

## CENTURIONS OF THE *III FLAVIA* LEGION IN DACIA<sup>1</sup>

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**Rezumat.** Centurionii din Dacia sunt cea mai activă parte a militarilor romani de aici. Au atât autoritatea cât și posibilitățile să se facă remarcați de-a lungul serviciului lor. Cu toate acestea, majoritatea centurionilor atestați în Dacia sunt simple nume și indicații de apartenență la o legiune sau alta. Acest fapt ne poate conduce spre o concluzie mai puțin strălucitoare decât ne-am fi așteptat. Aceea că viața și cariera unui centurion erau relativ statice, el practic ocupându-se o viață întreagă cu aceleași lucruri, probabil în același loc. Motivația cea mai puternică trebuie să fi fost de natură pecuniară, dar destul de mulți își doreau primipilatul și se vedeau în acea postură, destul de puțini ajungând practic la el. Cu toate acestea, putem spune că centurionul rămâne “motorul” existenței unui conglomerat de aproximativ 2000 de ofițeri profesioniști, instruiți și educați de armată pentru a fi apoi folosiți în absolut orice domeniu.

Legiunea *III Flavia*, pentru scurta perioadă în care a fost cantonată în Dacia, a lăsat urme adânci în istoria provinciei. În plus față de fructuoasa activitate în construcții civile și militare, ofițerii ei au fost cadre foarte active și eficiente în administrația și jurisdicția provinciei.

**Cuvinte cheie:** legiune, centurion, carieră, ierarhie, armată romană.

### 1. The *III Flavia* legion and Dacia

The history of the *III Flavia* legion and its connection to Dacia is long and sinuous. In the summer of AD 70, the former legion *III Macedonica* from Mainz, which had been disgraced by its conduct during the Batavian revolt (AD 69-70), was reconstituted by the emperor Vespasian under the name *III Flavia* and stationed in Burnum, Dalmatia<sup>2</sup>. Along with the occurrence of the Dacian revolts, the legion was moved to Singidunum, in Upper Moesia, even if traces of its presence are stretched all throughout the province and beyond<sup>3</sup>. From this garrison the legion has taken part in all the Dacian wars, both of Domitian's and of Trajan's<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-II-RU-TE-2011-2-0273.

<sup>2</sup> Cassius Dio, 55.24.3. The same happened to *XVI Gallica*, which became *XVI Flavia Firma*.

<sup>3</sup> Le Bohec-Wolff, 2000, p. 239-242. A large discussion on the subject is available also in Benea, 1983, p. 143-151.

<sup>4</sup> Piso, 2000, p. 208.

Between the two Trajanic Dacian wars, its garrison was established in the future province of Dacia, but the actual place remains unsure. One option is the fortress of Berzobis, in Banat, where the legion was surely garrisoned under the reign of Trajan<sup>5</sup>. The other, less accepted, is the site of the future *colonia* Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the capital of the province for a period, but which also has its uncertainties<sup>6</sup>. If no final remarks can be made upon this short interval, from the creation of the province, the legion occupies its fortress at Berzobis.

However, its traces, like in the case of the period in which it was stationed in Upper Moesia, stretch all throughout the province<sup>7</sup>. The evidence is purely epigraphic, but of two types. The most important one, the stone inscriptions, I will discuss later, as it fits completely in the subject of the paper. The military tile-stamps however, are another business and tend to reflect the work of the legion in the newly created province. Apparently, the tiles bearing the stamp of the legion *IIII Flavia felix*<sup>8</sup>, have been discovered in more than twenty settlements in Dacia, of which five or six auxiliary forts<sup>9</sup>. Of course that these are not evidence of the actual garrisoning of the forts by detachments of the legion, but of the distribution of building material and expertise of the legion on sites where it was necessary.

In the cases of involvement in civil building, as it is *colonia* Sarmizegetusa, the situation is slightly different, because in the case of this military colony, as in the other case of Thamugadi, the building vexillation of the legion was actually present on site and most of the building material was provided by it.

However, this is not the subject of the present paper, but is it worth to be mentioned. To conclude, around AD 119, the legion was moved back to Upper Moesia, in the fortress of Singidunum, leaving Dacia a single legion province, with a praetorian rank governor, the legate of the *XIII Gemina*<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. Centurions of the legion *IIII Flavia* in Dacia

One of the most prolific professionals of the legion, which was also active in Dacia is surely **C. Caesius Silvester** (CIL XI 5696 = IDRE I 126, CIL XI 5687, 5694, 5695, 5697, 5698-5701, 8051-8055, Tuficum, Italy). One of the most important characters of this *municipium* in Umbria, he had a most glorious career in the military as well as in the civilian structures.

