ON THE PRESENCE OF THE COHORT IX BATAVORUM MILLIARIA EQUITATA IN MOESIA INFERIOR*

The possible presence of this cohort¹ between the auxiliary troops of Moesia Inferior has been sustained based on three assumptions.

First of all, it was supposed, by D. Tudor, that the name of this troop appears on two tile stamps at Bîrseşti and Buridava (Stolniceni)².

Starting from this assumption, K. H. Dietz has supposed that the name of this cohort could have been restored on the diploma fragment from Oberstimm, and therefore this diploma would have been issued both for the auxiliary troops of Raetia and for an unit that has been deployed for a short time in Moesia Inferior³.

Finally, the name of the cohort was also restored on a diploma fragment from Dambach dated to 27th September 112, which was attributed to the auxilia of Moesia Inferior⁴.

^{*} I would like to thank Prof. Constantin C. Petolescu (Bucharest) and Dr. Paul Holder (Manchester) for reading previous versions of this short paper and made valuable comments on it allowing me to improve its quality.

Beneš 1978 = J. Beneš, Auxilia romana in Moesia atque in Dacia. Zu den Fragen des römischen Verteidingungssystems im unteren Donauraum und in den angrenzenden Gebieten, Prag 1978; Gudea 1997 = N. Gudea, Der dakische Limes. Materialien zu seiner Geschichte, Sonderdruck aus Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz 1997, 44. Jahrgang; Holder 2003 = P. Holder, Auxiliary Deployment in the Reign of Hadrian, in J. J. Wilkes (ed.), Documenting the Roman Army. Essays in the Honour of Margaret Roxan, London 2003; Lőrincz 1979 = B. Lőrincz, Pannonische Stempelziegel II: Limes-Strecke Vetus Salina — Intercisa, DissArch II, 7, Budapest 1979; Lőrincz 2001 = B. Lőrincz, Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. Teil I: Die Inschriften, Wien 2001; Petolescu 2002 = C. C. Petolescu, Auxilia Daciae. Contributie la istoria militară a Daciei romane, București 2002; Pferdehirt 2004 = B. Pferdehirt, Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Kataloge vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Altertümer, Band 37, Mainz 2004; PME = H. Devijver, Prosopographia militiarum equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum, I 1976, II 1977, III 1980, IV (Suppl. 1),1987, Leuven; Sarnowski 1988 = T. Sarnowski, Wojsko rzmskie w Mezji Dolnej i na północnym wybrezeżu Morza Czarnego, Warszawa 1988; Spaul 1994 = J. E. H. Spaul, Ala². The Auxiliary Cavalry Units of the Pre-Diocletianic Imperial Roman Army, Andover 1994; Spaul 2000 = J. Spaul, Cohors². The Evidence for and a Short History of the Auxiliary Infantry Units of the Imperial Roman Army, Oxford 2000, BAR IS 841; Strobel 1984 = K. Strobel, Untersuchungen zu den Dakerkriege Trajans. Studien zur Geschichte des mittleren und unteren Donauraumes in der Hohen Kaiserzeit, Bonn 1984; Szilágyi 1946 = J. Szilágyi. A daciai erődrendszer helyőrségei és a katonai téglabélyegek (Die Besatzungen des Verteidigungssystems von Dazien und ihre Ziegelstempeln), Diss. Pann. II. 21, Budapest 1946; Tudor 1968 = D. Tudor, Oltenia romană³, București 1968, Thomasson 1984 = B. Thomasson, Laterculi praesidum I, Göteborg 1984.

¹ For a short history see I. I. Russu, SCIV 23, 1972, 2,68; Beneš 1978, 17, no. 47/10; Strobel 1984, 122; Spaul 2000, p 215-216.

