

## THE EXTRAORDINARY FUNERARY STELE OF THE *VERNA* OF AN *EQUES ROMANUS* FROM TROESMIS



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**Abstract:** A funerary stele discovered accidentally at Troesmis more than five decades ago and dated to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, is analysed in terms of its provenance, material, shape and decoration. It proves to be an extraordinary find because it was not reused as building material (as is the case with most inscriptions from Troesmis), but was most probably found *in situ*. Furthermore, it is a rare example of the representation in funerary context of a set of bath utensils composed of *strigiles* and *ampulla*, as attested by the Latin authors and known from mosaics in the Roman baths in different areas of the Empire, as well as from archaeological finds mainly within funeral inventories. The documentation of the art of making of the stele and of its decoration, as well as the analysis on the provenance of the used stone material, made assumptions possible on its intended message for the monument and on its display and possible finding spot.

**Rezumat:** O stelă funerară descoperită întâmplător la Troesmis, acum mai bine de cinci decenii, și datată în prima jumătate a sec. al II-lea d.Hr. este analizată din punct de vedere al provenienței, materialului din care este realizată, al formei și decorului. Aceasta se dovedește a fi un exemplar deosebit, deoarece nu a fost reutilizată ca material de construcție (cum este cazul majorității inscripțiilor de la Troesmis), ci, cel mai probabil, a fost găsită *in situ*. În plus, este un exemplu rar de reprezentare în context funerar a unui set de ustensile de baie compus din *strigiles* și *ampulla*, așa cum sunt acestea atestate de autorii latini și cum se cunoaște din mozaicurile din băile romane din diferite zone ale Imperiului, precum și din descoperirile arheologice, în special din inventare funerare. Documentarea urmelor de unelte și detaliilor de realizare a stelei, precum și analiza decorului și a provenienței materialului litic al monumentului au permis formularea unor ipoteze privind mesajul intenționat pentru stelă, expunerea acesteia și posibilul loc de descoperire.

**Keywords:** *verna*, Troesmis, Moesia Inferior, *strigiles*, *ampulla olearia*, funerary stele, sculpture.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *verna*, Troesmis, Moesia inferior, *strigiles*, *ampulla olearia*, stela funerară, sculptură.

The ancient Romans used to pay a lot of attention to their image and put great effort in their funerary monuments as a means of (self-)presentation, in terms of both portrait/meaningful attributes and wealth. In Moesia Inferior the preferred ways of expression were, as far the state of research and the available sources are concerned, inscriptions and monumental funerary monuments, particularly the tall stelai. Furthermore, across the province, there are significant differences between the ancient centers of the Black Sea shores and those along the Danube and in the settlements inside the province.<sup>1</sup> While in other Roman provinces the iconography of the funerary monuments gives additional information about the population and their habits of representation, in the area of the Moesia Inferior, the portraits and generally customised depictions seem to have been rather uncommon, especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Therefore, one recently published stele of a *verna* of an *eques Romanus*, military tribune in the *leg. V Macedonica* from Troesmis (Turcoaia commune, Tulcea County) caught our attention and was the

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<sup>1</sup> Alexandrescu Vianu 1970; Conrad 2004; Scholz 2012; Alexandrescu 2021.

rationale behind the present paper.<sup>2</sup> As the material, shape and the depiction of the stele have not been subject to discussions up to now, the following will offer additional data, with the aim of fully highlighting the importance of this extraordinary find.

## 1. THE STELE

The tall pediment stele is made of a cream-coloured and relatively soft Lower Cretaceous bioclastic limestone, possibly from southern Dobruja.<sup>3</sup> It has numerous fine pores and moulds after shells and tiny gastropods.

The stele is complete, although composed of two joined fragments. During the excavation and/or transport, the fragment with inscription (a) was damaged over its main side, in the middle of line 2 of the inscription and on the bottom (Fig. 1a).

At the time of our examination (2021), the two fragments have the following measurements:

Fragment (a), with the inscription (Figs. 1-3) – preserved maximum height of 124 cm – 117 cm, width 52 cm, with a 48 cm wide shaft, depth of the block 30 (top) – 24 cm.

Fragment (b), with the bath utensils set (Fig. 4) – preserved maximum height of 122 cm, width 52 cm (bottom) – 48 (top of the fragment), depth of the block 32.5/33 cm (bottom) – 25 cm (at the level of the depiction).

Alexandru Avram documented the monument in the 1990s, when the two pieces were still connected and made the only available early illustrations of it (Fig. 5a-b).<sup>4</sup> Soon after, during the reorganisation and building activities of the museum in Tulcea, the two fragments were separated and, for a long time, considered to be fragments of two different monuments from two different ancient sites. During the last two decades, they have been – as it is the case at the moment – on display, at the entrance of the museum [fragment (b), Fig. 4], and in its storage [fragment (a), Fig. 1].<sup>5</sup>

The initially over 200 cm high stele has a quite narrow width of the shaft, which makes it a unique case among the Roman funerary monuments with this height/width ratio in the province.

The stele has a triangular pediment, decorated with an inscribed flower with 12 petals (Fig. 3) and richly decorated free-standing acroteria at the corners, featuring half-palmettes motifs, carefully carved on the sides of the monument as well (Fig. 1b and 2a). The central acroterion is featuring a split flame palmette, depicted with the leaves oriented towards the

<sup>2</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 176, fig. 12.8.

<sup>3</sup> The provenance analysis of the stone was made by dr. A. Baltres. The microscopic analysis enabled a detailed description: "The rock consists of a fine peloidal background containing various bioclasts, as comminuted thin-shelled bivalves, and thicker, micrite-coated shell fragments, high-spined microgastropods, sea urchin plates and spines, rare forams with thick micrite tests, and a *Trocholina*-type foraminifer. The algal products are represented by micrite nodules with bundles of relic filaments, resembling *Codiacean* algae, and a *Dasycladacean* alga attributable to *Clypeina* genre. The pores in the rock resulted by leaching out the comminuted bioclasts from the dense peloidal mass. The presence of the mentioned alga suggests that the limestone is Lower Cretaceous. Rocks of this type are possibly of South Dobrujan provenance." [Analysis report from 11.09.2021].

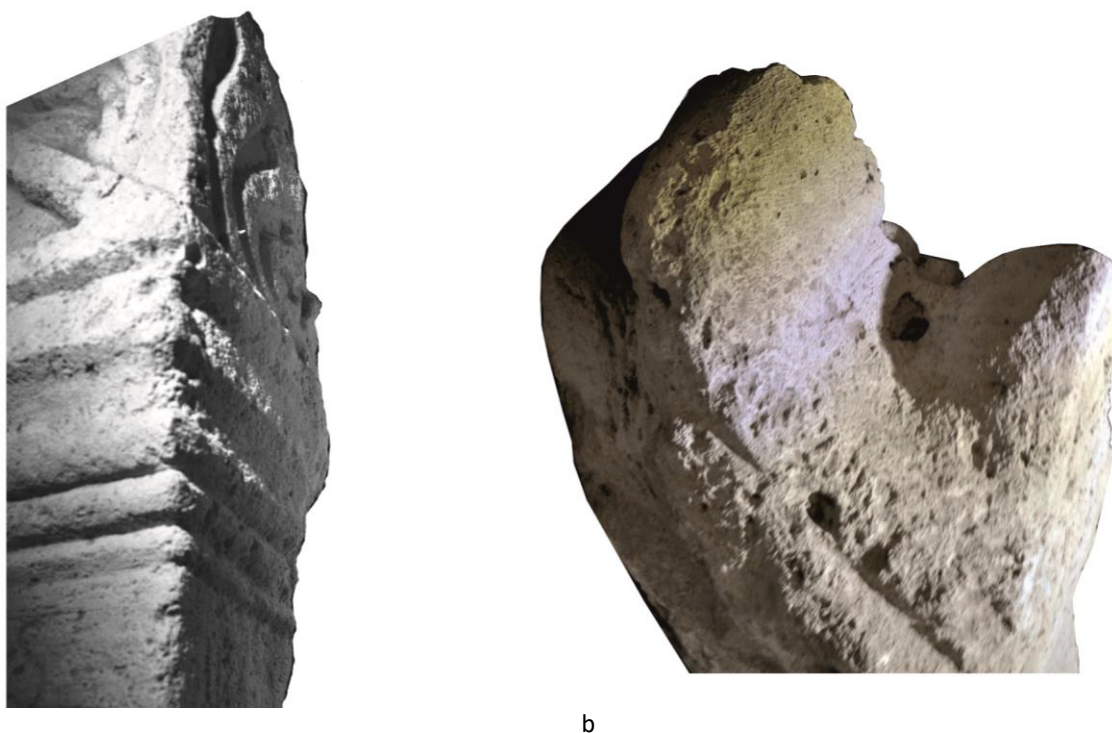
<sup>4</sup> E-mail of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

<sup>5</sup> They were assigned the ICEM inventory numbers 51590 (a) and 51590(b), where (a) is the upper fragment with inscription, and (b) the one with the bath utensils depiction. – The present display provides different conditions for the documentation of the fragments and we therefore had to use photogrammetry in order to properly illustrate fragment (a).

middle. The space between the acroteria is filled with tendrils started from the palmettes in the corner acroteria. The architectural details below the entablature are rendered similarly to those of an altar, with moulding, without any further details of an aedicula. The block has a protruding upper section with an alternating moulding. At the bottom, it terminates in a high, slightly protruding pedestal with a similar but inverted molding, carved only on the front side of the stele. The rectangular shaft of the block is set slightly back from the entablature and base. The plinth features no details about the way the stele was fixed into the ground. It is however noticeable that the sides of the lower half (Fig. 4a and 4c) and especially the right side of the stele are almost unworked, the same as its rear side (Fig. 2b). Under the inscription, there is a high-relief depiction of a set of bath utensils, two strigiles and one oil flask, all hanging on an almost round ring (Fig. 6).



