

EPIGRAPHICA HALMYRIDENSIA. I*

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Key words: Halmyris, inscriptions, dedication, limestone.

Abstract. The past years intense excavations in the area of the Halmyris fort and the restoration of its western gate revealed quite a few number of complete or fragmentary inscriptions on stone and bricks. Many were found during the 1991-2005 archaeological investigations in specific sectors of the fort, but a good deal of them appeared as *spolia* from the 1st-3rd century necropolis reused in the walls of the late 3rd – early 4th century western gate.

Cuvinte cheie: Halmyris, inscripții, dedicație, lespede.

Rezumat. Intensele cercetări arheologice din ultimii ani din aria fortului Halmyris ca și restaurarea poții vestice, au dat la iveală un număr important de inscripții pe piatră și cărămidă, complete sau fragmentare. Multe au fost găsite în perioada 1991-2005 în zona fortului, dar o mare parte au apărut ca *spolia* reutilizate în pereții poții vestice din sec. III-IV.

The sponsorship of the Halmyris site by the Earthwatch Institute in Boston (USA) since 1999 had a great contribution in the partial investigation of the western gate, where volunteers found inscriptions that have been preliminarily studied.

The restoration team, conducted by Mrs. Sarvaș is worthy of appreciation in pointing the existence and extracting and replacing with modern limestone some walled fragments of inscriptions facing down in southern and northern sides of the western gate, without damaging the monument in its entirety.

I. INSCRIPTIONS ON STONE

A. HONORARY

1. Fragment of white dark white light gray marble plaque, found in 2003, in the Domus 2 area, in P 6, at -0.90 m depth (Fig. 1). The piece was used as building material of the wall of the barrack block nr VI. Dimensions: 0.20 × 0.18 × 6.5 cm. The fragment bears traces of seven letters set on two lines; hl: 6.5 cm. The letters are straight, neatly traced, indicating the hand of an official engraver. The field of the preserved fragment is 0.15 × 0.10 cm. The surface of the fragment bears slight traces of fire.

1.1. The bottom halves of four letters. The first seems very likely the bottom right line of an A. A straight would indicate an I or rather T. The bottom of a second A appears clear enough although, if so, the horizontal line is not visible. The bottom of an S is clearly visible.

1.2. N is clearly readable; before N, a small upper trace of a letter is vaguely perceptible, most likely an I. The A is clear and is followed by the upper right part of an E which seems also unambiguous.

The reading:

ATAS
[I] NAE

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** The articles of the “Halmyris” group do not follow the rules of this journal because they were transferred from “Dacia” journal.

The group of letters ATAS, apparently difficult to be assigned to a particular expression, seems to be a plural perfect participle and the most convenient word would be [DEBELL] ATAS, a grammatical construction well represented, together with the temporal POST, on the Tetrarchic inscriptions at Sexaginta Prista, Transmarisca and Durostorum¹. The 1997 restitution of the Halmyris Tetrarchic inscription has also as restoration [POST DEBELLATAS] in the context of the same Tetrarchic wording which continues with HOSTIVM GENTES². On the Sexaginta Prista, Transmarisca and Durostorum inscriptions the expression is more elaborate, the group HOSTIVM GENTES being followed by CONFIRMATA ORBI SVO TRANQVILLITATE. At Halmyris and Donje Butorke the wording is simpler with HOSTIVM GENTES followed directly by PRO FVTVRVM IN AETERNVM REIPVBLICAE PRAESIDIVM CONSTITVERVNT, without any pompous expression ORBI SVO TRANQVILLITATE PRO FVTVRVM which occurs on the first three cases mentioned above.

The proposed restoration of the Tetrarchic wording on the Halmyris building inscription in 1997 was POST DEBELLATAS HOSTIVM GENTES IN AETERNVM REIPVBLICAE PRAESIDIVM CONSTITVERVNT.

The letters on the 2003 fragment fit [DEBELL]ATAS on the sixth and [I]N AE[TERNVM] on the seventh line in the Halmyris text. In that case the fragment would be an epigraphic evidence of another Tetrarchic foundation inscription at Halmyris.

This is the third Tetrarchic fragment of inscription found at Halmyris at a considerable distance from the initial place where the inscription must have been set. That shows that the monumental inscriptions were broken to pieces in a later period and used as building material.

A comparison between the physical characteristics of the two 1997 fragments and the one found in 2003 shows important differences. The stone analysis of the two 1997 fragments indicates a tough dark gray color, calcareous in composition, while the 2003 fragment is a dark white-light gray marble. The most obvious difference is the thickness of the fragments, which do not coincide. While the two 1997 fragments, which match together, are 8cm in thickness, the 2003 piece is only 6.5cm thick. That shows clearly that it is part of another inscription. The likely Tetrarchic wording on the 2003 fragment would belong to a different foundation inscription set in another location at the end of the reconstruction works. The 1997 fragments are supposed to have been set at the western gate, as suggested by their find spots. The find spot of the 2003 fragment would suggest a foundation inscription in the northern sector of the fort. Halmyris had two other pedestrian gates to the north and northeast, towards the harbor, investigated in the past years.

