

# Engraved gems from Tilurium in the Zagreb Archaeological Museum

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*Within the glyptic collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb eight engraved gems and two glass gems from Tilurium are found. A rich but standard iconographic repertoire is attested on them, covering various subjects: Minerva, Eros, a centaur, a satyr, Three Graces, a warrior, a deer, an eagle, a group of symbols and an inscription. Although lacking archaeological context, based on their stylistic and technical characteristics, they can be dated in the period from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.*

**Key words:** *Tilurium, legionary fortress, the Roman province of Dalmatia, engraved gems, glass gems, Roman period*

## Introduction

This paper is dedicated to Professor Mirjana Sanader on the occasion of her 65th birthday, in recognition of her career-long scientific achievements and outstanding contributions to the research of *Tilurium* as well as gratitude for her continuous support and mentoring.

A group of eight intaglios and two glass gems from Trilj and Gardun (*Tilurium*), which are part of the glyptic collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, is examined here.<sup>1</sup> However, before analysing the engraved gems, a short introduction to the very site of *Tilurium* should be given. *Tilurium* was a Roman legionary fortress built on the location of the present-day village Gardun near Trilj in Croatia, positioned some 30 km in the Salona hinterland and occupying a plateau above the Cetina River (*Hippus*).<sup>2</sup> Despite still not being able to pinpoint the exact date of Roman occupation of the place and consequently their building of the fortress as well, we can certainly connect their military presence in that area with that of the local people of *Delmatae* (Zaninović 1996a: 282-284; Sanader & Tončinić 2010: 45; Kaić 2014: 70).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The glyptic collection from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb numbers some 400 odd Roman engraved gems, which were only partially published. All the gems acquired until 1881, the 127 pieces, were published by F. Maixner (Maixner 1881a; Maixner 1881b). Since then, the gems were published mostly on occasion of being displayed in variously themed exhibitions (Rendić-Miočević 1987: nos. 37, 77, 128, 131, 158, 161; Nemeth-Ehrlich 1993: nos. 213, 214, 216-219, 226, 228, 229; Rendić-Miočević & Kirigin 1995: nos. 3-9; Kaić 2013b). The entire collection of Roman engraved gems was analyzed in the unpublished PhD thesis by the author of this paper (Kaić 2013a). For detailed account on the publications of engraved gems from the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, see Kaić 2017: 479, n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> In scientific literature during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century different opinions on locating the legionary fortress of *Tilurium* could be found, but it was not until 1937 that S. Gunjača correctly placed it in the village Gardun near Trilj (Gunjača 1937: 39-46). For legionary fortress of *Tilurium*, see Zaninović 1996a.

<sup>3</sup> For *Delmatae* see Zaninović 2007a.

Among the Roman military units that were stationed there, Tilurium is best known as the seat of the Seventh legion but again, with uncertain dates of the legion's arrival to the fortress as well as its departure. The Seventh legion was probably stationed in Tilurium at least from the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, while it left both the fortress and the Roman province of Dalmatia sometime around the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, by then awarded the title of *Claudia Pia Fidelis* (Zaninović 1996a: 284, 287; Tončinić 2004: 148; Sanader & Tončinić 2010: 45-46, n. 54; Tončinić 2011: 11-15; Kaić 2018: 1046).<sup>4</sup> Different auxiliary units replaced the Seventh legion and remained in Tilurium until the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>5</sup> Since that period, little is known about the history of Tilurium.<sup>6</sup> The role of Tilurium in the Late Antiquity is least known, although it is worth mentioning that on-going archaeological excavations in the last several years have yielded important new insights in the Late Antiquity in the area once occupied by the legionary fortress of Tilurium.<sup>7</sup>

The undoubted importance of the site of Gardun finally led to the systematic archaeological excavations of the site, conducted by Professor Mirjana Sanader continuously since 1997.<sup>8</sup>

