

IMMUNES AND PRINCIPALES AT ULPIA TRAIANA SARMIZEGETUSA

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IMMUNES ȘI PRINCIPALES LA ULPIA TRAIANA SARMISEGETUSA

Rezumat: Studiul se apleacă asupra identificării soldaților romani ce au ocupat vreun grad inferior în armata romană, atestați în capitala Daciei romane, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. După cum se știe, elementul militar a avut un rol foarte important în crearea Sarmizegetusei și în transplantarea civilizației romane în nou-născuta provincie. Sunt atestate unsprezece astfel de personaje, ocupând doar șapte ranguri, aflate sub cel de centurion. Rangurile inferioare atestate sunt: *scriniarius praefectorum praetorio*, *actarius*, *librarius a rationibus*, *adiutor officii corniculariorum*, *frumentarius*, *beneficiarius consularis* și *signifer*. Dintre aceste grade, două sunt *immunes*, ambele parte din *officium* al unui ofițer superior, și cinci *principales*, din care patru fac parte dintr-un astfel de *officium*. După lăsarea la vatră, cinci dintre personaje fac parte din *ordo decurionum*, doi dintre ei fiind chiar într-o situație specială, decurioni în absență.

Abstract: This paper identifies the Roman soldiers that occupied any inferior rank in the army, attested in the Dacian provincial capital, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The military element held a very important role in the creation of this major city, and, in the empowerment of the Roman civilization in the newly-created province. We have eleven such characters, attested in Sarmizegetusa, on seven different ranks, each one under the centurionate. These ranks are: *scriniarius praefectorum praetorio*, *actarius*, *librarius a rationibus*, *adiutor officii corniculariorum*, *frumentarius*, *beneficiarius consularis* and *signifer*. Out of them, two are *immunes*, both part of the *officium* of a superior officer, and five are *principales*, four of them part of an *officium*. After their discharge, five of the eleven people are part of the *ordo decurionum*, two of them in a special situation, decurions in absence.

Keywords: *immunes, principales, military ranks, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Dacia.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *immunes, principales, ranguri militare, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Dacia.*

The Capital city of the province of Dacia, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, is the most important and oldest Roman settlement in these lands. After nearly a century of research, many aspects of the life in this *metropolis* are available, including the character of its population. It is well-known that Sarmizegetusa was founded as a *colonia deducta*, in the years following the conquest. A large number of studies were written on this matter, but this is not the subject of this effort, so it will not be re-discussed here. The important fact for this paper is the massive colonization, of veterans, during the reign of Trajan, in Sarmizegetusa. This shows that the military elements had a very important role in the romanization of a recently conquered province, and veterans were used in great numbers to do this job for the authority of Rome in the provinces. Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa fits perfectly in this official habit of founding veteran colonies¹, even if, after the first generation, loses its military role, in favor of another, more civil and religious.

The *immunes* and *principales* of Sarmizegetusa are just one type of people we can find in this *metropolis*, acting either as agents for the colonization efforts, either as simple inhabitants of the city. We have a number of eleven such men attested in epigraphical monuments, most of them holding ranks as clerks, or beneficiaries of the governor. Each military rank and the status of its holder, in the military, and respectively, civil life, will be discussed in the following.

C. Iulius Fronto² – *scriniarius praefectorum praetorio* – part of the *scriniarii*, together with *primoscrinius praefecti, adiutor commentariorum at scrinia praefectorum*, group of secretaries that appear in the 3rd Century, first in the Rome cohorts, slowly replacing other types of military clerks. The holder can be promoted to *ostiarius praefectorum praetorio*, and, through this post to *canalicularius* or *laterculensis*, therefore, eventually to the centurionate.³ A known analogy is L. Iulius Victor⁴, who holds the same rank, and, afterwards becomes *ostiarius, laterculensis* and finally centurion. Fronto and others like him are among the first signs of a new trend in the Roman military practice, in the 3rd Century, the primate of the secretarial and clerical posts over those of tactical essence (the last reference to *optio* and *signifer* date from 221 and 222 AD). This is due to several possible causes: lack of literate people in the army staff, the massive

¹ Mann 1983, 39–40.

