

# CHRISTIANS AT LATE ROMAN TARRACO: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE EVIDENCE

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Ever since the excavation of the extramural Necròpolis Paleocristiana on the east bank of the river Francolí, conducted by Mossén Serra Vilaró in the late 1920s and early 1930s, its rich archaeological and epigraphic record has been crucial in looking at late Roman Tarraco. The Christian cemetery, outstanding amongst all known burial places of its time in the Western Mediterranean and known to have been in use from the fourth at least until the early sixth (if not up to the late sixth or early seventh) century<sup>1</sup>, provides the predominant stock of Tarraco's Christian epigraphy<sup>2</sup>: A total of 136 inscriptions figures in Géza Alföldy's pioneering corpus<sup>3</sup>.

The development and transformation of late Roman Tarraco can only partially be recaptured from the bunch of literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence — an evidence which, paradoxically, makes her one of the best documented late

antique town sites in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>4</sup>. Archaeology now seems to reveal that the invasions of the Franks of AD 260/61<sup>5</sup> did in fact leave their marks on the town: The harbour zone shows signs of fire damages<sup>6</sup>, and the public baths in the lower town may have been restored in the late third or early fourth century<sup>7</sup>. At Tarraco, public building gestures by that time had become an

1. For a summary of all the data, see esp. TED'A, *Els enterraments del Parc de la Ciutat i la problemàtica funerària de Tàrraco*, Tarragona 1987, 188 f., and GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, C., *Arqueologia y liturgia. Iglesias hispánicas (siglos IV al VIII)*, Barcelona 1995, 188. On the necropolis, the authoritative study is M. DOLORES DEL AMO'S, *Estudio crítico de la Necrópolis Paleocristiana de Tarragona*, 3 vols., Tarragona 1979-1989.

2. For a previous balance, see RODÀ, I., "Balanz actual de l'epigrafia cristiana a Catalunya", *III Reunió d'Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica Maó 1988*, Barcelona 1992, 111-113.

3. *Die römischen Inschriften von Tarraco* (hence *RIT*), 2 vols., Berlin 1975, 937-1073, to which, inter cat., the epitaph of *Thiudo*, now part of the collection of the *Museu Episcopal de Vic* (inv. n. 7825), has been added: FABRE, G.; MAYER, M.; RODÀ, I., *Fonaments* 5, 1985, 179 f. = *HEp* 1, 1989, 593; cf. RODÀ, I., *Catàleg de l'epigrafia i de l'escultura clàssiques del Museu Episcopal de Vic*, Vic 1989, 36 f. — For the number of Christian inscriptions from Tarraco already edited by J. VIVES, see *ICERV* 6 f. 10. 189-247. 277 f. 294-299. 321. 390. The Christian Latin-Greek bilingual inscriptions have most recently been re-edited by CANÓS I VILLENÀ, I., *L'epigrafia grega a Catalunya*, Debrecen 2002, 128-130, n. 145-148.

4. For recent syntheses, see MENCHON I BES, J.; MACIAS I SOLÉ, J.M.; MUÑOZ MELGAR, A., "Aproximació al procés transformador de la ciutat de Tàrraco. Del baix imperi a l'edat mitjana", *Pyrenae* 25, 1994, 225-243; KEAY, S., "Tarraco in Late Antiquity", CHRISTIE, N.; LOSEBY, S.T. (eds.), *Towns in Transition. Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Aldershot 1996, 18-44; MACIAS I SOLÉ, J.M., "Tarraco en la antigüedad tardía: un proceso simultáneo de transformación urbana e ideológica", RIBERA I LACOMBA, A. (coord.), *Los orígenes del cristianismo en Valencia y su entorno*, Valencia 2000, 259-271; GÓMEZ FERNÁNDEZ, F.J., "Tarraco en el siglo V d.C. Morfología y vitalidad urbana", *HAnt* 25, 2001, 371-391; PANZRAM, S., *Stadt und Elite: Tarraco, Corduba und Augusta Emerita zwischen Republik und Spätantike*, Stuttgart 2002, 82-127.

5. *AUR. VICT. Caes.* 33, 3; cf. *Eutr.* 9,8,2; *Oros.* 7, 22, 8. — With the exception of Els Munts/Altafulla, archaeological excavations so far do not suggest devastation and closing down of the major residential *villae* on the *ager Tarraconensis*: PANZRAM, *o.c.*, 95-105, with abundant bibliography.

6. ADSESIAS SANS, M.; POCIÑA LÓPEZ, C.A.; REMOLÀ VALLVERDÚ, J.A., "L'hàbitat suburbà portuari de l'antiga Tàrraco. Excavacions al sector afectat pel Peri 2 (Jaume I - Tabacalera)", RUIZ DE ARBULO, J. (ed.), *Tàrraco 99. Arqueologia d'una capital provincial romana. Tarragona, 15, 16 i 17 d'abril de 1999*, Tarragona 2000, 141.

