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Postal address (materials sent for reviewing purposes and other correspondence): *Universitatea “Al. I. Cuza”, Facultatea de Istorie, Bulevardul Carol I, nr. 11, 700506 - Iași, Romania.*

Tel.: (+04) 0232 201 615; Fax.: +(4) 0232 201 201, +(4) 0232 201 156;

Website: saa.uaic.ro; Email: saa.uaic.ro@gmail.com, blucretiu@yahoo.com.

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King Agesilaus and the Trial of Phoebidas

Larisa PECHATNOVA¹

Abstract. *The article explores the tradition about the capture of Thebes fortress Cadmea by the Spartan commander Phoebidas (382 BC). The purpose of the article is, first, to consider the degree of participation of King Agesilaus in the capture of Cadmea, and, secondly, to find out the reason why Agesilaus defended Phoebidas in court. The author concludes that Agesilaus' defense of war criminals like Phoebidas and Sphodrias had disastrous consequences for Sparta. According to the author, the blame for the violation of the Peace, the break of relations with the allies and the defeat of the Battle of Leuctra can be partly laid on Agesilaus.*

Rezumat. *Articolul explorează tradiția despre cucerirea fortăreței Cadmea de către comandantul spartan Phoebidas (382 î.Hr.). Scopul articolului este, în primul rând, de a analiza modul în care regele Agesilaus a participat la cucerirea Cadmei și, în al doilea rând, de a afla motivul pentru care Agesilaus l-a apărut pe Phoebidas în instanță. Autoarea concluzionează că apărarea de către Agesilaus a criminalilor de război precum Phoebidas și Sphodrias a avut consecințe dezastruoase pentru Sparta. Potrivit acesteia, vina pentru încălcarea păcii, ruperea relațiilor cu aliații și înfrângerea în bătălia de la Leuctra pot fi pusă parțial pe seama lui Agesilaus.*

Keywords: Agesilaus, Phoebidas, Leontiadas, Sparta, Thebes, Cadmea, Xenophon, Diodorus, Plutarch.

We know more about the Spartan king Agesilaus than about any other *basileus* of Sparta, primarily thanks to a rich tradition. His contemporary, the Athenian Xenophon, wrote a lot about Agesilaus. Xenophon fully expressed his admiration for the Spartan king in the tractate '*Agesilaus*', where the king is depicted in the most favorable light. In '*Hellenica*' Agesilaus is also the main personage. The special attitude of Xenophon towards Agesilaus was also manifested in the way he depicted the participation of the king in the trial of Phoebidas.

Despite his apparent bias, Xenophon remains the main source of our knowledge of Phoebidas. All later authors, such as Diodorus, Plutarch or Cornelius Nepos, wrote several centuries after the events of interest to us and used sources whose reliability cannot be established. But they have valuable information that should not be rejected only on the grounds that this information does not agree with Xenophon's version².

¹ St. Petersburg State University, Institute of History, Russia; email: l.pechatnova@spbu.ru.

² RICE 1974, 164.

The fact that much more information has been preserved about Agesilaus than about any other Spartan king is partly due to his unusually long reign (399–360), and in the most difficult period for Sparta. Agesilaus became king shortly after the brilliant victory of the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War, and died in an era when Sparta had already ceased to be the leader even of the Peloponnesian League. Let's try to at least concisely assess the degree of Agesilaus's guilt in the collapse of the Spartan Empire.

It is very difficult to give an unambiguous answer to this question. But some moments are well visible. A long stay in power and the absence of strong competition from the co-rulers led to a significant increase in the power of Agesilaus³. In fact, he made many decisions alone. An excellent psychologist and talented actor, he managed to charm the entire ruling elite thanks to two simple but very productive tricks: firstly, constantly showing generosity, and secondly, demonstrating the deepest respect and reverence for the main magistrates of the state – the *ephors* and the *gerontes*. There was no other such king in Sparta, who would have learned to manipulate people so cleverly. He fascinated many. Among his friends and admirers was Xenophon, who sincerely considered him a great king.

But almost sole and extended in time power, as a rule, leads to an aberration of the consciousness of the bearer of this power. This rule turned out to be true and for Agesilaus. The fact is that the king from time to time made decisions that went against international legal norms and Sparta's own obligations. Recall that in a short period of time, Agesilaus saved from execution two of the highest Spartan officers, Phoebidas and Sphodrias, who were tried for war crimes – violation of the oath and disobedience to the authorities.

In this article, I would like to consider one specific case – the story of Agesilaus' intervention in the trial of Phoebidas⁴. This story has been considered more than once in the scientific literature, but, as a rule, quite fluently. There are several works in which this topic is touched in one way or another. We will refer to them later. But first, let's look at the sources.

The most detailed story about the capture of the Cadmea by Phoebidas and his subsequent punishment for illegal actions belongs to Xenophon. Let us briefly summarize the events as they are presented by Xenophon.

³ Agesilaus, from the very beginning of his reign, apparently set himself the goal of neutralizing or even getting rid of his co-rulers – the kings from the Agiad dynasty. The most significant of the Agiads, who reigned together with Agesilaus, was king Pausanias (409–396). But he was co-ruler of Agesilaus for only four years. In 396, not without the help of Agesilaus, Pausanias was sentenced to death (Xen. Hell. III. 5. 25) and ended his life in exile. Pausanias's son Agesipolis I (395–380) fell completely under the influence of Agesilaus (Plut. Ages. 20; Diod. XV. 19. 4). Cleombrotus, the younger brother of Agesipolis, reigned for a short time (380–371) and died in the battle of Leuctra.

⁴ Four years later, in 378, Agesilaus will again put pressure on the judges and force them to justify the *harmost* Sphodrias. For this political process, see our article: PECHATNOVA 2021, 47–63.

In 382⁵, Phoebidas, brother of Eudamidas, who was sent to Thrace with a large army, went after his brother with additional forces (Hell. V. 2. 25)⁶. Phoebidas on the road to Thrace, passing through the territory of Boeotia, encamped near Thebes. Here Leontiades⁷, one of the *polemarchs* of Thebes, entered into negotiations with Phoebidas. Leontiades was at the head of the oligarchic *hetaeria*, focused on an alliance with Sparta (V. 2. 25)⁸. He advised Phoebidas to capture Cadmea, the citadel of Thebes, arguing that in this way 'Thebes will be completely under the control of the Lacedaemonians' (V. 2. 26, hereinafter translated by C.L. Brownson). Leontiades, persuading Phoebidas, argued that such an action would be 'the greatest service to his fatherland' (V. 2. 26). The Theban asked the *harmost* to help him and his supporters carry out a coup d'état, and promised that, having come to power, he would immediately send significant military assistance to the Spartans fighting against Olynthus (V. 2. 27). Phoebidas accepted this offer and, with the help of Leontiades and his supporters, captured the Cadmea (V. 2. 29).

Xenophon paints a vivid picture of the Spartans' seizure of the Cadmea. He gives a number of curious details that make the story itself lively and dynamic. Xenophon's accents are arranged as follows: Phoebidas only followed the instructions of Leontiades, who have led the Spartan detachment to the Theban citadel and ordered that no one be allowed into the Acropolis without his (Leontiades – *L.P*) order (V. 2. 29). Leontiades chose a good time when the Thebans celebrated the Thesmophoria. Therefore, the Spartans were able to secretly and with minimal risk enter the city and capture the Theban citadel. Here the main person is clearly Leontiades.

What follows is the classic description of a coup d'état carried out with the support of a Spartan garrison. Immediately after seizing power, Leontiadas cracked down on political opponents: Ismenias, on the orders of Leontiadas, was arrested and imprisoned in Cadmeia, and about 300 of his associates fled (*ἀπεχώρεσαν*)⁹ to Athens (Xen. Hell. V. 2. 30–31). Thebes moved towards a more rigid oligarchic regime, similar to corporate tyranny: all significant positions, including the *polemarchia*, passed into the hands of the conspirators led by Leontiadas

⁵ Henceforth, all dates are BC.

⁶ In Diodorus, most likely, by mistake, Phoebidas was sent first to Thrace, and after him already Eudamidas (XV. 19. 3).

⁷ For the origin of Leontiadas, his family and previous career, see esp.: TUFANO 2020, 67–74. S. Tufano shows through a number of examples that a recurrent tendency of Leontiadas' family seems to have been the support of Sparta and of its foreign policy.

⁸ The another *polemarch* was Ismenias, who led a faction with a pronounced anti-Spartan attitude. Apparently in 382 the balance of political forces in Thebes was approximately equal, since the highest magistrates, *polemarchs*, were the heads of the opposing parties. The fact that two politicians of different orientations were chosen for the same position suggests a system which allows for an institutional opposition (TUFANO 2020, 71). Perhaps, Ismenias enjoyed more authority among the Thebans than Leontiadas: they remembered and appreciated the active support that the Ismenias' party provided to the Athenian exiles during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens (BERESFORD 2014, 6).

⁹ Diodorus (Ephorus) gives the same figure, but instead of the neutral *ἀπεχώρεσαν* 'to go' he uses another verb *ἐφυγάδευσεν*, i.e., 'to be expelled', which greatly changes the meaning (BUCK 1994, 66).

(V. 2. 32). Xenophon calls the new rulers of Thebes tyrants (V. 4. 13), and the regime established by them is tyrannical (V. 4. 1)¹⁰. This can be assessed as a covert condemnation of those who helped the Theban oligarchs come to power. After all, the Spartans, who from archaic times had a reputation as tyrant-fighters (Her. V. 68; 92; Thuc. I. 18. 1; Isocr. IV. 125; Arist. Pol. V. 8. 18. 1312 b; Plut. Mor. 859 d)¹¹, now did not overthrow tyrannical regimes, but planted them. It is worth recalling their active assistance in establishing the tyranny of the Thirty in Athens (Xen. Hell. II. 3. 4)¹².

Thus ends the first part of Xenophon's story about Phoebidas, where the action took place in Thebes, and the second part begins, where the action is transferred directly to Sparta. After the account of the coup at Thebes, Xenophon reports on the reaction of the Spartans to the unauthorized capture of the Cadmea by Phoebidas: 'Leontiades proceeded at once to Lacedaemon. There he found the ephors and the majority of the citizens angry with Phoebidas because he had acted in this matter without authorization by the state' (Hell. V. 2. 32). Further, Xenophon sets out the Agesilaus' point of view on the criminal behavior of Phoebidas. Here the criterion that guided the king in assessing the actions of Phoebidas in Thebes is important. Let's take this passage: 'Agesilaus, however, said that if what he had done was harmful to Lacedaemon, he deserved to be punished, but if advantageous, it was a time-honoured custom that a commander, in such cases, had the right to act on his own initiative. 'It is precisely this point, therefore', he said, 'which should be considered, whether what has been done is good or bad for the state (προσέκει σκοπεῖν, πότερον ἀγαθὰ ἢ κακὰ ἐστὶ τὰ πεπραγμένα)' (V. 2. 32). Agesilaus explicitly defines harm and benefit from the point of view of politics, not morality.

Agesilaus made this curious statement, most likely, not in the Spartan Assembly, often called the *apella*, but in the Little Assembly, which Xenophon calls the Little *Ecclesia*¹³. It was in it, apparently, that the top leadership of Sparta discussed and made a decision regarding the situation in Thebes. In any case, Xenophon, having stated the point of view of Agesilaus, immediately reports that Leontiades, who appeared in Sparta to explain the situation, spoke precisely before the *eccletes* (Λεοντιάδης ἐλθὼν εἰς τοὺς ἐκκλητίους ἔλεγε τοιάδε...) (Hell. V. 2.

¹⁰ About the same, but in detail, says Plutarch: 'the Thebans ... lost their ancestral form of government and were enslaved by Archias and Leontidas, nor had they hopes of any deliverance from this tyranny ...' (Pel. 6. 1, translated by B. Perrin.); and elsewhere: 'Archias, Leontidas, and their associates... took the power into their own hands, and tyrannized against all equity and law' (De gen Soc. 576 a, translated by W. Goodwin)

¹¹ About the Spartans as tyrant-fighters, see esp.: PECHATNOVA 2020, 206–225.

¹² For Xenophon's attitude towards tyrannical regimes, see: LEWIS 2004, 65–74; BUXTON 2017, 25–29.

¹³ The name 'the Little *Ecclesia*' (τὴν μικρὰν καλουμένην ἐκκλησίαν) is found only in Xenophon's account of Cinadon's conspiracy (Hell. III. 3. 8). Since Xenophon, apart from the name, does not give any comments on the Little *Ecclesia*, there is a significant scatter of opinions in science. However, all researchers believe that we are talking about some kind of elite assembly, different from the usual Spartan Assembly (*apella*). Apparently, this was an emergency council, which was convened by the *ephors* on special occasions. It most likely included the highest magistrates of the state – kings, *gerontes* and *ephors* (CARTLEDGE 1987, 131; GISH 2009, 343).

33)¹⁴. Leontiades bluntly stated that if the Spartans supported the coup he had arranged and recognized the new government of Thebes as legitimate, then he would ensure the absolute loyalty of the Thebans to them. The speech of Leontiades, as quoted by Xenophon, sounds very convincing: '... a brief message from you will suffice to secure from that quarter all the support that you may desire...' (V. 2. 34). At really, as Xenophon adds, during his reign 'Leontiadas and his party... gave the Lacedaemonians even more support than was required of them' (V. 2. 36). Xenophon, apparently, does not accidentally quote a lengthy quotation from the speech of Leontiadas. Apparently, his goal was to shift at least part of the responsibility for the capture of Cadmeia from the Spartans to the Theban instigator.

The opinion of king Agesilaus and especially the agitation of Leontiadas did their job, and the judges decided to leave the Spartan garrison in Thebes and bring to justice the main opponent of Leontiadas – Ismenias¹⁵. On the last point, apparently, Leontiadas, the new ruler of Thebes, insisted very much. According to Xenophon, an exit court of the Peloponnesian League¹⁶ took place in Thebes, which included three Spartans and one representative from each of the allied polities. Apparently, Xenophon did not accidentally mention the composition of the court, thereby hinting at the absolute legality of the sentence passed on Ismenias. Ismenias was accused of *medism* (pro-Persian sympathies)¹⁷ and friendly (*xenic*) relations with the Persian king, and this at a time when the King's Peace was still preserved and Sparta had rather friendly relations with Persia (Hell. V. 2. 35). H. Hack points out the absurdity of such an accusation, 'since there was no one who had not courted the Mede at one time or another during the Corinthian War'¹⁸. J. Dillery calls these accusations obviously ridiculous and grotesquely exaggerated¹⁹. The trial of Ismenias was nothing more than a theatrical performance with

¹⁴ It is possible that the term ἐκκλῆται, which occurs three times in Xenophon (Hell. II. 4. 38; V. 2. 33; VI. 3. 3), specifically refers to the members of the Little *Ecclesia*. In all three places, where the *eccletes* are mentioned, they are talking about urgent and delicate matters, the discussion of which could only be conducted behind the scenes. The first case concerns the establishment of order in Athens, which meant the recall and resignation of Lysander. This had to be done, of course, quickly and without publicity. The second case is the story of Phoebeidas, and the third is the discussion of peace conditions after the defeat of the Spartans at the battle of Leuctra in 371.

¹⁵ But here's what is curious: Xenophon says nothing about the sentence passed on Phoebeidas. He diverts the reader's attention by engaging him in the details of Ismenias' trial.

¹⁶ Plutarch, however, states that Ismenias was taken to Sparta (Pelop. 5. 3) and after a trial, executed in some cruel way (De gen Socr. 576 a).

¹⁷ Ismenias, like Leontiadas, also led an oligarchic party, but opposed to Spartan interference in their factional struggles (Hell. Oxy. 12. 1–2: 'Of the two political factions, the party of Leontiadas were pro-Spartan, while the party of Ismenias were labeled as atticers as a result of their support for the [Athenian] *dēmos* in exile', translated by A. Beresford). Ismenias was one of those who, in 396 or 395, received a bribe from the Persian envoy Timocrates, who was sent to Greece to bribe prominent politicians in Thebes, Corinth and Argos in order to form an anti-Spartan coalition (Xen. Hell. III. 5. 1). So, the true accusation of Ismenias was that he actively contributed to the unleashing of the Corinthian War. His exceptional wealth (Plat. Men. 90 a; Rep. I. 336 a) may also have been very attractive to accusers.

¹⁸ HACK 1978, 226.

¹⁹ DILLERY 2003, 219.

absolutely predictable result: Ismenias was sentenced to death and his property was probably confiscated²⁰. P. Cartledge considered this trial the first of a series of such trials, which were a parody of justice. Including thanks to such unfair and cynical trials, Sparta became infamous in the years after 382²¹.

Xenophon named Leontiadas, head of the Laconophilic party in Thebes, as the undeniable instigator of Phoebidas. Xenophon's desire to shift the blame from Sparta to Thebes is understandable: with his rejection of Boeotia and everything connected with it, such tendentiousness of the Athenian historian is not surprising. On the one hand, Xenophon's Phoebidas is a true *Spartiate*, 'for he was a man with a far greater passion for performing some brilliant achievement than for life itself'. On the other hand, this man clearly did not correspond to his high position in the army. After all, according to Xenophon, 'he was not considered one who weighs his actions or has great practical wisdom' (Hell. V. 2. 28). Here one can see Xenophon's hidden allusion to the Spartan practice of appointing relatives and friends to important posts. An experienced military man, Xenophon, apparently, more than once observed the unpleasant consequences for Sparta of such appointments, based solely on family and friendly ties.

Later authors have some discrepancies with Xenophon. So, Diodorus (Ephorus) insists that the very idea of capturing the Cadmea came from the Spartan authorities, and Phoebidas only implemented the government's directive: '... they (Spartans – *L.P.*) were mindful of the danger that Thebes, if a suitable occasion arose, might claim the leadership of Greece. Accordingly, the Spartans gave secret instructions¹ to their commanders, if ever they found an opportunity, to take possession of the Cadmeia' (XV. 20. 1–2, hereinafter translated by C.H. Oldfather). According to Diodorus this was a secret order allegedly given to all the Spartan military leaders²², that is, in essence, we are talking about a conspiracy directed against Thebes. If, according to Xenophon, the Spartans' seizure of the Cadmea went smoothly, without causing a rebuff from the Thebans, then Diodorus, on the contrary, claims that the inhabitants of Thebes put up fierce resistance to the Spartan squad: 'When the Thebans, resenting this act, gathered under arms, he (Phoebidas – *L.P.*) joined battle with them and after defeating them exiled three hundred of the most eminent Thebans' (XV. 20. 2).

Plutarch generally aligns himself with Diodorus, but blames not the Spartan authorities in general, but specifically Agesilaus for the instigation of Phoebidas: 'Of course this gave rise at once to a suspicion that while Phoebidas had done the deed, Agesilaus had

²⁰ HACK1978, 226; DILLERY 2003, 219.

²¹ CARTLEDGE 1987, 374.

²² Most scholars believe that this Diodorus' statement is most likely a gross exaggeration (e.g., SEAGER 2008, 160). But there are voices in defense of his version. So, according to H. Hack, 'Diodorus' view finds support in the haste with which Agesilaus came to Phoebidas' aid soon after the occupation, when the Spartans put the latter on trial for taking unauthorized action' (HACK 1978, 223).

counselled it; and his subsequent acts brought the charge into general belief' (Ages. 24. 1, hereinafter translated by B. Perrin). Along the way, Plutarch also gives a moral assessment of the king's behavior, accusing Agesilaus of the fact that the interests of his friends are more important for him than the interests of the cause (Ages. 23. 6–7).

However, in the biography of Pelopidas, Plutarch places somewhat different accents. The instigators of Phoebidas are here named the Theban oligarchs, who convinced the Spartan *harmost* to capture the Cadmea: 'Therefore Archias, Leontidas (at Xenophon – Leontiadas – *L.P.*), and Philip, men of the oligarchical faction who were rich and immoderately ambitious, sought to persuade Phoebidas the Spartan, as he was marching past with an army, to take the Cadmeia by surprise, expel from the city the party opposed to them, and bring the government into subserviency to the Lacedaemonians by putting it in the hands of a few men' (Pelop. 5. 2, hereinafter translated by B. Perrin). There is no irresolvable contradiction with what Plutarch wrote in 'Agesilaus', since in Pelopidas' biography Plutarch naturally focused on the events in Thebes, and not Sparta.

The reaction of the Greeks to this absolute lawlessness is reported by many ancient authors. Isocrates and Polybius mention the capture of the Cadmea among the many crimes of the Spartans (Isocr. IV. 125–126; Polyb. IV. 27. 6–8). Diodorus claims that the Spartans' seizure of the Cadmea caused such indignation in the Hellenic world that the Spartan authorities were forced, in order to appease the allies, to arrange a show trial and impose an impressive monetary fine on Phoebidas (XV. 20. 2). Plutarch even cites the amount of this fine – a hundred thousand drachmas (Pelop. 6. 1).

A review of the sources leads to the following observations: Diodorus (Ephorus) and partly Plutarch, where he followed Ephorus, clearly show an anti-Spartan orientation. The Spartans planned an attack on Thebes in advance and only under the pressure of public opinion staged a formal trial of Phoebidas. It was they who dealt with Ismenias, the opponent of the rapprochement between Thebes and Sparta. Leontiadas and his party played a comparatively minor role in their versions.

A completely different, clearly pro-Spartan version is presented by Xenophon. He made Leontiades the main initiator of the Spartan attack on the Cadmea. It was he who persuaded the not too smart Phoebidas to occupy the Cadmea. He was also able to convince the Spartans to keep their garrison at Thebes. In Xenophon, Leontiadas is the villain who managed to deceive the Spartans and impose his will on them.

We join the opinion of R. Buck that a strong anti-Spartan orientation, even in the choice of words, raises suspicions about the veracity of Ephorus. The version of the long-accepted plan of the Spartan politicians to capture Cadmea at the opportunity sounds like a

rhetorical construction. The report of a battle between Thebans and Spartans during their march towards the Theban citadel is also highly doubtful²³.

On the other hand, Xenophon is hardly right when he completely removes the blame from the Spartans and exposes the Theban Leontiadas as the main autor of the events in question. Such a rehabilitation of the Spartans looks too biased. But the overall balance in evaluating the messages of Diodorus (Ephorus) and Xenophon is in favor of Xenophon's version²⁴.

After a review of the sources, we will try to answer the two most important questions for us: by whose order, secret or explicit, Phoebidas acted and what Agesilaus was guided by, speaking in his defense.

In the summer of 382 BC Phoebidas and his troops seized Thebes and helped the Theban oligarchs, led by Leontiadas, establish a regime here ready to cooperate with the Spartans. In Xenophon's version, the initiative came exclusively from Leontiadas, who, in order to defeat political opponents, was ready to surrender Thebes to the Spartans. Phoebidas allegedly only agreed with the plan proposed by Leontiadas, nothing more. The Spartan attack on Thebes in peacetime completely violated the traditional rules of interstate relations. From any point of view the act was absolutely unlawful since at that time the King's Peace still remained in force, and this is how it was perceived by all Greeks, including the Spartans themselves. Before Agesilaus made his point clear, the Spartans had no doubt that Phoebidas was guilty.

At the court session, Agesilaus apparently defended Phoebidas, an unconditional war criminal, so openly that this gave rise to rumors, the essence of which is reported by Plutarch: it was Agesilaus who advised Phoebidas to commit this criminal act (Ages. 24. 1). But, on the other hand, we do not find in Xenophon even a hint that Agesilaus pushed Phoebidas to capture the Cadmea. Plutarch, by the way, refers to rumors rather than facts. Thus, the sources do not give an unequivocal answer to the question of whether Agesilaus actually led the actions of Phoebidas in Thebes or not.

Of course, in the first quarter of the 4th century, Agesilaus was the main political figure not only in Sparta, but throughout Greece. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine that such an important decision as the capture of Thebes could be carried out without his direct instructions. And it can hardly be considered an accident that the seizure of the Theban citadel was carried out by a person from the king's inner circle. Recall that for many years the foreign policy of Sparta was led by Agesilaus. His co-rulers of the Agiad dynasty, as a rule, did not

²³ BUCK 1994, 68.

²⁴ Ibid.

seriously compete with him, since each of them ruled for a relatively short time and did not have time to acquire sufficient political weight.

In favor of the fact that it was Agesilaus who stood behind Phoebidas, one more consideration can be given: the king hated both Thebes and all of Boeotia as a whole. He always remembered the public humiliation to which the *beotarchs* in Aulis subjected him: they ordered the royal sacrifices to be thrown down from the altar at the time when Agesilaus performed sacrifice before going to Asia Minor in 396. They spoiled the colorful spectacle conceived by Agesilaus, during which he was going to portray himself as the new Agamemnon on the way to Troy (Xen. Hell. III. 4. 3). The vindictive and deeply offended king could not forgive the Boeotians for such an insult. This shameful episode for Agesilaus should always be remembered when considering his policy towards Thebes²⁵.

There is no consensus in the scholarly literature about Agesilaus' role in this story. Some believe that Agesilaus may well have inspired Phoebidas to take over the Cadmea before he even left Sparta. They definitely see the hand of Agesilaus behind Phoebidas' actions²⁶. D. Rice suggested that the Theban Leontiades could also have a great influence on the harmost. He connected different versions of ancient authors and came to the conclusion, 'that it was Agesilaus who conceived with Leontiades the plan of inviting Phoebidas' Spartan army into Thebes'²⁷. The same point of view is shared by R. Seager. In his opinion, Agesilaus could remotely control the joint actions of Phoebidas and Leontiadas²⁸. R. Seager explains this position of Agesilaus by his hatred of Thebes: 'Yet it is not incredible that Agesilaus, ...whose hatred of Thebes may have made him particularly sensitive to any manifestation of Theban independence, had suggested that Phoebidas explore the possibility of setting up a reliable puppet government'²⁹.

However, disagreements in the sources forced some researchers to completely reject the version according to which Agesilaus stood behind Phoebidas. So, I. Surikov considers unfounded the version according to which Agesilaus is accused of direct incitement of

²⁵ H. Hack considers, that the initiator of the incident at Aulis was Ismenias, the leader of the anti-Spartan faction in Thebes (HACK 1978, 212, 214).

²⁶ CAWKWELL 1976, 79; CARTLEDGE 1987, 156; SEAGER 2008, 160.

²⁷ RICE 1974, 180.

²⁸ Leontiades probably belonged to the circle of Agesilaus' foreign friends and, very possibly, was even his 'guest friend' (ξένος). A similar policy of forming client-friends from people who owned wealth, position and political power in their own states was already actively pursued by Lysander. And, of course, Agesilaus could act in the same spirit, maintaining friendly relations with the pro-Spartan oligarchs in many Greek cities. The appearance of Leontiadas in Sparta and the opportunity given to him to deliver a speech in defense of Phoebidas proves the closeness of the Theban to someone from the leadership of Sparta. This someone was, most likely, Agesilaus. He really wanted the power in Thebes to be in the hands of pro-Spartan oriented rulers loyal to him personally. Apparently, the *decarchies* of Lysander served as a model for him.

²⁹ SEAGER 2008, 160.

Phoebidas³⁰. In his opinion, the *harmost* could well have acted spontaneously, being unable to refuse an easy opportunity to seize the Cadmea, and with it Thebes. Like any Spartiate, he dreamed of glory and exploits and could not refuse such a chance to become famous.

Agesilaus, by virtue of his status, was a member of the judicial board³¹ and therefore participated in the trial of Phoebidas on a completely legal basis. He, as an influential and long-ruling king, had the opportunity to influence the judges, imposing his personal opinion on them. Of course, three dozen *gerontes* were easier to manipulate than a Spartan popular assembly, no matter how obedient it was (Arist. Pol. II, 8, 3, 1273 a; Diod. XI. 50). We also recall that in Sparta, court decisions were made on the basis of previously applied practices and precedents, and not in accordance with written laws (there was no written legislation in Sparta). This, of course, opened up scope for all sorts of manipulations. Aristotle considered the lack of written legislation to be a major flaw in the Spartan judicial system (Pol. I. 6. 14. 1270 b). Indeed, as P. Cartledge observed, 'his lack of written laws or decrees of course gave great scope for interpretation to those officials who were empowered to administer the rules...'³².

We believe that Agesilaus would in any case defend Phoebidas, regardless of whether he acted on the king's orders or made a decision completely independently. Firstly, for the king with a dubious right to the throne³³, this trial was another test of his strength and influence³⁴. Secondly, it was extremely important for Agesilaus to save Phoebidas from execution both as a spartan citizen and as a person from his inner circle. Phoebidas belonged to a noble family (Plut. Ages. 34. 8–11: story of Isidas, Phoebidas's son), was close associate of Agesilaus, and enjoyed his unconditional trust. In any case, in 378, during a campaign against Thebes, the king appointed Phoebidas to a high post, making him the *harmost*³⁵ (military governor) at the Thespieae (Xen. Hell. V. 4. 41).

³⁰ SURIKOV 2015, 117.

³¹ We know very little about the judicial system of Sparta. Undoubtedly, the Spartan court was fundamentally different from the judicial system of democratic Athens. The judicial board of Sparta is characterized by a small number of judges and their actual irremovability.

³² CARTLEDGE 2000, 12.

³³ On the struggle of Agesilaus for the throne, see: PECHATNOVA 2020, 521–526.

³⁴ Agesilaus a few years later defended in court a man who was not part of his circle of friends. We are talking about Sphodrias, the Spartan harmost in Boeotian Thespieae, who in 378 BC invaded Attica with an army in order to capture the Athenian harbor of Piraeus. The raid was unsuccessful, and Sphodrias himself, for actions not authorized by the Spartan government, was put on trial and escaped punishment solely due to the protection of Agesilaus (Xen. Hell. V. 4. 15–32).

³⁵ In Sparta, the term '*harmost*' (ὁ ἄρμοστής) meant a military rank, and was not just one of the synonyms for the word 'commander'. This is partly confirmed by Diodorus in his account of the capture of Chalcedon by Alcibiades in 409: 'Hippocrates... had been stationed by the Lacedaemonians in the city as commander (ἡγεμών) (the Laconians call such a man a '*harmost*' (ἄρμοστήν))...' (XIII. 66. 2). Diodorus repeats the same about Lysander, who 'they (Lacedaemonians – L.P.) ordered... to visit the cities and set up in each the magistrates they call *harmosts*...(τοὺς παρ' αὐτοῖς καλουμένους ἄρμοστὰς)' (XIV. 10. 1). In 387, according to the Peace of Antalcidas, Sparta recalls her *harmosts* from Asia Minor, but, despite her promises, leaves them in many other Greek cities (Polyb. IV. 27.

The main argument of the king in the defense of Phoebidas was that this *Spartiate*, in his opinion, was certainly useful (cr hv simo") to Sparta (Plut. Ages. 23. 7). At the same time, Agesilaus referred to some ancient custom (aj cai' on ei\ nai nov mimon)³⁶, according to which the actions of field commanders should be evaluated only on the basis of one test – harmful or useful for the state were the results of their activities (Xen. Hell. V. 2. 32). Agesilaus considered the seizure of the Cadmea to be extremely beneficial to the state, and this became the main argument in favor of Phoebidas' acquittal. The king in this case completely ignored the international agreements that Sparta swore to abide by. As J. Dillery observed, 'in fact, Agesilaus' apparent disregard for the just... illustrates the *dichotomy* between Sparta's internal *arete* and her external brutality'³⁷. Here we observe the usual behavioral stereotype of the *Spartiates* – a contemporary of Agesilaus. They strictly observed ethical norms only within their own society. Their virtues did not extend to the outside world. This generic trait of the Spartans was clearly formulated by Thucydides: 'The Lacedaemonians are exceedingly virtuous among themselves, and according to their national standard of morality. But, in respect of their dealings with others, although many things might be said, they can be described in few words—of all men whom we know they are the most notorious for identifying what is pleasant with what is honourable, and what is expedient with what is just' (V. 105. 4, translated by B. Jowett).

Recall that the famous commander and a person close to Agesilaus, Lysander, behaved in the same way abroad, however, like many other senior officers. The fundamental social norms that the Spartans adhered to in their homeland ceased to operate for them as soon as they found themselves outside of Sparta. The Spartans treated their allies with arrogance and disdain, as if those were their servants or slaves. (Thuc. VIII. 38. 3: Pendaritus; VIII. 84. 1–3: Astyochus; Diod. XIII. 66. 5; XIV. 12. 2–9: Clearch; Plut. Lys. 13: Lysander; Lys. 15: Callibius). They broke oaths easily. It is no coincidence that Lysander is credited with saying that adults should be deceived with oaths in the same way that children should be deceived with dice (Plut. Lys. 8. 5; Polyae. I. 45. 3; Aelian. V. h. VII. 12). The outright cruelty and imperial manners of the Spartan military greatly harmed Sparta and destroyed its authority in the eyes of the allies.

Returning to the trial of Phoebidas, we note that, although the court found Phoebidas guilty of criminal wrongdoing, he, thanks to the efforts of Agesilaus, escaped with only a fine and suspension from office (Plut. Ages. 6. 1; Diod. XV. 20. 2), still Cadmea remained under

5). In 374, Sparta once again promised in an agreement concluded with Athens to remove all its garrisons (Diod. XV. 38), but the *harmosts*, together with the garrisons, finally disappeared only after the battle of Leuctra (Xen. Hell. VI. 3. 18; Paus. VIII. 52. 4; IX. 6. 4). For the *harmosts*, see esp.: BOCKISCH 1965, 129–239.

³⁶ Probably, the mention of some archaic rule is an unfounded statement by Agesilaus. In the absence of written laws, the Spartan kings, as recognized bearers of ancient customs and religious norms, could well interpret them in the way they needed or simply invent them.

³⁷ DILLERY 2003, 218.

Sparta's control³⁸. It implies that the Spartan authorities retroactively sanctioned the capture of Cadmea, i.e., in effect turned a blind eye to the willfulness and recklessness of Phoebidas, and thus approved the violation of the terms of the King's Peace. The ancient authors are unanimous in the fact that it was the opinion of Agesilaus that determined the lenient sentence passed on Phoebidas. The king managed to overcome the initial resistance of the judges and achieved a verdict on the preservation of the Spartan garrison in Thebes. Here is how Plutarch puts it: '...he (Agesilaus – *L.P.*) ... was often carried away by ambition and contentiousness, and particularly in his treatment of the Thebans. For he not only rescued Phoebidas from punishment, but actually persuaded Sparta to assume responsibility for his iniquity and occupy the Cadmeia on its own account...' (Ages. 23. 6–7). In all probability, Agesilaus himself could have paid the fine huge of 100,000 *drachmas* (approx. 17 *talents*)³⁹, to which Phoebidas was sentenced (Plut. Ages. 6. 1; Diod. XV. 20. 2)⁴⁰. This is quite in line with his policy of supporting friends.

Agesilaus began to pursue such a policy from the very beginning of his reign (400/399). According to Xenophon's account, '... when the state pronounced him sole heir to the property of Agis, he gave half of it to his mother's kinsfolk, because he saw that they were in want...' (Xen. Ages. 4. 5–6, hereinafter translated by E. C. Marchant). Plutarch assessed the act of the king as follows: 'he (Agesilaus – *L.P.*) distributed... the half of his estates, thereby making his inheritance yield him good-will and reputation instead of envy and hatred' (Plut. Ages. 4. 1). Such extraordinary generosity of Agesilaus is evidence that from the first steps of his reign he planned to win over as many Spartans as possible, especially among the ruling elite. To this end, he showed in every possible way his respect for the *ephors* and *gerontes* (Plut. Ages. 4. 3) and was always ready to support them financially (Xen. Ages. 11. 8; Plut. Ages. 4. 3). He did not

³⁸ In this place Xenophon only briefly reports what happened, without expressing his opinion about the decision of the authorities to continue the occupation of the Cadmea. But later in his account of the Spartans' defeat at the battle of Leuctra, Xenophon makes it quite clear that this catastrophe was the punishment of the gods for the iniquity, committed by the Spartans in Boeotia: 'Now one could mention many other incidents, both among Greeks and barbarians, to prove that the gods do not fail to take heed of the wicked or of those who do unrighteous things... Lacedaemonians, namely, who had sworn that they would leave the states independent, after seizing possession of the Acropolis of Thebes were punished by the very men, unaided, who had been thus wronged, although before that time they had not been conquered by any single one of all the peoples that ever existed; while as for those among the Theban citizens who had led them into the Acropolis and had wanted the state to be in subjection to the Lacedaemonians in order that they might rule despotically themselves, just seven of the exiles were enough to destroy the government of these men' (Hell. V. 4. 1). For Xenophon, Sparta's intervening in Theban *stasis* and her defeat in the battle of Leuctra are closely linked, despite being more than ten years apart. On the civil struggle in Thebes, see esp.: BUXTON 2017, 21–40.

³⁹ CARTLEDGE 1987, 156.

⁴⁰ D. Rice believes the fine was never paid (RICE 1974, 182). Fines of 15–17 talents were usually awarded to Spartan kings suspected of corruption. So in 446 the king Pleistoanax was sentenced to a fine of 15 (Schol. ad Aristoph. Nub. 858 f), and the king Agis II in 419 – to a fine of 17 talents (Thuc. V. 63; see also: Diod. XII. 78).

forget about his army either. During the war with Persia in 396–394 BC Agesilaus gave his soldiers the opportunity to enrich themselves by allowing them to plunder the lands and cities of the Asia Minor satrapies (Xen. Ages. 1. 16). He offered his friends a completely legal way of enrichment – the sale of valuable trophies, which the king helped them acquire for a small price. Xenophon admired this feature in the character of Agesilaus so much that he fully endowed Cyrus the Great with this property in his utopian novel 'Cyropaedia' (VIII. 2. 13–14).

The popularity of Agesilaus is due not only to his generosity, demonstratively modest lifestyle and military successes. It is worth remembering that his path to power was not an easy one. Agesilaus was not the direct heir to the throne and therefore received the usual state upbringing and education (the so-called *agoge*), which is mandatory for any *Spartiate*, except for the direct heir (Plut. Ages. 1. 1). Agesilaus grew up in the barracks, like all other young *Spartiates*, and thanks to this he gained experience that the rightful heirs to the throne did not and could not have. He became his own for many Spartans and enjoyed their trust and respect. Plutarch noted this special quality of the king – his ability to respectfully communicate with fellow citizens, regardless of their status: '...he (Agesilaus – *L.P.*) was much more in harmony with his subjects than any of the kings; to the commanding and kingly traits which were his by nature there had been added by his public training those of popularity and kindliness' (Ages. 1. 3). Agesilaus was clearly closer in lifestyle and mentality to ordinary citizens than other Spartan *arkhagetai*.

Xenophon, and after him Plutarch, in every possible way emphasize, as a special merit of Agesilaus, the constant support that he provided to his relatives and friends. Xenophon calls this peculiar trait of the king's character 'love for friends' (φιλεταιρία) and describes with pathos the manifestations of such love: '...yet no traces of arrogance could have been detected in him, whereas signs of a fatherly affection and readiness to serve his friends...were evident' (Xen. Ages. 8. 1). And Plutarch, a more objective and less interested witness than Xenophon, directly says that Agesilaus put friendship above the law: 'Indeed, although in other matters he (Agesilaus – *L.P.*) was exact and law-abiding, in matters of friendship he thought that rigid justice was a mere pretext' (Plut. Ages. 13. 3).

Such adherence of Agesilaus to people close to him sometimes became dangerous for the state. He promoted his relatives to high positions, regardless of their abilities and skills. So, according to sources, the king made a serious mistake when 'he appointed as admiral Peisander, his wife's brother', although he had no experience in maritime affairs (Xen. Hell. III. 4. 29)⁴¹. The result was the crushing defeat of the allied fleet at Cnidus in 394, which put an end to Spartan hegemony at sea. The commanders appointed for the campaign against Olynthus in 382 (the brothers Eudamidas and Phoebidas, and Agesilaus's half-brother Teleutias) were

⁴¹ Xenophon does not openly criticize Agesilaus for such an appointment. But his comment leaves no doubt about the true attitude of the historian to the king's personnel policy. He characterizes Peisander as 'a man who was ambitious and of a stout spirit, but rather inexperienced in making such provisions as were needful' (Hell. III. 4. 29).

probably also proteges of Agesilaus. The choice of these people, according to P. Cartledge, convincingly indicates that Agesilaus was the undisputed inspirer of the entire project⁴².

The story of the trial of Phoebidas sheds light on Agesilaus' priorities. For him, it was fundamentally important to acquire as many supporters as possible. With the help of his clients, among whom there were the highest magistrates of the country, he was able for a long time to manage both the foreign and domestic policies of the Spartan state. The system of patronage created and successfully operated by Agesilaus allowed him to fully use his family, friends, clients and even political opponents for his own purposes⁴³. However, local priorities and personal preferences of Agesilaus often conflicted with the foreign policy interests of Sparta. The king achieved a mild punishment for Phoebidas, and a complete justification for Sphodrias. But this was the trigger that extraordinarily hastened the collapse of Sparta as an imperial state.

Agesilaus proved to be a poor strategist. He overestimated his strength and underestimated the determination of offended allies to resist Sparta's outright aggression. The neglect and cynical attitude of Agesilaus to international law and his own oaths cost dearly to the state that Agesilaus defended all his life. Agesilaus did Sparta a disservice by supporting the adventurers who blew up the King's Peace and eventually led Sparta to the defeat and collapse of her Empire.

Xenophon's stories about Phoebidas, as well as later about Sphodrias, are hardly accidental insertions. We believe that Xenophon introduced them to his '*Hellenica*' quite consciously. He thus showed his true attitude to the foreign policy pursued by Agesilaus. Xenophon does not directly blame Agesilaus for the failures that befell Sparta, but, on the other hand, he does not hide the fact that the state is responsible for the crimes of both commanders. And this, of course, is a hint at Agesilaus, who in those years was responsible for the foreign policy of Sparta. Even if Agesilaus did not directly direct the actions of Phoebidas and Sphodrias, he nevertheless considered it his duty to protect these ambitious and reckless Spartans. Xenophon considered such position of Agesilaus to be erroneous, as follows from his commentary on the defeat of the Spartans at Leuctra (Hell. V. 4. 1). Polybius, even more clearly than Xenophon, spoke about the episode with the Cadmea, considering it part of the general aggressive, but erroneous policy of Sparta (IV. 27. 6–8).

In the 14th chapter of the '*Lacedaemonian Politeia*', Xenophon have criticized just such commanders as Phoebidas and Sphodrias were. He considered them the main culprits for the collapse of the Spartan Empire. According to him, '... they strive far more earnestly to exercise rule than to be worthy of it' (14. 5). It is because of such people '... now many (from the Hellenes

⁴² CARTLEDGE 1987, 373.

⁴³ CARTLEDGE 1987, 159.

– L.P.) are calling on one another to prevent a revival of Lacedaemonian supremacy' (14. 6). Xenophon ends his invective with the words that the first persons in the state now '... obey neither their god nor the laws of Lycurgus' (14. 7).

The seizure of the Cadmea by Phoebidas is only one episode, although the most important, among the events that became milestones on the path of Sparta to military defeat and its transformation into a secondary state⁴⁴. Xenophon unequivocally points out (Hell. V. 4. 1) that the whole story with the Theban stasis and the armed intervention of Sparta is a key turning point, launched the chain of events that inexorably led Sparta to Leuctra⁴⁵.

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⁴⁴ DILLERY 2003, 236.

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A New Lot of Greek Amphoric Stamps from Medgidia Elenistic 1 site, Constanța County

Natalia MATEEVICI¹, Petre COLȚEANU²

Abstract. *The preventive archaeological research carried out on the Medgidia Elenistic 1 site, by MINA Constanța, which took place between November 2022 and July 2023, brought to light a rich and beautiful ceramic material of all kinds, from Getic and Scythian hand modeled pottery by – to luxury black-glazed Greek vessels, gray pottery and, of course, a rich batch of Greek amphorae and their fragments. In general terms, the discovered material falls chronologically between the IV and III BC. Among the amphoric material, the majority on the site, a special place is occupied by the amphoric stamps (67), coming from 6 Greek producing centers, both Mediterranean - Thasos, Cnidos, Rhodes, and from the Pontic ones - Heraclea, Sinope, Chersones. Among the stamps from Medgidia, some specimens of unknown centers were also noticed, some present for the first time in the W-NW area of the Black Sea, as well as, we believe, a new Sinopean producer. Most of the stamps belong to the Sinopean amphoric production - 34, which represents 60% of the total of this lot. From a chronological point of view, the batch of stamps discovered on the Medgidia Elenistic 1 site falls between the first half of the century 4th and mid-century 3rd century Chr.*

Rezumat. *Cercetările arheologice preventive efectuate pe situl Medgidia Elenistic 1, de către MINA Constanța, ce s-au derulat în perioada noiembrie 2022- iulie 2023, au scos la lumina zilei un bogat și frumos material ceramic de toate facturile, de la ceramică getică și scitică modelată cu mâna – la vase grecești de lux cu firnis negru, ceramică cenușie și, bineînțeles, un bogat lot de amfore grecești și fragmentele acestora. În linii generale materialul descoperit se încadrează din punct de vedere cronologic între sec. IV și III a. Chr. În cadrul materialului amforic, majoritar pe sit, un loc aparte îl ocupă ștampilele amforice (67 de exemplare), provenind din 6 centre producătoare grecești, atât mediteraneene – Thasos, Cnidos, Rhodos, cât și din cele pontice - Heraclea, Sinope, Chersones. Printre ștampilele de la Medgidia au fost sesizate și câteva exemplare ale unor centre necunoscute dar și unele prezente pentru prima dată în zona de V- NV a Mării Negre, ca și un, credem noi, nou producător sinopean. Majoritate ștampilelor aparțin producției amforice sinopeene -34 de exemplare, ceea ce reprezintă 60 de % din totalul acestui lot. Din punct de vede cronologic lotul de ștampile descoperit pe situl Medgidia Elenistic 1 se încadrează între prima jumătate a sec. IV și mijlocul sec. III a. Chr.*

Keywords: *amphora, stamps, producers, magistrates, Greek centers, chronological groups.*

¹ National History Museum of Moldova, Chișinău, amforaelada@gmail.com. Research carried out within the project 20.80009.0807.43, "Museum heritage and historical memory: research, interpretation, presentation".

²National Museum of History and Archaeology, Constanța, petre.colteanu@outlook.com

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2022, preventive archaeological research was started for the investment project "Medgidia Cement Factory exploitation quarry expansion", the Medgidia Hellenistic archaeological site 1. The site was delimited following an intrusive archaeological diagnosis carried out in the summer of 2022. We note that the site was not inedit, even if it is not registered in RAN or LMI, the first research being carried out in 2007. At that time, 44 archaeological complexes, pits and dwellings, dated to the IV-III centuries BC, were investigated.

The terrain on which the site is located is located on the SE side of the Medgidia quarry, in the outskirts of the Poarta Albă commune, on the border between the Poarta Albă UAT and the Medgidia municipality, and is located on the northern slope of the hill that is on the current edge of mining pit, on a slope that tends to run off in the SW-NE direction. The investigated area of the site is approximately 2.5 ha, the site being, in our opinion, exhaustively investigated.

A number of 366 archaeological features were researched, of which we mention hut dwellings (2 types -25), 21 fire installations (of which 8 ceramic furnaces), household pits (140), supply pits (100), deposit pits (6), clay loan pits (4) and other types³.

The stamps collection from Medgidia Elenistic 1 contains 67 specimens, which belong to amphoric packaging from several Mediterranean and Pontic centers. Among the Greek centers with the largest number of stamps, Sinope stands out -37 copies, nine stamps belong to Thasos, ten are Heracleote, three copies are Rhodian stamps, likewise three copies belong to amphorae from Chersonese, and one copy belongs to an amphora from Cnidos.

CATALOGUE

Sinope

1.1a, 1b.

ἀστυνόμου

Ἀισχίνου.

Δραλως grape↓

Two magistrate stamps possible Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἰφίος, group V/C, ca. 264 BC

Producer with a non-Greek name, from group V and early group VI, but this combination of names is first encountered in the northwest and west Pontic region. Taking into account the periods of activity of the astynomous, with whom this producer worked, we can say that his workshop existed for at least 20 years. Both stamps are executed with the same die. Feature 244.

³ Colțeanu, 2023. Communication held between October 18-21, 2023 on the occasion of the National Scientific Communication Session of the Institute of Archeology Iasi. The analysis of the internal architecture of the site will be the subject of a separate study.