The 2003 fragment must have been part of the second monumental Tetrarchic foundation inscription set at one of these two gates. However, all the gates of the fort must have had such inscriptions which contributed to the endorsement of the imperial propaganda.

The reading:

[Imp(eratoribus) Caess(aribus) C(aio) Aurelio Valerio Diocletiano / et M(arco) Aur(elio) Maximiano pp(iis) ff(elicibus) invictis Aug(ustis) / et Fl(avio) Val(erio) Constantio et Gal(erio) Val(erio) Maximiano / nobb(ilissimis) Caess(aribus) Germanicis Max(imis) Gothicis Max(imis) / Sarmaticis Max(imis) Britannicis Max(imis) Persicis / Max(imis) qui post debell]atas [hostium gentes / pro futurum i]n ae[ternum reipublicae / praesidium constituerunt].

Proposed date: 301-305.

2. Fragment of yellowish limestone plaque, found in 1994 facing down at the postern of the northeast gate (Fig. 2). The piece was cut at the four corners in order to be easily accommodated between the narrow walls of the last quarter of the 6th century postern and used as a threshold. The text was seriously damaged. The plaque has an uneven surface that shows that it was not properly prepared for the writing. Therefore,

¹ J. Kolendo, *Une inscription inconue de Sexaginta Prista*, *Eirene* 5, 1966, p. 139-154 (Sexaginta Prista); *CIL* III, 6151 (Transmarisca); I.I. Russu, *Inscriptii latine din Durostorum*, *StCl* 2, 1936, p. 210-212; *AE*, 1936, 10 (Durostorum). For a commentary on the three inscriptions see M. Zahariade, *The Halmyris Tetrarchic Inscription*, *ZPE* 119, 1997, p. 230-236; idem, *The Tetrarchic Building Inscriptions and the Lower Danubian Limes*, in: *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina, Roma, 18-24 Settembre 1997*, Roma, 1999, p. 453-457.

² M. Zahariade, *op. cit.*, p. 229; 233; idem, *Inscriptiia de fundatiie tetarhică de la Halmyris*, *Pontica* 29, 1997, p. 173-186; Al. Suceveanu, M. Zahariade, *Inscriptiile*, in: Suceveanu, Zahariade, Topoleanu, Poenaru Bordea, *Halmyris I. Monografie arheologică*, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 115.

there are visible repercussions in the lay out, size and quality of the letters. Dimensions: 0.47 × 0.42 × 0.07m. The preserved field of inscription: 0.24 × 0.32m; hl 3.5-4cm. The writing is unequal and asymmetrical; the letters are cut in a shallow manner.

The text has five lines:

[D] D N N
 CONSTAN
 TIVS AVG
 ET CONSTAS- (sic!)
 5. NTINVS

1.1: the first letter, highly probable a D, completely disappeared.

1.2: O is considerably damaged; S is bigger than the rest of the letters; only the left upper part of a letter is preserved, but due to its sharp angle-like form it strongly suggests an N

1.3: G is rendered through a C

1.4: T is shorter than the rest of the letters; the S at the end of CONSTA, which is visible enough, might be an additional error of the engraver. The bottom part of the plaque shows clearly the letters NT. The I, N, and V are broken at the lower part but are easily distinguishable.

1.5: the group TINVS falls in the fracture of the inscription.

On 1.2 and 3: Constan/tius Aug. is Constantius II (Flavius Iulius Constantius, 337-361).

On 1.4 and 5: Consta/ntinus is Constantinus II (Flavius Claudius Constantinus, 337-340), who was also Augustus after 9 September 337 together with Constantius II and Constans (337-351).

On 1.6. The title Augustus appears as the only solution.

The reading:

D(omini) N(ostri)
Constan-
tius Aug(ustus)
et Consta-
 5 *ntinus*
[Augustus]
[.....]

On the Scythia Minor milestones, only Constantinus II and Constantius II appear associated in an earlier or later period³. Constantius II held a certain authority over the other two Augusti, although Constantinus II was older in age and commonly appears on the first place in inscriptions⁴. On the Carcaliu inscription Constantinus II is also recorded on the first place in the list of the three Augusti, in 337-340⁵.

The Halmyris inscription dates after 9 September 337 but before the spring of 340, when Constantinus II Augustus, in an attempt to forcibly discipline the arrogant Constans invaded Italy, was defeated and killed by his younger brother at Aquileia⁶.

³ The association is usually with Constantine I (Maximus, the Great), either in the position of Caesars or as Augusti, but always without Constans, at least in Scythia; IGLR nr. 6 (323-337), 167 (324-326), 275 (ante 337), 276 (324-326).

⁴ On Constantinus II see O. Seeck, RE 4, s.v. *Constantinus* (3), col. 1026; J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 1971, 1, p. 223, s.v. *Fl. Claudius Constantinus*.

⁵ IGLR, nr. 238 (337-340). It is for the first time when the three Augusti, Constantine II, Constantius II and Constans appear together on a Scythian inscription.

