

ABSTRACT

This paper offers a papyrological re-assessment of three passages in the *Feriale Duranum* (*P. Dura* 54). It establishes the presence of L. Aelius Caesar, the first designated heir to the throne of Hadrian (col. I, 11-12); it sustains two readings by Fink (col. I, 24 and 29); and lastly, it argues for the presence of a *dies natalis*, perhaps of an unspecified *diua* (col. II, 27).

NEW TEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE *FERIALE DURANUM* (*P. DURA* 54)*

The present paper is the result of a thorough papyrological re-assessment¹ of *P. Dura* 54, which contains the so-called *Feriale Duranum*². A great deal of bibliography has been devoted to this complex and still debatable manuscript, evidently a list of Roman festivals; the main problem seems today to be the original context of this list, which has been long construed as a military document³, and only recently (and not undisputedly) construed as a civil-oriented device destined for the newly-declared colony of Dura⁴. This contribution will present an improvement to the extant text of the *Feriale* in four passages of the manuscript, and will discuss the potential scholarly gain to current studies on this papyrus coming from each alteration.

1. Lucius Aelius Caesar in the *Feriale* (col. I, 11-12)

While the *editio princeps* of the *Feriale Duranum* was still in preparation at Yale University, a debate arose among two of its main editors concerning the content of col. I, 11-12. The text, taken from Marichal's most recent edition, runs as follows:

11 [. . . Idus I]anuarias. Ob natale[m Luci . . . Caesaris ±14] Luci [. . .] Aug[ust]
12 [. . .] C[ae]saris

11-12. *supplevit* Marichal, ob natale[m luci sei caesaris socii aug(usti) b(ouem) m(arem) genio] luci [. . .] aug(usti) | [sei c]aesaris Fink 1940 ob natale[m luci aeli caesaris supplicatio memoriae] luci [ae - - - - -] | [aeli c]aesaris Hoey ap. Fink 1940 [. . .] Aug[ust] Marichal,] Caesaris *vidi*

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¹ I have personally inspected the papyrus at the Beinecke Library in New Haven, in April-May 2017.

² First edition by R.O. Fink in R.O. FINK-A.S. HOEY-W.F. SNYDER, *The Feriale Duranum*, «YCS» VII (1940), pp. 1-222; further editions by the same in C.B. WELLES-R.O. FINK-J.F. GILLIAM, *The Parchments and Papyri. With an account of Three Iranian Fragments by W. B. Henning*, New Haven 1959 (as *P. Dura* 54); again by Fink in his *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, Cleveland (Ohio) 1971 (n° 117); by R. Marichal in *ChLA* VI 309 (1974; I am referring to A. BRUCKNER, R. MARICHAL et al., *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* I–, Dietikon-Zürich 1954–). *TM* 44772.

³ This has been the predominant scholarly view since the very beginning: to quote only some of the assessments, see A.S. HOEY, *Official Policy towards Oriental Cults in the Roman Army*, «TAPhA» LXX (1939), pp. 456-481; R.O. Fink in HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 28-29; A.D. NOCK, *The Roman Army and Roman Religious Year*, «HTR» XLV (1952), pp. 187-241, particularly pp. 188-189; 193-195; 207; and J.F. GILLIAM, *The Roman Military Feriale*, «HTR» XLVII (1954), pp. 183-196, particularly pp. 183-184 – reprinted in ID., *Roman Army Papers (Mavors Roman Army Researches 2)*, Amsterdam 1986, pp. 123-136.

