

2017

# Julia Domna: Public Image and Private Influence of a Syrian Queen

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Bertolazzi, R. (2017). Julia Domna: Public Image and Private Influence of a Syrian Queen (Doctoral thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada). Retrieved from <https://prism.ucalgary.ca>. doi:10.11575/PRISM/26693

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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Julia Domna: Public Image and Private Influence of a Syrian Queen

by

Riccardo Bertolazzi

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GREEK AND ROMAN STUDIES

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL, 2017

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## Abstract

‘He possessed the craftiness of his mother and the Syrians, to which race she belonged.’ Thus Cassius Dio, a Roman senator and historian who lived between the second and the third centuries CE, referred to the cunning of Caracalla, a quality that this emperor inherited from his mother Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus and the first Augusta who came from the Eastern provinces of the Empire. She maintained the role of ‘first lady’ for twenty years, a period covering the reigns of two emperors, Septimius Severus (193-211 CE) and Caracalla (211-217 CE). Despite this, her role in both establishing and strengthening the Severan dynasty is only barely traceable in the historical accounts concerning this period. These are the epitome of Cassius Dio’s *Roman History*, the biographies of the *Historia Augusta* and the *History* of Herodian. Their reliability and accuracy, however, are still debated. The epigraphic, numismatic and artistic evidence, on the other hand, attests to the fact that she was one of the most honored imperial women in the course of the Principate. Almost 600 inscriptions bear her name; numerous coin types portray her together with the emperors; important artworks where she is depicted (such as the Kassel Cameo, the Arch of the *Argentarii* and the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna) demonstrate that she occupied no secondary position in the Severan regime. She appears, consequently, to be a key figure of this period. This is the interdisciplinary discussion to which this investigation contributes. By combining examination of literary sources and material culture, it provides insights concerning not only the political influence of this imperial woman, but also her contribution to the shaping of the Severan dynasty from a cultural point of view.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank many people for their help and support throughout the writing of this dissertation. A large debt of gratitude goes to the Department of Classics and Religion. I would specifically like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Hanne Sigismund Nielsen, whose guidance and support made this project possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Lisa Hughes (University of Calgary) for her help and enthusiasm, especially concerning the analysis of the visual arts, and the other members of my committee: Dr. Adam Kemezis (University of Alberta), Dr. Francine Michaud (University of Calgary) and Dr. Peter Toohey (University of Calgary).

I should like to offer special thanks to those who provided me with helpful suggestions for strengthening my work, in particular Dr. Alfredo Buonopane (University of Verona), Dr. Francesca Cenerini (University of Bologna), Dr. Lindsay Driediger-Murphy (University of Calgary), Dr. Jane Fejfer (University of Copenhagen), Dr. Erica Filippini (University of Bologna), Mrs. Marina Fischer (University of Calgary), Dr. Waldemar Heckel (University of Calgary) and Dr. Peter Toohey (University of Calgary), though of course I am responsible for all remaining errors.

I owe permission to reproduce photographs of the Kassel Cameo, through Dr. Rüdiger Splitter, to the Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, and of the bronze head of Julia Domna from Salaminias, through Ms. Isabella Donadio, to the Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum. I am also grateful to the assistance of Dr. Dane Kurth in obtaining images of coins from the website Wildwinds.com.

I would like to thank the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Department of Classics and Religion, and Graduate Student Association for their

generous help in financing my studies. I owe a special debt of gratitude to the Calgary Institute for the Humanities, which provided me with financial support and an office where I worked on this dissertation during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Finally, I must express many thanks to Dr. Lesley Bolton (University of Calgary), who patiently reviewed and substantially improved my English.

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## List of Abbreviations

The following list reports the abbreviations of epigraphic *corpora* and periodicals concerning the publication of new inscriptions, as well as encyclopedias, prosopographical works, numismatic and papyrological collections. Throughout this study, inscriptions mentioning Domna will be cited by using the numbers that are assigned to each of them in the appendices. These include inscriptions dating to a period of a year or less (Appendix *a*) and inscriptions dating to a period of more than a year (Appendix *b*). Thus, for example, ‘app. no. 85a’ refers to the inscription no. 85 in Appendix *a*, and ‘app. no. 85b’ to the inscription no. 85 in Appendix *b*.

- AE = *L'Année Épigraphique*. Paris 1888-
- BCH = *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*. Paris 1879-
- BCTH = *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques*. Paris 1883-
- BGU = *Berliner griechische Urkunden*. Berlin 1895-
- BMC Galatia = Wroth, W. 1964. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia and Syria*. Bologna.
- BMC Ionia = Head, B.V. 1964. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Ionia*. Bologna.
- BMC Lydia = Head, B.V. 1964. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*. Bologna.
- BMC Mysia = Wroth, W. 1964. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Mysia*. Bologna.
- BMC Palestine = Hill, G.F. 1965. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine*. Bologna.
- BMC Phoenicia = Hill, G.F. 1965. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia*. Bologna.
- BMC Phrygia = Head, B.V. 1964. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phrygia*. Bologna.
- BMCRE = *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*. London 1923-
- CIG = *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum*. Berolini 1828-1877.
- CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berolini 1853-
- CILPCart = Benzina Ben Abdallah, Z. and L. Ladjimi Sebaï. 2011. *Catalogue des inscriptions latines païennes inédites du musée de Carthage*. Rome.
- EDCS = Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby.
- IAM = *Inscriptions antiques du Maroc. 2. Inscriptions latines*. Paris 1982.
- IAM S = *Inscriptions antiques du Maroc. 2. Inscriptions latines. Supplément*. Paris 2003.
- IC = *Inscriptiones Creticae*. Roma 1935-1950.
- ICilicie = Dagron, G. and D. Feissel 1987. *Inscriptions de Cilicie*. Paris.
- IDR = *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae*. Bukarest 1975-
- IEph = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 11,1-17,4)*. Bonn 1979-1984.
- IG = *Inscriptiones grecae*. Berolini 1877-
- IGBulg = *Inscriptiones graecae in Bulgaria repertae*. Sofia 1958-1997.
- IGLS = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Paris 1929-1986.
- IGRR = *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanás pertinentes*. Paris 1911-1927.

- IGUR = *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*. Roma 1968-1990.
- IK Iznik = Şahin, S. 1979. *Katalog der antiken Inschriften des Museums von Iznik (Nikaia)* (*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 9 and 10, 1-2*). Bonn.
- IK Rhod. Peraia = Blümel, W. 1991. *Die Inschriften der Rhodischen Peraia* (*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 38*). Bonn.
- ILabr = Crampa, J. 1969-1972. *Labraunda. Swedish Excavations and Researches. Greek Inscriptions* (2vols.). Lund and Stockholm.
- ILAfr = *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc)*. Paris 1923.
- ILAlg = *Inscriptions latines d'Algérie*. Paris 1922-
- ILA = *Inscriptions Latines d'Aquitaine*. Santons and Bordeaux 1994.
- ILPBardo = Benzina ben Abdallah, Z. 1986. *Catalogue des Inscriptions Latines Paiennes du musée du Bardo*. Rome.
- ILTun = *Inscriptions Latines de la Tunisie*. Paris 1944.
- ILS = Dessau, H. 1892-1916. *Inscriptiones latinae selectae*. Berolini.
- InscrIt = *Inscriptiones Italiae*, Roma 1931-
- IRPLeon = Diego Santos, F. 1986. *Inscripciones Romanas de la Provincia de León*. León.
- IRT = Reynolds, J.M. and J.B. Ward-Perkins, *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. Rome 1952. Enhanced electronic reissue by G. Bodard and C. Roueché, 2009.
- IScM = *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae*. Bukarest 1980-
- ISmyrn = Petzl, G. 1982-1990. *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* (*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 23 and 24, 1-2*). Bonn.
- IvO = Dittenberger, W. and K. Purgold 1896. *Die Inschriften von Olympia*. Berlin.
- LIMC = *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Zürich, München and Düsseldorf 1981-2009.
- Lindgren = Lindgren, H. 1993. *Lindgren III: Ancient Greek Bronze Coins from the Lindgren Collection*. Quarryville.
- MAMA = *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*. Manchester and London 1928-1993.
- OGIS = Dittenberger, W. 1903-1905. *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Lipsiae.
- Perinthos-Herakleia = Sayar, M.H. 1998. *Perinthos-Herakleia (Marmara Ereğlisi) und Umgebung. Geschichte, Testimonien, griechische und lateinische Inschriften*. Vienna.
- PIR<sup>2</sup> = *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Berolini, Lipsiae, Novi Eboraci, Bostoniae 1933-2015.
- Prieur = Prieur, M. and Karin P. 2000. *A Type Corpus of the Syro-Phoenician Tetradrachms and Their Fractions from 57 BC to AD 253*. London.
- RIB = *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford 1995.
- RIC = *The Roman Imperial Coinage*. London 1923-1994.
- RIU = *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns*. Budapest 1972-
- RMD = Roxan, M.M. and P. Holder. 1978-2003. *Roman Military Diplomas*. London.

- RPC = *Roman Provincial Coinage*. London and Paris 1992-2006.
- RSC = *Roman Silver Coins*. London 1982-1987.
- Rosenberger = Rosenberger, M. 1972-1978. *The Rosenberger Israel Collection*. Jersusalem.
- Ruzicka = Ruzicka, L. 1915. ‘Die Münzen von Serdica’. *NZ* 48, 1-82.
- Salamine XIII = Pouilloux, J., P. Roesch and J. Marillet-Jaubert 1987. *Salamine de Chypre*, XIII. *Testimonia Salaminia*, 2. *Corpus épigraphique*. Paris.
- SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden and Amsterdam 1923-
- SNG ANS = Meshorer, Y. 1981. *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum. American Numismatic Society*. VI, *Palestine–South Arabia*. New York.
- SNG Braun = Leschhorn, W. 1998. *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum. Katalog der griechischen Münzen*. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum Braunschweig. Braunschweig.
- SNG Cop. = *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals. Danish National Museum*. Copenhagen 1942-1979.
- SNG Glasgow = *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum*. XII, *The Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow*. Part 2, *Cyprus-Egypt*. Oxford 2004.
- SNG Levante = Levante, E. 1986. *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum Switzerland. Cilicia*. Berne.
- SNG Lewis = *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum* 6. *Lewis Collection in Corpus Christi College. Cambridge* 2. *Greek Imperial Coins*. London 1972.
- SNG Paris = *Sylloge nummorum Greacorum France. Bibliothèque nationale. Cabinet des médailles*. Paris 1983.
- SNG Righetti = *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum Schweiz* 2. *Katalog der Sammlung Jean-Pierre Righetti im Bernischen Historischen Museum*. Berne 1993.
- SNG Tüb. = *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Deutschland. Münzsammlung Universität Tübingen*. Munich 1981-1998.
- SNG v.A. = *Sylloge nummorum Graecorum Deutschland. Sammlung von Aulock*. Berlin 1957-1981.
- TAM = *Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Vindobonae 1901-1978.
- Varbanov = Varbanov, I. 2005. *Greek Imperial Coins*. Bourgas.

## *Introduction*

A few years ago, while writing the introduction to her biography of Julia Domna, Barbara Levick noted with surprise that no novels, films or television programs focused on the powerful and dramatic story of this imperial woman<sup>1</sup>. Ten years after the publication of Levick's book, which has provided scholars with a useful work of reference on the first Syrian Augusta, novels and films about Julia Domna are still lacking. Yet it is beyond any doubt that her life contains extremely fascinating aspects. First of all, her origin outside the traditional circles of Roman aristocracy creates an intriguing sensation of mystery about her marriage with L. Septimius Severus. It is not completely clear, in fact, why a senator from Leptis Magna, in Libya, who had been appointed governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, decided to ask for the hand of a woman from Emesa, in Syria<sup>2</sup>. Their firstborn son, L. Septimius Bassianus, the future emperor Caracalla, was named after Domna's father, Julius Bassianus<sup>3</sup>. The latter was the great priest of the Sun god Elagabal, a black conical meteorite that was venerated not only in Emesa, but also in the whole Syrian-Mesopotamian area<sup>4</sup>. King-priests had ruled over this city from the late first century BCE until the early second century CE, when, for unknown reasons, this little

<sup>1</sup> Levick 2007, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Sev.* 3.9. On this topic see in general Levick 2007, 29-30; Birley 1999, 75-76. On Domna's origin cf. Levick 2009, 6-22.

<sup>3</sup> Julius Bassianus: PIR<sup>2</sup> I 202. From now on, I will mostly refer to Severus' and Domna's elder son through the widely used nickname Caracalla. From 195 up to his death, Septimius Bassianus adopted the official name of M. Aurelius Antoninus. Later on, however, he started to be called Caracalla on account of the Gaulish cloak that he made fashionable, presumably after the campaign against the Germans in 213. This nickname soon became more popular than the official one. On Caracalla's names see Mastino 1981, 27-28 and, more recently, PIR<sup>2</sup> S 446.

<sup>4</sup> On this topic see in general Icks 2011, 48-54; Frey 1989; Pietrzykowski 1986.

kingdom was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria<sup>5</sup>. The Emesene aristocracy, however, harbored the desire of restoring its past glory. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Domna's horoscope had predicted that she would marry a king, a prophecy that came true in 193, when the Pannonic legions acclaimed Septimius Severus emperor<sup>6</sup>. Domna immediately received the title of Augusta and, in 196, that of 'mother of the camps' (*mater castrorum*), which had already belonged to Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina the Younger<sup>7</sup>. This new title recognized Domna's constant presence at the side of Severus, especially during the civil wars of 193-197 and the Parthian campaigns in 194 and 197-198. Furthermore, it signaled her influence over the emperor and in public affairs. At the same time, Caracalla was awarded the title of Caesar, an act that sanctioned the beginning of the Severan dynasty with Domna holding the title of 'mother of the destined emperor' (*mater imperatoris destinati*)<sup>8</sup>. According to rumors, it was she who persuaded Severus to get rid of Clodius Albinus, the governor of Britannia whom Severus had appointed Caesar and successor when assuming the purple in 193<sup>9</sup>. Albinus was indeed a threat for the new dynasty. He had his own sons, and if Severus had suddenly died, she would have been left alone with her children (Bassianus and Geta were born in 188 and 189, respectively). Despite the death of Albinus, other menaces loomed over Domna. The ambitious Prefect of the Guard, Fulvius Plautianus, an old

<sup>5</sup> Sullivan 1978, 218.

<sup>6</sup> *Sev.* 3.9; *Geta* 3.1. Given the many interpretative problems affecting the (probably fake) multiple authors of the *Historia Augusta* (see *infra* section I.1.5), I will quote this work by simply mentioning the abbreviated name of its biographies (e.g. *Sev.* for the *vita* of Severus, *Carac.* for Caracalla, *Alb.* for Clodius Albinus etc.). Henceforth, I will also refer to Julia Domna through her *cognomen*. I will do the same with Septimius Severus and P. Septimius Geta, Caracalla's younger brother.

<sup>7</sup> On April 14<sup>th</sup>. Cf. Heil 2006, 73-74.

<sup>8</sup> Caracalla as *imperator destinatus*: Mastino 1981, 29-30. Domna's title is recorded on inscriptions: app. nos. 11a and 13a.

<sup>9</sup> *Alb.* 3.4-5.

friend of Severus from Leptis Magna, nurtured a deep hatred towards the Augusta<sup>10</sup>. According to Dio, he would never miss an opportunity to slander her before Severus<sup>11</sup>. In 202, he even managed to have his daughter, Plautilla, married to Caracalla. Plautianus' success was, however, short-lived. At the beginning of 205, Caracalla killed his father-in-law, an event that filled Domna with joy<sup>12</sup>. Despite the attacks of Plautianus, she never retired from public life. Her name appeared on hundreds of inscriptions from all over the Empire; she was portrayed on special imperial coins celebrating the dynasty<sup>13</sup>, and she was the first imperial woman to be included as a protagonist in the solemn celebration of the Secular Games<sup>14</sup>. As a whole, Domna's visibility on inscriptions and coins is more prevalent than that of previous imperial women who had been descendants of imperial households, such as Salonina Matidia, Vibia Sabina, Faustina the Elder, or daughters of emperors, such as Faustina the Younger and Lucilla<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, whereas occasional relations between imperial women and philosophical schools from the eastern provinces are documented, Domna became the promoter of an actual circle of sophists who would gather around her<sup>16</sup>. The dominant philosophical thought in Domna's salon was Neopythagoreanism, a Hellenistic school that, among other things, theorized the cosmic origin of imperial power<sup>17</sup>. This concept seems to be present in many Severan inscriptions, where great emphasis is normally placed on the 'divine household' (*domus*

<sup>10</sup> Plautinaus: PIR<sup>2</sup> F 554. Cf. also González Fernández and Conesa Navarro 2014 and Caldelli 2011 with further bibliography.

<sup>11</sup> Dio 76 (75).15.6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Dio 77 (76).4.4.

<sup>13</sup> The so-called 'dynastic issues'. Cf. Hill 1979, 19-20 and, *infra*, the table in section IV.4.1.

<sup>14</sup> Levick 2007, 53-54, 78.

<sup>15</sup> For a general idea concerning the quantity of coins and inscriptions cf. Nadolny 2016, 78-92.

<sup>16</sup> On the topic see Levick 2007, 107-123 with further references.

<sup>17</sup> On the relationship between Neopythagoreanism and the Severans, see Buraselis 2007, 14-24; Sfamemi Gasparro 2007.

*divina*), of which Domna was the mother<sup>18</sup>. Notwithstanding the exceptional importance given to her motherhood, Domna's influence in public affairs reached its apex when her role of *mater* was, in theory, not necessary anymore. When Severus died, in 211, Caracalla and Geta were 24 and 23 years old respectively, and supposedly able to marry and continue the dynasty. A deep hatred, however, divided the two brothers. The political stability of the Empire – and perhaps even its territorial integrity – was at risk<sup>19</sup>. In order to keep peace between them, Domna intervened as mediator, a role recognized by the senate and the populace through the bestowal of new titles that recalled those of the emperors, 'mother of the senate and the fatherland, Pious, Blessed' (*mater senatus et patriae, Pia, Felix*)<sup>20</sup>. Despite all these efforts, Caracalla killed Geta a few months later, as it turns out, in the arms of his mother<sup>21</sup>. This event apparently did not undermine Domna's position of influence, forasmuch as she continued to reign together with her older son during the following years. Dio says that she was entrusted with the supervision of the imperial correspondence, and that Caracalla always displayed great attachment to his mother<sup>22</sup>. Rumors about an incestuous relationship between the emperor and the Augusta started to circulate<sup>23</sup>. This was evidently as a consequence of the fact that, although she would have already been in her forties, great importance continued to be

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<sup>18</sup> The expression *domus divina* appeared for the first time during the reign of Tiberius, but it became a prevalent epigraphic formula during the Severan age. Cf. Hekster 2015, 182-183; Lichtenberger 2011, 321.

<sup>19</sup> According to Herodian (4.3.6-9), Caracalla and Geta were planning to divide the Empire into two separate kingdoms. Domna, however, persuaded her sons to abandon this project. On the struggle between the two brothers and the risk of a civil war cf. the detailed analysis in Kemmers 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Letta 1991, 673.

<sup>21</sup> Both Dio (78 [77].2.2-3) and Herodian (4.4.3) report this detail, specifying that Domna was covered with Geta's blood and accidentally wounded.

<sup>22</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.3.

<sup>23</sup> Hdn. 4.9.3 says that Domna (who is described as 'an aged woman') was nicknamed Jocasta by the Alexandrians. The story of the incest between Caracalla and Domna (*Carac.* 10.1-4) is also worth noting. On the topic cf. Levick 2007, 98-99; Marasco 1996; Letta 1985-1990.

given to her motherhood while Caracalla remained without a wife<sup>24</sup>. The end, in any case, suddenly came in 217, when the emperor was murdered in a plot organized by Macrinus, the Prefect of the Guard. When Domna realized that this event terminated her power, she preferred to die rather than to retire to private life<sup>25</sup>.

Although this fascinating story has not attracted, so far, the attention of novelists and screenwriters, it is at least possible to say that it has provided scholars with abundant food for thought. For over a century the discussion on Domna's personality and customs has occupied the thoughts of three generations of scholars. Alfred von Domaszewski was the first historian who dedicated considerable attention to her in several studies published between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his view, Domna should be identified as the main character responsible for the diffusion of oriental cultural traditions in the western half of the Empire, especially those concerning the cult of the sovereign and a new idea of power based on matriarchy<sup>26</sup>. More or less in the same period, Mary Gilmore Williams proposed a more nuanced approach. She recognized the political importance of Domna, but rejected the orientalist thesis, arguing that there was no proof to support the existence of divine honors for the Augusta while she was still alive<sup>27</sup>. The views of von Domaszewski, nonetheless, continued to enjoy notable favor among academics, even after Islemarie Mundle dismissed the equations of Domna with the Dea Caelestis that appeared in some literary sources and inscriptions as individual

<sup>24</sup> Letta 1991, 681.

<sup>25</sup> For an overall summary of the events that during Caracalla's reign involved Domna see Levick 2007, 87-106.

<sup>26</sup> Von Domaszewski 1909; Id. 1895, 72-73.

<sup>27</sup> Williams 1902, 303. Wild 1917-1918, 14-24 expressed the same conclusion. On the other hand, Babelon 1957; Altheim 1952, 259; Pfister 1951, 73; Lambrechts 1937, 83; Kornemann 1930, 93 continued to favor von Domaszewski's thesis.

manifestations of devotion<sup>28</sup>. Orientalist interpretations, however, were definitively abandoned between the 1970's and the 1980's. In this period, Erich Kettenhofen examined the literary and epigraphic sources concerning Domna, coming to the conclusion that there is no evidence to sustain the notion that Domna wanted to be honored as a goddess<sup>29</sup>. A few years later, Francesca Ghedini expressed the same verdict with regard to artistic and numismatic documentation, but credited Domna with an important role in innovating Roman customs. According to Ghedini, the ample visibility that the Augusta enjoyed on the Arch of the Argentarii in Rome and on the Severan arch in Leptis Magna indicates that her strong personality was able to break the traditional customs, which relegated women to the private and domestic dimension<sup>30</sup>. A decade ago, Barbara Levick published the biography mentioned above, *Julia Domna, Syrian Empress*, which was the first (and last) attempt to compile a systematic study of Domna's life and agency<sup>31</sup>. With regard to the methodology, this work resembles Anthony Birley's monograph on Severus (*Septimius Severus: the African Emperor*), which closely follows ancient historical accounts concerning the life and the reign of this emperor. Yet scholars have observed that the scarcity of literary references to Domna (a situation affecting Roman imperial women in general) forced Levick to write a history of Severus and Caracalla's reigns rather than a study concerning Domna's agency<sup>32</sup>. Furthermore, this book displays a general tendency to belittle her political and cultural influence, which, considering the great mass of epigraphic, numismatic and artistic documentation about

<sup>28</sup> Mundle 1961. Traces of the orientalist theory can be found in Halsberghe 1972, 41; Tatscheva-Hitova 1972, 25.

<sup>29</sup> Kettenhofen 1979, 143.

<sup>30</sup> Ghedini 1984, 187-192.

<sup>31</sup> Levick 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the review by Inge Mennen in *CIR* 58.2, 2008, 556-557.

her, should be considered anything but insignificant<sup>33</sup>. A more recent book by Julie Langford, *Maternal Megalomania: Julia Domna and the Imperial Politics of the Motherhood*<sup>34</sup>, has also met similar criticism. Langford argues that Severus used Domna's motherhood to advertise the dynasty throughout the Empire. The great number of inscriptions mentioning Domna should, accordingly, be interpreted as a reaction to messages spread by imperial propaganda rather than a consequence of her importance<sup>35</sup>. Despite references to literary, numismatic and epigraphic sources, scholars have observed that Langford focuses her attention on a limited number of documents to prove assertions intended to be all-encompassing<sup>36</sup>. Also, it has been noted that this study lacks an accurate examination of important artworks where Domna is portrayed, such as the Severan arch in Leptis Magna<sup>37</sup>. Only one year after the publication of Langford's book, however, Kimberly Cassibry reevaluated the presence of Domna on a good number of triumphal arches from Africa and Rome. She argued that these monuments were intended to obtain not only the favor of the emperors, but also the benevolence of the Augusta<sup>38</sup>. Finally, Sonja Nadolny's recent monograph on the Syrian Augustae (Julia Domna, Julia Maesa, Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea) has readdressed Domna's role in Severan propaganda and the political communication of the regime, especially through the study of imperial and provincial coins. According to Nadolny, the great visibility that Domna

<sup>33</sup> Levick's views echo also in Hekster 2015, 153, who, with regard to the reign of Caracalla, observes that 'her medial prominence *may* have resulted from her actual position of power during her son's reign, but that position cannot be asserted on the basis of her prominence in imperial messages'.

<sup>34</sup> Langford 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Langford 2013, 113-123.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the reviews by Lien Foubert in *AJPh* 135.4, 2014, 678-682; Adam M. Kemezis in *BMCRev* 2014.3; Emily Hemelrijk in *CW* 108.1, 2014-2015, 142-143.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the review by Diana E.E. Kleiner in *AHR* 119.4, 2014, 1331-1332.

<sup>38</sup> Cassibry 2014.

enjoyed implied a position of influence within the Severan household, which became the core of a ‘family domination’ (*Familienherrschaft*). All the same, this study is mainly based on a quantitative analysis of the documentation, and each source is not placed in its historical context. Nadolny’s work provides a good overview of the numismatic, epigraphic and literary attestations concerning Domna, but the origin and the evolution of her influence are not systematically investigated.

All things considered, scholars have, during the last decades, principally focused their attention on two facets of Domna’s life, the nature of her authority and her alleged orientalism. With respect to the first point, a unanimous conclusion has not been reached yet, and several questions are still a matter of dispute. Did she enjoy real political power or rather was her public image used as an instrument of propaganda to advertise the dynasty? How did the population of the Empire regard her? Were the numerous dedications set up in her honor intended to catch her benevolence or were they just passive responses to the propaganda of the Severan regime? How did her influence, if any, develop during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla? The present study, then, tries to find solutions to these problems through a comparative study of literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic sources about Domna. Even though this study is not intended to be a biography in the strictest sense of the word, the analysis of the documentation follows the chronology of the events between 187 (Domna’s marriage with Severus) and 217 (assassination of Caracalla) in order to better understand how historical events affected her life and authority. As for the orientalism, it is another question that remains without answers. When she became Augusta, did Domna bring some of her oriental background to Rome? Or, as the studies quoted above suggest, did she always behave as

an ideal Roman matron by imitating previous imperial women such as Crispina, the Faustinas, Sabina etc.? On the one hand, the fact that she did not try to impose her cult on the whole Empire seems unquestionable. On the other hand, it is undeniable that Domna's public image contains notable elements of discontinuity with respect to the Augustae who had come before her. Domna is, in fact, the first imperial woman who was explicitly compared to a deity on imperial coins<sup>39</sup>. She also appeared as a goddess on the Severan arch in Leptis Magna, and she is portrayed in a traditional oriental posture on the Arch of the Argentarii in Rome<sup>40</sup>. Furthermore, to my knowledge, she is the first Augusta who received divine honors on dedicatory inscriptions from the western provinces, such as Africa Proconsularis and Germany<sup>41</sup>. In the following chapters this documentation is accordingly reconsidered and compared to the ideas circulating in the cultural milieu that grew around Domna.

In order to answer the questions mentioned above, this study is divided into five chapters. The first is entitled ‘Critique of the Sources’, and is devoted to a preliminary examination of the literature concerning Domna’s period (especially Cassius Dio and Herodian’s *Histories* and the *Historia Augusta*), the epigraphic documentation, the coins (both imperial and provincial) and the artworks. Chapter two, ‘Marriage and Family’, examines the family backgrounds of both Severus and Domna with a view to better understanding the reasons that led Severus to marry her. The analysis of the events that affected Severus’ reign begins in chapter three, ‘The Civil Wars’, which includes a discussion concerning Domna’s attempts to persuade her husband to eliminate Clodius Albinus. Chapter four investigates the remaining part of Severus’ rule. Particular

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<sup>39</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 350-359; Morelli 2009, 127-144.

<sup>40</sup> On the topic cf. Ghedini 1984, 57-110.

<sup>41</sup> App. nos. 183b, 217b, 251b, 324b.

attention is paid to the struggle between Domna and Plautianus, as well as to how Domna could have influenced the image of the dynasty. Given the great mass of documentation to analyze, this chapter contains two parts. Section IVa includes an examination of literary and epigraphic sources, while section IVb is dedicated to the study of coins and artworks. Lastly, chapter five investigates the last years after Severus' death, that is the joint reign of Caracalla and Geta (211), which lasted less than one year, and the reign of Caracalla as sole ruler, which lasted until 217. The chapter is mainly focused on the changes that affected Domna's role after the death of her husband, her relationship with Caracalla and the persistence of her cultural influence.

## CHAPTER I

### *Literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic sources*

Unlike the male members of the Severan dynasty, ancient historians did not dedicate biographies or extensive narrations to Domna. References to her are scattered in the works of biographers and historians, either contemporary or late antique. Domna is normally mentioned either with the purpose of adding extra details to events where male individuals are the protagonists, or, in some cases, to emphasize their vices by portraying her as a victim. In order to study this imperial woman from a socio-historical perspective, it is necessary to integrate the literary evidence with the information provided by other types of sources. These are essentially inscriptions, coins and artworks. The name of Domna, in fact, appears in both Greek and Latin epigraphic records starting already from the early years of Severus' reign. The same applies to the coinage struck in her name by both imperial mints and provincial communities. Further, she was portrayed on public monuments, as for example arches and statuary groups, and on artifacts for private use, such as cameos and tondos. This kind of evidence was continuously produced not only throughout the reign of Severus, but also until the very last moments of Caracalla's rule. Thus, in the face of the paucity of references that occur in literature, it often provides a precious source of information that breaks the silence of the historians and biographers. The aim of this chapter is to offer a preliminary overview of the literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic sources concerning Domna. The purpose is to examine their strengths and limits, and to determine to which extent they can contribute to a better

understanding of the historical role of this imperial woman, and to clarify what are the most important issues connected to their use.

## I.1 LITERARY SOURCES

Before starting the examination of each author and his work, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the literature mentioning Domna. She appears in the three main historical accounts that narrate the Severan age. Two of them are written in Greek, viz. the last five books of Cassius Dio's monumental *Roman History*, and the central four books (3 to 6) of Herodian's *History of the Roman Empire from the Death of Marcus* (Τῆς μετὰ Μάρκου βασιλείας ιστορία). The third is the biographies of Septimius Severus, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, Caracalla and Geta, which are part of the so-called *Historia Augusta*, a compilation of lives of both emperors and usurpers composed during the late Empire. Although none of these accounts contain an extensive description of Domna's agency during both the twenty-four years of her marriage with Severus and the five years of the reign of her son Caracalla, each one of them reports a certain number of references to her. The most important ones can be summarized as follows:

CASSIUS DIO	HERODIAN	HISTORIA AUGUSTA	PERIOD
75 (74).3.1: Severus dreams of Faustina preparing their nuptial chamber		<i>Sev. 3.9; Geta 3.1:</i> Domna's royal horoscope. Severus asks for the hand of Domna and secures the marriage thanks to the intervention of friends	186
		<i>Alb. 3.5:</i> Domna pressures Severus to get rid of Niger and Albinus	193-196
		<i>Sev. 18.8:</i> Severus refuses to repudiate Domna, even though it is well known that she	reign of Severus

		committed many adulteries and plotted against him	
<b>76 (75).15.6-7:</b> Plautianus's hatred for Domna and his attempts to put her in disgrace. Domna turns to the study of philosophy			200 (ca.)-205
<b>77 (76).4.4:</b> Domna rejoices at the news of Plautianus's death			205
<b>77 (76).12.2:</b> meeting with the wife of the Caledonian chieftain Argentocoxus			209-211
	<b>3.15.6:</b> after the death of Severus, Domna tries to reconcile Caracalla and Geta while in Britain <b>4.3.5-9:</b> after the divinization of Severus in Rome, Domna tries again to reconcile the two brothers during a meeting where she is present		211
<b>78 (77).2.2-6:</b> presence at the murder of Geta, who dies in her arms	<b>4.4.3:</b> presence at the murder of Geta, who dies in her arms	<b>Sev. 21.7:</b> presence at the murder of Geta, who dies in her arms	211
<b>78 (77).10.2 and 4:</b> Caracalla has the craftiness of his mother, who criticizes Caracalla for his excessive expenditures			211-217
<b>78 (77).18.2-3:</b> Caracalla ignores Domna's wise advices. She is in charge of the imperial correspondence and holds public receptions for the most distinguished personalities. Caracalla praises her in his letters to the senate			211-217
		<b>Carac. 10.1-4:</b> Domna commits incest with her son Caracalla	211-217
<b>79 (78).4.2:</b> Supervision of the imperial correspondence during Caracalla's Parthian campaign			216-217

	<b>4.9.3:</b> the inhabitants of Alexandria call Domna Jocasta during Caracalla's visit to the city		216-217
<b>79 (78).23.1-3:</b> Domna attempts to get the praetorians on her side while in Antioch after the murder of Caracalla; suicide	<b>4.13.8:</b> Domna dies in Antioch after the murder of Caracalla, either by suicide or by order of Macrinus		217

**Table 1: List of the passages mentioning Domna in Cassius Dio, Herodian and the *Historia Augusta***

A few other literary sources recount some sparse details concerning the Syrian Augusta.

These are fourth-century works such as the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus*, Eutropius' *Breviarium* and Orosius' *Historiae Adversus Paganos*. However, the information provided by these sources relates almost exclusively the false story that she was the stepmother of Caracalla and that she committed incest with him<sup>42</sup>. For this reason, these works do not require an extensive examination here. Further references to Domna appear in the works of the sophist L. Flavius Philostratus, who declares that he was encouraged by the Augusta to write a biography of the philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, and that the sophist Philiscus Thessalus was appointed

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<sup>42</sup> *Epit. de Caes.* 21.5; AVR. VICT. *Caes.* 21.3; EVTR. 8.20; OROS. 7.18.2 relate that Domna was only the stepmother of Caracalla, a story that is reported by the *HA* as well (*Sev.* 21.7; *Carac.* 10.1; *Getae* 7.3) AVR. VICT. *Caes.* 21.3 also relates the vignette of the incest between Domna and Caracalla already narrated by *Carac.* 10.1-4. Modern scholars, on the other hand, are unanimous in considering this information to be a forgery that was probably in circulation during the reign of Caracalla. Levick 2007, 98-100 devotes an ample discussion on the origin of this falsehood. In fact, both Cassius Dio and Herodian always refer to Domna as the mother of Caracalla (e.g. Dio 78 [77].10.2 and 4; 79 [78].23.1; 24.1; Hdn. 3.15.6; 4.9.3; 4.13.8). Cf. also Letta 1985-1990, 521-529 with regard to the incest. According to this scholar, during the reign of Caracalla stories concerning the incestuous relationship with his mother started to circulate as a consequence of his refusal to re-marry. Later, Macrinus used these stories to discredit Elagabalus, whom Julia Mesa had presented to the soldiers as the son of Caracalla. The only genuine information that the aforementioned fourth-century sources seem to relate occurs in *Epit. de Caes.* 21.1 and 23.2. According to these passages, Domna was the daughter of the great priest of Elagabal in Emesa, Julius Bassianus, a fact that contradicts 21.5, where the Augusta is called *noverca*. On this topic cf. *infra* chapter II.

teacher of oratory in Athens thanks to her intercession<sup>43</sup>. Finally, the preface of the anonymous poem *Hunting with Dogs* (Κυνηγετικά), which was dedicated to Caracalla by a Syrian from Apamea (sometimes called Oppian from Apamea or Pseudo-Oppian), addresses her with the grandiose epithets of ‘Assyrian Cythereia’ (Ἀσσυρίη Κυθέρεια) and ‘uneclipsed Moon’ (οὐ λείπουσα Σελήνη)<sup>44</sup>.

This brief examination highlights the fact that the histories of Cassius Dio, Herodian, and the biographies of the *HA* are the most relevant resources for the study of her persona. Notwithstanding, the table reported above also shows how the information they provide is quite heterogeneous, and, most of all, how only in a few cases it is possible to make comparisons between what is related by one source and the information reported by the other two. An investigation of the degree of reliability of these works and, in consequence, of the most important publications that have dealt with these topics is therefore essential. Also, it is important to stress that Dio, Herodian and the *HA* are fundamental sources for the reconstruction of the history of the Severan age in general. A correct understanding of the sources they used, their points of view, and the date of composition of their accounts is, therefore, an essential prerequisite to reconstruct both Domna’s agency and, more in general, the historical context in which she lived.

### I.1.1. Cassius Dio: life and career

Claudius Cassius Dio was born during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in Nicaea (Isnik), which, after Nicomedia, was the most important city of the Roman province of

<sup>43</sup> Philostr. *VA* 1.3 and *VS* 2.30. On the relationship between Domna and Philostratus cf. Levick 2007, 107-123 with further references.

<sup>44</sup> Opp. *cyneg.* 1.7. On this depiction of Domna cf. Levick 2007, 142.

Bithynia<sup>45</sup>. His father was the senator and consul Cassius Apronianus, who under Marcus Aurelius governed the provinces of Lycia and Pamphylia, Cilicia and Dalmatia<sup>46</sup>. In 180 he was already in Rome, since he states that he witnessed the events starting from the arrival of Commodus in the capital onwards<sup>47</sup>. Soon afterwards he started upon the senatorial *cursus honorum*, and in 193, during the reign of Pertinax, he was designated praetor for the year 194<sup>48</sup>. It has been suggested that he was *consul suffectus* during the reign of Severus and even a member of the *consilium principis* during the reigns of both Severus and Carcalla, but it seems more probable that his political career did not improve at all under these two emperors<sup>49</sup>. During the winter of 214 and 215 he joined the

<sup>45</sup> Dio 75.15.3: ἐν τῇ Νικαίᾳ τῇ πατρίδι μου. The full name of Dio is reported by a Macedonian inscription from Beroea (AE 1971, 430) as ΚΛ'Κάσσιος Δίων. His name is also mentioned by a certain number of inscriptions that record his consulship of 229 together with Severus Alexander, but normally only through the form Cassio Dione. However, a military diploma (RMD II 133 = AE 1985, 821) attests the name L. Cassius Dio. Edmondson 1992, 16 suggests that the abbreviation ΚΛ' for Cl(audius) reported by the inscription from Beroea could be an error owing to the proximity of καὶ (KAI ΚΛ' on the stone). A second cognomen, Cocceianus (Gr. Κοκκιανός, Κοκκίος, Κοκκήιος or Κοκκηιανός), is attested by manuscripts (among them is Photius (Bibl. cod. 71), who probably read a copy of Dio's history), but it has been rejected by Gowing 1990, 49-54, and, more recently, by Prostko-Prostyński 2012 (*contra* Schmidt 1997, 2592 nt. 1). On the topic cf. also PIR<sup>2</sup> C 492; Ameling 1984, 125-126; Martinelli 1999, 13-16.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> C 485. Dio 49.36.4: τῇ Δελματίᾳ, ὃς ποτε καὶ πατήρ μου χρόνον τινὰ ἥρξε ('[...] in Dalmatia, which my father once governed for some time') and 69.1.3: ὁ πατήρ μου Ἀπρωνιανός, τῆς Κιλικίας ἄρξας ('my father, Apronianus, was the governor of Cilicia').

<sup>47</sup> Dio 73 (72).4.2: λέγω δὲ ταῦτα τε τὰ λοιπὰ οὐκ ἐξ ἀλλοτρίας ἔτι παραδόσεως, ἀλλ' ἐξ οἰκεῖας ἡδε τηρήσεως ('I state these and subsequent facts, not, as hitherto, on the authority of others' reports, but from my own observation' [transl. by Ernest Cary]). I will henceforth use Cary's English edition of Dio's *History* (LOEB 1969) when providing translations taken from Dio's account.

<sup>48</sup> Dio 74.12.2: ὑπό τε τοῦ Περτίνακος τά τε ἄλλα ἐτειμήμην, καὶ στρατηγὸς ἀπεδεδείγμην ('I received various honors from Pertinax, including the praetorship'). Barnes 1984, 242 prefers to date the praetorship to 195. Dio could be mentioned by a rescript of Septimius Severus addressed to a provincial governor called 'Dio' (*Dig.* 50.12.7).

<sup>49</sup> According to Millar 1966, 204-207, Dio was likely *consul suffectus* around the years 205/206 (this theory has been also accepted by Garnsey 1967, 57; Leunissen 1989, 163; Edmondson 1992, 19; De Blois 1997, 2651; Birley 1999, 142; Martinelli 1999, 19; Swan 2004, 2 and Davenport 2012, 801, who however hypothesizes the consulate between 203 and 208). This interpretation is principally based on the passage about Severus' campaign against adulteries. Dio 77 (76).16.4 reports that during his consulate he found three thousand accusations (γραφαὶ) in the records (τρισχιλίας γοῦν ὑπατεύων εὗρον ἐν τῷ πίνακι ἐγγεγραμμένας). Millar interpreted these charges

imperial court at Nicomedia, where he probably attended some meetings of the *consilium principis*<sup>50</sup>. Nevertheless, his vicinity to the entourage of Caracalla is limited to this occasion only. His presence can therefore be interpreted as the result of an ordinary mission on behalf of the Bithynian elites to whom he belonged as senator from Nicaea<sup>51</sup>. Something changed with the advent of Macrinus, who appointed him *curator* of Pergamum and Smyrna in the first months of 218<sup>52</sup>. This task occupied the rest of the year 218 and part of 219, and was followed by a period of illness that was spent in Nicaea, probably between 219 and 220<sup>53</sup>. As the events that occurred in the following ten years show, the rise of Julia Mamaea and her son Severus Alexander, who became Caesar on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 221, can be considered the turning point in Dio's political career. Already in 220/221 he was appointed legate of the Legio III Augusta in Numidia<sup>54</sup>. In 222/223, soon

as related to the year of Dio's consulship. Nonetheless, Letta 1979, 118-122 convincingly demonstrates that this investigation probably took place after the death of Severus. Accusations of adultery were in fact examined by a praetor who presided over the *quaestio de adulteriis*, which at the time of Severus was still operative. Dio probably consulted the archives during one of his consulships throughout the reigns of either Elagabalus or Severus Alexander. Τρισχλίας should therefore be considered the total number of accusations concerning the entire reign of Severus. Many scholars (Swan 2004, 2; De Blois 1997, 2651; Hose 1994, 358; Edmondson 1992, 19-20; Reinhold 1988, 1; Alföldy 1968, 113; Kunkel 1968, 286; Millar 1966, 17; Crook 1955, 81-82, 157) have also ascerted that Dio belonged to the *consilium principis*, since during the trial against the senator Raecius Constans he uses the expression πρός ἡμάς τοὺς συνδικάζοντας αὐτῷ (*scil.* Severus). As observed by Letta 1979, 122-123, this trial was probably conducted before the whole senate. Moreover, it was possible that senators were occasionally called to join the *consilium* on specific occasions, such as judicial proceedings, but this did not necessarily imply a special closeness to the emperor (Devenport 2012, 800).

<sup>50</sup> Dio 78 (77).17.3-18.1 and 79 (78).8.4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Letta 1979, 124-125 and, more recently, Davenport 2012, 802.

<sup>52</sup> Dio 80 (79).7.4. Cf. Schmidt 1997, 2635-2637; Barnes 1984, 244.

<sup>53</sup> Dio 80.1.2.

<sup>54</sup> Dio 80.1.2. This is probably the meaning of the expression ἡ ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ ἡγεμονία, that has been traditionally interpreted as the governorship of Proconsular Africa (Swan 2004, 3; Schmidt 1997, 2637; Edmondson 1992, 21; Leunissen 1989, 163; Millar 1964, 16; Gabba 1955, 290). As demonstrated by Letta 1979, 131-135 with solid arguments, this theory cannot be accepted, since 1) in the *History* of Dio, there are no other expressions similar to ἡ ἐν τῇ Ἀφρικῇ ἡγεμονία describing the governorship of a province, which would be better described by ἡ τῆς Ἀφρικῆς ἡγεμονία (as already observed by Vrind 1923, 146, 158-163; 2) at that time Numidia, where the III Augusta was stationed, was not separate from proconsular Africa, as reported by Dio himself

after the death of Elagabalus, he received the governorship of the consular province of Dalmatia, probably after having been *consul suffectus* in Rome for some months<sup>55</sup>. From Dalmatia he was sent directly to govern Pannonia during the summer of 223<sup>56</sup>. He remained there until either 227 or 228, and in 229 he finally became ordinary consul together with Severus Alexander. During his consulate he stayed in Rome for only a very short period<sup>57</sup>. The hostility of the praetorians, owing to the excessive severity with which he had commanded the troops in Pannonia, forced the emperor to ask him to leave Rome almost immediately<sup>58</sup>. He later decided to return to Nicaea, where he spent the rest of his life privately<sup>59</sup>.

This short analysis of the most salient events in Dio's life demonstrates that, during the reigns of both Severus and Caracalla, he was mainly at Rome. There he had the opportunity to observe the imperial court on many occasions, but from an external point of view. In fact, during this period he was not particularly esteemed by the rulers

(59.20.7); 3) a proconsulship of Africa does not fit with Dio's successive governorships in imperial consular provinces, such as Dalmatia and Pannonia Superior (cf. *infra*). Barnes 1984, 248 attempts to confute the points 1 and 2, but without an extensive discussion. In my view, Letta's argumentations are also confirmed by the governorship of the important military district of Pannonia Superior under Severus Alexander. Although Dio could have already served as *legatus Augusti pro praetore* after his praetorship some twenty-five years before (but this circumstance is not attested), a man without any recent experience as legionary commander could have hardly been appointed to cover such a position.

<sup>55</sup> Dio 80.1.3. Cf. Letta 1979, 135-137.

<sup>56</sup> Dio 80.1.3. The chronology provided by Millar 1966, 23 (office in Africa in 223; *legatus Augusti* in Dalmatia in 224-226 and then in Pannonia 226-228) is certainly erroneous, since the soldiers in Pannonia complained to Ulpian about Dio's command, but Ulpian was already dead in the first half of 224 (on the topic cf. De Blois 2003; Honoré 2002, 30-36 and Letta 1979, 130 with previous bibliography).

<sup>57</sup> As stressed by Dio himself (80.1.3: ἐς τὴν Τρόμην καὶ ἐς τὴν Καμπανίαν ἀφικόμενος παραχρῆμα οἴκαδε ἐξωρμήθην [‘After returning to Rome and to Campania, I at once set out for home’]).

<sup>58</sup> See n. 56 above.

<sup>59</sup> Dio 80.5.2-3.

and did not hold important positions. These circumstances certainly influenced his account, especially with regard to the use of sources, which will be discussed below.

### **I.1.2. Transmission of Dio's *History*, the chronology of its composition and Dio's historiographical methodology**

Dio's *History* originally covered the entire period between the foundation of Rome and the beginning of the reign of Alexander Severus through eighty books. The part concerning the reigns of the Severan emperors consists of books 75-80. Unfortunately, the original text of Dio is preserved by the manuscript *Vaticanus Graecus* 1288 only. It includes, with several lacunae, only a large section between books 79 (78) and 80 (79), corresponding to the final part of the reign of Caracalla and the beginning of the rule of Elagabalus<sup>60</sup>. The rest of the text is handed down either by later excerpts (from either various Byzantine collections, grammarians or lexicographers) or by epitomes<sup>61</sup>. The most important epitomator is Johannes Xiphilinus, a Byzantine monk who, during the latter half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, prepared an epitome of Dio by order of emperor Michael VII Doukas (1067-1078). For editions of books 75-80, Xiphilinus' work is the basic text, which, besides the excerpts, is also beefed up with passages from the Ἐπιτομὴ Ἰστοριῶν of Johannes Zonaras. The latter was a Byzantine chronicler who, some decades after Xiphilinus, composed a history starting from the creation of the world to the death of Emperor Alexius I Komnenos (1081-1118). Since he is following Dio as his main source for the Roman history, his work has been frequently used by scholars in order to enhance the epitome of Xiphilinus. Although it is possible that he occasionally made use of

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<sup>60</sup> Dio 79 (78).2-80 (79).8.3.

<sup>61</sup> On the topic cf. Martinelli 1999, 20-23; Cary 1970, xix-xvi; Millar 1964, 1-4.

Xiphilinus, he is normally more accurate concerning the selection of passages and their abbreviation, providing therefore a more coherent account<sup>62</sup>. Finally, both Xiphilinus and Zonaras are useful for the reconstruction of lacunose passages in the text of *Vaticanus Graecus* 1288.

Dio reports that, at the beginning of the reign of Severus, he wrote two minor *opuscula*. They were dedicated to the dreams that had predicted his future accession to Severus; later, he was inspired to compose a complete history of Rome<sup>63</sup>. He states that he spent ten years collecting materials from the beginning of Roman history to the death of Severus, and then twelve years writing<sup>64</sup>. Since he does not specify when the work was started, scholars have proposed different chronologies. According to the most common interpretation of Dio's explanation, the beginning of the history should be placed immediately after the publication of the first two pamphlets. Emilio Gabba, who argues for 196-206 and 206-218 for collecting and writing, respectively<sup>65</sup>, Fergus Millar (197-207 and 207-219)<sup>66</sup> and, more recently, Jonathan Edmondson (202-211 and 211-222)<sup>67</sup>, Manfred Schmidt (195-205 and 205-217)<sup>68</sup>, Marta Sordi (193-202 and 202-213)<sup>69</sup> and Peter Swan (ca. 200-210 and 210-222)<sup>70</sup> have endorsed this interpretation. Other scholars, on the other side, have proposed a later starting date. These are Cesare Letta (212-222

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<sup>62</sup> Millar 1964, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Dio 73 (72).23.1-3.

<sup>64</sup> Dio 73 (72).23.5: συνέλεξα δὲ πάντα τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τοῖς Ρωμαίοις μέχρι τῆς Σεουήρου μεταλλαγῆς πραχθέντα ἐν ἔτεσι δέκα, καὶ συνέγραψα ἐν ἄλλοις δώδεκα: τὰ γὰρ λοιπά, ὅπου ἂν καὶ προχωρήσῃ, γεγράψεται ('I spent ten years in collecting all the achievements of the Romans from the beginning down to the death of Severus, and twelve years more in composing my work. As for subsequent events, they also shall be recorded, down to whatever point it shall be permitted me').

<sup>65</sup> Gabba 1955, 295-301.

<sup>66</sup> Millar 1964, 30, 120.

<sup>67</sup> Edmondson 1992, 27-28.

<sup>68</sup> Schmidt 1997, 2620-2621.

<sup>69</sup> Sordi 2000.

<sup>70</sup> Swan 1997, 2549-2556; *Id.* 2004, 28-33.

and 222-234)<sup>71</sup>, Timothy Barnes (211-220 and 220-231)<sup>72</sup> and Adam Kemezis<sup>73</sup>.

Although the debate cannot be considered definitively closed, it is in any case possible, in my opinion, to reject the postulations of the first group. Dio says that he spent ten years collecting materials from the origins of Rome to the death of Severus (211) and that in another (*ἐν ἄλλοις*) twelve years he composed his history until this event. In consequence, it is impossible to sustain that: 1) he finished the preliminary research work before the death of this emperor<sup>74</sup>; 2) he started to write when Severus was still alive; 3) he started to write while still collecting materials before Severus' death. Moreover, as demonstrated by Letta, there is no proof that the original project of Dio was to write a Roman history *ab originibus* until the end of Severus' reign and that later on he decided to narrate the reign of Caracalla and Elagabalus<sup>75</sup>. In fact, he only says that he carried out research until the death of Severus, but he will continue to record the events ὅπου ἂν καὶ προχωρήσῃ<sup>76</sup>. He also states that the success of the pamphlet about the civil wars gave him the idea to write a Roman history, but he does not say that the work started immediately after<sup>77</sup>. Support for this interpretation can be found in the dream that Dio

<sup>71</sup> Letta 1979, 148-189 and *Id.* 2007, 41-47.

<sup>72</sup> Barnes 1984, 251-252.

<sup>73</sup> Kemezis 2014, 282-293. Although Kemezis does not provide a precise dating, he states that Dio's work should have reached its final form between 229 and 231.

<sup>74</sup> As already observed by the recension of Glenn W. Bowersock, *Gnomon* 37, 1965, 470-473 and reaffirmed by Letta 2007, 41-43.

<sup>75</sup> Letta 1979, 148-151; cf. also Schmidt 1997, 2620. The hypothesis has been formulated by Millar 1964, 119 and more recently supported by Edmondson 1992, 27 and Swan 2004, 34-36.

<sup>76</sup> Dio 73 (72).23.5. This idea is also expressed some lines above (23.3): *ἐν μῆδ πραγματείᾳ ἀπ' αρχῆς πάντα μέχρις ἂν καὶ τῇ Τύχῃ δόξῃ γράψας καταλίπω* ('[...] in order that in a single work I might write down and leave behind me a record of everything from the beginning down to the point that shall seem best to Fortune').

<sup>77</sup> Letta 1979, 153-154. Against this reconstruction Swan 2004, 28-33. His arguments seem however to be quite weak, since they are essentially based on *τὸτε δὴ* in Dio 73 (72).23.3, which, according to the scholar, would suggest the idea of prompt continuation after the publication of the pamphlet about the civil wars. It would be also possible, in my view, to interpret *τὸτε δὴ* as an indefinite "then".

reports he had between the death of Severus and the accession of Caracalla as sole ruler, namely that Severus appeared to him ordering him to record πάντα καὶ τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ τὰ γιγνόμενα<sup>78</sup>. The best explanation for the need of documentation up to 211 is the fact that before this date he had not started to work at all. Rather, starting from either 211 or 212, while collecting information about the past, he was taking notes about contemporary events. Therefore, as argued by Letta, the ten years of research should approximately cover the period from 211/212 to 222<sup>79</sup>. As for the writing, the twelve years of composition could have followed promptly. If so, the *History* up to the death of Severus should have been concluded by 234, and the remaining part between 234 and 235<sup>80</sup>. However, both Dio's negative judgments towards Severus and his hatred for Caracalla (who is called with the name of a cruel gladiator, Tarautas, on many occasions) could only with difficulty find a place in a historiographical work written under Severus Alexander, who had taken part of his name from the former and had been portrayed as the son of the latter by Julia Maesa and Julia Mamaea<sup>81</sup>. The books concerning the

<sup>78</sup> Dio 79 (78).10.1-2. Cf. Letta 1979, 148-150. Through a different interpretation of this passage, Swan 1997, 2552-2555 argues that the dream could have occurred when Severus was still alive. However, neither does this prove that at the time of this dream Dio was already writing nor, paraphrasing Swan 2004, 31 n. 135, does cut the ground from under the late chronologies.

<sup>79</sup> Letta 1979, 152-157.

<sup>80</sup> So Letta 1979, 185-189. According to Barnes 1984, 251-252 the composition should be placed between 220 and 231, although a later dating remains possible.

<sup>81</sup> According to Millar 1964, 138-139, Dio cannot be considered hostile to Severus, especially in regard to the final judgments that follow the death of the latter (77 [76].16.1-3, a similar position is expressed by Bering-Staschewski 1981, 75-77). Nonetheless, severe criticisms can be often detected in the narration of his reign, e.g. the transgression of laws that he himself had encouraged (75 [74].2.2), the Italian youth forced to turn to brigandage in consequence of his decision to exclude them from praetorian cohorts (75 [74].2.5-6), the inutility of his conquest of Mesopotamia (75.3.3), the senseless decision to destroy the walls of Byzantium (75 [74].14.4), his lies about the death of Albinus (76 [75].7.3), his wrath against the senate and the people in Rome (76 [75].7.3-4), the execution of Laetus for fear of his popularity (76.[75].10.3), his subjection to Plautianus (76 [75].15.3-5). Kemezis 2014, 292-293 and Eisman 1977, 667-673 have already observed that Dio's negative opinion of both Severus and Caracalla could have been displayed with difficulty before the death of Severus Alexander. In order to explain this, Eisman

Severan dynasty (75-80) were in consequence written after the news about the assassination of Severus Alexander and Mamaea had reached Dio, who was dwelling in Nicaea after his retirement from public businesses. Since the killings took place at Mainz between February and March of 235, it is necessary to assume that these books could not have been finished before the summer of this year<sup>82</sup>. Moreover, Dio's decision to conclude his narration after a very short excursus about the first years of Alexander's reign does not seem to be casual. After the accession of Maximinus Thrax, he evidently did not want to appear compromised with the previous regime, under which he had held important positions<sup>83</sup>. The beginning of the twelve years of writing should in consequence be postponed to a period between 223 and 224. In the fundamental passage about the duration of his work, Dio does not explicitly say that the composition started immediately after the end of the research<sup>84</sup>. One or two years between the two phases are therefore not impossible, since Dio himself says that he passed through moments of indecision and hesitation while working on the history, but thanks to Fortune he was

postulates a later revision of these books, which could have been published posthumously. In spite of this, it remains hard to explain why Dio should have planned a posthumous publication of his work. On Severus Alexander depicted as the son of Caracalla cf. Baharal 1996, 64-66. On the nicknames used by literary sources to refer to Caracalla cf. Bruun 2003, 86-87.

<sup>82</sup> Although it is possible that some preliminary drafts had already been prepared before. In this regard, Dio 77 (76).2.1 is particularly interesting: ἐν δὲ τῷ Βεσυβίῳ τῷ ὅρει πῦρ τε πλεῖστον ἔξελαμψε καὶ μυκήματα μέγιστα ἐγένετο, ὥστε καὶ ἐς τὴν Καπύην, ἐν ᾧ, ὁσάκις ἂν ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ οἰκῶ, διάγω, ἔξαικουσθῆναι: τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ χωρίον ἔξειλόμην τῶν τε ἄλλων ἔνεκα καὶ τῆς ἡσυχίας ὅτι μάλιστα, ἵνα σχολὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀστικῶν πραγμάτων ἄγων ταῦτα γράψαιμι ('On Mount Vesuvius a huge fire ignited and there were roars mighty enough to be heard even in Capua, where I live whenever I am in Italy. I chose this place for various reasons, and particularly for its quiet, in order that when I have leisure from the businesses of the city I may write these things'). According to Edmondson 1992, 27 this passage would demonstrate that Dio was already writing the *History* during the reign of either Caracalla or Macrinus, when he spent several periods in Italy. However, as observed by Letta 2007, 44, it is also possible to date the passage to 229, when Dio was forced to stay away from Rome (cf. *supra*). In my view, Dio could have stayed in Italy even longer, since in 80.5.2 he does not specifically state that he retired to Nicaea immediately after his consulate.

<sup>83</sup> This interpretation has been formulated by Letta 1979, 187.

<sup>84</sup> See n. 64 above.

eventually able to accomplish his goal<sup>85</sup>. I would maintain, in conclusion, ten years of documentation between 211/212 and 222: this is the period between the beginning of the work, with the research of materials preceding the death of Severus, and Dio's last significant visit in Rome, namely after the command in Africa and before the trip to Dalmatia and Pannonia. However, differently from Letta, I would move the chronology of composition to the years between 223/224 and 235/236, with the publication under Maximinus' reign. If this reconstruction is correct, it follows that Dio composed his account of the reigns of Severus and Caracalla at least fifteen years after the death of Domna.

Dio does not normally cite any of his contemporary sources. The only historical account referred to is the autobiography of Severus, which he mentions only once regarding the death of Clodius Albinus<sup>86</sup>. It is therefore impossible to establish whether the statement regarding the many books that he declares to have read could somehow be referring to other historians who wrote accounts contemporary to his time<sup>87</sup>. Scholars have, for this reason, assumed that his main source of information was his personal experience as senator<sup>88</sup>. This is most likely true, at least for periods during which both Dio and the imperial court found themselves in the same place. He could have witnessed, for example, the wedding of Caracalla and Plautilla or the public receptions of Julia Domna during the reign of Caracalla<sup>89</sup>. It is, however, important to stress that under the rule of both Severus and Caracalla, as reported above, he did not hold any important

<sup>85</sup> Dio 73 (72).23.4.

<sup>86</sup> Dio 76 (75).7.3. Millar 1964, 122 suggests that Dio could have read the life of Severus written by sophist Aelius Antipater, but there is no proof in this regard.

<sup>87</sup> Dio 53.19.6. A possible connection with Marius Maximus is argued by Birley 1997, 2700. Cf. Moscovich 2004, 357.

<sup>88</sup> Millar 1964, 172-173.

<sup>89</sup> Dio 77 (76).1.2 and 78 (77).18.2-3, respectively.

position from which he could have observed political events in detail<sup>90</sup>. Concerning the reign of Severus, James Moscovich has recently hypothesized a relationship between Dio and the sophists who frequented the imperial court and the circle of Julia Domna<sup>91</sup>. Hearsay, he argues, from people who were familiar with the palace could be the origin of several anecdotes, as for example the detailed report about the death of Plautianus or the meeting between Domna and the wife of a Caledonian chieftain<sup>92</sup>. The same kind of sources could also be postulated for the period after the death of Severus, for instance, the case of Domna's reproaches against Caracalla for his excessive expenditures<sup>93</sup>. Besides this, Dio occasionally specifies that the information he is reporting comes from trustworthy witnesses, as in the case of some revolts that occurred during Elagabalus' stay in Nicomedia<sup>94</sup>. Finally, another significant source of information is research in the archives. As stressed by Letta, it is not possible to maintain that every time Dio cites a letter sent to the Senate he was necessarily present during its reading<sup>95</sup>. Otherwise it would be difficult to justify the references to Elagabalus' letters that were sent to Rome when Dio was already *curator* at Pergamum and Smyrna<sup>96</sup>. He probably made use of the *acta senatus* or the imperial archives in order to get information for the periods he had been absent from Rome. In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the last occasion he had to make this kind of research was probably his stay in Rome after the return from Africa in 222<sup>97</sup>. Soon after he departed for Dalmatia and then reached Pannonia, coming

<sup>90</sup> See *supra*.

<sup>91</sup> Moscovich 2004, 361-364. Cf. also Millar 1964, 50-51.

<sup>92</sup> Dio 77 (76).16.5. Cf. Moscovich 2004, 363-364.

<sup>93</sup> Dio 78 (77).10.4.

<sup>94</sup> Dio 80 (79).7.4.

<sup>95</sup> Letta 1979, 139-148. An extensive use of archives is excluded by Millar 1964, 173.

<sup>96</sup> Dio 80 (79).1.2-3; 2.1-2; 4.4; 4.6; 5.2; 7.2; 8.1-3. Cf. Letta 1979, 142.

<sup>97</sup> Letta 1979, 144.

back to Rome in 229 only for a very short period, since he had to leave the city almost immediately because of the hostility of the praetorians. This corresponds to what he reports at the end of the reign of Elagabalus. In fact, he says that, starting from the accession of Severus Alexander, he is not able anymore to provide an accurate account of the facts<sup>98</sup>. Therefore, the quick excursus on the first events of Alexander's reign was evidently based either on hearsay that later reached the provinces where he was serving, or on the conversations with the emperor that he had in Capua in 229<sup>99</sup>, but no longer on documents from the archives.

Despite the fact of both being a contemporary of the events that he narrates and having access to a vast repertory of sources, Dio has been defined by Manfred Schmidt as *ein politisch ‘Publizist’ der früher Severerzeit* rather than a proper historian<sup>100</sup>. Although Dio himself considers it ‘particularly instructive, when one takes facts as the basis of one’s reasoning, investigates the nature of the former by the latter, and thus proves one’s reasoning true by its correspondence with the facts’<sup>101</sup>, it is difficult to find traces of this methodology in the composition of his work, which is mainly based on an anecdotal narration of the events<sup>102</sup>. This is especially apparent for the Severan age, and the analysis of Dio’s original text preserved in the *Vaticanus Graecus* 1288 has shown no differences with Xiphilinus’ epitome in this regard<sup>103</sup>. Dio’s interest is usually focused on a collection of incidents concerning emperors’ actions, personal behaviors and treatment of

<sup>98</sup> Dio 80.1.2.

<sup>99</sup> Dio 80.5.2.

<sup>100</sup> Schmidt 1997, 2594.

<sup>101</sup> Dio 46.35.1: καὶ γὰρ καὶ παίδευσις ἐν τούτῳ τὰ μάλιστα εἶναι μοι δοκεῖ, ὅταν τις τὰ ἔργα τοῖς λογισμοῖς ὑπολέγων τίν τε ἐκείνων φύσιν ἐκ τούτων ἐλέγχῃ καὶ τούτους ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνων ὁμολογίας τεκμηριοῦ.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Millar 1964, 43-46; Schmidt 1997, 2594-2595; *Id.* 2000, 34-35.

<sup>103</sup> Millar 1964, 159.

the Senate<sup>104</sup>, but without a real effort to understand the events and their causes<sup>105</sup>. Severus' scornful attitude towards senators and his actions normally undertaken without their approval occupy a good part of the books dedicated to the reign of this emperor, while the books on both Caracalla and Elagabalus are basically a string of anecdotes about their cruelty, depravity and licentiousness. It is therefore not surprising that decision making processes, relations of power within the imperial court and their consequences on the administration of the Empire appear only occasionally in his narration. The role played by imperial women is in many cases either left out or reported in order to stress other facts. A good example of this, for instance, is the hatred of Plautianus for Julia Domna, which is reported with the purpose of adding more details about the cruelty of the first, but without any further explanation about the causes of this enmity<sup>106</sup>. Moreover, the assertion that Caracalla ruled without following the good advice of his mother seems more functional as describing the foolishness of the latter rather than investigating the relationship between mother and son with regard to the activities of government<sup>107</sup>. Finally, after the death of the emperor, Domna's failed attempt to persuade the soldiers to revolt and her consequent suicide are narrated in order to reflect on the precariousness of human destinies rather than to enumerate the privileges and influence that she would have lost if she had had to abandon the imperial court and return to private life<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> Millar 1964, 159, 171. On Dio's senatorial point of view cf. also Kemezis 2014, 90-149 and *Id.* 2012. According to Kemezis, Dio's narrative of the Severan period expressed an 'oppositional story', which aimed at challenging the scripts that Severan emperors had written for themselves.

<sup>105</sup> Millar 1964, 77.

<sup>106</sup> Dio 76 (75).15.6. Cf. Langford 2013, 108-110; Mallan 2013, 740-742.

<sup>107</sup> Dio 78 (77).10.4.

<sup>108</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.1-3. Cf. Mallan 2013, 753-756.

### I.1.3. Dio and the Severans: some conclusions

Some conclusions are necessary at this point. For our knowledge of the Severan age, Cassius Dio's *History* is surely the most important source written by an eyewitness. Thanks to the information that he reports about himself, it is possible to have an idea of the role that he played within the Roman society of that time, and, in consequence, of his point of view. The fact of being a senator undoubtedly provided him with a favorable position to observe political life, and provides modern scholars with an interesting picture of the ideas and feelings of a member of the ruling class at the beginning of the third century<sup>109</sup>. It is likewise important to stress that he did not hold important political positions when the facts that he narrates took place. Besides, he composed his books on the Severan dynasty many years after the death of Domna, arguably under the rule of Maximinus Thrax. Therefore, although in some cases he probably made use of accounts by people who had been closer to the emperors' family, his knowledge of the life inside the imperial court - that is, the place where the influence of an imperial woman was more evident - is often superficial. Archive researches either in the *acta senatus* or in the imperial *tabularium* were also important sources that he used to integrate the other information he had gathered. However, the mass of documentation that he collected during ten years of research was not later reorganized into a coherent account with the purpose of individuating causes and effects of political events, but was rather used to put together a narration of anecdotes and curiosities about the events that occurred in his own times. In general, a precise intention to penetrate beyond the surface of the events is absent, and the focus is often limited to the emperors' actions and their relationship with the senate. Domna is only occasionally mentioned, and almost always with the purpose of

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<sup>109</sup> As stressed by Kemezis 2014, 148-169; Schmidt 1997, 2596; Millar 1964, 83.

enforcing observations made in regard of other subjects. Consequently, although fundamental for the reconstruction of the agency of the Syrian Augusta, Dio's *History* should be carefully compared to and integrated with other literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources.

#### I.1.4. Herodian

Although he is the historian who gives the most space to the political role of Julia Maesa, Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea<sup>110</sup>, Herodian relates very little about Domna. Apart from the speech to Caracalla and Geta, in fact, she is mentioned only on a few other occasions and in a cursory way. Unlike Cassius Dio, very little is known about this author. The eight books of his history cover the period between 180 and 238, but they contain almost no information about his identity and status. He says only that he is a contemporary of the events described in his history, and that during his life he held some responsibilities in both the imperial and municipal administration<sup>111</sup>. His origins can be situated with certainty in the Greek-speaking part of the Empire<sup>112</sup>. The text often displays elite attitudes and values, such as the praise of the virtues of Marcus Aurelius and a certain contempt for lower classes<sup>113</sup>. In spite of this, Herodian does not share with

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Nadolny 2016, 167-178; Kettenhofen 1979, 21-56.

<sup>111</sup> 1.2.5: ‘Α δὲ μετὰ τὴν Μάρκου τελευτὴν παρὰ πάντα τὸν ἐμαυτοῦ βίον εἶδόν τε καὶ ἤκουσα (ἢστι δ' ὁν καὶ πείρᾳ μετέσχον ἐν βασιλικαῖς ἡ δημοσίαις ὑπηρεσίαις γενόμενος) τῦτα συνέγραψα (‘The events which, after the death of Marcus, I saw and heard in my lifetime - things of which I had personal experience in my imperial or civil service - these I have recorded’ [transl. by Edward C. Echols]). From now on, translations of passages from Herodian’s *History* will be taken from Echols’ English edition of this work (*Herodian of Antioch’s History of the Roman Empire*. Berkeley-Los Angeles 1961).

<sup>112</sup> Among the most recent contributions on the biography of this writer cf. Galiberti 2014, 9-11; Kemezis 2014, 298-308; Sidebottom 2007, 78-79; Zimmermann 1999a, 302-319; Marasco 1998, 2838-2839; Gascó 1982 with previous bibliography.

<sup>113</sup> Aristocratic ideals: Galimberti 2014, 25-29; Sidebottom 1998, 2822-2823. Contempt for low classes: Sidebottom 1998, 2823.

Dio the same interest for the issues concerning the relationship between emperors and the senate. It is therefore plausible that he belonged to the provincial middle class, perhaps to the equestrian order. Consequently, he probably never held imperial offices of outstanding importance, but only administrative positions, such as those of either *procurator* or *subprocurator*, followed or preceded by responsibilities in the municipal administration<sup>114</sup>.

Herodian never cites the source of his information directly. He claims to know a considerable quantity of works, such as the writings of Marcus Aurelius, the lost autobiography of Severus, many writers who flattered this latter emperor and many others who wrote unbiased accounts of the battle fought at Lugdunum<sup>115</sup>. However, he never refers to specific authors as the source of his information, although occasionally he uses expressions such as λέγουσι and φασί<sup>116</sup>. Starting from the 1970's, several scholars have questioned Herodian's authority as an historian. Among these, it is important to mention Geza Alföldy and Frank Kolb. According to them, Herodian merely re-wrote the information that he found in the main source that he was using, namely the account of Cassius Dio<sup>117</sup>. Furthermore, Alföldy stressed Herodian's effort to confer to many episodes a dramatic hue<sup>118</sup>, thus following a very common tendency among writers from

<sup>114</sup> As observed by Cassola 1957b, 216, ὑπηρεσία is normally used by Herodian to refer to minor offices. Αρχή, on the other hand, usually indicates important offices. Cf. also Kemezis 2014, 306-307.

<sup>115</sup> Hdn. 1.2.3, 2.9.4, 2.15.6-7, 3.7.3, respectively.

<sup>116</sup> For the use of these expressions cf. Whittaker 1969, lxiii. See also Galimberti 2014, 18-19, who observes how other similar phrases such as οὗ μέν ... οὗ δὲ (1.11.2), ώς δὲ παρ' ἔτεροις εὑρομέν (ibid.) would suggest the recourse to different sources while documenting certain episodes.

<sup>117</sup> Alföldy 1989a-c; Kolb 1972, esp. 47, 160-161.

<sup>118</sup> Alföldy 1989c, 70.

the Antonine age<sup>119</sup>. One of the most relevant scenes, in this regard, is the long and pathos-filled speech that he attributes to Julia Domna when, after the death of Severus, she tries to dissuade Caracalla and Geta from dividing the empire into two<sup>120</sup>. As a result, Herodian has been classified as a novelist rather than a historian<sup>121</sup>. The theories of Alföldy and Kolb have been accepted by some scholars<sup>122</sup>, but strongly rejected by others<sup>123</sup>. In a detailed study published during the 1990's Harry Sidebottom refused to identify the main source of Herodian as Dio<sup>124</sup>, although he accepted that it was not possible to maintain that Herodian did not know the history written by the Bithynian senator, since a certain number of passages have been clearly shaped by his narration<sup>125</sup>. In Herodian's reference to the flattery of certain historians who composed works about Severus' rule - and in particular about the manifestations of the divine providence in favor of him - it is not difficult to recognize an allusion to Dio's booklet on dreams and portents that foreshadowed the accession of the African emperor<sup>126</sup>. In spite of this, many passages from Herodian's work do not seem to show any relationship to what we have of the work of Dio, and, in many cases, the information that he provides is accurate and seems to correspond to the historical truth<sup>127</sup>. In addition, the narration of Herodian does not show any particular signs of discontinuity at the beginning of the reign of Severus Alexander, namely the point where Dio terminates his account. This could demonstrate

<sup>119</sup> Marasco 1998, 2904-2908.

<sup>120</sup> Hdn. 4.3.8-9. Other examples in Marasco 1998, 2907.

<sup>121</sup> Alföldy 1989b, 275; Kolb 1972, 161. *Contra Bowersock* 1975, 712.

<sup>122</sup> Scheithauer 1990; Kettenhofen 1979, 21; Birley 1974.

<sup>123</sup> Hidber 2006, 65-70; Šašel-Kos 1986, 286-292; Gascó 1984; Bowersock 1975; Piper 1975.

<sup>124</sup> Sidebottom 1998, 2780-2792. Cf. also Sidebottom 2007, 78-82.

<sup>125</sup> Sidebottom 1998, 2781-2782. Cf. also Galimberti 2014, 13-14.

<sup>126</sup> Hdn. 2.15.6.

<sup>127</sup> Sidebottom 1998, 2784-2792. Cf. also the thorough examination of the account concerning the reign of Commodus by Galimberti 2014, 15-22

that, for the history, before the end of Elgabalus' reign, Herodian was already following other sources<sup>128</sup>. Although, a few years after the study by Sidebottom, Martin Zimmermann reaffirmed the possibility that Herodian used Dio as his main source of information<sup>129</sup>, the prevalent opinion among scholars now seems to be oriented towards recognizing considerable elements of originality in Herodian's work<sup>130</sup>. As stated above, Herodian himself refers to many historical accounts and other literary compositions in the preamble of his history. Furthermore, it must be observed that he could have collected information both among his contemporaries and through his personal experience as functionary<sup>131</sup>. His hints at the protocols that regulated the life at the imperial palace have also been noted, thus suggesting that he could have had a certain familiarity with people who used to frequent the imperial court<sup>132</sup>. The label of 'novelist' has also been reconsidered. Among ancient historians the practice of reworking information in their possession with the purpose of ascribing consistent orations to the characters in their accounts is anything but rare<sup>133</sup>. Episodes marked by a high degree of drama can be noted in Dio's account too. This is the case, for example, in the death of Domna. Dio describes this event by underlining the desire of power that had kept her alive despite the death of Caracalla, whom she had always hated after the assassination of Geta, and, finally, her suicide either by starvation or by smiting a cancer in her breast<sup>134</sup>. The account of Herodian, on the other hand, is much more concise and does not concede any space to a

<sup>128</sup> Sidebottom 1998, 2792.

<sup>129</sup> Zimmermann 1999a, 45-46, 81-85.

<sup>130</sup> Galimberti 2014, 18-22.

<sup>131</sup> Galimberti 2014, 22.

<sup>132</sup> Cecconi 2010, 131-132.

<sup>133</sup> According to Kemezis 2014, 229, the formal aspects of Herodian's work recall those of Lucian and Antonine historians.

<sup>134</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.1-3.

dramatization of the moment<sup>135</sup>. Sidebottom's label of 'historical novelist' seems, therefore, more appropriate, since it can conciliate both the images of Herodian as a collector of historical information and narrator of a story intended to be entertaining.

It is however important to note that sometimes Herodian provides details not reported by Dio, who cannot, therefore, be considered his exclusive source of information. Particularly interesting, in this regard, is Domna's participation in several meetings of the *consilium principis*, where she tried to conciliate Caracalla and Geta, and also the fact that she was the target of mockery by the population of Alexandria. It should finally be stressed that, since Herodian's point of view appears to be different from the senatorial perspective that characterizes the work of Dio, his observations are particularly representative of which opinions were circulating outside the political circles in Rome. Herodian's account should, therefore, be considered a necessary complement to the other sources that narrate this period.

### I.1.5. The *Historia Augusta*

Relevant information about Domna is occasionally reported in the lives of Severus, Geta, Caracalla and Clodius Albinus. The *Historia Augusta*, in fact, is the only literary source that reports interesting details such as the horoscope predicting that Domna was destined to marry a king, her kinship with Severus' praetorian prefect Papinianus, and her influence on Severus during the wars against Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus.

Modern scholars commonly use the name *Historia Augusta* (henceforth abbreviated in *HA*) to refer to a late antique collection of biographies of both emperors

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<sup>135</sup> Hdn. 4.13.8.

and usurpers from the second and the third centuries<sup>136</sup>. The lives, written in Latin, cover the period between the accession of Hadrian (117) and the death of Numerian (284), with a lacuna concerning the years 244-260. However, it is also true that the *HA* is probably the work that, during the last century, has generated the largest debate among the experts of second- and third-century history. The matters of dispute concern at least three issues. These are the authorship, the date of composition, and the sources used by the author(s). This latter question takes on great importance, especially with regard to the notorious mixture of historical facts and fiction that characterizes many biographies of the *HA*<sup>137</sup>. Despite this, in many places the narration was almost certainly built on the base of other accounts the author had access to, but that are now lost. The study of the sources of the *HA* is consequently fundamental for determining the reliability of its information. In the next paragraphs, I will briefly summarize the state of the question about authorship and date of composition. I will, then, devote a little more space to the discussion of the problems related to the sources.

The manuscripts of the *HA* attribute the lives to six different authors. With regard to the abovementioned biographies that are relevant for the present study, they report the name of Julius Capitolinus (life of Albinus), and Aelius Spartianus (lives of Severus, Caracalla and Geta). These names are not attested to by any other source, as is the case also with the other four authors (Vulcacius Gallicanus, Aelius Lampridius, Flavius Vopiscus and Trebellius Pollio) who appear in the other lives of the *HA*. It is also

<sup>136</sup> The most ancient manuscript, the *Codex Palatinus Latinus 899* of the Vatican Library (9th century), reports the following title: *Vitae diversorum principum et tyrannorum a divo Hadriano usque ad Numerianum* ('The lives of several *principes* and tyrants from the Divine Hadrian up to Numerianus').

<sup>137</sup> With regard to the *vitae* dedicated to individuals from the Severan age, a tentative separation between paragraphs containing genuine historical information and those characterized by fiction can be found in Birley 1997, 2740-2751.

interesting to note that, at the beginning of Geta's life, the author addresses Constantine the Great as the recipient of the work. Similar dedications are reported in many other lives, where the names of Diocletian and other tetrarchs are also mentioned<sup>138</sup>. The question of the six authors and their relationship with the emperors of the tetrarchic age was systematically investigated for the first time in an article by Hermann Dessau written in 1889. As observed by André Chastagnol, this contribution inaugurates the modern critique of the *HA*<sup>139</sup>. Dessau, in fact, established that all the lives are characterized by stylistic similarities that can be attributed to a single author, one who concealed himself behind six fictive pseudonyms<sup>140</sup>. Moreover, Dessau demonstrated that the dedications to Constantine and to the other tetrarchs are also imaginary, since the author of the *HA* certainly made use of fourth century historical works such as Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus* and Flavius Eutropius' *Breviarium historiae Romanae*<sup>141</sup>. Since these two accounts were both written somewhere between 360 and 369, the dating of the *HA* should be accordingly postponed to the last years of the fourth century<sup>142</sup>, probably between 390 and 400, as demonstrated by numerous veiled references to people and facts from this period<sup>143</sup>. Despite the lively debate that the theories of Dessau generated during the

<sup>138</sup> A complete list with the dedications to emperors is reported by Chastagnol 1994, cvi.

<sup>139</sup> Chastagnol 1994, xv.

<sup>140</sup> Dessau 1889.

<sup>141</sup> The use of Victor seems particularly evident in *Sev.* 17, 5-19, 4, which reproduces AVR. VICT. 20, 1 and 10-30. EVTR. 8, 11-14 is the source for *Aur.* 17, 13-18, 2. Concerning the passage in the life of Severus, Chausson 1997 proposes to identify the original source of the passage with the so-called Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte (EKG), a hypothesized historical work written during the fourth century that would have been used by Aurelius Victor as well. On Aurelius Victor as source of the *HA* cf. Festy 1999.

<sup>142</sup> Dessau 1889, 340-355.

<sup>143</sup> Dessau 1918.

following years<sup>144</sup>, successive generations of scholars have generally accepted them, with only a few different proposals concerning the period of composition<sup>145</sup>. The question of authorship, however, has been recently reopened by Daniël den Hengst. Taking into account some computer studies on the language of the *HA* completed at the end of the 90's, this scholar has rejected several of Dessau's points, thus giving credit to the possibility of multiple authors<sup>146</sup>. Almost at the same time, in view of the characteristic pro-senatorial point of view frequently expressed by the *HA*, other scholars proposed to locate the author in the intellectual circles flourishing among distinguished senatorial families between the second half of the fourth century and the first half of the fifth<sup>147</sup>. There have also been attempts to recognize the author among personalities who were particularly active during this period. According to Stéphane Ratti, the author should be identified as the historian and politician Varius Nicomacus Flavianus, and the *HA* equated to the *annales* mentioned by an inscription in his honor<sup>148</sup>. Nevertheless, during the last few years, all these new theories do not seem to have enjoyed much favor, and scholars have shown both prudence in accepting the critiques pointing to the single authorship, and strong skepticism regarding the proposals of identifying specific characters behind the composition of the *HA*<sup>149</sup>. In absence of new elements of reflection

<sup>144</sup> Some of Dessau's points were rejected by his master, Theodor Mommsen, in particular the existence of the single author (Mommsen 1890). For a complete history of the studies during this period cf. Brandt 2010; Chastagnol 1994, xix-xxvi.

<sup>145</sup> For the debate until the early 1990's cf. Chastagnol 1994, xix-xxxiv. In the course of recent years new proposals for a dating during the first half of the fifth century have been put forward (Neri 2002; Festy 2004), as well as attempts to single out a more precise date between 390 and 400 (Ratti 2008 and 2009, 93, 96-97).

<sup>146</sup> Den Hengst 2002.

<sup>147</sup> Festy 2004; Chastagnol 1994, cli-cliii.

<sup>148</sup> Ratti 2007 and 2009, 96-97.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Paschoud 2009, 175 Birley 2006, 19. Cameron 2011 has strongly rejected Ratti's theory.

and a more detailed analysis of the stylistic features of the *HA*'s language, both the single and anonymous authorship will be taken for granted.

The question of the sources used by the author is probably the most complex matter among the problems of interpretation that affect the *HA*. This question is also relevant for our understanding of Domna, since in some cases the anonymous author relies on the authority of his sources with regard to the agency of the Augusta<sup>150</sup>. The author's method of shaping his narrative on a main source, and abandoning it for a new one after having completed the period covered by the first, is universally accepted, as well as his recourse to other secondary sources to integrate the information provided by the principal one. Some of the main sources have been recognized with certainty. This is the case, for example, regarding Herodian for the period between Elagabalus and Maximinus Thrax<sup>151</sup>, and Dexippus for the events between 238 and 270<sup>152</sup>. As for the lives from Hadrian up to Caracalla, the study of the sources appears to be more problematic. In general, scholars have established a distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' lives. The primary lives are the biographies of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, Commodus, Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Severus and Caracalla, while the secondary ones are those dedicated to Ceionius Commodus, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger and Geta. The reason for this distinction is the different degree of reliability that characterizes the primary lives, which seem, for the most part, trustworthy and in agreement with the information reported by other accounts<sup>153</sup>. The secondary *vitae*, on the other hand, contain a high percentage of bogus facts and

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. especially chap. III.

<sup>151</sup> Chastagnol 1994, lxi-lxiii; Barnes 1978, 79-89.

<sup>152</sup> Chastagnol 1994, lxiv-lxvi; Barnes 1978, 108-113.

<sup>153</sup> On the topic cf. Barnes 1978, 38-48 with previous bibliography.

anecdotes<sup>154</sup>. In a passage from the *Quadriga Tyrannorum*<sup>155</sup> - the section dedicated to the usurpers who aspired to the purple during the reign of Probus - the *HA* itself indirectly offers the explanation of this distinction:

*Minusculos tyrannos scio plerosque tacuisse aut breviter praeterisse. Nam et Suetonius Tranquillus, emendatissimus et candidissimus scriptor, Antonium, Vindicem tacuit, contentus eo quod eos cursim perstrinxerat, et Marius Maximus, qui Avidium Marci temporibus, Albinum et Nigrum Severi non suis propriis libris sed alienis innexuit. Et de Suetonio non miramur, cui familiare fuit amare brevitatem. Quid Marius Maximus, homo omnium verbosissimus, qui et mythistoricis se voluminibus implicavit, num ad istam descriptionem curamque descendit?*

The minor pretenders, I am well aware, have either been wholly omitted by most of the writers or else passed over briefly. For Suetonius Tranquillus, a most accurate and truthful author, has said nothing of Antonius or Vindex, content with having touched on them in passing, and Marius Maximus treated of Avidius in the time of Marcus and of Albinus and Niger under Severus in no special books of their own but merely joined them to the lives of others. Now in regard to Suetonius we feel no wonder, for he was naturally a lover of brevity. But what of Marius Maximus, the wordiest man of all, who involved himself in pseudo-historical works? Did he descend to such accuracy of detail?<sup>156</sup>

One of the goals of the anonymous writer was to dedicate specific lives to characters who had been only treated in a cursory manner by previous biographers and historians. However, the information contained in these sources was not enough. After extrapolating some things from them, the author was consequently forced to supply new details by having recourse to his imagination. Admittedly, this procedure can be sometimes detected in the main lives as well. Yet, while writing these, the author was mostly making use of the information provided by the (usually good) source he was following. Thus, the recourse to invention was less necessary.

It now remains to explain which sources the author used for his principal lives. The debate is mainly focused on the figure of Marius Maximus, the author of the

<sup>154</sup> On the topic cf. Barnes 1978, 48-57 with previous bibliography.

<sup>155</sup> *Quatt. tyr.* 1, 1-2.

<sup>156</sup> Transl. by David Magie (LOEB 1921). When quoting large portions of text from the *HA*, I will henceforth make use of Magie's English edition of its account.

*mythistorica volumina* mentioned in the aforementioned passage from the *Quadriga Tyrannorum*. In the *vitae* from Hadrian to Macrinus, his name is cited twenty five times, plus five citations in the *vita Alexandri* (but in reference to previous emperors) and another one in the *Quadriga* referring to Avidius Cassius, Niger and Albinus<sup>157</sup>. Since Maximus is only mentioned with regard to events that occurred between the second century and the beginning of the third, it is clear that he has been used by the author of the *HA* as a source of information for this period. References such as ‘in Marius Maximus’ second book on the life of Marcus’ (*Mari Maximi secundum librum de vita Marci*), ‘as Marius Maximus explained in the life of Trajan’ (*in vita eius [scil. Trajan] Marius Maximus exposuit*), ‘as Marius Maximus said in the life of Severus’ (*ut Marius Maximus dixit in vita Severi*)<sup>158</sup> indicate that he was a biographer. Also, this writer has been traditionally identified with the general and politician L. Marius L. f. Quir. Marius Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus<sup>159</sup>. After starting his *cursus* in the equestrian ranks, he became senator under Commodus and held numerous important military positions during the reigns of Severus, Caracalla and Macrinus. He finally became ordinary consul in 223<sup>160</sup>. Neither Dio, who mentions him three times<sup>161</sup>, nor the inscriptions that record his *cursus* hint at literary interests. The end of his career and his probable retirement during

<sup>157</sup> A complete list of references to Maximus as a source in the *HA* is reported by Birley 1997, 2684-2693, and in Christol 1994, liii.

<sup>158</sup> *Avid.* 9, 5 (cf. also 6, 7); *Alex.* 48, 6 and 5, 3, respectively.

<sup>159</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> M 308. The identification of Maximus with this figure has been strongly supported by Birley 1997. *Contra Paschoud* 1999. According to Fündling 2005, 105, the biographer Maximus could be either the son of the Severan consular or the contemporary Marius Doryphorus, *scriba aedilicius et tribunicius*, who wrote under a partial pseudonym. On this topic cf. also Kemezis 2012, 408 n. 85, who stresses that the *HA* contains pieces of data that seem to correspond well to the presumed career and interests of the senator Marius Maximus.

<sup>160</sup> About his family and career cf. Kemezis 2012, 411; Birley 1997, 2694-2703.

<sup>161</sup> Dio 78 (77).14.3 relates Maximus’ appointment to the prefecture of the city by Macrinus; 79 (78).36.1 mentions a letter sent by Macrinus to Maximus in order to inform him about issues with the payment of salaries to the soldiers; 80 (79).2.1 quotes Macrinus’ letters to Maximus.

the 220's are elements that could support the identification with the biographer, since the last *vita* that the *HA* attributes to Maximus is a life of Severus. This hypothesis is certainly seductive. If it were confirmed, the references from Maximus would come directly from an individual who was deeply involved in political life during the Severan age. Nonetheless, the absence of other elements in support of this reconstruction does not allow a certain identification between the politician and the writer cited by the *HA*. Consequently, it is not possible to use the authority of the politician to support the reliability of the writer. It is, however, interesting to note that Ammianus Marcellinus says how, during his lifetime, the works of Maximus and Juvenal were among the most well known readings<sup>162</sup>. It is not surprising, then, that the author of the *HA*, who wrote approximately at the same time of Ammianus, made large use of Maximus' biographies.

In an article published soon after Birley's study of Maximus, François Paschoud questioned the existence of a biographer called Marius Maximus<sup>163</sup>. In view of the fact that the author of the *HA* often fabricates false authorities in order to support his assertions, Paschoud claimed that the biographer Maximus could be one of the numerous inventions of the author<sup>164</sup>. However, a few years later, Paschoud's remarks were criticized by Anthony Birley<sup>165</sup>. The latter observed how, between the fourth and the fifth

<sup>162</sup> AMM. 28, 4, 14: *Quidam detestantes ut venena doctrinas, Iuvenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla volumina praeter haec in profundo otio contrectantes* ('Certain people, who hate erudition as if it were poison, devote considerable energy to the reading of Juvenal and Marius Maximus, fiddling with no other books while spending their time in total idleness').

<sup>163</sup> Paschoud 1999.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. in particular Paschoud 1999, 243-244. A similar view is shared by Bertrand-Dagenbach 2004, 225, who claims that, although a biographer called Marius Maximus could have existed, his name could have been used by the author of the *HA* to create false sources.

<sup>165</sup> Birley 2006, 21-23.

century, it would have probably been difficult to fake quotations from Maximus<sup>166</sup>. The passage of Ammianus, in fact, testifies to the fact that Maximus was a well-known author at the time of the composition of the *HA*. Falsifications concerning his works would have been immediately discovered by readers who were contemporaries of the author of the *HA*. Accordingly, it seems likely that a biographer named Marius Maximus, who wrote at the time of Severus Alexander or a little later, really existed, and that the references to his work are genuine<sup>167</sup>. The identification with Marius Maximus Perpetuus appears possible, but it rests only on chronological evidence that cannot be considered completely decisive.

The debate on whether Maximus was the main source for the *HA*'s lives from Hadrian up to Elagabalus started during the second half of the nineteen century, and it has lasted until recently. Since it would exceed the limits of the present study to review in detail all the works that have treated this topic, I will offer only selective comments, referring to the studies of Birley and Chastagnol for a complete overview of the topic<sup>168</sup>. A certain number of those who, in the last few decades, have investigated the *HA* and its sources have in general accepted Maximus as the principal source for the primary lives<sup>169</sup>. On the other hand, other scholars have maintained that he was used as a complement only<sup>170</sup>. According to this interpretation, the source of the remarkable historical accuracy that characterizes these lives should rather be identified with an

<sup>166</sup> This observation already appears in Birley 1997, 2682.

<sup>167</sup> Similar conclusions have been recently expressed by Kemezis 2012, 405-412 who, however, reiterates the identification of the biographer with the senator Marius Maximus.

<sup>168</sup> For a history of these studies cf. Chastagnol 1994, lii-lix and especially Birley 1997, 2708-2714.

<sup>169</sup> Schlumberger 2010; Birley 2006, 21-23; *Id.* 1997; Chastagnol 1994, lii-lix.

<sup>170</sup> Kulikowski 2007; Paschoud 1999; Benario 1997; Syme 1983, 12-29; Rubin 1980, 63-65; Barnes 1978, 98-107; Syme 1972b (= 1983).

unknown writer, ‘Ignotus’, ‘Good Biographer’ or the ‘*Anonymus Symii*’<sup>171</sup>. This theory, which was for the first time put forward at the beginning of the 1900’s, has been vigorously resurrected by Ronald Syme, and later defended by and improved upon by Timothy Barnes and Herbert Benario<sup>172</sup>. There are at least three main arguments that would support this thesis: 1) the fact that Maximus is only occasionally cited demonstrates that references to his work have been inserted into the main account that comes from the main source; 2) Maximus’ point of view often clashes with the principal text; 3) The content of Maximus’ biographies were trivial and scandalous, if we accept the assessment of both the *HA* itself (the *mythistorica volumina* quoted in the *Quadriga*) and Ammianus in the above mentioned passage concerning the literary tastes of his contemporaries<sup>173</sup>. All three points have been subjected to the critique of Birley, who observed: 1) it was the normal habit of many ancient historians to quote only episodically from their main source (in this regard, the example of Livy who cites Polybius - his main source of information - only a few a times is illuminating); 2) the divergence between Maximus’ opinions and the basic text is, for the most part, confined to the life of Hadrian, an emperor whose complex personality prompted contradictory judgments in other accounts as well, such as that of Dio; 3) since we do not have the work of Maximus, it is difficult to evaluate its real content. Moreover, considering the many scandalous anecdotes reported by Suetonius, in the hypothetical case that the books of this historian

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<sup>171</sup> The latter definition was coined by Paschoud 1999, 241 in honor of Ronald Syme, who was among the most enthusiastic supporters of the existence of this lost writer, cf. *infra*.

<sup>172</sup> See above n. 170.

<sup>173</sup> A detailed list with all the arguments can be found in Birley 1997, 2710-2711.

had been lost, it is not difficult to imagine that they could have been judged in the same way<sup>174</sup>.

With reference to the topics treated by the present study, I would add a few observations in support of the arguments expressed by Birley. The *HA* cites Maximus several times when dealing with imperial women. A remark from the *vita Hadriani* relates that Plotina advocated the marriage between Hadrian and Vibia Sabina, but that it was, according to Maximus, against Trajan's will<sup>175</sup>. This information is not attested to elsewhere, but Plotina's influence in the rise of Hadrian is well documented by Dio, Eutropius and Victor<sup>176</sup>. Another passage from the life of Avidius Cassius narrates how Maximus tried to defame Faustina the Younger by alluding to her involvement in the rebellion<sup>177</sup>. Faustina's alleged participation in the plot is a fact reported by other sources, and therefore it cannot be regarded as a trivial matter<sup>178</sup>. The information about the horoscope according to which Julia Domna was destined to marry a king can be attributed to Maximus too<sup>179</sup>. Although this detail could, at first sight, seem a mere invention, it must be observed that she came from a family that could boast many sovereigns among its ancestors, so such a marriage was not improbable<sup>180</sup>. Regarding the Severans, other details from Maximus provide exact information about the origin of Geta's name<sup>181</sup>, the career of Severus<sup>182</sup>, and Severus Alexander's degree of kinship with

<sup>174</sup> Birley 1997, 2711-2714.

<sup>175</sup> *Hadr.* 2, 10.

<sup>176</sup> Dio 69.1.2 and 10.3; EVTR. 8.6.1; AVR. VICT. *Caes.* 13, 13.

<sup>177</sup> *Avid.* 9, 9.

<sup>178</sup> Dio 72 (71).22.3 and 29.1.

<sup>179</sup> This information is reported by *Sev.* 3.9, *Geta* 3.1 and *Alex.* 5, 4.

<sup>180</sup> See *infra* chapter II.

<sup>181</sup> *Geta* 2.1.

<sup>182</sup> *Geta* 3.1.

the rest of the family<sup>183</sup>. It is, finally, interesting to note that on some occasions the author of the *HA* invites the reader who wants to explore certain topics in more detail to refer to the work of Maximus: ‘if someone wants to know the whole story [scil. the usurpation of Cassius and the role of Faustina], he should read Marius Maximus’ second book on the life of Marcus’ (*si quis autem omnem hanc historiam scire desiderat, legat Mari Maximi secundum librum de vita Marci*)<sup>184</sup>; ‘Marius Maximus illustrated his [scil. Geta’s grandfather] life and customs quite in detail’ (*de cuius vita et moribus ... Marius Maximus satis copiose rettulit*)<sup>185</sup>; ‘whoever wants to know these facts in depth [scil. Severus’ persecutions against political opposers], he should read Marius Maximus among the Latin authors, and Herodian among the Greek writers. Both of them provide extensive and reliable accounts about these events’ (*quae qui diligentius scire velit, legat Marius Maximus de Latinis scriptoribus, de Graecis Herodianum, qui ad fidem pleraque dixerunt*)<sup>186</sup>. In short, it seems to me that Maximus was a precious source of information for the author of the *HA*, especially with reference to dynastic matters, political careers and conspiracies<sup>187</sup>. The quality of the information that he provides is comparable to that of either Dio or Herodian. Consequently, it appears difficult to prove that 1) the work of Maximus was a mere collection of trivial anecdotes and bogus stories, 2) the use of this author by the compiler of the *HA* was limited to sporadic references only. Although these arguments cannot be considered decisive in determining whether Maximus was the main

<sup>183</sup> *Alex.* 5.4.

<sup>184</sup> *Avid.* 9.5.

<sup>185</sup> *Geta* 2.1.

<sup>186</sup> *Alb.* 12.14.

<sup>187</sup> Birley 1997, 2723 and Chastagnol 1994, lvii have maintained that the source of such good information should be identified with Maximus. With regard to the aforementioned passage of Ammianus Marcellius (cf. *supra* n. 111), Birley suggests that the richness of prosopographical details could be the reason why the late Roman aristocracy was so interested in the work of Maximus.

source of the *HA* or not, it should be conceded that his contribution to the good quality of the *HA*'s biographies in this period was probably larger than the relatively few references to his work would suggest.

It can be conclusively affirmed that the *HA* represents a valuable instrument for the study of the agency of Domna and, more in general, for the understanding of the period considered by this research. The reason is the good sources that were used by the anonymous author. Among these, an important source of information was the lost biographies of Marius Maximus. An identification of this author with the Marius Maximus Perpetuus who was ordinary consul in 223 is certainly possible, but it cannot be proved with absolute certainty. Nonetheless, the *vitae* that can be attributed to him should probably have constituted the most detailed sources that were available to the compiler of the *HA*.

### I.1.6. Synopsis of Literary Sources

The examination of the principal problems concerning the study of the sources used by Cassius Dio, Herodian and the anonymous author of the *Historia Augusta* shows that it is impossible to establish a hierarchy between them. Each work, in fact, is characterized by both specific qualities that make it a valuable piece of evidence, and by particular issues that sometimes suggest caution in its use.

From a quantitative point of view, the history of Dio is the most important account. He is also the author that provides more information about his life and his position in society. The fact of being both a senator and a contemporary of the facts examined by this study is a precious circumstance that does not occur very often in

Roman historiography. Although Dio's account was probably written many years after the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, it mixes both memories of the author and documentary researches that are certainly valuable pieces of evidence. In spite of this, his value as an historian cannot be always considered equal to that of other writers from either the late republic or the early empire. As observed by Ferguson Millar, 'Cassius Dio was no Polybius'<sup>188</sup>. The narration of the events can be better classified as a collection of anecdotes and facts that were particularly relevant for the author, rather than a careful investigation of the causes and effects that regulated the political life of his times. Many events that must have affected the life of the imperial court considerably are often treated in a cursory way. This is the case, for example, regarding the hatred between Domna and Plautianus. The struggle between these two is related in a few lines and as an appendix to an account of Plautianus' scandalous and arrogant behavior. The latter caused great upset among many senators and, as a consequence, attracted the attention of Dio, who devoted the most space to these details.

To sum up, on account of the limitations of Dio's *History*, the study of the Severan period cannot disregard the use of both Herodian's *History* and the biographies of the *HA*. Unlike Dio's *History*, the information about the composition of these works is extremely scanty. Nonetheless, it is an accepted fact that both Herodian and the anonymous author of the *HA* made use of different sources. The first, who wrote around the middle of the third century, undoubtedly knew the work of the Bithynian senator, but had recourse to different sources of information as well. His perception of the events does not reflect the point of view of the senatorial class, although an elitist ideology is easily detectable. Finally, the possibility that parts of his account are influenced by the

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<sup>188</sup> Millar 1964, 73.

experience acquired during a period of service in both imperial and local administrations appears highly probable. As for the *HA*, although it was written more than one century and a half after the events, it is important to stress that its author made use of at least one good source from the early third century. The influence of this source is particularly evident in the so-called primary lives, that is, for the Severan age, the lives of Severus, Caracalla and Elagabalus. Additionally, its use for the ‘secondary’ lives of Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger and Geta can be occasionally detected. Although the question whether the good quality source should be identified with Marius Maximus remains still open, both the existence of this biographer and his considerable contribution to the good information reported by the *HA* for this period should, in my view, be considered highly probable.