² AE 1933, 248 = IDR III/2 113.

³ Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, x.

⁴ AE 1949, 108.

ammount of provincials in the Rome cohorts, the growth of the praetorian prefect's role in the administration, or maybe the tendency of literate men to record their carrers on monuments.⁵

Regarding his status, many things cannot be said. In the inscription text he is called *miles*, but this doesn't make him automatically an *immunis*. Most likely, he stands in the place of an inferior *principalis*, even if, at this time in history, such differences are hardly accurate.⁶ His social status is a very special one. Part of a family with a strong military tradition, he confirms the main calling of his kin. His father is a veteran of *XIII Gemina Severiana*⁷, a former *beneficiarius consularis*, after his honorable discharge he is a decurion in Sarmizegetusa and also a *Ilvir*. Both of his brothers are soldiers, legionaries, one of them a *beneficiarius consularis* and, the other *frumentarius*. He is highly honored by the people of Sarmizegetusa, with the grant of the decurionate in absence.⁸

M. Aurelius Valens⁹ – *magister k(ampi?)*, *actarius* – If the reading from the epigraphical corpus is correct, he first holds the post of *magister kampi*, rank known also from *CIL VIII 2562*. Domaszewski places it between the inferior ranks of the legionary cavalry, with his primal task that of training for horseback riding. This seems to be the case, as also Breeze mentions the separate corps of officers for the legionary cavalry, gathered in the *tabularium equitum*, lead by an *optio equitum*.¹⁰ Another side of this discution is the replacement and equivalence of the two ranks of *optio* and *magister*, beginning with the 3rd Century. Therefore, the post of *magister kampi* (*CIL VIII 2562* – in the legionary cavalry and *P. Dura 83* – in *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*) is attributed only to cavalry corps, and associated with *optio kampi*, known only in *ala Veterana Gallica*.¹¹

The possible promotion of Valens is to the rank of *actarius*. Placed among the secretaries in the governor's staff, the rank is also known to belong to other kind of *officia*, as that of the prefect of the camp or of any auxiliary *ala* or cohort's prefect.¹² Together with *cornicularius legionis*, they stand above the tactical ranks, as we encounter two *optiones* that replace them at one time (*CIL VIII 2554*).¹³ He is clearly a kind of staff coordinator, holding a unit's papers, *acta*, but under the chief-secretary, the *cornicularius*.¹⁴

⁵ Breeze 1974, 252–253.

⁶ However, Breeze considers him a *sesquiplicarius*, Breeze 1971, 134.

⁷ This dates the monument between 222 and 235, according to IDR III/2.

⁸ Ardevan 1987, 121.

⁹ *Klio* X 1910, 495 = *ActaMN XII* 1975, 168–170 = IDR III/2 270.

¹⁰ Breeze 1969, 54.

¹¹ Breeze 1976, 128–129.

¹² Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, 37–38, 55, 58.

¹³ Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, 39.

¹⁴ Breeze 1974, 282.

The weird fact of this career is that the two ranks held by Valens do not match. The first one, *magister kampi* could indicate a preference for a military career, but the second, *actarius*, is a clerk, who becomes important merely in the 3rd Century, for the perspective of a legionary centurionate. Maybe he was very well trained in both of these aspects, or maybe the reading of the inscription is not quite accurate, this kind of promotion being highly irregular. Nevertheless, we have an *actarius*, dedicating an altar to *Minerva Augusta*, the traditional goddess of these *actarii*, as there can be seen also from other examples from Dacia, and not only.

C. Iulius Sabinus¹⁵ – *librarius a rationibus* – a category of *librarius*. Tarruntenus Paternus, *Digest* 50.6.7, places it in his list of *immunes*, likewise Vegetius II.7, that mentions also the role of the *librarii* as that of consulting the records.

