

Once again on Augustus Galerius' and Caesar Maximinus Daia's letter to Heracleians and the location of Heracleia Sintica

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In 2002, a colleague of mine - T. Tarakov and I published an article in *Arheologia Journal* about a newly found inscription in the ancient town near the village of Rupite (former Muletarovo), Petrich district. The main conclusions on the contents and the meaning of the text were released in the article, yet it contained few inaccuracies, corrected in subsequent works. Meanwhile Cl. Lepelley and M. Manov also published their view on the new inscription. In the present work I would like to point out that I have revised the date of the inscription - currently it is 308 AD; Cl. Lepelley specifies it even further - between 10.12.307 AD and 30.04.308 AD. In addition, I have already corrected the mistake concerning *iura civitatis* and *ius civitatis* which I have in the first article published in *Arheologia*. The revisions on the translation of the Latin text, which I publish in the present paper, follow the same trend.

In fact, the main purpose of this article is to answer the critical notes and comments in Cl. Lepelley's and M. Manov's paper. Cl. Lepelley shares important comments and ideas, which in general I tend to accept. He is an experienced and respected specialist and he certainly contributes with his supplements to the interpretation of the text. In general there are no differences and controversies on the main issues that cannot be solved. It is especially important for me that Cl. Lepelley accepts the identification of Heracleia with Heracleia Sintica, based on Galerius's letter.

The more detailed comment given in M. Manov's publications is based on the fact that even if he does not argue on the contents of the inscription, he does not accept the suggestion that Heracleia Sintica is located near the village

of Rupite. In his first article he suggests that it was the location of the town of Petra and in the second one he focuses on the idea that Heracleia Sintica could not have been situated to the north of the Belasica Mountain. However the 'proofs' used in both works is hard to accept as convincing and final. They cannot be accepted mainly because they do not match the recent archeological and epigraphic evidence from the region. In his final analysis M. Manov suggests the thesis that *civitas Heracleotarum* mentioned in Galerius's letter is not Heracleia Sintica but a 'new' Heracleia, which came into being at the site where Petra had been located. In my opinion it is a quite brave idea, which lack proofs.

Besides quite recently I learnt about the existence of a newly found and still unpublished inscription from the village of Rupite kept at the Museum of Archeology in Sandanski. It reads: „Gaios Loukios Skotussaaios, called also Heracleotes and Ulpia Paramona (left) for the son Saios“. This short text mentions the names of Gaios Loukios, who was nicknamed Skotussaian (Skotussaaios), but was also known as Heracleian (Heracleotes). The way these two ethnicons were arranged in the text clearly points to the fact that this person came from Skotussa, but at the same time he was related to Heracleia. I think we can accept that he was a permanent resident of Heracleia since both his epitaph and son's grave were found there. Since it is obvious that Skotussa and Heracleia were situated close to each other, it is easy to prove that Heracleia Sintica is located near the village of Rupite.

Therefore, in my opinion, it is useless and irrelevant to look for a „new“ Heracleia. There are no firm reasons to doubt the fact that Heracleia Sintica was located near the village of Rupite.