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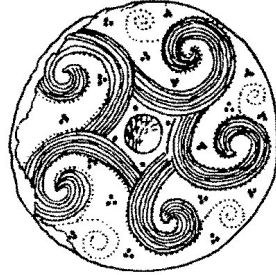
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A MILITARY DIPLOMA REGARDING *DACIA POROLISSENSIS* (14TH OF APRIL 123)¹

Cosmin Onofrei²

Abstract: *The paper analyses a roman military diploma discovered in Turkey. The diploma is a well preserved copy of the Imperial constitution of 14 April 123. It represents the oldest evidence, till now, of the existence of the province Dacia Porolissensis. After a brief introduction, we establish that in some military diplomas the situation of the auxilia is that from the moment of the discharge of veterans and not that from the constitution release and we state that the territory north of the river Arieş and of the upper course of the river Mureş, had not been established as a province on 12 November 119. For the moment, we can say that Dacia Porolissensis must have been founded between the 12th of November 119 and 14th of April 123. In the second part of the study we talk about the holder of the diploma, the Syrian Zacca, and his large family. After we analyzed all the names from the text we established that the holder of the diploma and some of his children bear traditional Syrian names, while the wife, together with the other children, have roman, Iranian or mythological Greek names. We have a mixed family of Syrians and Thracians, showing a certain degree of Romanization.*

Keywords: *military diploma, auxilia, province, Syrian, Thracian.*

The military diploma in question was found in Urfa (Turkey). Its dimensions are 16.9 × 13.1 cm and it is now kept at Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz³:

Tabella I extrinsecus:

Imp(erator) Caesar divi Traiani Parthici f(ilius) divi / Nervae nepos Traianus Hadrianus Aug(ustus)/pontifex max(imus) tribun(icia) potest(ate) VII co(n)s(ul) III proco(n)s(ul)/ equitib(us) et peditib(us) qui militaver(unt) in coh(orte) II Fia-/ via Commagenor(um) et pedit(i)b(us) Britann(icianis) quael sunt in Dacia Superiore sub Iulio Severo/ item alae I Britton(um) c(ivium) R(omanorum) et coh(ortis) II/ Gallor(um) Mace-/ donic(ae) translatis in Dacia Porolissensis sub/ Livio Grato quinis et vicenis pluribusvel stipendis emeritis dimiss(is) honesta mis-/ sione quorum nomina subscripta sunt/ ipsi liberis posterisq(ue) eorum civitatem/dedit et conubium cum uxoribus quas tunc/ habuissent cum est civitas iis data aut/ siqui caelibes essent cum iis quas postea/ duxissent dumtaxat singuli singulas/ a(n)te d(iem) XVIII K(alendas) Mai(as)/ Q. Articuleio Paetino L Venuleio Aproniano co(n)s(ulibus)/ Coh(ors) II Flavia Commagenor(um) cui praest/ Ulpius Victor/ ex equite/ Zaccae Pallaei f(ilio) Syro et Iuliae Bithi fil(iae) Florentinae uxor(i) eius Besse(ae)/ et Arsamae filio eius et Abisalmae f(ilio) eius/ et Sabino filio eius et Zabaeo f(ilio) eius/ et Achilleo f(ilio) eius et

¹ This paper is a revised and translated version of ONOFREI 2006, 37–43.

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³ PFERDEHIRT 2004, 22, Pl. 39; ILD 20.

Sabinae fil(iae) eius./ Descriptum et recognitum ex tabula ae-/ nea quae fixa est Romae in muro post/ templ(um) divi Aug(usti) ad Minervam

Tabella 1 intus:

Imp(erator) Caesar divi Traiani Parthici filius) divi Nervae/ nepos Traianus Hadrianus Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(hnus)/ tribun(icia) potest(ate) VII co(n)s(ul) III pro co(n)s(ul)/ eq(uitibus) et ped(itibus) qui mil(itaverunt) in coh(orte) II Fl(avia)/ Comm(agenorum) et ped(itibus)/ Britt(annicianis) quae sunt in Dac(ia) Superior(e) sub Iulio/ Severo item alae I Britt(onum) c(ivium) R(omanorum) et coh(ortis) II Gallor(um)/ Maced(onicae) translatis in Dac(ia) Poroliss(ensi) sub Livio/ Grato quin(is) et vici(is) pluribusve stipend(iis)/ emerit(is) dimiss(is) honest(a) miss(ione) quor(um) nom(i)nal subscript(a) sunt ipsis liber(is) costersque (!) eor(um)/ civitat(em) dedit et conub(ium) cum uxorib(us) quas/ tunc habuiss(ent) cum est civit(as) iis data aut/ siqui c[a]elib(es) ess(ent) cum iis quas postea

The Making of a Province

The diploma is a copy of the imperial constitution of 14 April 123 and also the oldest evidence so far of the existence of the province Dacia Porolissensis. In the specialized historiography more opinions have been issued regarding the exact date/year of the province's foundation⁴.