Domaszewski connects the rank to the staff of the camp prefect. This *officium* is lead by a *cornicularius* and is called *officium rationum*. In this office, he places it low, between the junior-staff posts, the *immunes*. Others of this kind are called *librarii horreorum*. These *librarii* are present in all the Roman military structures, in every staff, in every unit, being therefore the basic form of inferior clerk.

The status is quite well know, actually, many of the mentions being very clear in this matter. A *librarius* is many times called *immunis librarius*, or even *immunis*.¹⁶

Sabinus comes from a well placed family in Sarmizegetusa, his father was a *Iivir*, and he probably had some education while still at home, this granting him the opportunity to serve as a small rank officer in *XIII Gemina*. Due to his early death (30 years old), his career ends abruptly.

Aelius Septimius Romanus¹⁷ – *adiutor offici corniculariorum* – Tarruntenus Paternus places this rank between the *immunes*. The holder can be promoted to either *librarius* or *actarius cohortis*. He is the assistant of the *cornicularius* in any major officer staff.

We have also a great variety of *adiutores*, assistants to the other administrative ranks. Including the *librarii* have their own *adiutores*, a fact which indicates the very low position of the rank.

The *adiutor* from Sarmizegetusa is the son of P. Aelius Septimius Audeo, former centurion in *numerus Palmyrenorum* O?, a family with Eastern origin and also military tradition.

¹⁵ CIL III 1477 = IDR III/2 419.

¹⁶ Watson 1965, *passim*.

¹⁷ CIL III 1471 = IDR III/2 366.

C. Iulius Carus¹⁸ and **P. Antonius Victor**¹⁹ – *frumentarii* – In *Historia Augusta, Hadrian*, the *frumentarius* appears as a spy sent to follow a senator, which automatically led to the assumption that the vast majority of *frumentarii* had espionage or assassination missions, for the times of Commodus or Severus. Although enrolled in their legions, when detached to Rome, they were gathered in a *numerus frumentariorum*, with its own staff of officers, garrisoning the *castra peregrina*, on *Mons Caelius*, were loyal to the emperor and served as his eyes in the provincial Capital. Besides this, they also had police duties in the provinces, were given various tasks, mostly to supervise the activity in important objectives for the emperor. Although it would seem that these *frumentarii* serve only the emperor, it has been argued that they serve the authority of the governor as well.²⁰

In the framework of the legion, it stands above the tactical ranks, but under the *beneficiarius consularis*. In the 3rd Century, the holder can be promoted directly to the rank of *centurio frumentariorum*.

The first *frumentarius* is the brother of the *scriniarius* C. Iulius Fronto, legionaire in *XIII Gemina Severiana*²¹, either returned in his home city for the completion of some local tasks, either simply mentioned in the honorary monument erected for his father. The second, a legionaire in *VI Victrix*, garrisoned in Britannia, is part of a distinct aristocratic family, coming from Viminacium, probably detached in a mission in the Dacian capital.

C. Iulius Valerius²², **C. Iulius Valerianus**²³, **Ulpius Maximianus**²⁴, **L. Valerius Rufus**²⁵ – *beneficiarii consularis* – Vegetius II.7 says that the *beneficiarii* are promoted through the patronage of a superior officer, following a *beneficium*.²⁶

The role and activities of these *beneficiarii* depend more on a precise situation or time, and cannot be regarded in standard issues. During the second part of the 2nd Century AD, the personal connection between the *beneficiarius* and his governor disappears, leaving place for a duration of his mission independent of the governor mandate. Their missions were considered rigorous, and this can be acknowledged by studying the transfers between *stationes*. The *beneficiarii*

¹⁸ AE 1933, 248 = IDR III/2, 113.

¹⁹ CIL III 1474 = IDR III/2, 379.

