

CIL III 14450 = IGLR 3 = ISM II 155. A REVISION AND REASSESSMENT

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Cuvinte cheie: *inscripție, editori, provincie, împărați, Scythia, Dioclețian, dux, turn, porți, incintă, refacere.*

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Rezumat: *Studiul oferă noi lecturi ale unor pasaje de importanță majoră din bine cunoscuta inscripție tetrarhică tomitană CIL III 14450 = IGLR 3 = ISM II 155, posibile datorită unei complete re-examinări a piesei. Pe baza lecturilor anterioare ale editorilor, comentariile se concentrează strict asupra rândurilor 2/1; 7/6; 8/17; 9/8; 11/9, care aduc noi contribuții asupra capitalei provinciei Scythia în ce privește statutul său juridic, comanda la nivel provincial și intervențiile constructive ale autorităților oficiale.*

Abstract: *The study offers new readings of some passages of critical importance yielded by the well-known Tetrarchic inscription CIL III 14450 = IGLR 3 = ISM II 155 due to high-quality photos and a thorough re-examination of the stone. Reproducing former editors' readings, the commentary focuses strictly on the lines 2/1; 7/6; 8/17; 9/8; 11/9 which shed new lights on the capital of the province of Scythia as to its juridical position, provincial high level command, and late 3rd century building interventions by the official authorities.*

01. General.

The stone is a well-known fragmentary building inscription¹ found at Tomis and recorded currently under no. inv. MNA L no. 496 in the lapidarium of the Institute of Archaeology „Vasile Pârvan” in Bucharest (Fig. 1).

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¹ The stone is labelled by the editors as follows: ‘inscription’ (GR. TOCILESCU, *Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie*, Bucharest, 1900, p. 213, no. 42) (further *Fouilles*); ‘document of public character’ (I. STOIAN, *Tomitana. Contribuții epigrafice la istoria cetății Tomis*, București, 1962, p. 127, nr. 28) (further *Tomitana*); ‘limestone block’ (IGLR 3), *Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV- XIII descoperite pe teritoriul României*, București, 1976 (further IGLR), p. 37, nr. 3, I. STOIAN, *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine*,

The piece was published in several editions with commentaries and considered one of the benchmarks in the early Tetrarchic history of Tomis (Constanța), the capital of the ancient province of Scythia.

The present approach is far from being a new edition. It aims only at filling some important gaps left by the previous editors in the reading of the script and to offer a more complete and as comprehensive understanding as possible of the text of the inscription.

02. *Technical data and the state of conservation.*

A new systematic physical examination of the stone has been carried out in November 2015 accompanied by detailed high definition photography.

The measurements provided the following exact dimensions of the fragment preserved nowadays: length: 0.75 cm; width: 0.72 cm; thickness: 0.49 cm; the height of the letters: 4.0 - 4.5 cm².

The block is a compact white tough oolitic, calcareous stone of Triassic formation, without gravel or vegetal intrusions. In spite of its present day modest dimensions, the mass of the stone is remarkably heavy. The stone is broken on the mid left side where it shows a considerable concavity which caused the disappearance of the beginning of the writing on some lines. The left upper part shows visible traces of breakage. The piece was also massively broken on its lower and middle right sides, where important parts of the text are irremediably lost. The lower part of the block is seriously marked by a break which caused the loss of an almost entire line.

The inscription field shows a hollowed oblique line, some millimeters in depth, which affected the tract of some letters. Other incongruities consist in some indents on the right part of the stone and some other small notches on the upper left part which altered letters of some lines.

The inscription's field shows 11 visible lines bearing different degrees of clarity³.

1.0. *Editions and references*

According to Gr. Tocilescu's statement the piece was found in Constanța⁴. No other detail is offered as to the exact place or circumstances of discovery⁵. He

vol. II. Tomis și teritoriul său. Culese, traduse, însoțite de comentarii de Iorgu Stoian. Indici de Al. Suceveanu, București, 1987 (further ISM II) p. 184 n. 155/40); 'Altar oder einer Statuenbasis' (HD043009).

² The recent measurement coincides exactly with the figures offered by Em. Popescu, IGLR 3, but differs from that of ISM II 155(40): 0.75 x 0.67 x 0.50 m; the height of the letters 0.04-0.04 m); *Fouilles*, p. 213, no. 42; *Tomitana*, p. 127, no. 28 did not provide any dimensions of the block. For HD043009 the stone is: 75 cm x 67 cm x 50 cm; letters are 4 cm high.

³ As a general observation the stone was strongly rolled by water, as it is noticeable from the round smooth corners of the four sides, but it is difficult to say whether the process occurred after the breaking of the block or the fragmentation was caused by water. The erosion is visible mainly at the upper half of the block as shown by some letters almost wiped in the first two lines.

⁴ *Fouilles*, p. 213, nr. 42. The only indication is the note sent to the editors of CIL p. 2328⁹²: *Constantza rep. nunc Bucarest in museo.*

⁵ Th. Mommsen states only: *Tocilescu misit* (for CIL III).

first published the text of the inscription with a significant restitution accompanied by a thoughtful commentary: 'Nous proposons sous toutes réserves cette restitution dont l'unique utilité sera de mettre en valeur les différentes parties de l'inscription'.

There are five main editions of the document with important commentaries and interpretations:

1. *Fouilles* p. 213 no. 42.
2. CIL III 14450⁶.
3. *Tomitana*, p. 127, nr. 28.
4. IGLR p. 37-38 no. 3 fig. 3.
5. ISM II, p. 184-185 no. 155(40) fig 155.

The text of the inscription was partially reproduced by Lambrino⁷ and completely by Vermaseren⁸. The complete text was also reproduced in ILS 4103, HD043009 and EDCS. Soon after the publication in CIL, the inscription offered ground for historical debate⁹.

1.1. *The editors' readings*

Tocilescu, who apparently was the first to see and check the letters on the stone unnoticed some highly damaged traces of letters on the very edge of the fragment revealed by the new pictures: O (?), M (?), M(?). Other letters would be possible on this line, but considerable deterioration obstructs any coherent identification and reading.

