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During the 1985–1987 excavations carried out over the northern gate of the Roman and late Roman fort near IndependenȚa, Tulcea county, recently identified with the ancient Salmorus/Halmyris¹, seven tombstones were uncovered. All these can be added to the eight votive inscriptions mentioning a *vicus classicorum*², to the vexillation altar of Legions I Italica and XI Claudia³ and other isolated fragments of inscriptions that have already been dwelt upon.

In 1985, when clearing the frontside of the gate filled up to 2.50 – 3.00 m with the debris of the superstructure of the flanking towers Nos. 1 and 16, there were found two tombstones (Nos. 1 and 2). A fragmentary tombstone shows the scene of the funerary banquet with the first line of an inscription beneath (No. 3). It was obvious that all the three blocks had been fixed into the internal faces of the towers. The very position they had when uncovered – on the very ancient walking-level itself – proves that these blocks were the first to fall down.

During the 1986 excavations, when carrying out the extensive work of complete clearing, eight blocks have been identified within the threshold of the 3rd phase of the gate⁴ which, judging from their appearance, were liable to have inscriptions. However, at the time, one single fragmentary block (No. 5) covering the drain of the gate had certain traces of a written text. Considering the size, external ornaments and slight traces of lead minium, the two big flanking blocks (Nos. 6 and 7) were also likely to have had some text engraved. The upper five blocks of the threshold underlying the stone and mortar blocking up the gate in its fourth phase were also liable to have inscriptions (Fig. 1).

In June 1987, on the basis of a previously approved project to replace the northern gate threshold blocks and to recuperate such important epigraphical documents, the eight pieces were taken out. The threshold was restored to the precise shape it had when discovered. Out of eight blocks only five had inscriptions, the remaining three being re-used in the new re-built structure of the threshold of the northern gate (Fig. 2).

Consequently, all the inscriptions are funerary monuments taken out of the 2nd – 3rd centuries necropolis of the settlement at the beginning of the 5th century when the third phase of the northern gate was built up⁵. It is remarkable however that all the funerary inscriptions were found in the threshold of the gate, therefore they were not used as building material for the inner half of the gate where the votive altars were revealed.

We shall present the epigraphical monuments as they were found in 1985 or taken out of the threshold of the gate in 1987.

1. Tombstone of yellowish, porish, shell-like, low quality limestone, broken up into two parts; found in 1985; dimensions: 1.21 × 0.85 × 0.17 m; the inscription field is slightly deepened: 0.85 × 0.17 m; the text is hemmed in by a simple, nondecorated border 0.08 m wide; the letters are 0.04 – 0.06 m high with slight traces of lead minium; large, rather clumsy, asymmetrical letters. We date the inscription to the end of the 2nd century A.D. (Fig. 3).

The text reads as follows:

*D(is) M(anibus)
e(t) Memori(ae)
T Fl(avius) Secun-
dus vivit an-
nis L Aelia
Bendis ma-
rito suo pi-*

¹ Al. Suceveanu, M. Zahariade, *Dacia*, N. S., 31, 1987, 1–2, p. 87–98.

² Al. Suceveanu, M. Zahariade, *Dacia*, N. S., 30, 1986, 1–2, p. 109–120.

³ M. Zahariade, *Dacia*, N. S., 30, 1986, 1–2, p. 173–176.

⁴ M. Zahariade, Al. Suceveanu, A. Opaiț, C. Opaiț, F. To-
poleanu, *Dacia*, N. S., 31, 1987, 1–2, p. 105–106.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 103 and 105.

entissimo
ei sibi vivo

10 *suo posuit.*

1.2 : T from *ET* is missing.

1.4 : A + N in ligature.

Dis Manibus and *Memoria* are well-known in other Danubian provinces⁶ while the name of *Flavius Secundus*, in our case Aelia Bendsi's husband, is quite frequent in the Roman Empire; another *Flavius Secundus* appears at Independența in this very form. The cognomen *Bendsi* reveals the woman's Thraco-Dacian origin; nomen gentile, *Aelia*, proves a peregrine origin.

Bendsi is probably a corrupt form of the well-known Thracian Micro-Asiatic deity *Bendis*, sometimes identified with Artemis or with Hekate in the Greek pantheon⁷. The name of the feminine deity was taken over and suitably used in the Thracian feminine onomastic sphere. A *Bendi Paibis (filiae) uxori* is mentioned in an inscription in Philippi (Macedonia)⁸; at Bește (Bulgaria) the same name appears under the form : *Sises Mucasenis et Bendi marita*⁹. Other inscriptions reveal feminine persons bearing the names of Φλ(α)δία Βένδης at Doganovo (Bulgaria)¹⁰ and Βένδης Ζευπαδος¹¹ and [Β]ένδης in Thasos¹²; at Panticapaeum a Βένζει θυγάτηρ Μουσαπρεος¹³ is mentioned.

From the known examples it results that the form *Bendi-Bendis* is the most frequent. As for the form *Bendsi* on our inscription one could take into account the possibility of a mistake made by the lapidary who reversed the last two letters and wrote *Bendsi* instead of *Bendis*, the form which appears in all the other known examples.

2. Tombstone of yellowish, hard limestone broken at the lower part; found in 1985; dimensions : 1.03 × 1.01 × 0.15 m; the slightly deepened inscription field is 0.68 m long; the letters are 0.05 – 0.08 m high; upright, accurately engraved letters; well spaced but a rather asymmetrical writing; on the left side of the frame which borders the field of the inscription, there is an ornament showing a vine with leaves and cluster. We date the inscription back to the second half of the second century (Fig. 4).

The text reads as follows:

D(is) M(anibus)

Claudius M-

artinus vi-

xit anni(s) XX

5 *Claudius C-*

lemens pat(er)

[fil]io pient (issimo)

1.2 and 3 : S – letters slightly spaced from the remainder of the names:

1.6 : under the ringlet of P there is an oblique line slightly traced but clear enough for P to be taken as R.

Martinus and *Clemens* are anthroponyms currently occurring in the Roman provincial onomastics. Another *Martinus* appears at Independența in inscription No. 6. If in line 6 there is *RAT* instead of *PAT* this would generate an *origo* for *Claudius Clemens* from Ratiaria. As the relationship with the son, *Claudius Martinus*, had to be specified in the inscription due to the presence of the genitive *[fil]io*, the only possible reading is *PAT(er)*.

