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PUZZLES ABOUT PROCURATORS IN ROME*

CHRISTER BRUUN

There is currently a debate concerning how the imperial city of Rome was governed and public works were managed. An important role in this discussion is played by the imperial officials whose names appear in stamps on Roman lead pipes (*fistulae*), as these stamps, in fact, provide the names of most of the senators and especially of the *equites* whom we find engaged in public works in Rome.¹ In the following, some new and some old stamps will be discussed with a view to opening up new perspectives on the employment of imperial procurators.

1. The activities of Calpurnius Maximus near the Colosseum

A stamp on a *fistula* from Rome naming a certain Calpurnius Maximus as the person holding an official *cura* has been known since the 1890s:

IMP COMMODO ET QVINTILLO COS
SVB C(VRA) CALPVRNI MAXIMI
(CIL XV 7360, found near the Colosseum)

Since Calpurnius Maximus does not indicate his status, it is uncertain

* The research for this paper was carried out while holding a research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which is gratefully acknowledged. I am grateful to Louis Hamilton for revising my English; remaining linguistic and other faults are my own.

¹ See C. Bruun, *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome. A Study of Roman Imperial Administration*, Helsinki 1991, 207–71 for a presentation and discussion of the material. For a study of similar sources from Ostia, see C. Bruun, "L'amministrazione imperiale di Ostia e Portus", in C. Bruun – A. Gallina Zevi (eds.), *Ostia e Portus nelle loro relazioni con Roma* (Acta IRF 27), Roma 2002, 161–92.

whether he was a senator or a Roman knight. Scholars have been divided in this regard, and the presence of a senator by the name of Calpurnius Maximus at the *ludi saeculares* of A.D. 204 does not solve the riddle. Regardless of whether it was a son of his who had senatorial rank in 204, the Calpurnius Maximus of *CIL XV 7360* could perfectly well have been of equestrian status, and this will be the assumption here.²

New information on the elder Calpurnius Maximus was presented in 1993. Again, the evidence is from a lead pipe stamp that has received practically no attention after the first publication.³ The text reads:

(number VIII upside down)

AVR COMMOD PLAVT Q[V]INTILL C[OS]

*[SV]B C CALPVRN MAXIM[I] C[-]*⁴

(*MDAIR* 100 (1993) 497, from the grounds of the Ospedale Militare on the Caelius)

The two stamps resemble each other and both belong in the year 177, as the consular dating makes clear: in that year the ordinary consuls were Aurelius Commodus, the son of the emperor Marcus, and Plautius Quintillus.⁵

The stamps are, however, not identical, and perhaps the most significant difference appears on line 1 which gives the names of the consuls. In *CIL XV 7360* Commodus is styled "Imp(erator) Commodus", while he appears as "Aurelius Commodus" in the new stamp. As the epithet "Imperator" is missing in the new stamp, the stamp was perhaps applied at a somewhat earlier date. It has to be admitted, though, that Commodus is thought to have received his first imperial acclamation already on

² See the survey of scholarly opinions on the matter in Bruun, above n. 1 (1991) 243. See also note 4 below.

³ The stamp has not been registered in *AE* 1993–2001.

⁴ The editor A. Carignani in C. Pavolini, "La topografia antica della sommità del Celio. Gli scavi dell'Ospedale Militare (1987–1992)", *MDAI(R)* 100 (1993) 497–98 n. 169 suggested that, hypothetically, the letter C at the end of line 2 could be the first part of the abbreviated senatorial "Rangzeichen" *c(larissimus) [v(ir)]*. This solution cannot be excluded.

⁵ A. Degrassi, *I fasti consolari dell'impero romano dal 30 avanti Cristo al 613 dopo Cristo*, Roma 1952, 49; and G. Alföldy, *Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninen*, Bonn 1977, 190 register Commodus as consul with M. Peducaeus Plautius Quintillus in A.D. 177; to my knowledge no suffect consuls have been securely dated to that year (although there undoubtedly were several).

November 27, A.D. 176,⁶ and thus the epithet "Imperator" ought not to have been absent from any official document in A.D. 177 (nor should, of course, the epithet "Caesar" have been missing after A.D. 166). Yet it is more probable that "Imperator" was omitted early in 177 than later on in the year. Halfway through 177 Commodus was then officially made a co-ruler with the title "Imp. Caes. L. Aurelius Commodus Aug.",⁷ and this change in nomenclature is likely the *terminus ante quem* for our two stamps, as the reigning emperor would hardly be referred to without the title "Augustus" even in a consular dating on a *fistula*.⁸

