

TI. PLAUTIUS SILVANUS, TAURIC CHERSONESOS AND CLASSIS MOESICA

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Was it not for the famous elogium of Ti. Plautius Silvanus (CIL XIV 3608 = ILS 986)¹ from Tibur (Fig. 1), we would know nothing of the long and eventful years of his legateship in Moesia (c. AD 60-67)². The text informs one by one of how “he brought across (*transduxit*) into Moesia more than 100 000 of the Transdanubians, along with their wives, children, chieftains and monarchs, to become tribute-paying subjects (lines 9-12). He suppressed (*compressit*) an incipient disturbance of the Sarmatians, although he had sent (*missiset*) a great part of his army to Armenia to the expeditionary force (lines 13-15). He brought across (*perduxit*) to the river-bank which he protected, in order to pay homage to the Roman standards, kings hitherto unknown or hostile to the Roman people (lines 16-18). To the kings of the Bastarnae and of the Roxolani he sent back (*remisit*) their sons, (to the kings) of the Dacians he sent back their brothers, who had been captured or rescued from their enemies (lines 18-20). From some of them he received (*accepit*) hostages (lines 20-21). By means of these actions³ he both secured (*confirmavit*) and extended (*protulit*) the peace of his province (lines 21-22: *per quem* [sic !] *pacem provinciae et confirmavit et protulit*)”. Up to this point the text is narrated in the third person *perfecti indicativi* active, giving the *res gestae* of Plautius Silvanus whilst governor of Moesia, similarly as in lines 25-26, in which it reports that Plautius “was the first person to help (*adlevavit*) from that province the grain-supply of the Roman people by means of a large quantity of wheat”.

Of key importance for understanding lines 23-24: *Scytharum quoque regem* (sic !) *a Cherronensi* (sic !) *quae est ultra Borustenen* (sic !) *opsidione summoto* is the punctuation between lines 21-22 and 23-24 and the emendation in line 23 or 24 (Fig. 2), essential, if the sentence is to be grammatically correct. In CIL and ILS, H. Dessau put a semicolon after *protulit* at the end of line 22, admitting the possibility of *summoto* being replaced with *summovit*. The present author is of the opinion that the encroachment on the text of the inscription is more than just the exchange of *regem* for *rege* and that consequently, in lines 23-24, we are dealing with an expression in the *ablativus absolutus*, determining either time or reason, which in turn requires a comma instead of a full stop or semicolon after *protulit*⁴. Should this be true, the lines 21-24 would have to be understood as follows: by means of these actions he (sc. Plautius Silvanus) both secured and extended the peace of his province after putting an end to the siege (or having put an end to the siege or in result of

¹ I would like to thank Mr T. Plóciennik (University of Warsaw) for a discussion of lines 21-24 of the Tibur inscription.

² Cf. Ph. Fabia, “Sur une page perdue et sur les livres 16-18 des Annales de Tacite”, *RÉA* 34, 1932, p. 139-158; T. Zawadzki, “La légation de Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus en Mésie et la politique frumentaire de Néron”, *La parola del passato* 30, 1975, p. 60; M. Heil, *Die orientalische Außenpolitik des Kaisers Nero*, München, 1997, p. 29.

³ Up to this point, I have cited the translation by P. Conole, R. D. Milns, “Neronian Frontier Policy in the Balkans: The Career of Ti. Plautius Silvanus”, *Historia* 32, 1983, p. 183-184. Contrary to these scholars, however, I believe that not only *confirmavit*, but also *protulit* refers to *pax* and that the verb *proferre* is to be taken not in a temporal, but in a geographical sense; peace was extended beyond Moesia, between the mouth of the Danube and western Crimea. Conole and Milns translate: “... he both secured the peace of his province and prolonged it”; cf. L. Mrozewicz, *Exempla Prosopographica*, in *Studia Moesiaca*, Poznań, 1994, p. 20.

⁴ Cf. Zawadzki, *loc. cit.* (note 2).

putting an end to the siege or when the siege was put to an end) of Chersonesos, which lay beyond the Borysthenes (i.e. Dniepr) and was besieged by the Scythian king.



Fig. 1. Elogium of Ti. Plautius Silvanus from Tibur (CIL, XIV, 3608).

