

# TRADERS FROM THE EAST ON INSCRIPTIONS OF CARNUNTUM

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In Carnuntum we have a significant high percentage of persons coming from regions in Syria, Kilikia and Makedonia. Most of them were soldiers in the *legio XV Apollinaris*, which stayed from around 40 till 63 A.D., fought between 66 and 71 in the Jewish War and afterwards returned to Carnuntum<sup>1</sup>. But there were also civil persons coming from the East, one of them a *negotiator* from Kition in Cyprus and rich men from Judea and Syria. The question is which route they took on their way to Carnuntum, the so called Amber road coming from Aquileia to the North or might these merchants from the East have come by ship on the Danube?

The first civil persons mentioned on gravestones of Carnuntum in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A. D. definitely come from Italy. We know of two *lixae* (merchants or maybe slave traders<sup>2</sup>), some traders from Verona and Padua and freedmen, especially women from Etruria<sup>3</sup>. All of them were connected somehow with trade and with the military need of goods. There gravestones – all from the same style – also had been made by the army. These civil persons all for certain took the Amber Road on their way to the North.

The earliest mentioned man from the East was P. Domatius a merchant from Kition in Cyprus, whose gravestone (fig. 1) was found in Unterpetersdorf, a village 15 km south of Scarbantia (modern Sopron) next to the Amber Road. The style of the gravestone with its rounded upper ending<sup>4</sup> and the name of Publius Domatius, who does not have a *cognomen*, give us the hint to a date in Neronic times or at least in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

The gravestone has close stylistic parallels with two others found in the territory of Scarbantia especially because of the rare image of a peacock combined with a hunting scene. One tombstone belonging to a *libertus* and *negotiator* named T. Canius Cinnamus was found in Hegykö<sup>5</sup> and the other one without inscriptions in Arrabona, modern Győr<sup>6</sup>. The Roman army built there an auxiliary fortress around 25/30 A.D. and a road connecting Arrabona with Scarbantia. This connec-

<sup>1</sup> M. Mosser, *Die Steindenkmäler der legio XV Apollinaris* (Wiener Archäologische Studien 5), Wien 2003, 14.

<sup>2</sup> H. Graßl, in: E. Olshausen – V. Sauer (Edd.), *Mobilität und Kulturen der antiken Mittelmeerwelt*. Stuttgarter Kolloquium zur Historischen Geographie des Altertums 11, 2011, 262.

<sup>3</sup> I. Weber-Hiden, *Freigelassene in Carnuntum*, in: R. Breitwieser – M. Frass – G. Nightingale, *Calamus. Festschrift für Herbert Graßl zum 65. Geburtstag* (Philippika. Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen 57), Wiesbaden 2013, 549–562.

<sup>4</sup> J. Beszedés – M. Mosser, *Carnuntum* Jb 2002, 23 fig. 6, 33; at last I. Weber-Hiden, *Die Grabstelen von Carnuntum. Versuche zur Datierung des Inschriftenmaterials*, in: I. KONČANI UHAČ (Hrsg.), *Sammelwerk XII. Internationales Kolloquium über römische provinzielle Kunst Pula*, 23.–28. Mai, 2011, Pula 2014, 70–73.

<sup>5</sup> CIL III 4250.

<sup>6</sup> Ubieratlupa 3057.

tion was the reason for the spread of local produced tombstones evidently made in Scarbantia up to Arrabona shortly after the completion of the road. We don't have any reason to propose shipping traffic for transport.

At this early stage we may presume that a merchant coming from Cyprus will have started his way to the north ad Aquileia and then followed the Amber Road.

Not far from Unterpetersdorf and from quite the same age four gravestones were found in Walbersdorf<sup>7</sup>. The oldest one belonged to C. Petronius (fig. 2), an *equesalae Gemelliana*, who was stationed in Pannonia between 45 and 60 A.D. His hometown was Mopsuestia in Kilikia, but after his military service he settled next to Scarbantia. His family evidently imported grave-stones from the south, maybe from Aquileia.

Definitely it can be said, that the main route to Carnuntum at least for the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. was the Amber Road for civil as well as military purpose. But does it also matter for the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century?

Soldiers from Syria and Iudea can be attested in Carnuntum at least since Flavian times, but also merchants from the East, which may have followed the 15<sup>th</sup> legion, which returned from the Jewish War 71 A.D.

I suppose one of them was M. Mulvius<sup>8</sup> (fig. 3) a *negotians domo Iudaeus* who came from Iudea as merchant obviously with his family. At least six males are mentioned on the inscription, females and freedmen probably may have followed on the lower but missing part of the plate belonging to a rather big grave monument.