7. On the two renovations observed by the excavators — one in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, another before the 5<sup>th</sup> century — see DÍAZ GARCÍA, M.; GARCÍA NOGUERA, M.; MACIAS I SOLÉ, J.M., "Las termas públicas de Tarraco: estudio preliminar", FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA, C. (ed.), *Termas romanas en el Occidente del Imperio: II Coloquio Internacional de Arqueología Gijón, diciembre de 1999*, Gijón 2000, 163-169; FERNÁNDEZ OCHOA, C., "Les termes públiques de Tarragona: excavacions en el carrer de Sant Miquel, núm. 33. Estudi preliminar", RUIZ DE ARBULO (ed.), *o.c.*, 111-133, esp. 123 f. It is not clear whether these baths do actually correspond to the *thermae Montanae* known to have been repaired by an equestrian *praeses*: *CIL* II, 4112 = *RIT* 155.

imperial domain<sup>8</sup>. The town still was a vigorous commercial centre in the fourth and fifth centuries, but underwent radical urbanistic changes, such as the abandonment of the municipal forum as the civil political, religious and economic centre in the second half of the fourth century and transformations in the harbour zone, where extramural buildings and parts of the public baths were built over by new domestic structures. The still comparatively large population is supposed to have dwelt in the upper town<sup>9</sup>.

For the early Christianization of the townscape, we mainly rely on epigraphic and literary evidence. From the famous correspondence between Bishop Consentius of Menorca and Saint Augustine we may infer that by 400 AD a considerable Christian community had taken shape<sup>10</sup>. A church of the town, risen to metropolitan bishopric in 418 or 419, was the scene of an anti-Priscillianist trial whose prime protagonist, the monk Fronto, had founded a monastery<sup>11</sup>. The funerary poem of Sergius bears witness that another yet unlocated monastery was constructed *haud procul ab urbe* under his pontificate, between 520 and 555<sup>12</sup>.

Archaeologically, Tarraco's Christian architecture continues to be invisible until the mid-fifth century, when the basilica at the heart of the paleochristian necropolis replaced the earlier oratory and memorial for the Tarraconensian martyrs executed in 259<sup>13</sup>. A dependent ecclesiastical building dated to the late fifth or early sixth century — a large two-naved building, constructed against the outer face of the eastern wall of the old temple precinct on the upper terrace of Tarragona — may have formed part of an episcopal palace<sup>14</sup>. Towards the end of the sixth century, another visigothic basilica was built in the amphitheatre<sup>15</sup>.

By the seventh century, the cathedral — one of the four churches referred to in the *Oracional de Verona* by the name *Sancta Iherusalem* — had replaced the old temple of Roma and Augustus<sup>16</sup>.

Recent excavations of so far unknown Late Roman extramural burial grounds now add to a more comprehensive picture of the Christian townscape. Some 650 m. to the north-west of the area enclosed by the Republican walls in the upper town, on the southern slope of a hill, two thirds of the late Roman necropolis at Mas Rimbau — precisely, a number of 69 structures — have been investigated in 1997. The archaeologists have separated two sectors clearly differing chronologically, the burials starting with the fifth century<sup>17</sup>. A short distance to the north-west of the ancient town, some 400 burials of roughly the same date — from about 300 until the mid or late fifth century — and of similar characteristics have been excavated: a hundred, including two chamber tombs, in the *Parc de la Ciutat*<sup>18</sup>, another 220 at the necropolis at the *Carrer de Prat de la Riba/Avinguda de Ramón y Cajal*<sup>19</sup>, 40 *loculi* on the estate *Carrer Pere Martell 15*<sup>20</sup>, 23 more burials and tomb altars, *mensae*, in an excavation of another plot in its south (parcel·la 31 del PERI-2)<sup>21</sup>.

The most sensational new discovery has, of course, been the new paleochristian complex a short distance to the north of the early Christian cemetery excavated by Serra Vilaró, uncovered between 1994 and 1997 in a rescue excavation carried out by the *Servei Arqueològic URV*<sup>22</sup>. Opposite to a *domus suburbana* constructed in the early fourth and abandoned in the fifth century, on the other side of the Roman road there stood a three-naved basilica oriented to the east. Both the sub-

8. RIT 91 records the last known project on the municipal forum, the (re?) construction of a *porticus Ioviae [basilicae (?)]*, on Diocletian's and Maximian's orders.

9. KEAY, *o.c.*, 30 f.

10. AUG. *epist. Divj.* 11.

11. Cf. AMENGUAL I BATTLE, J., "Informacions sobre el priscilianisme a la Tarraconense segons l'epist. 11 de Consentius (any 419)", *Pyrenae* 15-16, 1979-1980, 319-339; AMENGUAL I BATTLE, J., "L'església de Tarragona al començament del segle V, segons la correspondència de Consentius a sant Agustí", *Randa* 16, 1984, 5-17.

12. RIT 939 = ICERV 278.

13. GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, *o.c.*, 187-190 with abundant bibliography.

14. AQUILLUÉ, A., *La sede del Collegi d'Arquitectes. Una intervenció en el Centre Històric de Tarragona*, Tarragona 1993, 97-123.

15. GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, *o.c.*, 191-202, with abundant bibliography.

16. GODOY FERNÁNDEZ, C.; DELS S. GROS I PUJOL, M., "L'Oracional Hispànic de Verona i la topografia cristiana de Tarraco a l'antiguitat tardana: possibilitats i límits", *Pyrenae* 25, 1994, 245-258, esp. 251 f.; MENCHON I BES; MACIAS I SOLÉ; MUÑOZ MELGAR, *o.c.*, 228 f.; MACIAS I SOLÉ, *o.c.*, 265-267.

