

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE TWO REGISTER INSCRIPTIONS FROM TIBISCUM

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Tibiscum is a point of reference for the south-west of the province Dacia, from a military as well as from a civil point of view. Several auxiliary troops such as Cohors I Sagittariorum and Cohors I Vindelicorum were camped in Tibiscum. In the 2nd century, Numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium and Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium were also brought here.

A civil settlement type vicus developed near the camp where, as a result of the research done, a series of workshops of pottery, iron, precious stones manufacture, glass and beads manufacture were discovered¹. All these sustain an intense economic activity in the civil settlement of Tibiscum.

We have to remark the presence of certain funeral steles which present two parallel placed fields for the inscription among the funeral monuments that appeared as a result of the archaeological diggings in the camp or in the civil settlement. So far two such funeral steles are known². The register of the inscription was divided into two fields with the help of a moulding or of some vertical lines carved in the rock.

The first funeral stela we are referring to is made up of the register of the relief placed on top, in addition to the two fields of the inscription. The register was kept in fragments. One can also see parts of two busts of certain characters. This register of the décor is made in the manner of the altorelief (fig.1). Moreover, in front of each register destined to the texts there is one of the two letters that open each funeral inscription (D M).

The problem in this case is the way in which the inscription was made, because although they are made by chiselling some lines in the rock in order to delimitate two fields of the parallel inscription, the one who wrote the text (it is only about one text) chiselled it on both registers destined to the inscription. Thus, instead of two texts there is only one text written on the entire surface prepared to include two inscriptions. In this case we can say that the person who carved the text did not know the reason of the division of the register of the inscription. The conclusion would be that in this case we deal with a funeral monument (a stela) on which the inscription was placed after its realization. We believe that we can identify two craftsmen who were involved in the realization and the inscription of the monument.

¹ Doina Benea, P. Bona, *Tibiscum*, București, 1994, *passim*.

² IDR, III/1, 156, 172.

The stela is erected in the memory of the parents of Aelius Valens. He dedicates the funerary monument to his parents³. If we consider the fact that both parents are mentioned by the same person, we infer that the two died at the same time approximately. We are confused about the fact that although there are two persons who died and to whom the stela is dedicated this was realized on the entire surface of the register of the inscription although the delimitation between the two registers for the inscriptions is obvious. Perhaps the person who chiselled the text did not know this type of funeral stela with two parallel registers of the inscription although the border lines between the texts can be noticed. Aelius Valens' father was part of Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium.

The second stela we are referring to presents two individual parallel texts divided by a moulding that seems to continue above the epigraphic register (fig.2). Both texts have a well profiled frame. In front of each register of the inscription one can see the letters D M. The first text is written in memory of a male character whose name is ignored. All we know is the fact that he was a *librarius* in a *numerus*. The second text is fragmentary and one cannot see the name of the person who put the stela or the name of the persons to whom it is dedicated.

Unlike the first case, here the person or the persons who chiselled the text (the writing is quite similar; there might be only one person who chiselled the two texts) wrote the two texts correctly in the parallel fields by the *lapidarius* who realised the stela.

There is the idea that this kind of funeral stela with several parallel inscriptions is characteristic of Mauretania and Numidia. This means that we are in front of direct taking over of this kind of funeral monument⁴ from the African area. We admit that we were tempted to give the maurs credit for these stele. In both cases we have to do with persons who were part of auxiliary troops type *numerus*. In the case of the stela erected by Aelius Valens we know that his father was a member of Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium. For the moment we cannot be sure that in the case of the stela with two parallel inscriptions it is about a character who had the function of *librarius* in Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium by analogy with the first stela we have referred to.

In our attempt to find in the nearby provinces or in other settlements from Dacia stele of this type with several parallel fields of the inscription we realized they were quite rare in the Danubian provinces. More precisely we can say they are present in the portfolio of the stone masons except for the province Moesia Superior. Here we discovered several such funeral stele with parallel inscriptions. The nine such stele are in the centre of Scupi with one exception: the stela with two

³ Aelius Sebl[- -]er, the father, from Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium, who lived 45 years and for his mother, Aelia Sa- -tus, who lived 30 years, and whose name is not entirely preserved.

