

THE MISSIONS OF THE SOLDIERS IN THE *LIMES* PROVINCES. *FRUMENTARII* IN DACIA

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Misiuni ale soldaților în provinciile de *limes*. *Frumentarii* în Dacia

Frumentarii sunt însărcinați cu cele mai delicate misiuni, ca și ceilalți colegi ai lor din *officium consularis*, sau detașați la *castra peregrinorum*. Singurul atribut unic și special este această dublă subordonare. Chiar dacă sunt aleși și promovați de guvernator, sunt trimiși la Roma, pentru a se pregăti, o perioadă determinată de timp, în *castra peregrinorum*, unde vor activa sub autoritatea împăratului. În cadrul acestui stagiou pot fi delegați cu misiuni variate în numele împăratului, oficial sau nu, oriunde în Imperiu, apoi putând fi trimiși în provinciile de origine pentru a-și continua serviciul militar. Continuă să facă parte din *officium consularis*, până ce sunt promovați sau lăsați la vatră. În acest timp, vor fi însărcinați, de către guvernator, cu misiuni de poliție locală, în provincie, alături de *beneficiarii* și *speculatores*. Alții pot să rămână la Roma, unde să fie promovați în interiorul *castra peregrinorum*, uneori chiar la *centurio frumentarius*, ceea ce le va permite să revină în armata provincială direct centurioni. În cadrul legiunii, pot fi promovați, gradual, la *beneficiarius*, *speculator*, și, rareori, la centurionatul legionar. Par a avea doar îndatoriri de natură militară, spre deosebire de ceilalți colegi din *officium*, care au și sarcini civile sau juridice. În Dacia sunt atestați cel puțin trei astfel de ofițeri, unii chiar cu cariere de succes, iar în restul Imperiului mai avem cel puțin patru, provenind din armata Daciei.

Key words: *frumentarius*, Dacia, *castra peregrinorum*, *centurio*, *centurio frumentarius*.

The matter of military intelligence and secret police in the Roman Empire has long been discussed, from different points of view, and regarding various aspects of the military organization. Accepting the fact that we are unable to trace any military intelligence agency centred in Rome, it is possible to identify, a unit based in the capital, which acted as an internal security agency throughout the Empire¹. The headquarters of these special troops were located in a military district, on mount *Caelius*. In this eastern part of the city, a military fort, named *castra peregrinorum*², was probably built in the time of emperor Trajan, or even earlier³. This fort was considered, as the name implies, a "foreigners camp"⁴, a depot of *principales* and centurions⁵, which garrisoned every soldier or officer sent with a particular assignment to Rome, for their stay time in the capital. It also seems that the *castra peregrinorum* could be used as a central point for the despatch of officers sent in provinces with various tasks⁶. One thing is

¹ Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

² Austin, Rankov 1995, 136; Durry 1968, 25–26; LeBohec 1994, 23; Mann 1988, 149 (Amm. Marcellinus, XVI.12.66); Rankov 1990, 176.

³ Clauss 1973, 82.

⁴ Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

⁵ Durry 1968, 26; Baillie-Reynolds 1923, 175–179.

⁶ Baillie-Reynolds 1923, 168–169; Rankov 1990, 176. For a detailed archaeological depiction of *castra peregrinorum*, see also Baillie-Reynolds, Ashby 1923.

positive, the fort was home for any *peregrini* soldiers, meaning provincial ones, different from *urbani*, which were definitely citizens and part of the Rome garrison⁷.

Part of the inhabitants of *castra peregrinorum*, besides the *frumentarii* and their officers, is made of other kind of *principales* or even centurions. An inscription from the time of Gallienus⁸ confirms the presence of *centuriones deputati et supernumerarii* alongside the *frumentarii* and other *peregrini*, in this fort. These two kinds of centurions, *deputati* and *supernumerarii* are probably part of their legions, sent to Rome with various tasks. It also indicates that they were supernumerary to the regular establishment of centurions for a legion⁹. Other kind of military elements present at one time in the *castra peregrina* are other *principales*, the *speculatores*, which seem to have been the second largest body garrisoned here during their stay in Rome, and the unique cases of *singulares*, *beneficiarii* or even *cornicularii*¹⁰.

The major part of the inhabitants of this fort are the *frumentarii*. These "road-runners"¹¹ travel throughout the Empire, on land or sea¹². Their name would imply their former duties as grain providers for a unit, but, by the time of the Principate, their missions vary widely¹³.

