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## INDEX

Patrick Bruun	Portrait of a Conspirator. Constantine's Break with the Tetrarchy .....	5
Tapio Helen	A Problem in Roman Brick Stamps: Who Were <i>Lucilla n(ostra) and Aurel(i-us) Caes(ar) n(oster)</i> , the Owners of the figlinae Fulvianae? .....	27
Paavo Hohti	Die Schuldfrage der Perserkriege in Herodots Geschichtswerk .....	37
Iiro Kajanto	On the Significance of the Hammer and Other Tools Depicted on Christian Funeral Inscriptions .....	49
Saara Lilja	Vermin in Ancient Greece .....	59
Tuomo Pekkanen	<i>Nomine superioris</i> (Tac. Germ. 36,1) ..	69
Hannu Riikonen	The Attitude of Roman Poets and Orators to the Countryside as a Place for Creative Work .....	75
Heikki Solin	Analecta epigraphica XXXII-XXXIX ..	87
Jaakko Suolahti	<i>M. Claudius Glicia qui scriba fuerat dictator</i> .....	97
Holger Thesleff	The Date of the Pseudo-Platonic Hippias Major .....	105
Toivo Viljamaa	<i>Magnum fas nefasque</i> . Horace's Epode 5, 87-88 .....	119
Maija Väisänen	Alcune famiglie eminenti (Titii, Ulprii, Statilii) nelle iscrizioni onorarie a Prusia all'Iprio in Bitinia .....	125
De novis libris iudicia	.....	133

**A PROBLEM IN ROMAN BRICK STAMPS:  
WHO WERE LUCILLA N(OSTRA)  
AND AUREL(IUS) CAES(AR) N(OSTER),  
THE OWNERS OF THE FIGLINAE FULVIANAE?**

**Tapio Helen**

There are four Roman brick stamps<sup>1</sup> in which the name of the figlinae Fulvianae is mentioned, namely nos. 223—226 of CIL XV,1. Two owners of the figlinae Fulvianae are mentioned in these stamps: *Lucilla* in 223*ab* and 224 *Aurelius Caesar* in 225; and one officinator, *Suc(c)es(sus) ser(vus)* in 225. Stamp 225, then, is binominal and stamps 223 and 224 are one name stamps. The fourth figlinae Fulvianae stamp, no. 226, contains no personal name; in this stamp the words *Por(tus) Licini* are linked with the name of the figlinae Fulvianae.

The problem is one of identification: Who were *Lucilla* and *Aurelius Caesar*, the owners of figlinae Fulvianae mentioned in the stamps?

Marini suggested identifying *Lucilla* with Domitia Lucilla, mother of Marcus Aurelius, the person most often mentioned in Roman brick stamps.<sup>2</sup> After Marini all writers on Roman brick stamps have agreed with this identification.<sup>3</sup> If *Lucilla* is Domitia Lucilla then, naturally, *Aurelius Caesar* is her son Marcus Aurelius. With these identifications stamps 223 and 224 are to be dated within the lifetime of Domitia Lucilla and stamp 225 between the death of Domitia Lucilla and the accession of Marcus Aurelius in 161.<sup>4</sup> Domitia Lucilla died in the year 155 or a little later.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper I reconsider a second possible identification for the owners of the figlinae Fulvianae. My candidate for *Lucilla* is Annia Lucilla,<sup>6</sup> the daughter of Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the younger and the granddaughter of Domitia Lucilla. She was born in 148 and was married to the Emperor Lucius Verus in 164. For *Aurelius Caesar* I suggest Commodus, the brother of Annia Lucilla. Before

1 I refer to the stamps in CIL XV, 1 with bare numbers and to the stamps in Supplement to CIL XV, 1 with numbers preceded by S.

2 Marini 32—33. Marini's book was completed in manuscript form in the 1790's. The genealogy, now generally accepted, of the gens Domitia which plays a central part in Roman brick stamps was established by Marini (31—39).

