

A SOLDIER'S TOMBSTONE FROM EMONA

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A small limestone block, built into a wall of the castle at Ljubljana, can be identified, by the distinctive carving upon it, as part of a Roman soldier's tombstone (Pl. 1).¹ The surviving fragment, which measures approximately 0.45×0.5 m, retains the corner of a rectangular design of roundels joined horizontally, vertically and transversely, by bars. This design may be restored as shown in Fig. 1.² The layout is not entirely symmetrical, being rectangular rather than square. The central motif is in a poor state of preservation but just enough survives of its circumference to indicate that it is clearly larger than the rest. It is theoretically possible to restore this central motif as an oval rather than a circle, but since this would be unparalleled and a circle produces a more balanced design, the roundel is preferred. The sculpture can be identified with confidence as a stylistic rendering of a set of *phalerae*, a type of military decoration awarded to soldiers of the rank of centurion and below.³ The roundels are the *phalerae* themselves, in this case relatively plain examples with only a concentric circle design; the bars represent the leather straps of the harness on which the *phalerae* were mounted so that they could be worn on the chest.⁴

The closest parallel to the Ljubljana example, in terms of the layout of the *phalerae*, comes from ancient Ateste, modern Este, in Venetia, north-east Italy (Pl. 2: 1).⁵ Here a tombstone commemorating the veteran, Lucius Blattius Vetus, a former centurion of legion IV Macedonica, depicts, above the text, a set of nine *phalerae*, identical in layout to the example under discussion, with eight roundels around the outside and one larger one at the centre, these being mounted on a harness of horizontal, vertical and transverse straps. The *phalerae* themselves are, in this instance, completely plain, though they may originally have been enlivened with painted detail. The stone is not specifically dated but should belong to the latter part of the first century BC. *Phalerae* of the concentric circle design are attested on tombstones from Villa Vallelunga in Latium (of probable late republican date), from Caritza, modern Korce, in Macedonia (undated), from Boppard and Mainz in Upper Germany (three examples, all of Julio-Claudian date),⁶ and from Ptuj in Pannonia, this last being one of three examples of tombstones depicting military decorations which derive from the area of Illyricum.

The tombstone from Ptuj, ancient Poetovio, commemorates a soldier of legion VIII Augusta, one Lucius Petronius Classicus (Pl. 2: 2).⁷ Below the text of the inscription there is depicted a human torso adorned with a set of *pha-*

