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Olli Salomies

**The Date of an Inscription
Dated by Consuls
from a *vicus* in Moesia Inferior**

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O. Salomies:

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Dated by Consuls from a *vicus* in Moesia Inferior

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address of the author:

olli.salomies@helsinki.fi

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The Date of an Inscription Dated by Consuls from a *vicus* in Moesia Inferior
Olli Salomies

Among the inscribed monuments from a *vicus* situated between the villages of Mihai Bravu and Turda in the county of Tulcea (N. Dobruja, Romania) published by L. Mihaescu-Bîrliaba and A. Ibba in F. Mitthof, C. Cenati and L. Zerbini (eds.), *Ad ripam fluminis Danuvi* (Tyche Suppl. 11, 2021; available at <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/51288>) p. 15-38, there is one, clearly the lower part of an altar of which the upper part is missing, mentioning the consuls in office when the stone was inscribed, namely inscription no. T7 on p. 30f. (with photos in pl. 4, figs. 10 & 11; cf. also p. 23). The reading of the text, dated by the authors to the late 2nd or the early 3rd century, is rendered by the authors as follows:

----- / Cestio / et Quin[tian]o sive Quin[till]o / co(n)s(ulibus)

By quoting line 2 as “et Quin[tian]o sive Quin[till]o”, the authors indicate that the reading of this line is either *et Quin[tian]o* or *et Quin[till]o*. In the commentary, they add that the name of the second consul could also have been *Quintil(l)ius*. Despite noting *Quin[tian]us* as a possible reading of the second consul’s name in the text (see above), the authors go on in the commentary by mentioning only consuls called *Quintilius* or *Quintillus*, namely the following persons: *Sex. Quintilius Condianus* and *Sex. Quintilius Valerius Maximus*, consuls in 151; *Plautius Quintillus*, consul in 159; *Sex. Quintilius Maximus* consul in 172; *M. Peducaeus Plautius Quintillus*, consul in 177; *Sex. Quintilius Condianus*, consul in 180. These are all ordinary consuls, as the consul(s) mentioned in the inscription must in any case be (see below), but in the case of the first consul the authors suggest an identification with a certain L. Cestius Gallus Cerrinius Iustus Lutatius Natalis (*PIR*² C 692), perhaps the only senatorial Cestius to have held the consulate in the period this inscription must be attributed to,¹ although it must be stressed that in *CIL* X 3722 = G. Camodeca, EDR173062 from Volturnum, the main source for this man’s career, this man is referred to not as *co(n)s(ul)* but only as *co(n)s(ul) d(esignatus)*.² The bottom line of the authors is, then, that this L. Cestius Gallus was consul with a man called Quintillus or Quintil(l)ius³ and that this is the consular pair mentioned in the inscription; the authors do not say if they think that the latter consul is identical with one of the ordinary consuls mentioned earlier or with someone else.

This reconstruction of the facts is, however, surely out of the question. First, let me observe that in the period the inscription must be attributed to, a consul can hardly have been referred to only by his family name, i.e. his nomen without the addition of his cognomen⁴ –

¹ But note that the name of the consul *Vaenianus* in the consular date *Vaeniano et Avito* in the diploma *RMD* II 120 = *AE* 1981, 656 = [EDCS-12100894](#) (from the 160’s) was emended to *Va<r>enianus* by G. Migliorati, *Iscrizioni per la ricostruzione storica dell’impero romano da Marco Aurelio a Commodo* (2011) 24, with the result that the consul was identified with another Cestius, namely L. Cestius Gallus Varenianus Lutatius Natalis Aemilianus known from *CIL* X 7506 = [EDCS-22100625](#) (*PIR*² C 693); this man is surely a relative of Cestius Gallus mentioned above, but no offices, senatorial or other, are mentioned in the inscription. The cognomen *Vaenianus* is apparently accepted as such in *PIR*² V 4; but a nomen **Vaenius*, from which the cognomenn could have been derived, is not attested.

² That the vertical stroke, read in the 19th century by Zangemeister at the end of l. 10 after *COS* in a part of the stone which is now lost cannot be a part of the numeral *[I]I* (thus *CIL* and [EDCS-17500280](#)), meaning that this man would have held the consulate twice, is obvious; the stroke must thus represent a part of the letter *D* in *d(esignatus)* (cf. E. Groag in *PIR*; G. Camodeca in *EDR*; L. Chioffi, *Museo provinciale Campano di Capua. La raccolta epigrafica* [2005] no. 206). As for *co(n)s(ul) d(esignatus)*, the man may in fact even have died before his consulate, as the inscription from Volturnum may have been set up after the man’s death, as suggested in *PIR* because of the presence on the stone of an *urceus* and a *patera* (but this does not seem a decisive argument).

