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TWO PONTIC NOTES

aus: *Epigraphica Anatolica* 38 (2005) 125–130

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1. A worshipper of Theos Hypsistos at Sinope

At Gerna Dere, small coastal settlement in the territory of Sinope, an altar with a Greek inscription was discovered and published as follows: ΘΕΟ ΥΨΙΣΤ/ΟΥ / ΑΛΕΠΙΑ / ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΗ.¹

In l. 1, the stone has clearly Ω. The adjective will necessarily stand also in the dative case, which means that the first two letters in l. 2 belong to the following word, the name of the dedicator. The last letter but one in this line, where the stone is damaged, should be read not as Π, but as ΠΙ. The woman's name is thus ΟΥΑΛΕΠΙΑ and the whole inscription reads:

Θεῶ Ὑψίστ[ω]
Οὐαλερία
Μαρκιανή

The altar was dated to the 1st–2nd century AD. The woman's name, Valeria, is otherwise attested at Sinope only twice.² The nomen Valerius/Valeria is rather rarely attested in the Greek-speaking provinces of the Empire, but is still frequent enough to preclude a link between these persons based on the name alone. Both her *nomen* and her *cognomen* being Roman, she seems to have originated rather in the Roman colony set up at Sinope by Caesar³ than in the old Greek city, although she chose to address the deity in Greek.

This raises the number of dedications to Theos Hypsistos from Sinope to four. The other three were erected by the brothers⁴ Αἴλιος Θρεπτίων Ποντιανός and Σεουήρος Μάκερ at Gerze⁵; by

* I am indebted to Magdalen College (Oxford) for the opportunity granted to me of working in Oxford's libraries.

The following abbreviations have been used:

Alföldy G. Alföldy, Die römischen Inschriften von Tarraco (Madrider Forschungen 10), Berlin 1975
Robinson D. M. Robinson, Ancient Sinope, Baltimore 1906
SIRIS L. Vidman, Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae, Berlin 1969
Solomonik E. I. Solomonik, Latinskie nadpisi Chersonesa Tavricheskovo, Moskva 1983.

¹ O. Doonan – D. Smart, Gerna Dere. Roman and Byzantine settlement in Sinop province, Turkey, *Talanta* 22–23, 2000–2001, 22–23 with fig. 6 (not included in D. French, *The Inscriptions of Sinope I* [IK 64], Bonn 2004).

² Γάϊος Οὐα[λέριος ---] received a honorary decree from Chersonesus Taurica in ca. AD 106–114 (S. Ju. Saprykin, *Chersoneskaya prokseniija sinopejtsy*, *VDI* 1998, 4, 41–65 = SEG 48, 999). The herald Οὐαλέριος Ἐκλεκτος [Σιν]οπεύς was a winner in a large number of games around the mid-3rd century AD: IG II², 3169/70 = IK 10,3 Nikaia 90, T39e = IAG 90 = A. B. Tataki, *Ancient Beroea. Prosopography and Society* (Meletemata 8), Athens 1988, 985; AD 261: SEG 17, 203 = IvO 243. He describes himself as Ῥωμαῖος: at this time when, due to the *constitutio Antoniniana*, everybody was a Roman citizen, this indication stresses the fact that his was a citizenship of old standing, as shown also by his *nomen* Valerius and not Aurelius: see for this J. and L. Robert, *BÉ* 1976, 279.

³ See for the Roman colony Strabo 12, 3, 11; Plinius n. h. 6, 2; Plinius epist. 10, 91; Appian Mithr. 120, 121; Robinson 255–256; S. Mitchell, *Iconium and Ninica. Two Double Communities in Roman Asia Minor*, *Historia* 28, 1979, 416–417 and n. 53.

⁴ For the meaning of “brothers” here see L. Robert, *Études anatoliennes*, Paris 1937, 288 n. 3.

⁵ D. French, *Sinopean notes 4. Cults and divinities: The epigraphic evidence*, *EA* 23, 1994, (99–108) 104 no. 12.1 = Robinson 306 no. 29 = IK 64 Sinope 117.

