

IN REGARD TO A POSSIBLE ABANDONMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF DACIA UNDER GALLIENUS

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Abstract: One of the most disputed issues in the Romanian specialty literature and largely, unresolved, is that of the partial abandonment of the province of Dacia as early as the rule of emperor Gallienus. Such information is recorded with several classical authors of the Late Roman period, like *Historia Augusta*, Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Rufius Festus and later, in the 6th century, Jordanes in ...*Dacia amissa*¹.

This paper proposes a solution in this case, namely, the establishment of the mobile cavalry of Gallienus, which played an important role in preserving the Roman Empire's integrity, among the cavalry auxiliary troops in Dacia. It counted a number of 10 *alae* and 8 *numeri*, with cavalry strength amounting to ca. 8500-11000 soldiers. The mobile cavalry set up by Gallienus, most likely in AD 258, was commanded for approximately 10 years by general Aureolus, officer of Dacian origin, which was likely not by accident.

Keywords: Gallienus; mobile cavalry; Aureolus; military reforms; Dacia.

Rezumat: Una din problemele mult disputate în literatura de specialitate românească și, în bună măsură, neelucidată, o reprezintă aceea a unei părăsiri parțiale a provinciei Dacia încă din timpul împăratului Gallienus. O astfel de informație apare la mai mulți scriitori antici din epoca romană târzie, precum *Historia Augusta*, Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Rufius Festus și apoi, în secolul VI, la Iordanes cu ...*Dacia amissa*².

Lucrarea de față propune o soluție în acest caz și anume formarea din trupele auxiliare de cavalerie din Dacia a cavaleriei mobile a lui Gallienus, care a deținut un rol important în păstrarea integrității Imperiului Roman. Este vorba de un număr de 10 *alae* și 8 *numeri*, cu efective de cavalerie care însumează cca. 8500-11000 de soldați. Cavaleria mobilă înființată de Gallienus, probabil în anul 258 p. Chr., a avut în fruntea ei cca. 10 ani pe generalul Aureolus, ofițer de origine dacică, fapt probabil neîntâmplător pentru această unitate.

Cuvinte cheie: Gallienus; cavaleria mobilă; Aureolus; reforme militare; Dacia.

One of the most disputed issues in the Romanian specialty literature, and largely, unresolved, is that of the partial abandonment of the province of Dacia as early as the

¹ Eutropius 9, 8, 1: ...*Dacia quae a Traiano ultra Danubium fuerat adiecta tum amissa est.*; Rufius Festus 8, 42 ... *sed sub Gallieno imperatore amissa est et per Aurelianus, translatis exinde Romanis duae Daciae in regionibus Moesiae ac Dardaniae factae sunt*; Aurelius Victor 33, 3: *et amissa trans Istrum, quae Traianus quaesiverat.*...; Jordanes, 217 ...*Sed Gallienus eos dum regnaret amissit Aurelianusque imperator evocatis extinde legionibus in Mysia conlocavit ibique aliquam partem Daciam mediterranean Daciamque ripensem constituit et Dardanium iunxit.*...

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rule of emperor Gallienus. Such information is reported by several classical authors of the Late Roman period, like *Historia Augusta*, Aurelius Victor, Eutropius, Rufius Festus and later, in the 6th century, Jordanes³.

The information in the literary sources must have been somewhat true, mirroring a difficult time in the existence of the province of Dacia that resulted in the use of the mentioned phrases at the scale of the whole Empire⁴.

According to the literary information only, this would be explained by the withdrawal of certain military units from the province, thus giving the impression within the Empire of the date that the province of Dacia was lost by the Romans. Any explanation or attempt to clarify *Dacia amissa* under Gallienus is hard to find, since later, under Aurelian, literary sources provide much more accurate information on the province's abandonment by the Roman administration and army.

Archaeological information on the south-eastern corner of Roman Dacia and in general, for the east of the province, where it seems that archaeological evidence for the last years of the province is missing, would account for a lack of certain Roman military units in former forts. Mainly, these are the forts located in the eastern part of Dacia Apulensis and Dacia Malvensis: Brâncovenești, Călugăreni, Sărățeni, Inlăceni, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Sânpaul, Olteni, Brețcu etc. However, this may be principally due to deficiencies in the systematic archaeological research of the mentioned sectors of Roman frontier.

