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From Dacia Minor to Nicomedia: Iconography, Onomastics and a New Career of the Late Roman Army. The Sarcophagus of Tziampo, *protector divini lateris*

Hüseyin Sami Öztürk - Dan Dana

Özet

İzmit Su ve Kanalizasyon İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü'nün bulunduğu alanda Kocaeli Arkeoloji ve Etnografya Müzesi Müdürlüğü tarafından 2017-2019 yılları arasında bir kurtarma kazısı yapıldı. Bu kazılar sırasında, içerisinde 5 in situ lahit, 51 kiremit mezar ve iki *amphora* mezarı bulunan yeni bir nekropol alanı keşfedilmiştir. Lahitlerden dördü üzerinde ise Roma dönemine tarihlenen mezar yazıtları tespit edilmiştir. Bu makalede, bu yazıtlardan Latince olanı tanıtılmaktadır. Diocletianus ya da Constantinus zamanına tarihlenen yazıtın çevirisi şöyledir: “Yeraltı Tanrıları’na! Dacia Minor Eyaleti’ndeki Pieucens Bölgesi kökenli, İmparator koruyucusu (= *protector divini lateris*) Tziampo bu mezar anıtını yeniden yaptırdı. (Ben) 50 yıl yaşadı(m). Bu mezara oğlum Severus yahut da eşim dışında (başka hiç kimsenin) gömülmesine izin vermiyorum. 9 yıl süvari, 11 yıl *ordinarius* ve 10 yıl *protector* olarak askerlik yaptım. Şayet birisi bu mezara bir başkasını gömmeye cesaret ederse, *fiscus*’a 20; kent kasasına 10 folles ödeyecektir. Tüm askerliğim 30 yıl sürdü. Hoşçakalın!”

Anahtar sözcükler: Nikomedeia, Bithynia, Dacia Minor, mezar yazıtı, onomastik, Diocletianus/Constantinus, Geç Roma ordusu, *protector divini lateris*, *caballarius*, *ordinarius*

Abstract

A rescue excavation by the Directorate of the Kocaeli Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography was conducted between 2017 and 2019 in the area where the General Directorate of Izmit Water and Sewerage Administration is located. In the course of these excavations, a new necropolis area was discovered, including five in situ sarcophagi, 51 tile tombs, and two amphora tombs. Among them, four sarcophagi bear funerary inscriptions dating from the Roman period. This

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We would like to thank the former director of the Museum, Mr Rıdvan GÖLCÜK (now at Troia Museum) and archaeologist Kemal ÇİBÜK (now at Troia Museum), who informed us about the inscriptions and allowed us to study them. We are also grateful to the director of the Museum, Mr Serkan GEDÜK, archaeologist Zuhale UYKAL and other museum staff who helped us during these works also to İstanbul Archaeological Museums for allowing the publication of the photo (Fig. 8) and Tuğçe AKBAYTOĞAN (the vice director of IAM), Feza DEMİRKÖK (the epigraphist of IAM) and Dilara TURAN (IAM).

paper presents one of these. The translation of this Latin inscription dated to Diocletian or Constantine is following as: “To the spirits of the dead! I, Tziampo, *protector* of the divine flank, restored my monument, originating from *regio Pieucensis*, province of Dacia Minor. He lived 50 years. And I want that nobody will be permitted to be deposited here except his son Severus or his wife. He served as horseman for nine years, as *ordinarius* for 11 years, and protected as *protector* for 10 years. But if another (person) dares to open (the sarcophagus), let him give the *fiscus* 20 *folles* and the city 10 *folles*. On the whole, he served for 30 years. Farewell, passers-by!

Keywords: Nicomedia, Bithynia, Dacia Minor, epitaph, onomastics, Diocletian/Constantine, Late Roman army, *protector divini lateris*, *caballarius*, *ordinarius*

I. The sarcophagus and its archaeological context

During the foundation construction for a building in April 2017 in Serdar neighbourhood of the district of İzmit (Kocaeli), at the southern border of D-100 Motorway, at No. 59 Sekapark, in the area where the General Directorate of İzmit Water and Sewerage Administration (İSU) is located, archaeological remains were discovered. A rescue excavation was conducted subsequently in the area by the Directory of Kocaeli Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography. Among the finds unearthed during these excavations (2017-2019), we can note five *in situ* sarcophagi¹ (one of which is without inscription) surrounded by a necropolis wall, 51 tile tombs and two *amphora* tombs, 99 coins, 12 terracotta artefacts, eight glass artefacts, two metal artefacts, two stone artefacts and one bronze idol².

The newly discovered *necropolis* area is located about 700 m from the city gate, on a terraced area 6-8 m above sea level³. The necropolis shows characteristics of stonework particular to Late Roman-Early Byzantine style; its wall is about 11 meters long and 60-80 cm wide in the eastern direction⁴. The existence of this Its existence was already known when another sarcophagus was discovered close to the excavation area in 1972⁵. The inscriptions of all four sarcophagi are located within the wall facing southwards, indicating that the road entering the city passed to the south of the *necropolis*.

Inscriptions and the recovered archaeological materials show that the *necropolis* was intensively used between the 2nd-4th centuries.⁶ The coins recovered in the necropolis area are highly relevant in our dating. According to the 23 coins that could be dated out of a total of 99, the earliest date for the use of the *necropolis* is the reign of Severus Alexander, while Constantius II's reign seems to be the latest⁷.

The existence of an extant *in situ* *necropolis* is a great chance; the entire area was probably covered and protected via a large scale landslide. Only one reason appears for such a large necropolis to be buried underground: a major earthquake. Indeed,

- 1 The edition of two of the four inscribed sarcophagi was published ("Two New Inscriptions from the Western Necropolis of Nikomedeia", *Libri: The Journal of Epigraphy, Translation and Review* 7 [2021]) 203-211). The fourth inscription, a Greek epigram, will be prepared for publication by M. Dana (Lyon 3 University). For a recent discovery of inscribed sarcophagi, this time in a necropolis of Nicaea, see EKİN-MERİÇ – DREYER 2021, 47-63.
- 2 UYKAL et alii 2019, 139-156; ÇOBAN – AVŞAR 2019, 171-186; GÖLCÜK et alii 2020.
- 3 GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 120.
- 4 GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 121.
- 5 TAM IV.1 239. See also: GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 121.
- 6 GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 120.
- 7 UYKAL et alii 2019, 150-154; GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 125.

the latest coins discovered in the *necropolis* are those minted during the reign of Constantius II and are crucial for our dating. Three devastating earthquakes centered on Nicaea and then Nicomedia took place during his reign. It is possible that during or in the aftermath of one of these earthquakes, the *necropolis* was wholly buried.

These inscribed sarcophagi and other findings, which survived to our times by chance, allowed us to learn new information about the city and the Eastern Mediterranean world. The inscribed sarcophagus of a *protector* dated to Diocletian's or Constantine's reign published in detail in this article was briefly presented twice, with Turkish translation (but without the Latin text) and some photos⁸.

This marble sarcophagus is composed of a coffin (H: 116 cm; W: 224 cm; D: 116 cm) and its lid (H: 85.5 cm; W: 236 cm; D: 124 cm), both of good execution, and moreover with two decorated acroteria (see below). Two skeletons with their heads facing west were discovered in the sarcophagus. There was a broken bottle on the skeletons; in addition, a golden band and wooden pieces were found in the coffin. Unfortunately, there is no information about the analysis of the skeletons.

II. The iconography

This partially decorated sarcophagus⁹ is remarkable because of the two corner acroteria on one side of the lid, presenting each one a personage in relief. In both cases, the chosen iconography is highly significant:

(a) on the left corner, in a carved niche, a hunting scene - a rider in tunic and large mantle on a galloping horse, killing a wild beast (a boar?) with a spear -, displaying, in fact, the motif of the so-called "Thracian Rider", superposed to the idealized mounted image of the deceased. While this scene is omnipresent in the Thracian lands of the Balkans during the imperial period, we may insist on some later usages in a military context. In the same Tetrarchic period as that of our sarcophagus, avatars of the hunting "Thracian Rider" occur funerary stelae of soldiers that died in Asia Minor at Bithynion/Claudiopolis (two soldiers, one of the deceased being *ex regione Scadiesiana*, so from the Balkans; see below, § VII.2) and Thyatira (Val. Iuventinus, *exarchus* from a Balkanic *vexillatio*)¹⁰, and in northern Italy at Augusta Taurinorum, in the latter on the stele of Aur. Marcianus, *circitor* from an unknown unit (since the epitaph is fragmentary)¹¹. We recall also invoke

8 ÖZTÜRK – DEMİRHAN-ÖZTÜRK 2019, 37, No. 4 (only Turkish transl.); GÖLCÜK et alii 2020, 124, No. 5 (only Turkish transl.), photos Pl. 35.2 (inscribed face of the sarcophagus), 36.1-2 (inner part of the sarcophagus, with two skeletons), 43.1-2 (iconography).

9 On Roman sarcophagi, see RUSSELL 2011.

10 CIL III 405 = ILS 2792 = TAM V.2 1122: *D(is) M(anibus). Val(erius) Iuventinus, exarc(h)us, | qui militavit annos XX in vexilla|tion(e) eqq(uitum) Dal(matarum) comit(atensium) Ancial|itana, vixit annos XL. Collect|a<r>ii titulum conscriptum ex | bonis eius posuerunt | bene merenti. Vale | viator.* Cf. the unique description (in 1750) of PEYSSONNEL 1765, 285: "un Marbre sépulchral, représentant un Homme à Cheval, accompagné de deux Chiens, & prêt à percer un Sanglier avec sa lance", reproduced in CIL and TAM ("eques cum canibus duobus aprum hasta percussurus/insultans"), and in PM, II, 334, No. 1400.

11 CIL V 6999; FRANZONI 1987, 97-98, No. 69 (Pl. XXXVI.1); the image, similar to that from the two stelae from Bithynion/Claudiopolis, is very slightly engraved, like a *sgraffito*. The upper part of a *stela* of a horseman, found at Romuliana/Gamzigrad, depicts the deceased under the traits of the "Thracian Rider" (with a *pilleus Pannonicus*), followed by a soldier holding a lance and a shield (Lupa 5471).

the stele of Valerius Victorinus (Ulmetum, Scythia), who served as *biarchus* among the *scutarii* in the imperial guard: the field in the middle of the sculpted panel depicts a horseman brandishing a spear, thus the dead is only partially portrayed as the “Thracian Rider”¹². On the sarcophagus, we may remark the symmetry of the scene (extremity of the horse - wild animal), clearly highlighted by the spear in diagonal.

(b) on the right corner, in a carved niche, the deceased is shown as a standing soldier (his face is now damaged); he wears in a belted, long-sleeved tunic (*tunica manicata*) with a typically 4th cent. *kammhelm* (ridge helmet and crest with plumes)¹³, a long *spatha*-sword with a square end that is partially visible, holding a *hasta* in the right hand, while the left hand rests on an oval *scutum*, with a central domed *umbo*. We observe a symmetry again, with the soldier in the middle of the scene; the bottom of the spear-head goes beyond the edge of the niche. While the scene depicts the well-known type of “stehender Soldat”¹⁴, we may note similar representations for soldiers of the late Roman army: the funerary plaque of a Dardanian *protector* in Aquileia (however, the shield displays the emblem of the *Moesiaci*, his former legion)¹⁵, and epitaphs of Balkan legionaries from the same city, figuring soldiers with two lances in the right hand and the left-hand resting on a shield: Aurelius Sudicentzus¹⁶, Val. Quintus¹⁷ and an anonymous one¹⁸; Lepontius’ stele from Strasbourg¹⁹; and the famous diptych from Monza figuring Stilicho. Even more interesting is the iconography of the stele of *Fl. Ingenuus, centenarius ex num(ero) eq(uitum) cataf(ractariorum) sen(iorum)*, found at Lugdunum²⁰: the horseman, with a long lance in diagonal and a helmet with plumes, is preceded by a military servant holding a sword (?) and lending the horse by the bridle, and succeeded by another military servant with a lance and a shield.