17. BEA CASTAÑO, B.; VILASECA CANALS, A., "Dues necròpolis del segle V d.n.e. a Tarragona: excavacions al Carrer de Prat de la Riba i al Mas Rimbau", RUIZ DE ARBULO (ed.), *o.c.*, 157-159.

18. TED'A, *Els enterraments del Parc de la Ciutat i la problemàtica funerària de Tàrraco*, Tarragona 1987.

19. BEA CASTAÑO; VILASECA CANALS, *o.c.*, 155-157.

20. GARCÍA NOGUERA, M.; REMOLÀ VALVERDÚ, J.A., "Noves intervencions a les necròpolis tardoantigues del marge esquerre del riu Francolí", RUIZ DE ARBULO (ed.), *o.c.*, 165-169.

21. GARCÍA NOGUERA; REMOLÀ VALVERDÚ, *o.c.*, 169-170.

22. Preliminary reports: MAR, R. ET AL., "El conjunto paleocristiano del Francolí en Tarragona. Nuevas aportaciones", *AnTard* 4, 1996, 320-324; LÓPEZ VILAR, J., "Parc Central", CORTÉS CORTÉS, R. (coord.), *Intervencions arqueològiques a Tarragona i entorn (1993-1999)*, Tarragona 2000, 59-76.

soil and the ambulatory surrounding the atrium housed more than 160 burials; two more were uncovered in the apse of the building. Yet another privileged grave in a rectangular contra-apse, added to the basilica some time after its construction, has, for the time being, been fixed to the early fifth century by the excavators. The whole complex — the basilica, the cistern and remains of a farm building — has been tentatively explained either as a donation of a wealthy *dominus* or as the residential area of a monastic community.

New epigraphic evidence comes from *Mas Rimbau*, from the *Carrer Pere Martell 15* and from the new paleochristian complex. All the texts were most generously and immediately disclosed to Prof. Alföldy by their excavators. The famous inscription of *beata Thecla* from the new paleochristian complex was almost immediately submitted to public by Rodolfo Cortés Cortés and Jordi López Vilar<sup>23</sup>. The other new finds have not yet been presented in detail, but — with the exception of the epitaph of *Samuel* from *Mas Rimbau* — photographs of all of them have been published<sup>24</sup>. It goes without saying that the following reflections on these inscriptions are deeply indebted to the archaeologists' exemplary courtesy, generousness and promptitude in making them available to the editors of the new *CIL II* fascicle and beyond.

At *Mas Rimbau*, a *menorah* with tripod base, round arms and crossbar on a stone slab, which obviously had been put above the head of a deceased person<sup>25</sup>, unquestionably reveals his or her Jewish identity<sup>26</sup>, thus adding to the three Jewish testimonies from Tarraco<sup>27</sup> and the *ager Tarracensis*<sup>28</sup> already known<sup>29</sup>. A new fragmentary epi-

taph — a rather crude slab of local limestone from the Llussós quarry — distinguished the grave of a certain *Samuel*<sup>30</sup> whose name, ranging amongst the favourite Hebrew names of patriarchs and prophets frequently borne in Western diaspora communities<sup>31</sup>, might well be thought to be a hallmark of his Jewishness. *Samuel* was, however, not an exclusively Jewish name<sup>32</sup>. If Margret H. Williams' observation that Jews favoured the undeclined form of biblical names, whereas Christians had a marked preference for the declined form<sup>33</sup>, can be applied to Western communities as well, then the declined *Samuel* from *Mas Rimbau* would perhaps more likely be considered a Christian namesake. It should be added here that the inscription — paleographically not predating the fifth century — does not seem to reveal any other indication of Jewishness (such as Jewish symbols, biblical quotations or Jewish *termini technici*). The formula — the text refers to the grave (*memoria*) of the deceased, his name following in the genitive — comes from the common stock of both Jewish and Christian inscriptions<sup>34</sup>. Given the notorious unreliability of names in telling a Jewish inscription from a non-Jewish one<sup>35</sup>, a Jewish *Samuel* at Tarraco is in fact doubtful. As however, the *menorah* from *Mas Rimbau* clearly points to a Jewish burial, as has been already suggested by the excavators<sup>36</sup>, it seems to reinforce the Jewishness of the Tarracensisian epitaph.

23. First full publication: CORTÉS CORTÉS, R.; LÓPEZ VILAR, J., "La inscripció de Thecla, verge consagrada a Crist", *Temps de monestirs. Els monestirs catalans entorn l'any mil*, Barcelona 1999, 119-122.

24. *Menorah* from *Mas Rimbau*: BEA CASTAÑO; VILASECA I CANALS, *o.c.*, 158 with fig. 13 (p. 163). — Gravestone of *Callistrate*: GARCÍA NOGUERA; REMOLÀ VALLVERDÚ, *o.c.*, 174; fig. 8; most recently, I. VELÁZQUEZ, *HEp* 10, 2004, 599. — Gravestone of *Lupulus*: LÓPEZ VILAR, *o.c.*, 75 (compare VELÁZQUEZ, *o.c.*, 601).

25. BEA I CASTAÑO; VILASECA I CANALS, *o.c.*, 157-164 with fig. 13 (p. 163); BEA I CASTAÑO, D.; CARILLA SANZ, A.; VILASECA I CANALS, A., "Un nuevo sector excavado de la necrópolis tardo-imperial de *Mas Rimbau* (Tarragona, tarragonès). Nota preliminar", *XXIV Congreso Nacional de Arqueología IV: Romanización y desarrollo urbano en la Hispania republicana*, Cartagena 1997, 587-592. The piece is deposited in the *Museo Nacional d'Arqueologia de Tarragona* (hence MNAT), inv. n. 45.183.