⁴ See the commentary of the authors of IDR, III/3, that accompanies the description of the funerary stele nr. 172; E. Nemeth, *Maurii*, in *Funeraria dacoromana*, p. 447-449.

parallel individual texts erected in honour of Domitia Ursa and Serenia Quarta⁵ which was discovered at Singidunum (fig.3). The other eight stele come from Scupi⁶ (fig. 4-10).

By the description offered by the authors IMS, I, and from their opinions results that such stele were no longer found at Singidunum. Moreover, not even the composition of the relief's register proves that this stela would have been made at Singidunum⁷. Probably it was ordered at Scupi and placed in Singidunum for the two women, in the first case by the husband who was *imaginifer* in *Legio III Flavia*, and in the second case by the tutor Lucius Cocceius Montanus. We cannot know what the connection between the deceased and the reason they were mentioned on such a stela was. It is certain that the persons who wrote the texts knew the role of the moulding placed in the middle in order to give two parallel fields of the inscription. Another assumption related to the above mentioned stela, which was later on used again⁸, would be that they do not fit the types of funeral monuments characteristic for Singidunum.

The funeral stele with two parallel fields of the inscription from Scupi make up a group within a typology of funeral stele. They make up the group of funeral stele with a pointed (pentagonal) or bowed gable and epigraphic field in the shape of a diptych⁹. One of them shows the busts of the deceased. Others show rosettes. In most cases such stele have family character since they are placed by the members of the same family: parents for children¹⁰, children for parents¹¹, brothers for brothers¹² or the husband for the wife or the wife for her husband¹³.

There are cases when the stela is dedicated to one person. The two texts are written by different members of the family for the loved one who left them: it is the case of the stela placed in the memory of a woman (her name was not kept) who lived 30 years. The two texts, very similar as

⁵ IMS, I, 52: the texts are: a) D(is) M(anibus) | Domitia | Ursa vixit | ann(is) XXV A1 | 5. banus Sep | timinus hos | pitae b(ene) m(erenti) p(osuit) | h(ic) s(ita) e(st) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis); b) D(is) M(anibus) | Sereni | aae Quartae | in | fterfec | 5. te(!) ab hoste | vixit ann(is) L | Coc(ceius) Montanus | tutor Titianus | 10. scribendum | curavit.

⁶ IMS, VI, 73, 91, 106, 107, 110, 119, 139, 155.

⁷ In the register of the relief there are two busts, probably belonging to two women, one with the hair caught in a loop, the other with her hair on her back, holding a papyrus in their left hands. Above the busts there is a shell. The two busts are disposed in a semicircular niche, that leans against two colonettes; other two colonettes frame the register of the inscription.

⁸ IMS, I, 34.

⁹ IMS, VI, p. 38-39.

¹⁰ IMS, VI, 110 (Lucius Cornificius and Iulia Valentina for the children Cornificia Valeria and Lucius Seius Maternus); 139 (mother Vesidia Ingenua for Petillia Clara and Lucius Petilius Lupus).

¹¹ IMS, VI, 91 (the sons Lucius Attius Severus and Lucius Severinus for their father Lucius Attius Severus and for Valeria Cornelia); 107 (one of the inscriptions was put by the daughter Cocceia Lucilia for her mother); 106 (the daughter Claudia Octavia for her mother Cocceia Marcelina); 155 (the sons P. Aelius Firmus, Varronius Maximus and Vales(!) and Firmina for their mother).

¹² IMS, VI, 106 (one of the inscriptions was put by the same Claudia Octavia sister, for her brother Tiberius Claudius Aelianus).

¹³ IMS, VI, 107 (one of the inscriptions put by the husband Cornelius Crescentius for his wife); 155 (the first inscription is put by Cornelia Secunda for L. Varronius Urbanus)

composition, were written by her daughter and by her husband¹⁴. In this case we think that both inscriptions were written by the same stone mason.

The stele with two inscriptions from Moesia Superior are family stele which is seen in the analysis of the texts written by the members of the same family. A more exact dating for the stele in the south of the Danube cannot be made except for the period between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD¹⁵.

