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EPIGRAPHY AND PAPHYROLOGY

TITULI PICTI BETA ON DRESSSEL 20 AMPHORAE FROM THE COLLECTION OF EMILIO RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA FROM MONTE TESTACCIO (ROME)

Abstract: The *tituli picti* beta found on Dressel 20 amphorae provide information about the merchants involved in the trade of Baetic olive oil. These inscriptions, painted systematically on amphorae, belong to a very specific field of epigraphic study in which the scholar Emilio Rodríguez Almeida excelled. This paper presents data on the history of the collection and epigraphic developments of the *tituli picti* beta that Emilio Rodríguez Almeida did not publish or was unable to read completely, originating from his prospecting campaigns. The study of this epigraphic treasure from Monte Testaccio in Rome makes it possible to reinterpret or complement his work, deepening our knowledge of Roman merchants of Baetic olive oil through new data, connections, and interpretations. Specifically, the different subtypes of *tituli picti* beta are analyzed, related to private merchants or to Rome as an agent of these transports from Baetica to the city of Rome. Furthermore, the specimens discussed here, taken out of context from their stratigraphy on the Mount, are related to parallels that are available to us, mainly from Dressel's publications and the latest excavations on the Mount, thanks to which we can obtain other data such as chronology and other associations between merchants, without forgetting the specific epigraphic differences of each inscription.

Keywords: *amphorae epigraphy, Dressel 20, Baetica, Roman trade, olive oil, Mount Testaccio.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Monte Testaccio is an artificial mound located between the Monte Aventino and the Tiber river in Rome, framed between Via Galvani, Via Nicola Zabaglia, Via Nicola Zabaglia and Piazza Orazio Giustiniani. It is artificial because it was formed from the chopped or crushed empty amphorae of olive oil that were deposited on arrival in the City, to be distributed later. The surface of the Mount is about 22,000 m² and has a height of fifty meters above sea level. Most of the objects deposited there are amphorae of Hispanic Baetic origin of olive oil (in a proportion of about 80 or 85% of the total). The majority of the remaining is of African and Oriental materials (15%). Sometimes, very sporadically, some remains of *sigillata*, *mosaic tessellae*, glass or *lucernae* have also been found. In conclusion, it could be said that essentially Monte Testaccio is a mountain of amphorae. Among the typologies found there, the Dressel 20 undoubtedly stands out, which contained Baetic olive oil from the basins of the Guadalquivir and Genil rivers. These amphorae,

discovery. His prospections, based on E. Rodríguez Almeida himself, yielded the following results until 1979⁴. The catalogue closed in October 1979:

Year	Inventory Numbers	Number of inscriptions found in the year
1968:	N. 1-28	28
1969:	N. 29-456	428
1970:	N. 457-744	288
1971:	N. 745-950	206
1972:	N. 951-1135	185
1973:	N. 1136-1343	208
1974:	N. 1344-1628	285
1975:	N. 1629-1891	263
1976:	N. 1892-2031	140
1977:	N. 2032-2141	110
1978:	N. 2142-2235	94
1979:	N. 2236-2301	66
Total		2301

Pl. 1. Inventory numbers granted and number of inscriptions per year.

2. THE TITULI PICTI OF MONTE TESTACCIO

From November 1979, Rodríguez Almeida stopped prospecting exhaustively, so the specimens he found from that moment on appear with acronyms only with the year and coordinates, missing the correlative inventory number. Of the 2301 epigraphs found up to November 1979, we do not know the proportion between stamps, *tituli picti* and graffiti; however, we can make a simple extrapolation that may serve as an indication. Thus, if after eight years of exploration (that is, including 1975), Rodríguez Almeida had 800 stamps (40% of the material found until then)⁵, we can think that at the end of 1979 the stamps must have been around 900 copies. The rest are *ca.* 1300 epigraphs, *tituli* or graffiti. In addition, also in the Testaccio, Rodríguez Almeida had found by 1979 about a hundred bronze coins, or fragments of them, almost all of them from the fourth century. Rodríguez Almeida published more than 500 copies of this impressive collection, including *tituli*, stamps and graffiti⁶. Therefore, at his death, many unpublished inscriptions remained. We present here a preview of some of these materials.

