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THE EARLIEST EXTANT DIPLOMA OF THRACE, A.D. 114 (= RMD I 14)

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 119 (1997) 269–279

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THE EARLIEST EXTANT DIPLOMA OF THRACE, A.D. 114 (= RMD I 14)*

A diploma was found in the village of Pissarevo, near Dolna Orjahovitsa, District of Veliko Tarnovo, Central North Bulgaria, before 1945. The site is on the left bank of the river Jantra (*Iatrus*), ca. 20 km south-east of the Roman town Nicopolis ad Istrum, and was within its territory (*regio Nicopolitana*).

It is presently in the collection of the Department of Classical Antiquities at the National Museum of Archaeology in Sofia (inv. no. A 8416). The diploma was given to the late academician Prof. D. P. Dimitrov in 1945.¹ In 1976 it was described and placed in the inventory of the Museum by Dr. V. Gerassimova-Tomova after it had been brought to the Museum by Dr. M. Chichikova, widow of Professor Dimitrov, in 1974. (National Archaeological Museum, photo neg. no. '74/1486-1494.)

The diploma is almost complete although sections of both tablets are now missing. On the outer face of tabella I the upper margin and two complete lines of script and part of the third are lost. The remainder of this tablet is represented by one large and two smaller fragments which join together but lack a triangular segment from the side of the lower right quadrant and an irregular section of the bottom edge, which creates a gap in the last three lines of text. The second tablet has broken into two joining sections and the lower part of the right side has broken away looking from the outer face. There are traces of solder on tabella II *extrinsecus*, which indicate where the protective capsule over the presumed seals was fastened. The text is clear and legible. The tablets are well preserved as a whole, although there is deep corrosion, now covered with patina, on the outer face of the second tablet which has created difficulties in the reading of the gentilicia of the last three witnesses. Average height of the letters: *extrinsecus* 3 mm. On the inner side the lettering is larger and is carelessly engraved in a different hand. Height of the letters: 4–5 mm. Two incised framing lines and a relief frieze run along the edges of both outer faces.

tabella I: *extrinsecus* (Pl. III)

ACIC PON

TRIBVNIC·POTEST·XVIII·IMP·VII·COS·VI·P·P
 PEDITIBVS·ET·EQVITIBVS·QVI·MILITAVERVNT
 IN·COHORTIBVS·DVABVS·QVAE·APPELLANTVR
 5 II·BRACARAVGVSTANOR·ET·III·GALLOR·ET·
 SVNT·IN·THRACIA·SVB·STATILIO·MAXIMO·QVI
 NIS·ET·VICENIS·PLVRIBVSVE·STIPENDIS·EME

* The *diploma* has not previously been published in detail but has been mentioned several times in the prosopographic literature. The authors would like to express warm thanks to: Mrs P. Ilieva, Curator of the Classical Antiquities Dept. at the National Museum of Archaeology in Sofia, for kind permission to study and publish the bronze tablets and to Dr V. Gerassimova, Dept. of Epigraphy, Bulgarian Archaeological Institute and Museum, Sofia, for her help. Prof. Dr. W. Eck, University of Köln, Institut für Altertumskunde, Alte Geschichte, has also generously given much valuable assistance.

¹ First noted by D. P. Dimitrov, *Bulgarian Historical Review* 3, 1946–47 [in Bulgarian], Sofia 1947, 49. Short references were made by B. Gerov, *Zwei neugefundene Militärdiplome aus Nordbulgarien*, *Klio* 37, 1959, 205, Anm. 8, id. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thrakien*, Amsterdam 1980, 52, Anm. 8; B. Gerov, *Untersuchungen über die westthrakischen Lande in römischer Zeit*, I, [in Bulgarian, German summary], *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté philologique* 54-3, 1959–60, Sofia 1961, 218–219, Anm. 4; R. Syme, *Hermes* 85, 1957, 493, note 2 = *Roman Papers* I, (Oxford 1977), 351, note 8; idem, *Historia* 14, 1965, 348, note 33 = *Danubian Papers* (Bucharest 1971) 231–2 note 33; id., *JRS* 67, 1977, 38–49 = *Roman Papers* III, Oxford 1984, 1043–1061. A conflated text without notes or comments may be found in *RMD* 1, 44, no. 14. The most recent comments and suggestions were made by B. Gerov, *Der Besitz an Grund und Boden im römischen Thrakien und Mösien* (1.–3. Jh.), [in Bulgarian, German summary, 162–173], *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté des lettres classiques et modernes* 72-2, 1977, Sofia 1980, 29, notes 2, 8 and 10; 36, note 49 = id., *Landownership in Roman Thracia and Moesia (1st–3rd century)*, Amsterdam 1988, 31, notes 2 and 8.

RITIS·DIMISSIS·HONESTA·MISSIONE·PER
 IVVENTIVM·CELSVM·QVORVM·NOMINA·
 10 SVBSCRIPTA·SVNT·IPSI LIBERIS·POSTERIS
 QVE·EORVM·CIVITATEM·DEDIT·ET·CONVBIVM
 CVM·VXORI BVS·QVAS·TVNC·HABVISSENT·CVM
 ● ●
 EST·CIVITAS·IIS·DATA·AVT·SI·QVI·CAELIBES·ES
 SENT·CVM·IIS·QVAS·POSTEA·DVXISSENT·DVM
 15 TAXAT·SINGVLI·SINGVLAS·A·D·XIII·K·AVG
 C·CLODIO·NVMMO
 L·CAEENNIO·SOSPITE·COS
 COH·III·GALLOR·CVI·PRAEST
 C·VINDILICIVS·C·F·PVB·FONTANVS
 20 EX·EQVITE·
 C·IVLIO·C·F·VALENTI·TRALL·
 ET·IVLIO·F·EIVS·ET·VALENTINAE·FIL·EIVS
 ET·GAIAE·FIL·EIVS
 DESCRIPTVM·ET·RECOGN·M·EX·TABVLA
 25 AENEA·QVAE·FIXA·EST·MAE·IN·MVRO
 POST·TEMPL·DIVI·AVG·D·MINERVAM ●

tabella I: intus (Pl. III)