III. The inscription

The epitaph is placed on one side of the sarcophagus, below the two motifs, the epigraphic field measuring 46 x 220 cm. Letters were carved in deep relief, with *apices*, some of them elegant; height of the letters measures: 9.5 cm (lid, L. 1) and 4.2 cm (sarcophagus); all line space: ca. 1.5 cm. The only damaged point occurs by the middle of L. 6: in the word PROTECTOR, the stone cutter let a *vacat* because of an accident on the stone, and it is followed by ligature TE. We can observe a certain layout, and traces of *ordinatio*. Normally, small spaces were let between the words and, generally, the letters were well-spaced, even if ligatures were sometimes used:

12 IGLR 206 (drawing p. 214; photo in the planches) = GSMI 261 (photo Pl. 133.4); commented reedition of SPEIDEL 1995 (reproduced in AË 1995, 1338); Lupa 21173 (other photos). For the text, see below, note 130.

13 See FEUGÈRE 1994, 141-152.

14 See recently BALTŲ 2018, 30-35 (the prototypes are in Northern Italy, using in fact one of Mars’ images).

15 IAquileia III 2913; FRANZONI 1987, 39-40, No. 22 (Pl. IX.1); SPEIDEL 1990, 69-72 (= SPEIDEL 1992, 415-418); Lupa 23558.

16 FRANZONI 1987, No. 13 (Pl. V.1); Lupa 14013.

17 FRANZONI 1987, 30-31, No. 14 (Pl. V.2); Lupa 14017.

18 FRANZONI 1987, 29, No. 12 (Pl. IV.3); Lupa 14014.

19 CIL XIII 5980 (Lupa 27828).

20 CIL XIII 1848; CAG, 69/2, 2007, 337 (photo fig. 240); LASSÈRE 2007², II, 819-820 (with photo); Lupa 20221.

NE (L. 3, 4 [twice]), NN (L. 5), TE (L. 3, 6 [twice]). The first line is centered, while on the last line the letters of the two words of the final formula are spaced. The words are not divided by the end of each line. Usual abbreviations (DM, PROV, MIN), are seen, while all other words are written in full. The interpunction is systematic only for numbers (mostly elegant). In L.5, the stone cutter inscribed a parasite T after CONIVGE, maybe influenced by the preceding AVT. The beginning of L. 5 is shifted more leftwards. Some lines were carved by stonemason at the deepened ground²¹.

We propose the following text:

vac. D(is) vac. M(anibus). vac.

Tziampo, protector divini lateris, monumentum meum vac.
restauravi, oriundus ex regione Pieucense, prov(incia) Dacia Min(ore). v

4 *Vixit · L · et volo neminem licere hic poni nis<i> nesi filio suo* v
Severo aut coniuge {t} sua. Militait annis cabalarius · VIII · vac. (!)
et ordinariis · XI · et protexit pro'tector annis · X · Si autem v (!)
alter ausus fuerit aperire davit fisco folles · XX · (!)

8 *et civitati folle's · X · Toto militait annos · XXX · vac.* (!)
v *V a l e t e* vac. *t r a n s i t o r e s* vac.

Translation: To the spirits of the dead! I, Tziampo, *protector* of the divine flank, restored my monument, originating from *regio Pieucensis*, province of Dacia Minor. He lived 50 years. And I want that nobody will be permitted to be deposited here except his son Severus or his wife. He served as horseman for nine years, as *ordinarius* for 11 years, and protected as *protector* for 10 years. But if another (person) dares to open (the sarcophagus), let him give the fiscus 20 *folles* and the city 10 *folles*. On the whole, he served for 30 years. Farewell, passers-by!

The composition of the epitaph is not completely typical, since the imprecatory formula is divided as well as the career: (I) generic funerary formula - (II) identity of the deceased, status, *origo*, and age - (III) imprecatory formula for the protection of the tomb, restricting the use of the sarcophagus to his family - (IV) military career - (V) continuation of the imprecatory formula, with the stipulation of two fines - (VI) end of the career, with the total years of service - (VII) farewell formula.

According to the redactor of the text, the soldier Tziampo is speaking of himself both in the 1st person (ll. 2-3: *monumentum meum restauravi*; l. 4, *volo*)²² and more often in the 3rd person (l. 4, *vixit*; l. 4, *filio suo*; l. 5, *aut coniuge {t} sua*; l. 5, *militait*; l. 6, *protexit*; l. 8, *militait*).

21 For example: L. 4, VIXIT; L. 5, SEVEROAVT...MILITAITANNIS. Besides, some letters tie by lines from above or bottom, for example L. 2 (MONVMENTVM) and 4 (NEMINEMLICERE).

22 The 1st person occurs in the bilingual epitaph of a soldier's son buried at Nicomedia: Φλ(άουτος) Μαξιμίνοσ σκουτάριοσ σινάτωρ άνέστησα τήν στίλλην τῷ υἱῷ μου Ὀκτίμω κτλ. *Fla(vius) Maximinus scutarius sinator levavi statu(am) filio meo Octemo* etc. (for this inscription, see below, § VII.1). The epitaph of Aurelius Saza *centenarius*, buried in Macedonia (see note 76), combines the 1st person (*ic iacio qui vixi annis quinquaginta et militavi annis XXX et sum natus in provincia Dacia et militavi inter ecuites catafractarios Pictavensis succura Romani propositi*) and the 3rd person (*Aurelia Plactu coniux qui posit titulo bene merenti caro mar(i)to <s>uo*), before addressing to the passer-by (*resta viator et lege titulo nestro; dunc leges et <r>e<p>ausas*).

L. 1: The epitaph is introduced by the traditional funerary formula; accordingly, the text, like the **iconography** shows no signs of Christianity.

L. 2: *Tziampo*. Only the *cognomen* of the deceased is given, while the *gentilicium* is omitted. Although the omission of the *nomen* occurs generally at a later date, in our case the context and the mention of *folles* strongly indicate a date under Diocletian (and his successors) or Constantine (see below, § IV); hence, the *gentilicium* of our *protector* must have been *Valerius* or, less likely, *Flavius*. Maybe the stone cutter simply forgot to write it or wrote it in painted letters – because there is a space for two letters if this first line of the main text started a bit to the left, as it occurs in L. 5. The name *Tziampo* is Thracian, with a new spelling (see below, § V).|| *protector divini lateris*: for this formula, see below, § VI.3.

L. 2-3: *monumentum meum | restauravi*. *Monumentum* is here used for sarcophagus²³. The use of the verb *restauro*, ordinary restricted to public monuments, is surprising in this funerary context and concerning moreover a sarcophagus.

L. 3: *oriundus ex regione Pieucense, prov(incia) Dacia Min(ore)*. Both indications appear for the first time (see below, § V). The name of the province stands in Ablative, *prov(incia) Dacia Min(ore)*, with two abbreviations²⁴.

L. 4: *Vixit (annis) . L .*, with the omission of ANNIS; we observe the same omission in l. 6. It is noticeable that we encounter *annis* (ll. 5-6) and *annos* (l. 8) in the same text in mixed formulas. H. MIHĂESCU pointed the preference for the Abl. pl. *annis* (ablative expressing the duration of time), favoured in middle and southern Italy, and in the Balkans, instead of the Acc. pl. *annos* (accusative of time), favoured in northern Italy, Gaul and Spain, as in the spoken language the plural of masculine nouns tended to a unique form in *-i*, as in It. *anni* and Rom. *ani*²⁵.

L. 4-5: *et volo neminem licere hic poni nis<i> nesi filio suo | Severo aut coniuge {t} sua*, with an accumulation of negations. Cf. *ic nemine(m) liceat poni nesi de meis* (Ostia, CIL XIV 553); *[non licet iuxta] corpus Afroditi[tes corpus alteri]us poni nisi a [me excepti]* (Rome, CIL VI 12123); *nemini licere neque aperir[e neque tr]ansferre neque de con[---]* (Auximum, CIL IX 5860 = ILS 8234). *Nesi* is an archaism for *sine* (Festus 164, 1).

L. 5: *Militait* for *militavit* (also l. 8)²⁶; this indicative perfect without *v* occurs for some verbs (1st and 4th conjugations)²⁷.|| *cabalarius* for *caballarius*, without gemination²⁸; for this military term, see below (§ VI.1).

23 About the extraordinary group of inscribed sarcophagi (*arcae*) of soldiers of the late Roman army at Concordia (Italy), see HOFFMANN 1963. At Beroia of Syria, a legionary *dedicavit monumentum suum in sempiternum Diis Manibus suis/ἀφιέρωσεν μνημείον αὐτοῦ διηνεκὲς θεοῖς καταχθονίοις καὶ δαίμοσι αὐτοῦ* (CIL III 191 = IGLS II 455).

24 Ordinarily, this indication of origin is introduced by *oriundus/oriunda* and the preposition *ex (oriundus ex)*, but other examples are built with the Abl., e.g. *oriundo Pannunia Superiore, domu Cl(audia) Sav(ari)a* (Apameia of Syria, IGLS IV 1375, in *legio II Parthica*).

25 MIHĂESCU 1978, 249-250, § 243; GAENG 1990, 120.

26 MIHĂESCU 1978, 191-192, § 144 (reducing the vowels *u + i* to the diphthong *ui*, then to *i*, cf. *posit* for *posuit*). *Militait* instead of *militavit* also occurs in the epitaphs of a legionary (Oescus, Moesia Inferior, ILBulg 52), of an *equus singularis Augusti* (Anazarbus, Cilicia, IAnazabos 67) and of a horseman of a *numerus Dalmatarum* (Makreš, Dacia Ripensis, AÉ 1938, 97).

27 MIHĂESCU 1978, 235, § 218 (with more examples); cf. *renovait* for *renovavit* in Upper Moesia (CIL III 14543 = IMS I 95) and in Numidia (CIL VIII 28046 = ILaI 1 2963).

28 MIHĂESCU 1978, 209, § 179.

L. 6: *Ordinarius* (instead of *ordinarius*), with the syncope of the unaccented vowel²⁹; for this rank, see below (§ VI.2).|| *Protexit protector annis · X*: a special formula, combining both the verb and the substantive (deverbative). We note the second epigraphic occurrence of this verb in its specific military sense, after the epitaph from Troesmis (Scythia) of *Val. Thiumpo*, dead at 45 years, *qui militavit in leg(ione) XI Cl(audia), lectus in sacro comit(atu) lanciarius, deinde protexit annis V, missus pr(a)-effectus leg(ionis) II Hercul(iae), [e]git ann(is) II semis* (see note 46). Tziampo served for many years among the *protectores* (for his career, see below, § VI.3).

L. 6-8: *Si autem | alter ausus fuerit aperire davit fisco folles · XX · | et civitati folles · X*, second part of the imprecation formula, with the stipulation of two distinct fines. Similar formulas are known elsewhere, as, for instance, on a sarcophagus of another *protector*, in Salona³⁰.|| *Davit* instead of *dabit*, because of the banal confusion between *b* and *v*³¹.|| *Folles*, a particular numismatic term (see below, § IV). Instead of the ungrammatical *si autem | altera usus fuerit*, we must divide *si autem | alter ausus fuerit*, with a precision not about the use (*usus*) but the daring (*ausus*), cf. similar formulas on epitaphs from Rome (*si quis autem ausus fuerit vendere vel donare*, CIL VI 17618) and Italy (*si quis autem ausus fuerit ingringere vel aperire*, CIL IX 984 = ILS 8237).

L. 8: *Toto militavit annos · XXX*, the second part of the career sequence, about his long military service.

L. 9: *Valete transitores*, final address to the passers-by, in a plural form, typical of later epitaphs; cf. in the Propontic region an epitaph dated in 362 from Perinthus, with *Valetis trasitoris* (sic)³². Similar formulas for this *topos* occur in other epitaphs of soldiers, not only the banal *Vale viator*³³, but also *Valete viatores*³⁴, *Havete transitores*, *balete transitores*³⁵, *Avete [v]oi viatore[s]*³⁶ and *Vivate, valete superi felices*³⁷.

IV. The date: Diocletian or Constantine

The paleographic features of the so-called vulgar Latin indicate a later period, consistent with the proposed date belonging to the second half of the Tetrarchic period. As for the

29 ΜΙΗĂESCU 1978, 189-190, § 140 (reducing the vowels *i + u* to the diphthong *iu*, transformed thereafter into *i* after the main accent of the word, with plenty of examples).