## I.2. INSCRIPTIONS

Epigraphic documents represent the largest source of evidence concerning Julia Domna. In fact, her name is attested to in ca. 600 inscriptions from all over the empire. This mass of documentation is quite heterogeneous. It includes inscriptions on public buildings, statue bases, altars, milestones, slabs recording decrees, *acta* regarding ceremonies, and, in some particular cases, even painted texts and inscriptions classified as *instrumentum inscriptum*. The first distinction, however, must be made between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ inscriptions, namely between inscriptions relating: *a*) her direct agency, i.e. those where her name is normally reported in the nominative case as the author of an initiative, *b*) inscriptions where she is the dedicatee, i.e. those where her name is reported in the other cases. The dative and accusative forms are mostly found in honorary inscriptions on

statue bases and buildings. Inscriptions for her safety are usually characterized by the formula *pro salute* followed by her name in the genitive. Also, several honorary texts, especially from the reign of Caracalla, record her name in the ablative case together with those of the emperors. The group *a* is extremely small. It includes only a couple of texts from Rome documenting her intervention in the restoration of two temples, and a letter sent to citizens of Ephesus on behalf of Caracalla<sup>189</sup>. The group *b*, on the other hand, includes all the rest of the inscriptions. With regard to the epigraphic part of this study, therefore, these texts will represent the main object of investigation.

During the last decades, several studies have taken into account the great mass of inscriptions on statue bases, arches and other public buildings that cities, imperial officials, military units, and even private individuals dedicated to Domna, either alone or together with the members of her family. According to Erich Kettenhofen, the great importance the Severan establishment gave to the celebration of the dynasty accounts for the abundance of attestations to her name on inscriptions, where she is normally mentioned together with the male members of her family<sup>190</sup>. Some years later, Jane Feijer published a study on Domna's official portrait statues, examining with particular care the statue bases attesting to inscriptions in her honor<sup>191</sup>. The scholar observed how, in the majority of cases, it is difficult to determine the reasons behind the placement of these monuments, which could be the result of either 'spontaneous' initiatives of local military and civil authorities, or instructions received from the central administration in Rome<sup>192</sup>.

In her biography of Domna, Barbara Levick observes that 'the quantity of tributes to

<sup>189</sup> App. nos. 95b, 142b and 136a, respectively. On the letter cf. *infra* section V.3.2.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Feijer 1985, 129-138.

<sup>192</sup> Feijer 1985, 133.

Domna alone or included in those devoted to her husband and sons or to the entire family certainly shows her perceived importance in politics and social life', but that 'the dedications made by loyal subjects empire-wide are commonplace, time-honored and conventional'<sup>193</sup>. Furthermore, in a recent monograph, Julie Langford has re-examined Domna's public image, placing particular emphasis on the inscriptions from Rome mentioning the Augusta. She argues that the appearance of Domna's name in a large number of epigraphic texts is not a consequence of her perceived importance in public life. Rather, it is the reflection of the messages that the imperial administration directed by Severus (the 'Severan imperial propaganda') sent to the population of the Empire with the purpose to advertise the dynasty<sup>194</sup>. The motherhood of Domna, in particular, had the purpose of legitimizing her sons and promoting the imperial family among the soldiers through the title *mater castrorum*, which is documented on coins and inscriptions<sup>195</sup>. In another recent study, however, Kimberly Cassibry has reevaluated the importance of monuments erected by provincial residents, in particular the arches that included dedications to Domna. According to Cassibry, 'Julia Domna appeared on more commemorative arches than any other empress because more patrons sought to articulate relationships to her on major monuments'<sup>196</sup>.

In summary, modern scholarship has not come to unanimous conclusions regarding the massive presence of Domna on inscriptions. The general tendency, however, is to explain this phenomenon as due to the propagandist importance attributed to her role as wife of Severus and mother of Caracalla and Geta. Nonetheless, in the light

<sup>193</sup> Levick 2007, 137 and 139.

<sup>194</sup> Langford 2013, 122-123.

<sup>195</sup> Langford 2013, 69-83. With regard to the soldiers cf. in particular 36-48.

<sup>196</sup> Cassibry 2014, 85.

of the relationships that local communities and provincial governments entertained with the imperial establishment (and, therefore, with the Augusta and her entourage), this role might be more complex than usually assumed.

First of all, it is important to stress that civic bodies must have often interacted directly with the imperial court, an environment to which Domna belonged. The documentation regarding embassies that local communities used to send to emperors with the purpose of discussing the most disparate matters is considerable<sup>197</sup>. The number of representatives from the provincial communities asking to be received by emperors, in particular, was so large that in Dio's account Maecenas brings forward the idea of forcing the cities to send their legates initially to the provincial governors<sup>198</sup>. Dedications of statues and monuments to honor the emperors and their relatives were often the topic that ambassadors brought to the attention of the sovereigns. During the reign of Tiberius, for instance, the Peloponnesian city of Gythium sent a delegation to the emperor to let him know about the measures that the city council had voted upon to pay homage to him and Livia. Besides extraordinary divine honors, mother and son were also awarded painted portraits<sup>199</sup>. In his reply, Tiberius states that he would prefer a more moderate homage, but with regard to Livia he adds that 'she herself will reply to you when she hears from you what decision you have reached concerning the honors in her case'<sup>200</sup>. Although Livia's reply is not preserved, it is worth nothing that she is called 'Tyche of the People and the City' on inscriptions at Gythium<sup>201</sup>. A letter of Claudius to the citizens of Alexandria documents that an embassy from this city was sent to the emperor to express

<sup>197</sup> For a general overview cf. Millar 1992, 363-463. Cf. also Ando 2000, 168-174.

<sup>198</sup> Dio 52.30.9.

<sup>199</sup> AE 1929, 100 = SEG 11.922 (= Oliver 1989, 58-65 no. 15 [I-II]).

<sup>200</sup> Part II ll. 20-22.

<sup>201</sup> i.e. Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ ἡ τοῦ ἔθνους καὶ τῆς πόλεως Τύγη (SEG 11.923).

felicitations for his accession to the throne and to request permission to set up statues to honor him and his relatives<sup>202</sup>. A letter by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus to the Ephesians relates that the city council had sent them a request to melt down some battered images of previous rulers in order to make new ones in their honor<sup>203</sup>. The emperors declined the offer. They also stated that sending them this request was the right thing to do, since ‘as regards the silver images, this is a matter that requires our permission indeed’<sup>204</sup>. These examples demonstrate that when honoring the imperial establishment through public monuments (and, consequently, through inscriptions), local communities often acted on their own initiative. The ultimate goal was evidently gaining the favor of the rulers through an embassy that was sent to them in order to display what the community had deliberated.

We can safely assume that delegations visiting the imperial court also had the occasion to pay homage to imperial women who could occasionally help them in bringing specific requests from them to the attention of the emperor. In a letter to the citizens of Samos, for example, Augustus makes a clear allusion to the fact that Livia was striving to obtain tax exemptions for the inhabitants of this island<sup>205</sup>. The strong relationships between Matidia the Youger, who was the half-sister of Sabina, and the Campanian city of Suessa Aurunca are very well documented. Here, Matidia commissioned a road seven miles long, enlarged the theater and built a new library, the *Bibliotheca Matidiana*<sup>206</sup>. A series of letters between Plotina, the Epicureans from

<sup>202</sup> *P. Lond.* 1912 (= Oliver 1989, 77-88 no. 19) ll. 31-34.

<sup>203</sup> Oliver 1989, 346-351 no. 170.

<sup>204</sup> Ll. 9-10: ‘τὸ περὶ τῶν ἀργυρῶν εἰκόνων, πρᾶγμα ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς ἡμετέρας συνχωρήσε[ως] προσδεόμενο<ν>’.

<sup>205</sup> Oliver 1989, 25-26 no. 1.

<sup>206</sup> On Matidia and Suessa Aurunca cf. Casella 2013, 73-86 with further references.

Athens, and Hadrian attests to the fact that this Augusta managed to secure Hadrian's consent to the appointment of *peregrini* to the direction of the Epicurean School<sup>207</sup>. In the city of Paestum (Bruttium) Faustina the Younger was honored with a statue at the request of the citizenry (*populo postulante*) because of several interventions in favor of the city (*ob plurima beneficia eius erga patriam*)<sup>208</sup>. Finally, it is interesting to note that, in Asia Minor, imperial women are occasionally awarded the title εὐεργέτις ('benefactor')<sup>209</sup>. On a statue base from Aphrodisia, for instance, this honor is attributed to Domna<sup>210</sup>. Dio notes that, after the death of Severus, she was in charge of replying to petitions in both Greek and Latin, holding also receptions 'exactly as did the emperor'<sup>211</sup>. In this regard, an inscription from Ephesus relates a letter with her reply regarding a request for certain privileges that the city had probably brought forward through an embassy<sup>212</sup>. It seems, however, certain that her relationships with the cities of the empire had already started during the reign of Severus. During the period of the civil war against Albinus, or shortly after, numerous statues dedicated to her started to appear in the cities of North Africa while a *procurator ad bona cogenda* sent by Severus was confiscating the properties of Albinus' supporters<sup>213</sup>. When Severus granted the Syrian city of Laodicea colonial status, its name was changed to *Colonia Iulia Severiana*, a fact that well underlines Domna's ties with the citizenry of this center<sup>214</sup>. Moreover, the Athenians called her Athena Polias

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<sup>207</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1099 = CIL III 12283 (= Oliver 1989, 174-180 no. 73).

<sup>208</sup> CIL III 473.

<sup>209</sup> On the topic cf. Angelova 2015, 86-87.

<sup>210</sup> App. no. 14b.

<sup>211</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.3.

<sup>212</sup> On this topic cf. section V.3.2 *infra*.

<sup>213</sup> On this topic cf. section III.5.2 *infra*.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Levick 2007, 131 and PIR<sup>2</sup> I 663.

and ‘defender of the city’ (*σωτείρα τῶν Ἀθηνῶν*) on inscriptions<sup>215</sup>. Francesca Ghedini has connected this to an intervention of Domna in favor of this community, which had met the hostility of Severus on account of some incidents between him and the Athenians before the elevation to the purple<sup>216</sup>. All these examples demonstrate that imperial women did not only represent a mere instrument of propaganda. They could entertain active connections with the communities of the Empire, receiving messages and embassies, a fact that could result in the dedication of honorary inscriptions.

Monuments dedicated by provincial governors, imperial administrative officials and military commanders deserve a special mention. With regard to the relationship between central power and the peripheral areas of the empire, a famous observation by Aelius Aristides is worth repeating:

Οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐφ' ἔαντῷ τηλικοῦτον φρονεῖ, ὅστις τοῦνομα ἀκούσας μόνον οἶδες τὸ ἐστὶν ἀτρεμεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀναστὰς ὑμνεῖ καὶ σέβει καὶ συνεύχεται διπλῆν εὐχήν, τὴν μὲν ὑπέρ αὐτοῦ τοῖς θεοῖς, τὴν δὲ αὐτῷ ἐκείνῳ περὶ τῶν ἔαντοῦ<sup>217</sup>.

No one is so proud that he can fail to be moved upon hearing even the mere mention of the ruler's name, but, rising, he [the governor] praises and worships him [the emperor] and breathes two prayers in a single breath, one to the gods and one to the ruler's behalf, one for his own affairs to the ruler himself<sup>218</sup>.

These few lines, written during the second century CE, well illustrate the zeal with which imperial officials in the provinces manifested their loyalty to the reigning emperors<sup>219</sup>. The public monuments that these officials set up with inscriptions recording the rulers' names either in the dative case or in the genitive case preceded by formulas such as *pro salute* or *ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ* ('for the safety of'), represent the most common source for this

<sup>215</sup> App. no. 1b.

<sup>216</sup> Ghedini 1984, 131. Discord between Severus and the Athenians: *Sev.* 3.7.

<sup>217</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 26K 32.

<sup>218</sup> Transl. by Oliver 1953, 899 chap. 32.

<sup>219</sup> For an overview of the relationships between emperor and imperial officials in the provinces cf. Millar 1992, 203-272.

phenomenon. Thus, it stands to reason that the mention of an imperial woman in such inscriptions implies a notable degree of importance attributed to these figures. Since the name of Domna frequently appears in this kind of texts, the analysis of this evidence represent an important element for the present study. In the previous works on her persona, scholars have already noted some interesting cases, such as that of the procurators L. Didius Marinus and Aristaenetus, who dedicated a building to her in Pergamum<sup>220</sup>. Further evidence, such as the numerous building inscriptions that the zealous governor of Numidia Q. Anicius Faustus dedicated to the imperial family - almost always including Domna - between 197 and 201, will be discussed in the next chapters. Finally, it should be noted that the study of this kind of inscriptions also provides interesting information concerning people who were acting under the supervision of these officials, such as the soldiers under the command of a governor or the people who lived in the capitals of the provinces, where administrative and military personnel must have been particularly active.

In summary, the great quantity of inscriptions reporting the name of Domna represents a form of evidence with many interesting aspects. On one hand, through the intervention of governors and military commands, the imperial administration certainly urged local communities to put up monuments to honor members of the establishment<sup>221</sup>. On the other hand, however, it is important to stress that when local communities decided to pay homage to the imperial establishment with statues and other honors, they would often submit their decision to the attention of the imperial court through embassies or letters. The fact that imperial women could make use of their influence by helping

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<sup>220</sup> App. no. 299b. Cf. Levick 2007, 138.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Højte 2005, 168-171; *Id.* 2000, 232; Fejfer 1985, 129, 132 with particular reference to statue bases.

petitioners in bringing their requests to the attention of the emperors is well attested to during the principate, and it probably had important consequences concerning the erection of monuments in their honor. The case of Domna, in this regard, is particularly relevant, since many provincial inscriptions suggest that, during the reign of Severus, she was held in very high regard. Besides, during the reign of Caracalla she had the task of examining petitions directed to the emperor, a role that brought her into even more contact with the citizens of the empire. Consequently, public homage in her honor cannot always be regarded as a mere consequence of the reception of ‘newsletters’ sent by the imperial propaganda, but rather the result of a complex interaction between local communities and central power. Inscriptions on statue bases and other monuments mentioning Domna can be, in many cases, considered valuable evidence to determine the degree of importance that the inhabitants of the empire conferred upon her.

### I.3. COINAGE

The coinage minted in honor of Domna is one the principal sources for the study of her public image. Coins mentioning her can be divided in two groups. The first one includes the coins struck in the imperial mints under the authority of the emperor, who would thus advertise themes that were particularly relevant to his regime on gold, silver, and bronze coins<sup>222</sup>. The most important imperial mint was located in Rome, but smaller mints were

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<sup>222</sup> The two main collections concerning Domna’s coins struck in the imperial mints are H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. IV.1, London 1936 (henceforth referred to as RIC IV.1), and H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. V, London 1975<sup>2</sup> (henceforth referred to as BMCRE V).

also occasionally active in Antioch and in other cities in the Eastern provinces<sup>223</sup>. The second group encompasses the bronze coinage produced by provincial cities. These coins normally show the portrait of the Augusta on the obverse, and themes characteristic of the city on the reverse. In some cases, this coinage can celebrate the connections between the city and the imperial court<sup>224</sup>.

Starting in the 1960's, coins minted in honor of Domna have been the object of extensive research. In a study concerning the coinage of Severus and his family printed for the first time in 1963 but republished in 1977, Philip Hill attempted to organize chronologically all the gold, silver and bronze types struck in the mint of Rome<sup>225</sup>. A few years later, this scholar published a study on the portraits of the Severan family on these same coins, including also those of Domna, whose images can be categorized according to at least seven types from 193 to 217<sup>226</sup>. In her book on the iconography of Domna published in 1984, Francesca Ghedini allotted considerable space to the examination of this coinage, focusing particularly on coins representing female deities struck by both imperial and local provincial mints<sup>227</sup>. The most relevant propagandist themes reported on the coins of Domna were also the subject of an article by Susann Lusnia published a decade later<sup>228</sup>. Furthermore, a considerable number of studies on Domna's coin reverses has appeared during the last years. Among these, it is important to mention the numerous contributions by Anna Lina Morelli on the motherhood of the Augusta, the studies by

<sup>223</sup> It seems that after the defeat of Pescennius Niger, Severus maintained the mints in Antioch and Alexandria, which had previously struck coins for his rival, cf. Butcher 2004, 98-108; Buttrey 1992, xx; Bland-Burnett-Bendall 1987, 70.

<sup>224</sup> On provincial coinage in general cf. Howgego-Heuchert-Burnett 2005. With reference to the Eastern provinces cf. also Harl 1987.

<sup>225</sup> Hill 1977.

<sup>226</sup> Hill 1979, esp. 185-186.

<sup>227</sup> Ghedini 1984, 123-184.

<sup>228</sup> Lusnia 1995.

Erica Filippini on the role of Domna within the imperial ideology, and the studies by Clare Rowan on the quantitative proportions of Domna's types in the hoards of silver coins<sup>229</sup>. Finally, Sonja Nadolny's recent monograph on the Severan imperial women dedicates considerable space to both imperial and provincial coins struck for Domna<sup>230</sup>.

This quick review of the most relevant studies on the coinage of the Syrian Augusta shows that modern scholarship has focused mainly on the coins struck in the imperial mints, and these also assume a special relevance for the present study. In fact, together with a very small number of inscriptions, this coinage represents the only evidence directly authored by the regime. Rowan has observed that the silver coinage struck for Domna represent 17% of the coins minted under Severus and 18% of those minted under Caracalla. These proportions, which remain constant for Julia Maesa and Julia Mamaea, corroborate the idea that one of the workshops (*officinae*) within the imperial mint was given the specific task of producing the types for the Augusta<sup>231</sup>.

The question of whether imperial women could decide which designs and motifs were to be reproduced on their coinage is naturally connected to the study of Domna's coin types. In view of the fact that in the ancient sources there is no information concerning the relationship between imperial women and coins struck in their honor, several scholars have assumed that it is impossible to determine whether Domna had

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<sup>229</sup> Morelli 2012, 275-279; Ead. 2010b, 470-471; Rowan 2011, 249-256; Filippini 2010; Morelli 2009, 127-144; Filippini 2008; Morelli 2006, 69-74.

<sup>230</sup> Nadolny 2016,

<sup>231</sup> Rowan 2011, 246-148. According to the scholar, the proportions for Maesa and Mamaea are 18% and 17%, respectively. Hill 1964, 169 had already suggested the possibility of one workshop for Domna's coins only, a theory also accepted by Levick 2007, 140 and Lusnia 1995, 121. Since, starting from 248, each workshop began to sign its products with a different Greek letter, scholars have identified six workshops within the mint of Rome. One of these struck coins exclusively for Philip the Arab's wife Octacilia Sevira (on this topic cf. Carson 1956, 238). Rowan 2011, 247 has observed that, in the case of Domna, Maesa and Mamaea, a percentage of the silver imperial coins in circulation ranging around 16-17% seems also to point at the existence of an imperial mint subdivided into six workshops, one of which produced coins for the reigning Augusta.

something to say about the selection of her coin types<sup>232</sup>. Despite this, Rowan has observed that some of the imperial women who belonged to the Severan dynasty might have been able to influence their numismatic image, especially when the young Elagabalus was raised to the purple<sup>233</sup>. The coinage of Julia Soaemias, for instance, displays strong elements of individuality. It is in fact almost exclusively characterized by the legend VENVS CAELESTIS, which seems to be an allusion to her Eastern cultural background<sup>234</sup>. Although themes already present on coins belonging to previous imperial women are the most typical on the coinage of Domna, it is possible to detect features that can be considered peculiar. Several iconographies appear for the first time on the obverses of the Syrian Augusta, such as the oriental goddess Cybele depicted while sat on a chariot pulled by four lions, *Luna Lucifera* driving a *biga*, or *Venus Genetrix* represented sat on a throne with scepter and diadem, but without the traditional apple and the Cupid<sup>235</sup>. Also, traditional deities receive new appellatives. Ceres is often called *Frugifera*, Vesta is designated as *Mater* and *Sancta*, and the legend LVNA LVCIFERA - peculiar to Domna only - occasionally replaces the traditional DIANA LVCIFERA<sup>236</sup>. A massive use of the nominative form to report names of deities on Domna's obverses equates the Augusta to the goddesses represented<sup>237</sup>. Particularly interesting are the legends concerning her motherhood, such as MATER DEVVM (with reference to Cybele),

<sup>232</sup> Levick 2007, 67; Lusnia 1995, 137.

<sup>233</sup> Rowan 2011, 244.

<sup>234</sup> Rowan 2011, 263, with ample bibliography on the interpretation of this legend.

<sup>235</sup> *Luna Lucifera*: RIC IV.1 p. 273 no. 379a-c, p. 310 no. 587, p. 312 no. 600. Cybele on the chariot pulled by lions: RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 562, p. 208 no. 858. *Venus Genetrix* on throne: RIC IV.1 p. 274 nos. 388a-c, p. 311 no. 592A.

<sup>236</sup> *Ceres Frugifera*: RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 546, p. 177 no. 636. *Vesta Mater*: RIC IV.1 p. 171 nos. 583-586, p. 209 no. 868, p. 211 no. 892a-b. *Vesta Sancta*: RIC IV.1 p. 171 no. 587, p. 178 no. 648, p. 209 no. 869, p. 211 no. 894. About *Luna Lucifera* cf. the previous footnote.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Morelli 2009, 132; Filippini 2008, 10.

which is already on the coins of Faustina the Younger and Lucilla as MATRI MAGNAE, and the aforementioned VESTA MATER, which are an explicit reference to her central role within the dynasty<sup>238</sup>. Finally, for the first time in the history of imperial women's coinage the goddess Isis in the act of suckling Horus appears on her coins bearing the legend SAECVLI FELICITAS<sup>239</sup>.

Scholars have attributed some of these innovations to the propaganda of Severus. The emphasis on the maternal element, in particular, would have been useful for advertising the dynasty, while the importance given to oriental cults such as that of Cybele and Isis would reflect the popularity of these deities among the inhabitants of the empire<sup>240</sup>. Despite this, given both the great variety that characterizes Domna's coinage and the existence of detailed studies about the chronology of the types and their interpretation, the examination of her coinage can provide interesting insights regarding the position enjoyed by the Augusta during specific periods in the reigns of both Severus and Caracalla. Moreover, when compared with the information provided by inscriptions and literature, these data are precious materials for delineating a better picture of Domna's agency.

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<sup>238</sup> *Mater deum*: RIC IV.1 p. 169 nos. 564-566 and 570, p. 209 no. 859. The legend MATRI MAGNAE appears only on the bronze coins of Domna: RIC IV.1 p. 207 no. 841. MATRI MAGNAE on the coins of Faustina: RIC III p. 270 nos. 704-706, p. 346 nos. 1663-1664. On the coins of Lucilla: RIC III p. 352 nos. 1736-1739. On Domna's motherhood on coins see in particular Morelli 2012, 286-287; *Ead.* 2010b, 470-471; *Ead.* 2009, 127-144; *Ead.* 2006, 70-74.

<sup>239</sup> The identification of the standing woman who breastfeeds the baby with Isis and Horus is in RIC IV.1 no. 577 (cf. also p. 74) and in BMCRE V pp. 166-167 nos. 75-82 (cf. also p. cxxxiv). The majority of the scholars who have examined the coinage of Domna have accepted this reconstruction, cf. Morelli 2012, 134; Filippini 2008, 13-14; Ghedini 1984, 155-156. On the other hand, Rowan 2011, 252 has rejected the identification, claiming that Isis *lactans* is always represented seated.

<sup>240</sup> Rowan 2011, 253.

#### I.4. ARTWORKS

Images of Domna did not appear on coins only, but also on public monuments, such as marble reliefs and statues, and artifacts for private use, such as cameos and paintings. As for the first category, it is important to stress that she was portrayed on some of the most famous monuments representing the Severan regime. The best known ones are the reliefs on the Arch of Septimius Severus in Leptis Magna, where she appears at least six times in different situations, and the Arch of the *Argentarii* (*Arcus Argentariorum*) in Rome, where she is portrayed attending a sacrifice, together with Severus<sup>241</sup>. On a relief of unknown origin she is also represented as Venus Victrix in the act of crowning Caracalla<sup>242</sup>. Although these monuments were probably put up on the initiative of either private associations or provincial communities, their relevant dimensions corroborate the idea that the regime had some input into their realization<sup>243</sup>. Finally, marble statues and busts of the Syrian Augusta are documented in considerable numbers from all over the empire<sup>244</sup>.

With regard to the artworks pertaining to the private sphere, images of the empress on cameos are attested to from the early period of Severus' reign<sup>245</sup>. Gems

<sup>241</sup> Alexandridis 2004, 202 no. 224; Micoiki 1995, 215-216 no. 444; Ghedini 1984, 27-110. On this topic cf. also chap. IVb.

<sup>242</sup> Ghedini 1984, 111-119. On this topic cf. also chap. V.

<sup>243</sup> According to Ghedini 1984, 29 and 90 the considerable dimensions of both the *Arcus Argentariorum* and the Severan arch of Leptis Magna could indicate that the imperial establishment had a determinant role in selecting the decorative patterns on these monuments. With regard to imperial statues and other kind of images, Fejfer 2008, 418-419 and Fittschen 1996, 42 have argued that official portraits of imperial women were under close imperial scrutiny and official models were sent out to the provinces for copying. Therefore, it is easy to presume that the important reliefs such as those on the arch of Leptis met imperial approval.

<sup>244</sup> The most up-to-date catalogue of these monuments can be found in Alexandridis 2004. Cf. also Hekster 2015, 143-153; Ghedini 1984, 121-184.

<sup>245</sup> A quite large cameo from Kassel shows Domna with her early hairstyle depicted as Victory (Alexandridis 2004, 205-206 no. 233; Micoiki 1995, 216-217 no. 447; Ghedini 1984, 132-135). On this topic cf. also chap. III.

representing Domna crowning Caracalla were produced during the last years of this emperor, probably being made for high dignitaries and their circles<sup>246</sup>. The same could apply to portraits on wooden panels. The most famous one is certainly the Severan Tondo, a group portrait from Egypt where she is represented together with the other members of the imperial family<sup>247</sup>.

Francesca Ghedini's book on the archaeological sources concerning Domna still represents the most exhaustive analysis of her iconography<sup>248</sup>. Through a detailed examination of coins, reliefs, statues, cameos and medallions representing Domna, Ghedini has come to some interesting conclusions regarding her role within the Severan regime's propaganda, and regarding her frequent presence on typologies of monuments that had been usually reserved for the celebration of men only, such as the triumphal arches<sup>249</sup>. During the following decades studies of Domna's representations in artworks have been included in numerous volumes concerning the iconography of imperial women. Among these publications, it is important to cite the study of Tomasz Mikocki on the assimilation of imperial women to goddesses, the substantial volume by Annetta Alexandridis on imperial women's *bildlichen Darstellung* (which also includes a catalogue containing all the most important iconographic representations of Domna), and Jane Fejfer's study on Roman portraiture<sup>250</sup>. Finally, Zahara Newby's study concerning the stylistic developments in Severan art and Natalie Kampen's re-examination of the scenes on the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna deserve a special mention<sup>251</sup>.

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<sup>246</sup> Heckster 2015, 152-153.

<sup>247</sup> Alexandridis 2004, 207, no. 235. See also chap. IVb.

<sup>248</sup> Ghedini 1984.

<sup>249</sup> Cf. in particular the conclusions (188-192).

<sup>250</sup> Fejfer 2009, 359-362; Alexandridis 2004; Mikocki 1995.

<sup>251</sup> Kampen 2009, 84-92, 98-99; Newby 2007, 201-249.

Given both the abundance of iconographic documentation concerning Domna and the ample scholarship on this topic, the examination of the influence that our Syrian Augusta had on her times cannot neglect this type of sources. The information that this evidence can provide is twofold. On one side, important public monuments such as the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna and Arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome represent a good picture of how the regime (including the Augusta) wanted to portray itself. On the other hand, artworks characterized by more modest dimensions such as cameos and statues are indicative of how local communities and imperial elites perceived the presence of Domna at the imperial court.

### I.5. CONCLUSIONS

The overview of literary, numismatic, epigraphic and archaeological evidence concerning Domna's agency shows that the study of this figure appears much harder when compared to the male members of the imperial family. She appears only occasionally in literary accounts. The lack of official political power makes it difficult to understand whether the appearance of her name on inscriptions is a direct consequence of her influence. Also, her power in shaping the contours of her public image on coins and monuments is more complicated to determine.

Nevertheless, each type of source shows intriguing peculiarities that make its use valuable. Although frequently lacking in-depth historical vision, Cassius Dio's account relating to the Severan age represents a precious piece of evidence by a senator who was contemporary to the events he was describing. The *History* of Herodian and the biographies of the *HA*, which made use of different sources contemporary to the events,

are important resources for supplementing the information provided by the Bithynian senator. Despite the scarcity of references to his biography, Herodian composed his work shortly after the end of the Severan dynasty. He probably knew the work of Dio, but also made use of other sources of information. The *HA*, on the other hand, was written a couple of centuries after the death of Domna. The anonymous author, however, made use of one good source from the early third century. Therefore, the information that this work provides should not always be regarded as pure invention by the author.

Coins struck in honor of Domna, inscriptions where she is mentioned, and artworks where she is portrayed are useful instruments to supplement the picture delineated by literary sources. Although this kind of evidence represents instruments of mass communication, the quality of information it can provide is heterogeneous. Coins minted in the imperial mints and a few inscriptions from Rome commemorating Domna's intervention in building projects are the only pieces of evidence that were officially authored by the regime. On the other hand, coins struck by provincial cities, inscriptions and honorary monuments set up by individuals can be indicative of the relationships between the Augusta and her subjects. Additionally, important artworks such as the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna or the Arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome represent particular cases. Although they are the result of initiatives undertaken by cities and private associations, it can be presumed that the imperial establishment had somehow approved their content.

As for the evidence directly produced by the regime, it is important to stress that the coins struck for Domna in the imperial mints sometimes show important elements of discontinuity when compared to the types previously minted for other imperial women.

Thus, this material is a significant source of information for better understanding the position that the Augusta occupied in the imperial establishment. Conversely, inscriptions set up to honor Domna and provincial coinage in her name can provide additional information regarding how cities, imperial officials, military personnel, and private individuals perceived her image. Thanks to the fact that it is frequently possible to date coins and inscriptions fairly accurately, this evidence can be used to supplement the information reported by Cassius Dio, Herodian and the *HA*. Consequently, a comparative study of literature, inscriptions, coins and artworks appears fundamental for our better understanding of the agency of the Syrian Augusta within the different phases of the reigns of Severus and Caracalla.

## CHAPTER II

### *Marriage and Family*

After having examined the issues concerning the interpretation of the sources, I will now turn to the analysis of the salient events in the life of Domna. The first of these is her marriage with Severus. According to the *HA*, the future emperor sought her hand because of her horoscope, which predicted that she would marry a king<sup>252</sup>. Although Severus is well known for his penchant for astrology<sup>253</sup>, the reasons that led him to propose to the family of Domna while he was in the other end of the Empire governing Gallia Lugdunensis were certainly more complex. This chapter is dedicated to the examination of the family backgrounds of both Domna and Severus, with the aim of better understanding what advantages the latter was looking for. It is undeniable that Domna's family played a major role during the first period of their union. As mentioned in the introduction of this study, their firstborn son was named after Domna's father, Bassianus. The horoscope, then, was not the only reason behind Severus' proposal. Scholars have justified his choice with a generic desire of wealth<sup>254</sup>. Yet the examination of Domna's family background demonstrates that, in Severus' eyes, relations with the Syrian and Emesene nobility were probably intended to boost his career. Despite his relatively

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<sup>252</sup> *Sev.* 3.9; *Geta* 3.1; *Alex.* 5.4.

<sup>253</sup> Dio 77 (76).11.1; *Sev.* 2.8-9, 3.9, 4.3. Cf. also Lusnia 2014, 40-46; Rubin 1980, 33-38. The monument that best illustrates Severus' attention towards astrology is the well-known *Septizodium*. This is a monumental *nymphaeum* (now disappeared) that Severus built in Rome between 202 and 203. It probably included sculptures of the Severans in close association with celestial deities. On the topic cf. Pfuntner 2016, 12-19; Lusnia 2014, 117-132 with further references.

<sup>254</sup> Levick 2007, 29-30, who also considers the possibility that Domna's relatives invented the story of the horoscope in order to attract pretenders to her hand. Cf. also Daguet-Gagey 2006, 168-173; Spielvogel 2006, 53; Bleckmann 2002, 269; Birley 1999, 75-76.

modest origins from the African equestrian class, he was already a senator. However, he was also in desperate need of good connections in order to emerge into the political arena.

## II.1. DOMNA'S HOROSCOPE

The only source about the life of Domna before Severus' accession are some passages from the *HA* concerning the motivation that led Severus to ask for her hand. All of them have a common feature, the horoscope of Domna. According to the author, this was the reason behind Severus' proposal of marriage. The same information is reported in three passages from the lives of Severus, Geta, and Severus Alexander:

*Sev. 3.9: cum amissa uxore aliam vellet ducere, genituras sponsarum requirebat, ipse quoque matheseos peritissimus, et cum audisset esse in Syria quandam quae id geniturae haberet ut regi iungeretur, eandem uxorem petiit, Iuliam scilicet, et accepit interventu amicorum.*

He had meanwhile lost his wife, and now, wishing to take another, he made inquiries about the horoscopes of marriageable women, being himself no mean astrologer; and when he learned that there was a woman in Syria whose horoscope predicted that she would wed a king (I mean Julia, of course), he sought her for his wife, and through the mediation of his friends secured her.

*Geta 3.1: Iulia, quam idcirco Severus uxorem duxerat quod eam in genitura habere compererat ut regis uxor esset, isque privatus sed iam optimi in re publica loci.*

Julia, whom Severus married because he found out that her horoscope showed that she should be the wife of a king, while he was still only a subject, though he held even then an excellent place in the state.

*Alex. 5.4: ut Marius Maximus dixit in Vita Severi, nobilem orientis mulierem Severus, cuius hanc genituram esse compererat ut uxor imperatoris esset, adhuc privatus et non magni satis loci, duxit uxorem.*

As Marius Maximus narrates in his Life of Severus, Severus, at that time only a subject and a man of no extraordinary position, married a noblewoman from the East, whose horoscope, he learned, declared that she should be the wife of an emperor.

As indicated in the passage from the life of Severus Alexander, the source of information is Marius Maximus' life of Severus. Apart from the story of the horoscope, the details related by the three passages can be considered accurate, and they correspond to what is reported by other sources. The Syrian origin of Domna has never been in doubt, as well as the identification of her native city with Emesa<sup>255</sup>. The fact that Severus had previously been married to a woman of north African origin, Paccia Marciana, is well known<sup>256</sup>. The circumstances in which Severus decided to look for a new wife (i.e. after having held the quaestorship, the tribunate, the praetorship, a legionary command in Syria, the governorship of Gallia Lugdunensis and other minor offices, but before the consulate and the prestigious governorship in Pannonia) seem to apply to a man whose public position was not extraordinary (*non magni satis loci*), but, at the same time, was well respected (*iam optimi in re publica loci*)<sup>257</sup>. Finally, Severus' interest in astrology and predictions is not only frequently attested to by the *HA*, but also by Dio, who composed a booklet about the omens that had foretold Severus' future accession to the throne<sup>258</sup>. The main purpose of this work was evidently to gain the favor of the new regime<sup>259</sup>. The choice of the topic cannot be casual, and it was likely intended to capture the attention of an emperor whose interest in such things was known in the public domain.

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<sup>255</sup> Syrian origin: Dio 78 (77).6.1a. Emesene origin: Hdn. 5.3.2; *Macr.* 9.1.

<sup>256</sup> She is mentioned by an inscription from *Cirta* (CIL VIII 19494 = ILAlg II 1, 565), and by two texts from *Leptis Magna* (IRT 410 = AE 1947, 50; IRT 411 = AE 1950, 160). About this character cf. Birley 1999, 52.

<sup>257</sup> Barbieri 1954, 59-60 considers the two expressions contradictory, and attributes them to different authors. According to Kettenhofen 1979, 59, the use of different definitions should be ascribed to a re-elaboration of the original information by the author of the *HA*. Undeniable similarities such as the use of the word *privatus*, the expressions *magni/optimi loci*, and the resemblance between *ut regis uxor esset* and *ut uxor imperatoris esset* seem to confirm this reconstruction. On Severus' career cf. *infra*.

<sup>258</sup> Dio 73 (72).23.1-2. On Severus' addiction to astrology cf. n. 253 above.

<sup>259</sup> Letta 1979, 125-126.

Scholars are, in general, unanimous in interpreting the episode of the horoscope as a story that circulated at the time of Domna rather than as a late antique invention. According to Ronald Syme, the rumor must have been spread either by Severus or by his adherents, after the accession in 193, since before this date it could have aroused the suspicion of plotting against the regime of Commodus<sup>260</sup>. Another possibility, also hypothesized by Syme, is to regard the information as mere gossip that circulated at that time<sup>261</sup>. A few years after the study of Syme, Zeev Rubin reasserted the theory of the propagandist device. Rubin claimed that the anecdote related by the *HA* could be an abbreviated version of a more detailed story, which was invented by Severan propaganda with the purpose of creating a favorable omen to support Severus' claim to the throne<sup>262</sup>. During the following decades this reconstruction met with the approval of Anthony Birley and Barbara Levick<sup>263</sup>. Considering the remarkable attention that Dio devotes to omens and predictions, however, it appears difficult to justify the absence of such a story in the work of the Bithynian writer<sup>264</sup>. An omen involving Domna is indeed present in the collection of prophecies reported by Dio. He relates that before marrying her, Severus saw Faustina the Younger in a dream in the act of preparing the nuptial chamber for him and his new wife in the temple of Venus close to the palace<sup>265</sup>. Dio's clarification that the dream occurred to Severus when he was about to marry Domna (μέλλοντί τε αὐτῷ τὴν Ιουλίαν ἄγεσθαι) is quite interesting. It could suggest that this story, and that of the horoscope, originally circulated together, and were originally included in the booklet

<sup>260</sup> Syme 1983, 89.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> Rubin 1980, 178-180.

<sup>263</sup> Birley 1999, 222 ad n. 38; Levick 2007, 30.

<sup>264</sup> As already observed by Syme 1983, 89.

<sup>265</sup> Dio 75 (74).3.1.

about the dreams and premonitions (βιβλίον τι περὶ τῶν ὄνειράτων καὶ τῶν σημείων) that foretell the reign of Severus. The brief list of prodigies included by Dio in his history appears to be almost exclusively focused on the dreams (ὄνειράτα), but the booklet should have likely contained much more<sup>266</sup>. This is especially true regarding signs (σημεῖα) not related to the dream state, such as Domna's horoscope. Furthermore, in Dio's list the only other σημεῖον that is not linked to a dream is the episode of the young Severus sitting inadvertently on the imperial throne, which is also reported by the *HA*<sup>267</sup>. The anonymous author also relates Severus' dream of the she-wolf that nursed him in the same way she had nursed Romulus and Remus, an omen that can be found in Dio's history as well<sup>268</sup>. It is therefore probable that both Dio and the source of the *HA*, Marius Maximus, gleaned the same material from the rumors that were in circulation, possibly fomented by propaganda and amplified by popular gossip. In this regard, the name Domna itself could have played a role. Its Arab origins are nowadays commonly accepted, in particular the connection with expressions indicating the color black<sup>269</sup>. However, on inscriptions the name sometimes appears misspelled as *Domina*, thus possibly suggesting an idea of regality to the people who were not familiar with such names. The phenomenon is so common that it can be observed on both Latin and Greek inscriptions<sup>270</sup>. It is certainly unfeasible to maintain that Severus could have been 'deceived' by such a misinterpretation, but the confusion between the different forms of the name could have been used to support the story of the horoscope<sup>271</sup>. In brief, both the

<sup>266</sup> List of dreams and premonitions: 75 (74).3.1-3.

<sup>267</sup> *Sev.* 1.9.

<sup>268</sup> *Sev.* 1.8; Dio 75 (74).3.1.

<sup>269</sup> Levick 2007, 18 with further references.

<sup>270</sup> On this topic cf. Kettenhofen 1979, 77.

<sup>271</sup> Similar conclusions can be found in Kettenhofen 1979, 77.

dream concerning Faustina preparing the nuptial chamber and the horoscope regarding the Syrian Augusta, strengthened by the ambivalence in Domna/Domina, may represent two sides of the same coin, viz. a propagandist effort to connect this Syrian aristocratic woman (and consequently Severus) to a royal ancestry. It is also true, however, that the expression ‘noblewoman from the East’ (*nobilem orientis mulierem*) reported by *Alex.* 5.4 (the passage directly attributed to Maximus) emphasizes the noble – and oriental – origin of Domna. Inasmuch as a fundamental assumption for a royal marriage is noble ancestry, a connection between this expression and the anecdote of the horoscope cannot be avoided. In order to determine whether Maximus’ statement contains a seed of truth or not, it is necessary to examine in detail the origin of Domna, and, in consequence, the social status of her family.

## II.2. THE DYNASTY OF EMESA

### II.2.1. Julius Bassianus

The only available evidence about the ancestry of Domna is revealed in a couple of passages in the anonymous *Epitome de Caesaribus*:

21.1: *Hic [scil. Caracalla] Bassianus ex avi materni nomine dictus est.*

He was called by the name Bassianus from his maternal grandfather.

23.2: *Huius [scil. Elagabali] matris Soemeae avus Bassianus nomine fuerat, Solis sacerdos; quem Phoenices, unde erat, Heliogabalum nominabant.*

The grandfather of his mother Soemea, Bassianus by name, had been a priest of Sol, whom the Phoenicians where he was living used to call Heliogabalus.

Although related by a fourth century source, this information should be considered reliable. The author of the *Epitome* certainly made use of previous works, and the facts

related in this booklet are, in general, consistent with those reported by Dio, Herodian, and the *HA*<sup>272</sup>. Moreover, the name Bassianus is borne by other members of the family, viz. Caracalla (called Septimius Bassianus before his promotion to Caesar and the adoption of the name M. Aurelius Antoninus), Julia Soaemias (Julia Soaemias Bassiana), Elagabalus (Sex. Varius Avitus Bassianus), and Severus Alexander (M. Julius Gessius Bassianus Alexianus)<sup>273</sup>. According to François Chausson, the name Bassianus could be interpreted as a modification of Bassus, thus assuming that the original name of Domna's father could have been Julius Bassus (the *gentilicium* Julius is obtained by the name of his daughters, Domna and Maesa)<sup>274</sup>. The priesthood of Elagabal held by Bass(ian)us is confirmed by the particular attachment to this cult that his family showed<sup>275</sup>. In a passage dedicated to the description of this cult, Herodian states that both the young sons of Soaemias and Mamaea, the future emperors Elagabalus and Severus Alexander respectively, had been consecrated to the worship of Elagabal<sup>276</sup>. The same passage

<sup>272</sup> According to Birley 1999, 224 no. 46, the most probable source used by the *Epitome* is, in this case, Marius Maximus. About the sources of the *Epitome* cf. Bonamente 2003, 100-103; Birley 1999, 207 no. 6 with further bibliography. Millar 1993, 303 expresses skepticism about the value of the information related by the *Epitome*. On the other hand, both Levick 2007, 15 and Chausson 1995a, 698 consider the *Epitome* reliable and founded on good sources, viz. Marius Maximus.

<sup>273</sup> In 214, the *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* as *magister Arvalium* record a M. Julius Gessius Bassianus. It is impossible to determine his precise identity, since he could be either the future emperor Severus Alexander, an unknown brother of him, or another person, cf. Birley 1999, 222 no. 35 (who leans towards the identity being a brother); Chausson 1995a, 699 n. 69; Scheid 1990, 438-440 no. 140; PIR<sup>2</sup> J 342 (the latter suggests an identification with the emperor, but the hypothesis is rejected by Birley on the basis of Hdn. 5.7.4, who states that in 221 Alexander was only twelve years old). For a family tree of Domna's family see fig. 2.

<sup>274</sup> Chausson 1995a, 703.

<sup>275</sup> Some scholars have proposed to identify the name Bassianus/Bassus with a Latinized form of a Phoenician word for priest, *basus*. It is however difficult to establish a connection between this name and priesthood held by Julius Bass(ian)us, since it also appears in the nomenclature of people without any specific priestly connotation, such as, for example, soldiers. Furthermore, the name Bassiana was borne by Julia Soaemias, and there is no proof that she was ever a priestess of the cult of Elagabal. Cf. the discussion in Levick 2007, 14; Birley 1999, 72, 224 no. 46.

<sup>276</sup> Hdn. 5.3.4: ιέρωντο δὲ αὐτοὶ θεῷ ἥλιῳ ('They were both priests of the sun god'), and 5.3.6: τούτῳ δὴ τῷ θεῷ ὁ Βασιανὸς ιερώμενος. Ἀτε γὰρ πρεσβυτέρῳ ἐκείνῳ ἐγκεχείριστο ἡ θρησκεία.

relates that Elagabus had been appointed chief priest, since he was the elder of the two boys. From this evidence it is possible to assume that the chief priesthood of Elagabal was hereditary, and it had been handed down from Julius Bass(ian)us to other male members of the family. A group of inscriptions from Rome, dated to the reign of Severus, attests to the name of another priest that could be related to the family of Domna. This is a Ti. Julius Balbillus, *sacerdos Solis Elagabali*, whose proximity to the imperial family could be suggested by the dedication of a statue base in his honor that an imperial freedman set up to his *amicus optimus*<sup>277</sup>. Additionally, the name Balbillus had already belonged to distinguished persons from the near East, such as the poetess Julia Balilla. She was a friend of Hadrian and Sabina and a member of the royal dynasty of Commagene, which had been related to the dynasty of kings who ruled Emesa between the first century BC and the first century AD<sup>278</sup>. Although there are no further elements that support Balbillus' Emesene origin and belonging to the family of Bassianus, it is necessary to stress that he is the first priest of Elagabal attested in Rome. According to Chausson, it is not impossible that Ti. Julius Balbillus came to Rome as a member of the entourage of Domna, and that he was responsible for the cult to which the Syrian members of the imperial house were particularly devoted<sup>279</sup>. Although there is no direct evidence that Domna ever participated in a religious ceremony related to the cult of Elagabal, it is interesting to observe that, on a panel of the Arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome, she is portrayed officiating at a public sacrifice with her right hand raised. This is a very common Near Eastern pose that, according to the context, denotes benediction or

(‘Bassianus [i.e. Elagabus] was a priest of this god [i.e. Elagabal]. Since he was the elder, he had been put in charge of the cult.’).

<sup>277</sup> CIL VI 2270.

<sup>278</sup> Cf. the stemma Sullivan 1977. On the figure of Balilla cf. Hemelrijck 1999, 164-170.

<sup>279</sup> Chausson 1995a, 699-701.

prayer<sup>280</sup>. Such a display of ‘orientalism’ demonstrates that, after having moved to the West, she did not completely abandon the religious traditions of her fatherland<sup>281</sup>. In this respect, it is worthwhile mentioning the βαρβαρικὰς φόδας ('barbarian chants') that, according to Dio, Julia Maesa and Julia Soaemias used to sing while worshipping the god from Emesa during the reign of Elagabalus<sup>282</sup>. Finally, C. Julius Avitus Alexianus, Maesa’s husband and Elagabalus’ grandfather, while *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in Retia during the reign of Severus, set up an altar to the *deus patrius Solis Elagabalus*<sup>283</sup>. This expression implies that he was from Emesa and that he was honoring the god venerated by his ancestors, thus suggesting a strong relationship between the cult of this deity and the aristocracy of the Syrian city. With this in mind, it is possible to better examine the connection between the family of Domna and the Emesene nobility.

### II.2.2. Emesa and its aristocracy

If compared to the most prominent Syrian cities, Emesa made its appearance quite late. Strabo, whose work was written during the Augustan age, mentions a tribe called *Emisenoi* (Ἐμισηνῶν ἔθνος) whose phylarchs, Sampsigeramus and his son Iamblichus, ruled the city of Arethusa<sup>284</sup>. The latter is mentioned by Cicero, who considered him a

<sup>280</sup> On Domna’s pose on the Arch of the *Argentarii* cf. Ghedini 1984, 35-36. On the pose with the raised right hand cf. also Dirven 2008, 237-238.

<sup>281</sup> The right hand raised in benediction is also one of the most common symbols of one of the most famous Syrian deities, Atargatis/Dea Syria. Cf. LIMC III.1 pp. 355-358.

<sup>282</sup> Dio 80 (79).11.1.

<sup>283</sup> AE 1962, 229 = AE 1962, 241: *Deo p[atrio] / Soli Ela[gabalo] / G. Iul(ius) Av[itus] / Alexi[anus], / soda[lis] / Titi[alis], / leg(atus) Au[gusti] p(ro) p(raetore)] / prov(inciae) [Raet(iae)].* ('C. Julius Avitus Alexianus, priest of the college of the *Titii*, governor of Retia [set up this monument] to the Sun Elagabal, god of his fatherland').

<sup>284</sup> Strabo 16.2.10.753.

possible ally against the Parthians while holding the governorship of Cilicia in 51 BC<sup>285</sup>.

These rulers presumably maintained friendly relationships with Rome, since in 47 BC, with the support provided by another prince probably related to his family, Ptolemaus son of Soaemus, Iamblichus was able to send some troops to help Caesar during the siege of Alexandria<sup>286</sup>. A few years later, the family was involved in the civil war between Octavian and Antony. The latter decided to replace Iamblichus with his brother, Alexander<sup>287</sup>. The victory of Octavian, however, rapidly led to the fall of Alexander, who was put to death and replaced by the son of Iamblichus, Iamblichus II<sup>288</sup>. It is possible that he was awarded Roman citizenship, thus receiving the name Julius, which is later borne by other members of the dynasty<sup>289</sup>. In 14 AD, after his death, Iamblichus II was succeeded by another Sampsigeramus. It is not completely clear whether this was a son of Iamblichus II or if he descended from another branch of the family<sup>290</sup>. At any rate, during the following decades the prestige enjoyed by Sampsigeramus II was indeed notable. One inscription from Heliopolis (Baalbek) and another from Palmyra honor Sampsigeramus II as ‘great king’<sup>291</sup>, thus showing the considerable prestige attributed to the dynasty by the ruling classes from other middle-eastern kingdoms. The relationship with Rome always remained close during the rest of the first century CE. The case of

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<sup>285</sup> Cic. *Ad fam.* 15.1.2.

<sup>286</sup> Jos. *AJ* 14.129. Although the sources do not explicitly mention an alliance between Rome and the Emesenes, several elements hint at friendly relationships. Regarding some matters about agrarian legislation in Italy, Cicero addresses Pompey calling him *Sampsiceramus* (*Ad Att.* 2.16.2), a name that might suggest a relationship with the phylarch Sampsigeramus. According to Sullivan 1977, 202, the allusion to Pompey’s settlements with many eastern kingdoms, *in primis* that of the Emsenes, seems clear. For a family tree of the kings of Emesa see fig. 1.

<sup>287</sup> Dio 50.13.17.

<sup>288</sup> Dio 51.2.2. Appointment of Iamblichus II by Octavian: Dio 54.9.2.

<sup>289</sup> Chad 1972, 58, who observes that Caesar could have also granted citizenship to Sampsigeramus I. Cf. Ball 2002, 35-36; Millar 1993, 303.

<sup>290</sup> The first option is preferred by Sullivan 1977, 212-214, while the second one by Ball 2002, 36.

<sup>291</sup> CIL III 14387a = IGLS VI 2760. The text from Palmyra is an inscription in Palmyrene published by Cantineau 1931, 116, 139-141 no. 18.

Soaemus, the nephew of Sampsigeramus II, is particularly interesting. On the occasion of the Armenian conflict during the reign of Nero, he was sent to occupy Sophene *cum insignibus regis*<sup>292</sup>. More or less during the same period, the above mentioned inscription from Heliopolis that reports the name of Sampsigeramus II calls him *rex magnus, philocaesar, philaromaeus, honoratus ornamentis consularibus, and patronus coloniae*<sup>293</sup>. Furthermore, together with the kings of Commagene and Judaea, Soaemus participated in the repression of the first Jewish revolt leading a considerable force of four thousand men formed by both cavalrymen and archers<sup>294</sup>. Later on, in 72, he participated in the *Bellum Commagenicum*. This conflict caused the suppression of this kingdom and the extinction of its dynasty, which was related to the Emesene royal house<sup>295</sup>. Despite the modest dimensions of Emesa<sup>296</sup>, the story of Soaemus clearly shows that from the end of the first century BC to the second half of the first century AD the kings and the nobility of this Syrian kingdom played important roles in the middle-eastern theatre. This is also demonstrated by the marriages that connected the dynasts of Emesa to other oriental royal houses. The brothers of Soaemus, for example, were all married to members of other dynasties. His siblings Azizus and Iotape had spouses from the house of Judaea, while a third Julia Mamaea, married a king of Pontus<sup>297</sup>.

<sup>292</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.7.1. On the topic cf. Barrett 1977, 153-159.

<sup>293</sup> CIL III 14387a = IGLS VI 2760.

<sup>294</sup> Jos. *BJ* 2.501.

<sup>295</sup> Jos. *BJ* 7.226. On this topic and Soaemus cf. Sullivan 1978, 216-218.

<sup>296</sup> Plin. *Nat.* 5.21.89. According to him, *ultra Palmyram quoque ex solitudinibus his aliquid obtinet Hemesa* ('Beyond Palmyra, in these solitary places Emesa gains some importance'). Josephus never explicitly mentions the city, but refer to the Emesenes with expressions such as, θυγατέρα τοῦ Ἐμεσῶν βασιλέως (*AJ* 18.135), Ἐμεσῶν δὲ Σαμψιγεράμος (*AJ* 19.338), τοῦ Ἐμέσων δυνάστου (*AJ* 20.158), which recall the Ἐμισηνῶν ἔθνος of Strabo 16.2.10.753. Dio defines Iamblichus I as Ἀραβίων τινῶν βασιλέα (50.13.7), referring to the city only at the time of Elagabalus. Cf. also the letters sent to Cicero *ab Iamblico, phylarcho Arabum (ad fam.* 15.1.2).

<sup>297</sup> Cf. the stemma of the family reported by Sullivan 1978 (cf. also p. 214). See also Birley 1999, 222 no. 40.

Soon after the military operations in 72 that embroiled Soaemus in Commagene, the dynasty of Emesa disappears from the record. A few years later, between 78 and 79, a C. Julius Samsigeramus, son of C. Julius Alexio, set up a grandiose funerary monument for himself and his relatives<sup>298</sup>. Although the nomenclature of these persons does not show any royal attribute, both the importance of the monument and their names is suggestive of them belonging to the dynasty, perhaps to another branch descending from the Alexander that was deposed by Octavian a century before<sup>299</sup>. What happened to the kingdom of Emesa after the disappearance of Soaemus is a matter of dispute. Annexation to the Roman province of Syria remains possible, but it is also true that the city does not seem to have struck imperial coins until the reign of Antoninus Pius. Therefore, the possibility that the dynasty ruled Emesa for some time during the second century cannot be excluded completely<sup>300</sup>.

A number of inscriptions from a family sepulcher continue to report names of individuals apparently connected to the dynasty. A Iotape and a T. Flavius Samsigeramus were buried in 108<sup>301</sup>. A C. Longinius Sohaimius son of Samsigeramus is mentioned in an epitaph dating to 110<sup>302</sup>. Another Samsigeramus son of Sohaimius died in 137<sup>303</sup>. Two other individuals named Alexander died in 158 and 177, respectively<sup>304</sup>.

It is also important to note that, in the course of the second century, several Emesenes reached prominent positions outside Emesa. One of these was probably C.

<sup>298</sup> IGLS V 2212 = OGIS 604.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. the stemmata in Settipani 2000, 448 and Sullivan 1978.

<sup>300</sup> Sullivan 1978, 218.

<sup>301</sup> IGLS V 2215, 2217

<sup>302</sup> IGLS V 2362. This inscription was not found together with the other tombs. Therefore, the affinity of Longinus Sohaimius to the other individuals can only be postulated on the basis of his name.

<sup>303</sup> IGLS V 2216.

<sup>304</sup> IGLS V 2213, 2214.

Julius Avitus, who held the governorship of Licia and Pamphylia between 147 and 149. After this office, he became *consul suffectus* during 149<sup>305</sup>. The husband of Julia Maesa, the aforementioned C. Julius Avitus Alexianus who set up a dedication to the *deus patrius* Elagabal, could have been related to him, even though the exact degree of kinship remains difficult to determine<sup>306</sup>. In 164, the emperor Lucius Verus installed a Soaemus on the throne of Armenia. According to Photius, who cites the novelist Iamblichus (a contemporary of Soaemus), he was a ‘king who descended from a dynasty of kings’ (βασιλεὺς [...] ἐκ πατέρων βασιλέων)<sup>307</sup>. Although the same passage defines Soaemus ‘the son of Achaemenides the Arsacid’, scholars generally prefer to identify him with a member of the Emesene royal house<sup>308</sup>. This interpretation also gives more strength to the expression ἐκ πατέρων βασιλέων. As related above, C. Julius Soaemus had already governed a part of Armenia *cum insignibus regis* between the reigns of Nero and Vespasian. It is therefore plausible that Lucius Verus made use of another member of the same family in order to install a king favorable to Rome on the throne of Armenia. Moreover, Iamblichus states that Soaemus later became senator and consul (γέγονε δὲ ὅμως καὶ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς τῆς ἐν Τρώμῃ, καὶ ὑπατος), thus receiving a recognition similar to the *ornamenta consularia* awarded to his ancestor<sup>309</sup>. After having been

<sup>305</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> J 191.

<sup>306</sup> Alexianus started his career as a knight, entering the senate *inter aedilios* only during the reign of Severus, cf. Pflaum 1979, 301 n. 36. According to Letta 1985-1990, 301 n. 43, either an adoption into the family of C. Julius Avitus or lineage through females could explain his initial membership in the equestrian order. Similar conclusions in Settipani 2000, 447.

<sup>307</sup> The information is related by Phot. *Bibl.* 40.

<sup>308</sup> Birley 1999, 224 no. 48; Letta 1985-1990, 294, 300 n. 40; Bowersock 1982, 665 no. 14; Chaumont 1976, 149-150. According to Birley, the alleged Arsacid ancestry could derive from the name Iotape, borne by some member of the Emesene dynasty, cf. the stemma in Sullivan 1976, who also includes Soaemus of Armenia, but without investigating his relationship to the rest of the family.

<sup>309</sup> *Apud* Phot. *Bibl.* 40. Soaemus probably lived in Rome for some time. Fronto mentions him in a letter to Verus (2.1.15).

overthrown by a satrap, Soaemus was reinstalled on the throne in 172<sup>310</sup>. It is possible that he was still in charge at the time of Commodus' accession. One last individual deserves a special mention. This is a Julius Alexander from Emesa who was put to death during the reign of Commodus. According to Dio, at a certain point the emperor ordered the death of some 'prominent men' (ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρας). Among these were the prefect of the guard Julianus and, immediately afterwards, Julius Alexander<sup>311</sup>. The latter was accused of having killed a lion with his javelin while on horseback. The episode probably took place in Syria, since Alexander was in Emesa when he was informed of the arrival of the assassins<sup>312</sup>. He was able to eliminate them and his enemies in the city, and to organize his escape to Parthia. He was, however, captured and executed soon after his flight from Emesa<sup>313</sup>. The motivation that led Commodus to order the assassination of Alexander, i.e. the killing of a lion, could at first sight seem banal and be regarded as mere sporting rivalry. Nonetheless, the *HA* states that, during the reign of Commodus, many people were put to death without reason, but in the cases of Lucilla (Commodus' sister) and Alexander because of a real conspiracy<sup>314</sup>. Some decades ago, the case of this Emesene personality was analyzed by Cesare Letta and Kostas Buraselis, who, in two different articles, came to very similar conclusions<sup>315</sup>. According to their reconstructions, Alexander's killing of a lion should be interpreted as an act of defiance against Commodus, who was often portrayed in the act of bringing down this animal, especially

<sup>310</sup> Dio 71.3.1<sup>1</sup>. On the topic cf. Chaumont 1972, 150-152.

<sup>311</sup> Dio 73 (72).14.1-3.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>314</sup> *Comm.* 8.2.

<sup>315</sup> Buraselis 1991; Letta 1985-1990.

toward the end of his reign<sup>316</sup>. Also, the successful suppression of his enemies likely suggested the availability of a consistent number of armed men, thus implying that Alexander enjoyed a large following in the region of Emesa<sup>317</sup>. His position was, in any case, quite important in Rome as well, since Dio mentions him among ‘the most distinguished individuals’ (ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρας), and immediately after the prefect of the guard in his account<sup>318</sup>. Therefore, it seems plausible that he was at least an important senator. If he really was a relative of Soaemus and C. Julius Avitus, he could have even been *consularis*<sup>319</sup>.

In summary, starting from the half of the first century BC, the aristocracy of Emesa began to play a considerable role in the Roman middle-eastern politics. Noblemen and dynasts from the city were active at the sides of Caesar, Antony and Octavian. As recognition, the members of the royal house received Roman citizenship at this time. Their contribution to the Roman armies campaigning in the East became even more important during the reigns of Nero and the Flavians. At this time, the *rex magnus* C. Julius Soaemus received the *ornamenta consularia*, thus probably becoming the first senator from the city. During the following decades royal titles disappear from the nomenclature of members of the dynasty, and the city became part of the province of Syria, perhaps already before the end of the first century or, at latest, in the course of the first half of the second century. Nonetheless, distinguished individuals evidently related to the royal family continued to emerge, especially during the Antonine age. From the reign of Antoninus Pius to that of Commodus it is possible to count at least three

<sup>316</sup> Buraselis 1991, 25-28; Letta 1985-1990, 293.

<sup>317</sup> Letta 1985-1990, 293-294.

<sup>318</sup> Dio 73 (72).14.1.

<sup>319</sup> Letta 1985-1990, 294. Birley 1999, 223 no. 44 accepts a connection with the Emesene royal house by virtue of the name Alexander.

senators, viz. C. Julius Avitus, Julius Soaemus, and Julius Alexander. The first two of them were consuls. Furthermore, the second was installed on the throne of Armenia, while the third openly challenged the regime of Commodus with the probable intention of stirring a revolt. The descent of Soaemus from the last sovereign of Emesa is almost certain. Avitus and Alexander likely belonged to the same family, or at least to parallel branches of it. Between the first and the second century, other important Syrian cities such as Antioch, Berytus and Heliopolis do not seem to have produced more than one senatorial family each, thus making it extremely improbable that different senatorial families with the same *gentilicium* lived in Emesa<sup>320</sup>. Additionally, the city received the *ius Italicum* only under Caracalla<sup>321</sup>. It might be presumed, therefore, that individuals with Roman names and the *gentilicium* Julius/a belonged to the royal family that had received the citizenship at the time of Augustus<sup>322</sup>.

### **II.2.3. Domna and her family**

There is no direct proof to connect Domna's father, Julius Bassianus, to the main royal line that descends from the last attested king of Emesa, the *rex magnus* C. Julius Soaemus. His priesthood of the *Sol Invictus Elagabalus*, however, represents a position of great prestige within the aristocracy of this city. Until the first half of the second century the importance of this cult is only attested to by the origin of some of its

<sup>320</sup> On the senators from the Syrian cities cf. Bowersock 1982. The *Claudii Pompeiani* are attested to at Antioch (p. 664 nos. 1-7). The most famous of them is Ti. Claudius Pompeianus, *cos. II ord.* 173 and husband of Lucilla (PIR<sup>2</sup> C 973). Two *Sentii* are documented in Berytus during the reign of Vespasian (p. 665 nos. 11-12). Three *Velii* who lived between the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Commodus are attested in Heliopolis (pp. 665-666 nos. 16-18).

<sup>321</sup> *Dig. 50.15.1.4* (*Ulpianus de cens.*): *Sed et Emisenae civitati Phoenices imperator noster ius coloniae dedit iurisque italicique eam fecit.* ('But our emperor gave the colonial law also to Emesa, city of the Phoenicia, and granted it the Italic citizenship'). Cf. Millar 2006, 202.

<sup>322</sup> Similar observations can be found in Bowersock 1982, 654.

sovereigns' names. Samsigeramus, in fact, has been interpreted as a Mesopotamian-Arabic compound indicating the veneration for the Sun god, while Soaemus should be related to the worship of the black monolith that was preserved in the temple of Elagabal<sup>323</sup>. The name Iamblichus seems also to be theophoric<sup>324</sup>. Starting from the reign of Antoninus Pius, the cult of the monolith preserved in the main temple of Emesa regularly appears on the majority of the coins struck by the city, which portray either the radiate bust of the Sun, the monolith surmounted by an eagle, the facade of the temple, or the altar of the god<sup>325</sup>. Although Julius Bassianus was not a senator like Soaemus or Julius Alexander, he was most likely a distinguished person related to the Emesene aristocracy that claimed its descent from the dynasts who had ruled the city<sup>326</sup>.

The names of the daughters of Maesa are, moreover, significant, since both Soaemias and Mamaea were names that had already belonged to members of the royal house. As reported above, Maesa married a man from Emesa, C. Julius Avitus Alexianus. His last name seems to represent an onomastic tradition that goes back to the Alexander who usurped the throne of Emesa at the time of the civil wars between Octavian and Antony. Alexio was the father of the Sampsigeramus mentioned on the monumental tomb erected in 78/79<sup>327</sup>. The name Alexander is also borne by several individuals buried in the

<sup>323</sup> Shahîd 1984, 41-42; Chad 1972, 134-138. Cf. also Ball 2000, 37.

<sup>324</sup> Chad 1972, 143-144.

<sup>325</sup> For a complete examination of the coins see Dieudonné 1906. Cf. also Chad 1972, 114-117.

<sup>326</sup> While commenting on Domna's death, Dio (79 [78].24.1) says that she sprang 'from the people' (ἐκ δημοτικοῦ γένους). At first sight, this expression may indicate that her family was of humble origin. Scholars, however, have interpreted Dio's words as a reference to the fact that Domna was not directly descending from senators (Levick 2007, 7). According to Mallan 2013, 754-755, they sound like 'a snide attempt to belittle Domna'. Mallan has also observed that Dio is probably echoing a passage from Diodorus Siculus (2.4.1) referring to the lowly origin of Semiramis, the Syrian queen that, according to Dio (79 [78].23.3), Domna wanted to imitate by trying to become sole ruler after Caracalla's death.

<sup>327</sup> A probable connection between these people and Avitus Alexianus is also stressed by Settipani 2000, 447.

common sepulcher along with other members of the dynasty. The marriage between Maesa and Alexianus was, therefore, a union between people from the same aristocracy. It is also possible that Alexianus passed from one branch of the family to another one through adoption, perhaps to the family of Maesa itself at the time of the marriage<sup>328</sup>. The dominance of Maesa's origins seems at any rate suggested by the transmission of the name Bassianus to the eldest daughter, whose complete name was, as reported above, Julia Soaemias Bassiana. Finally, it is worth noting that, in Palmyra, Maesa was awarded the honor of a statue during the reign of Severus<sup>329</sup>. Although at this time she was the sister of an Augusta and sister in law of an emperor, she was still lacking public recognition, since she would have received the titles of Augusta and *Avia Augusti* only after the accession of Elagabalus. According to Chausson, this unusual honor paid to a sister of the Augusta can be explained by the prestige that the sacerdotal family of Bassianus enjoyed in other Syrian cities, where it seems also to have had family connections with local aristocracies<sup>330</sup>. This reconstruction could, in my view, find confirmation in the well known passage of Herodian where the historian describes the cult of Elagabal:

Θπρησκεύται δὲ οὐ μόνον πρὸς τῶν ἐπιχωρίων, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντες οἱ γειτνιῶντες σατράπαι τε καὶ βασιλεῖς βάρβαροι φιλοτίμως πέμπουσι τῷ θεῷ ἐκάστου τοῦ ἔτους πολυτελῆ ἀναθήματα<sup>331</sup>.

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<sup>328</sup> As suggested by Letta 1985-1990, 301 n. 43, cf. above n. 39.

<sup>329</sup> Starcky 1949 no. 67 = Delplace-Dentzer-Feydy 2005, 163 no. IV.04. It is impossible to determine whether the inscription was set up together with another text on an architrave in honor of Severus, Caracalla, and Julia Domna (Starcky 1949 no. 64 = Delplace-Dentzer-Feydy 2005, 163 no. IV.03).

<sup>330</sup> Chausson 1995a, 703. Among other individuals with names possibly connected to dynasty of Emesa, the scholar observes that an inscription records the name of a Julius Bassus nephew of a Sampsigeramus (Cantineau 1930-1931 nos. 8 and 22). The latter is a priest of Bel.

<sup>331</sup> Hdn. 5.3.4.

The cult [of Elagabal] does not involve only the people who live there [i.e. Emesa], but also the satraps from the neighbouring regions and barbarian kings every year vie to each other to send expensive offerings to the god.

It is, therefore, possible to presume that the family of the great priest who was in charge of Elagabal's cult enjoyed a notable prestige both in Syria and Mesopotamia. There is no evidence to establish whether Julius Bassianus was still alive at the time the dedication in honor of Maesa was set up in Palmyra. Considering that Maesa probably married Alexianus around 180 at an age of more or less twenty, a date close enough to the birth of Soaemias (the latter gave birth to Elagabalus around 203-204), there is a good chance that Bassianus had already died<sup>332</sup>. If so, as the elder daughter of the priest (there is no evidence to suggest that Domna and Maesa had siblings) Maesa was the senior representative of the family. This does not mean that she could have held the priesthood, since there are no attestations of priestesses consecrated to the cult of Elagabal. After Bassianus' death, the priesthood could either have remained vacant for some years or, more probably, under the supervision of a relative while waiting for a male successor<sup>333</sup>. In this regard, Soaemias' second name 'Bassiana', whose importance has already been underlined with reference to the marriage of Maesa, is also significant, since it was transmitted to her son Elagabalus (Sex. Varius Avitus Bassianus) who finally inherited the priesthood.

With all this in mind, the expression *nobilis orientis mulier* used by the *HA* with reference to Domna becomes more clear. She belonged to a well-known Syrian aristocratic family with connections in important cities of this area, such as Palmyra. The

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<sup>332</sup> Similar conclusions in Chausson 1995a, 699.

<sup>333</sup> See the aforementioned case of Ti. Julius Balbillus, who was priest of Elagabal and possibly connected to Domna's family.

Emesene nobility, to which she belonged, had played a considerable role in Roman middle-eastern politics since the time of Julius Caesar. In the course of the second century, this aristocracy produced a king of Armenia who also became senator and consul. Julius Alexander, who is regarded among the most distinguished personalities by Dio, was a figure that certainly enjoyed a considerable prestige in Rome, and was ultimately able to plot against Commodus. Finally, the fundamental importance that the cult of Elagabal assumed not only in Emesa, but also in the whole Syrian-Mesopotamic area, throws considerable light on the prestige that characterized the priesthood of this deity. Such a position could have been held only by a representative of the highest aristocracy with probable connections to the dynasty that had ruled the city until the second half of the first century. All these elements undoubtedly appeared as good assets to an ambitious senator like Severus. However, in order to better understand how the marriage with Domna helped him realize his political ambitions, it will be necessary to dedicate some time to analyzing his family background and early career.

### **II.3. SEVERUS' FAMILY AND CAREER**

#### **II.3.1. *Africa oriundus?***

The starting point for all those who study Severus' life and career is the passage that opens the biography of Severus in the *HA*:

*Interfecto Didio Juliano Severus Africa oriundus imperium obtinuit. Cui civitas Lepti, pater Geta, maiores equites Romani ante civitatem omnibus datam. Mater Fulvia Pia, patrui magni Aper et Severus consulares, avus paternus Macer, maternus Fulvius Pius fuere<sup>334</sup>.*

After the assassination of Didius Julianus, Severus, a native of Africa, became emperor. His father Geta was born in Leptis, his ancestors had been Roman knights before the

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<sup>334</sup> Sev. 1.1-2.

concession of the citizenship to the whole civic body. His mother was Fulvia Pia, his great-uncles were Aper and Severus, both of consular rank. His paternal grandfather was Macer, while the maternal grandfather Fulvius Pius.

Many of these persons are mentioned not only in other literary sources, but also in several inscriptions from North Africa. The complete name of the father, P. Septimius Geta, appears on two statue bases set up in Leptis Magna and on another from Cirta<sup>335</sup>. He does not seem to have held any office, even though an *aedilis* mentioned as [- - -]s Geta in another fragmentary inscription from Leptis could possibly be identified with him<sup>336</sup>. The figure of Severus' grandfather appears to be more interesting. Differently from what the *HA* relates, his real name, L. Septimius Severus, appears on several inscriptions in Leptis<sup>337</sup>. These texts also attest to his *cursus honorum*, which included the offices of *sufes*, prefect ‘publicly created when first Roman citizenship was introduced’<sup>338</sup>, *duovir*, and perpetual *flamen*. Additionally, he stayed for a certain period in Rome, where he judged cases being included in the official list of jury-men. This information confirms what the *HA* reports in the aforementioned passage, viz. the fact that at least two generations before the emperor some of his relatives had already become members of the equestrian order<sup>339</sup>. Some scholars have proposed to identify the grandfather of Severus

<sup>335</sup> CIL VIII 19493 = ILAlg II 1, 564 (Cirta); IRT 414 = AE 1947, 48; IRT 607 = AE 1950, 158 (Leptis Magna). Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> S 455. For a family tree of Severus' family see fig. 3.

<sup>336</sup> IRT 597, the possible identification is suggested by Letta 1986, 532.

<sup>337</sup> IRT 412 = AE 1950, 156; IRT 413 = AE 1950, 157; IRT 607 = AE 1950, 158. According to Birley 1999, 219 no. 23, the text of the *HA* should be emended in <*pro*>*avus paternus Macer*, thus identifying Macer with the grand-grandfather of Severus. Letta 1987, 537 suggests amending *Macer* to *Aper*, a name that is well documented in the family.

<sup>338</sup> *Praefectus publice creatus cum primum civitas Romana adacta est*. This happened during the reign of Trajan, when Leptis became *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Fidelis Leptis Magna*. Cf. Cordovana 2007, 115-116.

<sup>339</sup> The *adlectio* into the decuries of judges appears in the last position of the *cursus honorum* mentioned by IRT 412, i.e. after the duovirate, the flaminate, and, most of all, the prefecture at the time of the bestowal of the Roman citizenship. This does not mean, however, that the grandfather of Severus became a knight after the inhabitants of Leptis were awarded the citizenship, thus contradicting the *HA*. The mention of the *adlectio* seems to occupy a particular

with the young friend of Statius called Septimius Severus mentioned in the *Silvae*<sup>340</sup>. According to the poet, who composed this work between the late 80's and the early 90's of the first century, this individual came to Rome from Leptis Magna when he was still a boy (vv. 29-30 and 37-40). His family owned some properties in Etruria, and particularly in Veii (vv. 54-55). Later, he participated in the public life of the forum, where he could have been both lawyer and judge, but not for money (49-50). Both his speech and his customs did not show any Punic influence, and he could be considered wholly Italian (vv. 45-46)<sup>341</sup>. The two *patrui magni* and *consulares* mentioned by the *HA*, Aper and Severus, i.e. P. Septimius Aper (cos. 153)<sup>342</sup> and C. Septimius Severus (cos. 160)<sup>343</sup>, must have been the sons of his brother. However that may be, it is worthwhile noting that the family of Severus was part of the equestrian order since at least the second half of the first century (but an earlier dating cannot be completely excluded). At the time of Statius, the family was already well integrated in the public life of Rome, although its members did not occupy positions of particular importance. A qualitative leap did indeed occur, however, towards the second half of the second century, when the cousins of Severus' father became consuls.

position in this *cursus*. The service in the decuries was probably placed at the end in order to emphasize the exceptional importance of this office, which could have been held before the prefecture. Cf. the discussion in Birley 1999, 220 no. 26 and Letta 1987, 532-533.

<sup>340</sup> *Silv.* IV *prooem.* and 5, 3-4, 29-56. Birley 1999, 220 no. 26; Letta 1987, 532-534. Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> S 484.

<sup>341</sup> This passage is traditionally interpreted as proof of the North African origin of the *Septimii*, since it could represent the poet's will to praise the family by minimizing the traces of its provincial background. The question is nonetheless disputed. Letta 1987, 533 observes that the assertions of Statius could allude to a family of Italian origin that had moved to Africa, but without losing its Italian identity.

<sup>342</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> S 438.

<sup>343</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> S 485.

### II.3.2. The *Septimii* enter the senate

Not much is known about the consul of 153, P. Septimius Aper, and the consul of 160, C. Septimius Severus. The latter is certainly the more interesting of the two. His full career, in fact, is reported by an honorary inscription from Thubursicu Numidarum<sup>344</sup>. After a regular senatorial *cursus* (but without the military tribunate), he was appointed legate of the legion XVI Flavia in Syria, *leg. Aug. pr. pr.* of Lycia and Pamphylia, Lower Germany and, finally, proconsul of Africa. While holding this last office, he is mentioned in an inscription from Leptis Magna dating to 173-174 together with Severus, who at this time was his legate<sup>345</sup>. This information confirms that what was reported by the *HA*, namely that it was Marcus Aurelius that granted the young Severus access to the senate after recommendation of Septimius Severus, ‘his relative’ (*adfinis suus*)<sup>346</sup>. Both Severus and his brother Geta, whose senatorial *cursus* is documented on an inscription from Leptis<sup>347</sup>, were then the first members of their branch of the family to undertake the senatorial career. Although their ancestry cannot be considered particularly prestigious, the considerable wealth of the family must have allowed P. Septimius Geta, the father of Severus and Geta, to send his sons to Rome to be educated and to start a political career<sup>348</sup>. With regard to the latter, recommendations from members of another branch of

<sup>344</sup> ILAlg I 1283 = AE 1917/18, 60.

<sup>345</sup> AE 1967, 536.

<sup>346</sup> *Sev.* 1.5.

<sup>347</sup> IRT 541 = AE 1946, 131.

<sup>348</sup> The *Septimii* should also have been very rich. Apart from their properties in Italy, in fact, it is important to note that Septimia Polla left a considerable patrimony to her brother and heir P. Septimius Geta, Severus’ grandfather (IRT 607 = AE 1950, 158). According to the testamentary will of her sister, Geta honored her memory with a silver statue of ca. 48 kg (according to Duncan-Jones 1982, 68, it is the most expensive statue set up in North Africa). The fact that he was able to have both his sons, L. Septimius Severus and P. Septimius Geta, undertaking the senatorial career is therefore not surprising. Cf. Birley 1999, 1, 214.

the family, who had entered the senate a few years before, were probably a decisive factor.

### **II.3.3. Severus' *cursus honorum***

After the admission to the senate, the offices held by Severus are well documented. He was appointed quaestor twice between 170 and 172. As mentioned in the previous section, in 173 he was chosen as legate by his relative C. Septimius Severus, who was at that time proconsul of Africa. After this, Severus was bestowed with the offices of tribune of the people and praetor in 174 and 177, respectively. A position as *iuridicus Asturiae et Calleciae* in northern Spain followed immediately after. Finally, in the early 180's, he was given the command of the legion IV Scythica, which was stationed at Zeugma, in northern Syria. According to Birley, in this period Severus visited Emesa, and, perhaps, met Domna<sup>349</sup>. In view of the considerable distance between Zeugma and Emesa (more than 300 km), this theory, although possible, remains impossible to prove<sup>350</sup>. It is however certain that Severus' stay in Syria made him familiar with the elites of this province, and, most of all, with the geopolitical situation in this area of the Empire. This is particularly true with reference to the relationship between the Romans and the Parthians, which, after Lucius Verus' campaigns of 161-166, was presumably still a matter of some importance for the imperial government. As reported above, it is not impossible that, at the time of Severus' appointment, the king of Armenia was still the Soaemus installed by Lucius Verus in 164 and, after a revolt, put again on the throne in 172 by the governor of Cappadocia Martius Verus. Considering the Emesene origin of

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<sup>349</sup> Birley, 1999, 75-76.

<sup>350</sup> According to Dio 79 (78).5-6, however, Severus visited the oracle of Zeus Belus in Apamea when still a private citizen, i.e. at the time of his legionary command in Syria.

this king, it is not difficult to imagine that the nobility of Emesa was at that time enjoying notable prestige amongst the eastern provinces. Also, it is important to stress that during the 170's and 180's several individuals from Syria reached positions of great importance in the political life of the Empire. A senator from Antioch, Ti. Claudius Pompeianus, married Marcus Aurelius' daughter Lucilla in 170. His prestige remained intact after the plot to assassinate Commodus in which Lucilla was involved, and he was still considered an important person after Commodus' death<sup>351</sup>. In 175, the general Avidius Cassius, a descendant of the Seleucids, was proclaimed emperor in Syria after the erroneous news of the death of Marcus Aurelius<sup>352</sup>. Finally, at the time of Severus' command in Syria, the aforementioned Julius Alexander from Emesa, one the ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρας during the reign of Commodus according to Dio, was probably active in Rome.

Severus' stay in Syria was certainly the occasion on which to become acquainted with the elites from this province. At that time, his career could not be considered particularly extraordinary. Although some of his relatives had recently been awarded the consulate, his ancestry was equestrian and he was the first of his family to enter the senate. In a nutshell, his status was no different from that of many other members of well-off provincial families who, during the second century, had access to the senate for the first time. It is understandable, therefore, that Severus could consider a connection with Syrian families, whose members were in certain cases playing major roles in the political life of the Empire, as a valuable instrument for improving his political career.

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<sup>351</sup> Ti. Claudius Pompeianus: PIR<sup>2</sup>C 973. According to the *HA*, after Commodus' death Pertinax offered Pompeianus the purple (*Pert.* 4.11), and Didius Julianus asked him to share the imperial power (*Did. Iul.* 8.3). Cf. Hekster 2002, 25-26.

<sup>352</sup> Avidius Cassius: PIR<sup>2</sup> A 1402. On Cassius' revolt cf. McLynn 2010, 377-382; Hekster 2002, 34-39; Buraselis 1991, 24-25 with further references.

## II.4. MARRIAGE

Sometime after the command in Syria, in 186, Severus received the first governorship of his career, and was dispatched to Gallia Lugdunensis as *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. At this time his first wife, Paccia Marciana, died, and, as reported by the anecdote of the horoscope mentioned above (§ II.1), he immediately started to look for a new wife. According to the *HA*, it was at this point that, despite the great distance between Syria and Gallia Lugdunensis, Severus asked for the hand of Domna. In order to try to better understand these events, it will be necessary to revert to the story of Domna's royal destiny as reported by the *HA*. The possible meaning of Domna's horoscope and the significance of the expression *nobilis orientis mulier* have already been discussed in the previous sections. Another piece of information that deserves further attention, in my view, is the passage where the *HA* narrates how Severus was able to obtain the consent of Domna's family to his marriage proposal.

### II.4.1. The intervention of Severus' friends

According to the account of the *HA*, Severus asked for the hand of Domna, and obtained it thanks to the mediation of friends (*eandem uxorem petitit, Iuliam scilicet, et accepit interventu amicorum*)<sup>353</sup>. The process described by this sentence seems to refer to a procedure that could have been more complex than the reconstructions so far conjectured by scholars. According to Birley, Severus sent a letter to Syria, and his familiarity with Julius Bassianus, whom he had known in Syria, was enough to secure the consent of the family<sup>354</sup>. Despite this, in the account of the *HA* the *interventus amicorum*, the

<sup>353</sup> Cf. section II.1 above.

<sup>354</sup> Birley 1999, 75-76.

intervention of some friends of Severus, seems to have been decisive. This could imply at least two things: a) notwithstanding his stay in Syria some years before, Severus was not familiar enough with the house of Julius Bassianus. Consequently, he had to rely on mediators who were, presumably, mutual acquaintances of his and the sacerdotal family from Emesa; b) even though Severus was already a senator and governor of a province, his status was still not high enough to automatically be considered suitable to marry one of Bassianus' daughters. If these considerations have a point, it is reasonable to conclude that, during his stay in Syria, Severus had been impressed by the prestige enjoyed by the family of Bassianus, and, more in general, by the renown of the Emesene nobility. If he had had the opportunity to visit Emesa, he did not establish particular connections with the family of Domna, and some years later he had to have recourse to the mediation of friends to secure the consent to the marriage.

The identity of these *amici* is unfortunately unknown. At this point, the *HA* is probably abbreviating its source, which may have reported more details about the negotiations between Severus and Bassianus. It is, therefore, possible only to make some conjectures about the persons that were involved in these events. As stated above, the *amici* were likely to have been mutual acquaintances of Severus and the family of Domna. Considering Severus' stay in Syria, it is likely that some of these were either Syrians or other Roman officials that he had met there. However, it is also possible to consider people that Severus met while at Rome, perhaps Syrian politicians or even relatives of Domna who were living in the *Urbs*. In this regard, the account of the *HA* is, in my opinion, worth repeating here:

*Carac. 8.2: Papinianum amicissimum fuisse imperatori Severo eumque cum Severo professum sub Scaevola et Severo in advocatione fisci successisse, ut aliqui loquuntur, adfinem etiam per secundam uxorem, memoriae traditur.*

It is generally reported that Papinian was a close friend of the Emperor Severus - related to him, some say, through his second wife - and that he had given instruction along with Severus under Scaevola's direction and later succeeded Severus as pleader for the privy-purse.

This passage refers to the famous jurist Aemilius Papinianus, who occupied a leading position during the reign of Severus, also becoming prefect of the guard, starting in 205 and continuing up to the death of the African emperor<sup>355</sup>. Scholars generally accept the possibility that Q. Cervidius Scaevola, the distinguished jurist who was also legal advisor of Marcus Aurelius and *praefectus vigilum* in 175, was the teacher of both Papinianus and Severus<sup>356</sup>. With regard to the latter, both the *Vita Getae* and Aurelius Victor mention law studies at the beginning of his career. According to the *Vita*, Marcus Aurelius raised Severus from the status of humble lawyer (*ex formulario forensi*) to the office of *advocatus fisci*<sup>357</sup>. Victor reports that during his youth Severus switched from the study of literature to that of law<sup>358</sup>. It is therefore plausible that both Severus and Papinianus studied law together during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

The expression *adfinem etiam per secundam uxorem* is debated. Some have interpreted these words as a reference to an unspecified degree of kinship between Papinianus and Domna, thus attributing a Syrian origin to the jurist<sup>359</sup>. Other scholars, however, question this interpretation, claiming that the *secunda uxor* could be the second wife of Papinianus rather than Severus<sup>360</sup>. If this interpretation were correct, Papinianus'

<sup>355</sup> Papinianus: PIR<sup>2</sup> A 388. Cf. also Magioncalda 2000; Giuffrè 1976, 632-666; Honoré 1962, 205-206.

<sup>356</sup> Crifò 1976, 748; Giuffrè 1976, 643, with further bibliography. According to Honoré 1962, 205-207, the study under Scaevola should be dated to the years 168-178.

<sup>357</sup> *Geta* 2.4.

<sup>358</sup> *Caes.* 20.28.

<sup>359</sup> Crifò 1976, 748.

<sup>360</sup> Honoré 1994, 80. On the discussion of this topic see in general Magioncalda 2000, 452.

second wife would be a kinsman of Severus, and an African origin should consequently be attributed to Papinianus himself. As in the case of the information regarding the *interventus amicorum*, at this point the *HA* is evidently abbreviating its source. Unfortunately, in absence of further evidence concerning the life of Papinianus - which is, for the most part, shrouded in darkness - a definitive solution to this controversy appears impossible. It is nevertheless possible to make a few observations that, in my view, could support the possibility of a family relationship between Papinianus and Domna: 1) the *HA* is always well informed about the family connections of Severus, but in its account there is no information regarding a female relative who married an important person such as Papinianus. On the other hand, the *HA* makes reference to Severus' second marriage with Domna on many occasions. 2) Considering the fact that Severus made use of mediators in order to obtain the consent to the marriage, the intervention of a close friend who was at the same time related to the Emesene sacerdotal family is definitely the most economical reconstruction. Moreover, the friendship with a relative of Domna could have allowed Severus to obtain precious information about both Domna's family and the benefits of a marriage with her. Although the plural *amicorum* used by the *HA* in *Sev.* 3.9 could indicate the intervention of a group of friends involved in a negotiation of a certain complexity, the information reported in *Carac.* 8.2 seems to hint at a chain of relationships between Severus, Papinianus and Domna. It is consequently possible that Papinianus was one of the friends who played a fundamental role in the arrangements that preceded the marriage.

### **II.4.2. Severus' career after the marriage with Domna**

During the years that followed the marriage, the career of Severus improved significantly. Immediately after the governorship of Gallia Lugdunensis, Severus was bestowed with the proconsulship of Sicily (189-190), the suffect consulship (190), and, finally, in 191, the prestigious governorship of Pannonia Superior. From a military point of view, this is certainly the most important Danubian province. This was, in fact, guarded by three legions and their auxiliary units, while Dacia, Moesia Superior, and Moesia Inferior were assigned two legions each, and Pannonia Inferior only one. The fact that, in 193, Severus was acclaimed emperor by the whole Danubian army was, in consequence, not particularly unexpected. The appointment to such an influential position, on the other hand, is quite surprising, especially in consideration of his previous career, which was relatively lacking in military experience. It is also worth noting that, more or less at the same time, probably in 192, P. Septimius Geta, the brother of Severus, became governor of Moesia Inferior<sup>361</sup>. Therefore, at the moment of Commodus' assassination, the two brothers had control of at least one half of the Danubian army, a circumstance that can be considered even more exceptional. Scholars have ascribed the causes of these promotions to the North Africans who became particularly prominent during this period, such as Pertinax and the Praetorian Prefect Q. Aemilius Laetus<sup>362</sup>. Both Severus and Geta had previously served under the command of Pertinax. He was holding the governorship of Syria at the time of Severus' legionary command in this province, and, some years before, had been governor of Moesia Inferior, where Geta had served as legate of the legion I Italica. As for Q. Aemilius Laetus, his origins from Thaenae (Africa

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<sup>361</sup> On the career of P. Septimius Geta cf. *infra*.

<sup>362</sup> Birley 1969, 261-264. According to the *HA* (Sev. 4.4), Severus was appointed to this position thanks to the support of Laetus (*Laeto suffragante exercitui Germanico praeponitur*).

Proconsularis) have been considered a valid reason to hypothesize his involvement in the advancement of other Africans, such as Severus, Geta, and perhaps, Clodius Albinus, who was at that time serving as governor in Britain<sup>363</sup>. If the two brothers enjoyed the benevolence of the same persons, another detail remains without explanation. This is the motivation that led the imperial entourage to entrust the most important governorship to Severus rather than to Geta. The latter was presumably the elder brother and also the one with more military experience. In fact, although at the moment of the appointment to the provincial governorship his *cursus* - as in the case of Severus - could boast only one important military command (i.e. the legateship of the legion I Italica), he had served as *tribunus laticlavius* in Britain at the beginning of his career<sup>364</sup>. For this reason, the preference given to Severus could imply that his connections were considered more powerful than Geta's. In my view, the marriage with Domna and the consequent support from members of the Syrian elite could represent the decisive factor that allowed Severus to be given priority. As reported above, the Julius Alexander from Emesa mentioned by Dio as one of the most distinguished men in Rome - and killed probably around the very

<sup>363</sup> According to Birley 1969, 252-253, the brother of Laetus, Aemilius Pudens, who is mentioned by AE 1949, 38 from *Thaenae*, could have met Geta while serving in the legion II Augusta, where Geta had been *tribunus laticlavius*.

<sup>364</sup> An inscription from Leptis Magna (IRT 541 = AE 1946, 131) reports the full career of Geta as follows: *P. Septimio Getae, c(larissimo) v(iro), X/vir(o) stlitibus iudican/dis, trib(uno) latic(lavio) leg(ionis) II Aug(ustae), / quaest(ori) provin(ciae) Cretae et / Cyrenarum, aed(ili) cereali, / curatori rei pub(licae) Anconita/norum, praet(ori) hastario et tu/telar(io), sacerdoti fetiali, leg(ato) / leg(ionis) I Italicae, proco(n)s(uli) Siciliae, / leg(ato) Augg[[g(ustorum)]] pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciae / Lusitaniae, co(n)s(uli), leg(ato) Augg[[g(ustorum)]] / pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciae Mysiae (!) In/ferioris, leg(ato) Au[gg[[g(ustorum)]] p]r(o) pr(aetore) / provinciarum Daciarum / curia Dacica ex voto posuit.* ('The *curia Dacica* [set up this statue] to P. Septimius Geta, *clarissimus vir*, member of the board of ten for judging lawsuits, broad-striped tribune in the legion II Augusta, quaestor of the province of Crete and Cyrene, aedile in charge of the corn supply, curator of Ancona, praetor of the spear, ward praetor, fetial priest, legate of the legion II Italica, proconsul of Sicily, legate of the emperors - acting praetor of the province Lusitania, legate of the emperors - acting praetor of the province of Moesia Inferior, legate of the emperors - acting praetor of the Dacian provinces.'). On the career of this figure cf. Birley 1999, 218 no. 21 with further references.

end of Commodus' reign - was active in the capital in this period<sup>365</sup>. Therefore, if on one hand the relationship with influential Africans, such as Pertinax and Laetus, were helpful to both Severus and Geta, then, on the other hand, the connection with the family of Domna could have been decisive for the advancement of Severus.

#### **II.4.3. The birth of Septimius Bassianus**

The predominance of Domna's Syrian background in the marriage with Severus can be detected from another event, that is the birth of their first son Caracalla in 188. He was given the name Septimius Bassianus, a fact that is well recorded in both literary sources and inscriptions<sup>366</sup>. Despite the fact that studies on nomenclature of Roman elites have established that the adoption of *cognomina* from the maternal lineage was intended to be a celebration of the ancestry of the mother<sup>367</sup>, scholars have not given much importance to the transmission of the name of Domna's father<sup>368</sup>. Furthermore, considering the documented habit of giving fathers' and grandfathers' names to the first born in the family of Severus, the disruption of this custom is certainly full of significance. The name of Severus' father, P. Septimius Geta, was given only to the second born son, who came into the world one year after the birth of Bassianus, in 189. It is worthwhile noting that, as reported above, the names Bassianus and Bassiana were also given to sons and

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<sup>365</sup> Cf. *supra*.

<sup>366</sup> On the topic cf. Mastino 1981, 27-28. Caracalla maintained the name Bassianus until Severus' self adoption into the Antonines, which took place in 195, cf. *infra* chap. III.

<sup>367</sup> Salway 1994, 127-130.

<sup>368</sup> I found a reference to the significance of Caracalla's *cognomen* Bassianus only in Buraselis 1991, 32. Birley 1999 does not discuss this matter. According to Levick 2007, 31 the *cognomen* Bassianus indicated 'the high standing of that side of the family [i.e. Domna's family], in local reckoning at least'. At p. 14 the scholar states that 'the placing of the name [i.e. Bassianus] is equally well to be explained by the rules of Roman nomenclature, passing from maternal grandfather to (...) elder grandson'. Such interpretation, nonetheless, does not seem to be persuasive. In fact, Roman nomenclature practice usually privileged the transmission of *cognomina* belonging to the paternal family, on the topic cf. Salway 1994, esp. 126-130.

daughters of other imperial women related to Domna. Despite the fact that Julia Maesa's first daughter was born from a Julius Avitus Alexianus, her full name was Julia Soaemias Bassiana. The name Bassianus was finally given to both Elagabalus and Severus Alexander. Maesa, Soaemias and Mamaea were all married to Syrians, while Domna is the only one in the family who married a man from another province. Nonetheless, the custom did not change, and the first-born son was given a *cognomen* from the family of Domna.

## II.5. CONCLUSIONS

Although both the family of Domna and that of Severus belonged to provincial elites, the differences between their social backgrounds are notable. Domna was a member of the nobility of Emesa who, in the previous centuries, had played sizable political roles in the Middle Eastern scenario. Kings from this city had been appointed senators and awarded important honors by Roman emperors. After the disappearance of the kingdom between the end of the first century and the beginning of the second, noblemen from Emesa were still employed for delicate roles, such as the rule of Armenia, which was entrusted to a Julius Soaemus. In this regard, the presence of names such as Soaemias, Mamaea, Alexianus/Alexander among the relatives of Domna could suggest a direct connection to the royal dynasty of Emesa. Other Emesenes were also active in the senate of Rome, where they occupied important positions, as the case of Julius Alexander, who was even able to plot against Commodus, demonstrates. Moreover, the priesthood of Elgabal, which was almost certainly hereditary and consequently a prerogative of Domna's family, involved great wealth and considerable prestige in the whole Middle East. This is

the context in which the words used by the *HA* to describe Domna, *nobilis orientis mulier* (*Alex.* 5.4), should be placed. The *gens* of Severus, on the other hand, had emerged from the ranks of the African knights only during the first half of the second century, when relatives from another branch of the family were admitted to the senate. As for Severus' own lineage, he and his brother Geta were the first ones to enter on a senatorial *cursus honorum*. In brief, the status of Severus, although respectable, could not be considered particularly outstanding, being similar to that of many other senators from the provinces, such as Cassius Dio. Severus' recourse to the help of friends in order to secure the marriage to Domna presumably suggests that obtaining the consent of her family was not a very easy business. The support from a close friend such as Papinianus, who was probably a relative of Domna, may have been decisive. During the years that followed the marriage, the careers of both Severus and Geta improved notably, and at the beginning of 190's the brothers were in command of a considerable part of the most battle-hardened troops in the empire, the Danubian legions. Although this stride in the careers of individuals without an outstanding military experience is probably to be attributed to the favor of influential figures like Pertinax and Aemilius Laetus, Severus' promotion to the most important governorship seems to demonstrate that his connections were stronger than Geta's. In this setting, the marriage with Domna could have provided him with precious political support in order to gain one of the most prestigious offices in the imperial administration. After all, the predominance of Domna's family background is demonstrated by the *cognomen* given to the first-born son, Bassianus, which represents the continuation of the lineage of the Emesene priestly dynasty. After the accession of Severus, several stories regarding the nobility of Domna were put in circulation. The

notion of her being a noblewoman from the East (*nobilis orientis mulier*) corresponds with the facts. On the other hand, the horoscope according to which Domna was destined to marry a king was evidently a propagandist invention, as was also the dream about Faustina preparing the nuptial chamber for Severus and his Syrian bride. The purpose was evidently to endorse the claims of Severus, a parvenu without an outstanding political and military career. These stories, however, seem to have also had the purpose of carving out a space for the new Augusta. Unlike the Antonine imperial women, she was not connected to any imperial ancestry. Despite this, the contribution of her family to the rise of Severus appears to have been important. For this reason, the figure of Domna should not be left in the shadow.

## Chapter III

### *The Civil Wars*

In chapter II, Domna's prominent role in the marriage with Severus has been examined by paying particular attention to the literary sources. After Severus became emperor in 193, not only the literature, but also the epigraphic and numismatic evidence, indicates that the prestige enjoyed by Domna in the new regime was anything but a secondary one. A passage from the *Historia Augusta* reports that it was she who convinced Severus to get rid of Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. The former had been proclaimed emperor in Syria, while the latter had been appointed Caesar by Severus soon after his accession. Scholars, in general, have considered this information to be one of the many inventions of the anonymous author of the *HA*. It is true, however, that the elimination of Albinus opened the way for the establishment of the Severan dynasty and for the rule of Domna's sons. In order to understand these events and the place that Domna was occupying at this time, one would do well to turn to examining the evidence that depicts the new Augusta from 193 (accession of Severus) to 197 (death of Albinus).

#### **III.1. DOMNA AND THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION**

The only piece of literary evidence that describes the agency of Domna during the period of the civil wars is a passage from the *Vita Albini* in the *HA*:

*Alb. 3.4-5: Nec negari potest, quod etiam Marius Maximus dicit, hunc animum Severo primum fuisse, ut, si quid ei contingere, Pescennium Nigrum et Clodium Albinum sibi substitueret. Sed postea et filiis iam maiusculis studens et Albini amori invidens*

*sententiam mutasse atque illorum utrumque bello oppressisse, maxime precibus uxoris adductus.*

It is an undeniable fact and Marius Maximus also relates it, that Severus at first intended to name Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus as his successors, in case anything should happen to him. Later, as it happened, in the interest of his growing sons, and through envy of the affection in which Albinus was held, **and most of all because of his wife's pleas**, he changed his purpose and crushed both of them in war.

Scholars are not unanimous in considering these lines trustworthy. They belong to the series of the so-called ‘secondary biographies’, which are, for the most part, the result of the imagination of the anonymous author<sup>369</sup>. According to Johannes Hasebroek, who in his study on the *HA*'s lives of Clodius Albinus and Pescennius Niger rejects all the quotations from Marius Maximus as inventions of the anonymous author, thus Domna's initiative can only be the product of the author's imagination<sup>370</sup>. Anthony Birley, on the other hand, considers the passage as a valuable piece of evidence because of its reliance on Maximus' authority, which, according to this scholar, should be considered genuine<sup>371</sup>. Zed Rubin expresses a similar opinion, stating that Domna's responsibility in the break between Severus and Albinus would demonstrate Maximus's attempt to exonerate Severus from the charge of having started the hostilities<sup>372</sup>. On the other hand, Erich Kettenhofen dismisses this information by stating that every fact reported by the *HA* should be considered a forgery of the author when it is not supported by further documentation<sup>373</sup>. Francesca Ghedini considers the *HA*'s assertion too exaggerated, leaving, nonetheless, the door open to the possibility of recognizing in this passage a

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<sup>369</sup> On the differences between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ *vitae* cf. the discussion above in chapter I.

<sup>370</sup> Hasebroek 1916, 20.

<sup>371</sup> Birley 1971, 324. About the reliability of *HA*'s quotations of Maximus see above chapter I.

<sup>372</sup> Rubin 1980, 165.

<sup>373</sup> Kettenhofen 1979, 61, the scholar quotes a more general observation by Straub 1952, 56, according to whom, if the information reported by the *HA* is not confirmed by other sources, it must be rejected.

change in the traditional role of the Augusta. According to her, beginning with Julia Domna, imperial women acquired more independence, and more influence in the disputes affecting the imperial court<sup>374</sup>. Finally, Barbara Levick does not take a stand for or against the reliability of this passage. Levick observes, however, that the advancement of Caracalla and Geta to the position of *Augusti* ‘would have helped give rise to the story that it was Domna who egged Severus on against Albinus, as well as against Niger’<sup>375</sup>.

