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A CONTEXT FOR A DEDICATION BY FIVE CAVALRY REGIMENTS TO  
A CORNELIUS SCIPIO IN ROME?

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## A CONTEXT FOR A DEDICATION BY FIVE CAVALRY REGIMENTS TO A CORNELIUS SCIPIO IN ROME?\*

In the second half of the 1960s an inscription was found in the Vatican commemorating a dedication by the prefects of five alae to a P. Cornelius P.f. Scipio. It has been published by M.Castelli,<sup>1</sup> who has accorded it a full discussion. The text reads:

P. Cornelius P.f. Scipion[i---]  
pr. pro cos. leg. diui Au[g.---]  
tr. pl. q. pro pr. Xuiro stl[it.---]  
alae V Astyrum [---]  
Agrippiana praef. N[---]  
Hispanorum ueterana p[raef.---]  
Praetoria praef. [---]  
Hispanorum Tironum [---]

It is flanked by another inscription to an Orestinus:

[---]o Orestino  
[---]i Caesaris  
[---]iudicand.  
[---]cundae

The length of the lacunae can unfortunately not be established. Since Scipio held the post of 'leg. diui Aug.' the inscription can be dated to the principate of Tiberius. Unfortunately the names of the five cavalry prefects<sup>2</sup> no longer survive.

Can a suitable context be found for the dedication? The regiments were the Alae Asturum, Agrippiana, Hispanorum Veterana, Praetoria, Hispanorum Tironum. If they may be presumed to have operated together in a particular campaign, is it possible to identify it?<sup>3</sup>

The most distinctive of the regiments is the Ala Praetoria. This was commanded for a period of four years by C. Fabricius Tuscus<sup>4</sup> who was decorated by Germanicus as 'imperator' in a 'bellum Germanicum': as the decoration is mentioned immediately after Tuscus' command of the Ala Praetoria, it seems reasonable to assume that he was decorated as prefect of the ala, which therefore saw a period of service in Germany. In fact, it is

\* Dr. B.M.Levick has been kind enough to read an earlier draft of this article.

<sup>1</sup> M.Castelli, *Dedica onoraria di età tiberiana a due membri della famiglia degli Scipioni*, *MEFRA CIV* (1992) 177 ff.

<sup>2</sup> These incerti should be added as numbers 32a-e on p.33 of D.B.Saddington, *Prefects and Lesser Officers in the Auxilia at the Beginning of the Roman Empire*, *PACA XV* (1980) 20ff.

<sup>3</sup> M.Castelli also locates the regiments in Germany.

<sup>4</sup> AE 73, 501; 78, 790. For Fabricius Tuscus, cf. Saddington, *l.c.n.* 2, no. 11; PME (H.Devijver, *Prosopographia Militiarum Equestrium* [1976-1987]) F 18 + Suppl. I.

tempting to identify the Ala Praetoria with the 'delectus eques' that accompanied Germanicus across the Rhine in 16.<sup>5</sup> The Ala Praetoria is also recorded at Cologne, by the tombstone of a *duplicarius* whose name has been lost, but who was the son of a Lepidus.<sup>6</sup>

German links can be established for the other regiments, if more tenuous and less precisely dated. Probably the earliest record of the Ala Asturum<sup>7</sup> is a tombstone of an *eques* in it who was buried at Cavillonum (Chalon-sur-Saône), presumably before the legions and auxilia of the Gauls were moved to the Rhine. The unit must have been in the Gallo-German area for some time, for the *eques* concerned was not an Asturian or a Spaniard, but a Ubian (from the area of Cologne) and therefore not a member of the original draft into the regiment.

No Ala Hispanorum Veterana or Tironum is known. The titles *Tironum* and *Veterana* were introduced early to distinguish regiments with the same ethnicum.<sup>8</sup> They appear with Spanish cohorts: a Coh. I Hispanorum Veterana was in Moesia Inferior in 99 and a [Coh. ---] Hispanorum Tironum is recorded on a prefectural stone in Sardinia at the end of the second century.<sup>9</sup> However, an Ala Hispanorum operated on the German front in the early principate. It is recorded on two epitaphs at Mainz.<sup>10</sup> One is for a trooper who was a Helvetian and therefore a recruit from the surrounding area and not a member of the original draft. The ala may have been Tironum or Veterana: such elements in titulatures tend to appear only in the later period.<sup>11</sup>

A Treviran, and therefore a 'local' recruit, in the Ala Agrippiana was buried at Borbetomagus (Worms) in Germania Superior.<sup>12</sup>

The Ala Praetoria can be assigned to the Rhine front early under Tiberius and may have been there longer (as the Cologne tombstone suggests). The three regiments with Spanish

<sup>5</sup> Tac. Ann. II, 16, 3; D.B.Saddington, *The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Caesar to Vespasian* (1982) 29; 243, n. 186.

<sup>6</sup> CIL XIII 8310.