30 CIL III 8742 = ILS 8249 = ISalonChr II 404 (second half of the 4th cent.): *Fl(avio) Magniano, protectori, conpari carissimo, Sever<a> de proprio hunc sarcofagum conparabit eundem solidis XV tantum et se in eodem una cum filia sua condi permisit. Si quis vero temptaverit in eodem sartofago ponere aliut corpus inferet fisci viribus auri · pondo · duo*. Cf., in the same city, *si quis vero supir duo cor<p>ora nostra aliut corpus voluerit ordinare dabit fisci viribus argenti pondo quindecim* (CIL III 9507 = ILCV 821 = ISalonChr III 2390 = ISalonChr I 161, dated in 378).

31 On this confusion, see ΜΙΗĂESCU 1978, 193-195, § 149-150.

32 IPerinthos 209 = AÉ 1998, 1179.

33 E.g. CIL III 7549 = ILS 1961 = ISM II (and VI.2) 373 = IGLR 5 (Tomis, *Val. Felix, princeps officii pr(a)-esidis*; corresponding, in the Greek version of the inscription, to χαῖρε, παροδείτα); CIL III 14214,28 = ISM II (and VI.2) 382 (Tomis, *Fl. Vrsinia[nus], mil(es) officii pr(a)e[s](idis)*); CIL III 405 = ILS 2792 (Thyatira, *Val. Iuventinus, exarcus vexillationis eqq(uitum) Dal(matarum) comit(atensium) Ancialitana*).

34 AÉ 1977, 791 = TAM IV.1 118 = CLEOr 26 = SGO II 09/06/14 (Nicomedia, *Valerius Vrsicinus, protector*).

35 CIL III 371 = ILS 2783 = IKyzikos I 482 (Cyzicus, *Fl. Marcus, protector*).

36 ISM IV 197 (Sacidava, *Val. Onesimus, centurio legionis II Hercul(iae)*).

37 AÉ 1977, 806 = CLEOr 42a (Nakolea, *Fl. Aemilianus, duc(enarius) e numerum eq(uitum) Corn(utorum) sen(iorum)*).

language, particular spellings are noticeable: lack of gemination (*cabalarius*); marks of pronunciation such as simplification (*militait*, twice), confusion between *b* and *v* (*davit*), and a syncopated form (*ordinaris*) may add the indication of duration with both *annis* and *annos*, or the strange syntax *militait annis cabalarius VIII*, with the intercalation of *annis*. Even if we are in a Hellenophone province, the use of Latin is consistent with the military status of the deceased, since Latin was the language privileged by Balkan soldiers of the later Roman army even in the Hellenophone regions; for more examples of the same period, in the larger region, see below, § VII)³⁸. No trace of Christianity is present, neither in the text nor in the iconography.

Another chronological criterion is suggested by the amount of the two fines, expressed in *folles*. Despite some presentations of *follis* as a large bronze piece, of about 9.69 gr. (1/32 of a *libra*), with 4% silver, this piece must be called in fact *nummus*³⁹ because of the monetary reform of Diocletian (about 294)⁴⁰. *Follis*, the Latin term for “bag” or “purse”, stands for a quantity of pieces (a sealed bag). Thus, *folles* were more likely only units of currency (reckoned in *denarii*), like purses, bags, and had two usages: a big *follis* (12,500 *denarii*, that is ten *aurei*, soon five *aurei*) and a small *follis* (125 *denarii*, that is 1/10 of one *aureus*)⁴¹. In our text, we should understand most likely the small *follis*, as the fines (multiples of ten) must exceed the price of the sarcophagus; for instance, a fine of 30 *folles* for premature appeals appears in a constitution of 315⁴². However, the *follis* depreciated sharply from the beginning of the 4th cent.

Folles are generally found in the inscriptions of the Western Mediterranean⁴³, including North Africa⁴⁴; especially, the known *folles* from Dalmatia are dated between 271 and the 4th cent. AD⁴⁵.

V. The name *Tziampo*

The name of the deceased, *Tziampo*, is Thracian and it is a new spelling of a name attested twice, each time with different forms:

- *Thiampo* (OnomThrac 363), peregrine name of a Thracian auxiliary soldier on a military diploma from Dacia Inferior, dated to 19 July 146 (AÉ 2011, 1791): *alae I Asturum (...) ex gregale Thiamponi Dexaei f(ilio), Besso*;

38 And at Thyatira (see notes 10 and 33), Laodiceia Combusta, Sebaste, Tyana (bilingual epitaph); Zeugma and elsewhere in Syria.

39 Ponderal reductions in 307 (1/40) and 310 (1/72), reaching under Constantine at a smaller dimension, with almost no silver.

40 Diocletian's reform replaced Aurelian's coin, and the older *antoninianus*, as the primary coin of the imperial monetary system. See JONES 1959; LAFAURIE 1975; COPE 1977; BRUUN 1979; WASSINK 1991 (inflation and financial policy); DEPEYROT 1992, 48-49 (49 n. 45-46, with mentions of big and small *follis*).

41 For the different types of *folles*, see CALLU 1969, 359-368. For bibliographic hints, we are grateful to Antony HOSTEIN.

42 *C. Theod.* xi 36. 2 (*Qui a prejudicio appellaverit vel ab executoribus rerum antea statutarum adque alterius auditorii judicium poposcerit, triginta follium poena multetur*).

43 Italy: AÉ 1990, 401.

44 CIL VIII 24609 = AÉ 1968, 559b = AÉ 1980, 903; AÉ 1952, 209 = AÉ 1953, 130 = AÉ 1954, 191; AÉ 1906, 138; AÉ 1914, 31; AÉ 1904, 215 = CIL VIII 2266.

45 CIL III 9597, 9582 (= 12872 = ILS 8253), 12933 (= 13896); AÉ 1994, 1372; AÉ 2010, 1202; ISalonChr II 715.

- *Thiumpo* (OnomThrac 365), *cognomen* of a famous Tetrarchic officer, on an epitaph from Troesmis (Scythia, end of 3rd-beginning of the 4th cent.): *Val(erius) Thiumpo, qui militavit in leg(ione) XI Cl(audia), lectus in sacro comit(atu) lanciarius, deinde protexit annis V, missus pr(a)efectus leg(ionis) II Herculiae, [e]git ann(is) II semis [e] et decessit, vixit ann(is) XXXXV, m(ensibus) III, d(iebus) XI, Aurel(ius) [---]*⁴⁶.

The different spellings of the first sound, *th-* and *tz-*, point to a particular consonant by the affrication of a voiceless dental before *-i-*. Normally, for some Thracian names, one common spelling variant was *-σ-/-s-* for *-θ-/-th-*, such as Βιλσης and Βιλθης in Eastern Macedonia (OnomThrac 36); cf. also Πιοθουθος and Πιησουσος in Eastern Moesia Inferior (OnomThrac 271 and 272), as the theonym written Σουρηγησης in the same dedication (IGBulg V 5329), with a *-θ-* *spirans*; in contrast, elsewhere, the ordinary spelling is *Suregethes/Σουρεγηθης*. Given that *Tziumpo* actually stands for *Thiumpo*, we can now explain previous spellings that stand more likely for names already attested, as the *hapax* Βρουθενις for the more frequent *Bruzenis* (OnomThrac 69 and 70), or Βαθ(ε)ις (twice) for *Batsis/Bazis* (OnomThrac 28), and maybe Βιθας and Βισας for *Biza/Bisa* (OnomThrac 37 and 62). Moreover, a suffixed name like *Mucathius/Mucatius* (OnomThrac 236) must be the same as *Mucasius/Mo(v)κασιος* (OnomThrac 236), while different suffixations are *Mo(v)-κασης* (OnomThrac 234) and *Μουκαθης* (OnomThrac 236). For the latter, we can expect the same sound again as in *Thiumpo/Tziumpo*. Other Thracian names starting with *tz-* are attested in Latin script, mainly in the 3rd cent., like *Tzinta/Tsinta* (f.), *Tzinto*, *?Tzita* and *Tzitzis* (OnomThrac 382 and 408), or with such fricatives⁴⁷, e.g. *Atsiutsia* (OnomThrac 11), *Citzosis* (OnomThrac 422), *Mamutso* (f.) (OnomThrac 206), *Mamutzis* (OnomThrac 206, here, a spelling variant of the common suffix *-zis*), *Tsiru* and *Tsinna* (OnomThrac 380, the last one being a variant of *Sinna*). We can also invoke the later spelling *Sudicentzus*⁴⁸ for *Sudicenthus* (OnomThrac 336), as well as, by the same time, *Aulucentius*⁴⁹ for the commoner *Aulucenthus*; or *Tziper* that occurs twice in Latin papyri⁵⁰ instead of the ordinary spelling Ζιπερ (Greek papyri and inscriptions)/*Ziper* (Latin inscriptions) (cf. OnomThrac 403-404).

Moreover, given the specification of the military diploma, we can assert that this his relatively uncommon name is of Thracian origin (and not of Daco-Moesian) facture; thus, the *protector* *Tziumpo* was more likely born in the central parts of the Balkans.

46 CIL III 6194 = ILS 2781 = IGLR 236. This inscription will be reedited, for the first time with photos, and after its recent restoration (Musée d'Archéologie Nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye), by Dan DANA and Maxime ÉMION.

47 About the affricative *tz-/ts-* in the Thracio-Dacian space, see the rather confuse study of ALEXIANU - CURCĂ 2002.

48 CIL V 900 = IAquileia II 2775: *Aurelius Sudicentzus, milix legionis XI Claudi(a)e (Sudicentzus IAquileia: SVDICEN|TZVS stone)*. Late Latin names could also have influenced the spelling in *-ius*, such as *Laurentius (et -tzius)*, especially *Constantius, Marcentius, Vincentius*, etc.

49 CIL V 940 = IAquileia II 2778: *Val(erius) Aulucentius, leg(ionis) XI Cl(audiae), milita(vit) gregales ann(os) XIII et centurio ann(os) III, et vixit ann(os) XL, et men(ses) V*. See the previous note about late Latin names in *-ius*.

50 *P. Sakaon* 33 (ll. [12] and 19) and 34 (l. 11); see the good readings of AST 2001 (BL VII 176). The *cognomen* is that of the *vir perfectissimus Valerius Ziper, praeses* of Aegyptus Herculia, ca. 318-321 AD (PLRE I 993).

V. Regio Pieucensis in Dacia Minor

1. Regio Pieucensis

Unlike the epitaphs of certain soldiers of this period, the *vicus* is not specified, but the *regio* is indicated, in a territorial sense. The mention of the *regio* (built with *oriundus ex*) is typical of later Latin epigraphy, particularly for soldiers, and starts already in the 3rd cent. The geographical name of *regio Pieucensis* is new, with no parallels in the extant literary or epigraphic sources. We can safely exclude two possibilities: **Pieuce*/**Pieuca* cannot be identical to the well-known sector of *Peuce* in the Delta of Danube (the southern arm, St. George, and an island)⁵¹, which was never included in the two southern provinces of Dacia, nor to the former peregrine community of *Picenses*/Πικηνῶσι in Moesia Superior, a geographical name built with a Latin desinenence after the river and the settlement Pincus (today the river Pek, and the site of Veliko Gradište on the Danube)⁵², that was by that time situated in Moesia Prima. The presence of a diphthong *-(i)eu-* excludes a specificity of the Daco-Moesian vocalism, that is the diphthongization of **ĕ* en *-ĵe-* (OnomThrac, LXXII-LXXIII).

If we let aside the *regio Scadiesiana* mentioned in the epitaph of the *ducenarius Val. Fuscianus*⁵³, which is located most likely in one of the Balkan provinces, three *regiones* in a territorial/geographic sense are mentioned in inscriptions from Late Antiquity for the (generic) province of Dacia: *regio Pieucensis* (in “Dacia Minor”, the epitaph of the *protector* Tziampo), *regio Scodrihe(n)sis* (epitaph of the praetorian *Aur. Passer*)⁵⁴, and *regio Serdicensis* (epitaph of the praetorian *Aur. Victo<r>inus, natione Dacisca*)⁵⁵. If the third one indicates the territory of Serdica, the capital of Dacia Mediterranea, the second one is more likely linked to the topic epithet of Ἀπόλλων Σκοδρινός, known by the dedication IGBulg IV 2025 found at Opicvet (dept. of Sofia, North-West of Serdica), that is in the same province⁵⁶. The names are thus deriving from known or unlocalized cities and settlements: **Pieuce*/*Pieuca*, **Scodra* and *Serdica*⁵⁷.

