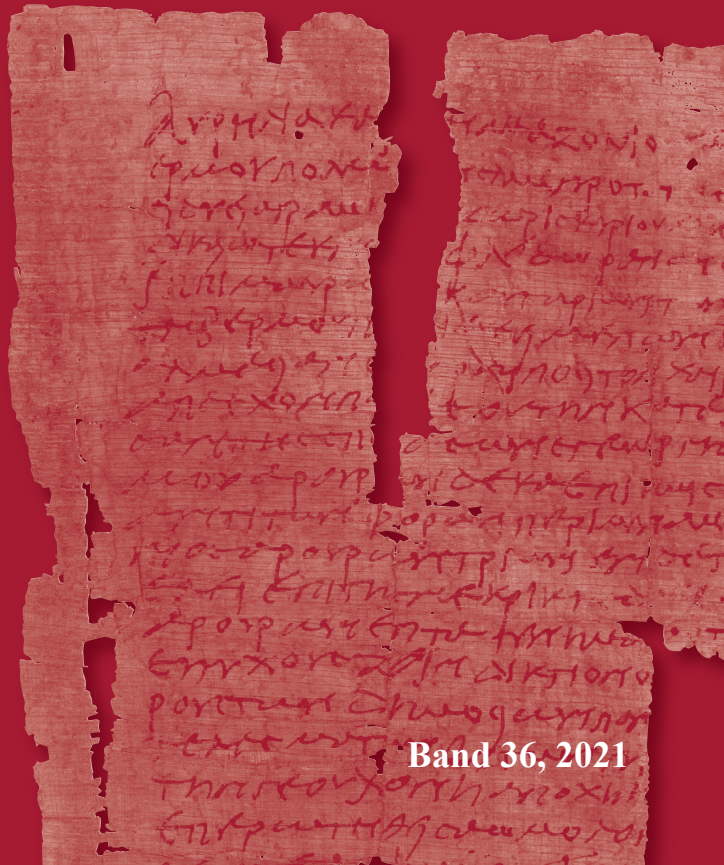


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I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S

Christer B r u n: Commodus and/or Marcus Aurelius in a Double-Sided Inscription from Ostia (<i>ScO</i> XI, C 115): Yes and No (Taf. 1).....	1
Chiara C e n a t i — Victoria G o n z á l e s B e r d ú s — Tina H o b e l — Peter K r u s c h w i t z — Denisa M u r z e a: Defragmenting Apulum: A Re-Examination of <i>IDR</i> III/5.2.586 (With a Digression on <i>IDR</i> III/5.2.622+626).....	11
Bram F a u c o n n i e r: Euergetism as a Political Strategy: The Case of Iason versus Moles	27
Alexander F r e e: A New Epitaph from Aphrodisias (Taf. 2–5).....	47
Nikolaos G o n i s: Caracalla’s Titulature, Geta’s Murder, and Egypt. Some Chronological Considerations	57
Nikolaos G o n i s: From Theadelphia to Philadelphia (PA): Two New Papyri from the Dossier of Aurelius Sakaon (Taf. 6–7)	63
Nikolaos G o n i s: Letters of Wessely to Bell	71
Alan J o h n s t o n: The Re-Emergence of <i>IG</i> XII,9 1196 (Taf. 8–10).....	79
Aikaterini K o r o l i: A Greek Receipt for the Payment of <i>diagrathon</i> from the Dossier of Ioulios (Taf. 11)	83
Sophie K o v a r i k: Aus Zwei mach Eins: SB XVIII 13997 und P.Vindob. G 21154. Ein arsinoitischer Teilpachtvertrag über Weinland (Taf. 12–13) .	87
Adam Ł a j t a r: <i>Peripoloi</i> and the god Medaurus in a newly-discovered Greek inscription from Rhizon (Taf. 14–15).....	97
Donato M a r a z z i: Contratto di lavoro per un muratore salariato (Taf. 16– 17).....	109
Federica M i c u c c i †: A Hermopolite Sale on Delivery in Vienna and London (Taf. 18–21)	115
Amphilochios P a p a t h o m a s — Eleni T s i t s i a n o p o u l o u: Der Gebrauch von Gnomēn, Proverbien und Apophthegmata in den griechischen Privat- und Geschäftsbriefen der byzantinischen und früh-arabischen Zeit (5.–8. Jh. n. Chr.).....	121
Amphilochios P a p a t h o m a s — Athanassios V e r g a d o s: An Oxy- rhynchon Deed of Surety for a Registered Sailor from the Dossier of Flavia Anastasia (Taf. 22–23)	131
Linda P u t e l l i: Ein neuer Papyrus des Flavius Johannes, <i>comes</i> <i>consistorianus</i> (Taf. 24–25).....	139
Peter S i e w e r t: Spätarchaisches Gesetz über Landwirtschaft aus Olympia (BrU 10) (Taf. 26).....	149
Marianna T h o m a — Amphilochios P a p a t h o m a s: The Use of Threat as a Rhetorical Strategy in Women’s Papyrus Letters.....	163

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Bemerkungen zu Papyri XXXIV (<Korr. Tyche> 989–1094)	177
Adnotationes epigraphicae XII (<Adn. Tyche> 119–122)	211
Tafeln 1–26	

