

J LATNOVAE 39: A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE *TITULUS PICTUS* FROM NOVAE

Abstract

The article discusses two new readings of line 5 of *titulus pictus* from (*ILatNovae* 39). According to the first one, line 5 is to be read as *C(aio) Sam(bucio) C(ai) f(ilio) Q(uirina) Maiore*, and the person mentioned is considered a senatorial legate. According to the other one, line 5 is to be read as *C(aio) Sam(mio) C(ai) f(ilio) Q(uirina)/O(uferina) Maiore*, and the person mentioned is considered a centurion.

Keywords

Titulus pictus, Novae, Moesia inferior, C. Sambucius Maior, C. Sammius Maior.

Titulus pictus, discovered in 1978 at the site of a military camp of Legio I Italica (in Novae, Moesia Inferior) by an archaeological team of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, has a long interpretative history.¹ Professor Leszek Mrozewicz, who had an important role in its interpretation and in establishing its dating (176–180 A.D.), has recently suggested the following, improved reading:

- ¹ Imperatores [Caes. Aurelius Antoninus]
- ² et Aurelius Com[modus Augusti --- ve]
- ³ tustate conlabsu[m a solo restituerunt per]
- ⁴ leg(ionem) I Ital(icam) P. Calpurni[o Iuliano leg(ato) Augustorum pr(o)pr(aetore) v(iro) c(larissimo)]
- ⁵ et C. Šammvcio Maiore [legato legionis eiusdem]²

¹ See, for instance: Mrozewicz 1981; idem 1981a; idem 1980; idem 1992: 68–70; Bunsch 2006; Bunsch, Mrozewicz 2008; Mrozewicz 2014–15; Okoń 2016.

² See Mrozewicz 2014–15: 167.

Elaborating on this proposal, I suggested refining the dating of the inscription (to the years 178–180) and a new reading of lines 4 and 5. In my opinion, they read as follows:

4. LEG(IONEM) I ITAL(ICAM) P. CALPVRNI[O IVLIANO LEG(ATO) AVGG(VSTORVM) PR(O) PR(AETORE) PROV(INCIAE) MOESIAE INF(ERIORIS)]
5. ET C. ŠAMBVCIO MAIORE [CAECILIANO? LEG(ATO) LEG(IONIS) I ITAL(ICAE) ---]³

I changed (in both lines) the way of noting the functions performed by persons mentioned in the *titulus*. Additionally, in line 5, I also changed the *nomen* of the legate, and thus his identification. Based on my prosopographic research, I concluded that this was C. Sa(m)bucius Maior (Caecilianus?), a representative of a senatorial family from Etruria. This senator has already been known to scholars, and the reinterpretation of the *titulus pictus* made it possible to complete his *cursus honorum*.⁴

Although I still believe my findings remain valid, I subsequently came to the conclusion that my analyses can be completed with two further hypotheses. Both refer to the reading of line 5, where we can see letters SAM and CIO separated by something that may constitute a remnant of *littera distinguens*.⁵ The state of the preservation of the inscription provides grounds for various hypotheses on the reconstruction of its content.⁶ It is possible that future research will one day lead to a conclusion favouring one of the following hypotheses. I am also convinced that my present analyses may prove useful for scholars interpreting similar inscriptions.

Hypothesis no. 1

Line 5, version: C. SAM•CIO MAIORE → C(aio) Sam(bucio) C(ai) F(ilio) Q(uirina) Maiore

Assuming that we can read letters SAM and CIO separated by *littera distinguens* in line 5, this notation can be expanded as follows: Sam(bucio/mucio) – that is the *gentilicium* abbreviation, and the letters CIO before the Maior *cognomen* (visible further in our text) as remnants of letters C(ai) F(ilio): a filiation and Q(uirina): an indication of the *tribus*.⁷ This is in accordance with our data on the *praenomen* of

³ Okoń 2016.

⁴ See Okoń 2017: vol. I, no. 895.