Fig. 1. Stele from Troesmis: a. Fragment (a); b. Fragment (a), left side (© the author).



a b  
Fig. 2. Stele from Troesmis. Fragment (a): a. detail of the right side; b. detail of the upper rear side (© the author).



Fig. 3. Stele from Troesmis. Fragment (a), detail of the upper front side (© the author).





Fig. 4. Stele from Troesmis. a. Fragment (b), detail of the right side (© C. Bodea, ICEM); b. Fragment (b) (© the author); c. Fragment (b), detail of the left side (© C. Bodea, ICEM).

## 2. THE INSCRIPTION

The epitaph (Fig. 5b-c) is carved just below the moulding, on seven lines covering the entire width of the shaft, without any frame or delimitation of the inscription, and reads as follows:

DIS MANIBVS  
 EVTYCO QVI ET OPELL  
                                 VS  
 TERENTIVS IVNIOR  
 5 TRIB MIL LEG V MAC  
 VERNAE SVO POSV  
                                 IT

*Dis Manibus / Eutyco qui et Opell/us /Terentius Iunior/ trib(unus) mil(itum) leg(ionis) V Mac(edonicae) / vernae suo posu/it*

The epitaph carving is rather irregular in size, shape, setting and letter design.<sup>6</sup> The letter height varies - line 1: 3.7-4 cm; line 2: 5 cm; lines 3-6: 4.5 cm. In line 1, after DIS, hedera distinguens of 3 cm in height; in line 1, I in DIS is higher than the other letters, about 4.7 cm;

<sup>6</sup> In the same province, we noticed resemblances particularly with the epitaph of L. Plinius, from Reselec (Conrad 2004, cat. no. 514), the epitaph from Oescus (Conrad 2004, cat. no. 460) and one epitaph from Tomis (Conrad 2004, cat. no. 181; ISM VI.2, 176), all dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, carved in marble, and most probably part of funerary monuments, given the small depth of the slabs from Reselec and Tomis and the length of the block from Oescus.



ligature in line 5, MA; in line 2, Y is made of the higher letter I, similar to that in line 1, reaching a height of about 5.7 cm; in line 4, the first I in IVNIOR is higher than the other letters.



Fig. 5. a-b. Stele from Troesmis in the 1990's (© Alexandru Avram); c. Stele from Troesmis. Detail of the inscription (© the author).

L. Mihailescu-Bîrliba discussed, in the first publication of the stele, about the main issues of the onomastics and especially about Terentius Iunior and his family<sup>7</sup>, presenting important data on the dating of the epitaph to the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Our lecture on the name of the deceased is *Eutycus qui et Opellus*, which implies no significant changes in the general analysis of the first publisher of the epitaph. In case of Opellus, it is not clear if it has to be read Opell(i)us or Opelius. We have no analogies for the form Opellus.<sup>8</sup> The cognomen is attested in the area of Troesmis for the *libertus* of a civil physician.<sup>9</sup> The form Eutycus is also attested on Latin inscriptions.<sup>10</sup>

The epigraphy of the stele provides arguments for the early dating in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century or even in its first quarter. For the i-longum there are analogies in Oescus and Restelec, on epitaphs dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD<sup>11</sup>. Together with the non-abbreviated formula *Dis Manibus*, the epigraphy of the stele of Eutycus confirms its dating to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The analogies of the decoration of the stele and the possible dating of the depicted realia, support the early dating of the monument. This can be corroborated with the introduction of the profile framed stelai, decorated with vine and grapes from Moesia Inferior (including from Troesmis)<sup>12</sup>, which does not occur before the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>13</sup> Thus the stele of Eutycus might be one of the earliest inscriptions from Troesmis.

### 3. TECHNICAL REMARKS

The flaws in the structure of the block were considered when the inscription was carved, as it is noticeable in the middle of lines 5 and 6. If the sculpture of the stele and the carving of the inscription were made in two places can not be decided, but it is obvious that there were at least two different persons working on the stele. The material analysis proved the origin of the stone from a southern region of the province.<sup>14</sup> Up to now, there are no other monuments reported to be made of this stone either in Troesmis or in the northern part of the province.<sup>15</sup>

The guidelines for the inscription are very visible in the first line (Fig. 5b-c and 7) and in lines 3 and 5. The guidelines seen on the lower part of fragment (b), on the base of the stele (Fig. 8), are not that easy to understand. They can be rests of the laying-out for the making of the stele as it is or from another attempt to use the block, before the present monument. The

<sup>7</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015, 123.

<sup>8</sup> OPEL II, 134 is not relevant, for the mentioned inscription (AE 1911, 39), it has a different reading: IDR III.3, 315.

<sup>9</sup> ISM V 193 (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.).

<sup>10</sup> OPEL II, 130. ISM V 45 (Euticus, in Capidava); ISM V 244 (Euty[--, from Cataloi). – For further examples on this quite common name, especially for slaves, see ISM V 104; Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015, 123.

<sup>11</sup> ILBulg 47 (Conrad 2004, cat. no. 460) and ILBulg 178 (Conrad 2004, cat. no. 514).

<sup>12</sup> Alexandrescu-Vianu 2007, 56.

<sup>13</sup> For examples of the non-abbreviated formula *DIS MANIBUS*: Troesmis: ISM V 193; Tropaeum Traiani: ISM IV 64 (unknown shape and decoration); Axiopolis: ISM IV 226 (unknown shape and decoration); Capidava: ISM V 26, 27, 29, 30, 31 are stelai with profiled field of inscription and without or rather simple decoration of the frame (see also Conrad 2004, cat. no. 245, 247, 246, 248, 243); Čerkvica: Conrad 2004, cat. no. 319 (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD); Oescus: Conrad 2004, cat. no. 435 (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., simple frame) and 447 (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, with vine ornaments); Sacidava: ISM IV 193 etc.

<sup>14</sup> See note 3 above.

<sup>15</sup> In Troesmis similar rocks have been noticed (analyses made by A. Baltres in 2012) in the case of two fallen ashlar, from the northern wall of the Western fortification, while chips from sarmatian rocks from southern Dobruja have been found in some binding material samples from the same spot (Alexandrescu 2016, 59, fig. 15). The fortification is very little investigated and it could be possible to find further blocks during future excavations.



three lines on the plinth (marked with red on Fig. 8) seem to have been made in a first step of the making of the stele, right after the roughing-out of the surface of the block with the tooth chisel; the sculptor set the top, shaft and basis of the stele.<sup>16</sup> The vertical line should correspond to the top of the central acroterion, for it marks the exact middle of the block. However, without being able at this point to document the fragments properly, it is difficult to make other statements apart from general comments on the matter.

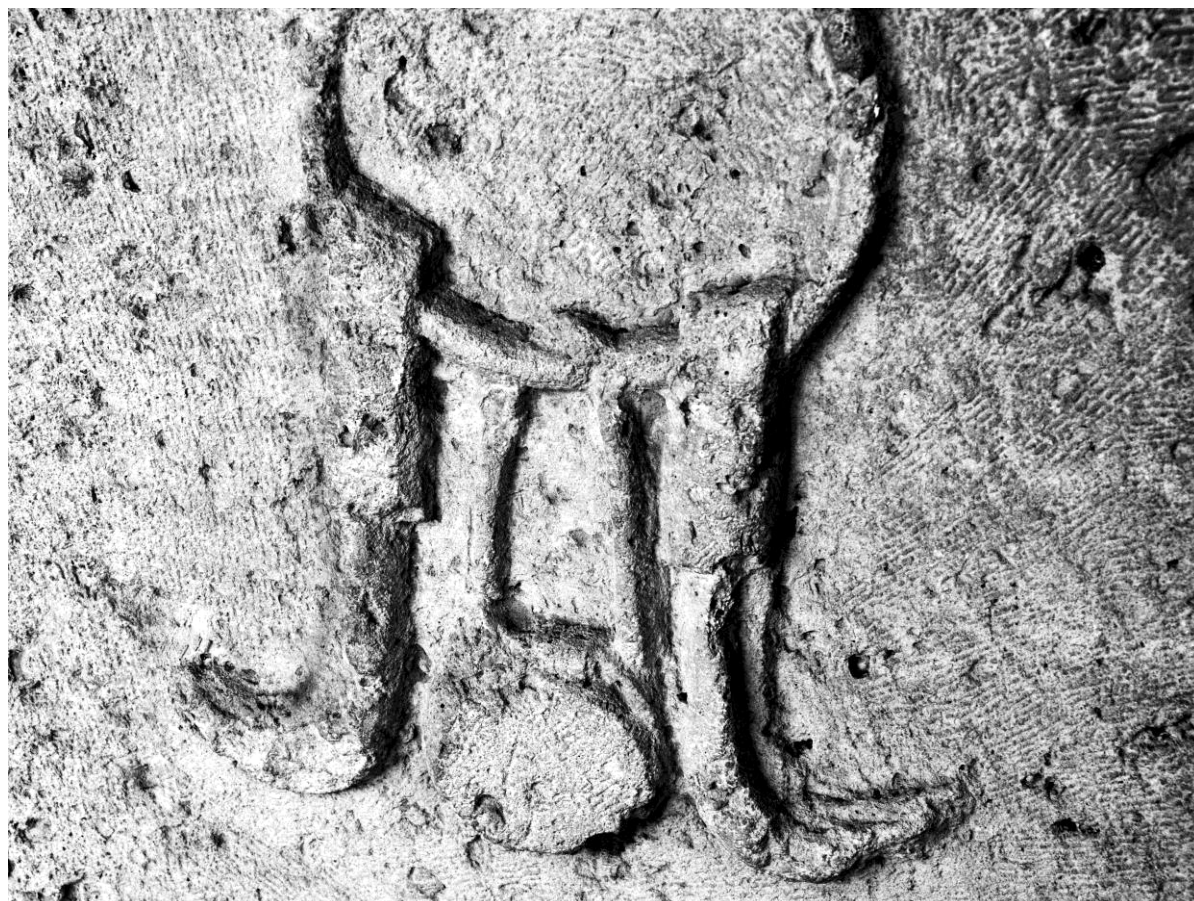


Fig. 6. Stele from Troesmis. Detail of the *instrumentum balnei* (© the author).