2. [ἄσ]τυνόμου

[Αἰσ]χίνου. [grape↓]

[N]ικίας

Magistrate stamp Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἰφιος, group V/C, approx. 264 BC. The producer Νικίας was active in groups V-VI. GRAMATPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, no. 362; CONOVICI, AVRAM POENARU-BORDEA 1989, 118, no. 50-51; SHELOV 1994, No. 253; FEDOSEEV 1998, № 203 Complex 200.

3. [ἄστυνό]μ[ου]

[Αἰσχίν]ου.

[Στέφ]ανος grape↓

Magistrate's stamp - Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἰφιος, group V/C, approx. 264 BC. It is possible that the potter was Στέφανος // CANARACHE 1957, no. 214; RĂDULESCU, BĂRBULESCU ET AL. 1988-1989, 44, no. 171, 172; 45, Pl. 1/6; GARLAN 2004, 64, F38. Feature 236.

4. στυνόμου

Ἀισχίνου.

Καλλισθένης grape↓

Magistrate stamp Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἰφιος VB, potter Καλλισθένης IV(V). GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, n° 357-358. Feature 228.

5. Δ[ας].

ἄστυ[νόμου] [grape↑, Bellows Satyr ← ↑]

Ἀριστ[ίωνος]

Magistrate stamp Ἀρίστων Ἀριστίππου, group V/B, ca. 279-269 BC, potter Δας II. Lunar Sigma. Similar to GARLAN 2004, n° 269, CONOVICI, AVRAM, POENARU-BORDEA 1989, 120, no. 131-132; Feature 28.

6. ἄστυνόμου

Δημητρίου Crater↑

τοῦ Θευγνήτου.

Τυς

Magistrate stamp Δημήτριος 2 Θευγνήτου, gr. Cow. 277 BC. Potter Τυς. BUZOIANU, CHELUĂ-GEORGESCU 1983, p. 170, n° 53, pl. II, ph. ; CONOVICI, AVRAM, POENARU BORDEA 1989, p. 117, n° 28, pl. III, ph. ; COJA 1986, p. 435, n° 87; CONOVICI 1998, p. 73, n° 100; GARLAN 2004, n° 246. Feature 229.

7. [ἄστυνόμου]

[Δημητρίου] Crater↑

[τοῦ Θευγνήτου].

[.....]

Magistrate stamp. The respective shape of the crater is found as an emblem of the astynom Δημήτριος 2 Θευγνήτου, Gr. V/A, approx. 277 BC. GARLAN 2004, n° 242 - 246; Feature 211.

8. [.....].

[ἄστυνόμου]

[Διονυσίου] Kantharos↑

Magistrate stamp Διονύσιος 3 Απολλοδώρου. The specific shape of the kantharos indicates the stamp belongs to this magistrate. Group V/A, approx. 275 of Chr. GARLAN 2004, n° 254. Feature 260.

9. Πρωτ[ος].

[ἄ]σ[τυνόμου] [Kantharos] ↑

Δ[ινυσίου]

Magistrate stamp Διονύσιος 3 Απολλοδώρου. Group V/A, approx. 275 a Chr. The producer Πρωτος 1 begins his activity during the time of the magistrate Μίκριας 1 from group IV/C, ca. 286 BC and works during several magistrates during Group V (GARLAN 2004, 73, F65), GARLAN 2004, n° 256. Feature 52.

10. ἄ[σ]τ[υ]νόμου

thyrsus with Ἑκαταίου

ribb- τοῦ Λαμάχο[υ]

ons↑

Magistrate's stamp. Ἑκαταῖος 2 Λαμαχου, group V/C, ca. 263 BC. Usually the name of the potter, who worked with this magistrate, was applied to the second one. Six producers are known, who worked with this astynom: Βάκχιος, Δας, Δῖος, Κλέων, Κτήσων. Conovici assumes that on the other side could be the name of the manufacturer Δῖος. CONOVICI 1998, n° 223. Feature 252.

11. ἄσ[τυνόμου]

thyrsus with Ἑ[καταίου]

ribb- τοῦ Λ[αμάχ/ου]

ons↑

Magistrate's stamp. Lunar Sigma. Possibly the two letters at the end of the patronymic were placed above the last letter. Conovici assumes that on the other handle could be the name of the manufacturer Δῖος. CONOVICI 1998, n° 223. Feature 216.

12. [ἄσ]τυνόμο(υ)

[Ἑκ]ατ[αί]ου

[τοῦ] Λαμάχ(ου)

[Thyrsus with ribbons→]

Magistrate stamp Ἑκαταῖος 2 Λαμαχου, group VC, ca 263 BC Similar to CANARACHE 1957, No. 258; CONOVICI 1998, n° 224-226; AVRAM 1999, 223, 8, Pl. V; GARLAN 2004, n° 312; Feature 155.

13. [ἄσ]τυνόμου

Ἑκαταίου [τοῦ]

Λαμάχου

Thyrsus with ribbons→

Magistrate stamp Ἐκαταῖος 2 Λαμάχου, group VC, ca 263 BC Lunar sigma. CONOVICI 1998, n° 227 (same matrix); GARLAN 2004, n° 312; Feature 200.

14. ἀστυνόμ(ου)

Ἐκαταίου [τοῦ]

Λαμάχου

Thyrsus with ribbons→

Magistrate stamp, Ἐκαταῖος 2 Λαμάχου, group VC, ca 263 BC. Lunar sigma is used. CONOVICI 1998, n° 227 (same matrix); GARLAN 2004, n° 312; Feature 190.

15. Τιμολέως.

ἀστυνόμου cornucopia↑

Ἐπιέλπους

Magistrate stamp Ἐπιέλπης 2 Ναύωνος, group V/B, ca. 273 BC Producer Τιμολέως, whose activity runs from the beginning of group V/B to group VI/A (approx. 260 BC) – during approx. 13 years. CONOVICI 1998, n° 132-133; AVRAM 1999, 223, no. 4, Pl. V; Passim.

16. Τιμολέως.

ἀστυνόμου cornucopia↑

Ἐπ[ιελπους]

Magistrate stamp Ἐπιέλπης 2 Ναύωνος, group V/B, ca. 273 BC Manufacturer Τιμολέως 1 active starting from group V/B to the beginning of group VI/A (c.260 BC) – during approx. 13 years. CONOVICI 1998, n° 132-133; AVRAM 1999, 223, no. 4, Pl. V; Feature 55.

17. Φιλοκράτης.

ἀ[σ]τυνόμο[υ] [cornucopia↑]

Ἐπιέλπους

Magistrate stamp Ἐπιέλπης 2 Ναύωνος, group V/B, ca. 273 BC. The potter is Φιλοκράτης III. CONOVICI 1998, n° 134; Feature 165.

18. ἀστυνόμο(υ)

Εὐχαρίστου.

Δαντος flower↑

Magistrate stamp Εὐχάριστος 2 Δημητρίου, gr. W/B, approx. 268 BC Similar to Garlan 2004, n° 290; The potter's name Δας I, II (III) is rendered in the genitive case. Some researchers believe that the stamps with the name of this potter belong to a single person. Garlan attributes this name to three homonyms (GARLAN 2004, 53-54); Feature 260.

19. [ἀστυνόμου]

[Ἴκεσίου]

τοῦ Ἑστιάου. bird→

[Κλε]αίνετος

Magistrate stamp, Ἴκέσιος 2 Ἑστιάου, active in group V/C, ca. 262-261 BC. The potter Κλεαίνετος II (Νουμηνίου) is active in group V, starting his activity at the beginning of group V,

during the time of the magistrate Ἀτταλος (ca. 281-280 BC) It is quite possible that his activity lasts until the period of activity of the magistrate Ἰκέσιος 2 Ἑστιάου, Analogies to CONOVICI 1998, n° 314 (same matrix); GARLAN 2004, n° 321 (same matrix). Feature 234.

20. ἄσ[τυνόμου]

Ἰκεσίου τοῦ Ἑστιαίου [bird→]

Ἀριστέ< >ς?

Magistrate stamp, Ἰκέσιος 2 Ἑστιάου, active in group V/C, ca. 262-261 BC Lunar Sigma. Similar to CONOVICI 1998, no. 301, only the potter's name is reconstructed as Ἀρίστων (sic!). In our case, the name belongs to a new potter, Ἀριστεύς, with the error of the engraver, who omitted the letter «υ». Feature 28.

21. Τιμολέων/ Τιμολέως (1).

ἄστυνόμου [quiver bow↑]

Καλλισθένου

Magistrate stamp Καλλισθένης 1 Νόσσου, group V/C, ca. 267 BC. The producer Τιμολέων/Τιμολέως 1, begins his activity within group V/B and continues it also in group V/C (GARLAN 2004, 74). Complex 186.

22. Πρωτος.

ἄ[σ]τυνόμου man's head →

Κ[ρατισ]τάρχου

Magistrate stamp Κρατίσταρχος Μενωνος, active within group V/C, approx. 265 BC, a man's head, usually bearded, is the emblem of the magistrate. The producer Πρωτος appears in group IV/C and is active practically throughout the period of group V, the last one being Λέων Λεοντίσκου (ca. 261 BC). PRIDIK 1917, p. 83, n° 438; CANARACHE 1957, no. 377; SHELOV 1975, p. 142, n° 564; RĂDULESCU, BĂRBULESCU, ET AL., 1988-1989, p. 47, n° 184-185, pl. 1/19-20; CONOVICI 1998, p. 86, n° 168; FEDOSEEV 1998, № 67. Feature 261.

23. [Κ]λέων.

ἄστυνόμου bearded head in profile →

Κρατιστάρχου

Magistrate's stamp Κρατίσταρχος Μενωνος, active in group V/C, c. 265 BC, a man's head, usually bearded, is the emblem of the magistrate. The potter's name appears to be Κλέων, active as well, in group V. It is a new combination of these two names. Feature 180.

24. [Σι]μαλίω[v].

ἄστυνόμου kantharos ↑

Σιμίου

Magistrate stamp - Σιμίας Ἰκεσίου group V/B, approx. 272 BC, producer Σιμαλίω II-III, active in groups IV-V. The magistrate Σιμίας Ἰκεσίου is well known both on the west Pontic coast and

on the west Pontic (CONOVICI, 1998, 83). In the given case, the emblem of the kantharos is the emblem of the magistrate. It is a rarer combination of these two names. Feature 211.

25. ἀστυνόμουρ

Χορηγί[ωνος]

Κτησον? Nike in quadriga →

Magistrate's stamp Χορήγιων Λεομέδοντος, active in group VI/ B, approx. 255 BC, in the legend sigma and omega - italics. The producer Κτήσων II, is active within groups VI-VI. From the period at the end of group V/C (during the magistracy Λέων Λεοντίσκου, ca. 261-260 BC) Κτήσων II uses the services of the same engraver, who prefers to omit the patronymic of the magistrates and use italic omega and lunar sigma (GARLAN 2004, 189). Precisely at CANARACHE 1957, no. 342 (same matrix); GARLAN 2004, n° 347; CONOVICI 1998, n° 393 (same matrix). Feature 267.

Potter Stamps

26. [Δ]ραλως

Δρ[αλ]ώου

Potter's stamp Δραλως. Manufacturer with non-Greek names. The legend contains the name of the producer Δραλως and in the second row – the patronymic, which has the same name, rendered in the genitive case. The activity of this producer is attested during the period of activity of several astynomia from group V- to the beginning of group VI. Being of non-Greek origin, in the family of this producer, the traditional rule for the Greek world of giving children names was not taken into account. Thus, the father named his boy after himself. In GARLAN 2004, n° 313, this copy allows a small rectification to the copy presented by Y.Garlan regarding the ending of the first proper name, (in Garlan it is Δραλω[ος]. Feature 122.

27. Ἐπικράτη[ς]

Potter's stamp, applied to the neck of an amphora, executed from a Pontic paste, reddish-yellowish, similar to the paste of Heracleea or Sinope?. The morphology, however, rather indicates a Sinopean vessel. The Sinopean potter Ἐπικράτης is part of group 1 and is the father of another known potter Μάνης 1 (GARLAN 2004 41). Feature 227.

28. [Ε]πικράτη[ς]

Potter's stamp applied to the neck of an amphora, Ἐπικράτης, chronological group 1. (GARLAN 2004 41). Feature 248.

29. Ἑρμωνο[ς]

Potter's stamp Ἑρμων Μητροδώρου, active in groups V-VI. Sometimes it has the qualification of κεραμεύς followed by the patronymic on some potters' stamps. (GARLAN 2004, 61, F28). GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA, 1969, 219, no. 606; RADULESCU, BĂRBULESCU, et al. 1988-1989, p. 77, no. 350, fig. IX/13; CONOVICI 1998, 94, n° 236; GARLAN 2004, n° 314; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, 309, S 458. Feature 114.

30. κερ[αμευς]?

Δ.ο....?

[...]

Potter stamp, potter or maybe even magistrate??? The appearance of stamps, which contained the title of the producer (potter) preceded or followed by the preposition κεραμεύς is indicated in group III, up to the final period of stamping by magistrates at Sinope and even in the late group of stamping by producers - post 180 BC. KATZ 2007, 261-272. We could assume the reading from the second line, of the name of the potter Διονύσιος Νευμηνίου (PRIDIK 1917, 88, № 315 - 532). Or, similarly, based on the fragmentation of the stamp, we could attribute the copy given to a Sinopean magistrate, in the legend of which appears, on the first line, the name of the potter Κέρδων, from group V Conovici 1998, 201, n° 289; AVRAM 1999, 223, no. 14, Pl. VI; GARLAN 2004, n° 271. Feature 215

31.

.....

..... Crater↑

Magistrate stamp. The crater emblem is a magistrate emblem. Possibly group VI/C1 (ca. 243 BC) - Έσταῖος 2 Ἀρτεμιδώρου? Likewise, this symbol is also used by magistrates Δημήτριος 2 Θευγνήτου and Ἀρτεμίδωρος 2 Γλαυκίου, respectively from group V/A, approx. 277 BC and VB, ca. 271 BC.

32. Indistinct stamp on amphora handle. Feature 196.

33. Indistinct stamp (erased) on handle. Feature 56.

Thasos

35. Θασίων

Dolphin (crustacean?)→

Ἀπολλόδωρ[ος]

Magistrate's stamp, after Avram, group XV, approx. 263 BC; according to Garlan, group X/16, approx. 269 BC Lunar Sigma. Does the manufacturer's name represent the emblem or emblems? DEBIDOUR 1979, 290, fig. 3.6; BUZOIANU 1982, 143; BUZOIANU 1992, 128, no. 76 (picture missing); Feature 269.

36. [Θασίω]ν

Grape←

Ἀριστο[φῶν] ←

Magistrate's stamp Ἀριστοφῶν 2 possible early c. III B.Chr. The fragment of the handle bears traces of secondary burning. Similar to BON 1957, n° 421; AVRAM 1996, n°395. Feature 196.

37. Θασίων

Dolphin →

[Δημά]λκης

Late magistrate stamp, writing with lunar sigma. Magistrate Δημάλκης, whose activity can be dated between the first quarter and the middle of the 60s of the III century BC (ca. 267) BON 1957, n° 591; PRIDIK 1917, 41, N° 120, pl. IV,6; AVRAM, BOENARU-BORDEA 1988, Pl. 2/30. Feature 180.

38. Ἡρακλείδης

Star with 16 rays

Τασίων

Magistrate's stamp - Ἡρακλείδης 1, dated ca. 276 BC, writing with the lunar sigma. TH. SAUCIUC-SĂVEANU, 1937-1940, 265, no. 57; BON 1957, n° 711; Feature 11.

39. Θα[σίων]

Flower Button ↑[Lira]→

Ἰδ[νάδης]

Magistrate stamp Ἰδνάδης, years 70-60 AD. III BC, the name of the magistrate reversed and retrograde. Similar to BON 1957, n° 865; AVRAM 1996, n° 472. Feature 123.

40. Νικόδημος

Vessel (aribalos)?←

Τασίων

Magistrate stamp Νικόδημος 1, the lunar sigma is used in the legend. Avram and Garlan date the activity of this respective magistrate between 287 – 274 BC and 281 – 280 BC. AVRAM 1996, n° 140; GARLAN 2004-2005, n° 325. Feature 229.

41. [Σάτ]υρος

Dog (?) ←

[Θασ]ίων

Magistrate stamp Σάτυρος II (GARLAN 2004-2005, 281), dated to the middle of the 3rd century BC BON 1957, n° 1514. TZOCHEV 2016, n° 358 p. 174. Feature 260.

42. Θασίων/ Σάτυρος / Γορ[γ]ου

Strigil with ampoule

Magistrate stamp Σάτυρος (IV), which also shows the patronymic Γόργου. Only two examples of this kind are known, with the same emblem, the example from Medgidia, being the second one⁴. Date: Middle century. III BC). BON 1957, n° 510 et 1515; GARLAN 2004-2005, 326, (the author dates it ca. 249 BC). Feature 23.

43. Illegible stamp. Feature 207.

Pontic Heraclea

44. Ἀρισ[το]

κρατες

⁴ Thanks to M. Debidour, for the information

Potter's stamp, from the final potter's stamp group at Heracleea. End of the IV-th century BC. GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 238, no. 808. Feature 28.

45. Ἀριστο

[krates]

Potter's stamp, from the final potter's stamp group at Heracleea. End of the IVth century BC. GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 238, no. 808. Feature 52

46. Ἐπικράτης

Potter's stamp from the final stamp group Ἐπικράτης – End of the IVth century BC -1st third of the century 3rd century BC. KATZ 2007, 430. Feature 267.

47. [Ἡρ]ακλε

ΟΗΤΟΣ

Potter's stamp Ἡρακλέων from the final potter's stamp group End of the IVth century BC -1st third of the century 3rd century BC. The stamp is small and executed in relief⁵. GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 239, no. 825 (it is mentioned that the stamp is englyphic). Feature 37.

48. Μένης

Potter's stamp Μένης, on the neck, from the late group of St. magistrate stampings. End of the IVth century BC -1st third of the century 3rd century BC, N is smaller than the other letters and is rendered retrograde. CANARACHE 1957, no. 472; Precisely at IRIMIA 1973, 28, Pl.X/5; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, Pl. XI, S67-68; in MATEEVICI, SAMOJLOVA 2017, 139, № 47, 47a. Feature 23.

49. Μένης

Potter's stamp Μένης, on the neck, from the late group of magistrates stampings. End of the IVth century BC -1st third of the century 3rd century BC, N is smaller than the other letters and is rendered retrograde. CANARACHE 1957, no. 472; Precisely at IRIMIA 1973, 28, Pl.X/5; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, Pl. XI, S67-68; in MATEEVICI, SAMOJLOVA 2017, 139, № 47, 47a. Passim.

50. Παρι

[Φ]ana

Manufacturer's stamp from the group of early stamping - the beginning of the century. IV BC Παριφάνης. The name in the stamp is rendered in the genitive case. Another opinion regarding this stamp is given by Fedoseev, who believes that the stamp represents the manufacturer's name in the abbreviated form Παρι., in the first line, and on the second line is the name of the magistrate, also in abbreviated form – Φανα.. (FEDOSEEV 2016, 13) Another stamp executed with the same matrix was also discovered in Arsa (GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 267, n°1179; and Argamum (Capul Dolojman) LUNGU 1992, 93, no. 73, Pl.VII/73 (also mentions both reading variants of the stamp); FEDOSEEV 2016, 196, № 1828). Feature 260.

⁵ Thanks to colleague Th. Castelli for the analogy

51.t...

Englyphic stamp on the neck of an amphora of Pontic origin. Feature 181A.

52. Σ...ο...

Stamp in relief, on a pontic amphora, possibly Pontic Heraclea. Feature 260

53.

..... IA

Englyphic stamp on the neck. Feature 180.

Chersonesos

54. [Αἶσ]χί[να]

ἀστυνόμο[υ]

Magistrate stamp – Αἰσχίνας, group I/B, approx. 306-296 BC PRIDIK 1917, 140, N° 2; CANARACHE 1957, 210, no. 485; Gramatopol, Poenaru-Bordea 1969, 242, n° 874; Buzoianu 1979, 91, no. 35; KATZ 1994, Tab. IV, 1-7, 1-5; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, 323, S 603. Feature 268.

55. Ἀπ[ολλωνίου]

ἀστυν [ομοῦντος]

Magistrate stamp Ἀπολλώνιος, group I/B – approx. 318-307 BC The lunar sigma is used. GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 242, n° 884-885; KATZ 1994, 89, N°20, Tab.X, 1-20, 9 – 1-20,10; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, 323, S 604-605; Feature 159.

56. [Ἡρακλ]είου

ἀστυνομοῦντος

Magistrate stamp Ἡράκλειος 1, gr. I/B, approx. 318-307 BC GRAMATOPOL, POENARU-BORDEA 1969, 242, n° 890-891; KATZ 1994, Tab. XVIII-XX, 1-47-48, 18. The lunar sigma is used. Feature 247.

Rhodos

58. ...1π (Γ)οκ(N) ξ...ις????? rose

Magistrate stamp (potter?). Feature 180.

59. Circular stamp, in relief, applied to a Rhodes amphora. It seems to be an early stamp from bouton-groupe. The section (profile of the handle) indicates an early date (beginning of the 3rd century A. Chr.) KATZ 2017, 213. Feature 180.

60. [Σω]τᾱ

Rectangular potter's stamp Σωτᾱς 1, on the back, Date group I (ca. 294-271 BC). The shape of the handle as well as its profile indicate an early date. The stamp was carelessly applied, thus printing only the last two letters of the proper name, rendered in the genitive. Amphoralex.org: RF-ΣΩΤΑΣ 01-012. Feature 52D.

Cnidos

61. ΖΗ - Ζή(νων)

Producer from group II, between 280-250 BC. Group of Zeno. Similar to GRAMATOPOL, POENARU BORDEA 1969, 256, n° 1047; BUZOIANU, BĂRBULESCU 2008, 321, n° 580-581; MADZHAROV, STOYANOV 2018, 146; KASHAEV, PAVLICHENKO 2019, 89, Fig. 5/66; LIȚU, CLIANTE, 2021, 126/5; JEFREMOW, KOLESNIKOV ET AL. 2021, 287, Fig. 4-5. The specimen from Medgidia, unlike some known specimens of this group, appears to contain no additional emblem. Feature 23.

Centers not identified

62. Anepigraphic handle (ring-shaped) applied englyptic on the handle. Most often such stamps were applied to some of the amphorae from Chios or Mende. The fragment from Medgidia, according to clay structure, does not belong to any of these centers. Compact yellowish-brown paste, with a lot of small mica residues, less chalk. Feature 133.

63. Ερεσ.....υ . ?????

Manufacturer's stamp, applied in relief on the handle. Clay structure, rather, would indicate a Mediterranean center. Feature 180.

64. ...διανο ?

Manufacturer's stamp, retrograde, on an amphora handle, made of reddish-brown clay, with visible inclusions of black, calcareous particles, chewed sand. Pontic center? Feature 150.

65. Anepigraphic stamp? Sinope,??? Light yellowish-reddish clay with visible black inclusions, tiny limestone. Two circles in relief are applied to the base of the handle. It is possible that the given piece belongs to a late amphora. Feature 216.

66. Ἄκρ....

Σασ....

Handle stamp, compact clay with minute calcareous inclusions. Mediterranean pasta. Feature 227.

DISCUSSIONS

The Sinopean stamps, in their vast majority (25 exp.) are those of magistrates. The names of some magistrates are found on several copies, thus the name of Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἰφίος (group V/A), appears on 5 copies (of course with different producers), among them there are also two stamps with a combination of names, found for the first time in the north-west and west Pontic region: Αἰσχίνου/Δραλῶης (note that these two specimens from Medgidia Elenistic 1, were executed with the same matrix). Two stamps belong to the magistrate Διονύσιος 3 Απολλοδώρου active within group V/A.

Similarly, two stamps belong to the astynom Δημήτριος 2 Θευγνήτου (group V/A) and the magistrate Ἰκέσιος 2 Ἐστιαίου (group V/C), respectively. Five stamps represent the magistrate Ἐκαταῖος 2 Λαμάχου (group V/C), known practically in all lots of Sinopean stamps, not only from the Dobrogean area. This magistrate, in most of his stamps, has as his emblem «Thyrsus with wine? -leaves» on the right, horizontally. In Medgidia, two copies of this

magistrate were also recovered, which have the emblem: thyrsus with ribbons, arranged on the left, vertically, before the legend.

The activity of the magistrate Ἐπιέλης 2 Ναύπωνος (group V/B) is represented by three stamps, two of which bear the name of the same potter Τιμολέως. Two stamps reflect the activity of the magistrate Κρατίσταρχος Μενωνος (group V/C). One copy each belongs to the magistrates Εὐχάριστος 2 Δημητρίου (group V/B), Καλλισθένης 1 Νόσσου (group V/C), Σιμίας Ἴκεσίου (group V/B) and Χορήγιων Λεομέδοντος (group VI/B), the latter stamp being also the latest stamp of a Sinopean magistrate discovered on this site (ca. 255 BC).

The few producer's stamps belong to Δραλῶης, known for his work with magistrates from the Vth group and the beginning of the VIth group. It should be noted that the producer's stamp Δραλῶης also contains a patronymic, which is the same name rendered in the genitive Δραλώου. It is the first stamp of this producer with a patronymic found on the western coast of the Black Sea. Y. Garlan attributes this stamp to the *auxiliaries*, mentioning three magistrates from group V and one from group VI during which this stamp⁶ was applied, probably to the second handle. The stamps of three of the four magistrates mentioned by Garlan can be found in the Medgidia collection: Διονύσιος 3 Απολλοδώρου, Εὐχάριστος 2 Δημητρίου and Χορήγιων Λεομέδοντος. From the dating of the activity of the four magistrates and of Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἴφιος, from our collection, we can say that the activity of this producer lasted 20 years: from approx. 275 to approx. 255 BC.

Among the producers who worked with the magistrate Αἰσχίνης 5 Ἴφιος, the name of a new Sinopean producer Ἀριστέυς (sic!) appears⁷.

The name of another Sinopean potter appears on another stamp from Medgidia - Ἐρμων Μητροδώρου, active in groups V-VI. Two identical stamps of the Sinopean manufacturer are applied to the necks of two amphorae with the characteristics of the clay, but also the morphological ones obviously Sinopean, on which the name Ἐπικράτης is rendered, a name found in the Sinopean amphoric epigraphy only in group I (ca. 350-340a. Chr.). The Sinopean potter Ἐπικράτης 1 is the father of another known potter, Μάνης 1, active up to the third group, and the first stamp with the name of Μάνης 1, is a re-engraving of a stamp of his father. The seal of Ἐπικράτης applied to the neck is undoubtedly a Heracleitian influence, and the stamps of this potter are the earliest of the Sinopean stamp group from Medgidia Elenistic 1.

The dating of the eight Thasos stamps falls between the first quarter of the century. III (ca. 284) belonging to the magistrates Ἀριστοφῶν 2, Νικόδημος 1 and the middle of the same century (ca. 251/249) - Σάτηρος II (no. 37) and Σάτηρος IV (no. 38).

Of particular interest among the Thasian stamps is the copy belonging to the magistrate Σάτυρος (IV), which also has the patronymic Γόργου. In the Thasian amphoric

⁶ GARLAN, 2004, 180-181, n° 313.

⁷ Information from Andrei Kolesnikov, to whom we extend our thanks.

epigraphy, several magistrates with this name are known, and only one of them has the patronymic⁸ indicated. At the moment, the existence of 30 copies with such a legend, with different emblems, is indicated⁹. In the stamp from Medgidia, a strighil and an ampoule appear as emblems. The stamp of Σάτηρος IV Γόργου from Medgidia Elenistic 1, bearing the emblem «strighil with ampoule», is the second known specimen and the first from the Romanian space¹⁰.

Heracleatian amphoric stamping is also represented in the lot from Medgidia Elenistic 1 by 10 stamps, applied in englyphic or in relief, on amphora necks. Two stamps are made in relief, one on the neck and the other on the handle. Most of the legible Heracleote stamps from Medgidia belong to the producers of the final stamp group of potters at Pontic Heraclea: Ἀριστοκράτης (2 copies), Ἐπικράτης, Ἡρακλέων, Μένης (two copies), dated between the late c. IV – the first third of the century III BC, and only one stamp seems to be earlier, belonging to the early potters stamps, dated to the beginning of the IV century BC, bearing the name of Παιριφάνης in the genitive case – Παιριφανα. There are several assumptions regarding this specimen, for example N.Pavlichenko attributes it to a single name mentioned above¹¹, Fedoseev considered that this stamp contains two abbreviated names firstly Παιρι – potter's name and secondly - Φανα, magistrate's name, which Fedoseev considers as a new name¹². Even if we accept the first or second variant, the stamp cannot be attributed to the late ones, but rather to the first half of the century IV BC.

Chersonesus is represented by three magistrate stamps, all belonging to the early period (groups 1/B) – years 318-300 BC): Αἰσχίνας, Ἀπολλώνιος, Ἡράκλειος 1.

Of the three Rhodes stamps, only two could be dated, one, even if heavily worn, still preserved the form of a stamp from the *bouton-group*, dated between 270 and 246 BC. Another stamp, incompletely preserved, could be attributed to the producer Σωτᾶς 1 and the dating of his activity belongs to group I (approx. 294-271a. Chr.). This dating is also supported by the shape of the handle itself.

The only stamp from Cnidos is monogrammatic, belonging to the potter Ζηνων of group II, dated between 280-250 BC (the so-called Group of Zeno). The specimen from Medgidia, unlike some known specimens of this group, appears to contain no additional emblem.

Five amphora stamps could not be identified, even though some, at first sight, appear to present sufficient data for their reading and identification.

Conclusions:

⁸ GARLAN, 2004-2005, 281.

⁹ GARLAN, 2004-2005, 281.

¹⁰ Kind information from Michel Debidour, whom we also thank in this way.

¹¹ Thanks to our colleague Natalia Pavlichenko for the suggestion.

¹² FEDOSEEV, 2016.

Of the 67 stamps identified, 37 are Sinopean specimens, i.e. approximately 60% of the total stamps. This joint report is representative of all batches of amphoric stamps from Dobrogea, published by several Romanian researchers. Thus, the presentation of the lot of stamps from Medgidia Elenistic 1 comes to confirm the situation created in Dobrogea c. IV-III, when a good part of the liquid products, brought in amphorae, especially from the end of the IVth and throughout the IIIrd century BC, belong to Sinopean imports (in which wine and olive oil were also brought). It should be noted that the dating of the majority of Sinopean stamps 27 out of 34 belongs to the V chronological group. Based on the research of this batch of stamps we were able to trace the chronological framework of the stamped amphorae from this site, and implicitly the chronology of the site. Based on the two early Sinopean stamps of the potter Ἐπικράτης and the Heracleote stamp Παιρι/φανα., the lower limit can be dated to the first half/midcentury IV BC, and the upper one - with the middle of the century. III BC (Thassian stamps of the two magistrates Σάτυρος II and Σάτυρος IV Γόργου).

Of course, the real picture of the amphoric imports at this site cannot be complete without the study of the entire lot of vessels and their fragments, which are to be researched and published later, and yet, the presentation and publication of the stamp lots is always for the benefit of researchers, who studies the ancient period.

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CATALOGUE



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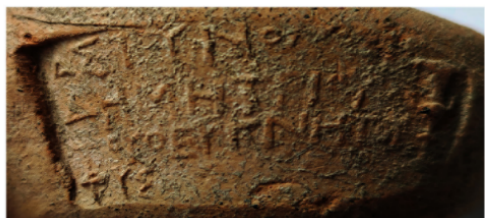
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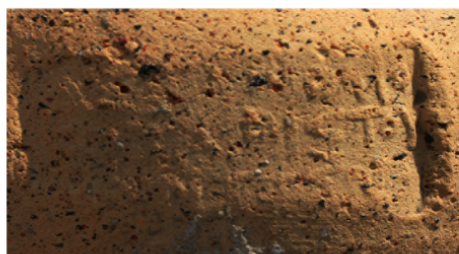
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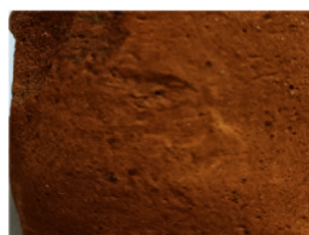
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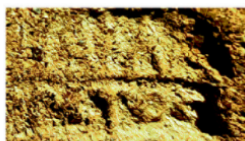
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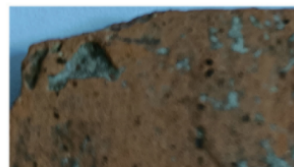
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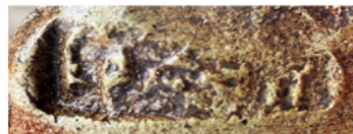
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The Use of Sacred Context for Slave Consecrations and Manumissions in Boeotia, Macedonia and Anatolia

Iulian MOGA¹

Abstract. In this contribution I will focus on some observations on the typology of these categories of epigraphs, with emphasis on regional particularities and chronological landmarks. In the second part of the study, however, I will highlight the situations encountered in Boeotia at Chaironeia, in Asia Minor, particularly in connection with the sanctuary of Helios Apollo Lairbenos, and in Macedonia, at Leukopetra, where the dedications are addressed to the Autochthonous Mother of the Gods. It is therefore necessary to make a few clarifications concerning the typology of these inscriptions, their formal aspect, the terms used to define the act of dedication or consecration, the particularities generated by the types of conditions that had to be satisfied, and the ways of dating the existing epigraphic material.

Rezumat. În această contribuție mă voi concentra asupra unor observații privind tipologia acestor categorii de epigrafe, cu accent pe particularitățile regionale și reperele cronologice. În a doua parte a studiului voi evidenția însă situațiile întâlnite în Beoția la Chaironeia, în Asia Mică, în special în legătură cu sanctuarul lui Helios Apollo Lairbenos, și în Macedonia, la Leukopetra, unde dedicațiile sunt adresate Mamei zeilor autohtonă. Este deci necesar să facem câteva precizări cu privire la tipologia acestor inscripții, aspectul lor formal, termenii folosiți pentru definirea actului de dedicare sau de consacrare, particularitățile generate de tipurile de condiții care trebuiau îndeplinite și modalitățile de datarea materialului epigrafic existent.

Keywords: consecrations, manumissions, Autochthonous Mother of Gods, Helios Apollo Lairbenos, freedmen.

In his volume devoted to the manumission of slaves in a Jewish context in the Bosporan Kingdom, E. Leigh Gibson takes up and adapts the taxonomy used by Aristide Calderini in his work published at the beginning of the 20th century. He showed that, at least as far as ordinary Greek inscriptions are concerned, a distinction can be made between slave manumissions in a civil context and in a religious or sacred context, the difference between the two categories being made not in relation to the eponymous magistrates (since the mentions in question only help us as a dating element, possibly from a prosopographical point of view), but rather by reference to the presence or absence of religious markers.² It is a

¹ Faculty of History, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

² LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 30-34.

distinction that may seem at first sight to be a very tenuous and insubstantial one, given the multitude of issues involved in defining the sacred and civil contexts. Can the sacral character be defined depending on the context in which the ceremony of entrustment or donation took place or in terms of involvement of a particular priest or *hieros*? Or in terms of the subsequent obligations of those consecrated? Or is the mere mention of the guarantor protective deity sufficient? Calderini and Leigh Gibson divide sacral manumissions according to the protection granted by the deity, the sale to the god or the consecration to him. Those in the first category could be subdivided into manumissions in which the deity is invoked to grant protection to the freedman and those which benefit from a so-called civil-religious mode.³

However, in some cases there are invocations addressed to the deities in certain inscriptions where there is no mention of donation or manumission in a sacred context, but the collective manumission of the slaves in question is the result of ordinary testamentary dispositions. The inscription discovered in 2001 at Büyütaşlı Höyük in the Cappadocian area, originally published by Murat Aydaş⁴ and re-edited with very relevant clarifications by Pierre Debord, is perhaps a revealing example in this respect.⁵ The inscription can be translated as follows: "I give these orders to the ones who were freed by me through this decision and whom I listed on the two tablets and codicils (of the will): their children should not be abandoned, for the family of the freedmen always remain united and for nobody should ever be put in my grave. And if one of the freedmen or their descendants does something wrong or takes to himself something of those, which have been given by me, or damages or abuses (the tomb), this person will pay as a fine nine pure virgins, nine boys, nine white bulls with golden horns, nine heifers, nine horses with golden bridles, nine white he-goats, nine she-goats, nine rams with golden fleece and nine white swallows to the goddess in Komana every year. May this person bring them to Zeus from Thymnasa, Zeus Pharnauos and Anaitis. (And even so) the aforementioned gods will not be appeased and neither the earth will give fruit nor the sky water nor the sun light. This person will also be liable to temple-robbery and his root will be completely destroyed. I set this tablet on my tomb."⁶ As is very clear from this funerary imprecation inscription of the 2nd century AD, we are dealing with the testamentary dispositions of a local aristocrat, as Debord also points out in his study (a wealthy landowner, probably a livestock breeder, a bit eccentric and "pour tout dire, mégalomane" and not a priest of the goddess Mâ, as Aydaş had initially considered⁷), but the sacred character is given by the provisions concerning the inviolability of the tomb of the deceased and by the assimilation of the destruction of the funerary complex in any form (lines 19-20) with *hierosylia*, i.e. sacrilege

³ LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 37.

⁴ AYDAŞ 2002, 25.

⁵ DEBORD 2005, 24-28.

⁶ MOGA 2019, 463-464, no. 6.9.1.

⁷ DEBORD 2005, 29-30.

committed by a person due to theft of sacred property. Moreover, the deities mentioned in the inscription are linked not to the protection given to the freed individuals and their descendants, but to the tomb itself. The atonement offerings were to be made annually to the goddess of the Cappadocian Comana, Mâ, but consecrated to Zeus of Thymnasa, Zeus Pharnauos (identifiable in Debord's view with Ahura Mazda) and Anaitis.

Equally difficult to categorize are the inscriptions at Chaironeia in Boeotia, mostly dating from the Hellenistic period, where that civil-religious aspect mentioned by Leigh Gibson is present, since manumission by consecration to the deity takes place in a civil context, involving the city authorities, according to local regulations whose provisions were not preserved.⁸ However, most of the inscriptions mention that the consecration was undertaken through the city council by law⁹ or under the authority of the council, according to law (*synhedrion* or rarely *boulē*, in only two cases¹⁰). However, we sometimes find that the manumission tax was raised by the treasurer in charge of religious issues.¹¹ Thus we notice on an inscription dating back to the 3rd-2nd centuries that "During the archontate of Kallikon, on the 15th day of the month Damatrios, Pourippos, son of Proxenos, consecrated his servant (*therapēnan*) Aphrodite to Sarapis as his *hiera*, on condition that she should remain with him and his wife Agatheine as long as they lived. He proceeded to consecrate her through the Council, according to the law, and immediately paid the fee of 20 drachmas to the treasurer of the sacred".¹²

Rarely at Chaironeia do we have mention of witnesses (*wistores*) in earlier inscriptions, but witnesses and the Council are never mentioned simultaneously in the same instance.¹³ In the case of Chaironeia, Claire Grenet believes that there are two procedural stages of manumission in a sacred context, namely the manumission proper and the consecration, since two of the dedications explicitly refer to freedmen (*apeleutheroi*): one in which Agathokles, son of Kallom, consecrated the freed slave Daos as a *hieros* to Sarapis, and another in which a female consecrates a slave with the help of those who had previously freed her.¹⁴ Another inscription from Chaironeia may lead us to the same idea, as we note that the daughter of Mnasias, Kaphisias, accompanied by her friends Asandros and Mnasias, sets free (*aphieiti*) her beloved child, Soso, by consecrating her to Artemis Eilithia, on condition that she remains with her for life.¹⁵

⁸ YOUNI 2010, 312.

⁹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 16 and the following ones.

¹⁰ GRENET 2014, 404.

¹¹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 18 and 21.

¹² DARMEZIN 1999, no. 18.

¹³ GRENET 2014, 405.

¹⁴ GRENET 2014, 396.

¹⁵ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 100. LEIGH GIBSON 1999, 34: a verb that can also be translated the verb as "send away" or "release".

The *paramonē* provision, was a suspensive clause which, in the event of non-compliance by the freedman, could have a resolutive character, in the sense that the person in question was liable to return to the previous legal condition, that of slave. Thus, we find at Stiris the following mention in relation to a situation as such: "If it does not happen as written above, the consecration shall be without effect, and they shall pay 30 silver minas."¹⁶ *Paramonē* is a fairly common condition in Greek inscriptions from the Hellenistic period throughout mainland Greece (Thessaly, Boeotia, Crete, etc.), but also at Leukopetra in Macedonia in the Imperial Roman period. In Asia Minor, however, the *paramonē* is not so common, but rather the exception.

Most of the inscriptions refer to the lifelong obligation of the freedman to remain with the former master, but a very small group of epigraphs stipulate such a contractual obligation for only 3 or 10 years.¹⁷ The ordinary lifelong obligation could also be accompanied by additional conditions, such as *gērotrophia*, which would require the freedman also to support his former master, or to pay for his funeral expenses.¹⁸ Thus, an epigraph from Stiris in the 2nd century shows that Eupraxis and her child, Dorion, had to "remain with Praxias and his wife Aphrodisia as long as they live, to see to their burial and to perform the customary ceremonies in their honour."¹⁹

An inscription from Delphi of 178/177 BC records, for example, that the only obligation of the freed and consecrated slave, i.e. of Euporia, to her former master, who also paid to the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios the manumission tax of 200 drachmas with the image of Alexander, was to join him on a longer journey: "She is to accompany Asandros to Macedonia and thus she will be free".²⁰ An additional safeguard was usually provided that the city authorities, the priesthood officials²¹ or any of the citizens could intervene to prevent the wrongful return to slavery by a third party,²² notably if that party was the descendants of the deceased.²³ The reason for this was that although the slaves manumitted by consecration to a deity were legally free, they were nevertheless considered the inviolable property of the god. It is to this type of perception that the Delphic sacral slave manumissions lead us, which had the procedural aspect of a direct fictive sale to the Pythian Apollo²⁴. I believe that an inscription from the 3rd century BC from Koroneia is also sufficiently explicit in this regard: "[---] on

¹⁶ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 149.

¹⁷ FOSSEY 1991, no. 4: "on condition that she (i.e., Parthena, the foster child) remains with them for 10 years, at which time the consecration will be effective".

¹⁸ YOUNI 2010, 321. DARMEZIN 1999, no. 127: "to take care of all of Paramona's needs".

¹⁹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 151.

²⁰ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 142.

²¹ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 129: "the priestess is to intervene to protect him".

²² For instance DARMEZIN 1999, no. 133.

²³ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 137.

²⁴ SOSIN 2015, 328-329.

condition that they remain with him as long as he lives, and also with his wife, Harmodia, behaving blamelessly. When Heirotodos and Harmodia die, Onasios and Dioniosios are to take charge of their funerals and perform every year all the customary ceremonies for the deceased. Let not the heirs of Heirotodos nor anyone else in any way be allowed to return Dioniosios or Onasimos to slavery, the priestess of Charops Herakles and anyone else who wishes may bring them back and intervene to protect them, *for Dioniosios and Onasimos are free persons belonging to the sanctuary, along with any property they may acquire.*"²⁵ Consequently, these persons were declared free and consecrated to the god, and they could not be returned to slavery unless they failed to fulfil their contractual obligations, and whoever ventured to commit any abuse in this sense was held guilty of hierosylia, i.e. of stealing the sacred property of the deity: "Whoever returns her (Hermaia) to slavery shall be liable to the punishment prescribed for the theft of sacred property."²⁶

It rarely happens in the case of consecrations and manumissions of slaves in a sacred context to encounter an explicit mention in the inscriptions of the fact that these actions were carried out within the sanctuary, as we find in the Koroneia, with regard to the sanctuary of Sarapis.²⁷ In the case of the sanctuaries at Leukopetra in Macedonia, located near Beroia, and at Atyochorion in southern Phrygia, situated near the city of Hierapolis, we can deduce this because most of the inscriptions were found either within the sacred sites or in the nearby villages. Circumstances in these two sanctuaries are relatively similar and therefore often subject to comparison. The chronological sequence of the inscriptions is roughly the same, i.e. the interval from AD 124/125 to AD 257 for the Anatolian epigraphs and from AD 148 to the second part of the 3rd century for the Macedonian ones. Almost all inscriptions can be precisely dated, which removes ambiguities. From a formal point of view, we note that in both cases there is a specific typology of composition. However, there are also differences, one of the most important being that sacred slaves or hierodules appear mainly in the Anatolian region, which can be explained by the fact that this category is more common in the Eastern area of the Graeco-Roman world. Then, in Asia Minor we have in most cases the financial protective provision for the case of non-compliance, especially by a third party, of contractual obligations, which begins with the formula 'should anyone dare' and continues with the institutions into whose treasury the fines were to be paid (imperial treasury, sanctuary or treasury of the city in charge of the administration of the sanctuary), similar to the case of inscriptions containing funerary imprecations. In Leukopetra, however, more emphasis is placed on the subsequent obligations of those who were declared *hieros* or *hieros kai eleutheros*, not only to their former masters, but also to the sanctuary: that they should serve at the sanctuary on the customary

²⁵ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 133. Vezi si DARMEZIN 1999, no. 135.

²⁶ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 131, an inscription also from Koroneia, dated to the 3rd century BC, Hermaia being considered "*hiera* and free". Similar situation in DARMEZIN 1999, no. 126.

²⁷ DARMEZIN 1999, no. 121.

days or on those appointed for the sacred celebrations²⁸. There are instances where the release of the slave occurred after a certain period of time, in fulfillment of a taken promise: “may he belong to the goddess after my end.”²⁹

The terminology employed is relatively similar. The actual term used for purchase contracts (*onē*)³⁰ that would be suitable in the case of temple records is extremely rarely mentioned. It appears on an inscription datable to 170 AD: “In the year 201 (= Augustan era), which is also 317 (= Macedonian calendar), on the 25th day of the month Hyperberetaios, I, Euarestos, son of Nikolais, of Beroia, donated (*eukharisamen*) to the Autochthonous Mother of Gods the child named Philiste, of about five years of age, whose purchase deed (*onē*) I deliver in the hands of the goddess.”³¹ The verbs commonly used in the inscriptions of the two sanctuaries are usually *anatithemi*, *doroumai* and *kharizomai*, which indicate dedication/consecration, donation and entrustment.³² Two of the verbs involved, *katagrapho* (in Asia Minor) and *stellographo* (at Leukopetra³³), clearly indicate that the texts of the inscriptions are only transcribed copies of the original documents kept in the temple archives. Evidence of this is also found at Delphi, where an inscription from 182-181 BC records that “the magistrates (*bouleutēs*) shall provide for (the document) to be transcribed in the sanctuary, and the consecration will be valid.”³⁴ Similarly, at Leukopetra, we notice that “Fundanius Nikeros hereby confirm by oath that the persons who affixed the seal below have placed in plain view a donation tablet dated the 20th of the aforementioned month for ten consecutive days (and that) the following text has been verified (after the original) and countersigned.”³⁵

Analyzing the available inscriptions, it is most likely that there had to be a certain person to render/donate someone who was to become a hieros or sacred slave to the deity, who either had the role of guarantor before the deity for the dedicated person, or who had legal tutelage over the person to be consecrated. However, at Leukopetra we have an interesting circumstance in which a consecrated person delivered himself to serve the deity, giving his consent to the consecration, although the one who confides him is his own mother: “In the Augustan year 235, which is also 351, Ladoma, the daughter of Amyntas, offered her own son named Paramonos, whom she had promised when she was ill, to serve no one else but the goddess alone. Paramonos, the one mentioned, being present, offered himself. When Aelia

²⁸ *IL*, 12-21; 29; 33.

²⁹ *IL*, 31 (192-193 d.Hr.).

³⁰ YOUNI 2010, 319; GOFAS, HATZOPoulos 1999, 7. For comparisons with the meanings of *katagraphē*, see RICL 1995, 187-188, *IL* (Introduction, pages 57-59) and MIRKOVIĆ 2001, 954-957 ff.

³¹ *IL*, 3. With a different indication of the dedicator's name at YOUNI 2010, 318.

³² YOUNI 2010, 317; PAPAZOGLU 1981, 173-174.

³³ *IL*, 23.

³⁴ *CID*, 137.

³⁵ *IL*, 99.

