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A New Military Inscription from Angelo Colocci's Vat. lat. 8493

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Angelo Colocci and BAV, ms. Vat. lat. 8493

The humanist and papal secretary Angelo Colocci (1467–1549) owned two copies of the *Epigrammata antiquae urbis* (Rome, 1521), edited by Giacomo Mazzocchi (BAV, mss. Vat. lat. 8492 and 8493), which was the earliest printed collection of ancient inscriptions from Rome. Vat. lat. 8493, likely acquired soon after publication, contains Colocci's most valuable annotations, including several new inscriptions added within the book and in the flyleaves. According to my ongoing study of inscriptions in Colocci's manuscripts, these notes can be dated to the immediate years following 1521, presumably before the Sack of Rome in 1527.

In the front flyleaves (ff. n.n. + I–VII) and in the frontispiece of the *Epigrammata*, Colocci transcribed ten ancient inscriptions (nine Latin, one Greek),[2] an eleventh-century verse epitaph,[3] and a set of literary fakes.[4] The genuine inscriptions clearly come from direct observation, not from the previous manuscript tradition: in fact, this manuscript constitutes the earliest source for all but three of them.[5] Additionally, these inscriptions enjoyed very little circulation: five of them were copied again around 1545–1560,[6] another one (*CIL* X 6430, f. IIr) was only transcribed in the nineteenth century, and an inscription from Santa Pudentiana remains unpublished to this very day, and will be the focus of this note.

It is quite puzzling that this inscription has remained unknown for so long. The editors of the *CIL* already had access to Vat. lat. 8493, although they ignored the identity of its owner and annotator. However, inexplicably, they only cited the manuscript for two inscriptions: *CIL* II 40* and XI 837 (in the end and front flyleaves, respectively).[7] Buonocore provided a partial list of Colocci's additions in the book,[8] but again did not take into account the unpublished inscription.

CIL VI 3559 and its hitherto unknown earliest location in Santa Pudentiana

On the verso of the last front flyleaf, Colocci transcribed an inscription that occupies the full page, with the heading "Fragmentum magnum ap(ud) s(anctam) Pudentianam".[9] On the next page, i.e. the frontispiece of the printed book, he copied another inscription (*CIL* VI 3559) from the same location: "Etiam ap(ud) s(anctam) Pudentianam fragm(entum) sine principio in tabula diversa a superioribus." To underline the closeness of these inscriptions, Colocci drew a line from the end of the first epigraph to the text location of the second.

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[2] *CIL* X 6430 (f. IIr), XIV 341 (f. IIv), VI 450 (f. IIIr), XI 837 (f. IVr), X 6514 and 6526 (f. IVv), *IG* XIV 1897 = *IGUR* II 833 (f. Vr), *CIL* VI 13152 (f. Vv; this inscription is the only one of this group not written by Colocci, who added the location note), the unpublished inscription studied here (f. VIIv), and *CIL* VI 3559 (frontispiece).

[3] Epitaph of Crescentius, who died in 1010 (inc. *Quisquis ab occasu properas huc quisquis ab ortu / Axe vel …*). See Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edificii di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri*, vol. IV, Roma 1874, p. 63 no. 144.

[4] This group (which will be the focus of a separate study) consists of ten literary spurious inscriptions in the form of verse epitaphs dedicated to singing and talking birds.

[5] *CIL* VI 450 (f. IIIr), *CIL* X 6514 and 6526 (f. IVv). These three inscriptions had appeared in Giocondo's sylloge, although Colocci clearly presents an independent version.

[6] *CIL* XIV 341 (f. IIv), XI 837 (f. IVr), *IG* XIV 1897 (f. Vr), *CIL* VI 13152 (f. Vv) and VI 3559 (frontispiece).

[7] *CIL* II, p. 8* no. 40*: "Adnotator Mazoch. cod. Vat. 8493"; *CIL* XI, p. 156 no. 837: "adscripta Mazochio Vat. 8493."

