

EPIGRAPHIC FORGERIES IN TRANSYLVANIA (15th–18th CENTURIES) (I)

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Abstract: In this article the author intends to analyze epigraphic forgeries regarding the history of Dacia, from a perspective that takes into account the context that favored their emergence and proliferation. Late 15th century and early 16th century represent the heyday of literary forgeries in the Hungarian Kingdom. Political propaganda, local patriotism and the passion for ancient manuscripts make up a mix of history and myth, of true and false, melted all in the aestheticized humanism of the Renaissance.

Keywords: epigraphic forgeries, humanism, manuscripts, patriotism, myth.

“Any forger, however deft, imprints the pattern and texture of his own period’s life, thought and language on the past he hopes to make seem real and vivid¹.”

The subject of fake inscriptions² was addressed only incidentally by Romanian historiography, usually in studies focused on other topics, and mainly from a normative perspective. Being limited to the simple identification and condemning of forgeries, these studies did not allow progress in the comprehension of a practice highly prevalent at the beginning of modern epigraphic investigation.

There are a few possible explanations for the historians’ lack of interest towards forgeries. Firstly, the classicists and the epigraphists have considered that their mission ends at telling the fake from the authentic. Secondly, the weak liaison between modern and ancient age specialists has led to the ignoring of certain documents that involve the knowledge of two historical periods: the one in which the forgery was done and the one that the forgery refers to³. All in all, the historiographical work of Transylvanian scholars has been more or less ignored in

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¹ Grafton 1990, p. 67.

² The present study is part of a series of three. In a future article I will deal with the forgeries authored by Stephanus Zamosius, the most prolific *falsarius* of Transylvania. The last part of the series I will dedicate it to the analysis of forgeries made during the Age of Enlightenment.

³ González Germain 2011, p. 202.

the historical work on Romanian Humanism because the authors, although writing about Daco-Roman antiquity, were not Romanian ethnics⁴.

My primary purpose in this article is to move away from the traditional approach, which sought only to distinguish the fake from the authentic, and to offer a better understanding of the historical context that encouraged the making of epigraphic forgeries. I intend thus to leave apart the moral dimension and focus on the social, historiographical and literary aspects of these forgeries⁵. Through this article, I also intend to plea for, on one hand, a reedit of fake inscriptions in a separate corpus and, on the other hand, for a cultural history that should keep in mind the authors academical preoccupations rather than their ethnic origin.

The proliferation age of epigraphic forgeries can be found between the 15th and the 18th centuries, when most of the texts are reproduced without an early critical reading although the methods of content analysis were known⁶. There have been rare cases when authors expressed their skepticism in regard to the authenticity of certain inscriptions. Among these Jan Gruter (1560–1627)⁷, Raffaello Fabretti (1618–1700)⁸ or Giuseppe Ariosti (18th century)⁹ have doubted, sometimes based on historical, and philological arguments, the ancient origin of some epigraphs referring to Dacia's history. Furthermore, R. Fabretti thought that Zamosius himself, knowing the fakeness of older inscriptions, gave up on reproducing them in his *Analects*.¹⁰

But, only at the beginning of the 19th century, the professionalization of history eliminates the slack that the production and reproduction of forgeries had. In 1873, subject to the most severe criticism, many inscriptions were purged as false by Mommsen, whose work of discrimination between fake and authentic, was resumed by his famous judgment: *Legem secutus quae in foro obtinet; dolum non praesumi sed probato dolo totum testem infirmari*¹¹. Since the publication of CIL III, the *falsae* were never collected in the new editions of Latin inscriptions, nor were they reprinted in any form¹². It should be noted though, that after the

⁴ The representatives of the “Romanian Humanism” are considered to be the Walachian and Moldavian chronic writers. D. Horia Mazilu believes that Romanian Renaissance “has produced a special kind of Humanism specific for this area, for whose defining calling upon western criteria is not always conclusive” (Mazilu 1984, p. 98). In Transylvania, the “Romanian Humanism” is illustrated by Nicolaus Olahus, a character whose ethnicity is in dispute by Romanian and Hungarian historians (the rich bibliography that treats Olahus' ethnical origins in Almási 2010, p. 117, n. 96).

⁵ Following upon a methodology established by Grafton 1990. Also Carbonell Manils, Gimeno Pascual, González Germain 2012.

⁶ Between 1439 and 1440, Lorenzo Valla proved that *Constitutum Constantini* was a fake in *De falso credita et ementita Constantini Donatione declamation*. For Valla's opinion that information transmitted on other supports than paper is more credible see Wood 2012, p. 163–164.

⁷ A few examples: Gruterus 1603, CIII, no. 5, LXXIII, no. 8, XXI, no. 8.

⁸ Fabretti 1638, p. 231–237.

⁹ Buonaparte, La Monaca 2010, p. 249.

¹⁰ Fabretti 1683, p. 241.

¹¹ Mommsen 1883, CIL IX, XI.

¹² The situation is valid globally for all provinces, González Germain 2009, p. 120–121; González Germain 2011, p. 2; González Germain 2012, p. 36.

distinctions made by Mommsen, the reorganization and revaluation of Dacian-Roman inscriptions in the seventies of the last century, permitted the rehabilitation of about 10 inscriptions, stated as false in CIL III. In revenge, no inscription considered genuine by Mommsen has ever been rejected as fake by the other editors.

Preoccupations to identify possible genuine inscriptions between those included by Mommsen as forgeries have come true in a few studies signed by M. Macrea¹³, N. Gostar¹⁴ and I.I. Rusu¹⁵. Still, the progress made in telling the authentic from the fake should not remove the theme from discussion, even more when, some inscriptions have been rehabilitated based on the principles established by Mommsen. The German scholar considered that the reputation of an author could serve as a valid criterion for discrimination between genuine and fake inscriptions¹⁶.

In my attempt to reopen the forgeries file, I have organized the documentary material by the following pattern: a short biographic note on the forgeries' author (when this is known to us), followed by a description of the cultural and historical context that surround the historiographical work that transmitted the forgeries, and, finally, the analysis and the actual comment of the forgeries. The questions that I would like to answer are: Who are the forgeries' authors? For whom did they write? How is the Dacian-Roman antiquity reflected in their works? What pieces of information did they fake and for what purpose?

The first modern inscription collection from the Hungarian Kingdom, generically called by the CIL III authors as “Antiquissimus”¹⁷ has been drawn up probably during the reign of Mathias Corvinus¹⁸. Among the inscriptions contained by this lost corpus, we can find eight inscriptions from Apulum, out of which only five are genuine. The sources that gave us these inscriptions are the Codex of Michael Fabricius Ferrarinus, prior of the Carmelite monastery in Reggio Emilia, and that of Benedetto Ramberto (Benedictus Rambertius), librarian of St. Mark of Venice¹⁹. Codices of these scholars have preserved, next to the authentic epigraphs, two inscriptions fully composed by an anonymous scholar, and one that seems

¹³ Macrea 1944–1948, p. 219–263.