Aureliane was priestess, (and) Aurelia Sappho was curator.”³⁶ We also note at Leukopetra that even the sacred slaves could make such consecrations. Thus, an inscription dated 193/194 A.D. records that a certain Mary, a slave of the Mother of the Gods, offered (*anatithemî*)³⁷ Thedotos, whom she had bought from birth and raised until the age of three, to the Autochthonous Goddess.³⁸

In Asia Minor there are no cases in which a certain person would voluntarily render himself or herself to the deity, even if the god sometimes explicitly demanded that he or she should come to his or her service by means of a divine command and report the event on a stele, thus advertising the power manifested by the deity or deities in question. A special case, however, is found in the Anatolian area at Ayazviran, in Lydia, in a confession inscription dated 118/119 AD.³⁹ Trophime, the daughter of Artemidoros Kikinnas, was asked to put herself into the service of the god, but she did not comply at once and therefore the god Mên Artemidoros Axiottenos, the master of Koresa, punished her with temporary insanity. But repenting and asking the advice of the gods Mên Artemidoros Axiottenos, Meter Tarsene and Apollo Tarsios about the matter, they commanded her to erect a stele and to put herself in the service of the gods. However, we do not know whether this consecration actually materialised in Trophime’s acquiring the condition of a *hiera*, given her status as a free person, since we are not aware of the existence of a *katagraphe* in this regard, but the possibility can be considered. Very interesting for the Asia Minor area is precisely the fact that in many cases the consecration of natural or adopted children takes place following such commands from the gods, the expressions commonly used being “upon the command of the god” (*kata epitagēn tou theou*) or according to the dream (*kat’onar*). But such orders also appear in the case of common dedications, not only in *katagraphai*⁴⁰. For example, Charixenos Dionysopolitanus is commanded to probably erect a statue (since the inscription is on a base) by the god Apollo Lairmenos, who is here called *theos epiphanes*⁴¹.

There are at least four instances in the sanctuary of Helios Apollo Lairbenos in Atyochorion where natural or adopted children were rendered to this god following a command or a dream. The first dates from the beginning of the third century and refers to the donation of an nurtured child (*threptos*) by a certain Markos, son of Dionysidaros of Motella, according to the command of Helios Apollo Lairbenos.⁴² Three other *katagraphai* refer to oniric instructions. Both Aphia of Hierapolis and Dion of Motella donate their own children, Roupos

³⁶ IL, 47 (203-204 d.Hr.).

³⁷ A term that could also have the meaning of ‘render’, ‘give’ or ‘donate’.

³⁸ IL, 39.

³⁹ MOGA 2019, 343-344, no. 4.2.11.

⁴⁰ DIGNAS 2003, 84; RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22-26, 28-31, 39-40, no. K5, K7, K11, K16, K23, K 30, K37, K49.

⁴¹ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 8, no. D4. The formula used for the first received order is *kata epitagēn*.

⁴² RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 2000, 23, no. K7.

and Roupeinas and Papirianos respectively to Helios Apollo Lairbenos in the 2nd century AD.⁴³ In the latter case we do not know the status of Didymos, but we do know that he was specially sent to a hieros, Dionysios, at the beginning of the third century, by Neikephoros of Motella, to be consecrated to Helios Apollo Lermenos. He may have been a relative of the couple Dionysius and his wife or even their child raised by Neikephoros of Motella.⁴⁴

Although it would appear at times that these are two distinct practices using similar procedures, having as a guarantor the divinity or being linked to an element of a sacred nature, in reality the consecration of slaves and the manumissions in a sacred context are essentially the same type of legal practice involving the fictitious or real donation to a divinity, with different ends, each time adapted to the particularities of local societies.

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⁴³ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22, nr. K4; RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 22, no. K5. The wording used in these inscriptions is 'according to a divine dream' (*kata ton theion oniron*) and 'according to a dream' (*kat'oniron*).

⁴⁴ RITTI, ŞİMŞEK, YILDIZ 2000, 49.

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Minor Inscriptions from The Western Pontic Area Between The 1st-3rd Centuries A.D. Re-Gatherings and Discussions on Their Account

Bogdan CHIRILOAIE¹

Abstract. This study deals with a less discussed topic, minor inscriptions, in the literature. It discusses how some minor inscriptions can provide us with information about the economic and commercial situation in the West Pontic area. The results obtained allowed us to identify the economic context of the province and also to observe where these inscriptions are concentrated, mainly in the military environment. It was found once again that the West Pontic towns never formed their own system of distribution of goods and did not benefit from a policy that allowed them to function as an economic system in their own right. We have also attempted to highlight the language and socio-communicative framework in which we arrive at the hypothesis that inscriptions of any kind were a sign of ownership.

Rezumat. Studiul de față tratează un subiect mai puțin discutat, inscripțiile minore, în literatura de specialitate. Este discutat modul în care unele inscripții minore ne pot oferi informații despre situația economică și comercială din spațiul vest-pontică. Rezultatele obținute ne-au permis să identificăm contextul economic al provinciei și totodată să observăm locul unde aceste inscripții se concentrează, cu precădere în mediul militar. S-a constatat încă odată că orașele vest-pontice nu au format niciodată un sistem propriu de distribuție a bunurilor și nu au beneficiat de o politică care să le permită să funcționeze ca un sistem economic de sine stătător. De asemenea, am încercat să evidențiem limbajul și cadrul socio-comunicațional în care ajungem la ipoteză că inscripțiile, de orice fel, erau un semn de proprietate.

Keywords: *minor inscriptions, 1st-3rd centuries A.D., Scythia Minor, ownership.*

The study of epigraphy, especially the minor one, has seen a secondary approach in the Romanian space, an approach that has not managed to be as developed as in the West. We note that there are several sources, corpora, works or articles dealing with this topic, but we believe that the state of research can be improved. The study, in perspective, of the epigraphic material has the purpose of giving us precise or vague clues regarding the economic, military, but also social situation in the early period of the Empire. The graffiti inscriptions covered in this work come from the Dobrogea area and fall between the I-III centuries A.D.

On the beginning of this paper, we will discuss the first inscription in the catalog discovered during the archaeological excavations at Dinogetia. The first inscription is on a pot with a turn, divided into five grooves, which is kept in a good state of preservation. On the other hand, the inscription is not so well preserved. This was applied to the raw paste, before

¹ MA, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași

the engobe was applied, a process that may have been one of the reasons for the poor state of preservation at the time of discovery. A number of three graffiti inscriptions were inscribed on the soft paste, probably rendering a name, of Latin origin, Atila, Au[r]. Sev(erus?), Aur (cat. no. 1). With Latin letters, uppercase and lowercase, the reading is a difficult one in the lower register, given those lines that overlap the letters. Our view of this inscription is that it would render, not only one name, but two. The first name, also provided by the author, is one that does not cause us problems, being intelligible, which would most likely be a *praenomen*. The second name, Au[r], could indicate, the name of the genus, *nomen*, attributed by us to the name *Aurelius*. Related to the third name "Sev", the author re-united it as "Sev(erus?)" but our opinion would be different. Given that the last word is also "Aur", which would be the family name, it would make the reunion of the name "Sev(erus)" erroneous, since this is also a family name. Thus, informing ourselves from the list of Latin anthroponyms², we noticed the existence of a cognomen, which would have started with the three letters, this being *Sev(erianus)*. This could indicate that the makers of this vessel were these two brothers, using graffiti to sign their products.

The next point in our analysis brings a series of seven inscriptions with particular importance in terms of the economic report from *Carsium*, which can affirm the role played in local trade, with the possibility of one transiting to the appropriate region, Walachia. The first piece, a fragment of an amphora neck, contains a graffiti (cat. no. 2), which appears to be in a good state of preservation, but which does not appear to be fully preserved. You can see type letters, thin and 5-7 mm high, with Greek characters and the last one is a Latin character. The author's opinion is that the inscription could be the abbreviation of an anthroponym³. In this sense, our idea is one in relation to the author's, it being about the middle part of a name, possibly an abbreviation or the fact that the legend was not preserved in its entirety. The letters are in order: A capital letter, followed by the Greek character Γ, and the last two letters were executed in ligature, and their interpretation is HR, the first character being in the Greek language, the equivalent of the character E. Thus, we can give the following division of the name "AGER", which could be the abbreviation of the name *Meleager*(?). We know of another mention of this character in Dacia, on a votive altar where his full name is given as "*C(aius) Valerius Mel(e)ager*", an individual with military duties who would have lived during the 1st century AD⁴. In the case of the character from *Carsium* we don't have enough data to be sure about his occupation, but we have two opinions. First, we think it may be the manufacturer's mark. On the other hand, it can be a sign of ownership, the owner of this vessel wanting to mark his personal property.

² Piso 2016, 564.

³ Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, pl. VIII, 1.

⁴ AE 1974, cat. nr. 0543. IDR II, 642.

The second inscription is reproduced on an amphora neck fragment with a good quality paste and a porous appearance⁵. The inscription consists of two letters, the first type letter, "M", and the second one was questioned by the author, with a height between 10-12 mm (cat. no. 3). The opinion is that this inscription may represent the measure of the vessel. In the case of the first letter, its analysis is easier from the point of view of the quantity represented, the letter "M - *mu*" having in the Greek alphabet the measure of 10,000 ml. As for the second letter, this may be the character "δ", which would have the equivalent of 10 l. If this supposition were plausible, then we could notice the double emphasis of the quantity of the vessel, in two distinct units of measure.

The third inscription is on the shoulders of an amphora fragment, rendered in red paint. The height of the letters is 30 mm (cat. no. 4). The inscription features a single character, a letter from the Greek alphabet, *Γ*, the old spelling of the letter *Π* (pi). Therefore, this letter can represent a unit of measure, which describes the quantity of the dish⁶. We can suggest that this vessel would have had the amount of 5 l⁷.

The next inscription, discovered on a fragment of a large amphora, shows two parallel lines of approximately 30 mm, which join at the top (cat. no. 5). The author did not provide an explanation for this inscription in this case, but our opinion is that the role of this character was to indicate the volume of the vessel. In this case, the letter, certainly from the Greek alphabet, appears to be "Π", but rendered somewhat clumsily. The weight of this vessel could have been 5 liters⁸.

Another inscription discovered on the fragment of a vessel shows the Greek character "ψ" (cat. no. 6), with a height of 30 mm and a width of 60 mm. The author explained this character as being part of a remnant of the inscription or on the other hand it would have been the measure of the vessel. Most probably this character would have rendered the weight of the vessel, but until the present moment there is no assurance of this supposition.

Another graffitti rendered on a fragment of the neck of an amphora contains a legend that is distributed over three lines⁹. The first part of the inscription is rendered between the turns and contains a single Greek character "Π" (cat. no. 7), with a dot and an inclined bar, probably representing the quantity of the vessel. The Greek character defines, as we have previously established, the number 5, but the dot and slash are new signs. In our opinion, this could be a fraction, and those marks denote half a liter. Thus, the final weight should be 5 and a half liters. The second part of the inscription, also rendered in Greek characters, is in a precarious state of preservation, rendering, according to the author, an anthroponym. We can

⁵ Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, pl. VIII, 2.

⁶ Menninger 2011, 366.

⁷ Menninger 2011, 366.

⁸ Menninger 2011, 366.

⁹ Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, pl. VIII, 6.

note with some certainty and accuracy the first three characters, *A, κ, λ*, which seem most likely to be the abbreviation of a name. In a first phase we tried to identify the name behind this abbreviation (we do not exclude the possibility that the graffiti has degraded with the passage of time, and the name in its initial state has been erased), then discovered two *cognomens* with the different ending: *Ἡρακλείδης*¹⁰ (found in Moesia Inferior 26 times) and *Ἡρακλέων*¹¹ (found in the same region 15 times). There is also the possibility that the name of the individual is not this, there are other possibilities of re-combining the name, *Ἡρακλᾶς*¹², *Ἀράκλῆς*¹³ or *Ἡράκλῆος*¹⁴. We therefore note that this inscription, in addition to suggesting the quantity of the vessel, also suggested the name of the owner or possibly the potter, but less likely.

Another inscription reproduced on a fragment of the neck of an amphora has the incised inscription, reproduced in two lines, preserved only fragmentarily and in a precarious state of preservation, but from which we can still see certain Latin and Greek characters. Thus, the reading of the inscription, *umnef[...]/Caesonia* (cat. no. 8), renders an anthroponym of Italic origin. Our opinion is that the reunion would be: *umni(a) fr(umentaria) Caesonia*, a character who would have been part of the *framentaria* of the *I Italica* legion¹⁵.

Another center of particular importance in this article is the fortress of Histria. At this point, we describe some inscriptions with graffiti, with equal importance in terms of the contribution of knowledge brought to the completion of an image from that period, I- III AD. We are also trying to piece together certain inscriptions that were left at a starting point. The first graffiti inscription under discussion, a fragment from the lip of a plate, shows only two Latin characters "...VE..." (cat. no. 10), located in the ligature, but about which we cannot pronounce in any way, because it does not provide enough detail to be able to place it in any category. We can suggest, however, that this graffiti could denote the abbreviation of an anthroponym, *Vettius*¹⁶, *Verus*¹⁷, *Vettienius*¹⁸, *Iuventius*¹⁹ or other such examples from the Moesia Inferior area.

The second inscription is a brick fragment, preserved in a precarious condition, containing four letters rendered with graffiti with a nail, 4-10 cm high. The letters are appropriately spaced, clear, without ligatures, and can be easily drawn, in the following order

¹⁰ ISM I, cat. nr. 1, 124, 196, 211. ISM II, cat. nr. 23, 83, 403. ISM III, cat. nr. 74.

¹¹ ISM I, cat. nr. 193, 219. ISM III, cat. nr. 68a, 72, 74, 38, 186.

¹² ISM II, cat. nr. 31.

¹³ Zahariade, Alexandrescu 2011, 38.

¹⁴ ISM III, cat. nr. 72.

¹⁵ Rankov 1990, 176.

¹⁶ ISM II, 160, cat. nr. 129.

¹⁷ ISM IV, 304, cat. nr. 175.

¹⁸ AE 1997, cat. nr. 1334.

¹⁹ ISM V, 223, cat. nr. 191.

from left to right: Γ Ε Ζ Ι²⁰. The author's opinion is that it may be the end of a name. In this sense, we wanted to affirm or challenge this statement. In our opinion, the letter Z can rather be replaced by the Greek letter lambda λ, which would provide a larger search area for this part of a name. Thus, replacing the two letters, we were able to discover two honorary inscriptions in Dacia, of a certain character with the *cognomen Euangelianus*, from the gens Iulia, possibly a military officer in *Legio V Macedonica*²¹ or *praefectus* of Micia²².

The third inscription considered shows a stamp applied to a fragment of the lip of a vessel belonging to the *terra sigillata* category. The processing technique is modest, and the fragment contains vegetal ornaments, ending near an eagle's head. The stamp is reproduced on two lines, partially preserved, with Greek characters, "Ηνὸδ[οτος]/ΥΛΗ..." (cat. no. 11). The name of this producer is no longer found in other areas of Danube or in the vicinity of Dacia, a fact that can place this craftsman as only a local one, within the settlement of Durostorum, which seems to have imitated the *terra sigillata* products from the northern coast between the II-III centuries A.D.²³. His name also appears in two other areas, in Istanbul²⁴ and in Balchik²⁵, an argument that can support the previously mentioned assumption.

The first object discussed from Tomis is a mug with a globular body with a beige engobe. The lip is flared and has only one tip. The state of preservation is very good, but also for dipinti that is legible and easy to read. The text is written with white paint, and the letters are cursive with sizes between 2.2 - 2.6 cm. In the vicinity of the writing, close to the bottom of the vessel, there is a dotted line of the same color, with a decorative role. This vessel is specific to the early Roman period, whose chronological framework is included in the time interval related to the II-III centuries A.D. The reading of this dipinti is as follows: τῇ καλῇ τὸ δωρον, (cat. no. 13). which translates as: "*Beautiful, the present*", a formula frequently found, especially on mirrors. The editors of this dipinti believe that the vessel in question could be a container for storing cosmetic products²⁶. We believe that this hypothesis cannot be a plausible one, because in order to store cosmetic products there were specially made vessels - *pixides* - which were much more common at Tomis. We believe that this formula found on this vessel refers to a formula used during the serving of alcoholic beverages. Evidence in support of our claim is provided by the inscriptions on glass cups discovered during that period, such as: ΛΑΒΕ ΤΗΝ ΝΕΙΗΚΝ (*Get victory!*), ΚΑΤΑΧΑΙΡΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΦΡΑΙΝΟΥ (*Rejoice and be happy!*), ΕΥΦΡΑΙΝΟΥ ΕΦΗΠΑΡΕΙ (*Be happy you're here!*)²⁷. A similar sample was also discovered during the excavations at

²⁰ Tudor 1980, 242, fig. 1/9.

²¹ IDR III, 3, 47.

²² IDR III, 3, 211.

²³ Tudor 1980, 243, fig. 2/15.

²⁴ SEG 28.562.

²⁵ SEG 60.772.

²⁶ Avram, Hălmagi, Streinu 2021, 178, cat. nr. 18760, pl. IV/8.

²⁷ Boțan 2015, 123.

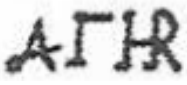



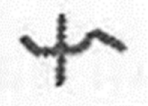
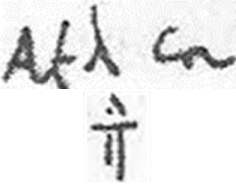
Dinogetia. A fragment of a glass bottom, measuring about 5 x 4 cm and 0.3 cm thick. On this fragment, two letters in relief ῥς are preserved, which can be reassembled as: "[Ζῆς]ῥς". The reunion could be translated by the formula "*Long live!*"²⁸.

The purpose of this study was to identify minor inscriptions from the 1st-3rd centuries A.D., reproduced on ceramics, glass or other types of materials, from the area of Roman Dobrogea. I considered only those inscriptions that had no prior description or those that I thought would require re-evaluation. We managed to analyze 13 minor inscriptions, dealing with their rendering, the quality of the inscription, as well as its degree of preservation. The graphic shows us the degree of literacy of the producers, the way the characters were rendered, as well as the norms used. After observing the way in which the writing appears, the next level shows us the degree of acculturation, to what extent the native population would accept the Latin or Greek script, as well as the perception of style. Based on what has been discussed, we notice a slight increase in Latin script, towards the II-III centuries A.D., and the Greek script begins to lose its importance, the main reason being the military occupation of the area. The most important social analysis is why the locals felt the need to express themselves in writing and why it was necessary for a certain individual to feel the need to inscribe his name on a certain object. In this case, we can talk about an individual with a social status and a high degree of literacy, who would have felt the need to print his name on an object, because through this process he would have marked his respective product and thus, those around him would know the belonging of the object. We also notice on certain pottery vessels forms of incantation or exhortation, with an entirely Greek script: τῇ καλῇ τὸ δωρον (*Beautiful, the present*); Ἑρμῇ ὁ κερδοποιός / Φιλίσκου εὐεῖλα τοῦ ἐν ἔτους (*May Hermes, creator of gains, be merciful to Philiskos throughout the year*)²⁹; ΕΥΦΑΙΝΟΥ ΕΦΗΠΑΕΙ (*Be happy you're here!*). The role of these inscriptions was, and still is to this day, to give the owner a sign by which he recognizes his ownership.

Nr. Crt.	Place of discovery	Object type	Legend	Characteristics	Size	Dating	Bibliography
1	Dinogetia	Mug	<i>Atila, Au[r]. Sev(erus?), Aur</i>	Pot with five grooves. It features a black-grey	Î=7,9 cm	II-III p.Chr.	ISM V, 278, cat. nr. 266.

²⁸ Barnea 1977, 280.

²⁹ Avram, Chera, Lungu 2016, 28, fig. 1/2.

				engobe and a series of three inscriptions.			
2	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Beige paste	Î=5-7 mm	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 1.
3	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Light beige paste, pink on the inside, with a porous appearance in the crack.	Î=10-12 mm	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 2.
4	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Brick paste.	Î=30 mm	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 3.
5	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Beige paste, pink inside.	Î=30 mm	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 4.
6	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Beige paste.	Î=30 mm L=60 mm	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 5.
7	Hârșova , punct „La Moară”	Amphora neck fragment		Light-colored paste on the outside and dark on the inside, with a porous appearance and crushed remains.	-	I-II p.Chr.	Nicolae 1995-1996, 150, Pl. VIII, fig. 6.

Minor Inscriptions from The Western Pontic Area Between The 1st-3rd Centuries A.D. Re-Gatherings and Discussions
on Their Account

8	Hârşova , punct „La Moară”	Amphor a neck fragme nt	<i>umnef</i> [...]/ <i>Caesonia</i>	-	-	I-II p.Chr .	Bounegru, Haşotti, Murat 1989, 280, fig. 9/16.
9	Histria	Brick fragme nt	<i>FEZI</i>	-	L=4 cm Î=10 cm	I p.Chr	Tudor 1980, 242, fig. 1/9.
10	Histria	Fragme nt of the lip of a plate	...VE...	-	-	I p.Chr	Tudor 1980, 243, fig. 1/11.
11	Histria	Fragme nt <i>Terra sigilata</i>	<i>Ἡνὸς[οτος]</i> <i>ΥΛΗ</i>	Modest technique, vegetable ornaments, with eagle head motif.	-	II-III p.Chr .	Tudor 1980, 243, fig. 2/15.
12	Tomis	Glass bowl	<i>ΕΥΦΡΑ[IN]ΟΥΕ[Φ]</i> <i>Ω Π[Α]ΡΕΙ</i>	Cup with a hemispheric al shape, with a high lip, slightly flared and the body divided into two registers, each by two rounded stripes.	L=6,9 cm Î=8,5c m	I-II p.Chr .	Lungu, Chera 1992, 276, fig. 3.
13	Tomis	Mug with a globula r body	<i>τῇ καλῇ τὸ δωρον</i>	Globular body, beige engobe, flared lip	L=2,2 cm Î=2,6 cm	II-III p.Chr .	Avram, Hălmagi, Streinu 2021, 178,

				and single- turned.			cat. nr. 18760, pl. IV/8.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AE = *L'année épigraphique*, Paris.

IDR = *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae*, ed. I.I. Russu, 1980.

ISM I = *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, Histria și împrejurimile*, ed. Dionisie M. Pippidi, București, 1983.

ISM II = *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, Tomis și teritoriul său*, ed. I. Stoian, București, 1987.

ISM III = *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Scythie Mineure, Callatis et son territoire*, ed. Alexandru Avram, București/Paris, 1999.

ISM IV = *Inscriptions de Scythie Mineure, Tropaeum – Durostorum – Axiopolis*, ed. Emilian Popescu, București/Paris, 2015.

ISM V = *Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, Capidava-Trosmis-Noviodunum*, ed. E. Doruțiu-Boilă, București, 1980.

SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leida.

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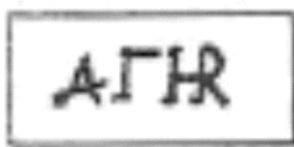
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FIGURES

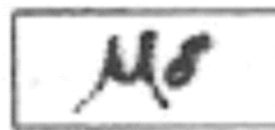


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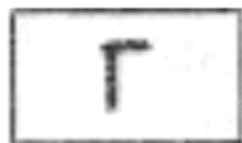
Figure 1 = Mug with inscription



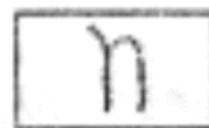
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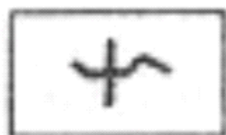
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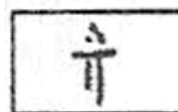
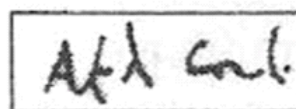
Cat. nr. 4



Cat. nr. 5



Cat. nr. 6



Cat. nr. 7

Figure 2 = Amphora neck fragments with inscriptions



Cat. nr. 8

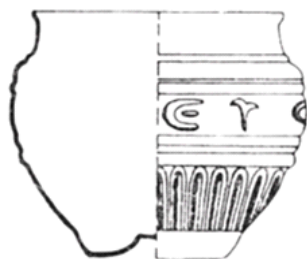


Cat. nr. 9



Cat. nr. 11

Figure 3 = cat. nr. 8 (Amphora neck fragment with inscription); cat. nr. 9 (Brick fragment with inscription), cat. nr. 11 (Fragment of *Terra sigillata* with inscription)



ΕΥ Φ Ρ Α Ι Ν Ο Υ Ε Φ Ω Λ Α Ρ Ε Ι

Cat. nr. 12



Cat. nr. 13

Figure 4 = cat. nr. 12 (Glass bowl with inscription); cat. nr. 13 (mug with inscription)



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Territorium Ciuitatis Ausdecensium: an Open Issue of Ancient Topo-Demography

Alexandru CODESCU¹

Abstract. This paper aims at re-examining the available data regarding the location of *ciuitas Ausdecensium* in *Moesia Inferior*, starting from the uncertainty as to the place where was discovered the inscription CIL III 14437² – the famous boundary stone which records the resolution of a land dispute between this *ciuitas* and a neighbouring population of Dacians. The analysis is focused on some key-elements which could elucidate the relation between *ciuitas Ausdecensium* and the Thracian strategy *Ούσδικησική* recorded by Ptolemy: the fact that we deal with a boundary stone which, therefore, was initially placed at an extremity of the territory belonging to this *ciuitas*, the fact that this territory extended in the opposite direction, most probably to the south, from the place where the boundary stone was installed, as well as the fact that the interprovincial border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia* is considered to have passed north of the Balkans' range, not very far from Danube's line, although the exact border route is still debated. All these circumstances lead to the plausible consequence of *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* reaching the interprovincial borderline. At its turn, this consequence, corroborated with the location in northern *Thracia* of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*, according to Ptolemy's account, supports the possible contiguity between *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* and the territory of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*. If this hypothesis is accurate, it may shed light on the processes that led to the creation of this *ciuitas* and, at the same time, could generate the need to be reassessed the opinion that considers this population of southern Thracian origin as having been relocated to Dobruja.

Rezumat. Acest articol își propune să reexamineze informațiile disponibile cu privire la localizarea în *Moesia Inferior* a comunității ausdecensilor (*ciuitas Ausdecensium*), pornind de la incertitudinea locului de descoperire a inscripției CIL III 14437², bine-cunoscuta piatră de hotar care documentează soluționarea unui litigiu funciar între *ciuitas Ausdecensium* și o populație învecinată de daci. Analiza este focalizată pe câteva elemente-cheie care ar putea elucida raportul dintre *ciuitas Ausdecensium* și strategia tracică *Ούσδικησική* atestată de Ptolemaeus: faptul că avem de a face cu o piatră de hotar, prin urmare inițial plasată la o extremitate a teritoriului acestei *ciuitas*, faptul că acest teritoriu se întindea în direcția opusă, cel mai probabil spre sud, față de locul unde piatra de hotar a fost instalată, precum și faptul că limita interprovincială dintre *Moesia Inferior* și *Thracia* este considerată a fi trecut la nord de linia Balcanilor, nu foarte departe față de Dunăre deși traseul exact al graniței încă este subiect de dezbateri. Aceste circumstanțe conduc spre consecința plauzibilă ca *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* să fi atins granița

¹ PhD. student, UAIC, Faculty of History; al.codescu@gmail.com.

This paper was prepared as part of my PhD research and reflects, in a shorter form, the section dedicated to *Ausdecenses*, of the draft PhD dissertation. I express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Lucrețiu Birliba for all support that he gave me during the elaboration of this article. All responsibility for the opinions and arguments put forward herein belongs entirely to me.

interprovincială. La rândul său, această consecință, coroborată cu localizarea strategiei *Οὐσδικησική* în nordul provinciei *Thracia*, potrivit relatării lui Ptolemaeus, sprijină posibilitatea existenței unei contiguități între *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* și teritoriul strategiei *Οὐσδικησική*. Dacă această ipoteză este corectă, ea poate să aducă lămuriri cu privire la procesul care a condus la apariția acestei *ciuitas* și, în același timp, poate genera necesitatea de a fi reevaluată opinia potrivit căreia această populație sud-tracică ar fi fost relocalată în Dobrogea.

Keywords: CIL III 14437², *Moesia Inferior*, *Thracia*, *ciuitas Ausdecensium*, *Οὐσδικησική*.

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, Gr. Tocilescu sent to the editors of the supplement to the third volume of CIL an inscription carved on a *terminus*, recording the resolution in the province *Moesia Inferior* of a boundary dispute which occurred between a certain *ciuitas Audec...* and a neighbouring population of Dacians: *Termin(i) pos(iti) / t(eritorii) c(iuitatis) Ausdec(ensium) adue/r(sus) Dac(os). Secun(dum) c(iuitatis) / act(a) C(aius) Vexarus t(erminauit) uel f(ecit) / opus. H(inc) excessent / Dac(i). Term(ini) t(eritorii) c(iuitatis) obli/[g(ati)] sint. M[es]sal(la) P[i]/[e?]ror term(inos) pos(uit) t(eritorii). / Iussu Helui(i) Per/tinacis co(n)s(ularis) n(ostri) per / Anternium An/[to]ninum trib(unum) / coh(ortis) I Cilic(um)*². According to the epigraphic text, the boundary marking was made upon instruction of the governor Helvius Pertinax, being thus dated in the period AD 175-179³.

In 1916, G. Mateescu was the first to notice that the members of this *ciuitas*, which was considered by him at that time to designate a fortified city⁴ and for which he restored the name as '*c(iuitas) Ausdec(ensis)*'⁵, most probably belonged to an already known Thracian people. Thus, G. Mateescu made the connection between the *Ausdecenses* indicated on the boundary stone, on the one hand, and the name of the strategy *Οὐσδικησική*, recorded by Ptolemaeus⁶ together with the mention made in a dedicatory inscription put in Rome by four praetorians who

² CIL III Suppl. 14437² = TUDOR 1956a, 52, no. 3 = AE 1957, 333 = ISM IV, 82. The text is that restituted by D. Tudor (1956a, 52, no. 3).

³ The period when Helvius Pertinax held the governorship in *Moesia Inferior* was generally dated in the years AD 175-179, but researchers' opinions as to the exact interval thereof vary considerably: 175-176 (SUCEVEANU 1977a, 152); 175-177 for both provinces of *Moesia* (PIR², H73); 175-178/179 for both provinces (LP I, 20, nos. 47, 98); 176-177 (MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 202; OPRIȘ, ȚENȚEA, CĂLINA 2020, 19, no. 9); 176-178 (STOUT 1911, 57); 177-178 (IDRE II, p. 346, no. 338, *sub numero*); 177-179 (STEIN 1940, 80-81; TUDOR 1956a, 55, no. 3 and n. 27; AE 1957, 333, *sub numero*; ISM IV, pp. 204-205, no. 82, *sub numero*).

⁴ The meaning of the Romanian word '*cetate*', used by G. Mateescu is either (old, ancient) fortified urban settlement or stronghold, fortress.

⁵ MATEESCU 1916, 38, no. 14 and *sub numero*. The emendation '*c(iuitatis) Ausdec(ensium)*' was made later by D. Tudor (1956a, 55, no. 3). However, V. Pârvan used in 1923 the expression (in Romanian language) 'the land of the city of Ausdecenses' (PÂRVAN 1923b, 109), but in that case, the use of the ethnonym in the genitive case was rather determined by the necessities of Pârvan's wording than by a reconsidering of the epigraphic text.

⁶ Geog. III, 11, 8; MATEESCU 1916, 38, no. 14, *sub numero*.

declared themselves '*ciues Vsdicensis* (sic) *uico Agatapara*'⁷, on the other hand. G. Mateescu's conclusions on the relation between the name of this *ciuitas* and the population *Ausdecenses/Vsdicens* were rapidly admitted by the other historians, starting with V. Pârvan⁸.

Together with the landmark contribution of G. Mateescu for establishing the connection between the *Ausdecenses* and the Thracian population *Vsdicens* attested by the Rome inscription and by the name of the *Οὐσδικησική* strategy, appeared in the Romanian historiography the possibility that other southern-Thracian population, besides the *Bessi*⁹, was object of a resettlement or migratory process towards Dobruja.

After more than a century from the first researches, the question of whether the *Ausdecenses/Vsdicens* were indeed object of such movement or displacement of people is still not definitively answered, due to the fragmentary status of the ancient information which survived. Directly linked to this issue is another open question, as we do know precisely where *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* was positioned. This is not only caused by the lack of knowledge regarding the place where this boundary stone was initially placed, but even the uncertainty as to the place where this inscription was discovered.

The purpose of this paper is firstly to examine the opinions expressed in respect of the above-mentioned problems, with a focus on those minority views which expressly or implicitly considered the *Ausdecenses* to be indigenous on the territory covered by their *ciuitas*, and subsequently to put forward and analyse a hypothesis that, even if it can be perceived in some of the previous contributions, nonetheless, to our knowledge, it has never been formulated as such – namely the possibility of a contiguity between *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*, located in *Moesia Inferior* and the area occupied in northern *Thracia* by the eponymous population of the *Οὐσδικησική* strategy¹⁰.

⁷ CIL VI Pars I, 2807 (= CIL VI Pars IV f.p. 32582) = ILS 4068; MATEESCU 1916, 38, no. 14 *sub numero* and n. 4.

⁸ PÂRVAN 1921, 202, where '*Thracas Ausdecenses*' are mentioned, however without citing the work of G. Mateescu, and PÂRVAN 1924, 4-5, where express reference is made to Mateescu's demonstration.

⁹ In 1916, when G. Mateescu published its contribution, the *Lai* (known at that time in Dobruja only from one inscription, found at Constanța-Anadolchioi, CIL III Suppl. 7533 = ISM II, 141 and which records this population under the term '*Lae*') were considered to be either an indigenous population the name of which would appear abridged on the stone, as it was thought by Gr. Tocilescu, the first editor of the respective epigraph (TOCILESCU 1900, 109, no. 2, *sub numero*; TOCILESCU 1903, 64, no. 95, *sub numero*), either a clan of the *Bessi* (PÂRVAN 1915, 432-434; MATEESCU 1916, 40). Afterwards, having discovered himself new inscriptions recording the presence of *Lai* in Dobruja (such as PÂRVAN 1923a, no. 61 = ISM I, 346; AVRAM 2007, no. 31), V. Pârvan modified twice his opinion on the meaning of the epigraphic term *LAI* / *LAE*, being however the first to accurately identify it (PÂRVAN 1925, 243, no. 41, *sub numero*) with those *Λαιαῖοι* mentioned by Thucydides (II, 96, 3; II, 97, 2).

¹⁰ As from the outset, it has to be pointed out an issue of chronology – at the moment when took place the dispute between the *Ausdecenses* and the *Dacians* (the eighth decade of 2nd cent. AD), the Thracian system of strategies had very probably been already abolished, this process being dated in the reigns of either Trajan or Hadrian (GEROV 1970, 129; GEROV 1978, 476; RUSCU 2007, 214; PARISSAKI 2009, 350 and n. 93; MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 108). Even if the distance in time between the moments when are attested *ciuitas Ausdecensium* and *Οὐσδικησική* strategy has to be permanently kept in mind, this neither constitute, as will result from the below analysis of the chronological setting, an obstacle to

1. The provenance of the boundary stone

Based on the scarce available information, it is generally admitted at present that the inscription CIL III 14437² was discovered in the southern part of Dobruja, at Azarlâc (currently Cetatea commune, Constanța county). However, this place of discovery is far from being certain.

The editors of the supplement to CIL III indicated, probably based on information provided by Gr. Tocilescu, that the stone was found ‘*prope Adamclissi*’¹¹. V. Pârvan, in his first work dedicated to the excavations he made at *Ulmetum*, affirmed that the road that led from the fortification located at Abtat-Calessi¹² to Tropaeum Traiani passed through ‘Azarlâc (*Ciuitas Ausdec...*)’¹³ and in the footnote, he mentioned ‘CIL. III 14437² (found, according to verbal information, at Azarlâc). Cf. also the Greek funerary inscription from *Arch.-epigr. Mitt.* XVII, p. 98’¹⁴. To our knowledge, it was the first time when this discovery place was indicated. However, the detail from the second part of Pârvan’s note generates further confusion, because in respect of the inscription evoked by Pârvan for comparison (AEM 17, no. 37), Gr. Tocilescu indicated indeed that it was found at ‘Hasarlik’. However, this toponym designated in that particular instance the place where it is located the ancient Cius (Gârliciu) near the Danube, and not Azarlâc (Cetatea). Thus, the Greek funerary inscription to which V. Pârvan was referring appears to have been ‘found at Hasarlik’¹⁵, the same as the preceding Latin epigraph¹⁶. For this latter, Gr. Tocilescu offered more detailed, but still unclear, information, mentioning that it had been found in a ‘Turkish cemetery near Hasarlik, Ostrov commune, Constanța county’¹⁷. The indication of Ostrov commune could lead to the nearby Beroe fortress¹⁸, but in the supplement to the third volume of CIL, the place of discovery indicated for the inscription AEM 17, no. 36 is Cius fortress¹⁹, where it is attested the toponym Hazarlâc / Hissarlık, this designating both the

a hypothetic contiguity between the areas covered by *Ὀὐδοικησικὴ* strategy (in *Thracia*) and *ciuitas Ausdecensium* (in *Moesia Inferior*) nor is opposed to a coexistence for a certain period of these two administrative realities.

¹¹ CIL III Suppl. 14437², *sub numero*. D. Tudor considered that this indication was made ‘altogether inexactly’ (TUDOR 1956a, 52, no. 3, *sub numero*).

¹² At the village named then Abtat-Calessi it was considered at that time to be located the ancient Abritus (PÂRVAN 1912, the map ‘*Dobruja in the Romans’ time*’; VULPE 1912, 136). Later, the ancient fortification from Abtat-Calessi was identified with Zaldapa (SUCEVEANU 1977b, 75).

¹³ PÂRVAN 1912, 579.

¹⁴ PÂRVAN 1912, 579, n. 3: ‘CIL. III 14437² (găsită, după știri orale, la Azarlâc). Cf. și inscripția funerară greacă din *Arch.-epigr. Mitt.* XVII, p. 98, găsită tot la Azarlâc.’

¹⁵ TOCILESCU 1894, 98, no. 37: ‘Gefunden zu Hasarlik’.

¹⁶ TOCILESCU 1894, 98, no. 36.

¹⁷ TOCILESCU 1894, 98, no. 36: ‘Gefunden auf einem türkischen Friedhof in der Nähe von Hasarlik, Kreis Ostrov, Bezirk Konstantza’.

¹⁸ At the end of 19th cent., Ostrov commune was located in Constanța county, Hârșova district (v. DĂNESCU 1897, 619 sqq., s.v. Ostrov); at present it is located in Tulcea county.

¹⁹ CIL III Suppl. 14214²¹.

hill on which are found the fortifications from *Cius* and the nearby lake²⁰. On this ground, these two inscriptions (*i.e.*, AEM 17, nos. 36 and 37) were recorded in ISM V with the probable place of discovery *Cius*²¹, the editor, Em. Doruțiu-Boilă, mentioning both the confusion existing between Hazarlâc (*Cius*) and Hazarlâc/Azarlâc (*Cetatea*) and the fact that it cannot be excluded that the actual place of discovery thereof was in reality Azarlâc (*Cetatea*)²².

Returning to the mention made by V. Pârvan regarding the alleged discovery of the inscription CIL III 14437² at Azarlâc (*Cetatea*), it should be noticed that its author was himself in doubt as to its accuracy, as it results both from the remark that it was based on 'verbal information'²³ and especially out of the fact that on the annexed the map of Dobruja, V. Pârvan placed *Ciuitas Ausdec...* in the area of Azarlâc (*Cetatea*), but accompanied by question mark²⁴.

G. Mateescu mentioned in his study of 1916 that the inscription CIL III 14437² was discovered at Azarlâc, 'on the road between Abritus and Tropaeum'²⁵, indicating that this was based on discussions with D. M. Teodorescu, the director of the National Antiquities Museum²⁶. He also stated that D. M. Teodorescu had worked with Gr. Tocilescu to a map of the ancient Dobruja, on which Gr. Tocilescu allegedly placed *Ciuitas Ausdec...* at Azarlâc and supported this localisation with the argument of the existence in the area of a fortification 'above the village'²⁷. Nonetheless, relatively recent researches revealed that the fortification to which G. Mateescu was referring is to be dated in the medieval period²⁸ and therefore this latter argument should be discarded.

In the ample study published in 1923 in respect of the Thracians epigraphically attested at Rome, G. Mateescu no longer manifested the same confidence as to the place in which had been found the inscription, observing that its provenance thereof was 'absolutely uncertain' and mentioning that 'in the Romanian works of Tocilescu and in the Museum's records was missing any information regarding this valuable epigraph'²⁹. He also pointed out that, irrespective of

²⁰ OPRIȘ 2020, 5-6. A similar confusion between the fortresses *Cius* and *Beroe* was made at that time also by P. Polonic who wrote on the plan he drew for the *Cius* fortress 'Roman fortress of Hazarlâc (*Beroe*)', v. OPRIȘ 2020, 7-8 and fig. 3.

²¹ ISM V, 116 and 116 bis.

²² ISM V, p. 137.

²³ PÂRVAN 1912, 579, n. 3.

²⁴ PÂRVAN 1912, the map '*Dobruja in the Romans' time*'.

²⁵ MATEESCU 1916, 38. The reference to this road certifies that the source of this information (expressly indicated by Mateescu in footnote 2) was indeed V. Pârvan (1912^b, 579) who mentioned *Ciuitas Ausdec...* in the context of the discussion on the roads in the area, also v. *supra* n. 12-13.

²⁶ MATEESCU 1916, 38. It is not clear whether these discussions were held only by V. Pârvan (these being probably the origin of that 'verbal information' mentioned by him, v. *supra* n. 14), or if G. Mateescu checked himself with D. M. Teodorescu the accuracy of the information.

²⁷ MATEESCU 1916, 38 and n. 2.

²⁸ BĂRBULESCU 2001, 125, n. 994 (date the fortification from *Cetatea* commune in the 13th-14th cent.); OPRIȘ, ȚENȚEA, CĂLINA 2020, 20 and n. 37, no. 9 (8th-10th cent.).

²⁹ MATEESCU 1923, 161: 'nelle pubblicazioni romene del Tocilescu e nei registri del Museo mancava ogni notizia su questa pregevole epigrafe'.

the place of discovery, an inscription found other than by systematic archaeological investigation does not necessarily place the ancient name it records in the spot where the inscription was found by chance³⁰. These observations stood at the basis of G. Mateescu's hypothesis on the autochthony of the *Ausdecenses* in the area covered by the community – *ciuitas* – attested by the inscription CIL III 14437².

In the paper dated 1956 in which he made significant improvements to the restitution of the inscription's text, D. Tudor emphasised the totally uncertain character of the data we have in respect of its the place of discovery³¹. This was also valid, in his opinion, for the information passed by D. M. Teodorescu as regards the map to which he worked with Gr. Tocilescu, since, on 'this map reproduced by Gr. Tocilescu in his work *Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie*, Bucharest 1900, there is nowhere recorded an indication in respect of the location of *ciuitas Ausdecensium*'³². D. Tudor also mentioned that in Dobrogea were two localities Azarlâc, that of Cius and that situated south of Adamclisi³³, and pointed out the uncertainty of whether the inscription was found *in situ*, as it could have been transported as construction material. Nonetheless, he observed the lack of any traces of mortar on the stone³⁴, circumstance which could indicate that it was never embedded in a wall. Al. Suceveanu remarked, as well, the doubt as to the place where the inscription had been found³⁵.

On the contrary, the editor of the fourth volume of ISM, Em. Popescu, considered unjustified such doubts, his arguments consisting in: (a) the fact that V. Pârvan could have obtained quite sure information from Tocilescu's collaborators; (b) the existence in Cetatea commune of an important archaeological site; (c) the fact that Gr. Tocilescu made several maps and that to which was referring D. M. Teodorescu 'is kept at MNA and on this is indicated *Ciuitas Ausdecensium*'³⁶; the possibility that *Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie* was sent for

³⁰ MATEESCU 1923, 161.

³¹ TUDOR 1956a, 52, no. 3, *sub numero*.

³² TUDOR 1956a, 52, n. 20: 'Localizarea fixată de Pârvan se baza numai pe faptul că subdirectorul de atunci al muzeului (D. M. Teodorescu) îl informase că lucrase la o hartă arheologică cu Tocilescu și că acela localiza cu acea ocazie civitas Ausdecensium la Azarlâc din între Tropaeum Traiani și Abrittus. Rămâne însă de neînțeles faptul că, în această hartă, reproducă de Gr. Tocilescu în lucrarea sa *Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie*, București 1900, localizarea pentru *civitas Ausdecensium* nu apare deloc înregistrată'. However, from the information offered by D. M. Teodorescu, as this was recorded by G. Mateescu (1916, 38), does not necessarily result that the map on which he worked with Gr. Tocilescu would have been exactly that included in *Fouilles*.

³³ TUDOR 1956a, 52: 'în afară de localitatea Azarlâc (sau Hasarlâc) de lângă Adamclisi, mai există o a doua cu același nume lângă Gârlici (vechiul *Cius*), pe Dunăre (raion Hârșova)'. D. Tudor was not entirely accurate in respect of that Azarlâc from *Cius*, as this latter toponym does not indicate a locality but the lake Hazarlâc-ghiol (DĂNESCU 1897 514, s.v.), as well as the neighbouring hill, on which is located *Cius* fortress (OPRIȘ 2020, 5).

³⁴ TUDOR 1956a, 52, n. 21.

³⁵ SUCEVEANU 1977a, 152, n.33. Al. Suceveanu mentioned that the existence of this doubt was also confirmed by E. Comșa, but he did not provide any further detail in this regard.

³⁶ ISM IV, pp. 201-202, no. 82, *sub numero*: 'Cette réserve ne nous semble justifié, car Tocilescu a préparé plusieurs cartes (dont une, qui se trouve au MNA et sur laquelle est mentionnée la *Civitas Ausdecensium*) (...)'. In itself, the affirmation

printing before the discovery of the inscription. In support of this latter argument invoked by Em. Popescu could be brought the haste in which this inscription was sent by Gr. Tocilescu to A. von Domaszewski to be included in the supplement to the third volume of CIL, published in 1902, without Tocilescu having had the time to firstly edit himself the inscription as he previously used to. However, the other arguments of Em. Popescu may be contested since, on the one hand, V. Pârvan himself manifested distrust as regards the reliability of the information he got in respect of the place of discovery of the stone and, on the other hand, the fortification from Cetatea is medieval, as mentioned above. Thirdly, letting aside the fact that it cannot be verified the affirmation of Em. Popescu as to the existence 'au MNA' of another map of Tocilescu indicating '*ciuitas Ausdecensium*', since no reference or further indication – such as an inventory number – is given in this respect, the doubt would remain even if Gr. Tocilescu indeed made such indication on a map. This is because the situation of unclear or inaccurate information given by Gr. Tocilescu for the finding places of inscriptions, incidentally discussed above in respect of AEM 17, nos. 36 and 37, is by far not singular³⁷.

Therefore, at the current level of our knowledge, it can hardly be discarded the uncertainty admitted even by V. Pârvan and the doubt which was expressed especially by the researchers who had breakthrough contributions to the epigraphic study of the inscription CIL III 14437² – G. Mateescu and D. Tudor. To this uncertainty contributes the existence in the area of *Moesia Inferior* of at least three points where are attested the toponyms Azarlâc/ Hissarlık / Hazarlâc³⁸. Thus, besides the two toponyms of this type attested in Dobruja and to which made reference D. Tudor, it should be noted the existence of an additional one, located not very far away, this being Hisarlic from the vicinity of Razgrad, where was identified the ancient Abritus³⁹.

Therefore, prudence should be manifested in using rigidly the uncertain finding place of the inscription CIL III 14437² in order to infer the situation of the *Ausdecenses* for the benefit of whom this boundary stone was fixed.

that on a map drawn in the early 20th cent. would be mentioned '*Civitas Ausdecensium*' is anachronistic since the restitution of the name of this *ciuitas* with the genitive plural of the ethnonym was firstly made by D. Tudor (1956a, 52, no. 3).

³⁷ For example, Em. Doruțiu (-Boilă) managed to correct 11 such inaccurate indications, based on the comparison with official documents kept in Tocilescu's archive (DORUȚIU 1964), pointing out that such inaccuracies regarding the finding places were included in the maps which accompanied the communications made by Gr. Tocilescu, being afterwards taken over and presented as certain information by the researchers. She also emphasised that such confusions could have affected also the other inscriptions published in *Fouilles...*, but for those she did not manage to find information to support or to rebut the data recorded there by Tocilescu (DORUȚIU 1964, 134). Even if the inscription at stake was not published in *Fouilles...* its situation is similar, because it was handed over to Gr. Tocilescu in the same period in which *Fouilles...* was published.

³⁸ The meaning of this toponyms (as 'place of the citadel(s)') OPRÎȘ 2020, 6) leaves open the possibility of existing even other points in the area of *Moesia Inferior* where this inscription could have been found, if one assumes as accurate at least the information that it was discovered in a place with such name.