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Defragmenting Apulum:^{*}
A Re-Examination of *IDR III/5.2.586*
(With a Digression on *IDR III/5.2.622+626*)

1. Introduction

During a survey of verse inscriptions from Roman Dacia in July 2021, we had the opportunity to re-examine an inscribed stone fragment that was published as item no. 586 in volume III/5.2 of the *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae*. Discovered in the vineyards of Dealul Furcilor-Podei,¹ the area of the necropolis with the largest surface

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¹ Further on this necropolis see M. Macrea, D. Protase, *Șantierul Alba Iulia și împrejurimi*, *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice* 6 (1959) 435–452; D. Protase, *Săpăturile de la Alba Iulia*, *Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice* 7 (1960) 407–410 and (1974) 134–159; R. Ciobanu, *Alba Iulia – Dealul Furcilor (Podei)*, *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice* (2004) 25–26; D. Protase, *Necropola orașului Apulum, săpăturile din anii 1970–1971*, *Apulum* 12 (1974) 134–159; M. Gligor, P. Mazăre, M. Breazu, *Un mormânt din epoca romană descoperit la Alba Iulia – Dealul Furcilor (str. Izvor, f. n.)*, *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica* 9.1 (2005) 251–261; R. Ota, *Some observations on the latest archaeological researches carried out in the Roman necropolis from Apulum (Alba Iulia). “Dealul Furcilor-Podei”*, *Ephemeris Napocensis* 19 (2009) 23–47; M. Gligor, D. Bogdan, P. Mazăre, Ș. Lipot, G. Balteș, *Morminte romane din necropola de pe Dealul Furcilor de la Apulum*, *Terra Sebus* 2 (2010) 117–139; G. Bounegru, *Roman Cemeteries from Apulum. Demarcation and Chronology*, in: I. Piso, V. Rusu-Bolindeț, R. Varga, S. Mustață, E. Beu-Dachin, L. Ruscu (eds.), *Scripta Classica Radu Ardevan sexagenario dedicata*, Cluj-Napoca 2011, 79–87; A. C. Bolog, *Necropola romană de la Apulum, Dealul Furcilor-“Podei” (campaniile 2008–2012)*, Cluj-Napoca 2017, and M. Gligor, A. Bobină,

area of Apulum, the monument is now preserved in the Muzeul Național al Unirii at Alba Iulia, Romania.²



Fig. 1: IDR III/5.2.586. © MNUAI. Photo: C. Cenati, July 2021.

The object, a fragment of a white limestone plaque (55 × 52 × 18 cm), is broken in its upper and right parts. Some wear and tear aside, the left and lower parts of the stone retain their original shape and form. At the top of the stone's inscribed surface, traces of at least three letters of an otherwise lost line are still visible. From the organisation and grammar of the surviving text, it is evident that at least two lines of text, if not more, are now lost at the beginning.³ We estimate that, in terms of the item's original measurements, the damage at the top of the stone amounts to at least 20 cm, possibly even more if the text at the beginning was written in slightly taller letters than the rest (which seems plausible, given that the letter size is gradually decreasing from top to bottom [see below]).

G. Balteș, A. Fetcu, *Cercetări arheologice preventive în necropola romană de la Apulum, Dealul Furcilor-Podei*, Acta Musei Porolissensis 41 (2019) 121–135. Cf. also section 3.1, below.

² Inv. no. 371. — The item featured in the collection of Adalbert Cserni (inv. no. 9090) (1908), and it was first scientifically published by D. Radu, *Materiale Epigrafice din Muzeul Regional Alba Iulia*, Apulum 4 (1961) 115 no. 31 (with fig. 31). Further on this piece, in addition to Radu op.cit. and Ioan Piso's entry in *IDR*, see C. Ciongradi, *Grabmonument und sozialer Status in Oberdakien*, Cluj-Napoca 2007, 174, pl. 50. Cf. also <https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD038977> and <http://lupa.at/11630> (last accessed: October 2021).

³ See below, sections 2 and 3 (esp. 3.2.).

Originally, the stone was part of a sizeable funerary plaque, visible to passers-by in the shape of a horizontal rectangle.⁴ The plaque was once mounted to a substantial, more complex funerary structure.

The fact that, and the way in which, the plaque was thus mounted can be gathered from two features of the surviving fragment: (i) On the left-hand side, a thicker, protruding frame is visible.⁵ This frame was not part of any original decoration of the margin, but designed to be fitted into an overlapping support structure.⁶ (ii) Equally on the left hand side, two previously unreported boreholes, drilled already in Roman times, are visible between the frame and the text (whose left margin is separated from the frame by a noticeable distance). The holes are located at the beginning of the third and sixth lines of the inscription, both with an identical diameter of 1 cm. The upper hole still has a depth of 0.2 cm, the lower one, better preserved, is 0.5 cm deep. These boreholes without a doubt served as receptacles for metal clamps that were used to affix the plaque.⁷

While the beginning of each surviving line of text is preserved, more than half of each line is lost due to the stone's damage on the right. The final line, now only exhibiting the letter *S* of what once was the phrase *s(it) [t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)]*, appears to have been arranged centred: it was executed in rather smaller letters than the remainder of the text, and we have no reason to believe that any further text followed after this closing formula.

