

IMP. CAES. AUGUSTUS, CALPURNII PISONES ET LIBURNIA



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Abstract. – The first part of this article explores the early history of the estate owned by one branch of the Calpurnii Pisones senatorial family in Caska, on the island of Pag, Croatia. Building on the notion that it was a property gifted to the Calpurnii by the emperor Augustus, which he had acquired through confiscation, the background and possible circumstances of this incident are looked at in greater detail, reaching the conclusion that the said event can, in all probability, be explained as an aftermath of the Bellum Civile. The subsequent segment explores the consequences of those imperial policies on the local island communities. The second part of the article investigates the influence of the aforementioned senatorial family on Liburnia through the prism of epigraphic monuments – a prosopographic analysis indicates a predominant majority of Romanised locals among the early Liburnian Calpurnii, often of a higher social standing, while a spatial analysis places most of the monuments in the town of Corinium and its surroundings. Starting with the premise that the Liburnian Calpurnii were clients of the senatorial family, possible reasons for their concentration in this location are more thoroughly explored. The final part of the article features a revision of an inscription pertaining to the votive altar from the Zelengrad hillfort.

Key words. – Liburnia, Calpurnii Pisones, Illyricum, senatorial aristocracy, Caska, island of Pag, clientele, imperial confiscation, Augustus, Roman patronage in Illyricum, Liburni, Roman warfare in Illyricum, Bellum Civile.

The author of this paper had the honour and privilege of being a part of the team that published new, as well as revised the already-known inscriptions pertaining to the altars erected by Calpurnia on her family's mansion in Caska, on the island of Pag, Croatia.¹ In short, four larger altars

¹ Many ideas presented in this paper attained their final form after hours of stimulating discussion with the members of my team, and for that I would like to thank Maja Grisonić, Nikola Cesarik and Inga Viligorac Brčić, without whom this paper could hardly have been conceived.

with quite unique texts were discovered in the cove of Caska during the timespan of almost one hundred years, all of which had been erected by Calpurnia, daughter of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Augur, with the altars seemingly being dedicated to a unique assembly of Egyptian deities. These monuments are not only important for the study of the Egyptian cults and the religion of the senatorial aristocracy, but they also bear an interesting implication regarding the high politics of the Tiberian period. Due to the positive feedback received after publishing our preliminary results,² we decided to expand on this topic by writing a monograph.³ In that work, we decided to concentrate on the political, cultic and local – Novalja-based context of that discovery. In this paper I will try to fill in the blanks by moving from an imperial and local into a regional, Liburnian context.



Fig 1. A newly-discovered altar from Caska dedicated by Calpurnia to Isis, Serapis, Osiris and Anubis
Photo by Nikola Cesarik

The *Bellum Civile* and the early history of the Caska estate

Calpurnia, as previously mentioned, was the daughter of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Augur (cos. 1 BC), the granddaughter of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso (cos. 23 BC), and the niece of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso (cos. 7 BC), best known for being accused of poisoning Germanicus. From this information alone it is clear that we are dealing with the highest echelons of Augus-

² Grisonic et al., 2022.

³ Cesarik et al., 2024.

tan aristocracy. Since the publication of the first two altars in the first half of the 20th century by Sticotti, a consensus has been reached among the local scholars that Caska was the site of a senatorial estate.⁴ Calpurnia probably inherited this villa from her father, and although it is not possible to reconstruct the subsequent ownership of the estate in detail, the manor remained in the possession of the Pisones in the coming centuries.⁵

While it is still not possible to define the original spatial organization of the property, archaeological excavations conducted there over the past decades have allowed us to understand at least the basic planimetry of the estate. A waterfront with docks was identified in the deepest part of the cove.⁶ Those piers were flanked by a necropolis from the SW side,⁷ with a partially excavated economic section and a possible residential complex of the villa on the other, NE, side.⁸

The villa had its own aqueduct, and although not much can be said regarding its borders and economics, it is safe to assume that it was at least partially based on its use of the sea resources, as well as the fertile Novalja Field that dominates this part of the island. As regards the areas of interest of this paper, it is necessary to emphasize that the villa was not the only large structure from the Roman period in the northern part of the island of Pag, as to the west of Novalja Field, on the island shore, a settlement was formed which grew to be present-day Novalja. Remains of the aqueduct cut into the bedrock, architectural remains from the Principate era, and fairly large early Christian edifices suggest that Novalja was the largest settlement on northern Pag at latest from Late Antiquity.⁹ On the opposite, eastern outskirts of Novalja Field, not far from Caska Cove, there is a rather large hillfort named Košljun. Due to the presence of Roman-era



Fig. 2. The island of Pag and Liburnia in a provincial context

⁴ Sticotti 1940, 179. Not known to him, but already in the 16th century a lead aqueduct pipe bearing the name of *Calpurnii Pisones* was found near the cove, thus further proving the family's possession of the estate, Grisonic et al. 2022, 248, especially n. 73.

⁵ Cesarić et al., 2024, 38, 40.

⁶ Rossi, Boetto 2020, 4.

⁷ Cf. Kurilić, Serventi 2018.

⁸ Grisonic, Stepan 2017, 71–76.

⁹ Ilakovac 1997, 80–81.

remains, Košljun was often viewed as a place where the residential complex of the villa was situated, but it is more likely that the site was, in fact, a settlement of Cissa, the main (proto)urban center of the local communities that controlled the northern part, if not the entire island in the pre-Roman period.¹⁰

Now we are coming closer to one of the problems this paper attempts to answer, and that is the question of how the Calpurnii Pisones managed to get their hands on this prime real estate in the first place. It is not very realistic to think that their agents could have just waltzed into the public assembly of Cissa and bought a large chunk of the communal territory together with one of its main harbors.¹¹ In our study we put forward the thesis that the estate was a gift from the emperor Augustus himself, who had, in turn, taken it from the locals;¹² a *tegula* with the emperor's stamp suggests his previous ownership,¹³ and, of course, only he could confiscate the territories from the local communities during this period – there is solid proof that Augustus did, indeed, do this in Illyricum around the same time.¹⁴ Moreover, there is a literary source that can provide the background for all of this – Appian, quoting Augustus's report to the Senate, writes how the emperor, after the defeat of Sex. Pompeius, in the initial stages of his Illyrican campaigns, among other things, deprived the Liburnians of their ships because they practiced piracy.¹⁵ The same event is echoed in Cassius Dio, where the Liburni are mentioned in a combination of various Illyrican ethnicities that were the target of the emperor's campaign due to withholding dues and generally having a bad attitude towards Rome.¹⁶ The events described most probably occurred in 35 BC, and in our study we noted that with the confiscation of the ships, harbors and other pieces of territory could also have been expropriated.¹⁷ The estate could have been gifted to the Calpurnii Pisones by the emperor as early as 23 BC, when Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, after his lengthy withdrawal from public life, held consulate with Augustus himself, or a bit later, during the consulate of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Augur.¹⁸ It is also quite tempting to see in this estate the emperor's gift to Lucius on the occasion

¹⁰ Kurilić 2011, 73–74.

¹¹ Due to the local winds, it is desirable for a settlement to have at least two harbours, one of which is always sheltered (cf. Aenona, Colentum, Iader). Caska was probably the place of Cissa's southern harbor. On the opposite, northern side of Caska, the present-day village of Stara Novalja, situated in another cove, also features a great deal of Roman-era remains. Cf. Kulenović 2024, regarding the most recent survey of the area.

¹² Grisonic et al., 2022, 251.

¹³ Cesarik et al., 2024, 29.

¹⁴ Cesarik, Drahotusky-Bruketa 2020, 39–42.

¹⁵ App. *Illy.* 4.16.

¹⁶ Dio. 49.34.2.

¹⁷ Grisonic et al., 2022, 250.

