ART. VII. – G. Julius Marcus. By G. R. Stephens, B.A., Ph.D.

AIUS JULIUS MARCUS is recorded on a milestone from Welton, near Milecastle 17 on Hadrian's Wall. It was set up some time after the emperor Caracalla had assumed his fourth consulship, which he did on I January 213, and was in the sixteenth year of his tribunician power, which probably concluded on 9 December 213. He had been twice hailed *imperator*, but lacked the title *Germanicus Maximus*; the Arval records show that he had accepted his third salutation and assumed the title by 6 October 213. Hence the milestone was set up between I January and 6 October 213.

More than fifty years ago, Professor Eric Birley² drew attention to a group of inscriptions on which a governor's name had been erased in antiquity. These included a series set up by army units in honour of Caracalla (and in one instance his mother, Julia Domna), whose texts included the phrase pro pietate ac devotione communi ("out of their common duty and devotion"). Consular or tribunician dates showed that these stones were set up in 213; the obvious conclusion was that the erased name was Julius Marcus.³ Two further inscriptions including this phrase have since been discovered at South Shields and Newcastle; both may be assigned to 213.⁴

It was subsequently suggested that the pro pietate stone from Netherby (RIB 976) could be reinterpreted and assigned to an Ulpius Marcellus, who in one view governed Lower Britain 217-18, or alternatively undivided Britain 211-12.5 The inscription is lost and is only recorded in an early transcript by Camden. Camden suggested it was an altar, but it was probably a jamb of a doorway, as is suggested in RIB, or a statue base, as at Newcastle. The transcript (reproduced in RIB) inserts lines of dashes in the text, presumably where a line was illegible.6 It runs: pro . . . devotione . . . num. eius . . . Marcello pr. pr. ("out of their devotion to his Diety, Marcellus, propraetorian"). There are two objections to accepting Marcello. In the first place, [.] Vlpio Marcello, however abbreviated or ligatured, contains too many letters to fit the spacing of the text, whereas G. Iulio Marco will fit. Secondly, the pro pietate stones comprise a unique series; since the Netherby stone is manifestly part of that series, it is virtually certain that it carried the full phrase, and hence the name Marco. Camden's faulty transcript is readily explicable. It implies that the stone was in poor condition, and it is not difficult to imagine him misreading Marco, a name unknown to him, for Marcello, a name familiar to him.

Marcus is currently recorded or restored on thirteen⁸ inscriptions (Appendix II). Three further stones could be plausibly assigned to him, whilst similarities in layout suggest that a third stone from Whitley Castle should also be assigned to him.⁹ He is recorded on more stones than any other governor of Britain, but little is known about him. The dedications include seven which provide dating evidence. Of these, it is just possible that two are earlier than 213; one could be later.¹⁰ His office need not be confined to 213. By the early-third century, governors normally served no more than two years,¹¹ so that Marcus could have been in Britain at any time between 211 and 215, as the appointee of Septimius Severus (193-211) or Caracalla (211/12-17). He could have been

an ex-consul or an ex-praetor, serving as consular governor of Britain, or as consular or praetorian governor of lower Britain. The erasure of his name shows that he suffered damnatio memoriae; presumably he committed suicide or was executed. Finally, it is normally assumed that he was disgraced in office. This is not certain: to take an extreme example, M. Antonius Gordianus, one of the governors of 216, did not suffer damnatio until 238.

Presumably at some point during 213, and perhaps not long before 6 October (RIB 1235, Risingham), Marcus directed all auxiliary units (at least) to make dedications including the phrase pro pietate ac devotione communi. Variations in text imply that only this phrase was specified, and that the form was otherwise left to the discretion of unit commanders. Hence, presumably, the dedications to Julia Domna at Netherby, Newcastle and perhaps South Shields, and her appearance at Risingham; hence too the long texts at High Rochester, Risingham, Whitley Castle and perhaps Chesterholm, and the short dedications to Deo Matuno pro salute of Caracalla at High Rochester, and to [...] pro salute imperatoris domini nostri at Old Carlisle. The freedom of choice evidently allowed could be the result of a sudden and urgent order. The quality of the lettering (other than at Chesterholm) and the extremely long texts carved on at least three occasions, argue otherwise. They imply a leisurely implementation of the order. The latitude allowed to commanders on this occasion explains the divergent texts of other official dedications, notably the altars which all units seem to have dedicated annually. These were normally made to Jupiter Best and Greatest (I. O. M.), but at Maryport, for example, dedications range from this, through simple variants such as *Iovi Augusto* and I. O. M. et numini Augusti, to Victoriae Augustae and Marti Militari. 12 The act of making a dedication was apparently more important than the words inscribed on it.