Overall, the lettering is carefully executed: letter shapes, sizes, and spacing are regular. The letter height varies between 5 cm (ll. 2–6), 4–4.5 cm (l. 7) and 3 cm (l. 8).⁸ Traces of drawn lines, designed to guide the stonemason, are still visible; these were not, however, always meticulously followed in the execution of the letters. Interlinear spacing is consistent and measures 2 cm. Triangular punctuation marks are regularly

⁴ Piso in IDR III/5.2.586 calls the object a 'stèle funéraire en calcaire'. Ciongradi, *Grabmonument* (s. n. 2) 174 refers to the monument as an 'architectural stele'.

⁵ Piso in IDR III/5.2.586 says that 'le champ épigraphique était encadré par des demi-colonnettes.' This does diverge from our own analysis of the object in general and from our view regarding the nature and use of the surviving protruding element on the left-hand side in particular. Ciongradi, *Grabmonument* (s. n. 2) 174 describes a decoration with vine branches on the remaining part of the frame on the left, similarly as on other funerary monuments from Apulum. Following our autopsy, we are confident to rule out the presence of any such decoration on this part of the monument.

⁶ We trust the validity of this claim because it is apparent that the final line of the preserved text, l. 8 of our line numbering (cf. section 2), is also the original ending of the inscribed text. If the surviving rim on the left had been decorative in nature, one would expect to find the very same rim also at the (still intact) bottom end of the inscribed field (and need to find a different explanation for the boreholes).

⁷ It is reasonable to assume that the upper of the two boreholes was originally (roughly) in the middle of the plaque, and that a third one existed above, at approximately the same distance that we observe between the two remaining holes. This tallies with our approximations regarding the original height and overall number of lines for this monument.

⁸ Line numbering, unless otherwise specified, follows that of our own edition rather than that of Ioan Piso; cf. below, section 2.

placed in between all surviving words. In the last line, also distinguished from the preceding text by its already mentioned reduced letter size, an additional punctuation mark was placed ahead of the first (and only surviving) letter, marking up this line and its formulaic message — *s. t. t. l.* — even further.

2. Towards a New Reading and Interpretation of *IDR* III/5.2.586

The piece was recorded and edited in *IDR* III/5.2 as follows:⁹



Figg. 2–3: Photo and drawing of *IDR* III/5.2.586, ad loc.

[- - -]
fecerun[t - - - ? *Valen*]-
tiniano [- - -]
vixit an(nis) [- - - *mensi*]-
bus tribu[s diebus]
5 *duobus* II [- - -]
solis vita [- - -]
S [- - -]

Following our autopsy, we would like to draw our attention to a small, but consequential number of points.

The most significant problem, from which everything else follows, lies in what is l. 3 of the previous edition. Why would *an(nis)* be given in abbreviation, if not only all numerals in this text, but also the terms *mensibus* and *diebus*, were subsequently spelled out in full?¹⁰ We therefore argue that, unless any strong evidence compels us to believe otherwise, we must assume that *annis* (or *anno?*),¹¹ too, was originally spelled out in full.

⁹ Image: *IDR* ad loc.

¹⁰ The only actual clue in support of this view is the syllable *-bus* at the beginning of l. 5 (= l. 4 of Ioan Piso's edition), which can only be explained as the ending of *[mensi]bus*. — For further items from Apulum detailing years, months, and days of an individual's lifespan see below, n. 26.

¹¹ One cannot be absolutely positive whether the text once read *annis* or *anno* (sc. *uno*), though the former is significantly more plausible: this point was already made by Piso in *IDR* III/5.2.586.

Based on that observation, as well as the need to include a numeral to specify the relevant number of years, also spelled out in full, it is inevitable to consider an inscribed monument that, originally, was significantly wider than previously suggested: arguably, this monument was about 2.5 times as wide as the surviving fragment in its present state.

A second observation is related to this first matter, namely the placement of the letter *S* in l. 7 of the previous edition. The formula *s. t. t. l.*, to which this *S* once pertained, was arranged at the centre of the inscribed field, most likely, rather than somewhat awkwardly aligned to the right margin. It is also reasonable to assume that these four letters were spaced out more widely than the other letters in the text, to achieve a pleasant layout overall.

Considering the way in which information is given in this text then, it is evident that (i) *tribu[s]* in l. 5 pertained to the number of months, whereas (ii) *duobus* at the beginning of l. 6 was part of the number of days that the deceased had lived. If the lines were rather wider than previously assumed, the only way to make this text and its layout work, is to infer that the deceased had lived another twenty-two, not just a mere two, days after those three months by which he exceeded the hitherto uncertain number of years that he had lived: [*diebus viginti*] | *duobus* — or potentially even [*diebus viginti et*] | *duobus*.

Based on our autopsy of the item, as well as the aforementioned considerations, we therefore propose to document and restore the inscribed text as follows:

 [- - -]+++[- - -]
 fecerun[t - - - • Valen(?)]-
 tiniano • [- - -]
 vixit • an[nis • - - - • mensi]-
 5 bus • tribu[s • diebus • viginti (vel viginti • et • ?)]
 duobus • I+[- - -]
 solis • VITA[- - -].
 • s(it) [• t(ibi) • t(erra) • l(evis) •].