On the other hand, from a numismatic view, relatively few coin hoards are known for the period of AD 253-268, namely the five deposits of which two at Olteni (Vâlcea county) and Goleț (Caraș Severin county), ending with coins from the joint reign of Gallienus and Valerianus (hence, up to 260), and other three found at Apulum (II, IV), respectively Aiud, dated by coins ending in AD 260-268⁵.

In a 1979- study, subsequent the analysis of the entire documentary potential (provided by literary sources, coin and archaeological finds), H. Daicoviciu reached the ingenious conclusion that at a certain point, Gallienus lost control of Dacia⁶. According to the said author, there would have been two main causes to the event: either a devastating Barbarian attack on the province, or a revolt of the province army, which proclaimed its own generals as usurpers (?).

E. Cizek, resuming the analysis of the ancient texts noted that two distinct historical traditions were in place in the Antiquity with regards to the abandonment of Dacia by the Romans. The first, maintained by Aurelius Victor, reported the event under Gallienus, while the second, recorded in *Enmann's Kaisergeschichte* and assigned to Aurelian⁷.

³ Eutropius 9, 8: *Dacia quae a Traiano ultra Danuvii fuerat adiecta tum amissa est.*; Rufius Festus 8, 4: *...sub Gallieno imperatore amissa est et per Aurelianus, translatis exinde Romanis duae Daciae in regionibus Moesiae ac Dardaniae factae sunt*; Aurelius Victor 33, 3: *...amissa trans Istrum, quae Traianus quaesiverat.*; Jordanes, 217...*sed Gallienus eos dum regnaret amissit.*

⁴ See ancient texts in note 2.

⁵ Suciú 2000, 145; C. Găzduc underlines the decrease of the monetary circulation under Gallienus (between 260-268) as the result of a poor coin supply of the province of Dacia (Găzduc 2002, 97, note 793 with respective bibliography). Circumstances in Raetia, at *Agri Decumates* are similar.

⁶ Daicoviciu 1980, 651-660.

⁷ Cizek 1986, 150-156. *Enmann's Kaisergeschichte* is assigned to the period of Emperor Constantine.

C. C. Petolescu assigned the time leading to the belief of the Roman public opinion that Dacia would have been lost⁸ subsequently to the Gothic invasion of 267, noticed for several destruction levels in a few Roman forts in Oltenia, alike Bumbăști, Drobeta and Slăveni.

C. Oprean, in a study published some time ago, attempted to explain a possible abandonment of Dacia by the withdrawal of Roman expeditionary forces to other fronts, given that the internal crisis of the Roman state was under full development⁹. Partly, it is possible these vexillations no longer returned to Dacia, the author argues - which worsened the military situation in this sector. Such reasoning appears likely, although only a few available epigraphic data confirm that certain troops from Dacia were displaced to other fronts.

D. Protase, in the last volume of the first edition of "Istoria Românilor", appreciated the situation in Dacia under Gallienus via the mentions on *Tabula Peutingeriana*, where the eastern and south-eastern parts of the province are missing, which would support the assumption that this part of the Dacian territory was abandoned sometime between 259 and 260¹⁰.

References to circumstances in Dacia under Gallienus emerge in several Romanian specialty works; however it is not our intention herein to make a general inventory, rather to consider certain military aspects concerning the situation of the troops in the province¹¹. Concurrently, we shall attempt to chronologically follow the situation of the European part of the Roman Empire, especially the provinces bordering Dacia.

From 254, the Barbarian tribes in the north of the Black Sea area directed their attacks to the Aegean space and avoided to further attack the provinces by the Lower Danube, much damaged by previous attacks and likely, impoverished. Therefore, Dacia was not directly involved in such events. Still, danger engaging southern Balkans and Minor Asia made emperor Gallienus establish the headquarters at Sirmium in 254, in the attempt to run from there all efforts for the defence of the provinces hit hard especially by the attacks of the Goths, but also of the Marcomanni on Mid Danube. The emperor would remain there until 257. It is likely that it was then when a vexillation of XIII Gemina was displaced to Sirmium, as recorded on a limestone block found in 1972 inside the northern enclosure of the fortification. The stone inscription read: LEG XIII GEM PVC¹².

⁸ Petolescu 2000, 292; the idea was also defended in the synthesis dedicated to the history of the province of Dacia in 1995, with a more detailed argumentation that comprised in addition the known ancient literary sources (Petolescu 1995, 122-126.)