The variety of opinions shows that scholars have not yet reached a unanimous verdict on whether *Alb.* 3.5 reports trustworthy information about Domna’s influence on Severus. In my view, in order to cast new light on this topic, two issues deserve to be discussed in detail: *a*) whether the passage derives from the quotation of actual sources (as sustained by Birley) or it is the product of the anonymous author’s imagination (as sustained by Hasebroek and Kettenhofen); *b*) the possibility that Domna had good reasons to urge Severus to dispose of Niger, and, in particular, of Albinus, a point that scholars have not yet investigated.

With regard to the question *a*, it will be useful to look for further references to either Marius Maximus or other sources that *HA* might have used. In particular, it will be necessary to analyze the origin of passages that in this account report information comparable to *Alb.* 3.4-5. As for the question *b*, it will be interesting to consider what were the intentions of Severus when he decided to appoint Albinus as Caesar and successor, and what was the position enjoyed by Domna during the years of the civil wars. The succession of Albinus to the throne could, in fact, have had important consequences for Domna and her children. Considering the silence of the literary sources

<sup>374</sup> Ghedini 1984, 7.

<sup>375</sup> Levick 2007, 44.

on her public role and position at court, in the following sections the historical context of the years 193-197 will be examined with special attention to the relationships between Severus and the other pretenders to the throne.

### **III.1.1. *Alb.* 3.4-5 and the sources of the *HA***

In the *HA*, the information regarding Severus' intention to appoint Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus as his successors does not appear only in the aforementioned passage, but also in other sections from the lives of Albinus and Niger:

*Alb.* 10.1-3: *De moribus eius* [i.e. Albinus] *varia dicuntur. Et Severus quidem ipse haec de eodem loquitur, ut eum dicat turpem, malitiosum, improbum, dishonestum, cupidum luxuriosum. Sed haec belli tempore vel post bellum, quando ei iam velut de hoste credi non poterat, cum et ipse ad eum quasi ad amicissimum frequenter miserit litteras, et multi de Albino bene senserint, et Severus ipse Caesarem suum eundem appellari voluerit et, cum de successore cogitaret, hunc primum habuerit ante oculos.*

With regard to his character there is great divergence of statement. Severus, for his part, charged him with being depraved and perfidious, unprincipled and dishonorable, covetous and extravagant. But all this he wrote either during the war or after it, at a time when he merits less credence, since he was speaking of a foe. Yet Severus himself sent him many letters, as though to an intimate friend. Many persons, moreover, thought well of Albinus, and even **Severus wished to give him the name of Caesar, and when he made plans for a successor, he had Albinus foremost in mind.**

*Pesc.* 4.7-5.1: *In vita sua Severus dicit se, priusquam filii sui id aetatis haberent ut imperare possent, aegrotantem id in animo habuisse, ut, si quid forte sibi accidisset, Niger Pescennius eodem et Clodius Albinus succederent, qui ambo Severo gravissimi hostes extiterunt. Unde apparet, quod etiam Severi de Pescennio iudicium fuerit. Si Severo credimus, fuit gloriae cupidus Niger, vita fictus, moribus turpis, aetatis proiectae, cum in imperium invasit.*

**Yet in his autobiography Severus says that on one occasion, when he had fallen sick and his sons had not yet reached an age when they could rule, he intended, if anything by any chance should happen to him, to appoint Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus as his heirs to the throne,** even these two men who in time became his bitterest enemies. From this it is evident what Severus thought of Pescennius. If we may believe Severus, Niger was greedy for glory, hypocritical in his mode of life, base in morals, and well advanced in years when he attempted to seize the empire.

Interestingly enough, these facts are always reported as information that the author learned from a source contemporary to the events, that is the autobiography of Severus, a work whose existence is beyond question, since both Dio and Herodian could read it<sup>376</sup>. From the analysis of the passages quoted above, it is possible to understand something of what Severus wrote about his rivals. He affirmed, so it seems, that after his accession he had in mind to designate both Albinus and Niger as his successors, since his health was precarious and his sons were too young to take on the responsibility of governing the Empire. Albinus, in particular, appeared to be the most suitable for fulfilling this task, and Severus offered him the title of Caesar. Nevertheless, both Niger and Albinus proved to be perfidious, dishonest and untrustworthy, and Severus had consequently no choice but to remove them.

Despite these and other references to Severus' autobiography in the *HA*, the anonymous author seems to have had only an indirect knowledge of it. In fact, in another passage from the life of Albinus, he invites the reader to refer to Marius Maximus and Herodian in order to get more details regarding the contents of Severus' work<sup>377</sup>. The information reported by *Alb.* 3.4 should therefore be interpreted as a quotation taken from Marius Maximus, who had had the possibility of reading the autobiography of the

<sup>376</sup> Dio 76 (75).7.3; Hdn. 2.9.3-4. In the early to mid twentieth century, the quotations of Severus' autobiography in the *HA* were often considered forgeries of the anonymous author, cf. Hasebroek 1916, 18-19; Barbieri 1954, 45-47. More recent studies, however, have reassessed their authenticity, cf. Rubin 1980, 138-143 and Chausson 1995b, with a detailed analysis of the quotations of Severus' autobiography in Dio, Herodian, and the *HA*. See also Birley 1999, 203 no. 1.

<sup>377</sup> *Alb.* 12.14: *Quae quidem omnia in vita eius [i.e. Severus] posita sunt. Quae qui diligentius scire velit, legat Marium Maximum de Latinis scriptoribus, de Graecis scriptoribus Herodianum, qui ad fidem pleraque dixerunt.* ('Indeed, all these things are set down in his autobiography, and those who desire to know them in detail should read Marius Maximus among the Latin writers, and Herodian among the Greek, for they have related many things and with an eye to truth'). Cf. Chausson 1995b, 187.

emperor<sup>378</sup>. This certainly seems true, also, for the material relating to Severus' intention to designate Niger and Albinus as successors<sup>379</sup>. With regard to the other facts mentioned immediately after (*Alb.* 3.5), i.e. Severus' concerns for his sons, his envy over the popularity enjoyed by Albinus, and the influence of Domna on his decision to eliminate both Niger and Albinus, they cannot obviously be attributed to the autobiography of Severus. The origin of this information must come from Maximus, who had presumably reported such considerations together with the extract from the work of Severus<sup>380</sup>. Other passages from both the *HA* and the account of Herodian seem to confirm this possibility. The envy of Severus over the popularity of Albinus is recalled in another section of the *Vita Albini*, where the author observes that Severus was aware of the great prestige that Albinus enjoyed in the senate. The latter, in fact, belonged to an ancient and respected family<sup>381</sup>. Herodian relates the same story, adding that many senators sent private letters to Albinus in order to persuade him to come to Rome and take the power while Severus was campaigning in the East<sup>382</sup>.

In short, the whole *Alb.* 3.4-5 should not be considered as a product of the author's imagination. It seems, rather, a collection of facts that he found in his source,

<sup>378</sup> According to Rubin 1980, 142-143, the expression *nec negari potest quod etiam Marius Maximus dicit* in *Alb.* 3.4 would suggest that the author of the *HA* is stressing the fact that Severus' intention to appoint Niger and Albinus as successors is reported not only by Severus himself, but also by Maximus. Similar considerations are expressed by Chausson 1995b, 187.

<sup>379</sup> According to Birley 1971, 324, the mention of Niger should be interpreted as an invention of the author of the *HA*. It is however possible that, soon after being proclaimed emperor, Severus really tried to make some arrangements with Niger, possibly offering him the title of Caesar as he did with Albinus (Heil 2006, 62 also considers this possibility; cf. also Syme 1979, 67, who defines the passage in question a 'useful clue'). At any rate, Severus could have written this in his autobiography in order to charge Niger with the responsibility of stirring up the civil war.

<sup>380</sup> Birley 1971, 324 also postulates this separation between the information reported by Severus in his autobiography and Marius Maximus' considerations about the reasons that led him to dispose of Albinus and Niger.

<sup>381</sup> *Alb.* 7.2.

<sup>382</sup> *Hdn.* 3.5.2.

Marius Maximus, and reported in an abbreviated form. Although there are no further literary attestations of her pressure on Severus, the reference to the pleas of Domna appears to be placed in a context of extracts from genuine sources.

### **III.1.2. The alliance between Severus and Albinus**

The *Feriale Duranum*, a calendar of religious observances from Dura-Europos (Mesopotamia), relates that Severus was proclaimed emperor on April 9<sup>th</sup>, immediately after the news of the assassination of Pertinax, who had been killed on March 28<sup>th</sup>, had reached Pannonia<sup>383</sup>. When the same news reached Syria, a few days after the proclamation of Severus, the legions stationed in the East acclaimed Pescennius Niger emperor<sup>384</sup>. According to Dio, before leaving Pannonia to march towards Rome and overthrow Didius Julianus, Severus sent letters to Albinus offering him the rank of Caesar and the co-regency of the Empire<sup>385</sup>. The political reasons that led Severus to propose such an alliance to Albinus can be summarized as follows: *a)* as governor of Britannia, Albinus could count on a considerable military force composed of three legions and a substantial number of auxiliary regiments. This force was inferior to Severus' (sixteen legions plus the auxiliary troops), but it was certainly enough to represent a threat, as the civil war of 196-197 and the difficulties that the troops of

<sup>383</sup> *Feriale Duranum* 2.3. For the text cf. Bruckner-Marichal 1975, 2-9, no. 309; Fink 1971, 423-429 no. 117; Fink-Hoey-Snyder 1940, 1-221.

<sup>384</sup> Cf. Levick 2007, 37; Birley 1999, 98; Letta 1991, 647-648. According to Hdn. 2.9.1-3, Severus proclaimed himself emperor after having been informed about Niger's acclamation. The *HA* (*Pesc.* 5.2), however, reports the contrary. Cf. Rubin 1980, 94-95.

<sup>385</sup> Dio 74 (73).15.1. Scholars seem to prefer Dio's version to Herodian's (2.15.2), according to whom Severus would have offered the title of Caesar when he was in Rome (June 193), cf. Levick 2007, 38; Birley 1999, 98; Letta 1991, 648.

Severus met during the battle of Lugdunum (February 9<sup>th</sup>, 197) would later show<sup>386</sup>; b) Albinus was not such a *parvenu* as Severus. His career included military commands in Bithynia and Dacia during the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Furthermore, before being appointed governor of Britannia, he had probably been governor of Germania Inferior<sup>387</sup>. Albinus descended from an ancient senatorial family, and, as demonstrated by the study of François Chausson, he could probably boast an affinity with the Antonines<sup>388</sup>. The popularity enjoyed by Albinus in Rome is not only demonstrated by the accounts of the *HA* and Herodian, but also by the public protests that took place in Rome at the end of 195, probably following the senate's decision - demanded by Severus - to declare Albinus public enemy<sup>389</sup>.

Further considerations probably played a role in the decision of awarding Albinus the title of Caesar. If Severus had died, his family could have benefitted from an alliance with Albinus. As noted above, in his autobiography Severus himself stressed the young age of his children and his possible death during the civil war. Although these arguments might sound like an attempt by Severus to divert the attention from his real political calculations, they could however contain some elements of truth. Firstly, in the life of Severus the author of the *HA* relates that the emperor could not celebrate the triumph

<sup>386</sup> Dio 76 (75).6.1-8; Hdn. 3.7.1-6; *Sev.* 2.1-2. The battle remained uncertain until the very end. Severus himself lost his horse while fighting (according to Dio) or perhaps fleeing (according to Herodian). Cf. Birley 1999, 124-125; Letta 1991, 661.

<sup>387</sup> On the career of Albinus cf. Eck 1994a, 230-232; Alföldy 1968b, 19-38.

<sup>388</sup> Chausson 2000, in particular 852-862.

<sup>389</sup> Dio 76 (75).4.2-6 records vast demonstrations in the circus against the imminent civil war, cf. Letta 2011, 301; Birley 1999, 119-120; Letta 1991, 658. This reconstruction is preferable to that of Alföldy 1968a, 118-119, according to whom Albinus proclaimed himself Augustus on this date. Dio, in fact, clearly hints at demonstrations against Severus. According to Sünskes Thompson 1990, 106-108 and Rubin 1980, 79-80, the demonstrations would have happened on December 15<sup>th</sup> 196. Also this possibility appears improbable, since Dio seems to allude to an event that took place soon after Severus refused to continue to recognize the Caesarship of Albinus (76 [75].4.1).

over the Parthians in person, since at that time he was suffering from a severe attack of arthritis that did not allow him to stay on his feet<sup>390</sup>. This event should be placed in 202, when the *victoria Parthica Maxima* was celebrated in Rome along with Severus' *decennalia*<sup>391</sup>. Moreover, according to *Pesc.* 4.7 (mentioned above in full), in his autobiography Severus refers to himself as *aegrotans* at the time of his accession in 193. Considering that the autobiography was probably written soon after the defeat of Albinus in 197, it follows that, in this period, the illness of Severus was already public knowledge<sup>392</sup>. Also, it is necessary to stress that, after his proclamation as emperor, Severus could not completely exclude the possibility of losing his life in the forthcoming civil wars. According to the *HA*, Didius Julianus sent some professional assassins (*quidam noti ducum interfectores*) to Pannonia to kill Severus<sup>393</sup>. Dio reports that during his march towards Rome, Severus had himself constantly surrounded by a guard formed from his most trusted soldiers, who 'did not once put off their breastplates until they were in Rome'<sup>394</sup>. The clash with Niger, who could rely on a force of nine legions, with the advantage of fighting in an area under his control, and with the support of the Parthians

<sup>390</sup> *Sev.* 16.6.

<sup>391</sup> That is, as soon as the imperial family came back to Rome after travelling through Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Balkans. Cf. Birley 1999, 136-144; Letta 1991, 665-668.

<sup>392</sup> On the dating of Severus' autobiography cf. Chausson 1995b, 189-194. Rubin 1980, 134-135 had previously proposed a later date around 205. The scholar sustained that before this date Severus could not have had time to write this work. This argumentation, however, does not seem persuasive.

<sup>393</sup> *Sev.* 5.8.

<sup>394</sup> Dio 74 (73).15.3. Cf. also *Sev.* 6.1-2: *Occiso Iuliano cum Severus in castris et tentoriis quasi per hosticum veniens adhuc maneret, centum senatores legatos ad eum senatus misit ad gratulandum rogandumque. Qui ei occurserunt Interamnae armatumque circumstantibus armatis salutarunt, excussi ne quid ferri haberent* ('After the murder of Julianus, Severus still remained encamped and in his tents as though he were advancing through a hostile territory. The senate, therefore, sent a delegation of a hundred senators to bear him congratulations and sue for pardon. And when these met him at *Interamna*, they were searched for concealed weapons and only then suffered to greet him as he stood armed and in the midst of armed men').

and other eastern kingdoms, most likely appeared to be an enterprise full of risk<sup>395</sup>. In the event that Severus perished, Domna and their children, and the rest of the family could have counted on the support from an individual backed by a strong army and with considerable political prestige in Rome<sup>396</sup>.

Both the joint consulate held by Severus and Albinus in 194, and the right to strike coins accorded to the latter, are further elements that prove the importance of the agreement between the two generals<sup>397</sup>. Furthermore, Herodian relates that Albinus was awarded the right of having public statues set up in his honor and other unspecified privileges<sup>398</sup>. Despite this, scholars have often interpreted the bestowal of the rank of Caesar as an honor lacking in real political weight and, in particular, of the right to the succession. The arguments that would support this reconstruction are: *a)* there is no proof that Albinus was awarded *tribunicia potestas*<sup>399</sup>; *b)* Albinus was never awarded the *imperium proconsulare* either and, consequently, apart from Britain, he did not have any

<sup>395</sup> According to Hdn. 2.8.9-10, 2.9.1 and 3, Niger preferred to indulge in the luxuries of Antioch rather than to march westwards to seize Rome. This version of the facts does not seem to be true. Niger personally took part in the operations near Byzantium and Perinthos (Dio 75 [74].6.3) against Severus. He probably abstained from launching an offensive against either Pannonia or Italy to avoid the risk of being outnumbered by the Severan army. On the topic cf. Letta 1991, 652-655.

<sup>396</sup> Schumacher 2006, 356-357 observes that Severus might have considered Albinus as a potential protector for Caracalla and Geta in the event he himself died in the war against Niger. Kemezis 2014, 64-65, on the other hand, argues that the lives of Severus' children would have been endangered should Albinus have reached supreme power. In both cases, however, Domna's position of influence would have been questioned.

<sup>397</sup> Another element that could be seen as a reinforcement of the alliance is the name Severus, which appears in the nomenclature of Albinus on both coins and inscriptions, thus suggesting a sort of adoption or, at least, Albinus' need of legitimization (Hasebroek 1921, 28; A. Stein in PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1186; Whittaker 1969, 245; Schumacher 2003, 362). According to Harold Mattingly and Edward Sydenham in RIC IV.1 p. 41, however, the presence of this name on Albinus' coinage after the rupture with Severus could indicate that the *cognomen* Severus was part of his name even before the events of 193-197, cf. also Schachinger 1996, 96.

<sup>398</sup> Hdn. 2.15.5.

<sup>399</sup> Schachinger 1996, 96-97; Van Sickle 1928, 123-127; Schumacher 2003, 358-360.

control over other western provinces<sup>400</sup>; c) differently from the other Caesars of the second century, who were regularly adopted by the reigning Augustus, Albinus was not adopted by Severus. Thus, Albinus' claim to the succession would have lacked an important prerequisite<sup>401</sup>.

With regard to points *a-b*, it must be stressed that the bestowal of the title of Caesar was not necessarily connected to the assumption of the *tribunicia potestas* and the *imperium proconsulare*. Marcus Aurelius was appointed Caesar in 139 and assumed his first *tribunicia potestas* at the end of 147. Commodus became Caesar in 166, but his first *tribunicia potestas* appears in 177, when he was promoted to the rank of Augustus. Caracalla became Caesar in 196, but the first *tribunicia potestas* and the *imperium proconsulare* were bestowed along with the promotion to Augustus in 198<sup>402</sup>. Moreover, it is interesting to observe that some military units stationed outside Britannia recognized the leadership of Albinus. A fragmentary architrave/slab from the military outpost of Calceum Herculis (El-Kantara) in Numidia bears a dedication to both Severus and Albinus, and relates that a regiment of Palmyrenes (*numerus Palmyrenorum*) carried out some work that was inaugurated by the legate of the legion III Augusta, C. Julius Scapulus Lepidus Tertullus<sup>403</sup>. In Aquae Flavianae, the same legate dedicated two statues of Aesculapius and Hygeia that a centurion of the III Augusta set up *pro salute et victoria* of Severus and Albinus<sup>404</sup>. Finally, in Dura-Europos (Mesopotamia) an *actuarius numeri*

<sup>400</sup> Schachinger 1996, 96-97; Van Sickle 1928, 123-127; Schumacher 2003, 360-362.

<sup>401</sup> Levick 2007, 44. Schumacher 2003, 362, 368 stresses this point with particular emphasis, claiming that the bestowal of the Caesarship without adoption was lacking political legitimization.

<sup>402</sup> On the dating of Caracalla's assumption of the title of Caesar see *infra*. Theodor Mommsen (1887, 1139) already noted that the *imperium proconsulare* could not be automatically connected to the title of Caesar.

<sup>403</sup> AE 1926, 144.

<sup>404</sup> CIL VIII 17726 = AE 1888, 72.

made a vow to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Conservator* and to the other immortal gods for the safety of Severus and Albinus in co-operation with a *tribunus cohortis*<sup>405</sup>. In short, the absence of the *tribunicia potestas* and the *imperium proconsulare* in the titulature of Albinus does not necessarily mean that his Caesarship was an empty honor. The appearance of his name on dedications set up outside the area under his direct influence demonstrates that both soldiers and common people in the provinces loyal to Severus considered Albinus as an actual successor.

As for point *c*, the lack of adoption by Severus, it is necessary to stress that, during the second century, emperors already well established in power but without male sons used to adopt the emperor-designate within an exclusive group of imperial relatives. Adoption always concerned people related by blood, or at least by marriage. Since adoption implies not only the transmission of the name, but also that of property, it seems understandable that emperors without male sons, such as Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, made recourse to adoption<sup>406</sup>. The case of Severus is completely different, because he already had two male children. Thus, the adoption of Albinus could have been criticized<sup>407</sup>. Furthermore, Severus was a general who became emperor because of a military pronouncement, and he could not boast a prestigious ancestry with connections to the Antonines, as could Albinus<sup>408</sup>. Consequently, the adoption of a distinguished person related to the previous imperial house, such as Albinus, by a relatively unknown

<sup>405</sup> AE 1934, 280.

<sup>406</sup> On the system of adoptions that regulated the succession during the Antonine dynasty cf. Hekster 2001, 35-49; Gardner 1998, 115. On the system of adoption in general cf. Corbier 1991, 66-77.

<sup>407</sup> Hekster 2001, 41 observes that in a passage of Tacitus (*Ann. 1.3*) concerning Tiberius' adoption of Germanicus by order of Augustus it is possible to detect a criticism of this decision since Tiberius already had a young male son (*Germanicum [...] adsciri per adoptionem a Tiberio iussit, quamquam esset in domo Tiberii filius iuvenis*).

<sup>408</sup> On the connections between Albinus and the Antonines cf. n. 388 above.

senator such as Severus, could have represented, in that particular moment, an excessive break with tradition. In summary, there is no solid evidence to prove that the adoption was unavoidably connected to the Caesarship. The bestowal of the Caesarship to Albinus cannot accordingly be interpreted as the concession of a ‘depowered’ title. Rather, on the contrary, it should be considered a real designation of proposed the succession. This is also proved, after all, by the fact that Albinus, an expert politician and commander, accepted it without suspicion<sup>409</sup>.

An analysis of the events that occurred during the following years shows that the break between Albinus and Severus was caused by the initiative of the latter, and that it was the result of a gradual process that did not start immediately after the elimination of Niger in the battle of Issus, which presumably took place in the March of 194<sup>410</sup>. The *HA*, Herodian and Dio do not offer concordant reconstructions of the events. In the life of Severus, the *HA* relates that, when Severus was returning to Rome after his campaigns in the East (second half of 193-first half of 195), the defection of Albinus was announced to him<sup>411</sup>. Herodian states that, since Albinus pretended to act as an emperor and many senators were privately asking him to come to Rome to assume the full powers, Severus decided to dispose of him by means of assassins. Albinus, however, discovered this machination and started to make preparations for war<sup>412</sup>. Dio simply reports that at a certain point Severus refused to give Albinus even the rank of Caesar, when the latter was

<sup>409</sup> Dio 74 (73).15.2.

<sup>410</sup> Letta 1991, 655. Herz 1978, 1183 suggests identifying a victory that, according to BGU 362.10.3-5, was celebrated on March 31<sup>st</sup> with the date of the battle of Issus. According to Birley 1999, 113, the battle could not have occurred later than the end of April. Rubin 1980, 192 proposes a dating to the spring of 194.

<sup>411</sup> *Sev.* 10.1-2.

<sup>412</sup> Hdn. 3.5.2-8. *Alb.* 8.1-4 also relates the story of the assassins.

aiming at that of Augustus<sup>413</sup>. The absence of chronological references makes it difficult to connect all this information to the other events that occurred between the defeat of Niger and the elimination of Albinus (February 19<sup>th</sup>, 197). It is, however, possible to roughly reconstruct the chronology of the break between Albinus and Severus by examining other events that can be dated with reasonable certainty. The most important one is the self-adoption of Severus into the Antonine family, a fact that clearly forewarned Albinus of Severus' future dynastic projects. This decision was probably taken during the summer of 195, on the occasion of the end of the first Parthian campaign<sup>414</sup>. In fact, on both coins and in inscriptions from this period (i.e. those with *imp. V, VI, VII*, and *trib. pot. III*) Severus is called *divi Marci Pii filius* and *Commodi frater*<sup>415</sup>. It is also probable that, on the same occasion, Caracalla received the name *M. Aurelius Antoninus*. An inscription from the city of Aezani (Phrygia) details a letter of Severus, dated to the last two or three months of 195, in which Caracalla is called with his new name, but without the title of Caesar<sup>416</sup>. Yet the letter makes an explicit reference

<sup>413</sup> Dio 76 (75).4.1.

<sup>414</sup> However, according to Baharal 1996, 20-42, art-historical evidence would suggest that in 193 Severus was already planning to associate himself with the Antonine dynasty.

<sup>415</sup> RIC IV 1 Severus nos. 686, 700, 712; CIL VIII 24004 = AE 1894, 49. Cf. Heil 2006, 65; Birley 1999, 116; Letta 1999, 658.

<sup>416</sup> CIG III 3837-3838 = IGR IV 566 = ILS 8805 = Oliver 1989, 430-433 no. 213, which is now lost. The titulature of Severus includes the third *tribunicia potestas* ( $\Gamma'$ ) and the eighth imperial acclamation ( $H'$ ). Several scholars have proposed amending  $\Gamma$  to either  $\Delta$  (Magie 1950, 1542) or  $E$  (Heil 2006, 79), thus changing the date to either 196 or 197, respectively. These years, according to such reconstructions, would better fit the eighth imperial acclamation, which concerns the fall of Byzantium and is not attested to either on coins or other inscriptions with *trib. pot. III*. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by Letta 2011, 299-302, the eighth acclamation does not clash with the third *tribunicia potestas*, since according to Dio 75 (74).14.2 Severus received the news about the fall of the city when he was still in Mesopotamia (end of summer-fall 195). There is, consequently, no need to amend the text of the letter, which, although lost, does not seem to be particularly lacunose.

to Severus' intention of having Caracalla as future co-ruler<sup>417</sup>. This is probably the same period during which, according to Dio, Severus was provoking Albinus by refusing to continue recognizing him as Caesar. It seems, therefore, plausible that upon hearing all this news, more or less between September and October, Albinus decided to take action, proclaiming himself Augustus and starting the preparations for imminent war. Severus reacted by urging the senate to declare Albinus a public enemy, an event that probably occurred shortly before the public protests against the upcoming war that were recorded by Dio to have happened on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December<sup>418</sup>. Later on, on the way back from the East, Severus reached the military camp of Viminacium (Moesia Superior), where, according to the *HA*, he appointed Caracalla as Caesar, thus sealing the definitive rupture with Albinus<sup>419</sup>. Since this title appears for the first time on an inscription dated to June 26<sup>th</sup>, 196, it is likely that Caracalla was awarded this title during the first months of the year, possibly on the date of his birthday (April 4<sup>th</sup>) or on occasion of the *dies imperii* of Severus (April 9<sup>th</sup>)<sup>420</sup>. Severus' efforts to establish a new dynasty were finally crowned

<sup>417</sup> Il. 12-17: Τὴν ἡδονὴν ἣν ἐπὶ τοῖς κατορθωμένοις / ἔχετε καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ τὸν νιόν μου Μᾶρκον Αὐγῆ/λιον Ἀντωνεῖνον ἐπιβαίνειν ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ / τῶν τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐλπίδων καὶ τετάχθαι μ[ετὰ] / τοῦ πατρός, φωνερώτατα ἔγνων δι[ὰ] / τοῦ ψηφίσματος [...] ('The pleasure which you take in our success and in the rise of my son M. Aurelius Antoninus with good fortune to hopes of becoming emperor and in his placement at the side of his father, this I have clearly recognized through the decree'). Letta 2011, 298 (cf. also *Id.* 1991, 657) considers this passage as proof that, already in 195, Caracalla was awarded the title of Caesar. It seems nevertheless odd that this title does not appear on an official letter, which should stress with particular emphasis the concession of such an honor. Oliver 1989, 433 also excludes the possibility of recognizing the bestowal of the Caesarship in these lines.

<sup>418</sup> See n. 389 above.

<sup>419</sup> Sev. 10.3: *Et cum iret contra Albinum, in itinere apud Viminacium filium suum maiorem Bassianum adposito Aurelii Antonini nomine Caesarem appellavit* ("As he was advancing against Albinus and had reached *Viminacium* on his march, besides the name *Aurelius Antoninus* he gave his elder son *Bassianus* the title of *Caesar*").

<sup>420</sup> App. no. 4a. Cf. Mastino 1981, 28-29. Caracalla appears as Caesar on an inscription from Ravenna (CIL XI 8) where Severus is *imp. VII* (viz. before the fall of Byzantium). The same text, nevertheless, bears Severus' *trib. pot. IIII*. Owing to the conflict between these two titles, a precise dating of the monument remains difficult. According to Letta 2011, 298, the rescript *Cod.*

with the bestowal of the title *mater castrorum* to Julia Domna on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 196, an event that was celebrated throughout the provinces under the control of the Severans<sup>421</sup>. From the analysis of all this evidence, it can be assumed that Severus' change of attitude towards Albinus did not take place immediately after the death of Niger. Admittedly, it might be presumed that Albinus started to openly manifest his desire to become co-emperor soon after the definitive defeat of Niger, demanding a recognition that was probably intended as a reward for the loyalty he had thus demonstrated. Severus, evidently, did not judge such pretensions as a serious threat, since he focussed on his first Parthian campaign undisturbed. He changed his mind more than a year later (summer of 195), when he started to openly provoke Albinus with the self-adoption into the Antonines and the designation of Caracalla as future co-ruler.

### **III.1.3. Overall remarks**

To sum up, although it is impossible to know what the real plans of Severus were when he awarded Albinus the Caesarship, it appears quite certain that this title was meant to be a real designation of the proposed succession. Severus had certainly good reasons to do so. An alliance with Albinus was necessary, not only to prevent a possible rival from claiming the throne, but also because Severus needed Albinus' military strength and political connections in order to enforce his claims. Additionally, in case of defeat in the war against Niger, Severus could have counted upon a powerful ally in the West, who

*Iust.* 9, 41, 1, 1-2, which is dated to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 196 and issued by the *imperatores Severus, Antoninus*, would prove that Caracalla was already Caesar on this date. Heil 2006, 75, however, observes that the caption may be an error of the late antique redactors, who automatically repeated the formula *imperatores Severus, Antoninus*, which appears on the majority of the rescripts issued during the reign of Severus.

<sup>421</sup> For the bestowal of this title on Domna, 196 should be preferred to 195. Cf. Heil 2006, 73-74 and the discussion in section III.5.1 below.

was strongly bound to him. After Niger had been eliminated in March 194, Albinus started to ask for the advancement to the rank of Augustus in recognition of the support he had provided. Severus, however, hesitated until the summer of 195 before taking the final decision to become a self-adopted member of the Antonine family and to bestow the name M. Aurelius Antoninus on Caracalla along with the designation of future emperor. In the light of this, it seems that in the spring of 193, when the alliance with Albinus was sealed, Severus decided to act as the circumstances unfolded, without any hidden plan to kill Albinus after the defeat of Niger. Consequently, there is something true in what the *HA* reports in *Alb.* 3.4 (which is basically what Severus himself wrote in his autobiography), i.e. that Severus tried to secure the alliance with Albinus because, in the course of the forthcomings wars, he might either have died or been defeated when his sons were still too young to succeed to him. Only sometime between the end of 195 and the beginning of 196, when Albinus had proclaimed himself Augustus, did Severus make the final step towards the establishment of his dynasty by appointing Caracalla Caesar and Julia Domna *mater castrorum*.

### **III.2. DOMNA'S COINAGE DURING THE YEARS 193-197**

Apart from her role in persuading Severus to dispose of Albinus, literary sources do not allow us to contextualize Domna's agency during the first years of her husband's rule. Therefore, it is necessary to turn to the analysis of the material evidence. The coinage struck in her honor shows how her role as wife of the emperor was advertised. The propagandist themes reported on the reverses of her coins, in particular, provide interesting information about her contribution to the rise of the Severan dynasty.

Furthermore, provincial coins indicate that during her travels to the East she was regarded as an influential personality who was worth addressing.

### **III.2.1. Imperial coinage**

Owing to the lack of precise elements that can date the coinage of Domna (such as, for example, imperial acclamations, consulates, and *tribuniciae potestates* that often appear on the coins struck for the male members of the family), it is not always easy to assign a precise chronological order to her coin types. Also, the moment at which Domna was awarded the right of striking coins still remains a matter of dispute. In his detailed analysis of the coinage of Severus and his family, Philip Hill dates the bestowal of the title of Augusta to 194, also supposing that the first issues in her honor were struck during this year<sup>422</sup>. This reconstruction relies on the fact that the name of Domna and the title Augusta are not documented on inscriptions before 195. Moreover, according to Herodian, immediately after his proclamation as emperor in Carnuntum (April 9<sup>th</sup>, 193), Severus arranged the escape of his children from Rome in order to prevent Julianus from capturing them<sup>423</sup>. Since it is highly probable that Domna was in Rome with her children, the awarding of the title of Augusta should be dated to Severus' arrival in the capital. However, it is necessary to stress that Severus was already in Rome a few days after the assassination of Julianus, which occurred on June, 1<sup>st</sup>. Soon after Severus' entrance to Rome, the city mint started to strike the first coins dedicated to him, which celebrated his

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<sup>422</sup> Hill 1977, 6-8, 13.

<sup>423</sup> Hdn. 3.2.4. While Severus was still staying in Pannonia, he could probably count on two relatives that were holding important positions in Rome. One was C. Fulvius Plautianus, who probably was in charge of the postal service as *praefectus vehiculorum*. The other was the husband of his sister-in-law Julia Mesa, C. Julius Avitus Alexianus, who was *procurator annonae* in Ostia. On the topic cf. Halfmann 1982, 220-221.

first act of largesse and the divination of Pertinax<sup>424</sup>. Following the prevailing opinion among scholars, it seems consequently probable that the bestowal of the title Augusta on Domna took place during the same period, along with the first coins struck in her honor<sup>425</sup>.

The first group of issues is characterized by the obverse IVLIA DOMNA AVG(usta). Following the order of the issues established by Hill, the reverses characterized by this legend are the following:

- 1) RIC IV.1, p. 165 no. 537 (aureus): VENVS GENETRIX. Venus seated on the left, holding apple and scepter: in front of her, Cupid.
- 2) RIC IV.1, p. 165 no. 536 (aureus, denarius): VENERI VICTR(ici). Venus, naked to the waist, standing right, holding apple and palm, resting on the left elbow on column; RIC IV.1 p. 207 nos. 842, 846 (sesterce, dupondius, as): VENERI VICTR(ici) S(enatus) C(onsulto). Venus, naked to the waist, standing right, holding apple and palm and leaning on a column.
- 3) RIC IV.1 p. 165 no. 534 (aureus, denarius): FECVNDITAS. *Fecunditas*, seated on throne with one child in her arms, a second child standing in front of her. RIC IV.1 p. 207 no. 838 (sesterce): FECVNDITAS S(enatus) C(onsulto). *Fecunditas* standing on the left, holding child on the left arm, with a child at each side. RIC IV.1 p. 207 no. 844 (dupondius/as): FECVNDITAS S(enatus) C(onsulto). *Fecunditas* seated on throne with a child at her breast. A second child standing before her.
- 4) RIC IV.1 p. 165 no. 538 (aureus, denarius): VESTA. Vesta, veiled, seated on throne, holding palladium and scepter. RIC IV.1 p. 207 no. 843 (sesterce): VESTA S(enatus) C(onsulto). Vesta, veiled, seated on throne, holding palladium and scepter.
- 5) RIC IV. 1 p. 207 nos. 840, 845 (sesterce, dupondius, as): IVNO REGINA S(enatus) C(onsulto). Juno standing on the left, holding *patera* and scepter. At her feet, on the left, a peacock.

When compared to the coinage minted for previous imperial women, the themes on the reverses of Domna's coins do not represent, at first glance, a break with tradition. Both the reverse types with the legends VENVS GENETRIX and VENVS VICTRIX are common

<sup>424</sup> Hill 1979, 148; *Id.* 1977, 12. Lusnia 1995, 121-122 also follows this chronology.

<sup>425</sup> In a note that follows a detailed study of Domna's gold issues, Filippini 2010, 91 expresses similar observations. Kienast 1996, 167 reports the assumption of the title Augusta after June 1<sup>st</sup>, or perhaps 9<sup>th</sup>. Without entering into the discussion, Levick 2007, 39 suggests that, during the ceremony for the consecration of Pertinax, Domna might have already been present acting as the new Augusta. Finally, Harold Mattingly and Edward Sydenham in RIC IV.1, pp. 63, 73, 165, 207 also consider 193 as the first year of the issues regarding Domna. Cf. also Morelli 2009, 128; Magnani 2008, 32; Letta 1991, 649; Ghedini 1994, 17-18; Kettenhofen 1979, 78-79.

imperial themes since the time of Julius Caesar and, starting with the reign of Hadrian, they often appear on the coinage of imperial women<sup>426</sup>. The *Fecunditas* type recurs especially on the coinage of Faustina the Younger, celebrating her numerous childbirths<sup>427</sup>. The reverse types with the legends VESTA and IVNO REGINA, finally, belong to the most typical themes that are represented on the coins of the Augustae. The cult of Vesta, in fact, is the most important one among Roman matrons, while Juno Regina is associated with the public image of the Augusta as much as the cult of Jupiter is connected to the figure of the emperor in his role of *pontifex maximus*<sup>428</sup>.

As for chronology, the *Venus Genetrix* type was struck only in gold and as an aureus. Thus, it assumes a particular celebratory connotation, which is also stressed by the reference to the goddess who was assumed to be the progenitor of the Roman people and the *gens Julia*. Therefore, it is probably the first issue that celebrated the assumption of the title Augusta in June 193, when the senate officially recognized Severus as emperor. The use of the nominative case suggests a strong identification between the new Augusta, on the obverse, and the goddess, on the reverse<sup>429</sup>. The *Veneri Victr(ici)* type, which was minted in all the denominations, clearly represents a continuation of the previous issue, as demonstrated by the strong similarities in the iconography. The Venus

<sup>426</sup> Before the battle of Pharsalus, Julius Caesar made vows to Venus Victrix, and later build a temple in honor of Venus Genetrix to celebrate the victory (app. BC 2.68 and 102). On the topic cf. Lusnia 1995, 122; Rives 1994, 294 with further references. The Venus themes appear for the first time on the coinage of Hadrian's wife Sabina, who was also portrayed as Venus Genetrix by statues, cf. Keltanen 2002, 120. On the presence of Venus on imperial coinage between the second half of the first century AD and the Antonine age cf. also Pera 1978, 79-97.

<sup>427</sup> On the FECVNITAS types on the coinage of Faustina the Younger cf. Del Basso and Zamboni 2013, 221-220 and *infra*.

<sup>428</sup> For the case of Domna cf. RIC IV.1 pp. 75-76. Starting from Plotina, coin types of Vesta appear to be very common amongst imperial women's coinage, cf. Keltanen 2002, 110-111. With the exception of Plotina, types portraying Juno are commonly in use since the time of Livia, cf. Keltanen 2002, 119.

<sup>429</sup> The particularly recurring use of the nominative case for the goddesses represented on Domna's reverses has been stressed by Morelli 2009, 132; Filippini 2008, 10.

holding the palm of victory should, consequently, be seen as an allusion to the eastern campaign against Niger. Also, since contemporary coins of Severus bear references to Mars, the victorious Venus may be seen as an allusion to the complementary presence of the Augusta. Domna, in a word, was depicted as the irreplaceable partner at the apex of the empire<sup>430</sup>.

This series of coins was followed by the issues with the legends FECVNDITAS and VESTA. These typologies of coins, which are characterized by their use of the nominative as in the case of the legend VENVS GENETRIX, cover all the denominations. They undoubtedly precede the *Iuno Regina* type, since this legend continues to appear in the subsequent group of issues characterized by the use of the legend IVLIA AVGSTA on the obverse<sup>431</sup>. According to Hill, the coins bearing the name IVLIA DOMNA AVG(usta) were minted under the authority of one of the *officinae* that struck coins for Severus. After the break between Severus and Albinus during the summer of 195, the *officina* that had been previously used for the minting of Albinus' coinage was assigned to Domna. From this point onwards, Domna's coins bore the legend IVLIA AVGSTA, thus marking the start of coins issued under her authority<sup>432</sup>. On the whole, this dating seems highly plausible, especially considering the fact that the change from IVLIA DOMNA AVG(usta) to IVLIA AVGSTA most likely marked an important event. Severus' decision to abandon the alliance with Albinus and to establish his own dynasty by the self-adoption into the dynasty of the Antonines and his bestowing of the name M. Aurelius Antoninus upon Caracalla is indeed the best condition for this important event. The legend IVLIA

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<sup>430</sup> Janiszewska 2011, 149.

<sup>431</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 560 (aureus, denarius); p. 208 no. 856 (sesterce).

<sup>432</sup> Hill 1979, 171. Cf. also Lusnia 1995, 121. Morelli 2009, 129-130; Filippini 2008, 9 proposes a slightly different period for the change of legend, i.e. 195/196.

AVGVSTA, after all, represents a strong link to the name of Livia, since it appears on both coins and inscriptions after the death of Augustus<sup>433</sup>. In summary, it is possible to assume, with a high degree of certainty, that the coins bearing the legend IVLIA DOMNA AVG(usta) cover the span between the summer of 193 and the summer of 195.

Although the themes adopted for Domna's obverses reflect typologies that are already common on the coinage of previous imperial women, a closer examination of her coin types seems to reveal, in my view, details that could refer to a characteristic and particular use of these coin types. The most interesting fact is the singular emphasis given to the maternal element, i.e. the procreative capacities of the Augusta, through the VENVS GENETRIX and the FECVNDITAS types. The latter virtue, in particular, almost always appears on coins (aurei, denarii, sesterces, dupondii and asses) portrayed as a woman seated on a throne, with a child at her breast and another one standing in front of her (fig. 4). Scholars generally identify the figures of the two children as Caracalla and Geta<sup>434</sup>. According to Erica Filippini and Anna Lina Morelli, these reverses represent a significant reference to Domna's role in the mechanism of dynastic continuation and, therefore, to her importance in establishing the Severan dynasty<sup>435</sup>. This series of coins also seems to foreshadow a concept (the hope for the eternal stability of the Empire) that issues dated to the years following the civil war dwell upon. Here Domna appears together with her children on coins celebrating the *aeternitas imperii*, the *saeculi felicitas* and the

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<sup>433</sup> The reference to Livia has been stressed by Hekster 2015, 146; Morelli 2009, 130; Filippini 2008, 8; Lusnia 1995, 120-121. On Severus' attempts to emulate Augustus, cf. Cooley 2007, 385-397.

<sup>434</sup> Morelli 2009, 129-130; Brenot 2000, 339; Mattingly in BMCRE V, lxxxvi.

<sup>435</sup> Filippini 2010, 84-85; Morelli 2009, 129-130. Cf. also Saavedra-Guerrero 2006a, 720.

*concordia aeterna*<sup>436</sup>. More or less during the same period, a typology style of denarius bearing the legend HILARITAS and the representation of a woman with two children at her sides can be interpreted as a further allusion to Domna's maternity<sup>437</sup>. Furthermore, it is interesting to observe that, when compared to the *Fecunditas* types of Faustina the Younger, those of Domna seem to have been struck for a different purpose. The earlier *Fecunditas* type in honor of Faustina - which is also the first coin with the legend FECVNITAS ever struck for an imperial woman - was almost certainly minted in 147 to celebrate the birth of her first daughter Domitia Faustina<sup>438</sup>. The number of similar coins struck for Faustina during the following years represents the most sizeable group of *Fecunditas* types minted for an imperial woman in the whole imperial history<sup>439</sup>. The iconographic variety of the reverses, however, show not only different images of the Augusta, either seated or standing, but also numerous variations concerning both the number of the children represented, and their sex. Therefore, it can be presumed that coins bearing the legend FECVNITAS, normally in the form of either FECVNITATI AVGVSTAE or, more rarely, FECVNITAS AVG(usta/ae), were struck with the purpose of

<sup>436</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 166 nos. 539-541 (aurei and denarii with the legend ATERNIT(as) IMPERI(i) representing Domna on the obverse, Caracalla and Geta on the reverse); p. 114 no. 175 (aureus with the legend FELICITAS SAECVLI representing Severus on the obverse, Domna, Caracalla and Geta on the reverse); p. 218 no. 36; p. 220 no. 52; p. 221 no. 59 (aurei with the legend CONCORDIAE AETERNAE representing Caracalla on the obverse, Severus and Domna on the reverse). Cf. Filippini 2010, 85-88; Morelli 2009, 130; *Ead.* 2006, 70.

<sup>437</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 557. Cf. Filippini 2008, 32 n. 100, who observes that the representation of the *Hilaritas* with two children occurs on this occasion for the first time in the coinage of imperial women.

<sup>438</sup> RIC III p. 269 no. 677 (denarius); p. 345 nos. 1638, 1639 (sesterce and as). RIC III p. 345 no. 1640 (sesterce) shows a variation with *Fecunditas* standing on the left. Cf. Del Basso-Zamboni 2013, 213-214.

<sup>439</sup> RIC III p. 268 no. 675 (aureus); p. 269 nos. 676, 678 (denarii), 679-682 (aurei); p. 345 nos. 1634-1635 (sesterces), 1636-1637, 1641 (asses). The existence of a sesterce dedicated *post mortem* to Faustina the Elder with the legend DIVA FAVSTINA on the obverse and FECVNITAS S(enato) C(onsulto) on the reverse (RIC III p. 165 no. 1142) should be regarded as either an error in the numismatic editions preceding the RIC or a modern falsification, cf. Del Basso-Zamboni 2013, 212-213.

celebrating the procreative capacities of this Augusta, rather than promoting the idea of maternity in a general sense<sup>440</sup>. This circumstance cannot apply to the case of Domna since, upon becoming Augusta, she already had two children of five and six years respectively<sup>441</sup>. Additionally, the combination of the legend FECVNDITAS in the nominative case, and the representation of this goddess sat on a throne, appears for the first time on the coinage of Domna. As mentioned above, the use of the nominative suggests an equalization between the goddess and the Augusta, thus communicating an impression of sacredness to her person<sup>442</sup>. The representation of the throne seems an allusion to her importance as an imperial woman and wife of the emperor; a theme that can also be detected on contemporary coins bearing the legend VESTA<sup>443</sup>. Consequently, Domna's coins, characterized by the legend FECVNDITAS and a goddess sat on a throne surrounded by two children, should be interpreted as signifying that, when she became Augusta, she was *already* mother of potential heirs to the throne. This kind of message is an innovation on imperial coinage.

These considerations become of special importance if placed in the historical context that has been examined in the previous section. As stated above, coins with the legends VENVS GENETRIX and FECVNDITAS should be dated to a period stretching from the early summer of 193 to the summer of 195. More specifically, Hill dates the *Venus*

<sup>440</sup> Del Basso-Zamboni 2013, 217-219. Fittschen 1982, 22-43 has argued that each childbirth of Faustina was celebrated through different portrait types on both coins and sculptures. Walter Ameling, however, has criticized this reconstruction through detailed arguments (1992, 147-166).

<sup>441</sup> According to Saavedra-Guerrero 2006a, 720, the prominence given to *Fecunditas* in Domna's coinage stresses the fact that she was mother of heirs to the throne rather than a prolific mother in general. Lusnia 1995, 122, on the other hand, regards Domna's *Fecunditas* types as a standard imperial theme.

<sup>442</sup> Morelli 2009, 129.

<sup>443</sup> Typology no. 4 above.

*Genetrix* type to 194, and the *Fecunditas* to the early months of 195<sup>444</sup>. In the light of the considerations expressed above, however, the minting of these coins could be relocated to 193 and 194, respectively. This is the period during which the alliance between Severus and Albinus was stronger, since the latter had just been appointed Caesar and, officially at least, heir to the throne with the prospect of becoming co-ruler soon. Even though the minting of coins with allusions to the maternity of Domna cannot have represented a direct threat to the alliance between the two generals, it is important to observe that their propagandist impact could have been considerable. Domna's coins were, in fact, circulating not only in the provinces under the control of Severus but also in the areas controlled by Albinus, whose coins show more conciliatory legends such as CONCORDIA and FORTVNA REDVX (the latter with reference to a happy conclusion of Severus' eastern campaigns)<sup>445</sup>.

There are at least two reasons that could justify Severus' intention to mint coins advertising the maternity of Domna: *a*) he had already started to provoke Albinus with the intention of preparing the ground for the escalation that would lead to the civil war; *b*) he was under pressure from the Augusta and/or other people that were close to her. The option *a* does not seem to be very probable. Until the early summer of 195, in fact, Severus had been occupied with the war against Niger and his first Parthian campaign in one of the most remote areas of the empire. This is certainly the period during which the military and political support of Albinus was fundamental. Thus, provoking such an

<sup>444</sup> VENVS GENETRIX: Hill 1977, 13 no. 90 (aureus). FECVNNDITAS: Hill 1977, 14 nos. 126 (dupondius), 137 (denarius), 142 (aureus).

<sup>445</sup> CONCORDIA: RIC IV.1 p. 53 nos. 62-63 (sesterce and dupondius); FORTVNA REDVX: RIC IV.1 p. 44 no. 5 (aureus); pp. 52-53 nos. 53, 59 (sesterce, dupondius/as), on the topic cf. Schachinger 1996, 100-117. Although in low percentages, Domna's FECVNNDITAS denarii and aurei appear regularly in the hoards of coins discovered in Britain and other Western provinces, cf. the analysis by Clare Rowan in Langford 2013, 130-133.

important ally could have been a risky move. In the light of this, the option *b* seems to be more preferable. With reference to the entire coinage of Domna for the years 193-195, her role as Augusta was strongly affirmed through coins representing the most important and traditional topics relating to the wives of emperors, i.e. those with the legends VENVS VICTRIX, IVNO REGINA, and VESTA. The affirmation of her maternity through the *Venus Genetrix* and *Fecunditas* types appears to be an important complementary allusion to her being mother of legitimate heirs to the throne, and, therefore, to her being of essential importance for a future dynasty.

### **III.2.2. Provincial coinage**

As stressed in chapter I, imperial coins contained messages that the central power sent to the inhabitants of the Empire. On the other hand, provincial coins expressed the point of view of local communities<sup>446</sup>. During the first years of Severus' reign, the image of Domna started to appear on the coinage struck by eastern civic mints<sup>447</sup>. Considering that she followed her husband when he travelled to the East in order to fight Niger (193-194) and the Mesopotamian tribes who had supported him (195), the inhabitants of the eastern provinces may have tried to gain her favor by dedicating coins to her. Interestingly, starting from 194, numerous cities in eastern Cilicia minted coins for Domna. Thanks to the city era reported on their obverses, it is possible to date the coins struck in Aigieai

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<sup>446</sup> Cf. section I.3 above.

<sup>447</sup> Starting from about AD 45, provincial coinage is minted in the Eastern provinces only. For this reason, it is sometimes called 'Greek imperial'. For a general overview of this topic, cf. Burnett 2005; Howgego 1995, 56-59 with further references.

(Cilicia)<sup>448</sup> to 194, and those minted in Anazarbus<sup>449</sup>, Irenopolis<sup>450</sup> and Flaviopolis<sup>451</sup> (Cilicia) to 194/195. Furthermore, in 195/196 similar coins are documented, again, in Irenopolis<sup>452</sup> (Cilicia), and, during 196/197, more are documented in Caesarea<sup>453</sup> (Cappadocia). Their obverses display a notable variety of themes, including the city goddesses of Aigeai and Flaviopolis<sup>454</sup>, and the bust of the Fortune (*Tyche*) of Irenopolis<sup>455</sup>. The coins of Anazarbus, which show the name of the city surrounded by a laurel branch, are also worth mentioning<sup>456</sup>. In fact, just like the coins displaying civic deities, these ones seem to have had the purpose of establishing a special relationship between the cities and the Augusta. The period in which all these coins were produced does not appear casual. Between the first months of 194 and the beginning of 196, the imperial court certainly visited these areas. The decisive battle between Severus and Niger was fought near Issus (eastern Cilicia) in March 194<sup>457</sup>. The ‘*vita A*’ of Oppian says that Severus visited Anazarbus<sup>458</sup>, and that the emperor and his entourage spent the winter of 194/195 in northern Syria, perhaps in Laodicea<sup>459</sup>. A few months later, during the spring of 195, the emperor crossed the Euphrates and went straight to Nisibis, in Mesopotamia<sup>460</sup>. In order to do so, he probably departed from the military camp of

<sup>448</sup> SNG Levante 1737. The city era indicates a period between 193 and 194. However, during 193 Asia Minor was still under the control of Niger. Cf. Letta 1991, 652-655. On the local eras see in general Buonopane 2016 with further references.

<sup>449</sup> SNG Levante 1408; SNG v.A. 5482.

<sup>450</sup> SNG Levante 1612.

<sup>451</sup> SNG Levante 1545.

<sup>452</sup> SNG v.A. 5587; SNG Paris 2265.

<sup>453</sup> SNG v.A. 6472-6473.

<sup>454</sup> SNG Levante 1737 and 1545, respectively.

<sup>455</sup> SNG Paris 2265.

<sup>456</sup> SNG v.A. 5482.

<sup>457</sup> Cf. section III.1.2 above.

<sup>458</sup> Westermann 1845, 63-68. Cf. also Burrell 2004, 220; Lehnert 1997, 240.

<sup>459</sup> Cf. Halfmann 1986, 216.

<sup>460</sup> Dio 75.3.2. Cf. Birley 1999, 155-156; Letta 1991, 656.

Zeugma, which guarded the border between Cilicia and Osrhoene<sup>461</sup>. After the battle of Issus and during the campaign against the Parthians, Domna presumably stayed either in Antioch or in another city between northern Syria and eastern Cilicia. Therefore, envoys from the cities located in this area and sent to the imperial court had the opportunity of meeting the Augusta and to ask for her support in matters involving their relationship with the imperial government. Between 194 and 196, several embassies probably came to the court from cities that had not been visited by Severus and the imperial court. Among these, the capital of Egypt, Alexandria, surely represented a special case. Unlike other eastern cities that remained loyal to Niger until the very end of the war, such as Antioch and Byzantium, Alexandria switched sides and recognized Severus as the legitimate emperor at the beginning of 194, when Niger's position began to falter<sup>462</sup>. After Severus' victory, the city likely sent its envoys to the emperor in order to congratulate him on his success and, possibly, to seek some benefits on account of its loyalty. Intriguingly, an Alexandrian coin dating to 194 displays the bust of Domna on the obverse, and Victory, who drives a *quadriga*, on the reverse<sup>463</sup>. During the same year, Alexandria honored the Augusta with another coin type whose obverse shows Justice (*Dikaiosyne*) with scales and a cornucopia<sup>464</sup>. On the one hand, the coins with Victory celebrated Severus' triumph over his enemies. On the other hand, those with Justice indicated the hope of a fair treatment from the new emperor. The presence of both these concepts on coins struck for

<sup>461</sup> Birley 1999, 155.

<sup>462</sup> On February 13<sup>th</sup> according to BGU 362 VI 6-8, more or less a month before the battle of Issus. Cf. Letta 1991, 654.

<sup>463</sup> SNG Glasgow 4335. According to the city era, this type could be dated to 193-194, but in 193 Egypt was still supporting Niger. On local eras cf. n. 76 above.

<sup>464</sup> SNG Glasgow 4336. As for the previous type, the dating of this coin must be restricted to 194.

Domna suggests that, as in the case of Cilicia, the Alexandrians regarded her as a personality worthy of address in order to improve their relationship with Severus.

### III.3. THE KASSEL CAMEO

Some of the themes that are documented on Domna's early coins occur on artworks too, as demonstrated by a well-known artifact preserved in Kassel (Germany). This is a cameo of notable dimensions (approx. 16 x 10 cm) that depicts a winged female figure sitting on a pile of weapons (fig. 13)<sup>465</sup>. She holds a crown in her right hand, and a palm branch in her left. Despite some chipping affecting the face, the person can be easily identified as Domna. Her characteristic hairstyle displayed by the cameo belongs to the first and middle periods of Severus' rule, covering more or less the years from 193 to 206-207<sup>466</sup>. The wings, crown, palm branch, and pile of weapons indicate that Domna is being represented as a personification of the goddess Victoria. The theme of Victory and the palm branch seem to allude to the imperial coins minted for the Augusta in 194, which show Venus holding a palm branch surrounded by the legends VENERI VICTR(ici)<sup>467</sup> or VENERI VICTOR(iae)<sup>468</sup>. For the first time in imperial coinage, the palm branch replaces the spear, which had until then appeared on coins with the legend VENERI VICTRICI<sup>469</sup>. The comparison of these images with the Kassel Cameo indicates that Domna was frequently associated with the victories of Severus, sometimes as the personification of the goddess Victoria herself. Such a role is not documented with regard to previous

<sup>465</sup> *Staatliche Kunstsammlungen*. Inv. no. Ge 236. Cf. Lichtenberger 2011, 358; Alexandridis 2004, 205-206 no. 233; Mikocki 1995, 216 no. 447; Ghedini 1984, 132.

<sup>466</sup> On the topic cf. Ghedini 1984, 28-29; Schlüter 1977; Hiesinger 1969, 40-41.

<sup>467</sup> RIC IV.1, p. 165 no. 536 (aureus, denarius); RIC IV.1 p. 207 nos. 842, 846 (sesterce, dupondius, as).

<sup>468</sup> RIC IV.1, p. 165 no. 535 (denarius).

<sup>469</sup> Filippini 2008, 11.

imperial women. As observed by Francesca Ghedini, the only official attempt to assimilate a living woman to Victoria dates back to the civil wars of the first century BCE, when Mark Antony's wife, Fulvia, was represented as Victoria on some coins struck in Rome and in the provinces<sup>470</sup>. Later, the goddess accompanied the official representations of Julius Caesar, Augustus and many of the following emperors<sup>471</sup>. It follows that the relationship between Victory and power was a very close one. Thus, the Kassel Cameo demonstrates that, starting from the first years of Severus' reign, Domna was already enjoying unprecedented visibility and power.

### **III.4. THE EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE DURING THE YEARS 193-197**

As well as coins and artworks, inscriptions are fundamental sources that can partially remedy the scarcity of references to Domna in the literary sources. Her name does not appear as often in inscriptions dated to the first years of Severus' rule, as it does during Severus and Caracalla's joint reign (198-211). However, a discrete number of monuments can provide interesting insights into her presence in public life and into the individuals and/or institutions that decided to put up monuments to honor the Augusta or to include her name in inscriptions commemorating the imperial house.

#### **III.4.1. The *mater castrorum* title**

Before proceeding to the examination of the inscriptions and monuments from the years 193-197, it is necessary to say a few words about the exact dating of the title 'mother of the camps' (*mater castrorum*), which was bestowed upon Domna in this period. This is

<sup>470</sup> Ghedini 1984, 134. These coins are RSC 3-4 and RPC 3139-3140 from Eumeneia (Asia). All these coins reproduce the bust of Fulvia with little wings at the nape of her neck.

<sup>471</sup> Ghedini 1984, 134.

very important, not only for the dating of the many monuments were *mater castrorum* is documented, but also for understanding the correct sequence of the events that characterized the establishment of the Severan dynasty. Furthermore, the title is strongly connected to the idea of maternity. As stressed previously with reference to her coinage, this is a key concept in understanding her role during the first years of Severus' rule.

Neither Dio, nor Herodian, nor the *HA* mention the awarding of the *mater castrorum* title to Domna. Therefore, its dating depends on the study of papyri and inscriptions. A papyrus from Egypt reports the exact day and month it was awarded, i.e. 14<sup>th</sup> April<sup>472</sup>. As for the year, starting from 196 it is undoubtedly attested to in inscriptions<sup>473</sup>, while on coins it appears during 197<sup>474</sup>. However, an inscription from Thugga (Africa Proconsularis) dating to 195 has usually been considered the first attestation of Domna's name followed by this title:

*Pro salute Imp(eratoris) Caesaris L. Septimi Severi Pertinacis Aug(usti), Parthici Arabic[ij], Parthici Adiaben[ici], pont(ificis) max(imi)], tri/b(unicia) pote]st(ate) III, co(n)s(ulis) II, p(atris) p(atriae) [[et D. Clodii Septimi Albini Caes(aris)]] et Iuliae [Domnae Aug(ustae)] **matris castr?orum** (?), opus templi Saturni quod L. O(ctavius) Victor Roscianus [- - -] ex summa honoris [- - - faciendum promiserat], taxatis HS quinquaginta milib(us) n(ummum) mu[- - -]ulis suis ad perficiendum id opus HS centum mil(ia) n(ummum) legavit, qua summa ab heredibus [sol]uta et publice inlata, pagus et civitas Thuggensis d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) dedicavit.*<sup>475</sup>

For the safety of the emperor Caesar L. Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, victorious over the Parthians of Arabia and the Parthians of Adiabene, *pontifex maximus*, holding the third tribunician power, consul for the second time, father of the country, and of the

<sup>472</sup> BGU II 362 sp. 11 ll. 15-17. The papyrus calls Domna ἡ κυρία ἡμῶν Ἰουλία Δόμνα, μήτηρ τῶν ἀητήτων στρατοπέδων ('our mistress Julia Domna, mother of the unconquered soldiers'). The most common Greek translation of the title *mater castrorum* is the transliteration μήτηρ κάστρων. Nevertheless, variations such as μήτηρ στρατευμάτων ('mother of the camps') and the aforementioned μήτηρ στρατοπέδων are not rare. Cf. Okamura 1995, 106-108; Kettenhofen 1979, 79-81.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. tab. *a* in the catalogue of inscriptions.

<sup>474</sup> Hill 1977, 16 no. 298. On the title *mater castrorum* on imperial coinage in general cf. Morelli, 2010a, 286; *Ead.* 2010b, 469-470; *Ead.* 2006, 68, 70, 75; Calabria 1989, 225-233. With regard to this title and Domna cf. Filippini 2010, 89; Morelli 2010b, 470; Filippini 2008, 20; Morelli 2006, 70.

<sup>475</sup> App. no. 2a.

Caesar D. Clodius Septimius Albinus, and of Julia Domna Augusta, **mother of the camps (?)**, L. Octavius Victor Roscianus [had promised to realize] the construction of the temple of Saturn by using the *summa honoraria*. After having estimated fifty thousand sesterces, through his will he left one hundred thousand sesterces to complete the building. After the heirs had deposited this sum in the public treasury, the *pagus* and the *civitas* of Thugga inaugurated this building through a decree of the decurions.

The inscription was engraved on the frieze of the temple of Saturn, but the text is fragmentary. The restoration *matris castri ORVM* reported in the CIL on the basis of a reconstruction by Louis Poinsot, however, concerns a fragment whose reading was already difficult at the moment of discovery<sup>476</sup>. Also, more recent editions consider the fragment almost completely illegible, and, as a consequence, Matthäus Heil in an article published a few years ago has expressed strong doubts about the existence of the title *mater castrorum* in this inscription<sup>477</sup>. According to Heil, the date for the bestowal of this title should be postponed to 196. Moreover, considering that the title *mater castrorum* was bestowed for the first time to Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina, it seems more plausible that Domna was awarded this title after Severus' self-adoption into the line of the Antonines and the bestowal of the name M. Aurelius Antoninus to Caracalla. As discussed above, these facts took place during the summer of 195. Consequently, the date of April 14<sup>th</sup>, 196 appears to fit better the combination of the events.

### III.5.2. Domna in inscriptions dating to 196-197

Despite the probable absence of the title *mater castrorum*, the inscription from Thugga mentioned in the previous section clearly attests to Domna's name along with the names and titles of Severus and Albinus. It is, therefore, possible to make a few observations

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<sup>476</sup> Cf. the commentary to CIL VIII 26498.

<sup>477</sup> Heil 2006, 73-74. Zeïn Ben Abdallah re-published the inscription in Khanoussi-Maurin 2000, 111-114 no. 38.

about the importance that the presence of her name assumes in this text. Firstly, the mention of the titles *Parthicus Arabicus* and *Parthicus Adiabenicus* after the name of Severus - an evident allusion to Severus' first Parthian campaign - indicates the *terminus post quem* for the dating, i.e. the early summer of 195. The absence of references to the self-adoption into the Antonines and the presence of Albinus' name, however, indicate that the inscription was engraved before the rupture between the two generals, i.e. in late summer-early autumn of 195. The text can, therefore, be dated to the mid-summer of this year. It is also interesting to note that during this period there are no other inscriptions from the North African provinces that record the inauguration of new buildings of significant dimensions. Furthermore, although she is not the first imperial woman to have received public honors in this city, she is the first whose name appears on the façade of a public building together with those of the emperor and his Caesar<sup>478</sup>. In the course of the second century, many other public buildings, such as the theatre, the capitol, and other temples had already been built in Thugga. Yet their dedicatory inscriptions report only the names of the emperors, while imperial women are honored solely through the erection of statues<sup>479</sup>. All these considerations seem to imply that, already during the first half of 195 - less than two years after having been bestowed the title Augusta - the prestige enjoyed by Domna was already considerable in the eyes of the citizens of Thugga.

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<sup>478</sup> The only attestation concerning an imperial woman who had been previously honored in Thugga is on a statue base that the inhabitants of the city dedicated to Faustina the Younger (CIL VIII 26532).

<sup>479</sup> CIL VIII 1493 = 15520 = 26467 = 26469a = 26469b (temples of Concordia, Frugifer and Liber Pater with dedication to Hadrian); Saint-Amans 2004, 342 nos. 77-78 (temple of Minerva with dedication to Hadrian); CIL VIII 1498 = 26528 (theatre with dedication to M. Aurelius and L. Verus); CIL VIII 1471 = 15513 = 15514 (capitol with dedication to M. Aurelius and L. Verus); CIL VIII 26530 = 26533 = ILAfr 523 (temple of Mercury with dedication to Commodus). Before Domna, a statue base to Faustina the Younger decreed by the decurions (CIL VIII 26532) is the only attestation of honors paid to an imperial woman.

Another monument that can be dated to this period is a statue base from Panhormus (Sicily)<sup>480</sup>. The *ordo decurionum* of the city dedicated a statue to *Iuliae Aug(ustae), Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L. Septimi Severi Pertinacis Aug(usti) Pii, Parthici Arabici et Parthici Adiabenici (...)* *tr(ibunicia) pot(estate) III, imp(eratoris) V, co(n)s(ul)is II* ('to Julia Augusta [wife of] the emperor Caesar L. Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Parthian Arabian and Parthian Adiabenic, holding the third tribunician power, acclaimed emperor for the fifth time, two times consul'). As in the inscription from Thugga, the mention of the titles acquired by Severus during the first Parthian campaign and his third tribunician locate its date to the second half of 195<sup>481</sup>. More precisely, the fifth imperial acclamation restricts its date to the mid-summer of this year<sup>482</sup>. Although other similar statue bases are not documented, it is probable that corresponding monuments to Severus, and, perhaps, Albinus, were set up at the same time<sup>483</sup>. No statue bases for previous imperial women are so far documented, neither in Panhormus itself, nor in the whole province of Sicily, whose cities had previously honored male members of the Antonine dynasty with a considerable number of monuments<sup>484</sup>. It is possible that Severus' proconsulate of Sicily (189-190) partially contributed to the considerable popularity enjoyed by the Severans in Phanormus, something confirmed by at least four more dedications<sup>485</sup>. The statue to Domna

<sup>480</sup> Cat no. 1a.

<sup>481</sup> Bivona 1970, 32 no. 13 expresses the same conclusions.

<sup>482</sup> Kienast 1996, 157.

<sup>483</sup> Another statue base for Severus (CIL X 7271) could be contemporary to the base for Domna. The shape of the letters, however, is clearly different. Cf. the pictures of these inscriptions in Bivona 1970, pls. VIII and IX.

<sup>484</sup> CIL X 7270, 7474 (statues to M. Aurelius), 7475 (statue to L. Verus); AE 1964, 181 (dedication to M. Aurelius); AE 1989, 341j (dedications to M. Aurelius and L. Verus).

<sup>485</sup> CIL X 7273 (statue to Caracalla), 7274 (statue to Severus), 7275 (statue to Geta), 7276 (statue to Caracalla). It is also important to stress that Severus seems to have paid considerable attention

undoubtedly recognizes her importance at the side of Severus, and the fact that in Sicily she is the first documented imperial woman to be honored through a monument like this corroborates this impression. Moreover, as in the case of the temple in Thugga, the erection of a statue in her honor during the summer of 195 is a further confirmation of the prestige that she enjoyed during this period.

Starting from 196, at which time the break between Severus and Albinus was irreconcilable, dedications to Domna became more frequent, along with those for Caracalla, who, as noted above, was appointed Caesar during the spring of this year. The first inscription that records Caracalla's new title is an altar dated to June 26<sup>th</sup>, and it also includes the name of Domna:

*Iovi Opt(imo) Max(imo) / Dolicheno / pro salute Imp(eratoris) / L. Septimi Severi Pii  
Perti/naci Aug(usti) et M. Aureli Ant/onini Caesar(is) et Iul(iae) Domnae / Aug(ustae)  
et tot(ius) dom(us) divinae. / M. Valerius Valen/tinus, optio cl(assis) pr(aetoriae)  
Ra(vennatis), de s(uo) fici(t) (!) / 'militib(us) class(is)' Dextro II et Prisco  
co(n)s(ulibus). // Iusso (!) Caeci/liio (!) Servillia/no, c(uratore) o(operum) p(ublicorum),  
III K(alendas) Iulias.<sup>486</sup>*

To Juppiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus for the safety of the emperor L. Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, the Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus, Julia Domna Augusta, and the whole divine household. The *optio* of the praetorian fleet stationed in Ravenna M. Valerius Valentinus set up [this monument] at his expense together with the soldiers of the fleet during the consulate of Priscus and the second consulate of Dexter. // With the approbation of the curator of the public works Caecilius Servilianus, on the third day before the calends of July.

The text contains a dedication to Juppiter Dolichenus for the safety of the imperial family. The monument was set up by an *optio*, an officer who was the assistant of a centurion, and his comrades in arms. While the text of the dedication is engraved on the front, the name of the *curator* and the indication of the day are reported on the right side

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to Sicily. During his reign, in fact, both Agrigentum and Lilybaeum were promoted to the rank of colony. Cf. Pfuntner 2016, 4-12.

<sup>486</sup> App. no. 4a.

of the monument. According to Giulio Molisani, who published the inscription, the presence of the grammatically incorrect formula *iussō* (for *iussu*) *Caeciliō (!) Serviliano* does not indicate that the monument was set up by order of this magistrate, but rather with his permission<sup>487</sup>. Molisani also observed that the words *militib(us) class(is)* or *militib(us) class(iaris)* were added after the incising of the main text, a circumstance indicating that Valentinus' comrades decided to join the dedication later on<sup>488</sup>. Although it might be plausible that these *militēs* represented the whole fleet stationed in Ravenna, it is more probable that they were the soldiers who were serving under the command of Valentinus<sup>489</sup>. In fact, detachments from the praetorian fleet of Ravenna had their barracks in Trastevere (*castra Ravennatum*), not far from the Tiber Island where the inscription was found<sup>490</sup>. Their duties are not very well known, but the existence of both a specific camp and a cemetery reserved for these soldiers suggest that they had other functions beyond merely operating the *velarium* of the Flavian amphitheater and preparing the *naumachiae*<sup>491</sup>. They were probably also in charge of the monitoring of the river traffic on the Tiber, and, even more likely, they served in the small personal fleet of the emperors<sup>492</sup>. Valerius Valentinus and his soldiers would have been present either in Ravenna or in Rome when Severus came to Italy after the proclamation in Pannonia. Later, they could have served on the ships that at the beginning of the war against Niger

<sup>487</sup> Molisani 1971, 801, who compares this formula to that reported by CIL VI 814, which commemorates the erection of a temple: *in loco qui adsignatus erat per Flavium Sabinum operum publicorum curatorem.*

<sup>488</sup> Molisani 1971, 799.

<sup>489</sup> Molisani 1971, 799.

<sup>490</sup> On the location of these *castra* cf. Coarelli 1992; Giorgetti 1977, 223-247.

<sup>491</sup> Cf. Starr 1960, 20-21, 23-24. The soldiers from the fleet of Ravenna probably had the same duties as their colleagues from the fleet of Misenum, who occupied the *castra Misenatum* on the Oppian Hill.

<sup>492</sup> Molisani 1971, 800.

carried the imperial family and the army of Severus to the East. Both Valentinius' use of the formula *de s(uo) feci(t)* and the decision of his men to take part in the dedication might suggest that this act of devotion did not originate merely from a generic display of loyalty, but from a sincere attachment to the members of the imperial house. The name of Domna, which is reported in the third position after those of Severus and Caracalla, should consequently be interpreted as a confirmation of the importance that soldiers stationed in Rome attributed to her during the early reign of Severus.

Other inscriptions set up during 196 or shortly after record the new title of *mater castrorum* and, in some cases, *mater Caesaris*. The case of an inscription from Volubilis, the capital of Mauretania Tingitana, is worth particular mention. This is a slab that was discovered in the forum of the city, and its dimensions suggest that it was originally used for a public work of some importance:

*Imperatori Caesari divi Marci Antonini / Germanici Sarmatici filio, divi Commodi / fratri, divi Antonini Pii nepoti, divi Hadri/ani pronepoti, divi Traiani Parthici abne/poti, divi Nervae adnepot, / L. Septimio Severo Pio Pertinaci Aug(usto), Parthico / Arabico et Parthico Adiabenico, p(atri) p(atriae), pont(ifici) / max(im)o, trib(unicia) pot(estate) IIII, imp(eratori)VIII, co(n)s(uli) II, proconsuli / et M. Aurelio Antonino Caes(ari) / et Iuliae Domnae Aug(ustae), matri castrorum, / res publica Volubilitanorum ex de[creto] / ordinis posuit<sup>493</sup>.*

To the emperor Caesar son of the divine M. Antoninus Germanicus Sarmaticus, brother of the divine Commodus, nephew of the divine Antoninus Pius, great-grandson of the divine Hadrian, great-great-grandson of the divine Trajan, great-great-great grandson of the divine Nerva, L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, Parthian Arabian, and Parthian Adiabenic, father of the country, *pontifex maximus*, holding the fourth tribunician power, acclaimed emperor for eight times, consul for two times, proconsul, and to M. Aurelius Antoninus Caesar, and to **Julia Domna Augusta, mother of the camps**, the city of Volubilis [set up this monument] through a decree of the city council.

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<sup>493</sup> App. no. 5a. The slab measures 130 x 169 x 19 cm (Labory 2003, 247 no. 387). A picture of the monument can be found in Labory 2003 and Mastino 1987 (pl. IV).

Severus' fourth tribunician power and the title *mater castrorum* of Domna suggest a dating between April 14<sup>th</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup> of 196, i.e. during the months that preceded the decisive battle between Severus and Albinus (February 19<sup>th</sup>, 197). This is also the period in which the legate of Hispania Tarraconensis, L. Novius Rufus, joined the party of Albinus together with the only legion stationed in the Iberian peninsula, the VII Gemina<sup>494</sup>. It can be assumed that the other Spanish provinces, Hispania Baetica and Lusitania, also followed Rufus' decision to side with the governor Britain. The solidity of support provided to Albinus by the Spanish provinces is also demonstrated by the vast confiscations that followed the victory of Severus. After the battle of Lugdunum, in fact, Claudius Candidus was sent to Spain with the task of persecuting Albinus' supporters, and, in this period, almost the whole production of olive oil from these regions passed under the control of the state<sup>495</sup>. The African provinces, on the other hand, sided with Severus. The erection of a monument dedicated to him and his family in the capital of Mauretania Tingitana, which is located just in front of Baetica on the other side of the Pillars of Hercules, had therefore a great propagandist impact. Considering that Volubilis was also the seat of the procuratorial governor of the province, the inscription sounds a strong declaration of loyalty to the Severan household in opposition to what was happening on the other side of the strait. The mention of Domna acquires great significance against this backdrop. She was evidently perceived as an influential member of the imperial court. As in the case of Thugga, the fact that this is, so far, the only

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<sup>494</sup> On Novius Rufus cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> N 189.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. Birley 1999, 125-126. According to *Sev. 12.1, tum et Hispanorum et Gallorum proceres multi occisi sunt*. Among the *proceres* there were probably influential families from Baetica who owned important Spanish terracotta workshops (*figlinae*), such as the *figlina Cearia* and the *figlina Grumensis*. On the persecution of the Iberian elites and the nationalization of the production of olive oil in this area cf. Afonso 2007-2009, 361-376 with further references.

inscription in Volubilis that mentions an imperial woman along with the other male members of the household confirms this reconstruction<sup>496</sup>.

Other North African inscriptions set up during the same period report the same message. Two statue bases from Auzia and Banasa in Mauretania Caesarensis were dedicated to Domna as *mater Caesaris et castrorum*<sup>497</sup>. Although the lack of precise chronological references and other parallel monuments to Severus and Caracalla makes it impossible to assign these monuments to a precise year, it is however probable that these inscriptions were set up during the war against Albinus or shortly after, since Caracalla is still holding the rank of Caesar (he would become Augustus at the beginning of 198).

A statue base dedicated to Domna in Narbo, the capital of Gallia Narbonensis, seems to have been set up under more precisely datable circumstances:

*Iuliae Dom/nae Augustae, / imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L. Sep/timi Severi Pii Per/tinacis Aug(usti), Ara/bici, Adiabenici, / p(atris) p(atriae), p(ontificis) m(aximi), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IIII, / imp(eratoris) VIII, co(n)s(ul)is II, et / M. Aureli Antoni/ni Caes(aris) matri / itemque castrorum / decuman(i) Narb(onenses)*<sup>498</sup>.

The *decumani* Narboneses [dedicated this monument] to **Julia Domna Augusta**, [wife] of the emperor Caesar L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, Arabian, Adiabenic, father of the country, *pontifex maximus*, holding the fourth tribunician power, acclaimed emperor for eight times, two times consul, and **mother of the Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus and the camps**.

The titulatures in the dedication suggest the same date as the inscription from Volubilis. The mention of the *Decumani Narbonenses* as the dedicators of the statue indicates that the monument was set up by a decision of the city. The placement of a public statue to Domna, and, probably, two others to Severus and to Caracalla, also has particular

<sup>496</sup> Before Domna, Volubilis had already honored Faustina the Younger with two individual dedications (IAM II 2, 400 = AE 1936, 40 = AE 1937, 24; IAM II 2, 385). A private individual had also set up a statue for Salonia Matidia (CIL VIII 21824 = 21859 = ILM 60 = IAM II 2, 374).

<sup>497</sup> App. nos. 7b and 8b.

<sup>498</sup> App. no. 3a.

significance. The neighboring provinces of Hispania Tarraconensis and Gallia Lugdunensis had fallen under the control of Albinus, who had, however, failed to secure the control of all of Gaul. Bands of followers of Severus were, in fact, conducting guerilla-warfare against the troops of Albinus, and the territory of Gallia Narbonensis may have been one of their areas of operation<sup>499</sup>. The decision to dedicate one or more statues to honor the imperial family in the capital of the province had evidently a propagandist purpose. The erection of a statue to Domna, along with the mention of her being the mother of Caracalla, also stresses in this situation the fundamental importance of her role in establishing the new dynasty. Finally, it is worth noting that the dedicatory formula here is different to the *ex decreto ordinis* that appears on the inscription from Volubilis. The collective expression *Decumani Narbonenses* seems to denote particular attachment to the emperor, the Caesar, and the Augusta by the whole civic body, which was presumably expecting the arrival of the imperial court. In fact, the inscription was set up in 196 after the promotion of Caracalla to the caesarship (probably in April), and before the final clash with Albinus (February 197), a period during which the Severan troops were already marching to reach southern Gaul.

A statue base from Ardea, a coastal town c. 35 km southeast from Rome, can also be dated to a precise period:

*Iuliae / Aug(ustae), / matri / castrorum, / Imp(eratoris) L. Septimi Severi / Pii Pertinacis Aug(usti), / Arabici, Adiabenic(i), p(atris) p(atriae). / Q(uin)q(uennalitate) C. Vibi Felicis, IIvir(atu) / C. Volcei Magni, Q. Egrili / Ingenui. Cur(a) agentib(us) C. Luceio Felice, M. Mettio Modesto. // Dedic(ata) Id(ibus) Sept(emribus) / Dextro II Pris[co] co(n)s(ulibus)<sup>500</sup>.*

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<sup>499</sup> Dio 76 (75).5.1-3 relates the episode of a school teacher, Numerianus, who pretending to be a senator organized an armed resistance against Albinus' forces. Cf. Birley 1999, 123; Letta 1991, 660.

<sup>500</sup> App. no. 6a.

**To Julia Augusta, mother of the camps,** [wife] of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, Arabian, Adiabenic, father of the country. [This monument was set up] during the quinquennial office of C. Vibius Felix, and during the duovirate of C. Volceius Magnus and Q. Egrilius Ingenuus. C. Lucceius Felix and M. Mettius Modestus took care [of the realization of this monument]. // It was dedicated on the Ides of September during the consulship of Priscus and the second consulship of Dexter.

The dating formula is engraved on the right hand side of the base, and informs us that the monument was dedicated on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 196. This is the first documented statue base for an imperial woman in Ardea. The monument was probably set up in the *schola* of a *collegium*, as indicated by the mention of the *magister quinquennalis*<sup>501</sup>. Other parallel bases with inscriptions to Severus and Caracalla are not so far documented. The base was originally an ossuary, whose inscription was erased in order to inscribe the text in honor of Domna. This fact seems to indicate that the monument was set up in a rush, probably because of an unexpected event<sup>502</sup>. In this regard, the dating could provide some interesting elements to help determine the reason. It is well known that, after visiting Carnuntum, Severus did not travel immediately to Gaul, but took a detour to visit Rome. A number of rescripts issued in the capital show that he certainly stayed in Rome from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 29<sup>th</sup> of 196, but he could have already been there on September 18<sup>th</sup>, when he dedicated a monument to celebrate the centenary of Nerva's accession<sup>503</sup>. The imminent arrival of Severus may have been the cause for the placement of a monument to Domna in the *schola* of Ardea. It is probable that, in this period, many Italian cities sent delegations to meet the imperial family on the way to Rome, or in the

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<sup>501</sup> Granino Cecere 2012, 270.

<sup>502</sup> The reuse of a previous monument to obtain an imperial statue base appears to be a very rare circumstance, which mostly affects either materials from a remote past (such as Hellenistic monuments) or statue bases dedicated to emperors who had incurred the *damnatio memoriae*. The reuse of a funerary monument represents, to my knowledge, a completely exceptional case. On the topic cf. Højte 2005, 56-64, in particular pp. 62-63.

<sup>503</sup> Cf. Birley 1999, 123; Letta 1991, 661. The inscription with the dedication to Nerva is CIL VI 954 = 31214.

capital itself. On this occasion, they could meet not only Severus, but also Domna. Another possibility is that the Augusta passed by Ardea while travelling to a seaside destination, as for example Baiae, where properties belonging to Severus and his successors are documented<sup>504</sup>. In either case, it is likely that the authorities of Ardea had some direct contact with the imperial court and its ceremonials.

Another important trace of the presence of Domna could be the mention of her name in an inscription from Lugdunum:

*[Pro] salute Imp(eratoris) L. Septimi / [Seve]ri Pii Pertinacis Aug(usti) / [et] M. Aureli Antonini Caes(aris), / Imp(eratoris) destinati, et / **Iuliae Aug(ustae)**, matris castror(um), / totiusque domus divinae / eorum et statu (!) c(oloniae) C(opiae) C(laudiae) Aug(ustae) Lug(uduni) / taurobolium fecerunt / Septicia Valeriana et / Optatia Siora ex voto, / praeeunte Aelio Antho, sa/cerdote, sacerdotia Aemi/lia Secundilla, tibicine Fl(avio) Restituto, apparatore Vire/yo Hermetione. / Inchoatum est sacrum IIII / Nonas Maias, consumma/tum Nonis eisdem / T. Sex(tio) Laterano, L. Cuspio / Ru/ffino co(n)s(ulibus). / L(ocus) d(atus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)<sup>505</sup>.*

For the safety of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, M. Aurelius Antoninus Caesar, Emperor-elect, and **Julia Augusta, mother of the camps** and their entire divine house, and for the welfare of the colony Copia Claudia Augusta Lugdunum, Septicia Valeriana and Optatia Siora celebrated a *taurobolium* to fulfill a vow. The priest Aelius Anthus dictated [the formulas] when the priestess was Aemilia Secundilla, the flute player was Flavius Restitutus, and the official in the sacrifice was Vireius Hermetio. The sacrifice started at the fourth day before the Nones of May and was completed on the Nones of the same [month] during the consulate of T. Sextius Lateranus and L. Cuspius Rufinus. The place was granted by decree of the decurions.

The sacrifice took place between the fourth and the seventh of May of 197, i.e. more or less two months after the battle near Lugdunum in which Albinus was defeated and killed. *Taurobolia* for the safety of the rulers were already an established custom in this

<sup>504</sup> Several *fistulae aquariae* with names of Severus, Caracalla, and Severus Alexander are documented in this area (AE 1997, 299-308). Cf. Parma 1997, 115-125. Nasti 1997, 127 observes that the name of Severus reported as *Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) L. Septimi Severi Pertinac(is) Aug(usti) n(ostr)i*, that is, without the title *Pius* that was assumed in September 194 or shortly before, could indicate that the imperial palaces in *Baiae* underwent some works of restoration between 193 and the end of 194. It is also interesting to note that, according to Herodian (3.13.1), after the fall of Plautianus (January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 205) Severus and his family started to spend more time in the imperial villas around Rome and on the coast of Campania.

<sup>505</sup> App. no. 10a.

city, but Domna is the first imperial woman to be mentioned in these dedications. The epigraphic record, in fact, attests to similar ceremonies celebrated for the safety of Antoninus Pius, Commodus, and the pair Severus-Albinus<sup>506</sup>. It is impossible to determine whether at the time of the sacrifice the imperial family was still in Lugdunum or already on the way to reach Syria, where Severus' second Parthian campaign was in preparation. The fact that this display of loyalty was meant to achieve the favor of the imperial government seems to be, nevertheless, quite evident. Lugdunum was punished for having sided with Albinus<sup>507</sup>, and confiscations against his supporters were still going on<sup>508</sup>. The mention of Domna in the dedication *pro salute* can consequently be interpreted as an implicit recognition of her influence at court, a fact that had probably been noted while the imperial court was staying in Lugdunum in the aftermath of the battle against Albinus.

Honors paid to Domna by communities from territories where extensive confiscations were taking place are not limited to Gaul. For example, a considerable zeal is detectable in the African provinces in setting up statues dedicated to the Augusta. After the defeat of Albinus a special *procurator ad bona cogenda in Africa* was appointed with the purpose of confiscating the properties of those that had favored his cause<sup>509</sup>. Interestingly enough, with the single exception of the aforementioned inscription from Lugdunum, almost all the other dedications to Domna dating to 197 are documented in

<sup>506</sup> CIL XIII 1751, 1752 (= AE 2007, 948), 1753, respectively.

<sup>507</sup> Hdn. 3.7.7.

<sup>508</sup> Persecutions against Albinus' supporters in Gaul: Hdn. 3.8.2; Alb. 12.3-4; Sev. 12.1. After the extensive confiscations of land ordered by Severus, the production of terra sigillata in Gaul came to an end. Cf. Letta 1991, 661.

<sup>509</sup> The *procurator* is T. Claudius Xenophon (Pflaum, *carrières* no. 222). The procuratorship *ad bona cogenda* is documented by CIL III 6575 = 7127. Cf. Birley 1999, 126; Duncan-Jones 1998, 6.

Africa Proconsularis and Numidia. During this period, the *ordines decurionum* from cities of considerable size such as Castellum Tidditanorum, Sigus and Uchi Maius decreed statues to Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>510</sup>. It is also important to remember the abovementioned statue bases from Auzia and Banasa in Mauretania Caesarensis, which relate the title *mater Caesaris*<sup>511</sup>. The number of these places is slightly superior to that of the cities where statues dedicated only to Severus are documented during the same period, i.e. Leptis Magna (Africa Proconsularis), Sila (Numidia), and Cissi (Mauretania Caesarensis)<sup>512</sup>. The aim of these dedications was evidently to congratulate the emperor, his son and his wife on the victory over their rivals. However, some communities may have wanted to secure the benevolence of Severus in order to avoid confiscations, and it seems no accident that a considerable number of dedications to Domna are documented too.

### III.4.3. Overall remarks

Inscriptions reporting the name of Domna during the period 193-197 provide interesting elements for understanding the prominence that she enjoyed at the dawn of Severus' reign. Starting from 195 - one year before the acquisition of the title *mater castrorum* - her name already appears on the façade of a temple in Thugga together with those of Severus and Albinus, something that is quite unusual for imperial women in this province. At the same time, in the capital of Sicily, Panhormus, she is awarded a statue together with Severus, who had been proconsul of Sicily some years before. After the

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<sup>510</sup> App. nos. 8a, 11a, 12a, respectively. From Sigus and Castellum Tidditanorum statue bases to Severus are not documented. Their presence, however, seems reasonably certain.

<sup>511</sup> App. nos. 7b and 8b.

<sup>512</sup> IRT 387; AE 1969, 697 = ILAlg II 2, 6868a; AE 1974, 944 = AE 1985, 895, respectively.

definitive break between Severus and Albinus, she is mentioned - either alone or together with other members of the family - in an inscription *pro salute* set up by a group of soldiers in Rome, on an honorary monument located in the capital of Mauretania Tingitana, and on a statue base in the capital of Gallia Narbonensis. All these inscriptions prove that her person was held in high regard by populations from the western provinces, especially in those places that were closer to the central administration, such as Rome and the provincial capitals. Furthermore, there are traces of special honors paid to her in places that she had visited, such as Lugdunum and, perhaps, Ardea. This town is, in any case, close to Rome, where Domna was staying when the monument was dedicated. Finally, the zeal with which North African communities honored the Augusta during the critical years of the civil wars and their immediate aftermath deserves a special mention. It seems no accident that previous imperial women never attained such a great visibility in North Africa. In only four years, Domna appears on at least nine North African inscriptions. This is far more than Bruttia Crispina (three inscriptions)<sup>513</sup> and Lucilla (four inscriptions)<sup>514</sup>, respectively wife and sister of Commodus, an emperor who had enjoyed immense popularity in the African provinces. Faustina the Younger, on the other hand, is honored 11 times<sup>515</sup>. However, this number applies to the 15 years during which she had been the Augusta at the side of Marcus Aurelius (from 161 to 175 or 176). Finally, Vibia Sabina, who had travelled through North Africa together with Hadrian, is

<sup>513</sup> CIL VIII 16530 = ILAlg I 3032 (Theveste); CIL VIII 22689 = IRT 2 = AE 1903, 355 = AE 1998, 1518 (Sabratha); CIL VIII 2366 (Thamugadi).

<sup>514</sup> AE 1913, 26 (Althiburos); AE 1978, 840 (Belalis Maior); IRT 25c = AE 1989, 773 (Sabratha); Uchi Maius (AE 1997, 1666).

<sup>515</sup> CIL VIII 5525 = ILAlg II 2, 4660 (Thibilis); CIL VIII 11323; ILAfr 128 (Sufetula); CIL VIII 12289 (Bisica Lucana), 14427 (Gasr Mezuar), 26252 (Uchi Maius), 26532 (Thugga); AE 2006, 1804 (Diana Veteranorum); IAM II 2, 385 and 400 (Volubilis); IRT 19 (Sabratha). The count does not include posthumous honors (AE 1954, 152 from Thamugadi).

mentioned five times<sup>516</sup>. Considering Severus' Libyan origin, it seems somehow logical that African cities were very fond of this emperor. Yet the numerous honors paid to Domna reveal that she had obtained an unprecedented prominence in public life.

### III.5. CONCLUSIONS

The information reported by the *HA* regarding Domna's pressure on Severus to break with Albinus does not rely only on the use of good sources, but seems also to find confirmation in the political context of the years 193-197 and in what coins and inscriptions say about her. Regarding the sources of the *HA*, the passage relating to the agency of Domna is placed in the context of quotations from a real source, viz. Marius Maximus. This re-elaborated what Severus himself had written in his autobiography when talking about his plans to designate Albinus as successor. If the emperor had perished, Caracalla and Geta would have been too young to succeed him. Admittedly, Severus might have mentioned his decision to appoint Albinus as successor with the purpose of concealing his true intentions. The bestowal of the rank of Caesar to this general could have been, in this case, only a temporary expedient to prevent him from challenging Severus while the latter was fighting Niger in the East. However, the examination of the most relevant events that occurred during the years of the civil wars shows that Severus' justifications are somehow acceptable: his children were only five and four years old; there is some evidence to believe that, at that time, his health was already getting worse; the possibility of perishing - either during the war against Niger or in a conspiracy - was real. His decision to award Albinus the rank of Caesar along with

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<sup>516</sup> CIL VIII 12458 (Maxula); CIL VIII 5697 = ILAlg II 2, 6508 (Sigus); AE 1951, 43 (Mactaris). Inscriptions to the Diva Sabina, which are not included in the count, are documented in Thamugadi (CIL VIII 17847) and Saldae (CIL VIII 8929).

the right to succeed to him could, therefore, be fully justified in the light of the political and military circumstances of 193. The defeat of Niger (spring of 194) likely provided Albinus with a good reason to demand promotion to Augustus. But this claim was a serious threat to Domna. The analysis of the numismatic, epigraphic and artistic evidence demonstrates that, during the early years of Severus' rule, she was already enjoying extraordinary influence and prestige, a circumstance that was clearly perceived by her contemporaries who honored her through coins, inscriptions and artworks. Yet this particular position depended on her relations with the male members of the imperial household. Severus was indeed the founder of the new dynasty, but he was much older than her and, possibly, already afflicted by health problems. Domna was, nonetheless, the mother of a future emperor, Caracalla, who bore the name of her father, Bassianus. Thus, Caracalla was destined to represent the continuity of Domna's lineage. It is therefore no coincidence that her role as mother of legitimate heirs to the throne was greatly emphasized on her coinage through the Venus Genetrix and Fecunditas types. The representation of Domna as Fecunditas sitting on a throne with a child in her lap (Geta) and another standing in front of her (Caracalla) seems a strong allusion to her dynastic ambitions. The appearance of these representations recurs during the first two years of Severus' rule, when the alliance with Albinus was still solid. The governor of Britain was a greater threat for Domna than for Severus. If, for one reason or another, Severus had died, the power would have been automatically transmitted to Albinus, thus annihilating the royal ambitions of the Augusta, who would have been forced to retire to private life or, even worse, she could have been slain together with her children. Conversely, immediately after the battle of Lugdunum, both the wife and the children of Albinus were

killed and thrown into the Rhone<sup>517</sup>. Niger's family, which had been initially spared after Severus' victory in the East, shared the same fate<sup>518</sup>. In short, the examination of her coins, the epigraphic record and the Kassel Cameo provides a picture that well matches that reported by the *HA*. Domna appears as an influential imperial woman, determined to assert her prerogatives, claiming at the same time an important and visible place in the new regime.

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<sup>517</sup> *Sev.* 11.9.

<sup>518</sup> *Nig.* 6.1-2.

## Chapter IVa

### *From the end of the civil wars to the death of Septimius Severus: the literary and epigraphic evidence*

After having examined how Domna influenced the first years of Severus' rule, I will now turn to the years from 197 to 211, i.e. to the rest of the reign of this emperor. The analysis of the literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic sources mentioning Domna during this period represent a fundamental step in understanding her agency at court and the role she played in public life. Given the great quantity of documentation concerning this period, this chapter is divided into two parts. The first section (chapter IVa) deals with the literary and epigraphic evidence. The second section (chapter IVb) examines the numismatic and artistic sources. Starting from the years following the second Parthian campaign of Severus (197-198), Domna's presence grows significantly in literary accounts and inscriptions. In the next paragraphs, I will argue that this increase in quantity - and in quality - of the documentation regarding Domna cannot be attributed only to the dynastic propaganda of the Severan regime. Rather, on the contrary, a detailed analysis of each type of source will reveal that the last years of Severus witnessed the affirmation of the strong personality of Domna, who successfully fought against her enemies and continued to enjoy great prominence until the last days of Severus.

#### **IVa.1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

From the death of Albinus (February 9<sup>th</sup>, 197) to the death of Severus (February 11<sup>th</sup>, 211) numerous events affected the life of Domna, who continued to follow Severus on his many travels through the empire. Soon after the defeat of Albinus, Severus and his

family returned to Italy<sup>519</sup>. Here the emperor had already started to enlist three new legions named *Parthicae* in preparation for a new campaign beyond the Euphrates, where the Parthians had invaded the new province of Osroene<sup>520</sup>. After a brief stop in Rome, the imperial court reached Syria around the late summer of 197<sup>521</sup>. The second Parthian campaign of Severus proved successful within a few months, since the Parthian capital, Ctesiphon, was taken and plundered by the end of January 198, and Severus celebrated the victory on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month<sup>522</sup>. On this symbolic occasion, which corresponded to the hundredth anniversary of Trajan's *victoria Parthica*, Severus bestowed the title of Augustus on Caracalla and that of Caesar on Geta<sup>523</sup>. Between February 198 and autumn of the same year, after retreating from Ctesiphon, Severus remained in the Syrian-Mesopotamian area to organize the new province of Mesopotamia, also making two unsuccessful attempts to take the caravan city of Hatra<sup>524</sup>. After the conclusion of these operations and a further stay in Syria until the summer of 199, the imperial family embarked on a journey through Palestine, Arabia and Egypt that lasted until the end of 200<sup>525</sup>. This is probably the time when the influence of Domna's archenemy, C. Fulvius Plautianus, the powerful prefect of the guard from Leptis Magna who was also kinsman of Severus, became particularly evident. After the arrival in Egypt

<sup>519</sup> Halfmann 1986, 217.

<sup>520</sup> Dio 76 (75).9.1. On these events cf. Birley 1999, 129-131; Letta 1991, 663. On the date of constitution of the Parthian legions cf. in particular Ferdinandi 2010, 199-202 with further references.

<sup>521</sup> Halfmann 1986, 217.

<sup>522</sup> The *Feriale Duranum* (1.14-1.16) reports the exact dating. Cf. Birley 1999, 130; Letta 1991, 664; Guey 1948, 60-70.

<sup>523</sup> Cf. Birley 1999, 130; Letta 1991, 664; Mastino 1981, 31.

<sup>524</sup> Dio 75 (76).10.1-12.5. Hdn. 3.9.3-7 reports only one siege of Hatra, but confuses and mixes Severus' two Parthian campaigns. Cf. Birley 1999, 130-131; Letta 1991, 664.

<sup>525</sup> Birley 1999, 133-139; Letta 1991, 666-667; Halfmann 1986, 220-221.

(November-December 199)<sup>526</sup>, Severus appointed the equestrian governor in charge of this province, Q. Aemilius Saturninus, as co-prefect with Plautianus. Dio relates that Plautianus managed to have Saturninus killed, and Severus' response to a petition dated to March 16<sup>th</sup>, 200 mentions Plautianus as sole prefect<sup>527</sup>. Later, after having spent another year in Syria (end of 200-beginning of 201), the imperial family made its way to Rome travelling through Asia Minor and the Danubian provinces<sup>528</sup>.

Once in the capital, on April 9<sup>th</sup> 202 Severus celebrated his *decennalia*, the Parthian victories, and the marriage between Caracalla and Plautilla, the daughter of Plautianus, who thus reached the apex of his prestige and influence<sup>529</sup>. Between the end of 202 and the beginning of 203, the imperial court visited Numidia and Africa Proconsularis, where Severus and Caracalla attended military operations aimed at enforcing the southern *limes*<sup>530</sup>. On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 203, however, Severus and his family were in Rome again<sup>531</sup>.

<sup>526</sup> Halfmann 1986, 217-218.

<sup>527</sup> Dio 76 (75).14.2. On the topic cf. Letta 1991, 667. Plautianus had been the sole prefect of the Guard starting at least from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 197. It is also interesting to note that Plautianus' title *necessarius dominorum nn. Augg.* becomes in common use on inscriptions during the period 199/200. On the topic cf. Caldelli 2011, 261-272 with further bibliography. The rivalry between Domna and Plautinaus will be examined *infra*.

<sup>528</sup> Halfmann 1986, 218.

<sup>529</sup> Dio 77 (76).1.2-3. Cf. Birley 1999, 144; Letta 1991, 668. On the celebration of the *decennalia* cf. in particular Chastagnol 1984, 117-118.

<sup>530</sup> Levick 2007, 51-52; Birley 1999, 146-154; Letta 1991, 669-670; Halfmann 1986, 218.

<sup>531</sup> A passage from Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* (2.20.2 [= # 601]) attests to the presence of Severus in North Africa at some point during his reign. The *HA* (*Sev.* 18.3) and Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 20.19) mention Severus campaigning in the region of Tripoli. The exact dating of the trip, however, is still a matter of dispute. Scholars are generally in favor of a date around 203 (Sears 2013, 202; Frakes 2007, 54-55; Spielvogel 2006, 140-150; Guédon 2006, 715-718; Daguet-Gagey 2000, 368; Birley 1999, 146-154; Letta 1991, 668-669; Grosso 1968b, 40-43), though some prefer a later chronology around 207 (Rowan 2012, 77-84; Kotula 1985, 151-165). In my opinion, the earlier dating is preferable. As observed by Grosso and Letta, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 203, the *equites singulares* set up a dedication in Rome *ob red(itum) ab exped(itione) felic(issima)* (Speidel 1994, 83-84 no. 58). This implies that on those days the emperors had returned to Rome. It seems improbable that the reference is to the return from the Parthian campaign, since, as seen

A year later, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 204, they presided over the secular games (*ludi saeculares*)<sup>532</sup>. It is possible that on this occasion the favor enjoyed by Plautianus had already started to decline. In fact, both his name and numerous titles (*comes Augustorum., sacer et consacer Augustorum., necessarius dominorum nostrorum*) are not mentioned in the *acta* of the *ludi*<sup>533</sup>. The definitive fall, in any case, took place only a few months later, on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 205, when Caracalla assassinated him (an event that, according to Dio, filled Domna with joy), and banished Plautilla to Lipari<sup>534</sup>.

The years following the assassination of Plautianus are relatively deficient in salient events for this study. The only exceptions are Severus' Britannic campaigns, which occupied the last years of his reign. The imperial family set off for Britain during the first months of 208<sup>535</sup>. At some time between 209 and 210 Geta was awarded the title Augustus, thus becoming equal to Caracalla<sup>536</sup>. But while the latter and Severus were campaigning in Scotland, he sojourned in *Eboracum* (York) together with Domna<sup>537</sup>. In 210, another campaign was led by Caracalla alone, since the precarious health conditions

above, the imperial court was already in Rome when Severus' *decennalia* were celebrated on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 202. Moreover, in Leptis Magna, a centurion from an unspecified legion put up an inscription *pro victoria et reditu* of the emperors and Plautianus on April 11<sup>th</sup> (IRT 292 = AE 1953, 189 = AE 1968, 8), thus alluding to the fact that military operations were still underway.

