

## CUP-BEARER OF CONSTANTIIUS II AND EARLY CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE NECROPOLIS OF ST SYNEROTES IN SIRMIIUM\*

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e-mail: ivpop@eunet.rs  
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Short communication

*Abstract.* – During the archaeological excavations performed in 1969/70 at the northern necropolis of Sirmium, around the Basilica of St Synerotes, a few sepulchral slabs with inscriptions and symbols of Early Christian character were discovered. The inscription on one slab, which reads: [±1 ? M]arturiu[s p]incerna / [C]onstanti / [I]mperatori[s (!) qui] vixsit (!) an/n[is] nonag/inta una cu/m matron/a sua Man/[ - - -, shows that this is a tombstone of a certain Marturius, the cup-bearer of Constantius II. This emperor spent many months in Sirmium during 351–352 and 357–359, celebrating twice in this city the triumph over Quadi and Sarmatae, and intensifying not only the building of its infrastructure, but also of the sacral structures. As a fervent Christian of Arian orientation, he organised four ecclesiastical synods in Sirmium. On another slab, an inscription in Greek letters is written around a Christogram in a double circle, while on the third slab, decorated with floral motifs around a Christogram, the inscription is partly preserved. These tombstones are located south of the southern portico of Basilica of St Synerotes.

*Key words.* – Roman period, Sirmium, Basilica of St Synerotes, Early Christian inscriptions, cup-bearer, Constantius II.

The first expert archaeological excavations of ancient Sirmium in 1882 were initiated by a chance-find from 1875, when two sepulchral slabs on which the martyr Synerotes is mentioned were discovered. On these epitaphs the name of the Sirmian martyr, a gardener executed on February 25<sup>th</sup> 305 because of an objection that the wife of an officer from the Emperor's Guard was entering his garden,<sup>1</sup> appears in the framework of two formulas: ...*ad beatu[m] Synerot[em] martire[m] (!) ...* and ... *ad dominem Synerotem...*<sup>2</sup> The slabs were found north-west of Mitrovica, not far from the location of *Majurska Bara* or *na Vrbici*, in the region of the northern city-necropolis of Sirmium. As a result, the existence of the Basilica of St

Synerotes was confirmed and, at the beginning of the ninth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hytrek confirmed the suppositions regarding its location in the northern necropolis (fig. 1). During the campaigns of 1882/83 he discovered a one-nave basilica, with dimensions of 19.30 x 30.30 m, and an apse on its western side and produced its plan.<sup>3</sup> However, the remnants of this building have been destroyed, and after the recent analysis

<sup>1</sup> Zeiller 1918, 87–88.

<sup>2</sup> *CIL* III, 10232, 10233; Ljubić 1883, 19; Hytrek 1894, 5; Brunšmid 1909, 188–189, br. 393, 394.

<sup>3</sup> Hytrek 1894, 5, Pl. I.

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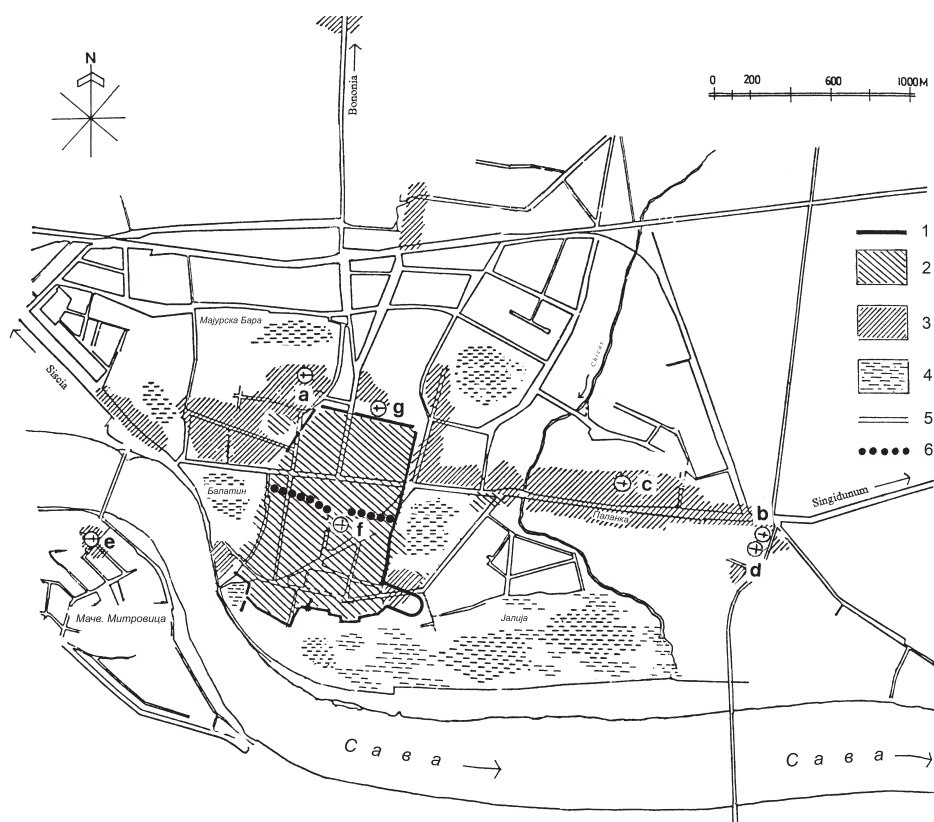


Fig. 1. Sirmium in the 4–5<sup>th</sup> century, necropolises and cultic structures: a – Basilica of St Synerotes; b, d – triconchal martyrium with a chapel; c – Basilica of St Irenaeus; e – martyrium (of St Irenaeus ?); f – city church (of St Demetrius ?); g – church (of St Anastasia ?) discovered and demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; 1 – rampart; 2 – settlement; 3 – necropolises; 4 – marshland; 5 – streets; 6 – supposed location of the interior rampart (after: Jeremić 2006, Fig. 1, with added church g)