²⁰ Mann 1988 *contra* Rankov 1990. For other, detailed arguments, about the place and role of these *frumentarii*, see also Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, Durry 1968, Clauss 1979, and Austin, Rankov 1995.

²¹ *supra*, no. 7.

²² CIL III 1477 = IDR III/2, 419.

²³ CIL III 1477 = IDR III/2, 419.

²⁴ IDR III/2, 239.

²⁵ CIL III 1485 = IDR III/2, 452.

²⁶ Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, 32–33. Further discussions on the status and role of this rank are held in Austin, Rankov 1995, Dise 1997, Dise 1997a, Ott 1995, Speidel 1992.

consularis erect votive altars, precisely dated, and containing many times, their recent itinerary.

It has been suggested the six-month period for the term of execution of every mission, but also the one-year period was later accepted. The most commonly agreement is with the six-month term, admitting exceptions only for the *vigiles beneficiarii* from Ostia. The situation is not entirely clear, as variations appear in the debut date of the missions and also in their duration and cycles, and even in the transfer method, for each province.

The dates on their votive altars indicate a different debut moment for the missions in every province. A slight regularity can be observed in Upper Germany, where in twenty-seven altars we have six-month missions, began either in January 13th, either in July 15th.²⁷

Regarding military hierachy, a *beneficiarius* takes his title and rank after the superior officer in whose service they stand. He can be called *legati beneficiarius*, as in Numidia, even if he serves the governor. One can reach to the rank of *beneficiarius* from *tesserarius* (CIL III 9908), *optio* (CIL III 1783), *frumentarius* (CIL II 4154, III 1907), *quaestionarius* (CIL VIII 20251), *duplicarius alae* (CIL VIII 21567), all these standing above the tactical ranks. He stands under the *speculator* (CIL VIII 2586, 2751), can be promoted to it (CIL III 3021, 3615, 8173, 13719), and, extraordinary to *commentariensis* (CIL V 6967), *cornicularius praefecti legionis* (CIL VIII 17625) or even *cornicularius consularis* (CIL III 10568). During the reign of Severus, and afterwards, the promotion can be made directly to the legionary centurionate (CIL III 3306, VIII 17626, XIII 6429).²⁸

The characters involved are, two of them, relatives, father and son, from the same family with the *scriniarius* and the *frumentarius* previously presented. Ulpius Maximianus raises an altar to Iupiter *optimus maximus*, as the majority of *beneficiarii*. Finally, L. Valerius Rufus is a decurion, *quaestor* and a *Ilvir* in Sarmizegetusa. Their presence here do not attest any *stationes*, because they are either veterans settled here after their retirement, or are relatives to the locals.

Q. Manlius Verus²⁹ – *signifer* of the XV *Apollinaris* legion. Vegetius, II.7 says that the *signiferi* carry the standards, in his time being called also *draconarii*, and stand at the top of the *principales* hierachy.

Actually, this rank is one third of the tactical ranks group, together with *tesserarius* and *optio*. It can be promoted to *aquilifer*, *optio*, or *cornicularius legionis*, from which, very often, the passage was made to the legionary centurionate. The highest type of *signifer* is the *princeps signifer*, and the leader of their *collegium* is an *optio signiferorum*. The holder of the rank can also be

²⁷ Schallmayer 1994, confirmed by Dise 1997 and Dise 1997a.

²⁸ Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, 32–34.

²⁹ CIL III 1478 = IDR III/2, 428.

promoted to the centurionate of an auxiliary cohort (CIL V 8185) or even directly to the legionary one (CIL XII 3177). They apparently have deputies, at the same time students, because of their financial duties. *Discens aquiliferum* and *discens signiferum* are young recruits – *tirones*, in personal service of the *aquilifer* or *signifer*.³⁰

The person in question, veteran of XV *Apollinaris*, is also a decurion in Sarmizegetusa, having as heir the centurion C. Iulius Macer.