<sup>532</sup> Halfmann 1986, 219.

<sup>533</sup> Daguet-Gagey 2005; Grossi 1958b, 50-51. According to Dio 77 (76).2.4-5, when on his deathbed, Severus' brother Geta reported to the emperor all the crimes of Plautianus. This confession persuaded Severus to remove many of the privileges that the prefect of the Guard had until that moment enjoyed. Therefore, the death of Geta should be placed around the beginning of 204. Cf. Letta 1991, 670. On the titles of Plautianus cf. Caldelli 2011, 261-262 with further references.

<sup>534</sup> Dio 77 (76).4.4. On Domna's possible involvement in the plot against Plautianus see *infra*.

<sup>535</sup> Halfmann 1986, 219. On the Britannic campaign of Severus cf. Birley 1999, 170-187.

<sup>536</sup> Kienast 1996, 166. Cf. also Mastino 1981, 37, who maintains the promotion to Augustus within 209, possibly during the period September-October.

<sup>537</sup> Hdn. 3.14.9 and 15.6.

of Severus (at that time he was sixty five years old) forced him to stay south of Hadrian's Wall<sup>538</sup>. The old emperor died in *Eboracum* on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 211<sup>539</sup>.

#### IVa.2. LITERARY SOURCES

As noted above, during the reign of Severus, literary references to Domna become more common, a circumstance that allows us to better contextualize her agency within the historical events outlined above in section IVa.1. Domna appears not only in several passages from Dio's *History*, but also in the *HA*<sup>540</sup>. Thanks to this information, it is possible to connect the Augusta to other events that are narrated in these works, and, in particular, to connect her to the rise and fall of one of the most famous individuals who lived at the Severan court, the powerful Prefect of the Guard, C. Fulvius Plautianus<sup>541</sup>. The most substantial mention of Domna, in fact, is in a famous passage by Dio, which describes the rivalry between her and Plautianus:

Καὶ οὕτω καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα ὁ Πλαυτιανὸς αὐτοῦ κατεκράτει ὥστε καὶ τὴν Ἰουλίαν τὴν Αὔγουσταν πολλὰ καὶ δεινὰ ἐργάσασθαι. Πάνυ γάρ αὐτῇ ἤχθετο, καὶ σφόδρα αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Σεουῆρον ἀεὶ διέβαλλεν, ἔξετάσεις τε κατ' αὐτῆς καὶ βασάνους κατ' εὐγενῶν γυναικῶν ποιούμενος. Καὶ ἡ μὲν αὐτή τε φιλοσοφεῖν διὰ ταῦτ' ἤρξατο καὶ σοφισταῖς συνημέρευεν<sup>542</sup>.

So greatly did Plautianus have the mastery in every way over the emperor, that he often treated even Julia Augusta in an outrageous manner. He heartily detested her and was always abusing her violently to Severus. He used to conduct investigations into her conduct as well as gathering evidence against her by inquiring amongst women of the

<sup>538</sup> Hdn. 3.15.1.

<sup>539</sup> Dio 77 (76) 15.2; Sev. 19.1.

<sup>540</sup> Cf. above, a table with the literary quotations is reported in section I.1.

<sup>541</sup> The most exhaustive and documented study on Plautianus (PIR<sup>2</sup> F 554) are González Fernández and Conesa Navarro 2014 and Grossi 1968b. Cf. also Caldelli 2011, 261 (with further bibliography in n. 2), who published a study on Plautianus' titulature. Brief synopses on his life and career can be also found in Levick 2007, 74-75 and Birley 1999, 221 no. 32.

<sup>542</sup> Dio 76 (75).15.6-7.

nobility<sup>543</sup>. For this reason she began to study philosophy and passed her days in company with sophists.

Dio also stresses the consequences of Plautianus' hostility towards Domna immediately after narrating the death of the latter at the end of the reign of Caracalla, observing that 'during her husband's reign she had lived in great unhappiness because of Plautianus'<sup>544</sup>.

Plautianus is certainly a key figure in the reign of Severus. Like the emperor, he was from Leptis Magna and, presumably, a relative of Severus on his mother's side<sup>545</sup>. His early (equestrian) career remains largely unknown<sup>546</sup>, but he became a close collaborator of Severus at the very beginning of the latter's rule. It was Plautianus who captured the family of Niger after the beginning of the civil war in 193<sup>547</sup>, and in 195 he was *praefectus vigilum*<sup>548</sup>. In 197, he became sole Prefect of the Guard, playing an important role in persecuting the supporters of Niger who had survived the civil war of 193-194 in the East<sup>549</sup>. During the same year, Plautianus received the *ornamenta*

<sup>543</sup> Following a suggestion by Peter Toohey, I preferred to translate the expression βασάνους ... ποιεῖν with 'inquiring' rather than 'torturing', which appears in Ernest Cary's translation published by the LOEB. In my view, crediting Plautianus with the power of torturing women from the high society of Rome does not sound very plausible.

<sup>544</sup> Dio 79 (78).24.1: (...) καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἡγεμονίᾳ περιαλγῶς πάνυ διὰ τὸν Πλαυτιανὸν ζῆσασα (...).

<sup>545</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> F 554. According to Herodian (3.10.6), Plautianus was a relative of Severus. His *gentilicium*, Fulvius, connects him to the family of Fulvia Pia, Severus' mother. Cf. also González Fernández and Conesa Navarro 2014, 29-30; Birely 1999, 232 no. 32; Grosso 1968b, 7.

<sup>546</sup> He was probably *procurator* in Africa Proconsularis when this province was governed by Pertinax (i.e. during 188-189), who punished him on account of his rapacity and licentiousness (*Exc. Val.* 334; *Hdn.* 3.10.6). Cf. Grosso 1968b, 9-11.

<sup>547</sup> *Sev.* 6.10; *Nig.* 5.2.

<sup>548</sup> As reported by CIL XIV 4380 = AE 1968, 8a. Cf. Christol 2007, 217-218; Sablayrolles 1996, 493-495 no. 21; Grosso 1968b, 13-17.

<sup>549</sup> Persecutions of opponents: *Sev.* 15.4. According to a dedication by the *equites singulares* (CIL VI 224), he was the sole Prefect of the Guard on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 197. The name of Plautianus is erased, but Grosso 1968b, 17-20 reconstructed his name and titles as *[[et C. Fulvi Plaut(iani) pr(aefecti) pr(aetorio)]]*. This restoration, however, has not been accepted by other scholars (Christol 2007, 219; Speidel 1994, 77 no. 54). A recent autopsy of the inscription by Maria Letizia Caldelli (2011, 262) has nevertheless confirmed Grosso's interpretation. Cf. also González Fernández and Conesa Navarro 2014, 31.

*consularia*, thus becoming *clarissimus vir*<sup>550</sup>. He even became consul, and in 203 he held the ordinary consulate together with P. Septimius Geta, Severus' brother<sup>551</sup>. Severus bestowed numerous unprecedented titles on him, such as ‘*necessarius* to the Augusti’ (*necessarius Augg.*) and ‘*comes* in all their expeditions’ (*comes per omnes expeditiones eorum*)<sup>552</sup>. Dio dedicates considerable space in narrating the enormous power Plautianus accumulated, saying that he was often called ‘the fourth Caesar’<sup>553</sup>. In my view, his hatred for Domna reveals at least two facts: *a) Domna was strongly hostile to him; b) she was evidently hampering Plautinaus’ plans and curbing his ambitions.*

Scholars have often interpreted the information about Domna and the philosophers as a demonstration that she was forced to retire to a private life of seclusion and study on account of Plautianus’ attacks<sup>554</sup>. Unfortunately, Dio does not say anything about the reasons behind the enmity between the Augusta and the Prefect of the Guard. Yet the fact that Plautianus attempted to discredit Domna in the eyes of Severus (σφόδρα αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Σεουῆπον ἀεὶ διέβαλλεν) seems to find some confirmation in other sources. Aurelius Victor (followed almost verbatim by the *HA*’s *vita Severi*) briefly relates that, despite Domna’s (alleged) adulterous behavior (*libido*) and treacherous plans (*coniuratio*), Severus refused to repudiate her<sup>555</sup>. As observed by Robert Penella, these

<sup>550</sup> CIL VI 224. Cf. previous note. *Ornamenta consularia*: Dio 46.46.4.

<sup>551</sup> Degrassi 1952, 57.

<sup>552</sup> On Plautinaus’ titles cf. Caldelli 2011. On Plautianus as *comes* of Severus cf. the detailed discussion in Corbier 1974.

<sup>553</sup> Dio 76 (75).14.1-16.1. Plautianus as ‘fourth Caesar’: 76 (75).15.2<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>554</sup> Cf. Levick 2007, 116, who adopts a view expressed by Bowersock 1969, 103. Cf. also Birley 1999, 141, 168; Gross 1968b, 35.

<sup>555</sup> AVR. VICT. Caes. 20.23: *Huic tanto domi forisque uxoris probra summam gloriae dempsere, quam adeo famose complexus est, uti cognita libidine ac ream coniurationis retentaverit.* (‘He [i.e. Severus] failed to attain the greatest glory in both public and private affairs because of the wicked actions of his wife, to whom he was so scandalously attached that he kept her after being informed of her adulteries and treacherous plans.’). Sev. 18.8: *Domi tamen minus cautus, qui uxorem Iuliam famosam adulteris tenuit, ream etiam coniurationis* (‘He [i.e. Severus] was less

accusations were probably the result of Plautianus' efforts to persuade Severus to get rid of his wife. This resulted in negative propaganda that was later handed down in the sources used by Aurelius Victor<sup>556</sup>. With regard to adultery, no other sources report this accusation, which is, after all, a quite common cliché used against the reputation of many other imperial women<sup>557</sup>. The charges of conspiracy, on the other hand, sound more unusual, and they may be related to facts that really happened. In truth, neither the account of Dio nor the concise remarks related by Victor and the *HA* can be of any help in contextualizing this information<sup>558</sup>. Dio's anecdote seems to have been placed in the narration with the purpose of emphasizing Plautianus' cruelty<sup>559</sup>, while Victor mentions Domna's conspiracy in a simple list of events that took place during the reign of Severus<sup>560</sup>. Notwithstanding the silence of the sources, I believe that a few other facts related by Dio, Herodian and the *HA* can cast some light on the accusations of treachery that Plautianus may have brought against Domna.

careful in his home-life, for he retained his wife Julia even though she was notorious for her adulteries and also guilty of plotting against him.'). On the connection between the work of Victor and the *vita Severi*, see section. I.1.5 above.

<sup>556</sup> Penella 1980, 382. Cf. also Birley 1999, 168; Ghedini 1984, 9-10; Kettenhofen 1979, 60. Rubin 1980, 174 hypothesizes that the charge of treason might be related to *Alb.* 3.5, which attributes to Domna the main responsibility for the outbreak of the war between Severus and Albinus. On the topic cf. sections III.1.1-2 above. As stressed by Ghedini 1984, 9, tendentious rumors about the Prefect of the Guard were presumably circulating as well, as for example the alleged sexual relationship between Plautianus and Severus during their boyhood in North Africa (Hdn. 3.10.6).

<sup>557</sup> Levick 2007, 76. Scholars have already stressed that accusations of sexual misconduct are a very popular topic in the accounts of Roman historians. Among the most famous cases, it is important to mention Julia the Elder, Valeria Messalina (Hidalgo de la Vega 2007a), and Faustina the Younger (Levick 2014, 80-82). In general see also Hidalgo de la Vega 2007b.

<sup>558</sup> Dio's narration of the hatred of Plautianus for Domna is included in a series of anecdotes that constitutes a long digression (76 [75].14.1-16.5) on the excesses of the Prefect of the Guard.

<sup>559</sup> According to Dio 76 (75).15.7, while the Augusta was spending her days studying philosophy, Plautianus was devouring huge quantities of food and wine, and indulging in sex with young boys and girls. On this topic cf. Mallan 2013, especially pp. 738-743.

<sup>560</sup> i.e. Severus' interest for erudition and appreciable writing skills (*Caes.* 20.22), and the arthritis (*Caes.* 20.25) that was troubling him.

#### IVa.2.1. The stay in the East

In her recent book on the use of Domna's maternal role by the Severan propaganda, Julie Langford has drawn attention to a passage where Dio describes Severus' first attempt to seize the caravan city of Hatra, an event that took place during the second Parthian campaign in 197. According to Dio, after the Roman troops had unsuccessfully assaulted the city many times, an embittered praetorian tribune expressed his thoughts by paraphrasing some verses from the *Aeneid*: 'in order that Turnus may marry Lavinia, we are meanwhile perishing all unheeded'<sup>561</sup>. Langford has maintained that the mention of the name Lavinia, which does not appear in the original Virgilian text, might be an allusion to the figure of Domna. Moreover, such a quotation coming from an officer of the praetorians may attest to the hostility that the Praetorian Guard, under the command of Plautianus, felt for the influential Augusta<sup>562</sup>. It is true, however, that in the text of Dio the word Λαουνίαν replaces *regia coniunx* in *Aen.* 11.371. The name of the Latin princess, therefore, is simply used to abbreviate a passage that was not cited word by word. Also, the complicated game of sarcastic analogies that, according to Langford, could constitute a parallel between the figures of Domna and Lavinia, although intriguing, remains difficult to prove<sup>563</sup>. The tribune's quote could, consequently, be interpreted as an elegant way of referring to a situation in which numerous soldiers perish for the caprices of the commander rather than a criticism of the Augusta. Another episode, Severus' second siege of Hatra, could, nevertheless, contain some interesting

<sup>561</sup> Dio 76 (75).10.2: “Ινα δη τὴν Λαουνίαν ὁ Τοῦρνος ἀγάγηται, ἡμεῖς ἐν οὐδενὶ λόγῳ παραπολλύμεθα”.

<sup>562</sup> Langford 2013, 42-44. Cf. also Langford 2008, 125-150. The Virgilian text is *Aen.* 11.371-373: *scilicet ut Turno contingat regia coniunx, / nos animae viles, inhumata infletaque turba, / sternamur campis.* ('In order that a royal bride may marry Turnus, / we, vile animals, unburied and unlamented mass, lay stranded in the fields').

<sup>563</sup> Cf. Emily Hemelrijk's review of Langford 2014 in *CW* 2014-2015, 108.1, 143.

elements that hint at the intervention of Domna. According to Dio, after the failure of the first siege (February-March 198), Severus made another attempt during the autumn of the same year. Despite massive preparations, involving the storage of a great quantity of food and the construction of many siege engines, the operations were once again unsuccessful. Moreover, the emperor even had to face a revolt among his troops:

Πεσόντος δέ πη τοῦ ἔξωθεν περιβόλου, καὶ τῶν στρατιωτῶν πάντων προθυμουμένων ἐς τὸν λοιπὸν ἐσβιάσασθαι, ἐκώλυσεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Σεουῆρος τοῦτο πρᾶξαι, τορῶς πανταχόθεν τὸ ἀνακλητικὸν σημανθῆναι κελεύσας: δόξα τε γὰρ τοῦ χωρίου ὡς καὶ πάμπολλα τὰ τε ἄλλα χρήματα καὶ τὰ τοῦ Ἡλίου ἀναθήματα ἔχοντος μεγάλη ἦν, καὶ προσεδόκησεν ἐθελοντὶ τοὺς Ἀραβίους, ἵνα μὴ βίᾳ ἀλόντες ἀνδραποδισθῶσιν ὄμοιογήσειν. Μίαν γοῦν διαλιπὼν ἡμέραν, ὡς οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ ἐπεκηρυκεύσατο, προσέταξεν αὖθις τοῖς στρατιώταις τῷ τείχει, καίπερ ἀνοικοδομηθέντι νυκτός, προσβαλεῖν: καὶ αὐτῷ τῶν μὲν Εὐρωπαίων τῶν δυναμένων τι κατεργάσασθαι οὐδεὶς ἔτ' ὄργῃ ὑπῆκουσεν, ἔτεροι δὲ δὴ Σύροι ἀναγκασθέντες ἀντ' αὐτῶν προσβαλεῖν κακῶς<sup>564</sup>.

When a portion of the outer circuit had fallen in one place and all the soldiers were eager to force their way inside the remainder, Severus checked them from doing so by ordering the signal for retreat to be clearly sounded on every side. For the place enjoyed great fame, containing as it did a vast number of offering to the Sun-god as well as vast sums of money; and he expected the Arabians to come to terms voluntarily, in order to avoid being forcibly captured and enslaved. At any rate, he allowed one day to pass; then, when no one came to him with any overtures for peace, he commanded the soldiers to assault the wall once more, though it had been built up during the night. But the Europeans, who alone of his army had the ability to do anything, were so angry that not one of them would any longer obey him, and the others, Syrians, who were compelled to make the assault in their place, were miserably destroyed.

On account of these troubles, Severus decided to abandon this expedition, after having conducted the siege for only twenty days<sup>565</sup>. Scholars, who have analyzed these operations against Hatra, have observed that this period is exceptionally brief when compared to other famous sieges conducted in the Middle East<sup>566</sup>. Furthermore, this was not the first time that soldiers were ordered by an emperor to retreat when about to sack a city, and Severus had already shown no mercy for Ctesiphon, which had been brutally

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<sup>564</sup> Dio 76 (75).12.1-3.

<sup>565</sup> Dio 76 (75).13.1.

<sup>566</sup> Campbell 1986, 52.

plundered only a few months before<sup>567</sup>. It seems, in a word, that after a breach had been opened in the wall, Severus decided to spare Hatra for religious and political reasons rather than military ones. His decision angered the soldiers belonging to the contingents from Europe, especially the officers<sup>568</sup>. These were already in a state of agitation, as demonstrated by the episode with the tribune who quoted the *Aeneid* during the previous campaign. Interestingly enough, the main motive behind the cessation of the assault seems to have been the need to spare a place (presumably a temple) that contained offerings to the Sun god ( $\tauοῦ χωρίου \dots τὰ τοῦ Ἡλίου ἀναθήματα ἔχοντος$ ), the most important deity venerated in the city<sup>569</sup>. This was Shamash, the ancient Mesopotamian solar deity whose Hatrene name was Maren, who appears as the divine protector of the city on coins minted in Hatra<sup>570</sup>. Although there were political divisions between Hatra and other cities in the Syrian-Mesopotamian area, the Hatrenes were Arabs whose religious background was similar to that of cities such as Edessa, Palmyra, and Emesa<sup>571</sup>. It seems, therefore, plausible that Severus prevented his troops from looting the temple of the Sun by reason of influence from someone who was particularly close to these communities through cultural connections. In this regard, the best candidate is Domna.

<sup>567</sup> As observed by Campbell 1986, 52, Titus took Jerusalem after a five month siege, the siege of Masada lasted for several months, and, finally, the Severan troops besieged Byzantium for almost three years. According to Dio 76 (75).9.4, Severus permitted the soldiers to plunder Ctesiphon, taking, also, a hundred thousand captives. According to Joseph. *BJ* 334, after the soldiers had taken the two external walls of Jerusalem, Titus forbade the soldiers from sacking the city, since ‘his paramount object was to preserve the city for himself and the temple for the city’.

<sup>568</sup> According to Speidel 1984, the ‘Europeans’ mentioned by Dio should be identified with the soldiers belonging to the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* stationed in the Mesopotamian city of Dura-Europos. This interpretation has, nonetheless, met the skepticism of scholars, cf. Campbell 1986, 55, and, especially, Kennedy 1986.

<sup>569</sup> With regard to the siege of Trajan, Dio (68.31.2) states that Hatra was under the protection of the Sun god ( $\tauοῦ Ἡλίου$ ).

<sup>570</sup> Tubach 2013; Dirven 2008, 210-217; *Ead.* 2006-2007, 367 with further references.

<sup>571</sup> On the common social and cultural background of these cities cf. Dirven 2011; Levick 2007, 48-49 with further references. With regard to the solar cult cf. Tubach 2013, 207-211.

As stated in the previous chapters, she belonged to a family strongly connected to the cult of Elagabal, a solar deity. The kings of Hatra were priest-kings like the sovereigns who had ruled Emesa, and Shamash and Elagabal shared the same symbol, the eagle<sup>572</sup>. Shamash was also venerated outside Hatra. In Palmyra, a religious fraternity was dedicated to the worship of this deity<sup>573</sup>, who was certainly popular in Emesa as well. In fact, the name Sampsigeramus, which had belonged to the rulers of the city, means ‘Shamash has decided’<sup>574</sup>. On the tetradrachms that the city struck for Domna and Caracalla during the reign of the latter, this Sun god appears under an eagle wearing a drape and the usual radiate crown<sup>575</sup>. Finally, it is worthwhile noting that Hatra, which has been called ‘a pre-Islamic Mecca’ by scholars, was a pilgrimage destination exactly like Emesa<sup>576</sup>. In this regard, Herodian declares that the temple of Emesa, where Elegabal (Θεός Ἡλίος) was worshipped, received lavish votive offerings from ‘satraps of all the adjacent territories and from barbarian kings’<sup>577</sup>. It can be assumed that among the βασιλεῖς βάρβαροι who were paying homage to the Sun god of Emesa there were also the kings of Hatra, who consequently entertained important relationships with the Emesene priestly nobility to which Domna belonged.

A few further passages from the *HA* and Herodian provide further interesting elements that might be helpful in integrating this picture. In the *vita* of Severus, the anonymous biographer relates that while the emperor was occupied with his second

<sup>572</sup> On the priest kings of Hatra and Shamash’s symbol cf. Dirven 2006-2007, 375-376. The eagle was also present on the Hatrene standards representing the most distinguished families of the city, cf. Dirven 2008, 240; Ead. 2006-2007, 379.

<sup>573</sup> Kaizer 2002, 99-100, 107-108; Teixidor 1979, 64-67.

<sup>574</sup> Teixidor 1979, 68.

<sup>575</sup> Prieur pp. 116-117.

<sup>576</sup> Dirven 2006-2007.

<sup>577</sup> Hdn. 5.3.4.

Parthian campaign (therefore, between 197 and 198), Plautianus, who was accompanying the imperial family, was persecuting the last supporters of Niger still in circulation<sup>578</sup>. Another passage from the *vita* of Geta hints at the fact that Plautianus, whose rapacity occupies a large section in Dio's account<sup>579</sup>, was taking advantage of his role as persecutor in order to accumulate enormous riches. This behavior caused the hostility of the young Geta (at that time he was eight or nine years old), who tried in vain to persuade Severus to curb Plautianus and to adopt a more lenient approach<sup>580</sup>. According to Grosso, it is probable that Caracalla's hostility towards Plautianus was growing at the same time, as suggested by another passage from the *HA*'s biography dedicated to him<sup>581</sup>. Grosso also observes that these scattered references to the intolerance of Caracalla and Geta towards Plautianus could be the remains of a more ample account concerning the enmity between them and the powerful prefect, an antagonism whose main supporter was

<sup>578</sup> *Sev.* 15.4: [Severus] *inter haec Pescennianas reliquias Plautiano auctore persequebatur, ita ut nonnullos etiam ex amicis suis quasi vitae sue insidiatores appeteret.* ('In the meanwhile, with the help of Plautianus he [i.e. Severus] was hunting down the last survivors of Pescennius' revolt, and he even went so far as to bring charges against several of his own friends on the grounds that they were plotting to kill him').

<sup>579</sup> Dio 76 (75).14-15.

<sup>580</sup> *Get.* 4.2-5: *cum vellet partium diversarum viros Severus occidere et inter suos diceret, 'hostes vobis eripio', consentiretque adeo usque Bassianus, ut eorum etiam liberos, si sibi consuleret, diceret occidendos, Geta interrogasse fertur quantus esset interficiendorum numerus; cumque dixisset pater, ille interrogavit, 'Isti habent parentes, habent propinquos?' cum responsum esset habere, ait, 'tum plures ergo in civitate tristes erunt quam laeti, quod vicimus'. Et obtinuisset eius sententia nisi Plautianus praefectus vel Juvenalis institisset spe proscriptionum, ex quibus ditati sunt* ('When Severus was planning to kill the men of the opposite factions and said to his family, "I am ridding you of your enemies," Bassianus gave his approval, even declaring that should he be consulted, their children too should be slain, but Geta, it is said, asked how large was the number of those to be put to death. When his father informed him, he asked again, "have they parents, have they kinsmen?" And when answer was made that they had, he remarked, "then there will be more in the state to mourn than to make merry at our victory". And he would have carried his point, had not the prefect Plautianus, or rather Juvenalis, stood out against him in the hope of proscriptions, for which they became enriched'). Juvenalis should be identified with Flavius Juvenalis (PIR<sup>2</sup> F 300), Prefect of the Guard during the period 193-195. Severus sent him to Africa with the plausible task of preventing Niger from occupying these territories. Cf. Grosso 1968b, 21-22.

<sup>581</sup> *Carac.* 1.7: *Plautiani odium crudelitatis causa concepit* ('he conceived a hatred for Plautianus because of his cruelty'). Cf. Grosso 1968b, 15.

Domna<sup>582</sup>. The Augusta might have had good reasons to hamper the plans of Plautianus, because she evidently had strong connections with many Syrian and Mesopotamian communities that were being plundered by the Prefect of the Guard<sup>583</sup>. Curiously enough, Herodian reports that Severus decided to attack Hatra because its king, Barsemius, had supported Niger during the civil wars<sup>584</sup>. It is therefore easy to imagine that Plautianus was ready to take advantage of this opportunity to lay hands on the riches stored in the temples of the city. Severus' sudden halt to the assault would likely have caused great dismay to Plautianus, and, probably, to other officers in command of the praetorians and the European contingents. In fact, Plautianus' plundering of Syrian and Mesopotamian cities on the pretext of punishing the supporters of Niger had provided many soldiers with plausible opportunities of easy enrichment<sup>585</sup>. When Severus restrained them from sacking Hatra and opened negotiations for the peaceful surrender of the city, it is reasonable to assume that the strong protests of these soldiers caused the general refusal to continue fighting. The sharp contrasts between opposite factions within the imperial court, i.e. Plautianus and his associates on one side, and Domna on the other side, could have been the final decisive factor that left the emperor with no choice but to abandon the siege. If this reconstruction is correct, behind Severus' second Parthian campaign a second domestic struggle was taking place, that is, between Plautianus leading the faction

<sup>582</sup> Grosso 1968b, 15.

<sup>583</sup> Cf. Dio 76 (75).14.3: Ἐπεθύμει τε πάντων καὶ πάντα παρὰ πάντων ἥτει καὶ πάντα ἐλάμβανε, καὶ οὕτε ἔθνος οὐδὲν οὔτε πόλιν οὐδεμίαν ἀσύλητον εἴασεν, ἀλλὰ πάντα δὴ πανταχόθεν ἤρπαζε καὶ συνεφόρει: καὶ πολὺ πλείονα αὐτῷ ἡ τῷ Σεουήρῳ ἄπαντες ἐπεμπον ('He [i.e. Plautianus] wanted everything, asked everything from everybody, and would take everything. He left no province and no city unplundered, but snatched and gathered in everything from all sides; and everybody sent a great deal more to him than to Severus').

<sup>584</sup> Hdn. 3.9.1.

<sup>585</sup> A passage of Dio (76 [75].14.3) relates that Plautianus sent centurions to some islands in the Red Sea in order to steal animals, thus alluding to the fact that the praetorian prefect was making use of military personnel for his requisitions.

of those who were taking advantage of the campaign to accumulate large riches, and Domna trying to defend the cause of the Middle Eastern communities that were enduring the pillages. Severus was dealing with a dilemma. He was evidently reluctant to curb Plautianus, a friend who had served him well and proven to be very efficient in persecuting his enemies during the civil wars<sup>586</sup>. By contrast, in the Middle East the impatience with Plautinaus' pillages was growing, and Domna was warning him not to allow the Prefect of the Guard to retain too much power. In this context, it is no surprise that Plautianus started a campaign of slander against Domna.

The conflicts between the Augusta and Plautinaus seem to have continued during the trip to Egypt (late 199-200) that followed the conclusion of the Parthian campaign. As mentioned above, on the arrival of the imperial court, the prefect of Egypt Q. Aemilius Saturninus was promoted to the rank of praetorian prefect, thus interrupting Plautianus' exclusive monopoly of this office. The coexistence of the two prefects was not destined to last for long, since Plautianus appears as sole prefect again on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 199, and Dio reports that he had Saturninus killed<sup>587</sup>. Scholars have interpreted the appointment of Saturninus as a temporary interruption of Severus' trust in Plautianus. According to Grosso, it was Domna who persuaded Severus to limit the powers of the prefect<sup>588</sup>. This reconstruction seems plausible. She was the only declared enemy of Plautianus who, according to the *HA*, was even able to persecute the friends of the emperor<sup>589</sup>. According to Dio, Severus' brother Geta was so afraid of Plautianus that only on his deathbed did he

<sup>586</sup> Cf. Grosso 1968b, 52-56. According to Grosso, Severus tolerated the excesses of Plautianus because he strongly needed him to strengthen his power.

<sup>587</sup> On the topic cf. the introduction to this chapter.

<sup>588</sup> Grosso 1968b, 34-35.

<sup>589</sup> *Sev.* 15.4.

find enough courage to denounce the crimes of the Prefect to Severus<sup>590</sup>. After the elimination of Saturninus and the recovery of his authority as sole prefect, Plautianus also received the official title of relative (*οἰκεῖος*) of the emperors<sup>591</sup>.

There are good reasons to attribute another episode related by Dio to this period. The historian narrates that the greed of the praetorian prefect was so unrestrained that he sent centurions to steal ‘horses with tiger-like stripes’ (probably zebras) sacred to the Sun (‘*Ηλιος*’) from certain islands in the Red Sea<sup>592</sup>. The episode, which is not related by other sources, is quite interesting. After mention of the sieges of Hatra by Trajan and Severus, the solar cult appears here for the third time in the account of Dio. Considering that these sacred animals were zebras, i.e. African animals, the theft seems to have taken place on Egyptian islands. In view of the fact that Dio reports this episode soon after the description of Egypt, and immediately after the assassination of Saturninus, it seems reasonable to assign this anecdote to the period during which the imperial court was staying in this province. Consequently, the zebras must likely have been consecrated to a solar Egyptian cult. The theft of the animals could have been intended as an act of scorn towards people whose relationship with the cult of the Sun was well known. Domna certainly fits this role. After all, Egyptian deities connected to solar cults, such as Isis, were venerated in Syria, and ancient sources attest to the relationships between the priestly classes of Heliopolis (Baalbeck) and the Egyptian city with the strongest

<sup>590</sup> Dio 77 (76).2.4.

<sup>591</sup> The titles ὁ κράτιστος ἐπαρχος τῶν στρατοπέδων καὶ οἰκεῖος ἡμῶν (‘the most powerful prefect of the camps and our relative’) appear on a papyrus (*P. Col.* VI 123) reporting some decisions of Severus and Caracalla regarding legal matters while the imperial court was staying in Alexandria.

<sup>592</sup> Dio 76 (75).14.3: καὶ τέλος ἵππους Ἡλίῳ ιεροὺς τιγροειδεῖς ἐκ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσσῃ νήσων, πέμψας ἐκατοντάρχους ἔξεκλεψεν (‘Finally, he sent centurions and stole horses with tiger-like stripes, sacred to the Sun, from the islands in the Red Sea’).

connections to the cult of the Sun, i.e. Heliopolis in northern Egypt<sup>593</sup>. Finally, Dio's emphasis on this episode suggests that news of Plautianus' sacrilege reached Rome, perhaps amplified by the court milieu that was close to Domna and, consequently, hostile to the praetorian prefect<sup>594</sup>.

#### **IVa.2.2. The wedding banquet of Plautilla and Caracalla**

There is another passage in Dio that could imply an intervention by Domna. As mentioned above, after the imperial family had come to Rome in the spring of 202, Plautianus celebrated his greatest political success, the marriage between his daughter Plautilla and Caracalla. Dio describes the wedding ceremony as follows:

Ἐποιήθησαν δὲ καὶ οἱ γάμοι τοῦ τε Ἀντωνίνου τοῦ νίοῦ τοῦ Σεούντρου καὶ τῆς Πλαυτίλλης τῆς τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ θυγατρός: καὶ τοσαῦτα τῇ θυγατρὶ οὗτος ἔδωκεν ὄσα καὶ πεντήκοντα γυναιξὶ βασιλίσσαις ἥρκεσεν ἄν. Εἴδομεν δὲ αὐτὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἐς τὸ παλάτιον κομιζόμενα. Εἰσιάθημεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῳ ἄμα, τὰ μὲν βασιλικῶς τὰ δὲ βαρβαρικῶς, ἐφθά τε πάντα ὄσα νομίζεται, καὶ ὡμὰ ζῶντά τε ἄλλα λαβόντες.

The nuptials of Antoninus, the son of Severus, and Plautilla, Plautianus' daughter, were also celebrated at this time; and Plautianus gave as much for his daughter's dowry as would have sufficed for fifty women of royal rank. We saw the gifts as they were being carried through the Forum to the palace. And we were all entertained together at a banquet, partly in royal and partly in barbaric style, receiving not only all the customary cooked viands but also uncooked meat and sundry animals still alive.

The most interesting detail in this passage is the description of the banquet. Dio, who was present in person, states that this was organized partially according to the standard rules of imperial banquets (*τὰ μὲν βασιλικῶς*), and partially according to an exotic 'barbarian' fashion (*τὰ δὲ βαρβαρικῶς*). In my view, the latter expression is a reference to the Syrian customs of Domna and her relatives who were living together with her at court. In Dio's account covering the Severan period, the connotation of 'barbarian' is never used with

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<sup>593</sup> Cf. Jidejian 1975, 5. Connections between these cities are explicitly recorded in MACR. *Sat.* 1.23.10. On Egyptian cults in Syria cf. Sartre 2001, 895–896.

<sup>594</sup> On the possibility that Dio made use of palace sources cf. section I.1.2 above.

reference to either Severus, Plautianus, or other African individuals, whereas in many cases it is used to describe the Syrian customs of Elagabalus and other persons belonging to the family of the Augusta. Thus, for example, Dio recounts that Elagabalus, Julia Soaemias, and Julia Maesa used to sing ‘barbaric chants’ (*βαρβαρικὰς ὠδὰς*) while praying to Helagabal, and that Elagabalus was often seen in public while wearing the ‘barbaric dress which the Syrian priests use’ (*τὴν ἐσθῆτα τὴν βαρβαρικήν, ἣ οἱ τῶν Σύρων ἱερεῖς χρῶνται*)<sup>595</sup>. It seems, therefore, plausible that Domna was present at the banquet, whose Syrian associations would have assumed a very specific meaning. Dio reports that Plautianus spent a huge amount of money on the dowry of his daughter. The gifts, which were evidently the result of what the prefect had pillaged in the East, were even paraded through the Forum before Dio and his colleagues as a display of magnificence. The senators were later received in the palace for the banquet. Here, the presence of Domna and the display of Syrian customs were likely meant to show Plautianus (and the senators) that, even at the apex of his influence, the prefect had to contend with the Augusta, who, despite the setbacks (the assassination of Saturninus in Egypt and Severus’ consent to the marriage between Caracalla and Plautilla), was still occupying her influential position at court. The organization of a banquet was, after all, an event that assumed particular significance. Dio narrates that, during the reign of Tiberius, Livia wanted to organize a banquet inviting senators, knights and their wives to celebrate the dedication of an image of Augustus in her house. Yet in an effort to limit her influence in public affairs, Tiberius allowed her to entertain only the women<sup>596</sup>. The exhibition of ‘Syrian-ness’ at the wedding banquet of Caracalla and Plautilla, therefore,

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<sup>595</sup> 80 (79).11.1 and 80.11.2, respectively. Cf. Bertolazzi 2015, 428-430.

<sup>596</sup> Dio 57.12.5, the episode is placed in the narration of the numerous contrasts between Tiberius and his mother after the death of Augustus.

seems to have had a strong political significance in the feud between Plautianus and Domna.

#### **IVa.2.3 The assassination of Plautianus**

The last episode connected to this rivalry is Plautianus' assassination (January 22<sup>nd</sup> 205).

This happened after a period during which the prefect had lost the apparently unconditional trust of Severus, who had been informed by the dying Geta (the emperor's brother) of the criminal behavior of Plautianus<sup>597</sup>. It is not impossible, at any rate, that Caracalla's growing hostility, which had turned into open hatred during the period preceding the assassination, played a role as well<sup>598</sup>. It was in fact Caracalla who, while Severus was present, gave the order to kill Plautianus. According to Herodian, this happened after the two emperors had discovered that the Praefect of the Guard was planning to kill both of them<sup>599</sup>. Dio, on the other hand, relates that Caracalla had fabricated false letters in order to accuse Plautianus of plotting their murder<sup>600</sup>. Scholars have in general rejected Herodian's account, interpreting it as the official version that the government circulated in order to justify the killing of the prefect, giving, instead, more credit to the reconstruction of Dio<sup>601</sup>. This is also the only authority that mentions Domna. After the assassination of Plautianus, he relates the following episode:

<sup>597</sup> Dio 77 (76).2.4.

<sup>598</sup> At the same time Plautianus, considered Caracalla as the main reason for his falling out of favor, cf. Dio 77 (76).2.5.

<sup>599</sup> Hdn. 3.11.1-3.12.12.

<sup>600</sup> Dio 77 (76).3.2-4.5.

<sup>601</sup> Birley 1999, 162-163, followed by Levick 2007, 79-81. According to Gross 1968b, 52, both his state of isolation and the desperation at Caracalla's harsh treatment of Plautilla (cf. Dio 77 [76].2.5 and 3.1; Hdn. 3.10.8) could have encouraged Plautianus to plan the murder of the emperors. Also, the same situation could have provided Caracalla (and Domna) with the right occasion to eliminate him.

Καὶ αὐτὸν τις τῶν τριχῶν τοῦ γενείου ἐκτίλας τῇ τε Ἰουλίᾳ καὶ τῇ Πλαυτίλῃ προσήνεγκεν ὁμοῦ οὖσαις, πρὶν καὶ ὄτιοῦν αὐτὰς ἀκοῦσαι, καὶ εἶπεν ‘ἴδετε τὸν Πλαυτιανὸν ὑμῶν,’ κακ τούτου τῇ μὲν πένθος τῇ δὲ χαρὰν ἐνέβαλεν<sup>602</sup>.

And somebody plucked out a few hairs from his beard, carried them to Julia and Plautilla, who were together, before they had heard a word of the affair, and exclaimed, ‘Here is your Plautianus!’, thus causing grief to the one and joy to the other.

In this passage Dio confirms that the enmity between Domna and Plautinaus lasted until the very last moments of the latter’s life. As for the aforementioned passage describing Plautianus’ hatred for Domna<sup>603</sup>, Moscovich has suggested identifying the source of this information with someone belonging to the intellectual circle of the Augusta, possibly the sophist Philostratus<sup>604</sup>. Levick has observed that Domna might have been with Plautilla with the purpose of keeping an eye on her, but eventually concluded that there are no elements to evaluate whether Domna played a role in planning the assassination of the Praefect of the Guard or not<sup>605</sup>. It is interesting to note, however, that the passage stresses that Domna was completely unaware of Caracalla’s plans (*πρὶν καὶ ὄτιοῦν ... ἀκοῦσαι*). Regardless of whether the events really happened in this way, the main purpose of the anecdote seems to be to exonerate the Augusta of any responsibility in the murder. Her joy, on the other hand, was impossible to conceal, since the enmity with Plautianus was evidently a matter of public knowledge. In brief, the necessity of proving her non-involvement in the killing of the prefect betrays the fact that she would be the first person to be suspected of having organized the plot. Letting such an anecdote become known to Dio and the other senators could have been a good way of removing a predictable suspect. Even if the whole plot was on the initiative of Caracalla alone (who, however,

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<sup>602</sup> Dio 77 (76).4.4.

<sup>603</sup> Cf. the beginning of section IVa.2 above.

<sup>604</sup> Moscovich 2004, 360.

<sup>605</sup> Levick 2007, 80.

was only fourteen years old at the time), Domna was, at least, the moral instigator of the assassination. As noted above, the Augusta probably encouraged the hatred of the young Caracalla for the greediness of Plautianus at the time of the expedition in the Middle East. After the marriage between her son and Plautilla, she would have continued to foster, not only Caracalla's hostility towards Plautianus, but also the strong disgust that the young emperor bore towards his wife<sup>606</sup>. It is important to remember that Caracalla was originally named after Domna's father, thus becoming the conveyor of her lineage<sup>607</sup>. After Plautilla had been banished to Lipari, Caracalla never remarried, but in 216 he sought the hand of a Parthian princess<sup>608</sup>. Notwithstanding the implausible comments of Herodian, who says that Caracalla wanted to unify the Roman and the Parthian empires<sup>609</sup>, this project does not seem to be completely senseless<sup>610</sup>. Caracalla was, after all, the descendant of kings who had ruled over Emesa and Armenia, and it is reasonable to assume that Domna had had great projects in store for her son. She could only have disapproved of the marriage between Caracalla and Plautilla. Despite the great power that Plautianus had accumulated, the prefect still remained a parvenu of equestrian origin who had risen to prominence thanks only to his friendship with Severus<sup>611</sup>.

<sup>606</sup> Herodian (3.10.8) says that Caracalla refused to eat and sleep with Plautilla. Dio (77 [76].2.5 and 3.1) also comments on Caracalla's loathing for Plautilla.

<sup>607</sup> Cf. chap. II above.

<sup>608</sup> Dio 79 (78).1.1.

<sup>609</sup> Hdn. 4.10.11.

<sup>610</sup> According to Letta 1991, 680, Caracalla's plan resembled the strategy of Mark Antony, who had put one of his sons on the throne of Armenia.

<sup>611</sup> Before the marriage between Plautilla and Caracalla, Plautianus seems to have made considerable efforts to create a sort of royal retinue for his daughter. According to Dio (76 [75].14.4), he 'castrated a hundred Roman citizens of noble birth (...) his purpose was that Plautilla (...) should have only eunuchs as her attendants in general'. Yet this did not prevent Plautilla from acquiring a bad reputation, since Dio (77 [76].3.1) refers to her as the 'the most shameless creature'.

#### IVa.2.4. The stay in Britain

Between the death of Plautinaus and that of Severus, the only literary reference to Domna is another passage from Dio's *History*. The episode takes place when the imperial court had moved to Britain following Severus' campaign against the Caledonian populations. According to Dio, Domna, after the a peace conference, had a conversation with the wife of a local chieftain concerning differences in matrimonial customs between Romans and Caledonians:

"Οθεν καὶ μάλα ἀστείως Ἀργεντοκόξου τινὸς γυνὴ Καληδονίου πρὸς τὴν Ἰουλίαν τὴν Αὔγουσταν, ἀποσκώπτουσάν τι πρὸς αὐτὴν μετὰ τὰς σπονδὰς ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνέδην σφῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἄρρενας συνουσίᾳ, εἰπεῖν λέγεται ὅτι 'πολλῷ ἡμεινον ἡμεῖς τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἀναγκαῖα ἀποπληροῦμεν ύμῶν τῶν Θωμαϊκῶν: ἡμεῖς γὰρ φανερῶς τοῖς ἀρίστοις ὁμιλοῦμεν, ύμεις δὲλάθρᾳ ὑπὸ τῶν κακίστων μοιχεύεσθε'<sup>612</sup>.

A very witty remark is reported to have been made by the wife of Argentocoetus, a Caledonian, to Julia Augusta. When the empress was jesting with her, after the treaty, about the free intercourse of her sex with men in Britain, she replied: 'we fulfil the demands of nature in a much better way than do you Roman women; for we consort openly with the best men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest'.

Just like the story about the messenger carrying the lock from Plautianus' beard, the origin of this anecdote has been attributed to the milieu of the imperial court<sup>613</sup>. It is possible that this anecdote was originally part of a fuller story describing the participation of the Augusta in the events surrounding the negotiations between Severus and the Caledonians. Dio, however, makes use of the episode to create a vignette exalting the integrity of those populations whose lifestyle was less corrupt than those of the Romans<sup>614</sup>. It is not a case that the anecdote was strategically placed after a remark regarding the failure of Severus' moral legislation, which had in vain attempted to curb

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<sup>612</sup> Dio 77 (76).16.5.

<sup>613</sup> Moscovich 2004, 363-364. According to the scholar, the source of this information could be identified with the sophist Philostratus.

<sup>614</sup> Mallan 2013, 742-743; Levick 2007, 71.

adultery<sup>615</sup>. At any rate, the information concerning the meeting between Domna and the Caledonian woman confirms the active role of the Augusta at the side of Severus and Caracalla during the last stages of the Britannic expedition.

#### **IVa.2.5. Overall remarks**

To sum up, during the period between the conclusion of the civil wars (197) and the death of Severus (211) the presence of Domna in the literary sources is sporadic. Almost all of the references appear in the account of Dio, who uses the figure of the Augusta to create vignettes that amplify the vices of other characters, such as the cruelty of Plautinaus and the rashness of Caracalla, or the failure of Severus' policies, as in the episode involving the Caledonian woman. The cameo concerning Plautianus' hatred for Domna represents the most informative episode involving the Augusta in Dio's narration of the reign of Severus. Although Dio does not specify what the origin was of the rivalry between the Augusta and the powerful prefect of the Guard, a few other episodes from the accounts of Dio and the *HA* can help in reconstructing the genesis of this enmity. The Syrian lineage of the Augusta, her belonging to a dynasty devoted to the solar cult, and her connections with the Syrian and Mesopotamian nobility, these elements seem to be behind Severus' decision to stop the soldiers who, as Dio reports, were about to plunder the offerings to the Sun in Hatra. According to *HA*, Plautianus and, presumably, part of the troops participating in the Parthian campaign of 197-198, were taking advantage of the war and the persecutions against those who had previously supported Niger to accumulate wealth. The attitude of the Severan regime towards the Syrian and Mesopotamian communities, their cults and their riches, appears to be the battleground

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<sup>615</sup> Dio 77 (76).16.4.

between the opposite factions led by Domna and Plautianus. The rivalry continued during the following period in Egypt, as the episodes of the assassination of Aemilius Saturninus, and the theft, ordered by Plautianus, of the zebras consecrated to the Sun, seem to suggest. The episode of the banquet at the wedding between Caracalla and Plautilla indicates that the fight was still ongoing after the arrival of the imperial court in Rome. The story of the messenger sent to Domna and Plautilla after the killing of Plautianus includes the joy of the Augusta at the news of Plautianus' death, thus confirming that the hostility between the two of them persisted until the very last moments. The enmity between Domna and the Prefect of the Guard was a well-known fact, but her surprise at the news of the assassination could have been fabricated in order to avert any suspicion that she had plotted the killing. Although there is no proof of her direct involvement, her moral support was probably behind Caracalla's decision to act. The hostility of Domna's elder son towards Plautianus had already started to grow while in Syria, but it turned into open hatred after he was forced to marry Plautilla. In all likelihood, Domna perceived this marriage as an intrusion in her dynastic plans, and consequently made every effort to sabotage it. Finally, while the last anecdote reporting the dialogue with the Caledonian woman is not very helpful for our understanding of Domna's agency, it does confirm that she maintained a strong presence in public life until the very end of Severus' reign.

#### **IVa.3. INSCRIPTIONS**

The epigraphic documentation about Domna is much more abundant than the literary evidence, with the majority of inscriptions where her name is mentioned dating to the

reign of Severus. As reported in chapter I, the texts attesting to her direct agency are extremely scant, while honorific inscriptions set up to her by imperial officials, local communities, soldiers, and other individuals make up the bulk of the evidence. As seen above in section IV.2a, the clash between Domna and Plautianus started at the time of Severus' Parthian campaign. Despite Plautianus' numerous attempts to discredit her, she was able to keep her position at court. Dio says that she managed to do so by spending her time in the company of philosophers<sup>616</sup>. However, her constant presence in honorary inscriptions (where her name always precedes those of Plautilla and Plautianus) seems rather to indicate an active participation in public life. Considering that the erection of honorary inscriptions was normally intended to capture the benevolence of the rulers, epigraphic evidence becomes a fundamental instrument in measuring how Domna's contemporaries perceived her influence and authority during this troubled period. Moreover, examination of the reasons that may have led governors or other imperial officials to honor Domna certainly helps to determine whether she was a genuinely influential individual, or a person whose public image was simply used by Severus in order to advertise the dynasty. The following sections will be dedicated to a chronological analysis of the inscriptions, and to an examination of the people who dedicated them.

#### **IVa.3.1. Domna's return to Rome and departure to Syria (197)**

As mentioned above, after the defeat of Albinus, Severus and his family returned to Rome for a brief period in the spring of 197. More or less at this time, the Sabine

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<sup>616</sup> Cf. section IVa.2 above.

community of Trebula Mutuesca set up a statue in honor of Domna<sup>617</sup>. The monument was dedicated by the *Trebulani Mutuescani*. As seen in the previous chapter with reference to the statue set up by the *Decumani Narbonenses*, this expression, which designates the whole civic body and not just the town council, can be interpreted as a manifestation of particular attachment<sup>618</sup>. In Trebula, this is the first documented statue for an imperial woman, demonstrating that honoring the Augustae was anything but a customary practice in this community. Interestingly, in 198, other centers on the way from Gaul to Rome set up similar statues. The dedications report the names of the *Glanenses* (from Glanum, not far from Marseille), and the *Capenates Foederati* (from Capena, in southern Etruria)<sup>619</sup>. While the court was travelling to Rome – or perhaps while it was staying in the capital – delegations from these cities would have had the possibility of meeting Domna.

Several statue bases are also attested to with regard to the travel to Syria (second half of 197). During this period, Domna was honored in Greece, in particular in Thespiae, Tithronium, and by an unknown community in Attica<sup>620</sup>. Two of these inscriptions can be compared to the Gallic and Italian ones, since in the last two cases (Tithronium and Attica) the dedicators are the cities as a body (ἡ πόλις). Also, both in Thespiae and Tithronium, she is the first imperial woman to be honored with a statue.

#### **IVa.3.2. Syria (197-202)**

Several inscriptions from Syrian cities seem to refer to the stay of the imperial family. A priestess of the imperial cult in Berytus, Sentia Magnia Sephare, set up a monument to

<sup>617</sup> App. no. 13a. The dedicatory inscription calls Caracalla *imperator destinatus*, a title that was probably bestowed on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 197 (*dies natalis* of this emperor), cf. Mastino 1981, 29.

<sup>618</sup> Cf. section III.4.2 above.

<sup>619</sup> App. nos. 16a, 15a, respectively.

<sup>620</sup> App. nos. 11b-12b, 6b, respectively.

the *Genius populi* with a dedication for the safety of Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>621</sup>.

Since Caracalla is still holding the rank of Caesar in this instance, this text should be dated to 197, i.e. before the beginning of Severus' Parthian campaign of 197-198. The circumstances in which Sentia Magnia decided to consecrate a monument to Berytus' protecting deity do not appear to be fortuitous. In fact, while staying in the East between 197 and 201, Severus punished this city for having supported Niger during the civil wars. Berytus lost part of its territory and, in particular, the control over the Bekaa valley, where Heliopolis (Baalbek) became an autonomous center with the rank of *colonia* and Latin status for its citizens<sup>622</sup>. Furthermore, the rival city of Tyre, which had supported Severus, also became *colonia* and capital of the new province of Syria Phoenice<sup>623</sup>. In this situation, it is no surprise that the elite of Berytus tried to gain the favor of the rulers by honoring them. The inclusion of Domna's name in the dedication demonstrates that the citizens of this city regarded the Augusta as a key person in the imperial establishment. Moreover, another inscription documents that the decurions put up a statue of Domna in the forum<sup>624</sup>. No other statues for Severus and Caracalla are so far attested to in Berytus, and, consequently, this monument cannot be dated to a precise year. As in

<sup>621</sup> App. no. 9b.

<sup>622</sup> In 199, a dedication to Severus *ex responso Iovis Optimi Maximi Heliopolitanis* was set up in the sanctuary of Heliopolis (AE 1903, 269 = IGLS VI 2765). At this time, the city changed its name to *Colonia Iulia Augusta Heliopolis*. On the topic cf. Millar 2006, 193-194. On the relationship between Severus and the eastern cities during the war against Niger cf. also Thiel 2005.

<sup>623</sup> This certainly happened after 198, since according to Ulpian (*Dig.* 50.15.1), the new status was granted by both Severus and Caracalla. Cf. Millar 2006, 195-196; Letta 1991, 666; Ziegler 1978, 498-499. According to Birley 1999, 114 the division of Syria took place in 194. It is nonetheless important to note that Laodicea became metropolis in 194 and colony in 198 (on the topic cf. Millar 2006, 192). It would, consequently, be more plausible to place the reorganization of Syria and the creation of the new colonies in 198. Herodian (3.3.3) reports that the rivalry between Berytus and Tyre became particularly sharp during the war between Niger and Severus, when Tyre supported the latter.

<sup>624</sup> App. no. 20b.

the case of the dedication by Sentia Magna, however, the period 197-201 represents the ideal occasion for paying homage to Domna. It is also interesting to note that some relations between the elites of Emesa and Berytus probably existed, as demonstrated by the case of M. Iulius Avidius Minervinus, an Emesene who, around the end of the first century CE, placed an altar to the *Genius* of Berytus on account of some benefits that he had received from the decurions<sup>625</sup>. Finally, it is important to stress that Domna is the first documented Augusta to be honored on the monuments of Berytus<sup>626</sup>.

Another inscription that may have been set up during the stay of the imperial court in Syria is a monument of unknown typology, which, according to a correspondent of Ernest Renan (the source of the IGRR), was found in the ruins of an ancient synagogue in the town of Kasyoun, in Galilee<sup>627</sup>. According to the reconstruction of Renan, the text was organized in three columns as follows:

καὶ	Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῶν κ[[υρί]]-	
Ιουλίας	ων ἡμῶν Αὐτοκρατόρω[[ν]]	[[καὶ]]
Δόμνης	Καίσαρων Λ. Σεπτ. Σενή[[ρου]]	[[μάτηρ]]
Σεβ.	Εύσεβ. Περτ. Σεβ. καὶ Μ. Αύρ. Ά[[ντωνε]]- ίου [[καὶ Λ. Σεπτ. Γέτα]] νιῶν αὐ[[τοῦ, ἐξ]]	[[στρατοπ]]- εύχῆς Ιουδαίων.

*Central section*: ‘For the safety of our lords the emperors: L. Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, and his sons M. Aurelius Antoninus and L. Septimius Geta. [This monument] was set up following a vow of the Jews’.

*Left column*: ‘and [for the safety of] Julia Domna Augusta’.

*Right column*: ‘and mother of the camps (?)’.

The erasures that obliterate the final letters of the central section and the whole right column seem to have been caused by the reuse of the monument, rather than by the

<sup>625</sup> AE 1950, 233.

<sup>626</sup> Apart from the Severans, the elite of Berytus made notable efforts to obtain the benevolence of previous emperors. Statues were in fact dedicated to Domitian (AE 2012, 1752) and Hadrian (CIL III 165 = 14388 = AE 1900, 142; AE 1994, 1773).

<sup>627</sup> Renan 1864, 774-776. The inscription is app. no. 9a. Cf. also Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 19.

erasure of names. It is possible, however, that the left column had originally included the name of Plautilla. The presence of Geta indicates that the stone was engraved after he had been promoted to the rank of Caesar, i.e. after the capture of Ctesiphon in 198. It is interesting to note that this is, so far, the only known inscription dedicated by Palestinian Jews to Roman emperors<sup>628</sup>. The decision to set up such a monument could reflect events occurring around the period of Severus' Parthian campaign. According to Jerome, violent clashes between Jews and Samaritans took place during 197<sup>629</sup>. This explains the *Iudaicum triumphum* that the senate in 202 bestowed on Caracalla on account of Severus' successful efforts to regulate regional matters in Syria<sup>630</sup>. It is, consequently, easy to postulate that, as in the case of Berytus and Tyre, the imperial authority intervened to punish some communities and to reward others depending on the role they had played in these tumults. In the facsimile reported by Renan, the dedication to Domna is surrounded by laurel branches. This demonstrates that the Jewish communities who populated southern Syria regarded Domna as a very important person to address.

#### **IVa.3.3. Egypt**

Inscriptions from Egypt, where the imperial family travelled between 199 and 200, also attest to the name of Domna. A block of considerable dimensions placed in front of the Great Sphinx in Gīza bears an inscription dating to 199-200, which includes the names of

<sup>628</sup> According to Avi-Yonah 1984, 77, both the placement of this inscription, and the absence of references to any revolts of the Jews under the reigns of Severus and Caracalla in the Talmudic sources suggests that there were good relationships between the Palestinian Jews and the Severan establishment.

<sup>629</sup> *Chron. a. Abr.* 2210. The reference is to a war between Jewish and Samaritans, perhaps the uprising of these two communities noted by OROS. 7.17.3.

<sup>630</sup> Sev. 16.7, cf. also 17.1, according to which, on the way to Egypt (i.e. 199), Severus conferred new rights (*nova iura*) upon the communities of Palestine. On the topic cf. Birley 1999, 135; Avi-Yonah 1984, 76-79; Smallwood 1976, 488-494.

Severus, Geta, Domna, the governor of Egypt, and the ἐπιστράτηγος responsible for administering one of the districts in which this province was subdivided<sup>631</sup>. The text, in Greek, starts with a dedication to the eternal victory and permanence (ὑπὲρ αἰωνίου νείκης καὶ διαμονῆς) of the members of the imperial family, and, further on, alludes to renovations of the pavement (στρῶμα) around the Sphinx. The presence of the names of the governor and the local official in charge of the district gives a solemn tone to the inscription, which seems to allude to an important occasion, like a visit of the emperors<sup>632</sup>. Dio mentions Severus' strong interest in the antiquities of Egypt, and his desire to examine as many things belonging to its past civilization as possible<sup>633</sup>. It is interesting to note that this is the first text where the name of Domna is included in a dedication for the safety and victory of the imperial household. As discussed above, the stay in Egypt was a period of strong conflicts between Plautianus and Domna, with the latter probably behind the appointment of the governor Aemilius Saturninus as co-prefect with Plautianus<sup>634</sup>. Unfortunately, a lacuna affecting the last lines of the inscription in Giza makes the reading of the governor's name difficult. According to Grosso, however, the name should be identified with that of Alfenus Apollinaris, who succeeded Saturninus as governor of Egypt during the first months of 200<sup>635</sup>. The erection of this inscription should, accordingly, be placed after Plautianus had managed to kill Saturninus (end of 199/beginning of 200) and thus to regain the full power as sole prefect. In the eyes of the Egyptian authorities that set up the monument, the Augusta was, nonetheless, far from

<sup>631</sup> App. no. 38a.

<sup>632</sup> Birley 1999, 139 also postulates a visit of Severus to the Sphinx. On the Sphinx as a touristic destination in antiquity cf. Adams 2007, 169-170.

<sup>633</sup> Dio 76 (75).13.1. On Severus' interest for Egypt cf. Birley 1999, 138-139.

<sup>634</sup> Cf. section IVa.1 above.

<sup>635</sup> Grosso 1968b, 28-30.

being eclipsed, and still occupied her prominent role within the imperial establishment. If this reconstruction is correct, it would be easier to understand why Plautianus, whose name does not appear on the inscription, was continuously attempting to abuse Domna before Severus and, possibly, provoking her by stealing the animals sacred to the Sun from the islands in the Red Sea.

Several inscriptions from Leptis Magna also attest to the reverence that, in this period, provincial authorities had for the Augusta. A year after the imperial visit to Egypt, M. Iunius Punicus, a procurator in charge of the granaries in the Mercurius quarter of Alexandria, placed four statues of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna in the area of the theater<sup>636</sup>. As observed by Birley, Iunius Punicus decided to erect these monuments as a manifestation of gratitude, since the inscriptions specify that he had been promoted to centenarian procurator in Alexandria after having held the office of sexagenarian procurator in Thrace<sup>637</sup>. He was from Leptis<sup>638</sup>, and, therefore, an individual that was probably well known to Severus; Iunius Punicus had probably met him in Alexandria while attending to his duties as procurator<sup>639</sup>. His decision to honor Domna along with the emperors indicates that, from his point of view, Domna was a person to be held in particular regard.

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<sup>636</sup> Statue base for Domna: app. no. 52a. Statue bases for Severus, Caracalla and Geta: IRT 392 (= AE 1940, 95), 422, 434. On the *procurator ad Mercurium* cf. Rickman 1971, 304-306.

<sup>637</sup> Birley 1999, 149.

<sup>638</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> I 802.

<sup>639</sup> Severus' stay in Alexandria: *Sev.* 16.9: *post hoc* [i.e. the stay in Syria] (...) *Alexandriam petit*. Cf. Birley 1999, 138.

#### IVa.3.4. Return to Rome (202)

After having come back to Syria, Severus and his family prepared to return to Italy. The trip, however, was delayed until the beginning of 202. A considerable number of inscriptions set up in Asia Minor between 200 and 202 attest to the fact that local communities and provincial authorities were expecting a visit of the emperors and the Augusta. In 200, the communities of Commagene, in northern Syria, placed three columns with the names of Severus, Caracalla and Domna on the so-called ‘Severan Bridge’ on the Chabina Creek<sup>640</sup>. Domna’s name is also reported on milestones, placed after those of Severus and their sons. Plautilla, who at the beginning of 202 had been officially betrothed to Caracalla before the departure from Syria, is also mentioned<sup>641</sup>. It is very important to underline that this is the first documented appearance of imperial women’s names on a significant group of milestones<sup>642</sup>. There are at least ten monuments of this kind documented in the coastal area of the province of Asia<sup>643</sup>. Almost all their inscriptions mention the proconsuls who were governing the province when the milestones were set up, Q. Aurelius Polus Terentianus (together with the procurator Attilius Clarus), and Q. Hedius Rufus Lollianus Gentianus. The first administered the province from at least 200 to the first months of 201, whereas the latter succeeded him

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<sup>640</sup> App. no. 41a. CIL III 6712 and 6713 are the dedications to Severus and Caracalla. Severus’ *trib. pot. XII* (= 204), however, does not match the other titles and, most importantly, the legateships of L. Alfenus Senecio (the governor of Syria Coele) and L. Marius Perpetuus (the legate of the legion XVI Flavia), who supervised the restoration of the bridge (CIL III 6709-6710). Furthermore, Caracalla’s *imp. III* is probably a mistake for *trib. pot. III* (= 200). On the topic cf. Kennedy 1982; Leaning 1971. A fourth column with a dedication to Geta was probably torn down after his assassination in 211.

<sup>641</sup> On the betrothal of Plautilla to Caracalla cf. Christol and Drew Bear 1995, 76-78.

<sup>642</sup> A milestone from Sessa Aurunca mentioning Matidia Minor (AE 1991, 492) represents the only previous attestation of an imperial woman on this typology of monument. The relationship between Matidia and the town in Campania was, nevertheless, so close that this honor should be considered an exceptional one. On the topic cf. Pagano and Villucci 1991, 287-291. On the figure of Matidia Minor cf. Bruun 2010, 211-233 with further references.

<sup>643</sup> App. nos. 48a-51a, 53a, 55a-57a, 65a, 67a.

during 201, and maintained the office until an unspecified time in 202<sup>644</sup>. All the milestones bear references to road restorations, which were presumably part of a series of initiatives that provincial authorities undertook to welcome the passage of the imperial party on its way back to Rome<sup>645</sup>. Both Polus Terentianus and Lollianus Gentianus can be regarded as close supporters of Severus. In fact, Terentianus was governing Dacia in 193, when the Danubian legions acclaimed Severus emperor. His later career is not known in detail, but the appointment to the prestigious governorship of Asia demonstrates that he did not lose the favor of the rulers<sup>646</sup>. As for Gentianus, it is important to stress that, during the early reign of Severus, he had been *comes* of the emperors on several occasions and *censor* (governor with power to conduct a new census) of Gallia Lugdunensis<sup>647</sup>. Furthermore, his sons Lollianus Plautus Avitus<sup>648</sup> and Lollianus Terentius Gentianus<sup>649</sup> became ordinary consuls in 209 and 211, respectively. By including Domna in inscriptions on milestones, both Polus Terentianus and Lollianus Gentianus were probably thinking that keeping good relations would greatly benefit their careers. As for Plautilla, it is important to stress that she had received the title of Augusta after the betrothal to Caracalla<sup>650</sup>. As prescribed by court etiquette, she was probably

<sup>644</sup> On the careers of Terentianus (absent in PIR<sup>2</sup>) and Gentianus (PIR<sup>2</sup> H 39) cf. Christol and Drew-Bear 1995, 88-93 with further bibliography. On Gentianus cf. also Mennen 2011, 108.

<sup>645</sup> Cf. the conclusions in Christol and Drew Bear 1995, 93.

<sup>646</sup> According to Birley 1999, 83, his nomenclature could attest to an African origin. The scholar observes that Terentianus' service in Britain under the command of Pertinax during the 180's could also indicate a further connection to Severus, who during the same period had been legate of Pertinax in Syria.

<sup>647</sup> Birley 1999, 76 suggests that Severus and Gentianus might have met when the first was governor of Gallia Lugdunensis and the latter was on his way to assume the command of the legion XXII *Primigenia* in Mogontiacum.

<sup>648</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> H 36.

<sup>649</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> H 37.

<sup>650</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> F 564.

spending a considerable part of her time with Domna<sup>651</sup>. Both of them were also supposed to appear together on official occasions<sup>652</sup>. Plautilla was consequently sharing in Domna's visibility and prestige. Furthermore, at this moment, Plautianus was at the peak of his power and constantly at Severus' side as *comes per omnes expeditiones, necessarius* and *socer et consocer* of the Augusti<sup>653</sup>. Honoring Plautilla was, therefore, extremely important for those who wanted to maintain the favor of the emperor<sup>654</sup>. It is in any case significant that the name of Plautilla, who appears on the single milestone set up during the proconsulship of Terentianus, is not always reported by the milestones set up by Gentianus. This may suggest that Domna was still considered to be the more important among the two Augustae.

Plautilla's name possibly appeared placed after Domna's on another inscription from Tacina, a small center in the province of Lycia and Pamphilia<sup>655</sup>. This monument was set up under the proconsulate of Julius Tarius Titianus (ca. 202-205). It records the construction of new baths at the expense of one of the leading citizens, Tryphon, who

<sup>651</sup> When Plautianus was assassinated, Domna and Plautilla were together and (in theory) unaware of what was happening. Cf. section IVa.2.3 above. Imperial women belonging to previous dynasties would also have stayed at court together with the current Augustae. Thus, for example, Commodus' sister Cornificia was staying with Domna when Geta was killed (Hdn. 4.6.3).

<sup>652</sup> Although she is not mentioned, Plautilla was certainly in the group of distinguished women led by Domna during the Secular Games of 204 (on this topic cf. Levick 2007, 53-54 and *infra* section IVa.3.7). Also, Plautianus used to conduct investigations about Domna among the women of high society who were evidently seeing the Augusta (and Plautilla) quite often. Cf. section IVa.2 above.

<sup>653</sup> Cf. Caldelli 2011.

<sup>654</sup> Two inscriptions that honor Plautilla in Nicaea (IK Iznik 59) and Seleucia Kalykadnos might be dating to this period (ICilicie 2). As observed by Conesa Navarro and González Fernández 2016, 146, the close relationship between Plautilla and Plautianus was occasionally emphasized in inscriptions. Thus, in CIL VI 1074, Plautilla is presented not only as the wife of Caracalla and the daughter-in-law of Severus, but also as the daughter of Plautianus.

<sup>655</sup> App. no. 178b. According to the IGRR, the name of Geta originally occupied the erased space after 'Ιουλίας in l. 3. The erasure, however, may have included Plautilla's name as well.

dedicated the new building to the members of the imperial family<sup>656</sup>. The inscription is often quoted by scholars, inasmuch as the Augusta is called ‘New Hera’ (Νέα Ἡρά). In the text, she is the only member of the family with a divine title, a circumstance that, according to scholarly literature, should be regarded as an initiative of the local elite and not as an attempt by Domna to be venerated as a goddess<sup>657</sup>. The equation between an Augusta and Hera was not a novelty. This comparison had already been used in inscriptions to honor previous imperial women, such as Livia, Julia Sabina, Domitia Longina, Vibia Sabina and, perhaps, Faustina the Younger<sup>658</sup>. With Domna, however, the equation with Hera gains new momentum. In fact, she is compared to Hera on a statue base from Corycus (Cilicia)<sup>659</sup>, and she is addressed as Juno Regina and ‘goddess Juno of the earth’ (*dea Iuno orbis terrae*) in two African inscriptions from Zama and Leptis Magna (Africa Proconsularis), respectively<sup>660</sup>. Moreover, she is depicted as Juno on a relief belonging to the Severan Arch in Leptis<sup>661</sup>. In Tacina, the title ‘New Hera’ clearly has the purpose of giving more prominence to Domna, whose name appears in the third position, i.e. after Severus and Caracalla, and before Geta and, perhaps, Plautilla. The exceptional emphasis attributed to Domna is probably a consequence of Tryphon’s knowledge of the imperial court. The inscription says that he had been ambassador in

<sup>656</sup> Titianus’ career is only fragmentarily known (on the topic cf. Eck 2012, 69-73). The inscription from Tacina has been usually considered as a proof that he was proconsul of Asia (e.g. IGRR IV 861). A recently published text, however, unequivocally attests to the fact that he governed Lycia and Pamphilia between ca. 202 and 205, cf. Gökalp 2011, 125-128.

<sup>657</sup> Levick 2007, 136; Ghedini 1984, 125-128; Kettenhofen 1979, 118-119.

<sup>658</sup> Livia: IGRR IV 319 (Pergamum). Julia Sabina: BCH 1880, 396 no. 3 (Halicarnassus). Domitia Longina: SEG 31, 945 (Stratonicea). Vibia Sabina: IG XII suppl. 440 (Thasus); IGRR III 663 (Patara); IGRR IV 1492 (Kassaba), 1595 (Metropolis); TAM II<sup>2</sup> 560 (Tlos). Faustina: SEG 39, 1497 (Hierapolis Castabala). Cf. also Lichtenberger 2011, 211; Levick 2007, 136; Ghedini 1984, 125-128.

<sup>659</sup> App. no. 42b.

<sup>660</sup> App. nos. 183b, 324b.

<sup>661</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 211; Alexandridis 2004, 199-200; Mikocki 1995, 211-212 no. 423; Ghedini 1984, 80-87. Cf. also section IVb.2 below.

Rome at the time of Commodus (*μετὰ πάσας ... διαποντίους πρεσβείας*). As one of the most distinguished citizens, he would have been sent to meet Severus and Caracalla when they were travelling through Asia Minor on the way back to Rome in 202. The title ‘New Hera’ and the emphasis given to the name of Domna seem to indicate that the city obtained some benefits thanks to her intercession.

The Balkan provinces on the route of the imperial family to Italy are rich in dedications to Domna. As observed by Birley, the passage of the court was a good opportunity for both governors and local communities to meet the emperors<sup>662</sup>. Two slabs from Augusta Traiana (province of Thrace) dating to 202 are particularly worth mentioning<sup>663</sup>. Both monuments report an edict of the legate Q. Sicinius Clarus<sup>664</sup>, who carried out an imperial instruction concerning the establishment of a new settlement in Pizos. As in the inscription from Giza, the text starts with a dedication to the victory and safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna. Sicinius Clarus is probably another strong supporter of Severus. His origin seems to be Oea in Tripolitania, and his father must in all probability be identified with a Sicinius Pudens who set up an inscription in Leptis Magna to thank Severus and Caracalla for the advancement of his son<sup>665</sup>. At the same time, the city of Ulpiana and the legate of Moesia Superior, Q. Anicius Faustus, set up three statues in honor of Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>666</sup>. As well as the aforementioned governors, Anicius Faustus can be considered one of the most active supporters of the Severan regime. He was from Numidia, where he had served as legate from 197 to 201,

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<sup>662</sup> Birley 1999, 143.

<sup>663</sup> App. nos. 62a-63a.

<sup>664</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> S 699.

<sup>665</sup> IRT 295 = AE 1942/43, 2 = AE 1953, 185. Cf. Laronde and Degeorge 2005, 94; Birley 1999, 33 with further references.

<sup>666</sup> App. no. 68a.

also holding the suffect consulate *in absentia* at some time in 198<sup>667</sup>. Under his command, numerous inscriptions honoring the imperial family were set up in Lambaesis and other Numidian cities<sup>668</sup>. Amongst them, it is worthwhile mentioning three architraves on public buildings, which the city of Cuicul constructed and Anicius Faustus dedicated. Following the regular format of the consular dating, the texts report the names of the four members of the family in the ablative case, thus implying that the new structures were inaugurated not only during the reign of the emperors, but also during that of the Augusta (*et Iulia Domna Aug. matre castrorum*)<sup>669</sup>. The dedication of the statues in Moesia, therefore, was a further declaration of loyalty on behalf of this senator, with Domna still holding a privileged position, just as in the inscriptions set up in Numidia. Moreover, while these statues were being set up, the veterans of the legion VII Claudia set up another dedication in Viminacium commemorating the emperors and Domna<sup>670</sup>. This inscription is particularly significant, since it was probably put up on the occasion of a visit by Severus and his family<sup>671</sup>. Further displays of devotion are also documented in the neighboring province of Moesia Inferior. Here, in 201, the city of Tomi inaugurated some new buildings by setting up dedications that mention the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* C. Ovinius Tertullus as co-author of the initiative<sup>672</sup>. The name of Domna, as usual, comes in the fourth position after Geta. Except for the governorship of Moesia Inferior, no other steps of the career of Ovinius Tertullus are known. Many other dedications to the imperial house, on both inscriptions and coins from Moesia, attest,

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<sup>667</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> A 595. On his career cf. also Mennen 2011, 68-69, 86-88; Birley 1999, 143.

<sup>668</sup> App. nos. 14a, 35a-37a, 46b, 48b.

<sup>669</sup> App. nos. 35a-37a.

<sup>670</sup> App. no. 71a.

<sup>671</sup> On the topic cf. Mirković 1977, 183-187.

<sup>672</sup> App. nos. 59a-60a.

nonetheless, to the fact that he supported the cause of Severus, to which he was also close on account of a probable African origin<sup>673</sup>.

All this documentation demonstrates that between 201 and 202 the governors of Thracia, Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior took particular care to include the name of the Augusta in their declarations of loyalty to the imperial house. Admittedly, Domna is not the first imperial woman to be recorded in this type of inscription in these regions. In Moesia Inferior, Faustina the Younger had already appeared in the dedication of a temple of Serapis by the legate M. Iallius Bassus<sup>674</sup>, and in a couple of inscriptions *pro salute* erected in Augusta Traiana and Nicopolis ad Istrum<sup>675</sup>. Yet it is necessary to remember that Faustina stayed in these regions for considerable periods of time during Marcus Aurelius' Danubian campaigns, so it is understandable that inscriptions to her would be dedicated. The manifestations of devotion towards Domna seem, however, to be more conspicuous. This may well be a consequence of the fact that, as in the case of the governors of Asia mentioned in the previous section, Sicinius Pudens, Anicius Faustus and Ovinius Tertullus can be considered as close supporters of Severus, and as politicians with a good knowledge of the imperial court. Provincial communities and soldiers were also following their example. The city of Ulpiana calls itself *res publica sua* when referring to Domna, and the veterans of the legio VII Claudia paid homage to the Augusta. No similar honors are, so far, documented with respect to earlier imperial women.

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<sup>673</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup>O 191.

<sup>674</sup> CIL III 12387 = AE 1891, 88.

<sup>675</sup> IGBulg V 5599 = SEG 26.784 and IGBulg II 660, respectively.

#### IVa.3.5. The situation in Italy

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the return of the court to Rome and the marriage between Caracalla and Plautilla should be dated to the spring of 202. A few months later (September 13<sup>th</sup>) a soldier belonging to the *equites singulares* dedicated an altar to honor Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla and Plautianus in Rome<sup>676</sup>. This is not the first dedication that soldiers of the *equites singulares* set up to honor members of the Severan dynasty. Starting from the beginning of Severus' reign, the dedications *pro salute* placed by the soldiers of this unit in Rome can be summarized as follows:

People honored	Monument typology	Dedicators	Date	Reference
Severus, Caracalla, Plautianus	altar <i>pro salute</i>	<i>collegium curatorum</i> (a list with the names of the members of the <i>collegium</i> follows)	Jan. 1st, 197	AE 1935, 156 = AE 1968, 8b
Severus, Caracalla, Plautianus	altar to Hercules Invictus and all the gods and goddesses <i>pro salute</i> ; to the Genius of the <i>turma</i> for the return of the unit	T. Flavius Respectus, C. Severinus Vitalis, Sex. Gemellinius Pudens	Jun. 6th, 197	CIL VI 224
Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautianus	altar <i>pro salute, itu, reditu</i> and <i>victoria</i> ; to the Genius of the <i>turma</i> for their return from the Parthian expedition	M. Aurelius Nepos, <i>remansor</i>	Apr. 1st, 200	App. no. 45a
Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla, Plautianus	altar to Hercules Invictus and the Genius of the regiment <i>pro salute</i>	C. Julius Secundus, <i>vexillarius</i> (a list with the names of the soldiers in Secundus' <i>turma</i> follows)	Sept. 13th, 202	App. no. 69a
Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautianus	altar to the Genius of the regiment <i>pro salute, victoria et reditu</i>		202-203 (?)	App. no. 72a

Table 2: Dedications *pro salute* set up by soldiers belonging to the *equites singulares* between 197 and 203.

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<sup>676</sup> App. no. 69a.

The monuments that report only the names of Severus, Caracalla and Plautianus were erected at the time of the war against Albinus, in 197. Domna had the title of *mater castrorum* (and *Caesaris*) since 196, but her name was, nevertheless, omitted. As seen in chapter III, soldiers from the fleet of Ravenna had included her name in a dedication to Severus and Caracalla that they had erected in Rome in 196<sup>677</sup>. This indicates that the *equites singulares* were not compelled to mention the entire imperial family in their dedications. Starting from 200, however, they started to include Domna (and Geta, who had become Caesar in 198) in their dedications. This is the first time that an imperial woman appears in an inscription *pro salute* placed by the *equites*. Despite the prevalent interpretation of Dio's words (namely that Domna retired among the philosophers on account of Plautianus' attacks), these inscriptions suggest that her presence in public life was still strong. Also, considering that the *equites singulares* were under the command of Plautianus, the fact that they felt the need to include Domna in their displays of devotion reveals that her popularity remained intact even among Plautianus' subordinates.

In the meanwhile, other elite soldiers started to pay homage to Domna. On the *dies natalis* of Severus (April 3<sup>rd</sup>) in 200, two officers of the *frumentarii* of the legio II Italica set up an altar to Jupiter for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna in Luna (northern Etruria)<sup>678</sup>. The II Italica, a Danubian legion that marched into Rome with Severus in 193, was one of the core units in the Severan army, and its soldiers were presumably very attached to Severus<sup>679</sup>. The omission of Plautianus' name implies that

<sup>677</sup> Cf. section III.5.2 above.

<sup>678</sup> App. no. 46a. A detachment of *frumentarii* was probably stationed in Rome in the *castra peregrina*. Scholars have hypothesized that their presence in Luna was connected to the surveillance of the marble caves. On the topic cf. Frasson 2013, 17-20 with further bibliography.

<sup>679</sup> The legion was awarded the titles *Pia* and *Fidelis* at the time of the civil wars of 193-197. Cf. Lörincz 2000, 145-149 with further references.

he was not regarded as the ‘fourth Caesar’ by the entire army. Domna, on the other hand, was becoming more and more popular among the soldiers stationed in Italy.

In January 201, another individual erected an interesting monument in Portus, the new port of Ostia built by Trajan. His name is C. Valerius Serenus, and he set up an altar to the safety and the safe travelling (*ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ ἐπανόδου*) of Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>680</sup>. The inscription also reports that he was manager of the whole Alexandrian fleet (*ὁ ἐπιμελητὴς παντὸς τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείνου στόλου*), and, therefore, one of the most distinguished individuals from the Alexandrian community in Rome<sup>681</sup>. The fact that the name of Geta was not included in the dedication makes this text quite different from other contemporary dedications. Given the great attention that Severus paid to the grain supply from North Africa and Egypt, the role of Serenus was certainly not a minor one<sup>682</sup>. It cannot be excluded that either Serenus or his delegates had the possibility of being received at court, perhaps during the stay of Severus and his family in Alexandria during 200<sup>683</sup>. Valerius Serenus can, therefore, be regarded as another individual with a certain degree of familiarity with the Severan establishment. The omission of the Caesar (Geta) and the mention of Domna immediately after Caracalla seem to reflect the great importance that he and the Alexandrian traders based in Rome attributed to the

<sup>680</sup> App. no. 54a.

<sup>681</sup> On the topic cf. Terpstra 2013, 120.

<sup>682</sup> Sev. 8.5: *Rei frumentariae, quam minimam reppererat, ita consuluit, ut excedens vita septem annorum canonem populo Romano relinquaret* (‘Finding the grain-supply at a very low ebb, he managed it so well that on departing this life he left the Roman people a surplus to the amount of seven years’ tribute’). On the topic cf. Langford 2013, 63. On the importance of the Alexandrian fleet, which, according to the estimations, was transporting 150.000 tons of corn every year to Rome, cf. Rickman 1971, 10.

<sup>683</sup> On Severus’ stay in Alexandria cf. section IVa.1 above.

Augusta<sup>684</sup>. Interestingly, in the abovementioned inscription from Tacina, the name of Domna, who acquires exceptional importance thanks to the comparison with Hera, is reported in the third position after Severus and Caracalla, and before Geta<sup>685</sup>. In 203, a symposiarch of the priesthood of Bel in Palmyra honored Severus, Caracalla, Domna and Geta by setting up an inscription where the name of the Augusta is placed, once again, in the third position<sup>686</sup>. Furthermore, Severus and Domna are addressed as the ‘rulers of the earth, the sea and all humanity’ (*δεσπόται γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καὶ παντὸς ἀνθρώπων γένους*), an expression that confers the title of emperor (*δεσπότης*) upon the Augusta<sup>687</sup>. As seen above in chapter II, Domna’s family enjoyed considerable popularity in Palmyra. The city, in fact, honored Julia Maesa with a statue when Domna was still alive<sup>688</sup>. Thus, the relevance given to Domna’s name in Tacina and Palmyra seems to be intentional, as in the case of the dedication by Valerius Serenus.

#### **IVa.3.6. The trip to Africa (202-203)**

After having spent the summer of 202 in the capital, the imperial court accompanied by Plautianus, moved to North Africa between the end of 202 and the beginning of 203<sup>689</sup>. There are several inscriptions that can be dated to this period. During 202, the city of Uchi Maius (Africa Proconsularis) erected a statue to Caracalla, who is addressed as the son of both Severus and Domna. This is the first attestation of an imperial woman

<sup>684</sup> The omission of Geta becomes even stranger when considering that the production of coins for Geta significantly increased during this period, cf. Kemmers 2011, 274-280.

<sup>685</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.4 above.

<sup>686</sup> App. no. 77a.

<sup>687</sup> Interestingly, the word δεσπότης occurs in the accounts of both Dio (55.12.2) and Herodian (1.6.4) with reference to male emperors. An inscription that the city of Mytilene dedicated to Severus (IG XII 2, 216) calls the emperor γᾶς καὶ θαλάσσας δεσπόταν.

<sup>688</sup> Cf. section II.2.3 above.

<sup>689</sup> Cf. section IVa.1 above.

appearing in the filiation of an emperor. After Augustus' death, the senate put forward the idea of adding 'son of Livia' to the name of Tiberius<sup>690</sup>. The latter, however, declined this proposal<sup>691</sup>, and the filiation from his mother never appears on inscriptions. As for Domna, there is no evidence that Severus or the senate granted the Augusta a similar honor. Yet a few other inscriptions from both North Africa and other regions attest to the inclusion of Domna's name in the filiations of Caracalla and Geta<sup>692</sup>. This habit is probably the result of local initiatives which, nevertheless, highlight the special relationship between Domna and her sons<sup>693</sup>. Two other interesting monuments were set up in the camp of the legio III Augusta in Lambaesis (Numidia), which Severus and his entourage probably visited<sup>694</sup>. The first is a slab that was placed on the facade of a new temple of Dea Caelestis<sup>695</sup>. The author of the text, which starts with a dedication *pro salute* to Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna and Plautilla, was the legate Claudius Gallus together with his wife and sons. Like the abovementioned governors in Asia Minor, Thrace, and the two Moesiae, Claudius Gallus was a close collaborator of Severus, since he participated in the second Parthian campaign as commander of the *vexillationes* from Germany<sup>696</sup>. He also became *consul suffectus* and, later, governor of Dacia. The second

<sup>690</sup> This initiative is well documented, inasmuch as it appears in Dio 57.12.4; SVET. *Tib.* 50.2 and TAC. *Ann.* 1.14.1. On the topic cf. Bertolazzi 2015, 424-428.

<sup>691</sup> Dio 57.12.4-5: Ἄλλοι καὶ τὸν Τίβεριον ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἐπι- καλεῖσθαι ἐσηγήσαντο, ὅπως ὥσπερ οἱ Ἐλληνες πατρόθεν, οὕτω καὶ ἐκεῖνος μητρόθεν ὄνομάζηται. Αγανακτῶν οὖν ἐπὶ τούτοις οὕτε τὰ ψηφιζόμενα αὐτῇ πλὴν ἐλαχίστων ἐπεκύρουν, οὗτ' ἄλλο τι ὑπέρογκον ποιεῖν ἐπέτρεπεν. ('Still others proposed that Tiberius should be named after her [i.e. Livia], so that, just as the Greeks were called by their father's name, he should be called by that of his mother. All this vexed him, and he would neither sanction the honors voted her, with a very few exceptions, nor otherwise allow her any extravagance of conduct'.) On the topic cf. Bertolazzi 2015, 424-430.

<sup>692</sup> App. nos. 110b (Megara); 92a (Auzia); 70a (Uchi Maius); 16b (Athens); 178a (Cuicul); 211a-213a (Sitifis); 214a (Thamallula).

<sup>693</sup> Bertolazzi 2015, 424-428.

<sup>694</sup> Stay in Lambaesis: Levick 2007, 51; Birley 1999, 147-148.

<sup>695</sup> App. no. 75a.

<sup>696</sup> On Claudius Gallus (PIR<sup>2</sup> C 878). Cf. also Birley 1999, 106, 147.

inscription appears on a statue base, which miliary administrative personnel (*familia rationis castrensis*) set up along with other similar monuments to Severus<sup>697</sup>. Both this statue and the dedication by Claudius Gallus demonstrate that the stay of the imperial family was an ideal occasion for both high officers and soldiers to display their loyalty, not only to the emperors, but also to Domna. Finally, not far from Lambaesis, the city of Thamugadi dedicated a large building to Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla and Plautianus<sup>698</sup>. According to Henriette Doisy, the inscription could have belonged to a triumphal arch<sup>699</sup>, but this attribution remains hypothetical.

Further to the East, in Tripolitania, where Severus conducted some military operations<sup>700</sup>, another monument to Domna could possibly be connected to an imperial visit. This is a statue base from the portico behind the theater of Leptis Magna. This statue of Domna was set up along with two other similar monuments to Severus and Caracalla<sup>701</sup>. The author of the dedication was a procurator, D. Clodius Galba. As was the case for the aforementioned M. Iunius Punicus, the occasion for setting up these statues was a promotion (stressed by the expression *ob caelestem in se indulgentiam*) to a more prestigious office, i.e. from running imperial estates in Africa Proconsularis to the administration of the privy purse (*ratio privata*) in central and northern Italy. Unlike the honors paid by Iunius Punicus, a statue base for Geta is, in this case, not documented<sup>702</sup>.

<sup>697</sup> App. no. 74a. Statues to Severus: CIL VIII 2702, 2703 (= 18114), 18250. All the three inscriptions report *trib. pot. XI* (= 203) in the titulature of Severus.

<sup>698</sup> App. no. 82a.

<sup>699</sup> Doisy 1953, 130.

<sup>700</sup> Cf. section IVa.1 above.

<sup>701</sup> App. no. 83a. Statues to Severus and Caracalla: IRT 395, 424. On the technical features of these monuments cf. Bigi 2010, 223-225 with a picture (fig. 7.6) of the three statue bases.

<sup>702</sup> It seems improbable that a further statue base dedicated to Geta was removed after the *damnatio memoriae*, as suggested by Bigi-Tantillo 2010, 295 n. 191. In Leptis numerous statue bases dedicated to Geta with his name erased are still *in situ*, e.g. IRT 433-444.

The purpose of Galba's initiative seems to be more similar to that of the head of the Alexandrian fleet C. Valerius Serenus, who chose to include only Severus, Caracalla and Domna in his dedication<sup>703</sup>. The bases set up by Galba, therefore, confirm the fact that Domna could, occasionally, be considered more worthy of honoring than the Caesar, Geta.

#### **IVa.3.7. The last years of Plautianus and Plautilla (203-205)**

The return of the imperial family to Rome was anticipated in the text of an altar to Fortuna that Antonius, an imperial freedman with a senior position in the chancellor's office (*proximus a libellis*), set up *pro salute et redditu* of Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna and Plautilla<sup>704</sup>. Antonius was certainly used to seeing the Augustae at the imperial palace, and his interest in keeping a good relationship with them is consequently well justified. As noted above, Plautilla was spending a considerable part of her time together with Domna, sharing in her visibility and in the important position the senior Augusta was occupying in public life. Unfortunately, information about Plautilla's character is limited to a single comment of Dio, who says that she was 'the most indecent woman' (ἡ ἀναιδεστάτη γυνή)<sup>705</sup>. Traces of an eccentric personality are, perhaps, detectable in the great variety of hairstyles documented on her coins. In less than three years, in fact, Plautilla is portrayed with at least five different coiffures<sup>706</sup>. She was probably able to establish relationships with local communities, as demonstrated by a

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<sup>703</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.5 above.

<sup>704</sup> App. no. 80a. On the position of *proximus* cf. Weaver 1972, 252-257. On Jun. 10<sup>th</sup>, 203 the *equites singulares* set up a dedication (Speidel 1954, 83-84 no. 58) *ob redditum ab expeditione felicissima in urbem sacram*.

<sup>705</sup> Dio 77 (76).3.1.

<sup>706</sup> Varner 2004, 164-165 with further bibliography.

good number of individual statues that Cures (Samnium)<sup>707</sup>, Aquae Balissae<sup>708</sup>, Siscia (Pannonia Superior)<sup>709</sup>, Soluntum (Sicilia)<sup>710</sup> and Nicaea (Bithynia)<sup>711</sup> erected in her honor. Dedications where she appears together with Domna and the other members of the imperial family are numerous<sup>712</sup>. Among the most interesting ones, it is worthwhile mentioning a bronze slab that was placed in the barracks of the fourth cohort of the *vigiles* in Rome. In the dedication *pro salute*, the names of Domna and Plautilla follow those of the emperors, thus becoming the first imperial women to be mentioned in a cantonment of the *vigiles*<sup>713</sup>. In Dacia, a *numerus* of Mauretanians and their prefect, Julius Evangelianus, set up a slab that records the names of Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla and Plautianus<sup>714</sup>. Both the career of Evangelianus and his relationship with the imperial court remain unknown<sup>715</sup>. Yet it seems evident that he wanted to gain as much favor as possible at the imperial court<sup>716</sup>. Finally, in 204, the emperors and Geta, Domna, Plautilla and Plautianus are recorded in the dedication of the Arch of the *Argentarii*, a richly decorated arch that the association of the money-changers (*argentarii*) and other *collegia* built at the entrance of the Forum Boarium. As observed

<sup>707</sup> CIL IX 4958.

<sup>708</sup> AE 2007, 1144

<sup>709</sup> CIL III 3968 = 10850 = AE 2008, 1079.

<sup>710</sup> CIL X 7336.

<sup>711</sup> IK Iznik 59.

<sup>712</sup> Cf. nos. 69a, 73a, 75a, 76a, 78a, 80a, 82a, 84a, 86a, 91a, 164b-172b, 174b-181b in the catalogue.

<sup>713</sup> App. no. 78a. Plautianus is also recorded, although only as one of the consuls of 203.

<sup>714</sup> App. no. 84a.

<sup>715</sup> His name does not appear in PIR<sup>2</sup> and, to the best of my knowledge, he does not appear on any other inscription.

<sup>716</sup> With regard to the relationship between Plautianus and provincial governors, the case of Raecius Constans (PIR<sup>2</sup> R 8), the governor of Sardinia, is worth remembering. According to Dio (76 [75].16.2-3), Constans was punished for having torn down some images of Plautianus. Cf. Grossi 1968b, 44-49.

by Grosso, this arch represents the apogee of Plautianus<sup>717</sup>, who was also portrayed on one of the decorative panels together with Caracalla and Plautilla<sup>718</sup>.

The power equilibrium, however, began to change soon. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, just before dying, Severus' brother Geta allegedly revealed the fraudulent actions of Plautianus to the emperor, who thus became suspicious of the prefect and removed many of his privileges<sup>719</sup>. Epigraphic evidence from Rome attests to both Plautianus' fall into partial disgrace and the increase in Domna's influence. In the long inscription that records the *acta* of the Secular Games (which started on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 204), the simple abbreviation *pr(aefectus) pr(aetorio)* replaces the name of Plautianus, and the name of Plautilla is not documented at all<sup>720</sup>. Domna, on the contrary, appears several times. She led a procession of 109 matrons who attended a ceremony officiated by Severus in honor of Juno Regina<sup>721</sup> and she presided over the religious banquets that the most distinguished matrons offered to Juno and Diana<sup>722</sup>. The presence of her niece – and the future Augusta – Julia Soahemias, who was the first matron among those of equestrian rank, is also recorded<sup>723</sup>.

The absence of direct references to Plautilla and Plautianus in the *acta* suggests that the Arch of the *Argentarii* (where their names appear in full) was inaugurated at the

<sup>717</sup> Grosso 1968b, 51.

<sup>718</sup> Severus, Domna and Geta (whose image was erased in 211) were depicted on another panel. On the arch of the *argentarii* cf. in general Rowan 2012, 105-107; Daguet-Gagey 2005; Elsner 2005 and bibliography there. Cf. also section IVb.2 below. Both the images of Plautianus and Plautilla were chiseled off in 205 and 211-212, respectively

<sup>719</sup> Cf. section IVa.1 above.

<sup>720</sup> Presence of Plautianus: Pighi 1965 IV 5. According to Pighi, the name of Plautianus should appear at the beginning of the text, immediately after Geta. Grosso 1968b, 50-51 has, nonetheless, demonstrated that the space occupied by the erasure is insufficient to include the name of the prefect. Consequently, the only name that was deleted was that of Geta.

<sup>721</sup> App. no. 8a.

<sup>722</sup> App. no. 89a.

<sup>723</sup> Pighi 1965 V<sup>a</sup> 27.

beginning of 204, just a few months before the Secular Games. During this period, Plautianus' fortune had evidently started to decline along with Plautilla's<sup>724</sup>. In honorary inscriptions dating to 204 the young Augusta is still mentioned together with Domna, but her coin types show that she abandoned the peculiar hairstyles adopted during 202 and 203, the so-called *Melonenfrisur* and the *Scheitelzopf*<sup>725</sup>. In 204 she is portrayed with a new hairstyle, the *Helmfrisur*, which resembles Domna's traditional coiffure<sup>726</sup>. This modification of her portraiture seems to suggest that Plautilla attempted to conform to the customs of the senior Augusta, thus renouncing assertions of her individuality. Now Severus was probably more inclined to pay attention to Domna than to Plautianus. As reported above, this new course of events affecting the imperial court lasted until the beginning of 205, when Plautianus was assassinated and Plautilla banished to Lipara. After these episodes, Plautilla's name disappeared from inscriptions, while that of Domna acquired more and more prominence. In the next sections I will, then, turn to the examination of the epigraphic evidence concerning Domna during the least years of Severus' reign.

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<sup>724</sup> Cf. Grosso 1968b, 51. According to this scholar, the death of Geta, the brother of Severus who, on his deathbed, revealed Plautianus' crimes to the emperor (Dio 77 [76].2.4), should be placed in this period.

<sup>725</sup> Varner 2004, 165. In the *Melonenfrisur*, Plautilla's hair is parted in the center and braided horizontally. The braids (usually five or seven in number) are drawn into a chignon at the back of the head. The *Scheitelzopf* shows braids drawn together to form a broad, flat band of hair. This is folded over on the nape of the neck and then pulled up the back of the head. Cf. also Ghedini 1984, 89-90 with previous bibliography.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.* This hairstyle displays waves of hair descending to the nape of the neck and covering the ears (with little side-loops emerging by either cheek). A small chignon is inserted into the mass of the coiffure on the nape of the neck. On Domna's early hairstyle cf. section III.4 above.

#### IVa.3.8. After the death of Plautianus (I). The situation in Rome.

After the assassination of Plautianus at the hands of Caracalla, on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 205, the presence of Domna on inscriptions is still constant. In some cases, however, the name of the Augusta acquires specific relevance. An inscription from Rome dating to August 17<sup>th</sup>, 206, reports some interesting information regarding the dedication of statues to honor the Augusta. The first part of the text is the dedication of a statue to Ti. Claudius Severus, *patronus* of the association of fishermen and divers (*corpus piscatorum et urinatorum*):

*Ti. Claudio Esquil(ina) Severo / decuriali lictori, patrono / corporis piscatorum et / urinator(um), q(uin)q(uennali) III eiusdem corporis, / ob merita eius, / quod hic primus  
statuas duas, una / Antonini Aug(usti) domini n(ostr)i, alias Iul(iae) / Augustae  
dominae nostr(ae), s(ua) p(ecunia) p(osuerit), / una cum Claudio Pontiano filio / suo  
eq(uite) Rom(ano) (...)*

To Ti. Claudius Severus, of the tribe Esquilina, *decurialis lictor*, patron of the association of the fishermen and divers, three times *quinquennialis* of the association, on account of his merits, **since he was the first to set up two statues, one for our lord Antoninus Augustus, and the other for our mistress Julia Augusta, at his own expense** and together with his son Claudio Pontianus, Roman knight (...)<sup>727</sup>

Although this inscription does not commemorate a member of Severus' family, its content is very intriguing for at least three reasons: *a*) it shows groups of statues dedicated only to Caracalla and Domna existed; *b*) since Claudio Severus had been the first to set up statues for this emperor and his mother (at least in Rome, one may assume), it follows that there were other people who had erected similar statue groups after Claudio Severus had opened the way for this kind of initiative; *c*) this is the first inscription that mentions the title *domina* with reference to an imperial woman.

As for the points *a-b*, it is worth observing that special honors for Caracalla and Domna imply a special connection between these two individuals. Claudio Severus certainly had good reason to set up statues in honor of the young emperor and the

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<sup>727</sup> App. no. 98a.

Augusta. Perhaps at the time of this initiative he was already *patronus* of the association of fishermen and divers, a person who had the task of representing the guild at the highest levels. It is also possible that he became *patronus* later, presumably on account of his ability to attract the attention of the emperors. In either case, a specific statue for Domna could suggest that she had a role in improving the relationship between the association and Caracalla. Since the statue group put up by Claudius Severus had not been the only one, it is reasonable to suppose that there had been other cases of interactions between associations/individuals and the pair Caracalla/Domna. That Severus was particularly concerned with educating his sons to become good emperors is a well-known fact. According to Herodian, for instance, while Severus and Caracalla were campaigning in Scotland, Geta was entrusted with the civil administration of the empire<sup>728</sup>. Also, starting from the promotion to the rank of Augustus, Caracalla's name regularly appears on imperial rescripts together with Severus'. Consequently, it seems plausible that Caracalla was already dealing with administrative matters when Claudius Severus was dedicating his statues. The influence of Domna, in this context, may have been considerable. The 'excellent advice' that, according to Dio<sup>729</sup>, she gave Caracalla when he became the sole ruler is probably the result of a well-established habit, which had already begun during the reign of Severus. The presence of Domna at the side of Caracalla, and, sometimes, together with Severus, is documented by other monuments from this period. One year after the placement of the dedication to Claudius Severus, in 207, three statues to Severus, Caracalla and Domna were set up in the camp of the *vigiles* in Ostia<sup>730</sup>. These monuments were erected under the authority of the prefect, Cn. Marcius Rustius Rufinus,

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<sup>728</sup> Hdn. 3.14.9.

<sup>729</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.2.

<sup>730</sup> App. no. 101a. The statue base to Caracalla is CIL XIV 4387 = AE 1889, 105.

and under the supervision of the vice prefect, C. Laecanius Novatillianus, and the tribune of the second cohort of the *vigiles*, M. Flavius Raesianus. The occasion was the restoration of the barracks, since Severus and Caracalla are called *restitutores castrorum Ostiensium* ('restorers of the camps in Ostia'). Marcius Rustius Rufinus is a very interesting person. He was certainly very close to the emperors. After a series of military assignments in the garrison of Rome (as centurion in the first praetorian cohort and *exercitator* in the *equites singulares*), and in the East (as centurion *primipilus* in the III Gallica, stationed near Emesa, and in the III Cyrenaica, stationed in Arabia), he was put in charge of the conscription in Northern Italy before Severus' campaign against Clodius Albinus in 197. A procuratorship in Syria Coele followed a little later. On the occasion of the Parthian campaign of 197-198, he was entrusted with the special task of supervising the supplies for the army, holding also the command of the fleets of Ravenna and Misenum<sup>731</sup>. Interestingly, in 207 the municipality of Beneventum, the city where Marcius Rustius Rufinus was from, erected two statues to Caracalla and Domna, which probably formed part of an arch on the Via Appia<sup>732</sup>. The formula at the end of each dedication, *in territorio suo quod cingit etiam Caudinorum civitatem* ('in its territory, which includes also the town of Caudium'), should be interpreted as a reference to a territorial dispute between Beneventum and Caudium, an issue that was presumably settled by the emperors (or, perhaps, by Caracalla alone)<sup>733</sup>. Considering that in southern Italy this is the only documented statue dedicated to Domna, such a display of gratitude to the Augusta suggests that she had played a role in these events. Although Rustius

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<sup>731</sup> De Carlo 2006-2007; Dobson 1978, 269-270 no. 154; PIR<sup>2</sup> M 246; Pflaum 1960, II, 625-627 no. 234

<sup>732</sup> App. no. 99a. The inscription to Caracalla is in Carfora 2006, 316-318 no. 63.

