

HISTORICAL AND EPIGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM DOCLEA

1. FROM THE 1890s TO THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

Since 1890, when the systematic archaeological research of Doclea started, some 140 inscriptions had been recorded from the site and its vicinity. Today only 40 survive. They are mainly located at the site and in the archaeological depot of the Museum and Galleries of Podgorica (MARTINOVIĆ 2011, 125-148). Due to the inability to provide adequate protection by the relevant institutions, a large number of inscriptions have disappeared or have been destroyed by the local population and irresponsible researchers. Certain inscriptions mentioned in documentation from the archaeological excavations in Doclea, kept at the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Properties in Cetinje, are still not published. There are photographs of several inscriptions whose present location is unknown: the authors of this paper were not able to find them all.

The interest in inscriptions from Doclea is actually older than any systematic research of the site. Since the mid-19th century, several writers have documented them in their works (NEUGEBAUER 1851, 73-74; DENTON 1877, 72; KNIGHT 1880, 190; MARKOV 2005, 389-393). The great progress made in epigraphy in the second half of the 19th century also influenced the scientific interest in Doclea. In 1873, Theodor Mommsen included several inscriptions from Doclea in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. This epigraphic material was provided by Valtazar Bogišić, who, during his long and systematic research into the legal past of Montenegro, also showed an interest in its epigraphic and numismatic heritage (KOPRIVICA 2019, forthcoming).

In October 1881, after the Montenegrin separation from the Ottoman Empire, a mission from the French government arrived, comprised of Lieutenants Saski and Ansac (VUJOVIĆ 1971, 314-315). French officers also visited Doclea. Lieutenant Saski made drawings of several inscriptions, published a year later by Robert Mowat (MOWAT 1882; SASKI 1882).

During the first systematic research at Doclea, carried out in 1890-1892, some previously unknown inscriptions were found among the remains of the newly discovered *forum*, *basilica*, *thermae*, temples I and II (temple of Dea Roma and temple of Diana). The director of the research, A.P. Rovinski, recorded and later published these inscriptions (ROVINSKI 1890, 12; 1891, 19-21; 1909, 36-39, 55-59). Due to his modest knowledge of Latin epigraphy, some of the inscriptions were not read properly. Inscriptions found at this period were of great importance for understanding the history of Doclea, especially

those on architraves found in the *forum*, referring to *Marcus Flavius Fronto* (CIL III 12695, CIL III 12692, cfr. CIL 13819, CIL III 13820).

These first investigations prompted don Frano Bulić, director of the Archaeological Museum in Split, to send Vid Petričević to Montenegro to report on the excavation results. Petričević visited Doclea in April 1890. His report included copies of several inscriptions that he published the same year (PETRIČEVIĆ 1890a, 1890b).

Piero Sticotti, the most prominent researcher of Doclea, arrived with Luka Jelić in Cetinje in September 1892. Their mission was part of a wider research in Montenegro and Albania, which was conducted at the request of the Directorate of the Archaeological and Epigraphic Seminar of the University of Vienna. Sticotti and Jelić read, copied and made drawings of the inscriptions at the site and in its immediate vicinity (KOPRIVICA 2017, 61). The texts they found at Doclea were readily incorporated into the supplement of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* III (STICOTTI 1908, 52). During this mission, as well as in the next two that Sticotti carried out in 1902 and 1907, 68 inscriptions from Doclea and its immediate environs were documented and analysed (STICOTTI 1913, 155-183).

