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## Ducenarius de numero sagittariorum on an inscription from Salona

From 2004 to 2008, numerous stone fragments were found during development-led archaeological excavations of the Vranjic coast. The area of the Vranjic peninsula formed part of the Salonitan ager in antiquity. The fragments found predominantly belonged to Roman architecture, which includes the Early Christian church, probably a villa and a part of the Southeastern Salonitan necropolis.<sup>1</sup> These buildings were dismantled and used as spolia to consolidate the coast during the early medieval period, which, in addition to archaeological findings, was also concluded based on C14 analysis.<sup>2</sup> The research was carried out on several occasions, mostly in the southern and southeastern parts of the peninsula. In this excavation, over 30 epigraphic monuments were found in secondary use, dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century, except for a Hellenistic inscription in Greek from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>3</sup> The epigraphic material has been partially published,<sup>4</sup> and among the inscriptions is the lid of the Late Antique sarcophagus with the text revealing the most accurately dated preserved Roman monument in Dalmatia.<sup>5</sup>

The topic of the article is an inscription on the front side of a sarcophagus found in 2007 in Vranjic (Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup>

The monument was taken out from the trench into several parts that are now joined together.<sup>7</sup> Most of the inscription remained intact,<sup>8</sup> and reads as follows:

*[Fl(avius?) —]nus doc(enarius) de num(ero) sagittariorum] sarto(fagum) sibi e[t]  
[c]oniugi suae carissim(a)e G+[—] [p]os(uit) quae vixit [an(nos)—]  
hab(uit) marit(um) mens(i)b(us) VIII. Si quis vero super hu[nc]  
suum corp(us) pon(ere) vol(uerit) det fisc(o) virib(us) arg(enti) pon(do) [—]*

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1 I'm very delighted for contributing this article to a volume dedicated to prof. dr. Manfred Clauss. His vision and efforts, along with the other esteemed colleagues, resulted in creation of the indispensable tool in nowadays epigraphy, the EDCS. The article was written within the project "The new lives of ancient inscriptions: epigraphic spolia on the territory of central Dalmatia" (EpiSpolia) funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ IP 2019-04-3537).

2 Radić Rossi 2008, 499–500.

3 Radić Rossi 2008, 499, fn. 28.

4 Cambi 2010, 133, 242–243; Bizjak/Marinković 2011; Ilardi, Baraka Perica 2021; Konestra/Cambi 2021, 363.

5 Demicheli 2018.

6 Archaeological supervision was carried out by Georheo d.o.o. I'm grateful to the leader of the excavation, Goran Skelac, mag. archaeol., who provided me epigraphical documentation for publication.

7 Today is exposed on Manastirine site in Salona, next to the building complex called *Tusculum*, which belongs to the Archaeological Museum in Split.

8 The inscription is included in EDCS (EDCS-67800030), but with some gaps in reading.

[Flavius? —]nus ducenarius of the archer-squadron, set up the sarcophagus for himself and his dearest wife G[—] who lived [—] years, and has been married for nine months. If anyone would want to lay his body on top of this (body), let him give in the treasury the amount of [—] silver pounds.

There was no decoration on the sarcophagus or a frame designated for the text inscribed. The letters have minimal space between each other, as was the epigraphic habit in the Late Antiquity in Dalmatia. The sarcophagus was made for a married couple whose names have not been preserved, and at the time of its placement, the wife was already deceased. This couple did not enjoy marital happiness for a long time, only nine months, which was somewhat poetically indicated by the phrase *habuit maritum mensibus VIII*, literally “she had a husband for nine months”. This example of articulating the length of the marriage is rather rare in epigraphy, and we can find the same and similar expressions mostly in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 1: Latin inscription from Vranjic. Foto: G. Skelac.