¹⁴ Gostar 1972, p. 93–97.

¹⁵ Rusu 1966, p. 437–450; Russu 1964, p. 477–481.

¹⁶ Thus I.I. Rusu establishes the authenticity of an epigraph based on an argument such as “Sestini [...] was not an impostor”, “Neigebauer was not an epigraph forger”, Domaszewski “nearly with intent [...] tries to compromise by the stigmata of “falseness” and to take out, from the Roman Dacia’s epigraphic documents, a precious inscription, especially in terms of onomastics and demography”, Russu 1964, p. 480. I.I. Russu’s reaction towards one of CIL’s editors is not singular. In 1875, the Spanish professor A. Fernández Guerra determined Hübner to take out the CIL II 5941 inscription from the forgeries category and to include it among the authentic one. The inscription is still questionable today (González Germain, Carbonell Manils 2012, p. 15).

¹⁷ Mommsen 1873, p. 153. Other such lost epigraphic collections prototypes have been called *Antiquissimus* or *Antiquus* by the CIL editors. For *Antiquissimus* and *Antiquus (Hispanus)* see Hübner 1869, p. 39; González Germain, Carbonell Manils 2009, p. 119–130; González Germain 2011, p. 201–215.

¹⁸ Mommsen 1873, p. 153.

¹⁹ Hyde 2009, p. 58.

interposed. The collection compiled by Ferrarinus in the 1470 or the 1480²⁰ gives a terminus *ante quem* for the production of forgeries reproduced in *Antiquissimus*. The inscriptions within *Antiquissimus* will be also copied by **Antonio Bonfini** (Antonius Bonfinius) (1434–1503), an Italian Humanist and poet, charged by King Mathias to write a history of Hungary²¹. Keeping in mind the forgeries' diffusion through some epigraphic Italian collections, we can speculate that they were made right at King Mathias' court, a point of contact between the Italian and Hungarian humanists²².

Before the proper examination, a typological and chronological placing is needed for spurious inscriptions. *Antiquissimus* contains three votive inscriptions, of a private character, whose supposed discovery would have been done in Alba-Iulia. The choice of the city is not by chance. Alba-Iulia was in the 15th century, next to Oradea, one of the episcopal centers where a strong cultural humanist circle emerged, mostly under Italian influence²³. On the other hand, it was believed during that age that Alba-Iulia had developed on the site of the ancient Sarmizegetusa²⁴.

The first false inscription reproduced by Mommsen in CIL III is a votive altar for the Egyptian gods of Isis and Osiris.

Text: Isidi et Serap. / sacr. / ex voto pro filioli salute / suscepto / Saurana fecit²⁵

Translation: Sacred to Isis and Serapis, on behalf of the well-being of her young son, Saurana made it, having made a vow.

Comment: The inscription's text presents to us a mother that makes an offering to the Greek divine couple with medical attributes, for the health of her new born son. The abbreviations are unusual (Serap. for Serapidi²⁶, the verbe *fecit* does not usually appear in full in authentic inscriptions) and the division of words isn't made in regard to the space on a possible stone but in regard to logical sequences, a sign that the antiquary did not know the rules of stone inscriptions very well. The one dedicating the inscription bears only one name, *Saurana* (corrected by Ackner-Müller and then by Mommsen as Scauriana (?)), although the

²⁰ Wood 2008, p. 301.

²¹ Ciurea 1984, p. 321–328.

²² An analogy in the Iberian epigraphy, González Germain 2010, p. 85.

²³ Giurescu, Pop, Andreescu 1998, p. 119.

²⁴ Even after locating Sarmizegetusa on the site where during medieval times the village of Grădișteea appeared, by Mezerzius, a series of authors will either repeat the wrong identification of Sarmizegetusa with Alba-Iulia, or will oscillate between the two locations. Georg von Reichersdorff, in *Chronographia Transylvaniae* wrote that “[...] *Regiam Zarmis civitatem [...] quae nunc Alba Iulia appellatur*” (Reichersdorff 1532, p. 2) and “*Alba Iulia [...] olim Zarmiis Dacia apellata*” (Reichersdorff 1532, p. 13). Only beginning with Wolfgang Lazius (+1565) the identification Sarmizegetusa – Grădișteea proposed by Merzezius would be finally imposed in historical literature (Bogdan 1885, p. 47).

²⁵ CIL III, 52*; Ackner-Müller 1865, p. 84, no. 390.

²⁶ The shortening might have been suggested to the antiquary by a broken inscription. For example, on another inscription from Alba Iulia (CIL III, 7769), only Serap[idi] was preserved from the god's name.

Latin onomastic rules imposed *duo nomina* for women during the Principate. The character's onomastic, more likely to be inspired from Christian epigraphy naming, is usual for modern made inscriptions, because the humanists ignored or weren't preoccupied by the rules of classical Roman nomenclature.

A second forgery picked up by Mommsen appears under the shape of a dedication to Iuno Lucina.

Text: Iunoni Lucinae / pro filia partu laborante / suscepto / voto Statilia / d. d.²⁷.

Translation: To Juno Lucina, for her daughter, suffering in childbirth, Statilia gave as a gift, from the vow made.

Comment: According to Mommsen²⁸, the name of Statilia, could have been suggested to the antiquary by the erroneous reading of an authentic inscription from Alba Iulia²⁹ (CIL III 1087). The introductory formula *I.O.M. STAT* stood at the beginning of this inscription. The last word was wrongly restored as *Stat(ilio)*, instead of *Stat(ori)*, and continued further by Antiquissimus as *Statilia*. The adjunction of the epiclesis *Lucina*, making reference to a particular function of the goddess Iunona (that to aid women in child labor) is not specific for Dacia's epigraphy, which lead Mommsen to take into consideration an external source of inspiration, more precisely, an inscription from Rome: *Iunoni Lucin. / Sulpicia Ser. f. pro. / Paulla Cassia / f. sua / d. d. l. m.*³⁰. We cannot know if the anonymous antiquary had traveled to Rome and had personally seen the inscription or had discovered it in one of the syllogai of Roman inscriptions that had started to circulate in the entire Europe. It seems that the forgery from Alba-Iulia would have served in its turn as an inspiration source for other Renaissance forgeries. In the second half of the 19th century, after a discussion with Mommsen and Henzen, Hübner³¹, who was preparing the second CIL volume, discovered some similarities between the Apulum inscription and the next fake inscription from Murcia: *Castori et Polluci dis magnis. Sulpitiae Quinti Sulpiti filiae votum ob filium saluti restitutum*³². The Apulum text is older than the one from Murcia, thus there is a possible interdependence, but according to González Germain, who recently revisited earlier conclusions on Hispanic forgeries, the formulation does not indicate a conclusive correlation³³. According to the Spanish historian, a more relevant parallel could be traced between the inscription from Murcia and the latter *ex-voto* (CIL III 52*), based on the following formulation: *pro filioli salute* (Alba-Iulia) / *ob filium saluti* (Murcia)³⁴.

