

Snežana FERJANČIĆ*

SOME NOTES ON THE FRAGMENT CIL XVI 19 FROM STARA PALANKA**

ABSTRACT: *The collection of the City Museum of Vršac contains a small piece of a military diploma published by H. Nesselhauf in 1936 (CIL XVI 19). Close examination of the fragment has allowed us to propose a slightly different reading and interpretation of the partially preserved text. The inner side contained information on the place on the Capitol, in Rome, where the original document had been exhibited (ara gentis Iuliae). Two partially preserved witness signatures, consisting of their names and origo, are recorded on the outer side. One of them seemingly included additional elements, i. e. the filiation, followed by a tribe. Judging by the mention of the altar of the Julian family, the Stara Palanka fragment should be dated to the time between 68 AD and 71 AD.*

KEY WORDS: *military diplomata, Stara Palanka, ara gentis Iuliae, Vespasian.*

In 1936 H. Nesselhauf published the sixteenth volume of the famous epigraphic collection *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*, entitled *Diplomata militaria ex constitutionibus imperatorum de civitate et conubio militum veteranorumque expressa* (Berolini). It comprised 157 military diplomas or fragments, ranging from the last years of Claudius' reign to the beginning of the fourth century AD. One of the fragments is currently kept in the collection of the City Museum of Vršac (inv. n° Aa 3329).

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** The following abbreviations were used in the text:

AE = *L'année épigraphique*, Paris

CIL = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*

RMD = M. M. Roxan–P. Holder, *Roman Military Diplomas I-V*, London 1978-2006

I would also like to thank Olga Pelcer-Vujačić for the photos of this fragments.

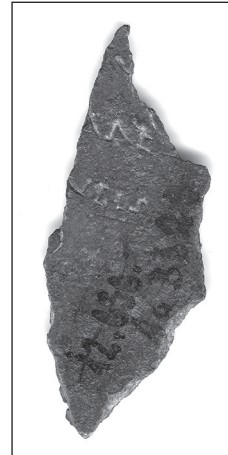
The small piece of tabella II was found in 1928 in the hamlet Stara Palanka (presently part of the settlement of Banatska Palanka in Serbia) on the left bank of the Danube. It was brought to the Museum of Vršac in 1930. Dimensions: 6.1 x 2.4 x 0.4 cm (*CIL* XVI 19). The partially preserved text consists of four lines on the inner side and five lines on the outer side.

Intus:

[---]V[---]
 [---]AAE[---]
 [---]NTIS[---]
 [---]O[---]

Extrinsecus:

[---]S[---]
 [---]I·DFC[---]
 [---]ENS
 [---]I·VILL[---]
 [---]ENS



Close examination of the fragment has allowed us to propose a slightly different reading of the text than the one suggested by Nesselhauf. According to the German scholar, the letter V in the first line of the intus text probably belongs to the soldier's name or *origo*. The subsequent part of the text is restored as follows: [*Descriptum et recognitum ex tabul*]a ae[*nea quae fixa est Romae in Capitolio ad aram ge*]ntis [*Iuliae - -*].¹ The fourth line of the intus text contains only part of a letter, which might be read as O.² It probably belonged to the formula pertaining to the place on the Capitol where the original document had been exhibited. The formula could be restored in two ways. One, already suggested by S. Dušanić, would be: [--- *aram/arae ge*]ntis / [*Iuliae latere dextr*]o.³ However, it seems that one should also consider the following option: [--- *ad aram ge*]ntis [*Iuliae in podi*]o [---]. The closest parallels, mentioning the *podium* of the altar of the Julian family after the *ara* itself, are found in *CIL* XVI 12 and *RMD* 324, both issued in AD 71.⁴

The extrinsecus text also deserves to be discussed again. It contains traces of the names of witnesses who had signed the original document, with

¹ H. Nesselhauf, *CIL* XVI 19.

² Cf. Nesselhauf, *loc. cit.*

³ S. Dušanić, The Witnesses to the Early “Diplomata Militaria”, in: *Selected Essays in Roman History and Epigraphy*, Belgrade 2010, 303, n. 26.

