

COMMANIPULARES / COMMANIPULI IN ROMAN DACIA AND THE FRAGMENTARY PRESERVED FORMS. TERMINOLOGY

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Keywords: Inscription, *commanipularis*, *commanipulus*, *commanuculus*, phonetic variation, vulgar form, Dacia.

Abstract: To designate the concept “member of a maniple”, the epigraphic sources center attention on two basic forms – *commanipularis* and *commanipulus* –, which appear in a variety of vulgar variants in the inscriptions from the Roman Empire. The term is attested three times in Dacia (twice at Potaissa, and once at Apulum). It seems that there is a preference here for the use of the corrupt form *commanuculus*, which has analogies only at Rome. Most of the vulgar forms of this term occur in the Roman province Italia (Rome and some regions of Italy). Dacia is one of the other three provinces in which the term is attested in a vulgar form.

Rezumat: Pentru a desemna noțiunea de „soldat făcând parte din același manipul”, sursele epigrafice evidențiază două forme de bază – *commanipularis*, respectiv *commanipulus* –, care apar într-o varietate de forme vulgare în inscripțiile din Imperiul Roman. În Dacia, termenul este atestat de trei ori (de două ori la Potaissa, o dată la Apulum). Se pare că aici există o preferință pentru utilizarea formei corupte *commanuculus*, pentru care avem analogii doar la Roma. Majoritatea formelor corupte se concentrează în provincia Italia (Roma și câteva regiuni ale Italiei), iar dintre celelalte provincii în care este atestat epigrafic termenul în cauză, doar în trei se înregistrează forme corupte. Una din aceste provincii este Dacia.

The two variants of the same term for the concept of “comrade”, or, more precisely “fellow member of a century” are attested in more provinces of the Roman Empire.¹ In order to create a statistical overview of the topic across the Empire, I referred to the EDCS² on-line database from Frankfurt. The search engine of this database has revealed a number of 79 inscriptions in which the noun *commanipularis*, together with its variants, appears: *commaniplaris*,³ *commapularis*⁴ or *commapulus*, *commanupularis*,⁵ *commanicularis*,⁶ *commanipularis*,⁷ *commanipulus*,⁸ *commaniplus*,⁹ *commanuculi*,¹⁰ *comanpulus*,¹¹ *commanipulus*,¹² *comanipulus*.¹³ The standard form

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¹ Hispania Citerior, Roma, Latium et Campania (Regio I), Umbria (Regio VI), Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Germania Superior, Raetia, Pannonia Superior, Moesia Inferior, Dacia, Mauretania Caesariensis, Aegyptus, Numidia, Syria.

² Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby, www.manfredclauss.de (last accessed 15 June 2010), which totals more than 380.000 inscriptions, from more than 1000 publications, and represents almost the total amount of the Latin inscriptions from the Empire.

³ AÉ 1986, 532 (Raetia).

⁴ AÉ, 1988, 169 (Roma).

⁵ CIL VI 2543 (Roma): ... *per heredes / Aelium Restitutum / commanupularem*

⁶ CIL VI 2625 (Roma): *D(is) M(anibus) / Aelius Timoxe/nus millex (!) c(o)ho(rtis) / septim(a)e praeto/r(e)iae centuria / Clyconiana (!) / Balerio (!) Crispo / commanicula/rio condam (!) mi/liti fecit ve/ne (!) merente (!)*. This inscription is full of vulgarisms: *millex* (=miles), the abbreviated form *cho* (=cohortis), *septime* (=septimae), *paetoriae* (=praetoriae), *Clyconiana* (=Glyconiana), *Balerio* (=Valerio), *commaniculario* (=commanipulari) (this form represents a mixture between the third declension in *-aris* and the second declension, having the singular dative desinence *-o*), *condam* (=quondam), *vene* (=bene), *merente* (=merenti).

⁷ AÉ 1912 186 (Roma): [*co*]nmanipularis (=commanipularis).

