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PROJECT TILURIUM - A “POET” IN THE MILITARY CAMP AT TILURIUM¹

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INTRODUCTION

The most famous military unit residing in Tilurium was the 7th Legion (*legio VII*). This legion probably came to Illyricum during the Delmatian-Pannonian uprising (6-9 CE.).²

In the year 42, along with the 11th Legion, this legion acquired the honorary title *C(laudia) p(ia) f(idelis)* because they had refused to participate in the rebellion against the emperor Claudius. After the departure of the *Legio VII C.p.f.* (probably around 60 CE.), smaller military units resided in Tilurium until the 3rd cen-

tury, among which the 8th Cohort (cohors VIII *voluntariorum civium Romanorum*) spent the longest time there.³

This site is rich with inscriptions (around 100) and many of them are the tombstones of the serving soldiers. There are 23 inscriptions of the deceased soldiers of the 7th Legion.⁴ Almost all of them can be dated before the 42 because there's no mention of the honorary title *C(laudia) p(ia) f(idelis)*.

The number and quality of the said tombstones brought us to the conclusion that there must have been a stonemaking workshop in Tilurium. This is also

¹ The results presented derived from the scientific project (Roman Military Camps in Croatia and Roman military camps in Croatia and *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum quae in Croatia repertae sunt*), conducted with the support of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia.

² On the theories when the Seventh legion could come in Illyricum see TONČINIĆ 2011, 11-15.

³ ZANINOVIĆ 1996, 216.

⁴ TONČINIĆ 2011, 170.

conceivable that the same workshop and its craftsmen produced the famous *tropaeum* commemorating Roman victory over the peregrine peoples and communities in Illyricum. Tilurian stelae are easily recognizable by their pronounced iconographic elements of military character (comprising the frieze of weapons etc.) and by large doors in the bases.⁵

On many sepulchral inscriptions all around the Roman Empire there can be found the poems (*carmina epigraphica*) inscribed along with the general information of the deceased person, regardless on his gender, profession or occupation. These poems are composed in verses whose meter is recognizable in most cases. This epigraphic feature started to occupy the scholars' interest and for last 120 years have been published some of the most valuable collections and studies about the *carmina epigraphica Latina*.⁶

Four of the Tilurian stelae have versified epitaphs, so we dare say that there might have been one or more poets at the military camp, who were composing poems for the tombstones.

INSCRIPTIONS

1. Epitaph of Lucius Ancharenus (fig. 1)⁷

*L(ucius) Ancharenus C(ai) f(ilius)
Ser(gia) Laranda mil(es)
leg(ionis) VII ann(or)um XL stip(endiorum) XXI
h(ic) s(itus) est*

5 *Q(uintus) Ancharenus haec tanquam
posuit tibi dona, frater, quia
longe a patria te cecisisse dolet.
Optaram vivo potius dare vina
me tibi non obito, care, ferenda.*

10 *Tu, o si quicquam sentire potes
pro te(m)pore nostro damus. Haec
ostica sit tibi terra levis. Frater
fratri posuit*

The monument was erected for Lucius Ancharenus, son of Gaius, from Laranda in Galatia who lived for 40 years spending 21 years in the Roman army. His

⁵ For the palette of the motives on the Tilurian stelae see TONČINIĆ 2011, 150-153.

⁶ BÜCHELER-LOMMATZSCH (CLE), 1895-1926; CHOLODNIAK, 1897; ENGSTRÖM, 1911; LATTIMORE, 1962; COLAFRANCESCO - MASSARO 1986, 1986; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ, 1987; COURTNEY, 1995; CUGUSI, 1996; SBLENDORIO CUGUSI, 2005; KRUSCHWITZ, 2007.

⁷ SANADER, 2000, 229-231; SANADER - MILIČEVIĆ BRADAČ - DEMICHELI 2007; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 22-23; no. 1; EDH 039866.