P·CAESAR·DIVI·NERVAE·F·NERVA·TRAIANVS
 TIMVS·AVG·GERM·DACIC·PONTIF·MAXIM·TRI
 POTEST·VII·IMP·VI·COS·VI·P·P
 5 TIBVS·ET·EQVITIBVS·QVI·MILITAVERVNT·IN
 HORTIBVS·DVABVS ● QVAE·APPELLANTVR·II
 ACARAVGVSTANOR·ET·III·GALLOR·ET·SVNT
 THRACIA·SVB·STATILIO·MAXIMO·QVI
 S·ET·VICENIS·PLVRIBVSVE·STIPENDIS·E
 ERITIS·DIMISSIS·HONESTA·MISSIONE
 10 ER·IVVENTIVM·CELSVM·QVORVM·NOMI
 A·SVBSCRIPTA·SVNT·IPSI·LIBERIS·POSTE
 ●
 SQ·EORVM·CIVITATEM·DEDIT·ET·CONVBIV
 M·VXORIBVS·QVAS·TVNC·HAB·ISSENT
 M·EST·CIVITAS·IIS·DATA·AVT·I·CAELI ●

tabella II: intus (Pl. IV)

15 ● ESSENT·CVM·IIS·QV·POSTEA·VXI
 DVMTAXAT·SINGVLI·SINGVLAS
 A·D·XIII·K·AVG
 C·CLODIO ● NVMMO
 L·CAEENNIO·SOSPITE
 20 COH·III·GALLOR·CVI·PRAEST
 (!) C·VINDILIVS·C·F·PVB·FONTANVS
 EX·EQVITE·
 C·IVLIO·C·F·VALENTI·TRALLI·
 ●

10 ET · IVLIO · F· EIVS ET VALENTINAE FIL· EIV
ET· GAIAE FIL EIVS

tabella II: extrinsecus (Pl. IV)

TI·IVLI		VRBANI
P·CAVLI	•	VITALIS
L·PVLLI		VERECVNDI
C· VETTIENI		HERMETIS
P·ATINI		TROPHI
A·CASCELLI	•	PROCVL
L·PVLLI		AN
•		

A conflation of the two sides follows:

[Im]p. Caesar divi Nervae f(ilius), Nerva Traianus [Op]timus Aug(ustus) Germ(anicus), Dacic(us), pontif(ex) maxim(us), tribunic(ia) potest(ate) XVIII, imp(erator) VII, co(n)s(ul) VI, p(ater) p(atriciae) peditibus et equitibus qui militaverunt in cohortibus duabus, quae appellantur (1) II Bracaraugustanor(um) et (2) III Gallor(um), et sunt in Thracia sub Statilio Maximo, quinis et vicenis pluribusve stipendis emeritis dimissis honesta missione per Iuventium Celsum, quorum nomina subscripta sunt, ipsis liberis posterisque eorum civitatem dedit et conubium cum uxoribus, quas tunc habuissent, cum est civitas iis data, aut, si qui caelibes essent, cum iis quas postea duxissent dumtaxat singuli singulas.

a. d. XIII k. Aug. C. Clodio Nummo, L. Caesennio Sospite co(n)s(ulibus).

coh(ortis) III Gallor(um) cui praest C. Vindilicius C. f. Pub(lilia tribu) Fontanus, ex equite C. Iulio C. f. Valenti, Tralli, et Iulio f. eius, et Valentinae fil. eius et Gaiae fil. eius.

Descriptum et recogn[itu]m ex tabula aenea, quae fixa est [Ro]mae in muro post templum divi Aug(usti) [a]d Minervam.

Ti. Iuli Urbani; P. Cauli Vitalis; L. Pulli Verecundi; C. Vettienu Hermetis; P. Atini Trophi[mi]; A. Cascelli Procul[i]; L. Pulli An[thi?].

General Observations

The placement of PEDITIBVS before EQVITIBVS in the preamble to the list of units is normal in diplomas which name only cohorts, but reflects the fact that both cohorts named were part-mounted.

The T's and several I's in lines 10, 13 and 14 are larger than other letters.

The nomen of the commander of *cohors III; Gallorum*, C. Vindilicius Fontanus, has been incorrectly inscribed as Vindilius on the inner face of tabella II (line 21).

On the outer face of tabella I Trajan's titles are given as *tribunic(ia) potest(ate) XVIII, imp. VII, cos. VI*, on the inner face they appear as *trib[unic(ia)] potest(ate) [X]VII, imp. VI, cos. VI*. The significance of these last differences will be discussed in connection with the date of the diploma.

The Consuls

C. Clodius Nummus was identified as suffect consul immediately following the *ordinarii* in *Fasti Potentini*, the name of his colleague was not preserved there.² An attempt was made to equate Nummus

² N. Alfieri, *Athenaeum* XXVI, 1948, 110–134, right column line 12 = *AE* 1949, 23. See A. Degrassi, *I fasti consolari dell'Impero Romano dal 30 avanti Cristo al 613 dopo Cristo*, Roma 1952, 34.

with L. Acilius Strabo Clodius Nummus, legate of *legio III Augusta* in 116,³ but the latest analysis of the career of the legate rules out this identification.⁴

The second consul, L. Caesennius Sospes, was already known through an inscription found at Pisidian Antioch which detailed his career but stopped short of his consulship.⁵ His name was only partially preserved in this inscription, which has been the subject of some debate. Only the salient points will be discussed here. Sospes had followed a fairly standard senatorial career until he was appointed as *legatus legionis XIII geminae* in which capacity he was awarded *dona* for his participation in an *expeditio Suebica et Sarmatica* by an unnamed emperor. This award had been accepted as Domitianic by many scholars. H.-G. Pflaum discussed this career⁶ on several occasions and believed that the earlier part of his career could not have been Domitianic.⁷ One of the props of his contention was that Sospes had been *praefectus frumenti dandi*, a post which some scholars believe to have been abolished by Claudius and restored only under Nerva,⁸ another that he had been in charge of Cappadocia and Galatia under Hadrian (this was later revised to the end of 113 in view of the consulship revealed in this diploma). He concluded that the *expeditio* must have occurred in 107. Pflaum based this latter contention on the fact that Hadrian was governor of Pannonia inferior in 107/8 and that a passage in the *vita Hadriani*⁹ described the future emperor as ‘*legatus postea praetorius in Pannoniam inferiorem missus Sarmatas compressit*’. Pflaum’s analysis has not been universally accepted. R. Syme energetically contested the dating sequence of the career of Sospes and pointed out that the Sarmatians with whom Hadrian would have contended were Rhoxolani, whereas Domitian’s war of 92 was directly against the Suebi and Sarmatae, and further that the action undertaken by Hadrian would hardly be of such a serious nature as to merit the award of *dona*.¹⁰ Syme considered the proposition that the evidence failed to support the placement of the earlier posts in the reign of Domitian to be an argument *ex silentio*. He suggested that a retardation of the consulate of Sospes following the assassination of Domitian would account for the long gap between his participation in the *expeditio*, his subsequent charge of Cappadocia-Galatia and the suffect consulship of 114.¹¹ Be that as it may, we are now able to fit the consuls named in this diploma into the period May – 31 August 114.¹²