⁶ For these events, see: X. Lucien-Brun, *Constance II et le massacre des princes*, Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé, ser. 4, 1973, p. 585-602; Joe W. Leedom, *Constantius II: Three Revisions*, Byzantion 48, 1978, p. 133-36; Michael DiMaio, *Smoke in the Wind: Zonaras' use of Philostorgius, Zosimus, John of Antioch, and John of Rhodes in his Narrative on the Neo-Flavian Emperors*, Byzantion 58, 1988, p. 236-249; More recently, M. Di Maio and D. W.-H. Arnold, *Per Vim, Per Caedem, Per Bellum: A Study of Murder and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Year 337 A.D.*, Byzantion 62, 1992, p. 198-212.

B. TOMBSTONES

3. Yellow limestone plaque. Found in 2004, walled in the pavement of the corridor, on the edge of the 'secret well' between the northern bastion and the fort wall (Fig. 3). The stone was cut at the lower part to fit in the new structure. Dimensions: 0.74 × 0.94 × 0.70 m. The inscription field: 0.76 × 0.40 m; hl: 2-5cm. The words are separated by *hederae distinguentes*.

The field of inscription is framed by a decoration of vine sticks with leaves and grapes. The decoration appears only on the right side, while the left is almost completely deteriorated. The inscription has seven lines.

The text reads:

D M
AELIVS SO
LA VIVO S
VO SIBI PO
5. SVIT ET AELE
MARCE CO
IVGI PIENT

*D(is) M(anibus)
Aelius So-
la vivo s-
uo sibi po-
5. suit et Ael(ia)e
Marc(ia)e co(n)-
iugi pient(issimae)*

The letter O has different sizes: 1.2 and 4 (from SOLA and POSVIT) and 6 (COIVGI) are 2-3 cm 1.3: A from SOLA is deteriorated but is easily identifiable.

1.5: E+T in ligature

1.5: last E from AELE: 2cm

The letter O of the line 2, (SOLA) 4 (POSVIT)

1.5. ET in ligature; AELE, as it appears written on the block is certainly the gentilice Aeliae. It could have been pronounced as such, though, in the daily colloquial language and the engraver, no doubt from a local environment, could have adopted the respective phonetic form.

1.6. MARCE would indicate the same phonetic phenomenon as in the case of *Aele. Marc(ia)e* is the most likely restitution; *coiux* for *co(n)iux* is a largely spread wording.

Aelius Sola must have been a soldier discharged from an auxiliary unit or naval squadron stationed at Halmyris⁷. If so, Sola received the Roman citizenship and acquired implicitly the imperial gentilice during the Antonine period as the common formula sounds: *civitatem Romanam qui eorum non haberent dedit*. His wife, Aelia could have also received the citizenship concomitantly through the well known juridical procedure: *et conubium cum uxoribus quas tunc habuissent cum est civitas iis data aut cum iis quas postea duxissent dumtaxat singuli singulas*.

Aelius Sola dedicates the inscription to himself (*suo sibi*), and to his wife (*coniugi*) while he was still living (*vivo suo*). It could be an indication that the two spouses had no children or heirs to take care of a proper burial after their death.

⁷ Except legionary vexillations, which built the first stone fort (see below, note 19), the epigraphic evidence for early Halmyris garrison indicate a significant squadron of the war fleet on the Danube (*Classis Flavia Moesica*) (Suceveanu., Zahariade, *Un nouveau vicus sur le territoire de la Dobroudja romaine*, Dacia N.S., 30, 1986, p. 109-120) and a certain activity of the *legio V Macedonica* (M. Zahariade, *New Epigraphical Finds in the Roman Fort of Independența, Tulcea County*, Dacia N.S. 34, 1990, p. 263). On the other hand, the presence of the Thracians, especially Bessians in the Roman Imperial Navy is well documented (CIL XVI+ *Supplementum*, passim; RMD, passim).

Sola is certainly a Thracian name, particularly Bessian⁸, and it is recorded for the first time at Halmyris. Individuals bearing the name Sola appear frequently in a military environment, both in the auxiliary units and in the imperial navy. *Meticus Solae*, *Bessus* labeled as *gregalis*, from ala I Asturum in Moesia Inferior and *Bithus Solae*, also a *Bessus* from numerus Equitum Illyricorum in Dacia Inferior are recorded as grantees in the military diplomas from Plovdiv (A.D. 99)⁹ and Palamarca (13.12. 140), respectively¹⁰. Sola Mucatri is a veteran from ala Tungrorum Frontoniana garrisoned in the 2nd century at Ilişua¹¹. He seems to have remained in northern Dacia Porolissensis after his discharge. A Solas appear on a receipt for the squadron of Donatus of ala veterana Gallica from Egypt in 130¹². A soldier in the praetorian navy from Misene bears a typical Roman name, C. Iulius Victor, certainly received during the service or on discharge, but he insists to make known his former Thracian name on the diploma, Sola Dini¹³.

It is difficult to decide whether or not Sola was initially recruited in Thrace and then dispatched to the Halmyris garrison. It seems more likely that he was recruited into the army from the local Bessian communities settled in Dobrudja since early 1st century A.D.¹⁴, enough numerous to allow conscription on a regular basis.

Marcia is a common Latin name in the Lower Danubian lands¹⁵ and is already known at Halmyris. A Memmia Marcia died here at mid 2nd century¹⁶.

