

## Ancient Epigraphic Inscriptions as a Source for Research of the Oldest Past of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Text Reconstruction and Analysis of Four Previously Unpublished Epigraphic Monuments\*

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**Abstract:** Epigraphic inscriptions hundreds of which have been found in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are an authentic testimony of the people of the time about the political, cultural and social life of provinces *Dalmatia*, and the two Pannonia provinces (*Pannonia Superior* and *Pannonia Inferior*). Although a systematic research is lacking, the number of newly-found epigraphic monuments has significantly increased in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to that number four more will be added. Two monuments were found in the wider Trebinje area, while the other two are from the Crkvine near Makljenovac (Doboј) locality. Votive altar for Jupiter, Best and Greatest, from the soldier of *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria* is the first material evidence for which it can be certainly asserted that it is linked to the presence of the cohort in the area of Doboј. The cohort whose name is mentioned on the epigraphic monument from Doboј was probably made in the 80s CE, after the Roman legions retreated from the area of the province Dalmatia. It is considered that the cohort was stationed throughout the whole principate in its “birth” province Dalmatia and that it is, conditionally speaking, one of the autochthonous cohorts. The confirmation that the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* was stationed in the *castrum* in Makljenovac is a good indicator that Romans accounted for the inter-provincial borders, not only for the limes.

**Key words:** epigraphic inscriptions, milestone (*miliaria*), *cippus*, brick, votive altar, the Roman provinces, Trebinje, Doboј, Severan dynasty

Researching territorial, legal and administrative structure, as well as historical daily life, i.e. processes that concern them, is the essence of the scientific research

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of the development of provinces that were not part of the highly-advanced Mediterranean civilisation. Due to the geographical remoteness and low accessibility of the mountainous terrain, certain parts of the Roman provinces that were in the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina were truly cut off from great urban centres of not only the empire, but also of its constituent provinces. Such a position resulted in an insufficient presence in the ancient writings.

Ancient writings are often confusing, imprecise and demand a detailed methodological analysis by the use of the exterior and interior criticism of the sources. When literary sources are in question, the BiH historiography paid significant attention to them as compared to the material archives, although those sources are, in fact, a history of Illyrian peoples observed through an insufficiently objective perspective of the Greco-Roman writers.<sup>1</sup> Opposite to that, epigraphic inscriptions, hundreds of which have been found in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are an authentic testimony of the people of the time about the political, cultural and social life of provinces Dalmatia (*Dalmatia*), and the two Pannonia provinces (*Pannonia Superior* and *Pannonia Inferior*).

In the earlier stages of research, epigraphic corpus were contributed a lesser significance, while modern ancient historiography has been increasingly relying on the data retrieved through the analysis of the content of the epigraphic monuments.<sup>2</sup> Although a systematic research is lacking, the number of newly-found epigraphic monuments has significantly increased in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, after the

<sup>1</sup> Thus, for example, the contemporary historiography, relying on *Velleius Paterculus*, concludes that the province of Illyricum was divided in two parts in 8 CE, after the Roman victory at the river *Bathinus* – *Ferozem illam tot milium iuventutem, paulo ante servitatem minatam Italiae, conferentem arma, quibus usa erat, apud flumen nomen Bathinum, prosternentemque se universam genibus imperatoris, Batonemque et Pinnetem excelsissimos duces, captum alterum, alterum a se deditum iustis voluminibus ordine narrabimus...* (*Vell. II*, 114, 4), i.e. the river Bosnia. However, historiography is uncertain regarding the exact location of the river flow. Still, *Velleius Paterculus* does not mention in his text that any administrative division took place within the province where the *Bellum Pannonicum* was waged, hence, he only mentions Dalmatia as a province when he praised the victory of the Roman troops *Celebri etiam opera diligentique Vibius Postumus vir consularis, praepositus Delmatiae, ornamenta meruit triumphalia* (*Vell. II*, 116, 1-2). Due to different transcriptions, interpretations and certain scientific omissions, research of the Greek and Roman sources can certainly provide results that will contribute the construction of a more complete image of the structure of the peregrine *civitates* and the significance of certain Roman institutions in the process of their transition into the municipal status and the phases of certain cultural and historic processes in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>2</sup> A proof of that is that large collections of Latin inscriptions, such as: Archäologisch-epigraphische Mitteilungen aus Österreich *Ungarn-Wien* (AEM), *L'Année épigraphique; Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine* – Paris (AE), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia (ILJug)* have been made available to scientists at online databases, most significant of which are Epigraphische Datenbank Claus, *Epigraphic Database Heidelberg* and <http://www.ubi-erat-lupa.org/simplesearch.php>

19<sup>th</sup> c. and Arthur Evans' research, who registered the discovery of two milestones in the wider area of Trebinje, in late 20<sup>th</sup> c. a third milestone was found.<sup>3</sup>

