

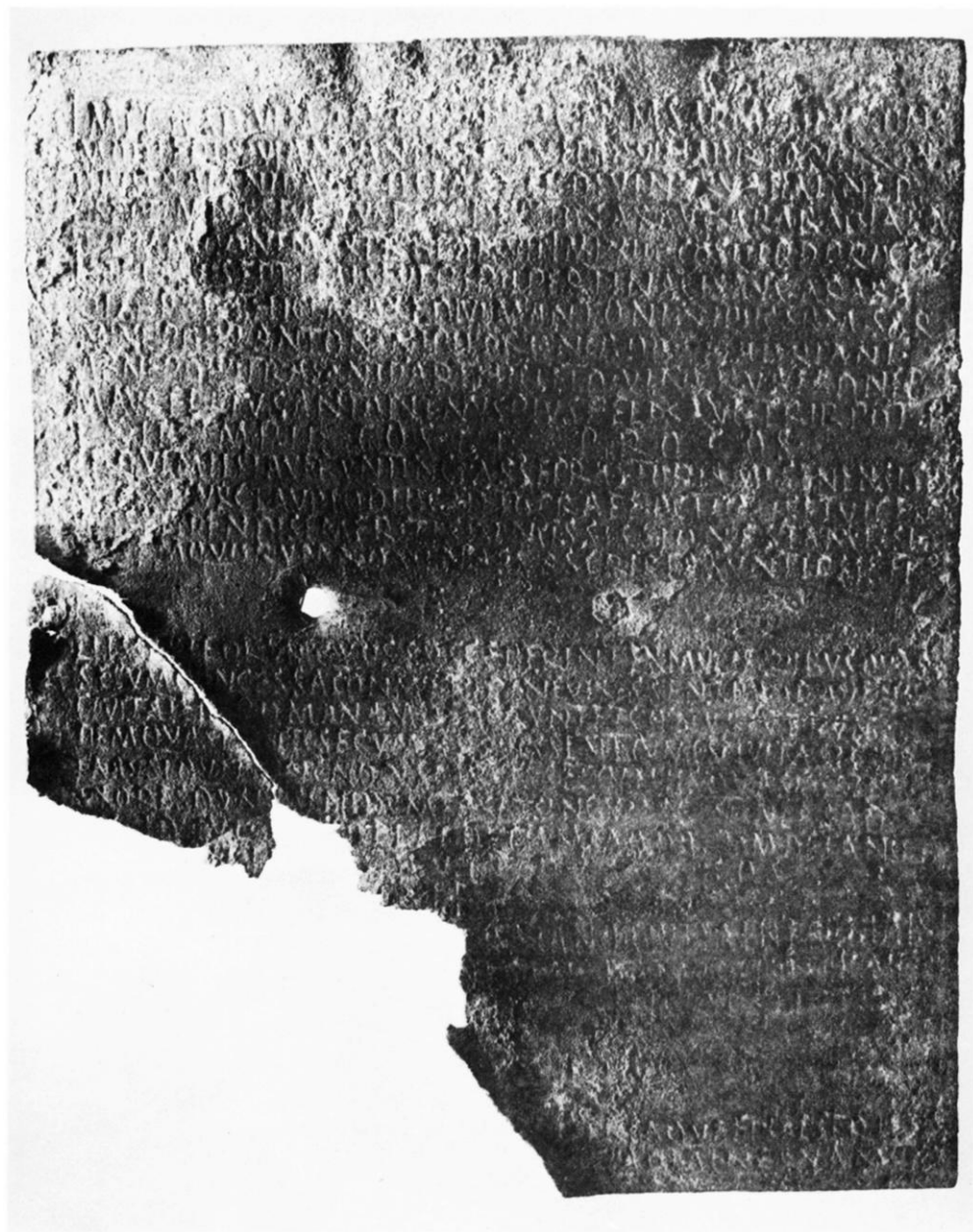
JOHN F. OATES

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TEXT is the establishment of the names of one of the consuls of the year 209 as Aurelius *Commodus* Pompeianus (a grandson of Marcus Aurelius). Acquired by purchase from a dealer in 1972, the text is now housed in the Rare Book Room of Perkins Library at Duke University. Originally 18.5 cm. high and 14.5 cm. wide and ranging in thickness from 1.5 to 2.5 mm., the bronze tablet is now missing its lower left-hand corner. There is one large fragment and a smaller fragment which joins at the left in the middle of the plaque. Both outer and inner surfaces have suffered damage. As is generally true by this date the outer surface is more carefully inscribed and is much more easily read. Unfortunately at a crucial point in line 23 the surface is badly rubbed and unreadable. Likewise it is now not possible to recover the name of the sailor whose diploma this was. Over much of the outer surface a good deal of encrustation makes reading the text difficult. I have used a number of photographs taken in various degrees of raking light and have used a binocular microscope equipped with low power (3.5× magnification) lens illuminated by raking light. I report below all that I can see. One is helped most, of course, by parallels; the text of *diplomata militaria* was conservatively maintained over the centuries, and the wording of this text is similar to that of other discharges from the fleet.