³ The authors in fact write “*Quintil(l)us* ou *Quintil(li)us*”, but the latter form must be an error for *Quintil(l)ius*.

⁴ During the early empire, the use of the nomen only of consuls who did have a cognomen may have been more common; cf. e.g. *AE* 2016, 201 = [EDCS-69000084](#) (*fasti* of Tusculum), *Viselli[us]* (AD 12); *CIL* VI 10051 = *ILS* 5283 = [EDCS-19301226](#) *D. Haterio Agrippa et Sulpicio co(n)s(ulibus)* (AD 22); note also that in some ms. *fasti* the consul Ser. Sulpicius Galba in AD 33 is called *Sulpicius* (see the *Chronica minora* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historia*.

although it must be admitted that there *is* a solitary instance of exactly this, namely a votive inscription in honour of *Heros Invictus pro salute Imp(eratoris)* from Ulmetum, also in Moesia Inferior and less than sixty km. from the *vicus* mentioned above,⁵ set up by three Valerii *X Kal(endas) Iulias Cornelio et Catio co(n)s(ulibus)*, i.e. in AD 216, a year everywhere else referred to as *Sabino II⁶ et Anullino co(n)s(ulibus)*, or, more rarely, in inscriptions of a more “official” nature and mainly (but not exclusively) from Italy, (*P.*) *Catio Sabino II (et) (P.) Cornelio Anullino co(n)s(ulibus)*.⁷

But even if it could be accepted that the pair of consuls in the inscription from the *vicus* could have been called *Cestio et Quintilio* (or *Quintillo*) *co(n)s(ulibus)*, there is the problem that this would have to have been a pair of suffect consuls or a consular pair consisting of a suffect and an ordinary consul, although this latter combination would only be a very remote possibility, as the scenario that one of the ordinary consuls is replaced by a suffect consul is (as far as I can see) not attested after AD 146.⁸ But finding a pair of suffect consuls (or a pair of a suffect and an ordinary consul) used in the date of an inscription of about the Severan period from a *vicus* in the province of Moesia Inferior would be close to a miracle. In a well-known study on the study of the use of suffect consuls in consular dates, W. Eck observed that after the early second century, suffect consuls were used only in very few cases in private documents (as contrasted with official documents such as military diplomas, issued in Rome, in which the use of suffect consuls for dating is attested until AD 206).⁹ The latest provincial dedications or similar documents dated by suffect consuls Eck was able to find are from about 150 AD, the latest exactly datable being from AD 153;¹⁰ in Italy, the documents stop in AD 146, with one exception, namely an inscription from Forum Flaminii (*AE* 1987, 348) which must be dated to *c.* AD 175.¹¹ But in these cases we are not dealing with normal votive inscriptions set up by private persons, not to speak of private persons operating in a remote provincial *vicus*; the inscription from Forum Flaminii obviously belongs to a substantial honorific monument (n. 11), and the other inscriptions cited by Eck as the latest ones

Auctores antiquissimi IX p. 281, *Consularia Italica*; p. 410, Prosper; *ibid.* XI p. 137, Cassiodorus).

⁵ *CIL* III 7531 = *ISM* II 130 = *ISM* V 76 = [EDCS-27800427](#).

⁶ The numeral indicating the iteration of the consulate of Sabinus (cf. next n.) is often omitted.

⁷ For instances of the use of the nomen and the cognomen of the consuls of 216 outside Italy note *CIL* II 2221 = II² 7, 295 = *ILS* 6906 = [EDCS-09000314](#); *CIL* II 2663 = *ILS* 2335 = [EDCS-05502041](#); *AE* 1990, 805 = 2008, 1146 = *Tituli Aquincenses* 70 = [EDCS-05200562](#); *AE* 1937, 239 = [EDCS-15900400](#) (Dura-Europos); *I. Ephesos* 971 (in Greek); *AE* 1975, 808 = *I. Pessinous* 166 (in Greek). As Catus Sabinus was consul for the second time, he is always named first, the *only* exception being the inscription from Ulmetum where he is called *Catius* and mentioned only after his colleague.

