

AUXILIA COMMAGENORUM IN DACIA*

Commagene, a kingdom in north-western Syria became independent in 162 BC, following an uprising against the Seleucids. The first direct contacts with the Romans date from the times of the civil wars, when King Antiochus swore allegiance to Pompey, by sending him 200 archers¹, and was therefore rewarded with a part of Mesopotamia. He was dethroned by Marcus Antonius because of his attitude during the conflict against the Parthians².

In the first part of the 1st century AD, the Roman state carried out an interesting policy, apparently lacking coherence. In certain particular moments, these apparently contradictory aspects were more likely the effects of some dynastic problems (both in *Commagene* kingdom, and in Rome), rather than due to foreign policy reasons. The kingdom was annexed for the first time by Tiberius in 17 AD, when the entire Cappadocia³ was attached, and the authority of King Antiochus IV was restored by Caligula in 38 AD⁴. The conquest of the small kingdom and its inclusion in Syria province was accomplished in the second part of the year 72 by its governor, L. Junius Caesarius Paetus, also because of an alleged complicity with the Parthians⁵. Inscriptions mention a *bellum Commagenicum*⁶, although Josephus⁷ and Suetonius⁸ refer to a "skirmish"⁹.

Generally, both in diplomacy and in war, the relation between the perception of danger and preventive attacks is indistinct. Examples mentioned throughout the centuries are extremely numerous, depicting situations in which Empires motivate their expansion by the need to secure their frontiers. A proof in this respect would be Josephus Flavius' recall of the conquest of the *Commagene* kingdom (Josephus, BJ II 16.4), interpreted in an extremely suggestive way by Benjamin Isaac. So, if the king was unfaithful (he wasn't!) and if the Parthians really wanted to attack (they didn't!), it would

* I would like to thank my dear friend Florian Matei-Popescu, who read this paper and made valuable comments on it.

¹ Davies 1977, p. 261.

² Speidel 2005, p. 85-88.

³ The annexation of the kingdom during the reign of Tiberius had a vague motivation, king Archelaus was accused of leading a "rebellion" (Isaac 1990, p. 40).

⁴ Rey-Coquais 1978, p. 49; Millar 1993, p. 52-53.

⁵ D. Kennedy, C. Velius Rufus, *Britannia* 14, 1983, p. 187-188; Millar 1993, p. 80-93; Dabrowa 1994, p. 20; Isaac 1990, p. 22, p. 39.

⁶ ILS 9198 – *Baalbek*; AE 1943, p. 33 – *Volubilis*.

⁷ See note 4.

⁸ Suetonius, *Vespasian* 8.4: *Achaiam, Lyciam, Rhodum, Byzantium, Samum libertate adempta, item Trachiam Ciliciam et Commagenen ditionis regiae usque ad id tempus, in provinciarum formam redegit* [...]; 8, 5: *Cappadociae propter adsiduos barbarorum incursus legiones addidit consularem rectorem imposuit pro equite Romano*.

⁹ According to Josephus (BJ VII 7.1-2), in the fourth year of Vespasian's reign (1 July 72 – 30 June 73), Paetus denounced king Antiochus IV Epiphanes of *Commagene* of having the intention to rally to the Parthians in an uprising against Rome. With the approval of emperor, Paetus is heading towards *Samosata*, while Antiochus' sons, Epiphanes and Callinicus, start stirring the people, so as to organize the resistance. Antiochus recommends prudence; he travels to Tarsus in Cilicia where he turns himself in to the Romans, which seems to have demoralized the army. This is a possible explanation for the Roman's easy success. Subsequently, Antiochus was received in Rome with great honors, just like his sons were, and it was considered "intolerable for them to live outside the Roman Empire" (ILS 9200; Josephus, BJ VII 7.3). Epiphanes continued to name himself *basileus*, even though he entered the Senate and became a Consul in 109 (Sullivan 1977, p. 794).

have been dangerous for Romans not to take over *Samosata* (so, they did it!)¹⁰. The same author interpreted Josephus' tale as a proof of the fact that the Parthians did not represent, at that particular time, a danger for the borders of the Empire. Before the Judaic revolt, the ancient author presents Agrippa II as having said about Parthia that it had not violated the treaty with Rome, and subsequently describes the meeting between Vologaeses I and Titus at Zeugma, when the suppression of the Judaic revolt was allegedly celebrated, and therefore the Parthian king gave Titus a golden crown¹¹.

Some researchers see in the annexation of *Commagene* an expansion, while others plead for strategic arguments connected to the fortification of the Euphrates¹². This conquest must be analyzed in the broader context of Emperor Vespasian's policy, period in which major changes occurred, both in the reorganization of the infrastructure, in the arrangement of units, and in the foreign policy and administration of some of the provinces. Benjamin Isaac thinks it is quite possible for the reason on which the annexation of *Commagene* was based to have been the intention to station the legion at *Samosata*¹³, and the central element of this reorganization seems to have been the transformation of Cappadocia in a major military province. Two legions were transferred at *Samosata* and *Satala*, so that Cappadocia could become a major military province, all major commercial routes and crossing places over the Euphrates being under the control of Roman legions. The incorporation of *Commagene* completed the defensive policy at the eastern frontier, the governor of Syria having the responsibility of defending the Euphrates from Sura to the Cappadocian border¹⁴.

After the annexation, the kingdom was divided into four city-states: *Samosata*, *Caesarea Germanica*, *Perrhe* and *Doliche*, a *koine* remaining separate in the framework of Syria province¹⁵. Strategic reasons must have played a decisive role in the political reconfiguration of the entire area. Royal authority was replaced by a Roman governance in Armenia Minor, and the small kingdoms of Chalkidike and *Emesa* vanished from the political configuration of the area.

The kingdom's internal history reveals interesting aspects concerning the relationship between the royal family and different families. There were certain clashes between the local Semitic population and several families of Iranian, Greek or Macedonian origin, which can explain king Antiochus I's religious program having a syncretic character. Its stake was to reconcile such differences and, naturally, to consolidate the royal family, who was also anchored in traditions that had a Greek and Persian origin. It is interesting to note that, after the death of Antiochus III in 17 AD, much of the population of *Commagene* asked for Rome's direct control over the kingdom. Quite probably, this was a proof of dynastic instability, which probably encouraged the nobility to come up with this solution. A comparative analysis of the relationship that small kingdoms in the area had with the Empire reveals the fact that Rome considered that it had to be consulted in all issues related to the succession to the throne.

¹⁰ Isaac 1990, p. 22.

¹¹ Some researchers argued that this was a consequence of Caesarius Paetus' easy success, in 73 the Parthian king Vologaeses began hostilities against the Empire, probably in the *Commagene* area (G. W. Bowersock, *Syria under Vespasian*, JRS 63, 1973, p. 135; Dabrowa 1994, p. 25).

¹² For a synthetic presentation of these opinions, see Speidel 2005, p. 86 note 5.

¹³ Isaac 1990, p. 39. The annexation of *Commagene* can be seen as a lesson learned after Corbulo's failed attempt to conquer Armenia, and also after the failures in the times of Nero and Paetus. Syria proved to be vulnerable while the Roman army was involved in the campaigns in Armenia, which has been proven by the Parthian invasions in the province. The fortification of this frontier sector down to the Euphrates seems to have been vital for the policy carried out by the Romans in the following years, by strengthening the entire defensive system and the infrastructure. Thus, excellent supply and attack bases were built.

¹⁴ Mitford 1978, p. 1182. B. Isaac considered it possible for the intention to camp the legion at *Samosata* to have been the reason for the annexation of *Commagene* (Isaac 1990, p. 39).

¹⁵ Rey-Coquais 1978, p. 53; Sullivan 1977, p. 732-798.

It was assumed that auxiliary Commagenians' units were recruited among the soldiers sent in aid by king Antiochus of *Commagene* during the campaign of Titus in Judea¹⁶. Flavius Josephus indicates a number of Commagenians sent in the year 66 by Antiochus IV to support Cestius Gallus in the Judaic rebellion¹⁷. The diploma from Cataloi, dating from 92¹⁸, mentions members of the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* among the units of Moesia Inferior discharging soldiers in that respective year. On the basis of this, we can state that the respective unit could have been recruited in 67 at the latest¹⁹, which is concordant with the statements of the ancient author.