² IDR II 563 (Buridava (Stolniceni), TIR L 35, 68-69, I f; Gudea 1997, 88-89, no. 74): *C I[X]*, retrograde; 571 = AE 1964, 229 bis (Bârseşti, 3 kilometres westward from Stolniceni, TIR L 35, 27, I f): *[I]X B*, retrograde; D. Tudor, in Akten des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik (Wien 17. bis 22. September 1962), Wien, 1964, p. 405-406, no. 2 (Bîrseşti): "Parmi les nombreuses alae et cohortes auxiliaries, dont l'appelatif commence par la lettre B (comme: Bosporanorum – Bracaraugustanorum – Breucorum – Brittonum etc.), aucune n'a atteint le chifre IX ou X, à l'exception de celles des Bataves. Cela nous permet de compléter avec certitude notre estampille: [coh(ors) I]X B(atavorum)"; D. Tudor, SCIV 16, 1, 1965, p. 184, no. 11; Strobel 1984, p. 122; Sarnowski 1988, p. 63.

³ RMD 10; K. H. Dietz, Germania 60, 1982, p. 183-191.

⁴ H-J. Kellner, BVbl, München, 50, 1985, p. 239-243 = RMD 85. See also Holder 2003, p. 104: "In addition there is a fragment of 112 in which twelve cohorts were named and at least two, *cohors I Cilicum sagittaria* and *cohors VIIII Batavorum milliaria*, were not on issues on the previous year".

Starting from these assumptions the scholars have presumed that this cohort has been deployed in Moesia Inferior from Britannia, some time before 112, maybe with the occasion of the Trajan's Dacian wars, and then transferred to Raetia, where it appeared for the first time in 116⁵. In the following lines I try to discuss all these three assumptions and to show that none seems to be correct.

In 1966, two years after Tudor's first publication of the tile stamp from Bîrsesti, a Romanian scholar, N. Gostar has sustained that on this stamp should be the name of cohors milliaria Brittonum⁶, known by its full name as I Nerviana Augusta milliaria Brittonum. Thus, the sign in the front of letter B should be read as (milliaria). Very few scholars have followed Gostar on this way. Though, the assumption made by Gostar seems to be correct, because there is another tile stamp from Buridava with the inscription CORSMB, which has been read as co(ho)rs M(illiaria) B(rittonum)7 and it is now known from the diplomas that this cohort has stationed in Moesia Inferior⁸ until the creation of Dacia Inferior at the beginning of Hadrian's reign, when it was enlisted between the units stationed in this province⁹. Moreover, on one diploma for the auxiliary troops of Moesia Inferior dated to September 25, 111 this troop appears as I MILLIARIA BRITTONVM on extrinsecus and as I ∞ BRITTONVM on intus (also on the diploma dated to 116). In summary, we have now more reasons to believe that the Gostar's reading is the one that is correct, bearing in mind the fact that the sign for milliaria as an X was used for other units from other provinces, too 10 . It is worth mentioning that on the diploma from 105, mentioned above, where the whole name was engraved, the sign for milliaria appears before the ethnic name of the unit, both on extrinsecus and intus, as in the diploma from 111 and as on the tile stamp from Bîrsesti. The tile stamp from Buridaya must be taken out of discussion because only the letter C I are fully preserved as we understand from Tudor's draw and other readings are possible. In fact, it seems that this tile was never seen since its first publication. D. Tudor has asserted there that the tile stamp comes from Gheorghe Petre-Govora's archaeological collection 11. But, as we understand from a Gheorghe Petre-Govora's letter sent to Constantin C. Petolescu,

⁵ Strobel 1984, p. 122: "Die *Cohors IX Batavorum milliaria equitata (exploratorum)* wurde für den 2. Dakerkrieg Trajans 103/105 n. Chr. von Raetien an die untere Donau verlegt, wo die Truppe ihre Ziegelstempel im Burgus von Bîrseşti und im großen Militärzentrum von Buridava (Stolniceni) am Olt hinterließ. Nach dem Ende der Feldzüge kehrte die Einheit nach 107 n. Chr. in die Provinz Raetien zurück"; Holder 2003, 104: "The third, *cohors VIIII Batavorum milliaria* had been transferred to Raetia by 116".

⁶ N. Gostar, ArhMold 4, 1966, p. 184.

⁷ CIL III 14216²⁵ = IDR II 560; Gostar, op. cit., p. 182-183; Petolescu 2002, p. 90, no. 25; F. Marcu, AMN 39-40/I, 2002-2003, p. 222-223.