⁶ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle*², Darmstadt 1996, 32, 147, 149; A. R. Birley, "Hadrian to the Antonines", *CAH XI*², Cambridge 2000, 132–94, esp. 180–81. The only source giving a precise date is *Hist. Aug. Comm.* 2.4; in *Hist. Aug. M. Aur.* 16.1 the bestowal of the title "Imperator" is mentioned but not dated. The date of October 28 is given by *Hist. Aug. Comm.* 12.4 (*cum patre imperator appellatus est*), erroneously, it is thought. The same source reports that Commodus celebrated a triumph over the Sarmatians and Germans with his father on December 23 (*Comm.* 12.5). Our other narrative sources for this period, Cassius Dio and Herodian, do not provide information in this regard. Cassius Dio is extant in fragments (excerpts) only, and Herodian does not dwell on such topics. There is no very recent treatment of this problem, but see R. Marino, "Il problema cronologico della *tribunicia potestas* prima di Commodo", *Studi di storia antica offerti a Eugenio Manni*, Roma 1976, 223–39, esp. 225–26, 238–39 (the focus is on the first *tribunicia potestas*, but the author dedicates considerable space to the first imperial acclamation of Commodus as well). O. Hekster, *Commodus. An Emperor at the Crossroads*, Leiden 2002, 38 with n. 114 does not provide clarity (inadvertently, the book claims that Commodus was made both Imperator and Augustus on Nov. 27, 176); the epigraphical sources listed do not help determine when Commodus became "Imperator". Instead, a fragment of the *Acta Arvalium* is quite important, see J. Scheid, *Commentarii Fratrum Arvalium qui supersunt. Les copies épigraphiques des protocoles annuels de la confrérie arvale (21 av. – 304 ap. J.-C.)*, Roma 1998, 252–53 no. 88. The text, which Scheid dates to between November 14 and December 5, A.D. 176, calls Commodus *cos. desi[gnatus]* and *particeps imp[erij]*. Scheid suggests that the ceremony celebrated by the Arvalians took place in occasion of Commodus' receiving the imperial acclamation on Nov. 27. It is noteworthy, though, that the unusual expression *particeps imperii* is used.

⁷ Kienast (above n. 5) 147.

⁸ An inventory of the seven known lead pipe stamps from Rome in which an emperor appears in a consular dating (all published in *CIL XV*) shows that either the epithet "Imperator" or "Augustus", or both, always accompany the emperor's name. "Imperator" appears six times (*CIL XV* 7241, 7360, 7361b, 7362, 7364–65), "Augustus" is present four times (*CIL XV* 7361a–b, 7362, 7364). In a *fistula* stamp from Gaul in which Caracalla appears in a consular dating, both *Imp.* and *Aug.* accompany his name (*Gallia* 49 (1992) 90–93). This pattern leads to the conclusion that when the stamp discussed

In any case, that the two stamps are different is a strong indication that they belonged to different hydraulic enterprises (once a stamp had been cut, the *plumbarius* could use it for as long as it served him), separated if not in time then at least in space.

The archaeological evidence indeed proves that the stamps were not part of the same urban project. As noted above, the new stamp derives from the recent excavations on the grounds of the Ospedale Militare on the Caelius, which lies to the south-east of the Colosseum, at a distance of some 500 metres.⁹ *CIL XV 7360*, on the other hand, was found "nei movimenti di terra compiuti allo scopo di spianare la nuova via del Colosseo" (*CIL XV, ad. loc.*).¹⁰ The modern, rather short Via del Colosseo is situated on a spur of the Oppian hill above the Via dei Fori Imperiali, north-east of the Colosseum at some distance from the amphitheatre, but in 1895 when the discovery was made, the street ran down to about where the modern entry to the Metropolitana is situated; Lanciani's *Forma Urbis* shows the topography and even identifies the zone of excavation in 1895.¹¹

The different sizes of the *fistulae*, an internal diameter of merely 4 cm for the pipe from the Ospedale Militare, and 9 cm for the one near the Colosseum,¹² proves that they did not belong to the same conduit. Yet, as far as the task of the procurator is concerned (which really is the aspect that interests us here), one might be tempted to claim that Calpurnius Maximus

here was cut, Commodus' imperial status had likely not yet been clearly established. One can also note that for Quintillus both nomen and cognomen are given. It seems odd that nothing should indicate Commodus' new imperial status, if it was already well established. What I believe to be a revealing parallel can be found in *CIL XV 7319*, a stamp which contains the consular dating for A.D. 161: *Aurel. Caes. III et Comm. II cos.* The same conduit also carried the stamp *Imp. Caes. Aureli Antonini et Aureli Veri sub cura* (etc.), in which we thus find the imperial titulature of the new emperor Marcus (the titulature is surely meant to apply to Lucius Verus as well) after his accession on March 7, 161. The fact that the change in titulature is not reflected in the consular dating must derive from the fact that this particular stamp had been cut before March 7 and continued to be in use. In the same fashion, I imagine that the stamp from the Ospedale Militare was made before the changes in Commodus' titulature became common knowledge.

⁹ See C. Pavolini in Pavolini (ed.) (above n. 3) 447; Carignani (above n. 3) 497, for a description of the find spot.

¹⁰ The quote in *CIL XV* is from G. Gatti, "Roma. Nuove scoperte nella città e nel suburbio", *NSA* 1895, 346, which registered the discovery.