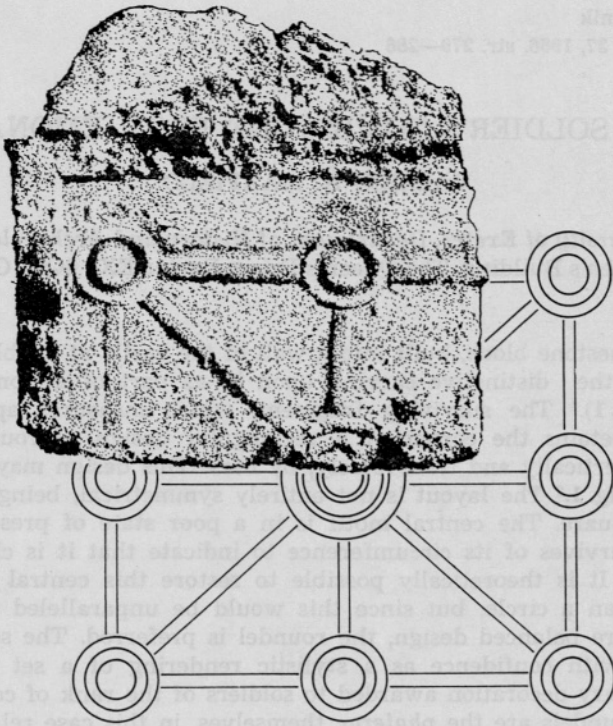
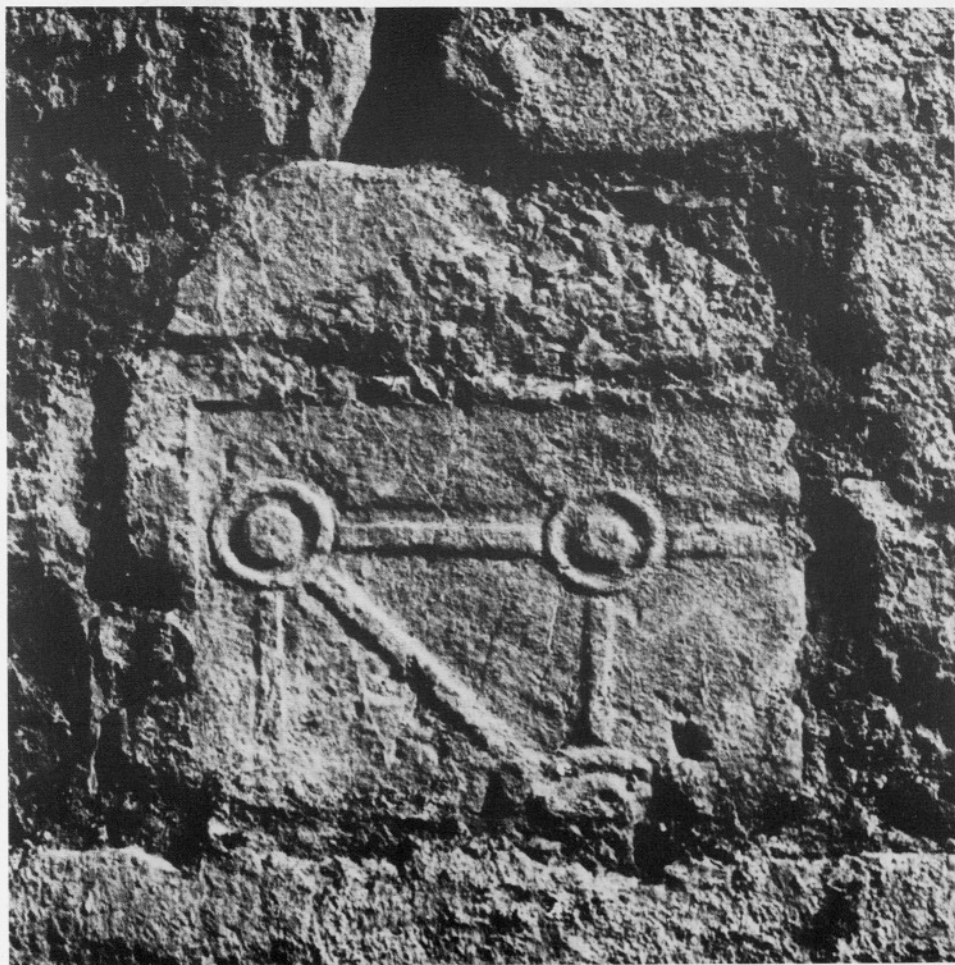


Fig. 1: Ljubljana (Emona); restored drawing of fragmentary soldier's tombstone.

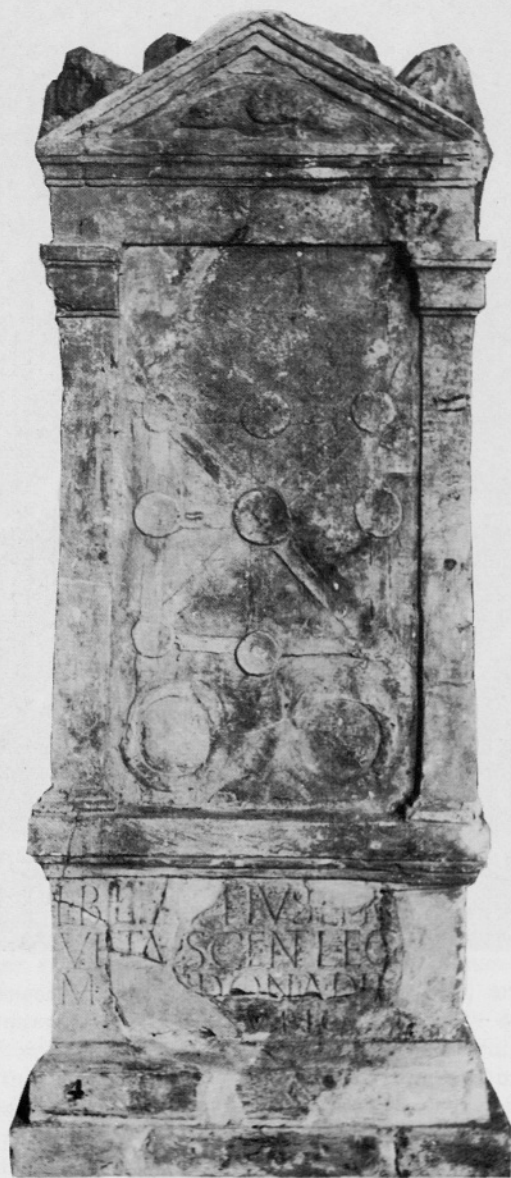
Sl. 1: Ljubljana (Emona): prikaz rekonstrukcije fragmentarnega vojaškega napisu.