⁴ Already L.R. TAYLOR (*Review of The Feriale Duranum by R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, W. F. Snyder*, «AJA» XLVI [1942], p. 310) noted that the only even remotely military festival (if it was military at all) in the *Feriale* was the *Rosaliae Signorum*. P. HERTZ (*Kaiserfeste der Prinzipatszeit*, *ANRW* II, 16.2 [1978], pp. 1135-1200, particularly pp. 1193-1200), on the other hand, probably in order to solve the problem, has tried to find a military aspect in all the festivals in the *Feriale*. Also D. FISHWICK (*Dated inscriptions and the Feriale Duranum*, «Siria» LXV [1988], pp. 349-361, particularly p. 350) has remarked that the whole scenario of the *Feriale* as a standard military calendar is in fact hypothetical; the document could have been a local product, destined only to the Palmyrene cohort. But the traditional view of this document as a military-destined festivity list has been actually challenged only in 2005 by B. REEVES, who has – with sound arguments – construed the document as a civil calendar, destined to the newly-appointed *colonia* of Dura-Europos. Reeves' contribution, consisting in her still unpublished doctoral dissertation (*The 'Feriale Duranum', Roman Military Religion, and Dura-Europos. A Reassessment*, Buffalo), has met with mixed reactions; both J. AUSTIN (*Writers and Writing in the Roman Army at Dura-Europos*, Birmingham 2010, p. 190) and I. HAYNES (*Blood of the provinces. The Roman Auxilia and the Making of Provincial Society from Augustus to the Severans*, Oxford 2013, pp. 199-204) have doubts on the totally civil nature of the *Feriale* argued by Reeves. A. LOZANO GOMEZ (*El culto a los emperadores en el ejército romano: el caso del Feriale Duranum*, «Arys» XII (2014), pp. 213-237, particularly p. 232), though sympathetic towards this reconstruction, does not endorse it to the extent of rejecting the traditional view of the *Feriale* as a military document; according to him the only conclusion one may be sure of, is that the *Feriale* is an official document, issued by the central government of Rome.

If one considers the letters actually readable, only *Luci* and *Caesaris* can be seen. But who was this Lucius Caesar? From the critical apparatus, which details the history of the *constitutio textus*, a disagreement between editors is evident; this disagreement was duly reported in their edition. Fink believed that the *dies natalis* celebrated at ll. 11-12 was that of Lucius Gnaeus Seius Herennius Sallustius Barbius (Orbus Orbianus?), father of Sallustia Orbiana and therefore father-in-law of Severus Alexander⁵; Hoey was rather inclined to think of Lucius Aelius Caesar, the adopted son of Hadrian (a possibility decidedly ruled out by Fink himself⁶). In his review of the first edition, Weinstock rejected both⁷; no decisive solution to the issue has been so far proposed by scholars.

In fact, neither is particularly unsuitable for featuring on a Roman list of festivities. The *Feriale* preserves a remarkable quantity of days devoted to celebrate Emperors, Empresses, and other members of the imperial family, including deceased ones, like Germanicus⁸. From a purely biographical point of view, Aelius Caesar (or rather, Lucius Ceionius Commodus, known afterwards as Lucius Aelius Caesar) seems very close to Germanicus: he too was the intended heir to the imperial throne; he was – allegedly – held in great esteem by an Emperor (in this case, Hadrian); and he too fell prey to premature death (even if, in his case, apparently predictable)⁹. His presence in the *Feriale* would represent the same trend that prompted the authors of the document to insert Germanicus in the list: not just Romans who became Emperors, but also noble and virtuous Romans designated for the Empire – and worthy of it, had they lived. If, on the other hand, one considers Lucius Seius, his mention falls in the same set of *diuuae* such as Vibia

⁵ HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 74-77.

⁶ HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, p. 183 (fn. 875). The arguments against Lucius Aelius Caesar, as raised by Fink (HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 74-75), run as follows. (1) The *natales Caesarum* given by Philocalus (see *CIL* I, p. 255) locate Aelius' birth *Idibus Ianuariis*, whereas in the *Feriale* one sees six letters in a lacuna and then *I Ianuarias*, i.e. some days before the Ides; (2) at the end of the line there is *aug*, and this cannot be applied to Aelius, who never became *Augustus*; (3) in *P. Oslo* III 77 (AD 169-176, *TM* 12575), an Egyptian religious calendar connected with the Imperial cult, Aelius' birthday is not to be found.

⁷ «Col. i, 11-12 contained according to Mr. Fink (pp. 74-77) the natalis of Lucius Seius Caesar, the supposed name of Severus Alexander's father-in-law, according to Mr. Hoey (p. 183, n. 870) that of Lucius Aelius Caesar, the adopted son of Hadrian; both suggestions seem to me too far-fetched» (S. WEINSTOCK, *Review of The Feriale Duranum by R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, W. F. Snyder*, «JRS» XXXII (1942), 127-129, particularly p. 128.