⁸ CIL III 6577 (Aegyptus, Alexandria): *Genio sancto / legionis et comma/nipulorum bonorum / Q(uintus) Caecilius Kalendi/nus optio posuit*; CIL V 893 (Venetia et Histria (Regio X), Aquileia): *D(is) M(anibus) / Aurel(ius) Dizo millex (!) / leg(ionis) XI Claud(iae) vixit / ann(os) XXVII milit(avit) ann(os) / quinque obitus in / Mauretania bene / merenti cives et / commanipuli de suo / fecerunt*; CIL VI 323 (Roma): *Herculi Invicto / pro salute DD NN ... Aur(elius) Fabianus signifer et / Val(erius) Firminus optio / ... cum commanipulis libentes votum solverunt*; CIL VI 1055 (Roma): *Imp(eratori) ... coh(ors) IIII vigil(um) ... cum commanipulis suis*; CIL VI 2424 (Roma): ... *Claudius Messianu/s commanipulus / et heres / bene merenti fecit*; CIL VI 2553 (Roma): ... *Aurelius Sextianus com/manipulus et heres eius / contubernali rarissimo / posuit*; CIL VI 2567 (Roma): *M(arcus) Ulpius / Titus commanipulus / et beres eius contu/bernali carissimo / posuit*; CIL VI 2602 (Roma): *D(is) M(anibus) / M(arco) Aur(elio) Luciano mil(iti) coh(ortis) VI pr(aetoriae) (centuria) / Alexandri vix(it) ann(os) XXVIII / mil(itavit) ann(os) VI {h}oriundus ex / provincia Dacia C(aius) Virius / Urbicus her(es), com(m)anipulo / b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit)*; CIL VI 3010 (Roma): *c{e}o(m)manipul(is) suis*; CIL VI 3028 (Roma): *commanipulis suis*; CIL VI 3029, 3033: *commanipulis*; CIL VI 3075 (Roma): *salvis commanipu/los (!)*; CIL VI 3085 (Roma): [*com*]manipulos ...; CIL VI 32668 (Roma), CIL X 1766 (Latium et Campania (Regio I)): *commanipulus*; AÉ 1909, 15 (Numidia): [*comm*]anipulis.

⁹ CIL VI 2436 (Roma): *Maximi/nus Florus comma/nip(u)lus eius / b(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit)*.

¹⁰ CIL VI 1056 (Roma): *Imp(eratori) ... coh(ors) I vig(illum) ... cum commanuculis suis*.

¹¹ CIL VI 3060 (Roma): *com(m)an(i)pulo*.

¹² CIL VI 32976: *commanipuli* (=commanipuli), (in the same inscription: *nerenti* (=merenti)).

¹³ CIL VI 37213 (Roma): *comanipuli* (=commanipuli).

of this noun is *commanipularis*, and it belongs to the third declension. It is a compound form of the noun *manipularis* (derived from *manipulus* and meaning “soldier of a maniple”), and the *cum* preposition. The form *commanipulus*, belonging to the second declension, is also frequently used, but semantically doesn’t express equally clear the sense of “membership in the same maniple”. This aspect is given by the suffix *-ar-*, added to the theme of the word. *Commanipulares* can be used, sometimes, with the sense of “century”,¹⁴ working as a collective noun and referring to the members of the century. The other attested forms, with the same connotation as *commanipularis* / *commanipulus*, are nothing but vulgar uses of the two basic forms mentioned above.

I must emphasize that editors of epigraphic texts usually restore this abbreviated word without any criteria. The restitution is based on each editor’s option alone (namely, some of them use the third declension as basic form (*commanipularis*), while others employ the second declension (*commanipulus*), in order to complete the word)¹⁵. The two terms which denominate the same notion represent compounded forms, including the *cum* preposition followed either by the noun *manipulus* (maniple, military unit),¹⁶ or *manipularis* (a soldier who is member in a maniple).

Out of the 79 occurrences, 53 come from Rome. Among the examples from Rome, 17 uses the suffix *-ar-* (*commanipularis*), while 27 inscriptions reproduce the word *commanipulus* (in different inflectional forms). The other 9 are not relevant from this point of view, because the final part of the word is restored, so one cannot be sure if the scribe intended to write *commanipularis* or *commanipulus*. Other 6 inscriptions come from different regions of the Roman province Italia: Latium et Campania (Regio I) - 4 inscriptions, Umbria (Regio VI) - 1 inscription, Venetia et Histria (Regio X) - 1 inscription. Actually, 75% of the occurrences comes from the province Italia, and 67% of the total is represented by the inscriptions from Rome. The other 20 inscriptions are distributed among different areas of the Empire: Hispania Citerior (3 inscriptions), Alpes Maritimae (1), Germania Superior (2), Raetia (1), Pannonia Superior (2), Dacia (3), Moesia Inferior (1), Mauretania Caesariensis (2), Africa Proconsularis (1), Aegyptus (1), Numidia (2), Syria (1). Eight of these inscriptions use the abbreviated form, therefore one doesn’t know if the author of the text had one form or the other in mind while writing. Of the 12 remaining inscriptions, 5 use the *-ar-* suffix, while the others are based on the form *commanipulus*. From the entire group of inscriptions under analysis, 22 render the form *commanipularis*, and 34 the form *commanipulus*. Thus, it becomes apparent that the second form, *commanipulus*, has a higher frequency.

