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Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

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RUSSELL T. SCOTT

A New Inscription of the Emperor Maximinus at Cosa

In 1970 excavations at Cosa (modern Ansedonia) by members of the American Academy in Rome focussed on the development of private housing and the completion of work in the forum. From the cistern of a house of Augustan date overlying the remains of two republican predecessors of the second century B.C. was recovered the inscription discussed below, which bears significantly on the later history of the town and its forum in the empire. Along with much building debris gathered in the forum it found its way into the cistern at some point in the post-antique history of the site when efforts were made by persons unknown to create an enclosure on level ground within the area bounded by the collapsed perimeter walls of the house. For the opportunity to publish it in advance of the appearance of the final reports on the Forum and Houses at Cosa I am grateful to the then director of excavations and current editor of Cosa publications, Professor FRANK E. BROWN.¹

The inscription C70.523, which has been recomposed from many fragments, was carefully aligned and cut on a prepared slab of Luna marble approximately two feet square, m. 0.63 by m. 0.59. The back was left rough, the front fine polished. The top margin is m. 0.053, the bottom m. 0.065. The ten lines of text are spaced by dotted ruling with a fine point. The heights of the lines vary from a minimum of m. 0.034 to a maximum of m. 0.040; the intervals between them vary from a minimum of m. 0.013 to a maximum of m. 0.02. Letter heights vary from a minimum of m. 0.031 to a maximum of m. 0.042. Within the lines words are separated by medial triangular interpuncts. There are orthographic peculiarities in HODIO line 6 and one ligature at the end of line 8, IVSSERVNT. Pl. 18.

Text: *Imp(erator) Caes(ar) C(aius) Iulius Ve-*
 rus Maximinus in-
 victus Aug(ustus) et C(aius) Iulius
 Verus Maximus nobil(issimus)
5 *Caes(ar) opus porticus fori*
 et aedibus cum hodio

¹ On Cosa generally see F.E. BROWN, *Cosa I: History and Topography*, MAAR 20, 1951, and: *Cosa: The Making of a Roman Town*, Michigan 1980. For preliminary reports on the houses see F.E. BROWN, BdA 52, 1967, 37, V. J. BRUNO, *Archaeology* 23, 1970, 232, R.T. SCOTT, *AJA* 75, 1971, 213.

vetust(ate) dilapsum pec(unia) pub(lica)
Cosanor(um) rest(itui) iusserunt
cur(am) agente C(aio) Rufio C(ai) filio)
 10 *Proculo c(larissimo) v(iro) (hedera)*

The text is straightforward except in lines 5–7 which call for brief comment. For the general formulation *opus ... dilapsum* one may compare for example *opus porticus Spei vetustate vexatum* (CIL XIV 2804), but the expression in the Cosa inscription is imperfect. By analogy one would expect *opus porticus fori cum aedibus et hodie vetustate dilapsum*,² but the scribe or carver reversed the order of preposition and connective: *et aedibus cum hodie*. I would take this to be the result of haste and the influence of the common usage *aedes cum ...*, as for example *aedes cum porticibus* (CIL XI 5375).

Orthography: *hodium* for *odeum*. Neither the aspiration nor the variant spelling with *i* for *e* is a regional peculiarity.³ The *acta* of the *ludi saeculares* from Rome of 204 regularly have *odium* for *odeum*, the odeon in question being that of Domitian.⁴

The works of restoration ordered certainly involved the seating block and scene of the small theater inserted in the basilica in the Julio-Claudian period and the portico with shops opening behind located along the southwest side of the forum opposite, all of which preserve clear signs of repairs appropriate to this period.⁵ The intent would appear to have been the limited revival of the town (in the face of considerable neglect) in connection with the *res publica Cosanorum*, and the inscription is the first which can be connected directly with a third century settlement in and around the forum already known through excavation.⁶

Four inscriptions from Orbetello and one from the forum at Cosa, CF 1501, probably also reflect its existence in the time of Caracalla, Gordian III, Aurelian and perhaps Trajan Decius,⁷ while a second inscription recovered by excavation, C 68.40, a dedication to Liber Pater from a small cult sanctuary of military character at the southeast end of the forum, attests it in the later fourth century.⁸

The name of the senator Caius Rufius Proculus is prominent not only in lines 9 and 10 of the new Cosa inscription but elsewhere. The presence of the filiation enables the

² Cf. for example *porticus cum aediculis* (CIL XIV 158–9).

³ For *h* before initial *o* cf. CIL VI 47524 (Rome), IX 5577 (Septem Pedae), X 4915 (Venafrum).

