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DOCTORS OF THE ROMAN GARRISON OF TYRAS*

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ABSTRACT

The article revises the readings of two inscriptions of Tyras which presumably contain information about the organization of the medical service in the Roman garrison of that city in the 2nd century AD. The first of these (*L'Année épigraphique*, 1995, 1350) confirms the mention of *medicus vexillationis*, a term unknown in other texts; the inscription belongs to the very few evidences of the existence of the position of doctor of vexillation. It confirms the existence of at least two doctors in the vexillation of Tyras, one of whom was a naval doctor. The inscription is the only evidence so far to show that doctors serving in the provincial, and not only praetorian (Misene and Ravennate) fleets had the status of *duplicarius*.

However, the inscription itself turns out to be of a different nature than its first publisher P.O. Karyshkovsky had suggested – it is not an honorary inscription, but a dedication to Asclepius and Hygia on behalf of not only two doctors, but also two legionaries, presumably privates. The text of the first three lines is reconstructed differently: *[D(eo) A]sclepio • et • Hygi(ae) | [e.g. T(itus) • Fl(avius) •] Successus • M(arcus) • Ata|[eus? • P]lacid[[us) m(ilites)] leg(ionis) • I • Ital(icae)*.

In the second inscription (*L'Année épigraphique*, 1990, 869) the mention of the unique term *valetudinarius*, usually interpreted as referring to personnel of hospital (*valetudinarium*), is not confirmed. In its place the *cognomen* of one of the dedicants *Valens* is to be restored and the term itself must be considered a “ghost”.

Keywords: Northern Black Sea region, Tyras, epigraphy, Roman army, ancient medicine

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ЛІКАРІ РИМСЬКОГО ГАРНІЗОНУ ТІРИ

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АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті переглядаються читання двох написів Тіри, які, ймовірно, містять відомості про організацію медичної служби в римському гарнізоні цього міста в II ст. н.е. У першій з них (*L'Année épigraphique*, 1995, 1350) підтверджується згадка *medicus vexillationis* – терміну, невідомого в інших текстах; сам напис належить до дуже нечисленних свідчень існування посади лікаря вексилляції. При цьому підтверджується існування у вексилляції Тіри щонайменше двох лікарів, один з яких був флотським. Напис є єдиним поки що свідченням того, що лікарі, які служили і на провінційних, а не тільки преторіанських (Місенському та Равенському) флотах, мали статус *duplicarius*.

Проте сам напис виявляється іншим за характером, ніж передбачав перший видавець П.О. Каришковський, – це не напис «за успіх» командувача тіраського гарнізону, а посвята, поставлена на честь Асклепія та Гігії від імені не лише двох лікарів, а й двох легіонерів, мабуть, рядових. Текст перших трьох рядків поновлюється інакше: *[D(eo) A]sclepio • et • Hygi(ae) | [e.g. T(itus) • Fl(avius) • S(uccessus) • M(arcus) • Ata | • P]lacid[us] m(ilitis)] leg(ionis) • I • Ital(icae)*.

У другому написі (*L'Année épigraphique*, 1990, 869) згадка унікального терміну *valetudinarius*, що тлумачився як позначення обслуговуючого персоналу госпіталю (*valetudinarium*), не підтверджується. На його місці відновлюється *cognomen* одного з посвятників Valens, а сам термін має бути визнаний фантомом.

Ключові слова: Північне Причорномор'я, Тіра, епіграфіка, римська армія, антична медицина

It is well known that the Roman army had its own medical service and military physicians are occasionally mentioned in inscriptions. As such mentions are not very numerous, each of them attracts the attention of researchers. Among the inscriptions of Tyras there are two texts of relevance for this subject. A careful study of the original of the first one and of the photo of the second one, unfortunately, lost, allows us to propose new readings and thus a new understanding of these inscriptions.

The first inscription is a **dedication of the soldiers of the Legio I Italica and military doctors to Asclepius and Hygia** (fig. 1). The dedication is made on a slab of grey marble; its preserved dimensions are 33.4×26.1×6.0-6.7, it is thinner in the lower part than in the upper one. The slab consists of five joining fragments, its front and back sides have been polished, the right, top and bottom sides are roughly picked, the left one is broken off. Above the epigraphic field is a carved ornament, consisting of a row of horizontal volutes, ending with the image of a leaf. The panel was found in the autumn of 1981, during road works at the intersection of Ushakov and Popov streets in Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, a few dozen meters from the Central excavation sector on the territory of ancient Tyras. It was given to the Odessa Archaeological Museum, where it is now preserved (Inventory No. 88200) in 1982 by local historian V.P. Pushkarev. The inscription is on the front of the panel; its left side is broken off.



