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A NEW GOVERNOR OF MOESIA SUPERIOR

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A NEW GOVERNOR OF MOESIA SUPERIOR¹

In the course of the archaeological campaign of 2014 in the Roman *Colonia Ulpia Traiana Ratiaria*, which in the last quarter of the third century became the provincial capital of *Dacia Ripensis*, in the Vidin district of Bulgaria,² two marble *arae* were discovered in the „Babuya“ area. Both are dedicated to Diana. Unfortunately, due to massive disruption of the site during last two decades, a proper archaeological context is unavailable, and the terrain still awaits full excavation.

The dedications to Diana might indicate that a sanctuary of that goddess existed in *colonia Ulpia Ratiaria* and the *arae* were located near or inside the sanctuary. One of them was set up by a provincial governor of Moesia Superior, and the second probably by an imperial freedman.³ In this article I will be dealing with the first *ara*, where a previously unattested provincial governor is mentioned.

The marble altar, h. 100 cm, w. 63 cm, d. 42 cm is fragmented. Thus, on its upper right and lower end as well as on the left side the base is partly broken, which affects the inscription. The upper and lower ends are profiled.

The letters are well formed, not heavily apicated, with varied sizes: 6.5 cm (l. 1–2), 6 cm (l. 3, 4, 5, 6) and 5 cm (l. 7).

The inscription reads as follow:

DIANAE	<i>Dianae</i>
SACR	<i>sacr(um)</i>
Ṭ·MINIC	<i>T(itus) Minic(ius)</i>
Q̄PIMIANVS	<i>Opimianus</i>
[L]ĒG·AVG·PR·PR	<i>[l]eg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)</i>
[P]ROV·MOES	<i>[p]rov(inciae) Moes-</i>
[IA]E SVPER	<i>[ia]e Super(ioris).</i>

Ligature: 5 line: AV

‘Dedicated to Diana, T. Minicius Opimianus, imperial legate *pro praetore* of the province of Upper Moesia (set this up)’.

The ligature is most likely a result of the stone-cutter wanting to cite the title in one line. This is also probably why PR PR appears a bit crowded.

Despite the partial fragmentation of the inscription, the name of the provincial governor is clear – T. Minicius Opimianus. He seems to have belonged to the senatorial family of Minicii and one of his predecessors was the T.(?) Salvius Rufinus Minicius Opimianus who was appointed as procurator of the province of Asia.⁴ The family’s origin appears to be in Tusculum,⁵ which has also been shown by onomas-

¹ My sincere thanks go to Werner Eck, Nicolay Sharankov, Hadrien Bru and Adam Kemezis for their valuable comments on the draft of this paper

² On the latest excavations in Ratiaria, see *Ratiaria semper floreat*, vol. 1. *Ratiaria and its Territory* (ed. R. Ivanov), Sofia, 2014; I. Topalilov, Some Notes on the Topography of Ratiaria, *Oltenia* 20–21, 2013–2014, 95–104; Z. Dimitrov, Latest Data from Archaeological Excavations of Ratiaria. Architectural Complexes and Problems with the Studies, *Oltenia* 20–21, 2013–2014, 105–119. For the *lex coloniae*, see W. Eck, *Fragmente eines neuen Stadtgesetzes – der lex coloniae Ulpiae Traianae Ratiariae*, *Athenaeum* 104, 2016, 538–544.

³ The inscription is published in I. Topalilov – H. Bru. P. Mummius Sisenna Rutilianus à Ratiaria (Mésie Supérieure), *DHA* 42/2, 2016 (in print).

⁴ For him, see W. Eck, *Ergänzungen zu den Fasti Consulares des 1. und 2. Jh.n.Chr.*, *Historia* 24, 1975, 326–327, n. 13; *PIR*² M 623a. It has been suggested recently that his procuratorship should be dated around 100 AD, see H.-G. Pflaum *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain. Supplément*, Review by: W. Eck, *Gnomon* 57, 1985, 255.

⁵ W. Eck (n. 4) 327.



tics.⁶ From the evidence of a funeral epitaph found in Grottaferrata, it seems that the members of the family were assigned to the tribe Papiria.⁷

A little more is known for the son of the procurator T. Salvius Rufinus Minicius Opimianus who built the Mausoleum in Grottaferrata.⁸ It appears that on July, 1, 123 he was appointed with Cn. Sentius Aburnianus as *cos. suff.*, as a military diploma issued on August, 10 reveals.⁹ Perhaps 15 or 16 years later,¹⁰ he was *proconsul Africae*. A dedication made to the emperor that was set up in Thagora in 139¹¹ dates his proconsulship either in 138/139¹² or 139/140.¹³

A similar career seems likely for his son, who according to an inscription of November, 3 was *cos. suff.* in 155.¹⁴