It is possible that the *pro pietate* stones record building, but all they certainly record is fealty to Caracalla and Julia Domna. Of the other stones, *RIB* 977 (Netherby) commemorates the erection of a building from its foundations, and *RIB* 1205 (Whitley Castle) the restoration of another; *RIB* 905 (Old Carlisle) and 1265 (High Rochester) may also record building, whilst *RIB* 2298 (Welton) attests some attention to the road network. Amongst Marcus's immediate predecessors, Virius Lupus (197) is recorded on three stones, Valerius Pudens (205) on one, and Alfenus Senecio (c. 206) on nine; Antonius Gordianus (216) is recorded on two dedications and one altar. Epigraphy flatters the builder rather than the campaigner (only three inscriptions attest the Commodan governor Ulpius Marcellus), whilst much building and rebuilding took place in the earlier-third century. ¹³ Nevertheless, the survival of at least four conventional dedication stones and one milestone may suggest that a good deal of building took place at this time.

Outside north Britain, there is no unequivocal evidence for building between c. 206 and 213. Thus it may be legitimate to interpret the work under Marcus as the resumption of a major programme of building initiated under Senecio but then abandoned because of the campaigns of Severus and Caracalla 208-11. Marcus is attested at three of the outpost forts (and hence could be assumed at Bewcastle), and at six other forts. These forts were occupied; since legionary garrisons are not in question, at least ten auxiliary units had presumably returned from the north by 213. On one interpretation, the vexillation-fortress at Carpow was occupied as late as 215 or even 216. This is not impossible, but may seem somewhat late when large-scale withdrawals of auxiliary

troops had been made by 213. It is possible, therefore, that the northern conquests had been abandoned by 213. Possibly Marcus was appointed because he was sufficiently energetic to ensure that the necessary rebuilding was carried out. The responsibility need not imply that he was of consular rank, but he could have seen service as a *comes* of the emperors.

Seven units are recorded by the inscriptions, but no more than two are accorded the epithet Antoniniana (Appendix III). One of the stones from Netherby probably records coh. I Ael. Hisp. ∞ eq. Antoniniana (RIB 977). At Old Carlisle, where the ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata was based, the inscription records ala Aug. [. . . posui]t (RIB 905); either ob virtutem appellata or Antoniniana is possible in abbreviated form. 16

Imperial epithets were infrequently awarded before the third century. Awards became widespread under Caracalla and Elagabalus, both of whom bestowed the epithet Antoniniana. Dr Janó Fitz¹⁷ has argued that the epithet was first awarded to the Rome garrison, the Italian fleets, and the Rhine and Danubian armies in the spring of 212 as a reward for supporting Caracalla against his brother Geta, and that the award was extended to a large number of other units between May and September 216. Fitz noted that the ala Augusta at Old Carlisle and cohors I Vardullorum at High Rochester are attested as Antoniniana in 216, as might several other units (Appendix III). On this basis, he concluded that the epithet was first awarded in Britain in the summer of 216, and assigned one of the Netherby stones (RIB 977) to that year. This is highly implausible.

If Marcus served no more than about two years, he arrived in Britain between 211 and 213; since he was governor in the latter year, it is most unlikely that he was still in Britain in 216. In any case, the epithet was occasionally used during the reign of Septimius Severus. ¹⁸ Moreover, Geta may well have been murdered on 26 December 211 (rather than the end of February 212), ¹⁹ whereas the epithet was first awarded some time between 11 April and 10 December 212. ²⁰ In view of this interval, it is unlikely that the epithet was a reward for support against Geta. Indeed, the data assembled by Fitz need not imply a two-stage grant in spring 212 and summer 216; rather a wholesale grant some time during 212, and most probably towards the end of that year.