M. Rostowzew and with him many other scholars were evidently more convinced by H. Dessau's proposition, according to which around AD 62 Plautius Silvanus with the troops of his Moesian army carried out a military intervention in Crimea, against the Scythians = ? Sarmathians besieging Chersonesos. The expedition of Plautius Silvanus deduced from the Tibur inscription must have been intended as a means of introducing temporarily direct Roman rule in the Kingdom of the Bosphorus⁵ and initiating Roman military presence in Chersonesos⁶, a fact which could find confirmation in Josephus'

⁵ A.v. Domaszewski, "Die Dislokation des römischen Heeres im Jahre 66 n.Chr.", *RhMus* 47, 1892, p. 207-218; M. Rostowzew, "Römische Besetzungen in der Krim und das Kastell Charax", *Klio* 2, 1902, p. 81; W. Schur, *Die Orientpolitik des Kaisers Nero*, Leipzig, 1923, p. 87; C. Patsch, "Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Südosteuropa. VI. Bis zur Festsetzung der Römer in Transdanuvien", *SbAkadWien* 214, 1932, p. 166; J. G. Anderson, "Roman Policy in the Black Sea", *CAH* X, 1934, p. 775; V.F. Gajdukevič, *Das Bosporanische Reich*, Berlin-Amsterdam, p. 1971, p. 345; A. N. Zograf, *Ancient Coinage*, Oxford, 1977, p. 318; cf. V. M. Zubar, *Severnyj Pont i Rimskaja Imperija*, Kiev, 1998, p. 38-40.

⁶ Domaszewski, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 208; Patsch, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 168; Gajdukevič, *l. c.* (note 5); V.I. Kadeev, *Chersones Tavricheskij v pervych vv. n.e.*, Char'kov, 1981, p. 24; E. I. Solomonik, *Latinskie nadpisi Chersonesa Tavricheskogo*, Moskva, 1983, p. 17; Heil, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 153; cf. also Zubar, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 57 and see an overview of other Russian and Ukrainian studies on the subject in T. Sarnowski, "Plavtij Silvan i eskadra-prizrak na Černom more v I v. n.e.", *VDI* 1 (225), 2006, p. 117-131.

narrative (his reconstruction of Agrippa's speech) about three thousand heavy-armed soldiers (*hoplitai* = legionaries), who in 66 or at the very beginning of Vespasian's reign held in subjection "the Heniochi, the Colchians, the race of the Taurians, the people of the Bosphorus, the nations bordering on the Euxine and Lake Maeotis", and about "the forty battle-ships bringing peace to that once unnavigated and savage (Black – TS) Sea"⁷.

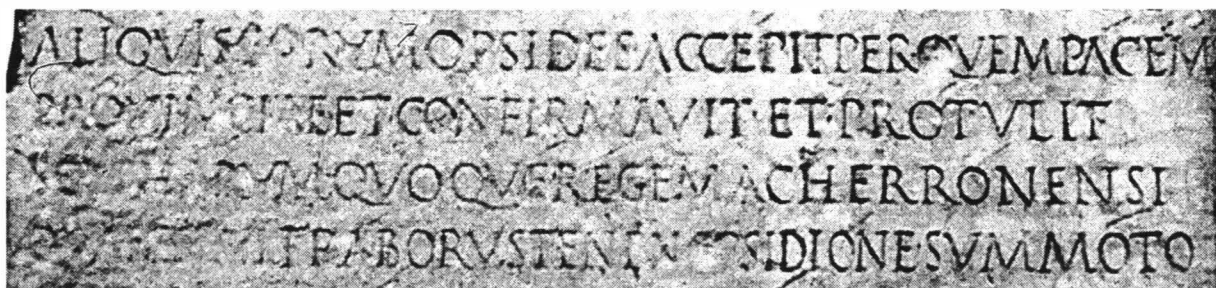


Fig. 2. Elogium of Ti. Plautius Silvanus from Tibur. Lines 21-24.

Soon after the inscription from Tibur was published, M. Rostowzew i B. Latychew began looking for confirmation of the expedition of Plautius Silvanus in the epigraphic material from Chersonesos⁸; an effort was made with time to include in the critical context also archaeological sources from Chersonesos and beyond. Even today the Ukrainian and Russian studies bring controversial statements concerning the sides in the conflict, its nature and scope, the causes and effects of military action in the Crimea and the character of the aid provided to Chersonesos⁹.

