

NOTES ON THE GREEK INSCRIPTIONS (IV)

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Cuvinte-cheie: *inscripții funerare, Tomis, onomastică, inscripții creștine.*

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Rezumat: *Articolul discută două inscripții grecești tomitane, cu noi sugestii de lectură și restituire:*

1. *Epitaf al lui Apollonios, fiul lui Dadas, și al soției sale, Zounis, ISM VI.2, 597;*

2. *Epitaf pus de Iulius (sau Valerius) Attius pentru soția sa, Bonosa. ISM VI.2, 544.*

Abstract: *The present article reviews two Greek inscriptions from Tomis, proposing new readings and restorations:*

1. *Epitaph of Apollonios, son of Dadas, and of his wife, Zounis, ISM VI.2, 597;*

2. *Epitaph set up by Iulius (or Valerius) Attius for his wife, Bonosa, ISM VI.2, 544.*

1. Epitaph of Apollonios, son of Dadas, and of his wife, Zounis

Two fragments from the upper half of a funerary stele with circular pediment and two registers in a frame decorated with spiraling vine tendrils. The depiction of the heroised deceased as a “Thracian horseman” facing a seated woman is carved in the upper register. The Greek inscription from the lower register was reappraised recently and published in ISM VI.2, 597 as follows¹:

Απολ[λ]ώνιος
Δαδα [vac. ἀ]νέστη-
σε τήν [σ]τή[λη]ν
ἐαυτ[ῶ] καὶ
5 [τ]ῆ ἰδί[α] σ]υμβίω
Ζουν[.]τικου
Θ.α.τ[-] θυ.γ[ατρύ]

On re-examining the stone, I noticed that last letter can hardly be a *gamma*

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¹ *Editio princeps:* MUNTEANU 1975, p. 391–394, no. 2, fig. 2. The edition in ISM VI.2 relies heavily on DANA 2014, p. 471–473, nr. 4, fig. 7. Both graphical reconstructions are unconvincing.

(Fig. 1). The woman's name and patronym are problematic². In my view, there is a more compelling solution:

Ἀπολ[λ]ώνιος
 Δάδα [v. ἀ]νέστη–
 σε τήν [σ]τήλ[λ]ην
 ἑαυτ[ῶ] και *vac.*
 5 [τ]ῆ ἰδί[α σ]υμβίῳ
 Ζουν[ι]τι Κου– *vac.*
 θία τ[οῦ] Οὐι– –

Translation: Apollonios, son of Dadas, set up the stele for himself and for his wife Zounis, daughter of Kouthias, son (or freedman) of Oui... (Vi...?) ...

The editors of ISM VI.2 noted that another Apollonios, son of Dadas, is recorded in ISM II 295 and perhaps in ISM II 137. All three inscriptions can be dated roughly to the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD., so they could refer to the same individual. The name Dadas is recurrent in the inscriptions from the Pontic coast of Thrace and Asia Minor, but it is most frequent on the northern coast of the Black Sea³. The family might have been of Thracian, Sarmatian, or of some other origin⁴.

The name of his wife, Zounis, bears no parallels. The Greek accent fell on the first syllable: Ζοῦνις⁵. By contrast, Kouthias, the name of her father, is recorded in numerous inscriptions from Scythia Minor, in Tomis: Θεάδων Κουθίου (ISM II 17), Κουθίας Κουθία (ISM II 157)⁶, Κουθίας Καλλικράτου (ISM II 468), and in Istros: Κουσίας Διονυσόδωρου and his son, Διονυσόδωρος Κουσίου, (ISM I 193) and Μενίσκος Κουσίου (ISM I 212). A votive plaque dedicated by Κότυς Κουθείου near Philoppopolis (IGBulg III.1 971) confirms the Thracian origin of this name⁷.

² The morphological analysis was done at syllable level, but it is unclear how this would work for languages which are scarcely known. The evidence is predictably equivocal. "Une série des noms daces en *thia-/θια-*" was put forward on data from Egypt and the Left Pontus. Incidentally, such names are found in other Egyptian papyri – see, for example, Θιας, -τος (BGU III 700; P. Gen P 42; P. Hamb IV 257) – and in the inscriptions of the Bosphoran kingdom – Θιάγαρος (CIRB 1278), Θιάρμακος and Θιάβωγος (CIRB 1287). On closer inspection, some of the names turn out to be Greek or Roman. Thiadices in O. Faw. 1 = CEL I 73 is most likely a Latin variant of Θεαδικης (cf. Θεάφιλος, Δεινοδικης, Ξενοδικης) and not a barbarian name: the author writes in another letter *debio* and *habio* (O. Faw. 2 = CEL I 74; on this type of spelling, see also ADAMS 2013, p. 103–104). In ISM VI.2, 490, col. B, l. 29, instead of -βαλο[ς] Θια –, one should read Βαλερεια|νός in lunate letters.