Fig. 1. Tombstone of L. Ancharenus (Photo by A. Verzotti)



Fig. 2. Tombstone of Q. Baebius (Photo by A. Verzotti)

brother Quintus set this monument mourning and regretting his death. He was a biological brother to the deceased soldier and not brother in arms, because sometimes this formula can be understood as denoting army brethren on the military inscriptions.⁸ This reading is somewhat supplemented and a bit different from the published and online editions.⁹ We couldn't find the epitaph similar to this one in the sources on our disposal, but some of the motifs are known. The meter of the poem is not certain, but trochaic and iambic meters are a strong possibility.

v. 8-9, *Optaram vivo potius dare vina me tibi non obito, care, ferenda*. The verb *opto* 1, -vi, -tum is seldom used in present conjunctive on the inscriptions.¹⁰ The first image here is the one of grief that the surviving brother is pouring the libation of wine over his brother's grave instead of drinking it with him. Then, it is the pity that the deceased is not able to drink wine anymore. Expressions of these ideas are attested elsewhere in sepulchral poetry.¹¹

2. Epitaph of Quintus Baebius (fig. 2)¹²

*Q(uintus) Baebius Q(uinti) f(ilius) Sergia Conan(a)
miles leg(ionis) VII ann(or)um XXXXV
stip(endiorum) XX h(ic) s(itus) e(st)*

5 *Quamvis lasse, viator, rogo ne graveris et tumulum
contempla meum, lege et moraris, iam
aliquid resciveris. Dum vixi hilaris iucundus amicis,
nunc
torpens iaceo, hic ossa requiescunt mea. Natus sum
Conanis, conditus in Illurico. Vale et bene facito vitae
dum fatum venit.*

10 *Frater fratri.*

The monument was erected for Quintus Baebius, son of Quintus, from Conana in Pisidia, who lived for 45 years and spent 20 years in the Roman army. His unnamed brother arranged for his tombstone and he might have

⁸ On this formula in military context see KEPARTOVÁ, 1986, 11-14.

⁹ SANADER, 2000, 230-231; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 22-23, no. 1; EDH 039866.

¹⁰ We found only one epigraphic example, CIL II/5 1236 (Astigi) : *optaram in manibus coniu/gis occidere*. In both inscriptions, from Dalmatia and Hispania the verb *optaram* is used in the accusative with infinitive construction.

¹¹ CLE 1107 (Roma): *ossibus infundam quae nunquam vina bibisti*; CLE 500 (Tarraco): *fudimus insonti lacrimas nunc vina*.

¹² CIL III 9733; CLE 77; CHOLODNIAK, 1897, 1075; BETZ, 1938, 65; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ, 1987, 227; FADIĆ, 1997, 81, no. 11; SANADER - MILIČEVIĆ BRADAČ - DEMICHELI 2007; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 30-32, no. 8; EDH 058840.

been his brother in arms, not biological brother. The expression *frater* in military terminology is not always related to the kinship relation between two soldiers, but to friendship, which is often firmer because the soldiers live together with each other more than with the members of their families.¹³ Like the poem of G. Iulius, this one is also written in a monologue form. The meter of the poem is iambic senarius.

v. 4-5, *quamvis lasse, viator, rogo ne graveris et tumulum contempla meum*. The idea of this verse is to draw the passer by's attention who will thus recall the memory of the deceased soldier by reading his life-in-short. The request to the traveler or the passer by to pause and contemplate the monument (or some religious site) is well known topos in Roman literature and one of the most memorable passages being Apuleius' Florida (c. 1). There are verse inscriptions with similar meaning attested all around the Empire,¹⁴ but the idea of speaking in the 1st person is known from the late Republican period (Latin inscriptions) and even earlier (Greek inscriptions).

v. 6, *dum vixi, hilaris iucundus amicis*. There are inscriptions expressed in the 1st person related to the character and human qualities which tell us that the dead person was beloved and favored by his friends.¹⁵ Yet, it is unlikely that they would have said such a thing about themselves if they were alive. Similar type of this sentence is attested on some other inscriptions¹⁶ and on the epitaph of G. Iulius (*vixi qua potui, carus sum Oporum*).

¹³ It is visible on the inscriptions when the person who erected the monument for his *frater* didn't bear the same *nomen gentile*. On that phenomenon see KEPARTOVÁ 1986, 11-14. The same pattern cannot be applied among the names of the sailors and it is possible that two biological brothers in Roman navy bear the different gentilician. On names of the sailors, see SALOMIES, 1996, 170.

¹⁴ E. g. CIL XIV 2605 (Tusculum) *te rogo praeteriens fac mora et perlege versus quos ego dictavi et iussi scribere quendam*; AE 1992, 560 (HisPELLUM): *Viator resiste et rogo te et lege post annos XXVII ven[i] HisPELLUM in patriam meam*; AE 1916, 122 (Melita): *siste viator iter animum[que intende sepulchro] et lege*; AE 1989, 247 (Sulmo): *salve viator qui istac iter facis, salvo tuo corpore consiste et lege*.

¹⁵ E. g. CIL VI 16169 (Roma): *vixi ut potui, bene gratus parenti atque amicis omnibus*.