²⁷ CIL III, 53*.

²⁸ Mommsen 1873, 7*.

²⁹ An authentic inscription copied by the same Antiquissimus; however there is another inscription at Alba-Iulia mentioning a certain *Statilia Lucia* (whose name was read until Mommsen as *Statilia Lucina*, Ackner-Müller 1865, p. 81, no. 376).

³⁰ ILS 3103.

³¹ Hübner 1869, p. 35; González Germain 2011, p. 171, no. 8.

³² CIL II, 356*.

³³ González Germain 2011, p. 172.

³⁴ González Germain 2011, p. 172, n. 388.

The following inscription could be interposed, in Mommsen's view, not necessarily forged:

Text: I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / diis et deabus / Ael(ius) Valens et Lucius / Quadratian(us) / centur(iones) Iul(ius) / Fortis p(rimus)p(ilus) et C(aius) Marcellin(us) / trib(unus) mil(itum), ob XIII leg(ionem) / servatam idib(us) Mart(iis) p(osuerunt)³⁵

Translation: To Jupiter, the Best and the Greatest, to the gods and to the goddesses, Aelius Valens and Lucius Quadratianus, centurions, Iulius Fortis, princeps prior and Caius Marcellinus, military tribune, for having kept the legion XIII set this up on the Ides of March.

Comment: The antiquary is imagining an IOM dedicated altar by four officers, for the protection of the 13th legion on the Ides of Mars, the day of Caesar's death, and because of this, a grim day. The problematic names such as Lucius Quadratianus or Caius Marcellinus seem more like reading and reproduction errors than interposed elements. The onomastic is too plain for the identification of the characters. The association of military ranks listed above is pretty implausible for a genuine inscription. Like in the case of the other two inscriptions, the abbreviations are not the ones usually found in Latin epigraphy (for example *centur.* for *centurions*). The *idibus Martiis* formulation, a hint for a political event of considerable importance, is a humanist adding, justified by the antiquaries' interest in great historical dates. The expression *ob XIII leg. servatam* evokes to G. González Germain another false inscription from Spain *Iovi optimo/ob aug. servatum*³⁶. It still remains to be established what was the manuscripts' circuit between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Castilia and Leon Kingdom. The reference to the 13th legion might suggest an authentic nucleus' existence³⁷.

What might have been the porpoise of forging these epigraphs is quite hard to answer in the absence of the original work and in the context of not knowing the author. In the first two inscriptions we are dealing with mothers who address to healing gods for the health of their young children, and a third is a collective inscription signaling several officers addressing to Jupiter. The forgeries might have been inspired by contemporary realities (death at birth, for example), but, as well as, given the extreme homogeneousness of the public that they were addressing to (formed generally by Latin speaking clergymen and their patrons) they could have served as vehicles for transmitting philosophical, moral or political messages. We could speculate, keeping in mind the frequent usage of pagan symbolism to illustrate Christian themes in Renaissance³⁸ and the probable belonging of the antiquary to the clergy, that the women giving birth references would have tensed reflections on incarnation and Christian Nativity³⁹ while the

³⁵ Mommsen 1873, 8*, no. 54*.

³⁶ HEp 5, 1999, 795, quoted by González Germain 2011, p. 172 and 424 (non vidi).

³⁷ Mommsen 1873, 8*, no. 54*.

³⁸ Leith, Whalley 1987, p. 125.

³⁹ In *De partu Virginis*, an epical poem written in 1526, by Jacopo Sannazaro, the pagan gods live in the same world as the Virgin Mary; Van Tieghem 1944, p. 124–125.

third inscription, alluding to the Ides of March, could echo meditation on key political concepts such as tyrannicide.

A rich series of forgeries came to us by the work of the one whose name is linked with the beginnings of Dacian-Roman epigraphy, Megyeri János, a Hungarian clergyman and poet, born around 1470 in Megyericse. His name is more commonly known in its Latinized variant, Johannes Mezerzius, transmitted by Stephanus Taurinus, a contemporary scholar. In 1496, Mezerzius is named canonic of Alba-Iulia and in 1497 he is made secretary of Geréb László in the archbishopric in Kalocsa⁴⁰. In a youth composed epitaph, he refers to himself as a poet, putting himself in a highly prestigious literary lineage. He evokes Janus Pannonius and Petrus Garázda in his biological and intellectual genealogy, two renowned 15th century poets and some of the most representative authors of Hungarian Renaissance⁴¹.

“Three blood relatives we became renown poets, where the waters of Drava irrigate the high plane of Pannonia. / One was Janus who brought ashore for the first time maidens crowned with the laurels of Helicon./ The other one was Petru, born in the family of Garázda who brought the plectrum sound of Aonius’ harp./ Finally me, the last poet in the kind of poets, I have followed as a third glory between the learned Pieride. / Petrus rests in Strigonia citadel, the Pontifical Chair itself has his Joannes. / Here, if faith may wish so, tuck my bones: If not, it’s nothing, let them lie anywhere / The spirit, after it is released, flies toward the etheric skies / The passing bones do not worth much / The soul, casted away from the ether by the father, returns, / But the body from which it was created goes into the dust, / The happiest resting place for the divine mind is the sky / Dust is the mean house of the powerless body / Do not blame, reader, this long poem in marble / I have written this epitaph for unknown men. I have written this still in my life time, in 1507⁴². But Mezerzius was not going to remain in cultural history as a lyrical poet⁴³. Going as far as 1495, he had begun to gather Roman inscriptions from Transylvania, at the suggestion of his relative and friend Filip More of Ciula (Csulai Móré Fülöp), a known diplomat of the era. Filip More is also the one that will be going to take Mezerzius’ inscriptions collection to Venice, where he would hand it over to the editor Aldo Manuzio (Aldus Manutius)⁴⁴, the famous editor of

⁴⁰ Bodor 1995, p. 58.

⁴¹ Birnbaum 1986, p. 55.