First of all, we shall deal with his military career, which is detailed only in the statue basis CIL XI 5696. From his first post attested we could already place the character – a praetorian. His first important job was *beneficiarius praefecti*

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<sup>5</sup> Piso, 2000, p. 208; Strobel, 1984, p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> One of which was recently discovered under the shape of centuriation traces on the site, which would exclude any previous military installations. See Marcu-Cupcea, 2011, *passim*. However, efforts to argue in favor of this hypothesis are numerous: Benea, 1983, p. 153; Opreanu, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Such a registry was completed by Glodariu, 1966, and reissued by Benea, 1983, p. 153-156.

<sup>8</sup> This title is restricted to the reign of Trajan, Piso, 2000, p. 208.

<sup>9</sup> Glodariu, 1966, p. 431-432; Piso, 2000, p. 211.

<sup>10</sup> Piso, 2000, p. 211.

*praetorio*, not the highest rank in the guard, but surely one of the most valuable in relation to the proximity to important people. It is absolutely sure that close service with the praetorian prefect granted his chances for sure promotions. First of all, he was made *evocatus Augusti*, a rank high both in prestige and expectations, as he was a candidate for a legionary centurionate and probably primipilate. Before this happened we have information on his exceptional conduit in the Dacian Wars of Trajan, when he was decorated, as a praetorian<sup>11</sup>.

The primipilate of course occurred, but not before Silvester passed through no less than five centurionates in five different legions. His first centurionate began in *II Augusta*, in Britain, and consequently lead him all throughout the Empire. His next move was to the recently created province of Dacia, which conquest he was an active party of, probably during the legion *III Flavia felix*'s garrisoning in the fortress of Berzobis<sup>12</sup>. He probably moved along with the legion south of the Danube and left for the east some time during Hadrian's reign. We cannot say for sure, but the Jews' revolt probably attracted his transfer in the *III Gallica*, which was garrisoned in Syria, but moved to Judaea with this occasion. In this context occurs the transfer to *VI Ferrata*, as the legions were part of the same army. After his honourable service in this bloody conflict he was transferred for one final centurionate in Lower Germany, in *XXX Ulpia Victrix*. This long-term professional service could not end but with the exceptional honour of the primipilate, which occurred in *III Flavia felix*<sup>13</sup>, one of his former legions. As to why he returned in *III Flavia* for the primipilate, we cannot say for sure, but probably it was a matter of vacancy.

After this career peak, which he held only for a year, some time between the ending of the Bar-Kochba revolt (AD 136) and his attesting as a decurion of Tuficum (AD 141), he held also the rank of *praefectus castrorum* of the same legion. This is his last rank, afterwards he becomes a *primipilaris*, therefore an equestrian and he returns home.

Another option for the chronology of his career is that all of his transfers had taken place during the Dacian wars and in the short time after the creation of the province, when all the legions were together. In this case, he may never have gone in the East, going from Dacia directly to Lower Germany<sup>14</sup>.

In any case, the exact date of his retirement cannot be established, but it was shortly before AD 141, when he is already a decurion of Tuficum. His civilian career is just as prolific as his military one, attesting at least five honours, of which

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<sup>11</sup> Maxfield, 1981, p. 217.

<sup>12</sup> According to IDRE I 126.

<sup>13</sup> The occurrence of the title *felix* here is a bit peculiar, as it could tempt us to date it under Trajan. However the chronology of the civilian career from the other monuments impeaches this.