Corrupt forms:

Rome: *commanuplaris*, AÉ 1959, 174 - standard form: *commanipularis*; the variant in this inscription has two phonetic changes: the use of *u* vowel instead of *i*, and the fall of *u* vowel before the liquid *l*.

The *i* / *u* variation is well-known in imperial inscriptions. Some examples occur in Dacia, as well: *Quadrubi(i)s*,¹⁷ IDR II, 82, Drobeta; *Quadruiis*, IDR III/5, 309, 311; *stupidiorum*, IDR III/5, 590; *[D]ecumum* (for Decimum), ILD 500, Potaissa; *co[m]/manucu/lis* (!) (for *commanipuli* or *commanipulares*),¹⁸ ILD 499, Potaissa, the end of the 2nd or the 3rd century AD. Mihăescu believes the phenomenon is rare in the written sources arising from the South-Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, but it is confirmed by the evolution of the Romance languages: e.g. lat. *genuculum* = *geniculum* > rom. *genunchi*, it. *ginocchio*, fr. *genou*;

¹⁴ Lendon 2006, p. 273.

¹⁵ For example, in CIL VI 2698 (Roma), we’ve found the restitution *commani/pul(ar)i*, in CIL VI 37248 (Roma), *commanipul(ari)*, although the noun could be also *commanipuli*.

¹⁶ *Manipulus* is a collective noun, meaning “maniple” – group of soldiers. The *-ar-* suffix, added to the theme of the word, renders the sense of “member of a maniple”.

¹⁷ See also Ardevan 2006, pp. 71-74.

¹⁸ See Bărbulescu, Milea 1975, 4, pp. 571-576. Le Roux 1981, pp. 199, propose: *cum commanuculis (suis)*.

manuculus = *maniculus*, *manipulus* > rom. mănunchi, it. manocchio, fr. manoil.¹⁹ This alternation is probably the result of the tendency to render the pronunciation *ü*.²⁰

The fall of *u* in the example above may be due to the fact that it was not actually pronounced. Inscriptions reveal this phenomenon especially in the case of unstressed *u*, preceded or followed by another *u*. We have more examples in Dacia in which the name *Ingenuus* is syncopated.²¹ The unsyncopated form appears only in IDR III/2, 432. Another proper name – *Perpetuus* (cognomen) – maintains the unsyncopated form in an inscription from Tibiscum.²² For the syncopation of *u* before the liquid *l*, see the examples: *Saeclaris*, IDR III/5, 109; *Proclus*, IDR III/5, 452; *Proclus*, *Proc[l]inus*, *Procla*, IDR III/5, 481; *Felicl(a)e*, IDR III/5, 576.

comma(ni)pul(aris), AÉ 1988, 169

-here the basic form can be both *commanipulus* and *commanipularis*; the unstressed *ni* syllable is syncopated. This can be interpreted either as a spelling error or an abbreviation.

cum commanuculis suis, CIL VI 1056; *commanu/culo*, CIL VI 2787; *commanuculis suis*, CIL VI 3079

-the basic form is *commanipulus*; phonetic variations: *u* instead of *i*; the plosive bilabial *p* > the plosive guttural *c* (in Dacia, for example, the latter phonetic variation is testified only in the word *co[m]manuculis* from Potaissa (Bărbulescu 1975, pp. 571-576).

comma/nip(u)lus, CIL VI 2436

-the fall of the unstressed *u* vowel before of the liquid *l* (see *supra*).

comma/nupularis, CIL VI 2492; *commanupularem*, CIL VI 2543

-the variation *i* / *u*, seen in some examples above.

commanupuli, CIL VI 2552

- the variation *i* / *u*.

com(m)anipulo, CIL VI 2602

-simplification of the geminate nasal: *mm* > *m*.