Đorđe Odavić, an archaeologist from Trebinje found the milestone (*miliaria*) in 1980, during an excavation of the medieval Church of St. Panteleimon in the Aleksina Međa village, just outside Trebinje.<sup>4</sup> The monument was built into the fence of the church. Due to such secondary use, the monument was preserved in quite a bad shape. It is important to emphasise that only a fragment of the milestone has been preserved, the upper section with a text. The preserved fragment is 55 cm in height, its diameter is 40 cm. The engraving is shallow and much of the text has already been erased. The graphemes' dimensions are 6,9 cm in the third row, 5,2 cm in the fourth and 7,2 and 5,3 cm in the sixth row.



**Image 1:** Epigraphic milestone of the Emperor *Maximinus Thrax* and his son *Maximus*, discovered at the Aleksina Međa location near Trebinje (photo: A. Šaćić Beća)

The preserved text and the reconstruction of the inscription reads:

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[Ma]x[iminus i]mp-  
[erator] II co(n)s(ul)

<sup>3</sup> *ILJug* II, 962 = *CIL* III, 10175 = *CIL* III, 10175 add. P. 2328, 177.  
*ILJug* II, 966 = *CIL* III 10176.

<sup>4</sup> On this occasion, I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr Odavić for making available the published and unpublished epigraphic archives of the Museum of Herzegovina, Trebinje.

*s [----] M[aximus ?]  
 [n]obi[lissimus Caesar ---]  
 -----*

Translation: ... *Maximinus*, two times the Emperor, consul (?), ... *Maximinus*, the most noble.



**Image 2.:** The front of the milestone with the textual part, the Aleksina Međa locality (Trebinje) (photo: A. Šačić Beća)

The analysis of the text that can only be read in part, due to damage the monument suffered, and it implies that the monument originates from the period of the emperor Maximinus Thrax (*Imperator Caesar Caius Iulius Verus Maximinus Augustus 235–238*) and his son Maximus (*Gaius Julius Verus Maximus Princeps Iuventutis*). If the title the Emperor (two times) is correct, then the monument can be dated to the summer of 236 CE, as the Donja Bijenja milestone (Nevesinje).<sup>5</sup> There are several reasons for the relatively precise dating of the milestone. Namely, apart from the name and the title of the emperor Maximinus, the name of his son Maximus is also engraved in the monument. He has an identical *praenomen* and *nomen* as his father. Alongside Maximus' name, the inscription would have most probably contained the title *caesar*, awarded to him in 236 CE.<sup>6</sup> Namely, in that

<sup>5</sup> *Imp(erator) Caes(ar) C(aius) Iul(ius)] / Verus Maximinus / Pius Felix p(ontifex) m(aximus) t(ribunica) / p(oteste) II Imp(erator) III co(n)s(ul) s/ p(ater) p(atriciae) et C(aius) Iul(ius) Verus / Maximus nobi/lissimus Caes(ar) / Augusti. (ILJug II,1022 = AE 1980, 0681)*

<sup>6</sup> The title *Caesar* lost its primary meaning in the period when Principate were established, when only the emperor could hold that title. When Antoninus Pius became an emperor in 138 CE, the title *Caesar* was awarded to Hadrian's second son, Marcus Aurelius. By that, the title was given a legitimacy of succession.

year, apart from pronouncing his son a *caesar*, Maximinus Thrax was proclaimed an emperor for the third time.<sup>7</sup> Since the monument reads that Maximinus Thrax had the *imperium* for two times, and knowing that the third title ensued in the late fall, before 10 December 236, the dating Bojanovski provided for the Donja Bijenja monument seems justifiable in this case as well.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that the secondary use of this milestone did not destroy the text and that the destruction occurred already in antiquity, when the name of Maximinus was erased from inscriptions (*damnatio memoriae*).

Certainly, regardless of the area where the epigraphic milestone was found, it should be emphasised that it is possible that the monument was part of the communication network that ran through the Nevesinjsko polje to the Sarajevsko polje, i.e. towards the *municipium of Aquae*, especially if one keeps in mind that milestones were used as building materials in the medieval period, hence, it would not be unusual for it to have been transferred from the Nevesinje area. By all accounts, during the reign of Maximinus Thrax, the Narona – Sarajevo road was reconstructed. As an argument for the claim that the monument had been brought from the Nevesinjsko polje area, we can mention the second Maximinus' milestone found in Han Vitek near Konjic.<sup>9</sup> One can even assume that the three milestones of Maximinus Thrax were made in the same stonemasonry. Sadly, neither of the three epigraphic monuments contain a preserved mileage.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, it is important to emphasise that the monument was found near the place where, according to Bojanovski, there used to be a Roman station *Asamum*.<sup>11</sup> Bojanovski reached that conclusion on the basis of a detailed analysis of *Tabula Peutingeriana*.<sup>12</sup> Its significance is that much more emphasised because the Trebišnjica river valley, unlike Neretva, is not abundant with milestones. Since this is the first interpretation of the milestone, only further analyses can determine its possible significance for the study of the *Epidaurum – Asamum* road. The monument is preserved today at the Museum of Herzegovina and is not part of the museum exhibition.