However, even a long time before the excavations, the site attracted attention of scholars due to a great number of various Roman finds (Kaić 2018: 1046).<sup>9</sup> Among these finds engraved gems stood out, owing to their large number (Nardelli 2012: 130; Kaić 2014: 70). Apart from the engraved gems in the Zagreb Archaeological museum (Maixner 1881a; 1881b; Kaić 2013a), two engraved gems and two glass gems in the Cetina Region Museum (Kaić 2010) as well as four engraved gems from private archaeological collections in Croatia (Kaić 2014), the majority of Gardun gems, 238 pieces in total, are kept in the Archaeological Museum in Split<sup>10</sup> (Nardelli 2011). All the listed gems are stray finds collected mainly during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, two engraved gems were found in course of the archaeological excavations at the excavation area D, where military barracks were revealed (Kaić 2014: 74, n. 38, 40). Several engraved gems from Gardun are kept in the glyptic collections abroad as well.<sup>11</sup> Given data, as well as the current state of research, show that among the Roman military sites in Croatia, the largest number of engraved gems comes from the legionary fortress of Tilurium (Nardelli 2012: 130, n. 3).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> M. Zaninović (1996a: 284) argued that the first legion stationed in Tilurium was the legio IX Hispana, based on his reading of one inscription, which mentions the veteran Sextus Cornelius (CIL 3: 13977).

<sup>5</sup> Given the inscription (CIL 3, 2706=9274), which confirmed that the last unit to leave the fortress in 245 AD was the Cohort VIII voluntariorum civium Romanorum (Zaninović 2007b: 182). For list of auxiliary units stationed in Tilurium, see Tončinić 2004: 148.

<sup>6</sup> A significant number of epigraphic monuments from Gardun mentioning the beneficiarii was found, thus pointing to the existence of the beneficiary station at the river Cetina (Hippus) crossing (Sanader 1998: 243-244; Zaninović 2007b: 183; Zaninović 2010: 504; Glavaš 2016: 23-24).

<sup>7</sup> M. Zaninović suggests that Tilurium during the Late Antiquity could have retained its military role since no large civilian settlement was found within its former territory (Zaninović 1996b, 270; 2007b, 183; 2011: 504). A civilian settlement named Pons Tiluri was situated around the Hippus river bridge at today's town of Trilj (Gunjača 1937: 42; Zaninović 2011: 501, 504).

<sup>8</sup> For archaeological excavations of Tilurium, see Sanader 1998, 243-255; Sanader 2003; Sanader et al. 2004a; Sanader et al. 2004b-2011; Sanader 2014, 17-22.

<sup>9</sup> In the Archaeological Museum Split most of the Gardun finds are kept. Another important collection is kept in the Archaeological collection of the Franciscan Monastery in Sinj and the Cetina Region Museum, also in Sinj. The Trilj Regional Museum in Trilj, opened for public in 2006, is now the main institution where all the newly acquired archaeological material from Gardun is placed.

<sup>10</sup> Monsignor Frane Bulić was the museum director, who showed constant interest in acquiring and publishing the engraved gems in the museum journal *Bullettino di archeologia e storia Dalmata* (1879-1929). He was first to publish the engraved gems from Gardun in the glyptic collection of the Split Archaeological Museum. In 2011, the entire Gardun engraved gems collection was published by Bruna Nardelli (Nardelli 2011).

<sup>11</sup> In the collection of engraved gems from Dalmatia by Sir Arthur Evans, five are said to come from Tilurium (Hoey Middleton 1991: no. 68, 121, 153, 209, 217). One carnelian from Gardun is found in the glyptic collection of Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, with the finding site incorrectly spelled as "Gordun" (AGWien I: 152, no. 491, pl. 81)

<sup>12</sup> For glyptics in Croatia see Nardelli 2011: 1, n. 4 and Nardelli 2012: 133-134, n. 3.