3. Tombstone of soft, yellowish limestone; it is made up of two fragments, the former found in 1985 in the outer debris of the northern gate and the latter in 1987 having its lower part intentionally cut in order to fit into the threshold of the same gate; dimensions : 1.71 × 1.47 × 0.17 m; the slightly deepened inscription field is 0.41 m wide; big, vertical, carefully engraved letters; 0.06 – 0.08 m high. The two fragments fit perfectly. The fragment from the upper row of the threshold shows that the monument was cut into two pieces, both serving simultaneously and not successively as building material for the third phase of the gate, a fact which suggests that the upper part of the threshold, made up of the five slabs, was built up at the same date (Fig. 5).

⁶ e.g. ISM, V, no. 181 (Troesmis); IDR, III/3, no. 179 (Micia); 358 (Ampelum). Many inscriptions indicate only *Memoria*.

⁷ Z. Gocceva, *Der Bendiskult und die Beziehungen zwischen Thrakien und Kleinasien*, in *Hommage à Maarten J. Vermaseren*, I, Leiden, 1978, p. 397–404 (with the bibliography to which we also add D. Popov, *Essence, origine et propagation du culte de la déesse thrace Bendis*, in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne*, 2 (= Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besan-

çon, 188), Centre de recherches d'histoire ancienne, 21, Paris 1976, p. 289–303.

⁸ D. Decew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste*, 2 Auflage, Wien, 1976, p. 50.

⁹ CIL, III, 6137.

¹⁰ G. I. Kazarow, *DissPann*, 1938, ser. II, fasc. 14, p. 257.

¹¹ Ch. Picard, BCH, 45, 1921, p. 171, no. 33.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 173, no. 46.

¹³ V. Latigev, IOSPE, 11, no. 223.

The tombstone includes two parts: a) the upper rectangular one shows the scene of the funerary banquet (*coena funebris*). The deceased lies on his left side on a *kliné* with a thick mattress leaning against a high, S-shaped back curved at its upper extremity. The legs of the *kliné* have protuberances; the deceased seems to lie with his head propped directly on the upper edge of the bed. Under his left elbow, there is a little pillow. His right hand is bent at a right angle, touching the mattress. The legs are stretched out at full length and the feet are not covered. The table (*mensa tripes*) is of a round shape with straight legs which end in hooves. There are fruits on the table (probably apples). On both sides of the mortuary bed there are two characters; on the right side a woman, half turned to the onlooker, seated on a *kathedra* with a high back, with a slightly curved upper extremity; her legs rest on a rectangular stool which stands at the bottom of the *kathedra*; on the left side a man, probably the slave of the deceased, stands dressed in *chiton* in a static attitude.

The lower register includes the inscription field.

The text reads as follows:

D(is) M(anibus)
Ael(ius) Vale-
ns vix(it)
an(nis) XLV et
 5 *Ael(ius) Sabi-*
nus fil(ius) <et>
vix(it) an(nis) VIII
t(itulum) p(osuit) Ael(ius) Val(ens?)
ret(eranus?) . . .

10 letters E (1.2) and I (1.6) are 0.02 m high; letter E (1.8) is 0.04 m high; 1.6: *et* is a wrong addition made by the lapidary; 1.8: *V + A* in ligature.

The tombstone, *t(itulum)*, is therefore dedicated by *Aelius Valens* to another *Aelius Valens* and to his son *Aelius Sabinus*, who died at the age of 45 and 8, respectively. *Aelius Valens* seems to have been a military man or rather a veteran, tombstones decorated with the scene of funerary banquet being dedicated mostly to this kind of people¹⁴. *Aelius Valens* as well as *Aelius Sabinus* are extremely frequent names in the Balkan-Danubian provinces. Our restitution in 1.9, *ret*, although uncertain, compels recognition because the slab broke in that very place where the upper part of the oblique lines of the *V*, the beginning of *E* and the readable enough upper line of a *T* are to be noticed. They are followed by two or three more letters which are not distinguishable. *Aelius Valens*, the dedicator, is either a relative or an heir of the family of the deceased.

4. Tombstone of hard, grey limestone, broken into four fragments; found in 1987; dimensions: 2.22 × 0.82 × 0.13 m; the inscription field is slightly deepened: 0.77 × 0.43 m; the letters are 0.04 – 0.05 m high; the writing is generally neat and careful; several *hederae distinguentes* but no ornamental motifs. The paleography of the letters and the many ligatures date the inscription back to the first half of the third century (Fig. 6).

The text reads as follows:

D(is) M(anibus) Val(erio) Po-
ntico et Val(eriae)
Nene parenti-
bus b(ene) merenti(bus)
 5 *Val(erius) Valens*
fil(ius)
mil(es) leg(ionis)
I Ital(icae)
posuit

1.2: *N + T*, *V + A + L* in ligature; 1.3: *N + F* in a double ligature; *N + T* in ligature; 1.4: *N + T + I* in ligature; 1.5: *V + A* in ligature; letters *A* in lines 1–5 have the horizontal binding line oblique.

Ponticus is a name of Greek origin¹⁵, taken over and widely used in the Roman World and rather widely spread in the Balkan-Danubian and Micro-Asiatic provinces of the Roman Empire. *A Iulius Ponticus* appears in 134 on the *laterculus* of the Legion V Macedonica quartered at Troesmis¹⁶. The name occurs no less than four times in another inscription found in the same

¹⁴ Z. Covaceff, *Pontica*, 18, 1985, p. 175.

¹⁶ ISM, V, no. 137, col. IX, 3, A. *Fl(avius) Pont(icus*

¹⁵ W. Pape, G. Benseker, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen*, II, Braunschweig, 1911, p. 1233–1234.

ianus?) also appears, in col. VI 15.

fortress and dated to A. D. 106–168 designating various members of a family of military men (veterans and men serving in the same unit) of Amastris¹⁷. *Valerius Valens* is a widely spread name in the Empire, especially in the Balkan-Danubian provinces, so we shall not insist upon it. If *Valerius Ponticus*, the father, had had any connection with the army, then *Valerius Valens*, soldier in I Italica, who dedicated this monument to his parents, could have inherited the military traditions in which he had been brought up.

