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A NEW LATIN INSCRIPTION FROM VINČA IN BELGRADE

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Abstract. – In the summer of 2020, a fragmentary lower part of a statue base with a Latin inscription carved on its underside was accidentally discovered in Vinča, in the area of the archaeological site of Ošljane. The remains of a Roman building (presumably a *villa rustica*) were located at the aforementioned site. After the discovery, the monument was stolen, then it was soon recovered and transferred to the National Museum of Serbia. The inscription records the career of a member of the equestrian order.

Key words. – Roman honorific inscription, Belgrade, Vinča, Ošljane, *villa rustica*, *militiae equestres*, procurator

In the summer of 2020, a fragmentary epigraphic monument was discovered in the Belgrade municipality of Vinča in Serbia. The inscription, carved on the underside of a statue base, records certain steps in the career of a member of the equestrian order. Ulpus, whose cognomen is not preserved, probably hailed from Beneventum in Italy. He served as an equestrian officer in the Roman army and was decorated for bravery in the campaigns of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. Upon completing the *militiae equestres*, Ulpus became, thereafter, procurator of the province of Dacia Apulensis.

The context of the find

The monument was accidentally discovered on July 10th, 2020, during infrastructure works along the road that leads from Smederevski Put Street to the Belgrade Vinča waste landfill.¹ A detailed survey of the terrain conducted by the archaeologists of the National Museum of Serbia established that the monument was not found *in situ*, and that there were no other finds in the surrounding area. The location where the monument was found had already been mechanically excavated, as the workers testified. Since, during the first

excavations, no similar object was observed, the monument was thrown into an already excavated ditch in the interval between those two, chronologically close, campaigns of work with heavy plant.

Finds like this monument, if their discovery is not reported to the competent institutions in Serbia, very often become the subject of illegal trade. The following questions arise: why would a Roman monument be thrown into a freshly dug ditch and where could it have been brought from?

During the two-week search for the lost monument, one of the authors of this paper found out, through a conversation with the police, that information was circulating among the illegal diggers that during the works on the expansion of the Belgrade Vinča landfill, which were still taking place at that moment, two Roman sites were damaged. Illegal diggers had the intention

¹ Before it was finally transferred to the National Museum of Serbia, the monument was stolen. After a successful operation by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, and in constant coordination with the National Museum of Serbia, the monument was recovered on July 23rd, 2020 in a forest next to the asphalt road to the Rajinovac monastery in Begaljica.

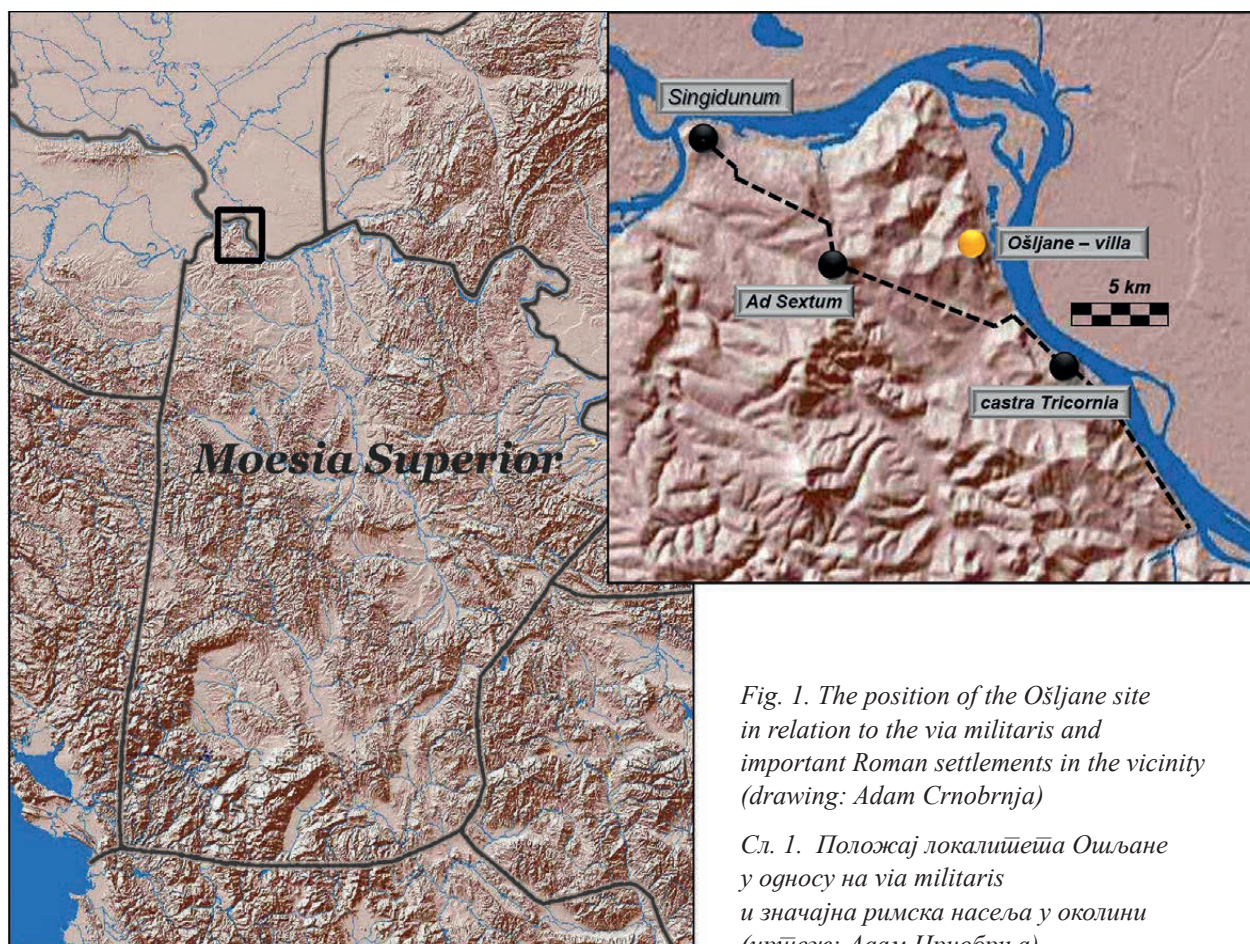


Fig. 1. The position of the Ošljane site in relation to the *via militaris* and important Roman settlements in the vicinity (drawing: Adam Crnobrnja)

Сл. 1. Положај локалитета Ошљане у односу на *via militaris* и значајна римска насеља у околини (цртеж: Адам Црнобрња)

of conducting research with metal detectors at these locations, but they did not dare to do so because of the constantly present security at the construction site. If that information is correct, it would mean that the monument was not destroyed by illegal diggers, and this is supported by the fact that the monument was thrown away, which certainly would not have been the goal of the looters.

The location where the monument was found is situated on the road between the construction site and the gate through which one exits the landfill area. Indirect information obtained from individual employees at the landfill, as well as the unofficial statements of workers who were engaged in the works on its expansion, indicate that the discovery was made during the construction works at the landfill site itself. Namely, the monument was found during the excavation for the expansion of the landfill, and then transported and dumped in the first suitable place, so that the works would not be stopped by the services for the protection of cultural assets.

Although the information we received informally may seem unreliable, it largely coincides with publicly available data on the dynamics of works on the expansion of the Vinča landfill, as well as with earlier knowledge regarding the location of the Roman *villa rustica* at the Ošljane site.