⁵ This is how the problem is approached, among others, by professor Olli Salomies, an expert on onomastics (*per litteras*, 10/03/2016), and Eryk Bunsch, a conservator (*per litteras*, 03/19/2017).

⁶ Even despite its thorough conservation carried out in 2004 by Eryk Bunsch.

⁷ See examples of similar abbreviations: [C(aius) Sall]ustius C(ai) f(ilius) Q(uirina) For[un]at[ianus] Costob[ius] (AE 1978, 837 = CIL VIII 14667); C(aius) Moenius Nigrini f(ilius) Q(uirina)

the legate's father and the *tribus* to which *Sabucii* belonged. Was such a shorthand, however, used in this case? *Gentilicium* abbreviations were quite frequent in inscriptions, but they usually referred to well-known and popular names. Thus, this was the form we find for *nomina* of emperors and the emperor-related ones – of persons who were granted citizenship by them. The following abbreviations were used: IVL (Iulius), CL (Claudius), FL (Flavius), VLP (Ulpus), AEL (Aelius), AVR (Aurelius), later also SEPT (Septimius) and VAL (Valerius). The source material provides plentiful evidence for this phenomenon.⁸ In epigraphic practice, instances of shortening a *nomen gentile* are less frequent. There are, however, inscriptions, including those of senators-legates from the Danubian region, e.g. for Font(eius) Maximus, Baeb(ius) Caecilianus, Cos(conius) Gen(tianus), which contain such abbreviations.⁹ This lends credibility to the idea of reading the SAM• notation as Sambucius and identifying this person as a senatorial legate. There may have been various reasons for the use of an – from assuming that on a daily basis a legate used only the *Maiores cognomen* to concluding that such a notation was due to the lack of space, since the inscription contained a much longer (and now lost) text.

If this interpretation stands, one can conclude that line 5, except for the new understanding of the SAM and CIO notation, is to be interpreted as I suggested in my previous article.¹⁰ Taking the above into account, my current reading is as follows:

5. ET C. ŞAM(BVCIO) C(AI) F(ILIO) Q(VIRINA) MAIORE [CAECILIANO? LEG(ATO) LEG(IONIS) I ITAL(ICA)E] ---]

Fronto (AE 1981, 548).

⁸ Interestingly, the *gentilicium* abbreviations were used both in the case of senators and people of lower ranks. See, e.g. senatorial inscriptions: from Corinth: *Ti(berio) Cl(audio) Ti(beri) C[laudi] Hippar[chi] f(ilio)* [Quir(ina) A]t[ico] (AE 1977, 774); from Volturnum: *Ti(berio) Cl(audio) Ti(beri) fil(io) Pa[l(atina)] Me[---] P[ri]sc[o] Ruff[ino] iun(iori) c(larissimo) v(iro)* (CIL X 3723); from Sarmizegetusa: *M(arco) Cl(audio) Ti(beri) filio Quirin(a) Frontoni* (CIL III 1457 = ILS 1097 = IDR 3, 2, 9). See also soldier's inscriptions: from Leustetten: *P(ublio) Iul(io) C(ai) f(ilio) Quir(ina) Pintam[o] domo ex Hisp(ania) citerio[re] Augusta Brac(ara) vet(erano)* (AE 1972, 359); from Papkeszi: *T(itus) Fl(avius) T(iti) fil(ius) Qu(i) r(ina) Ius<t>inus vet(eranus) leg(ionis) II ad(iutricis) dom(o) Sirm(io)* (AE 1976, 553 = AE 1994, 1390); from Belgrade: *T(ito) [F]l(avio) T(iti) f(ilio) Quirina Vict[orino] d(omi)ni donatum (!) hastis fa[leris] (!) corona m[u]rali* (CIL III 1664 = IMS 1, 26).