Сл. 1. Сирмијум у IV–V веку, некрополе и култна места: а – базилика св. Синеротија; b, d – триконхални мартиријум и капела; c – базилика св. Иринеја; e – мартиријум (св. Иринеја ?); f – градска црква (св. Димитрија ?); g – црква откривена и унишћена у XIX веку (св. Анастасије ?); 1 – бедем; 2 – насеље; 3 – некрополе; 4 – мочваре; 5 – улице; 6 – претпостављена шраса унутрашњеи бедема (према: Jeremić 2006, Fig. 1, са додатоком цркве g)

of Hytrek's plans, of the presented dimensions of the building and of the inscriptions on the sepulchral slabs, the conclusion was made that this was a three-nave basilica with its apse to the east (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> During his excavations in 1882/83, Hytrek also discovered the part of a necropolis with graves of different construction and with numerous sepulchral slabs. On one of them is written: *Syner]otis ma[rtyris...*<sup>5</sup> In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the necropolis was researched again on two occasions: during the protective excavations in 1960/61<sup>6</sup> and during the revising excavations, on a larger scale, conducted in 1969/70.<sup>7</sup> The goal of these researches was to define the area of the Early Christian cemetery and its relationship to the earlier

pagan necropolis. 332 graves of different constructions were researched, most of them orientated in the direction east-west, with incinerated deceased persons.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jeremić 2006, 117–128.

<sup>5</sup> Brunšmid 1909, 190, br. 395.

<sup>6</sup> The excavations were performed by the Regional Institution for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Novi Sad, under the direction of dr Olga Brukner.

<sup>7</sup> The excavations were executed in the framework of the Yugoslav-American archaeological project, directed by dr Vladislav Popović and dr Edvard Oshenschlager.

<sup>8</sup> Милошевић 2001, 168–170.

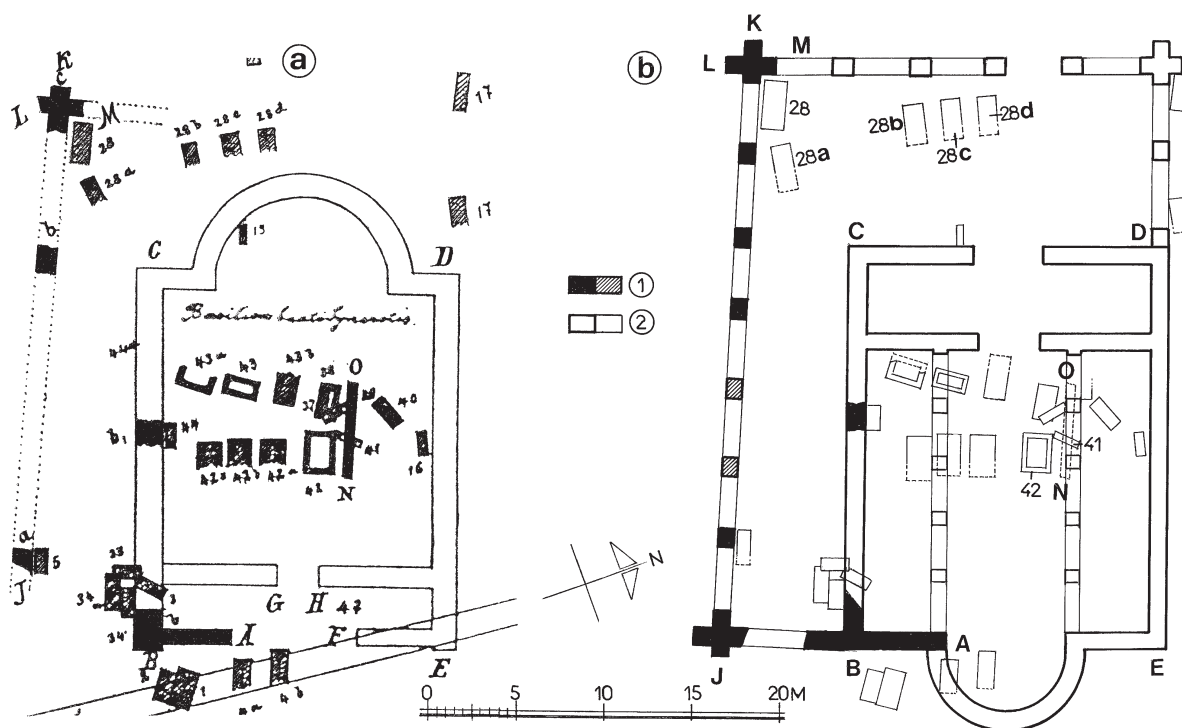


Fig. 2. Plan of the Basilica of St Synerotes (after: a) Hytrek 1894, Pl. I; b) Jeremić 2006, fig. 9b)

Сл. 2. План базилике св. Синерота (према: а) Hytrek 1894, Pl. I; б) Jeremić 2006, fig. 9b)

Unfortunately, a great number of the grave structures was devastated and, during the Turkish period, certain parts of land have been moved from one location to another. The fragmented tombstones with the Christian symbols and inscriptions, one in Greek (inv. 191), discovered in 1969, and the other in Latin (inv. 666), found in 1970,<sup>9</sup> are the only testimonies that the deceased were Christians, because the surrounding finds, which were, probably, part of the grave inventory, did not yield any data regarding the religious orientation of the buried persons. According to the field documentation, the tombstones were found south of the position where the basilica was standing, the first at the depth of 0.61 m (trench IV, excavation J), and the other one at the depth of 0.70 m (trench XI, excavation N). The tombstone with the Greek inscription was discovered in a layer with mixed Roman ceramics and bricks, and the one with the Latin inscription was built into a wall completed and repaired in a later (Turkish ?) period, built in the area around the southern portico of the basilica (fig. 3). It was placed above eight devastated skeleton graves and one grave of an incinerated person. Both sepulchral slabs, deposited in the Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica, are today more damaged

but, since they were photographed during the excavations and immediately after them, in 1969 and 1971, their appearance at the moment of discovery is known, and a large part of the text, especially of the one in Latin, can be reconstructed.