⁸ Germanicus' birthday was on May 24th: he is regularly featured in col. II, 12-13. Cfr. REEVES, *The 'Feriale'* cit. fn. 4, pp. 107-109.

⁹ The actual political and historical relevance of this shadowy personality has never been conclusively assessed. The main source, his *Vita* within the *Historia Augusta*, has been harshly criticized from a historical point of view by, e.g., A. ASTE (*La Vita Aelii dell'Historia Augusta*, Roma 2007, pp. 20-23, and see bibliography attached) as well as many others; it apparently earns more benevolence only from T.D. BARNES (*Hadrian and Lucius Verus*, «JRS» LVII (1967), pp. 65-79, particularly pp. 65-66). What can be gathered from the text is a Marcellus-like historical assessment, which once more links Aelius to Germanicus. Aelius is altogether clever and good-looking (*SHA Ael.* 5.2-5.3 *comptus, decorus, pulchritudinis regiae, oris uenerandi, eloquentiae celsioris, uersu facilis, in re publica etiam non inutilis*) – rumours of a liaison with Hadrian are inevitable (5.1-5.2 *Hadriano, ut maliuoli locuntur, acceptior forma quam moribus*) – and he is strongly wanted (and celebrated) by Hadrian himself as *Caesar* (3.3-3.5 *datum etiam populo congiarium causa eius adoptionis conlatumque militibus sestertium ter milies, circenses editi, neque quicquam praetermissum, quod posset laetitiam publicam frequentare. Tantumque apud Hadrianum principem ualuit, ut praeter adoptionis adfectum, quo ei uidebatur adiunctus, solus omnia, quae cuperet, etiam per litteras impetraret*), despite the fact that he suffers from some unspecified illness (3.7 *hic tamen ualetudinis adeo miserae fuit, ut Hadrianum statim adoptionis paenituerit*; see also D.C. 69,17 *καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Κόμμοδον μὲν Λούκιον, καίτοι αἷμα ἐμοῦντα, Καίσαρα Ῥωμαίοιο ἀπέδειξε*), the main and only symptom of which – blood-vomiting – may point to more than twenty different causes, from a peptic disorder to stomach cancer, to chronic hepatitis. Hadrian himself indulges in quoting Vergil on Marcellus when referring to his presumptive heir (*Aen.* VI 869-871; 883-886). After a very quick political career (3.2-3.3 *statimque praetor factus et Pannonis dux ac rector inpositus, mox consul creatus et, quia erat deputatus imperio, iterum consul designatus est*), Aelius died on January 1st AD 138, forcing Hadrian to turn to Antoninus. On the legal circumstances of his adoption – and its political meaning for the author of his *Vita*, i.e. a prelude to the Tetrarchy, see N. BAGLIVI, *Elio Vero tantum Caesar nell'Historia Augusta*, «Orpheus» XIX/XX (1998/1999), pp. 3-27, particularly pp. 7-18. Scholars still seem to debate whether Aelius was *really* meant to be Emperor, and Hadrian's alleged esteem from his *Vita* bears the mark of truth; or whether his adoption was only a highly contrived device in order to satisfy Hadrian's real wish to adopt Marcus Aurelius, who in AD 136 was too young to be proposed as a potential heir. By choosing a terminally ill man with no real quality, but connected with powerful senatorial families (the *Ceionii*, the *Plautii*, and so on), Hadrian would only have to wait for a quick death, and then raise Marcus to the throne. For the former opinion, see BARNES, *Hadrian* cit. fn. 9, pp. 74-77; more recently, G.A. CECCONI, *L. Aelius Caesar*, «SDHI» LXIII (1997), pp. 477-494 (particularly pp. 483-484; 488; 491-493). The latter has been argued by, among others, H.G. PFLAUM, *Le règlement successoral d'Hadrien*, in H. BRAUNERT-A. CHASTAGNOL-H. NESSELHAUF-H.-G. ALFÖLDI (Hrsg.), *Historia Augusta Colloquium*, Bonn 1963, pp. 95-121 (see particularly pp. 97-100) and Y. ROMAN, *Petite contribution épigraphique a la solution d'un mystère historique, l'adoption de L. Aelius par Hadrien*, in J. DALAISON (éd.), *Espace et pouvoirs dans l'Antiquité de l'Anatolie à la Gaule: hommages à Bernard Rémy*, Grenoble 2007, pp. 469-475. To conclude: if only half of the status and symbolic value Hadrian attributed to his presumptive heir is true, Lucius Aelius is more than enough qualified to be featured in a list of Roman festivities such as the *Feriale Duranum*. In fact, he appears in similar documents, such as imperial *Fasti*: see some instances given by CECCONI, *L. Aelius* cit. fn. 9, pp. 483-484, fn. 26.