Nene appears in this very form in an inscription at Sacidava in which the name was correctly read by A. Aricescu¹⁸. A Νηνης, as a familiar feminine appellation appears near Nicopolis ad Istrum¹⁹ and still as a feminine name under the form of *Nina*, *Ninna*, *Ninnita*, as martyrs in Thessalonica, Byzantium, and Noviodunum²⁰. A composite Νενίσος appears as a masculine name at Resovo in Macedonia²¹. We also mention the form *Nonna*, martyr in the same town²². A *Fl(avia) Nona* appears on a fragment of a votive altar in Tomis dated back to the first third of the 2nd century²³.

The name was considered to be of Thracian, Celtic, Greek or Micro-Asiatic stock²⁴. The feminine name *Nene* is a nickname, as proved very clearly by the inscription near Nicopolis ad Istrum: Αὐρηλία Σαδὶνα ἡ καὶ Νηνης. *Valeria Nene* at Halmyris seems to be part of an important group of Thracio-Phrygian elements of Asia Minor, settled at one moment or successively in the eastern Moesia Inferior. The big family of veterans and military men serving in the legion Vth Macedonica at Troesmis, the people in Sacidava, Tomis, Noviodunum and Nicopolis ad Istrum plead for this inference. On the other hand, the mention of the Legion I Italica, and of its soldier, *Valerius Valens*, on the inscription at Independența raises the question of the presence of a legionary vexillation in the fort or its neighbourhood in the first half of the 3rd century. We think it is obvious that the funerary monument dates after the departure of the Vth Macedonica to Dacia, as it is difficult to suppose that *Valerius Valens* left Novae and erected a funerary monument at Halmyris, i.e. Independența. Even if the mention of the Legion I Italica is not an irrefutable argument for accepting the presence at Halmyris of a vexillation of that legion in the first half of the 3rd century, the epigraphical evidence shows that during this period the sector of the maritime Danube was strictly controlled by the legion in Novae through its subunits²⁵. If we take into account the fact that the administrative and military authority of the Legion I Italica was exerted over these regions and over the northern and north-western shore of the Black Sea and it extended over the activities of the Moesian fleet²⁶, and the fact that at Halmyris there was a fleet station near the fort, epigraphically proved by the existence of a *vicus classicorum*²⁷, we can suppose that sub-units of the legion I Italica were, from the second half of the second century until the Tetrarchic epoch a common presence in the Halmyris fort.

5. Tombstone of yellowish limestone; fragmentary; found in 1987; dimensions: 0.68 × 0.90 × 0.20 m; the slightly deepened inscription field is 0.58 m wide; the letters are 0.05–0.06 m high; the letters are separated by *hederac distinguentes*; traces of lead minium. The date of the inscription: A. D. 106–168 (Fig. 7).

The text reads as follows:

.....
[ri]
 x(it) an[n]is XXXII
 C(a)us Val(erius) Lon-
 ginus vet(eranus)
 5 l[e]g(ionis) V Mac(edonicae)
 ex h(eneficiario) ...
 COXXI

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, nr. 186.

¹⁸ A. Aricescu, SCIV, 21, 1973, 1, p. 112–113 re-reads the letters NE at the end of l. 7 of the Sacidava inscription (N. Gostar, *Noi monumente epigrafice din Scythia Minor*, Constanța, 1964, p. 89–90 = StCl, 5, 1963, p. 306–309, fig. 12) repeated at the beginning of the next line (l. 8), in a single word which represents, in fact, the name of the deceased's wife, *Nene*, as a familiar appellation. The same reading with E. Popescu, *Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România*, București, 1976, no. 188.

¹⁹ G. Mihailov, IGB, II, 687.

²⁰ D. Deceș, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 328.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 332.

²³ ISM, II, no. 160 with the whole bibliography of the

problem and with the observation that the term *dumus* in the Latin transcription of the Greek δοῦμος is of a Thracio-Phrygian origin.

²⁴ For more detailed discussions see A. Holder, *Alt-keltischer Sprachschatz*, 2, Leipzig, 1896–1904, p. 759; P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen, 1896, 313–344; I. Sundwall, *Klio*, 11, 1912, p. 170; L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen*, Prague, 1964, p. 357, no. 1024 (1–4); 359, no. 1035 (1).

²⁵ E. Doruțiu-Boilă, SCIV, 23, 1972, 1, p. 56–59; A. Aricescu, *Pontica*, 10, 1977, p. 179–190; *idem*, *Armata în Dobrogea română*, București, 1977, p. 41–44.

²⁶ E. A. Belicaev, VDI, 106, 1968, 4, p. 127–137; T. Sarnowski, *Novaeusia*, 3, Warszawa, 1987, p. 135–165.

²⁷ See note No. 2.

1.2 : *x* on the left side certainly comes from *vix(it)* ; *A + N* in ligature ; 1.5 : *M + A* in ligature ; 1.7 : uncertain reading, letters erased ; probably *COH* or *CON* or *COXI*.

Caius Valerius Longinus is, therefore, a *veteranus ex beneficiario* but it is hard to tell whether he was *legati legionis*, *consularis*, or *procuratoris* as this office appears many times on the *laterculus* of the V Macedonica at Troesmis. The name *Valerius Longinus* is mentioned two more times in the same inscription²⁸. As a veteran settled in the *canabae* of Halmyris, C. Valerius Longinus erected a monument in honour of an unknown person who had lived for 32 years. Under normal circumstances, if one of the two *Valerii Longini* at Troesmis and our Longinus were one and the same person, the *laterculus* at Troesmis should have contained the indication *ex beneficiario* since both inscriptions mention veterans. It is preferable then to consider Longinus at Halmyris as a third Valerius Longinus mentioned in Dobrugea.

6. Tombstone of yellowish limestone, broken into four fragments ; found in 1987 ; dimensions : 2.56 × 0.90 × 0.25 m ; the inscription field is slightly deepened : 1.30 × 0.45 m ; letters are 0.65 × 0.08 m high ; upright, elegant letters with straight symmetrical lines. The monument has two parts : a) the upper one reveals a vaulted gable wall in relief, 0.70 m high, supported by two small columns with Corinthian style and bases in stairs. A dolphin is shown on the top right ; the same representation must have existed on the left top corner as well, but the slab was cut in right angle to fit into the left fold of the northern gate. In the middle there is a *corona* with dense leaves bound at the bottom with a tape in the form of a *hedera* which branches symmetrically. In the middle of the *corona* there are a palm of *acanthus* and two rosettes placed laterally with three petals each ; b) the inscription field is framed by the two little columns. We date the inscription to the second half of the second century (Fig. 8).