⁸ Pferdehirt 2004, no. 10, diploma from the 13th of May 105 found in the vicinity of *Novae* (Shvistov, Bulgaria); RMD 222; W. Eck, A. Pangler, Dacia, N.S. 50, 2006, p. 99-102, no. 3.

Petolescu 2002, p. 90, no. 25; F. Marcu, op. cit., p. 221-223; O. Tentea, F. Matei-Popescu, AMN 39-40/I, 2002-2003 (2004), p. 276-277.

¹⁰ For example, in Dacia on some tile stamp of the *ala I Bosporanorum milliaria*, which stationed at Cristeşti (Szilágyi 1946, Taf. XIV/203, p. 204; N. Gudea, A. Zrínyi, in D. M. Pippidi, Em. Popescu, Epigraphica. Travaux dédiés au VII^e Congrès d'épigraphie grecque et latine (Constantza, 9-15 septembre 1977), Bucharest 1977, p. 225, type II (fig. 6, 2) and p. 226, type VI (fig. 7, 4); Gudea 1997, p. 103-104, no. p. 98, fig. 2 (= IDR III/4 154) and 8; IDR III/4 153; for a history of the unit see Petolescu 2002, p. 65-66, no. 5); in Pannonia Inferior *cohors I Aurelia Antonina milliaria Hemesenorum* (COH X HE from *Intercisa*, Lörincz 1979, p. 26, 71; cat. no. 7/21, p. 22, 44-48, 57-62, 65, 68-69; Taf. 7/4.7a; Lörincz 2001, p. 35-36, no. 23 and p. 266, no. 368a); also in Pannonia some tile stamps of *cohors I milliaria Nova Surorum* from *Ulcisia Castra* (T. Nagy, BudRég 13, 1943, 395 and 554e – COH X NS; for a history of the unit see Lőrincz 2001, p. 42, no. 42). I shall use this opportunity to thank also to my dear friend and colleague, Ovidiu Țentea, who kindly informed me about the shape of the Pannonian tile stamps and who read also this paper and made valuable comments on it.

Tudor 1968, p. 530, no. 399.

the tile stamp was never in his possession 12 and it is no sign of it in the museum from Râmnicu Vâlcea 13. We have thus more reasons to believe that a vexillatio from cohors I Nerviana Brittonum milliaria stationed at Buridava was sent for short period to occupy the small fortification from Bîrsesti14.

On the small fragment of Oberstimm¹⁵, in the first line K.-H. Dietz has presumed that he could read the name of Ti. Iulius Aquilinus, attested procurator of the Raetia province in those times 16. In fact the name was constructed only using bottoms of the letters and as H. Wolff has already pointed out the assumption made by Dietz, that we have to restore the name of the cohort IX Batavorum milliaria on this fragment, does not sit on the firm ground 17. Also, the name of certain governor Faustinus can not be, without any kind of hesitations, presumed to be the cognomen of A. Caecilius Faustinus, the governor of Moesia Inferior from 103/105¹⁸. For instance, we can search for a *Faustinus*, as an equestrian commander of a certain unit, on a diploma issued for one of the provinces with only one troop 19. Or if it was in fact A. Caecilius Faustinus named on this fragment we shall have to bear in mind that he was also the governor of Pannonia Superior sometime before the 3rd of May 112²⁰. It would have been possible to have on a constitution for Raetia auxilia a unit which had been for a certain period deployed on the territory of that province. Therefore, there are no decisive proofs that Faustinus from the diploma fragment of Oberstimm was one and the same person with the attested governor of Moesia Inferior, A. Caecilius Faustinus or that this fragment having the name of this person on it should automatically referred to Moesia Inferior.

On the diploma from Dambach, it was engraved the name of a certain Batavorum unit, but one can not be sure that it is the cohort IX Batavorum, because the numeral is missing²¹. Although the diploma has certain difficulties of reading, there are no decisive proofs that, from the remaining letters, we can supply the names of some auxiliary troops of Moesia Inferior. Therefore, I believe that this diploma should be restored as a diploma for the auxiliary troops of Raetia. The first unit from the list which appeared to be sagittaria (VG SAGITT) could be identified as ala I Augusta Thracum sagittariorum, unit that was listed by the diplomas from 107 and 116 on the second position²². After this unit from the letters ET I we could read et I singularium, just like on the diplomas from 107

¹² Letter from 9th of the December 1976. I want to express my gratitude towards my professor, Constantin C. Petolescu, who kindly provided me this information.