On the shaft, below the oil flask, there is a vertical guideline (marked with black on Fig. 8), which would represent the second stage of working on the decoration of the stele.

The front of the stele (Fig. 6) and the sides, down to the middle of the stele, bear visible traces of working tools. While on the sides, on the basis and on the shaft there are traces of tooth chisel, the rear side and the lower sides have traces of a quick rough shaping, done most probably with the point chisel and the sculptor's pick (Fig. 1b, 2b, 4a and 4c). As for the mouldings, there are visible the fine shaping and smoothing with the flat and tooth chisel and eventually with the scraper (Fig. 7).

The plausible reason for leaving some parts unworked (the sides of the lower half of the stele and the rear side) while other parts of the monument are executed and finished with great care and skill can be the intended display of the stele within or in front of a wall and/or next to other blocks. A possible variant would be in a funerary building like a tumulus with

<sup>16</sup> In the case of one stele from Marcianopolis, S. Conrad observed the guidelines for structuring the fields of the stele: Conrad 2004, cat. no. 314 and pl. 140.



high stone tambour, such as that of the slave Florus in the Carnuntum military necropolis (Fig. 15).<sup>17</sup> Thus, the execution of the lower part of the tall stele of Eutycus can also be explained, as it would have been walled into the foundation of the construction. This hypothesis would also be an example for Troesmis in terms of using an Italic tradition in the form of the most representative shape of the round funerary building, well-attested in Rome and Italy and, from there, across the provinces.<sup>18</sup> However given the state of the archaeological research at Troesmis this proposal can not be verified thoroughly.<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 7. Stele from Troesmis. Detail of the tool traces on the front side (© the author).

#### 4. THE ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION

The architectural decoration of the pediment, i.e. the elaborate corner and central acroteria, is quite singular among the stelai in the region. The central acrotere is decorated with a split flame palmette composed of three and a half-leaf half palmettes, with broad-leaves. In the corner acroteria, the half flame palmettes are similar, composed of two and a half leaves. There, on the front and on the sides, the leaves spring, together with a spiral tendril<sup>20</sup>, from the corner, without any cauliculae.

<sup>17</sup> Sandstone; dimensions: height 215 cm, width 77 cm, depth 22.5 cm; epitaph in Latin and Greek; dated to the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; Kremer 2021, 54-55 (with literature). – Archaeological context: Betz, Kenner 1937, Sp. 28-29, fig. 10, Sp. 66-68, no. 24/316, fig. 8 and 33. – The Eastern origin of the 26 years young man is indicated only by the Greek funerary poem, added to the Latin epitaph.

<sup>18</sup> Kremer 2015; Kremer 2021 (with literature).

<sup>19</sup> The geophysical prospections carried out to present within the necropolis areas highlighted its complexity, attesting the existence of funerary plots, barrows and even tumuli: see Fig. 17 and Kainrath, Grabherr 2016, 179-188, 192-195.

<sup>20</sup> The identification of the vegetal motifs on Roman sculpture in the provinces is still a very little addressed topic. The tendril that emerges from the corner palmettes is, according to the identifications of G. Caneva, the depiction of the leaves of *Phyllitis scolopendrium* (L.) Newman, and would have superstitious and therefore protective significance: Caneva 2010, 62 with fig. 24.



Fig. 8. Stele from Troesmis. Guidelines for the layout of the decoration on fragment (b) (© the author).

The next analogies and possibly followed traditions are to be found in the Hellenistic architecture of Macedonian tombs<sup>21</sup>, and, in the same tradition, in the early Roman times, in the southern area of the province, namely in Plovdiv. Dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the stelai in Plovdiv are different from those in Troesmis, but feature similar architectural decoration, even though only in two-dimensional terms.<sup>22</sup> The flame palmettes on the limestone stele of C. Iulius Gratus (Fig. 9a)<sup>23</sup> are very much similar to those in Troesmis. In this case, it may be noticed that the palmettes are free-standing from any other leaves on their lower part or combined vegetal motifs, and there are only three leaves in the half-palmettes and six leaves respectively in the central acroterion. The younger example in Plovdiv, carved in marble, is considered by A. Slawisch as being 'drawn with a stencil' and therefore executed in a very non-plastic representation.<sup>24</sup> The author considers the two stelai as products of a longlasting local workshop.

The Attic flame palmette may be also seen on several stelai from Histria and Kallatis dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC<sup>25</sup>, as well as on further elements of architectural decoration from the two Greek cities. Another analogy is the acroterion on a fragment of a marble sarcophagus lid from Histria.<sup>26</sup>

The wide spread of the motif of the flame palmette and its use in sculpted and painted architectural decoration since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC makes it difficult to infer the tradition followed by the artists working in Troesmis, especially when looking at the examples of using the motif (more or less plastically rendered) on stelai from Italy<sup>27</sup> or in the Danubian provinces. However, for the stele of Eutycus, it is obvious that the artist was familiar with using and adapting stencils for sarcophagi lids, where the plinth of the corner acroterai had an elongated lower end.<sup>28</sup> The provenance of the model from the sarcophagi in Asia Minor is also observable in the execution of the ornaments in the corner acroterai, on the sides of the stele (Fig. 1b and 2a)<sup>29</sup>: The side ornament is more simple, pointing out to the main side of the monument.<sup>30</sup> While on the two stelai from Plovdiv the artist seems to have lost the sense of what the motifs originally meant, on the stele from Troesmis, the separation between the three acroteria and their decoration seems to be quite familiar to the sculptor. He was probably working also in or with the workshop(s) that produced the local versions of the sarcophagi after models from Bithynia, like those from Tomis.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>21</sup> It remembers the similar features on the facade of Macedonian tombs like, for example, the so-called "Tomb of the Palmettes", in Mieza (Lefkadia), dated to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC: Rhomiopoulou 2011, with fig. 100. – See also the finial Descamps-Lequime (ed.) 2011, cat. no. 267 (end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC).

<sup>22</sup> Parallels are to be found also among the so-called 'Türgrabsteine' in Phrygia, for example Waelkens 1986, cat.no. 37, pl. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Slawisch 2007, cat. no. Ph 18 (dated to the third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

<sup>24</sup> Slawisch 2007, cat. no. Ph 17 (dated to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).

<sup>25</sup> Bîrzescu, Posamentir 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandrescu-Vianu 2000, cat. no. 228, pl. 90b.

<sup>27</sup> For example the small stele of the only three years old Nerantus, from Este: Pflug 1989, cat. no. 227, pl. 33/1 (dated to the second quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD).

<sup>28</sup> Further examples on stelai from Moesia Inferior: Conrad 2004, cat. no. 439 and 449 (from Oescus); 31, 34, 42, 43, 50, 58, 61 (all from Odessos); 374 (from Novae); 135 and 137 (from Tomis).

<sup>29</sup> To be compared, for example, with the sarcophagi lids from Tomis: Covacef 2011, cat. no. 105 and 106.

<sup>30</sup> On the provenance of the particular form of stelai with triangular pediment and framed field from the sides of chest sarcophagi with lid in roof design from Asia Minor, see, for example, Cigaina 2016, 82 (with literature).

<sup>31</sup> Alexandrescu 1970, 273-274. – For a recent detailed analysis on the way the Roman sarcophagus industry worked see Russell 2011 (with literature).