3 Borghesi 40—41; Descemet 132; Dressel, *Untersuchungen*, 39 and CIL XV, 1 p. 272; Bloch, *I bolli laterizi*, 266 and Sette Bassi, 403f; Setälä 79—80; Steinby, *La cronologia*, 42.

4 Dressel dates the stamps 223*ab* and 224 immediately after 140, CIL XV, 1 p. 272 and comments on these stamps; Bloch (*I bolli laterizi*, 266) and Steinby (*La cronologia*, 42) to 145—155.

5 This is deduced from the fact that the last stamp with a consular date containing the name of Domitia Lucilla is from the year 155 (stamp 1090).

6 RE I, 2315 (Annius 123); PIR I<sup>2</sup> pp. 127—8 no. 707.

Marini the notion that Annia Lucilla appears as *dominus* in Roman brick stamps seems to have been a popular one, but the main arguments for this notion were erroneous, as Marini pointed out (see below).<sup>7</sup>

The following is an example of the text of the stamps of *Lucilla*:

223a            OP·DO·EX·FIG FVLVIANIS·  
                  LVCILLAE·Ñ·

*opus doliare ex figlinis Fulvianis Lucillae nostrae*

The text states that the brick (*opus doliare*) originates from the *figlinae Fulvianae* owned by *Lucilla nostra*. — In 223b and 224 the text consists of one line and in 224 the possessive pronoun *n(ostrae)* is missing, otherwise 223b and 224 differ from 223a only as regards the abbreviations; all are round in shape without *orbiculus*.

These stamps are anomalous in the "canon" of the stamps attributed to the two Domitiae Lucillae in CIL XV,1 firstly on account of the name form *Lucilla nostra* or *Lucilla* which appears in them. Normally the name of Domitia Lucilla<sup>8</sup> in stamps contains the gentilicium: such a name form appears in 104 stamps. When the gentilicium is missing, then in most cases (16 stamps) *Veri* is attached to the cognomen: *Lucilla Veri* (variously abbreviated), to indicate that Domitia Lucilla was the widow of M. Annius Verus. The unaccompanied cognomen *Lucilla* appears for an owner of *figlinae* or *praedia* in only two stamps apart from the *figlinae Fulvianae* stamps.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, no other name forms used of Domitia Lucilla appear in the *figlinae Fulvianae* stamps.

Before Marini it was the opinion of commentators on brick stamps that the name form *Lucilla Veri* referred to Annia Lucilla the daughter of Marcus Aurelius because she was the wife of the Emperor Lucius Verus, but by means of the consular dates that appear in the stamps Marini demonstrated that this was chronologically impossible. So the only remaining possibility seemed to be that *Lucilla Veri*, and *Lucilla* solely, was Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus Aurelius.

In one stamp, 226, in which the name of the *figlinae Fulvianae* is mentioned, the name of *Portus Licini* also appears. For Marini this was proof that Lucilla, the owner of the *figlinae Fulvianae*, was Domitia Lucilla, since the name of *Portus Licini* is associated

7 For instance, Fabretti interpreted the filiation CNF in Domitia Lucilla's name in stamp 1010 as *C(aesaris) n(ostri) f(ilia)* instead of *Cn(aei) f(ilia)*; Marini 34.

8 See Indices of CIL XV, 1. pp. 29—30.

9 Stamps 1053 (year 135) and 1064. In addition to these the name form *Lucilla* appears as a component in slave names (e.g. *Favor Lucillae*) in five stamps.