The Date of the Diploma

It is clear that from quite early in Trajan’s reign some imperial constitutions giving grants to auxiliaries were prepared an appreciable time before their actual publication in Rome.¹³ Engravers working on the preparation of diplomas to be issued to individual soldiers seem to have drafted some parts of the tablets in advance, probably the Imperial titles, the list of auxilia and the standard part of the grant formula, at least on one leaf of a diploma. This diploma shows differences between the inner and outer faces of

³ R. Syme, *JRS* 48, 1959, 5, where it was suggested that he could have held the *fasces* while in command of the legion.

⁴ Bengt E. Thomasson, *Fasti Africani*, Stockholm 1996, 142, no. 19. Cf. *PIR*² A 83.

⁵ *CIL* III 6818 = *ILS* 1017.

⁶ *Historia* 2, 1953/4, 431–450; *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium*, 1968/69, Bonn 1970, 183–186.

⁷ For a complete account of this career see W. Eck, *RE* Suppl 14, 80–81, re A. Iunius Pastor L. Caesennius Sospes. At that time Eck largely followed the timing of posts suggested by Pflaum but allowed the possibility of the alternative Domitianic date for the *EXPEDIT SVEBIC ET SARM*.

⁸ So Pflaum, citing D. van Berchem, *Les distributions de blé et d’argent à la plèbe romaine de l’Empire*, Geneva 1939.

⁹ *Historia Augusta*, 3,5.

¹⁰ The Enigmatic Sospes, *JRS* 67, 1977, 38–49 = *RP* III, 1984, 1043–1061.

¹¹ Professor Eck has kindly confirmed that he now believes Syme’s analysis to be preferable to that of Pflaum.

¹² Two different consuls are named on a diploma issued on 1 September 114: *CIL* XVI 61. See the Table of relevant evidence for the lower limit.

¹³ No fewer than 10 issues of those extant for the reign of Trajan may be classified as “delayed” on present evidence.

tabella I concerning Trajan's year of tribunician power and the number of salutations received and thus belongs to this category of delayed diplomas. The year of issue of the diploma is indicated by Trajan's titles as recorded on the outer face. His 18th year of tribunician power ran from 10th December 113 until 9th December 114. The date of publication in Rome is shown on both faces as 19 July 114.

The reason for a delay in issue of this diploma, as with others, is not apparent but it will be helpful to present the evidence of diplomas issued between 112 and 117 in tabular form. The following diplomas may be recognised as delayed and are relevant to the discussion:

Table of relevant evidence for *optimus* from diplomas

Diploma	Date	OPTIMVS	Titles	T.P.int	T.P.ext.	Imp	cos
A ¹ [Dacia]	112/113	<OPTIM> ²	Ger[m. Dac.]	----	XVII	VI	VI
B ¹ Dacia	114 Mai. ³	<OPTIMVS> ²	Germ. Dac.	XVII	XVII	VI	VI
RMD 1, 14 ₂	114 Iul. ³	[OP]TIMVS	Germ. Dacic.	[X]VII	XVIII	VI/VII	VI
C 16, 61 P. inf.	114 Sept.	OPTIMVS	Germ. Dacic.	XVIII	XVII	VII/VI	VI

1. The letters A and B refer to diplomas which have not yet been published. RMD 1, 14₂ denotes the present diploma.

2. Titles indicated as: <OPTIMVS> were inserted into a line above the text between Traianus and Aug.

3. Date confirmed partly through Fasti Potentini.¹⁴

OPTIMVS

This is the first extant diploma which shows the title *Optimus* fully integrated into the text as an agnomen of Trajan. There have been a number of attempts to identify the date when this title was bestowed by the senate and doubts have been expressed about its precise significance and use.¹⁵ Some confusion has been caused by the statement of Dio/Xiphilinus which links the bestowal of the title *Optimus* by the senate with Trajan's capture of Armenia (Epitome LXVIII, 23) and further appears to place it after his seventh imperial salutation (Epitome LXVIII, 19, 3–4). By its very nature *Optimus* is a civil title and therefore is not necessarily connected either with imperial salutations or epithets of victory. There need be no direct temporal connection between events of Trajan's campaign and the voting by the senate and acceptance by Trajan of this title and the evidence of the diplomas supports such a view.

As the Table above shows, the unpublished diplomas labelled A and B in Table 1 are examples of delayed diplomas. Both were partially engraved when Trajan's tribunician year was indicated as XVII, i.e. 10 Dec. 112 – 9 Dec. 113. The second diploma (B) was based on a *constitutio* set up in May 114, according to the consuls and the month named, although Trajan's year of tribunician power indicated the previous year.¹⁶ In this diploma the lines giving the date, names of consuls and details of the recipient and his unit on the outer face are in a different hand from the rest of the script. Given the discrepancy between Trajan's titles and the consular date it may be inferred that these lines were added later. Unfortunately, the exact date of issue of A remains uncertain. However, both A and B show the same unusual feature – the title OPTIMVS has been inserted in the marginal space above the first line of

¹⁴ N. Alfieri, *Athenaeum*, 26, 1948, 110 ff. = AE 1949, 23.