**1.** White marble slab, broken into five fragments (inv. 666/1970). Dimensions: 47 x 28 x 2.50 cm. The right and lower parts of the slab are missing. The inscription consists of nine, for the most part, partially preserved lines. Their varying length (lines 8 and 9 are somewhat shorter than lines 1–7) presents certain difficulties concerning the reconstruction of the text, particularly the first line. However, the number of missing letters at the beginning of lines 1–5 is easily established, since line 7 is preserved in its entire length. Letter height:

<sup>9</sup> We assume that both inscriptions were supposed to be published in the framework of the corpus of the Early Christian epigraphic monuments of Sirmium, edited by dr Petar Petrović for the IX volume of the edition *Sirmium*, whose editors were supposed to be Vladislav Popović and Noël Duval. After the premature death of V. Popović in 1999, the editor of this publication became N. Duval, but it still remains unpublished, for many objective and subjective reasons.

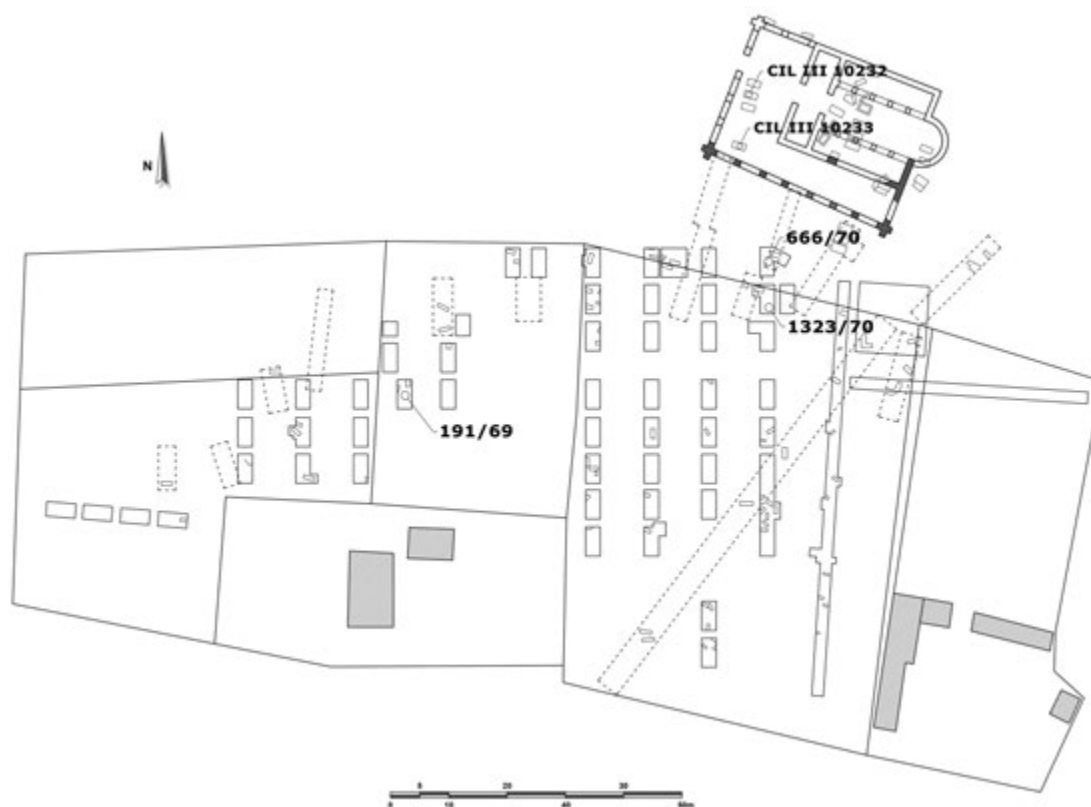


Fig. 3. Finds of the sepulchral slabs CIL III 10232, 10233 and inv. 666/1970, 191/1969 and 1323/1970 (plan: B. Popović)

Сл. 3. Налази надгробних плоча CIL III 10232, 10233 и инв. 666/1970, 191/1969 и 1323/1970 (план: Б. Поповић)

4.5 cm. Incised above the first line is a cross with an extended descending arm and the apocalyptic letters A and Ω under the transversal arm. To the left of the cross, is a double heart shaped *hedera* (fig. 4). The text reads as follows:

[± 1 ? M]arturiu[s p]incerna / [C]onstanti / [I]mperatoris (!) qui vixit (!) an/n[is] nonag/inta una cu/m matron/a sua Man/[- - -]

The name of the deceased, in lines 1 and 2, should be restored as [M]arturiu[s], i. e. *Martyrius*. The alteration of the Greek vowel Y with the Latin U was quite common in the Danubian and Balkan provinces of the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup> The name *Martyrius/Martyria* is already attested in Pannonia Inferior. It is recorded (in the form *Martoria*) on a Christian epitaph from Cibalae, dated to the beginning of the fourth century AD.<sup>11</sup> One should also note that *Martyrius/Μαρτύριος* is comparatively frequent in Christian inscriptions throughout the Roman Empire. The Latin form is found in Transpadana in northern Italy, as well as in the western (Hispania, Gallia Belgica) and Balkan (Moesia Inferior)

provinces.<sup>12</sup> The Greek form is attested in Sicily, Achaia, Crete, Cyrene, Thrace and the coastal regions of Asia Minor.<sup>13</sup> Considering the uneven length of the lines, the name *Marturius* could have been preceded by one or two letters. Consequently, the name of the deceased might be restored as [Fl(avius ?) M]arturiu[s]. The name *Flavius* is often attested among high civil and military officials in Late Antiquity.<sup>14</sup>

Lines 2–5 reveal *Marturius*' occupation and provide crucial chronological information for the dating of his epitaph. The word incised in line 2, following the letter S at the beginning, was undoubtedly [p]incerna. *Pincerna*, meaning “cup-bearer”, is considered a late formation, borrowed from the Greek language. It does not

<sup>10</sup> Mihăescu 1978, 183–184, § 130.

