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6

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PREFECTS FROM 284 TO 395 AD.
PAPER EDITION

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

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INSCRIPTION IN HONOUR OF THE PRAET.
PREFECT PROBUS FROM CAPUA MADE
BY THE CITY *REGIONES* AND *COLLEGIA*

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PLRE: I, pp. 736-40 - REVISED

PRAETORIAN PREFECTS: Sextus Claudius Petronius Probus

DATE OF THE INSCRIPTION: 381/383 AD

PROVENANCE AND LOCATION

Ancient city: Capua. Modern city: Santa Maria Capua Vetere (Caserta - Italy). Province: Campania. Diocese: Italiciana. Regional prefecture: Italia Illyricum Africa.

Provenance: found in 1955 in modern Capua (ancient Casilinum), along with another base for Anicius Paulinus, in a private house facing the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta (formerly Santi Stefano e Agata). Current location: Museo Campano di Capua (Palazzo Antignano), Cortile secondario, inv. nr. 5. Ancient location: public space.

TYPE AND MATERIAL OF THE SUPPORT AND TEXT LAYOUT

Type of support: statue base. Material: limestone.

Reuse of the inscribed field: yes. Reuse of the monument: uncertain.

Opisthographic: no.

Dimensions of support: Height: 111 cm. Width: 66 cm. Breadth: 67 cm.

Dimensions of letters: 4.5/5 cm.

Inscribed field: One inscribed field (*frons*). Fragmentary: the inscription

is partially broken on the right side of the epigraphic field (lacuna on right-hand side of the first five lines).

Writing technique: chiselled. Language: Latin. Rhythm: prose. Palaeography: late Roman monumental capitals.

TEXT CATEGORY: Honorary inscription for the praetorian prefect Petronius Probus

LATIN TEXT

Claudio Petronio Probo v(iro) [c(larissimo)]
 proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) i(udicanti)],
 uno eodemque tempore II [et III]
 praetorio prefectura (sic) pol[lent(i)],
 5 consuli ordinario, nobilita[te]
 munificentiaque praestante (sic),
 originali patrono, regiones
 [- ca. 6 -] collegia posuerunt.

CRITICAL EDITION

Edition based on Porena 2020a, p. 111.

1: *Claudio*, Mazzarino 1974

2: *proconsuli Africae et s[imul]*, Barbieri 1971, *LSA*; *proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) iud(icanti)]*, Mazzarino 1974, Chastagnol 1982c, Cameron 1985, *EDR*; *et s[- -]*, Chioffi 2005

3: *uno eodemque tempor(e) et[iam]*, Barbieri 1971, *LSA*, *EDR*; *uno eodemque tempore (e)t [inde?]*, Mazzarino 1974; *uno eodemque tempore et [in]*, Chastagnol 1982c; *uno eodemque tempore et[iam]*, Cameron 1985; *uno eodemque tempor(e) et [- -]*, Chioffi 2005

4: *praetorio prefectura pol[lenti]*, Barbieri 1971, Mazzarino 1974, Giardina 1983; *praetorio pr(a)efectura polle[nti et]*, Chastagnol 1982c; *praetorio pr(a)efectura pol[lenti]*, Chioffi 2005

6: *praestanti*: Barbieri 1971, Mazzarino 1974, Chastagnol 1982c, Cameron 1985, Chioffi 2005

8: *[?et omnia] collegia*, Cameron 1985; *vicani collegia*, *EDR*

TRANSLATIONS

– English: «To Claudius Petronius Probus, of clarissimus rank, proconsul of Africa with jurisdiction on behalf of the emperor, holding the second and third praetorian prefecture both at the same time, ordinary consul, prominent for his

nobility and munificence, patron since his family origin, the regions ... and the colleges set up».

– French: «À Claudius Petronius Probus, clarissime proconsul d’Afrique avec juridiction en lieu et place de l’empereur, tenant en même temps la deuxième et troisième préfecture du prétoire, consul ordinaire, supérieur en noblesse et munificence, patron lié par l’origine familiale, les régions ... les collèges ont dressé».

– Italian: «Al chiarissimo Claudius Petronius Probus, proconsole d’Africa con giurisdizione in vece dell’imperatore, che riveste nello stesso momento la seconda e la terza prefettura del pretorio, console ordinario, superiore per nobiltà e per munificenza, patrono legato dall’origine familiare, le regioni ... i collegi posero».

