

STTL

Sit Tibi Terra Levis: Formulae and Phrases from Funerary Monuments of Ancient Liburnia and Iapodia

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STTL, a well-known acronym standing for SIT TIBI TERRA LEVIS, quite expectedly was chosen as the acronym of the research project titled “Sit Tibi Terra Levis: Formulae and Phrases from Funerary Monuments of Ancient Liburnia and Iapodia”. The Project is funded by the Croatian Science Foundation (HRZZ) and shall last for four years (2023–2027).

Project leader is Prof Anamarija Kurilić (University of Zadar), and the team members are scholars from different institutions from Croatia and abroad: Dr Kornelija Appio Giunio (Archaeological Museum Zadar), Dr Fran Domazetović (University of Zadar), Dr Francisca Feraudi-Gruénais (Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften), Dr Ivan Marić (University of Zadar), Dr Anja Ragolić (ZRC SAZU – Institute of Archaeology, Ljubljana), Prof Zrinka Serventi (University of Zadar), Prof Ante Šiljeg (University of Zadar), Prof Nedim Tuno (University of Sarajevo), as well as a doctoral student Krešimir Baljkas, mag. educ. hist. (University of Zadar). Since May 2024 Dr Matteo Pola started his incoming mobility research project that is joint with the STTL project.

The aim of the project is to analyse funerary monuments and sites from two northwestern regions of Roman Dalmatia, Liburnia and Iapodia (Map 1). The main focus is on their epigraphic phrases and formulas, including attributes, expressions and syntagmas that appear on tombstones, such as *Dis Manibus* = “to the gods Mani” (i.e. “to the spirits of the deceased”, or “to the gods of the underworld”), *hic situs est / hic sita est* = “here he/she rests”, *bene merenti* = “well-deserving”, *infelix* or *infelicissimi* = “(very) unfortunate”, *defunctus*, *-a*, *-i* – “deceased”, *qui vixit annis / qui vixit annos* – “who lived ... years”, and so on. This type of research aims to gain insight into funeral customs and workshop standards, as well as ritual practices and emotions, thereby seeking to improve knowledge of ancient social history. It is expected that their analysis will also be able to establish certain spatial and temporal specificities of the researched areas and/or microregions.

This is the first such research not only for the area of Liburnia and Iapodia, but also for the Roman province of Dalmatia and for the entire area of the Roman Empire. However, research into formulas and phrases present on tombstones of the ancient world has so far been partially done. The greatest attention of researchers has been attracted by the use of the invocation to the gods Mani (*Dis Manibus*) on tombstones throughout the Roman Empire, including the Roman province of Dalmatia (to which ancient Liburnia and Iapodia belonged) (cf. Fig. 1), while other formulas and phrases have been researched much less frequently or not at all. However, a combined research into the occurrence of formulas and phrases has not yet been done anywhere.

The research will also concentrate on content analysis and correlation with other relevant sources (archaeological, linguistic, historical and other), archaeological and spatial analyses, and similar. To achieve that, various methods are applied using an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach, so, in addition to classical historical and epigraphical methods, methods of digital humanities in general and digital epigraphy in a narrower sense, as well as methods of spatial analysis characteristic of geographical and cartographic research, are also used.

Table 12.1. Various forms of the <i>DM</i> invocation in Roman Dalmatia (after Tantimonaco 2013)			
Formula (according to S. Tantimonaco 2013)	Number of inscriptions		
	Dalmatia (total)	Salona only	Liburnia only
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus</i>	1387 (three at the end of the text)	671	114 (two at the end of the text)
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus et aeternae securitati</i>			
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus et in perpetua securitatem</i>			
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus et memoriai</i>			
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus et perpetuae securitati</i>	3	1	0
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus memoriae</i>			
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus pietati aeternitati</i>			
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus sacrum</i>	164	9	12
<i>D(is) M(an)ibus</i>	1	0	1
<i>Dis Manibus</i>			
<i>Dis M(an)ibus</i>			
<i>Dis Ma(n)ibus</i>	1	0	1
<i>Dis Man(ibus)</i>	3	0	0

Fig 1. Partial presentation of distribution of *Dis Manibus* invocations in Roman Dalmatia (Kurilić & Serventi, *Dii Manes in Roman Dalmatia*, in: *Between Fearing and Worshipping. Household Spirits in the Greco Roman World*, eds. Guzmán Almagro & Tantimonaco, 2024).



Fig 2. Georadar survey in Caska Bay



Fig 3. LiDAR survey in Caska Bay

A database of Roman-era tombstones from the researched areas is currently being created, which will be available to everyone in open access upon completion (epigraphy.info platform included) and which everyone will be able to use for their further research. This has fulfilled one of the first tasks from the first year of the project, and the similar can be stated for the other tasks: a large part of the epigraphic material from the Archaeological Museum in Zadar (Fig. 4–5) and the Museum of Ancient Glass in Zadar has been collected and described, as well all the funerary monuments from museum and collections of North Liburnian area (cf. Fig. 6), while similar activities are currently underway in the area of southern Liburnia, and in the very immediate future in the areas inhabited by the Iapodes.

LiDAR and ground-penetrating radar surveys have been carried out at selected locations of already known Roman-era necropolises (Caska on the island of Pag; Figs. 2–3) and at sites where Roman-era graves are expected to exist (Gornji Karin), while surveys will be carried out at other similar locations next year.



Fig 4. Epigraphic study in Archaeological Museum Zadar.

Fig 5. Epigraphic study in Archaeological Museum Zadar.



Fig 6. Epigraphic study in National Museum in Labin (CIL 3, 3061).