¹³ Another information from Constantin C. Petolescu, based on the document sent in 1976 to him from this museum and where it was no sign of this tile stamp.

¹⁴ For a short presentation of the archaeological discoveries from there, see D. Tudor, in Akte des IV. Internationalen Kongresses für griechische und lateinische Epigraphik (Wien 17. bis 22. September 1962), Wien, 1964, p. 405. D. Tudor believed there was situated the Dacian Latène site, in fact this presumably site was situated at Ocnita (TIR L 35, 54, I f). **RMD 10.**

¹⁶ K. H. Dietz, Germania 60, 1982, p. 183-191.

¹⁷ H. Wolf, BVbl, München, 65, 2000, p. 155: "die Ergänzung der coh. VIIII Batavorum milliaria erscheint z. Zt. ganz ungewiß".

PIR² C 43; Thomasson 1984, p. 131, no. 68.

¹⁹ See the earliest example provided by the fully preserved diploma for Cilicia from 19th of August 121: intus PEDIT ET EQVIT QVI M IN COH IIII GALL QVAE EST / IN CILICIA SVB CALPVRNIO CESIIANO (CESTIANO ext.) PRAEF SVR / DENIO (SVDERNIO ext.) PRISCO . See also the diplomas for Lycia et Pamphylia, RMD 161 (138), RMD 67 (23. 12. 167), CIL XVI 128 (23. 3. 178) and the diploma for Asia from 148 (RMD 100).

²⁰ RMD 223 = Pferdehirt 2004, p. 15, a diploma for the auxiliaries from Pannonia Superior under the governorship of L. Minucius Natalis, receveing their honesta missio in the time of A. Caecilius Fausti-

H-J. Kellner, loc. cit. = RMD 85.

²² CIL XVI 55; RMD 155; p. 229. For this unit which was transferred to Noricum by 132 see Spaul 1994, p. 228-230, no. 81; Holder 2003, p. 109.

and 116²³. The first publisher has presumed that he could identify the name of the cohort I Cilicum milliaria sagittaria, which stationed on the territory of Moesia Inferior in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. But there are no signs of this cohort in Moesia Inferior before the year 134, when appeared on a diploma for this province²⁴. Therefore, it could not have been on a diploma for Moesia Inferior which dated from 112. This assertion is strongly defended now by the fact that the name of this unit appears on a diploma from 115 for Moesia Superior²⁵, province where it was attested also before this year²⁶. In the final remained line on intus III BR can be restored the name of the cohort III Britannorum equitata which stationed in Raetia in the 2nd century²⁷ or the name of III Bracaraugustanorum, also stationed in Raetia in the 2nd century²⁸. On the territory of Moesia Inferior there are no information concerning the presence of a unit with this name or of another unit that could have been appeared on the diplomas as: III BR. From the letter RAVG ET If M the publisher reads I Bracaraugustanorum et II Mattiacorum. In fact, as we look to the diplomas for Moesia Inferior where both units appeared together, these two units were separated by another unit²⁹ and *I Bracaraugustanorum* was never to be abbreviated as BRACAVG or BRACARAVG on the diplomas from Moesia Inferior, before its deployment in Dacia Inferior³⁰. Therefore in this line too it can not be supplied the names of some cohorts from Moesia Inferior31.

The decisive proof that this diploma should be considered as a diploma for the auxiliary units from Raetia is the mention of this *Batavorum* unit³². In the two diplomas from 116³³ appeared two units with such name: *III Batavorum milliaria* and *IX Batavorum milliaria*. The first unit which was deployed also from Britannia where it was attested in the same fort at Vindolanda³⁴, together with the second cohort, appears in Raetia for the first time on the diploma from 107³⁵. The second unit appeared in Raetia for the first time in the year 116³⁶. In the diplomas of Moesia Inferior there is no place for a *cohors Batavorum*, even the number of documents has been into a continuous growth in the later years³⁷, thus a fragment discovered on the territory of Raetia and referring to a certain *Batavorum* unit should be considered as fragment of a diploma given to a soldier who

²³ CIL XVI 55; RMD 155; p. 229. For this unit see Spaul 1994, p. 204-206, no. 72.