None of the sources considered hitherto in the discussion persuades to the conclusion drawn from Plautius Silvanus' elogium. This concerns not just the three undated decrees in Greek from Chersonesos, of which one, very fragmentarily preserved, mentions a king and Sauromates or Sarmatians in the context of information about an invasion by a big army, fires ravaging the Chersonesian *chora* and the construction of an embankment¹⁰, and the other two commemorate two otherwise unknown citizens of Chersonesos, who traveled on city business, one to Rome and the other as an envoy to the legate of Moesia¹¹. Neither is there any reason to link Silvanus' alleged expedition with a Latin tombstone from Chersonesos naming two freedmen killed by the Taurians¹². A new dating to the 2nd century and a new reading of Roman tile-stamps VEX/G RAV SP from Charax, linked since the times of Rostowzew with the Ravennate Fleet and the Crimean theme in the legateship of Plautius Silvanus in Moesia, eliminates this interesting source¹³. Evidence of destruction and conflagration on Late Scythian sites (Južno-Donuzlavskoe, Beliaus, Čajka, Ust'-Alma, Kara-Tobe and others) on the western shores of the Crimea north of Chersonesos, cited in the discussion¹⁴, confirms some sort of military action around the middle of the 1st century AD, but does not indicate that it actually took place in the sixties and that Roman troops

⁷ Ios. Fl., *Bell. Iud.* II, 336-337.

⁸ B. Latyschew, "La constitution de Chersonésos en Tauride d'après les documents épigraphiques", BCH 9, 1885, p. 274; M. I. Rostovcev, "Novye latinskie nadpisi s Juga Rossii", *Izvestija Petrograd* 27, 1908, p. 3; idem, "K istorii Chersonesa v epochu rannej Rimskoj imperii", *Sbornik statej v čest gr. P.S. Uvarovoj*, Moskva, 1916, p. 1-15.

⁹ Cf. Sarnowski, *l. c.* (note 6).

¹⁰ IOSPE I², 369.

¹¹ IOSPE I², 355 and 420.

¹² IOSPE I², 562 = AÉ 2000, 1280 (for the new dating).

¹³ CIL III 14215, 5 = T. Sarnowski, "The Phantom Squadron of the Ravennate Fleet on the Black Sea in the 1st Century AD", ZPE 157, 2006, p. 256-260. The following readings have been proposed: *Vex(illarii or -illatio) / <sub or curam agente or curante or instante or cum > G. Rav(onio ?) Sp(erato ?); Vex(illarii) G. Rav(onii ?) Sp(erati ?); Vex(illarii or -illatio) / <per > G. Rav(onium ?) Sp(eratum ?); <Per> vex(illarios or -illationem) G. Rav(onius ?) Sp(eratus ?); Vex(illationi) G. Rav(onius ?) Sp(eratus ?)*. Cf. also Sarnowski, VDI 1 (225), 2006, p. 117-131.

¹⁴ I. V. Jacenko, *Kratkije Soobščeniya Moskva* 124, 1970, p. 36; O. D. Daševskaja, *KSMoskva* 130, 1972, p. 62, 65-69; T.N. Vysotskaja, *Ust'-Alminskoe gorodišče i nekropol'*, Kiev, 1994, p. 14-16; S. Ju. Vnukov, in *Archeologičeskie issledovanija v Krymu 1993 g.*, Simferopol', 1994, p. 65; cf. Sarnowski, *op. cit.* (note 6).

were involved. The same can be said of traces of at least two episodes of conflagration in the 1st century AD on some of the farmsteads lying in the Herakleian Peninsula (= *chora* of Chersonesos)¹⁵. Dating the fortifications on the Ai-Todor cape (Charax) to the 2nd century¹⁶ has excluded from the discussion this Roman fort, which played an important role in V.N. D'jakov's reconstruction of events concerning Silvanus' expedition¹⁷.

Until new and perhaps less controversial sources are found, there is nothing to do but reconsider the Tibur inscription. Regardless of whether it is time or reason that we are dealing with in lines 23 and 24, the events around Chersonesos should be understood not as a separate action by the person honored in the inscription, referred to in the rest of the text with verbs in the third person active, but as an episode meriting attention but not equivalent to Plautius' other unquestioned exploits. The translation of the inscription in the sense that he himself put an end to the siege, as J. J. Wilkes¹⁸, for example, is one of a number of possibilities and not the most obvious one from the point of view of the grammar¹⁹. Sentence structure leads us to consider seriously the possibility that neither Plautius Silvanus nor any of his troops especially detached for the purpose actually participated in the Crimean war. Errors made by the author of the Tibur text seem also to speak in favour of this idea. People from the entourage of our two-time consul were evidently unaware of the correct or more likely the most common spelling of the name of the Herakleian colony (*Chersonesus*, *Chersonesos* or *Cherronesus* instead of *Cherronensis* as in the text) and the river Dniepr (*Borysthenes* instead of *Borustenes* as in the text) and like Silvanus they had probably never ventured east of the Dniepr (*ultra Borysthenem*).