³ Using LGPN, I counted 36 occurrences of this name in the inscriptions of the Bosphoran Kingdom. Among the non-Greek bearers, see, for example, Φαρνάκης Δάδα (CIRB 1280), Δάδας Χοδιακίου (CIRB 1283), Σάρακος Δάδα (CIRB 1287) in Tanais, Παδάμειστος Δάδα (CIRB 947) in Theodosia. The name Δάδαγος/Δάδακος from several Olbian inscriptions could be also related to it.

⁴ See also the discussion in HÄLMAGI 2021, p. 195.

⁵ Cf. the feminine names ending in -χάρις: Εὐχάριτι (I. Pessinous 62), Ἐπιχάριτι (I. Perge 410), but Ἐπιχάριδι in a Lycian epitaph (I. Bubon 19). By contrast, the oxytone -ίς is always declined -ίδος, -ίδι.

⁶ [Κου]|θίας Κουθία in line 6.

⁷ The root name is perhaps Latinized as Cutio, -unis in ISM I 331 and Cutus in O. Did 334 and

Finally, the patronym of Kouthias is quite likely a Roman name, a Latin *nomen* or *cognomen* or formed of *dua nomina*⁸. Many restorations are possible here: Οὐί[βίου], Οὐί[κτωρος], Οὐί[ρρίου], Οὐί[ψανίου] etc.

2. Epitaph set up by Iulius (or Valerius) Attius for his wife, Bonosa

Upper half of a stele with a curved pediment and acroteria on both sides, each decorated with a Greek cross. Under the pediment, a *iota-chi* christogram between the letters *alpha* and *omega* is encircled by a stylised laurel wreath with tendrils ending in ivy leaves. The Greek inscription is carved underneath. On its first line, three other crosses are arranged equidistantly on both sides and in the middle of the stone. ISM VI.2, 544 offers the following edition (Fig. 2)⁹:

Α ω
 τίτο *vac.* λο(ν)
 [.]ιουλατζεις βιξιλάρις *vac.*
 ὀπου κίτε ή γυνή μου μακα-
 5 ρία *vac.* Βονῶσα *vac.* καί Τίτω προσ-
 <ήν>ιν(κα)· <άν>ηγ<έροθη και ἐδ>ωρίθη τῶ μνημῖον
 ὑπέρ τῆς μνημοσύνης αὐτῆς,
 ὅτι ἐζ<ήσ>αμεν ὁμοῦ ἔτ [η] κα', ὅτι *vac.*

The epitaph is similar in wording to another contemporary inscription, ISM VI.2, 540: ἔθηκεν τὸ τίτολον τοῦτο | Μάρκελλος ὀπου κίντε | κτλ. Here, the first line was reduced to a heading, τίτολο(ν)¹⁰. Two decorative marks are used at the end of the lines 2 and 3 instead of *hederae distinguentes*.

The soldier's name has been variously read and interpreted: Ἰούλ(ιος) Ἀτζεῖς¹¹. [Τ.] Ἰούλ(ιος) Ἀτζεῖς¹² and, finally, [.]ιουλατζεις, a supposed Thracian name¹³. There is another one-letter *vacat* at the end of the same line, so probably the text is centered and follows the alignment of the crosses. Iulius and other *nomina* are well documented in the 4th century¹⁴ and Ἀτζεῖς is a plausible rendition of

335. Other derivatives: Κουθιούλας in Parthikopolis (IGBulg IV 2282), Κουθιούρας in Istros (ISM I 229) with rhotacism, Κουτιούλης (Quintus Valerius) in Aphytis in Pallene (FEISSEL & SÈVE 1979, p. 304, no. 43), Cutiula (IG X 2, 1, 910 – edited in majuscules) and Κουθιούλης in Thessalonike (IG X 2, 1, 1310), and perhaps also Κούθειν (= Κούθειον) in Thessalonike (IG X 2, 1, 916). The similar spelling variations and phonetic values of θ(ι), see QUAEGEBEUR 1992, p. 271 (Egyptian names), PALUNČIĆ 2019, p. 314–315 (Sarmatian names) and the so-called *tau Gallicum*.