<sup>7</sup> Sergejevski 1948, 50.

<sup>8</sup> Bojanovski 1978, 117.

<sup>9</sup> *Imp(eratori) C(aesari) IUL(io) / M[a]ximino Pio Felici e[t] C(aesari) Iu[l](io) maximo / nobilissim[o] / Caesri Aug(usti)*. (CIL III 10165)

<sup>10</sup> Bojanovski is of the opinion that the construction of the road Narona – Nevesinjsko polje – Borci – Konjic – Sarajevsko polje started in the period of *Augustus* (Bojanovski 1974, 15). By all accounts, a relatively large reconstruction took place of the section of the road that passed through Eastern Herzegovina in 340s CE.

<sup>11</sup> Bojanovski 1988, 86

<sup>12</sup> In that context, it follows that this milestone is also a material evidence of what was recorded in *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

The corpus of the epigraphic material from the Epidaurum area (*Ager Epidauritanus*) should also contain a tombstone discovered in 1999 in Trebinje.<sup>13</sup> Apart from a small section of the inscription, of which only three lines have been preserved, all else was destroyed by the secondary use. The preserved fragments are of the following dimensions: height 29 cm, width 11 cm, breadth 6 cm. The letters were engraved in capital letters and they are 7 cm in height. The first 2 or 3 lines of the text have been destroyed, as well as the last lines. The number of lines cannot be precisely determined, but it is obvious that the introductory oath to Manes is missing. Also, the final section of the text is missing.

The preserved text and the reconstruction read:

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[---]emo[---]

[---]AEL(io ?) ann[(orum)]

[--- ?] XXXV [----].

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Translation : ... Elija (who died) aged 35 ....

The preserved shape on the inscription	<i>nomen</i>	Information
[---] EMO / AEI	<i>Aelius</i>	-

As on the majority of the sepulchral monuments in the Trebinje area, the person mentioned on this monument also has *nomen Aelius*.<sup>14</sup> On the basis of the gentile nomen, it can be concluded that the *terminus ante quem* of the monument was the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE. The *praenomen* cannot be precisely determined due to the bad condition of the monument. Only three last letters EMO have been preserved. The datival suffix /O/ indicates it was a male person. Names that linguistically consist of the /EMO/ graphemes in the onomastic mosaic of the Roman Empire are infrequent. They mostly appear in the roman province of *Gallia Narbonensis*,

<sup>13</sup> As is the case with the previous monument, archaeologist Đorđe Odavić discovered this monument as well. Odavić discovered the monument in the Museum of Herzegovina facilities, when the museum underwent a meticulous cleaning because of the exhibition of the painter Milena Šotra entitled “Galeria legata”. The monument was thus found before 1999, but it had been lost in the museum inventory.

<sup>14</sup> The gentile nomen *Aelius* is the most frequent *nomen* in the area that administratively and legally belonged to the *Ager Epidauritanus*. It can only be safely determined from the onomastic elements that this was a man who had the gentile name of the emperor Hadrian (*Caesar Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus Buccellanus Augustus* 117–138).

from where this *Aelius* had arrived.<sup>15</sup> Still, due to the insufficient information this epigraphic monument provides, the issue of the ethnic origin of this man remains open.



**Image 3:** The front side with the *cippus* text from Trebinje (photo: A. Šačić Beča)

In comparison to the ancient sepulchral monuments, the findings of the ancient brick with the imprinted text are by far rarer.<sup>16</sup> The reason should be sought in the

<sup>15</sup> The only Illyrian name that contains the last syllable in EM is *Temus*. However, that is a female Illyrian name which does have the masculine nominative suffix /US/, but, in the dative form, it does not appear with the /O/ suffix, which is the case here. András Mócsy in the paper *Nomenclator provinciarum Europae Latinarum et Galliae Cisalpine cum indice inverso, col. "Dissertationes Pannonicae"* mentions several names that can be brought into connection with the onomastic elements of this inscription: *Aedemo, Eudemus, Demonstratus, Lemnus*. These names, in the majority of cases, appear also in the Roman province *Gallia Narbonensis, which was predominantly settled by the primordial Celtic population. (More on that, see: Lőrincz 2005, 25)*. Bojanovski states that the local, Illyrian names were mostly preserved in the hinterland of *Epidaurus*. However, he does not reject the possibility of presence of immigrant settlers (Bojanovski 1988, 83-84). According to the aforementioned, there are two possibilities that can be brought into connection with the origin of this Elijan man. According to the first option, this man was a local, of Illyrian descent, while, according to the second option, it was a settler from *Gallia Narbonensis*. Due to the partially preserved graphemes in the name, both the options related to the origin of the man whose tombstone was found in Trebinje should be considered.