The epigraphic discoveries ruled out the first scenario, assuming the founding of the province in the time of Antoninus Pius⁵ but they also gave birth to new assumptions on the year of the province's establishment. Based on Hadrian's travel on the Lower Danube, Constantin Daicoviciu and Dumitru Protase proposed the year 124 as the foundation date of the province⁶. I. I. Russu assumed a broader range, of sometime between 120–123, as Dacia Porolissensis is already attested by the military diploma from Gherla (dated in 10 August 123)⁷. With the advent of this last diploma from Gherla, there was always the assumption that Dacia Porolissensis was born simultaneously with the other two Dacian provinces. C. C. Petolescu has proved that the holders of the two diplomas from Porolissum (29 June 120) and Cășei (29 June 120) were not those who have lost these official documents, but more likely their offspring and thus the year 120 cannot be proposed as the earliest date for the foundation of the province in question. This demonstration excludes the idea of the Palmyrean archers' settlement in the two stations above mentioned, as these have most likely arrived at Porolissum from Tibiscum, where palmyrenii Sagittarii are still documented in 126⁸.

The military diploma of Gherla (10 August 123) was also analyzed by Ioan Piso, who states that the constitution is issued in the year 123, but the discharge of the soldiers takes place earlier, sometime in 119⁹. The distinctive feature of the 123 diploma is the fact that the disbandment of veterans took place in 119, under Q. Marcius Turbo, while the issuance of the constitution and the release of the diploma only took place in 123. The troops mentioned in the diploma belong to the armies of Lower Pannonia and Dacia Porolissensis.

It is possible that the situation of the troops, as stated in a military diploma, is actually that from the moment of disbandment of veterans and not that from the constitution release.

⁴ Foundation of the province in the time Antoninus Pius, after dividing the territory of Dacia (*Dacia Superior* and *Dacia Inferior*) under Hadrian: DAICOVICIU 1945; MACREA 1969, 29–94.

⁵ In order discovery, diplomas from Gherla are dating back to 2 July 133 and 10 August 123 (IDR I, 7, 11; RMD I, 21, 35)

⁶ PISO 1993, 34.

⁷ The range is determined by analyzing the military diplomas discovered at *Porolissum* (IDR, I, 6) and Cășei (IDR, I, 5; RMD, I, 17), in which is attested only *Dacia Superior* (IDR, I, 16–28, 28; RMD I, 21).

⁸ PETOLESCU 1985, 45–55

⁹ PISO 1993, 34.

Examples for this are the diplomas of 106/110 from *Porolissum*¹⁰, documenting the foundation of Dacia in 11 August 106, or the one of 179 from *Drobeta*¹¹. If these allegations are correct, then *Dacia Porolissensis* is attested by the Gherla diploma not in 123, but already in 119¹².

The recently discovered new military diploma¹³, supplemented by a small fragment¹⁴ and dated in 12 November 119, mentions seven auxiliary units (one *ala* and six *cohortes*) who are in *Dacia Superior* under Iulius Severus, the same as in our diploma. Moreover, two of the cohorts stationed on that date in *Dacia Superior* (*Cohors I Britannica milliaria c. R. equitata* and *Cohors I Brittonum milliaria Ulpia torquata pia fidelis c. R.*) are subsequently transferred to *Dacia Porolissensis*, where they are then mentioned in several military diplomas: *Cohors I Britannica c. R.* in diplomas from 123, 124/12, 133, 154, 161 (probably) and in other four diplomas from 164, while *Cohors I Brittonum pia fidelis c. R.* in the diplomas from 133, 135, 154, 161 (with question mark, as the other troop) and in four diplomas of 164¹⁵.

From all that was been explained above, we can deduce the fact that the territory north of the river Arieș and of the upper course of the river Mureș, had not been established as a province, on 12 November 119, by territorial separation from *Dacia Superior*. Until new findings emerge, we can say that *Dacia Porolissensis* must have been founded sometime between the 12th of November 119 and 14th of April 123.