The inscription shows the features of the Salonitan epigraphy of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries: among those being mentioned, the phrasing on the protection of the burial site is one of the most reliable indicators. Namely, on more than a hundred Salonitan sarcophagi dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, there is a kind of notice in the sense of a warning for all those who want to open other people's sarcophagus or who want to be buried into it. This probably arose as a consequence of the actual illegal practice in the Salonitan cemeteries, and the imposition of such high penalties should

<sup>9</sup> From the 4<sup>th</sup> century: *habuit maritum*, ILCV 4285; [*maritum*] *habuit*, ILCV 4286 (Rim); *habuit coniugem*, CIL V 914 (Aquileia); *habuit uxorem*, CIL VI 32977; ICUR 18995 (Rome); besides these, there is the inscription from the 1<sup>st</sup> century with the phrase *uxorem habuit*, AE 1910, 191 (Polla/Forum Popilii).

undoubtedly have had the effect of repelling potential grave desecrators.<sup>10</sup> The fine was most often indicated in units of weight in silver or gold, but also in monetary units that bore the symbols of the denarius.<sup>11</sup> This inscription mentions an unknown amount of silver pounds (*librae*), which is certainly a huge amount, considering the fact that one pound was 327,45 grams. The legal protection in this inscription is expressed by the sentence *Si quis vero super hunc suum corpus ponere voluerit det fisco viribus argenti pondo* [–. Interestingly, there are no two identical formulas of this type recorded in Salona. The institution to which the amount should be paid is sometimes the Salonitan Church, and sometimes the imperial or city treasury.<sup>12</sup>

The text of the inscription has the features of vulgar Latin which is very well attested in the Salonitan area in this period, and there are also a few stonemason's mistakes. The word *sartofagus* instead of *sarcophagus* or *sarcofagus* has already been noticed several times in the Salonitan epigraphy,<sup>13</sup> and it can almost be seen as a local orthographic variant of this word rather than a stonemason's mistake. The word recorded as *doc(enarius)* in classical Latin appears as *ducenarius*. It is recorded in the form *docenarius* on another monument from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>14</sup> and on two others in the form *ducenarius*.<sup>15</sup> The word *carissimae* is engraved in the vulgar Latin variant as *carissime*, while the demonstrative pronoun in the accusative case is carved in the wrong gender (*hunc* instead of *hoc*). Namely, the object in the accusative case is the noun *corpus*, which is neuter.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> It is also possible that some people, upon payment of the mentioned amount, were allowed to use someone else's burial space, as indicated by the inscription from Tragurium which mentions the punishment for those who, without the knowledge or consent of the family, want to open the sarcophagus and bury the body: CIL III 2704, *Sarcophagum Ursicli et Tertiae / depositio Ursicli die III Idus Dec(embres) ind(ictione) XIII / si quis vero voluerit sine conscientia supra / sibi praesumere det poen(a)e nomine sanctae {a}ec(c){l}lesiae / ante litis ingressum auri unc(ias) IIII*.

<sup>11</sup> More on that: Caillet 1988; Salona-04, 52–58.

<sup>12</sup> As sarcophagi with this formula were most often found in cemeteries around burial basilicas, it can be assumed that the Church took care of the cemeteries, and it is expected that the Church was listed as a potential beneficiary of these amounts. However, this cannot be a general rule since there are also inscriptions from the 4<sup>th</sup> century found in church cemeteries that explicitly mention the city treasury.

<sup>13</sup> Salona-04, 404 (= CIL III 8742); Salona-04, 225 (= CIL III 9533); Salona-04, 490 (= CIL III 9571); Salona-04, 221 (= CIL III 9585); Salona-04, 392 (= ILJug 2129); ILJug 2568,4021; Salona-04, 420; Salona-04, 581; Salona-04 – A 3000 and perhaps Salona-04, 566.

<sup>14</sup> Salona-04, 136 (=AE 1961, 308).

<sup>15</sup> Salona-04, 97 (= CIL III 14704); Salona-04, 378 (= CIL III 8712).

<sup>16</sup> The form *hunc* could only work grammatically if the person who placed the inscription thought of himself as the person over whom someone else would lie in the sarcophagus, but I believe that this was not the case here and that it is an incorrectly used pronoun, which is not an isolated case in Salona (Salona-04, 96 (=CIL III 9527); Salona-04, 163 (= CIL III 9508); Salona-04, 228 (= CIL III 2632); Salona-04, 501 (= CIL III 9591)).