<sup>14</sup> However the praetorian decorations seem to indicate that he participated in the Dacian wars as a praetorian. To assume at least three centurionates concentrated in the short period of stay of all the legions in Dacia is not likely. On the other hand, he could have been decorated after the first Dacian war and centurion in the three legions until the end of the second one, AD 106. No such comments in Maxfield, 1981 or Dobson, 1978.

one is exceptional and one religious: *decurio municipii* (CIL XI 5694, 8051), *patronus municipii* (CIL XI 5697), *IIIvir quinquennalis* (CIL XI 5698, 8052), *curator viarum et ponticum Umbriae et Piceni* (CIL XI 5696, 5697) and *pontifex* (CIL XI 5696). As this very important person in his city, the *primipilaris* (entitled as so in CIL XI 5687, 5695, 5697, 8052) attends to different duties and concerns of the community, some of them in his personal name and expense – a sanctuary for Venus (CIL XI 5687), official weights and measures (CIL XI 5695) or again a temple (CIL XI 5700); and others in the name of his community and on public expense – CIL XI 8051. Of his civilian posts, the most important he considers *curator viarum et ponticum Umbriae et Piceni*, distinction in which he was personally delegated by the emperor Antoninus Pius, by AD 142 the latest (CIL XI 5696, 5697)<sup>15</sup>.

About his family little is known, only that his wife Cesidia Eutiche (CIL XI 5699) was of Greek origin and that he had at least one influential freedman (CIL XI 5697). Some other connections are presumed, but not sure<sup>16</sup>.

In conclusion, what can be said about this character? He was a traditional Roman citizen of Italian origin, who in search for a reliable and durable career enlisted in the praetorian cohorts, some time at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. His personal education and conduit lead him quickly to the peak of the soldierly career, and, following exceptional service in the Dacian wars he was marked for the centurionate and primipilate. He achieved this great honour as a true professional, by passing through five centurionates in which surely used his valuable experience. Finally, after proving himself in yet another conflict, he approached his European homeland for the crowning of his career as a *primus pilus*. Surely such a distinguished professional could not be deprived of the traditional rank held by men like him, the *praefectura castrorum*, which he occupied probably immediately after the primipilate in the same legion. However this is the high point of his military career. We could expect that such a man should reach at least one of the *militia equestris* at Rome and, why not, a procuratorship. In fact, we can notice that even privileged Italians, coming in the legionary centurionate from the praetorian ranks had their limits. After all, they were military men, of somewhat modest, but honourable origin, which were looked upon and used as field specialists.

Even if the title *primipilaris* granted him an immense privilege, that of actual member of the equestrian order, he searched only a quiet retirement in his hometown. However, as *primipilaris*, one remained permanently at the disposal and in the service of the emperor, and Silvester is selected in such a job by the emperor Antoninus Pius, as a curator of the roads and bridges of Umbria and Picenum, probably in the context of some major infrastructure works.

At least as important is **M. Calventius Viator** (CIL III 7904 = IDR III/2 205, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa; AE 1915, 42, Gerasa; CIL VIII 2532 = 18042, Lambaesis). He is a very interesting character, with a career developing at the

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<sup>15</sup> A very particular function, with which only two men from Tuficum are known to be delegated. Dobson, 1978, p. 249.

<sup>16</sup> Dobson, 1978, p. 250.

beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Some of the conditions and promotions in his career have led to a very dramatic story connected to Viator<sup>17</sup>. However, it is not all supported by the evidence.

The first monument is an altar from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, dedicated to the Celtic goddess of horses, Epona, and to the goddess of cavalry exercise camps. In this inscription we find the first details about the career of M. Calventius Viator, (*centurio leg(ionis) IIII Flaviae felicis / exerc(itor) eq(uitum) sing(ularium) / C. Avidi Nigrini / leg(ati) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)*). It confirms the status of Viator under the governorship of Avidius Nigrinus in Dacia, between AD 110/112 and 114<sup>18</sup> that of training officer of the horse guard. He is detached from the *IIII Flavia* legion, at this time garrisoned in Dacia, at Berzobis, where he is a centurion. Until now, nothing special: a legionary centurion that is detached to the governor's guard to train the unit in the Roman military ways. We know of several other such tasks of the centurions concerning the governor guards. The first interesting fact that appears in this inscription in the full title of Viator, not simply *exercitor equitum singularium (consularis / legati Aug. pro praetore)*, but also including the name of the governor. This is a common practice in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, until the time of the establishment of the *officium consularis*, when the personal relation between the officer and his *officialis* becomes an institutional one<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, we could argue that at this time the personal relations would have a significant role in the promotion and transfer prospectation of an officer, moreover, that some posts are related in time to the mandate of the superior officer.

