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6

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La terza serie di «Res publica litterarum - Studies in Classical Tradition», edita dalla Roma TrE-Press sotto gli auspici del Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici del medesimo Ateneo, torna a essere affiancata da una collana di studi e ricerche, come l'aveva concepita il suo fondatore Sesto Prete quando insegnava all'Università del Kansas.

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PPRET INSCRIPTIONS

INSCRIPTIONS PERTAINING TO THE PRAETORIAN
PREFECTS FROM 284 TO 395 AD.
PAPER EDITION

PIERFRANCESCO PORENA,
ELEONORA ANGIUS, ANDREA BERNIER,
GIORDANA FRANCESCHINI, IRENE VAGIONAKIS

IN RE PUBLICA LITTERARUM
LIBERI NOS SUMUS



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CONSTANTINE'S *QUINQUENNALIA*
MEDALLION POSSIBLY ENGRAVED BY HIS PRAET.
PREFECT VITALIANUS

EDITIONS: Hostein 2008, pp. 248 f.; Emion 2017, pp. 667 f.

PLRE: NEW - inscription unknown to the *PLRE*

PRAETORIAN PREFECTS: Vitalianus

DATE OF THE INSCRIPTION: 310 AD

PROVENANCE AND LOCATION

Ancient city: Nemetacum. Modern city: Beaurains (Arras - Pas-de-Calais, France). Province: Belgica Secunda. Diocese: Galliae. Regional prefecture: not regional before 326 AD.

Provenance: Beaurains Treasure or Arras Treasure, found in 1922, but dispersed and sold on the antiquities market. Current location: Antiquities Market or private collection. Ancient location: private building.

TYPE AND MATERIAL OF THE SUPPORT AND TEXT LAYOUT

Type of support: gold medallion (multiple of nine solidi). Material: gold.

Reuse of the inscribed field: yes. Reuse of the monument: no. Opisthographic: yes.

Dimensions of support: Diameter: 4 cm. Weight: 40.26 gr. Dimensions of letters: 0.2/0.7 cm.

Inscribed field: Two inscribed fields (graffiti on recto, graffiti on verso). Undamaged.

Writing technique: engraved (graffiti). Language: Latin. Rhythm: prose. Palaeography: cursive.

TEXT CATEGORY: Instrumentum

LATIN TEXT

a) Edition based on Hostein 2008

recto XII

verso Vitaliani p(raefecto) p(raetori)o

b) Edition based on Emion 2017

recto XII

verso Vitaliani pro-tictoris

CRITICAL EDITION

Edition based on Hostein 2008 (a) and on Emion 2017 (b).

1: IIIX = *octava pars librae* Weiser 2006; XII = *denarii duo milia* Casey 2000

TRANSLATIONS

– English:

«12.000 (denarii)» - «belonging to Vitalianus praetorian prefect» (Hostein)

«12.000 (denarii)» - «belonging to Vitalianus protector» (Emion)

– French:

«12.000 (déniers)» - «appartenant à Vitalianus préfet du prétoire» (Hostein)

«12.000 (déniers)» - «appartenant à Vitalianus protecteur» (Emion)

– Italian:

«12.000 (denarii)» - «di Vitalianus prefetto del pretorio» (Hostein)

«12.000 (denarii)» - «di Vitalianus protettore» (Emion)

THE INSCRIPTION AND ITS PREFECTS: CRITICAL COMMENTARY, UPDATING, OVERVIEWS

In 2008 A. Hostein re-examined a gold medallion from the treasury of Beaurains near Arras (Bastien, Metzger 1977), a multiple (a coin representing the equivalent) of 9 gold solidi that has featured in several auction house catalogues since 1990 (Weiser 2006, pp. 224-26). The medallion was minted in Trier for Constantine's *Quinquennalia*, which began on July 25th 310 AD and ended on July 25th 311 AD (type: *RIC VI* Trier 801; *recto*: bust of Constantine wearing lorica and paludamentum, head with laurel wreath turned to the right; legend *IMP CONSTANTINVS PIVS FELIX AVG*; *verso*: the emperor Constantine in military dress standing on the right, holds in his right hand a spear pointed in front of him and a globe in his left hand; legend *PRINCIPI IVVENTVTIS*; exergue *PTR*). On the two sides of the gold medallion, two graffiti in italicised Latin are engraved: on the *recto*, the number twelve surmounted by a horizontal line; on the *verso*, Hostein read *Vitaliani p(raefecto) p(raetori)o*.