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

THE INSCRIBED BASE FOR PROBUS

The base was found in 1955 in Capua (Caserta - Italy) during excavations of a house belonging to the Angeloni family. The property was situated in front of the entrance to the Duomo, the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta (formerly Saints Stephen and Agatha), but in the space that was once occupied by the Church of ‘San Giovanni dei Nobili Uomini’. The inscription was published in 1971 by G. Barbieri (1911-1985). It is currently kept in the Museo Campano di Capua (Palazzo Antignano), Cortile secondario, inv. nr. 5.

The inscription in honour of Probus was chiselled onto a reused funerary altar (a *patera* is engraved on the left side). The text was engraved on the rear side of the altar. The dedication by the *regiones*, an uncertain civic entity and the *collegia* certainly belonging to the city of Capua suggests that in ancient times the base may have been in a public space in this Roman city (today Santa Maria Capua Vetere; on *regiones* and *collegia* see *LSA* 1936 sect. Further Discussion; the word *vicani* proposed by G. Camodeca [*EDR*] between *regiones* and *collegia* seems very likely). However, the base appears to have been found in modern Capua (ancient Casilinum) which lies in the bend of the river Volturno 4.5 km. NorthWest of the ancient Roman city of Capua. The base was probably taken from the ruins of the Roman city, together with the base inscribed in honour of Anicius Paulinus (see below), and was reused in the construction of the new city of Capua by the river in the 10th Century. The presence of the *regiones* of the city among the dedicators, suggests that it was originally erected in a public space, although some other accessible space belonging to the *collegia* cannot be excluded.

The limestone medium-sized parallelepiped base is made from a re-worked and adapted funerary altar (*patera* on the left side, remains of the *pulvini* and a *focus* on the top). The base is moulded at top and bottom, but the rear is heavily damaged, so that it is very difficult to establish whether the base is opisthographic. The editor of our inscription, Barbieri (1971, p. 298, see also *LSA* 1936) assumed that the base was opisthographic, since the *patera* on the left side and the lost *urceus* on the right side are the wrong way round. It is possible, therefore, that the present epigraphic field was in fact the back face of an altar that had been turned 180°. Furthermore, the ‘sister’ base for Anicius Paulinus is certainly opisthographic and it was engraved on the back face of a funerary altar (see below).

On the upper surface of the base we find the housings for the statue’s feet. It was probably a bronze statue. Private individuals, dignitaries and public institutions all needed the emperor’s permission in order to put up a bronze statue in a public space. In our inscription from Capua the permission is not mentioned (see Feissel 1984, pp. 545-58; for bronze statues in honour of praetorian prefects with imperial permission, see PPRET 24, 54, 58, without permission, see PPRET 57. For references to gilded bronze statues in honour of praetorian prefects, erected in prestigious public spaces in this period [*sub auro, inaurata, auro condecorata*], see PPRET 27, 28, 31, 46, 48, 51). It is not excluded that the monument could have been located in a private, but accessible space belonging to the *collegia*.

The inscribed field (*frons*) is fragmentary: the inscription is partially broken on the right side of the epigraphic field. As we shall see, the lacuna on right-hand side of the first five lines is very important (see below).

THE INSCRIBED BASE FOR PAULINUS

The inscribed base in honour of Petronius Probus from Capua was found in 1955 along with the base for Anicius Paulinus (see *PLRE* I, pp. 678 f.; Chastagnol 1962, p. 207; Camodeca 1980-1981, p. 72; Savino 2005, p. 257; Tantillo in Bigi, Tantillo 2020, pp. 75 and 175). The two bases lay side by side in the same space within the same private house in modern Capua. The base in honour of Paulinus is now exhibited close to the base for Probus in the Museo Campano di Capua (see Barbieri 1971, pp. 291-97 = *AE* 1972, 75b; Chioffi 2005, nr. 111; *EDR* 005624 = *LSA* 1941; Tantillo in Bigi, Tantillo 2020, pp. 174-76, with photo p. 175, fig. 80; reconstructive drawing and relief p. 176, fig. 81): (front face, *AE* 1972, 75a) *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum), / Nasenniae / Primae, / [-] Castricius Liberalis / coiugi / bene merenti.*

(back face) *Anicio Paulino v(iro) c(larissimo), pro/vectori Campania(e), qui pri/mus proconsulatus pro/vinciae fasces invexit, prae/fecto sacratissimae urbis, / iustitia, auctoritate, munificentiaque pollenti, sa/lubri provisorii, origina/li patrono, regiones [--- / ---] collegia posue/runt.*

(transl.) «To Anicius Paulinus, of clarissimus rank, promoter of Campania, who was the first to bear the fasces of the proconsulate of the province, prefect of the most sacred city (Rome), who shines for justice, authority and munificence, providential benefactor, patron since his family origin, the regions ... and the colleges set up».