The second source is an altar from Gerasa, Arabia, dedicated to Diana *Augusta*, in the health of emperor Hadrian. In this altar, some of the *equites singulares* of Hadrian (although not entitled *Augusti*), from the *VIII(?) turma*, led by Viator as *curam agens*, express their gratitude towards the goddess and the emperor. In this inscription, no connection to the previous career steps of Viator are made, he is only entitled as (*centurio leg(ionis) V M[a]/cedonicae* and *curam agens* of the *singulares*). There are several problems with this text and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. The most important is the dating, that can be established in three different time-spans: AD 117/118, immediately after Hadrian became emperor, AD 129/130, during Hadrian's visit in the East or after AD 130, during the Jewish revolt<sup>20</sup>. The second issue in discussion is the lack of previous details in Viator's career. Whenever this monument was erected, it was after the one from Sarmizegetusa, and therefore at least the first centurionate would be worth mentioning. But not the centurionate itself, rather the service in the personal guard of Nigrinus may have induced this inaccuracy. M. P. Speidel elaborated this very epic theory that Viator was the discloser of Nigrinus' assassination attempt on Hadrian, and that through this gesture he became a personal guard of Hadrian, and he followed the emperor in

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<sup>17</sup> Speidel, 1994, p. 47-49.

<sup>18</sup> Piso, 1993, p. 19-23 and Petolescu, 2005, p. 195.

<sup>19</sup> Dise, 1997, p. 274-283.

<sup>20</sup> Petolescu, 2005, p. 196.

all his journeys<sup>21</sup>. However, in one of his recent works, C. C. Petolescu counter argues the theory mainly due to dating reasons. By the time that Hadrian came to the Danube, in the spring of AD 118, Nigrinus was already executed along with the other conjurers<sup>22</sup>.

In this case, how can we explain the apparently tight connection between Hadrian and Viator, in spite of the latter's service in the proximity of a mortal enemy of the emperor? Another detail seems to be important in the dating of the second monument that is the lack of Imperial titles, except that of *pater patriae*, immediately refused by Hadrian, this also dating the inscription very early in his reign<sup>23</sup>.

Most probably the service of Viator in the provincial guard of Nigrinus ended with his governorship of Dacia, by AD 113/114<sup>24</sup>. Soon afterwards, the legionary centurion was transferred in *V Macedonica*, at Troesmis, in Lower Moesia, and perhaps left with a vexillation in Trajan's Parthian war. His connection to Hadrian could have occurred by the time that the future emperor became governor of Syria, Viator's experience in training horse guards ensuring him a rank in the Syrian governor guard. There is no evidence that he was an *exercitator* of this guard, only a *curam agens*, a term equal to *praepositus* and which implies full command<sup>25</sup>. Such a command is highly irregular for *equites singulares Augusti*, which have equestrian tribunes, but can be very useful in the dating of the inscription, probably very soon after the death of Trajan, when the guard of the governor of Syria became the first horse guard of emperor Hadrian<sup>26</sup>.

A third mention of Viator is presumed in CIL VIII 2532=18042, the speech of emperor Hadrian to *ala I Pannoniorum* in Lambaesis, that would imply the fact that by AD 128 the two are still together, however no real detail can be extracted and thus no conclusion<sup>27</sup>.

Returning to Dacia, M. Calventius Viator is one of the few examples of centurions in training of the *equites singulares*, especially in the period of the beginning of the province, when one could expect experiments in administrative practice, in this case attested not only in Dacia. However, it's clearly visible that the changes in provincial administration from the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century are not invented, but rather legal establishments of practices in place since the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The only question that remains is if Viator was part of the *primi ordines* as *exercitator equitum singularium* of the Dacian governor, and if so, why did he not mention his promotion in *V Macedonica* on the rank of *princeps* or even *primus pilus*.

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<sup>21</sup> Speidel, 1994, p. 47-49, 78, 91, 102 and 149-150.

<sup>22</sup> Petolescu, 2005, p. 196-197.

<sup>23</sup> *HA, Hadr.* 6; Petolescu, 2005, p. 197.

<sup>24</sup> Petolescu, 2005, p. 197.

<sup>25</sup> Speidel, 1994, p. 91.

<sup>26</sup> Petolescu, 2005, p. 197.

<sup>27</sup> Although Petolescu considers him as a tribune of the *equites singulares Augusti*. Petolescu, 2005, p. 198.