Although it has been thought that only the legions of the north and western armies were providing these *officiales*¹⁴, epigraphical evidence indicates that, coming from every legion of the Empire, the *frumentarii* gather at the Capital, in a *numerus frumentariorum*¹⁵, an *ad-hoc* military unit, organized in Rome for the emperor's personal use. The unit has its own internal hierarchy, with its own officers, as the *optio*, *canalicularius*, *aedilis castrorum*, and evidently, the *centurio frumentarius*, to which many of them were promoted during their stay in Rome¹⁶. Their primary leadership is ensured by the *princeps peregrinorum*¹⁷, a senior legionary centurion¹⁸, assisted by the *subprinceps peregrinorum*¹⁹. Although the management of the *castra peregrina* is ensured by the *princeps peregrinorum*, it is highly probable that the official command of the *frumentarii* belongs to the praetorian prefect, as of every other unit in Rome²⁰. Forty such *frumentarii* are attested in Rome, through inscriptions, only sixteen other being discovered in the province of origin²¹.

The recruitment of these *principales* is carried out by the provincial governor²², as they are part of his staff. It would seem that every legion sends about three such *frumentarii* to the provincial capital, and therefore, towards the *officium consularis*²³. Out of these three, in most

⁷ Durry 1968, 27.

⁸ CIL VI 1110, Rome.

⁹ Baillie-Reynolds 1923, 175–176.

¹⁰ Baillie-Reynolds 1923, 178–179.

¹¹ CIL III 2063 = ILS 2370: Varronius... *qui cucurrit frum(entarius) ann(os) XL*.

¹² Aur. Victor, *Epitomae de Caesaribus* 39.44. Durry 1968, 26.

¹³ Mann 1988, 149; Lebohec 1994, 23.

¹⁴ Baillie-Reynolds 1923, 170–1.

¹⁵ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 35; Clauss 1973, 82 (CIL VI 3341); Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

¹⁶ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 36, only in the 3rd Century (CIL III 2063); Clauss 1973, 109–113; Mann 1988, 149–150.

¹⁷ Clauss 1973, 85; Mann 1988, 149; Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

¹⁸ Mann 1988, 149; Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

¹⁹ Mann 1988, 149.

²⁰ *SHA, Commodus*, Clauss 1973, 85.

²¹ Clauss 1973, 82, 85.

²² Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 35–36; Rankov 1990, 177 (details about their election in CIL II 4154 and XIII 8282); Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

²³ The number of *frumentarii* from each legion is revealed by inscriptions, as CIL VI 3351 and 3362, Clauss 1973, 83. Another proof of their membership in the *officium consularis* is the depicting of *frumentarii* bearing the *Benefiziarlanze*, a special kind of non-functional lance, typical also to other members of this staff (*beneficiarii*, *speculatores*), on monuments, as CIL III 3241 and 5579, Rankov 1990, 181–182. Some missions of police work, mostly against the Christians, during Decius' reign, were conducted by gubernatorial mandate, according to Rankov 1990, 181.

cases, two are sent to Rome, as part of their special training, in the *castra peregrina*²⁴. This special kind of levy is conducted mostly from the province of origin, in which part of them return, after the completion of their special tasks²⁵. Their stay in Rome should be regarded as a special training stage, offered by the emperor, to prepare the candidates for particular missions that they will be entrusted with²⁶. During their stay in Rome, the approximately one hundred *frumentarii* are tightly bonded in personal and collegial relations²⁷.

A large variety of missions are attested through literary or epigraphic evidence. Missions that imply police work are often mentioned, especially in literary sources. The *frumentarii* can arrest many types of villains, but they are detached mostly for state security matters. Espionage missions are also present amongst their duties²⁸, and also assassinate²⁹. In the 3rd c. they must handle the provincial rebellions, and they become very unpopular in the public eye³⁰. Inside the provincial *officia*, they share their duties with the *speculatores* and *beneficiarii*, and, in some cases, even with *commentarienses*³¹. Police work, in general, was entrusted to military staff, either legionary or praetorian, most of them delegated as *stationarii*, in many cities³². This may indicate that a *statio* can be considered as the headquarters of any soldiers with police tasks. Some of them have a large territory in control and, other just road stations or cities³³. For those concerning a whole region, the staffs are called *regionarii*, or *agentes*³⁴. The whole corps of soldiers active in such a *statio* must have been under the command of centurion³⁵. The *frumentarii* are part of this police system, many times they are detectives or executioners, called for duty together with other *stationarii*³⁶.

