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COMMENTS ON THE IDENTITY AND DEPLOYMENT OF COHORTES I BRITTONUM¹

It seems to be a reality that the *cohortes* of Britons were not initially created under the Flavii, but earlier, probably immediately after the beginning of the conquest of Britannia².

We have information about the existence, in the 1st century AD, of about ten units -cavalry and infantry- recruted either from the units stationed in the province or from a particular ethnic group: the Britons. The similarity between these troops, among the cohortes I Brittonum is a source of controversy, among scholars especially in relation with those units of Britons stationed in Dacia Inferior, which were identified with one another. often on conjectural arguments³. The different opinions will be reproduced as follows in my analysis of each of the following cohortes: I Brittonum, I Aelia Brittonum, I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum, I Aurelia Brittonum, I Flavia Brittonum and finally the best known / Ulpia Brittonum. A different oppinion was expressed by N. Gostar who disagrees with the similarity between the troops of Britons attested in Dacia Inferior and Dacia Superior: coh. I Aurelia Brittonum. coh. I Augusta Nervia Brittonum. respectively coh. I Flavia Brittonum, but without going into any detail concerning their deployment⁴. The scholars from western Europe who studied the Britons' cohorts as well, considered every unit separately, being cautious in expressing the identity between one another⁵. An exception can be found in the study of J. Spaul who speculates on the existence of a unique coh. I Brittonum, which had changed its Imperial titles during the first three centuries from *Flavia* to *Ulpia*, hence *Aelia* and *Aurelia* and finally taking back its first title. Flavia, in the 3rd century⁶.

In this paper, each unit will be studied independently, except for *coh. I Brittonum* with the simple name, which has to be related to one of the other *cohortes*, and for *coh. I Aurelia Brittonum*, attested only on one occasion, and being considered together with *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*.

1. Coh. I Aelia Brittonum

Among the first documents attesting this troop there is an epigraph describing the career of T. Appalius Alfinus Secundus, who was a tribune and who had the command of

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² Until recently, the earliest date to consider the debut in the conscription of Britons was *c*. AD 60, as AD 85 has been the first known military diploma where units of Britons were registered. About the recruiting of Britons starting with Nero's reign, or even under Claudius ; see the new contributions in Eck 2003, 224 and Eck, Pangerl 2003, 208.

³ As for the distinction between different ethnic troops with the same paradigmatic numeral, what remains problematic is the identity of different units *primae Hispanorum*, some with the title *Flavia*, one with *Flavia Ulpia*, and another one with the title *Aelia*. The difficulties of this undertaking were illustrated in R. Syme's attempt to make the distinguish between them, but with no definite result, Syme 1959, 30-31.

⁴Gostar 1966, 182-183.

⁵ The most significant example is provided in Wagner 1938, 106-109.

⁶Spaul 2000, 195-197.

coh. I Aelia Brittonum, during his *militia secunda*⁷. H.-G. Pflaum has dated the tribune's background in the first half of the 2nd century⁸. P. Holder asserted that the units with the title *Aelia* have been generally created by Hadrian and some of them may be *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* ∞ as well, perhaps have been constituted as regular units during Hadrian's reign as well but they had been in existence as irregular or temporary units already early in the second century⁹.

It is not to be ruled out the possibility that this unit could have been mentioned in the military diploma of Moesia Inferior dated AD 111 (RMD IV, 222), with the name *coh. I* ∞ *Brittonum.* It is also possible, however, that in the Pannonia Inferior's diploma of AD 135 (RMD IV, 251), where a *coh. I Brittonum milliaria* appears again without any other title, what was actually recorded *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* (see infra)¹⁰. In other terms, this unit could have received the title *Aelia* afterwards¹¹, as a battle honor, probably in connection with some conflicts¹² and consequently, the honorific title doesn't necesarilly reflect here the creation date. The deployment of the troop will be, therefore, from Pannonia to Noricum¹³, perhaps with a halt of some years in Moesia Inferior. Perhaps this is the reason why only this unit and coh. *VII Lusitanorum* on Pannonia Inferior's diploma of AD 143¹⁴.

The cohort is attested in Noricum, at Winden am See (*Virunum*) on an inscription from AD 238¹⁵, on tile-stamps at Mautern (*Favianis*), some of them with the title *Antoniniana*¹⁶, and probably at Wallsee¹⁷. Thus G. Alföldy believed that the troop was garrisoned in the fort at Mautern in the 2nd and 3rd century¹⁸. This is confirmed and nuanced by the last excavations inside the fort. Consequently, *coh. I Aelia Brittonum milliaria* is considered to have been "*höchstwahrscheinlich*" the garrison of the fort in its third phase dated from Hadrian until the end of Marcus Aurelius' northern wars¹⁹. The fort's hypothetical dimensions of 176 by 145 m are perfect for the accomodation of a

⁷ ILS 1417 = PME I, IV, V A 153.

⁸ The argument for the association of his career to Hadrian's reign is the relation of T. Appalius with M. Gavius Maximus, Praetorian Prefect under Antoninus Pius, Pflaum 1960, 342-343.

⁹Holder 1998, 261-262.

¹⁰ The same conclusions in RMD IV, 490, note 6.

¹¹ As an example it is worth mentioning that coh. *I Aelia Gaesatorum milliaria* is recorded for the first time under this name on the military diploma of 126 (Eck, Roxan 1995; AE 1995, 1823), which implies the origin of the troop under Trajan; see also Holder 1998, AD 258. *Coh. I Aelia Dacorum milliaria* or *coh. I Aelia sagittariorum milliaria* are recorded among the units of Britannia on a diploma from AD 127 and in Pannonia Superior on a diploma of 133. Accordingly, these cohorts could have existed before Hadrian's reign; see Holder 1998, 255, 260-261.