³⁹ BE 1958, 328, Hisarlic being the finding place of the inscription put by Ἀπολλώνιος Ἐπτακένθου.

2. Status of the research in respect of the presence of the *Ausdecenses* in *Moesia Inferior* and regarding the location of their *territorium*

As from the beginning of this section, we should deal with a problem of methodology. The Romanian historiography thought about the first part of this matter as to the presence of the *Ausdecenses* in the Romanian part of Dobruja, where the inscription is generally considered to have been found. However, even supposing that this inscription was indeed found there and also admitting that this finding place is located on, or near, the point where this stone was initially fixed, two circumstances should be kept in mind. On the one hand, it is the fact that the supposed place of discovery – Azarlâc (Cetatea commune) – is located in the southernmost area of the Romanian Dobruja and on the other hand it is the fact that we deal with a boundary stone, which was initially placed at the very end of the territory of this *ciuitas*, on the limit between this community and a neighbouring group of Dacians. Therefore, there is a reasonable possibility that the territory of this *ciuitas* extended to the south of the discovery place, hence outside the area of the Romanian part of Dobruja. Going further on the same line of reasoning and taking into account that the finding place is uncertain, it is also reasonable to admit that the original place where this boundary stone was fixed may have been located to the southern part of the historical Dobruja, or even at certain distance from it, case in which *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* could have extended further south, hence completely outside of the entire Dobruja region. Therefore, when discussing about matters related to the location of this territory, we have to rely on the only clearly known element in this respect, this being its location in *Moesia Inferior*, information resulting from the fact that the boundary stone was set upon instruction – *iussu* – of the governor Helvius Pertinax⁴⁰. Consequently, we should discuss on the reasons for the presence of this *ciuitas* in *Moesia Inferior* and not restrictively in Dobruja (being it either the historical region or only the Romanian part thereof).

The Romanian historiography, in its vast majority, considered that the *Ausdecenses* are attested in Dobruja by the inscription CIL III 14437² and that their presence in this area was an effect of a movement of population. After some previous hesitations in this respect⁴¹, R. Vulpe was the first scholar to clearly articulate, subsequent to the breakthrough study of G. Mateescu from 1916 in which was demonstrated the identity between *Ausdecenses* and the *Vsdicenses*, the idea that the *Ausdecenses* got in Dobruja as result of movement of population, a forceful relocation in his opinion⁴². In the years '50 of the 20th century, the researches interpreted the land dispute

⁴⁰ For the jurisdiction of the provincial governors, as agents of the imperial power, for the settlement of such boundary disputes, as well as for the involvement of the military force for the implementation of such settlements, especially for setting the boundary stones, v. BURTON 2000, 199, 202, 204-205, 212-213.

⁴¹ PÂRVAN 1911, 5-6; PÂRVAN 1912, 575-576; PÂRVAN 1923b, 110; PÂRVAN 1924, 5; MATEESCU 1916, 39 and n. 21.

⁴² VULPE 1938a, 35; VULPE 1938b, 188; VULPE 1940, 78; VULPE 1953, 741 = VULPE 1976, 286-287; VULPE 1968, 164-165. Previously, the idea that *Ausdecenses* came to Dobruja from the *Οὐσδικησική* strategy had been expressed by G. Mateescu (1916, 39 and n. 21) and by V. Pârvan (1924, 5).

between the *Ausdecenses* and the Dacians in a social key, in which the Dacians were seen as the autochthonous element, fighting for land with the newly arrived southern Thracians colonized and supported by the Roman occupation force⁴³. However, the strongest driving force of the prevailing Romanian historiographic current, as from the study of G. Mateescu until current time – that of the *Ausdecenses* having migrated to, or having been relocated in, the area of Dobruja – was the analogy with the situation of the *Bessi* and *Lai*, determined by their affiliation to the southern Thracian populations⁴⁴. Except for the contributions of Al. Suceveanu who, as shall be detailed below, diverged from the majority standpoint and argued for the autochthony of this population⁴⁵, and except for the hypothesis proposed by M. Tacheva, which indirectly leads to the same conclusion of the autochthony of the *Ausdecenses*⁴⁶, in the recent researches it was almost unanimously affirmed that this population was colonised or relocated, either by the Roman or by the Odrysian authority. The *Ausdecenses'* origin in Balkans was also mentioned by Al. Barnea⁴⁷, M. Bărbulescu⁴⁸, M. Zahariade⁴⁹ and by D. Dana and Fl. Matei-Popescu⁵⁰ or A. Băltăc⁵¹. In a study from 2018, Fl. Matei Popescu, having remarked the impossibility to identify *ciuitas Ausdecensium* (located in *Moesia Inferior*) with the strategy *Ούσδικησική* (situated further

An idea according to which the *Ausdecenses* got into Dobruja as result of a migratory process, as part of the *Bessi* and together with them, had been expressed by G. Mateescu (1916, 39), when hypothesised that such migration was caused by the Celts' invasion of the Balkans in the 3rd cent. B.C. Părvan rebutted partially this conjecture, opposing to the *Ausdecenses* being considered part of the *Bessi* (PĂRVAN 1924, 5), while in 1923 Mateescu abandoned himself this opinion completely, formulating for the first time the hypothesis of the autochthony of this population in the area of their *ciuitas* (MATEESCU 1923, 161).

⁴³ ȘTEFAN 1954, 30; RUSSU 1955, 84; TUDOR 1956a, 56.

⁴⁴ MATEESCU 1916, 39; VULPE 1938b, 188; ȘTEFAN 1954, 30; TUDOR, 1951, 18; TUDOR 1956a, 53; CONDURACHI, 1958, 307.

⁴⁵ SUCEVEANU, 1977b, 74-75; SUCEVEANU, 1991a, 38, 54 (in this latter work, the affiliation of the *Ausdecenses* to the southern Thracian populations and their bringing in the Roman period was accepted as one of the possibilities, together with that of having been indigenous) and especially SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1993, 162-164.

⁴⁶ TACHEVA 1995, 431, 433. M. Tacheva did not express any opinion on the origin of the *Ausdecenses*, but, as we shall analyse below, her interpretation on the emergence and on the location of the *Ούσδικησική* strategy, as well as to its relation with *ciuitas Ausdecensium*, leads to the conclusion that in her view the eponymous population of this *ciuitas* was indigenous in the respective area. We should also add to these diverging opinions, the doubt expressed by B. Gerov as to identity between *Ausdecenses* and *Vsdecenses*, as well as to the analogy with the *Bessi* and *Lai* (GEROV 1988, 23, n. 27, v. *infra*, n. 56).

⁴⁷ Al. Barnea had a slightly ambiguous position, on the one hand supporting the opinion of Al. Suceveanu on the autochthony of this population, v. BARNEA 1998, 223; BARNEA 2002, 52, but on the other indicating that the *Ausdecenses* had been brought by the Romans from the area of the Balkan Mountains, v. BARNEA 2002, 52.

⁴⁸ BĂRBULESCU 2001, 125, 193.

⁴⁹ ZAHARIADE 2009, 37.

⁵⁰ DANA, MATEI-POPESCU 2009, 247.

⁵¹ BĂLTĂC 2011, 32; 63 n. 724; 86.

south, in *Thracia*)⁵², pointed out that '[w]e must therefore envisage a resettlement of the *Usdicenses* in the area of Cetatea; this could have been done by the Thracian kings.'⁵³

In this overwhelming historiographic picture, the hypotheses which in some way or another considered a possible autochthony of the *Ausdecenses* in the area of their *ciuitas*, put forward by G. Mateescu and, decades later, by Al. Suceveanu and respectively M. Tacheva, remain isolated, both in their ensemble – in relation the dominant view – and the one in respect of the others. This latter situation is caused by the fact that each of these minority opinions is different, but also by the fact that when new such hypotheses were formulated it does not appear to have been known to their authors the previous opinions which took into consideration such autochthony. They require a thorough examination for two seemingly contrasting reasons – on the one hand because some objections may be opposed to them, and on the other hand because, if they are studied with due consideration to the whole of the information preserved by the sources, these opinions could lead to perceiving some important nuances in respect of the situation of the *Ausdecenses* which might tilt the balance towards the autochthony of this population. In the following paragraphs, we shall diverge from the method of following the historiographic evolutions in chronological order, out of the necessity to analyse in direct succession G. Mateescu's and M. Tacheva's respective hypotheses, which have some affinities, even if they were formulated completely independent and at long distance in time. Thus, we shall firstly deal with the hypothesis formulated by Al. Suceveanu, by presenting both the arguments invoked by its author and some of the issues which it raises.

Al. Suceveanu expressed his doubt in respect of a relocation of the *Ausdecenses* as from his work dedicated to the economic life in Roman Dobruja where he mentioned, as a working alternative, that their arrival in Dobruja as result of such displacement of population would not have been compatible with their status of *peregrini* and with their organisation as a *ciuitas*⁵⁴. In *La Dobrudja Romaine*, he mentioned, together with the majority opinion regarding a 'transplantation' of the *Ausdecenses*, also the possibility that they were autochthonous⁵⁵. In these brief early references to such possibility, Al. Suceveanu did not bring into discussion the identity *Ausdecenses*-*Vsdicenses*, which in the Romanian historiography stands at the basis of the thesis regarding their relocation. However, in the study published in 1993, together with Iuliana Barnea, Al.

⁵² MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 113. However, we consider that the mention according to which *Οὐσδικησική* strategy would have been 'situated south of the Haemus Mountains as mentioned by Ptolemy' (MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 113) doesn't follow accurately the information of Ptolemy, who mentions *Οὐσδικησική* strategy among the four northernmost strategies located towards the two *Moesia* provinces 'πρὸς μὲν ταῖς Μυσίαις' (as regards the meaning of the last part of Ptolemy's sentence 'καὶ περὶ τὸν Αἴμιον τὸ ὄρος' v. *infra*, n. 109).

⁵³ MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 113.

⁵⁴ SUCEVEANU, 1977b, 74-75.

⁵⁵ SUCEVEANU, 1991a, 54.

Suceveanu indirectly challenged this identity⁵⁶ and developed the hypothesis of the local origin of the *Ausdecenses*, proposing to ‘put in relation’ the toponym *Δαουσδάνα* recorded by Ptolemy⁵⁷ with *ciuitas Ausdecensium*⁵⁸. Al. Suceveanu’s demonstration started with the fact that the localisation of *Δαουσδάνα* at Razgrad – as had been thought previously – could no longer be kept, since there *Abritus* was identified, and therefore considered that *Δαουσδάνα* could be linked, actually identified, with *ciuitas Ausdecensium*⁵⁹. In his opinion, this had two consequences, on the one hand abandoning the placement of *ciuitas Ausdecensium* to Azarlâc (Cetatea) and on the other hand admitting a local origin of the *Ausdecenses*, ‘more in line with the status of *civitas peregrina*’⁶⁰. The principal argument invoked by Al. Suceveanu was that ‘in the light of the chronology of such kind of movements from south to north, we do not think that could be accepted to place the presence of a southern-Thracian population as early as 1st cent. BC – 1st cent. AD, and moreover in the form of a *civitas peregrina*’⁶¹. This reasoning was based on the comparison with the relocation of the *Bessi* in Dobruja in conjunction with the opinion previously expressed by Al. Suceveanu who considered this to have happened in the 2nd cent. AD⁶². However, on the one hand, the chronology of the bringing the *Bessi* in Dobrogea is far from being surely fixed in the 2nd cent. AD. On the contrary, the fact that Ovidius records

⁵⁶ The probable rejection by Al. Suceveanu of the ethnical identity between the *Ausdecenses* (the inhabitants of *ciuitas Ausdecensium*) and the *Vsdecenses* (inhabitants of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*) may be inferred from the following conclusion ‘Then, one could also envisage a local origin of these *Ausdecenses*, more in line with the status of *civitas peregrina* which results from the well-known inscription, besides that which makes them come from the southern Thracian area, deducted from the stemming of the ethnonym out of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*’ (for the original wording v. *infra*, n. 58. Independently, B. Gerov (1988, 23, n. 27) argued against the identity between the *Ausdecenses* and *Vsdecenses*, in his opinion the two ethnonyms being different.

⁵⁷ *Geog.* III, 10, 12.

⁵⁸ SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1993, 162-164: ‘L’autre toponyme, Dausdava, a été localisé par W. Tomaschek à Razgrad. Mais il a été démontré, avec des arguments solides, qu’à Razgrad s’est trouvé l’antique *Abritus*. Cela signifie qu’il faut localiser Dausdava ailleurs et qu’elle pourrait être mise en rapport avec la non moins mystérieuse *civitas Ausdecensium*. La liaison que nous suggérons ici a cependant deux implications, chacune importante en son genre. D’abord on devrait abandonner son ancienne et hypothétique localisation à Cetatea, en faveur d’un emplacement vers le sud-ouest, plus près des coordonnées ptolémaïques. Ensuite, on pourrait envisager aussi une origine locale de ces *Ausdecenses*, plus conforme au statut de *civitas peregrina* qu’implique l’inscription bien connue, outre celle qui les fait venir de la zone sud-thrace ; déduite par la dérivation de l’ethnonyme de la stratégie *Ούσδικησική*. Cela parce que, à la lumière de la chronologie des déplacements de ce genre du Sud au Nord, nous ne croyons pas qu’il puisse être question de placer la présence d’une population sud-thracique en Dobroudja dès les 1^{er} siècle av. J.-C. – 1^{er} siècle apr. J.-C., et encore sous la forme d’une *civitas peregrina*.’

⁵⁹ SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1993, 162-164.

⁶⁰ SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1993, 164.

⁶¹ SUCEVEANU, BARNEA 1993, 164, v. for the original quotation *supra*, n. 58. B. Gerov also pointed out the distinction between the *Ausdecenses*, who had their own *ciuitas* and the *Bessi* and *Lai*, which are attested in Dobruja only as inhabitants of certain villages (GEROV 1988, 23, n. 27).

⁶² ZAH, SUCEVEANU 1971; against this hypothesis regarding the *Bessi*, which was admitted by a significant part of the researchers, brought arguments or expressed doubts R. Florescu (1990, 111 and n. 82) and, more recently, Fl. Matei-Popescu (2018, 114).

the presence of the *Bessi* in the vicinity of Tomis⁶³ and probably generally in the area of the Left *Pontus*⁶⁴ at the beginning of the 1st cent. AD shows that we should take into consideration a movement of population which led them to this area and that could be dated at the end of the 1st cent. BC – beginning of the 1st cent. AD⁶⁵, probably in the aftermath of their defeat by L. Calpurnius Piso in 11 BC. Secondly, the hypothetical identification of *ciuitas Ausdecensium* with *Δαουσδάνα* is only an alternative to placing this *ciuitas* at Azarlâc (Cetatea), but for which Al. Suceveanu did not offer any concrete argument. The mere fact that it is equally improbable that *ciuitas Ausdecensium* was located at Azarlâc (Cetatea), even if we admit that the stone was indeed found there and that this *ciuitas* designates not a community but an urban centre⁶⁶, this does not constitute in itself an argument to place *ciuitas Ausdecensium* at *Δαουσδάνα* and not somewhere else. Moreover, identifying *ciuitas Ausdecensium* with *Δαουσδάνα* starts from the uncertain assumption that *ciuitas Ausdecensium* was an urban centre or at least a centre of habitation, which, although not excluded, neither is it necessarily imposed by the sphere of the Roman notion of *ciuitas*, which is more complex than that of a mere settlement⁶⁷. Thirdly, the identification by G. Mateescu of the *Ausdecenses* with the *Vsdecenses*, was not made solely based on the similarity with the name of the strategy *Ὀυ̐σδικησική* as it results from Al. Suceveanu's argumentation, but also taking into account the similarity with the ethnonym declared by the four *ciues Vsdecenses* who commissioned the inscription from Rome⁶⁸.

We turn therefore to G. Mateescu, the researcher who firstly⁶⁹ formulated and brought arguments for the hypothesis of the *Ausdecenses'* autochthony in the area of their *ciuitas*. In his work regarding the Thracians of Rome, published in 1923, without denying the identity *Ausdecenses-Vsdecenses*, he departed from the standpoint which he previously had as regards a migration of this population⁷⁰. Starting from the uncertainty of the place where the inscription CIL III 14437² was discovered and from the observation that the stone could have been moved

⁶³ Tr. III, 10, 5-6; IV, 1, 67-68.

⁶⁴ FLORESCU 1990, 111, n. 82, lit. b).

⁶⁵ For the opinion according to which the *Bessi* were relocated by the Thracian rulers, v. MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 114.

⁶⁶ As mentioned above, the inscription CIL III 14437² is a boundary stone, so even if it was found at Azarlâc (Cetatea) and even if *ciuitas Ausdecensium* designates some sort of urban centre (both assumptions being not only uncertain, but rather improbable) this does not necessarily mean that this urban centre was located at Azarlâc because the boundary stone was initially placed on the border of the territory of this *ciuitas* and neither we have any evidence to suggest that it was transported from this border exactly to the presumptive urban centre of this *ciuitas*, nor have we any evidence that at that time was located any urban centre at Azarlâc, since the fortification located there proved to be medieval (v. in this respect *supra*, n. 28).

⁶⁷ In respect of the meaning of the term *ciuitas*, with reference to *ciuitas Ausdecensium*, v. MATEESCU 1923, 161; TUDOR 1956a, 57; AVRAM 1984, 159.

⁶⁸ MATEESCU 1916, 38, n. 4, v. *supra* n. 7.

⁶⁹ The initial opinion of V. Pârvan, indigenous character of this *ciuitas* (PÂRVAN 1911, 6) is not counted among those opposed to the majority opinion on the relocation or migration of the *Ausdecenses*, as it was put forward before 1916 when G. Mateescu observed the identity between the *Ausdecenses* and *Vsdecenses*.

⁷⁰ MATEESCU 1916, 38-40, no. 14, *sub numero*.

since ancient times, G. Mateescu pointed out that, not having been discovered in a clear archaeological context, this inscription could have originated from the north-eastern border of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*⁷¹, for the localisation of which he used the map of H. Kiepert⁷². According to G. Mateescu's argumentation, the stone could have been used for the delimitation between 'Usdice(n)ses and the Geto-Dacians who neighboured the Danube'⁷³. In addition, he indicated that, by analogy to other *ciuitates*, as *ciuitas Cotinorum*, he understood '*ciuitas Ausdecensis*, as well, as an indigenous rural organization, recognized by the roman state, with a certain right of autonomy, comprised within the limits of a larger territory, which coincided maybe with that of the strategy of Ptolemy'⁷⁴. The biggest issue raised by the new hypothesis put forward by G. Mateescu may already be perceived from the place where he imagined that was placed the boundary stone, namely 'at the north-eastern border of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*⁷⁵ and this becomes obvious in G. Mateescu's supposition that *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* coincided with the area covered by the strategy *Ούσδικησική*. Against this view stands the fact that, in accordance with the inscription CIL III 14437², *ciuitas Ausdecensium* was situated in the province *Moesia Inferior*⁷⁶, while the strategy *Ούσδικησική* was located by Ptolemy in the province *Thracia*⁷⁷. G. Mateescu appears as not having noticed and therefore did not address the issue raised by the fact that the two administrative entities are located in distinct provinces, it is true that in slightly different times⁷⁸.

⁷¹ MATEESCU 1923, 161.

⁷² FOA, XVII, *Illyricum et Thracia*.

⁷³ MATEESCU 1923, 161: 'Spostando un po' la provenienza di questa pietra di confine al mezzogiorno di Abritus nel paese dei Crobizi ci avviciniamo al limite di nord-est della strategia *Ούσδικησική*, secondo la carta summentovata, e in questo caso la nostra iscrizione ha potuto servire proprio alla delimitazione dei confini tra gli Usdicesii e i Geto-Daci vicini al Danubio.'

⁷⁴ MATEESCU 1923, 161: 'Tuttavia ora l'esempio di quella *civitas Cotinorum* di cui abbiamo già parlato e di molte altre *civitates peregrinae*, come quelle delle tribù celtiche (es.: Vindelici, Treveri, Raurici, Taurini, Suessiones, Viromandui, etc.), mi muove a intendere anche la *civitas Ausdecensis* quale una organizzazione rurale indigena, riconosciuta dallo stato romano con qualche diritto di autonomia, e compresa dentro i limiti di un *territorium* più vasto, che combaciava forse con quello della strategia di Tolomeo, donde la nostra iscrizione per il tramite di un *actor civitatis* manda via i Daci intrusi.'

⁷⁵ MATEESCU 1923, 161.

⁷⁶ This results by the fact that in accordance with the inscription on the boundary stone, the delimitation of lands was made 'upon instruction of Helvius Pertinax, our consular governor' – *Iussu Helui(i) Per/tinacis co(n)s(ularis) n(ostri)* (v. for the restitution of the inscription, TUDOR 1956a, 55-56, no. 3).

⁷⁷ On the geographical distinction between *ciuitas Ausdecensium* and the strategy *Ούσδικησική*, see also MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 113.

⁷⁸ On the chronology of Ptolemy's catalogue of strategies, as well as on the relation with the information recorded by Pliny the Elder (*NH*, IV, 40; 45; 47), v. PARISSAKI 2009, 337-338, 339-345. In this context, two conclusions drawn by M.-G. Parissaki should be noted. The first is that the ancient geographer lists two catalogues of the Thracian administrative units, one for the strategies (*Ptol. Geog.* III, 11, 8-10) and other for the big cities (*Ptol. Geog.* III, 11, 11-13), this latter mentioning also the cities established by Trajan, G. Parissaki emphasising that these two enumerations are not contemporaneous, and 'the second catalogue is, consequently, considered as a *terminus ante quem* for dating the

In 1995, in the second part of a study published in the previous year in respect of the northern border of the province of *Thracia*, M. Tacheva developed, independently of the previous opinions of G. Mateescu and Al. Suceveanu, a hypothesis which indirectly leads to the conclusion of the autochthony of the *Ausdecenses* in the area where the boundary stone had been installed. The construction of M. Tacheva's hypothesis had already started as from the first part of her study, dated 1994, where she criticised the previous localisation of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* in the mountainous area at south of Loveč (the ancient Melta), pointing out that through the respective area passed, as from AD 61, the military road from Oescus to Philippopolis, circumstance which would exclude the survival of a strategy in that region, with the preliminary conclusion that the strategy *Ούσδικησική* had to be located somewhere else⁷⁹. Starting from this point, in 1995 she further noticed that the inscription from Svärlig⁸⁰ record in the years AD 55-60 a strategy *Σηλλητική ὄρεινή* (mountainous) which implies the existence of a flat one too, *Σηλλητική πεδιασία*. She corroborated this with the discovery at Razgrad (Abritus) of the inscription put by Ἀπολλώνιος Ἐπταικένθου, στρατεγός of Ἀνχιάλος, *Σηλλητική* and Ῥυσική⁸¹ arguing that this 'suggests that the *flat* Selletike, together with its centre (in the future Abritus), was in Moesia Inferior even at the time of Traianus and therefore only one Selletike (the former *mountainous* part) appears in Ptolemy'⁸². M. Tacheva's argumentation was grounded on the view that the strategies' catalogue recorded by Ptolemy dates from the period subsequent to the establishment by Trajan of Nicopolis ad Istrum⁸³, corroborated with the fact that in this catalogue is mentioned only one strategy *Σηλλητική* (while out of the inscription of Svärlig results the existence of two such strategies) and with the opinion that Abritus was situated in the area of the strategy *Σηλλητική*. These circumstances would prove, according to M. Tacheva, that the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία* (or the geographical area where this had been situated) was placed in *Moesia*. Subsequently, M. Tacheva argued that 'Judging by the

strategies' catalogue' ('Ce second catalogue est donc considéré comme *terminus ante quem* pour la datation du catalogue des stratégies' PARISSAKI 2009, 338); for the opinion according to which both the list of the strategies and that of the cities recorded by Ptolemy date from the same time, that of Hadrian, v. GEROV 1970, 130-131; GEROV 1979, 216, n. 22.). A second conclusion expressed by M.-G. Parissaki is that dating before the year AD 77 the commencement of the third chronological division proposed by her for the evolution of the strategies and the administrative reform which led to the 14 strategies enumerated by Ptolemy (PARISSAKI 2009, 345). Also B. Gerov mentioned that the decrease of the number of the strategies started with the reign of Vespasian (GEROV 1970, 127).

⁷⁹ TACHEVA 1994, 117.

⁸⁰ IGRR I, 677.

⁸¹ BE 1958, 328.

⁸² TACHEVA 1995, 431. Since neither the inscription from Svärlig, nor that of Razgrad, referred to by M. Tacheva, date from Trajan's time, but are earlier, dating from the first half of the 1st cent. AD (the inscription from Razgrad, v. PARISSAKI 2009, 325), respectively at the beginning of the second half of this century (inscription from Svärlig, v. PARISSAKI 2009, 329-331), it is not very clear the reasoning for which M. Tacheva considered that the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία* would have been located in *Moesia* 'even at the time of Traianus'. Most probably the ground which M. Tacheva had in view was the fact that one *Σηλλητική* is recorded by Ptolemy in *Thracia*.

⁸³ TACHEVA 1995, 429.

inscription about the boundaries traced in 178 AD of *civitas Ausdecensium*, discovered in Tropaeum Traiani, it was precisely that part which must have been renamed to Usdikesike (known only from Ptolemy), to distinguish it from the preserved (*mountainous*) Seletike.⁸⁴ However, even if we let aside the localisation, longtime outdated, at Tropaeum Traiani of the discovery of the inscription CIL III 14437², most probably based on the inaccurate indication in CIL, it retains the attention the inaccuracy resulting from corroborating the placing in *Moesia* of the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία* during Trajan's time with the hypothesis of it having been renamed *Ούσδικησική*⁸⁵, because this latter strategy is expressly recorded by Ptolemy in *Thracia*. This inaccuracy no longer appears in the conclusion of the respective paper, because there M. Tacheva formulated the hypothesis according to which the strategy *Ούσδικησική* would have been annexed to *Moesia Inferior* during the reign of Hadrian: 'It can be claimed that the flat Selletike was also eliminated by Emperor Traianus, similar to the strategy Rhysike; the mountainous Selletike and Usdikesike were annexed to *Moesia Inferior* at the time of Emperor Hadrian, after his visit to Thrace, which is also associated with the building of new camps and with the care for the fortification system of the provinces'⁸⁶. It may be noticed that the aforementioned inaccuracy was corrected, but at the price of an inconsistency between the body of the argumentation, where was argued that the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία* would have been located in *Moesia* also in the time of Trajan, being subsequently renamed *Ούσδικησική*⁸⁷ and the conclusion of the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία* having been abolished by Trajan followed by the annexation to *Moesia Inferior* of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* during the reign of Hadrian⁸⁸. In spite of the issues raised by the demonstration made by M. Tacheva, there should be taken into account some of her preliminary conclusions, especially the possible localisation of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* further to east of the area Loveč (Melta)⁸⁹, as well as the hypothesis of a possible annexation to *Moesia Inferior* of the territory of this strategy during Hadrian⁹⁰. If this latter hypothesis put forward by M. Tacheva (at this moment only conjectural) will prove to be accurate, the territory of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* either got to be overlapped (and replaced by) *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*, either was located in its immediate vicinity, both these alternatives implying the autochthony of the *Ausdecenses* on this latter territory.

⁸⁴ TACHEVA 1995, 431. As consequence of this hypothesis on the renaming as *Ούσδικησική* the strategy *Σηλλητική πεδιασία*, M. Tacheva considered that 'Usdikesike survived until the time of Emperor Antoninus Pius (140 AD) at the latest, when a cohort is attested in the castellum of Abritus' (TACHEVA 1995, 431).

⁸⁵ TACHEVA 1995, 431.

⁸⁶ TACHEVA 1995, 433.

⁸⁷ TACHEVA 1995, 431.

⁸⁸ TACHEVA 1995, 433.

⁸⁹ TACHEVA 1994, 117; TACHEVA 1995, 431.

⁹⁰ TACHEVA 1995, 433.

3. The contiguity hypothesis

The questions raised by the arguments elaborated by G. Mateescu, Al. Suceveanu and M. Tacheva risk to lead to the rejection of their common element constituted by the indigenoussness of *Ausdecenses* both on the territory of their *ciuitas* located in *Moesia Inferior* and on that of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*. Nonetheless, a careful look shows that this autochthony deserves to be kept among the plausible alternatives, waiting for additional data to settle the issue. Thus, in addition to the above hypotheses, there is another possibility that the aforementioned opinions did not express, although the ensemble of the preserved data supports it and the standpoints of G. Mateescu and M. Tacheva implicitly leave open, namely that of a contiguity between *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* located in *Moesia* and the territory that (previously) belonged to the strategy *Ούσδικησική* recorded by Ptolemy. From this perspective, the demarcation line between these two territories would have been on the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*, and the boundary stone CIL III 14437² probably originates from the opposite side of the *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* where this latter neighboured the land inhabited by a group of Dacians. This possibility is supported by the fact that the inscription CIL III 14437² is a boundary stone, a *terminus*, fixed⁹¹ between *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* and the Dacians with whom they were in dispute. Consequently, this territory probably extended to the south from the place where the stone was initially installed. As this initial place of installation is at least uncertain, if not completely unknown, it is also possible that the point from which *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* started to extend southwards was in reality situated further to the south or south-west from Azarlâc (Cetatea) where it is currently supposed that the stone was found.

In this case, the geographical order (from north to south, or from northeast to southwest) was probably the following: the *Daci* / the boundary stone CIL III 14437² between *Daci* and the *Ausdecenses* / the provincial border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thrace* / the area (previously) covered in *Thrace* by the strategy *Ούσδικησική*.

The course of the provincial border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia* in 1st-2nd cent. AD is still subject to debates, which are continuing even at present, since new inscriptions have been found. In the modern historiography, a landmark contribution in this respect is due to B. Gerov⁹². The border route proposed by B. Gerov started from the Tsibritsa (*Ciabrus*) river where,

⁹¹ For a short reference to the method of installation of these *termini*, v. TUDOR 1956a, 54-55, no. 3, *sub numero*, and for an overview on boundary disputes and installation of boundary stones, v. BURTON 2000.

⁹² GEROV 1979. However, seven decades before B. Gerov, G. Seure analysed the literary and epigraphic sources available at that time and proposed a northern border for the province of *Thrace* which followed a route parallel with the line of the Balkan Mountains, having at south (in *Thracia*) Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis and at north (in *Moesia Inferior*) the modern Razgrad (SEURE 1907, 259: the map placed on top of the tripartite figure and 270 for the probable positioning of the border at 43°20'N). G. Seure pointed out that this border, with its main characteristics (its location at the north of Haemus Mountains and the parallelism with this mountain range) had been exactly indicated by Ptolemy (SEURE 1907, 267).

according to the account given by Ptolemy⁹³, *Moesia Superior*, *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia* met, passed south of Montana⁹⁴, following the direction to southeast up to the upper course of river Osăm (*Asamus*)⁹⁵, turning subsequently north between the modern settlements Butovo and Maslarevo⁹⁶ and continuing towards east approximately parallel with the Balkan line, to the north of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis and south of Abritus⁹⁷. The discovery in 1979, at Polski Senovec, on the course of Yantra (*Iatrus*) river, of a new stone fixed on the border *inter Moesos et Thraces*⁹⁸ led to a correction being proposed by V. Gerasimova-Tomova to the line pencilled by B. Gerov. In her opinion, the border passed at the east of Maslarevo, in parallel with Yantra river up to the vicinity of Nicopolis ad Istrum⁹⁹. This latter hypothesis appears to have been carried further by M. Tacheva, according to whom the reorganization during the reign of Hadrian of the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*, which would result from these border stones having been installed in AD 136, included the moving toward south of the provincial limit in the area between the cities Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis¹⁰⁰. In 1985

⁹³ *Geog.* III, 9, 1.

⁹⁴ GEROV 1979, 216-217.

⁹⁵ B. Gerov, who placed in the area of the upper course of the river *Asamus* the strategy *Οὐσδικησική*, considered that initially this stretch of land had been part of *Thracia*, being transferred to *Moesia* sooner than other areas from the north of Balkan Mountains, due to strategic reasons, related to the control of Troian pass (GEROV 1979, 221).

⁹⁶ In the area of Nicopolis ad Istrum, the border route proposed by B. Gerov was based on the boundary stones fixed *inter Moesos et Thraces*, especially those discovered at Maslarevo (laidzi) (CIL III Suppl. 14422¹ = ILBR 358) and Butovo (CIL III Suppl. 12407 = ILBR 429) (GEROV 1979, 222-223). B. Gerov considered that these boundary stones marked the border between the provinces *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*, as this border resulted from a reorganisation of this limit made by Hadrian in the year AD 136, in the course of which had been installed the respective *termini*. A. Tomas pointed out that the demarcation with such *termini* of the provincial border was made only in exceptional situations (TOMAS 2007, 38), but admitted that the discovery of the boundary stones from Roman (in the Vratsa region, on the course of the river Iskär) constitute an argument supporting the interpretation made by B. Gerov (TOMAS 2007, 38). When B. Gerov was writing, were also known in the area situated in the relative vicinity of Nicopolis ad Istrum other two boundary stones regarding the border *inter Moesos et Thraces*, one of them discovered in the cemetery at Svištov (CIL III, 749 = ILBR 357), which was considered by B. Gerov to have been moved towards north from the border area where is had initially been installed), and the other discovered at Hotnica (CIL III pars posterior, p. 992 *ad no.* 749 = AE 1985, 730 = ILBR 386), where he mentioned that had been stone quarries (GEROV 1979, 223). A. Tomas noted that each of the six boundary stones *inter Moesos et Thraces* were more or less moved from the initial places where the stones had initially been placed (TOMAS 2016, 111).

⁹⁷ GEROV 1979, 222-225, 230, 237. In the same vein v. PETOLESCU 2000, 45.

⁹⁸ AE 1985, 729 = ILBR 390.

⁹⁹ GERASIMOVA-TOMOVA 1987. She also brought arguments (p. 18-19) for the opinion according to which also on the course of the Yantra river, at Radonovo, would have been found at the end of 19th cent., or in the early 20th cent., another border stone *inter Moesos et Thraces*, to which arguably made reference G. Seure (1907, 269-270, n. 8).

¹⁰⁰ The border line proposed by M. Tacheva was based on the opinion that the territories of the two cities, Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, which were part of the province of *Thrace* in most of the 2nd cent. AD, were relatively small, as would be evidenced by the geographical distribution of the epigraphical findings, and consequently did not occupy the entire space between these two urban centres (TACHEVA 1994, 118; TACHEVA 1995, 427); for the small extent of the territories of the cities of *Thrace*, v. also GEROV 1970, 125; *contra* RUSCU 2007, 215-216. However, M. Tacheva did

a new such *terminus* was discovered at Novae¹⁰¹, therefore in an area located in close proximity to the place where had been discovered the inscription from the Svištov cemetery¹⁰². This, together with other arguments, allowed L. Ruscu to put forward the hypothesis according to which the territory belonging to Nicopolis ad Istrum was very large, extending in the 2nd cent. AD up to the Danube¹⁰³. The consequence of this hypothesis was that the territory of the province *Thracia* would have separated *Moesia Inferior* in two discontinuous areas¹⁰⁴.

not explain the reason for which, even admitting that the territories of the two cities were small and therefore did not touch, she considered that necessarily between these territories the provincial border had to be pushed further south; apparently her hypothesis, continuing that of V. Gerasimova-Tomova (1987), took further the opinion according to which the border followed the line of the Yantra river, this turning to east near Nicopolis ad Istrum.

¹⁰¹ AE 1985, 733.

¹⁰² v. *supra*, n. 96.

¹⁰³ RUSCU 2007.

¹⁰⁴ M. Duch, although considered that L. Ruscu demonstrated 'very convincingly' that except for the inscription from Hotnica, the others would reflect the course of the border between *Thracia* and *Moesia Inferior* (DUCH 2017, 374-375), and therefore 'Lower Moesia in its eastern course, at least until the times of Pertinax/Septimius Severus, was much narrower than it is generally thought to have been' (DUCH 2017, 375), nonetheless he pointed out that he did not think 'that Nicopolis ad Istrum's territory directly bordered the Danube and cut through Lower Moesia as this would have been impractical and would have introduced chaos into the exaction of customs duties (*portorium*)' (DUCH 2017, 375). An additional problem raised by the hypothesis formulated by L. Ruscu is raised by its implied consequence, namely that of placing Abritus in *Thracia* in 2nd cent. AD. According to the opinion of B. Gerov, generally accepted by the researchers until recently, the basin of Rusenski Lom River and of its tributaries, where Abritus was situated, had permanently been part of *Moesia*, as from the moment when the province *Thracia* was established (GEROV 1979, 229). The contrary opinion expressed by L. Ruscu (2007, 218-229) who considered that in the 2nd cent. AD, starting with the northern part of Nicopolis ad Istrum and probably up to the northern part of Marcianopolis, the border between *Thracia* and *Moesia Inferior* got close to the Danube or even touched the river, appears to be supported by the opinion argued in a study published in 2006 by P. Weiss. He, started from (a) the relatively recent discovery of some fragments of a military diploma dated 10 October, AD 138 (AE 1998, 1620) which records a praetorian legate of *Thracia*, Iulius Crassipes, based on which was corrected the name of the *consul suffectus* mentioned by another military diploma, dated 30 October, AD 140 (AE 1998, 1183, for the correction of the date thereof v. WEISS 2006, 358) from [I]ulio Crass[o...] in [I]ulio Crass[ipede ...], as well as from (b) the reference to the same governor of *Thracia* on three coins of Anchialos, previously unknown WEISS 2006, 358-360). On this double ground, P. Weiss corrected to *Iulium Crass[ipedem ...]* the name of the governor recorded by a famous inscription discovered at Razgrad (Abritus), namely AEM 17, no. 65 = CIL III Suppl. 13727 (WEISS 2006, 361 and 364, n. 27). P. Weiss went further by arguing the fact that the inscription from Abritus was raised when Iulius Crassipes was praetorian legate of *Thracia*, rather than after AD 140 when he could have theoretically held the command of consular legate of *Moesia Inferior* (WEISS 2006, 364-367). If the argumentation put forward by P. Weiss will be confirmed, the location of Abritus in *Moesia Inferior* during the reign of Antoninus Pius should be reconsidered, with the consequence of admitting the extension in that period of the extension of the territory of *Thracia* up to north of Abritus, towards the Danube (v. in this vein also AE 2006, 1209).

Therefore, *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*, being located towards the southern part of the province *Moesia Inferior*, was probably in close proximity of a portion of the border with *Thracia*, in virtually all hypotheses regarding the course of this border¹⁰⁵.

Equally, the analysis of the Ptolemy's catalogue of strategies reveals that *Ούσδικησική* is included the group of the northernmost strategies of *Thracia*, situated towards *Moesia*, 'along Haemus mountains'¹⁰⁶, more precisely 'on the side of the two Moesia and around Mount[ain] Haemus'¹⁰⁷ – *πρὸς μὲν ταῖς Μυσίαις καὶ περὶ τὸν Αἴμον τὸ ὄρος*¹⁰⁸ – case in which the northern limit thereof probably coincided with the interprovincial border. At the same time, it should be remarked that *Ούσδικησική* strategy is enumerated the third from west to east, among the four northern strategies of *Thracia*, being therefore most probably situated in the eastern half of the northern part of this province¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁵ There could be an exception for most of the border line proposed by M. Tacheva (save for the part passing nearby Marcianopolis), although, as mentioned above, one of the consequences of her opinion was the autochthony of the *Ausdecenses* in the area of their *ciuitas*.

¹⁰⁶ PARISSAKI 2009, 338.

¹⁰⁷ DELEV 2009, 245.

¹⁰⁸ Ptol. *Geog.* III, 11, 8.

¹⁰⁹ The exact location of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* made object of various hypotheses, since the mid-19th cent. (for the bibliography of this matter up to his time, v. GEROV 1979, 217, n. 25). In B. Gerov's opinion *Ούσδικησική* was situated in the area of the upper reaches of Osām (*Asamus*) river (GEROV 1979, 221). For the problems raised by this hypothesis, v. TACHEVA 1994, 117. According to P. Delev, a possible location of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* is in the area where afterwards was established Nicopolis ad Istrum (DELEV 2009, 246); a similar opinion had been expressed by G. Seure (1907, 265, n. 4). Against these latter views was opposed the possible location in the area of Razgrad (Abritus) of the strategy *Σηλλητική*, as it was considered by Th. Ivanov (1961, 97, n. 1) and by M. Tacheva (1995, 431), because in such case the two strategies mentioned by Ptolemy in the vast area at the east of *Σαρδική*, namely *Ούσδικησική* and *Σηλλητική*, would get to be positioned in a very narrow area (Nicopolis ad Istrum – Abritus). The question of whether Abritus was located in the 2nd cent. AD in *Moesia Inferior* or *Thracia* (v. in this respect, *supra*, n. 104) should also be taken into account, but irrespective of the answer thereof, it does not materially change the essence of the aforementioned problem, because if Abritus was located in *Moesia Inferior*, probably a part of this strategy remained in *Thracia* after the year AD 46 and continued under this name, possibly with the attribute *ὄρεινή*, mountainous, according to the inscription from Svārlig (IGRR I, 677) and in Ptolemy's catalogue this Thracian part is simply indicated as *Σηλλητική*. In any case, if Th. Ivanov's and M. Tacheva's opinion in this respect is correct, then between Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis was placed, in Ptolemy's catalogue, the strategy *Σηλλητική*, making difficult the localisation of *Ούσδικησική* in the area of Nicopolis ad Istrum, as thought by G. Seure and P. Delev. However, the location of the strategy *Σηλλητική* in the area of Abritus, proposed by Th. Ivanov is not unanimously admitted by the researchers (for different opinions, v. the bibliography quoted by TACHEVA 1995, 430, n. 13). For the hypothetical situation at Abritus of the strategy *Ύρσική* v. MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 112; M. Tacheva, at her turn, placed the strategy *Ύρσική* in the area Novae-Nicopolis ad Istrum (TACHEVA 1995, 430), while A. Tomas considered that it would have been located in the area of the Yantra river basin, or at east of it (TOMAS 2016, 98), hence toward Abritus. In support of situating *Ύρσική* strategy in or nearby, the area of Abritus, it should be noted that the epigraphic argument – the inscriptions of Razgrad (BE 1958, 328; PARISSAKI 2009, no. I/5) and Burgas (BE 1963, 160; PARISSAKI 2009, no. I/6), based on which the strategy *Σηλλητική* was placed by Th. Ivanov at Razgrad (Abritus) may be equally applied for situating there the strategy *Ύρσική*. In this latter case, the lack of strategy *Ύρσική* from Ptolemy's catalogue would be easier to explain by its abolishment as results of the respective area being annexed to *Moesia* following the year AD 46. In this light, it is plausible the opinion of A. Tomas, according

To the extent to which the above coordinates are valid, the ensemble of this geographical setting makes plausible the hypothesis that *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* had its southern limit on the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*, with the possible consequence of this *territorium* neighbouring the strategy *Ούσδικησική* if *ciuitas Ausdecensium* existed in *Moesia* before was abolished the strategy *Ούσδικησική*, or at least with the possible consequence of the contiguity of the territories inhabited by the *Ausdecenses* in *Moesia Inferior* and the *Vsdicenses* in *Thracia*, in the case when these administrative entities were at no time contemporaneous. In this latter respect, it should be noticed that, most probably, the Thracian strategies were abolished during the reigns of Trajan or Hadrian¹¹⁰ and hence several decades earlier than the moment when was raised the inscription CIL III 14437². Nevertheless, the emendation by D. Tudor of the restitution of the lines 3-4 from *secun[d(um)] / act(orem) c(iuitatis)*, in *secun(dum) c(iuitatis) act(a)*¹¹¹, pointing out that these *acta* have ‘the broad meaning of ownership titles (archives of the city, older delimitation made by the emperors, provincial governors etc.’¹¹² allowed FI. Matei-Popescu to observe that the possession of such documents proves that ‘the *civitas* has been in place for decades before AD 177’¹¹³. These decades before the years ‘70 allow the possible existence of a period in which the strategy *Ούσδικησική* and *ciuitas Ausdecensium* were coexistent. Moreover, if it is admitted that the source of this possible coexistence resided in the division of lands between *Moesia* and the newly established province of *Thracia* when was dissolved the Thracian kingdom, we get to a period of almost a century of coexistence of the two administrative units, until the strategy *Ούσδικησική* was abolished, afterwards continuing for a time only its counterpart from *Moesia* – *ciuitas Ausdecensium*. This would further lead to the conclusion that, in the aftermath of the establishment of the province of *Thracia*, on that

to which to the east of *Ψυσική* were situated the strategies *Ούσδικησική* and *Σηλλητική* (TOMAS 2016, 98), with the remark that in such case, *Σηλλητική* should be placed east or southeast of *Ούσδικησική*. This latter interpretation also makes possible to be observed Ptolemy’s indications, including in respect of the strategy *Σηλλητική*, allowing to be kept the order of these northern strategies as well as their localisation towards the two *Moesia* provinces. The final part of the information provided by Ptolemy, regarding the localisation of the four northern strategies ‘(...) and around Haemus Mountains’ – *καὶ περὶ τὸν Αἴμον τὸ ὄρος* (for the meaning of the preposition *περὶ* v. SEURE 1907, 267, n. 3: ‘= autour, des deux côtés de’), could lead to situating the strategy *Σηλλητική* to the south of *Ούσδικησική* and west of Burgas, but such placing raises the issue of the spatial, temporal and toponymical relation between (a) the strategy *Σηλλητική* and (b) the strategy recorded around Anchialos (*περὶ Ἀνχιάλον τόπων*) by the inscription of Vize (Bizye) (DAWKINS, HASLUCK 1905-1906, no. 1; PARISSAKI 2009, no. I/4).

¹¹⁰ v. *supra*, n. 10.

¹¹¹ TUDOR 1956a, 53-54.

¹¹² TUDOR 1956a, 54: ‘sensul larg al unor acte de proprietate (arhive ale cetății, hotărnicii mai vechi făcute de împărați, guvernatori de provincie, etc.)’. For the relevance and use of the documentary evidence in boundary disputes, usually previous decisions in respect of the same dispute, v. BURTON 2000, 202, 214.

¹¹³ MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 113.

portion of the territory of the former Thracian kingdom which was assigned to *Moesia* the older strategies, or parts thereof, were transformed in *Moesia* in *ciuitates* and, possibly, in *regiones*¹¹⁴. Therefore, the contiguity hypothesis fits in the following chronological setting:

- The period which followed the Thracian uprising of 13-11 BC: the extension, under Roman control of the Odrysian authority over the territory of Dobruja, except for the Western Pontic Greek cities¹¹⁵, with the consequence of the expansion in this area of the administrative system of the strategies¹¹⁶.

- AD 46: the establishment of the province of *Thrace*¹¹⁷, accompanied by the transfer to *Moesia* of a part of the former Thracian kingdom, including Dobruja¹¹⁸. In this context, the territory inhabited by the *Ausdecenses/Vsdcenses* was probably divided by the newly established border between the two provinces, the Moesian part thereof constituting *ciuitas Ausdecensium*, and the part remained in *Thracia* keeping its name, *Οὐσδικησική*, but with a narrower area.

¹¹⁴ For the replacement of the former strategies by *regiones*, v. MATEI-POPESCU 2013, 207-208; 226; MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 115. Fl. Matei-Popescu remarked that 'At the moment of the introduction of the direct Roman administration, the strategies were most probably dissolved. There is no information that in the Moesian area of the former Thracian kingdom the strategies continued to function.' (MATEI-POPESCU 2013, 208: 'În momentul introducerii administrației romane directe strategiile au fost cel mai probabil dizolvate. Nu există informații că în zona moesică a fostului regat tracic strategiile ar fi continuat să funcționeze.', v. also n. 40 for a possible exception). In a later study, Fl. Matei-Popescu put forward the hypothesis of the survival for a while of the strategies including in the Moesian area of the former Thracian kingdom (MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 116). The phenomenon of the replacement in time of the strategies by territories of the cities, by *regiones* and rural *ciuitates* is also observed in Thrace, but at a later time, after the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. For the existence of *regiones* and rural *ciuitates* between Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, v. GEROV 1979, 229. In the area of Marcianopolis it is epigraphically recorded a *regio Gelegetiorum* (AE 2000, 1268; MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 115, n. 164; MATEI-POPESCU 2019, 104).

¹¹⁵ MATEI-POPESCU 2022, 143.