26. See NIQUET, *o.c.*, 172.

27. RIT 1075-1076.

28. RIT 1074, from Pallaresos.

29. The three texts have been most recently re-edited by NOY,

D., *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe. I: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul*, Cambridge 1993 (hence: *JIWE I*), nos. 185-187.

30. MNAT inv. n. TRM 5.95-5779-1. For a detailed discussion of the *menorah* and the epitaph, see NIQUET, *o.c.*, 169-173.

31. Other namesakes of *Samuel*: NOY, *JIWE I* 92, n. 69 = *CIJ I* 583; *JIWE I* 187, n. 145 = *CIJ I* 650; *JIWE I* 157, n. 121 = *CIJ I* 630; *JIWE I* 238, n. 177; NOY, D., *Jewish Inscriptions from Western Europe. II: The City of Rome (hence: JIWE II)*, Cambridge 1995, 139, n. 174 = *CIJ I* 399; *JIWE II* 149 f., n. 187 = *CIJ I* 401; *JIWE II* 187 = *CIJ I* 401 and *CIJ I* 399.

32. As has been recently reconsidered by WILLIAMS, M.H., "The Jewish Community of Corycus — Two More Inscriptions", *ZPE* 92, 1992, 251 f.

33. WILLIAMS, *o.c.*

34. For Jewish inscriptions, see, f. ex., NOY, *JIWE I*, n. 176 = *CIJ I* 660b. *Memoria* in the meaning of "tomb, grave": *JIWE I*, n. 174 = *CIJ* 526, where *memoria* is used as a synonym for *dormitio*; *JIWE* 183 = *CIJ* 661; 187 = *CIJ* 1 660d = *RIT* 1074. Christian analogues have been collected by MUÑOZ GARCÍA DE ITURROSPE, M.T., *Tradicón formular y literaria en los epitafios latinos de la Hispania cristiana*, Vitoria/Gasteiz 1995, 115-117.

35. On this problem, most recently MUSSIES, G., "Jewish Personal Names in Some Non-literary Sources", VAN HENTEN, J.W.; VAN DER HORST, P.W. (eds.), *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy*, Leiden, New York, Köln 1994, 242-276, esp. 243 f.; cf. VAN DER HORST, P.W., *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs. An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy (300 BCE - 700 CE)*, Kampen 1991, 16-18.

36. BEA I CASTAÑO; VILASECA I CANALS, *o.c.*, 158.

The new funerary inscription of *Callistrate*, procured by her husband *Fl(avius) Profutur(us)*, came to light at the *Carrer Pere Martell 15* in 1998<sup>37</sup>. The text — *Callistrate fide/lissima, vives / in Deo domino. / Fl(avius) Prof(uturus) compar* — provides us with new data with respect to both formula and onomastics. On the Iberian peninsula, Christians were not used to addressing their deceased as *fidelissimus/a*<sup>38</sup>. The formula *vives in Deo domino*, a rare expansion of the common acclamations *vives in Deo* or *vives in domino* and the like<sup>39</sup>, occurs for the first time in the Christian epigraphy of Tarraco<sup>40</sup>.

As for the names, to the best of my knowledge, neither that of the woman nor the cognomen of her widower have so far been attested in Hispanic inscriptions<sup>41</sup>. *Kallistrate*, a common name in Ancient Greece<sup>42</sup> and particularly in Attica<sup>43</sup>, rarely occurs in the Western provinces; of all the testimonies, none seems to be later than third century<sup>44</sup>. For *Profuturus*, we note three Christian namesakes — two bishops and the dedicator of a mosaic pavement at Iulium Car-

nicum.<sup>45</sup> *Flavius*, the gentile of Tarraco's *Profuturus*<sup>46</sup>, had come into vogue as a status marker of imperial servants and soldiers from the early fourth century on<sup>47</sup>, about to become "little more than a courtesy title functioning something like Mr in modern English usage<sup>48</sup>" and "as common as dirt in the lower reaches of the new municipal elites<sup>49</sup>". For this and several other reasons — the deceased is still characterized by a superlative; in the last line, we notice a ligature, rarely used in later Christian inscriptions; in the first two lines, *hederae* figure as interpunctuations; finally, palaeography<sup>50</sup> — the inscription seems to predate the fifth century.

Another three new Christian inscriptions have been brought to light in the course of the rescue excavations of the new paleochristian complex at the *Parc Central*: two inscribed fragments of a marble tablet, incomplete on all sides and cut off on its back, whose uneven paleography — one of the fragments shows an A with angled bar — suggests a date not earlier than the fifth century<sup>51</sup>, the epitaph of a certain *Lupulus*<sup>52</sup> and the most prominent epigraphic novelty, the epitaph of *beata Thecla*, the Egyptian *virgo Christi* who had died at Tarraco at the age of 77.