The two bases from Capua in honour of Probus and Paulinus are undoubtedly ‘sister bases’, that it so say that they were made by the same dedicators (resp. ll. 7-8 and 9-10) and conceived for the same architectural context. The work may well have been executed by the same stone cutters’ workshop, and probably for the same occasion or within a limited period of time (on the close relationship between the two inscribed bases, see Tantillo in Bigi, Tantillo 2020, pp. 174 f.). The pair of statues with similar dedications were probably a manifestation of gratitude of the Campanian city towards their aristocratic patrons. Since Capua was their *origo*, the patrons presumably would have bestowed *munificentia* upon it. Anicius Paulinus was the first *proconsul* of Campania after November 30th 377 or 378 AD (*CTh* IX 40, 12) and before April 24th 380 AD (*CTh* XV 7, 4-5), when he is attested as urban prefect. His prefecture began after February 15th 380 AD (*CTh* VI 35, 9; XIV 3, 16) and ended before February 22nd 381 AD when Valerianus was prefect of Rome (*CTh* XV 7, 6). In Capua the statue for Paulinus was probably put up by the urban prefecture in the second half of 381 AD or in 382 AD.

It should also be noted that the two senators, Probus and Paulinus, were also honoured with two statues in the statue cycle made by the *consularis Cretae* Asclepiodotus in the *Praetorium* of Gortyna in 382-383 AD. The statue base in honour of Paulinus in Gortyna is published in *ICret.* IV 320 = *LSA* 781 = Bigi, Tantillo 2020, p. 193, nr. 4:

Ἀνίκιον Παυλεῖνον, | τὸν λαμπρότατον | ἀπὸ ἀνθυπάτων καὶ | ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων τῆς βασιλευούσης | Ῥώμης, δόγματι τοῦ κοινοῦ | πάσης τῆς ἐπαρχίας, | Οἰκουμένιος Δωσίθεος | Ἀσκληπιόδοτος ὁ λαμπρό(τατος) | ὑπατικός τῆς Κρητῶν | ἐπαρχίας ἀνέστησα.

(Transl.) «To Anicius Paulinus, of clarissimus rank, former proconsul and former prefect of Rome who reigns, by decree of the Council of the whole province, Oecumenius Dositheus Asclepiodotus, of clarissimus rank, consularis of the province of the Cretans, I have placed».

Paulinus' *cursus honorum* in Gortyna is the same as the one in the Capua inscription (former proconsul of Campania and former urban prefect). In Gortyna, Petronius Probus is exalted, within the same cycle, as former consul and as former praetorian prefect for the third time (see PPRET 61, ll. 3-5). The similarity of the two Capuan dedications together with the similarity of the two dedications in Gortyna suggests that monuments in Italy and Crete were made at the same time: they describe the same moment of Probus' prefectorial career, between 381 AD (end of the urban prefecture of Paulinus) and the period of Spring 382 / Spring 383 AD, when the statuary cycle in the *Praetorium* of Gortyna was decreed and then put up by the *consularis* Asclepiodotus. At that time Probus had been praetorian prefect three times. These preliminary remarks help when it comes to examining the most controversial passage of Probus' Capua inscription: the expression *uno eodemque tempore* (l. 3) which is linked to a reference to his praetorian prefecture (l. 4). Sadly, the expression is inserted in one of the lines on the right side of the epigraphic field which is fragmentary. The dedication made by the Capuans to the powerful senator should contain, as in the Gortyna inscription, the iteration of Probus' prefectures, and in fact, in all likelihood, it hides it in an expression that is difficult to decipher, because it is unique in the panorama of prefectural titles and partly compromised by the gap in the right side of the epigraphic field.