¹¹⁶ In Dobruja is recorded epigraphically, by the already famous decree of *Mokaporis* discovered at Dionysopolis, the existence of a strategy of Axiopolis (Ἀξιούπολις) (LAZARENKO, MIRCHEVA, ENCHEVA, SHARANKOV 2010, 36; BE 2011, 448; SHARANKOV 2013, 63; BE 2014, 283, 327; SHARANKOV 2015, no. 1; BE 2017, 351).

¹¹⁷ The establishment of the province of *Thrace* in AD 46 is based on a text of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius Hieronymus who records for this year '*Thracia huc usque regnata in prouinciam redigitur*' (Euseb. *Chron.* sub anno 46, ed. Fotheringham 1923, 262). The information is taken-over, for the same year, by the *Chronicle* of Synkellos: 'Θράκη ἀπὸ τοῦδε τοῦ χρόνου ἐπαρχία ἐχρημάτιδε, βασιλεύουσα πρὶν' (Synkell., sub anno 46, ed. Mosshammer 1984, 405; trad. Adler, Tuffin 2002, 482).

¹¹⁸ The majority opinion is that simultaneously with the establishment of *Thracia*, the area of Dobruja was included in the province of *Moesia*; in this sense, v. PIPPIDI 1965, 306; VULPE 1968, 48; DORUȚIU-BOILĂ 1977, 96-97, n. 23; GEROV 1979, 237; PETOLESCU 2000, 35, 69. In the same vein, MATEI-POPESCU 2010-2011, 228-229, who brings a nuance in his study of 2018 regarding the strategies of *Scythia Minor* where he points out that the Roman advance, both military and administrative, was slow, beginning with AD 46 and having been finalised in the reign of Trajan (MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 112). See also MATEI-POPESCU 2022, 139 and 144 (where is mentioned that *Ripa Thraciae* which was part of Trebellenus Rufus' *prouincia*, was assigned to *Moesia* 'probably already under Tiberius'). For an annexation dated after AD 46, v. Al. Suceveanu (1971b, 122; 1979, 47), according to whom *Ripa Thraciae* would have been annexed to *Moesia* only at the time of Vespasian, opinion admitted by A. Tomas (2007, 32, n. 6); Al. Suceveanu admitted also the possible extension in time of this process until the reign of Domitian (SUCEVEANU 1991b, 269).

- The reigns of Trajan and Hadrian: Ptolemy's list of strategies (which probably evokes also some older situations) records *Ούσδικησική*, in the northern group thereof; the establishment of the new cities Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis entails the diminishment of the territory of strategies¹¹⁹; subsequently the strategies were abolished¹²⁰.
- AD 136: border stones are fixed *inter Moesos et Thraces/ inter Thraces and Moesos*¹²¹, operation interpreted as part of a reorganization of the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia*, either in the area between the rivers Osăm (*Asamus*) and Vit (*Utus*), according to the opinion expressed by B. Gerov¹²², or also between the territories of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, as argued by M. Tacheva¹²³; if such reorganization of the provincial border involved also a movement to south of the border and if this moved border got to the territory of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* and divided it, this could constitute an alternative moment of the occurrence in *Moesia Inferior* of the community belonging to the *Ausdecenses – ciuitas Ausdecensium*, as result of the extension of the territory of this latter province in the formerly Thracian lands¹²⁴.
- The years AD 175-179: the inscription CIL III 14437² records the installation of some *termini* between *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium* situated in *Moesia Inferior* and a neighbouring population of Dacians;
- End of 2nd cent. AD: reorganisation of the interprovincial border, by the inclusion in *Moesia Inferior* of the cities Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis¹²⁵.
- 3rd cent. AD: four praetorians '*ciues Vsdicensis* (sic) *uico Agatapara*' raised a dedicatory monument at Rome¹²⁶. The elements recorded in the inscription, such as the toponym terminated in *-para*, the *cognomen* Mucianus of one dedicant, as well as the divinity (Hero Briganitius) for which the dedication was made determined the researchers to locate in

¹¹⁹ TACHEVA 1994, 119.

¹²⁰ PARISSAKI 2009, 350 și n. 93; MATEI-POPESCU 2018, 116.

¹²¹ For the bibliography of the border stones *inter Moesos et Thraces* (6 inscriptions) / *inter Thracas* (sic) *et Moesos* (5 inscriptions) v. AE 2004, 1306 a, b, *sub numero*; RUSCU 2007, 216; TOMAS 2007, 31, n. 1; TOMAS 2016, 108-113.

¹²² GEROV 1979, 221.

¹²³ TACHEVA 1994, 119.

¹²⁴ In such case, *ciuitas Ausdecensium* would have probably followed chronologically the strategy *Ούσδικησική*, because any part of this strategy that potentially remained in *Thrace* could not have continued under this administrative form (i.e., that of strategy), as in the same chronological horizon is observed in *Thrace* the dissolution of the strategies' system). As pointed out by G. Parissaki, the reorganisation of the border dated AD 136 was put by some researchers precisely in connection with the dissolution of the strategies (PARISSAKI 2009, 350, n. 93, with the bibliography of the matter).

¹²⁵ This reorganisation of the border was dated after the assassination of Commodus, to the end of the 2nd cent. AD (PETOLESCU 2000, 45), or during the reign of Septimius Severus, or even earlier, during the reign of Pertinax (BOTEVA 1996, 174). B. Gerov proposed a wide interval of time (between AD 187 and the first years of the reign of Septimius Severus (GEROV 1979, 224); in the same vein, but with an interval slightly extended, AD 187-197, L. Ruscu (2007, 215).

¹²⁶ CIL VI Pars I, 2807 (= CIL VI Pars IV f.p. 32582) = ILS 4068.

Thracia the origin of these four¹²⁷. The contiguity hypothesis, corroborated with the fact that the indication *ciues Vsdicenses* may refer to their origin in a *ciuitas*, could lead to situating *uicus Agatapara* in *Moesia Inferior* at the time when this inscription was raised, taking also into account that the extension to the south of the territory of this latter province, at the end of the 2nd cent. AD, possibly involved the annexation to *Moesia Inferior* of that part of the former strategy *Οὐσδικησική* which had remained in *Thracia* up to that moment¹²⁸.

From a different angle, it may be raised the question of whether the identification at Sacidava (Muzait hill, between Dunăreni and Rasova, Constanța county) of the place where cohort *I Cilicum* had its garrison, could offer some clue in respect of the area where *ciuitas Ausdecensium* was situated. Thus, since the operation of setting boundary stones evoked by the inscription CIL III 14437² was implemented by the tribune of this cohort, Anternius Antoninus, it could be argued that the place where these *termini* were fixed was situated within the area controlled by *Cohors I Cilicum* and hence in a relative proximity to Sacidava, where this military unit had its garrison¹²⁹.

The identification at Sacidava of the place of garrison belonging to *Cohors I Cilicum* came after some unsuccessful attempts had been previously made in this respect. We shall have a brief overview on the historiographic evolution of this matter, because one of the previous contributions touches upon the relation between the localisation of this garrison and the boundary setting operation recorded in the inscription CIL III 14437². In his study of 1956 in which was emendated the reading of the aforementioned epigraph, D. Tudor mentioned that the garrison of *Cohors I Cilicum* was to be located 'in the region between Constanța and the Danube'¹³⁰. In the same year, on the basis of two funerary inscriptions discovered at Tomis, D. Tudor inclined to place there the garrison of this cohort, in the 3rd cent. AD, 'from the reign of Philip the Arab at the latest'¹³¹. A. Aricescu placed this garrison even at Azarlâc (Cetatea), firstly

¹²⁷ GEROV 1988, 116. B. Gerov considered that the inscription raised by the four *ciues Vsdicenses* proves that the strategy *Οὐσδικησική* would have survived in a very reduced area, under the form of a rural territory, until the 3rd cent. AD. (GEROV 1970, 129, n. 7; in the same vein, v. GEROV 1978, 484, n. 71, where is formulated the hypothesis that this rural territory was organised as a *ciuitas* (*Vsdicensium*), distinct of the Moesian *ciuitas Ausdecensium*; GEROV 1988, 23, n. 27, 40, 115-116). G. Parissaki (2009, 350, n. 93) manifested doubts in respect of this opinion. For the hypothesis of a Moesian origin of the four dedicants, v. BĂLTĂC 2011, 157.

¹²⁸ The distinctive elements pointed out by B. Gerov (1988, 116) undoubtedly assign the dedicants, as well as their home village, *uicus Agatapara*, to the area of southern Thracian culture. However, due the fact that the strategy *Οὐσδικησική* was located in the northern part of *Thracia* province, space in which the border shifted south at least at the end of 2nd cent. AD, these southern Thracian elements of the inscription CIL VI, 32582 cannot constitute a peremptory argument to locate the *ciuitas* of the four Thracian praetorians in *Thracia* province, as this area could have been located precisely in the zone which had been annexed to *Moesia Inferior*, either at the end of the 2nd cent. AD or even before, if will prove to be correct M. Tacheva's hypothesis regarding an earlier border shifting to the south.

¹²⁹ I thank to Prof. Dr. L. I. Bîrliba for having suggested the necessity of examining this issue.

¹³⁰ TUDOR 1956a, 56-57.

¹³¹ TUDOR 1956b, 584.

in a study of 1970¹³², and subsequently in his work dedicated to the Roman army in Dobruja¹³³. A. Aricescu's opinion was based on a hypothetical emendation of Procopius' reference to *φρούριον Τιλικίων*¹³⁴, which he considered that should be read *φρούριον Κιλικίων*¹³⁵. However, besides such emendation, it is the argumentative structure of A. Aricescu's demonstration which raises problems. This line of reasoning started in Aricescu's study of 1970, when he placed *φρούριον Κιλικίων* at Cetatea, based on the involvement of the Cilicians' cohort in the land delimitation between the *Ausdecenses* and the *Dacians*¹³⁶, involvement which already implied in his view that the cohort had a stable presence in the very place where the land delimitation was arguably made. On the other hand, A. Aricescu contended that the cohort's garrison was located at Cetatea by invoking the emendation *φρούριον Κιλικίων*¹³⁷. Therefore, the argumentative construction put forward by A. Aricescu may be summarised as follows: out of the cohort's involvement in the boundary dispute (at Cetatea), it results that *φρούριον Κιλικίων* was situated in the same place; out of the localisation of that *φρούριον* in the respective place, it results that there was also the garrison of that cohort. Such reasoning cannot stand because the involvement of the cohort in the land delimitation operation neither necessarily implies that there was the presumptive *φρούριον Κιλικίων*, nor does this necessarily imply that there was the garrison of the respective cohort. Such involvement could have taken place also by sending a body of that military unit, together with its tribune, in a mission at a certain distance from the garrison. For instance, at the end of 2nd cent. – early 3rd cent. AD, the involvement of the Moesian fleet's praefect, Vindius Verianus, in the settlement of another boundary dispute, in the northern Dobruja, to which we shall refer in certain detail below, namely the dispute between the *Buteridauenses* villagers and Messia Pudentilla and the emplacement by this prefect of boundary stones (of which were found two, one of them with

¹³² ARICESCU 1970, 305-306.

¹³³ ARICESCU 1977, 58, 153-154, 157.

¹³⁴ Procop. Aed. IV, 7.

¹³⁵ A. Aricescu's opinion did not generally receive acceptance, especially in the context when, at short time after its was put forward, the place where *Cohors I Cilicum* stationed was convincingly identified by C. Scorpan. Researchers' doubts did not concern only the positioning at Azarlâc of this garrison, but also the emendation of Procopius' text. (v. DORUȚIU-BOILĂ 1990, 19 and ISM IV, p. 207, no. 82, *sub numero*, where Em. Popescu remarked that the hypothesis proposed by A. Aricescu was 'adventurous').

¹³⁶ 'Le point où nous sommes aboutis avec cette localisation se trouve sur l'ancien territoire de la communauté des Ausdecenses au sujet desquels on sait, d'après une inscription célèbre, qu'ils ont été protégés contre les Daces par la *cohors I Cilicum*' (ARICESCU 1970, 305; to the same effect, ARICESCU 1977, 153-154).

¹³⁷ ARICESCU 1977, p. 58: 'Among the inscriptions which mention *Cohors I Cilicum*, a particular importance has that discovered at Cetatea, dating from the years 177-179 (the Epigraphic Supplement 90) where the unit had its headquarters, as it proves to us the name of the fortification, kept until the 6th century and recorded by Procopius of Caesarea, *Castellum Cilicum*, (*φρούριον δὲ τὸ Κιλικίων*)' ('Dintre inscripțiile în care este menționată *Cohors I Cilicum* o însemnătate deosebită are cea descoperită la Cetatea, datând din anii 177-179 (SE 90), unde își avea reședința unitatea, după cum ne-o dovedește numele fortificației, păstrat până în secolul al VI-lea și amintit de Procopius din Caesarea, *Castellum Cilicum*, (*φρούριον δὲ τὸ Κιλικίων*).').

known discovery place at Mihai Viteazu commune, previously Sariurt, Constanța county)¹³⁸ proves that it was not necessary for the military unit that supervised the installation of these *termini* as result of a boundary dispute to have been stationed precisely in the place at which or for which these stones were fixed¹³⁹. Later, when his work on the Roman army was published in English, A. Aricescu nuanced his opinion to the effect that at Cetatea would have been permanently stationed only a detachment of the cohort *I Cilicum*¹⁴⁰. It was C. Scorpan who established, based on inscriptions found in the fortification situated between Dunăreni and Rasova, on the Muzait hill, that the garrison of the cohort *I Cilicum* was in reality located at Sacidava¹⁴¹. One of these inscriptions¹⁴² is a dedication for Marcus Iulius Philipus, *nobilissimus Caesar*, by the cohort *I Cilicum* itself, being thus certain its stationing at the respective moment at Sacidava¹⁴³. C. Scorpan also pointed out that the mentions of this cohort in other parts, as Tomis, Chersonesus or Azarlâc 'may refer to detachments of the cohort sent out on specific missions'¹⁴⁴.

Returning to the question of the existence of a connection between the existence at Sacidava of the garrison of the cohort *I Cilicum* and the localisation of *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*, at first view the answer would seem to be negative, since, as it was observed, this cohort was 'one of the most mobile units of Moesia Inferior army, being present in several locations during its stationing within the province'¹⁴⁵. However, as it was noticed by V. Pârvan in respect of the boundary stones between Messia Pudentilla and the *Buteridauenses*, the instruction given by the provincial governor to a military commander for the boundary setting took into

¹³⁸ CIL III Suppl. 14447 = ISM I, 359.

¹³⁹ In addition, even if it was admitted that the discovery place of the inscription CIL III 14437² was indeed at Azarlâc (Cetatea), it should be noticed firstly that, in the hypothesis when the stone was discovered in its initial position, at Azarlâc could not be the administrative centre of that *ciuitas*, but only the border thereof. In the alternative hypothesis when the inscription was discovered in a secondary position, we do not have any guarantee that the place where the stone was transported and where it was found was the very administrative centre of that community, and that this place of secondary use was not a different urban centre more important at the time when the stone was put in secondary use. Therefore, even if the inscription CIL III 14437² was indeed discovered at Azarlâc (Cetatea), this neither brings by itself any reliable information as to where was the administrative centre of that rural community, nor does it prove that the respective rural community actually had such administrative centre when the *termini* were installed.

¹⁴⁰ ARICESCU 1980, 24 (in the same vein at pp. 43-44): 'A particularly interesting inscription among those referring to Cohors I Cilicum is that found at Cetatea (SE 90); it dates from between 177 and 179, when a detachment of the unit was in permanent residence, as is shown by the survival of the name of the fortress until the 6th century A. D. when it was mentioned by Procopius of Caesarea: *Castellum Cilicium*, (φρούριον δὲ τὸ Κιλικίων).'

¹⁴¹ SCORPAN 1980, 203-209; SCORPAN 1981.

¹⁴² SCORPAN 1980, 204-205, no. 3 = SCORPAN 1981, no. 3, = AE 1981, 743 = ISM IV, 170.

¹⁴³ For the certain character of this localisation v. also DORUȚIU-BOILĂ 1990, 269. Even A. Aricescu admitted in 1980 this positioning of the garrison, noting about *Cohors I Cilicum* that it was 'installed probably by Trajan at Sacidava' (ARICESCU 1980, 44).

¹⁴⁴ SCORPAN 1981, 102; in the same vein, SCORPAN 1980, 209.

¹⁴⁵ MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 203. This high mobility of this unit was also noticed by A. Aricescu who remarked that it was 'a sort of transferrable unit' (ARICESCU 1980, 25).

consideration the existence of a certain form of authority of the respective military unit on the rural area adjacent to the place where the it had its garrison¹⁴⁶. The information offered by the two inscriptions regarding the boundary established between the land of Messia Pudentilla and that of the villagers of Buteridava may prove to be significant for establishing an analogy with the situation of the *Ausdecenses*, due to the relative proximity, in space and in time, of the two disputes which took place in *Moesia Inferior*, in the period between the last quarter of the 2nd cent. AD and the first years of the following. The inscriptions regarding the boundary between Messia Pudentilla and the *Buteridauenses* bring very important knowledge, because in their case are known not only the localisation of the headquarters of the military unit the commander of which dealt with the dispute, but also the area where, most probably, it was initially installed one of the two *termini* that were found. This was initially published by Gr. Tocilescu in *Fouilles* and short time afterwards was included in the Supplement to the third volume of CIL¹⁴⁷. The discovery place was vaguely indicated to be near Isaccea (Noviodunum). V. Pârvan noted that the discovery place was indicated 'for sure inaccurately'¹⁴⁸. The second of these two *termini*, having an almost identical text, was discovered by V. Pârvan, fallen from Histria's perimetral wall¹⁴⁹. The reading of these boundary inscriptions was significantly improved, initially by V. Pârvan who correctly restored the three final lines, regarding the praefect of the fleet, Vindius Verianus¹⁵⁰ and subsequently by I. I. Russu who elucidated with a very high probability the name of the landowner, Messia Pudentilla, giving also the final wording of the text: *[I]ussu et ex decreto u(iri) c(larissimi) Ouini Tertulli co(n)s(ularis) termin(i) positi inter [?M]essiam Pude[ntil]lam et uicanos But(?)eridauenses per Vindium Verianum praef(ectum) cl(assis)*¹⁵¹. An essential contribution to the valorisation of the scientific potential of the two inscriptions was brought by Emilia Doruțiu(-Boilă) who made research in Gr. Tocilescu's archive where she discovered a 'note of the communal authorities of Casapchioi (Sinoe), Mss. vol. 5132, f. 202' which 'shows however that the piece published by Gr. Tocilescu was discovered at Sariurt in the yard of an inhabitant'¹⁵². Even if neither in this case is sure that the inscription was discovered in its original place, but rather on the contrary, since it was found in a villager's yard, where it was probably transported in order to be given a practical use, we may nonetheless assume with a

¹⁴⁶ PÂRVAN 1916, 636-637. For the possible existence of a certain type of military subordination in the area where the prefect of the fleet actioned for settling the boundary dispute v. SUCEVEANU 1971a, 161, 166.

¹⁴⁷ Tocilescu, 1900, no. 31 = AE 1901, 52 = CIL III Suppl. 14447 = ISM I, 359.

¹⁴⁸ PÂRVAN 1916, 635: 'desigur neexact'. The inaccuracy of Gr. Tocilescu's recording was also remarked by I. I. Russu, in the context of the discovery in the perimetral wall of Histria of a second *terminus*, situation which proved that these boundary stones had been fixed in *regio Histriensis*, from where this second piece was subsequently transported for the erection of the city's wall (RUSSU 1955, 81).

¹⁴⁹ PÂRVAN 1916, 633-637, no. 30 = AE 1919, 14 = ISM I, 360.

¹⁵⁰ PÂRVAN 1916, 634-635.

¹⁵¹ RUSSU 1955, 80.

¹⁵² DORUȚIU 1964, 132, no. 2.

fair degree of probability that the difficulties of transporting such stone with the technical means available for a villager at the end of 19th century did not allow it to be brought from a large distance to Sariurt (Mihai Viteazu, Constanța county). We have thus the benefit of certain information which support an analogy with the situation of the *Ausdecenses*:

- The delimitation operation was made upon instruction of the governor of *Moesia Inferior*, [I]ussu et ex decreto, u(iri) c(larissimi) Ouini Tertulli co(n)s(ularis), similar with the situation of the boundary set to *Ausdecenses*' territory: *Iussu Helui(i) Pertinacis co(n)s(ularis) n(ostris)*.
- The governor's name, Ovinus Tertullus, dates the litigation which took place in northern Dobruja at the end of the 2nd cent. – early 3rd cent. AD¹⁵³, not much time after the litigation which had opposed the *Ausdecenses* and the *Dacians*, dated in the second half of the eighth decade of the 2nd cent. AD, when Helvius Pertinax was governor¹⁵⁴.
- The delimitation of the territories was made by installing *termini*, boundary stones, the epigraphic text being almost identical in this respect in both cases: *termin(i) positi / termin(i) pos(iti)*.
- Both boundary settings were made under the direct supervision of a military commander, Vindius Verianus, *praefectus Classis Flaviae*¹⁵⁵, respectively Anternius Antoninus, *tribunus cohortis I Cilicum*.

The land delimitation made for Messia Pudentilla brings, however, an additional information – the operation was made at approximately 70km distance in straight line from Noviodunum, where the Moesian fleet was stationed. Even if in the case of the *Ausdecenses* it is not necessary that the tribune of the cohort acted at the same distance as that at which operated the praefect of the fleet, this 70km distance may offer an indicative frame for testing the contiguity hypothesis, by taking into account that within this radius and in the zone located in a reasonable proximity outside it, could have been set the boundary stones of the *Ausdecenses*, while in the relatively narrow remaining space stretching from these to south, towards the border with *Thracia*, could have been located *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*.

¹⁵³ The command held by Ovinus Tertullus in *Moesia Inferior* was dated in AD 198-201 (STOUT 1911, 60-61; STEIN 1940, 84-86). D. M. Pippidi gave the interval 198-202 (ISM I, p 473, 159-160, *sub numeris*), with reference to Stein.

¹⁵⁴ For the different opinions as to the date of the command held by Helvius Pertinax in *Moesia Inferior*, v. *supra*, n. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Although the inscriptions from Sariurt (Mihai Viteazu) and Histria indicate only that Verianus was *praefectus classis*, V. Pârvan noted that this 'is naturally *classis Flavia Moesica*' (PÂRVAN 1916, 636: 'e firește *classis Flavia Moesica*'), and his opinion was going to be confirmed by an inscription on a votive *tabula ansata*, made of silver sheet, dedicated by Verianus to *Fortuna Mellior*, part of the famous silver treasure found in 1928 at Marengo (Cascina Perbona), in Italy: *Fortun(ae) Meliori / M(arcus) Vindius Verianus praef(ectus) clas(sis) Fl(auiae) Moes(icae) et a militib(us) III d(ono) d(edit)* (BENDINELLI 1937, 37-38, no. 23; AE 1937, 178; SUCEVEANU 1971a, 161, n. 45).

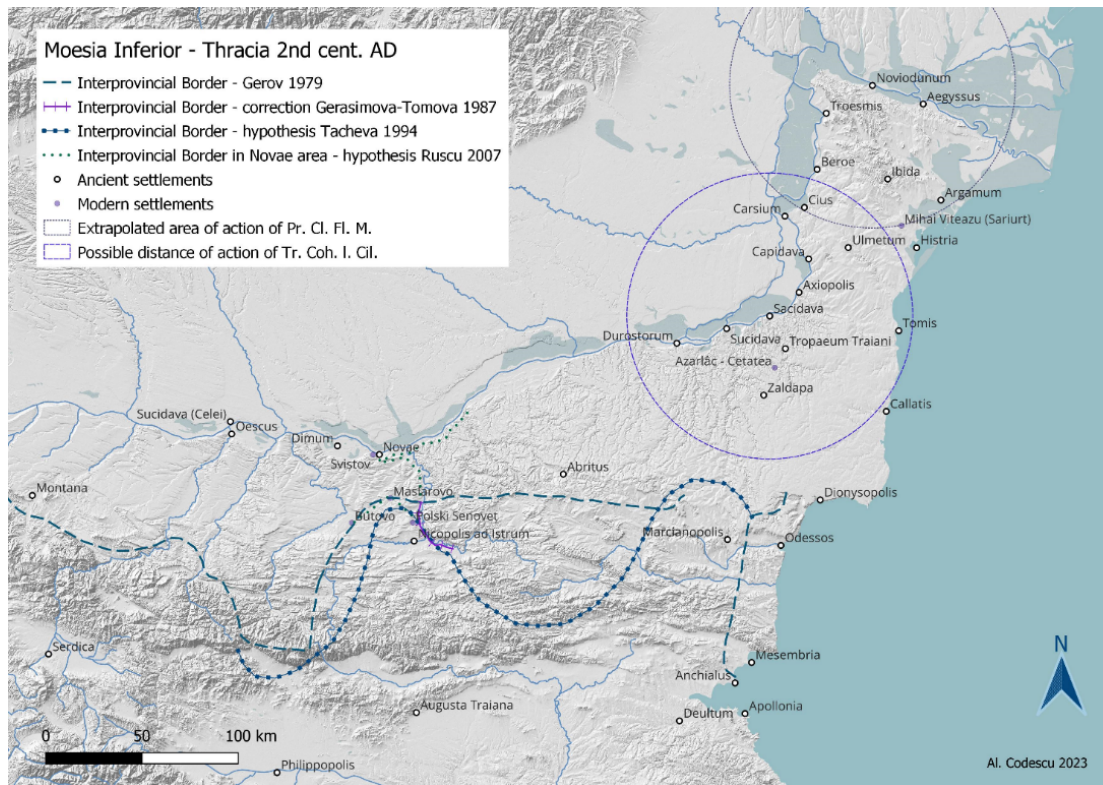


Fig. 1 Hypotheses regarding the border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thracia* and the possible area of action of *tribunus Cohortis I Cilicum*

4. Conclusions

Should the contiguity hypothesis prove to be accurate, a first consequence is that the population *Ausdecenses/Vsdicenses* probably occupied a larger area, which had been divided by the border drawn between *Moesia* and *Thracia*, either at the moment of the dissolution by Claudius of the Thracian kingdom and of the annexation of a part of its territory to *Moesia*, either at a later reorganisation of this border which occurred prior to the moment when the inscription CIL III 14437² was set. Since in the area of Dobruja existed strategies in the period when this region was included in the Thracian kingdom, but no such administrative entities are attested there after it was annexed to *Moesia*, we may conceive *ciuitas Ausdecensium* as result of this division of the larger area previously occupied in the Thracian kingdom by the *Ausdecenses/Vsdicenses*. While that part of this area which remained in the province of *Thracia* continued, in a narrower space, the previous form of organisation – the strategy *ὀυδοικησική*, the part situated north of this division, annexed to *Moesia*, could have become *ciuitas Ausdecensium*. Another possible origin of this *ciuitas*, in the same context of the contiguity, could be a hypothetical extension to the south of the province *Moesia (Inferior)*, dating before the boundary dispute recorded by CIL III 14437².

A second consequence of this possible contiguity is that it no longer makes necessary to conceive a relocation of the *Ausdecenses*, conclusion which was based almost entirely on the belonging of the *Ausdecenses/Vsdicenses* to the southern Thracian branch. If the contiguity

hypothesis is correct, this population was autochthonous in the area covered by the contiguous territories of *ciuitas Ausdecensium* and respectively of the strategy *Ούσδικησική*. Nonetheless, it should be noted that although it no longer imposes the idea that the *Ausdecenses/Vsdicenses* were object of a movement of people, it does not exclude either that this population indeed came in its entirety, before AD 46, to the area situated at the north of Balkans, to the extent, unproven though, that this population has its origin in a zone located further south than that where Ptolemy placed the strategy *Ούσδικησική*.

In conclusion, it has to be pointed out that the contiguity hypothesis starts, as also does the majority view, from the thesis of the identity *Ausdecenses-Vsdicenses*. In addition, it takes into consideration the fact that the inscription CIL III 14437² was a boundary stone, hence initially installed at the extremity of *territorium ciuitatis Ausdecensium*, and the possible consequence that this territory extended further south towards the provincial border between *Moesia Inferior* and *Thrace*. It also takes into account that the respective border, in almost any of its the proposed courses, was located in the 2nd cent. AD somewhere between Danube and the Balkan range. At the same time, it observes the location of the strategy *Ούσδικησική* in Ptolemy's catalogue in the norther part of *Thracia*, as well as the uncertainty regarding the place where this boundary stone was discovered.

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The Cult of Azizos in Roman Dacia: New Approaches

Juan Ramón Carbó García¹

Abstract. *The spread of the cult of the divinity of Syrian-Arabic origin Azizos from the East to the Danubian provinces and Rome has traditionally been related to its importance in the Syrian city of Edessa and to different Roman military campaigns against the Parthians and the Sassanid Persians in that same area, in the second and third centuries A.D. Through the analysis of the epigraphic repertoire of this divinity in Dacia, as well as with the study of certain monetary emissions of the time of Emperor Elagabalus and with the revision of the ancient literary texts, we present certain results, which can open new perspectives of study. The importance of Edessa as the origin of the spread of the cult of Azizos in Dacia can be generally confirmed, in the cases of some inscriptions of precise dating and by the military character of the dedicants. On the other hand, a new proposal is introduced in relation to the inclusion of the god in the triad of the city of Emesa and with the possible diffusion of the cult jointly or parallel to the Sol Inuictus Elagabal in the time of Emperor Elagabalus, when we refer to inscriptions of imprecise dating at the time of the Severan dynasty and the dedicators are not military and have no direct relationship with any of the campaigns in Parthia.*

Rezumat. *Răspândirea cultului divinității de origine siro-arabă Azizos din Orient în provinciile dunărene și la Roma a fost legată în mod tradițional de importanța sa în orașul sirian Edessa și de diferite campanii militare romane împotriva parților și a perșilor sasanizi din aceeași zonă, în secolele II- III d.Hr. Prin analiza repertoriului epigrafic al acestei divinități în Dacia, precum și prin analiza anumitor emisiuni monetare din vremea împăratului Elagabal și cu revizuirea textelor literare antice, prezentăm unele rezultate care pot deschide noi perspective de studiu. Importanța Edesei ca origine a răspândirii cultului lui Azizos în Dacia poate fi general confirmată, în cazul unor inscripții precis datate și prin caracterul militar al dedicanților. Pe de altă parte, propunem o nouă ipoteză legată de includerea zeului în triada orașului Emesa și de posibila difuzare a cultului în comun sau paralel cu Sol Inuictus Elagabal în vremea împăratului Elagabalus, atunci când ne referim la inscripții din timpul dinastiei Severilor care nu pot fi datate cu precizie, iar dedicanții nu sunt militari și nu au nicio relație directă cu campaniile din Parthia.*

Keywords: Azizos; Roman Dacia; Roman cults; Syrian cults; Emesa; Edessa; Elagabalus.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the twentieth century, the divinity Aziz, of Arab origin, was studied by Drijvers (1972 and 1980), as part of his detailed analysis of the cults and beliefs developed in the Syrian city of Edessa. The remarkable number of testimonies of his cult in Roman Dacia has made this god receive adequate attention to his importance in the historiography dedicated to

¹ jrcarbo@ucam.edu, Universidad Católica de Murcia

the study of Roman Cults of Eastern origin – those that were traditionally called "the Oriental Cults" – in the Dacian provinces. Sanie (1981, pp. 117-122) included him in his monograph on the Syrian and Palmyrenian cults in Dacia and, internationally, Frey (1989) and Turcan (1996, p. 184) did the same when studying the religious policy of Elagabalus, the first, and the cults in the Roman Empire, the second. Already in the twenty-first century, Carbó García (2010a, pp. 806-819) made an analysis within the framework of the "oriental" cults in Dacia, including the corpus of inscriptions and a study of the dedicants. More recently, Carbó García (2016) carried out a study of his diffusion in Dacia in relation to the Roman military campaigns in the East, and Vágási (2017) examined his presence in the Danubian provinces.

Aziz was part of a triad of the style of those favored by the Phoenicians, especially in coastal cities such as Byblos, Tyre, Sidon and Berytus, and in the inner regions of Syria, in cities such as Hatra, Palmyra or Baalbek-Heliopolis. If in the highest position of that triad was the Semitic, Arab and originally Babylonian deity *El* or *Il* –the *Baal* of Emesa, *Ilāh hag-Gabal*, known as *El Gabal* and Latinized *Elagabalus*–, the accompanying Arab divinities were *Salman* –*Aziz*– and *Mun'im*, respectively the deities of the morning star and twilight, equivalent to the Greek Dioscuri and appreciated as protectors of the journey, of caravanners and shepherds (Frey, 1989, pp. 55-56; Levick, 2007, p. 15). In Palmyra, *Aziz(os)* also personified the morning star, along with his twin brother, *Arsu*, who personified the evening star. As an astral tutelary god, *Azizos* is usually depicted riding a horse or dromedary, with *Arsu*. Drijvers, who studied his cult in the Syrian city of Edessa (Drijvers, 1972), mentions that, in Syria, *Azizos* was venerated separately, especially by the Emesenes, always as god of the morning star, and in that case, in the company of the astral god *Mun'im* –*Monimos*– (Drijvers, 1980, p. 147). In fact, *Aziz(os)* is a theophoric name used in the dynasty of king-priests of Emesa, of great popularity and still surviving in the Arab Muslim world and even in non-Muslim peoples of the Near East (Levick, 2007, p. 16). In the Arabic language, it has the meaning of "strong, powerful", and it refers to the power and glory of deities and kings. We should add that, in Islam, *Al-Aziz* is one of the appellations of *Allah*. In the Surah of Yusuf, in the Qur'an, the Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) holds that title, and so does Putiphar, whom he refers to as *Aziz*, precisely.

The character of *Azizos* was militarized when Syria became a Roman province. As a horseman god, protector of the steppe, represented in reliefs riding a dromedary and armed with spear and shield, it was identified with *Ares* or *Mars* and his cult was even officially introduced into the Roman army (Levick, 2007, p. 16; Vágási, 2017, pp. 53-54). This can be seen in different inscriptions in military camps (Drijvers, 1980, p. 170). When he appears in Latin inscriptions, his name is usually followed by different epithets, such as *bonus puer*, *puer inuictus*, *deus bonus puer*, *puer conservator* or is even substituted by the meaning, such as *deus fortis phoebus* (Carbó García, 2010a, p. 192). He was identified with the Greek *Phosphoros* and with the Roman *Lucifer*, in the sense of being a harbinger of the sun, bearer of light and life (Turcan, 1996, pp. 211-212). Certainly, this aspect made him a companion of the *Sun* god.

As for the other member of this triad of Emesa, *Monimos*, he appears as *Hesperos* in reliefs of this city, Palmyra and Baalbek-Heliopolis, and although *Azizos* appears as *Phosphoros*, these two gods were not always worshipped together, so they should not be regarded as inseparable twins (Vágási, 2017, p. 54).

The main ancient literary source is a text by emperor Julian, in which he reproduces the annotations of Iamblichus in a speech delivered by the emperor in December 362, in Antioch, in honor of Helios. According to the text, the inhabitants of Edessa worshipped the *Sun*, accompanied by *Azizos* and *Monimos*, whom Iamblichus identifies respectively with *Ares* and *Hermes*, and *Azizos*, as forerunner of the *Sun*, the morning star, would precede Helios in the procession (Iul., *Orationes*, IV, 150 d, 154 b.):

And yet, again, I wish to mete out a little more of the theology of the Phoenicians ---- whether to good purpose my argument will discover as it goes on. Those who inhabit Edessa, a place consecrated to the Sun, from time immemorial, place on the same throne with him two gods called "Monimos" and "Azizos." By these names are understood (as Iamblichus says, from whom I have borrowed these few things out of his abundance) by "Monimos" Mercury, by "Azizos" Mars, the assessor of the Sun, who also diffuses, as a channel, many blessings upon the region encompassing the earth (...) That Mars, called "Azizos" by the natives of Edessa in Syria, is the harbinger of the Sun...

Drijvers (1980, pp. 147-148) notes that, in Loeb's edition by W.C. Wright, he read Emesa instead of Edessa, and that many scholars, following Spanheim, considered these references to a *Sun* cult more applicable to Emesa than to Edessa, although all manuscripts unanimously read Edessa. This has had the consequence that most of the studies carried out on the diffusion and presence of the cult of *Azizos* in the Danubian provinces or, more specifically, in Roman Dacia, which we have already mentioned at the beginning, have focused on an alleged diffusion of the cult from Edessa. They put it in relation to the relevance of this Syrian city in several of the military campaigns developed in the area by the Romans against the Parthian Empire (Carbó García, 2016).

The interpretations of the epigraphic monuments that we will reflect in the next section also reflect this traditional perspective, necessary because it can be perfectly valid, on the one hand, and because it gives rise to new perspectives of study and interpretation of the testimonies of his cult, on the other hand. Together, both perspectives should contribute to enriching and deepening our knowledge and understanding of this divinity of Syrian-Arabian origin and his important diffusion and presence in Roman Dacia.

PRESENCE OF THE CULT IN DACIA

As a solar and armed god, the cult of Azizos spread in the Danubian provinces thanks to the army, especially, in such a way that it is present in Pannonia, in Dacia and in Dalmatia, apart from Rome. The inscriptions dedicated to this god are usually addressed only to him, although sometimes he appears associated with Apollo, as in several inscriptions of Dacia (Carbó García 2010a, p. 192); but the fact remains that, although his cult enjoyed some popularity and diffusion in the Danubian provinces, the same did not happen with Monimos, since his name has only been found in the onomastic record (Vágási, 2017, p. 55, note 9).

In Dacia, he appears in 15 inscriptions in different forms (see repertoire): *Bonus Puer*, *Bonus Puer Phosphorus*, *Azizos Bonus Puer* or *Deus Fortis Phoebus*. This divinity had a temple epigraphically attested in Potaissa (Rusu-Pescasu and Alicu, 2000, pp. 134-135) and it is very likely that there was another in Apulum, where 9 inscriptions come from, while three others come from Potaissa, one from Napoca, one from Suceagu and one from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa.

In these inscriptions, the dedicants with Roman or Italic names stand out above the Greco-Orientals, and the presence of a person of Syrian-Arabic origin can hardly be detected in a single inscription, found in Napoca. The diffusion of Azizos in Dacia seems to have followed a path like that of *Jupiter Heliopolitanus* from the East – although in later times – and relying on Romans and Italics and not on Syrians or Greco-Orientals, in general, for his diffusion. The solar character of the divinity, his frequent associations with *Apollo* and the more popular Roman denomination of *Bonus Puer* seem to have much to do with his popularity among Romans and, to a lesser extent, among Greek-Orientals, rather than among the Syrians. This is different from what was detected for other cults in the same field, such as *Jupiter Dolichenus* or the Palmyrene gods. But he is only worshipped with the name of *Azizos* on a single occasion, in one of the two inscriptions from Potaissa.

The study of the possible dating of the monuments is of enormous importance, together with that of the dedicants, in order to approach the understanding of their dissemination. An inscription from Apulum mentions the *municipium Aurelium Apulense*, which existed in the time of Marcus Aurelius, between 161 and 180 AD, becoming *colonia Aurelia Apulense* under the reign of Commodus, between 180 and 193 AD. This implies that the monument can be dated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius or even to the early years of Commodus' reign (see rep. 5). Another inscription, also from Apulum, could be dated in the last decades to the second century according to the *peregrinus* name of the dedicant, as Piso has observed (see rep. 6). In this sense, we can see that the introduction of this cult is prior to the Parthian campaign of Septimius Severus, and it is very likely that it is due to the direct knowledge of new divinities during the participation of the *legio V Macedonica* in the campaign of Lucius Verus against the Parthians (Popescu, 2004, p. 134).

More complex is the dating of a third monument of this divinity, dedicated by a centurion of the Macedonian V legion, on which Azizos appears next to *Apollo Parthicus* (see rep.

12). It is the same title carried by several emperors with the meaning of "victor over the Parthians", and everything seems to indicate that in this case it would refer to a victory over them. In his day, Mircea Macrea pointed to the victory that took place in the time of Lucius Verus, between 161 and 166 AD, a campaign in which the *legio V Macedonica* took part with all its troops. Then, Edessa was also taken, a city-fortress where the god *Azizos* was worshipped, as we have already mentioned (Macrea, 1971, pp. 352-353). However, it has also been argued that the *pia constans* title for the unit in the inscription is from the time of Commodus, 185 or 187, so Speidel dated the altar after the Parthian war of Septimius Severus and related it directly to this campaign and not to that of Lucius Verus. But he did not treat it as a testimony of the cult of *Azizos* and interpreted it rather as a sample of syncretism between *Mithras* and *Apollo* (Speidel, 1978, pp. 479-482). On the other hand, Nemeti did not exclude even a later dating, in relation to the Parthian campaigns of Gordian III, Philip the Arab, Trebonianus Gallus or, above all, Valerian I, if we consider the other inscriptions of Potaissa (Nemeti, 2005, p. 184; Nemeti, 2007, p. 231). Specifically, one in which, as in this one, the god called *Deus Fortis* also appears (see rep. 13). It is a surprising epithet for this divinity, since it does not appear on other occasions neither in the epigraphic record nor in the ancient literary sources assigned to the god, although it does appear with divinities of the military field, such as *Hercules*, *Mars* or *Liber*. The coincidence of two inscriptions in the same locality with this unusual epithet could suggest the same dating for both in the third century and after Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana*, as we will explain shortly. The dedicant, *Caius Cassius Vitalis*, centurion of the *legio V Macedonica*, would have participated with the whole unit or with a *vexillatio* in a Parthian campaign. In any case, he would have played a role in the direct diffusion of the cult of *Azizos* in Dacia in connection with his presence in the East. This is an inscription in which the god hides under a strong *interpretation*. Instead of using the common denomination of *bonus Puer*, it has been preferred to translate the original meaning of the name of the Syrian divinity, and *Phosphorus* has also been changed by *phoebus*, so that *Azizos* is closer to *Apollo* just as he is closer to *Azizos* thanks to the epithet *parthicus*. *Phoebus* meant "the bright one" or "the luminous one", highlighting the solar attributes that, of course, *Apollo* possessed, but that *Azizos* also had (Nemeti, 2005, pp. 182-184).

Four inscriptions dedicated to *Azizos* can be dated generally to the third century, without further precision, although they have been placed in relation mainly to the time of the Severan dynasty (see rep. 1, 3, 8 and 13). The concentration of some of these inscriptions (see rep. 1, 2, 3 and 6) in the same area of Apulum, corresponding to the location of the ancient *canabae*, would suggest the existence of a temple to this god, according to the interpretation of Piso (*IDR* III/5, 300).

Among the inscriptions generally datable in the third century, is the one mentioned a few lines earlier, in which appears the god *Azizos* called *Deus Fortis* (see rep. 13). Considering the space that appears damaged in the first line, it is certain that the denomination of the divinity

would be accompanied by other names or divine epithets, as can be observed in other inscriptions of Azizos in Dacia. For example: *Deo For[ti Apollini Parthico]* or *Deo For[ti Bono Puero Apollini]* (Nemeti, 2005, p. 183; Nemeti, 2007, p. 230). The plaque is dedicated to the health of the emperor or emperors, in a typical formula that, in union with an “oriental” divinity, indicates a connection with the Imperial Cult. At that time of great propagation of “oriental” cults, it intends to use its popularity for its dissemination and, at the same time, to exercise a certain religious and social control over the cults and their followers. The dedicants, if we take into account the deleted spaces, would have been at least ten. They are Roman citizens, although we do not know their origin, and most of them have the demonym *Aurelius*. In a successful proposal for reconstitution, Nemeti proposed that the fragment be a part of the same inscription with the other larger fragment collected in *CIL III*, 7688, a list of veterans of the *legio V Macedonica* (Nemeti, 2007). The complete list would have come to comprise approximately 75 names. The repetition among them of the demonym *Aurelius* seems to indicate a later dating to Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana*, in the year 212. As we said before, the coincidence of two inscriptions in the same locality with the unusual denomination of the god as *Deus Fortis* and his association with *Apollo* could suggest the same dating for both in the third century and after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. Nemeti then interpreted that the list of legionaries participating in the dedication of the inscription would most likely have been a list of veterans of some later Parthian campaign, such as that of Gordian III, that of Philip the Arab, that of Trebonianus Gallus or especially that of Valerian I. A very suggestive idea, although we do not have enough elements to be able to contrast it, would be to interpret these two inscriptions to *Deus Fortis* – Azizos in the framework of the first Parthian campaign of Valerian I and the return to Dacia of a *vexillatio* of the *legio V Macedonica*, that is, between the end of 256 and 258. They would thus coincide in time with another inscription dedicated to this god in Potaissa, which is also the latest found to date in this locality. And it would coincide with it – at least, the inscription we are dealing with – in its dedication for the health of the emperors, as we will see shortly. However, we cannot forget that the mention of the epithet *pia constans* for the legion in the inscription dedicated to *Deus Fortis Phoebus Apollini Parthicus*, and the non-appearance of the nicknames *Antoniniana* (granted by Caracalla), *Severiana Alexandriana* (by Severus Alexander) or *Gordiana* (by Gordian III) (Petolescu, 2010, p. 198), seems to point rather to the Parthian campaign of Septimius Severus in the case of that inscription.

Precisely the later inscriptions of all the cults of Syrian origin in Dacia are two dedications to this same god. The first one, from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, in which Azizos accompanies *Apollo* in a dedication to the *numina* of both gods, was erected by an imperial procurator who was acting governor of Dacia between 251 and 253 AD, according to another inscription of Apulum (*IDR III/5*, 68). This places it in the years of reign of Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus, precisely at the time when, on the eastern front, the Persian king Shapur I conquered the province of Syria (see rep. 15).

The second one, from Potaissa, mentions the emperors Valerian and Gallienus, as well as Caesar Valerian, son of Gallienus, and Cornelia Salonina, wife of Gallienus (see rep. 11). Thus, it can be dated generally between 255 AD, when Valerian, the first son of Emperor Gallienus, is named Caesar, and 258-259, when Emperor Valerian is captured by the Sassanids in Persia, in the framework of their "Parthian" campaign and before the walls of Edessa. And more likely between the end of 256, with the end of the first Parthian war of Valerian I and the return to Dacia of a *vexillatio* of the legion, and 258 AD (Nemeti, 2007, p. 231). The epithet *III pia fidelis* carried by the legion would have been granted after the fighting on the northern border of Dacia against the free Dacians, at the latest in the year 257, as revealed by the title *Dacicus Maximus* that Gallienus receives. (Popescu, 2004, p. 135). It is the later Latin inscription found in Potaissa and it is also one of the last of Dacia prior to Christianity, among those which can be exactly dated. In this inscription, the name of *Azizos* appears, along with its more common denomination of *bonus Puer*, and the *conservator* epithet. This appears in the inscriptions of other Syrian gods and especially when they take on a military character, such as *Jupiter Dolichenus*. It is considered that it was a symbol of stability, something very necessary at the time in which the monument was erected, and that comes to redound the mention of the imperial family, with members of three generations. This gives an idea of a necessary stability around succession. In addition, the inscription testifies to the completion of the reconstruction works of a temple of the divinity in Potaissa by the *legio V Macedonica*.

Thus, these two testimonies of Potaissa would support the hypothesis of the presence of *Azizos* among the *dii militares*, in the official pantheon of the third century AD. This was a difficult time in the political-military and economic grounds, when the military unit resumes a civil building work which had begun much earlier. Therefore, the inscription is dedicated for the health of the emperors and the imperial family. The dedicator, Donatus, was the prefect of the *legio V Macedonica*, which has been noted as probably originating in the African provinces (Sanie, 1981, p. 120). The invocation reflected in the inscription seems to have responded on the one hand to the wishes that the god protected the legion, after it had suffered losses in the last battles in northern Dacia. On the other hand, it expresses loyalty and concern for the emperors: in the case of Valerian the younger, son of Gallienus, the desire for his speedy recovery, thanks to the healing qualities of the original divinity of Edessa, and in the case of Valerian I, the protection and guarantee of success for the old emperor in his fight against the Persian attackers (Popescu, 2004, p. 135).

In sum, previous research that has attempted to piece together the history of the spread of the cult of *Azizos* in Dacia reveals a close relationship with the same history of the campaigns in the East by the Roman emperors, from Marcus Aurelius to Valerian and Gallienus. However, not all inscriptions can be dated accurately and some of them could be related to some of the military campaigns in the East, in a general way. But we can't specify much more. The chronology of the spread of his cult corresponds to the general chronology of the spread

of Roman cults of eastern origin in Dacia. The time in which more monuments can be dated is that of the Severan dynasty, comprising the last decade of the second century and the first ones of the third century AD, being very notable the difference with the number of testimonies datable in other times. The cult of *Azizos* was introduced in Dacia as a result of the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus, in the time of Marcus Aurelius. Later, the campaigns of Septimius Severus in Parthia would help explain the importance of the cult of *Azizos* in those years. The later campaigns, from Caracalla or Severus Alexander to Valerian and Gallienus, definitely explain the later manifestations of that same cult in Dacia.

