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INOFFICIAL TITLES OF EMPERORS IN THE EARLY PRINCIPATE

Summary: The Greeks, both communities and private persons, often attributed to members of the imperial family honorary titles that they did not officially have. Livia was regarded as Thea Sebaste in Ioulis, Ioulia as Sebaste in Apollonia, Caius Caesar as Parthikos in Kos, Domitian as Theos Aniketos (invictus) in Aphrodisias, and Sabina as Sebaste in Perge. These honorary titles always appear in a cultic context. This suggests that for the Greeks such inofficial titles were comparable with epithets of gods.

Key words: Emperor, imperial family, titulature, epigraphy, Livia, Iulia, C. Caesar, Sabina, Domitian.

According to literary tradition Sabina, Hadrian's wife, was awarded the title *Augusta* in A.D. 128, in the same context in which the emperor was given the title *pater patriae*.¹ The title *Sebaste/Augusta* appears, however, in two honorary inscriptions for Sabina that are dated to c. A.D. 120–122.² For this reason Werner Eck suggested dating the official award of this title to c. A.D. 119.³ In 1992 I published two new inscriptions for Sabina from Lyttos, in which she lacks the title *Augusta/Sebaste*. One of them can be safely dated to A.D. 124/125, the other is also earlier than A.D. 128.⁴ As I argued, these texts suggest that Sabina did not have the title *Augusta* at that date; the early appearance of the title should be explained as an inofficial (and probably unauthorised) adaptation by provincial communities of a title that they knew from imperial nomenclature.⁵ In this article I present a few inscriptions, published recently, that offer new evidence for this practice from the Greek East, which for the most part concerns members of the family of Augustus.

¹ W. ECK, Hadrian als pater patriae und die Verleihung des Augustatitels an Sabina, in: G. WIRTH (ed.), *Romanitas, Christianitas. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Literatur der römischen Kaiserzeit J. Straub zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Berlin–New York 1982) 218, with the sources.

² *CIL* II 4992 (Olisipo, A.D. 121/122); *I. Perge* 99 (c. A.D. 121).

³ ECK, *art. cit.* 226–228.

⁴ *SEG* XLII 813–814 (= *SEG* XXXVI 815 bis and XL 777 b).

⁵ A. CHANIOTIS–G. RETHEMIOTAKIS, Neue Inschriften aus dem kaiserzeitlichen Lyttos, Kreta, *Tyche* 7 (1992) 34.

Livia Sebaste in Ioulis on Keos

The epistyle of a building, possibly dedicated to the emperor cult, in Ioulis, is inscribed with a dedicatory inscription that has recently been restored by Sophia Zoumbaki and Lina Mendoni as follows:⁶ Ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ σωτηρίας | θεοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις καὶ θεοῖς Σεβαστοῖς ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς | [θεῶν] Σεβαστῶν | Θεοῖς τε φίλοισιν. The editors rightly identified the θεοὶ Σεβαστοί with Augustus and Livia and pointed out that Livia was sometimes designated as Augusta/Sebaste in the Eastern provinces prior to Augustus' death.⁷

Iulia Sebaste in Apollonia

A statue base from Apollonia commemorates the dedication of a statue of Ἰουλίᾳ Σεβαστᾷ by Aristo:⁸ [Ἀρι]στῶι Ἀριστωνίδ[ου], | Εὐθυκλέους γυ[νᾶ] | Ἰουλίαν Σεβαστᾷ | Ἐλευθι[---]. The editors pointed out that Livia was called *Iulia Augusta* / Ἰουλίᾳ Σεβαστῇ after her adoption by Augustus (A.D. 14–29) and argued that the statue represented Livia. This is plausible, but as I have pointed out in my commentary in *SEG* XLVII 847, an identification with Iulia should not be excluded; Augustus' daughter is called Ἰουλίᾳ Θεᾷ Σεβαστῇ in an inscription from Paphos⁹ and possibly also in an inscription from Aphrodisias.¹⁰ The mention of Eleithyia, the patron of childbirth, supports an identification with Iulia. Both Livia and Iulia, as many other female members of the imperial family, were often identified with Greek goddesses in the East; Livia was worshipped, e.g., as Aphrodite, Hestia Nea Demeter, and Hera.¹¹ An association with a goddess of childbirth, however, clearly supports an identification with Iulia. Christian Habicht has demonstrated that Augustus' daughter was honored in the East as the mother of the two heirs of Augustus, Caius and Lucius Caesar.¹² Habicht has associated a statue of Kalliteknia in Euromos¹³ with Iulia; the priest of Καλλιτεκνία also served as the priest for the cult of the Dioskouroi, who were associated with her two sons. Two further dedications to Iulia Kalliteknes are