The text reads as follows :

D(is) M(anibus)

Memmia Mar-

cia vixit

annis XVIII

5 *Mem(mius) Mar-*

cus pater

eius et Fl(avius) Mar-

tinus mari-

tus eius et

10 *Fl(avius) Secun-*

dus d eius

coniugi

p(ientissimae) p(osuerunt)

1.2 : *A + M + A* in ligature ; 1.7 : *E + T* and *M + A* in ligature ;

1.9 : *E + T* in ligature ; dots among some words on lines 7, 9, 10, 11, 12.

In the Halmyris fort there lived a family of *Memmii* which, judging from the general appearance of the monument, may have belonged to the local aristocracy. *Memmius* is an ancient Italic name²⁹. In Lower Moesia as well as in other Balkan-Danubian provinces and generally throughout the Empire *Memmii* are rather frequent.

The text raises no reading difficulties. The relationship can be easily traced.

Memmius Marcus — ?

|
Memmia Marcia — Flavius Martinus

Flavius Secundus, mentioned at the end of the inscription, entitled himself *D EIUS*, hence *D* of *Memmia Marcia*. Although another *Flavius Secundus* appeared in inscription No.1 of IndependenȚa, it seems highly improbable that they are one and the same person although the latter died at about fifty years of age and this might be an argument for supporting the identity between the two persons. The abbreviation *D* seems more difficult to interpret. It should stand for a noun — the name of a function — that must be in grammatical agreement with the pronoun in the genitive singular following it. The abbreviation *D* might mean either *d(ispensator)*³⁰, manager of the goods of *Memmia Marcia*, or *d(octor)* with the sense of teacher³¹, or *d(omesticus)*, meaning “member of the family, client, friend”, or even less probably “slave, affranchised, servant”.

²⁸ ISM, V, no. 137, col. II 22 ; col. VI 18.

²⁹ Groag-Fluss, in RE, 15, 1932, col. 602–637 ; s.v. *Memmius*, col. 637–638, *Memmia*.

³⁰ R. Cagnat, *Cours d'épigraphie latine*, Paris, 1914, p. 421, with the known variants for the abbreviation *D*.

³¹ A similar interpretation is made for letter *d* on an inscription of *Nemausus* (Nîmes), ILS, 5087 : *Tr/Q. Vettio Gracili cor trium/ annorum XXV/natione Hispan/donavit L. Sestius/Latinus d(octor)*.

7. Tombstone of yellowish limestone, found in 1987; dimensions: $2.31 \times 0.90 \times 0.20$ m; the deepened and framed inscription field: 1.35×0.64 m; the letters are 0.05 – 0.06 m high; the big, artless and sometimes asymmetrical letters have lead minium traces. The upper part of the block was cut in order to fit into the right leaf of the gate threshold. On the grounds of the paleography of the letters the inscription can be dated back to the latter half of the 2nd century or the early 3rd century A. D. (Fig. 9).

The monument has two parts: the upper one is divided into three fields by two lateral oblique stripes, making up a triangular fronton with ornaments of acanthus branches on both sides. Inside the triangular fronton there are a *corona* with traces of lead minium and a pine fruit above it. A *tenia* binds the crown at its base. Two symmetrical *hedera* branches spring from the upper side of the crown. The lower part of the block is decorated with the well-known motif of the krater with two vine branches with leaves and clusters winding along the frame and ending with a coil under the *tenia* of the crown.

The lower part contains the following inscription:

*D(is) M(anibus)
Fl(aviae) Titiae mat-
ri posuit Ael(ius)
Titianus filiu(s)*

5 *bene meren-
ti vivit an(nis) LX*

1.4: A + N + V in ligature; 1.6: A + N in ligature; letter A in lines 2, 4, 6 does not have the horizontal binding line.

Therefore, *Aelius Titianus*, the son, put a tombstone in honour of his mother, *Flavia Titia*, who died at the age of sixty. Names such as *Titia*, *Titius*, *Titus* have an old Roman origin³², but during the Principate they were exclusively used as *cognomina* with the masculine variant *Titianus* quite frequent in the Balkan-Danubian provinces and in the Empire in general.

8. The last monument presented here comes from a fortuitous discovery. It is a tombstone published by E. Bujor in 1954³³. We resume the discussion of the text of that monument on the one hand because it was not included in the volume *Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor*, V, București, 1980 and on the other because the article published in a former number of the review *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche* could pass unnoticed by epigraphists (as experience showed). We did not have the possibility to see the inscription itself so all the technical data below are taken from the already published text.

Fragmentary funerary slab of limestone; broken into two pieces; found in 1934 (or before?); dimensions: $110 \times 0.82 \times 0.10$ m; the inscription field is slightly deepened and bordered by a frame on which the vine stalk with leaves and cluster is represented; the letters are 0.05 m high. After the character of the letters the inscription dates back to the second half of the second century.

The text reads:

[D(is) M(anibus)]

!

rius vivit

annos LXX

5 *q Primitiva*

co(n)iu bene

merito co(n)[iu]

gi pos[uit ...]

l(ocus)[m(onumentu) in f(rontem) p(edes)]

1.1: letter L is followed by a vertical rod and the lower part of another vertical one; 1.4: the last figure, X, from LXX falls in the broken part of the slab but it nevertheless preserves the initial printing.

Beside the author's epigraphical considerations, one can make some other remarks which spring from a thorough examination of the photo; 1.4: figure L appears overturned; 1.5: two letters, maybe F + L, are probably in ligature, which gives FL(avia); 1.6–7: the form with *bene merito* instead of *bene merenti* is not very common³⁴ and refers directly to the Primitiva's husband; 1.7–8: the only possible reading is *co(n)[iu]gi* as a synonym for *maritus* which appears in inscription No. 6. The reading of the last line as proposed by the author remains, in any case, wholly hypothetical.

³² W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte der lateinischen Eigennamen*, Berlin, 1904, s.v. *Titus*.

³³ E. Bujor, SCIV, 5, 1954, 3–4, p. 599–601.

³⁴ See for example, ISM, V, no. 244.

Fig. 1. Independența. The northern gate of the fort with the original threshold.