⁸ Cf. ISM II 261, l. 6: τοῦ Ἰουλίου [---] | ἀπελευθέρ[ω].

⁹ *Editio princeps*: BĂRBULESCU, CÎTEIA 2006, fig. 1 (BE 2008, 373; BE 2009, 612).

¹⁰ Previous translations: “Epitaphe. Iulius Atzeis vexillarius, dans le lieu ou repose ma femme, la bienherueuse Bonosa” (Bărbulescu and Cîteia) and “Épitaphe. [.]ioulatzeis, uexillarius, à l'endroit où repose ma femme, la bienheureuse Bonosa” (Avram, Bărbulescu and Buzoianu).

¹¹ BĂRBULESCU, CÎTEIA 2006.

¹² BE 2008, 373.

¹³ DANA 2014, p. 470–471, nr. 3, fig. 6: „avec le suffixe -zis/-tzis”, but the suggested variation is quite unusual.

¹⁴ For other soldiers of the same name in the East, see MAMA I 170, the sarcophagus

Attius¹⁵. There is also another possibility: if the first vertical hasta is not a letter, but a decorative mark pairing the one at the end of the line, then the soldier was named Οὐα(λέριος) Ἄτζεις¹⁶.

A small *iota* visible at the end of line 5 gives πρόσισιν = πρόσεισιν. Titus must be the owner of the funerary plot and he was a member of the family or perhaps a close friend. In the next clause, ὠριθη can be read as a variant spelling of χωρηθη and no other emendation is needed. The use of the passive voice prompts me to question whether its meaning here is the same as that of συγχωρηθη, “conceded”, “allowed”, a word occurring in other funerary inscriptions, as well¹⁷. Summing up my observations, I propose:

Α ω
 † τίτο † λο † †
 v. Ἰούλ(ιος) Ἄτζεις βιξιλάρις † vac.
 ὅπου κίτε ἡ γυνή μου μακα-
 5 ρία v. Βονῶσα v. καὶ Τίτω πρόσι-
 σιν ἴνα ἡ γῆ ὠριθη τῷ μνημίον
 ὑπὲρ τῆς μνημοσύνης αὐτῆς,
 ὅτι ἐζ<ήσ>αμεν ὁμοῦ ἔτη κα', ὅτι vac.

L. 3: or † Οὐα(λέριος).

Translation: Iulius (or Valerius) Attius, *vexillarius*, (set up) the epitaph (in the place) where my blessed wife Bonosa rests and (which) belongs to Titus, so that the land is (con?) – ceded for a monument in her memory, because we lived together 21 years and ...

Based on iconography, the editors dated the stele to the late 5th or the first half

inscription of Marcus Iulius Eugenius, soldier in Pisidia during the persecutions of Maximinus Daia and eventually bishop of Laodicea Combusta; YON 2015, p. 307, no. 10, the epitaph of Iulius Urbanus, centurion of an unnamed *numerus* stationed on limes Arabicus, so probably also from the same period. For the preponderance of Flavius and Aurelius in Late Roman Egypt, see KEENAN 1973, and especially p. 49–51 about the decline of other names. See also BAGNALL *et alii* 1987, p. 36–40 on differences between Western and Eastern elites and SALWAY 1994, p. 137–140 for a brief overview.

¹⁵ The spelling was analysed in BĂRBULESCU, CÎTEIA 2006, p. 442–443; ADAMS 2013, p. 120–121 covers the typical variations for “ti” when followed by a vowel. The same spelling occurs in two other Tomitan inscriptions: Κοσταντζία (ISM VI.2, 548) and Σαβάτζου (ISM VI.2, 714).

¹⁶ This name is quite frequent among the soldiers of the late 3rd and early 4th centuries. See, for example, Valerius Felix, *princeps officii presidis*, in ISM II 373; Valerius [...].inus in ZAHARIADE, ALEXANDRESCU 2011, p. 57–60, nr. 36 (Halmyris). The abbreviation Οὐα. is uncommon, but not without parallel – for example, see ISM II 14, l. 7 (HĂLMAGI 2021, p. 184, nr. 14).