The gentilice Aelius/Aelia becomes more and more significant in number at Halmyris: Aelius Valens, Aelius Sabinus, Aelia Bendsi, Aelius Titianus¹⁷ (see also infra nr. 7, 8, and 9). The increasing number of Aelii is a remarkable indication of the Romanization in progress in the north-eastern corner of Dobrudja in the Antonine period.

Date: Antonine period.

4. Lower part of a yellow limestone plaque (Fig. 4). Found in 1992, walled in the structure of the southern side of the second gateway of the western gate overlaying nr. 6 (see below). The tombstone was cut in two. The lower part was placed in the masonry with the cut edge facing the exterior. The preserved plaque is broken in two.

The field inscription has a 0.24m wide featuring vine creeping stalks with grapes and leaves. Under the text of the inscription there is a vase with reflected rim; on each side there are two leaved twigs and two springing out stalks. In the middle there are two lotus buds. Two peacocks on either side drink water out of the vase. The field inscription is 0.74m wide. Dimensions: 1.21 × 0.67 × 0.20m; h: 9-11cm. Two lines are preserved:

MARI

F C

1.1: the breaking of the stone falls exactly on the middle line of A. The upper part of R and of an I is also broken.

1.2: *Hederae distinguentes* before F, between F and C, and after C which is slightly broken at the upper and lower part.

The reading:

[.....]
mari[to]
f(aciendum) c(uravit)

⁸ G.I. Katsarov, *Trakiiskite Besi*, IzvestijaBID 6, 1924, p. 31-34; W. Tomaschek, *Die Alten Thraker*², Wien, 1980, p. 43.

⁹ CIL XVI, 45.

¹⁰ RMD 39 = IDR I, nr. 13.

¹¹ CIL III, 787.

¹² P. Lond. II 482¹⁰; CPL 114¹⁰; J. Lesquier, *L'armée romaine d'Égypte d'Auguste à Diocletien*, I-II, Le Caire, 1918, p. 503-504; S. Daris, *Documenti per la storia dell'esercito romano in Egitto*, Milano, 1964, p. 119-120 nr. 38²¹.

¹³ CIL X, 3593: *C. Iulius Victor qui et Sola Dini*.

¹⁴ Em. Zah, Al. Suceveanu, *Bessi Consistentes*, SCIV 22, 1971, 4, p. 567-578.

¹⁵ E.g. M. Minkova, *The personal names of the Latin Inscriptions in Bulgaria*, dans *Studien zur klassischen Philologie*, Wien, 2000, p. 202.

¹⁶ Zahariade, *New Epigraphical finds*...p. 262, nr. 6.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 259-260 nr. 1; p. 260-261 nr. 3; p. 264, nr. 7.

The massiveness and ornamentation of the fragment indicates a considerable size of the tombstone set by a person with a satisfactory financial situation, a woman who set the tombstone for her husband.

Date: The ending formula *f(aciendum) c(uravit)* would indicate late 2nd – early 3rd century.

5. Fragmentary yellow limestone plaque (Fig. 5). Found in 1992, in the same structure, next to nr. 5. Dimensions: 1.16 × 0.83 × 0.19m; hl. 6.7cm. The preserved field of inscription is 0.61m wide; straight, well cut letters. The plaque was cut vertically to be walled in the masonry. The cut edge appears eroded or chiseled even by the late 3rd century builders. The upper right part is completely destroyed; the upper left part is missing; some of the letters are completely illegible because of erosion. The 6cm deepened field of inscription is sided by a 0.15m wide border surrounded by a vine stalk decoration with leaves and grapes. The letters and the border have noticeable traces of ochre.

Seven lines are preserved:

[CA]PIT[O]
[A]NVS
ORM
VS SEX
5. QVIN[T]
FILI B[M]
F [C]

- 1.1: the lower right part of a letter is visible before PIT; very likely an A, considering the oblique remaining fragment of a line; the upper left part of the P is broken; only the left part of the top line of the T is preserved; very likely: [CA]PIT[O];
- 1.2: S is faded but is easily recognizable; the lower part of a letter is preserved only through the trace left by the chisel, possibly the letter A; lecture: [A] NVS;
- 1.3: the letters ORM are clear; there is a trace of an I, or T, or F, or any other letter with a vertical line before O, as the tiny fragment of a sole of a letter shows; I seems more likely.
- 1.4: the letter X is broken to the right, but it does not affect an easy lecture: SEX;
- 1.5. QVIN. T, which is very likely, seems to have disappeared in the erosion; lecture QVIN[T];
- 1.6: the stone is broken under this line and splits the letters I, B, from I following P only the insertion of the chisel is preserved; lecture FILI B[M].
- 1.7: only the letter F is preserved; the letter C disappeared because of the erosion; lecture: F[C]

The reading:

[...] [Ca]pit[o...]
[...a]nus [...]
[...i(?)orm [...]
us Sex(tus)[...]
5. Quin[tus ?...]
fili b(ene) [m(erenti)]
f(aciendum) [c(uravit)]

Capito is a cognomen, while Sextus and Quintus are *praenomina*. They are well known among the Latin personal names and widespread in the Roman Empire, both in the Eastern and Western provinces¹⁸. In I. 3 one can attempt to restore *[stipend]ior(u)m*, but one can only guesstimate, as far as it is hardly acceptable that given the neat aspect of the inscription, the engraver could have commit such an omission in case of a key word in the text. As it seems, Sextus and Quintus were Capito's sons.