According to Flavius Josephus, the army of Antiochus IV consisted in over 2000 archers on horseback and 3000 pedestrian archers. Naturally, the army of *Commagene* could not be inferior in number to the garrison that was stationed here after the year 72, made of a legion and a few *auxilia*²⁰.

Only four auxiliary units recruited from *Commagene* have been attested up to the present moment, in the times of the Principate: *ala I Commagenorum* (Egypt, Noricum)²¹, *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* (Moesia Inferior, Dacia Inferior), *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* (Moesia Superior, Dacia, Dacia Superior) and *cohors VI Commagenorum* (Numidia)²².

We shall take into discussion the first two cohorts of Commagenians, whose history is connected to that of the province of Dacia. Whether an "*ala II Flavia Commagenorum*" was attested in the army of this province or not is still under discussion; two hypotheses have been formulated but the final verdict depends on new pieces of evidence that are still to be found. The unit is attested in only one diploma, dating from October 109²³. J. Garbsch considered that "*ala II Commagenorum sagittaria*" was in fact the scribe's mistaken version for *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum*, but P. Holder has no doubt that the respective recording is correct²⁴.

Cohors I Flavia Commagenorum sagittariorum equitata (?)²⁵

The moment of the unit's constitution was considered to be related to the annexation of the *Commagene* kingdom (72 A.D.), hypothesis supported by the unit's imperial name. The presence of this unit on the diploma from Cataloi suggests an earlier

¹⁶ Cichorius, RE IV, 274; Wagner 1938, p. 123-126; Saddington 1982, p. 48-49; Spaul 2000, p. 404-405; Petolescu 2002, p. 97-99.

¹⁷ Josephus, BJ II 18.9.

¹⁸ Petolescu, Popescu 2004, p. 269-276.

¹⁹ Matei-Popescu 2004, n^o. 20. *Ala I Commagenorum* for instance, is attested in Egypt on a *pridianum* dated from 48 A.D. (Saddington 1982, p. 255). If the two cohorts were also recruited earlier than Flavian times, then the imperial entitling could have been granted as an honor for bravery in combat - Holder 1980, 16.

²⁰ Speidel 2005, p. 98-99.

²¹ Spaul 1994, p. 94-95; Ubl 2004, p. 31-38.

²² Spaul 2000, p. 406-407; Y. Le Bohec, Les unités auxiliaires de l'armée romaine en Afrique Proconsulaire et Numidie sous le Haut-Empire, Aix - Marseille 1989, p. 73-76.

²³ AE 1990, 860 = RMD III 148.

²⁴ J. Garbsch, *Das älteste Militärdiplom für die Provinz Dakien*, BVbl 54, 1989, p. 137-151; conclusions reiterated by J. Garbsch, N. Gudea, *Despre cea mai veche diplomă militară eliberată pentru provincia Dacia*, AMP 14-15, p. 70; P. Holder, *Auxiliary Deployment in the Reign of Hadrian*, Documenting the Roman Army. Essays in Honour of Margaret Roxan (J. J. Wilkes ed.), London 2003, p. 132, table 1; P. Holder, *Auxiliary deployment in the reign of Trajan*, Dacia, N.S. 50, 2006, table 4. See also Ubl 2004, 32.

²⁵ Cichorius, RE IV, 273-274; Christescu 1937, p. 183; Wagner 1938, p. 123-124; Kraft 1951, p. 60 61; 173, n^o 1330-1331 a, b; Russu 1972, p. 70; A. Aricescu, *Armata în Dobrogea romană*, București 1977, p. 59-60; Tudor 1978, p. 334; Beneš 1978, p. 26-27; Strobel 1984, p. 127; Vlădescu 1983, p. 25; Al. Suceveanu, in Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *La Dobroudja romaine*, București, 1990, p. 65; Spaul 2000, p. 403; Petolescu 2002, p. 95-96; Matei-Popescu 2004, p. 204, n^o. 20; Țentea, Matei-Popescu 2004, p. 279-280; Matei-Popescu, Țentea, 2006a, p. 87-88.

recruiting, which must have occurred before Vespasian's reign²⁶. It is listed among the Moesia Inferior diplomas from 92²⁷, 97²⁸, 105²⁹, 111³⁰ and 116³¹.

From the period the cohort was stationed in Moesia Inferior dates the epitaph from *Tomis* (before Trajan), in which are mentioned M. Tertullus and Mitrdates: a veteran, respectively a pedestrian from this unit³².

In the first two decades of the IInd century, the history of the Commagenians' unit cannot be handled separately from the history of the legions that took part in the operations in Muntenia region during the Dacian wars. *Exercitus Moesiae Inferioris*³³ was an essential component of the military effort deployed by the Empire in the conflict against the kingdom of Dacia³⁴, due to the strategic position that the two Moesias had facing the northern Danubian territory³⁵. The core of Moesian military units was represented, during Trajan's first Dacian conflict, by Legion V Macedonica (*Oescus*) and Legion I Italica (*Novae*)³⁶. The two legions took part in complex operations, being the only units attested in *Buridava* during the first campaign³⁷. In this context, M. Zahariade considers that it is very likely for detachments from Legion V Macedonica and Legion I Italica to have been transferred to *Drajna de Sus* and *Mălăiești*, together with the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* (in full effective) from the garrison of *Buridava*, in order to build forts along access routes from Transylvania³⁸. These transfers of units are thought by the same author to have been related to the destruction of Dacian fortresses from *Gura Vitioarei*, *Plopeni*, *Slănic* or *Homorîciu*, simultaneously causing the erection of the fortresses in *Drajna de Sus* I and *Mălăiești*³⁹. In the time interval between the two Dacian wars, the garrison of the fortress from *Drajna de Sus* was made of vexillations from the Legions mentioned and of the effectives of the Commagenians' cohort. According to Zahariade, after the conquest of Dacia, they were joined by a vexillation from Legion XI Claudia⁴⁰. The unit

²⁶ See note 18.

²⁷ Petolescu, Popescu 2004, p. 269–276.

²⁸ RMD V 338; W. Eck, A. Pangerl, *Zwei Konstitutionen für die Truppen Niedermösens vom 9. September 97*, ZPE 151, p. 185–192.

²⁹ CIL XVI 50.

³⁰ RMD IV 222

³¹ W. Eck, A. Pangerl, *Neue Diplome für die Auxiliärtruppen in den mösischen Provinzen von Vespasian bis Hadrian*, Dacia, N.S. 50, 2006, p. 99–102, 103.

³² AE 1938, 6 = ISM II 176. According to I. I. Russu, the name Mithradates has an Iranian origin, and Barales a Syro-Semitic origin (Russu 1969, p. 171 note 13).

³³ CIL III 12467.

³⁴ Wagner 1938, p. 123; Russu 1969, p. 172; Strobel 1984, p. 127; Petolescu 1995, p. 249.

³⁵ Christescu 1937, p. 13–14; T. Sarnowski, *Zur Truppengeschichte der Dakerkriege Traians*, Germania 65, 1987, 2, p. 107–122. See Matei-Popescu, 2004a and the entire discussion on this subject.

³⁶ For the participation of legions from Moesia Inferior to the Dacian campaigns, see the more recent discussion in Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 290–300.

³⁷ IDR II 381; Zahariade 1997, p. 59. The fact that they were attested here, just like the *pedites singulares*, led to the hypothesis that the governor of Moesia Inferior was also stationed here (Gh. Bichir, *Centrul militar roman de la Buridava*, TD 5, 1985, 1–2, p. 99–102). However, E. Doruțiu-Boilă (Emilia Doruțiu-Boilă, *Despre cărămizile cu ștampilă ale legiunilor V Macedonica și XI Claudia la Dunărea de Jos și pe litoralul nordic al Mării Negre*, SCIVA 41, 1990, 3–4, p. 251–271) dates the presence of the *pedites singulares* at *Buridava* after the hostilities of the first campaign ceased, or even after the constitution of the province.

³⁸ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 61–62.

³⁹ For the strategic position of the aforementioned forts, as well as for the relationship between them and the fortified Dacian points, see Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, fig. 1.