¹² For the conflicts from the 130s; see RE Suppl. 9, 554-555. W. Eck has recently demonstrated that in Pannonia there is no reason to believe that hostilities occured during Aelius Caesar' governoship and that the next governor, Haterius Nepos, received *ornamenta triumphalia* not as a consequence of battles in Pannonia, but as a reward after the war against Bar Kokhba, in Arabia, Eck 1999, 28-30. However, because of some coin-hoards and the presence of layers of ash in Aquincum it is still considered that at least some "minor disturbances" took place in the second half of 130's; see Lőrincz 2003, 28.

¹³ We could find similarities in the case of coh. *V Breucorum equitata* or coh. *II Batavorum milliaria* transferred under Trajan or Hadrian from Pannonia to Noricum; see Alföldy 1974, 144. Unfortunately, no complete unit list has survived for Noricum, except for the military diploma of AD 79, where three troops are registered; see Weiß 2004, 239-240.

¹⁴ Roxan 1999, 252.

 $^{^{15}}$ CIL 4812 = ILS 2524.

¹⁶ In tile-stamps, the abbreviation is CIAB (CIL III 13539a, read as CHO I VB) and ...HO I A B ANTO (AE 2000, 1148,a,b); see Alföldy 1974, 259; Gassner et alii 2000, 341, Abb. 249.

¹⁷ This tile-stamp from Wallsee records BRI FEC ; see Fischer 2002, 42, Abb. 43.

¹⁸ Alföldy 1974, 144, 148, 259.

¹⁹ Fischer 2002, 45. The unit could have stationed at Mautern until Diocletian's reforms, Gassner et alii 2000, 342.

coh. milliaria equitata, as the unit of Britons is and as it is confirmed by the *tribunus* rank of T. Appalius or by the inscription from Winden am See, where Aelius Martius is s(ummus) c(urator) of the troop²⁰.

A Pfannberg (*Noricum*) inscription could have been found of a *miles* of this unit, if we take into consideration the abbreviation c(o)*hortis l Brit(tonum)* and the discovery location (see below)²¹. The inscription from Torino, where a prefect of COH I BR ∞ EQ ²² is attested, could also point to a cohort from Britannia²³, probably the future *coh. l Aelia Brittonum*²⁴. Moreover, a centurion of a *coh. l 7 Brittonum* is recorded on an inscription at Aquileia²⁵.

2. Coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum

Presumably the first documents attesting the troop are the military diplomas of Dacia Inferior of AD 120/130 (Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2001, 38- 42, no. 3) and AD 129/130 (Weiß 1997, 244)²⁶. Subsequently, the unit is clearly mentioned on diplomas of AD 140 (IDR I, 13 = IDR 39) and AD 146 (RMD IV 269)²⁷, as part of the army in Dacia Inferior. A problem emerges with the Moesia Inferior's diploma of AD 111 (RMD IV, 222), where a *coh. I milliaria Brittonum* is also registered. P. Holder recognizes the unit as beeing *coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum milliaria*, his argument beeing the lack of the ϖ sign before the ethnic name of the troop²⁸. Given the fact that during Trajan's reign the territory of the future Dacia Inferior was part of Moesia Inferior, it is conceivable that the troop could be identified with *I Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum*. However, if the title *Nerviana Pacensis* describes the initial recruiting area (see *infra*), in conjuction with the moment of the unit's creation, it is difficult to explain the lack of this title in the diploma²⁹.

²³ J. Spaul classifies this cohort as *coh. I Britannica*, Spaul 2000, 193.

²⁴ A second probability is for the cohort *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum* which, at one time was *equitata* (AE 1947, 32), to be mentioned in the inscription; or, this troop is attested on an inscription at Vintimille only abbreviated as *coh(ors) pr(ima) Brittonu(m)* (AE 1915, 58 = ILS 9506).

²⁰ CIL III 4812 = ILS 2524. Summus curator was probably in charge of the supply distributions; see Speidel 1992, 137-139. For this unit as equitata see also Holder 1998, 254, 261.

²¹ CIL III 5455. G. Alföldy dates this inscription in the 2nd century, Alföldy 1974, 259. Another possibility is for the inscription to belong to a soldier from the *cohors I Flavia Brittonum*, also attested in Noricum.

²² CIL V 6995, where was identified with *coh. I Breucorum*, but this troop doesn't appear to be a *milliaria*; see for instance Spaul 2000, 317, and PME I, A 103.

²⁵ The sign 7 is regarded as a centurion grade, inaccurately included in front of the unit's ethnic name; see AE 1990, 387.

²⁶ In tabella I extr. r. 7 appear a [....]RITT co.

²⁷ See also Petolescu 2001.

²⁸ For the same opinion see RMD IV 222, (n. 7) This sign is also engraved before the real name of the unit on an unpublished diploma of Moesia Inferior, hosted in Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, Holder 2003, (n. 9). It is true that in the same diploma from Mainz, dated AD 105, the *milliaria* sign is positioned in front of the ethnic name, but probably after the titles Augusta Nerviana Pacensis which is significant (I would like to thank Prof. W. Eck for the information). At any rate, there is another inadvertence: in the same diploma, the name of coh. *Il Brittonum Augusta Nerviana Pacensis (milliaria)*, whose ethnical name is put in front of the titles Augusta Nerviana Pacensis.

²⁹ Comparatively, coh. *Il Augusta Nervia Brittonum*, recorded in Pannonia Inferior in AD 114 (CIL XVI 61; RMD 87), and Dacia Porolissensis in AD 130/131 (Weiß 2002, no. 5), AD 133 (IDR I, 11), AD 151 (Isac 2001, 54-5), AD 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47) and AD 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64), will appear every time with the title *Nervia Pacensis*. If the abbreviation $I \infty$ [----] of the *tabella intus*, line 1, in the diploma of 120/130, represents coh. *I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum* (Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2001, 38) this could be another argument to the unit in the diploma of Moesia Inferior to be the same with the cohort from Dacia Inferior. After all, the question is why the unit in Moesia is recorded with a truncated name. However, we did not totally exclude the possibility of the cohort being identical with coh. *I Aelia Brittonum* from Pannonia and later on from Noricum.

It is obviously difficult to assert that the troop mentioned on the diploma of AD 111 in Moesia Inferior could have been the same with *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*, since the latter is recorded on the chronologically related diplomas of AD 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3) and AD 113/114 (?) (RMD IV, 225)³⁰.