⁶ S. ZOUMBAKI–L. MENDONI, Θεοὶ Σεβαστοί, in L. MENDONI–A. J. MAZARAKIS AINIAN (eds.), *Kea-Kythnos. History and Archaeology. Proceedings of an International Symposium, Kea-Kythnos, 22–25 June, 1994* (Athens 1998) 669–678 (*IG* XII 5, 629 + a new fragment; the entire text in *SEG* XLVIII 1129). Cf. my comments in *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion* 1998, *Kernos* 14 (2001) 231 no. 299.

⁷ E.g. ZOUMBAKI–MENDONI, *art.cit.* 672f. (e.g., *IG* II² 3241; *IGR* IV 249).

⁸ P. CABANES–N. CEKA, *Corpus des inscriptions grecques d'Illyrie méridionale et d'Épire* 1.2. *Inscriptions d'Épidamne-Dyrrhachion et d'Apollonia* (Paris–Athens 1997) 45 no. 173; cf. my comments in *SEG* XLVII 847.

⁹ *IGR* III 940: Ἰ[ου]λίαν Θεᾷν Σεβαστῇ[ν], θυγατέρα Αὐτοκράτορος[ς] | Καίσαρος Θεοῦ υἱοῦ, Θεο[ῶ] | Σεβαστοῦ, γυναῖκα δὲ Ἀγ[ρίππα].

¹⁰ *SEG* XXX 1249: Ἰ[ο]υλίαν Σεβαστῇ[ν] | Σεβαστοῦ θυγατέ[ρα] Ἦραν. J. M. REYNOLDS, *The Origins and Beginnings of the Imperial Cult at Aphrodisias*, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 26 (1980) 82, prefers an identification with Livia, after her adoption by Augustus.

¹¹ Aphrodite: *IGR* IV 257; Hestia Nea Demeter: *IGR* IV 180; Hera: *IGR* IV 249, 319.

¹² Chr. HABICHT, *Iulia Kalliteknes*, *MH* 53 (1996) 51–54.

¹³ *SEG* XLIII 711.

known from Priene (Θεὰ Καλλίτεκνος)¹⁴ and Halasarna on Kos (unpublished: Λητώ Καλλίτεκνος).¹⁵ Whether we restore in the last line Ἐλευθί[αι], i.e., a dedication of Iulia's statue to Eleithyia, or Ἐλεύθι[αν], i.e., an identification of Iulia with Eleithyia, the association of the mother of Augustus's beloved grandchildren with the goddess of childbirth is obvious.

Caius Iulius Caesar Parthicus in Kos

A very fragmentary inscription from Kos may also present a surprising case of an unofficial title for a member of Augustus' house. The text is an honorary inscription for a man who had served as a priest of Apollo (L. 7f.), gymnasiarchos (L. 7), probably as an agonothetes of an agon honoring Hestia and of the festival Pythokleia (L. 5),¹⁶ as a priest or high priest of Tiberius (L. 3) and as a high priest of Claudius, the *ktistes* of Kos (L. 5):¹⁷

- 4 [----- ἱερέ]α Τιβερίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ υ[ί]-
[οῦ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ --- c. 6 --- Κ]αίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ υἱοῦ Παρθ[ι]-
[κοῦ ----- c. 17 -----]ας Ἑστίας καὶ Πυθοκλίων, ἀρχιε-
[ρατεύσαντα Τιβερίου Κλαυδ]ίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ κτίστ[α]
[τὰς πόλιος ?--- c. 6 --- γυμνασιαρ]χήσαντ[α, ἱ]ερατεύσαντα Ἀπ[όλ]-
8 [λωνος -----]

L. 5, e.g. [ἀγωνοθετήσαντα τ]ῆς Ἑστίας.

The first part of the text seems to mention offices currently held by this man (lines 3–5), the later part earlier offices (cf. L. 7: [ἱ]ερατεύσαντα). The title Παρθι-
κός (lines 4f.) is puzzling. The date of the inscription excludes an identification with Trajan. The only member of the imperial family under the Julio-Claudians that had any connection with the Parthians is Augustus' grandson and adopted son, Caius Caesar, whose meeting with the king of the Parthians Phraates V resulted in a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the East (A.D. 1).¹⁸ We know that Caius Caesar was the recipient of divine honors in Kos from another inscription which mentions the agon Kaisareia, celebrated in his honor.¹⁹ The agon Kaisareia, the remains of the name (Καί-

¹⁴ *I. Priene* 225.