That makes plausible the existence of a first line (1) which seems to have been erased or severely damaged and therefore far from being restorable. For

⁶ CIL III 14450 made an important modification to Gr. Tocilescu's reading which served as base for further editions and readings (see below).

⁷ LAMBRINO 1936, p. 915, n. 9.

⁸ CIMRM 1960, 364 no. 2301. The inscription was recently reproduced in two important epigraphic collections: Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg (HD043009): D[eo] Soli pro [sal(ute)] / [Im]pp(eratorum) CC(aesarum) C(ai) Val(eri) Dioclet[iani] / [[et M(arci) Aurel(i) Val(eri) Maximiani]]] / [inv]icti(!) Augg(ustorum) trib(unicia) pot(estate) P(iorum) [F(elicium)] / [iu]sso(!) hac desposit[i]one(!) / [dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)] Augg(ustorum) porta[m] civi]/[ta]ti praesida[riam] / [cur(ante)] C(aio) Aurel(io) F[irminiano] v(iro) p(erfectissimo)] / [devo]tissimo n[umini] Augg(ustorum)] / [ci]vitas [Tomitanorum] fec(it)].

Epigraphik Datenbank Claus/Slaby (EDCS) (Moesia Inferior):

De[o] Soli pro [sal(ute)] / [Im]pp(eratorum) CC(aesarum) C(ai) Val(eri) Dioclet[iani] / [[et M(arci) Aurel(i) Val(eri) Maximiani]]] / [Inv]icti Aug(usti) trib(unicia) pot(estate) P(ii) F(elices) / [iu]ss<u=O> hac d<i=E>spositione / [dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum)] Augg(ustorum) porta[m(?)] civi]/[ta]ti praesidia[li] / [cur(ante)] C(aio) Aurel(io) F[irminiano] v(iro) p(erfectissimo)] / [devo]tissimo n[umini] Augg(ustorum)] / [ci]vitas [Tomitanorum] fec(it)].

⁹ PÂRVAN 1915, p. 415-450, n. 5; NETZHAMMER 1924 p. 397-412; IORGA 1971, p. 19, 78; LAMBRINO 1936, p. 915 and n. 9; VULPE 1938, p. 296; BARNEA 1968, p. 376; SUCEVEANU 1969, p. 353; POPESCU 1977, p. 258 and n. 8; ARICESCU 1977, p. 125, 162; ZAHARIADE 1988, p. 33, 42; BARNEA 1991, p. 195; PROTASE 2001, p. 488; LEWIN 2004, p. 228-229; ZAHARIADE 2006, p. 71; IONESCU & PAPUC 2005, p. 79-80; SUCEVEANU 2009, p. 243; BĂJENARU 2010, p. 33-34, n. 92; MATEI-POPESCU 2014, p. 191.

convenience, we will add this potential first line to the generally accepted ten lines, but will be considered only in the process of re-numbering of the standardized editors' arrangement.

1. 1. [O..., M..., M...]

1. 2 (1). *Fouilles*: [in hon(orem) d(omus) d(ivinae)] e[t] D(eo) SOLI PRO [salute et victoria]; CIL: [in h d ?] D(eo) SOLI PRO [sal(ute)]; *Tomitana*: DE[o] SOLI PRO [salute]; IGLR + ISM II: DE[o] SOLI PRO [sal(ute)].

1. 3 (2). *Fouilles*: [im]PP(eratorum) CC(aesarum duorum) C(aii) VAL(erii) DIOCLET[iani...]; CIL: [im]PP CCC VAL DIOCLET[iani]; *Tomitana*: [im]PP(eratorum) C(aesarum) C. VAL(erii) DIOCLET[iani]; IGLR: [im]P(eratorum) C(aesarum duorum) C(ai) VAL(erii) DIOCLE[tiani]; ISM II: [im]P(eratorum) C(aesarum duorum) C(ai) VAL(erii) DIOCLET[iani];

1. 4 (3). *Fouilles*: [et M. Val. Maximiani]; CIL: [et M. Aur. Maximiani] ; *Tomitana*: et [M. Val(erii) Maximiani]; ISM II: [et M(arci) Aurel(ii) Val(erii) Maximiani]; IGLR: [et M(arci) Aur(elii) Maximiani];

1. 5 (4). CIL: [inv]ICTI AVGG TRIB POT P [fel]; *Fouilles*: [inv]ICTI AVG (usti) TRIB(unicia) POT(estate)P(ii)fel(ices); *Tomitana*+IGLR+ISM II: [inv]ICTI AVG (usti) TRIB(unicia) POT(estate) P(ii) fel(ices);

1. 6 (5). *Fouilles*: [ex iu]SSO HAC D[i]SPOSIT [io....]; CIL+ *Tomitana*+ IGLR+ ISM II: [iu]SSO HAC DESPOSIT[i]one];

1. 7 (6). *Fouilles*: AAVGG(ustorum duorum) (sic!) PORTA[...]; CIL; [dd nm] AVGG PORTA[m civi]; *Tomitana*: D(ominorum) N(ostrorum) [Aug(ustorum) PORTA[m civi]; IGLR: [D(ominorum) N(ostrorum) AVG(ustorum) PORTA[s sive-m civi]; ISM II: [D(ominorum) N(ostrorum) AVG(ustorum) PORTA[m civi];

1. 8 (7). *Fouilles*: [...]TI PRAESIDA[...]; CIL: [ta]TI PRAESD[i]A[riam]; *Tomitana* + IGLR II: [ta]TI PRAESIDA[riam]; IGLR:[ta]TI PRAESIDA[li sive-ariae];

1. 9 (8). *Fouilles*: [Imp(eratoris) C(aesaris)] C(aii) AVREL(ii) D[iocletiani invic-]; CIL:[cur] C. AVREL F[irminiano v(iro) p(erfectissimo)]; *Tomitana* + IGLR+ ISM II: [cur(ante)] C. AVREL(io) F[(irminiano) v(iro) p(erfectissimo)];

1. 10 (9). *Fouilles*: [invic]TISSIMO N[umini devota]; CIL: [devo]TISSIMO N[um. m. eor]; *Tomitana*+IGLR+ISM II: [devo]TISSIMO N[umini Aug(ustorum)].