lerae similar to the Ljubljana examples. Unfortunately the lower part of the torso is broken away, so that the representation is incomplete. However it is clear from the surviving portion that Classicus's *phalerae* are mounted on a harness of horizontal and vertical straps, and are accompanied by a pair of *torques*; three further *torques* (or possibly *armillae* — in the absence of any indication of size it is impossible to distinguish between the two) are depicted at the top of the stone above the epitaph. During the period of the early Principate, to which the Classicus stone belongs, it was extremely common for sets of *phalerae* to be awarded in combination with both *torques* and *armillae*, and it is not improbable that the Ljubljana stone originally depicted something other than just the *phalerae*. Legion VIII Augusta moved to the newly established legionary base at Poetovio in AD 9 and remained there until AD 45 when it transferred to Novae in lower Moesia.⁸ If Classicus won his military decorations when serving with VIII Augusta, the most likely occasion is in connection with the suppression of Pannonian revolt in which it was engaged immediately prior to its move to Poetovio.



Pl. 1: Ljubljana (Emona); fragment of a Roman soldier's tombstone, depicting *phalerae*.

Tab. 1: Ljubljana (Emona): fragmentarni nagrobnik rimskega vojaka, ki prikazuje falere.



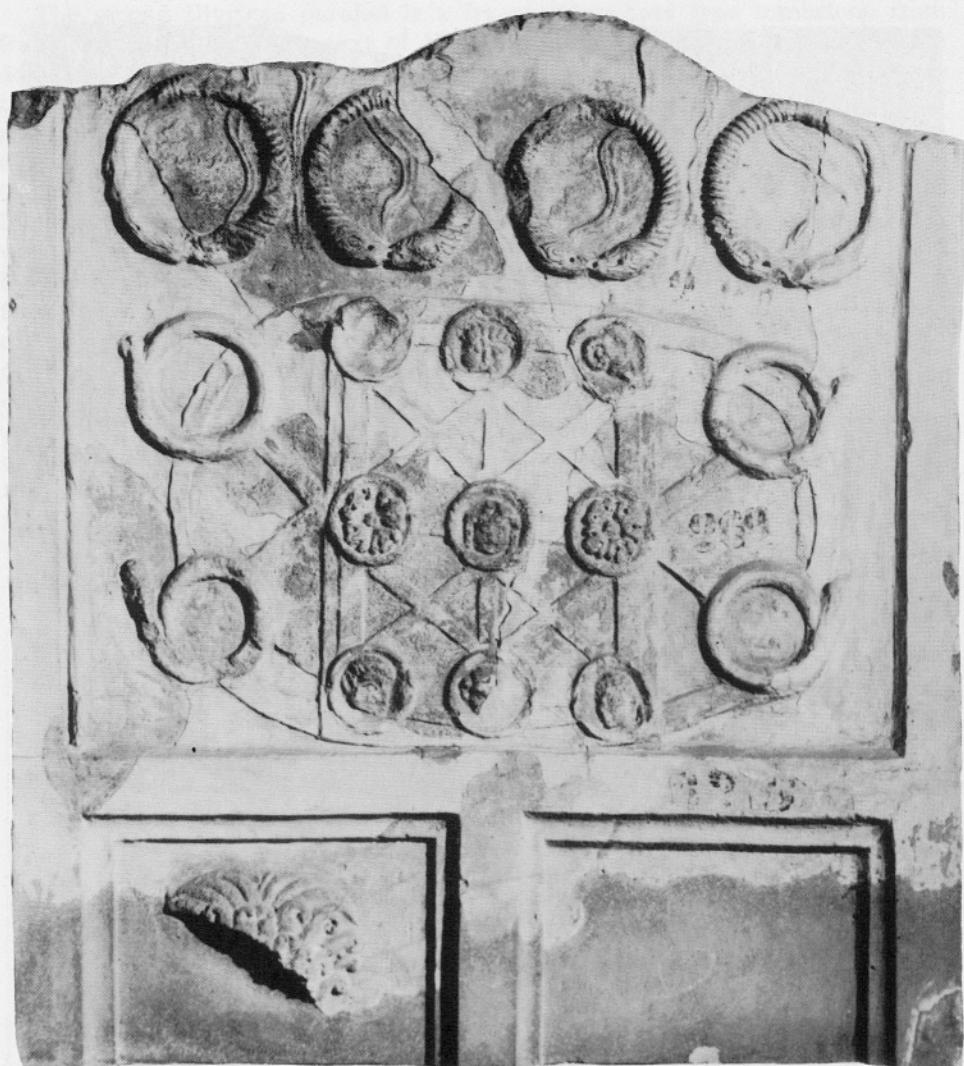
1



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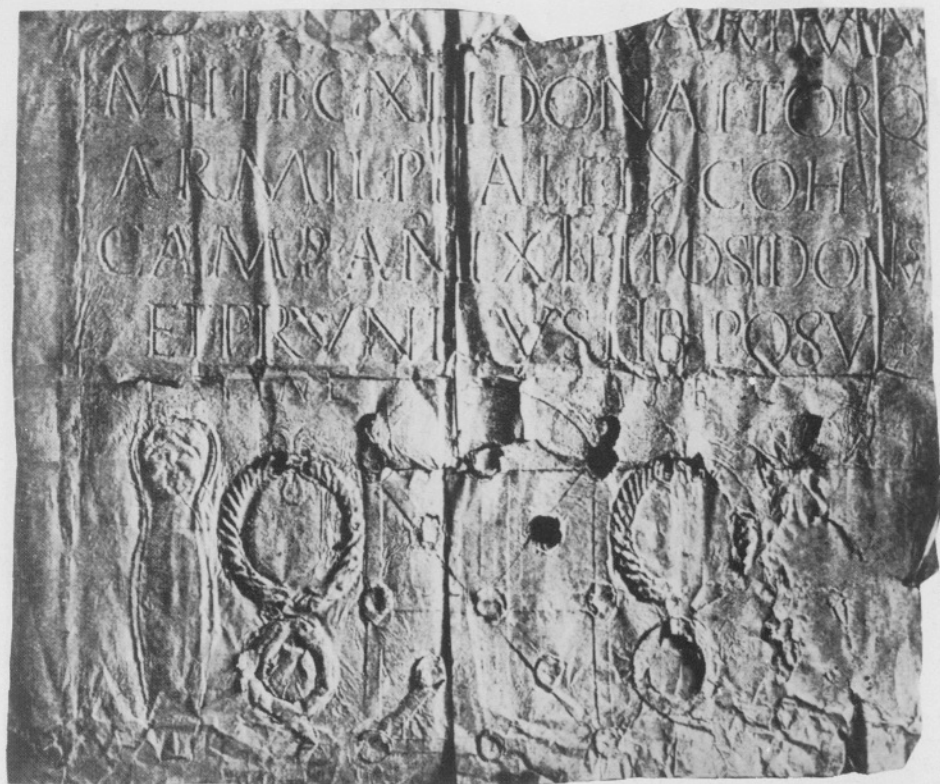
Pl. 2: Este (Ateste); tombstone of L. Blattius Vetus (1). Ptuj (Poetovio); tombstone of L. Petronius Classicus (2).

Tab. 2: Este (Ateste): nagrobnik Lukija Blatija Veta (1). Ptuj (Pojtoviona): nagrobnik Lukija Petronija Klasika (2).



Pl. 3: Burnum, near Split; fragmentary door-type tombstone depicting military decorations.

Tab. 3: Buren pri Splitu: fragmentarni nagrobnik v obliki vhodnih vrat, ki prikazuje vojaška odlikovanja.



Pl. 4: Narona; tombstone depicting military decorations and greaves.

Tab. 4: Narona: nagrobnik, ki prikazuje vojaška odlikovanja in golenice.