[8] M. Buonocore, Sulle copie postillate vaticane degli *Epigrammata antiquae Urbis*, in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae*, vol. 13, Città del Vaticano 2006, pp. 91–102 (96–97).

[9] Colocci first wrote "Potentianam", which then he corrected into "Pudentianam".

When *CIL* VI 3559 was copied again in the 1540s, it was unanimously located "in aedibus Coritianis in foro Traiani", i.e. in the vineyard-villa next to the Forum of Trajan that had belonged to Johann Goritz (d. 1527/8).[10] This fragmentary marble commemorates the dedication, in 168 CE, of an unknown object by a list of soldiers, most probably praetorians.[11] Undoubtedly, Colocci attests its earliest, previously unknown location in Santa Pudentiana (in the *vicus Patricius*, now via Urbana, on the Viminal), before it was moved to Goritz's villa. Santa Pudentiana stood much closer to the *Castra praetoria*, and it is in this area on the Viminal Hill that the inscription must have been originally located.

An unpublished military inscription from Santa Pudentiana

The other inscription (f. VIIv) copied by Colocci in Santa Pudentiana is, likewise, a fragmentary (marble) slab with a list of praetorian soldiers. Colocci clearly divided the text in two parts (lines 1–7 and 8–27), separated with a vague explanation "sequitur fragmentum", which must mean that the inscription was already divided in two pieces, but which evidently belonged to the same inscription.[12] The first fragment was clearly fragmentary on the top, on the left hand side (except for l. 7), and probably on the bottom. The second fragment was at least fragmentary on the bottom, and possibly on the top. Following Colocci's transcription, I propose the following edition of the text:

Fragmentum magnum ap. s. Pudentianam.
[---]
[---] coh(ortis) [---] pr(aetoriae)
[---]SA[---] coh(ortis) VII pr(aetoriae)
[--- Mu]catra Beroe(a) coh(ortis) V pr(aetoriae)
[--- Aureliu]s Mucapor Beroe(a) coh(ortis) III pr(aetoriae)
5 [---]ius Fructus Aesco[13] coh(ortis) II pr(aetoriae)
[--- P]raesentius Maximus Em⌜o⌝na[14] coh(ortis) IIII pr(aetoriae)
C(aius) Iul(ius) Ianuarius Ze<r>mi⌜z⌝egetusa[15] coh(ortis) VIIII pr(aetoriae)

Sequitur fragmentum.
Item coh(ortium) doctores
C(aius) Iunius OPAELIA AEB++IVS[16] Aug(usta)[17] coh(ortis) X pr(aetoriae)
10 P(ublius) Aelius Pacatus Scupis coh(ortis) I pr(aetoriae)
M(arcus) Aurelius Mucianus Beroe(a) coh(ortis) VI pr(aetoriae)
M(arcus) Aurelius Asclepius Ratiaria coh(ortis) VIIII pr(aetoriae)
P(ublius) Aelius Dassius Mogionibus coh(ortis) VII pr(aetoriae)
Ti(berius) Claudius Vitalis Caesarea coh(ortis) VII pr(aetoriae)

[10] On Johann Goritz, see M. Ceresa, Goritz, Johann, detto Coricio, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 58, Roma 2002, pp. 69–72. On his antiquarian collection, see K. W. Christian, *Empire Without End. Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527*, New Haven–London 2010, pp. 320–322. I am currently carrying out a study of Goritz's epigraphic collection.

[11] See most recently C. Ricci, Una dedica militare del 168 d.C. e gli *statores*, in M. L. Caldelli et al. (curs.), *Epigrafia 2006. Atti della XIVe Rencontre sur l'épigraphie in onore di Silvio Panciera*, Roma 2008, pp. 1227–1240 (1227–1232) (= *AE* 2008, 171). The inscription is now inserted on the wall of the Galleria Lapidaria, 35, 12, inv. 6968.

[12] Colocci's note regarding *CIL* VI 3559 that this was a "fragmentum sine principio in tabula diversa a superioribus (sc. fragmentibus)" implies necessarily that the first inscription consisted of two separate fragments.