2. Dacia Minor

Dacia Minor occurs for the first time in the epigraphic evidence⁵⁸ and seems to be an unofficial name for the new South-Danubian Dacia, by contrast with a **Dacia Maior/Magna* that must have been the former Roman province. After the loss of Dacia, most likely in 260 (*amissa Dacia*), Aurelian⁵⁹ created a new province the

51 POLASCHEK 1938.

52 TIR L-34, 1968, 89 and 90. This toponym must be twice corrupted in *Peuce oppidum* (Iulius Honorius i 19), and *Peice* in *Cosmographia Aethici* i 19.

53 IKlaudiu polis 40 (at Bithynion/Claudiopolis).

54 CIL VI 2698.

55 CIL VI 2605 = ILS 2041 (SERDICN stone).

56 And less likely *Scodra* (in Praevalitana, diocese of Dacia); there was also a village in the territory of Synaus, in Mysia Abbaitis (MAMA X 396, Σκοδρινῶσι).

57 Another *regio* in the vicinity of Serdica, *regio Dyptens(is/iium)*, appears in ILBulg 211: *per fines civitatis Serdensium, regione Dyptens()*.

58 Unlike *Armenia Maior* and *Armenia Minor*.

59 Originating from the South-Danubian region, see note 120.

South of Danube, called *Dacia nova* in some literary sources⁶⁰. Placed between the two former Moesiae (Superior and Inferior), later renamed Prima and Secunda and covering only partially their initial territory⁶¹, this new Dacia was divided into *Dacia Ripensis*, alongside the Danube, with the capital at Ratiaria, and *Dacia Mediterranea*, in the middle of the Balkan Peninsula, with the capital at Serdica⁶². A diocese of the Balkans was called “Dacia”, regrouping later, in addition, the provinces Moesia Prima, Praevalitana and Dardania. Accordingly, many soldiers of the late Roman army gave their province as *Dacia* (a generic name, without the precision *Ripensis* or *Mediterranea*), presenting themselves as *Dacus* or, with a later term, *Daciscus* (see below)⁶³. *Dacisci* also implies, by derivation and diminutive suffixation, this impression of a smaller Dacia, so a *Dacia Minor*.

However, we may recall a passage in the cosmography of Geographus Ravennas, about a *Dacia Minor* separated by the river Elbe from *Magna Dacia*, later called *Gipidia*, that is the former (North-Danubian) province⁶⁴. The same compiler mentions in the fourth book *Dacia Prima* and *Dacia Secunda*, also called *Gipidia*, where the Huns and the Avars inhabited at that time. Such denominations are actually inspired by Iordanes, *Get.* xii, 74 (*Gothia, quam Daciam appellavere maiores, quae nunc Gepidia dicitur*), xliii, 226 and v, 37⁶⁵. In the same way, we can understand the South-Danubian “Scythia Minor”⁶⁶, which was never an official name, as opposed to *Scythia magna*⁶⁷. Also, because of the chronology, it is impossible to think of

60 Lactantius, *De mort. persec.* xi 1 (*Dacia nova*); Anonymus Valesii v 3 (*nova Dacia*, as origin of Licinius). About Aurelian’s policy in this region, see VELKOV 1998.

61 SHA, Aurel. xxxix 7 (*cum vastatum Illyricum ac Moesiam deperditam videret, provinciam Transdanuvina <m> Dacia a Traiano constitutam sublato exercitu et provincialibus reliquit, desperam eam posse retineri, abductosque ex ea populos in Moesia, conlocavit appellavitque suam Daciam quae nunc duas Moesias dividit*); Eutr. ix 15. 1; Suda, s.v. Δακία χῶρα.

62 Cf. an inscription dated 283, on a bronze plaque found at Bov, on the top of the Haemus: *Gaianus pr(a)eses finem posui inter du[as D]acias dila[psum ---]* (ILBulg 188; VELKOV 1998, 158-159).

63 This derivative concerns, in fact, the inhabitants of the new Dacia created by Aurelian South of Danube, while *militēs Dacisciani*, among Gallienus’ units, indicate troops from (abandoned) Dacia (SHA, Claud. xvii 3; see ZAHARIADE – PHELPS 2002); also, the *Dacisci* (SHA, Aurel. xxxviii 4); the adjective *Daciscus* is also employed by Lactantius, *De mort. persec.* xxvii 8. Cf. also ND, Or. xl 21 (*militēs Dacisci, Mediolana*, in Moesia Secunda) and xlii 24 and 28 (*auxilium primorum Daciscorum* at Drobeta and *auxilium secundorum Daciscorum* at Burgus Zonus, both in Dacia Ripensis). For the same formation, cf. the rare secondary form *Puniscus* from *Punicus* (second *cognomen* of Q. Latinius Primus Puniscus, at Ūreu in Africa Proconsularis, AÉ 1975, 876).

64 Anon. Rav. i 11: *Quarta ut hora noctis Northomanorum est patria, que et Dania ab antiquis dicitur. Cuius ad frontem [Alpes vel] patria Albis Maurungani certissime antiquitus dicebatur. In qua Albis patria per multos annos Francorum linea remorata est. Et ad frontem eiusdem Albis Dacia minor dicitur et dehinc super ex latere magna et spatiosa Dacia dicitur. Que modo Gipidia ascribuntur. In qua nunc Vnorum gens habitare dinoscitur.*

65 See ARMBRUSTER 1969, 429-430 (quite confusing); BREZEANU 1984, 117-118; DILLEMANN 1997, 94.

66 The first mention is Strabo vii 4. 5 (C. 311), where Μικρὰ Σκυθία stands not only for Dobruđa, but also for the maritime shores until Crimea. The 6th cent. compiler John Malalas ascribed to Trajan the foundation of two provinces behind Danube, Dacia prima and Dacia secunda (*Chronogr.* xi 11, p. 209 Thurn: καὶ πέραν τοῦ Δανουβίου ποταμοῦ ἐπὶ τὰ δυτικὰ μέρη ἐπαρχίας δύο, ἄστινας ἐκάλεσε Δακίαν πρῶτην καὶ δευτέραν), that never existed.

67 Anon. Rav. iv 1 (*In portione autem Iaphet filii Noe, quam phylosophi Europam appellaverunt, sistuntur patrie, id est patria que dicitur Scythia, que in omnibus heremosa existit. Et eaque Maior Scythia appellatur, quam Iordanis cosmographus in modum fungi... scarifum esse dixit*) (also iv 6, *ex super scripta Maiore*

an alternative (and unattested) name of *Dacia Inferior*, one of the three divisions of the greater Trajanic Dacia realized by Hadrian (with *Dacia Superior* and *Dacia Porolissensis*). Another literary mention, in a peculiar kind of text, the Sibylline Oracles, refers to wars (during Antoninus Pius) against Britons, Moors, μεγάλοι Δάκοι and Arabians⁶⁸. Here, the “big Dacians” stand for the Dacians outside the Roman province; for the modern scholars, they are the “free Dacians”, an expression coined on the convenient model of modern *Germania libera*. Also, the motif of *Germania Magna*, much favoured by moderns, is known in Antiquity a sole mention, that is Γερμανία Μεγάλη in Ptolemy, *Geogr.* ii 11.

We can encounter more or less developed formulae of the *origo* on epitaphs: for instance, around 300, the legionary (?) *Aur. Clarianus, nat[us in Moes(ia) I]nferio[re, reg(ione)] Mar(cianopolitana), vic[o ---]diano*⁶⁹. Other mentions of soldiers from South-Danubian Dacia indicate the province (or the diocese) and sometimes the *vicus* or the *regio*, or the ethnics *Dacus/Daciscus*:

- province + *regio*: around 300, the praetorian *Aur. Passar, domo Dacia, regione Scodrihese*⁷⁰;

- province + *vicus*: after 324, *Fl. Marcus, protector, natus in Dacia provincia, in vico Valentiniano, militavit in vixillatione Fesianesa annis XXIII, unde factus protector i[n]deque militavit in scola protectoru<m> annis cuincue*⁷¹; *Valerius Vrsicinus, protector de provincia Dacia, vico Diossenans*⁷², *fecit stipendia XXIII*⁷³; *Fl. Aemilianus, duc(enarius) e numerum eq(uitum) Corn(utorum) sen(iorum), vixit ann(nos) XLVII, militavit stupendia XXVII, natus in Dacia, civit[a]te Fla(via) Singedonum*⁷⁴;

- province and city (standing for *regio*): the 4th cent. stela of Romula, *oriundae ex prov(incia) D[ac(ia)], cives Aquisene[nsis], daughter of Romulianus, p(rae)p(ositus) eqq(uitum) Dalm(atarum) Beroensium comitate(nsium) et Fl(avia) Maxima casta coniux eius*⁷⁵;

Scythia) (et *Guidonis Geographica* 125, *Maiores Scythia*), cf. Iordanes, *Get.* x 62: *Partem Moesiae, quae nunc a magna Scythia nomen mutata minor Scythia appellatur*. See also Anon. *Rav.* iv 14: *Iterum ad partem quasi meridianam, ut dicamus ad spatiosissimam terram, sunt patrie spatiosissime quae dicuntur Datia prima et secunda, quae et Gipidia appellatur, ubi modo Vni, qui et Avari, inhabitant*.

68 *Oracula Sibyllina* xii 81.

69 CIL V 892 = IAquileia II 2733. Cf. the epitaph at Viminacium of *Sabinianus, pro(tec)tor, ortus in provincia Dardania, reg(ione) Vlpiane[nse?, vico?] Dasa* (IMS II 142).

70 CIL VI 2698.

71 CIL III 371 = ILS 2783 = IKyzikos I 482 (Cyzicus).

72 The stone has DIK(ENA)NIS (ll. 3-4), pointing thus to a particular consonantism (between -s- and -z-); some editors (as ŞAHİN) preferred *Dissena* | (*an*)*nis*, which seems less likely. We may add a Dacian toponym, *curial(es) territ(orii) Suc(idavensis)* (Sucidava, Dacia Inferior, IDR II 190 = IGLR 277), and the Thracian *cognomen* of *Aurel. Dituuanus, strator trib(uni)* (Sacidava, Moesia Inferior, GSMI 285 = ISM IV 187), both written with a *sigma*.

73 AÉ 1977, 791 = TAM IV.1 118 = CLEOr 26 = SGO II 09/06/14 (Nicomedia).

74 AÉ 1977, 806 = CLEOr 42a (Nakolea, dated in the year 356). See DREW-BEAR 1977, with the reading *Io(viorum)*, and more recently the commentary of COLOMBO 2010, 81-90, No. 1, with the better reading IQ instead of IO, so <e>q(uitum). As Singidunum was in fact in Moesia Prima, Dacia means here the diocese.

75 KOLB – IVANOV 2016 (Abritus, Moesia Secunda); better readings and comprehension in SALOMIES 2018; other photos: Lupa 20851. Cf., at Colonia Agrippinensium, the epitaph of *Donatus ex pro[te]ctorib[us], civis Afer*, veteran dead at 45 years (IKöln² 401).

- only the province: *Aurelius Saza, centenarius (...)* *ic iacio qui vixi annis quinquaginta et militavi annis XXX et sum natus in provincia Dacia et militavi inter ecuites catafractarios Pictavensis succura Romani propositi*⁷⁶; the bilingual epitaph erected by [*Fl.?* *Vitalianus, circ(itor) s(ub) c(ura) Severini p(rae)p(ositi)*], or (*iundus*) *Dacia/ Βεϊταλειανός, κερκείτωρ σεουρα (= sub cura) Σευηρείνου πρεποσειτού, γενηθέντα ἐν Δακεία*, for his wife *Aur(elia) Ceze/Κυζη*), dead at 15 years and *pos ducto vixit dies XV* (dead after 15 days of marriage)⁷⁷.

- the ethnic (derived from the name of the province): *origo* of an anonymous *eques singularis Augusti, [natione D]aciscu[s]*⁷⁸; the praetorian *Aur. Victo<r>inus, natione Dacisca, regione Serdic(e)n(se)*⁷⁹; in the 4th cent., the sarcophagus of *Martinianus, ex protectoribus, germen Dacisqus*⁸⁰.