We should exclude by all means the possibility of *coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum* and the troop recorded at Buciumi in Dacia Porolissensis³¹, beeing identical, since they have a different numeral³².

With respect to the unit's title G.M.Bersanetti alleged that *Nerviana* is one of the imperial titles that designate the emperor under whom the troops were created³³. However, the title has a different ending name as compared to other imperial designations. Thus, W. Wagner asserts that the relation between the epithet *Nervia* and the emperor Nerva is not necessarily indicated³⁴. At any rate, P. Holder claimed that the Britons could have been initially recruited from the territory of *Colonia Nervia Glevum* (Gloucester), which could have borne, at one point, the title *Pacensis*³⁵. Another possibility concerning the derivation of the title resides in its origin coming from the Celtic tribe of *Nervii*³⁶. The *Nervii* were a Germanic tribe located probably in Gallia Belgica³⁷. However, it would be problematic to imagine the creation of a troop of *Nervii* combined with *Brittones*. Thus, the best name for the unit would have been *Nerviorum Brittonum*. I believe that the unit could have existed before Nerva's reign, but initially without the title *Nervia*.

V. Christescu's opinion is that the unit abbreviated CORSMB (CIL III 14216, 25 = IDR II, 560) on the tile-stamp at Stolniceni is the same with the cohort from the Thessalonice and Bumbeşti inscriptions (see *infra coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*), and also with CH I BR mill. (CIL III 8074) recorded on a tile-stamp at Orşova³⁸. On the contrary, N. Gostar clearly identified the troop with *coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria* when discussing the Stolniceni tile-stamp³⁹. Likewise, according to I.I. Russu and C.C. Petolescu, *co(ho)rs M(illiaria) B(rittonum)* is identical with *coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria* Additionally, D.Tudor claims that *coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum milliaria* is similar with the one that rebuilt the enclosure of the fort at Bumbeşti, after the cohort had changed its name in the honor of Caracalla⁴¹. However, 3 km away from Stolniceni, at Bârseşti, a tile with a retrograde stamp had been discovered......XB⁴², D.Tudor

³⁰ Holder 2003, note 9. Additionally, the troop is attested with the title *Ulpia* in all military diplomas, except for the ones from 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64 and CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19).

³¹ About coh. *II Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum* and the fort at Buciumi; see Russu 1959; Chirilă et alii 1972, 114ff; Gudea 1997b, 27, 31.

³² According to J. Spaul, the unit from Dacia Inferior is similar to the one from Dacia Porolissensis, as some errors have been made in military diplomas, Spaul 2000, 201. For the individuality of each troop see Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2002, 39-40 and Weiß 2002, 250.

³³ Bersanetti 1940, 106.

³⁴ Wagner 1938, 111.

³⁵ Holder 1980, 40. Nevertheless, the problem is that in the military diploma of AD 105, both of the cohortes Augustae Nervianae Pacensis are included (information Prof. W. Eck). Therefore they could have been in existence before AD 80, that is before Nerva's reign when the colony received the name Nervia.

³⁶ Russu 1959, 313-314.

³⁷ Plinius, Naturalis Historiae IV, 105.

³⁸ Christescu 1937, 184.

³⁹ Gostar 1966, 182-183. The same opinion in Vlådescu 1983, 34.

⁴⁰ Russu 1972, 69; Russu 1974, 44; Petolescu 2002, 90. *Contra*; see C.- H. Daicoviciu 1967, 81.

⁴¹ Tudor 1978, 333.

⁴² IDR II, 572.

interpreted it as *beeing the* [c(ohors) I]X B(atavorum)⁴³. Conversely, N. Gostar asserts that it seems highly probable to be identified with the troop mentioned in the tile-stamp at Stolniceni, abbreviated here [coh (ors)] (milliaria) B(rittonum), where X could denote milliary sign⁴⁴. K. Dietz and K. Strobel considered also that in the stamp at Bârsești can be identified the Batavian's cohort, also milliaria, the same troop being recorded on tile-stamp at Stolniceni as CORSMB⁴⁵. At any rate, obviously, a complete and strong 1000 men unit couldn't have occupied the fortification at Stolniceni, because the fort was probably too small⁴⁶.

The last mention of the troop can be found in the military diploma of AD 146 (RMD IV 269) and there is no confirmation that the troop resided in Dacia until the end of the province. Altogether, one cannot completely reject the possibility for *coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum* to be similar to *coh. I Aurelia Brittonum* attested in Bumbeşti (*infra* n.4). Yet it is hard to believe that there was a change in the ethnical name of the troop. As a matter of fact, the homonym unit in Dacia Porolissensis kept its titles even in the 3rd century in the inscriptions that are the last attestations of the troop⁴⁷.

3. Coh. I Flavia Brittonum

The first recording of the troop is to be found on the tombstone of a *miles* of the *coh(ors) I Fl(avia) Brittonum* (CIL III 2024) discovered in Salona. The unit is mentioned on another inscription of Doboj (*Dalmatia*) where it states that T. Claudius Zeno Ulpianus accomplished his *militia secunda* as a tribune of the unit of Britons (CIL III 1278; PME I, IV, V, C 194). Early in the 2nd century, the cohort was dislocated from Dalmatia to Noricum, since a soldier of the troop is registered on a tombstone in Melk (CIL III 5668). During the 2nd century the unit is thought to have been the garrison of the Roman fort in the vicinity of Melk, at Pöchlarn (*Arelapa*)⁴⁸, where another *miles* of the *coh(ors) I Fl(avia) Brit(tonum)* (AE 1973, 431) is attested⁴⁹. The troop is recorded on another inscription from Virunum dedicated in AD 267 (?) to Victoria by a former tribune (CIL III 481; PME I, IV, B 19)⁵⁰.

