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L. TETTIUS CRESCENS' *EXPEDITIO IUDAEAE*

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L. TETTIUS CRESCENS' *EXPEDITIO IUDAEA*\*

What meaning should be ascribed to the mention of the *expeditio Iudaeae* which appears in the epitaph of Tettius Crescens?

The inscription, found in Sardinia, published in 1929 and again in 1988, reads as follows:

*L. Tettius Crescens / domo Roma / vix(it) ann(is) (vacat) / expeditionib(us) interfui(t) / Daciae bis Armeniae / Parthiae et Iudaeae / se vivo sibi fec(it).*<sup>1</sup>

This epitaph is commonly considered that of a Roman soldier,<sup>2</sup> and Chr. Bruun is the first scholar to argue against this interpretation. According to him, Tettius Crescens was probably not a soldier.<sup>3</sup>

Bruun may be correct. In his funerary monument, Tettius Crescens does not mention any special achievement in battle, or membership in a military unit, as we would expect to find in the epitaph of a soldier. The fact that the figure of an eagle appears in the center of his funerary monument,<sup>4</sup> too, has no special meaning, since it is one of the most common symbols in Roman funerary art, and appears not only when the deceased was a soldier.<sup>5</sup> On these grounds,<sup>6</sup> Bruun may be correct arguing that Tettius Crescens was not a soldier, but a civilian who followed the Roman armies. Rome's armies were accompanied by a great number of civilians and semi-civilians, who consisted of camp-followers, servants and others who assisted the army on its campaigns. There were both armed and unarmed non-combatants. The unarmed non-combatants were the drivers and porters temporarily requisitioned for transport duty with the army train, and not to be trusted with weapons, while the armed non-combatants corresponded to the numerous slaves permanently assigned to the legion. According to Roth, they may have amounted to 1200 men, who carried arms in order to police and defend the baggage train and, when the soldiers were not present, the camp itself.<sup>7</sup> Such camp-followers, called *lixae* or *calones*, included slaves, freedmen and presumably also some freeborn. Only a very limited number of them are known from inscriptions, but their numbers undoubtedly ran into the thousands during a major campaign.

Other categories of persons who followed the Roman army without being part of the fighting forces include various kinds of *mercatores* and *negotiatores*. One group of *mercatores* and *negotiatores* in particular may be listed, that of the slave-merchants. Bruun suggests that Tettius Crescens may have been such a man. This is surely possible, not only because many Lucii Tettii are found engaged in

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<sup>1</sup> *Ann.Ep.* 1929, 167. The new reading appears in: M.P. Speidel, The Roman Army in Arabia, *ANRW*, II, 11, 1, 1988, 560, no. A 57. No special meaning seems to be attached to the rather uncommon expression 'expeditio Daciae, Armeniae, Parthiae' (Rosenberger calls it a variant) vis-à-vis the much more common one 'expeditio Dacica, Armenica and Parthica' which is attested to in most extant sources. See V. Rosenberger, *Bella et expeditiones: Die antike Terminologie der Kriege Roms*, Stuttgart 1992, 92, n. 4; 93, n. 5, 95, n. 17.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Y. Le Bohec, *La Sardaigne et l'armée romaine sous le Haut-Empire*, Sassari 1990, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Chr. Bruun, The Spurious 'Expeditio Iudaeae' under Trajan, *ZPE*, 93, 1992, 98–106.

<sup>4</sup> See the photo in Speidel, The Roman Army (n. 1), pl. II A 57.

<sup>5</sup> Sources and bibliographical details are quoted by Bruun, The Spurious 'Expeditio Iudaeae' (n. 2), 101, n. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Less conclusive is the use of the verb *interesse* which appears in the inscription – *expeditionib(us) interfui(t)* – and the fact that he chose to be buried in Sardinia, in spite of his being originally from Rome (see Bruun, The Spurious 'Expeditio Iudaeae' [n. 2], 101–2 and 106). There may have been personal reasons that led Tettius Crescens to the decision to settle in Sardinia, where in any case many Roman soldiers lived (see Le Bohec [n. 2]).