<sup>11</sup> *ILJug* 283.

<sup>12</sup> *OPEL* III 177. For Moesia Inferior see: *AE* 1977, 765.

<sup>13</sup> <http://clas-igpn2.classics.ox.ac.uk/name/Μαρτύριος> (03/08/2015).

<sup>14</sup> Mócsy 1964, 257–263.

appear in literary sources before the fourth century AD.<sup>15</sup> The term *pincerna* is recorded on two pieces of epigraphic evidence, in addition to the funerary inscription of Marturius from Sremska Mitrovica. An epitaph of a thirty-year old cup-bearer by the name of Antilocus, dated to the fourth century AD, was discovered in Rome.<sup>16</sup> A fragmentary inscription from Assisi in Umbria mentions a slave (his name is not preserved) who was *pincerna princeps*, i. e. the chief cup-bearer, of his master, Lucius Didius Communis.<sup>17</sup> Dated to the first century AD,<sup>18</sup> the fragment seems to provide the earliest attestation of the term *pincerna* in epigraphic evidence.

As a cup-bearer, Marturius attended upon the emperor Constantius II, whose name is recorded in line 3 of the inscription. Considering the length of the lines, it seems highly unlikely that he served one of his broth-

Fig. 4. Sepulchral slab of Marturius, cup-bearer of Constantius II (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

Сл. 4. Нагробни споменик Мартурију, пехарнику Констанција II (документација Археолошког института у Београду)



ers (Constantine II or Constans), or even Constantine himself. Written in genitive, the names *Constantinus* and *Constans* would have been divided between lines 3 and 4 – *Constanti/ni* and *Constanti/s*. However, there is no space for two or three letters at the beginning of line 4. Only one letter is missing, and it must be an I, followed by the partially preserved N of the word *imperatoris*. Consequently, it seems quite certain that Marturius attended upon Constantius II. Sirmium was the emperor's main military base during the struggle against the usurper Magnentius and during the campaigns against the Quadi and the Sarmatae. Constantius Gallus, the son of Constantine's half brother Iulius Constantius, was appointed *Caesar* in Sirmium, on March 15, 351 AD.<sup>19</sup> Constantius II waited in Sirmium while his army marched to meet Magnentius' forces at Mursa.<sup>20</sup> After the decisive battle, which took place on September 28, 351 AD, Constantine's son resided in Sirmium at least until the last days of May 352 AD. During his sojourn in the city, he issued three edicts, on February 26, May 12 and 27, 352 AD respectively.<sup>21</sup> Constantius II returned to Sirmium in October 357, planning to wage war against the Quadi and Sarmatae, who were pillaging the provinces of Valeria, Pannonia Secunda and Moesia Superior.<sup>22</sup> The city served as the emperor's headquarters during the campaigns against the barbarians from the autumn of 357 AD to the spring of 359 AD. His presence there is attested by various edicts, issued between October 17, 357 AD and May 28, 359 AD.<sup>23</sup>

The word *imperatoris* in lines 4 and 5 was written with an N instead of an M. The form *imperator* is attested in the Danubian provinces of Noricum, Dacia and Moesia Inferior.<sup>24</sup> The form *vixsit*, written in line 5 instead of *vixit*, is frequently found in Christian inscriptions.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Heraeus 1915, 14–15; Bartelink 1979, 215; Traina 1997, 298.

<sup>16</sup> *CIL* VI 9798=ILCV 596. For the dating see: EDB28775, 09/07/2015 (A. Rocco).

<sup>17</sup> *CIL* XI 5436=AE 2010, 935.

<sup>18</sup> EDR025386, 03/03/2006 (G. Asdrubali Pentiti).

<sup>19</sup> Kienast 2004, 318.

<sup>20</sup> Socrat. *Hist. Eccl.* II 28.

<sup>21</sup> Seeck 1964, 198–199.

<sup>22</sup> Amm. Marc. XVI 10, 21. For the date see: Seeck 1964, 204.

<sup>23</sup> Seeck 1964, 204–206. On Constantius' and Sirmium see: Mirković 1971, 38–39; Mirković 2006, 69–70.

<sup>24</sup> Noricum: *CIL* III 5720. Dacia: *CIL* III 1394 (Germisara). Moesia Inferior: *AE* 1922, 70 (Ulmetum); 1924, 148 (Histria).

<sup>25</sup> *ILCV* Indices, p. 608–609, s. v. *vivo* III.



Lines 7–9 contain the formula *una cum matrona sua*. The expression *una cum*, meaning “with”, is recorded on inscriptions from the Danubian and Balkan provinces (Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia).<sup>26</sup> The words *matrona sua* refer to Marturius’ wife. *Matrona*, meaning „wife, spouse“ is already recorded on the famous funerary inscription from Sirmium, set up in the basilica of St. Iraeneus by a certain Macedonius and his wife (*matrona*) Ammes, daughter of Evenatus.<sup>27</sup> It is also attested in Christian inscriptions.<sup>28</sup> The name of Marturius’ wife, beginning with the letters MAN at the end of line 9, might be restored in various ways (e. g. *Manilia*, *Mania*, *Manlia*, *Mansuetia* etc.).<sup>29</sup>

2. Fragment of white marble slab (inv. 191/1969). Dimensions: 17.5 x 9.5 cm at the moment of the discovery, today 17.3 x 5.5 cm. The inscription consists of seven partially preserved lines, incised around a staurogram (Christogram) in two concentric circles, with the apocalyptic letters A and Ω beneath the transversal arm of the cross. The first Λ in line 5 is preceded by two leaf-shaped hederæ. Letter height: 2.8–3 cm. The preserved text reads as follows:

] / [- - -]M[- - - / - - -] ἔζησεν [- - - / - - -]  
ἀποθνήσκ[ει - - - / - - -]αντων Δ[- - - /<sup>5</sup> - - -]ΛΛΟ [- -  
- / - - -]υστου [- - - / - - -]ΛΕΥ[- - - / - - -]