According to data known so far, the finds at the Ošljane site were mentioned as early as the beginning of the 20th century,² and it was mentioned as a Roman site in the middle of the last century.³ On that occasion, a series of trial trenches were used to explore a narrow area in the future south-eastern part of the landfill. Since the primary goal was to determine the presence of archaeological content, the trenches were only 1 m wide. In some places, archaeological material from the prehistoric and Roman periods was found. Archaeo-

² Николић 1903, 995.

³ Гарашанин, Гарашанин 1951, 129; Гарашанин 1954, 93.

⁴ Војовић 1975, Т. XLI.

logical trial trenches were not positioned at the location where there were indications of the existence of a Roman *villa rustica*, because it was located outside the then-planned scope of the landfill. The project manager of the research, Dragoljub Bojović, clearly indicated on

the attached plan and photo the area where the remains of Roman buildings were located and where a Roman altar, dated to the 2nd or 3rd century A.D., was accidentally found.⁴ Based on the partially preserved inscription [...] X LEG III [...], the spacious *villa rustica* was



Fig. 2. The archaeological site of Ošljane (*villa rustica*) in relation to the Vinča landfill: a) October 2008; b) July 2020 (images taken from Google Earth)

Сл. 2. Археолошко налазиште Ошљане (*villa rustica*) у односу на дејонију Винча: а) октобар 2008; б) јул 2020. (преузето: Google Earth)

labelled as a veteran villa.⁵ Unfortunately, its remains were not explored in 1975, because the work was stopped due to the opposition of the landowner.⁶ The *villa rustica* was located in the fertile valley of the Ošljanski stream, along the once marshy bank of the Danube, about 3 km northeast of the Roman Singidunum–Viminacium road, i.e. about 7 km upstream of *castra Tricornia* (Fig. 1). In 2020, the expansion of the Vinča landfill included the area that was designated in 1975 as the location where the remains of the Roman villa were situated (Fig. 2). If our assumption that the monument was found during earthworks on the expansion of the Vinča landfill in 2020 is correct, it also means that the archaeological site is now largely devastated and unavailable for further research.

Description of the monument

The monument in the form of a marble plaque, rectangular in shape (dim. 90 x 50 x 10–18 cm), is now stored in the Collection of Ancient and Medieval Epigraphic and Anepigraphic Monuments of the National Museum of Serbia, inv. no. 169. The inscription is carved on the bottom of the reused base of a statue (Fig. 3a–b). On the opposite side of the inscription are preserved the lower segments of a male statue, consisting of two feet (length 35 cm) in sandals. The top surface of the left foot is damaged, to the right of the right foot is depicted a helmet (dim. 20 x 20 x 35 cm) with paragnathides (visible to the right), to the left of the left foot are the remains of an indiscernible representation and on the base is carved a fringe-like decoration (Fig. 4a–d). The preserved parts of the male sculpture and the base are carved out of one single stone block. There are open toe sandals on the right and partially on the left foot. The sandals are made of intertwined straps wrapping around the upper parts of the feet. Two vertical straps reach up to the ankle of the right foot (to the right are the visible remains of the tying laces) and there are two horizontal straps placed above the toes, which are depicted in detail.

There are four recesses on the top surface of the pedestal – to the right in front of the right foot (dim. 4 x 4 x 3 cm) and behind it (dim. 3.5 x 5 x 3.5 cm), to the left of the left foot (dim. 4 x 4.5 x 3.1 cm) and one (dim. 4 x 4 cm), filled with pure lead⁷, behind the left foot. All sides of the monument are roughly cut. There are visible traces of subsequent working for a new purpose (probably as building material?) resulting in the damaged text on the left and right sides of the inscription and the carved grooves (fig. 5). Two, 3 cm wide,

grooves are carved in front and behind the right foot, on the sides of the base.⁸

The inscription

The inscription consists of sixteen partially preserved lines. Letter heights: 7 cm in line 1; 6 cm in line 2; 3 cm in lines 3–15; E at the end of line 2, before S, 2.5 cm; A at the end of lines 5 and 7 (before the fragment of the C) and I at the end of line 9 – 1.8 cm. Triangular separation marks are visible between the words in all the lines.

The letter M in the first line measures 8 cm in width. Since the nomen *Ulpus* was probably preceded by the abbreviated praenomen *M(arcus)*, one can presume that approximately 8 cm is missing on the left side. The possibility that the first two lines, with larger letters, were longer than the following ones should be taken into account. The preserved text is as follows:

[]VLP · M · FIL · QVIR
[]ÇERIALID · LAVRES
[]+CENT · DAC · APVL · PRAEF
[]I · VLP · CONT · PRAEF · ALAE
5 []VACOR · PRAEF · ALAE · SABA
[]N MAVRET · TRIB · MIL · LEG
[]YREN · PRAEF · COH · I · THRAC
[]PPAD · PRAEP · VEXILLATION
[]I · FVLM · ET · XV APOLL · ET · VEXI
10 []N · HISP · IN · BELLO PARTHIC
[]DVOB · IMPP · ANTONINO
[]IO DONIS · DONAT · COR
[]MVRAL · VALLAR · HASTIS
[]S · II · ITEM IN EXPEDITION[]
15 []MAN · SVB ANTONINO E[]
[]QDQ[]++[]+++S[]
[]

Ligatures: VIR in line 1; LAVR in line 2; HR in line 7; TI in line 8; NI in line 12; DI and TI in line 14.

⁵ Bojović 1975, 85–86.

⁶ Bojović 1975, 86, n. 1.

⁷ Analyses of the contents extracted from this recess were performed using the technique of energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (EDXRF), on apparatus consisting of a 50 kV X-ray mini tube AMPTEK, an X-ray detector SSD-123 AMPTEK and laser pointer for recording the site of measurement, with a diameter of 2 mm. Recording conditions were voltage 40 keV, current 10 µA and recording time 100 s. The analyses were carried out by Milica Marić Stojanović, chemist (National Museum of Serbia).

⁸ The analyses of the remains of the male statue will be the subject of a separate paper.



Fig. 3. The inscription on the monument (a) and left lateral side of the monument (b)
 (photo: Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 3. Напис на сјоменику (а) и лева бочна страна сјоменика (б)
 (фото: Документација Народног музеја Србије)

Bearing in mind all the difficulties concerning the length and division of the lines, we propose the following reading:

[M.] Ulp(ius) M. fil(ius) Quir(ina) / [- - - pr(aetor)?]
 Cerial(is?) i(iure?) d(icundo?), Laure(n)s (!) / [L(avinas
 ?), pro]c(urator) cent(enarius) Dac(iae) Apul(ensis),
 praef(ectus) / [alae] I Ulp(iae) cont(ariorum), praef(ectus) alae
 Saba/[sten(orum) i]n Mauret(ania), trib(unus) mil(i-
 tum) leg(ionis) / [III C]yren(aicae), praef(ectus)
 coh(ortis) I Thrac(um) / [in Ca]ppad(ocia), praep(osi-
 tus) vexillation(ibus) / [leg(ionum) XII] Fulm(inatae)
 et XV Apoll(inaris) et vexi(llatione) /¹⁰ [± 4 i]n
 Hisp(anias), in bello Parthic(o) / [ab] duob(us)
 Imp(eratoribus) Antonino / [et Ver]io (!) donis do-
 nat(us) cor(ona) / [aur(ea) ?] mural(i) vallar(i) hastis

/ [± 4]s II item in expedition[e] /¹⁵ [Ger]man(ica) sub
 Antonino e[t] / [Comm]odo [- - -]++[- - -]+++S[.]
 / [- - -].