In September 1892, Paul Nicod was also in Montenegro by the order of the French Ministry of Education. The inscriptions he had collected in Doclea on that occasion were published a year later by René Cagnat (CAGNAT 1893). From 1893, the British Archaeological Mission, led by J.A.R. Munro, made great progress in understanding the sacred topography of Doclea (KOPRIVICA 2013). Munro published, together with F.J. Haverfield, the epigraphic material discovered during this mission. These inscriptions, together with the previously known ones (74), were published in the research report (MUNRO *et al.* 1896, 31-57). The most important finding was the *ex voto* inscription of deaconess Ausonia, not preserved today (MUNRO *et al.* 1896, 42-43; ŠEKULARAC 1994, 19-20; KOPRIVICA 2013, 10; SANADER 2013). Some of the inscriptions found in churches (Basilica A, Basilica B and the Cruciform church) are *spolia* from the Roman period. At the end of their mission, the British researchers also made some of the inscriptions from Doclea and its vicinity available for publication in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (KOPRIVICA 2013, 2).

In 1893, Ljuba Kovačević, a professor at Belgrade Higher School, copied four inscriptions from the site, three unknown and the fourth one that had been erroneously transmitted by Cagnat. Kovačević later gave these inscriptions to professor Josip Brunšmid for publishing (BRUNŠMID 1901, 87-88).

During his stay in Montenegro in October 1901, the Italian archaeologist Roberto Paribeni was primarily focused on the inscribed monuments (BURZANOVIĆ, KOPRIVICA 2011, 222-223). The texts found in Doclea and Tuzi were published in 1903 (PARIBENI 1903). Archaeologist Dante Vaglieri, a member of the multidisciplinary scientific mission led by Antonio Baldacci

in 1902 (BALDACCI 1991), published only three, previously unknown, inscriptions. One of them, an altar, is dedicated to the deity Ananka, especially venerated in Greece (VAGLIERI 1904; ŠAŠEL KOS 2013).

The period of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the World War I (1914-1918) was not favourable for any scientific research. However, since in January 1916 Montenegro was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Camille Praschniker and Arnold Schober were able to conduct some research in Doclea. Their study of the site was limited to terrain mapping and the finding of some, previously unpublished inscriptions (PRASCHNIKER, SCHOBBER 1919, 1-3).

In the period between the two World Wars, scientific interest in Doclea almost ceased. No scientific mission was organized, nor was any presence of foreign or Yugoslav researchers documented in Doclea. Nevertheless, Antun Mayer (MAYER 1928-1929) and Nikola Vulić (VULIĆ 1931, 124-125; VULIĆ 1933, 64) made a significant contribution to the research of the inscriptions from Doclea during this phase.

2. FROM WORLD WAR II UNTIL TODAY

After World War II, interest in the inscriptions from Doclea was prompted by finds made during systematic excavations throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Most notably, three inscriptions were published by A. CERMANOVIĆ-KUZMANOVIĆ, O. VELIMIROVIĆ-ŽIŽIĆ, D. SREJOVIĆ (1975). The outstanding work of Jaro and Ana Šašel resulted in the gathering of all available data on the inscriptions from this region (ŠAŠEL, ŠAŠEL 1963-1986). In 2011, *The Corpus of Latin and Greek inscriptions from Montenegro* was published (MARTINOVIĆ 2011). However, this *corpus* has certain methodological failings. The part on the inscriptions from Doclea was actually taken from the unpublished catalogue of the former curator of the Podgorica Museums and Galleries, the late Milan Pravilović (MARTINOVIĆ 2011, 9-10). One can observe that many inscriptions have been misplaced and are not represented well. Some new finds were published as individual articles, such as the votive inscription for Neptune (VUČINIĆ 2007; GRBIĆ 2009); passing epigraphic remarks were made by BAKOVIĆ (2011, 24, photo n. 2), SANADER (2013, 8-17), KOPRIVICA (2013, 10), PELCER-VUJAČIĆ (2014, 91-98) and ŽIVANOVIĆ (2014, 35-38).

In the recent years, during the excavation campaigns in 2009 and 2010, several well preserved funerary inscriptions have been found, as shown during the presentation at the Round Table on Doclea held in Podgorica in December 2013. Unfortunately they are still not published or available for scholarly research.

The project for the digitization of ancient inscriptions from Montenegro was started by the Historical Institute with Olga Pelcer-Vujačić as the project coordinator in 2014. We established collaborations and data-sharing with



Fig. 1 – *Epigraphica Montenegro* website homepage.