²⁴ CIL XVI 78, F. Matei-Popescu, SCIVA 52-53, 2001-2002, p. 199, no. 17.

²⁵ W. Eck, A. Pangerl, Chiron 35, 2005, p. 49-67.

Attested by the military diplomas from 16th of September 93 (CIL XVI 39), 12th of July 96 (RMD 6) and 8th of May 100 (CIL XVI 46).

²⁷ H. Wolff, op. cit., 168 and the table with the diplomas; Spaul 2000, p. 202 The cohort was deployed in the fortification of Eining.

This unit agreed in Raetia in the 2nd century see H. Wolff, op. cit., the table with the diplomas; Spaul 2000, p. 94.

²⁹ CIL XVI 44 (14, 08, 99) the two units were separated by *I Hispanorum veterana*; Pferdehirt 2004, no. 11 (13, 05, 105), these two units were separated by the cohort *Sugambrorum tironum*.

³⁰ F. Matei-Popescu, in Corona Laurea. Studii în onoarea Luciei Țeposu-Marinescu, Bucureşti, 2005,

⁵¹ Into a letter sent to me on the 20th of February 2006, P. Holder has suggested me that *RAVG* or *RAVC ET II M* or *II A* could have been supplied as *I Br<e>corrum et I Aquitanorum*, cohorts which stationed in Raetia in 2nd century, but due to the bad condition of the diploma photo one can not go further into this direction for the moment.

³² H-J. Kellner, op. cit. = RMD 85, extrinsecus I. 8: BATAVO.

³³ RMD 155; p. 229.

³⁴ M. G. Jarrett, Britannia 25, 1994, p. 56, no. 15.

³⁵ CIL XVI 55.

³⁶ RMD 155; p. 229.

³⁷ Pferdehirt 2004, no. 10, no. 11; R. Petrovszky, Mitteilungen des historischen Vereins der Pfalz 102, Speyer 2004, p. 13-17, another copy after the same constitution as Pferdehirt 2004, no. 11; CIL XVI 50 (diplomas from the 13th of May 105); RMD 222 (diploma from 25th of September 111); W. Eck, A. Pangler, Dacia, N.S. 50, 2006, p. 99-102, no. 3 (diploma from 116).

has fought in one of the *Batavorum* units attested there. This observation, together with the possible identification of some auxiliary units from Raetia, allow us to consider this fragment as a part of a diploma given to the auxiliary units from Raetia.

Recently, M. Biancardi³⁸ has undertaken the old assumptions on presence of the cohort in Moesia Inferior and supposed that it was transferred from Britannia to Raetia, where it is attested by an inscription at Weissenburg³⁹. From there first a vexillatio and then the entire unit were sent to Moesia Inferior. In fact he proposed a new reading of this inscription: coh(ors) IX Bat(avorum)/ eq(uitata) (milliaria) ex p(rovincia) B(ritannia) instead of expl(oratorum) as it was read till now. The new reading it is based on the first reading from CIL III where appeared ex p. B. H. Wolff has, although, pointed out that this inscription seems to date from the second half of the 2nd century, because of the use of numeral IX instead of VIIII⁴⁰, thus Biancardi's assertions would have seem useless. But we learn now from leather strap found at Vindolanda where appeared C IX B that this form of the numeral was in use in the final part of the first century 41, therefore this inscription could date from the beginning of the 2nd century. In this inscription the commander M. Victorius Provincialis is named as praefectus and not tribunus, as it should have been named the commander of a cohors milliaria, although it seems that this distinction was never applied to the cohortes Batavorum and cohortes Tungrorum from Britain auxiliary forces 42. The commanders of this unit at Vindolanda ca. 95-105 were named also as praefecti having no direct proof that this unit was milliaria, but which was considered as milliaria due to the size of the fort there⁴³. Therefore, it is also possible this inscription to date from the very first moment of unit's deployment in Raetia⁴⁴, because it is possible later on that the cohort would have been commanded by tribuni as we learn from a Greek inscription found at Marseille, where it appears the tribune, T. Porcius Cornelianus⁴⁵. Nevertheless, this is not a decisive proof about the chronological moment of Provincialis command of the unit, because the other Batavian cohort which stationed in Raetia at the beginning of the 2nd century, III Batavorum milliaria, was commanded by praefecti also after its deployment in Pannonia Inferior in 118/119⁴⁶, but it appears a tribune, too⁴⁷. As anyone can see from the entire discussion above, it is virtually impossible to date the inscription from Weissenburg, yet there are no direct proofs against an early dating of the inscription. However, I would not follow Biancardi in his assertion that M. Victorius Provincialis was named praefectus in the Weissenburg inscription because a part of its soldiers (vexillatio) were deployed on the territory of Moesia Inferior and therefore: "la coorte ormai della consistenza numerica di un'unita guingenaria riporta come suo comamdante un praefectus"48. As we already saw from above it is very difficult to assert such thing on the Batavian cohorts, the case of III Batavorum milliaria being clear enough. Therefore, we can guess that both Batavorum units which would have been deployed on the territory of Raetia at the beginning of the