However, with the exception of the inscriptions which can be clearly dated to the years of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius, for the beginning of the cult in Dacia, and those which can be dated with equal certainty to the time of Valerian and Gallienus, for its end, most are integrated into that general set of imprecise dating which we record as "from the time of the Severan dynasty". The importance of the Syrian city of Edessa in relation to the cult of *Azizos*, already commented on in the introduction, as well as the existence of these Roman military campaigns led by different emperors against Parthians, first, and Sassanids, later, seem to have led specialists to set aside other possibilities. This is especially noticeable when we talk about that time of the emperors of the Severan dynasty. For them, if there is no Parthian campaign in between that establishes a connection with Edessa, it seems that we have not been able to propose other possible explanations about the spread of the cult and to find another nucleus of diffusion, whether an alternative or complementary to that Syrian city.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

In the first place, the existence of the cult of *Azizos* in different cities of the Syrian area should make us rethink the preponderant role of Edessa in the explanations about the diffusion of the cult towards the European provinces of the Roman Empire. The aforementioned studies of Drijvers (1972; 1980) led almost inevitably to many later studies on *Azizos* placing this Syrian city as the center of his cult and, above all, as the original nucleus of his subsequent expansion, always in relation to the Roman military campaigns in the East. However, we have already advanced other possibilities. The god personified the morning star also in the city of Palmyra, along with his twin brother, *Arsu*, who in turn personified the twilight star. Drijvers himself (1980, p. 147) pointed out that he was worshipped elsewhere in Syria, and especially by the Emesenes, always as god of the morning star, although in the case of Emesa, he did so accompanied by the astral god *Monimos*, god of the twilight star (Frey, 1989, pp. 55-56). But, although they appear together in the reliefs of various cities, as in Emesa itself, in Palmyra or in Baalbek-Heliopolis, they were not inseparable twins and could be worshipped – and represented – separately. Even so, in the case of Emesa, we have already seen how Martin Frey (1989) and Barbara Levick (2007, pp. 15-16) placed both as the companions of the *Baal* of Emesa, *El Gabal*, latinized *Elagabalus*.

Thus, and although he could be worshipped individually, we should not contemplate the study of *Azizos* simply as another divinity, to classify him along with other gods of the Syrian or Syrian-Arabic area, attending only to his ethno-geographical origin. Precisely, the most interesting thing, which undoubtedly, we must take into account for his study, including the issues related to his diffusion, is his quality as part of a triad like the usual ones of the Phoenicians. Beyond the influence that his cult could have in the city of Edessa in the face of his spread to the Danubian provinces and to Rome, through the participation of Roman military units in the Parthian campaigns (Carbó García, 2016), his character as an integral part of the triad of Emesa must have provided a way of access to the heart of the Empire by the hand of the members of the Severan dynasty. In particular, from the hand of the child-emperor who adopted the name of his main god, *Elagabal*, and moved him to Rome.

The cult of *Azizos* reached the western provinces of the Roman Empire and Rome itself with that of the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*, as companion god and forerunner. The emperor introduced a large number of new rituals into the *Sun* cult in Rome, when he made official the cult of *Sol Inuictus Elagabal* and placed it at the top of the Roman pantheon. He mainly adopted Syrian customs and even Syrian servants for ceremonies, with him came other priests of the cult – including his cousin, Alexian, the future Alexander Severus– and developed great ceremonies (Sánchez-Sánchez 2018, pp- 49-51). In this sense, it is perfectly acceptable and not surprising at all that the boy-emperor took this triad with him to Rome, and not only the betyl of *Sun Inuictus Elagabal* (Levick, 2007, p. 15).

Following this, the numismatic sources of the reign of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus - Elagabalus- are analyzed to try to demonstrate the transfer of this triad from Emesa to Rome and the western provinces of the Empire (Carbó García, forthcoming).

There are three types in coins that appear on different reverses and that we can analyze to this end: first, a star that accompanies the personification of the Sun; on the other hand, a star that appears next to the emperor, as an officiating priest of sacrifice, before a shrine; and finally, a star located on the chariot that bears the betyl of the god *El Gabal*. The representation of the Emperor as *Helios* and, above all, the very frequent appearance of the symbol of the star on coins in which he appears offering a sacrifice have been associated with his alleged birth in Syria and his position as supreme priest of the sun god *El Gabal* in the city of Emesa. But some of these representations could be the result of the immobilization of the design, inheritances of those used by previous emperors in their coins. Their presence could be explained by the obsession with astrology of the emperors of this dynasty, but we could try to identify the stars represented on Elagabalus' coins with some specific star, then accepting an astronomical value. And maybe we could make from it a religious interpretation of these symbols.

Nevertheless, to be able to do it, we should operate within four established parameters: first, the dating of the coin with astronomical symbol; secondly, to discard the aspect of

repetition by tradition and immobilization of the design, we should check that the astronomical symbol is presented for the first time for that coinage design or, at least, that it is a reintroduction after a significant period of time; thirdly, it must be established that the astronomical event has occurred; and finally, historical evidence that supports the observation and importance of the specific phenomenon must be presented. Anyway, without the fulfillment of that last parameter, any correlation between a symbol in a coin and an astronomical fact would be mere speculation (Faintich, 2008, p. 5).

Certainly, that a star appears next to the personification of the Sun –*Sol Inuictus*– is not an exclusive motif of Elagabalus. We can observe it before, on different coins of Septimius Severus, and then, on others, of Gallienus, Maximinus Daya, Licinius and Constantine. If this type appears on the coins of Septimius Severus for the first time, due to the influence of the Empress Iulia Domna, its reintroduction after the years of the reigns of Caracalla and Macrinus has an obvious historical explanation, given that Varius Avitus Bassianus was a priest of the god El Gabal from Emesa and, in this case, it would not be an immobilization of the design². Precisely, the type in which the emperor appears as a priest, officiating a sacrifice before a shrine, accompanied by a star, is extremely frequent in the coinage of Elagabalus³. As for the type in which the transfer of the betyl of the god can be seen, the star makes its appearance on the quadriga and to the left of the sacred stone. The known coins date from the year 222 (*RIC* 61) and refer to a very specific event, that of the celebration of the summer festival in Rome in honor of the god, in which the betyl was moved from his temple in the city –the *Elagabalium*– to another temple that must have existed on the outskirts. Herodian notes that the event took place on the summer solstice, like the apotheosis of the *Sun* and its triumph over the shadows (*Hdn.*, V, 6, 6-9). At dusk of the summer solstice, as a culmination of these festivities, the *Sun* god was present in the *Elagabalium*, while he was offered the rites and sacrifices described by Herodian of Antioch, all thanks to an astronomical theophany, possible thanks to the alignment of the atrial axis of the building, at 24° north of the west. It is likely that this festival also served to commemorate the transfer of the betyl from the East to Rome. Another very similar type, related to that one, shows us the emperor Elagabalus himself on the chariot, and the star in exactly the same position (*RIC* 35 y 308).

When, on these coins, the star accompanies the personification of the *Sun* or the emperor himself, officiating as *Sacerdos Amplissimus Dei Inuicti Solis Elagabali*, or the chariot that transports the betyl from the *Elagabalium*, during the celebration of the summer solstice in Rome, that star would be *Azizos*, the morning star, the forerunner of the *Sun*, in the absolutely

² *RIC* 28, 37, 38, 39, 40, 63, 301 (star to the left of the personification of the Sun) and 300 (star to the left or right of the personification of the Sun, according to different examples).

³ *RIC* 46, 46var, 46 *limes denarius*, 49, 51, 52, 53, 88, 88var, 146, 147, 177, 191, 323error, 325 and 327 (2) (star to the left of the emperor, as a priest, before a shrine); *RIC* 135 y 327 (star on the right); *RIC* 131 (star on the left or right, depending on the examples).

majority cases in which the star appears on the left. Or it would be *Monimos*, the twilight star, in the much less numerous examples in which the star appears on the right. After having verified the much higher number of times in which the star appears on the left and after also noting the diffusion and popularity of the cult of *Azizos* in Rome, the Danubian provinces and Dacia, specifically, in the face of the total absence of *Monimos*, the importance of the character of the first of these deities as a forerunner of the Sun would seem evident in the coins.

Perhaps this could be explained by the character of the morning star as forerunner of the Sun, while the evening star announced its disappearance; and it could also have to do with the image of the emperor himself, a young man of 16 years at the time of his arrival in Rome, easily identifiable himself with the *bonus puer Azizos*, forerunning *El Gabal*. Perhaps now we should try remembering Herodian's description of how the young emperor preceded the chariot with the god's betyl, walking backwards so as not to take his eyes of it, forerunning the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*, then⁴.

This interpretation complies with the four parameters quoted above: the mentioned coins can be dated; we discard repetition by tradition and immobilization of design; we know astronomically the morning star –the planet Venus– and the evening star –again the planet Venus, visible at twilight–; and we have presented the historical evidence that indicates the religious importance of these stars as the gods *Azizos* and *Monimos*, companions of the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal* in Emesa and in other Syrian cities, in the transfer of the betyl to Rome by the hand of the emperor, and in the ceremony that he arranged in Rome on the summer solstice.

Following this hypothesis, some interesting perspectives would be opened that could also affect the knowledge of the diffusion of the cult of *Azizos* in the Roman Empire. And, of course, in Dacia, which is the case that concerns us in these pages.

To begin with, we should not try to explain the inscriptions dedicated to *Azizos* in Dacia that present an imprecise dating "at the time of the Severan dynasty" only in terms of the military campaigns in Parthia closer in time. In other words, we should not try to force the dating to try to ascribe them to the campaign of Septimius Severus, or that of Caracalla, or that of Alexander Severus, when we do not have any data to that effect. In fact, those inscriptions in which the presence of military units or individuals cannot be detected among the dedicators or recipients of the votive offerings, could be explained, at least partially, but more easily than through the influence of the military, by the political-religious promotion of Emperor Elagabalus of the cult of *Azizos* as a companion and forerunning of the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*.

Another perspective that opens up when dealing with the cult of *Azizos*, not only individually, perhaps coming from Edessa or another city in the Syrian area, but as part of the

⁴ HDN., V, 6, 7: A six-horse chariot bore the sun god, the horses huge and flawlessly white, with expensive gold fittings and rich ornaments. No one held the reins, and no one rode in the chariot; the vehicle was escorted as if the sun god himself were the charioteer. Elagabalus ran backward in front of the chariot, facing the god and holding the horses' reins. He made the whole journey in this reverse fashion, looking up into the face of his god.

triad of Emesa, is the one that would affect the study of the other two gods of that triad in Dacia: we have already commented that, to date, no inscription dedicated to *Monimos* has been found in Dacia and we provided a possible explanation; on the other hand, there is no epigraphic monument in Dacia explicitly dedicated to the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*, which does not mean that some of the many inscriptions dedicated to *Sol Inuictus*, in general, could refer to this god without mentioning his specific appellation (Carbó García, 2010b). The point is that the presence of the cult of *Azizos* in Dacia, when it does not have a direct relationship with a diffusion from the military field, could even be associated in some cases with the presence of followers of the cult of *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*, without naming it explicitly, in the same way as it happened in Rome, where we have evidence of the introduction of the cult of *Elagabal* before the reign of Elagabalus and also without explicitly mentioning the name of the Syrian divinity (Carbó García, 2010b, pp. 593-594).

In the case of Roman Dacia, those inscriptions dedicated to the *bonus Puer* – *Azizos* and dated imprecisely in the years of reign of the emperors of the Severan dynasty, without a direct relationship with the military field, perhaps had nothing to do with any of the Parthian campaigns and we can try to understand them in terms of the inclusion of the god in the triad of Emesa, next to the cult of the *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*. For example, we could try to apply this hypothesis to the case of the inscription dedicated by *Titus Flavius Italicus*, first *quattorvir* of the *municipium Aurelium Apulense*, to the *bonus Puer* (see rep. 5) very possibly in the same location of Apulum in which three other inscriptions appeared, dedicated to *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* (IDR III/5, 144), to *Diana* (IDR III/5, 52) and, precisely, to the *Deus Sol* (IDR III/5, 351). In short, it would be a question of adding a new perspective to the existing ones, in this specific case, around the existence of this artificial pantheon whose cult has been interpreted according to the Imperial Cult and the official civic religion, although Szabó has recently provided another explanation related to the presence of several religious narratives and local myths (Szabó, 2018, pp. 50-51). Certainly, now we have more elements to try to understand better the presence here of *Deus Sol* and *bonus Puer* – *Azizos*.

In conclusion, the different perspectives, old and new, can be combined to deepen the study of the cult of *Azizos* and his diffusion, his dedicants and how, being understood as part of a triad and not only individually, the manifestations of his cult could be put in relation to those of other gods, as could be the case of *Sol Inuictus Elagabal*.

CATALOGUE OF INSCRIPTIONS:

1-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Upper fragment of a votive altar or base of a statue. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1130; *ILS* 4348; Sanie, 1981, p. 264, nº 46; *IDR* III/5, 300; *CODR* II, 103.

Deo bono / Puero / [p(h)]osphoro / [---]?

2-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Fragment of votive altar or base of a statue, without crowning or base. The inscription is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1136; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 52; *IDR* III/5, 305; *CODR* II, 105.

Bono Puero / p(h)osphoro / Lael(l)ia Cu- / rill(i)a pro sa- / lute sua suo- / rumque v(otum) s(olvit) / l(ibens) m(erito)

3-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Fragment of votive altar or base of statue without crowning or base. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1138; *ILS* 4347; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 54; *IDR* III/5, 307; *CODR* II, 106.

Deo b(ono) p(h)os- / phoro Apol- / lini Pythio / D(ecimus) Iulius Ru- / sonius cust(os) / armorum / pro salute sua / et suorum / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

4-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Votive altar or marble statue base. It is preserved in the Unirii Museum of Alba Iulia.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1131; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 47; *IDR* III/5, 301; *CODR* II, 107.

Bono / Puero / Aur(elius) Ch- / restus / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

5-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Votive inscription, probably an altar or base of statue. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1132; *ILS* 7142; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 48; *IDR* III/5, 303; *CODR* II, 108.

Bono Deo / Puero p(h)os- / phoro / T(itus) Fl(avius) Italicus / primus IIII / vir m(unicipii) A(urelii) A(pulensis) / cum Stati- / lia Lucia / coniuge et / suis ex voto

6-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Upper fragment of a votive altar or base of statue. It is not preserved today. Main references: *CIL* III, 1137; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 53; *IDR* III/5, 302; *CODR* II, 104.

Bono P- / uero ex v- / ot(o) A[ph]ro- / di[si]us Alex- / andri po[s(uit)]

7-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Votive inscription. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1135; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, nº 51; *IDR* III/5, 304; *CODR* II, 109.

Iulia Secunda / Puero p(h)osphoro / D(eo) O(ptimo) M(aximo)? / d(ono) d(edit) d(edicavitque)

8-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Votive altar or base of statue in limestone. It is preserved in the Museum of Sebeș.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1133; *ILS* 4346; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, n° 49; *IDR* III/5, 306; *CODR* II, 110.

Deo bono / Puero p(h)os- / phoro Apol- / lini Pythio / T(itus) Fl(avius) Titus et / T(itus) Fl(avius) Philetus / p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) s(uorumque)

9-Apulum (Alba Iulia). Votive altar with inscription found in Apulum, but coming from Sarmizegetusa, according to Verantius. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 1134; Sanie, 1981, p. 265, n° 50; *IDR* III/5, 2*; *CODR* II, 116.

L(ucius) Fl(avius) Valens / ob honorem / flamonii / b(ono) P(uerto) d(edit)

10-Napoca (Cluj-Napoca). Votive altar of hard sandstone. It is preserved in the National Museum of Transylvanian History, in Cluj-Napoca.

Main references: Sanie, *Cult.Or.I*, p. 266, n° 57; *CODR* II, 111.

Puero / bono / Arim- / o v(otum) l(ibens)

11-Potaissa (Turda). Votive inscription discovered at the base of a temple. It is not preserved today. Main references: *CIL* III, 875; *ILS* 4345; Sanie, 1981, pp. 265-266, 55; *CODR* II, 112.

Deo Azizo bono P[uerto conserva-] / tori pro salutem dd(ominorum) [nn(ostrorum) Valeriani et Gal-] / lienii Augg(ustorum) et Valerian[i nobiliss(imi) Caesaris] / et Corneliae Salonina[e Augustae et] / leg(ionis) V Mac(edonicae) III pia[e fid(elis) ---] / Donatus praef(ectus) leg(ionis) eiusde[m ---] / templum ince(p)tum perfecit v[---]

12-Potaissa (Turda). Votive altar in sandstone. It is preserved in the Regional Museum of Turda.

Main references: Macrea, 1971, 350; *AnnÉp* 1972, 454; *ILD* II, pp. 199-200, n° 482; *CODR* II, 113.

Deo Forti / phoebo / Apollin(i) / Parthico / C(aius) Cassius / Vitalis (centurio) / l(egionis) V M(acedonicae) p(iae) c(onstantis) / l(ibens) posu(it)

13-Potaissa (Turda). Fragmentary marble votive plate. It is not preserved today.

Fragment A.

Main references: *ILD* II, p. 200, n° 483; Nemeti, 2007; *CODR* II, 114.

Deo For[ti ...] / pro salute impera[toris, torum?] / Aur(elius) Quintianus [...] / Aur(elius) Augustinianu[s ...] / Iul(ius) Rufinus [...] / Aur(elius) Surus [...] / Aur(elius) Marcu[s ...]

Combined reading with *CIL* III, 7688.

Main references: *CIL* III, 7688; Nemeti, 2007; Carbó, 2010a, pp. 1244-1245.

Deo For[ti...] / pro sal(ute) imperat[or(um)? et ...] sacerdotalis Daciae / Aur(elius) Quintianus e[x ...], [...], [...] ius ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Iulianus, Aur(elius) Anice[tus ex ...], / Aur(elius) Augustianus [...], [...], [...] nes, Aur(elius) Statilius ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Firmidius ex...], / Iul(ius) Rufinus e[x ...], [...], [...] nus, Aur(elius) Valens, Ael(ius) Aufidius [...], / Aur(elius) Surus [...], [...], [...] ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Valens, Aur(elius) Victorinus ex eq(uite), / Aur(elius) Marcu[s ...], [...], [...] us, Sep(timius) Alexander ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Verus ex eq(uite), / [...], [...], [...] s, Val(erius) Valens, Aur(elius) Firmus ex dup(lario), / [...], Aur(elius) Vict[or ex ...], [...] us ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Flavianus ex imm(une), Aur(elius) Maximinus, / [...], Aur(elius) Farnax [...], [...] ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Viatorinus, Aur(elius) Sedatus ex im(mune) lib(rario), / [...] ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), Aur(elius) Lucilius ex opt(ione), Aur(elius) Vital(is) ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Crispus, Aur(elius) Crescens, / [...], Aur(elius) Gaianus, Aur(elius) Celsus ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Verus, Aur(elius) Iulius ex be(neficiario) tr(ibuni), / [...] ex s]pec(ulatore), Aur(elius) Mucianus ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), Aur(elius) Valeria[nus] EM GN, Aur(elius) Maximus ex arc(ario), Aur(elius) Quintillianus, / [...] ex dup(lario), Aur(elius) Maximus ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), Aur(elius) Sabin[us...], Aur(elius) [...], Petr(onius) Marcianus ex lib(rario), / [...] ex] opt(ione), Aur(elius) Cassius ///IL, Sep(timius) Crisp(us) ex ca(n)d(idato), Aur(elius) Valerius ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), Aur(elius) Valentinus ex tub(icene), / [...] ex] opt(ione), Aur(elius) Lucius ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), Aur(elius) Lu[...] ex] dup(lario), Aur(elius) Domnio ex imm(une), Ael(ius) Maximia[nus] ex tess(erario), / [...] ex] dup(lario), Aur(elius) Agrippa ex c(ustode) a(rmorum), [...] ex] opt(ione), Aur(elius) Valerius, Sep(timius) Volusius, / [...] us vet(erano) ex b(ene)f(iciario) leg(ati) m[armo]ra ex suo posuit.

14-Suceagu. Calcareous stone votive slab. It is not preserved today.

Main references: *CIL* III, 7652; Sanie, 1981, p. 266, nº 56; *CODR* II, 115.

Bono Pue- / ro Firmi- / [n]ius Bellic- / us vet(eranus) ex c(ustode) [a(rmorum)?] / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

15-Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (Grădiște-Sarmizegetusa). Marble votive base of statue. It is preserved in the National Museum of Transylvanian History, in Cluj-Napoca.

Main references: *AnnÉp* 1983, 841; *ILD* II, p. 129, nº 264; *CODR* II, 117.

Numinibus prae- / sentissimis Apol- / lini et bono Puero / M(arcus) Aur(elius) Marcus, v(ir) e(gregius) / proc(urator) Aug(usti) n(ostr)i age(n)s / vice praesidis / Heraclida alumn- / us pro salute patro- / ni sui posuit

Abbreviations

AnnÉp

L'Année Épigraphique

<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CODR II</i>	Carbó García, J.R., 2010. <i>Los Cultos Orientales en la Dacia Romana</i> . Vol II: <i>Corpus Epigráfico</i> . Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.
<i>IDR</i>	<i>Inscripțiile Daciei Romane / Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae</i>
<i>ILD I</i>	Petolescu, C.C., 2005. <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> . I. Bucharest: Acad. Române.
<i>ILS</i>	Dessau, H., 1892-1916. <i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i> , Berlín I-III.
<i>RIC</i>	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i>

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A Greek *graffito* Discovered in the Sântana de Mureș-Chernyakhov Settlement from Negrilești, Galați County

Ana HONCU¹, Paul CIOBOTARU²

Abstract. *The paper publishes a Greek graffito on a Zeest 80 amphora, found in Negrilești, in the settlement of Sântana de Mureș- Chernyakhov culture. The words NAYKAEP(...) EAAHNION inscribed on the upper part of the amphora can be associated with primary content the transport process –loading the container on the ship at the place of origin of the content. The characteristics of the amphora and the inscription are connected with the oil supply in the province of Scythia. The information highlights the trade connections of the settlements from the Lower Danube with the eastern provinces of Roman Empire at the end of the 3rd century, the beginning of the 4th century AD.*

Rezumat. *Articolul propune restituirea unui graffito în limba greacă de pe o amforă Zeest 80, descoperită la Negrilești, în așezarea Sântana de Mureș- Cerneahov. Cele două cuvinte, NAYKAEP(---) EAAHNION inscripționate pe două rânduri pe partea superioară a amforei pot fi asociate cu prima etapă a procesului de transportare – încărcarea recipientului pe navă la locul de origine al conținutului. Caracteristicile amforei sunt legate de procesul de aprovizionare cu ulei în provincia Scythia Minor. Se evidențiază legăturile comerciale ale așezărilor de la Dunărea de Jos cu provinciile estice ale Imperiului Roman la sfârșitul secolului al III-lea- începutul secolului al IV-lea p. Chr.*

Keywords: amphora, Greek graffito, Barbaricum, Negrilești, Sântana de Mureș-Cerneakhov Culture.

The material discussed by us was discovered during the archaeological campaign carried out on the site belonging to the Sântana Mureș-Cerneakhov Culture from Negrilești in 2007 (Pl. 1). During the excavations was investigated the dwelling L1, in the vicinity of which was identified as a waste pit (Gr. 1). Four storage vessels and two Roman amphoras were recovered in its inventory.³ In the following lines we will briefly present the material discovered in pit G1 and we will turn our attention to a roman amphora belonging to the type Zeest 80. It drew our attention because on its neck was inscribed *post coctum*, a *graffito* written in Greek.

Storage vessels

¹ Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, odochiciuc.ana@gmail.com

² Tecuci Mixed Museum, paulciobotaru2008@yahoo.com

³ CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013, 33.

Together with the Roman *amphorae*, four storage vessels were recovered,⁴ of which one is half preserved (Pl. 3/12). The clay is coarse red-brown and has crushed ceramics and silver mica in composition. The body of the vessels is truncated conic, the base is a straight cut, the rim is curved (Pl. 3/8-9, 10) and it has a triangular rim with a shallow internal (Pl. 3/10). The neck can be decorated with an alveolate girdle. (Pl. 3/9)⁵.

Amphora of unknown centre type I⁶

The mouth is wide, 15.8/16 cm in diameter, the rim rounded, slightly upturned, the neck high, cylindrical, gradually widening towards the area of the maximum diameter of the amphora (Inv. 1745). The handles are large and oval in section, they grip below the lip and above the shoulders. The body is conical with slight grooves on its surface (Pl. 2/5-6). The clay is red (red 2.5YR 5/6-5/8 - Pl. 2/7), hard with limestone and iron oxide in the composition. Traces of beige-brown engobe/paint can be seen on the outer surface.

Amphora used to transport olive oil - Type Zeest 80⁷

This type of amphora has two variants and is distinctive for its comparatively oversized handles, which extend in a large curve from the shoulders to below the rim. The body is ovoid and commonly displays ridging; the neck is relatively wide and conical, while the rim is simple. The base consists of a short, solid spike. The early version dates back from the 2nd- 4th centuries AD.⁸ In the Lower Danube area, the amphora has a significant widespread, it being discovered at Callatis⁹, Halmyris, where it is dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD,¹⁰ Histria,¹¹ Argamum,¹² in the territory of Noviodunum at Telița Amza¹³ and Niculițel,¹⁴ and in the territory of Ibida¹⁵ (Kurt Baiir, Slava-Rusă-Coșari¹⁶ and Slava Rusă – Fântâna Seacă).¹⁷ They also appear in the northern Black Sea¹⁸ at Kartal in two variants, early and late¹⁹, as well as in the

⁴ CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013, 35, pl. 9.

⁵ Dimensions of the storage vessels: Pl. 3/8-9 Inv. 1740 – Hp = 96 cm, Dg = 35,20 cm, Db = 25,60 cm; Pl. 3/10 Inv. 2466 – Hp = 92 cm, Dg = 39,60 cm, Db = 25,60 cm; Pl. 3/11 Inv. 2467 – H = 82,40 cm, Dg = 34,40 cm, Db = 20 cm; Pl. 3/12 Inv. 2468 – H = 27,20 cm, Db = 18 cm.

⁶ CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013, 35, pl. 10 - fig. from the right, down.

⁷ Thanks to Ștefan Honcu for the identification of the material and the information provided.

⁸ PARASCHIV 2006, 86, type 40.

⁹ ICONOMU 1968, 247, fig. 12, 13.

¹⁰ OPAIȚ 1991, 136, cat. no. 30, pl. 4/30.

¹¹ SUCEVEANU 2000, 161, type LII, pl. 78/2.

¹² PARASCHIV 2006a, 305-306, type XV, cat. no. 37, 38, pl. III/37, 38.

¹³ BAUMANN 1995, 105, cat. no. 79, pl. LXX/2.

¹⁴ PARASCHIV 2014, 53, type Zeest 80, pl. 8/48.

¹⁵ PARASCHIV, MOCANU 2010, 539, pl. 3/8.

¹⁶ OPAIȚ, PARASCHIV 2013, 318.

¹⁷ Unpublished material, researched by Șt. Honcu and L. Munteanu.

¹⁸ KRAPIVINA 1993, 99, type 32, fig. 30/22-24; BURAKOV 1976, 72, type 10, pl. III/8, 8a-b.

¹⁹ BRUYAKO, DZIGOVSKIY, DENISYUK 2011, 338, fig. 2 early variant, 337 fig. 1 late variant.

western part of the Empire at Brindisi and Trigeste.²⁰ In the eastern part of the Empire, such vessels were found at Knossos²¹ and Athens.²² It also appears at Ephesus in a context dated start to the beginning of the 3rd century AD.²³

Zeest 80 amphora discovered at Negrilești²⁴ (Teodor Cincu History Museum Tecuci, Inv. no.²⁵ = 1744) in the settlement of Sântana de Mureș-Cerneahov culture²⁶ was briefly discussed on the publication of the material about the local site. The amphora has the following dimensions and characteristics: Rd = 15,8 cm Hp. = 71,5cm, (Pl. 2/1-2) the clay is red (red 2.5YR 5/6-5/8) with a dark-reddish gray core (dark-reddish gray 2.5YR 4/1 – Pl. 2/4), silver mica and limestone in composition. A Greek *graffito* (Pl. 2/3) was executed *post coctum* on the neck of the amphora and inscribed in two lines. Our amphora could be date back in the mid-3rd century AD or maybe later.

Recently, A. Opaîţ²⁷ inclines toward a north Aegean origin of this amphora type.²⁸ He agrees with the older opinion of V. Swan that suggested its provenance in the area of the Sea of Marmara or the Dardanelles. At least one of the workshops of this type should be located in the area of Kyzikos, and other possible manufacturing centers may be located in Zeytinliada and Thessaly.²⁹ Their large capacity (between 60-80l and even 100 l) seems to suggest the content of the oil.³⁰

The oil was *species annonaria* the most demanded, because olive oil was used as food, as fuel for lighting, as an ingredient for paint, soap, cosmetics, and ointments. During the Severian period, the olive oil became part of the *annona* (ordinary food distribution).³¹ Free olive oil distribution was continued under Elagabalus, then resumed under Severus Alexander.³² Other mentions date from the time of Aurelianus.³³ In the 4th century, free oil distribution (*canon urbicarius olei*) continued, the oil being produced by the Hispanic provinces, but especially by

²⁰ AURIEMMA, DEGRASSI, QUIRI 2015, 150, fig. 4 – Brindisi, fig. 3 – Trigeste.

²¹ HAYES 1983, 155, type 38, fig. 25/89-90.

²² ROBINSON 1959, 69, pl. 40, K115.

²³ BEZECZKY 2013, 173-174, type 60, pl. 48/625.

²⁴ CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013, 35, pl.10 photo from the top left.

²⁵ Abbreviations used in the text: Inv. no. = Inventory number, Rd = Rim diameter, Hp = Height preserved.

²⁶ See the context of the discovery in CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013. In their conclusions, the article's authors mention the existence of imported ceramics (CIUBOTARU, ILIE 2013, 45, pl. 10).

²⁷ OPAÎŢ 2023, 160-161.

²⁸ OPAÎŢ, PARASCHIV 2013, 325. See more recently Opaîţ 2023, 161.

²⁹ OPAÎŢ 2023, 161.

³⁰ OPAÎŢ 1996, 68.

³¹ HA 18.3.

³² DE SALVO 1992, 184; HA Hel. 27.7; HA Sev. Al. 22.1-2.

³³ HA Aur. 35, 1-2.

Africa.³⁴ In the province of Schythia Minor, olive oil continue to be imported predominantly from the Aegean and Peloponnesian areas.³⁵

Graffiti on amphorae is a separate category of inscriptions on ceramic vessels. Amphorae were functionally different from other types of vessels: they were intended, first, for transportation, as well as for storing goods, mainly wine and olive oil. Therefore, the inscriptions on amphorae had a commercial or economic character: names and characteristics of the transported or stored products, volumes, and masses or their contents; names of people associated with trade, amphorae owners, and buyers.³⁶ Since most *graffiti* on the amphorae were intended for a narrow circle of people working in the field of trade and who knew this terminology, they were words, usually abbreviated up to one or three letters. The purpose was to have an efficient means of checking in the complex organizational and transportation structure.³⁷ No less laconic are those inscriptions made for internal use, for example, by the owner of the house or shop owner. These *graffiti* were written in cursive script, and rustic capitals were used.

The *graffito* on the Zeest 80 amphora from Negrileşti was written in two rows in Greek capitals, on the amphora neck.

Legend:

1. NAYKAEP

2. EAAHNKON

Reading this small inscription allows several hypotheses. First, we note that the letters are legible and have been preserved entirely. The first word, *naukler(os)*, is part of the Greek terminology relating to people in the sphere of commercial relations (*emporos*, *naukleros*, *nautikoī*).³⁸ We will try to clarify the term *naukleros*. However, of course, the definition needs to reach a consensus. If we follow P. Chantraine,³⁹ the word ναυκλήρος, which was later latinized into *nauklerus/naularius*, when into *navicularius* under the Principate, designates a "shipowner", who can also command the ship and who rents it to transport people and goods". J. Vélissaropoulos⁴⁰ insisted on the meaning of *naukleros*, and defines as "ship's masters", as it appears in literary sources from the classical and Hellenistic periods.⁴¹ More precisely, the author gives a more exhaustive definition of this function: *naukleros* can be a shipowner, therefore both owner and operator, a charterer, or even an agent of the owner.⁴² From the

³⁴ DE SALVO 1992, 185.

³⁵ For the import of olive oil in Lower Danube area see: OPAIT 2023.

³⁶ NAMOJLIK 2010, 397.

³⁷ MILLET 2019, 125-126.

³⁸ BOUNEGRU 2006, 33-57, BOUNEGRU 2008, 193-196.

³⁹ CHANTRAINE 1984, 736-737.

⁴⁰ VÉLISSAROPOULOS 1980, 13.

⁴¹ Aeschyl, *The Suppliants*, 176-177; Herodot, *The Histories*, IV, 152; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, VII, 2, 12.

⁴² Owner, captain, and operator.

point of view of the operation of the ship, *naukleros* appears both as a carrier of goods belonging to different shippers, and as a carrier of his own goods, thus acting both as a transport entrepreneur and as a trader.⁴³ P. Arnaud shows that the meaning of the word under the Roman Empire meant the person who operated the boat, not the one who owned it.⁴⁴ In the later Roman Empire, the *navicularius* is not necessarily a person who sails on board, but rather the shipowner who placed his ships at the service of the *annona*, under the command of a *magister navis*.⁴⁵ Ultimately, as O. Bounegru pointed out, the translation of the term *naukleros* "was a combination of ancient and modern concepts which could hardly account for the functions exercised by these characters, these having been modified and adapted to various missions according to the regions and the chronological contexts".⁴⁶ Finally, we can conclude that the exact meaning actually varies not only through time but also in the documentary contexts where it is used.⁴⁷

Concerning the meaning of Ἑλληνικός, ἡ, ὄν, the dictionary gives us the following explanation: Hellenic, Greek; τὸ Ἑλληνικόν - Greek race, Greek army, Greek character, and Greek manners.⁴⁸ In *Politicus* 262 Plato takes issue with a classification that divides humanity into two parts, τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, the Greeks, on the one hand, and on the other all the peoples that designated by a single name: "barbarians". For the name Ἕλλην ("The Greek"), LGPN database attests to fifteen occurrences— a scarce name elsewhere in the Greek world.⁴⁹ L. Robert thought that it was a name carried by the Greeks to affirm their Greek identity among the barbarians⁵⁰. Judging from the onomastic context, M. Dana and D. Dana consider, on the contrary, that it would be rather a name chosen by a native, who became "The Greek".⁵¹ In other words, "The Greek" could very well designate the Hellenized natives, a new category of "Greeks", recalling, in another register (namely, onomastic) the legal and tax status of the "Hellenes" in Egypt.⁵² Ἑλληνικός as a proper name is attested twice, in a *graffito* from Dura-Europos⁵³, and on a mosaic from Cyprus⁵⁴ (Pl. 4/13).

Starting from these explanations, we propose the following options for reading and restoring the inscription. NAYKΛEP[...] in the first line can be completed in four ways. The first

⁴³ VÉLISSAROPOULOS 1980, 50.

⁴⁴ ARNAUD 2020, 379-382.

⁴⁵ ARNAUD 2020, 385.

⁴⁶ BOUNEGRU 2006, 33-57.

⁴⁷ ARNAUD 2020, 382.

⁴⁸ BAILLY 1935, 648.

⁴⁹ <http://clas-igpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/name/%E1%BF%9E%CE%95%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%B7%CE%BD>,
09.02.2023.

accessed

⁵⁰ "Le nom semble presque particulier à la Thrace" (ROBERT 1959, 165-236).

⁵¹ DANA, DANA 2013, 291.

⁵² DANA, DANA 2013, 291, footnote 38.

⁵³ SEG 7, 710.

⁵⁴ MICHAELIDES 1987, 23 mosaic 21.

hypothesis would be recognizing the non-ending accusative case of ΝΑΥΚΛΕΡΟΣ (in ancient Greek, we usually have ΝΑΥΚΛΗΡΟΣ, but sometimes in Greek inscriptions Η/eta is rendered by Ε/epsilon), namely ναυκλήρ(ον). The second word could be the adjective ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ in the accusative case. We could translate "from naukleros Ellenikos", or "for naukleros Ellenikos". There is no verb in the text of which the name is a direct object, but it is easy to understand such a verb; that is the reason for the choice of accusative case. The second version of reading the inscription could be the plural *naukleroi*, and the second term would be the genitive plural ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ (with Ο instead of Ω; n.b. they knew that it was Ω, noted usually as Ο) of the adjective ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ. If so, the *graffito* we will have ναυκλήρων Ἑλληνικῶν, and the translation would be "of Greek naukleroi".⁵⁵

We can exemplify this with some inscriptions where the *naukleroi* identified themselves by an ethnicon: ναύκληρος Αίγεαίος (from Aigea; it is generally a mistake to have two *iotas* with accents in the same word), Κωρυκιώτης ναύκληρος (Cilicia Trachea),⁵⁶ θεόκτιστος ναόκληρος (sic with ο, instead of υ), Λύκιος (probably the ethnic Lycian).⁵⁷ At Puteoli two funerary inscriptions in honour of two naukleroi from Corycus use the two forms Κωρυκιώτης ναύκληρος and ναύκληρον Κωρυκιώτην,⁵⁸ while an inscription from Nicomedia mention ναύκληρος Νεικομηδεύς.⁵⁹

The third proposed option would provide for the restoration of the word ναυκλήριον (sing. Neut.),⁶⁰ which means a ship of a ναύκληρος. In this case, we will have ναυκλήριον Ἑλληνικόν (Greek nave) like πλοῖον ἑλληνικόν.⁶¹

We can also propose the mention of a ναυκληρία (f. sing.), which could refer to "shipowning".⁶² The restoration of the inscription would require the use of plural genitive: ναυκληριῶν Ἑλληνικῶν (in the *graffito* with Ο instead of Ω). *Naukleria* are therefore, associations of shipowners and navigators put in the service of the State but which also carried out transport for personal purposes.⁶³

As far as we know, the specialized literature does not cite any identical *graffito* to our inscription⁶⁴. *Graffiti* attesting *naukleroi* and *nautai* were discovered in the North Pontic region,

⁵⁵ Like Koinon of Beirutian Poseidoniasts, Merchants, Shippers and Warehousemen (τὸ κοινὸν Βηρυτίων Ποσειδωνιαστῶν ἐμπόρων καὶ ναυκλήρων καὶ ἐγδοχέων). Tyrians established the 'Koinon of Tyrian Heraklesiasts, Merchants and Shippers' (Τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Τυρίων Ἑρακλειστῶν ἐμπόρων καὶ ναυκλήρων (VERBOVEN 2020, 338).

⁵⁶ ROBERT, ROBERT 1958, 353.

⁵⁷ ROBERT, ROBERT 1958, 362.

⁵⁸ IG XIV, 841.

⁵⁹ ARNAUD 2020, 412.

⁶⁰ POxy. 87.7 (IV century AD).

⁶¹ ARNAUD, 2015 128.

⁶² REED 2003, 123.

⁶³ BOUNEGRU 2004, 66.

⁶⁴ *Graffiti* with numbers on Zeest 80 *amphorae* were thoroughly analyzed and described by ILYASENKO 2014; see also BELÂEV 1961, 127-143; TOLSTOJ 1953.

in the Chersonese *chora* and Donuzlav Bay. First of them is a dedicatory *graffito* on three shards from an *amphora* or jug, which was found in the Chaika settlement and dates in the 3rd century BC.⁶⁵ It recorded a gift offering to God [...] by the *naukleroi* and sailors (*nautai*) for a safe voyage and arrival in the harbor. The author of the *graffito* wrote in *Koine*, and not in the Dorian dialect, which was spoken in Tauric Chersonese and its rural periphery, including the northwestern Crimeea. Therefore, the sailors who made this consecration were not natives of Chersonese.⁶⁶ The second is a *graffito* on the body of an *amphora* dated in the 1st century AD and discovered during the excavations in the South-Donuzlav settlement in the northwestern Crimeea: Κόνον(ος) ναυτικῶν – "Conon's amphora from/of sailors".⁶⁷ We would also mention the *graffito* of Frumușița (middle of the 5th century BC). The Greek inscription NAY was scratched on the Attic *kylix*, which can be an abbreviation of a proper name, for example, of the owner of the vessel, but also of some qualifications found directly related to commercial activity at sea such as ναυκληρία, ναύκληρος.⁶⁸

In order to restore the most important elements of trade relations in the western Pontic Basin, the treatment of the epigraphic sources is meaningful. Among the western Pontic cities, Tomis has the richest list of epigraphic evidence of the activities of *naukleroi*. The first category of inscriptions contains evidence of local *naukleroi*. Should be mentioned two Tomitan *naukleroi*, one unknown⁶⁹ and Theokritos, son of Theokritos.⁷⁰ Another interesting case is that Hermogenes, a major shipowner, who, thanks to the vast commercial activity in the western Pontic area and Asia Minor, gained dual citizenship of Tomis and Fabia Ankyra.⁷¹ The *naukleroi* were organized in *oikos*-type associations.⁷² This system of a large union of *naukleroi* in Tomis⁷³ has been attested only in a few towns on the Bithynian coast,⁷⁴ and it indicates the existence of a typical trading area in the region mentioned.⁷⁵

Most of the *naukleroi* appear in inscriptions in various associative forms. In Greece and adjacent islands, they are attested in the Aegean islands, Cyprus, Ephesus, Ios, Samothrace, Cyzicus; in the province of Macedonia, Thracia, Moesia Inferior etc.⁷⁶ PHI inscriptions

⁶⁵ Εὐχαρ[ιστήρια] / [ναυκλ]ήροι Θεὸν [.....] / οἱ περὶ [.....]]υχον / κατὰ εὐτυχῆ? πλό]ον ναῦ/ται εὐχῆι? κατ' εἵσπλο]υν (SAPRYKIN 2015, 128-129).

⁶⁶ SAPRYKIN 2015, 129.

⁶⁷ DAŠEVSKAĀ 197, 51–53.

⁶⁸ PETRESCU-DÎMBOVIȚĂ 1953, 497-511.

⁶⁹ BĂRBULESCU, BUZOIANU 2009, 398-407; ISM II, 291.

⁷⁰ ISM II, 186.

⁷¹ ISM II, 375.

⁷² DANA 2013, 62.

⁷³ DANA 2013, 62; ISM II, 60; ISM II, 132.

⁷⁴ BOUNEGRU 2000, 130.

⁷⁵ BOUNEGRU 2000, 126.

⁷⁶ DE SALVO 1992, 450-452.

database⁷⁷ gives us the following classification of inscriptions attesting *naukleroï* or *corpora* in our area of interest:

Attica (IG I-III)	15
Peloponnesos (IG IV-VI)	1
Central Greece (IG VII-IX)	4
Northern Greece (IG X)	3
Thrace and the Lower Danube (IG X)	9
North Shore of the Black Sea	4
Aegean Islands, incl. Crete (IG XI-XIII)	62

We, therefore, observe an abundance of them in the Aegean islands, the area of provenance of the Zeest 80 amphora and probably its content.

Based on the reading and the restoration of our *graffito*, a significant conclusion can be drawn about the commercial activity and provincial society at the end of the 3rd century, the beginning of the 4th century AD. In this period, some Greek traditions are preserved, not only in material culture - the use of old transport containers, but also spiritual - the Greek language is preserved. EΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΝ is most likely associated with the first stages of the trading process - loading onto the ship at the place of origin of the content (maybe in the north Aegean zones).

The amphora could have reached Barbaricum as part of the illicit trade that was taking place in the border area of the province of Scythia, possibly via the center of Noviodunum, by waterway, and further to the site of Negrileşti. This hypothesis is supported by ancient written sources that mention the illicit trade practiced by commanders and soldiers in garrisons on the Danubian *limes* of the province of Scythia Minor with the Barbarians.⁷⁸ An additional reason is also the presence of another type of amphora made, most probably, for Barbarian trade in the Noviodunum workshops.⁷⁹

Finally yet importantly, the *graffito* is a proof of the functioning of the port of Tomis in this period. The geographical distribution of the inscriptions that mention *corpora* of *naukleroï* and individual *naukleroï* determined P. Arnaud to conclude about the activity of ports and port hierarchies.⁸⁰ He observes what some ports emerge only from the lists of recorded *corpora* and *collegia*. In contrast, African and Levantine ports were totally or almost

⁷⁷ <https://inscriptions.packhum.org/>

⁷⁸ BARNEA 1967, 567, HONCU, MAMALAUCA 2021, 119.

⁷⁹ HONCU, MAMALAUCA 2021.

⁸⁰ ARNAUD 2020, 419-420.

absent from the lists until the later Roman Empire. On the other hand, Nicomedia, with sixteen *naukleroi* and one mention of the house of the *naukleroi* stands above all other ports, followed only, far behind, by Narbo and Arelate. Salona, Tomis, and Sinope have provided evidence for the existence of known *corpora*, *collegia*, or houses of shippers.⁸¹

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Caption

Pl. 1. Location of the Negrilești site

Pl. 2. Roman amphorae discovered at Negrilești. 1-2 photo, drawing, 3 - detail with *graffito*, 4-Zeest 80 – close up, 5-6 photo, drawing - unknow amphora type, 7 – close up

Pl. 3. Storage vessels discovered at Negrilești site

Pl. 4. Mosaic from Cyprus which attested the name Ἑλληνικός

Abbreviation

ABSA - Annual of the British School at Athens.

Acta Musei Tutovensis. Istorie veche și arheologie, Bârlad.

Bosporskie čtenia, Kerch.

Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique Supplément, Athens, École Française d'Athènes.

CIRB- Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani. Leningrad.

Drevnosti Bospora - Antiquities of the Bosporus.

Kratkie Soobšeniâ Instituta arheologii, Moskow.

IG- Inscriptiones Graecae

ISM I - Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine = Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae.

ISM II - Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine = Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae.

LGPN – Lexicon of Greek Personal Name

LRCW, 6, Archaeopress - LRCW 6: Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry Land and Sea: Pottery Routes, Eds. V. Caminnecki, E. Giannitrapani, M. C. Parelllo, M. S. Rizzo.

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⁸¹ BOUNEGRU 2006b, 419.

