

- ³⁰ A. Cermanović, Die dekorierten Sarkophage in den römischen Prowinzen von Jugoslawien, *Archaeologia Iugoslavica* VI, Beograd 1965, 89—103, T. V, IX, X, XI
- ³¹ E. Stein, *Geschichte des spätrömischen Reiches* I, Wien 1928, 202—218; H. Schiller, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit* II, Gotha 1887, 238—245
- ³² CIL III 10648
- ³³ CIL III 3277
- ³⁴ CIL III 3276
- ³⁵ VHAD XII 4—5

Fotografije: Rudolf Bartolović

NEW ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM OSIJEK (MURSA) AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

In the period from 1967 to 1971 the collection of Roman inscriptions in the Museum of Slavonia has been increased with additional six new examples. Three of them have been found at Osijek and three in the environs. The study of them provided some new data for the Roman history in this region.

The inscriptions, transcriptions and restitutions of the texts can be seen in the Croatian text.

No. 1, 2 and 3 (fig. 1, 2 and 3) are altars dedicated to Jupiter, Best and Greatest by consular beneficiaries. They were found all three together in 1971 in a pit 2 m deep when some telephone cables had to be laid into the ground in front of the Technical School in the Lower Town of Osijek. All three are similar in style and in the contents of their inscriptions and they, by all probability, belonged to a Jupiter Temple.

No. 1 (fig. 1) This altar was found broken and damaged so it had to be restored. It is uncertain whether to assume an S at the beginning of line 4 and whether Titus Flavius Iustus was a *bf. cos.* of the leg IV Scythica. It is known that from the time of Emperor Nero on, this legion was constantly stationed in Syria⁴. It is more probable T. Fl. Iustus belonged to leg IV Fl(avia) F(elix) which was stationed at Singidunum,⁵ not so very far from Mursa.

M. Pompeius Macrinus and P. Iuventius Celsus were *consules ordinarii* in the year 164 A. D.⁶

This inscription belongs to the more rare ones which could be with certainty dated and therefore it gives us some useful hints for epigraphic studies and for comparisons of stone-cutters' workshops.

No. 2 (fig. 2) This second of the three altars can be dated either somewhat earlier or later than 164. A. D. because it is quite similar in style and in character of letters to the previous one, with which it was found under the same circumstances.

It explicitly mentions Censorinius Maximus fulfilled his vow after having obtained his dismissal, what was usually done by all beneficiaries when their missions ended and they were called off.

No. 3 (fig. 3) provides some additional explanations for the first two altar inscriptions inasmuch as it expresses a special reason for dedication of the altar to Jupiter, namely, Iulius Salutaris **replaced altars to their right place**. It is only natural to assume he also fulfilled his vow after having obtained his dismissal, as was mostly the case with beneficiaries on duty outside their units. But before he did so, he replaced altars which were overthrown in the Jupiter temple. How many of them were overthrown we do not know, probably even more than the two which were found together with the third.

One can easily see that the three altars belonged to a Jupiter temple and that their inscriptions indicate that in the Marcomann wars, which started as is generally assumed in 167 A. D., plunder and demolition also occurred at Mursa.

Demolition was most violent at the beginning of the war between 167 and 171, when Marcus Aurelius could not yet master the situation, because Pannonia was suddenly overrun by numerous barbaric tribes whose main stream swept through the Pannonian plains down to Italy besieging Aquileia and plundering Opitergium.⁹

The succession of events in connection with our inscriptions happened as follows: T. Fl. Iustus erected his altar in A. D. 164, while Censorinius Maximus might have done the same approximately about that year. When the first violences at the beginning of the Marcomann wars were over and the Emperor mastered the situation in the province, Iulius Salutaris, probably shortly after 171 erected himself a new altar after having replaced to the right place the overthrown ones which he found in the temple and thus fulfilled his vow to Jupiter.

The contents of these three inscriptions give us also the first epigraphic hint as to the road the barbaric tribes used in this part of Pannonia, touching and plundering Mursa on their way to Italy: they obviously used the Roman road Poetovio — Mursa along the Drava river-valley.

As regards the beneficiary station at Mursa, it surely was very significant, surveying the crossing of the river Drava in the nearest proximity of the Danubian Limes. Altars of consular beneficiaries are always indicating a necessity of a tight control over the enemies on a special or crucial spot in the roadnet.^{2 3}

No. 4 (fig. 4) is an inscription on a pedestal of white marble on which apparently a statue of Silvanus stood representing the god with his animals. The statue broke and only the feet of Silvanus and the animals' paws remained. This pedestal was in 1970 occasionally excavated when the new Post Office building in the Lower Town of Osijek was being built. A protective excavation was then carried out and as a result the fundamentals of a noble Roman house from the third century could be detected.