Fig. 1. Dedication of the soldiers of the *Legio I Italica* and military doctors to Asclepius and Hygia (Odessa Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. 88200; Photo by A.I. Ivantchik).

The dimensions of the epigraphic field are 24.8×23.6 cm. The upper margin filled with floral ornament is 4.0 cm high, the lower one is 2.3 cm high, the right side of the inscription reaches the edge of the panel. The letters are deeply and neatly cut, decorated with small serifs and have slightly elongated proportions. The last letters in the first and fifth lines are reduced in size and cut inside preceding letters. All

words and abbreviations are separated by large dots placed in the mid-letterheight. Letterheights noticeably decrease from the top line to the bottom: 3.6-3.7 cm in line 1; 3.0-3.3 cm in lines 2-3; 2.7-2.8 cm in line 4; 2.5-2.6 cm in line 5; 2.3-2.4 cm in lines 6-7. The average interlinear distance is 0.5 cm.

The inscription was published by P.O. Karyshkovsky and subsequently reproduced¹ in the following form:

[D(eo) A]sclepio et Hygi(ae)
 [pro] successu{s} M(arci) Ata-
 [e.g. li P]lacid[i (centurionis)] leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) L(ucius) Pa-
 [e.g. piri]us Olympicus me-
 5 [dic]us vexil(lationis) et M(arcus) · Seius · Ga-
 [e.g. rgil]ius medicus duplicar(ius)
 [clas]sis Fl(aviae) Moes(icae) v(otum) s(olverunt) l(ibentes) m(erito)

Karyshkovsky rightly pointed out that the approximate length of the lines can be calculated from lines 5 and 7, where restorations *me[di]cus* and *[cl]assis* can hardly be doubted. Although the density of letter placement in the lines varies quite a bit, lines 5 and 7 still give an idea of the size of the lacunae. Restoration of the text in the lacunae presents however a number of difficulties. Karyshkovsky proposed the text *[pro] successu{s} Ata[li P]lacid[i (centurionis)] leg(ionis) I Ital(icae)*. Accordingly, he considered the inscription to be a dedication by two doctors of the Tyranian vexillation “for success” (the last letter, he thought, was inscribed by mistake and should be excluded) of the commander of that vexillation, the centurion of the *Legio Italica* Marcus Atalius Placidus.

However, this restoration can hardly be followed. The formula *pro successu* seems to be unknown in Latin epigraphy; it is at any rate not attested in *Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg* (<https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/home/>) except in this inscription. As the restoration of this unique formula requires a change in the word, which is fully preserved on the stone, it raises further doubts. At the same time, *Successus* is a widely attested *cognomen*², and its restoration seems self-evident. If this reading is correct, the lacuna at the beginning of the line should contain abbreviated *praenomen* and *nomen*, or just *nomen*. The former is more likely: although inscriptions of this time often use two *nomina* instead of three, yet in this inscription all preserved names have *praenomina*. The lacuna allows 3 or 4 letters before *S*, and we could restore here, for example, *[M(arcus) Aur(elius)/Au(relius)] Successus*, *[T(itus) Fl(avius)] Successus*, etc. Accordingly, the following name should also be in the nominative, not the genitive. The absence of *et* between two names is not problematic: the conjunction is far from always present in lists of names in Latin

¹ Карышковский П.О. Посвятительная надпись римских врачей из Тира // Самойлова Т.Л., Дзис-Райко Г.А., Карышковский П.О., Кравченко Н.А., Патокова Э.Ф. (ред.). Новые исследования по археологии Северного Причерноморья. Киев, 1987. С. 52-56, фото; Sarnowski T. L'organisation hiérarchique des vexillationes Ponticae au miroir des trouvailles épigraphiques récentes // Le Bohec Y. (ed.). La hiérarchie (Rangordnung) de l'armée romaine sous la Haut-Empire. Actes du congrès de Lyon. Paris, 1995. P. 326; L'Année épigraphique. Paris, 1995, 1350; Aparaschivei D. Physicians and Medicine in the Roman Army of Moesia Inferior. *Dacia* 2012. Vol. 61. P. 118, n°5. See more: Ivantchik A. Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Tyras and Vicinity (Inscriptions of the Northern Black Sea. Lapidary Inscriptions). Vol. 1. Bordeaux, 2021. № 20.