Such geographical indications displaying the province and the *regio* are current for soldiers, starting with the 3rd cent.⁸¹. While the standard formula is *natus in provincia*, we may also encounter *natus provincia*, already in an epitaph of the first half of the 3rd cent., for a praetorian *nat(us) provinc(ia) Dacia* (CIL VI 2425 = ILS 2042). Among the provincial indications in the 4th cent., we may quote: an anonymous *de numero M[---]m seniorum, natus in provi[nc]ia ---*⁸²; an anonymous [*--- nu*]m(*eri*) *eq(uitum) Dalm(atarum), de succur(a) [--- p(rae)p(ositi)?, natus in (provincia?) Pannonia Infe]riore, in regione Myrsen(a)*⁸³; the son of a *cent(enarius) de Aureliacos, Aur. Benedictus, nat(us) pro(vincia) Cappa(docia), Ma(zacae) T(h)ermas Basilicas*⁸⁴; the *protector Fl. Verinus, nat(us) Pan(nonia) prov(incia)*⁸⁵. This final example is a generic indication since the previous provinces Pannonia Superior and Pannonia Inferior were divided at that time (*Pannonia Prima* and *Savia*, respectively *Pannonia Secunda* and *Valeria*).

76 CIL III 14406a = ILGR 205 = CLE 1878 = IG X.2.2 109 = IDRE II 360 = CLEOr 13 = Kinch 34 = IKato Makedonia II 356 (Edessa of Macedonia); commemorated by his wife Aurelia Plactu.

77 CIL III 14184.9 = ITyana 101 (Tyana); with the reading of DANA 2019, 176-178, No. 46.

78 CIL VI 3320 = DKR 618 = IDRE I 60 (Rome).

79 CIL VI 2605 (Rome), accordingly from Dacia Mediterranea.

80 CIL V 6244 = ILCV I 811a (Mediolanum).

81 A Pannonian legionary of the 3rd cent., *o[ri]iundus ex regione Bassiane(n)si, desideratus in Dacia* (Gorsium, Pannonia Inferior, CIL III 3336 = RIU VI 1552a = IDRE II 285 = TitAq IV 1948); a legionary *ex provincia Moesia Super(iore), reg(ione) Viminac(io)* (Cyrthus, Syria, CIL III 195 = IGLS I 150); a legionary and (*centurio*) *ex b(ene)fic(iario) praefectorum, natus provincia M[oe]sia Superiore, reg[io]ne Scupina (?)*, *Da(r)dan[ia] me genuit, tenuit G[erma]nia* (CIL XIII 6823 = CLE 407; SCRINA ms.); a *protector, ortus in provincia Dardania, reg(ione) Vlpiane[nse?, vico?] Dasa* (Viminacium, IMS II 142); a praetorian *nat(ione) Bessus, natus reg(ione) Serdica, vico Magari* (CIL X 1754); a soldier [*civi*s] *Supriane(n)ses, [reg(ione) Serdi]ce(n)se, vico Colp[---]io* (ICVR VII 20202 = AÉ 2004, 326); a dedication of soldiers of the imperial guard, *cives prov(incia) T(h)raci(a)e, reg(ione) Serdicens[e]*, MIDNE *Potelese* (CIL VI 2819 = 32567); a legionary *nat(us) vico Bitalcost(-), reg(ione) Pautaliense* (CIL VI 2772 = 32660); the relative of a soldier, *natus ex provincia Maesia Inferiore, regione Nicopolitan(a)e, vico Sapisara* (CIL VI 2933); a praetorian *nat(ione) Mysia Superiore, reg(ione) Ratiare(n)se, vico C[-]nisco* (CIL VI 2730). About the indications of origins for Thraco-Moesian soldiers in Rome, and the mentions of *regiones*, see CENATI 2018 and CENATI 2021; about *regiones* and *territoria* in the lower Danubian provinces, see MATEI-POPESCU 2019.

82 AÉ 1976, 668 (Eumeneia of Phrygia).

83 IGLS XIV.2 565 (Aire/Şanamein, in Southern Syria); new reading of DANA 2019, 174-176, No. 45. As in this case, we can signal the usage of previous provincial names, for instance Ουαλέριος Ρομύλλος, οὐετρανός, ἀναφερόμενος ἦν ἐν Παννονίας ἀνωτέρας (IGLS II 523).

84 AÉ 1977, 818 (Zeugma of Syria).

85 DANA et alii 2020 (Zaldapa, Scythia).

In the same way, we must understand the generic indication of a *provincia Dacia* for both *Daciae Mediterranea* and *Ripensis* for other soldiers in the 4th cent.

For now, four *protectores* born in the (Southern) province(s) of Dacia are attested by inscriptions: two at Nicomedia (*Val. Vrsicinus, Tziampo*), one at Cyzicus (*Fl. Marcus*) – so, around one of the Tetrarchic capitals –, and a fourth in Mediolanum (*Martinianus*), in another point concerned by military presence⁸⁶.

VI. Tziampo's career: *caballarius* - *ordinarius* - *protector*

1. *Caballarius*

Caballarius, built with the suffix *-arius*, typical for occupations or qualifications⁸⁷, is a mounted trooper, synonym of *alaris* in more *glossaria*⁸⁸ and, in our context, an alternative for *eques*. Even if the impression was that this technical term was favoured especially in medieval Latin – its avatars are It. *cavaliere*, Fr. *chevalier*, Sp. *caballero* –, it was, in fact, already in use in Late Antiquity⁸⁹. As a Greek loanword – one in the Latin many of the military vocabulary –, it is well-attested in papyri and Byzantine texts, betraying a great vitality moreover⁹⁰: *καβαλ(λ)άριος* (var. *καβαλλέριος*, *καβελάριος*) and its many derivatives, such as the adj. *καβαλλαρικός*⁹¹. It is important to stress that its mention in our example is the first one found in a military context, since the papyrological and Greek textual examples occur some centuries later⁹². Generally, it was thought that the military use of *eques* was later (according to the papyri) and that previously it meant a military servant (Gr. *ἵπποκόμος*), but it diverges greatly from the meaning our epitaph gives.

Tziampo started his military service either as an *eques legionis*, or in a *vexillatio*, or in a mounted *numerus*, whose name was unfortunately not given, unlike other more detailed careers (see below).

86 The sarcophagus from Mediolanum of *Martinianus, ex protectoribus, germen Dacisqus*, mentions his service of 45 years; he prepared it when he was 60 years, hoping to live much more, until 99 years (CIL V 6244 = ILCV 811).

87 SOLIN 2003, 179-180.

88 CGL IV 315 and V 594-595; see TLL, II, 5 and III, 3.

89 Cf. by the same time as our epitaph, because of the mention of *f(ol)(es)* for prices concerning the crossing of the lake of Tunis (Africa Proconsularis), *homo pedester* as opposed to *homo caballaris* (Maxula, CIL VIII 24512 = ILS 9457 = ILPBardo 403: 1 *folles*, respectively 4 *folles*). A Christian epitaph from Rome dated 363 mentions [*Con*]stantius *caballariu[s]* (ICVR IX 24865).

90 See SCHULTHESS 1924; DARIS 1960, 209; DARIS 1991², 47-48; ΚΑΗΑΝΕ – ΚΑΗΑΝΕ 1982, 133, 135; ΜΗΛΑΪΣΚΟΥ 1993, 373-374, § 278; LBG I.1 724 (the family); ΚΡΑΦΤ 2008, 54-55 with n. 150-151 (papyri); ΖΕΡΒΑΝ 2019, 57-58 (with J. KRAMER).

91 First occurrence in *Edict. Diocl.* xv 56a (*[m]ola caballa[ri]a <cum> lapidibus*/μύλος *καβαλλαρικός λίθινος*) and xix 33 (τάπητ *καβαλλαρικός*) (ed. Giacchero).

92 See, among many other mentions, the graffito Πλῆνις *κα[βα]λλαρίου Ἐρωθιτῶ(ν)*, at Monesis (Chams el-Din, Kharga Oasis), so in *legio secunda Valentiniana* (SEG XXXVIII 1766 = AÉ 1988, 1068, 4th cent.); many occurrences of *καβαλ(λ)άριος* in *O. Abu Mina* (first half of the 7th cent.); the mention of cavalymen in *P. Gascou* 32, for a mounted unit of *bucellarii* (*Oxyrhynchos*, 612 AD). On *caballarii* in Egypt, see GASCOU 1978, 228-229.

2. *Ordinarius*

Ordinarius has in our text the generic sense of *centurio*, which was employed by that time not only for legions but for any kind of units, as they were commanders of an *ordo* (*centuria*). This period of both continuity and change also shows the maintenance of the old term of *centurio* for the units inherited from the pre-Tetrarchic military history (legions, *alae*, *cohortes*) and the use of the alternative and new term of *centenarius* for the units of the Tetrarchic-Constantinian reform⁹³.

The same promotion as *protector* from the rank of *ordinarius* is clearly attested in the epitaph of Florius Baudio, of equestrian rank, dead at 40 years, after 25 years of service: *vir ducenarius, protector ex ordinario leg(ionis) II Ital(icae) Divit(iensium)*⁹⁴. A Greek epitaph from Laranda (Isauria) furnishes the condensed career of Μάξιμος κεντηνάρης – πρωτήκτωρ, Μυσιατικός ἀπὸ ληγεῶνος πρώτης Ἰταλικῆς, therefore promoted *protector* from the rank of *centenarius*, after serving in *legio I Italica*⁹⁵.

3. *Protector*

The title of glory of Tziampo was, however, that of *protector*, member of an elite unit of the late Roman army; his title is mentioned moreover twice: *protector divini lateris* (l. 2) and *protexit protector* (l. 6). Only a few inscriptions bearing the elaborate formula *protector divini lateris*, guardian of the emperor's divine flank, are known in Rome⁹⁶, Umbria⁹⁷, Dalmatia⁹⁸, Upper Moesia⁹⁹, Arabia¹⁰⁰. We can add to the list L. Iunius Iunillus, *v(ir) p(erfectissimus), com(es) divini lateris, praeses pr(ovinciae)*

93 Concerning *ordinarii*, see the older papers of STEIN 1933 and GILLIAM 1940, and the recent study of JANNIARD 2007 (on *centuriones ordinarii* and *ducenarii*; S. JANNIARD, in *ISalonChr* II, 2010, 1028). The terms *ordinarius/ordinatus* started to be employed for centurions by the beginning of the 3rd cent. (see the discussion in FAURE 2013, I, 203-206). Cf. by the same Tetrarchic epoch the career of *Val. Longinianus, vixit annos XLV, militavit optio leg(ionis) XI Clau(diae) ann(os) XV, centurio ord(inarius) ann(os) VI, natus in Mensi(a) (sic) Infer(iore) castell(um) Abritanor(um)* (CIL V 942 = ILS 2670 = IAquileia II 2779); on the epitaph of his two daughters, we encounter the father *Val. Castus, centur(io) ord(inarius) leg(ionis) I Iov(iae) Scyt(hicae) una cum Val(erio) Valeriano centen(ario) socero suo posuit* (Carsium, Scythia, AÉ 1989, 641 = 1990, 866).

94 CIL XI 4787 = ILS 2777 (Spoletium, in Umbria); maybe in the context of Constantine's campaign against Maxentius, in 212, which is confirmed by the *nomen* of the *parens* of the deceased, *Val. Vario, optio leg(ionis) II Divit(ensium)*.

95 ENGELMANN – ÜNER 1992, 3-4, No. 3 (photo Pl. IV) (SEG XLII 1264). Was it *centenarius* in *legio I Italica*, before his promotion as *protector*, or in another unit, after a service in the legion from Moesia Secunda? In his case, the ethnic adjective Μυσιατικός (cf. Lat. *Moesiacus*) can designate both the geographic-provincial *origo* or the by-name epithet *Moesiaca* of that legion. See a legionary *civis Mensiacus* dead at Burdigala (CIL XIII 595 = ILA-Bordeaux 69; other readings by DANA 2015).

96 Epitaph of *Fl. Gaudentius, v(ir) d(evotus), p(ro)t(ector) l(ateris) d(ivini)* (CIL VI 32940 = ICVR I 427 = ILS 2785, 5th cent.).

97 Dedication of *Aurelius Faustus, prot(ector) divini lateris Aug(usti) n(o)stri* (Ocriculum, CIL XI 4082 = ILS 4002, under Decius?); epitaph of *Fl. Concordius, protector divinoru[m] laterum et pr(a)epositus iuniorum* (Fanum Fortunae, CIL XI 6222 = ILCV 3827 = ILS 9204, second half of the 4th cent.).

98 Refection of the *thermae* in Narona by *M. Aur. Valerius, v(ir) p(erfectissimus), duce[n]a[ri]us, ex protectorib(us) lateris divini* (CIL III 1805 = ILS 5695, in 280).