⁴ *CIL* XVI 12: *ad aram gentis Iuliae in podio / parte exteriore tab(ula) I*. *RMD* 324: *in ara gentis Iuliae in podio anti secus*.

information on their origin (*-ens(is)* in lines three and five). Nesselhauf states the possibility that the text also included their status. According to his interpretation, the second line of the fragment might have contained the title *dec(urionis)* and the letter H in front of it.⁵ However, close inspection of the fragment has revealed another possibility. The first preserved letter in the second line seems to be an I. Furthermore, the letter following the D might not be an E, but an F, since it is completely different from the Es in the third and fifth lines. Its upper and middle horizontal strokes are much shorter and not wedge-shaped. The lower horizontal stroke of the supposed E seems to be nothing more than an imperfection in the surface of the tablet or a later indentation. Consequently, the second line could have contained the *nomen gentile* of the witness in genitive, ending with an I, followed by filiation – *D. f(ilius)* – and an indication of the tribe or a cognomen, beginning with a C. The lack of a punctuation mark between the letters F (of the word *filius*) and C is paralleled on a diploma issued in 70 AD.⁶ Witness signatures containing the *praenomen*, *nomen gentile*, filiation, tribe, cognomen and *origo* are attested in a number of early diplomas, ranging from AD 52 to AD 75.⁷ In all these documents, the filiation is invariably followed by the tribe, with the exception of one signature on the diploma issued in AD 74: *L. Iuli(i) C. f(iiii) Silvini Carthag(iniensis)*.⁸ It seems, therefore, that the letter C is the beginning of the name of one of the Roman tribes – *Camilia*, *Claudia*, *Collina*, *Cornelia* or *Clustumina* must all be considered. The other option, that the C represents the beginning of a cognomen seems somewhat less plausible.

The fourth line of the extrinsecus text also presents a point of interest. The first letter is only partially preserved. Nesselhauf believed it to be an H,⁹ while Dušanić opted for an L.¹⁰ According to the latter's opinion, the following VILL is an abbreviation of the title *vill(icus)*. Consequently, the fourth line would run: [- - - *col(oniae)* or (e.g.) *C(ai)] l(iberti) vill(ici)*.¹¹ Signatures

⁵ Nesselhauf, *CIL XVI 17 ad n° 19*. Cf. S. Dušanić, *Selected Essays* (n. 3), 303 who believes that the first letter in the second row was T.

⁶ *RMD* 203, tabella II extrinsecus, lines 20-22: Q ANTISTI·Q F SER RVFI CLODIANI / PHILIPP / EQ·R.

⁷ *CIL XVI* 1 (AD 52), 7 (AD 68), 10 (AD 68); *RMD* 203 (AD 70); *CIL XVI* 15 (AD 71), 20 (AD 74); *RMD* 2 (AD 75). From the reign of Vespasian, witness signatures contain only the *tria nomina*, without any additional information. The change is usually ascribed to the emperor's censorship in 73/74 AD: J. Morris–M. Roxan, The Witnesses to Roman Military Diplomata, *Arheološki Vestnik* 28, 1977, 326 sq.; R. Frei-Stolba, Bemerkungen zu den Zeugen der Militärdiplome, in: *Militärdiplome. Die Forschungsbeiträge der Berner Gespräche von 2004*, Stuttgart 2007, 15.

⁸ *CIL XVI* 20.

⁹ Nesselhauf, *CIL XVI* 19.

¹⁰ Dušanić, *Selected Essays* (n. 3), 303.

¹¹ Dušanić, *op. cit.*, 303 sq., n. 27.