THE INTEGRATION OF THE *CURSUS HONORUM* OF PROBUS IN THE INSCRIPTION FROM CAPUA

Sex. Petronius Probus was the most important senator of the second half of the 4th Century AD. Born around 328/332 AD, after the *quaestura* and the *praetura* in Rome, he was *proconsul* of Africa in 358 AD, ordinary consul in 371 AD and four times praetorian prefect of Italia-Illyricum-Africa, Illyricum, Gaul in a maximum span of time from 364 AD to 387 AD (this is the most extensive chronology proposed by the modern historians). He died between 388 and 392 AD (see in brief Jones 1964b, pp. 85-89; similarly *PLRE I*, pp. 736-40 and 1050-51; Pergami 1995, pp. 417-23; Lizzi Testa 2004, pp. 316-19; see more extensively Porena 2023a, pp. 129-216). Petronius Probus is attested as praetorian prefect during and at the end of his career in 11 inscriptions (besides this one, see PPRET 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66), as well as being mentioned in numerous literary texts. He is also cited in as many as 46 constitutions from the Theodosian and Justinian Codes (source list in *PLRE I*, pp. 736-40; Porena 2020c). Unfortunately, the data provided by this

large number of sources does not always concur. While it is certain that Petronius Probus was proconsul of Africa in 358 AD (*CTh* XI 36, 13, on June 23rd; *CIL* VIII 1783) and ordinary consul beside Gratian Augustus (*iterum*) in 371 AD (*CLRE*, pp. 276 f.), the chronology, sequence and administrative geography of his four praetorian prefectures is difficult to reconstruct and historians are divided (concerning an examination of the problems of the career of Petronius Probus and the related hypotheses by modern historiography, see PPRET 59).

In the reconstruction of the career of Probus and his four praetorian prefectures, a correct reading of the Capua inscription is important. In the Capua inscription, Probus' *cursus honorum* is listed according to the chronology of the codicils of appointment (ll. 2-5): proconsulate of Africa (358 AD), praetorian prefecture (the first one since 364 or 368 AD), the consulate (371 AD) (the same sequence is adhered to in other inscriptions of Probus, see PPRET 59, ll. 9-12; PPRET 63, ll. 4-10; PPRET 65, ll. 2-6; PPRET 66, ll. 3-7). The *cursus honorum* was carefully laid out by the stonecutter: l. 2 *proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) i(udicanti)]*; ll. 3-4 the expression which indicates simultaneity *VNO EODEMQVE TEMPORET[- 4 -] / PRAETORIO PREFECTVRA POL[- 3/4 -]* and which has posed problems of interpretation; l. 5 *consuli ordinario*. The expression *uno eodemque tempore* undoubtedly indicates the overlapping of two offices. The formula *praetorio prefectura* (sic), with inversion of the sequence of the two terms of the office, is a unique case in late antique epigraphy, nor is it found in literature or in any legal texts; it only appears on this one stone. Moreover, in l. 4 the word *POL* before the lacuna can undoubtedly be integrated with the word *pol[lenti]*, since it appears on the 'sister' base of Anicius Paulinus (l. 7). However, the question remains – which appointment overlapped his praetorian prefecture?

The first editor of the Capua inscription, Barbieri, thought that Probus had simultaneously held the proconsulate of Africa and the praetorian prefecture of Italia-Illyricum-Africa. Barbieri identified the proconsul, on the basis of the *gentilicium* attested in Capua (l. 1), with Petronius Claudius, who was in office from 368 to 370 AD (*PLRE* I, p. 208, with *AE* 1975, 873), and who was thus different from the Probus *proconsul* of Africa in 358 AD (*CIL* VIII 1783; *CTh* XI 36, 13, on June 23rd 358 AD). In Capua Probus would have been celebrated as praetorian prefect and simultaneously as proconsul of Africa for one year between 368 and 370 AD, during his long praetorian prefecture in the years 368-375/376 AD. Barbieri (1971, p. 298) has integrated (ll. 2-5): *proconsuli Africae et s[imul] / uno eodemque tempor(e) et[iam] / praetorio prefectura pol[lenti], / consuli ordinario*.

Mazzarino accepted the identification of the senator as Petronius Claudius proconsul of Africa in 368-370 AD, and integrated at l. 2 *s(acra) [v(ice) i(iudicanti)]* (1974, p. 335, followed by Giardina 1983, p. 171 and subsequent editors). Mazzarino (1974, p. 335) and Giardina (1983, p. 171) integrated (ll. 2-5): *proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) iud(icanti)]*, / *uno eodemque tempore (e)t [inde?] / praetorio prefectura pol[lenti], / consuli ordinario*.

