

GÉZA ALFÖLDY, *Provincia Hispania superior*. Schriften der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Band 19. Verlag C. Winter, Heidelberg 2000. 79 Seiten, 2 Abbildungen.

The discovery, during excavations at Lavinium in 1995/6, of an inscription, erected in honour of one C. Servilius Diodorus by his wife, is the starting point of this substantial essay by one of the foremost epigraphers of present times, dedicated to another, Werner Eck, on his sixtieth birthday. For the purposes of this work, Alföldy has the further advantage of being a master of the epigraphy and history of Roman Spain, for the inscription in question is most remarkable for what it reveals about the Roman provinces of the Iberian peninsula in the third century AD. It is dated to 7 September 227, and the second and third lines begin a list of several offices which Diodorus had held with the words *proc(uratori) CC provinciarum Hispaniar(um) / citerioris et superioris*. From this beginning, the author develops an argument that Servilius Diodorus had been, by the date of the inscription, the financial procurator of *Hispania citerior* and then the praesidial procurator of the hitherto unknown province of *Hispania superior*; that the new province was the result of the division of *Hispania citerior* by Caracalla; and that *Hispania superior* is in fact an alternative name for the province of Callaecia, which appears from a later inscription (CIL VI 41229) to have been combined again into a single province shortly before 238. On the author's account, *Hispania superior* (or Callaecia) was made up of the two *conventus* based on *Lucus Augusti* (Lugo) and *Bracara Augusta* (Braga), with its capital probably at the former, while the remainder of the old *Hispania citerior* was reformed into the provincia *Hispania nova Antoniniana* (known from two inscriptions, referring to its first governor, C. Iulius Cerealis, from León: CIL II 2661 and 5680), with its headquarters still at Tarragona.

Much of this is not new. The author argued for a division of *Hispania citerior* of this type in his review article on A. TRANOY, *La Galice romaine* (1981), which appeared in *Germania* 61, 1983, 511–528, at pp. 522–26. His proposal there had, and has, much to commend it, based on the explicit mention of the division of *Hispania citerior* in the Cerealis inscriptions. What is new in the inscription from Lavinium is the name of the province, *Hispania superior*. The author acknowledges the difficulty that one rather small and insignificant province should be burdened with two names, and suggests that each is perhaps an abbreviated form of a full title, such as *Hispania superior Callaecia*, on the model of *Hispania ulterior Baetica* and *Hispania citerior Tarraconensis* (pp. 32–4). This is of course possible, though there is no evidence for it; and this explanation does not account for the real oddity of the name *Hispania superior*, which is what this province is superior to. The author does discuss this question, pointing to the use of *superior* as part of the names of other provinces (pp. 29–30), coming to the conclusion that here it means 'higher' or 'more mountainous' than other parts. This does not, however, deal with the difficulty (also acknowledged by the author) that in all other cases where *superior* is part of the name of a province, its significance is made clear

by the existence of another province, which bears the same name, with *inferior* substituted for superior. In this case, there is no sign of the existence of a *Hispania inferior*. This must make us wonder whether the author is on the right track in identifying *Hispania superior* with the praesidial province, created by Caracalla's division of *Hispania citerior*. Two other explanations suggest themselves: either that the name is given wrongly in the Lavinium inscription, where *superior* has been written for, say, *ulterior* (though, as the author observes [p. 28], the latest example we have of this name being used for the province known as *Baetica* is from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century); or that *Hispania superior* is not the name of a normal praesidial province but of an area of such a province, assigned to a procurator, as in the case of two *provinciae* from the reign of Trajan (CIL V 875 and XII 1855). The author considers this last, but rejects it on the grounds that it would be anomalous for such a 'province' to be paralleled with *Hispania citerior*, as is the case in the Lavinium inscription (pp. 14–15, n. 12). To which one might answer that such an oddity might be more obvious to the author than to Servilius Diodorus' wife, Egnatia Salviana, who put up the statue in his absence. At least such an hypothesis would explain the absence of a *Hispania inferior*, which would have been, like *Hispania superior*, a transient entity.

Whatever uncertainties there might be about the connection between the Lavinium inscription and the reorganisation of the Spanish provinces, there can be no doubt that the author has amply demonstrated in this extended essay both the high scholarship and the historical imagination that has marked him out for so long. To have his considered account of the administrative structure of *Hispania citerior* in the third century, and its various fragmentations and amalgamations, irrespective of the relevance of Servilius Diodorus, is a gain indeed.