<sup>7</sup> ILS 2509; Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 152. The ala is next attested by a veteran of the Claudio-Neronian period who settled at Tomi in Moesia (*Arch.Anz.* XXIX [1914], 438; Saddington, o.c. n. 5, 67).

<sup>8</sup> Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 174.

<sup>9</sup> CIL XVI 44; AE 72, 226; Y. Le Bohec, *La Sardaigne et l'armée romaine sous le Haut-Empire* (1990) 124, no. 51.

<sup>10</sup> CIL XIII 7026-7. Two prefects of the regiment are known in the Claudian period, Caecilius Senecio (CIL V 4058; Saddington, l.c.n. 2, no. 71; PME C 25) and Stilacius Coranus (ILS 2730; Saddington, *ibid.*, 91; PME S 81). The area of service of the first is unknown, but the second commanded the regiment in Britain: many regiments were transferred from Germany to Britain at the time of the Claudian invasion (cf. Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 215, n. 58).

<sup>11</sup> Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 176f.

<sup>12</sup> ILS 2503: he mentions his regiment in the ablative case, which is regarded as a sign that the inscription is early (Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 56). A subprefect of the Ala Agrippiana, Decmanius Caper (PME D 5), is recorded by his funerary monument in Narbonese Gaul. He calls himself 'subpraef. equit. alae Agrippian.' (CIL XII 2231): the formula praef. equitum alae is common in the Claudian period, but attested earlier by the epitaph of Fabricius Tuscus under Tiberius (above, n. 4; Saddington, o.c.n. 5, 76). In any case, the rank of subprefect is early (Saddington, l.c.n. 2, 25).

names and the Ala Agrippiana all had 'Gallo-German' soldiers in them at an early stage. Nothing prevents all five units recorded on the inscription from Rome from having been in the Germanies in the pre-Claudian period, most likely from Augustus onwards.

It may also be possible to posit a period of service on the Rhine for the [P. Corneli]us Orestinus of the Rome inscription, line 4 of which ends in '[---]cundae'. If this can be emended to '[trib. mil. leg. Se]cundae'<sup>13</sup> he must have served on the Rhine, presumably at the same time as his father: Legio II Augusta was in Germany from Augustus to Claudius, when it went to Britain.

P. Cornelius Scipio gives his career as follows in the Rome inscription: 'pr. pro cos. leg. diui Au[---]/tr. pl. q. pro pr. X uiro stl[---]'. It must have been as legate of Augustus that he was involved with the regiments. No reason is given for the dedication. But perhaps the fact that the five regiments were all cavalry may be significant, as two parallel figures in Tacitus suggest. He refers more than once to the exploits of a certain L. Stertinius<sup>14</sup> under Germanicus, always with forces of cavalry. It is clear that he was more than a prefect of a single ala. In fact in his *Fasti* of Roman Germany Ritterling<sup>15</sup> placed him among the senior staff of Germanicus. The second parallel is the Pedo who was in charge of the cavalry operating among the Frisians.<sup>16</sup>

However, given his social status, Cornelius Scipio was presumably more than a *praefectus equitatus* (which is what Stertinius may have been). We know of several 'legates' of Germanicus on the Rhine in 14 to 16 (apart from his two deputy commanders, A. Caecina Severus and C. Silius). They include L. Apronius,<sup>17</sup> who was awarded the *ornamenta triumphalia*; P. Vitellius,<sup>18</sup> whom Suetonius called a 'comes' and who commanded two legions in 15; Anteius,<sup>19</sup> probably *praefectus classis* at one stage; and Seius Tubero,<sup>20</sup> 'legatus', assigned the cavalry ('equitem') in 16. The position of *legatus* seems to have been fairly flexible at the beginning of the principate. It is not necessary to regard Cornelius Scipio as a simple legionary legate. He may, like P. Vitellius, have had

<sup>13</sup> Such is the reasonable emendation of M. Castelli, l.c.n. 1, 192f. who identifies him with the Scipio Orestinus of Telesia (ILS 5987; PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1441), who, he suggests, was the father of the Cornelia Orestina (PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1492) who was briefly married to the emperor Gaius. If, as Castelli, 190, proposes, the second line of Orestinus' inscription [---]i Caesaris can be emended to [comiti Tiberi]i Caesaris, an Augustan date is assured.

<sup>14</sup> Tac. Ann. II, 8, 4; 11; 17, 1. Cf. Saddington, l.c.n. 2, no. 36; n. 5, 30; 184f.; PME Suppl. I, p. 1727; D.B.Saddington, Tacitus and the Roman Army, ANRW II, 33, 5 (1991) 3536, no. A 2.

<sup>15</sup>E.Ritterling & E.Stein, *Fasti des römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat* (1932) 122, no. 6; Pedo is listed on pg. 132 as a 'Stabsoffizier'.

<sup>16</sup> Tac. Ann. I, 60, 2; Saddington, l.c.n. 2, 35; l.c.n. 14, 3536, no. A 1; PME A 97. For a later *praefectus equitatus*, cf. A.Didius Gallus under Claudius (ILS 970; Saddington, 54; PME p. 322 + Suppl. I p. 1540).