The troops mentioned in our diploma are: *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum, pedites Britannici, Ala I Brittonum civium Romanorum* and *Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica*. The first two are stationed in *Dacia Superior*, as part of the occupation army here. *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum* is attested in *Moesia Superior* by the diplomas from the years 96, 101 and 103/107, but also in *Dacia* (listed among those troops mentioned in the military diplomas of 14 October 109 and 2 July 110), and later in *Dacia Superior* (apart from that presented here, by the diplomas from 136/138, 144, 157 and 179), being encamped at Micia (Vețel, Hunedoara county)¹⁶. The irregular unit of *pedites* is mentioned in *Moesia Superior* by a diploma from 103/107, and in *Dacia* they are attested by the diploma of 17 February 110: *pedites singulares Britannici*, and 2 July 110: *pedites Britannici*. They reappear in the diploma from Tibiscum: 13 December 157 [*ped*]it(es) singul(ares) Britannic(i), and in 179 in *Drobeta*: *vexillatio peditum singular(ium) Britannicianorum*. Subsequently, they are organized into a numerous, with the garrison at Cigmău (Hunedoara county)¹⁷.

Ala I Brittonum c. R. is also attested only in the diplomas from Gherla and Čovdiv of 10 August 123¹⁸ and *Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica* is brought among the occupation troops of *Moesia Superior* (it is mentioned in two military diplomas, from the years 94 and 100) and appears, before 123, only in *Dacia*, in the diplomas from 14 October 109, 17 February 110, 2 July 110, afterwards reappearing in 156/157 in *Moesia Superior*¹⁹.

Three of the troops listed above come from *Moesia Superior*, as well as the vast majority of auxiliary troops from *Dacia*, which were temporarily stationed in the South-Danubian province by Trajan, to their use in the wars against Decebal. *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum, Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica* and the *pedites* unit are mentioned among the troops in the military diplomas of the years 109 and 110, when soldiers from the contingents that fought in the Dacian wars were

¹⁰ CIL XVI, 160; IDR I, 1.

¹¹ PISO/BENEA 1984, 263–295; RMD II, 123.

¹² PISO 1985, 472–473.

¹³ ECK/MACDONALD/PANGERL 2001, 27–36; RMD V, 351.

¹⁴ ECK ET AL. 2002–2003, 48–50; RMD V, 351.

¹⁵ PETOLESCU 2002, 86–88, with the bibliography.

¹⁶ PETOLESCU 2002, 97, with the bibliography.

¹⁷ PETOLESCU 2002, 129, with the bibliography.

¹⁸ PETOLESCU 2002, 68, with the bibliography.

¹⁹ PETOLESCU 2002, 105, with the bibliography.

discharged, thus indicating their direct involvement in the conflict²⁰. *Ala I Brittonum c. R.* does not appear until the year 123, but the holder of the Gherla diploma, *ex gregale Glavo Navati f(ilio) Sirm(io)*, is discharged in 118 by Q. Marcius Turbo, although in 123 the units were under the command of Livius Gratus. In the case of this cavalry troop we can only assume that it participated in the Dacian wars, because the only data regarding *Ala I Brittonum c. R.* come from Dacia.

From the text of the diploma we can see that *Ala I Brittonum c. R.* and *Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica* are *translatae in Dacia Porolissensi*. We have analogies for this expression in another military diploma, in which *Cohors I Hispanorum* and *Cohors I Thebaeorum* appear as *ex translatarum in Iudaeam* from Egypt²¹. The two units are *Dacia Porolissensis* under the command of Livius Gratus (mentioned also in the text of the 123 diplomas from Gherla and Čovdiv as *procurator of Dacia Porolissensis*), and reassembling the four units and moving two of them in *Dacia Porolissensis* is explained by C. C. Petolescu with the following: “*these troops had been sent on an expedition, probably the oriental one, from where they had recently returned*”²².

The explanation for the use of the term *translatae* in the case of the two auxiliary units mentioned in the diploma can be quite a simple one, of geographical and administrative nature. *Ala I Brittonum c. R.* and *Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica* were stationed in *Dacia Superior* before the foundation of the province *Dacia Porolissensis*. From there, they are either moved further north or remain in their old garrisons, which, after drawing the border between the two provinces, will belong to the territory of *Dacia Porolissensis*.

The four auxiliary units are mentioned together as they were probably a tactical squad. The discharge of soldiers happens under Iulius Severus, when all belonged to *Dacia Superior*, but the constitution is drafted later, when *Dacia Porolissensis* was already a province and *Ala I Brittonum c. R.* and *Cohors II Gallorum Macedonica* were under the command of Livius Gratus. Thus it was necessary to recall, by the means of the term *translatae*, that the two units were encamped in *Dacia Superior* when the discharge of soldiers occurred, but, when actually writing the diploma, they were already on the territory of *Dacia Porolissensis*.

Another interesting thing is that Iulius Severus appears as the governor of *Dacia Superior* in the military diplomas for a very long time span (119–126)²³. He is the only governor who has a mandate twice as long (seven years) than that of those who followed. Also during his mission the reform of Hadrian, started with Turbo, continued, being completed with the establishment of *Dacia Porolissensis*.