Traces of unidentifiable letters are visible in line 1, before and after M, at the ends of lines 2, 3, 5 and 6. At the beginning of line 3, there is a stroke that might have belonged to an E or Σ and at the beginning of line 7, a trace of an A or an Λ. The words ἔζησεν in the second line and ἀποθνήσκ[- - -] in the third line reveal that the fragment belonged to a funerary inscription. In line 2, behind ἔζησεν, one would expect the term ἔτη, followed by a number. The verb ἀποθνήσκω in the present tense, instead of the aorist ἀπέθανεν, is recorded on two inscriptions, found in Moesia Superior and Gallia Lugdunensis respectively.<sup>30</sup> The letters -αντων, in line 4, could be interpreted as the ending of an aorist participle of some verb (e. g. ποιησάντων) or the genitive πάντων/ἀπάντων of the pronoun πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν/ἅπας, ἅπασα, ἅπαν.<sup>31</sup>

Since in the inscription the cup-bearer of Constantius II is mentioned, the tombstone confirms the information from written sources about the important role which this city played during the rule of this emperor. During his long stays in this city, Constantius II initiated its further building and also the repairing of the road to Italy, to which bears witness a milestone from Sirmium.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the numismatic finds also show

his building activity in the space of the palatial complex, especially his adding of the supporting wall around the circular construction (mausoleum, temple ?), since in the filling of the negative of this wall, in 2014, coins minted by Constantius II were found.<sup>33</sup> Given that he spent almost two years in Sirmium, it is logical that the Emperor took measures to reconstruct the palace in which he stayed with his suite, to which also belonged his cup-bearer *Marturius*, buried in the city’s northern necropolis. The cup-bearer (*pincerna*) was a slave whose duty was to mix wine, to pour it into cups and to serve them to the persons at the table. Usually, this was a young man, chosen because of the elegance of his movements, and he attracted attention by his appearance and clothes – his hair falling down on his shoulders and wearing a short tunica.<sup>34</sup> As the sepulchral slab shows, the cup-bearer of Constantius II was a Christian who died in Sirmium and was buried next to the Basilica of St Synerotes in the northern necropolis. However, because today the remains of this basilica do not exist, and the graves around it are devastated, the question remains as to whether this sacral structure was built during the rule of Constantius II or it already existed before him. The first supposition seems more probable, because the analysis of archaeological and numismatic material, in the first instance bricks with the stamps of military units, from the excavations of the Basilica of St Iraeneus in the eastern necropolis, points to the possibility that this sacral structure was also built during the reign of this emperor.<sup>35</sup> In any case,

<sup>26</sup> Mihăescu 1978, 317, § 318; Fehér 1997, 222, s. v. *una*.

<sup>27</sup> Mirković 2006, 117; Popović et al. 2013, 314, n° 79.

<sup>28</sup> E. g. *ILCV* 353 (Augusta Treverorum), 2184 (Larissa); *ILJug* 2591 (Salona).

<sup>29</sup> For names beginning with *Man-* see: Solin, Salomies 1994, 111–112; *OPEL* III 49–52. The authors owe gratitude to Professor Miroslava Mirković for helpful suggestions and advice concerning the reading of the Marturius’ epitaph.

<sup>30</sup> Moesia Superior: *IMS* VI 81 (Scupi). Gallia Lugdunensis: *SEG* 42, 965, 1 (Augustodunum).

<sup>31</sup> The authors owe gratitude to Professor Marijana Ricl for helpful suggestions and advice.

<sup>32</sup> *CIL* III 10617 = M. Mirković, *op. cit.* (note 66), no 97.

<sup>33</sup> The analysis of the numismatic finds from the excavations in Sirmium was done by Pavle Popović, the curator and numismatist of Museum of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica.

<sup>34</sup> Rich 1861, 487.

<sup>35</sup> The information was obtained thanks to dr M. R. Vasić, the participant of the excavations in 1976 and 1977, with whom dr I. Popović is preparing the publication of the results of these researches.

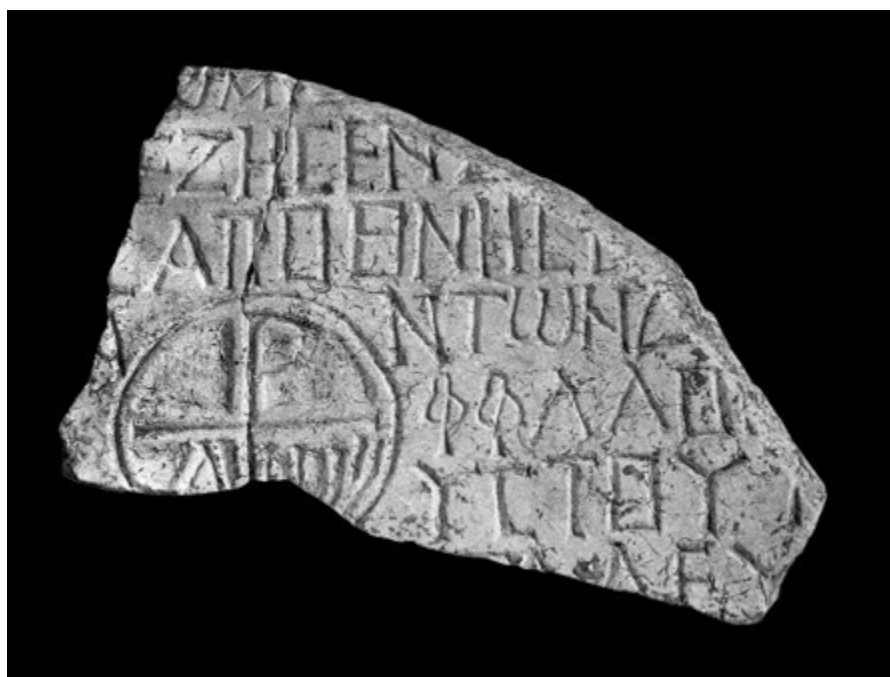


Fig. 5. Sepulchral slab with Greek inscription and staurogram (Christogram) in two concentric circles (documentation of the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