The inscription records certain phases of the career of an equestrian who is not noted in H. Devijver's *Prosopographia militarium equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum* or H.-G. Pflaum's *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain*. His name is not entirely preserved. We only know that he bore the imperial nomen *Ulpus*. The chronological frame for the dating of the inscription and Ulpus' career to the second half of the 2nd century AD is provided by the mention of two wars waged under Marcus Aurelius. The first one is the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus (162–166 AD) and the other is the latter phase of the Marcomannic wars (178–180 AD). The

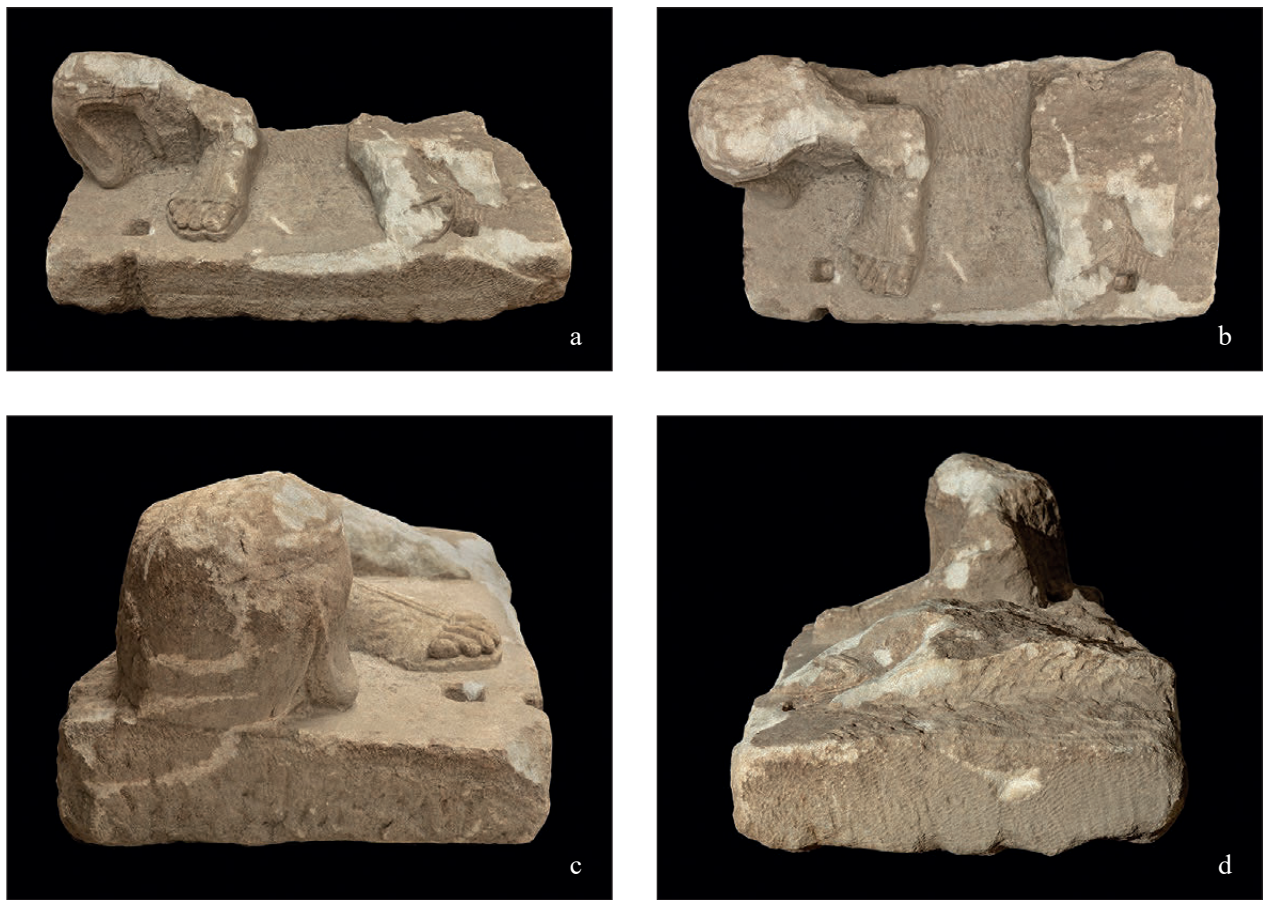


Fig. 4a–d. Preserved parts of the sculpture (photo: Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 4a–d. Очувани делови скулптуре (фото: Документација Народног музеја Србије)

mention of the *bellum Parthicum* in line 10 is followed by the names of the two emperors who have awarded military decorations to Ulpus. Since the name of the first was *Antoninus*, the other one must be Lucius Verus. Marcus Aurelius and his co-ruler were the only two Augusti during whose joint rule the Romans waged war against the Parthians. The inscription from Vinča presents a particular problem concerning the reading of the emperors' names. One would expect that *Antonino* at the end of line 11 would be followed by *Vero* in line 12, as is the case in the inscription of Lucius Iulius Vehilius Gallus Iulianus. He was decorated for the victory in the Parthian war and the names of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus are given as *Antonino et Vero*.⁹ In the inscription from Vinča, however, the name of the second emperor ends in *-io* in ablative case. The letters I and O are clearly visible at the beginning of line 12. Perhaps the stonecutter made a mistake and incised *Verio* instead of *Vero*? The term *expeditio Ger-*

manica in lines 14 and 15 denotes the second stage of the Marcomannic wars waged by Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus (178–180 AD). In the famous inscription recording the career of Marcus Valerius Maximianus, consul in 185 AD, from Diana Veteranorum in Africa Proconsularis, this phase is styled *expeditio secunda Germanica*.¹⁰

Judging by the nomen *Ulpus* and the father's praenomen *Marcus*, the family of our equestrian received Roman citizenship from Trajan. The group *QVIR*, at the end of line 1, could be interpreted in two ways – as the abbreviated name of the voting tribe *Quir(ina)* or as the beginning of a cognomen. If we accept the first possibility, Ulpus' cognomen must have been a short

⁹ *CIL* VI 41271 = 31856 + p. 3811 = *ILS* 1327 = *IDRE* I 18 = Lőrincz 2001, 278, no. 409.

¹⁰ Lőrincz 2001, 188–189, no. 100.