This outer text would have been readable when it was incised, but it is not particularly attractive and contains a number of minor errors. The scribe feels free to break words between lines without regard to syllables. Variations in letter size used to effect in many other diplomata are not used here. There are some instances of slightly larger letters but not in any consistent pattern. The surface of the bronze is now in such poor condition that it is most often impossible to tell if an interpunct was used between each word or abbreviation. I have indicated each dot that I can see, and I doubt that the scribe separated the elements with any consistency. Abbreviation itself is inconsistent. In line 5, for example, the scribe has abbreviated more radically than elsewhere in order to finish that line with the rest of Septimius Severus' titulature.

The inner side is ever more crudely executed; the writing is much more

\*William H. Willis and Kent J. Rigsby, my colleagues at Duke University, provided much aid in discussing this text with me and by reading my manuscript. Professor J. Frank Gilliam of the Institute for Advanced Study and Professor A. R. Birley of the University of Manchester provided help at many points. I am grateful to all of them for making this a better paper.



A SAILOR'S DISCHARGE (DUKE UNIVERSITY, DURHAM, N.C.)

rudimentary, less deeply incised, and letter forms are very carelessly made. Furthermore, over the left and right quarters of each line encrustation has made any reading impossible. It is possible to read only the middle portions of each line, and the text can then be restored from the outer text and the other parallels. As we might expect and as is universally the case, the inner text ends with the imperial edict granting citizenship—with the words *singulis singulas*, and thus does not give us the vital information missing from the outer text—the name of the second consul and the name of the discharged sailor. I have, therefore, not printed the inner text.

## TEXT

- IMP CAES DIVI M ANTONINI pii · GERM · SARM F DIVI COM  
MODI FR DIVI ANTONINI PII NEP DIVI HADRIANI PRON  
DIVI TRAIANI PARTHICI ABNEP DIVI NERVAE ADNEP  
L SEPTIMIUS SEVERVS PIVS PERTINAX AVG ARAB ADIAB  
5 PAR MAX PONT MAX TR POT XVII IMP XIII COS III P P PROC  
IMP CAES L SEPTIMI SEVERI PII PERTINACIS AVG ARAB A  
DIAB PARTHICI MAX F DIVI M ANTONINI PII GERM SAR  
M NEP DIVI ANTONINI PII PRONEP DIVI HADRIANI  
ABNEP DIVI TRAIANI PARTHICI ET DIVI NERVAE ADNEP  
10 M AVRELLIVS ANTANINVS PIVS FELIX AVG TRIB POT !  
XII · IMP · II · COS · III · PROCOS  
IIS QVI MILITAVERVNT IN CLASSE PRAETORIA MISENENSIS!  
QVAE EST SVB CLAVDIO DIOGNETO PRAEF·OCTONIS ET VICE  
NIS STIPENDIS EMERITIS DIMISSIS HONESTA MISSI  
15 one QVORVM NOMINA SVBSCRIPTA SVNT IPSIS FI

- LISQVE EORVM QVOS SVSCEPERINT EX MVLIERIBVS QVAS  
SECVM CONCESSA CONSVETVDINE VIXISSENT PROBAVERI!  
CIVITATEM ROMANAM DEDERVNT ET CONVBIVM CVM IS  
DEM QVAS TVNC SECVM habuISSENT CVM ES CIVITAS IIS DA!  
20 TA AV SIQVI TVNC NON habuissET CVM IIS QVAS POSTEA !  
VXORES DVXISSENT DVMTAXAT SINGVLIS SINGVLAS A D  
... ID IVL[ ] RELIO COMMODO POMPEIANO

COS

(1 cm. blank)

] · ANO (traces)

] (traces)

] (traces)

(1 cm. blank)

