

# Some new granite funerary stelae from Augusta Emerita<sup>1</sup>



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Of all the rich variety of funerary monuments set up at the Roman colony of Augusta Emerita to commemorate the dead, the stelae of local granite remain one of the least studied types. These imposing monuments, often standing over 1 m tall, either culminated in a rounded top or had a round-topped shaft carved in relief to project from a rectangular block of granite. A few examples have a rosette or circle-motif carved in low relief above the epitaph, and a variant form of stele is also found, which is crowned with a triangular pediment rather than a semicircular top. A number of recent articles has begun to highlight their importance,<sup>2</sup> but a detailed epigraphic, archaeological and historical study of all known examples (currently forty-eight) is badly needed to allow their full significance to be appreciated.<sup>3</sup> What is not in doubt is that these stelae were the earliest type of funerary monument at Emerita. Just as local granite was used for the first phase of public building in the new colony

before the marble quarries in the region of Borba and Estremoz (Portugal) came into production, so too was it the material for the earliest funerary monuments.<sup>4</sup> It is no surprise that the form of the funerary monuments chosen by the first generations of colonists closely reflected the commonest form of grave-marker in use in late Republican Rome and Italy.<sup>5</sup>

When I was in Mérida in June 1999 collecting material for a detailed study of all the granite stelae from Emerita, Dr. Pedro Mateos Cruz, Coordinator of Excavations, kindly alerted me to two unpublished examples in the collection of the Consorcio de la Ciudad Monumental Histórico-Artística y Arqueológica de Mérida. In the same month, I myself located two further examples among piles of granite blocks stored near the so-called Casa del Anfiteatro and inside the Alcazaba respectively. It is the purpose of this brief article to publish for the

1 I am very grateful for the kind assistance and encouragement of Dr. Pedro Mateos and his colleagues from the Consorcio in preparing this article and to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its generous support of my research on the funerary epigraphy of Emerita. All the photographs were taken by the author.

2 NOGALES 1994; RAMÍREZ SÁDABA and NOGALES 1995; RAMÍREZ SÁDABA 1994-95 [1998].

3 As recognized by RAMÍREZ SÁDABA 1994-95 [1998]: 258.

4 For a recent discussion of these granite quarries, which included what became the reservoir for the "Proserpina-Los Milagros" aqueduct system, see NOGALES, DE LA BARRERA and LAPUENTE 1999. For the "granite-phase" of public building, see TRILLMICH 1990: 302-310.

5 For examples from Rome, note *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 1379, 3004a-b, 3022-23 (all illustrated in the volume of plates, *CIL* I<sup>2</sup>, fasc. 4, no. 2, ed. A. Degrassi and H. Krummrey, published in 1986); for a brief selection from Italy: note *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 1863, 1865-66, 1870, 1886, 3290-91 (all from Amiternum); FERUGLIO, PONZI and MANCOLI 1991: 148-150, cat. nos. 3.23, 24, 26; pp.183-186, cat. nos. 3.127, 128, 131 (Mevania, Umbria); *ILLRP* 914 = SUSINI and PINCELLI 1960: 59-61, no. 52 and Tav. X (Bononia).

first time the texts of these four new granite stelae. Two provide important evidence about the makeup of the population of the colony in the first two or three generations of its existence: one of the stelae (no. 1) provides a rare example of an indigenous individual granted Roman citizenship and incorporated among the *coloni* of the new colony, while another (no. 3) may attest an immigrant from another Lusitanian community whose family came to settle at Emerita.

Unfortunately, precise details do not survive of the original findspots of any of these four funerary monuments, but given the type of granite used for them and their formal similarity to other Emeritan examples, it is highly probable that they were set up in the cemeteries of the Roman colony of Augusta Emerita. A large number of granite funerary monuments from the Roman period (not just stelae, but also barrel-shaped monuments known as *cupae*) were reused in the building of the exterior walls of the Alcazaba, completed in A.D. 835, from which a number were disengaged during restoration work in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup> It is particularly likely that this is the provenance of the fragmentary example still located in the Alcazaba (no. 3, below), and possibly some of the other examples as well.