¹⁵ The evidence then known was presented by F. A. Lepper in *Trajan's Parthian War*, London 1948, 34–39 and Table 1. The title was further investigated by Martin Fell, *Optimus Princeps?*, München 1992, esp. 39–69, where the differentiation between *optimo princeps* and the honorary title OPTIMVS is emphasised and the evidence presented for all types of attestation. Fell points out that even after its official acceptance the agnomen was not always used in inscriptions; the title Parthicus had more significance for propaganda, with its emphasis on Trajan's military prowess, and was used in filiations after his death until well into the 3rd C.

¹⁶ These were the same consuls as those named in the present diploma.

Trajan's titles, positioned so that the word falls evenly between TRAIANVS and AVG¹⁷. From this it is possible to suggest a sequence of events. Most accounts of the early part of Trajan's Parthian campaign place his arrival at Antioch in January.¹⁸ Trajan perhaps left Antioch in April. C. S. Lightfoot has constructed a probable route for the army, whose first main objective after Arsamosata was Satala.¹⁹ He based his opinions on personal knowledge of the terrain and calculated that this may have taken about 51 days.²⁰ If these calculations are correct, the first stage of the expedition could only have reached Satala by late May, thus after the issue of diploma B. Therefore it seems possible that Trajan was offered the title *Optimus* by the senate, and had accepted it, before he left Rome (on October 27 113, the anniversary of his adoption?), when both A and B had already been partially inscribed – hence the significance of the seventeenth year of tribunician power in both diplomas. The inner face of the Pissarevo diploma also shows Trajan's seventeenth year of power together with a sixth imperial salutation. The following order of events may be suggested. Diplomas A and B were already nearly complete by the autumn of 113, although the constitutions on which they were based had not yet been posted up on the wall behind the temple of Augustus and the details concerning date had yet to be added. The inner face of tabella I of RMD I 14₂ was prepared shortly after this, before 10 December 113, but after Trajan had accepted the title OPTIMVS, since this face has [OP]TIMVS in the correct position between Traianus and Aug(ustus). Diplomas A and B had the title added to an existing script. This would account for the hasty addition of OPTIMVS in those parts of diplomas which were already prepared. From Satala Trajan moved on to Elegeia and it is probable that the events recorded by Dio/Xiphilinus concerning his bloodless victory in Armenia took place by early June (LXVIII,18,2–183b; 23, 1). This would permit the seventh salutation by his army to have been made well before July 19. Time must be allowed for news to reach Rome (but we may assume that an imperial dispatch from Armenia would travel much faster than an army) and for the final preparation of the *constitutio* for Thracia. Here for the first time both OPTIMVS and IMP VII are recorded together in a diploma.²¹

Legati Augusti pro praetore Thraciae

Two governors of Thrace are named in the diploma from Pissarevo. The governor of Thrace at the time of issue of the diploma was Statilius Maximus. His full name was T. Statilius Maximus Severus Hadria-

¹⁷ It is difficult to be certain but there are slight differences in the engraving in both diplomas which may signify another hand was used for the additions. The placement of the agnomen underlines its difference from the military epithets bestowed on Trajan, which always follow the completion of his name with Augustus. It should be noted that, although the agnomen appears on the outer face of diploma B (the inner face does not survive for this section) and thus could possibly have been added (illegally?) by an admiring veteran, OPTIM had been engraved on the inner face of diploma A and therefore is most unlikely to have been added by the recipient. In both cases it is highly probable that a professional engraver made the additions.

¹⁸ Johannes Malalas suggested that Trajan arrived at Antioch on 7 January (*Chron.* 2, 272). Arrian implies that Trajan set out from Rome in autumn 113, probably on the anniversary of his adoption by Nerva (27 October). Dio/Xiphilinus tells us that he journeyed by way of Athens. He crossed the Aegean to Asia and went by way of Lycia and other provinces to Seleucia Piera, the port for Antioch, arriving there in December to be met by Hadrian. This is difficult to envisage at that time of the year. Either Trajan (and the army?) had crossed the Taurus Mountains in winter, when there would be heavy snow in the area, or he had made the final stage of the journey by sea, from a port such as Side.

¹⁹ Dio/Xiphilinus LXVIII, 19, 2.

²⁰ Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth Century Perspective, *JRS* 80, 1990, 115–126, see especially 115–118. Lightfoot appends a timetable based upon the probable route taken, which places Trajan at Nisibis by September 15, 114: p. 118 note 11.

²¹ It is unfortunate that the upper section of tabella I of our diploma is lacking so that the title OPTIMVS can only be assumed to have been present on the outer face.

nus²². He probably succeeded Iuventius Celsus late in 112 or early 113.²³ In *Fasti Potentini*²⁴ the second of a pair of consuls cited for 115 was originally restored as [L. Cat]ilio Severo; the pair were later identified as [L. Vips]tano Messalla and [T. Stat]ilio Severo / [Hadria]no. L. Vipstanus Messalla was *ordinarius* for 115 with M. Pedo Vergilianus and, in view of the strong possibility that the *Fasti Potentini* are incomplete for 115, it is a reasonable assumption that the suffect consul T. Statilius (Maximus) Severus Hadrianus replaced M. Pedo Vergilianus.²⁵ This provides an upper limit for his post as governor of Thrace of late 114 or early 115 unless his consulship was held *in absentia*, as W. Eck points out.²⁶

His predecessor as governor, Iuventius Celsus, became a notable Jurist. His full name is preserved in the Digest as P. Iuventius Celsus Titus Aufidius Hoenius Severianus²⁷. He was praetor in AD 105 or 106, according to Pliny.²⁸ His term as praetorian governor of Thrace must have ended at latest ca. 113 and probably began ca. 109/110.²⁹ He is thought to have been *consul suffectus* in AD 115.³⁰ This date for his first (suffect) consulship agrees with the usual interval of 13–17 years between the consulship and the proconsulship of Asia, which Celsus held 129/130.³¹

The Units

Only two units were named:

Cohors II Bracaraugustanorum equitata was one of a series of cohorts raised in north-west Spain and named for the conventus Bracara Augusta. Its early history is obscure but it may have come to the Balkan area like its sister unit, the first in the series, which served in Dalmatia in the Julio-Claudian period.³² This diploma gives the first positive indication of the existence of the cohort in the middle of the reign of Domitian on normal calculations.³³ It is not listed in any of the early diplomas of Moesia or Moesia inferior and may have been sent to Thrace by Claudius after the creation of the province in A.D. 46. Such a posting may be responsible for the lack of early evidence. The cohort was part-mounted as is shown through the bilingual (Greek and Latin) tombstone of an eques, Celsus Marius found at Šipka, near Kazanluk in northern Thrace, who died after 24 years of service.³⁴ This stone may suggest that the cohort, or part of it, was stationed at Šipka guarding a pass in the Haemus Mountains. G. Mihailov suggested a date in the reign of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius for the tombstone but the style of the

²² Known from Brick stamps; cf W. Eck, *RE Suppl.* 14, 744 no. 25a.; R. Syme, *Historia* 14, 1965, 348 = *Danubian Papers*, Bucharest 1971, 231.