Of the latter two inscriptions, the fragmentary epitaph of *Lupulus* (Fig. 1)<sup>53</sup>, reading *Hic requiescit*

37. For a photography, see GARCÍA NOGUERA; REMOLÀ VALVERDÚ, *o.c.*, 174, fig. 8; compare VELÁZQUEZ, *HEp* 10, 2004, 599.

38. An exceptional parallel: RIT 961. Cf. MUÑOZ GARCÍA ITURROSPE, *o.c.*, 66 f.

39. Examples for the latter have been collected by E. DIEHL, *ILCV* III p. 339.

40. The stock so far includes formula such as in *PX(Christo) quiescere* (RIT 960), in *Deo laetare* (RIT 991); cf. *requiescit san(c)tus spiretus(!) in nomine(!) Dei* (RIT 998). Other towns so far do not offer parallels; see, however, *ICVR* n.s. IX 24119: *Regina vibas(!) in domino Zesu(!)*. — *Dominus Deus* in other formula: *CIL* XIII, 8331 = *AE* 1953, 272 = 1995, 1116 = GALSTERER, B. and H., *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Köln 1975, 70, Nr. 290: *D(eo) d(omino)? PX(Christo) d(edit) a(nimam)*; *AE* 1935, 94: *votum reddit d(omin)o D(e)o a(d)iuvante*; BUONOCORE, M., *Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae septimo saeculo antiquiores. V: Regio 3, Bari* 1987, 62 n. 52: *In D(eo) d(omino) et spiritu san(c)to*; *ILCV* 3375 C [--- in do]mino Deo nostro.

41. Neither J.M. ABASCAL PALAZÓN, (*Los nombres personales en las inscripciones latinas de Hispania*, Murcia 1994) nor A. LOZANO VELILLA (*Die griechischen Personennamen auf der iberischen Halbinsel*, Heidelberg 1998) record any namesake.

42. For references, see FRASER, P.M.; MATTHEWS, E. (eds.), *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, vol. 1, Oxford 1987, 249; vol. 3 B, Oxford 2000, 22.

43. FRASER; MATTHEWS, *o.c.*, vol. 2, Oxford 1994, 252.

44. See SOLIN, H., *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom. Ein Namenbuch*, Bd. 1, Berlin-New York 1982, 94; cf. SOLIN, H., *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen. Ein Namenbuch. II. Teil: Griechische Namen*, Stuttgart 1996, 211. For yet another occurrence, see FERRUA, A., *RAL* 35, 1980, 87, n. 11 (early 3rd cent.). — For a few male *Callistrati* buried in Roman catacombs, see *ICVR* n.s. I 2093; VIII 21708. For *Callistrati* from elsewhere, see, f. ex., *CIL* VIII, 13535 = *CLE* 1417 = *ILCV* 780 (from Carthage).

45. The bishop of Ticinum: PIETRI, CH. and L., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 2: Italie (313-604)*, Rome 2000, 1851 *Profuturus* 2. — The bishop of Numidian Circa: MANDOUZE, A., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire 1: Afrique (303-533)*, Paris 1982, 928 f. — The donator from Iulium Carnicum (late

4th or early 5th cent.): MAINARDIS, F., *Supplementa Italica* n.s. 12, 1994, 146 f.n. 52. The Roman catacombs offer a couple of Christian namesakes (all undated): *ICVR* n.s. III 6756, 6871c, 7766b; IV 11394, 11396, 10115; VII 19226; VIII 22619; IX 24185, 25462.

46. Another paleochristian epitaph, dated to the late 4th or early 5th century, was put up by a *Fl(avius) Zoticus* for his wife: RIT 960. For *Flavii* in the Late Roman *Hispania Tarraconensis*, see now GALLEGO FRANCO, H., *El nomen Flavius en las estructuras onomásticas y sociales de la provincia tarraconense. Un estudio de las fuentes epigráficas*, *HAnt* 25, 2001, 239. 241 f.

47. KEENAN, J.G., "The Names Flavius and Aurelius as Status Designations", *ZPE* 11, 1973, 33-63 and 13, 1974, 283-304.

48. CAMERON, AL., "Flavius: a Nicety of Protocol", *Latomus* 47, 1988, 26-33.

49. CAMERON, *o.c.*, 33.

50. The letters have been executed quite carefully; typical late letter forms, like A with angled bar, do not occur.

51. MNAT, inv. n. ER 94.3063 and 94.3041. According to GÉZA ALFÖLDY's autopsy in September 2002 (to whom I owe a description, a drawing and photographs), the first fragment has an A in its first line, an R and part of a vertical in its second. Of the second fragment, in the first line there is the lower curve of what seems to be a B, in the second line the serif of a horizontal bar and part of an N, in the third line, part of another curved letter. In between, guidelines are visible. Measurements: (12,2) × (8) × 6/11 (first fragment); (14,5) × (6) × 1 (second fragment). Letter height: 5 cm.

52. For a photography *in situ*, see LÓPEZ VILAR, *o.c.*, 75.

53. MNAT, ER '95-3041.





Fig. 1

/ *in pace Lupulu[s] / peregr[?---] / ----*<sup>54</sup>, does not seem a nut as tough to crack as that of the pious virgin. Paleographically, it is certainly not earlier than late fourth or early fifth century<sup>55</sup> and predates the late fifth century. The name of the deceased was borne by numerous pagans<sup>56</sup> including two females from Tarraco<sup>57</sup> and Barcino<sup>58</sup>. There are, however, very few Christian namesakes, the Tarraconensian being the first and (so far) only in the Iberian Peninsula<sup>59</sup>. Some of these Christians possibly owe their name to *Lupulus*, a martyr of Capua venerated in Cappadocia and Campania<sup>60</sup> who figures twice in a double list of saints, prophets and apostles from the mosaic floors of the (no longer extant) Capuan church St. Priscus, dated to the fifth or sixth century<sup>61</sup>. At the beginning of the third line, the Tarraconensian *Lupulus* was obviously styled a *peregrinus*<sup>62</sup>, that is:

54. The reading follows G. ALFÖLDY's autopsy in September 2002.

55. Notice the letter A with angled bar.

56. For references, see SOLIN, H.; SALOMIES, O., *Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum Latinorum*, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York 1994, 355; LÖRINCZ, B., *Onomasticon provinciarum Europae Latinarum* 3, Wien 2000, 38 f.