The other civil persons in Carnuntum coming from Iudea were P. Aemilius Verecundus<sup>9</sup> (fig. 4) his sun and probably his freedman, who ordered the tombstone with a unique relief above the inscription showing a vase in the middle and two date palms. Palm trees are a symbol for Iudea like those shown on coins, but these trees may also be connected with the goods Aemilius was dealing with.

The importance of this plant describes Strabon with the following words<sup>10</sup>: "Bread, wine, vinegar, honey, flour and some wicker-work is made from palmtrees. The seeds are used for feeding cattle and sheep. All other lands do not have these plants". Some scholars mean that the Jews had therefore a monopole on dates<sup>11</sup>.

The exact import ware Aemilius Verecundus was dealing with we do not know but it must have been something connected with date palms, maybe date wine. Two things military troops needed and could not find next to Carnuntum was oil and in the first century A.D. wine as well, especially sweet wine.

Around hundred years later C. Domitius Zmaragdus from Antiochia financed a whole *amphitheatrum*<sup>12</sup>, which shows that merchants coming from there could get very, very rich.

The two families of tradesmen mentioned before quite sure followed the 15<sup>th</sup> legion 71 A.D. returning from the Jewish war, but what route did they take?

<sup>7</sup> That are the tombstones of C. Petronius (AE 1909, 900), of his sun Rufus (Ubieratlupa 422), of the mother of two further C. Petronii (AE 1909, 199) and of Ti. Iulius Rufus a *veteran alae Scubulorum* (AE 1906, 111).

<sup>8</sup> AEAustr 2010, 42 (= E. Weber – I. Weber-Hiden, *Tyche* 26, 2013, 273 nr. 42); F. Beutler – G. Kremer, *Tyche* 28, 2013, 6–7.

<sup>9</sup> F. Beutler – G. Kremer, *Tyche* 28, 2013, 7–13.

<sup>10</sup> Strabon 17.1.14.

<sup>11</sup> For example H. GRASSL, *Die Integration des Alpen-Adria-Raumes in das röm. Wirtschaftssystem*, in: P. Herz – P. Schmid – O. Stoll (Edd.), *Handel, Kultur und Militär. Die Wirtschaft des Alpen-Donau-Adria-Raumes*, Berlin 2011, 53–59.

<sup>12</sup> CIL III 14359<sup>2</sup>; AE 1901, 247.

One possibility would be from Asia Minor crossing Anatolia to Nicomedia and Byzantium, then using *via militaris* to Sirmium and then following the Danube or the other route is from Sirmium further *via militaris* to Siscia, Emona and from Poetovio following the Amber road to the North.

The question is, if we have any evidence for shipping traffic on the Danube for the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. We know that the *limes* with its auxiliary forts between Carnuntum and Aquincum and the *limes* road have not been finished before Trajan, but we have evidence for a fleet in Aquincum already in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. A very simple tombstone<sup>13</sup> dated from M. Nemeth from 50 to 70 A.D., but in the same style as the oldest ones from Claudian times in Carnuntum, belonged to Eburo, a *miles in classe*. He was a peregrine man with a Celtic name serving in the fleet. That gravestone is an indication for presence of a fleet and the military use of the Danube already in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and for civil purpose at least downstream<sup>14</sup>, but did the 15<sup>th</sup> legion go by ship as well?

One way to get answers to this question is to look, if we can find members of the 15<sup>th</sup> legion, who came from cities between Syria and Carnuntum, had been recruited there and give us indication for the way the legion took (fig. 5).



Fig. 5 Map with places of recruitment of soldiers *legionis XV* (based on a map made by Michaela Kronberger, in: M. Mosser, *Die Steindenkmäler der legio XV Apollinaris*, Wien 2003, Abb. 5).

In the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century we have not only tombstones of soldiers from different regions and towns like Antiochia, Beryto, Cyrrho in Syria found in Carnuntum, but also from Apri in Thracia<sup>15</sup>, Sirmium<sup>16</sup>, Emona<sup>17</sup> and Savaria<sup>18</sup>. To those we may add a veteran of the 15<sup>th</sup>

<sup>13</sup> M. Nemeth, *Tituli Aquincenses II*, Budapest 2010, Nr. 609; *Ubiertatupa* Nr. 2870.

<sup>14</sup> Import of *Terra Sigillata* and *cives Agrippinenses Transalpinii* in Aquincum give clear evidence for trading contacts between Rhine and Danube.

<sup>15</sup> AE 1929, 211.

<sup>16</sup> CIL III 4991.

<sup>17</sup> AE 1934, 268.

<sup>18</sup> CIL III 14358<sup>19</sup>.

legion mentioned on a gravestone found in Topusko *domo Siscia*, the place of his recruitment<sup>19</sup> who went back home after his time in Carnuntum, as well as a *mileslegio XV* in Scarbantia<sup>20</sup>.