Date: 2nd century. The straight and neatly tracing of the letters are important clues in dating the inscription.

¹⁸ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki, 1982, passim. For Capito in the Lower Danubian provinces see Minkova, *op. cit.*, 131.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.

Pl. I – Halmyris: Figs. 1-5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.

Pl. II – Halmyris: Figs. 6-7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

Pl. III – Halmyris: Figs. 8-9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

Pl. IV – Halmyris: Figs. 10-13.

6. Yellow fragmentary limestone plaque (Fig. 6). Found in 2005, underneath nr. 4. Dimensions: 1.07 × 0.79 × 0.24m; hl. 4.5-5cm. Traces of mortar from the walling into the masonry are still visible at the bottom part of the inscription field.

The stone was found broken in two. The left upper part was cut in order to be fitted in the new structure. The preserved field of inscription is 0.70 × 0.57m and 6cm deepened. On the right side there is a Corinthic style, double drummed at the upper part column, rectangular in profile, with stylized leaves, roughly chiseled with irregular incisions.

The letters D and M are 7 cm in height.

D M
M VLP MAR
CELLINVS POS
SIBI ET CL BERSIL
5. LE B M CONIV
GI ET NATIS[...]

D(is) M(anibus)
M(arcus) Ulp(ius) Mar-
cellinus pos(uit)
sibi et Cl(audia) Bersil-
5. le b(ene) m(erenti) coniu
gi et natis[...]

Tria nomina indicates Marcellinus as a Roman citizen. He set himself (*sibi posuit*) the tombstone. He received the imperial gentilice, Marcus Ulpius during Trajan's reign. This is the first case of a M. Ulpius known at Halmyris that would entail also an early date of the inscription, during or shortly after Trajan's reign. He might have supposedly been still an active soldier in one of the legionary detachments from I Italica, V Macedonica, or XI Claudia, which built the first stone phase of the fort in 106-117¹⁹, or a civilian (in the administrative services), although there is no clear indication for any of these assumptions. It seems unlikely that he was a veteran when the inscription was set, otherwise he would have indicated the customary formulas of *militavit*.

The cognomen Marcellinus is rare for the early 2nd century. I. Kajanto has demonstrated that names ending in the suffixes *-inus*, *-anus* become increasingly numerous in later period, stressing on the rarity in early centuries A.D. The cognomina derive from the parental ones adding the suffix, which in the long run increased the number of extended forms. Marcellus as widely spread in early period becomes Marcellinus as a more common personal name in a later epoch²⁰. Surprisingly, Moesia Inferior did not yield any 1st –2nd century name of Marcellinus, the few examples being later in date²¹. In Dacia the name seems more widespread. A. Iulius Marcellinus is recorded in an inscription at Schitu Topolniței, in Dacia Malvensis in the second half of the 2nd century²². At Germisara, an earlier Aelius Marcellinus is *signifier et quaestor N(umeri) B(rittonum)*, freed from a deadly threat (*mortis periculo liberatus*)²³. Marcellinus is for the first time attested at Halmyris and certainly in north-eastern Dobrudja.

Claudia Bersille was undoubtedly a native woman of some condition, of peregrine origin, inheriting the imperial gentilice from his grandfather who might have been granted the Roman citizenship during Claudius' or Nero's reigns. The feminine gentilice Claudia is well documented in Moesia Inferior²⁴ and elsewhere. As Marcellinus' wife, she was also a Roman citizen. Bersille seems very likely a *hapax* in the long list of Thracian personal names. Decev's list²⁵ could not produce any example of an identical or similar name,

¹⁹ Zahariade, *Vexillation in northern Dobroudja*, Dacia N.S. 30, 1986, 1-2, p. 173-176.

²⁰ Kajanto, *op. cit.*, p. 173, Ch. 2 *Cognomina*. Marcellinus is obtained from a praenomen, Marcellus.

²¹ Minkova, *op. cit.* s.v., p. 202.

²² IDR II, nr. 135.

²³ IDR III/3, nr. 243.

²⁴ Minkova, *op. cit.* s.v., p. 41.

²⁵ D. Decev, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste*, Wien, 1976, p. 51-55.

although the root *behr-* is widespread and used in dozens of combinations to form place names. A Berilo, as a masculine name, appear in an album of the *sodalicii* of Bacchus from Nedan, also in Moesia Inferior²⁶. The name Bersille is formed of the indo-european *-*bher=*to carry, to bear, to cut, to split, to cleave²⁷ and the ending *-sille*. But *Sile* is a feminine name in itself, like in an inscription in Koinare: [...] *senecta mea Crescentilla socra tua et Sile coniux tua Bitilla curavit filia*[...]²⁸.

On line 6, after *et* the word *natis* designates the children of the couple resulted from their marriage.

Date: the first half of the 2nd century.

8. Fragment of a yellow limestone plaque (Fig. 7). Found in 1985. The plaque seems to have been cut in four. The preserved fragment is the upper right quarter of the entire tombstone. Its right part is strongly eroded. It was used as a base for the drum of a column in Domus I. Six lines are preserved:

1.1: only the letter D is preserved. It was certainly followed by M which disappeared in the cutting.