In both stamps the name of the officinator is the same: Successus. Suppose that in both cases Successus is the same man. Who then is dominus (or: who are domini)? In 741 *M. Aurelius Antoninus Commodus* is the Emperor Commodus; this much may be considered certain. The name form indicates the time following Marcus Aurelius' death in 180, when Commodus was sole Emperor.<sup>12</sup> Successus, the officinator, does not appear in brick stamps other than these two, or perhaps it would be preferable to say that no other Successus appearing in brick stamps is conveniently identifiable with this Successus.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Commodus is a more suitable candidate than Marcus Aurelius for the role of *Aurelius Caesar*, dominus in stamp 225, because if it were Marcus Aurelius, then there would be a very great time difference between the stamps of Successus, namely from the time when Marcus Aurelius was Caesar (before the year 161) to the time when Commodus was sole Emperor (from 180). And a further conclusion: if *Aurelius Caesar* in 225 is Commodus, then Annia Lucilla is a more likely candidate for *Lucilla* in 223 and 224 than Domitia Lucilla.

The above argument rests on the supposition that Successus in stamps 225 and 741 is the same person. As Successus was a very common cognomen, it is in no way certain that this was so in reality. Dressel, in his comment on 741 in CIL XV,1, remarks briefly "cf. no. 225"; as there is no other obvious common feature in the two stamps it is evident that Dressel had in mind the possibility that Successus was the same person in both stamps. If so, it is rather odd that he did not consider the possibility that *Aurelius Caesar noster* was not Marcus Aurelius but Commodus.

In a new stamp found at Ostia Annia Lucilla is mentioned together with her husband the Emperor Lucius Verus. The stamp is fragmentary, just about one half of it being preserved, but on the second line (i.e. the inner one in the circular stamp) the words ]LAE·ET·VERI[ are clearly visible; the obvious completion is *Lucillae et Veri*. From other points of view interpretation of this stamp remains a problem, partly owing to its fragmentary condition, and it is not clear what is stated as being owned by Lucilla and Verus, it may be a slave or a praedia, or perhaps something else.<sup>14</sup> But the

12 After Marcus Aurelius' death in 180 Commodus adopted the names of his father: the praenomen M. in place of his original L., and the cognomen Antoninus in addition to his original Commodus. In coins the cognomina normally appear in the order Commodus Antoninus the order Antoninus Commodus occurring in the first years 180—183 only. This may be taken to indicate that the stamp 741 is not much later than 180. See v.Rohden, col. 2469.

13 Steinby deems it possible that the Successus of 741 is the same person as *Cor( ) Suc(cessus?)* in 202 (La cronologia, 40). Another chronologically possible Successus is *Rutilius Successus* (stamps 134 and 135 = S.43) who was officinator at the figlinae Caninianae owned by Faustina and Commodus; see Helen 148 no. 54.

14 This stamp is to be published in Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae vol. VII: Lateres signati Os-

main point for the argument presented here is that Annia Lucilla is mentioned in Roman brick stamps as an owner of wealth.

In CIL the signum (i.e. the figure in the centre of a roundshaped stamp) of the figlinae Fulvianae stamps of *Lucilla*, 223ab and 224, is described as follows: *Victoria sinistrorsum currens sinistra ramum palmae, dextra elata coronam tenet*. In the new stamp from Ostia only part of the signum is visible, but it seems as though in this stamp, too, a "Victoria sinistrorsum" is depicted. If this is so, then the same Victory signum appears in all stamps which belong to Annia Lucilla according to the reasoning presented here.

The figure of Victory is very interesting from the chronological viewpoint, and an attractive hypothesis may be constructed on it. It is generally held that a great deal of the figure motifs that occur in the signa of Roman brick stamps originate from the pictorial symbol language used in Imperial propaganda and preserved for us mainly in the reverse types of Imperial coins.<sup>15</sup> Victory was the symbol of the Emperor as imperator, as the champion of Roman order against external aggressors. Accordingly, one would expect *a priori*, without any knowledge of, say, numismatics, the various phases of Roman political history to be reflected in the use of Victory symbolism. And this is the case with coins: coins with Victory types were common in those periods when the Emperor led the Roman legions in person against external enemy; in times of peace the Victory symbol was used sparingly.<sup>16</sup> Now, in this respect the opening years of the decade 160 marked an epoch in Roman history: the Roman world passed from a long period of total peace to one of external wars. If it is true that the Victory symbol on the brick stamp signa is derived from the symbol language of Imperial propaganda, then, obviously, the 160's constituted a more likely period for its appearance than, say, the two preceding decades.