⁹ Fonteius Maximus' inscription from Novae: *Dedicata Kal(endis) Mais M[a]ximo et [P]aterno co(n)s(ulibus) per Font(eium) Maximum v(irum) c(larissimum) leg(atum) leg(ionis)* (AE 1987, 862 = Mrozewicz 1984 = IGrLatNovae 71 = ILatNovae 50); Baebius Caecilianus' inscription from Aquincum: [---] [pro salute Imp(eratorum)] [L(uci) Sept(imi) Severi] et An[tonin]i Aug(ustorum) L(ucius) Baeb(ius) Caecilianus [le]g(atus) Aug(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) [ob re]duc(tam) leg(ionem) II adi(utricem) (AE 1978, 652 = AE 1976, 544 = TitAq 387); Cosconius Gentianus' inscription from Mihail Bravu: [pro salute] Cn(aei) Sue[---] Cos(coni) Gen(tiani) [le]g(at)o] T(itus) Cael(ius) Cat[us] b(ene)f(iciarius) eius ex vo(to) p(osuit) (AE 1985, 725 = ZPE 58, 1985, 197–203 = ISM 3, 415 No. 95).

¹⁰ Okoń 2016.

Hypothesis no. 2

Line 5, version: *C. SAM•CIO MAIORE* → *C(aio) Sam(mio) C(ai) F(ilio) Q(uirina)/O(ufentina) Maiore*

If we assume that endings of names (that were obvious for everyone) were often cut off (by *littera distinguens* or even without it)¹¹ and we complete the SAM abbreviation with the -ius ending, we get Samius or Sam(m)ius *nomen*¹² (with a ligature).

Many people with this *gentilicium* originating, without exception, from the Latin-speaking part of the Empire (Italy, the West) are attested in the sources:

- L. Samiu[s] from Rome (*CIL* VI 30581, 2);
- L. Samius from Rome (*CIL* XV 1407, 1–7);
- Samius, an equite from the time of Claudius, who committed suicide due to Suillius' deception (Tac. *Annales* 11, 5, 2);
- C. Samius C.f. from Tegianum (*CIL* X 312 = *I.I.* 3,1, 253; *I.I.* 3,1, 254);
- C. Samius from Veleia, the oldest Roman recorded in the sources (102 years old), attested at the time of the census of 73/74 (*FGrHist* 257 F 37, 75);
- L. Sammius Aemilianus, *flamen provinciae Narbonensis*, *praefectus cohortis* and members of his *familia*: L. Sammius Maternus and L. Sammius Eutyches (Pflaum 1978, no 13 = *CIL* XII 3183 (p. 836) = *CIG* 6788 = *ILS* 5274);
- L. Samiu[s] Agilis from Puteoli (*CIL* X 2584);
- Sex. Sammius Sex. f. Vultin(a) Aper, a notable from Nemausus, attested in the vicinity of Rome from the 1st–2nd centuries (*CIL* VI 29718 = *ILS* 5082 = *SupplIt Imagines* – Roma 3, 3469);
- C. Samius Crescens, a soldier from the urban cohorts under the Antonines or the Severans and his brother C. Samius Fortis, a praetorian (*AE* 1981, 388);
- Sammia Lais and [S]ex(tus) Sammius Mercuria[li]s, probably a couple of freedmen from Nemausus (*CIL* XII 3871 [p. 840] = *INimes* 78);
- Sex. Sammius Macer, a freedman of Sex. Sammius Aper, attested in Rome (*CIL* VI 25858);

¹¹ For example, the most popular ending -ius. See, among others: The inscription from Dunaujvaros: *Q(uintus) Mod(ius) Q(uinti) f(ilius) Quirina Ru<f>inus trib(unus)* (*AE* 1910, 141 = *ILS* 9155 = *RIU* 1104); the inscription from Viminacium, where Pupin(ius) Lati(nus) is mentioned (*IMS* 2, 51 = *CIL* III 8110 = *ILS* 2302); the inscription from Lugdunum: *[Vin]dicin(ius) Paternus [h(eres)]* (*AE* 1982, 711).