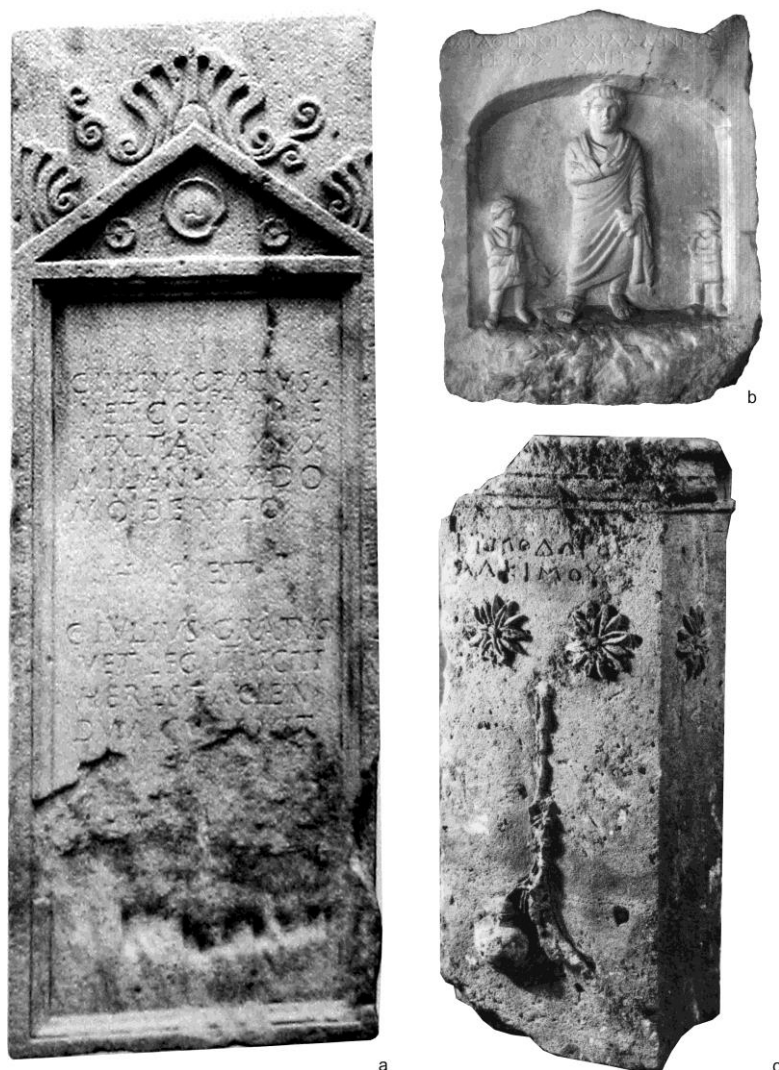


Fig. 9. a. Stele of C. Iulius Gratus, Plovdiv, third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (after Slawisch 2007, pl. 29, Ph18); b. Stele of Agathenor, Varna, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (after Andreeva (ed.) 2018, cat. no. 33); c. Stele of Hermodoros, Sevastopol, late 4<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (after <https://loris.kdl.kcl.ac.uk/iospe2/webroot/images/inscriptions/30.38.jp2/full/full/0/default.jpg>).

Even though the vegetal motifs were very popular as ornaments for the stelai from Moesia Inferior, for the flower in aetoma a good analogy can only be made with the stele for Iulia Olympia in Tropaeum Traiani<sup>32</sup>, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The detailed analysis of the vegetal motifs on Ara Pacis identified among others also a similar flower as the water lily (*Nymphaea* sp.).<sup>33</sup> It is quite frequent on the decoration of Italic Republican funerary buildings.<sup>34</sup> Together with the palm leaves (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) it is interpreted as a symbol for victory and rebirth.<sup>35</sup> Further of interest for the discussion of the stele from Troesmis, also in what concerns the vegetal motifs used for its decoration, is a group of early Hellenistic stelai from Chersonesos<sup>36</sup>, that features similar flowers, with preserved painted details of the petals (Fig. 10).

<sup>32</sup> ISM IV, 57; Conrad 2004, cat. no. 275.

<sup>33</sup> Caneva 2010, 106-107, with fig. 44, 166.

<sup>34</sup> Maschek 2012, 103-104, type 2.2.1.C.

<sup>35</sup> Caneva 2010, 106-107, 150.

<sup>36</sup> Posamentir 2005, 108.



Fig. 10. Stele of Hermodoros, Sevastopol (after Posamentir 2005, pl. 48/5).

## 5. STRIGILES ET AMPULLA

The stele has on its lower half an almost high relief decoration featuring a set of bath utensils (Fig. 6), consisting of two strigiles and one vessel for oil, with an apparently lentoid shape (and an anular base?), hanging on a strip. All these items hang on a large metal ring. The set corresponds to that described by ancient authors as consisting of *strigiles* and *ampulla*.<sup>37</sup> The depiction can be considered to scale (taking into account the finds of such implements<sup>38</sup>): the vessel has a height of 8 cm and a diameter of 7.5 cm; the scrapers have a length of 22 cm (that on the left) and 20 cm (that on the right of the vessel). The hanging ring holding the set together has an external diameter of about 18 cm and an internal diameter of 15.5 cm.

The handles of the strigiles are depicted as being compact.<sup>39</sup> Normally, if the blade (*ligula*) is shown in profile, then the handle would feature the *clausula*. It can be said that the skillfully made representation of the entire set is more or less intended in three-quarter view, following the realistic, almost three-dimensional early Hellenistic way of depiction. The oil vessel represented on the stele from Troesmis must have had the specific small loop handles.

The strigil was used for cleaning the human body by scraping dirt off the skin. Its origin is not precisely known, and the historical, iconographical and archaeological evidence dates from at least mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BC until the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>40</sup> While the information on Greeks and Etruscans is more frequent for young men, soldiers and athletes, its use spread among the Romans, in the baths, for both men and women. The range of utensils directly related to the scrapers included the sponge, the vessel for oil, sometimes a vessel for water, as well as a ring to hold the set together.<sup>41</sup> *Strigiles* seem to also have been used in the medical practice.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Plaut, *Stichus*, 226.

<sup>38</sup> For an overview on *strigiles*, see: Vagalinski 1995; Vagalinski 2009; Mallet, Pilon 2009; Kakish 2015; for the vessels, see: Nenova-Merdjanova 1995; Nenova-Merdjanova 1999; Wardle 2008.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Vagalinski 1995, fig. 12-18, and fig. 33; Wardle 2008, fig. 4.5.7.

<sup>40</sup> Pohl 2004; Thuillier 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Vagalinski 2009, 132-133.

<sup>42</sup> Ancient sources: Vagalinski 1995, 435. – Several funerary inventories with medical implements, including *strigiles*, are considered proof of the profession of the deceased: see, for example, Künzl 1982, cat. Germania inferior 7, 91-93; Italia 4, 105; Moesia inferior 3, 110-112; Moesia inferior 4, 112-114; Oța 2016, 130.

The strigil, made of copper alloy or iron, had a slotted solid or open 'box' handle with a curved channelled 'blade', with rounded tip and blunt edges. Usually, the length ranges from 16 to 30 cm when measured from the tip of the blade to the far end of the handle. The shape of the handle is a characteristic that differs in the Pre-Roman and Roman types, as shown by Vagalinski.<sup>43</sup> The handles of the Roman strigils display a great morphological diversity: they could be a hollow forged handle (the most common) or a compact grip, sometimes imitating Hercules' club. While the *strigiles* were usually made of bronze (especially the Roman ones) or iron<sup>44</sup>, the oil vessel could have been made of metal (bronze or iron) or glass.<sup>45</sup> The lentoid shape of the vessel is more common to glass recipients<sup>46</sup>, but there are no examples correlated to *strigiles*. Nenova-Merdjanova mentions a bronze vessel from Philippopolis having a flattened spherical shape.<sup>47</sup> The *ampullae oleariae* are normally round.<sup>48</sup> Nenova-Merdjanova considers there were three types of bronze vessels used as the oil vessel within the *instrumentum balnei*: *ampullae oleariae* (which could also be made of silver or thick glass), globular vessels and busts.<sup>49</sup> The first type, featuring a narrow neck and different variants of shape, seems to be the earliest, while the other two feature a specific metal handle and ornaments of the vessel body.

Finds of *strigiles*, with or without hanging ring and vessel, i.e. as a set of bath utensils, have been discovered in funerary contexts also in Moesia Inferior<sup>50</sup> and Thracia.<sup>51</sup> When available, the bath vessels in the region are of bronze.<sup>52</sup> The finds of *strigiles* (usually as a pair, but attested also as a single example or of up to four items), hanging ring and oil vessels are important in order to appreciate the accuracy and quality of depiction on the stele subject to discussion in this paper. For the Romans, these bath utensils were too common to be more than potential elements of the funerary inventory, as part of the personal hygiene or cosmetic use<sup>53</sup>, or as part of the physicians' instrumentarium. There are funerary inventories of both men and women with *strigiles* (and eventually other elements of the kit) attested in the Roman provinces.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Vagalinski 1995, 435-436: the author distinguished four main types of Roman scrapers.

<sup>44</sup> Vagalinski 1995, 439-440; Simion 1996, 113; Vagalinski 2009, 130-132. – There are also examples of silver or gilded vessels and scrapers: Simion 1996, 115; Mallet, Pilon 2009, 120-123.

<sup>45</sup> Usually the finds from Pompeii are the first to be mentioned and illustrated. However, in the Roman provinces there are several sites with such finds of sets of bath utensils: see, for example, Wardle 2008 (London); Linfert-Reich 1974 (Cologne).

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Fontaine *et alii* 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Nenova-Merdjanova 1995, fig. 1b.

<sup>48</sup> Isings 1957, 78-81, Form 61 (*aryballos*). – See, for example, the overview on the finds directly connected with scrapers, from Londinium in Wardle 2008 (with literature). – On the topic of terminology related to such vessels see Fontaine *et al.* 2012; Mustață 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Nenova-Merdjanova 1995, 51-52; Nenova-Merdjanova 1999, 130.

<sup>50</sup> Oța 2016: most finds have been uncovered in the Greek cities and their surroundings.

<sup>51</sup> Vagalinski 1995; Andreeva 2018, cat. no. 32, 36, 37, 53, 58.

<sup>52</sup> Simion 1994-1995; Oța 2016. There are also finds of glass *aryballoi* in funerary context, but the information on the inventory is not available in order to comment on the connection to strigiles. They were uncovered in the necropoleis of Tomi, Dionysopolis and Tutrakanci – Bucova 1968, 81-83, no. 129-135; Oța 2013, 208-209.