Official titling of an olive oil amphora Dressel 20
Dressel⁷ divided the *titulus* that appears on these amphorae into five parts and named each of them with

a Greek letter (Fig. 3). Thus, based on the position in which the different parts that compose it were located, Dressel coded the inscriptions as α, β, γ, δ and ε. It should be noted that another element must be added to this list, which we have called ζ, and which seems to correspond to a primitive ε inscription that did not yet have a definitive place on the amphora; this “primitive” ζ or ε was placed to the left of δ and should perhaps be understood as the first attempt to find a place for the new cipher (which, let us remember, began to be written in the middle of the second century AD) before finally being placed on the right side of the amphora (Fig. 3)⁸. On the other hand, Rodríguez Almeida found some amphorae with an anomalous inscription located in the space between the inscriptions β, γ and δ, an epigraphic discovery that he called θ⁹. Being a certainly sporadic inscription, we do not consider that it can be included within the “canonical” parts of the *titulus* of a Dressel 20 that were written in “origin” (Baetica); we consider that θ is a “storehouse” inscription, written at the destination (in *Portus* or in the river port of Rome), although it surely also had an “official” character, since it was written in *atramentum*.

Apart from all these inscriptions, written in *atramentum* (black ink), the Dressel 20 that appear in the Testaccio are usually painted with other inscriptions made with ink almost always red (*rubrum*), for which there is still no completely satisfactory explanation or a clearly assigned place on the

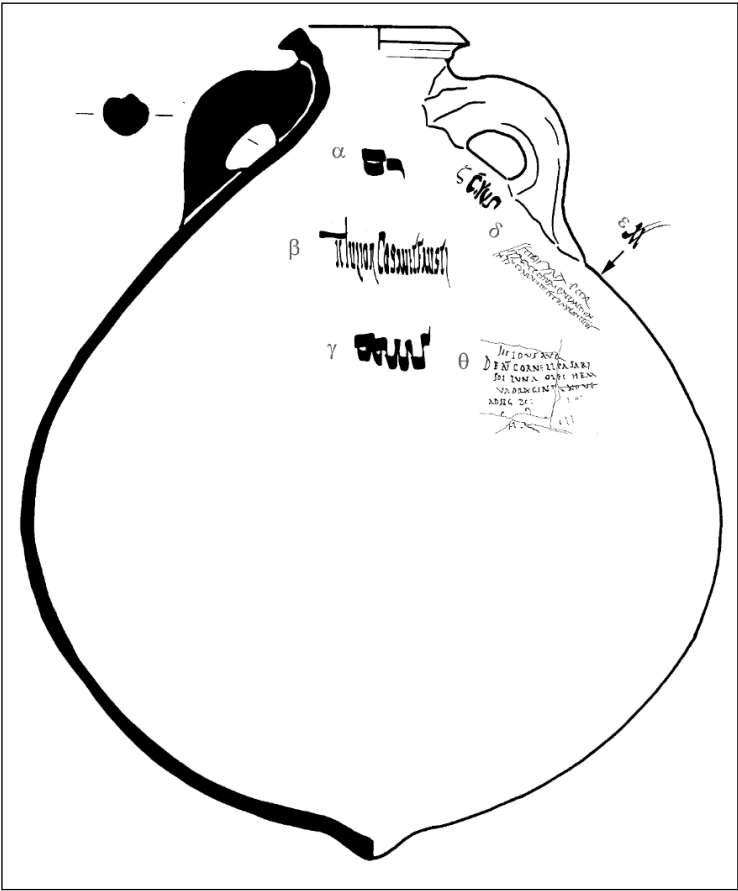


Fig. 3. Epigraphy of tituli picti of a Dressel 20.

⁴ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1989.
⁵ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1975-76.
⁶ In addition to the *tituli* and graffiti, Rodríguez Almeida published some of his stamps in RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA, 1975-76 and RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1977-78. We also know some other stamps in his collection through other references (REMESAL 1977-78).
⁷ DRESSEL 1878; CIL XV.

⁸ AGUILERA 2012.
⁹ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1972; REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003; REMESAL 2012.

surface of the amphora. We grouped them under the name of *Alia* and they were written on those parts of the surface of the amphora left by the inscriptions of the official title. These anomalous inscriptions seem to have been written in the place of reception and storage, whether this place was *Portus* or the storehouses of the river port of Rome.