⁹ Oprean 1999-2000, 393-406.

¹⁰ Protase 2001, 264-265, dates this survey record between 251 and 271. The lack from the map of certain territories east the Rhine is deemed argument in favour to such dating. Recent research of the document supports its dating to the Late Roman period, under Theodosius II most likely (see Benea 2001, 285-300, with references to that date).

¹¹ Ruscu 2000, 272-273, presents the issue in question of the period of Gallienus with the same results as we obtained in our work of 1996, the Introductory Chapter, however actually not mentioned; Madgearu 2008 for instance, concerning the same period of Gallienus, makes no effective contributions, but rather presents a chaotic account, oscillating between various provinces and without following the chronological evolution of the events between 253-268.

¹² AE 1990, 855, Sirmium: the last three letters, interpreted either as imperial epithets *pia vindex*

During 254-257, the central power tries to set up an in-depth defensive designed to ensure the protection of the European provinces on the Rhine and the Danube, but especially the defence of Italy, as centre of the Imperial power.

On 256-257 coins, the two legions in Dacia appear with titles *pia* and *fidelis* as loyal to emperor Gallienus¹³.

Shortly after, possibly even in 256 or early the following year, Gallienus headed to the Rhine area to reject other attacks of the German tribes. Subsequently, Gallienus would carry out a few measures meant to balance the military effort at central power level, much upset by internal dissent. Concurrently, in 257, Gallienus holds the title *Dacicus Maximus*, either an indication of a military event against the free Dacians unknown to us insofar or a result of the imperial propaganda.

Among the imperial coins issued for legions loyal to Gallienus, those concerning V Macedonica and XIII Gemina recorded with titles VI P, VI F date to 258¹⁴. Those with imperial titles VII P and VII F, which the other legions receive¹⁵ and dated to 259, are though missing. This would account for the first stage of the joint reign of Gallienus and Valerianus, when the massive usurper proclamations in various European provinces had not occurred yet. However, the Empire leadership was confronted with the large scale attacks of the German tribes along the European provinces.

Instead, a few years later, respectively in 268, certain golden coins (*aurei*) issued for usurper Victorinus in Gallia, one of Postumus's successors after his slain, record the two legions in Dacia, *V Macedonica* and *XIII Gemina*¹⁶ among the legions loyal to this usurper, namely *I Minervia*, *II Traiana*, *III Gallica*, *X Fretensis*, *XIV Gemina*, *XX Valeria Victrix*, *XXII Primigenia* and *XXX Ulpia*. In general, the modern literature supposed that these coin issues would represent an element of imperial propaganda just after Gallienus's death, for the new usurper of Gaul.

Epigraphically, there is currently no information concerning the involvement of certain troops from Dacia in imperial campaigns outside the province. After 258, epigraphic information dated for the province of Dacia is missing. This may represent the time when, in the following years of Gallienus's reign, important changes occurring in the north-Danubian province would leave the impression, at the scale of the Empire, that the province was lost. Or, as accurately noted by H. Daicovicu a long time ago, of the loss of control over Dacia.

The analysis of the entire documentary material on the rule of Gallienus in general, compels us to formulate a possible working hypothesis insofar supported by some data. Accordingly, we believe that a significant military reform was implemented, resulting in the establishment of a central cavalry expeditionary corps, able to move swiftly from one area to another, depending to the necessities of the moment.

constans, or as *p(edes) v(alli) c(entum)*, signifying the enclosure portion built by the respective unit, which is more likely.

¹³ Fitz 1966, 363-365.

¹⁴ RIC, V/1, 1927, 92-97.

¹⁵ Fitz 1966, 363-365 argued that in this case, the legions in Dacia would have supported the revolt of Regalianus, thus being no longer listed among troops loyal to the central power.

¹⁶ Ritterling 1924, s.v. *Legio*, col. 1344.

It was set up on several echelons distributed to several centres deemed important in the defence of the part of the Empire which remained loyal to emperor Gallienus. They are mentioned epigraphically at Aquincum, Sirmium, Lichnidus and Poetovio.