All these police tasks are revealing them as kin to the *speculatores*, whose *collegia* they attend³⁷. Other missions, similar to those mentioned above, are the supervisions of large infrastructure projects. The security of marble quarries in Italy or Egypt, stone quarries in Noricum, the restoration of the Delphi site, the reparations of Salona's city walls³⁸, or the restoration of the *schola speculatorum* in Aquincum³⁹, are all projects under the custody of

²⁴ This number is approximated following epigraphic support: CIL VI 3349, 3357, 3361, Clauss 1973, 83.

²⁵ Rankov 1990, 177.

²⁶ Clauss 1973, 85.

²⁷ They call each other *collegae*, they raise funerary monuments for any deceased colleague, even coming from other legions (CIL VI 3332, 3334, Rome), they are promoted or released according to regular practice, but they share different careers (CIL VIII 1322 = 14854, Tuccabor, VIII 2825, Lambaesis, VI 3341, 3351, Rome). Clauss 1973, 83–84.

²⁸ *SHA*, *Hadrian* 11.4–6 reveals the intercept of the private correspondence between a senator and his wife, lead by a *frumentarius*. Macrinus is spying on his legionaries, *SHA Macrinus* 12.4. Hadrian is spying on his friends, also Caracalla. Cassius Dio 78.15. Clauss 1973, 93, Austin, Rankov 1995, 136.

²⁹ *SHA*, *Commodus* 4.5 reveals a mission of political assassinate, entrusted by the emperor through the praetorian prefect. Other, such attempts to eliminate rivals, are depicted in the civil war at the end of the 2nd century: *SHA*, *Pesc. Niger* 2.6, *Julianus* 5.8, CIL X 6657 = ILS 1387, or Herodian III.5.4–5. Clauss 1973, 91, Rankov 1990, 176.

³⁰ Aur. Victor, *Epitoma de Caesaribus* 39.44, Austin, Rankov 1995, 137, Clauss 1973, 104.

³¹ CIL XIII 1771, Lugdunum, Clauss 1973, 98.

³² Plinius, *Epistulae* 74, CIL III 7135, 7136, Clauss 1973, 98, 100. Tertullian (*Apologetics* 2.8) says that such *stationes* hold soldiers that have to control the *latrones*.

³³ AE 1960, 348, σπεκλάτωρ Ποντικός, or other such agents. Clauss 1973, 99.

³⁴ As the case of Scantiu Lucius (AE 1957, 327), or other *beneficiarii* from Samum, Dacia Porolissensis.

³⁵ As in RIB 587, Ribchester, Clauss 1973, 100.

³⁶ Present especially in Christian executions. Macrinus is caught during an inspection of a coach, lead by a *frumentarius* (Cassius Dio 78.39.3 and Herodian 5.7–8), Clauss 1973, 101–105.

³⁷ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 35.

³⁸ In 170, a *frumentarius* leads a *vexillatio* for the rebuilding of these city walls, probably under the Marcomannic threat (CIL III 1980, 1973, 6374), Clauss 1973, 94.

³⁹ As revealed by CIL III 3524. The attendance of a *frumentarius* to this project is probably a condition to his prospective promotion to *speculator*, and, eventually, to legionary centurion. A similar case is CIL III 14479 = AE 1901, 154 = IDR III/5 426, Apulum. Cupcea 2008, 272.

*frumentarii*⁴⁰. In most of these missions they are delegated by the emperor, to which they pledge their loyalty for their period of stay in the *castra peregrinorum*⁴¹. Their attachment to this structure is never hidden, so they must not be regarded as agents of terror⁴². With such activities, abuse is inevitable. Many such cases are described by sources, as standing trial and damnation with no evidence – *concussio*. The popular reaction is not positive to this behaviour, so, by the time of Diocletian, a thorough reform was needed, for a major image improvement. Thus came into action the *agentes in rebus*⁴³.

Nevertheless, the basic duty of such an officer, as is the case with other detached soldiers, is that of messenger. It is revealed by a series of literary sources⁴⁴, or epigraphic monuments⁴⁵. By the time of Trajan or Hadrian, an official messengers system is established, tightly connected to the *cursus publicus*, which will include the *frumentarii*⁴⁶. Their task, in this situation, is the exchange of information between the emperor and the provincial governors, or its delivery where needed⁴⁷. This is maybe the reason why there are no *frumentarii* coming from *II Parthica*, garrisoned, beginning with Severus' reign, at *Mons Albanus*, in Italy. As it can easily be seen, most of the inhabitants of *castra peregrinorum* have the same main duty, that of messenger, like the *speculatores*, *singulares* or even centurions⁴⁸.