⁴ Fragments 37, 44–47, 91 in CH. HÜLSEN, *Neue Fragmente der Acta Ludorum Saecularium von 204 nach Chr.*, RhM 81, 1932, 87. The odeon of the *acta* is mentioned in strict topographical association with the theater of Pompey and the *teatrum ligneum*, both of which are close to the Tarentum, hence its identification as that built by Domitian. Cf. P. Romanelli in NASA 7, 1931, 313 and 325. Other references to *odium* = *odeum* in TLL 9, 2, fascic. 3 s. v.

⁵ Cf. the forthcoming: Cosa III: The Buildings of the Forum. ⁶ Cf. Cosa III (forthcoming).

⁷ CIL XI 2633 (213 A.D.), 2634, 2635 (?) (241 A.D.), 2636 (no date). On the inscription from the forum of Cosa C. BABCOCK, *AJPh* 83, 1962, 147, where the identification of Decius and a date of 251 A.D. are proposed.

⁸ See J. COLLINS CLINTON, *A Late Antique Shrine of Liber Pater at Cosa*, *EPRO* 64, 1977, and: Cosa III (forthcoming).

completion of his father's name, Caius Rufius Festus, which appears along with those of his two sons on an inscribed fistula from Rome (CIL XV 7525) and an inscription from Montefiascone (CIL XI 2997).

[R]ufiorum Festi patris et Mar[cell]/ini et Proculi fil(iorum) (trium) c(larissimorum) v(irorum)

Fortunae / sanctae / pro salutem / Rufiorum / Festi / et Marcellini / et Proculi / (trium) c(larissimorum) v(irorum) / Antigonus / ser(vus) act(or) cum s(uis)

The family, perhaps the most durable of any from Etruria in the empire, can be traced to Volsinii by CIL XI 2698, where the senator Gaius Rufius Festus Laelius Firmus and his sister Rufia Procula are the children of Gaius Rufius Festus, equestrian procurator of Dalmatia and Istria.

C(aio) Rufio C(ai) fil(io)

Pom(ptina tribu) Festo

p(rimo) p(ilo) trib(uno) cohort(is) V vi[g](ilium)

XII urb(anae) III pr(aetoriae) proc(uratori)

5 provinciae Dalma-
tiae et Histriae

C(aius) Rufius Festus

Laelius Firmus c(larissimus) v(ir) et

Rufia C(ai) f(ilia) Procula c(larissima) f(emina)

10 patri pientissimo

l(ocus) d(atatus) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

As BARBIERI has noted, the mention of the tribe Pomptina and the use of *c(larissima) f(emina)* as a title for Rufia Procula imply a late Antonine or early Severan date for the Volsinii inscription, and he follows DRESSEL in dating the fistula from Rome to the beginning of the third century.⁹ The family achieved senatorial rank in the generation after the procurator and went on to become one of the most distinguished of Etruria in the later empire; its origins were perhaps equally venerable: TORELLI has suggested its emergence to prominence came in the third century B.C.¹⁰

With the evidence of the new inscription the family relationships in those previously known become clear. Three generations of fathers and sons are represented with the equestrian Festus father of C. Rufius Festus Laelius Firmus, himself the father of C. Rufius Proculus and Rufius Marcellinus.¹¹ This stemma is consonant with the date of

⁹ G. BARBIERI, *L'Albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino* (193–285), 1952, 1–2, 176–77; cf. H.-G. PFLAUM, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le haut-empire romain*, 1960, 1, 566, and J. MATTHEWS, *Continuity in a Roman Family: the Rufii Festi of Volsinii*, *Historia* 16, 1967, 484.

¹⁰ M. TORELLI, *Senatori etruschi della tarda repubblica e dell'impero*, *DialArch* 3, 1969, 285, 307–08 on the Rufii. For full discussion of the later history of the family see MATTHEWS, *op. cit.* (n. 9 above).

¹¹ BARBIERI, *op. cit.* (n. 9 above) 176–177, points out the mistake of BORMAN and SEECK in associating the three Rufii of the Montefiascone inscription as brothers in the same generation.

C 70.523, which is established as 236 A.D. by the titulature of Maximinus and Maximus.