To this effect, four powerful military centres, reuniting several troops designed to constitute a second defence echelon within the Empire are established from legion vexillations from several provinces. They are grouped as follows:

Sirmium (for the safety of provinces Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior, Dacia and Pannonia Inferior): vexillations of the legions in the two provinces of Germania and the two provinces of Britannia with their *auxilia*¹⁷;

Aquincum (for the defence of the Pannonias): legion vexillations from provinces Germania: *VIII Augusta, XXII Primigenia, I Minervia, XXX Ulpia*;

Poetovio (for the protection of Italy): vexillations of six legions of which four from Pannonia and the two of Dacia - *XIII Gemina* and *V Macedonica*;

Lichnidus (Macedonia): vexillations of legions *II Parthica, III Augusta* under the command of Aurelius Augustianus¹⁸, for the defence of the Balkan and possibly Minor Asian provinces.

The known epigraphic material allows a single remark, namely that certain legion vexillations were displaced far from their garrisons in their provinces, like those from Germania and Britannia to Sirmium and Aquincum, and those from Dacia, precisely at Poetovio. Their stationing in those locations extended for a while. Thus, at Poetovio, several inscriptions mention there a vexillation formed of *XIII Gemina* and *V Macedonica*¹⁹ units. Four votive inscriptions (of which only one preserves clear the invocation to Mithras) record military elements coming from among certain *principales*, part of the *officium praepositi* accompanying respective vexillation led by *Flavius Aper*. The detailed mention of some of the soldiers forming the legion records office, *canalicularii, actarii, codicarii et librarii* in the two legions supports the fact that the unit had a significant strength, which in fact led to their involvement in this campaign. Inscriptions date between 260 and 268²⁰. Their dispatch to Poetovio was designed, among other, for the preparation of a campaign against usurper Postumus²¹.

In fact, vexillations of the four legions of Pannonia²² were located at Poetovio in the same period still, which supposes a massive concentration of troops for the Empire defence in this sector.

¹⁷ CIL III 3228; Saxer 1968, 55.

¹⁸ AE 1934, 193; Saxer 1968, 55-56.

¹⁹ AE 1936, 54, Poetovio: *D(eo) S(oli) I(nvicto) M(ithare) / pro sal(ute) officialium Apri prae/positi leg(ionum) V M(acedonicae) et XIII Gem(inae) Galli(eniarum)*; AE, 1936, no. 57: */...pro salute.../leg(ionum) V M(acedonicae) et XII/I G (eminae) G(allienarum) (sic!)/Fl(avius) Aper (vir) e(gregius)/pra/positus*; AE, 1936, 55: */pro salute/ tesserarior(um) et custod(um) ar/mor(um) leg(ionum) V M(acedonicae) /et XIII Gemin(a)e/ Gallienarum (sic!)*; AE, 1936, 56: */pro /sa/lute canaclari(i) et actariorum /et codicarior(um) et librariorum leg(ionum) V M(acedonicae) et XIII G(eminae) Gallienarum (sic!)*.

²⁰ Saxer 1968, 56-57.

²¹ Saxer 1968, 57.

²² AE 1934, 223; Saxer 1968, 57 appreciates they were present sometime in the second half of the 3rd century, without direct connection to the presence of the two units from the Dacian legions.

The military reform was initiated by Gallienus in 258/259 by the extension of legion cavalry echelons from 120 horsemen to 726²³, to which added units from auxiliary troops of the type.

The emergence of the four military centres was due to the foreign critical situation on Rhine and Danube borders and especially, to the relentless German barbarian incursions, reaching even north Italy. This is completed by the emergence, in the area believed as loyal to Gallienus, of certain generals later proclaimed emperors, against whom the same troops had to intervene.

Zosimus, one of the few classical authors with a relatively positive view on Gallienus's rule, reports that the establishment of the cavalry was a wise tactical move of the emperor, at a time the German hordes prepared to cross the Rhine²⁴.

R. Saxer, in his study of the Roman vexillations during the Principate, assumed that mobile cavalry detachments were raised from among cavalry auxiliary troops and transformed into distinct cavalry units, which had nothing in common with the former echelons²⁵. They were named according to the basic ethnicity, like for instance, *equites Mauri*, *equites Dalmatae* etc., the only mentioned by literary sources²⁶. The origin of these troops is unknown. Were they selected from all the provinces of the Empire or only from those provinces directly subordinated to Gallienus and loyal to him, in the European parts of the Empire, territory which he received upon the division of the Empire for administration together with his father?

Therefore, under the given circumstances of multiple difficulties, the emperor likely could choose only from among the troops in the provinces loyal to him, especially those in the European part of the Empire.