The pro pietate stones were set up to affirm the army's loyalty to Caracalla. If the units in question had been styled Antoniniana when the stones were set up, this would almost certainly have been stated. Therefore it is highly probable that the epithet was awarded after 6 October 213 (RIB 1235). This is at least one year after its apparent bestowal on the rest of the army.

During the campaigns of Severus and Caracalla, Geta remained well behind the front "to administer the affairs of the empire". ²¹ Immediately after Severus's death on 4 February 211, Caracalla perhaps sought recognition as sole emperor. ²² Having failed, he concluded peace with the Maeatae and Caledonians, and returned to Rome with Geta and Julia Domna. Geta's death was badly received by *legio II Parthica* at Alba, ²³ and perhaps by other sections of the army. Caracalla then granted a large donative; army pay may well have been raised at the same time. ²⁴ The *inormitate stipendii* given to the troops outweighed the moral scruples of *II Parthica*. ²⁵ It seems legitimate to infer that Caracalla's popularity with the armies was gained soon after Geta's death; the epithet *Antoniniana* can be interpreted as a symbol of the intimate bond Caracalla deliberately fostered between himself and the armies.

It is likely that Geta's death was badly received in Britain, in view of his apparent

popularity. This does not explain Caracalla's failure to award Antoniniana in Britain until the end of 213 at the earliest. Other troops were won over by lavish financial rewards; it might be expected that the army in Britain would respond in the same manner. In Britain, however, there was an additional factor. Severus and Caracalla had conducted a great campaign, one recalling the no doubt celebrated campaigns of Agricola (77-84). Heavy casualties were sustained;²⁶ peace was then concluded, perhaps with subsidies, and much of the conquered territory was abandoned.

Caracalla's settlement was to prove successful, but his contemporaries were not to know this. It is perhaps worth recalling that Severus Alexander and Julia Mamaea were killed by the army in 235 in not totally dissimilar circumstances.²⁷ It is not difficult to imagine the mood of the army in Britain, especially perhaps, within the ranks of *legio VI Victrix Britannica pia fidelis*.²⁸ It might be guessed that there was dissatisfaction from 211, when it became clear that there was to be no final campaign to consolidate victory and large-scale annexation, and surmised that hostility intensified as troops were withdrawn.²⁹ It is likely that Marcus was appointed between 211 and 213; by 213 the north had been abandoned, or was at least in the process of abandonment. Clearly Marcus was charged with the rebuilding of military installations. He might also have been charged with justifying Caracalla's political settlement, by presenting (perhaps justifiably) the tactical withdrawal as a great military victory (Appendix I). If the mood of the army has been correctly surmised, he was also responsible for re-establishing military discipline.

Inscriptions such as the *pro pietate* series are normally thought to denote unrest of some kind, on the grounds that loyalty is only proclaimed loudly when it has been called into question. It is normally assumed that there was unrest in the army in 213, and that Marcus either failed to eradicate it, or was himself implicated in it; the erasure of his name shows that the protestations of loyalty he commanded from the army were discounted by the emperor. In that case, the dedications to Julia Domna could signify continuing hostility towards Caracalla; the German troops attested at Piercebridge in 217 may have been sent with Gordianus to strengthen the loyalty of the British garrison.³⁰

Implicit in reconstructions such as these is the assumption that Marcus was unsuccessful. This conclusion is not supported by the evidence. The troops from Germany were legionaries. If the loyalty of auxiliary units was in doubt, wholesale transfers of auxiliary personnel and units would be expected; there is no evidence for this. Moreover, if the army was mutinous in 213, it is unlikely that it was allowed to remain so until 217: there is no obvious connection between the events of 213 and the presence of foreign troops four years later.³¹ As to Julia Domna, she had been mater castrorum since 195; a statue of her stood in all sacella.³² She had also spent three years in Britain, and was the widow of Septimius Severus. It is scarcely surprising that dedications were made to her. The virtual omission of Caracalla on some stones need signify nothing: he appeared on numerous inscriptions, including perhaps, parallel statues (or jambs) at Netherby and Newcastle.