The last known representative of this family is the grandson of T. Salvius Rufinus Minicius Opimianus, known only from a hagiographical source. Specifically, a certain “Municius Timinianus” is mentioned in the Latin version of *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* as a proconsul of Africa who died a year before the trial of Perpetua.¹⁵ As T. Barnes suggests, in this case we are possibly dealing with Minicius Opimianus, as he is mentioned in the Greek version of the *Passio* as Μινούκιος Ὀπιμιανός.¹⁶ He was probably proconsul of Africa either in 202–203 or 203–204.¹⁷ Following the usual interval of time between a suffect consulship and the proconsulship of Africa that is observed in similar cases, W. Eck reasonably suggested that Μινούκιος Ὀπιμιανός was *cos. suff.* in 186/187.¹⁸ R. Syme’s observation that the time interval between the two positions was 15 years dates his proconsulship in 188–189.¹⁹

As can be concluded from this short review of the information available so far, the members of the family of T. (?) Salvius Rufinus Minicius Opimianus figured consistently in the *fasti consulares*, two of them became proconsuls of Africa. These consulars will naturally have governed other provinces before attaining the honor of the African post, and Moesia Superior could certainly be among those provinces.²⁰

⁶ A. M. Andermahr, *Totus in praediis. Senatorischer Grundbesitz in Italien in der Frühen und Hohen Kaiserzeit*, Bonn 1998, 343–344, no 346.

⁷ See the inscription in AE 1906, 80; see also M. Roxan – W. Eck, *A Diploma of Moesia Inferior: 125 Jun. 1*, ZPE 116, 1997, 200, n. 73; on his family, see W. Eck (n. 4) 327; RMD I 51, n. 6.

⁸ PIR² M 623.

⁹ See M. Roxan (n. 6) no. 21; G. Alföldy, *Konsulat und Senatorenstand unter den Antoninien. Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Führungsschicht*, Bonn 1977, 111. On the possibility for July, 1st, see W. Eck – A. Pangerl, *Neue Diplome mit den Namen von Konsuln und Statthaltern*, ZPE 187, 2013, 288.

¹⁰ For 16 years interval, see W. Eck (n. 4) 325.

¹¹ CIL VIII, 4643; ILA I g 1, 1029; B.E. Thomasson, *Fasti Africani. Senatorische und ritterliche Amtsträger in den römischen Provinzen Nordafrikas von Augustus bis Diokletian*, Stockholm 1996, 60, no.71; G. Alföldy (n. 9) 207.

¹² G. Alföldy (n. 9) 207, 267; R. Syme, *Hadrianic Proconsuls of Africa*, ZPE 37, 1980, 5, 12.

¹³ PIR² M 623.

¹⁴ CIL VI 2120 = 32398a = Dessau 8380; see also G. Alföldy (n. 9) 167, 207, 308 and recently W. Eck, *Die Fasti consulares der Regierungszeit des Antoninus Pius. Eine Bestandsaufnahme seit Géza Alföldys Konsulat und Senatorenstand in: Studia Epigraphica in memoriam Géza Alföldy* (W. Eck, B. Fehér, P. Kovács ed.), Bonn 2013, 77, n. 25.

¹⁵ 6.2. *Hilarianus procurator, qui tunc loco proconsulis Minuci Timiniani defuncti ius gladii acceperat*; see also PIR² M 622.

¹⁶ T. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*, Tübingen 2010, 305, n. 45.

¹⁷ T. Barnes (n. 16) 305, n. 46.

¹⁸ W. Eck (n. 4) 327.

¹⁹ R. Syme, *The Proconsuls of Asia under Antoninus Pius*, ZPE 51, 1983, 285.

²⁰ See G. Alföldy (n. 9) 23.

The following table²¹ shows the interval between the consulship and the governorship of Moesia Superior:

no	Name	<i>cos. suff.</i>	Governorship of Moesia Superior
1	Ti. Iulius Candidus Marius Celsus	86	?
2	L. Funisulanus Vettonianus	ante finem a. 85	?
3	L. Tettius Iulianus	83	88
4	Cn. Pinarius Aemilius Cicatricula Pompeius Longinus	90	94/96
5	C. Cilnius Proculus	100	100/101
6	L. Herennius Saturninus	100	102 ²²
7	T. Prifernius Paetus	96	112–114 ²³
8	L. Coelius Rufus	119	120
9	C. Iulius Gallus	124	126
10	L. Vitrasius Flamininus	122	130?–132 ²⁴
11	P. Tullius Varro	127	Sub Hadriano (post a. 127)
12	P. Mummius Sisenna Rutilianus	146	151
13	M. Pontius Sabinus	153	160
14	M. Servilius Fabianus Maximus	158	161/162, ut videtur
15	M. Claudius Fronto	165	ca. 167–170
16	L. Fabius Cilo Septiminus Catinius Acilianus Lepidus Fulcinianus	193, II 204	a. 195