Matidia, who never was the wife of an Emperor, but was niece to Trajan and mother-in-law to Hadrian¹⁰; or as Iulia Mamaea, mother to Severus Alexander¹¹; that is, not royalty strictly speaking, but aristocrats who were deeply connected to the Emperor.

Let us consider the section of the papyrus where either one or the other name should lie. If one looks at the end of l. 11, one must remark, first of all, that after *Luci* one sees definite traces of two letters; faint traces of a third one are perhaps to be spotted immediately afterwards (**FIG. 1**). The ink on these three letters after *Luci* is somehow diluted, which prompted earlier editors to suspect there had been an erasure of some sort in this section of the papyrus; the scribe, realizing he had made a mistake – or written too much beyond the notional right margin, would have cancelled what he had written after *Luci*, and re-written it in the following line. At any rate, the first two letters after *Luci* can in fact be read as *ae*, which Hoey suggested¹². One sees, after the *i* of *Luci*, two serifs at the bottom of the line, very close to each other; such serifs, in this rustic capital writing, normally constitute the base of a stroke, either vertical or oblique. Above them, in the middle of the writing line, we see two oblique strokes converging on each other, in a manner consistent with *a. S*, on the other hand (as in *Sei?*) can be ruled out. Then comes and *e*: (**FIG. 2**). The third visible letter is too damaged to be read; only faint traces are visible. One can see, however, traces of a horizontal stroke at the bottom of the writing line, and suspect the presence of an *l*. Therefore, *Luci Ael* is the most plausible reading.

What follows is more puzzling, as the remaining line is almost completely empty: no traces of ink can be seen even with the electronic microscope. This could be dismissed as nothing but a portion of the unwritten right margin, if a spot of ink did not appear in it, which is consistent with the top of *b* or *r*, both as regards position (it is well above the writing line) and form (it reminds one of the ornamental serif at the top of *b* and *r* in this script). After it, one sees very weak traces of at least two letters. The former might be construed as an upright. The latter, which was probably believed to be the *g* of *Aug* by Fink¹³, is more likely to be interpreted as *s*: (**FIG. 3**). These traces are located about five or six letters after the last visible letters after *Luci*, much farther in the right margin than all the other ends of the lines; this suggests that the erasure took much more than just the sequence *ael*. It is possible that traces of the diluted ink only remained in the left edge of the line, whereas other traces were almost completely wiped out by subsequent damages and the long burial of the manuscript.

One might suppose that the scribe, after writing something like *Luci Aeli Caesaris*, realized he was too far from the average length of the line and had trespassed the line of the right margin he had till then somehow respected; therefore he erased *Aeli Caesaris* (*Luci* appears to be more or less aligned with the other lines in the right margin) and re-wrote it in l. 12: [*Aeli*] *Caesaris* (a dot-like trace matching the upper portion of *c* can in fact be seen). It is true that the lacuna containing *Aeli* at l. 12 is apparently too short to accommodate four letters, even with a very narrow *i*; one must consider, however, that the lacuna is probably larger than it appears now, due to a slight misplacement of the external fragment of col. I, and of the fibres in the other, larger, fragment (**FIG. 4**). The external fragment slopes to the left, and is not perfectly aligned with the internal fragment. The fibres of the internal fragment, on the other hand, are twisted, so that after l. 12 they begin slanting as well to the left. By straightening the external fragment, i.e. by moving its upper portion to the left so that it becomes aligned with the larger one, one can gain a more precise measure of the gap between the two fragments, at least as far as portions of text *above* col. I, 12 are concerned¹⁴; more to the point, one is thus allowed to restore [*Aeli*] before *Caesaris* in l. 12 (**FIG. 5**).