<sup>53</sup> Simion 1996; Oța 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Vagalinski 1995, 437; Oța 2016, 131. – For pre-Roman examples see Colivicchi 2006; Thuillier 1989; Pace 2012 (there also with the fortunate situation of having both finds and depictions in funerary context in Kyme, in Aeolis); Kakish 2015, 68, note 4.





Fig. 11. Pillar of Metrodoros, detail of the back side, 300-250 B.C. (after Bentz 2009, fig. 15.5).

As subject of the depiction the kit or parts of it are well represented on baths pavements.<sup>55</sup> Scraper and sometimes the entire set are to be seen on portrait stelai of boys, young men or professional athletes, possibly taking after classical and Hellenistic iconographic models. The young men were commonly represented as athletes on classical Attic grave stelai, either alone or with a smaller subsidiary slave figure.<sup>56</sup> In those cases the utensils are carried by a servant or used by the deceased. There are not many analogies among depictions on the Roman funerary monuments in Moesia Inferior. Two stelai from Odessos then show the slave with the *instrumentum balnei* next to the deceased (Fig. 9b)<sup>57</sup>, which was an athlete in one case.<sup>58</sup> On other two stelai from Odessos, the set hangs on the wall, in a typical funerary banquet scene<sup>59</sup>, or is depicted under the field with the representation of the seated deceased, along with further vessels and utensils.<sup>60</sup> In three of the mentioned cases in Odessos the set is similar to that on the stele from Troesmis, consisting of two *strigiles* and the oil vessel in the middle, all hanging on a metal ring. In the case of the athlete's stele, the servant holds the vessel in his right hand and the two scrapers in the left hand.

<sup>55</sup> The most known examples are those from Ostia, the mosaic with athletes in the suburban baths of the Porta Marina (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD: Turci 2019, 64-72, fig. 5), on one mosaic from Casa di Menandro in Pompeii, Regio I, Insula 10.4 (1<sup>st</sup> century AD: Pugliese Carratelli (cur.) 1990, vol. II.2, Regio I, fig. 225), but also on one from a baths building in Batn Ezzamour, near Gafsa (4<sup>th</sup> century AD: Khanoussi 1988).

<sup>56</sup> See several examples discussed by Turner 2012. – See also a fragmentary stele from Mesambria: Andreeva (ed.) 2018, cat. no. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Vagalinski 2009, cat. no. 48; IGBulg I 147; Conrad 2004, cat. no. 75, pl. 52/1; Andreeva (ed.) 2018, cat. no. 33 (dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).

<sup>58</sup> Vagalinski 2009, cat. no. 47, IGBulg I 147bis, Conrad 2004, cat. no. 72, pl. 54/2 (dated to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).

<sup>59</sup> Conrad 2004, cat. no. 31, pl. 33/3; IGBulg I 171bis (dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD); Vagalinski 2009, cat. no. 46.

<sup>60</sup> Vagalinski 2009, cat. no. 120 (dated to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> – beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).

Two strigiles on a D-shaped ring (Fig. 12), along with further furniture and cosmetic utensils and vessels are depicted on the limestone sarcophagus set up in Tomis by Flavius Neikylos for his wife Flavia Cocceia and himself.<sup>61</sup> The sarcophagus, dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, is considered to be the product of a local workshop, built in the tradition of the products from Bithynia, especially from Nikomedia.<sup>62</sup>

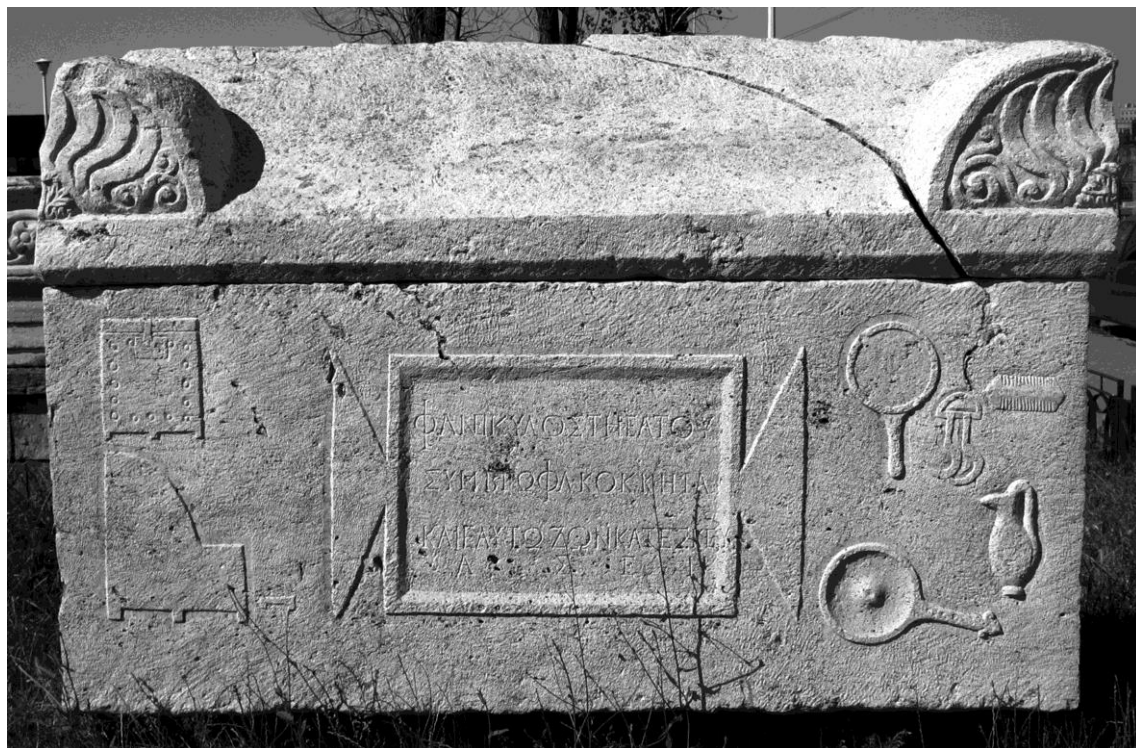


Fig. 12. Sarcophagus for Flavia Cocceia and Flavius Neikylos, Constanța, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (© the author).

For the Roman period, and possibly as a special indicator of the preference of the deceased for the Roman use of the bath utensils, it is worth mentioning here the depictions of such sets on stelai from the region of Nakoleia and Dorylaion, in Phrygia, there also among other motifs decorating the so-called "Türgrabsteine".<sup>63</sup> Outstanding in this case is that, in that region and within the iconography of these stelai, the set is considered as one of men attributes, but never of women.

While on the stelai from Phrygia the depictions of attributes were separated for husband and wife, the differentiation being visible, in the case of the mentioned sarcophagus in Tomis, the depicted items are of rather general use in the household. As the archaeological evidence show, even the scrapers can be part of the funerary inventory of women.

Up to now there has been no other example of Roman date for the bath utensils kit as the main subject of the depiction, as it is the case with the stele from Troesmis. The *instrumentum balnei* on the stele of Eutycus is depicted as hanging on the wall and resembles one of the representations on the marble pillar of Metrodoros<sup>64</sup>, discovered in

<sup>61</sup> ISM VI.2, 506, pl. CLII. – A similar monument, without depictions related to the present stele (only a chair and a mirror are depicted), is the sarcophagus of Euphrosyne, the wife of the business representative (πραγματευτής) of the primipilarius Iulius Fronto (ISM VI.2, 289, pl. LXXXIX), also found in Tomis.

<sup>62</sup> Alexandrescu Vianu 2008-2009, 64; Avram 2014, 150, fig. 22-23.

<sup>63</sup> Waelkens 1986, 133-134, cat. no. 298, 332, 341, 347; Adak, Akyürek Şahin 2005, 163-164, no. 33.

<sup>64</sup> Bentz 2009, 192 and 195.

Chios and dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. There the utensils of interest in this paper are depicted as a set (Fig. 11), hanging on the wall, as a part of further decorations of the monument and a direct indicator of the activity of the deceased as an athlete. It is a way of showing significant items/attributes attested also by some of the paintings and reliefs in the Etruscan tombs from Tarquinia and Cerveteri dated to the Hellenistic period<sup>65</sup>. For the present discussion it must be mentioned the particular case of a group of stelai of young men from an early Hellenistic necropolis of Chersonesos, featuring a strigil and an aryballos, sculpted or just painted.<sup>66</sup> The stelai from Chersonesos have been relatively recently investigated<sup>67</sup>, one of the conclusions being the use of tall stelai, put for one person only, in specially constructed individual bases, with accurate differentiation (in what concerned shape and decoration) between stelai for young men, men and women.<sup>68</sup> The stele of Hermodoros, (son of) Alkimos (Fig. 9c)<sup>69</sup>, featuring the sculpted and painted set of oil flask and scraper hung by a strap on a nail, in the lower part of the stele, is particularly interesting: Under the epitaph and on the sides of the stele are depicted rosettes similar (but not the same!) to the one in the tympanon of the stele of Eutycus (Fig. 3). In case of other stelai (the one of Hermodoros is only partially preserved) the shaft is delimited by mouldings and the sculpted decoration is completed by painting.