<sup>16</sup> In the interior of the Dalmatia province, only about 15 brick masonries were registered (Škegro 1999, 258). The reading of literature indicates that, currently, Robert Matijašić, the classic period scholar, is the most engaged researcher of brick texts. Pedišić and Podrug emphasise that Matijašić has on several occasions emphasised that the experts need to become more engaged into the

fact that the material produced by small masonries from the interior of the Roman province Dalmatia did not leave the framework of the local usage.<sup>17</sup> Keeping in mind the aforementioned, the previously unpublished inscription on the brick, found in a wider locality of Makljenovac (near Doboj) will expand the corpus of the ancient seals from the area of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>18</sup> The width of the brick is 28 cm, while the length of the preserved fragment was 18 cm. The size of the letters is 4 cm. Orthographically, the graphemes were written in the capital letters and all but the last letter are well preserved. The upper half of the last letter was preserved in the last letter of the inscription, while the lower half was most probably destroyed by accident, during the excavation. Since the brick inscriptions are on a softer material as compared to other kinds of epigraphic inscriptions, this (undeliberate) damage frequently occurs. Next to the last letter of the inscription, a section of the brick was clearly chunked by a tool, since a small dent is seen on that place. This is important to emphasise since one gets the impression on the photo that it is a remain of a grapheme or a punctuation mark.

The preserved text and the reconstruction of the inscription reads:

*C(aesari) v(etustate) [c(orrupum)].*

Translation: Caesars (the restorers) of the destroyed antiquities.

The text on the brick inscription from the Crkvine location in Makljenovac is highly unusual for the area of the Western Balkans. The analysis demanded a comparison with textually similar inscriptions from other parts of the Roman Empire. Namely, this kind of text appears in the majority of cases in public (*tituli*

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publication related to the brick products, since that would create a base for the development of corpus of the ancient seals (Pedišić/Podrug 2007, 82). As far as the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina is concerned, not a single monograph on this subject has been published. The problem with the inscriptions from Bosnia and Herzegovina has been sporadically treated within other, wider topics by authors such as Patscha, Sergejevski, Čremošnik, Bojanovski, Škegro, Mesihović, Busuladžić and others. Certain data containing the inscriptions on the brick from Bosnia and Herzegovina are provided by the authors comparatively, by comparing the inscriptions with those that were made in the masonries of the Adriatic shore. That can be observed in the papers by Matijašić and Wilkes.

<sup>17</sup> Škegro mentions that in the period of the developed Empire (by that he means the period from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE) the municipal masonries were also open for the production of brick solely for the local use (Škegro 1999, 253). Observed chronologically, the period when those masonries were active was short, and it depended on the constriction requirements of a smaller community. It is possible that those masonries in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina were opened as part of the construction projects that had unfolded in a certain area during a certain period.

<sup>18</sup> On this occasion, I would like to extend my gratitude to archaeologist Aleksandar Jašarević, the curator of the Regional Museum in Doboj, who informed me about this find in the deposit of the museum, and provided me with an insight into the material, enabling thus the analysis of the seal.



*publici*) or private inscriptions on buildings (*tituli privati*) and are honorary inscriptions, rarely used as seals on the usable objects (*instrumentum*).



**Image 4:** A fragment of the Roman brick with the inscription from Makljenovac (Doboj) (photo: A. Šaćić Beća)

The seal indicates that the brick was made in the period of the emperor Septimius Severus (*Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Eusebes Pertinax Augustus* 193–211). The *terminus ante quem* of the brick is year 202 CE, while the *terminus post quem* of the brick is 211 CE.<sup>19</sup> The word *Caesar* should be read in plural for all the monuments that contain the CVC abbreviation concern the emperor Septimius Severus and his sons and heirs Caracalla and Geta.<sup>20</sup> It appears in another epigraphic monument found in Crkvina near Makljenovac.<sup>21</sup> The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE was the period when the word *Caesar* started to lose its original meaning and appropriate a new sense, meaning the heir – *Augustus*. Another confirmation of this dating is the previously published epitaphs from the Doboj *castrum*. Namely, so far, several such monuments have been found and they concern the Roman ruler and

<sup>19</sup> The abbreviation CVC appears on the Septimius Severus' monuments after the year 202, when he, together with his sons (who also bore the title of *Caesar*) Geta and Caracalla reconstructed the Pantheon in Rome (Birley 2002, 163).