The evidence for building suggests that Marcus was an active governor. He held office during a period probably characterized by serious military unrest, and as governor was responsible for restoring military discipline. The *pro pietate* stones need not, however, be interpreted as a manifestation of continuing unrest. They can be interpreted as a demonstration of loyalty made at the end of such a period, rather than during it. If this

is correct, the epithet Antoniniana was probably awarded not long after the stones were set up, presumably during the first half of 214.³³ Since Marcus was still governor when the epithet was awarded (RIB 977), the unrest had almost certainly been eliminated before the end of his term. His success is also implied by the appointment of Gordianus not later than 216, and perhaps earlier as his successor, ³⁴ for such an elderly man would scarcely have been sent to anything other than a peaceful and well-ordered province.

Julius Marcus could have suffered damnatio in circumstances unknown after his recall from Britain. Equally, once it is recognized that he was an active and apparently successful governor, his elimination of military unrest suggests an alternative hypothesis. Marcus's order for the display of loyalty in 213 may have been backed up by the savage punishment of ringleaders by no means uncommon in the Roman world. This was followed by the Antoniniana award, which signified Caracalla's acceptance of the display and official forgiveness of all that had preceded it. To restore discipline is inevitably to court unpopularity. Marcus, perhaps unpopular by this stage (if indeed, he had ever been popular), may then have been eliminated by Caracalla as a public act of reconciliation. This is speculative, but the chronology at least fits the evidence. It suggests that Julius Marcus was successful, but was then sacrificed to the wider needs of the empire – or of Caracalla.

Appendix I

The Jarrow War-Memorial

Two fragments of monumental dedications were recovered from the nave of St Paul's church, Jarrow, in 1782-3. Heubner identified them as fragments of a single inscription.³⁷ They are published as *RIB* 1051a, b, and are identified as parts of a narrative inscription from a warmemorial (*tropaeum*) set up 122-4 by the Hadrianic governor A. Platorius Nepos.³⁸

The lettering on fragment a is almost certainly second century.³⁹ That on fragment b, however, is manifestly third century.⁴⁰ Both fragments could well have come from the same monument, but the letter-forms show that they are not parts of the same text;⁴¹ at best, b is a much later addendum.

Fragment a mentions Hadrian. It could, as surmised, commemorate the completion of Hadrian's Wall. On the other hand, the words necessitate and divino pr[aecepto?] in lines 3 and 4 might conceivably refer to a return to Hadrian's Wall after one of the abandonments of the Antonine Wall. Line 5 seems to read c]os II[, and could equally apply to Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius. Retreat is perhaps less damaging to imperial prestige if divinely sanctioned, especially if the divinity in question was the Wall's builder, Hadrian. This would at least explain the curious structure and layout of the text.

Fragment b is quite different. It may record the driving out of barbarians, the recovery of Britain, and the army of the province; it concludes with the name of a governor, who was certainly not Platorius Nepos. The lettering shows that the text was probably set up under one of the Severi. It could conceal the withdrawal from the north after the death of Septimius Severus in 211. The fragment comes from the lower of at least two slabs, 42 and the name and titles of Caracalla could have been carried on an upper slab. According to Herodian, the imperial expedition was mounted after a barbarian invasion, whereas the only reasons recorded in the epitome of Dio are the corrupting influence of Rome on Severus's sons and the idleness of the armies. 43 If the above explanation is accepted, it suggests strongly that Herodian's version is to be preferred; certainly it is more in accord with the text of fragment b. The governor in line 6 could have been Marcus, or his immediate predecessor or successor. If the above chronology is correct, Marcus is perhaps the strongest candidate.