### 1. STELE FOR C. IULIUS MANDI (F.) SANGENUS (láms. 1-2)

A medium-grain grey granite stele, now covered with a reddish-brown patina (lám. 1). It measures 99 cm high, 54,5 cm wide and 21 cm deep. The epitaph (lám. 2) is inscribed on a recessed rectangular panel with a rounded top (55 cm high at its apex by 36 cm wide), surrounded by a moulded frame, approximately 8 cm wide: a feature only found on one other (no. 2, below) of the forty-eight granite stelae currently known from Emerita. In form, this variant of a granite stele with a recessed panel with semicircular

top is almost identical to a number found at the colony of Norba Caesarina (modern Cáceres) and in its territory.<sup>7</sup> Examples of a very similar form of stele have been located at Caesaraugusta (Zaragoza) and other sites in the Ebro valley, while others of the same form, but of a different material (local limestone) are known from Astigi (Écija) and the territory of Segida Augurina in the *conventus Astigitanus, Baetica*.<sup>8</sup> The stele is broken diagonally across the upper right corner and damaged at the bottom left, but this damage has not affected the text of the epitaph. The sides and top of the monument were polished to a smooth finish, which strongly suggests that it was intended to be a freestanding monument, seen from the sides. It is not clear whether the monument has been preserved to its full original height, but the fact that it has very similar proportions to those of stele no. 2 (below) and to the examples from Norba and its territory (see above, note 7) might suggest that both this and the following stele (no. 2, below) are in fact preserved more or less complete.

The epitaph was carved in square capitals, but with some irregular features: for example, the very wide M at the start of line 2 and the malformed bowl of the G in line 3. The letters are of similar height throughout, although – somewhat strangely – those in line 4 are the largest of all. An ND ligature was used in line 2. The text is not particularly well arranged vertically on the panel; the first three lines are squeezed closely together, while the last two are much more amply spaced, as the stonemason came to realize that he had plenty of space on the prepared panel for the desired epitaph. The letters measure: 6,0 cm in lines 1, 3 and 5; 6,3 cm in line 2; 7,0 cm in line 4. Triangular interpunction is visible in lines 1 and 4. The letter-forms and the extreme simplicity of the text would suggest a date in the last years of the first century B.C. or the first years of the first century A.D.

6 See NOGALES 1994: 204 and fig. 1. For *cupae*, see CALDERA 1978; BEJARANO 1996 [2000].

7 Norba: *CIL* II 712, with photo at SALAS and ESTEBAN 1994: fig. 5; *HAE* 489 = *CPILC* 158, with photo at CALLEJO 1965: plate XXXII; *CPILC* 166, with photo at CALLEJO 1970: 133, fig. 1. Territory of Norba: *CPILC* 437, with photo at SALAS and ESTEBAN 1994: fig. 27 (Salvatierra de Santiago); *HAE* 2675 = *AE* 1968, 220, with photo at CALLEJO 1967: plate XVI (Torre de Santa María).

8 See BELTRÁN LLORIS 1995: 185 and figs. 7-8 (Ebro valley); cf. *CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/5, 1204-1208, 1215, 1218, 1238 (Astigi), 1315 (territory of Segida Augurina).



LÁMINA 1

Stele for *C. Iulius Mandi (f.) Sangenus*. Photo: J. Edmondson

The text reads:

C · IVLIVS

MANDI

SANGEN

VS H · S ·

5 EST (vacat)

This text can be expanded as:

*C(aius) Iulius / Mandi (filius) / Sangenus  
b(ic) s(itus) / est.*

The epitaph is of considerable interest since it



LÁMINA 2

Stele for *C. Iulius Mandi (f.) Sangenus*: the epitaph. Photo: J. Edmondson.

appears to commemorate a non-Roman granted Roman citizenship. The deceased has a Roman *praenomen* and *nomen*, *C(aius) Iulius*, but an indigenous *cognomen*, *Sangenus*. His indigenous roots are further emphasized by the fact that his father, on the basis of his name *Mandus*, was clearly non-Roman and by the style in which his filiation is expressed: in the Genitive without *f(i)lius*, the method used among the indigenous population of the Iberian peninsula before they had become fully assimilated to Roman onomastic practices.<sup>9</sup> The father of the deceased had a name, *Mandus*, that was Celtic in origin. It is unparalleled in Lusitania, but found in the region of El Cerro de Andévalo (prov. Huelva) on an epitaph, dated to the late Republic or very early Principate, commemorating *Boutia Mandi f.* (*CILA Huelva* no.

<sup>9</sup> See further ÉTIENNE, FABRE, LE ROUX and TRANOY 1976: 99-100; DIAS 1985. For the same practice in Oscan Italy, see LEJEUNE 1976: 43-45.