The Syrian *Zacca* and his Family

The copy of the imperial constitution is given to *Zacca, Pallaei f., Syrus, ex equite* in *Cohors II Flavia Commagenorum*. In the diploma also stands out the troop commander's name, *Ulpius Victor*. The current veteran was recruited at the latest in the year 98, and his ethnic shows the concern of the Roman officials regarding the completion of unit's personnel with recruits from the same area and with the same skills. *Zacca* appears in Greek form as *Ζακχαῖος, Ζαχχαῖος*²⁴, *Ζαχχεος, Ζαχχος, Ζακχεος*²⁵. The form *Zaki* is common in Egypt²⁶ and *Zakabaha* in Lycia²⁷.

²⁰ For Dacian Wars under Trajan: STROBEL 1984.

²¹ PFERDEHIRT 2004, 65.

²² The author mentions only three auxiliary units, one attested in *Dacia Superior* and two in *Dacia Porolissensis* (ILD, 36).

²³ In chronological order: ILD, 14 (12 april 119); IDR I, 5 = RMD, 17 (Căței, 29 june 120) and IDR I, 6 (Porolissum, 29 june 120); ILD, 20 (14 april 123); IDR I, 8 = RMD, 27 (Tibiscum 126); IDR I, 9 = RMD, 28 (Tibiscum 126).

²⁴ WUTHNOW 1930, 49.

²⁵ DANA 2004–2005, 70; for *Pallaeus*, see: CIL V 7095; CIL VI 22462; DANA 2004–2005, 70, n. 7.

²⁶ RYCKMANS 1934–1935, I, 69.

²⁷ ZGUSTA 1964, § 1357.

The anthroponym is not yet found again in Dacia, but is attested in Africa, where the Punic cultural tradition is maintained also in the Roman times. The name is the Latin translation of Zakar=Memor, which is interpreted etymologically as *le dieu s'est souvenu, c'est-à-dire a epergne*²⁸. His children also bear Semitic names – *Zabaeus*²⁹. The anthroponym is close to the forms *Zabidas*, *Zabdas*, *Zabdaios*³⁰. ZB is an abbreviation of names like ZBD 'or ZBDY. ZB 'is hypocoristic, translated by *gift, gave*, with him anthroponyms being formed, as *Zebaios* for example. ZBD 'is itself hypocoristic, being translated by *his gift*, ZBDBOL (*Zabdibol = gift of Bol*), ZBDBL (*Zabdibel = gift of Bel*)³¹. *Abisalma*³² consists of *Salma*, the brother of Salmat goddess (SLMT) and *Abi*, who in many cases may indicate a deity, in this case Salma. As analogies we can use the following anthroponyms: *Abigail*, *Abiezer*, *Abiel*³³. It should however be noted that 'Ab (*father*) is no longer used as a Godbearer name in the imperial times, at least not in Palmyra³⁴.

The other sons of our veteran bear Iranian names – *Arsama*³⁵, roman names – *Sabinus* and *Sabina*, and mythological Greek names – *Achilleus*, the latter indicating an existing fashion throughout the Empire. His wife, *Iulia Florentina*, daughter of *Bithus*, has Thracian origin. In this case we have a mixed family of Syrians and Thracians, showing a certain degree of Romanization. The holder of the diploma and some of the children bear traditional Syrian names, while the wife, together with the other children, have Roman names, but she also wishes to recall that she is originally Thracian, just like her father. By keeping Godbearer names or reminders of their ethnicity, these Roman citizens try to preserve a little of the tradition specific to their homeland. The degree of acculturation can be seen in the onomastics, as taking Roman names by themselves or their children, indicates their desire to blend with the multiethnic and multicultural society of the Roman Empire.

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²⁸ LASSERE 1988, 95.

²⁹ WUTHNOW 1930, 47, Ζαβαίος, Ζαββαίος; RMD IV 307, *Zabdaeus* from *Doliche* (DANA 2004–2005).

³⁰ LITTMAN 1943, 312b; CANTINEAU 1930–1932, II, 91.

³¹ STARK 1971, 85; WUTHNOW 1930, 48, *Zabdila*, at *Dura Europos* attested *Zebaios*; CANTINEAU 1930, no. 19, *Odenathus* statue erected in his honor by *Septimius Zabdi*, supreme commander of Palmyrene troops, and general, *Septimius Zabbai*.

³² See *Salmas* son of *Ramius* from *Porolissum*. See also: RYCKMANS 1934–1935, I, 36; CANTINEAU 1930–1932, II, 55.

³³ BERNARDI 1988, 77.

³⁴ STARK 1971, 63.

³⁵ ZGUSTA 1964, § 107–113; DANA 2004–2005, 70–71.

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