<sup>7</sup> It is quite possible that these state military slaves, by serving in staff positions, accumulated enough money to put up monuments. See J. Roth, The Size and Organisation of the Roman Imperial Legion, *Historia*, 43, 1994, 355–358. I wish to thank Prof. Israel Shatzman for this reference.

business activities<sup>8</sup> – which obviously is not conclusive – but because, if Tettius Crescens had been a *lixa*, he would have probably recorded it in his epitaph.<sup>9</sup>

In any case, the question remains concerning the proper interpretation of the *expeditio Iudaeae* mentioned in his epitaph.

Bruun argues that the term *expeditio* may have here the general meaning of “travel”,<sup>10</sup> but the chronological sequence mentioned in the inscription – *expeditionib(us) interfui(t) / Daciae bis Armeniae / Parthiae et Iudaeae* – seems too meaningful as to allow for misunderstanding. If the first *expeditiones* mentioned are the well known Dacian wars, fought in 101 and 102, and then the Armenian and the Parthian wars, in 114–117, there seems no reason to imagine that the last of these *expeditiones* meant simply a voyage.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, we may quote an observation made by Sir R. Syme, who states that “no doubt can be entertained anywhere when to ‘*expeditio*’ is attached the name of a nation or a country”.<sup>12</sup> It is therefore clear that all the *expeditiones* mentioned in our inscription refer to military campaigns.

The same Bruun, following Le Bohec, also takes into consideration the possibility that the term *expeditio* may mean a real campaign here, and suggests that, in this case, it should be identified with the famous war fought against the Jews by the emperor Hadrian. Rosenberger, too, lists the inscription among the sources mentioning Hadrian's war in Judaea.<sup>13</sup> As for the long span of time which elapsed between the first Dacian war, in 101, and Bar Kochba's war in 132–135, Bruun argues that “nothing prevents us from assuming that Tettius Crescens had been conducting business in the wake of the army for 30 years or even longer”.<sup>14</sup>

This possibility, however, is not easy to defend, not only because of the remarkably long span of time which elapsed from 101 to 132–135 CE, but also because the sequence of the wars mentioned in the inscription is strictly chronological: the Dacian wars, then the Armenian and the Parthian wars. If the list also comprised Hadrian's wars, there would be a ‘missing campaign’ here, namely, Hadrian's first war, the *expeditio Britannica*, fought in 122, between Trajan's Parthian war (114–117) and Hadrian's war against Bar Kochba (132–135). In other words, if Tettius Crescens kept following the campaigns of Trajan and Hadrian until 132–135, we would not understand why he did not also follow the *expeditio Britannica*. In conclusion, there seems to be no reason to deny the possibility, which actually appears a probability, that the *expeditio Iudaeae* mentioned in Tettius Crescens' epitaph belongs, like the wars which precede it, to those fought in Trajan's, not in Hadrian's days.

If such is the case, we may well relate it to the unrest attested to in Judaea toward the end of Trajan's time, as Alon has already suggested.<sup>15</sup> It is also meaningful that this is not the only instance in which the term *expeditio* is used referring to the Jewish revolt in Trajan's time. An inscription from Berytus, too, mentions a Roman soldier, Caius Valerius Rufus, *tribunus militum* of a *vexillatio* of the *legio XII Claudia Pia Fidelis*, “*misso cum vexillo . . . in expeditionem*” to Cyprus against the Jews at

<sup>8</sup> Bruun, The Spurious ‘*Expeditio Iudaeae*’ (n. 2), 103–4. See also the bibliography quoted in n.s 31, 32, 35 and 38.

<sup>9</sup> This is the case, for example, with the *M(arcus) Titius lixa, coh(ortis) / III Thracum Syriac(ae)* mentioned in *AE* 1990, 1012 and with the *L(ucius) Freius / L(ucii) l(ibertus) Faus(tus), lixa, / leg(ionis) V* mentioned in *AE* 1990, 862. These references have been taken from the handout of Dr. Rachel Feig Vishnia's paper on “The Shadow Army: the *Lixae* and the Roman Legions”, presented at the Twenty-Ninth Conference of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, held in Haifa on June 7, 2000. I wish to thank Prof. Israel Shatzman and Dr. Yulia Ustinova, who brought the handout to my attention.