As it can clearly be observed, the population of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa contains a few military elements of lower rank. This, added to the centurions and the simple soldiers, form a part of population having a military origin, that is, most of the times, settled here only after the discharge. Eleven *immunes* and *principales* are attested in Sarmizegetusa, but only on seven or eight ranks.³¹ Out of these seven ranks, only three have a military essence, four of them being bureaucrats. Regarding the status of the rank, we have only two *immunes* and five *principales*. The two *immunes* are both part of an *officium*, where they stand on inferior positions. A *librarius a rationibus* is part of the *officium rationum*, the staff of the camp prefect, where he places very low, between the junior-staff posts. The *adiutor officii corniculariorum* is likewise an inferior rank, assistant to the *cornicularius*.

Out of the five ranks of *principales* that we find in Sarmizegetusa, four of them are part of an *officium*. This is very important also in establishing the proportion of military ranks in comparison to the staff posts. However, only two of the *officiales* in Sarmizegetusa are bureaucrats. The *scriniarius* is a superior secretary in the staff of the praetorian prefects, introduced in the lower hierarchy only from the 3rd Century onwards. The *actarius* is the leading secretary of an auxiliary unit, mostly cohorts, being part of a superior officer's staff. The other two *officiales* have mostly military duties. The *frumentarius* has been discussed in detail, revealing his obscure status and allegiance. For the *beneficiarius consularis* we cannot say for sure if he had only military duties, because we do not know exactly which duties he had, when detached or present at the *praetorium consularis*. We can however say that he was used for all kind of tasks, military or civil, and that he was the most common rank in the *officium consularis*. Therefore, we have only one pure military rank left, the *signifer*. His role in the legionary century is well known and understood. Together with the tactical role, that of standard bearer, he has also a financial one, keeping the century's savings.

The position in the military hierarchy is, very often reflected also in the civil one. From the eleven characters involved, five of them are part of the *ordo*

³⁰ Domaszewski-Dobson 1967, 43–44; Speidel 1982, 856–857.

³¹ The eighth rank is that of *magister k(?ampi)*, which was established to be doubtful, so it will be excluded from the statistics.

decurionum, being therefore of high social status. Two of them, the *scriniarius* and his brother, the *frumentarius* are granted a very special status, that of decurion in absence, very probably due to their father's higher social status. The father, also a *beneficiarius consularis*, became, after his discharge, a decurion and, eventually a *Ilvir*, chief-magistrate of Sarmizegetusa. This special family is highly honoured by the *ordo decurionum* of Sarmizegetusa, and their monument is raised in a place offered by the city, in the *forum*.³² Hence the privileges granted to the two sons. Another former *beneficiarius* held a full civil carrier, being a decurion, *quaestor*, and, finally a *Ilvir* of the Dacian city. Finally, the *signifer* was also a decurion in Sarmizegetusa, having a centurion as heir.

The others have no special social status, due to various reasons. For example, the *actarius* is attested as soldier, dedicating an altar to Minerva *Augusta*. The *librarius*, although coming from a well placed family in the city's society, he died very young, at the beginning of his carrier. This is also the case for the *adiutor*, he was attested when raising a monument for his father. One of the *frumentarii* died also very young, at 19, having therefore no chance to prove himself. Finally, one of the *beneficarii* dedicated an altar to Jupiter *optimus maximus*, as many of his kind do.

The eleven cases of *immunes* and *principales* attested in Sarmizegetusa are only a small part of the nearly three hundred such characters from all the province. They present us with an image, revealing the very important role of the soldiers in Roman provincial society, especially in a case such as Dacia. As we have taken notice, at the middle of the 2nd Century and at the beginning of the 3rd, the former military personell was used in creating a local elite, financially potent, and which was very available in spending their money to create a good self-image. Sarmizegetusa is a case which revelas this connection between military and civil, even in the delicate matter of hierachy.

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³² As this is the place of discovery, according to IDR III/2.

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