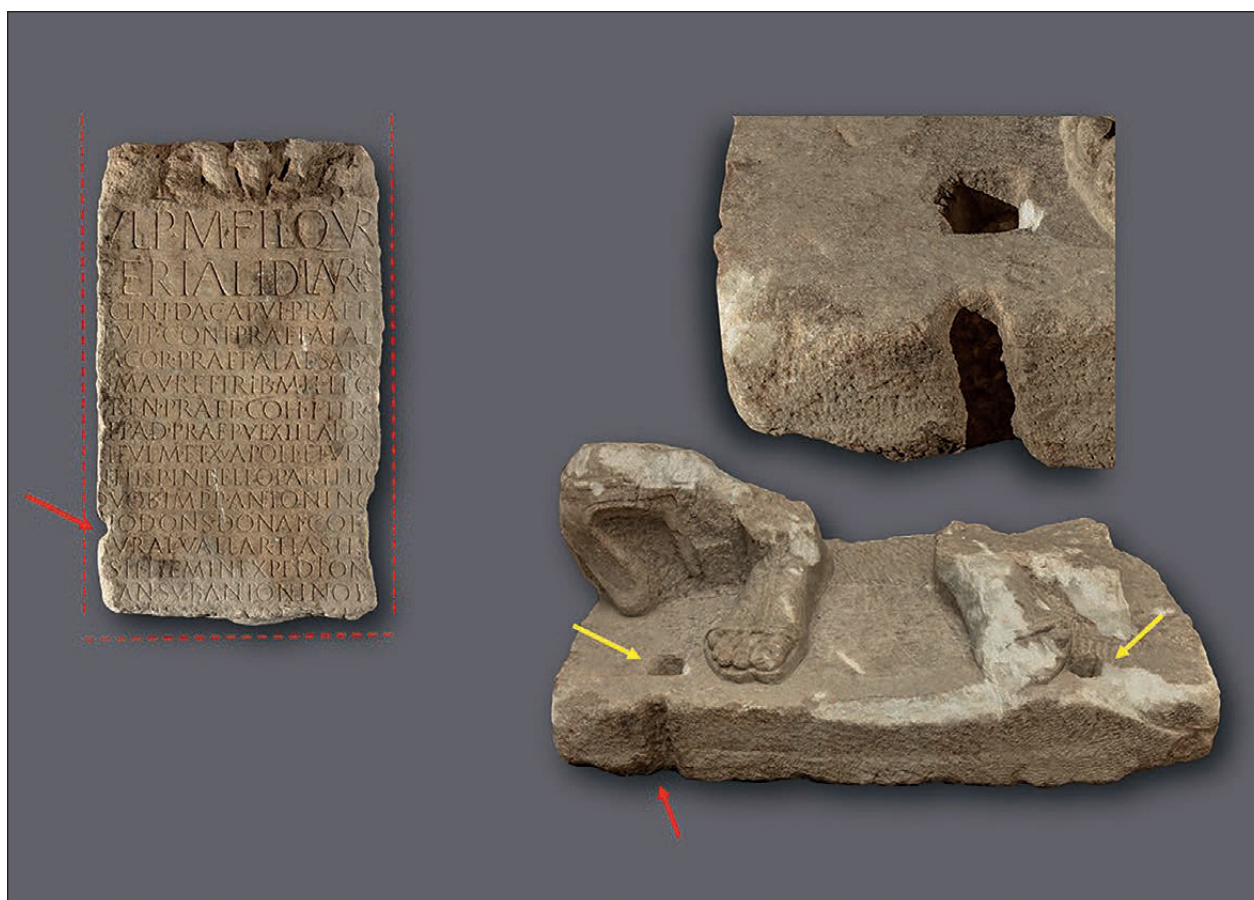


Fig. 5. Traces of subsequent processing of the marble block (photo: Documentation of the National Museum of Serbia)

Сл. 5. Трагови накнадне обрабе мермерног блока (фото: Документација Народног музеја Србије)

one. Although the interpretation of the letters *QVIR* as *Quir(ina tribu)* seems logical, one should not completely discard the slight possibility that the group is actually the beginning of the Latin cognomen *Quirinus* or *Quirinalis*.¹¹

The reading of line 2 of Ulpius' inscription presents certain difficulties. The sequence CERIALID-LAVRES is difficult to interpret. *Ceriali* could be the cognomen *Cerialis* in dative case,¹² and the following D might stand for *d(omo)*. In that case, *Laure(n)s* would be the *origo*. If we accept this interpretation, Ulpius hailed from the city of Lavinium in Latium. Its inhabitants were often styled *Laurentes Lavinates* and its territory was called *ager Laurens* or *Laurentinus*.¹³ However, we would suggest an alternative reading of the second line of Ulpius' inscription. The sequence CERIALID might be interpreted as *Cerial(is) i(ure) d(icundo)*. The lack of a separation mark between CERIAL and I presents no problem, because the *hed-*

erae are also missing in lines 10 (between *bello* and *Parthico*), 14 (between *item*, *in* and *expeditione*) and 15 (between *sub Antonino* and *e[st]*). If the proposed interpretation is correct, Ulpius held the post of *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*. The title is attested only in Beneventum in Italy. Four inscriptions record it as *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo quinquennalis*;¹⁴ the simpler

¹¹ Kajanto 1965, 184 (*Quirinalis*), 216 (*Quirinus*); Solin, Salomies 1994, 389. For the frequency of the names in northern Italy and the western provinces see: *OPEL* IV 20.

¹² Kajanto 1965, 211 = 221; Solin, Salomies 1994, 313. It should be noted that a certain Marcus Ulpius Cerialis is attested as *proc(urator) Augg(ustorum)* on inscriptions from Leptis Magna in Africa Proconsularis, dated between December 10, 197 AD and December 9, 198 AD (cf. Pflaum 1960, 656 and n. 2).

¹³ Philipp 1924, 1007–1008.

¹⁴ *CIL* IX 1599 + 1640 = *ILS* 6494 = *AE* 2010, 357; *CIL* IX 1641 = *ILS* 6495; *CIL* IX 1655 = *ILS* 6496; *AE* 1914, 164.

form – *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo* – is attested only once.¹⁵ *Praetores Cerialis* were considered supreme magistrates in the colony of Beneventum. They replaced the *duoviri* late in the Severan period but not after the reign of Severus Alexander.¹⁶ According to G. Guadagno, however, *praetura Cerialis* should not be regarded as the supreme magistracy of Beneventum. The inscriptions of Caius Caelius Bassaeus Donatus¹⁷ and Caius Caelius Bassaeus Proclius Faustinus¹⁸ clearly show that the two brothers entered the *ordo decurionum* of Beneventum and obtained the rank of *equites Romani* after the *praetura Cerialis*. Consequently, *praetura Cerialis* should be regarded as an extraordinary local magistracy in Beneventum, held by young men of notable families before their enrolment into the *ordo decurionum*.¹⁹ If Ulpius held the post of *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*, it seems logical to presume that he hailed from Beneventum. His tribe *Quirina*, however, is not attested in the town. Its citizens belonged to *Stellatina*,²⁰ while some *equites Romani* were inscribed in the urban tribe *Palatina*.²¹

Ulpius' career presumably started with the post of *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo* in Beneventum. In that case, *Laure(n)s* at the end of line 2 of his inscription should be understood as the priestly title. Ulpius obtained equestrian status after the *praetura* and served as *sacerdos Laurens Lavinus*. This priesthood was held by members of the equestrian order since the reign of Augustus.²²

The equestrian career of Ulpius followed a well-established pattern. The *cursus* started with the command over a *cohors quingenaria* or *cohors voluntariorum* or *ingenuorum civium Romanorum*. Next came the tribunate in a legion or a *cohors milliaria*. Command over an *ala quingenaria* was the third step, and the fourth, command over an *ala milliaria*.²³ Ulpius' *militiae equestres* are recorded in lines 3–8 in inverse order. It appears that his military career started with the command over the *cohors I Thracum* in Cappadocia. It should be noted that this unit is not attested as part of the provincial auxiliary garrison, which consisted of numerous cohorts. Most of them are attested in Cappadocia on early military diplomas (issued in 94,²⁴ 99,²⁵ 100²⁶ and 101²⁷ AD) and throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries.²⁸ A couple of units left the province at some point during the first half of the 2nd century AD. The transfer of the cohort *II Augusta Thracum* to Pannonia Inferior probably occurred during the aftermath of Trajan's Parthian war, perhaps in 123 AD.²⁹ The cohort *I Apamenorum sagittariorum equitata* was moved to

Egypt before 144 AD,³⁰ and *I Raetorum equitata* to Asia before 148 AD.³¹ The cohort *I Thracum* could have replaced one of those units. The possibility that it came to Cappadocia in the last years of Antoninus Pius' reign also seems conceivable. Relations between Rome and Parthia worsened after the accession of Vologaeses IV in 148/149 AD and Hadrian's heir reinforced the Cappadocian garrison with new troops.³² Ulpius' cohort *I Thracum* could have been among those reinforcements.