² Kajanto I. The Latin Cognomina. Helsinki, 1965. P. 356.

inscriptions, even when there are only two names in a text. In this inscription it is also absent in the third line, between the names of the second and third dedicants, and only separates the last and penultimate of them.

The *cognomen* of the second dedicant can hardly be anything but *Placidus*, which is very common. As for the *nomen*, the restoration of the name *Atalius* proposed by Karyshkovsky is not the only possible one: here we can also assume *Atatius*, *Atanius* and *Ataeus*. The size of the lacuna, where 2-3 letters would fit before the securely restored *P*, suggests the variant *Ata[eu]s* as preferable one (see *AE*³ 1979, 226), while *Ata[li]us* is also possible (the spelling *Atalus* is occasionally attested), considering that letters *L* and *I* are narrow and, in this line, the letters are rather closely placed together. Since between *PLACID* and *LEG* there is room for only two narrow or one wide letter, and we also need room for the mention of the status of the first two dedicants, we have to assume that the *cognomen Placidus* was abbreviated. Such abbreviations are attested (specifically for *Placidus*, see *AE* 1924, 23; *AE* 2004, 1062), though not very frequently. In that case, *m(ilites)* may be restored in the lacuna. Karyshkovsky suggested here the restoration of the sign denoting the centurion. However, no status is indicated for the first dedicant, and hence the indication standing here must refer to both first dedicants. This rules out the restoration of the title of centurion here - one can hardly assume the presence of two centurions of the same legion as part of the small vexillation cantoned in Tyras. Thus, for the restoration of lines 2-3 we may suggest the following variant: [e.g. *T(itus) · Fl(avius) ·] Successus · M(arcus) · Ata[eu]s² · P]lacid[us) · m(ilites) ·] leg(ionis) · I · Ital(icae)*. The text, after checking the readings from the original in the Odessa Archaeological Museum, should read as follows (differences from earlier publishers are given in the apparatus):

- [D(eo) A]sclepio · et · Hygi(ae)
 [e.g. T(itus) · Fl(avius) ·] Successus · M(arcus) · Ata-
 [eu]s² · P]lacid(us) [· m(ilites) ·] leg(ionis) · I · Ital(icae) · L(ucius) · Pa-
 [. . .]us · Olympicus · me-
 5 [dic]us · vexil(lationis) · et · M(arcus) · Seius · Ga-
 [. . .]ius · mēdicus · duplicar(ius)
 [clas]sis · Fl(aviae) · Moes(icae) · v(otum) · s(oluerunt) · l(ibentes) · m(erito) ·

2: [pro] successu{s} Karyshkovskii; 3: [e.g. li P]lacid[i (centurionis) Karyshkovskii; 4: [e.g. piri] us Olympicus me- Karyshkovskii; 5: N. Selius Sarnowski *per errorem*; 6: [e.g. rgil]ius medicus Karyshkovskii

Translation: [To the g(od) A]sclepius and Hygia [T(itus) Fl(avius) ?] Successus, M(arcus) Ata[... P]lacid(us) [soldiers] of the *Legio I Italica*, Lucius Pa[. . .]us Olympicus, do[ct]or of vexillation, and M(arcus) Seius Ga[. . .]ius, doctor on double wages of the Flavian Moesian [fl]eet, fulfilled their vow willingly and deservedly.

Compared to Karyshkovsky's restoration, this version has the advantage of not requiring the correction of the surviving part of the text and the introduction of the nowhere else attested formula, although there are also some difficulties, in particular, the need to assume the abbreviation of the *cognomen Placid(us)*, which is only rarely attested in the Latin inscriptions. The reconstructed *nomen Ataeus* is also rather rare.

³ *AE* – L'Année épigraphique. Paris, 1888–.