⁴⁰ It seemed, until not so long ago, that this legion was stationed for a while at *Brigetio*, in Pannonia, but it is very possible for these traces to date from the period of the transfer to the Lower Danube limes, transfer carried out, according to Florian Matei-Popescu, as a consequence of the Dacian attack in the winter of 101–102 (B. Lőrincz, *Zur Erbauung des Legionslagers von Brigetio*, AArchHung 27, 1975, 3–4, p. 342–352; Matei-Popescu 2004a, p. 123–129). M. Zahariade considers that only a part of this legion

of Commagenians is likely to have been stationed here in full formation, between 102 and 117/8⁴¹.

The stamps from the fortress in Drajna de Sus were broken down in three types, the third one including two subvariants⁴²: the stamps "COH COM" represent the Drajna de Sus I type⁴³, the stamps "COH I COM" represent the Drajna de Sus II type⁴⁴, and "COH COMA" the Drajna de Sus III.a-b type⁴⁵. Although fragmentary, a stamped brick discovered in the fortress at Voinești can be included in type III.a⁴⁶. Type III.b has the same characteristics as type III.a, the text impression being deeper and doubled on the inside by a thin line. Archaeological research in Târgșor revealed tegular stamps belonging to this unit⁴⁷. Although fragmentary, a stamp from Voinești can be included in type Drajna III and probably in subvariant III.b, but in fact the two pieces from Târgșor belong to a different type.

According to the researchers who studied the tegular material in north-western Muntenia, the number of stamp types used by the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* at Drajna de Sus could suggest the fact that the unit was stationed in the mentioned fortress in full effective⁴⁸. The respective assertion, as well as the calculation of the military effectives in the area is determined only by the correspondence paradigm of a stamp type to a *centuria*. To what extent does the discovery of the two stamps from Târgșor and of the item from Voinești allow us to assert the presence of vexillations from the Commagenians' unit in these areas or just the fact that some transports of tegular material from the fortress in Drajna de Sus were reported? Light will probably be shed on this subject only when geological and mineralogical analyses will have been carried out and new elements will have been brought into discussion!

Stamps of Legion XI Claudia are mentioned in Drajna de Sus, Voinești and Târgșor, together with attested evidence of the Commagenians' cohort, which can mean,

was transferred to Oescus, where it was stationed together with the legion V Macedonica, this transfer occurring before the beginning of the first Dacian war, simultaneously with the vexillation from *Brigetio*, and that subsequently, another vexillation was sent directly to Durostorum in 105-106 (M. Zahariade, *How and when the Legio XI Claudia arrived in Lower Moesia*, Roman Frontier Studies. Proceedings of the XVIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (ed. N. Gudea), Zalău 1999, 599-607). Following the attack in the winter of 101-102, being under an extraordinary pressure on two quite broad fronts, Trajan decides to bring in the legion XI Claudia and also some detachments from the legion I Minervia (or maybe the entire legion), leaving at *Brigetio* the vexillation dealing with the erection of the forts in that particular place on the Pannonic limes, as he did not want to weaken this limes sector excessively. Fl. Matei-Popescu argued that it was only after the attack in the winter of 101-102 that the army of Moesia Inferior was reinforced with two legions and two cohorts millariae, and that it was in this context that the legion V Macedonica was transferred to *Troesmis* (Matei-Popescu 2004a, 123-129). It is possible for the army in Moesia Inferior to have been involved in the deployment of military operations only from the year 102, more specifically after the attack of Decebal and his allies to the south of the Danube (Matei-Popescu 2007, p. 290-300).

⁴¹ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 64.

⁴² CIL III 12530a = IDR II, 603 a-c = Gh. Ștefan, *Le camp romain de Drajna de Sus, département de Prahova*, Dacia 9-10, 1941-1944, p. 124.

⁴³ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 23, fig. 14 a-b; Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 127, fig. 5/I a.

⁴⁴ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 23, fig. 15 a-c; Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 127, fig. 5/II b.

⁴⁵ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 23; type III.a - fig. 16 a-b, type III.b - fig. 16 c-e; Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 127, fig. 5 / III c-d.

⁴⁶ M. I. Bădescu, *Ștampile tegulare de la Voinești, Muscel, com. Lerești (jud. Argeș)*, SCIVA 32, 1981, 2, p. 292, fig. 2; Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 127, fig. 5/g.

⁴⁷ Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 127, fig. 5 / IV e-f. See also previous records, accomplished on the basis of verbal information from the author of the discovery: Petolescu 1995, p. 249 note 433; Petolescu 2002, p. 96 note 5.

⁴⁸ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, 64: the calculation is valid if we admit that a type of stamp corresponds to an individual workshop belonging to a *centuria*, so the garrison at Drajna de Sus should have been made of 1060 people. If we admit this hypothesis, the Commagenian cohort couldn't have been camped in the fort at Drajna de Sus in full effective, because two *centuriae* would be missing.

under the reserve of similar attestations in the future, that we are dealing with a mere attachment of the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* to this Legion's vexillations⁴⁹.

Following Hadrian's administrative reorganization, the unit is reported on the list of military effectives in Dacia Inferior attested in the diplomas in 130⁵⁰; 140⁵¹; 146⁵². Chronological references are lacking from the attestations of the other fortresses in Dacia Inferior. The fact that the unit was attested in *Romula*⁵³, *Slăveni*⁵⁴ and *Acidava*⁵⁵ is due to the de discovery of tegular stamps. This type of stamps, displaying a retrograde writing, seems to have appeared after 117/8, when the unit was transferred to the Alutan limes area⁵⁶, and differs from the types from *Drajna de Sus*. We believe that the stamps from *Romula* and *Slăveni* could belong to different subtypes. Cartridge dimensions are very similar, the writing is retrograde in both cases, but the letters' shape and thickness are different. Since only one item from each site is known up to the present moment, we must be cautious in approaching a possible interpretation.

The first reading of this unit's stamps from *Romula*, belonging to the Papazoglu collection was the correct one, and was performed by O. Hirschfeld: *Coh(ors) I Fl(avia) Com(magenorum)*⁵⁷. When he published it in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, A. von Domaszewski mistook the abbreviation of the imperial name "FL" for "II"⁵⁸, reading that was to be reiterated on other occasions, as well⁵⁹. V. Christescu reestablishes the correct reading of this type of stamps, after confronting them with the situation reported in two military diplomas from Dacia Superior, province where the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* had no reason to be present⁶⁰. D. Tudor considered that *Romula* was the most important place where the biggest number of stamps were discovered at that time, stating that the unit had been stationed here since 105. From here, some of the vexillations would have been temporarily transferred to *Slăveni* and *Acidava*, with a view to participating to an intensive campaign of building fortifications on the Olt valley and in the north-eastern part of Muntenia – at *Drajna de Sus*. Therefore, after the administrative reorganization in the times of Hadrian, the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* stayed in Dacia Inferior⁶¹. The transfer of the unit to the north of the Danube will follow a different course. Most probably, D. Tudor's assertions can be transposed to the period immediately after the Romans abandoned north-western Muntenia. Ioana Bogdan Cătănciu believes that there used to be a *castellum* at *Romula*⁶², and that the units whose stamps were discovered in the precinct wall and in other buildings having an official character did not have a garrison at *Romula*, but contributed to the construction and reconstruction of the Roman city⁶³. In *Slăveni*, the unit is attested by stamps belonging to the same type

⁴⁹ The *Cohors I Aelia sagittariorum* can be a very good analogy in this respect, because it acted as a unit auxiliary to the legion Vindobonense through a considerable chronological interval. The cohort was camped at Klosterneuburg, but strategically, it seems to have been subordinated to the legion stationed at *Vindobona*. Klosterneuburg (*Cannabianca*) was considered to be a "flank fortification" of *Vindobona*. Furthermore, the *Cohors I <∞> nova Severiana Surorum sagittariorum (Ulcisia Castra)* seems to have been included in the orbit of the legion at *Aquincum*.

⁵⁰ RMD V 376

⁵¹ IDR I 13 = RMD I 39

⁵² RMD IV 269.

⁵³ IDR II 382.

⁵⁴ Tudor 1933, fig. 3 c, d; IDR II 528 = CIL III 8074, 14d (wrong reading).

⁵⁵ IDR II 551 = CIL III 8074, 14d.

⁵⁶ Zahariade, Dvorsky 1997, p. 68 note 18.

⁵⁷ O. Hirschfeld, *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, Berlin, II n° 40 (apud Tudor 1933, p. 229).

⁵⁸ CIL III 8074, 14c.

⁵⁹ Cichorius, RE IV, 274; Pârvan 1926, p. 277.