¹¹ R. Lanciani, *Forma Urbis Romae*, Roma 1893–1901 (reprint 1990), pl. 29.

¹² See Carignani (above n. 3) 497 n. 167 and Gatti (above n. 10) 346, respectively.

had been acting as a procurator in charge of the Colosseum (being an analogous case to the Roman knight who was *procurator operis theatri Pompeiani* around A.D. 200 in *ILS* 1430-31), since both *fistulae* were found in relative proximity of that building. This, however, is not the case.

It is true that *CIL* XV 7360 was discovered quite close to the Colosseum, and one certainly cannot exclude that the conduit might have served for instance a fountain in the Colosseum or one just outside. The recently found conduit, however, did definitely not serve the Colosseum. The archaeological context to which the new stamp belonged is much better documented, and the excavation team was able to connect the conduit to a remarkably luxurious *domus* on the site, which, the discoverer suggests, might even have been an imperial residence.¹³

2. Two *fistulae* of Flavius Secundus

Another imperial official, Flavius Secundus, appears in two different lead pipe stamps that are both dated to the very period when Calpurnius Maximus was active. One of these was found on the Quirinal and reads:¹⁴

IMP M AVR ANTON AVG ET L AVR COMM
CAES SVCC FL SECVNDI AEL FEL OFF
 (*CIL* XV 7320)

The other one comes from the vicinity of the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli (i.e., from less than 300 m north of the Colosseum) and carries the text:

SVB CVRA FL SECVNDI [---]
IMP ANTONINI ET COMMODI AVGG NN
 (*NSA* 1922, 222)

Since the emperor Marcus is given almost his full titulature in the first stamp, while Commodus is simply styled "L. Aurelius Commodus Caesar", we must conclude that the *fistula* belongs to a time before Commodus began using the epithet "Imperator". The situation is similar to the one discussed in

¹³ Carignani (above n. 3) 497–98.

¹⁴ The entry in *CIL* XV is based on a report by Pirro Ligorio, the sometimes less than reliable Renaissance intellectual, but the *CIL* editor Dressel was right in trusting Ligorio in this case (he otherwise rarely did), as was demonstrated when a *fistula* naming Flavius Secundus was later discovered (see the following stamp).

section 1 above, although in the present case we are not forced to assume that the stamp in fact dates to early A.D. 177. The *terminus ante quem* for the stamp could well be November 176 (although early 177 cannot be excluded), while the earliest possible date is 166, as already established by Dressel in *CIL* XV.¹⁵ The second stamp, however, dates to the later part of 177, after Commodus had been given the epithet "Augustus".

Thus, the two different stamps of Flavius Secundus not only demonstrably come from separate sites, but their dates must be several months apart.

If we want to establish the chronology of the four *fistulae* discussed so far,¹⁶ we can then say that the earliest stamp is *CIL* XV 7320 (Flavius Secundus) which belongs in the period A.D. 166 – November 176 (or possibly a little later). In the period from January to about June 177 belong *MDAIR* 1993, 497 (Calpurnius Maximus) and *CIL* XV 7360 (Calpurnius Maximus), with the first of these probably slightly earlier. Lastly, we have *NSA* 1922, 222 (Flavius Secundus), which postdates June 177. Furthermore, the four *fistula* stamps enable us to establish the following about Calpurnius Maximus and Flavius Secundus in regard to their activities in Rome:

(1) during a period of at least two years (A.D. 176-177), the activities of two imperial officials (who both appear to be of equestrian rank) intersect in such operations in Rome that include the laying out of water conduits of lead.

(2) both officials are found carrying out hydraulic activities on more than one location during this period.

It used to be thought that officials acting *sub cura* in lead pipe stamps were *procuratores aquarum*, but because of their concurrent activities, it is clear that Calpurnius Maximus and Flavius Secundus cannot both be the *procurator aquarum*, and possibly neither of them were. This conclusion supports a suggestion advanced by the present author in some earlier studies.¹⁷ Werner Eck has suggested that such *fistula*-officials instead were

¹⁵ Commodus became Caesar in A.D. 166, see Kienast (above n. 6) 147.

¹⁶ The question of chronology, and the implications thereof, were already discussed in Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 243. The topic was pursued further by Carignani (above n. 3) 498 n. 169, who was aware of the implications of the new discovery.