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Pontica, Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța.
RCRF Acta - Rei Cretariae Romanae Fautorum Acta, Archaeopress Journal.
REG - Revue des Études Grecques, Les Belles Lettres, Paris.
RPLHA - Revue de Philologie de Littérature et d'Histoire Anciennes, Paris.
SAA – Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași.
SCIV(A) – Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche (și Arheologie), București.
Scripta Antiqua, Bordeaux.
SCȘt. - Studii și cercetări științifice, Iași.
SEG - Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

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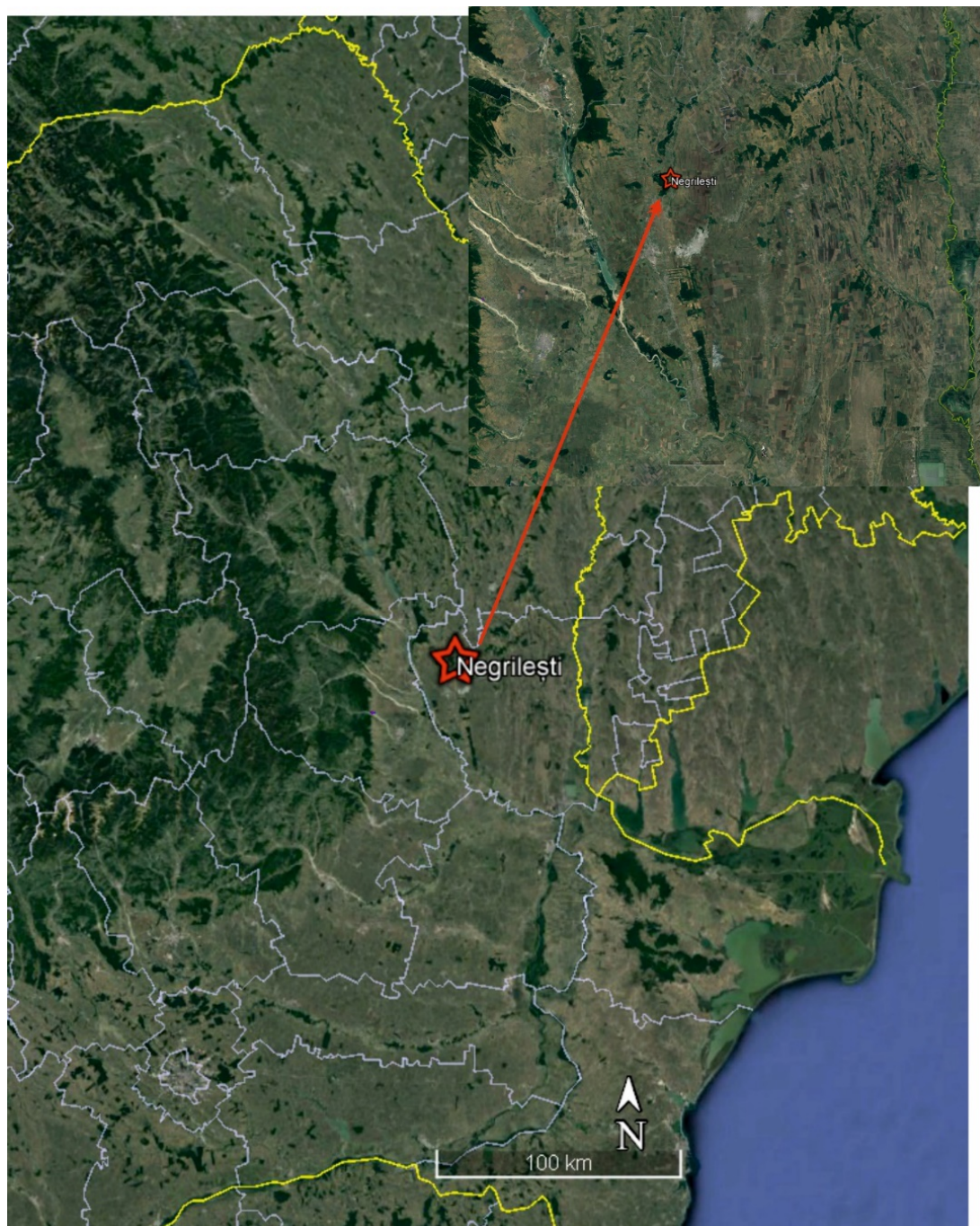
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Pl. 1. Location of the Negrilesti site



Pl. 2. Roman amphorae discovered at Negrileşti. 1-2 photo, drawing, 3 - detail with graffiti, 4-Zeest 80 - close up, 5-6 photo, drawing - unknow amphora type, 7 - close up



Pl. 3. Storage vessels discovered at Negrileşti site



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Pl. 4. Mosaic from Cyprus who attested the name 'Ελληνικός



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“People in Dark Times”: Damascius on Political Persecution and the Philosophical Way of Life

Eugene AFONASIN¹

Abstract. *The Neoplatonic philosophers developed a complicated and quite ingenious concept of the grades of virtue, starting with such common human virtues, as the natural, ethical and political, and finishing which those attainable only by the real seekers of the highest truth, such as the purificatory, contemplative, paradigmatic, and hieratic. In the paper I trace the evolution of the Neoplatonic grades of virtue by means of the select passages from Damascius' “Philosophical History,” which deal specifically with the character of Damascius' revered teacher. The life of Isidore is presented by his student as an ascent along the path of Neoplatonic perfection, moreover, by chance or not, but in the surviving fragments of this work, which tells about many remarkable philosophers and theurgists, it is Isidore who ultimately attains the last seventh degree of virtue. Possessing outstanding personal qualities and even the gift of the seer, he was a teacher of the Socratic type, most eager to help students achieve the purificatory virtues that alone determine the further path of philosophical perfection. The position of Damascius and his attitude to the philosophical way of life is further illustrated by a series of lively portraits of Athenian and Alexandrian philosophers of his time.*

Rezumat. *Filosofii neoplatonici au dezvoltat o concepție complicată și destul de ingenioasă a gradelor virtuții, începând cu virtuțile omenești comune, cum ar fi cele naturale, etice și politice, și terminând pe care cele atinse numai de către adevărații căutători ai adevărului cel mai înalt, cum ar fi cele purificatoare. În această lucrare urmăresc evoluția gradelor de virtute neoplatonice prin intermediul pasajelor selectate din „Istoria filozofică” a lui Damascius, care se ocupă în mod specific de personajul veneratului profesor al lui Damascius. Viața lui Isidor este prezentată de elevul său ca o ascensiune pe calea perfecțiunii neoplatonice. În fragmentele care s-au păstrat, Isidor este cel care ajunge în cele din urmă la. ultimul grad de virtute. Posedând calități personale remarcabile și chiar darul viziunii, el a fost un profesor de tip socratic, cel mai dornic să-i ajute pe elevi să atingă virtuțile purificatoare. Poziția lui Damascius și atitudinea sa față de modul de viață filosofic este ilustrată în continuare printr-o serie de portrete pline de viață ale filozofilor atenieni și alexandrini din timpul său.*

Keywords: virtues, truth, purification, education, Neoplatonic school.

A philosopher in antiquity is first of all the exponent of a certain way of life: Cynical, Stoic, Epicurean, Platonic.² The Neoplatonist philosophers were no exception, turning in the eyes of their biographers into true paragons of perfection, whose virtues (ἀρεταί) were manifested at all levels of the multi-layered Neoplatonist universum.

¹Email: afonasin@gmail.com

² There is abundant evidence of this in various biographies, the earliest of which date back to the time of Plato and Aristotle. Philosophical biography as a genre must go back to the Peripatetic school, in particular to the works of Aristotle's disciple Dicaearchus (Fr. 33-52 Mirhady). For details, cf. Stefan Schorn (2018).

The idea of degrees of virtues was clearly formulated by Plotinus in a special treatise (*Ennead* 1.2 [19]; O'Meara 2019). Porphyry reformulated it in *Sentences* 32 and practically realized it in the biographies of Pythagoras and Plotinus, in which both the ancient philosopher and the teacher of Porphyry himself appear as perfect sages, who by their moral qualities far surpassed the ordinary representatives of the human race. Iamblichus also devoted a special work to degrees of virtue, which unfortunately did not come down to us, and wrote a treatise about the Pythagorean way of life, which opens the cycle of his Pythagorean works. Marinus wrote a biography of his teacher Proclus, Olympiodorus returned to the origins of the tradition and produced a short biography of Plato, and Damascius offered a wide panorama of Neoplatonic life in his *Philosophical History*.³

The cardinal virtues of the ideal citizen, which Plato discusses in the *Republic*, such as prudence, courage, self-control and justice, are supplemented by Plotinus with more perfect, purifying ones. Their task is to bring the soul to intelligence, in order to discover in it the paradigms of each of these virtues. Porphyry develops his teacher's idea and speaks of four kinds of virtues – civic (πολιτικά), purificatory (καθαρτικά), contemplative (θεωρητικά) and paradigmatic (παράδειγματικά).⁴

The civic (or social) virtues, which cultivate the four cardinal virtues, are designed to curb all kinds of desires peculiar to the body. The purificatory virtues enable the next step to be taken, that is, a complete distraction from all carnal desires, which in turn enables the philosopher in the third step to direct all attention to the mind, and in the fourth step to achieve "union with its essence" (*Sentences* 32.70-82). Clearly purification plays a key role in this process. The success of the whole enterprise depends directly on it, for the purificatory virtues "are acquired only in this life," and only through them is "ascent to higher" degrees of them possible. Know thyself, comprehend that you are "a soul bound in a foreign thing," says Porphyry, and you will make the right step on the path of purification. Only then will you be able to "collect yourself, also spatially, from the body, acquiring a perfectly impartial disposition toward it" (*Sentences* 32.100-105). In this way you succeed in getting rid, as far as possible, of the cares, sufferings, and

³ The full text of Damascius' work has not survived, but it was available to Patriarch Photius (ninth century), who described it as 'not so much a biography of Isidore as an account of other men, both his predecessors and contemporaries.' He quotes and retells excerpts from these accounts in various places in his monumental *Library* (first selecting some biographical accounts and then going back to the beginning of the essay and using those sections that he liked for literary reasons). He also notes that the book consisted of about 60 chapters and was too large to be considered a biography. In the *Suda* (tenth century) our work is called *Philosophical History* and is used as a source for examples of the use of various words and expressions as well as for biographical articles. In a number of instances the information from Photius and the *Suda* overlaps. Fragments of Damascius' work were first collected and translated into German by Rudolf Asmus (1911). On the basis of this work Clemens Zintzen (1967) published them half a century later. Finally, Polymnia Athanassiadi (1999) has again studied and systematized the evidence available to us. This translation of selected passages from the *Philosophical History* is based on that publication.

⁴ Porphyry, *Sentences* 32.1-5. For a commented edition and translation, cf. Brisson 2005, vol. 2, esp. 628-642.

experiences that prevent you from ascending to a higher level, and attain the tranquility of the soul necessary for contemplation.

The scheme is further developed by Iamblichus, who gives each of the levels of virtue a specific name and adds three more to Porphyry's four levels. These virtues, in ascending order from level to level, are as follows: natural (φυσικαί), ethical (ἠθικαί), civic (πολιτικάί), purificatory (καθαρτικάί), contemplative (θεωρητικάί), paradigmatic (παραδειγματικάί), hieratic or theurgic (ιερατικάί / θεουργικάί).

The special treatise of Iamblichus on the virtues, as already noted, has not come down to us, but his theory is reconstructed on the basis of the reports of Marinus, Damascius, and Olympiodorus. Marinus lists the levels of the virtues in the biography of his teacher, stopping specifically at the contemplative and noting that the others are already beyond ordinary human abilities (*Life of Proclus* 3.1-7). The theurgic ones are mentioned further on in the biography, while Marinus directly links the establishment of this level of virtues to Iamblichus (26.20-22). The term "paradigmatic" is not used at all. Quite on the contrary, our other source, Olympiodorus (Commentary on Plato's *Phaedo* 1.8.2-3 Westerink), leaves out the hieratic virtues, which has given rise to the assumption that only Damascius placed the paradigmatic virtues between the contemplative and the hieratic (Commentary on Plato's *Phaedo* 1.138-144 Westerink).⁵ In contrast, John Finamore, in a special study, insists that the entire seven-part scheme goes back directly to Iamblichus (Finamore 2012, 124-129).

Natural virtues such as well-developed senses, physical endurance, and good health are given to us from birth (συμφύοντα, *Life of Proclus* 4.5), but each individual seeker of perfection does not receive them quite by accident. Proclus, as Marinus notes, was one of those rare beings who "did not drink the cup of oblivion" (5.6-7),⁶ that is, who in rebirth managed to choose the philosophical way of life. Damascius says the same about natural virtues (Commentary on *Phaedo* 1.138.4), noting further that ethical virtues are just the opposite, acquired by man in the process of education and belong to both the rational and irrational parts of the soul (εἰσὶ δὲ ὁμοῦ λόγου τε καὶ ἀλογίας, *ibid.* 139. 4), whereas the civic virtues use the rational part of the soul to order the irrational (λόγου κοσμοῦντος τὴν ἀλογίαν ὡς ὄργανον ἑαυτοῦ, *ibid.* 140.2).

In this new and more developed scheme, the purifying virtues are again intended, according to Olympiodorus, to free oneself from emotions and experiences, whereas the contemplative ones only take effect after the soul has managed to "escape" (πεφεύγασιν) from them altogether (Commentary on *Phaedo* 8.2.12). Or, according to Damascius, our being through them "aspires to the mind rather than to the soul" (Commentary on *Phaedo* 1.142.3). In this respect they are intermediate in character and have value only insofar as they lead to the

⁵ Westerink 1976, vol. 1, 117–118; Saffrey, Segonds 2002, xciii–xcviii.

⁶ According to his biographer, he remembered that he was a link in the "Hermaic chain" and that the soul of the Pythagorean Nicomachus lived in him (*Life of Proclus* 28). Damascius says the same of Isidore (*Philosophical History*, fr. 5, cf. fr. 13).

paradigmatic virtues inherent in the mind itself (διὸ καὶ αὗται παραδειγματικά, ὅτι προηγουμένως αὐτοῦ εἰσιν τοῦ νοῦ αἱ ἀρεταί, *ibid.* 143.4).

On the connection between the paradigmatic virtues and the higher, theurgic virtues we read in Olympiodorus (Commentary on *Phaedo* 8.2. 19-20), who states that theurgy is precisely designed to solve the main task of Neoplatonic philosophy, which is to ensure the union of our mind with the intelligible essences (καὶ φιλοσοφίας μὲν ἔργον νοῦν ἡμᾶς ποιῆσαι, θεουργίας δὲ ἐνῶσαι ἡμᾶς τοῖς νοητοῖς, ὡς ἐνεργεῖν παραδειγματικῶς). Marinus (*Life of Proclus* 22.8-15) describes a similar process. According to him, naturally endowed with excellent gifts, Proclus was quickly transformed from a thyrsus-bearer into a true Bacchante (Plato's metaphor: *Phaedo* 69c), from discursive and evidential cognition making the ascent to contemplation of the paradigms of the divine mind (τὰ ἐν τῷ θειῷ νῷ παραδείγματα), gaining on this path a virtue that could be called not reason but wisdom or even something more than that.

The path to this supremely indescribable and super-intelligent state has, in a way, a providential character. Damascius relates it directly to πρόνοια (Commentary on *Phaedo* 28.6).⁷ A central episode in Proclus' biography also illustrates this well. According to the biographer (*Life of Proclus* 29), wishing to help a girl named Asclepigeneia, the philosopher visited the temple of Asclepius, which at that time was living out its last days and had already been destroyed by Christians in the days of Marinus.⁸ As soon as he addressed a prayer to the Savior “in the ancient manner,”⁹ a miracle took place and the girl recovered. This event was important for the preservation of the Neoplatonic school continuity because the rescued girl was the granddaughter of another Asclepigeneia, the daughter of Proclus' teacher Plutarch, and later became the wife of Archon Theagenes (who later provided considerable assistance to the Academy) and the mother of the future scholarch of the Academy, Hegias (Damascius, *Philosophical History*, fr. 63B and 145 Athanassiadi). It can be assumed that, according to his

⁷ Which points to unity at the highest level of the Neoplatonic universe, the level of the Henads. For more details, see Finamore 2012, 127, who, with reference to Saffrey, *Segonds* 2002, 153 n. 1, also notes the equivalence in this place of πρόνοια and πρὸ νοῦ. However, the term can also be understood in a more familiar sense as a foresight or even a foreknowledge of the future. For a recent work on the Henads theory, see. Mesyats 2012.

⁸ The temple of Asclepius was situated on the southern slope of the Acropolis, next to the temple of Dionysus and close to the house which, as Marinus reports here, belonged to Proclus' teacher Plutarch and in which both Plutarch's successor as head of the Academy, Syrian, and Proclus himself later lived. For more on this house, see Frantz 1988, 43 sq., Castrén 1991, 475 sq., Camp 1990, Karivieri 1994, Saffrey, *Segonds* 2002, 34, Edwards 2000, 104, and our article _____. On the significance of Asclepius (as well as Athena and other gods) for Proclus' philosophy, see. _____. An excellent biography of Proclus is Wildberg 2017.

⁹ Prayer in the ancient manner is, of course, an example of the application of that secret “Chaldean” knowledge which was passed on to Proclus by Asclepigeneia the elder, Plutarch's daughter. It is noteworthy that the knowledge of Chaldean rituals which Plutarch received from his father or grandfather, the “great” Nestorius, was passed on not to his son but to his daughter, perhaps, as John Dillon suggests (Dillon 2007, 123 n. 16), because his son Hierius, though a philosopher, was not well suited for it. See also Brisson 2017.

biographer, Proclus as a “theurgist” was not simply seeking to thank the family of his mentor, but also “foresaw” the consequences of his action.

By calling the philosopher a Bacchante, Plato, according to Damascius (Commentary on *Phaedo* 1.172), sought to show that anyone who succeeds in distracting himself from the process of becoming, as it were, wears the robes of both philosopher and theurgist. It is true, notes the Neoplatonist, that among the philosophers of the school there are those who prefer philosophy (such are Plotinus and Porphyry), and those who are more inclined to theurgy (such are Iamblichus, Syrian, Proclus and other “hieratics”).

As head of the Platonic school, Damascius must have felt it his duty to show the way to restore the balance which had been lost, and, yielding to the requests of his students and especially of Theodora, an enlightened lady who, like Iamblichus, came from a noble Syrian family, compiled a biography of his teacher Isidore, placing it in the broad context of the philosophical life of his time.

Like Proclus in his biography of Marinus, Isidore retains some personality traits in Damascius' memoirs, but on the whole he appears as a kind of role model whose virtues are perfect on all levels of the Neoplatonic universe. Unfortunately, the text of the biography has not survived in its entirety, but the fragments that have survived, as Dominic O'Meara (2006) has shown, make it possible to discern traces of the same methodology in Damascius' work as in Marinus'. The life of Isidore is also presented by his disciple as a path of ascent along the path of Neoplatonic perfection, and, coincidentally or not, in the surviving fragments of this work, which recounts many remarkable philosophers and theurgists, the final seventh degree of virtues is apparently attained ultimately only by Isidore. Possessing outstanding personal qualities and even the gift of vision, he was a teacher of the Socratic type (fr. 37 et al.), most of all eager to help his students achieve the purificatory virtues (fr. 38B et al.), which determine, as we know, the further path of philosophical perfection.

II

Damascus saw Athens as a haven, a refuge from the political battles of Constantinople and the fury of the religious fanatics of Alexandria, although here too the great legacy of Plato faded in the hands of unprincipled orators and narrow-minded commentators, who continued to pursue their own objectives. In this respect Christianity seemed more a symptom than a cause of the decline of an ancient tradition in need of rethinking and revival than ever before. The success that accompanied Damascius in this enterprise and the unprecedented rise in the prestige of philosophical education in Athens led to his imminent collapse – the ban on the teaching of philosophy under the imperial decree of 529. At the beginning of the sixth century, a young and ambitious philosopher, who had received a versatile rhetorical and philosophical education at the famous Horapollon school in Alexandria and who had fled from there with his teacher Isidore to escape persecution by Christian fanatics, sought to revive the school –

spiritually and physically,¹⁰ gathering in Athens, according to Agathius Scholasticus, the best minds of "the whole Hellenic world" (*On the reign of Justinian* 2.30.3).

It is in this context that the treatise we are studying arises, having been created, it may be assumed, in the first decade of the sixth century, in the early stages of Damascius' public career, seeking not only to secure the place for his school in the academic tradition of Platonism, but also to define the goals that this new educational institution had for itself. It is also possible that the biographical material Damascus presented in his work was reinterpreted by him gradually as events unfolded, including the ones that took place after the closure of the school and the forced journey of the Athenian Platonists to Persia.

The text of the *Philosophical History* has not reached us and is reconstructed on the basis of excerpts from later compilations, so its original composition cannot be reconstructed. Polymnia Athanassiadi (1999) divides the fragments into several sections. First come a few introductory notes on Hellenistic Egypt (ff. 1-4); the next section gathers those passages which enable to make a portrait of Isidore, the teacher of Damascus (ff. 5-38), followed by a series of sections which constitute the "philosophical history" proper, both in Alexandria (ff. 39-58, 71-96, 106-131) and Athens (59-70, 97-105, 145-152). A separate group of fragments (132-144) may be singled out, in one way or another, concerning Damascus' "philosophical conversion" and his journey with Isidore from Alexandria, via Gaza, Bostra, Beritus, Aphrodisias and other cities to Athens.

The various accounts of philosophical life in Alexandria and the misadventures of the Platonic philosophers in that once highly cultured city deserve special treatment. As far as Athens, we first encounter the events here in fr. 59, where, quite predictably, Damascius speaks of Proclus. Despite the fragmentary nature of the text, we are presented with a rather varied and diverse picture of philosophical life in Athens, beginning with the undisputed founder of the local school of Neo-Platonism, Plutarch.

Of all the Athenian philosophers of the time, the young Damascius must have been most impressed by the Syrian Salustius, whom his contemporaries regarded as a Cynic, with all the attributes attached to this status. He walked barefoot all over the *oikumene* (66C), never cooked food (66D) and, like Diogenes of Sinope, answered the questions of the powers-that-be with audacity and wit (66A). This ascetic way of life reportedly did not compromise his physical and mental health at all (66B); moreover, according to Simplicius (Commentary on Epictetus' *Enchiridion* 13; fr. 66G), he allowed himself various antics, such as putting hot coals on his lap and testing how long he could stand it.

Salustius was an instructor of Socratic type. He constantly tested and provoked young men, making them wonder if they had really consciously chosen as their profession such a difficult subject as philosophy. Damascius himself was no exception. According to him,

¹⁰ On the place where Damascius probably established his school, cf. Athanassiadi 1999, 343–346. In general on the fate of the Athenian school after Proclus, cf., for instance, a series of essays in Cameron 2016.

Salustius was testing the youth by discreetly setting intellectual traps for them to fall into because of their youthful haste, thereby making sure that they were “not good enough” for such a path (fr. 66F). Another and no less effective scenario seems to have been criticism of other teachers and schools (66E), and Salustius, who had received an excellent rhetorical education (fr. 60) and also earned universal respect for his moral qualities (fr. 66A, B), wit (fr. 60 and 66A) and natural “perspicacity” (fr. 70), must have done so very convincingly. Unfortunately, we have only one substantive account of Salustius’ philosophy. Damascus writes that he considered the fifth Platonic virtue to be the “true opinion” about the gods, adding that it can also be inherent in perfectly flawed people (fr. 66A). This observation shows that Salustius participated in some capacity in the discussion of the question of degrees of virtue so important to the Neoplatonic school. In this respect the account of Proclus, who, as Damascius notes, “placed theology above all other branches of philosophy, and preferred piety to its opposite, the austere life striving for virtue” (fr. 59E), is remarkable. If this is true, the position of Salustius, who throughout his life strove for moral perfection but was markedly skeptical of everyday manifestations of religious piety, shows perfectly the source of his disagreement with the head of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism (ff. 68).

Another group of fragments deals with the history of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism during the last years of Proclus’ life and some time after his death in 485. Proclus considered Isidore, the Alexandrian philosopher and unique person, according to Damascius, above all his disciples and wanted to see him as his successor. But despite his entreaties, Isidore remained adamant, pointing out that he was afraid of sinning before the gods in pursuit of human glory (fr. 98D).¹¹ On the contrary, two other candidates, according to our historian, yearned for this very glory. One of them was the philosopher Asclepiodotus, who had studied in Alexandria and then, having married the daughter of a local magnate, moved to Aphrodisias and opened his school there. It is reported that at Proclus’ call he immediately arrived in Athens (fr. 99A), but for some reason he was not elected. Nor do we know about the fate of Proclus’ only “favorite” philosopher Zenodotus (fr. 99B), and it is difficult to say whether fr. 99C, which describes the reaction of one of the rejected candidates, refers to him or to Asclepiodotus. It must have been even more problematic for Proclus to openly seek the leadership of the haughty dabbler of fortune, Hegius, son of the school’s benefactor, Senator Theagenes. We know that there were objective preconditions for his nomination. First of all, Hegius clearly possessed certain talents, so that Proclus not only personally taught him, but also saw fit to teach the young man Chaldean theology, something that usually completed rather than began the circle of Neoplatonic sciences. But Hegius must also have regarded himself as the successor of his great ancestors, the priest Hegius and the founder of the school Plutarch (fr. 145B), and, being related to them, must have seen not only spiritual but also legal reasons for his claim to

¹¹ It can also be suggested that Isidore was aware of the problematic nature of his candidacy in the context of the current political situation, for he had fled Alexandria, was wanted, and had even been arrested once.

the Plutarch house, where Proclus himself lived and the considerable funds of the school (fr. 102), to which he was probably prepared to add his own. As such his status is easily comparable to that of Speusippus, Plato's nephew and successor. But on the other hand, seeking to become "holier than others" (fr. 145C), Hegius too irritated those around him with his religious zeal, restoring forgotten rituals and pagan shrines (even against the wishes of his relatives), which could not but provoke the negative reaction of the authorities and the fury of the Christian adversaries, perhaps not as numerous as in Alexandria, but still active enough. After all, someone, according to Marinus, had destroyed the famous temple of Asclepius in Athens, to which Proclus had already gone in order to save Asclepigeneia, the future mother of Hegius himself, from an unknown disease (*Life of Proclus* 29). Be that as it may, Hegius did run the school for a time, probably after the death of Marinus and at the request of Isidore who was leaving the city (fr. 151C and E), becoming, according to Damascius, the cause of the decline of philosophy in Athens (145A).

The immediate successor of Proclus, Marinus is of genuine interest to Damascius. Regularly emphasizing his poor health, which may have prevented him not only from living but also from adequately understanding Proclus' "sublime interpretations" (fr. 97), Damascius speaks of him with respect, emphasizing his diligence, honesty, restraint, and, importantly, political tact (fr. 100A), all the qualities necessary for someone to adequately lead a school and dispose of its property in these dark times.

In contrast, Damascius did not share Marinus' philosophical position at all, nor did Isidore, whose criticisms, allegedly led Marinus to burn his own commentary on Plato's *Philebus* (fr. 38). We know from our sources that Marinus taught Aristotle's philosophy (ibid.), studied mathematics, and adhered to an epistemological interpretation of the *Parmenides*, believing that this dialogue treats of ideas and not of gods, thus not accepting the teaching of Iamblichus and Proclus on the Henads (fr. 97I-J). This does not mean that theurgy and the "philosophical religion" of the Neoplatonists were alien to him, as his biography of Proclus, full of wonderful stories and descriptions of the very "purest insights of the blessed man" which Damascius accuses him of not understanding (fr. 97I), clearly shows. Marinus' philosophical position is slightly revealed by a small treatise recorded "from the voice" by his disciples, a commentary or rather an introduction to the *Data* (*Dedomena*) of Euclid. In this work Marinus obviously considers himself a successor of his teacher: since Proclus composed a commentary on Euclid's *Elements* (cf. Morrow 1970), his successor must have felt obliged to comment on another work of the great mathematician. Strictly speaking, the extant text does not deal with the mathematical sections of the *Data*, being limited to a parsing of basic terms and definitions, which certainly confirms Marinus' interest in epistemology and logic.¹² At the same time, we

¹² For text, translation and commentary of Euclid's *Data*, see Taisbak 2003; for Marinus' work, see also Oikonomides 1977. In fact, in this small treatise Marinus explains the basic terms of this peculiar work by Euclid, a kind of problem book. What is the "given" (τὸ δεδομένον), Marinus asks, what, in general, is Euclid's treatise and to what field of

can assume that, like in case of Proclus, mathematics was of interest to him only as rather elementary prolegomena for the study of Platonic philosophy.

III

It is the duty of the Neoplatonist to oppose the “dominant faith.” This duty, however, can be fulfilled in different ways. One can, like Serapio, lead a private life unnoticed by the representatives of the dominant ideology (fr. 111). This Alexandrian philosopher, who must have been an older contemporary of Isidore and his personal friend, succeeded in this way, “locking himself in his little house” and “associating with his few neighbors only in case of emergency.” The philosopher was distinguished by his piety, always taking part in public rituals concerning traditional religion, all the rest of the time leading a “godlike existence,”

knowledge should it be referred? Some think that the “given” is something comprehensible and reducible to one thing, such as orderly (τεταγμένον) as in Apollodorus, known (γνώριμον) as in Diodorus, or expressible (ῥητὸν) as in Ptolemy, even if the values are only approximately known. Others believe that the term refers to the initial data of a given problem (number of points, segments of a certain length, etc.). Others believe that the given is ordered and present (πόριμον), ordered and known, or known and present. The ordered is opposed to the disordered (ἄτακτος). Thus a single line passing through two points is ordered, but a circle passing through two points is not ordered because it is not a single line. It is true that the same figure can be ordered in one respect and not in another, as, for example, an isosceles triangle is ordered with respect to its shape but not ordered with respect to its size. Some things are known to us in fact, such as the length of this road, while others are known to us by virtue of their intrinsic properties. For example, if two segments “with two names” (ἡ ἐκ δύο ὀνομάτων), that is, such segments whose length squares are only commensurable (Euclid, *Elements* 10.36), are added, then the whole becomes incommensurable (ἄλογός ἐστιν) – we know this because of the properties of the mathematical object itself. The irrational (incommensurable, ἄλογα) as such is not necessarily unknown (ἄγνωστα). What is present is that which can be constructed and that which is evident without proof (even if things themselves are not defined). In contrast, the absent (ἄπορον) is that which is “beyond our reach,” such as the square of a circle.

Then, having defined the concepts, Marinus considers their joint use. For example, how do the ordered and the disordered, on the one hand, and the present and the absent, on the other, relate? The spiral was ordered but not present for mathematicians before Archimedes, whereas objects that arise in countless ways and are disordered in this respect become present if one proposes a way of constructing them. It can also be observed that not everything that is known is quantified, but everything that is quantified is known; incommensurable segments are known but not expressible, whereas all whole numbers are expressible but not all are known; incommensurable objects can be quantified, but nothing expressible can be unexpressible, etc. The main thing, Marinus proves, in combining these terms, is to understand the difference between the properties of things themselves in nature and our knowledge or ignorance of these properties. Archimedes proved the orderliness of many things that his predecessors did not consider as such. If we ignore this, we will confuse the examples “as to us,” “as to their nature,” and “as to their measurement.”

Therefore, in defining the subject of Euclid’s treatise, Marinus suggests that we immediately discard the first – we are not at all simply faced with tasks ‘given’ (as it seems to some) by those who formulated them. He suggests not separating the second and third, since this inevitably leads to an incomplete definition. A complete definition of the “given” must always include both the known (γνώριμον) and the present (πόριμον), with Marinus proposing to treat the former by analogy with genus (γένει) and the latter with distinction (διαφορᾷ). Only along this path do we approach “scientific definitions” (τοῖς ἐπιστημονικῶς... ὀρίσμοις). Such, in fact, is the content of this short essay. In its concluding part Marinus briefly indicates the place of the treatise among the other works of Euclid and, with reference to Pappus’ commentary on the *Data*, concludes that the method of this work is analysis rather than synthesis.

composing hymns to deities, meditating and interpreting books of Orpheus, which he, not having any other property, bequeathed to Isidore. He was a profound thinker who often discussed difficult theological questions with Isidore, without in any way seeking to make these discussions public. Damascius writes specifically about this unique personality, noting that otherwise people would never have known about him and his way of life, and contrasting him with numerous ambitious and often superficial colleagues in the philosophical world, especially those who by their defiant behavior only made matters worse and upset the rare delicate balance even where it was achieved from time to time. A striking example, "in all things contrary to Serapion," was the rhetorician and political figure Pamprepus.

Possessing certain literary talents, Pamprepus advanced rapidly both in his homeland of Egypt and in Athens, where he not only became a famous grammarian, but also married a wealthy woman, which must have opened for him the way into politics (fr. 112B). He also showed an interest in philosophy, competing with the Athenian Platonists, all except Proclus, whose wisdom he "could not even approach" (fr. 112B). Not having succeeded among the experts in philosophy, he nevertheless learned to rubbish in the eyes of the uninitiated, particularly by winning over with his eloquence a major Constantinopolitan dignitary named Illus, which enabled him to make a brilliant career in the capital (fr. 77D). But this was the beginning of the end, when, having supported Illus' unsuccessful action against the emperor Zeno, he actively intervened in politics, inciting the adherents of traditional religion first in Constantinople and then in Alexandria to oppose the emperor and restore the ancient order, showing them some "prophecies" which foretold the imminent doom of Christianity (fr. 113 L-N).

Pamprepus met an ignominious end, and rightly so (fr. 115C), but this activity, his and the others like him, led to the severe suffering of many people who had led a decent life – grammarians, rhetorician and philosophers, whose only fault was their rejection of "the prevailing faith." The head of the Alexandrian philosophical school, Horapollon and the philosopher Heraiscus, whom, according to Damascius (fr. 76E), Proclus himself had praised, was tortured on the rack, demanding to betray the philosophers Harpocras and Isidore, who had fled from the persecution of the authorities (fr. 117 and 128). Julian, Damascius' brother, was arrested in the public baths and also tortured (fr. 119F, H-K). None of them betrayed their own friends. The outstanding Alexandrian grammarian Agapius was arrested (fr. 126), the theurgist Maximinus was executed in Constantinople (fr. 139), the sophist John died under torture (Fr 131), sharing the fate of Hypatia (Fr 43E), who had been killed by Christian fanatics some decades before. The list can be easily expanded. The Alexandrian philosopher Ammonius, unable to withstand the pressure, was forced to make a deal with the authorities (fr. 118). However, as Damascius thinks, it was, as in the case of Horapollon the Elder, a mercenary calculation that played a role here (fr. 120B). On the contrary, Severianus, a high-ranking official who had received an excellent and comprehensive education in rhetoric and Roman

law, and then studied under Proclus himself, was unwilling, at the risk of his career, to accept the offer to become a Christian from the emperor Zeno himself (fr. 108).

The authority of pagan philosophy was also imperceptibly undermined by characters like Hilarius, who gave his wife to a friend, and who, thus freeing himself from family obligations, rode to Athens from Antioch accompanied by concubines to study philosophy with Proclus (fr. 91). Acamatius was no better, who, not confining himself to the art of divination, endeavoured to convince the people of Heliopolis that he knew about philosophy, so that Isidore and Damascus, who were passing through that city, had to make an effort to convince people otherwise and show the complete incompetence of this "simpleton" (fr. 140).

And yet Damascius seeks and seems to find a decent way out for the honest man living in these dark times. He does not agree to "crawl into a corner," "and from there philosophize majestically and verbally about justice and prudence," for "speeches unsupported by works are vain and empty" (fr. 124). To this end he goes to Athens and, thanks to his organizational talents, revives the academic tradition, which had visibly faded after the death of Proclus, but which is now, according to Agathius Scholasticus, flourishing again and bringing together the best minds of "the whole Hellenic world" (*On the Reign of Justinian* 2.30.3).

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Peculiarities of the Funeral Treatment Applied to Children in the Province of Scythia Minor

Laura GHEORGHIU¹

Abstract. *The article represents a contribution to the funerary archeology of the province of Scythia, outlining the picture related to the funerary practices addressed to children. It is emphasized that the burial rituals, most of the time, were different from those applied to adults in terms of the space within the necropolises, the position, the orientation, or the burial inventory.*

Rezumat. *Articolul reprezintă o contribuție asupra arheologiei funerare din provincia Scythia, conturând imaginea legată de practicile funerare abordate asupra copiilor. Se subliniază faptul că ritualurile funerare, de cele mai multe ori, erau diferite față de cele aplicate adulților în ceea ce privește spațiul în cadrul necropolelor, poziția, orientarea sau inventarul funerar.*

Keywords: *Infant burials, Scythia Minor, funerary archaeology.*

Introduction

The topics related to practices and attitudes towards infant burials have begun to arouse interest, being increasingly addressed in the studies that have published in recent years, despite the fact that children's graves are rather poorly represented numerically within the necropolises of the province of Scythia.

Among Romans, the phenomenon of high mortality of children is known, so that approximately 40% of children died before the age of one year, from various causes such as: malnutrition, infections, diseases or the mother's too young age, thus, many of the graves of children were treated differently from those of the adults.

The concept that the community did not suffer for the death of a child was fueled by the ancient authors but also by the well-known cases of infanticide, provided even in the Law of the 12 Tables² where it called for the killing of children born deformed. Another practice was the abandonment of children in public places by parents who did not want them or could not afford to raise them. This custom was condemned by Christian authors, one of them being Gregory of Nyssa who dedicated his work *De infantibus praemature abreptis* to the subject³.

¹ Doctoral School, Faculty of History, "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași, Romania; lauraghe18@gmail.com.

² CICERO, *De Leg.*, II, 58.

³ GREGORY OF NYSSA, *De infantibus praemature abreptis*.

From Plutarch we learn that Numa Pompilius restricted a part of the funeral rituals dedicated to children, prohibiting the period of mourning for children under one year old, considering that they were not fully members of society, the author himself comparing a newborn to a plant. In the case of the death of children older than one year, the period of mourning should not be longer than the age at which the child died⁴.

In a letter sent to his wife in response to be hearing the news of their daughter's death, Plutarch expressed his hope that the funeral would have been done in a simple manner that would not cause them suffering, bringing into question the psychological impact, in addition to the legislative one⁵.

In order to extract some general characteristics, we worked based of a sample consisting of 93 tombs distributed in the necropolis as follows: Histria (30 tombs), Ibida (29 tombs), Tomis (15 tombs), Callatis (11 tombs), Noviodunum (four tombs), Beroe (two tombs), Argamum (one tomb), Enisala (one tomb).

Exceptions to the rule

According to the Roman funeral rites, from the moment a member of the family died, that family became *familia funesta*, that is, it had the obligation to organize the funeral, being forbidden to practice activities such as offering sacrifices to the gods. Members were isolated from the community as they were considered impure, the house where the death occurred being marked at the entrance with cypress branches⁶. For children who died before reaching the age of three, these rituals were restricted, the family being forbidden to mourn formally, *lugetur* manifested in public, but they had to live their suffering away from the eyes of the community⁷.

In the Roman period, burials had to be carried out extra muros, a rule stipulated in the Law of the 12 Tables⁸ and reconfirmed by the Senate in 260 BC⁹. Hadrian proposes, for violating the provisions of the law, a fine of 40 aurei, the confiscation of the place where the tomb was located and the transfer of the remains *extra urbem*¹⁰. Intramuros tombs were considered to create the risk of fires and poor hygiene. In the case of residents of rural areas, burials were prohibited at a distance of no more than 20 meters from a building¹¹.

⁴ BALTUSSEN, 2009, 67-98.

⁵ BALTUSSEN, 2009, 67-98.

⁶ ERKER, 2011, 40-60.

⁷ ERKER, 2011, 40-60.

⁸ CICERO, *De Leg.*, II, 58.

⁹ CUMONT, 1949, 82.

¹⁰ DAGRON, 1977, 1-26.

¹¹ CICERO, *De Leg.*, II, 61.

The exception to this rule is the discovery of children's graves inside the walls of fortresses and the so-called *suggrundaria*¹². *Grunda* was translated by *eaves* or *roof*, thus, these graves are found in the area of houses or even under their floor, this treatment being applied to childrens who died before reaching 40 days. In some necropolises, such as that of Callatis, a certain concentration of children's graves was observed in a certain area of the necropolis¹³.

Regarding the position in which the deceased were deposited, the crouched one predominates among the skeletons of children. Such examples are found in the case of tombs: M. 23¹⁴ from Ibida, M. 2/2005¹⁵ from Enisala, M. 40¹⁶ from Noviodunum or the tomb discovered in 1968¹⁷ at Argamum.

This mode of burial can be interpreted as considering the earth as a mother, the burial of the deaths mirroring the position of the infant in the mother's womb. Another theory is that this position corresponds to that of human sleep, representing the so-called "eternal sleep"¹⁸.

To explain the small number of discoveries of funerary monuments dedicated to children, we must also consider the problem of the costs imposed by their construction, as evidenced by the greater number of discoveries of this kind in urban environments compared to those in rural environments¹⁹.

The term "monument" comes from the Latin *monere* which translates as "to remember". It was not only to mark the place where someone was buried, but also to keep the memory of the deceased alive. Funerary texts illustrated a person's existence on earth by recalling their virtues, often in the form of specific epithets, in addition to mentioning the deceased's name, date of death or number of years lived²⁰.

Due to the fact that Roman sacred and civil law were not clearly demarcated, there were certain problems with some funerary practices that were interpretable. For the Romans, the term tomb implied two concepts: *sepulchrum*, which referred to the place where the deceased or cremated remains were deposited, and *monumentum*, which corresponded to the monument erected in memory of the deceased²¹.

¹² RUBEL, SOFICARU, 2012, 169-182.

¹³ RADU et. al., 2016, 193-207.

¹⁴ IACOB et. al. 2003, 297.

¹⁵ STĂNICĂ et. al. 2010, 203-222.

¹⁶ STĂNICĂ et. al. 2010, p. 203-222.

¹⁷ COJA 1971, 179-190.

¹⁸ COMȘA, 1982, 92.

¹⁹ RUBEL, SOFICARU, 2012, 169-182.

²⁰ VAN DER HORST, 1991, 40.

²¹ L. MUREȘAN, I. MUREȘAN, 2016, 119-133.

Stonemason's workshops existed in greater numbers in developed communities that could afford these services, as the cost of making gravestones could be quite high for ordinary citizens²².

The typology of the tombs

The typology of the tombs was discussed based on the five types proposed by Andrei Soficaru²³, each has related subtypes.

The most widespread type of grave is the one in a simple pit, rectangular with rounded corners, in most cases and with variable dimensions. In the case of Greek cities, the early practice of inhumation is attributed to the Greek heritage, while, for the other regions, it considering the influence of the penetration of Roman civilization. The typology is known throughout the period of the province of Scythia²⁴.

In the statistics dedicated to children's graves, we have 38 graves included in this typology. A subtype is that of burials in ceramic vessels, representing a particularity in the case of children's skeletons. This type of burial was used exclusively for the burial of children, out of the parents' desire to protect their bodies even after death. The practice of burial in ceramic vessels is also found in the Greek period on the northern and western coast of the Black Sea, but also in various Roman or romanized populations of the Roman Empire, such as those in Africa or Dalmatia²⁵.

Most examples are found in the Histria necropolis where five such tombs were discovered: the first was discovered during the excavations of 1960-1963²⁶ being followed by M. 8/1966, M. 11/1966, M. 17/1966²⁷ and M. 20/2010²⁸.

M. 39 SV/2004 from Callatis contained an amphora covered with a small limestone slab. Inside it were very small osteological fragments belonging to an infant²⁹.

At Ibida necropolis, in the foundation of one of the walls of the fortress, was discovered M. 23 (figure 4) a child's grave deposited in an amphora-oriented NE-SW. The bottom of the amphora had been broken so that the body could be placed on its right side. A coin from the time of Commodus was discovered on the stone that had been placed over the amphora, dating the tomb to the 4th century³⁰.

²² SALLER, SHAW, 1984, 124-156.

²³ SOFICARU, 2007, 297-312.

²⁴ SOFICARU, 2007, 297-312.

²⁵ SONOC, 2006, 73-113.

²⁶ CONDURACHI, 1970, 177-224.

²⁷ SUCEVEANU, 1982, 36.

²⁸ ANGELESCU et. al., 2009, 33.

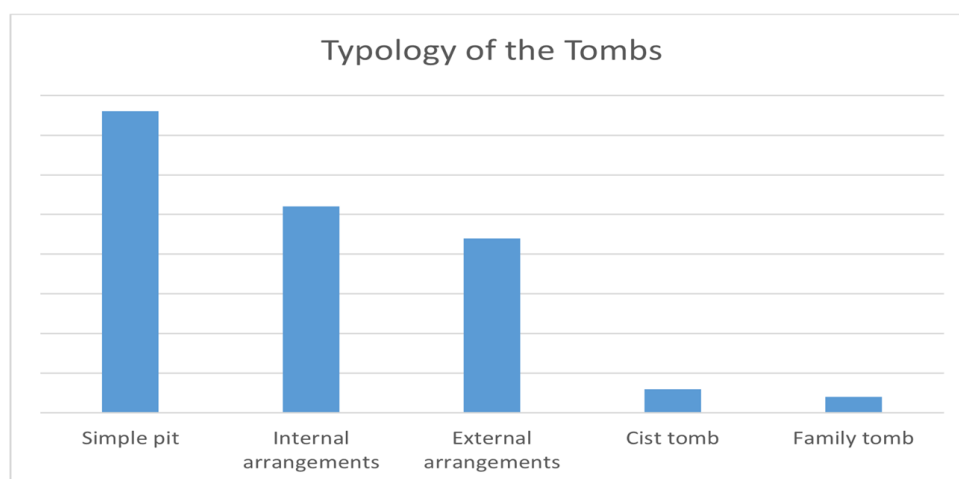
²⁹ UNGUREANU, RADU, 2006, 259-278.

³⁰ IACOB et al. 2003, 297.

The tombs in a simple pit are followed by those with internal arrangements, the large number of them being due to the tombs with an access chamber and a niche which, in most cases, was blocked with tegulae. This type is mainly found in the Tomitan necropolis and is considered to have appeared with the evolution of simple pit graves, the initially dug pit being transformed into an access room to which, at one end or on one of the sides, a niche is added in which enter the coffin³¹.

One of the theories regarding the origin of this typology is that according to which it finds its root in the oriental area. Thanks to the sandy soil in the East, it was possible to practice this type of burial, which also led to the appearance of several underground rooms³². In the case of the discussed children's graves, there are 28 graves with internal arrangements.

There are 23 graves whose pits were indicated by stones, tegulae or ceramic fragments. Three children's skeletons were discovered in cist graves, and in the case of two vaults they were discovered together with other skeletons adult.



The funeral inventory

Archaeological discoveries have shown that graves can provide important information related to the social status of the deceased, revealing data regarding occupation, marital status, or religious beliefs. It is obvious that those who did not pass through some important stages of life, benefit from different specific forms of burial including the inventory discovered in the graves. This category can include children, women who died during childbirth, unmarried people or those who suffered violent deaths³³.

Considering the high mortality of children, parents tried to protect them with the help of objects with apotropaic value, which were assigned magico-religious valences used to

³¹ LUNGU, 2000, 42.

³² BARBU, 1977, 203-214.

³³ PEARCE et. al., 2001, 63.

protect the bearer in everyday life but also after death³⁴, protecting them against disease, natural calamities, or other dangers.

The first mention of the term *amuletum* is found in Plinius Secundus, who speaks of practices to prevent the evil eye in which amulets were used³⁵. Also called *crepundia*, these objects, which were often miniatures, were kept in small boxes called *cistellae*, not to be confused with jewelry boxes. Canon 36 instituted within the Council of Laodicea forbade the manufacture of amulets and the practice of magic or astrology³⁶.

Some of the most famous amulets given by parents to newborns were the *lunula* for girls and the *bullula* for boys.

The *lunula* is considered to be one of the oldest amulets, the earliest discovery being made in Mesopotamia and dating back to the fourth millennium BC. It was often worn as a pendant to give to newborns, especially baby girls, a life safe from danger, also offering protection to mothers. Through her, children and mothers were placed under the protection of the goddess Artemis Selene who controlled procreation and growth.

As an amulet, the crescent moon was always worn upside down. Eastern civilizations correlate it, among others, with the moon god Baal of Emesa, a fact that brought this amulet into the masculine and royal sphere, explaining its wearing by boys as well, although it predominates among girls³⁷.

Such pendants were discovered in graves B. 102 (figure 1), A. 225, C. 17, B. 117 and C. 42 (figure 2) in the Beroe necropolis³⁸.

Among the boys, the equivalent of this talisman was represented by *bullula* pendants that had apotropaic attributes during life and retained this functionality for the deceased as well. At the age of nine, boys received a *bullula*-type object that they wore, as a pendant or as a bracelet, until they put on the toga and became roman citizens, being also a defining criterion of social status, its wearing being the prerogative of children free and, the metal from which it was made, a criterion of wealth.

Initially, only the children of the patricians wore *bullula* made of gold. Later, during the Second Punic War, this right was also guaranteed for the children of senators, knights and freeborn. Children who could not afford to wear gold or other metal accessories wore a leather cord with a knot as an amulet³⁹. During the period of the Republic, the *bullula* had a role as a military decoration, being worn around the neck by the victorious generals as well⁴⁰.

³⁴ GAVRILĂ, 1984, 75-86.

³⁵ PLINIUS, *Nat. Hist.*, II, 3-7.

³⁶ BOLLOK, 2013, 227-241.

³⁷ PINCKERNELLE, 2007, 47.

³⁸ PETRE, 1987, 5-27.

³⁹ PINCKERNELLE, 2007, 45.

⁴⁰ BOLOG, BOUNEGRU, 2011, 135-145.

Even coins were used as amulets, their apotropaic power being given by the representation of the deity on them. These were pierced and worn as a pendant or, deposited in the grave as an obol of Charon⁴¹.

On the coins issued by the emperors Trajan and Commodus appears the image of the daughter of Asclepios, the goddess Hygieia. She is depicted sitting on a rock surrounded by water and feeding a snake. A similar iconography appears on the coins issued by Heliogabalus, next to the goddess and Asclepios. It is believed that the image of the snake had protective powers, protecting, in particular, against diseases those whose amulet was represented⁴².