In Roman brick stamps of CIL XV,1 and its Supplement a signum with some Victory type appears 21 times.<sup>17</sup> Of these 21 stamps one is early, from the end of the first century,<sup>18</sup> and 15 are

tienses as no. 635; the fasciculus of Imagines of this volume is being printed. — The first line of this stamp reads: ]i.ex.praed.Ianua[, which seems to indicate that Ianuarius was the praedia owner. There is, however, another possible word order, namely: Ianua[ri...] ex praed/[Lucil]lae et Veri[...] according to which Lucilla and Verus would be the praedia owners. The latter word order is possible if the stamp is completely round in shape, i.e. there is no orbiculus (the stamps 223ab, 224 and 741 are of this type). The part of the stamp that has survived is semi-circular without an orbiculus, but there may be an orbiculus in the missing part. For the reading of stamps, see Helen 31—35; see also Dressel's comment on 741.

15 See Steinby, *La cronologia*, 21.

16 A handy survey of the legends and reverse types of coins is to be found in the book of Anne S. Robertson, XXXV-CLXVIII.

17 See the list in Steinby 1969, *Liite VIII:7*.

18 Stamp 62.

just as certainly late, from the time of Commodus at the earliest.<sup>19</sup> The five remaining are: the two stamps under examination here, 223*ab* and 224; a fragmentary stamp 2075, not datable owing to its fragmentary condition; and two stamps, 716 and 2187, which may be dated to the 160's or somewhat later on as good grounds as the *figlinae Fulvianae* stamps.<sup>20</sup>

So the occurrence of the Victory type seems to follow the same pattern in brick stamps as in coins, at least in so far as it does not appear in brick stamps during the peaceful reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius (given that *Lucilla* is *Annia Lucilla* and not *Domitia Lucilla*). But this need not be as conclusive as it looks, for elaborate figures, such as Victory, are more common on the whole in late second and early third century stamps than in earlier stamps.

The exemplars of stamps 223*ab* and 224 that I saw are too badly worn for any detailed comparison with coins to be possible.<sup>21</sup> If a model for the signum of these stamps is to be found among the reverse types of coins, then the nearest possibility is the one most fully described as follows: "Victory, winged, draped, advancing left, holding wreath in extended right hand and palm sloped up by left shoulder in left."<sup>22</sup> This is one of the commonest Victory types in Imperial coins. It is very common in the coins of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus and appears in their reigns in *aes* as well as in gold and silver pieces.<sup>23</sup> In the coins of Antoninus Pius it is rare, appearing only in the latter part of his reign and almost exclusively in gold pieces.<sup>24</sup> From Hadrian's reign there is only one issue with this reverse type.<sup>25</sup> So it may be held with some justification that this Victory type was more likely to appear in brick stamp signa in the 160's than in the 140's and 150's.

19 Stamps 44, 46, 47 = S.21, 222, 239, 408*d*, 429—432, 434*a*, 623, 624, 2192, S.619.

20 For 716, see below. — In 2187 the dominus is *M. Pontius Sabinus*. This may be the same person as *M. Pontius Laelianus Larcus Sabinus* whose *cursus honorum* is preserved in the inscription CIL VI 1497 (cf. 1549) = Dessau ILS 1094 (cf. 1100). He was, among other things, *comes Veri imperatoris in bellis Parthico et Marcomannico* and *sodalis Antoninianus Verianus*, and *cos. ord.* in 163. Setälä (123—124) prefers this identification because with it a connection arises between *M. Pontius Sabinus* and *Larcia Sabina*, another dominus mentioned in Roman brick stamps (see stamps 1235 and 1236). This identification also fits in with the chronology implied here. Bloch (Indices to CIL XV,1, p. 42) accepts the identification, suggested in PIR III<sup>1</sup> p. 84 no. 613, of the dominus of stamp 2187 with a *legatus provinciae Thraciae sub Antonino Pio*. It is very possible that all three *M. Pontii Sabini* were one and the same man.