Appendix II

Inscriptions of C. Julius Marcus

Site	Name	pro pietate	Other	Date
High Rochester I		RIB 1278		10 Dec. 212-6 Oct. 213
High Rochester II	G. [Iulius Marcus]		RIB 1265	
Risingham		RIB 1235		6 Oct. 213-9 Dec. 216
Netherby I	?[G. Iul. Marc[o]	RIB 976		
Netherby II	G. Iul. [Marci]		<i>RIB</i> 977	
South Shields		Britannia,		
		xvi, 325.11		
Newcastle		Britannia,		
		xi, 405.6		
Chesterholm		RIB 1705		10 Dec. 212-6 Oct. 213
Whitley Castle I		RIB 1202		1 Jan. 213-6 Oct. 213
Whitley Castle II	[G. Iul. Mar]co		RIB 1205	
Old Carlisle	[G. Iul. Ma]rco		RIB 905	1 Jan. 213-31 Dec. 213
Old Penrith		RIB 928		1 Jan. 213-31 Dec. 213
Welton	G. Iul. Marco		RIB 2298	1 Jan. 213-6 Oct. 213

Appendix III

Army Units as Antoniniana

	Unit	Marcus Antonin without epithet		Gordianus 216 Antoniniana	213-17/22 Antoniniana
leg. II	Augusta				RIB 488
VI	Victrix				CIL XIII 2616
XX	Valeria Victrix				AE 1952.91
ala II	Asturum				RIB 1465 (221)
	Augusta	? <i>RIB</i> 9	005 ?	RIB 1049	
	D .				DID
coh. I	Batavorum				RIB 1544
IV	Breucorum				RIB 1101
I	Cugernorum	Britannia,			
		xi, 405.6			
I	Aelia Dacorum				RIB 1892
I	Aelia Hispanorum	RIB 976	RIB 977		
I	fida Vardullorum			RIB 1279	RIB 1280 (220)
IV	Gallorum	RIB 1705			, ,
V	Gallorum	Britannia,			
		xvi, 325.11		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
II	Nerviorum	RIB 1202			
I	Vangionum	RIB 1235			

Acknowledgement

Professor M. G. Jarrett read an earlier draft of this paper and suggested a number of improvements here incorporated. I am indebted to him, but he is not responsible for the conclusions drawn and does not necessarily agree with all of them.