Thus, this dedication was made not by two, but by four persons, two legion soldiers and two doctors. It is addressed to the healing gods who patronized the activity of two dedicants, the military doctors. Despite the fact that in Latin inscriptions, the dedications to Aesculapius (often paired with Hygia) occur nearly twice as often as to Asclepius (according to the *Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg*), still the use of the deity's name borrowed from the Greek is quite common and widely attested not only in the Greek-speaking provinces, so no conclusions can be drawn from its use.

The first two dedicants were soldiers of the *Legio I Italica*, which was stationed in Moesia; its camp was situated at Novae since Vespasian's time. Initially, however, the main responsibility for the territory of Dobrudja and garrisons of the Greek cities of the Northern Black Sea coast was assigned to the *Legio V Macedonica*. This legion was withdrawn from Lower Moesia in the 60s of the 2nd century. The exact date of its withdrawal is unclear: we know that in AD 168 it was already stationed at Potaissa in Dacia (*CIL*⁴ VI, 1377), and in AD 162-166 it fought in the war against Parthia, in the army of Lucius Verus, from which, apparently, it never returned to Lower Moesia. Most likely, the legion was relocated to the East in full in 162, but there is a hypothesis that some small vexillations of the legion did remain in Lower Moesia, in particular at Tyras and Olbia, until the legion came back from the East and moved to Dacia, *i.e.* until AD 167⁵. Thus, a complete withdrawal of the legion, including its Black Sea vexillations, from Lower Moesia, should be dated between 162 and 167. For a time, a mixed garrison of soldiers from all three Lower Moesian legions (*I Italica*, *V Macedonica*, *XI Claudia*) and *auxilia* stood in Tyras, headed by a centurion of the *I Italica*: this situation is attested by a tile stamp⁶. A similar composition of the garrison, albeit under the command of a centurion of the *Legio XI Claudia*, is epigraphically attested at Olbia (*IOSPE*⁷ 12, 322). We do not know how long such a situation lasted – perhaps we are talking about a brief transition period of gradual transfer of responsibility from the *V Macedonica* to the *I Italica*⁸. We cannot however fully rule out the possibility that mixed vexillations of soldiers from different legions could have been formed in the Greek cities of the Black Sea coast in normal time, in which case the tile stamp from Tyras and the inscription from Olbia would reflect this situation.

After the withdrawal of the *Legio V Macedonica* from Lower Moesia, the main role passed to the *Legio I Italica* (see *CIL* VIII, 619 = *ILS*⁹ 2747: military tribune of the *Legio I Italica* was *praepositus vexillationibus Ponticis apud Scythia et Tauricam*)¹⁰; its soldiers formed the core of the garrison of Tyras, which was headed by one of the centurions of the legion. It can thus be assumed that this inscription dates from after

⁴ *CIL* – Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum. Berlin, 1863-.

⁵ *Sarnowski T.* Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres // *Archeologia*. 1987. Vol. 38. S. 90-91.

⁶ *Карышковский П.О., Клейман И.Б.* Древний город Тира. Историко-археологический очерк. Киев, 1985. С. 98-99, рис. 32; *Sarnowski T.* Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres... S. 73; *Сон Н.А.* Тира римского времени. Киев, 1993. С. 31-34. The names of *auxilia* stationed in Tyras are unfortunately unknown to us.

⁷ *IOSPE* – *Latyshev B.* Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae. St-Petersburg, 1885-1916.

⁸ See: *Sarnowski T.* Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres... S. 90.

⁹ *ILS* – *Dessau H.* Inscriptiones Latinae selectae. Berlin, 1892-1916.

¹⁰ On the history of the legion, see in detail: *Absil M.* *Legio I Italica* // *Le Bohec Y., Wolff C.* (ed.). *Les légions de Rome sous la Haut-Empire*. Lyon, 2000; *Matei-Popescu F.* *The Roman Army in Moesia Inferior*. Bucharest, 2010. P. 77-123.

AD 162/167, but hardly later than the end of the century. The shape of the letters and the fact that all the persons mentioned have *tria nomina*, while from the middle of the second century onwards the *praenomen* was increasingly omitted, also confirm this date.