⁴² *Tres fuimus clari cognato e sanguine vates, / Pannonicam Dravus qua rigat altus humum. / Unus erat Ianus proprios qui primus ad oras / duxit laurigeras ex Helicone Deas. / Alter erat Petrus genitus de stripe Garázda, / qui tulit Aoniae plectra sonora lyrae. / Ultimus hos ego sum cognata e gente secutus / tertia doctarum Pieridum. / Strigonia Petrus requiescit in arce, Ioannem / ipsa suum sedes Pontificalis habet. / Hic mea, si dederit sors, ossa recondite, si non, / nil nostra, iaceant quolibet illa loco. / Spiritus aethereas postquam resolutus ad auras / evolat, haud magni membra caduca facit. / Celsus ab aethereo demissus patre revertit / at corpus de qua fingitur, intra humum. / Coelum divinae est requies faustissima mentis / parvula corrupti corporis illa domus. / Ne longum, lector, damnes in marmore carmen, / scripsimus ignotis ista legenda viris* (Barabás 1907, p. 116).

⁴³ Bodor 1995, p. 58.

⁴⁴ Bodor 1995, p. 58.

Erasmus' works. Paulus Manutius, son of Aldus and godson of Filip More, was the coordinator of the Vatican library. Through him, a copy of the Mezerzian collection will arrive in the Vatican⁴⁵ and it will be kept in Codex no. 5250. The finding of the Roman capital Colonia Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa where, in the Middle Ages, the village of Grădișteea had developed, is owed to Mezerzius. Because epigraphic abbreviations were not known, Mezerzius names the city after its lapidary variant, "Zarmis"⁴⁶. This is the starting point of a debate that spread over decades and which would set to establish the proper variant of the name of the ancient capital, "Zarmis" or Zarmisegetusa⁴⁷. On the other hand, because of existing ambiguities in ancient sources,⁴⁸ Mezerzius believed that the Roman "Zarmis" was founded on the place of the the Dacian "Zarmis". His conclusion was meant for a long historiographical career, ended only in the 20th century, when following systematic archeological diggings, two centers, one Roman and the other Dacian, were discovered, at a distance of 40 km, one from the other.⁴⁹ However, in the 16th century, "Zarmis" was the mythical place where one of the greatest battles of the ancient world was fought, where the Dacian-Roman grand war saga ended and, at the same time, the place of the royal residence. In the *Index* of his work, Stephanus Taurinus inserts under the "Zarmis" lemma the following explanation: " 'Zarmis', very big city and formerly the bright capital of Decebal, once the king of Dacians, eventually, after he was defeated, it became Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica colony; now the inhabitants refer to it as Varhel, which means the place of the citadel. This thing was first observed by that <renown> Ioan Mezerzius, Archdeacon of Cojocna and former cleric of the Transylvanian Alba Church – a man of great reputation and very taught who got to a special level of learning especially on antiquity, <level of learning> that is not possessed by many – when in years past he was exploring the ruins of the said ancient city, for he had a great passion of antiquities. This <identification> comes even cleared than day light from the inscriptions added here."⁵⁰ Mezerzius himself left a note through which he explained that from the epitaphs found in Varhel village comes out that that there was the place where the ancient "Zarmis" once stood ("we first, – may all ill be absent from the word – whilst walking through the ruins, found it")⁵¹.

⁴⁵ Bodor 1995, p. 59.

⁴⁶ It is worth mentioning that Mezerzius and other scholars of that age did not know the inscription that attested the variant Zarmis(egetusa) (CIL III, 973), but only inscriptions that had preserved the forms Sarmiz(egetusa). The trans-writing of Zarmis points to a dependency towards the Ptolemaist manuscript. For the written variant of this toponym see Dana, Nemeti 2014, p. 109–114 and Mitthof 2014.

⁴⁷ Ortelius amends the reading of "Zarmis" proposed by Taurinus, Ortelius 1587, ZA. Contra, Zamosius 1593, 30 / 33; the whole debate in Ceaușescu 1979, p. 102.

⁴⁸ Dana, Nemeti 2014, p. 102.

⁴⁹ Daicoviciu *et alii* 1951, p. 95–126; Daicoviciu *et alii* 1952, p. 281–310.

⁵⁰ Taurinus 1519, p. 469–470; translation by Holban 1968, p. 161.

⁵¹ Mommsen 1873, p. 153; Mommsen 1883, p. 234, no. 1452; Bogdan 1885, p. 46.

One of the inscriptions, that Mezerzius had based upon when he identified Sarmizegetusa, was the founding inscription, kept in three verses out of which two were authentic, and a third was partially interpolated and composed by Mezerzius based on the on the other two⁵². According to the text kept by the Codex Vaticanus, Mezerzius might have stated:

Fragmenta in Transylvania proper ecclesiam/Valachorum in vico Varhel, qui est antiquam Sarmiz./ Cae/saris Divi Nerv Traiani Augusti Condita Colonia / Dacica per V. M. Scaurianum. Cetera abolita.

The second inscription is mentioned by Mezerzius with the following text:

in ruinis oppidi Varhel in loco castrorum / Auspiciis Cae/saris Divi Nervae / Traiani Augusti / Condita Colonia / Dacica / Per / M. Scurianum / Eius pro pre.

All in all, based on these two inscriptions, Mezerzius composes a third, in front of which he posts a fictional text:

*Varhel / IOM / Romulo parenti / Marti auxiliatori / Felicibus auspiciis Cae/saris Divi Nervae / Traiani Augusti / Condita Colonia / Dacica / Sarmiz / Per /M. Scaurianum / Eius pro pr.*⁵³

Translation: At Varhel. To Jupiter, the Best, the Greatest, To Father Romulus, to Mars the Helper. Under the divine auspices of Emperor Caesar son of Nerva (past between gods), the August Nerva Traianus Colonia Dacica was founded by M. Scaurianus, his governor.

Comment: Because the fragment containing the beginning of the inscription had not been preserved, Mezerzius tries to recompose the lost text based on a dedication to *IOM*, *Romulus Parens* and *Mars Auxiliator*. The *auxiliator* epithet for Mars is a total novelty. N. Gostar was considering a possible misreading of the *ex AVcTORItate* expression by Mezerzius⁵⁴. The invocation of Mars is however a creation of the antiquary. It is true that a dedication of Trajan towards Mars (*Ultor*) can be found on the triumphant monument from Tropaeum⁵⁵, but, at the beginning of the 16th century, the Moesia Inferior campaign and the monuments complex from Adamclisi were completely unknown. The Moesian Campaign had not been retained by Xiphilinus in his excerpts from Cassius Dio⁵⁶, the column's first exegesis, owed to A. Ciacconius appeared in 1576⁵⁷, whilst the tropaeum from Adamclisi (a place that was in Turkish territory, at the time of Mezerzius' writings) was going to be discovered only at the end of the 19th century. In the case of the *ex voto* from Sarmizegetusa, we are more likely to have literary references and savant anachronisms: the three gods, *Jupiter*, *Romulus* (*Quirinus*) and *Mars* formed once

⁵² CIL III, 1443; IDR III/2, 1; Gostar 1971, p. 305; Wolff 1976, p. 102.