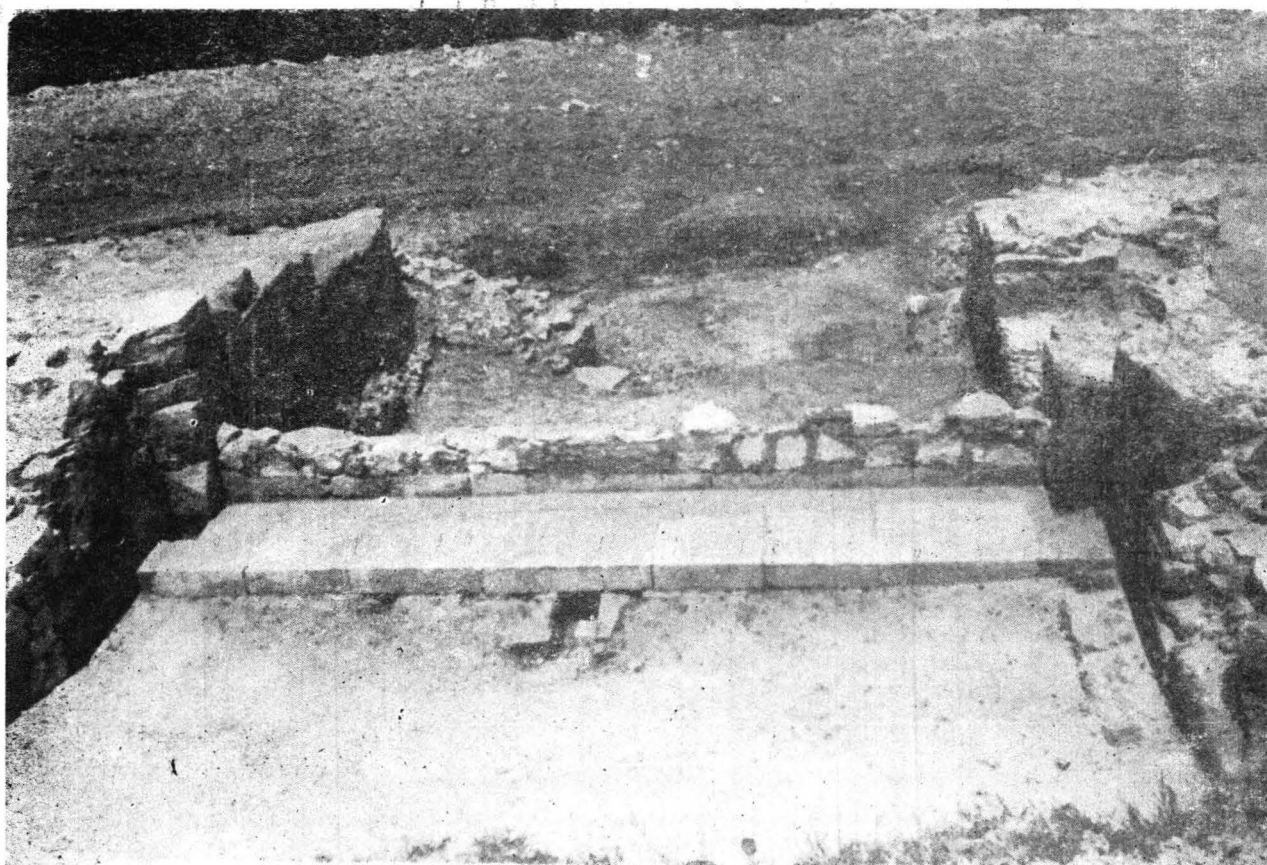


Fig. 2. Independența. The northern gate of the fort with the new restored threshold.

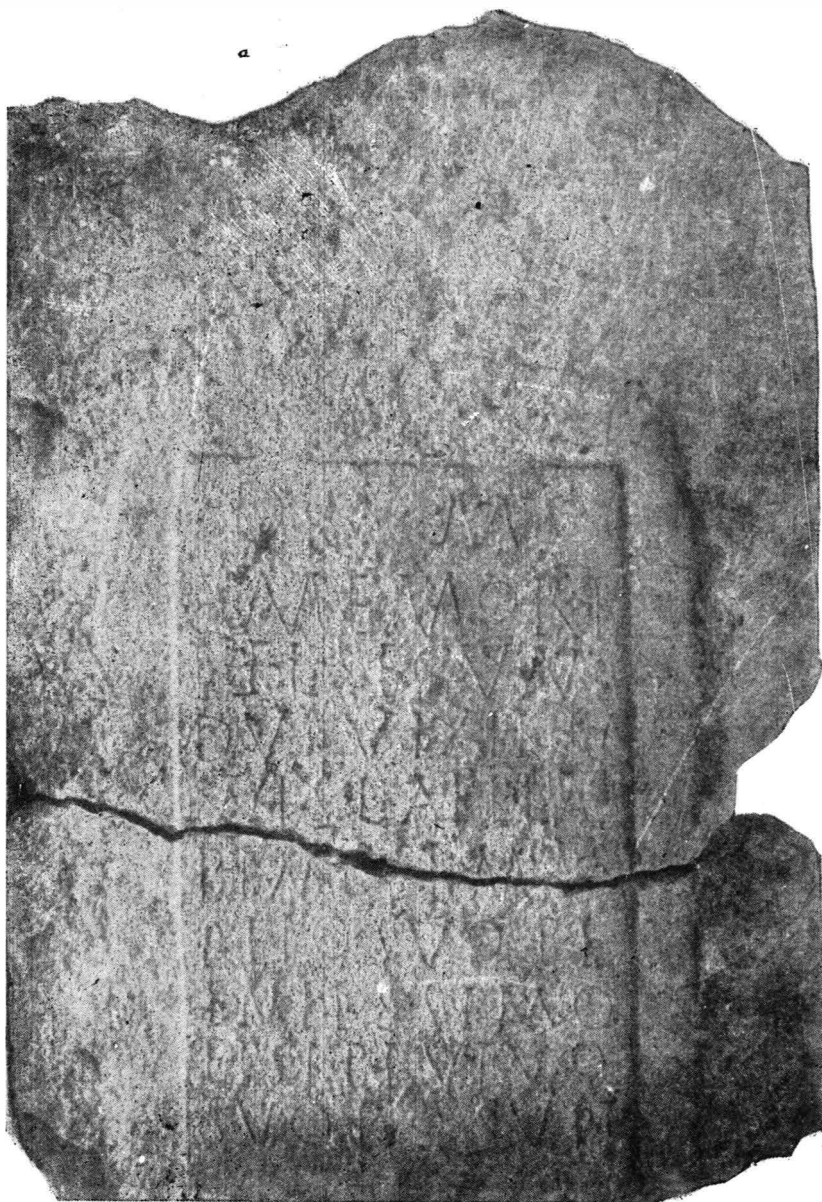


Fig. 3. Independența. The funerary slab dedicated by *Aelia Bendsi* to her husband, *T. Flavius Secundus*.