99 Epitaph of the wife of *Aurel. Maior ex protectoribus divini lateris* (Ulpiana, AÉ 1981, 731, end of the 3rd cent.).

100 Refection of the *statio* and its *praesidium* in 333 (Azraq), among others fortifications of a sector in Arabia, [*cur]ante V[incentio p]rotec(tore) divinum laterum* (ALIQUOT 2016; AÉ 2016, 1791).

*M(auretaniae) C(aesariensis)*¹⁰¹. The complete title was *protector divini lateris Augusti nostri*, a high-sounding title, in accord with the gradual sacralisation of the imperial person and the proximity invoked by these elite soldiers¹⁰².

The term *protector* is attested from the beginning of the 3rd cent.¹⁰³, used as an honorific title under Valerianus and Gallienus for the officers selected among centurions in the *comitatus*¹⁰⁴. In the first period, they were selected among the field officers from ranks, and admitted to the presence of the emperor during the *adoratio* of the purple ceremony (as in the 4th cent.), when this title was granted to the most competent or most highly recommended junior officers at the end of their ordinary service. At the latest in the 280's, the *protectores* had a commander, maybe *comes divini lateris* which must have been the office of C. Valerius Diocles before acceding to the imperial throne as Diocletian¹⁰⁵. Under the same emperor, the *protectores* became a specific corps in the central general staff¹⁰⁶, since they are definitively structured, as proved by the existence of an *actuarius protectorum* at Nicomedia (see below, § VII.1). Under the orders of a *magister militum praesentis*, they could serve in the proximity of the emperor and the *magistri militum* and high military officials, including in the provinces. The *protectores* could also be assigned - individually or in small groups -, to various tasks and missions, such as logistics, intelligence and recruiting matters¹⁰⁷. In the 4th cent., their corps served as a “vivier de recrutement pour pourvoir aux commandements des unités militaires, tant dans l'armée centrale que régionale. On y éprouvait essentiellement, pendant une période de trois à cinq ans en moyenne, leur aptitude à exercer de futures tâches de commandement, en particulier logistiques”¹⁰⁸.

Tziampo, dead at the age of 50, after a service of 30 years (both indications seem however rounded), was therefore recruited in his 20's. His career is split into three almost equal periods: 9 years as *caballarius*, 11 years as *ordinarius*, 10 years as *protector*. As other *protectores* promoted by merit, this occurred after 20 years of honourable service and the rank of centurion¹⁰⁹. In the elite unit, he served for a long time and died before receiving a higher responsibility, as some *protectores* that were promoted to the rank of *tribunus*, *praefectus*¹¹⁰ or *praepositus*¹¹¹, and later *comes* or *dux*¹¹².

101 AÉ 1975, 8823 (Ureu).

102 SPEIDEL 2008, 687-688; ÉMION 2020, 479.

103 SPEIDEL 1986 (a part of the *singulares* of the emperor, of the *prefecti praetorio* and of governors).

104 See the classical study of CHRISTOL 1977.

105 ÉMION 2020, 481.

106 DREW-BEAR – ZUCKERMAN 2004, 423.

107 DIESNER 1968; F. PRÉVOT – S. JANNIARD, in ISalonChr II, 2010, 728-729; briefly JANNIARD 2015. In his unpublished dissertation, Maxime ÉMION defines them as both bodyguards and officers in formation, insisting on the distinction, since the mark of honour of *protector* constitutes a *dignitas*, a dignity title immediately below that of *praepositus* and *tribunus* (ÉMION 2017; see now briefly ÉMION 2020).

108 F. PRÉVOT – S. JANNIARD, in ISalonChr II, 2010, 726.

109 See table 3 in ÉMION 2020, 484.

110 The case of Val. Thiumpo, *praefectus legionis II Herculiae* (Scythia).

111 Cf. the epitaph found at Sacidava (Scythia) of [Fl. ---], *faqtus do{m}mesticus protector fuit an(nis) VIII, promotus (ad) Sucid[a]v(am), gessit an(no) I cuneo eq(uitum) II Stab(lesianorum)* (in service at Sacidava, Moesia Secunda) (BĂRBULESCU – BARNEA 2018; AÉ 2018, 1403).

112 An epitaph from Arelate offers the most complete description of a military career in post-Constantine

Tziampo's initial unit is not mentioned, but since he served as *caballarius*, he was might be an *eques lanciarius*. We may mention and the epitaph of 352 from Aquileia of *Ma[---? ---]nes, natus in Dardania, [militavi inter Mo]esiacos annis triginta et quinque, exxibi (= exivi) ex protectoribus*¹¹³. In service from 317, his long career suggests that he was a veteran granted with the title of *protector* after his retirement. As demonstrated by M. SPEIDEL. The Palatine legion of the *Moesiaci* was principally formed from mobile detachments of the legions *XI Claudia* and *I Italica* garrisoned at Aquileia¹¹⁴. The epitaph of *Fl. Verinus, prot(ector), natus Pan(nonia) prov(incia), an(nis) XVIII, vixit an(n)is XXXXII, militavit in leg(ione) Pannoniciana*, commemorated by *Fl. Florinus biar(chus)*, dates from the middle or the first decades of the second half of the 4th cent.; after about 15 years of service in a Palatine legion (more likely than *comitatensis*), namely the *legio Pannoniciana*, and probably an advancement not mentioned (*centenarius?*), he was selected for the *schola protectorum*, among the emperor's bodyguards, and died during a mission (*deputatio*) in the province of Scythia, at Zaldapa¹¹⁵.

As shown by Maxime ÉMION, who insisting on the over-representation of *comitatenses* and *palatini* soldiers among the *protectores*, the legions were served Val. Thiumpo¹¹⁶, Florius Baudio¹¹⁷ and Maximus, during the transition years between the end of the first Tetrarchy and the beginning of the sole reign of Constantine, belonged to the imperial *comitatus*. We have now enough evidence showing that the rank before the promotion as *protector* or *domesticus* was, in the 4th cent., that of *centurio* or *centenarius*: Fl. Abinnaeus (the papyrological folder *P. Abinn.*, in 346) was *ducenarius*, Maximus was *centenarius*, Dassianus was *centurio (primus)*¹¹⁸, Florius Baudio and Tziampo were *ordinarii*.

times: *Fl. Memorius, v(ir) p(erfectissimus), qui milit(avit) int(er) Iovianos annos XXVIII, pro(ector) dom(esticus) an(nos) VI, prae(positus) Lanciari(i)s sen(ior)ibus an(nos) III, comes rip(a)e an(num) I, com(es) Mauret(aniae) Ting(itanae) an(nos) IIII, vix(it) an(nos) LXXV* (CIL XII 673 = ILS 2788); see DREW-BEAR – ZUCKERMAN 2004, 419-426 (he leaves his legions at the beginning of the 350s).

113 IAquileia III 2913. See also the career of one of the last praetorians, Val. *Tertius: militi corti(s) X pr(a)etori(a)e, qui vixit annis XXXVI, me(n)s(es) III, dies XV, militabit legione M(o)esiaca annis V, inter lanciarios annis XI, in pr(a)etoria ann[is -], centuria Salbi* (CIL VI 2759). Cf. a similar career of legionaries recruited from the Thracian regions and promoted as praetorians on an epitaph from Caesarea of Mauretania (CIL VIII 21021 = ILS 2038): *Aurelius Vincentius, miles coh(ortis) tertiae praetoriae, centuria Maximini, militavit in legione undecima Claudia annis V, in praetoria annis XI, vixit annis XL, civis T(h)rax. Memoria fecerunt cives de rebus ipsius bene merenti.*

114 On the *Moesiaci* and the creation of the Palatine legions, see SPEIDEL 1990, 69-72.

115 DANA et alii 2020. The sister unit of the *Moesiaci*, the *Pannoniciani*, was created from the vexillations of Pannonian legions in Italy. Accordingly, the best soldiers serving among the *Moesiaci* and the *Pannoniciani* constituted, since their Tetrarchic creation and during the 4th cent., a pool for the *protectores*.

116 CIL III 6194 = ILS 2781 = IGLR 236 (dead about 320, at Troesmis, Scythia): *qui militavit in leg(ione) XI Cl(audia), lectus in sacro comit(atu) lanciarius, deinde protexit annis V, missus pr(a)efectus leg(ionis) II Hercul(iae), [e]git ann(is) II semis.*

117 Epitaph of Spolegium (CIL XI 4787 = ILS 2777): *Florio Baudioni, viro ducenario, protectori ex ordinario leg(ionis) II Ital(icae) Divit(iensium)*, dead at 40 years, after 25 years of service.

118 Promoted *tribunus*, from *domesticus* (epitaph at Maionia in Lydia, DREW-BEAR et alii 2004; AÉ 2004, 1396 a = SEG LIV 1218A).

VII. Nicomedia, capital of Diocletian: military epitaphs in the Bithynia region

The *protector* Tziampo, buried at Nicomedia, which was Diocletian's capital and residence¹¹⁹, and also of Galerius and Licinius, was a native of the new South-Danubian Dacia, the homeland of many soldiers of Balkan origin that became emperors, some of them from Dacia Ripensis, like Aurelian¹²⁰, Galerius¹²¹ (and his nephew Maximinus Daia, who was *scutarius*, *protector* and finally *tribunus*) and Licinius.¹²²

1. Evidence at Nicomedia

From Nicomedia we now have more epitaphs of soldiers of the late Roman army, especially *protectores*:

- *Claudius Herculanus, protector Aureliani Augusti*, dead at the age of 40. This junior staff officer and guard of Aurelian was commemorated by his blood brother, *Claudius Dion[y]sius, protector Augusti, frater ipsius*. Depicted on the rectangular stele as a horseman, in a *barbarica* dress (according to M. P. SPEIDEL), he must have died during Aurelian's march to Palmyra when the emperor spent winter in Byzantium (271/272)¹²³. On the upper part of the stele, above the epigraphic field (58.5 x 71 cm), Georges PERROT, who saw it in 1861 during his trip in Anatolia, makes a sign with a schematic drawing a damaged relief (height 64 cm) of a horseman with a spear, turned to the right. In contemporary publication, two Greek antiquarians give a different drawing (of a complete relief)¹²⁴; however, this image reproduced by M. P. SPEIDEL is likely anachronistic because of the curious resemblance with an *armatolos* or *klephtes* from the first half of the 19th cent.

- *Valerius Vincentius, actuarius protectorum*, commemorated by his wife Antia, after six years of common life. His sarcophagus (180 x 120 cm), discovered in 1861, contained two bodies wrapped in line, the soldier being buried with his weapons¹²⁵;

- the marble plaque (73 x 60 x 4 cm) of *Valerius Vrsicinus, protector de provincia Dacia, vico Diosenanis*, dead at the age of 50, after 23 years of service, commemorated by his *frater* (comrade rather than a real brother?) *Valerius Manica, prot(ec)tor*¹²⁶;

119 SESTON 1946, 94-95. A new Tetrarchic painted relief with embracing emperors was recently discovered at Nicomedia (ŞARE-AĞTÜRK 2017; ŞARE-AĞTÜRK 2018; ABBE – ŞARE-AĞTÜRK 2019; ŞARE-AĞTÜRK 2020).

120 Born in Moesia Superior (future Dacia Ripensis), cf. *SHA, Aurel.* iii 1 (*ut nonulli, Dacia Ripensi*) and iii 2 (*Moesia genitum*), *Eutr.* ix 13. 1 (*Dacia Ripensi oriundus*) and *Epit. Caes.* xxxv 1. See KIENAST et alii 2017⁶, 225.

121 Born in the village renamed *Romulianum* (after his mother), also in Moesia Superior (later Dacia Ripensis), cf. *Epit. Caes.* xl 16 (*ortus Dacia Ripensi*), *Eutr.* ix 22. 1 and *Iord., Rom.* 298. See KIENAST et alii 2017², 272.

122 He was *ex Dacia nova* (*Anon. Vales.* v 13), *Dacia oriundus* (*Eutr.* x 4. 1); cf. also Socrates, *HE* i 2. 1. See KIENAST et alii 2017⁶, 282.

123 KLEONYMOS – PAPADOPOULOS 1867, 163-164, No. 12 (drawing p. 163); PERROT 1872, I, 6-7 (drawing p. 7); CIL III 327 = ILS 2775 = TAM IV.1 137 (with *Di Manes*); SPEIDEL 1997, 232-233 (reproducing p. 233, fig. 1, the drawing from Kleonymos and Papadopoulos).