Among the last recordings of the cohort there is a *titulus honorarius* from Thessalonice (CIL III 13704 = ILS 9009 = IG X/II 1, 147)⁵¹: *B(onae) F(ortunae) / M(arcum) Aurel(ium) Cassi/anum, v(irum) e(gregium), prae / sidem prov(inciae) Daciae*

⁴³ Coh. VIIII Batavorum equitata garrisoned in Chesterholm (Vindolanda) was moved to Dacia for Trajans' wars and, after a short time, to Raetia where it is recorded on diploma of AD 107 (CIL XVI 94); see Birley, Birley, Birley 1993, 7-8; Birley 2002, 926-927. Tegular material another unit - coh. II Flavia Bessorum has been discovered at Bârseşti; see IDR II, 571 and Tudor 1978, 233. The only datable find in this fort is a denarius issued between 103 and 112; see Tudor 1978, 233.

⁴⁴ Gostar 1966, 184.

⁴⁵ Dietz 1982, 185-186; Strobel 1984, 122.

⁴⁶ In the Roman fort at Stolniceni, no archaeological excavation has been made therefore the dimensions of 50 x 60 or 60 x 60 of the fortification are only hypothetical (Tudor 1978, 270; Gudea 1997, 88-9). There were also identified in this area some tile-stamps of coh. *I Hispanorum veterana, coh. II Flavia Bessorum, legio I Italica, legio V Macedonica, legio XI Claudia* and *pedites singulares*; Gudea 1997, 88-89.

⁴⁷ The proofs are made of the inscriptions on which the unit has the additional title *Antoniniana*; see AE 1960, 361; AE 1978, 690.

⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the fort's dimensions are considered unsuitable for this kind of troop; see Alföldy 1974, 148, 259.

⁴⁹ Pompeius Celer's tombstone is dated about AD 130, Fischer 2002, 44.

⁵⁰ See also Alföldy 1974, 259.

⁵¹ The inscription is considered to be from AD 250, Pflaum 1960, 1067.

/ Malvensis, patrem / karissimum / M(arci) Aurel(ii) Phi/lippus et Cassianus⁵², trib(unus) coh(ortis) I / F(laviae) m(illiariae) Bryttonum / Malvensis. What was recorded after the troop's name was probably the name of the province where it was once garrisoned, Dacia Malvensis⁵³. This clearly applies in the case of the *n*(*umerus*) Syrorum *M*(*a*)/vensium (CIL VIII 9381 and 20945 = ILS 2763)⁵⁴. Romanian scholars generally considered this inscription as the only attestation of the troop's existence in this form, thus disregarding the former evidence. Consequently, they have tried to establish which of the troops attested in Dacia Inferior is to be identified with the cohort (*supra* no. 2).

Any unit of Britons from the army of Dacia Inferior: *coh. I Flavia Brittonum, coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum*⁵⁵, or even *coh. IX Batavorum* could have been represented on the tile-stamp CORSMB (CIL III 14216, 25 = IDR II, 560) from Stolniceni on the River Olt (*supra*).

To conclude it is conspicuous that *coh. I Flavia Brittonum* moved from Noricum to the southern Dacia and then returned to Noricum in second-mid 3rd century⁵⁶.

It is noticeable, that whenever the unit is attested, it is registered as *coh. I Flavia Brittonum*, with one exception: the inscription from Thesalonice, in which the title *Flavia*⁵⁷ is followed by the sign for *milliaria*. Anyhow, the fact that the known commanders of the unit are tribunes constitutes another reason to believe that the troop had also been a *milliaria* earlier.

4. Coh. I Ulpia Brittonum

The cohort is probably first recorded on AD 85 (CIL XVI 31), on a military diploma in which troops from Pannonia are enumerated. It will be transferred to Moesia

⁵² PME I, IV, V, A 218.

⁵³ Th. Mommsen demonstrated that the title *Malvensis* refers to the fact that the unit was garrisoned in the province with the same name; see Mommsen 1894, 118. It has been recently considered that *Malvensium*, which appears in connection with the *numerus Syrorum*, stands for the name of the colony Malva; see Gostar 1966, 184 and Speidel 1973, 174. About the controversy concerning the term *Malvensium*; see also Tudor 1944; Daicoviciu 1944; Nesselhauf 1964; Vittinghoff 1969; PME 199; Speidel 1984, 172-173 (n.1). The title Dacia Malvensis ilustrates the financial circumscription, while the military one was still regarded as Dacia Inferior. That is the reason why the mention of the appellative *Malvensis* on the Thessalonice inscription could be unconventional; see Piso 1993, 83-86. The title could have been used because it is short enough and more suggestive than the term *Dacia Inferior*.

⁵⁴ See also Speidel 1973, 172, 174, Pl. II. If the term *Malvensis* designates the settlement Romula-Malva, it is quite obvious that the unit was garrisoned here once (see also Piso forthcoming). The only known parallel is the name of coh. *VI Nova Cumidavensium* attested in the 3rd century AD at Râşnov (*Cumidava*) in Dacia Inferior; see Macrea 1937, 235 ff. On the other hand it is customary to attach the name of the garrisoning place to the name of some ethnical troops as it is the case with the *Brittones Elantienses* (CIL XIII 6490, 6498), *Brittones Triputienses* (CIL XIII 6502) and *Brittones Murrenses* (CIL XIII 6471, 12501) on the Odenwald-Neckar *limes*, or *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* (IDR III/1, 156) and the *numerus Maurorum Miciensium* (IDR III/3, 47 = AE 1944, 74) in Dacia.

⁵⁵ This tile-stamp was assigned even to coh. *I Ulpia Brittonum ; see* Gostar 1966, 182-183.

⁵⁶ The inscription of AD 267 (CIL III 481), where M. Bellicius Saturninus a tribune of the troop is recorded, does not necessarily prove that the unit was stationed at Noricum at that time. A *praefectus alae Bosporanae* is mentioned on an inscription from Dougga in Africa, even if we know that the *ala was* garrisoned at the same time "*in Syria*", as it is communicated in the same inscription (AE 1969/1970, 653).