Ἵουσιτίμωσ and his son Ἰουσιτίμωσ at Sinope⁶; and by ---]ωσ and his wife Ἰουσιτίμωσ at Emreli⁷. Apart from the one found in the city itself, the other two come from places which, like Gerna, were small villages on the coast, belonging to the cluster of settlements proliferating in Roman Imperial times and spreading from the coast inland.⁸ On the basis of these inscriptions, there appears no reason to connect the cult of Theos Hypsistos to Jewish beliefs. The cult of this god,⁹ worshipped by Greeks and Romans alike, may have originated in the city, which was a thriving commercial centre, and spread from there to the surrounding smaller settlements, without one single definite centre of worship.

2. A soldier of the *cohors II Lucensium* at Chersonesus

An epitaph was set up for a soldier of the *cohors II Lucensium* at Chersonesus Taurica.¹⁰ It runs as follows:

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)
M(arcus) Anto-
n(ius) Va-
lens mil(es)
coh(ortis) II
Lucensiu(m)
vixit ann(is)
XXV mil(itavit) ann(is) V
h(eredes) f(aciendum) c(uraverunt).

On the grounds of the use of the praenomen and of the closing formula *h. f. c.*, it can be dated to the 2nd century BC.¹¹ It is possible, on external evidence, to narrow this date further down.

The unit to which M. Antonius Valens belonged was initially recruited from the Iberic tribe of the Callaeci belonging to one of the three *conventi* into which Gallaecia was divided.¹² The earliest extant evidence places it in undivided Moesia; military diplomas of AD 105¹³, 110/113?¹⁴

⁶ D. French, *op. cit.*, 104–105 no. 12.2 = IK 64 Sinope 118, 1st–2nd century AD.

⁷ D. French, *op. cit.*, 105 no. 12.3 = Robinson 304 no. 26 = IK 64 Sinope 119.

⁸ O. Doonan – D. Smart (n. 1), 23–24. See for the settlement pattern around Sinope most recently O. P. Doonan, *Sinop landscapes. Exploring connections in a Black Sea hinterland*, Philadelphia 2004, with further literature.

⁹ For the cult of Theos Hypsistos it will suffice to indicate S. Mitchell, *The cult of Theos Hypsistos between Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, in P. Athanassiadi – M. Frede (eds.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 1999, 81–148, with the extensive catalogue of inscriptions linked to this deity; see also the objections of M. Stein, *Die Verehrung des Theos Hypsistos: Ein allumfassender pagan-jüdischer Synkretismus?*, EA 33, 2001, 119–126.

¹⁰ AE 1909, 166 = IOSPE I², 555 = Solomonik 19.

¹¹ W. Wagner (*Die Dislokation der römischen Auxiliarformationen in den Provinzen Noricum, Pannonien, Moesien und Dakien von Augustus bis Gallienus*, Berlin 1938, 99, 161–162) gives a date around the mid-2nd century; he was followed by K. Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung der Alen und Kohorten an Rhein und Donau*, Bern 1951, 179 no. 1572, and V. Velkov (n. 17) 254 no. 11.

¹² See for them RE III [1899] 1356–1359 (Hübner); *La romanización de Galicia*², La Coruña 1992.

¹³ CIL XVI 50.

¹⁴ CIL XVI 58.

and 127¹⁵ evince it as part of the garrison of Moesia Inferior; at this time, it seems to have been stationed at Abrittus/Razgrad. In the military diploma CIL XVI 78 of AD 134 it no longer appears among the units of the province and in AD 136 building inscriptions attest its presence at Kabyle¹⁶ in the province of Thracia; it remained here until the end of the 2nd century, when it was once again removed to Germania/Separeva Banja, still in Thrace¹⁷.

The unit sent a detachment to Chersonesus while this part of the Crimea, along with the Greek cities of Olbia and Tyras, were under the military control of the Lower Moesian army.¹⁸ After military interventions in the course of the 1st century AD, constant presence of Roman army units on the northern Black Sea shore can be ascertained from the very beginning of Hadrian's reign.¹⁹

Hence it is possible to place Antonius Valens' presence and untimely end at Chersonesus certainly before AD 136, when the cohort was attested in Thrace and thus ceased to belong to the army of Lower Moesia;²⁰ probably before AD 134, since it no longer appears among the units of this province listed in the diploma of this year.²¹ Given his only five years of military service, he must have entered it in AD 129 at the very latest and in all likelihood somewhat earlier; however, no earlier than the beginnings of Roman garrisoning of Chersonesus after AD 117.²²