Some of the inscriptions written with *atramentum* have taken on a brown color over time, a symptom of their imminent disappearance. On the other hand, inscriptions written with *rubrum* may have undergone a similar process, degrading in such a way that in some cases the red colour has been transformed into an almost diaphanous whitish colour. In addition to the inscriptions written with *atramentum* or *rubrum*, other anomalous inscriptions have been preserved in the Dressel 20 amphorae, written with a kind of charcoal that is preserved with a bluish-black color¹⁰.

From our work reviewing the unpublished inscriptions, a first group of unpublished inscriptions appears here, which we have ordered following the system already created by Dressel in his day¹¹. Therefore, the inscriptions that refer in position β to the *Ratio Patrimonii*¹² appear first, followed by the different private characters ordered first by the *nomen*, then by the *praenomen* and finally by the *cognomen*¹³.

3. CORPUS OF BETA INSCRIPTIONS ON DRESSSEL 20 AMPHORAE COLLECTED BY EMILIO RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA ON MOUNT TESTACCIO

The *tituli picti* beta of the *Ratio Patrimonii*

Therefore, the inscriptions that refer in position β to the *Ratio Patrimonii* appear first¹⁴, followed by the different private characters ordered first by the *nomen*, then by the *praenomen*, and finally by the *cognomen*¹⁵.

The inscriptions of the *Ratio Patrimonii* are well known on Monte Testaccio and among those found by Dressel, by Rodríguez Almeida and by ourselves there are more than 300 copies. They began to appear around the year 214, replacing the inscriptions of the Augusti¹⁶, and for the most part (more than 95% of the cases) they were written in the province of Baetica (the rest were written in the province of Tarraconense). These inscriptions of the *Ratio Patrimonii* will remain the only ones used in the β position until the time of Alexander Severo, when the names of private characters appear again in β ¹⁷, and since then both options (*Ratio Patrimonii* and private characters) have coexisted until the end of the Testaccio's life¹⁸.

¹⁰ AGUILERA/BERNI 1998.

¹¹ CIL XV.

¹² AGUILERA 2012.

¹³ For an explanation of this order, see AGUILERA 2015.

¹⁴ To know the different protagonists that appear in position β and their evolution over time, see AGUILERA 2012.

¹⁵ For an explanation of this order, see AGUILERA 2015.

¹⁶ They begin around the year 198 with *Dominorum NN(ostrorum) Severi et Antonini Augg(ustorum)* to continue later as *Dominorum NNN(ostrorum) Severi Antonini et Getae Auggg(ustorum)*, then *Dominorum NN(ostrorum) Antonini et Getae Augg(ustorum)* and finally as *Domini N(ostri) Antonini Aug(usti)*.

¹⁷ AGUILERA 2012.

¹⁸ AGUILERA 2002.

In this group of the collection of Emilio Rodríguez Almeida, a total of three specimens belonging to the *Ratio Patrimonii* have been found.

L.H.: H 8.

A.H.: 1971.

L.C.: IT WAS 778.

β : *Fisci [Rationis Patrimonii]*
Provinc[iae Baeticae?]



Fig. 4. Drawing of the inscription "*Fisci [Rationis Patrimonii] / Provinc[iae Baeticae?]*".

The *tituli picti* of private

In the same way, we have several copies of private, either by the *nomen*, by the *praenomen* or by the *cognomen*. The following are the data we have on each of the twenty-two characters studied:

M(arci) Aemi[li? ---]: It could be any of the Marci Emilii already known: With *cognomen Cutianus* we know of three specimens, all found by Rodríguez Almeida himself. The first was initially published in Rodríguez Almeida, 1972, and later republished in 1979 (ERA collection n. 460, found in grid K-5); the second and third published in Rodríguez Almeida, 1979, with numbers 16 (ERA collection n. 1234, found in grid C-7 and with absolute dating of the year 147) and 16A (ERA collection n. 2016+2106 found between grids F7 and E8 and with absolute dating of the year 146).