⁵⁷ Th. Mommsen initially has regarded the letter F as uncertain (Mommsen 1894, 118), but he has seen only the Mortmann's transliteration and not the original. I.I. Russu authenticate for the existence of letter F which stands for *Flavi*; see Russu 1974, 42.

Superior, where it is attested on the diploma of AD $104/105^{58}$ (CIL XVI 54), the reason for that being, obviously, the conflicts in the region. Afterwards it will be part of the Roman army in the newly created province on account of the diploma of AD 106/110 (CIL XVI 160 = IDR I, 1). From now on, it will appear in almost every diploma of Dacia and then of Dacia Porolissensis, always on the first place among the cohorts⁵⁹.

The name of the unit is abbreviated as $coh(ors) \ I \ Br(ittonum)$ on a tile-stamp discovered in the area of the Roman fort of Porolissum (Pomet), dated later under Trajan's reign or in the early Hadrian reign⁶⁰. Nevertheless, the earlier tile-stamps on which this unit is mentioned, originating from the fort at Bologa, bear different abbreviations: $coh(ors) \ I \ Britton(um)^{61}$, although it is clear that the distinction between various types of stamps is not always chronologically valuable. A votive inscription from Porolissum recording the troop as equitata⁶² and the tombstone of a centurion's daughter are also known⁶³. The tile-stamp from Dierna, in which the troop's name is abbreviated like in the tile-stamp from Porolissum, but with the indications for *milliaria*, can also be attributed to the same cohort⁶⁴. It is possible for this tile-stamp to be dated during the Dacian wars, yet it is not to be excluded a later date, when the troop seems to be present in the southern part of Dacia Superior (*infra*). Otherwise, it is very hard to assign to one troop or another tile-stamps from the forts on the River Olt at Stolniceni (*supra*)⁶⁵ and Slǎveni⁶⁶ (*supra* no. 2).

The bronze button from a barrack in Buciumi record a centurion of the unit $C(ohors) \ I \ B(rittonum) \ / \ (centuria) \ ARTE(-midorii, -misii) \ / \ CRINCA^{67}$ seems to be

⁶¹ Gudea 1977, 129-30, no. 1-2, Fig. 2.

⁵⁸ The more precise date for this diploma is given by RMD IV, 369. B. Lőrincz identified this troop in a new diploma of 105, discovered in *Vetus Salina*, thus considering the site as part of Moesia Superior; see Lőrincz 1999, 200, 202.

 ⁵⁹ See the military diplomas from the years AD 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3), AD 133 (IDR I, 11 = RMD 35), AD 151 (Isac 2001, 54-55); AD 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47) and AD 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64; CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19; IDR I, 20 = RMD 63). On Dacia Superior's diploma of AD 119, the troop is not mentioned any more as the first among cohorts, but as the fourth one; see Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2001, 29, 33. It is probable that the title *Ulp(ia)* has also been recorded in this fragmentary diploma.
 ⁶⁰ Gudea 1978, 67.

⁶² AE 1947, 32; Russu 1968, 453-454, no. 2. It is hard to date this inscription, the epithets *p(ia) f(idelis)* and *c(ivium) R(omanorum)* that are inscribed on the stone, were awarded to the troop in 106/110 (CIL XVI 160). However, the unit doesn't bear the title *eq(uitata)*, but still it could have posessed detachments of cavalry. Another proof of the fact that the cohort had cavalry is constituted by the diplomas in AD 161 (RMD 177) and 164 (RMD 63 = IDR I 20), issued for former horsemen of the troop. Additionally, an inscription was found in *Vetus Salinae* attesting an *eques* of [*coh(ortis)*] *I Britto/[num (milliariae)]*; see Lőrincz 1999 (n. 18).

⁶³ Gudea 1977, 1300-1301, no. 4.

⁶⁴ CIL 8074, 10 = IDR III/1,52. About tile-stamp see also Marcu 2004, 573-574. D. Benea alleges, taking into consideration only a single tile-stamp from Mehadia and the discovery place of the military diploma of AD 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47), that *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum* stationed here during the Dacian wars, Benea 1997. It is true that coh. *III Dalmatarum* that were garrisoned in Mehadia in a later period is recorded as *milliaria* and *equitata* on an inscription, where we find also the titles *Alexandriana* and *Valeriana Galliana* (CIL III 8010). However, the fort of Mehadia covers only 1,65 ha, being too small for a *milliaria peditata* troop. After all, the only known commander of coh. *Dalmatarum* recorded in Germania, in Cologne, is a *praefectus* (AE 1896, 101), which does not necessarily imply a *quingenaria* unit (see the discussions about this matter in Strobel 1987, 287 ff.), but this remains a possibility. It is also conceivable that the unit turned into a *milliaria* only in the 3rd century. Consequently, either detachments of the troop garrisoned in other fortlets in the neighbourhood, or the unit has been present in Mehadia understrenght.

⁶⁵ The abbreviation is CORSMB, CIL III 14216, 25 = IDR II, 560.

 ⁶⁶ Vlådescu 1983, 202, Abb. 10. At Slåveni the abbreviation is CIB; see also Isac, Marcu 1999, 587-590.
 ⁶⁷ Gudea 1977, 130, no. 3.

dated from an earlier phase. Thus, presumably some detachments of the unit stationed here⁶⁸.

It is also expectable that this unit had been recorded as well in the first half of the 2nd century on an inscription from Vintimille with the name coh(ors) pr(imae) Brittonu(m), without the title Ulpia or the sign for milliaria⁶⁹.

It is possible to make the association between this unit with the title *Ulpia* and *coh. I Aurelia Brittonum milliaria Antoniniana*, the one who rebuilds in stone the turf rampart of the fort at Bumbeşti⁷⁰. The troop could have been replaced at Porolissum by *coh. III Campestris*⁷¹. Thus, it is plausible that *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*, without the title *Ulpia* on the military diplomas of AD 164 received the name *Aurelia* as a battle honor, possible as a consequence of its involvement in the conflicts at the end of AD 160s - AD 170s⁷². It is probable that these wars affected Dacia Porolissensis, beeing the location of the unit present there at that time. Another possibility implies the fact that the cohort could have been dislocated during Marcomannic wars to Dacia Superior, highly affected by these disturbances, as we can deduce from M. Claudius Fronto's joint command over Moesia Superior and Dacia Apulensis (CIL VI 1377 = 31640)⁷³.