¹⁸ Cesarik et al., 2024, 30–31.

of his marriage to Statilia – the daughter of Titus Statilius Taurus, one of Augustus's most important generals, and one who actually held command in Illyricum, and, thus, had decent knowledge of the local situation and economic potential.¹⁹

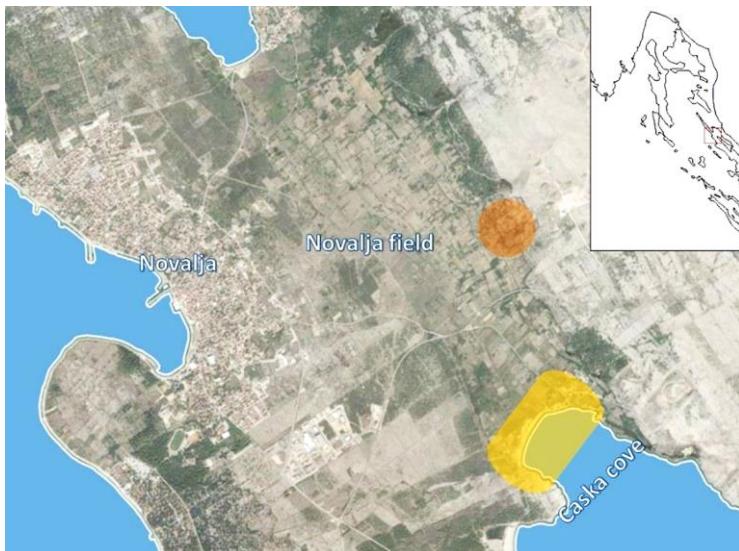


Fig. 3. Northern Pag; center of the senatorial estate, in yellow; Košljun hillfort, in red

From the local perspective, the imperial intervention changed the prospects of the Liburnians settled on the Košljun hillfort and, so to speak, redirected their development in another trajectory. It appears that during the Late Liburnian period, the political evolution of the communities on the island of Pag was rather similar to that of the other northern Liburnian islands; with one, or sometimes two, proto-urban centers controlling the entire island.²⁰ These settlements, as a rule, developed rather early into the *municipia*, and everything associated with that status.²¹ That process, however, cannot be observed on the island of Pag – for now, there are no traces of a municipalisation of the local settlements, and we lack any notion of *ordines*, *munificentiae*, *magistrates*, Romanised local elites, or even locals from the epigraphic monuments.²² It seems that Pag was destined

¹⁹ T. Statilius Taurus and his family members actually had estates in Histria, half a day of sailing from Caska; CIL V, 332, CIL V 409. I would like to thank Feda Milivojević for an interesting discussion regarding this topic.

²⁰ Cf. *Arba* / Rab on the island of Rab, *Curicum* / Krk with the community of the *Fertinates* (unknown precise location but probably Omišalj) on the island of Krk, and *Apsorus* / Osor and *Crexa* / Cres on the Lošinj – Cres archipelago (in Antiquity probably considered one island.)

²¹ Alföldy 1965, 69.

²² With one possible example being the inscription CIL III 2969, which will be discussed later.

to become an island of the Roman aristocracy and their estates, with, at least in the legal sense, “second rate” settlements. Thus, since the emperor’s confiscation is of paramount importance for the early history of the entire island, it is necessary to take a closer look at the entire *Augustus vs Liburnii* strife. As previously noted, Appian, our main source, is quite explicit as regards the cause – the Liburnian piracy – though it seems to me that we are not getting the whole story from him. The two notions that I find to be the most problematic are the terms “Liburni” and “piracy”. Regarding the Liburni, I am not convinced that Appian’s source, which was most probably the *Commentarii* of Augustus himself, is honest when referring to them as a collective. First, it appears that the Liburnian communities used to be quite autonomous in their external relations, i.e., there was no unitary entity with some sort of strong central authority, as was the case with the Delmatae or the Illyrian kingdom.²³ One or several Liburnian communities could have, indeed, taken advantage of the chaos of the civil wars and *indulged* in piracy; undertaking that is difficult to organize for individuals, but with the involvement of an entire *civitas*, such as the one at the Košljun hillfort, the whole thing seems feasible. This all leads to the next problem, which is that Appian’s observation documents the only explicit strife between the Roman state and the Liburnians in all of the surviving literary sources. Since the last third of the 2nd century BC at the latest, the Liburnians were among the most faithful *socii* of the Roman state on the eastern Adriatic.²⁴ The friendship continued with the Romans under the Julians; Caesar assisted them in their unsuccessful campaign aiming to retake Promona,²⁵ and with the beginning of the civil war, the Liburnian ships formed the base of Caesar’s flotilla.²⁶ Their fleet constituted an important component of Octavian’s navy in the battle of Actium,²⁷ while in Illyricum they likely played a supporting role during Octavian’s campaigns, as well as fighting on the Roman side during the *Bellum Batonianum*.²⁸ In subsequent centuries, Liburnia, thanks in large part to the patronage of the imperial house, became one of the most urbanised, Romanised, and prosperous parts of the province.²⁹ To conclude, the entire “piracy affair” did not have a long-lasting negative effect on the majority of Liburnian *civitates*.³⁰ Part of Augustus’s report mentioning the Liburnians as

²³ Čače 2013, 13–14.

²⁴ Čače 2013, 24.

²⁵ App. *Ill.* 3.12.

²⁶ Caes. *BCiv.* 3. 9.

²⁷ Veget. 5.3.

²⁸ Suić 1992, 57. Also, inscr. CIL III, 3158, and ILJug, 208.

²⁹ Alföldy 1965, 68.

³⁰ Čače suggested (in Čače 2013, 41) that the confiscation of the ships could be interpreted as a part of a more comprehensive process, one that actually ended the previously valid arrangement of Roman-Liburnian relations, and, thus, that even would also have been the end of the Liburnian alliance. That may be the case, but that event could also be the beginning of a

a whole could have easily been an exaggeration aimed at impressing the Senate, and not necessarily a reflection of the real situation on the ground.³¹

Regarding the term “piracy” itself, several things must be noted. Appian, as a first-class Alexandrian intellectual of the 2nd century AD, but also his source, were familiar with the rich, now largely lost Greek tradition,³² in whose *topos* the Liburnians were regularly depicted as archetypal northern Adriatic pirates. However, this extremely ahistorical view is difficult to transfer to the second half of the 1st century BC.³³ This brings us to my last point, namely the question of whether it really was piracy. In a similar manner as *latronicum* is everything that is not *bellum*,³⁴ so, for example, unsuccessful usurpers are demoted to the status of *latrones*, the term “piracy” here does not necessarily have to be understood literally. Appian, perhaps, again following Augustus’s *Commentarii*, blames Sextus Pompeius for his association with pirates and piracy, although from the perspective of Sextus that was certainly perceived as a legitimate strategy.³⁵ Octavian’s campaign in Illyricum had several goals, but one of the most important was that of the propagandistic nature aimed at the Senate and the Roman people, as Appian blatantly states.³⁶ One of the ways how that goal was meant to be achieved by Augustus was related to the deeds of his predecessor. Acting as the successor (and avenger) of his adoptive father, it was necessary to punish the communities that defied, or, worse, betrayed the proconsul, but also to emulate and, if possible, to outperform Caesar. This could be connected neatly with the actual needs of the Roman state on the Adriatic, where the chaos of civil war had eroded the Roman dominion over the various peoples.³⁷

In short, my views are very similar to those of D. Džino, who concluded that Octavian’s *victims* were those Liburnian communities that had aligned themselves with Pompey during the civil war.³⁸ It is important to note how there is still no consensus in local historiography about the political orientation of the Liburnian *civitates* during the civil war, in large

relationship based on new foundations, equally, if not more beneficial to the majority of the Liburnian *civitates*.

³¹ As Marjeta Šašel Kos proposed (Šašel Kos 2005, 404), Appian’s index of conquered ethnicities in the said chapter most probably comes from the official document, an official list of conquered peoples, submitted by Octavian to the Senate after his successful campaigns, and Appian copied it directly from Augustus’s *Commentarii*. It seems that many of those communities are rather tiny (and sometimes mentioned only in this paragraph in all of the literature), thus another argument of the emperor’s exaggeration.

³² Šašel Kos 2005, 38–39.