1.2: P is slightly destroyed to its upper right part; P+I in ligature; an R, as the last preserved letter of the line is clearly readable.

1.3: IMI; the right half of the M is slightly eroded. The reading of the group IMI leaves no doubts;

1.4: ANN. The right oblique line of the A is longer than the rest of the letter.

1.5: AELIV.

1.6: RATIA. The horizontal bar of the T is not completely engraved. Only the right half is visible.

The reading:

D [M]
PAPIR
IMI
ANN
5. AELIV
RATIA

D(is) [M(anibus)]
Papir[ius ?.....]
imi [....vix(it).....]
ann[is.....]
5. *Aeliu[s.....]*
Ratia[ria?.....]

Papirius is most likely to be restored on 1.2. The name is of Italic of origin and frequent especially in middle and southern Italy²⁹. A Papirius Mes[...] is recorded on the Troesmis legionary *laterculus* of 134³⁰. Another Papirius Valens, a *tubicen*, is recorded on a second half of the 2nd century inscription at Lom³¹.

The text yet raises some difficulties. IMI on line 2 could come from a cognomen that have this group of letters, e.g. [Pr]imi[tivus], or [Max]imi[nus]. L. 6 poses the dilemma of the reading of the well-known colonia in Moesia Superior, RATIARIA or a group of letters such as RNIA, which would come either from a feminine cognomen e.g. [Calpu]rnia, or masculine ending in [...]rnia[nus]. The problem comes from the puzzling N or T after R. If it is a T it was incompletely carved in the stone. But the second letter after R is an A and has exactly the same characteristics as A from AELIV[s...] on 1.5. The reading RATIARIA is highly

²⁶ B. Gerov, *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae*, (further on, ILB), Sofia, 1989, nr. 438 II/13. A. Bersolus, as a masculine name appears in Pannonia (AE 1972, 447).

²⁷ I.I. Russu, *Limba traco-dacilor*, București, 1967, p. 132.

²⁸ Gerov, *op. cit.*, nr. 153; M. Minceva, *op. cit. s.v.*, p. 253. On the name see also, K. Vlahov, *Nachträge und Berichtigung zu den thrakischen Sprachresten Rückwörterbuch*, GSUIFF 57, 1963, 2, p. 221-273; Zh. Velkova, *Nachträge zu den thrakischen Sprachresten* (1957-1972), Linguistique Balkanique 17, 1974, 2, p. 55-77.

²⁹ A. Mocsy, *Gesellschaft und Romanisation in der römischen Provinz Moesia Superior*, Amsterdam, 1970, p. 214.

³⁰ ISM V nr. 137 VII 3.

³¹ Gerov, *Romanizmăt mejdu Dunava I Balkana II. Ot Hadrian do Konstantin Veliki*, GSUIFF 42, 1950, p. 16.

probable. If so, it might be that the last individual recorded in the Halmyris inscription could have originated from Ratiaria, a homeland well represented in other collective inscriptions³².

9. Yellow limestone fragment of a tombstone (Fig. 8). Dimensions: 0.55 × 0.45 × 0.18 m. hl. 8-10cm. It was found in 2002, walled in the structure of the northern bastion of the western gate and recuperated when the restoration works commenced. The stone is badly damaged on the right side and nothing is preserved from the common floral motif (vine rod, grapes and leaves), although the dividing line between the field of inscription and the border indicate an initial intention to create decoration.

Three lines are preserved.

1.1: the bottom parts of E and L which are very likely, followed by IVS

1.2: easily readable VRNINV; N + V in ligature in which V is rendered as an U

1.3: the right part of a V; an X seems excluded; the following letters are clearly readable IT AVET; T and A are divided by a narrow space, enough to make a distinction between the two letters; E + T in ligature.

From a fourth line only a tiny upper part of a possible I is preserved.

The reading:

ELIVS
VRNINV
VIT AVET
I(?)

[A]elius
[Sat]urninu
[s milita]vit a(nnis) V et
[.....i(?)..]

Aelius Saturninus died while in active service after five years in the army. Saturninus is attested for the first time at Halmyris. As a personal name it is widely spread in almost all the provinces of the Roman Empire. It appears for quite a few times in the Troesmis *laterculus* of legio V Macedonica in 134³³ or in many other instances in Moesia Inferior³⁴. Aelius Saturninus at Halmyris died after five years of service.

Date: first half or mid 2nd century.

10. Greysh monolithic fragmentary plaque, broken in four smaller parts (Fig. 9). Found in the debris at the western gate in 2004. The four fragments join together.

Frg. 1: 0.38 × 0.30 × ca. 0.035m; hl. 7cm.

The top part of the fragment.

Three lines are preserved:

1.1. Only the lower parts of the letters are readable. E N E M E R E

1.2: E T F I L I O S I S. E falls mostly in the break of the stone, but the two horizontal bars are enough preserved to read an E. The reading of the rest of the line poses no problems. The last S is slightly broken to its curvature, but is easily readable.

1.3: I X I T A N X. The lower parts of all the letters on this line fall in the fracture of the stone.