LORIoT's recent survey of the available epigraphic and papyrological evidence has demonstrated conclusively that the designation of Maximus as Caesar fell in the period January 7–May 16, 236, very possibly toward the beginning of March in conjunction with the first anniversary of his father's accession.¹² The lack of references to Maximinus' German victories similarly points to a date in winter/spring 236; for while he adopted the title *Germanicus* in winter 235–236, its use is too infrequent to serve as a dating criterion early in the year. By itself and re-inforced by the epithet *Maximus* assumed by the emperor before his summer campaigns of 236 in Pannonia and upper Moesia, it is current and reliable as an indicator of date in the latter part of the year.¹³

These established indicators effectively resolve the dilemma posed by the existence of two closely related sets of coins with different obverse legends issued in honor of Maximus. The one styles him *Caes(ar)*, the other adds the title *Germ(anicus)*.¹⁴ From the foregoing, it follows they would have been issued in spring and fall 236. CARSON, however, had earlier sought to account for the fact by arguing «in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary it may well be that Maximus became Caesar at the same time his father became Augustus» – that is in early 235, to which period he assigned the first set of coins honoring Maximus.¹⁵ It is now necessary to recognise LORIoT has provided that evidence, to which C 70.523 conforms. The text is whole and sound, its charge clearly formulated in the chancery of Alexander before the events at Moguntiacum. It remains to see how that charge to Caius Rufius Proculus may fit the general history of the period.

Domestic policy of the later years of Alexander, so far as the epigraphic evidence is concerned, is inseparable from foreign policy: the improvement of roads, military transport and provisioning systems take pride of place in inscriptions throughout the empire.¹⁶ That Cosa by position and setting had a place therein is indicated by its appearance in the Itineraries, and I would submit it is in that context the new inscrip-

The omission of the full name of C. Rufius Festus Laelius Firmus from the much abbreviated inscriptions from Rome and Montefiascone is self-explanatory.

¹² See X. LORIoT, ZPE 11, 1973, 147.

¹³ See X. LORIoT, in ANRW 2, 2, 1975, 657; A. U. STYLOW, Ein neuer Meilenstein des Maximinus Thrax in Sardinien u. die Straße Karales-Olbia, Chiron 4, 1974, 515; cf. R. A. G. CARSON, BMCRE 6, 1962, 92.

¹⁴ Viz. the statement in RIC 4, 136: «As has been noticed above, the revised form of Maximinus' own obverse legend, embodying the title *Germanicus* was probably adopted after the first month or so of the year 236, when the news of the German exploits was officially announced in Rome. If Maximus was not designated Caesar until 236, then it must be concluded either that his coins with obverse legends (1) and (2) (*Caes*) were hurriedly produced before his adoption of the title *Germanicus* early in 236 was known – and this seems an improbable view to take – or that two parallel sets of coins were issued embracing both sets of obverse legends – and this seems equally improbable.»

¹⁵ CARSON, op. cit. (n. 13 above) 73.

¹⁶ LORIoT, op. cit. (n. 13 above) 681–82; H.-G. PFLAUM, Essai sur le Cursus Publicus sous le haute-empire romain, MemAI 14, 1940, 91 on the Severans; cf. H. A. Alex. Sev. 45. 47.

tion should be viewed and the works in the forum associated with the maintenance of supply and security along the *via Aurelia*.¹⁷ The present state of our knowledge of the occupation of the site in the third century does not permit its precise role in the complicated yet overlapping system of the *cursus* to be determined; but it is to be hoped additional information may be obtained from future exploration of the eastern height above the forum, the baths adjacent to its west corner and the *horreum* located just inside the northwest gate of the town, both of which are presently known to have been in use during the empire.¹⁸

Whatever function Cosa served perhaps sufficed to ensure the existence of the forum settlement in the third and fourth centuries and the repairs commemorated in 236 are suited to its public and private requirements.¹⁹ But the *res publica Cosanorum* was in no sense a successful general re-animation of the old town or its territory. The excavations on the site to date have revealed that the Latin colony of the middle republic experienced only a modest re-kindling of life in the Augustan period, and the growth of senatorial and imperial estates in its territory by the later Flavian period only hastened the decline of the Augustan town. Recent survey work in the *ager Cosanus* further shows a certain languishing in the pattern of villa occupation in the second half of the second century A.D. with few sites close to the town surviving the anarchy of the third century.²⁰

We know of no local official from Cosa itself in the empire before Porcius Severinus, a senatorial *curator rei publicae* in 213 A.D. (CIL XI 2633), who might represent the villa class in the territory.²¹ While the work of evaluating the various factors leading to the decay of the town and its surroundings can only be described as in progress, the appearance at Cosa in 236 A.D. of Caius Rufius Proculus of Volsinii acting for the government may fairly be considered an index of its continuing momentum.²²

¹⁷ Cf. Cosa III (forthcoming). The repaired odeon may have served the imperial cult. It was finally transformed into a church in the late fourth or fifth century A.D.