³³ Cf. Čače 2005.

³⁴ Grünewald 2008, 15.

³⁵ App. *BCiv.* 5.77, 80.

³⁶ App. *Ill.* 4.16.

³⁷ Bilić-Dujmušić 2005, 425–426.

³⁸ Džino 2010, 108.

part because the primary sources are mainly concerned with brief descriptions of the military operations. Opinions vary greatly.³⁹ In short, the authors of the older generation tend to see a political fracture among the Liburnians, where certain communities would side either with Caesar or Pompey; however, the younger scholars note the alignment with the Pompeian party as a temporary and essentially forced policy of the few Liburnian communities, while Liburnia as such would remain in Caesar's camp.⁴⁰ Let us briefly inspect what happened during the civil war, mainly the naval campaign of Pompey's armada in the north Adriatic, as reconstructed in detail by S. Bilić-Dujmušić in his recent book. Pompey's navy arrived in the Kvarner area in May or early June of 49 BC. The Caesarian fleet was defeated, and their ground troops were blocked by the disembarked enemy forces on a peninsula on the island of Krk. The Caesarian army held on until mid-June, when the relief army arrived via the mainland, but was unable to free them due to a lack of ships. After an unsuccessful attempt at evacuation via improvised rafts, the Caesarian army on Krk capitulated in mid-July at the latest.⁴¹ I would like to point out several details. According to Bilić-Dujmušić, the Pompeian fleet was composed of approximately 80–120 ships, with 7,000–14,000 soldiers.⁴² It is hard to imagine that a force of that magnitude could support itself for around two months without local assistance, with their logistics lines stretched to Dyrrhachium, Corcyra or even Issa, hundreds of miles away. Košljun, with its harbors situated some 20 NM to the south, could have been used as an ideal forward logistics center, especially if the entire community had decided to cooperate in that endeavour. This brings us to another issue, which is that the problems for the Caesarian side escalated when they lost their fleet. The details of this event have not been described in the sources, but what is known is that the said fleet was at last partially composed of Liburnian ships and crews. Forty of those ended up as part of the Pompeian naval force, and even continued the campaign on their side, before being sent to Dyrrhachium, where they formed the Pompeian Liburnian flotilla.⁴³ Bilić-Dujmušić offers several possible answers as regards how the entire matter unfolded – the Caesarian fleet might either have been defeated in open battle or surprised by the overwhelming number of enemy forces, or there might have been a rebellion,⁴⁴ possibly led by Pompeian sympathizers

³⁹ Cf. S. Bilić-Dujmušić 2000, 35–45.

⁴⁰ For more details, S. Bilić-Dujmušić 2000, 85–92, where an entire chapter is dedicated to this issue, and also with revisions in S. Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 111–116. The authors of the older generation would include M. Suić and M. Zaninović, while the younger ones would be represented by S. Čače and S. Bilić-Dujmušić himself.

⁴¹ Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 51–52.

⁴² Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 60.

⁴³ Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 71, 81.

⁴⁴ Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 73.

among the officers. In relation to what was said earlier, could this hypothetical desertion, or at least unwillingness to fight until the end, by the Liburnian crews be easily explained by a defection of their home community, or perhaps their neighbors, to the enemy's side? Finally, there is the question as to what the Caesarian army was doing on the island of Krk in the first place. Bilić-Dujmušić favors two possibilities – that it was there to prevent the desertion, since part of that army was made up of soldiers initially mobilized by Pompey, or that it was a part of a broader plan based on guarding crucial Kvarner islands, of which Krk was only one link in the chain.⁴⁵ That really may have been the case, but the sheer size of the army (15 coh) implies that that groupation was probably among the biggest, if not the biggest. Regarding the previously-discussed possibility of Cissa defecting to the Pompeians, could this transfer of forces on the island of Krk be seen as a maneuver aiming to prevent the desertion of the local Curictae?⁴⁶

In any case, my proposed hypothesis is that the Liburnians of the island of Pag, i.e. Cissa as a central settlement, did not simply decide to revert to their ancient practices of piracy, but rather, they ended up as allies (probably forced to some extent) of the “wrong Roman government” during the *Bellum Civile*, and facilitated the Pompeian campaign of 49, which culminated with the battle of Krk and the defeat of the Caesarian party. Unlike the inhabitants of Melita and Corcyra, who were also targeted by Augustus for the same crime of piracy, the Pag islanders probably evaded outright genocide and enslavement, unlike the former, and the expropriation of their natural harbor and ships would have been seen as an appropriate and rather light punishment. Whether that was a reflection of the fact that they were “forced”⁴⁷ into the Pompeian camp or that Augustus decided to be lenient due to the impending clash with Anthony, as well as their previously friendly relations, it is hard to say.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Bilić-Dujmušić 2022, 65–67.

⁴⁶ Lucan's *Pharsalia* – one of the crucial sources regarding the battle of Krk states (Luc. *Phars.* 4.406–410) that Antonius – the leader of the Caesarian army, made a mistake by putting his trust into the people of Krk (*gente Curictum*), but no further context is given, and, as Bilić-Dujmušić points out (2022, 112), this very short paragraph cannot be used as definitive proof that Lucian alludes to the treachery of the local community.

⁴⁷ One could easily imagine how the Liburnians, seafarers *par excellence*, cherished the connections with Pompey, the supreme commander in the War against the pirates of 67 BC. The echoes of the said relations could possibly be observed in Pliny, where it seems that one of his sources for Liburnian ethnography was Varro – the commander of Pompey's anti-piracy flotilla based in the lower Adriatic (App. *Mith.* 19.92). Poleis Issa was also allied with Pompey during the *Bellum Civile*, which is often explained through their animosity against pro-Caesarean Salona, but then again, as a local naval hegemon in central Adriatic, there had to have been some kind of previous contacts between Issa and Pompey during 67 BC.

⁴⁸ Čače 1993, 33.

Modus vivendi: Roman aristocracy and the local communities on the island of Pag

Let us briefly inspect the situation on the southern part of the island of Pag. Near the village of Vlašići there are two archaeological sites that are of interest to us. One of them is Gradac, near Smokvica, the only hillfort from the southern half of the island with traces of a permanent settlement, pottery remains pertaining to the Late Liburnian period,⁴⁹ and where a rather significant number of Greek Hellenistic and Roman Republican coins was found.⁵⁰ Thus, it has been suggested that Smokvica had a role similar to that of Košljun in the north, as a central proto-urban settlement of the Late pre-Roman period.⁵¹ The second site is situated not far from the hillfort; two Roman inscriptions were recorded around the local church of St. Hyerolimus. One of them is quite problematic, as it is a dedication by Cinius Genialis to Janus in which Cinius proclaims that he had repaired the deity's statue.⁵² Janus held a prominent place among the Roman deities, but votive dedications to him are quite rare, except in Liburnia.⁵³ Moreover, archaeological excavations of the church, never published in their entirety, revealed not only remains of the early Christian phase of the site, but also remains that could pertain to classical temple architecture.⁵⁴ It is interesting that Cinius erects the dedication *pro salute ordinis sui et civium suorum*, thus, he comes from a community with a municipal constitution. This is the only inscription from the island which points to something like that, and the implications are numerous. If we are not dealing with some pan-Liburnian sanctuary to Janus, or if Cinius was not a magistrate in the nearby Smokvica settlement, this inscription could imply that southern Pag was transferred into the possession of some other more powerful Liburnian municipality, such as Aenona, Argyruntum or even Iader, a proposal that will be explored later.⁵⁵ However, there is one huge confutation to these considerations, and that is that it is not quite clear where this monument originates from – whether from Vlašić on the island of Pag or from Aenona. Going back chronologically, the monument was, indeed, located at one point on the island of Pag; a local 18th century chronicler, Marko Lauro Ruić, claims that before its destruction, the inscription⁵⁶ was

⁴⁹ Oštarić, Kurilić 2013, 272.

⁵⁰ Ilkić, Kožul 2017, 89.

⁵¹ Oštarić, Kurilić 2013, 272.