For this duty to be carried out efficiently, a rigorous management of the infrastructure is needed, a connection of these special officers corps to the *cursus publicus*. The *stationes* along the main roads, or situated at important crossing points or ports, serve as headquarters for this kind of soldiers, and as control points. In Italy, such *stationes*, manned also with *frumentarii*, can be seen on Via Appia⁴⁹, or in important ports, as Ostia⁵⁰ or Puteoli⁵¹. These *stationes* can be considered different to those manned with *beneficiarii*, as the one in Ostia is called *statio n(umeri) fr[u]mentariorum*, but this is known to be a special detachment of the *frumentarii* corps.

At least sixteen *frumentarii* are known to be sent from Rome back to their legion headquarters, or to the *officium consularis* of their province of origin. In Hispania, *frumentarii* are sent from Legio to the *officium consularis* at Tarraco directly, along with the *speculatores*, *commentarienses* or *cornicularii*, apparently without their preparation stage at Rome⁵². Back home, they can be entrusted with several missions in provincial *stationes*⁵³, along with other messengers⁵⁴. In the case of these *frumentarii*, the issue of loyalty for the emperor is no longer

⁴⁰ Clauss 1973, 94–95, Rankov 1990, 177.

⁴¹ Their tight connection to the emperor is revealed by the form *frumentarius Augusti*, mentioned on many inscriptions (IGRR III 80 = ILS 9476, AE 1977, 60, ILS 9473, CIL XIII 1771), Mann 1988, 150, Rankov 1990, 177, Austin, Rankov 1995, 136. He is not different from *frumentarius legionis*, but is serving a special mission for the emperor, see Clauss 1980, *passim*.

⁴² Rankov 1990, 178.

⁴³ Dury 1968, 27, Clauss 1973, 106–109, Austin, Rankov 1995, 137.

⁴⁴ Cassius Dio 78.34.7 (*γραμματοφόροι*), 79.14.1, 15.1, 39.3, *SHA, Maximus et Balbinus* 10.3, Clauss 1973, 87, Rankov 1990, 180.

⁴⁵ CIL III 2063, 8581 = ILS 2370, 14191, Rankov 1990, 180.

⁴⁶ Clauss 1973, 87–88.

⁴⁷ Clauss 1973, 87, Rankov 1990, 180. Empowered by the mention in CIL III 2063 = ILS 2370: *Varronius... qui cucurrit frum(entarius) ann(os) XL*.

⁴⁸ Rankov 1990, 180.

⁴⁹ CIL VI 230 Roma, *frum(entarius) leg(ionis) XIII Gem(inae)*, Clauss 1973, 89.

⁵⁰ CIL XIV 7, 125, Clauss 1973, 82, 90.

⁵¹ CIL X 1771, Clauss 1973, 90.

⁵² CIL II 4150, 4154, 4170, 6088, Clauss 1973, 96.

⁵³ Campbell 1994, 29.

⁵⁴ CIL III 3241 – Sirmium, a *frumentarius* holding a *Benefiziarlanze*, which can be considered as standard equipment for the members of *officium consularis*. *Supra*, no. 23.

active, as they became *officiales*⁵⁵. The idea of Domaszewski, that they form a special *numerus frumentariorum* in every provincial capital⁵⁶, has not been confirmed.

Regarding military hierarchy, the *frumentarius* is a *principalis*, placed above the tactical ranks, from which it can be promoted⁵⁷. His pay is double the regular pay of a soldier, this making him a *duplicarius*⁵⁸. He is standing under the *beneficiarius consularis*, and it can be promoted to this rank, many *beneficarii ex frumentarii* being attested⁵⁹. Prospective direct promotion to *centurio frumentarius*, in the 3rd century, has been assumed, but not confirmed by evidence⁶⁰. However, direct promotions to the legionary centurionate are known⁶¹, and indirect, through ranks like *optio*⁶², *commentariensis* or *candidatus*⁶³. Promotions to *speculator* are also assumed, because of their tight relation and collegiality⁶⁴. Not much is known about the career of a *centurio frumentarius*. They are promoted inside the *castra peregrinorum* towards leading ranks, as *subprinceps peregrinorum*⁶⁵, *viceprinceps peregrinorum*⁶⁶, *exercitator singularium Imperatoris*⁶⁷, or, at the top of the professional career, *primuspilus legionis*⁶⁸. In some situations, these officers' career does not end at the primipilate, in exceptional cases they can benefit from imperial favor to get to the highest ranks of praetorian prefect, *praefectus Urbi*, or even *consul II*⁶⁹.

In Dacia, there are at least three *frumentarii* attested through inscriptions. However, from the legions of Dacia other four are revealed, throughout the empire, carrying various missions.