Frg. 2: 0.26 × 0.26 × ca. 0.035m; hl. 7cm. Three lines are preserved.

1.1: T I E. The first letter must be a T whose horizontal bar is missing; I is complete.

The lower part of an E is the only solution for reading this letter.

1.2. N I V. N and I are clear. There is an oblique bar of a letter which can not be anything else but a V.

1.3: P(?) or R (?) E. Only the loop of an R or B is preserved. The upper part of the next letter reveals an E, which is most likely.

Frg. 3: 0.10 × 0.10 × ca. 0.033m; fragmentary letters. The fragment matches exactly between fragments 1 and 2.

³² E.g. IMS II, nr. 53.

³³ ISM V, nr. 137 IV 8; 22-24.

³⁴ ISM V, nr. 10, 149, 187, 188, 298; In general see Minkova, *op. cit.*, s.v. p. 247-248.

A small fragment of the lower part of V, followed by the lower half of an I, and a fragmentary lower oblique bar of X. that would match the V on the second and I X on the first fragment.

Frg. 4: EA(?) or EN(?)

The assemblage of the four fragments resulted in five lines of the same inscription with the following reading:

BENEMERE[N]
TI ET FILIO SIS
NI VIXIT AN X
P(?) (R?) E
EA or EN

bene mere[n]
ti et filio Sis(o?)
ni vixit an(nis) X[..?]
P(R?) E[.....]
EA/EN

The preserved text would point to the final lines of the inscription. The beginning of the dedication falls in the rupture and is so far lost. The only name readable is Siso (Dat. – Sisoni). The text specifies only that he had a son, unnamed in the text, who also receives the dedication. He seems to have lived ten years or more. Siso is a rare name. A Sise is known at Oescus (Gigen), very likely as a military³⁵ and an Aelius Sissa is recorded on an inscription at Securisca (Cerkovica)³⁶ In different variants, the name is apparently masculine, rather than feminine.

11. Greysh monolithic stone with fragmentary inscription, found in the debris of Thermae I, in 1995. Dimensions: 0.36 × 0.26 × 0.20m; hl. 0.7-0.10 cm; elongated letters. The left side of the stone is broken to its left part.

Three lines are preserved:

EA
ALE
S

Possible lecture:

[...] ea[...](?)
[V]ale(ns)
[...] s[...]

An Aelius Valens is known at Halmyris as a veteran in an unnamed regiment, together with another Aelius Valens on the same tombstone³⁷.

12. Greysh monolithic stone with fragmentary inscription. Found in 1982 S 1 26. Dimensions: 0.14 × 0.12 × 0.07m. The left side is completely broken. One fragmentary letter is preserved.

The reading:

V

13. Yellowish limestone with fragmentary inscription. Found in 1982 in S1 26. Dimensions: L = 0.16 × 0.13 × 0.06m. The right part of the letter M falls in the fracture. One fragmentary letter is preserved:

The reading is:

M

³⁵ Gerov, ILB nr. 68.

³⁸ ISM I, nr. 201 B 18.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, nr. 133.

³⁷ Zahariadc, *New Epigraphical finds...*, p. 260-261, nr. 3.

14. Yellowish limestone with fragmentary inscription. Found in 1982 S 1 26. Dimensions: 0.15 × 0.65 × 0.08m.

One fragmentary letter is preserved. The right part of the letter V falls in the fracture.

The reading:

V

15. The middle part of a yellowish limestone fragmentary plaque. Found in 1982 in SI 26. Dimensions: 0.38 × 0.17 × 0.06m; hl. 6.5cm. The field of inscription is slightly deepened and sided by a 2.5cm and 4cm wide double frame, without decoration. Four lines are preserved.

1.1. the lower right part of an A, followed by an S

1.2. very likely a G of which only the upper and the bottom part are preserved

1.3. possibly the right bottom part of an A

1.4 the right upper part of a V

The reading:

AS
G
A
V

16. The upper left part of a yellowish limestone fragmentary plaque. Found in 1982 in S1 26. Dimensions: 0.85 × 0.25 × 0.14 m; hl. 3cm. The field of inscription is bordered by a deepened frame. Only one letter is preserved.

The reading:

L

II. INSCRIPTIONS ON BRICKS

17. Fragmentary brick: 12 × 6.5 × 3cm. Paste of yellowish color, well fired, without major traces of gravel or sand; hl. 1.5-2.5cm. The letters are of irregular form and were incised into the raw paste. Five lines were preserved.

1.1. D or Q; the upper part falls into the fracture of the brick; P or I; the upper part falls into the fracture of the brick; separation dots between D/Q and P/I; D is more likely.

1.2. S bigger (2.7cm) than the other two letters, IN; the tracing of the first letter is not very clear; it could also be a Q with an elongated tail.

1.3. above the left vertical bar of an N is a horizontal incision, hardly visible, either accidental or a ligature N + T.

1.4. the first letter seems a handwritten uncial *α*.

1.5. an I is most likely.

The reading:

DPI
SIN
NTE
PO
α
5 I

No coherent interpretation is possible for the moment.

18. Fragmentary building brick poorly fired, with gravel intrusions (Fig. 10). Dimensions: 13.5 × 12 × 4.3cm; hl.: 1-1.5cm; The Greek letters are written in the raw paste (Fig. 10).