1. (11)10. *Fouilles*: [ci]VITAS [Tomitanorum]; CIL: [ci]VITAS [Tomit fec]; *Tomitana* + IGLR+ ISM II: [ci]VITAS [Tomitanorum fec(it)].

1.2. Commentary and additional restorations

There is space available on both sides of the inscription field for some more restorations.

1. 2(1). After DE[o] SO[LI], the space would allow about seven or eight letters, until the next clearly visible PRO. A possible [*invicto*] is unreadable but likely, given the epithet commonly attributed to the Sun God in this epoch¹⁰. PRO is clear on the stone, but the restorable [*sal(ute)*] falls entirely in the break, although apparently there is enough room for the term to fit into the line. The additional wording [*et victoria*], suggested by Gr. Tocilescu, although in a

¹⁰ HIJMANS 1996, p. 115-150; HALSBERGHE 1972, *passim*; HIJMANS 2003, p. 377-398; BERRENS 2004; BOWMAN 2005, p. 67-89, especially p. 78; LENSKI 2006, p. 59-90.

requiring position, seems unlikely on this line because of lack of space: possible final reading of the line: D(eo) SOLI [**invicto**] PRO [salute].

l. 3(2) The name of Diocletian is rendered as DIOCLE[tiani] in IGLR, while all others read: DIOCLET. However, the letter T is followed by a clearly visible I on the photography which results in DIOCLETI.

The proposed reading would be: [IM]P(eratorum) CC (Caesarum duorum) C(ai) VAL(erii) DIOCLETI[ani].

l. 4(3). The length of the line allowed *Fouilles* and *Tomitana* proposed restitution of the name of M. Valerius Maximianus: [[ET M(arci) VAL(erii) MAXIMIANI]]. The name was erased possibly soon after Maximianus' death in 312¹¹. Instead of VAL(erii), IGLR prefers the alternative AVR(elii), which certainly the Emperor bore. ISM II restores the entire name with both alternatives: M(arci) AVREL(ii) VAL(erii) MAXIMIANI. The abbreviation AVREL, which is on the stone some lines below, is rather unusual and highly rarely rendered; AVR would be more preferable in this case. The length of the line on our inscription could possibly allow the two gentilices, Valerius and Aurelius, but this is only a mere guess in view of the bad state of the line¹².

The proposed restoration is M(arci) AVREL(ii) VAL(erii) MAXIMIANI.

l. 5(4). The wording [Inv]ICTI AVG(usti) TRIB(unicia) POT(estate) P(ii) [f(elices)] is unanimously accepted. It is clearly visible a second G after Augusti. The group TRIB is damaged in its upper part, but easily readable. Clear readable P as part of the epithets *pii felices*. The terms *pii felices* must have been rendered on the inscription PP FF i. e. PP(ii) [FF(elices)] for the traces of a second, smaller P appears in the rear of the first, at the extreme right break of the inscription. If so, it further requires a double F which both fall into the break; the most likely restoration: [Inv]ICTI AVGG(usti) TRIB(unicia) POT(estate) PP (ii)

[FF(elices)]¹³.

l.(6)5. [iu]SSO HAC DESPOSIT[ione] is clearly readable and assumed by all editors. IGLR restitutes DESPOSITI[one], which is indeed obvious on the inscription. *Fouilles* and other editors prefer to restore D[i]SPOSIT[ione]¹⁴.

¹¹ On *damnatio memoriae* see VARNER 2004. The Tomitan stone shows clear signs of that operation carried out according to the principle: *eradendos ubique titulos abolendamque omnem memoriam decerneret* (Suet. *Dom.* 23. 1). That could have happened, according to a tradition (BARNES 1982, p. 41-42; LENSKI 2006, p. 68) only after 311 in connection with a hypothetical attempt of Maximianus to assassinate Constantine. The '*damnatio memoriae*' in Roman art see PETERSEN 2011, p. 1-8.

¹² The abbreviation AVR(elius) alternates in many cases with VAL(erius) but both are represented together on the inscriptions.

¹³ In the series of the Tetrarchic building inscriptions at the Lower Danube this specific term varies between PP(ii) FF(elices) at *Donje Butorke* (CERMANOVIĆ KUZMANOVIĆ 1978-1979, p. 133; *Durostorum*, at RUSSU 1933-1935[1936], p. 210), or simply PII FEL(ices) and PII FELICES at *Sexaginta Prista* (KOLENDO 1966, p. 139-154), and Transmarisca (CIL III 6151). The fragmentary Tetrarchic inscription from Seimeni (IGLR 205), in Scythia, preserves P(ii) F(elices). In general see ZAHARIADE 1999, p. 553-559.

The reading: D<I=E>SPOSITIONE.

l. 7 (6). The group AVGG must have been preceded by [DD NN] now disappeared from the stone due to the cavity produced on its left side. Even if the four letters fall entirely in the break, the right slit of the last N is clearly visible and the reading DD NN is assured.

On the same line, CIL and later editors restored M for PORTA[m]. IGLR offers the alternatives PORTA[s-/m], while *Tomitana* and ISM II prefer CIL's reading, PORTAM.

Fresh photography discloses no traces of M. T is followed by a twisted A which results in PORTA but on its upper left side there is a slight S: A+S in ligature. At the very contiguity of the break of the stone is clearly visible upper part of a C and the left upper oblique small cut of a V. The two fragments would compose CV [...] as an associative preposition (*cum*) which, in order to have a clear meaning requires a noun in Ablative (see below). The configuration of the right side of the stone leaves vacant space for additional seven or eight letters at the end of the line. The most accessible term we propose, fitting in the line and common on other building inscriptions, is *muris* (see note 26).