The simplification of geminates is a widespread phonetic phenomenon in the epigraphic evidence of the Roman Empire.

conmaniculario, CIL VI 2625

-*n* instead of *m* in *con* – dissimilation; the plosive bilabial *p* > the plosive guttural *c*.

[commanu]/culis, CIL VI 2759

- the plosive bilabial *p* > the plosive guttural *c*.

co(m)/manupulis, CIL VI 3009

- simplification of the geminate: *mm* > *m*; *u* instead of *i*.

com(m)an(i)pulo, CIL VI 3060; *com(m)an(i)pu[li]s*, CIL VI 3088

- simplification of the geminate; syncopation of the stressed *i* vowel – it seems to be a spelling error.

conmanipuli, CIL VI 32976

- *n* instead of *m* in *con* – dissimilation.

cum/manup(u)l{i}o, CIL VI 33010

-*u* for *o* (*cum* instead of *com* – archaic tendency) – the *o* / *u* variation is present both in the inscriptions

¹⁹ Mihăescu 1978, pp. 176-177. Probably Mihăescu was not familiar with the inscription from Potaissa, published by Bărbulescu and Milea (SCIVĂ 26, 1975, 4, pp. 571-576), which proves the form *co[m]manuculis*, derived from the noun *manipulus*, which he himself refers to.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

²¹ IDR III/2, 444 (Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), IDR III/3, 15 (Călan), IDR III/4, 17 (Apoldu de Jos, Sibiu): *Ingenu(u)s*; IDR III/5, 312 (Apulum): *[In]genus*; IDR III/5, 451, 538 (Apulum): *Ingenu*; IDR III/5, 522 (Apulum): *[I]ngenus*; IDR III/6, 113 (Apulum): *(H)aedu(u)s*; ILD 564 (Napoca): *Ingenu(u)s*; CIL III 7681 (Potaissa): *Ingenu(u) [s]*; CIL III 915 (Potaissa): *[I]ngenu(u)s*.

²² ILD 200; Piso 1978, pp. 184-186. The inscription was discovered in more fragments, which have been published separately in the IDR.

from the Empire, and in the ones from Dacia,²³ *u* for *i*; the syncopation of the unstressed *u*; the epenthesis of *i*, eliminated by the editor of the text.

com(mani){po}pilarius, CIL VI 37785

-a form difficult to explain, full of errors; in the same inscription we have *cubucilarius* for *cubicularius*, with the interchange of *i* and *u* vowels (metathesis) – spelling error.

[co]nmanipularis, AÉ 1912, 186

-*n* instead of *m*.

It is interesting to note that most corrupt forms occur in the inscriptions of Rome and in those of some regions of the Roman province Italia. In only three of the other provinces are some vulgar forms attested: Raetia: *commanip(u)lar(ibus)*, AÉ 1986, 532, Africa Proconsularis, *comanupul(aris)*, AÉ 1997, 1630, and Dacia, in 3 cases: *[?comma]n(i)culos*, IDR III/5, 406, Apulum, *co[m]/manucu/lis* (!), AÉ 1976, 574, ILD 499, Potaissa, *com(m)a(nipulorum)*, AÉ 2004, 1194, ILD 502, Potaissa.

The form *commanuculus* from Potaissa, with *i* > *u* and *p* > *c*, can be found only at Rome, where it occurs three times. It seems that also our example from Apulum is very close to this variant. For the latter, I suggest the following restitution: *[?comma]n(i)culos* - or *[?comma]n(u)culos*. I have maintained the diacritic “?” as it appears in Ioan Piso’s edition of IDR III/5, 406, although the restitution *commaniculus* or *commanuculus* is the most plausible, as Ioan Piso specifies.

As already mentioned, there are three inscriptions in Dacia, which attest the investigated word. One comes from Apulum, and two from Potaissa.

1. **Apulum**, IDR III/5, 406.