⁵³ CIL III 1443; Forisek 2004, p. 242.

⁵⁴ Gostar 1971, p. 310.

⁵⁵ AÉ 1965, 276; AÉ 1972, 521a; AÉ 1996, 1355b.

⁵⁶ Daicovicu 1972, p. 319.

⁵⁷ Ciacconius 1576.

the archaic roman triad, who preceded the Capitoline deities (Jupiter, Juno and Minerva)⁵⁸. No one in Dacia would have invoked the old gods of the Capitol. This inscription is one of the few in which we can trace Mezerzius' intervention in the original text. Most of the forgeries kept in J. Mezerzius' work do not seem to be created in fact by him. Mommsen believes that the work of J. Mezerzius had served only as a vehicle for the spreading of forgeries that were in different *sylogai* (elaborated in the 15th and at the beginning of the 16th century) and which Mezerzius might have used in composing his own collection of inscriptions⁵⁹. S. Taurinus, the successor of J. Mezerzius in the capitulum from Alba Iulia might have replicated a part of the inscriptions, without using the final variant of the mezerzian manuscript, but an intermediate variant that included pages from other authors. These foreign pages would have contained a large number of fake inscriptions⁶⁰.

In order to realize the importance of replicating the forgeries by S. Taurinus, it is necessary to offer a few biographic and bibliographic on this scholar. Stephanus Taurinus (Stephan Stieröchsel) was born in the old Moravian capital of Olmütz around 1485 has spent most of his life in the Hungarian Kingdom. He arrives in Transylvania in 1517, as a provost of the Alba Iulia Church at the invitation of the Roman Catholic Bishop Francisc Varday⁶¹. At the moment of S. Taurinus' arrival, three years had passed since the uprising led by György Dósza against the great land owners, conflict where Bishop Francisc Varday had taken part on the noble side. At the request of Archbishop Iohannes Thurzo from Breslau, Taurinus composes, after the model of Lucanus' *Pharsalia*, an epic poem that is centered on the war between peasants and nobles⁶². The poem, entitled, *Stauromachia id est Cruciatorum Servile Bellum* has György Dósza (known in the poem as Zeglius – the Szekely), the Papal legate Thomas Bakócz and Bishop Francisc Varday (Taurinus' patrons) as main characters. The epic line is initially tied to the events surrounding the preparation of a new anti-ottoman crusade. In front of the army gathered for taking part in the fight against the Turks, Dósza/Zeglius makes a plea for abolishing noble privileges, invoking examples of ploughmen leader from Roman antiquity⁶³. He promises his soldiers the toppling of the old order and the fair sharing of lands and he manages to aim the action against the nobility. The rebellion is crushed and Zeglius' soul lands in Tartar where he is punished to forever repeat his torment on the hot stake⁶⁴. A short reference to Dacian history⁶⁵ is revealed in the beginning of the 4th book, in the speech of the Papal legate T. Bakócz. He is in front of the Hungarian king, trying to mobilize the

⁵⁸ Beard, North, Price 1998, p. 15; Webber Jones 1930, p. 253.

⁵⁹ Mommsen 1873, p. 155.

⁶⁰ Mommsen 1873, p. 155.

⁶¹ Vekov 1998, p. 109.

⁶² Capesius 1957, p. 68.

⁶³ Taurinus 1519, XII–XV; Capesius 1957, p. 68; Cernovodeanu 1973, p. 128.

⁶⁴ Taurinus 1519, XXXIII–XXXIII, Capesius 1957, p. 70.

⁶⁵ Taurinus 1519, XXIII (vs. 86–97).

nobility to fight. His speech is built on the idea that wars are passing misfortunes. Even if everywhere in the contemporary world the atrocities of war have started, one must not forget that Mars' bursts since forever have only temporarily interrupted peace, so that in the ravaged earth of Troy, later grow fruit⁶⁶. Local history events subsume to the same logic. Trajan's fighting with Decebal, the destruction of the Dacians in the mountains, the royal suicide, the discovering of Decebal's treasures in the Sargetia River but also the later ruining of Trajan's symbols of triumph (Zlatna, Alba Iulia, Sarmis, Abrud⁶⁷) or the disappearing of the monumental bridge into the Danube waters, all have happened by twist of fate, a fate that still allows good days after the fall. The proper names in this short evocation are found, accompanied by historical and geographical explanations, in an *Index abecedarius*, attached to the work by Taurinus in 1519⁶⁸. Among the explanations, fake inscriptions are also inserted, made up by various anonymous antiquaries in the preceding century and taken from the unfinished manuscript of Mezerzius. Mommsen considered that Taurinus' preference for reproducing false inscriptions (out of 10 reproduced inscriptions, 4 are fakes and 3 are interpolated⁶⁹) would be specific for uncultivated spirits that are enchanted more by forgery than by truth⁷⁰. This is a severe opinion, which is no longer valid today. It is my belief that the selection was determined by the crossing between the events depicted in the inscriptions' text and the ones depicted in the epos' text. The forgeries spread through Mezerzius' collection presented themselves as historical inscriptions, inspired from Cassius Dio's Roman History. The fragments referring to the Dacian-Roman war, from Taurinus' epos, were based on the same ancient work. The reproducing of supposed to be ancient inscriptions, which dramatize the

⁶⁶ Taurinus 1519, XXIII (vs. 80–86).

⁶⁷ At the time of Taurinus' writings, only four contemporary settlements were known to have been on the sites of former Roman colonies: Zarmis, Alba Iulia, Zlatna and Abrud (for the last three, the Roman name was not known at that time). The mining towns of Zlatna and Abrud (which in the beginning of the 15th century also included Roşia Montana in its administrative territory) were part of the oldest county in Transylvania, with Alba as residence. (Binder 1980, p. 214–215). A Roman inscription (CIL III, 1266) had been found there, which Taurinus uses as an argument for stating that Abrud might have been built on the site of a former Roman colony. Latin inscriptions had been found in many parts of Transylvania but the political-administrative importance that was given to Alba, Abrud and Zlatna at that particular time made them more likely candidates for the prestige of appearing on the site of former Roman colonies. Mezerzius could have spoken even about an inscription mentioning a *praefectus Slotne sive aurariarum*, passed by Mommsen as a fake (Mommsen 1873, 8*, no. 64*). The rest of the Roman cities were located much later: the first that locates *Napoca* at Cluj is Zamosius (Russu 1960, p. 213–224), but until the end of the 19th century, the old Cluj–*Potaissa* identification will persist (Bărbulescu 1994, p. 18); Tibiscum is identified by K. Mannert at the beginning of the 19th century (Wollman 1977, p. 364); *Potaissa* is identified as Turda by Mommsen (Mommsen 1873, p. 172–173; Bărbulescu 1994, p. 19); *Porolissum* is discovered at the end of the 19th century by Carol Torma (Gudea 1986, p. 18).