Сл. 5. Надгробни сѣоменик са грчким шексѣом и сѣауроѣрамом (хрѣсѣоѣрамом) у два конценѣирѣчна круѣа (документѣациѣа Археолошкоѣ инсѣѣиѣуѣѣа у Беоѣрагу)

the formulas *ad dominum Synerotem*,<sup>36</sup> i.e. *ad beatum Synerotem*,<sup>37</sup> from two inscriptions from the Basilica of St Synerotes, find their parallel in the formulas from the inscription in *basilica domini nostril Ereni*,<sup>38</sup> from the Basilica of St Iraeneus, and *[In dom]o beati[ssimae dominae nost]re Anast[asiae] - - -*, from the Basilica of St Anastasia, which was, maybe, located next to the northern city-wall.<sup>39</sup>

Erecting basilicas dedicated to local martyrs is completely in accordance with the religious politics of Constantius II, who adopted a harsh attitude towards paganism, forbidding, with his laws from 353 and 356, not only the nightly sacrifices, but also the very worshipping of pagan idols.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, after his victory over Magnentius in 350, the Emperor spent the winter of 351/52 in Sirmium, falling under the influence of the bishop Valens of Mursa, who preached Arianism. Since Constantius II became a fervent advocate of the Arian heresy, numerous local prelates followed him. Between 351 and 358, in Sirmium, four ecclesiastical synods took place, some of them organised by the Emperor himself. At them, with the help of the bishop Valens of Mursa, Ursacius of Singidunum and the newly elected Sirmian bishop Germanius, Arianism prevailed.

The struggles between the adherents of the Nicaean dogma and Arius' heresy also continued in 359, when the so-called *Fourth Sirmian Formula* was issued, which was intended to be a compromise solution for both opposed sides, but, according to the Emperor's will, the decision of the majority was changed. So, at the Synod in Constantinople in 360 the basis of faith was formulated by the Arian bishops Valens and Ursacius.<sup>41</sup>

The tumultuous activity of the Church in Sirmium during the reign of Constantius II was one of the reasons why the Pannonian metropolis was, in the eyes of the entire Christian world, the *head of Illyricum* (*caput Illyrici*), as recorded in the documents of the ecclesiastical synod held in Aquileia in 381.<sup>42</sup> It is logical that

<sup>36</sup> *CIL* III, 10233.

<sup>37</sup> *CIL* III 10232.

<sup>38</sup> Duval 1979, 83–84, fig. 6; Поповић 2003, 262, сл. 2; Поповић 2013, 107, Cat. 79.

<sup>39</sup> Popović, Ferjančić 2013, 101–114; Popović 2013, 107, fig. 38.

<sup>40</sup> Stein 1968, 145.

<sup>41</sup> Stein 1968, 145–146; Mirković 2006, 121–123.

<sup>42</sup> *PG*, 16, col. 913.

the activities of the Church dignitaries were followed by the erection or reparation of the sacral structures dedicated to the local martyrs, who were, according to their names, of Greek origin. Around the martyria were built the necropolises of the early Christians, with the oldest graves in the churches themselves and immediately in front of their entrances. But, since the basilicas of St Synerotes and of St Iraeneus were built on the sites of earlier pagan necropolises, in both cases the earlier graves were protected by the vaulted constructions by which the walls of the newly built sacral structures over bridged them.<sup>43</sup> According to the inscriptions, the dedicants of the tombstones on the oldest Christian graves in the Basilica of St Iraeneus, the wife and the father in law of the deceased, *Ammes* and *Evenatus*, were Orientals,<sup>44</sup> while *Artemidora*, the deceased woman buried in the western portico of the Basilica of St Synerotes, was of Greek origin. Unfortunately, since the monument with the Greek inscription around the Christogram in the double circle (inv. 191/1969) was discovered in the disarranged layer south of the Basilica of St Synerotes (fig. 5), we can only assume that the grave on which it was placed was somewhat more to the north, i.e. closer to the Basilica.

The Christian symbols on two sepulchral slabs from the necropolis of St Synerotes were represented in different ways. On the epitaph of the cup-bearer of Constantius II, Marturius (...[p]incerna / [C]onstanti(i) / [i]nperatori/[s] (!) ...), a cross was represented, on which the lower part of the vertical arm is longer than the upper one, and below the horizontal arm, as if they are hanging from it, the letters A and Ω are represented. The symbol conceived in this way represents the cross which is rising up, i.e. the cross raised on Golgotha, which is, without doubt, an allusion to Christ and his victory over death. Such a cross is also incised in the upper left corner of the sepulchral slab of the exorcist Ursacius (...Urs[acius...]/nus exorcis[ta]...),<sup>45</sup> found at the necropolis of St Iraeneus. The apocalyptic letters, *alpha* and *omega*, hung on the horizontal arms of the cross on the tombstone of the cup-bearer Marturius, symbolise Christ as “the beginning and the end”, in accordance with his words from the *Book of Revelation*, in which Christ, in three places, in three variants (1: 8, 21:6, 22:13), pronounces: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and last”. The same meaning is also conveyed by the symbols from the other two Sirmian monuments, one gilded bronze fibula, found in the northern part of the palatial complex,<sup>46</sup> and one marble plate—architectural element from the



Fig. 6. Sepulchral slab with Christogram and the vegetable ornaments (photo: S. Pop-Lazić)

Сл. 6. Нагробни сѣоменик са христѣограмом и већешабилним орнаментима (фото: С. Пој-Лазућ)

imperial palace.<sup>47</sup> On them, the vertical arm of the cross is bent in such way that it forms the Greek letter *rho*, while on the plate, two crossed lateral arms are added to the vertical arm. The cross with the vertical arm in the shape of the letter *rho* and with the crossed lateral arms, between which are the letters A and Ω, the symbol above which is represented as a cross in a circle, is also engraved on the fragmented marble sepulchral slab, lavishly decorated with vegetal ornaments, the tree of life and vines, but with the heavily damaged inscription, of which only the letters ...IS (fig. 6) survive. This slab was also discovered at the necropolis of St Synerotes, in 1970 (inv. 1323/1970). On the sepulchral slabs from the same necropolis, those mentioning St Synerotes, discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the same symbol is also standing between the letters A and Ω,<sup>48</sup> just as on the monument from the periphery of the eastern city necropolis, erected by Aurelia Urbica (*Aurelia Urbic[a]...*) for her husband Flavius Martinianus (*Fla[vio] Martiniano*)

<sup>43</sup> Jeremić 2006, 124, fig. 8, 11, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Jarak 2011, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Milin 1996, 245–247; Mirković 2006, 119 (supplemented text of the inscription).