The proposed reading: DD(omnorum) NN(ostrorum) AVGG(ustorum) PORTAS CV [m muris] (Fig. 2)

l. 8(7). The space after the breaking of the stone to the left, at the beginning of l. 8(7) has enough room for six letters: [civita]TI. Except CIL, *Fouilles* and S. Lambrino who restored PRAESID[i]ARIAM, the later editors' readings offer *praesidariam*, *praesidali*, or *praesidiali*. The sharp image of the photography revealed the following situation:

a. an oblique handmade incision on the right upper part of the loop of letter D which means D+I in ligature; (Fig. 3)

b. small, fragmentary upper right cut from the loop of an R, after A.

The reading becomes in this case: [civita]TI PRAESIDIAR[iae]¹⁵.

[CVR(ante)] or rather [CVRANTE] is the most likely restoration of the editors. On other building inscriptions *curante* is commonly rendered non abbreviated¹⁶. The word would fit well at the end of l. 8 (7), leaving a generous space on the next line for the name of the officer.

l. 9 (8). Except *Fouilles*, all editors restored C(aio) AVREL(io) F[irminiano]. IGLR reads C. AVR(elio) although AVREL is plainly visible on the stone.

¹⁴ *Dispositione* is the correct term (cf. IGLR 238, Carcaliu); the lapicid erred and wrote *e* instead of *i* conceivably the way the word was pronounced in daily life of at least a segment of the Tomitan community.

¹⁵ It may be that the lapicid wrote initially PRAESIDARIA which could have circulated as an abbreviated form of the official *praesidiaria* and, when the review of the inscription was made, the I had no more place to fit between D and A; therefore he cut an I on top of the loop of letter D. That explains the definite reading, *praesidi[aria]*, with D+I in ligature, instead of *praesid[aria]*.

¹⁶ e. g. RIU 3, 770; IIJug. 1, 357; CIL III, 4617; 4121; 4622; 4638 a.o.

Even if *Fouilles* restored an epigraphic 'stirring difficulty'¹⁷ placing the second time in the text the name of D[iocletian], he has the great merit of apparently detecting the letter D instead of F, which the later editors or commentators did not observe and restored conjecturally F[irminianus]¹⁸.

The re-examination of the letters on the stone and high quality picture confirmed the letter D seen by Tocilescu and reveals indeed no traces of an F assumed by all later editors. There is more than half of the letter D (ca. 50%), followed apparently by the letter O (Fig. 4). The position of the latter (O) looks quite anomalous and seems to stick to the upper part of the D, which means a ligature D+O. The two letters strongly recommend a name starting with DO. A suggestion for the name would be DO[mitio/mitiano/metiano].

The editors restored a social rank of an alleged official individual: [V(ir) P(erfectissimus)]. The stone allows the restoration of both rank and office of this individual. Our proposal for the restoration of text on l. 9(8). is: [*v(iro) p(erfectissimo) duce*]. The reading with *duce* on the same line rather than on the following, 10(9), which apparently does not offer enough space for these six letters, seems most convenient. An alternative variant for the office and rank of a governor would be [*v(iro) p(erfectissimo) praeside*], but there is little room for ten letters at the end of the line or, alternatively, at the beginning of the l. 10 (9).

The proposed reading of the l. 9 (8): [*curante*] C. AVREL(io) DO[*mitio/mitiano/metiano v(iro) p(erfectissimo) duce*].

l. 10 (9). All editors restored [*devo*]TISSIMO at the beginning of the line followed by N[*umini Augg(ustorum)*]. It is indeed the most likely reading especially that the upper part of the left vertical bar of N is clearly visible.

l. 11 (10). [*ci*]VITAS [*Tomitanorum*] is the most reasonable restoration; an indent observable on the right arm of V means V + I in ligature; the noun [*ci*]VITAS requires a locative adjectival construction and [*Tomitanorum*] is the most rational option particularly that there is enough room for the wording as read by all editors: [*ci*]VITAS [*Tomitanorum*].

There is a possibility for an additional plausible l. 12 (11) which might be considered. All editors restored [*fecit*] immediately after [*Tomitanorum*]. However, the alternative would be [*restituit*].

Both words pose a key question. Were the reconstructions carried out on older structures (gates, walls), as results from V. Pârvan's excavations, *restituit* would be a good option, which is also ours. Were the new gates (*portae*) and curtain walls (*muri*) built *a fundamentis*, *fecit* is the right choice proposed by all editors. The option [*restituit*] seems supported epigraphically by a small fragment of upper part of letter S under *civitas Tomitanorum* in which case a l. 12 is most likely: [RESTITVIT].

¹⁷ *Tomitana*, p. 128.

¹⁸ It would be explainable, but highly hypothetical, the circumstance that the similar *praenomen, nomen* plus the letter D from *cognomen* would have induced Tocilescu to read C. Avrel(ius) D[iocletianus].

2.0. Historical commentary

The additional restorations of some important parts of the text require some short historical commentaries.

a. *The date*

l. 4 (3) is most likely occupied by the name of Diocletian's co-Caesar and co-Augustus, C. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus, whose name suffered *damnatio memoriae* apparently in 311 (see note 11).

The *tribunicia potestate* encompassed the office as a common reference term for both Augustuses.

Diocletian, as single *Augustus*, had already held TRIB POT on 27. IX 284 and TRIB POT II on 1. I. 285 with PM, consul II, PP, PROCOS, IMP I, and a first title of *Germanicus Maximus I*. He held TRIB POT III, IMP II, *Sarmaticus Maximus I* and again *Germanicus Maximus I* after 1. I. 286¹⁹. As senior Augustus, Diocletian appointed Maximianus as Caesar at Milan, on 21. VII 285, and Augustus on 1.IV. 286²⁰. Maximianus held his first TRIB POT on 1.IV. 285, as Caesar and TRIB POT II on 1.IV. 286, as Augustus.