**Sex. Pilonius Modestus** (CIL III 1480 = IDR III/2 437, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa) is again a professional centurion and one of the very few of his kind that gives us chronological information about his career. Sadly he is a tragic character, dying at the age of 37, in the newly created province of Dacia, at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, a city that he probably help build. As in his funerary monument no retirement can be seen, we can use his term of service, *stipendis centurionis XVIII* to find his enlistment age – 18. Modestus became centurion as an *eques Romanus*<sup>28</sup>, his enlistment as such being clearly described as *ordinem accepit ex equite Romano*, another proof of the retaining of equestrian belonging even during the military service as centurion<sup>29</sup>.

Originally from Beneventum, Italy, therefore a honourable citizen since long, he sought a military career since early in his maturity. Probably the reliability of such a career in disfavour of the equestrian one lead many of the Roman knights to this choice in life. He was probably enlisted directly centurion of the legion *VII Claudia*, garrisoned in Upper Moesia, some time at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and therefore was caught up in the Dacian conflicts. Especially his future four transfers confirm this, all taking place in the legions participating in the Dacian wars<sup>30</sup> – *VIII Augusta*<sup>31</sup>, *XI Claudia*, *I Minervia*, *III Flavia*.

The erection of his funerary monument in Sarmizegetusa is a clear sign that his last centurionate was in *III Flavia*, in the time of its garrisoning in Dacia (by AD 119). Moreover, the monument also nominates the exact place in the battle order of the legion – *III hastatus posterior*, not a very high one, as we could expect, at least one of the *primi ordines*, but a regular *hastatus*.

This gives us some conclusions. First, an *eques Romanus* is not entitled to a centurionate between the *primi ordines* or even the primipilate *a priori*. Especially when he is enlisted directly from the civilian life, and doesn't come from previous military service in Rome, as this would weight as a clear advantage in this sense. Second, his career even if long, 19 years, was pretty much developed during the Dacian wars, his death occurring possibly shortly after the creation of the province, in which case he had no time for future promotion. Finally, no promotion pattern can be deducted from this career, as he probably became a *III hastatus posterior legionis III Flaviae felicis* according to vacancy rules. Nevertheless, he is one of the most civilized elements that colonized the new province, along with other Italians or traditional Roman citizens and legionary veterans.

**C. Titius Ianuarius** (AE 1959, 314 = IDR II 35, Drobeta) appears on his funerary altar raised by his freedman, Titius Epipodius. His place of origin is not

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<sup>28</sup> *Contra*, the authors of IDR III/2, that translate the phrase “*was made centurion, former Roman equestrian*”.

<sup>29</sup> For this argument, see Stein, 1927, 136-139, 238, 301; Zwicky, 1944, 91 and especially Speidel, 1993, *passim*, after the analogy to the expression *miles ex cohorte* or other similar formulas.

<sup>30</sup> Piso, 2000, p. 205-225.

<sup>31</sup> A peculiar exception?

sure, either colonia Victrix Camulodunum, in Britain<sup>32</sup>, or Philippi in Macedonia<sup>33</sup>, but he surely died at the age of 56 in Dacia, at Drobeta.

His military rank is a question of debate. The text of the inscription appears as it follows: *7 · LEG · IIII F F R*, and has been developed in several attempts as (*centurioni*) *leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis)/(f)r(umentario)*<sup>34</sup>. As it was previously suggested<sup>35</sup>, I don't think that this is accurate, and that even if the epithet *felix* appears for the *IIII Flavia* legion after the reign of Trajan, it should not be excluded. Indeed a look upon the inscription reveals no pause mark between the two F's, and moreover, a look on a similar inscription, of another centurion of the same legion, indicates the abbreviation *IIII Fl(aviae)*, when missing the epithet<sup>36</sup>.

In this case we would incline towards the reconstruction (*centurioni*) *leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis)/r(egionario)*, regarded as possible by M. P. Speidel, however not adopted since<sup>37</sup>. These *regionarii* are a not as well known category of legionary centurions in charge with the order and supervision of activities in key spots of the Empire. Where these *regionarii* are present, they seem to be in charge of an administrative unit called *regio*, under military supervision. One of the best-known cases is the *regio Montanensium*, around the city and the mines of Montana in Lower Moesia<sup>38</sup>.

We have also in Dacia a series of attestations of a *regio Ans.* in the most northern part of the province, where ranking soldiers, even if not centurions, are attested as in charge or present<sup>39</sup>. As these *regiones* under military supervisions are placed at key points in the Empire, Drobeta would correspond to such conditions, being the most important passage over the Lower Danube. In such a case, a *regio* under military control is not to be excluded, even if there is no way of knowing if this is a *regio* of Dacia or Upper Moesia, especially when at this moment in time the *IIII Flavia* legion is switching provinces.