¹² Widespread especially in the east of Noricum; see Hainzmann 1998. The alternant form was Sammus. See *ILLPRON* nos. 228, 887, 1196, 1242, 1256, 1271, 1291, 1298. However, it should be noted that it was most often found as a single *nomen* or a nickname, not a *gentilicium*.

- T. Sammius Passer, an inhabitant of the Claudium Virunum municipium, from the second century (*CIL* III 5068 = *ILLPRON* 1351);
- L. Samm[ius? .../...] Perfectus, probably a soldier from the camp in Viminacium from the 2nd–3rd centuries (*IMS* 2, 203);
- Sammius Primitivus and Sammia Placentina, freedmen from Gaul from the second half of the 2nd century (*AE* 2004, 892 = *IGLN* 335). The presence of a couple of freedmen points to the existence of a citizen (or a family) with this *nomen*;
- Samius Priscus, a physician (Galen 14, 474 Kuhn);
- Sammius Sabinus and Sammius Cynus from Aquileia (*CIL* V 1364 [p. 1026] = *InscrAq* 2, 1447);
- Sammia Secundina, *flaminica* from Nemausus (Spickerman 1994, no. 24);
- Sex. Sammius Servat[ius] from Nemausus (*BCTH* 1887, 237);
- T. Fl(avius) Sammius Terentianus, *praef(ectus) kast(orum)* from Novae under the Severans (*AE* 1998, 1129 = *AE* 2001, 1734 = EDH HD043301);
- Sex(tus) Sammius Volt(inia) Severus (*CIL* XIII 2234 = *ILS* 2342 = *ILN* 5, 2, 372), *centurio legionis I Germanicae*;
- T. Sammius Tertiolus, *scriba aerarii* from Vienna (*CIL* XII 2212 = *ILN* 5, 2, 335);
- Sammius Tertullianus, an inhabitant of Aeclanum from the first half of the 3rd century (*CIL* IX 1095 = *ILS* 3444);
- Sammius Victor, a centurion of Legio VI victrix from the 1st–3rd centuries (*AE* 1964, 170);
- Sam(ius/mius?) Tertius and Quartus, brothers from Tridentum (*AE* 1999, 741).

The inscription from Tridentum is particularly interesting here.¹³ It contains the SAM abbreviation, which resembles the notation from our *titulus pictus* and can be expanded into the Samius/Sammius *gentilicium*.¹⁴ The aforementioned inscription is votive in nature, and it was placed by two brothers on an altar dedicated to Silvanus. The abbreviation was due to the modest size of the altar, which is also very indicative of the financial status of the founders. If a similar abbreviation was used in the *titulus pictus*, it could be due to the low status of the person thus mentioned, as well as due to the lack of space, because line 5 could further include other names or enumeration of specific military units involved in the reconstruction.

¹³ Buonopane 1999. I extend my thanks to the Author of the article for sending its copy immediately upon its publication.

¹⁴ Buonopane 1999 also points to the possibility of expanding the SAM abbreviation as: Samillus, Sammicus, Sammucinus. I do not exclude such an option, but numerous epigraphic examples show that the standard ending -ius was most frequently subject to derivation.

The list of individuals with Samius/Sammius *gentilicium* adduced above proves that these were held by equites, decurions and representatives of the lower social classes, but there is no attested senator with this *nomen* known to us. Adding an ending other than -ius (e.g., -ucius, -icius, -illus, -uconius, -ucinius) does not change this fact. If we adopt the C. Sam(m)ius Maior reading (or a similar one), we would deal with the first senator of this name, which is unlikely, because the C(aius) *praenomen* and the Maior *cognomen* (both clearly visible) indicate a member of the Sabucii family (as I wrote previously).