Graffiti on *recto*: Hostein (2008) interprets the numeral as a number XII (twelve) surmounted by a line as the currency, which indicates 12,000 denarii (an eighth of a pound of gold: 322,10 gr. for 96.000 denarii). Casey (2000) interprets the numeral as a currency, but he distinguishes the number X from the number II surmounted by a line, and considers the X a denarii symbol, followed by the number 2,000; the medallion is equivalent of 7.5 aurei, but 3.18 gr. of gold would have to be added to reach the weight of 40.3 gr., that is 2,000 denarii. Weiser (2006) reads the numeral backwards (IIX) and interprets it as the weight: II minus X = eight, i.e. an eighth of a gold pound, about 40.20 grams of gold of our medallion.

Graffiti on *verso*: According to Hostein, Vitalianus would have been the praetorian prefect of the emperor Constantine in 310 AD (so before also Weiser 2006, who considers him the owner of Beaurains' treasure). His prefecture is identified by the abbreviation of the charge, the same abbreviation used by the compilers of the Theodosian Code: *P(raefecto) P(raetori)O*. Vitalianus could either have been the owner of the medallion or of the whole treasure in which it was found; Hostein states on p. 250: «Le multiple a été en possession d'un certain Vitalianus, dont le titre était celui de PPO entre le 25 juillet 310, date probable de l'émission de la monnaie et 315, terminus ante quem de l'enfouissement du trésor». He proposes that Vitalianus was the Anonymous praetorian prefect of Constantine in Aquileia in 312 AD (*Paneg.* 12 [9], 11, 4, Lassandro, Micunco 2000 = *PLRE* I, Anonymus 5, p. 1005), with an extension of his mandate up to 315 AD, when Petronius Annianus is attested in office (PPRET 8, 9; Porena 2003, pp. 292-96); however, the consulate of Annianus of 314 AD should have been conferred during his prefecture (*CLRE*, pp. 162 f.). Hostein thinks that the gold medallion could be a gift from Constantine to Vitalianus, praetorian prefect, who then passed it on to one of his relatives, maybe a Paternus Valerianus, an high dignitary of the Constantinian age (*PLRE* I, Valerianus 15, p. 939; see below).

A. Gutsfeld (2016, p. 239, n. 117) doubted this reading: the letters engraved on the *verso* side of the medallion after the name *Vitaliani*, are disputed (below); it is not clear why a high dignitary would have signed the medallion with his own name. M. Emion (2017) is strongly opposed to Hostein's reading: following on from the studies of Casey 2000, he considers the reading anachronistic, i.e. too early, the abbreviation PPO, *P(raefecto) P(raetori)O*, in the Constantinian age. He also believes that the hypothesis of such an important dignitary, fighting alongside Constantine Augustus against Maxentius in 312 AD and then maybe up to 315 AD, burying treasure as untenable.

Moving from the reading of the graffiti proposed by Abdy (2006) and Tomlin (2006), and from the interpretation by Casey (2000), Emion believes that on the *verso* of our medallion is engraved: VITALIANI PRO-TICTORIS. In his opinion, Vitalianus is a *protector* and although he is the owner or the heir of the treasure, he is not a praetorian prefect.

Porena: the medallion needs to be examined with the aid of high powered optical instruments. The presence of the name of a praetorian prefect on a gold medallion for the *Quinquennalia* of Constantine cannot be excluded. It is possible that it does not indicate the ownership of the entire treasure, but that it is the gift of a dignitary to an officer, one of his clients, who had contact with the *comitatus* of the Augustus. Emion (2017, p. 668) thinks that Vitalianus *protector* is the son of the owners of the treasure, Paterna and Valerianus, whose names are engraved on a gold wedding ring found among the precious objects of the Beaurains' treasure (Bastien, Metzger 1977, pp. 171 f.; *BM* collection). Also Porena (2012, pp. 315 f.) proposed to interpret Paterna and Valerianus as the owners of the treasure: Paternus Valerianus (*PLRE I*, Valerianus 15, p. 939), probably one of the diocesan vicars of Constantine (317/330 AD?), may be the son of the owners of the treasure; Valerianus the elder was probably a high officer in Constantine's army. Could Vitalianus *protector*, the man whose father guided him into a military career, be the brother of Paternus Valerianus? Could Vitalianus be both a praetorian prefect and friend of Valerianus, the owner of the treasure?

PIERFRANCESCO PORENA