¹⁶ E. g. AE 2006, 475 (Gambulaga): *ego vixi qua et potui, quad modum volui, bene dedi cui volui, non dedi cui nolui*; CIL III 2835 (Burnum): *vixi(!) quad potui semper bene pauper honeste [fr]audavi nullum*. CIL VI 2489 (Rome): *vixi quod volui semper bene pauper honeste fraudavi*.

v. 6-7, *nunc torpens iaceo*. The participle *torpens* is used only once more in sepulchral poetry.¹⁷

v. 7, *hic ossua requiescunt mea*, a verse concerning the fact that nothing but the (burnt) bones¹⁸ were left after him. In non-metrical inscriptions various expressions with the same meaning are known,¹⁹ as well as in metrical inscriptions.²⁰ The same verse we find on the epitaph of G. Iulius (v. 11-12).

v. 7-8, *Natus sum Conanis, conditus in Illurico*. Information about the death away from home is not so common, but sometimes we can find that information on ordinary inscriptions²¹ and in sepulchral poetry.²² Yet, soldiers of the 7th legion left us a lot of information about their home towns, mostly in Italia and Asia Minor.²³

v. 8-9, *vale et bene facito vitae dum fatum venit* is a dead man's salute to the passer by with the wishes for a good life until it ends. The same verse is on the epitaph of G. Iulius (here no. 3).

¹⁷ CLE 2099 (Lugdunum Convenatrm): *ut capite erepto torpentia membra rigescunt*.

¹⁸ Although on the inscriptions sometimes we read *cineres* (the ashes), which doubtless indicates that the body was burnt on pyre, still the word *ossa* (the bones) at least in 1st and 2nd century also means the left of the bones after the pyre, i. e. the ashes. In that sense is indicative the inscription CIL VI 21975 (Rome) with the verse: *ossa dedi terrae corpus Volchano dedi (I gave my bones to the earth and my body to Vulcan)*.

¹⁹ E. g. CIL VI 14765; CIL VI 28871; CIL III 2817; AE 1941/42, 61.

²⁰ E. g. CIL V 3415 (Verona): *hic mea composito requiescunt ossa sepulcro*; CIL V 6811 (Eporedia): *Feci quod volui vivus monumentum(!) / ubi ossa et cineres aeternum requiescerent mihi*; CIL VI 11407 (Roma): *hic mea ferali requiescunt ossa sepulcro*; AE 1992, 560 (HisPELLUM): *hunc locum ubi ossa meorum requiescunt et mea et amicorum meorum ex hoc sepulchro*; CIL III 1871 (Narona): *Pomponio Stercorio infanti infelicissimo non clausa in tumulo requiescunt ossa sepulcro istius nunc infantis nec corpus morte sacratum*.

²¹ E. g. ILJug 2212 (Salona): *natus Salonis, defunctus Monte Gargano*; InscrAqu III (Aquilaia): *natus in castello Dardano [defunctus Aquilaia(!)]*.

²² E. g. CLE 1267 (Salona): *sum Frygiae(!) te[rra] natus et multa p[era] grans veni in D[al]matia sane Sa[lona(?)] bona in quantum licuit aeterna [non hab]itare domu*; CLE 474 (Roma): *Pannonia terra, creat tumulat Italia tellus*.

²³ TONČINIĆ, 2011, 201-207.

3. Epitaph of Gaius Iulius (fig. 3)²⁴

*C(aius) Iulius C(ai) f(ilius)
Fab(ia) Ninica
mil(es leg(ionis) VII
ann(or)um) XXXIX stip(endiorum)
5 XVII h(ic) s(itus) e(st)
Hospes, resiste et tumulum
contempla meum, lege et
moraris, iam scies quae
debeas. Vixi qua potui, ca-
10 rus sum Oporum, hic su-
m sepultus, his ossua re-
quiescent mea. Vale et
bene facito vitae dum
fatum venit.
15 Faustus l(ibertus) patrono*

The tombstone was erected for Gaius Iulius, son of Gaius, from Ninica in Cilicia who lived for 39 years of which he spent 17 years in Roman army. His freedman Faustus set the monument and probably ordered the verse inscription. The poem is written in the form of the monologue of the deceased soldier who wanted to tell his story in the 1st person to the passer by. This *carmen epigraphicum* is doubtless the same poem that was found in Beneventum which proves that some kind of album with already prepared verses and phrases existed in the stonecutting workshops in different places of the Empire.²⁵ Also, we cannot exclude the possibility that the "poets" from Beneventum and Tilverium are the same person. The meter of this poem is iambic senarius.

v. 6-8, *hospes resiste et tumulum contempla meum, lege et moraris* is addressing to the passer by and this or similar sentence is well known from Latin sepulchral poetry.²⁶ There are obvious textual overlappings between this inscription and the one of Q. Baebius (here no. 2).