53).<sup>10</sup> The name is related to *Mandonius*, the leader of the Ilergetes during Rome's campaigns against Hannibal (Polybius 10.18.7; 10.35.6-8; Livy 22.21; 27.17; 28.24, 31). As Albertos Firmat observed (1966: 146), the Celtic root *mandu-* is found in a number of names in Britain and Gaul: for example, *Mandubracius*, the leader of the Trinovantes in south-east Britain (Caes. BG 5.20.1) or *Mandalonius* (CIL XIII 4130, territory of the Treveri, Gallia Belgica).<sup>11</sup> The *cognomen* of the deceased, *Sangenus*, is also Celtic in origin and found elsewhere in central and north-eastern Lusitania: for example, *Sangenus Concelti* f. at Ibahernando (prov. Cáceres) (AE 1990, 521) and *Sangen[us]* at Ávila (LICS [= KNAPP 1992] no. 38, revising AE 1914, 12). It is also occasionally found outside Lusitania, for example, at Uxama (CIL II 2817: *Valerius Sangeni* f. *Calidus Ablig(um)*).<sup>12</sup>

This would all suggest that the deceased was a native Spaniard granted Roman citizenship by Julius Caesar or (more plausibly) by Augustus and then enrolled among the colonists of Emerita.<sup>13</sup> A clear-cut case of this from the territory of Emerita can be seen at the necropolis located on the cortijo "El Rincón de Gila", about 20 kilometres north of Badajoz very close to the Portuguese border. Here an epitaph was set up for *C. Allius Tangini f(ilius) Pap(iria tribu)* (the text breaks off here, leaving it unclear whether he had a *cognomen* or not).<sup>14</sup> From his Roman voting tribe, the *Papiria*, he was explicitly a citizen of Emerita, while his father, *Tanginus*, appears to have been a local non-Roman.<sup>15</sup> A number of other cases can be found from Lusitania where an individual bore the Roman *praenomen* and *nomen* *C. Iulius* alongside an indigenous *cognomen*: for example, *C. Iulius C.f. Aplondus* (CIL II 76 = IRCP 129, the region around Ourique, Beja); *C. Iulius Arenius* (HAE 482

= IRCP 66, Bensafrim, Lagos); *C. Iulius Rusocus* (CIL II 706, Norba Caesarina); and examples can also be found where *C. Iulii* had their patronymic expressed in an indigenous fashion: for example, *C. Iulius Bouti* f. *Letondo* (AE 1909, 97 = IRCP 130, Panóias, Ourique, Beja); *C. Iulius Proculus Tapori* f. (CIL II 6263 = IRCP 424, Corval, Reguengos de Monsaraz, Évora); *C. Iulius Penti* f. *Turpio* (AE 1988, 698, Redondo, Évora) and *Iulia Rufa Tongeti* f. (AE 1993, 895 = HEp 5, 55, Rincón de Gila, Badajoz). These all show a clear progression from non-Roman to a more Roman style of nomenclature, which may well be the result of their gaining Roman citizenship.

## 2. STELE FOR P. VALLERIUS LAETUS (láms. 3-4).

Another medium-grain granite stele of very similar design and dimensions also forms part of the collection of the Consorcio de la Ciudad Monumental Histórico-Artística y Arqueológica de Mérida ( lám. 3). It has a rounded top and is now covered all over with a reddish-brown patina. It measures 98 cm high, 44,5 cm wide and 25 cm deep. The stele is broken diagonally across its lower right corner, and again it is unclear whether the stele has been preserved to its full original height or whether it was cut for later reuse. A recessed panel with a semicircular top (58 cm high at its highest point, 34 cm wide) was carved for the inscription of the epitaph ( lám. 4), as on stele no. 1 (above). This panel is surrounded by a moulded border, approximately 10 cm wide. Unfortunately precise details concerning the findspot of the stele are not preserved.

The epitaph ( lám. 4) was inscribed in large square capitals of a certain rusticity. The letters vary in height between 8,2 cm at the ends of lines 2 and 3

10 *Boutius/-a* was one of the commonest indigenous names found in inland Lusitania: see PALOMAR 1957: 50-51; UNTERMANN 1965: 72-73, Map 18. This might suggest that *Boutia Mandi* f. was another immigrant from central or northern Lusitania to this important mining region that included the mines of Rio Tinto: on migrant labour in these mines, see further, EDMONDSON 1987: 61-66; DOMERGUE 1990: 344-346; HALEY 1991: 89-99.

11 See further EVANS 1967: 100-102, 222-223.

12 See further ALBERTOS 1966: 197-198.

13 On natives enrolled in the colony at Emerita, see SAQUETE 1997: 52-59; for natives in Roman colonies in general, see BRUNT 1971: 246-255.

14 AE 1993, 892 = HEp 5, 52; see further RAMÍREZ SÁDABA 1993: esp. 254-255.

15 *Tanginus/Tancinus* is one of the commonest indigenous names from Lusitania: PALOMAR 1957: 101-103; UNTERMANN 1965: 170-171, Map 74.



LÁMINA 3

Stele for *P. Vallerius Laetus*. Photo: J. Edmondson.