The final trace of a letter in l. 6, a vertical line, may have been an L, E, or F, possibly even an N, at a stretch, an M. The serifs do not match those of a B, D, or an R. In our drawing, below, we tentatively suggest that this was, in fact, an L. Resolving the *cruces* of l. 1 is substantially more difficult, as our photo illustrates (produced with arresting lights from two sides under challenging light conditions):



Fig. 4: Detail of the first line of text. © MNUAI. Photo: V. González Berdús, July 2021.

There are visible traces of no fewer than three letters. The final one may have been an R, an M, or, at a stretch, an A. The traces of the two earlier letters did not provide us with sufficient clues as regards their original nature. At any rate, these letters must have formed part of the names of the inscription's dedicants.¹²

With a view to the monument's original width, a restored l. 5 now gives us the strongest indication for an approximation regarding the average number of letters per line (including punctuation). Realistically, one may deduce that the average number of characters per line was at approximately 25 ($\pm 10\%$). We will revert to this matter in section 3.2. (where we will also discuss the additional — purely illustrative! — supplements that we have incorporated in the following sketch). This also allows for a perfectly centred display of *s. t. l.* in its smaller lettering. We imagine therefore that, originally, the inscription could have looked as follows:¹³

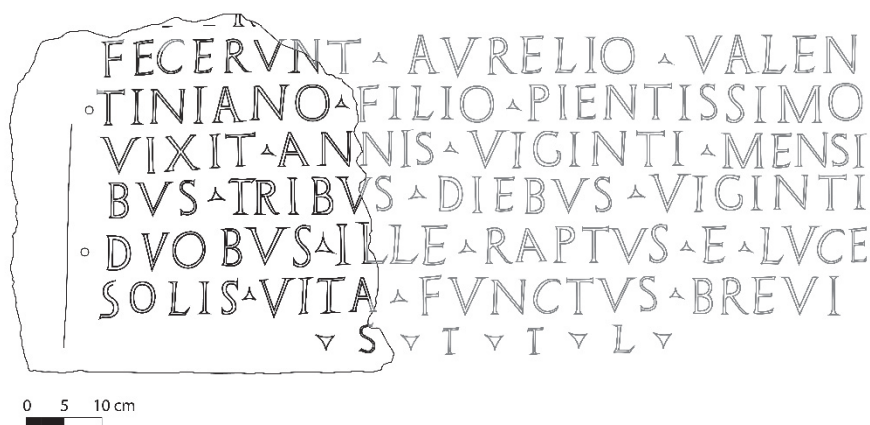


Fig. 5: Tentative reconstructive drawing of the inscription. Drawing C. Cenati, T. Hobel.

Our translation of the text into English (supplements are given in square brackets, and only sufficiently certain supplements are translated):

. . . [*sc.* they] had this made for . . . [Valen?]tinianus . . . [*sc.* he] lived for [twenty (?)] year[s], three [month]s, [twenty-]two [days] . . . of (the) Sun (?) . . . life . . .
May [the earth rest lightly upon you].

¹² Cf. below, section 3.2.

¹³ Drawing by Chiara Cenati and Tina Hobel. We discuss the supplements of l. 2, 3, 6, and 7, which are purely for illustrative purposes, more extensively below in section 3.2; considering the tenuous nature of these supplements, we exclude them from our translation, below.

3. Further Observations

With a clearer understanding of the text, its original design, and its overall content and dynamic, it may be useful to provide a short commentary on a number of issues arising from our revised reading.

3.1. *The Monument in Its Spatial and Chronological Context*

The Roman necropolis of Dealul Furcilor-Podei is the necropolis with the largest surface area at Apulum. It was developed for, and in use by, the Municipium Aurelium Apulense founded by Marcus Aurelius, later promoted to Colonia Aurelia Apulensis by Commodus. It bordered the road that connected the *municipium* / *colonia* with the Roman fort and the *canabae* of the *legio XIII Gemina*, later to become the Municipium Septimium Apulense under Septimius Severus.¹⁴ The evolution of the cemetery is closely linked to the evolution of the urban centre of Apulum. Thus, its existence started after the foundation of the Municipium Aurelium Apulense in A. D. 180,¹⁵ and it continued after the abandonment of the province and in the fourth century.¹⁶

The Roman funerary monuments that have come to light from this necropolis are very fragmentary. This does not, however, prevent us from making some more general observations regarding the status of the individuals who were buried there. Even if fragmentary, the surviving epigraphic evidence on the whole exhibits very accurate writing, often executed in rather tall letters (cf. e. g. IDR III/5.2.554), designed for display on what once were sizeable and costly monuments. The necropolis was used by both civilians and high ranking soldiers who inhabited the *colonia*. Many of them seem to have achieved a certain social status. Among others, we note e. g. a *beneficiarius* (IDR III/5.2.621), a *decurio* (IDR III/5.2.626),¹⁷ as well as a female member of the urban aristocracy (IDR III/5.2.647). This is the context of the burial behind IDR III/5.2.586.

With a view to the date of IDR III/5.2.586, only very little can be said, and while each individual observation may not be strong enough in and of itself to support the overall claim, the cluster of observations certainly consistently points in the same direction. The inscription's palaeography would seem to suggest a likely date between the second and certainly not later than the beginning of the third century A. D. The lettering is mostly neat and tidy in its execution, and the letters have been cut deeply into the surface. These formal considerations match (i) the chronological framework derived from the development of the Dealul Furcilor cemetery and the birth of the *municipium* at Apulum, (ii) the use of a *cognomen* ending in *-tinianus*, and (iii) the absence of a cut frame to enclose the inscription.