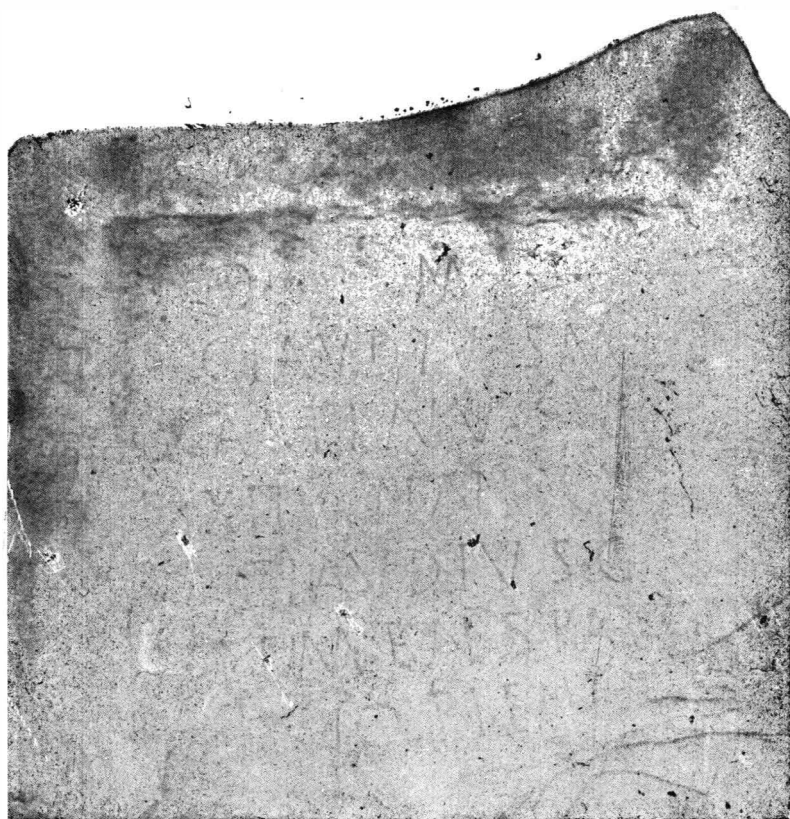


Fig. 4. Independența. The funerary slab dedicated by *Claudius Clemens* to his son, *Claudius Martinus*.

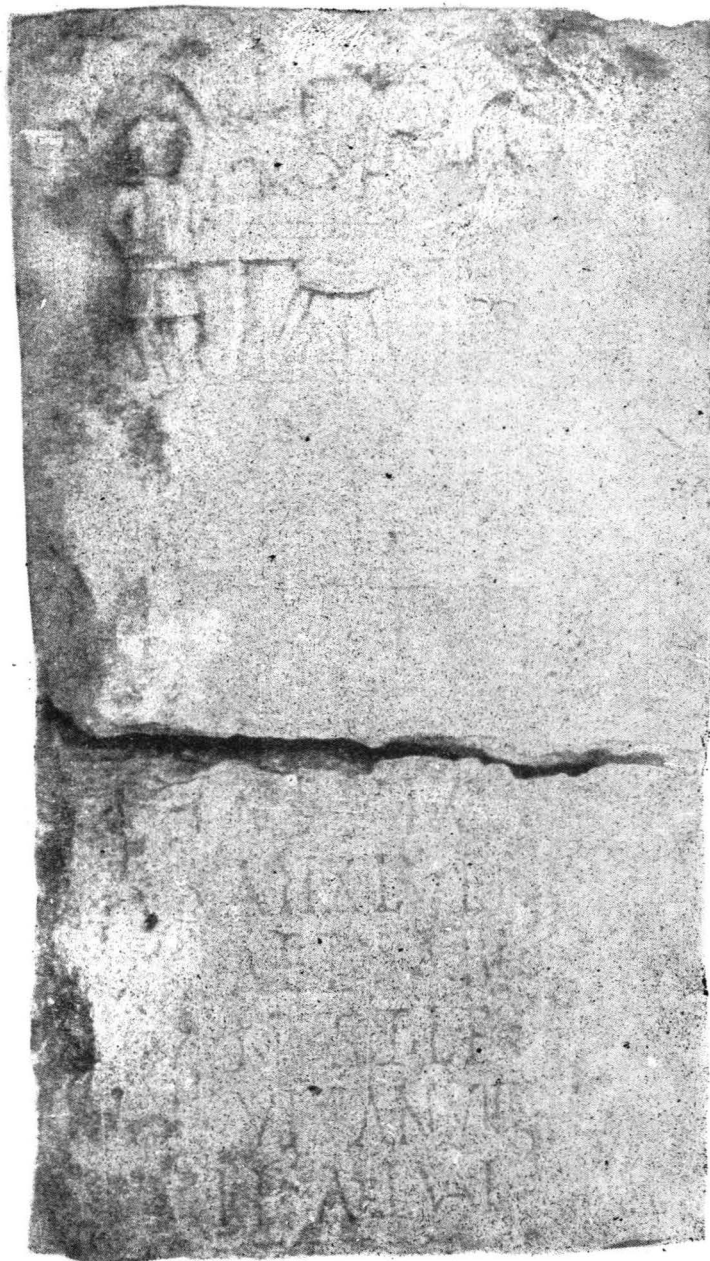


Fig. 5. Independența. The tombstone with the scene of the funeral banquet dedicated to *Aelius Valens* and *Aelius Sabinus*.