¹⁷ At first in Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 263–71; the argument is developed most recently in C. Bruun, "Der Kaiser und die stadtrömischen *curae*: Geschichte und Bedeutung", in A. Kolb (ed.), *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis im römischen Reich*

largely responsible for individual sites and buildings supplied by the stamped water pipe.¹⁸ This idea certainly represents a possibility in some cases, but it does not fit in with (2) above, namely the fact that both Calpurnius Maximus and Flavius Secundus were active in two places which are neither close nor even in the same city region. The lead pipes of the former come from the Augustan regions II and III, those of Flavius Secundus from regions IV and VI.¹⁹

Instead, the situation that presents itself is one in which imperial procurators in Rome are not confined to any precise building, but are in charge of special tasks in the development of the capital's infrastructure. The *fistulae* only tell of hydraulic works, but we should not be blinded by the nature of our sources; it is certainly possible that the water conduits were merely part of larger construction projects about which no texts have survived. These construction projects were imperial in the sense that they were financed with imperial funds (the *patrimonium*), whether intended for the use of the emperor and his family or for public use. The way in which the procurators would have recorded these tasks in an inscription giving their public career probably varied. Perhaps they were sometimes simply called *proc. Augusti*.²⁰

(forthcoming). For agreement see, e.g., W. Eck, "Überlieferung und historische Realität: ein Grundproblem prosopographischer Forschung", in W. Eck (ed.), *Prosopographie und Sozialgeschichte*, Köln – Wien – Weimar 1993, 365–96, esp. 388–89; Carignani (above n. 2) 498 n. 169; R. Rodgers (ed. and comm.), *Frontinus: De aquaeductu urbis Romae*, Cambridge 2004, 286; F. Del Chicca (ed. and comm.), *Frontino De aquae ductu urbis Romae*, Roma 2004, 432–33.

¹⁸ See most recently W. Eck, "Zu Inschriften von Prokuratoren", *ZPE* 124 (1999) 228–41, esp. 237–38: "die für einen großen Gebäudekomplex insgesamt oder für bauliche Einrichtungen eines Verwaltungsbereichs verantwortlich waren".

¹⁹ The Ospedale Militare site belongs to the ancient *regio II*, the Colosseum lies in the *r. III*, the *r. VI* embraces the Quirinal while S. Pietro in Vincoli is situated in *r. IV*. For the division of Rome into regions, see *LTUR* IV (1999), s.v. and esp. p. 518 with the foldout map (D. Palombi). In theory, these officials may of course have been given a new assignment in the intervening time. Purely from the point of logic, there are other ways in which the above "anomalies" could be explained. One of the two officials might be a senator, in charge of a special project; then the other could still be a *proc. aquarum*. Other scenarios are also possible. Certainty eludes us, but if the above pages have at least managed to draw some attention to the new material and the possibilities it opens up, they have served a purpose.

²⁰ The question of public works in Rome and the function of procurators and officials in *fistula* stamps is discussed in more detail in Bruun, above n. 17 (forthcoming). One may

3. Two procurators of Fulvius Plautianus²¹

In 1902, the name of Fulvius Plautianus, the powerful *praefectus praetorio* under Septimius Severus, was found on two lead pipes in Rome, on the Quirinal hill. After some initial problems of interpretation²² the stamps were presented as follows:

*FVLVI PLAVTIANI PR [PR C V S]VC C CORN[ELI]
[VI]CTORIS PROC OFF TERENTIVS C[ASSAND]ER
(BCAR 1902, 63 = BCAR 1902, 292 = NSA 1902, 133 = NSA 1903, 20 = AE 1903, 125)
Fulvi Plautiani pr(aefecti) [pr(aetorio) c(larissimi) v(iri) s]ucc(ura) Corn[eli] /
[Vi]ctoris proc(uratoris) officinator Terentius C[assand]er (scil. fecit)*

*FVLVI PLAVTIANI PR PR C V SVC C ANNI
PROCVLI PROC OFF TERENTIVS CASSANDER
(BCAR 1902, 292 = NSA 1903, 20 = AE 1903, 126 = ILS 8689)
Fulvi Plautiani pr(aefecti) pr(aetorio) c(larissimi) v(iri) succ(ura) Anni / Proculi
proc(uratoris) officinator Terentius Cassander (scil. fecit)*

The most remarkable aspect of these stamps is that the name of the praetorian prefect Plautianus is found paired with the names of imperial procurators through the formula *sub cura*. The formula is a familiar one, for many lead pipe stamps in which various imperial officials act *sub cura* are known from Rome, Ostia and Central Italy (cf. above at n. 17). The common characteristic of all these stamps is that they are imperial, i.e. they name the emperor (in the genitive case), and the procurators evidently perform their

note that M. Petronius Sura who acts *sub cura* in the *fistula* stamp *CIL XV 7309* labels himself merely *proc. Augusti* in a dedication to Hadrian (*CIL VI 977*).

²¹ An earlier version of the following section on the *fistulae* of Plautianus was first delivered as a paper in a plenary session at the memorable IXth Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy in Sofia in 1987. The paper was submitted to the Congress Proceedings about a year later and was updated in 1995. As the proceedings have not yet appeared and are unlikely to do so, I have decided to publish a much revised version of the paper, the content of which was never fully incorporated into Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 229–30.

²² The stamp naming Cornelius Victor was noticed earlier than the other stamp and although a preliminary reading was announced at once, it took some time before it had been cleaned and properly read. The stamp of Annius Proculus was neglected at first. When it became an object of study, its text may have helped deciphering the first stamp; see below for references to all the relevant passages in *BCAR* and *NSA* of the years 1902 and 1903.

task for the emperor. The stamps presented above constitute the only exception to this rule, as here imperial procurators are employed for the installation of a conduit carrying the name of someone other than the emperor.