²⁴ BULIĆ, 1908, 79-80; ENGSTRÖM, 1911, 23; BETZ, 1938, 65; IL-Jug 1950; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ, 1987, 228; SANADER - MILIČEVIĆ BRADAČ - DEMICHELI 2007; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 43-45, no. 20; EDH 034294.

²⁵ Especially the verse inscription of G. Iulius (n. 2), which is very similar to the inscription from Beneventum (CIL IX 1764): *.... hospes, resiste, et tumulu[m] contempla meum] / lege et moraris iam sc[is] fatum meum] / vixi qua potui karus Ru[lfino] fide] / hic sum sepultus hic os[s]a in terra cubant] / valete et bene facite vo[]bis dum licet]. First who noticed this similarity was Duje Rendić-Miočević (RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ, 1987, 268).*

²⁶ E. g. CIL I 3146 (Rome), *hospes, resiste, nisi molestus[t] perspice monumentum*; CIL III 6416 (Burnum): *hospes, resiste, et tumulum contempla meum*; CIL V 6808 (Eporedia): *hospes, resiste, et tumulum hunc excelsum aspice*; CIL IX 1527 (Pagus Veianus): *Hospes, resiste, et quae sum in monumento lege*; AE 1972, 74 (Montecassino): *[hospes] consiste et casus hominum cogita annorum natu(s) XXXV arbitror fuissem*.



Fig. 3. Tombstone of G. Iulius (Photo by A. Verzotti)

v. 9-10, *vixi qua potui, carus sum Oporum* is some kind of a modest apology for the way he lived his life. On the epitaph of Q. Baebius there is a similar verse: *dum vixi, hilaris iucundus amicis*. Both inscriptions have *vixi* (Q. Baebius v. 6, C. Iulius v. 9) in the 1st person perfect and then allusion to the popularity with his fellows and friends. The repeating pattern suggests some kind of "poet's manual" for epitaphs.

v. 13-14, *Vale et bene facito vitae dum fatum venit*, the same verse is on the epitaph of Q. Baebius (v. 8-9).

4. Epitaph of Lucius Mummius (fig. 4)²⁷

*L(ucius) Mummius L(uci)
f(ilius) Fab(ia) Ancyra
miles leg(ionis) VII
ann(orum) XXXVI*

5 *stip(endiorum) XVI h(ic) s(itus) est*

*Arma bis octonis felicia qui tulit annis,
hic situs est fato Mummius ipse suo.
Si sapiunt obiti data munera percipis am(pla)*

10 *et recipis nostrae pignus amicitiae.*

*Hoc tibi cum titulo posuit Cornelius Chrestus
et dixit lachrymans (!) sit tibi terra levis
M(arcus) Cornelius M(arci) l(ibertus)
Chrestus posit*

The monument was erected for Lucius Mummius, son of Lucius, from Ancyra in Galatia, who died in the age of 36 of which he spent 16 years in the Roman army. His friend M. Cornelius Chrestus, who was a freedman, set this monument. In the entire group of inscriptions belonging to the 7th legion in Dalmatia, there's no similar stela to the one of L. Mummius: it is a unique piece of work, both in the sense of metric inscription and as a funerary monument.²⁸ We think that this tombstone is the youngest among these four inscriptions, but still it should be dated before the year 42. The meter is elegiac couplet.

v. 7, *bis octonis annis*. For metrical reasons, it is sometimes easier to express the number of years using mathematic operations. The multiplication of 2 with 8 is attested on the verse inscriptions several times, but in the form *bis octonos (annos)*.²⁹

v. 9, *Si sapiunt obiti data munera*: For all living people the afterlife is a mystery, so they hope that the spirits of the dead are aware of living people's good wishes and intentions. The similar idea is known from several *carmina epigraphica*.³⁰

²⁷ FADIĆ, 1995, 168-172; ŠEGVIĆ, 1996, 135-136, no. 32; FADIĆ, 1997, 81, no. 8; AE 1995, 1232; SANADER - MILIĆEVIĆ BRADAČ - DEMICHELI 2007; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 71-73, no. 42.

²⁸ Completely described in FADIĆ, 1995: 168-172; TONČINIĆ, 2011, 72-73.

