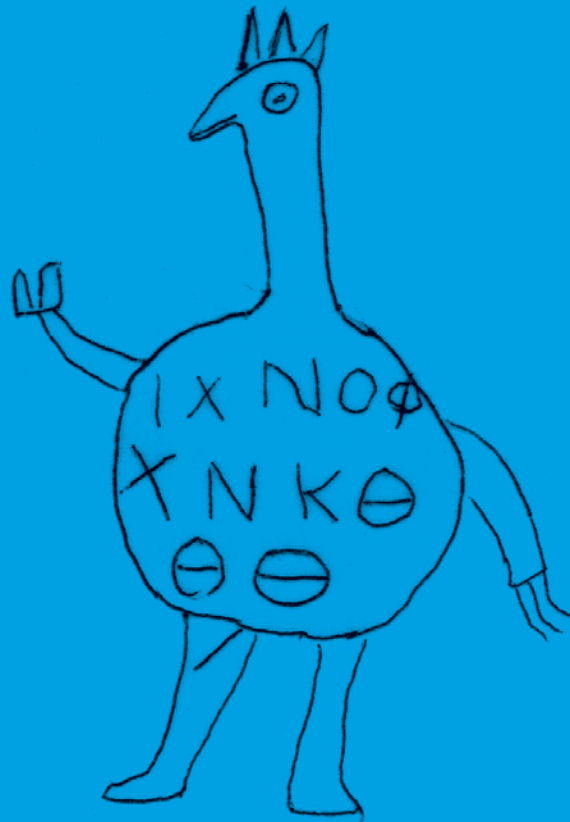


HUNGARIAN POLIS STUDIES Nr. 22

FROM POLITES TO MAGOS

Studia György Németh sexagenario dedicata



BUDAPEST - DEBRECEN

2016

HUNGARIAN POLIS STUDIES
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University of Debrecen
Dept. of Ancient History and Class. Phil.
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HPS 22
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Redaction
Ádám Szabó

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Cover photo:

An image of the daimon Abraxas in bird-form inscribed on one of the six small lead containers found in the cistern of the Fountain of Anna Perenna, Rome in 1999-2000 (IV inscription on the body, IXNOΦ/INKΘ/ΘΘ has been resolved by Gy. Németh (2016) as a slightly inaccurate acronym for an invocation of Christ:

Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Ναζωραῖος ὁ [π]αῖς
Ἰησοῦς Ναζωραῖος καὶ Θεός.
Θεὸς, Θεός.

The container is in the Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme, Dipartimento Epigrafico, inv. no. SAR 475555. Drawing based on Blänsdorf 2012, 624 no. IX.49.6.

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Prof. György Németh
(25. June 1956)



INVITATION



Dear Colleague,

we would like to invite you to the celebration of Professor György Németh's 60th birthday anniversary, where a volume of studies with the title "*From Polites to Magos*" is going to be introduced. This private event will take place at 1 p.m. on 24th June 2016 at the Hahn István seminar room of ELTE BTK (address: 1st floor/138., Múzeum körút 6-8., Budapest, H-1088).

The event and the volume are going to be surprise for celebrated, therefore, we kindly ask you to send a message to Edina Gradvohl to the following e-mail address: soranosster@gmail.com mentioning whether you will or will not take part in the celebration.



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Zsolt Mráv

THE STATUE BASE OF SEVERUS ALEXANDER FROM ULCISIA
(SZENTENDRE, PEST COUNTY, HUNGARY)

The aim of this paper is to prove that two inscribed fragments of different provenance is belonging to the same statue base.

The fragments

1. Lower part of a statue base (Fig. 1.)



Findspot: The fragment was found in 1808, in Szentendre, behind the house of Gáspár Pajor together with the intact statue base of Iulia Mamaea, the *mater castrorum* (CIL III 3639 = RIU 868). Currently it can be found in Budapest, in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum (inv. n.: RR RD 115).

Dimensions: height: (71) cm; width: 67 cm; thickness: 56 cm. The inscription field: height: (57,8) cm; width: 46,5 cm.