[13] Sc. *Oesco*. Since the same reading is attested twice in *CIL* VI 32623, I leave Colocci's transcription.

[14] Colocci reads "Emena".

[15] Colocci reads "Zemis Egestusa", both here and in l. 24.

[16] On the margin, Colocci proposes his own interpretation: "ego: Aebutius"; *Aebutius*, however, is a *nomen* and not a *cognomen*.

[17] This is likely one of the surviving lines that posed greater difficulty in deciphering; Colocci himself could not read two of the letters, and his transcription certainly contains other mistakes.

Ti(berius) Claudius Ulpia Saturninus P(o)etovione[18] coh(ortis) I pr(aetoriae)
C(aius) Valerius Ursulus Scarabantia[19] coh(ortis) III pr(aetoriae)
M(arcus) Ulpius Messius P(o)etovione coh(ortis) X pr(aetoriae)
T(itus)[20] Aurelius Maximus Ratiaria coh(ortis) VIIII pr(aetoriae)
C(aius) Domitius Saturninus Savaria coh(ortis) VIII pr(aetoriae)
C(aius) Iulius Gratus Savaria coh(ortis) VI pr(aetoriae)
T(itus)[21] Flavius Apronianus Savaria coh(ortis) VIII pr(aetoriae)
P(ublius) AENVS[22] CONGINianus[23] Mursa coh(ortis) II pr(aetoriae)
P(ublius) Allius Oclatius Siscia coh(ortis) IIII pr(aetoriae)
M(arcus) Aurelius Aurelianus Ze<r>mi⌜z⌝egetusa[24] coh(ortis) [---] pr(aetoriae)
M(arcus) Aurelius Disza Serdica[25] coh(ortis) [--- pr(aetoriae)]
Ti(berius) Claudius Magnus P(o)etovione coh(ortis) [--- pr(aetoriae)]
[-] Ausonius TICRInianus[26] Sis[cia coh(ortis) --- pr(aetoriae)]
[---?]

Numerous lists of praetorians (most of them, like this one, fragmentary) have been found within or near the *Castra praetoria* in Rome, in what Mommsen dubbed *laterculi praetorianorum*, which includes inscriptions of votive and honorary monuments.[27] Some of these were complete lists (probably deriving from official records) of the praetorians at the moment of their discharge, ordered by cohort and, within each cohort, their year of enrolment. Others included just a group of individuals, as in the present inscription, where apparently the soldiers were ordered according to their role, for each of whom the number of cohort had to be specified; we can imagine that these praetorians made a collective dedication, either to a god or to an emperor.[28]

[18] Colocci has written below "i(nfra) 135", cross-referencing the *origo Poetovione* with *CIL* VI 2571 (which mentions a "P. Barbius P. f. Papiria Poetevione Maximianus miles coh. V praetoriae"), present in the *Epigrammata antiquae urbis*, Romae 1521, f. 135r; in the bottom margin of this page in Vat. lat. 8493, Colocci also cross-references this text with that of the unpublished inscription: "Poetevione s(upra) in additis."

[19] Colocci writes this name in three lines ("C. Valerius / Ursulus / Scarabantia (vac.) coh. III pr."), but since the resulting text follows accurately the sequence of *praenomen*, *nomen*, *cognomen* and *origo*, it most probably appeared as a single line.

[20] Colocci reads *Ti(berius)*, but the soldiers named *Titus Aurelius* (who derive their name from Antoninus Pius) are much more frequent than those named *Tiberius Aurelius*; C. Cenati (*Miles in urbe. Identità e autorappresentazione nelle iscrizioni dei soldati di origine danubiana e balcanica a Roma*, Roma 2023, pp. 68 and 477–478) lists 35 soldiers from Rome of Danubian and Balkan origin with the former name, but only one (from the 1st c. CE) with the latter.

[21] Colocci reads *Ti(berius)*, but Titus seems more plausible; again, Cenati (*Miles in urbe* [n. 20], p. 480) lists 17 soldiers named T. Flavius, and none named Tiberius.