<sup>20</sup> Similar inscriptions have been found in Britain and France. For example: *[Imperatores] Caesares L(ucius) Septi[mius Severus Pius Pertinax Aug(ustus) et M(arcus) Aurelius] / [Antoninus A] ug(ustus) [[et P(ublius)]]] Septimius [[[Geta]]] nobilissimus Caesar 3] / [vetustate c]orruptum (CIL VII, 00106)*

<sup>21</sup> A fragment from the sepulchral stele, preserved text: ] / i(?)[---] / cv(?)[---] / h[---] / eiu[s? ---] / [----](?) (CIL III, 12760).

his family members.<sup>22</sup> A systematic research conducted in 1984 by Irma Čremošnik confirmed that a military camp was based in Crkvina near Makljenovac, which can be assumed to belong to the period of the peak reign of Septimius.<sup>23</sup> Although there are some indications that a masonry existed in the wider area of Doboj where brick was made, evidence to confirm that are still scarce. On the basis of another finding with the CVC seal, it is difficult to make an estimate on whether it was a local production or an import of the construction material for the needs of the military camp and a nearby settlement.<sup>24</sup>



**Image 5:** A fragment of the Roman brick with the inscription from Makljenovac (Doboj)  
(photo: A. Šačić Beća)

A possibility that the masonry existed should not be neglected, for, chronologically, its existence would have been relatively short and closely connected to the needs of the construction of the *castrum*. There is a possibility that the CVC was the *tria nomina* of the owner of the masonry where the brick was made. Such masonries were not obliged to place their seal to the materials for internal use that did not include a greater production for the purpose of the export. On the other hand, it is also possible that the masonries placed the seal only on a certain, smaller number of the produced samples, which would have been possible in this case. However, the distribution of clay with the CVC seal on a wide area of the Roman Empire suggests a possibility that the material was imported from some greater, perhaps Italic centres of production since the CVC mark was primarily used to present the activities of

<sup>22</sup> *CIL III*, 14222 (p. 2328, 117); *CIL III*, 12757 = AHB p 639.

<sup>23</sup> Čremošnik 1984, 23-84.

<sup>24</sup> The research so far has shown that settlements were organised next to military camps in accordance to the civilian settlements and the *vicus* (Čremošnik 1984, 38).

the emperor Septimius Severus. The inscription had been engraved prior to sealing and seems to have been preserved entirely.

Another ancient epigraphic monument, unpublished so far, has been found.<sup>25</sup> It is a votive altar dedicated to the supreme Roman god Jupiter. The monument is of the following dimensions: width: 29 cm, length 60 cm; the writing space is 15 cm, and its height is 28 cm; letters are 3,5 cm high and are capital letters.

The preserved text and the reconstruction of the inscription reads:

*[I(ovi)] O(ptimo) M(aximo)*  
*[L?] [V]AR(ius) R (ufus)*  
*[DELMA]TI[S]*  
*COH(orti) • I • M(illiariae)*  
*5 EX I(maginifero) V(oto) S(oluerunt)*  
*L(ibentes) •*

Translation: To Jupiter, Best and Greatest, [L] Varius Rufus, to the Dalmatae cohort the I milliaria, from imaginifer, willingly fulfilled his vow on the order (of the deity)

Of all the epigraphic monuments mentioned in this paper, it would perhaps be pretentious to say that this votive altar is most valuable, although its analysis could provide certain guidelines related to determining the border between Dalmatia and Pannonia. When such monuments are in question, so far, in the Makljenovac area near Doboj, only one more fragment of a monument has been found, containing the inscription of Jupiter's oath.<sup>26</sup> Unlike the votive altar, that monument, being only preserved in fragments, does not enable any further detailed epigraphic analysis.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the historical value of the monument is not contained in the oath or in the onomastic structure of the name of the person it was dedicated to but in the name of the cohort that is shown on it. The first letter of the *praenomen* L is in a bad condition but not entirely erased and it is possible that it signifies one of the most frequent Roman personal names *Lucius*. The same situation is seen in the *nomen gentile* in which the upper part of the grapheme V can be distinguished, as

<sup>25</sup> As was the case with the previous find, I am sincerely grateful to archaeologist Aleksandar Jašarević, the curator of the Regional Museum in Doboj, who enabled me to gain access to the monument, this epigraphic altar is currently located in the museum's deposit, but should soon be part of the exhibition.

<sup>26</sup> *CIL III*, 12756.