Scythia was officially established as a province shortly after 21.VII. 286 when the two Augusti acquired the title of *Iovius* (Diocletian) and *Herculius* (Maximianus)²¹ respectively and received the two new legions, I (Iovia) and II (Herculia) created and dispatched expressly for the new district²².

TRIB POT without number for both emperors suggests an early setting of the inscription, but not earlier than 1. IV. 286 when Maximianus was appointed Augustus, as he appears together with his senior colleague (*invicti Augusti*), and certainly not later than 1.III. 293 when the Tetrarchic regime was installed²³.

¹⁹ CAGNAT 1914, p. 231-232; 233 and n. 1; ENSSLIN 1948, s.v. *Valerius*, RE, VII A 2, col. 2426; CHASTAGNOL 1994, p. 24; BOWMAN 2007, p. 69.

²⁰ The debate on the date see: CAGNAT 1914, p. 234; ENSSLIN 1948, col. 2427; SESTON 1946, p. 65-66; JONES 1964, vol. I, p. 38; CHASTAGNOL 1980, p. 80-81; BARNES 1982, p. 6-7; 1982, 4, 196; WILLIAMS 1985, p. 48-49; CHASTAGNOL 1994, p. 25; KOLB 1995, p. 22; KOLB 1987, p. 28-31; 33-34; 65; BOWMAN 2007, p. 69; CORCORAN 2006, p. 40; *Consularia Constantinopolitana (Chron.Min. I 229)* strongly suggests the date of Maximianus' proclamation as Augustus on 1. IV 286, a date maintained by BARNES 1982, p.196, although 1.III cannot be excluded; the entire discussion at BOWMAN 2007, p. 69 n. 8 and also: 1996, p. 537.

²¹ For the date of 21. VII 286 seen. 20 and also; BARNES 1982, p. 6; BOWMAN 2007, p. 70 and n. 14; For July 25th POTTER 2005, p. 280-281. The date of the adoption of the names *Iovius* and *Herculius* by the two Augusti is still debated: ENSSLIN 1948, col.2427; JONES 1964, p.38 (21. VII 286); SESTON 1946, p. 223-224; SESTON 1980, p.257-266, (for the year 287); KOLB 1987, p. 63; CORCORAN 2006, p. 40 (for the year 287).

²² ZAHARIADE 2015, p.165- 177.

²³ *Tomitana*, p. 127-128; ISM II, p. 184-185. Inscriptions mentioning Diocletian and Maximianus at a very early period are rare but non inexistent in the Lower Danube provinces: e.g. ISM II 111 (77) (Tomis) (16. IX. 284-1.IV. 286): Diocletian as *Ἀυτοκράτωρ* and *Εὐσεβῆς Εὐτυχῆς Σεβαστός*; IGBulg 8 = ILS 8929 (Oescus) (285), altar dedicated to Diocletian by the two *praefecti praetorio*, Afranius Hanibalianus and Iulius Asclepiodotus. The inscription is apparently even earlier, before the proclamation of Maximianus as Caesar. In his first regnal year Diocletian bears on the inscription: *pius felix, invictus Augustus, pontifex maximus, Germanicus maximus, tribunicia potestate, pater patriae, proconsul*.

The office of C. *Aurelius Do[mitius/mitianus/metianus]* must have unfolded sometime shortly after 21. VII. 286 (the setting of the province) and before 1. III. 293 at the latest, when the institution of Tetrarchy took shape.

A suggestion for an early Tetrarchic date of C *Do [mitius/mitianus/metianus]*'s duchy in Scythia is indirectly offered by the report of a reliable hagiographic writing on the presence of the duke Latronianus (*Latronianus dux*) at Halmyris on July 290 on the occasion of the inspection of the massive reconstruction works of the fortress, and the execution of the two Christian martyrs, Epictetus and Astion on the 8th of the same month²⁴. If so, in our present state of knowledge, C. *Aurelius Do[mitius/mitianus]* could have held the office between 21. VII. 286 (the date of the setting of Scythia), and before July 290 when the second duke in office of of the provnce, according to the hagiographic evidence, was already in office and visited Halmyris.

Firminianus dux limitis provinciae Scythiae datable between 293 and 305 is not otherwise known among military officers of equestrian rank of the period²⁵. The suggested chronology of the early Diocletianic dukes of Scythia, obviously submitted to future amendments would be therefore: C. *Aurelius Do[mitius/mitianus/metianus]*, between 21. VII. 286 and ca. 288/9 (?); [...] *Latronianus*, ca. before 290 and 293 (?); C. *Aurelius Firminianus* between 293 and 305(?).

b. *Portas cum muris*.

l. 7(6) holds one of the keystones of the text. The reading PORTAŞ CV[m] is clear on the stone, but there is enough space for more five to seven letters. If so, the wording would require either MVRIS, or less likely TVRRIBVS. The association *porta*, *murus*, and *turris* is common in the vocabulary of the building inscriptions either in plural or singular, in pair or in all three together, The present configuration of the broken right side of the stone makes possible rather PORTAŞ CV[m muris] than PORTAŞ CV[m turribus]; *turribus* would require three extra letters which seem to be too long for the right side of the stone, compared to *portas cum muris* which offer a shorter and more convenient variant²⁶.

²⁴ A distinct discussion on the duke Latronianus and his presence at Halmyris on the occasion of the inspection of the reconstruction works: ZAHARIADE 2001-2003, p. 143-168; ZAHARIADE 2012-2013, p.167-169. Latronianus is recorded in Scythia, as *dux* (*Acta SS Iulius* II 18; III 19; 20; 21; 23; IV 32; 41; 49), *dux provinciae*, *dux provinciae istius* (IV 41) and *dux Scythiae* (IV 49) in an account of unfolding events. It is not yet clear whether or not, originally, the Scythian duke had the official competence on jurisdiction, as seems to be revealed by the trial he conducted in 290 at Halmyris against the two Christians, Epictetus and Astion, a field which usually fell in the competency of the *praeses* (see CORCORAN 1996, p. 234-252; SLOOTIJES 2006, p. 32-33; on the Scythian dukes see: ZAHARIADE 1988, p. 41-51; ZAHARIADE 2006, p. 49-54; a view at WIEWIOROWSKI 2007 (the abstract in English).