The second Illyrican parallel is a fragmentary door type tombstone from Burnum, near Split.⁹ The text of this inscription and the lower part of the door are completely lost, but enough survives of the panel depicting the military decorations for a confident restoration to be attempted (Pl. 3). A set of *phalerae*, decorated with rosettes and human (or divine) heads, is mounted on a harness of horizontal, vertical and transverse straps, slightly more complex than the Ljubljana example. The straps extend to left and right of the *phalerae* themselves, indicating, presumably, those parts of the harness which went around behind the wearer's back. Again, the *phalerae* are accompanied by *torques* and *armillae*, four of each. The two sets of ribbons hanging down from above, attest the presence of two crowns, *coronae aureae*.¹⁰ To the left of the decorations is depicted a rod, best interpreted as a *vitis*, the symbol of authority of the centurion, thereby indicating the rank of the unknown soldier commemorated.¹¹ Burnum was a legionary base from the Augustan period until the final departure of the army in AD 86, when it began to develop as a civil settlement, though not as a military colony.¹² Legion XI Claudia was based at the fortress from c. AD 9 until its transfer to Germany in AD 70 when it was replaced by IV Flavia. The unknown centurion could have served with either of these legions and won his military decorations with one of

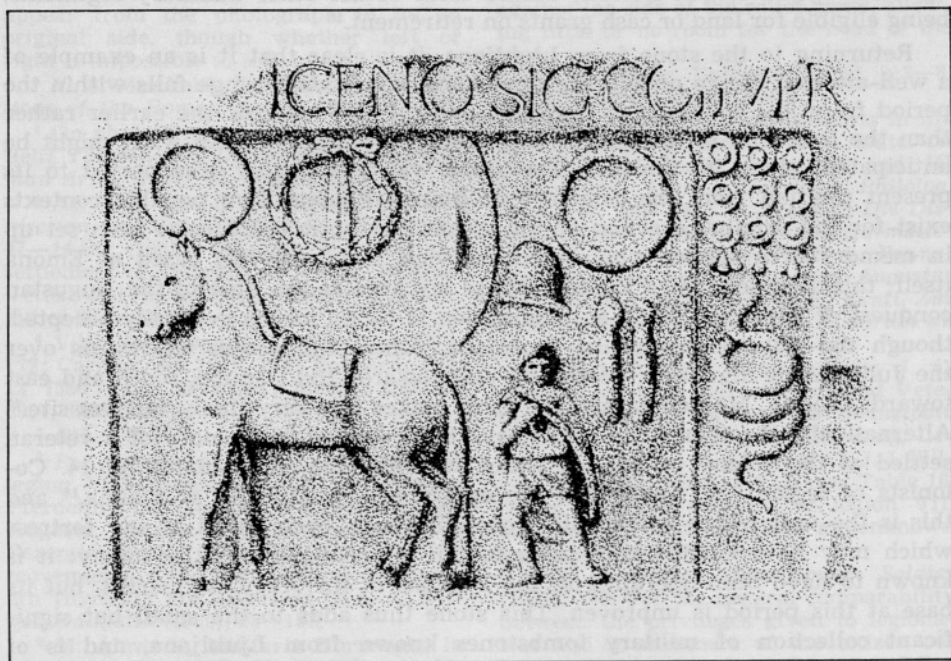


Fig. 2
Sl. 2

these or another unit in which he could have served prior to his commission as centurion.

Thirdly there is a stone which derives from Narona: it is now lost, but it was recorded prior to its disappearance in a shipwreck (Pl. 4).¹³ The uppermost part, giving the name and filiation of the soldier commemorated did not survive, but the bulk of the text and the sculpted panel which lay below it were intact. The sculpture shows a very stylized set of *phalerae* (the roundels themselves are no more than small plain discs), but includes an interesting detail in the loop which rises up above the rectangular panel, indicating, presumably, a strap which went up around behind the wearer's neck. To either side of the *phalerae* is a *torques*, an *armilla* and a greave. The soldier commemorated served in legion XII prior to a commission as centurion in a cohors Camp(ana) or Camp(anorum), one of a group of citizen cohorts raised by Augustus at a date which cannot be ascertained with precision.¹⁴ It is not improbable that this soldier was transferred to the cohort at the time of its inception, in which case the decorations belong to the wars of the late first century BC or early first century AD. Narona was established as a colony, Colonia Iulia Narona (in all probability a civilian not a veteran colony) some time between 47 and 27 BC, while there is evidence of land-grants there being made to veterans early in the reign of Tiberius.¹⁵ It must have been at about this time that the soldier in question was settled there on his discharge from the army, members of the citizen cohorts, unlike those of the other auxiliary regiments, being eligible for land or cash grants on retirement.¹⁶