Of course Fulvius Plautianus was no ordinary private citizen. He became one of the two *praefecti praetorio* in A.D. 197 and remained in that position until his death on 22 January, 205. His rank was boosted in other ways as well, as we shall see, and one might at first glance say that Plautianus' appearance in the stamps both underlines the extraordinary position he had gained in the state, and confirms the rule that no common private person could use imperial procurators for their hydraulic works.²³

Plautianus' other distinctions can help date the stamps, and establishing the date will have important consequences. In 197 Plautianus became both *praefectus praetorio* and *clarissimus vir*, the latter epithet an indication that he had been elevated to senatorial rank. As the stamps contain the epithet *c.v.*, they both date to A.D. 197 or later. In A.D. 202 Plautianus was given consular rank, and in 203 he was *consul II ordinarius*. Stefano Priuli suggested twenty years ago that as the rank of *cos. II* is not marked in the stamp, the *fistulae* should date to before the year 203.²⁴ If correct, this gives us a *terminus ante quem* prior to his death in 205²⁵.

It is important here to point to the frequency with which Plautianus adds *cos. II* to his name in brick stamps, another kind of *instrumentum domesticum*, i.e., everyday objects which have limited space for honorific epithets.²⁶ As far as inscriptions on stone are concerned, the mention of *cos.*

²³ Bruun (above n. 1 [1991] 229–30; E.M. Steinby, "Le *fistulae* di Fulvius Plautianus", *Epigrafia della produzione e della distribuzione* (Coll. ÉFR 193), Roma 1994, 659–660. Thus already G. Gatti, "Notizie di recenti trovamenti di antichità in Roma e nel Lazio", *BCAR* 30 (1902) 56–98, esp. 64.

²⁴ This suggestion was first made by S. Priuli, "Le iscrizioni sulle *fistulae*", in *Il trionfo dell'acqua. Acque e acquedotti a Roma* (Exhibition catalogue, Rome 1986), Roma 1986, 187–95, esp. 192.

²⁵ It should be noted that not everyone is in agreement. Not too long ago Werner Eck instead dated the *fistulae* to 203 or after; he does not seem to have been aware of Priuli's argument, though; see W. Eck, in a note in *LTUR* II, Roma 1995, 106. So did Gatti (above n. 23) 64, but at the time of writing he was under the wrong impression that the stamp contained the formula "*cos. II*".

²⁶ See P. Setälä, *Private Domini in Roman Brick Stamps of the Empire*, Helsinki 1987, 122–27; M. Steinby, "L'industria laterizia di Roma nel tardo impero", in A. Giardina

II is, on the other hand, more of an exception.²⁷

There are also reasons for establishing a later *terminus post quem* than 197 for the stamps. After Plautianus' daughter Plautilla married Caracalla in 202 her father became officially related to the imperial family, and he began using the epithets *necessarius*, *socer* and *consocer Augustorum* (obviously with the approval of the emperor).²⁸ It is this new relation to the imperial family, created through the imperial marriage of his daughter, that best explains Plautianus' appearance together with imperial procurators in the *fistulae*.

A less cogent argument has been made that Plautianus became part of the imperial family even earlier. Fulvio Grosso once suggested that he had received the status of *adfinis* ("related by marriage") already in A.D. 200. But the text Grosso referred to comes from Egypt and uses the expression "oikeios".²⁹ From this it does not follow that he would have been known as *adfinis* in Latin documents at the time (the Latin term in fact never appears in Plautianus' official documents). Moreover, *necessarius* is by far the most common epithet used in inscriptions,³⁰ and therefore it must be the expression which carries the strongest and most significant message. Arguably, only his daughter's imperial marriage and the acquisition of the epithet *necessarius* meant that Plautianus really became aggregated to the imperial family. That in turn would make a new *terminus post quem* of sometime in 202 for his appearance in the *fistula* stamp the most likely situation. Since the epithets of Plautianus are identical in the two stamps, this creates a rather narrow window of time – between four and eight months, depending on when one believes the marriage between Caracalla and Plautilla to have taken place³¹ – during which both procurators would

(ed.), *Società romana e impero tardoantico* II, Roma – Bari 1986, 99–164 and 438–46, esp. 104–106.

²⁷ See the collection of inscriptions in G. Alföldy, "Un' iscrizione di Patavium e la titolatura di C. Fulvio Plauziano", *Aquileia Nostra* 50 (1979) 125–52, esp. 129–31. Many of them have suffered from *damnatio memoriae* and *cos. II* might in fact have been mentioned; in addition, some of the inscriptions may date from before A.D. 203.

²⁸ See *PIR*² F 554 (Stein) for Plautianus' epithets. On the date of the marriage between Plautilla and Caracalla see below n. 31.

²⁹ F. Grosso, "Ricerche su Plauziano e gli avvenimenti del suo tempo", *RAL* 23 (1968) 7–58, esp. 32.