] . . . . . AEREA QVE FIXA EST RO

] . . . . . AD MINERVAM

Imp(erator) Caes(ar), divi M. Antonini Pii Germ(anici) Sarm(atici) f(ilius), divi Commodi fr(ater), divi Antonini Pii nep(os), divi Hadriani pron(epos), divi Traiani Parthici abnep(os), divi Nervae adnep(os), L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Aug(ustus) Arab(icus) Adiab(enicus) Par(thicus) max(imus) pont(ifex) max(imus) tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) XVII, imp(erator) XIII, co(n)s(ul) III, p(ater) p(atriae), proc(onsul), Imp(erator) Caes(ar) L. Septimi Severi Pii Pertinacis Aug(usti) Arab(ici) Adiab(enici) Parthici Max(imi) f(ilius), divi M. Antonini Pii Germ(anici) Sarm(atici) nep(os), divi Antonini Pii pronep(os), divi Hadriani abnep(os), divi Traiani Parthici et divi Nervae adnep(os), M. Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Aug(ustus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) XII, Imp(erator) II, co(n)s(ul) III, proco(n)s(ul)

iis, qui militaverunt in classe praetoria Misenensi{s}, quae est sub Claudio Diogneto praefecto, octonis et vicens stipendis emeritis dimissis honesta missione, quorum nomina subscripta sunt, ipsis filisque eorum, quos susceperint ex mulieribus, quas secum concessa consuetudine vixisse{nt} probaveri{nt}, civitatem Romanam dederunt et conubium cum isdem, quas tunc secum habuissent, cum es{t} civitas iis data, au{t} siqui tunc non habuisset, cum iis quas postea uxores duxissent dumtaxat singuli{s} singulas. a.d. . . . id. Iul. [Au]rellio Commodo Pompeiano [ ca. 10-12 letters] . . . . . ?

## COMMENTARY

Line 1. There are letter traces in the middle of the line but in the area where I have used lower-case letters it is impossible to connect them securely to the letters which must have been there.

Line 5. A heavily abbreviated line. The scribe seems anxious to complete Severus' designation on this line.

The imperial acclamations of Severus are something of a problem. See M. Platnauer, *The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus*, *Studia Historica* 18 (Oxford 1918) 32-33, note 5; Gerard J. Murphy, *The Reign of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus from the Evidence of the Inscriptions* (Philadelphia 1945) 101-102; and Aline Abaecherli Boyce, "The Twelfth Imperial Acclamation of Septimius Severus," *AJA* 53 (1949) 337-344. As far as I am aware only this text and *ILS* 8917 (and see note 2 there) of 218 mention thirteen imperial acclamations.

Line 10. *Sic!* Antoninus is simply misspelled; on the spelling of Aurelius see A. Degraasi, "Aurelius," *Athenaeum* 9 (1921) 292-299 = *Scritti Vari* 467-472. He argued there that the spelling Aurelius was deliberate, limited to the imperial family, and begun in 204 in Caracalla's nomenclature.

Line 12. Claudius Diognetus is known to have been procurator Augusti in Egypt as early as 24 May 197. He is attested again in a number of papyri as procurator Augustorum from 202 to 204. Pflaum discusses his career in *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres*, no. 246, pp. 659–662. There is some uncertainty about the exact position of Claudius Diognetus, but he appears to be *vice archiereus* in 197 as a centenarius and in 202–204 as a ducenarius effectively *rationalis Aegypti*. He was clearly not prefect; see T. D. Barnes, “Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*,” *JTS* (1968) 409–531, esp. 526. He could have been employed continuously in Egypt or held other posts elsewhere between 197 and 204. In any case, in 209 we find him as prefect of the fleet at Misenum, one of the highest posts in the 200,000 sesterii class.

Line 15. The letters—*one*—cannot be seen on the plaque.

Line 17. Read *vixisse probaverint*.

Lines 19/20. The engraver has left out two *l*'s, in *es*<*t*> and *au*<*t*>. Nothing can be seen of the letters printed in lower case.

Line 22. Traces of two or three letters remain on the very bottom of the smaller fragment. Either VI or III would be compatible with what remains. In any case, by mid-July 209 Geta had not yet been named co-Augustus with his father and brother.