Since in 258, Gallia, Britannia, Pannonia had proclaimed several throne pretenders, the only area loyal to him at that date was that of the provinces by the Lower Danube (Thracia, Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior and Dacia). Nonetheless, during Gallienus's rule, in Dacia there is neither any known usurper nor any obedience to other pretenders to the imperial throne proclaimed in Pannonia or Moesia, although this may be supposed.

The only province with intact military strength was the province of Dacia, which, by its position, was isolated in the middle of the Barbarian world in constant movement. It was provided with two legions and numerous auxiliaries.

This does not mean that Dacia was entirely deprived of troops; possibly, small detachments of XIII Gemina supplied the lack of original *auxilia* units. Discussed troops reach almost 9 000 horsemen²⁷, which is approximately the entire corps strength, appreciated to ca. 10 000 *equites*.

The mobile army included units from the auxiliary troops, especially from cavalry troops. The withdrawal of certain auxiliary troops from Dacia and subsequent defence limited to infantry troops remaining in certain fortifications, might have led to a

²³ Vegetius *Epit.*, II, 7.

²⁴ Zosimus, I, 30; Blois 1976, 27-28.

²⁵ Saxer 1967, 125.

²⁶ Tudor 1974, 286.

²⁷ Benea 2010, 643-648.

special situation in the province defence, hence the view of the Late Roman historiography that Dacia was abandoned, in the sense that control over the province was lost.

Direct information on the takeover of auxiliary troops units from Dacia into the campaign army is currently inexistent. However, an information provided by *Historia Augusta*²⁸ in the biography of usurper Aureolus would be worthy of note. Aureolus originally held the title of *dux Illyrici*, as such leading the troops from the entire Balkan area, including those in Dacia²⁹. This means that during Aureolus's command over Illyricum, until his transfer to north Italy, the units transferred from Dacia were also part of in these military troops. The fact that Aureolus was a Dacian native, coming from a modest shepherds' family is also striking. So, sometime until 261 or shortly after, no further information on the detachments in the army of Illyricum surfaced. Epigraphic information from Dacia disappears approximately in the same period as well.

Two military events occurred in this start period of general Aureolus's military activity. The first took place in 260, when Aureolus, commander of the mobile cavalry defeated at Mursa, on the Drave, the army of usurper Ingenuus, proclaimed emperor by the troops in Moesia also with the approval of the troops in Pannonia³⁰.

Then, in 261, Aureolus would head to Serdica, where he would crush the army of the two proclaimed emperors - Macrianus - father and son, on their way from the East on to Rome. After capturing Valerianus, general Macrianus had proclaimed himself emperor: father - *Augustus*, and son, *Caesar*³¹. Good part of Macrianus's army would side with Aureolus prior the proper military conflict, and another part, would be captured³².

This victory consolidated Aureolus's authority, who, in 265, accompanies Gallienus in a campaign against usurper Postumus, confrontation which ends somewhat inconclusively. Later, Aureolus was detached to Raetia as *dux*, at the head of an army that would repel German incursions. From 261, Raetia was under the authority of usurper Postumus.

Aurelius Victor mentions Aureolus's presence in Raetia as *dux* at the command of both the mobile cavalry and the infantry in the province in the fights against the Barbarians³³. After these events, Raetia would be again attached to the Empire, more precisely to the provinces loyal to Gallienus, Aureolus already holding the command of the entire mobile cavalry. In this capacity, he would be brought by emperor Gallienus to defend north Italy, respectively the military centre at Mediolanum against usurper Postumus in Gallia and the defence of north Italy against German incursions.

The time when Aureolus was moved to the new location at Mediolanum meant the establishment of a novel powerful military centre, the fifth, which obviously required new military units. There is no information on their source, however one

²⁸ SHA, *Aureolus*, 11, 1-3.

²⁹ We argue this since, subsequently, in Claudius, the future emperor's biography, he holds under his command the armies from Thracia, Moesia, Dalmatia, Pannonia and Dacia (SHA, *Vita divi Claudii*, 15, 3).

³⁰ SHA, *Ingenuus*, 9, 1.

³¹ SHA, *Aureolus*, 11, 3.

³² SHA, *Aureolus*, 11, 3; *Macrianus*, 12, are mentioned ca. 30 000 soldiers siding with Aureolus.