21 See the photographs in Suolahti (et al.), nos. 237 and 238.

22 This description is used by Mattingly in *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*; in RIC the description is shorter.

23 It is especially common in the *aes* issues of the year Dec. 163 — Dec. 164, see RIC III, pp. 282—3 nos. 876—885 (Marcus Aurelius) and p. 323 nos. 1392—5 (Lucius Verus).

24 RIC III, nos. 205*a* (p. 51), 225 (p. 53), 255, 266 *a—c*, 268, 281 from the period 151—8; two are silver issues and the others gold issues.

25 RIC II, p. 352 no. 106, a silver *quinarius* of the period 119—122.



But in the case under examination here Victory symbolism may have a more specific and "personal" significance, too. Lucius Verus was the commander-in-chief and official hero of the Eastern campaigns which began in 162, and the coins with Victory types celebrate the victories that he won. Annia Lucilla was from the year 161 the betrothed of Lucius Verus and from 164 his wife; and she was also the daughter of the other Emperor Marcus Aurelius. In other words, Annia Lucilla was a person with whom in the 160's the symbolic figure of Victory very naturally became associated. So, if we assume that the signum in the stamps of *Lucilla* refer in some way to the figlinae owner, then we have a specific reason for supposing that this *Lucilla* is Annia Lucilla and not Domitia Lucilla.<sup>26</sup>

The name form *Aurelius Caesar* is an appropriate one for Marcus Aurelius during the period from 139, when he became Caesar, to 161, when he became Augustus, and for Commodus from 166, when he became Caesar, to 177, when he became Augustus. *Aurelius* is the only gentilicium appearing in the name of Commodus before 191 when he adopts the second gentilicium *Aelius*.<sup>27</sup> In Roman brick stamps there are cases in which the name *Aurelius Caesar* refers, without any doubt, to Marcus Aurelius. These are the stamps, six in number, in which the owner is referred to in the words *Aureli Caesaris et Faustinae Augustae*, i.e. Marcus Aurelius and his wife Faustina owned a figlinae or a slave jointly.<sup>28</sup> There are four stamps in which *Aurelius Caesar* alone is mentioned as a figlinae owner. In one of these the praenomen is mentioned and it is *L.*; this is either Lucius Verus or Commodus.<sup>29</sup> In the other three cases, among them the figlinae Fulvianae stamp 225, *Aurelius Caesar* is referred to without praenomen, and thus both Marcus Aurelius and Commodus are possible identifications. The two remaining stamps, 715 and 716, are very similar to each other, their texts are the same (down to the abbreviations), except for the name of officinator which in 715 is *Ieronymus* and in 716 *Mercurius*.<sup>30</sup> The signa in these stamps differ from each other: in 716 the same Victory type appears as in *Lucilla's* stamps, and in 715 a Hercules figure is depicted; both are well-suited to the time of Commodus.

Annia Lucilla was a granddaughter of Domitia Lucilla. It is,

26 Similar considerations may have brought the Victory symbol into the stamp of M. Pontius Sabinus (see note 20 above).

27 v. Rohden, col. 2469.