With *cognomen Euporio* we have a single finding, found and published by Dressel in the CIL (n. 3696) as *M. Afranius Euporio*, Rodríguez Almeida rightly proposed to modify the reading to *M. Aemilius Euporio*¹⁹

¹⁹ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1972.

With *cognomen Pastor*, Dressel found two copies (CIL XV n. 4084a and 4084b), Rodríguez Almeida found two others (The first published in 1972, later republished in 1979, and the second published also in 1979²⁰. We found two others in our 1993 excavation campaign²¹: both in a stratum with a contextual chronology of ca. the year 145.

With *cognomen Rusticus* Rodríguez Almeida found a specimen of this individual in his grid C-6 (inventory n. 1418)²².

With *cognomen Silvinus*, Rodríguez Almeida found a specimen of this individual in his G-6 grid (inventory n. 525)²³.

[*L(uci) Antoni*] *Crassini*: *Lucius Antonius Crassinus* is a well-known character in the Testaccio. Dressel found two specimens²⁴, Rodríguez Almeida found another²⁵ and we have found six more²⁶.

L(uci) Antoni Plebeiani: Dressel found 12 specimens (CIL XV 3716, 3718, 3720, 3721, 3722, 3723a, 3723b, 3723c, 3723d, 3723e, 3723f, 3723g) and we have found another²⁷. This would therefore be the first specimen found by Rodríguez Almeida.

L(uci) Ant[oni ---]: Observations: It could be any of the known *Lucii Antonii* or another yet to be known: *Crassinus* (see commentary to n. 5), *Epaphroditus*²⁸, *Iucundus*²⁹, *Plebeianus* (see commentary to n. 6), *Securus*³⁰ and *Severus*³¹. *D(ecimi) Atici Aticci Trophimiani*: The tracing of the first letters in β is much thicker, probably due to the higher initial ink load.

MM Claud(iorum) Senecionum: This character (*Marcus Claudius Senecio*) is well known in the Testaccio and we have a total of 20 entries in the CEIPAC database. Specifically, there are a total of 8 inscriptions referring to the *tria nomina* in the plural³², all of them dated to the middle of the second century A.D. (149-153). It has been found in the Testaccio related to the QFC stamp of Peñaflor. It is an association that could well be between father and son, since both have the same name³³.

Ti(beri) Claudii N[obilis]: possibly related to the above as a branch of the same family. We only have 3 parallels with the same character: two published in CIL³⁴ and in Remesal and Aguilera³⁵. The information of the parallels of the CIL dates it stratigraphically in the Testaccio between the years 145-161

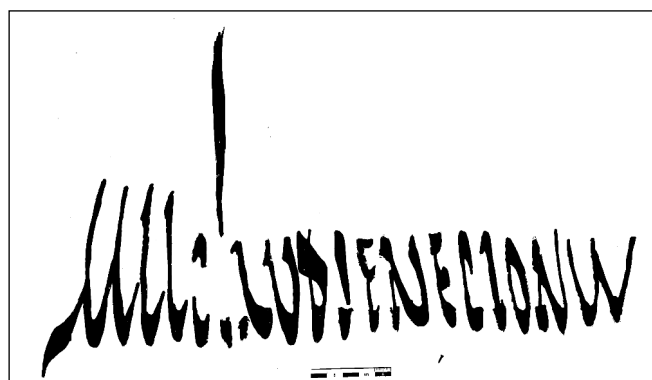


Fig. 5. Drawing of the inscription “MM Claud(iorum) Senecionum”.

A.D., while the other one is dated to 174 A.D. The specimen we present is certainly the best specimen, thanks to the lime that has preserved it.

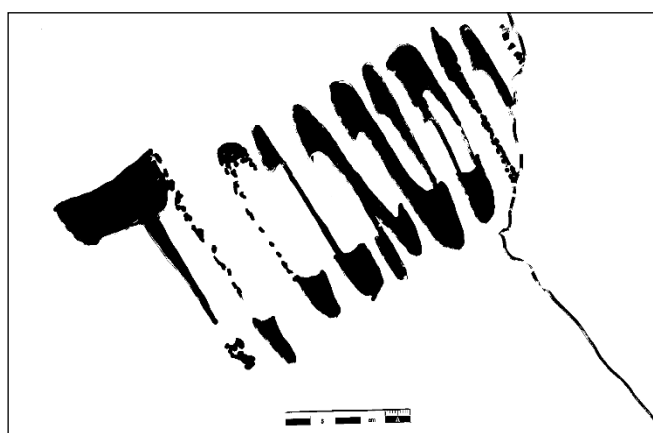


Fig. 6. Drawing of the inscription “Ti(beri) Claudii N[obilis]”.