Returning to the stone from Ljubljana, it is clear that it is an example of a well-attested design of military tombstone, whose date-range falls within the period from late Republic to Domitian, with a bias towards the earlier rather than the later end of the range. This dating is consistent with what might be anticipated, given its findspot. The stone was presumably transported to its present position from the cemetery of Roman Emona. Two possible contexts exist for the original erection of the stone. Firstly, it could have been set up in memory of a soldier who died in service, and who was based at Emona itself; this assumes that a legionary base lay here at the time of the Augustan conquest of Illyricum. Such an assumption is by no means generally accepted, though the critical position of Ljubljana, controlling access westwards over the Julian Alps into Italy, north and east towards the Danube, south and east towards Moesia, Macedonia and the East, makes it a very likely fortress site.¹⁷ Alternatively, the tombstone could have been erected in memory of a veteran settled at the colony of Emona, which was founded in or about AD 14. Colonists of legion XV Apollinaris are epigraphically attested at Emona,¹⁸ and this is the unit which will in all probability have been based in any fortress which may have existed here prior to the establishment of the colony: it is known to have been operating in the Balkans in the Augustan period, but its base at this period is unproven. This stone thus adds to the small but significant collection of military tombstones known from Ljubljana, and is of particular interest as being one of only thirty-four examples from the whole of the Roman Empire (four of these coming from Illyricum) of sculptural representations of *dona militaria*.

Source of illustrations

Fig. 1: drawn by Mike Rouillard.

Fig. 2: drawn by Seán Goddard from a photograph published in *Epigraphicae Makedonias* 1 (1915), 28.

Plate 2: 1: Museo Nazionale Atestino, Este.

Plate 2: Archaeological Museum, Ptuj.

Plate 3: Archaeological Museum, Split.

Plate 4: Photograph of a squeeze of the stone, originally published in *Bonner Jahrbücher* 114/5 (1906); courtesy of the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn.

¹ I am grateful to Professor Šašel for drawing this fragment to my attention and inviting me to write this note on it, and to Dr L. J. F. Keppie for discussing with me various points connected with veteran settlement.

² The stone has been considerably mutilated in later use: it is unclear which way up it originally went and it has therefore been drawn in the same alignment as it appears built into the castle. The present top of the stone would appear from the photograph to be an original side, though whether left or right is impossible to tell.

³ V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981), 91–97.

⁴ On *phalera* harnesses see V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981), 93–4 and fig. 11.

⁵ AE 1893, 119. L. J. F. Keppie, *Colonisation and Veteran Settlement in Italy, 47–14 BC* (1983), 195–201 discusses the settlement of veterans at Ateste. Blattius Vetus will have been settled there in either 30 or 14 BC.

⁶ Villa Vallelunga: AE 1891, 15 = EE 8, 172; Caritza: AE 1915, 112; Boppard: *CIL* 13 7556 = *ILS* 2649 add; Mainz: *CIL* 13 6901, 6938, 11837.

⁷ *CIL* 3 4060.

⁸ For a recent survey of the history of legion VIII Augusta see B. Oldenstein-Pferdehirt, *Die Geschichte der Legio VIII Augusta, Jb. des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums* 31 (1984), 397–433. The movements of the Roman army in southern Illyricum are discussed in J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (1969), 88–152.

⁹ M. Abramić, *Militaria Burnensia*, in M. Abramić and I. V. Hoffiller (eds), *Strena Buliciana: Commentationes Gratulatoriae Francisco Bulić* (1924), 221–8 esp. 225–8.

¹⁰ The various forms of military crown are discussed in V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (1981), 67–81 and illustrated on fig. 6. Only the *corona aurea* and the *corona civica* are tied with ribbons, and the former is statistically much the more likely to have been won in duplicate.

¹¹ An alternative interpretation of the rod as the lower part of the shaft of a *hasta pura* is much less likely, given its relatively inconspicuous position tight up against the side of the relief panel, allowing little or no room for the head of the spear.