S. Conrad considered the introduction of the set within the depictions on the stelai from Odessos as an expression of the virtues of the deceased<sup>70</sup>, while on the stele of the athlete from the same city the direct connection with the set of bath utensils carried by his slave is just the expression of the success of the sportsman.<sup>71</sup> On a metope of one of the Republican funerary buildings from Isernia (Fig. 13) the set is depicted as part of the personal belongings of the deceased, chosen in order to express his/her virtues: *pietas* (vessels for the libation) and an elevated lifestyle, through body care<sup>72</sup>. Similar interpretation is given for the group of stelai of young men from Chersonesos, featuring strigil and aryballos.<sup>73</sup>

For the case of Eutycus, L. Mihailescu-Bîrliaba advanced the hypothesis to understand the depiction as a hint that the relationship between the *verna* and his patron was of special (sexual) nature.<sup>74</sup> Certainly, this is possible, but there can also be a more simple significance, directly related to the deceased. As his age is not mentioned, the assumption that it was a young man or even just a boy, eventually the biological son of the tribune Terentius Iunior, is just as possible. His Greek origin, given his name, would make the depiction a suitable attribute for highlighting the purity and innocence of the boy/ young man. Through its making, shape and chosen details, and considering the absence of any mention on the age of

<sup>65</sup> Steingraber 1983, cat. no. 9 (Tomba dei Rilievi, Cerveteri, end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.); cat. no. 69 (Tomba Giglioli, Tarquinia, end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC); cat. no. 62 (Tomba dei Festoni, Tarquinia, middle 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC).

<sup>66</sup> Posamentir 2005, 107-108; Posamentir 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Posamentir 2011 (with literature).

<sup>68</sup> Posamentir 2005, 107.

<sup>69</sup> Sevastopol, Museum, inv. 36847/7 (found in secondary use as building material in the Tower of Zenon, 1960-1961), dated in the late 4<sup>th</sup>-first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC; Posamentir 2011, cat. no. 65; IOSPE III, 244 (<https://iospe.kcl.ac.uk/3.244.html> [last visited on 01.08.2021]).

<sup>70</sup> Conrad 2004, 98.

<sup>71</sup> See note 58 above.

<sup>72</sup> Maschek 2012, 99 and cat. no. DF20.

<sup>73</sup> Posamentir 2011, 409-410.

<sup>74</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliaba 2015, 124.



the deceased, the stele from Troesmis relates quite well to the tradition of Attic stelai, like, for example, the marble stele of Eupheros (Fig. 14), found *in situ* in the so-called 'Kindernekropole' from Kerameikos<sup>75</sup>, but also with the regionally restricted and more discreet expression from the northern Black Sea region presented above.



Fig. 13. Funerary monument from Isernia, 45-20 BC (after Maschek 2012, DF20, pl. 5.2).

Special funerary monuments, in terms of customisation and expensiveness, built by the patrons for their slaves are known especially in Italy<sup>76</sup>, but also in other Roman provinces as is the case with the above mentioned Florus from Carnuntum (Fig. 15).<sup>77</sup> In case of the stele of Eutycus it is an almost impossible task to decide if the observed traditions were due to the sculptor, to the commissioner, express features strictly related to the deceased or are a mixture of several factors. Given the costs implied by such a monument, it would be logical to assume the existence of a well-established and intentional concept, benefiting from minimal but particularly eloquent iconographic expressions, which both the sculptor and the commissioner of the monument will have known/ recognized/ understood from their background but also from their travels around the Black Sea, but also through Thrace and the Propontida. These connections are due, on the one hand, to the marble trade between Asia Minor (Prokonnessos/Cyzicus and Nicomedia) with the areas of Moesia Inferior and Northern Italy and the personnel structure involved (traders, workers, etc.).<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, the contacts were facilitated by the Roman military presence around the Black Sea and the mobility of these troops who, in the early Roman period, arrived both on the northern shore of the Black Sea and along the Lower Danube.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Kerameikos Museum P 1169, height 147 cm, width 49 cm, dated to 430-425 BC: Stears 2000, 37-42, fig. 2.3; IG I<sup>3</sup> 1283; on the discussion on the age of the deceased based on the finds in the grave see <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=Kerameikos+P+1169%2C+I+417&object=Sculpture> [last seen on 01.08.2021].

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Kohl 2018 (with literature).

<sup>77</sup> From other provinces, and especially from Rome, there are examples of epitaphs put for *vernae* by their patrons or owners, men or women, mentioning at least their age. Portraits or other depiction are there also the exception: see, for example, Kohl 2018, 241-254, especially fig. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Avram 2014 (with literature).

<sup>79</sup> The existence of suitable workshops in Roman time in the area of Chersonesos is attested, for example, by the customized funerary monuments for soldiers, like the marble stele of Aurelius Salvianus, *tubicen leg. XI Claudia*: Akimova, Korovina 1987, cat. no. 152.

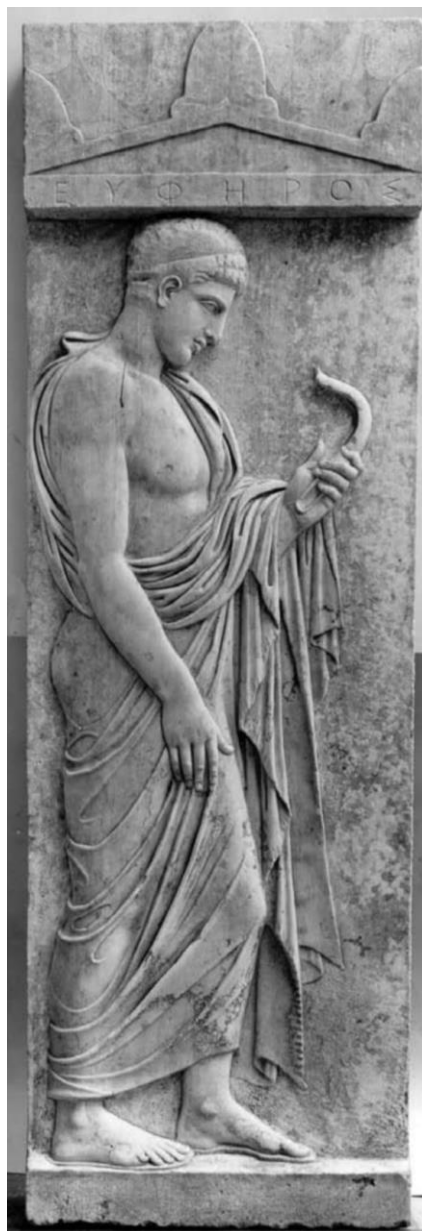


Fig. 14. Stele of Eupheros, from Kerameikos, about 430-425 BC (after Stears 2000, fig. 2.3).

## 6. ON THE FINDING SPOT OF THE STELE

*Troesmis* was one of the main Roman sites on the Danube in Moesia Inferior, known as legionary fortress of the *legio V Macedonica* and later as Roman *municipium*. Up to 2011, the main and most exploited information source was the epigraphical evidence, i.e. the early Roman inscriptions reused as building material within the Late Roman and Byzantine fortresses, known as the Eastern and Western fortifications, and which are both still dominating the landscape.<sup>80</sup> Multidisciplinary archaeological investigations, within the ongoing Troesmis project, enabled the identification of the legionary fortress and also of the civilian settlements and necropoleis nearby (Fig. 16-17).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015.

<sup>81</sup> Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath 2016 (with literature).



Fig. 15. The funerary building, with the stele of Florus (dated to the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) walled in. Reconstruction in the Archaeological Park Carnuntum (© the author).

The fact that the necropolis areas in the surroundings of Troesmis have been (and still are!) used as agricultural fields or even vineyards and orchards is expected to have as immediate consequence finds and findings of funerary monuments and inventories. This was the case with the object of interest of this paper – the funerary stele of Eutycus – brought in the 1980s to the museum in Tulcea broken in two pieces.<sup>82</sup> A. Opaiț, at that time researcher at the museum in Tulcea, kindly provided the information, that the fortuitous find was made in one of the funerary areas near the still standing fortifications from Troesmis, by a tractor driver. However, he was not able to point out more precisely the spot of its excavation.

Taking into consideration the topographic maps of the period, with information on the use of the fields, as well as nowadays agricultural fields in the area, it is possible to make further use of the interpretation of aerial photographs and the field observations on still standing burial mounds or on the ones that have been flattened by ploughing works. Additional useful observations provide the mapping of existing data on the reuse of funerary inscriptions in the Late Roman and Byzantine fortifications (Fig. 18), with the noticeable occurrence of epitaphs in the Eastern fortification (marked with green). Thus it would be a plausible assumption, that the stele of Eutycus was uncovered in the area to the NE or East of the Eastern fortification, within the part of the necropolis much damaged by modern agriculture, and which, at the time of our investigations, was not available for geophysical prospections (Fig. 16-17).

<sup>82</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015.