²⁵ The PN *Firminianus* is known in the Norico-Pannonian provinces in the 2nd-3rd centuries (OPEL II p. 42 s.v. *Firminianus*). In later period, except the Tomitan inscription from Louvre, there are only variants of the PN: *Firmianus*, *Firminus*, *Firmilianus* (PLRE I p. 339).

²⁶ The wording on the Tomis inscription reflects the work carried out at the gates flanked by towers and walls (curtains) only: *portae*, *muri*; e.g. *muros portas(que) col(oniae)* (Vienne); *portas muros[que] col(oniae)* (Nîmes) (Augustan period) (HORSTER 2001, p. 64-65

Tomis revealed three gates certainly identified thus far:

1. a gateway flanked by two towers (the north-east gate), on the present day Blvd Ferdinand²⁷;
2. the south-west gate, on the same Blvd, without visible tower(s)²⁸.
3. a gate flanked by U-shape towers which opens to the north-west; it lies at the cross-road of the present day streets Dragoș Vodă, M. Kogălniceanu, and Mircea cel Bătrân²⁹;

Two coins from Tacitus (275-276) and Probus (276-282) found in the mortar of the defence curtain wall between north-east and south-west gates is an excellent chronological *post quem* evidence, to date the building of the curtain segment in early Tetrarchic epoch³⁰.

In his consistent study on the Tomis defence wall, V. Pârvan stressed on the likelihood of a previous phase of the gate no. 1 built with U-shaped flanking towers, north-east oriented. He noticed severe destruction of a preceding tower and reconstruction coating in a coherent refurbishment with massive rectangular stone blocks set in masonry³¹.

The term *murus* on the inscription refers, in our view, to the curtain wall on the Blvd. Ferdinand at its contact to the sea, but it could also hint at a possible circuit wall of the entire peninsula³². It could be that the three gateways identified thus far were encompassed in the term PORTAS, a deduction which holds at least

and cat. XX 3; XX 2); more examples e. g.: *portae murus* (Herculanum; ILS 5527); *murus et portas* (Teopolis, CIL XI 850); *portam cum muris* (Risingham; RIB 1234); *kastel(li) Sablonet(i) mulrum(!) cum portis lapidi(bus) substitutum(!)* (Ellingen: AE 1983, 730); *porta praetoria cum turre* (Montana: CIL III, 7450; VELKOV & ALEXANDROV 1994, p. 4-5, n. 5, 6). The thorny issue is what terms in the inscriptions reflect the work done. *Porta* means certainly the gateway and obligatorily the additional two flanking towers. *Murus* is a distinguishable term and cannot refer to anything else but to the curtain wall, while *turres* mean the curtain towers: e.g.: *muros portas ac turres* (Rome, ILS, 797); *murus portae turres* (Saepinum, ILS 143); *muros cum turribus horum castrorum* (Esztergom, CIL 3, 10596=RIU 770); *vallum cum portis et turribus* (Regensburg, AE, 1987, 791; HD007887). In Lusitania, an inscription makes also a clear parallel between the structures and the terms employed: *muros turres ac portas [dedit]* (Colonia Pax Iulia; AE 1989, 368; HORSTER 2001, p.65, cat. XIV 4). The Liburnian colony of Arba (Rab) displays the differences between the parts of the fortification system even clearer: *murum et turres* (CIL 3, 3107; see also HORSTER 2001, p. 58, 76 Kat. XXVIII 1 and, in general, 58 tab. II a).

²⁷ PÂRVAN 1915, p. 415-417; 437-443; RĂDULESCU 1995-1996, p. 83-84.

²⁸ RĂDULESCU 1995-1996, p. 84 who supposes an unidentified protruding tower at the breaking of the wall in an obtuse angle situated in the present day park.

²⁹ LAMBRINO 1936, p. 912-917; PAPUC & LUNGU 1998, p. 201- 208.

³⁰ CANARACHE 1961, p. 16-17; RĂDULESCU 1995-1996, p. 84; SUCEVEANU 1969, p. 353.

³¹ PÂRVAN 1915, p. 440-442.

³² Zosimos 1. 42. 1 alludes to the strength of the Tomis walls which saved the city from being taken by the Goths and Heruls in 269: Τομῆι μὲν τευχῆρει πόλει προσβαλόντες ἀπεκρούσθησαν[...]: ('and, i.e. the Goths made an attempt on Tomis, a fortified town, but were repulsed from it'). A thorough re-examination of the line of the late 3rd - 4th century Roman wall of Tomis and conclusions: RĂDULESCU 1995-1996, p. 89-91 with a map of the situation in the terrain. A sea wall of the city of Tomis must have existed especially in view of Zosimus' text, although traces of it were not clearly identified; PÂRVAN 1915, p. 428; PAPUC & LUNGU 1998, p. 205; cf. also: CHELUȚĂ-GEORGESCU 1977, p. 253-260.

until new solid evidence will clarify the existence of a sea wall with gates surrounding the Tomis peninsula.

c. *Civitas praesidiaria*. The remains of the small upper left side of R on l. (8)7 and the obvious ligature D+I, give a clear reading on the stone: [*civita*]ti PRAESIDIAR[*iae*]. Pârvan and Lambrino read *praesid[i]ariae* which Tocilescu hesitated to restore³³.

Praesidiarius-a-um, is an adjective derived directly from *prae*+*sidium*³⁴ and has the meaning of serving for defence, garrison, protection, eventually in the first line. Obviously, there is no connection here with the term *praesidalis*, which refers to the governor (*praeses*), gubernatorial³⁵. However, in a larger, symbolically sense, the wording *civitas praesidiaria* applied to Tomis certainly encompasses the significance of the topmost position of the city in the province, the city capital as the main defence hub of the province.