³³ Aurelius Victor, *Caesares*, 33, 17.

may assume they were largely part of Aureolus's troops, a Dacian origin general, as *dux Illyrici*, troops which later followed the general in the campaigns carried out in the west of the Empire. The removal of the units from the garrison provinces might have represented a factor of disquiet and discontent for the army remaining in Dacia.

Likely indirectly, this is referenced by a letter, preserved in SHA and deemed forgery, addressed by Gallienus to Venustus in Dacia, asking him to appease Claudius (future emperor Claudius II), ill-willed against the emperor and mentioning among other... *while the Dacian troops, even now in a state of anger, are still in ignorance, for I fear there may be some serious outbreak*³⁴.

Until present, the paragraph was not analysed under this context especially, being considered a false letter included in *Historia Augusta* for further emphasizing Claudius II. We believe it contains a grain of truth for the discussion herein³⁵.

Firstly, it appears obvious that Claudius had taken over, after Aureolus, the command of the armies in the Balkan provinces as *dux Illyrici*³⁶: having under his authority "the troops in Thracia, Moesia, Dalmatia, Pannonia and Dacia". From this point of view, the future emperor Claudius II was subordinated to Aureolus.

The discontent of the soldiers in Dacia could have several causes, of both military nature and social nature.

It is known that subsequent Severus Alexander's military reform, soldiers stationed on the limes were given land, which made the displacement of units outside the garrison provinces entirely unpopular. This reform had weakened the Roman army's mobility in setting up campaign armies. The removal from Dacia of massive units, beside the echelons in the two legions, *XIII Gemina* and *V Macedonica* present on 257/258 coins as loyal to emperor Gallienus, are in favour of our hypothesis and arguments.

Locally, these measures that Gallienus took had unfavourable consequences, as they imposed certain reorganisation, the displacement of small legionary detachments or infantry *auxilia* detachments to the abandoned forts, with troops departed to south Danube, in campaign. This likely generated special difficulties not only of military nature but also social since it was obvious that the displaced units introduced in this new "melanges", troops mixture lost their identity and even more damaging, had no chance of return to their province of origin, having stable seats in various locations, either in south Danube or in Upper Italy, at Mediolanum, Verona and Aquileia³⁷.

Hence, above letter to Venustus by Gallienus, likely mirrored a reality close to the truth, mentioning the discontent of the troops remained in the province. A last aspect concerns the families of the soldiers who stayed in Dacia, finding themselves in a general state of insecurity and likely deprived of the possibility to be effectively defended by the province army.

³⁴ SHA, *Vita divi Claudii*, 17, 1-4.

³⁵ Zahariade, Phelps 1999, 313-327.

³⁶ SHA, *Vita divi Claudii*, 15, 2-3.

³⁷ Alföldy 1927, 199.

Except for Dacia, the loss of control is recorded for none of the other Balkan provinces. Why is that? Possibly, the only explanation lies in the withdrawal of a large number of the troops from the province, from the point of view of coin hoard finds dated under Gallienus, circumstances appear relatively calm, suggesting no significant military incidents, as if Dacia would be avoided even.

We included in a table all present troops from the three Dacian provinces provided with cavalry units. We added Mauri, Syrian and Palmyrene units, given they were mounted archers and might have been implicitly selected. We found tricky the appreciation of the precise *numeri* strength, since commonly, in the west of the Empire, it was less, consisting of up to 250 soldiers, yet, the size of some of forts in Dacia, like those at Răcari, Sânpaul, compelled us to consider there normal strengths of up to 500 soldiers. In the case of Dacia, the measure initiated by Gallienus could have facilitated access to the eastern area of groups of free Dacians, who were archaeologically identified especially in the 4th century (we make no further suppositions related to such presence).

The military strength of the province of Dacia comprised several auxiliary troops, among which cavalry troops held a distinct place in each of the three Dacian provinces. Naturally, only *ala I Batavorum* was a *milliaria* unit, the rest being formed of 500 knights. Yet, *ala I Batavorum* was the auxiliary unit attached to legion XIII Gemina as early as under Trajan, in the fortress at Vindobona. A number of 4 *alae* come from the 10 units in Dacia Porolissensis, from Dacia Malvensis - 2 *alae* and from Dacia Apulensis other 4 units. The strength of these units amounts to up to 5500 soldiers. Should one also add to this number the 8 present *numeri* coming from Dalmatia, Africa, Syria etc., mostly formed of horsemen, another ca. 3600 soldiers would result, together summing up to 9000 soldiers. We did not include in the table below the infantry *auxilia* which also comprised a detachment of *equites*, since the proper cavalry units of Dacia covered almost entirely the number of soldiers in the mobile cavalry corps.