⁶⁰ Christescu 1937, p. 183 (= IDR II 382; Tudor 1933, p. 67-68, p. 229, n° 1; Tudor 1978, p. 334; Vlădescu 1983, p. 35).

⁶¹ Tudor 1933, p. 232.

⁶² Bogdan Cătănciu 1994, p. 350 note 32.

⁶³ Bogdan Cătănciu 1981, p. 25-26 note 226.

as the ones in *Romula*, but of smaller dimensions⁶⁴. Therefore, it is impossible to know precisely whether this cohort had its garrison at *Romula*⁶⁵ or Slăveni⁶⁶.

According to the opinion of Al. Barnea and I. Ciucă, the attestation of bricks bearing the stamp of the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* documents the presence of some vexillations of the respective unit in *Acidava* as builders, and this fortress was the unit's garrison later on. The moment in which the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* came back to the Olt river would have coincided with the replacement of the wooden fortress at *Acidava* with the brick one⁶⁷.

The only chronologically relevant attestation can be found in the fortress from Câmpulung-Jidava. A brick bearing the signature of a soldier (*miles*) from the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* was found in the *retentura dextra*, on the pavement of the *contubernium* of a barracks, and this is considered to be the first attestation of a unit on the *limes transalutanus*⁶⁸. The barracks has only one construction phase; the dating appears to be Severian (based on the coins), an item from *Philippus Caesar*, found in the burning level, would indicate the destruction of the fortress during the Carpians' attack under *Philippus Arabs*⁶⁹. On the basis of a comparison with the Commagenians' unit from *Micia*, C. C. Petolescu assumed that the unit was an *equitata*⁷⁰. In the basement of the *principia*, in "the same room and even disposed in compact groups" were identified over 400 arrowheads; some of them, namely trilobate arrows, are typically oriental⁷¹. This phase of the *principia* from Jidava, which also comprises the *armamentaria* under discussion, is very likely to correspond to the period in which the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* was stationed in this fortress. C. C. Petolescu considered that the fact that this unit was stationed in this fortress was certain, at least from the first half of the IIIrd century⁷².

The fact that in the *castellum* from Urluieni, arrowheads are predominant among all the weapons found in archaeological investigations led to the assumption that the unit stationed here was made of archers. This hypothesis also relies on the fact that these *castella* were situated along the fortress line in western Muntenia, where the Roman army was fighting against Dacian and Roxolan populations, which were made of good archers⁷³.

Information regarding the constituents of this unit is quite scarce. Two praefects are known, probably of Italic origin⁷⁴: *M. Antoninus Modianus* and *C. Betitius Pietatas*⁷⁵. Two of this unit's soldiers are attested in the inscription from *Tomis*: *M. Iulius Tertullus*

⁶⁴ See note 52. About the units stationed at Slăveni, see Vlădescu 1983, p. 32-57.

⁶⁵ Tudor 1978, p. 334.

⁶⁶ Beneš 1978, p. 27.

⁶⁷ IDR II 551 = CIL III 8074 14d; Barnea, Ciucă 1989, p. 148, p. 154. For a presentation of the fort, see Tudor 1978, p. 301-304 and Vlădescu 1983, p. 82-85.

⁶⁸ Avram, Petolescu 1999, p. 189; Petolescu 2002, p. 95-97, n° 30.

⁶⁹ Petolescu, Cioflan 1984, p. 15-17.

⁷⁰ Petolescu 1995, p. 250 note 443; the argumentation is based on the considerable dimensions of the *horreum*, which would indicate the fact that a *cohors equitata* was stationed in the respective fort, cf. Petculescu 1987, p. 70.

⁷¹ Popescu, Popescu 1970, p. 257, fig. 12/2. See Davies 1977, p. 257-265; Zanier 1988, p. 22-25.

⁷² Petolescu 1995, p. 250; Petolescu 2002, p. 96-97.

⁷³ See the argumentation of Mrs. Ioana Bogdan Cătănciu, who was underlying the fact that, when arrows are identified in a certain site, one cannot draw the absolute conclusion that *sagittarii* were stationed in that place, since bows were used by other soldiers for training purposes, as well (Bogdan Cătănciu 1994, p. 348).

⁷⁴ Wagner 1938, p. 124; Russu 1969, p. 172.

⁷⁵ CIL VI 3504 (*Roma*), PME 9 A 138; respectively CIL IX 1132 (*Aeclanum*, Regio II), PME B 22 – dating in the first part of the IInd century A.D.; ILD 106.

and Mitridates⁷⁶. The name of one soldier, [- - -]ITULCAI (?), is known from a graffito discovered in the fortress from Jidava⁷⁷.

Therefore, the unit's effectives correspond to a *cohors quingenaria*, but there is also the possibility for it to have been an *equitata*⁷⁸. Both by analogy with the aforementioned unit and on the grounds of the archaeological situation of the fortress in Jidava, we can assume that the unit's name was the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum equitata (?) sagittariorum*⁷⁹.

Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum equitata sagittariorum⁸⁰

The unit is recorded in the diplomas from Moesia Superior from 96⁸¹, 100⁸² and 103/5⁸³. It took part in Trajan's Dacian expeditions⁸⁴, being subsequently attested among the units in the new province in 109⁸⁵ and 110⁸⁶.

Following the administrative reforms in 118/ 119, this cohort will be among the auxiliary units in Dacia Superior. The first attestation dates from April 14th 123: a military diploma copied from an imperial constitution granted to soldiers in this cohort, as well as to those from the *Pedites singulares Britannici* formation, from *ala I Brittonum c. R.* and the *cohors II Gallorum Macedonica*, who had already been transferred on the territory of the new province, Dacia Porolissensis. The diploma was granted to *Zacca, Pallaei f., Syrus*, under the command of *Ulpius Victor*⁸⁷. He had been recruited in the year 98 at the latest, his origin indicating the preoccupation of Roman authorities to round up the effectives of some archers' cohorts with recruits coming from the same area

⁷⁶ ISM II 176. The inscription from *Tomis* cannot be an argument for a possible stationing of the cohort in the town on the Black Sea shore, since the beneficiary of the funerary inscription was a veteran and was not active in the military force (Matei-Popescu 2004, n° 20).

⁷⁷ Reading ILD 164 (the discovery was also mentioned in Petolescu 1995, p. 250; Petolescu 2002, p. 96-97), Felix Marcu argues that a *graffito* mentioning the name of a soldier in the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* does not automatically indicate the unit's stationing at Jidava. To support his argument, he indicates a *graffito* on a brick bearing the stamp of the *legio XX* from Caernarvon, dated in the times of Septimius Severus, which indicates a soldier in an auxiliary unit (*coh. Sunicorum* or *Sunucorum*) who worked in the legion's *figlina* (F. Marcu, *Military Tile-stamps as a Guide for the Garrisons of several Forts in Dacia*, *Orbis antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis*, Cluj-Napoca 2004, p. 577).

⁷⁸ See note 70.

⁷⁹ In a recent study, M. Zahariade and D. Lichiardopol suggest a method for the calculation of effectives stationed in northern Muntenia (Wallachia), on the basis of the ratio between the typology and distribution of stamped tegular material. This approach is based on the totality of tegular evidence in north-western Muntenia, the hypotheses regarding the effectives of the units stationed in every fort individually are limited by the precariousness of archaeological researches in the forts in the respective area - Zahariade, Lichiardopol 2006, p. 121-133.

⁸⁰ Cichorius, RE IV, 273-274; Christescu 1937, p. 183; Wagner 1938, p. 123-124; Kraft 1951, p. 60-61, p. 173, n° 1330-1331 a, b; Russu 1969, p. 167-186; C. C. Petolescu, *Cohors II Hispanorum la Micia*, *Sargetia* 9, 1972, p. 43-50; Beneš 1978, p. 26-27; Russu 1972, p. 70; Petolescu, Mărghită 1974, p. 247-258; Petolescu 1976, p. 393-398; Gudea 1976, p. 517-521; Tudor 1978, p. 334; Petculescu 1982, p. 84-89; Strobel 1984, p. 128; Spaul 2000, p. 404-405; Petolescu 2002, p. 97-99 n° 31; Țentea, Matei-Popescu 2004, p. 280; Matei-Popescu, Țentea 2006; Matei-Popescu, Țentea 2006a, p. 87-88.

⁸¹ AE 1977, 722 = RMD I 6.