The inscription mentions Marcus Aurelius Severus, a member of the equestrian order who dedicated the statue to Silvanus Augustus. The name of Marcus Aurelius was probably given to the dedicator or to one of his ancestors by Emperor Marcus Aurelius when he granted civil rights to natives. Therefore we assume the dedicator was a romanised native who clung to the domestic cult of Silvanus, evidently identifying Silvanus with Jupiter. M. Aur. Severus probably held an office in the colony Mursa and erected the statue out of propagandistic reasons¹⁶. It might have been at the beginning of the third century.

No. 5 (fig. 5) is again an inscription on a pedestal made of a rough kind of limestone which was found at Klisa near Osijek. The transcription is only an attempt to complete its very laconic text. The statue of Jupiter Dolichenus must have stood on the top of the pedestal, what can be judged by the hole and some remains of lead in the middle of the top. This statue was dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus presumably by a collegium of merchants from the proceeds of their merchandise. The laconic inscription as well as the ligatures in line 3 and 4 (C with E and C with I) induce us to insert in line 5 a small letter o between the two oblique bars of a big letter M and to assume that letter N and I were also in ligature, while the last letter O in the supposed word »mercimonio« can partly still be seen. For these reasons we suggest reading »e mercimonio« and in line 6 and 7, which are missing, we guess »coll(egium) neg(otiantium)« could be the nearest possible solution for completing the inscription.

In the local history of Mursa and her nearest environs this inscription is rather significant being the first we know about to mention Jupiter Dolichenus. It is known that during the reign of the Severan dynasty quite a number of Syrian merchants flocked to eastern Pannonia and also to Mursa and that they, as well as the soldiers returning from wars in the East, were responsible here for the spreading of Oriental cults. The Syrian cults finally disappeared with the fall of the Severan dynasty. Therefore we suggest to date this inscription with the beginning of the third century.^{16—18}

No. 6 (fig. 6), again a small altar of white marble which was found in 1967 north-east of Osijek outside the village Kopačevo. It bears an inscription beginning on the cornice with a dedication to Jupiter Fulgurator or Fulminator by Aelius Surinus, a decurio of the colony Mursa who was elected for the next year but not yet in function as a duumvir for the period of five years (meaning he will perform the censorship). In all probability Aelius Surinus was a prosperous citizen of Mursa who held civil offices in the colony and perhaps owned a villa rustica outside the town where he erected an altar and dedicated it to Jupiter Fulgurator, i. e. to the almighty god endowed with power over sky and weather phenomena.

No. 7 (fig. 7) is part of the frontispiece of a sarkophagus which was in 1970 found among the ruins of the mediaveal borough Kolodvar near Osijek when some restoration work had been carried out on it.

Very little has been preserved from the inscription so that our attempt to restore the text is only conjectural. Assuming the tabula ansata was about 100 cm long and about 60 cm high, we guess there might have been at least six lines. Except for the letters D and M (Dis Manibus) certainly heading the inscription, the next three lines probably contained the names of a married couple with mention of the father's name and with precise figures of the age at which the couple died. Perhaps in the missing line 4 the letters H. S. S. (hic siti sunt) were incised followed by one or two more lines with names of the children or heirs who carried out the parents' last will and provided for the sarkophagus and the inscription on it.

This type of a sarkophagus with medallions on each side of the inscription has not yet been found in this region and therefore it enlarges the collection of our specimens among which the ones with the well known norico-pannonian curved decoration, trimming the tabula ansata, widely prevails. So this fragment of a sarkophagus will eventually have to be dealt with in a study on the stone-cutters' workshops of Mursa.

No. 8 (fig. 8) is the fragment of a titulus, an honorary inscription which had been perhaps walled in on a building, a triumphal arch, a bridge, an aqueduct or the like. It was in 1965 dug out from a plough field near Beli Manastir in the vicinity of Osijek and later given to the museum.

It is very difficult to restore this inscription because so very little remained of it. Apparently one thing is assured: the mention of the Emperor Flavius Iulius Constantius. In the second preserved line (the stone was broken off even on the top as can be judged by the line of rupture) perhaps we should assume the name of this emperor's brother, Constans, was cut, although in an unusual abbreviation. The following flattering phrases we tried to decipher, can often be found on contemporary official inscriptions or on coins. In line 6, 7 and 8 which are missing, we can easily contrive names were mentioned of some high official or of a commanding officer or else of a group of people in charge of the building of the respective object, and that the titulus highly probably ended with the formula very common at that time: DNMQ eius or eorum.

If our conjecture is only approximately right then this titulus could have been erected or walled in on a building or object at the beginning of the joint reign of Constantius and Constans when they earned some successes in their wars in the East and West of the Empire and were not yet in an open dissension on religious matters as it became evident in 343 during the synod at Serdica. These religious conflicts never ceased to the end of their joint reign.

We have tried not only to give explanations and attempts for restoration of these new inscriptions, but also in each case to point out what new knowledge for the cultural or political history we could, so to say, squeeze out of them. We believe the new knowledge is significant and can be excellently used for changing, completing and forming the image of Mursa and her environs in Roman times, on what scholars in our country have been working for two centuries. One can be rather optimistic on the furtherwork on this image as constantly new finds come to light caused by large-scale building activities in process.