In the *lapidarium* of the National Museum in Warsaw there is a fragment of a funeral stela made in marble which presents two parallel registers of the inscription delimited by a vertical line lightly chiselled¹⁶. This stela was placed in memory of two persons: Caius Cornelius and a certain Coelia, both *liberti*¹⁷. The author Anna Sadurska dates this stela at the end of the 1st century AD.

As a conclusion regarding the funeral steles at Tibiscum with two parallel registers of the inscription, by analogy with more numerous stele of the same type at Scupi, we believe that we cannot be sure when we state that in the case of the stela placed for a *librarius* from Numerus... would be Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium and this just because this type of monument is characteristic of Mauritania. We think that in the case of the funeral stele with two parallel registers of the inscription it is not necessarily a stela characteristic of Mauritania or Numidia or at least it is not kept only in the Moor space but it was adopted by persons in the Roman space as it results from the anthroponyms on the steles from Moesia Superior where we deal with Roman names. At Tibiscum we must be cautious when referring to the direct adoption of this type of stela from the Moor space.

On the funeral stele from Scupi no character has a name that sounds north-African. The fact that the registers of the relief in the case of the funeral stele is not preserved does not allow us to make other connections with the stele from Scupi.

Regarding the population in Scupi it is said that several persons attested by the inscriptions have Roman names. The veterans who contribute to the elevation of the establishment at the rank of *colonia* come from the western provinces of the empire as Hispania, Gallia Narbonensis, the north of Italy¹⁸. In addition to this we must not forget the presence of certain elements that come from the micro Asian space.

Regarding this population in Minor Asia we must refer to the eastern necropolis of the town Scupi where among the inventory pieces there were found Latène ceramics and earthen pots worked by hand or jewellery characteristic of the Thracians and micro Asian lamps and glass pots

¹⁴ IMS, VI, 107.

¹⁵ IMS, VI, p. 40.

¹⁶ Anna Sadurska, *Inscriptions latines et monuments funéraires romains au Musée National Varsovie*, Varşovia, 1953, nr. 14, pl. XVII, fig. 2.

¹⁷ Fragmentary texts. The first: C(aius) Cornelius/ C(ai) I(ibertus) Nicephor.....; the second: Coelia/M(arci) L(iberta) Be[ne merita].

¹⁸ IMS, VI, p. 26.

which by their shape denote an oriental origin¹⁹. We must also mention the local funeral stela which present as ornaments feminine accessories (the mirror, the comb) which are connected to the micro Asian space²⁰. A few votive monuments dedicated to divinities in the Syrian space²¹ or the Egyptian one²² are known together with altars dedicated to divinities in the Roman Pantheon (Jupiter, Junona, Minerva, Diana, Fortuna, Nemesis, Hercules) or in the Thracian world (the Thracian Knight, Zbeltiurdus).

On the whole, the population in Scupi is made up of elements coming from the western provinces, the Thracian space, the Illyrian space as well as elements coming from the north-west of Minor Asia²³.

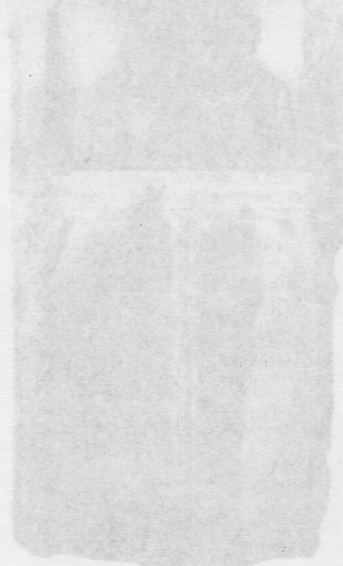
In this situation we think that we cannot say with certitude that this type of funeral stela with two parallel inscriptions comes at Tibiscum directly from the Moor space. It is probably an adoption of this type of funeral stela from the Asian space through South-Moesian channel from the portfolio of the craftsmen in Scupi by the craftsmen in Tibiscum. We believe that the relations between south-west Dacia and the south of Moesia Superior are also seen in the artistic field and not only in the economic field.

