

New epigraphic finds from Rogatica in Roman Dalmatia

Nove epigrafske najdbe iz Rogatice v rimski Dalmaciji

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Izvleček

V članku so predstavljeni rimski spomeniki iz Rogatice in njene okolice (Republika Srbska, Bosna in Hercegovina), odkriti v letih 2014 in 2016. Rimska naselbina, najverjetneje municipij, je bila povzdignjena na raven kolonije v 3. st. in je ležala na vzhodnem robu rimske province Dalmacije. Med novoodkritimi spomeniki avtorja opišeta oltar, posvečen bogovoma Liberu in Liberi, oltar, posvečen Najboljšemu in največjemu Jupiteru, ter fragmentarno ohranjen kamen z neopredeljivo moško upodobitvijo. Kulta Libera in Jupitra sta v epigrafskem materialu Rogatice že izpričana.

Ključne besede: rimska doba, provinca Dalmacija, Rogatica, rimski napisi, Liber, Libera, Jupiter

Abstract

The paper presents new Roman epigraphic finds from the city of Rogatica (Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Hercegovina) and its vicinity, discovered in 2014 and 2016. The Roman settlement, possibly a *municipium* promoted to the rank of a colony during the 3rd century AD, was located in the eastern reaches of the province of Dalmatia. New finds include two altars, one dedicated to Liber and Libera, and the other, partially preserved, to *Juppiter Optimus Maximus*, as well as one fragmentary monument with a relief depicting an unidentifiable male figure. The cults of Liber and Jupiter are already attested in the epigraphic material from Rogatica.

Keywords: Roman period, Roman Dalmatia, Rogatica, epigraphic monuments, Liber, Libera, Jupiter

Two new Latin inscriptions and one fragmentary monument from the province of Dalmatia have been brought to our attention recently.^{1*} They were discovered in modern Rogatica and its vicinity, in the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Hercegovina (Fig. 1). Archaeological excavations, conducted

since the beginning of the 20th century, have revealed considerable traces of a Roman settlement in Rogatica, covering the area between the hill Ljuna and the river Rakitnica (remains of walls, bricks, various architectural elements, coins), as well as several *villae rusticae* in its vicinity, on the Rogatica field (the villages of Plješevica, Potpeć and Drijenke).² The name and status of the settlement have been frequently discussed among

^{1*} The authors owe gratitude to Nebojša Golić, director of the Tourist Organization of the municipality of Rogatica, and Željko Petrović, director of the Firefighting Unit of the municipality of Rogatica, for providing the unpublished Roman finds from Rogatica and its vicinity.

² Patsch 1909, 181; Bojanovski 1988, 171, 175; *ALBiH* III 17. 288 (V. Paškvalin).



Fig. 1: Map of northeastern Dalmatia.

Sl. 1: Severovzhodni del province Dalmacije.

modern scholars. According to some, Rogatica was a Flavian *municipium*.³ Others, starting with C. Patsch,⁴ believed that it was a colony and that its abbreviated name – *Ris()* – and status were recorded on the tombstone of the *decurio* T. Claudius Maximus.⁵ Found in the modern city, it is dated to the 3rd century AD.⁶ However, *Ris()* might not refer to Rogatica at all, but to Risinium, in the bay of Boka Kotorska, in the south of Dalmatia. The reading of the abbreviation as *Ris(inii)* was suggested by Mommsen and accepted by other scholars.⁷ Reflecting on the possibility that *Ris()* actually referred to Roman Rogatica, one might presume that the settlement enjoyed the status of a *municipium* at first and that it was elevated to the rank of a colony at some point during the 3rd century AD.⁸ A similar development is recorded, for instance, in the case of the neighbouring Domavia. The *municipium* was given the status of a colony in the time between the reigns of Severus Alexander (222–235 AD) and Trebonianus Gallus (251–253 AD).⁹

³ Alföldy 1965, 154; Wilkes 1969, 281; Mrozewicz 2015, 158.

⁴ Patsch 1909, 182–183. Cf. A. et J. Šašel, *ILJug* (Situla 25), p. 87; Bojanovski 1988, 172. Loma 2010, 287–288, n. 43 has suggested that the area of Rogatica belonged to the territory of the *municipium Malvense*, which she had identified with Skelani on the Drina.

