

# NEW EPIGRAPHIC CONFIRMATION OF GOVERNOR'S STRATOR FROM SALONA

Ivan Matijević

University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

History Department

Poljička cesta 35

HR – 21000 Split

imatijev@ffst.hr

UDK / UDC: 003.071(497.583 Solin)“652”

Izvorni znanstveni članak / Original scientific paper

10.52064/vamz.57.1.4

During archaeological excavations of the city walls south of the cemeterial basilica at Kapljuč in Salona in 2021, a fragment of a stele was discovered. The stele was erected during the Late Principate period in this part of the so-called Northern necropolis by Aurelius Candidianus. He likely commemorated his wife, whose name has not been preserved. Candidianus served

as a strator in the governor's officium in Salona. Although he did not specify his unit affiliation, it can be assumed to have been one of the five auxiliary units stationed in Dalmatia at that time.

**Key words:**

Salona, necropolis, stele, roman army, officium consularis, strator

During archaeological excavations of the city walls in Salona in 2021, in the space between towers 15 and 16, about fifty meters south of the early Christian cemeterial basilica in Kapljuč, a stele was found.<sup>1</sup> Its upper part is missing, it is made of limestone.<sup>2</sup> The height of the monument is 35 cm, length 30 cm, thickness 8 cm. The height of the letters in the 1st and 2nd lines is 3.1 cm, in the 3rd line 3 cm (ligature 4.4 cm), in the 4th line 2.1 cm, in the 5th line 1.8 cm. The letters in the 4th and 5th lines are carved in ordination lines. Triangular interpuncts separate the words in the 2nd, 4th and 5th lines, double punctuation is in the 5th line between letters *S* and *B*. Ligatures are in the 1st line (*MP*), 3rd line (*ID*) and 4th line (*TR*). The inscription field is bordered by a simple carved frame. The inscription reads:

[---]  
 [inc]ompa[ra]  
 bili · Aure[lius]  
 Candidian[us]  
 miles · ex strat[ore]  
 5 co(n)s(ularis) · b(ene) · m(erenti) · p(osuit)

Aurelius Candidianus, a soldier and governor's *strator*, erected a stele to the person whose name was carved in the upper part of the monument. After the name, the adjective *incomparabilis* was written, which was usually used by spouses for deceased spouses on burial inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, it is highly likely that Candidianus commemorated his wife. Furthermore, during the Late Principate period when this inscription was created, active soldiers in Salona had the strongest bonds with women, as mentioned in 43% of the inscriptions out of a total of 51.<sup>4</sup> His gentilicium *Aurelius* is one of the most common in the Roman Empire, as well as in Dalmatia, especially during the Late Principate when the majority of its bearers acquired it in the year 212 thanks to the Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana*.<sup>5</sup> The cognomen *Candidianus* in Dalmatia is confirmed only on two inscriptions, one of which is from Salona.<sup>6</sup> Several elements indicate that the stele was created during the Late Principate. It is the use of the adjective *consularis*;<sup>7</sup> the abbreviated formulation *b(ene) m(erens) p(osuit)*, the *duo nomina* form and gentilicium *Aurelius*,<sup>8</sup> as well as the shape and dimensions of the stele.<sup>9</sup>

1 Many ancient inscriptions were discovered in the space between the basilica and the city walls. Most of them are tombstones and originally belonged to the so-called Northern necropolis. Many were used as building material during the construction of this part of the city walls in 169–170. More details about the necropolis, Miletić 1990, 170–172; about the results of the most recent research of this part of the walls and some other inscriptions that were discovered together with this stele, Demicheli 2023; Demicheli, Grbavac 2024.

2 This paper was written as part of a scientific project *The new lives of ancient inscriptions: epigraphic spolia from the territory of Central Dalmatia* (Epi-Spolia) funded by Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ IP 2019-04-3537).

3 Here are some examples from Salona: *AE* 1914, 73; *ILJug* 2148; *CIL* 3, 2086; 2199; 2279; 8612; 8730; 9381.

4 After women, the next most commonly mentioned are parents (16%), followed by brothers (5%), and then *hospitae*, sisters, freedmen, and various other individuals, Matijević 2019, 63–78, 90, 91.

5 Alföldy 1969, 46–53.

6 Alföldy 1969, 170.

7 Syme 1968, 89; Rankov 1999, 20, 21, n. 39.

8 Alföldy 1969, 27, 29, 30.

9 During this time, soldiers in Salona used similar simple steles with a thickness between 7 and 9 cm, and with a simply framed inscription field, for example see *CIL* 3, 2009; 2061; 2063; 8522; 9401; 12899; 12905; 14695, as well as the stele of *strator* Crispinus.

FIGURE 1. New epigraphic confirmation of governor's strator from Salona (photo by D. Demicheli).