LÁMINA 4

Stele for *P. Vallerius Laetus*: the epitaph. Photo: J. Edmondson.

and 6,3 cm in line 5. The precise dimensions of the letters are: line 1 = 7,7 cm; line 2 = 7,5 cm (E, I, V), 8,0 cm (R), 8,2 cm (S); line 3: 7,7 cm (S = 8,2 cm); line 4 = 7,0 cm (Ts = 7,5 cm); line 5: 6,3 cm. The interpunctum is circular. The text is not well arranged on the panel prepared for the inscription, resulting in the final letter of the funerary formula *s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)* having to be inscribed on an extra line. The letter forms suggest a date in the first half of the first century A.D., as does the relatively simplicity of the text. The use of the formula *s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)* would suggest that this stela was set up a few years later than no. 1 (above).

The text reads:

P · VALL

ERIVS ·

LAETVS

H · S · E · S · T · T

5            L

The text can be expanded as:

*P(ublius) Vall|erius / Laetus /  
h(ic) s(itus) e(st) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) / l(evis).*

The only problem of reading occurs over the deceased's *praenomen* at the start of line 1. The photographs of the stela (láms. 3-4) might suggest that it should be read as a D and hence *D(ecimus)*. However, close inspection of the stone reveals that

only the left upright hasta and the upper part of the curved stroke that adjoins it were cut to a depth consistent with that of the other letters of the epitaph. What might appear at first sight to be the rest of the bowl of a supposed D are much more superficial traces and in fact seem to be the result of damage to the stone. The letter that was inscribed was a very open P. The position of the interpunct following the *praenomen* confirms this, since if the letter was a D, the interpunct would intersect the middle part of its bowl – not a normal epigraphic practice. Furthermore, while a few other *D(ecimi)* are found at Emerita, the *praenomen* is generally very rare in Hispania.<sup>16</sup> Even more significant is the fact that although some *D(ecimi) Valerii* are known from Rome and its vicinity and in Gallia Narbonensis, no other *D(ecimi) Valerii* are yet attested anywhere in the Iberian peninsula.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, a number of *P(ublii) Valerii* are found at Emerita and other cities in Hispania.<sup>18</sup>

A slight anomaly occurs later in the first line, where the *nomen gentilicium* of the deceased is inscribed as *Vallerius* rather than *Valerius*, the standard spelling. Parallels for this doubling of the consonant in a *gentilicium* can be found from Emerita. One of the most familiar funerary monuments from the early years of the colony is the mausoleum of the *Voconii* excavated in the area now known as “Los Columbarios”. The epitaph built into its facade identifies that the tomb was set up for *C. Voconius C.f. Pap.* and his family. From the military decorations depicted above the epitaph, he was very probably

one of the initial veteran settlers of the new colony.<sup>19</sup> However, a funerary stele from Puerto de Santa Cruz (prov. Cáceres) in the territory of Emerita commemorated one *L. Vocconius L.f. Pap.* (*AE* 1977, 417), clearly the same family name, but spelled differently. The absence of a *cognomen* in both cases suggests that these *Voc(c)onii* date from the same period: the reigns of Augustus or Tiberius at the latest. A number of cases of the doubling of consonants in names can be found from other parts of the Iberian peninsula: for example, *L. Virrius L.f. Pap. Fidus*, a soldier attested at Astigi (*CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/5, 1285); *L. Vissellius Niger*, a veteran soldier originally from Caesaraugusta (*HEp* 6, 179, San Juan del Monte, prov. Burgos); *Domittia Eutelia* (*EE* VIII 146, San Esteban de Gormaz, prov. Soria), *Iullia Auctilla* from Valeria (prov. Cuenca) (*AE* 1982, 600).<sup>20</sup> In the nomenclature of emperors of the Antonine and Severan dynasties the name *Aurelius* was sometimes inscribed *Aurellius* in documents produced in the city of Rome (for example, *ILS* 388, 451, 452, 475, 480, 4387, 8697, 8914). *Valerius* is one of the commonest family names found at Emerita, while *Laetus*, though a common Latin *cognomen*, is otherwise not attested at Emerita.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. STELE FOR TWO OCTAVII, A GRANDFATHER AND HIS GRANDSON (láms. 5-6)

The upper section of a medium-grain grey granite funerary stele with a rounded top, broken off horizontally across the shaft and damaged down the left margin (láms. 5-6). It now measures (70) cm tall,

16 For the rarity of *Decimus* in the Iberian peninsula, see ABASCAL 1994: 28-29. From Emerita, *Murria D.f. Hispana* (*HEp* 6, 113), *D. Iulius Fuscus* (*ERAE* 218), *D. Iulius Pecio* and *D. Iul. Eupbrodocton* (unpublished altar, MNAR inv. no. 30345).