<sup>27</sup> Imamović 1977, 366-367; Mesihović 2011, 640.

well as the grapheme AR, all of which are well preserved. The initial letter R in the *cognomen* marks *Rufus* or *Rufino*.<sup>28</sup> In the onomastic context, the analysis of the name in the situation when only the initial letter is preserved, notwithstanding all the onomasticons and nomenclators, is still based on quite imprecise assumptions. In the third line, the monument reveals a relatively well-preserved remainder of the word *Delmatis*, which is a dative form of *Dalmatarum*, an official name of the cohort. Then, in the fifth line, the formula is preserved that precisely states that it was the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata*.<sup>29</sup> It is the data confirming that the *castrum* in Makljenovac belonged to the Roman province of Dalmatia, for, unlike the *Cohors prima Flavia Hispanarum*<sup>30</sup> and the *Cohors prima Belgarum*,<sup>31</sup> that also appear on one of the Doboj inscriptions, the cohort whose name is engraved on this

<sup>28</sup> During the reconstruction of the text of the unpublished epigraphic inscriptions, it is desirable to consult more experienced researchers. Thus, dr. Milan Lovenjak, an assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, proposed to reconstruct the text the following way: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / [+ V]arr(ius) / [+ +]TI(?) / cob(ortis) I • m(illiariae) S/ ex i(maginifer) v(otum) s(olvit) / l(ibens)*. Lovenjak finds it unusual that the dedication in singular appears in the dative case (*Delmatis*), but that the monument concerns a soldier *cob I miliaria* with an adjective *Delmatarum*, of the cohort whose existence has previously been confirmed in the Dalmatian province. Also, in his opinion, the word *militia*, perhaps with a ligature in the first section, cannot be completely excluded, but the dative then would be the mistake of the brick mason, since the titular of the nominative is preserved. I also would like to use this opportunity and express gratitude to dr. Lovenjak for professional assistance in writing this article.

<sup>29</sup> *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* was the full name of the cohort. For an easier analysis of the monument, it is necessary to briefly reflect upon the history of the cohort. It should primarily be stated that this cohort should be differentiated from the *Cohors prima Delmatarum* that was mainly stationed in Britain, and that these two cohorts are completely different auxiliary units. The cohort whose name appears on the epigraphic monument from Doboj most was most probably formed in 80 CE, after the Roman legions retreated from the territory of the Dalmatia province. Unlike the *Cohors prima Delmatarum*, an exclusively infantry unit, the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata*, as its name states, was a mixed infantry and cavalry unit. This cohort was outside its base province for only a short period of time, during a military campaign that Septimius Severus led against the Parthians (197-198 CE). It is considered that this cohort was *de facto* stationed through the entire Principate in its “birth” province Dalmatia and it is, as such, classified as an autochthonous cohort (see more in: Holder 1980).

<sup>30</sup> *[---]m[us(?) tr[i]b(unus)(?) / [c]ob(ortis) eius[d]em / [p]raef(ectus) cob(ortis) I Fl(aviae) / [Hi]spano[r]um (CIL III, 12759. (B) = CIL III, 14619. (B))*. It should also be emphasised that Čremošnik well observed that the *cursus* was mentioned on the inscription, i.e. the position that this tribune had in the army: of a noble birth, but since only a fragment of the monument has been preserved, he might have been a tribune of the cohort I Flaviae Hispanorum, which does not entail that the cohort was in the *castrum* in Makljenovac in the moment the monument was made. Namley, the tributary in the cohort could have been only a part of this *cursus horonum* which, sadly, has not been preserved in entirety. (Čremošnik 1984, 39)

<sup>31</sup> *D(is) M(anibus) / C(aius) Iulius Maxi-/mus veter(anus) / cob(ortis) I Belg(arum) <sup>5</sup>/ v(ivus) f(ecit) / sib(i) ed( = et) Avil(liae) / Amabili co/niugi su(a)e (CIL III, 8376b. = CIL III, 12750 = AE 1890, 0105).*

altar was stationed all the time in Dalmatia. The fifth line reads that the person to whom the altar was dedicated was *imagnifier*. That would mean that he was the *principals*, which in today's words would mean the rank of the non-commissioned officer. His task in the cohort was to carry the symbol with principes' face and this vocation was characteristic of solely the first cohort. What follows is the usual oath and no specificities have been noticed.

Géza Alföldy emphasised the possibility of the presence of the *Delmatarum milliaria equitata* cohort, and he ascribed one of the three military fragments from Makljenovac to this very cohort.<sup>32</sup> Ivo Bojanovski in his chapter on the Roman army in the area of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina entitled *Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Ancient Period*, places this cohort in the castrum in Doboj, although he emphasised that he was not certain about the correct analysis of the epigraphic fragments found.<sup>33</sup> It is thus obvious that Bojanovski was also not able to see this altar that was situation in the deposit of the Regional Museum in Doboj. The same applies to Irma Čremošnik who, although having written the most extensive study on the Makljenovac castrum that was the result of a systematic research, found no evidence to support that the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* was stationed there.<sup>34</sup>