No.	Troop name	Garrison	Strength
1.	<i>Ala Asturum</i>	Boroşneul Mare, Hoghiz	500 knights
2.	<i>Ala I Batavorum milliaria</i>	Războieni	1000 knights
3.	<i>Ala Bosporanorum</i>	Cristeşti	500 knights
4.	<i>Ala I Claudia Gallorum Capitoniana</i>	Boroşneul Mare	500 knights
5.	<i>Ala I Hisp. Camp.</i>	Micia	500 knights
6.	<i>Ala I Siliana</i>	Gilau	500 knights
7.	<i>Ala Britannica c.R.</i>	Căşei	500 knights
8.	<i>Ala I Hispanorum</i>	Slăveni	500 knights
9.	<i>Ala II Pannoniorum</i>	Gherla	500 knights
10.	<i>Ala I Tungrorum Frontoninana</i>	Ilisua	500 knights
	Total		5500 knights

	<i>Numeri</i>		
1.	<i>Numerus Maurorum S....</i>	Sânpaul	250-500
2.	<i>Numerus Maurorum O...</i>	Sutor	250-500
3.	<i>Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium</i>	Tibiscum	250-500
4.	<i>Numerus Maurorum Hisp.</i>	Ampelum	250-500
5.	<i>Numerus Maurorum S....</i>	Răcari	250-500
6.	<i>Numerus Maurorum Miciensium</i>	Micia	250-500
7.	<i>Numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium</i>	Tibiscum	250-500
8.	<i>Numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium</i>	Porolissum	250-500
9.	<i>Numerus Palmyrenorum Optatianensium</i>	Sutor	250-500
10.	<i>Numerus Equitum Illyr.</i>	Hoghiz	250-500
11.	<i>Numerus Illyricorum</i>	Brîncovenești	250-500
12.	<i>Numerus Surorum</i>	Arutela, Romula	250-500.
	Total		3500-6000
	General total		8500-11000

Table I. Cavalry auxiliary troops in Roman Dacia.

There is no indication on any units removed from Dacia either as expeditionary cavalry forces formed of several *auxilia* detachments or, conversely, as complete units. The importance of Roman cavalry units in Dacia must have drawn the attention of the Empire rulers in the establishment of the echelons, at least for Illyricum, where not by accident, an officer of local Dacian origin, like Aureolus was appointed at the head of this army. At the time when these units, which must have been also completed by troops from the south-Danubian provinces, were involved, by the start of their establishment date in 259-261, into military events in areas close to their original garrisons, this was only natural, since it implicitly supposed the defence of their own territory. As the configuration of the cavalry corps fell into shape, becoming a distinct military force, likely for the entire Empire, the soldiers and even officers remaining in respective provinces must have felt discontented.

Given the internal dissensions caused by the usurpers claiming 1-3 provinces as part of the territory under their jurisdiction, the troops in the provinces by the Lower Danube were interested in only the defence of their own territories. This was most likely the "Gordian knot" of the conflict between Gallienus and the Illyrian officers led by Claudius and Aurelianus, who wished to protect mainly their Balkan territories of origin³⁸ and less the unification of the Empire with the western or even Eastern provinces.

The military measures taken by Gallienus had adverse local consequences in Dacia, as they imposed certain military reorganisation by bringing small detachments

³⁸ Hartmann 2006, 81-117.

in the forts abandoned by their units. These units came from the two legions or from bordering infantry auxilia. In only one case, the archaeological research has revealed damage by massive fire – in the fort at Ilişua – dated under Gallienus, which might be connected to these events³⁹. There is no other indication on the end of certain Roman fortifications by massive fire, which may be dated with precision.

The almost one decade in Gallienus's rule (260–268) might seem a period when not much may be said about Dacia, namely, data on and from the province are missing. However, one should bear in mind that the future emperor Claudius held the title of *dux Illyrici*, office taken over from Aureolus just after 261, who had meanwhile become the commander of the entire mobile cavalry. Or, his biography clearly mentions the presence of Dacian troops from in the composition of his units⁴⁰. Regardless the period until the end of Gallienus's rule, he succeeded to include Dacia again among the provinces under the control of the Empire. The situation is made definitive in 272, when emperor Aurelianus, following the victory against the Goths and Carps, would recover them (“... retracing Empire borders onto its previous frontiers...” – says the ancient source)⁴¹. Nevertheless, the new emperor Aurelianus would decide to finally abandon Dacia.