### ***The iconographic repertoire on the engraved gems from Gardun and Trilj***

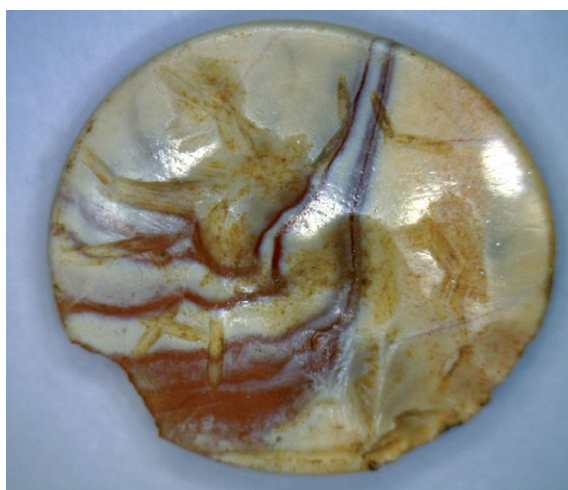
As mentioned above, within the glyptic collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb three intaglios come from Gardun (*Tilurium*). To that number, we can add five more intaglios, which were found in the area of Trilj. All were acquired for the Museum as stray finds. They cover a wide iconographic range, without any repetition of motifs, including Graeco-Roman divinities, mythological figures, animals, symbols and one inscription as well.

An amethyst<sup>13</sup> from Trilj (Fig. 1) is engraved with the figure of Eros in three-quarter profile to left, holding a torch turned downwards in his right hand and a butterfly in his left hand (Maixner 1881a: 78, no. 12; Kaić 2013a: 172, no. 66). The iconography of Eros burning a butterfly, belonging to the Eros-Psyche cycle, was frequently found on engraved gems during both Republican and Imperial periods (Magni 2009: 72). Besides being connected to the realms of love and sexuality, this imagery also referred to the funerary sphere with butterfly representing the soul of a deceased person (Schwartz 1999: 18; Platt 2007: 93, no. 5; Kaić 2018: 1047). The analogies for our motive can be found on the carnelian from Gadara (Henig & Whiting 1987: 20, no. 168), and garnet from Verona (Magni 2009: 75-76, no. 274, pl. 18), both showing Eros holding a torch beneath the butterfly. For the position of Eros' body, we can cite a glass gem from the Ashmolean Museum (Henig & MacGregor 2004: 51, no. 3.36) with Eros chasing a butterfly, but without holding a torch. According to the stylistic and technical characteristics, our amethyst can be dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.



*Fig. 1. Eros burning a butterfly; an amethyst, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. 219/18 (photo: I. Kaić).*

A banded carnelian<sup>14</sup> from Gardun (Fig. 2) is engraved with a centaur in three-quarter profile to left, with front legs slightly raised and with both arms either outstretched forwards or lifted wide apart. Behind the centaur, there is a hardly recognizable object, perhaps a thyrsus. Though no exact iconographic analogy could be detected, we can mention a glass gem from Aquileia showing a centaur with raised front legs and with arms stretched wide apart, holding a branch (Sena Chiesa 1966: 195, no. 419, pl. 21). A glass gem from Göttingen (AGDS III Göttingen: 118, no. 293, pl. 54), moulded with a centaur playing the auloi and holding a thyrsus, can be cited for stylistic parallels, based on which our carnelian can be dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.



*Fig. 2. A centaur; banded carnelian, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15954 (photo: I. Kaić).*

<sup>13</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. 219/18; shape 6; 9,07 x 7,2 x 3,87 mm (the shape of all intaglios is determined according to AGWien I: 15, Fig. c and Mandrioli Bizzari 1987: 30, pl. 2). Bought from Matija Latinac, from Trilj.

<sup>14</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15954; shape 8; 11,00 x 10,00 x 2,00 mm. Unpublished. Bought in 1910 from Mate Žuljević, from Trilj.



Fig. 3. A warrior; banded agate, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15935 (photo: I. Kaić).



Fig. 4. Minerva; a carnelian, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. 217/34 (photo: I. Kaić).