17 Rome and vicinity: *ILS* 4378, 4386, 4399, 4971, 7574; from Gallia Narbonensis, note, for example, the consul of A.D. 35 and 46, *D. Valerius Asiaticus*: cf. *ILS* 7006.

18 From Emerita, note *P. Valerius Flaus* (*CIL* II 5266); *P. Valerius Salutaris* (unpublished altar, MNAR inv. no. 36033); for the rest of Hispania, see ABASCAL 1994: 232-244.

19 See BENDALA 1972: 240-245; the epitaph is *HAE* 1634 = *ILER* 3643.

20 For a case where a double consonant was shortened to a single one, *Munius* for *Munnius*, note *CIL* II 39 = *IRCP* 333 (Ferreira do Alentejo, Beja). There are a number of cases where variant spellings of certain names are found: for example, *Munius* / *Munnius*: *Munius*: *CIL* II 1945 (Iluro); *Munnius*: *CIL* II 4046 = II<sup>2</sup>/14, 755 (Alcora, prov. Castellón, in the territory of Saguntum); *RIT* 347 (Tarraco); *CIL* II<sup>2</sup>/14, 792-793 (Dertosa); *Valius* / *Vallius*: *Valius*: *CIL* II 1506 = II<sup>2</sup>/5, 1249 (Astigi); *AE* 1977, 392 (Turgalium); cf. *Vallius*: *AE* 1976, 298 (Baltar, prov. Orense); *CIL* II 1120 (Italica). Other examples include *Popilius* / *Popillius*, *Herenius* / *Herenius*; *Gellius* / *Gellius*; *Camilius* / *Camillus*: for details, see ABASCAL 1994: *ss.vv.*

21 *Valerius* is the second most common *gentilicium* in the Iberian peninsula: see ABASCAL 1994: 29. For other *Valerii* at Emerita, see, for example, *CIL* II 494, 500, 585, 597, 5260, 5273; *EE* VIII 35, 56; IX 85, 86; *AE* 1968, 205; 1983, 492; *HAE* 1844 = *ILER* 4247. For *Laetus*, cf. KAJANTO 1965: 69, 261; from neighbouring *Metellinum* (Medellín), note *Loreia M.f. Laeta* (*HAE* 735 = *ILER* 2202 = HABA 1998: 119, no. 32); for the cognate name *Laetinus*, attested at Emerita, note *AE* 1994, 864.



LÁMINA 5

Stele for two *Octavii*: view of its left side and front. Photo: J. Edmondson

56 cm wide and 38 cm (left side) – 35 cm (right side) deep. Its sides and top were polished to a smooth finish, while its back was left rough, suggesting that it was designed as a free-standing monument, but one that was set up against a wall in the funerary enclosure. The fact that the stele was broken (perhaps as a result of its reuse, very probably in the wall of the Alcazaba) has resulted in damage to the final line of text visible and possibly the loss of further lines of text. A triangular hole gouged into the surface of the stone has obscured part of the text of line 2. I came upon the fragmentary stele in May 1999 among a pile of granite blocks inside the Alcazaba, up against the south wall that runs along the calle Ciñuelos, behind the modern ticket office not far from the modern entrance. In July 2000, it was still on display in this same area of the Alcazaba.

The epitaph was inscribed in square capitals of some elegance (lám. 6). The letters have serifs and stylish tall Ts are used in lines 1, 2 and 3 and a tall I in the word HIC in line 2. There is also an IT ligature in SIT in line 2. The letters measure 7,5 cm in line 1 (with the T 9,5 cm and the O 8,0 cm), 6,5 cm in lines 2, 3 and 4 (with the taller Ts and tall I measuring 7,5 cm) and approximately 6,0 cm in line 5 (they are only preserved to a height of 5,0 cm as a result of the



LÁMINA 6

Stele for two *Octavii*: the epitaph. Photo: J. Edmondson

recutting of the stone). Triangular interpunctation is visible in the first four lines, and was probably also used in the now damaged fifth line. An interpunct probably followed *f(ilius)* at the end of line 1 as in line 3, but the surface of the stone is damaged at this point and so all trace of it is now lost. From the nature of the letter-forms and formulas used, the text can be dated to the early to mid first century A.D.