A surprising feature of the inscription is the fact that it begins with – instead of the accustomed *D(is) M(anibus)* – a dedication to *I(upiter) O(ptimus) M(aximus)*.²³ Such deviations from the rule, while not being entirely unprecedented,²⁴ are rare enough to justify attention. This is certainly not a local Chersonesian epigraphic peculiarity: no other Latin grave stone there bears such dedication.²⁵ Moreover, they are to be met with exclusively in Hispania, invariably dedications to female deities made *in honorem et memoriam* of a woman, those to a male deity for a man. They occur in two main areas of concentration: one in Lusitania²⁶, the other, somewhat

¹⁵ M. M. Roxan, An Auxiliary/Fleet Diploma of Moesia Inferior: 127 August 20, ZPE 118, 1997, 287–299.

¹⁶ For Roman Kabyle see V. Velkov, Zum Militärwesen der römischen Provinz Thracien. Das Militärlager Cabyle, Chiron 8, 1978, 433–439.

¹⁷ For the history of the *cohors II Lucensium* see V. Velkov, *Cohors II Lucensium equitata* in Moesia and Thrace, AArchHung 41, 1989, 247–256; M. M. Roxan, P. Weiß, Die Auxiliartruppen der Provinz Thracia. Neue Militärdiplome der Antoninenzeit, Chiron 28, 1998, 379–381; J. Spaul, Cohors. The evidence for and a short history of the auxiliary infantry units of the Roman Imperial army (BAR IS 841), Oxford 2000², 83–84. All previous literature and epigraphic evidence can be found in one or other of these works.

¹⁸ While at the same time the Bosphoran kingdom belonged to the Bithynian command and the eastern Pontic coast to the Cappadocian. See M. P. Speidel, D. French, Bithynian troops in the kingdom of the Bosphorus, EA 6, 1985, 97–102; T. Sarnowski, Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres, Archeologia 38, 1988, 64–66 and Abb. 2.

¹⁹ T. Sarnowski, op. cit., 87.

²⁰ M. Roxan (n. 17), 381.

²¹ J. Spaul (n. 17), 84.

²² See for the Roman military presence on the northern Black Sea shore T. Sarnowski (n. 18), 61–98. See also T. Sarnowski, O. Ja. Savelja, Das Dolichenum von Balaklava und die römischen Streitkräfte auf der Südkrim, Archeologia 49, 1998, 15–54.

²³ M. Roxan (n. 17), 380 n. 32 corrects here to <D. M.>. The stone has IOM, cf. Solomonik fig. 19.

²⁴ Cf. R. Cagnat, Cours d'épigraphie latine⁴, Paris 1914, 282.

²⁵ Solomonik, passim.

²⁶ Augusta Emerita/Merida: CIL II 5261 (--- Augustae); Faro/Ossonoba: CIL II 8 (Iovi Optimo Maximo); Merobriga/Santiago de Caçém: CIL II 22 (Marti); CIL II 23 (Veneri Victrici Augustae); Pax Iulia/Beja: CIL II 46 = SIRIS 753 (Serapi Pantheo); Scallabis, Colonia Praesidium Iulium/Santarém: CIL II 5026 (Marti); CIL II 332 (Pietati Augustae); Collippo/S. Sebastião do Freixo: CIL II 351 (Minervae).

more concentrated, in Tarraco and the *conventum Tarraconensis*²⁷. The probability of a soldier in a unit originally recruited in the Tarraconensis and who conforms to a specific Tarraconensis epigraphic habit to originate himself from the Tarraconensis seems too great to be written off as a mere coincidence.

The recruitment to auxiliary units is generally regarded as switching to local enlistment rather early, perhaps as soon as the unit was stationed away from its area of formation and already in the first half of the 1st century AD.²⁸ Numbers of cases of recruitment from a unit's area (or tribe) of origin fall sharply from the reign of Vespasian onwards²⁹ and are considered in the 2nd century to be isolated cases, linked to certain little Romanized populaces or to nationally influenced modes of combat.³⁰ This trend is strengthened in the case of provinces which, like Hispania, lay away from the borders of the Empire and had been ruled by Rome for a long time; in such cases, growing enfranchisement of the natives gradually reduced the local potential for draft.³¹