57. CIL II, 4160 = RIT 195.

58. FABRE, G.; MAYER, M.; RODÀ, I., *Inscriptions romaines de Catalogne. 4: Barcino*, Paris 1997, 268 f., n. 186.

59. Another *Lupula* was buried at Dertona: MENNELLA, G., *Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae septimo saeculo antiquiores. 7: Regio IX. Dertona, Libarna, Forum Iulii Iriensium*, Bari 1990, 53 f., n. 47. In the Roman catacomb of Peter and Marcellus, two *Lupuli*, pilgrims on their way to the holy sepulchres of the martyrs, scratched their names into the walls: ICVR n.s. VI 15938e; 15979.

60. His veneration was fixed to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> october: Comm. mart. Hieron. p. 469-70.

61. ILCV 1965A; ILCV 1966A (*Lupulus* appears in 1965A c and 1966A ß). For a detailed discussion, see DELEHAYE, H., *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, Bruxelles 1933, 302-304.

62. The letters could belong either to the substantive or to a conjugated form of the verb *peregrinari*. For the former, compare f.ex. AE 1928, 35: *Tehodosius(!) / fidelis hic qui/escit peregrinu(s)*; AE 1971, 494; AE 1971, 495; AE 1985, 558 = CIL II, 5, 555. For the latter, see AE 1938, 135 = 1975, 414h from Grado: *Hic requiescit in pace Christi sanctae memoriae Marcianus episcopus, qui vixit in episcopato annos XLIII et peregrinatus / est pro causa fidei annos XL; depositus est autem in hoc sepulchro / VIII Kal. Maias indict(ione) undecima*.



Fig. 2

a Christian who had finished his life as a guest on earth in order to return to eternal heaven<sup>63</sup>.

The epitaph of *Thecla* (Fig. 2), uncovered in the interior of the central nave of the new paleochristian basilica<sup>64</sup>, was from the start predestined to attract extraordinary attention<sup>65</sup>, the deceased woman bearing the name of Tarragona's city patroness, the saint from Iconium<sup>66</sup>. Accordingly, the inscription has already resuscitated the controversy about the origin of the cult of Saint Thecla at Tarraco, fixed to the early sixth century by a majority of scholars, but recently predated to as early as the fourth century CE<sup>67</sup>.

The inscription does not provide a date in itself. The firmly Christian vocabulary, the style of the lettering, the peculiar letter forms of the V and the G and the conclusive *hedera* all point to the fifth or sixth century<sup>68</sup>. The inscription is notable

63. In his autopsy, G. Alföldy read *PEREGR[?+---]*. Of the last extant letter, part of a vertical line and of a curve are visible, from which one may exclude a formula like *peregit annos ...* (see, f. ex., AE 1906, 39: *annos peregit duos et octoginta*).

64. LÓPEZ VILAR, o.c., 64: "... a l'interior de la nau central, en l'estrat general de destrucció que cobria l'edifici basilical."

65. For full editions of the inscription, see above (footnote 24) and LÓPEZ VILAR, o.c., 64 (with translation into Catalan): *Haec hic beata Thecla, / virgo Christi. Ei patria Aegypt(us). / Vixit ann(is) LXXVII; ut meruit, in pace requievit D(omi)ni*. See, most recently, VELÁZQUEZ, *HEp* 10, 2004, 600.

66. On *Thecla* and the *Acta Pauli et Theclae*, see, f. ex., JENSEN, A., *Thekla — Die Apostolin*, Gütersloh 1999.

67. DEL AMO, M.D., "Thecla et Theclae. De la santa de Iconio a la beata tarraconense", *El temps sota control. Homenatge a F. Xavier Ricomà Vendrell*, Tarragona 1997, 123-130 (non vidi); DEL AMO, M.D., "Tarraco en el período de la ocupación bizantina del se español", *V Reunión d'Arqueologia Cristiana Hispànica Cartagena 1998*, Barcelona 2000, 145-149.

68. Vocabulary: ALFÖLDY, o.c., 483 f. — For the V, which resembles a Y, compare ICERV 504, 506 (dated to visigothic times); HÜBNER, E., *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Christianae*, Berlin 1871, n. 180 (6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> cent.) = ICERV 265; HÜBNER, E., *Inscriptionum Hispaniae Christianarum supplementum*, Berlin 1900, n. 324 (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> cent.) = ICERV 371 (considered much later by VIVES). — Parallels from Tarraco for G with a crossbar pointing downwards: RIT 944 (393 AD); RIT 971, 987, 1011 and 1014 (not earlier than 5<sup>th</sup> cent.); RIT 989 (probably late 5<sup>th</sup> cent.). On the paleography, cf. CORTÉS CORTÉS; LÓPEZ VILAR, o.c., 119. — For the *hedera* running out of use by visigothic times, see ALFÖLDY, o.c., p. 484.

by a number of peculiarities<sup>69</sup>: It opens with the unusual sequence *haec hic beata Thecla*<sup>70</sup> and gives the deceased woman's origin, a rare information in paleochristian epitaphs<sup>71</sup>. The well-known concluding formula *requievit in pace* is expanded to the unique sequence *ut meruit, in pace requievit d(omi)ni*<sup>72</sup>. The closest parallel may be seen in the metrical epitaph of an unknown woman buried in 422 AD at Syracusae, whose conclusive sentence runs *digna cum sanctis, ut mereatur, ibi deposita est in pace D(o)m(in)i*<sup>73</sup>.