The unknown commemorator was *ducenarius*, an officer in the Late Antique army. The word *ducenarius* in the Latin language was known long before Late Antiquity, initially had nothing to do with the army, and denoted a procurator of the equestrian class who had an annual salary of 200.000 sesterces (*procurator ducenarius*). This was a salary grade, since there were various civil officials whose annual salary was different, depending on the type of responsibility. The titles *procurator sexagenarius*, *procurator centenarius* and *procurator ducenarius* existed mostly for the equestrians who managed the tax offices on the provincial level.<sup>17</sup> As this term was recorded among members of the late Roman army, it would be worthwhile trying to clarify what the name *ducenarius* meant on this inscription. Namely, the Roman army, in the transformation that started in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, went through a series of changes during Late Antiquity. The reform resulted in new numerical and tactical divisions and the appearance of a new nomenclature in the officer cadre. The old system of legions, alae, and cohorts that was established before the military reform was not abolished but continued to exist during Late Antiquity in parallel with the newly formed units of *scholae palatinae*, *cunei*, *vexillationes*, *equites* and *auxilia*.<sup>18</sup> Within the newly established military formations, a new hierarchical system was created with an officer nomenclature unknown until then. Thus, as early as the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, ranks appeared in the Roman army under the names *biarchus*, *circitor*, *centenarius* and *ducenarius*. One of the most cited ancient sources for the structure of the Late Antique army is St. Jerome, who, wanting to explain the hierarchy of the Church and society, made a comparison with the army, specifically with the cavalry (*singula militiae equestris officia*), but which can also be compared to the infantry.<sup>19</sup> Jerome enlisted all the positions within the army from the highest to the lowest: *tribunus*, *primicerius*, *senator*, *ducenarius*, *centenarius*, *biarchus*, *circitor*, *eques*, (*pedes*), *tiro*.<sup>20</sup> All these positions are individually recorded in the literary, legal, epigraphic and papyrological sources of Late Antiquity.

There is significantly less epigraphic evidence about the late Roman army than in the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, which leads to numerous unknowns regarding the organization and disposition of military units. In addition to the already

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17 There was also the class *trecenarius*, which was the manager of the imperial finances, but this term also has its military application.

18 Janniard 2015, 403.

19 Hier. C. Ioh. 19. *Volo quod dico, manifestius fieri: finge aliquem tribunitiae potestatis suo vitio regradatum, per singula militiae equestris officia, ad tironis vocabulum devolutum, numquid ex tribuno statim fit tiro? Non; sed ante primicerius, deinde senator, ducenarius, centenarius, biarchus, circitor, eques, dein tiro; et quamquam tribunus quondam miles gregarius sit, tamen ex tribuno non tiro, sed primicerius factus est.*

20 For an explanation of these positions and their equivalents in the Roman army before the reform, see Rocco 2012, 229–237 (with references to other literature).

mentioned foundation of new types of units, there was a change in the numerical value within the old system of legions and cohorts that still existed, so for example, a legion in Late Antiquity numbered around 1000 to 1200 people. We know the list of military units in certain parts of the Eastern and Western Roman Empire from the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but we do not have actual epigraphic confirmation for all the units listed there, just as we do not find in the *Notitia Dignitatum* some that are epigraphically confirmed.

There is no unified opinion in the scientific literature regarding the interpretation of the military position of *ducenarius*.<sup>21</sup> To understand this better, it will be necessary to mention another military position, the *centenarius*, which is mostly tried to be explained along with the term *ducenarius*. Both terms, despite their already existing meanings,<sup>22</sup> had to be reinterpreted even in Late Antiquity, as evidenced by Vegetius, who wrote that centurions were the same as *centenarii* were in his time (i.e. at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>23</sup> Vegetius also defines a *centurio hastatus* who commanded two hundred soldiers (*duae centuriae, id est CC homines*) and was called a *ducenarius*.<sup>24</sup> Although he was a Late Antique author who defined these terms, not everyone accepted Vegetius' interpretation based on etymology. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an interpretation was offered by Otto Seeck, who thought that the term *ducenarius* was used to refer to officers of a noble status who held the so-called *ducena dignitas*, i.e. whose property was estimated at 200.000 sesterces, which corresponded to half of the amount required for entry into *ordo equester*.<sup>25</sup> This opinion was supported by Michael Speidel, dealing with the origin of the new ranks in the Late Antique army.<sup>26</sup> He believed that at the latest Emperor Gallienus was the one who awarded the centurions of the field armies with titles of equestrian order related to *centena* and *ducena dignitas*, and in both cases, they would be centurions of a higher rank.<sup>27</sup> Warren Treadgold believes that the difference in duties between the *centenarius* and the *ducenarius* does not exist, only that the *ducenarius* surpassed the *centenarius* in rank. For this, he gave the example of a *semissalis*, whose duties did not differ from those of an ordinary soldier, but he had a higher rank and received a higher salary.<sup>28</sup> The most thorough discussion on the position of the *ducenarius* was written by Sylvain Janniard.<sup>29</sup> He refers to the fact that during the