The first six actions represented in the Tibur text were connected undoubtedly with securing the province of Moesia, which had been expanded fifteen years earlier, in the face of serious population shifts on the foreground of its new borders. The Crimean episode in the legateship of Plautius Silvanus, doubtless dramatic for Chersonesos, probably ended fortunately for the town without there being any need for Roman troops to land on the western shores of the Crimea. In the light of what we know of the territorial division of competences of the legates of Moesia, Pontus and Bithynia, and Cappadocia with regard to the northern Black Sea littoral²⁰, it seems very unlikely that a sizeable garrison posted to the Bosporan kingdom, the shores of the Azov Sea and the Caucasian coast, mentioned by Josephus for AD 66²¹, actually came with the expedition of Plautius Silvanus, which if it really had taken place, would not have reached as far as east as Chersonesos. I should think that the 3000 legionaries from the narrative of Josephus are, among others, a vexillation from the *V Macedonica* transferred to the eastern front before Plautius Silvanus undertook any action on the Lower Danube²². This clearly converges in time with the Bosporan ceasing to issue coins in the name of their king Cotys in AD 62 and replacing them with coins bearing Nero's bust²³. The common opinion is that the changes in Bosporan minting were due in all likelihood to Roman troops from Moesia being introduced into the Kingdom, undoubtedly during a crisis of some sort; it is hard to suppose, however, that the two legions under Plautius Silvanus' command

¹⁵ L. Kovalevskaja, T. Sarnowski, "La vaisselle des habitants d'une maison rurale de l'époque romaine dans la chôra de Chersonèse Taurique", *RCRFacta* 38, 2003, p. 229.

¹⁶ K. K. Orlov, *Architekturnye komplekсы Charaksa*, in *Architekturno-arheologičeskie issledovanija v Krymu*, Kiev, 1988, p. 24-25.

¹⁷ V. N. D'jakov, "Tavrika v epochu rimskoj okkupacii", *Učenyje Zapiski Moskov. Gos. Pedagog. Inst. Kafedra istorii drevnego mira*, 28, 1942, p. 45-57.

¹⁸ J. J. Wilkes, *Romans, Dacians and Sarmatians in the First and Early Second Centuries*, in B. Hartley, J. Wachter (eds.), *Rome and Her Northern Provinces*, London, 1983, p. 260.

¹⁹ Speaking in favour of this hypothesis is *quoque* in line 23, but the argument loses in the context of the active voice which is used continuously in the text.

²⁰ M. P. Speidel, D. H. French, "Bithynian Troops in the Kingdom of the Bosporus", *EpAnat* 6, 1985, p. 97-102; T. Sarnowski, "Das römische Heer im Norden des Schwarzen Meeres", *ArchWarszawa* 38, 1988, p. 63-65.

²¹ Ios. Fl., *Bell. Iud.* II, 336-337.

²² Sarnowski, *op. cit.* (note 20), p. 68. Also to be considered is *XV Apollinaris* on its way from Pannonia; cf. L. Keppie, *Legions in the East from Augustus to Trajan*, in Ph. Freeman, D. Kennedy (eds), *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, Oxford, 1986, p. 416-420.

²³ Zograf, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 318. Conole and Milns, *op. cit.* (note 2), p. 190, may be right in thinking that Cotys had fallen in battle against Scythian (or Sarmathian – TS) invaders.

(VII *Claudia* and VIII *Augusta*) could have provided 3000 men and yet remained viable to take the offensive against the Sarmatians somewhere at the mouth of the Danube and perhaps even deeper in the steppes of present-day southern Ukraine. The expression *ultra Borysthenem*, used in the text from Tivoli perhaps to ensure that the Italian reader would not mistake Tauric Chersonesos for the Thracian one, may inadvertently reveal the real geographic scope of action taken by Moesian troops. If the Greek inscription from Mangup in the Crimea, mentioning Plautius Silvanus, is – as Ju.G. Vinogradov thought – an Olbian decree²⁴, then the information it provides about dispatching Roman auxiliary units to Olbia (?) threatened by war would fit nicely with my conjecture.