124 The drawing from the report of PERROT shows a damaged relief, without the heads of the rider and the horse.

125 KLEONYMOS – PAPADOPOULOS 1867, 164, No. 13 (drawing); CIL III 6059 = 6988 (“repertam esse arcam a. 1861 clausam plumbo, continuisse cadavera duo bysso involute”) = ILS 2779 = ILCV 526 = TAM IV.1 275.

126 ŞAHİN 1973, 52-53, No. 27 (photo Pl. 6) (corrections in ŞAHİN 1975, 47-48) (AÉ 1977, 791); LEBEK 1976, 170-174 (for the epigram); TAM IV.1 118; VULPE 1979; ŞAHİN 1985, 120-121, No. 50; CLEOr 26; SGO II

- only the extreme end of the name at genitive (in big letters) of an anonymous, [--- ---]ου πρωτήκτορος¹²⁷;
- the bilingual Christian epitaph erected by Fl. Maximinus, *scutarius sinator*, for his son of 5 years¹²⁸;
- we must add to this list two other soldiers: (1) a sarcophagus (προγονική λάρναξ) found at Tuzla, 3 km near Nicomedia, for Kytheria and her husband Valerius Pomponius, dead at 45 years, that served in Diocletian's guard as the centurion (έκατοντάρχη στρατευσαμένω έν τῷ ιερῷ παλατίῳ¹²⁹ ἔτη -); the eventual amend concerns the fiscus, the city (of Nicomedia) and the village of Arbillanoi¹³⁰; (2) the fragmentary epitaph of an anonymous, ἀναφερόμεν[ος έν τῷ ιερῷ παλατίῳ ἔθηκα τήν πύ]ελον ἔμαυτῷ κα[ί τέκνοις κτλ.]¹³¹.

2. Evidence in the larger Bithynian region

Many other epitaphs of soldiers of the late Roman army in the neighboring regions well illustrate, as observed by M. P. SPEIDEL, “the growing importance of Bithynia as a garrison area for the imperial armies at the time the capital of the empire moved to Nikomedeia and Byzantion”¹³²:

- at Chalcedon, two soldiers: (1) the sarcophagus (σορός; coffin: 219 x 114 x 98 cm; lid: 229 x 123 x 52 cm) displaying the epitaph in a *tabula ansata* of Φλ. Εὐτύχης ἀπό προτικτόρων, destined to himself (still alive) and his children¹³³; it is important to stress that the sarcophagus of this veteran contained more skeletons¹³⁴; (2) the fragmentary Christian epitaph of a [δο]μειστικός (or a member of his family), maybe from the second half of the 6th cent.¹³⁵.

- at Prusias ad Hypium, as many as five soldiers: (1) *Val. Titianus, BB, decanus num(eri) scut(ariorum), natione Dalmata*, deat at the age of 45, after 22 years of

09/06/14; ÜZÜNOĞLU 2013, 217-220, No. 6 (photo p. 219, fig. 3) (with DM).

127 IGR III 10 = TAM IV.1 383 (PLRE I 1033, Anonymus 193).

128 Stela with fronton (83 x 58 x 4.5/9 cm), CIL III 14188 = ILCV I 2180 = TAM IV.1 367; republished by FEISSEL 1987, 435-436 (photo Pl. III.2) (SEG XXXVII 1081): Φλ(άουιος) Μαξιμίνοσ σκουτ[ά]ριος σινάτωρ ἀνέστησα τήν στίλλην τῷ υἱῷ μου Ὀκτίμω ζήσαντι ἔτη ε', ἡμέρας ιε'· τμηθίς ὑπό ιατροῦ ἔμαρτύρησεν. ✱ *Fla(vius) Maximinus scutarius sinator levavi statu(am) filio meo Octemo, vicxit annos V, dies XV, precisus a medico, ic postus est ad martures.*

129 That is, the *sacrum palatium*.

130 TAM IV.1 285 (9 years of marriage). Cf. the famous stela found at Ulmetum (Scythia) of *Val. Victorinus, biarc(h)us, qui militavi[t] in sacro palatio ann(os) VII[-]*, and was killed at the age of 40, in 324, at the “battle of Chalcedon”, in *proel[i]o [R]o<ma>norum Calced[o]nia contra aversarios decessit* (IGLR 206 = GSMI 261); see the commented reedition of SPEIDEL 1995 (reproduced in AÉ 1995, 1338), that places this soldier of the imperial guard among the *scutarii*. On 8th September 324, at the Battle of Chrysopolis (Üsküdar), Constantine's army won against Licinius.

131 TAM IV.1 333. Cf. at Perinthus Οὐαλέριος Ἀνδρόνεικος ἀναφερόμενος έν τῷ ιερῷ παλατίῳ (IPerinthos 188, by the same time).

132 SPEIDEL 1984, 156 (= SPEIDEL 1992, 411). We let aside the epitaphs from Constantinople, mainly of *foederati*, and those from northern Propontis.

133 After κ(αι) τοῖς γλυκυτάτοις μου τέκνοις only Φλ is inscribed, after that a blank space was let by the stonemason.

134 ASGARI – FIRATLI 1978, 33-34, 76, No. SR. 9 (photo Pl. XXI, fig. 39); IKalchedon 71.

135 IKalchedon 81.

service, commemorated by his comrade *Vrsus ex numero ipso*¹³⁶; this soldier from western Balkan area also served in the imperial guard, and the abbreviation BB was developed as *b(ar)b(aricatus)* by M. P. SPEIDEL¹³⁷; (2) Κλ[αυδι]ο[ς], that served 11 years, and thereafter was *scutarius* for 13 years (ἔστρατεύσατο ἕτ(η) αἰ' καὶ ἰς τοὺς σκουαρίους ἕτη ιγ'), commemorated by his brother *Maximinus*¹³⁸; (3) the Christian epitaph of Τιράνης, κόμης ἀπὸ πριμικρίων¹³⁹; (4) the Vth cent. Christian epitaph of Georgios' son, τοῦ λαμπροτάτου σχ<ο>λαρίου καὶ μαγίστερος δρακῶνον¹⁴⁰; (5) much more later, after the 6th cent., the epitaph of Θεόδοτος, ὀπίτων βάνδου τριτου Ἀρμενίω(ν)¹⁴¹.

- at Prusa ad Olympum, two soldiers: (1) the Christian epitaph of Σάββας ἀπὸ τριβούνου¹⁴²; (2) a honorific Christian statue for [Φλ.?] Φαυστίνος ὁ λαμπρ(ότατος) καὶ περιβλ(επτος) ἀπὸ τριβ(ούνων) νοταρίων¹⁴³.

- at Bithynion/Claudionopolis, two soldiers: (1) *Val. Fuscianus, du[ce]narius ex regione Scadiesiana, vico* (not written, the stone cutter let a *vacat*), from a *vexillatio eqq(uitum) cat(afractariorum) clib(anariorum) s(ub) c(ura) Valentis p(rae)p(ositi)*, dead at 50 years after 35 years of service, commemorated by a *collegium* whose *pater* was *Severianus dux* (or *ducenarius*)¹⁴⁴; the plaque features a horseman in the style of the “Thracian Rider”, in a hunting scene; *regio Scadiesiana* is most likely another Balkan region; (2) the fragmentary epitaph of the officer [Val.?] *Serenus*, whose plaque features a horseman again - bearing a *pilleus Pannonicus* however - in the style of the “Thracian Rider”, in a hunting scene¹⁴⁵.

- at Nicaea, two soldiers: (1) the Christian epitaph of Φλ. Ἰταλᾶς ἀπὸ προτηκτόρων, whose monument (τὸ κοιμητήριον) was also intended for his wife *Aur. Romula*, his son *Aur. Romulus*, his daughter-in-law *Aur. Vrsa* and the wife's brother *Aur. Senecianus*¹⁴⁶; (2) much later, the epitaph of Ἰλλοῦς πριμικρίος (with his family)¹⁴⁷;

- at Strobilos, the 6th cent. Christian epitaph of [πριμ]εῖκ(ήριος) Ἰλλούστ[ριος], dead at 20 years¹⁴⁸.

- at Cyzicus, *Fl. Marcus protector, natus in Dacia provincia in vico Valentiniano, militavit in vixillatione Fesianesa annis XXIII, unde factus protector, i[n]deque militavit in scola protectoru<m> annis cuincue*¹⁴⁹. He was married to *Mariana*, had a

136 AÉ 1951, 30 = IPrusias ad Hypium 101.

137 See SPEIDEL 1997, 233-234. The same abbreviation occurs in the epitaph of *Aur. Vale(n)s, BB n(umeri) eqq(uitum) scut(ariorum) s(ub) c(ura) Marini p(rae)p(ositi)* (Intercisa, RIU V 1205).

138 IPrusias ad Hypium 95.

139 IPrusias ad Hypium 133.

140 IPrusias ad Hypium 120. See SPEIDEL 1985 (= SPEIDEL 1992, 390-395).

141 STAUNER 2020.

142 IPrusa ad Olympum I 218.

143 IPrusa ad Olympum II 1095.

144 PM, II, 334, No. 1401 (photo Pl. 204); the particular study of SPEIDEL 1984 (photo Pl. 15) (= SPEIDEL 1992, 406-413) about the *catafractarii clibanarii* and the rise of the later Roman mailed cavalry (AÉ 1984, 825 = IKlaudiu polis 40).

145 SPEIDEL 1984, 156 (photo Pl. 16) (= SPEIDEL 1992, 411) (IKlaudiu polis 36).

146 INikaia I 557.

147 INikaia I 558 (photo Pl. XXXII); Isaurian name (see FEISSEL 2012, 9).

148 IApameia (Bithynien) und Pylai 135.

149 CIL III 371 = ILS 2783 = IKyzikos I 482; brief comment in LASSÈRE 2007², II, 812-813, No. 448; PLRE I

slave (*puer*) Thalarion who was later manumitted; the monument was erected by his brothers in arms Perula, Frontinus, Superianus, Maxentius and Vrsinus.

Like the epitaph of the Pannonian *protector* died at Zaldapa (Scythia), which was recently published, this new inscription from Nicomedia enriches an essentially epigraphic folder that strengthens the general impression that a majority amongst the first generations of *protectores* came from the Balkano-Danubian provinces (Thrace, Moesia, South-Danubian Dacia, Dardania, Pannonia)¹⁵⁰, thus proving that Thracio-Moesian and Pannonian regions remained during Late Antiquity privileged recruitment pools for the Roman army. The clichés about the martial qualities of Balkan recruits are strengthened during Late Antiquity: according to *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 50 (middle of the 4th cent.), Thrace furnished for the army the most remarkable men, brave in war (*maximos habens viros et fortes in bello; propter quod et frequenter inde milites tolluntur*)¹⁵¹, while Ammianus Marcellinus evoked the *bellatrices Thraciae gentes* and Vegetius praised the martial character of Dacians, Moesians and Thracians, thus illustrating the stories about Mars' birth among them¹⁵². Judging only after the onomastics, we may now give the list of more *protectores* with Thracian *cognomina*:

- *F[ll]a. Bityanus, prot(ector) domes(ticus)* (PLRE I 162), commemorating his father *Fla. Dinnius, pr(a)ef(ectus) vehi(culorum)*, dead at 60 years, after 36 years of service (Čomakovci, dept. of Pleven, in eastern Dacia Ripensis)¹⁵³;

- *Bulper, veteranus ex prote^rct^roribus*, commemorating in a Christian epitaph from Rome his wife *Dando*¹⁵⁴;

- *Fl. Buraido, [prote]ctor eschol(a)e ped[itum]*, commemorating his wife *Vrsina, filia Vrsiniani ex trib(uno)* that died in 390, aged 27, at Sebaste (Phrygia Pacatiana)¹⁵⁵;

- *Fl. Moco, domesticos, de patria Artacia de vico Calso*, commemorating his wife *Dona (= Domna)* at Beroia of Thrace¹⁵⁶;

557-558 (Marcus 4).

150 ÉMION 2017 gathered a prosopographic annex of 138 *protectores* and *domestici*; 25 are originating from these provinces (14 in Pannonia, 6 in Moesia, 5 in Thrace).