**Image 6:** Jupiter's altar mentioning the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* from Makljenovac (Doboj) (photo: A. Šaćić Beća)

<sup>32</sup> It is the fragment of the votive altar with the following text: *curam] / [age]nte M(arco) R(ufinio) [---] / [praese]nte co(hors-) [---] / miliar[ia- ---] (CIL III, 12758 = CIL III, 14618b). Alföldy's reading brings this monument into a connection with the analysis of the unpublished altar from Makljenovac (see more in: Alföldy 1962). There is a possibility that it could have been the same person, especially considering that the onomastic elements on this altar are not well preserved. The inscription on this cohort from Užice also mentions the name *Rufus*: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Part(h)ino / C(aius) Iul(ius) Rufus / trib(unus) coh(ortis) Imil(liariae) / Delm(atarum) pro sal(ute) 5 / [[.....]] / [[...]] I l(ibens) p(osuit) (CIL III, 12718 (p 2328,116) = ILJug III, 1511)**

<sup>33</sup> Bojanovski 1988, 328.

<sup>34</sup> Čremošnik 1984, 23-84.



**Image 7:** The inscription of Jupiter's stele from Makljenovac near Dobož  
(photo: A. Jašarević)

The confirmation that *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* was stationed in the Makljenovac *castrum* is a good indicator that the Romans took care of the inter-provincial borders, not only about the *limes*. If the aforementioned cohort is observed as bordering, then Appian's data that *all of Paeonia*<sup>35</sup> *from Iapydes to Dardani is woody and long*<sup>36</sup> matches the findings of the First Dalmatian Mixed Cohort. So far, evidence have been found that the cohort was present in Salona (Solin near Split), Klis, Promona,<sup>37</sup> Užice, Čačak and Dobož.<sup>38</sup> Observed chronologically, Promona had originally been in the border area between two Illyrian peoples, the

<sup>35</sup> Šašel-Kos analysed this issue in great detail in her study "Appaian and Illyricum" and concluded that Appian mixed the *Paeones* and the Pannonians due to a lack of knowledge in the Illyrian ethnography (Šašel Kos 2005, 275-389). Appaian himself stated that the *Paeones* were *the Paeones are a large nation along the Ister ((most probably meaning northward) who extend from the Iapodes to the Dardanians (App. Ill. 14, 40)*. Observed chronologically, in the period when Appian lived and wrote, as well as according to the events he described, it is most likely that the data concerns the Illyric peoples of Pannonia, not the *Paeones*.

<sup>36</sup> *App. Ill. 22.*

<sup>37</sup> Different historians have tried to determine the geographical position of Promona. Thus, Zaimović is of the opinion that Promona was Tepljuh, south of Knin (Zaimović 2008, 181), while Bilić-Dujmušić is of the opinion it was Velika Orašnica (Bilić-Dujmušić 2004, 465). Šašel Kos located Promona was between Petrovo and Kosovo polje (about 8 kilometres north of Drniš and 19 kilometres south of Knin). (Šašel Kos 2005, 444).

<sup>38</sup> Bojanovski 1988, 356; Mesihović 2011, 258.

Liburnians and the Dalmatae.<sup>39</sup> Alter, it belonged to the border area and was part of the province Dalmatia,<sup>40</sup> and that is confirmed by the inscription erected by military officials *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata*. The Užice and Čačak area would have separated the province *Dalmatia* from *Moesia Superior*, hence, this cohort was stationed in the territory. In accordance with the aforementioned, there is a clear implication that Makljenovac near Dobož was also the northernmost point of the Roman province Dalmatia in north-eastern Bosnia.<sup>41</sup> Apart from controlling the inter-province border, the task of the cohort was to supervise the transport of the ore from the central and eastern Bosnia (*Bostuae Nova, Domavia*) mines *en route* to Sirmium. The monument cannot be younger than 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE, for two reasons. In the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE, the *cohortis I Flavia Hispanorum* was stationed, while the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* was formed in the late 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE. It should be emphasised: if the claim that the Romans accounted for the interethnic borders of the Illyrian peoples (*peregrinus civitas*) is understood as true, then Makljenovac would mean the northernmost border of Daesitiates (*civitas Daesitiates*).

## Conclusion

If one takes written sources to be the helping hand of a historian, then the material sources, primarily epigraphic inscriptions, are the fingers of that helping hand. This is a metaphor that perhaps is not characteristic of history as a science, but in studying territorial, legal and administrative structure of the social processes and the daily life from a historical perspective, it is justified. The four epigraphic inscriptions here analysed open a spectrum of themes that the future historical research should pay attention to. Here we primarily relate to the issue of the southern border of the Roman province *Pannonia* that had encompassed northern Bosnia, as well as the issues of the Roman roads and brick masonries.