¹⁰ Her *dies natalis* was on July 4th (col. II, 19). For Matidia's and Marciana's inclusion in the *diuae* since Hadrian's times, and the political reasons beyond, cfr. J.H. OLIVER, *The Divi of the Hadrianic Period*, «HTR» XLII (1949), pp. 35-40, particularly pp. 37-38.

¹¹ Her *dies natalis* must have taken place between August 6th and 30th. In the same period must have taken place the celebrations for Marciana's *dies natalis*, as she is clearly mentioned in col. I, 28, and the date was most likely noted with *Kalendas Septembres*, preceded by a now vanished figure.

¹² «The letter following *luci* (marked as a dot in Mr. Fink's restoration) should in the opinion of the present writer be read as an *a* (just possibly *e*). The next letter may be *e*. An attempt seems to have been made to erase these two letters. Whether other letters followed them and were more completely erased seems doubtful» (HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, p. 183, fn. 870).

¹³ This final *g*, together with *aug*, can still be visible in all editions, including the most recent one (Marichal's).

¹⁴ As for what is located *below* l. 12, the twist of the fibres in the larger fragment of col. I causes this alteration actually to falsify the dimensions of the gap.

The reconstructed l. 12 would be thus aligned to those other lines which, in the layout of the *Feriale*, continue the preceding line, and are located in *eisthesis* if compared to lines where a sentence actually begins. To conclude, it seems that Lucius Ceionius Commodus, later in his life Lucius Aelius Caesar, was in fact mentioned in the *Feriale Duranum*. Among the arguments against his presence raised by R.O. Fink¹⁵, the only one actually compelling is (1)¹⁶; however, as Fink himself concedes, this is not the only instance of a wrong (or badly written) date in the *Feriale*. In col. II, 4 Septimius Severus is said to have been born on April 11th (*III Idus Apr[il]es*), which differs from what we know from *Historia Augusta*¹⁷; in col. II, 7 one notices an accusative without a figure (*No[nas] Maias*) instead of the expected ablative. Either one among the two available dates for Lucius is wrong, or the scribe has made a mistake, such as *[Idibus] Ianuarias* instead of *I]anuariis*. One might, eventually, propose such a supplement for ll. 11-12:

[.] Ianuarias. Ob natale[m Luci Aeli Caesaris ±14] Luci [[Ael][i Caesa]ri]s]
[Aeli] Caesaris

2. Fink's *quod* in col. I, 24 and a *supplicatio* in col. I, 29.

Col. I, 23-29, the last readable lines of the first column, contain festivities to be held on March 13th, *III Idus Maias*. Marichal's text runs as follows¹⁸:

III I[d]us M[artias. Quod] Imperator [Caesar Marcus Aurelius Seuerus Alexander im]perator
ap[pellat]u[s sit, Io]ui b' m', [Iunoni b' f', Minervae b' f', ± 16 Ma]rti b' m' [
25 [. . .]litib[.]aug[± 31]r aug .
[. . .] imp[.] apel[
[. . .] . s[.]uoda[] .¹⁹
]x ma . [] t supp[] d[
]and[

23-24. *suppl. Fink 1940* || 24-29. *suppl. Marichal*, [quod] |²⁵ [a mi]litib[us imp(eratoris)] Aug(usti) [Marci Aureli Seueri Alexandri Alexande]r aug(ustus) n[- - | primo] imp[erato]r ap[el]latus sit supplicatio | pridie Idu]s [Martias q]uod A[lexander augusti no]s[ter augustus et pater | patriae et pontifex] max[imus ap]pellatus s[un]t supp[licatio] [genio do]mini nostri Alex[and]ri augusti taurum *Fink 1940, 1971* a [militibus] ... ma[ximus Sanders] [quod |²⁵ a mi]litib[us imp(eratoris)] Aug(usti) [Marci Aureli Seueri Alexandri Alexande]r Aug(ustus) n[oster ... primo] imp[erato]r ap[el]latus sit supplicatio ... *Fink 1959* || 25.] . . . []litib[*Marichal* | in fine lineae n[*Fink 1940, 1971* n[oster] *Fink 1959* . [*Marichal* || 26.] . []imp[*Marichal* || 27.] . [] s[*Marichal* || 28.] . t supp[] . d[*Marichal*

The only certain event in these lines is Severus Alexander's *dies imperii*, on March 13th. The entry is clear only for the mere proclamation (col. I, 23-24 *im]perator | ap[pellat]u[s sit*); what was subsequently celebrated in ll. 24-29 (or in what way) is impossible to gather, due to the extended lacunae in the manuscript. R.O. Fink has proposed a most extensive supplement which has not met with universal approval²⁰. Yet, at least two small portions of that supplement can be

¹⁵ See fn. 6.