21 For wider discussion on that Janniard 2007.

22 Like *ducenarius*, the name *centenarius* denoted a salary grade on an annual level (100.000 sesterces).

23 Veg. II, 13.4: *Centuriones . . . . . qui nunc centenarii vocantur*.

24 Veg. II, 8. 3: *Item primus hastatus duas centurias, id est CC homines, ducebat in secunda acie, quem nunc ducenarium vocant*.

25 Seeck 1905, 1753.

26 Speidel 2006. These are the ranks of *ducenarius*, *centenarius*, *biarchus* and *circitor*.

27 Speidel 2006, 206; v. Rocco 2012.

28 Treadgold 1998, 91; Rocco 2012, 234.

29 Janniard 2007.

3<sup>rd</sup> century the term *centurio ordinarius/ordinatus* appears, which, according to the written source,<sup>30</sup> should be a centurion commanding a squad with a larger number of soldiers than the classical *centuria* had. That would mean that a centurion was subordinate to *centurio ordinarius/ordinatus*. At the same time, the title *ducenarius* began to appear, which was different from *ducena dignitas*, which should have something to do with the change in the number of infantry subdivisions mentioned by Vegetius. Thus, the terms *centurio* and *centurio ordinarius (ordinatus)* would be positions that remained in the formations that existed before the military reform (legions, cohorts, alae), while their equivalent in the newly established types of military units would be *centenarius* and *ducenarius*.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the fact that the newly established units were based on the decimal system, this would fully correspond to Vegetius' statement of a *ducenarius* leading 200 soldiers. In the synthesis of the late Roman army, made more recently by Marco Rocco, it is stated that the *ducenarius* may have commanded a unit that was between a *centuria* and a cohort in terms of numbers, that is, what was once known as a *manipulum*.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, one could say that *ducenarius* was a military commander of a unit that outnumbered classical *centuria* and probably had around two hundred soldiers.

The name of the *ducenarius* from the Vranjic inscription has not been preserved, but considering his position, I believe that his name was in *duo nomina* form, i.e. made up of *gentilicium* and *cognomen*. In the restitution, it was suggested that his *gentilicium* was Flavius, for which there are certain grounds. Namely, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, this *gentilicium* stood as a mark of a higher social class,<sup>33</sup> to which this man in the position of *ducenarius* should have belonged. Bearers of the name Flavius in Late antique Salona (especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> century) were mostly either military personnel or civilians with respectable positions. Moreover, it was also worn by Flavius Valerianus, a member of the same archer unit, who, in contrast to the anonymous person from the Vranjic inscription, was in the position of *centenarius*. His sarcophagus was found in Salonitan's Western necropolis and the inscription<sup>34</sup> reads:

*Fl(avius) Valerianus d(e) n(umero) sagittario/rum cent<e>[>narius in hoc f(i)sepul/crum voluer<i>E>t  
super hoc co/rpus aliquis {voluere} alium / ponere da<b>V>it in {h}ec(c)lesia aur/i p(ondo) III.*

The composition of the inscription is very similar to the one found in Vranjic, with several differences: the beneficiary of the fine collected for illegal burial was the Church of Salona, and not the state or city treasury; the price of the fine is expressed in pounds of gold (approximately 327,5 gr.) while in Vranjic inscription the value is in pounds in silver. Both inscriptions show the characteristics of vulgar Latin, but the

<sup>30</sup> *P.Monac.* 8.

<sup>31</sup> Janniard 2007, 391.

<sup>32</sup> Rocco 2012, 230.

<sup>33</sup> Keenan 1973.