All these places are located either on *via militaris* or on the Amber road but none of them next to the Danube. It is quite obvious that the legion followed the main roads and did not use shipping traffic. The first mentioned *domo Iudaeus* was a member of the *gens* Mulvia, who also is represented on places between Iudea and Carnuntum. Most of the inscriptions apart from Rome were found in Upper Italy, especially in Aquileia, but also in Edessa, in Macedonia<sup>21</sup> and in Siscia<sup>22</sup>. These two are definite later than the examples of the soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup> legion, but the ancestors of the mentioned Mulvii may have come together with M. Mulvius and his family and they also can't be attested on the Danube.

In Carnuntum we have not only persons from Iudea coming from the East but also a man from Dacia named Peregrinus<sup>23</sup>. He did not belong to the rich merchant society we have spoken earlier, no he was a simple slave, but obviously a very good boot maker (*sutor caligarius*) otherwise he would not have got a grave inscription. How he came to Carnuntum we don't know, we just are able to date the tombstone in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

The result of the investigation related to shipping traffic on the Danube is that we have no evidence for long distance trading in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. at least upper stream and mainly if not exclusive military use between the new built forts.

## TRADERS FROM THE EAST ON INSCRIPTIONS OF CARNUNTUM (Abstract)

In Carnuntum we have a significant high percentage of persons coming from regions in Syria, Kilikia and Makedonia. Most of them were soldiers in the *legio XV Apollinaris*, which stayed from around 40 till 63 A.D., fought between 66 and 71 in the Jewish War and afterwards returned to Carnuntum

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<sup>19</sup> IL Jug 3117. To the recruitment of the *legio XV* see also S. Ferjančić, *Zbornik Matice Srpskeza klasične studije* 13, 2011, 133–146.

<sup>20</sup> RIU I n. 192.

<sup>21</sup> CIL III 7316.

<sup>22</sup> CIL III 3973.

<sup>23</sup> AE 1929, 217.

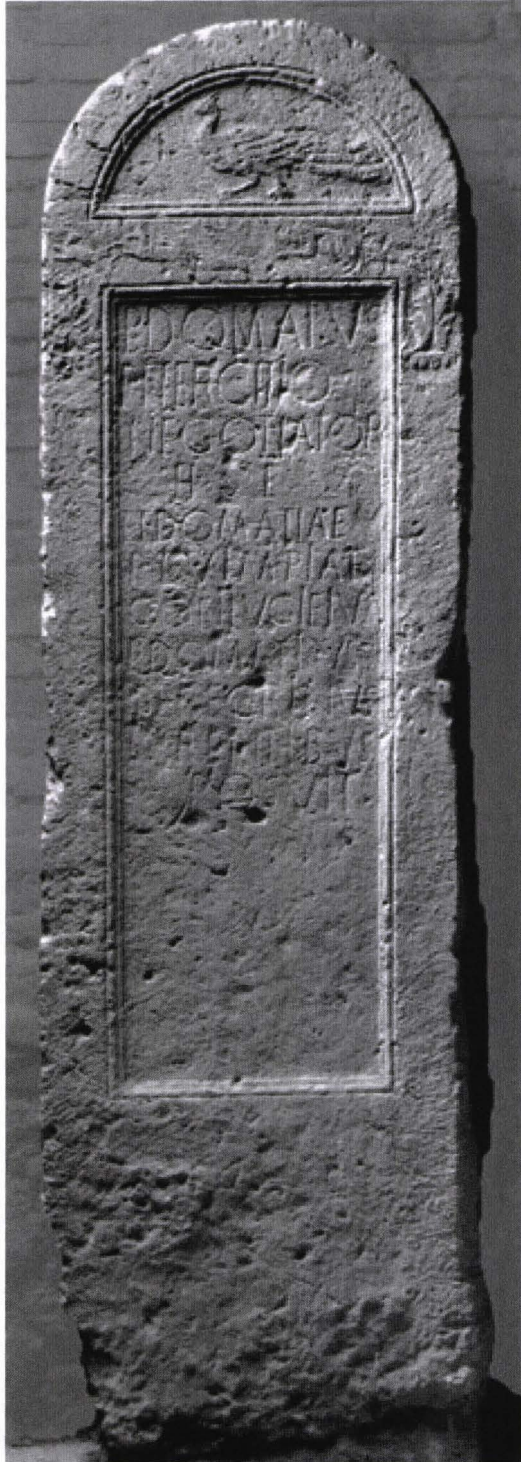


Fig. 1 Stela from Unterpetersdorf (photo O. Harl, *Ubiertalupa* 455)



Fig. 2 Stela from Walbersdorf (photo O. Harl, *Ubiertatupa* 427)



Fig. 3 Tombstone of M. Mulvius (photo N. Gail).



Fig. 4 Stela of P. AemiliusVerecundus (photo N. Gail).