¹⁶ (2) is rendered invalid by a new reading on the manuscript; as for (3), one cannot be sure whether the birthday of Lucius Aelius was actually absent from the text: the papyrus is thoroughly incomplete, and January festivities are only partially featured.

¹⁷ *SHA Sev. 1.3 ipse natus est Erucio Claro bis et Seuero consulibus VI Idus Apriles.*

¹⁸ I have made only some minor alterations to the beginning of ll. 25-27, as can be seen from the apparatus. In order not to create confusion with too long lines, I have not solved the abbreviations *b(ouem) m(arem)* and *b(ouem) f(eminam)*. These words in the *Feriale* are almost abbreviated with short oblique strokes pointing upwards, similar to Greek acute accents. In the apparatus, 'Fink 1940' is HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2; 'Fink 1959' is WELLES-FINK-GILLIAM, *Parchments* cit. fn. 2; 'Fink 1971' is *Roman Military* cit. fn. 2; 'Sanders' is H.A. SANDERS, *The Feriale Duranum by Robert O. Fink, Allan S. Hoey and Walter F. Snyder*, «Classical Weekly» XXXIV (1941), pp. 271-272.

¹⁹ There is no actual certainty about the distance of this and the following detached scraps from the main fragment.

²⁰ Fink believes this section of the *Feriale* to contain two distinct entries: March 13th, lines 23-26, for the proclamation *a militibus* (the praetorians) after the assassination of Elagabalus; March 14th, lines 26-29, celebrating the titles of *pater patriae* and *pontifex maximus* being granted to the new Emperor. This would be an act of gratitude towards the Senate, which awarded the two aforementioned titles, and had been instrumental in Alexander's accession (HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 85-92). Hoey (*ibidem*, pp. 93-94), GILLIAM, *Roman* cit. fn. 3, p. 194 and MARICHAL (*ap. ChLA VI*, p. 4) disagree for several reasons, including: (1) it is impossible that a single event is contained in lines 23-26; one sees two events, the *militibus* being mentioned only for the latter; (2) it is otherwise

further argued by a direct inspection of the papyrus. Apparently unseen by previous editors, traces of at least two letters can be seen after l. 24 *b(ouem) m(arem): Ma]rti b' m'* [. The first trace appears to be a serif, which might in fact belong to any letter containing an upright; *q* can also be admitted. As for the second letter, it resembles an upright; some faint traces in kits left portion might also point to a *u*. A *qu[od*, though far from being the only possibility here, is not, to conclude, to be ruled out (FIG. 6). In the same entry, Fink and Gilliam read *supplicatio* in col. I, 29. Despite Marichal's different interpretation (]. *T SUPP*[.] *D*), there seems to be no alternative to it. The *d* is in fact an *o*, and before it one can see an upright which closely recalls *i* (FIG. 7).

3. A new *dies natalis* (col. II, 27)?

The last-but-one line in col. II, l. 27, is probably beyond any hope of providing a fully convincing supplement. According to previous editors, neither the *Volcanalia*²¹ nor Hadrian's *dies imperii*²², both oddly missing from the *Feriale*, fit the scanty traces of this line. One remark can be made, however, concerning its last readable portions, in the right part of the column. The line, in my revised edition, runs as follows:

[.] uo[.] o . . [.] lia m . . [.] . . a . . [.] . [

] u [.] ob [.] iam [.] [.] ad [Fink 1940] uo[.] mo[.] iam [.] [.] a . . [(valde dubitanter an [Kalendas Septembres] quo[d uot]a ob u[ic]to]riam Pa[r]thicam] Augusti Alex[andri soluantur Victoriae b f] Fink 1959] uo[.] aob [.] iam [.] [.] a [(dubitanter an] quo[d uot]a ob u[ic]to]riam Pa[r]thicam] Aug Alex[andri] Fink 1974 [.] uo[.] mo [.] am [.] [.] [.] Marichal