In Agrippa's speech of AD 66, which Josephus reconstructs, there is mention also of forty battle-ships sailing in the eastern Black Sea. These must have been in all likelihood ships belonging to the *classis Pontica* established in AD 63²⁵. Perhaps the same ships from the royal Pontic fleet served to carry to Trapezus the *legio V Macedonica*, where it either did not arrive in full strength or else a vexillation of this legion was soon sent to Bosphorus. D. Kienast, who shared the conviction of a few other scholars believing that the Moesian fleet was formed already under Augustus²⁶, expressed the idea that the Moesian troops of both Didius Gallus in AD 44 and Plautius Silvanus in the reign of Nero were transported on ships of the Moesian fleet²⁷. It is not very likely to my mind, but hardly because the fleet was not formed until the Flavians, as E. Condurachi and M. Reddé would have it²⁸. It is true that we do not know the forming date of the Moesian fleet, which is first confirmed by a diploma of AD 92²⁹, but there are reasons to think that it occurred soon after the provincialization of Thrace already under Claudius, and not later than Nero's reign³⁰. It is not clear into what formation entered Tutius, a *classarius* discharged in AD 71 from the Misene fleet, who returned to the banks of the Danube after his *deductio* in Paestum³¹. The provincial fleet on the Lower Danube was either not yet among the formations, in which Tutius may have started his service in AD 45 or 46 at the latest, or else it was just under organization, resulting in recruits from the Lower Danube being sent to train on ships from Misenum. The diploma of AD 92 found in Dacia belonged to an unknown sailor of the *classis Flavia Moesica*³². If he entered directly into the Moesian fleet, which is not to be excluded, then the *classis Moesica* must have been in existence under Nero in AD 66³³.

In two epistles of the Moesian legate Flavius Sabinus (ca. AD 53-60), which appear to have been copied in the Horrothesia dossier from Histria³⁴ probably in the second half of the 2nd century AD, there is a record of two more or less vague *eparchoi*, Arruntius Flamma³⁵ and Asiaticus³⁶. A title that has yet to be

²⁴ AÉ 1996, 1357; Ju.G. Vinogradov, "Očerok voenno-političeskoj istorii Sarmatov v I v. n.e.", VDI 2, 1994, p. 167.

²⁵ Patsch, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 170; Anderson, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 775; D. Kienast, *Untersuchungen zu den Kriegsflotten der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Bonn, 1966, p. 110. J. H. Oliver, "Texts A and B of the Horrothesia Dossier at Istros", GRBS 6, 1965, p. 150 is isolated in his view that the information provided by Josephus should be linked with the legateship of Flavius Sabinus in Moesia (c. AD 53-60).

²⁶ G. Starr, *The Roman Imperial Navy, 31BC-AD 324*, New York, 1941, 130, p. 361; Kienast, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 110; H. D. L. Viereck, *Die römische Flotte. Classis Romana*, Hereford, 1976, p. 255; O. Bounegru, M. Zahariade, *Les forces navales du Bas Danube et de la Mer Noire aux I^{er}-VI^e siècles*, Oxford, 1996, p. 8.

²⁷ Kienast, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 111.

²⁸ E. Condurachi, *Classis Flavia Moesica au I^{er} siècle de notre ère*, in *Actes du IX^e Congrès international d'études sur les frontières romaines*, Bucarest, 1974, p. 84; M. Reddé, *Mare Nostrum. Les infrastructures, le dispositif et l'histoire de la marine militaire sous l'Empire Romain*, Rome, 1986, p. 511-524.

²⁹ CIL, XVI, 37.

³⁰ T. Sarnowski, "Zur Geschichte der moesischen Provinzialflotte im 1. Jh. n.Chr.", in: *Ratiariensia. Studi e materiali Mesici e Danubiani 3-4*, 1987, p. 263-264; D. B. Saddington, "The Origin and Nature of German and British Fleets", *Britannia* 21, 1990, p. 229 arrived to the same conclusion independently of the present author.

³¹ CIL XVI 13 from Dălgodelci (North-West Bulgaria) in the later Upper Moesia.

³² CIL XVI 37.

³³ Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 30), p. 223.

³⁴ ISM I 67 and 68; cf. Oliver, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 143-156.