¹⁵ K. HÖGHAMMAR, *Sculpture and Society. A Study of the Connection between the Free-Standing Sculpture and Society on Kos in the Hellenistic and Augustan Periods* (Uppsala 1993) 189 no. 79.

¹⁶ For this festival see M. SEGREG, *Iscrizioni di Cos*, edited by D. PEPAS-DELMOUSOU and M. A. RIZZA (Rome 1993) 70–73 ED 82.

¹⁷ SEGREG, *op.cit.*, 207 no. EV 134.

¹⁸ For these events see D. KIENAST, *Augustus. Princeps und Monarch* (Darmstadt 1999, third edition) 345f. and 376, with the sources and further bibliography. For the Roman expectations from this expedition see E. GRUEN, The Expansion of the Empire under Augustus, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume X. *The Augustan Empire* (Cambridge 1996, Second Edition) 191f.

¹⁹ SEGREG, *op.cit.*, 228 EV 218 A lines 9–11: Καيسάρηα τὰ τιθέμενα Γαῖωι Καίσαρι.

σαρ Σεβαστοῦ υἱός),²⁰ and the position of this priesthood strongly suggest that the Koans awarded the title *Parthikos* to Caius Caesar, in order to celebrate his success. We may restore in lines 4f.: [καὶ Γαίου Κ]αίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ υἱοῦ Παρθ[υ]κοῦ]. It may be assumed that Kos was one of Caius' stops in his Eastern expedition, probably after his stay in Samos.²¹

Domitian Deus Invictus

In Aphrodisias, a priest dedicated a statue of an emperor to Zeus Nineudios.²² The emperor's name is given as Αὐτοκράτωρ Καῖσαρ Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικὸς (Imperator Caesar Augustus Germanicus); an identification with Domitian is quite probable,²³ since another inscription from Aphrodisias uses the same nomenclature for Domitian. One cannot exclude, however, an identification with Caligula, Claudius or Nero. The surprising element in the emperor's titulature is his designation as ἀνίκητος θεός. This private, unofficial designation of an emperor as *invictus* (or *deus invictus*) antedates the introduction of *invictus* as an official imperial title under Septimius Severus by a century.²⁴

Inofficial titles as cultic epithets

The Greeks, the communities of Ioulis and Kos and private persons (Apollonia, Aphrodisias), were familiar with the honorary titles and names that were used by members of the imperial family, but they were not always familiar with the mechanisms behind their official awards. For them they were comparable with epithets of gods (such as ἐπήκοος, σωτήρ, πλουτοδότης etc.); the latter were not subject to official authorisation, but could be used freely. All the unofficial titles presented here are found in inscriptions with an evident cultic context (dedications, references to priesthoods). Especially in the early years of the principate, during the reign of Augustus, the unofficial use of honorary titles should not surprise us. What for the Romans was part of the official name of an emperor was for the Greeks a cultic epithet.

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²⁰ Cf. *IGR* IV 205 (Ilion): Γάιον Καίσαρα τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ.

²¹ On his stay in Samos see Suet., Tib. 12.2.

²² P. PARIS–M. HOLLEAUX, *Inscriptions de Carie*, *BCH* 9 (1885) 79f. no. 10: [Αὐτοκράτορα Καίσαρα | Σεβα]στὸν Γερμα[νικόν] | ἀγ[ί]κητον θεόν, Διο[νύσιος] | Πα[π]ύλου τοῦ Παπύλου Διονυ[σίου] | ἱερεὺς Διὸς Νινευδίου, συν|καθιέρωσεν τὸν θεὸν τῷ θεῷ καθὼς ὑπέσχετο.

²³ Cf. *SEG* XXXII 1099: [Α]ὐτοκρ[ά]τ[ορ]α Καί[σαρ]α Δομιτιανὸν Σεβαστὸν Γερμανικόν.

²⁴ For this title under the Severans see, e.g., A. MASTINO, *Le titulature di Caracalla e Geta attraverso le iscrizioni* (Bologna 1981) 38–40 and 63f.