²⁹ CLE 1297 (Tusculum); CLE 1071 (Arelate); CLE 1550 (Veleia); CLE 2001 (Dorylaeum); CLE 1178 (Sellaoua); CLE 1996 (Ammaedara).

³⁰ CLE 647 (Roma): *hoc ego feci bene, si quid sapiunt inferi*; CLE 179 (Roma): *Bene adquiescas, Hilara, si quid sapiunt inferi*; CLE 1538 (Roma): *Bene adquiescas frater Aucte Tulli / sei quicquam sapiunt inferi*; CLE 1147 (Salona): *nunc si qu(i)d Manes sapiunt in mollibus umbris conprecior ut matris sit tibi gratus honos*; CLE 180 (Roma): *sei quicquam sapiunt inferi ut ossa eius quae hic sita sunt bene quiescant*; CLE 428 (Stabiae): *si sapiunt aliquid post funera Manes Antoni et Proculi molliter ossa cubent*.



Fig. 4. Tombstone of L. Mummius (Photo by A. Verzotti)

v. 10 *pignus amicitiae*. This syntagm is attested only once more,³¹ but the word *pignus* is more often affiliated with the noun *amor (pignus amoris)*.³²

³¹ CLE 1112 (Umbertide).

³² CLE 750 (Salona); CLE 972 (Roma); CLE 500 (Tarraco); CLE 480 (Ammaedara); AE 2009, 145 (Roma);

CONCLUSION

By comparing these four poems with the other poems (mostly from Italia and Dalmatia), we can notice some similarities. In this regard, the repeating pattern suggests some kind of "poet's manual" for epitaphs with already prepared elements for composing the poems. Two poems (epitaph of Q. Baebius and G. Iulius) were written in similar style, they contained the same phrases in the same meter and it would appear that they were written by the same person.

While we are certain that the epitaph of L. Anchareus (here no. 1) is versified, the verses were not easily identified and consistent metric scheme could not be established with certainty. Although the epitaph of L. Anchareus does not show so many similarities with two iambic poems, it still looks probable that it could be the work of the author who wrote epitaphs for Q. Baebius and G. Iulius.

Two poems were certainly written by the same poet, maybe three, but because of the unique appearance in many senses of the tombstone of L. Mummius, we believe that the author of this poem was not the same person: at least the poems were not composed in the same period of time. The only information common to all four inscriptions is that the legionaries were from Asia Minor and they died before the year 42 (lack of the honorific legion title *Claudia pia fidelis*). The tombstones of L. Anchareus (no. 1), Q. Baebius (no. 2) and G. Iulius (no. 3) are similar in iconographic sense as well. Among themselves, thus they share the same motives: the head of the Gorgon on the stele pediment and the frieze below the pediment (all three); triangular pediment on the top with acroteria to the sides (1 and 3); image of a closed double door with four recessed panels framed with moulding (2 and 3); they all have the poem carved in the inscription field along with all information about the deceased soldier. There are many other stelae of the 7th Legion which have similar or same iconographic solutions, and the only difference here is the presence of a poem.

The tombstone of L. Mummius (4) has the relief image of a young man in the pediment and the griffins on the arms of the pediment. There is the relief image of the military medals. There are three inscription fields: one for the general information about the deceased person, the other for the poem and the third with the information who set the monument. Since there's no such a stela in Tilurium, one can suppose that either this stela wasn't carved in the same workshop or at the same period as the other monuments with the poems. Also, the letters from the first and the third field are better carved than the letters from the other inscriptions.

According to the paleographic peculiarities, one could conclude that these inscriptions are carved in 1st, 2nd or 3rd decades of the 1st century CE. It is mostly visible on the example of some letters which remind of the late Republican or early Principate inscriptions (especially on the inscriptions no. 1, 2 and 3). The letters are very similar to those from the famous *Tabulae Dolabellae* which are set around year 17.³³ Furthermore, there's no evidence of the cognomen for any of the deceased soldiers, which is the reliable indicator for the inscriptions prior to Claudius' reign.

³³ CIL XVII/4, p. 131, SCHMIDT, 2006.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AE	L'Année Épigraphique, Paris
BASD	Bulletino di archeologia e storia dalmata, Split.
CIL	Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
CLE	Carmina Latina Epigraphica (Bücheler-Lommatzsch), Leipzig.
EDH	Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg.
ILJug	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia repertae et editae sunt</i> , Ljubljana 1963-1986.
Opusc. archaeol.	Opuscula archaeologica, Zagreb.

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