The same was taken to be true for the *cohors II Lucensium*: three cases of soldiers were cited, who were deemed of Thracian origin.³² This is undoubtedly true of two of them, who bear unmistakably Thracian names;³³ less so for the third. This is Fl(avius) Mestrius Ius[tus]³⁴, who dedicated a statuette to the Thracian Horseman at Goliamia Brestnica by the sanctuary of Glava Panega in the province of Thrace, near the border to Moesia.³⁵ Whether he was there on official business³⁶ or private leave, the fact that he dedicated to a Thracian deity does not necessarily make him a Thracian, nor does his *gentilicium* Flavius, notwithstanding the fact that Roman citizenship had been granted to Thracians by the emperors of this dynasty.³⁷ The name Mestrius,

²⁷ Tarraco: CIL II 4080 = Alföldy 35 = SIRIS 765 (Isidi Augustae); CIL II 4081 = Alföldy 36 (Iunoni Augustae); CIL II 4087 = Alföldy 47 (Neptuni (sic) Augusto); CIL II 4415 (Veneri); Aeso/Isona: CIL II 4458 (Lunae Augustae); Acci, Colonia Iulia Gemella/Guadix: CIL II 3386 = SIRIS 761 (Isidi puellari); Gerunda: CIL II 6181 (Apollini Augusto); Almenara: CIL II 3977 = 6054 (Veneri sanctae).

²⁸ K. Kraft (n. 11), 43–68: “eine bewußte Rücksichtnahme auf den ursprünglichen Aushebungsbezirk fehlt; seit hadrianischer Zeit ... spielt die Wahrung der ursprünglichen Nationalität der Truppen offenbar kaum eine Rolle; J. Beneš, *Auxilia Romana in Moesia atque in Dacia*, Praha 1978, 71: die nationale Zusammensetzung der Hilfskräfte war in dieser Zeit schon bedeutungslos, nachdem die Hilfsbestände immer öfters ungefähr seit den dreißiger Jahren des 2. Jhs. vollständig aus der Bevölkerung der derzeitigen Lagergegenden ergänzt wurden. Der nationale Charakter der Auxiliareinheiten verschwand ...”

²⁹ P. A. Holder, *Studies in the auxilia of the Roman army from Augustus to Trajan* (BAR IS 70), Oxford 1980, 118.

³⁰ K. Kraft (n. 11), 63.

³¹ K. Kraft, op. cit., 44; P. A. Holder (n. 29), 118, 121. See also for conscription into the legions J. C. Mann, *Legionary recruitment and veteran settlement during the Principate*, London 1983, 54–55.

³² K. Kraft, op. cit., 47; 179 no. 1571, 1573.

³³ V. Velkov (n. 17), 253–254 no. 8, mid-2nd century: [Au]luzeni(s) m[il(es)] coh(ortis) II Lucens(ium) v. s. l. m.; V. Velkov, op. cit., 254 no. 9 (= AE 1911, 17), mid-2nd century: Apollini Tadeni Aelius Tarzas (centurio) coh(ortis) II Lucensium memoriae causae v. s. l. m.

³⁴ CIL III 14424 = G. Kazarow, *Die Denkmäler des Thrakischen Reitergottes in Bulgarien* (Diss. Pann. II14), Budapest 1938, no. 372; with the corrections of B. Gerov, *Epigraphisches zur Geschichte der niedermösischen Legionen*, *Epigraphica* 38, 1976, 65.

³⁵ B. Gerov, *Die Grenzen der römischen Provinz Thracia bis zur Gründung des Aurelianischen Dakien*, ANRW II7.1, 1979, 219–220.

³⁶ Thus J. Beneš (n. 28), 43.

³⁷ B. Gerov, *Römische Bürgerrechtsverleihung und Kolonisation in Thrakien vor Trajan*, *StCl* 3, 1961, 107–116 (= Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thrakien. Gesammelte Aufsätze, Amsterdam 1980, 83–92).

here used as a cognomen, is Italic and occurs there most often.³⁸ In the lands north of the Balkan range, on the linguistic borderline between Greek and Latin, Greek was favoured over Latin in dedications, while at the same time in epitaphs Latin texts outnumbered Greek ones by far; people (mostly Thracians) who chose Latin in the more official context of funerary inscriptions stuck to Greek in the more personal one of dedications to the gods, perhaps due to an early spreading of Greek in this sphere.³⁹ Our soldier erected a dedication in Latin in an environment which favours Greek in votive offerings and did so in a sanctuary where the majority of dedications were made in Greek. For all these reasons, it is less than likely that Flavius Mestrius be a Thracian, nor is the date of his dedication (given variously as Flavic-Trajanic or mid-2nd century⁴⁰) in any way ascertained. Thus, he cannot be used as an argument for local recruitment into this unit.