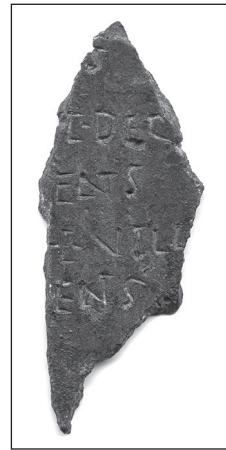
containing additional information on witnesses, such as their tribe, *origo*, status or occupation, are common in military diplomas up to the reign of Vespasian.¹² However, examination of the data concerning the occupation reveals that most of the witnesses were veterans or active soldiers and officers.¹³ Civilian posts and titles are rarely recorded. Two bronzes, issued in 70 and 71 AD respectively, bear the names of the members of the *ordo decurionum* of Philippi in Macedonia and Iader in Dalmatia.¹⁴ Bearing in mind the adduced data on the occupation of witnesses, it seems that the group VILL in the fourth line of the Stara Palanka fragment could be interpreted in another way as well. We presume that it was actually the beginning of a cognomen.¹⁵ The name could have been *Villaniensis*, *Villanus*, *Villaticus*, *Villianus* or *Villus*.¹⁶

Lastly, the Stara Palanka fragment was published in *CIL XVI* with an S in the sixth line of the extrinsecus text. Close examination of the fragment has revealed no traces of that letter. Considering all the possibilities discussed above and difficulties arising from the partially preserved text, we propose a slightly different reading of the extrinsecus text:

*J*S[- - - | - - -]i D. f(i)lius C[- - - | - - -]ens(is) [- -
- | - - -]i Vill[- - - |⁵ - - -]ens(is) [- - -].

According to our suggestion, one witness signature contains the filiation and possibly the name of the tribe starting with a C, while the other consists of the *nomen gentile* followed by a cognomen beginning with *Vill*-. Similar cases, combining signatures with the filiation and without it, are recorded on all the diplomas containing additional data on the witnesses.¹⁷

The Stara Palanka fragment is dated to 64/74 AD.¹⁸ The mention of the *ara gentis Iuliae* in the intus text allows a more precise dating. Judging by available



¹² Cf. Dušanić, *op. cit.*, 298.

¹³ Veterans: *CIL XVI* 8, 9 (68 AD); *CIL XVI* 10; *RMD* 203, 204 (70 AD). *Missicii*: *AE* 2006, 1833 (70 AD). Soldiers and officers: *CIL XVI* 3 (54 AD); *CIL XVI* 10; *RMD* 204, 205 (70 AD); *CIL XVI* 12; *RMD* 324 (71 AD); *AE* 2007, 1782 (86 AD).

¹⁴ *CIL XVI* 10: Philippi (P. Carullius Sabinus, C. Vetidius Rasinianus); *CIL XVI* 14: Iader (T. Fanius Celer, C. Marcius Proculus).

¹⁵ Cf. Dušanić, *Selected Essays* (n. 3), 304, n. 27 stating that the cognomen remains theoretically possible.

¹⁶ I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965, 158 (*Villianus*), 236 (*Villus*), 312 (*Villanus*, *Villaticus*); H. Solin–O. Salomies, *Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum Latinorum*, Hildesheim–Zürich–New York 1994, 423 (*Villanensis*).

¹⁷ See n. 7 above.

¹⁸ *CIL XVI* 19. Cf. P. Holder, *RMD V* p. 682.

evidence, the altar of the Julian family appears to have been a regular choice for the display of diplomas between AD 68 and 71.¹⁹ It seems, therefore, that the fragment from Stara Palanka belongs to that period as well.²⁰ Three other Vespasianic documents were discovered in Moesia Superior. The earliest one, consisting of two fragments, was found near Arčar, which is identified with the ancient Ratiaria. It was issued in 70 AD to a veteran of the legion II Adiutrix.²¹ The complete diploma of Heras, discharged from the cohorts I Raetorum in 75 AD, was discovered in the Danubian fort of Taliata, near Donji Milanovac.²² Finally, the town of Scupi has yielded a bronze issued in 78 AD.²³

We have already stated that the hamlet Stara Palanka is presently part of the settlement of Banatska Palanka, on the left bank of the Danube. The site has yielded a relatively large amount of archaeological material from the Roman times, such as *terra sigillata* pottery, lamps, glassware, fibulae and coin hoards.²⁴ Vestiges of a building with a hypocaust were discovered in the vicinity of the settlement, near the channel of the river Nera.²⁵ Archaeological excavations on the neighbouring island of Sapaja (integrated into the embankment since 1970), have revealed the remains of a late Roman fort, dated to the fourth century AD, possibly between Constantine's Gothic campaign of 322 AD and his intervention in the conflict of the Sarmatian Limigantes and Agaragantes in 334 AD.²⁶ Its name could have been Translederata or Contra Lederatam, since it was situated vis-à-vis Lederata.²⁷ Lederata