Any attempt to identify the Cappadocian regiment seems to be an almost impossible task. It must have been a *cohors quingenaria*, since Ulpius' command over it should be regarded as *militia prima*. Most of the Thracian cohorts bearing the number I are well accounted for in the Roman army of the 2nd century AD. Three regiments garrisoned in the Pannonian provinces. The cohorts *I Thracum civium Romanorum pia fidelis* and *I Thracum Germanica equitata* were in Pannonia Inferior and *I Thracum equitata civium Romanorum* was in Pannonia Superior.³³ Another cohort *I Thracum sagittariorum* garrisoned in Dacia Superior.³⁴ One or possibly two *cohortes I Thracum* were stationed in Britain.³⁵ The garrison of Arabia included the cohort *I Augusta Thracum equitata*.³⁶ One cohort *I Thracum* is

¹⁵ *CIL* IX 1637 = *ILS* 6493.

¹⁶ *Diz. ep.* II, 212, s. v. *Cerialis*; De Carlo 2010, 246–247; De Carlo 2013, 280–281.

¹⁷ *CIL* IX 1599 + 1640 = *ILS* 6494 = *AE* 2010, 357.

¹⁸ *CIL* IX 1641 = *ILS* 6495.

¹⁹ Guadagno 2010, 103–105.

²⁰ Kubitschek 1889, 38–39; Torelli 2002, 134.

²¹ De Carlo 2013, 282.

²² Wissowa 1902, 447–448; Saulnier 1984, 517–533; Scheid, Granino Cecere 1999, 101–104.

²³ For the sequence of *militiae equestres* see: Devijver 1989a, 277; Devijver 1989b, 397–398.

²⁴ *RGZM* 7 = *AE* 2004, 1920.

²⁵ Eck, Pangerl 2014, 238–246 = *AE* 2014, 1656.

²⁶ Eck, Pangerl 2004, 233–241 = *AE* 2004, 1913.

²⁷ *RGZM* p. 18, ad no. 7; Speidel 2009, 605–606.

²⁸ For the Cappadocian garrison in general see: Speidel 2009, 595–631.

²⁹ Speidel 2009, 620, no. 23.

³⁰ Speidel 2009, 611, no. 1.

³¹ Speidel 2009, 619, no. 20.

³² Speidel 2009, 622.

³³ Lőrincz 2001, 42–43, no. 43–45.

³⁴ Petolescu 2002, 122–123, no. 58.

³⁵ Jarrett 1994, 66, no. 51–51 A.

³⁶ Speidel 1984, 252–253, h; Bowersock 1983, 107.

attested in Egypt in the first decades of the 2nd century AD. It was garrisoned in the fortress of Contra Apollonos in the Thebaid. The precise location of the regiment's *hiberna* is provided by a registration of birth issued on April 25, 127 AD.³⁷ The same cohort *I Thracum* is probably mentioned on a partially preserved *proskynema* from Talmis, written by a certain Glycon. The title of his regiment in the second line is restored as α' [Θρ]ακῶν.³⁸ The inscription from Talmis is undated, but it seems logical to presume that it belongs to approximately the same period as the document from 127 AD. The adduced epigraphic evidence testifies to the presence of a cohort *I Thracum* in Egypt during the first decades of the 2nd century AD. The regiment's subsequent fate and history seem to be unknown. Its name is not recorded on military diplomas for Egypt issued in 157–161,³⁹ 179⁴⁰ and 206 AD.⁴¹ This lack of data suggests that the cohort *I Thracum* had left the province before the middle of the 2nd century AD. Perhaps it was transferred to Cappadocia and should be equated with the regiment mentioned on the inscription from Vinča.

Ulpus' *militia secunda* was the post of military tribune in the legion *III Cyrenaica*, which garrisoned in Bostra in the province of Arabia from the latter part of Trajan's reign.⁴² Next came the *militia tertia*, i.e., the prefecture in Mauretania. The name of the regiment is partially preserved at the end of line 5 as *ala Sabaf- -*. There is no doubt that Ulpus commanded the ala *Pia Gemina Sebastena* or *Sebastenorum*, to cite its full title. This regiment garrisoned in the province of Mauretania Caesariensis. The location of its fort during the 2nd century AD remains unknown. In the 3rd century, however, it was stationed in the fortress at Kherba des Ouled Hellal.⁴³ The form *Sabastenorum* in its name is already recorded on three inscriptions from Numidia. They pertain to the career of the commander Caius Annius Flavianus.⁴⁴

Ulpus' prefecture in Mauretania Caesariensis was followed by the command over another ala whose name is partially preserved. The letters *VACOR* at the beginning of line 5 must be interpreted as part of the ethnic title *Aravacorum*. Two cavalry regiments raised among the Aravaci or Arevaci come to mind. Ala *I Aravacorum*, i.e., ala *I Hispanorum Aravacorum*, garrisoned in Pannonia from the first years of Vespasian's reign. After the division of the province under Trajan, it belonged to the army of Pannonia Superior. If Ulpus was the prefect of this regiment, he held this post while it was stationed in Celamantia.⁴⁵ Ala *II Aravacorum*, i.e., ala

II Hispanorum et Aravacorum, as it is called in the military diplomas starting with the one issued in 99 AD,⁴⁶ garrisoned in Moesia Inferior from Domitian's reign. Its fortress was Carsium on the lower Danube.⁴⁷ Both *alae Aravacorum* were, judging by available epigraphic evidence, *quingenariae*, as was the ala *Sebastenorum*. This means that Ulpus belongs to the rather restricted category of equestrian officers who had iterated the *militia tertia*.⁴⁸

The fifth stage of Ulpus' military career was the post of prefect of the ala *I Ulpia contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum*. This command corresponds to the *militia quarta*. Ala *I Ulpia contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum* was raised at the beginning of Trajan's reign. It came to Pannonia Superior after the emperor's Dacian campaigns and after a brief spell in Dacia Superior, where it participated in the war against the Iazyges. Its Pannonian fortress was Arrabona.⁴⁹

It seems that Ulpus' cursus comprised an extraordinary appointment besides the usual and expected posts in a career of an equestrian officer. He had been in charge, as *praepositus*, of detachments of the legions *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* and one (or several?) regiment(s) whose title(s) is(are) not preserved in Hispania. We have developed the abbreviation *Hisp()* as *Hisp(anias)*, following the phrasing attested on the honorary inscription of the praetorian prefect Lucius Iulius Vehilius Gallus Iulianus. He commanded the detachments that fought against the Mauri in *Hispanias*

³⁷ Bell 1937, 33, ll. 14–15: *Actum castris hib(ernis) coh(ortis) I T(hracum) contra Apollonos poli<m> magna<m> Thebaidis*. On the cohort see: Daris 1988, 764; Speidel 1988, 788, no. 9.

³⁸ Preisigke 1915, no. 4550. Cf. Daris 1956, 239; Daris 1988, 764; Speidel 1988, 788. Lesquier 1918, 495, no. 21 supposed that the title of the cohort should be restored as α' [Θηβ]αίων.

³⁹ *CIL* XVI 184 + *RMD* p. 247.

⁴⁰ *RMD* 184.

⁴¹ Eck 2011, 63–77 = *AE* 2012, 1960.

⁴² Speidel 1984, 691–697; Gatier 2000, 341–349; Kennedy 2004, 47–48.

⁴³ Benseddik 1982, 40–42.

⁴⁴ *CIL* VIII 17900 = *ILS* 1436; *AE* 1969/1970, 704; 1989, 888. For Flavianus' career see: *PME* A 120; Jarrett 1972, 157–158, no. 17.

⁴⁵ Lőrincz 2001, 20, no. 13.

⁴⁶ *CIL* XVI 44.