<sup>46</sup> Popović 2009, 101–112.

<sup>47</sup> Popović 2013, 111, Cat. 77; Popović 2014, 271–272.

<sup>48</sup> *CIL* III, 10232, 10233; Ljubić 1883, 19; Hytrek 1894, 5; Brunsmid 1909, 188–189, br. 393, 394.



and for her daughter Inaca (*Inacae dulcissim[a]e filiae mater*).<sup>49</sup> Both versions of the cross, with or without crossed lateral arms, represent the monogram cross or Christogram, the composite picture of the cross and two letters of the word *Christos*. As such, the cross itself represents the letter *chi*, while its upper bent arm forms the letter *rho*. The monogram cross on which are hanging the letters A and Ω, is also engraved on the tombstone with the Greek text, discovered at the necropolis of St Synerotes. On this sepulchral slab the Christian symbol is placed inside the two engraved concentric circles, analogous to the fragmented specimen from the same necropolis, found as late as 1871.<sup>50</sup> The engraved circles around the Christogram can be perceived as a simplified representation of the laurel wreath. Since a wreath was the symbol of victory, and the laurel leaves of which it was made symbolised the imperial power, on the late ancient monuments the Christogram was often represented inside the wreath, as in the case of an archivolt from the imperial palace in Sirmium.<sup>51</sup> The simplified version of this representation, the Christogram in a circle, is also used very often on the monuments from this period. It appears on the sepulchral slab mentioning the Basilica of St Iraeneus,<sup>52</sup> on the above-mentioned monument of the exorcist Ursacius from the same necropolis,<sup>53</sup> as well as on the monument of deacon Macarius (...*Macarius diaconus*...) from the unknown site in Sirmium.<sup>54</sup> For a chronological definition of the monuments with this symbol, it is important to mention that the oldest sepulchral slabs with the representation of a Christogram, combined with the letters *alpha* and *omega*, are registered on the graves in Trier, dated to the period just after 320, while in Rome they appear in 323.<sup>55</sup> These tombstones in relief mark the *terminus post quem* for the execution of the relief tombstones from Sirmium, while the *terminus ante quem* is marked by the phenomenon of burials *intra muros*, during the third decade of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the impending Hunnic invasion, which resulted in the destruction of the city in 441/42.<sup>56</sup> Considering the historical circumstances and the archaeological context, we think that the dating of the monuments mentioning St Synerotes to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> or to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, is unacceptable.<sup>57</sup>

The archaeological material discovered in the vicinity of the slab with the Greek inscription is not chronologically sensitive, while in the layer around the monument decorated with the vegetal ornaments were found a glass cup and a fragmented *lacrimarium*, with forms

characteristic of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, along with a bronze bulbiform fibula of the type Keller 3 A / Pröttel 3/4 A, which is dated to the period from 330 to 380.<sup>58</sup> The greatest number of finds of these fibulas in Pannonia comes from graves with coins from the period of rule of Constantius II.<sup>59</sup> Under the sepulchral slab with the Latin inscription, around the existing graves, were found two bronze coins of Constantine (306–324) and two of Licinius (311–324), five blue glass beads in the shape of polyhedron, and next to the skull of one skeleton was placed a bulbiform bronze fibula of type Keller 2 A / Pröttel 2 A/B,<sup>60</sup> dated to the period between 310 and 350,<sup>61</sup> or between 300 and 340.<sup>62</sup> These objects from the graves registered under the sepulchral slab with the Latin inscription, approximately define the time of these burials. However, since the sepulchral slab was placed for Marturius, the cup-bearer of Constantius II, the erection of this monument can be dated with more precision to the period when this emperor and his escort stayed in Sirmium, in the winter of 351/52, or between 357 and 359, when Constantius II spent more time in the Pannonian metropolis, twice celebrating his victory over the Sarmatae. This confirms the supposition that the tombstones of a Christian character from the necropolis of St Synerotes and, probably, also from the necropolis around the martyria dedicated to St Iraeneus and St Anastasia, were erected during and immediately after the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and not during the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century, as was previously suggested.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, if we accept the supposition that the apse of the Basilica of St Synerotes was in the east, and

<sup>49</sup> Brunšmid 1909, 177–178, br. 376.

<sup>50</sup> Brunšmid 1909, 194, br. 406.

<sup>51</sup> Jeremić 1993, Cat. 34; Popović 2013, 113, Cat. 78; Popović 2014, 272–275.

<sup>52</sup> Duval 1979, 83–84, fig. 6; Поповић 2003, 262, сл. 2; Popović 2013, 107, Cat. 79.

<sup>53</sup> Milin 1996, 245–247, fig. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *CIL* 10235; Brunšmid 1909, 183, br. 385.

<sup>55</sup> Schwinden 2006, 151, Cat. 103 (Trier); Giuliani 2005, 240–241, Cat. 60, 61 (Rome).

<sup>56</sup> Popović 1987, 95–129.

<sup>57</sup> Damjanović 2014, 510–512.

<sup>58</sup> Keller 1979, 37–38; Pröttel 1991, 357–359; 361–364.

<sup>59</sup> Keller 1979, 38.

<sup>60</sup> Keller 1979, 35–36; Pröttel 1991, 353–357.