⁵² CIL III, 2969. *Iano Aug(usto) / sacrum / Cinius Genial/is pro salute o/rdinis sui et civi/um suorum si/mulacrum <e=T>i / reformavit a<t=D>/que restitui<t=D>*

⁵³ Cf. Sanader 2016.

⁵⁴ PSD. 6. January, 2015.

⁵⁵ Dubolnić 2007, 29. The numismatic finds from the hillfort Gradac suggest that the settlement did not survive into the Principate period, i.e., no coins coined after the second half of the 2nd century BC were identified. Ilkić, Kožul 2017, 90.

⁵⁶ Sanader 2016, 127, and especially n. 11.

used as a part of the grave at the cemetery in Vlašići. In the 17th century, Lucius, in *Inscriptiones Dalmatae*, provides a transcription of a part of the significant *codex De Ponte*, now lost, where for this inscription there is simply *In insula Pagi in Villa Vlassich*.⁵⁷ On the other hand, *Cyriacus of Ancona* (15th century), explicitly claims that the monument originates from *Aenona*.⁵⁸ Since Cyriacus is the primary and oldest source, it would be methodologically correct to opt for *Aenona*, where a person like *Genialis* could actually hold a *magistratura* and where one could actually find indication of a Janus-cult.⁵⁹ After all, there are numerous examples where epigraphic monuments often end up tens of kilometers away from the place where they were first observed, so perhaps it would not be wrong to assume that the inscription was transferred to Vlašići at one point – perhaps during the time of the Turkish Wars, when the elites of the coastal cities invested in leisure houses on the islands.⁶⁰

The other inscription, and there is a consensus that it pertains to Vlašići, is one quite early dedication to *Divo Augusto* by a Lucius Quinctius Gallus.⁶¹ Observed on only three inscriptions, *nomen gentile* Quinctius was extremely rare in the province. If one possible mention on a broken monument from Argyruntum is discarded,⁶² this *gentilitium* appears only on one other inscription from *Iader* – a large, relief-decorated and, thus, quite expensive votive altar.⁶³ The said monument was dedicated by P. Quinctius Paris for the health of his son Scapula, and, if Alföldy was right, the dedicatory is a freedman of the family of the knight T. Quinctius Scapula.⁶⁴ While the speculations about the private sanctuary of the Quinctii near Vlašići, analogue to that of the Calpurnia in Caska, cannot be currently

⁵⁷ ID fol. 24. Kat 15.

⁵⁸ CYR kat 10, CYR2 413.

⁵⁹ CIL III, 3158.

⁶⁰ The texts given by Cyriacus and De Ponte differ after the first two lines in composition, ending, vocabulary and number of lines. In addition, Cyriacus' transcription from the *Epigra-mata* and the one from his letter to Andreolus Giustiniani, on which CIL and Dessau rely, are also different. Does this leave room for a third possibility? Can we assume that Cyriacus and the author of the De Ponte codex saw two different inscriptions, similar in form and dedicated by the same person, one in Nin and the other in Pag? The possibility for such a thing exists, but it is difficult to prove. On the contrary, the discrepancy can be explained by the fact that neither Cyriacus nor the De Ponte codex author saw or copied the inscription letter by letter, as was often the case among the early humanists, i.e., in the case of Cyriacus, whose few surviving fragments were printed with a delay of several centuries, we cannot be sure at all how the text stood in the original. The possibility that the monument had fallen into further disrepair in the meantime cannot be ruled out, in fact I consider it probable. Finally, the main argument that we are dealing with the same monument would be the mistake at the end of the inscription – *ti reformavit* - which is identical in all the transcriptions of this text.

⁶¹ CIL III, 3113.

⁶² ILJug 2897.

⁶³ CIL III, 2903. *Isidi Serapi Liber(o) / Liberae voto / suscepto pro salute / Scapulae filii sui // P(ublius) Quinctius Paris / s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*

⁶⁴ C. 100, Alföldy 1969, 114.

proven, it may be presumed that this family indeed owned the estate somewhere in the vicinity. Regarding all of this, the excavations at Caska yielded some quite unique pottery finds, such as a *tegula* and *amphora* with the stamp of Sex. Appulieus, and an *amphora* with the stamp of M. Iunius Silanus.⁶⁵ Those finds, especially the *tegula*, could imply that other senatorial families also had their estates on the island. Moreover, dedications of Quinctius, as well as that of Cinius, and with an inscription from Argyruntum mentioned previously, had been used as a supporting argument for the thesis that the northern part of island could have been under the rule of Arba, while the southern part was under the rule of Argyruntum or Aenona,⁶⁶ the main argument being that the Quinctii are also found among the upper strata of Arba.⁶⁷ I am not entirely convinced of this, mainly because the person from Arba is a praetorian veteran of the *gens* Quinctilia and not Quinctia, while the person mentioned on the inscription of the decurion from Arba has Quintius as a nomen.⁶⁸

One more thing should be considered – almost 30 years ago, Boris Ilakovac noticed traces of ancient *limitation* in Novalja Field.⁶⁹ While Ilakovac based his research mainly on the use of topographical maps, his arguments should not be discarded *a priori*, especially as his finds were never reviewed in detail by subsequent researchers.⁷⁰ One of the reasons for the unpopularity of his thesis was the fact that Ilakovac could not decide what that proposed limitation concerned. Cissa was never a colony, so there was no need for limitation,⁷¹ yet Ilakovac was convinced that he was dealing with *centuriae* of 710 m x 710 m. There was no need for parcelization of that kind for the private estates, such as that of the Calpurnii Pisones, so Ilakovac made the assumption that northern Pag was measured as a part of *ager publicus* before the establishment of the said estate or after the *Germanicus* affair.⁷² Then again, if he was right with the dimensions of the *centuriae*, then they are complementary with those of *Colonia* Iader. The rule of Iader, although improbable, should not be seen as impossible; Iader had dominion over its archipelago as part of it was under *ager centuriatus*, and the case of *prefectura Phariaca Salonitana* can serve as an analogue case.⁷³ This all brings us back to square one and the question

⁶⁵ Grisonic et al., 2022, 250, and especially n. 77, where previous literature is noted.

⁶⁶ Dubolnić 2007, 29, where previous supporters of this thesis are cited.

⁶⁷ CIL III, 3114.

⁶⁸ CIL III, 13293.

⁶⁹ Ilakovac 1997.

⁷⁰ Due to his background in civil engineering before moving into archaeology, Ilakovac was renowned in local archaeological circles as a quiet and thorough researcher.

⁷¹ There are several rather similar cases in Liburnia. Smaller settlements such as Škarin samograd, Beretinova gradina or Arausona continued being occupied from the Bronze Age into Antiquity, yet it seems that they remained *peregrine* settlements in the legal sense.

⁷² Ilakovac 1997, 76, 78.

⁷³ CIL III, 14712. This problem will hopefully be discussed in detail in a subsequent paper.

whether the island was divided between the Roman aristocratic families and the various Liburnian civitates. Discarding the fact that, as far as we know, there were no *municipii* on Roman Pag, the majority of the evidence is, in fact, from subsequent times. During the High Medieval Period, in a political sense the island was split – the northern part became the domain of Arba / Rab, a commune from the island of the same name north of Pag, while the southern part of the island was eventually dominated by Iader / Zadar.⁷⁴ It is tempting to explain these developments as a continuity of the state from Antiquity, where the pretensions of Zadar towards Pag could be seen through the prism of a culture of memory – where the aristocracy of Iader retained the idea that their city had jurisdiction over one part of the island, yet the sources are not so clear on this. It seems that the Croatian rulers and their donations played a prominent role in all of this.⁷⁵ Whether the gifts of the Croatian kings to the churches of Rab, Zadar and Nin were based on a legal notion from Antiquity is hard to prove at this point.⁷⁶

The Caska senatorial estate and the gens *Calpurnia* in Liburnia

As noted previously, the imperial confiscation and the subsequent establishment of the senatorial villa profoundly changed the social, political and economic dynamics of the entire island of Pag. *SC de Cn. Pisone Patre* explicitly mentions the conflict between the locals and the slaves of Cn. Calpurnius Piso on one of his Illyrian estates,⁷⁷ but here I am referring to something that could be described as *longue durée* relations and not the incidents like the aforementioned one. As the Caska estate was undoubtedly

⁷⁴ Suić 2013, 35. A situation that caused several open conflicts between the town of Pag, a new urban center on the island, and Zadar.