<sup>733</sup> Torelli 2002, 224.

Rufinus is never called *patronus* of Beneventum, his interest in the dispute between Caudium and Beneventum, and, generally, in the good relations between Beneventum and the Severans, is easy to postulate<sup>734</sup>. Furthermore, the fact that he was promoted to the *praefectura vigilum* soon after the assassination of Plautinaus is a clue of his good relationship with Domna, a circumstance that can also be intimated from the aforementioned statue he erected in Ostia.

The expression *domina nostra* ('our mistress') represents an innovation in imperial epigraphy, because Domna is the first imperial woman to be honored with this title in inscriptions<sup>735</sup>. *Dominus noster* ('our lord') had already begun to appear during the reign of Commodus<sup>736</sup>. Yet, at that time, it had never been used for honoring Antonine women, such as Lucilla or Crispina. Domna, on the other hand, was called *domina* on the statue base of Cladius Severus and on other roughly contemporary monuments. A statue base from Bostra (Arabia) attests to the use of the equivalent Greek word for *domina*, κύρια, which is also used for the first time to refer to an imperial woman<sup>737</sup>. The city set up the statue between 205 and 207, but the monument was inaugurated by the governor of the province, Q. Aiacius Modestus (ἐπὶ Αἰακίου Μοδέστου ὑπάτου ἀναδεδειγμένου). At the same time, another statue was erected for Caracalla, who is called κύριος<sup>738</sup>.

<sup>734</sup> On Beneventum and the Severans cf. Bertolazzi 2016, 290-292; Torelli 2002, 222-231.

<sup>735</sup> Suetonius (*Dom.* 13.1) relates that, in the amphitheater, the people of Rome acclaimed Domitian and Domitia Longina *dominus* and *domina* by uttering *domino et dominae feliciter!* ('good fortune attend our Lord and Mistress!'). A few lines below, however, Suetonius says that Domitian wanted to be addressed as *dominus et deus noster* (*Dom.* 13.2), a story reported by Dio 67.4.7 and other later authors (AVR. VICT. *Caes.* 11.2; *Epit. de Caes.* 11.6; EVTR. 7.23; OROS. 7.10.2) as well. Yet there is no epigraphic evidence attesting to the use of the titles *dominus* and *domina* by Domitian and Domitia Longina. On the topic cf. Jones 1992, 108.

<sup>736</sup> Chastagnol 1988, 12-14.

<sup>737</sup> App. no. 184b. The expression ἡ κύρια ἡμῶν is attested to by an inscription from Teos (IGGR IV 1562), which the IGRR erroneously attributes to Faustina the Younger. This text is, in reality, a dedication to Diocletian's daughter, Galeria Valeria.

<sup>738</sup> IGLS XIII 1, 9055.

Considering that similar statues for Severus and Geta have not, so far, been discovered<sup>739</sup>, this statue group can be compared to the two statues put up by Claudius Severus. Both Domna and Caracalla are called κύριοι and honored together by a provincial governor whose familiarity with the imperial court was presumably well-established. A statue base from Gerasa (ca. 40 km west from Bostra) bears an inscription where Domna is called ‘the mistress Augusta’ (ἡ κύρια Σεβαστή)<sup>740</sup>. Statues for other members of the imperial family are not documented and the monument cannot be dated to a precise year, but the city, which calls itself ‘devoted’ (εὐσεβοῦσα), might have followed the example of Aiacius Modestus. Another interesting artifact from Rome indicates that the word *domina* could be occasionally used by people living in the capital to address the Augusta herself. This is a rare fiscal document, a *tabella immunitatis* ('exemption tablet'), with the name of the Augusta on a small little plate of bronze that was attached to the means of transport used for her property (perhaps that used by Domna herself) in order to exempt it from taxation<sup>741</sup>. In the text, Domna is called *Iulia Augusta domina mater castrorum* ('the mistress Julia Augusta, mother of the camps'). These few examples are not enough to demonstrate that Domna was awarded the title *domina* as part of her official titulature. It is, nonetheless, interesting that she could be occasionally addressed through a title normally used for emperors, a fact that highlights the aura of reverence which surrounded her during this period.

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<sup>739</sup> According to the IGES, the statue base of Caracalla comes from the theater. Although no indications are reported for the base of Domna, it is reasonable to assume that this moument was found in the same building.

<sup>740</sup> App. no. 312b.

<sup>741</sup> App. no. 33b. Cf. also Crimi 2012. On the *tabellae immunitatis* cf. Gasperetti 2009, 271-272; Mekacher 2006, 153; Orlandi 1995-1996, 368-369.

#### **IVa.3.9. After the death of Plautianus (II). The situation in North Africa.**

During the years following the assassination of Plautianus, the name of Domna is increasingly mentioned on inscriptions in many areas of the Empire, especially in North Africa, in the Danubian area and in the Eastern provinces. In North Africa, in particular, she appears on a considerable number of public monuments, particularly arches. It is important to note that she is the first imperial woman to appear on this kind of monument in this region<sup>742</sup>. During Severus' reign, her presence on African arches can be summarized as follows:

<b>City</b>	<b>People honored</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Thubursicu Numidarum	Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla	202-205	App. no. 179b
Thugga	Severus, Caracalla, Domna; Caracalla and Geta (on the other side of the monument)	205	CIL VIII 26540; App. no. 96a
Leptis Magna	Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna	ca. 206-207	Alexandridis 2004, 203-204 nos. 227-229; Ghedini 1984, 57-110
Vaga	Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna	209	App. no. 116a

**Table 3: Domna's presence on north African arches during the reign of Severus**

Considering that several arches to Severus and Caracalla had already been built between 195 and 198<sup>743</sup>, Domna's presence on the majority of the arches erected after 205 is very

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<sup>742</sup> Before Domna, imperial women had already been recorded on dedicatory inscriptions of arches elsewhere. Livia was honored in Ticinum, together with Augustus and other members of the imperial family (CIL V 6416); in Ephesus she was honored alongside with Augustus, Agrippa and Julia (AE 1904, 98 = AE 1924, 68). CIL IX 3304 from Superaequum, where Livia is honored alone, may have belonged to an arch, but Kleiner 1990, 512-513 has rejected this hypothesis. After her death the senate decreed an arch in Livia's honor, but this was never built, cf. Barret 2002, 173; Kleiner 1990. Antonia the Younger, Agrippina the Younger and Claudia Octavia appeared on an arch of Claudius built on the Via Lata in Rome (CIL VI 921 = 31204). Plotina and the Diva Marciana were honored together with Trajan in Ancona (CIL IX 5894). Lastly, an arch to commemorate the Diva Sabina was, perhaps, erected in Rome around 136-137, cf. Kleiner 1990, 512.

<sup>743</sup> Severus: CIL VIII 306-307 dating to 195 (Ammaedara); ILAlg I 1255 = AE 1917/18, 16 dating to 198 (Thubursicu Numidarum). Severus and Caracalla: CIL VIII 1428, 1444 dating to 196-197 (Thubursicu Bure).

interesting<sup>744</sup>. As observed by Kimberly Cassibry in a recent study on the arches with dedications to Domna, the residents who erected them were trying to articulate relationships, not only to the emperors, but also to the Augusta as well<sup>745</sup>. This seems to be particularly true during the period 205-209. The arch in Thugga was dedicated by decree of the decurions to celebrate the bestowal of municipal status on the city, which changed its name to *Municipium Septimum Aurelium Liberum Thuggense*<sup>746</sup>. It must be noted that the main inscription is dedicated only to Severus, Caracalla and Domna, who are called *conditores* ('founders') of the city<sup>747</sup>. Geta is honored together with Caracalla on the other side of the arch, while four statues – one for each member of the family – were placed in recesses in the pillars<sup>748</sup>. The dedicatory inscription on the temple of Saturn with the names of Severus, Clodius Albinus and Domna set up in 195 already testified that the inhabitants of Thugga held Domna in especially high regard<sup>749</sup>. Ten years later, the fact that they mentioned her as founder of the *municipium* together with Severus and Caracalla reveals the special place she was still occupying in their mind. A statue base in her honor, erected at some point during the reign of Severus, corroborates this impression, as well as one dedication where her name is placed after Severus', but precedes those of Caracalla and Geta<sup>750</sup>. On account of the privileges that Thugga received from Severus, it appears evident that the city had a special relationship with the

<sup>744</sup> Another arch was dedicated to Severus and Caracalla in Sufetula between 209 and 211 (ILAfr 121 = AE 1913, 30).

<sup>745</sup> Cassibry 2014, 85.

<sup>746</sup> On the topic cf. Cordovana 2007, 273; Saint-Amans 2004, 123-15 with further references.

<sup>747</sup> App. no. 96a.

<sup>748</sup> Caracalla and Geta: CIL VIII 26540 = ILAfr 526 = ILTun 1409. Statues: CIL VIII 26541 (Caracalla); app. no. 97a (Domna); CIL VIII 26542 = ILTun 1410 (Geta). The statue for Severus is not recorded, but its presence should be considered certain. On the description of the arch cf. Khanoussi and Maurin 2000, 32-35 nos. 10-11.

<sup>749</sup> Cf. section III.5.1 above.

<sup>750</sup> App. nos. 157b, 38b, respectively.

emperor, to whom several delegations would likely have been sent to express gratitude. The frequency with which Domna is honored, however, demonstrates that special connections with the Augusta also existed. As noted in chapter III, Domna was not the first imperial woman honored in Thugga (a statue had already been dedicated to Faustina the Younger)<sup>751</sup>. Yet the presence of her name on the arch and other public buildings demonstrates that she enjoyed unprecedented honors in this city. Soon after the inauguration of the arch of Thugga, the construction of another triumphal arch in Severus' hometown, Leptis Magna, was completed. This is the famous *quadrifrons* Severan Arch, whose dedicatory inscription is unfortunately lost<sup>752</sup>. Despite this, the main theme of the monument is easily identifiable as a celebration of the emperors and of Domna, who appears at least six times in its decorative reliefs<sup>753</sup>. A few years later, in 209, a triumphal arch dedicated to Severus, Caracalla, Geta, and Domna was erected in Vaga<sup>754</sup>. Unlike Thugga, the dedicatory inscription does not call them *conditores*. However, special emphasis is put on the fact that the new colony was established  *nomine et auspiciis divinis eorum* ('under their name and divine auspices'). Since the word *eorum* includes Domna as well, it follows that this inscription attributes a great deal of importance to the Augusta by mentioning her among the founders, as at Thugga. The inscription also says that the promotion to the rank of colony was carried out under the

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<sup>751</sup> Cf. section III.5.2 above.

<sup>752</sup> On this monument cf. in general Faust 2013; *Id.* 2011; Cordovana 2007, 405-409 with further references.

<sup>753</sup> Besides the bibliography reported in the table above, cf. section IVb.5.3 *infra*.

<sup>754</sup> App. no. 116a.

supervision of the proconsul T. Flavius Decimus<sup>755</sup>, who presumably oversaw the construction of the arch and its dedication.

Besides Flavius Decimus, other governors and imperial functionaries erected monuments to display their loyalty to the emperors and the Augusta. The legate of Numidia, Ti. Claudius Subatianus Proculus, placed an altar to Fortuna Augusta for the safety of Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>756</sup>. The omission of the name of Geta is also observed on the architrave of a temple that Subatianus Proculus dedicated in Lambaesis<sup>757</sup>. Once again, Domna seems to have acquired an importance that was superior to Geta's, at least in the eyes of Subatianus Procolus, who was particularly devoted to Severus. In fact, the aforementioned dedications to the imperial house mention him as consul designate. Two of his relatives, a Claudius Subatianus and a Subatianus Aquila (perhaps his father and his older brother), were governors of Cyprus in 197-198 and Egypt in 206-211, respectively<sup>758</sup>. Furthermore, his family was from Cuicul, a city where the Severans had been extensively honored. Here, in 199, the legate of Numidia, Q. Anicius Faustus, had dedicated several inscriptions to the family of Severus where the name of Domna appears in the ablative case. Also, in 200, some functionaries of the local tax bureau (the *quattuor publica Africae*) had set up a large block, supporting a group of statues, dedicated to Severus, Domna (who appears immediately after her husband), Caracalla and Geta under the supervision of the imperial procurator in charge of this branch, M. Rossius Vitulus, a staunch follower of Severus who had managed the military

<sup>755</sup> Aside from the legateship in Africa, nothing is known about the career of this senator, cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> F 255.

<sup>756</sup> App. no. 119a.

<sup>757</sup> App. no. 117a. On Subatianus Proculus cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> S 938.

<sup>758</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> S 935 and 937, on the family of the Claudi Subatiani cf. also Salomies 1997.

coffers during the war against Pescennius Niger<sup>759</sup>. Finally, it is important to note that the successors of Subatianus Proculus continued to pay omage to the imperial household and Domna. The legate Q. Cornelius Valens placed an altar to Jupiter Conservator for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna in Castellum Dimmidi (Numidia), more or less in 210<sup>760</sup>. A certain Pontius (his full name is unfortunately unknown)<sup>761</sup>, legate and consul designate, together with his wife and son set up an altar to Juppiter Valens, Aesculapius and Silvanus Pegasianus for the safety of the emperors and Domna in Lambaesis<sup>762</sup>.

Local communities also put a lot of effort into honoring the Augusta in ways other than erecting triumphal arches. During the period following the death of Plautianus, statues dedicated to Domna were placed in Giufi (Africa Proconsularis), Castellum Phuensium, and Civitas Celtianensis (Numidia)<sup>763</sup>. Also, in Auzia (Mauretania Caesarensis), together with Severus, she is named parent of Geta on a statue base in honor of the latter<sup>764</sup>. The name of Domna is placed after that of Severus but before Caracalla's, who is mentioned as the brother of the Caesar. It is interesting to note that, as in the case of Thugga, Severus promoted Auzia to the rank of colony during these years, an honor that was bestowed only on this city in Mauretania Caesarensis<sup>765</sup>. In 208, the decurions of Sicca Veneria (Africa Proconsularis) dedicated an altar to Jupiter Optimus

<sup>759</sup> App. no. 125b. On the *quattuor publica Africae* cf. the detailed analysis by Dupuis 2000 (the statue base from Cuicul is examined at pp. 281-284 no. 3). During the same period M. Rossius Vitulus (PIR<sup>2</sup> R 102) dedicated a group of statues to the emperors and Domna (app. no. 40a). On his career cf. also Migliorati 2011, 524-527.

<sup>760</sup> App. no. 121a. On the chronology of the legates of Numidia during this period cf. Thomasson 1996.

<sup>761</sup> According to Le Bohec 1989, 401, he might be identified with Pontius Pontianus (PIR<sup>2</sup> P 816), the legate of Pannonia Inferior between 218-220.

<sup>762</sup> App. no. 203b.

<sup>763</sup> App. nos. 95a 93a, 94a respectively.

<sup>764</sup> App. no. 92a.

<sup>765</sup> Laporte 1996, 302.

Maximus to Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>766</sup>. In the course of recent years, this monument has attracted considerable attention. It was dedicated *ob servatam eorum salutem detectis insidiis hostium publicorum* ('for the preservation of their safety after plots by public enemies had been discovered'). Interestingly, an inscription from Ephesus set up by a freedman of the imperial house says that Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna escaped the 'murderous hopes' of conspirators<sup>767</sup>. Although the exact dating of this text is uncertain, it can be considered to be roughly contemporary to that of Sicca Veneria. The identity of these enemies remains unknown, though a reference to the alleged conspiracy of Plautianus against Severus and Caracalla cannot be completely excluded<sup>768</sup>. However this may be, it is important to note that Domna is regularly included in North African dedications *pro salute*. This is particularly true in the case of an impressive series of altars wishing for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna that were erected during the years 209-210 in Africa Proconsularis, Numidia and Mauretania Tingitana. M. Caninius Adiutor Faustinianus, for example, prefect of the second cohort of the Hamians (Syrian archers) and commander of a vexillation of the III Augusta, dedicated an altar to Jupiter Dolichenus in Thenadassa (Africa Proconsularis)<sup>769</sup>. This monument is very similar to another that the commander of a detachment of the *ala III Asturum* in Tamuda (Mauretania Tingitana) erected to Jupiter Optimus Maximus on April 11<sup>th</sup>, 210, the 65<sup>th</sup> and last birthday of Severus<sup>770</sup>. Other dedications include altars to Minerva Augusta by an *optio* of the III Augusta in Bezeros, to Minerva and Victoria Augusta by the *coloni*

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<sup>766</sup> Cat.no. 109a.

<sup>767</sup> App. no. 186b.

<sup>768</sup> Daguet-Gagey 2006, 76-88. Cf. also Levick 2007, 81; Birley 1999, 76; Sünskes Thompson 1990, 156-157.

<sup>769</sup> App. no. 211b.

<sup>770</sup> App. no. 120a.

*Gamonenses* (Africa Proconsularis), and to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the *Nymphae* by a foraging party of the III Augusta in Casae (Numidia)<sup>771</sup>. Finally, the case of Thamugadi (Numidia) is particularly worth mentioning. Between 209 and 211, members of the local elite honored the imperial family with at least four altars to Victoria, Concordia, Mercurius and Mars Conservator<sup>772</sup>. All these dedications *pro salute* should probably be interpreted as references to the campaign of Severus in Britain. The constant presence of Domna, however, demonstrates that her safety was considered to be as important as that of the emperors.

Dedications of both civil and military buildings mention Domna quite frequently. After Severus' campign against the desert populations in 203, efforts to strengthen the military presence in the southern regions of Numidia and Africa Proconsularis are still documented during the last years of this emperor<sup>773</sup>. The name of Domna is incised on the architrave of a new building in Castellum Dimmidi (Numidia) whose construction was supervised by a centurion of the III Augusta at some point between 209 and 211<sup>774</sup>. In the same period, she is also mentioned in an inscription on a cistern built for a fort in Gasr Zerzi, a remote outpost in the Libyan desert, and on another architrave that the soldiers of the III Augusta placed at the entrance of a building erected in their camp at Lambaesis (Numidia)<sup>775</sup>. As for civil buildings, it is important to mention the dedications of a new temple to Jupiter in Mopthi (Numidia) and the portico of the new forum of Uchi

<sup>771</sup> App. nos. 193b, 194b, respectively.

<sup>772</sup> App. nos. 208b-210b.

<sup>773</sup> On the topic cf. in general Cordovana 2007, 227-258; Mastino 1999 with further references.

<sup>774</sup> App. no. 191b.

<sup>775</sup> App. nos. 193b, 204b, respectively.

Maius, whose construction had already started ten years before, in 197, with the placement of a group of statues to Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>776</sup>.

This overview of the North African inscriptions mentioning Domna from 205 to 211 shows that local communities, imperial officials and soldiers attributed considerable importance to her. Indeed, Severus paid great attention to the administration of this part of the Empire. The new colonial status achieved by Thugga and Auzia, where Domna is honored extensively, is perhaps one of the best example of Severus' attention towards North Africa. The imperial mint, after all, was advertising his policies through coins displaying the personification of Africa, coins which were struck again in 207 after an interval of 13 years<sup>777</sup>. The important position that Domna occupies in dedicatory inscriptions on arches and other buildings, the numerous statues put up in her honor, and the many altars for her safety erected by both imperial officials and ordinary people demonstrate that, even after Severus' trip to Africa in 203, she played an important role in the relationship between the Severans and North Africa until the death of her husband in 211.

#### **IVa.3.10. After the death of Plautianus (III). The situation in the East.**

As in North Africa, the epigraphic evidence from the eastern provinces in the last years of the reign of Severus shows a wide diffusion of expressions of loyalty towards Domna. Inscriptions set up in this period are, in general, more numerous than during the long stay the imperial family had in the East during 197-202. This is particularly true for Arabia.

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<sup>776</sup> App. no. 205b (Mopthi). Uchi Maius: app. no. 213b. Statues: app. no. 12a; CIL VIII 26256 (Severus), 26260 (Caracalla). On the topic cf. Mastino 1994. The name of the Augusta appears on a statue base in honor of Caracalla erected in 202 (app. no. 70a), where the young emperor is named as son of both Severus and Domna.

<sup>777</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 118 nos. 207-207A (denarii). On the topic cf. Rowan 2012, 82.

Here Domna is, on present evidence, the first imperial woman to be honored in inscriptions. Around 205-208, this province was governed by one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Severus, the senator Q. Aiacius Modestus Crescentianus<sup>778</sup>. In Petra, he together with his wife and his sons set up a series of altars for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>779</sup>. Interestingly, the *cursus honorum* of Aiacius Modestus includes the office of *XVvir sacris faciundis*, that is, one of the priests who had been responsible for the organization of the Secular Games in 204<sup>780</sup>. Given the great visibility that Domna had enjoyed during the celebration of the *ludi*, the inclusion of her name in the dedications by Aiacius Modestus seems to be a logical consequence of what had happened in Rome. While the governor was dedicating the altars in Petra, the city of Bostra set up statues to Caracalla and Domna. These are the aforementioned dedications where the Augusta is called κύπια ('mistress')<sup>781</sup>. Although the statues were erected by the civic body, they were inaugurated by the governor himself. Such a circumstance demonstrates that Aiacius Modestus was not only paying homage to the Augusta in the provincial capital, but also taking measures to have her honored by other cities in Arabia. This is a very rare event, which is not documented with regard to previous imperial women in the Greek-speaking part of the Empire<sup>782</sup>. In 207, the association of the cloth-launderers in Gerasa, called the 'Great Artemision Association', erected an altar for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>783</sup>. Later, between 209 and 211, another

<sup>778</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> A 470.

<sup>779</sup> App. nos. 103a-105a.

<sup>780</sup> Rowan 2012, 65-67; Lichtenberger 2011, 69; Várhelyi 2010, 210.

<sup>781</sup> App. no. 184b. Cf. section IVa.3.8 above. The statue to Caracalla is IGLS XIII 1, 9055.

<sup>782</sup> Julius Candidus, governor of Achaia between 135 and 137 (PIR<sup>2</sup> I 233), dedicated two statues to Sabina (and another two to Hadrian) in Megara (IG VII 70-74).

<sup>783</sup> App. no. 100a. The adjective 'Artemision' is an evident reference to the cult of Artemis, who was particularly revered in Gerasa. On this topic cf. Lichtenberger 2008.

association of growers from the countryside of this city and an unknown dedicator placed a similar monument for the safety (*ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας*) of the imperial family, including the Augusta<sup>784</sup>. These inscriptions clearly show how important the role of Domna was for the inhabitants of this province, both imperial personnel and common people.

A similar situation seems to have occurred in other provinces. In 208, an imperial procurator in Asia, Q. Aemilius Aristides, set up a statue group to the imperial family in the theater of Ephesos<sup>785</sup>. In the dedication Aristides stresses his outstanding devotion to Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna through an exceptional formula, *imperio eorum dicatissimus* ('the most faithful to their authority'), thus implying that Domna did not occupy a secondary place as an instrument of his destiny. Between 206 and 208, the city of Hierapolis dedicated its new theater to Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>786</sup>. The inscription on the *scaenae frons* records that the new building was inaugurated under the proconsulship of Q. Tineius Sacerdos, while M. Ulpius Domitius Aristaeus Arabianus was *curator* (λογιστής). The names of Tineius Sacerdos and Aristaeus Arabianus also appear on a statue base for Domna set up in another city of Asia, Prymnessos, 'under the proconsulship of Tineius Sacerdos and the legateship of Domitius Aristaeus Arabianus'<sup>787</sup>. Also, a dedication to the imperial family put up by the city of Charrae (Mesopotamia) in 209, says that the monument was erected under the proconsulship of L. Marius Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus<sup>788</sup>.

It is reasonable to assume that, while Tineius Sacerdos, Aristaeus Arabianus and Marius Maximus were not the authors of these initiatives, they were well aware of the

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<sup>784</sup> App. no. 198b, cf. also 199b.

<sup>785</sup> App. no. 106a.

<sup>786</sup> App. nos. 187b-188b.

<sup>787</sup> App. no. 124a.

<sup>788</sup> App. no. 112a.

honors that were being paid to the emperors and, in particular, to the Augusta. Because of his task of *curator*, Arabianus supervised the realization of the theater of Heliopolis and its dedicatory inscription. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Heliopolis, Prymnessos and Charrae put special emphasis on the names of the proconsul and his legate on account of the fact that they represented an important connection between these cities and the imperial court. Tineius Sacerdos had already been consul and governor of Pontus and Bithynia some years before<sup>789</sup>, Aristaeus Arabianus belonged to a senatorial family from Claudiopolis in Bithynia<sup>790</sup>, and Marius Maximus is the general of Severus commonly identified with the biographer quoted by the *HA*<sup>791</sup>. Thus, the mention of Domna on the *scaenae frons* of the theater in Hierapolis, the statue dedicated to her in Prymnessos, and the dedication in Charrae acquire a special significance, inasmuch as she was considered a person worthy of address, particularly by help of imperial officials who were administering the province. Another dedication to Domna from Cyprus seems to have been set up under identical circumstances. The city of Kition honored the Augusta with a statue, which was dedicated under the proconsulship of Sex. Clodius and the curatorship of a certain Appianus<sup>792</sup>. Unfortunately, this text cannot be dated to a precise year, but the possibility that it could be roughly contemporary to the monuments from Hierapolis and Prymnessos is attractive. The statue group erected by Aelius Aristides shares interesting common features with the altars erected by Q. Aiacius Modestus in Arabia. The inclusion of Domna demonstrates that these imperial officials considered her a key individual, who evidently had the power to increase or decrease the favor they were enjoying at court.

<sup>789</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> T 229.

<sup>790</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> D 134. Cf. also Madsen 2009, 71.

<sup>791</sup> On Marius Maximus cf. section I.1.3 above.

<sup>792</sup> App. no. 28b.

Finally, apart from the dedications involving governors and other officials, the considerable number of dedications set up by local communities yield a further confirmation of the wide popularity of Domna in the Eastern provinces during the last years of Severus' reign. Together with the other members of the family, she appears on architraves commemorating the construction of new baths in Chimaera (Lycia and Pamphilia), Olympos (Asia), and unknown buildings in Ephesus (Asia) and Koptos (Egypt)<sup>793</sup>. Statues to her are dedicated in Hermionis (Achaia), Ephesus, Samos and Stiris (Asia)<sup>794</sup>.

#### **IVa.3.11. After the death of Plautianus (IV). The situation in the West.**

From 205 to 211, a considerable number of inscription mentioning Domna are also documented in the European provinces, particularly in the Danubian area. As in the North African and Eastern provinces, governors and other imperial officials frequently appear in dedications to the imperial household. In 208, the legate of Moesia Inferior, L. Julius Faustinianus, and the commander of the legion I Italica, Valerius Q[u...]<sup>795</sup>tianus, appear as sponsors of a monument *pro salute* of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna set up in Novae by the *primus pilus* of the legion<sup>795</sup>. The career of Julius Faustinianus is, for the most part, unknown<sup>796</sup>, but the dedication of a statue group to the imperial family that the city of Nicopolis ad Istrum erected between 210 and 211 bears the formula ‘under the governorship of L. Julius Faustinianus’ (ὑπατεύοντος τῆς ἐπαρχείας Λ. Ιουλ.

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<sup>793</sup> App. nos. 192b, 206b, 196b, 113a, respectively.

<sup>794</sup> App. nos. 201b, 24a, 207b, 127a, respectively.

<sup>795</sup> App. no. 107a.

<sup>796</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> I 304.

Φαυστεινειανοῦ, πρεσβευτοῦ Σεββ.)<sup>797</sup>. Considering that, in 210, the senate and the people of Nicopolis had placed four other statues to the emperors and Domna mentioning the previous legate, Flavius Ulpianus<sup>798</sup>, it seems plausible that these governors were actively supporting the eagerness with which the city displayed its loyalty to the emperors and Domna. In Kabyle (Thrace), in 205 or 208 the soldiers belonging to the *cohors I Athoitorum* erected a temple to Jupiter Dolichenus, which was dedicated to the emperors and Domna under the supervision of the legate Q. Egnatius Proculus<sup>799</sup>. The career of this governor is largely unknown, but an inscription from Sparta reports that he had held the consulate<sup>800</sup>. Furthermore, according to the same text, Severus sent him to Greece for an unspecified period to review the status of the free cities in this province.

Other governors whose careers thrived during the reign of Severus included Domna in their dedications. Between 209 and 211, in Grosskrotzenburg (Germania Superior), Q. Aiacius Modestus Crescentianus, who was appointed legate in Germany after the governorship in Arabia, set up a dedication *pro salute, victoria et reditu* ('for the safety, victory and return') of the three emperors and Domna, declaring also his devotion to the majesty of all the four of them (*numini devotus*)<sup>801</sup>. In Spain, the procurator of Baetica, M. Lucretius Julianus had his name engraved along with those of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna on a public building (perhaps a public archive) in Hispalis,

<sup>797</sup> App. no. 126a. Severus: IGBulg II 624; Caracalla: IGBulg II 625.

<sup>798</sup> App. no. 123a. Severus: IGBulg II 629; Caracalla: IGBulg II 630. Ulpianus' full career is also unknown, cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> F 402.

<sup>799</sup> App. no. 185b. The inscription cannot be dated to a precise year, since a lacuna affects the consular dating. This could be read as either *Anto[nino II et] / [Geta]* (205) or *Anto[nino III et] / [Geta II]* (208).

<sup>800</sup> IG V 1, 541. Cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> E 29, 31.

<sup>801</sup> App. no. 200b.

the provincial capital<sup>802</sup>. The equestrian *cursus* of Lucretius Julianus includes important positions in Baetica and Lusitania. Before the procuratorship of Baetica, he had been curator in Italica (Baetica) with the task of collecting the inheritance tax, the *XX hereditatum*, in Baetica and Lusitania, and administrator of a credit institute of Baetica under imperial supervision, the *Kalendarium Vegetianum*<sup>803</sup>. This succession of posts seems to attest to a certain favor by the imperial court. The mention of Domna in the dedication from Hispalis can consequently be regarded as an homage of a functionary who considered her benevolence an important asset in developing his fortune. In Baetica, Domna is the first documented imperial woman whose name was incised on the dedication of a new building by order of an imperial official, a fact that cannot be interpreted as a mere conventional honor.

Other inscriptions by individuals of lower rank from the Danubian area also show notable effort in paying honors to the Augusta. In 209, a *beneficiarius consularis*, i.e. a selected sub-officer directly employed by a governor<sup>804</sup>, placed a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus in Narona (Dalmatia) to fulfill a vow for the safety of Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>805</sup>. Similarly, during the same the year, an overseer (*vilicus*) of a tax office located in Moesia Superior set up another dedication to Jupiter, but he mentioned only Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>806</sup>. Both dedications should be viewed in the context of Severus' ongoing British campaign (209-211), and their purpose was presumably to play up to their superiors (a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in the case of the *beneficiarius*, and an imperial procurator in the case of the *vilicus*) while awaiting a

<sup>802</sup> App. no. 202b.

<sup>803</sup> On the career of Lucretius Julianus cf. Eck 1994b.

<sup>804</sup> On the *beneficiarii consulares* cf. Ott 1995, 30-32.

<sup>805</sup> App. no. 114a.

<sup>806</sup> App. no. 115a.

promotion. The inclusion of Domna's name in the dedications shows that, even under these circumstances, the Augusta was believed to be an important person to honor. Moreover, in the inscription from Moesia Superior, her name appears, once again, after Caracalla, thus occupying a place that was traditionally attributed to Geta, who, in this case, is not mentioned at all.

#### **IVa.3.12. Overall remarks**

The quantity and distribution of the inscriptions honoring Domna demonstrate that she was honored extensively in Italy and in almost all the provinces of the Empire. During the period 197-203, the erection of statues, the dedication of altars *pro salute*, and inscriptions on public buildings are often connected to the movement of the imperial court through the Empire. In only six years, the imperial family travelled from Gaul to the East, from the East to Rome, and, finally, between Rome and Africa. The importance that local communities attributed to Domna demonstrates that they were desirous of attracting the attention and the benevolence of the Augusta in places where it was easier for them to approach her. This is frequently true for provincial governors. Imperial officials set up the first series of milestones mentioning an imperial woman when Severus and his family were travelling back from Syria in 202; they often began their decrees by including her name in the dedication for the safety of the emperor; lastly, they frequently mentioned her in the dedication of new buildings. Interestingly, many of these individuals can be identified as close supporters of Severus, who were consequently well aware of the influence of the Augusta at the imperial court. Numerous dedications appeared in Rome as well. The devotion that several units of the garrison of Rome showed to the

Augusta is an unprecedented circumstance in imperial history. Also, the fact that some of these soldiers were commanded by Domna's archenemy, Plautianus, is particularly worth mentioning. Inscriptions show no sign of a retirement from public life by the Augusta. Conversely, the *acta* of the Secular Games of 204 attest to the constant presence of Domna, the first imperial woman to be recorded in this type of document. Inscriptions seem also to attest to a special relationship between Domna and Caracalla, who, in 205, killed Plautianus. After the death of the prefect of the guard – but probably even before – groups of statues dedicated only to Domna and Caracalla existed, and were set up by individuals who were evidently trying to gain the favor of the young emperor and his mother. During the last years of Severus' reign, a notable increase in the number of dedications to Domna characterizes the African, Asian and Danubian provinces, where the imperial court had travelled extensively some years before. In these areas, governors, soldiers and local communities placed a great number of statues, building dedications and altars for the safety and victory of the emperors and Domna, especially during the British campaign of 209-211, when the imperial family was staying in Britain. Unexpectedly, perhaps, there are no inscriptions from Britain during these years that mention the Augusta. In truth, a considerable number of inscriptions record the restoration of forts and other military structures during the years preceding Severus' campaign in Scotland<sup>807</sup>. The majority of these inscriptions were set up under the authority of the legate L. Alfenus Senecio (who governed Britain between 205 and 208), but they never mention Domna. This demonstrates that the honors paid to Domna were not predictable everywhere. It was rather up to the individual(s) who dedicated the monument as to

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<sup>807</sup> RIB I<sup>2</sup> 722 (= AE 1969/70, 328), 740 (= AE 1930, 111), 746, 1151, 1234, 1462, 1909 (= AE 1930, 113 = AE 1947, 107); RIB III 3215 (= AE 1962, 260 = AE 1969/70, 327). On the topic cf. Birley 1999, 170-173.

whether to include the Augusta, or not. Therefore, the inscriptions *pro salute* and the other monuments with the name of Domna from Africa, Asia and the Danubian provinces testify to the exceptional importance that the people from these areas attributed to the Augusta. These territories are also the areas where the imperial family travelled the most, and where Severus bestowed numerous privileges, such as, for example, the promotion of many cities to the rank of colony. The extent of the homage paid to Domna can, consequently, be seen as a recognition of her considerable influence in public affairs, rather than as the product of generic directives dictated by imperial propaganda.

## Chapter IVb

### *From the end of the civil wars to the death of Septimius Severus: the numismatic and artistic evidence*

It is not only the literary sources and inscriptions that provide interesting insights about Domna's persona and status at court between 197 and 211. The examination of her coinage covering this period and the analysis of depictions of her on arches and other artifacts reveal important elements that complete the picture provided by literary sources and inscriptions. Some of her most interesting and innovative coin types, which will be examined in section IVb.1, belong to these years. Furthermore, some of her most famous portraits, such as the so-called 'Severan Tondo' and her numerous representations in the decorative reliefs of the Arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome and the Severan arch in Leptis Magna, were realized during the central and last years of the reign of Severus. Section IVb.2 will be devoted to their analysis. Both coins and artworks attest to a new role of the Augusta, who seems to have acquired not only unprecedented visibility and prestige, but also a notable influence on the cultural policies of the Severan regime.

#### **IVb.1. NUMISMATICS**

As discussed in chapter I, coins struck in the imperial mints provide precious information on how the members of the imperial house (and, thus, the Augusta) wanted to portray themselves. This information can be compared to that which emerges from the analysis of the epigraphic record and the literary accounts, which express the point of view of the provincials and the elites in Rome. Moreover, as in the case of inscriptions, provincial coinage supplies further food for thought regarding the importance that local

communities ascribed to Domna. A complete discussion of the imperial and provincial coinage of the Augusta, however, would exceed the limits of the present investigation. In the next sections, therefore, I will discuss only a selection of themes that either reflect Domna's presence in the public life of the Empire or the development of her political personality. In the first two sections I will examine *a)* the imperial coins struck during the period of the struggle with Plautianus (197-205), and *b)* those coins minted from the death of Plautianus to the death of Severus (205-211). I will also investigate several instances of provincial coins depicting significant honors paid to Domna in the East, such as the erection of temples dedicated to her cult, or the attribution of the title 'Fortune' (*Tύχη*) of the city, a range of themes that can provide further information concerning the relationship between the Augusta and local communities.

#### **IVb.1.1. Domna's coinage at the time of the struggle with Plautianus**

Regarding the coinage struck during the first years of reign, coins minted during the period 197-205 tend to display legends and iconography that had already been used by the Antonine imperial women, as for example, the types with legends IVNO, HILARITAS and MATRI CASTRORVM, which had already belonged to Faustina the Younger, Lucilla and Brutitia Crispina<sup>808</sup>. During these years, however, important elements of change can also be observed. These are: *a)* the increasing use of the nominative case to indicate both deities and personifications of virtues on the reverses; *b)* the frequent references to Domna's maternal role and the relationship with her sons; *c)* the emphasis placed on

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<sup>808</sup> *Iuno*: RIC III p. 73 no. 391 (quinarius and denarius); p. 94 no. 504 (aureus); p. 269 nos. 687-690 (aureus and denarii) [Faustina the Younger]; p. 399 no. 283 (denarius) [Crispina]. *Hilaritas*: RIC III p. 269 nos. 684-686 (aurei); p. 275 no. 769 (denarius) [Lucilla]; p. 399 no. 282 (denarius) [Crispina]. *Matri castrorum*: RIC III p. 274 nos. 751-754 [Faustina the Younger].

Eastern deities (in particular on Cybele and Isis); *d)* recurring allusions to the sacredness of the role of the Augusta.

Several coins minted during the first half of 197 bear the legend VESTAE SANCTAE and display, on the reverse, the goddess standing and holding a patera and a scepter<sup>809</sup>. Here, the adjective *sancta* is associated with Vesta for the first time in the imperial coinage, and indicates not only the singular devotion of Domna towards this deity, but also a special relationship between the Augusta and a goddess whose cult was a fundamental part of the religiousness of Roman matrons. The use of the legend HILARITAS, which appears at the beginning of 198, also shows some new elements. The personification of this virtue is similar to that seen on types struck for earlier imperial women, i.e. a woman standing, holding a palm and cornucopia, as represented on the coins of Faustina the Younger, Lucilla and Bruttia Crispina<sup>810</sup>. A modification of this theme, however, appears on Domna's coinage, showing Hilaritas with a palm, a cornucopia and a child standing on each side<sup>811</sup>. As for the coins from 197 displaying Fecunditas on a throne with two children, this reverse has been interpreted as a further allusion to the maternal role of Domna, whose sons, Caracalla and Geta, were at this time about to be promoted to the rank of Augustus and Caesar, respectively<sup>812</sup>. The theme of maternity, however, appears to be even more prominent on the following series of coins, which occupies the central part of 198 and is dedicated to the Oriental goddess Cybele. This deity had already appeared on the coins of Faustina the Elder and Faustina the

<sup>809</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 171 no. 587 (denarius); p. 178 no. 648 (denarius).

<sup>810</sup> Faustina the Younger: RIC III p. 269 nos. 684-686 (aurei and denarii); p. 345 nos. 1642-1644 (sestertii and asses). Lucilla: RIC III p. 275 no. 769 (denarius); pp. 352-353 nos. 1740-1743 (sestertii and asses) Crispina: RIC III p. 399 no. 282 (denarius); p. 442 no. 668 (sesterce); p. 443 no. 678 (dupondius/as). Cf. Morelli 2009, 123-124.

<sup>811</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 557 (denarius).

<sup>812</sup> Morelli 2009, 133.

Younger as a female figure seated between two lions and accompanied by the legend MATRI MAGNAE<sup>813</sup>. On Domna's coins, Cybele is represented either seated between the lions or standing with a lion at her feet<sup>814</sup>. Yet the legend that appears on both variants, MATER DEVM, is new<sup>815</sup>. Unlike the coins struck for earlier imperial women, the use of the nominative case suggests an equivalence between Domna and Cybele. Moreover, even without declaring it explicitly, this expression alludes to the role of Domna as the divine mother of two divine sons<sup>816</sup>. A similar message can be found in a group of sesterces and dupondi/asses minted in 200 under the authority of the senate. Here, Domna is represented standing and facing the center between Caracalla in military dress and Geta wearing a toga<sup>817</sup>. The Augusta is also resting her hands on the shoulders of the sons, who are holding a globe between them. The image and the legend PIETATI AVGVSTAE S(enato) C(onsulto) not only depict Domna as the guarantor of the loyalty between Caracalla and Geta, but also emphasize the role of the Augusta as mother of the emperors who will rule the world.

The so-called 'dynastic issues' are four series of aurei and denarii minted between 201 and 202 to celebrate the family of Severus. Their aim was, evidently, to communicate an idea of stability and confidence in Severus' dynastic policies, which were meant to provide a prosperous future thanks to the designation of Caracalla and

<sup>813</sup> Faustina the Elder: RIC III p. 270 nos. 704-706 (aurei and denarii). Faustina the Younger: RIC III p. 270 nos. 704-706 (aurei and denarii); p. 346 nos. 1663-1664 (sesterce and as). Lucilla: RIC III p. 353 nos. 1753-1754 (sestertii).

<sup>814</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 169 nos. 564-566 (aurei and denarii).

<sup>815</sup> A sesterce with Cybele and the legend MATRI DEVM SALVTARI (RIC III p. 165 no. 1146) was struck for Faustina the Elder, but only after her deification.

<sup>816</sup> Nadolny 2016, 54-55; Morelli 2009, 138-140.

<sup>817</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 209 no. 864; p. 211 no. 886.

Geta as his successors<sup>818</sup>. Yet these coins also sanction the affirmation of Domna as a fundamental member of the imperial household. According to the chronology elaborated by Hill<sup>819</sup>, I would summarize the coins where Domna appears as follows:

	<b>Coin typology</b>	<b>Obverse</b>	<b>Reverse</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>1st issue (201)</b>	Au	SEVERVS AVG. PART. MAX. Bust of Severus	FELICITAS SAECVLI Bust of Domna, front, between Caracalla on l. and Geta on r.	RIC IV.1 p. 111 no. 159
	Au	ANTONINVS AVGVSTVS Bust of Caracalla	CONCORDIAE AETERNAE Conjoined busts of Severus, radiate, and Domna, diademed, on crescent	RIC IV.1 p. 218 no. 36
	Au	P. SEPT. GETA CAES. PONT. Bust of Geta	CONCORDIAE AETERNAE Conjoined busts of Severus, radiate, and Domna, diademed, on crescent	RIC IV.1 p. 315 no. 7a-b
	Au	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	ANTONINVS AVGVSTVS TR. P. IIII Bust of Caracalla	RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 543
	Au/D	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	P. SEPT. GETA CAES. PONT. Bust of Geta	RIC IV.1 p. 169 no. 571
	Au/D	SEVERVS AVG. PART. MAX. Bust of Severus	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	RIC IV.1 p. 112 no. 161a-b
<b>2nd issue (201)</b>	Au	SEVERVS PIVS AVG. P. M. TR. P. VIII Bust of Severus	FELICITAS SAECVLI Bust of Domna, front, between Caracalla on l. and Geta	RIC IV.1 p. 114 no. 175
	Au	ANTONINVS PIVS AVG. PON. TR. P. IIII Bust of Caracalla	CONCORDIAE AETERNAE Conjoined busts of Severus, radiate, and Domna, diademed, on crescent	RIC IV.1 p. 220 no. 52
	Au/D	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	AETERNIT. IMPERI Busts of Severus and Caracalla facing one another	RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 539a
	Au/D	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	AETERNIT. IMPERI Busts of Caracalla and Geta facing one another	RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 540
	D	SEVERVS PIVS AVG. Bust of Severus	IVLIA AVGVSTA Bust of Domna	BMCRE V p. 219 no. 342
	Au/D	SEVERVS PIVS AVG. P. M. TR. P. X Bust of Severus	FELICITAS SAECVLI Bust of Domna, front, between Caracalla on l. and Geta	RIC IV.1 p. 115 no. 181a-b

<sup>818</sup> Filippini 2010, 85-87; Levick 2007, 140; Saavedra-Guerrero 2006a, 722; Lusnia 1995, 127-128. Kemezis 2014, 69-70 notes that, after the chaos of the civil wars of 193-197, it was fundamental for Severus to promote dynastic continuity as a warranty of stability for the Empire.

<sup>819</sup> Hill 1977, 19-20.

<b>3rd issue (201)</b>	Au	ANTON. P. AVG. PON. TR. P. V COS.	CONCORDIAE AETERNAE Conjoined busts of Severus, radiate, and Domna, diademed, on crescent	RIC IV.1 p. 221 no. 59a-c
	D	IVLIA AVGSTA Bust of Domna	ANTONIN. PIVS AVG. PON. TR. P. V Bust of Caracalla	RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 542
	D	IVLIA AVGSTA Bust of Domna	ANTONINVS PIVS AVG.	RIC IV.1 p. 166 no. 544
<b>4th issue (202)</b>	Au/D	SEVERVS PIVS AVG. P. M. TR. P. X COS. III Bust of Severus	FELICITAS SAECVLI Bust of Domna, front, between Caracalla on l. and Geta	RIC IV.1 p. 115 no. 181c
	Au	ANTON. P. AVG. PON. TR. P. V COS.	CONCORDIAE AETERNAE Conjoined busts of Severus, radiate, and Domna, diademed, on crescent	RIC IV.1 p. 221 no. 59a-c

**Table 4: Domna in the ‘dynastic issues’.**

Domna appears both on coins celebrating her relationship with each member of the imperial family, and on coins advertising the family as a whole, i.e. those with the legends FELICITAS SAECVLI, CONCORDIAE AETERNAE and AETERNIT. IMPERI on the reverses. The connections between Domna and her sons, however, seem to have received more emphasis, in particular the relationship with Caracalla, who, in the third issue, is the only individual to appear alone with his mother. Furthermore, Caracalla is constantly portrayed on the coins celebrating the *concordia aeterna* between Severus and Domna. With respect to the iconography on the reverses, significant innovations must be stressed. The coins advertising the *felicitas saeculi* with the busts of Caracalla, Domna and Geta probably take inspiration from denarii already struck for Augustus, where the bust of Julia is represented between those of Gaius and Lucius<sup>820</sup>. On these coins, however, the

<sup>820</sup> Lusnia 1995, 128-129 (the denarii are RIC I<sup>2</sup> p. 72 nos. 404-405). Lusnia observes that it is also possible that the two busts around Julia belong to Augustus and Agrippa. At any rate, both interpretations do not diminish the importance of the maternal role of Julia. Cf. Filippini 2010, 86-87; Morelli 2009, 133; Filippini 2008, 14. The theme of the *felicitas saeculi* appeared on the coinage of Faustina the Younger too. Coins minted in 161 depicts the bust of Faustina on the obverse, and a *pulvinar* with two babies (Commodus and his brother Antoninus) surrounded by the legend SAECVLI FELICIT(as) on the reverse (RIC III p. 271 no. 709-712 [aureus and denarii]; p. 346 nos. 1665-1666 [as]), cf. Morelli 2009, 114.

busts of mother and sons are in profile, whereas, on the Severan coins, the bust of Domna is facing the observer, while those of Caracalla and Geta are in profile and facing towards Domna's (fig. 5). The latter is the central figure of this picture. She seems to be the origin of the *felicitas saeculi*, which is spreading from her to the rest of the world through her sons<sup>821</sup>. This is the first time that the bust of an Augusta is represented in such a pose on imperial coinage, a circumstance that surely would have attracted the attention of Domna's contemporaries. The images on the coins characterized by the legend CONCORDIAE AETERNAE, which reproduce Caracalla on the obverse and the conjoined busts of Severus and Domna on the reverse (fig. 6) are also quite unusual representations for imperial coins. An aureus of Hadrian, displaying the emperor on the obverse and the conjoined busts of the deified Trajan and Plotina with the legend DIVIS PARENTIBVS on the reverse, is the closest comparison<sup>822</sup>. The coins of Hadrian and those of Caracalla certainly share the intent of justifying the transmission of power from parents to sons, but, in the case of Caracalla, the parents are still alive and ruling. Moreover, a radiate crown appears on Severus' head, while Domna wears a diadem adorned with a lunar crescent. Thus, Severus and Domna appear as two figures of cosmic nature, the personifications of *Sol* and *Luna*, which are also symbols of eternity<sup>823</sup>. In the second issue, Domna's aurei celebrating the *aeternitas imperii* are strictly connected to this message of eternity. The theme is also present in the first three issues with regard to

<sup>821</sup> Nadolny 2016, 57. In 161, coins with the legend SAECVLI FELICIT were minted for Faustina the Younger to celebrate the birth of Commodus and his twin brother Antoninus (RIC III p. 271 nos. 709-712 [aureus and denarii]; p. 346 nos. 1665-1666 [sestertius and as]). Their reverses display a pulvinar over which each boy is represented with a star over his head. As noted by Langford 2013, 106-107, this scene communicates the impression of an intimate family moment, whereas the Severan coins seem to convey a more official and formal message.

<sup>822</sup> RIC II p. 367 no. 232A (aureus).

<sup>823</sup> Lusnia 1995, 128.

Severus, Caracalla and Geta<sup>824</sup>. Yet, the inclusion of the Augusta in the celebration of the eternal power (*imperium*) of the male members of the family implies that Domna was considered instrumental in maintaining and spreading the authority of the Severan house.

Even though they are not considered part of the ‘dynastic issues’ by Hill, other coins minted for Domna during the same period advertise similar messages. A group of denarii with the legend SAECVLI FELICITAS portray a standing woman wearing a peaked headdress (*polos*) and breastfeeding a child; she also rests her left foot on the prow of a ship, while behind her, on the right, there is a rudder (fig. 7)<sup>825</sup>. Scholars generally identify this figure as the Egyptian goddess Isis holding her son Horus<sup>826</sup>. It is interesting to note that these coins were struck in 201, when the imperial family had just come back to Syria after the trip to Egypt and the visit to Alexandria, where the cult of Isis enjoyed particular favor<sup>827</sup>. Contemporary coins of Severus, Caracalla and Geta do not show references to Eastern cults, and Isis is depicted here for the first time on imperial coins, a set of circumstances that suggests the personal interest of Domna for the cult of this deity. The recourse to a popular motherly deity in the Greco-Roman world such as Isis, the presence of the child, and the legend SAECVLI FELICITAS in the nominative case emphasize not only the relationship between Domna and her sons, but also an idea of

<sup>824</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 111 no. 155a-c (aurei); p. 114 no. 174 (aureus and denarius) and no. 178A (denarius).

<sup>825</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 170 no. 577 (aureus/denarius); p. 178 no. 645 (aureus/denarius).

<sup>826</sup> Langford 2013, 73; Morelli 2009, 134-135; Filippini 2008, 13-14; Levick 2007, 126; Lusnia 1995, 128; Ghedini 1984, 155-156. Rowan 2011, 252-253, on the other hand, rejects this identification, arguing that the iconography of *Isis lactans* always displays the goddess seated while suckling. It is, however, true that Isis is often depicted while sailing on a ship (*navigium Isidis*) and tending a sail with her hands (LIMC V.1 pp. 782-784; Langford 2013, 73 suggests that the representation of Isis on a prow could be a reference to Severus’ revamping of the *annonia*). The presence of the rudder is also compatible with other representations of Isis, who is sometimes portrayed as Isis-Fortuna (LIMC V.1 pp. 784-787).

<sup>827</sup> Visit of the imperial family in Alexandria: Birley 1999, 136-137; Letta 1991, 666-667. On the frequency with which Isis appears on coins, statuettes and gems from Alexandria, see Hegedüs 1998, 169; Heyob 1975, 75.

equality between the goddess and Domna, who thus becomes the source of *felicitas* for a new age<sup>828</sup>.

After the marriage of Caracalla and Plautilla, in 202, and until the death of Plautianus, in 205, the issue of new coin types for Domna sharply decrease. From 203 up to the beginning of 205, only denarii, sesterces and dupondii bearing the legends PIETAS PVBLICA (203), PIETAS AVGG. (204), and PVDICITIA (205) were struck for Domna<sup>829</sup>. Coins advertising the *pietas publica* show a veiled woman with raised arms in front of an altar, a probable reference to Domna's loyalty towards the state and its institutions<sup>830</sup>. The *pietas aug(ustorum)* types, on the other hand, display a woman dropping incense onto an altar while holding an incense box<sup>831</sup>, but the legend seems to recall the aforementioned coins minted in 200 with the legend PIETATI AVGVSTAE S. C., which show Domna as the guarantor of the harmony between Caracalla and Geta. The allusion, therefore, is to the harmony within the imperial family, in particular between Domna, Severus and Caracalla. Finally, the *pudicitia* types, which show a seated woman covering her breast with her hands<sup>832</sup>, propose again a theme that had already belonged to the coinage of the Antonines<sup>833</sup>. Despite the small number of new types, the quantity of coins produced for Domna during this period remains unchanged, as demonstrated by the fact that the *pietas* types represent 18% of the coins struck for the Augusta during the reign of

<sup>828</sup> Filippini 2008, 13-14.

<sup>829</sup> Hill 1977, 21-23.

<sup>830</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 170 no. 170 and p. 178 no. 643 (denarii). The same coin type was struck for Geta: RIC IV.1 p. 316 no. 14 (denarius). Cf. Saavedra-Guerrero 2006a, 98.

<sup>831</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 170 no. 574 and p. 178 no. 642 (denarii); p. 209 no. 863 (sestertius); p. 210 no. 885 (dupondius/as). Coins with the same legend were struck for Plautilla (RIC IV.1 p. 270 no. 367 [aureus/denarius]; p. 309 no. 581 [dupondius/as]), but with a woman holding a scepter and child.

<sup>832</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 170 no. 576 (aureus and denarius); p. 178 no. 644 (denarius).

<sup>833</sup> Lucilla: RIC III pp. 275-276 nos. 778-781 (aurei and denarii); p. 353 nos. 1758-1759 (asses). Crispina: RIC III p. 399 no. 285 (aureus); p. 442 no. 670 (sestertius).

Severus<sup>834</sup>. The singular emphasis placed on the virtues of *pietas* and *pudicitia* seem like a response to Plautianus' accusations that, as discussed above, likely included plotting against Severus and conjugal infidelity<sup>835</sup>. These rumors were evidently not only circulating within the imperial palace, but also outside of it. In his brief note on Plautianus' attacks on Domna, Dio seems to be well aware of these allegations<sup>836</sup>. Given the fact that in this period Dio did not hold important positions that could have put him in direct contact with the emperors<sup>837</sup>, it is necessary to presume that the whole senate had some knowledge of the charges brought against Domna<sup>838</sup>. The insistence on the themes of *pietas* and *pudicitia*, then, seems to have been aimed at providing reassurance about the probity of the Augusta. If Plautianus had managed to discredit Domna in the eyes of Roman society, Severus, who was putting great efforts into restoring the old moral legislation<sup>839</sup>, might have felt the need to remove her from the imperial court<sup>840</sup>. Domna had, consequently, to find a way to repudiate the accusations of Plautianus. The latter, on the other hand, had to cement his bond with the Severan household in order to maintain his influence. Interestingly, the contemporary coinage of Plautilla, who was despised and

<sup>834</sup> Rowan 2011, 250-251.

<sup>835</sup> Lusnia 1995, 126-127 has already suggested a connection between the accusations of Plautianus and the *pietas* and *pudicitia* themes on Domna's coinage (*contra* Levick 2007, 76). Cf. also Saavedra-Guerrero 2006a, 97. On the nature of the accusations cf. section IVa.2 above.

<sup>836</sup> Cf. section IVa.2 above.

<sup>837</sup> Cf. section I.1.1 above.

<sup>838</sup> Plautianus used, after all, to 'gather evidence against her by inquiring amongst women of the nobility' (Dio 77 [76].15.2). Cf. section IVa.2 above.

<sup>839</sup> Especially by enacting laws against adultery (Dio 77 [76].16.4), cf. Birley 1999, 164-165.

<sup>840</sup> Langford 2013, 74 argues that the imperial administration issued the *pudicitia* types as a response to Plautianus' charges of infidelity, which would have undermined the legitimacy of Severus' offspring. If the paternity of Caracalla and Geta could have been in question, however, Plautianus would have openly challenged the dynastic projects of the emperor, a circumstance that seems hard to believe. Furthermore, Plautianus had married his daughter Plautilla to Caracalla, thus becoming, *de facto*, a member of the dynasty. It is more likely that the accusations of infidelity against Domna were limited to events taking place at court after Severus' second Parthian campaign of 197-198. Cf. section IVa.2.1 above.

loathed by her husband Caracalla, puts great emphasis on the alleged harmony between the two spouses, as demonstrated by coin types dedicated to the *concordia aeterna*, the *concordia Augustorum*, and the *concordia felix*<sup>841</sup>.

The power struggle between Domna and Plautianus is, perhaps, one of the best keys in interpreting the themes that appear on Domna's coinage during the period 198-205. The emphasis placed on relationships within the family can be interpreted not only as a consequence of the dynastic propaganda of Severus, but also as an effort to strengthen the position of Domna. Both the so-called 'dynastic issues' and the numerous types representing female figures with children give substance to the connections with her sons, in particular with Caracalla, who developed a strong hatred for Plautianus. The representations of Oriental deities (Isis and Cybele) stress the relationships with the Eastern provinces, where the imperial family stayed during the years 198-205. Finally, the use of the *pietas* and *pudicitia* themes presents an impression of familial devotion and modesty. Thus, in opposition to the negative propaganda of Plautianus, Domna's coinage displays the image of an Augusta who is strongly connected to her sons (especially to Caracalla, the heir to the throne), loyal, virtuous, and who did not conceal her relationship with the Eastern part of the Empire, where the tensions with Plautianus had started.

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<sup>841</sup> *Concordia eterna*: RIC IV.1 p. 269 no. 361 (aureus and denarius). *Concordia felix*: RIC IV.1 p. 270 no. 365a-b (denarii). *Concordia Augustorum*: RIC IV.1 p. 269 nos. 359 (denarius and quinarius), 363a-b and 364 (aurei and denarii). A similar situation may have occurred during the reign of Domitian. Fraser 2015, 235 has observed that the coins of both Domitia Longina and Julia Titi place great emphasis on the theme of *concordia* in a period during which rumors of discord and competition between these two imperial women were in circulation (Dio 67.3.2; SVET. *Dom.* 22).

#### **IVb.1.2. Domna's provincial issues in Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia (197-202)**

While the imperial family stayed in the Middle East, coins representing Cybele struck by the imperial mints are not the only numismatic evidence indicating a relationship between Domna and this area. Bronze issues by Middle Eastern cities are still numerous at this time, and they document important honors paid to the Augusta.

Notable coins were minted in Laodicea ad Mare, a Syrian city that could boast important connections with the Severan regime on account of its loyalty to Severus during the civil war against Pescennius Niger<sup>842</sup>. In 198, Laodicea received the title of *colonia* and Latin status, an event that was celebrated by the striking of new coins dedicated to Severus and Domna; they were addressed as the re-founders of the city through reverses displaying a human figure in the act of plowing with oxen<sup>843</sup>. The most noteworthy piece, however, is a coin minted in honor of Severus and Domna that seems to be roughly contemporary to these issues. The image of Domna appears on the reverse within a distyle temple, and the legend ΑΥΓ ΔΟΜΝΑ ΤΥΧΗ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ ('Domna Augusta, Fortune of the metropolis') surrounds the scene<sup>844</sup>. Such a display of devotion indicates not only that, in this city, the Augusta had received divine honors, but also that she was considered the tutelary deity (*Tyche*) of the community<sup>845</sup>. In 200, when Severus and his entourage came back to Syria after the trip to Egypt, another Syrian city, Paltos, struck similar coins for Domna<sup>846</sup>. These issues display the bust of Domna wearing a turreted crown, and bear the legend ΑΥΓ ΔΟΜΝΑ (ΤΥΧΗ) ΠΑΛΤΗΝΩΝ

<sup>842</sup> Hdn. 3.3.3. On the topic, see Millar 2006, 195-196.

<sup>843</sup> Julia Domna: BMC Phoenicia 370-371. Septimius Severus: BMC Phoenicia 367-368.

<sup>844</sup> BMC Galatia 81.

<sup>845</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 368-369; Levick 2007, 130-131; Christof 2001, 154-157; Meyer 1987-1988, 68; Ghedini 1984, 142 have already stressed this connection.

<sup>846</sup> BMC Galatia 1-2. See also Lichtenberger 2011, 369; Christof 2001, 155; Meyer 1987-1988, 68 n. 54.

(‘Domna Augusta [Fortune] of the Paltenians’). Between 200 and 201, Eirenopolis (Cilicia) issued coins with the bust of Domna on the obverse and the personification of the civic deity, Eirene, on the reverse<sup>847</sup>. In 199, Caesarea Panias, in Palestine, dedicated coins to the Augusta with the representation of Fortuna (*Tyche*) with rudder and cornucopia on the reverse<sup>848</sup>. Other Palestinian cities such as Ascalon and Sebaste had Domna represented on their coins between 201 and 202<sup>849</sup>. Tripolis, in Syria, minted coins portraying the Augusta between 202, when the imperial family was about to leave for Rome, and 203<sup>850</sup>. Finally, it is worth noting that the Mesopotamian city of Carrhae also held Domna in particular esteem. On a coin that the local mint presumably struck at the time of Severus’ second Parthian campaign, the busts of Severus and Domna appear facing each other on the obverse, while the reverse displays another bust of the Augusta facing a large lunar crescent<sup>851</sup>. This image might suggest an identification of Domna with the Moon, a connection that is particularly significant in Carrhae, inasmuch as this city was believed to be under the protection of the Mesopotamian moon-god Sîn, who was particularly revered by Caracalla<sup>852</sup>.

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<sup>847</sup> SNG Levante 1613.

<sup>848</sup> SNG ANS 867. With regard to previous imperial women honored by coins of Caesarea, only a type for Poppaea Sabina representing a *Tyche* within a temple is documented (SNG ANS 858).

<sup>849</sup> Ascalon: SNG ANS 732. Similar coins for Faustina Minor are also documented in this city (BMC Palestine 226; SNG ANS 730). Sebaste: SNG ANS 1079–1080.

<sup>850</sup> BMC Phoenicia 78. No coins for previous imperial women are so far attested to in this city. Tripolis struck coins for Severus a little later, between 203 and 204 (BMC Phoenicia 71).

<sup>851</sup> Lindgren & Kovacs 2559. Although the coin cannot be dated to a precise year, the fact that Severus awarded the city the colonial status (Millar 2006, 200) suggests that the relationship between Carrhae and the imperial court improved considerably during Severus and Domna’s stay in the East.

<sup>852</sup> On the topic, see Hekster and Kaizer 2012; Ricci 1983.

#### **IVb.1.3. Domna's coinage from the death of Plautianus to the end of Severus' reign**

After the death of Domna's archenemy, her coinage still persists with themes that had already been used during the previous years, but with some significant differences. The relationship with her sons is still present, even though it occupies a less prominent position. The representation of Domna's maternity, on the other hand, notably increases its importance, but in a more sacred and universal sense.

The goddess Vesta returns on the coinage of Domna in 207, but with the new legend of VESTA MATER<sup>853</sup>. This is the first time that the title of *mater* is associated with the name of Vesta on the coinage of an imperial woman. Recalling the wide presence of the word *mater* in previous issues, the reference is, once again, to Domna. The Augusta and the goddess seem, therefore, to merge into the figure of a universal and semi-divine mother. The woman that, on the reverse, appears in the act of performing a sacrifice in front of the temple of Vesta - sometimes alone and sometimes surrounded by a group of Vestals - has been identified with Domna<sup>854</sup>. The association Domna/Vesta, therefore, presents the Augusta as mother of the Roman people and protector of the state.

Another coin type struck in 207 displays a similar message. The legend FECVNITAS, which appears again on the coinage of Domna after an interval of almost 12 years, characterizes this new issue<sup>855</sup>. The iconography on the reverse, however, is completely different from the scene displayed on the coins of 195, where Domna was portrayed seated on a throne with two children<sup>856</sup>. The new *Fecunditas* types show a female figure with diadem reclining under a tree and leaning on a basket of fruit; her right

<sup>853</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 171 nos. 583-586 (aureus and denarii). As seen above in section IVb.1.1, coins with the legend VESTAE SANCTAE were minted in 197.

<sup>854</sup> Morelli 2009, 114; Filippini 2008, 217-218.

<sup>855</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 167 nos. 549-550 (aurei and denarii).

<sup>856</sup> On the coins struck in 195, see above chap. III.

hand rests on a starry globe and four figures symbolizing the Seasons are behind her (fig. 9). This scene, which appears here for the first time on the coinage of an imperial woman, seems to merge the image of *Fecunditas* with that of *Tellus*, thus communicating ideas of both renovation and eternity<sup>857</sup>, a series of concepts already present in the previous issues characterized by the legends AETERNITAS IMPERII and SAECVLI FELICITAS. The juxtaposition Domna/*Fecunditas/Tellus* recalls, nonetheless, the conception of Domna as universal mother, a message that is already evident in the coins with Cybele as *mater deum* examined above.

The revival of another traditional theme marks the coinage of Domna during the last years of Severus, namely the commemoration of the Augusta as *mater castrorum*. Coins with the legend MATRI CASTRORVM and a female figure before some military standards, either sacrificing over an altar with a *patera* and an incense box, or seated on a throne with a scepter and a phoenix on a globe had already been minted in 198<sup>858</sup>. These types are identical to the coins struck for Faustina the Younger<sup>859</sup>. The new coins minted in 208, however, bear the legend MATER CASTRORVM, and a scene with a sacrificing figure similar to the previous one, but with some substantial differences. The female figure, which should be identified with the Augusta herself on account of the nominative case of the inscription, performs the sacrifice with a caduceus or scepter instead of the incense box in her left hand, while a snake coils around the altar<sup>860</sup>. Moreover, on dupondi and asses, the female figure wears a diadem<sup>861</sup>. All these new details

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<sup>857</sup> Filippini 2008, 13.

<sup>858</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 169 nos. 567-569 (aurei/denarii).

<sup>859</sup> RIC III p. 274 nos. 751-754 (aurei, denarii and quinarius); p. 346 nos. 1659-1662 (sesterces and as); p. 350 nos. 1711-1714 (sesterces and as)

<sup>860</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 563a-b (aureus/denarius).

<sup>861</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 210 nos. 880-881.

significantly change the message transmitted by the picture. Domna does not appear only as the emblem of the harmony between the soldiers and the emperors, but as a divine figure protecting the army<sup>862</sup>.

Another coin type that occurs almost immediately afterwards, in 209, contains strong elements of innovation as well. Although the reverse is dedicated to Cybele, a deity who had already appeared on the coins struck for the Augusta in 198, both the legend and the iconography represent innovations in imperial coinage. The goddess, in fact, is depicted while seated on a throne that is pulled by a quadriga of lions; the scene is accompanied by the legend MATER AVGG (fig. 8)<sup>863</sup>. The use of the nominative case, as usual, suggests a relationship of equivalence between the goddess and the Augusta<sup>864</sup>. Yet the connection seems to be stronger than before, since MATER AVGG, a direct reference to Domna, replaces MATER DEVM, the appellative of Cybele that had been used for the types minted in 198<sup>865</sup>. Moreover, the iconography, with the four lions that pull the chariot of the Augusta/goddess, highlights the role of these animals, which are often associated with the concept of royalty. In his analysis of the attempted usurpation of Julius Alexander from Emesa, Cesare Letta has stressed the circumstances in which Alexander killed a lion

<sup>862</sup> Morelli 2009, 137-138.

<sup>863</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 168 no. 562 (aureus/denarius); p. 208 no. 858 (sesterce); p. 210 no. 885 (dupondius/as). Hill 1977, 23 places this coin in the second half of 205. According to Lusnia 1995, 132, the *terminus post quem* of this type should be 209, i.e. when Geta was promoted to the rank of Augustus. It was at this point that Domna officially became *mater Augustorum*, cf. also the chronology of types in Filippini 2010, 91-93.

<sup>864</sup> Nadolny 2016, 54-55; Langford 2013, 73; Morelli 2009, 140; Filippini 2008, 18.

<sup>865</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 366-367 suggests that an explicit equation between a Severan Augusta and a goddess might have existed in the case of Plautilla too. According to Lichtenberger, the *Venus Genetrix* who appear on the reverses of some imperial coins minted for Plautilla (RIC IV.1 p. 270 no. 369 [aureus/denarius]) would sport one of the hairstyles of this Augusta. However, the legend VENVS VICTRIX does not establish an equation as strong as that between Domna and Cybele.

to challenge the authority of Commodus<sup>866</sup>. Although the association between lions and royal power has Egyptian and Middle Eastern origins, the symbolic use of these animals can be found in the Roman world as well, in particular between the second century and the Severan age. In one of the medallions reused on the arch of Constantine, Hadrian is portrayed while hunting the Libyan lion, while Commodus often portrayed himself on coinage on horseback attacking a lion, and Caracalla himself used to keep lions around him and met a miraculous lion while campaigning against the Parthians<sup>867</sup>. It is also interesting to note that Caracalla had radiate lions represented on his coinage in 215, 216 and 217<sup>868</sup>. If these considerations are correct, the legend MATER AVGG and the goddess on throne driving a quadriga of lions likely expresses the idea of a divine, royal mother, the *mater divinae domus* often advertised by inscriptions set up in this period.

This brief overview of the coin types struck for Domna during the period 205-211 shows that they depict the Augusta as a cosmic entity that protects the state and its components. Although the theme of familial relationship still emerges on the coins with the legend MATER AVGG, it now occupies a secondary position. The main cause of this change is probably that the Severan dynasty was, at this point, well established, and a great emphasis on the family was less necessary. It is, nevertheless, true that the death of Plautinaus, the main opponent of Domna, seems to have opened the way for a new

<sup>866</sup> On this topic cf. chap. II above.

<sup>867</sup> According to Dio (79 [78].1.5), Caracalla affirmed that, during his Parthian campaign of 215-216, ‘a lion had suddenly run down from a mountain and fought on his side’ (λέων τις ἐξαιρόντης ἐξ ὄρους καταδραμών συνεμάχησεν αὐτῷ). Curiously enough, the *HA* (*Carac.* 6.4) relates that, during this campaign, ‘wild beasts were let loose against the enemy’ (*feris etiam bestiis in hostes inmissis*), a probable (misinterpreted) allusion to the episode of the lion. It seems, therefore, that this anecdote enjoyed broad circulation, being also quoted by Marius Maximus, the *HA*’s main source for the reign of Caracalla. On the other examples of symbolic use of lions by emperors cf. the detailed discussion in Letta 1985, 292-293 and 302 n. 50.

<sup>868</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 252 no. 273a-e; p. 254 no. 283a-c; pp. 256-257 nos. 296a-c (aurei, antoniniani and denarii); p. 303 no. 548a-b (sesterces); p. 306 no. 564a-c (asses); p. 571a-c (asses).

concept of the role of the Augusta, who was portrayed not only as mother of the imperial family, but also as a sovereign with divine attributes.

#### **IVb.1.4. Overall remarks**

Despite the great variety of coin types that imperial mints struck for Domna from 197 to 211, the principal messages that appear on her reverses can be summarized in two general trends. The first one is the relationship with Severus, Caracalla and Geta, a theme that is particularly evident in the so-called ‘dynastic issues’ of 201-202, and in the numerous representations of virtues and deities accompanied by children. Thus, Domna is portrayed as an essential element of cohesion within the imperial family. Not only did this function reinforce the fundations of the Severan dynasty, but it also strengthened the position of Domna against the attacks of Plautianus. The emphasis put on *pietas* and *pudicitia* can be interpreted not only as the celebration of the classic virtues of the Roman matron, but also as a reply to Plautianus’ attempts to discredit her. The accusations against Domna included treacherous behavior (lack of *pietas*) and infidelity (lack of *pudicitia*). As discussed in section IVa.2.1 above, it is reasonable to suppose that the struggle between Plautianus, who accumulated a great quantity of plunder while persecuting the supporters of Niger, and Domna, who likely had strong connections with the eastern communities, had started while the imperial family was staying in the East. Provincial coinage from this area demonstrates that Domna was very popular in many cities of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, which seem to have addressed the Augusta as their protector.

The second theme in the imperial coinage of Domna is the representation of the Augusta as a cosmic entity surrounded by a sort of divine aura. The best examples are the

*Fecunditas* types, where Domna is linked to the representation of *Tellus* holding a starred globe and surrounded by the personifications of the seasons, and *mater Augustorum*, where she is explicitly compared to the goddess Cybele. Furthermore, the idea of Domna as a semi-divine being emerges in the *Vesta Mater* type, which draws a subtle analogy between Domna and the goddess. The *mater castrorum* types, which contain divine and universal symbols, such as the snake and the caduceus, instill a similar concept as well. First of all, it is necessary to stress that these series of unconventional coin types appear to mark a significant reinforcement of Domna's authority, which Plautianus had challenged until his death in 205. However, the equation between Domna and these deities also corresponds to important changes that were affecting the idea of royal authority. Scholars have stressed that the cultural milieus of the Severan age expounded new theological bases to justify and advertise the power of the emperors<sup>869</sup>. In this period, in fact, the ability of the rulers to interpret divine benevolence (*providentia*) becomes increasingly connected to the origin of their *imperium*<sup>870</sup>. The sovereign gradually assumes the role of the 'chosen', as a hypostasis of the divine in the human world, the mediator between the sphere of human life and the divine dimension with its cosmic and absolute harmony<sup>871</sup>. These are also Neopythagorean (and Platonist) ideals that the sophist L. Flavius Philostratus espoused in a biography of Apollonius of Tyana, an itinerant philosopher and mystic (Dio considers him 'a thorough juggler and magician')

<sup>869</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 376-378; Cordovana 2007, 424-426.

<sup>870</sup> On Severus and the *providentia* cf. Martín 1982, 307-308. During his reign, Severus constantly claimed the divine support of his hometown deities, Liber Pater and Hercules, as well as that of other gods, such as Neptune and Serapis. On this topic cf. the detailed analysis in Rowan 2012, 32-109; Lichtenberger 2011, 27-126. In a cosmic sense, the Severan *Septizonium*, a monumental nymphaeum (now lost but known through medieval and modern descriptions) built in Rome, is perhaps the monument that best illustrates how Severus advertised his special connection with the divine sphere. Cf. n. 253 above.

<sup>871</sup> Cordovana 2012, 71; *Ead.* 2007, 425. Cf. also Buraselis 2007, 14-24.

who had become a famous propagator of Neopythagoreanism during the Flavian age<sup>872</sup>.

Modern scholarship has considered the *Apollonius of Tyana* as a sort of Severan manifesto of political thinking, inasmuch as Philostratus dedicated considerable space to the advice that Apollonius would give to the Flavian emperors<sup>873</sup>. It is important to note that Philostratus was an eminent protégé of Domna, and a member of the well-known circle of sophists and philosophers who used to gather around her<sup>874</sup>. In the *Apollonius*, Philostratus claims that Domna had exhorted him to write the biography<sup>875</sup>. Although the

<sup>872</sup> Dio's opinion about Apollonius: 78 (77).18.4 (γόνς καὶ μάγος ἀκριβῆς). On the debate on Apollonius' personality in antiquity cf. Flinterman 2014, 353-357. The original title of the biography was Εἰς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον (*About Apollonius of Tyana*), which should be preferred to the more common Τὰ ἐξ τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον (*The life of Apollonius of Tyana*), cf. Boter 2015. On Philostratus and the *Apollonius of Tyana* cf. Kemezis 2014, 150-195; Bowie and Elsner 2009; Sfameni Gasparro 2007; Goulet 1998; De Lannoy 1997.

<sup>873</sup> Cordovana 2012; *Ead.* 2007, 425-426. On the topic cf. also Sfameni Gasparro 2007, 283-288. In the work of Philostratus, the most interesting chapters on the relationship between the divine world and imperial power concern the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors. Cf. in particular *vita Apoll.* 5.7, 27-29, 35-36.

<sup>874</sup> Dio mentions Domna's philosophical salon twice, once during the narration of Severus' reign (76 [75].15.6), and, later on, in reference to Caracalla's reign (78 [77].18.3). It seems, therefore, that Domna's relationship with sophists and philosophers was a well-known fact among her contemporaries. On the topic cf. Levick 2007, 107-123 with further references. It is also interesting to note that, as far as we know, all the philosophers and *literati* having something to do with Domna's circle were from the Greek part of the Empire, a circumstance that would make this salon purely Hellenistic (as stressed by Buraselis 1991, 34). Contrary to what is argued by Levick 2007, 163, there is no reason to think that this circle was restricted to people from Greece and Asia Minor only. According to the Suda (s.v. Φρόντων [Adler p. 763]), the Emesene sophist Fronto was in Rome at the time of Severus, and he is described as the rival teacher of Philostratus. These facts have led Buraselis 1991, 35 to think that Fronto followed Domna from Emesa to Rome. Curiously enough, he bequeathed his property to his nephew Cassius Longinus, the famous rhetorician who was teacher and chief counselor of Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra.

<sup>875</sup> *Vita Apoll.* 1.3: καὶ προσήκων τις τῷ Δάμῳ τὰς δέλτους τῶν ύπομνημάτων τούτων οὕπω γιγνωσκομένας ἐς γνῶσιν ἥγαγεν Ἰουλίᾳ τῇ βασιλίδι. Μετέχοντι δέ μοι τοῦ περὶ αὐτὴν κύκλου, καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ῥητορικοὺς πάντας λόγους ἐπήγει καὶ ἡσπάζετο, μεταγράψαι τε προσέταξε τὰς διατριβὰς ταύτας καὶ τῆς ἀπαγγελίας αὐτῶν ἐπιμεληθῆναι ('The notebooks containing the memoirs of Damis [scil. a disciple of Apollonius] were unknown until a member of his family brought them to the attention of the empress Julia. Since I was a member of her circle - for she admired and encouraged all rhetorical discourse - she set me to transcribe these works of Damis and to take care over their style [transl. by Christopher P. Jones]'). Some scholars have rejected the historical accuracy of this information, arguing that Philostratus' references to Damis' writings are fictional expedients to confer authority upon his work (on the topic cf. the synopses of the debate in Kemezis 2014a, 63-68; Sfameni Gasparro 2007, 283-184). Kemezis 2014a has

work was probably published after her death<sup>876</sup>, it is reasonable to assume that the *Apollonius* did not reflect only the intellectual interests of the author, but also those of his patroness<sup>877</sup>. One of Philostratus' main objectives was to exonerate Apollonius from the accusations of being a magician. The latter is presented as a man who possessed divine qualities (thus becoming δαιμόνιος τε καὶ θεῖος), but thanks only to his philosophical knowledge (σοφία), which allowed him to ascend to a level above human nature<sup>878</sup>. Philostratus uses the expression ‘the philosopher Julia’ (ἡ φιλοσόφος Ἰουλία) to refer to Domna, a manifest attempt to equate the Augusta to distinguished philosophers of the past, such as Apollonius<sup>879</sup>. It is impossible, of course, to establish whether Domna wanted to be addressed as a philosopher. Philostratus' characterization seems, nevertheless, to echo the exceptional importance that she attributed to the study of the (Neopythagorean and Platonist) philosophy, which would strongly influence her idea of royalty<sup>880</sup>. If this reconstruction is correct, the divine qualities attributed to Domna on

also questioned the existence of a relationship between Domna and Philostratus. In my view, the existence of this connection seems difficult to confute. Philostratus mentions Domna's circle of sophists in *VS* 2.30 too, and there is no reason to believe that he lied to his contemporaries regarding his affinity with this circle (similar considerations are expressed by Sfamemi Gasparro 2007, 283). Furthermore, he sent a letter concerning Plato's critique of rhetoric to the Augusta (*Ep.* 73). The authenticity of this document has also been debated, but Robert Penella, the editor and commentator of Apollonius' letters, has reaffirmed its genuineness (cf. Penella 1979).

<sup>876</sup> Inasmuch as the *Apollonius* does not contain an explicit dedication to the Augusta, it is generally assumed that she was already dead when this biography was published (Flinterman 1995, 25). According to Kemezis 2014a, 78, the *Apollonius* was probably written during the earlier part of Alexander Severus' reign.

<sup>877</sup> Sfamemi Gasparro 2007, 287-288. According to Morgan 2009, the great attention that Philostratus pays to the solar cult throughout his work could also be interpreted as a reference to Domna's religious interests.

<sup>878</sup> Sfamemi Gasparro 2007, 287.

<sup>879</sup> *VS* 2.30.

<sup>880</sup> At any rate, Domna was not the only member of the imperial court to have shown interest towards philosophy. According to Galen, Severus and his sons kept a certain Arria in high regard on account of her extraordinary knowledge of Plato (Künh XIV p. 218). Cf. Buraselis 1991, 37. It is also worthwhile to note that the presence of γεωμέτραι in the circle of Domna (Philostr. *VS*

imperial coins would not imply that the Augusta was trying to impose the worship of her person. They would, rather, suggest a more sophisticated concept, viz. the semi-divine nature of a sovereign who, thanks to her knowledge and wisdom, represents a connection between the human and the divine spheres.

#### **IVb.2. RELIEFS, SCULPTURE AND PAINTING**

As for inscriptions and coins, numerous artworks attest to the emphasis given to the public image of Domna during the years 197-211. Many of the most famous Severan monuments were, in fact, erected in this period. Among these, it is important to mention well-known examples of family representations, such as the so-called ‘Berlin Tondo’, the Arch of the *Argentarii*, and the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna. Considering that all three artifacts can be dated to specific periods within the reign of Severus, and that each of them has been erected by different commissioners and in different contexts, it will be necessary to examine them in detail in the next sections.

##### **IVb.2.1. The ‘Berlin Tondo’ and the presence of Domna in the East (197-202)**

The ‘Berlin Tondo’ is the only painted group portrait of an imperial family to have survived from antiquity<sup>881</sup>. This tempera on panel represents Severus and Domna, who are depicted side by side, and, in front of them, Caracalla and Geta (fig. 14). The face of the latter, however, has been completely erased and smeared with excrement after the

2.30) has been interpreted as an proof of her interest in Platonic and Pythagorean philosophies. Cf. Flinterman 1995, 22-23.

<sup>881</sup> Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. 31.329, diam. 30.5 cm. Alexandridis 2004, 207 no. 235\* fig. 60, 4; Varner 2004, 181-182 fig. 187; Doxiadis 1995, 88 fig. 25; Kleiner 1992, 321-322 fig. 284; Heinen 1991, 263-298 color pl. 61 with further references.

*damnatio memoriae* that followed his murder in 211<sup>882</sup>. The tondo comes from Egypt, where it was probably displayed in a public place, such as the office of a magistrate or a temple<sup>883</sup>. All four members of the family are sumptuously dressed; the males wear jeweled crowns and hold gold-tipped scepters; Domna sports a jeweled diadem and wears a large pearl necklace and triple pearl earrings. She has a round face and brown, wavy hair, which corresponds to the hairstyle documented on statues and coins<sup>884</sup>. The ‘Berlin Tondo’ probably belongs to a series of mass-produced group portraits displayed in public places. Heinz Heinen has suggested that the tondo should be identified as one of those ἐικονίδια with the portraits of the deified Severus, Caracalla and Domna mentioned by an Oxyrhynchus papyrus written during the reign of Caracalla<sup>885</sup>. It is, nonetheless, certain that the tondo was painted around 198, when Caracalla and Geta became Augustus and Caesar, or shortly after, since Caracalla is still portrayed as a boy. The most fitting period is Severus’ visit to Egypt between 199 and 200, inasmuch as at this time the artist might have had the possibility of seeing the members of the imperial family in person<sup>886</sup>. However this might be, it is interesting to note that the message of unity and dynastic continuity transmitted by the tondo is similar to that which is advertised by contemporary coins, such as the so-called ‘dynastic issues’ (examined above in this chapter), or contemporary cameos, such as an artifact preserved in Paris at the Bibliothèque

<sup>882</sup> Varner 2004, 182.

<sup>883</sup> Heinen 1991, 285. On the massive presence of imperial painted portraits in public places cf. the detailed analysis in Ando 2000, 232-239.

<sup>884</sup> Kleiner 1992, 321. The hairstyle corresponds to the so-called *Gabii* type, which includes the first series of Domna’s portraits covering approximately the period 193-206/207. Cf. Ghedini 1984, 28-29; Schlüter 1977; Hiesinger 1969, 40-41.

<sup>885</sup> Heinen 1991, 265-283.

<sup>886</sup> Severus is depicted with a full head of grey, curly hair as described by *Sev.* 19.9 (Kleiner 1992, 321). Furthermore, his skin color is significantly darker than that of the members of the family, a particular that could come from direct observation.

Nationale. The latter bears another representation of the imperial family, with the conjoined busts of Severus and Domna facing those of Caracalla and Geta<sup>887</sup>. As in the ‘dynastic issue’ with the legend CONCORDIAE AETERNAE, Severus wears the radiate crown and Domna the lunar crescent, a symbolic comparison between the imperial couple and the pair sun/moon. Thus, the cameo represents further attestation of the omnipresence of Domna in the dynastic images that were spread through the Empire.

If the ‘Berlin Tondo’ indicates how the imperial government afforded great visibility to Domna, not only with regard to the imperial coinage, but also in the official portraiture, another representation of the imperial family in an Egyptian temple suggests that locals were well aware of the important role of the Augusta. The place is the sanctuary of Esna, a city located some 55 kilometers south of Luxor that was certainly visited by Severus<sup>888</sup>. Here, by using the Egyptian iconographic style, local authorities had the emperor and his family portrayed as royal personalities, displayed facing the gods who protected the city (fig. 15). The names of the members of the family are also engraved near each figure in hieroglyphic characters<sup>889</sup>. As for Domna, this is the only documented occurrence of an imperial woman represented in this way. The only partial exception is a depiction of Livia on the Kalabsha Gate, where her name is, however, not mentioned<sup>890</sup>. The inscription from Esna is, consequently, the only Egyptian documentation of the name of an imperial woman written in hieroglyphics<sup>891</sup>. Moreover,

<sup>887</sup> Cabinet des Médailles (inv. no. B 13047), the provenience of the cameo is unfortunately unknown. Cf. Alexandridis 2004, 206 no. 234\* fig. 60, 2 with further bibliography.

<sup>888</sup> According to Dio 76 (75).13.1, Severus visited the whole country with few exceptions, and he also reached the border with Ethiopia.

<sup>889</sup> Heinen 1991, 282; Sauner 1952.

<sup>890</sup> On the topic cf. Winter 1979, 68.

<sup>891</sup> Heinen 1991, 282 n. 43, who observes that another hieroglyphic inscription was engraved for Vibia Sabina on the Antinous Obelisk in Rome, cf. Gauthier 1917, 197.

she is portrayed immediately after Severus and before Caracalla, a fact that well attests to the importance attributed to Domna by the inhabitants of Esna.

Finally, it is worth noting that one of the best example of Domna's early portraits comes from Syria. This is a bronze head, now preserved in the Fogg Museum (Harvard Art Museums), which originally belonged to a life-size statue (fig. 16)<sup>892</sup>. Its findspot is Salaminias, a small center located ca. 44 kilometers North East of Emesa<sup>893</sup>. According to Ulrich Hiesinger, who published this artifact, both the hairstyle and the somatic traits point to a dating to the very last years of the second century, when Domna was in Syria<sup>894</sup>. This suggests that images of the Augusta were already widespread in this area at this time, a further confirmation of how locals were perceiving her importance and influence.

#### **IVb.2.2. The Arch of the *Argentarii***

In 204, the corporation of the moneychangers (*argentarii*) and other guilds of merchants active in the Forum Boarium (*negotiantes boarii*) erected a small (6.3 x 5.7 x 2.2 m), but richly decorated arch, in honor of Severus, Caracalla, Geta, Domna, Plautilla and Plautianus at the entrance of the forum in Rome. Thanks to the dedicatory inscription with the titulatures of Severus and Caracalla, who were originally portrayed on the decorative reliefs together with Domna, Geta, Plautilla and Plautianus (both names and

<sup>892</sup> Object no. 1956.19. Dimensions: 36 x 22 x 20 cm.

<sup>893</sup> Hiesinger 1969, 39.

<sup>894</sup> Hiesinger 1969, 41-42. According to the scholar, this portrait shows Domna as a 'still young and lovely woman'. The coiffure has been identified with the so-called 'Gabii type', two waved side parts extending to the level of the chin, while the hair behind is drawn up in a large bun covering most of the back of the head. This same hairstyle also appears in the Kassel Cameo (cf. section III.4 above) and on the Arch of the *Argentarii* (cf. below). On Domna's hairstyles, see also Baharal 1992; Ghedini 1984, 89-90 with further references.

images belonging to the last three individuals, however, have been erased), the monument can be easily dated to 204<sup>895</sup>. The presence of Plautianus might suggest a more precise chronological attribution, i.e. to the first months of 204, and, in any case, before the *ludi saeculares* that were celebrated in late May. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, in fact, at the time of the *ludi* the fortune of Plautianus had already started to decline, since his name never appears in the inscription recording the *acta*.

On the internal panel of the east pillar (fig. 17), Domna is represented together with Severus, performing a public sacrifice. The choice of portraying an imperial woman participating in a sacrifice together with the emperor is somewhat of an innovation. In fact, the emperor normally dominates the scene in state art, almost to the complete exclusion of other persons<sup>896</sup> and, before Domna, there is no artistic evidence concerning imperial women attending a sacrifice together with male members of the imperial household<sup>897</sup>. Severus is depicted on the left, pouring a libation onto a tripod with his right hand. Geta was probably doing the same on the opposite side, but his figure is now completely lost owing to the *damnatio memoriae*. Domna is placed behind Severus, but at the center of the picture in a hieratic frontal pose, and with her right hand raised with the palm turned outwards. Scholars have identified a scene reproduced on a fresco in a

<sup>895</sup> The inscription is app. no. 86a. On the Arch of the *Argentarii* cf. in general Rowan 2012, 105-107; Daguet-Gagey 2005; Elsner 2005 and bibliography there.

<sup>896</sup> Beard, North and Price 1998, 350; Gordon 1990, 205. Apart from the Vestals, women rarely perform sacrifices in rites connected to the state religion (Ryberg 1955, 96). Cf. also Hemelrijk 2009, 259-260.

<sup>897</sup> The only exception could be the altar of the *magistri vici sandaliari*, where a female figure (who could be Livia or, perhaps, Julia) is represented with *patera* and incense box at the side of a male priest, who could be identified with Augustus. The interpretation of the scene, however, is still debated, cf. Pollini 2012, 137-138; Bergmann 2010, 298-299 (app. no. 21); Lott 2004, 125-126, 144-146, 192-193; Galinsky 1996, 304, 306; Pollini 1987, 30-37; Ghedini 1984, 32-33 with further references.

temple of Dura Europos (Syria) as the most fitting comparison for this scene<sup>898</sup>. Here, a priest of Bel is depicted performing a sacrifice in the same pose as Severus, and his daughter appears with her right hand raised, exactly like Domna. It seems, therefore, that the artists in charge of the realization of the panel in Rome drew inspiration from an Eastern way of depicting sacrifices. This could have happened because, until then, Roman examples of women participating in sacrifices together with men were lacking<sup>899</sup>. However, a reference to the cultural background of Domna cannot be excluded, especially when considering the raised right hand, which also occurs as an expression of devotion on innumerable statues from Palmyra, Hatra, and other cities in the Syrian-Mesopotamian area<sup>900</sup>. Interestingly, a statue of Domna belonging to a family group from Perge (Pamphylia), and roughly contemporary to the Arch of the *Argentarii*, shows the Augusta in the same pose (fig. 18)<sup>901</sup>. Considering that, at Perge, no other statues of earlier imperial women reproduce this posture<sup>902</sup>, and that Domna had passed through Asia Minor during her travels, the statue could be a reference to an event that actually happened. As for Rome, it is worth remembering the case of Julius Balbillus examined above in chap. II. He was a contemporary of Domna and the first priest of Elagabal in Rome. His connections with Vestals and freedmen of the imperial household are well documented, and for this reason it sounds plausible that he had come to Rome to take care of the cult of Elagabal, who was particularly worshipped by Syrian members of the

<sup>898</sup> Ghedini 1984, 30; Teixidor 1979, 134; Cumont 1926, 45-47.

<sup>899</sup> Ghedini 1984, 30.

<sup>900</sup> On the topic cf. Dirven 2008, 237–238.

<sup>901</sup> Archaeological Museum of Antalya, inv. no. A 3262. Cf. Özgür 2008, 92-93 no. 39; Alexandridis 2004, 199 no. 217\*.

<sup>902</sup> In Perge, the only other representation of an imperial woman with the *dextra elata* is a statue of Domna's niece Julia Soaemias (Archaeological Museum of Antalya, inv. no. 3270). Cf. Özgür 2008, 94-95 no. 40. Statues of Sabina (Özgür 2008, 80-81 no. 33) and Faustina the Younger (Özgür 2008, 88-89 no. 37) are also documented in this city, but they display different poses.

imperial household such as Julia Maesa, her daughter Soaemias, and Maesa's husband Julius Avitus Alexianus. People in Rome would likely have had occasion to see these people – and, arguably, Domna herself – performing sacrifices following Eastern rituals.

The display of oriental customs that appears on the Arch of the *Argentarii* finds some parallels with other events happening at court. As seen above in section IVa.2.2, the banquet at the wedding between Caracalla and Plautilla was partially organized in Syrian style. Furthermore, the gesture of the *dextra elata* also appears on a coin minted for Geta between 200 and 201, where Caracalla is represented on the reverse, raising his right hand with the palm turned outwards<sup>903</sup>. Scholars have observed that Caracalla's hand is excessively large, an element that confers a religious significance to the scene<sup>904</sup>. The radiate crown worn by Caracalla and the legend SEVER INVICTI AVG PII FIL, which seems an allusion to the solar cult, might support this interpretation<sup>905</sup>. This is the first time that an emperor is depicted in such a pose, a fact that corroborates the possibility of an influential relationship between Domna and Caracalla, as suggested by the statue groups that, as discussed above in section IVa.3.8, were specifically erected for the Augusta and her son.

Another element of interest is the caduceus that Domna originally held in her left hand before the erasure of the figure of Geta. Scholars agree upon the message of peace and prosperity that this emblem communicates, inasmuch as it frequently appears in

<sup>903</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 317 no. 21 (aureus). While Lichtenberger 2011, 229 considers the figure on the reverse as another image of Geta (who was, at that time, holding the rank of Caesar), an identification with Caracalla seems more plausible (cf. Ghedini 1984, 34). His radiate crown and the breastplate are, in fact, attributes of the emperors, cf. for example the dupondi/asses that show Caracalla wearing a military dress and Geta wearing a toga (RIC IV.1 p. 209 no. 864; p. 211 no. 886). Moreover, on a coin from Nicaea (Bithynia), Caracalla is depicted while standing on a chariot with his right hand raised (BMC Lydia 16). Cf. Brilliant 1963, 209-210.

<sup>904</sup> Ghedini 1984, 34.

<sup>905</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 229; Ghedini 1984, 34.

depictions of *Pax*, *Victoria*, and *Felicitas*<sup>906</sup>. It is also true, however, that the caduceus is associated with deities. As discussed above in section IVb.1.3, coins with the legend MATER CASTRORVM depict Domna holding a caduceus and sacrificing in front of an altar around which a snake coils. Although the sacrifice takes place in front of the military standards, both the caduceus and the snake confer an atmosphere of transcendence to the scene, and an aura of sacredness to Domna. Similarly, on the Arch of the *Argentarii*, the figure of the Augusta seems to reveal a subtle opposition between the human and the divine. On one side, the whole scene of the sacrifice probably draws inspiration from an event that actually happened, but on the other, Domna's right hand raised, the caduceus she holds, and the hieratic nature of her pose connect her to the divine sphere. The hieratic posture also recalls the coins with the legend FELICITAS SAECVLI, where the bust of Domna appears at the center between Caracalla and Geta as the personification of *Felicitas*, and, consequently, as (divine) source of prosperity.

#### IVb.2.3. The Severan arch of Leptis Magna

This four-way, richly decorated, arch, located at the intersection of the coastal road between Carthage and Alexandria and the street leading to the Old Forum of Leptis (where the arches of Tiberius and Trajan were also erected), is one of the most famous monuments of the Severan age<sup>907</sup>. Despite the fragmentary condition of the reliefs that decorate the arch, it is still possible to discern a celebration of Severus and his family, a

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<sup>906</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 103; Morelli 2009, 138; Ghedini 1984, 40-41.

<sup>907</sup> On the Severan arch of Leptis Magna see in general Faust 2013; *Id.* 2011; Cordovana 2007, 405-409 with further references.

context in which Domna acquires significant prominence<sup>908</sup>. Unfortunately, the dedicatory inscription is lost, and it is impossible to know the commissioners, but scholars generally postulate that the arch was erected on the initiative of the inhabitants of Leptis<sup>909</sup>. The dating has been a matter of discussion for a long time, but during the last decades a chronological attribution between the second half of 205 and the beginning of 209 has finally prevailed. Neither Plautilla nor Plautianus appear in the reliefs, and the portraits of Severus, Caracalla and Domna are typical of the last period of Severus' reign<sup>910</sup>. Moreover, Geta does not occupy an important position, and it is therefore necessary to presume that the decoration of the arch was realized before he became Augustus in 209. Domna appears at least six times, and she always plays an impactful role in scenes representing sacrifices, processions, and assemblies of deities. Given the importance that the Severan arch in Leptis assumes for the study of the public image of Domna, the scenes where the Augusta is represented will be briefly examined in the next sections.

a) *Scene of sacrifice* (NE outer frieze, figs. 16 and 18). Although a large lacuna affects the central part of the relief, the interpretation of the scene seems clear. Domna is depicted performing a sacrifice. With her left hand she holds an incense box, and with her right hand (now lost) she places some grains of incense on an altar, which is missing

<sup>908</sup> The most exhaustive analysis of the representations of Domna on the arch is still Ghedini 1984, 57-110. Cf. also Faust 2011, 120-121 and *passim*.

<sup>909</sup> Faust 2013, 493-494; Rowan 2012, 84-85; Wilson 2007, 296-297. Some fragments of the original inscription are, nonetheless, documented, but the only legible words are DIVO at the beginning of l. 1 and DIVAE at the beginning of l. 2; on the problem cf. Cordovana 2007, 409.

<sup>910</sup> Faust 2013, 494; *Id.* 2011, 131; Ghedini 1984, 88-90. On the portraits of Severus cf. in general Raeder 1992; Baharal 1989; Hornbostel 1972; Soechting 1972; McCann 1968. On the portraits of Caracalla cf. Leitmeir 2007 with further references.

owing to the lacuna<sup>911</sup>. Severus appears on the right side of the representation, surrounded by a group of men. He holds the wand of the augurs, the *lituus* (now lost), while a personification of Rome stands at his side<sup>912</sup>. Caracalla and Geta do not appear, but it seems plausible that they were originally standing around the altar in the lost section. The interpretation of the scene has been debated, but the possibility that this was a sacrifice in honor of the *Genius* of the emperor seems the most probable interpretation<sup>913</sup>. The relief, therefore, depicts Domna as a symbol of the unity of the imperial family, and an element of connection between emperor and sons. Furthermore, the presence of Juno, who is sitting on a throne behind the Augusta, underlines 1) her royal rank, and 2) a sort of equation between Domna and the deity<sup>914</sup>. Both concepts are already present on contemporary coins, especially on the *mater augg.* types examined above in section IVb.1. It is also important to stress that this frieze could be reproducing an event that actually happened. As seen above, before the Severan age there is no documentation concerning imperial women attending sacrifices performed by emperors<sup>915</sup>. Domna, however, had already appeared together with Severus and Geta in the scene of sacrifice on the Arch of the *Argentarii* dating to 204. During the Secular Games celebrated in this year, Domna had also attended a sacrifice in honor of Juno together with Severus<sup>916</sup>.

<sup>911</sup> Ghedini 1984, 61.

<sup>912</sup> Ghedini 1984, 60. According to Rowan 2012, 94, it could be a thunderbolt. Yet Severus holds the *lituus* in the SW frieze, where he and Caracalla are clasping their hands. Alexandridis 2004, 203 assumes that the all the male members of the family were originally placed around the altar, where the large lacuna is, and identifies Severus with the *Genius Senatus*.

<sup>913</sup> Ghedini 1984, 61-62.

<sup>914</sup> Identification of the figure sat on a throne with Juno: Rowan 2012, 94; Ghedini 1984, 62. Alexandridis 2004, 203 considers Juno part of a representation of the Capitoline triad.

<sup>915</sup> Cf. section IVb.2.2 above.

<sup>916</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.7 above.

b) *Scene with the dextrarum iunctio* (SW outer frieze, figs. 17 and 19). Severus, Caracalla and Geta occupy the center of the scene. Severus and Caracalla are clasping hands (the symbolic act of the *dextrarum iunctio*), while Geta is standing in the middle. Domna appears on the left, surrounded by a group of deities. These are Hercules, who is depicted between the Augusta and the emperors, the Virtue of the Roman people, and Minerva<sup>917</sup>. The presence of the latter offers the key to interpreting the role of Domna. Acting as *mater castrorum*, she probably represents the military force of the dynasty, upon which the *concordia augotorum* (symbolized by the *dextrarum iunctio*) is founded<sup>918</sup>. Although she does not appear at the center of the representation, the importance conferred upon Domna is evident. Her figure clearly stands out on the left, and, once again, the juxtaposition between the Augusta and the divine is boldly suggested.

c) *Solemn procession* (SE outer frieze, fig. 23). Notwithstanding the many lacunae affecting this relief, it is still possible to detect its content. This is a military procession, similar to the one represented in the well-preserved NW frieze, where Severus and his sons are standing on a quadriga, preceded and followed by soldiers. The same subject probably appeared on the SE frieze, but with a few significant differences. Unlike the NW panel, the procession where Domna is participating does not seem to be reproducing an actual event. Personifications of deities are, in fact, accompanying the cortege, and Domna herself, who holds a palm branch, is depicted as a personification of Victoria<sup>919</sup>. There is, therefore, a peculiar difference between these panels and the panels examined

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<sup>917</sup> Ghedini 1984, 64.