The text is damaged down the entire left margin and the fifth line has suffered badly as a result of the breakage of the stone. Despite the damage, it is possible to suggest a plausible reading in most cases. In line 1, a small trace of the very right end of the horizontal bar of an L can just be made out at the very left edge of the stone, which allows us to reconstruct the *praenomen* of the first man mentioned as *L(ucius)*, the same as his father's. The damage at the left edge of line 2 has resulted in the loss of one letter before the G and the A, unless the line was indented, in which case the G may have been the first letter of the line (see further below). In line 3, the abbreviated *praenomen* of the second person commemorated on the tombstone has disappeared thanks to the damage at the left edge, while in line 4, there is space for one extra letter at the beginning of the deceased's *cog-*

*nomen*, unless this line was indented. Line 5 is considerably more damaged with the first few letters (five or six in number) now completely obliterated and none of the surviving letters preserved to their full original height. The first visible trace is the top third of a T beneath the second S of line 4, followed by the upper half of a V that stretches from beneath the gap between the S and the N in line 4 to just to the left of the bottom right corner of this same N. A very small part of the upper part of the bowl of an S is just visible beneath the E of NEPOS, while the top left corner of an E appears below the P. The clearest traces are the last two letters at the right end of the line: an S and a T. Because the stele is now broken, it is unclear if we have lost further lines of the text. The epitaph, for example, might have continued with a record of the dimensions of the burial plot (for which see further the comments on no. 4, below).

As a result, what survives of the text can be read as follows:

L · OCTAVIVS · L · F · [·]  
 [-?]GA[·] HIC · SĪT · EST  
 [·] OCTAVIVS · L · F ·  
 [-?]VRSVS · NEPOS  
 5 [- 5 or 6 - ] T̄V̄S̄ ĒST  
 [ - - - - - ? ]  
 [ - - - - - ? ]

It is possible in most cases to suggest a plausible restoration for the missing letters. In line 3, the

*praenomen* of the second man commemorated might well have been *L(ucius)* like that of his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, but absolute certainty on this is impossible. In line 4, we clearly have the *cognomen* of the second man, followed by an indication of his familial relationship to the man named first on the epitaph: he was his grandson (*nepos*). As for his *cognomen*, [*T*]ursus or [*C*]ursus are theoretical possibilities, although only the first can be paralleled from the Iberian peninsula and both are very rare names.<sup>22</sup> It is much more convincing in my view to argue that this line, as line 2, was indented. As a result, we have the much commoner *cognomen* *Ursus*, attested in Lusitania and well represented across the Iberian peninsula.<sup>23</sup> The fifth line, as we have seen, has suffered the most damage, but is relatively easy to restore. A funerary formula is required; [*hic si*]tus est fits the space available on the stone and provides a suitable text. It is mildly anomalous, but not a serious problem that the formula was written out in full in this line, but slightly abbreviated earlier in line 2.

The biggest problem of interpretation occurs in line 2. The surviving letters GA could belong to the *cognomen* of the deceased, but it is very difficult to suggest one that fits the available space. There does not appear to be the space that would be needed for a *cognomen* such as [SA]GA[X], [GI]GA[S] or [IV]GA[S] and there are no known *cognomina* that would require just one letter to be restored before the G and the A.<sup>24</sup> It seems preferable, therefore, to argue that the text was slightly indented in this line and to read it as GA[L], the standard abbreviation for the Roman voting tribe, the *Galeria*. If this is correct, the first individual named had just a *praenomen* and *nomen* and a Roman tribal affiliation. He is thus analogous to a number of the earliest colonists attested at Emerita (in both the urban centre and the rural

22 For *Tursus*, note *CPILC* 381 (Plasencia, prov. Cáceres); *CILA Huelva*, no. 55 (the Cerro de Arévalo, prov. Huelva). *Cursus* is not to my knowledge attested in Roman Spain, but for examples from elsewhere, see *KAJANTO* 1965: 93, 351.

23 For example, *CIL* II 202, 5004 (Olisipo); *AE* 1971, 163 (Collippo); *IRCP* 318 (Trigaches in the territory of Pax Julia); see further *ABASCAL* 1994: 551. *Ursianus*, a related form, is also found at Emerita: *CIL* II 543 + *EE* IX 60; *CIL* II 578; *CMBad* 915 = *ILER* 4744. For discussion of the distribution of the names *Ursus* and *Ursianus* in Lusitania, see *RUIVO* 1992: 123.

24 For a *Pompeius Sa[g]ax*, see *CIL* II 1076 (Villanueva del Río, prov. Sevilla, as restored by *SOLIN* and *SALOMIES* 1988: 395); for *Gigas*, a charioteer, see *CIL* VI 33946 = *ILS* 5280 (Rome); for *Ingas*, a rare *cognomen*, see *KAJANTO* 1965: 345.



territory) who lack a *cognomen*.<sup>25</sup> However, as is well known, the colonists of Emerita were enrolled in the *Papiria* voting tribe, whereas on this reading *L. Octavius L.f.* was enrolled in the *Galeria*. This would, therefore, suggest that he was an immigrant to Emerita, perhaps from one of the other Lusitanian colonies such as Norba Caesarina, Metellinum or Pax Iulia<sup>26</sup> or from one of the Lusitanian communities promoted to municipal status under Augustus such as Eborā, Myrtilis, Salacia or Olisipo.<sup>27</sup> His grandson was given a *cognomen*, as had become normal by the time that he was born. A number of other *Octavii* are attested at Emerita.<sup>28</sup> As mentioned above, it is possible that the text continued to include, for example, details of the measurements of the burial plot. But no certainty is possible here.