⁸² CIL XVI 46.

⁸³ CIL XVI 54; Pferdehirt 2004, no 13. For possible datation of this constitution see Fl. Matei-Popescu, *AJA* 111, 4 Online Book Review - http://www.ajaonline.org/pdfs/book_reviews/111.4/16_Popescu.pdf, October 15, 2007.

⁸⁴ Strobel 1984, p. 128.

⁸⁵ AE 1990, 860 = RMD III 148. See also note 24.

⁸⁶ IDR I 3 = CIL XVI 163.

⁸⁷ Pferdehirt 2004, n° 22.

and probably having the same abilities. Four other diplomas attest it in Dacia Superior in 136/138⁸⁸, 144⁸⁹, 157⁹⁰ and 179⁹¹.

The unit was attested to have been stationed in the fortress from *Micia* for nearly the entire duration of the province's existence, except for the first two decades of the IInd century. The earliest attestation dates from the reign of Hadrian⁹². Other inscriptions were dedicated by the unit to the following emperors: Antoninus Pius⁹³, Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus⁹⁴, in 164. The baths (*balneas coh(ortis) II Flaviae Commagenorum vetustate dilapsas restituit*)⁹⁵ were renovated in 193, under the supervision of praefect Sextus Boebius Scribonius Castus. The baths were repaired once more under Severus Alexander⁹⁶. During the common reign of Septimius Severus and of his sons, the cohort takes part, together with other units, in important military works, a [*praefect*]us being mentioned in the inscription⁹⁷.

However, this unit seems to have been stationed at *Micia* right from the times of Trajan, taking into consideration the fact that it is in this particular moment that could be dated more precisely the altar dedicated by praefect *M. Arruntius Agrippinus* to Jupiter Turmasgades⁹⁸. This person is very likely to have become in 118 the praefect of the oriental desert, in Egypt (*praefectus Montis Berenicidis*), according to the mention on an *ostrakon*, in Greek, discovered at *Krokodilo*⁹⁹. This position could have been attained after having held three posts the equestrian militias and consisted in controlling roads and stone quarries in this part of Egypt¹⁰⁰. Therefore, the command of a *quingenaria* cohort being the first of equestrian *militiae*, *Agrippinus'* mission at *Micia* could be dated in the first years of the province's existence¹⁰¹.

The *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* is attested in the fortress at *Micia* by four types of tegular stamps¹⁰². The reading of the first two types raised several problems, which led to rather consistent controversial debates in specialized literature.

Type 1: "COH II FL COMM" – the *cohors II Fl(avia) Comm(agenorum)*. The stamps belonging to this type have initially been read COH II HIS, being attributed to the *cohors II Hispanorum*¹⁰³. Since an important number of bricks bearing this type of stamps were discovered in *thermae*, Floca attributed the renovation and enlargement of the *thermae* to the *cohors II Hispanorum*, suggesting that in the incomplete part of the inscription, attesting the renovation of these *thermae* during the reign of Alexander

⁸⁸ RMD V 384

⁸⁹ IDR I, 14 = CIL XVI 90.

⁹⁰ IDR I, 15 = CIL XVI 107.

⁹¹ I. Piso, Doina Benea, *Das Militärdiplom von Drobeta*, ZPE 56, 1984, 263-295 = RMD II 123 = AE 1987, 843.

⁹² CIL III 1371 = IDR III 3, 51.

⁹³ Petculescu 1982, 84-85, n° 1, fig. 1; ILD 307 - dated: 10 December 139 – 9 December 140.

⁹⁴ CIL III 1372 = IDR III 3, 52; CIL III 1373 = IDR III 3, 53.

⁹⁵ CIL III 1374 = IDR III 3, 45.

⁹⁶ AE 1903, 66 = Daicoviciu 1930, 35, n° 1 = IDR III 3, 46.

⁹⁷ CIL III 1343 = AE 1978, 705, IDR III 3, 77.

⁹⁸ IDR III 3, 138.

⁹⁹ Cuvigny 2005, p. 135-154, n° 87, with a comment on the career of this person on page 138-139.

¹⁰⁰ See the career of *M. Artorius M. f. Pal. Priscillus Vicasius Sabidianus* preserved in an inscription at *Puteoli* (CIL VI 32929 = ILS 2700) dated from the times of Trajan. After having held the position of *praefectus cohortis XV voluntariorum c. R.* (Germania Inferior), *tribunus legionis VII Claudia* p. f. (Moesia Superior), *praefectus alae I Pannoniorum* (Africa or Moesia Inferior), this person becomes *praefectus montis Berenicidis*; PME, A 168; Holder 1980, p. 157, E 139.

¹⁰¹ Matei-Popescu, Tentea 2006a, p. 88.

¹⁰² C. C. Petolescu, *Cronica epigrafică a României* (V, 1985), SCIVA 37, 1986, 4, p. 350, nr. 341, considers confuse and incomplete their publication in IDR III 3, 197– where three types are mentioned.

¹⁰³ Floca 1968, p. 113, n. 10.

Severus¹⁰⁴, the name of the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* must be replaced by that of the *cohors II Hispanorum*. The same reading of the respective stamps was reiterated on the occasion of the publication of a kiln group¹⁰⁵ or that of some stamped tiles and bricks¹⁰⁶. Rectifications of these readings were carried out only a few years later, as a consequence of the discovery of better impressed stamps, which were able to provide an accurate reading¹⁰⁷.

Type 2: "COH II FL COMC". The reading accepted nowadays was established by a study dedicated to epigraphic discoveries made by L. Petculescu at *Micia*¹⁰⁸; and goes as follows: *Coh(ors) II Fl(avia) Com(ma)g(enorum)* or *Coh(ors) II Fl(avia) Com(ma)genorum* *C(ommodiana)* or *G(ordiana)* or *G(alliana)*. C. C. Petolescu considers that the final letter G can be rounded up as *G(etica)*¹⁰⁹. It is worth mentioning that the items on which the three letters COH are of the same size belong, in fact, to the type under discussion¹¹⁰, and they are not variants of the type COH II FL COMM¹¹¹.

Types 3 and 4 raised no problems in their reading and interpretation. These stamps are: "CO SE FLA C", and the reading is *Co(hors) Se(cunda) Fla(via) C(ommagenorum)*¹¹², respectively "COH II COM" – *Coh(ors) II Com(magenorum)*¹¹³.

Stamps of the same unit have been identified more recently in Cladova, about 100 km ahead of the fortress in *Micia*¹¹⁴. No elements leading to the dating of these stamps could be identified. According to Eduard Nemeth, this does not exclude the transfer of several vexillations from this unit along the lower course of the Mureș river in the times of Trajan¹¹⁵.

We have some epigraphic records up to the present moment, therefore we can determine its full name. The unit's name is the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum equitata sagittariorum*, to which the imperial surname is added, according to the situation. In the aforementioned diplomas from 109 and 110 it was recorded as *sagittaria*, respectively *sagittari(um)*. In an inscription from *Micia* it appears under the name *eq(uitata) s[ag(it-tariorum)]*¹¹⁶. L. Sossiu[s] is a *decurio*, which proves that the unit is a *cohors equitata*¹¹⁷, its effectives corresponding to a *cohors quingenaria equitata*¹¹⁸. Two other inscriptions

¹⁰⁴ See note 96.

¹⁰⁵ Oct. Floca, Șt. Ferenczi, L., Mărghitani, *Micia*. Grupul de cuptoare romane pentru ars ceramică, Deva 1970, p. 9-10.

¹⁰⁶ Petolescu 1972, p. 43-46, Petolescu, Mărghitani 1974, p. 254-256.

¹⁰⁷ Petolescu 1976, p. 395-397, n° 3; Gudea 1976, p. 519, n° 3.

¹⁰⁸ Petculescu 1982, p. 87-88, n° 3, fig. 3.

¹⁰⁹ AE 1983, 848 = C. C. Petolescu, *Cronica epigrafică a României (III, 1983)*, SCIVA 35, 1984, 4, p. 378 nr. 233. The fact that they were rounded up slightly differently is explained by the weak impression of the cartridge: Petolescu, Mărghitani 1974, p. 256 nr. 33 (Petolescu 1972, p. 47, note 25) – add to the end of the reading from CIL III 8074.14a - *S(agittariorum)*; Floca 1968, p. 112 suggests "COMAG".