³⁰ For this argument see Alföldy (above n. 27); cf. Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 230.

³¹ The window of time is some eight months if one follows Kienast (above n. 6) 165,

have been operating under him.

We must consider above all the physical context in which these material sources, the *fistulae* and their stamps, originated. Even though the archaeological reports documenting the finds are less complete than one could wish for, there are clear indications that the two *fistulae* belonged to the same edifice (which, in the light of modern research, does not seem to have been the palace of Plautianus³²). The lead pipes were manufactured by the same *plumbarius* Terentius Cassander, and the stamps appear to be identical except for the mention of the procurators.³³ Moreover, the two *fistulae* were found on the same site, when excavating a room some 165 m from the northern opening of the tunnel under the Quirinal (the "Traforo"),³⁴ even though only one, that of Cornelius Victor, was published almost immediately after the discovery in April 1902.³⁵

who dates the marriage to the period 9–15 April, 202. Other scholars consider a later date to be more likely. The only narrative source giving a chronological indication is the epitome of Cass. Dio 77.1, in which several events are lumped together: the *decennalia* of Severus, the marriage, and the return to Rome of the emperor and the ensuing games and gifts to the people. A. R. Birley, *Septimius Severus. The African Emperor*³, London – New York 1999, 143–4 considers Severus to have been on his way to Rome, perhaps at Carnuntum, on his *dies imperii* on April 9, while the marriage took place in the capital at a later date; similarly H. Halfmann, *Itinera principis. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich*, Stuttgart 1986, 221–22, who concludes that the marriage was celebrated before the end of August.

³² E. Lissi Caronna, "Domus: C. Fulvius Plautianus", *LTUR* II (1995) 105–06 doubts that the site she describes would have been splendid enough around A.D. 200 to qualify as the residence of Plautianus. On the region of the "Traforo" in general, see also P.L. Tucci, "Tra il Quirinale e l'Acquedotto Vergine sulla pianta marmorea severiana: i frammenti 538 a–o", *ARID* 23 (1996) 21–33 with p. 31 for our *fistulae*.

³³ *Carta Archeologica di Roma* II, Firenze 1964, 234 no. H 140 s gives the information, which I have not found anywhere else, that the two *fistulae* both had the diameter of 7 cm.

³⁴ See the description of R. Bonfiglietti, "Gli orti di C. Fulvio Plauziano sul Quirinale", *BCAR* 54 (1926) 145–75, esp. 170: "Egualemente, nello sbancamento del nucleo, nella camera di cui abbiamo parlato ... si trovarono in tempi diversi due frammenti di tubo di piombo, provenienti chiaramente dall'Alta Semita, sui quali si legge il nome del proprietario del luogo C. Fulvio Plauziano". See also *Carta Archeologica di Roma* (above n. 33) *loc. cit.*

³⁵ The sceptic might argue that since only one stamp was published initially, the other stamp had not yet been uncovered and, thus, likely came from a different location. But besides the word of Bonfiglietti (above n. 34), an engineer involved in the tunnel project and generally considered reliable, in my experience *fistulae* are the kind of objects that

What are the ramifications of this double discovery? Gatti in 1902 already made some relevant observations (my translation of the Italian original): "either there were two conduits each handled by a different procurator, or rather, one of them took over after the other had initiated the work but had been prevented by death or some other reason from finishing it".³⁶

Gatti's second and preferred explanation is, of course, quite in line with the common idea of how imperial procurators were employed. When a vacancy appeared, a successor was nominated. It becomes somewhat more complicated when we try to picture this procedure in the context both of the imperial administration and of completing a hydraulic project. If a procurator suddenly dies, how quickly can the emperor find a successor and provide him with the *codicilli* specifying his appointment, and how soon will the new appointee be on the spot in Rome?³⁷ We can only speculate, but clearly a much smoother change would have occurred if we were dealing with a planned substitution, with the new procurator perhaps already designated and waiting for the date on which the man in office was to step down. Even so, it seems somewhat odd, if we consider the situation from the practical point of view, that this localized hydraulic project should have dragged on so long that it would have been affected by the supposed change of procurator, to the extent even that the stamps had to be changed. It is true that even in eight months or less (if we are justified in narrowing down the period to which both stamps belong, as was suggested above at n. 31) much can happen, but one would rather imagine that the hydraulic work had been made in a much shorter time; lead pipe production is not overly complicated.³⁸

would suffer from the "when you've seen one, you've seen them all" effect, i.e., once one stamped *fistula* had been found, the stamp read and the pipe set aside, other similar dirty and ugly objects would be added to the pile without much thought, not least since the inscriptions would have been difficult to distinguish.

³⁶ G. Gatti, "Notizie di recenti trovamenti di antichità in Roma e nel suburbio", *BCAR* 30 (1902) 285–99, esp. 292–93.

³⁷ Making quick decisions in the Fall of A.D. 202 would have been possible, though, as the emperor was present in Rome. According to Halfmann (above n. 31) 218–19 and 222, Septimius Severus, having been in the capital since at least August 202, visited North Africa from late 202 (or early in 203) until June 203, when he returned to Rome; cf. Birley (above n. 31) 140–54.