Notes and References

- ¹ RIB 2298; P. v. Rohden, RE ii (1896), 2438; M. Hammond and W. F. Snyder, MAAR xv (1938), 54-6, 62-9; CIL vi 2086 = ILS 451.
- ² AA4, xi (1934), 127-37.
- ³ First divined by McCaul (Lap. Sept. 777 = RIB 977 (Netherby)), but without the necessary connections.
- ⁴ Professor A. R. Birley has suggested that M. Antonius Gordianus (c. 216) could be restored on *Britannia*, xi (1980), 405.6 = AE 1980. 603 (Newcastle) (*The* fasti of Roman Britain (Oxford, 1980), 165 n. 8). The restoration presents problems compare C. Daniels and B. Harbottle, AA5, viii (1980), 65-73, with the commentary in Britannia but Gordianus, however abbreviated, would not fit the spacing, for Marcus only just fits. The slight hesitation expressed elsewhere (AA5, xii (1984), 155 n. 28) is unreservedly withdrawn.
- ⁵ E. Birley, CW2, liii, 21-2, with AA4, xvi (1939), 243-4; A. R. Birley, op. cit., 165.
- ⁶ This seems the logical inference, for it is difficult to see what other purpose the dashes served. Lines 2a and 10a are omitted without dashes, but this is presumably a copying error.
- ⁷ Restoration of *communi* has been doubted on the grounds that the word is omitted on the Newcastle stone (C. Daniels and B. Harbottle, *op. cit.*, 70-1). But the line of dashes between *devotione* and *num. eius* suggests strongly that the word could be discerned but not read. Possibly *communi* was omitted in error at Newcastle, or through lack of space.
- 8 Following A. R. Birley, op. cit., 166-7.
- ⁹ RIB 1018 (Cumbria), 1551 (Carrawburgh), 1741 (Great Chesters), 1203 (Whitley Castle). RIB 8 (London) has also been suggested (A. R. Birley, op. cit., 206), but this seems somewhat more speculative.
- Earlier RIB 1278 (High Rochester), 1705 (Chesterholm). Later RIB 1235 (Risingham). Germanico Maximo is restored on 1235, but is required by the spacing; imperatori III should also be restored. The earlier title, Brit. Max., should be restored on 1202 (Whitley Castle), for there is insufficient space for this and Germ. Max.
- 11 A. R. Birley, op. cit., 403-4.
- ¹² RIB 814-15, 842-3, 837-8. Those to Victory and Mars cannot be shown to be alternatives to I.O.M., but some were buried with official altars in that group.
- ¹³ M. G. Jarrett, Britannia, ix (1978), 289-92; M. G. Jarrett and J. C. Mann, Bonner Jahrbücher clxx (1970), App.
- ¹⁴ R. P. Wright, Britannia, v (1974), 289-92.
- 15 M. G. Jarrett and J. C. Mann, op. cit., 205.
- 16 RIB 890, 895, 907: alae Aug.
- ¹⁷ Honorific titles of Roman military units in the third century (Budapest and Bonn, 1983).
- 18 B. Lörincz, ZPE xlviii (1982), 142-8; pace J. Fitz, op. cit., 34.
- ¹⁹ T. D. Barnes, J. Theol. Stud. 2, xix (1968), 523-5; A. Birley, Septimius Severus (London, 1971), 270-1. See now G. Alföldy, Antiquitas iv (1972), 19-51.
- ²⁰ CIL vi 1063; iii 11950.
- ²¹ Herodian 3.14.9.
- ²² Herodian 3.15.5; Dio 77.1.3.
- 23 SHA Caracalla 2.7-9; Geta 6.1-2.
- ²⁴ Herodian 4.4.7; D. R. Walker, The metrology of the Roman silver coinage, Part III, B. A. R. S40 (Oxford, 1978), 131.
- ²⁵ SHA Caracalla 2.8; Herodian 4.4.8
- ²⁶ Dio 76.13.
- ²⁷ Herodian 6.7.9-10.
- ²⁸ JRS lii (1962), 197.37; liii (1963), 164.29b, 30.
- ²⁹ Note, against a similar background, the elimination of Sallustius Lucullus between 85 and 96 (Suetonius

- Domitian 10.3), and the apparent transfer from Britain of the pedites signulares Britannici (CIL xvi, 54), although there are other possible contexts see A. R. Birley, op. cit. 82-3.
- ³⁰ C. Daniels and B. Harbottle, op. cit., 71; JRS lvii (1967), 205.16, with RIB 1022, 1026; E. Birley, Ep. Stud., iv (1967), 107.
- ³¹ D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall* (London, 1976), 137. Indeed, the German vexillation could have been at Piercebridge in 208 see G. R. Stephens, *Britannia*, xviii (1987), forthcoming.
- ³² A. Alföldy, Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, xlix (1934), 69.
- ³³ Since VI Victrix was styled Britannica at York (ISS liii (1963), 164.29b), but was otherwise styled Antoniniana (e.g. Britannia, v (1974), 469.56), it presumably dropped the former title when granted the latter. If Britannica tiles were fired at York, and if Antoniniana was granted by mid-214, this might imply that the legion returned to York some time before that date, for it seems unlikely that whatever element of the legion remained at York continued to fire tiles. This would strengthen the case for an early evacuation of the north.
- 34 A. R. Birley op. cit., 184.
- 35 P. Salway, Roman Britain (Oxford, 1981), 250.
- 36 Ibid.
- ³⁷ Lap. Sept. 539 = CIL VII, 498.
- 38 I. A. Richmond and R. P. Wright, AA4, xxi (1943), 93-120.
- ³⁹ C. Daniels, Handbook to the Roman Wall, ed. 13 (Newcastle, 1978), 55.
- 40 E. Birley, Research on Hadrian's Wall (Kendal, 1961), 159; A. R. Birley, op. cit., 205-6.
- ⁴¹ C. Daniels, op. cit., 55; M. G. Jarrett and J. C. Mann, op. cit., 199.
- ⁴² I. A. Richmond and R. P. Wright, op. cit., 97.
- 43 Herodian 3.14.1; Dio 76.11.1.