In light of these observations, I would – with all due caution – expand the text as follows:

*L(ncius) Octavius L(ncii) f(ilius) /*  
*Gal[leria tribu] hic sit(us) est /*  
*[?L(ncius)] Octavius L(ncii) f(ilius) /*  
*Ursus, nepos, / [hic sit]us est / [----- ?] /*  
*[----- ?].*

#### 4. TALL STELE WITH THE PARTIAL DIMENSIONS OF A BURIAL PLOT (láms. 7-9)

Tall stele of medium-grain yellowish-grey granite with a semi-circular top, measuring 140 cm tall, 52 cm wide, 35 cm (left side) – 34 cm (right side) deep (lám. 7). The bottom 40 cm was left unfinished to

allow the stele to be inserted into the ground. The sides were polished to a smooth finish, but the stele is slightly damaged across the front of the arched top, resulting in the loss of the original surface at this point. The stele does not appear to have been fully carved out from its original rectangular granite block at the top right rear corner (see lám. 8). The surface of the stele has crumbled away in places, resulting in the loss of the first letter of its brief inscription. In May 1999 I came upon the stele face down in a deposit of granite blocks in the vicinity of the mausoleum with a marble lintel block bearing representations of the rivers *Ana(s)* and *Barraeca* that was erected in the later third century A.D. near the so-called Casa del Anfiteatro.<sup>29</sup> It now forms part of the collection of the Consorcio de la Ciudad Monumental Histórico-Artística y Arqueológica de Mérida.

The stele originally stood as a marker of a burial plot, recording the dimension of its frontage: twelve Roman feet. This detail, inscribed in fairly regular square capitals with triangular interpuncts, appears in a single line of text, near the bottom of the stele's shaft. It is possible that the family who owned the plot intended to record the deceased's name above the indication of the burial plot's frontage once he or she had died. The letters are 7 cm tall, except the II of the numeral XII, which only measure 6 cm (lám. 9). Traces of red colorant highlighting the letters were still visible when I studied the inscription in May 1999. Given the extreme brevity of the text, it is difficult to establish its date with any certainty, but the practice of recording the dimensions of burial

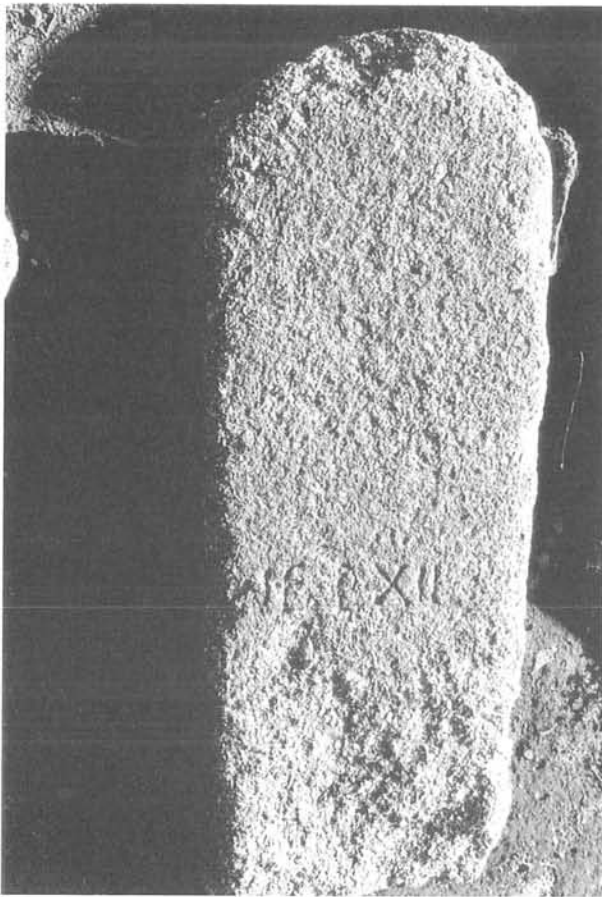
25 For example, from the urban centre *P. Alfius T.f. Pap.* and *T. Alfius T.f. Pap.* (CIL II 528), *C. Voconius C.f. Pap.* (HAE 1634 = ILER 3643 and 4878), *M. Servilius M.f. Pap.* (ERAE 368; with brief reference at FORNI 1976: 35), *P. Sertorius* (RAMÍREZ SÁDABA 1999: 277-281, no. 2) and *T. Manlius L.f.*, an immigrant from Segobriga (ERAE 192 = GARCÍA IGLESIAS 1973: 31-32; cf. CMBad 922 = ILER 6709, which both omit the second line); or from the territory *C. Axonius Q.f. Pap. leg. XX* (CIL II 22\* = IRCP 576, Elvas), *M. Iunius M.f. Pap.* (unpublished granite stele, from Madrigalejo, prov. Cáceres, now in the castle at Malpica del Tajo; information courtesy of the Centro CIL II, Alcalá de Henares), *L. Voconius L.f. Pap.* (AE 1977, 417, Puerto de Santa Cruz, prov. Cáceres), *L. Hermelius L.f. Pap., vet. leg. XX* (CIL II 662, Villamesías, prov. Cáceres), *P. Talius Q.f. Pap. (vet.) leg. X* (HEp 4, 186, Villanueva de la Serena, prov. Badajoz).