The wording: *portas cu[m] muris civita*]ti *praesidiar*[*iae*] in that case takes the meaning of 'gates and walls of the main city of defence which ensures defence' and that would make sense in the context of the massive rebuilding works at the front gates (*portae*) and walls (*muri*) severing the peninsula on which the provincial capital was set.

d. *The name on the l. (9) 8*

The later editors ruled out on good ground the ghostly repetition of the name of D[iocletianus], proposed by Gr. Tocilescu, but instead restored F[irminianus], reproducing a full name of a duke of Scythia recorded on an altar

³³ PÂRVAN 1915, p. 435-436, n. 5; LAMBRINO 1936, p. 915, n. 9: *praesid[i]ariae*. Apparently, Tocilescu did not notice the slit cutting the buckle of the D and read cautiously PRAESIDA[...]. In the meantime, recently, the reading *praesidaria* continued to circulate as a reference to the main gate of the city of Tomis (BĂJENARU 2010, p.33-34; MATEI-POPESCU 2014, p. 191).

³⁴ Definition and examples in TLL 471 s.v. *praesidiarius-a-um*; another variant: *praesidiarium-ii* hints at a place where soldiers resided in the sense of garrison soldiers. Livy's expression (XXIX 8. 2): *praesidiarii milites* is explained by Festus (2nd century). Fragm. E Cod. Farn Annot. Festi. Qu. XIV, 14: *praesidiarii milites qui praesidio relictis sunt in oppido*. The origin of the term recalls Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* V 15: *praesidium dictum qui ex castra praesidebant in loco aliquo, quo tutior regio esset*; see also the wording of the series of Tetrarchic building inscriptions along the Danube, ending in *praesidium constituerunt* (ZAHARIADE 1999, p. 553-561), but in all these latter cases *praesidium* takes a symbolic meaning in the sense that the defence of the place (Kladovo, Sexaginta Prista, Transmarisca, Durostorum, and Halmyris) was strengthened. Amm. Marc. adds to the meaning: *castra duo praesidiaria* (XVIII 7. 7); *munimenta praesidiaria* (XV 9. 12); *praesidiaria castra* (XXIX 6. 2).

³⁵ The standard term employed to refer, in different instances, to something related directly to the provincial governor, *praeses*, and his office is *praesidalis*. The word is always accompanied by a noun related to the person or staff of the *praeses* (e.g. *princeps praesidalis*; *praesidalis officii*; cf. *princeps officii praesidis*; IGLR 5); see BERGER 1953, p. 646; CORCORAN 1996, p. 234 and appendix 36 with all examples).

now in the Louvre Museum. It must be pointed out again that there is no trace of letter F on the stone³⁶.

The new photography shows clearly the upper half of the letter D and visible part of the letter O in an upper ligature with D (D^o=D^o) (see above).

The reading of the two preserved letters indicates DO and the most convenient restoration would be therefore C(aius) AVREL(ius) DQ[mitius] or DQ[mitianus], or DQ[metianus]³⁷.

C. Aurel(ius) Dq[mitius/mitianus/metianus] could have held the required equestrian rank of a *dux*, as a typical *vir militaris*, associated with the title of *vir perfectissimus*, a rank, which is true is conjecturally restored on the stone.

e. *Civitas Tomitanorum* indicates obviously the city council (administration). It may have eventually contributed financially and with manpower to the reconstruction of the Tomis gates and walls although the coordination and supervision of such rebuilding works of critical importance for the defence of the provincial capital fell in the responsibility of the Imperial power represented by the highest military (*dux*) or civil (*praeses*) authority, in a period when the enactment of new reforms took shape³⁸. In other words, the council of Tomis (*civitas Tomitanorum*) could have signaled to the Imperial authority to take initiative on the subject of the state of the gates and curtain walls in order to conduct essential works of restoration³⁹. Once the decision was taken, the

³⁶ Some (LEWIN 2004, p. 229, with 'important observations' received from C. Zuckerman; BĂJENARU 2010, p. 22 who reproduces A. Lewin's i.e. Zuckerman's observations) have recently claimed that on l. 9 the cognomen of the officer starts with the letter P or B instead of F. The observation of another letter instead of F is correct in principle only that the three scholars seems not to have even seen the original stone not to speak about a thorough check of the text and eventually used the poor quality photography published by I. STOIAN, *Tomitana*, pl. XXXI, fig. 2 and Em. Popescu, IGLR, fig. 3; POPESCU 1977, p. 259, fig. 4. Clearly, the first to be aware of the letter D on the stone (l. 9[8]) was Tocilescu and therefore the discussion on other later 'noticed' letters becomes pointless. The important issue is the letter following D.

³⁷ *Domitius/Domitianus/Dometianus* are extremely rare in Lower Moesia (OPEL II, p. 106). *Domitius* is unknown in the 4th-6th century Scythia Minor. The PN is a famous Latin personal *nomen gentile* in early Rome. In the 1st-3rd century, the *Domitii* are particularly common in western provinces (OPEL II, p. 106). In later Roman period, *Domitii* are still recorded in the sources, although the list offered in PLRE shows none to have been earlier than mid-5th century. *Domitianus* as another variant for the restoration is also characteristic in the 1st-3rd century western provinces and rare in Lower Moesia and Dacia (OPEL II, p. 106); on *Dometius/ Dometianus* see: ISM II, no. 24 on a catalogue of a mid-3rd century college from Tomis: Α[ὐρ(ήλιος) Δομετιανός]; and cf. ISM V 66; 245); except these, no other examples can be given as to the name Dometius/Dometianus in Dobrudja.

³⁸ Ulpian I 8. 9. 4. states clearly: *muros autem municipales nec reficere sine principis vel praesidis auctoritate nec aliquis eis coniungere vel superponere*; see also HORSTER 2001, p.135-137 and the commentary.