[22] While *P. Aelius* would be the most straightforward restitution, it is strange that Colocci wrongly reads a text that coincides with lines 10 and 13. Perhaps another *nomen* appeared, such as *Aenius* or *Paenius* (with the omission of P in the sequence *P. Paenius*).

[23] Neither the *cognomen Conginianus* nor the *nomen Conginius* are attested (we do find the *nomina Congius* and *Congidius*). The most conservative restitution would be *Longinianus*.

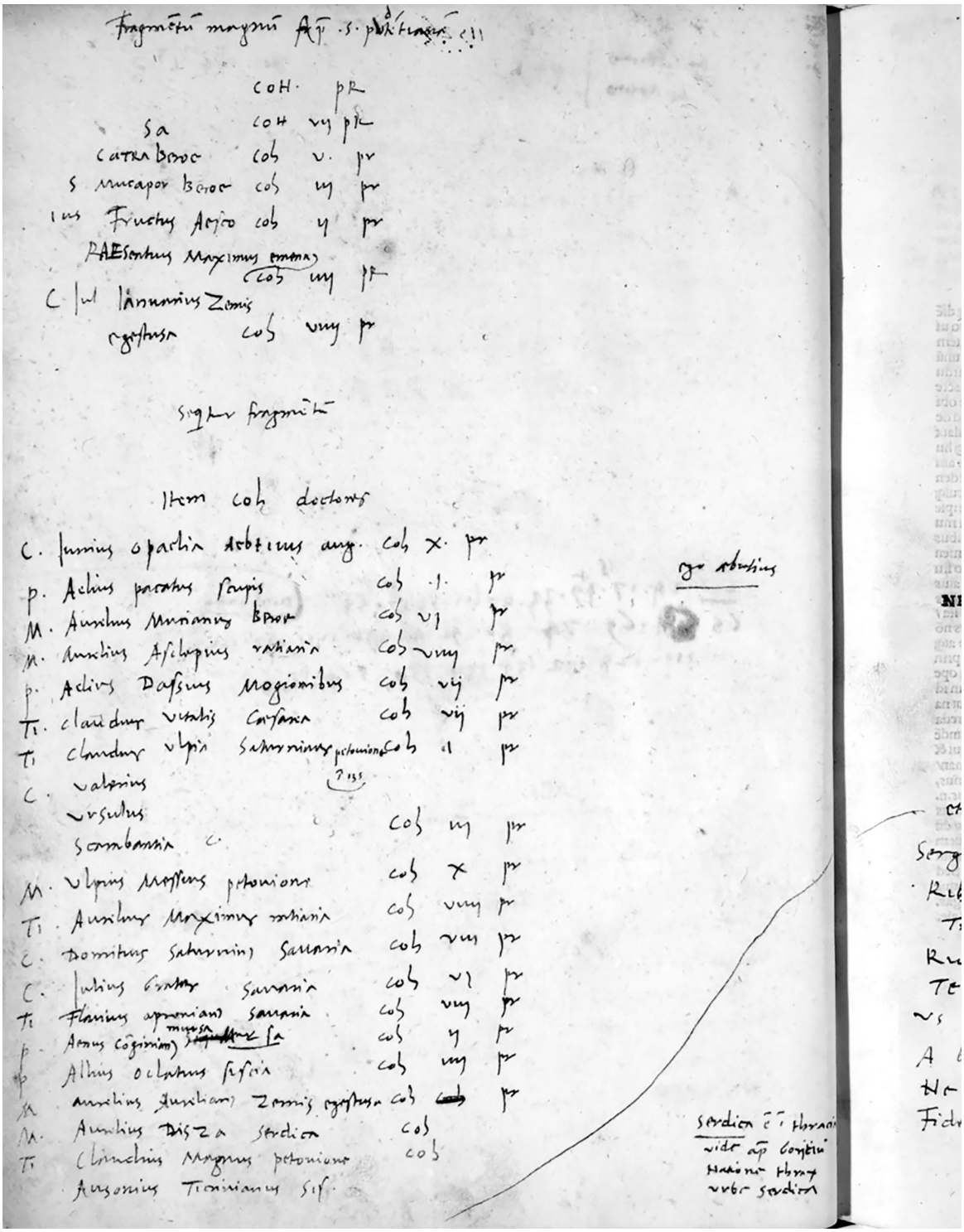
[24] See above, line 7.