<sup>17</sup> Tac. Ann. I 56, 1; 72, 1; PIR<sup>2</sup> A 971; Ritterling-Stein, 122, no. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Tac. Ann. I 70; Suet. Vit. 2,3; PIR<sup>1</sup> V 502; Ritterling-Stein, 122, no. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Tac. Ann. II 6, 1; PIR<sup>2</sup> A 727; D.B.Saddington, *Praefecti Classis, Orae Maritimae and Ripae*, JRGZ XXXV (1988) 301; 309, no. 35a; l.c.n. 14, 3542, no. F 1 (not in Ritterling-Stein).

<sup>20</sup> Tac. Ann. II, 20, 1; PIR<sup>1</sup> S 248; Ritterling-Stein, 123, no. 9.

more than one legion assigned to him. Certainly cavalry, like Seius Tubero: possibly a combined legionary and cavalry force for a battle or a season.

Cornelius Scipio's career appears to be given in descending order. After the vigintivirate, he was 'q(uaestor) pro pr(aetore)'. As Castelli has shown, he must have been the *quaestor pro praetore* or acting governor of Achaia in AD 2 as recorded on an inscription from Messene honouring C. Caesar, Augustus' adopted son, who was in the East at the time.<sup>21</sup> After a tribunate of the plebs at Rome he became an imperial legate in Germany. The date, of course, cannot be established. He may have served under Tiberius, or even under Germanicus in 13. At one stage he was in command of five cavalry regiments, either in a single battle or for a period of time. This would appear to be the occasion for the inscription set up to him in Rome by their prefects.<sup>22</sup>

Scipio's *cursus* is difficult to interpret. As is usual in inscriptions of the early principate, the provinces in which he served abroad are not named. At first sight l. 2 appears to make him praetor, proconsul and then legate of the deified Augustus, but the next line is clearly in descending order. Accordingly, if no post has been lost in the lacuna at the end of l. 2, he must have been legate after his quaestorship and plebeian tribunate.<sup>23</sup> One would have expected him to have held the praetorship before his legateship and proconsulate. A parallel case is the ignotus from Aquileia who was '[---] pr. pr. pro cos. leg. Caes. aed. cur. q.',<sup>24</sup> where Mommsen interpreted 'pr. pro cos.' as a single post, 'praetor pro consule' (analogous to the frequent *quaestor pro consule*). However,<sup>25</sup> the praetorship was an important 'republican' magistracy, and may have been placed out of order at the head of the inscription (as *consul* often is). Accordingly, it would appear that he was quaestor, tribune of the plebs,

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<sup>21</sup> M.Castelli, l.c.n. 1, 191ff., referring to AE 67, 458; W.Eck, RE Suppl. XIV (1974) 109, no. 333a. J.E.G.Zetzel, *GRBS* XI (1970) 273, suggested that Scipio's decree at Messene was related to unrest in Achaia at the time, such as the trouble connected with the fall of Julius Eurycles (PIR<sup>2</sup> I 301). P.Herz, *Klio* LXXV (1993) 286ff., however, proposed that Scipio had good reason to demonstrate his loyalty to C. Caesar after the fall of his mother Julia (who was Scipio's aunt) and that he was in the southern Peloponnese rather than at Corinth so as to be able to be in close contact with C. Caesar who was in Syria, probably at Antioch, at the time.

<sup>22</sup> Parallels for auxiliary regiments, or their prefects, erecting dedications to senior Roman commanders are hard to find. However, the inscription to Caecilius Senecio mentioned above (n. 10) was set up by the Ala Hispanorum. The Ala Auriana Hispanorum I also honoured one of its prefects (AE 66, 124). ILS 9499 was set up by an auxiliary prefect to his 'legatus'. For a regiment acting through its prefect, cf. ILS 2491 (Ala Gallorum Petriana per C. Iulium Augurinum praefectum).

<sup>23</sup> For a senator, admittedly just adlected from equestrian status, employed as a legate after his quaestorship, cf. Velleius Paterculus (II, 111, 3; PIR<sup>1</sup> V 237). An inscriptional case with a 'Roman' magistracy included, is provided by Papinius Allenius (ILS 945; PIR<sup>1</sup> P 76); cf. CIL V 879.

<sup>24</sup> CIL V 879, discussed by Th.Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* II (1871, <sup>3</sup>1952) 650, n.2, adducing Republican parallels, notably M. Coelius Vinicianus 'pr. pro cos. tr. pl. q.' (ILS 883). B.E.Thomasson, *Legatus: Beiträge zur römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte* (1991) 97f., however, prefers to emend CIL V 879 by inserting 'praetor' into the text and reading '[---] leg. Caesar.] pr. pr. procos. <pr.> leg. Caesar.

<sup>25</sup> As Professor W.Eck has kindly pointed out to me in a letter.

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legate, proconsul and, lastly, praetor. But the main interest of the inscription remains the remarkable dedication by five alae at such an early date.

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