiele gemeenschappen. Vanaf de Severische periode komt daar verandering in, met een drastische toename in het aantal inscripties opgericht voor het welzijn van de keizerlijke familie. Opvallend is dat Septimius Severus weliswaar meermaals geprezen wordt om zijn *fortitudo*, maar de frase *fortissimus felicissimus* ontbreekt in de overgeleverde militaire inscripties. Ook de honorieke frase die sterk geassocieerd werd met Caracalla, *super omnes retro principes*, is niet traceerbaar in het overgeleverd materiaal. Er lijkt geen eenduidige verklaring voor deze afwijking. Het proefschrift speculeert over mogelijke oorzaken maar moet concluderend dat er geen volledig overtuigend antwoord gevonden kan worden op basis van het resterend bronmateriaal.

Net als in civiele gemeenschappen loopt ook het aantal militaire inscripties in de derde eeuw sterk terug, en ook militaire oprichters van inscripties geven de voorkeur aan bekend normatief taalgebruik. In de weinige inscripties die afwijken van de gestandaardiseerde keizerlijke titels zijn het met name militaire deugden en keizerlijke onoverwinnelijkheid die worden uitgelicht. Vergelijkbaar met civiele gemeenschappen is ook de toename van het normatief lexicon in de late derde en begin vierde eeuw in een klein aantal resterende militaire inscripties. Met de regeringsperiode van Diocletianus komt de epigrafische aanwezigheid van het leger in Noord-Afrika grotendeels ten einde.

Naast inscripties ter ere van de keizer richtten individuele officieren ook veelvuldig inscripties op ter ere van hun meerderen, meestal als gevolg van een promotie. Deze inscripties leggen in contrast met hun civiele tegenhangers juist veel nadruk op de ondergeschikte positie van de oprichter jegens de geëerde. Daarmee bevestigen ze bestaande hiërarchische verschillen binnen het leger, en benadrukken ze de legitimiteit van die hiërarchie in een publieke context. Toch zijn er vanaf de late tweede eeuw na Christus ook voorbeelden aan te wijzen van militaire inscripties die putten uit het civiele corpus van gouverneursdeugden, ook wanneer daar weinig directe aanleiding toe lijkt te zijn. Het gebrek aan militaire deugden in militaire inscripties is opvallend. Een verklaring wordt gezocht in de retorische cultuur die nadruk legt op geïdealiseerd aristocratisch gedrag binnen militaire kringen, zoals onder andere blijkt uit de brieven van Plinius de Jongere.

Anders dan de leden van de civiele elite hadden officieren en legionairs weinig aanleiding tot het oprichten van standbeeldbases, altaren of andere eerbetonen aan hun naasten. Toch vinden we in het epigrafisch bestand enkele voorbeelden van zelfrepresentatie in de openbare ruimte, die in hun gebruik van normatief taalgebruik enigszins vergelijkbaar zijn met de 'familiaire' inscripties uit civiele gemeenschappen. Hierbij worden twee voorbeelden aangehaald: de militair ingenieur Nonius Datus en de centurion Iasucthan. Beide mannen gebruiken normatief taalgebruik om zichzelf of (in het geval van Iasucthan) mede-soldaten een plaats te geven binnen een epigrafisch landschap dat gedomineerd werd door hoge officieren.

Het proefschrift sluit af door te wijzen op een viertal paradoxen die dwars door de grote verscheidenheid aan materiaal lopen. Het proefschrift betoogt dat normatieve taal zowel flexibel is als sterk gebonden aan traditie, met aan de ene kant voorbeelden van unieke normatieve termen en aan de andere kant een grote mate van repetitie binnen gemeenschappen door heel Noord-

Afrika. Hoewel de specifieke motivaties van de oprichters een punt van speculatie zullen blijven, waren sommige normatieve termen generiek (*ob merita*) dan wel doelgericht (*innocentia*, *liberalitas*) genoeg om stem te geven aan breedgedragen idealen van legitieme macht. Unieke termen aan de andere kant dienden vooral om stem te geven aan de oprechte motivatie van de oprichter, en daarmee ook de uitzonderlijkheid van het gedrag van de geëerde.

Een tweede paradox is dat normatief taalgebruik zowel reactief als voorschrijvend is. De oprichters van standbeeldbases, altaren en andere honorieke inscripties handelden vaak in reactie op specifieke daden en gebeurtenissen. Het normatief taalgebruik in deze inscripties is verbonden met deze context, maar stelt tegelijkertijd verwachtingen voor toekomstig gedrag. De oprichters van inscripties treden, bewust of onbewust, naar voren als ethische arbiters, die in staat zijn om te oordelen over de morele waarde van anderen. Daarmee speelden met name stadsraden en andere civiele instituten een modererende functie in de lokale gemeenschap.

Een derde paradox is dat normatief taalgebruik de ideologische ontwikkelen aan het hof op de voet volgt en tegelijkertijd grotendeels onafhankelijk van keizerlijke ideologie lijkt te functioneren. Er wordt gewezen op de rol van keizerlijke interventies in de regio, actoren zoals de legaat Quintus Anicius Faustus en momenten van politieke crisis. Toch ontbreken veel belangrijke keizerlijke deugden in het provinciale repertoire. Noord-Afrikaanse oprichters maakten keuzes in hun normatief taalgebruik die stem gaven aan provinciale verwachtingen van goed keizerlijk gezag.

Ten slotte wordt er gewezen op de paradox dat normatief taalgebruik bedoeld is voor de geëerde, maar vaak net zozeer tekenend is voor degene die eert. Door te handelen als ethische arbiters vestigen de oprichters van inscripties ook aandacht op zichzelf. Leden van de elite profileerden zich als trouwe onderdanen van de keizer door diens deugden te prijzen. En de officier die een standbeeld opricht voor zijn meerdere benadrukt door persoonlijk normatief taalgebruik zijn hechte band met de geëerde.

Het proefschrift concludeert dat de onderzoeksvragen niet eenduidig beantwoord kunnen worden voor alle gemeenschappen in Noord-Afrika. Wel wijst het proefschrift op het belang van normatief taalgebruik binnen de politieke cultuur van Noord-Afrika: zowel een reactie op politieke realiteiten als een manier om die realiteiten vorm te geven.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Stefan Maria Hendricus Jozef Penders (Geleen, 1988) started his BA in History at Leiden University in 2006 and obtained his BA diploma in 2009 with a minor in Egyptology. Subsequently, he started his MA History: Societies and Institutions (research), specialising in Ancient History at Leiden University. During his research master, Stefan did internships at both the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the heritage project Plaatsen van Betekenis. In 2012 he obtained his MA diploma cum laude. His thesis, 'Imperial waters. Roman river god art in context' won the Fruin Prijs 2012 as well as the IISG-Volkskrant Scriptieprijs 2013.

After obtaining his MA, Stefan worked for two years at Buro Menno Heling as a writer and editor with a focus on heritage and the cultural sector. He was offered a PhD position at Leiden University and started his doctorate in April 2014. During his PhD, Stefan combined research with teaching and ran a social media account for the Ancient History department together with colleagues. He took a six-month hiatus in 2018 to work as a junior policy officer at the Dutch Research Council (NWO). During his PhD he was also active as a freelance writer and editor as well as a voluntary communications officer for the heritage organisation RomeinenNU, with the goal of promoting the Roman heritage of the Netherlands. In 2019 Stefan was offered a position at the marketing firm Splend. Later that same year, he was given the opportunity to join the Dutch Research Council as a policy officer. Beyond his current work as a policy officer, Stefan is member of the board of RomeinenNU.