28 Stamps 45, 401, 622 = S. 189, 719, 720 and 2513.

29 Stamp 740.

30 A *Mercurius* (or *Mercurialis*) also appears as officinator in 756 with *Aug.* as dominus. In addition to these there is a *Mercurius* (or *Mercurialis*) *Ti. Claudi Quinquatralis* (*sc. servus*), stamps 1077 and 1078, in which *Lucilla Veri* (= Domitia Lucilla) is dominus. If this *Mercurius* is the same as the *Mercurius* of 716, then it is probable that the *Aurelius Caesar* in 716 is Marcus Aurelius rather than Commodus. See Helen 105 and 144 no. 36.

therefore, by no means impossible that part of the landed property of Domitia Lucilla later passed to Annia Lucilla. Such a transfer would explain the fact that the figlinae Fulvianae belonged to the Portus Licini group of figlinae: as noted above, for Marini this was proof that *Lucilla*, the owner of the figlinae Fulvianae, was Domitia Lucilla. Part of Domitia Lucilla's property might have passed to Annia Lucilla under the terms of Domitia Lucilla's will (in 155 or a little later), but a more likely date is the year 161. In that year Antoninus Pius died and Marcus Aurelius succeeded him as Emperor. Immediately after his accession Marcus Aurelius elevated Lucius Verus, his brother by adoption, to co-emperorship and betrothed his daughter Annia Lucilla to his new co-Emperor. We may assume that at this juncture, if not earlier, Marcus Aurelius endowed his daughter with landed property.<sup>31</sup> The marriage of Annia Lucilla and Lucius Verus was celebrated in 164 and probably immediately after this Annia Lucilla became Augusta. If we assume that the name of Augusta would have been used of Annia Lucilla on brick stamps if she had been Augusta, then the stamps of *Lucilla* must be dated to the years 161—164; but such an assumption is not necessary, because Imperial titles in stamps are not always used of Imperial persons (e.g. in stamp 741 above no Imperial title is used of Commodus).

If the owners of the figlinae Fulvianae were Annia Lucilla and Commodus, the ownership must have passed from Annia Lucilla to her brother some time between the years 166 and 177, i.e. in the period when Commodus was Caesar. The year 169 is a possible date for this transfer. In that year decisive changes took place inside the Imperial families:<sup>32</sup> Lucius Verus died in January or February; Annia Lucilla was re-married by her father to Ti. Claudius Pompeianus<sup>33</sup> who was to be the Emperor's next in command during all subsequent campaigns. In the autumn M. Annius Verus, another son of Marcus Aurelius and Caesar together with Commodus, died; Commodus was left sole Caesar and the obvious successor to the throne. In the autumn of 169 Marcus Aurelius was embarking on the second Germanic campaign (which was to last eight years) and we may assume that he was anxious to have all affairs settled in Rome as a safeguard against all eventualities. The marriage of Annia Lucilla was performed in haste, against the bride's will and that of her mother and before the period of mourning had elapsed,

31 In the Vitae of Pertinax (11,12) and Didius Julianus (8,9) it is explicitly stated that these Emperors, on assuming the Imperial power, transferred their private property (at least part of it) to their children, presumably in order to prevent its incorporation with the Imperial patrimony. A transfer of landed property from Marcus Aurelius to his wife Faustina about the time of his accession is noticeable in Roman brick stamps. See Kuusanmäki 53 and Helen 139—150 nos. 20, 32 and 51.

32 See v. Arnim, 2296—7.

33 PIR II<sup>2</sup> no. 973.

as the biographer of Marcus Aurelius relates.<sup>34</sup> Annia Lucilla's new husband was an elderly man, a distinguished general but of humble origin. Among the affairs to be settled by Marcus Aurelius in the autumn of 169, we may be sure, was that concerning the landed property of the Imperial families. At this juncture Marcus Aurelius may have strengthened the position of Commodus, the heir to the throne, by transferring to him parts of the landed property of Lucius Verus and Annia Lucilla.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Vita Marci 20,6—7.

<sup>35</sup> The history of the landed property of Lucius Verus, as reflected in the Roman brick stamps, constitutes an interesting problem. I have shown elsewhere that at least part of his lands near Rome had previously been confiscated property transferred by Hadrian to L. Aelius Caesar, the father of Lucius Verus, in 137 (see Helen 116—117).

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