To support the strategic importance of Drobeta from the military point of view, as passageway between two very important provinces, another centurion is attested here, **Iulius Strato** (CIL III 14484 = IDR II 34, Drobeta), on the funerary monument erected for his daughter. Even if no supplemental information is to be found, the man is clearly a (*centurio*) *leg(ionis) IIII Fl(aviae)*, therefore in a time after the return of the legion in Upper Moesia. Why is this centurion here, along with his family, remains a mystery. He is not retired, nor on any special duty that we can see from this monument. However, he is clearly living his life in Drobeta, at

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<sup>32</sup> As in IDR II.

<sup>33</sup> As in ILD.

<sup>34</sup> In IDR II (excluding *felicis*) and in Petolescu, 1981, p. 593-613, no. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Speidel, 1984, p. 186.

<sup>36</sup> CIL III 14484 = IDR II 34, also in Drobeta.

<sup>37</sup> Speidel, 1984, p. 186, note no. 8.

<sup>38</sup> On this see Speidel, 1984, p. 185-188. Other informations on the *regionarii* in Hirschfeld, 1891, p. 863-865 and more recently Fuhrmann, 2012, p. 222-228.

<sup>39</sup> For the *statio* of Samum and *regio Ans?* see Isac, 1994, Isac, 2003, Ardevan, 1991, Opreanu, 1994, and more recently Cupcea, 2012, p. 245-248.



more than 250 km away from his garrison. His origin in Drobeta is very hard to assume, because he is clearly a Roman citizen not of the first generation, part of a Roman family, and centurion of a 1<sup>st</sup> century legion.

As in the previous case, he must have been detached to Drobeta on some official duty which remains unsure, but which is surely connected to the Danube bridge/passage. In fact, Drobeta will remain all throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century an important spot from this point of view, a series of military and centurions of the legion *V Macedonica* being attested here, even before the legion moved to Dacia.

Remarkable through his funerary monument is **L. Valerius Seranus** (CIL III 8143 = IDR III/1 1, Kovin, Serbia), from the tribe Voltinia, originally from Italy or Narbonensis. The monument is preserved only in the drawing of L. F. Marsigli, but it reveals a very rich ornamentation, including an element seldom seen or presumed in the iconography of the centurions – a helmet with the transverse crest.

The matter of the distinction of the centurions in regard of his helmet has long been argued, and the single iconographic consensus that has been reached is the *crista transversa*, on top of the helmet. However, this is not sure, only supposed and poorly attested.

From the time of the Principate only one such depiction survives, the funerary monument of **T. Calidius Severus**, centurion of *XV Apollinaris* from Carnuntum (CIL III 11213), dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. In the lower half of the monument two reliefs describe practically this man's career: in one he is in the company of a horse – he was cavalryman and decurion of *cohors I Alpinorum*, and in the other his centurion equipment – *lorica hamata*, *ocreae*, centurion staff and helmet with the transverse crest<sup>40</sup>.

The monument of Valerius Seranus probably has another such depiction in its superior registry, a helmet with a transverse crest, at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Along with other iconographic consensus, as the *vitis*, the cloth or the wearing of the sword on the left hand, this is part of the very few distinction marks of the legionary centurions.

On the other hand, the monument is very complex also from the epigraphic point of view, at least two verses being present, but not decipherable and a long list of freedmen. At least ten of his freedmen are mentioned, all of them wearing this name, Valerius, the first two are his heirs and have his *praenomen* also, this being another clue on his social status and economic potency.

Due to the formula (*centurioni*) *leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis)* and to the place of discovery, meaning the province of Dacia, the monument must date from the reign of Trajan, when the legion was based at Berzobis<sup>41</sup>. Kovin must have been his country residence, where he was also buried.

Last but not least, **Q. Licinius Macrinus** (CIL III 1353 = IDR III/3 95, Micia) is a (*centurio*)/*leg(ionis) IIII F(laviae) f(elicis)* dedicating a monument to the

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<sup>40</sup> Bishop-Coulston, 2006, 96, figure 52/2; *Ubi erat lupa*, 80.