Two of the *frumentarii* in Dacia are mentioned on monuments in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Their role here remains to be determined. The other two are attested in Drobeta and Apulum, both of them standing, at the time of the erection of the monument, on higher ranks.

C. Iulius Carus⁷⁰, from Sarmizegetusa, is part of a very special family, with a military tradition for ages. The inscription is graved on a honorary monument, erected in the forum of the city, in the memory of his father, a legionary veteran and city magistrate. The father, C. Iulius Valerius, is a veteran of *XIII Gemina Severiana*, former *beneficiarius consularis*, who, after his honourable discharge, has become a member of the *ordo decurionum* in Sarmizegetusa, now a *metropolis*, and, afterwards, elected also as a *Ilvir* of the city. He must have been financially potent and a good soldier, discharged as an officer, member of the *officium consularis*, all these enabling him to become a very important man for his city⁷¹. His service to Sarmizegetusa has not been forgotten, even after his death. The decurions decide to allow the erection of an honorary monument, in the *forum*. The veteran had three sons and two daughters that are building this monument for their father. The sons are all three soldiers, two of them

⁵⁵ Clauss 1973, 96–97.

⁵⁶ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 34–35.

⁵⁷ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 35.

⁵⁸ Breeze 1971, 134.

⁵⁹ Four promotions to *beneficiarius consularis*, one to *beneficiarius tribuni*, five *beneficarii* from Lambaesis are mentioned as *ex frumentario* (AE 1917 18, 57), Clauss 1973, 109.

⁶⁰ Domaszewski–Dobson 1967, 35, *contra* Clauss 1973, 109. The only exception is that of T. Varronius Maro, who was a *frumentarius* for forty years (CIL III 2063 = ILS 2370, Salona). See also *supra* no. 11 and 47.

⁶¹ CIL XIII 6682, Mogontiacum, AE 1905, 25 and AE 1930, 151, Emerita, Clauss 1973, 110, Breeze 1974, 272.

⁶² CIL XI 1322, Italy, Clauss 1973, 110–111.

⁶³ A hypothetical promotion system, amongst the senior–staff ranks has been established by D.J. Breeze: *frumentarius* – *beneficiarius consularis* – *speculator* – *commentariensis* – *cornicularius consularis* – *centurio*. Breeze 1974, 269.

⁶⁴ The cases of CIL III 3524, Aquincum and CIL III 14479 = AE 1901, 154 = IDR III/5 426, Apulum. See Cupcea 2008, *passim*.

⁶⁵ CIL VI 3326, Clauss 1973, 112.

⁶⁶ CIL VI 486, Clauss 1973, 112.

⁶⁷ CIL VIII 2825, Lambaesis, Clauss 1973, 112.

⁶⁸ CIL VI 423, 1636, X 6657, Clauss 1973, 112–113.

⁶⁹ Clauss 1973, 113.

⁷⁰ AE 1933, 248 = IDR III/2 113, dated 222–235.

⁷¹ He can be considered the owner of several tile stamps, IDR III/2 560 or nos. 36–40 from Piso 1996, 176–178.

legionaries and one praetorian, all of them stand on senior–staff ranks. C. Iulius Valerianus is a *beneficiarius consularis*, Carus is a *frumentarius* and Fronto is a *scriniarius praefectorum praetorio*, in *cohors I Praetoria*. The two legionaries must have served in *XIII Gemina*, as their father, as no other legion is mentioned on the inscription. An interesting situation is that two of them, the *frumentarius* and the *scriniarius*, are, during their military service, also decurions. They are highly honoured by the people of Sarmizegetusa, with the grant of the decurionate in absence, a very rare and special privilege⁷². The curious fact is that the third son, which is a *beneficiarius consularis*, is not granted the decurionate, even if he is standing on the highest rank, from the three. The reason for him not being a decurion is not that of an incompatibility issue between the rank of *beneficiarius* and the metropolitan decurionate, but the fact that he is serving inside the province of Dacia, maybe even detached to a *statio* near, or in Sarmizegetusa, this not granting him any special status. The other two, must have their service in other places. The praetorian is serving in Rome, of course, as a personal archivist of the praetorian prefects. It is, therefore, highly probable that the *frumentarius* is also serving in Rome, or in other provinces. We have thus, a case of a *frumentarius* during his stage in Rome, in *castra peregrinorum*, serving, together with his brother, directly the emperor, in this case, Severus Alexander.