²³ W. Eck, Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der senatorischen Statthalter, *Chiron* 12, 1982, 353 and 348 note 272.

²⁴ N. Alfieri, *Athenaeum* 26, 1948, 110–134 = *AE* 1949 23, (Picenum).

²⁵ A. Degrassi, *Fasti consolari . . .*, Roma 1952, 34.

²⁶ Jahres- und Provinzialfasten . . ., *Chiron* 12, 1982, 357–8, note 308.

²⁷ *Dig.* V, 3, 20, 6, (with emendations by Borghesi) where he is named with Quintus Iulius Balbus. Celsus was consul for the second time in 129 as *ordinarius*, with L. Neratius Marcellus: *PIR*² I 882. Balbus replaced Marcellus at least during the period February 18 – April 30 (*CIL* XVI 74,75; *RMD* 1 34).

²⁸ Pliny, *Ep.* VI, 5.

²⁹ W. Eck, Jahres- und Provinzialfasten . . ., *Chiron* 12, 1982, 348–351, note 272.

³⁰ A. Degrassi, *Fasti consolari . . .*, Roma 1952, 34.

³¹ See C. Habicht, *Altertümer von Pergamon*, VIII, 3, Berlin 1969, 55–58.

³² G. Alföldy, Die Auxiliartuppen der Provinz Dalmatien, *AArchHung* 14, 269 = *Mavors III*, Amsterdam 1987, 249–50.

³³ The man, or men, of the cohort who received the grants had received *honesta missio* from Iuventius Celsus after twenty-five or more years of service. They would have been recruited ca. 87 or 88. It is possible to argue that they may have started service in another cohort and formed a cadre around which our unit was later created, but the existence of other units with the same title but of an earlier date makes this unlikely.

³⁴ G. Mihailov, *IGBulg III*, fasc. 2, no. 1471 bis = *AE* 1965, 347

inscription and evidence that the cohort was transferred to Moesia inferior by 145, at latest, suggests that this is too late.³⁵ Two possible commanders of the cohort are attested. M. G. Jarrett made the suggestion that an equestrian from Africa, Tiberius Claudius Helvius Secundus,³⁶ was appointed to his first post in the equestrian militiae in charge of the cohort, which was specifically noted as *equitata*, through the patronage of Q. Pomponius Rufus, governor of Lower Moesia from 98/99.³⁷ The cohort (or a homonym?) is also mentioned in a *cursus honorum* of M. Atinius Paternus, who was later decorated while tribune of *legio X Fretensis* during the Parthian campaign of Trajan.³⁸

A *cohors III Gallorum equitata* was part of the auxilia of undivided Moesia in April 75³⁹ along with four other *cohortes Gallorum* and 30 years later appeared in a diploma of Moesia inferior.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, according to K. Strobel, it had taken part in the first Dacian war.⁴¹ Shortly after this it is recorded building a road near Sacidava in the Dobrudja through a milestone of 103/104, while Q. Fabius Postuminus was governor of Moesia inferior.⁴² A tombstone of one of its veterans of the same period was found at Gigen (Oescus).⁴³ The unit is not found in the existing diplomas of Moesia inferior after 105⁴⁴ and, although several of them are only partially preserved, this absence together with the propinquity of the two provinces makes it very probable that this unit was transferred to Thrace by Trajan.⁴⁵ The date of the transfer is unknown but presumably it occurred some time between the end of the Dacian wars and Trajan's departure for the Parthian campaign in late 113, to appear in our diploma by 114. Further records are scant but later a cohort with an identical title is noted in *Not. Dig. Or.*, XL, 45/46. Its station is given as Ulucitra(?) in the province of Rhodopa, which included the Rhodope mountains and the North Aegean coast.⁴⁶ Several commanders of a *cohors III Gallorum* are known⁴⁷ but, in view of the three other cohorts of the same title (in Britannia, Raetia and Mauretania Tingitana), it is difficult to assign them to this cohort with any degree of certainty.

³⁵ G. Mihailov, see note 34 above. It was transferred to the garrison of Moesia inferior at latest from the early part of the reign of Antoninus Pius and is listed there in diplomas of 145 and 152/154. S. Torbatov, *Arheologija*, 33,1, Sofia 1991, 23–27 = *RMD* 3, 165; I. Venedikov, *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Staline* 9, 1953, 61–69 = *RMD* 1, 50.

³⁶ *AE* 1925, 44 (Caesarea, Mauretania Caesariensis).

³⁷ For Q. Pomponius Rufus see *CIL* XVI 45 and 45. The African contribution to the imperial equestrian service, *Historia* 12, 1963, 209–226, especially 212. Cf. *PME* 1, 252–3, C 143. Jarrett later qualified this suggestion, because of the lack of evidence for the cohort in Moesia inferior and the existence of two further cohorts of the same title, in: *An Album of the Equestrians from North Africa in the Emperor's Service*, *Epigraphische Studien* 9 (Bonn 1972) 146–232 No. 40.

³⁸ *CIL* VI 1838 = *ILS* 2727 (Rome); cf. *PME* 1, 130, A 182.

³⁹ D. Vuckovic-Todorovic, *Starinar*, 18, 1967 22 ff. = *RMD* 1, 2.

⁴⁰ *CIL* XVI 50 of 105.

⁴¹ *Untersuchungen zu den Dakerkriegen Trajans*, *Antiquitas Reihe* 1, Band 33, Bonn 1984, 130–131.