<sup>41</sup> Kovin is closer to Viminacium than to Singidunum and all the other epigraphic traces on site – tile stamps – belong to legio *VII Claudia*.

god Jupiter *optimus maximus* Heliopolitanus at Micia. The centurion is probably of Eastern origin, even if clearly a citizen and he dedicated to a divinity from Heliopolis/Baalbek, in Syria. He is not the only one who does this, another two centurions, of *XIII Gemina*, one of them wearing the same name – Licinius, also at Micia<sup>42</sup> and the other at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa<sup>43</sup> are expressing their loyalty to the Syrian god. One cannot say for sure but it is possible that they are connected, at least in origin.

### 3. Conclusions

There are at least two categories of military men of the *III Flavia* legion present or attested in Dacia. The first category is that of ‘war heroes’ from the time of the conquest of the province. From this category come the first three centurions studied here. They are men of good Roman origin, one of them even an equestrian, one of them a praetorian and at least two of them Italians, that decide at one time to try the professional military career. Their success is relative or they are attested on their way for success. One of them concludes a professional military career with the post of *praefectus castrorum*, probably in Dacia, and returns at home, in Italy to aid and develop his community. Another is a valuable professional in cavalry training, thus coming in the proximity of very important persons, culminating with the friendship of emperor Hadrian. Finally, the equestrian dies at a young age, but we can see from his career that he was on a good path.

Every one of these three had activities and lived in Dacia. C. Caesius Silvester was *praefectus castrorum* of the legion in its time in Dacia therefore he must have contributed actively to the legion’s building works in the new province. His most prestigious civilian post that of curator of roads and bridges in an Italian region can be a clue in his specialization in development and building practices as officer. M. Calventius Viator was the trainer of the horse guard of governor Nigrinus, therefore served in Dacia at least in the province’s first decade. He lived in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, at that time the governor’s residence, acting as training specialist. His career will lead him far in the East, where he will accompany Hadrian and climb up in rank along with the future emperor. Finally, Sex. Pilonius Modestus, the Italian knight, gave up the civilian comfort for the military career as early as 18 years old, he probably had a prolific activity in the Dacian wars and became centurion in many legions, on his way to the prospective primipilate. Sadly, by the time he was serving in Dacia he deceased and thus never reached this invaluable goal.

The second category is that of the men on duty, which includes the last four of the studied examples. These are again men of good origin, not new Roman citizens, coming from different parts of the Empire – the East, the Balkans, Italy, Narbonensis. However, they are in service after the conquest of the province and the establishment of the legion at Berzobis. They are part of that immense category of centurions that are simply *centurio legionis*, with a single exception. C. Titus

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<sup>42</sup> CIL III 1354 = IDR III/3 96.

<sup>43</sup> AE 1933, 18 = IDR III/2 243.

Ianuarius is probably in charge of a regio in the vicinity of Drobeta as regionarius. His work here can be connected to the one of his comrade Iulius Strato, their presence here enhancing Drobeta's important strategic role all throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Q. Licinius Macrinus dedicates an altar to a divinity from his country of origin when in service at Micia. Many legionary tile stamps and personnel are present here at Micia, a settlement and military camp built entirely by the Dacian legions. Finally, L. Valerius Seranus leaves us a clue of how a centurion helmet could have looked like on his beautiful funerary monument erected at his country residence in southern Banat.

It is very difficult to establish exactly the work of every centurion present in Dacia in such a short time span. However, they are not the only military personnel from *III Flavia* active in Dacia. At least two of the legion's veterans remained in Dacia, C. Antonius Capito at his country residence near Apulum<sup>44</sup> and Firmus in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, as decurion<sup>45</sup>. Later in the history of the province, the legion remained connected to Dacia, as an equestrian of origin from Napoca<sup>46</sup>, or at least Dacia, attends to the tribunate of the legion. Finally, another prefect of *XIII Gemina*, probably local, received the same rank also for the *III Flavia* and left for Singidunum<sup>47</sup>.

All these attestations, along with the numerous hints upon the building work of the legion in Dacia compose the complex picture of the activity of a legion, in this case *III Flavia*, in a newly created province. They are one of the most important agents of Romanization, because they are the first that come into contact to the fresh subjects.

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<sup>44</sup> AE 1994, 1294, Ohaba.

<sup>45</sup> IDR III/2 111, Sarmizegetusa.

<sup>46</sup> CIL III 14468 = IDR III/5 14, Apulum.

<sup>47</sup> CIL III 1201 = IDR III/5 448 (=436?), Apulum.

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