If this hypothesis is true, the tile-stamp found at Dierna could be dated later, in the period when the Britons were moved from Dacia Porolissensis to the southern Dacia Superior. In reference to the unit attested by the inscription at Bumbeşti, D. Tudor asserted that the title *Aurelia* was bestowed simultaneously with the title *Antoniniana* under Caracalla or Elagabalus, when the unit was dislocated to Bumbeşti. Subsequently he identified the unit with *coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria* and with *coh. I Flavia* ∞ *milliaria Bryttonum Malvensis*⁷⁴. Accordingly, the troop could have stationed in Stolniceni, before its dislocation to Bumbeşti (*supra* no. 2)⁷⁵. G. M. Bersanetti insists that the military units entitled *Aureliae*, and not *Aurelianae*, were created by Marcus Aurelius⁷⁶, though he had previously claimed that *coh. I Aurelia Brittonum* could be identical with *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum milliaria*⁷⁷. W. Wagner has treated the two units

⁶⁸ It is not to be definitely rejected the possibility of identification of this troop with *cohors I Britannica*; see Marcu 2004.

⁶⁹ AE 1915, 58 = ILS 9506. Another inadvertence is constitued by the fact that M. Aemilius Bassus, commander of the unit recorded in diploma of AD 110 and whose career is described there (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3; PME I, IV, V, A 75), is recorded as *praefect*, even if he accoplished here his *militia secunda* and we know for sure that *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum* has been *milliaria* as it is recorded in the military diplomas of AD 106 (CIL XVI 160 = IDR I, 1), 109 (AE 1990, 860 = RMD 148), 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3), 133 (IDR I, 11 = RMD 35), 151 (Isac 2001, 54-5); 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47) or 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64; IDR I, 20 = RMD 63 and CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19). Inherently H. Devijver assigns to M. Aemilius Bassus the status of tribune ; see PME A 75, IDR III/1, 77.

⁷⁰ The text of the inscription from Bumbeşti indicates that muros cesp[iticios] castro[ru]m coh(ortis) I A[u]reliae Brittonum @ Antoniana(e) vetust(atae) dil[apsos] lapide eos restitue[r]unt (CIL III 14485a), although it is not necessarily implied that the unit was garrisoned here "long before AD 201" (Petolescu 1995, 246), but only that this is the unit that rebuilt the enclosure in stone. It is not sure that this unit was the actual garrison of the fort even if it had rebuilt the enclosure.

⁷¹ The transfer of the unit to Porolissum is considered to have happened during Septimius Severus or Caracalla, Piso 2001, 231.

⁷² Other units bearing the title *Aurelia* have been created in the period of the Marcomannic wars; see Birley 1993, 159; Wagner 1938, 91, 131, 179, 182.

⁷³ About this period see also Birley 1993, 159 ff, as for M. Claudius Fronto and the way in which the *tres Daciae* were affected after AD 169 ; see Daicoviciu, Piso 1977; Piso 1993, 94-102; Gudea 1994.

⁷⁴ Tudor 1978, 333.

⁷⁵ Tudor 1978, 333..

⁷⁶ Bersanetti 1940, 108 (n. 1). The same opinion in Gostar 1966, 83.

⁷⁷ Bersanetti 1940, 107, (n. 5).

separately without rejecting the similarity of the troops and consequently the title *Aurelia* is not always considered to be in connection with the troops created by Marcus Aurelius⁷⁸.

The identity between *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* and *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum* is refuted by the fact that the first already existed early in the 2nd century, as the garrison of a fort in Noricum, as it is proved by the career of T. Appalius Alfinus Secundus (PME I, IV, V, A 153) and the archaeological excavations in the fort at Mautern. In any case, the title *Aelia* indicates at least its existence under Antoninus Pius. Therefore, if the similarity is real, the cohort recorded in Noricum should have been mentioned in the military diploma of AD 161 (RMD 177) with the name *Aelia*, and not with the name *Ulpia*; or at least with both titles. Moreover, if the unit from Dacia Porolissensis changed its title from *Ulpia* to *Aurelia*, the inscription from Bumbeşti and some tile-stamps from Mautern, on which the unit bears also the title *Antoniniana*, would have been almost contemporaneous⁷⁹.

Another uncertainty concerns the fact that in the diplomas of AD 111 (RMD IV, 222) in Moesia Inferior and of AD 135 (RMD IV, 251) in Pannonia Inferior, a *coh. l Brittonum milliaria* is recorded without any supplementary title. In the first document the sign for (*milliaria*) is placed before the ethnical name of the troop. All the same, *coh. l Ulpia Brittonum milliaria* has the title *Ulpia* in the diploma of AD 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3) and perhaps in the one of AD 113/114 (RMD IV, 225), and respectively in diplomas of Dacia Porolissensis dated in AD 133 (IDR I, 11 = RMD 35), in AD 151 (Isac 2001, 54-5) and in AD 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47). Therefore it would be strange for this cohort to be mentioned in AD 111 or AD 135 without its designated title.

A plausible possibility is that the unit registered on the mentioned diploma of Moesia Inferior could be indeed *coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum* or another troop similar to the unit recorded in the diploma of Pannonia Inferior in AD 135 (RMD IV, 251). Hence, this last unit could have also been identical with *coh. I Aelia Brittonum*, which is attested during the 2nd and 3rd centuries in Noricum. If this troop received the title *Aelia* later, it would have been normal for it to be recorded earlier in diplomas with the simple name of *coh. I Brittonum*.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to inquire about the identity of the troop registered in the diploma of Pannonia of AD 85 (CIL XVI 31) and the one of Moesia Superior from AD 104/5 (CIL XVI 54) with the simple name *coh. I Brittonum milliaria*. This could have been either *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* or *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*. Given the fact that *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* could have existed originally without the title *Aelia*; it is imaginable that the troop on the diploma of AD 85 (CIL XVI 31) could be similar with the one from Pannonia Inferior in the diploma of AD 135 (RMD IV, 251)⁸⁰. On the other hand the cohort recorded in AD 104/5 (CIL XVI 54) in Moesia Superior⁸¹ could be the future *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum* which received the title *Ulpia* after the second Dacian war. Therefore, what can be presumed is either the initial existence of two units of Britons, named simply *coh. I*

⁷⁸ Wagner 1938, 108.