⁸ See the L. Vidman, *Fasti Ostienses* (1982²) p. 50 [*Sex. Eru[c]ius Clarus II, Cn. Claudius Seve[rus] / [---] Mart(ias) loco Clari Q Licinius Modest[inus]*].

⁹ W. Eck, in *Epigrafia. Actes du colloque en mémoire de Attilio Degraffi* (Collection de l'École française de Rome 143, 1991, 15-44, esp. 34-42 for the private documents; and cf. now W. Eck, *ZPE* 223 (2022) 215f.

¹⁰ But the document (*Tyche* 1 [1986] 70 no. 25) cited by Eck 1991 p. 40 as belonging to AD 152 must in fact be dated to AD 144 and mentions the ordinary, not the suffect consuls (T. Drew-Bear, *MEFRA* 106 [1994] 810f.). The consuls mentioned in *CIL* VII 802 = [EDCS-07900765](#) (quoted on the same page) are in fact ordinary consuls during the Gallic empire in the 260's (see *RIB* 1956).

¹¹ For the date of *AE* 1987, 348 = [EDCS-07400264](#) (= EDR080461, with photo) with the text *Dedic(ata) K(alendis) Iun(iis) / M. Sulpicio Crasso, / C. Egnatio Capitone co(n)s(ulibus)*, see *PIR*² S 993 (the consul M. Sulpicius Crassus held the proconsulate of Asia in the early 190's; as he must have held the consulate *c.* 15 years earlier, it must this be dated to *c.* 175). The stone itself is a *tabula* (42.5 x 44.5 x 11, with letters varying between 3 and 4 cm.) which must have been a part of a large honorific monument.

using suffect consuls are either dedications of some public structures¹² or an inscription in honour of provincial notable.¹³

The bottom line is, then, that it is simply impossible to assume that a modest votive altar of about the Severan period from a *vicus* in northern Moesia Inferior could have been dated by suffect consuls of whom at least one would have been called by his family name instead of his cognomen. The consuls mentioned here must be ordinary consuls called by their cognomina. In trying to determine the correct reading of the date, it seems advisable to start with the second consul and to look for ordinary consuls with a cognomen beginning with *Quin-*. Now ordinary consuls between Trajan¹⁴ and the end of the third century with a suitable cognomen are known in the following years:

- 159: Plautius Quintillus with M. Statius Priscus;
- 177 M. Peducaeus Plautius Quintillus with the emperor Commodus;
- 235 L. Ti. Claudius Aurelius Quintianus with Cn. Claudius Severus;
- 289 L. Ragonius Quintianus with M. Magrius Bassus.

However, Quintillus consul in 159 is always mentioned first before his colleague Priscus, and, although there are in fact some scattered instances of the reversed order of the consuls of a particular year (cf. n. 7), it seems most improbable that 159 could be the year meant in the inscription under discussion. The other consuls, Quintillus consul in 177, Quintianus consul in 235 and Quintianus consul in 289 are either without exception or (in the case of Quintianus consul in 289)¹⁵ with two exceptions always mentioned in the second place in consular dates, and one of these three years must, then, be the year indicated by the consular date in the document discussed here; it follows that the reading in l. 1 must in one way or another correspond to the name of the consul named before his colleague. Now the reading of the editors in this line is *Cestio*. As I have been trying to show, this reading cannot be correct, but surely one cannot assume that whatever was originally inscribed in this line could be seen to represent the reading *Imp(eratore) Commodo* or something similar¹⁶ or, if the inscription were from AD 289, *Basso*; but it seems in any case quite inconceivable that this inscription could be as late as from the tetrarchic period. We are thus left with the outcome that the inscription must be from AD 235 and that the reading *Severo* or something amounting to it should be seen as having been inscribed in this line. This means that something must be done about the letters in the beginning of the line. According to the editors, the first two letters are *CE*. But looking at the photo I seem to discern traces of the letter *A* crammed

¹² *CIL* II 2008 = II² 5, 840 = *ILS* 5423 = [EDCS-08700904](#) (of AD 153) from Nescania in Baetica, the dedication of *Iuppiter Pantheus Aug(ustus) cum aede et tetrastilo solo [p]ub(lico)* by two *curatores iuvenum*; *AE* 1978, 666 = *IDR* II I 242 = [EDCS-11200186](#) from Sarmizegethusa in Dacia, probably a building *[de]dicatum epulo Iovis X K(alendas) Iun(ias) [Av]iola et Severo co(n)s(ulibus)* (for the date, probably around AD 150, see I. Piso, in L. Zerbini [ed.], *Roma e le province del Danubio* (2010) 269f.).