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¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 24, note 14.

²⁰ Mariana Crînguș, *The representation of personal feminine objects on the funeral stelae from Drobeta*, in Volumul omagial I. Piso, forthcoming.

²¹ IMS, VI, 7, 15, 16, 17, altars for Caelus Terra Pontus or Dea Syria.

²² IMS, VI, 19, for Serapis and Isis.

²³ IMS, VI, p. 32-33.



Fig. 1

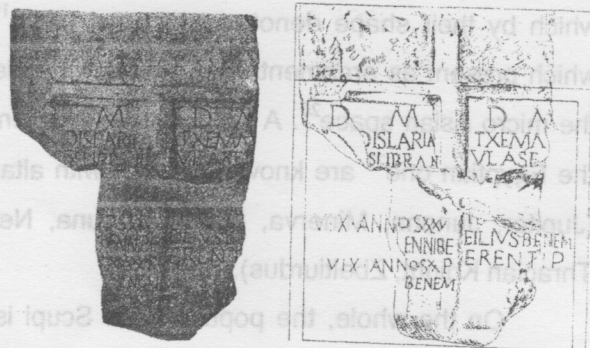


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 24, note 14.
²⁰ Minerva Cingus, The representation of personal feminine objects on the funeral stelae from Drobeta, in *Voluntati*
omnibus I. Piso, forthcoming.
²¹ ILS, VI, 7, 12, 16, 17, others for Caelius Tiberius Pontius or Des Syris.
²² ILS, VI, 19, for Scipio and Iai.
²³ ILS, VI, p. 32-33.



Fig. 5

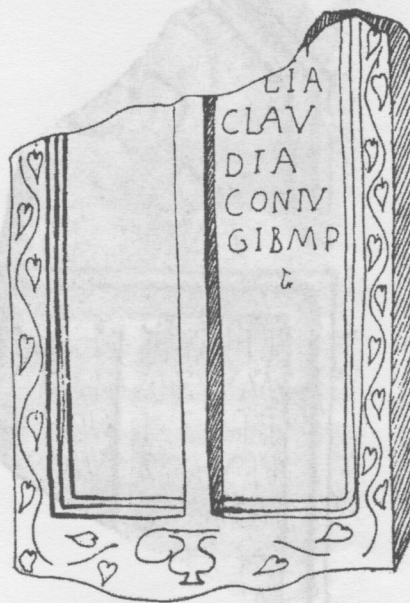


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

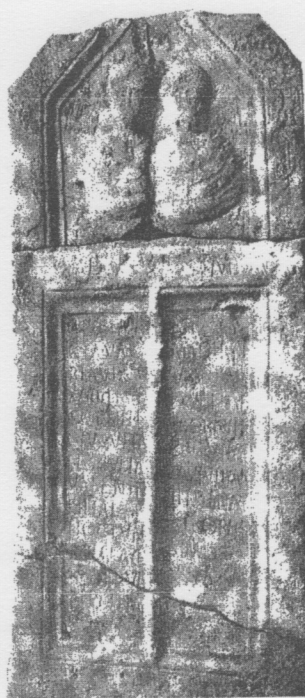


Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

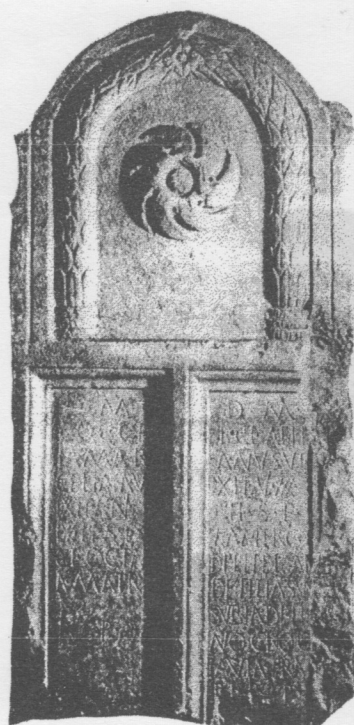


Fig. 11