

# ON THE DEPICTIONS OF ROMAN SOLDIERS ON FUNERARY MONUMENTS IN MOESIA INFERIOR

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**Keywords:** Moesia Inferior, Tomis, Roman army, gravestone.

**Abstract:** One of the few examples of Roman gravestones bearing a depiction of the deceased as a soldier was known to have been found in Tomis and kept in the collection of the National Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest. Considered lost at one point in time, the monument was traced to the National Military Museum and it is presented here together with other two gravestones from Moesia Inferior, originating in Histria and Oescus.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Moesia inferior, Tomis, armata romană, stelă funerară.

**Rezumat:** Unul dintre puținele exemple de stele funerare de epocă romană cu reprezentarea defunctului ca militar era cunoscută ca provenind de la Tomis și păstrată în colecția Muzeului Național de Antichități din București. Considerată pierdută la un moment dat, stela a fost reperată la Muzeul Militar Național și este prezentată aici alături de alte două stele funerare din Moesia inferior, de la Histria și de la Oescus.

More than fifty years ago D. Tudor, in the second volume of this very publication<sup>1</sup>, presented a selection of unpublished inscriptions from Dacia and Dobruđa, mentioned in the manuscripts of Gr. G. Tocilescu – the former director of the National Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest – and present at that date in the lapidarium of the Archaeological Institute in Bucharest founded in 1956 and including the former Museum as one of its departments. During recent research on ancient stone monuments<sup>2</sup>, especially on those bearing depictions of soldiers, we were able to re-examine one particular gravestone found in ancient Constanța and published for the first time by D. Tudor (Fig. 1). The results of this re-examination are the subject of the present contribution.

<sup>1</sup> Tudor 1956. The manuscripts of Gr. G. Tocilescu are preserved in the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> The monument was documented within the NCSRHE Project TE 113 (2010–2013) of PN II (2007–2013) Human Resources: [www.arheomedia.ro/monumente/ID5122](http://www.arheomedia.ro/monumente/ID5122).

## THE SOLDIER FROM TOMIS

For a long time this spectacular marble funerary stela from Tomis was considered lost<sup>3</sup>. Recently it was possible to study it in the permanent exhibition of the National Military Museum in Bucharest (Fig. 2). The stela is but partially preserved: only two thirds of the plate<sup>4</sup> with the original right side remained, showing surface damage of the area below the register with the depiction wherein the inscription was carved. The upper part of the stela is also missing, rendering impossible the identification of its initial shape. It is also impossible to determine whether the inscription started on the upper border of the field with depiction or had only the two lines carved under this field<sup>5</sup>. From the preserved part of

<sup>3</sup> Gr. G. Tocilescu's manuscript 5132, sheet 309 (see also note 1 above). The information (a handwritten note in a small size notebook) is very scarce, and probably belongs to Tocilescu himself. For provenance information is mentioned only "Constanța".

The monument was registered in the collection of the National Museum of Antiquities in Bucharest under inv. No. L658: Tudor 1956, p. 585, no. 55, fig. 12. The monument was loaned to the newly organised National Military Museum but the formal registration of this action seems to have been lost. – ISM II, 213: *Ma]rcianus patri / [--- posu]it*; Alexandrescu-Vianu 1985, p. 77, no 182.

<sup>4</sup> Dimensions: preserved height about 70 cm; preserved width 42 cm; thickness of the slab 8 cm (in the area bearing the inscription) and 11 cm (in the area of the field with depiction). The field with depiction is about 6.5 cm deep and the preserved height of the body of the represented soldier is 26 cm. The letters are about 4 cm high. On the right side of the slab still exists the hole for a clamp (3 cm wide and 2 cm high, ca. 1.5 cm deep).

<sup>5</sup> Typologically the stela could have been a type of gravestone with a simple border and relief or a naiskos-type gravestone, as in Conrad 2004, p. 35–36. It belonged rather to the Greek gravestones 'Typ A' or 'B' than 'Form VII' after Conrad 2004 – see also in Conrad 2004, p. 54, footnote 454 the comment on this particular monument from Tomis.

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