A banded agate<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 3) from Trilj is engraved with figure of a kneeling warrior in three-quarter profile to left (Maixner 1881a: 79, no. 19; Kaić 2013a: 187, no. 103). A warrior is shown naked, holding in his left outstretched arm a rounded shield, placed left of him. A sword handle is hanging from his back. This particular motif of a warrior belongs to the so-called Capaneus type (Spier 1992: 78, no. 167). It was already well attested on the Etruscan scarabs and continued to be used on the Italic gems of the late-Republican period (Toso 2007: 111-112; Magni 2009, 122). Banded agates from the J. Paul Getty Museum (Spier 1992: 78, no. 167) and Fréjus (Guiraud 1988: 141, no. 469, pl. 32) as well as one sardonyx from the Nürnberg collection (AGNürnberg: 103, no. 231, pl. 32) provide the closest iconographic parallels for the Tilurium piece. In addition to these intaglios, one can mention a glass gem from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (AGWien II: 55, no. 747, pl. 28). Stylistic and technical characteristics of our intaglio, reflected in the use of pellets for the nose, eyes and knees of the warrior, allow us to date it in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. It seems that the story of Theban hero was well-liked by the soldiers garrisoned in Tilurium, for one more engraved gems featuring Capaneus is known. A carnelian from the Archaeological Museum in Split, also dated in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, exhibits a rare motif of Capaneus mounting the ladder in an attempt to take over the city walls of Thebes (Nardelli 2010: 163-164).

Among female Graeco-Roman deities, only a goddess Minerva is represented in this small collection. On the carnelian<sup>16</sup> (Fig. 4) from Trilj (Maixner 1881b: 117, no. 89; Kaić 2013a: 198, no. 13), the goddess is standing frontally with head in profile to right, dressed in long chiton, holding a patera in her left hand and a spear in her right slightly raised arm, with a shield on the ground. The whole figure of the goddess is elongated, which corresponds with a somewhat larger size of the intaglio. A similar iconography of this variant of Athena Parthenos type (Magni 2009: 53) is shown on one sardonyx from the Sa'd collection (Henig & Whiting 1987: 18, no. 146), while stylistic and technical analogies can be traced on the carnelian in the Braunschweig collection (AGDS III Braunschweig: 22, no. 48, pl. 7). Accordingly, our carnelian can be dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

<sup>15</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15935; shape 8; 14,5 x 11,00 x 3,00 mm. Bought from Matija Latinac, from Trilj.

<sup>16</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. 217/34; shape 8; 14,91 x 10,51 x 4,02 mm. Bought from Matija Latinac, from Trilj.

A prasio<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 5) is engraved with figures of Three Graces dancing embraced. The left Grace is shown frontally with head in three-quarter to left, the central Grace is depicted from the back, with her head in profile to left and with both hands embracing the other two Graces around their shoulders. The right Grace is carved frontally with head in three-quarter to right, holding two ears of corn in her left hand. In the Roman view, a charming trio embodied not only the female beauty and grace but also fertility, marital unity and prosperity (Milleker 1988: 69; Francis 2002: 197). The same iconographic layout is found on the green and brown jasper from the Sa'd collection (Henig & Whiting 1987: 28, no. 272). For stylistic and technical characteristic one can mention the carnelian from the Hungarian National Museum, depicting the goddess Minerva (Gesztelyi 2000: 52, no. 84). A prasio from Tilurium belongs to the group of so-called "Kleine Praser", the green-colored translucent chalcedonies distinctive for their small dimensions, convex shape and classicizing motifs of Late Hellenistic and Augustan tradition (Platz-Horster 2010). This particular group of engraved gems is mostly dated throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, with some pieces belonging to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC or the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Sena Chiesa 1966: 54; Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978: 196; Henig 2007<sup>3</sup>: 8, 10; Platz-Horster 2010: 191).



Fig. 5. Three Graces; green translucent chalcedony, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15942 (photo: I. Kaić).

A chalcedony<sup>18</sup> from Trilj (Fig. 6) is engraved with the figure of a seated deer or a goat in profile to the left with its head facing the opposite direction (Kaić 2013a: 240, no. 235). Behind the animal some sort of vegetation, a shrubbery or perhaps a little tree, is carved. There are several examples that can be cited for iconographic analogies, with intaglios depicting either a deer (Gesztelyi 2001, str. 66, 86, App. 14; Henig 2007<sup>3</sup>, str. 196, 238, App. 28, t. 24) or a goat (Sena Chiesa 1978: 118, no. 137, pl. 19; AGWien III: 97, no. 1880, pl. 43).<sup>19</sup> Stylistic and technical features, most notable in skilful yet delicate modelling of the animal, place our intaglio in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.