¹² J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (1969), 217–8.

¹³ *CIL* 3 8438 = *ILS* 2597.

¹⁴ M. P. Speidel, *Citizen Cohorts in the Roman Imperial Army. New Data on the Cohorts Apula, Campana and III Campestris*, *Trans. American Philolog. Assn.* 106, 339–348; W. Wagner, *Die Dislokation der römischen Auxiliarformationen in den Provinzen Noricum, Pannonien, Moesien und Dakien von Augustus bis Gallienus* (1938), 114–6; K. Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung der Alen und Kohorten an Rhein und Donau* (1951), 82–105.

¹⁵ AE 1950, 44 = *ILug* 113–4; J. C. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate* (1983), 30–1, note 336; E. Ritterling, *Legio, RE* 12 (1924–5), 1243–4. Cf. J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (1969), 248. Mann, Table 16, refers to seven veterans of legion VII, one from XI and one from an unknown legion settled at Narona.

¹⁶ G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (1969), 149. For the general comparability between the privileges given to legionaries and to members of the citizen cohorts see V. A. Maxfield, *Systems of Reward in Relation to Military Diplomas*, in W. Eck and H. Wolff (eds), *Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische*

Quelle. Passauer Historische Forschungen forthcoming. Failure to give a land or cash grant to the soldier under discussion would clearly have been totally inequitable, given that he had transferred to the citizen cohort from a legion: had he retired direct from the legion there would have been no doubting his eligibility for *missio agraria*.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the history of Emona see, J. Šašel, Emona, *RE Suppl.* 11 (1968), 540—578.

¹⁸ J. C. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate* (1938), Table 18.1 refers to three veterans from XV Apollinaris, and one from VIII Augusta which was stationed at nearby Poetovio from AD 9—45.

VOJAŠKI NAGROBNIK IZ EMONE

Povzetek

Kamen manjših dimenzij iz apnenca, vzdian v steno ljubljanskega Gradu, je soče po značilni upodobitvi na njem brez dvoma fragment rimskega vojaškega nagrobnika (**Tab. 1**). Na odlomku je ostanek pravokotne upodobitve okroglih plošč, povezanih med seboj vodoravno, navpično in počez s palicami; rekonstrukcija te upodobitve je predstavljena na sliki 1: gre za stilistični prikaz garniture faler (*phalerae*), posebnega vojaškega odlikovanja, ki so ga prejemali vojaki na stopnji stotnika (*centurio*) in nižjih činov. Okrogle plošče so falere, okrašene s koncentričnimi krogi; palice predstavljajo usnjene pasove jermenja, na katerem so bile falere pritrjene, da so jih odlikovanci mogli nositi na prsih.

Najboljša paralela ljubljanskemu kamnu z ozirom na upodobitev faler je nagrobnik Lukija Blatija Veta (*L. Blattius Vetus*), veterana in nekdanjega stotnika IV. Makedonike, iz Atesta (danes Este) v Benečiji (**Tab. 2: 1**), na katerem je garnitura devetih faler upodobljena na enak način kot na ljubljanskem nagrobniku. Same falere so neokrašene, čeprav ni izključeno, da so bile prvotno pobarvane. Kamen ni natančno datiran, vendar je bržčas s konca 1. stoletja pr. n. š. Falere, okrašene s koncentričnimi krogi, so upodobljene na nagrobnikih iz Ville Valleeunge v Latiju (verjetno kasnega republikanskega datuma), iz Caritze (danes Korce) v Makedoniji (nedatiran), iz Bopparda in Mainza v Zgornji Germaniji (trije primerki, vsi iz julijsko-klavdijskega časa) in iz Ptuja v Panoniji. Slednji je eden od treh nagrobnikov z upodobljenimi vojaškimi odlikovanji, ki izvirajo s področja Ilirika.