⁴⁷ Matei-Popescu 2010, 188–189, no. 9.

⁴⁸ For other cases see: Demougin 2000, 132–133; Salomies, Fiema 2009, 121–124.

⁴⁹ Eck, Pangerl 2008, 280–281; Lőrincz 2001, 18–19, no. 9.

in 171 AD.⁵⁰ Both legions that sent their *vexillationes* to the Iberian peninsula garrisoned in the province of Cappadocia during the 2nd century AD. The headquarters of *XII Fulminata* were in Melitene and those of *XV Apollinaris* in Satala.⁵¹ Ulpius obviously commanded a detachment of another unit or a group of units, as is suggested by *vexi[- -]* at the end of line 9. Considering the presumed length of the line, the first possibility seems more plausible. Ulpius' extraordinary command in the Hispanic provinces could be dated to ca. 177 AD, when the Mauri raided the southern parts of the Iberian Peninsula for the second time. During the first assault, in 171–172 AD, the *vexillationes* of the legions *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* were engaged on the middle Danube, fighting against the Marcomanni and the Quadi.⁵² Although the army of Mauretania Tingitana played a crucial role in the suppression of the attack in 177 AD,⁵³ it seems that detachments of the Cappadocian legions and one other unit also participated in the fighting.⁵⁴

We have already mentioned that Ulpius was decorated for bravery twice in his career: in the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus (162–166 AD) and in the second phase of the Marcomannic wars (178–180 AD). The exact number and types of decorations awarded in the Parthian war is difficult to determine. Ulpius received at least two crowns (*muralis* and *vallar*), mentioned in line 13. If, however, the word *corona* at the end of line 12 was recorded as *cor(ona)*, there would have been sufficient space for another award of this type, probably *corona aurea*, and the sequence would be: *cor(ona) aur(ea), mural(is), vallar(is)*. The abbreviated form *cor(ona) aur(ea)* is attested on several inscriptions from Rome, Italy and the provinces.⁵⁵ The *hastae* at the end of line 13 also present a problem. Ulpius obviously received more than one *hasta*, but how many and were they followed by the mention of two *vexilla*? Concerning the restoration of the text at the end of line 13 and the beginning of line 14, the most obvious and common solution would be *hastis / [puris]s II*. The expression *hastis puris*, followed by a number, is attested on numerous inscriptions from various parts of the Roman Empire.⁵⁶ One should not completely discard the possibility that the word *hastis* was incised without the adjective *puris*. Such is the case on a funerary inscription from Singidunum in Moesia Superior. The decorations of Titus Flavius Victorinus are listed in this way: *hastis faleris (!) corona murali*.⁵⁷ If the term *hastis* was not followed by the adjective *puris*, perhaps it was followed by a men-

tion of two *vexilla*? Consequently, the text at the end of line 13 and the beginning of line 14 might be restored as *hastis [ve/xillis]s II* (the division of the lines is purely conjectural). It should be noted that the decorations of one other equestrian officer during the reign of Marcus Aurelius comprised *coronae muralis* and *vallar*is, two *hastae* and two *vexilla*. They were awarded to Marcus Macrinus Avitus Catonius Vindex, prefect of the ala *I Ulpia contariorum*, for services in the first phase of the Marcomannic wars.⁵⁸ The number and types of decorations won for bravery in the second phase of the Marcomannic wars remain unknown, since that part of Ulpius' inscription is missing.

The second question related to Ulpius' military decorations pertains to the identity of the units he commanded at the time when they had been awarded to him. Ulpius was obviously an experienced commander when he was put in charge, ca. 177 AD, of the detachments of the legions *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* on the Iberian Peninsula. It seems certain that the awarding of decorations during the Parthian war of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus predates this appointment and should be connected to the first stages of his career. Ulpius probably received them while he held the post of prefect of the cohort *I Thracum* in Cappadocia. The Cappadocian army played an important role in the campaign against the Parthians. Led by the provincial legate and experienced general Marcus Statius Priscus Licinius Italicus, it attacked Armenia in 163 AD and stormed the kingdom's capital of Artaxata.⁵⁹ It appears conceivable that the cohort *I Thracum*, under Ulpius' command, participated in these events.

⁵⁰ *CIL* VI 41271 = 31856 + p. 3811 = *ILS* 1327 = *IDRE* 1 118 = Lőrincz 2001, 278, no. 409.

⁵¹ Speidel 2009, 601. For *XII Fulminata* in Cappadocia see: Bertrand, Rémy 2000, 254. For *XV Apollinaris* see: Wheeler 2000, 295–305.

⁵² Wheeler 2000, 298–299.

⁵³ Alföldy 2008, 460.

⁵⁴ For the raids by the Mauri on the Iberian provinces at the beginning of Marcus' reign see: Bénabou 1976, 147–154; Alföldy 2008, 460.

⁵⁵ *ILS* 967 (Umbria); 1017 + p. 173 (Galatia); 1385 (Rome); 2697 (Germania Superior).

⁵⁶ E.g. *ILS* 1098, 1326; *AE* 1920, 45; *AE* 1930, 79; *AE* 1964, 192; *AE* 1979, 601; *AE* 1997, 1482.

⁵⁷ *IMS* I 26.

⁵⁸ *CIL* VI 1449 + p. 3805, 4700 = *ILS* 1107 = *IDRE* I 17. For the dating and detailed interpretation see: Maxfield 1981, 179–180.

⁵⁹ Chaumont 1976, 148–149; Birley 2012, 217–218.

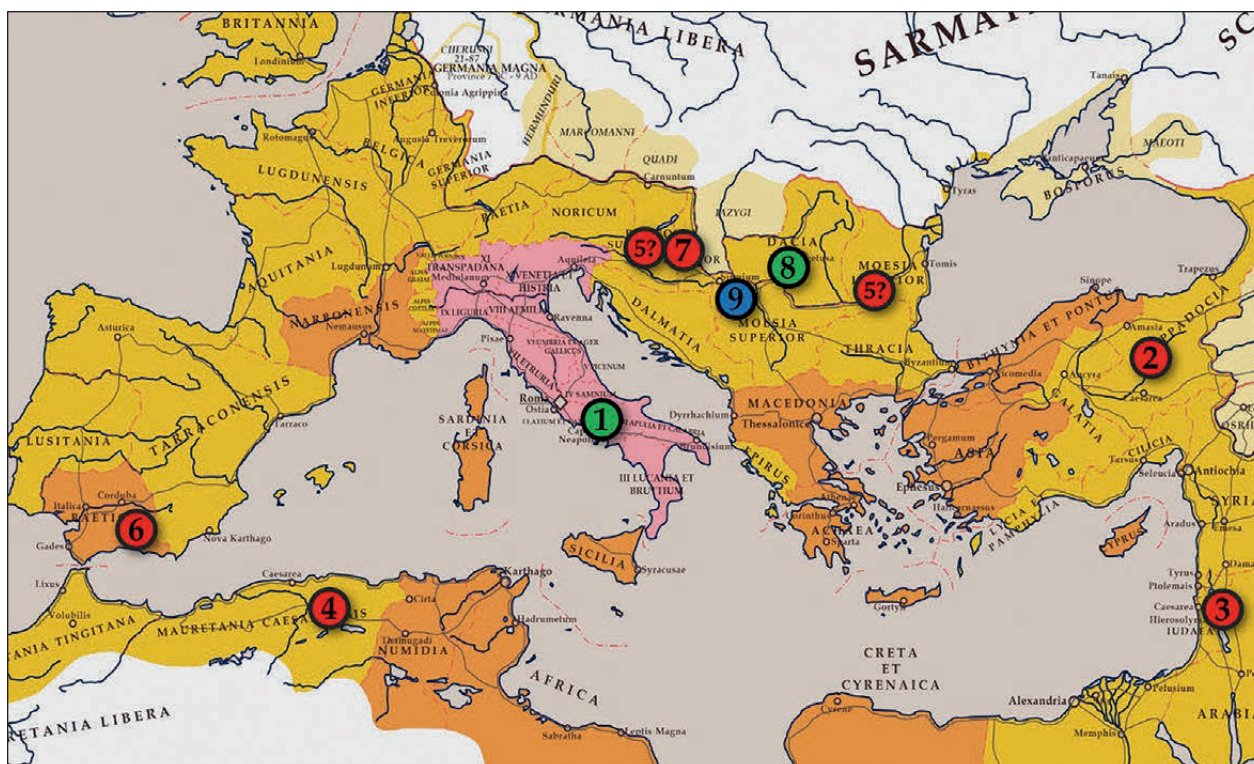


Fig. 6. The career of M. Ulpius:

1) Beneventum (*praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*); 2) Cappadocia (*praefectus cohortis I Thracum*); 3) Arabia (*tribunus militum legionis III Cyrenaicae*); 4) Mauretania Caesariensis (*praefectus alae Sebastenorum*); 5) Pannonia Superior or Moesia Inferior (*praefectus alae I or II Aravacorum*); 6) Hispania (*praepositus vexillationibus legionum XII Fulminatae et XV Apollinaris*); 7) Pannonia Superior (*praefectus alae I Ulpiae contariorum*); 8) Dacia Apulensis (*procurator centenarius*); 9) Ošljane, the presumed find place of the monument (drawing: Adam Crnobrnja)

Сл. 6. Карјера М. Улпија:

1) Беневетиј (*praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*); 2) Кападокија (*praefectus cohortis I Thracum*); 3) Арабија (*tribunus militum legionis III Cyrenaicae*); 4) Цезарејска Мауријанија (*praefectus alae Sebastenorum*); 5) Горња Панонија или Доња Мезија (*praefectus alae I or II Aravacorum*); 6) Хиспанија (*praepositus vexillationibus legionum XII Fulminatae et XV Apollinaris*); 7) Горња Панонија (*praefectus alae I Ulpiae contariorum*); 8) Дакија Ајуленсис (*procurator centenarius*); 9) Ошљане, претпостављено место налаза споменика (цртеж: Адам Црнобрња)

The possibility that Ulpius received the decorations while he was the tribune of the legion *III Cyrenaica* is highly improbable, because there is no proof that the Arabian legion fought in the Parthian expedition of Lucius Verus.⁶⁰

Our conjecture that Ulpius received the decorations for the Parthian war of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus during his command in Cappadocia allows for further chronological speculation concerning his career. Each spell of military service of an equestrian officer lasted about three or four years under normal circumstances.⁶¹ We shall propose a tentative chronological frame for Ulpius' military career. His command

over the cohort *I Thracum* in Cappadocia could be dated ca. 162–165 AD and the tribunate in the legion *III Cyrenaica* in Arabia ca. 166/167–168/169 AD. Ulpius' tenure in Mauretania Caesariensis, as prefect of the ala *Sebastenorum*, would have consequently been ca. 170/171–172/173 AD and his command over one of two *alae Aravacorum* (in Pannonia Superior or Moesia Inferior) ca. 174/175–175/177 AD. Next came the extraordinary command on the Iberian Peninsula.

⁶⁰ Gatier 2000, 347; Kennedy 2004, 48.

⁶¹ Brunt 1983, 47; Le Bohec 1990, 43; Southern 2006, 129.

In 177 AD he was appointed *praepositus* of the detachments of the Cappadocian legions *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* and one other regiment, which fought the Mauri in the Hispanic provinces. It seems conceivable that Ulpus' previous military experience played an important role in this appointment. The last step in his military career – *praefectus alae I Ulpiae contariorum* – might be dated ca. 178/179–180/181 AD. That means that the military decorations for *expeditio Germanica* were awarded to Ulpus during his tenure in Pannonia Superior. The ala *I Ulpia contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum* participated in the second phase of the Marcomannic wars.⁶²

After the *militiae equestres*, Ulpus' career continued with the procuratorship in Dacia Apulensis. At the beginning of line 3, a trace of a curved upper stroke is preserved, which probably belonged to a C. That is why we propose the following reading of the title: *[pro]c(urator) cent(enarius) Dac(iae) Apul(ensis)*. The inscription from Vinča strengthens the view that the financial procurators of Dacia Apulensis were *centenarii*. This conclusion was based on a votive monument from Sarmizegetusa, set up by Lucius Octavius Felix, procurator of Dacia Apulensis, on the occasion of his promotion *ad ducenariam* in the province of Dalmatia.⁶³

Ulpus' procuratorship in Dacia Apulensis presents a chronological problem. Assuming that it followed immediately after the completion of *militiae equestres*, it should be dated to the very first years of Commodus' reign. The sequence of procurators from that period comprises two officials. Titus Claudius Xenophon held the post probably in 181–183 AD,⁶⁴ and Caius Sempronius Urbanus probably in 184–186 AD.⁶⁵ The next known procurator – Quintus Petronius Antonianus – held the office in 195–198 AD.⁶⁶ It appears, therefore, that Ulpus' procuratorship in Dacia Apulensis should be dated after 186 AD, possibly to 187–189 AD. This implies a hiatus of five or six years between the completion of *militiae equestres* and his first administrative post. Bearing in mind that equestrian tenures were not necessarily held without intervals,⁶⁷ this possibility seems conceivable. We will offer a similar example from the first half of the 2nd century AD. Marcus Aemilius Bassus ended his military career in the latter part of Trajan's reign, possibly ca. 114/115 AD with the prefecture of the ala *Moesica felix torquata* in Germania Inferior. The suggested date is inferred from the fact that he commanded the cohort *I Brittonum milliaria Ulpia torquata civium Romanorum* in Dacia in 110 AD.⁶⁸ Bassus received the first

procuratorship in the Gallic provinces from Hadrian.⁶⁹ Even if he had been appointed at the very beginning of the emperor's reign, this would mean that an interval of several years passed between the completion of *militiae equestres* and his first administrative post. The other solution to the chronological problem concerning Ulpus' procuratorship in Dacia Apulensis would be a slight correction of the sequence of procurators. Considering that the average tenure lasted for about 2 to 3 years,⁷⁰ perhaps we might move Xenophon's procuratorship to 182–183 AD, and thus make room for Ulpus, in 181–182 AD.

To sum up. The inscription from Vinča records the career of an *eques Romanus* by the name of Marcus Ulpus (the cognomen is not preserved). Judging by the presumed title of *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*, he hailed from Beneventum in Italy. Ulpus' military career followed well established patterns. He was prefect of a cohort *I Thracum* in Cappadocia and tribune of the legion *III Cyrenaica* in Arabia. The ensuing stages of his career took him to the western part of the Roman Empire. He commanded the *ala Pia Gemina Sebastenorum* in Mauretania Caesariensis, then probably the *ala I Hispanorum Aravacorum* in Pannonia Superior (although the *ala II Hispanorum et Aravacorum* in Moesia Inferior cannot be completely excluded) and, finally, the *ala I Ulpia contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum* in Pannonia Superior. Ulpus' military experience qualified him for the extraordinary command on the Iberian Peninsula. He led the detachments of the Cappadocian legions *XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris* against the raiding Mauri in 177 AD (Fig. 6). One should note that Ulpus was a highly decorated officer. It appears that he was awarded for his bravery and exploits in the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus during his tenure in Cappadocia. He obtained a second set of decorations while commanding the *ala I Ulpia contariorum* in the second phase of the Marcomannic wars of Marcus Aurelius. After com-

⁶² Lőrincz 2001, 19, no. 9.