³⁵ ISM I 67, lines 7-8 and ISM I 68, line 12; D. B. Saddington, "Praefecti classis, orae maritimae and ripae of the Second Triumvirate and the Early Empire", *JRGZ* 35, 1988, p. 303, no. 39

³⁶ ISM I 67, line 16 and ISM, I, 68, line 20; Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 35), p. 303, no. 40.

confirmed for the west shore of the Black Sea (*praefectus orae maritimae*), which Iulius Vestalis may have borne in the times of Ovid³⁷, is commonly attributed to these two men³⁸. Meanwhile, however, the political situation on the Lower Danube had changed diametrically. In earlier times only the Greek cities in the Black Sea littoral were directly subordinate to the Roman Empire and Vestalis could not have dispatched his official duties anywhere else. The Danubian shore with the Thracian strongholds at Troesmis and Aegyssus belonged to a client Thracian kingdom. The Histrian documents indicate that under Nero at the latest, financial decisions in the tax district of the Danube bank called *kataŮ toŮn ālstron oŮxqhj te/loj* in Greek, which H. Nesselhauf recognized as the customs of the Thracian shore, styled later in Latin as *portorium ripae Thraciae*³⁹ or *ripae Thracicae*⁴⁰, were being made by the Moesian legates.

The Thracian *portorium* district, which reached west of *Novae a finibu[s] canabarium Dimensionum usque [ad mare]*⁴¹ covered in the west the area controlled by the legion stationed in *Novae (VIII Augusta until AD 69 and later I Italica)* and territories further down the Danube, presumably east of the mouth of the Yantra river. It is this second of the listed above parts of the *ripa Thraciae* that is referred to, in my opinion, in the name of the Lower Danubian riverine command *ripa Danuvii*. We find this designation among the titles of M. Arruntius Claudianus, who was entrusted in Domitian's time with the *praefectura classis Moesicae et ripae Danuvi*⁴². Since the tax and command districts on the Lower Danube quite clearly did not correspond in the Principate⁴³, there is no reason to think that Asiaticus and Arruntius Flamma bore an otherwise unconfirmed title of *praefectus ripae Thraciae*⁴⁴, just as it is groundless to see a connection between the term *ripa Thraciae* in the name of the customs of the Thracian shore (*portorium*

³⁷ Ov., *Pont.* IV 7; PIR², I, 621.

³⁸ Patsch, *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 120; W. Reidinger, s.v. *Vestalis*, RE VIII A 2 (1958), col. 1777; R. Syme, *History in Ovid*, Oxford 1978, 82 f.; Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 35), 302, no. 33; M. Slavova, "Lines 26-32 of the Horothesia of Dionysopolis (IGBulg V 5011)", ZPE 120, 1998, p. 103 f.; Al. Suceveanu (in Al. Suceveanu, A. Barnea, *La Dobroudja romaine*, Bucarest, 1991, p. 26) and K. Nawotka (*The Western Pontic Cities. History and Political Organization*, Amsterdam, 1997, p. 58 f.) think that Vestalis had authority over the *praefectura ripae Thraciae*. A. V. Podosinov, *Ovidij i Pričernomor'e*, Moskva, 1984, p. 157 believes, that Vestalis commanded auxiliary units stationed on the Lower Danube. Cf. A. Avram (in: ISM III, p. 55): *praefectura civitatum* or *praefectura civitatum orae maritimae*.

³⁹ ISM I 67, line 69 and ISM I 68, line 69 – *Exemplum [decreti]* of the 25th of October, 100; H. Nesselhauf, "Publicum portorii Illyrici utriusque et ripae Thraciae", Epigraphica 1, 1939, p. 335; cf. O. Bounegru, "Începuturile organizării vamale în Dobrogea romană", Pontica 20, 1987, p. 137-145.

⁴⁰ ISM V, 10 of c. AD 155-161.

⁴¹ ISM I 67 and 68, lines 71-72; cf. Nesselhauf, *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 333 f.; A. Dobo, *Publicum Portorium Illyrici*, Budapest, 1940, p. 184 f.; S. J. de Laet, *Portorium*, Brugge, 1949, p. 203; B. Gerov, "Zur epigraphischen Dokumentation des Publicum Portorii et Ripae Thraciae", Epigraphica 42, 1980, p. 122; P. Ørsted, *Roman Imperial Economy and Romanization. A Study in Roman Imperial Administration and the Public Lease System in the Danubian Provinces from the First to the Third Century A.D.*, Copenhagen, 1985, p. 270. The station at Dimum was the last in the Illyrian *portorium* district.