⁴² *AE* 1981, 745.

⁴³ *CIL* III 14417,1

⁴⁴ *CIL* XVI 58, of 110/113, *ZPE*, 116, 1997, 193–203, of 125, *ZPE* 117, 1997 of 127, *CIL* XVI 78, of 134. Inconclusive are: *RMD* 3, of 145, *RMD* 1, 50 of 152–154.

⁴⁵ At least three further cohorts of this title are attested in other provinces through diplomas and other evidence. One is found in Britannia in diplomas: *CIL* XVI 69 and 146, of 122 and 146 respectively. It also appears in a diploma of 127, recently published by J. Nollé, *ZPE* 117, 1997, and another of 178, *RMD* 3, 184. It is thought to have been in Britain in the Trajanic period from the evidence of inscriptions and tile stamps at the second fort of Templeborough, in Yorkshire: *RIB* 619, 120; tiles *RIB* 2472.1 and 2472.2; cf. G. R. Stephens, M. G. Jarrett, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society*² 85, 77. Another *cohors III Gallorum* was stationed in Raetia in the early to mid-second century: *CIL* XVI 55 of 107, *RMD* 3, 155 of 116 and *RMD* 2, 94 of 138/140. The third was in Mauretania Tingitana from 88, through 109 and 114/117 until 122 and later: *CIL* XVI 159, 161, 165, and 169/73 etc. This cohort had acquired the title *civium Romanorum* by 109. In view of the date spans of their presence in each province it seems unlikely that any of these three homonyms are candidates for a transfer to Thrace.

⁴⁶ Cf. A. H. M. Jones *The Later Roman Empire 284–602*, 1964, Map II.

⁴⁷ T. Porcius Cornelianus (*CIG* III 6671 = *ILS* 8852 – Marseille); T. Appalius Alfinus Secundus (*CIL* IX 5357 = *ILS* 1417 – Firmum Picenum); Sex. Pulfennius Salutaris M. Luccius Valerius Severus (*CIL* X 4873 – Venafrum).

The Garrison of Thrace

According to Flavius Josephus Thrace was guarded by two thousand men.⁴⁸ This remark probably refers to the Neronian period⁴⁹ and would imply that there were at least four quingenary cohorts in the province at that time. No legions were stationed in Thrace, although there were three legions in Moesia inferior, along the Danube at Novae, Durostorum and Troesmis, in the second century. There is evidence of the presence of other cohorts in the province later in the second century. *Cohors II Lucensium* is listed in Moesia, then Moesia inferior between 78, ca. 113 and 127,⁵⁰ but by 136 was encamped at *Cabyle* where it remained until 193⁵¹. It was moved to the city of *Germania* (Sapareva Bania) south of Serdica in the reign of Severus and is found there in inscriptions up to the end of the reign of Severus Alexander⁵². Its place at *Cabyle* was taken by *cohors I Aelia Athoitorum*.⁵³ *Cohors II Mattiacorum* was in Moesia and then Moesia inferior, at least up to 145 but later possibly in Thrace, in the joint reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (unpublished diploma fragments).⁵⁴

The Commander of the Cohort

C(aius) Vindilicius C(ai) f(ilius) Pub(lilia tribu) Fontanus was first noted by H. Devijver in Tomus 2, V 114 bis; then in Tomus 4, Suppl. I, V, 114 bis, following the first brief publication of the present diploma in 1978.⁵⁵ In Tomus 5, Suppl. II, V, 114 bis he referred to a suggestion of G. Alföldy that the gentilicium Vindilicium was Celtic and that this, taken in conjunction with the tribus Publilia, may mean that Fontanus originated from Verona,⁵⁶ however, this remains very uncertain.

The Recipient

The recipient of the diploma was C. Iulius C.f. Valens, Tralles, *eques* of *cohors III Gallorum*. His name is Roman, but his home and the find-spot of the diploma indicate the possibility of a Thracian origin (but see below). This is surprising, since Thracians in various inscriptions and *diplomata* of the first – third centuries tend to preserve part of their original Thracian names, at least in filiations. The Tralles

⁴⁸ BJ II, 368.

⁴⁹ Cf. A. von Domaszewski, Die Dislokation des römischen Heeres im Jahre 66 n. Chr., *Rheinisches Museum* 47, 1892, 207–218.

⁵⁰ CIL XVI 22 (Moesia); 50, 58 (Moesia inferior); an unpublished diploma lists the cohort in Moesia inferior in 127. Add AE 1925, 66 (Razgrad) a tombstone of an eques of the cohort.

⁵¹ V. Velkov, Inscriptions de Cabyle, *CABYLE*, Vol. 2 (Sofia 1991) nos. 4,5,12–15, 18, 19.

⁵² For a comprehensive history of the cohort see V. Velkov, *Cohors II Lucensium equitata in Moesia and Thrace*, *AArchHung* 41, 1989, 247–256. According to Velkov the cohort was previously encamped at Abritus (Razgrad) in Moesia inferior but was moved to Cabyle under Hadrian. The unpublished diploma of 127 indicates that the transfer from Moesia inferior to Thrace took place between 127 and 136.

⁵³ AE 1979, 554 (Lovec) gives a fuller name: *coh. I Aeliae Athoit. e(t) Berec.*; at Cabyle see V. Velkov *CABYLE*, no. 10 and G. Mihailov *IGBulg.* III, fasc. 2, no. 1835 (Antoniniana). The cohort is also present in an unpublished diploma of the 160's AD.

⁵⁴ CIL XVI 22 of AD 78 (Moesia); 44, of AD 99. W. Eck – M. M. Roxan, *ZPE* 116, 1997, 193–203, of 125, unpublished diploma of 127, CIL XVI 78 of AD 134 and *RMD* 3, 165 of AD 145 (Moesia inferior).

⁵⁵ *Prosopographia Militiarum Equestrum quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum* Tomus 4, Suppl. 1, Leuven 1987, p. 1775 V no. 114 bis.

⁵⁶ Devijver, *PME*, Tomus 5, Suppl. 2, Leuven 1993, 2284, V no. 114 bis. G. Alföldy, Die Truppenkommandeure in den Militärdiplomen, in *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*. Passauer Historische Forschungen 2, edd W. Eck, H. Wolff, Köln, 1986, 422 note 63.