³⁹ LEWIN 2004, p. 229 thinks that the maintenance or restoration of the city gates fell into the responsibility of the city council, eventually of an appointed high rank official, in our case a certain called C. Aurel[...] representing the city administration (*ordo*) expressed here by *civitas Tomitanorum* and, accordingly, once the city council of Tomis was the only local authority appearing on the inscription, another high official military (*dux*) or civil (*praeses*) and their adjacent title [*vir perfectissimus*], it is true conjecturally restored on

military or civil administration took over the task of restoration or reconstruction of the anticipated structures. Inscriptions related to major building or rebuilding activities of significant military structures in a fort or town (walls, towers, and gates) or even of civil interest (temples, porticoes with ornaments) show always *duces* and *praesides* as top supervisor authorities.

The Louvre inscription from Tomis mentions the territorial aspect of the duke's office: *dux limitis prov(inciae) Scyt(hiae)*, but a similar number of letters on our stone would be impossible to be reproduced⁴⁰.

Even in a poor state of conservation and multiply edited and commented, the Tomis inscription occasioned eight additional restorations of some importance for the early Tetrarchic history of the city. The l. 7(6) shows building interventions at several gates (*portas*) and curtain walls (*muris*). The term *praesidiariae*, in l. 8(7), instead of generally accepted *praesidariae* or *praesidalis* stresses the role of Tomis as a defensive hub in its position of main city of the province and certainly the residence of the governor of the province. The l. 9(8) and 10(9) bring forth the name of a duke, *C. Aurelius Do(mitius/mitianus/metianus)*, unknown thus far, on the list of the Scythian early dukes and even in the list of PN of Scythia. Last, but not least, the Tomis inscription is a key document in showing apparently that the large scale Tetrarchic building activity in the province commenced early in 286 with the capital of the newly created Scythia.

the inscription, cannot be invoked in the same text. Indeed, the civil community and the provincial *fiscus* could have played an important financial role in the rebuilding or repairs (HORSTER 2001, p. 66-71) as it is the case at Callatis in 172 (ISM III 97) when an exceptional tax was imposed to the inhabitants by the provincial governor targeting expressly the rebuilding of the defensive structures (walls): *curam agente exactionis pecuniae et operis extructionisque murorum[...]*. The local community might have contributed financially (*exactio*) and conceivably with manpower to the reconstruction, but only at the initiative and under the coordination and authority of the provincial governor of Moesia Inferior: *praeside provinciae consulare M. Valerio Bradua legato Augusti pro praetore*. Rapidum offers two other examples of a kind. In 167, the walls of the fortified civil settlement were built *a fundamentis by veterani et consistentes apud Rapidum pecunia et sumptu omni suo*, but the entire community initiative was undertaken *adiuvante et curante viro egregio Baio Pudente, procuratore Augustorum optimo praeside* (CIL VIII 20834-20835). Under the Tetrarchy, the council of the same town, which in the meantime had become *municipium* under Septimius Severus, appears as builder *a fundamentis* of the town defence structures: *municipium Rapidense ante plurima tempora rebellium incursione captum ac dirutum ac pristinum statum a fundamentis restituerunt* - which would have involved also gates, curtain walls, and towers - but the entire coordination and expertise was made again [...], *curante U[lp]io Apollonio v(iro) p(erfectissimo) p(raeside) p(rovinciae) M(auretaniae) C(aesariensis)*. (CIL VIII 20836). Some mid-3rd century milestones show roads repair activities in the neighbouring area of Tomis in which the administration of the city, called *Metropolis Tomitanorum* was indeed involved but had a direct supervision (*agente*) of the highest provincial authority, the *praeses*, always recorded in inscriptions (BĂRBULESCU & RĂDULESCU 1991, p. 123-141).

⁴⁰ Commonly, the name of the duke is accompanied by the name of the province although, in some instances, the district is not recorded in the text: e. g. IGLR 233, 271 (Scythia); CIL III, 4039; III, 5565; 3761, 11853 (Valeria, Pannonia Prima et Noricum Ripensis).

The revised text of the inscription⁴¹:

[O..., M..., M...]
 DE[O] SOLI [**INVICTO**] PRO [SAL]
 [IM]PP CC C VAL DIOCLETI[ANI]
 [[[ET M AVREL VAL MAXIMIANI]]]
 5 [INV]ICTI AVGG TRIB POT PP [**FF**]
 [IV]SS<V=O> HAC D<I=E>SPOSITIONE
 [DD NN] AVGG PORTAS **CV**[**M MVRIS**]
 [CIVITA]TI PRAESIDIAR[**IAE CVRANTE**]
 C AVREL **DO**[**MITIO VP DVCE**]
 10 [DEVO]TISSIMO N[VMINI AVGG]
 [CI]VITAS [TOMITANORUM]
 [**RESTITVIT**]

De[o] Soli [Invicto] pro [sal(ute)] / [Im]pp(eratorum) CC(aesarum) C(ai) Val(eri) Diocleti[ani] / [[[et M(arci) Aurel(i) Val(eri) Maximiani]]] / [Inv]icti Augg(usti) trib(unicia) pot(estate) pp(ii) [ff(elices)] / [iu]ss<u=O> hac d<i=E>spositione / [dd(ominorum) nn(ostorum)] Augg(ustorum) portas cu[m muris]/[civita]ti praesidiar[iae curante] / C(aio) Aurel(io) Do[mitio v(iro) p(erfectissimo) duce] / [devo]tissimo n[umini Augg(ustorum)] / [ci]vitas [Tomitanorum] / restituit].

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CIMRM – M.J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae I-II*, 1956-1960.

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⁴¹ The bolded letters in the text indicates the new contributions brought to the reading of the text of the inscription.

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Fig. 1 The inscription in the lapidarium of the Institute of Archaeology „Vasile Pârvan” in Bucharest. inv. MNA, L no. 496.



Fig. 2. Photo showing the revised reading: PORTAS CV[M...] on the 1.7(6).



Fig. 3. Photo showing the revised reading: PRAESIDIA [RIAE] on the 1.8(7) with D+I in ligature.



Fig. 4. Photo showing the revised reading: C. AVRELIVS DO[...] on l. 9(8) with D+O in ligature.