⁴² AE 1972, 572; PME A 166. Al. Suceveanu, "M. Arruntius Claudianus et l'annexion romaine de la Dobroudja", *Ancient Society* 21, 1990, p. 266 is of the opinion that Claudianus served in the western part of Moesia; similarly Bounegru, *Zahariade, op. cit.* (note 26), p. 16 and A. Avram, in: ISM III, p. 54. To the contrary already Em. Doruțiu-Boilă, *Der niedermösische Limes unter Domitian. Zu einer Inschrift aus Ephesos*, in *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms II. Vorträge des 10. Intern. Limeskongresses*, Köln-Bonn, 1977, p. 291; Sarnowski, *op. cit.* (note 30), p. 264; K. Strobel, ZPE 71, 1988, p. 272; idem, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*, Bonn, 1989, p. 17, 127. The only known piece of evidence pointing to a (short) presence of a detachment of the *classis Moesica* in the western part of Moesia comes from Montana of AD 147 - AE 1987, 867: ... *cum vexillationibus leg. I Ital., XI Cl., class. Fl. Mo. ob venationem Caesarianam ... ursis et visontibus prospere captis* ... It is noteworthy that the commanding officer was a *trib. ch. I Cili*. P.C. Petrović ("Classis Flavia Moesica na Dunavu u Gorn'oj Meziji", *Starinar* 40-41, 1989/1990, p. 207-216) does not bring any additional evidence of longer presence of the Moesian provincial fleet in western Moesia.

⁴³ Sarnowski, *op. cit.* (note 30), p. 263 f.; cf. Avram, in ISM III, p. 59, note 240.

⁴⁴ So Al. Suceveanu, SCIVA 30, 1979, p. 48 f.; idem, "Sugli inizi della dominazione romana in Dobrugia. Punti di vista e controversie", in: *Quaderni Catanesi di studi Classici e Medievali* II/4, 1980, p. 487 f.; idem, *op. cit.* (note 42), p. 272; D. M. Pippidi, in ISM I, ad no. 69 and Bounegru, *Zahariade, op. cit.* (note 26), p. 37.

ripae Thraciae) and the term *ripa Danuvii* in the name of the Lower Danubian command district (*praefectura ripae Danuvii*)⁴⁵. Arruntius Claudianus' title seems to demonstrate that the *praefectura classis Moesicae* was not only more prestigious, but also earlier than the *praefectura ripae Danuvii*. It is not unlikely therefore that the *eparchoi* from the Histrian documents were commanders of the Moesian fleet in the 50s of the 1st century AD⁴⁶. It is doubtful, however, that the naval and riverine commands were already combined at this time. The Danubian prefecture responsible for the supervision of the lower stretch of the river frontage probably had a number of auxiliary cohorts assigned to it, and the first to appear in epigraphical records from the Thracian shore are dated to Flavian times. But if the Thracian *portorium* and the new provincial fleet could well have used the old Odrisian installations, such as the ones at Aegyssus and Troesmis mentioned by Ovid⁴⁷, the auxiliary troops had no choice but to build appropriate forts for themselves. Neither is it mere chance that in all likelihood the original and afterwards main naval base was located on the lowest stretch of the Danube, namely at Noviodunum. I am inclined to conjecture that in the Claudio-Neronian period the Moesian fleet was the only Roman military formation operating permanently along the central and eastern sections of the Thracian shore of the Danube in the first of its major roles, namely, in patrolling the river, intelligence-gathering, and in close support of active military operations. Not until the early Flavian period, probably once the Danubian prefecture (*praefectura ripae Danuvii*) was established on the lower course of the river⁴⁸, was it also involved in the construction and supplying of the first auxiliary forts.

I am not really persuaded by the view that the dual prefecture held under Domitian by M. Arruntius Claudianus continued to exist from the annexation of Thrace until Trajan's conquest of Dacia⁴⁹. D. Kribbe's surmise of a special command („Sonderkommando”) is more convincing⁵⁰. This command could have been appointed in Lower Moesia perhaps in AD 92, that is, when the war in Pannonia, in which the *V Macedonica* presumably participated, was ongoing⁵¹. Bithynia seems an appropriate parallel in this case, considering that during Trajan's Parthian war there is an officer commanding both the fleet and some land forces assigned to the prefecture of the shore⁵². The special nature of Arruntius Claudianus' command appears to be supported also by the fact that in an inscription of another prefect of the Moesian fleet from the Flavian period (Q. Atatinus Modestus) there is no mention of a *praefectura ripae*⁵³. E. Doruțiu-Boilă's comparisons with Pannonian prefectures are to my mind correct, but apparently only in part. Correct, because they show that the Lower Moesian military commanders were charged with more than just military duties, but incorrect when suggesting that the prefect of the fleet discharged these duties only as *praefectus ripae Danuvii*⁵⁴. Nonetheless, since for the shore commanders on the Middle Danube and Rhine some specific administrative duties, only occasionally mentioned in the official titles of the officers⁵⁵, were secondary to their prime military function (supervision of various