The other *frumentarius* from Sarmizegetusa is mentioned on a funerary monument⁷³. **P. Antonius Victor** was a legionnaire in *VI Victrix*, garrisoned at Eburacum, in Britain, and a *frumentarius*, dead at the age of 19. His father, P. Antonius Super, is erecting this funerary monument, not only for him, but also for his wife, Antonia Bonosa, for Aurelius Constantius, decurion of Viminacium, *eques Romanus*, dead at 45, and for another son, tribune of the cohort *III Delmatarum*, dead at 34. The relation of Super to the decurion of Viminacium is not clear, maybe some distant relative of him or his wife. Anyway, the "miserable father" is probably a decurion of Sarmizegetusa, as it can be seen from another monument, a small column for the *ordo augustalium*⁷⁴, or a tile stamp that could have been his⁷⁵. Back to the *frumentarius*, he had been enlisted since very young in the *VI Victrix* legion. We don't know exactly why he had gone so far away from home, but maybe it has something to do with the origins of his family, which is, probably one of immigrants in Sarmizegetusa. His privileged status, as son of a decurion and relative to *equites*, probably granted him the opportunity to accede to higher ranks early on, in his military service. That is why, already at nineteen, he is a *frumentarius*, part of the *officium* of the governor of Britain, and, probably detached in some mission. If so, maybe accomplishing that mission he had lost his life, and therefore is mentioned on this monument. It is an interesting case of a colonists family coming to Sarmizegetusa, but whose young try to return to their province of origin, maybe due to relatives that remained there. Another possibility is that of transfer along with the promotion, or after the completion of the service stage in Rome, but then he must have mentioned the other legions that he served in.

The other two *frumentarii* in Dacia have acceded to the rank of centurion, one of them becoming even an *eques Romanus*. **C. Titius Ianuarius**⁷⁶, from Drobeta, originary from Colonia *Victrix* – Camulodunum or Philippi, centurion of *III Flavia*, is mentioned on a funerary monument, erected by his freedman Titius Epipodius. After the mention of the legion a group of

⁷² Ardevan 1987, 121, Piso 1993, 326.

⁷³ CIL III 1474 = IDR III/2 379.

⁷⁴ AE 1933, 241 = IDR III/2 134, dated after 222, as the previous.

⁷⁵ IDR III/2 543, or no. 18 from Piso 1996, 166.

⁷⁶ AE 1959, 314 = IDR II 35.

two letters, *FR*, appears, reconstructed by the authors of IDR II as *fr(umentario?)*⁷⁷ A similar situation was discussed in detail by M.P. Speidel, found in several inscriptions in Lower Moesia⁷⁸. The same letter pattern is encountered in at least three inscriptions, two of them from the region of Montana⁷⁹, and one from Scythia Minor⁸⁰. In each of the three cases, the succession is, as it follows: name, legion (*I Ital(icae)* or *V Mac(edonicae)*), and after a single *R*. In all of the cases, the reconstruction was made to *(f)r(umentarius)*, but Speidel had proven them all wrong. The correct reading is: *(centurio) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) r(egionarius)*⁸¹. The presence of this rank is more likely than that of a *frumentarius*, because of the *regio Montanensium*, area of great economic importance, supervised by a police force of *regionarii*, under the command of a *centurio regionarius*⁸². The *regio Montanensium* extended to the north, to the Danube and to the border with Upper Moesia⁸³, therefore, the centurion in Drobeta must have been in a similar situation. In any case, there is more common for a centurion that mentions his legion, to be a *regionarius*, than a *centurio frumentarius*, which is written, in most of the cases by the direct succession of the two terms⁸⁴. C. Titius Ianuarius has to be considered as a *(centurio) leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis) r(egionarius)*, even if, maybe not the commander of the *regionarii* in Montana, but in any other area organized and controlled in the same manner. The mention, by a legionary centurion, of a previously held rank, especially, and only that one of *frumentarius*, is also not common. In my opinion, and in the light of those proven in Lower Moesia, the centurion from Drobeta must have been a *regionarius*, apparently deceased in the line of duty⁸⁵, as a commander of a security force detached in a most important economic region.

P. Aelius Marcellus, is a very important person of Apulum and Dacia. This *vir egregius* is known from three honorary monuments in Apulum⁸⁶ and one in Fulginiae⁸⁷. The single one that is in our interest is only the third one from Apulum, a honorary marble plate. His military and civilian career is depicted here, unveiling a worthy soldier and officer. He started as a *centurio frumentarius*, promoted to *suprinceps peregrinorum*, *praefectus castrorum* of the *VII Claudia* and *I Adiutrix* legions, *primus pilus* and *vir egregius*. His exceptional military career led to a similar civil one, as decurion and patron of Apulum, *sacerdos Laurentium Lavinatium*, and patron of the cities of Fulginiae, Forum Flavinium and Iguvium. He is a standing example of a *centurio frumentarius* that was promoted inside the *castra peregrinorum*, becoming thus eligible for the primipilate and legionary prefect⁸⁸. This man was an exceptional soldier, sent throughout the empire, after the completion of his service directly to the emperor, as a *centurio frumentarius*, to attend to command duties, and then, become an *eques*.