<sup>918</sup> Ghedini 1984, 64. Scenes of battle, which also emphasize the military force of dynasty, are documented on the arch of Leptis, cf. Faust 2013, 495-496; *Id.* 2011, 113-115.

<sup>919</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 357; Ghedini 1984, 70-72.

above, where the assimilation between Domna/deity was only suggested. Here it becomes explicit. According to Ghedini, this may be an expedient that allows an imperial woman to be depicted participating in a military procession, an almost unprecedented fact in imperial history<sup>920</sup>. Moreover, the role of Victoria reflects neither that of mother of the dynasty, nor that of *mater castrorum*. Rather, it represents the theological aspect upon which the authority of Severus is established, the divine support of a goddess whose power is represented by Domna<sup>921</sup>.

d) *Cultual scene* (pillar). In a fragmentary relief from one of the pillars, it is possible to recognize another depiction of Domna, whose hairstyle alludes to her youthful portraits, such as those on the Arch of the *Argentarii* and the bronze head from Syria examined in the sections above<sup>922</sup>. This circumstance represents an element of contrast with the other scenes, where Domna's hairstyle always corresponds to those typical of the period 205-211. Unfortunately, the lacunae do not permit a complete understanding of this scene, since only the figure of Domna survives in its entirety<sup>923</sup>. As a result, the fact that the arch was not only representing contemporary situations, but also events happening in the past, is the only information that is possible to obtain.

e) *Relief with sacrifice in front of a temple* (pillar, fig. 24). Despite the fact that only the lower part of the figure of a woman is still visible, its identification with Domna, standing at Severus' side within a group of people including Caracalla, Geta, Heracles

<sup>920</sup> Ghedini 1984, 73-74. The only previous case is the Britannic triumph of Claudius. On this occasion, Messalina was allowed to follow the quadriga of the emperor on a *carpentum* (SVET. *Claud.* 17.3; cf. also Dio 60.22.2 who, however, mentions Messalina's use of the *carpentum* without referring to her participation in the triumph).

<sup>921</sup> Ghedini 1984, 74.

<sup>922</sup> Cf. Alexandridis 2004, 200; Ghedini 1984, 76. On Domna's hairstyles cf. section III.4 above.

<sup>923</sup> The possibility that the scene represents a religious theme seems, nonetheless, the most probable one, cf. Faust 2011, 120-121.

and, perhaps, the *Tyche* of the Severan household, should be considered certain<sup>924</sup>. All these characters are standing in front of a temple, presumably while proceeding to perform a sacrifice whose preparation is represented in the panel below<sup>925</sup>. According to Ghedini, this event could, perhaps, be identified as the ceremony for the inauguration of the joint consulship of Caracalla and Geta, which took place in 205<sup>926</sup>. As in the NE frieze, however, the participation of Domna in a public sacrifice, together with the other male members of the family, is the most interesting peculiarity of this scene.

f) *Assembly of deities* (pillar, fig. 25). This name is applied to a scene in which Severus and Domna appear together. Domna is depicted standing on the right side of Severus, who is sitting on a throne. The presence of a peacock at her feet suggests that she should be identified with Juno, whereas the throne, long beard, and tunic covering the whole body hint at an identification of Severus with Jupiter, and, possibly, Serapis as well<sup>927</sup>. The figures of Fortuna (left side) and Minerva (right side) complete the scene. With regard to the identification Domna/Juno, it is important to stress that an individual from Leptis, Q. Fulvius Dida Bubilianus, set up an altar to fulfill a vow made to the Augusta, who is called ‘Julia Domna Augusta, the goddess Juno of the earthly world’ (*Iulia Domna Augusta, dea Iuno orbis terrae*)<sup>928</sup>. Coins struck in 195, with the legend IVNO REGINA on the reverse, show a female figure in the same pose as Domna is represented with in this panel<sup>929</sup>. The juxtaposition Domna/Juno, therefore, was a concept

<sup>924</sup> Faust, 2011, 116; Alexandridis 2004, 200-201; Ghedini 1984, 77.

<sup>925</sup> Faust 2011, 118; Ghedini 1984, 77-78.

<sup>926</sup> Ghedini 1984, 80.

<sup>927</sup> Lichtenberger 2011, 212-213; Alexandridis 2004, 200; Ghedini 1984, 82. According to Faust 2013, 501, Rowan 2012, 94-95 and Faust 2011, 124, the identification of Severus with Jupiter should be preferred.

<sup>928</sup> App. no. 324b.

<sup>929</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 207 nos. 840, 845 (sesterce, dupondius/as).

that had already arisen during the first years Severus' reign, and, in the minds of the inhabitants of Leptis, it was a well-established idea when the arch was erected. The message of this panel, however, seems to be more extensive, since Domna also appears at the side of Fortuna. If the presence of Minerva, who is depicted at the side of Severus with a shield and (originally) a spear, represents the military strength of the emperor, the presence of Fortuna, who stands behind Domna, prompts ideas of abundance and prosperity being connected to the semi-divine Augusta.

In short, the reliefs on the arch of Leptis Magna depict Domna in a wide range of different situations: these are two sacrifices performed together with the other male members of the family (reliefs *a*, *e* and, perhaps, *d*), a parade of gods and humans (*c*), a scene expressing concord among the emperors (*b*), and a divine allegory, which concerns Domna and Severus only (*f*). The recurring concepts are essentially two: 1) Her being an essential member of the imperial family, not only as mother of the dynasty, but also as personification of the divine power that was supporting it. 2) Her proximity to the divine sphere, a position that includes identification with deities who are normally considered the protectors of Rome, such as Juno, Victoria, and Fortuna.

#### **IVb.2.4. Overall remarks**

The many representations of Domna in the reliefs of the arch of Leptis Magna, a monument dating to the last years of the reign of Severus, should be considered as a culmination of what had already been depicted during the previous years. The Berlin tondo, the reliefs in the temple of Esna, the bronze head from Salaminias in Syria, and the panel on the Arch of the *Argentarii* in Rome attest to her constant presence in public life.

In scenes representing public sacrifices she is sometimes the protagonist. She is also the first – and the last – imperial woman to be depicted in a military procession acting as a goddess. Divine attributes, which are already noticeable in the depiction on the Arch of the *Argentarii*, become much more evident in Leptis, where Domna is explicitly compared to goddesses such as Juno and Victoria. The commissioners of all these monuments and artifacts are professional associations, cities and, presumably, individuals who consider her, not only the mother of the dynasty, but also an important public person. Also, it should be stressed that both the Arch of the *Argentarii* and the arch of Leptis Magna were apparently built on the initiative of people who could observe the life of the imperial court from a close position. The *argentarii* and *negotiatores* in Rome certainly had the opportunity to see Domna in public. The inhabitants of Leptis Magna, where relatives of Severus were still living during the reign of this emperor<sup>930</sup>, could count on privileged relationships with the emperor and his entourage.

#### **IVb. 3. CONCLUSIONS (IVa-IVb)**

From the analysis of the impressive quantity of evidence concerning Domna during the years 197-211, a complex picture of her relationship with the court and the inhabitants of the empire comes to light. Although literary sources are quite deficient in information, Dio reports that Plautianus hated Domna strongly, and tried to discredit her in every possible way. The causes of this hostility are detectable in several passages of the *HA*, which says that Plautianus abused the power of persecuting Severus' opponents that he had been entrusted with. While Severus was campaigning against the Parthians,

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<sup>930</sup> According to Sev. 15.7, a sister of Severus came from Leptis Magna to visit the emperor, who sent her back because she could hardly speak Latin.

Plautianus accumulated plunder at the expense of the population of Syria and other regions in Middle East, a fact that caused Domna to react. She presumably made use of her influence on Severus to defend the cause of those who were enduring the pillaging and to curb Plautianus. While the imperial party was travelling through Egypt between 199 and 200, the appointment of Aemilius Saturninus as co-prefect of the guard evidently fulfilled this objective, and it is not difficult to see Domna behind this operation. Plautianus, however, managed to get rid of Saturninus. The enormous riches, which, according to Dio, he paraded through the streets of Rome on the occasion of the wedding between Caracalla and his daughter Plautilla, demonstrate that Plautianus had achieved his purposes, at least partially. In fact, despite the campaign of slander that he had organized against Domna, he could not persuade Severus to remove her from the imperial court. The ‘dynastic emissions’ in 200-201, the numerous representations of Domna on artworks such as the ‘Berlin Tondo’ and the Arch of *Argentarii*, and the constant presence of her name on inscriptions reveal that the hostility of Plautianus was not enough to undermine the prestige she was enjoying. Furthermore, numerous statues and dedications, which provincial governors, imperial officials and soldiers set up to honor her, indicate that her influence in public affairs remained strong. Dio’s affirmation that she was spending her days with sophists and philosophers cannot, consequently, be used to demonstrate that she retired from public life.

It was, eventually, Caracalla that eliminated Plautianus, thus breaking through the impasse that the struggle between the prefect and Domna had created. Although there are no sources that support a direct involvement of the Augusta in the assassination, it is possible to say that the relationship between Domna and her elder son was a strong one.

The ‘dynastic emissions’ of 201-202 had already emphasized this connection, and, during the following years, groups of statues were erected for the two of them. Additionally, on imperial coins Caracalla is, on one occasion, portrayed with his right hand raised, the same pose with which Domna is represented on the Arch of the *Argentarii*. It is also important to stress that honorary dedications, in many cases, include Domna and Caracalla along with Severus, but not Geta. Domna, after all, was the individual who had the most to gain from the death of Plautianus. Severus was almost 60 years old and afflicted by arthritis. If he had died, Domna, who would remain alone with two adolescent sons, would have been an easy target for Plautianus, who was rich, powerful and could count on the support of the praetorians. It is, consequently, easy to postulate that behind Caracalla’s hatred for Plautianus there was Domna, who, not surprisingly, was the first to be informed of the assassination of the prefect.

Some innovations affected the public image of the Augusta after the death of Plautianus. The first is the renewed emphasis on the relationship with the East and its deities, a connection that had already come to light with the coins dedicated to Cybele and Isis between 197 and 200. Cybele, in fact, returns on a new type struck in 207 on aurei and denarii, which depict the goddess driving a quadriga of lions with the legend MATER AVGG. These coins represent a second important innovation, the full identification of Domna with a deity. Some years before, this tendency had already appeared, *in nuce*, in the ‘dynastic emissions’ characterized by the legends FELICITAS TEMPORVM and SAECVLI FELICITAS, and in the hieratic depiction of the Augusta on the Arch of the *Argentarii*. A totally ‘divine’ Domna also appears later, between 205 and 209, on the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna, which was decorated with depictions of the Augusta as

Juno and Victoria. This phenomenon, however, should not be ascribed to a supposed desire for being worshipped as a goddess. Rather, representations of Domna as a goddess seem to reflect one of the cornerstones of the new political course inaugurated by the Severans. This is the concept of royalty backed by divine investiture, which makes the emperor a mediator between the human and divine sphere. Interestingly, it was one of Domna's protégés, the sophist Philostratus, who theorized these concepts in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a work that he had decided to write following the exhortations of the Augusta. Hence, Domna, the mother of the *domus divina*, appears to have been one of the main supporters and ideologues of this new 'theological conception' of the imperial power.

## Chapter V

### *The last years*

The last two chapters have investigated Domna's agency and the perception of her influence during Severus' reign, from 193 to 211. The same topics will be examined in this chapter, but I will shift my attention to the joint reign of Caracalla and Geta (211), in addition to the reign of Caracalla as sole ruler (211-217). During these years, literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic documentation concerning the Augusta is anything but scanty. What is more, in some cases it is even more abundant than before. This is particularly true for literary sources (section V.2). Herodian, for example, mentions Domna for the first time when narrating the tense relationship between Caracalla and Geta during 211. Moreover, Dio displays a singular interest in the Augusta during Caracalla's sole reign, a clear reference to the fact that, in this period, she was generally regarded as a more powerful individual. The production of inscriptions in her honor increases notably starting from 211, and continues apace until her death in 217 (section V.3). A famous inscription from Ephesus also belongs to this period. It reports a letter of Domna to the city, a document of extraordinary importance, because it is one of the very few extant examples of a missive written by an imperial woman. The striking of imperial coins (section V.4) is maintained at a constant level. Yet several motifs that had already appeared under Severus not only continue, but are even more widely developed. Among these, the themes of Domna's royal and divine attributes will be investigated with particular attention. Provincial coins honoring her continue to be struck as before. It is, however, important to note that many interesting manifestations of devotion are

documented in Asian cities, which received numerous benefits from Caracalla. For the first time she is also portrayed on silver tetradrachms minted in Cilicia and Syria. Finally, both Caracalla and Domna are represented on a very intriguing artifact, the Warsaw relief, which depicts the Augusta in the act of crowning her son (section V.5).

## V.1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

A situation of general uncertainty followed the death of Severus, who, on his deathbed, had exhorted Caracalla and Geta to reign harmoniously together<sup>931</sup>. The rivalry between the two brothers, who had already started to compete during the previous years, became immediately evident when the imperial court returned from Britain to Rome in the middle of 211<sup>932</sup>. After the failure of a solemn sacrifice to Concordia - or maybe even earlier - the senators, whose concern over the situation was growing, decided to bestow the titles *pia, felix, mater senatus et patriae* on Domna, who was clearly seen as the only person that could maintain the peace between Caracalla and Geta<sup>933</sup>. This was the first time that an imperial woman was awarded the titles *mater senatus et patriae*. The only – partial – exception was Livia, to whom the senate was about to decree the title *mater patriae* after the death of Augustus, but Tiberius, who did not tolerate the continuous interferences of

<sup>931</sup> Dio 77 (76).15.2.

<sup>932</sup> Enmity between Caracalla and Geta before the death of Severus: Dio 77 (76).7.1-2; Hdn. 3.13.1-6. Return to Rome: Halfmann 1986, 219.

<sup>933</sup> Sacrifice to Concordia: Dio 78 (77).1.4. During the last decades, the exact year of the bestowal of these new titles has been a matter of dispute, but scholars now agree upon 211, cf. Nadolny 2016, 50-51; Kemezis 2014, 77-78; Langford 2013, 134-136; Levick 2007, 93-94 with further references. There is only one inscription, a dedication to Severus, Caracalla and Domna from Albanum (app. no. 216b), which could attest to the use of these titles before 211, inasmuch as Severus is not called Divus. Caracalla, however, is already *Parthicus maximus* and *Britannicus maximus*, a circumstance that suggests a date after 211 (cf. Mastino 1981, 52). According to Kemezis 2014, 78, the text probably reflects multiple stages of composition, the latest being after Severus' death.

his mother in political matters, stopped the initiative<sup>934</sup>. Also, it was the first time that the titles *pia* and *felix* were bestowed on a living Augusta, inasmuch as Faustina the Younger had been officially awarded the title of *pia* only after her death<sup>935</sup>. The authority of Domna, however, was not sufficient to put an end to the struggle, which eventually ended on either the 19<sup>th</sup> or the 26<sup>th</sup> December 211, when Caracalla treacherously assassinated Geta during a conciliatory meeting that had been called in the apartments of Domna<sup>936</sup>.

The measures adopted by Caracalla after the assassination seem to indicate that the two brothers were leading opposite armed factions, and that a civil war was imminent<sup>937</sup>. The deletion of the memory of Geta, in fact, did not affect only inscriptions, statues and portraits, but even his name on papyri<sup>938</sup>. Furthermore, the military units that had remained loyal to Caracalla were awarded the title *Antoniniana*<sup>939</sup>, imperial mints struck coins to thank the gods for the lucky escape<sup>940</sup>, a new imperial acclamation was bestowed on Caracalla<sup>941</sup>, and even the Antonine Constitution, which extended the Roman citizenship to almost all free inhabitants of the Empire, was issued as an act of gratitude for the safety of the emperor<sup>942</sup>. Dio probably exaggerates when he states that some 20.000 people who had supported Geta were killed, but the death of Papinianus, the relative of Domna and prefect of the guard appointed by Severus in 205, indicates how

<sup>934</sup> Dio 57.12.4; SVET. *Tib.* 50.2; TAC. *Ann.* 1.14.1. On the topic cf. Bertolazzi 2015, 424-428.

<sup>935</sup> Levick 2014, 58; Kienast 1996, 141.

<sup>936</sup> Dio 78 (77).2.2-4; Hdn. 4.4.3. On the dating cf. Letta 1991, 673.

<sup>937</sup> Kemmers 2011, 285-287.

<sup>938</sup> Krüpe 2011, 15; Varner 2004, 168. On the unprecedented thoroughness with which Geta's name was erased cf. also De Jong 2007. Krüpe notes that at least one third of 970 documents reporting memory sanctions against 120 individuals from the mid-republic to late antiquity refer to Geta. Also, the *damnatio* decreed by Caracalla affected even papyri that, in 211, were at least ten years old.

<sup>939</sup> Campbell 1984, 88-93; Fitz 1983, 228.

<sup>940</sup> Letta 1989.

<sup>941</sup> Letta 1991, 673-674. Cf. also Kienast 1996, 163.

<sup>942</sup> Letta 1989.

precarious the situation was<sup>943</sup>. The harshness of the purge caused some negative reactions in the populace and the garrison of Rome, and Caracalla was forced to spare the eminent senator Fabius Cilo, who was rescued from the hands of the praetorians by the urban cohorts and the mob<sup>944</sup>.

Meanwhile, the pressure of the Alemanni on the Raetic border provided Caracalla with the pretext of a large-scale campaign to strengthen his popularity among the troops. The emperor left Rome in the summer of 213 to reach Gaul and then Raetia<sup>945</sup>. He passed the frontier in August, and a victory over the Alemannic tribes was obtained shortly after, since, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October, the Arval Brethren celebrated the Germanic victory of Caracalla and Domna, who had probably accompanied her son as far as Raetia<sup>946</sup>. There are no indications that the imperial court returned to Rome after the end of the campaign. Caracalla and his mother most likely wintered in the Danubian provinces, presumably in Sirmium<sup>947</sup>. At this time, the emperor was already planning to intervene in the internal struggles that were affecting the Parthian Empire, where king Vologases VI was fighting the usurpation by his brother, Artabanus V<sup>948</sup>. After having travelled through the Balkans and crossing the Hellespont in the first half of 214, the imperial court toured Western Anatolia, visiting the cities of Cyzicus, Ilion, Pergamum, Smyrna, Ephesus, and finally it

<sup>943</sup> Slaughter of Geta's supporters: Dio 78 (77).4.1. Death of Papinianus: *Carac.* 4.1; Dio 78 (77).4.1-2. On the events following the death of Geta cf. Kemmers 2011, 285-286; Levick 2007, 90-91; Birley 1999, 189; Letta 1991, 673-675. On the relationship between Papinianus and Domna cf. chap. II.

<sup>944</sup> Dio 78 (77).4.2-5.

<sup>945</sup> Halfmann 1986, 223, 225-226.

<sup>946</sup> Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 34. On the war against the Alemanni, cf. Burns 2003, 277-279; Letta 1991, 675-677.

<sup>947</sup> Halfmann 1986, 226; Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 38.

<sup>948</sup> Dio 78 (77).12.2<sup>a</sup>. Cf. Letta 1991, 677-678.

wintered in Nicomedia<sup>949</sup>. From here, it resumed the journey to Syria by crossing Nicaea, Ancira, Tyana, the Cilician Gates and Tarsus, and eventually arrived at Antioch in the summer of 215<sup>950</sup>.

Immediately after arriving, Caracalla made an attempt to occupy Armenia, which, however, offered strong resistance, and the Roman troops were eventually compelled to retreat to Syria<sup>951</sup>. At this point, the summer was already ending, and the emperor was forced to wait and monitor the developments of the civil war in the Parthian territories. In the autumn of 215, he left Antioch and travelled to Egypt, where he stayed until the beginning of 216<sup>952</sup>. In this period, Dio attributes a massacre of civilians in Alexandria to the bloodthirsty temperament of Caracalla, but his account does not seem to be totally reliable<sup>953</sup>. Rather, Caracalla's decision to punish some expressions of dissent seems to have stirred an open revolt, which had to be repressed by the army<sup>954</sup>. Although our sources do not report the presence of Domna during this trip, the jokes that the Alexandrians made on the alleged incestuous relationship between Caracalla and his mother suggest her presence in Alexandria<sup>955</sup>. At any rate, at the beginning of 216, the emperor was back in Antioch to resume the operations against the Parthians. Before starting the campaign, however, Caracalla asked for the hand of Artabanus' daughter<sup>956</sup>. The purpose was probably the creation of a client kingdom in southern Mesopotamia,

<sup>949</sup> Halfmann 1986, 224, 227. Cf. Letta 1991, 678-679.

<sup>950</sup> Halfmann 1986, 224, 228. Cf. Letta 1991, 679.

<sup>951</sup> Dio 78 (77).21.1.

<sup>952</sup> Halfmann 1986, 225.

<sup>953</sup> Dio 78 (77).22-23. Cf. also Hdn. 4.8.6-9.8 and *Carac.* 6.2-3, where the same episode is related in a more abbreviated version.

<sup>954</sup> For a detailed analysis of the events cf. Letta 2016.

<sup>955</sup> Hdn. 4.9.3.

<sup>956</sup> Dio 79 (78).1.1. Hdn. 4.10-11 also describes the episode, but a large part of his account must be regarded as an imaginative reworking of the events, cf. Levick 2007, 102; Letta 1991, 680-681; Alföldy 1972, 31; Kolb 1972, iii-iv.

which would be ruled by any future son of the emperor. This project is, after all, coherent with Caracalla's numerous attempts to imitate Alexander the Great, and it should also be noted that, on his mother's side, he was connected to the Emesene nobility, who had ruled over Armenia a few decades earlier<sup>957</sup>. Artabanus, nevertheless, refused the offer, leaving Caracalla with no other option than to declare war<sup>958</sup>. Since the negotiation had been going on for a while and the summer was now ending, the emperor made only a brief incursion beyond the Tigris, and postponed the beginning of wider operations to the following year<sup>959</sup>. But, while the preparations for the imminent campaign were underway, on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 217 Caracalla was assassinated while travelling to Carrhae to visit the temple of the god Lunus (Sîn)<sup>960</sup>. The instigator of the murder was Macrinus, the Prefect of the Guard, who was probably concerned about his safety. After becoming emperor, Macrinus allowed Domna, who was staying in Antioch, to keep her royal retinue and the bodyguard of praetorian soldiers. But when the Augusta realized that it was impossible for her to maintain her power, she decided to put an end to her life<sup>961</sup>.

As in the reign of Severus, literary, epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological sources attest to the presence of Domna in public life. The accounts of Dio and Herodian assign more space to her, and the production of coins and inscriptions bearing her name remains constant. Furthermore, although during Caracalla's reign honorary monuments

<sup>957</sup> Levick 2007, 101; Letta 1991, 680-681. On Caracalla's *imitatio Alexandri*, cf. Maier 2012; Baharal 2003. According to the latter, Caracalla's desire to imitate Alexander the Great was an entirely personal matter and the outcome of his (sophistic) education. Buraselis 1991, 38, however, has observed that the dynastic house to which Domna belonged could boast a blood connection with the Commagenian nobility (cf. section II.2.1 above). Thus, it might claim descent from the Seleucids and Alexander.

<sup>958</sup> This is the cause that, according to Dio 79 (78).1.1, Caracalla reported in his letters to the senate.

<sup>959</sup> *Carac.* 6.4; Dio 79 (78)1.2.

<sup>960</sup> *Carac.* 6.6; Dio 79 (78).11.6. On Caracalla's trip to Carrhae, cf. Hekster and Kaizer 2012.

<sup>961</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.4-6; Hdn. 4.13.8.

of extraordinary elegance such as the Severan Arch in Leptis Magna were not built, depictions of Domna at the side of her elder son are, nevertheless, documented. As in the previous chapters, the analysis of all this evidence will be subdivided into separate sections, which will be devoted to each type of source.

## V.2. LITERARY SOURCES

### V.2.1. The year 211

Soon after the death of Severus, Domna is depicted taking an active role in political life. She also appears for the first time in the account of Herodian. According to the latter, Domna and the members of the imperial council tried to reconcile Caracalla and Geta when the court was still staying in Eburacum, in northern England:

(...) Ἐξῆι τε τῆς βαρβάου πρός τε τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἥδη καὶ τὴν μητέρα ἡπείγετο. Ως δὲ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸν ἐγένοντο, συνάγειν αὐτοὺς ἡ μήτηρ ἐπειρᾶτο καὶ οἱ ἐξιώσει ὄντες καὶ σύνεδροι πατρῷοι φίλοι<sup>962</sup>.

And now he [i.e. Caracalla] abandoned this alien land [i.e. Scotland] and returned to his brother and mother. When they were together again, their mother tried to reconcile them, as did also men of repute and the friends of Severus who were their advisers.

The attempt was unsuccessful, and the hostilities exploded again when, a few months later, they were back in Rome. At this point, Herodian inserts an episode in which Domna intervenes in a turbulent dispute between the two rivals, who were considering the option of dividing the Empire into two parts. According to this project, Italy and the western provinces would be assigned to Caracalla, while the Eastern provinces would go to Geta. Domna, however, suddenly broke into the conversation:

‘Γῆν μέν καὶ θάλασσαν, ὡς τέκνα, εὑρίσκετε ὅπως νείμησθε, καὶ τὰς ἡπείρους, ὡς φατε, τὸ Πόντιον ῥεῖθρον διαρεῖ. Τὴν δὲ μητέρα πῶς ἀν διέλοισθε, καὶ πῶς ἡ ἀθλία ἐγὼ ἐς

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<sup>962</sup> Hdn. 3.15.6.

έκάτερον ύμῶν νεμηθείην ἢ τιμηθείην; πρῶτον δὴ ἐμὲ φονεύσατε, καὶ διελόντες ἔκάτερος παρ' ἔαντῷ τὸ μέρος θαπτέτω. Οὕτω γάρ ἂν μετὰ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης ἐξ ύμᾶς μερισθείην.' Ταῦτα δὲ λέγουσα μετὰ δακρύων καὶ οἰμωγῆς, ἀμφοτέροις τε τὰς χεῖρας περιβάλλουσα καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς ἄγκαλας λαβοῦσα, συνάγειν ἐπειρᾶτο. Πάντας δὲ οἴκτου καταλαβόντος διελύθη τὸ συνέδριον, ἢ τε σκέψις ἀπεδοκιμάσθε<sup>963</sup>.

'Earth and sea, my children, you have found a way to divide, and, as you say, the Propontic Gulf separates the continents. But your mother, how would you parcel her? How am I, unhappy, wretched - how am I to be torn and ripped asunder for the pair of you? Kill me first, and after you have claimed your share, let each one perform the funeral rites for his portion. Thus would I, too, together with earth and sea, be partitioned between you'. After saying this, amid tears and lamentations, Julia stretched out her hands and, clasping them both in her arms, tried to reconcile them. And with all pitying her, the meeting adjourned and the project was abandoned.

Scholars have considered the project of splitting the Empire into two separate kingdoms as an invention of Herodian, who also depicted Domna as a fragile and touching character with the purpose of giving a dramatic taste to scene<sup>964</sup>. The historical accuracy of this passage is, therefore, doubtful<sup>965</sup>. It is nonetheless true that the prominent position that Herodian attributes to the Augusta in Eburacum and Rome reveals the awareness of the central political role she had assumed after the death of Severus<sup>966</sup>. As discussed above, in this period the senate awarded the Augusta the titles of *mater senatus et patriae*. Strangely enough, in the account of Dio there is no mention of these events. Yet, in 211, he was certainly present in Rome and, possibly, in the senate when the bestowal of these new titles was being discussed. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that, in Dio's history, the narration covering the year 211 occupies only a few paragraphs,

<sup>963</sup> Hdn. 4.3.8-9.

<sup>964</sup> Nadolny 2016, 165; Levick 2007, 88; Sidebottom 2007, 79; Bleckmann 1992, 222; Letta 1991, 673; Alföldy 1989b, 190-191; Kettenhofen 1979, 22.

<sup>965</sup> According to Zimmermann 1999, 205, for the bipartition of the Empire Herodian could have taken inspiration from the civil war of 193-194, when the West was governed by Severus and the East by Niger. Sidebottom 2007, 79, Bleckmann 1992, 222 and Alföldy 1989d, 255, have also hypothesized a correspondence with the joint reign of Valerianus and Gallienus, while Levick 2007, 88 with that of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.

<sup>966</sup> Levick 2007, 88.

perhaps on account of Xiphilinus' abridgement. Some remarks on the cruelty of Caracalla and his plans to assassinate his brother represent, in fact, the only surviving information. Hence, in consideration of what Herodian says, the death of Severus put Domna in the unique position of supervising the activities of the two emperors. Since the time of Agrippina the Younger, no imperial woman had been left alone with the task of invigilating a young emperor. Despite the silence of Dio, this situation did not go unnoticed by the contemporaries of the Augusta.

### **V.2.2. The assassination of Geta and the reign of Caracalla (211-217)**

Caracalla's plan for the assassination of Geta in 211 closely resembles the killing of Plautianus in 205. As a pretext to catch his brother off guard, Caracalla called Geta to a conciliatory reunion in the apartments of their mother. When the two brothers met, a group of soldiers, previously instructed by Caracalla, broke in and killed Geta on the spot. The biggest difference to the assassination of Plautianus is the presence of Domna, who, according to Dio, had her younger son slain in her arms:

(...) ἔπεισε τὴν μητέρα μόνους σφᾶς ἐς τὸ δωμάτιον, ώς καὶ συναλλάξουσαν, μεταπέμψασθαι: καὶ οὕτω πιστεύσαντος τοῦ Γέτα ἐσῆλθε μὲν μετ' αὐτοῦ, ἐπεὶ δὲ εῖσω ἐγένοντο, ἑκατόνταρχοί τινες ἐσεπήδησαν ἀθρόοι, παρὰ τοῦ Ἀντωνίνου προπαρεσκευασμένοι, καὶ αὐτὸν πρός τε τὴν μητέρα, ώς εἰδέ σφας, προκαταφυγόντα καὶ ἀπό τε τοῦ αὐχένος αὐτῆς ἐξαρτηθέντα καὶ τοῖς στήθεσι τοῖς τε μαστοῖς προσφύντα κατέκοψαν ὀλοφυρόμενον καὶ βιώντα: ‘μῆτερ μῆτερ, τεκοῦσα τεκοῦσα, βοήθει, σφάζομαι’. Καὶ ἡ μὲν οὕτως ἀπατηθεῖσα τόν τε νιὸν ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῆς κόλποις ἀνοσιώτατα ἀπολλύμενον ἐπεδε, καὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐς αὐτὰ τὰ σπλάγχνα τρόπον τινά, ἐξ ὃν ἐγεγέννητο, ἐσεδέξατο: καὶ γὰρ τοῦ αἵματος πᾶσα ἐπλήσθη, ώς ἐν μηδενὶ λόγῳ τὸ τῆς χειρὸς τραῦμα ὃ ἐτρώθη ποιήσασθαι. Οὔτε δὲ πενθῆσαι οὔτε θρηνῆσαι τὸν νιόν, καίπερ πρόωρον οὕτως οἰκτρῶς ἀπολωλότα, ὑπῆρξεν αὐτῇ (δύο γὰρ καὶ εἴκοσι ἔτη καὶ μῆνας ἐννέα ἐβίω), ἀλλ’ ἡναγκάζετο ώς καὶ ἐν μεγάλῃ τινὶ εὐτυχίᾳ οὖσα χαίρειν καὶ γελᾶν: οὕτω που πάντα ἀκριβῶς καὶ τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ νεύματα τὰ τε χρώματα ἐτηρεῖτο: καὶ μόνη ἐκείνη, τῇ Αύγούστῃ, τῇ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος γυναικί, τῇ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων μητρί, οὐδ’ ιδίᾳ που ἐπὶ τηλικούτῳ παθήματι δακρῦσαι ἐξῆν<sup>967</sup>.

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<sup>967</sup> Dio 78 (77).2.2-6.

[Antoninus] induced his mother to summon them both, unattended, to her apartment, with a view to reconciling them. Thus Geta was persuaded, and went in with him; but when they were inside, some centurions, previously instructed by Antoninus, rushed in a body and struck down Geta, who at sight of them had run to his mother, hung about her neck and clung to her bosom and breasts, lamenting and crying: ‘Mother that didst bear me, mother that didst bear me, help! I am being murdered’. And so she, tricked in this way, saw her son perishing in the most impious fashion in her arms, and received him at his death into the very womb, as it were, whence he had been born; for she was all covered with his blood, so that she took no note of the wound she had received on her hand. But she was not permitted to mourn or weep for her son, though he had met so miserable an end before his time (he was only twenty-two years and nine months old), but, on the contrary, she was compelled to rejoice and laugh as though at some great good fortune; so closely were all her words, gestures, and changes of color observed. Thus she alone, the Augusta, wife of the emperor and mother of the emperors, was not permitted to shed tears even in private over so great a sorrow.

As in other passages of Dio’s narration, the inclusion of Domna as a victim of the events seems to have had the purpose of emphasizing the cruelty of another character, viz. Caracalla, who not only kills his brother in the arms of their mother, but also forbids her to mourn his death<sup>968</sup>. The versions provided by the other writers are quite similar to this. Despite a lacuna affecting the account of Herodian, it seems that he reproduced Dio in full<sup>969</sup>. The anonymous author of the *HA*, who did not apparently know Dio’s account, reports more or less the same information, but adds that Caracalla was tempted to kill Domna as well, since he saw her mourning the death of Geta<sup>970</sup>. Finally, when narrating

<sup>968</sup> Dio’s use of Domna as a character that emphasizes the cruelty and the defects of other personalities has been investigated in Mallan 2013. On this episode cf. in particular pp. 743-746. Similar considerations can be found also in Nadolny 2016, 142-143. Following a suggestion from Ghedini 1984, 21 n. 102, Levick 2007, 89 stressed the dramatic connotations of the scene, which could recall the episode of the *Iliad* (5.314-317) where Aphrodite protects her son Aeneas and she is slightly wounded.

<sup>969</sup> Hdn. 4.4.3.

<sup>970</sup> Sev. 21.7 (Caracalla kills Geta in the arms of their mother); Carac. 3.3 (Caracalla is tempted to kill his mother). According to Hdn. 4.6.3, Caracalla ordered the death of Annia Cornificia, the sister of Commodus, because she had wept with Domna at the death of Geta. Although not present in the epitome of Xiphilinus, this anecdote, which is reported by Petrus Patricius, was probably present in Dio’s account as well (cf. Dio 78 [77].16.6<sup>a</sup>). It might have originated with the story related by the *HA*, i.e. that Caracalla wanted to kill his mother when he saw her weeping together with other women.

the death of Caracalla, Dio insists on Domna's innocence, saying that 'she hated him while he lived'<sup>971</sup>.

The lack of other detailed accounts concerning this episode makes it impossible to know whether, as reported by the sources, Domna was simply a passive spectator of the intrigues of Caracalla<sup>972</sup>. Palace sources might have revealed the circumstances of the killing to Dio, and, perhaps, to Marius Maximus, the main source of the *HA*<sup>973</sup>. However this might be, it is important to note that, at the time of the assassination, the political situation in Rome was likely more complicated than that reported by our sources. As stressed above, Caracalla and Geta were probably leading two opposite armed factions, and a passage of Philostratus relates that Geta was put to death because he had plotted against his brother<sup>974</sup>. The versions of Dio and the *HA*, therefore, should be considered as part of a historiographical tradition that depicted Caracalla as a bloodthirsty tyrant and Domna as an innocent victim of his cruelty.

Despite the words of Dio, the events that followed the killing of Geta do not attest to a situation of conflict between Domna and Caracalla. According to what Dio reports, in fact, they reigned together, and Caracalla showed great respect for his mother:

(...) καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ἐν ταῖς πρός τὴν βουλὴν ἐπιστολαῖς ὁμοίως τῷ τε ιδίῳ καὶ τῷ τῶν στρατευμάτων, ὅτι σώζεται, μετ' ἐπαίνων πολλῶν ἐγγράφων<sup>975</sup>.

(...) and [Caracalla] used to include her name, in terms of high praise, together with his own and that of the legions, in his letters to the senate, stating that she was well.

<sup>971</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.1. Cf. also 79 (78).24.1.

<sup>972</sup> According to Levick 2007, 90 several doubts arise from this episode. The killing of Geta might have been the consequence of a violent altercation between the two brothers.

<sup>973</sup> On Dio's possible use of palace sources cf. Moscovitch 2004, who, however, examines the reign of Severus only.

<sup>974</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.24. Eutropius (7.19) and Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 20) seem to support this reconstruction. Cf. Mallan 2013, 745.

<sup>975</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.2.

Caracalla's word of appreciation for Domna represent an exceptional case in imperial history, since this is the first time that an emperor confers the honor of being included in the imperial signature to an imperial woman. Something similar, in truth, seems to have happened at the time of Tiberius for a while, when the name of Livia was included in the letters of the emperor<sup>976</sup>. This custom, in any case, did not last for long, since Tiberius soon removed his mother from every political activity<sup>977</sup>. The conflicting situation between Tiberius and Livia, who wanted a share in Tiberius' power, caused the removal of Livia from public life. On the other hand, the apparently good relationship between Caracalla and Domna seems to have allowed the latter to maintain her influence throughout the whole reign of her son.

In a couple of other passages, Dio also refers to the advice that Domna gave to Caracalla:

Καί ποτε τῆς Ἰουλίας ἐπιτιμησάσης αὐτῷ ὅτι πολλὰ ἐξ αὐτοὺς ἀνήλισκε, καὶ εἰπούσης ὅτι ‘οὐκέθ’ ἡμῖν οὔτε δίκαιος οὕτ’ ἄδικος πόρος ὑπολείπεται,’ ἀπεκρίνατο, τὸ ξίφος δείξας, ὅτι ‘Θάρσει, μῆτερ: ἔως γάρ ἀν τοῦτ’ ἔχωμεν, οὐδὲν ἡμᾶς ἐπιλείψει χρήματα’<sup>978</sup>.

Once when Julia blamed him for spending vast sums on them [i.e. the soldiers] and said: ‘there is no longer any source of revenue, either just or unjust, left to us’. He replied showing his sword: ‘Be cheerful, mother, for as long as we have this, we shall not run short of money’.

Τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἐμιαιρόνει καὶ παρηνόμει καὶ τὰ χρήματα κατανήλισκεν. Οὐδὲ ἐπείθετο οὔτεπερὶ τούτων οὔτε περὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῇ μητρὶ πολλὰ καὶ χρηστὰ παραινούσῃ<sup>979</sup>.

For the rest, he was staining himself with blood, doing lawless deeds, and squandering money. Neither in these matters nor in any others did he heed his mother, who gave him many and excellent recommendations.

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<sup>976</sup> Dio 57.12.2. On the topic cf. Bertolazzi 2015, 421-422.

<sup>977</sup> Dio 57.12.6.

<sup>978</sup> Dio 78 (77).10.4.

<sup>979</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.1.

The most interesting piece of information, however, comes from a passage referring to the privileges that Caracalla had bestowed on his mother. Besides the inclusion of her name in the letters, Dio adds further important details with a polemic tone:

Καίτοι καὶ τὴν τῶν βιβλίων τῶν τε ἐπιστολῶν ἑκατέρων, πλὴν τῶν πάνυ ἀναγκαίων, διοίκησιν αὐτῇ ἐπιτρέψας (...). Τί γὰρ δεῖ λέγεν τὸι καὶ ἡσπάζετο δημοσίᾳ πάντας τοὺς πρώτους καθάπερ καὶ ἐκεῖνος.<sup>980</sup>

And yet he had appointed her to receive petitions and to take care of his correspondence in both languages, except in very important cases (...). Need I add that she had public receptions for all the most prominent men, precisely as did the emperor?

As in the case of the inclusion of Domna's name in the letters to the senate, this is the first time that an imperial woman is appointed to supervise the correspondence of an emperor. This role, however, was probably an unofficial one. There is no evidence that Domna could express legal opinions or take decisions in the stead of Caracalla<sup>981</sup>. She probably had the role of sorting out (διοίκησις) the great quantity of letters and petitions that were continuously received by the administrative offices *ab epistulis* (ἐπιστολαι) and *a libellis* (βιβλία). Nonetheless, the possibility of deciding whether a request had to be prioritized or not, gave an enormous power and an unprecedented position to Domna<sup>982</sup>. It is also possible that she occasionally could have replied to petitions using the name of her son. Erich Kettenhofen, whose opinion is followed by Barbara Levick, has argued that every final decision concerning administrative issues would have been, in any case, referred to Caracalla<sup>983</sup>. It was Caracalla who, while in Antioch, sat as the judge in a dispute between the inhabitants of Goharia (Syria) and a *publicanus*<sup>984</sup>. Moreover, after the inhabitants of Ephesus had requested Domna's help to obtain a new privilege, it was

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<sup>980</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.3.

<sup>981</sup> On the topic cf. Tuori 2016. Cf. also Levick 2007, 96; Kettenhofen 1979, 17-19.

<sup>982</sup> Tuori 2016, 196.

<sup>983</sup> Kettenhofen 1979, 18-19 and Levick 2007, 96.

<sup>984</sup> As reported by an inscription from Dmeir, in Syria (SEG 17.259). On the topic cf. Stolte 2003; Puech 2002, 132-134.

the emperor who granted it<sup>985</sup>. Yet Dio says that Caracalla ‘held court rarely or never’<sup>986</sup>.

Also, it is important to note how the decision to entrust Domna with the supervision of the correspondence necessarily implies that there were administrative matters he did not want to take care of. At any rate, towards the end of the reign of Caracalla, Domna most likely acquired total control over his correspondence. In fact, a letter that Falvius Maternianus, the praefect of the City, sent to Caracalla to warn him about the treacherous intentions of Macrinus, was first diverted to Antioch, where Domna was staying while Caracalla was campaigning against the Parthians<sup>987</sup>.

The ‘public receptions’ of Domna also deserve special attention. Dio refers to these occasions by using the verb ἀσπάζομαι (‘to greet’, ‘to welcome’), which, on first thought, could apply to a variety of contexts. Yet the occurrences of ἀσπάζομαι in the *History* of Dio generally describe a specific event prescribed by court etiquette. During Caracalla’s stay in Nicomedia, for example, Dio relates that the emperor would call the senators to a meeting soon after dawn, but then he would keep them waiting in the antechamber until noon or later. In many cases, and at a late hour, he decided not to show up at all, without even exchanging greetings with them (οὐψὲ γάρ ποτε ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ μηκέτι μηδ’ ἀσπάζεσθαι ήμᾶς ώς πλήθει)<sup>988</sup>. Therefore, ἀσπάζομαι seems to refer to a simple exchange of greetings, rather than a proper reception. Nonetheless, it is often

<sup>985</sup> An inscription from Ephesus (app. no. 136a) reports a letter of Domna to the inhabitants, and, immediately after, another letter of Caracalla. On the topic cf. Burrell 2004, 70-75, and, *infra*, section V.3.2.

<sup>986</sup> Dio 78 (77).17.1.

<sup>987</sup> Dio 79 (78).4.2. According to Hdn. 4.12.6-7, the letter of Maternianus came directly to Caracalla, but the emperor passed it to Macrinus without reading it. Dio, however, seems to be better informed, since he specifies that another letter was sent to Macrinus through other couriers by the censor Ulpius Julianus (79 [78].4.3). Both Maternianus and Julianus were senators, hence colleagues of Dio.

<sup>988</sup> Dio 78 (77).17.3.

employed by Dio to describe an official situation with an exchange of homage between distinguished persons and emperors or individuals who enjoyed great power and prestige at court. While narrating the customs of Elagabalus, for example, Dio states that the emperor used to recline during the salutations of the senators (*πολλάκις καὶ κατακείμενος τὸν βουλευτὰς ἡσπάζετο*)<sup>989</sup>. He also used to dance when performing sacrifices, receiving salutations or delivering a speech (*τά τε γὰρ ἄλλα καὶ ὠρχεῖτο [...] καὶ θύων ἀσπαζόμενός τε καὶ δημηγορῶν*)<sup>990</sup>. At the apex of his power, Plautianus used to allow certain senators who were there to pay their respects to be received before others (*πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἀσπαζομένων*)<sup>991</sup>. It is also interesting to note that the same ceremony is probably attested to by the funerary inscription of the senator L. Plotius Sabinus. After the listing of offices held during his *cursus honorum*, the text mentions the right of the *salutatio* in the second group amongst those who were admitted to Antoninus Pius' presence<sup>992</sup>. The presence of imperial women at this kind of reception would normally appear inappropriate. Before Domna, only Livia and Agrippina the Younger enjoyed similar privileges. Dio says that Livia could receive both senators and other people who wanted to greet her in her house (*τοὺς ἐθέλοντας οἴκαδε ἀσπασομένους*)<sup>993</sup>. Agrippina, who, according to Dio, was more powerful than Claudius, could greet in public all who desired it<sup>994</sup>. Domna, however, was not only meeting the most prominent men (*πάντας τοὺς πρώτους*), but she was also doing this in the same way as the emperor did (*καθάπερ καὶ ἐκεῖνος*). It is reasonable to presume that the public receptions of Domna were

<sup>989</sup> Dio 80 (79).14.4.

<sup>990</sup> Dio 80 (79).14.3.

<sup>991</sup> Dio 77 (76).5.3.

<sup>992</sup> CIL VI 31746 = 41111. Cf. Crook 1954, 22-23, 68.

<sup>993</sup> Dio 57.12.2.

<sup>994</sup> Dio 61 (60).33.1.

already taking place in Rome between 211 and 213, i.e. before the departure to Germany, and, from there, to the East. In fact, the ‘most prominent men’ mentioned by Dio were probably senators and politicians who were staying in Rome, since, as seen in the previous chapters, it was not unusual for an imperial woman to cultivate relationships with local aristocracies from Italy and the provinces.

### V.2.3. Fall from power and death

Dio devotes considerable attention to the last period of Domna’s life after the assassination of Caracalla. For the first time in his *History*, the historian attributes the role of protagonist to Domna<sup>995</sup>. His narration was originally preserved in full by the manuscript *Vaticanus Graecus* 1288, which is, unfortunately, now riddled with lacunae. It is consequently impossible to reconstruct these events in great detail, since the epitome of Xiphilinus has omitted this part of Dio’s account<sup>996</sup>, Herodian mentions the death of the Augusta only *en passant*<sup>997</sup>, and the *HA* remains completely silent. Dio, in any case, says that Domna was overcome with despair upon hearing the news of the death of Caracalla, but not on account of her motherly love (she, in fact, hated him), rather because she was horrified by the prospect of retiring to private life<sup>998</sup>. Although Macrinus had sent her a friendly message and left her royal retinue unchanged, Domna started to conspire against him by inciting the praetorians to revolt<sup>999</sup>. Now that her son had been killed, her purpose was to become sole ruler, following the example of mythical oriental

<sup>995</sup> Mallan 2013, 751.

<sup>996</sup> On Xiphilinus’ method for abridging cf. in general Mallan 2013a.

<sup>997</sup> Hdn. 4.13.8.

<sup>998</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.1. Cf. also the lacunous section 23.4: (...) φοβηθεῖσα μὴ τοῦ τε ὄνόματος τοῦ τῆς Αὐγούστης στερηθῆ καὶ ἐς τα [...] πατρίδα ἀπελθεῖν ἀναγκασθῆ (...) ('fearing she might be deprived of the title of Augusta and be forced to return to her native country').

<sup>999</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.3.

queens such as Nictoris and Semiramis<sup>1000</sup>. At this point, a large lacuna makes the text illegible<sup>1001</sup>, but what happens next can easily be understood when the narration starts again. After having been informed of Domna's hostility, Macrinus ordered her to leave Antioch and to retire to private life; when Domna realized that every chance to recover her power was lost, she let herself die<sup>1002</sup>.

As observed by Christopher Mallan, the fear of being reduced to a private station is a theme that recurs in the *History of Dio*<sup>1003</sup>. Cleopatra, for example, preferred to die rather than lose her royal rank<sup>1004</sup>. When Marcus Aurelius fell seriously ill, Faustina the Younger encouraged Avidius Cassius to proclaim himself emperor and take her as wife, since, if Marcus died, she would be reduced to a private station<sup>1005</sup>. In the case of Domna, however, the death of Caracalla would have implied not only the return to private life (ἰδιωτεύειν), but also the loss of her influence in state affairs. This is shown clearly in the passage that follows the death of the Augusta. Here, for the first time, Dio dedicates a paragraph to reflect on the nature of power to an imperial woman:

Καὶ ἡ μὲν οὕτω τε ἐκ δημοτικοῦ γένους ἐπὶ μέγα ἀρθεῖσα, καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἡγεμονίᾳ περιαλγῶς πάνυ διὰ τὸν Πλαυτιανὸν ζήσασα, τῶν τε νιέων τόν τε νεώτερον ἐν τοῖς αὐτῆς κόλποις κατασφαγέντα ἐπιδοῦσα καὶ τὸν πρεσβύτερον ζῶντά τε ἀεὶ διὰ τέλους διὰ φθόνου ἔχουσα καὶ φονευθέντα οὕτω μαθοῦσα, τῆς ἀρχῆς ζῶσα ἐξέπεσεν καὶ ἔαυτὴν προσκατειργάσατο, ὥστε τινὰ ἐς αὐτὴν ἀποβλέψαντα μὴ πάνυ πάντας τοὺς ἐν ταῖς μεγάλαις ἔξουσίαις γενομένους μακαρίζειν, ἢν μὴ καὶ ἡδονή τις αὐτοῖς τοῦ βίου καὶ ἀληθῆς καὶ ἀκήρατος καὶ εὐτυχία καὶ ἀκραιφνῆς καὶ διαρκῆς ὑπάρχῃ<sup>1006</sup>.

And so this woman, sprung from the people and raised to a high station, who had lived during her husband's reign in great unhappiness because of Plautianus, who had beheld her younger son slain in her own bosom and had always from first to last borne ill will toward her elder son while he lived, and finally had received such tidings of his

<sup>1000</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.3.

<sup>1001</sup> Vast lacunae affect sections 23.3-5.

<sup>1002</sup> Dio 79 (78).23.5-6.

<sup>1003</sup> Mallan 2013, 757.

<sup>1004</sup> Dio 51.11.2.

<sup>1005</sup> Dio 71.22.3. On Avidius Cassius' revolt cf. section II.3.3 above.

<sup>1006</sup> 79 (78).24.1-2.

assassination, fell from power during her lifetime and thereupon destroyed herself. Hence no one could, in the light of her career, regard as happy each and all who attain great power, unless some genuine and unalloyed pleasure in life and unmixed and lasting good fortune is theirs.

Dio expresses similar considerations in regard to the death of Marcus Aurelius<sup>1007</sup>. He notes that Marcus spent the majority of his reign amid countless tribulations, and remained, ultimately, disappointed by the recklessness of his son Commodus, whom he had educated in the best possible way. From Dio's point of view, the analogies between Domna and Marcus Aurelius are, after all, easy to single out. Both of them shared an active interest in philosophy, and they were both disappointed in their sons<sup>1008</sup>. However, the most interesting fact is that Dio insists on Domna's frustration at the loss of her political power. She fell from power ( $\tauῆς ἀρχῆς \dots \grave{\epsilon}\acute{\xi}\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ), and it is possible to include her in the count of those who attained great powers ( $\piάντας τοὺς \grave{\epsilon}\acute{\nu} \tauᾶς μεγάλαις \grave{\epsilon}\acute{\xi}\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\iota\acute{\alpha}\ς \gamma\acute{\nu}\acute{\o}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\o}\nu\acute{\zeta}$ ). Hence, Dio's digression on power and infelicity in the life of Domna seems to compare her to the emperors, thus implying that the power and the influence the Augusta had, had been substantially greater than those of previous imperial women. Furthermore, Domna's decision to let herself die rather than retiring to private life reveals the extraordinary importance that she attributed to her royal status. The most famous Augusta who had found herself in a similar situation was Domitia Longina after the assassination of Domitian. Despite the fact that the latter incurred the *damnatio memoriae*, Domitia was allowed to keep the title of Augusta and to continue to administer her large patrimony<sup>1009</sup>. As seen above, Macrinus offered similar conditions to

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<sup>1007</sup> Dio 72 (71).36.3. Cf. Mallan 2013, 756.

<sup>1008</sup> Mallan 2013, 756-757.

<sup>1009</sup> Fraser 2015, 238-244; Hidalgo de la Vega 2012, 94; Cenerini 2009, 93-94; Chausson 2003, 124-125. Portraits of Domitia continued to be produced after the death of her husband (Fraser

Domna who, nevertheless, chose another fate<sup>1010</sup>. Curiously enough, both Semiramis and Nictoris, the oriental queens that, according to Dio, Domna wanted to emulate, put an end to their lives while facing conspirators<sup>1011</sup>. Thus, besides the desire to rule alone, the way in which these queens left the world may have suggested to Dio the comparison between them and Domna. In the eyes of the historian, to all intents and purposes, Domna decided to die as an oriental queen<sup>1012</sup>. Correspondences with the suicides of Hellenistic queens can provide further food for thought. As noted above, Cleopatra committed suicide in order to avoid being dishonored and taken to Rome as a captive. More than two centuries before, in 287 BCE, the noble and influential Phila, daughter of Antipater and wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes, committed suicide after her husband had been driven out of Macedonia and had lost his throne<sup>1013</sup>. Both stories display a common trait, the desire to die rather than to face the consequences of the loss of power and prestige connected with royal rank. In short, Domna's tragic end seems to show consistency with her middle-eastern cultural background.

2015, 244-254; Varner 1995, 203-206), as well as bricks bearing the stamps of workshops of her property (among these, the *figlinae Sulpicianae*, which she acquired after 96, cf. Fraser 2015, 2141-242; Chausson 2003, 124; PIR<sup>2</sup> D 181). According to the *HA* (*Did. Iul.* 8.10), after the death of Didius Julianus, Severus spared both Julianus' wife, the Augusta Manlia Scantilla (PIR<sup>2</sup> M 166) and Julianus' daughter, Didia Clara (PIR<sup>2</sup> D 79), who had been appointed Augusta as well.

<sup>1010</sup> But Domna's sister, Julia Maesa, retired to Emesa and was allowed by Macrinus to live off her considerable patrimony (Hdn. 5.3.2 and 5.3.11). Although not holding any official title, Maesa used to live at court with her sister during the reigns of both Severus and Caracalla (Dio 79 [78].30.3).

<sup>1011</sup> According to Diodorus Siculus (2.20.2), Semiramis turned into a dove when her son plotted against her. Nictoris committed suicide after having killed the Egyptians who had been involved in the murder of her brother (Hdt. 2.100.3).

<sup>1012</sup> When, in the passage quoted above, Dio says that Domna 'sprang from the people and raised to a high station', he is most likely trying to make another comparison between the Augusta and Semiramis, cf. section II.2.3 above with the discussion on the expression ἐκ δημοτικοῦ γένους.

<sup>1013</sup> Plut. *Demetr.* 45.1. Cf. Carney 2000, 165-169; Macurdy 1932, 58-69. Diodorus Siculus (19.59.3-5) provides a brief account of Phila's personal qualities. According to the historian, she would be able to quell troublemakers in the camp, arrange marriages of sisters and daughters of the poor at her own expense, and she would see to it that men unfairly charged received justice. Even her father, Antipater, was said to have consulted with her about the most important matters.

#### V.2.4. Overall remarks

With regard to the presence of Domna in the accounts of Dio and Herodian, the death of Severus definitely marks a new phase. At this point, in fact, she starts to directly intervene in the political life, and, for the first time, she takes care of issues related to the administration of the Empire. It is impossible to establish whether Herodian is reporting true historical facts when he says that Domna took part in the imperial councils by imploring Caracalla and Geta to make peace. Despite this, the new role that the historian attributes to the Augusta reflects the awareness of her increased relevance in securing political stability. Dio is even more explicit when he notes that Domna was not only giving Caracalla advice on how to govern the Empire, but also enjoying unprecedented prerogatives for an imperial woman, such as holding public receptions where the most important politicians in Rome were paying her homage. Furthermore, the praise and the reassurances on her safety that were included in Caracalla's letters to the senate demonstrate that the relationship between the two of them was not as compromised as reported by Dio, who credits Domna with an implacable hatred for Caracalla after the killing of Geta. It is also important to stress that Domna is the first imperial woman who takes an active role in the administration of the Empire. The task of supervising letters and petitions addressed to Caracalla indicates that, even in unofficial terms, the emperor had delegated important administrative duties which he did not want to handle himself to his mother. Dio's comments on the correlation between power and infelicity that follow the narration of the death of Domna make an indirect reference to the unprecedented influence she had attained. After the assassination of her son, she was removed from a position of great power (*μεγάλη ἐξουσία*), which had become similar to that of the

emperor himself (ἀρχή). Finally, her decision to let herself die rather than to retire to a private station seems to be quite an unusual one, and makes Domna more similar to an Hellenistic queen, like Phila, rather than to a Roman imperial woman, like Domitia Longina.

### V.3. INSCRIPTIONS

As for the reign of Severus, during the reign of Caracalla, the diffusion of inscriptions dedicated to Domna, and of those that include her name, is an important element in determining her importance in the eyes of the inhabitants of the Empire and the evolution of her influence in public affairs. Numerous dedications for the safety and victory of Caracalla, Geta and Domna were set up to welcome the return of the imperial court from Britain. Much similar homage was paid to Domna and Caracalla during the following years while they were travelling through Germany, the Danubian provinces and the Middle East. Governors, high officials and military units are the authors of a conspicuous number of such dedications, a fact that confirms not only the prestige enjoyed by Domna, but also her increased popularity among the military. Moreover, a very important document concerning her new task of supervision over the correspondence of Caracalla belongs to this period. This is the famous letter that Domna sent to the inhabitants of Ephesus, who were requesting the permission to build a new temple for the imperial cult. Finally, further documentation comes from other areas that were not visited by Caracalla and Domna. This is the case for Britain, Spain and the North African cities. These continue to display an incredible vitality in honoring the Augusta, particularly through an impressive number of new arches.

In what follows, the inscriptions dating between 211 and 217 will be examined in chronological order, paying particular attention to the travels of Domna, the most important people who honored her, and to the regions with the highest amount of documentation.

### V.3.1. The year 211

Following the conclusion of the British campaign, several inscriptions refer to the return of Caracalla, Geta and Domna to Rome<sup>1014</sup>. Two slaves in charge of the administration of the baths in Aquae Vescinae (Campania), Antonius and Eugene, set up an altar in the main atrium of the bathhouse to celebrate their safety, victory, and return<sup>1015</sup>. The inscription has led scholars to believe that the baths in Aquae Vescinae were imperial property<sup>1016</sup>. If this assumption is correct, this would reflect the homage of two individuals belonging to the *familia Caesarum*. The same could apply to an inscription from Dalmatia, which a certain Hermes set up to honor the two emperors and their mother after ‘the enemies had been defeated’ (*devictis hostibus*)<sup>1017</sup>. In Heliopolis (Syria), on the other hand, the dedicators of an altar for the safety and victory of Caracalla, Geta and Domna are a veteran and former *beneficiarius*, Antonius Silvanus, his wife and their children<sup>1018</sup>. Domna’s return to the capital, therefore, was a well-known fact, not only in Italy, but also in regions that were located on the other side of the empire.

During the rest of 211, the name of Domna continues to be recorded in inscriptions, together with those of Caracalla and Geta. L. Lucceius Martinus, the legate

<sup>1014</sup> On this topic cf. also Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 32-33.

<sup>1015</sup> App. no. 131a.

<sup>1016</sup> Horster 2001, 268.

<sup>1017</sup> App. no. 133a.

<sup>1018</sup> App. no. 138a.

of Lower Germany, restored a temple of Jupiter Dolichenus in Colonia Agrippina, and celebrated the event with a dedication for the safety of the emperors and Domna<sup>1019</sup>. Thus, she becomes the first documented imperial woman whose name was inscribed on a public monument in this important city. Despite the fact that the rest of Lucceius Martinus' career is unknown, it is easy to image that he followed the evolution of the British campaign from a privileged position, inasmuch as a detachment of the legions under his command (the I Minervia and the XXX Ulpia) probably were sent to reinforce the army led by Severus and Caracalla. It is also possible that Lucceius Martinus and other officials met the imperial family on its way back to Rome. The name of the Augusta, in fact, might also have been included in a common dedication that Lucceius Martinus and 60 centurions from the legion I Minervia erected in Bonna for the safety of the imperial family<sup>1020</sup>. In this period, Domna seems to have occupied a special place in the thoughts of officers in command of Rhineland and Danubian military units. In Abusina (Raetia) in 211, T. Flavius Felix, prefect of the third cohort of Britons, placed an altar to the Capitoline triad and to the Genius of the cohort for the safety of Domna and her sons<sup>1021</sup>. In Grosskrotzenburg (Germania Superior), the commander of the first cohort of Roman citizens and the third cohort of the Vindelici, Flavius Antiochus, set up a similar monument for the safety of Caracalla and Domna<sup>1022</sup>. During Severus' reign, she had already been honored several times in these regions, but only on monuments from Germania Superior<sup>1023</sup>. Considering that all the new dedications were set up in just one

<sup>1019</sup> App. no. 134a.

<sup>1020</sup> App. no. 132a. Although the content of the text is quite certain, the name of Domna is fully restored by the editors.

<sup>1021</sup> App. no. 129a.

<sup>1022</sup> App. no. 137a.

<sup>1023</sup> Cf. sections IV.3.11 above and app. nos. 85a, 18b, 147b.

year after Severus' death, it is necessary to conclude that Domna's importance had by now notably increased.

It could have been another high official who, in the military camp of Legio (Hispania Citerior), dedicated an altar (the text is unfortunately lacunous) to Minerva and *Iuno Victrix ac patriae Conservatrix* ('Victorious Juno, Guardian of the Fatherland') for the safety of Domna<sup>1024</sup>. The title *patriae Conservatrix* is an evident allusion to the new role of the Augusta, who was seen as the guarantor of the state institutions in a period when the peace between Caracalla and Geta was generally perceived as precarious. Given the circumstance that Domna is the first imperial woman whose name is mentioned in the camp of Legio, people there must have had a good reason to honor her.

In the Middle East, a new temple for the military standards in Dura Europos (Mesopotamia) was inaugurated with a dedication that included Domna<sup>1025</sup>. If the restoration suggested by Michael Speidel is correct<sup>1026</sup>, the dedicatory is a vexillation of soldiers who had been posted to Dura.

Other subjects, who were connected to the state and its institutions, to various degrees regularly honored Domna during this year. Thanks to the initiative of Didimus Serapio, chief-priest of the imperial cult in Alexandria, the city erected a statue to

<sup>1024</sup> App. no. 139a.

<sup>1025</sup> App. no. 135a. According to Speidel 1984, 302, the dedication, which is riddled with lacunas and erasures, would include only the names of Geta and Domna, thus suggesting that the project of splitting the Empire in two with Geta obtaining the East (as reported by Hdn. 4.3.5-7) really existed.

<sup>1026</sup> Speidel 1984, 303-305. The inscription is divided into two parts, i.e. the dedication to Geta and Domna on the right side, and the name of the dedicators on the left. Speidel has restored the latter part as follows: *[milites] / [vexillationis] / An[tonianorum] / Europa[eorum] / devoti num[ini] / maiestatique / eius*. According to Speidel, a Greek graffito from Dura attesting to a οὐεξιλλατίωναν Ἀντωνίνιαν (AE 1934, 275) would support the existence of a *vexillatio Antoninianorum*.

Domna<sup>1027</sup>. The *Laurentes Lavinates*, a religious fraternity whose members were nominated by the emperors, set up statues for Domna and Caracalla in Ostia<sup>1028</sup>. The city of Sardis (Asia) dedicated the new baths to Caracalla, Geta and Domna under the supervision of an imperial official, the *curator civitatis* (*λογιστής*) Dionysus, who was also ‘the most important person in Asia’ (*ο κρατίστος τῆς Ασίας*)<sup>1029</sup>.

In the inscriptions mentioned above, Domna is either honored together with Caracalla and Geta (dedications of new buildings, altars *pro salute*) or alone (statue bases). Although Severus had been deified when the emperors had returned to Rome (approx. May-June 211), his name is never mentioned<sup>1030</sup>. It follows that these dedications should be interpreted not as a generic homage to the dynasty, but as honors for those who were actually ruling the Empire. After the death of Severus, governors, military officials, religious fraternities and other distinguished individuals evidently saw Domna as an important element of continuity and stability in the situation of uncertainty that surrounded the power struggle between Caracalla and Geta.

### V.3.2. The letter from Ephesus

An inscription from Ephesus (Asia) has preserved one of the most interesting testimonies concerning the relationship between Domna and the cities of the Empire. This is a letter

<sup>1027</sup> App. no. 130a. Giuseppe Botti, the source of the IGRR, found the statue base in a private collection in Alexandria, and hypothesized that its original location was the Caesareum.

<sup>1028</sup> App. no. 140a. On the *Laurentes Lavinates*, see in general Liu 2015; Cooley 2000, 179.

<sup>1029</sup> App. no. 143a.

<sup>1030</sup> In 211, dedications that include the deified Severus are documented in North Africa (app. nos. 144a-146a, 148a-151a), where local communities were strongly devoted to his memory (on the relationship between Severus and the North African provinces, cf. in general Cordovana 2007 and Mastino 1999).

that she sent to the inhabitants of Ephesus. The inscription reports only a few lines, but the content is extremely interesting:

Ίουλία Σεβαστὴ Ἐφεσί[οις]. Πάσαις μὲν πόλεσιν καὶ σύνπασι δήμοις ε[ὺεργεσιῶν]  
τυνχάνειν τοῦ γλυκυτάτου μου νιοῦ τοῦ α[ὐτοκράτο]ρος συνε[ύ]χομαι, μάλιστα δὲ τῇ  
ύμετέρᾳ διὰ [τὸ μέγεθος] καὶ κάλλος καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν δόσιν καὶ τὸ παιδ[ευτήριον] εἶναι  
τοῖς πανταχόθεν ε[ἰς τὸ] ἐργαστήριον [ῆκουσιν?]<sup>1031</sup>.

Julia Augusta to the Ephesians. I join in the prayer of all cities and all peoples to receive [benefactions] from my sweetest son, the emperor, especially in the case of your city on account of [its magnificence] and the rest of its contributions and because of the fact that it is a school for those who come from anywhere to its seat for learning<sup>1032</sup>.

The reference to the benefactions that cities receive from Caracalla clearly alludes to a request for benefits, whose nature appears in the letter of Caracalla that follows immediately after. Here, the emperor addresses the confederation of the Asian cities, which had brought forward a petition on behalf of the Ephesians, and awards Ephesus its third *neokoria*, i.e. the right to build a new temple for the imperial cult<sup>1033</sup>. Although neither the letter of Domna nor that of Caracalla includes dating references, Ephesus celebrated the bestowal of this privilege with the minting of new coins dedicated to Caracalla, Geta and Domna<sup>1034</sup>. Therefore, the letters of Domna and Caracalla must be

<sup>1031</sup> App. no. 136a. The text follows the edition by Oliver 1989, 512-515 no. 265.

<sup>1032</sup> Transl. by James Oliver.

<sup>1033</sup> IEph 212 (ll.15-22) = AE 1966, 430 = Oliver 1989, 512-525 no. 266: Ό κύριος Ἀντων[ε]ῖνος  
τῇ [Ἄσιᾳ]. Απεδεξάμην [τ]ῆς γνώμης ύμᾶς μεθ' ἡς προσ[εδόθη] νεωκορία τῇ] λαμπροτάτῃ τῶν  
Ἐφεσίων πόλει· κρίσει γάρ τὴν τεμῆν πρέπει] προστέμειν· διόπερ ἀξιώσασιν ύμειν καὶ  
συναπο[δοχῆς ἐπὶ Ρώμης ἥγουμένοις τὴν ύπερ Ἐφεσίων αἰτησιν ἔδωκα κ[αὶ συνεχώρη]σα τρις  
εἶναι νεωκόρους (!) τὴν πόλιν, τὴν δὲ ἐπώνυμ[όν] μοι δίδοτε] νεωκορίαν κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδῶ  
ἀνατίθημι τῇ ἐνεργεστάτῃ θεῷ [Ἀρτέμιδι] ὡς μὴ ἐξ ἐμοῦ καρποῦσθαι τὴν τειμήν, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τῆς  
κατα[λογῆς τῆς θεοῦ? - - -] ('Our lord Antoninus to Asia. I commend you for a draft of a decree  
by which [another *neokoria* is accorded to the] most brilliant city of the Ephesians. Additional  
grants of this honor [should] always be made with circumspection. To you, therefore, who had  
asked for it and were initiators of a joint approval at Rome, I have granted the petition on behalf  
of the Ephesians and [joined in permitting] the city to be thrice temple-warding, but the neocory  
title, [which you offer to me], I reassign in my modesty to the most effective goddess [Artemis],  
so that the city may harvest the honor of a temple not from me but from the respect shown to her.'  
[transl. by James Oliver]). On this kind of privilege, which was quite common in Asia Minor, cf.  
in general Burrell 2004, 1-12.

<sup>1034</sup> Burrell 2004, 70-71 nos. 12-15.

dated to 211. As observed by Barbara Burrell, the embassy that the *koinon* of Asia sent to Rome in order to present the petition would likely have found a very tense situation<sup>1035</sup>. The emperors, who were conducting separate lives in different locations, would almost never meet each other in public or hold court together<sup>1036</sup>. It is plausible, therefore, that the ambassadors turned to Domna and, possibly, delivered the petition to her. The Augusta then made use of her influence to secure the *neokoria* for Ephesus but, in the meantime, wrote a letter to the Ephesians in order to let them know that she was following their case. Given the uncertainty that the rivalry between Caracalla and Geta was causing, it is perhaps not too speculative to hypothesize that Domna already started to take control of the imperial correspondence during this period<sup>1037</sup>. At any rate, the very fact that the inscription from Ephesus represents the only attestation of an epistle sent from an imperial woman to a civic body indicates how exceptional the situation in Rome was. As illustrated above in chapter I, it was not uncommon for imperial women to be patrons of local communities. Differently from the case with the emperors, however, letters sent by imperial women were normally not recorded on inscriptions, a probable consequence of their unofficial nature. Yet, in Ephesus, the decision of transcribing the letter of Domna on stone along with other official imperial epistles indicates its strong political value. The letter, in truth, does not contain any official decision, but Domna's intervention had evidently been decisive in securing the new *neokoria* for Ephesus. Hence, this letter confirms the picture that has been outlined in the previous section, where other

<sup>1035</sup> Burrell 2004, 72.

<sup>1036</sup> Cf. especially Dio 78 (77).2.1-2 and Hdn. 4.1.5.

<sup>1037</sup> A connection between Domna's letter and Dio's passage concerning her task of supervision over the imperial correspondence (cf. section V.1.2 above) has already been suggested in the first edition of this inscription (Keil-Maresch 1960, 80-83), but without a precise chronological attribution. Cf. also Burrell 2004, 72.

inscriptions set up during 211 have been examined. Her political influence had not only increased on account of her role as mediator in the feud between her sons, but also as a consequence of her expanding involvement in administrative matters.

### V.3.3. Between Germany and Danube

As seen above in section V.1, after the assassination of Geta Caracalla did not stay in Rome for long. In 213, at the beginning of August, he was already in Germany to start the campaign against the Alamanni, whose pressure was mounting at the Raetic border. An interesting statue base from Mustis (Africa Proconsularis), seems to belong to this period.

*Iuliae Domnae Aug(ustae), matri / imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aureli Severi / Antonini Pii Fe[li]/cis Aug(usti) et castrorum [et se]/natus et patriae, c{o}n[i]ugi] / divi Severi Pii, patr[is do]mini n(ostr)i imp(eratoris) Antonin[i Aug(usti)], / Part(hici) max(imi), Brit(annici) max(imi), [pont(ificis)] / max(imi), p(atris) p(atiae). / Ordo Musti[tanorum] / Fortunae Reduci et F[ecun]ditat[i] d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ecunia) [p(ublica)]<sup>1038</sup>.*

To Julia Domna Augusta, mother of the emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus, and of the camps, the senate and the fatherland, wife of the divine Severus Pius, father of our lord emperor Antoninus Augustus, Parthicus maximus, Britannicus maximus, pontifex maximus, father of the fatherland. The city council of Mustis [set up this monument] for the Fortuna Redux and the Fecunditas by decree of the decurions at public expense.

The statue of Domna had been set up along with others for the deified Severus, and possibly, Caracalla<sup>1039</sup>. The latter was already ruling alone after the assassination of Geta, for he is the only recorded son of Domna. Also, on account of Caracalla's titulature lacking the title of Germanicus maximus, it is possible to infer that the monument was set up before the end of his Germanic campaign (October 213)<sup>1040</sup>. The name of *Fortuna Redux*, which is applied to Domna at the end of the inscription, might suggest a more

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<sup>1038</sup> App. no. 172b.

<sup>1039</sup> Statue for Severus: AE 1999, 1844. Cf. also Bertolazzi 2013, 304.

<sup>1040</sup> Cf. Kienast 1996, 163.

precise dating. The identification of Domna with this particular kind of Fortuna – who had to guarantee the safe return of the emperor – seems to indicate that Caracalla was already on his way to Germany<sup>1041</sup>. As for *Fecunditas*, it is important to stress that the *Fecunditas/Tellus* coin types struck in 207, which reproduced the goddess surrounded by the four seasons, had already conferred on Domna an aura of divinity<sup>1042</sup>. I have interpreted this tendency as a reflection of the Neopythagorean ideals concerning royalty that were particularly popular in the intellectual circle of Domna, as demonstrated by the writings of Philostratus<sup>1043</sup>. The equation with *Fortuna Redux* and *Fecunditas* might be interpreted in the same way. The choice of these two deities to honor the Augusta does not appear to be casual. As seen above, *Fortuna Redux* implies the idea of protection over the emperor, who was at this time campaigning in Germany. *Fecunditas*, on the other hand, recalls the role of Domna as semi-divine protector of the prosperity of the world<sup>1044</sup>. As discussed in the previous chapter, Domna is called *Iuno Regina* in an inscription from Zama Regia dating to the reign of Severus, and *dea Iuno orbis terrae* by another text of uncertain date from Leptis Magna<sup>1045</sup>. Besides, on the Severan arch from this city, she is often represented near figures of gods or as the personification of Juno and Victoria. Unlike the eastern provinces, this is the first time that an imperial woman is compared to a goddess in Africa Proconsularis. This province had strong bonds with the Severan establishment, a connection that, after the death of Severus, was maintained

<sup>1041</sup> On *Fortuna Redux*, see especially Kajanto 1988.

<sup>1042</sup> Cf. section IVb.2.3 above.

<sup>1043</sup> Cf. section IVb.2.4 above.

<sup>1044</sup> At the time of Caracalla's campaign in Germany, Domna would have already been in her forties (on her supposed birthdate cf. chap. II above). Thus, a reference to her biological *fecunditas* seems extremely improbable.

<sup>1045</sup> Cf. section IVb.2.4 above.

during the reign of Caracalla<sup>1046</sup>. Therefore, it is not surprising that the cosmic role of Domna is again documented in an African city during the rule of this emperor.

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, at Rome, the Arval Brethren (*Fratres Arvales*) were celebrating ‘the safety and the German victory of the emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus (...) and Julia Augusta’,<sup>1047</sup> During this ceremony they performed sacrifices in honor of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, Minerva, Salus Publica, Mars Ultor, the Military Lares, Fortuna Redux, the Genius of the emperor and the Juno of Domna. Despite the fact that provincial monuments *pro salute et victoria* had already been erected for Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna during the campaign in Britain<sup>1048</sup>, this is the first time that an inscription from Rome records an imperial woman sharing in a victory with an emperor. This is a very intriguing circumstance, inasmuch as it confirms what Dio says with regard to the inclusion of Domna’s name in the letters that Caracalla was sending to the senate<sup>1049</sup>. Flattering references to his mother and the reassurance that she was well would likely have been included in the missives that Caracalla sent to Rome to announce his German victory. Besides the *acta* of the Arval Brethren, a dedication in Althiburos (Africa Proconsularis) attests to the *Victoria Germanica Augusta* of Domna and Caracalla<sup>1050</sup>. This inscription indicates that the name of Domna had been included not only in the letters that Caracalla sent to Rome, but also in the news that was circulating throughout the Empire. Another inscription from Germany makes reference to the

<sup>1046</sup> As the numerous honorary arches for Caracalla and Domna demonstrate. Cf. Cassibry 2014, 82-84 and *infra*.

<sup>1047</sup> App. no. 186a. According to Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 34 the celebration of this joint victory should attest to the presence of Domna in Germany.

<sup>1048</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.10 and 11 above.

<sup>1049</sup> Cf. section V.2 above.

<sup>1050</sup> App. no. 174a. A similar dedication may have been set up in Theveste (CIL VIII 10625 = 16537 = ILAlg I 3036), cf. Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 35. Nevertheless, the inscription is too fragmentary to verify the presence of the name of Domna.

German victory of the emperor and his mother. This is a marble block from Meimsheim (Germania Superior), which records their *Victoria Germanica*<sup>1051</sup>. Interestingly enough, from the same area, other monuments dedicated to Domna that could date to this period are documented. The first one was found in the town of Murrhardt. This is a statue base set up by a regiment of volunteers who had, presumably, participated in the operations against the Alamanni, the *cohors XXIIII Voluntariorum Antoniniana civium Romanorum*, which declared itself ‘faithful to her divine majesty’ (*devota numini eius*)<sup>1052</sup>. The second one is a richly decorated slab from Moguntiacum that contains a dedication to Domna, who is called *Caelestis Dea*:

[*Iuliae Augustae], Caelesti deae, / [matri Imperato]ris Caesaris / [M. Aurelii Anton]ini  
Pii Felicis / [Augusti Parth]ici maximi, / [Britannici maxi]mi, Germanici /  
[maximi, itemqu]e senatus, patri/[ae et castror]um. In honorem / [legionis XXII  
A]ntoniniane Pr(imigeniae) / [P(iae) F(idelis) - - -]us Quirina An/- - -]iana / - - - - -*

To Julia Augusta, Dea Caelestis, mother of the emperor Caesar M. Aurelius Antoninus Pius Felix Augustus Parthicus maximus, Britannicus maximus, Germanicus maximus, and of the senate the fatherland and the camps. In honor of the legion XXII Antoniniana Primigenia Pia Fidelis [- - -]us of the tribe Quirina An[- - -]<sup>1053</sup>.

Unfortunately, the last lines with the name of the dedicatory are almost completely lost. The only surviving word, a reference to the tribe Quirina, seems to indicate that he was a private, probably a soldier of the legion XXII Primigenia, which was stationed in Moguntiacum and participated in the Germanic expedition<sup>1054</sup>. Inasmuch as Aurelius Victor talks about a victory of Caracalla near the river Main (*prope Menum*), the imperial

<sup>1051</sup> App. no. 182a.

<sup>1052</sup> App. no. 170a.

<sup>1053</sup> App. no. 251b.

<sup>1054</sup> Cf. Levick 2007, 134; Mundle 1961, 231-232. On the history of the XXII Primigenia, see in general Franke 2000 (participation in Caracalla’s Germanic campaign: 100-101).

party probably stopped for a while in Moguntiacum before this battle<sup>1055</sup>. In this city, military officials, soldiers and local inhabitants would have had the opportunity of seeing Domna. Both the slab from Magontiacum and the other monuments from this area, therefore, seem to have been erected as attempts to capture the benevolence of the Augusta. The equation with Dea Caelestis closely recalls another well-known *captatio benevolentiae*, i.e. the preamble of Oppian's *Cynegetica*, a didactic poem about hunting that was written during the reign of Caracalla<sup>1056</sup>. Here the author addresses Domna as 'Assyrian Cythereia' (Ἀσσυρίη Κυθέρεια) and 'Uneclipsed Moon' (οὐ λείπουσα Σελήνη)<sup>1057</sup>. The first appellation is a reference to the Phoenician goddess Astarte, who was identified by the Romans as the multifarious Dea Syria, and by the Carthaginians as *Dea Caelestis*<sup>1058</sup>. In both cases, a strong cosmic connotation characterized these deities, whose representations often include the attribute of the lunar crescent. This element well illustrates the second appellation, 'Uneclipsed Moon', which strengthens the cosmic connotation of Domna/*Dea Caelestis*. Finally, the adjective Cythereia belongs also to Aphrodite, and draws, once again, the attention to the theme of fertility<sup>1059</sup>. In brief, both the inscription from Mogontiacum and Oppian's preamble have an important element in common. This is the attempt to capture the benevolence of Domna through a reference to her cosmic role between human and divine. Such a philosophical concept would have been already known to Domna's contemporaries, inasmuch as it had already been

<sup>1055</sup> AVR. VICT. *Caes.* 21.2. Before reaching Germany, Caracalla passed through Gaul (*Carac.* 5.1-3), where he probably organized the zone behind the front, cf. Letta 1991, 676-677. On the itinerary of Caracalla cf. Halfmann 1986, 225-226, who considers Moguntiacum as the base from which the campaign started.

<sup>1056</sup> Cf. chap. I above.

<sup>1057</sup> Opp. *cyneg.* 1.7.

<sup>1058</sup> On Astarte/Dea Syria cf. Ensoli 2004; Bilde 1990; Turcan 1989, 132-142; LIMC III.1 pp. 355-358. On the Carthaginian *Dea Caelestis*, see especially Lancellotti 2010.

<sup>1059</sup> Ghedini 1984, 149.

advertised on her coinage, and perhaps propagated by the circle of philosophers who had gathered around her.

After the conclusion of the campaign in Germany, Caracalla and Domna started to travel to the East by touring the Balkans<sup>1060</sup>. In all likelihood, the imperial party stopped in Carnuntum (Pannonia Superior), one of the most important military camps along the Danubian frontier. Here the emperor and his mother were most likely welcomed by the governor P. Cornelius Anullinus<sup>1061</sup>, who was the homonymous son of one of Severus' most famous generals, P. Cornelius Anullinus<sup>1062</sup>. Considering his ancestry and the prestigious governorship he held, Cornelius Anullinus was presumably on very good terms with the imperial establishment, a circumstance that is also demonstrated by his appointment to the ordinary consulate in 216. Thus, it is not surprising that, at the arrival of the imperial court, he dedicated a new temple to Serapis and Isis with an inscription 'for the safety, the victory and well-being' (*pro salute, victoria et incolumitate*) of Caracalla and Domna<sup>1063</sup>. In the same period, it is likely that another inscription for their safety was placed in Ad Statuas (Pannonia Inferior), a fort located some 100km southwards along the Danube<sup>1064</sup>. Although fragmentary, the text records building works that affected another temple (perhaps, like in Carnuntum, dedicated to Serapis and Isis), and it contains a further dedication for the safety of the emperor and his mother. In Intercisa (Pannonia Inferior), 130 km downstream on the Danube, the first cohort of the Emesenes set up an elegant dedication with bronze letters in honor of Caracalla and

<sup>1060</sup> Halfmann 1986, 226.

<sup>1061</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1323.

<sup>1062</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1322. He served Severus during the civil wars of 193-197 and during the Parthian campaigns. He was also ordinary consul in 199, cf. Birley 1999, 49-50, 112-113 and *passim*.

<sup>1063</sup> App. no. 176a.

<sup>1064</sup> App. no. 173a.

Domna<sup>1065</sup>. Finally, 300 km further south, Aelius Surus, decurion and *duovir* of the colony of Bassiana, placed an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus for their safety and return (*pro salute et reditu*)<sup>1066</sup>. All these inscriptions follow a route of approximately 500 km along the Danube, which the imperial party probably sailed while visiting cities and forts that were located near this river<sup>1067</sup>.

An inscription from Ephesus indicates that Caracalla and Domna wintered in Sirmium (Pannonia Inferior), not far from Bassiana<sup>1068</sup>. From Sirmium, the emperor paid a quick visit to Dacia, where the local population and the troops stationed in this province bestowed numerous honors upon Domna. In Apulum, the legion XIII Gemina erected a statue for the Augusta<sup>1069</sup>. Some kilometers further north, in Napoca, an altar to the Dea Syria was set up for the safety of the emperor and his mother<sup>1070</sup>. The dedicators were some local citizens (whose name are lost) and the governor of the province, L. Marius Perpetuus<sup>1071</sup>, the brother of Severus' general and biographer Marius Maximus. In this city, a cavalry regiment (the *Ala Silana Antoniniana*) also erected a statue of Domna<sup>1072</sup>. Interestingly, two other statues for the Augusta alone are documented in the region of Napoca. One was placed by the *cohors I Britannica Antoniniana* in Samum,

<sup>1065</sup> App. no. 181a.

<sup>1066</sup> App. no. 189a.

<sup>1067</sup> Other dedications to Caracalla alone can be attributed to the same route. See for example RIU III 865 (Ulcisia); AE 1904, 155 (Aquincum); CIL III 10306; RIU V 1140 = AE 1971, 334; AE 1910, 133 (Intercisa).

<sup>1068</sup> AE 1971, 455 = SEG 17, 505. This text records the numerous travels of an unknown citizen of Ephesus (his name is lost) who, on behalf of his city, was on numerous embassies to the emperors. After having been to Germany to meet Caracalla in 213, he went to Sirmium to meet him again in 214 (l. 15). Cf. Halfmann 1986, 226. Sirmium was, after all, a customary residence for the emperors who were travelling through the Danubian provinces, cf. Mennen 2011, 40.

<sup>1069</sup> App. no. 227b.

<sup>1070</sup> App. no. 191a.

<sup>1071</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> M 311. On the career of this senator, see also Piso 1993, 169-177 no. 38.

<sup>1072</sup> App. no. 255b.

and the other one by the *cohors V Lingonum Antoniniana* in Porolissum<sup>1073</sup>. Finally, another statue was erected in the camp of Micia, on the way between Sirmium and Napoca<sup>1074</sup>, and, in the nearby town of Germisara, a tribune of the legion XIV Gemina dedicated an altar to Diana for the safety of Caracalla and Domna<sup>1075</sup>. Such an abundance of honors indicates that the Dacian troops, who had been certainly reviewed by Caracalla, likely held Domna in great esteem, and considered her as an individual who could exercise a great deal of influence over the emperor. As in the German provinces, Domna had already appeared on Dacian inscriptions during Severus' reign, but only a couple of times<sup>1076</sup>.

After having left Dacia and resuming the trip to the East, the imperial party travelled through Moesia and Thrace. In this area, inscriptions recording the name of Domna are numerous during the reign of Caracalla. Both the types of some of these monuments (arches, statues and altars *pro salute*) and the formulas reported by their dedicatory inscriptions, indicate that they may well have been erected to celebrate the arrival of Domna and her son. This seems to be the case for the arch of Caracalla in Thasos, a small island situated not far from the Hellespont. The arch, which supported the statues of Caracalla, Domna and the deified Severus, was dedicated after 213, since Caracalla is already called Germanicus maximus<sup>1077</sup>. In the text of the dedication, Domna occupies the second position, i.e. after Caracalla and before Severus, a circumstance that well demonstrates the prominence of the role she was now playing at the side of Caracalla. Several statues from Moesia are also documented. The most famous one was

<sup>1073</sup> App. nos. 278b and 263b, respectively.

<sup>1074</sup> App. no. 253b.

<sup>1075</sup> App. no. 238b.

<sup>1076</sup> App. nos. 84a, 114b.

<sup>1077</sup> App. no. 302b. On the arch cf. Marc 1999.

erected by the city of Histria (Moesia Superior), where Domna was honored with the unusual name of ‘Fortune of the world’ (*Τύχη τῆς Οἰκουμένης*)<sup>1078</sup>. This title resembles the expression ‘rulers of the world’ (*οἱ τῆς Οἰκουμένης δεσπόται*) that the city of Ilias (Asia Minor) had used with reference to Domna and Severus during the reign of the latter<sup>1079</sup>. Both these appellatives never appear in the official titulature of Domna, and, therefore, they should be attributed to the creativity of the locals<sup>1080</sup>. In my view, however, an unusual divine comparison such as ‘Fortune of the world’ might be connected, once again, to a theme that was particularly important to Domna, viz. the sovereign as expression of the cosmic force that presides over the universe. Thus, the meaning of ‘Fortune of the world’ might be similar to the ‘divine’ titles that had already appeared in Africa (Fecunditas and Fortuna Redux) and Germany (Caelestis Dea). It is, finally, interesting to note that this is the first time that this title is documented. No similar honor for imperial women who had been previously honored in these regions, such as Salonia Matidia<sup>1081</sup>, Sabina<sup>1082</sup>, Faustina the Younger<sup>1083</sup> or Crispina<sup>1084</sup>, is documented.

#### V.3.4. The East (214-217)

The imperial party entered the province of Asia at some point during the summer of 214<sup>1085</sup>. Both Dio and the *HA* report an accident that occurred during the crossing of the

<sup>1078</sup> App. no. 243b.

<sup>1079</sup> App. no. 27b.

<sup>1080</sup> Levick 2007, 131; Ghedini 1984, 143-144; Kettenhofen 1979, 106-109.

<sup>1081</sup> Perinthos-Herakleia 7.

<sup>1082</sup> Perinthos-Herakleia 37.

<sup>1083</sup> IGBulg V 604-605, 660, 5568, 5599; AE 1937, 246 = IScM III 97.

<sup>1084</sup> IGBulg II 613.

<sup>1085</sup> Halfmann 1986, 224.

Hellespont. The mast of the ship that was transporting Caracalla collapsed, and he was forced to climb down into a lifeboat<sup>1086</sup>. The solemn sacrifices that the Arval Brethren performed in this period for the safety of the emperor may refer to this episode, but the fragmentary state of the inscription does not allow certain conclusions<sup>1087</sup>. At any rate, sacrifices for Domna were, once more, included in the celebration. This indicates that official communications concerning the well-being of the Augusta continued to be received in Rome, presumably through the letters that Caracalla was sending to the senate.

Once in Asia, Caracalla and his mother passed through Ilium, and from here they reached Pergamum, where Caracalla visited the temple of Aesculapius<sup>1088</sup>. A statue base with a dedication to Domna is documented in this city<sup>1089</sup>. The monument was set up on the initiative of a Romanius Montanus, an imperial procurator in charge of a troop of gladiators. Unfortunately, the career of this individual is unknown, but he should be identified with a relative of M. Romanius Juventinus, an imperial procurator of the inheritance tax who had erected a statue of Domna in Ephesus during the reign of Severus<sup>1090</sup>. As Domna's letter to the Ephesians demonstrates, Asian communities were well connected to the Augusta. By setting up a statue in one of these cities, both

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<sup>1086</sup> Dio 78 (77).16.7 simply says that Caracalla crossed the Hellespont ‘not without danger’, while *Carac.* 5.8 reports some more information about the accident.

<sup>1087</sup> App. no. 193a. Millar 1962, 130 hypothesized a connection between the shipwreck and the sacrifices of the Arval Brethren; but Letta 1989, 273 has rejected this possibility, saying that the sacrifices could generally refer to the safety of the emperor’s trip.

<sup>1088</sup> Visit to Ilium: Dio 78 (77).16.7; Hdn. 4.8.3. Visit to Pergamum: Dio 78 (77).15.6-8; Hdn. 4.8.3. Dio’s version, which indicates Ilium as the first stop, should be preferred to Herodian’s, who talks about a stay in Pergamum and, then, a visit to Ilium. Cf. Halfmann 1986, 227. On the visit to Pergamum cf. also Rowan 2012, 130-137 who, however, reports a wrong dating (end of 213). As seen above, Caracalla was still in Germany in October 213. The stay in Sirmium and the visit to Dacia, therefore, cannot fit a period of only one-two months.

<sup>1089</sup> App. no. 260b.

<sup>1090</sup> App. no. 24b. Monatnus: PIR<sup>2</sup> R 78. Juventinus: PIR<sup>2</sup> R 79. The probable connection between these two individuals is stressed in the PIR and Levick 2007, 207 n. 82.

Juventinus and Romanus may have ensured that their loyalty would have been noticed and rewarded. Or, perhaps, they set up these statues on the occasion of an imperial visit, as the case of Montanus seems to indicate. It is important to remember that Caracalla presided over gladiatorial games while in Asia Minor (sometimes he fought as a gladiator as well)<sup>1091</sup>. Also, Montanus' dedication expresses a strong degree of attachment to Domna, forasmuch as he calls her 'his mistress' (*domina sua*)<sup>1092</sup>. In this period, honors paid to the Augusta are documented in Ephesus as well. After having obtained the new *neokoria* in 211, the city celebrated Caracalla's trip to the East with a new series of monuments dedicated to the emperor and Domna. Between 213 and 217, the city dedicated a new portico and two statues to the two of them<sup>1093</sup>. In the case of the two statues, the dedicatory formula 'the council and the neochory people' (βουλὴ καὶ ὁ νεωκόρος δῆμος) shows that not only the members of the council, but also the whole population were expressing their heart-felt gratitude for the benefits they had received from Caracalla and Domna. Ephesus is located some 180 km south from Pergamum, and, in her letter of 211, Domna had expressed a vivid interest for the cultural richness of the city<sup>1094</sup>. Such an abundance of honors may have had the purpose of welcoming an imperial visit.

Towards the end of 214, the Arval Brethren celebrated Caracalla's and Domna's safe arrival to the winter quarters in Nicomedia (*hiberna Nicomediae*) with a series of

<sup>1091</sup> Dio 78 (77).17.4 and 19.3.

<sup>1092</sup> On the use of the word *domina* with reference to the Augusta cf. IVa.3.8 above.

<sup>1093</sup> App. nos. 291b-292b.

<sup>1094</sup> That is the 'seat for learning' (ἐργαστήριον) reported at the end of Domna's letter. This is probably an allusion to the famous Library of Celsus, one of the largest libraries in the Empire. On this topic cf. Houston 2014, 189-197 (with ample bibliography); Casson 2001, 114-118.

new sacrifices<sup>1095</sup>. The imperial court stayed in this city at least until the beginning of spring 215, because Caracalla celebrated his birthday (April 4<sup>th</sup>) here<sup>1096</sup>. After that, the emperor and his mother resumed their travel to Syria. They probably passed through the city of Adana, in Cilicia, where an honorary dedication on an altar mentions both of them<sup>1097</sup>. Antioch was reached in the summer, but the imperial party did not stop there for long<sup>1098</sup>. During the second half of 215, in fact, Domna and Caracalla were already travelling to Alexandria, in Egypt, where they stayed until the following year<sup>1099</sup>. A little before the return to Antioch, on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 216, Alexandria set up a dedication to Caracalla, Domna and to the Divine Severus<sup>1100</sup>. The name of Domna in the second position before that of Severus indicates, once again, the importance that, in the eyes of the Alexandrians, the Augusta now held. Most importantly, the inscription sounds like an attempt to recover the benevolence of the rulers after the riots that had broken out during their stay in the city. The epithet of ‘devotee of Serapis’ (*Φιλοσέραπις*) bestowed on Caracalla surely stresses the relationship between the emperor and the city, and the inclusion of Domna immediately after the name of Caracalla indicates that her favor was no minor matter to obtain. It is interesting to know that the city had already dedicated a statue to Domna soon after Severus’ death, in 211<sup>1101</sup>. Before then, there is no epigraphic documentation concerning imperial women in Alexandria.

During the return trip to Antioch, the imperial party stopped over at Apamea, in Syria. Here, the inscription on a statue base for Domna commemorates the 203<sup>th</sup> stop of

<sup>1095</sup> App. no. 193a.

<sup>1096</sup> Dio 78 (77).19.3.

<sup>1097</sup> App. no. 220b.

<sup>1098</sup> Hdn. 4.8.6 reports only a brief stay in Antioch.

<sup>1099</sup> Halfmann 1986, 225.

<sup>1100</sup> App. no. 219a.

<sup>1101</sup> See section V.3.1 above.

the itinerary of Caracalla<sup>1102</sup>, and, for the first time in the East, the title ‘mother of the Roman people’ (μήτηρ … δέμου Τρωμαίον) is attached to the customary titles of the Augusta<sup>1103</sup>. The two dedications to Heliopolitan Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Venus and Mercurius that a *speculator* of the legion III Gallica placed in Heliopolis could also be connected to this travel<sup>1104</sup>. Both monuments were set up for the safety and victories (*pro salute et victoriis*) of Caracalla and Domna. Thus, as in Germany and in the Danubian provinces, soldiers stationed in the East thought that Domna held a share in the military successes of her son. Of course, this does not mean that she was regarded as a military commander. Rather, it suggests that she was considered a co-ruler. The troops that were campaigning against the Parthians seem, in general, to have shared this point of view. In 216, in fact, vexillations of the IV Scythica and the II Cyrenaica dedicated the new amphitheater of Dura Europos to the emperor and his mother<sup>1105</sup>. As for Alexandria, military personnel had already honored Domna in this city in 211<sup>1106</sup>, while no honors for her are documented during Severus’ reign.

### V.3.5. Africa

During the reign of Caracalla, Domna was not only honored in the regions visited by Caracalla, i.e. Germany, the Danubian provinces and the East. Important monuments are documented in North Africa as well. Here, after Severus’ death, the displays of loyalty towards the Severan household are still numerous, and sometimes they exceed in

<sup>1102</sup> App. no. 220a. On Caracalla’s stop cf. Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 42 n. 204.

<sup>1103</sup> The unofficial title *mater populi Romani* is documented in an inscription from Rome (app. no. 176b) and, perhaps, in another one from Pannonia (app. no. 173a).

<sup>1104</sup> App. nos. 239b-240b. Cf. Bonello Lai 1978-1979, 43.

<sup>1105</sup> App. no. 223a.

<sup>1106</sup> Cf. section V.3.1 above.

magnificence the monuments from other areas of the Empire. The triumphal arches dedicated to Caracalla and Domna in Assuras and Vazi Sarara (Africa Proconsularis), Cuicul and Tebessa (Numidia), and Volubilis (Mauretania Tingitana) are the best examples of this trend. Admittedly, not all the African arches erected during this period bear the name of Domna. Both Vallis (Africa Proconsularis) and Castellum Tidditanorum (Numidia), dedicated arches to Caracalla and Geta in 211<sup>1107</sup>, while Cirta (Numidia) and Uzappa (Africa Proconsularis) built arches for Caracalla alone at a later time<sup>1108</sup>. All in all, however, five arches out of a total of nine include Domna in their dedications.

The arch of Vazi Sarara was dedicated in 212 with an inscription for the Divus Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>1109</sup>. This monument was erected on the initiative of a rich notable, C. Octavius Rogatus, who, at the moment of the dedication, held the office of *flamen perpetuus* and priest of Mercury. The arch was placed at the entrance of a sanctuary complex built to worship this god, whose temple was dedicated with another inscription to the Divus Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>1110</sup>. In Vazi Sarara, the Augusta had already been mentioned in 211 in a dedication that included Caracalla and Geta<sup>1111</sup>. Yet she does not seem to have received honors during the reign of Severus, when the city council placed an altar to Mercury for the safety of Severus and Caracalla<sup>1112</sup>. The inscriptions from 211 and 212 - and, in particular, the dedication of the arch - seem to reveal that the citizens of Vazi Sarara regarded Domna as a more influential individual during the reign of her son.

<sup>1107</sup> CIL VIII 1273 = 14771 = 25830 and ILAlg II 1, 3592, respectively.

<sup>1108</sup> Cirta: CIL VIII 7094 = 19434 = ILAlg II 1, 674; CIL VIII 7095 = 19435 = ILAlg II 1, 675; CIL VIII 7096 = ILAlg II 1, 676; CIL VIII 7097 = ILAlg II 1, 677. Uzappa: CIL VIII 11929.

<sup>1109</sup> App. no. 166a.

<sup>1110</sup> App. no. 165a. On this complex, cf. Cagnat and Gauckler 1898, 66-69.

<sup>1111</sup> App. no. 151a.

<sup>1112</sup> CIL VIII 23747.

Following the chronological order of the dedications, the next arch was inaugurated in Theveste (Numidia) in 214. This monument was built in a quadrifrons configuration in fulfillment of testamentary instructions of an eminent citizen of this city, C. Cornelius Egrilianus<sup>1113</sup>. Although the Divus Severus, Caracalla and Domna are honored on three different inscriptions on the East, South and West sides of the arch<sup>1114</sup>, the dedication engraved on one of the pillars says that the structure supported both imperial statues and at least one sculpture representing Minerva<sup>1115</sup>. A series of shrines (*aediculae*) containing statues of emperors and deities crowned the quadrifons, and scholars have assumed that its construction started some years before the official inauguration<sup>1116</sup>. 211 is certainly an attractive date, inasmuch as the statue of Minerva may have been used to replace that of Geta, whose name may have been included in the original project. In his detailed study of this arch, Lidiano Bacchielli has proposed identifying the statue for Domna with the statue of Minerva, whose features would resemble those of the Augusta<sup>1117</sup>. According to his reconstruction, the statues would

<sup>1113</sup> For an accurate description of this monument, which was originally placed in the forum of Theveste, cf. Bacchielli 1987, 296-299.

<sup>1114</sup> CIL VIII 1855 = 16504a = ILAlg I 3037; CIL VIII 1857 = 16504c = ILAlg I 3039; and app. no. 195a, respectively.

<sup>1115</sup> CIL VIII 1858 = 16504d = ILAlg I 3040 = AE 1945, 58 = AE 1988, 1120 = AE 2010, 1814. The text is unfortunately affected by several lacunas. The first lines can be read as follows: *[Ex testamento] C. Cornelii Egriliani, / praef(ecti) leg(ionis) XIII Geminae, quo testamen/to ex HS CCL mil(ibus) n(ummum) arcum cum statuis / [- - - i]tem tetrastylis duobus cum statuis / [- - - e]t Minervae quae in foro fieri prae/[cepit] (...) ('In compliance with the testament of C. Cornelius Egrilianus, prefect of the legion XIV Gemina. In this testament he allocated 250,000 sesterces to build an arch with the statues of [- - -], and with two tetrastyle shrines with the statues of [- - -] and Minerva in the forum').*

<sup>1116</sup> Hamdoune 2010, 248; Bacchielli 1987, 296.