<sup>34</sup> Salona-04, 407.

already-published inscription shows a bit more stonemason's mistakes. Flavius Valerianus was a *centenarius*, which was a lower position than of a *ducenarius*, and since it was the same type of military unit, these two inscriptions at least gave us a somewhat closer insight into the structure of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century archer detachment in Salona. As previously said, *centenarius* and *ducenarius* belonged to the nomenclature introduced after the military reform in the later Roman Empire, and both could be called non-commissioned officers. Their squad was called *numerus*, as indicated by the words *de num(ero)*. During the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, *numeri* were parts of legions and cohorts, and in Late Antiquity the term *numerus* could replace some of the newly created or reformed units such as *scholae*, *auxilia palatina* or *vexillatio*. *Numerus* therefore does not have a specific technical description in the numerical sense in Late Antiquity. The type of the *numerus* was reconstructed after the partially preserved with the letters *sag[-]* as *numerus sagittariorum*, which means a squad of archers. If we knew the real numerical value of the archery unit, it would be much easier to establish the commanding structure. Still, for now, we can only assume that it was a unit that numbered at least 200 people. Considering the length of the Salonitan city walls and the number of towers, but also the city's turbulent past in Late Antiquity, there's no doubt that several detachments of archers should have been deployed on the city fortifications.

Two other sarcophagi in Salona mention the rank of *ducenarius*: one commemorates Flavius Victorinus who was listed as *ducenarius ex vexillatione equitum Valentinianensium*.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, this one belonged to a cavalry unit, and the monument could be dated to the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century according to the unit name. Another inscription mentioned Antonius Taurus who is said to have become a *ducenarius* after holding two positions as *centenarius*: *ex dua<b>us c(entenariis) ducenario post facto*.<sup>36</sup> As can be seen, the first *ducenarius* was a member of the cavalry unit, while the second one was not listed as a specific military unit member.

On the Dalmatian inscriptions from the period of the entire antiquity, so far, only three soldiers have been confirmed who served in archery detachments, and all three monuments are from Salona.<sup>37</sup>

35 CIL III 14704 = Salona-04, 97, [F]l[avio] Victo[ri]/[n]o duce[n]a[r](io) / [e]x(?) v<e>I>xill[atio]/n(e) equi[tum] Val[en]tin[ian]en[sium]. The part of the inscription concerning the name *Valentinianensium* was reconstructed, and the date was set based on it. See comment of the inscription in Salona-04, 97.

36 CIL III 8712 = Salona-04, 378, Ant[onio] Tauro ex dua<b>us c(entenariis) ducenario / post facto qui vixit an(n)is LV / Ael(ia) Saturnina c(larissima) f(emina) / marito benignis/simo.

37 CIL III 8734; CIL III 14701=14702; Salona-04, 407. The earliest among them mentions a soldier who left only his name (*Beres*) and the function of *sagittarius* on a very well-made tombstone. In addition to words, his military profession is also confirmed by the relief of the bow and arrow (CIL III 8734). Based on the name, it can be said that he was of Eastern origin, so according to all the above, the opinion is that this archer belonged to the *cohors II Cyrrhestarum* (such interpretation is mentioned by several authors, listed in: Matijević 2020, 14, fn. 115.). This cohort was settled in Dalmatia in the early Principate, and on several stelae of the members of this unit, there are nicely made reliefs of

What we cannot know from the inscription from Vranjic, was the exact name of this archer unit, and there could be several possibilities. The *Notitia dignitatum*, which was written at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, mentions as many as 48 military units for the area of Illyricum: 26 military units were under the command of *magister militum per Illyricum*,<sup>38</sup> while 22 military units were under the command of a person entitled as *vir spectabilis comes Illyrici*.<sup>39</sup> Those first were listed in the part that refers to the eastern part of the Empire, while the latter were in the western part of the Empire. There were two archery units in the eastern part of Illyricum, *Equites sagittarii seniores* and *Sagittarii lecti*, while *Sagittarii Tungri* and *Sagittarii venatores* were in the western part. Salona was located within the western part of Illyricum, so one could think that the *centenarius* and *ducenarius* of the *numerus sagittariorum* belonged to either the *Sagittarii Tungri* or the *Sagittarii lecti* unit. However, it should be taken into account that it could also be another unit, for two reasons: Sylvain Janniard has already expressed the opinion that one should be careful when attributing the unit of the *centenarius sagittariorum* to one of the two archery detachments from western Illyricum, since it can be related also to those mentioned in the eastern Illyricum.<sup>40</sup> Another reason would be that this monument can be dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, while the *Notitia Dignitatum* enlisted the military troop deployment at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, so we cannot know for sure whether the same archer units were present in the area of Illyricum since the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