⁷⁹ It is sure that the title Antoniniana in the inscription at Bumbeşti was a later addition. Indeed, the inscription is dated AD 201 (see Fitz 1986, 141-142; Petolescu 1995, 246 (n. 392)), which does not contradict at all the possibility for two cohorts Brittonum bearing the same Imperial title to exist.

⁸⁰ The absence of the cohort from other military diplomas issued for the army of Pannonia between AD 85 and AD 135 could be explained by its moving to Moesia Inferior, where it may be recorded AD 111 (RMD IV, 222). Another troop that seems to be dislocated from Moesia Inferior to Pannonia Inferior (see diploma of 114, CIL XVI 61) immediately after AD 111? (CIL XVI 58) is ala I Flavia Gaetulorum. However, the cavalry troop will be back in Moesia Inferior by AD 125 (RMD IV, 235).

⁸¹ All troops mentioned in this diploma except for the *ala praetoria*, will be recorded later in the army of Dacia.

Brittonum milliaria, or the existence of a single cohort from which, at one moment, another one was created⁸².

It would be fanciful to imagine that *coh. I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum* could have been similar with *coh. I Flavia Brittonum*, as supposed by some Romanian scholars, since the first troop is recorded in diploma from Moesia Inferior of AD 105 and in Dacia Inferior on diplomas of AD 129/30 (Weiß 1997, 244) and AD 140 (IDR I, 13 = RMD 39), therefore being in existence also in the 1st century. Or, on account of the inscriptions from Dalmatia and Noricum, dated between the 1st and the 3rd century, the unit with the title *Flavia* could have been created as well in the 1st century. Next, it is very difficult to believe that a unit created during Flavian Emperors would be recorded under Domitian and merely as a *coh. I Brittonum*, without the Imperial title Flavia⁸³. As an illustration, *coh. I Flavia Hispanorum*, recorded for the first time on diplomas from the reign of Domitian⁸⁴, when it received the title *Ulpia*, wouldn't have gotten rid of the title *Flavia*, but it would have preserved both of them at the same time⁸⁵. It is not less difficult to imagine the possibility for a unit with the title *Flavia* to receive the title *Ulpia* and then the titles *Aelia* and *Aurelia* and finally in the 3rd century to get back the title *Flavia*.

The attribution of the inscriptions of Pfannberg, Torino or Aquileia included above as authentifications of *coh. I Aelia Brittonum* remains presumptive. However, the name of a particular unit is not always thoroughly recorded in the text and in inscriptions. After all, the inscriptions mentioned are not necessarily essential for the unit's identity or deployment, since they record a tribune, a centurion and a soldier, thus they are not official inscriptions of a troop.

To sum up, there are four different cohorts of Britons with the numeral I, the best known being *coh. I Ulpia Brittonum*, attested most of the time in Dacia Porolissensis and dislocated in the late 2nd century, this time with title *Aurelia*, to the southern Dacia Superior. Nevertheless, other possibilities imply for the unit that rebuilt the enclosure at Bumbeşti to have been actually created under Marcus Aurelius⁸⁶, or, less probably, that it was similar to *coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum*. The latter is the only cohort of Britons not attested after AD 146, the other two units bearing their ethnical name among the imperial titles even in the 3rd century (see Table 1). The deployment of the cohort with the title *Nerviana* is also a matter of guesswork, because the evidence is too patchy, the only documents in which doubtlessly attested being the military diplomas

⁸² Presumably only the detachments of the troop recorded on the diploma of AD 85 (CIL XVI 31) in Pannonia were sent to Dacia. Subsequently, a distinct unit could have emerged from these vexillationes. This new troop will be recorded in the diploma of 104/105 (CIL XVI 54) in Moesia Superior; it will be the future coh. I Ulpia Brittonum. The proof that a large number of soldiers could have been detached duties is made of the Vindolanda writing tablets, Hunt papyri or the two complete rosters of coh. XX Palmyrenorum; see Bowman, Thomas 1995, 92; Fink 1971, 217 ff; P.Dura, 100, 101. However, this is not a strong enough argument for the idea that individual units were created from such detachments; although the existence of many troops with the same ethnic name and the same numeral points to the idea that initially there was a single unit.

⁶³ Among the troops bearing the title *Flavia*, the only exception is coh. *I Flavia Nvmidarum*, which is recorded without the title *Flavia* in the diplomas of Syria from AD 88 (CIL XVI 35), although *Flavia* appears again as a part of its name in AD 145/146 (Weiß 1999), 157 (RMD 50), 167 (RMD 67) and 178 (CIL XVI 128). Anyhow, the troop could have received the title after AD 88; see also Spaul 2000, 473.

⁸⁴ See the military diploma dated AD 93 (CIL XVI 39).

 $^{^{85}}$ This is the case for the military diplomas dated AD 110 (CIL XVI 57 = IDR I, 2) and AD 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47) and for the milestone of Aiton dated AD 107/8 (CIL III 1627).

⁸⁶ Among the four other cohorts bearing the title Aurelia, based in Dalmatia, three are indisputably created under Marcus Aurelius, considering the title nova attached to their name; see Wilkes 1969, 118; Wagner 1938, 91, 179, 182. There is no guarantee that coh. I(I) Aurelia Dardanorum had the same origin, considering that it could have been similar to coh. II Aug. D. Ant. P.F. @ eqq. (CIL III, 10255); see Spaul 2000, 350.

from the early 2nd century therefore it would be unwise to be too firm. Analogous to *coh. Il Nervia Pacensis Brittonum* garrisoned in Dacia Porolissensis, it is to assume that the homonymous unit from Dacia Inferior did not change its name.