¹⁴ For a map of the area see IDR III/5.1, pl. III, and cf. the bibliography assembled above, n. 1.

¹⁵ IDR III/5.1.20.

¹⁶ See e. g. Ota, *Some observations* (s. n. 1) and Bounegru, *Roman Cemeteries* (s. n. 1).

¹⁷ See the digression, below.

3.2. *The Deceased: Name, Age, and the Overall Narrative*

The fragmentary nature of *IDR* III/5.2.586, to an extent, distracts from an important aspect of overall information design: the name of the deceased, whatever it may have been (see below), did not, in fact, top this inscription.

The only surviving element that unambiguously is (part of) a personal name in our fragment is placed at the beginning of l. 3: *-tiniano*.¹⁸ This — evidently the name of the deceased — has commonly, though with some hesitation, been restored as *[Valen]-tiniano*: a plausible supplement, since Valentinianus is the most common *cognomen* ending in *-tinianus* that is attested within both the third century military milieu¹⁹ and the context of Apulum's elite.²⁰ It is by no means the only credible solution, however. Less frequent names, such as Iustinianus or Martinianus, which are attested in Dacia, cannot be excluded,²¹ and it is also perfectly possible to think of more scarcely attested names such as, for example, Quintinianus, Faustianus, and Latinianus (attested in Moesia Inferior and Pannonia Superior), or even Pontinianus or Gratinianus (both unattested in Dacia).²²

The space that follows the verb *fecerun[t]* in l. 2 due to the stone's damage would capture approximately 15 characters,²³ among which there would have been the first few letters of the *cognomen* (i. e., for example, *[Valen]*). If the deceased still held *tria nomina*, then the question would be whether or not the *praenomen*, like the numerals in this inscription, was spelled out in full — leaving either little, or even very little, space for a *nomen gentile*, suggesting in turn that the *nomen gentile* must have been a short one (such as Aelius or Ulpius, for example). With the inscription's tentative date in the late second, or possibly the early third, century A. D., however,²⁴ there is a good chance that no *praenomen* was used, giving somewhat more space for the *nomen gentile*: we chose *Aurelius* in our draft reconstruction of the text, above, purely for illustrative purposes.

¹⁸ The only additional potential hint towards a personal name receives discussion, below, section 3.3. (with n. 32).

¹⁹ It pertains to the Valens / Valentinus group of *cognomina* that is especially common in the military sphere; cf. already L. R. Dean, *A Study of the Cognomina of Soldiers in the Roman Legions*, Princeton 1916, 54–56. Regionally, the *cognomen* Valentinianus, derived from Valentinus, also appears e. g. in *RIU* II 512 (Brigetio) and *IScM* IV 110 (Durostorum).

²⁰ Cf. Claudius Valentinianus, *decurio quattuorvir* of Apulum (*IMS* I 76 = *IDRE* II 311).

²¹ Iustinianus (*IDR* III/6.322) appears on a stamp on a *mortarium* from the necropolis Dealul Furcilor in Apulum. Another stamp with the name Iustinianus was noted on a lamp dated to the second / beginning of the third century A. D., which was discovered at the same necropolis and is now held in a private collection (Bounegru, *Roman Cemeteries* [s. n. 1] 81). Martinianus is the *cognomen* of a *centurio* of the *legio V Macedonica* (?) at Potaissa (*CIL* III 7692), and it also would seem to appear in *ILD* 446 from Brâncovenesti.

²² One Aurelius Gratinianus appears as the dedicant of a third-century votive inscription from modern day Bistrița, Mehedinți County (*IDR* II 132).

²³ For our calculations regarding the length of each line see above, end of section 2.

²⁴ See above, section 3.1.

The dative of the honorand of this inscription was placed as late as ll. 2–3 of the text. Since the subsequent text lacked any mention of relatives or heirs directly responsible for the setting up of the memorial, it is apparent that the nominatives of the memorial’s dedicants must have been listed before the honorand, i. e. in the (now almost entirely lost) first line and potentially some additional line(s) that preceded it (especially if one were to imagine inclusion of any titles in addition to personal names). In other words: those who honoured the deceased deemed mention of their own name(s) more important than mention of the deceased himself. This in turn suggests that the memorial was set up by a socially ambitious group of individuals,²⁵ parents or otherwise, a group with a desire to advertise their own names at the expense of their deceased son, relative, friend, or acquaintance. Arguably, their relationship with the deceased was clarified after the mention of the deceased’s name in the now missing part of l. 3: *filio pientissimo* (as proposed, again purely *exempli gratia*, in our drawing, above), *filio carissimo, alumno, sodali, fratri* — something along those lines.

Unfortunately, there is no other evidence that would help us to understand who exactly the other individuals involved in this memorial — the providers / facilitators just as much as the recipient — actually were.

The damage that has occurred resulted in the deletion of the number of years that the deceased had lived. There are two main factors that might help in a tentative restoration: (i) the space that is hypothetically available for a numeral spelled out in full, and (ii) the use of a formula that lists years, months, and days in total. As for the former aspect, supplements of reasonable length would include (in ascending order) *quattuor, quinque, undecim*, and *viginti* — potentially also *septem* or *novem*, if one were to assume a somewhat wider letter spacing. Once again purely for illustration purposes, we chose *viginti*.²⁶ It is possible, though not necessary, that the indication of the age of the deceased was introduced by use of the relative pronoun *qui* at the end of l. 3.