<sup>39</sup> That can be concluded from Appian's testimony that the Dalmatians, when Caesar was waging a war with the Celts, occupied the town of Promona by Liburnians. (*App. Ill.* 12, 34) When reading Appian, one can conclude that Promona, in the period of Octavian's campaign, was an average town.

<sup>40</sup> The northwest border should in this case be sought in a natural border, like the Promina mountain, the name of which is etymologically linked to Promona.

<sup>41</sup> Owing to the confirmation from the findings that prove the presence of the cohort that had existed almost the entire time in the province Dalmatia, i.e., the cohort that was also at the border and characteristic only of the Roman province of Dalmatia, the Makljenovac camp is confirmed not to have only been a transit stop for the Roman units. The conclusion presented by Bojanovski, that this camp was Peripannonian (Bojanovski 1988, 328) and, as such, was Pannonian, is not confirmed by this finding.

Although such themes are treated in historiography as purely technical, tasked mainly with the analysis and dating of the inscription texts, this paper was organised the way that it accounted for the place this fundus takes in the mosaic of cultural and historic processes in the Principate, together with the lexical and onomastic analysis. The milestone of the Emperor Maximinus Thrax shows that the *damnatio memoriae* of his work and character, because of the isolated position, was not as widespread in the interior. That, in fact, proves that the information, even that which was significant for the Roman Empire, was not transparent even among the officials in the interior. Milestones are public constructions supervised by the administrative bodies. Unlike the Maximinus Thrax's and his son Maximus' milestones, the *cippus* fragment found also near Trebinje does not provide any significant data, and it is also impossible to establish whose tombstone it was. Still, this kind of monument is important because it helps to trace certain phases of romanisation by the use of statistics.

Reconstruction of the text from the seal on the Maljkovac brick demanded an epigraphic analysis from a far wider area as compared to the one where the brick was found. The research showed that the CVC abbreviation appears on many more inscriptions in Britain and Galia Narbonensis as compared to the west-Balkan provinces. Its use was short-term and is related to the *Pantheon* reconstruction in Rome. In the year 202 CE, Septimius Severus and his sons reconstructed the famous temple and because of that they added to the inscriptions the following text: *C(aesari) v(etustate) [c(orrupum)]*. The data itself shows a close connection between the Roman provinces and a certain form of centralism. Aesthetically, the seal is elaborate, with the capital that, due to the precision of forms, indicates that it was imported, rather than locally produced. Also, the previous systematic research did not result in finding of the inscription on the Makljenovac brick, which is unusual given that there was a masonry nearby. The value of this brick fragment and its seal is that it proves that in the period from 202 to 211 CE, the Makljenovac *castrum* was reconstructed. It is possible that it was an investment of the empire to show gratitude to the First Mixed Dalmatian Cohort (*Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata*) for the participation in wars against Parthians (197-198 CE), when the cohort for the first and the last time left the base province. Still, one should not neglect the possibility that the CVC abbreviation contains the first three letters, the *tria nomina*, of the brick masonry owner, i.e. the owner of the property where the brick was made.

Until now, it was only assumed that the mentioned cohort was stationed in the Makljenovac *castrum*. The majority of BiH ancient historians and archaeologists referred to Alföldy's claim that the fragment of the altar was part of a monument which mentioned the *Cohors prima Delmatarum milliaria equitata* (CIL III, 12758



= *CIL III*, 14618B). Alföldy's assumption was the only proof that the cohort was present in north-eastern Bosnia. However, a relatively preserved Jupiter's altar found in the deposit of the Regional Museum in Doboj by Aleksandar Jašarević confirmed that Alföldy was right. For historians, such a discovery is important since it answers the question that was so far unanswered by the literary sources. Primarily, this inscription confirms that Makljenovac near Doboj was the northernmost point of the Roman province Dalmatia in north-eastern Bosnia. Also, it proves that Romans, as outstanding practitioners, accounted for the internal borders of the empire, and that is the issue that has so far been rather neglected in BiH historiography. Finally, it should be emphasised that the paper attempted neither to disprove nor to confirm some previous opinions, but to methodologically analyse the previously unpublished material so that it helps define a scientific problem in the following stages of research.

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### Abbreviations

- AE*                      *L'année épigraphique*, Paris
- CIL III*                 *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum III* (ed. Th. Mommsen), Berlin 1873: Supplementa 1889–1902.
- ILJug*                    *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMXL e MCMLX repertae et editae sunt* (ed. A. et J. Šašel), Situla 5, Ljubljana 1963 (št. 1–451); *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMLX e MCMLXX repertae et editae sunt* (ed. A. et J. Šašel), Situla 19, Ljubljana 1978 (št. 452–1222); *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMII et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt* (izd. A. et J. Šašel), Situla 25, Ljubljana 1986 (št. 1223–3128).

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