⁷⁵ As summarized by Suić (Suić 2013, 34–37), the Croatian king Petar Krešimir III is noted in one document as a ruler who gave the small island of Maun west of Pag to Zadar; in another grant, he gave jurisdiction over northern Pag to the church of Rab while keeping the parishes of the southern islands in the domain of the bishop of Nin / Aenona. With the church authority came the economic and political one, so when the parishes of southern Pag eventually became the domain of the bishop of Zadar, the city started to exercise control over the island. It is not surprising that the first development of Medieval communal organization on the island was under the Venetian auspices during the strife between Serenissima and Zadar.

⁷⁶ After the review process was over, in the same week I was preparing the final version of this paper to be sent to the Editor, two important articles regarding this topic became available online; the first one (Doneus et al., 2024) presented the results of a survey of the Kvarner islands. The international team discovered extensive Roman land-divisions on the islands of Krk and Cres (both main centers on those islands were Roman *municipii*) with *limes* not too dissimilar to those of the Roman colonies. The second paper (Kulenović 2024) confirmed the division of Novalja Field on the island of Pag, yet the organization, origin and planimetry of the said parcelization were determined to be quite different to those presented by Ilakovac.

⁷⁷ Eck et al. 1996, 184–185, 202–203.

one of the largest in the entire region, it is logical to assume that its influence went beyond the narrow confines of Pag and that it had an impact on the whole of Liburnia, and probably beyond. It is difficult to say anything more precise about the nature of these influences, at least until systematic archaeological excavations of the mansion are conducted. Two sunken ships found in the harbor of the villa, judging by the specific architecture of the vessels, pertain to the Liburnian naval tradition, which would be direct evidence of the estate's interaction with the local communities.⁷⁸ In the future, perhaps the most promising results can be expected from the excavation of the economic parts of the estate - with ceramic material, economic installations and the remains of the products pertaining to the manor: regrettably, however, these types of artefacts have not yet been satisfactorily systematized in Liburnia for a comparison to be made. Fortunately for us, there is one group of sources which is systematized relatively well – that being the epigraphic remains. If one were to search for the *Calpurnii* on the epigraphic material from the province, they will find that almost one third of the inscriptions where this *nomen gentile* is mentioned belong to the monuments from Salona, the metropolis of Dalmatia.⁷⁹ A slightly larger number pertains to Liburnia,⁸⁰ while the rest of the province accounts for the remaining monuments.⁸¹ Now, when doing quantitative analyses in archaeology I am of the opinion that it is necessary to keep in mind the quote attributed to Benjamin Disraeli that “*There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.*” Indeed, more than half of all the published epigraphic monuments from Dalmatia come from its metropolis, and were we to limit ourselves to Early Christian/Late Antique inscriptions, we would see that there is an absolute dominance of Salona in that regard.⁸² Furthermore, more than one-fifth of all the epigraphic monuments in Dalmatia come from Liburnia, a rather small area in comparison to the rest of the province, but highly Romanized and urbanized.⁸³ All this clearly implies that it is necessary to pay special attention to higher concentrations of characteristic inscriptions in minor settlements,

⁷⁸ Rossi, Boetto, 2020, 25.

⁷⁹ CIL III, 2046, CIL III, 02253, CIL III, 8736, CIL III, 8756, CIL III, 8757, CIL III, 9157, CIL III, 14869, ILJug, 682, ILJug, 2714.

⁸⁰ Corinium CIL III, 2886, CIL III, 2890, CIL III, 2891, CIL III, 2892, CIL III, 9970, CIL III, 9976, ILJug, 2868, ILJug, 2862 Nedinum CIL III, 2857, Senia ILJug, 2899, Iader AE 2014, 1023, and possibly ILJug 2849 from Zelengrad discussed later – the *Calpurnii* from Pag are not included here.

⁸¹ Tilurium CIL III, 13972, Buthœ AE 2011, 901, Risinium ILJug, 633, Municipium Malvesatium CIL III, 14219. Aequum CIL III, 9763

⁸² As a further illustration, one can cite the fact that almost three times more soldiers were recorded in Salona than on the inscriptions originating from the Burnum encampment, where the entire legion with various auxiliary units was located during the 1st century AD.

⁸³ The presented data come from a search of the Clauss-Slaby epigraphic database, which brings up inscriptions that have already been restored, so it is wiser to accept them as an illustration of the situation rather than as data set in stone.

which, in some way, *destroy* the average – and that the vast majority of the Calpurnii in Liburnia are not found in larger cities like Iader, Aenona, Asseria or Varvaria, where most of the inscriptions are recorded, but on the monuments originating from the town of Corinium and its surroundings.⁸⁴ Situated some 70 km southeast of Caska, the name of the ancient town is preserved in the present-day settlement of Karin, located on the sea bearing the same name, and which, together with the Novigrad Sea, forms a deep bay on the north Dalmatian mainland. As regards the question of who the Calpurnii of Corinium were, we may try to provide an answer with the help of several better-preserved inscriptions. A relatively early tombstone⁸⁵ was set up by Calpurnia Ceuna to herself and her mother, aunt and sister.⁸⁶ An analysis of the relationship among all those recorded on this inscription reveals that they were all members of a Romanized Liburnian family – the commemorator's father, Caius Calpurnius, acquired Roman citizenship but he married a Liburnian woman whose father (if not even grandfather) already possessed Roman citizenship.⁸⁷ However, it seems that Caius failed to acquire citizenship for his sister.⁸⁸ Calpurnia Ceuna is also mentioned as the dedicatrix on the inscription from Nadin, where she erected a fairly massive votive altar to Latra, the most popular south-Liburnian epichoric deity, in the center of her cult,⁸⁹ and perhaps on another inscription from Corinium.⁹⁰ One Quintus Calpurnius, son of Sextus, erected a monument to Latra in Corinium proper.⁹¹ This stone piece is, in fact, a fragment of a temple's architecture, so there is a strong indication that Quintus, like Ceuna, belonged to the wealthier stratum of this community.⁹² There was a votive dedication to Jupiter in the same settlement,

⁸⁴ Since in the post-Antique Period monuments were often moved and/or subsequently incorporated into various buildings (often churches, and often in neighboring villages), it is impossible to say with certainty whether some of the Karin inscriptions actually come from the Miodrag hillfort (ancient Corinium city center) or whether they perhaps belong to smaller settlements in the surrounding sites, such as Budim or Novigrad.

⁸⁵ This monument was analyzed by Slobodan Čače in detail, so we will use his conclusions. Čače, 1987.

⁸⁶ CIL III., 2891. *Calpurnia C(ai) f(ilia) / Ceuna v(iva) f(ecit) sibi et / Oppiae [S]ecundae / m[ajtr[i et] Oppiae Oep/li f(iliae) Voltisae amitae / et Calpurniae C(ai) f(iliae) / Oeplae sorori.* This inscription, with the monument from Flanona (CIL III, 3038.), testifies to the important role of women in the Liburnian funeral cult – female dedicators erect tombstones exclusively (!) for female ancestors or relatives.

⁸⁷ Čače 1987, 605.

⁸⁸ Čače 1987, 606.

⁸⁹ CIL III, 2857.

⁹⁰ CIL III, 2892.

⁹¹ CIL III, 9970.

⁹² From the examples of Quintus, Ceuna, and the Octavii family from Nadin (and their side branches), one can see how the first generations of the Romanized elites successfully combined the old (the epichoric goddess Latra) and the new (the medium of stone sculpture and epigraphy).