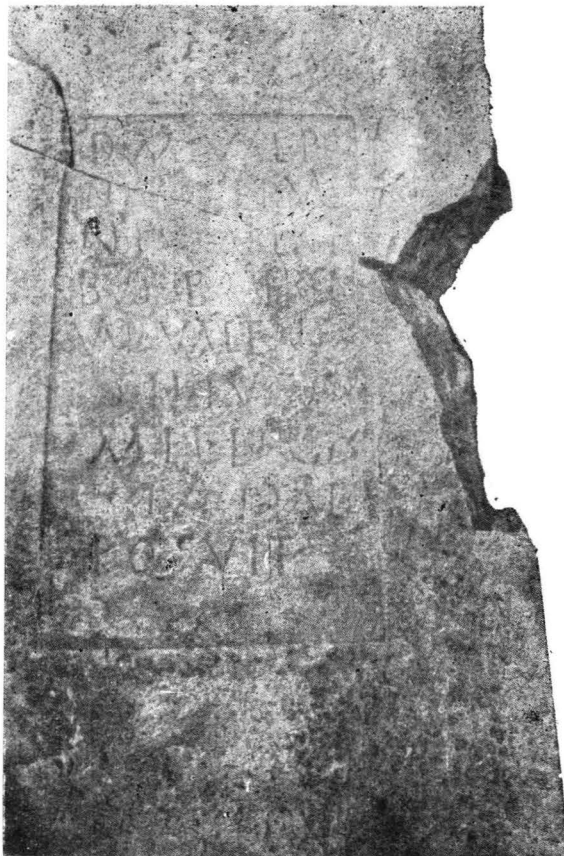


Fig. 6. Independența. The funerary slab dedicated by *Valerius Valens*, soldier in the Legion I Italica, to his parents, *Valerius Ponticus* (father) and *Valeria Nene* (mother)



Fig. 7. Independența. Fragmentary funerary slab recording *Caius Valerius Longinus*, *veteranus ex beneficiario* in the Legion V Macedonica.



Fig. 8. Independența. The tombstone of *Memmi*

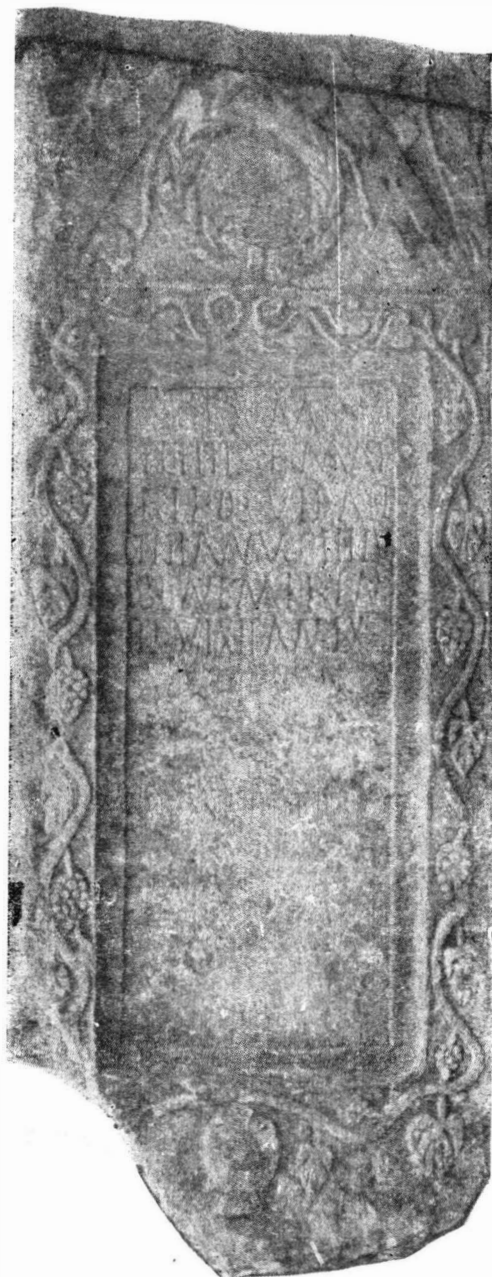


Fig. 9. Independența. The tombstone dedicated by *Aelius Tilius* to his mother, *Flavia Tilia*.

The analysis of the texts on the epigraphic monuments, three of which are monuments of art as well, leads to some paleographic, grammatical and artistic conclusions and also entail more general socio-juridical remarks regarding the extent in which these documents reflect the degree of Romanization of the society at Halmyris.

a. *Paleography*. All the letters on the eight pieces under examination evince remarkable correctness of lines although some are asymmetrically or artlessly engraved (Nos. 1, 2, 4). In the inscriptions made for the wealthy families (Nos. 3, 6) the line is accurate, straight.

A series of paleographic characteristics are quite notable: letter N slightly slants to the right (Nos. 2, 4, 7): letter F has an exaggeratedly prolonged left base (No. 1); but for one text (No. 2), all the others contain ligatures to a smaller (Nos. 1, 3) or greater extent (Nos. 4, 6, 7).

b. *Grammar*. From the very beginning we must emphasize that the seven inscriptions are written in correct Latin. However, we must remark several peculiarities: in inscription No. 1 the copulative conjunction *et* links *DM* and *Memoria*. Quite notable that the quasi-obligatory completion *Memori(ae)* would have required Flavius Secundus' name in its Genitive and not in the Nominative case, as it is written.

In inscription No. 2 the final *S* is far from the name proper, perhaps for reasons of space economy or perhaps because the process of its deletion had already started, at least in colloquial speech. In fact the final *S* of the word *annis* in the same inscription is altogether omitted. There is a similar situation in inscription No. 7, where the final *S* of *filius* is deleted, although in this case it may have been voluntarily omitted for lack of space. Nevertheless, the deleted final *S* in the two inscriptions of Independența can be attributed to the wider phenomenon of *S* deletion in inscriptions³⁵.

Finally, let us examine two questions related to the sentence word order in inscriptions Nos. 6 and 7. In No. 6 the noun in the Dative *coniugi* must have been placed after *Flavius Martinus maritus eius* to which it is connected syntactically, particularly as it was Flavius Martinus who dedicated the tombstone to his wife (*coniugi*) and not Flavius Secundus after which the noun *coniux* is placed.

The second case (No. 7) is an instance of reversal of the final part of the text; *vixit an(nis)* *LX* must have been placed after *matri*, whereas the formula *benemerenti* must have been followed by *posuit*, and in that case the wording of the text must have been the following: *D(is) M(anibus) Fl(aviae) Titiae matri vixit an(nis) LX Aelius Titianus filius benemerenti posuit*.

