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The Sallii from Amiternum and the Role of "Praetextati" in Municipal Councils

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Two inscriptions point to Octavian's position as triumvir from 36 to 32 B.C. The first is contained in the *Fasti* of 36 B.C. where Octavian has celebrated an *ovans* from Sicily,<sup>6</sup> the second at Tergiste from 32 B.C.<sup>7</sup>

The possible reasons for Octavian's policy of not placing the title of triumvir on his coins were: to disassociate himself from Antony who continued to style himself as such; to remove himself from his prior bloody history as a triumvir; to make full use of his adoption by Caesar as son and therefore heir; and finally, Antony was in the East away from the seat of power and could not challenge Octavian's propaganda.

With the end of the second five year period, both Octavian and Antony began a propaganda war. Both men accused the other of standing in the way of restoring the republic. Ultimately, Antony's defeat at Actium ended the triumvirate and established the principate of Augustus.

But for all of Octavian's propaganda he could never shake off the title of triumvir. A century later, Suetonius remarked that this was his most savage time of rule. An inscription, ILS 78, attests to Octavian being called a triumvir after Actium: *Imp. Caesari d.f. imp. v. cos vi iii vir r.p.c. patrono*. The inscription, found at Lunae near Rome is addressed to the patron Caesar and the title of triumvir may not have carried a negative connotation.<sup>8</sup>

As seen, the end of the second triumvirate can be viewed differently for each man. Lepidus, with his removal in 36 B.C., Antony with his defeat in 31 B.C., and Octavian by his refusal to use the title after 36 B.C. The two inscriptions, ILS 77 and 78 point to two interesting points. ILS 77 indicates that the triumvirate ended in 32 B.C., and ILS 78, dedicated to Caesar as patron after Actium, seems to imply that the title of triumvir was not a negative attribute.

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6 Victor Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*, Oxford, 2nd edition (1976) 34 no. 36.

7 ILS 77.

8 The problems reported by Dessau (1, p. 23) are noteworthy. Octavian's fifth salute as imperator (29 B.C.) and his sixth consulship (28 B.C.) did not coincide, but both occurred after 31 B.C.

#### THE SALLII FROM AMITERNUM AND THE ROLE OF *PRAETEXTATI* IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

From the second to the fourth century AD the Sallii were one of the leading families of Amiternum. Their prestige was also high in towns in the immediate environment such as Foruli, Aveia Vestina and even in farther away Reate and Interamma Praetuttianorum. Their activities as benefactors are amply recorded in inscriptions, five from Amiternum and one from Foruli<sup>1</sup>. Possibly from the second<sup>2</sup> or third century are three texts recording Caius Sallius Proculus and one

1 CIL IX 4206; 4207; 4208; AE 1937, 119; AE 1937, 121 and CIL IX 4399 (Foruli).

2 St. Mrozek, *Primus omnium sur les inscriptions des municipes italiennes*, *Epigraphica* 33 (1971), 65 dates these texts to the second century AD.

recording the activities of a junior member of the family, perhaps the former's son (CIL IX 4208). From the fourth century date two *tabulae patronatus* honouring two further members of the Sallii: AE 1937, 119 dates from AD 325, recording the cooption as patron of Amiternum of Caius Sallius Pompeianus Sofronius. AE 1937, 121 (AD 335) records the subsequent cooption of his son, Caius Sallius Sofronius junior, as *patronus*<sup>3</sup>.

In the following pages we shall especially focus on CIL IX 4208 recording a young member of the Sallii who held a *munus gladiatorium*. The text is particularly interesting, because he is said to have done this in his capacity as a *praetextatus*. *Praetextati* are mainly known from the *album decurionum* of Canusium<sup>4</sup>. Since legal and literary sources are not particularly rewarding in the discussion of the function of municipal *praetextati*, we have to depend on epigraphical sources. This can be supplemented by the evidence we have on senatorial *praetextati*. The text from Amiternum can serve as an interesting parallel for their role in municipal councils. The text runs as follows, in Mommsen's CIL edition:

.....viro atq  
 .....orum Proculi p[atri?]  
 [sace]rdoti Lanivino immun[i, patrono]  
 [s]plendidissimi ordinis et populi Am[iterninorum, summo mag(istro)]  
 Septaquis, patrono Aveiatium et Pel[tuinatium; quod?]  
 ex indulgentia praetextatus adiu[tore patre mu-]  
 neris Corneliani editione primus om[nium]  
 cum quattuor paribus gladiatorum [et reliquo]  
 splendido adparatu patriam suam ho[norarit]  
 ipsosque cives sincera amoris adfect[ione officii om-]  
 nibus fovere non desinat; plebs urba[ana ex aere]  
 conlato bigam quam in amphitheatr[o postularet]

Obviously, the beginning of the text is difficult to read since in particular the first and second line on the stone are full of lacunae. We do not know how much of the text is missing here, but since we find the genitive Proculi in line 2, it seems to record the activities of an unnamed son of the Caius Sallius Proculus of CIL IX 4206, 4207 and 4399<sup>5</sup>. Perhaps the lacuna behind the p in line 2 should be supplemented by *p[atroni filio]*. The translation would then be as follows:

“..... for N.N., the son Proculus, *patronus*, priest of the cult of Lanuvium enjoying immunity, *patronus* of the most splendid ordo and the people of Amiternum, highest magistrate of the Septem Aquae, *patronus* of the inhabitants of Aveia and Peltuinum. Because, as a *praetextatus*, he was the first of all Amiternians, enjoying permission from the emperor, and with his father as an adjoint, to honour the city with four pairs of gladiators and exhibiting various spectacular extras, in the execution of the *munus* Cornelianus. And because he promised not to stop showing the citizens his sincere affection in all [future] offices. As a result, the people of the city erected a statue of a two-horsed chariot for him with the money collected which is to be placed in the amphitheatre.”

The activity for which the son received a statue was the execution of a gladiatorial *munus* in the local amphitheatre of which the remains can still be seen today in the neighbourhood of San Vittorino (prov. of l'Aquila). Various aspects in the execution attract our attention. First of all, the

3 See for these two texts: G. Annibaldi, Rinvenimento di due Tabulae Patronatus presso Preturo, *Notizie degli Scavi* 1937, 94–107; M. Buonocore, *Varia Epigraphica Abruzzesi*, in: *Miscellanea Graeca e Romana* IX (1984), 234–235.

4 CIL IX 338. Cf. now Chelotti et al., *Le epigrafi romane di Conosa*, Bari (1985), nr. 37.

5 This is also argued by Mommsen in CIL and by Annibaldi, *Tabulae* (as in n. 3), 101.