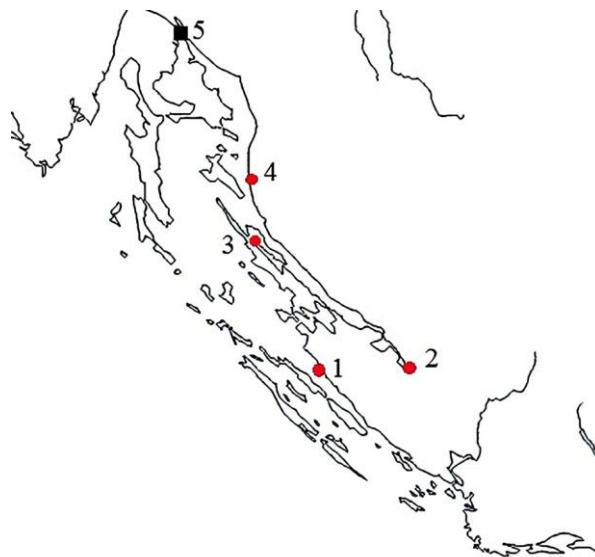


Fig. 4. The *Calpurnii* in Liburnia; 1. Iader; 2. Corinium; 3. Caska; 4. Senia; 5. represents the proximal position of a site where the Caesarian army was besieged on the island of Krk

erected by a certain Kalpurnia Peculiaris.⁹³ Another inscription from this town, erected by Calpurnia Tertulla for her daughter Baebia, demonstrates a marriage relation between the *Calpurnii* and the *Baebii*,⁹⁴ another family of Romanized Liburni, some of whom achieved significant local careers.⁹⁵ One tombstone, later transferred to nearby Novigrad, was erected by Calpurnia Volaesa for her son Marcus Iulius Severus, a soldier in the urban cohorts.⁹⁶ Calpurnia and her husband were locals,⁹⁷ but it is particularly interesting to note that their son managed to get a post in the urban cohorts of the city of Rome. This is not an isolated case, since we also find

⁹³ ILJug, 2862. The letter K in the name of this lady is quite interesting; it can be observed on approximately 20 inscriptions where various *Kalpurnii* are mentioned, mainly in African provinces, but it must be noted that the practice of using the letter K is not unknown in Liburnia, as well as in the proximity of Karin EDCS-57200181

⁹⁴ CIL III, 2890. *Baebiae L(uci) / f(liae) Tertulli/nae ann(orum) XXIX / Calpurnia Ter/ [t]ullia[m]a mater / viva posuit.*

⁹⁵ Alföldy 1969, 65.

⁹⁶ M(arco) Iulio Severo mil(iti) / c(o)ho(rtis) VII urb(anae) / *Calpurnia Volaesa / mater p(osuit)*. As it is known, a 7th urban cohort did not exist – the numeration of urban cohorts started with No. X, with the exception of Coh I Flavia Urbana, yet the text is hard to read in any other manner. Possibly the original XII was read as a VII, but due to the monument being lost, this cannot be verified.

⁹⁷ For the indigenous origin of the Liburnian *Julii*. G. Alföldy, 1969, 31–36. The nomen *Volaesa* is mentioned exclusively and only on this monument and should probably be included among the relatively numerous Liburnian names which start with *Vol-* (*Voltisa, Volses, Volso, Volsouna, Voltimes...*).

Praetorians on the inscriptions of Corinium and neighboring towns.⁹⁸ Praetorian and urban cohorts went practically all the way up to Antonins, staffed almost exclusively by Italics,⁹⁹ but this inscription, like the inscriptions of the two Praetorians, can hardly be dated to the late Principate, therefore interesting possibilities for further interpretation open up.¹⁰⁰ Finally, on another monument from Karin, which cannot be dated before the beginning of the 2nd century AD, as many as six people bearing *gens* Calpurnia have been recorded.¹⁰¹

What can be concluded from the above? It seems certain that the earliest bearers of this *nomen gentile* in Corinium were local Liburni. As Geza Alföldy, Mate Suić, John Wilkes and others assumed half a century ago, those people were most likely clients of the senatorial family from Pag, and their descendants.¹⁰² Moreover, it seems to me that the distribution of citizenship to the Corinian Calpurnii was probably done in a targeted manner – to enterprising individuals, who, judging by the quality of the monuments, very quickly rose in rank to fill the upper classes of the Corinienses, although it cannot be ruled out that they had been a part of them earlier. It is possible to, humbly, outline a further development – there is a kinship connection between the Iulii and the Baebii – the latter probably received a *ticket* to Roman citizenship, as clients of the proconsul Tamphilus Vala recorded on the public well in Iader.¹⁰³ We also cannot rule out the possibility that distinguished patrons played a role in the fact that a surprisingly large number of Corinieses (as compared to the size of the settlement) found employment in the various guard units in Rome itself. That this relationship was not always beneficial is illustrated by the fact that Corinium had enormous problems with its southern predatory neighbor – Nedinum. During the 1st century AD, the Nedite tried (and managed) to expand their territory several times at the expense of the Corinienses, until their newly-acquired land reached practically to the city walls of Corinium¹⁰⁴ – this could correspond with the time when their patrons, the Calpurnii Pisones, fell from imperial grace.

⁹⁸ CIL III, 2884, CIL III, 2887. It should be noted that in one case it is not entirely clear whether the person is from neighboring Ansium or the Italian Anzio

⁹⁹ Le Bohec 2000, 99–100.

¹⁰⁰ A rather large number of Praetorians originated from this province and can trace their origo to *Liburnia*, and especially this area of that region. It is still impossible to explain the exact reason for all of this, except in the most general and vague terms, like the especially strong Romanization of Liburnia or the special patronage of the imperial house and perhaps even the senatorial families.

¹⁰¹ CIL III, 9976.

¹⁰² Wilkes 1963, 453; Alföldy 1969, 70; Suić 1981, 253, 256–258.

¹⁰³ According to Ivo Fadić, the original publisher of the inscription (Fadić 1986, 424), that proconsul should be Gn. Baebius Tamphilus Vala Numonianus.

¹⁰⁴ Wilkes 1963, 268.

Finally, perhaps the most important question remains – *Why Corinium?* – the smallest among the large municipalities of southern Liburnia, or the largest among the smaller *oppida* of the inner Liburnian seas? Part of the answer probably lies in the question itself, since in larger and more important settlements like Aenona or Asseria, the clients of the imperial house, the Illyrican legates or their associates had already established a monopoly.¹⁰⁵ The most attractive explanation is, of course, that in the vicinity of Corinium lay the estate of Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso, brother of Lucius. After all, we know from *SC de Cn. Pisone Patre* that his branch of the family had another estate in Illyricum.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, it is quite peculiar that, as with the previously-mentioned Pag settlements, we do not have any inscriptions from the rather large Corinium that mention municipal *ordo* or *magistrates*. Local historiography tried to resolve this problem by attributing this town during the early 1st century AD to *colonia* Iader,¹⁰⁷ but there is no concrete proof for this. On the other hand, no archaeological remains of the senatorial estate have been recognized, and, unlike Caska, we completely lack any mention of the *familia rustica* or the *Pisones* themselves on the epigraphic monuments. I believe that perhaps we can find a more compelling explanation to this problem in the writings of two titans of our profession. The first is the ancient encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder (23/24–79), while the second is the recently deceased professor from the Department of History at the University of Zadar, Slobodan Čače (1946–2020). According to Pliny, the border between Liburnia and Iapodia was formed by the river *Telavius*.¹⁰⁸ For a long time there was a consensus among the local scholars that this is the name of the present-day river Zrmanja;¹⁰⁹ however, Čače pointed out that this could, in fact, be the river Žrnovnica, more to the north.¹¹⁰ But now we have a problem – we lack the mention of the Zrmanja in Pliny's work – a larger, and, more importantly, partly navigable river. Čače had a ready answer here – according to him, the Zrmanja shares the fate of the Cetina, a rather large river by local standards, whose existence is ignored by almost all of the Ancient authors who wrote about the eastern Adriatic. The reason for this is, among other things, the lack of a larger center at the estuary that would attract trade. In the case of the Zrmanja, places like Corinium or Argyruntum, regularly mentioned by Roman-era authors, could overshadow the mouth of the river with their commercial role.¹¹¹ And, indeed, at a time when it

¹⁰⁵ Especially when considering how Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso (cos. 23 BC) chose to support the losing sides in all of the Roman civil conflicts during his lifetime.