Fig. 2 – Some of the photos shown in the Images Gallery.

both the EAGLE project (<https://www.eagle-network.eu/>) and Trismegistos (<https://www.trismegistos.org/>). One of the main points in this collaboration was the sharing of images and their presentation on Wikimedia Commons, especially as many inscriptions from this region are still checked from *CIL* drawings. In creating the website, we chose to follow the principles of the Linked Open Data approach, using structured data and so enabling the connection of the digital library to other resources. At first we envisioned this as a searchable database, but it was soon realized that we should first make a digital corpus that uses TEI-XML mark-up, according to the EpiDoc schema and with further quality assistance from EAGLE project members.

In 2016, from the database we produced a webpage: <http://www.epigraphicamontenegrina.me/> (Figs. 1-2). Our own *Epigraphica Montenegrina* database contains about 350 ancient Latin inscriptions from Montenegro, including the ones from Doclea (Fig. 3). Currently as a simple browsing website, it includes texts, ancient and modern locations, as well as photos and translations. Not all metadata is yet present on the website, but collaboration with European databases and projects should enable this feature to appear soon.

3. SOME EXAMPLES OF INSCRIPTIONS FOUND IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Some inscriptions found during the second half of the 20th century were known only through documents of the relevant institutions involved in their recovery; these fragments are scattered in several places.

3.1 *Inscription 1*

The photo of this inscription (Fig. 4) was presented in a paper by Baković without any reading being offered, being described as «fragment of stone sculpture» (BAKOVIĆ 2011, 26, plate, II, n. 2). It was found during the campaigns of 2009 and 2010 and is connected with a possible discovery of the central, Capitoline temple of Roman Doclea (BAKOVIĆ 2011, 15). The stone is broken on all four sides, its dimensions currently unknown. Letters are distinct, although the letter L has a very short lower hasta. The text is as following:

FULGU
DIVV

Fulgu[r]
divu[m]

This short text refers to the lightning of Jupiter, god of light and diurnal lightning (as opposed to that of Summanus, deity of lightning at night

The screenshot shows the website 'EPIGRAPHICA MONTENEGRINA'. At the top left is a circular profile of a classical bust. The navigation menu includes Home, Inscriptions, Gallery, Bibliography, Useful Links, About, and Contact. A search icon is on the right. The main content area is titled 'Martinović CILMontenegri 109' with a date of February 11, 2016. It lists the inscription type as 'Votive inscription' and the monument as 'Altar'. Dimensions are given as Height: 61.5 cm, Width: 33 cm, Length: 21 cm, and Letter size: 2,5-4 cm. Provenance is 'Doclea' and the current place is 'National museum of Montenegro, Cetinje'. A bibliography lists three references. The text of the inscription is shown in a vertical column: 'Neptuno sacrum petri Petronius Asper v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) ac(s)imo'. A translation section is empty. A photo of the stone altar is shown. At the bottom, there is a license notice and page numbers 'CIL 03 14605' and 'CIL 03 8395'.

Fig. 3 – Screenshot of *Epigraphica Montenegrina* database, with an inscription from Doclea (<http://www.epigraphicamontenegrina.me/martinovic-cilgmontenegri-109/>).

– Summanum or Summani fulgur), whose epigraphic evidence is much less prominent (*CIL* VI 206, 30879, 30880). However, it seems necessary to make a distinction between the lightning from the cult of Summanus and, in particular, that from the cult of Jupiter, a complex god who cannot be reduced to this single function of a hurler of lightning. For example, in Gallia Narbonensis the cult of lightning was a phenomenon essentially venerated in



Fig. 4 – Inscription 1 (after BAKOVIĆ 2011, plate II, n. 2).

the countryside, which is perfectly logical, since rural dwellers have always been much more sensitive than urban ones to atmospheric phenomena. The event is also perceived in the Roman civilization as a source of life, since it brings the beneficial rain, the source of abundance and agricultural wealth in Mediterranean region (RÉMY, BUISSON 1992, 85).