The *frumentarii* from the army of Dacia are attested also during various missions, throughout the empire. **M. Aurelius Berulus**, a *frumentarius* of *XIII Gemina*, dies during his stay in Rome, and is probably buried here, as his funerary monument attests⁸⁹. He is the single

⁷⁷ In IDR II, other reconstructions are *F(o)r(tis)* or *F(i)r(mae)*, therefore attributes of the legion, not a separate rank. Later on, C.C. Petolescu, in ILD, mentions another opinion, that a third F would have been omitted, thus the reconstruction should be *leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis) (f)r(umentario)*.

⁷⁸ Speidel 1984, *passim*.

⁷⁹ CIL III 12371, Montana, CIL III 7420, Almus.

⁸⁰ AE 1980 828 = ISM V 124, Horea, near Troesmis.

⁸¹ Speidel 1984, *passim*.

⁸² See also *supra*, no. 34.

⁸³ Speidel 1984, 186, proven by CIL III 7420, Almus.

⁸⁴ Or separated by *et*, as in AE 1996, 1540 = IDRE II 411, Apamea, Syria.

⁸⁵ Because he is not called *veteranus*.

⁸⁶ CIL III 1181 = IDR III/5 439, CIL III 1182 = IDR III/5 441 and CIL III 1180 = AE 1980, 736 = IDR III/5 442.

⁸⁷ CIL XI 5215, 5216, apparently the same monument. His *origo* is in Apulum, because of the Papiria tribe. Dobson 1978, 319.

⁸⁸ Dobson 1978, 318–319.

⁸⁹ CIL VI 3356 = IDRE I 25, Rome.

frumentarius coming from Dacia attested during his period of stay in *castra peregrinorum*. Another *frumentarius* of *XIII Gemina Severiana* attested in Italy is **M. Aurelius Sophaenetus**, this time detached for a mission in a *statio* on Via Appia. In this *statio*, himself and a colleague, Q. Haterius Valerianus, from *VIII Augusta*, raise an altar for the emperor Severus Alexander, the *genius* of *castra peregrinorum* and for all the army⁹⁰. This is the perfect example for missions of the *frumentarii* which occur during their stay in Rome, cases in which they are sent, sometimes in pairs or groups, even if coming from different legions, to do any police or messenger work needed at one time in the empire.

The other two *frumentarii* connected in some way with the army of Dacia, but attested elsewhere in the empire, are, in fact centurions. **Ti. Claudius Vibianus**, centurion of *XIII Gemina*, is also a *centurio frumentarius*, detached in some mission, in Phrygia, at Augustopolis⁹¹. In this case, the second rank is a promotion from the regular legionary centurionate. The other, **C. Sulgius Caecilianus**, honoured by a monument in Tukabur, Africa *proconsularis*⁹², a regular *vir militaris*, begins his career with the post of *optio peregrinorum*, that is a *principalis* in the fort on mount Caelius, and *exercitator militum frumentariorum*, that is a trainer, mostly present in cavalry units⁹³. He is then promoted to *navarchus* of the praetorian fleet in Misenum, then centurion of *XIII Gemina in provincia Dacia*. After another four legionary centurionates, he is again a *praepositus* in the praetorian fleet and, finally *primus pilus* and legionary prefect. This is the classic example of a brilliant career, beginning as *principalis* and ending as *eques Romanus*. Finally, a worthy mention is that of **Aelius Verecundinus**, centurion of *III Scythica*, *natus in Dacia ad Vatabos* (sic)⁹⁴, with the complete soldier career explained. His promotion system included the ranks of *exactus*, *librarius*, *frumentarius*, *speculator*, *evocatus*, *centurio et centurio frumentarius*, but, curiously, no tactical rank. Anyway, a valuable piece of information regarding the lower legionary hierarchy, even if no indication of any service stage in Dacia occurs.