The reading:

ΑΡΑΚΑ

The dots are obliquely set between A and P, possible a writer's sign; irregular letters.

Possible lecture: Ἀράκλα sc. Ἡράκλα. An Ἡράκλας is known at Histria³⁸. The spelling with $\tilde{\eta}$ instead of ϵ : Ἡρακῆς contr. Ἡρακλῆς (Att), Ἡρακλέα (acc.), seems a slightly corrupted Doric dialect in rendering and pronouncing the name.

³⁸ ISM I, nr. 201 B 18.

19. Fragmentary brick of red paste, with fine traces of gravel and sand. Found in 1994. Dimensions: 22.5 × 11 × 4.5cm; hl. 3.5cm Intersected three fingers print. The three preserved letters are incised in the raw paste with a wide point stylus. D is partially incised over the finger prints.

The reading:

V I D

If not the name or mark of a craftsman, we precautiously propose: *V(exillatio equitum) I D(almatarum)*. If so, the brick must be late 3rd – early 4th century in date when *vexillationes equitum* as a type of cavalry unit circulated in the Empire and not later³⁹. In *Notitia Dignitatum* *vexillationes* appears only as headings for such a type of regiments, but never refers to a specific unit, as occurs during the Tetrarchic period. At late 3rd –early 4th century, *vexillationes equitum* used to bear numbers, as it is the case of *vexillatio II scutariorum* from Odessus (Varna), or *vexillatio XIII (or XII) catafractariorum* from Trimammium, temporarily dispatched to Histria⁴⁰. It might be one of the many Dalmatian regiments that circulated within the Empire, with a temporary presence at Halmyris.

20. Complete building brick found in the collapsed rubble near the interior face of the defense wall, on the southern side of the western gate (Fig. 11). Dimensions: 34.5 × 27 × 5 cm. The brick is well burnt, has a dark reddish color, with visible very fine gravel and sand. The oblique finger prints divided the brick surface in four triangles of which only the upper (a), the left (b) and lower(c) contain Greek letters. They were written with a stylus after the finger prints had been already traced:

a. Letters: K (hl. 2cm); PX; hl. 3cm; X is later incised, overlapping P. To the right of the group PX there are several incisions from the stylus.

b. Up: group of letters: NYKT or NTYK (hl. 3cm). N + Y + T + K in ligature; the oblique lines of Y are traced above T.

Bottom: the letters: NK (hl. 2.3cm); N + K in ligature; several incisions from the stylus to upper right

c. Bottom, the letters ΠPH. The upper right part of H is missing. Vertical and pointed incisions from the stylus under the letters.

21. Fragmentary building brick. Found in 1994. The color of the paste is dark reddish with visible fine incisions of gravel and sand. Dimensions: 16 × 11 × 5cm. The incisions, written with a stylus, are illegible. It appears as an attempt of a cursive writing or possible a drawing.

22. Fragmentary building brick. The piece was found in 1994 in the collapsed rubble inside the edifice *Thermae I*. The color of the paste is brownish-reddish. The brick is well burnt. Dimensions: 29 × 25 × 5cm; hl. = 3.5cm. Oblique three fingered prints. Two letters at the bottom part of the piece:

The reading:

Θπ

π is slightly turned to the right.

23. Fragmentary building brick, found in the rubble inside the edifice (Fig. 12) *Thermae I*. Dimensions: 27 × 18 × 5. The paste is well fired. Oblique finger prints. The only preserved letter appears to have been incised in the raw paste.

The letter:

M

The letter is cut by an oblique line.

24. Fragmentary building brick, found in 1993 during the survey of the ‘Dealul Cetății’ hill, to the south (Fig. 13). The paste is dark grayish, with cavities from the incomplete or poorly firing. Dimensions:

³⁹ D. Hoffmann, *Das Spätromische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, Teil I-II, Epigraphische Studien 2, 1969, p. 281-282 and passim IGLR, nr. 110.

⁴⁰ V. Beševliev, *Spätgriechische und Spätlateinische Inschriften aus Bulgarien*, Berlin, 1964, nr. 52;

14 × 17 × 5cm. Fragmentary stamp. The dimensions of the preserved part of the cartouche are: 7 × 4cm; hl. = 3cm; reversed writing. The reading is from right to left.

Possible reading:

LE [G] I [IOVIAE SCY]

Le[g](ionis) I [Ioviae Scy(thicae)]

Legio I Iovia Scythica is a Tetrarchic legion created especially for Scythia and garrisoned at Noviodunum. It might have dispatched a detachment in the Halmyris fort as suggested by a *lettera commendaticia* inscribed on a brick⁴¹ where Valerius Valerinus Constans appears as a military (with unknown office) in λεγέων πρεῖμα Ἰοβία. As there is a local business, in which Valerius Valerinus recommends a certain Secundus, the Hermes' son, and urge Valeria, the bone craftswoman, he must have had a certain position in the legion and in the Halmyris garrison in general⁴².

⁴¹ A. Aricescu, *Armata în Dobrogea romană*, București, 1977, p. 122-123, fig. 28.

⁴² *Halmyris I*, p. 125-126, nr. 21.