Claud[ior(um?)]: it should probably be related to MM . *Claudiorum Senecionum*, *supra* refered.

Fadiorum: this epigraph was published by Emilio Rodríguez Almeida³⁶. There are another 7 specimens³⁷. As Remesal and Aguilera explain, the association of the *Fadii* in the Testaccio is well known in a chronology from the mid-second century AD³⁸.

C(ai) Iuli Valeriani: there are 8 inscriptions with these *tria nomina*, all of them found in the Testaccio and published by Dressel³⁹. There is also evidence of a possible association of this character with two other characters, one of the same name and the other of the *Hermerotis cognomen*⁴⁰.

T(iti) Litucci Sabini: another 23 specimens have been recorded with these *tria nomina*⁴¹. The copy reviewed here was not published by Rodríguez Almeida and is especially curious, given the high strokes of the initial letters, T and L, which differentiate it from the rest of the copies known so far.

²⁰ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1979

²¹ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003.

²² RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1979, 873-975 n. 20.

²³ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1972, 1979.

²⁴ CIL XV 3700, 3701.

²⁵ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1975-76.

²⁶ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003.

²⁷ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2014, 39-414, n. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

²⁸ Dressel alone found and published 11 copies of this character in the Testaccio (CIL XV 3702, 3703a, 3704, 3705, 3706, 3707, 3708, 3709, 3710a, 3710b and 3710c) while outside the Testaccio another 12 copies appeared in the wreck of Saint-Gervais 3 (initially some were published by B. Liou (1980) and later all in Liou and Gassend, 1990, with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

²⁹ Only Dressel has found in the Testaccio examples of this character; specifically, five: CIL XV 3711, 3714, 3715a, 3715b, 3715c.

³⁰ Found only by Dressel (a single copy, published in CIL XV 3724).

³¹ Found only by Dressel (three copies, published in CIL XV 3202-2, 3725 and 3727).

³² CIL XV 2835, 3814, 3815, 3817, 3818a-d.

³³ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003, 303.

³⁴ CIL XV 2971, 3811

³⁵ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2014.

³⁶ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1991.

³⁷ One, in CIL XV, 3874, and another 5, in REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003

³⁸ On his relation with *L. Fadius Cilo*, see REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003.

³⁹ CIL XV, 3903-3905f.

⁴⁰ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2014.

⁴¹ All of them published in CIL XV; RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1994; REMESAL/AGUILERA 2014.

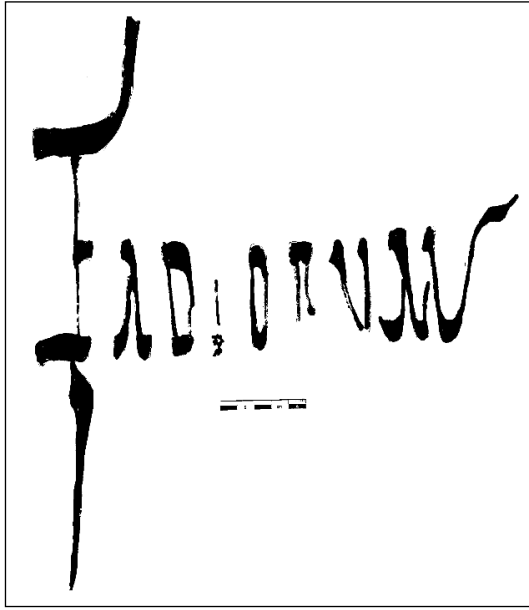


Fig. 7. Drawing of the inscription “Fadiorum”.

[M(arcì) Luc]reti Optati: there are only 4 other copies with these *tria nomina*, all of them published in CIL⁴². Dressel places it in 149 A.D. A drawing that we did not have available by the CIL is provided.