Fig. 6. A resting deer; a chalcedony, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15948 (photo: I. Kaić).

A chipped carnelian<sup>20</sup> from Gardun (Fig. 7) is engraved with the figure of an eagle in three-quarter profile to the left, perching on the boar head, which is shown in profile to the left (Maixner 1881a: 111, no. 51; Kaić 2013a: 245, no. 249). Closest iconographic and stylistic parallels come from the glass gems (Imhoof-Blumer & Keller 1889: 128, no. 47, pl. 20; Richter 1956: 111, no. 521, pl. 62; AGDS I, 3: 197, no. 3413, pl. 323). This particular motif, well known from the Roman bronze figurines in variants with an eagle

<sup>17</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15942; shape 1; 10,73 x 9,03 x 3,96 mm. Bought from Matija Latinac in Trilj.

<sup>18</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15948; shape 8; 12,00 x 10,00 x 1,50 mm. Unpublished. Bought in 1911 from Mate Žuljević, from Trilj.

<sup>19</sup> For resting deers on engraved gems see Henig 2007<sup>3</sup>: 167-168, 233, nos. 616-617, pl. 19.

<sup>20</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. 227/83; shape 8; 11,84 x 10,57 x 2,19 mm. Unpublished. The intaglio is chipped in the left upper part.



Fig. 7. An eagle perching on the boars' head; a carnelian, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. 227/83 (photo: I. Kaić). Fig. 8. A group of symbols; black mottled jasper, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15922 (photo: I. Kaić).

standing on the head of a deer, stag, bear or ram, is probably associated with Oriental cults (Richter 1956: 111, no. 521; Warden 1997: 56-57, no. 187). A carnelian from Tilurium can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

A black mottled jasper<sup>21</sup> from Gardun (Fig. 8) is engraved with modius containing an ear of corn and two cornucopiae, with a weighing scale on top of the basket (Kaić 2013a: 260, no. 290). A motif of modius with a pair of scales is well represented on the Roman engraved gems, with modius usually filled with ears of corns and poppy heads, often grouped together (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1986: 38-39, no. 79; AGNürnberg: 154, no. 429, pl. 59; Dembski 2005: 155, nos. 1039-1040; Henig 2007<sup>3</sup>: 142, 258, no. 404, pl. 44). A jasper from Tilurium shows a small iconographic peculiarity, with cornucopiae added instead of the poppy heads. According to the stylistic and technical elements, our intaglio can be dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

### **Glass gems from Gardun**

The Zagreb Archaeological Museum collection also holds two glass gems from Gardun, stray finds again.

A glass gem<sup>22</sup> from Gardun (Fig. 9) is moulded with a figure of satyr standing in a three-quarter profile to the left. On his raised right leg, a young child with outstretched arms is lying, to whom a satyr is playing the flute. In a small child, perhaps a baby Dionysus can be recognized (Platz-Horster 1987: 10-11, no. 17). It is important to note that direct iconographic and stylistic analogies are found on glass gem from Berg - Xanten, where the Roman legionary fortress of Vetera I was located (Platz-Horster 1987: 11, no. 18, pl. 3). The Xanten glass gem is dated to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the same chronological frame in which a Tilurium piece should be placed.

<sup>21</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15922; shape 8; 11,76 x 9,35 x 2,00 mm. Unpublished. Bought in 1911 from Mate Žuljević.

<sup>22</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. 222; a glass gem as an imitation of nicolo, shape 8; 11,29 x 9,4 x 1,63 mm. Unpublished. Bought in 1910 from Mate Žuljević, from Trilj.

<sup>23</sup> Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, Inv. no. A-15957; yellow transparent glass; shape 10; 6,5 x 8,3 x 1,3 mm. Bought in 1911 from Mate Žuljević, from Trilj.