⁵ *CIL* III 2766b + pp. 1035, 2256 = 8369 = 12748 = *ILJug* 1571 = HD033828.

⁶ Bojanovski 1967, 146 ad no. 1.

⁷ Mommsen, *CIL* III 2766b; Alföldy 1965, 142; Wilkes 1969, 255; Loma 2010, 297; Grbić 2014, 142, n. 387.

⁸ Wilkes 1981, 273 stated that the city at Rogatica was perhaps a *municipium* called *Ris()*. Cf. Mrozewicz 2015, 159.

⁹ Alföldy 1965, 155; Wilkes 1969, 279–280.



Fig. 2: The altar of Liber and Libera, inscription field.

Sl. 2: Rogatica. Napisno polje oltarja, posvečenega Liberu in Liberi.

New finds

1. Votive altar of limestone, with the base and capital doubly moulded on three sides (front, left, and right). The capital is decorated with simple *acroteria* and a disc between them on the front side and with simple *acroteria* on the left side. The *acroteria* on its right side, as well as the moulding on the right side of the base, are chipped off. The back side of the altar is roughly dressed. Dimensions: 78 × 40 × 30 cm. Inscription field: 35 × 30 cm. Letter height: 5 cm. The altar was found in March 2016, during regulation works in the newly excavated bed of the river Rakitnica in the Rogatica field, at the depth of 2 metres. The site is located approximately 50 metres east of the present river bank. The inscription, consisting of four lines, reads as follows (Fig. 2; 3):

Lib(ero) L(iberae) | Tib(erius) Cl(audius) An(tonius) | v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit).

Translation: To Liber and Libera. Tiberius Claudius Antonius fulfilled his vow willingly.

Ligatures: IB and AN in line 2, NI in line 3. Triangular punctuation marks in lines 1, 2, and 4. The altar was dedicated to Liber, the ancient Italian god of fertility of both nature and men, and his



Fig. 3: The altar of Liber and Libera, found in Rogatica.
Sl. 3: Rogatica. Oltar, posvećen Liberu in Liberi.

feminine companion Libera.¹⁰ Radical abbreviation of the goddess' name to *L(ibera)* is not frequent in the epigraphic evidence of the Roman Empire. It is attested in Dacia¹¹ and Lusitania.¹² Liber and Libera were particularly venerated in the Balkan and Danubian provinces of the Roman Empire (Macedonia, Moesia, Dacia, Dalmatia, Pannonia, and Noricum). It is usually believed that they represent old autochthonous deities of fertility and vegetation, assimilated to the Roman ones and worshipped under Latin names.¹³ Epigraphic evidence testifies

¹⁰ On Liber in general see: Bruhl 1953; Radke 1965, 175–183; Matijašić, Tassaux 2000, 66–76.

¹¹ Micia: *IDR* III/3, 103 = HD045094.

¹² Norba: *HEp* 1994, 223 along with the radically abbreviated name of Liber to *L(iber)*. For a different reading see: *HEp* 1990, 206.

¹³ Wissowa 1902, 248; Schur 1926, 73–74; Bodor 1963, 211–239; Dobruna-Salih 2005, 223–232; Pilipović 2005,

that the cult of Liber was well established in Dalmatia, since the end of the republican period. L. Annaeus Epicadus, *quaestor* of the *conventus civium Romanorum* at Narona at the time of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, built a temple to Liber Pater in the city.¹⁴ The altar erected by Tib. Claudius Antonius is not the first attestation of Liber's cult in Rogatica. The site has already yielded a dedication to the god, styled *Liber Bacchus*, because of his connection with wine, grapevines, and viticulture in general.¹⁵ The altar was set up by a certain P. Aelius Clemens, veteran of an unnamed regiment. It contains two inscriptions, one dedicated to *Liber Bacchus*, the other to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus*.¹⁶ P. Aelius Clemens should be identified with the homonymous *duovir* of the Roman city at Rogatica, who dedicated an altar to Jupiter.¹⁷ The monument is dated to the middle of the 2nd century AD (A. and J. Šašel) or to the end of the 2nd century AD/first half of the 3rd century AD (I. Bojanovski, based on the palaeographic features).¹⁸ Clemens' family played a prominent role in the administration of the Roman town at Rogatica. His homonymous son – P. Aelius Clemens Junior, also a veteran discharged from an unnamed unit – held the high magistracies of *duovir* and *quinquennalis*.¹⁹