Why was Dacia chosen to relinquish part of its military strength? This is still an issue hard to explain and reconstitute⁴². Likely, the almost complete strength of the troops in Dacia, with numerous cavalry auxiliary units weighed much.

Secondly, starting with the Severans, Dacia represented one of the main sources of soldiers for the *equites singulares* and praetorian cohorts in Rome. Epigraphically, there are no many firm indications, however it is possible that the training degree of the soldiers in the province of Dacia exceeded that of simple soldiers and under-officers, becoming valuable high rank officers in the Empire army. One of them would be precisely Aureolus, of poor origin (shepherd) or Regalianus, legate of Pannonia Superior, proclaimed usurper by Gallienus.

These military elite, beside that coming from the south-Danubian provinces would play the most important role under Gallienus in maintaining the integrity of the Roman Empire and especially of their home provinces.

The analysis performed by U. Hartmann on the causes of Gallienus's slain led precisely to a more accurate understanding of the discontent of the officers in the Illyrian origin Roman army, whose main focus was the defence of the Danubian provinces and not the emperor's preparations for a new campaign against Postumus in order to bring again under central control the western provinces of Britannia, Gallia and Hispania⁴³.

In 267, the Heruli attack Asia Minor and Greece from sea, conquering the cities at Chrysopolis, Cyzicus and Byzantium. Only in the following year, 268, they would be defeated by Gallienus in Thracia, on river Nestus. The emperor would then head to

³⁹ Protase et alii 1997, passim.

⁴⁰ SHA, *Vita divi Claudii*, 15, 3.

⁴¹ SHA, *Vita Divi Aureliani*, 22, 3; Eutropios, 4, 131,1. See Benea 1996, 190, note 12.

⁴² Benea 1996, 190.

⁴³ Hartmann 2006, 81–117.

Italy, to attack Aureolus, who had proclaimed himself emperor at Mediolanum. The cause of this new usurpation should be perhaps related to the emperor's attitude during the latest events, further more that Aureolus had been loyal to emperor Gallienus for more than 10 years. It might have had the same cause like in the case of the rest of the officers in the mobile cavalry fighting for the integrity of the Roman Empire. Indirectly, circumstances in Dacia might have had a bear on this. It was left with few troops that had to ensure the safety of the frontiers and implicitly of the families of the soldiers departed for a campaign and unable to return to their native province⁴⁴.

Admittedly, in the military clash with Aureolus, which took place sometime in April or May of 268, the latter, though wounded, withdrew to Mediolanum and could not be killed. The time when the plot of the Illyrian officers unsatisfied by the government of Gallienus was put into effect was slightly prior 29 August or even early September 268. U. Hartmann⁴⁵ believes it is possible that the underlying reason was Gallienus's policy towards the East after his father's fall.

The withdrawal of certain auxiliary troops from Dacia and then the limited defence based only on the infantry remained in certain fortifications, might have created a special defence situation in the province and thereafter, the view of the Late Roman historiography on the loss of Dacia, namely a withdrawal.

This would explain the lack of auxiliary troops from the former province of Dacia, which, after 271 or 274/275, is no longer found on the territory of the Roman Empire, being "melted" in the structure of Gallienus's mobile cavalry. Our hypothesis is plausible given that, for the time being, other written information on Dacia, especially after 258-260 is unknown. Should we look at the number of auxiliary cavalry units, they noticeably amount to almost the number of the soldiers in the mobile cavalry, estimated to ca. 10000 horsemen. This might indirectly suggest the use of only the units from Dacia in the set up of the mobile cavalry. It is worth mentioning that at the date, both Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior had fewer auxiliary cavalry troops, judging from the epigraphic evidence from these provinces.

However, the importance of the mobile cavalry in the destiny of the Roman Empire would increase in the following decades up to the establishment of the Dominate, most of the emperors succeeding Gallienus being elected amongst its commanders.

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⁴⁴ Such an assumption is underlined precisely by the text in Aureolus's biography, when he attempted to approach Claudius, who finally killed him (SHA, *Aureolus*, 11, 3).

⁴⁵ Hartmann 2006, 81-117.

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