¹⁰⁶ Eck et al. 1996, 184–185, 202–203.

¹⁰⁷ Wilkes 1963, 254.

¹⁰⁸ Plin. *HN* 3.140.

¹⁰⁹ Čače 1988, 65.

¹¹⁰ Čače 1988, 66.

¹¹¹ Čače 1988, 73–74.

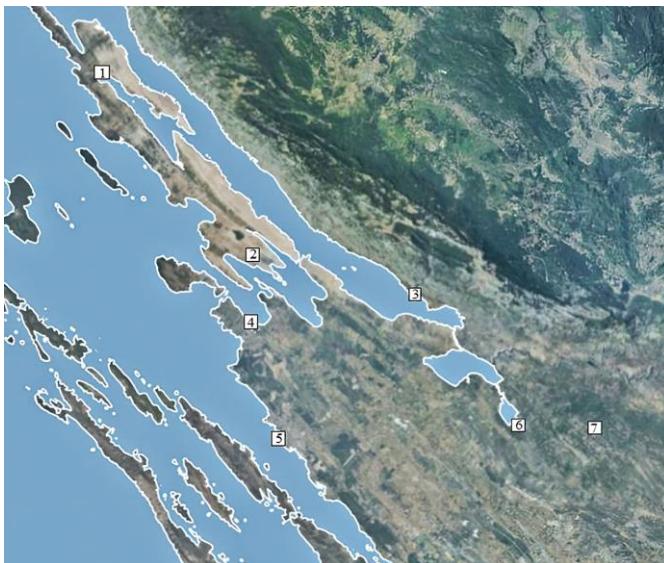


Fig. 5. South-Liburnian sites mentioned in the text – 1. Caska; 2. Vlašići; 3. Argyruntum; 4. Aenona; 5. Iader; 6. Corinium; 7. Zelengrad hillfort

was cheaper to send goods a hundred miles by sea than a dozen kilometers by land, located deep in the bay but near the Zrmanja estuary, towns like Ansium, the Cvijina Gradina hillfort and Corinium, which all experienced strong development at the beginning of the Principate, could play a similar role as the nearby Obrovac in subsequent times – as a marketplace for the entire region and beyond. During the Medieval Period, the town of Obrovac played a prominent intermediary role, where grain, flour, cattle and lumber from the continent reached the market via the sea,¹¹² while the single most important commodity that moved in the opposite direction via the Zrmanja and the Una corridor was sea salt from Pag.¹¹³ The main reason why the commune of Zadar, as noted earlier, was so keen on ruling the island was the fact that Pag was one of the biggest salt producers on the entire eastern Adriatic.¹¹⁴ It seems that the beginning of salt production on the island of Pag should be sought in Antiquity,¹¹⁵ yet at this point

¹¹² Š. Perićić 1979, 214–215.

¹¹³ Š. Perićić 1979, 214.

¹¹⁴ The trade with the salt from Pag was the main source of income of the Zadar aristocracy in the 14th century (Dokoza 2015, 91). According to a document from the beginning of the 15th century, salt exports from Pag were between 240,000 to 260,000 *modii*, with one Zadar *modius* being 81,5 kg. (Dokoza 2015, 96). The salt from Pag would then be sold not only to Ascoli or Pesaro in Italy, but even to Kotor, from where it would be sent to the continental markets in Serbia, as explained in Raukar 1970, 51.

¹¹⁵ Grisonic 2022, 164. Although in the High Medieval Period the majority of the salt pans were situated in the middle and southern part of the island (Dokoza 2015, 91), some

it cannot be proven that the Calpurnii Pisones were involved in this business endeavour.¹¹⁶

All of the above implies that the Calpurnii Pisones could have set their eyes on the territory of Corinium due to its traffic significance, i.e., based on their economic calculations. Furthermore, if we disregard the examples of Caska and Corinium, the other two places where this *gens* is noted in Liburnia are in Iader and Senia¹¹⁷ – both cities being, among other things, important trade and traffic centers. The Iader inscription, commemorating the unfortunate 20-year-old Calpurnia, at least according to the DM formula, should not be dated before the beginning of the 2nd century AD, so it is not of paramount importance to us.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the tombstone from Senia,¹¹⁹ which apparently cost a considerable sum of money due to its dimensions and quality of workmanship, is dated in the late 1st century BC, or alternatively at the beginning of the 1st century AD, and it commemorates one Lucius Calpurnius Maximus, most likely a local in origin and a client or freedman of the Calpurnii from Caska.¹²⁰ Perhaps it would not be too far off if we were to connect the activities of Lucius from Senj with the assumed role of the Corinian Calpurnii – as clients located at locations from where the trade routes spread inland, and yet accessible by sea, which, in turn, ensured an excellent connection not only with Caska, but also with Picenum, Istria and, of course, with Aquileia, where there are significantly more bearers of this *nomen gentile* recorded on inscriptions.¹²¹

The votive altar from Zelengrad

During the analysis of the previously discussed epigraphic monuments, I noticed one inscription whose reading can be slightly revised, and that has certain implications regarding the local religious practices. A votive altar,¹²² decorated with reliefs, and first published in the early 20th century, was found not far from the Zelengrad hillfort.¹²³ This site, situated in

¹²¹ 12th century documents indicate that there was a salt production facility in Stara Novalja, not too far from Caska Cove, as noted in Peričić 2001, 47.

¹¹⁶ See Dubolnić 2007, 29, for the thesis that the salt pans were likely under the administration of the imperial fiscus or senatorial tenants, not local municipalities.

¹¹⁷ AE 2014, 1023; ILJug, 2899.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Alföldy 1969, regarding the dating of the Dalmatian inscriptions

¹¹⁹ An important port situated in front of the mountain pass that connects the sea shore and the continent cf. CIL III, 13283.

¹²⁰ Glavičić 1994, 70–71.

¹²¹ Many Istrian Calpurnii were probably the heirs of the freedmen of the founder of Pola, thus not necessarily connected with this branch of the senatorial family.

¹²² Now in the Archaeological Museum Zadar, AmZd, Inv. A7276.

¹²³ Abramić, Colnago, 1909, 34; AE 1910, 81; ILJug 2849; EDCS-10101872, HD029694. Lupa 22913, EDCS database misattribution this monument to Domavia probably because there is a site there with the same name (Gradina = Hillfort).

inland Liburnia, between the Bukovica plateau and the Karin Sea, has certain similarities with several nearby hillforts, which all probably survived from the Bronze Age into Antiquity as smaller settlements, but did not achieve municipal status, at least not during the time of the Julian emperors.¹²⁴ The accepted reading of the inscription *Val(etudini) Sta(tae) sac(rum) / Lurnio Cal(purnia) / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)* is quite uncertain – the altar, now in the Archaeological Museum Zadar, belongs to a set group of monuments which were photographed several times, every 50 years or so, and it seems that every photograph offers elements for a slightly different reading.¹²⁵ After inspecting the altar in person, my impressions are as following. The last line of the inscription can, indeed, be interpreted as *v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)*, although I am not completely sure due to the poor state of the inscription field. The second row contains the name of the dedicant, which is read as *Lurnio Cal(purnia)*. The prevalent opinion is that *Lurnio* is probably a local feminine name, but more typical – because of the *-o* ending, for the Delmatae than the Liburnii.¹²⁶ This personal name should be followed by a collective - *Calpurnia*. Abramić and Colnago probably opted for that solution due to the fact that there were *Calpurnii* in nearby Karin, as noted before. However, all of this depends on the presumption that this word is abbreviated, thus other readings are possible, such as, for example, *Lurnio Cai (serva) vel (servus)*, as was suggested to me by Nikola Cesarik. While on the photograph from 1909, the lower horizontal stroke of the supposed letter *L* is quite visible, the recent photograph of O. Harl raises serious doubts, and an autopsy of the inscription reveals a rather different condition today than the one recorded in the original photograph. Moreover, a comparison of the letters *L* (the first being the one in *Lurnio*) suggests that we are not dealing with the same kind of letter form, and a rather more compelling comparison can be found in the letters *I* in the said word. And, indeed, we know of some Liburnian votive monuments where a dedicant has a local name and is of servile status.¹²⁷ Finally, the first row is even most ambiguous – before

¹²⁴ Cf. n. 71.