Fragmentary, marble votive plaque (?), from which only the right part is preserved.²⁴ In the fragmentary text the collocation *[?commanu]nculos suos* comes up, for which I propose the restitution *[?comma]n(i)culos* or *[?comma]n(u)culos*.²⁵ We can notice in this form the fall of *i* / *u*, and the transformation of the plosive bilabial *p* in the plosive guttural *c*. The same corrupt form appears in the inscription from Potaissa (see *infra*, nr. 2). The only analogies in the Empire can be found in the three above related inscriptions from Rome.²⁶

2. **Potaissa**, in M. Bărbulescu and Z. Milea, *O descoperire epigrafică în castrul de la Potaissa*, SCIVA, 26/4, 1975, pp. 571-576; ILD 499.

Stone altar, found in the military camp from Potaissa in 1972. It attests the word *co[m]/manucu/lis*. The authors of the article suggest several possible interpretations of the text, especially of the word *commanuculis*. In my opinion, the noun is in plural ablative. This case expresses the associative value of the syntactic function fulfilled by the word. Thus, the use of *cum* preposition is not mandatory. The dedicators, the two centurions C(aius) Val(erius) Lu[c(anus?)] and C(aius) Tib(erius) C[eler?], together with their comrades, dedicate this monument to the legions mentioned in the beginning of the text.

The inscription cannot be dated precisely. The epithet P(ia) C(onstans) given to the legion from Potaissa can offer only a *terminus post quem* around the year 180 AD.²⁷

3. **Potaissa**, in M. Bărbulescu, *Inscriptions votives pour les Génies protecteurs dans le camp légionnaire de Potaissa*, OA, 2004, pp. 375-377, nr. 2.

Votive limestone altar, found in the principia of the military camp from Potaissa. It is dedicated *Genio*

²³ *con* (the vulgar form of “cum”), ILD 437 = Ardevan, Beldiman, Zepezaner 1990, pp. 195-201, Odorheiu-Secuiesc, dated in the 3rd century. Usually, the preposition is used in the ablative case, but in the mentioned inscription it appears in accusative, in the collocation *con quen*. There are two errors here, a morphological one, in which the accusative is used instead of the ablative, and a discord, in which the masculine form *quem* (vulgar *quen*) comes up instead of the feminine one. Correct is *cum qua*, or *quacum* (the latter is closer to the literary standard).

²⁴ Image in IDR III/5, 406, page 312, and on-line: www.uni-heidelberg.de (Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg: HD038660) (last accessed 20 June 2010).

²⁵ See *supra*, p. 77.

²⁶ See *supra*, p. 76.

²⁷ Bărbulescu 1975, p. 575.

(*centuriae*) *Val(eri) Iustini, pro sa(lute) COMA*. The dedicator's cognomen is Thracian: Aur(elius) Muca.²⁸ Mihai Bărbulescu believes the inscription may be dated to the IIIrd century, on the basis of the dedicator's name, Aurelius, and the absence of his praenomen.²⁹ The abbreviated form COMA could be restituted either as *com[m]a(nipularium)*, or *com[m]a(nipulorum)* (if we take into account the standard forms of the word). Mihai Bărbulescu proposes the restitution *com[m]a(nuculorum)*, considering the other inscription from Potaissa,³⁰ which preserves the corrupt form *co[m]/manuculis*.

Another military term used in epigraphy is *contubernalis*,³¹ meaning “tent-mate”. In the strict sense of the word it refers to the 8 or 10 soldiers who share the same tent, and, in the large sense it means “comrade”. J.E. Lendon, in his article “*Contubernalis, Commanipularis, and Commilito in Roman Soldiers' Epigraphy: Drawing the Distinction*”,³² shows, based on some inscriptions, that the term doesn't necessarily mean “tent-mate”. There are cases in which a *contubernalis* belongs to another detachment.³³ He concludes that this is rather a “comrade”. Its sense is more emotional, and it is used in funerary inscriptions to name the deceased, to whom, his comrade, *commanipularis*, dedicates the monument.

Lendon's remark,³⁴ according to which a *commanipularis* is always associated to an infantry unit, and never to a cavalry one, while *contubernalis* is used when referring to the knights, is worth noting. Lendon quotes an inscription from Rome,³⁵ in which the deceased is named *contubernalis*, and the dedicator, his comrade, calls himself *commanipulus*.³⁶

The numerous corrupt variants of the term *commanipularis* / *commanipulus* which appear in the epigraphic evidence from the Roman Empire show the lower quality of the language used among soldiers.