The examples show that the interval between consulship and governorship of Upper Moesia could be between two and five years. At first, it seems that there are three exceptions to the rule, those of L. Vitrasius Flamininus, *cos. suff.* 122 (132), of M. Pontius Sabinus, *cos. suff.* 153 (160) and of T. Prifernius Paetus, *cos. suff.* 96 (112–114).²⁵ In the last case, the anomaly has led some to posit a second T. Prifernius Paetus whose consulship should be placed between 106–108 when a lacuna of the *fasti consulares* is attested and some consuls' names are missing.²⁶ He is associated with T. Prifernius Paetus Settidianus Firmus,²⁷ who is probably the provincial governor mentioned on the military diplomas dated to ca. 112–middle of 114.²⁸ If so, in this case the rule was followed.

As for L. Vitrasius Flamininus, he was successively appointed as *curator alvei Tiberis* in 124 and then it is most likely that he was initially *leg. pr. pr.* of Dalmatia (c. a. 127/129), then of Moesia Superior (c. a. 130/132), of Italia Transpadana (c. a. 132/136) and finished as proconsul of Africa (c. a. 137/138). It seems that his gap between *cos. suff.* and *leg. pr. pr.* of Moesia Superior was not decisive for the practice and the next known *cos. suff.* fits the gap.

So, here arises the question, who was the T. Minicius Opimianus from the inscription from Ratiaria?

Paleographical study of the inscription may reveal the answer. It is beyond any doubt that the letters were very carefully made. Some specifics, however, may be observed with the shape of letters. For instance, the letter C is broader than O, the letter R is characterized by a long hasta, and the outer hastae of P and M are not parallel. These specific characteristics have exact parallels in two other inscriptions from Ratiaria –

²¹ It is based on B. E. Thomasson, *Laterculi praesidum I*, Göteborg 2011.

²² See for this date W. Eck – A. Pangerl, *Moesia und seine Truppen. Neue Diplome für Moesia und Moesia superior*, 1, *Chiron* 38, 2008, 346.

²³ W. Eck – A. Pangerl (n. 21) 353–357.

²⁴ W. Eck – A. Pangerl (n. 21) 377.

²⁵ On T. Prifernius Paetus, *cos. suff.* 96 (112), see *PIR*² P 934.

²⁶ See W. Eck – A. Pangerl (n. 21) 353–357.

²⁷ See Cl. Zaccaria, *A proposito di uno nuovo senatore da Nesactium (Regio X): T. Prifernius Paetus C. fil. Settidianus Firmus, cos. suff. e legatus della Moesia Superior in età Traiana*, in: *Epigrafia e ordine senatorio, 30 anni dopo* (Maria Letizia Caldelli – Gian Luca Gregori, ed.), Rome 2014, 301.

²⁸ W. Eck – A. Pangerl (n. 21) 347–357.

one from an altar of Hercules Victor,²⁹ and the other from an altar of Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Fulgurialis.³⁰ Both of these are dated to the second quarter of the 2nd c. and are assigned to the production of same workshop. So, we can conclude that the inscription of T. Minicius Opimianus should also be dated to that time, which means that in this case we are dealing with the second known member of the family who was *cos. suff.* in 123. Following the well established practice we should assume that his governorship of Upper Moesia should be dated within next five years, i. e. between 124–129/130. The only other known *legatus* from that time is C. Iulius Gallus, who was serving in 126.³¹ Since his consulship was in 124, it places the governorship of T. Minicius Opimianus between 126 and 129/130.³² If so, the inscription from Ratiaria reveals that the *cursus honorum* of T. Minicius Opimianus was very much like other members of senatorial families in the 2nd c. starting with *cos. suff.* in 123, then governorship of Upper Moesia, and completion in 138/139 or 139/140 as proconsul of Africa. It is very likely that he might have also held another governorship between them.

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²⁹ K. Karadimitova, Novi posvetitelni nadpisi ot Ratiaria [= Newly found votive inscriptions from Ratiaria], Numismatika, sphragistica i epigraphica, 2, 2005, 211–219, tabl. XXXVI, 2.

³⁰ K. Karadimitova, Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Fulgurialis v Ratiaria [= Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Fulgurialis in Ratiaria], Numismatika, epigrafika i sfragistika 4, 2008, 207–217.

³¹ See the date in B. Thomasson (n. 21) 20: 35a.

³² If we suppose that the T. Minicius Opimianus from the inscription from Ratiaria is to be identified with the T. Salvius Rufinus Minicius Opimianus who was *cos. suff.* in 155, we should date his governorship of Upper Moesia not later than 160/161. Of this period we are aware of the provincial governors as follows: M. Valerius Etruscus (156/157), C. Curtius Iustus (157), M. Pontius Sabinus (160), M. Statius Priscus Licinius Italicus (161), M. Servilius Fabianus Maximus (161/162). So we should put his governorship between 158/159.