¹¹⁰ Petolescu 1976, p. 397 note 17.

¹¹¹ Petolescu, Mărghitani 1974, p. 253, n° 35.

¹¹² Petolescu 1976, p. 397 nr. 4 (= IDR III 3, 197, type II – incomplete due to the fragmentary character of the item; Petolescu, Mărghitani 1974, p. 256, n° 34 – A is rendered incorrectly, respectively upside down. In fact, the letter is in its normal position).

¹¹³ Petolescu 1976, p. 397, nr. 5; Petolescu, Mărghitani 1974, p. 255-256, n° 32 note 45 quotes erroneously an analogy for this type in the item Szilágyi 1946, p. 55, pl. XVIII/253; (the cartridge quoted is in fact XVII/253 (!) and belongs to type "COH COM", being similar to the Draja de Sus I type (!). The discovery place of the item published by Szilágyi was not published at the time.

¹¹⁴ P. Hügel, *Cărmizi romane ștampilate descoperite la Cladova (jud. Arad)*, Ziridava 19-20, 1996, p. 74, II/1, a-c.

¹¹⁵ E. Nemeth, *Armata în sud-vestul Daciei Romane. Die Armee im Südwesten des Römischen Dakien*, Timișoara 2005, p. 43.

¹¹⁶ AE 1903, 65 = Daicoviciu 1930, 37, 6 = ILS 9273 = IDR III 3, 138.

¹¹⁷ CIL III 1355 = IDR III 3, 105.

¹¹⁸ Daicoviciu 1930, p. 24, p. 36-37; Christescu 1937, p. 185; Floca 1968, p. 113; Petolescu 1995, p. 251.

from *Micia* mention the unit's *nomina imperialia*: [Severi]ana [Alexandriana]¹¹⁹ and, later on, *Philippiana*¹²⁰.

The unit's prosopography includes the following persons among the *praefecti*: *M. Arruntius Agripinus*¹²¹, *Sex. Boebius Scribonius Castus*¹²² (193-212), *Iulius Arcanus*¹²³, *C. Pomponius Cassianus*¹²⁴, *Tampius Ruffinus*¹²⁵, *C. Vettius Sabinianus*¹²⁶, [...]*di-anus*¹²⁷ and two others whose name is still unknown¹²⁸. Among *centuriones*, the following are mentioned: *Crisp(us) Lucius*¹²⁹ and *C. Iulius [Martijalis]*¹³⁰. Furthermore, the existence of decurion *L. Sossiu[s]*¹³¹, of an *actarius*, *Ianuarius*¹³² and of two veterans, *Dion[ysius]*¹³³ and *Aur(elius) Maurus*¹³⁴ is recorded.

The religion of the Commagenians' units in Dacia

It has been generally assumed that these units, like the ones recruited from the Orient in general, were the bearers of the religions in the areas they were recruited from, but depending on several factors (the time elapsed since the formation of the units, the province they were transferred in etc.), other significant variables got in the way. It is worth mentioning that the different knowledge degree of the history of the units under discussion and, obviously, the documentation – uneven from a quantitative viewpoint – that we have at our disposal hinders the formulation of generally valid conclusions.

Jupiter Dolichenus was an extremely popular divinity in the military environment. Traces of the worship of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Roman Empire have been found especially in Oriental provinces and in those at the frontier. Some of the attestations of Jupiter Dolichenus in the Danubian provinces can be put down to the civil element (in major economic centers) or the Syrian military element¹³⁵. It is considered that the penetration of Jupiter Dolichenus in this area is due exclusively to the Commagenians' units¹³⁶.

¹¹⁹ AE 1903, 66 = IDR III 3, 46 (n. 99).

¹²⁰ CIL III 1379 = IDR III 3, 58.

¹²¹ See note 128 – Turmazgades, and he probably also appeared in the dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus (AE 1911, 35 = IDR III 3, 67). Cf. PME, A 165.

¹²² CIL III 1374 = IDR III 3, 45; AE 1903, 67 = IDR III 3, 68.

¹²³ CIL III 7855 = IDR III 3, 109; PME, I 24.

¹²⁴ CIL III 7848 = IDR III 3, 78; CIL III 7849 = IDR III 3, 79. Cf. PME, P 24. See also IDR III 3, 151.

¹²⁵ Family name established by I. I. Russu - IDR III 3, 63. Erroneous in AE 1977, 706 and PME A 113: *P. Ampiu[s] Ruffinus*.

¹²⁶ CIL III 1619 = 7854 = IDR III 3, 108. He must have been a *praefectus* in 160-170, because in 180 the same person was attested as governor of the three Daciae (AE 1920, 45; Piso 1993, p. 131-137, n° 26; IDRE II 427; Petolescu 2002, p. 98 note 14 – *Thurburbo Maius*).

¹²⁷ See note 96.

¹²⁸ *M. [...]* – AE 1911, 35 = IDR III 3, 67; *ignotus* - CIL III 1343 = AE 1978, 705 = IDR III 3, 77.

¹²⁹ CIL III 1347 = 7850 = IDR III 3, 88.

¹³⁰ CIL III 7873 + 13773 = IDR III 3, 177. According to some authors, a former centurion of this unit was mentioned in a funerary inscription from *Sucidava*, the respective unit is still unknown (D. Tudor, *Câteva descoperiri din Dacia Inferioară*, AISC 2, 1933-1935, p. 190-191, n° 14. For other opinion see I. I. Russu, *Despre inscripțiile antice ale Olteniei și Munteniei (În legătură cu Inscriptiile Daciei Romane II)*, Drobeta 3, 1978, p. 192 and C. C. Petolescu, ILD 113 = IDR II 205.

¹³¹ See note 117.

¹³² AE 1971, 399 = IDR III 3, 111.

¹³³ CIL III 12569 = IDR III 3, 175. According to I. I. Russu (*Note epigrafice*, SCIV 18, 1967, 1, p. 170-171, n° 4), this person can be identical with *Aur(elius) Dionisius cur(ator)*, who dedicated an inscription to *Genius Turmazgada*.

¹³⁴ CIL III 6267 = IDR III 3, 166. C. C. Petolescu (Petolescu 1995, p. 251 note 477) argues that this cognomen was rectified unjustifiedly *Ma(t?)urus* (IDR III 3, 166).

¹³⁵ Nemeti 2005, p. 232.

¹³⁶ C. C. Petolescu, *Dacia și fenomenul oriental. Studiu introductiv*, in R. Turcan, *Culte orientale în lumea romană*, București 1998, p. 8.

Four inscriptions were found for Jupiter¹³⁷, and two for Dolichenus¹³⁸ in *interpretatio Romana*, from which in one case he has the surname Commagenus. Two inscriptions of this unit record Turmazgades as Jupiter Turmazgades, respectively Genius Turmazgades¹³⁹. The following are mentioned in one inscription each: Mercury¹⁴⁰, Hercules¹⁴¹, Liber Pater¹⁴², Mars Gradivus¹⁴³, Fortuna¹⁴⁴, Minerva¹⁴⁵ and Diana¹⁴⁶.

Only two inscriptions of the 14 votive inscriptions belonging to the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* from *Micia* are dedicated to him. We would have certainly expected for the attestations of Dolichenus to be more numerous at *Micia*, considering that this fortification had been the Commagenian unit's garrison for a remarkable chronological interval. Several divinities originating from Syria have been attested at *Micia*, namely Jupiter Dolichenus and Jupiter Turmazgades, Jupiter Hierapolitanus¹⁴⁷, Jupiter Heliopolitanus. To what extent can we put this down exclusively to the Commagenians unit? The only thing we know for sure is that they brought Turmazgades to light¹⁴⁸.

A group of inscriptions from *Ampelum* was connected to a *vexillatio* from the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* transferred for the protection of auriferous areas¹⁴⁹. Out of a group of six, three dedications were for: *Deus Aeternus Commag(enorum) Dulc(enus)*¹⁵⁰, *I(upiter) O(ptimus) M(aximo) Commagenorum [A]eternus*¹⁵¹ and *I(upiter) O(ptimus) M(aximus) D(olichenus) et Deus Commacenus*¹⁵². Katalin B. Angyal and Lajos Balla consider *Deus Commagenus* a divinity different from Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus and from Aeternus, namely a „reissue” of Baal from Doliche¹⁵³. Some authors considered that these dedications should be connected to civil elements, related to cultural, eventually commercial activities, taking into account the fact that the three persons mentioned are *sacerdotes*¹⁵⁴. There used to be a temple of Jupiter Dolichenus in *Ampelum*¹⁵⁵, where,

¹³⁷ CIL III 1343 = AE 1978, 705 = IDR III 3, 77; CIL III 7848 = IDR III 3, 78; CIL III 7849 = IDR III 3, 79; CIL III 1347 = 7850; IDR III 388.