¹⁹ *AE* 2006, 1833 (71 AD) and *AE* 2004, 1282=2007, 1232 (71 AD) should be added to the list given in *RMD* IV p. 617. On the *ara gentis Iuliae* as a site for displaying the diplomas see: G. Forni, I diplomi militari dei classari delle flotte pretorie (inclusi quelli dei classari-legionari), in: *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*, Köln–Wien 1986, 307 sqq.; W. Eck, Eine Bürgerrechtskonstitution Vespasians aus dem Jahr 71 n. Chr. und die Aushebung von brittonischen Auxiliareinheiten, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 143, 2003, 225 sq.

²⁰ Forni, *Heer und Integrationspolitik* (n. 19), 309 and Dušanić, *Selected Essays* (n. 3), 303, n. 26 date the fragment to 68/70 AD.

²¹ *RMD* 323.

²² *RMD* 2.

²³ Unpublished document (information obtained from M. Mirković who received it from L. Jovanova).

²⁴ O. Brukner, Rimski nalazi u jugoslovenskom delu barbarikuma – Bačka i Banat, *Arheološki Vestnik* 41, 1990, 204.

²⁵ D. Dimitrijević, Sapaja, rimsko i srednjovekovno utvrđenje na ostrvu kod Stare Palanke, *Starinar* 33-34, 1982-1983, 55 stating that the finds imply the existence of a minor settlement or a *villa rustica*.

²⁶ For the excavations see: Dimitrijević, *Starinar* 33-34, 1982-1983, 33-51. For the dating see: eadem, *op. cit.* 51; M. Đorđević, Contributions to the Study of the Roman Limes in South Banat, in: *Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube*, Belgrade 1996, 130.

²⁷ Dimitrijević, *Starinar* 33-34, 1982-1983, 55; A. Jovanović, The Problem of the Location of Lederata, in: *Roman Limes* (n. 26), 70.

ta is considered as one of vital strategic points of Trajan's Dacian campaign. The fortress served as a bridge-head for the pontoon over which the emperor crossed the Danube in 101 AD. The strategic importance of Lederata implies the existence of a fortification on the left bank of the river. It was presumably erected after 106 AD and the establishment of the province of Dacia.²⁸

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Summary

The collection of the City Museum in Vršac (Serbia) contains a small piece of a Roman military diploma (Inv. n° 3329). The fragment was published for the first time in 1936 by H. Nesselhauf, in the *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL XVI 19). It was discovered in 1928 in the hamlet of Stara Palanka, on the left bank of Danube. Two years later, in 1930, it was brought to the Museum of Vršac. Close examination of the fragment has allowed us to suggest a slightly different reading than the one proposed by Nesselhauf. Bearing in mind all the difficulties resulting from the size of the fragment and the partially preserved text, the outer side could be read as follows: *J[S] [- - -] [- - -] i D. f(i)lius C[- - -] [- - -] ens(is) [- - -] [- - -] i Vill[- - -] |⁵ - - -] ens(is) [- - -]*. It contains two witness signatures, consisting of the names in genitive and their *origo*. It seems that the first signature included the filiation, after the *nomen gentile*, and then the name of a tribe or a cognomen. The first possibility is more plausible, because the tribe almost invariably follows the filiation in the signatures that contain additional information on the witness. The letters VILL in the fourth line should be interpreted as the beginning of a cognomen. The Stara Palanka fragment is dated to 64/74 AD by modern scholars. However, the mention of the *ara gentis Iuliae* as the place where the original bronze had been exhibited, allows a more precise dating, between 68 AD and 71 AD.

²⁸ Jovanović, *Roman Limes* (n. 26), 69.