In 1982 Chastagnol disputed the cumulation of the proconsulship of Africa and the praetorian prefecture. The scholar identified the proconsul of Africa with Probus, in office in 358 AD, and not with Claudius, in office in 368-370 AD, and opted for the cumulation of the praetorian prefecture and the ordinary consulship. He thus read at the end of l. 3 and integrated at the end of l. 4 two conjunctions *et*, to underline that connection. Thus Chastagnol (1982c, p. 549) integrated (ll. 2-5): *proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) iud(icanti)]*, / *uno eodemque tempore et [in] / praetorio pr(a)efectura polle[nti et] / consuli ordinario*. Such a choice was criticised by Giardina who demonstrated the impossibility of integrating *[in]* in the l. 3, and *[nti et]* in the l. 4 (Giardina 1983, pp. 179-81).

On the basis of Chastagnol's analysis, Cameron (in 1985) accepted the identification of the proconsul of Africa of 358 AD as Petronius Probus (the proconsul named Petronius Probus and not Petronius Claudius). Furthermore, after subjecting the criteria for analysing the onomastics of the two senator-proconsuls to close criticism, Cameron then opted for the exaltation of the cumulation of the praetorian prefecture held together with the ordinary consulship. In doing this, he was assuming that the Capua base was made in the year of the consulship (371 AD) or immediately thereafter. Cameron (1985, p. 164) integrated (ll. 2-5): *proconsuli Africae et s(acra) [v(ice) iud(icanti)]*, / *uno eodemque tempore et[iam] / praetorio prefectura pol[lenti], / consuli ordinario*.

Chastagnol and Cameron's interpretation states that the praetorian prefecture of Probus celebrated at Capua is the long prefecture of the years 368-375/376 AD (see Cameron 1985, p. 166: «The Capua stone, I suggest, dates from (or soon after) 371, the year of Probus' consulate. In the year when Probus was simultaneously consul and prefect, it would have been natural and appropriate to note that synchronization. But the moment Probus had ceased to be consul and was just prefect once more, there was little point in stressing the synchronization. And by 378 none at all. In all probability, then, the Capua dedication dates precisely from 371»; on Probus' long praetorian prefecture in 368-375/376 AD, see PPRET 59). This chronology is widely accepted. No new hypotheses for integration have been put for-

ward by Chioffi 2005, nr. 111 bis, *EDR* 079706, *LSA* 1936. No one has seen fit to highlight the close similarity with the dedications to Anicius Paulinus from Capua and Gortyna, which point to a date in the period 381/383 AD.

The integration of lines 3-4 of the Capua inscription that we propose is different. The cumulation of the proconsulate of Africa and the praetorian prefecture of Italia-Illyricum-Africa is never attested, and is unlikely for administrative reasons: the prefectorial seats of Sirmium or Milan and the proconsular seat of Carthage are so far apart that for several months of the year, communications between the two would be infrequent to say the least. That the same dignitary would be made responsible for these two seats, thus seems unlikely. The combination of the praetorian prefecture with the ordinary consulship is so frequent in the 4th Century that it is not a record worthy of a temporal periphrasis, occupying an entire line in the epigraphic field (l. 4; between 292 and 400 AD 39 praetorian prefects were ordinary consuls during their prefectorial mandate; if we exclude consuls-emperors and consuls-military commanders, the percentage of praetorian prefects among the consulships assigned to senators is remarkable). The combination of the praetorian prefecture with the ordinary consulship at the time of the Capua inscription's execution was so common that it was almost a rule. Moreover, in the numerous inscriptions recalling Probus' *cursus honorum*, while listing the African proconsulate, the praetorian prefecture(s) and the ordinary consulate, the simultaneity of the appointments to the proconsulate or the consulate is never underlined (see PPRET 59, ll. 9-12; PPRET 63, ll. 4-10; PPRET 65, ll. 2-6; PPRET 66, ll. 3-7).