Monumental commemoration of an individual who died at a relatively young age, potentially without any major accomplishments in life, feeds even further into the earlier observation that those who created the memorial were clearly interested in promoting themselves by means of this monumental display — and that was most likely the reason why, syntactically, they reserved the first position for themselves.

3.3. Filling Some Gaps

The biggest challenge to a better understanding of the piece is caused by the fragmentary nature of ll. 6–7, and especially of l. 7, in which the stone exhibits the letters *SOLIS • VITA*. We do not (yet) have a definitive idea of what the underlying

²⁵ The plural *fecerunt* (l. 2) makes it unambiguously clear that originally more than one individual was mentioned as the subject of this sentence.

²⁶ *Centum* may safely be disregarded since at Apulum the very specific breakdown of someone’s lifespan by years, months, and days was typically only employed for those who died at a relatively young age, namely within the first two decades of their respective lives: cf. *IDR III/5.2.474, 502, 539, 593, 606*. The formula is predominantly used in the second (rather than the third) century A. D. at Apulum.

message was. We contemplate three different hypothetical scenarios (in descending order of probability). All three scenarios presuppose that *SOLIS* is related to *sol -is*, the Sun. Syntactically, a solution that both fits the available space and results in a meaningful statement based on an interpretation of *solis* as a form of the adjective *solus -a -um* did not occur to us, but we have no compelling reason to rule out solutions based on this alternative interpretation, either.

(i) As the piece is a funerary monument, it is tempting to think of a rhetorical or even poetic(ising) parting message ahead of the final wish *s. t. t. l.*²⁷ The surviving words are not, however, easily reconciled with any well attested formulaic message (much less one that would actually fit the available space).

Pondering what might have been expressed here through a rhetorical or poetic sentiment, one might consider, for example, the notion that the deceased had relinquished his life (*vita*) together with any hope to see the light of the sun (*solis*) ever again. In a slight variation on the same theme, one might also think of an expression along the lines of *il[le raptus e luce]solis vita [functus brevi]*, i. e. the notion that the deceased was snatched away from the light of sun (*solis*) after only a short life (*vita*).²⁸ Both variants are distinct possibilities (with a view to the message they convey rather than the actual wording), and the latter, entirely hypothetical and tentative, might even fit the space that was available on the stone.

Certainly, there is no visual clue in the surviving text, especially after *duobus* in l. 6, that, in terms of layout or reader's preparation, would suggest a sudden change in style and register, moving from prose to verse (or something close to it).²⁹ At the same time, one might be willing to argue, of course, that the use of spelled-out numerals had been an indication of elevated style all along. We therefore assign the highest level of plausibility to this option, combined with the caveat that this must, of course, remain pure speculation.

(ii) There is a possibility that the statement made in this final part of the inscribed text was not rhetorical or poetic in nature, but was an element of a more complex form of self-representation. This is especially plausible when considering the status and aspirations of the individuals who were involved in the creation of monumental burials at the Dealul Furcilor cemetery.³⁰

From the overall structure of the text it is apparent that the dedicants wanted to self-advertise rather than to honour the deceased — and the question thus is whether or not

²⁷ Piso in *IDR* III/5.2.586: 'une formule peu habituelle'.

²⁸ See *vitaeq(ue) e limine raptus* (*CLE* 569, 3); *e luce ereptus* (*CLE* 1828, 3); *raptae/raptus lucis* (*CIL* VIII, 9094; 9150; 11734; 18606).

²⁹ On the way in which verse parts typically tend to be introduced when they follow a substantial prose opening see M. Limón Belén, *La compaginación de las inscripciones latinas en verso: Roma e Hispania*, Roma 2014. Of course, employment of visual clues to distinguish verse from prose in epigraphic sources is always just an option, not an absolute requirement by any means.

³⁰ See above section 3.1.

they did not only wish to promote themselves in the public sphere, but also make another statement, and this statement, if correct, might have been a religious one.

At Apulum — both in the *Municipium Septimium Apulense* and in the *Colonia Aurelia Apulensis* — the cult of Sol (Invictus Mithras) was very popular. In fact, it is one of the best attested cults for this settlement altogether.³¹ Might the inscription have contained a reference to this cult? Are we potentially looking at an *in[Victi cultor dei] | Solis . . .* (or something similar, along the same lines)? This suspicion might, in fact, be fuelled further by what follows, namely *VITA*, which, of course, needs not be a form of the noun *vita*, ‘life’ at all. A recent article by Mariana Egri, Matthew M. McCarty, Aurel Rustoiu, and Constantin Inel established in some detail that (i) there was a second / third-century A. D. Mithraic community at Apulum, and (ii) a man called Vitalis (!) was an important node in this religious network.³² Even though the status of Vitalis himself is unknown, the evidence collated by Egri, McCarty, Rustoiu, and Inel makes it clear that this man was involved in a network of ambitious local dignitaries.³³ Might Apulum’s *cultores dei Solis Invicti Mithrae* thus have played a role in this burial, and was Vitalis involved in its execution?