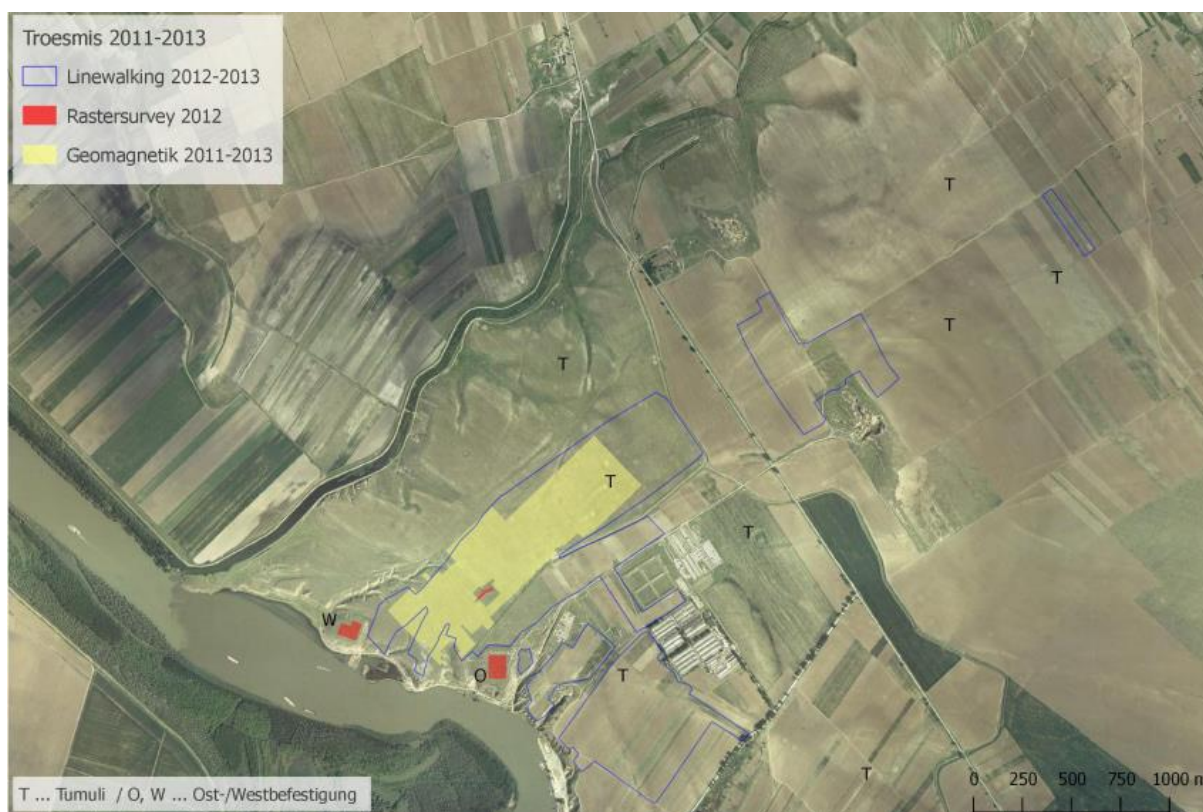


Fig. 16. Troesmis area with recognisable barrows, marked with T (after Alexandrescu, Gugl 2014, fig. 2).

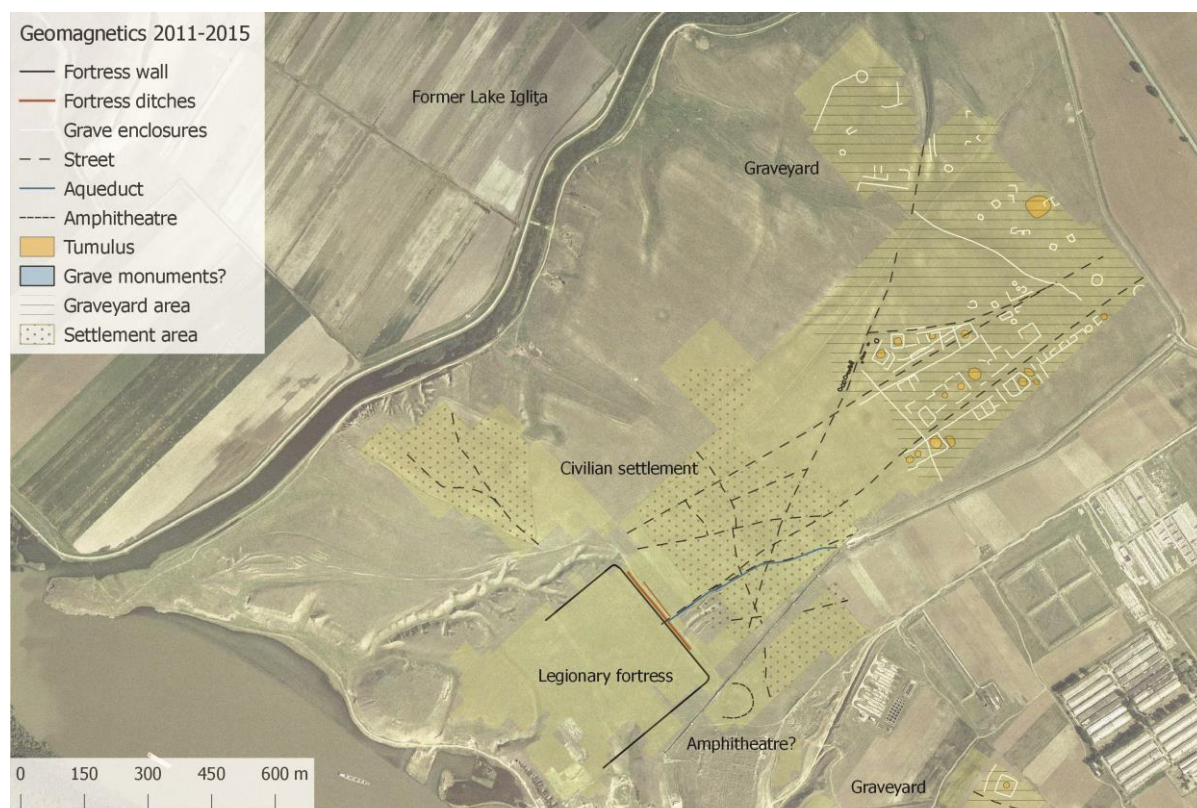


Fig. 17. Troesmis central area with the necropolis structure based on the results of the geophysical prospections (after Alexandrescu, Gugl 2016, fig. 5).

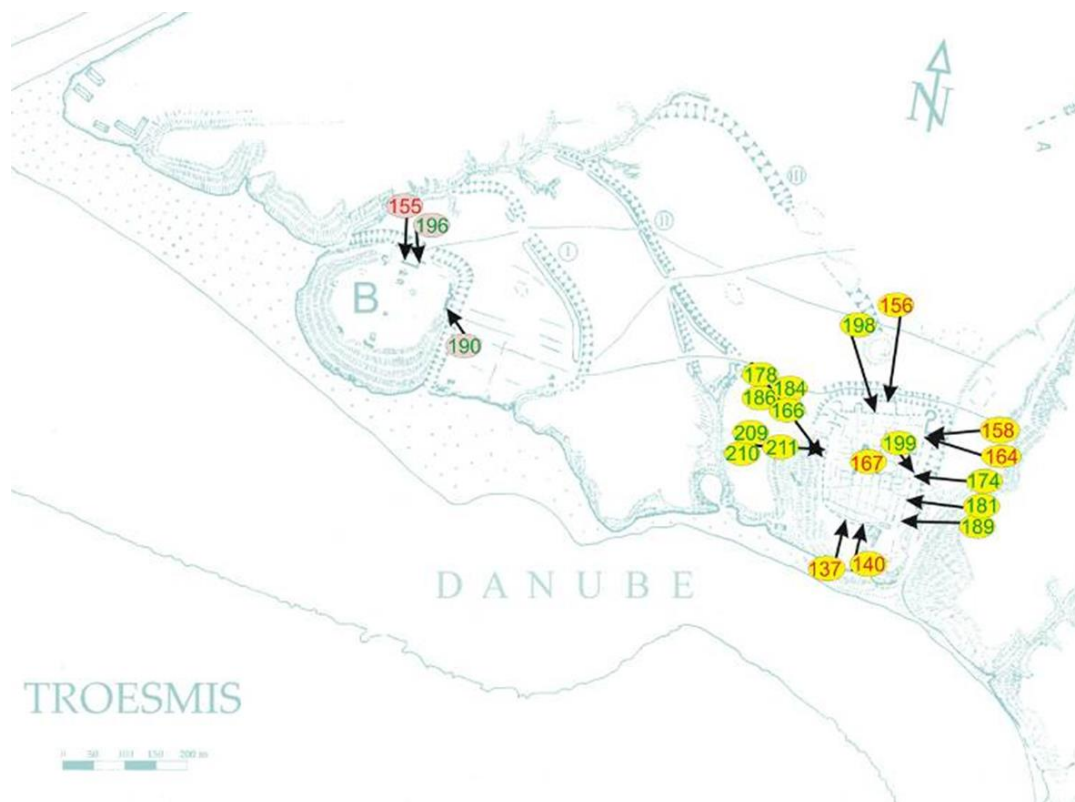


Fig. 18. Troesmis fortifications with the finds of reused inscriptions. The numbers refer to the *ISM V* corpus; with green are marked epitaphs, with red, votive or honorary inscriptions (after Alexandrescu 2016, fig. 7).

## 7. THE STELE OF EUTYCUS AMONG THE FUNERARY MONUMENTS FROM TROESMIS

The early workshops in Carnuntum, worked with the locally available stones and followed traditions from northern Italy.<sup>83</sup> This seems to be valid also for other military centers along the Danube, such as Oescus<sup>84</sup>, Novae and, later on, Troesmis. It still is a general topic for discussion, as the observable traditions are a matter of choice of the sculptor or of the customer.<sup>85</sup> In Carnuntum the epigraphic evidence shows that soldiers from other regions also paid for monuments built in northern italic tradition. The origin of the deceased was expressed not by the choice of the monuments or eventual decoration, but rather through the epitaph.<sup>86</sup>

There are several fragmentarily preserved funerary inscriptions known from Troesmis, carved in up to 60 cm wide blocks, without profiled field of inscription and without ornaments of any kind.<sup>87</sup> The height of the monuments is up to about 160 cm, as far as it can be appreciated. Their depth can not be conclusive, as to date they are bearing the traces of the reuse, and might have been cut accordingly.<sup>88</sup> They were most probably no funerary altars, but stelae featuring minimal architectonic ornamentation. The group is dated to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. As all of them have been reused and are only fragmentarily preserved or very damaged by the reuse, the

<sup>83</sup> Kremer 2021.