In the governor's *officium*, the *stratores* likely ranked as *immunes* and were organized as an elite unit serving the governor. Occasionally, they performed tasks similar to those of other *officiales*: they led the fortification of cities, carried out arrests, guarded prisons, served in *stationes* and inspected horses for the army.<sup>10</sup> In provinces without their own legionary garrisons, *stratores* were taken from auxiliary units. They had their own officers and an administrative office (*tabularium*), they formed a *collegium* in the governor's *officium* and were quite independent. In Gallienus' time, the *stratores* were the core of the newly founded mobile cavalry units (*equites stablesiani*).<sup>11</sup>

Aurelius Candidianus is only the fourth epigraphically confirmed *strator* of a governor in the province of Dalmatia.<sup>12</sup> Three previ-

ously known inscriptions of *stratores* date to the time of the Late Principate and originate from the provincial capital of Salona which could mean that they were tied to the governor's *officium* in the city through their service.<sup>13</sup> Statilius Pulcher erected a funerary inscription for his wife.<sup>14</sup> After serving as *strator* in the governor's *officium*, he was promoted to a post in the pay grade of *duplicarius* in his *Cohors I Belgarum*.<sup>15</sup> The unit was located in Dalmatia during the 2nd and 3rd centuries,<sup>16</sup> and its soldiers also operated in Salona.<sup>17</sup> A male person erected a stele to Aurelius Hilarianus who spent at least ten years in the army.<sup>18</sup> Stele was damaged in the place where the name of his unit was carved, which is why, in addition to the *Cohors I Belgarum*, the *Cohors I milliaria Delmatarum* can be considered.<sup>19</sup> This unit was probably founded a few years before the year 169 or 170,<sup>20</sup> and its

10 Rankov 1999, 22, 23, n. 57.

11 Speidel 1974, 544–546; 1978, 49, n. 269.

12 There are 113 inscriptions testifying about soldiers in the service of the governor's *officium* in Salona, Matijević 2020.

13 The same goes for Dalmatian *singulares*, all of whose epigraphic confirmations originate exclusively from Salona; Matijević 2016; 2020, 52–56.

14 *CIL* 3, 2067= *ILS* 2587= *EDH HD*063263= Matijević 2020, 106, cat. no. 93.

15 Matijević 2020, 48, 49.

16 Alföldy 1987, 248, 249.

17 Matijević 2011.

18 *ILJug* 2610= *EDH HD*035046= Matijević 2020, 106, 107, cat. no. 94.

19 Matijević 2015, 154; 2020, 49.

20 Cesarik, Glavaš 2017, 209–215.

members were also epigraphically confirmed in Salona.<sup>21</sup> According to the palaeographical characteristics and the considerable similarity with some other military monuments from Salona, Hilarianus' service could be more closely dated to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century.<sup>22</sup> Iulius Crispinus was commemorated by his wife,<sup>23</sup> the name of his unit is not specified.

Before the Candidianus' mark of his *strator* service is the preposition *ex*, as it is next to the marks of Hilarianus' and Pulcher's service. However, according to their inscriptions they were ordinary soldiers, so the preposition used in this context could mean that they were returned to their units after the end of their *strator* service or that they were soldiers in the *stratores* analogous to the expression *eques ex singularibus*.<sup>24</sup> Candidianus did not mention the name of his unit, and it must have been one of the five cohorts (*cohors I Belgarum, III Alpinorum, VIII Voluntariorum civium Romanorum, I milliaria Delmatarum, II milliaria Delmatarum*) located in Dalmatia at the time.<sup>25</sup> He emphasized belonging to the governor's *officium*, apparently considering this service more prestigious, as some Dalmatian *beneficarii* and *singulares* did on their inscriptions.<sup>26</sup>

The stele of strator Aurelius Hilarianus was found in a room that leans against the northern wall of the Early Christian basilica in Kapljuč,<sup>27</sup> which means that he was buried within the so-called Northern necropolis that stretched here before the creation of the basilica.<sup>28</sup> Adennius Philetianus<sup>29</sup> and Vivius Silvestrus,<sup>30</sup> active soldiers from the *Cohors VIII Voluntariorum*, were buried in this part of the necropolis sometime during the Late Principate.<sup>31</sup> About eighty meters to the south next to the city walls, Candidianus' stele was discovered, which indicates that at least four soldiers were the owners of burial plots in this necropolis or had the right to be buried in them during the time of the Late Principate.

21 *CIL* 3, 2006; 14700, and most likely *CIL* 3, 14693; for more details on this fragment see Cesarik 2022, 63, 64.

22 Matijević 2020, 70, 71.

23 *ILJug* 2739=EDH HD035168= Matijević 2020, 107, cat. no. 95.

24 Speidel 1978, 51, 52. For the use of the preposition *ex*, Speidel 1993, 191–192; Nelis-Clément 2000, 383; Emion 2017, 35.

25 Alföldy 1987, 245–247, 249, 251, 252, 254, 255. During the first years of Emperor Domitian's reign, the *Legio III Flavia felix* left Dalmatia, it then becomes a provincia inermis with no permanently stationed legions in it (Wilkes 1969, 97, n. 2).

26 Matijević 2020, 29, 50, 52.

27 Brøndsted 1928, 160, n. 14.

28 Miletic 1990, 170–172.

29 *AÉ* 2013, 1193=EDCS-69200413.