³⁸ See A. Cochet – J. Hansen, *Conduites et objets de plomb Gallo-Romains de Vienne*

Even though it is not absolutely compelling, one might also explore the other possibility, that two procurators had been involved in the same project. Considering the hierarchical structure of the imperial administration, such a situation seems decidedly odd. Very few positions were collegial. Yet the situation in Rome, as it appears in the *fistula* stamps, is unusual. Even though one might think that the *cura aquarum*, the aqueduct administration, would have used one specially appointed *procurator aquarum* for supervising the installation of lead pipes ordered by the emperor, this was not so. Not unfrequently, the officials that turn up in *fistula* stamps indicate that they work for the *patrimonium*.³⁹ It has, as we saw above, also been suggested that such officials sometimes were simply in charge of a building that was to be supplied by the conduit.⁴⁰ What seems clear is that at any time in Rome, there could be many *equites*, and perhaps some senators as well, who had such duties that their names might turn up in the *sub cura* formula on an imperial *fistula*. Therefore the idea that two procurators were jointly involved in the supervision of an hydraulic project is not impossible. Their "job description" may not have been identical, one may for instance have been in charge of a building, the other of a specific project, and so on. Perhaps they both operated under the supervision of the high-ranking chief *proc. patrimonii*, who may have had the power to direct their activities without having to acquire authorization from the emperor.⁴¹

To open up this perspective is all that can be done at the moment, and to have done so perhaps has some ramifications for the study of the organization of public works in Rome.

All in all, the cases of Calpurnius Maximus, Flavius Secundus and the two procurators of Fulvius Plautianus are all relevant for that obscure and little known subject, the organization of public works in Rome, the elucidation of which has justly been labelled "ein wirkliches Desiderat der Forschung" by Werner Eck.⁴²

(*Isère*) (Gallia Suppl. 46), Paris 1986, 22–67.

³⁹ Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 257–59.

⁴⁰ See note 18 above.

⁴¹ Without claiming that they would have carried such titles, one is reminded of the *adiutores* and *subcuratores operum publicorum* that are found in a few instances in Rome; see H.-G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain I–III*, Paris 1960–61, III 1028.

⁴² Eck (above n. 18) 238.

4. A Procurator of the *Patrimonium* or not?

The final case to be discussed here has no connection to the questions explored above, but still concerns the tasks that might have been handled by procurators encountered in lead pipe stamps. A stamp on a *fistula* from the Testaccio district in Rome has been presented in the following fashion:

IMP ANTONINI AVG PII PATRIMONI
PROC CIVLIVS RVFVS [.] C
 (BCAR 34 (1906) 113; 36 (1908) 55 no. 1)⁴³

The reading of the first line presents no problems – *Imp(eratoris) Antonini Aug(usti) Pii patrimonii(i)* – but the question is how to expand some of the abbreviated words in line 2. Hans-Georg Pflaum is the author of the proposal to read, in the second line, *proc(urator) C. Iulius Rufus [f(aciendum)] c(uravit)* – in which case C. Iulius Rufus would seem to be a *proc. patrimonii*, although in his title these words appear in the inverse order (a very unusual occurrence).⁴⁴

Or was Iulius Rufus in fact the manufacturer of the fistula: *C. Iulius Rufus [fe]c(it)*? The latter interpretation was some time ago proposed by Werner Eck, who was unconvinced by the first reading.⁴⁵

This new reading however runs into problems when we try to make sense of the words preceding Iulius Rufus' name. We must decide whether *proc.* is in the nominative or in the genitive. The latter option is not possible. It does not make sense to read *patrimonii(i) proc(uratoris)* – we can have *patrimonii* in the genitive indicating the government branch that oversees the property supplied by the *fistulae*, but we cannot have a *procurator patrimonii* in the genitive following the name of the emperor also in the genitive. The procurator cannot have been the owner of property; the emperor was. If the formula *sub cura* had preceded the mention of the

⁴³ In the stamp published in 1906, the beginning of l. 2 was somewhat difficult to read; an identical stamp presented in BCAR 36 (1908) allows a clear reading. The earlier stamp was also published in NSA 1906, 206 and AE 1907, 120, but in both cases with the incorrect spelling "Iunius Rufus".

⁴⁴ Pflaum (above n. 40), I 315 (based on an earlier suggestion by A. Stein); in agreement R.P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*, Cambridge 1982, 74 n. 26; Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 257.

⁴⁵ Eck (above n. 17) 388 n. 84: "dagegen ist C. Iulius Rufus, genannt Bull.Com. 1906, 113, nicht als *procurator patrimonii* zu verstehen, sondern als Hersteller der *fistula*".

patrimonii procurator, such a genitive would make sense, but it does not, and it seems rather farfetched to assume that the formula has been left out by mistake.