The altar of Liber and Libera was dedicated by a certain Tib. Claudius Antonius, whose origin and status remain undetermined. The imperial name *Claudius*, very frequent in all parts of the Roman Empire, especially in Dalmatia and the Danubian provinces,²⁰ is already attested in Rogatica, on the aforementioned epitaph of the decurion T. Claudius

87–90; Pilipović 2011, 63–66. For a different view on the assimilation see: Imamović 1977, 161–162.

¹⁴ *CIL* III 1784 = *ILLRP* 206 = *ILS* 3354 = HD053382. On the dating of Epicadus' quaestorship see: Wilkes 1969, 247. Alföldy 1965, 134 dates the inscriptions mentioning the officials of the *conventus* at Narona (*CIL* III 1820 = 8423, 1784) to the middle of the first century BC. On the cult of Liber in Dalmatia in general see: Matijašić, Tassaux 2000, 69 and Tab. I: 93–96.

¹⁵ On the assimilation of Liber and Bacchus see: De Cazanove 1988, 245–265; Isler-Kerényi 2010, 27–44; Matijašić, Tassaux 2000, 69–71; *DNP* VII 136–137, s. v. *Liber, Liberalia*.

¹⁶ *CIL* III 8367 + pp. 2127, 2256 = *ILJug* 1567 = Imamović 1977, 398, no. 155 + 376, no. 118 = HD023076.

¹⁷ *CIL* III 8366 + p. 2127 = *ILJug* 1566 = Imamović 1977, 374, no. 117 = HD033825.

¹⁸ A. and J. Šašel, *ILJug* 1566; Bojanovski 1967, 146, no. 2.

¹⁹ *ILJug* 624 = *AE* 1976, 533 = Imamović 1977: 458, no. 243 = HD012315.

²⁰ Alföldy 1969: 37. For the frequency in the western part of the Roman Empire see: *OPEL* II 60–62.

Maximus.²¹ The Latin cognomen *Antonius* is found in northern Italy, western and eastern provinces (where it was particularly widespread).²² In Dalmatia, it is recorded after *ca.* 160 AD, in the area of Salona and in the interior of the province, in the *Municipium S.*²³

2. Fragment of a votive altar of limestone, with a doubly moulded capital on three sides (front, left, and right). The back side of the altar is roughly dressed. The lower part and the left side of the monument are broken, as is the upper part of the capital. Traces of a circular decoration (perhaps a *patera*?) are visible on the front side of the capital. Dimensions: 55 × 42 × 42 cm. Inscription field: 40 × 32 cm. Letter height: 5 cm. The letters are shallow and worn. The fragment was found in April 2014, in the village of Plješevica, on the site of Crkvina, 2 km to the north of Rogatica, during the widening of the local road. Judging by the architectural remains on the site, i.e. the foundations of a building, a *villa rustica* might have been located at Crkvina.²⁴ The altar is kept in the office of the Tourist Organization of Rogatica. The fragmentary inscription, consisting of three lines (lines 2 and 3 are only partially preserved), runs as follows (Fig. 4):

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) | [.] Aur(elius) |
[± 3]us | [- - -]

Translation: To Jupiter, Best and Greatest. [-]
Aurelius [-]us ...

The cult of Jupiter Capitolinus, supreme deity of the Roman pantheon,²⁵ is already attested in Rogatica. The god is called *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* on four inscriptions, while the fifth monument records the comparatively less frequent epithet *Capitolinus*.²⁶ Three inscriptions were set up by the municipal magistrates. We have already mentioned those dedicated by the *duovir* P. Aelius Clemens.²⁷ The name of the other magistrate –



Fig. 4: The altar of Jupiter, found in Plješevica.
Sl. 4: Plješevica. Oltar, posvećen Jupiteru.