At the same time, one must ask just how plausible such a bold reference to a religious network could be in the context of a funerary monument. We therefore chose to assign a slightly lower level of likelihood to this solution when compared with the first one.

(iii) Finally, we — at least briefly — considered an indication of the day of death in the shape of *[- - - die] | Solis*, preceded by reference to the day of the month and possibly the year.³⁴

This type of indication of a specific day of the week would seem at odds, however, with the (albeit tentative) date of the inscription: with a view to its lettering, it seems plausible to suggest a date in the late second century A. D., and we feel confident to rule out any date later than the early third century. In that regard, a reference to the *dies Solis* would be the least plausible of the three proposed readings of the fragment.

³¹ Further on this see Cs. Szabó, *The Cult of Mithras in Apulum: Communities and Individuals*, in: L. Zerbini (ed.), *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane*, Soveria Mannelli 2015, 407–422 and Cs. Szabó, *The material evidence of the Roman Cult of Mithras in Dacia. CIMRM Supplement of the province*, *Acta Ant. Hung.* 58 (2018) 325–357.

³² See M. Egri, M. M. McCarty, A. Rustoiu, C. Inel, *A New Mithraic Community at Apulum (Alba Iulia, Romania)*, *ZPE* 205 (2018) 268–276.

³³ Note e. g. Egri, McCarty, Rustoiu, Inel (note above) 268: *Soli | Invicto | Mithrae | pro salut(e) | P(ubli) Ael(i) Ma|ri flam(inis) col(oniae) | Vitalis ark(arius) | v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit)*.

³⁴ At Apulum, an expression naming a specific day of the week features in a votive inscription (*CIL III 1051: die Iovis*).

Digression: A Small (But Not Altogether Insignificant) Discovery While on the Search for Further Fragments of IDR III/5.2.586

During an — unsuccessful — search for additional fragments to restore the inscribed monument that was *IDR III/5.2.586* from the surviving epigraphic record of Apulum, we considered (and then rejected) *IDR III/5.2.626* as a potential candidate:³⁵



Fig. 6: Photo and drawing of *IDR III/5.2.626*, ad loc.

It is certain that this piece (a limestone fragment, measuring $38 \times 29 \times 17$ cm, according to *IDR ad loc.*) cannot have been part of the same monument as *IDR III/5.2.586* due to a number of conflicting issues. While contemplating the content and shape of *IDR III/5.2.626* in some detail, we noticed that it, in turn, however, with a view to its shape, its dimensions, its fragmentation as well as its layout, and its content might, in fact, be a fit for a third inscription from Apulum, namely *IDR III/5.2.622* (also a limestone fragment, measuring $55 \times 55 \times 16$ cm, according to Ioan Piso, *IDR ad loc.*):³⁶

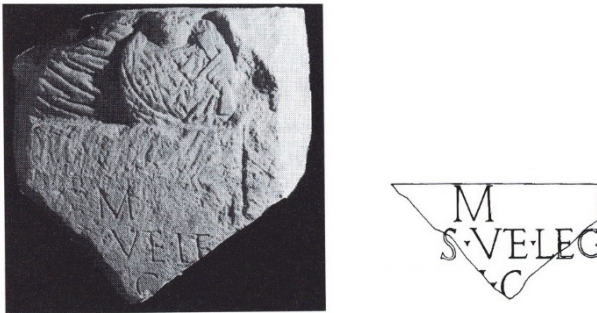


Fig. 7: Photo and drawing of *IDR III/5.2.622*, ad loc.

We did not consult either fragment in an autopsy, and, unfortunately, despite our and the museum's best efforts, this second fragment has been inaccessible. No recent, high-quality photo was available to us. On the basis of a photo of Ioan Piso's, however, in conjunction with a recent photo of the earlier fragment that was kindly provided to

³⁵ Image reproduced from *IDR ad loc.* Cf. also <http://lupa.at/12049> (last accessed: October 2021).

³⁶ Image reproduced from *IDR ad loc.* See also <https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD039015> and <http://lupa.at/13036> (last accessed: October 2021).

us by the museum curator (see below), we are convinced that these are perfectly adjoining fragments that once formed part of the same monument.³⁷



Fig. 8: *IDR* III/5.2.622. © I. Piso.

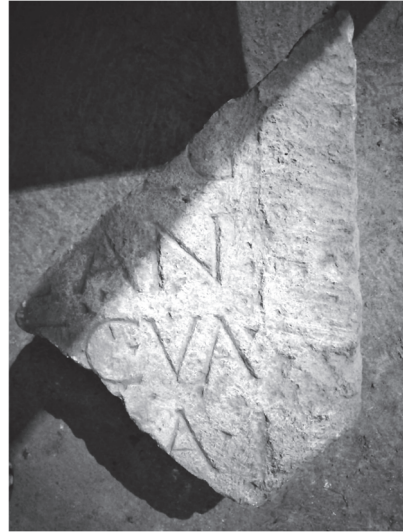


Fig. 9: *IDR* III/5.2.626. © MNUIA. Photo: D. Zudor, August 2021.