In 2013 and 2016, Porena, with Bigi and Tantillo, autoptically re-examined the inscription in honour of Petronius Probus in the Museo Campano in Capua. The analysis of the incised surface, fracture, frottage and photos shows that at l. 3 the noun *tempore* had been engraved in its entirety, including the final *E*, and that not a *T*, but a numeral was engraved close to the fracture. The upper horizontal slanting bar covers, but does not touch, the two small vertical rods that can be seen below, which are lower than the height of the vertical rods of the other letters engraved in the other lines of the text (see Porena 2020a, pp. 108-13 and figg. 66-69). Porena believes that at l. 3, after the noun *tempore*, there was an overscored numeral, $\bar{\text{II}}$, which can be identified as a number 'two'. To the right of the numeral there remained about nine centimetres of space to insert three or four more letters. The formula *uno eodemque tempore* was intended to specify a peculiarity of the praetorian prefecture (l. 4) held by Probus, and not its cumulation with the preceding proconsulate of Africa, or with the ordinary consulship. The long

expression *uno eodemque tempore* [...] *praetorio prefectura pollenti*, which occupies two lines of the *cursus honorum* was meant to exalt the rare and prestigious simultaneity of two prefectorial mandates. In ll. 3-4 of the Capua inscription, it was most likely written: *uno eodemque tempore II[et III]* (i.e. *secunda et tertia*) / *praetorio prefectura* (sic) *pol[lent(i)]*, i.e. «holding the second and third praetorian prefecture both at the same time».

If this reading is correct, the Capua inscription would support the hypothesis that in the years 381-382 AD, Petronius Probus held two praetorian prefectures, his second one being in 380-382 AD and his third one in 381-382 AD (on this hypothesis, see Porena 2020a, pp. 103-17; 2023a, pp. 164-89, and PPRET 59). These two prefectures were made distinct via codicils of appointment; although the administrative areas given to the prefect were also distinct, they were temporarily united under his sole responsibility. We therefore have a prefect who governed (for a few months between 381 and 382 AD) two neighbouring but autonomous praetorian prefectures, which were provided with two *officia* in two separate seats. As we have seen, the inscription for Probus from Capua, was made as part of a pair with Paulinus' inscription in the same city. Both are similar to the inscriptions in honour of Probus and Paulinus in Asclepiodotus' cycle in the *Praetorium* of Gortyna, dating to 381/383 AD: the second and third praetorian prefecture of Probus began and ended in this period.

Among the 46 surviving constitutions sent to our prefect (see Porena 2020c, pp. 211-13) there are three constitutions addressed to Probus praetorian prefect, dated to the years 380-383 AD (*CTh* VI 28, 2, on March 12th 380; *CTh* VI 35, 10, on June 27th 380; *CTh* XI 13, 1, on January 19th 383, probably 382 AD, see Porena 2020b, p. 157; 2023a, pp. 121 f.). These constitutions may retain the date that has come down to us in the manuscript of the Law Codes and – in our opinion – they were sent to Probus during his second and third prefectures. We think that in the years (379?) 380-382 AD, emperor Gratian would have given Probus a second praetorian prefecture in Italia-(Illyricum?)-Africa. In the Autumn of 381 AD, Gratian also gave Probus a third praetorian prefecture of Illyricum alone (if it was with or without the Pannonian diocese is uncertain, see Porena 2020b; 2023a, pp. 80 f.), which was extended into 382 AD. Thus, as said, Probus was appointed to a second and third prefecture with separate and almost simultaneous codicils and the two mandates on two locations would have overlapped for a few months.

There was probably a slight difference in the inscriptions chiselled for the two monumental series in Italy and in Crete. The Capuans wanted to

exalt Probus as prefect for the second time in Capua, the seat of the district itself (Italia-[Illyricum]-Africa), and at some point as prefect for the third time in another prefectural district (Illyricum). Since Probus had not been discharged from the second prefecture while gaining another, they wanted to mark the prestigious, rare simultaneity (*uno eodemque tempore*) of the two appointments. Probus' two paired prefectures over, the Cretans in Gortyna only refer to his third overall term (PPRET 61, ll. 4-5: ἀπὸ ἐπάρχων πραιτωρίων γ'), which, according to the proposed reconstruction, consisted of the prefecture of Illyricum, where Crete was (the statuary cycle of the *Praetorium* of Gortyna very probably portrayed the three praetorian prefects who had had Crete in their prefecture, one after the other, and who, in our opinion, were appointed by the emperor Gratian: Probus in 379/380-382 AD [see PPRET 61], Hypatius in 382/383 AD [see PPRET 73], Praetextatus in 383/384 AD, who in Gortyna is exalted probably when he was about to take office as praetorian prefect [see PPRET 77]).