There remains thus no basis for the assumption of early local recruitment into this unit while it was stationed in Lower Moesia. The date of the above-mentioned two Thracians in the *cohors II Lucensium* is given implicitly by the very fact that they erected their votive inscriptions at Kabyle, which puts them between ca. AD 136 and the end of the century,⁴¹ i. e. after the unit had become a part of the Thracian army. The case of Antonius Valens, recruited in Hispania to serve at the other end of the Empire in Lower Moesia, runs counter to expectations. He was already a Roman citizen, so he must have volunteered⁴² for this unit, probably for entirely personal reasons. His short military career must be put between AD 120 and 129; hardly any earlier, for in the troubled first few years of Hadrian's reign, when the entire Moesian border was threatened by the Sarmatians,⁴³ the unit was not likely to have troubled sending for men all the way to Hispania, but would have contented itself with what there was close at hand.

As far as the above mentioned cases, so few in number, are relevant, the unit seems not to have resorted to local recruitment as long as it stayed in Lower Moesia. Thus, Antonius Valens may be an example of a unit consciously favouring enlistment from its original home area, even though it lay now very far away; this in turn may add a distinctive note to the general picture of local recruitment in the Antonine age.

³⁸ W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen*, Berlin 1933, 193, 230; B. Lőrincz, *Onomasticon provinciarum Europae Latinarum III*, Wien 2000, 79.

³⁹ B. Gerov, *Das Zusammenleben des Lateinischen und des Griechischen im Ostbalkanraum*, in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thracien. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Amsterdam 1980, 244–245: “die von Personen thrakischer Herkunft stammenden Weihinschriften ... sind zu 86% griechisch und nur zu 14% lateinisch”.

⁴⁰ K. Kraft (n. 11), 179 no. 1571; V. Velkov (n. 17), 254 no. 10.

⁴¹ Incidentally, this fact of recruiting Thracians into the cohort rather speaks against the assumption of M. Tacheva (*The northern border of the Thracia province to the Severi 2. From Nicopolis ad Istrum to Odessos, Thracia 11. Studia in honorem Alexandri Fol*, 1995, 429) that the transfer of this unit from Moesia to Thrace, as well as the adjustment of the administrative border between the two provinces in AD 136, were undertaken as a consequence of Thracian resistance to “the appropriation of lands for the cities and colonies founded by Traianus”.

⁴² Cf. H. T. Rowell, review of K. Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung der Alen und Kohorten an Rhein und Donau*, *JRS* 1953, 176; P. A. Holder (n. 29), 121–124.

⁴³ K. Strobel, *Die Jahre 117 bis 119 n. Chr., eine Krisenphase der römischen Herrschaft an der mittleren und unteren Donau*, in H. Kalcyk, B. Gullath, A. Graeber (eds.), *Studien zur Alten Geschichte. Siegfried Lauffer zum 70. Geburtstag am 4. August 1981 dargebracht von Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern III*, Rome 1986, 903–967.

Özet

Makalede, Karadeniz kıyılarında bulunup yayınlanan iki yazıt, okunuş ya da yorum bakımından yeniden ele alınmaktadır:

Yazıtlardan biri Sinope’de bulunmuş olan ve İ.S. I-II. yüzyıllara tarihlenen bir adaktır. Yazara göre bu yazıtın doğru okunuşu şöyledir: “*Valeria Marciane (bu adağı) Theos Hysistos’a (sundu)*”.

Yazıda ele alınan diğer eser, yine aynı bölgedeki Chersonesos’da konuşlanmış olan *cohors II Lucensium* adındaki Roma askeri birliğinde 5 yıl görev yapan ve 25 yaşında ölen M(arcus) Antonius Valens’in latin dilindeki mezar yazıtıdır. Yazar burada, adı geçen birlikte görev yapan askerlerin etnik kökenleri, devşirildikleri bölgeler ve yazıtın olası tarihi (İ.Ö. II. yüzyılın ilk yarısı ?) üzerine yorumlar getirmektedir.