<sup>10</sup> Bruun, The Spurious ‘*Expeditio Iudaeae*’ (n. 2), 105.

<sup>11</sup> Prof. Eck was kind enough to point this out to me.

<sup>12</sup> R. Syme, *Journeys of Hadrian*, *ZPE*, 73, 1988, 166 = *Roman Papers*, VI, ed. A. R. Birley, Oxford 1991, 353–354.

<sup>13</sup> V. Rosenberger, *Bella et expeditiones* (n. 1), 97, n. 35. See also T. D. Barnes, *Emperors on the Move*, *Journal of Rom. Arch.*, 2, 1989, 254.

<sup>14</sup> Bruun, The Spurious ‘*Expeditio Iudaeae*’ (n. 2), 100, n. 9, 106.

<sup>15</sup> G. Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age*, II, ed. G. Levi, Jerusalem 1984, 417–418.

some time after 20 or 21 February 116 CE.<sup>16</sup> In the time of Trajan, it appears that the campaigns are increasingly referred to as *expeditiones* in the epigraphical sources. The reason for this development in terminology is identified by Alföldy with the growing necessity of stressing Roman political superiority in foreign affairs. The rulers found it necessary to emphasize that the military events were not dictated by Rome's enemies, but were the result of their own planning and foresight.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, Tettius Crescens may well not have been a soldier, but his mention of an *expeditio Iudaeae* remains meaningful, and has to be taken into consideration when dealing with the events which took place in Judaea at the end of Trajan's reign.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *ILS* 9491 = *AE* 1912, 179. See Rosenberger, *Bella et expeditiones* (n. 1), 95. The whole *legio* was in Parthia: see *ILS* 2083.

<sup>17</sup> The conquest of Britain, for example, is called *bellum Britannicum* in the time of Claudius, but both *bellum* and *expeditio* are used for the wars under Domitian and Trajan, while the term *expeditio* is used predominantly for wars in Marcus Aurelius' time and later. See G. Alföldy, *Römische Heeresgeschichte*, Amsterdam 1987, 479.

<sup>18</sup> On the Jewish disorders in Judaea towards the end of Trajan's reign, see E. Mary Smallwood, Palestine c. A.D. 115–118, *Historia*, 11, 1962, 500–510; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, ed. G. Vermes & F. Millar, I, Edinburgh 1973, 533–534; E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 421–427; A. Oppenheimer, The Jewish Community in Galilee during the Period of Yavneh and the Bar-Kokhba Revolt' (Hebr.), *Cathedra*, 4, 1977, 51–66 and Summary (Hebr.), 82–83; M. D. Herr, The Participation of the Galilee in the 'War of Qitos' (= Quietus) or in the 'Ben-Kosba Revolt', (Hebr.), *Cathedra*, 4, 1977, 67–73; D. Rokeah, Notes on the 'War of Qitos' (Hebr.), *Cathedra*, 4, 1977, 74; Y. Zafrir, The Historical Considerations and the Archeological Findings (Hebr.), *Cathedra*, 4, 1977, 75–80; Z. Yeivin, The Evidence of the Korazin Excavations and the Archeological Survey (Hebr.), *Cathedra*, 4, 1977, 81; Marina Pucci, Il movimento insurrezionale in Giudea (117–118 D.C.), *SCI*, 4, 1978, 63–76; B. Isaac and I. Roll, Legio II Traiana in Judaea, *ZPE*, 33, 1979, 153–4; B. Isaac and I. Roll, Judaea in the Early Years of Hadrian's Reign, *Latomus* 38, 1979, 54–61; Marina Pucci, *La rivolta ebraica al tempo di Traiano*, Pisa 1981, 104–119; B. Isaac and I. Roll, Legio II Traiana in Judaea – a Reply, *ZPE*, 47, 1982, 131–2.