⁶⁸ Vekov 1998, p. 109.

⁶⁹ Mommsen 1873, p. 155.

⁷⁰ Mommsen 1873, p. 155.

destiny of sovereigns, amplified the political weight that Taurinus wanted to give to his text. The inscriptions belong to the same chronological context, that of Dacia during the war⁷¹, a period that isn't documented by epigraphic sources, but well known from Dio Cassius. Most of them are versifications, some of them with a moral-educational content, others, in a political satire manner, showing famous episodes from Roman history. At the end of the 16th century, Johann Lewenklaw (Johannes Leunclavius), one of the editors of Cassius Dio's work, established the correspondence between these inscriptions (to which however he did not contest their authenticity) and various passages from the Greek historian's work. I shall reproduce these epigraphs, below.

FORTVNAE AVG OMNIPOTENT
 VBI ERAS RHAMNVSIA
 VBI ERAS
 QVANTVM ABFVIT NE ROMA LVGERET
 SED VIVIT TRAIANVS
 VAE TIBI DECEBALE
 MILES LEG VI ET XIII G DEVOTI CAPITIBVS⁷²

Translation: To the all-powerful Fortuna Augusta. Where were you, Rhamnusia? Where were you? How little was lacking for Rome to cry. But Trajan lives. Woe to you, Decebalus! Soldiers of the Sixth and Thirteenth Legions Gemina, loyal to their commanders!

Comment: The passage incriminated for producing this inscription is the following: "Though Decebalus was faring badly in open conflict, nevertheless by craft and deceit he almost compassed Trajan's death. He sent into Moesia some deserters to see if they could make away with him, in as much as the emperor was generally accessible and now, on account of the exigencies of warfare, admitted to a conference absolutely everyone who desired it. But they were not able to carry out this plan, since one of them was arrested on suspicion and under torture revealed the entire plot" (LXVIII, 11)⁷³. The anonymous antiquarian tries to recreate the atmosphere in the camp of Roman conquerors by imagining a choir of soldiers who recite an epigram. The epigram would have been inscribed on an altar dedicated to Fortuna Augusta Omnipotens. It begins with a rhetorical question addressed by roman soldiers to the goddess of Fate, which they honor under the epiclesis Rhamnusia. The invocation formula, "*Ubi eras, Rhamnusia, ubi eras? Quantum abfuit ne Roma lugeret?*", echoes rather as a Christian appeal for a divine intervention, than the classic pagan repertoire. On a famous painting of Matthias

⁷¹ In their histories, the antiquaries adopt the Roman point of view, according to which there had been only one conquering war of Dacia.

⁷² CIL III, 66*.

⁷³ Leunclavius 1606, p. 1481.

Grünwald (1470–1528), Saint Antony is holding a piece of paper with the words “*Ubi eras, bone Jhesu, ubi eras? Quare non affuisti ut sanares vulnera mea?*”. The surname Rhamnusia was in fact a local epithet for Nemesis, alluding to the city of Rhamnus in Attica, where this deity was worshiped by a temple. The cult title Rhamnusia was also mentioned a few times in Latin poetry by writers like Cattullus (66.71; 68.77), Ovidius (Met. III, 406) or Statius (Silv. 2.6.74). During Renaissance times the equivalence Rhamnusia/Nemesis-Fortuna became rather a familiar theme⁷⁴. But not only literary references stood at the basis of composing the forgery, but also an inscription found in Alba-Iulia and dedicated to *dea Nemesis sive Fortuna* (CIL III 1125)⁷⁵. The next two verses, “*How little was lacking for/Rome to cry*” are referring to Trajan assassination attempt by an emissary of Decebalus, the episode briefly noticed by Dio Cassius and quoted above, while the exclamation “*Vae tibi Decebale!*” ending the epigram, reminds Brenus’ disdainful cry “*Vae victis!*”. The tone is incensed and sententious. A second inscription reads:

VICTORIAE AVG
 NONNE TIBI DIXI DECEBALE
 FVNESTUM EST
 HERCVLEM LACESSERE
 NON RECTE FECISTI
 TVA IPSE QVOD JACES
 MANV
 SED TE VTCVNQVE
 CAESAR VICIT
 TVLIT
 TIBI SEMPER AVGVR
 AVGVSTALIS⁷⁶

Translation: To Victoria Augusta. Didn’t I tell you, Decebalus, that provoking Hercules brings misfortune? You didn’t act right, taking your own life, but Caesar defeated you anyway. The augur augustalis always brought to you.

Comment: At the basis of this forgery there is another fragment of Cassius Dio⁷⁷. “Decebalus, when his capital and all his territory had been occupied and he was himself in danger of being captured, committed suicide” (LXVIII, 14). The inscription preserves a similar stilted and patronizing tone towards Decebalus as the precedent one, while it reserves for Trajan the adulatory style of panegyrics. The Hercules – Trajan analogy stand on literary and epigraphic mentions. It is

⁷⁴ Miller, Vredeveld 1993, p. 462, n. 20.

⁷⁵ Fabretti 1683, p. 232.

⁷⁶ CIL III, 72*, the inscription is not reproduce by Taurinus, but it is part of the same collection.

⁷⁷ Leunclavius 1606, p. 1482.

known that Hercules was considered the protector of Ulpia gens and Trajan had been himself compared to Hercules by Plinius (Pan. 14.5) and Dio (Or. 1.56–84). On the obverse of several coins, Trajan appears represented as Hercules⁷⁸. There are three fake inscriptions in total that exploit the Traian – Hercules association (CIL III, 70*; CIL III, 72*; CIL III, 67*). In this one an augur-priest is reproving Decebalus for his hybris. He addresses Decebalus directly (*Didn't I tell you, Decebalus, that provoking Hercules brings misfortune?*), condemning the king's voluntary death, which turned out to be nothing more than a meaningless act, unable to deprive the conqueror of his victory, (*You didn't act right taking your own life. But Caesar defeated you anyway*). There is not the faintest trace of a heroic suicide left. The antiquarian condemns the excessive wilting and excessive ambition which lead the Dacian king to challenge Hercules, while exalting the inescapable extension of Roman political and military power. It wasn't hard for the critic historians of the nineteenth century to ban these epigraphs as forgeries, given the abundant use of rhetorical figures and tropes, (interrogations, exclamations, imprecations), that blatantly contrasted with the lapidary style⁷⁹.