26 Immigrants from each of these colonies, each enrolled in the *Galeria* tribe, are now attested at Emerita: *L. Postumius L. lib. Gal. Apollonius Norbensis Aug(ustalis)* (SAQUETE 1997: 146-148 and Lám. VIII, 2); *C. Sulpicius C.f. Gal. Superstes, II vir III Metellinensium* (AE 1993, 909 = HEp 5, 94); *Q. Baebius Florus Gal. Pacensis* (CIL II 516).

27 For their citizens enrolled in the *Galeria*, see WIEGELS 1985: 77 (Eborā), 81-82 (Myrtilis), 85 (Salacia), 82-84 (Olisipo). For two other inscriptions from Emerita attesting individuals enrolled in the *Galeria*, whose ethnic origin is not specified, note EE IX 86 (*L. Iulius C.f. Gal. Lupus*); AE 1994, 867 = 1996, 862b (*.....f. Gal. Macer* and *.....Gal. Seranus*).

28 CIL II 581 (*Octavia Briseis, Octavius Asi....*), 601 (*L. Hoctavius Marus*); ERAE 201 (*Octavia Rhodine*). For other *Octavii* in *Hispania*, see ABASCAL 1994: 192-193.

29 On the mausoleum, see PALMA and BEJARANO 1997; CANTO, BEJARANO and PALMA 1997

**LÁMINA 7**

Stele with dimensions of the frontage of a burial plot.

Photo: J. Edmondson

**LÁMINA 8**

Stele with dimensions of the frontage of a burial plot: view of its right side. Photo: J. Edmondson

plots appears to have died out at Emerita and in other towns of Roman Spain around the end of the first century A.D.<sup>30</sup>

The text reads:

[I]N · F · P · XII

This can be expanded as:

[i]n f(ron)te p(edes) XII.

A number of other granite stelae were used at Emerita (and elsewhere) to mark the limits of the burial plot and record its dimensions.<sup>31</sup> Rather than record just one of the dimensions, as here, it was more usual to give both the frontage and depth of the plot: for example, *in f(ron)te p(edes) XII, in a(gro) p(edes) IX* (*HEp* 6, 114) and to include such dimensions at the end of an epitaph giving full details of the deceased person or persons buried in the funerary enclosure.<sup>32</sup> But where only one measure-

30 For this in Baetica, see STYLOW 1995: 223.

31 For examples from Emerita, note ÁLVAREZ SÁENZ DE BURUAGA 1955-57: 213; *HEp* 6, 121, 122, 124. In general, see RODRÍGUEZ NEILA 1991; ECK 1987: 63-65, 82-83.

32 For other examples where both measurements are given on granite funerary stelae from Emerita, note *EE* IX 75, 79; *ERAE* 386; *HEp* 6, 111, 116, 120.



LÁMINA 9

Stele with dimensions of the frontage of a burial plot: the inscription. Photo: J. Edmondson.

ment was given, it is possible that a second marker was erected along the edge of the burial plot, recording the other measurement.<sup>33</sup> Twelve Roman feet (equivalent to 3,54 m) was the most common dimension for the frontage of burial plots at Emerita, in the rest of the Iberian peninsula and at Rome.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For other examples from Emerita where just the frontage or the depth was given, see *HEp* 6, 113, 124.

<sup>34</sup> For Emerita, note also *CIL* II 545; *EE* IX 75; *HEp* 6, 114, 116, 120, 122. For the Iberian peninsula in general, see RODRÍGUEZ NEILA 1991: 72-75, esp. Cuadro I. At Rome, in a sample of 1451 inscriptions that give the dimensions of the burial plot, no fewer than 402 (27,7%) have a frontage of 12 Roman feet: see ECK 1987: 64, 82

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