(Τράλεις, Τράλλ(ι)οι)⁵⁷ are mentioned by Plutarch in the biography of Agesilaus of Sparta.⁵⁸ He wrote that in 395/4 BC, returning from Asia Minor on a road from the Hellespont to Thessaly, he passed by some places inhabited and ruled by a Thracian tribe with this name. There are various readings of Plutarch's original text – Τρωχαλεῖς, Τράλλεις, Τρωδεῖς.⁵⁹ On the other hand Titus Livius wrote that *Tralles* are only an Illyrian tribe.⁶⁰ Stephanus Byzantinus has given us the name of a town of the Tralles in Illyria: Βόλουρος, πόλις τῶν ἐν Ἰλλυρίᾳ Τράλλεων.⁶¹ A village with similar name Βέλλουρος, is mentioned by Procopius as being in the area of the Rhodopes mountains.⁶² Mercenaries of Tralles participated in the eastern anabasis of Alexander the Great and they founded a town named Tralleis in Caria, in Asia Minor.⁶³ The Tralles are also mentioned in a late second century AD Greek inscription on a votive stone recently found at the ancient town of Neinae, between Skaptopara and Petra, on the left bank of the middle reaches of the Strymon (Struma).⁶⁴

Valens would not have been the first veteran to spend his retirement in the province in which he had served rather than returning to his original home.⁶⁵ Our veteran had a son and two daughters, all with Roman names, who would probably have been born and grown up in Thrace. He may have decided to remain and settle with his family in Moesia inferior with his family rather than return to his home in Asia Minor or southern Thrace. Unfortunately, his wife is not named so that we are deprived of any further clues her origin may have given.

If the Thracian Tralles is meant the diploma contains the latest mention of this tribal name, which is less well known than others. The tribal area has been suggested as being near the modern Bulgarian-Greek border on the southern slopes of the Rhodopes and Pirin mountain and between the rivers Nestus (Mesta) and Strymon (Struma)⁶⁶. If this is so, and if the siting of *cohors III Gallorum* in the Rhodope region in Notitia Dignitatum reflects its earlier station, it is possible that the recipient was a local recruit who served near his native home, but this suggestion must remain very tentative.

C. Iulius Valens, had served for 25 or more years in the auxilia. He would have been recruited during the reign of Domitian ca. 87/88 or perhaps somewhat earlier⁶⁷. It is possible that he participated with his cohort in the first Dacian war (see above). *Cohors III Gallorum* is not attested in inscriptions as having acquired a block grant of *civium Romanorum* during the Dacian campaigns so that his *tria nomina* should not have been acquired in this way. In any case, if such a grant had been given for valour in the Dacian wars a name such as *M. Ulpus [----] f. Valens* would be expected, with the father's name

⁵⁷ On the *Tralles* see W. Tomaschek, *Die alten Thraker. Eine ethnologische Untersuchung*. Heft I, *SAW* 124/4, Wien 1892; 1980², 56 ff.; K. Patsch, *JÖAI* 10, 1907, 172; Polaschek, *RE* VI A, (Stuttgart 1912), col. 2091 ff.; Lenk, *RE* VI A, (Stuttgart 1937), col. 407; D. Detschew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste*, Wien 1957, 1977², 518 ff.

⁵⁸ Plutarch, *Ages.*, 16, 2; *Apophth. lac. Ages.*, 42.

⁵⁹ See the various readings, discussions and suggestions in B. Gerov, *Untersuchungen über die westthrakischen Lande in römischer Zeit*, I, *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté philologique* 54, 3, 1959–60, Sofia 1961, 218–66, note 4; id. *Landownership in Roman Thracia and Moesia (1st–3rd century)*, Amsterdam 1988, 40–41, note 49.

⁶⁰ Livy, 31, 35, 1; 33, 4, 4; 37, 22, 1.

⁶¹ Steph. Byz., 175, 7.

⁶² Procopius of Caesarea, *De Aedif.*, IV, 11, 7. Detschew, op. cit. (note 58) 49.

⁶³ F. B. Poljakov, *Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa* I, Bonn 1988.

⁶⁴ V. Gerassimova, *New Museum Acquisitions in 1992*. [in Bulg.], *Annuaire du musée national archéologique bulgare* IX, Sofia 1993, no. 5, 238–239, fig. 5–6 (NAM-Sofia, inv. no 8480). For the site, which lay in the province of Macedonia, see G. Mihailov, *IGBulg* IV, Sofia 1966, 233, nos. 2240–2260.

⁶⁵ Cf. M. M. Roxan, *Findspots of Military Diplomas*, University College London, Institute of Archaeology Bulletin 26, 1989 (1990) Table VII p. 179.

⁶⁶ P. Leuney, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*, Paris 1949, 398 sqq.

⁶⁷ The length of service is given as *quinis et vicenis pluribusve*.

showing his Thracian, or other, parentage.⁶⁸ He should be the son of a man who already had citizenship (the father's name is given in the accepted Roman style).

After his discharge in AD 114 from the garrison of the province of Thrace he apparently settled with his family ca. 20 km from Nicopolis ad Istrum, which had been founded by Trajan in AD 106.⁶⁹ This city lay within the province of Thrace until an alteration of the northern boundary between Thrace and Lower Moesia probably took place shortly before Septimius Severus came to power.⁷⁰ The area along the rivers Iatrus (Jantra) and present Rossitsa were very fertile and were settled by Roman veterans before, but mainly during, the Flavian period⁷¹ and after the Dacian wars,⁷² these factors may have led Valens to establish himself in the area.

As noted above, the recipient had a Roman name. A number of inscriptions refer to persons of the same name both in Moesia inferior and Thrace but none are identifiable with this veteran.