Oddly enough, the sequence] a . . [between the last two brackets is considered a blank space, no more than one letter wide, by Marichal; on the contrary, Fink, as can be seen from the critical apparatus, had repeatedly attempted at deciphering it, reading either] ad . . [(1940, 1959) or] a . . [(1974), and tentatively supplying]augalex[. I suggest another interpretation of the sequence, according to a comparison with a word very frequently attested in the *Feriale Duranum*: (FIG. 8). The first letter of the sequence, too large to be *u*, is most likely *n*; the right lower portion of *a* is visible; then, *t* can be supposed thanks to the horizontal stroke at the top of the writing line, and what was thought to be *ad*, can also be *al*. One can see the bottom of *e*, whose inferior ornamental stroke is serpentine in shape, and the left portion of an *m*. If this holds, the presence of *natalem*, which in turn suggests *et ob] natalem] [. supplicatio]*, or [*. b(ouem)*], must be put in context with what we know of the structure of the *Feriale*.

As far as syntax is concerned, entries in the *Feriale* can be divided in two typologies. After the dating formula, the reason for the festivity is normally expressed either with *ob* + accusative of the event (*natalem, imperium*), or *quod* + subjunctive if more details are needed. Then comes the addressee of the celebration; and the material act of service to be performed during the festivities, i.e. *supplicatio* (probably including «distribution of drinks to the soldiers²³»), or *immolatio* – signified by *bos mas, bos femina, taurus* in the accusative case. Now, in this kind of layout, a word such as *natalem* is much more likely to appear at the beginning of the entry (e.g. *XVIII Kalendas Decembres. Ob natalem . . .*), whereas, if my reading is correct, in l. 23 *natalem* would be located at the end of it. It is possible that this *dies natalis* is a further reason for the festivity described in l. 23, i.e. that it comes after one or more events: instances in the *Feriale* include January 3rd (*uota, salus imperatoris, and aeternitas imperii populi*

unattested in the *Feriale* that a single event is redoubled in the list of festivities; (3) if lines 27-29 contain titles granted by the Senate, one should also see the *imperium proconsulare* and the *tribunicia potestas*, both regularly granted to Alexander (*SHA Alex.* 1.3; 8.1).

²¹ As GILLIAM, *Roman* cit. fn. 3, p. 195 points out, the *Volcanalia* cannot be found the *Feriale*; they should have taken place on August 23rd (*X Kalendas Septembres*), but no entry at the bottom of col. II seems to him to be able to host this celebration.

²² Whereas his *dies natalis* is probably noted in col. I, 13 (January 24th: see HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, p. 77), there is no recognizable *dies imperii* for Hadrian, who ascended to the throne on August 11th AD 117, after Trajan's death. The problem is discussed by GILLIAM, *Roman* cit. fn. 3, p. 196.

²³ TAYLOR, *Review* cit. fn. 4, p. 311.

*Romani*²⁴); January 28th (a victory on Parthians by Severus and Trajan's *dies imperii*²⁵); and, perhaps, September 18th (Trajan's *dies natalis* and Nerva's accession to throne²⁶). This *dies natalis*, therefore, should be on the same day of some other important event, and should take place in the second half of August: the last datable entry in col. II is the *Circenses Salutare*s (l. 25, August 5th); then comes l. 26 (Iulia Mamaea's *dies natalis*), where the Calends of September begin to be employed, therefore we must be more or less after August 15th²⁷; then the here analysed l. 27; l. 28 (Marciana's *dies natalis*), again dated with the Calends of September; and then begins col. III 1, *pridie Kalendas Septembres*²⁸ i.e. August 31st.

However, to uncover either event seems unlikely. Fink believed this entry in its entirety to contain a victory of Severus Alexander against the Parthians (AD 225-228)²⁹, but there is no certain evidence, and the direct inspection of the papyrus discourages us from accepting his supplement. One would be tempted to locate here the *Volcanalia*, but again, the name does not fit the sequence] o [. . .]lia, as after *o* one cannot have but *b* or *r*. Nor is it likely to read a *quod* earlier in the line, as before the first *u*, traces indicate rather *d* or *b* than *q*. So much for the event celebrated before the *dies natalis*; as far as the *dies natalis* itself is concerned, it probably did not refer to an Emperor. Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Pertinax, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla are all featured in the *Feriale*; the missing sections likely contained Severus Alexander (October 1st), Tiberius (November 16th), Vespasian (November 17th), and Titus (December 30th). Caligula, Nero, Domitian and Elagabalus were probably not included due to their *damnatio memoriae*, and none of them (but for Elagabalus, whose date of birth is uncertain) was born in August.