It is also worth considering that the person mentioned in line 5 may have been of a lower rank, for instance, a centurion.¹⁵ The epigraphical material confirms that reconstruction works were often carried out by centurions, as well as prefects or tribunes of auxiliary cohorts.¹⁶ Since there was a regular legion in Novae, I believe a centurion played this role. It is worth noticing here that around 201–230 A.D. T. Fl(avius) Sammius Terentianus, an eques and a prefect of the camp, who could have been the cousin of Sam(m)ius Maior, is attested in Novae. Therefore, the inscription could have contained both the *tribus* of Q(uirina) and O(ufentina), as we do not have the data about the *origo* of both Sammius' and the visible letter could have been both Q and O.¹⁷

Bearing the above in mind, line 5 of the *titulus pictus* may have been as follows:

ET C. ŞAM(IO) C(AI) F(ILIO) Q(VIRINA)/O(VFENTINA) MAIORE
[C(ENTVRIONE) LEG(IONIS) I ITAL(ICAE) ---]

¹⁵ Recently, such a dedication inscription from Cologne (*CIL* XIII 8201 = *IKöln* 108 = *ILS* 4312) listing: emperors (Caracalla and Geta) together with their mother, a provincial legate, and a centurion, was pointed out to me by W. Eck (email from 01/31/2018), which I am very grateful for. The hypothesis of him being a centurion was supported by Piso 2013: 51–53, who claimed that the person mentioned in line 5 of the *titulus pictus* was a centurion (...ucius Maior), and the person above (in line 4) was Calpurnius Iulianus, a praetorian legate of the province of Moesia Inferior and a legate of Legio I Italica at the same time. The Romanian scholar assumed that Moesia Inferior lost its consular status at that time due to the departure of Legio XI Claudia. I challenged this view (see Okoń 2016).

¹⁶ See, for example, inscriptions of centurions: *CIL* III 1790 = *CIL* III 6362 = *CIL* III 8484 = *CIL* III 1790 add. p. 2321, 121 = *ILS* 3381 = *AE* 1999, 1221; *CIL* XIII 8201 = *AE* 1895, 141 = *ILS* 4312; *AE* 1950, 127 = *IRT* 869; *AE* 1974, 574; *AE* 1983, 729; *AE* 1986, 523, of cohorts' prefects: *CIL* VII 585 = *RIB* 1465; *AE* 1975, 870; of cohorts' tribunes: *AE* 1966, 606; *CIL* VII 1003 = *CIL* VII 1003, add. p. 311 = *ILS* 2618 = *RIB* 1234; *CIL* XIII 6562 = *AE* 1995, 1165.

¹⁷ There were no other *tribus* beginning with these two letters. It is worth noticing that centurions often differed from ordinary soldiers by being given filiation and *tribus* – see, for example, the dedication for Caracalla given by *cohors V vigilum* (*CIL* VI 1058 = *CIL* VI 31234 = *ILS* 2157) – all centurions (six) have filiation, and three of them also *tribus*. Such a notation confirmed their origin from a family that already had Roman citizenship.

Conclusion

The state of the preservation of the inscription allows for two additional hypotheses. Both refer to line 5 and in both I interpret CIO letters as filiation and the *tribus* notation. Until now no one has interpreted this fragment of the *titulus pictus* in this way, but the rich source material proves that it had clear parallels.

The differences between the two hypotheses result from the different expansion of the SAM abbreviation. According to hypothesis No. 1, line 5 contains the name of a senator-legate from Italy: C. Sam(bucius)/Sam(mucius) Maior (whom I studied in my previous article), whereas according to hypothesis No. 2, it contains the name of an unknown centurion: C. Sam(ius)/Sam(mius) Maior from the Latin-speaking part of the Empire. From an epigraphic point of view, both hypotheses can be accepted and I do not find any good arguments for rejecting either of them. However, the context of the creation of the *titulus pictus* and other persons listed in the inscription definitely point to a person of the senatorial order. From this period, we know one senatorial family using the Caius *praenomen* and the Maior *cognomen* – *Sabucii Maiores*. Thus, I support the identification of the person mentioned in line 5 (regardless of the form of notation) as a legate, C. Sa(m)bucius Maior, a member of a senatorial family from Etruria.

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