<sup>24</sup> For rebellion of Lucius Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia, see Parat 2016.



Fig. 9. A satyr; glass imitating a nicolo, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. 222 (photo: I. Kaić).

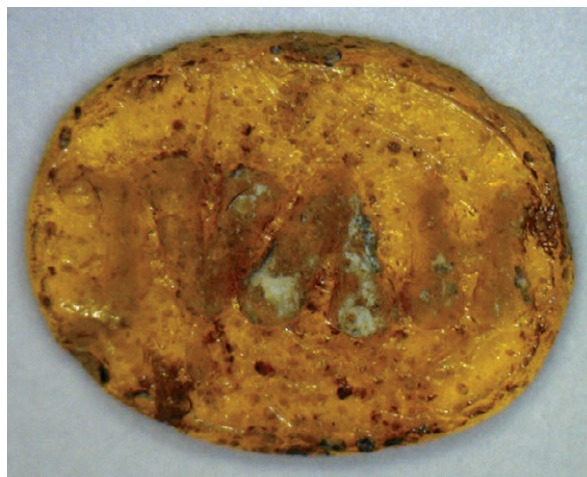


Fig. 10. An inscription; glass gem, Archaeological museum in Zagreb, inv. no. A-15957 (photo: I. Kaić).

The second yellow glass gem<sup>23</sup> from Gardun (Fig. 10) is bearing a retrograde inscription HAVE (Kaić 2013a: 303, no. 399; Kaić 2017: 483). The closest analogy can be found on another yellow glass gem from Resnik (*Siculi*) in Croatia. This glass gem, with an inscription HAV, is set in a bronze ring (Kamenjarin 2011: 147, 149, no. 3818). It is worth mentioning that Claudius founded a veterans' colony of Siculi as a reward for soldiers of the *legio VII* and *legio XI*, who pledged their allegiance to the emperor during the Scribonianus' rebellion (Zaninović 1996: 215).<sup>24</sup> Similar greyish glass gem with the inscription HAVI comes from Vendeuil-Caply in France and is dated to the mid-first century CE, based on the context of the find (Guiraud 1988: 192, no. 928, pl. 61).

## Conclusion

Although not many in number, the engraved gems from Tilurium in the Zagreb Archaeological Museum offer a wide, although standard iconographic repertoire. Among the eight engraved gems and two glass gems, each piece carries a separate motif: Minerva, Eros, a centaur, a satyr, Three Graces, a warrior, a deer, an eagle, a group of symbols and an inscription. Most of the motifs fit nicely with the military nature of the site. However, a gem engraved with Three Graces points more towards a woman as being its owner, than a soldier.

The gems in the collection bear evidence of various stylistic and technical characteristics, which allow them to be dated to the period from the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. One engraved gem and one glass gem are dated to the late-Republican period (Fig. 3, 9). One carnelian (Fig. 7) belongs to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Five engraved gems (Fig. 1, 4-6, 8) and the other glass gem (Fig. 10) can be dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The remaining engraved gem (Fig. 2) belongs to the 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD.

We can conclude that this small but interesting collection of gems from Tilurium adds to our knowledge of rich glyptic corpus from that important Roman military site in Croatia.

## Abbreviations

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|--------------------------|---|
| AGDS I, 3                | E. Brandt, W. Gercke, A. Krug, E. Schmidt, <i>Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen. Band I: Staatliche Münzsammlung München, Teil 3: Gemmen und Glaspasten der römischen Kaiserzeit sowie Nachträge</i> , München, 1972. |
| AGDS III<br>Braunschweig | V. Scherf, <i>Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen. Band III. Die Gemmensammlung im Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum Braunschweig</i> , Wiesbaden, 1970.   |

- AGDS III Göttingen P. Gercke, *Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen. Band III. Die Gemmensammlung im Archäologischen Institut der Universität Göttingen*, Wiesbaden, 1970.
- AGNürnberg C. Weiss, *Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen. Band V. Die antiken Gemmen in Sammlung Friedrich Julius Rudolf Bergau im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg*, Nürnberg, 1996.
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