The accessory and adornments of the deceased had particular significance in the case of those who died unmarried, one of these symbols being a single earring discovered in the burial inventories of children.

According to a study carried out by Mario Ivanov, the ritual of burying women with a single earring was a common one in cemeteries in the Balkan area, especially in Greece and south of the Danube, during the 1st-5th centuries.⁴³ He analyzed 87 graves in which a single earring was part of the burial inventory, from Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia and Serbia, and, following anthropological analyses, he concluded that all were women, most of them dying before the age of adolescence.

Ivanov concluded that this custom is related to the wedding of a woman. In Roman society, the legal age for girls to marry was 12, and engagement could take place around the age of seven, or even much earlier. The inability of girls to reach marriageable age or married woman status due to premature death was a cause of deep sadness for their families. In the graves of the province of Scythia, were discovered a large number of deceased people who had a single earring as their burial inventory. This phenomenon leads us to believe that the ritual symbolizes the failure to achieve a marital status.⁴⁴

Among the graves that had a single earring as a funerary inventory, there is grave C. 42 (fig. 4) discovered in the necropolis of Beroe, which housed a child skeleton in a poor state of preservation, under the skeleton, on the left side, three tegulae were placed. His burial inventory included, in addition to a gold earring, a silver medallion, a fragment of a pendant in the shape of a miniature bowl, a *lunula* pendant, seven shells and two beads from a medallion. Other graves from Beroe in which a single earring was discovered are A. 326, C. 36, E. 153, B. 30, B. 76, B. 42, E. 123 (figure 3), E. 57, B. 133⁴⁵.

At Callatis, in M. 2/2003, a child's skeleton was discovered in a poor state of preservation, oriented E-W, over its grave four stone slabs were placed. His grave inventory

⁴¹ BENȚA, 1999, 85-116.

⁴² CARVALHEIRO PORTO, 2020, 492-502.

⁴³ IVANOV, 2008, 287-299.

⁴⁴ APARASCHIVEI et. al. 2012, 169-182

⁴⁵ PETRE, 1987, 54-55.

includes a bronze earring, a silver crucifix found around the neck, a fibula with a silver pin and a bronze ring⁴⁶.

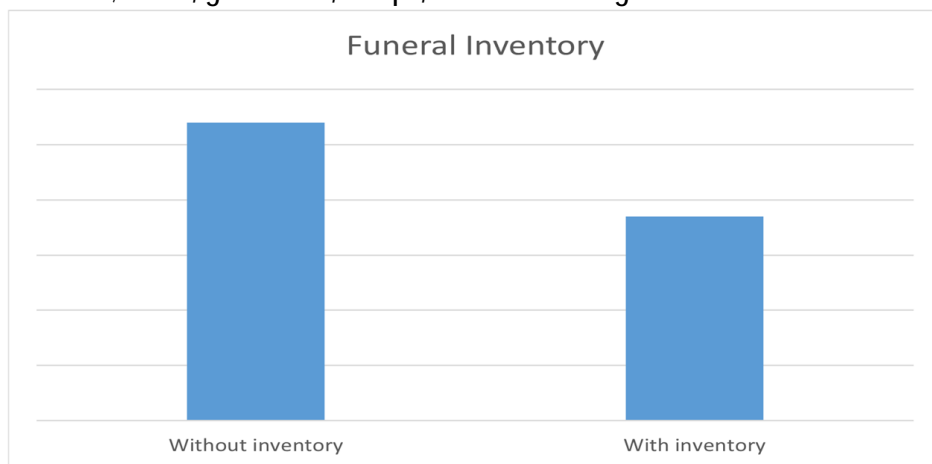
In addition to the mentioned tomb, there are also: M. 5/2000 (S2 tronson 1), M. 4/2000 (S3 tronson 3), M. 7/2000 (S4 tronson 1)⁴⁷, M. 139, M. 4, M. 59, M. 218, M. 71⁴⁸, M. 2/1968⁴⁹.

Such examples also come from the tomitan necropolis. A very poorly preserved child skeleton was discovered in M. 38/2009. It was placed supine and oriented W-E. The tomb was arranged by a row of stones placed on the south side. The grave inventory includes two bronze bracelets, an earring, a bronze chain, and glass beads.⁵⁰

M. 17/2016 (Avram Iancu) is a tomb with a longitudinal groove blocked with tiles. Disparate bones from two E-W oriented children were found. Their grave goods included a zoomorphic fibula, two glass vessels, a gold earring and glass beads. The nails from the coffin were discovered⁵¹.

Conclusions

In most of the graves no burial inventory was discovered, a quite common phenomenon for children's graves. From this statistic we must also consider the fact that, in the case of multiple graves, some of the inventory items could belong to another deceased. Also, for antiquity, the phenomenon of robbing tombs is well known, so it is possible that some of those without a burial inventory may have had them initially before the looting. Among the inventory items, the most common are jewelry items: beads, bracelets, rings, earrings, pendants; clothing accessories: fibules, appliques, pins, belt ends, cufflinks; toiletries: combs, hairpins; ceramics; coins, glassware, lamps, animal offerings.



⁴⁶ PAPUC et. al., 2003, 110.

⁴⁷ IONESCU et. al., 2002-2003, 225-277.

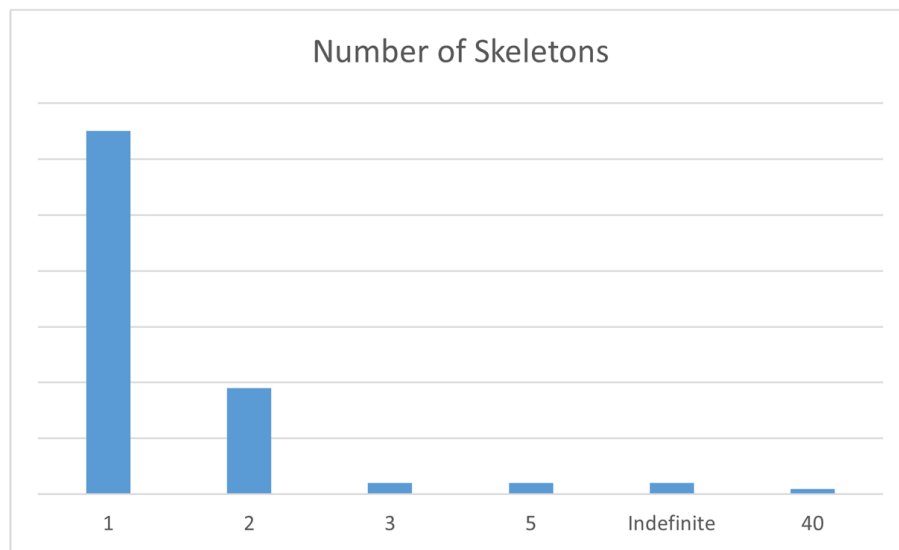
⁴⁸ PREDA, 1980, 47.

⁴⁹ ICONOMU, 1969, 81-110.

⁵⁰ BĂJENARU et. al., 2010, 64.

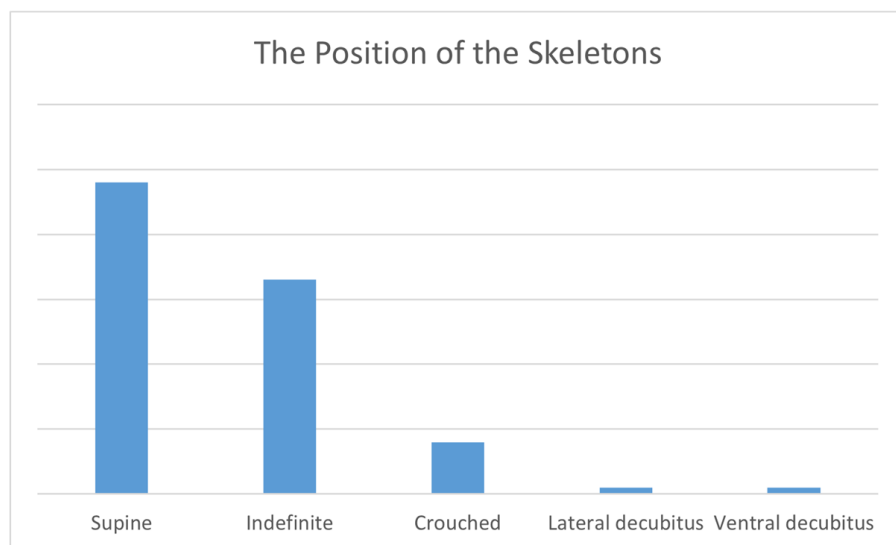
⁵¹ BĂJENARU et. al., 2016.

Regarding the number of skeletons discovered in a grave, those with a single skeleton predominate, followed by 21 double graves in which, in most cases, one skeleton of a child and one of an adult was discovered. In the case of two graves each, it is a child skeleton buried together with the skeletons of more than two adults. In the vault discovered at Ibida, of the 39 skeletons, half were of children⁵². For the skeletons that were not in anatomical connection, had a poor state of preservation and did not benefit from anthropological studies, the number of the individs could not be established.

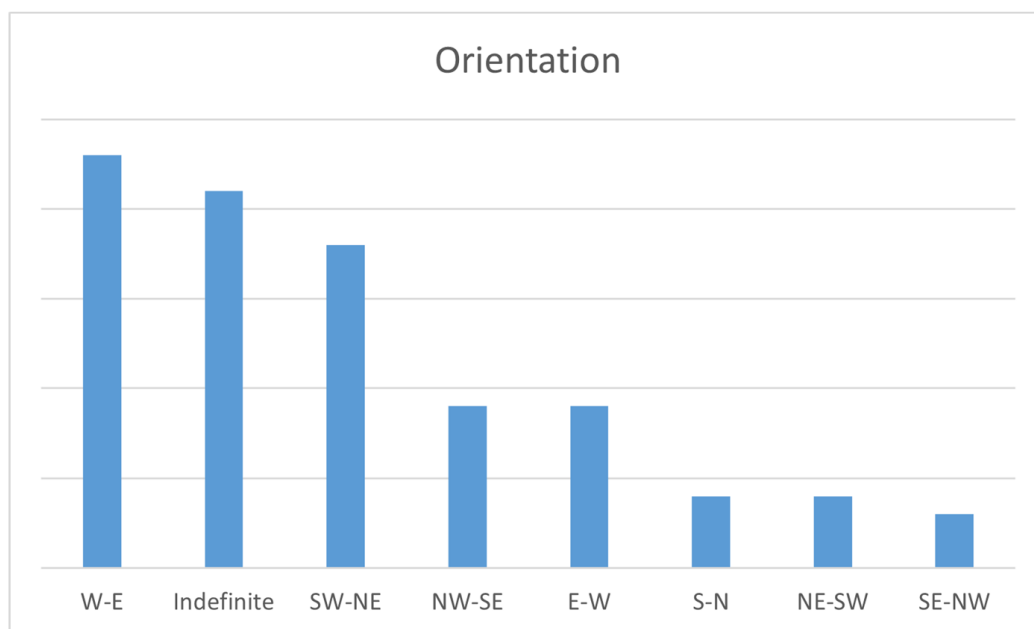


The predominant position in which the deceased were deposited is supine. For many of the skeletons the position in which they were deposited could not be determined due to the fragility of the child's bones resulting in a poor state of preservation. In the case of eight graves among those included in the database, skeletons were discovered in a crouched position, and two were deposited lying on their sides.

⁵² MIRIȚOIU, SOFICARU, 2003, 511-530.



The most common orientation is W-E, with some variations depending on the season in which they were buried, which makes us believe that Christian graves predominate. For many of the skeletons the orientation could not be established because they were not in anatomical connection or presented a poor state of preservation.



Catalog of the tombs ⁵³

⁵³ The tombs are presented according to the following model: the necropolis where they were discovered, the number of the grave, the number of skeletons discovered in the grave, the position of the skeleton, the orientation of the skeleton, the burial inventory, bibliography.

Necropolis	Tomb	Typology of the tombs	Number of skeletons	Position	Orientation	Funeral Inventory	Bibliography
Callatis	M. 1/1968	Simple pit	3	Indefinite	E-W	A pitcher	ICONOMU, 1969, 81-110
Callatis	M. 4/1968	Simple pit	2	Indefinite	E-W	Glass beads	ICONOMU, 1969, 81-110
Callatis	M. 8/1968	Family tomb	5	Supine	E-W	A bronze buckle, a glass bowl and a ceramic bowl.	PREDĂ, 1980, 100.
Callatis	M. 1/2000 (S4 tronson 1)	Internal arrangements	2	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IONESCU et.al., 2002-2003, 225-277.
Callatis	M. 2/2000 (S3 tronson 1)	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IONESCU et.al., 2002-2003, 225-277.
Callatis	M. 3/2000 (S5 tronson 1)	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	E-W	A glass bead	IONESCU et.al., 2002-2003, 225-277.
Callatis	M. 2/2003	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	E-W	A bronze earring, a silver crucifix, a silver pin buckle and a bronze ring.	COLESNIUC et. al. CCA 2003.
Callatis	M. 39 SV/2004	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	UNGUREANU et. al., 2006, 259-278.
Callatis	M. 1/2006	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	RADU et. al., 2014, 221-232.
Callatis	M. 131	External arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	PREDĂ, 1980, 103.
Callatis	M. 167	Simple pit	5	Indefinite	W-E	Bronze coin.	PREDĂ, 1980, 123.
Histria	M. 11/1955	Simple pit	1	Supine	WSW-ENE	Bone comb.	CONDURACHI et.al., 1957, 9.
Histria	M. 1/1956	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	W-E	Glass beads, bronze coin.	PIPPIDI, 1956, 294.
Histria	M. 4/1956	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	PIPPIDI, 1956, 294.
Histria	M. 5/1956	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	PIPPIDI, 1956, 294.

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Histria	M/1959	External arrangements	2	Indefinite	W-E	Bronze applique, bronze buckle.	CONDURACHI et. al., 1962, 383-438
Histria	Trei morminte 1960-1963	External arrangements	Indefinite	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	CONDURACHI et. al., 1970, 177-224.
Histria	M. 5/1961	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	SW-NE	Without inventory	HAMPARȚUMIA N 1971, 151.
Histria	M. 10/1961	External arrangements	1	Supine	SW-NE	Four coins, a knife.	HAMPARȚUMIA N 1971, 151.
Histria	M. 18/1961	Internal arrangements	3	Supine	W-E	Iron bracelet, bronze ring fragment, bronze coin, a bead.	HAMPARȚUMIA N 1971, 200.
Histria	M. 19/1961	Simple pit	1	Crouched	SW-NE	Without inventory	HAMPARȚUMIA N 1971, 202.
Histria	M. 28/1961	Simple pit	1	Crouched	S-N	Animal offerings, three perforated shells.	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 153.
Histria	M. 29/1961	External arrangements	2	Supine	S-N	A ceramic bowl.	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 153.
Histria	M. 33/1961	Cist tomb	1	Supine	SW-NE	A comb, beads, an exagium.	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 155.
Histria	M. 35/1961	Simple pit	1	Supine	NW-SE	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 153.
Histria	M. 36/1961	External arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 153.
Histria	M. 38/1961	Cist tomb	2	Supine	SW-NE	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 156.
Histria	M. 30/1962	Cist tomb	1	Supine	SW-NE	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 153.
Histria	M. 51/1962	Internal arrangements	1	Lateral decubitus	W-E	An iron object.	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 154.
Histria	M. 55/1964	Simple pit	2	Supine	E-W	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 154.
Histria	M. 57/1964	Simple pit	2	Supine	NW-SE	Iron buckle.	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 154.
Histria	M. 67/1964	Simple pit	1	Supine	E-W	Without inventory	CREȚU et. al., 2020, 155.
Histria	M. 73/1964	Simple pit	2	Supine	NW-SE	A pair of earrings, a bone bracelet.	HAMPARȚUMIA N, 1971, 207.

Histria	M. 8/1966	Simple pit amforă	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	SUCEVEANU, 1982, 36.
Histria	M. 11/1966	Simple pit amforă	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	SUCEVEANU, 1982, 36.
Histria	M. 11/2009	External arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Animal offerings.	ANGELESCU et. al., CCA, 2009, 33.
Histria	M. 20/2010	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	ANGELESCU et. al., CCA, 2009, 33.
Histria	M. 9/2012	External arrangements	1	Supine	NW-SE	Without inventory	DABÎCĂ, 2014, 137.
Histria	M. 12/2013	External arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	DABÎCĂ, 2014, 137..
Ibida	Vault	Family tomb	40	Indefinite	Indefinite	Lamps, two buckles, two coins dated to the 4th and 5th centuries, bone combs and beads.	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; MIRIȚOIU, SOFICARU, 2003, 511-530.
Ibida	M. 3	Simple pit	2	Supine	W-E	A lamp	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 10	Internal arrangements	1	Crouched	SW-NE	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 13	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	NE-SW	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 14	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	W-E	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 16	Simple pit	2	Supine	S-N	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., CCA 2003, 297.
Ibida	M. 17	Simple pit	2	Supine	NW-SE	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.

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Ibida	M. 18	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	A ceramic bowl.	IACOB et. al., CCA 2003, 297.
Ibida	M. 20	External arrangements	1	Supine	SW-NE	A string of beads.	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 23	Simple pit	1	Crouched	NE-SW	A coin.	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 25	Internal arrangements	2	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 29	Simple pit	2	Supine	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 30	Simple pit	2	Supine	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 329-332.
Ibida	M. 31	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	NW-SE	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 361.
Ibida	M. 33	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., CCA 2003, 297.
Ibida	M. 36	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Beads and a bronze object.	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 361.
Ibida	M. 40	Internal arrangements	1	Crouched	W-E	A coin.	IACOB et. al., CCA 2003, 297.
Ibida	M. 69	Simple pit	1	Supine	WSW-ENE	A bronze bracelet, an iron bracelet and a bronze earring.	IACOB et.al., 2003, 297; SOFICARU et. al., 2004, 361.
Ibida	M. 93	External arrangements	1	Supine	SSW-NNE	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2006, 332.
Ibida	M. 96	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	Iron buckle.	IACOB et. al., 2006, 332.
Ibida	M. 98	External arrangements	1	Supine	ESE-WNW	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2006, 332.

Ibida	M. 101	External arrangements	1	Supine	VSW-ENE	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2006, 332.
Ibida	M. 112	External arrangements	1	Ventral decubitus	SW-NE	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2007, 336-340.
Ibida	M. 117	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2007, 336-340.
Ibida	M. 119	Simple pit	2	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et.al., 2007, 336-340.
Ibida	M. 159	Simple pit	1	Supine	SW-NE	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2014, 133.
Ibida	M. 162	Simple pit	1	Supine	SW-NE	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2015, 85-86.
Ibida	M. 166	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	SW-NE	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., 2015, 85-86.
Ibida	M. 180	External arrangements	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	IACOB et. al., CCA, 2018.
Tomis	M.22/1983	Internal arrangements	Incert	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	CHERA et. al., 1984, 175-199.
Tomis	M. 26/2009	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	BĂJENARU et. al., CCA, 2009.
Tomis	M. 37/2009	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Without inventory	BĂJENARU et. al., CCA, 2009.
Tomis	M. 38/2009	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	W-E	Two bronze bracelets, one earring, one bronze chain and glass beads.	BĂJENARU et. al., CCA, 2009.
Tomis	M. 2/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	ENE-WSW	Glass bowl, unguentarium.	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.

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Tomis	M. 4/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrange ments	2	Supine	WNW-ESE	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 5/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrange ments	1	Supine	E-W	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 6/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrange ments	2	Supine	ESE-WNW	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 8/2016 Avram Iancu	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	NW-SE	Glass bowl, unguentarium.	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 13/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrange ments	1	Indefinite	E-W	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 14/2016	Internal arrange ments	1	Indefinite	NE-SW	Glass bowl, unguentarium.	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=Constanta-or-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.

	Avram Iancu						onstanta-or-Constanta-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 17/2016 Avram Iancu	Internal arrangements	2	Indefinite	ESE-WNW	A fibula, two glass vases, a gold earring, glass beads.	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=C-Constanta-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 9/2017 Avram Iancu	Internal arrangements	1	Indefinite	W-E	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=C-Constanta-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 10/2017 Avram Iancu	Internal arrangements	1	Indefinite	WSW-ENE	Without inventory	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=C-Constanta-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Tomis	M. 14/2017 Avram Iancu	Internal arrangements	1	Indefinite	WSW-ENE	Glass vessel.	http://cronica.cimec.ro/detaliu.asp?k=5806&d=C-Constanta-Constanta-Str-Avram-Iancu-2016 , accesat la 24. 03.2022.
Noviodunum	M. 16-17	Simple pit	2	Supine	S-N	Without inventory	STĂNICĂ et. al., 2010, 203-222.
Noviodunum	M. 18	Simple pit	1	Supine	W-E	Ceramic bowl.	STĂNICĂ et. al., 2010, 203-222.

Noviodunum	M. 33	Simple pit	1	Indefinite	Indefinite	Without inventory	STĂNICĂ et. al., 2010, 203-222.
Noviodunum	M. 40	Internal arrangements	1	Crouched	W-E	A coin.	STĂNICĂ et. al., 2010, 203-222.
Beroe	C. 42	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	Indefinite	A gold earring, a silver locket, a fragment of a pendant in the shape of a miniature bowl, a lunula pendant, seven shells and two pearls from a locket of which only a fragment was discovered.	PETRE, 1987, 27.
Beroe	C. 73	Internal arrangements	1	Supine	Indefinite	Three beads.	PETRE, 1987, 27.
Argamu	M. 1968	Simple pit	1	Crouched	Indefinite	Without inventory	COJA, 1971, 179-190.
Enisala	M. 2/2005	Internal arrangements	1	Crouched	NW-SE	Without inventory	STĂNICĂ et. al., 2005-2006, 317 – 330.

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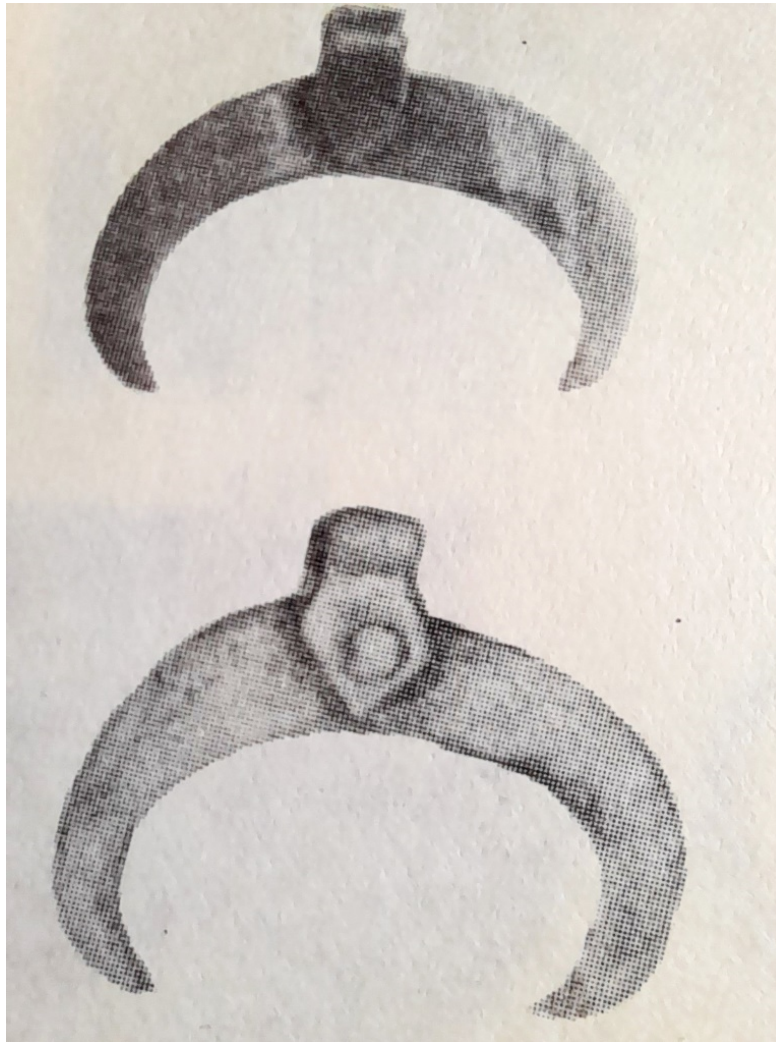


Figure 1 - B. 102 Beroe (Petre, 1987, 27.)

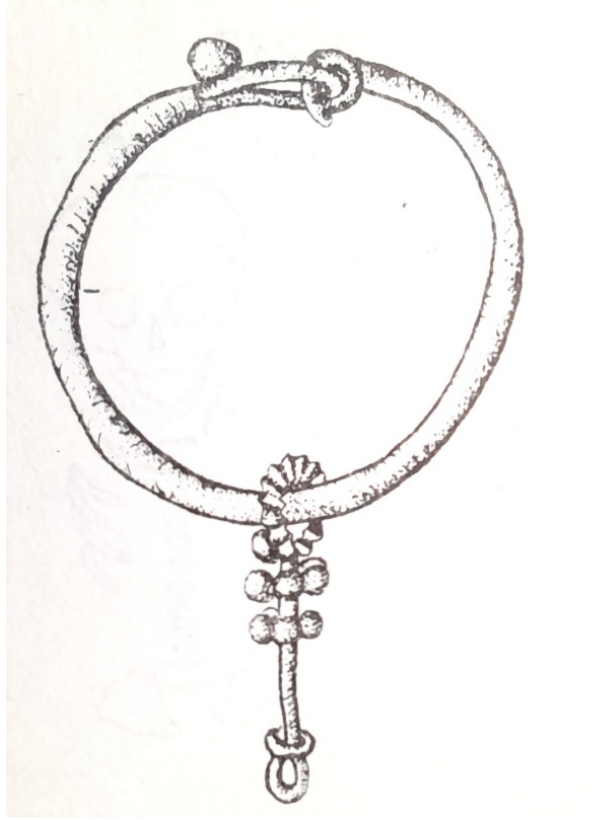


Figure 2 - C. 42 Beroe (Petre, 1987, 30.)

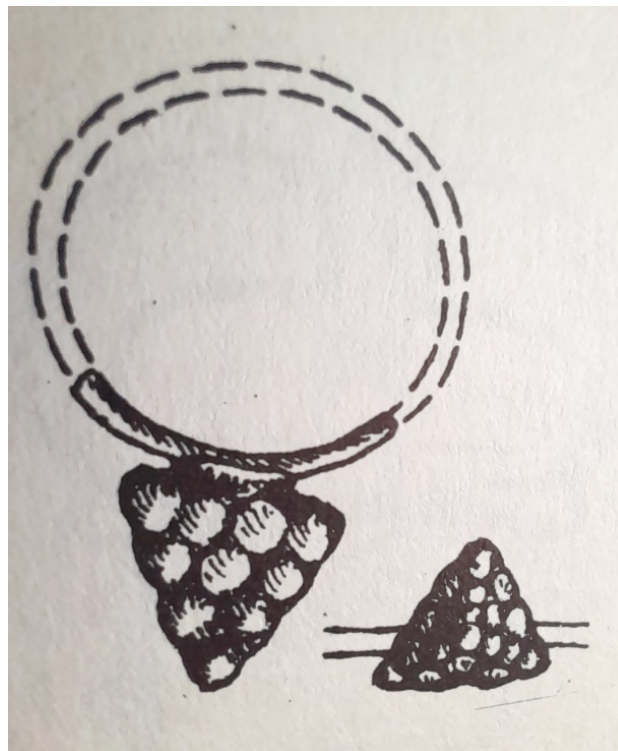


Figure 3 - E. 123 Beroe (Petre, 1987, 38.)



Figure 4 - M. 23 Ibida (APARASCHIVEI et. al., 2012, 169-182.)



Figure 5- M. 31 Ibida (RUBEL, SOFICARU 2012, 169-182.)



Figure 6 - M. 1/2006 Callatis (IONESCU et. al., 2014, 229.)



Figure 7 – M. 51/1962 (CREȚU et. al., 2020, 154.)



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Themes and Motifs in the Letters of Aldelmo of Malmesbury. The Man, The Literature, The Society

Patrizia MASCOLI¹

Abstract. *Among the epistolary collections that have come down to us, the epistolary of Aldelmo of Malmesbury, of which the first Italian translation is in progress, is of interest. This paper deals with some key themes which occur in the letters of this bishop, related to society and human behavior.*

Rezumat. *Printre colecțiile epistolare pstrate, cea aparinând lui Aldelmus din malmesbury prezintă un interes aparte. În acest articol autorea tratează câteva teme-cheie din scrisorile acestui episcop, legate de societate și de caracterul uman.*

Keywords: *Aldelmo of Malmesbury, epistles, Anglo-Saxons, solidarity.*

In recent years, late antique epistolaries have been the subject of numerous investigations, aimed at deducing information on the historical, political and religious context as well as obtaining information on the Fortleben of classical and Christian authors.

As is known, epistolography constitutes the obligatory channel of distance communication in the ancient world, but it is also the virtual meeting place that allows its users to find and profitably cultivate common ground of cultural interests, ideologies and principles. It is an exquisitely literary meeting ground, where social relations find almost natural elements of nourishment and development and with it, also other constraints and shared attitudes in the face of new situations and emerging historical issues. Among the epistolary collections that have come down to us, the epistolary of Aldelmo of Malmesbury, of which the first Italian translation is in progress, is of interest.

Aldelmo abbot, bishop and man of letters, is a symbolic figure of 7th century England, characterized by wars between the different kingdoms and clashes between pagans and Christians, which resulted in acts of atrocities on both sides. However, the England of that period was also characterized by the presence of cultured rulers, who favored the birth of important schools (such as that of Canterbury) and by an anti-dogmatic Church, which saw disputes between the monastic current of Celtic tradition, more intransigent and less open to

¹ patrizia.mascoli@uniba.it, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro

agreements with the Anglo-Saxons, and the current of Augustine's missionaries, who carried out an evangelization campaign from Canterbury.

Aldelmo was the first Anglo-Saxon author who wrote in Latin and was one of the most read authors in British schools from the generations immediately following his death until the Norman conquest of 1066. A considerable corpus of his writings has been handed down, both in prose and in verse, masterfully published in Rudolf Ehwald's edition in the *Auctores Antiquissimi* section of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*², in which the scholar meticulously reports the results of the collations of the manuscripts, an exhaustive documentation of Aldelmo's sources and a careful historical reconstruction of the events gradually evoked³.

ALDELMO'S LETTERS

Aldelmo's epistolary consists of thirteen letters (three of which are addressed to him) written in different years and addressed to bishops, kings, his preceptors, which constitute a precious testimony of Aldelmo's life, of his pastoral activity, of his times. They take up standardized typologies typical of the classical canons: they open with the heading containing the greeting to the recipient, accompanied by a praise, sometimes contrasted with a rhetorical spirit from the sender; the motivations of the letter follow, sometimes not without cultural references and numerous references to the Holy Scriptures.

The dating of the letters is uncertain, although some clues can be deduced approximately from the formulas with which Aldelmo refers to himself. At least three of the thirteen letters probably date back to the period preceding his abbey: in fact in the epist. 1 to Leuterio, 2 to Hadrian and 3 to Wihthfrith Aldelmo calls himself *supplex bernaculus*. He declares himself abbot in epistle 4 (*sine meritorum praerogativa abbatis officio functus*); in epistle 6 (8), dedicated to his beloved sister Sygegyth, he is *supplex indigno abbatis vocabulo functus*, while in letter III (9), addressed to him by Cellano, abbot of Péronne, he is defined as *archimandrita*. The expression *extremus servorum Dei* in epist. 8 (11) would indicate that Aldelmo is a bishop, in epist. 10 (13), which is of uncertain attribution⁴, Aldelmo defines himself as *servus servorum Dei*, a clear expression of episcopal dignity.

Aldelmo's letters have a historical-political and religious-paideutic character: they are aimed at thanking those who helped him in his rise to the episcopate (epist. 1), at interceding with kings, at giving credit to those who trained him (epist. 2)⁵, to protect those he loves (his

² EHWALD 1919.

³ See also LAPIDGE, HERREN 1979.

⁴ EHWALD, *MGH* cit., 502, n.1.

⁵ *REVERENTISSIMO PATRI MEAOVE RVDIS INFANTIAE VENERANDO PRAECEPTORI HADRIANO ALDHELMVS BERNACVLVS FAMILIAE CHRISTI ET VESTRAE PIETATIS SVPPLEX ALVMNVS SALVTEM. Fateor, mi carissime, quem gratia purae dilectionis amplector, postquam a sodali contubernio vestro ante triennium circiter discedens a Cantia sequestrabar, quod nostra parvitas hactenus ad consortium vestrum ardenti*

sister, disciples and brothers), to evangelize the still pagan population (epist. 4), to push his disciples to study at the prestigious Anglic schools, where excellent tutors taught (epist. 5).

These epistles shed light on the relationships that Aldelmo forged with some influential figures, English and foreign, both religious and civil, chosen with the criteria of affection and esteem but also with those of practical opportunity. Among the focal points that emerge from the letters arises Aldelmo's aspiration for a Britain to be unified under the sign of the Church of Christ and of Rome in its universal function as the center of Christianity, as a factor in the unification of Anglo-Saxon Britain. Rome, where pagan temples and Christian basilicas coexist, is the city at the crossroads of the traditions of the empire and the papacy: even lay people such as the kings of Wessex or Mercia went there on pilgrimage to be baptized or to enter monastic life. Aldelmo's love for the study of the Bible was Roman-Christian, to which he dedicated many of his energies, without ever neglecting the study of pagan authors, including Virgil and late ancient authors; it is not a coincidence that Aldelmo's Latin⁶, which became his second language, is rich in lexical and rhetorical references to classical culture, which he saw as an indispensable tool for the Angles to make cultural and civil progress⁷.

Another element that emerges from reading the epistles is the attachment to the social group and the sense of cohesion belonging to the Germanic peoples. The letters reveal a strong ethnic pride, the full awareness of belonging to a people that already has common traditions and culture, even if it has not yet organized itself into a unitary nation. Aldelmo is therefore configured as the heir to the common cultural heritage of his gens.

Furthermore, the attitude of the Anglo-Saxons towards women is more Germanic than Christian, inspired by affection and respect for their qualities: no mention of the inferiority of women is found in the writings of Anglo-Saxon authors. Filled with sweetness and imbued with love towards a woman of his family who is about to receive the sacrament of baptism is the letter to his sister Sigegyth 6 (8)⁸. In the more traditional Christian culture, women have a

desiderio flagrabat. Quod etiam iam dudum cogitarem, quemadmodum in votis est, adimplens perficere, si rerum ratio ac temporum vicissitudo pateretur, et nisi me diversa impedimentorum obstacula retardarent praesertimque corporeae fragilitatis valitudine medullitus tabentia membra coquente non sinerer, qua quondam, dum post prima elementa iterum apud vos essem, domum redire coactus sum...

⁶ LAPIDGE-HERREN 1979, 4: «Aldhelm's Latin is extremely difficult, and sometimes impenetrable». M. Winterbottom, *Aldhelm's prose style and its origins* «Anglo-Saxon England» 6, 1977, 40 redeems the fame of Aldelmo as author of difficult prose: «Almost all Aldhelm's sentences, like his individual words, are long; but never loses an essential simplicity of structure». RUFF, ARTHUR (2006, 165-177) demonstrate how productive the tension between clarity and darkness in Aldelmo's prose is.

⁷ MALMESBURY (2007, 195, 2-4) states that the Greeks usually wrote intricately, the Romans with splendor, and the English with ostentation.

⁸ *DILECTISSIMAE ATOVE AMANTISSIMAE SORORI ET MIHI SINCERO CARITATIS AFFECTU VENERANDAE <SIGEGYTHAE> ALDHELMVS SVPPLEX INDIGNO ABBATIS VOCABVLO FVNCTVS IN DOMINO SALVTEM. Cognoscat vestra almitas de baptismo sororis me interrogasse pontificem, qui licentiam dedit baptizari illam sanctimoniam, sed tamen clam et latenter. Saluto te diligenter, o Sigegyth, ex intimo cordis*

completely different position: daughter of Eve and heir of original sin, she is an instrument of damnation, a vessel of all wickedness, an ally of the devil: in fact the Fathers and above all Augustine did not begrudge her their invectives. The Germans, far from the Judeo-Christian myths, were of a different opinion and Aldelmo demonstrates this in the course of his other works.

Among the qualities that Aldelmo shows himself to appreciate in many characters in his letters is the typically Anglo-Saxon gift of solidarity and loyalty. In epist. 9 (12) Aldelmo urges abbot Wilfrid's brothers to support him during his exile. The young people, whom he trained and educated, must not separate from that holy man who held them in a merciful embrace: may they be reproached, dishonored and looked at with horrendous disgust if they forget the grace received, preferring idleness in their beloved homeland to the rigors of a sad exile⁹. Aldelmo then shows energetic firmness towards the king of Dumnonia Geraint (epist. 4), when the latter does not take a position towards the bishops of his region who do not align themselves with the dictates of the Catholic faith but who follow the Byzantine tradition: they, with their excesses and verbal conflicts, they risk bringing the Church of Christ into a serious schism¹⁰.

Another theme concerns cultural relations between England and Ireland. In some letters, the phenomenon that began in the 7th century and continued in the 8th century is outlined in advance: emigration from England to Ireland for study purposes. Aldelmo, who does not deny the validity of the Irish schools, forcefully defends the doctrine of the English masters: in epist. 3 (a. 675) warns Wihtfrith, who has traveled to Ireland, not to be attracted by the temptations he may encounter: the rantings of philosophers, the reading of classical pagan myths and the

cubiculo subnixis precibus obsecrans, ut assidua scripturarum meditatione mentem tuam occupare non desistas, quatenus psalmigrafi sententiam compleas dicentis: In lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte et idem psalmista hoc item testatur dicens: Quam dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua et reliqua. Orationum vero mearum ut memores sint, omnes sorores per Christum suppliciter obsecro, quia dicit apostolus: Multum valet deprecatio iusti assidua. Vale, decies dilectissima, immo centies et milies; te Deus valere faciat!

⁹ *...Nuper furibunda tempestatis perturbatio, sicut experimento didicistis, fundamenta ecclesiae sicut quodam immenso terrae motu concussit, cuius strepitus per diversa terrarum spatia velut tonitruali fragore longe lateque percrebuit. Et idcirco vos viscerales contribulos flexis genuum poplitibus subnixa exposco prece nequaquam huius perturbationis strofa scandalizari, ne quisquam vestrum inertis segnitiei fide torpescat, etiamsi rerum necessitas exigat cum praesule proprio pontificatus apice privato tellure paterna propelli et quaelibet oporteat latorum regnorum transmarina aggredi rura. Quis enim, quaeso, tam durus atroxve labor existens ab illo vos antistite separans arceat, qui vos ab ipso tirocinio rudimentorum et a primaeva tenerae aetatis infantia usque adultae pubertatis florem nutriendo, docendo, castigando paterna provexit pietate et quasi nutrix gerula dilectos alumnos extensis ulnarum sinibus refocilians sic caritatis gremio fotos clementer amplexus est?*

¹⁰ *...Auditum namque et diversis rumoribus compertum nobis est, quod sacerdotes vestri in catholicae fidei regula secundum scripturae praecepta minime concordent et per eorum simultates et pugnas verborum in ecclesia Christi grave scisma et crudele scandalum nascatur...*

easy allurements of bodily pleasures¹¹. After a few years in epist. 5 to Eahfrith (a. 686/90)¹², Aldelmo admonishes his friend, who went to Ireland for study for six long years, not to keep to himself but to share within the community his knowledge¹³. In the course of the letter he asks himself why large masses of disciples go to Ireland, when in Britain one can find masters, citizens of Greece and Rome, capable of revealing the dark mysteries of the celestial library to disciples eager to study them: an exaltation of the masters of the Canterbury school, Theodore is portrayed as a "luminous image of the flaming sun and moon", surrounded by a crowd of Irish students and Hadrian is "equally endowed with unspeakable finesse"¹⁴. Michael Herren

¹¹ ...*Porro tuum discipulatum ceu cernuus arcuatis poplitibus flexisque suffraginibus feculenta fama compulsus posco, ut nequaquam prostibula vel lupanarium nugas, in quis pompulentae prostitutae delitescunt, lenocinante luxu adeas, quae obrizo rutilante periscelidis armillaque lacertorum tereti utpote faleris falerati curules comuntur, sed magis edito aulae fastigio spreto, quo patricii ac praetores potiuntur, gurgustii humilis receptaculo contenta tua fausta fraternitas feliciter fruatur necnon contra gelida brumarum flabra e climate olim septentrionali emergentia neglecto, ut decet Christi discipulum, fucato ostro, potius lacernae gracilis amictu ac mastrucae tegmine incompto utatur...*

¹² ...*Fateor, sodalitatis fraternae cliens altique municipatus municeps, postquam vestram repedantem istuc ambrosiam ex Hiberniae brumosis circionis insulae climatibus, ubi ter bino circiter annorum circulo uber sofiae sugens metabatur, territorii marginem Britannici sospitem applicuisse rumigerulis referentibus comperimus, ilico, ut flammiger flagransque flagitabat amor, ineffabiles altithrono grates pansis in edito utrimque volis tripudiantes obtulimus, potissimum quod te exulem almus arbiter priscam paterni visitantem clientelam ruris caerulea trans ponti glauca inormesque dodrantium glareas atque spumiferas limphae obstirpationes circili carina procellosum sulcante salum reducere ovante nauarco dignatus est, ut, ubi dudum incunabulis tirocinii editus rudibus adulto tenus pubertatis aevo pubertatis aevo adoleveras, nunc versa vice superna opitulanti praerogativa affatim fultus ab incolatu externi ruris repatrians praeceptoris vocamine indepto sortitoque fretus fungaris...*

¹³ LAPIDGE, HERREN 1979, 145-146 observe: «Letter V to Eahfrith is a central document for the study of the cultural relations between England and Ireland in the last quarter of seventh century. Aldhelm is the leader of a national awakening of the English in the domain of letters. Irish teachers and monks had dominated English education from the early part of the seventh century. Irish contacts with the continent, especially with Spain, greatly stimulated Latin studies, particularly in the fields of grammar, biblical exegesis, and theology. One could fairly say that the Irish were at least a generation advanced over the English in most educational areas». STELLA (2009, 435-436) analyzes the reasons that push Aldelmo to write this letter. See also GWARA 1966, 84-134; LAPIDGE 2007, 15-69.

¹⁴ ...*Sed haec misellus homuncio dictando volvens scrupulo ancipiti extemplo quatiens angebar. Cur, inquam, Hibernia, quo catervatim instinc lectitantes classibus advecti confluunt, ineffabili quodam privilegio efferatur, ac si istic, fecundo Britanniae in cespite, dedasculi Argivi Romanive Quirites reperiri minime queant, qui caelestis tetrica enodantes bibliothecae problemata sciolis reserare se sciscitantibus valeant? Quamvis enim praedictum Hiberniae rus discentium opulans vernansque, ut ita dixerim, pascuosa numerositate lectorum, quemadmodum poli cardines astriferis micantium vibraminibus siderum, ornetur: ast tamen climatis Britannia occidui in extremo ferme orbis margine posita verbi gratia ceu solis flammigeri et luculento lunae specimine potiatur, id est Theodoro infula pontificatus fungenti ab ipso tirocinio rudimentorum in flore philosophicae artis adulto necnon et eiusdem sodalitatis cliente Hadriano dumtaxat urbanitate enucleata ineffabiliter praedito! Et audacter in propatulo contestans pellaci falsitatis fribulo neglecto aequa veritatis censura trutinante discernam: etiamsi [beatae memoriae] Theodorus summi sacerdotii gubernacula regens Hibernensium globo discipulorum, ceu aper truculentus molosorum catasta ringente vallatus, stipetur, limato perneciter grammatico dente iactura dispendii carens rebelles falanges discutit et utpote belliger in meditullio campi arcister legionum falangibus saeptus aemulorum spissis: mox nervosis tenso lacertorum volis arcu spiculisque ex faretra*

observes how Aldelmo defends these beliefs by using a language consisting of "convulsive phrases and a bombastic vocabulary which tends to demonstrate that the English are not second to the Irish in verborum copia"¹⁵.

Regarding Aldelmo's evangelizing mission which went beyond the borders of Britain, reaching the land of the Franks, epist. III (9)¹⁶ and 7 (10)¹⁷, which concern the correspondence between Cellanus of Péronne and Aldelmo, show Aldelmo's sagacity, political diplomat. There is also a letter, 10 (13) to Wynberht¹⁸, which concerns a legal question in which possession of a productive property is claimed, land particularly suitable for fishing which had been acquired by the Malmesbury monastery and subsequently lost.

We can conclude by stating that Aldelmo, of royal birth and trained thanks to the teaching of masters such as Theodore and Hadrian, undoubtedly led a comfortable and ambitious life. As emerges from the letters, he had direct and frequent relationships with influential figures of the Church and State, with whom he knew how to deal as equals, also to obtain privileges, lands, properties for his monasteries and for the Churches he founded. The letters, although written with a particularly elaborate language and style¹⁹, show that Aldelmo knew how to adapt the paideia acquired during his years of study to the new needs of evangelization. If the Christian Britain of Aldelmo was still characterized by rude simplicity that was nourished by sovereign naivety and superstition, it cannot be denied that our bishop

exemptis, hoc est chronographiae opacis acutisque syllogismis, turba supercilii tyfo turgens amissa ancilium testudine terga dantes latebras antrorum atras triumphantes victore praepropere petunt.

¹⁵ LAPIDGE, HERREN 1979, 146.

¹⁶ DOMINO LECTRICIBVS DITATO STVDIIS MELLIFLVSQVE ORNATO LVCVRATIVNCVLIS ALDHELMO ARCHIMANDRITAE, SAXONVM MIRIFICE REPERIENTI IN ORIS, QVOD NONNVLLI CVM LABORIBVS ET SVDORIBVS IN ALIENO AERE VIX LVCRANTVR, CELLANVS IN HIBERNENSI INSVLA NATVS, IN EXTREMO FRANCORVM LIMITIS LATENS ANGLVO EXVL, FAMOSAE COLONIAE CHRISTI EXTREMVVM ET VILE MANCIPIVM, IN TOTA ET TVTA TRINITATE SALVTEM....*Quasi pennigero volatu ad nostrae paupertatis accessit aures vestrae latinitatis panagericus rumor, quem agiliū lectorum non horrescunt auditus, sine sanna aut amurcali impostura notus propter alburnum dictricis Romaniae decorum. Etsi te praesentem non meruimus audire, tuos tamen bona lance constructos legimus fastos diversorum deliciis florum depictos; sed si peregrini triste reficere v>is corculum, paucos trans mitte sermunculos illius pulcherrimae labiae tuae, de cuius fonte purissimo dulce dirivati rivi multorum possint reficere mentes, ad locum, ubi domnus Furseus in sancto et integro pausat corpore...*

¹⁷ [CELLANO...ALDHELMUS...SALVTEM] ...*Miror, quod me tantillum homunculum de famoso et florifero Francorum rure vestrae frunitae fraternitatis industria interpellat Saxonicae prolis prosapia genitum et sub Arctoo axe teneris confotum cunabulis...*

¹⁸ DOMINO IN DOMINORUM DOMINO DILECTISSIMO WINBERHTO ALDHELMVS SERVVS SERVORVM DEI IN ANGLVARI DVORVM TESTAMENTORVM LAPIDE DE SVMMIS MONTIVM VERTICIBVS ABSCISO, QVI STATVAM QVATERNIO METALLORVM GENERE FABRE FACTAM QVATERNIO POPVLORVM REGNA SIGNANTEM CONTRITO CRVRATENVVS AVRATO CAPITE OPPRESSIT, SALVTEM. *Gerulum litterarum ad vestrae pietatis praesentiam destinavimus, qui vobis viva voce de causa nostrae necessitatis imminenti plenius promulgabit id est de terra, quam nobis venerandus patricius Balredus possidendam accepto pretio obtulit, praecipue pro captura piscium apta et competenti loco. Et idcirco, dum in vestri regis potestate data et collata esse videtur, obnix precamur, ut eandem agri partem per terrae tuae caritatis patrocinium obtinere et habere firmiter valeamus, ne eadem possessione per violentiam privati, quia plerumque iustitiae iura vacillant, fraudemur...*

¹⁹ What Traube defined *latinitas artificiosa* to the choice of *vocabula rariora* (1911, 175).

contributed with the means most congenial to him, that is, with the strength of his great doctrine and his humanity to make its population more cultured and civilized and to evangelize territories beyond the borders of Britain, also overthrowing the Irish dominance that had brought so many monks and teachers to England.

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