¹³⁸ AE 1911, 35 = IDR III 3, 67; Floca 1953, p. 762-763, n° 6, fig. 7 = IDR III 3, 66.

¹³⁹ AE 1903, 65; ILS 9273 = IDR III 3, 138; CIL III 1338 = ILS 4047a = IDR III 3, 139.

¹⁴⁰ CIL III 7855 = IDR III 3, 109.

¹⁴¹ ILD 306: the most recent discussion; IDR III 3, 130 (Silvanus Domesticus).

¹⁴² CIL III 1355 = IDR III 3, 105.

¹⁴³ CIL III 1619 = 7854 = IDR III 3, 108.

¹⁴⁴ CIL III 1374 = IDR III 3, 68.

¹⁴⁵ AE 1971, 399 = IDR III 3, 111.

¹⁴⁶ AE 1975, 706 = IDR III 3, 63.

¹⁴⁷ IDR III 3, 97; for the description of the discovery and interpretation conditions, see Adriana Rusu – Pescaru – Alicu, Deva 2000, p. 77. Sorin Nemeti (Nemeti 2005, p. 242-243) argues that a temple of Dolichenus must have existed here, a temple belonging to Commagenian soldiers in which Turmazgades and Heliopolitanus would have been hosted, as well as a temple of the goddess Dea Syria and of Turmazgades.

¹⁴⁸ Țentea 2007, p. 213. See also the inscription from *Romula* dedicated to *Turmazgada* by Maximus Maximinus and Iulianus Maximinus (CIL III 8027 = IDR II 340).

¹⁴⁹ Popa, Berciu 1978, p. 11-15, n° 9-11; Petolescu 1995, p. 252 note 489.

¹⁵⁰ CIL III 7832 = IDR III 3, 296 = Balla 2000, p. 69, n° 3.

¹⁵¹ CIL III 1301a = 7834 = ILS 4298 = IDR III 3, 298 = Balla 2000, p. 70, n° 4.

¹⁵² CIL III 1301b = 7835 = ILS 4299 = IDR III 3, 299 = Balla 2000, p. 70, n° 5.

¹⁵³ Balla 2000, p. 63-72, and the entire demonstration. For a brief review of other opinions, see Nemeti 2005, p. 287 note 306.

¹⁵⁴ M. Popescu, *La religion dans l'armée romaine de la Dacie*, Bucharest 2004, p. 138; Atalia Ștefănescu, *Deus Commagenus, a new deity in the pantheon of Roman Dacia*, *Studia historica et archaeologica in honorem magistrae Doina Benea* (eds. Mariana Crînguș, Simona Regep-Vlasici, Atalia Ștefănescu), Timișoara 2004, p. 373-378; Nemeti 2005, p. 288. A fragment of a tegular stamp from *Ampelum* can reopen the discussion on the presence of this unit in this locality or the transportation of tegular material bearing the unit's stamp. Its reading was restituted by the author of the discovery as follows: *IIII FL* (I. T. Lipovan, *Monumente epigrafice din Ampelum (I)*, SCIVA 39, 1988, 1, p. 68-69, fig. 6/2 a-b. See also C. C. Petolescu, *Cronica epigrafică a României, VIII (1988)*, SCIVA 40, 1989, 4, p. 490; AE 1988, 961 b). C. C. Petolescu considers as probable the reading: *[Leg.] IIII FF* (ILD 349); under

according to Sorin Nemeti, oriental priests elaborated by adjunction to Deus Aeternus, a new conception of the Commagenian divinity considered to be eternal¹⁵⁶.

A similar problem is raised by the dedication to Jupiter Commagenus on the altar discovered at Săcădate (Sibiu)¹⁵⁷. Just like in the case of the attestations at *Ampelum*, the dedication does not represent the proof for the existence of any Commagenian vexillation or of any members of one in the settlement.

The answer to the question whether these cohorts were promoters par excellence of the cults originating from the kingdom of *Commagene* into the province of Dacia would be an appeal for prudence in formulating general conclusions, in, for instance, discussions on the penetration of oriental cults into the western part of the Empire¹⁵⁸. On the basis of the brief presentation above, we can argue that these units' soldiers made a clear contribution to the spreading of these cults, but they were not their only promoters¹⁵⁹.

The weapons of Commagenian cohorts in Dacia

Sagittarii units were introduced in the Roman army under the pressure of enemies requiring a different tactical approach. The *sagittarii* are mentioned for the first time in the army of Scipio the African. In spite of their early entry in the Roman army, their integration and constitution into regular units was completed in the times of the Principate, therefore the presence of words like *sagittaria*, *sagittariorum* in the entitling of a unit indicated the weapon that was specific to that respective unit¹⁶⁰.

The looks and equipment of oriental archers are represented by "levantine" clothing, as depicted on Trajan's column: an ankle-long tunic, worn underneath a shirt with short sleeves and a *lorica squamata* on top, and a conical helmet on the head, which was atypical for the Roman army. The arrow quiver was worn on the back in the case of pedestrian archers, and around the waist, in the case of those on horseback¹⁶¹.

Naturally, once they entered the Roman army, these auxiliaries underwent strong "Romanising" influences in all aspects of spiritual or material life, and implicitly in what

these circumstances, this would be the northernmost attestation of tegular material of the legion in Dacia (C. H. Opreanu, *Activitatea constructivă a legiunii IIII Flavia Felix la nordul Dunării, în anii 101-117 d. Chr.*, Dacia Augusti Provincia, p. 52, fig. 1). If the reading of the respective stamp were restituted as *[Co]H II FL*, the aforementioned inscriptions could be seen in a new light. Until recently, the tegular attestations of the cohors II Flavia Commagenorum were recorded only at *Micia*. The discovery of this unit's stamps at Cladova (see note 114), places in a totally new context the discussions regarding the diffusion of the tegular material bearing this unit's stamp. Therefore, in *Ampelum*, just like in Cladova, we could be dealing with the attestation of the cohors II Flavia Commagenorum!

¹⁵⁵ Adriana Rusu-Pescaru, D. Alicu, p. 154.

¹⁵⁶ Nemeti 2005, p. 288.

¹⁵⁷ IDR III 4, 86.

¹⁵⁸ Tentea 2007, p. 215-216.

¹⁵⁹ The names *Surus* and *Sura* attested at *Micia* in two inscriptions can have an ethnic meaning, but no connection can be established between these persons and the Commagenian unit stationed here (Russu 1969, p. 179; Sanie 1981, p. 220 sqq.). Two dedications to *Dea Syria* (CIL III 7864 = IDR III 3, 136) and Jupiter (CIL III 1348 = 7851 = IDR III 3, 91) from the same M. Ulpius Phoebus indicate the presence here at *Micia* of a person probably originating from the Orient, whose past might have been connected to the Commagenian cohort's activity. The following dedications are in the same situation: that of Iulius Trophimus to Jupiter Dolichenus Commagenus (IDR III 3, 66) and that of Casius Rufus to Jupiter Erapolitanus (Hierapolitanus), discovered in the ruins of a temple attributed to this divinity (Floca 1953, p. 773-784; AE 1952, 196 = IDR III 3, 97).

¹⁶⁰ See the weaponry from *Numantia* published by Groller 1901, p. 85-132; Iulius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VII 31. For synthetic presentations of the archers' units' evolution from the Republican times up to the Principate, see: Feugère 1993, p. 211; M. C. Bishop, J. C. N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment from The Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, London 1993, p. 55, fig. 25 (second edition, 2006, p. 58, fig. 27).

