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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,² 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.³ 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.⁴ 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.⁵

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 Pedro Mateos Cruz, Coordinator of Excavations, kindly alerted me to two unpublished examples in the collection of the Consorcio de la Ciudad Monumental Histórico-Artística y Arqueológica de Mérida.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* I² 1379, 3004a-b, 3022-23 (all illustrated in the volume of plates, *CIL* I², fasc. 4, no. 2, ed. A. Degrassi and H. Krummrey, published in 1986); for a brief selection from Italy: note *CIL* I² 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).

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
h(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(ilius)*, the method used among the indigenous population of the Iberian peninsula before they had become fully assimilated to Roman onomastic practices.⁹ 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.

⁹ 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.

LÁMINA 3

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

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 interpunction 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 stele was set up a few years later than no. 1 (above).

The text reads:

P · VALL

LÁMINA 4

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

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 stele (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 con-



LAMINA 5

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

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 recutting of the stone). Triangular interpunction is visible in the first four lines, and was probably also

LAMINA 6

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

used in the now damaged fifth line. An interpunct probably followed *f(i)lius* 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 *cognomen*, unless this line was indented. Line 5 is considerably more damaged with the first few letters (five

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 Iulia²⁶ or from one of the Lusitanian communities promoted to municipal status under Augustus such as Ebora, Myrtilis, Salacia or Olisipo.²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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(ucius) Octavius L(ucii) f(ilius) /
Gal(eria tribu) hic sit(us) est /
[?L(ucius)] Octavius L(ucii) f(ilius) /
Ursus, nepos, / [hic si]tus 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.²⁹ 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 plots appears to have died out at Emerita and in other towns of Roman Spain around the end of the first century A.D.³⁰

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. Vocconius 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. Talus 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 Metellensium* (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 (Ebora), 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* andf. *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 9

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

valent 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.³⁴

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

³⁴ 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