The woman buried in the new paleochristian basilica has been considered a "holy woman"<sup>74</sup> or "una monja con el nombre de *Thecla*, procedente de Egipto y muerta ... con fama de santa"<sup>75</sup>. As such, the inscription is thought to suggest that the cult of the martyr from Iconium had been introduced at Tarraco as early as in the fourth century AD, a thesis primarily based on the spread of the *Acta Pauli et Theclae* and of the *Orationes Pseudocyprianae* as well as on the presence of easterners, who might have performed a mediatory role<sup>76</sup>.

A thorough look at the text does, however, stand in the way of such a rapprochement of the deceased virgin in Christ<sup>77</sup>, who seems to have to be added to the number of her sisters in faith

already known epigraphically<sup>78</sup>, and the saint<sup>79</sup>. The inscription evidently neither indicates nor refers to the deposition of relics or a reliquary; the formula is that of a Christian epitaph. The few known epitaphs of martyrs and inscriptions related to the deposition of relics in the Peninsula obviously do not predate the sixth century<sup>80</sup>. Finally, the fact that the saint's Egyptian namesake is called *beata* clearly does not win her the fame of a saint. As a matter of fact, *beatus* (or *beatissimus*) in inscriptions particularly characterizes martyrs<sup>81</sup> and apostles<sup>82</sup>; at the same time, the adjective figures in epitaphs of bishops<sup>83</sup> and presbyters<sup>84</sup>, but even in inscriptions of non-clerics<sup>85</sup>. It defines the deceased who enjoys celestial felicity, but may as well characterize the living in his life on earth, two phases which are juxtaposed in the fine epitaph of bishop Placentinus from Madauros who is praised as *quondam beatus [in vita] et nunc beatior [in pa]ce*<sup>86</sup>. The epigraphic evidence goes hand in hand with the literary evidence: In his *De beata vita*, Augustine defines Christian *beatitudo*, felicity resulting from a pious life and the knowledge of the Law of God, as *pie perfecteque cognoscere, a quo inducaris in veritatem, qua veritate perfruaris, per quid conecctaris summo modo*<sup>87</sup>. The living is characterized as a *beatus in spe* already on his way to a *beatitudo* which he is

69. As already noted by CORTÉS CORTÉS and LÓPEZ VILAR: *o.c.*, 119 f.

70. So far, I know of no epigraphic parallels. The immediate sequence of the adverbial *hic* and the demonstrative pronoun *haec*, here obviously referring to the deceased woman, occurs in Roman comedy: See, f. ex., Plaut. *Truc.* 335 *sed quid haec hic autem diu ante aedis stetit*.

71. Hispanic examples: the funerary inscription of Aurelius Aeliodorus(!), *natione Graeca(!), civis Tarsus(!) Cilicia, commorans (H)ispali* (RIT 958, 4th or early 5th cent.) and the epitaph of Aurelius Iulianus *nationem(!) Afram(!)* from Gades (4th cent.) (ICERV 139 = ILCV 3386). Cf. also ILCV 4460 B (*oriundus ex Armenia*). The unconventional phrase *ei patria Aegypt(us)* in Thecla's epitaph seems to be the translation from a Greek equivalent.

72. Parallels for the expression *in pace requievit Domini*: two epitaphs for a presbyter and a *famula Dei* from Lusitanian Myrtilis, AE 1985, 506 (a. 512), AE 1989, 365 (a. 539 or 534) and an interesting metrical inscription from Syracusae, AE 1906, 167 (a. 422). In a series of funerary inscriptions from Albulae in Mauretania Caesariensis, the slight variation *discessit in pace Domini (nostri)* is used: AE 1985, 979; 981 f.; 988.

73. AE 1906, 167 (the phrase is completed by the consular date).

74. KEAY, *o.c.*, 41.

75. DEL AMO, "Tarraco...", *o.c.*, 145.

76. For literature, see above (footnote 67) and CORTÉS CORTÉS; LÓPEZ VILAR, *o.c.*, 120.

77. On the term and its meaning, see esp. PIETRI, CH., "Le mariage chrétien à Rome", PIETRI, CH., *Christiana respublica. Éléments d'une enquête sur le christianisme antique* 3, Rome 1997, 1543-1569. Compare SCHÖLLGEN, G., "Jungfräulichkeit", RAC 19, 2001, 547-591, with an up-to-date bibliography.

78. The terminology varies: See, f. ex., CIL II, 7, 706 (*virgo et famula PX(Christi)*); AE 1902, 75 = ICVR n.s. 8, 20836 for an *abbatissa* styled *s(acra) v(irgo)*, ICERV 54 = ILCV 1725 for a *virgo immaculata in Dei nomine ancilla XP(ist)i*. Most women were called *famula*, *virgo* or *ancilla Dei* (or *Christi*, respectively).