¹⁶¹ Zanier 1988, p. 7; Coulston 1985, fig. 29, 30, 33; Dixon, Southern 1992, p. 57, fig. 23.

the military equipment was concerned. They gradually gave up their traditional conical helmets, for the simple reason that these helmets were not produced anymore by Roman workshops in the second half of the IInd century A.D., when they disappeared completely. As for offensive weaponry, these auxiliaries had to adopt some weapons atypical for their specialization as well, firstly for tactical reasons, related to their adapting to the Roman army standards. Therefore, they gave up their traditional *bipennis* in favor of the Roman sword, sometimes receiving also light spears to defend themselves in case the enemy took them by surprise¹⁶². An armor was imposed to those to whom the armor was not specific, due to the fact that they could not wear shields¹⁶³.

It seems that the stationing of a unit of Syrian archers can be attested archaeologically, especially when offensive weaponry is analyzed, and only within a chronological interval. In what the military equipment is concerned, particularities specific to its provenience area can be noted quite sporadically. An extremely relevant example in this respect is represented by the fortress in Straubing, where the *cohors I Flavia Canathenorum milliaria equitata sagittaria* was stationed after 125 A.D.¹⁶⁴. The equipment items belonging to the soldiers of this unit preserve the aforementioned particularities only in a few cases; they are otherwise extremely standardized¹⁶⁵. It is under these circumstances that the situation of the units of Syrian archers in the army in Dacia must be analyzed.

Trilobate arrows have been spread in the entire Empire, just like the composite bow, by oriental archers, at least in the early imperial age – although they are pretty different in shape, dimensions and processing standard¹⁶⁶. Like most launching weapons, arrowheads are not highly datable artifacts, typological information being significant only if the context in which the discovery was made and implicitly the dating elements are known.

Discoveries in Dacia provide the following broad picture:

Trilobate arrowheads have been discovered especially in the fortresses in which units of Syrian archers were stationed: *Porolissum*¹⁶⁷, *Tibiscum*¹⁶⁸, *Micia*¹⁶⁹, Jidava, *Aru-tela*¹⁷⁰, Urluieni (unidentified unit)¹⁷¹.

Ear laths have been discovered in auxiliary fortresses at *Micia*¹⁷², *Tibiscum*¹⁷³, *Romita*¹⁷⁴, Cristești¹⁷⁵, Urluieni¹⁷⁶, three such pieces have been recorded at *Apulum*¹⁷⁷.

¹⁶² Dixon, Southern 1992, p. 77.

¹⁶³ Vegetius 1.20; 2.15.

¹⁶⁴ Spaul 2000, p. 433 for a brief history of the unit.

¹⁶⁵ Walke 1965; Keim, Klumbach 1976; Prammer 1989.

¹⁶⁶ Coulston 1985, p. 264; Zanier 1988, p. 5-27.

¹⁶⁷ Gudea 1989, p. 990 pl. CXXXI/9-11; Gudea 1996, p. 235-239, pl. LVI, LVII; N. Gudea, *Sagittarii Porolissenses și armele lor. 1*, Fontes Historiae. Studia in honorem Demetrii Protase (ed. C. Gaiu, C. Găzdac), Cluj-Napoca 2006, p. 409-411, fig. 9-11.

¹⁶⁸ Bona, Petrovsky, Petrovsky 1983, p. 412; M. S. Petrescu, *Piese de armament descoperite în castrul de la Tibiscum I*, AMN 22-23, 1985-1986, p. 522, pl. III/1-7.

¹⁶⁹ Petculescu 2002, p. 770, fig. 6/102-105.

¹⁷⁰ Vlădescu 1983, p. 177, fig. 113 = Vlădescu 1974-1975, p. 42, fig. 16.

¹⁷¹ Bogdan Cătănciu 1994, p. 321, 347, fig. 4/2, 13.

¹⁷² Petculescu 2002, p. 768-769, fig. 1-4.

¹⁷³ Bona, Petrovsky, Petrovsky 1983, p. 417, pl. XI/1, 2, 11; Petrescu, Rogozea 1990, p. 117, pl. XI/5; Benea 1983, fig. II/2.

¹⁷⁴ Al. V. Matei, I. Bajusz, *Castrul roman de la Romita-Certiae. Das Römergrenzkastell von Romita-Certiae*, Zalău 1997, p. 129, pl. 82/1.

¹⁷⁵ Petică, Zrinyi 2000, p. 127, nr. 41.

¹⁷⁶ Bogdan Cătănciu, 1994, fig. 14 a.

¹⁷⁷ Daniela Ciugudean, *Obiecte din os, corn și fildeș de la Apulum, Alba Iulia*, 1997, pl. XXX/2-4. Analogies for legionary fortresses: *Carnuntum* (Groller 1901, p. 131 pl. 24; Mathilde Grünewald,

Thirteen trilobate arrowheads have been found in the fortress at *Micia*, but there is no dating element¹⁷⁸. In the center of the fort was excavated a store dated around 106-170 containing a significant number of bow laths, bone arrow nocks and antler debris or waster. Two pieces are of bone and the rest of antler. None of the finished ear laths is entirely preserved. All are broken, many of them were burnt together with the building¹⁷⁹. The first mention that must be made is the fact that we are definitely in the presence of a workshop that was producing composite bows, which stands for a unique case in the entire Empire. The mention refers to the shape and dimensions of ear laths. Most of them have a rounded head (some have an angular head), some of them are shorter and more strongly arched, and others are straighter and wider. The latter were undoubtedly much longer. The storage place from *Intercisa*¹⁸⁰ provides better analogies, as the only undamaged pieces found in the entire Empire were preserved there. The ear laths that were longer, wider, with less curved braces connected to bows having a wide span between the two ends are described as belonging to pedestrian archers¹⁸¹, whereas smaller and less curved braces belonged to much smaller bows, like in the descriptions of bows belonging to archers on horseback and as per the sculptural representations or the mosaics from Apamea Syriae¹⁸². It is very likely for the arrowheads and the bow pieces discovered in the fort at *Micia* to have belonged to the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum sagittariorum equitata*.

Four hundred arrowheads were discovered in the *armamentarium* of the fort at Jidava¹⁸³, this being the biggest weapon storage room discovered in Roman Dacia so far. The constructive phase of the principia in Jidava, to which the *armamentarium* under discussion was attached, can be correlated to the level of the barracks researched in the '80s, in the pavement of which was identified the brick bearing the signature of a soldier in the Commagenians' cohort¹⁸⁴. Therefore, it is quite probable for the arrows deposit to correspond to the period in which the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* was stationed in this fort, as this unit was stationed at Jidava at least until the first half of the IIIrd century¹⁸⁵.

The constitution of these units cannot be connected *stricto sensu* to the year in which the *Commagene* kingdom was conquered. The two cohorts were dislocated in the proximity of Dacia, probably during the reign of Domitian, perhaps taking part in Trajan's Dacian campaigns on two different fronts, their history being also determined by two different spaces in the province of Dacia.

From what we can understand on the basis of epigraphic sources, especially those in *Micia*, the religion of the soldiers that made up these units does not differ sensibly from the more well-known cases of other auxiliary units in the Empire. Obviously, it cannot be argued that these units promoted Dolichenus in any special way, but it is certain that Commagenians soldiers made Turmazgades well-known.

Keramik und Kleinfunde des Legionärs-lagers von Carnuntum (Grabungen 1976-1977) RLÖ 34, Wien, 1986, Taf. 13/6-8). The discovery of these pieces in legionary fortresses must be connected to the Vegetian precepts, according to which one third of the legionaries had to know how to string an arrow (Davies 1977, p. 265-286). In some cases, much scarcer, some *sagittarii* vexillations could have been attached to legionary bodies.

¹⁷⁸ Petculescu 2002, p. 770, fig. 6/102-105.

¹⁷⁹ Petculescu 2002, p. 765, 768-769, fig. 2-4, 5/53, 64, 65.

¹⁸⁰ Agnes Salamon, *Csontmühely Intercisában*, AÉrt 103.2, 1976, p. 209, fig. 1.

¹⁸¹ Coulston 1985, p. 245-246

¹⁸² Dixon, Southern 1992, p. 53.

¹⁸³ Popescu, Popescu 1970, p. 257, fig. 12/2 – only three arrowheads were published in the preliminary excavation report, the others are unpublished.

¹⁸⁴ See note 69.

¹⁸⁵ See note 77.

Numerous arrowheads and bow pieces specific to *sagittarii* units were identified archaeologically both in Micia and in Jidava.

The stationing of these units in Dacia is documented both epigraphically and archaeologically for an extremely broad chronological interval beginning with conquest campaigns till the last moments of the province's existence.

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