<sup>61</sup> Keller 1979, 35.

<sup>62</sup> Pröttel 1991, 357.

<sup>63</sup> Damjanović 2014, 510–512.

not in the west, as Hytrek supposed,<sup>64</sup> the graves on whose monuments was engraved the name of the martyr were in the west porch of the basilica, at its entrance, and they were, probably, somewhat older than the grave of the cup-bearer Marturius, whose sepulchral slab was registered around the area of the south porch of the basilica, this would define the *terminus post quem* for dating of the monument with the mention of the name of St Synerotes to the period around 350. However, while the tombstone of the cup-bearer Marturius can, with relative certainty, be dated to the sixth decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, for other monuments from the Early Christian period there are no closer chronological points of reference. Still, a conclusion can be made that the Christian symbols engraved on them, the cross, the cross in a circle, the monogram of Christ and the Christogram in a circle, appear simultaneously during the middle-second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and that on some monu-

ments these variants are combined. It seems that an exception is one monument discovered before 1871, on which are mentioned the names *Iuvenianus* and *Constantianus*. The Christian symbol above the text on this slab consists of a cross whose upper arm is, on both sides, bent in the shape of the letter *rho*, forming a heart-shaped element, under which the small letters A and Ω are flanked by pigeons.<sup>65</sup> By its iconographic solution, based on the pigeons on both sides of the cross, this Christian symbol could represent the earlier phase of the depiction of the Christogram, which finds its parallels on some monuments from Trier.<sup>66</sup> However, since the exact place and circumstances of discovering this monument are unknown to us, the question still remains as to whether this is a monument somewhat older than the others discovered in Sirmium, or if it is a product of a craftsman who was working under the influence of the stone-carving workshop in Trier.

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<sup>64</sup> Jeremić 2006, 117–128.

<sup>65</sup> *CIL* III 6446=10238, Brunšmid 1909, 182, br. 384.

<sup>66</sup> Schwinden 2006, 151, Cat. 103.

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<b>Amm. Marc</b> .....	<i>Ammianus Marcellinus in Three Volumes</i> , with an English translation by J. C. Rolfe, vol. I–III, London – Cambridge Mass. 1963–1964.
<b>PG</b> .....	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (J. P. Migne, éd., <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , Paris 1960).
<b>Socrat. Hist. Eccl.</b> .....	<i>Socrates' Ecclesiastical History</i> , Oxford 1893 <sup>2</sup> .

## ABBREVIATIONS:

<b>AE</b> .....	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> , Paris
<b>CIL</b> .....	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<b>EDB</b> .....	<i>Epigraphic Database Bari. Inscriptions by Christians in Rome (3<sup>rd</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> cent. CE)</i> , <a href="http://www.edb.uniba.it">http://www.edb.uniba.it</a>
<b>EDR</b> .....	<i>Epigraphic Database Rome</i> , <a href="http://www.edr-edr.it">http://www.edr-edr.it</a>
<b>IG</b> .....	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
<b>ILCV</b> .....	E. Diehl, <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i> I–III, Berolini 1961.
<b>ILJug</b> .....	A. Šašel, J. Šašel, <i>Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMXL et MCMLX repertae et editae sunt</i> , Ljubljana 1963.
<b>IMS</b> .....	<i>Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure</i> I, II, III/2, IV, VI, Beograd 1976–1995.
<b>OPEL</b> .....	<i>Onomasticon provinciarum Europae Latinarum</i> I–IV, Budapest/Wien, 1994–2002.
<b>SEG</b> .....	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> , Leiden

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**Резиме:**

ИВАНА ПОПОВИЋ, Археолошки институт, Београд  
 СНЕЖАНА ФЕРЈАНЧИЋ, Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет,  
 Одељење за историју, Београд

## ПЕХАРНИК КОНСТАНЦИЈА II И РАНОХРИШЋАНСКИ НАТПИСИ СА НЕКРОПОЛЕ СВ. СИНЕРОТА У СИРМИЈУМУ

*Кључне речи.* – римски период, Сирмијум, базилика св. Синерота, ранохришћански натписи, пехарник Констанција II.

Током археолошких ископавања, спроведених 1969/70. године на северној некрополи Сирмијума, око базилике св. Синерота (сл. 1, 2) откривено је неколико надгробних плоча са натписима и симболима ранохришћанског карактера. Натпис на једној плочи (сл. 4), који гласи [ $\pm$  1 ? M]arturiu/[s p]incerna / [C]onstanti / [I]mperatori[s (!) qui] vixsit (!) an[n]is nonag[inta] una cu[m] matron[a] sua Man[us] - -, показује да је реч о надгробном споменику извесном Мартурију, пехарнику Констанција II. Овај цар је током 351–352. и 357–359. године боравио у Сирмијуму више месеци, прослављајући у том граду два пута тријумф над Квадима и Сарматима и потенцирајући изградњу како његове инфраструктуре, тако и сакралних објеката. Као ревностан хришћанин аријанске оријентације, у Сирмијуму је организовао четири црквена сабора. На другој плочи (сл. 5), натпис на грчком језику је исписан око христогорама у двоструком кругу, док је на тре-

ћој плочи (сл. 6), украшеној биљним мотивима око христогорама, натпис веома фрагментарно сачуван. Ови надгробни споменици су лоцирани на простору јужно од јужног портика базилике св. Синерота, док су они на којима се помиње базилика св. Синерота, откривени у XIX веку, нађени у њеном западном портику (сл. 3). Хришћански симболи на надгробним плочама са некрополе св. Синерота су представљени на различите начине. Међутим, док се надгробни споменик Мартурију, пехарнику Констанција II, може релативно поуздано датovati у шесту деценију IV века, за остале споменике из ранохришћанског периода не постоје ближе хронолошке одреднице, али се може закључити да се хришћански симболи урезани на њима – крст, крст у кругу, христов монограм и христогорам у кругу – појављују током средине – друге половине IV века истовремено, а да се на неким споменицима те варијанте комбинују.