Description: The inscription field has a profiled frame. The 8,5 cm wide outer surface of the frame was decorated with trailing ivy scroll.

Inscription: The inscription is properly arranged, with well composed lines. The elegant letters are engraved accurately. The height of the letters: 5,2-5 cm. The only ligature is TE. The carver consequently used punctuation in the form of downward triangles.

Fig. 1.: Ulcisia (Szentendre). Lower part of the statue base (photo: O. Harl; drawing: Zs. Mráv)

 ++ [- - -]
 AVG PONT
 MAX TRIB
 POTÊSTATIS
 [[VI[.]]] COS [[[...]]] P P
 COH I ∞ N S S S
 DEVOTA NV-
 MINI EIVS.

Literature: RD 115 (F. Rómer and E. Desjardins); CIL III 3638 (Th. Mommsen); Nagy 1939 128; RIU 867 (S. Soproni); Lőrincz 2001, Kat. Nr. 436; FPA IV, 119-120 (P. Kovács). Mentioned by Soproni 1987, 24, 68; Kovács – Lőrincz 2011, 91.

2. Upper part of a statue base (Fig. 2.)



Fig.: 2. Upper part of the statue base (photo: Ortoľ Harľ; drawing: Zsolt Mráv)

Findspot: The fragment was found in a secondary context between 1986 and 1994. It was recycled as building material during the construction of the fortified port at Bölcske (Tolna county) in the beginning of 370s. Wosinsky Mór Museum, Szekszárd (inv. n.: 2002. 5. 18).

Dimensions: height: (60) cm; width: (67) cm; thickness: (30) cm. The inscription field: height: (39) cm; width: 46,5 cm.

Description: Above the inscribed field the cymatium runs into a norico-pannonian volute. The outer surface of the frame is ornamented with ivy scroll. The fragment is embedded in a wall-block.

Inscription: The height of the meticulously engraved, elegant letters are 6,6 cm. Due to the *abolitio nominis* and the water erosion, the inscription is strongly damaged and worn.

IMP CAES
[[M [.]Y[.]EL[.]]]
[[[- - -]]]
[[[...]X[.]N[...]]]
[.] INVI[.]T[.]O
[... .]QNT

Literature: Beszédes – Mráv – Tóth 2003, 128 Kat. Nr. 18 (=AE 2003, 1425); Beszédes – Mráv – Tóth 2009, 151-152 Cat. 18. Mentioned by Soproni 1990, 135 n. 21; Kovács – Lőrincz 2011, 91.

The two fragments belong together and should be interpreted as parts of the same inscription for the following reasons:

1. Both fragments belong to a statue base of Severus Alexander.
2. The width of the fragments (67 cm) and the inscription fields (46,5 cm) are identical.
3. The inscription fields framed with an inverse cymatium on both pieces, which were surrounded by ivy scrolls.
4. The fracture follows the same line. If we place the fragments above each other, the pieces fit together perfectly.
5. Moreover the texts show a clear continuity in the respective lines between the upper and lower fragments (see particularly the PONT abbreviation in the emperor's titulature).

The two fragments fit together so closely and the text on their surfaces match so well that there is absolutely no doubt that they form an integral unit. After putting them together, the whole text of the inscription can be reconstructed with great certainty (Fig. 3):