The *nomen* of the third dedicant cannot be restored from the first two letters, since there are too many options. His *cognomen* most likely suggests Greek origin. The same spelling is attested in the inscription from Salona (Split) *CIL* III, 9430 of the 4th or 5th centuries AD. Olympticus occupies the post of a doctor of the vexillation (evidently that of Tyras). The Roman army had a quite well developed medical service: every unit had doctors and they were apparently of different ranks. Certainly, there must have been doctors in vexillations as well, although this inscription seems to be the only evidence of the use of the term *medicus vexillationis*. We know two more inscriptions where a doctor of vexillation is apparently mentioned, though the term is not used. These are a dedication by a *miles medicus* to *Genius vexillationis* of the *Legio I Minervia* (Iversheim, AD 145, *CIL* XIII, 793) and a dedication on behalf of vexillation of the *Legio XI Claudia* in Montana (Mikhaylovgrad in Bulgaria, AD 155, *CIL* III, 7449). The latter inscription apparently lists the entire contingent of the vexillation, and among the principals there is a *medicus*, in the spot one before last, right before *immunes venatores*, after which follows a list of private legionaries by cohorts. Apparently, in the vexillation of Tyras, which was likely not big, this position was held by a doctor of lower status, in the rank of ordinary legionary, who enjoyed the privilege of *immunis*, as did other legionaries with specialized skills.¹¹ *Miles medicus* (exact meaning of the term is debated), the doctor of vexillation in the inscription from Iversheim, was of the same status, while the doctor from Montana was apparently of slightly higher status, since he is ranked as a principal.

The *cognomen* of the fourth dedicant cannot be reliably reconstructed from the preserved letters. Like the third one, he was a doctor, but formally of a higher status, *duplicarius*, i.e. earning double wages. Such status seems to have been normal for naval doctors: of ten known from inscriptions, nine were *duplicarii*¹², including those who died after five years of service (*CIL* XI, 29; *CIL* VI, 3910¹³) and only one L. Lollius Valens (*CIL* X, 3559), who died after just 17 days of service, was *manipularis*. It is possible that the doubling of wages for doctors who served in the navy was designed to compensate for the difference between the generally lower wages and status of marines in comparison to those of soldiers of the land forces, especially legionaries¹⁴.

¹¹ Direct mention: *Dig.* 50.6.7; on military doctors of various ranks, see: *Wilmanns J.C.* Der Sanitätsdienst im Römischen Reich. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Studie zum römischen Militärsanitätswesen nebst einer Prosopographie des Sanitätspersonals. Hildesheim-Zurich-New York, 1995, *passim*, especially 75-88; *Baker P.A.* Medical Care for the Roman Army on the Rhine, Danube and British Frontiers in the First, Second and Early Third Centuries AD (BAR International Series 1286). Oxford, 2004. P. 42-45; *Rémy B., Faure P.* Les médecins dans l'Occident romain (Scripta Antiqua 27). Bordeaux, 2010. P. 50-54; *Bader P.* The Identity, Legal Status and Origin of the Roman Army's Medical Staff in the Imperial Age // *Maire B.* (ed.). 'Greek' and 'Roman' in Latin Medical Texts. Leiden, 2014. P. 44-49, with bibliography.

¹² See a list in *Nutton V.* The Doctors of the Roman Navy // *Epigraphica.* 1970. Vol. 22. P. 66-71; *Reddé M.* Mare Nostrum. Les infrastructures, le dispositif et l'histoire de la marine militaire sous l'Empire Romain. Rome, 1986. P. 536; *Wilmanns J.C.* Der Sanitätsdienst im Römischen Reich... S. 19-29.

¹³ See: *Rémy B., Faure P.* Les médecins dans l'Occident romain... P. 176-177.

¹⁴ See: *Starr G.G.* The Roman Imperial Navy. 31 B.C. – A.D. 324. Cambridge, 1960. P. 81; *Hirt Raj M.* Médecins et maladies de l'Égypte romaine. Etude socio-légale de la profession médicale et de ses praticiens du Ier au IVe siècle ap. J.-C. Leiden, 2006. P. 129-131.

Alternatively, it may have reflected harder conditions of service including greater workload than that of doctors serving with the land forces.