Nagrobnik iz Ptuja, antične Pojtovione, pripada vojaku VIII. Avguste, Lukiju Petroniju Klasiku (*L. Petronius Classicus*) (**Tab. 2: 2**). Pod napisom je upodobljen torzo moža, ki ga krasi garnitura faler; podobne so tistim z ljubljanskega nagrobnika. Poleg faler je par torkvesov (*torques*, ovratnica); še trije torkvesi ali armile (*armillae*, narokvice) so upodobljeni na zgornjem delu nagrobnika nad napisom. V zgodnjem principatu — Klasikov nagrobnik je iz tega obdobja — so navadno odlikovali z garniturami faler skupaj s torkvesi in armilami in sklepamo lahko, da na ljubljanskem nagrobniku niso bile upodobljene zgolj falere. VIII. Avgusta je prišla v Pojtoviono 1.9 n. š. in ostala v legijski trdnjavi do 1.45, ko je bila prestavljena v Nove (*Novae*) v Spodnji Meziji. Če je bil Klasik odlikovan v času svojega službovanja v VIII. Avgusti, se je to zgodilo najverjetneje za panonsko-delmatskega upora, ki ga je legija pomagala zatreti, tik preden je prišla v Pojtoviono.

Druga paralela iz Ilirika je fragmentarni nagrobnik v obliki vhodnih vrat iz Burna pri Splitu (**Tab. 3**). Garnitura faler, okrašenih z rozetami in človeškimi ali božjimi glavami, je pritrjena na jermenje iz usnjenih pasov, ki je nekoliko bolj plepicirano prepleteno kot jermenje z ljubljanskega nagrobnika. Falere spremljajo štirje torkvesi in štiri armile. Dve garnituri trakov, ki visijo nad temi odlikovanji, pričajo, da je bil pokojni odlikovan tudi z venci (*coronae aureae*). Levo od odlikovanj je palica, najverjetneje *vitis*, znak stotnikove oblasti; sicer neznani vojak je bil torej *centurio*. V Burnu je bila nameščena legija od avgustejskega obdobja do 1.86, ko se je začel razvijati v civilno naselbino. XI. Klavdija je bila nameščena v trdnjavi od ok. 1.9 n. š. do premestitve v Germanijo 1.70, ko jo je nadomestila IV. Flavija. Neznani stotnik

je služil v eni od omenjenih legij in si zaslužil odlikovanja bodisi v eni od teh legij, bodisi v kaki drugi enoti, v kateri je služil, preden je postal stotnik.

Tretji kamen je iz Narone, manjka mu zgornji del; danes je izgubljen, vendar je bil objavljen, še preden je izginil v nekem brodolomu (**Tab. 4**). Relief prikazuje zelo stilizirano garnituro faler, na vsaki strani še torkves, armilo in golenico. Pokojni vojak je služil v XII. legiji, preden je postal stotnik v kohorti *Camp(ana)* ali *Camp(anorum)*, eni od kohort rimskih državljanov, ki jo je bil dal nabrati Avgust. Verjetno je bil vojak prestavljen v kohorto ob priliki njenega nastanka, torej je dobil odlikovanja v vojnah konec 1. stoletja pr. n. š. ali v zgodnjem 1. stoletju n. š. Narono je ustanovil kot kolonijo verjetno Tiberij in verjetno se je vojak v njej naselil po dosluženju vojaškega roka, saj so vojaki iz kohort rimskih državljanov dobivali po upokojitvi ali zemljo ali denar.

Ljubljanski nagrobnik je torej lep primer tipa vojaškega nagrobnika, ki je bil razširjen v obdobju od pozne republike do Domicijana; bolj kot za končno fazo je bil značilen za zgodnjo fazo tega obdobja. Ta datacija je v skladu s tem, kar bi že sicer predvidevali glede na najdišče kamna, ki je bil očitno prenesen na Grad z emonskega pokopališča. Okoliščine postavitve nagrobnika bi mogli pojasniti na dva načina. Če je bil nagrobnik postavljen še aktivnemu vojaku, bi morali predpostavljati, da je v Emoni v času avgustejskega osvajanja Ilirika obstajala legijska trdnjava. Čeprav hipoteza ni splošno sprejeta, jo potrjuje strateško-kritična lega Ljubljane, kjer bi z veliko verjetnostjo mogli pričakovati obstoj legijske trdnjave. Sicer nam ostane domneva, da je bil nagrobnik postavljen za veterana, ki je bil naseljen v koloniji Emoni, ustanovljeni okoli l. 14 n. š. ali prav to leto.

Nagrobnik je važen prispevek k sicer majhni, vendar pomembni zbirki vojaških napisov iz Ljubljane.