

The Album of Herculaneum and a model of the town's demography

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Preliminaries

There survive from the ruins of Herculaneum parts of an inscription in marble carrying a long list of individuals with Roman or Romanized names. The various fragments (*CIL* X 1403a-l + *AE* 1978,119a-d; *AE* 1992, 286a-d) were unearthed in a central part of the town where the *decumanus* meets *cardo* III.¹ The inscription was originally attached to the wall of a large public building which has been identified as the Basilica Noniana,² named after M. Nonius Balbus, the town's most famous representative, a Roman senator of praetorian rank, benefactor and patron.

Until very recently, it was thought that the inscription carried a list of members of the college of *Augustales* (whose presence in the town is epigraphically attested), on the grounds that many of those whose names survive were freedmen, and that most *Augustales* in Italian cities were of this status.³ This interpretation is no longer accepted. There are too many names. *Augustales*, as they appear in inscriptions from other Italian towns, were a relatively small, select group. On our inscription some 500 names survive complete or in part, and it is thought that there may have been double that number, or even more; add that all those listed are males, adults, it is assumed, and that the total population of the town is reckoned to have been around 4000-5000.⁴

If not *Augustales*, who were they? Pesando suggested tentatively and in passing that this might have been the citizen-roll of Herculaneum. Camodeca envisages a list of *municipes* and *incolae*, that is, resident aliens. Wallace-Hadrill offers this cautious judgement: 'So what did the list represent? It is still too early to be sure, but it looks like everyone entitled to a vote locally.' He goes on to refer to 'this list people, born or officially resident in Herculaneum, who were full Roman citizens'. So *incolae* were included — those of them who were Roman citizens. It is not unlikely that *incolae* had voting powers, though in some parts of the Roman world, at least, these were somewhat restricted: at Malaga, for example, only one *curia* of *incolae*, chosen by lot, was entitled to vote. Wallace-Hadrill's

1 Most of the fragments were discovered by the Bourbons in 1739 and were edited by Th. Mommsen in 1883. Some smaller fragments turned up in the 1960-61 excavations and were edited by G. Guadagno in 1977. G. Camodeca issued a new edition of the fragments in 2008. In addition, several fragments with names inked in were discovered in the same area in 1960-61. See Pagano 1992; Wallace-Hadrill 2011b, 135; and below, text to n.8.

2 Accepted by Camodeca and Wallace-Hadrill, though the former (2008, 94 n.19) acknowledges the divergent view of A. Allroggen-Bedel as expressed most recently (2008). See now the definitive discussion of Wallace-Hadrill 2011b.

3 On *Augustales*, see Duthoy 1978; most recently, Mouritsen 2011, 249-60.

4 See Camodeca 2008, 88; Wallace-Hadrill 2011a, 138. The arguments of Najbjerg (2002, 161), restating the case for the *Augustales*, are unconvincing. No one has offered an estimate in excess of 4000-5000 for the population living in the urban area itself. Perhaps a somewhat larger number inhabited the territory. As far as we know, there has been no treatment of the demography of the countryside since Beloch 1890. In this paper we focus overwhelmingly on Herculaneum the town, because we hold that most of the persons whose names have survived were based there. We admit, however, that some country residents are likely to have been included, though how they might be identified as such is unclear. See p. 73 below. [At n.16]