The inscription testifies to the fact that in addition to the land units, some of the ships of the Flavian Moesian Fleet were stationed in Tyras, although their main base was at Noviodunum; the presence of ships from this fleet in many places, both on the Danube and the coast of the Black sea, is attested by inscriptions and tile stamps¹⁵. In neighbouring Olbia, the presence of ships of the Moesian fleet is attested in AD 157¹⁶. The dedicant in our inscription was a doctor who was servicing one or several (if there were several) ships attached to the vexillation of Tyras¹⁷, while his colleague mentioned before was responsible for the land forces. Our inscription is the only epigraphic evidence so far that attests a doctor *duplicarius* in a provincial fleet (see, however Galen. *De compos. medic.* 4.8, where a certain *Axius, medicus ocularius* of the fleet of Britannia, is mentioned) – the rest of inscriptions refer to the Misene and the Ravennate fleets.

Apart from this inscription, another Latin inscription from Tyras is traditionally thought to refer to the medical service of the Roman army; it is supposed to mention the unique term *valetudinarius*. It is a **honorific inscription for Marcus Ennius Illadianus**, centurion of the *Legio V Macedonica* (fig. 2), which was discovered during the excavations of the Romanian researcher Paul Nicorescu in 1936 (*INBS*¹⁸ I, 41). Like all other inscriptions from his excavations, it was probably taken to Iași: since 1927 Nicorescu was professor of ancient history and epigraphy at Iași University, and since 1937 also director of the University Museum of Antiquities. At least one of these inscriptions in the late 1950s was in Iași: this is evidenced by a letter by P. Petrescu-Dâmbovița and N. Gostar to P.O. Karyshkovsky on May 27, 1960, to which the latter refers in one of his works¹⁹. However, in the Moldavia's History Museum in Iași, which is the successor of the Museum of Antiquities, none of Tyras inscriptions could be located: there is only a panel with a fake decree, stolen during World War II from the Odessa Archaeological Museum (*INBS* I, 119)²⁰. Apparently, all inscriptions from the excavations of Nicorescu are now lost, in any case their location is unknown and

¹⁵ On the history of that fleet, see *Starr G.G.* The Roman Imperial Navy... P. 129-137; *Kienast D.* Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römischen Kaiserzeit. Bonn, 1966. P. 110-112; *Aricescu A.* The Army in Roman Dobrudja (BAR International Series 86). Oxford, 1980. P. 30-32; *Bounegru O., Zahariade M.* Les forces navales du Bas Danube et de la Mer Noire aux Ier – Vie siècles (Colloquia Pontica 2). Oxford, 1996; *Matei-Popescu F.* The Roman Army in Moesia Inferior... P. 245-255.

¹⁶ *Иванчик А.И., Крапивина В.В.* Римский военный диплом 157 г., выданный матросу Флавиева Мезийского флота // *Зинько В.Н., Крапивина В.В.* (ред.). Древности Северного Причерноморья в античное время. (МАИЭТ, Suppl. 4). Симферополь, 2007. С. 66-83; *Ivantchik A.I., Krapivina V.V.* A Roman military diploma issued to a sailor of the Classis Flavia Moesica // *Chiron*. 2007. Bd 37. P. 219-242.

¹⁷ It seems that there was usually a doctor in the crew of every ship: *Starr G.G.* The Roman Imperial Navy... P. 56; *Nutton V.* The Doctors of the Roman Navy... P. 70; *Reddé M.* Mare Nostrum... P. 536.

¹⁸ *INBS* I – *Ivantchik A.* Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Tyras and Vicinity...

¹⁹ *Карышковский П.О.* Эпиграфические памятники Белгород-днестровского музея // Краткие сообщения о полевых археологических исследованиях Одесского государственного археологического музея в 1961 г. Одесса, 1963. С. 109.

²⁰ See about it: *Иванчик А.И.* О некоторых поддельных надписях Ольвии и Тиры // Археологія і давня історія України. 2015. Вип. 1 (14). Olbio. In memoriam V.V. Krapivina. С. 152-153, рис. 7; *Ivantchik A.I.* Some fake inscriptions from Olbia and Tyras // Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia. 2015. Vol. 21, Issue 2. P. 292-294, fig. 7; *INBS* I 119.

they can only be judged from his publications.