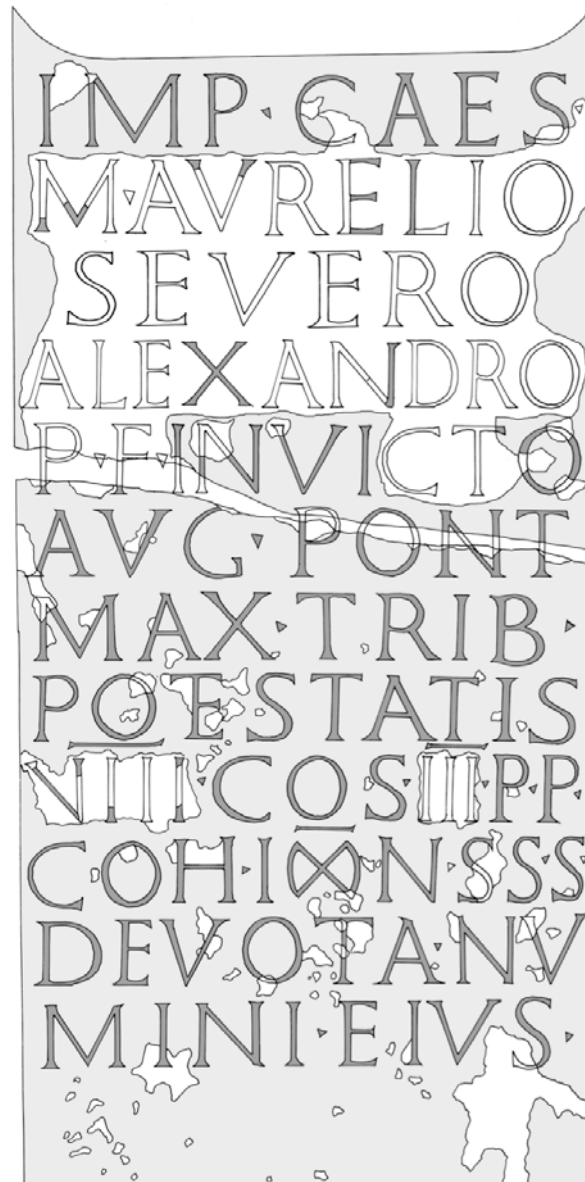


Fig. 3.: Reconstructed inscription of the statue base of Alexander Severus which was originally erected in the auxiliary fort of Ulcisia (drawing: Zsolt Mráv)

- Imp(eratori) Caes(ari)*
 [[*M(arco) [A]u[r]e[li]o*]]
 [[[*Severo*]]
 [[[*Ale]x[a]n[dro]*]]
 5. *p(io) f(elici) invi[c]to*
Aug(usto) pont(ifici)
max(imo) trib(uniciae)
potestatis
 10. [[*VI*]] *co(n)s(uli) [[*III*]]* *p(atri) p(atriae)*
coh(ors) I (milliaria) n(ova) S(everiana) S(urorum) s(agittariorum)
devota nu-
mini eius.

The date of the inscription

In spite of the earlier view, the right iteration number of the tribunician power is not VIII¹, but VIII. Thus the statue was dedicated by the unit when Severus Alexander renewed his tribunician power for the eighth time, between December 10, 228 and December 9, 229 AD.² In AD 229 Severus Alexander was elected *consul* for the third time³, so the statue base belongs to AD 229.

Some conclusions

The dedicator of the statue was an auxiliary unit, the *cohors I milliaria Severiana Surorum sagittaria* stationed at Ulcisia⁴, so the base – together with the contemporary statue base of Iulia Mamaea (CIL III 3639 = RIU 868) – was originally stood in the *principia* of the auxiliary fort.

The middle part of the statue base was broken into two parts. The lower part remained in Ulcisia. However, the upper part was collected for a late Roman military construction project. As a *spolium*, it was embedded in the fortification walls of the Valentinianic fortified port at Bölcske. This means that the *spolia* of this fortlet were collected not only from the Gellért-hill (Budapest, 11th district) and the auxiliary forts of Campona (Budapest, 22th district, Nagytétény) and Vetus Salina (Adony, county Fejér)⁵, but also from the fort of Ulcisia.

¹ CIL III 3638 (Th. Mommsen); Nagy 1939 128; RIU 867 (S. Soproni); Lőrincz 2001, Kat. Nr. 436; FPA IV, 119-120 (P. Kovács); Kovács – Lőrincz 2011, 91.

² Kienast 1996², 178.

³ Kienast 1996², 178.

⁴ Lőrincz 2011, 42.

⁵ Beszédes – Mráv – Tóth 2003, 103.

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From Polites to Magos

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