¹³ *AE* 1971, 183 = *CIL* II² 7, 291 = [EDCS-09000310](#) of AD 152 from Corduba, a monument in honour of a *flamen divor(um) Aug(ustorum) provinc(iae) Baeticae* set up by the *concil(ium) pro]vinc(iae) Baetic(ae)*.

¹⁴ Earlier consuls with cognomina beginning with *Quin-* (there is Sex. Nonius Quin(c)tilianus, ordinary consul in AD 8) obviously do not come into question.

¹⁵ The order of the consuls is Quintianus, Bassus in the *fasti* of Cales (*CIL* X 4631 = *Inscr. It.* XIII 1 no. 16 = [EDCS-37800004](#)) and in the military list *P. Mich.* X 593 col. I, l. 18, but in all other cases the order is Bassus, Quintianus (*CIL* X 3698 = *ILS* 4175 = [EDCS-17500256](#); *ICVR* III 7376 = [EDCS-34900704](#); *Cod. Iust.* 4,19,8; 7,56,3; 9,2,9; the *Chronicle of 354* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historia. Auctores antiquissimi* IX p. 60 and the ms. *fasti* cited *ibid.* p. 230, 290, 445; vol. XI p. 149 and vol. XIII p. 380, 396f., 514).

¹⁶ For the date *Imp(eratore) Commodo* (or just *Commodo*) et *Quintillo co(n)s(ulibus)* see e.g. *CIL* VI 2382 = 32638 = [EDCS-18400008](#) (a *laterculus* of praetorians); *CIL* XV 7360 = [EDCS-37900555](#); *ISM* I 332 = [EDCS-36900289](#); ms. *fasti*. Longer forms of the names are used e.g. in *CIL* VI 631 = *ILS* 5084 = [EDCS-17300774](#) (*Imp(eratore) Caes(are) L. Aurelio Commodo, M. Plautio Quintillo co(n)s(ulibus)*); *CIL* XIV 328 = *ILS* 7022 = [EDCS-05700328](#); *CIL* X 285 = *Inscr. It.* III 1, 259 = [EDCS-11400371](#); *AE* 1971, 534 = *IAM* II 94 = [EDCS-08800079](#).

between the *C* and the *E*. I suggest that these letters *CE* or *CAE* do not belong to the cognomen of the first consul but represent the end of a word the beginning of which was inscribed in the preceding line, now lost. As this is clearly a votive inscription and as veterans are attested as having settled in this *vicus*,¹⁷ one could think of the termination of an expression indicating the former military service of the person who set up the monument, e.g. [*veteranus classis (Fl(aviae)) Moesi]cae* (or, if I am wrong in deciphering the letter *A*, *Moesi]ce*).¹⁸ As for the rest of the line, the genitive *CAE* or *CE* seems to have been followed by more than just four letters (as in *STIO*). First there is a clear *S*, then a vertical stroke which according to the editors is a *T* but which in my view could be interpreted as an *E* (note that the stone is very worn). The next letter also seems to include a vertical stroke, and a *V* thus seems to be excluded; but I suggest that this is a *B*, third-century inscriptions often substituting a for a [v]. The next letter can in my view be interpreted as another *E*; in what comes next one can discern another vertical stroke, and with some imagination one can interpret the letter as an *R*. At the end of the line as preserved one can see pretty clearly a part of the letter *O*. My conclusion is, then, that the reading of this part of the line corresponds to what one must expect to have been inscribed, namely *Sebero*, and that the whole fragment must be dated to AD 235 and read as [*----]/cae Sebero / et Quint[ian]o / co(n)s(ulibus)*.

Prof. em. Olli Salomies
 Department of Languages
 POB 24 (Unioninkatu 40)
 FIN-00014 University of Helsinki
 Email: olli.salomies@helsinki.fi

¹⁷ See the inscription T1. For a *beneficiarius* honouring a legate in the same place see T4 (= *AE* 1985, 725 = [EDCS-08300497](#); the reading of this inscription does not seem altogether satisfactory).

¹⁸ A veteran of the *classis Ravennas* had settled here (cf. the diploma of AD 71, no. T3 = *AE* 2004, 1282 = 2007, 1232 = [EDCS-33500447](#)).