L(uci) Mari Phoebi et Vibior(um) V(iatoris) et R(estituti): There are 15 copies published by Dressel⁴³. The R for *Restitutus* has the same long upward stroke as a similar inscription⁴⁴. There is another copy with this association⁴⁵. Both this and a very similar specimen although of worse conservation are published as a new discovery, since Rodríguez Almeida did not do so.

[L(uci) Memmi Menan]drionis?: this inscription was published by Rodríguez Almeida⁴⁶.

P(ubli) Oliti Apollonis: as with the previous one, the inscription was published by Rodríguez Almeida⁴⁷.

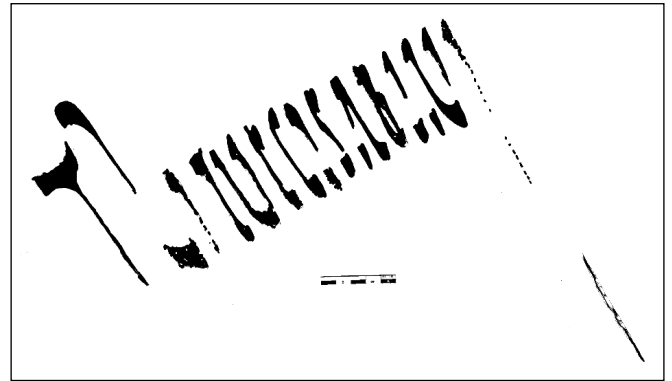


Fig. 8. Drawing of the inscription “T. Litucci Sabini”.

Distribution of the different *tituli picti* on the grid

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A										
B										
C				1						
D										
E										
F										
G										
H								2 3		
I										
K										
L										

Pl. 2. Place of discovery of the different inscriptions of the catalogue in the Rodríguez Almeida grid.

⁴² CIL XV 3939-3942.

⁴³ CIL XV 3949, 2951-3959h.

⁴⁴ CIL XV 3952.

⁴⁵ REMESAL/AGUILERA 2003.

⁴⁶ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1994.

⁴⁷ RODRÍGUEZ ALMEIDA 1994.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A									155	
B	221					149	145 149	145 160	138?	
C			223	223		147 149	140 147 149	146 147		
D		214	214 223	223			147			
E							145	116? 145 146 147		
F		210					147			
G		210	209 210	219 220 222	219 220 222		160	246		
H		206	209 210	210 222			160	251 254-257		
I			220 230?							
K				214?	143? 208 229	146 222				
L										

Pl. 3. Consular dates by grid found in Rodríguez Almeida's surveys based on the *tituli picti* published to date, with a greater shading of the dates of the third century.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As has been shown, we have more than twenty inscriptions in beta position on amphorae of the Dressel 20 typology from the Testaccio and collected by Emilio Rodríguez Almeida. The importance of Rodríguez Almeida's work on Monte Testaccio is inescapable for understanding both the structure of the Mount and for knowing the merchants reflected in the *tituli picti* beta. He was undoubtedly the scholar who resumed the study of Mount Mount, after decades of Dressel's studies. The collection that has been treated here is only a part of

the treasures that, as an epigraphic archive of Antiquity, the Mount hides. The epigraphs of this work respond to the normality of what has been found in other prospections or excavations (by Dressel or Spanish excavations), with chronologies of the second and third centuries A.D. The beta inscriptions of the Dressel 20 amphorae are probably the largest concentrated commercial archive of Antiquity, so continuing with these works becomes a necessary task for any student of the economic history of Hispania and the city of Rome. The collection of beta inscriptions presented here

were collected by Emilio Rodríguez Almeida. However, the layer of lime that existed on the objects meant that he could not observe or read (and, therefore, he could not draw or publish). Specifically, those in which we find associations of several characters, two or three, are important, as is the case, for example, with the *MM Claud(iorum) Senecionum*. These associations and the links with other headings, especially in the delta position on the same amphora typology, provide chronologies and data to understand the functioning of the Roman control of olive oil in a province. In turn, the links that are found in this area must provide the necessary information to be able to recreate a commercial ecosystem that was born in Baetica but that extends its power to the city of Rome. We think that this work is a further step towards the development of a prosopography of Baetic olive oil traders, which should be added to the rest of the publications mentioned here.

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