The sculpted decoration of *IDR* III/5.2.622 displays a child holding what seems to be a book scroll, standing in front of an adult.³⁸ The inscribed text of the two fragments combined, including the most plausible supplements, reads as follows:

[D(is)] M(anibus)
 [- -]s vêt(eranus) leg(ionis)
 [XIII G(eminae)³⁹ - - - de]c(urio) can-
 [abensium - -]EC(- - -) VA
 5 [- - -] + A
 - - - - -

³⁷ *IDR* III/5.2.622 (left): photo taken by Ioan Piso (also available at <https://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD039018>); *IDR* III/5.2.626 (right): photo taken by Dana Zudor, August 2021.

³⁸ Cf. Ciongradi, *Grabmonument* (s. n. 2) 169 and J. Mander, *Portraits of Children on Roman Funerary Monument*, Cambridge 2013, 328.

³⁹ The supplement proposed by Piso in *IDR* III/5.2.622 is the most probable, although it cannot be excluded that the deceased was a veteran of another legion, like the *I Adiutrix*, that might have been in Apulum during the reign of Trajan (cfr. *IDR* III/5.1.74 and see J. C. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate* [Institute of Archaeology: Occasional Publication 7], London 1983, 30–40, esp. 40; I. Piso, *Les légions dans la province de Dacie*, in: Y. Le Bohec [éd.], *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire*, Lyon 2000, 205–206; G. Cupcea, *Professional ranks in the Roman army of Dacia*, Oxford 2014, 11, with further literature on this specific topic).

Since we were unable to consult these pieces in autopsy, we hesitate to hazard a guess regarding the nature of the fragmentary letter at the beginning of l. 5. On the basis of photos provided to us, however, it may have been a T, a C, or a G:

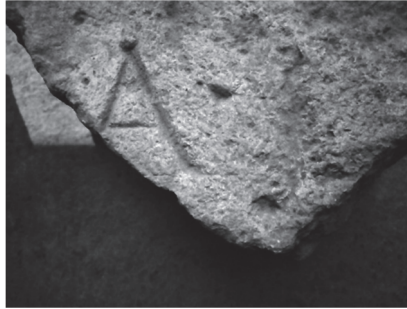


Fig. 10: Detail of *IDR III/5.2.626*. © MNUAI. Photo: D. Zudor, August 2021.

Previously, the *CAN* of l. 3 (= l. 2 of *IDR III/5.2.626*) had been explained as a fragment of the name *Candidus* -a.⁴⁰ In conjunction with the mention of, and the phrase's obvious relation to, a military veteran, honoured by this funerary inscription, it is now clear that this cannot be the case. It therefore seems most plausible now to think of a veteran who held the office of *decurio canabensium* (or *canabarum*) at Apulum, very likely in the 2nd century A.D.⁴¹

The remainder of the text remains relatively opaque. *EC* of l. 3 had previously, i. e. prior to the combination of the two fragments, been explained as *[d]ec(uri- -)*.⁴² Whether this can still stand, future research will have to show. Punctuation before and after the subsequent cluster *VA* suggest, however, that this sequence *VA* was felt to be a unit: might this have been part of an abbreviated name, such as *Va(lerius)* vel sim.? And in that event, was *EC* perhaps part of the phrase *[f]ec(it)*?

Whatever the case may be, it is now clear that the two pieces, previously deemed unspectacular in and of themselves, were, in fact, part of the funerary monument for a local magistrate. The sculpted family scene (father and son (?), including a *volumen*) fits the idea of a proud display of status overall.

⁴⁰ *IDR III/5.2.626*: ‘Can[didus] ou un *cognomen* apparenté’.

⁴¹ See *IDR III/5.1.240* and *5.2.527* for parallels, and also cf. *5.1.74* for a variant: (...) | *L(ucius) Silius Maximus* | *veteranus leg(ionis) I Ad(iutricis)* | *P(iae) F(idelis) magistra(n)s* | *primus in can(abis)* | (...) (in a dedication to *Fortuna Augusta* and the *Genius canabensium*).

⁴² *Piso* in *IDR III/5.2.626*: ‘probablement *[d]ec(urio)* dans une troupe auxiliaire.’

4. A Brief Conclusion

The two sets of texts discussed in the present article, though heterogeneous in many ways, allow perhaps for a short, concluding outlook on funerary self-representation at Apulum.

Autopsy of *IDR III/5.2.586* allowed us to reconstruct a substantial funerary plaque that once had been mounted on a funerary building. The honored deceased was a young man, or, depending on the restitution of the number of years, potentially even a child still, who, by the time of his death, appears not yet to have reached any major accomplishment within the urban or military community. The dedicants, arguably the parents, therefore used the monument to set in stone, and to put on proud display, their own role and status within the Roman city. This is clearly reflected in the name's arrangement on the stone. Furthermore, if our interpretation is correct, they asserted their family's status not only by choosing to erect a big funerary building for their son: they also would appear to have composed a funerary inscription in a high stylistic register, beyond the widespread and trite formulae of funerary commemoration, thus tapping into, without fully embracing, Roman poetic imagery.

Self-representation strategies of local elites of Apulum can also be observed in the second monument. In spite of the combination of the two fragments, the inscription is still very fragmentary. The remaining text is sufficient, however, to make it evident that we are dealing with a new member of the local elite who had finished his service in the army as a simple soldier, but then was prominently involved in the administration of the *canabae* where he still lived. His achievements and his pride were further emphasised and represented, accessibly and almost in a nutshell, in the portrait at the top of the monument where the man is shown with the toga (?) and a roll in the hand.

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