The persistent preservance of native Thracian anthroponymy (No. 1) is a widely spread phenomenon being frequently resorted to as an evidence of the resistance of the native traditions in the field of onomastics to the adoption of Roman names and to Romanization in general³⁶. However strong such arguments may be, the adoption of Roman names, usually in consequence of receiving Roman citizenship, represents a wide breach in the native traditions and attests to the quick Romanization of the names, consciousness and customs of the Thracian-Dacian-Moesic population.

According to paleography, the whole set of inscriptions (except No. 5) seems to have been written during the latter half of the 2nd century and the first three decades of the 3rd century.

The eight epigraphic items speak of two *Memmii*, two *Claudii*, four *Flavii*, four *Valerii* and five *Aelii*.

The names of *Memmius* in inscription No. 6 suggest the penetration of Italic elements probably as far back as the 1st century A.D., while the names of *Claudius* and *Flavius* seem to indicate that the persons were initially of peregrine origin. The five names of *Aelius* imply that the respective persons or their parents at the most received the names under Hadrianus or Antonius Pius.

The name *Valerius* was extremely frequent in the Roman Empire in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In our particular case, C. *Valerius Longinus* was probably granted Roman citizenship when enlisting into the legion or perhaps he was a Roman citizen (the son of a veteran?) from the very day he was born, undoubtedly on the territory of Moesia Inferior (No. 5). T. *Flavius Secundus* seems also to have been a Roman citizen. The other three *Valerius* (No. 4) appear at a somewhat later date towards late 2nd century or rather the first half of the 3rd century. Anyhow, irrespective of the specific socio-juridical status of each individual, all anthroponyms on the seven funerary monuments attest to a vigorous Romanity living in north-eastern Dobrudja as far back as the 2nd–3rd centuries A. D. speaking correct Latin, with small excusable wording imperfections, the result of the fact that the language was spoken in a provincial environment

³⁵ H. Mihăescu, *La langue latine dans le sud-est de l'Europe*, București–Paris, 1978, p. 211.

³⁶ V. Beşevliev, *Untersuchungen über die Personennamen bei den Thakern*, Amsterdam, 1970, p. 60–68.

c. *Art.* From the artistic point of view, tombstone Nos. 3, 6 and 7 can be generally assigned to the typology of inscriptions already discovered in Moesia Inferior.

Number 3 belongs to the category of Danubian tombstones class B, group XI, more frequently considered to date back to the latter half of the 2nd and to the 3rd centuries, characteristic of Moesia Inferior³⁷, although some pieces belonging to the same category were found in Dacia Inferior³⁸ as well.

Tombstone No. 6 was not included among the types characteristic of Moesia Inferior. Tombstones with panels supported by colonades seem to have originated in north-eastern Italy, in Ravenna, in the lower basin of the Po river and in Venice³⁹, wherefrom they spread to Noricum, Pannonia and along the Lower Danube limes. Such tombstones are quite frequent in Moesia Inferior, particularly in its western areas⁴⁰. In contrast to the already known cases, the tombstone of Independența displays some original variants of ornamentation and stylistic arrangement. Thus, the acanthus flower is surrounded by a wreath and there are two lateral rosettes which lend originality to the disposition of ornaments.

The dolphins flanking the upper side of the panel represent another original addition as compared to the already known set of tombstones of this type. As for the long Corinthian colonades that support the panel, there is an analogy, although not a very close one, in the tombstone of Labet (Iom district) where they are rectangular⁴¹. At Peicinovo (Burmli, Belene district) the Corinthian colonades support a panel displaying the scene of the funerary banquet⁴². The Italic onomastic register in the text of inscription No. 6 as well as the north-eastern Italic origin of this type of tombstone⁴³ might point to the presence of some Italic elements in the group of colonists who settled in Halmyris or, in any case, to craftsmanship of an Italic tradition in the decoration of this tombstone. However, the slight clumsiness in writing the letters and in shaping the colonades, the slight asymmetry of the panel seem rather to indicate a local craftsmen who treated the older Italic model in an original way.

Tombstone No. 7 cannot be included in the typology of tombstones worked out by Maria Alexandrescu Vianu, because the triangular fronton is not flanked by acroteria but by floral motifs representing acanthus branches⁴⁴. The two tombstones discovered at Oescus⁴⁵ are other cases having a framed triangle without acroteria; there is no wreath on them but an ornamentation representing rich vegetation and ferns. The closest analogy to the triangular framed fronton lacking acroteria with ornamentation and wreath, treated in a similar manner is supplied by two tombstones of Troesmis⁴⁶ and the one of Marcianopolis⁴⁷.

We cannot conclude this brief analysis of the three tombstones without paying due heed to the accurate iconographic approach of subjects, the craftsmen observing all the artistic requirements of the time, which proves the strong Roman iconographic artistic tradition in the province. The slight and hardly perceivable artlessness in execution, particularly in tombstones Nos. 3 and 6, can be accounted for by the existence of local workshops in which the local stone-cutter treated in a correct but personal way the respective artistic subjects⁴⁸.

³⁷ M. Alexandrescu-Vianu, *Dacia*, N. S., 17, 1973, p. 220.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ D. P. Dimitrov, *Nadgróbnite ploči ot Rimsko vreme v Severna Bălgariia*, Sofia, 1942, nr. 20, 22, 26, 30–33, 37–39, 70–73, centered on *Rattaria*, *Bononia*, *Lukovița*, *Dobri Dol*, *Novo Selo*, *Drenoveț* with extensions as far as *Novae* and *Nicopolis ad Istrum*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, no. 26.

⁴² *Ibidem*, no. 63.

⁴³ G. Mansuelli, *Le stelle romane del territorio ravennate e del Basso Po*, Ravenna, 1967, p. 82.

⁴⁴ Under the circumstances, the previous existence of a single prominent acroterium is possible, as it was the case of the tombstone in Mokreș (D. P. Dimitrov, *op. cit.*, no. 19), subsequently removed to fit the block into the threshold.

⁴⁵ D. P. Dimitrov, *op. cit.*, no. 7, 8.

⁴⁶ ISM, V, no. 184, 186/1.

⁴⁷ D. P. Dimitrov, *op. cit.*, no. 19.

⁴⁸ For details on the various aspects of the dating and the morphology of the artistic context of the tombstones in Moesia Inferior, see G. Bordenache, *Dacia*, N. S., 9, 1965, p. 253–281; M. Alexandrescu-Vianu, *Dacia*, N. S., 21, 1977, p. 139–166; *idem*, *Dacia* N. S., 29, 1985, p. 57–59.