In both Capua and Crete the dedicators of monuments to the prefect and former praetorian prefect Probus did not feel the need to specify the prefectures governed by the senator. Since the assignment took place close to the time when the text was written, and concerned administrative areas that had not been changed between the moment of the appointment and the time of the chiselling of the inscription, their geographical extent was not indicated. As a general rule, in the inscriptions of or for the praetorian prefects, the geographical extent of the praetorian prefecture is not indicated. Ordinarily the praetorian prefects do not indicate the extent of their prefecture in documents or inscriptions drawn up by themselves. In the 4th Century, the only praetorian prefecture that changed size was the prefecture of Italia-Illyricum-Africa (on this prefecture, see Olszaniec 2014a). This prefecture, consisting of three administrative sectors, could be reduced in size, losing either Illyricum or, more rarely, Africa. In an honorary inscription, when the geographical extent of the prefecture held by the prefect had not been changed – extended or reduced – in the time between the prefect's term of office and the time of the writing of the inscription in his honour, as a rule the dedicators did not indicate the administrative areas of the prefecture (cf. e.g. PPRET 48), otherwise they did (cf. e.g. PPRET 46; PPRET 49; PPRET 59; cf. Porena 2023b, pp. 51-65).

Concerning Probus, his second praetorian prefecture had taken place in Italia-(Illyricum)-Africa, including Capua (379? 380/382 AD), while his third praetorian prefecture had covered (autonomous) Illyricum (381/382 AD), including Gortyna. The Campanian and Cretan dedicators did not

extol the geographical extent of Probus' two prefectures, but their iterations which represented a record. The geographical limits of the two appointments were much longer to explain within an honorary inscription and to some extent were unnecessary since they referred to a situation that contemporary readers in Capua and Gortyna would have been familiar with. If our hypothesis is correct (see Porena 2020a, pp. 103-17; 2023a, pp. 164-89), in the years of the Gothic crisis (376 AD ff.) the autonomous prefecture of Illyricum had been separated by the emperor Gratian from the prefecture of Italia-Illyricum-Africa (we are not sure if Illyricum as a whole or only the dioceses of Dacia and Macedonia, see Porena 2020b; 2023a, pp. 80 f.). When Probus obtained the two overlapping mandates on the two distinct prefectures at the same time, in 381/382 AD, this administrative arrangement – the prefecture of Illyricum being autonomous and separated from Italia-Africa (and perhaps Pannonian Illyricum) – had been established and had been functioning for at least four or five years. In that moment in 381/382 AD, the aspect that the Capuans wanted to highlight was the entrusting of the two distinct, but united prefectures to a single prefect, who also happened to be their powerful patron. The Cretans directly exalted the primacy of no less than three praetorian prefectures all taken up by their influential patron. The proposed integration of l. 3 to the Capua inscription allows us to date the text to the period 381-383 AD, that is to say around the same time as the inscriptions of the *Praetorium* in Gortyna. Thus the best explanation for the similarity in the pairs of inscriptions in honour of Petronius Probus and Anicius Paulinus in Capua and Gortyna, is that they were created in the same period.

The hypothesis of two independent praetorian prefectures which were assigned to Probus, and who thus superimposed and accumulated the third prefecture on the second, can be confirmed by two inscriptions, coming a few years later. The latter, chiselled on a Roman funerary altar (PPRET 77, l. 16) and on a large statue base in Palazzo Altemps in Rome (PPRET 79, col. II, l. 11), were made in honour of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus. The praetorian prefecture that Praetextatus held in the years 383(?)/384 AD, appears in a formula, which, like that of the Capua periphrasis (ll. 3-4), is found in no other text: *praefectus praetorio II Italiae et Illyrici* (*Illyrici et Italiae* in PPRET 78, l. 4). The numeral *II* does not indicate a normal iteration of the praetorian prefecture of Italia-Illyricum-Africa – that is to say, two consecutive appointments to the same office –, but a double mandate granted by the emperor to a single praetorian prefect to be in charge of two separate praetorian prefectures, Italia-(Illyricum)-Africa and autonomous Illyricum, which

were not reunited during the Gothic crisis into one vast prefecture (see Porena 2020a, pp. 113-17; Porena 2023a, pp. 182-87).

Finally, the periphrasis in ll. 3-4 of the Capua inscription, which is unique, describes the temporary assignment to Petronius Probus of two praetorian prefectures – in effect his second and his third – which were entrusted to him, the single holder, for a few months, between the end of 381 and the Summer of 382 AD. The separation of the autonomous praetorian prefecture of Illyricum had been decided by the emperor Gratian in order to deal with the Gothic crisis.

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