¹²⁵ The details of the inscription field on the photograph presented by Abramić and Colnago from 1909, the photograph from the 1960s from the official card index of the Zadar Museum and, most recently, that from Ortolf Harl (Lupa) all differ due to the luminance.

¹²⁶ Kurilić 2002, 139, n. 117: “Admittedly, female names ending in *-o* were extremely rarely used in the area of Liburnia, and even then it is questionable whether their bearers were Liburnians or foreigners (especially Delmatae). However, the inscription does not allow for a different interpretation: on a votive monument, such as the one on which the name is recorded, it is normal for the votary to be in the nominative, and not in the dative or some other case.” I would like to add to this that the monument was found precisely in the area of southern Liburnia, where, in addition to the standard Liburnian nomenclature, we have confirmation of other autochthonous names that we can link to the so-called Delmatae name circle. cf. CIL III, 9929a.

¹²⁷ AmZd, Inv. A7485.; *Darmoca / Ceunae l(iberta) / Secunda / [-*

sac(rum) there should be the name of the deity, which Abramić and Colnago, the original researchers, reconstruct as *Val(etudini) Sta(tae)*.¹²⁸ On the other hand, Julian Medini was split between Vesta and a thus-far unknown local deity Valsta.¹²⁹ Most of the later publications waver between these three readings, with those of Abramić and Colnago seeming to prevail. While dedications to Vesta are not too numerous in the Roman world, there is one from Albona in northern Liburnia.¹³⁰ However, I do not believe this is the case with this altar, as that would simply require too many interventions in the text – treating the letter A as a mistake, morphing the letter L into E, and so on. Regarding the interpretation of Abramić and Colnago, it is based on the assumption that there are two abbreviated words in the beginning of the row, analogue to *sac(rum)* in the continuation. It seems to me that we do not have sufficient evidence for this reading; there is no visible interpunct, and the word below is inscribed in full.¹³¹ It seems that Valetudo was treated in a similar manner to Salus, and, at a first glance, we can find her on a rather respectable number of votive epigraphic monuments. However, if from this number we subtract those where she is not treated explicitly as a deity,¹³² we do not have too many monuments as compared with the Zelengrad altar. Even if we concentrate on those votives, there are simply no identical inscriptions; *sacrum* does, indeed, appear in dedications on a smaller number of cases,¹³³ while the goddess is listed as Bona on three monuments,¹³⁴ as Bona Dea on one,¹³⁵ and Valetudo (alone) on five monuments.¹³⁶ Yet it seems that there are no direct analogies where on a monument the worshipper would have conceived the text in the form of *Valetudini statis / statae* or *stabilis*.

Moreover, the autopsy of the inscription suggests that there are visible traces of horizontal lines after the last letter A in *Valsta*, and those lines could be interpreted as remains of a letter E, thus the first word would have at its ending A and E inscribed in ligature – *Valstae*. Thus, the possibility that the monument is, indeed, dedicated to the epichoric goddess Valsta

¹²⁸ Abramić, Colnago, 1909, 34.

¹²⁹ Medini 1974, 116.

¹³⁰ AE 1935, 125.

¹³¹ After all, the relief on the altar is not centered in the absolute middle of the inscription field, which would imply that the stone master was familiar with the length of the first word.

¹³² A rather large number of votives and *tituli sacri* contain “Valetudo” not as a deity but as an adjective, personification or a verb. A great deal of inscriptions from Bevagnie mention *Magistri Valetudinis* involved in the local Umbrian cult of Valetudo, while an inscription from Glanum commemorates a temple of Valetudo, a possible *interpretatio* of a local Galic deity, built by Agrippa.

¹³³ Monuments from Etruria (AE 1987, 361), Umbria (CIL XI, 6112.) and Mauritania (CIL VIII, 9610.)

¹³⁴ AE 1987, 361; AE 1999, 1248; CIL VIII, 9610.

¹³⁵ CIL I, 3413.

¹³⁶ CIL XI, 6112; CIL, IX, 3813; CIL, IX, 3812; CIL, IX, 7886; CIL III, 05149.

seems more acceptable to me. An additional argument could be the relief itself – the iconography is no doubt Liburnian; Appio Giunio links this depiction with that of the Veturia Aeta from the Ostrovica stele,¹³⁷ where that lady is wearing a similar folk costume as a deity from the Zelengrad altar, as well as with the depiction of the goddess Latra from the Nadin altar.¹³⁸ Thus, if these considerations are correct, Valsta could be included in the relatively large circle of autochthonous Liburnian goddesses.¹³⁹ It is difficult to conclude anything concrete about the nature of

the presumed deity, however, with all the reservations, starting from the assumption that this is a language belonging to the Indo-European branch, it is perhaps possible to say a few words about this problem. Given the basis of the theonym, the still extremely useful etymological dictionary *Indo-germanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* by Julius Pokorný, under the root *ual-*, *ual-d(h)-* states the following – English meaning: *to be strong*, German meaning: *stark sein*. Almost countless examples given by Pokorný, as well as by other philologists of the younger generations, come from the semantic field of strength or authority: Latin *valeō*, Ossi. *ualaemom*, Old Slavonic *vlastъ*, Ger. *valDan*, Lithuanian *valdōnas*,¹⁴⁰ Latvian *vālsts*,¹⁴¹ Gall. *walatro*,¹⁴² etc. So, could this goddess possibly be named as “Strong” or “One who Rules”? Does this mean that there is a new Liburnian goddess officially named Valsta? Not necessarily, the entire term may have been understood generically, e.g. *Potnia* or *Despoina* in Greece. Of course, other explanations are possible – as previously noted, in Latin the term has



Fig. 6. A detail of the inscription field of the Zelengrad altar. Photo by David Štrmelj

¹³⁷ ILJug, 869.

¹³⁸ Appio Giunio 2016, 19–20. Abramić and Colnago believed that the relief depicted a dedicant, but: 1) most altars from Liburnia on which we have reliefs depict instruments of the cult or the deity itself, and 2) there is a thick moulding under the woman's feet on this relief – could that profilation indicate that here an actual statue of a deity is depicted? Various statuettes of deities were sometimes incorporated on votive altars (like on one from Iader, CIL III, 2906), and while the monument from Zelengrad has moulded patera on top, could this relief serve as a proxy for a statuette that could not be made?

¹³⁹ As it is well known, Liburnian region is unique in the provincial context not only due to having the highest concentration of autochthonous deities recorded on epigraphic monuments, but also due to fact that almost all of those deities are goddesses cf. Medini 1974.

¹⁴⁰ Pokorný, 1959, 1111–1112.

¹⁴¹ Derksen, 2008, 526.

¹⁴² Matasović, 2009, 402.

found its way into the semantic field of health, but perhaps the root of the name should be sought in *uh₂lso-* as in the Latin *vallum*, thus connected with knots, waves or walls. Or we might be dealing with the local adaptation of a Latin theonym due to religious taboos.¹⁴³ In any case, it might be best if a professional philologist were to deal with this problem.

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¹⁴³ Inscription CIL III, 14320, 1 notes one of the few recorded local deities of the central part of the province named *Armatus*. Due to the fact that in that region there are no similar cases of epichoric gods (except maybe Silvanus depicted in *interpretation indigina* but with roman name), and due to the fact that etymology of the theonym is latin, (thus it has been suggested that the god is connected to armour and war), is it not too unreasonable to observe that there could be a widespread local taboo regarding the usage of local names in the naming of deities?

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