<sup>84</sup> Conrad 2001.

<sup>85</sup> See for example the analyses for area of Carnuntum (Kremer 2021) and Aquileia (Cigaina 2016; Cigaina 2021, 112-121).

<sup>86</sup> Kremer 2021, 53.

<sup>87</sup> The designation as cippi is used by E. Doruțiu-Boilă for ISM V 174-176, 179-182, 189-191, 193, 196.

<sup>88</sup> See for example the situation for ISM V 189, 190, 193 or 201.

issue of their initial decoration can not be discussed. Shaft stelai or altar stelai, of relatively modest dimensions and shape, seem to have been preferred by certain inhabitants in the area of ancient Troesmis in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It is worth noticing that similar blocks could have been used for different destinations, like votive<sup>89</sup> or honorary<sup>90</sup> inscriptions, thus making the workshop quite lucrative, as the delivery from the local quarries implied limited special requirements.<sup>91</sup> This detail underlines the great significance given to inscriptions and the quite discrete behaviour with regard to the image of individuals within their community in the early Roman period at Troesmis. There is no data up to now on the original location of those monuments in order to appreciate if there might have been additional features for their display. At the same time, but especially one or two decades later, in Troesmis, there were customers for tall and richly decorated stelai, for funerary altars, as well as, later on, for sarcophagi. Furthermore, even if the data on this find is very scarce, there is at least an example of a larger funerary building.<sup>92</sup> For the area of Troesmis, as generally for the funerary monuments along the Danube, the workshops and, with them, a certain standardization of the stelai, seems to really be in place only in the middle and at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>93</sup> In this case too, the inscriptions are the main way to express the identity of the deceased and their memory, using quite simple types of monuments, with depictions and portraits being rather the exception. The early examples are usually singular/extraordinary in appearance and tectonic in shape and composition.<sup>94</sup> Detailed analysis, as also shown in the case of the stele of Eutycus, identifies them as products of mixed traditions and craftsmanship due most certainly to the reality of the period and of the region.

The customization of the stele of Eutycus was made through the depiction of the *instrumentum balnei*. The inscription gives no additional details to complete or explain the representation, being more eloquent on the dedicant, Terentius Iunior, *tribunus militum leg. V Macedonicae*. There is no information on the age of the deceased nor on his potential activities as an athlete. It can be assumed, however, that the depiction is to be understood in direct relation to him and his young age. Given the overall uniqueness of the stele of Eutycus not only in Moesia Inferior, the analysis can remain only at the level of hypothesis. L. Mihailescu-Bîrliba considers the choice of the subject a direct indicator on the occupation of the deceased: as slave in the household of the tribune Terentius Iunior, directly responsible of the personal hygiene of his master, as well as for an eventual relationship between the two men.<sup>95</sup> The presence of slaves in the Roman army is undisputable.<sup>96</sup> The dimensions of the

<sup>89</sup> ISM V 218.

<sup>90</sup> ISM V 143-146, 148, 155, 158-160.

<sup>91</sup> The discussions on the matter of the economics of the Roman stone trade and use of local resources within Moesia Inferior are incipient. One of the foci of the ongoing project DOBRON\_STONE (PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-1031) is the provenance determination of the lithic material used in the Roman times in the Northern part of Moesia inferior, the known local stones from Northern Dobruja and their particular uses in different periods. – For a recent overview on the topic at the level of the Roman Empire see Russell 2013.

<sup>92</sup> ISM V 209.

<sup>93</sup> Conrad 2001; Alexandrescu-Vianu 2007.

<sup>94</sup> Conrad 2001.

<sup>95</sup> Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2015, 123.

<sup>96</sup> Stoll 2006, 268-269, 283; Boymel Kampen 2013. – For the situation of *vernae* in the same context there is no special analysis yet. Their presence on funerary monuments and, most important, the evidence of funerary monuments of slaves is exceptional, even if they became visible through inscriptions only. In Troesmis was uncovered the epitaph of a freeman, Lucius Iuventius qui et Faustus (ISM V 191), which mentions only the advanced age of the deceased, 60 years.



monument and its decoration show it was expensive and point out indirectly to the importance of this deceased *verna* for Terentius Iunior, the person that incurred the costs of the stele, and, by doing so, he ensured Eutycus with the place and confidence to become and remain visible.<sup>97</sup> It is clear that the deceased came with his master to Troesmis, even if the precise circumstances cannot be ascertained in more detail. Through this monument, more certainly through the probable funerary building, it might have been walled into, the memory of this slave certainly became very visible.<sup>98</sup> for the inhabitants of Troesmis and passers by. Dedicated studies on the funerary landscape in different areas of the Roman Empire, as well as in Rome, Ostia and Pompeii, taking into consideration both the archaeological and the epigraphical evidence, point out to a quite wide span of particularities.<sup>99</sup> For the remote region of Troesmis, it may also be stated, that only the documentation by the time of its discovery might have been able to clarify its exact use/ display.<sup>100</sup>

## 8. CONCLUSION

Given its craftsmanship, shape and decoration, the stele of Eutycus features good parallels to the region of Asia Minor, but also with the northern Black Sea, with Chersonesos. In the analysis of S. Conrad there are only few examples of related funerary monuments<sup>101</sup> featuring similar height/width ratio. It is plausible, that the stele from Troesmis is the product of a local workshop where stonemasons from Asia Minor were active at some point, eventually somehow connected to a workshop in Tomis, given the above observed analogies in the execution of the architectural decoration. The delivery of Prokonnesian marble to the region is well attested and reached by fluvial transport the area of Troesmis as well. However the meanwhile well investigated iconographic traditions of Cyzicus and Byzantion were not popular in the northern part of the province<sup>102</sup> as they were in Thrace and in the cities on the Western shore of the Black Sea.<sup>103</sup> Even if the stele of Eutycus is unique in its category of monuments, the work of stonemasons from Asia Minor is well attested in Moesia Inferior<sup>104</sup> and Troesmis, and, more importantly, some of them and their apprentices worked in local stones. How easy or complex the communication and (trade) relations between the Greek cities on the shores of the Black Sea, especially with Tomis, and the legionary centre from Troesmis were, it can only be assumed based on the historical, epigraphical and archaeological evidence.<sup>105</sup> More detailed investigations are necessary on the used forms of funerary monuments, their material, their initial shape and display. As extraordinary as it is, the stele of Eutycus fits well in the funerary landscape from Troesmis,

<sup>97</sup> Bradley 1994, 48-50, 69-70; Kohl 2018; Stoll 2006, 283.

<sup>98</sup> Boymel Kampen 2013, 191 points out that "the fundamental quality of slavery is its invisibility".

<sup>99</sup> See for example Mouritsen 2005 (with literature).

<sup>100</sup> See for example the finds from the barrow XXX in Noviodunum, with marble funerary statues and limestone sarcophagus (Simion 1994-1995). As individual finds and without information on their context, the stone monuments would have been interpreted based on analogies and not necessarily as they have been found: under a barrow. – On the funerary precincts in Moesia see Scholz 2012, 504-505 (with literature); on barrows, tumuli and round funerary monuments see Scholz 2012, 84-91 (with literature).

<sup>101</sup> Like one stele in Tomis: Conrad 2004, cat. no. 140 (height 245 cm, width 51 cm, thickness 25 cm; 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD).

<sup>102</sup> The theme of the funerary banquet is attested up to now in only one case, on a stele from Halmyris: Zahariade, Alexandrescu 2011, cat. no. 20; Conrad 2004, cat. no. 214; see also Conrad 2004, 57-70.

<sup>103</sup> Alexandrescu Vianu 1970, 271-274; Alexandrescu Vianu 2008-2009; Avram 2014.

<sup>104</sup> Alexandrescu Vianu 2008-2009; Avram 2014.

<sup>105</sup> See for example Matei-Popescu 2014. – An eloquent case study would enable the broader analysis of the epigraphic record of the Cocceii on the territory of the northern Moesia Inferior: Mihailescu-Bîrliba 2018, 199-200.

as far as the present state of research allows insights into. The stele combines characteristics of the Greek shaft stelai (the architectonic decoration of the top part) with the dimensions of the Roman shaft stelai with triangular pediment and the ornaments of the sarcophagi lids in roof design.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, it features both the inscription (but not more information on the deceased as his name!, like more common for the Greek stelai) and the rich ornaments and depiction of significant attributes, being thus a hybrid mixture of Greek and Roman characteristic ratios between image and text on the funerary monuments.<sup>107</sup> Considering the mentioned group of early Hellenistic stelai from Chersonesos, the idea to understand the stele of Eutycus as an expression of the habit observed to be settled there for stelai for young men or boys, is very attractive. Given the observations made on the finished or only roughly carved parts of the stele, the hypothesis on its possible display, again within a Roman architectural solution, was advanced.

The extraordinary character of the stele from Troesmis is given by the circumstances of its discovery, within the necropolis, by its shape and dimensions, the epigraphic details and also by the architectural decoration and the depiction of the bath utensils. The mixed features of the Greek and Roman tradition, clearly illustrated by the shape and making of the stele, the onomastics, the structure of the epitaph and the chosen subject for the decoration, make the final product a 'very' Roman funerary monument, that stood most certainly out in the "funerary landscape" from Troesmis through its dimensions and ornaments.

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<sup>106</sup> 'Type D' with 'Type VII' after Conrad 2004.

<sup>107</sup> Slawisch 2007, 53.

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