The three inscriptions from Dacia are engraved on honorary or votive monuments. The examples from Potaissa come from the military camp. It seems that there is a preference for the vulgar form *commanuculus* in Dacia, in which two phonetic variations can be noticed: *i > u* (the phenomenon is characteristic for the 2nd and the 3rd century AD, and is widespread across the Empire)³⁷ and the plosive bilabial *p >* the plosive guttural *c*. This form is, as it seems, characteristic to the military jargon.



Fig. 1
Votive plaque, Apulum,
IDR III/5, 406; picture
after EDH, HD038660.

²⁸ Bărbulescu 2004, p. 375, no. 2; Dana OA, 2004, p. 440.

²⁹ Bărbulescu 2004, p. 376, no. 2.

³⁰ Bărbulescu, Milea 1975; ILD 499.

³¹ There are three occurrences of the term in Dacia: IDR II, 158 (Galicea Mare, Dolj); IDR III/5, 559 (Apulum); IDR III/1, 139 (Tibiscum).

³² Lendon 2006, p. 270-276.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 271.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 273-274.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

³⁶ CIL VI 2553 (Roma): [---] *Aurelius Sextianus com/manipulus et heres eius / contubernali rarissimo / posuit*, CIL VI 2567: *Ulpus / Titus commanipulus / et heres eius con/tubernali carissimo / posuit*.

³⁷ See also Benze 2007, p. 356.

Fig. 2a-b
Stone altar (picture after
Bărbulescu-Milea 1975).

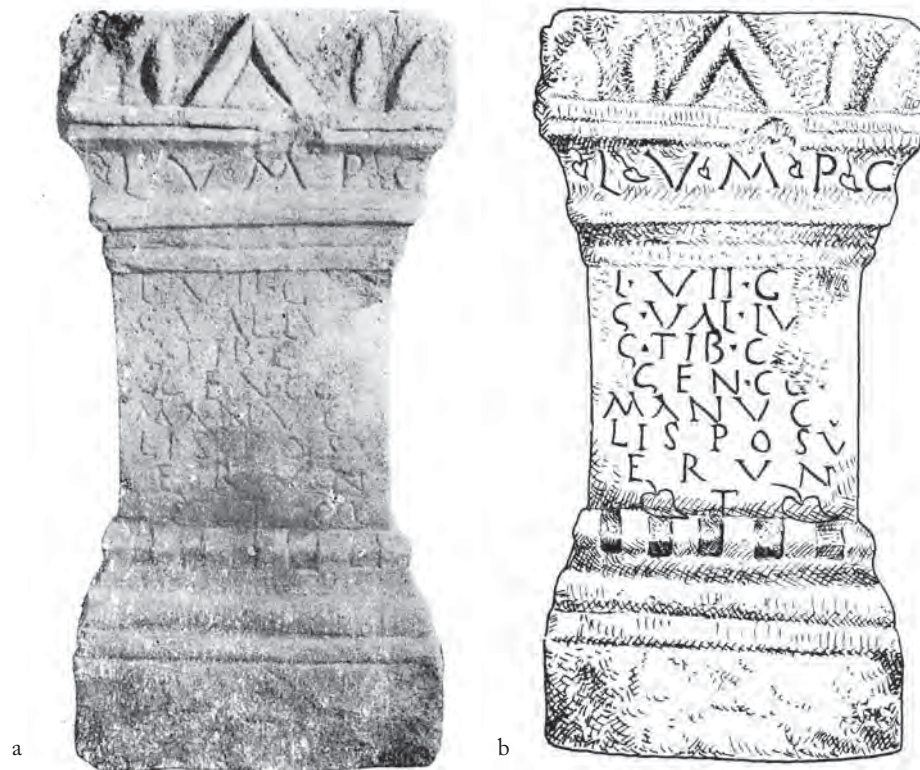


Fig. 3a-b
Votive limestone altar (picture
after Bărbulescu, 2004).



Bibliographical abbreviations:

- Ardevan, Beldiman, Zepezcaner 1990 – R. Ardevan, C. Beldiman, J. Zepezcaner, *Un nou monument epigrafic din estul Daciei romane*, SCIVA 41, 1990, 2, pp. 195-201.
- Ardevan 2006 – R. Ardevan, *Les Quadriviae à Drobeta*, Drobeta 16, 2006, pp. 71-74.
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