79. See the objections already put forward after DEL AMO's conference by SOTOMAYOR, DE PALOL and GODOY: DEL AMO, "Tarraco...", *o.c.*, 149.

80. On their date, types and formula, see DUVAL, Y., "Projet d'enquête sur l'épigraphie martyriale en Espagne romaine, visigothique (et byzantine)", *AnTard* 1, 1993, 173-203; cf. CASTILLO MALDONADO, P., *Los mártires hispanorromanos y su culto en la Hispania de la antigüedad tardía*, Granada 1999, 179-195.

81. See, f. ex., CIL VIII, 27545 = AE 1899, 40; CIL VIII, 23921 = ILLun 648; AE 1937, 177 = ILLun 278; AE 1935, 95 = ILLun 471; AE 1957, 120 = 1958, 121; AE 1983, 128; AE 1982, 135b; AE 1975, 139; AE 1949, 41; AE 1969/70, 730 = 1955, 48; AE 1990, 459 = 1992, 879a+b. Notice particularly RIT 944, the funerary inscription of Marturia, concluding with the exclamation *vivas cum beatos(!)*.

82. See, f. ex., CIL VI, 41397a = ILCV 1758 = ILS 8989 and CIL VI, 41420c = CIL VI, 8566 = ICVR 1, 989 = ILCV 110 = ICVR n.s. 2, 4184.

83. See, f. ex., AE 1974, 696; CIL II, 14, 91 = IHC 184; AE 1903, 96; AE 1937, 148 = ILLAlg 2, 7200.

84. AE 1912, 295 = ILLun 379.

85. See AE 1969-70, 737c from Altava. Note also the funerary inscription for the *beatus spiritus* of Flavius Lampadius, a boy who died at the age of 11: BINAZZI, G., *Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae septimo saeculo antiquiores. Regio V: Picenum*, Bari 1995, 34 f., n. 19.

86. AE 1916, 81 = ILLAlg 1, 2757.

87. Aug. *beat. vit.* 35.

finally rewarded with, thus rising to be a *beatus in re*<sup>88</sup>.

In what way and how far, then, does the funerary inscription of the *virgo Christi* from Tarraco still shed new light on the cult of saint Thecla? If we are right in assuming that particular religious assumptions laid behind the naming<sup>89</sup>, then the inscription does, first and foremost, broaden our evidence for the veneration of the martyr in Egypt, the native country of the *beata Thecla* buried at Tarraco. According to Stephen J. Davis' stimulating recent monography it were Alexandrian female monks who as early as in the fourth and fifth century revered Thecla as their patron saint and disseminated her veneration through the country<sup>90</sup>. The author emphasizes the important role of women who were active as pilgrims and residents at Thecla's shrine near Seleucia in Asia Minor.

If the Thecla devotion at Tarraco should have begun at so early a date, we are still lacking conclusive pre-medieval evidence for its spread and its protagonists. It may be seductive to assume that an Egyptian namesake of the saint made genuine efforts to introduce the cult of the

saint at Tarraco, but the inscription regrettably does not *prove* this. It would overdo to conclude from Thecla's by then common Christian name that she gave her life to establishing the cult of the saint.

The pious virgin from Egypt is at least another point in favour of a strong oriental influence on Tarraco's religious development in Late Roman and Visigothic Times. A countryman of Thecla, the Alexandrian presbyter Stephanus, died there, too, in 619 AD.<sup>91</sup> Was the virgin missionary's part in Christianizing Tarraco so prominent as to win her the privileged grave in the rectangular contrapose of the new paleochristian basilica, which its excavators have been tempted to attribute either to her or to the generous donator of the complex?<sup>92</sup> Direct prove of this could only come from its full archaeological valuation, while the inscription leaves us with the knowledge that Tarraco's earliest *Thecla* known to us is an Egyptian who happened to end up her life far away from home. Epigraphic highlights such as this nurture the hope that future findings might shed some more light on our yet all too incomplete knowledge of the Christianization of the Iberian peninsula.

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88. For a detailed summary, see DE NORONHA GALVÃO, H, "Beatitudo", MAYER, C. (Hrsg.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1, Basel 1986-1994, 624-638.

89. Among the Christian inhabitants of Egypt, the saint's name has been proved in documentary evidence from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century across a wide geographical range. Its popularity was notably increasing during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, due to the emergence of pilgrimage practice: DAVIES, ST. J., "Namesakes of Saint Thecla in Late Antique Egypt", *BASP* 36, 1999, 71-81, reprinted in his *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2001, 201-208.

90. See the previous footnote.

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91. RIT 940 = ICERV 556: *Stephanus Alexandrinus in honore Dei et omnium sanctorum die VIII Id(us) April(es) an(no) tertio ordinationis eius cum suis sub pontificatu Georgii ep(iscop)i. Sigillum hic esto.*

92. See LÓPEZ VILAR, o.c., 65: "Podria ser que aquí hi hagués el cos del *dominus* artífex de la donació, ja fóra un laic, ja un eclesiàstic. Però també és possible plantejar que hi hagués aquí la tomba de la *beata Theclalica*, mentre que una altra tomba col·locada al costat mateix va conservar intacte el seu esquelet."