duovir and *quinquennalis* – remains uncertain. His cognomen was *Albanus* and his *nomen gentile*, at the beginning of the second line, was read as *Fl(avius)*²⁸ or *[A]el(ius)*.²⁹ The first preserved letter in line 2 seems to be an *E* and consequently one should accept the latter suggestion.³⁰ The altar that he had dedicated to Jupiter is dated to the end of the 2nd century AD or to the 3rd century AD.³¹ The cognomen of M. Ulpius, the dedicator of the fourth inscription, is restored by modern scholars as *[Apo]llo[dorus]*.³² It appears, however, that one should take into account other options as well: *Apollonianus*, *Apollonides* or *Apollonius*.³³ Judging by its palaeographic features, the altar was erected

²¹ *CIL* III 2766b + p. 1035 = 8369 = 12748 + p. 2256 = *ILJug* 1571 = HD033828.

²² Kajanto 1965, 140; Alföldy 1969, 153; *OPEL* I 131.

²³ Alföldy 1969, 153–154.

²⁴ Sergejevski 1936, 13; Mesihović 2009, 64.

²⁵ On Jupiter see: Wissowa 1902, 100–113; Radke 1965, 155–160.

²⁶ On the epithets and their frequency see: *Diz. epigr.* IV 240 sqq.

²⁷ *CIL* III 8366 + p. 2127 = *ILJug* 1566; *CIL* III 8367 + p. 2127, 2256 = *ILJug* 1567 = HD033825.

²⁸ Patsch 1893, 89, no. 3; Patsch 1909, 183, no. 2; Hirschfeld, *CIL* III 12747; Alföldy 1965, 161, n. 31; Imamović 1977, 374, no. 115; HD052416.

²⁹ Bojanovski 1967, 148, no. 3; Mesihović 2009, 61, no. 5. Hoernes 1880, 46 has read the name as *[Ae?]l(ius) Alb(inus)*.

³⁰ Photograph in Bojanovski 1967, 147, Pl. 1, Fig. 4.

³¹ Bojanovski 1967, 148 ad no. 3.

³² Patsch 1912, 160; Bojanovski 1967, 152, no. 6; Imamović 1977, 374, no. 116; A. et J. Šašel, *ILJug* 1569; Mesihović 2009, 58, no. 2.

³³ *OPEL* I 145–146.

during the 2nd century AD.³⁴ The fifth monument pertaining to the cult of Jupiter in Rogatica is the altar dedicated by M. Ulpius Marcianus. Found in Rogatica in 2012, it was transferred to the village of Kondžilo in the municipality of Visoko in 2014.³⁵ Jupiter bears the epithet *Capitolinus*, previously attested in Dalmatia on inscriptions from the territories of Domavia³⁶ and Delminium, respectively.³⁷ The dedicator is presumably the same person as M. Ulpius Marcianus, who erected the fragmentary altar of Juno Regina, found in the village of Živaljevići, to the northeast of Rogatica.³⁸

The altar from Plješevica should be dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD or to the 3rd century AD. The name *Aurelius* points to the reign of Marcus Aurelius as the *terminus post quem*. The cognomen of the dedicator is impossible to restore. Judging by the length of the second line, it contained approximately three letters before the preserved ending of 'VS'.

3. Semicircular upper part of a limestone monument with a naked (?) and bearded (?) male figure in relief. Dimensions: 52 × 72 × 15 cm. The fragment was found in June 2014 on the property of

³⁴ Bojanovski 1967, 152 ad no. 6.

³⁵ Silajdžić, Mesihović 2014, 121.

³⁶ *ILJug* 1555 = Imamović 1977, 368, no. 104 = HD033815 found at the village of Sikirić.

³⁷ *ILJug* 167 = Imamović 1977, 360, no. 90 = HD019702 found at the village of Mokronoge.

³⁸ *CIL* III 14616 = Imamović 1977, 384–385, no. 131 = HD052569.

Abbreviations

AE = *L'Année épigraphique*, Paris.

ALBiH = *Arheološki leksikon Bosne i Hercegovine* I–III, Sarajevo 1988.

CIL = *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*.

Diz. epigr. = E. De Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane*, Roma 1886-.

DNP = *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Stuttgart, Weimar, 1996-.

HD = EDH = *Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg* (Service provider: Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften) [<http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/home?&dang=de>].

