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

Penders, S.M.H.J.

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

[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

[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 αὐτῶν 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᾽ αὐτῶν 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

[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

---

[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.

---

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

[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

---

[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

[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]

---

[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"

[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

[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

[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

[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*
>
> *ḤNB'L MYŠQL 'RṢ MḤB D'T HTMT ZBḤ ŠPṬ 'DR*
> *'ZRM BN ḤMLKT ṬBḤPY R'PS BT'RM BTM P'L W'YQDŠ*
>
> [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 'ZRM 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

[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.

---

[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

[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.

[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

[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

[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

[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.

[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.