In the period from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, the epigraphic culture of Dalmatia, especially Salona, was much more developed than most other provinces and large cities. However, there are only a few dozen inscriptions mentioning soldiers and military units. This number is not nearly enough when compared to the data on the army during Late Antiquity, especially during military operations in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. There is no doubt that in Late Antique Salona had more permanent military personnel than during the period of the Principate, especially because there was also a weapon factory (*fabrica armorum Salonitana*).<sup>41</sup> It was a state weapon factory mentioned in the

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bows, arrows and quivers (Cambi 1994, 160; Matijević 2009, 41). Soldiers who are not explicitly mentioned as archers should be added to the same unit, since from the iconography of their tombstones, it is clear that they were archers. Those are three stelae: ILJug 2820 (*Burnum*); AE 1994, 1357; AE 1994, 1358 (*Dugopolje*). There is another relief with the same motifs, and it is the lower part of the stele from *Tilurium*, which there is almost no doubt commemorates the soldier *cohors II Cyrrhestarum*. About the relief, see Ivčević 2013, 472, Fig. 1. The second explicitly mentioned *sagittarius* was *Valerius As[—]*, whose tombstone was also found in Salona (CIL III 14701=14702; different reading is offered by the editors in the commentary on the inscription Salona-04, 407). His monument can be dated to the late Principate, and possibly the early Dominate. The third monument is the already mentioned sarcophagus commemorating the *centenarius* of Flavius Valerianus from the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>38</sup> Not. Dig. Or. IX. 18–48.

<sup>39</sup> Not. Dig. Occ. VII 41–62.

<sup>40</sup> Janniard 2010, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Not. Dig. Occ. IX 22. More about the Salonitan weapons factory see Demicheli 2018, 370–373.

*Notitia Dignitatum* which was not only supposed to supply the army in the vicinity of Salona and across Illyricum, but the factory itself would be well protected by soldiers.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, I believe that the absence of military inscriptions is primarily a consequence of changing the burial practice in Late Antiquity, which had several repercussions that might cause the lack of epigraphical evidence today. Until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the tombstones in Salona were available to a broad circle of people. In the vast majority of cases, these were simple stelae of smaller dimensions or urns whose price was most likely acceptable to practically all strata of Salonitan society. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the primary bearer of the inscription became a sarcophagus, which was only affordable by members of the upper class. Judging by the prices expressed in solids that are preserved on some inscriptions, these sarcophagi were very expensive.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, from Late Antiquity onwards, sarcophagi were the most visible part of the Salonitan funerary assemblage. They thus were the first to be under attack, either during looting in the early Middle Ages, or during exploitation for other purposes in later periods.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the Salonitan inscriptions are far from saying their last word, as new ones are constantly being found that only confirm Salona as a city where literacy was at a high level, and the demand for sarcophagi, despite their high price, remained relatively high.

Every new epigraphic confirmation of the Late Antique army in Salona is particularly valuable, as there are not many of them, and each one reveals a piece of the military structure in Late Antiquity about which we have no reliable information. The inscription mentioning the *ducenarius numeri sagittariorum* is currently the only one of its kind, not only in Salona but also in the entire Empire. This corroborates the fact that we have very little epigraphic data on the Late Antiquity army compared to the military inscriptions of the earlier period. Still, when speaking of Salonitan epigraphy, there is a good reason to be optimistic, since almost every new archaeological excavation brings to light new inscriptions and there is no doubt that more military inscriptions are yet to be found.

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42 The location of this *fabrica* in the area of Salona has not been discovered so far, but it is possible that it was located in the southeastern part and that it was protected by a thick wall with towers, part of which was recently discovered. This is just a hypothesis for which there is no concrete evidence yet.

43 On the prices of Salonitan sarcophagi, Demicheli 2022, 94–95.

44 It was often the case that sarcophagi in central Dalmatia served as watering holes for livestock or olive oil tanks, and broken parts of sarcophagi were used as building material. Therefore, one must reckon with a substantial number of those which have perished forever in this way. In the most recent excavations of the northern city walls, dozens of fragments of Late antique sarcophagi were found that were broken (probably during looting) and thrown onto a pile of stones that fell from the city walls and towers.

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