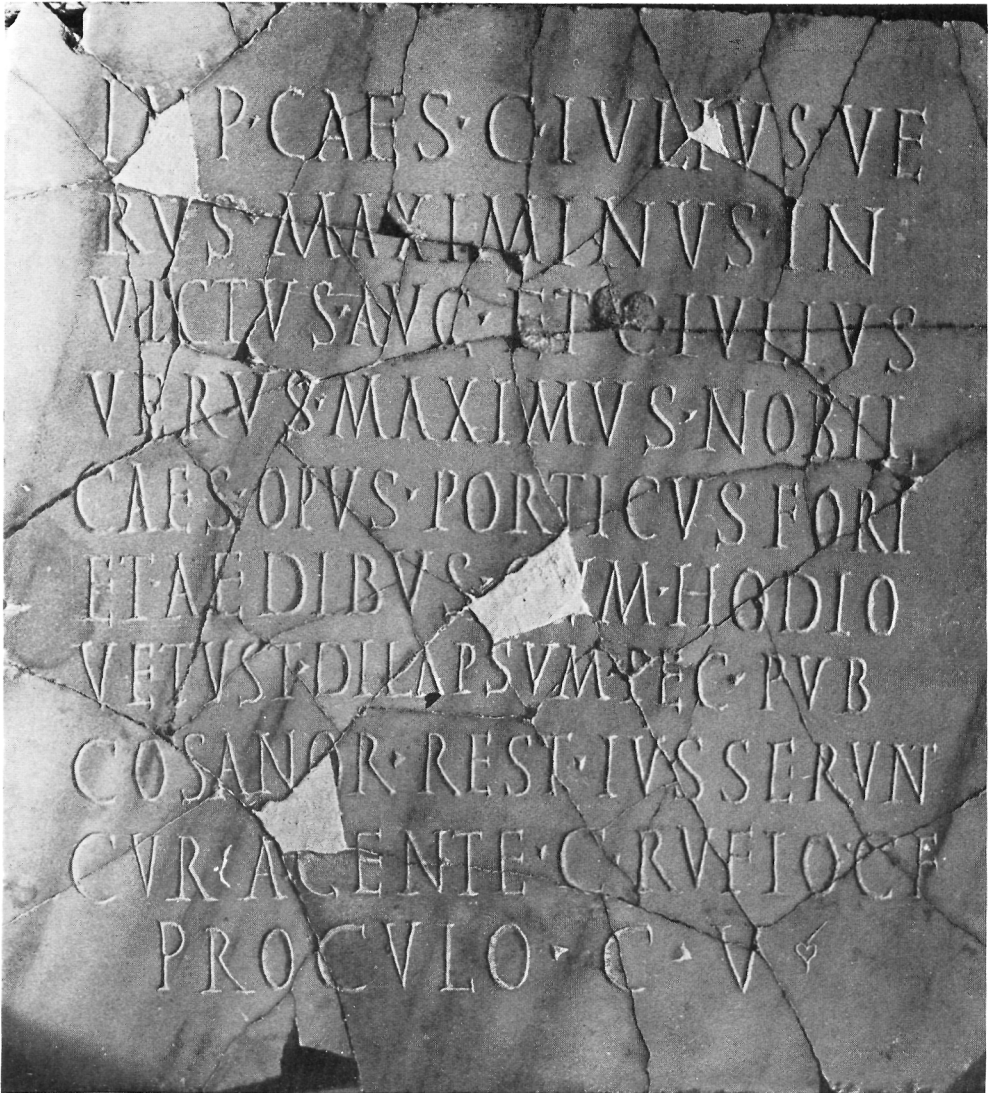
¹⁸ On these features cf. Cosa I, 36–37. 67–71. 82–84. In the original survey the *horreum* was identified as a temple, an error since corrected by preliminary testing. See now: Cosa: The Making of a Roman Town 21–22. 56–58. 73.

¹⁹ That the third century represents a period of considerable activity on the site is demonstrated by the pattern of chronological distribution of amphorae recovered from the forum and its environs prepared by Prof. E. L. WILL, whose work on the storage wares from Cosa is forthcoming. The pre-dominant type is the 'African' of Tunisian manufacture, which may suggest the settlement served the military *annona*.

²⁰ For the work of the Italian mission under Prof. ANDREA CARANDINI of the University of Siena at the villa site Sette Fenestre, a brief notice by D. MANACORDA, in JRS 68, 1978, 122. For the survey project of Cosan territory by the Wesleyan (Conn.) University mission under Prof. S. J. DYSON see JFA 5, 1978, 251.

²¹ On the *curatores rei publicae* in Italy see the dissertation of C. FANT (Ann Arbor 1977) and W. ECK, Die staatliche Organisation Italiens in der hohen Kaiserzeit, Munich 1979.

²² Cf. TORELLI, op. cit. (n. 10 above) 331. I wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous assistance of Dr. A. U. STYLOW in the preparation of this article.



Zu: R. T. Scott, *A New Inscription of the Emperor Maximinus at Cosa* (S. 309 ff.). Foto: B. Bini, Rom