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Eric Birley A tribunus laticlavus from Cerfennia

aus / from

Chiron

Ausgabe / Issue **8 • 1978**

Seite / Page **357–360**

<https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron/1405/5754> • urn:nbn:de:0048-chiron-1978-8-p357-360-v5754.6

Verantwortliche Redaktion / Publishing editor

Redaktion Chiron | Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73 b, 80799 München

Weitere Informationen unter / For further information see <https://publications.dainst.org/journals/chiron>

ISSN der Online-Ausgabe / ISSN of the online edition **2510-5396**

Verlag / Publisher **Verlag C. H. Beck, München**

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ERIC BIRLEY

A tribunus laticlavius from Cerfennia

A fragmentary inscription from Cerfennia, in the Marsian country, has received less attention than it deserves, I think. It had been published, without comment, as CIL IX 3649, thus:

s]ER SCATONI HVIRO
]NO MILITVM IN
]NIS IIII MACEDON
]DESIGNATO
]PRIMA MATER

The restoration *S]er(gia)* presents no difficulty, for that was the tribe of Cerfennia. It is equally certain that we should restore *tribu]no militum in [----- legio]nis*; it was left to RITTERLING, taking that point to be self-evident, to suggest that the missing word, specifying the country in which *IIII Macedonica* was stationed, was *Hispania*.¹ Since that legion was in garrison in Hither Spain from the time of Augustus until its transfer to the Rhine (most probably by the emperor Gaius in A. D. 39), the implication of RITTERLING's suggestion was that the inscription should be dated somewhere within that period. Recently, greater precision has been offered by Professor GÉZA ALFÖLDY in his 'Fasti Hispanienses' (1969), 125 f.: he noted, following an observation made to him by Sir RONALD SYME, that a Scato of Cerfennia should be a member of the same family as the Marsian leader in the Social War, Vettius Scato, and as Cicero's contemporary, the impoverished Marsian house-agent Vettius Scato;² and he suggested further that the present man should be equated with the Scato attested by coins from Cyrenaica as the praetorian proconsul of Crete and Cyrenaica under Augustus, specifically before the death of Agrippa in 12 B. C. If so, Professor ALFÖLDY concluded, the inscription could be assigned to that early period.

As far as the restoration of the nomen is concerned, PIR¹ S 194, in dealing with the proconsul, had referred to BORGHESI's observation that the rare cognomen Scato³ was only attested epigraphically in the *gentes Magulnia* and *Vettia*;

¹ RE 12, 1550 and 1555.

² Cf. SYME, *The Roman Revolution*, 1939, 91 note 5.

³ It may be noted that Scato has not been registered by I. KAJANTO in his book, *The Latin Cognomina*, 1965.

and as the Vettii were Marsian, in this case Vettius is manifestly correct. That is clearly what W. SCHULZE inferred in his discussion of the name, though he referred also to the Magulnii Scatonnes of Praeneste.⁴

But there is a serious objection to Professor ALFÖLDY's equation of the present *tribunus laticlavius* with the praetorian proconsul, for the text from Cerfennia surely implies that the mother, Prima (whose own nomen must remain unknown), is commemorating a son who has died when still on military service, though *quaestor designatus* – for [*quaestori*] suggests itself without any question. In that case, we must ask why she should mention the country in which he had been serving? The answer has been suggested to me by the case of Dillius Vocula, whose brave but unavailing leadership on the Rhine in A. D. 69 has been recorded so vividly by Tacitus (Histories 4, 24–59), and whose earlier career was commemorated by his widow on an inscription found in Rome a long time ago (CIL VI 1402 = ILS 983):

C. Dillio A. f. Ser(gia) Voculae trib(uno) milit(um) leg(ionis) I, IIIviro viarum curandar(um), q(uaestori) provinc(iae) Ponti et Bith[yl]oniae, trib(uno) pl(ebis), pr(aetori), leg(ato) in Germania leg(ionis) XXII Primigeniae, Helvia T. f. Procula uxor fecit.

Tacitus records (Histories 1, 55) that IIII *Macedonica* had taken the lead, followed reluctantly at first by XXII *Primigenia*, in declaring against Galba on 1 January 69; those two legions shared a single fortress, shown by numerous tombstones of their men to have been that at Mogontiacum (Mainz). The legion only sent a vexillation with the Vitellian forces to Italy (Hist. 2, 100); we next hear of its main body marching with legions I and XXII, under Vocula, to raise the insurgents' siege of Mogontiacum (Hist. 4, 37). After the murder of Vocula by a deserter from *leg. I*, Tutor caused the troops of the Upper German command to take the oath of allegiance to the *imperium Galliarum*; but at Mogontiacum the military tribunes refused to do so, and they were put to death (Hist. 4, 59). If I am right, Scato was one of those tribunes, and like Vocula he deserved to be commemorated for his loyalty, and for his tragic death in *Germania*.

His service in the vigintivirate may be restored as IIIviro [*capitali*], rather than IIIviro [*a. a. a. f. f.*], since the least prestigious of the minor magistracies seems appropriate for a member of a family which, as far as we know, had never seen one of its members reach the consulate.⁵ If we note that the restorations proposed in the second, third and fourth lines of the inscription involve thirteen letters in each case, we may restore the record of this interrupted career as follows:

[-. Vettio -. f. S]er(gia) Scatoni IIIviro / [*capitali, tribu*]no militum in / [*Germa-*

⁴ Zur Geschichte lateinischer Eigennamen, 1904, 303.

⁵ Cf. my observations in my paper on 'Senators in the emperors service', Proceedings of the British Academy 39, 1954, especially 202 ff.

nia legio]nis IIII Macedon/[icae, quaestori] designato, / [-----fil.] Prima, mater.

His praenomen and filiation must remain uncertain, but it may be noted that the Marsian leader was Publius Vettius Scato, and it is perhaps likely that Publius remained the normal praenomen for members of the family.