<sup>1117</sup> Bacchielli 1987, 313-314. This interpretation is, however, purely speculative. According to Bacchielli, the lacuna in the fifth line of the dedicatory inscription (cf. n. 1115 above) should be restored as *[Divi Severi e]t Minervae*. This assumption leads Bacchielli to postulate that the statues of the Divus Severus and Minerva were originally placed on opposite sides, i.e. the West side (where the inscription to the Divus Severus is placed) and the East side (which hosts the inscription to Domna, who would have consequently become Domna/Minerva).

have represented Caracalla, Domna/Minerva, the Virtue of Caracalla and the Divus Severus<sup>1118</sup>. More recently, Christine Hamdoune has partially challenged this interpretation, arguing that a statue of Caelestis would have been placed above the dedication for Domna, with the statue of Minerva above the inscription honoring Severus<sup>1119</sup>. Neither of these theories is, in my view, totally persuasive. Neither the honorary inscription for Domna nor that for Severus contains references to Minerva, Caelestis or Virtus. Also, the possibility that Egrilianus wanted to dedicate each side of the arch to a different member of the Severan household seems more economical. Alternatively, it is possible to postulate that Egrilianus was already aware of the *damnatio* affecting the memory of Geta when he drafted his last will. The statue of Minerva, in this case, could be interpreted as an expedient to fill the fourth side of the arch and, at the same time, to pay homage to a deity who enjoyed notable popularity in Theveste<sup>1120</sup>. Whatever the truth of the matter, the hypothesis of a statue portraying Domna as either Minerva or Caelestis in Theveste does not seem to have a solid grounding. Yet it is interesting to note that this is the first documented mention of Domna in the city. As in the case of Vazi Sarara, in Theveste the importance of the Augusta seems to have been officially recognized after Severus' death<sup>1121</sup>.

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<sup>1118</sup> Bacchielli 1987, 313-320.

<sup>1119</sup> Hamdoune 2010, 250-251.

<sup>1120</sup> One its most important civic temples has been attributed to the cult of this goddess, cf. CIL VIII p. 215. Dedications to Minerva are also documented: CIL VIII 16525 = ILAlg I 3009; AE 1935, 44.

<sup>1121</sup> Both Severus (CIL VIII 16536 = ILAlg I 3033) and, perhaps, Caracalla (CIL VIII 1854 = 16503 = ILAlg I 3034) had already been mentioned in the inscriptions of Theveste between 198 and 211.

In 216, Cuicul (Numidia) erected an arch at the entrance of the new Severan forum<sup>1122</sup>. The new monument was dedicated to Caracalla, Domna and the Divus Severus<sup>1123</sup>. This time the name of Domna is in the second position, after Caracalla and before Severus, a fact that well illustrates the importance that she had assumed in the eyes of the citizens of this city. During this period, the decurions also decreed a statue for the Augusta<sup>1124</sup>. No other contemporary statues are documented for Caracalla. As the dedicatory inscription already mentions Caracalla as *Germanicus maximus*, this monument was certainly erected during the last months of 213, or later. Unlike Theveste and Vazi Sarara, these are not the first monuments that were dedicated to Domna in Cuicul. Some years before, a close collaborator of Severus, the imperial procurator M. Rossius Vitulus, had set up an inscription where Domna was mentioned in the second position immediately after the emperor<sup>1125</sup>. Moreover, in 198, the legate of Numidia Q. Anicius Faustus had honored her through different inscriptions where her name appeared in the ablative case together with those of the emperors<sup>1126</sup>. Yet, with the erection of the arch and the statue, the inhabitants of Cuicul honored the Augusta during the reign of Caracalla.

The last Severan arch built in North Africa is located in Volubilis, the capital of Mauretania Tingitana. It was inaugurated in 217, only a few weeks before the assassination of Caracalla, and the dedicatory inscription mentions only the emperor and Domna<sup>1127</sup>. The city council officially decreed the construction of the arch, but it was the

<sup>1122</sup> On the topography of this place, cf. Sears 2013, 206-209 with further references.

<sup>1123</sup> App. no. 222a.

<sup>1124</sup> App. no. 289b.

<sup>1125</sup> App. no. 40a. Cf. section IV.3.9 above.

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.4 above.

<sup>1127</sup> App. nos. 35a-37a.

governor, M. Aurelius Sebastenus, who started and dedicated it (*incohante et dedicante*). His career is unknown, but the purpose of capturing the benevolence of both Caracalla and Domna seems clear. Such was Sebastenus' concern about his relationship with the rulers that, soon after the end of Caracalla's reign, he set up a new dedication for Macrinus and Diadumenianus<sup>1128</sup>. At any rate, in Volubilis Domna had not been mentioned for many years (the last time was in 196)<sup>1129</sup>. In 200 and 202, other governors had set up dedications to honor Severus, Caracalla and Geta without mentioning Domna<sup>1130</sup>. Hence the appearance of her name on the arch built in 217 seems to suggest that the general perception of her importance had, in the meanwhile, notably increased.

In the same manner of the arches, Domna is included in dedicatory inscriptions belonging to altars, new buildings and statues. All these monuments were set up not only in cities where she had already been honored during Severus' reign, but also in places where her name is documented for the first time. Among the communities in the first group, it is important to mention Leptis Magna and Thugga in Africa Proconsularis, and Lambaesis and Thamugadi in Numidia. In Leptis Magna, three statues for Domna, the Divus Severus and Caracalla were placed in the new basilica that was inaugurated in 215<sup>1131</sup>. In Thugga, one of the most influential matrons in the city, Gabinia Hermiona, built a temple for the Germanic Victory of Caracalla, and dedicated it to the Divus

<sup>1128</sup> AE 1926, 26.

<sup>1129</sup> Cf. section III.5.2 above.

<sup>1130</sup> IAM II 2, 350 = AE 1953, 80 = AE 1957, 204 and IAM II 2, 354 = AE 1960, 102, respectively.

<sup>1131</sup> Domna: app. no. 209a. Severus: IRT 400. Caracalla: IRT 429. On the Severan basilica of Leptis cf. Cordovana 2007, 341-371; Wilson 2007, 296-301. The bases are not preserved in their original position, since they were re-employed as construction material when the Severan basilica was converted into a Christian church (cf. Bigi-Tantillo 2010, 289). However, the fact that all three bases are re-employed in the same building suggests that they had been originally set up in this place (cf. Tantillo 2010, 178).

Severus, Caracalla and Domna in 214<sup>1132</sup>. As discussed in the previous chapter, Thugga could boast important connections with the Severan court. Severus had bestowed Roman citizenship on the whole civic body, and the city had already set up arches and statues to pay homage to the imperial family<sup>1133</sup>. As seen in the previous chapters, Lambaesis was also well connected to the Severans. In this important military camp several statues were set up to honor the Augusta, presumably on the occasion of the imperial visit to Africa in 203<sup>1134</sup>. After 211, the name of Domna replaced that of Geta on at least seven monuments dedicated to Hercules, which, in 198, a soldier had erected for the safety of Severus, Caracalla and Geta<sup>1135</sup>. Numerous altars were also put up between 211 and 217. The most distinguished dedicatory inscription is the legate of the III Augusta, M. Valerius Senecio, who dedicated an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus *pro salute* of Caracalla and Domna<sup>1136</sup>. His career is not known in detail, but according to other inscriptions Caracalla appointed him consul in this period, or a little later<sup>1137</sup>. This suggests that he was enjoying a certain favor at the imperial court. Finally, it is important to stress that members of the local elite of Thamugadi had mentioned Domna in several inscriptions dedicated during the reign of Severus<sup>1138</sup>. In 214, however, the city dedicated its new baths to Caracalla and Domna with inscriptions where both their names appear in the ablative case, a formula that could be translated as ‘during the reign of Caracalla and Domna’<sup>1139</sup>. Something similar is already documented in 199 in Cuicul, where the names Severus, Caracalla, Geta and

<sup>1132</sup> App. no. 197a.

<sup>1133</sup> See section IVa.3.9 above.

<sup>1134</sup> See section IVa.3.6 above.

<sup>1135</sup> App. nos. 154a-160a.

<sup>1136</sup> App. no. 247b.

<sup>1137</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> V 196.

<sup>1138</sup> App. nos. 208b-210b.

<sup>1139</sup> App. no. 194a. Cf. also Campedelli 2015, 502-504; Levick 2007, 97-98.

Domna are reported in the ablative case on inscriptions dedicated by the legate Q. Anicius Faustus<sup>1140</sup>. The reappearance of such formulas in Thamugadi in 214 suggests that the city put a great effort into strengthening its relationship with the emperor and Domna.

In other communities, located in both Africa Proconsularis and Numidia, the name of Domna appears for the first time on local monuments. With regard to the Proconsularis, this is the case for Avedda<sup>1141</sup>, Furnos Minus<sup>1142</sup>, Thala<sup>1143</sup> and Thuburnica<sup>1144</sup>, where the Augusta is included in dedications of new buildings. It is important to stress that the male members of the Severan family had already been honored in all these cities under Severus<sup>1145</sup>. The same situation applies to Numidia, and in particular to Calceus Herculis and Verecunda. In Calceus Herculis, a dedication to Severus and Clodius Albinus was set up at some point before the end of 195<sup>1146</sup>. Later on, a private individual, perhaps a soldier from the local garrison, placed an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus for the safety of Severus and Caracalla<sup>1147</sup>. After 211, however, Domna appears together with Caracalla on two altars to Hercules Sanctus and to the Deus Sol<sup>1148</sup>. Two different centurions of the III Augusta, who were commanding a regiment of Emesenes (the *numerus Hemesenorum*), erected these monuments, which were dedicated

<sup>1140</sup> See section IVa.3.4 above

<sup>1141</sup> App. no. 229b.

<sup>1142</sup> App. no. 293b.

<sup>1143</sup> App. no. 280b.

<sup>1144</sup> App. no. 282b.

<sup>1145</sup> Avedda: CIL VIII 14370; ILTun 1211. Furnos Minus: CIL VIII 25808a = AE 1909, 161. Thala: ILAfr 00195 = AE 1915, 15 = AE 1915, 80. Thuburnica: CIL VIII 10603 (= 14696), 14695.

<sup>1146</sup> AE 1926, 144.

<sup>1147</sup> AE 1933, 34.

<sup>1148</sup> App. nos. 233b and 234b, respectively.

to gods that are connected to the emperor and to the Augusta respectively<sup>1149</sup>. As for Verecunda, where Severus, Caracalla and Geta had been previously honored<sup>1150</sup>, Domna appears together with Caracalla on the dedications of two statues to Juptiter Optimus Maximus Conservator and Juno Concordia Augusta set up in 212<sup>1151</sup>.

Lastly, a group of milestones dating to 213-216 deserves special mention, for Domna is mentioned for the first time, together with the Divus Severus and Caracalla, on this type of monument. They were placed on the route that led from Lambaesis and Thamugadi (Numidia) to the coastal city of Igilgili (Mauretania Caesariensis), passing through the territories of Cuicul, in Numidia, and Sitifis and Thamallula, in Mauretania<sup>1152</sup>. Before 211, a good number of milestones located on this route were dedicated to Severus, Caracalla and Geta<sup>1153</sup>, as were the vast majority of these monuments discovered west of Africa Proconsularis<sup>1154</sup>. Starting from 213, however, Domna was the first imperial woman whose name appeared on African milestones. Also, on monuments from Lambaesis and Thamugadi, her name was written in the ablative case together with Caracalla's<sup>1155</sup>. In the coastal region, on the other hand, she appears in the filiation of Caracalla, who is recorded as the son of the Divus Severus and Domna. This is also an innovation, being, in fact, the first attestations of an imperial woman

<sup>1149</sup> On Caracalla and Hercules, cf. Rowan 2012, 67-77. On Domna and the Sun, cf. section IV.2.1.

<sup>1150</sup> CIL VIII 4214, 4216.

<sup>1151</sup> App. nos. 167a and 168a, respectively.

<sup>1152</sup> App. nos. 178a, 190a, 202a-208a, 210a-214a, 216a-218a, 224a.

<sup>1153</sup> CIL VIII 10337-10338, 10353, 10358 = 2240, 10362; AE 1951, 37.

<sup>1154</sup> Salama 1951, 269-270. Cf. also Salama 1951a, 27-28. On the routes of this region see Salama 2010.

<sup>1155</sup> App. no. 203a, 205a, 217a.

appearing in the filiation of an emperor on milestones<sup>1156</sup>. Inasmuch as the inclusion of Domna's name in Caracalla's filiation is documented on these milestones only, this singular honor should be regarded as a local initiative rather than a decision taken by the emperor. Despite this, the fact that the citizens of both Sitifis and Thamallula had received some benefits from Caracalla (they called themselves 'Antoniniani' on the milestones) demonstrates their closeness to the court and their knowledge of imperial affairs where Domna was playing a prominent role. It follows that the importance attributed to the Augusta reflects their perception of how her influence had increased under the rule of her son. A similar situation seems to apply to Lambaesis and Thamugadi as well. Her name is transcribed in the ablative case, which in Thamugadi appears also on the dedication of the baths, indicating that Domna was considered, *de facto*, co-ruler with Caracalla.

### V.3.6. Britain

In 213, while the imperial party was staying in Germany, the name of the Augusta was inscribed on a considerable number of monuments in Britain. This is the first time that British inscriptions mention her. The majority of these dedications are documented in the area of Hadrian's Wall. In Pons Aelius, the First Trajan Cohort of Cugerni set up a statue of Domna in the headquarters of its fort<sup>1157</sup>. She was probably honored alone, since a similar base for Caracalla is not documented. The legate C. Julius Marcus oversaw the placement of the statue, and the formulas *pro pietate et devotione* ('out of loyalty and

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<sup>1156</sup> An inscription erected in Uchi Maius during Severus' reign represents the first attestation of the inclusion of Domna's name in the filiation of Caracalla, cf. section IVa.3.6 above.

<sup>1157</sup> App. no. 184a. On the context in which the monument was discovered, cf. Daniels and Harbottle 1979, 66.

devotion') and *Julia Augusta nostra* ('our Julia Augusta') underline the devotion towards Domna. The lack of equivalent monuments for Caracalla, the use of the same dedicatory formulas and the supervision by Julius Marcus are features characteristic of other statue bases that were placed along the Wall's path<sup>1158</sup>. The Fifth Cohorts of Gauls set up a monument in Arbeia<sup>1159</sup>, the First Aelian Cohort of Hispani did the same in Castra Exploratorum<sup>1160</sup>, and the First Cohort of Vangioni, the Raeti Gesati and the *Exploratores Habitacenses* did likewise in Habitancum<sup>1161</sup>. According to Charles Daniels and Barbara Harbottle, all these statues could indicate that the troops stationed along the wall preferred to honor Domna, rather than Caracalla, because of their devotion to the memory of Geta<sup>1162</sup>. As discussed in the previous sections, many other military units stationed on the Danube erected statues of Domna during the reign of Caracalla. These were the 24th Cohort Antoniniana of Volunteers (in Germany), the legion XIII Gemina, the Ala Silana Antoniniana, the First Cohort Britannica Antoniniana and the Fifth Cohort Antoniniana of Lingoni (in Dacia)<sup>1163</sup>. As is the case for the statues placed in Britannia, similar monuments for Caracalla are not documented in the Danube area. Notwithstanding this, the title *Antoniniana* bestowed on the auxiliary units stationed in Germany and in Dacia indicates that there was a close relation between these regiments and Caracalla<sup>1164</sup>. It is Domna's increased visibility and influence that seems, therefore, to be the spur that encouraged British, German and Dacian units to honor her to an unprecedented extent.

<sup>1158</sup> Julius Marcus also honored Caracalla alone, cf. CIL VII 310 (= RIB I<sup>2</sup> 1202), 351 (= RIB I<sup>2</sup> 905), 1186 (= RIB I<sup>2</sup> 2298).

<sup>1159</sup> App. no. 175a.

<sup>1160</sup> App. no. 177a.

<sup>1161</sup> App. no. 180a.

<sup>1162</sup> Daniels and Harbottle 1979, 70-71.

<sup>1163</sup> Cf. section V.3.3 above.

<sup>1164</sup> On the title *Antoniniana* held by military units, cf. Campbell 1984, 88-93; Fitz 1983.

Other monuments set up in Britain corroborate this possibility. Some 150 kilometers south of Hadrian's Wall, in Bremetennacum, a lacunous altar bears an inscription for the safety and victory of both Caracalla and Domna<sup>1165</sup>. In the modest town of Calleva, ca. 90 kilometers west from Londinium, a certain M. Vibius Sabinus set up another statue of Domna<sup>1166</sup>. Unfortunately, the dedicatory inscription is not complete. The preposition *ob* at the end of the last surviving line, however, suggests that this monument was an expression of private gratitude rather than an act of generic devotion.

### V.3.7. Rome and Italy

As is the case for the European and African provinces, the number of Italian inscriptions mentioning Domna increased considerably in number during the reign of Caracalla. With regard to Rome, during Severus' reign, which lasted 18 years, her name is documented on 28 inscriptions (1.5 texts per year). On the other hand, during Caracalla's reign, which occupies only 6 years, she appears on 16 inscriptions (2.6 texts per year). Similar proportions affect the rest of Italy as well, with 13 inscriptions under Severus and 13 under Caracalla (0.7 and 2.1 per year, respectively).

During the first period of Caracalla's reign, between 212 and 213, several inscriptions honoring the Augusta were erected in Rome. Among their dedicators, it is important to mention a sizeable group of *vigiles* and sailors from the fleet of Misenum who, in 212, organized public spectacles in honor of Caracalla and Domna, an initiative whose purpose was to please the emperor and the Augusta while they were staying in the

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<sup>1165</sup> App. no. 232b. The last lines are erased.

<sup>1166</sup> App. no. 235b.

capital<sup>1167</sup>. In 213, the Prefect of the Watch, L. Valerius Datus, and his *subpraefectus*, P. Aelius Annianus, set up a dedication for their safety, return and victory (*pro salute, redditu et victoria*), an allusion to Caracalla's German campaign<sup>1168</sup>. Valerius Datus was certainly very close to Caracalla. In fact, he was placed in command of the fleet at Misenum in 212. In 216, he was appointed Prefect of Egypt after the riots in Alexandria, which had caused the removal of the previous prefect, Aurelius Septimius Heraclitus<sup>1169</sup>. Macrinus eventually put Datus to death in 217, presumably on account of the latter's unwillingness to recognize the new emperor<sup>1170</sup>. Datus' decision to include Domna in his dedication indicates how a close associate of the emperor considered the Augusta a key figure of the imperial establishment. Finally, the fact that, from 211 to 217, at least three new statue bases for Domna are documented in Rome is also worth stressing. Two of the dedications are anonymous<sup>1171</sup>, while the third mentions administrative personnel belonging to the imperial house<sup>1172</sup>. During Severus' reign, no statues for Domna are epigraphically attested to in Rome.

Just as for the inscriptions from the rest of Italy, dedications that include Domna are documented in several cities where Severus and his sons had previously been honored without the Augusta. The citizens of Ferentium (Latium) had placed a statue for Severus<sup>1173</sup>, but after his death they set up two statues for Caracalla and Domna<sup>1174</sup>. Puteoli (Campania) erected two statues to Severus and Caracalla in 196, but later

<sup>1167</sup> App. no. 161a.

<sup>1168</sup> App. no. 187a.

<sup>1169</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> V 65. Cf. also Letta 2016, 270.

<sup>1170</sup> Dio 78 (79).15.3. Cf. Davenport 2012, 193.

<sup>1171</sup> App. nos. 267b-268b.

<sup>1172</sup> App. no. 269b.

<sup>1173</sup> CIL X 5825.

<sup>1174</sup> App. no. 179a.

dedicated a new temple to Venus Caelestis to Caracalla and Domna<sup>1175</sup>. The colony of Telesia (Campania) honored Caracalla with a statue when he was still holding the rank of Caesar (196-198), and, between 208 and 211, set up a dedication for Severus and Caracalla in the baths<sup>1176</sup>. Later on, this city built a new monument for the Divus Severus, Caracalla and Domna<sup>1177</sup>. Finally, the Augusta is the only imperial woman who, to this point in time, received the honor of a statue in Larinum (Apulia)<sup>1178</sup>.

### V.3.8. Hispania

Unlike the provinces examined above, Domna is not mentioned very often in the Iberian Peninsula. During Severus' reign, she appears only once in a family dedication from Hispalis (Baetica)<sup>1179</sup>. After the death of her husband, Domna's name is recorded on two inscriptions from the camp of the legion VII Gemina in Legio (Hispania Citerior). We saw previously that, in 211, she was mentioned on the altar dedicated to Minerva and Juno Victrix, Guardian of the Fatherland, for her safety<sup>1180</sup>. Later, C. Julius Cerealis, legate and first governor of the new province of Hispania Citerior Antoniniana, placed an altar to Juno Regina for the safety and long reign (*pro salute et imperii diuturnitate*) of both Caracalla and Domna<sup>1181</sup>. This is the second time that Domna was directly associated with a type of power that belonged to the emperors, the *imperium*. In 208, the procurator Q. Aemilius Aristides had set up a dedication for Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Domna in Ephesus, declaring himself 'greatly devoted to their power' (*imperio eorum*

<sup>1175</sup> App. no. 266b.

<sup>1176</sup> AE 1975, 201.

<sup>1177</sup> App. no. 288b.

<sup>1178</sup> App. no. 249b.

<sup>1179</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.11 above.

<sup>1180</sup> Cf. section V.3.1 above.

<sup>1181</sup> App. no. 307b.

*dicatissimus*)<sup>1182</sup>. Julius Cerealis was, however, far more superior in rank to Aemilius Aristides. Cerealis, in fact, held the consulate, and was the first governor to be sent to Hispania Citerior Antoniniana, a new province created by Caracalla around 213<sup>1183</sup>. Although Cerealis' career is unknown, he was certainly a close supporter of the emperor. As in the abovementioned case of Valerius Datus, his choice of honoring both Caracalla and Domna as co-rulers is indicative of her influence over the emperor.

### V.3.9. Overall remarks

As in the accounts of Dio and Herodian, starting from 211 inscriptions attest to significant changes in the relationships between Domna, the emperor and the citizens of the Empire. The letter she sent to Ephesus, a document that should be dated to 211, indicates that the Augusta had become a key figure for those who wanted to submit a petition to the emperors. She is now mentioned in areas where her name was rarely documented before Severus' death (as in Germany and Spain), or not attested to at all (as in Britain). This seems to be a demonstration of the influence that she was gradually acquiring while the political climate remained uncertain owing to the power struggle between Caracalla and Geta. After the death of the latter, one would expect Domna's importance to decrease, inasmuch as her role as mediator was not necessary anymore, and Caracalla was well established on the throne (he had been appointed emperor with full powers almost fourteen years before, in 198). Conversely, the production of inscriptions in her honor continues with a higher frequency than during the previous

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<sup>1182</sup> Cf. section IVa.3.10.

<sup>1183</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> C 262. Hispania Citerior Antoniniana was probably established during Caracalla's brief stay in Gaul before the German campaign (Letta 1991, 676-677). On the new province, cf. most recently Ozcariz Gil 2013, 45-46.

years. This demonstrates that the general perception of her influence was considerably stronger than before, a confirmation of what is reported by Dio, who says that Domna was providing Caracalla with ‘excellent advice’ concerning ruling matters. Distinguished individuals who enjoyed the favor of the emperor, such as Valerius Datus in Rome, Julius Cerealis in Spain, Cornelius Anullinus in Pannonia and Aurelius Sebastenus in Mauretania, showed great deference to her by including her name in their dedications. The emperor himself, after all, did not conceal his attachment to her. According to Dio, he was always mentioning her in his letters to the senate, a fact that is reflected in the Acts of the Arval Brethren. The members of this priesthood performed sacrifices to celebrate the German victory of Caracalla and Domna, as well as other events connected to their trip through the Balkans and Asia Minor. Dedications for the safety and victory of them both are also regularly documented outside Rome and, sometimes, even in areas where she had not been honored under Severus (e.g. Britain). The typology of the monuments recording her name is also worth mentioning. Although she had already appeared on African triumphal arches during the rule of her husband, her presence on this kind of monument becomes more frequent when Caracalla was reigning alone. This is especially true for the arches erected during the last years, when her name is mentioned after Caracalla’s and before that of the Divus Severus (as in Cuicul), or alone after Caracalla’s (as in Volubilis). Finally, notable differences between the two reigns are detectable with regard to statue bases. Under Caracalla, an impressive quantity of new statues for the Augusta was set up in the military camps of Britain, as well as in regions visited by Domna between 213 and 215, i.e. Germany, Dacia and the Danube, Thrace and

Asia Minor. In all these places she was honored alone, a circumstance that hardly happened under Severus.

#### V.4. NUMISMATICS

Just was the case for the literary sources and the inscriptions, the imperial coins struck during the years 211-217 attribute an unprecedented role to Domna. Starting from 211, through the new legends IVLIA PIA FELIX AVG (on the obverses) and MAT AVGG MAT SENAT M PATR (reverses) her coinage reinforced both her role as protector of the state and its institutions and her relationship with Caracalla. Later, it advertised her proximity to the divine element, particularly through the new types with the legends LVNA LVCIFERA and VENVS GENETRIX. Provincial coins, on the other hand, attest to numerous connections between Domna and the eastern cities during the period of her travel through the East.

##### V.4.1. The imperial coinage

During 211, a new typology of coins was minted for Domna. These report the new titulature that she assumed after the death of Severus, i.e. *Pia, Felix, mater Augustorum, mater senatus, mater patriae* ('Pious, Blessed, mother of the Augusti, mother of the senate, mother of the country'). *Pia* and *Felix* appear on the obverses of all the coins minted between 211 and 217, which are characterized by the legend IVLIA PIA FELIX AVG<sup>1184</sup>. It is important to note that both these titles represent an absolute innovation in the titulature of imperial women, because they are typical of emperors. *Pius* and *Felix*, in

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<sup>1184</sup> Filippini 2010, 91; *Ead.* 2008, 8; Lusnia 1995, 121, 138.

fact, started to appear in Commodus' titulature during the first years of his principate<sup>1185</sup>.

In this case, *Pius* had a strong religious-political connotation. It first implied a relation with the previous Antonines, in particular Antoninus Pius and the two Faustinas, who had been awarded the title *Pia* after their deification<sup>1186</sup>. Secondly, it advertised Commodus' loyalty and dedication (*pietas*) to the gods and the state<sup>1187</sup>. As for *Felix* ('blessed'), scholars have noted that an idea of divine protection, and, thus, a sort of superhuman guardianship over the Empire, is likely to be connected to this title<sup>1188</sup>. Both *Pius* and *Felix* appear in the titulature of Severan emperors. Severus, Caracalla and Geta are often addressed as *Pii*, but only Caracalla is called *Felix*, a circumstance that seems to stress his particular relations with the divine, and, once again, with the Augusta<sup>1189</sup>. In sum, after Severus' death, Caracalla and Domna's common use of the titles *Pius/Pia* and *Felix* not only strengthens the relationship between the two of them, but also attributes the unprecedented role of 'divine' protector of the state to Domna<sup>1190</sup>.

The new titles MAT AVGG MAT SENAT M PATR represented on the reverses amplify the messages that are already present in *Pia* and *Felix*. Although these new titles are not related to official power, they clearly imply the recognition of a relationship of subjection of the institutions subject to Domna's tutelage<sup>1191</sup>. It is not difficult to interpret the title

<sup>1185</sup> Kienast 1996, 149.

<sup>1186</sup> Title of *Pia* Faustina the Younger: Levick 2014, 58 who, however, is led into error by a mistake in the IGRR when, in n. 12, she attributes a dedication to Diocletian's daughter Galeria Valeria to her (IGRR IV 1562 from Teos, where Galeria Valeria's name includes the Greek equivalent of *Pia*, εὐσέβεστάτη). Cf. also Kienast 1996, 141. *Pia* also appeared as a title of Faustina the Elder after her deification, cf. Levick 2014, 58.

<sup>1187</sup> Hekster 2002, 92-93.

<sup>1188</sup> Langford 2013, 112; Hekster 2002, 93-94.

<sup>1189</sup> Kienast 1996, 156-166.

<sup>1190</sup> Levick 2007, 95.

<sup>1191</sup> Morelli 2009, 142-143, who observes how the repetition of the word *mater* emphasizes the concept of tutelage over each separate entity (the Augusti, the senate and the citizens of the Empire).

*mater senatus* as an appeal by the senators, who saw Domna as the only authority that could guarantee an ordinate transition from the reign of Severus to the rule of Caracalla and Geta<sup>1192</sup>. *Mater patriae* echoes the *pater patriae* of the emperors. It sounds a call to all the subjects of the Empire to observe the loyalty owed to the dynasty, whose continuity had been entrusted to Domna.

All the coins minted for Domna during 211 display a woman holding a scepter and a branch on their reverses (fig. 10). On aurei and denari, she is sometimes standing<sup>1193</sup>, but more often she appears seated on a throne on both gold/silver and bronze issues<sup>1194</sup>. This image recalls the reverses of several coins of Augustus and Tiberius, where a veiled woman holding a scepter is represented on a throne<sup>1195</sup>. Although no legend indicates the identity of this woman, she should be identified with Livia, inasmuch as she also appears on coins of Caligula, Cladius and Galba with the legend DIVA AVGVSTA or AVGVSTA<sup>1196</sup>. On Domna's coins, however, both the legend MAT AVGG MAT SENAT M PATR and her characteristic hairstyle leave no room for doubt concerning the identification of the woman sat on the throne as the Augusta. It is also important to stress that, while Livia was depicted as a priestess with a veil on her head, Domna is shown as a ruler. Thanks to the title *mater augustorum*, this series of coins can be dated to the joint reign of Caracalla and Geta, in 211. Notwithstanding the brevity of this period, this coin

<sup>1192</sup> Letta 1991, 673 and, more recently, Langford 2013, 111-112. According to Levick 2007, 94, the new title was ‘a uniquely high distinction to console her widowhood’. This interpretation, however, seems to be a little too simplistic.

<sup>1193</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 273 no. 380.

<sup>1194</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 73 no. 381 and p. 310 no. 588.

<sup>1195</sup> Augustus: RIC I p. 90 no. 350 (aureus/denarius); Tiberius: RIC I p. 103 no. 3 (aureus/denarius); p. 105 nos. 15-17 (asses). Divus Augustus: RIC I p. 95 no. 2 (as).

<sup>1196</sup> Caligula: RIC I p. 96 no. 9 (dupondius). Cladius: RIC I p. 96 no. 10 (dupondius). Galba: RIC I p. 200 no. 3 (aureus); p. 202 no. 27 (sesterce); p. 208 no. 79 (aureus). Cf. Morelli 2009, 47-51.

type represents 5% of all the silver coins struck for Domna after Severus' death<sup>1197</sup>.

Considering that it was minted only for a few months, such a proportion is certainly notable.

After 211, Domna's coin types mostly reproduced themes that had already appeared during the reign of Severus. Yet several new focuses are easily detectable. A quantitative analysis of the coinage struck for the Augusta after 211 has shown that types dedicated to deities make up the vast majority of her coins<sup>1198</sup>. Diana appears on 31% some all the silver emissions, and Vesta (29%) and Venus (23%) come immediately after. Virtues such as *Fecunditas*, *Felicitas* and *Pudicitia* amount to only 1%<sup>1199</sup>. A strong emphasis on the symbols of power (the scepter and the throne) characterizes part of the coins of Vesta, and almost all those of Venus. On denarii, Vesta is often represented while standing with scepter and palladium<sup>1200</sup>, or, on both denarii and sesterces, while sitting on a throne with scepter and small ladle (*simpulum*)<sup>1201</sup>. As for Venus, it is important to stress that, on the antoniniani bearing the legend VENERI GENETRICI, the goddess is standing with the scepter in the left hand and extending the right arm with the open hand<sup>1202</sup>. On aurei, antoniniani and sesterces bearing the legend VENVS GENETRIX, she is depicted in the same way, but sitting on a throne (fig. 11)<sup>1203</sup>. Like the throne and scepter, the gesture of holding out the right arm belongs to the symbolism of imperial power. It implies control and clemency, and often appears when an emperor is addressing

<sup>1197</sup> Rowan 2011, 254-255.

<sup>1198</sup> Rowan 2011, 254-256.

<sup>1199</sup> Rowan 2011, 254.

<sup>1200</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 274 no. 390.

<sup>1201</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 274 no. 391 and p. 311 no. 593.

<sup>1202</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 387 no. 387.

<sup>1203</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 274 no. 388a-c and p. 311 no. 592a. On sesterces she also appears with a child in front of her (p. 311 no. 592a-b).

his soldiers (*adlocutio*)<sup>1204</sup>. In a broader sense, this gesture has been interpreted as an allusion to the fact that the emperor's authority is not an outer attribute (such as the scepter or the armor), but the consequence of his personality and nature<sup>1205</sup>. Interestingly, a sesterce struck for Lucilla displays Venus holding a scepter with her left arm and extending her right arm with the open hand<sup>1206</sup>. This is, to my knowledge, the only other example of Venus holding out her right arm. It is, of course, impossible to interpret Venus' extended right arm as a reference to *adlocutiones* held by Lucilla or Domna. However, an implicit allusion to their close connection to the imperial power might, in my view, be detected. This is particularly true for Domna, whose coins display this iconography to a much larger extent than Lucilla's. Caracalla had, after all, bestowed an unprecedented status on his mother, who, according to Dio, could hold public receptions 'exactly as did the emperor'.

The increased importance attributed to the divine element in Domna's coinage deserves particular attention. Considering that coins struck for Caracalla during his sole reign also place a great emphasis on deities such as Aesculapius, Apollo, Mercury and Serapis<sup>1207</sup>, it may be assumed that the attention towards the divine represents another indication of the convergence of views between Caracalla and Domna. Furthermore, Caracalla's coins include homage to deities who are also present in the coinage of Domna. He is represented while performing a sacrifice in front of the temple of Vesta,

<sup>1204</sup> Stewart 2012, 268; Barash 1997, 227-231.

<sup>1205</sup> I.e. the *felix dextra*, 'qua nihil est in orbe maius' ('a hand than which the world contains nothing more powerful'), according to Martial (*Epig.* 4.30.4-5). Cf. Barash 1997, 228; Brilliant 1963, 96.

<sup>1206</sup> RIC III p. 354 no. 1769. Cf. also RIC III p. 314 no. 1258, a similar hybrid sesterce was minted for Marcus Aurelius.

<sup>1207</sup> Rowan 2011, 254, who notes that during Severus' reign only 21% of the silver coins minted for Caracalla represented deities. Under Caracalla's sole rule this proportion rises to 59%. Cf. also Rowan 2012, 110-112.

sometimes together with his mother<sup>1208</sup>. The two-horse chariot driven by Luna is also depicted on his coins<sup>1209</sup>. This goddess, however, makes her first full appearance on imperial coins through Domna's types displaying the same scene and the legend LVNA LVCIFERA (fig. 12)<sup>1210</sup>. Several elements support an identification of the Augusta with Luna. These are the legends in the nominative case, the adjective *lucifera* (which had already appeared on Domna's coins during the reign of Severus), and the lunar crescent that, on the obverses, frequently appear under her bust when she wears the diadem<sup>1211</sup>. Interestingly enough, the crescent also appears on her diademed bust on both aurei and antoniniani with the legend VENVS GENETRIX<sup>1212</sup>. On the other hand, this lunar symbol is not documented on the antoniniani characterized by the legend VENERI GENETRICI<sup>1213</sup>. This demonstrates that the crescent was not used to differentiate the double denominations in gold and silver (antoniniani and double aurei)<sup>1214</sup>. Rather, it emphasized the connection between Domna and the divine element. Thus, the use of the crescent only on the coins with the legends LVNA LVCIFERA and VENVS GENETRIX renewed the aura of sacredness around her persona. The lunar crescent as a cosmic symbol was not a total novelty. It had already appeared during the reign of Severus on the so-called 'dynastic issues'. Here the radiate crown and the lunar crescent characterized the conjoined busts of Severus and Domna (wearing the diadem), who were consequently identified as the

<sup>1208</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 247 nos. 249-250 (aurei).

<sup>1209</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 252 no. 274a-c; p. 254 no. 284a-d, though the RIC identifies the goddess as Diana.

<sup>1210</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 273 no. 379a-c (aurei and antoninianus); p. 310 no. 587 (sesterce).

<sup>1211</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 273 no. 379a (antoninianus).

<sup>1212</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 274 no. 388a.

<sup>1213</sup> RIC IV.1 p. 274 no. 387. The RIC, however, erroneously attributes the crescent to this type, where Domna appears only with the diadem. Cf. BMCRE V p. 433 no. 20.

<sup>1214</sup> Filippini 2008, 16.

personification of the Sun and Moon<sup>1215</sup>. Inasmuch as representations of the sun and radiate crowns can be frequently noticed on Caracalla's coins dating to this period<sup>1216</sup>, it follows that the dualism between the emperor/Sun and the Augusta/Moon was strongly re-advertised during the reign of this emperor.

In summary, from 211 to 217 the coinage of Domna again suggests several themes that had already appeared, in a more veiled form, at the time of Severus. The first is the royal authority of the Augusta. Through issues representing Domna/Venus/Vesta sat on a throne with scepter and extended right arm, Domna's coinage hints at her position of influence. This fits well with what is related by Dio, who says that she was holding public receptions for the most prominent men. A second theme is the relationship with the divine. The exaltation of her role as cosmic ruler between the human and the heavenly worlds is detectable on the coins dedicated to Luna Lucifera and Venus Genetrix. They represent the continuation of a message that had already been expressed during the late reign of Severus through the Fecunditas, *mater augustorum* and *mater castrorum* types.

#### V.4.2. Provincial Coinage

Just like the large number inscriptions, between 211 and 217, eastern cities minted numerous coins bearing the bust of Domna. Unfortunately, only a small part of this

<sup>1215</sup> Cf. section IV.4.1 above.

<sup>1216</sup> Sol: RIC IV pp. 250-251 nos. 264a-e and 265a-h (aurei); pp. 253-254 nos. 281a-b and 282a-f (aurei, denarii and antoniniani); p. 256 nos. 293a-f and 294 nos. a-c (aurei, denarii and antoniniani); p. 302 no. 543a-b (sesterces); p. 304 no. 551 (dupondius); p. 305 no. 556 (as); p. 306 nos. 562 and 566 (as and sestertius); p. 307 no. 570 (as). The radiate crown appears on all the antoniniani minted for Caracalla. See also the numerous representations of a radiate lion holding a thunderbolt in his jaws, RIC IV.1 p. 252 no. 273a-e (aurei); p. 254 no. 283a-c (aureus, antoninianus, denarius); p. 256 no. 296a (aureus); p. 303 no. 548a-b (sesterces); p. 304 no. 552 (dupondius); p. 305, no. 557a-b (asses); p. 306 no. 564a-c (asses); p. 307 no. 571a-c (asses).

coinage can be dated to precise years. In many cases it is, therefore, impossible to establish whether a coin was struck on the occasion of an imperial visit, or not. At any rate, the great quantity of coins dedicated to the Augusta demonstrates that, during these years, local communities regarded the favor of Domna as an important element in their relationship with the imperial court. This is especially true for a series of honors that Caracalla bestowed on the cities of Asia, i.e. the permission to build new temples for the imperial cult, a privilege that entailed a new title of ‘temple warden’ (*νεωκόρος* or *ναοκόρος*) each time the honor was granted<sup>1217</sup>. As discussed above, in 211 the city of Ephesus asked for the support of Domna to obtain a new *neokoria* from Caracalla. After the emperor had granted the privilege, the coins that the city struck to celebrate the event were dedicated not only to Caracalla and Geta, but also to Domna<sup>1218</sup>.

A few years later, between 214 and 215, the trip of the emperor and his mother through Asia was probably the occasion for the bestowal of new titles on the cities of this province. This seems to have been the case for Cyzicus, Pergamum, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Antandros and Tralles. Coins minted in Pergamum place particular emphasis on both the new *neokoria* (the third one) and the presence of the emperor, who is depicted performing a sacrifice in front of the new temple<sup>1219</sup>. This *neokoria*, however, was also commemorated on coins struck for Domna<sup>1220</sup>. More or less at the same time, Smyrna celebrated its third *neokoria*, which was, once again, advertised through new

<sup>1217</sup> On the origin and implications of this privilege cf. the detailed analysis of Burrell 2004, 1-13.

<sup>1218</sup> Caracalla and Geta: BMC Ionia 292; SNG Cop. 436; SNG v.A. 1904. Domna: Burrell 2004, 71 no. 15.

<sup>1219</sup> BMC Phrygia 324, 327; SNG Cop. 500; SNG Paris 2227-2230, 2245-2247; SNG v.A. 1411-1412, 7513. Cf. Rowan 2012, 131-137; Burrell 2004, 30-35.

<sup>1220</sup> BMC Phrygia 317; SNG Paris 2214-2216.

coins for Caracalla and Domna<sup>1221</sup>. Unlike Pergamum, there is no proof that the imperial party visited Smyrna. Yet, while the emperor and the Augusta were travelling through Asia, embassies would have maintained contact between the imperial court and the inhabitants of Smyrna. The same applies to other communities that were awarded new titles of *neokoros*, but where Caracalla's presence *in loco* cannot be verified. These are Antandros, Cyzicus, Laodicea (in Phrygia), Philadelphia and Tralles<sup>1222</sup>. Cyzicus, Laodicea and Philadelphia celebrated the new honors with coins for Caracalla and Domna<sup>1223</sup>. As for Antandros and Tralles, only coins for Caracalla are documented<sup>1224</sup>. This could indicate that not all cities were attributing the same weight to the Augusta. Some of them evidently considered their relationship with Domna as a priority; others preferred to focus their attentions on the emperor alone. In any case, the presence of Domna on the majority of the coins celebrating the new titles indicates that she had been a key figure in the relations between cities and imperial court. It is important to stress that, in Cyzicus, Ephesus, Pergamum, Philadelphia and Smyrna, she is the first imperial woman who appears on coins advertising the title of *neokoros*. Cyzicus and Ephesus, in truth, had already portrayed Faustina the Younger on coins mentioning their second

<sup>1221</sup> Caracalla: BMC Ionia 403-417; SNG Cop. 1389; SNG v.A. 2220-2221, 8005. Domna: BMC Ionia 389-394; SNG Cop. 1385; SNG v.A. 2219. On Smyrna's third *neokoria* cf. Burrell 2004, 48-51.

<sup>1222</sup> Laodicea represents a particular case, because the only *neokoria* of this city was awarded by Commodus and later, after his assassination, withdrawn. Caracalla restored it, probably during his trip in the province. Cf. Burrell 2004, 199-124.

<sup>1223</sup> Cyzicus: SNG Cop. 125; SNG Paris 773 (Domna). SNG Paris 774; SNG Righetti 703; SNG Braun 962 (Caracalla). Cf. also Burrell 2004, 99. Laodicea: BMC Phrygia 213-218, 221; SNG Cop. 583-586; SNG v.A. 3851-3854, 8417; SNG Lewis 1608; SNG Righetti 1197 (Domna). BMC Phrygia 225-236; SNG Cop. 589-591; SNG v.A. 3856-3862, 8418, 8419; SNG Righetti 1200, 1201 (Caracalla). Cf. also Burrell 2004, 124. Philadelphia: BMC Lydia 79-82, 84; SNG Tüb. 3757; SNG Righetti 1063 (Domna). BMC Lydia 86-87; SNG v.A. 3081 (Caracalla). Cf. also Burrell 2004, 129.

<sup>1224</sup> Tralles: SNG Cop. 696; SNG v.A. 3290. Cf. also Burrell 2004, 132. Antandros: Burrell 2004, 134.

*neokoria*<sup>1225</sup>. In both cases, however, the *neokoria* had been granted by Hadrian. Consequently, Faustina cannot have played a part in the bestowal of these titles.

Another important group of coins minted for special circumstances are the tetradrachms that several eastern cities struck between 215 and 217. Despite their local origin, these silver coins were minted for a broad circulation, and they were probably used to pay the troops that were participating in Caracalla's Parthian campaign<sup>1226</sup>. The majority of these tetradrachms are dedicated to the emperor. They were produced in at least 28 civic mints from Cilicia, Syria and Palestine<sup>1227</sup>. Some of these workshops, however, issued tetradrachms dedicated not only to Caracalla, but also to Domna. Although tetradrachms minted by Syrian cities had been dedicated to emperors since the first century CE, Domna is the first imperial woman to appear on these coins. Her native city, Emesa, was the center that minted the highest quantity of tetradrachms with her image. Caracalla awarded Emesa the title of colony, a privilege the emperor bestowed only on a few other cities, Antioch, Edessa and Palmyra<sup>1228</sup>. The relationship between Emesa and the imperial court, therefore, seems to have been particularly strong in this period. Starting from 215, at least five different Emesene workshops were dedicating coins to Domna<sup>1229</sup>. Apart from the obverse, where the bust of the Augusta is sometimes diademed, her tetradrachms are in every way identical to those struck for Caracalla. The reverses display, in fact, an eagle with open wings and, below, a small radiate bust of the

<sup>1225</sup> Cyzicus: BMC Mysia 225-227; SNG Cop. 113-115; SNG v.A. 7373; SNG Paris 702-713. Cf. also Burrell 2004, 98. Ephesus: BMC Ionia 235; SNG Cop. 402. Cf. also Burrell 2004, 84.

<sup>1226</sup> These tetradrachms may have been the payment of a war tax that Caracalla had imposed on the wealthiest cities in the East. Another possibility is that rich citizens from these communities spontaneously provided the precious metal for the minting of these coins. Cf. Prieur p. xxv; Bellinger 1940, 6-7.

<sup>1227</sup> Bellinger 1940, 12-14.

<sup>1228</sup> Millar 2006, 199, 202-208.

<sup>1229</sup> Prieur 949, 978-981, 995-999, 1007, 1021, 1527.

sun god Shamash<sup>1230</sup>. On the other hand, the reverses of the tetradrachms from Tarsus (Cilicia) and Hierapolis Bambice (Syria) display the civic deities of these centers<sup>1231</sup>. Hierapolis probably had strong connections with the imperial court, inasmuch as it possessed the most important sanctuary of Atargatis or Dea Syria, who is depicted riding a lion on both the tetradrachms of Domna and other bronze coins minted for Caracalla<sup>1232</sup>. Also, the tetradrachms from Hierapolis place a lunar crescent under the bust of Domna. The equation between the Augusta and the Moon, which was already present on the denarii minted in Rome, is thus reaffirmed on the tetradrachms of Hierapolis. As for Tarsus, it is important to note that the imperial party had probably crossed this city during the trip from Nicomedia to Antioch. As seen above, the nearby city of Adana set up a dedication for both the emperor and the Augusta, a proof of the fact that the population of this area was trying to strengthen its relationship with the rulers.

Beside the coins struck to commemorate new titles of *neokoros* and the silver tetradrachms, numerous bronze types indicate that eastern communities put a great effort into catching the attention of Domna. Just as in the reign of Severus, coins suggesting the identification of the Augusta with the Fortune of the city (*Tyche*) are particularly abundant. Between 215 and 216, when Domna was travelling between Antioch and Alexandria, the city of Gaza (Palestine) depicted its *Tyche* on the coins struck in her honor<sup>1233</sup>. The same happened in another Palestinian community, Nysa-Scythopolis,

<sup>1230</sup> Prieur pp. 116-117. On the relationship between Emesa and Shamash, cf. section IV.2.1 above.

<sup>1231</sup> Hierapolis: Prieur 924. Tarsus: Prieur 783-784.

<sup>1232</sup> Domna: Prieur 924; Caracalla: BMC Galatia 46-53.

<sup>1233</sup> BMC Palestine 130.

where the city Fortune is represented together with cornucopia and scepter<sup>1234</sup>. A little later, between 216 and 217, Amisos (Pontus) honored Domna with a coin depicting its *Tyche* on a throne<sup>1235</sup>. Many other coins minted for Domna without a precise dating, but belonging to Caracalla's reign also reproduce the theme of civic Fortune. This appears in Thrace and Moesia Inferior on the coins of Marcianopolis<sup>1236</sup>, Plotinopolis<sup>1237</sup> and Serdica<sup>1238</sup>; in Asia on the coins of Hadrianopolis-Sebaste<sup>1239</sup> and Sardes, where Domna is the first Augusta to be depicted as a personification of Fortuna wearing a *polos* and holding a cornucopia<sup>1240</sup>; and in Syria on the coins of Damascus<sup>1241</sup>. Furthermore, a good number of cities addressed both Caracalla and Domna at the same time by creating coins with their two busts. This is the case for Tarsus<sup>1242</sup> and Hierapolis<sup>1243</sup>, which were also striking silver tetradrachms for Domna, and other eastern cities such as Adana (Cilicia)<sup>1244</sup>, Marcianopolis (Thrace)<sup>1245</sup> and Smyrna (Asia)<sup>1246</sup>. Something comparable had already happened some 150 years before, when several cities had struck similar coins for Nero and Agrippina the Younger<sup>1247</sup>. At that time, however, Nero was still portrayed as a boy, whereas Caracalla was now in his mid-twenties.

<sup>1234</sup> SNG ANS 1050.

<sup>1235</sup> SNG. v.A. 6746.

<sup>1236</sup> Varbanov 878.

<sup>1237</sup> Varbanov 1842.

<sup>1238</sup> Ruzicka 81-83.

<sup>1239</sup> SNG v.A. 3607.

<sup>1240</sup> BMC Lydia 147-148, 150.

<sup>1241</sup> Rosenberger 23.

<sup>1242</sup> SNG France 1542-1543.

<sup>1243</sup> Lindgren 1139.

<sup>1244</sup> SNG France 1870, 2436.

<sup>1245</sup> Varbanov 1030, 1050.

<sup>1246</sup> BMC Ionia 419-421.

<sup>1247</sup> BMC Phrygia 13; RPC 3107 (Synaus, Asia); RPC 4861 (Caesarea Maritima, Palestine).

#### V.4.3. Overall remarks

After the death of Severus, depictions of Domna seem to enjoy greater initiative with regard to the imperial coinage, which seems to be increasingly influenced by her personality. The new titulature of the Augusta (*Pia, Felix, mater senatus et patriae*) appears immediately on the coins minted in 211, where, for the first time, she is portrayed sitting on a throne without any written reference to deities or virtues. The following issues often revive symbols of power, especially the Venus and Vesta types, which represent a significant portion of the coinage that was minted for her between 211 and 217. On these coins the deity (or the Augusta) is depicted extending her right hand with the open palm, a gesture that reproduces the poses of the emperors. At the same time, an increasing emphasis is placed on Domna's divine attributes, with particular attention to the equation with the Luna. This is a further demonstration of Domna's interest in the role of the rulers as mediators between human and divine. It is probably no coincidence that, in this period, Caracalla erected a shrine to honor the sophist Apollonius of Tyana<sup>1248</sup>. According to the most well-known member of Domna's philosophic circle, Philostratus, it was Apollonius that theorized the good ruler's special connection with the divine sphere<sup>1249</sup>. Therefore, one may wonder whether some influence from the Augusta should be detected behind the exceptional importance that Caracalla's coinage attributes to the divine element. A strong relationship between Domna and Caracalla can easily be detected on provincial coins. During Caracalla's Parthian campaign, Domna is the first imperial woman who appears on the Syrian tetradrachms, which were presumably struck to pay the troops following an imperial decree. She is also mentioned on almost all the

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<sup>1248</sup> Dio 78 (77).18.4.

<sup>1249</sup> Cf. section IVb.1.4 above.

coins that Asiatic cities minted to celebrate the new titles of *neokoros* received from Caracalla. Coins reproducing the busts of the emperor and his mother were struck in Thrace, Asia and Syria. The overall impression is that Domna not only had something to say about Caracalla's policies, but she could also influence the cultural tendencies of his principate. In this context, the fact that, even after the reign of Severus, many Middle Eastern communities continued to address her as their civic Fortune seems to be a necessary consequence of her increased authority.

#### V.5. THE WARSAW RELIEF

It is not only inscriptions and coins that associate Domna with the *imperium* of Caracalla. A relief of unknown origin, preserved in the National Museum in Warsaw, represents the emperor and his mother in a scene of triumph over the enemies of the Empire (fig. 26)<sup>1250</sup>. Caracalla is portrayed putting a fur hat over a trophy, flanked by two smaller captives. At his left side, Domna is crowning him with her right hand while holding a palm branch in her left arm. The iconography of Victory crowning the emperor is not new in Roman art. A relief on the Arch of Trajan in Beneventum, which represents a winged Victory putting a crown over the head of the emperor, is probably the closest comparison to this scene<sup>1251</sup>. As for the family relations, it is important to stress that another scene with an imperial woman crowning her son appears in a relief from Aphrodisias (Asia),

<sup>1250</sup> Inv. no. 139678. Heckster 2015, 152-153; Kampen 2009, 95; Alexandridis 2004, 205 no. 230; Bergmann 1998, 153, 156-157; Ghedini 1984, 113-119; Fleischer 1983, 254, 261-262.

<sup>1251</sup> Alexandridis 2004, 205; Ghedini 1984, 115-116. Other scenes of emperors crowned by Victory: Relief of Marcus Aurelius (Kleiner 1992, 292-294); Arch of Titus (Kleiner 1992, 188); Great Trajanic Frieze (Kleiner 1992, 220-222). In Caesarea (Mauretania Caesariensis), a Victory crowning an emperor is also represented on a breastplate; the emperor has been tentatively identified with Augustus (Simon 1986, 223).

where Agrippina the Younger crowns the young Nero<sup>1252</sup>. Notwithstanding their similarity, some differences between the reliefs from Aphrodisias and Warsaw are noticeable. In Aphrodisias there is no *tropaeum* on Nero's side (he was probably holding a spear, now lost), and Agrippina is portrayed with a cornucopia in her left arm. The Warsaw relief, on the other hand, has a strong military connotation. Also, the equation between the Augusta and Victoria is typical of representations of Domna<sup>1253</sup>. As discussed in the previous chapters, she appears as Victoria in a cameo dating to the first half of Severus' reign and, later, in a relief from the Severan arch in Leptis Magna. Unlike the arch of Leptis, where the assimilation to Victoria allowed Domna to participate in a triumphal procession, the Warsaw relief establishes a connection between her and the campaigns of Caracalla. Some details, such as the Dacian *falc* on the top of the *tropaeum* or the captives' clothing, are a direct reference to the operations in the Danubian area during 213-214<sup>1254</sup>. Although both the Aphrodisias and Warsaw reliefs display the common theme of the Augustae joining the celebration of their sons, the overall messages that they communicate are different. Agrippina, who is represented as Fortuna, communicates the idea of wealth and prosperity, which through her son are

<sup>1252</sup> Smith 2013, 74-78 no. A 1; Alexandridis 2004, 158-159 nos. 104-105; Kampen 2009, 97; Smith 1987, 127-132. A cameo from Colonia Agrippina presents a similar situation. Nero is portrayed as Jupiter sitting on a throne, while Agrippina holds a crown aloft with her right hand and a cornucopia in her left arm. Cf. Mikocki 1995, 182 no. 213. A woman wearing a turreted crown is represented on a cameo preserved in Berlin, shown crowning a bearded emperor on a chariot (Mikocki 1995, 215 no. 440). According to Mikocki, this scene could display either Caracalla and Domna or Hadrian and Sabina.

<sup>1253</sup> Ghedini 1984, 132-135. Mikocki 1995, 204 nos. 370-371 cites two fragmentary inscriptions from Marcianopolis, in Moesia Inferior (SEG 28.598-599), which would attest to the equalization between Faustina the Younger and Victory (Νίκη). This quote appears also in Hekster 2015, 153. Yet both Faustina's name and her titles (Τύχη καὶ Νίκη) are fully restored by the editors.

<sup>1254</sup> Alexandridis 2004, 205 no. 230; Ghedini 1984, 117.

dispensed to the Empire<sup>1255</sup>. Domna, on the other hand, is included in the celebration of Caracalla's military successes. Also, the relief with Agrippina and Nero belonged to a temple of the imperial cult<sup>1256</sup>. The panel with Domna and Caracalla was probably part of a triumphal arch<sup>1257</sup>, like those erected in North Africa and Greece after Severus' death. The image seems to recall the numerous dedications *pro salute et victoria* that were set up for Caracalla and Domna around the Empire, both in Italy and in the provinces, as well as the many statues of the Augusta placed in the military camps. As on the monument erected by Julius Cerealis, who dedicated it to the 'long duration' of their empire (*imperium*), Domna appears to have been recognized as *de facto* co-ruler with Caracalla.

## V.6. CONCLUSIONS

The notion that the influence of Domna substantially grew after Severus' death appears in all the types of sources examined in this chapter. The account of Herodian - who says that the Augusta presided over the imperial councils -, the coins that portray her on a throne with the unprecedented titulature of *Pia, Felix, mater senatus et patriae*, and the numerous inscriptions in her honor demonstrate that she was regarded as the guarantor of the political stability, which was increasingly threatened by the rivalry between Caracalla and Geta. Domna's letter to the inhabitants of Ephesus should be placed in this context. This is the only surviving attestation to a message concerning administrative matters sent to a city by an imperial woman. The letter was engraved on a slab containing other

<sup>1255</sup> This interpretation remains valid even if an identification of Agrippina with Concordia is accepted, as proposed by Scherrer 2008.

<sup>1256</sup> The *Sebasteion* of Aphrodisias, a grandiose temple complex dedicated to the Julio-Caludians. On the topic see in general Taussig 2012; Ismaelli 2011; Letzner 2011.

<sup>1257</sup> Ghedini 1984, 116.

imperial decrees, a circumstance that indicates how, during this period, missives from the Augusta received the utmost attention.

Even though it is impossible to know whether Domna was involved in plotting the death of Geta, her new position of prominence was anything but diminished during the sole reign of Caracalla. Rather, her influence seems to have grown constantly. With an irritated tone, Dio dedicates some space to her public receptions for the most distinguished people and for her supervision of the imperial correspondence. Dio's words do not seem to be casual. The Arval Brethren and eminent individuals from both Rome and the provinces spent a great deal of energy in honoring the Augusta. Domna and Caracalla's itinerary through Germany, the Danubian provinces and the Middle East is very rich in dedications to the Augusta. Among these, it is important to mention the statues that were set up for Domna alone. The majority of these are documented in the military camps of Germany and Dacia, as well as in cities in Thrace and Asia Minor, which were probably visited by the emperor between the end of 213 and the beginning of 214. Interesting evidence concerning the relationship between Domna and local communities can be detected in provincial coins as well. In Asia Minor, the majority of the numerous cities that received new titles of *neokoros* from Caracalla included honors to Domna in their celebrative coins. She is also the first imperial woman to appear on the silver tetradrachms that Middle Eastern cities struck to pay Caracalla's army. Interestingly, the majority of Domna's tetradrachms were struck in Emesa, her native city that, not surprisingly, was awarded the colonial status by Caracalla.

As for the areas that the emperor and his mother did not visit, the extraordinary vitality of the African provinces in demonstrating their loyalty to the dynasty and the

Augusta must be stressed. Between 211 and 217, the presence of her name on the arches built in Africa Proconsularis, Numidia and Mauretania Caesarensis grows continuously. Statues and other dedications for Domna appear in places where she had not been honored during Severus' reign. For the first time, her name appears on North African milestones. She is also the first imperial woman in this area whose name is recorded on such monuments, which were erected by cities that had received benefits from Caracalla. This demonstrates, once again, that local communities thought it was important to express their gratitude not only to the emperor, but also to Domna.

Caracalla was, after all, forever mentioning his mother in his letters to the senate, and she was probably included in other imperial missives that were circulating through the provinces. This explains the abundance of statues for Domna alone in Britannia, a province where honors for the Augusta are not documented under Severus. In Rome, the frequency with which dedications were set up almost doubled with respect to the previous reign. The Warsaw relief shows how the population of the Empire could sometimes consider Domna co-ruler with Caracalla, as in the case of the dedication in the ablative case for both Caracalla and Domna in North Africa. After 211, a particular emphasis on Domna's exceptional authority appears also on imperial coins dedicated to Venus, where the goddess is depicted extending her right arm with the open hand. This gesture represents a typical pose of the emperors, who are usually depicted in this way while holding an *adlocutio*.

Besides Domna's authority, coins advertise another interesting message, which had already started to appear under Severus. This is the special relationship between her and the divine sphere. The equation with Luna is documented for the first time on

imperial coins with the legend LVNA LVCIFERA, and on other types where the lunar crescent is represented beneath Domna's bust on the obverses of both aurei and denarii. Considering that Caracalla is often portrayed with the radiate crown on contemporary types, the duality sun/moon places great attention on the cosmic nature of the rulers. It is perhaps no coincidence that in this period Domna is compared to the *Dea Caelestis* in an inscription from Germany, and to *Fortuna Redux* and *Fecunditas* in another text from Africa Proconsularis. Other comparisons documented in the Greek-speaking provinces, such as 'Fortune of the World', are unprecedented and in no way relate to the traditional divine titles conferred on imperial women in the Eastern provinces.

In 217, Domna's prestige and influence were so noticeable that Dio felt the need to introduce a reflection on the precarious nature of power and honors while narrating the circumstances of her death. After becoming emperor, Macrinus did not touch her privileges and her royal retinue, presumably for fear of losing popularity if he had reduced Domna to a private station. He finally ordered her to retire to private life when she started to plot against him in a desperate attempt to regain her power, a last confirmation of the extraordinary position she had enjoyed during the rule of Caracalla. Considering the fact that her life was not in immediate danger, her decision to let herself die is quite surprising, and seems to follow Hellenistic customs rather than Roman habits.

### *General conclusions*

Domna's refusal to abandon her royal retinue and to retire to private life provides not only an idea of the great prestige that she had attained during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla, but also a key element in better understanding her complex character. This is her strong Hellenistic cultural background, which makes her a unique imperial woman in Roman history. In fact, she did not limit herself to playing the traditional role of an Augusta, i.e. that of an austere Roman matron, wife of the emperor and, possibly, mother of his children. Rather the contrary, she appears to have been determined to affirm the importance of her oriental lineage since the first stages of her marriage with Severus. L. Septimius Bassianus, the name given to their firstborn son in 188, included the *cognomen* of Domna's father, Julius Bassianus. This was the great priest of the Sun-god Elagabal, a member of the Emesene nobility that, during the first century CE, had ruled over the small (but importantly regarded) kingdom of Emesa and formed relationship with other middle eastern dynasties. During the second century, the kingdom lost its independence, but the Emesene elite still maintained prestige and ambitions. The Romans placed Sohaemus, an Emesene who was probably a relative of Domna, on the throne of Armenia in 144 and, again, in 163. According to Domna's horoscope, she was destined to marry a king, a fact that well illustrates her nobility and the aspirations of her family. Severus certainly had some knowledge of this situation, inasmuch as he had served as legionary commander in Syria during the 180's. The desire of gaining new connections to boost his career led him to propose to Domna, whose family had friends in common with Severus (perhaps one of them was the jurist Aemilius Papinianus, whose Syrian origin seems probable). The intervention of these *amici* of Severus seems to have been determining in

securing the consent of Domna's family to the marriage, a circumstance that contributes to explaining the relevance given to her ancestry. In fact, the firstborn Septimius Bassianus (the young Caracalla) was intended to be the continuation of Domna's lineage, and Severus had only his second-born son, Geta, named after his father. When Severus became emperor in 193, he appointed the governor of Britain, Clodius Albinus, as his Caesar and (in theory) successor. This decision provided safety for the West while Severus was fighting his rival, Pescennius Niger, in the East, but represented a serious threat to Domna. If Severus had suddenly died, either during the war or because of his health problems, Albinus would have become emperor, thus depriving Domna of both her royal rank and the possibility of establishing her sons as emperors. Consequently, the anonymous author of the *HA* is probably right when he declares that she played a part in Severus' decision to abruptly break the alliance with Albinus in 195. Coins and artworks produced during the early reign of Severus show that during this period she was anything but a minor figure. Coin types minted between 193 and 195 depict her seated on a throne with her two children, and associate her persona to Severus' victories. She is also the first imperial woman to be represented as a personification of Victory. This was evidently in recognition of her constant presence at the side of Severus, a fact that allowed her to be regarded as a key person in the eyes of those who were trying to obtain favors from the emperor. Honorary inscriptions dating to the first years of Severus' reign often mention her, especially in places that were visited by the emperor (such as Gaul, Italy and the East) or in regions that were affected by his decisions (such as North Africa). It is beyond any doubt that she occupied an important position in the dynastic propaganda of the Severan regime. In 196 she became *mater castrorum* and *mater Caesaris* (i.e. mother of

the designated emperor, Caracalla), and in 198 *mater Augusti et Caesaris* (when Caracalla was promoted to the rank of emperor and Geta to that of Caesar). Her presence in epigraphic texts is much greater than that of preceding imperial women, even that of Faustina the Younger, who had been *mater castrorum* and mother of heirs to the throne. When compared to Faustina, Domna is mentioned more frequently in inscriptions set up by provincial governors, imperial officials and soldiers serving in the garrison of Rome. These people could observe the events taking place at the imperial court from a privileged point of view. Therefore, the particular care with which they paid homage to Domna is indicative of her influence in state affairs. As for the messages directly spread by imperial propaganda, the so-called ‘dynastic emissions’ are particularly worth mentioning. In this group of coins minted to celebrate Severus and his family, Domna assumes an unprecedented visibility for an imperial woman. Also, the coins where she is portrayed in a full face pose represent a unique case in imperial coinage, and indicate that her role was not limited to producing heirs to the throne. Conversely, she was a leading figure of a dynasty whose purpose was not only to perpetuate the name of Severus, but also to continue her noble lineage. This is the first case of an imperial woman who managed to advertise her persona extensively despite not descending from previous imperial houses or the traditional Roman nobility. Her depiction on the Arch of the *Argentarii* attests to the first representation of an Augusta attending a religious ceremony together with an emperor, and assuming a devotional pose typical of middle eastern regions. A similar posture also appears on some coins of Caracalla, who seems to have formed a strong relationship with his mother. The support of the young emperor proved to be a decisive factor in the power struggle between Domna and Plautianus, Severus’

right-hand man and sole Prefect of the Guard since at least 197. The enmity between the two of them probably started during the long stay of the imperial court in the East between 197 and 201. At this time, Plautianus was entrusted with the task of persecuting Severus' opponents, but he took advantage of this role to accumulate riches at the expense of the eastern cities. This caused a reaction by Domna who, on account of her origin, had strong relations with the middle-eastern communities. She tried to persuade Severus to limit the powers of Plautianus, but the latter started a campaign of sexual and political slander against her. It seems unlikely that Plautianus' attempts to discredit Domna caused her retirement from public life, inasmuch as her name continued to appear in inscriptions set up both in Rome and the provinces. She reacted, rather, by surrounding herself with philosophers and having personifications of chastity and devotion displayed on her coins. The conflict worsened perceptibly when Plautianus persuaded Severus to marry Caracalla to his daughter Plautilla. This marriage represented another serious threat to Domna. It not only placed Plautianus in a unique position to control the young emperor, but also subverted the dynastic plans of the Augusta. The fact that Caracalla despised his spouse, who could not boast an ancestry as noble as Domna's, does not seem to be fortuitous. Rather, it prefigures the future dynastic policies of Domna and Caracalla who, in 216, would try to arrange a marriage with a Parthian princess. At the beginning of 205, however, Caracalla came to the aid of his mother by killing Plautianus. Plautilla was banished to Lipara, and the Prefecture of the Guard returned to a collegial institution with Papinianus as one of the two prefects.

The death of Plautianus represents a significant turning point in Domna's life as Augusta, since, after 205, some of the most distinctive traits of her persona appear on

coins and artworks. Domna's coinage dating to the least years of Severus' reign abandons the themes of chastity and loyalty, and focuses on the creation of an aura of sacredness around her. For the first (and last) time in imperial history, coins dedicated to Cybele equate the Augusta with the goddess through the legend MATER AVGG, which replaces the traditional MATRI DEVM. Other coins connect her to a new kind of Fecundity who, for the first time on imperial coinage, does not advertise maternal fertility, but the prosperity of the world. Even the traditional *mater castrorum* types display significant innovations, such as the snake (a symbol of eternity) coiled around the altar over which the Augusta is sacrificing, and the caduceus in her hand, which emphasizes Domna's relation with the gods. Domna also appears several times on the famous Severan arch in Leptis Magna, where she is identified with Juno and, once again, with Victory. All these references to the relationship between the Augusta and the divine sphere may, at first sight, suggest that she desired to be venerated as a goddess, a possibility that scholars have considered in the past. In my view, however, these allusions should be interpreted in the light of the doctrines circulating among the sophists who used to attend Domna's philosophic salon. It is important to note that she is the first imperial woman who had a group of philosophers gathered around her, and that only Greek individuals are documented members of this group, which could, consequently, be considered a Hellenistic circle. Domna entrusted one of her protégés, the sophist Flavius Philostratus, with the task of writing a biography of Apollonius of Tyana, an itinerant philosopher and mystic who had an important role in the diffusion of Neopythagoreanism and Platonism. Apollonius is said to have possessed a divine nature by virtue of his superior knowledge, which allowed him to establish a special connection with the gods and to understand the

principles that regulate the cosmos. Now, considering that Philostratus calls Domna ‘philosopher’, and that she descended from a priestly family, it seems likely that Philostratus’ work reflects Domna’s (Neopythagorean and Platonic) view concerning the role of a king, i.e. that of a sovereign/philosopher who, on account of his superior understanding, acts as mediator between the human and the divine spheres. These ideas are fully compatible with key elements of Severan propaganda, which put great emphasis on the relationship between the emperor and the celestial sphere, e.g. the divine portents that foretold Severus’ accession, the Septizodium dedicated to the members of the imperial house and the planetary deities, and the many references to the *domus divina*, the *caelestis indulgentia* and the *aeternitas imperii*. The emperor himself is also credited with interests in philosophy, most notably in the Platonic school of thought. Thus, Severus and Domna would share common philosophical interests. It is probably not too unsafe to conjecture that Domna consistently contributed to shape the theological basis that supported the Severan regime.

The erection of monuments mentioning Domna in their inscriptions does not show signs of stalling during the last years of Severus. On the contrary, a stronger presence of the Augusta on important celebrative monuments such as the North African arches is detectable. The placement of statue groups dedicated to Domna and Caracalla is also worth mentioning, inasmuch as it represents a further confirmation of the special relationship between the Augusta and her elder son. Finally, as in the first years of the reign, numerous governors and imperial functionaries included Domna in their declarations of loyalty. At this time, both Caracalla and Geta had become adults and had been awarded the title of emperor, a circumstance that, in theory, would have made the

advertisement of Domna's maternal role as guarantor of the dynastic continuity less necessary. The fact that her presence in inscriptions is increasing instead of diminishing seems to corroborate the idea that she was regarded as an influential member of the imperial household rather than as an instrument of dynastic propaganda.

When Severus died, in 211, Domna had already attained an extraordinary degree of influence and prestige. When it appeared clear that Caracalla and Geta had no intention of sharing the imperial power with each other, the senate and many imperial officials turned to her as the only person who could mediate between the two conflicting brothers. The titles *mater senatus*, *mater patriae*, *pia* and *felix*, which were bestowed for the first time on an imperial woman, start to appear on coins and inscriptions during this period. They clearly echo those of previous emperors, in particular *mater patriae*, *pia* and *felix*. The latter frequently appears in Caracalla's titulature, but not among the titles of Severus and Geta. It alludes to the concept of divine protection and benevolence, and seems to represent another important connection between Caracalla and Domna. Interestingly, after Severus' death, references to the relationship with deities consistently increase on Caracalla's coins, a circumstance that stresses the existence of common views between mother and son.

Inscriptions set up during 211 often relate dedications to Caracalla, Geta, Domna and the Divus Severus. In some cases, however, the latter is not mentioned, a probable consequence of the fact that these texts were meant to be declarations of loyalty to the people who were actually ruling the Empire rather than a generic homage to the dynasty. The dedication of individual statues to Domna in several military camps on the way from Britannia to Rome is also interesting. It highlights the care with which soldiers would

honor the Augusta when, after the end of the campaign in Scotland, she travelled back to Rome together with her sons. Moreover, the letter that in 211 she sent to the inhabitants of Ephesus concerning the bestowal of new honors on them - the only documented letter sent by an imperial woman to a city - suggests that the Ephesians considered it an extraordinary privilege to receive a letter from her. After all, the presence of Domna at the imperial councils, and Geta's assassination during a meeting with Caracalla in her apartments, indicate that the two brothers would meet only when their mother was present. It is, therefore, easy to presume that in 211 her political influence enjoyed a considerable boost, and the coins that represent her seated on a throne with a scepter in her hand confirm this impression.

After Caracalla assassinated Geta at the end of 211, one would expect Domna's presence in public life to fade, inasmuch as her function as mediator was not necessary anymore. She was most likely in her forties, and a widow as well. Thus, her role as guarantor of the dynastic succession was, at this point, over. Despite this, the production of inscriptions mentioning her name increases rapidly, both in Italy and in the provinces. This phenomenon is particularly evident along the route that Caracalla and Domna travelled between 213 and 216, an itinerary that covers the Danubian provinces, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. Cities, garrisons, imperial officials and, sometimes, private individuals spent considerable energy on setting up statues to honor the Augusta or in including her name in dedications of new buildings (such as barracks, porticoes, amphitheaters and arches) and altars *pro salute*. Asian cities, which received numerous benefits from Caracalla, also struck a conspicuous quantity of coins for Domna. Furthermore, she is the first imperial woman to appear on Syrian and Cilician

tetradrachms, a series of silver coins that local communities would mint on particular occasions only. The tetradrachms produced during Caracalla's reign were a contribution to his campaign against the Parthians, but they were also meant to celebrate the presence of the emperor and his mother in the East. As for the provinces that the imperial court did not visit, North Africa continued to manifest its devotion to Domna through the erection of numerous new monuments. Among these, it is necessary to mention new arches, where the Augusta was celebrated together with Caracalla and the Divus Severus (or with Caracalla alone), and milestones, where her name sometimes appears in the ablative case. Finally, the presence of a notable number of statues dedicated to her alone in the military camps of Britannia and Dacia is worth particular mention. In Britannia, she is the first imperial woman to be mentioned in inscriptions, and there is some evidence to suggest that almost every camp along the Hadrian Wall had at least one statue set up for her. In Dacia, further statues are documented not only in numerous forts belonging to auxiliary units, but also in legionary camps. At first sight, one may think that a part of the soldiers preferred to remain loyal to the Augusta rather than to Caracalla, perhaps on account of their sympathy for Geta. However, some units that set up statues to Domna identified themselves as 'Antoniniana'. It seems probable, therefore, that they simply considered the Augusta as a person who could exercise a great deal of influence over the emperor, who would be constantly mentioning her in his messages to the army.

The unprecedented quantity of honors paid to Domna during Caracalla's reign finds interesting correspondences in the literary sources, which, for the first time, make direct references to her influence in public affairs. She would provide Caracalla with suggestions on how to administer the Empire, she would hold public receptions in the

same way as the emperor did and, lastly, she would take care of the imperial correspondence. No other imperial women had enjoyed similar privileges before. Despite Geta's assassination at the hands of Caracalla, the relationship between the Augusta and her son - who would not miss on occasion to praise his mother in front of the senate - seems to have been a collaborative one. If Domna really hated Caracalla because of the killing of her younger son, she evidently decided to cooperate with Caracalla in order to provide stability for the state or, if we follow Dio's account, to satisfy her desire of power. At any rate, her influence over the emperor does not seem to have been limited to the administrative routine. Rather, Domna's cultural tastes probably had a deep impact on Caracalla's personality and policies. Besides showing particular attention towards divine matters on his coins, this emperor displayed a great interest for Hellenism. He paid honors to one of Domna's favorite philosophers, Apollonius of Tyana, and dedicated a shrine to him; he put great effort into imitating Alexander the Great and, finally, tried to marry the daughter of the Parthian king Artabanus V. Ancient historians branded these initiatives as the extravagances of a tyrannical and mentally unstable ruler. They become, nonetheless, understandable when one considers Domna's cultural background and philosophical preferences. By honoring Apollonius, Caracalla demonstrated sharing his mother's Neopythagorean view concerning kingship. Furthermore, his dynastic plans in the East do not sound completely ridiculous when considering that he was related to the nobility of a Hellenistic kingdom on his mother's side, and that his original name, Bassianus, was meant to make him a descendant of this lineage. Caracalla's death suddenly put an end to these projects, and Domna found herself deprived of her power. Her final decision to die rather than to retire to private life finds no comparison among

Roman imperial women, and seems to recall the suicides of several Hellenistic queens who did not want to be dishonored by losing their royal status.

This reexamination of Domna's life through literary, epigraphic, numismatic and artistic sources has essentially aimed at readdressing two points, namely her power and the influence of her cultural background on the Severan dynasty. It has emerged that these two elements cannot be examined separately. For Domna, being 'a noblewoman from the Orient' (as in the words of the *HA*), and belonging to a family with a specific dynastic tradition, necessarily implied leaving her mark on the family that she had created with Severus. This included the unprecedented visibility that she acquired during the reign of her husband, the contribution of her philosophical interests to the Severan idea of imperial power, and, last but not least, her strong relationship with her firstborn son Caracalla and her remarkable influence over him. Domna was, indeed, one of the few imperial women who, since the time of Augustus, could count on their male sons to expand their influence in public affairs, the others being Livia Drusilla and Agrippina the Younger. However, both Livia and Agrippina had to face the aversion of their sons Tiberius and Nero, who did not want to share their power with them. Domna, conversely, was not only able to enjoy a considerable share of Caracalla's authority, but also to elaborate an innovative view of the position that an Augusta could occupy, i.e. that of a philosophically cultured sovereign who, thanks to her σοφία, could talk with the gods and interact with humans. Thus, an overall evaluation of Domna's persona cannot simply take into account her experience as that of an ordinary imperial woman. She represents something more. She seems, in sum, to have been a Hellenistic queen who, in a shrewd and original manner, played the role of Roman Augusta with great success.

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## Figures

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**Figure 1.** The dynasty of Emesa. *Source:* Levick 2007.

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**Figure 2.** The family of Domna. *Source:* Levick 2007.

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**Figure 3.** Descent of Septimius Severus. *Source:* Levick 2007.

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**Figure 4.** Denarius. Obv. IVLIA DOMNA AVG. Bust of Domna, draped, head bar, r.; the hair is elaborately styled, and crimping is divided by five horizontal ridges; large bun or chignon on the back of the head. Rev. FECVNDITAS. Fecunditas seated r. on a throne, holding one child in her arms and another standing at her feet. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

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**Figure 5.** Aureus. Obv. SEVER P AVG PM TR P X COS III. Bust of Severus, draped, head laureate, r. Rev. FELICITAS SAECVLI. Bust of Domna, draped, facing, between Caracalla, laureate, cuirassed, draped, bust r. and Geta, draped, bust l. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

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**Figure 6.** Aureus. Obv. ANTONINVS PIVS AVG PON TR P IIII. Bust of Caracalla, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r. Rev. CONCORDIAE AETERNAE. Conjoined busts of Severus and Domna, r.; Severus is radiate and draped; Domna is diademed and draped on a crescent. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

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**Figure 7.** Denarius. Obv. IVLIA AVGVSTA. Bust of Domna, draped, head bar, r.; the hair is elaborately waved, and crimping is divided by six horizontal ridges; large bun or chignon on the back of the head. Rev. SAECVLI FELICITAS. Isis standing r. and wearing a *polos*, left foot on prow, holding Horus; rudder behind. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

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**Figure 8.** Aureus. Obv IVLIA AVGVSTA. Bust of Domna, draped, head bar, r.; the hair is elaborately styled, and crimping is divided by seven horizontal ridges; large bun or chignon on the back of the head. A curled lock on her cheek. Rev. MATER AVGG. Cybele seated l. in quadriga of lions, holding a branch in her r. hand. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 9.** Denarius. Obv. IVLIA AVGVSTA. Bust of Domna, draped, head bar, r.; the hair is elaborately styled, and crimping is divided by five horizontal ridges; large bun or chignon on the back of the head. Rev. FECVNNDITAS. Tellus reclining left under tree, leaning on basket of fruits, right hand on starry globe; four figures (the Seasons) behind. *Source:* Wildwinds.com

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 10.** Denarius. Obv. IVLIA PIA FELIX AVG. Bust of Domna, draped, head bar, r.; the hair is elaborately styled, and the crimping is divided by seven horizontal ridges, which end in a braid gathered at the nape. Large bun or chignon on the back of the head. A curled lock on her cheek. Rev. MAT AVGG MAT SEN M PATR. Domna seated l. on a throne, holding branch and scepter. *Source:* Wildwinds.com.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 11.** Antoninianus. Obv. IVLIA PIA FELIX AVG. Bust of Domna, draped bust on crescent, diademed head, r.; the crimping is divided by seven horizontal ridges, which end in a braid gathered at the nape in a very small bun. A curled lock on her check. Rev. VENVS GENETRIX. Venus Genetrix seated on a throne l., scepter in l. hand, r. hand extended. *Source:* Beastcoins.com.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 12.** Antoninianus. Obv. IVLIA PIA FELIX AVG. Bust of Domna, draped bust on crescent, diademed head, r.; the crimping is divided by seven horizontal ridges, which end in a braid gathered at the nape in a very small bun. A curled lock on her check. Rev. LVNA LVCIFERA. Luna in biga l. with cloak floating around head. *Source:* Vcoins.com.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 13.** Cameo of Julia Domna as Victoria. Winged, seated figure with cuirass below, holding wreath in r., palm branch in l. 16.3 x 10.7 cm. *Source:* Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel. Antikensammlung, inv. no. Ge 326.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 14.** The Berlin Tondo. Domna, Severus, Geta (his face is erased) and Caracalla. Pigment on panel. Diam. 35 cm. *Source: Staatliche Museen, Berlin / ARTstor Slide Gallery.*

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 15.** Temple of Esna, Egypt. On the r. side, the local gods Khnoum, Nebout and Heqa. In front of Khnoum, Severus is portrayed with the traditional symbols of royalty, i.e. crook (heka), flail (nekhakha) and was-scepter, and receives an offering of eternal life from the god. Domna, Caracalla and Geta (the latter erased) are portrayed after Severus and carry the ankh, a life-giving symbol, in their r. hands. Domna is depicted with the wadj, a scepter often held by goddesses (like Nebout, on the r.). Caracalla, who holds crook, flail and was-scepter, wears the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt. *Source:* Sauneron 1952 pl. I.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 16.** Bronze head of Domna from Salaminias, Syria. The hairstyle is of the early ‘Gabii’ type. *Source:* Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Gift of Mr. C. Ruxton Love, Jr. (Imaging Department, President and Fellows of Harvard College).

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**Figure 17.** Arch of the *Argentarii*, Rome (east pillar, internal panel). Severus and Domna, sacrificing, Geta chiselled away, r. Domna's pose is hieratic and frontal, her r. hand raised. She wears a crescent diadem and her hairstyle is of the early 'Gabii' type. In her l. hand, once covered by the figure of Geta, she was originally holding the caduceus. *Source:* ARTstor Slide Gallery (photo in public domain).

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**Figure 18.** Statue of Domna from Perge, Lycia et Pamphylia (Archaeological Museum of Antalya). Domna's pose is hieratic and frontal, her r. hand raised. She wears a crescent diadem and her hairstyle is of the early 'Gabii' type. *Source:* Livius.org (photo in public domain).

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 19.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Scene of sacrifice. Domna (at the end of the l. side of the r. part of the relief) holds an *acerra* in her l. hand while placing grains of incense on an altar (now lost). Severus appears on the r. and was probably holding a *lituus* in his r. hand. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery.

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**Figure 20.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Scene with the *dextrarum iunctio* between Severus and Caracalla. Domna appears on the l., between Hercules and Minerva. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 21.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Scene of sacrifice, detail. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery (photo in public domain).

**Figure 22.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Scene with the *dextrarum iunctio*, detail. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery (photo in public domain).

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**Figure 23.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Solemn procession. Domna, on the l. side, is represented as Victoria and holds a palm branch. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 24.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Relief with a sacrifice in front of a temple. Severus and Caracalla are portrayed in the superior level on the r. side. Domna is probably to be recognized with the female figure at the side of Severus. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery.

*Image removed owing to copyright restrictions*

**Figure 25.** Severan Arch, Leptis Magna (Tripolis, Archaeological Museum). Scene with assembly of deities. Domna, on the l., is portrayed as Juno. At her r. side, Fortuna. Severus, on the r., is depicted as Jupiter/Serapis. At his l. side, Minerva. *Source:* University of California, San Diego / ARTstor Slide Gallery.



**Figure 26.** Warsaw Relief (Warsaw, National Museum). Domna holds a palm branch in her l. hand and crowns Caracalla with her r. hand. The emperor stands next to a *trophaeum* with two captives at the bottom. *Source:* Wikimedia Commons (object and photo in public domain).

## Appendix a - Inscriptions dating to a period of a year or less

N.	Name	Titles	Typology of Dedication	Author(s)	Location	Date	Reference
1a	Iulia Aug.		statue base (alone)	res publica	Panhormus (Sicilia)	195	CIL X 7272 = X *267
2a	Iulia [Domna Aug.]		architrave (+Sev, Alb)	pagus et civitas Thuggensis	Thugga (AfrProc)	195	CIL VIII 1482 = 15504 = 26498 = ILTun 1400
3a	Iulia Domna Augusta	M. Aureli Antonini Caes. mater	statue base (alone)	decuman. Narb.	Narbo (GalNarb)	196	CIL XII 4345
4a	Iul. Domna Aug.		altar to I.O.M. (+Sev, Carac)	M. Valerius Valentinus optio cl. pr. Ra.	Roma	June 26 <sup>th</sup> , 196	AE 1971, 28
5a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	slab (+Sev, Carac)	res publica	Volubilis (MaurTin)	196	AE 1916, 89 = ILAfr 613
6a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (alone)	collegium	Ardea (Ita-I)	Sep. 13 <sup>th</sup> , 196	AE 1975, 142
7a	Iuli[a Aug. - - -]		slab (+Sev?, Carac?)	res publica	Volubilis (MaurTin)	196?	IAM II 2, 503
8a	Iulia Aug.	mater castror.	statue base (+Carac)	res publica	Castellum Tidditanorum (Num)	197	CIL VIII 6702 = ILAlg II 1, 3589
9a	Τουλίαν Δόμνων Σεβ.		block πρὸς εὐχῆς Τουδαίων (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Kasyoum (Syria)	197?	CII 972 = IGRR III 1106
10a	Iuliae Aug.	mater castror. totiusque domus divinae	altar (+Sev, Carac)	Septicia Valeriana et Optatia Siora ex voto	Lugdunum (GalLug)	May 4th, 197	CIL XIII 1754
11a	[Iulia] Augusta	[mater c]astrorum; matri M. Aureli [An]tonini Caes. Imp. destinati	statue base (+Carac)	res publica	Sigus (Num)	197	CIL VIII 5699 = ILAlg II 2, 6511
12a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	decuriones	Uchi Maius (AfrProc)	197	CIL VIII 26257
13a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum Imp. Caesaris L. Septimi Severi Pertinacis Aug. et	statue base (alone)	Trebulani Mutuescani	Trebula Mutuesca (Ital-IV)	197-198	CIL IX 4880 = CIL XIV *411b1

		M. Aureli Antonini Caesaris Imp. destinati parens					
14a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	(a) Q. Anicius Faustus leg. Aug. pr. pr. cos. desig. (dedicante) (b) col. i[mmunium et] b.f. quorum n. i. s. [sunt]	Madauros (AfrProc)	198	AE 1920, 12 = AE 1967, 568
15a	Iulia Aug.	mater [ca]strorum	statue base (+Carac)	Capenates foederati	Capena (Ital-VII)	Sep. 18 <sup>th</sup> , 198	AE 1954, 164
16a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	Glanenses	Glanum (GalNarb)	198	AE 1992, 1187
17a	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἀφιε[ρώσαντος Ἀ]ντονίου ... [πρε]σβ[ευτοῦ] ἀντι[στρατήγου τοῦ] λα[μπ]ροτάτο[ν ἡγεμόνος?]	Olba (Cilicia)	198	IGGR III 848
18a	Iulia Domna Augusta	mater castrorum	statue base (alone)	decuriones	Thagaste (AfrProc)	198	CIL VIII 17214 = ILAlg I 869
19a	[I]ulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev)	pag. Thibaritanus d. d. p. p.	Thibaris (AfrProc)	198	CIL VIII 26180
20a	Iulia Augusta	mater August. n. et castror.	altar to Genius leg. III Aug. P. V. <i>pro salute</i> of (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	T. Arranius Datus signifer ex HS III mil. n. de suo posuit	Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2527 = 18039
21a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. n. et castror.	altar to Genius Lambaesis <i>pro salute</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Baebius Faustianus sig. leg. III Aug. P. V.	Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2528
22a	[Iulia] Augusta	mater Augu[storum et castrorum]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2549
23a	Iulia Domna Augusta	mater castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	eq. leg. III Aug. P. V.	Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2550 = 18045
24a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. n. et castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	cornicularius et b.f., trib. laticlavi., mil. leg. III Aug. P. V. ex arca sua fecerunt quorum nomina subiecta sunt	Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2551 = 18046
25a	[Iulia Augusta]	[mater] Aug. n. e[t] castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	tesserari leg. III Aug. P. [V.]	Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2552 = 18070

26a	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater Augg et] cast.	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Lambaesis (Num)	198	CIL VIII 2558
27a (I)	Τουλίαν Δόμιναν θεὰ Σεβ.	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ ἱερωτάτη βουλὴ κὲ ὁ κράτιστος δῆμος Οὐλπίας Νεικοπόλεως τῆς πρὸς Ἰστρον	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	198	IGBulg II 618 = IGRR I 575 = AE 1902, 105
28a (II)	Τουλία Δόμινα θεὰ Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ ἱερωτάτη βουλὴ καὶ ὁ κράτιστος δῆμος Οὐλπίας Νεικοπόλεω[ς τῆς πρὸς Ἰστρον]	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	198	IGBulg II 619
29a (III)	Τουλία Δόμινα θεὰ Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ ἱερωτάτη βουλὴ καὶ ὁ κράτιστος δῆμος Οὐλπίας Νικοπόλεως τῆς πρὸς Ἰστρον	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	198	IGBulg V 5214 = IGRR I 576.1418 = SEG 24.953
30a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev)	Auzienses	Auzia (MaurCaes)	198	CIL VIII 9032
31a	[I]ο[υλ]ία Δόμινα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	βουλὴ, δῆμος	Sebastopolis (PontusByth)	198-199	SEG 39, 1802
32a	Iulia Aug.		statue base (alone)		Althiburos (AfrProc)	199	CIL VIII 27778
33a	[Iulia Aug.]	ma[ter] [Augustor. et ca]stro[r.]	altar to I.O.M. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Carnuntum (PanSup)	199	AE 2003, 1387
34a	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum	statue base (+Carac)	decuriones	Sila (Num)	199	AE 1969/70, 699 = ILAlg II 2, 6869
35a	Iulia Domna Aug. (ABL. CASE)	mater castr[orum]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica (dedicante Q. Anicio Fausto leg.)	Cuicul (Num)	199	ILAlg II 3, 7805
36a	Iulia Domna Aug. (ABL. CASE)	mater castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica (dedicante Q. Anicio Fausto leg.)	Cuicul (Num)	199	ILAlg II 3, 7806 = AE 1911, 106
37a	Iulia Domna Aug. (ABL. CASE)	mater castr[orum - - -]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica (?) (dedicante Q. Anicio Fausto leg.)	Cuicul (Num)	199	Thomasson 1996, 174 no. 50ee
38a	Τουλία Δόμιν[η]	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἐπάρχου Αἰγύπτου, ἐπιστρατηγοῦντος, [- - -]	El Giza (Egypt)	199-200	IGRR I 1113

	Σεβαστὴ			Ἀρρίου Οὐίκτορος στρατηγοῦντος			
39a	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	βουλή, δῆμος	Sebastopolis (PontusByth)	199-200	SEG 39, 459
40a	Iulia Aug.	mater castr.	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	procurante Rossio Vitulo e. v. Pastor vilicus Cuculi et Milei et Adauctus c.s.	Cuicul (Num)	200 ca.	ILAlg II 3, 7808 = AE 2000, 1797
41a	Iul. Domna Aug.	matre. Ka[str]orum	column (on a bridge) (+Sev, Carac)	quat. civitat. Commag.	Kiachta (Syria)	200	CIL III 6714 = 14165, 17b = IGLES 1, 44
42a	[Iulia Augusta]	[mater castrorum mater Augustorum]	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautianus)	M. Calpurnius Geta Attianus et M. Calpurnius Attianus fil.	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	200	IRT 402
43a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] <<n.>> et castr.	architrave? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	armorum custodes	Lambaesis (Num)	200	ILS 9097
44a	Iu[lia Domna Aug.]		slab? (+ Sev, Carac, Geta)		Roma	Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup> , 200	CIL VI 40615 = 39426 = AE 1916, 46
45a	Iulia Aug.	m. k.	altar to Genius turmae <i>pro salute, itu, reditu, et victoria</i> (+ Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautianus)	M. Aurelius Nepos, remansor	Roma	Apr. 1 <sup>st</sup> , 200	CIL VI 225 = 30720 = IX *147
46a	Iul. Aug.	mater cas.	altar to I.O.M. (+ Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Firmidius Spectatus fr. leg. II Ital. P. F. optio	Luna (Ital-VII)	Apr. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 200	CIL XI 1322 = CIL III *237
47a	Iu[lia Aug.]		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	T. Ael. Longinus fl. pp. om[nibus honoribus functus] [- - -]tio Peregrino procurator[e - - -]	Auzia (MaurCaes)	201	CIL VIII 9030
48a	Ίουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ]	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	αἱ ὁδοὶ ἀποκατεστάθησαν ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτου Λολλιανοῦ Γεντιανοῦ	Bodrum (Asia)	201	AE 1999, 1593a
49a	Ίουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτου Λολλιανοῦ Γεντιανοῦ	Halicarnassus (Asia)	201	SEG 16, 665b =AE 1959, 6
50a	Ίουλία Δόμνη [Σεβαστὴ]	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	αἱ ὁδοὶ ἀποκατεστάθησαν ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτου Λολλιανοῦ Γεντιανοῦ	Halicarnassus (Asia)	201	SEG 49, 1426a
51a	Iul. Domna	A[ug. mater	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta,	[αἱ ὁδοὶ ἐγένοντο καὶ	Keramos	201	SEG 41, 938a = SEG 45,

	Ίουλ. Δό[μνη Σεβα]στή	cast]orum μήτηρ κάστρων	Plautilla)	κατεσκευάσθ[ησαν ἐπὶ ἀνθ]υπάτου Πόλου Τερεντιάν[ου καὶ ἐπι]τρόπου Ἄτιλίου Κλάρου	(Asia)		1526 = AE 1992, 1594a = AE 1994, 1638 = AE 1995, 1527
52a	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum mater Aug[[g.]]	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Iunius Punicus proc. sexagenarius provinciae Thraciae centenarius Alexandriae ad Mercurium	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	201	IRT 403
53a	Iulia Domna Au[g.] Ίουλία Δόμνα	mater castrorum μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	αἱ ὄδοι ἀποκατεστάθησαν ἐπὶ ἀνθυ. Λολλιανοῦ Γεντιανοῦ	Magnesia ad Maeandrum (Asia)	201	CIL III 13689 = 14202, 3 = AE 1896, 50 = AE 1896, 78 = AE 1995, 1481
54a	Ίουλία Σεβ.		altar ὑπέρ σωτηρίας καὶ ἐπανόδου (+Sev, Carac)	Γ. Οὐαλέριος Σερῆνος νεωκόρος τοῦ μεγάλου Σαράπιδος ὁ ἐπιμελητὴς παντὸς τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείνου στόλου	Portus (Ita-I)	Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup> , 201	IG XIV 917 = IGRR I 380
55a	Iulia [Domna Aug.]	mater [castrorum]	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Ἡ Σμυρναίων πόλις ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτ. Λολλιανοῦ Γεντιανοῦ	Smyrna (Asia)	201	CIL III 471 = 472 = 473 = 474 = 475 = IGRR IV 1482 = AE 1995, 1466
56a	Iul. Do[mna Aug.] Ίουλία [Δ]ό[μνα] [Σεβαστή]	mater ca[s]troru[m] [μήτηρ κάστρων]	milestone (+ Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	αἱ ὄδ[ο]ι ἀ[π]οκατεστάθησαν [- - -]	Stratonikeia (Asia)	201	CIL III 482 = 12271 = SEG 45, 1561 = AE 1892, 19 = AE 1995, 1529
57a	Iul. [D]o[mna Augusta] [Ίουλία Δόμνα] Σεβαστή	[mater castrorum μήτηρ κά[στρων]	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	[αἱ ὄδοι ἀποκατεστάθησαν ἐπὶ ἀ[νθυπάτου Λολλιανοῦ] Γεντιανοῦ καὶ ἐπιτρ[ό]που [- - -]	Stratonikeia (Asia)	201	CIL III 12272 = SEG 41, 948 = SEG 45, 1561 = AE 1995, 1528
58a	Iulia Domna Aug.		statue base (+Carac)	decuriones (+ P. Aelius Rusticus cur. rei p. e. v. dedicans)	Sufetula (AfrProc)	201	ILAfr 130
59a	Iulia [Domna Aug.]	[mater castr. et Augg.]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica Tomitanorum per C. Ovinium Tertullum leg. Augg. pr. pr.	Tomi (MoesInf)	201	CIL III 7540 = IGRR I 612

60a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castr. et Augg.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica Tomitanorum per C. Ovinium Tertullum leg. Augg. pr. pr.	Tomi (MoesInf)	201	AE 1997, 1324
61a	Iulia August[a]	mater castror.	statue base (alone)		Uzelis (Num)	201	CIL VIII 6340 = 19312 = ILAlg II 3, 8796
62a	Τοιυλία Δόμνα	μήτηρ κάστρων	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	<i>reform of the statute of the emporion Pizos, edict of the Roman governor Q. Sicinius Clarus</i>	Augusta Traiana (Thracia)	202	IGBulg III 2, 1690 = IGRR I 766 = SEG 45, 845
63a	Τοιυλία Δόμνα	μήτηρ κάστρων	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	<i>reform of the statute of the emporion Pizos, edict of the Roman governor Q. Sicinius Clarus</i>	Augusta Traiana (Thracia)	202	IGRR I 748
64a	[Iu]lia Augusta	[m]ater castrorum	statue base (alone)	res publica	Cirta (Numidia)	202	CIL VIII 6998 = ILAlg II 1, 563
65a	[Iulia Domna Aug.] Τοιυλία Σεβαστὴ	[mater cast]rorum μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Dogruda (Asia)	202	IGRR IV 132 = AE 1888, 61 = AE 1995, 1442
66a	[Iulia Domna] Augusta	mater [Augusti n.] et castrorum totiu[sque domus] Caesarum nostrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac)	coloni	Hammam (AfrProc)	202	CIL VIII 588 = 11731
67a	[Iulia Domna Aug.] Τοιυλία Σεβαστὴ	[mater cast]rorum μήτηρ στ[ρ]ατο[πέ]δο[ν]	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἐπὶ ἀνθυπάτου Λολλι[άνου] Γεντιαν[οῦ - - -]	Kyzikos (Asia)	202	AE 1888, 61 = IGGR IV 132 = SEG 45, 1669
68a	Iulia Domna Augusta	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	r. p. sua Ulp. curante Q. Anicio Fausto leg. Augustorum pr. pr.	Remesiana (MoesSup)	202	CIL III 1686
69a	Iulia Aug.	mater castror. et Aug[g.]	altar to Hercules and Genius num. eq. sing. pro salute (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla, Plautianus)	C. Iulius Secundus vexil.	Roma	Sept. 13 <sup>th</sup> , 202	CIL VI 226
70a	Iulia Domna	mater	statue base to Caracalla	res publica	Uchi Maius	202	AE 2000, 1733

	Aug.	August[[[orum]]] et castrorum			(AfrProc)		
71a	Iulia Do[m]na	mater cast.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	vet. leg. VII Cl. Ant[o]ninianae	Viminacium (MoesSup)	202	AE 1978, 704 = AE 1979, 518 = AE 1982, 840 = AE 1989, 633
72a	Iulia Aug.	matr. Augg. et Kastr.	altar to Genius eq. sing. Augg[g.] nn[n.] (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautianus)		Roma	202-203 (?)	Speidel 1994, 84-85 no. 59
73a	[Iuli]a A[ug.]	[mater Augg. et castr.]	altar to IOM (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	c. R. [consist. Kar. intra leugam]	Carnuntum (PanSup)	203	AE 2003, 1388
74a	Iulia Aug.	mater August. et castror.	statue base (+Sev)	familia rationis castrensis	Lambaesis (Num)	203	AE 1914, 38
75a	Iulia Aug.	<<Pia mater Aug.>>	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	Cl. Gallus [leg.] Augustor. pr. pr. cos. desig[n.] curator [ci]vitatis Thessalo[nice]nsium cum Flavia Silva Prisca c. f. uxore et [Fla]vio Catulo Munatiano c. p. et Cl. Galitta c. p. fili(i)s	Lambaesis (Num)	203	AE 1957, 123 = AE 2010, 1834
76a	[Iulia Au]g.	mater [Augg. et castrorum]	slab (+Sev?, Carac?, Geta?, Plautilla?, Plautianus)	qui h[uc? in vexillatione descenderun]t	Ostia (Ita-I)	203?	CIL XIV 4385
77a	Ίυλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ τῶν ιερῶν στρατοπέδων, δεσπότις γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης καὶ παντὸς ἀνθρώπων γένους	architrave? (+Sev [1st position], Carac [2nd position], Geta [4th position])	Σάλμης Μαλίκου ... Ιάδους ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ συμποσίαρχος ιερέων μεγίστου θεοῦ Διὸς Βήλου	Palmyra (Syria)	203	IGRR III 1533 = IGLS XVII/1, 157
78a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg. et castror.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	milites qui frumentum publicum acceperunt et alii	Roma	203	CIL VI 220
79a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg. et Kastr.	slab to the Genius eq. sing. and Hercules Invictus pro salute (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautianus)	equites singulares?	Roma	203	CIL VI 227
80a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg.	altar to Fortuna Auggg. (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	Antonius lib. proximus a libellis	Roma	203	CIL VI 180
81a	[Iulia Domn]a	mater [Augusti et castrorum et totius]	altar to I.O.M. Conservator (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Sidi Marched (AfrProc)	203	CIL VIII 12209 = 23794