Another epigraphic forgery is inspired by the episode of building the bridge over the Danube, narrated by Cassius Dio. About the bridge at Drobeta, the author of the Roman History reports: “the piers are standing, affording no means of crossing, as if they had been erected for the sole purpose of demonstrating that there is nothing which human ingenuity cannot accomplish” (LXVIII, 13). The fragment sits at the basis of composing the following inscription⁸⁰ that should have been placed at the end of the bridge:

PROVIDENTIA AVG
VERE PONTIFICIS
VIRTVS ROMANA QVID NON DOMET
SVB JVGVM ECCE
RAPITVR ET DANVBIVS⁸¹

Translation: By the providence of Augustus, of the real pontifex, the Roman virtue, what doesn't subdue? Under the yoke, here, kidnaps even the Danube.

Comment: “The roman virtue [...] what cannot subdue” retakes the phrase of Cassius Dio “there is nothing which human ingenuity cannot accomplish”⁸². The hint to Roman virtue might have been inspired by two genuine inscriptions from Apulum dedicated to *virtus romana* (CIL III, 1159 and CIL III 1116).⁸³ Invoking

⁷⁸ Francke 1840, p. 169.

⁷⁹ Spotorno 1813, p. 46–47.

⁸⁰ Leunclavius 1752, p. 1482.

⁸¹ CIL III, 71*; Forisek 2004, p. 239.

⁸² Leunclavius 1752, p. 1482.

⁸³ Webber Jones 1926–1929, p. 272, n. 5

the quality of pontifex of the emperor is based on a play upon words inspired by a popular etymology that derived *pontifex* from *pons*⁸⁴, while the verse: “sub jugum ecce rapitur et Danubius” reverberates in echoes from Martial (“grande iugum domita Dacus cervice recepit”; Martial 6, 76, 6).

The discovery of Decebalus’ treasury, who, after Cassius Dio, hid his treasures under the bay of a river called Sargetia, sits at the basis of the making of another inscription. The ancient text informs us that: “The treasures of Decebalus were also discovered, though hidden beneath the river Sargetia, which ran past his palace” (LXVIII, 14). This fragment has served as an inspiration source for the next inscription:⁸⁵

IOVI INVENTORI
DITI PATRI
TERRAE MA-
TRI
DETECTIS DACIAE
THESAVRIS
DIVVS NER-
VA
TRAIANVS
VOTVM SOLVIT⁸⁶

Translation: To Jupiter the Finder, to Dis Pater (Father of wealth), to Mother Earth. Once the treasures of Dacia found, the divine Nerva Traianus made the vow.

Comment: Like all the other forgeries, this inscription too is abundant in bookish references and mythological allegations. The “Inventor” epithet had been attributed to Jupiter, by Hercules, thanking for the aid that the divinity had given him for finding the Cattle of Geryion. In the imagination of the modern antiquary, Jupiter Inventor could have been adored by Trajan for the help he could have given in the finding of Decebalus’ treasures. Dis Pater appears here not as a chthonian divinity but in the position of a patron of riches (an allusion to the same treasures). In exchange, the invocation for Terra Mater is inspired from the text of an original inscription (CIL III, 1284, CIL III, 1285.)⁸⁷

Two inscriptions are dedicated to Hercules. In one of them, Trajan is thanking Jupiter Stator and Hercules, the protector of his gens⁸⁸:

IOVI STATORI
HERCVLI VICTORI

⁸⁴ Spotorno 1813, p. 48.

⁸⁵ Leunclavius 1752, p. 1482.

⁸⁶ CIL III, 69*; Forisek 2004, p. 245.

⁸⁷ Fabretti 1683, p. 236.

⁸⁸ Francke 1840, p. 169.

M. VLPIVS NERVA TRAIANVS
 CAESAR VICTO DECEBALO
 DOMITA DACIA
 VOTVM SOLVIT
 ASPICE ROMVLE PATER
 GAUDETE QVIRITES
 VESTRA EST GLORIA ISTA.

Translation: To Jupiter the Stayer, to Hercules the Winner. Marcus Ulpus Nerva Traianus Caesar, Decebalus being defeated, Dacia being conquered, made the vow. Behold, father Romulus! Rejoice, citizens! This glory is yours.

Comment: At the basis of the composing of this inscription there seem to be several literary references. Firstly, we have the fragment from Dio Cassius referring to Trajan's victory and, probably, a short passage from Eutropius ("Daciam, Decebalus victo, suberigit"; Eutrop. 8.2). Decebalus' defeat by Trajan in the Dacian war has constituted the starting point of several forgeries from the Renaissance. Onofrio Panvinio (Onuphrius Panuinius), the librarian of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese cites a mutilated inscription that might have contained a eulogy to Trajan⁸⁹: DACICVS TRIB. POT. IIII. COS. IV. VICTO DECEBALO. W. Lazius retakes this inscription, claiming that it might be fixed in the walls of the Gumpendoff citadel and that it can only be read as far as this: SAR[...] DIV[...] / NERV[...] / TRA[...] VS AVG. / [...] NICVS DACICVS / VICTO DECE [...] / PONTIF MAX / [...] POT IIII, COS V⁹⁰.

In his turn, Gruterus takes over the inscription form Panuinus and restitutes it as: IMP. CAES. DIVI / NERVAE. F. NERVA / TRAIANVS. AVGVSTVS / GERMANICVS. DACIVS / PONTIF. MAXIMVS / TRIB. POT. IIII. COSIV / VICTO DECEBALO⁹¹.

The invitation *Gaudete quirites / vestra est gloria ista* is a tracing by Martial⁹² ("*gaudete cuni, vestra res acta est*", Mart. XI, 61). As it was expected, neither in this inscription, nor in the precedent one, the imperial title is not the one regularly met in genuine epigraphic texts. Also, the antiquarian overlooked the fact that a Roman emperor became divus only after his death⁹³.

The second inscription is dedicated by *colonia Sarmis* to the emperor and his sister Marciana.

DEO HERCVLI
 PRO SALVTE IMP
 DIVI TRAIANI

⁸⁹ Panuinus 1557, lib II, A. V 854 (non vidi); Fabretti 1683, p. 236.

⁹⁰ Lazius 1546, p. 37; Fabretti 1683, p. 236.