The rest of this line contains the information that constitutes the chief importance of this text, the name of one of the two consuls of A.D. 209, [A]urelius Commodus Pompeianus. Until recently the consuls for this year were known only as Pompeianus and Avitus and there were a number of possible identifications. In the late 1950's a mundane dedication of an altar was found near Stobi in Yugoslavia in what was part of the ancient province of Macedonia (Vucović-Todorović, *Archaeologia Jugoslavica* 4 (1963) 79, which was dated in the consulship of Αὐρηλίῳ Πομπειανῷ καὶ Λολλιανῷ Ἀουίτῳ τὸ β' ὑπάτοις. (For the peculiarity of Avitus' coming in second place when he, unlike Pompeianus had been consul twice, see W. Seston, *Bonner Historia Augusta Colloquium* 1964–5 [1966] 213.) Even before the inscription was published, H.-G. Pflaum (“Les Gendres de Marc-Aurèle,” *Journal des Savants* [1961] 28–41), from information received, identified Aurelius Pompeianus as the grandson of Marcus Aurelius, the son of Lucilla and her second husband, Ti. Claudius Pompeianus. He, however, thought his full name to be Ti. Claudius Aurelius Pompeianus. Shortly after, independently of one another, Jaroslav Šašel (*Historia* 17 [1968] 256) and W. Seston (*op. cit.* 211–219) concurred with Pflaum on Pompeianus and identified the other consul as L. Hedi Rufus Lollianus Avitus (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> H 41). From our text we can

now know that Marcus Aurelius' grandson styled himself Aurelius Commodus Pompeianus. The lacuna after IVL is sufficiently large to accommodate [TI CL AV] although just barely. M would fit more comfortably. In the line above, —ISSENT— occupies the same space as the length of lacuna.

The consul's father, Ti. Claudius Pompeianus had married Aurelia Lucilla Augusta, the widow of Lucius Verus, in 169. Their son would have been born in 177 if he held his consulship *suo anno*. Since the surviving daughters of Marcus Aurelius were called sisters of Septimius Severus and Commodus his brother, Pompeianus would be the emperor's nephew. He would have been five years old at the time of his mother's downfall and death in 182, and he must have retired along with his father to their country estates in 180 at the accession of Commodus.

The elder Ti. Claudius Pompeianus appears on the scene in 193 when he played a role in the chaotic events of the year, lending his *auctoritas* to Pertinax (his protégé) and Didius Julianus in turn in an attempt to establish a stable government. He is not heard of again and presumably died a natural death shortly afterward. His son, the consul of 209, we are told by the *Historia Augusta* (Caracalla 3.8), was put to death in 212 by Caracalla in the blood bath after the death of Geta. The passage is corrupt and confused, but perhaps because of imperial ancestry Pompeianus posed a threat to Caracalla. Commodus had removed three of his brothers-in-law married to younger daughters of Marcus Aurelius. Cn. Claudius Severus, the husband of the eldest daughter, Faustina, had apparently retired to his estates in Asia Minor after Faustina's death in 176. His son, Ti. Claudius Severus Proculus, was consul in 200 under Severus and we know no more of him; perhaps after his service to the new regime he also retired to Asia Minor. On the fate of Marcus Aurelius' descendants see Pflaum in the *Journal des Savants* cited above. Of Aurelius Commodus Pompeianus we know little. He has a ringing name of great *auctoritas*, but we do not know if he was *capax imperii*.

Line 23. Seston and Šašel (see above, on l. 22) independently identified the second consul of this year as L. Hedi Rufus Lollianus Avitus, consul suffect perhaps in 177 (so Seston). Unfortunately our diploma cannot provide confirmation. First, the break from the left lower corner begins seriously to affect the text at this point, and then the first section of preserved bronze has suffered serious damage to its surface. No certain trace of any letter can now be seen. If we assume the engraver placed the COS in the middle of the blank space left after the second consul's name, the blank space between the end of the name and the letters COS would be 4.5 cm. There would then be 9 cm. available for the name, 5 of which fall in the lacuna and the rest of which would cover the first 4 cm. of the

preserved bronze. It is easily possible that writing existed on this preserved surface. I can see only what may be strokes at two points and perhaps, directly under the first O of COMMODO, the tops of the numeral II. There is in any case barely room for the full name; it would fit more easily if Rufus were omitted. The full name is 25 letters long, but *l*'s, *e*'s, *f*'s, and *i*'s, of which there are many, are very narrow letters and the full name is conceivable. Still, we must await a further document for definite confirmation that this man was consul in 209.

Line 24. After a space of a centimeter we have the name of the grantee and presumably that of his wife and such number of children who also receive citizenship. The lacuna and the lack of formulae render what remains of this section unreadable. The letters —ANO— may be part of the cognomen of the grantee.

Lines 27/28. These phrases are formulaic and run as follows: *Descriptum et recognitum ex tabula aerea quae fixa est Romae in muro post templum Augusti ad Minervam*. Here it is impossible to tell the extent of abbreviation or its pattern. I cannot reconcile the scant traces immediately to the right of the lacuna with any letters.

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## ROME OF THE XII TABLES



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