The *frumentarii* would have been entrusted with most delicate missions, as other colleagues in the *officium consularis*, or detached to *castra peregrinorum*. The single special feature that they have is this double subordination. Even if they are elected and promoted by the provincial governor, they are sent in Rome, to train and serve, for a determined period, in *castra peregrinorum*, where they activate under the direct authority of the emperor. During this special grant, they are entrusted with various missions, representing the emperor, officially or not, in remote places of the empire, and afterwards they are sent back to the province of origin, to continue their regular military service. There, they continue to be part of the *officium consularis*, as *frumentarii*, until they are either promoted or released. In this situation, they are entrusted, this time by the governor, with missions as police agents in the province, completing the work of *beneficiarii* or *speculatores*. Some of them can be promoted inside the *castra peregrinorum*, to higher *principales* ranks, or to *centurio frumentarius*, fact that enables them to return in their province directly as centurions. Inside the provincial armies, they are gradually promoted to *beneficiarius*, *speculator*, and, seldom, directly to the legionary centurionate. They seem to have just military tasks, different from *beneficiarii* or *speculatores*, which also have administrative and law enforcement duties. This is maybe the reason for the promotion to these ranks, so that any prospective centurion would have military and administrative training.

⁹⁰ CIL VI 230 = 36748 = ILS 2216.

⁹¹ CIL III 7041 = 13654 = IDRE II 385. For a list of centurions of *XIII Gemina*, attested in other provinces, in the 2nd or 3rd centuries, see Moga 1985, 102.

⁹² CIL VIII 1322 = 14854 = AE 1956, 11 = IDRE II 431.

⁹³ Indication towards the mounted state of the *frumentarii*, most of them messengers.

⁹⁴ AE 1996, 1540 = IDRE II 411, Apamea, Syria.

The persons mentioned above, connected in some way or the other to the army of Dacia, are attested in different stages of their career. Four of them are simply *frumentarii*, mentioning their legion of origin. For the three of them we know that they come from *XIII Gemina*, and all seem to be attested during a remote mission. C. Iulius Carus from Sarmizegetusa is probably serving his stage in Rome or entrusted with some mission, as him and his praetorian brother are honoured with the metropolitan decurionate in absence. Another, M. Aurelius Berulus, dies during his detachment to Rome, so he is buried here, by his colleagues, with the mention of his legion, on the monument. In the case of M. Aurelius Sophaenetus, we know exactly the mission, that is the supervision of a road station on the Via Appia, known to be manned with *frumentarii*, along with a colleague from *VIII Augusta*. The second *frumentarius* attested in Sarmizegetusa is known from a collective funerary monument that tells us about his service at Eburacum, in the *VI Victrix* legion, dead in the time of duty, at the age of 19. He seems to have been either serving in the *officium consularis* of Britain, and there he had lost his life, or being detached with any mission in Dacia, closer to the home of his parents. In any case, his perspectives would have been promising, as he was a *frumentarius* already at 19.

The other five examples mentioned in this paper are all centurions, with some connections to the rank in discussion. C. Titius Ianuarius, from Drobeta, thought to be a centurion of *III Flavia* and *frumentarius*, has been proven to be *regionarius*, as many other colleagues of his in Lower Moesia, fact that doesn't make him any less important. A very important person of Apulum, P. Aelius Marcellus, depicts his exceptional career, beginning with the rank of *centurio frumentarius* and ending as *eques* and patron of more than one city. Another similar career is that of C. Sulgius Caecilianus from Africa, which, beginning with the rank of *optio peregrinorum*, spent a stage of his military service in Dacia as a centurion of *XIII Gemina*. Finally, Ti. Claudius Vibianus, centurion of *XIII Gemina* and *centurio frumentarius* is attested probably during a mission in Phrygia. A worthy soldier, that reaches the peregrine and legionary centurionate, is born in Dacia, Aelius Verecundinus.

What can be said about these soldiers' missions in Dacia or any other *limes* province? There are no special missions for the *limes* area. The *frumentarii* are active in any place of some importance to the proper functioning of the economic and administrative apparatus, not only on the borders. As part of the *officium consularis*, they can be detached in the *limes* zone, to do the police work there⁹⁵, but this is not more or less important than their work inside the empire's territory. They are very important agents of the Roman authority, representing the emperor in any situation, even if considered "dirty work". Their special training in Rome enables them to accomplish any security mission, to control the road traffic or information. Therefore, the *frumentarii* of Dacia have no special mission in their province of origin, except maybe of those regular missions entrusted with by their governor. Moreover, they seem to have been elected for missions across other provinces, as Asia or Italy. In this case, we must presume that *frumentarii* coming from other legions would have been detached with missions in Dacia, as to ensure the correct accomplishment of their duty, free from any connection with a former commander or colleague. Good for anything, the *frumentarii* are as important as any other military for the proper function of the Roman state.

⁹⁵ As are the *beneficiarii* in the region *Ansamensium*, Northern Dacia.

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