⁶³ *IDR* III/2, 225. Cf. Stein 1944, 79; Piso 2013, 187, ad no. 93.

⁶⁴ Piso 2013, no. 94 = 126.

⁶⁵ Piso 2013, no. 95.

⁶⁶ Piso 2013, no. 96.

⁶⁷ Brunt 1983, 50.

⁶⁸ *CIL* XVI 163.

⁶⁹ For Bassus see: *PME* A 75.

⁷⁰ Brunt 1983, 49–50.

pleting the *militiae equestres*, Ulpus held the post of procurator in Dacia Apulensis, presumably during the 180s. This procuratorship is the last piece of information concerning his career. He might have held the

post of procurator in Moesia Superior after Dacia Apulensis. This conjecture would explain why the monument recording his cursus was discovered in Vinča, on the territory of Roman Singidunum.

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НОВИ ЛАТИНСКИ НАТПИС ИЗ ВИНЧЕ У БЕОГРАДУ

Кључне речи. – римски почасни натпис, Београд, Винча, Ошљане, вила рустика, друга половина 2. века, *militiae equestres*, прокуратор

Током извођења инфраструктурних радова поред друма који од улице Смедеревски пут води ка Београдској депонији „Винчи”, 10. јула 2020. године случајно је пронађена база статуе са латинским натписом. Споменик је непосредно након открића био украден, али је захваљујући успешној акцији МУП Републике Србије убрзо пронађен и пренет у Народни музеј Србије. На основу детаљног прегледа терена који су спровели археолози Народног музеја Србије установљено је да није откривен *in situ*, као и да у земљи око њега није било покретних налаза. Информације добијене неформалним путем указују да је споменик откривен приликом проширења депоније, а затим одвезен и бачен на првом zgodном месту како службе за заштиту културних добара не би зауставиле радове. На основу података о темпу радова на проширењу Депоније „Винча” и резултата заштитних археолошких истраживања из седамдесетих година прошлог века, готово је сигурно да је споменик нађен на локалитету Ошљане на рубу депоније (сл. 2). На том месту су лежали остаци римске сеоске виле (*villa rustica*). Она се налазила уз некада мочварну обалу Дунава, на око 3 км североисточно од римског пута Сингидунум–Виминацијум, односно око 7 км узводно од утврђења Трикорнијум (сл. 1).

Споменик је у облику плоче (дим. 90 x 50 x 10–18 цм), правоугаоног облика. Натпис је уклесан на доњој страни секундарно употребљене базе мушке статуе (сл. 3а–б). Од скулптуре су сачувана два стопала у сандалама (горња површина левог стопала је оштећена) и шлем са десном паранатидом, десно од десног стопала; лево од левог стопала налазе се остаци нејасне представе, а на бази је уклесан украс налик ресама (сл. 4а–д, 5). Сачувани делови мушке скулптуре и њена база исклесани су из једног каменог блока. На десном и делимично на левом стопалу налазе се сандале са отвореним прстима који су обрађени до детаља. На горњој површини постаментa налазе се четири удубљења: испред десног стопала, са десне стране (дим. 4 x 4 x 3 цм) и иза њега (дим. 3,5 x 5 x 3,5 цм), испред левог стопала, са леве стране (дим. 4 x 4,5 x 3,1 цм) и једно (дим. 4 x 4 цм), испуњено чистим оловом, иза левог стопала. На споменику су видљиви трагови накнадне обраде ради нове намене (вероватно као грађевинског материјала?), при чему је натпис оштећен и уклесани су жлебови (сл. 5).

Натпис, који се састоји из шеснаест делимично сачуваних редова, бележи одређене кораке у каријери једног припадника римског витешког staleжа (*ordo equester*) из друге половине 2. века (сл. 6). Од његовог имена сачуван је само

номен Улпије, а знамо и да је био уписан у трибу *Quirina*. Изгледа да је на почетку каријере био *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*. Реч је о локалној магистратури у Беневенту у Италији, коју су вршили младићи из угледних породица пре него што би били уврштени у градски савет (*ordo decurionum*) и витешки staleж. Уколико је Улпије заиста био *praetor Cerialis iure dicundo*, треба претпоставити да је био рођен у Беневенту. После претуре је уврштен у витешки staleж и добио је свештеничко звање *sacerdos Laurens Lavinas*. Потом је служио као официр у римској војсци и прошао је све *militiae equestres*. Најпре је заповедао кохортом *I Thracum* у Кападокији (око 162–165. године). Ова јединица, до сада није посведочена у поменутој провинцији, могла би се идентификовати са кохортом *I Thracum*, која је у првим деценијама 2. века била стационарана у Египту. Уколико је наша претпоставка тачна, у Кападокију је вероватно прекомандована пре средине поменутог столећа. Изгледа да је Улпије први пут одликован док је био стационаран у Кападокији. Јединице провинцијског гарнизона играле су значајну улогу у походу Луције Вера против Партије (162–166. године). У борбама је лако могла учествовати и кохорта *I Thracum*. Број и врсту одликовања које су Улпију доделили Марко Аурелије и Луције Вер није могуће прецизно утврдити. Свакако је добио две короне (*corona muralis* и *corona vallaris*) и одређен број хасти (*hastae*). Улпије је из Кападокије прекомандован у Арабију, где је служио као војни трибун легије *III Cyrenaica* (око 166/167–168/169. године). То би била његова *militia secunda*. Потом следи заповедништво над двома алама. Улпије је био префект але *Pia Gemina Sebastena* или *Sebastenorum* у Цезарејској Мауританији (око 170/171–172/173. године). Затим је командовао одредом чији назив није у потпуности сачуван (174/175–175/176. године). Можда је реч о али *I Hispanorum Aravacorum*, која је била део гарнизона Горње Паноније. У обзир долази и ала *II Hispanorum et Aravacorum*, стационарана у Доњој Мезији. Све три поменуте јединице биле су *alae quingenariae*, што значи да је Улпије припадао релативно уском кругу људи који су два пута поновили трећи корак у војничкој каријери припадника витешког staleжа (*militia tertia*). Искуство стечено током службовања у Кападокији, Арабији, Цезарејској Мауританији и Горњој Панонији или Доњој Мезији, донело је нашем официру једно ванредно наименовање. Око 177. године је постављен за заповедника (*praepositus*) вексилација кападокијских легија *XII Fulminata* и *XV Apollinaris* у Хиспанији. Оне су, заједно са

главнином гарнизона Тингитанске Мауританије, учествовале у борби против Маура који су пљачкали провинције на Иберијском полуострву. Улпијева *militia quarta* била је префектура у али *I Ulpia contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum*, у Горњој Панонији (око 178/179–180/181. године). Ова јединица учествовала је у другој фази маркоманских ратова Марка Аурелија. Улпије је у току тих операција по други пут одликован. Нажалост, није познато која одликовања су му доделили Марко Аурелије и Комод. Пошто је

прошао све *militiae equestres*, Улпије је наставио цивилну каријеру. Био је *procurator centenarius* Дакије Апулензис, што је уједно и последњи забележен корак његовог курсуса. Ову дужност је вероватно вршио после 186. године, можда од 187. до 189. године. Улпијев натпис је значајан за познавање римске администрације у дачким провинцијама. Он потврђује претпоставку модерних истраживача да су прокуратори Дакије Апулензис припадали категорији центенарија (*centenarii*).