[25] In the margin, Colocci has written: "Serdica est in Thracia, vide apud Goritium *natione Thrax urbe* (!) *Serdica*." This refers to *CIL* VI 2742 ("natione Thrax civitate Serdica"), which was first copied in the 1540s "in domo Ioh. Coritii", i.e. in the house of Johann Goritz (for whom see above, n. 10).

[26] The *cognomen Ticrinianus* is not attested; the restitution closest to Colocci's reading would be *Tigrinianus*, which, however, only features in Christian inscriptions from the fourth century onwards (*ICVR* 2547, 19275, 24185, 27127). Other possible restitutions include *Taurinianus*, *Nigrinianus*, *Macrinianus*, *Licinianus*, etc.

[27] On the praetorian *laterculi*, see R. R. J. Benefiel, A New Praetorian *Laterculus* from Rome, *ZPE* 134 (2001), pp. 221–232; N. Gex, Les inscriptiones des *castra praetoria*: les *laterculi*, in *Entre archéologie et épigraphie: nouvelles perspectives sur l'armée romaine*, Frankfurt–Bern 2013, pp. 113–132; Cenati, *Miles in urbe* (n. 20), pp. 38–41.

[28] Similar dedications present the soldiers grouped by cohort (e.g., *CIL* VI 32543), or in a random order: this is the case of a dedication to Caracalla made by six soldiers (*CIL* VI 32538), each with the specification "((centurio)) coh(ortis) [I–VII] pr(aetoriae) Ant(oninianae) p(iae) v(ictricis)", or another one to Gordian III by at least 17 soldiers from Lower Moesia (*CIL* VI 32549), where the cohort number ("coh. [I–IX] pr.") precedes their names.



BAV, ms. Vat. lat. 8493, f. VIIv [© 2024 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana]

This new inscription featured at least 26 praetorians. Apparently, their rank or their role was mentioned at the beginning of each column; the last 19 were *doctores*, i.e. instructors of the praetorians under the command of a *campidoctor*.[29] All names are mentioned with their *tria nomina* followed by their *origo*: the filiation is never given, and only once the pseudo-tribe *Ulpia* (l. 15) is securely mentioned.

[29] See E. de Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane*, Roma 1895–1906, vol. II/1, pp. 48–49 *s.v.* 'campidoctor', and vol. II/3, pp. 1928–1929 *s.v.* 'doctor'; G. Horsmann, *Untersuchungen zur militärischen Ausbildung im republikani-*

The names and origin of these praetorians coincide precisely with the second of the three phases in the documentation of the praetorian guard identified by Benefiel.[30] This second phase spans from Septimius Severus' reform of 193 CE until Caracalla's *constitutio Antoniniana* of 212, and is characterised by soldiers almost exclusively from the provinces, many of whom bear imperial *gentilicia*.[31]

Indeed, all praetorians from our list are non-Italian; most of them come from the provinces along the Danube, first and foremost from Upper Pannonia (three from Poetovio and Savaria, two from Siscia, and one from Mogiones,[32] Scarabantia and Emona), but also from Lower Pannonia (one from Mursa), Upper Moesia (two from Ratiaria and one from Scupi), Lower Moesia (one from Oescus), Thrace (three from Beroe, one from Serdica) and Dacia (two from Sarmizegethusa); only one soldier (from Caesarea) does not come from the northern provinces of the empire. Imperial *gentilicia* are also plentiful (two Iulii, three Claudii, one Flavius, one Aelius, and six Aurelii), but non-imperial *nomina* are also present, and the M. Aurelii represent 'only' 22% (4 out of 18). Thus, this inscription should be dated in the Severian period, certainly after 193 and probably before 212 (or in the immediate successive years).