151 See later Justinian, *Nov.* 26 pr. 1: Ἐκεῖνο τῶν ἀνωμολογημένων ἐστὶν ὅτι περ, εἰ τις τὴν Θρακῶν ὀνομάσειε χώραν, εὐθὺς συνεισέρχεται τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τις ἀνδρείας καὶ στρατιωτικοῦ πλήθους καὶ πολέμων καὶ μάχης ἔννοια· ταῦτα γὰρ ἐγγενῆ τε καὶ πάτρια τῇ χώρᾳ καθέστηκεν ἐκείνη.

152 Ammianus Marcellinus xxvi 7. 5; Vegetius i 28 (*Dacos autem et Moesos et Thracas in tantum bellicosos semper fuisse manifestum est, ut ipsum Martem fabulae apud eos natum esse confirmant*).

153 CIL III 14412,4 = ILBulg 160 = GSMI 512; DREW-BEAR – ZUCKERMAN 2004, 424-425; [M BITIANVS CIL: Ziabitianus Gerov]; for the reading of the *nomen* and *cognomen*, see MOLIN 1998 (cf. AE 1998, 1126); DANA 2014, 195 (informations and photo of Nikolaj Šarankov).

154 ICVR VIII 22406; the wife died at 40 years, after 24 years of marriage. Both names are *hapax*, most likely Thracian.

155 MAMA XI 72 = AÉ 2012, 1499 (replacing other readings) (marriage of 14 years).

156 CIL III 14207,15 = ILCV 478 = SGLIB 192. *Artacia* must be linked to a population in that region (for the literary sources, see DETSCHEW 1957, 28) and the topic epithet of Ἥρα Ἀρτακηνή (IGBulg III.1 980, dedication from Philippopolis).

- the famous *Traianus Mucianus* (PIR² T 300; PLRE I 609-610, *Mucianus* 5), from Philippopolis, in the second half of the 3rd cent.¹⁵⁷;
- *Perula* (PLRE I 689), a comrade of Fl. Marcus, dead at Cyzicus (see note 149) (if *protector*);
- *Val. Thiumpo, protector*, promoted *praefectus legionis II Herculiae* (PLRE I 910, see above).
- our *Tziampo*, dead at Nicomedia.

We may add two *protectores* that ended their days in Dacia Ripensis, most likely their place of origin: *Fl. Martialis ex protectoribus*, commemorated as *patronus* by *Maxentius gener et serv{f}us suus* at an advanced age (100 years!), at Vratarnica nearby Romuliana¹⁵⁸; *Fla. Licinianus, [e]x pr(o)t(ectoribus)*, dead at 60 years (?), commemorated by his homonymous son at Manastirište (dept. of Vraca)¹⁵⁹.

Finally, it is essential to notice the expenses implied by Tziampo's sarcophagus, not only commanded but *restauratus*, and moreover personalized by a peculiar iconography betraying his Thracian origin and displaying the military status and a carefully inscribed Latin epitaph, despite the Greek-speaking milieu, giving details not only about his career but also about his family life (that is, an unnamed wife¹⁶⁰ and a son Severus), as occurs often in other epitaphs of soldiers¹⁶¹, that were ordinarily inserted in different social and professional groups.

157 See CHRISTOL 1977.

158 CIL III 14594 = ISalonChr III 1356 = IMS III.2 109 (PLRE I 563, *Martialis* 2).

159 MAŠOV 1975, 36-37, No. 1 (photo and drawing p. 36, fig. 1ab), with the reading *[e]x pr(ae)t(orio)*. The *nomen* and the paleography of this stela (not recorded in AÉ) assure a date in the 4th cent. and, therefore, the quality of *protector*.

160 Cf. an epitaph from Bostra (Arabia), *Coniux Bitiano, de numero mil(itum?) Constan(tiacorum?)* (IGLS XIII.1 9174, with the reading of DANA 2014, 194-195, No. 11), where the name of the wife of this Thracian soldier is not given.

161 For the formulary of the epitaphs of praetorians, *protectores*, *domestici* and members of the *scholae palatinae*, see YOUNOU 2011; concerning the family life in the later Latin epigraphy, see SHAW 1984, in partic. 472 (nothing, for the soldiers, "a far higher propensity than average to commemorate themselves before death").

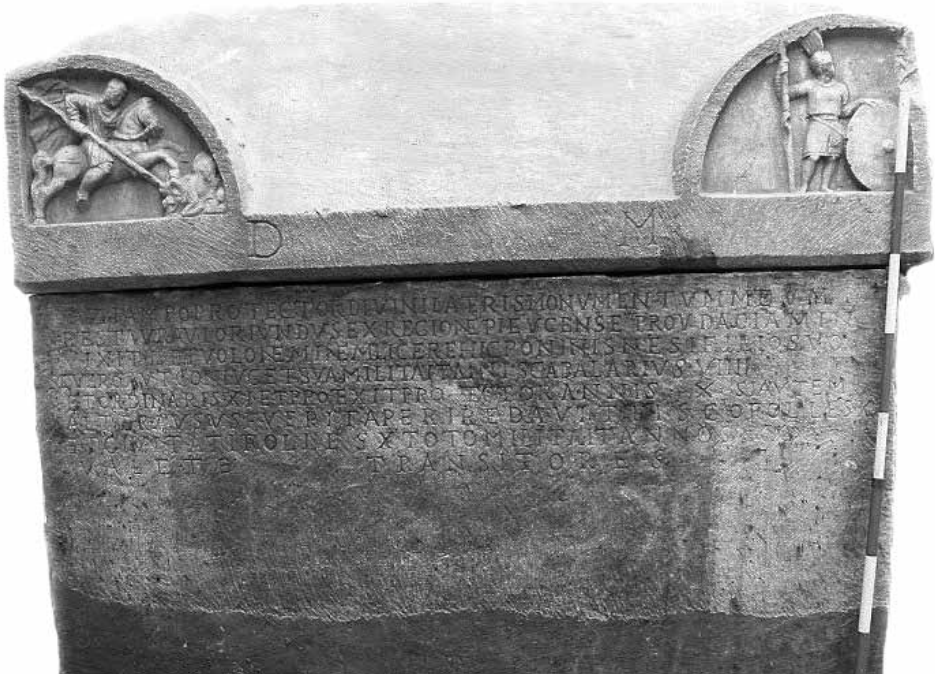


Fig. 1. Sarcophagus of Tziampo, *protector divini lateris*



Fig. 2. The two skeletons inside the coffin



Fig. 3. The left side scene ("Thacian horseman" motif)



Fig. 4. The right side scene (standing soldier)

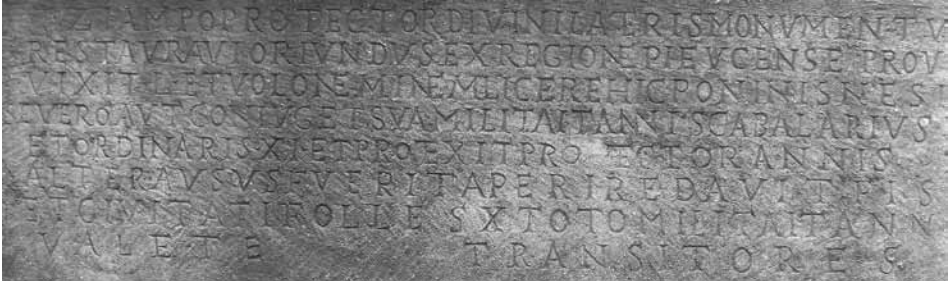


Fig. 5. The inscription (left side)

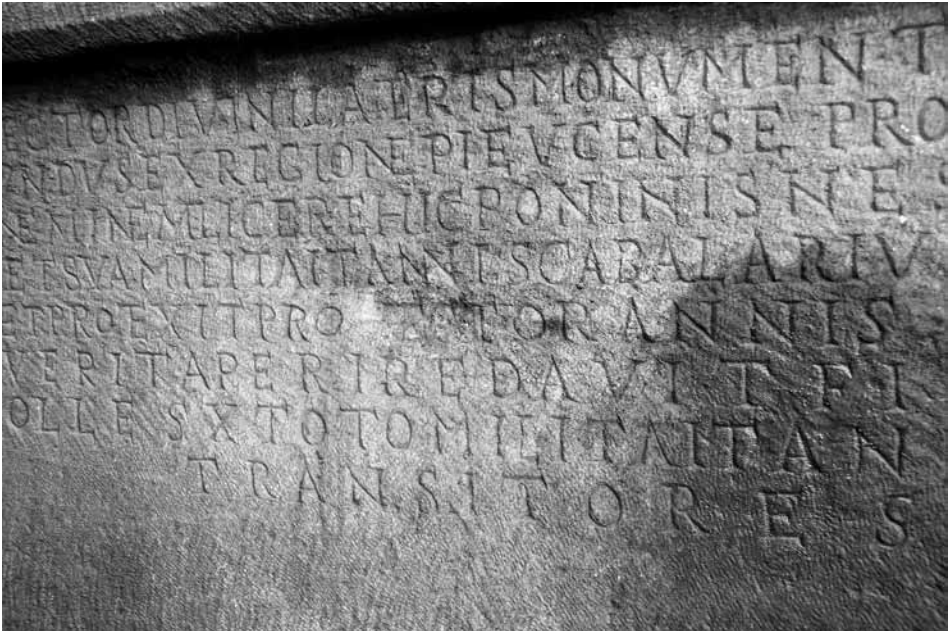


Fig. 6. The inscription (central part)

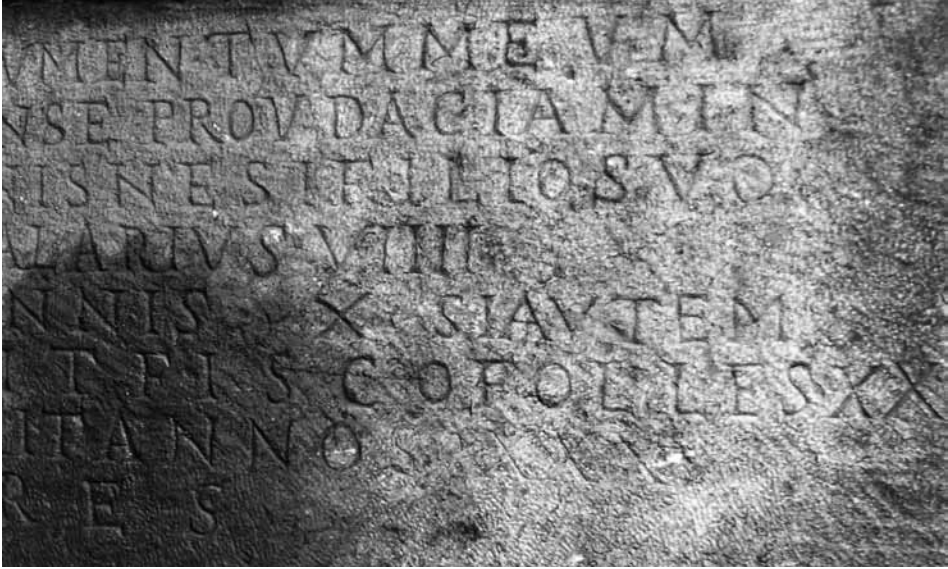


Fig. 7. The inscription (right side)



Fig. 8. Stela of Claudius Herculanus (Photo: Istanbul Archaeological Museums)



Fig. 9. Epitaph of Valerius Titianus (Photo: Hüseyin Sami Öztürk)

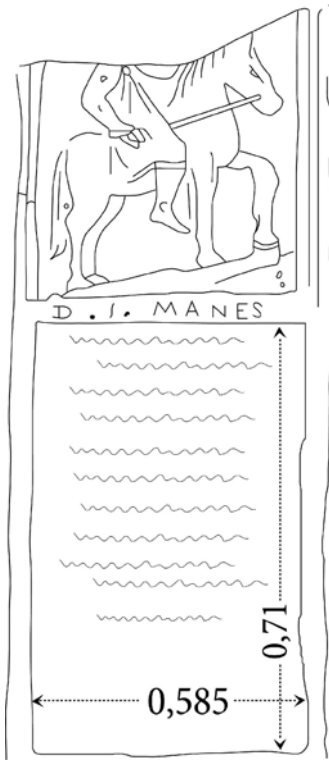


Fig. 10. Stela of Claudius Herculanus (redrawn by U. C. ARDAL based on Perrot's drawing)



Fig. 11. Stela of Claudius Herculanus (Kleonymos and Papadopoulos' drawing)

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