⁴⁵ So D. Kribbe, "Neue Inschriften aus Ephesos II", *JÖAIBeibl* 49, 1968/1971, p. 13 and Doruțiu-Boilă, *op. cit.* (note 42), p. 291. Cf. also I. B. Cătănciu, *Wallachia in the Defensive System of the Roman Empire 1st-3rd Centuries AD*, Alexandria, 1997, p. 153. She thinks that the two *eparchoi* were *praefecti ripae Histri*. Rightly to the contrary already H.-G. Pflaum, *AE* 1972, ad no. 572.

⁴⁶ So already Sarnowski, *op. cit.* (note 30), p. 263 f.; similarly Avram, in *ISM* III, p. 59.

⁴⁷ Ovid. *Pont.* I 8, 11 f.; IV 7, 21; IV 9, 75.

⁴⁸ In the list of prefects compiled by Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 35), p. 305-312 the first commander of a river bank (L. Volcacius Primus – ILS 2737; cf. *PME* V 124) falls under Nero. Possibly of earlier date is one Ignotus recorded by *AE* 1926, 80 as ...*prae]fec. coh. I Tyr., tribun. mil. leg. IV Scythic., praef. equit., praef. rip. Danuvi.*

⁴⁹ Doruțiu-Boilă, *op. cit.* (note 42), p. 289, 296; cf. A. Poulter, *Classical Review*, 1991, p. 409.

⁵⁰ Kribbe, *op. cit.* (note 45), p. 13.

⁵¹ See *CIL* III 7397; cf. G. Alföldy, *ActaArchHung* 11, 1959, p. 49; K. Strobel, *Die Donaukriege Domitians*, Bonn, 1989, p. 124.

⁵² *AE* 1965, 348: *prae]f. orae maritimae Am]astr(ensis) et clas[is Ponticae]*; cf. J. Moreau, in *Limes-Studien. Schriften des Institutes für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Schweiz*, 14, 1959, p. 84 f.; Kienast, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 116; D. H. French, "Classis Pontica", *EpAnat* 4, 1984, p. 55-57; Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 35), p. 312, no. 64.

⁵³ *CIL* IX 3609 = ILS 2707 a; *PIR*² A 1276; H. G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut Empire romain*, Paris, 1960-1961, p. 1608; Saddington, *op. cit.* (note 35), p. 312, no. 63.

⁵⁴ On the non-military duties of *praefecti classis Moesicae* cf. *ISM* I 359 and 360.

⁵⁵ ILS 2737: *praef. ripae Danuvi et civitatium duar. Boior. et Azalior.*

stretches of the river frontage), it should rather be assumed that Claudianus' dual post covered two separate prefectures with their own command districts.

The annexation of the Danubian part of Thrace to Moesia, which became a fully independent province only after the final dissolution in AD 44 of the joint command Moesia - Macedonia - Achaia, resulted in a land connection between the occupation zone in western Moesia and the former theatre of operations on the lower reaches of the Danube, but it did not create appropriate conditions for a military occupation of the whole Thracian section of the Danube river. It was merely the first, essential step in this direction. Organizing a limes and basing the border on this long and difficult stretch of the Danube required that the population relations be stabilized and on both sides of the river at that. In practice, this meant that the Moesian army's zone of operations had to be transferred from the right to the left bank of the Danube. It was not until Nero's rule that Plautius Silvanus undertook active operations north of the Danube. In all likelihood, the *tutela ripae (Danuvii)* mentioned in Silvanus' elogium, which rested on the Moesian legates from Nero's time, was largely exercised by the Moesian fleet formed under Claudius. The fleet was charged with shipping Moesian troops to the Crimea not earlier than in the beginning of the 2nd century, when either in Hadrian's reign or at the end of Trajan's rule a Roman garrison was first stationed there⁵⁶.

⁵⁶ The earliest dated Roman inscription from the Crimea is IOSPE, I², 674 (altar of AD 120 discovered at Charax). Originating from Trajan's time is IOSPE, I², 562 = AE, 2000, 1280.