This new inscription testifies to a worship given to the lightning, just one manifestation of the divine power, perhaps on the very spot where a bolt had struck the ground that thereby became a sacred place. In this form, without the participle *conditum*, Jupiter's bolt is attested in Rome (*CIL* VI 205, 30714, 30878; GASPERINI 1982, 23-28), Ostia (*CIL* XIV 4294), Britannia (*CIL* VII 561) and more frequently in various forms in Gallia Narbonensis. The worship of this divine power was previously unattested in Dalmatia.

3.2 *Inscription 2*

The inscription is fragmented, with its current dimensions measuring 20×16×5 cm (Fig. 5). There are 5 lines, whose letters' dimensions are 2 to 3 cm, being both shallow and worn. It was first published in 2011 (MARTINOVIĆ 2011, 140, n. 127), later revised by Pelcer-Vujačić in 2014 (PELCER-VUJAČIĆ 2014, 92-93, n. 2). Today it is kept in a depot of the Museums and Galleries of Podgorica. Paleographically, this inscription could be dated to the 1st century AD, although there are examples for a later date (PETROVIĆ 1975, 108-121).

--_ERIA
--_SIMA
--_RILLA
--_ULTAN.
--_TIT P S
--_T



Fig. 5 – Inscription 2 (after PELCER-VUJAČIĆ 2014, fig. 4).

[D(is) M(anibus) . . . l . . . Val]erial[matri pientis]simal[eVale]rillal [. . . m]ult(os) an[n(os)] bene vixit] tit(ulum) p(o)s(uit)

Other reconstructions of the name of the deceased are also possible, but less probable. Aprilla: Narona (*CIL* III 1844), Asseria (*CIL* III 2852) and Salona (*CIL* III 6551) or Surilla: Prijepolje (AE 1980, 699) and Hvar (*CIL* III 3084); KAJANTO 1965, 325; ALFÖLDY 1969, 154, 303.

The question as to whether another part of the inscription exists, as given by Martinović in a drawing, still remains unanswered. It is not certain whether they are even connected; we believe that the other part belongs to a completely different inscription. From the photos, one can tell that both the stone and the letters of the second are completely at odds with the first. Previously believed to be lost, the original piece was located in the depot at the site of Doclea in October 2017.

The text of the fragmented epitaph is:

INO
RAT
XT XX
VS · PATR

and we suggest the following reading:

]INO[
[f]rat[ri]
[vi]x(i)t XX
]us patr[ibus pientissimi]

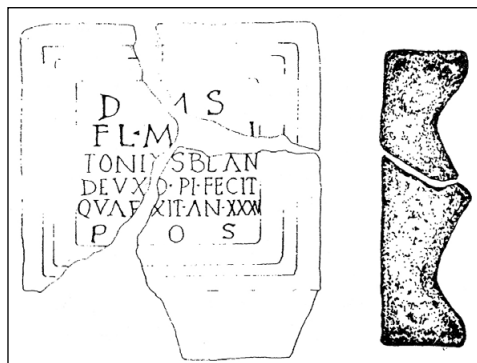


Fig. 6 – Inscription 3 (drawing by MARTINOVIĆ 2011, 147, n. 141).

3.3 *Inscription 3*

Inscription from the top of a small sarcophagus (Fig. 6), double moulded, with the inscription field measuring 34×36 cm. Letters are of various sizes and straight, without ligatures.