⁹¹ Gruterus 1603, p. 246; Fabretti 1683, p. 236.

⁹² Fabretti 1683, p. 234.

⁹³ Fabretti 1683, p. 234–235; Forisek 2004, p. 24; the imperial title used in the epigraphic documents was *Imperator Caesar Nerva Traianus Augustus* (Petolescu 2001, p. 47).

AVGVSTI ET
 MARCIANAE
 SORORIS AVG
 COLONIA DAC
 SARMIZ⁹⁴

Translation: To the god Hercules, for the safety of divine emperor Traianus Augustus and of his sister Marciana Augusta. Colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa.

Mommsen believes that it was composed based on some authentic fragments (CIL III 1444 si 1447)⁹⁵, which came from inscriptions that contained dedications to Trajan. The reference to the emperor's sister is taken from Plinius, who, in the Panegyric, had praised the loyalty of Marciana towards Trajan (Plinius, Paneg. LXXXIV).

The next inscription does not appear in Taurinus' *Index*, but it is part of the same forgeries collection found in Mezerzius' manuscript.

Text: Iovi Custodi / Quirino Sal/vatori / pro salute / Caes(saris) Nervae / Traiani / Augusti / colonia Sar/miz⁹⁶

Translation: To Jupiter the Guardian/ to Quirinus the Savior/ for the safety/ of Caesar Nerva/ Traianus/ Augustus/ colonia Sar/miz

The word *salvator* is unknown in classic Latin⁹⁷. It only appears in late antiquity, to Christian authors such as Tertullian, Lactantius or Juvencus, from where the antiquary probably took it⁹⁸. The dedication copies the topos of the conditores: the altar is made for Romulus, the founder of the City (Romulus parens Urbis), for Trajan's, the founder of the *Colonia Dacica Sarmis*, success. The association of Trajan with Romulus could have been synthetically taken also from Eutropius, who in his Breviary, stated that the emperor Antoninus Pius "deserves to be compared to Numa Pompilius just as Trajan should be compared to Romulus" (Eutropius, Brev. 8,8).

To sum up, the forgeries of the 15th century, produced, most likely in the clerical and humanist circles close to the royal court are inspired from Dio Cassius⁹⁹ Roman History and from authentic Roman inscriptions from Transylvania or Rome. Most of them are literary forgeries that transpose famous episodes in Roman antiquity under the shape of *epigrammata*. They are built around an ideology of power embodied by ancient characters, in a period when the Hungarian gentry identified themselves with the Roman aristocracy. Although Matei Corvin

⁹⁴ CIL III, 67*.

⁹⁵ Mommsen 1873, 9*.

⁹⁶ CIL III, 68*.

⁹⁷ Mommsen 1873, p. 9.

⁹⁸ Migne 1846, p. 146, n. 808.

⁹⁹ The first Latin translation of Cassius Dio is published in 1526 by N. Leonicensus. In 1519 a *Life of Trajan* had been published by Georgius Merula, in Latin (based on Dio Cassius' text), that Taurinus had known. In the most probable case, the forger or forgers of the inscriptions knew Greek.

personally regarded himself as a descendant of Messala Corvinus, Trajan's fighting spirit and activism could have served the Hungarian propaganda very well, the ambitions of the king to occupy the Czech throne, to conquer Vienna and to expand his suzerainty over Moldova. Matthias intended even to build a marble bridge over the Danube, in order to imitate Trajan's bridge¹⁰⁰. During Mathias' reign, the Hungarian kingdom reaches its largest expansion in its history. Under Trajan, the Roman Empire knew the largest expansion. Trajan had led a centralizing policy designating for administrative positions officials responsible only to him¹⁰¹. In his turn, Mathias promotes a policy of centralization confining the opposition of the gentry and restricting the functions of Hungarian Diet. On an ethical plane, the legitimization of the modern age elites as characters whose individual destinies are connected to the "grand history" is made by calling upon ancient heroes, superior in ethical and intellectual excellence and by military virtue. From the portrait that Cassius Dio makes for the Roman emperor, a portrait that, after the fashion of the time, included virtues and vices, the humanists will only retain the virtues. Trying to rehabilitate Mathias' origins, devalued by Frederic the Great for his Romanian origin, Bonfini shows how the Roman people was preserved through the Romanians, and how the Roman glory was rebuilt through the Romanian Mathias¹⁰². In its turn, the Hungarian gentry tries to restore, by evoking Roman greatness certain ethical values and models of military heroism, that had insured its power, at some point¹⁰³. Forgeries not only have a political dimension, but also an aesthetic one. Writing about Dozsa peasant war, Taurinus compose an epic poem, not a historical chronicle. Lucan's epic, which served as a model to Taurinus, was a work with multiple meanings and a narrative discourse imbued with a strong emotional tone. As shown by E. Paleit in a study dedicated to the reception of Lucan's work in England, "early modern readers of Lucan also take from him and adapt particular 'structures of feeling': for example, nostalgia and grief at the lost of something called freedom (a term different readers interpret differently), or rapture at his description of slaughter and the unnatural. Recognition that the reception of classical texts involved structures of feeling as well as ideological content enables greater understanding of of the complex interplay of different thoughts, feelings, desires, and values, not all necessarily conscious or consistent, triggered by any person's interaction with their environment- the contradictions and tensions, that is, characterizing many people's experience of politics."¹⁰⁴. I believe that in this context should be interpreted literary forgeries regarding Trajan's war with the Dacians. They can seem surprising if we look at them today in Mommsen's austere work, but for the contemporaries who had seen them in the notes of an epos, they could have easily passed as genuine.

¹⁰⁰ Ciurea 1984, p. 327.

¹⁰¹ Winsbury 2014, p. 195.

¹⁰² Levente 2011, p. 241.

¹⁰³ Levente 2011, p. 241.

¹⁰⁴ Paleit 2013, p. 23.

FALSURI EPIGRAFICE ÎN TRANSILVANIA
(SECOLELE XV–XVIII) (I)

REZUMAT

Rezumat: În acest articol, autoarea analizează falsurile epigrafice referitoare la istoria Daciei, dintr-o perspectivă a contextului care a favorizat apariția și proliferarea acestora. Perioada cuprinsă între sfârșitul secolului al XV-lea și începutul secolului al XVI-lea coincide cu debutul falsurilor literare în Regatul Ungar. Propagandă politică, patriotism local și pasiune pentru manuscrisele vechi, toate alcătuiesc un amestec de istorie și mit, de autentic și fals, topite în umanismul estetizant al Renașterii.

Cuvinte-cheie: falsuri epigrafice, umanism, manuscrise, patriotism, mit.

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