The Witnesses

The names of the witnesses are clear. On present evidence they signed in the following periods:

Ti. Iulius Urbanus (ca. 105–129); P. Caulius Vitalis (ca. 94–118/122?); L. Pullius Verecundus (ca. 79–129); C. Vettienus Hermes (ca. 113–134); P. Atinius Trophi[mus] (ca. 108–114); A. Cascellius Proc[ulus] (ca. 110–122/34?); L. Pullius An[thus] (ca. AD 114–129).⁷³

The diploma from Pissarevo, Central North Bulgaria (in *territorium Novaensium*, deinde *regio Nicopolitana*) is the earliest and most complete diploma for the Roman *auxilia* of Thrace.⁷⁴

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⁶⁸ For examples see CIL XVI 160; 163; RMD II 86, I 20, III 158 and Ulpian Valens M[----]Jus? f., Bessus, recipient of a diploma of AD 126, W. Eck – M. M. Roxan, Two New Military Diplomas, *Römische Inschriften – Neufunde, Neulesungen und Neuinterpretationen. Festschrift für Hans Lieb*, edd. R. Frei-Stolba & M. A. Speidel, Basel 1996, 71, note 79.

⁶⁹ *Amm. Marc.*, 31, 5, 16. For the site see T. Ivanov – R. Ivanov, *Nicopolis ad Istrum. Vol. I. History, Topography, Bibliography*, [in Bulgarian, English summary], Sofia 1994; A. G. Poulter, *The Roman, Late Roman and Early Byzantine City of Nicopolis ad Istrum: The British Excavation 1985–1991. Vol. I.* Monograph 8, The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1995.

⁷⁰ B. Gerov, *ANRW* II, 7, 1, 224–5. See now D. Boteva, who attributes the change to Pertinax: The South border of Lower Moesia from Hadrian to Septimius Severus, in *Roman Limes on the Lower Danube*, Belgrade 1996, 173–176.

⁷¹ CIL XVI 28, diploma of AD 82 from Debelets, Veliko Tarnovo area; B. Gerov, Zwei neugefundene Militärdiplome aus Nordbulgarien, *Klio* 37, 1959, 210 ff., diploma from Gradishte of AD 91 = RMD I, no. 5; CIL III 6144 (Gorna Orjahovitsa) a veteran discharged in the early Trajanic period; CIL III 12409 and 12411 (= ILS 2666b) – inscriptions from Butovo (*emporium Piretensium*) of the early 2nd century A.D.

⁷² For the 1st century Roman colonisation of Thrace see B. Gerov, Römische Bürgerrechtsverleihung und Kolonisation in Thrakien vor Trajan, *Studii Clasice* III, Roma 1961, 107–116 = *Beiträge zur Geschichte der römischen Provinzen Moesien und Thrakien*, Amsterdam 1980, 83–92, esp. 92, n. 1 for colonisation in Moesia inferior; id., *Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae (Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae)*, Sofia 1989, nos. 49, 51–65 (Oescus et vicinia), 72, 203–204 etc; id., Die lateinisch-griechische Sprachgrenze auf den Balkanhalbinsel, in: *Die Sprache im römischen Reich der Kaiserzeit* (Beihefte der Bonner Jahrbücher 40), Bonn 1979, 159, Anm. 85.

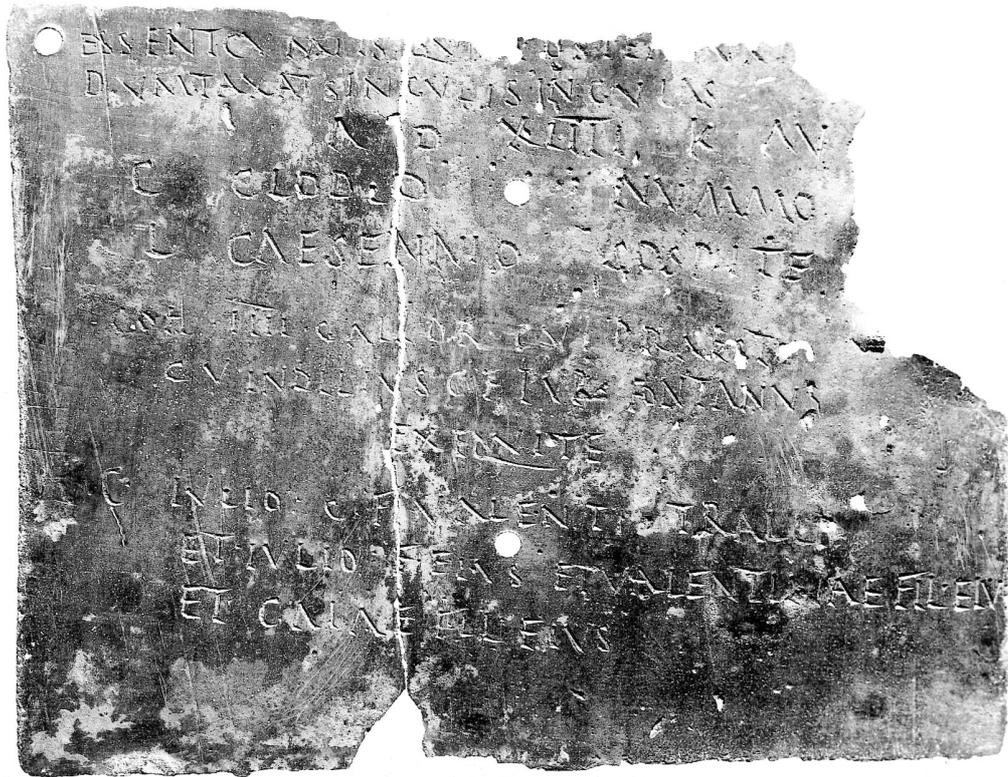
⁷³ For the last list of names, dates and relevant diplomas for individual witnesses see RMD III, 347–9; Period 2: A.D. 73/74 – 138 *NOMINA/COGNOMINA SIGNATORVM*. These lists will be revised and updated in RMD IV.

⁷⁴ Several newly found fragments of diplomas which probably relate to the *auxilia* of Thrace will be published shortly by P. Weiß and M. M. Roxan.



Diploma of Thrace A.D. 114, Tabella I extrinsecus and intus
Photographs by Mrs. R. Staneva and Mr. Kr. Georgiev, Sofia. Courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum
in Sofia

TAFEL IV



Diploma of Thrace A.D. 114, Tabella II intus and extrinsecus
Photographs by Mrs. R. Staneva and Mr. Kr. Georgiev, Sofia. Courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum
in Sofia