30 *AÉ* 1913, 41=EDH HD026952.

31 Matijević 2013, 120.

## ABBREVIATIONS

EDCS – Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby (<http://www.manfredclaus.de>).

EDH – Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg ([edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de](http://www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de)).

ILJug A. Šašel, J. Šašel (eds.), *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Yugoslavia inter annos MCMXL et MCMLX repertae et editae sunt*, Situla 4, 1963.

A. Šašel, J. Šašel (eds.), *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Yugoslavia inter annos MCMLX et MCMLXX repertae et editae sunt*, Situla 19, 1978.

A. Šašel, J. Šašel (eds.), *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Yugoslavia inter annos MCMLI et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt*, Situla 25, Ljubljana, 1986.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alföldy 1969 – G. Alföldy, *Die Personennamen in der romischen provinz Dalmatien*, Winter, 1969.

Alföldy 1987 – G. Alföldy, Die auxiliartuppen der Provinz Dalmatien, in Speidel, M. P. (ed.), *Römische Heeresgeschichte. Beiträge 1962–1985.*, MAVORS: Roman Army Researches 3, Brill, 1987, 239–297.

Brøndsted 1928 – J. Brøndsted, La basilique des cinq martyrs a Kapljuč, in Dyggve, E., Brøndsted, J., Weilbach, F. (eds.), *Recherches a Salone I*, J.H. Schultz, 1928, 33–186.

Cesarik 2022 – N. Cesarik, Cohors I Alpinorum vel cohors I milliaria Delmata-rum?, *Tusculum* 15, 2022, 61–69.

Cesarik, Glavaš 2017 – N. Cesarik, I. Glavaš, Cohortes I et II milliaria Delmata-rum, in Demicheli, D. (ed.), *Illyrica Antiqua 2, In honorem Duje Rendić-Miočević, Proceedings of the International Conference (Šibenik, 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2013)*, Odsjek za arheologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2017, 209–222.

Demicheli 2023 – D. Demicheli, Salonitanski bedemi i kule – riznica epigrafskih spomenika, *Hrvatska revija* 3, 2023, 9–14.

Demicheli, Grbavac 2024 – D. Demicheli, K. Grbavac, Nadgrobni tituli djevojčice Valerije Prokile iz Kule 15 na sjevernim salonitanskim bedemima, *Tusculum* 16, 2024, 87–94.

Emion 2017 – M. Emion, *Des soldats de l'armée romaine tardive: les protectores (IIIe-VIe siècles ap. J.-C.)*, unpublished PhD thesis, Normandie Université, 2017, <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01740232> (January 26, 2023).

Matijević 2011 – I. Matijević, Natpisi Prve kohorte Belgâ iz Salone, *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku* 104, 2011, 181–207.

Matijević 2013 – I. Matijević, Nova epigrafska potvrda vojnika Osmo dobrovoljačke kohorte u Saloni, *Tusculum* 6, 2013, 117–124.

Matijević 2015 – I. Matijević, *Rimski vojnici na natpisima iz Salone iz doba principata*, unpublished PhD thesis, Zadar University, 2015.

Matijević 2016 – I. Matijević, Singulares of the Dalmatian governor, *Vjesnik za arheologiju i povijest dalmatinsku* 109, 2016, 193–224.

Matijević 2019 – I. Matijević, Životni suputnici rimskih vojnika na salonitanskim nadgrobnim natpisima iz doba principata, *RADOVI – Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 51, 2019, 61–116.

Matijević 2020 – I. Matijević, *Officium consularis provinciae Dalmatiae. Vojnici u službi namjesnika rimske Dalmacije u doba principata*, Književni krug Split, 2020.

Miletić 1990 – Ž. Miletić, Sjeverna salonitanska nekropola, *Radovi Filozofskog fakulteta u Zadru* 29 (16), 1990, 163–195.

Nelis-Clément 2000 – J. Nelis-Clément, *Les bénéficiaires: militaires et administrateurs au service de l'Empire (Ier s. a.C. – VIe s. p.C.)*, Ausonius Editions 5, De Boccard, 2000.

Rankov 1999 – B. Rankov, The governor's men: the officium consularis in provincial administration, in Goldsworthy, A., Haynes, I. (eds.), *The Roman army as community, Including papers of a conference held at Birkbeck College, University of London on 11-12 January, 1997*, Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary series 34, Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999, 15–35.

Speidel 1974 – M. P. Speidel, Stablesiani. The raising of new cavalry units during the crisis of the Roman Empire, *Chiron* 4, 1974, 541–546.

Speidel 1978 – M. P. Speidel, *Guards of the Roman armies: an essay on the singulares of the provinces*, Habelt, 1978.

Speidel 1993 – M. A. Speidel, Miles ex cohorte: Zur bedeutung der mit ex eingeleiteten Truppenangaben auf Soldateninschriften, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 95, 1993, 190–196.

Syme 1968 – R. Syme, The Ummidii, *Historia* 17, 1968, 72–105.

Wilkes 1969 – J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia*, Routledge, 1969.