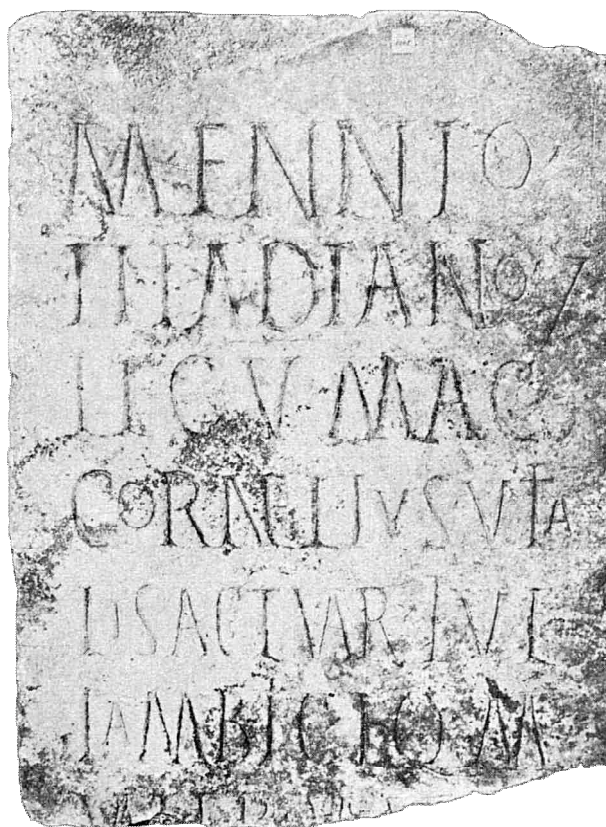


Fig. 2. Honorary inscription in honour of Marcus Ennius Illadianus, centurion of the *Legio V Macedonica* (Photo: Nicorescu 1937, fig. 7).

The inscription in question was published by Nicorescu with a fairly good photo and description²¹ and has been reproduced and commented on many times²², among others because it was seen as evidence of the organization of medical service in the Roman army – the *valetudinarius* presumably mentioned in it, was considered an employee of a military hospital, the *valetudinarium*.

The inscription is on a 37.0 cm high, 28.3 cm wide and 8.8 cm thick marble block with a smoothed or polished facade. Its upper part is preserved, the bottom is broken off. The upper right corner is slightly moulded, on the basis of which Nicorescu assumed that the block was reused and was originally part of an architrave. The letters of the inscription are cut evenly and neatly, decorated with serifs and traced in

²¹ Nicorescu P. Garnizoana romană în sudul Basarabiei // Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secțiunii istorice. Ser. III. 1937. Vol. 19. P. 219-220, n°2, tabl. VI-VII, fig. 7-8; see Nicorescu P. O inscripție a împăratului Traian găsită la Cetatea Albă // Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile secțiunii istorice. Ser. III. 1944. Vol. 26. P. 502, note 2.

²² Карышковский П.О. Материалы к собранию древних надписей Сарматии и Тавриды // Вестник древней истории. 1959. Вып. 4. С. 117, № 6; Sarnowski T. Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres... S. 72, No. 9; AE 1990, 869; Aparaschivei D. Physicians and Medicine in the Roman Army of Moesia Inferior... P. 118, n° 6; INBSI 41.

red paint, traces of which are visible on the stone. Ligatures and interpunction in the shape of small triangles are used, some letters are of reduced size. The letterheight is 3.5 cm.

The text of the inscription reads as follows:

M(arco) ▲ Ennio ▲
 Illadiano ▲ > (centurioni)
 leg(ionis) ▲ ∇ ▲ Mac(edonicae) ▲
 Cor'ne'lius ▲ V'it'a-
 5 lis ▲ act'ua'r(ius), ▲ Iul(ius)
 Iamb'li'c(hus) ▲ eq(ues), ▲ M(arcus)
 (Vā)lēr(ius) ▲ (VĀ)l[- - -]
 [- - -]

6: Iamblic(us) edd; eques Nicorescu; 7: val(etudinarius) edd.

Translation: For Marcus Ennius Illadianus, centurion of the *Legio V Macedonica*, Cornelius Vitalis *actuarius*, Iulius Iamblichus, cavalryman, Marcus Valerius Val[ens - -]

This honorific inscription was apparently set up in honour of the garrison's commander by *principales* who were his subordinates serving in the same legion. The centurion of the *Legio V Macedonica* Marcus Ennius Illadianus is mentioned in another inscription from Tyras²³, which is exactly dated by the title of Trajan, that is, by the presence of the *cognomen Parthicus*. It was bestowed upon Trajan by the Senate on February 20th or 21th, AD 116²⁴. The date of our inscription, therefore, falls between that date and Trajan's death on August 7th, AD 117. The inscription in honour of Illadianus should date in approximately the same period.