A *diua* might be featured here. Not one of the two Faustinae: the one who was born on February 16th, be she the Elder or the Younger³⁰, is not included in the *Feriale* (there is no *XV/XIV Kalendas Martias* entry), and the other is in col. III, 7³¹, probably around September 19th-22nd. Trajan's wife Plotina or Hadrian's wife Sabina – despite Gilliam's scepticism about her presence among the *diuae*³² – might be better candidates for this *dies natalis* – as well as for the unknown *diua* in col. I, 10³³.

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²⁴ Col. I, 2-4 [*III Nonas Ianuarias. Quod soluantur ac nuncupentur u*]o[ta, *et ob salutem* | [*domini nostri Marci Aureli Seueri Alexandri Augusti, et ob aeternitatem* | [*impe*]ri populi R[omani ...

²⁵ Col. I, 14-15 V *Kal(endas)* [F]e[br]uar[is]. *Ob u*[i]c[t]ori[a- ±20 Parthica]m Maxi[m]a[m] Diui Seuer[i e]t ob [*imperium* Diui Traiani ...

²⁶ Col. III, 4-5 [*XIII Kal(endas) Oct[ob]res.*] *O[b natalem* Diui Traiani *et ob imperium* Diui Neruae, Diuo | Traiano ...

²⁷ Between the Nones (5th or 7th) and the 13th or 15th, the Ides and not the Calends would have been employed.

²⁸ The line has been convincingly reconstructed as hosting Commodus' birthday: [*pridie* [*Kal(endas) Septembres. Ob nat]alem* [*Diui Commodi Diuo*] *Com*[modo b(ouem) m(arem)].

²⁹ HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 153-154.

³⁰ Polemius Silvius' calendar (*CIL* I, p. 259) features a *natalis Faustinae uxoris Antonini*; there is no certainty in scholarship whether the 'Antoninus' here meant is Antoninus Pius – married to Faustina the Elder – or Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, married to Faustina the Younger. This, and the fact that no February 16th is in the *Feriale* and the Faustina in III 7 is not given any distinctive epithet, raises two issues: not just who is the Faustina in the *Feriale*, but why one of the two dropped from the official list of *diuae*, and of course, which one. See Fink in HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, pp. 156-160; and J.F. GILLIAM, *On Divi under the Severi*, in J. BIBAUW (éd.), *Hommages à Marcel Renard II*, Bruxelles 1969, pp. 284-289. As far as who is the Faustina born on February 16th and featured in Silvius' calendar, modern scholarship has reached no consensus. To give only a small selection, B. LEVICK is for Faustina the Elder (*Faustina I and II. Imperial Women of the Golden Age*, Oxford 2014: see the chronology at pp. 169-170, where – moreover – the Younger's birth is significantly located in late September), while D. KIENAST (*Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 1990, p. 141) and *NP* VI 442-443 s.vv. Faustina I and II (W.ECK; see H. CANKIK-H. SCHNEIDER-M. LANDFESTER, *Brill's New Pauly*, Leiden-Boston 2006—) are determined on Faustina the Younger.

³¹ [*Ka*]l(endas) Oct[ob]res.] *Ob natal[em Di]uae F[austina]e, Diu[ae Fau]sti[nae supp]licat[io]*.

³² See the aforementioned GILLIAM, *On Diui* cit. fn. 30.

³³ V[] *Idus* I[anu]arias. *Ob nata[lem Diuae ±8, Diuae ±8 supp]licatio*. One can determine it was a *diua* and not a *diuus* because a *diuus*' birthday would have required a *bos mas*, not a *supplicatio*. This woman might also be a *diua* of the Severan family, according to Hoey (HOEY-FINK-SNYDER, *Feriale* cit. fn. 2, p. 73).