Text taken from the original archaeological notes:

D M S
F L MELAN
TONIUS BLAN
DEVXO PI FECIT
QVAE VIXIT AN XXXV
POS

In 2011, as published by MARTINOVIĆ 2011, 147, n. 141:

D(is) M(anibus) S(acrum)
Fl(avius) Meli-
tonius Blan-
de uxo(ri) pi(entissimae) fecit
quae (vi)xit an(nos) XXX
pos(uit)

Today only the lower right part of the inscription is held at the site of Doclea. At present, we are not able to check the differences between the original notes and Martinović's edition. The Latin *cognomen Blandus* is attested all over the whole empire, especially in the Celtic provinces (LORINZ 1994, 302). In the province of Dalmatia, however, there are only three instances: ILJug 888 (Iader), *CIL* III 8786 (Salona) and this one. These *cognomina* belong to



Fig. 7 – Inscription 4 (photo taken by T. Koprivica in 2011).



Fig. 8 – Second part of the inscription (photo taken by T. Koprivica in 2011).

the so-called ‘laudatory *cognomina*’, meaning here agreeable or sweet (from some scholars’ points of view, see KAJANTO 1965, 282; ALFÖLDY 1969, 165).

3.4 *Inscription 4*

The left part of the inscription is known from a photo taken by Koprivica in 2011, from the documentation of the Administration for the Protection of Cultural Properties in Cetinje (Fig. 7). It is a double moulded plaque. It seems

that the text corresponds with the upper right part of the original inscription, also photographed by Koprivica in 2011 (Fig. 8). Letters are with ligatures, shallow and worn. If the two pieces correspond, the suggested reconstruction of the joint text could be:

D [M]
FLAVIA N
DR I

In the outer moulding:

MEREN[TI] POSUIT
Q
VA
E
V
IXIT
ANN
E

D(is) [Manibus]
Flavia N[...]

[bene] merenti posuit
quae vixit
ann(os)
...e...

This funerary inscription features an Imperial cognomen, very frequent in Doclea. Most members of the elite bear the family name *Flavius* and belong to the Flavian *tribus Quirina*, indicating that an extensive grant of citizenship was made to the upper classes on the founding of the city (ALFÖLDY 1965, 145,182; WILKES 1969, 260).

3.5 *Inscription 5*

Fragment located at the depot at the site of Doclea in October 2017. It has capital letters, beautifully carved, with those of the first line slightly bigger:

SVO
FECIT
suo /fecit

The remaining words are usually the two last words found in a funerary inscription.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Apart from the veneration of Jupiter's bolt, all other inscriptions are simple funerary ones without any decoration, commemorating the deceased and their age, as well as the feeling of loss in the family. Most of the mentioned names here are of Latin origin, but in Doclea several Illyrian names are attested, such as *cognomen Pinnia* (CIL III 12696: *Flavia Pinnia*; RENDIĆ-MIOČEVIĆ 1948, 9; KATIČIĆ 1962, 106-107), *Anna* (CIL III 14600: *Cassia Anna*) and *Tatta* (ILJug 1830: *Epidia Tatta*), and this can be interpreted as evidence of the retention of a strong ethnic identity. Furthermore, the *nomen gentilicium Pletorius* is also attested (CIL III 14602: *L. Pletorius Valens*; ALFÖLDY 1969, 109; ILJug 1848: *Plaetoria Iulia*).

Nevertheless, one should not take funerary monuments as evidence that a given person had just one fixed identity (GRAHAM 2009, 52-53). A Latin name recorded for an individual from a Roman province is not sufficient to prove Roman identity, either ethnic or cultural, nor is it proof of a certain level of competence in Latin (GAVRIELATOS 2017, 142). The native elite adopted Roman material culture and ways of living as a response to the changing political realities, and these changes then filtered through the society as a result of the emulation of the elites by the non-elites (MILLET 1990, 212). For the people of the provinces, being part of the Roman Empire concerned a practical knowledge of how to act within a changing social context, and learning new ways of how to express their place in the local community.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a historical and epigraphical survey of the inscriptions from Doclea. Due to devastation and inadequate protection by the relevant institutions, a large number of inscriptions have disappeared or have been destroyed by the local population and irresponsible researchers. Bearing that in mind, every new inscription is important for understanding the history and everyday life in Roman Doclea.