HEp = *Hispania Epigraphica*, Madrid.

IDR = *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae* I–III, București 1975–1999.

ILJug = A. et J. Šašel, *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMXL et MCMLX repertae et editae sunt*



Fig. 5: Fragmentary monument, found in Sjeversko. Sl. 5: Sjeversko. Fragmentiran spomenik.

Sreten Mitrović, in the village of Sjeversko, district of Borika, approximately 20 km to the northeast of Rogatica. Its current location is the office of the Tourist Organization of Rogatica. The relief is extremely worn, and the male figure could not be identified. Perhaps it depicted an autochthonous deity (Fig. 5).

Altars dedicated to Liber and Libera and Jupiter, respectively, as well as the fragmentary monument with the depiction of a male figure, represent a small but welcome addition to the epigraphic and archaeological material from the Roman settlement at Rogatica.

(Situla 5), Ljubljana 1963; iidem, *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMLX et MCMLXX repertae et editae sunt* (Situla 19), Ljubljana 1978; iidem, *Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia inter annos MCMII et MCMXL repertae et editae sunt* (Situla 25), Ljubljana 1986.

ILLRP = A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei publicae* I–II, Firenze 1957–1963.

ILS = H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae* I–III, Berlin 1892–1916.

OPEL = B. Lőrincz, *Onomasticon provinciarum Europae Latinarum*, Vol. I: *Aba – Bysanus*, Budapest 1994; Vol. II: *Cabalicius – Ixus*, Wien 1999; Vol. III: *Labareus – Pythea*, Wien 2000; Vol. IV: *Quadratia – Zures*, Wien 2002.

RE = Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll-Mittelhaus-Ziegler, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.

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Povzetek

Prva arheološka izkopavanja v Rogatici in njeni okolici (Republika Srbska, Bosna in Hercegovina) segajo na začetek 20. st. Odkrite so bile sledi pomembne rimske naselbine ter številne vile rustike. Na podlagi epigrafskih spomenikov se je naselbina morda imenovala *Ris*(), moderni raziskovalci pa ji pripisujejo status municipija, preden je bilo mesto v 3. st. povzdignjeno v kolonijo.

Med spomeniki iz Rogatice in njenega zaledja, odkritimi v letih 2014 in 2016, so v članku podrobneje opisani dva oltarja ter fragment tretjega spomenika.

Prvi oltar, ki ga je postavil Tiberij Klavdij Antonij, je bil posvečen bogovoma Liberu in Liberi. Spomenik je bil odkrit v novoizkopanem rečnem koritu med urejanjem struge Rakitnice. Čaščenje Libera, starega italskega boga plodnosti, je v Rakitnici že izpričano. Publij Elij Klemens, veteran nedoločljive vojaške enote in eden od dveh županov (*duovir*) rimskega mesta, je oltar posvetil božanstvu, ki so ga Rimljani zaradi njegove povezave z vinogradništvom poistovetili z Bakhom.

Drugi, fragmentarno ohranjen oltar je bil odkrit na najdišču Crkvina v vasi Plješevica, kjer so arheologi izkopali vilo rustiko. Posvečen je Najboljšemu in največjemu Jupitru, čigar kult je v Rogatici in njenem zaledju prav tako že izpričan. Poudariti je treba, da so tri doslej odkrite oltarje, posvečene Najboljšemu in največjemu Jupitru, s tega območja postavili mestni uradniki: eden od dveh županov (*duovir*) Publij Elij Klemens in eden od

dveh županov (*duovir*) ter eden od dveh županov z oblastjo cenzorja (*quinquennalis*; odgovoren za popis prebivalstva na vsakih pet let) Elij Alban. Kot dedikant oltarja iz Plješevice se omenja možki z rodovnim imenom Avrelij brez ohranjenega kognomna. Zaradi tega se spomenik datira v čas vladavine Marka Avrelija ali kmalu zatem.

Fragment tretjega spomenika, ki se zgoraj polkrožno zaključuje, ni mogoče tipološko opredeliti. Najden je bil leta 2014 v vasi Sjeversko. Slabo ohranjen relief gole (?) in bradate (?) moške osebe verjetno predstavlja neko domače božanstvo.

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