	Aug.	domus [divinae]					
82a	[Iulia Domna August]a	mate]r[ Aug]usti [[et Caesaris]] <<nostr>> [et castrorum et] <<senatus e]t patri[ae e]t>>	arch? (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla, Plautianus)	res publica	Thamugadi (Num)	203	CIL VIII 2368 = 17872 = AE 1954, 153
83a	Iulia Aug.	mater August[[o[rum]]] et castrorum	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	D. Clodius Galba proc.	Lepcis Magna (AfrProc)	204	IRT 407
84a	Iulia [Aug.]		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla, Plautianus)	Mauri Mic. et Iul. Euangelianus praef.	Micia (Dacia)	204	IDR III 3, 47 = AE 1944, 74
85a	[Iulia Domna Aug.?]	[mater castrorum]	block (+ Sev, Carac, Geta)	primi o[rdi]n[es et centuriones leg. XXII Pr. P. F.]	Mogontiacum GermSup)	204	CIL XIII 6801 = AE 1898, 71
86a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. <<n(ostri)>>	arch (+ Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla, Plautianus)	argentari(i) et negotiantes boari(i)	Roma	204	CIL VI 1035 = 31232 = AE 1993, 118 = AE 2005, 183
87a	Iulia Aug.	mater castror.	<i>Acta Ludorum Secularium</i>		Roma	204	Pighi 1965 III 9
88a	[Iulia] Aug.	mater castror. con[iunx imp.]	<i>Acta Ludorum Secularium</i>		Roma	204	Pighi 1965 IV 9-10
89a	Iulia Aug.	mater castr[or]um	<i>Acta Ludorum Secularium</i>		Roma	204	Pighi 1965 V <sup>a</sup> 52
90a	Iulia Aug.	m[ater] castrorum	<i>Acta Ludorum Secularium</i>		Roma	204	Pighi 1965 V <sup>a</sup> 83
91a	[Iulia Domna Aug.?]	[mater Aug. et castrorum]	architrave? (+Sev, Caracalla, Geta, Plautilla?)		Tocolsida (MaurTin)	204	IAM II 2, 815 = IAM S, 815
92a	Iulia Aug.	mater Caesar[[um]] et castrorum	statue base to Geta		Auzia (MaurCaes)	205	CIL VIII 9035
93a	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum	statue base (+Sev, +Carac)	res publica	Castellum Phuensium (Num)	205	CIL VIII 6306 = ILAlg II 3, 9438
94a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (alone)	res publica	Civitas Celtianensis (Num)	205	CIL VIII 19693 = ILAlg II 1, 2093
95a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Augg. castrorumque	statue base (+Carac)	civitas	Giufi (AfrProc)	205	ILAfr 293 = AE 1908, 170 = AE 1985, 867
96a	Iulia Augusta		arch (+Sev, Carac)	res publica	Thugga (AfrProc)	205	CIL VIII 26539 = ILAfr 525 = AE 1914, 179

97a	[Iulia Domna]	[August]a	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Thugga (AfrProc)	205	ILAfr 563
98a	Iul. Augusta	domina nostr.	statue base to Ti. Claudius Esquil. Severus qui primus statuas duas una Antonini Aug. domini n. aliam Iul. Augustae dominae nostr. s. p. p. una cum Claudio Pontiano filio suo eq. Rom.		Roma	August 17 <sup>th</sup> , 206	CIL VI 1872
99a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augusti et castrorum	statue basis (+Carac)	colonia Iulia Concordia Aug. Felix Beneventum devota maiestati Augg.	Caudium (Apul/Cal)	207	CIL IX 2165
100a	Ιουλία Δόμνα		altar (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	οἱ ἀπὸ Συστέματος Ἀρτεμεισιακοῦ Μεγάλου ἐπὶ- καλουμένου τῶν γναφέων πηχθέντος ὑπὸ Ζήνωνος Αρίστωνο[ς]. ὁ βωμὸς ἐγένετο ἐκ φ[ι]λοτειμίας Ζαβδίων οἰκοδόμου	Gerasa (Arabia)	207	SEG 35, 1572 = AE 1985, 834
101a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]]<<usti>> et kastrorum	statue base (+ Sev, Carac)	sub Cn. M. Rustio Rufino pr. vig. e. v.	Ostia (Ita-I)	207	CIL XIV 4386 = AE 1889, 122 = AE 1889, 166
102a	Iulia Domna Aug.	[mater castrorum]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica	Uchi Maius (AfrProc)	207	CIL VIII 15449 = 26258 = AE 1994, 1847 = AE 2000, 1734
103a (I)	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum totiusque domus divinae	altar to Apollus (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Aiaciū Modes[tus Cr]escentian[us v. c. X]Vvir [s. f. leg.] Augg. [pr. pr. cos. des. cum Danacia Quartil]la Aurelianā ux[ore et Q. Aiacio Censorino Ce[lsino A]rabiano et L. Aiacio [Mode]sto Aureliano Pris[co Agri]cola Salv[i]ano filis	Petra (Arab)	207-208	AE 1968, 518
104a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	block (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Aiaciū Modestus	Petra	207-208	AE 1968, 522

(II)		totiusque domus divinae		Crescentianus v. c. XVvir s. f. leg. Augg. pr. pr. cos. [de]s. cum Danacia Quartilla Aureliana uxore et Q. Aiacio Censorino Celsino Arabiano et L. Aiacio Modesto Aureliano Prisco Agricola Salviano filiis	(Arab)		
105a (III)	Iulia Aug.	Iuliae A[u]g. [mater c]astr[or]um totiusq[ue domus] d[ivin]ae	block (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Aiaci Modestus Crescentianus v. c. XVvir s. f. leg. Augg. [pr.] pr. [cos.] des. cum Danacia Qu[ar]tilla Aurelian[a uxore et] Q. Aiacio C[ensorino] Arabian[o et L. Aia]cio Mo[desto Aureliano] [Prisco Salviano filiis]	Petra (Arab)	207-208	AE 1968, 523
106a	[Iulia Domn]a	mater August[[orum]] et castrorum	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[Aemilius Ar]listides procura[t]or imperio eorum dicatissimus	Ephesus (Asia)	208	CIL III 6071 = 14195, 26
107a	Iulia Augusta	mater Augusti [[et Cae]]s. et kastrorum	statue representing the <i>origo</i> of Rome dedicated <i>pro salute</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Aurelius M. f Aelia Paulinus Ovilavis p. p. leg. I Ital., dedicantibus Iul. Faustin. consulari et Val. Q [...]tiano legato legionis.	Novae (MoesInf)	May 15 <sup>th</sup> , 208	AE 1982, 849 = AE 1993, 1362
109a	Iulia A[ug.]	mater Aug. et castrorum	altar to I.O.M. Conservator (+ Sev, Carac, Geta) <i>ob servatam eorum salutem detectis insidiis hostium publicorum</i>	decuriones	Sicca Veneria (AfrProc)	208	CIL VIII 1628
110a	Iulia Aug.	mater Caesar[[um]] Aug[[[g.]]] et castrorum	statue base (+Sev)	C. Iulius Turranicus ob honorem aedilitatis	Caesarea (MaurCaes)	209	CIL VIII 10981 = 20986
111a	Iulia Aug.	mater Caesaris Aug[[g.]] et castrorum	statue base (alone)	C. Iulius Turranicus ob honorem aedilitatis	Caesarea (MaurCaes)	209	CIL VIII 20987
112a	Τιουλία Δόμνα		architrave? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ κώμη, ἐπὶ [Αὐρ]ε[λ]ιανοῦ [πρεσβ.] Σεβ.	Charrae (Syria)	209	IGRR III 1149

	Σεβαστὴ						
113a	[Ιο]ύλια Δόμνα		block (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Koptos (Egypt)	209	SEG 34, 1596 = SEG 51, 2157
114a	Iul. Augusta	matr. Augg. et castrorum	altar to I.O.M. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	G. Statius Tacitianus b.f. cos. leg. XIIII G.	Narona (Dalm)	209	CIL III 1780
115a	Iu[ll]ia Aug.	mater castror(um)	altar to I.O.M. (+Sev, Carac)	Tha[ll]lion eorumd. v[il.]	Runjevo (MoesSup)	209	CIL III 8185
116a	[Iulia Domna Augusta]	[mater Augg. et castrorum	arch (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Colonia Septimia Vaga deducta per T. Flavium Decimum procos. c. v.	Vaga (AfrProc)	209	CIL VIII 1217 = 14395
117a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg[[g.]] [- - -] e(t) castrorum	architrave (+Sev, Carac)	[Ti. Cl. Subatianus] Proculus leg. Auggg. cos. desig.	Lambaesis (Num)	209-210	CIL VIII 18252 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21
118a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg[[g.]]	architrave pro salute (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[Ti. Cl. Subatianus] Proculus leg. Augg[[g.]] cos. desig.	Lambaesis (Num)	209-210	CIL VIII 18252 = AE 1917/18, 27 = AE 1920, 21
119a	Iu[lia] Aug.	mater [Aug.] et castro[rum]	altar to Fortuna Augusta (+Sev, Carac)	Ti. Cl. Subat[ia]n[u]s P[roc]ulus leg. Augg. [p]r. pr. cos. desig. cum suis	Lambaesis (Num)	209-210	Thomasson 1996, 177 no. 52b
120a	Iulia	mater Augu[[storum]] at castrorum totiusque domus divinae	altar to I.O.M (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[[- - -]] procur. eorum Val. Ma[- - -]tius dec. [al]ae III Asturum, prae[po]situ[s] castelli Tamu[den]sis	Tamuda (MaurTin)	April 11 <sup>th</sup> , 210	AE 1991, 1743 = AE 1992, 1934 = AE 1994, 1906 = AE 1998, 1603
121a	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum et Aug[[g.]]	altar to Jupiter Conservator (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Cornelius Valens leg. eorum pr. pr.	Castellum Dimmidi (Num)	c. 210	AE 1948, 211
122a	Τουλία Δόμνα	μήτηρ [κάστρων] [καὶ] τὸν οἶκον αὐτῶν	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[ - - - ] ἀρχιερεύς Ὄστρεως, [Τι]θοήνους καὶ Ἀμμωνος Θεῶν[v]	Koptos (Egypt)	Apr. 15- 24 <sup>th</sup> , 210	IGRR I 1185 = AE 2004, 1631 = SEG 54, 1739
123a	[Ιουλίαν Δόμναν θεὰν Σεβαστὴν]	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ ιερωτάτη βουλὴ καὶ ὡ] κράτιστος δῆμος Οὐλπίας Νεικοπόλεος, ὑπατεύοντος τῆς ἐπαρχείας Φλα. Οὐλπιανοῦ πρεσβ. Σεββ.	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	210	IGBulg II 631
124a	Τουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.	μητέρα κάστρων	statue base (alone)	ἐπὶ ἀνθ(υπάτου) Τιε[ι]ου Σακέρδωτος, πρεσβε[υ]τοῦ δὲ Δομιτίου Αρισταίου Αραβιανοῦ	Prymnessos (Asia)	210	MAMA IV 10 = IGRR IV 674 = CIG 3882g

125a	Ίουλία Δόμνα Αύγοῦστα Σεβαστὴ	μητέρα κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Ηλιόδωρος Ἱεροκλεῦς Νετ(τίδας) ὑπέρ τοῦ πατρὸς Τεροκλεῦς Ηλιοδώρου Νετ(τίδα) στρατηγήσαντος Χερρονήσου καὶ Σύμης ἀνέστησεν	Thyssanous (Asia)	210	IK Rhod. Peraia 158
126a	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	θεὰ μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	ἡ ἱερωτά(τη) βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος Νικοπολιτῶν, ὑπατεύοντος τῆς ἐπαρχείας Λ. Ίουλ. Φαυστεινειανοῦ πρεσβευτοῦ Σεββ(αστῶν)	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	210-211	IGBulg II 626
127a	[Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]		statue base (alone)	ἡ Στιριέων πόλις	Stiris (Achaia)	210-211	IG IX 1, 48
128a	Iuli[a] Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] et kast.	altar to I.O.M, Iuno, Minerva and Genius coh(ortis) III Brit(annorum) (+Carac, Geta)	T. Fl. Felix praef.	Abusina (Raet)	Dec 1 <sup>st</sup> , 211	CIL III 5935 = 11942
129a	Iul[ia Augusta]	[mater Augg.]	altar (+Carac, Geta)		Abusnia (Raet)	211	CIL III 11951
130a	[Ι]ουλίαν Δόμναν Σεβαστὴν	μητέρα Σεβαστ[[ῶν]] καὶ ἀνικήτων στρατοπέδων	statue base (alone)	ἡ πόλις διὰ Διδύμου Σαραπίωνος τοῦ ἐνάρχου ἀρχιερέως τῶν κυρίων Σεβαστῶν	Alexandria (Egypt)	March 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 211	IGRR I 1067
131a	Iulia Augusta	mater Augustor. et castr.	? (+Carac)	Antonius et Eugenes servi dispensatores	Aquae Vescinae (Ita-I)	211	AE 1914, 217
132a	Iulia Augusta (?)	mater Augg. et castr. (?)	Slab + statue bases (+Carac, Geta)	60 centurions from the legion I Minervia	Bonna (GermInf)	211	CIL XIII 8050 = AE 1985, 683
133a	Iu[lia Domna Augusta]	mater Augg. [et castrorum]	altar (?) to I.O..M, Iuno Reg.	[---] Hermes	Brattia (Dalm)	211	CIL III 10109
134a	Iulia Augusta	[mater Augg. et castr.]	architrave (+Carac, Geta)	L. Lucceius Martinus leg[atus Augg. pr. pr. prov.] Germaniae Infer.	Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (GermInf)	211	CIL XIII 8201 = AE 1895, 141
135a	[I]u[lia] Aug.	Pia Felix mater Augg. et [castrorum et senatus] et	slab for the dedication of the temple of the <i>signa</i> (+ Carac?, Geta)	[milites vexillationis] An[tonianorum] Europa[eorum]	Dura Europos (Mesop)	211	AE 1984, 921

		patriae					
136a	Τουλία Σεβαστὴ		<i>slab with letter to the citizens</i>		Ephesus (Asia)	211	SEG 51, 1579
137a	[Iulia Aug. ma]ter	Aug. et cast(rorum)	slab to IOMD and Iuno Regina <i>pro concordia cohortium</i> (+Carac)	Fl. Antiochus praef. coh. I c. R. eq. P. F. praep. coh. IIII V.	Grosskrotzenburg (GermSup)	211	CIL XIII 7411 = AE 2008, 980
138a	Τουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτρηρ αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος αὐτῶν οἴκου	altar (+Carac) ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκης	Ἀντώνιος Σιλουανὸς οὐεντρανὸς ἀπὸ βενεφικ. Ἀπαμεὺς ἄμα τῇ συμβίῳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ἀνέθηκεν	Heliopolis (Syria)	211	IGLS VI 2744 = AE 1939, 57
139a	[Iulia Aug.]	mater Imp. Caes. M. Au[r. Antonini et] P. Septimi Severi [Getae] Pia Fel. A[ug. et mater senat]us et castror[um et patriae]	altar to Minerva and Iuno Victrix and Conservatrix (alone)		Legio (HispCit)	211	IRPLeon 25
140a	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Carac)	Laurentes Lavinates	Ostia (Ita-I)	211	CIL VI 1047 = 31233 = XIV 2072
141a		[ - - - ] mater Augg. et senatus et patriae	?		Roma	211	CIL VI 31374
142a	Iuli[a Aug.]	[Pia] Felix m[atri Aug.] et Caes. [et castr. et] senat[us]	? (alone?)		Roma	211	CIL VI 40674
143a	Τουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κ[άστρων καὶ τῶν αὐτο]κρατόρων	architrave (+Carac, Geta)	Σαρδιανῶν πόλις, ἐπιτροπεύοντος τῆς Ασίας Διονυσίου τοῦ κρατίστου, λογιστεύοντος τῆς πόλεως [[- - - - -]]	Sardis (Asia)	211	AE 1993, 1505 = SEG 36, 1094
144a	Iulia Aug.	mater Au]g[[g.]] et castror. et senatus et patr[ia]e totiusq. d[onus divinae eorum]	architrave (+Div Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica	Schauwasch (AfrProc)	211	CIL VIII 14813
145a	Iulia Domna Aug.		altar to Jupiter (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Lurius Seius veteranus leg. II Adi. Piae F[i]de.	Silyanah (AfrProc)	211	AE 1907, 202

146a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. et castr. et senatus [et patriae] totiusq. d[onus divinae]	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Suas (AfrProc)	211	AE 1990, 1038
147a	[Iu]l. Augusta	[m]ater Augg. [et] castrorum [et] senatus	statue base (alone)		Synnada (Asia)	211	CIL III 13655
148a	[I]ulia Aug.	matr. [c]astrorum [e]t Aug. [n]ostri	architrave? (+Carac, Geta)	M. Aur[e]liu[s Vete]ranu[s ((centurio))?] [[leg. III]] [A]ug. Ant.	Tfilzi (Num)	211	AE 1976, 722
149a	Iulia Augusta	mater Augusti et sen. et castrorum	block (+Carac, Geta)	curia Commodiana	Thamugadi (Num)	211	AE 1982, 958
150a	[Iulia Augusta]	matris Aug[[g.]] e[t castrorum]	architrave (+Carac)	colonia Iuli[a Aurelia Commoda Thū]burb[o Maius	Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	211	CIL VIII 12366
151a	I[ulia Dom]na Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] m[a]ter castrorum et [senatus et patriae] totiusque divinae domus	slab (+Div Sev, Carac, Geta)	civitas	Vazi Sarra (AfrProc)	211	CIL VIII 23750 = ILTun 607
152a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castro[r. et] sen[atus - - -]	slab (+Carac)	Senatus populusque Vo[l]sini]ens(is)	Volsinii (Ita-VII)	211	CIL XI 2696
153a	[Iulia Domna]	[mater castror]um et senatus et patriae [ - - - m]ater Imp. Antonini Aug.	architrave? (+Carac)		Henchir Bir Essefir (AfrProc)	212	CIL VIII 25457
154a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Anicius Faustus leg. Augg. pr. pr. c. v.; P Ael. Menecrates Flor. eq. p. p. fl. pp.	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	AE 1911, 97
155a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Ael. Menecrates	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	AE 1911, 98
156a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Ael. Menecrates	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	AE 1912, 17
157a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Ael. Menecrates	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	AE 1912, 18

158a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Ael. Menec.	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	BCTH-1911-100
159a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Aelius Menecrates	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	BCTH-1912-349
160a	<<Iuliae Aug.>>	<<mater Aug.>>	altar to Hercules (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Ael. Menec.	Lambaesis (AfrProc)	212	BCTH-1912-350
161a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. n. [et] castrorum	slab (+Carac)	vigiles et nautae Classis Misenatis	Roma	212	CIL VI 1063 = *429, 17
162a	[Iulia Domna]	[Augusta Pia Felicis matris Augusti et castrorum item senatus ac patriae]	architrave (+Div Sev, Carac)	civitas	Thaca (AfrProc)	212	CIL VIII 11194
163a	<<Iulia Aug.>>	<<mater cast et sen. ac patriae>>	slab (+Carac)	dedicante Q. Anicio Fausto [leg. Augg. pro praetore consuli am]plissimo pat. col. et Saevinio Proculo tri[buno laticlavio curatore r. p. d. d. p. p.]	Thamugadi (Num)	212	CIL VIII 17871 = AE 1985, 881c
164a	[Iulia] Aug.	Pia Felix mater Imp. et senatus et castrorum et patriae	statue base (+Div Sev, Carac)	res publica	Uzelis (Num)	212	ILAlg II 3, 8799
165a	Iulia Domna Augustae	Pia Felix mater Aug. et castrorum et senatus totiusq. domus divinae	slab (+Div Sev, Carac)	P. Opstorius Saturninus fl. pp., sac. Merc.	Vazi Sarra (AfrProc)	212	CIL VIII 12006 = 12007
166a	Iulia Domne Augusta	Pia Felix mater Augusti et castrorum et senatus totiusque domus divinae	arch (+Div Sev, Carac)	C. Octavius Rogatus flam. pp., sacerdos Merc.	Vazi Sarra (AfrProc)	212	CIL VIII 23749 = AE 1899, 116
167a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus ac patriae	altar to I.O.M. (+Carac)	L. Propertius L. f. Martialis vet. fl. pp. ob honore. flamoni. perpetui	Verecunda (Num)	212	CIL VIII 4196 = 18491
168a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus ac patriae	altar (+Carac)	L. Propertius Victor vet. ob honorem flamoni.. promiserat, L. Propertius Martialis vet. fl. pp. frater et	Verecunda (Num)	212	CIL VIII 4197 = 18492

				Propertius Victor evocatus filius ei[us] ampliata summa faciend. dedicandamq. curaverunt			
169a	Iul. Domn. Aug.	mater Aug. et castr(or)um	altar to IOM (+Carac)	dedicante L. Mario Perpetuo c. per Restutum m. c. R. D., sacerdotes eiusdem loci d.	Diana (MoesSup)	212-213	AE 2003, 1532
170a	Iulia Augusta	mater [ i]ndulgentis[si]mi princi[pis] M. [A]jur(el)i An[to]nin[i p]ii [Aug.] mater [sen]atus, mater c[as]tror(um), mater pat[ri]ae	statue basis (alone)	coh. XXIIII Vol. Antoniniana c. R. devo[ta] n[um]ini eius	Murhardt (GermSup)	212-213	CIL XIII 6531 = AE 1895, 33
171a	Τιουλία Δόμνα θεὰ Σεβ.	μήτηρ ιερῶν στρατευμάτων καὶ συνκλή- του καὶ δήμου Πρωμαίων	statue base (+Carac)	Μ. Ἰούνιος Λουκιανὸς ἀρχερατικὸς καὶ Οὐλπία Ἀγρειππεῖνα ἀρχερατικὴ σύμβιος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν ιδίων	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	212-213	IGBulg II 633 = IGRR I 577.1419 = AE 1902, 111
172a	[Τιουλία Δόμνη Σεβ.]	[μήτηρ Σεβ. καὶ στ]ρατοπ. καὶ συνκλ. καὶ πατρίδ.	altar (+Carac)		Rome	Jun. 9 <sup>th</sup> , 212 or 213	IGUR IV 1658 = AE 2008, 191
173a	Iulia Aug.	mater Augus]ti et senat. et [castrorum patriaeque et populi senatusque] Romani	slab (+Carac) to [Deus Invictus Serapis and Isis Regina?] and the Genius of [- - -] pro salute et Victoria	[- - -]b.f., sac[erdos - - -]	Ad Statuas (PanSup)	213?	AE 1947, 36 = AE 2000, 1202
174a	[Iulia Domna Augusta]	[ma]ter Aug. et senat. [et castrorum et patriae totiusque] domus divina[e - - -]	? (+Carac)		Althiburos (AfrProc)	213	CIL VIII 27773 = AE 1913, 46
175a	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater c]astr. [ac	statue base (alone)	cohors V Gallorum, curante	Arbeia	213	RIB III 3272

		senat. ac] [pa]tria[e]		C. Iul. Marco, leg. Aug. pr. pr.	(Brit)		
176a	[Iulia Pia Aug.]	[mater cas]trorum	slab (+Carac)	[P. Cornelius Anu]llinus leg. leg. X[III G.]	Carnuntum (PanSup)	213	AE 1992, 1412 = AE 2000, 1209
177a	Iulia Au[g.]	mater Au[g. nostri M. Aur]elii Anton[ini] et castr. [et] senatus et patriae	statue base (alone)	coh. [I] Ael. [Hisp. m. eq.]	Castra Exploratorum (Brit)	213	CIL VII 963 = RIB I 976
178a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Caesar. et senatus et patriae	milestone (to Caracalla)	res publica	Cuicul (Num)	213	AE 1911, 101
179a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus ac patriae Pia Felix	slab/statue base (+Carac)	senatus populusq. Ferentin[as]	Ferentinum (Ita-I)	213	CIL X 5826
180a	Iu[lia Domna]	[Pia Fel. Aug. ma]ter August[i nostri item castroru]m senatus patri(a)e	slab (+Carac)	[coh. I Van]gionum item Raeti Gae[sa]ti et expl[oratores Habitancenses]	Habitancum (Brit)	213	CIL VII 1002a-h = 1002k = RIB I 1235
181a	Iulia Aug.	[mater Augusti nos]tri [et castror. et senat. ac patriae]	slab (+Carac)	[coh. I ((milliaria)) Hemes. Aur. Anton. sa]g. eq.	Intercisa (PanInf)	213?	AE 2002, 1180 = AE 2005, 1246
182a	Iulia Aug.	mater castroru{u}m	slab ?		Meimsheim (GermSup)	213	CIL XIII 6459
183a	Iulia Aug.	Pia Felix mater Augusti et castrorum et senatus et patriae	statue base (+Carac)	seniores kast.	Nibber (AfrProc)	213	CIL VIII 1616 = 15722 = ILS 44
184a	Iulia Aug. nostra	mater Aug. nostri M. Aureli Antonini ac castrorum ac senatus ac patriae	statue base (alone)	coh. I Ulpia Traiana Cugernorum c. R.	Pons Aelius (Brit)	213	RIB III 3284 = AE 1980, 603
185a	Iulia Aug.	mater M. Antonini Aug. n. p. m.	altar to Vesta (+another altar for Caracalla)	Eutyches, Victor cum filiis	Roma	213	CIL VI 786
186a	Iulia Aug.	Pia Felix m. Imp. Antonini Aug. n. senatus castrorum	slab (+Carac)	<i>Acta fratrum Arvalium</i>	Roma	213	CIL VI 2086 = 32380

		et patriae					
187a	Iulia Aug.	mat. Aug. et castrorum	slab (+Carac)	L. Valerio Dato pr. vig. e. v. et P. Aelio Anniano s(ub)pr. M. Ulpio	Roma	213	CIL VI 40647 = AE 1983, 45
188a	Iulia [Aug.]	mater Aug. et castror[um] totiusque domus divin[ae]	slab (+Carac)	Eutychus Aug. n. ver. di[sp.]	Roma	213?	CIL VI 40641 = 15 = 1071 = 36883
189a	[I]ul[i]a Aug.		altar to IOM pro salute et reditu	[S]urus, dec. col. Bass., Ilvir	Bassiana (PanInf)	214	CIL III 6470,4 = 10197 = ILJug II 1040
190a	Iulia Aug.	mat. Aug. et castr. et sen[at.] ac patriae	milestone (+Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	214	CIL VIII 22358
191a	[Iulia]	[mater d. n.] et castrorum senat[usque ac patriae]	altar to Dea Syria pro salute (+ Carac)	Aureli Claudi Nepo[tiani - - -] fratres	Napoca (Dacia)	214	ILD 542 = AE 1960, 226
192a	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ ἀνεικήτων [σ]τρατοπέδων	altar? (+Carac)	Σερῆνος πανταρχήσας [τ]ῆλις Όμβειτῶν πόλεως	Ombos (Egypt)	Apr 4 <sup>th</sup> , 214	IGRR I 1288
193a	Iuliae Aug.		slab (+Carac)	<i>Acta fratribus Arvalium</i>	Roma	214	CIL VI 2103 = AE 1994, 108
194a	Iulia Augusta (ABL. CASE)	Pia Felix mater Aug. et castrorum itemque senatus et patriae	architrave (+Carac)	res publica	Thamugadi (Num)	214	AE 1948, 111 (+ CIL VIII 2369 + CIL VIII 2370)
195a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum et Aug. et sen. et patriae	arch (+Div Sev, Carac)	C. Cornelius Egrilianus, praef. leg. XIII Geminae	Theveste (AfrProc)	214	CIL VIII 1856 = 16504b = ILAfr I 3038
196a	[Iuli]a Domna Aug.	Pia Fel. mater Aug. et [castror.] et pat. totiusq. div. domu[s eorum]	architrave (+Carac)	colonia	Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	214	ILAfr 268
197a	[I]ulia Domna	Pia Felix Aug. mater Aug. et castr[o]rum et senatus et patriae totiusque divinae	architrave (+Div Sev, Carac)	G[a]binia Hermiona	Thugga (AfrProc)	214	CIL VIII 1483 = 15505 = 26546 = 26639 = 26650 = ILAfr 527 = AE 1997, 1654 = AE 2003, 2013 = AE 2005, 1686 = AE

		domus [eorum]					2007, 1741
198a	Iulia Domna	Pia Felix Aug. mater Aug. et castrorum et senatu[s] et patriae	arch (+Div Sev, Carac)	colonia	Assuras (AfrProc)	215	CIL VIII 1798 = 16466
199a	Τιολία Δόμνα	κυρία Σεβαστή μήτηρ στρατοπέδων, καὶ τὸν σύμπαντος οῖκου αὐτῶν	two blocks (architrave?) (+Carac)	M. Αὐρήλ. Μόκιμος Ἀβδάιον Παλμ., Ἀτωνιανὸς τοξότ., and other soldiers now lost	Berenice (Egypt)	215	SEG 48, 1977 = AE 2000, 1578
200a	Iulia Aug.	Pia [F]elix mater Aug. et castro[ru]m et senatus et patriae	slab? (+Carac)	res publica	Castellum Subzuaritanum (Num)	215	CIL VIII 6002 = 19216 = ILAlg II 3, 7384
201a	[Iulia Domna Aug.]	[matris Aug. et senatus et castrorum] totiusque divinae domus eorum	architrave (+ Carac)	L. Varza Felix et L. Varz[a - - ob honorem] flamoni sui i[te]m IIviratus	Furni (AfrProc)	215	CIL VIII 10610 = 14751 = ILTun 1267 = AE 1996, 1730
202a	Iulia Dom[na]	mater castrorum et senatus et patriae	milestone (to Carac)	res publica	Igilgili (MaurCaes)	215	AE 1987, 1088
203a	Iulia Aug. (ABL. CASE)	mater Aug. et castrorum et senatu[s] ac patriae	milestone (+Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	215	AE 1981, 903
204a	[Iulia Aug.]	mat. Aug. et cas. et s. ac patriae	milestone (+ Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	215	CIL VIII 10231
205a	Iulia Augusta (ABL. CASE)	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus ac patriae	milestone (+ Carac)		Lambaesis (Nam)	215	CIL VIII 10253
206a	Iul. Aug.	mat[er Aug.] et cas. et se[n. ac patriae]	milestone (+ Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	215	CIL VIII 10260
207a	Iul. Aug.	mat. Aug. et cas. et sen. ac patriae	milestone		Lambaesis (Nam)	215	CIL VIII 10263
208a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castr. et sena. ac patriae	milestone		Lambaesis (Num)	215	CIL VIII 22359
209a	Iulia	mater Imperatoris	statue base (+Div Sev)	Lepitani Septimiani	Leptis Magna	215	IRT 404

	Augusta	Caes. M. Aurelli Antonini Pii Felicis Augusti et castrorum senatus et patriae			(AfrProc)		
210a	[Iul. Aug.]	ma[t. Aug. et c]astro[r. et sena]tus [ac patriae]	milestone (+Carac)	res publ. Thamugadi	Mascula (Num)	215	CIL VIII 10202
211a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castr. et senat. et patr.	milestone (to Carac)	r. p. Sitif. Ner. Antoninianor.	Sitifis (MaurCaes)	215	BCTH-1928/29-165
212a	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castr. et sen[at.] et patr.	milestone (to Carac)	r. p. Sitif. Ner. Antoninianor.	Sitifis (MaurCaes)	215	CIL VIII 10359 = 22403
213a	Iulia Dom. Aug.	mater castr. et senat. et patriae	milestone (to Carac)	r. p. Sitif. Ner. Antoninianor.	Sitifis (MaurCaes)	215	CIL VIII 10340 = 22401
214a	Iulia Dom{i}na Aug.	[mat]er castrorum et se[nat]us et patrie	milestone (to Carac)	res publica	Thamallula (MaurCaes)	215	BCTH-1907-CXCI
215a	Iulia Augusta	Pia Felix mater Augusti et castrorum et senatus ac patriae	statue base to a goddess (+Carac)	P. Flavius Pudens Pomponianus c. v.	Thamugadi (Num)	215	AE 1987, 1078
216a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus ac patriae	milestone (+Carac)	res publica	Thamugadi (Num)	215	BCTH-1901-CCXV
217a	Iulia Aug[usta] <u>(ABL. CASE)</u>	mater Aug. et castrorum et senatus et patri	milestone (+Carac)		Thamugadi (Num)	215	AE 1946, 67
218a	[Iulia] Aug.	mater [Aug.] et castro[rum] et senatu[s et] patriae	milestone (+Carc)	res publica	Thamugadi (Num)	215	CIL VIII 10197 = 10198 = 22326
219a	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστή	μήτηρ τῶν ἀγ[ττήτων] στρατοπέδων	slab (+Carac [1st position], DivSev [3rd position])	ἡ πόλις	Alexandria (Egypt)	March, 11 <sup>th</sup> 216	IGRR I 1063
220a	[Ιουλία Δόμνα]	μήτηρ M. Aὐρ. Αντωνένου Εὐτύχους Σεβ. καὶ	statue basis (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος	Apamea (Syria)	216	AE 1908, 271

		τῶν ἱερῶν στρατοπέδων καὶ τῆς ἱερᾶς συνκλήτου καὶ δέμου Ρωμαίων					
221a	[Iulia Domna]	[Augusta] matris August[ī et castrorum]	altar to Hercules (+Carac)		Aquincum (PanInf)	216	AE 1990, 805 = AE 2008, 1146
222a	Iuli[a] Domna	Pia Felix Aug. mater eius et senatus et patriae et [cas]trorum	arch (+Div Sev, Carac)	res publica	Cuicul (Num)	216	CIL VIII 8321 = 20137 = ILAlg II 3, 7818
223a	I[ulia] A[ug.]	[mater Aug. et castr. et sen. et patr.]	slab (+Carac)	vexill. legion[u]m IIII Sc[yt. et] III [Cy]r. [An]tonin[ian]arum	Dura Europos (Mesop)	216	AE 1937, 239
224a	[Iulia] Aug.	m[at. Aug. et] [castr. et sen. ac pat.]	milestone (+Carac)		Ei Atesch (Num)	216	CIL VIII 10379 = 22413
225a	Iulia Aug.	mater kast(rorum)	altar to I.O.M. (+Carac)	Achilleus eorundem servus	Scupi (MoesSup)	216	CIL III 1697 = 8243
226a	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castrorum et senatus et patriae	architrave (+Carac)	cultores dei Ierhobolis iuniores constituti, [magistri] cultorum [qui nomina s]ua subiece[runt]; [- - -] Iulius Temarsa vet. sacerdos maior	Lambaeis (Num)	March 15th, 217	AE 1967, 572a
227a (I)	Iulia A[ug.]	Pia Felix mater Au[g. e]t castroru[m et senat]us et patriae	arch (+Carac)	res p. [Volubilitan]oru[m]; in[cohant]e et dedica[n]te M.] Aurellio Sebasteno pr[oc.] [Aug. d]evotissimo	Volubilis (MaurTin)	217	CIL VIII 9993 = 9996 = 10950 = 10951 = 21828 = 21851 = 21852 = AE 1916, 100
228a (II)	Iulia Aug.	[Pia Fel]ix ma[t]er [Aug. et c]astrorum et senatus et patriae	arch (+Carac)	res [pu]blic V[ol.] add[itis signis?] cete]risque ornamen[tis pe]rf[ecit] [dedicante M.Aurelli]o Sebasten[o proc. Aug.]	Volubilis (MaurTin)	217	IAM II 2, 391 = IAM S, 391
229a	Diva Iulia Domna		statue basis (+DivSev, DivCarac)	dec. Gillitani s. p. f.	Gillium (AfrProc)	229	CIL VIII 26225 = AE 1899, 56
230a	Δόμνη	θεὰ Σεβαστὴ	circular altar to Gordian III (+Sev, Carac, AlexSev)		Aigeai (Cilicia)	238	SEG 32, 1312

## Appendix b - Inscriptions dating to a period of more than a year

N.	Name	Titles	Typology of Dedication	Author(s)	Location	Date	Reference
1b	[Ιουλία Σεβαστή]	Ἀθηνᾶ Πολιάς (?)	slab (+Sev)		Athenae (Achaia)	193-195?	SEG 34, 184
2b	ἡ Σεβαστὴ Ιουλία Δόμνα		statue base (alone)	βουλὴ δῆμος Ἰστριανῶν	Histria (MoesInf)	193-198	IScM I 86 = SEG 2, 456
3b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Λουκίου Σεπτιμίου Σεουήρου Περτίνακος Σεβαστοῦ γυνή	statue base (alone)		Epidaurus Limera (Asia)	193-211	SEG 45, 278
4b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		altar? ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Μᾶρ. Αὐρ. Φίλιππος, στράτορ	Gerasa (Arabia)	193-211	SEG 36, 1364
5b	[Ιο]υλία Δόμνα Σεβαστῆ		statue base? (alone)		Olympia (Achaia)	193-211	IvO 387
6b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων; Λ. Σεπτιμίου Σεουήρου Εύσεβοῦς Περτίνακος Σεβαστοῦ Άραβικοῦ Άδιαβηνικοῦ γυνή	statue base (alone)	ἡ πόλις	Attica (Achaia)	196-198	IG II <sup>2</sup> 3415
7b	Iulia Augusta	mater Caesaris et castrorum	statue basis (alone)		Auzia (MaurCaes)	196-198	CIL VIII 9033
8b	[Iu]lia Dom[na Au]g.	[ma]ter C[aes. et] c[astr. - - -]	statue basis? (alone)		Banasa (MaurCaes)	196-198	IAM II 1, 96
9b	Iulia Domna [A]ug.	mater castrorum liberorumque et totius domus divinae eius	statue basis? to Genius Populi (+Sev, Carac)	Sentia Magnia Saephare flam[ini]ca	Berytus (Syria)	196-198	CIL III 154
10b	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	statue base (+Carac)		Ostia (Ita-I)	196-198	CIL XIV 120 = CIL VI 1049
11b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	γυνή Αὐτοκράτορος Λ. Σεπτιμίου Σεβήρου Περτίνακος Άραβικοῦ	statue base (+Carac, Sev?)		Thespiae (Achaia)	196-198	IG VII 1845

		Αδ[ια]βηνικοῦ καὶ μήτηρ Μάρκο[ν] Αὐρηλίου Άντωνίου Καίσαρος					
12b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	statue base (+Sev)	ἡ πόλις ἡ Τειθρονίων	Tithronium (Achaia)	196-198	SEG 16, 353
13b	Iulia Aug.		statue base (+Sev, Carac)	M. Pompeius Pudentianus vet. fl. p.	Thamugadi (Num)	196-209	AE 1941, 46
14b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων, ἡ έαντοῦ (i.e. τοῦ δήμου) εὐεργέτις	statue base (+Carac?)	ὁ δῆμος	Aphrodisias (Asia)	196-211	MAMA VIII 452
15b	Iulia Dom{i}na Augusta	mater castrorum	statue base (alone)	decuriones	Arba (Dalm)	196-211	CIL III 3119
16b	[Ιουλία] Δόμν[α Σεβαστὴ]		statue base to Geta in the agora (+Sev)		Athenae (Achaia)	196-211	IG II <sup>2</sup> 3416a = SEG 33, 180
17b	[Ιουλία] Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	[μήτηρ] στρατοπέδων] καὶ τοῦ σύνπαντος θείου οἴκου [- - -]	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta?)		Augusta Traiana (Thracia)	196-211	IGRR I 1492
18b	[Iulia] Dom{i}na Aug.	mater castror.	statue base (alone)	Hel(vetii) publice	Aventicum (GermSup)	196-211	CIL XIII 5085
19b	[Iulia Domna August]a		? (+Sev, Carac?, Geta?)		Bagacum (Belg)	196-211	AE 1987, 773
20b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	statue basis (alone)	col. Iulia fel. Ber.	Berytus (Syria)	196-211	AE 1950, 230
21b	Iulia Aug.	mater castro[r.]	statue basis (alone)		Boccadifalco (Sicilia)	196-211	AE 1968, 200
22b	Iul. Domn. Aug.	mater kastrorum	statue basis (+Sev)	C. Iul. Ulpia Firmus Parth(i)copoli	Bostra (Arab)	196-211	IGLS XIII 1, 9053
23b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ ἱερῶν στρατοπέδων	statue basis (+Sev, Carac)		Boubon (LyciaPamph)	196-211	SEG 27, 920
24b	[Iuli]a Augusta	mater castrorum	statue basis (alone)	M. Romanius Iuventinus proc. Augg XX her. provinci[a]e Asiae	Ephesus (Asia)	196-211	AE 1952, 218
25b	Iulia Domna Aug.	[m]a[te]r castr. [et	? (+Sev, Carc?)		Furni	196-211	CIL VIII 12032

		Augustorum - - -]			(AfrProc)		
26b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	statue basis (alone)	municipium Gaul.	Gaulus (Sicilia)	196-211	CIL X 7502
27b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων, τῆς οἰκουμένης δεσπότις (+Sev)	? (+Sev)	M. Αἰμίλιος Λόνγος	Ilias (Asia)	196-211	IGRR IV 878
28b	[Ιουλία Δόμν]α Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ [στρατοπέδων]	slab	[έ]πὶ Σέξτου Κλωδίου [- -]νιανοῦ ἀνθυπάτου [ἡ βουλὴ?]	Kition (Cyprus)	196-211	IGR III 977
29b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	δῆ(μος)	Labraunda (Asia)	196-211	ILabr 38
30b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Sev)		Lyttus (Crete)	196-211	IC I/XVIII 47b = AE 1935, 89
31b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος Νεικοπολιτῶν	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	196-211	IGBulg II 635 = IGRR I 574 = AE 1902, 112
	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	ἡ λαμπροτάτη Πρ[ιηνέων] πόλις ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν φόρων δεκά[της, κα]θὰ ὁ κράτιστος ἀνθύπατος Λικίννιος Νέπως καὶ ὁ τῶν κυρίων ἐπί-τροπος [- - -]	Priene (Asia)	196-211	SEG 46, 1483
32b	Iulia Aug.	mater castro(rum)	statue basis (alone)	C. Cipius Corinthianus qq. pp.	Ostia (Ita-I)	196-211	AE 1989, 127
33b	Iulia Aug.	domina mater castrorum	tabella immunitatis (alone)		Roma	196-211	CIL VI 2149 = XV 7125
34b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ		? (+Sev, Carac, Geta?)		Roma	196-211	IGRR I 128
35b	[Iulia] Aug.	m[ater Aug. n. et] castro[rum]	?	[civitas] Vellav[orum]	Ruessio (Aquit)	196-211	CIL XIII 1592
36b	[Ιουλία] Δόμ[να]	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ [ό] δῆμος Σεβαστοπολειτῶν	Sebastopolis (PontBith)	196-211	Sebastopolis 3
37b	Iulia Aug.	mater (?) auggg. (?) ma(te)r kast(rorum)	altar <i>pro salute</i>		Soueida (Syria)	196-211	Cagnat 1924, 112
38b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum	architrave (+Sev [1st p.], Carac [2nd p.], Geta [4th p.])	decuriones	Thugga (AfrProc)	196-211	CIL VIII 1481 = 15523

39b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστή		statue base (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ασσίων	Assi (Asia)	196-217	IGRR IV 252
40b	[Ιο]υλία Σεβαστή	μή[τηρ τῶν στρατοπέδων]	slab (alone?)	<i>decree of the city</i>	Athenae (Achaia)	196-217	SEG 21, 504
41b	[Ιου]λία Σεβ[αστή]	σωτείρα τῶν [Ἀθηνῶν], Αθηνᾶ Πολιάς	slab (alone?)	<i>decree of the city</i>	Athenae (Achaia)	196-217	SEG 37, 97
42b	Ίουλία Δόμνα	νέα [Ἡρα], μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base? (alone)		Corycus (Cilicia)	196-217	IGRR III 856
43b	[Iuli]a Dom[na]	[mater Aug.?] et castr[orum]	? (+Sev?, Carac?)	lib. ta[b.]	Ephesus (Asia)	196-217	IK 12, 297a
44b	[Ιουλία Δόμνα Σε]βαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	? (alone?)	[ἡ Σμυρν]αίων πόλις	Smyrna (Asia)	196-217	ISmyrn 681a
45b	[Ιουλία Δόμνα Σε]βαστή		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[διέποντος τὴν ἐπαρχείαν ὑπατί]κοῦ Όουειγίου [Τερτύλλου, πρεσβευτοῦ Σεβαστῶν ἀντιστρατήγου ...]	Histria (MoesInf)	198-201	IScM I 87
46b	[Iulia Aug.]	mater Augusti et cast.	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	dedic. Q. Anicio Fausto - - - ]	Lambaesis (Num)	198-201	CIL VIII 18255 = AE 1967, 570
47b	[Iulia Aug.]	ma[ter Augg.] et castroru[m]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[dedica]nte Q. Ani[cio Fausto]	Lambaesis (Num)	198-201	CIL VIII 18068 = AE 1890, 107 = AE 1891, 149 = AE 1992, 1875
48b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] <>n.>> et castr.	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	dedic. Q. Anicio Fausto consulari, armorum custodes	Lambaesis (Num)	198-201	AE 1902, 10
49b	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater A]ugg. [nn.]	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Condate (Lugdun)	198-201	CIL 17 <sup>2</sup> 462 = CIL XIII 8952
50b	Iulia Aug.	matr. castr.	statue base (alone)	civitas Sutunuricensis	Soltane (AfrProc)	198-201	ILAfr 302 = AE 1909, 159
51b	Ίουλία [Δόμνα Σεβαστή]	[μήτηρ] στρατοπ[έδων]	slab (+Sev)	[Βεροιαίων ἡ μητρόπολις καὶ νεωκόρος]	Beroia (Macedonia)	198-202?	SEG 48, 745
52b	[Iulia Au]g.	mat. Augg. et castr.	altar to Silvanus Felix (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautianus)		Roma	198-205	CIL VI 643
53b	Iulia Aug.	mater castor.	altar to Mars (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	C. Rusticelius Proculus sac.	Ammaedara (AfrProc)	198-209	AE 1992, 1770
54b	Iulia	mater kas.	altar to Jupiter and Juno (+Sev, Carac,	cura Non. Felicis v. o., p. p., praepo. vex. Aulutre. mil.	Apamea Cibotus (Asia)	198-209	AE 1987, 941 = AE 1988, 1030 = AE 1995,

			Geta)	conducto. kastelli  Leg. XI Cl.: Fl. Sabinian., tess., Val. Silvanus et Val. Castus Mucatrl. Dolei, Aur. Senpro. et Aur. Tarsa Leg. I Ita.: [I]ul. Vitalis, Iul. Firmus			1512
55b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Appia (Asia)	198-209	AE 1993, 1509
56b	Ίουλία Δόμνη		milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Appia (Asia)	198-209	AE 1993, 1510a
57b	Ίουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων, ἡ γλυκυτάτη πατρίδι	<i>epystilium</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Arykanda (LyciaPamph)	198-209	AE 1994, 1735
58b	Το[υλία] Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		block (+ Sev, Carac, Geta)	ό ἀγωνοθέτης τῶν με]γάλων Παναθην[αίων] καὶ ιερεὺς Διός	Athenae (Achaia)	198-209	IG II <sup>2</sup> 3416 = SEG 34, 186
59b	Iul. Do[mna Augusta]		? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Bir Chouhada (Num)	198-209	ILAlg II 3, 7536
60b	Iulia Augusta	mater Augusti [et Caes.] et castrorum totiusque domus divina[e]	altar to Fortuna Redux (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	C. Sittius Q. fili. Quirina Flavianus aedilis IIIvir praefectus coloniarum ob honorem IIIviratus	Cirta (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 6944 = ILAlg II 1, 473
61b	Iulia Aug.		altar to Mater Deum Magnae (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica, pr(aeeunte) Talusio Appiano	Dea Augusta Vocontiorum (Narb)	198-209	AE 1889, 81
62b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[[g. nn.]]]	altar to Neptunus Aug. (Sev, Carac, Geta)	Victori(nu)s, Getulicus, Ianuarius verna Augg. ... ex dispensatoribus	Djeradou (AfrProc)	198-209	CIL VIII 27550 = AE 1899, 41
63b	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum et Augusti	statue basis (alone)	decuriones	El Abiod (MaurCaes)	198-209	CIL VIII 20208
64b	Iulia Dom{i}na August.	[m]ater imperatorum et castrorum {et castrorum}	block (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	em(p)tores defensionum Iumian(a)e Sapon(a)e Ponte(n)sis Camme(n)sis	El Eulma (Maur Caes)	198-209	ILAlg II 3, 7543a = AE 1906, 98 = AE 1907, 158
65b	[Iulia Aug.]		? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Helico libertus eorum	Ephesus (Asia)	198-209	CIL III 427 = CIG 2971 = SEG 56, 1223

66b	[Ιουλία] Δόμνη Σε[βαστή]		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἀγορανόμος	Ephesus (Asia)	198-209	AE 1997, 1454
67b	Iulia Aug.	m. Augg. et castr.	altar? to Genio saccariorum salarior(um) (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Restitutianus Cornelianus de XVI ab aer. et ark. sal. Romanarum cum Ingenua filia	Fregene (Ita-VII)	198-209	CIL XI 7725
68b	Iulia Dom{ι}na	mater castror.	altar to Dextri Aug. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Hos[t]ilius Callipus C. Hos[til]i Felicis filius et G[argili]a Donata mar[ita eius] L. Gargili Urba[ni filia] M. Hostili V[---]	Gens Suburburum Colonorum (Num)	198-209	ILAlg II 3, 7568 = AE 1972, 699
69b	Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστή		milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Ghedjeler (Asia)	198-209	IGRR IV 599
70b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] castrorumque	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	civitas	Giufi (AfrProc)	198-209	AE 2003, 1986
71b	Iulia Domna [Aug.]		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Hammam Siala (AfrProc)	198-209	CIL VIII 14457
72b	Ιουλία Σεβαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev Carac, Geta)		Hedje (Asia)	198-209	IGRR IV 924
73b	Ιουλία Δόμν]α Σεβα[στή]	[θειοτάτη μήτηρ κά]στρων	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Histria (MoesInf)	198-209	IScM I 82 = SEG 24, 1111
74b	[Ι]ουλία [Δόμν]α Σεβαστή	[μητέρα] [κάσ]τρω[v]	statue base (alone)	[ἡ πόλις ἡ Κουριέων?]	Kourion (Cyprus)	198-209	AE 1957, 827
75b	Iulia Aug.	mater castror.	altar to Dii Deaeque immortales (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Septimius Honoratus proc. Augg. et Caesaris	La Biolle (Narb)	198-209	CIL XII 2491
76b	[Iulia Au]gusta	mat[er Aug. et castrorum]	? (+Sev, Carac?)	[--- l]eg. Augg. [pr. pr.]	Lambaesis (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 2704
77b	Iulia Aug.	mater castrorum	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	leg. III Aug.	Lambaesis (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 2706
78b	[I]ulia A[ug.]	[mater] Aug. e[t castrorum] totiusq[ue domus] divina[e]	column? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Lambaesis (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 2707 = 18115
79b		[[[- - - mater Aug. et Caes.]]] et castror.	block (+Sev, Carac)	[--- quor]um nom. sub[s.] sunt	Lambaesis (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 18253

80b	Iulia Aug.	matr. Aug. n. ca[st.]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[t]ub. leg. III Aug. P. V. q. n. sub. [s.]	Lambaesis (Num)	198-209	AE 1906, 10 = AE 1907, 183 = AE 1907, 184 = AE 1983, 977
81b	Iulia Aug[usta]	[mater Augustorum] et cas[t]roru[m - - -]	semicircular exedra (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. [- - -] Asper Aurelianus sacerdotalis provinciae Africæ	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	198-209	IRT 397 = AE 1926, 158
82b	Iulia Aug.	m(ater) c(astrorum) et Augg.	altar to Terra Mater (+Severus, Carac, Geta)	Titi. Verecundus proc. Augg. nn. et Callimorph(h)u(s) M[- - -] vil. fer.	Ljubija (Dalm)	198-209	AE 1958, 63
83b	Iu[lia] Dom[na]	mater [Augg.] et castro[r - - -]	altar to Venus Aug. (+ Sev, Carac, Geta)	Terentia Sp[- - -]ra[- - -], sacerdos	Mactaris (AfrProc)	198-209	CIL VIII 23405
84b	Iulia Domn[a Aug.]	mater] [Augg. et cas]trorum totiusque domus divinae	arch (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Madauros (AfrProc)	198-209	ILAlg I 2086
85b	[Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]	[μήτηρ κάστρων] καὶ τοῦ σύνπαντος αὐτῶν οἴκου]	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Όνόματ[α - - -] names of the members of an association	Mangalia (MoesInf)	198-209	IScM III 73,A = IGRR I 650 = AE 1996, 1351a = SEG 46, 900
86b	[Ιουλία Δόμνα Σ]εβαστὴ		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	οἱ θρη[σκευταῖ]	Mangalia (MoesInf)	198-209	IScM III 260
87b	Iulia Aug.		altar to Mater Deum (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	C. Sittius Ianuarius sacerd.	Mascula (Num)	198-209	CIL VIII 2230 = 17668
88b	[Iulia Augusta]	mat[er castr.]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Mediolanum Santonum (Aquit)	198-209	AE 1977, 535
89b	Iuliae Aug.	m. Augg. et castr.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Restitutianus Cornelianus de XVI ab aer. et ark. sal. Romanarum cum Ingenua filia	Ostia (Ita-I)	198-209	CIL XIV 4285 = AE 1888, 65 = AE 1888, 124
90b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ τῶν στρατοπέδων καὶ τοῦ σύνπαντος αὐτῶν οἴκου καὶ ιερᾶς συνόδου	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Λ. Σεπτίμιος Τρύφων, Άλεξανδρεύς φιλόσοφος, γενόμενος ιερεὺς ... ἀρχιερεὺς Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Άντωνίου ...	Pergamum? (Asia)	198-209	IGRR IV 468
91b	Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων, ἡ γλυκυτάτη πατρίδι	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Perge (LyciaPamph)	198-209	SEG 38, 1401

92b	Iuli[a] Domna]	[mater Augg.] et kastrorum	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Stla[ccia - - -] sacerdos	Puteoli (Ita-I)	198-209	CIL X 1585
93b	Iulia Aug.		altar to IOMD (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Semnus Augg. nn. lib. optio tabellariorum stationis	Roma	198-209	CIL VI 410 = 30760
94b	Ιουλία Σεβαστή	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων, καὶ τοῦ σύνπαντος αὐτῶν οἴκου	slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Λ. Σεπτίμιος Τρύφων καὶ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς φιλόσοφος γενόμενο<ς> ἵερεὺς κατὰ τὸ ἔξῆς δις καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ καθηγεμόνος Διονύσου διὰ βίου ἔτι τε καὶ τειμηθεὶς ἀρχιερεὺς Μάρκου Αὐρηλίου Αντωνίου Σεβαστοῦ τοῦ νέου Διονύσου διὰ βίου	Roma	198-209	SEG 35, 1040/1732 = CIG 6829 = IGR IV 468
95b	[Iulia] Aug.	mater Aug[g.]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Roma	198-209	CIL VI 883
96b	Iulia Au[g.]		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	dendrophori	Roma	198-209	CIL VI 1040
97b	Iulia Au[gusta]	[mater A]ug[g.] et castror[um]	slab (+Sev., Carac, Geta)		Roma	198-209	CIL VI 31332
98b	[Iulia] Aug.	[matri] Aug. n. et ca[str.]	? (alone?)		Roma	198-209	CIL VI 40676
99b	Ιουλία Σεβαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Senir Mesarlik (Asia)	198-209	IGRR IV 926
100b	Iulia Domna Aug.		altar to I.O.M (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Lurius Seius veteranus leg. II Adi. Pia F[i]de.	Skira (AfrProc)	198-209	CIL VIII 25894
101b	Iulia Aug.	mater Caes. et castrorum totiusq. domus divinae eorum	statue basis to Victoria Aug. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Captius Pap. Martial(is), aed.	Sitifis (MaurCaes)	198-209	CIL VIII 8455
102b	Iuli[a] Aug		statue basis to a deity? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	P. Aelius Victorinu[s] ex mag. et [ex] decur.	Storgosia (MoesInf)	198-209	ILBulg 223 = AE 1911, 16
103b	Iulia Dom[na Aug.]		architrave (+Sev, Carc, Geta)	[- - -] Lucanus sacerdos	Suk Tleta (AfrProc)	198-209	CIL VIII 14465
104b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater [castrorum]	statue base to Mars (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Selicius Saturninus Selici Felicitis f. ob hon.	Sutunurca (AfrProc)	198-209	AE 1992, 1798 = AE 1993, 1737

				[XI]pr(imatus)]			
105b	[Ιουλία] Δ[όμν]α Σεβαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Tchamekeui (Asia)	198-209	IGRR IV 925
106b	Ιουλία Σεβαστή - - - ]		? (+Sev)		Athenae (Asia)	198-210	IG II <sup>2</sup> 3413
107b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Ephesos (Asia)	198-210	I Eph 3087
108b	[Ιουλία] Δόμνα Σεβαστή	μήτηρ κάστρων	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[βουλὴ καὶ ὁ νεωκόρος δῆμος]	Ephesos (Asia)	198-210	I Eph 4109
109b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.		? (+Sev, Carac)	ἡ πόλις ἐκ τῶν ιερομνημονικῶν πόρων	Epidauria (Achaia)	198-210	IG IV <sup>2</sup> ,1 610
110b	Ιουλία Σεβαστή	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	statue base to Caracalla	ἡ πόλις ἡ Μεγαρέων	Megara (Achaia)	198-210	IG VII 80 = CIG 1075
111b	Iulia D[omna Augusta]		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Agger (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 12142
112b	[Iuli]a Do[mna Aug]	[m]ater c[astrorum]	statue base (alone)	[ - - - ]ius Fabianu[s - - - pr]aef. i. d.	Ammaedara (AfrProc)	198-211	ILTun 460 = AE 1927, 30
113b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Au[[g.]] et castror. totiusq. divinae domus eorum	altar to Hygia Aug. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Baebius Secundus et Iulia Victorina	Ammaedara (AfrProc)	198-211	AE 1999, 1783
114b	[Iuliae Domnae Aug.]	mater Aug[g. nn. et castrorum]	slab (+Sev, Carac)		Apulum (Dacia)	198-211	EDCS-66600396
115b	Iulia		? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	vexillatio leg. III A[u]g. et mil[ites] coh[o]rtis I S]yro[r]um sagit[ta]riorum	Auru (AfrProc)	198-211	AE 1962, 304 = AE 1992, 1761
116b	Iulia Domna Aug.	[mater Augus]ti et castrorum	statue base (+Sev)		Biniana (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 75
117b	[Iu]lia [Domna Aug.]		slab (alone)		Carthago (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 24556 = ILTun 963
118b	[Iulia A]jug.	mater Au[gg.]	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Chusira (AfrProc)	198-211	AE 1993, 1720
119b	[Iulia Domna Aug.]		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	sacerdo[tes dei Mercuri Sobri]	Cincari (AfrProc)	198-211	ILAfr 484 = AE 1915, 40
120b	Iul[ia Do]mna Aug.	ma[ter cas]trorum	statue base (+Sev, Carac)	M. An[to]nius M. f. Pap. V[ena]tor, L. Flavius [ - - - ]	Diana (AfrProc)	198-211	AE 1934, 28 = AE 1993, 1770

				Pap. Donatus q. aedil. q(uaestoriae), praef. i. d. pro IIviris			
121b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Τιβ. [Κλ.] Μελίτων φιλοσέβαστος ό ἀγορανόμος ἀλυταρχοῦντος	Ephesos (Asia)	198-211	I Eph 523
122b	Ιο[ν]λ[ία Δόμνα]	[μήτηρ σ[τρατ]ο[πέδων]]	architrave for the dedication of a stoa in the agora (+Sev? Carac?, Geta)		Ephesus (Asia)	198-211	SEG 27, 752
123b	[Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]		architrave for the dedication of an hydreion (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Τι. Φλ. Μένανδρος, ὁ ἀστάρχης καὶ γραμματεὺς γενόμενος τοῦ δῆμου	Ephesus (Asia)	198-211	SEG 28, 871
124b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[usto]rum]]] et cast[rorum - - -]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Get)		Furni (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 12031
125b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater cast.	column to Mars Conservator (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Rossius Vitulus proc. ducen. IIII publ. prov. Afr.	Henchir Sidi Soltan (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 14454
126b	Ίουλία [Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]	[το]ὺς εὐεργέ[τας τῆς οἰκου]μένης καὶ κτί[στας] (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Hierapytna (Crete)	198-211	IC III/III 19
127b	Δό[μνα Σεβαστὴ]	[μητέρα κάστρων, Κου]ριέω[ν]	? (+Sev)	[ἡ πόλις]	Kourion (Cyprus)	198-211	AE 1975, 843
128b	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum mater Aug[[g.]]	statue base (alone)	curia Augusta	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	198-211	IRT 405
129b	Iulia Augusta	mater castrorum mater Aug[[g.]]	statue base (alone)	curia Iulia	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	198-211	IRT 406
130b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] et castrorum	statue base (alone)	Messius Atticus ((centurio)) coh. VII pr. P. V.	Leptis Magna (AfrProc)	198-211	IRT 408
131b	[Iulia Augusta]		statue basis (alone)		Mascula (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 15776
132b	[Iuli]a Domn[a Augusta]	[mater] Aug[[g.]] et castrorum	architrave (+Sev)		Municipium Avula (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 710 = 713 = 12141

133b	Iulia Dom{i}n. Aug.		altar to Ado Aug. (+Sev, Carac)		Neferis (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 24031 = ILTun 825 = AE 1905, 13
134b	Ιουλία Αὐγούστα Σεβ.	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	statue base (alone)	ἡ μητρόπολις, διέποντος τὴν ἐπαρχείαν Μ. Κλ. Δημητρίου, λογιστεύοντος Καισερίου Στατιανοῦ τοῦ κρατίστου	Nicomedia (BithPont)	198-211	IGGR III 6
135b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater castrorum, mater Augustor[um]	statue basis (alone)	Q. Silicius Victor et C. Tadius Fortunatus	Pagus Mercurialis (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 885 = 12387 = CIL XI * 250,2a
136b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ]	[μήτηρ τῶν [ιερῶν στρατοπέδων]	architrave? (+Sev, Carac)		Palmyra (Syria)	198-211	IGRR III 1534
137b	Ιου[λία] Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		statue base (+Sev, Carac)	οἱ Πενταπολεῖται [- - -] Ἀδριανοπολεῖται, [Β]ε[ρ]γᾶοι, Σκυμβέρτοι, Γαζώριοι	Philippi (Macedonia)	198-211	SEG 45, 791
138b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβ.]	[μήτηρ κάστ]ρων κ[αὶ σύμπαντος αὐτῶν οἴκου]	slab (+Sev, Carac)		Philippopolis (Thracia)	198-211	IGBulg III 1, 1074 = IGRR I 702.1463
139b	Iulia Aug.	mater castror. et Aug[[g.]]	statue basis (alone)	decuriones	Pisaurum (Ita-VI)	198-211	CIL XI 6324
140b	Iuliae Aug.	mater Augg. totiusq. domus divinae eorum	altar (+Sev, Carac)		Roma	198-211	CIL VI 461
141b	Ιουλία Σεβασ[τὴ]		altar? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Roma	198-211	IGUR I 34
142b	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg. et castrorum	architrave (alone)		Roma	198-211	CIL VI 997
143b	Iulia Aug.	m. k. totiusq. domus divinae numeroque eorum	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Accius Iustus cum suis	Roma	198-211	CIL VI 3768 = 31322
144b	[Iu]lia Aug.	[m]ater Augg. et [c]astrorum	slabs + statue bases (+Carac)	kalatores pon[tificum et flaminum] curante Eutychete	Roma	198-211	CIL VI 36932 = AE 1900, 86
145b	Iulia Aug.	mater castror.			Roma	198-211	CIL VI 36934
146b	Iulia [Aug.]		slab? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Roma	198-211	CIL VI 40603 = 1039

147b	[Iuli]a A[ug.]	[mat. Aug.]	altar to IOM and Genius Loci (+Sev, Carac., Geta)	Q. A[- - -]ndr[us] [praef. coh.] II [Raet.]	Saalburg (GermSup)	198-211	CIL XIII 7452
148b	Iulia Domna Augusta		altar (alone)	Sabrathenses	Sabratha (AfrProc)	198-211	IRT 37
149b	Iulia Augusta	mater [Augustorum et castrorum]	architrave (+Sev, Carac.)	[p]opulus Sustritanus	Sustri (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 25937 = AE 1892, 91
150b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		statue base (alone)	ἡ πόλις	Taenarum Oppidum (Achaia)	198-211	SEG 19.199
151b	Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base? (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἐτείμησαν ἀρχιέρειαν	Termessos (Asia)	198-211?	TAM III 1, 97
152b	[Ιουλί]α Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	[μήτηρ κ]άστρων	statue base? (alone)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἐτείμησαν ἀρχιέρειαν	Termessos (Asia)	198-211?	TAM III 1, 99
153b	[Iulia] Domna [A]ug.	matris Aug[g.] et cas[tr]orum	altar? (+Sev, Carac, Geta?)	L. Metilius Primus Iulianus Ma.	Thabora (AfrProc)	198-211	ILAfr 218
154b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ]	μήτηρ κάστρ[ων]	? (+Sev, Carac)	[ἀρχιερεύς τῶν Σεβαστῶν καὶ ἄγων[οθέτης τοῦ Κοινοῦ τῶν Μακεδόνων]	Thessalonike (Macedonia)	198-211	IG X 2, 1, 138 = AE 2006, 1270 = SEG 56, 752
155b	[Iulia Aug.]	[Au]gust[[orum]] mater			Thubursicu Numidarum (AfrProc)	198-211	ILAgl I 1257
156b	Iulia Aug.	ma[ter Augg.]			Thubursicu Numidarum (AfrProc)	198-211	ILAgl I 1259
157b	Iulia Domna Augusta	mater Augustorum et castrorum	statue base (alone)		Thugga (AfrProc)	198-211	CIL VIII 26544
158b	Iul[- - -]		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Tipasa (MaurCaes)	198-211	CIL VIII 20865
159b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] n. et castrorum	? (+Sev, Carac)	curia Victoriae Antonini	Tubunae (Num)	198-211	AE 1901, 2
160b	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater Aug[[g.]] et castrorum]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	optiones valet[udinarii - - -] pequari. librarius et discentes capsario[rum]	Lambaesis (Num)	199-201	CIL VIII 2553 = 18047 = AE 1906, 9
161b	[Iulia Aug.]	ma[ter Augg.] et castroru[m]	block (+Sev, Carac, Geta?)	veteran[i leg. III] Aug. P. V.	Lambaesis (Num)	199-201	CIL VIII 18068 = AE 1890, 107 = AE 1891, 149 = AE 1992, 1875

162b	[Ιου]λία Αύγούστη	μήτηρ κάστρων	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ὑπὲρ τοῦ διέποντος [τ]ὴν ἐπαρχείον ὑπατικοῦ Όουνίου Τερτύλου	Tomi (MoesInf)	199-201	IScM II 83 = IGRR I 614 = SEG 27.399
163b	[Iulia] Aug.	mater Augg. [et castrorum totiusq]ue divinae domus eorum	altar to Mater Magna Deum Idea <i>pro salute</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	decuriones, Iulio Aspro procos. c. v., Claudio Iuliano [- - -] curator[e]	Carthago (AfrProc)	200-210	ILAfr 355 = ILTun 1047 = AE 1920, 28 = AE 1922, 56
164b	Iulia Aug.	[mater Augusti et Caesaris]	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla?)	colonia	Aelia Capitolina (Palest)	202-205?	AE 1984, 914 = AE 1997, 1562
165b	[Iulia] A[ug.]	[mater] A[ugg.], mat[er] cast[r.]	altar to IOM (+Sev, Carac, Plautilla)	[- - - Pa]catus [vet. le]g. XIII G[em.]	Carnuntum (PanSup)	202-205	AE 2003, 1389
166b	Iulia Aug.		architrave? (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	C. Aufidius Utilis Manciane cultor	Fundus Tapp(- - -) (AfrProc)	202-205	ILTun 629 = AE 1938, 72
167b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. n. et cast.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Plautilla)	cor. leg. III Aug. P. V., scamnari	Lambaeis (Num)	202-205	CIL VIII 2557 = 18050
168b	Iulia Do[mna Aug.]	mater Augg. et castrorum	block (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla?)		Mactaris (AfrProc)	202-205?	AE 1957, 54 = AE 2002, 1667a-b
169b	Iulia Aug. mater Augg.	mater castrorum	statue base? (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	Q. Calpurnius Festus, aed.	Madauros (AfrProc)	202-205	ILAlg I 2087
170b	[I]ulia Dom[na Aug.]	mater Augg. m]at[er] castrorum	statue base? (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	C. Iulius Urbanus Priscianus, aed.	Madauros (AfrProc)	202-205	ILAlg I 2088
171b	Iulia August[a]	mate[r] Augg.] mater castro[rum]	statue base? (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	Q. Mattius Rusticus Flav[ia]nus	Madauros (AfrProc)	202-205	ILAlg I 2089 = AE 1917/18, 15
172b	Iulia Domna		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	P. Perellius Saturninus Ilvir	Mustis (AfrProc)	202-205	AE 1968, 590
173b	[[Ιουλία Δόμνα]]	[[θεὰ]]	statue base (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ὑπατεύον[τος] τῆ[ς ἐπ]αρχείας Αὐρ. Γάλλου πρεσβ. Σεββ. ἀντιστρα[τήγου]	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	202-205	IGBulg II 623
174b	Iulia Aug.	matr. castror.	altar to Diana (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla?)		Roma	202-205	CIL VI 120
175b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. <<n.>> et castror. et <<senatus>> <<et patriae>>	altar to Isis Regina (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla, Plautianus)	L. Ceius L. f. Privatus, princeps castrorum peregrinorum	Roma	202-205	CIL VI 354
176b	Iulia Augusta	mater Aug. <<castrorum senatus et populi	altar to IOMDD (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	sacerdotes	Roma	202-205	CIL VI 419 = 30763

		Romani>>					
177b	Ίουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστὴ	[μήτηρ Σεβαστο]ῦ μήτηρ κάστρων	monument to the imperial family (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)		Sparta (Achaia)	202-205	AE 1991, 1440 = SEG 34, 309 = SEG 36, 360
178b	Ίουλία	Nέα Ἡρα	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla?)	Τρύφων Ἀπολλωνίδου	Tacina (Asia)	202-205	IGRR IV 881
179b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater [Augg. et castrorum]	arch (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)	M. Fabius Laetus fl. pp.	Thubursicu Numidarum (AfrProc)	202-205	ILAlg I 1256
180b (I)	[Ίουλία] Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		milestone (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)		Traianopolis (Thracia)	202-205	AE 1991, 1408 = SEG 39, 666
181b (II)	Ίουλία [Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]		slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta, Plautilla)		Traianopolis (Thracia)	202-205	IGRR I 828
182b	[Iulia D]omna Aug.	matr. [castr]orum	altar (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Patroclus Augg[[g.]] lib. procurator	Ain Ouassel (AfrProc)	202-211	CIL VIII 26416 = ILTun 1373 = AE 1892, 90 = AE 1892, 124 = AE 1894, 77 = AE 1909, 113
	[I]ulia [Augu]sta	[mater Augusti et cas]tror[um totiusque] divinae domus	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta [?])	[ - - - ] Rusonianus fl[am.] augur IIvir qq.	Lepcis Magna (AfrProc)	202-211	IRT 396 = AE 1991, 1619
183b	Iulia Domna Aug.	Iuno Regina	architrave (+Sev [I.O.M.?], Carac)	Vicani	Zama Regia (AfrProc)	202-211	AE 1949, 109
184b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	ἡ κύρια	statue base (+ Carac)	ἐπὶ Αιοκίου Μοδέστου ὑπάτ. ἀναδ., ἡ Βοστρηνῶν πόλι[ζ]	Bostra (Arabia)	205-207	IGLS XIII 1 9054
185b	Iul. [Aug.]	[matr. castr.]	slab to IOMD for the dedication of a temple (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[milites? in] cohorte I Athoitorum, de Q. Egnatio Proculo leg. Aug. pr. pr.	Kabyle (Thrace)	205-208	AE 1999, 1374 = SEG 42, 646
186b	Ίουλία Σεβαστὴ		altar? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Helico libertus eorum [ $\Gamma\Lambda\acute{\iota}$ ]< $\kappa$ >ων ἀπελεύθερος αὐ[τῶν]	Ephesus (Asia)	205-209	CIG 2971 = CIL III 427
187b (I)	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	dedication of the <i>scaenae frons</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ πόλις Ιεραπολειῶν, ἀνθυπάτεύοντος Κ. Τινηίου Σακέρδωτος, ταμίου καὶ πρεσβ. καὶ ἀντιστρατήγου	Hierapolis (Asia)	206-208	AE 1985, 804 = AE 2007, 1395 = SEG 77, 1367

				καὶ λογιστοῦ τῆς πόλεως Δομιτίου Ἀρισταίου Ἀραβιανοῦ			
188b (II)	[I]ουλ[ία]		name on relief in the <i>scaena frons</i> (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Hierapolis (Asia)	206-208	SEG 35, 1375
189b	[I]ulia Domna Au[g.]	[m]ater ca[st]rorum	statue base (alone)	nautae universi Danuvii, sub cura L. Iulii Faustiniani	Axiopolis (MoesInf)	207-210	CIL III 7485
190b	Iulia Domna Augusta		statue base (+Carac, Geta)	[municipiu]m Septimum Aurelium Limisa	Limisa (AfrProc)	208-211	AE 2004, 1676
	[Iulia] Domna Aug.		? (+Sev?, Carac, Geta)	[- - -]pione verna [- - -] contrascriptor [- - -]	Capsa (AfrProc)	209-211	AE 1996, 1702
191b	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater] Auggg. et castr.	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	sub cura L. Corne. Catonis ((centurionis))	Castellum Dimmidi (Num)	209-211	AE 1940, 144
192b	Ίουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ Σεβαστῶν καὶ τῶν ιερῶν στρατοπέδων	block - dedication of the baths (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ πόλις	Chimaera (LyciaPamph)	209-211?	AE 1996, 1504
193b	Iul[iae] Augusta	m. Augg. [e]t [cas]trorum	altar to Minerva Aug. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Iulius Z[e]no optio leg. III Aug.	Bezereos (AfrProc)	209-211	ILAfr 28 = AE 1909, 152
194b	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg. et castr. totiusque dom. divin.	altar to I.O.M. et Nymphae (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	vex(illarii) leg. III Aug. morantes ad fenum sec.	Casae (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 4322 = 18527
195b	Iulia Domna Aug.	[mater castrorum et totius domus] divinae	altar to Minerva, Victoria Augusta (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[c]oloni Gam(onenses)	Douar Bayoud (AfrProc)	209-211	AE 1999, 1771
196b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[Τί. Φλ. Μένανδρος ὁ ἀσιάρχης] καὶ γραμματεὺς γενόμ[ε]νος τοῦ δήμου	Ephesus (Asia)	209-211	IEph 435 = SEG 28, 871
197b	Iulia Aug.		architrave of a <i>cisterna</i> to serve the fort (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Gasr Zerzi (AfrProc)	209-211	Brogan-Reynolds 1964, 44 no. 2
198b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		altar? (Sev, Carac, Geta)	κηπουροὶ τῆς ἄνω φάρανγος	Gerasa (Arabia)	209-211	SEG 35, 1573 = AE 1985, 835
199b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.		altar to Zeus Ouranios ὑπέρ σωτηρίας (+Sev,		Gerasa (Arabia)	209-211	SEG 39, 1655

			Carac, Geta)				
200b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Augg. et castrorum	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	Q. Aiaciūs [Mo]destus Crescentia[nus], leg. G. S. num. d[evotus]	Grosskrotzenburg (GermSup)	209-211	CIL XIII 7417
201b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων, τὴν δέσποιναν	statue base (+Geta)	ἡ πόλις ἡ τῶν Ἐρμιονέων	Hermionis (Achaia)	209-211	IG IV 704
202b	[Iulia Domna]	[mater cast]rorum	slab - dedication of a public building (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[ - - ]cao proc. Augg[[g.]] nn[[n.]] [dedicante (?) M. Lucretio Iu]lliano proc.	Hispalis (Baet)	209-211	AE 1987, 497 = AE 1994, 907
203b	Iulia Aug.	mater August[[orum]] et castrorum	altar to Iuppiter Valens, Aesculapius, Silvanus Pegasianus (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[ - - Pontius - - - leg. Aug. pr. pr. co)s desig. cum Claudia Proculina uxore et Pontio Suro Iuniano fil.	Lambaesis (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 2585 = 18091 = AE 1967, 571
204b	[Iulia A]ugusta	mater Augustorum et [castror]um totiusque domus divinae	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[leg. III A]ug. P. V.	Lambaesis (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 2671 = 18107
205b	Iulia Aug.	[mater castrorum et totius domus] divinae	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica	Mophi (Num)	209-211	AE 1950, 136
206b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων καὶ τῶν ιερῶν στρατοπέδων	architrave for the dedication of the baths (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	ἡ πόλις	Olympos (Asia)	209-211	SEG 46, 1711
207b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Carac)	ἡ πόλις	Samos (Asia)	209-211	IG XII, 6 1:425 = SEG 1.403 = IGRR IV 1722
208b	Iulia Aug.	mater Augg. et castrorum	block to Victoria (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Iunius Vibianus, augur	Thamugadi (Num)	209-211	AE 1941, 49
209b	Iulia Aug.		altar to Concordia Auggg. (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Licinius Optatianus fl. pp.	Thamugadi (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 17829
	Iulia Augusta	mater Aug[[g.]] et castrorum	altar to Mercurius (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	L. Germeus Silvanus augur	Thamugadi (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 17837 = AE 1888, 28
210b	Iulia [Domna]		altar to Mars Aug. Conservator (+Sev, Carac, Geta)		Thamugadi (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 17835
211b	Iulia Aug.	mater castr.	altar to IOMD (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Caninius Adiutor Faustinianus praef. coh. II	Thenadassa (AfrProc)	209-211	IRT 868 = AE 1950, 126

				H(a)m. praep. vex. leg. III Aug. P. V.			
212b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Au[gustorum] et castrorum	? (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	res publica	Thugga (AfrProc)	209-211	ILAfr 562
213b	[Iulia A]ugusta	mater castrorum Augu[stor]m totiusq[ue domus divinae]	architrave (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	[- -]us Felix, Memmia Pude[- -]	Uchi Maius (AfrProc)	209-211	CIL VIII 25484
214b	Iul[ia] D[omna Augusta]	mater Au[gg.]	statue base to Geta	res publica	Uchi Maius (AfrProc)	209-211	AE 2006, 1687
215b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug[[g.]] et castr.	slab (+Sev, Carac, Geta)	M. Baebius Victor fl. pp.	Vazanis (Num)	209-211	CIL VIII 17638
216b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. n. et senat. et patriae et castr.	slab? (+Carac)	Dasimius Firmin. corn. leg. et Aurel. Victorin. actar. cum imm. libr. et exactis	Albanum (Ita-I)	211-213	CIL XIV 2255 = 3401
217b	Iulia Domna Aug.	coniunx Divi Severi, Fortuna Redux, Fecunditas	statue base (+Div Sev, Carac?)	ordo	Mustis (AfrProc)	211-213	AE 2013, 2137
218b	[Iulia Augusta]	mater Aug.] et castror[um et] senatus et patriae toti[usque domus divinae eorum]	? (+Carac)		Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	211-213	ILTun 718
219b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Imp. Caes. M. Aureli Antonini Pii Felicitis Aug. Brit. maxim[i p]latris patriae et castrorum et senatus et patriae	statue basis (+Carac)	decuriones	Verecunda (Num)	211-213	CIL VIII 4215
220b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.	Εὐσεβ. Εὐτυχῆς μήτηρ κάστρων καὶ τοῦ κυρίου Αύτοκράτορος καὶ τῆς ιερᾶς Συνκλήτου καὶ τῆς πατρίδος	altar (+Carac)		Adana (Cilicia)	211-217	AE 2005, 1547b
221b	[Iulia Dom]na Aug.	mater Aug. et castrorum	altar to Hercules (+Carac)	sub cura Iul. Paterni proc. Syntrophus vil.	Ad Mediam (Dacia)	211-217	CIL III 1565 = IDR III 1, 58
222b	[Iulia Domna Aug.]	[mater Augg. et castror. et senatus et pat]riae totius[q. domus divinae	slab (+Carac)		Ammaedara (AfrProc)	211-217	AE 1999, 1790

223b	Iulia Aug.	mater eius et castrorum senatus et patriae	altar to IOM, Iuno Reg., Minerva (+Carac)	Aelius Sostratus proc.	Ampelum (Dacia)	211-217	CIL III 7836 = IDR III 3, 318
224b	Ιουλία Δόμνα	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (alone)	ἡ πόλις ἡ Ἀντικυ- ρέον	Antikyra (Achaia)	211-217	IG IX 1, 7
225b	Iulia Augusta	mater Augusti	altar to I.O.M. Sabadius (+Carac)	L. Aur. Marcianus, aedilicius	Apulum (Dacia)	211-217	AE 1961, 82 = IDR III 5, 1, 225
226b	Iulia Aug.	mater Augusti	altar? to IOM, Iuno Reg. (+Carac)	M. Ulp. Mucianus mil. leg. XIII Gem. horologiar(ius?)	Apulum (Dacia)	211-217	CIL III 1070 = IDR III 5, 1, 193
227b	Iulia Augusta	ma[ter] sanctissimi piissimiqu[e] Antonini Augusti et castrorum senatusque ac patriae	statue base (alone)	legio XIII Gemina	Apulum (Dacia)	211-217	EDCS-66600394
228b	Ιου. Δόμνα Σεβ.	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Carac)	ἡ πόλις ἐπὶ συναρχίας Α[ὐρ.] Δημητρίου Απφου	Augusta Traiana (Thracia)	211-217	IGBulg III 1558 = IGRR I 751
229b	[Iulia Aug.]	[mater A]ug. et castrorum et [senatus et patriae]	architrave (+DivSev, Carac)	[mun]icipium Septimi[um Aurelium Aveddensium numini maiestatique eorum devotum	Avedda (AfrProc)	211-217	CIL VIII 14369 = ILAfr 435
230b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.		altar Διὶ καὶ Διονύσῳ (+Carac)	Αὐρ. [Διο]νύσιος [Θε]μίσωνος	Bizye (Thracia)	211-217	IGBulg V 5659 = SEG 28, 560 = AE 1999, 1368
231b	[Iulia Domna] Aug.	[F]elix ma[ter Im]p. Antonin[i Pii] [Fel]icis Aug. [et cas]trorum [et senat]us ac p[at]riae [s]anctissimae	statue base (alone)		Borbona (Samn)	211-217	CIL IX 4637
232b	Iul. Aug.	mater d. n. et castrorum	? (+Carac)		Bremetennacum (Brit)	211-217	CIL VII 226 = RIB I 590
233b	Iu[lia Aug.]	[m]ater [Aug. et c]a. et [senatus]	altar to Hercules Sanctus (+Carac)	[C. Iul. Ael]jur[io ((centurio)) leg. III A]ug. praep. n. Hemesenorum	Calceus Herculis (Num)	211-217	CIL VIII 2496 = AE 1933, 45
234b	[I]ulia Aug.	mater A[ug. et castr.]	altar? to Deus Solis (+Carac)	[M.] Ulpius Optatu[s ((centurio)) leg. III Aug. praeposit]us n. Hemesenoru[m]	Calceus Herculis (Num)	211-217	AE 1926, 145 = AE 1979, 676 = AE 1992, 1850

235b	Iulia Aug.	mater senatus et castrorum	statue basis (alone)	M. Sabinius Victor	Calleva (Brit)	211-217	CIL VII 7 = RIB I 68
236b	Iulia [Aug.]	[m]ater [Aug.] et castrorum [et senatus et pa]triae totiusq. [domus divin]ae	altar (+Carac)	[- - -]us proc. [Aug.]	Carthago (AfrProc)	211-217	AE 1998, 1538
237b	Iulia Dom[na Augusta - - -]		? (+Carac)		Chusira (AfrProc)	211-217	ILTun 585
	Ίουλία [Σ]ε[β]αστὴ	μήτηρ [κάστρων]	statue base (+Carac)		Ephesus (Asia)	211-217	SEG 15.703
238b	Iu[lia] Aug.	mater [Aug. castr.] senatus ac patr[iae]	altar to Diana (+Carac)	C. Val. Valent[inus], trib. leg. XIII G. An[t.]	Germisara (Dacia)	211-217	AE 2003, 1513
239b (I)	Iulia Aug.	mater d. n. castrorum senatus patriae	altar I.O.M., Venus, Mercurius dii Heliopolitani (+Carac)	Aur. Ant. Longinus specul. leg. III Gall. [An]toniniana	Heliopolis (Syria)	211-217	CIL III 138a = 14385b1 = IGLS VI 2711 = AE 1906, 187a
240b (II)	Iulia Aug.	mater d. n. castrorum senatus patriae	altar to I.O.M., Venus, Mercurius dii Heliopolitani (+Carac)	Aur. Ant. Longinus specul. leg. III Gall. [Antoninia]nae	Heliopolis (Syria)	211-217	CIL III 138b = 14385b2 = IGLS VI 2712 = AE 1906, 187b
241b	Ίουλία [Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ]	κάστρων μήτηρ], [τὴν δέσποιναν]	? (+Carac)	[ἡ πόλις ἡ τῶν [Ἐρμιονέων]	Hermionis (Achaia)	211-217	IG IV 706
242b	Ίουλία Δόμνη		architrave with dedication to Apollo and others in the theatre (+Carac)		Hierapolis (Asia)	211-217	AE 1985, 805 = AE 2007, 1396 = SEG 35, 1386 = SEG 77, 1369
243b	Ίουλία Δόμνα Σε.	Tύχη τῆς οἰκουμένης	statue base (alone)	βουλὴ δῆμος	Histria (MoesInf)	211-217	IScM I 89
244b	[[Ιουλία Δόμνα]] Σεβαστὴ	[μήτηρ ἀνει]κήτων στρατοπέδων	? (+Carac)		Koptos (Egypt)	211-217	SEG 34, 1597
245b	[θεὰ Ίουλία Δό]μ[να] [Σεβαστὴ]	[μητέρα [κάστρων] [καὶ πατρίδος? κ]αὶ κυρίου ἡμῶν]	? (+Carac)		Kourion (Cyprus)	211-217	AE 1975, 842
246b	Iulia Dom{i}na Aug.	mater castrorum e[t] Aug. et senatus	? (+Carac?)		Lambaesis (Num)	211-217	BCTH-1915-114
247b	Iulia Augusta	m[ater Augusti et castrorum et senatus et	altar to I.O.M (+Carac)	M. Valerius Senecio leg. Au[g. pr. pr. cos. des.]	Lambaesis (Num)	211-217	CIL VIII 2619

		patriae]					
248b	Iulia Domna		altar to Opis Regina (+Carac)	L. Veturius Felix et Lucia Quieta	Lambaesis (Num)	211-217	CIL VIII 2670
249b	Iuliae Aug.	mater Aug. castr. senat. et patr(iae)	statue base (alone)	decuriones	Larinum (Ita-IV)	211-217	AE 1994, 490
250b	[Iulia] Augusta	mater Au[gusti n. et ca]strorum	slab (+Carac)	sac(er)do[tes] arar[u]m dei [- - Libe]ri Patris	Luna (Etrur)	211-217	CIL XI 1335
251b	[Iulia Augusta]	Caelestis dea, [mater Imperato]ris Caesaris [M. Aureli Anton]ini Pii Felicis [Augusti Parth]ici maxim[i] [Britannici maxi]mi Germanici [maximi itemqu]e senatus patri[ae et castror]um	slab (alone)		Moguntiacum (GermSup)	211-217	CIL XIII 6671
252b	Iulia Dom[na] Aug.	mat Aug. et castro[rum] et senatus et patriae to[tius]que [do]mus divinae	? (+Carac)	L. M[- - - Fel]ix Quad[ratus - - - II]vir	Meninx (AfrProc)	211-217	ILTun 66 = AE 1934, 35
253b	[Iulia A]ug.	ma[ter sanc]tissi[mi Imp. Anto]nini [Aug. et c]astro[rum sen]atus	statue base (alone)		Micia (Dacia)	211-217	CIL III 1376 = IDR III 3, 55
254b	Ιουλία Δόμνα [- - -]		statue base (+Carac)	πόλις Σεβαστήων [Με]λιταέων	Melitaia (Achaia)	211-217	SEG 3, 466
255b	[Iulia Augusta]	[mater sanctissimi piissimique Antonini Augusti et castroru]m [sena]tusq. ac patriae	statue base (alone)	ala Silana Antoniniana	Napoca (Dacia)	211-217	AE 1993, 1331
256b	Ιουλία Δόμνα	Θεὰ [Σεβ.], μητέρα ἱερῶν [στρατευμάτων] καὶ συγκλήτου [καὶ δήμου Προμαίων]	statue base (+Carac)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος Νεικοπολιτῶν	Nicopolis ad Istrum (MoesInf)	211-217	IGBulg II 634 = IGRR I 578.1420
257b	[Iulia A]ug.	mater Au[g. et castrorum et patr]iae	slab? (+Carac)		Ostia (Ita-I)	211-217	CIL XIV 124

258b	[Iuli]a Aug.	mater [n]obilissimi [prin]cipis castrorum [sena]tus et patriae [maie]statiq(ue) eorum	slab (+Carac?)		Ostia (Ita-I)	211-217	CIL XIV 5333
259b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβ.]	μήτηρ [κάστρων]; οἱ κύριοι (+Carac)	slab (+Carac)		Palmyra (Syria)	211-217	AE 2001, 1965
260b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. et castrorum et senatui (!) et patriae domina sua	statue base (alone)	Romanius Montan[us] proc. Aug. famil. glad.	Pergamum (Asia)	211-217	CIL III 14192,12 = AE 1903, 150
261b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβ.]		slab? (+Carac)		Philippopolis (Thracia)	211-217	IGBulg III 1, 1323
262b	[Iul]ia Aug.	mater A[ugusti et c]ast. et senat. et pa[triae]	? (alone?)		Pisae (Ita-VII)	211-217	CIL XI 1427 = InscrIt VII 1, 94
263b	[Iulia Domna Augu]sta	[mater] sanc[tissi]mi A[ntoni]ni Au[g. et cas]tror[um sena]tusque a[c patriae]	statue base (alone)	coh. V [Ling.] Ant[oni]nia[na]	Porolissum (Dacia)	211-217	AE 1958, 232
264b	Ιουλία Σεβαστὴ	μητὴρ [Σεβαστοῦ καὶ στρατοπέδων]	altar? (+Carac)	Φηλικίστιμος εὐξάμ[ενος - - -]	Portus (Ita-I)	211-217	SEG 36, 922 (1) = IG XIV 922 = IGRR I 386
265b	[I]u[lia] Domna	[mater] Caesaris	? (+Carac)		Potaissa (Dacia)	211-217	CIL III 7690
266b	[Iu]liae Aug.	mater Au[g(usti) et castr(orum) et senatus et totius do]mus divin[ae]	slab (+Carac)		Puteoli (Ita-1)	211-217	AE 1956, 144 = AE 1985, 278
267b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. n. et castrorum	statue basis (alone)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 1048
268b	Iulia Aug.	mater Augusti Pii Fel. et castrorum	statue basis (alone)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 31335
269b	[Iulia Aug.]	[Pia] Fel[ix] mater Imp. Ca[es. M. A]ureli Anto[nini] Pii Aug. e[t] castr[or. e]t senatu[s] et [pat]riae	slab + statue basis (alone)	Aciliu[s - - - i]ppus subpro[c.] Dona[tus] lib. tabul. Steph[anus] lib. comm. devo[ti nu]mini eius	Roma	211-217	CIL VI 36935 = AE 1911, 178
270b	Iulia	Pia Felix	slab (+Carac)	Rufinus et Lupercilla	Roma	211-217	CIL VI 1070
271b	[Iulia Augus]ta	mater Aug. et cas[trorum]	slab? (+Carac)	<i>membebers of a collegium?</i>	Roma	211-217	CIL VI 9428

272b	[Iulia A]ug.	ma[ter Aug.]	slab (+Carac)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 40640
273b	Iulia [Aug.]		slab? (+Carac)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 40642 = 1169 = 3776
274b	Iulia [Aug.]	[mater Au]g. n. et [castrorum]	slab? (+Carac)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 40643
275b	[Iuli]a Aug[usta]	[Pia F]elix m[ater Imp. M. Aure]li Ant[onini]	? (alone?)		Roma	211-217	CIL VI 40675
276b	[Iulia Augusta]	[salva et sospes (?) c]oniunx di[vi Severi mater Caesa]ris Aug. et pa[triae - - -]	? (+Carac)	[- - - Hor]tensus	Salamis (Cyprus)	211-217	CIL III 12105
277b	['Ιουλία] Δόμνα [Σεβαστὴ]		? (+Carac, Sev)		Salamis (Cyprus)	211-217	Salamine XIII 149
278b	Iulia Augusta	mater sanctissimi piissimiq[u]e Antonini Augusti et castrorum senatusqe ac patriae	statue base (alone)	coh. I Brittan(n)ica ((millaria)) Antoniana	Samum (Dacia)	211-217	AE 1929, 1
279b	Iulia Domna	Pia Felix Aug. mater Aug. n. castrorum senatus et patrium	slab (+Carac)	civitas Sustrian.	Sustri (AfrProc)	211-217	CIL VIII 25934
280b	[Iulia Domna]	[mater Augusti et cast]rorum totiusque domus [divinae]	architrave (+Carac)		Thala (AfrProc)	211-217	BCTH-1901-143
281b	[Iulia Augusta]	[Pia] Felix mater eius et c[astrorum et senatus ac patriae]	slab (+Carac)	col. Thamug. numini [maiestatiq. eorum devota]	Thamugadi (Num)	211-217	CIL VIII 2371
282b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. et castror. et senatus et patriae totiusque domus divinae eorum	architrave (+Carac)	Lucilia Cale flam. col.	Thuburnica (AfrProc)	211-217	CIL VIII 14690
283b	Iulia Aug.	mater eius [et castr]ror. senatus pop.q. Rom.	? (+Carac)		Zarai (Num)	211-217	BCTH-1904-157
284b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. [et castrorum totiusque divinae d]omus eorum	architrave (+Carac)		? (AfrProc)	211-217	AE 2000, 1753

285b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. [et castrorum totiusque divinae d]omus eorum	altar? (+Carac)		? (AfrProc)	211-217	ILPBardo II, 5
286b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater Aug. et senatus	altar? (+Carac)		Althiburos (AfrProc)	213-217	AE 1913, 46
287b	Iulia Aug.	mater castroru[m]	block (+Sev, Carac)	vexillatio leg. III Aug. P. V(indicis) qua[e] Vezerei praeten[dit - - -]	Bezereos (AfrProc)	213-217	ILTun 57 = ILAfr 27 = AE 1922, 54 = AE 1978, 886 = AE 1980, 901
288b	Iul[ia Aug.]	[mater Aug. n. et c]astroru[m]	slab (+Carac)	[colonia] Telesia d[evotissima num]ini eoru[m]	Capua (Ita-I)	213-217	CIL X 3835
289b	Iulia Domna Aug.		statue base (+Sev, Carac)	decuriones	Cuicul (Num)	213-217	CIL VIII 8320 = ILAlg II 3, 7810
290b	[Iuliae Aug.]	[mater] c[astrorum]	slab? (+Carac)		Echzell (GermSup)	213-217	Nesselhauf and Lieb 1959, 184
291b	Ίουλία Δόμνα	μήτηρ στρατοπέδων	architrave (+Carac)	ἐπὶ τῆς Λ. Αὐφιδίου Εύφρά]μου ἀσιάρ[χου γραμματ]είας	Ephesus (Asia)	213-217	IEph 3001.2
292b	Ίουλία Σεβαστὴ	μήτηρ κάστρων	statue base (+Carac)	ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ νεωκόρος δῆμος	Ephesus (Asia)	213-217	Eph 300 = CIG 2972
293b	Iulia Domna Aug.	Pia Felix matris Aug. et castror. et senat. et patr. tot[iusque domus divinae]	architrave (+Carac)	[- - -] Sentius Felix Repostus	Furnos Minus (AfrProc)	213-217	CIL VIII 25808 = AE 1898, 100
294b	Iulia Domna	mater castror.	altar to Ianus Pater Aug. (+Sev, Carac)	C. Iulius Victor armatura q. f(isci?) armaturae	Lambaesis (Num)	213-217	AE 1908, 9
295b	Iu[li]a Aug.	mater Aug. et castr. et s[enatus et patriae]	? (+Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	213-217	CIL VIII 2708
296b	[Iulia Au]g.	mater [Aug(usti)] et castro[rum]	? (+Sev, Carac)		Lambaesis (Num)	213-217	BCTH-1904-205
297b	Iulia Aug.	mater Aug. [et castrorum] ac senatus et patriae	architrave (+Carac)	curia Papiria	Lambaesis (Num)	213-217	CIL VIII 2712
298b	[Iulia Aug.]	[ma]ter Aug. et [castrorum et pat]riæ	slab (+Carac)		Ostia (Ita-I)	213-217	CIL XIV 122

299b	Iulia [A]ug[ust]a	mater [Aug. et c]astrorum et senatus	statue base (+Carac)	L. Didius Marinus et A[ri]staenetus lib. procc.	Pergamum (Asia)	213-217	AE 1933, 282
300b	Iulia Domna Aug.	mater senatus, castrorum et patriae	slab (+Carac)		Sidi Abd el Basset (AfrProc)	213-217	AE 1990, 1036a
301b	[Iuli]a August[a]	mater castrorum et Aug. e]t senatus a[tque patriae]	? (+Carac)	res publica c[ol. Tham. num. eorum de]vota	Thamugadi (Num)	213-217	CIL VIII 17873
302b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβ.		arch (+Carac, DivSev)	ἡ Θασίων πόλις	Thasos (Thracia)	213-217	IG XII, 8, 382 = AE 1888, 41
303b	Iulia Domna Aug.	Pia Felix mater Aug.	architrave (+Carac)	[col. I]ul. Aur. Com. Thub. Maius	Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	213-217	AE 1912, 182
304b	[Iulia Domna]		slab (+Carac)		Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	213-217	ILAfr 269 = AE 1919, 30
305b	Iulia Domna	Aug. mater Aug. et senatus et patriae totiusque domus divinae	statue base? (+Carac)	P. Cestius Martialis, aed.	Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	213-217	ILAlg I 2092
306b	Iulia Au[g.]	mater Aug. et castrorum et senatus ac patriae	column (+Carac)		Thullio (AfrProc)	213-217	CIL VIII 22421
307b	Iulia Aug.	Pia Felix ma[ter] Antonini Aug. [cas]trorum senat[us] ac patriae	altar to Iuno Regina pro salute et imperii diurnitate (+Carac)	C. Iul. Cerealis cos. [leg.] Aug. pr. pr. pr. H. n. c. An[toni]nianae	Legio (HispCit)	214-217	CIL II 2661
308b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Αύγοῦστα	μήτηρ συνκλήτου καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν στρατευμάτων Αὐρηλ. Ἀντωνινιανῶν Εὐρωπαίων	statue base (alone)	ἡ βουλή	Dura Europos (Mesop)	215-217	SEG 7, 332 = AE 1933, 223
309b	[Ιουλία Δόμνη Σεβαστή]		?		Bostra (Arabia)	?	IGLS XIII 1, 9146 = IGRR III 1322
310b	[Iulia Domn]a Aug.	mater [- - -]	slab (+Sev)		Carthago (Afrproc)	?	CIL VIII 1017
311b	[ - - Iu]lia Dom[na - - -]		?		Carthago (AfrProc)	?	CILPCart 60
312b	Ιουλία Δόμνα	ἡ κύρια Σεβαστή	statue base (alone)	ἡ πόλις	Gerasa (Arabia)	?	SEG 7, 816
313b	Iulia Aug[- - -]		slab?		Gortyna	?	CIL III 12037 = IC IV

					(Creta)		273
314b	Ιουλία Δόμνα Σεβαστὴ		?		Laodicea ad Lycum (Asia)	?	CIG 3940 = IGRR IV 851
315b	[ - - - ] Iulia Au[g. - - -] mater [ - - - ]		?		Lebena (Creta)	?	IC I 55
316b	Domna		?		Mediolanum Santonum (Aquit)	?	ILA 1005, 33
317b	[Ιουλία Δ]όμν[α]		?		Odessus	?	IGBulg I <sup>2</sup> 63
318b	[Ι]ουλία Σεβ[αστὴ]		block (alone?)		Perinthus (Thracia)	?	SEG 48, 919
319b	Ιουλία Δόμνη	[μήτηρ στρατοπ]έδων	?		Pogla (LyciaPamph)	?	IGRR III 405
320b	Domina (!)		altar (+Sev, Carac)		Pupput (AfrProc)	?	CIL VIII 24091 = ILTun 792
321b	Iulia	ma[ter? Aug.] et castro[rum]	slab fragment		Roma	?	CIL VI 31336
322b	[Iulia] Au[g.]	[ma]ter [ - - - ]	?		Roma	?	CIL VI 40673
323b	[Iulia D]omna [ - - - ]		?		Thuburbo Maius (AfrProc)	?	CIL VIII 847
324b	Iulia Domna Aug.	dea Iuno orbis terrae	statue base (alone)	Q. Fulvius Dida Bubilianus	Lepcis Magna (AfrProc)	?	IRT 291 = AE 1926, 159 = AE 1951, 230 = AE 1954, 201b
325b	Iulia Augusta		?		Tarantasia (AlpesGr)	?	CIL XII 5709
326b	[Ιουλία Δ]όμν[α]		?		Odessus (MoesInf)	?	IGBulg I <sup>2</sup> 63
327b	Diva Iulia		statue base?	leg. I Min. Antoniniana P. F.	Bonna (GermInf)	?	CIL XIII 12042 =AE 1910, 125