¹⁷ For example, I. Byzantion 318: τὸ ἀν|γ[ε]ῖ|ον τὸ συγχωρηθὲν ἡμῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου ἐκ τῶν † | [συ]νγενικῶν ἡμῶν μνημάτων ἰς κτήσιν ἐωνίαν σὺν τοῖς † | [τέ]κνοις ἡμῶν, “the sarcophagus from our family tomb, which was granted by my father to me and my children for everlasting possession”.

of the 6th century¹⁸, but the soldier's name urges for an earlier dating¹⁹. The motif of the christogram surrounded by a laurel wreath appeared during the reign of Constantine I and it became popular across the empire in a short time. Around the middle of the 4th century, two *chi-rho* monograms in wreaths surrounded by pairs of birds were painted on the walls of two adjoining rooms in the Roman villa at Lullingstone²⁰. The same motif was carved on a splendid sarcophagus with scenes from the Passion of the Christ (**Fig. 3**), found in the vicinity of the cemetery of Domitilla in Rome and dated to about 350 AD²¹. A monogram in a wreath and two birds were also engraved on a Latin epitaph from the same city, ICUR I 3202 = ILCV 1480²². The inscription was set up in 385, during the consulate of Flavius Arcadius and Flavius Bauto. The motif is also common in tomb paintings. On the wall of a tomb from Thessalonike, dated to the second quarter of the 4th century, the christogram in wreath is accompanied by two human figures²³.

Accordingly, I believe that the epitaph of Bonosa should be dated to the 4th century, with a *terminus post quem* sometime in the second quarter. Two other funerary monuments with similar iconography and lettering must be from the same period: ISM VI.2, 540, mentioned above, and ISM VI.2, 545, a Latin inscription for another soldier, Terentius, son of Gaiona²⁴.

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¹⁸ The arguments of OPPERMANN 2010, p. 212, 251–252 were followed in ISM VI.2.

¹⁹ As suggested also by A. Avram in BE 2008, 373.

²⁰ PAINTER 1969, p. 141–143, with reconstructions in fig. 7 and 9.

²¹ FICKER 1890, p. 113–115, nr. 171; CAMPENHAUSEN 1929, p. 67–68 fig. 18.

²² For an online photo, see <http://lupa.at/9662>.

²³ MARKE 2006, p. 145–146, 229 fig. 82 pl. 6b; for style and dating, see also PELEKANIDIS 1969.

²⁴ Cf. OPPERMANN 2010, p. 212.

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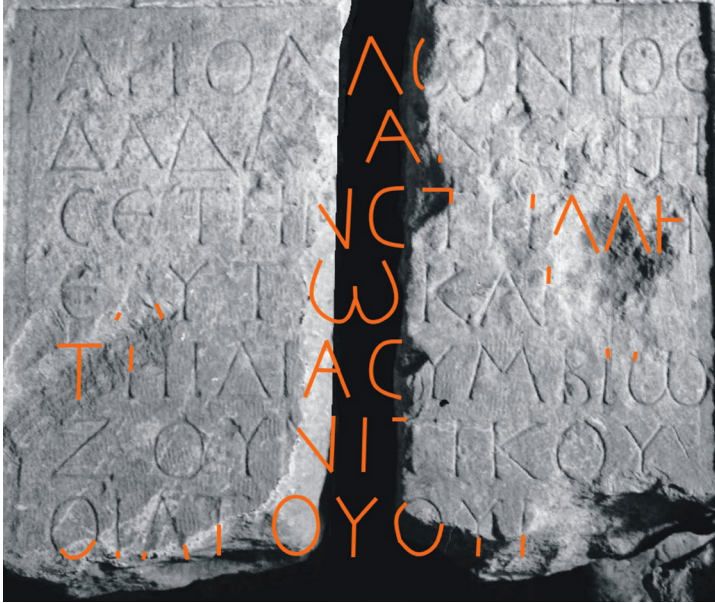


Fig 1. Funerary stele from Tomis (MINAC, inv. no. 4505).
Photo from edition and modified by the author.



Fig 2. Funerary stele from Tomis (MINAC, inv. no. 43462). Photo from edition.



Fig 3. Sarcophagus with Passion scene from Rome (Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano, inv. nr. 31525). Photo: DAIR 1933.0151.