We must therefore assume that *proc.* is in the nominative. It now becomes very difficult not to connect *proc.* with the name Iulius Rufus. Were title and name to stand separately, we would have to supply a verb, for instance *patrimoni(i) proc(urator) (curavit)*, followed by *C. Iulius Rufus fecit*. This appears highly improbable; in this reading, not only is the *proc. patrimonii* anonymous, there is not even any verb to denote that he (or his office) was performing some function.⁴⁶

Eck's interpretation therefore requires us to consider line 1 as complete in itself and to read, in l. 2, *proc(urator) C. Iulius Rufus fecit*. This too creates a unique situation, making the *plumbarius* an imperial procurator. No such cases are known. In addition, it was noted by G. Gatti, the excavator of the Testaccio site, that on two other lead pipes belonging to the conduit of Iulius Rufus there appeared the stamp *oficina Eutychetis* (*BCAR* 34 (1906) 114 = *NSA* 1906, 181 = *NSA* 1906, 206 = *AE* 1907, 120). The person called Eutyches was undoubtedly the manufacturer of the conduit.

Against this background it seems sensible to agree with Pflaum's reading and restoration *proc(urator) C. Iulius Rufus [f(aciendum)] c(uravit)*. At least the formula *faciendum curavit* is the traditional formula by which magistrates and other officials denote public works they are overseeing. *Fecit* is the term which common manufacturers use on lead pipe stamps and on other types of *instrumentum domesticum*.

Having said this, there are two newly discovered texts that provide cause for reconsidering the meaning of *fecit* in lead pipe stamps. In one Ostian *fistula* of Claudian date we read *[Clau]di [C]ae. Aug. Ti. Claudius Aegialus fecit*. If Aegialus is to be identified with the powerful imperial freedman Aegialus under Nero, it seems likely that his task in Ostia was not simply to pour the lead and install the water pipes, but that he was in charge of a larger project sponsored by the emperor (the piece of *fistula* on which the stamp was impressed is enormous).⁴⁷

⁴⁶ It seems very unlikely that the letter C before Iulius Rufus could have stood for *c(uravit)*, that is *patrimoni(i) proc(urator) c(uravit)*, *Iulius Rufus fecit*. It is a theoretical possibility, but has no support in the structure and wording of other *fistula* stamps.

⁴⁷ For the reading of the stamp and the famous freedman Aegialus, see C. Bruun, "Ti.

Secondly, a newly discovered lead pipe from Ponte Galeria between Rome and Ostia carries two stamps, one reads *sub Gnesio [-] / Sotas disp(ensator) fecit*, and the other simply *Antullus* (*AE* 1995, 249). To judge from the common pattern in *fistula* stamps, the latter stamp should really be read *Antullus (fecit)*, thereby making Antullus the *plumbarius*. This straightforward conclusion is however complicated by the other stamp, in which one reads *Sotas dispensator fecit*. Running a lead manufacture business is not the kind of activity one would normally associate with a *dispensator*, for which position only highly trusted and numerically gifted slaves were chosen. Thus, at Ponte Galeria there are grounds for assuming that *fecit* on the *fistula* assumed a wider meaning, "supervised", not, "was involved in the actual production".⁴⁸ One may add that "*fecit*" of course appears in this wider meaning in numerous inscriptions on stone from all over the empire.⁴⁹

To my mind, the only way to make sense of the stamp of Iulius Rufus is to either read [*f.*] *c.* – or, if it can be shown that the right reading of the stamp is [*fe*]*c*[*it*] – to assume that *fecit* has the same and wider meaning of *faciendum curavit*. Either way, C. Iulius Rufus was not a simple *plumbarius* and must be connected with the imperial *patrimonium*, within which he held a procuratorship of some kind (in the absence of other evidence, I obviously do not propose that he was the *proc. patrimonii* in charge of the whole department).⁵⁰

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Claudius Aegialus e l'acquedotto di Ostia", *ZPE* 122 (1998) 265–72, esp. 267 (= *AE* 1998, 276).

⁴⁸ See the argument presented previously in C. Bruun, "Imperial *procuratores* and *dispensatores*: New Discoveries", *Chiron* 29 (1999) 29–42, esp. 29, 34–37 (= *AE* 1999, 412). One must remember, though, that even the conventional interpretation of "*fecit*" in lead pipe stamps does not imply that the *plumbarius* handled everything himself. The *plumbarius* was surely normally the owner of a workshop and was assisted by slaves or labourers. A fair number of plumbers were in fact female *plumbariae*, see Bruun (above n. 1 [1991]) 343–44.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, *ILS* 5409–11, 5432, 5447, 5460, etc. The Pantheon in Rome provides a classic example: *M. Agrippa L. f. cos. tertium fecit* (*CIL* VI 896 = *ILS* 129).

⁵⁰ It has to be added, though, that it would be most useful to be able to inspect the *fistula* or see a photograph of it. As it is presented, line 2 is clearly shorter than line 1, which is quite unusual. One suspects that part of the text on l. 2 is missing, and this could, in the end, be the reason for some or all of its unusual features.