³⁸ M. Biancardi, ZPE 140, 2002, p. 245-251.

³⁹ CII III 11918

⁴⁰ H. Wolff, op. cit., p. 167: "Ihrem Erscheinungsbild zufolge und wegen der Schreibweise der Kohortenziffer – *IX* statt *VIIII* – scheint die Inschrift eher in das späte als das frühe 2. Jahrhundert zu gehören.".

⁴¹ RIB 2445. 2.

⁴² M. G. Jarrett, Britannia 25, 1994, p. 54-56; Spaul 2000, p. 212-216 (cohortes III et IX Batavorum). M. G. Jarrett, op. cit., p. 48-50; Spaul 2000, p. 225-230 (cohortes I et II milliariae Tungrorum).

⁴³ Flavius Cerialis, praefectus (PME, F 43b); Flavius Genialis (PME, F 49b); K.-H. Dietz, BRGK 65, 1984, p. 243, note 498; Spaul 2000, p. 215-216.

The history of the Batavian cohorts is very complicated and I do not want entering in this debate. For a short information see K.-H. Dietz, op. cit., p. 242-246; M. G. Jarrett, op. cit., p. 54-55.

⁴⁵ CIG III 6771 = ILS 8852; PME, P 95.

⁴⁶ Lőrincz 2001, p. 30-31, no. 9.

⁴⁷ CIL III 10329 = Lőrincz 2001, p. 236, no. 260.

⁴⁸ M. Biancardi, op. cit., p. 250-251.

second century would have been shared the same history. Both would have been deployed in Britannia in the flavian times and then transferred in Raetia, where *III Batavorum milliaria* was first attested on the diploma from 107⁴⁹, and *IX Batavorum milliaria* by the quoted inscription from Weissenburg and by the diplomas from 116⁵⁰. The latter unit remained on Raetian territory, instead of *III Batavorum milliaria* which was deployed in Pannonia Inferior sometime after 116⁵¹.

In summary, as we have seen from the previous lines it seems that this cohort was never dislocated on the territory of Moesia Inferior. All the evidences brought up into the discussion until now, by the scholars, could be interpreted diferrent, too. The tile stamp from *Buridava* and Bîrseşti could be attributed to other unit. In the diploma fragment from Oberstimm one can not be sure that *Faustinus* from there it is the one and the same person with the attested governor of Moesia Inferior, or if it is the same person we can not automatically attributed the fragment to Moesia Inferior. Finally, the diploma fragment from Dambach should rather refer to the auxiliary units from Raetia than to the auxiliary units from Moesia Inferior. Therefore I sustain that we do not have enough elements to back up the assumption that this unit was transferred on the territory of Moesia Inferior at the beginning of the second century and we have now more reason to believe that it remained on the territory of Raetia after its deployment from Britannia.

⁴⁹ CIL XVI 55.

⁵⁰ RMD 155, p. 229.

⁵¹ See note 46.