At least three of the praetorians are attested with certainty in other inscriptions from Rome. Firstly, an "Aur. Mucapor d(omo) Beroe(a)" (l. 4) is listed among praetorians of the second cohort in a fragmentary slab with a list of soldiers (*CIL* VI 2386).[33] Secondly, P. Aelius Pacatus (l. 10) made a dedication to *Nemesis Sancta Campestris* for the salvation of the two emperors; there he is mentioned as "P. Aelius P. f. Aelia Pacatus Scupis, quod coh(ortis) doctor voverat, nunc campidoctor coh(ortis) I pr(aetoriae) p(iae) v(indicis)".[34] This allows us to know his complete name, shed light on his career (he was eventually promoted to *campidoctor*), and confirm that both inscriptions date from the reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla.

Thirdly, P. Allius Oclatius from Siscia (l. 23) appears in two other inscriptions, although his *cognomen* and *origo* were not previously known. He should be identified with the "P. Allius P. f. [---] campidoc[tor]" who made an imperial propitiatory dedication (*CIL* VI 36847),[35] and is featured as "cam(pi)d(octor) P(ublius) Allius [---]" within the fourth cohort in an inscription on the base for a honorary statue (*CIL* VI 32536).[36]

With less certainty, the Mucatra from the fifth praetorian cohort (l. 3) might be identified with Apollonius Mucatra, a centurion of this cohort who was buried in Rome at the age of 49 by his wife and two freedmen (*CIL* VI 2557).[37] Other identifications are still possible, but more hypothetical.[38]

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schen und kaiserzeitlichen Rom, Boppard 1991, pp. 84–86 and 90–92; S. Janniard, *Campicursio*, pyrrhique et *campidoctores*: entraînement aux mouvements collectifs et instructeurs dans l'armée romaine tardive, in C. Wolff (ed.), *Le métier de soldat dans le monde romain*, Paris 2012, pp. 275–283 (278–281).

[30] See Benefiel, A New Praetorian (n. 27), pp. 222–224.

[31] After 212 CE, the provincial origin of the soldiers persists, but now over half of them have assumed the name M. Aurelius.

[32] For the place name *Mogiones*, see W. Eck and Chr. Niederhuber, Ein weiteres Diplom aus der Konstitution der Philippi aus dem Jahr 248 für einen Veteranen der *cohors X praetoria*, *ZPE* 227 (2023), pp. 197–202 (201).

[33] See Cenati, *Miles in urbe* (n. 20), pp. 300–301 no. C85. The fragment bearing Mucapor's name is now in the Musei Capitolini, NCE 618.

[34] *CIL* VI 533 = *ILS* 2088. See Cenati, *Miles in urbe* (n. 20), p. 283 no. C68.

[35] *CIL* VI 36847 (fragmentary slab, beginning of the 3rd century CE). The inscription is now in the Museo della Civiltà Romana, cassa 153.

[36] See Cenati, *Miles in urbe* (n. 20), pp. 258–260 no. C5.

[37] *CIL* VI 2557 (3rd century CE). See Cenati, *Miles in urbe* (n. 20), p. 363 no. C426. The inscription is now inserted on the wall of the Galleria Lapidaria, 29, 58, inv. 7462.

[38] Among the several attested M. Aurelius Mucianus (l. 11, from Beroe), there is an epitaph of one "M(arci) Aureli Muciani militis cohor(tis) praetori(a)es (!) (…) nationem Thacem (!)" (*CIL* IX 1424, from Ariano Irpino), and another epitaph of an "Aurelius Mucianus missici/us c(o)h(o)r(tis) VI pr(a)et(oriae)" (*CIL* VI 2604). As for M. Aurelius Aurelianus (l. 24, from Sarmizegethusa), one "Aur(elius) Aurelian(us)" put an epitaph to his brother, a soldier "nat(ione) Dacia" (*CIL* VI 3456).