Hitherto, it is obvious that *coh. I Flavia milliaria Bryttonum Malvensis* is similar to the unit attested in Dalmatia and afterwards in Noricum. It is also very probable that the *I Aelia Brittonum* could have existed before the reign of Hadrian.

Table 1

Coh. I Aelia Brittonum

Military diplomas/ Period	Inscriptions/ Period	Tile- stamps/ Period	Abbreviation	Province	Source
? AD 85			l Brittonum milliaria	Pannonia	CIL XVI 31
? AD 111			l milliaria Brittonum	Moesia Inferior	RMD IV 222
AD 135			l Britt. α	Pannonia Inferior	RMD IV 251
	2nd century	?	Chortis I Brit.	Noricum (Pfannberg)	CIL III 5455
	2nd century		Coh. I Aeliae Britton.	Italy (Firmum Piceni)	ILS 1417 =
					PME I, IV, V
					A 153
		2nd and	1. C I A B	Noricum	AE 2000,
		early 3rd	2. []ho I A B	1, 2. Mautern	1148,a,b.
		century	3. Anto	3. Walsee	Fischer 2002,
			4. Bri fec		Abb. 43
AD 238			l Ael. Brit.	Noricum	CIL 4812 =
				(Winden am See)	ILS 2524
	?		Coh. I Br Eq	Italy (Torino)	CIL V 6995
	?		Cohors I 7 Brittonum	Italy (Aquileia)	AE 1990, 387

Coh. I Augusta Nerviana Pacensis Brittonum

Military diplomas/ Period	Inscriptions/ Period	Tile- stamps/ Period	Abbreviation	Province	Source
AD 105			l Augusta Nerviana Pacensis œ Brittonum	Moesia Inferior	Information W. Eck
? AD 111			l milliaria Brittonum	Moesia Inferior	RMD IV 222
AD 120/13	0		[- B]ritt. Aug. Nerv.[]	Dacia Inferior	AMN 39, 38-40
AD 129/30)		[-] Aug. Pa[c.—B]ritt. œ	Dacia Inferior	Weiß 1997, 243 ff.
AD 140			l Aug. Nerv. Pac. Britt. α	Dacia Inferior	IDR 13 = RMD 39
AD 146			l Aug. Pac. Nerv. Britt.	Dacia Inferior	RMD IV 269
		?	CORSMB	Dacia Inferior	CIL III 14216,
				(Stolniceni)	25 = IDR II, 560

Military diplomas/ Period	Inscriptions/ Period	Tile- stamps/ Period	Abbreviation	Province	Source
	1st or early 2nd century		Coh. I Fl. Brittonum	Dalmatia (Salona)	CIL III 2024
	1st or early 2nd century		Coh. I Fl. Britton.	Dalmatia (Doboj)	CIL XI 6337 = ILS 1422
	2nd century		Chor. I Fl. Bt	Noricum (Melk)	CIL III 5668
	2nd century		Coh. I Fl. Brit	Noricum (Pöchlarn)	AE 1973, 431
	3rd century		Coh. I F M Bryttonum	Thessalia	CIL III 13704 =
			Malvensis	(Thessalonic)	ILS 9009 =
					IG X/II 1, 147
	AD 267		Chor. I Fl. Brit	Noricum (Virunum)	CIL III 481

Coh. I Flavia Brittonum

Coh. I Ulpia Brittonum

Military diplomas/ Period	Inscriptions/ Period	Tile- stamps/ Period	Abbreviation	Province	Source
AD 85			l Brittonum milliaria	Pannonia	CIL XVI 31
AD 104/5			l Brittonum co	Moesia Superior	CIL XVI 54
AD 105			rt I Brit	Moesia Superior (?)	AE 1999, 1258
	1st - early 2nd century		l Britto	Moesia Superior (?)	Lőrincz 1999, no. 18
AD 106/11	0		l Brittonum milliaria Ulpia torquata P.F. Civium Romanorum	Dacia	CIL XVI 160
AD 109			l Brittonum œ Ulpia torquata CR	Dacia	AE 1990, 860 = RMD 148
AD 110			l Brittonum œ Ulpia torquata CR	Dacia	CIL XVI, 163 = IDR I, 3
		Trajan	COH. BRITTON	Dacia (Bologa)	Gudea 1977, no. 1.
		Trajan	СІВ	Dacia (Buciumi)	Gudea 1977, 130, no. 3
		Trajan- Hadrian	Coh. I Br.	Dacia Porolissensis (Porolissum)	Gudea 1978, 67
	first half of the 2nd century	Coh. pr B	Brottonu.	Italy (Vintimille)	AE 1915, 58
AD 119	,		[]ton cr pf	Dacia Superior	AMN 39, 29
AD 133			l Ulp. Britton. a	Dacia Porolissensis	IDR I, 11 = RMD 35
AD 151			l Ulpia Britton(um) (milliaria)	Dacia Porolissensis	lsac 2001, 54-5

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AD 154			l Ulp. [Britton.] τ	Dacia Porolissensis	IDR 17 =
AD 134			ι οιρ. [Βιτειοι.] τ	Dacia Foronissensis	RMD 47
AD 161			[I UI]p. Brit. CR œ	Dacia Porolissensis	RMD 177
AD 164			l Britton. co	Dacia Porolissensis	RMD 63 =
NB 101					IDR I 20
AD 164			l Britton. ao	Dacia Porolissensis	IDR I, 18 =
					RMD 64
AD 164			I [Britton.]		CIL XVI 185 =
					IDR I, 19
	?		Coh. I Brittonum œ eq.	Dacia Porolissensis	AE 1947, 32
			P.f. c.r.	(Porolissum)	
	?		Coh. I Brittonum	Dacia Porolissensis	Gudea 1977,
				(Porolissum)	no. 4
		?	Coh. I Br œ	Dacia Superior	CIL 8074, 10 =
				(Dierna)	IDR 111/1,52
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