Among the principals who have made a dedication in honour of their commander, the *actuarius* is mentioned at the top of the list. He was responsible for keeping records and for food supplies. Our inscription, as far as I know, provides the earliest attestation of this post. Then follows *eques* Iulius Iamblichus. Of all persons mentioned in the text, he is the only one with non-Latin *cognomen*, and is apparently of Greek origin, while his "imperial" *nomen* testifies that his family was enfranchised in the time of Julio-Claudian emperors. Legionary cavalrymen commonly count among the principals, apparently because they were attached to headquarters²⁵. The principals in the Tyranian vexillation must have been members of its commander's headquarters.

This is followed by a mention of the third dedicant. The last line of the inscription preserves only tops of letters in its left half. The restoration of last three letters as *VAL* is quite convincing, although it is less certain that it stands for *val(etudinarius)*, as Nicorescu and all commentators after him thought. Firstly, after *nomen Valerius*, we would expect not his position, but *cognomen*. *Praenomen* is commonly dropped in this

²³ Nicorescu P. O inscripție a împăratului Traian găsită la Cetatea Albă... P. 501-510, pl. 1, fig. 2, 3; Карышковский П.О. Материалы к собранию древних надписей Сарматии и Тавриды... С. 116-117, № 5; Sarnowski T. Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres... S. 71-72, n° 8; AE 1990, 868; INBS 133.

²⁴ CIL XIV, 244; Kienast D., Eck W., Heil M. Romische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie. 6., überarb. Aufl. Darmstadt, 2017. S. 117.

²⁵ Domaszewski A. von. Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres, 2. Aufl. Graz, 1967. S. 47-50.

period (as in this inscription – all *tria nomina* are given for the centurion, but only two for the *actuarius* and *eques*), but *cognomen*, which was a personal, not familial name, is present almost universally. Secondly, the restored position of *valetudinarius* is likely a “ghost”. We have attestations of *optio valetudinarii* (*Dig.* 50.6.7; *CIL* XIII, 8011; *AE* 1937, 181; 1955, 13; *CIL* VIII, 18047 etc.) – a reference to the personnel of hospitals (*valetudinarium*), but *valetudinarius* is nowhere mentioned. The word is attested, but in a very different meaning – “a person of poor health, an invalid” (see e.g. *OLD*, s.v.), i.e. not a doctor, but on the contrary a sick person. Thus, there is no basis for restoring this term here. We should, therefore, restore the *cognomen* of a third principal, whose position is not preserved. Among *cognomina* that start with *Val-*, the most common, especially in military circles, is the name Valens, which I restore here, although other variants are also possible. So, the last two lines of the inscription should read:

Iamb^hli'c(hus) ▲ eq(ues), ▲ M(arcus) | 'Ṽa'leṛ(ius) ▲ 'Ṽa'![ens- - -].

Accordingly, the inscription is not related to the medical service and its surviving part does not mention either doctors or hospital personnel. It must be excluded from the list of sources concerning Roman military doctors, and the term *valetudinarius* as designation of medical personnel never existed.

Thus, a revision of the readings of the inscriptions from Tyras allows us to draw some conclusions concerning the history of medical service in the Roman army. The mention of a *medicus vexillationis*, a term unknown in other texts, is confirmed in the first of them; the inscription belongs to the very few evidences of the existence of the office of doctor of vexillation. It also confirms the existence of at least two doctors in the vexillation of Tyras, one of whom was a naval doctor. The inscription is the only evidence so far to show that doctors serving in the provincial, and not only praetorian (Misene and Ravennate) fleets had the status of *duplicarius*. The inscription itself, however, turns out to be of a different nature than has been suggested – it is not an honorary inscription, but a dedication, placed in honour of Asclepius and Hygia on behalf of not only two doctors, but also two legionaries, presumably privates. In the second inscription the mention of the unique term *valetudinarius*, usually interpreted as referring to personnel of hospital, is not confirmed. In its place the *cognomen* of one of the dedicants is to be restored and the term itself must be considered a “ghost”.

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