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Roman Military Diploma from the Reign of Vespasian Found at the Territory of Scupi

UDK: 904:929.653(497.711)„652”

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In 1993, a fragment of a bronze military diploma (i.e. an official military certificate) was brought to the City Museum of Skopje after having been discovered by accident in the vicinity of Rašče in the Skopje region.¹ The fragment was part of one of two plates of a rectangular bronze diploma. (It represents a little more than half of one of the bronze plates, i.e. one quarter of the whole diploma.) The diploma is made of good quality bronze and is well preserved. The text on the front outer side is intelligible, while the text on the inner side is less intelligible due to layers of calcination and corrosion.²

Military diplomas were individual copies of imperial decrees which granted certain legal rights and benefits to veteran soldiers.³ They were identical copies of original imperial decrees exhibited at a public place in Rome.⁴

Military diplomas are usually similar in terms of their appearance and contents. They consist of two bronze plates hinged together with bronze wire threaded through two perforations. The inscription is engraved on all four sides, following more or less

1 The diploma was brought by Mr. Abedin Krosi, a pedagogue from the elementary school in the village of Rašče in the Skopje region. According to his account, the diploma was discovered by accident at the site locally known as Dardha e Ilazit during agricultural work on a field owned by a villager named Iliaz Bakiu. The City Museum of Skopje offered to purchase the diploma from Mr. Krosi, but according to his statement, the Mr. Bakiu was not prepared to sell the diploma as he wanted to maintain it in private ownership. According to Mr Krosi's statement, the reason for taking the diploma to the Museum was not for material benefit but for educative purposes to obtain basic information about the find and its historical and archaeological importance. On that occasion, the delivery person did not agree to leave the diploma in the Museum for deeper observation and research. He only allowed photo-documentation of the find.

2 The necessary measuring for determining the dimensions and the weight of the preserved part of the diploma was not performed during the examination.

3 Morris J. – Roxan M., 1977, 300, The earliest diploma dates from 52 AD at the time of Emperor Claudius, while the latest were issued at the beginning of the 4th century in Diocletian's reign. According to some authorities, diplomas were issued to all veterans, and accordingly, the number of issued diplomas should be 250– 500,000 copies. However, only 257 diplomas had been discovered by 1977, which is a small amount compared to the possible number of issued diplomas. This has led other authorities to question the theory that all veterans (*emiriti*) received diplomas and to propose that the awarding of diplomas was selective and not an automatic consequence of completing military service, i.e. that diplomas may have been awarded for special courage in wartime or merit (*ob virtutem*) in peaceful times (Dušanić S., 1982, 197 – 232, presents an overview of the type, purpose and character of military diplomas: Dušanić S., 1986, 190 - 240).

4 Душанић С., 2001, 114, note 9 (with listed literature), an original version of the decree was kept in the public archive (*tabularium publicum*), while a second was publicly displayed on one of the walls in the Capitol.



Fig 1. Tabella I (extrinsecus)

established formula. The text of the decree is inscribed twice: vertically with larger letters on both inner plates and horizontally on the front outer plate. The last outer plate contains the inscribed names of witnesses (Roman citizens) who guarantee the authenticity of the document, i.e. the copy, with their wax seals. The text inside was regarded as a certified transcription of the original, but a copy of the text was also written on the outer side in order to avoid constant opening of the tablets.

The text of each diploma begins with the name of the Emperor and all his honorary titles. Then it lists the military units served in by the soldier to whom the decree pertains, the military region and places where they were stationed, the name of their commander (*legatus*), the formula according to which they and their descendants are granted citizenship (*civitas*), the legal right to marry (*conubium*), the date (day and month) of issuing the decree, and the names of the two consuls holding office in the year the diploma was issued. It then gives information about the military unit in which the retired veteran served, including the name of the soldier's commanding officer and similar data, followed by the name of the holder of the decree and a reference to his origin—his ethnicity or birthplace. Sometimes the diploma states the names of the members of the soldier's family. Finally, it gives data about the location in Rome where the original decree was displayed, listing the names of all the soldiers from the same regiment to whom transcripts were issued on the same day.

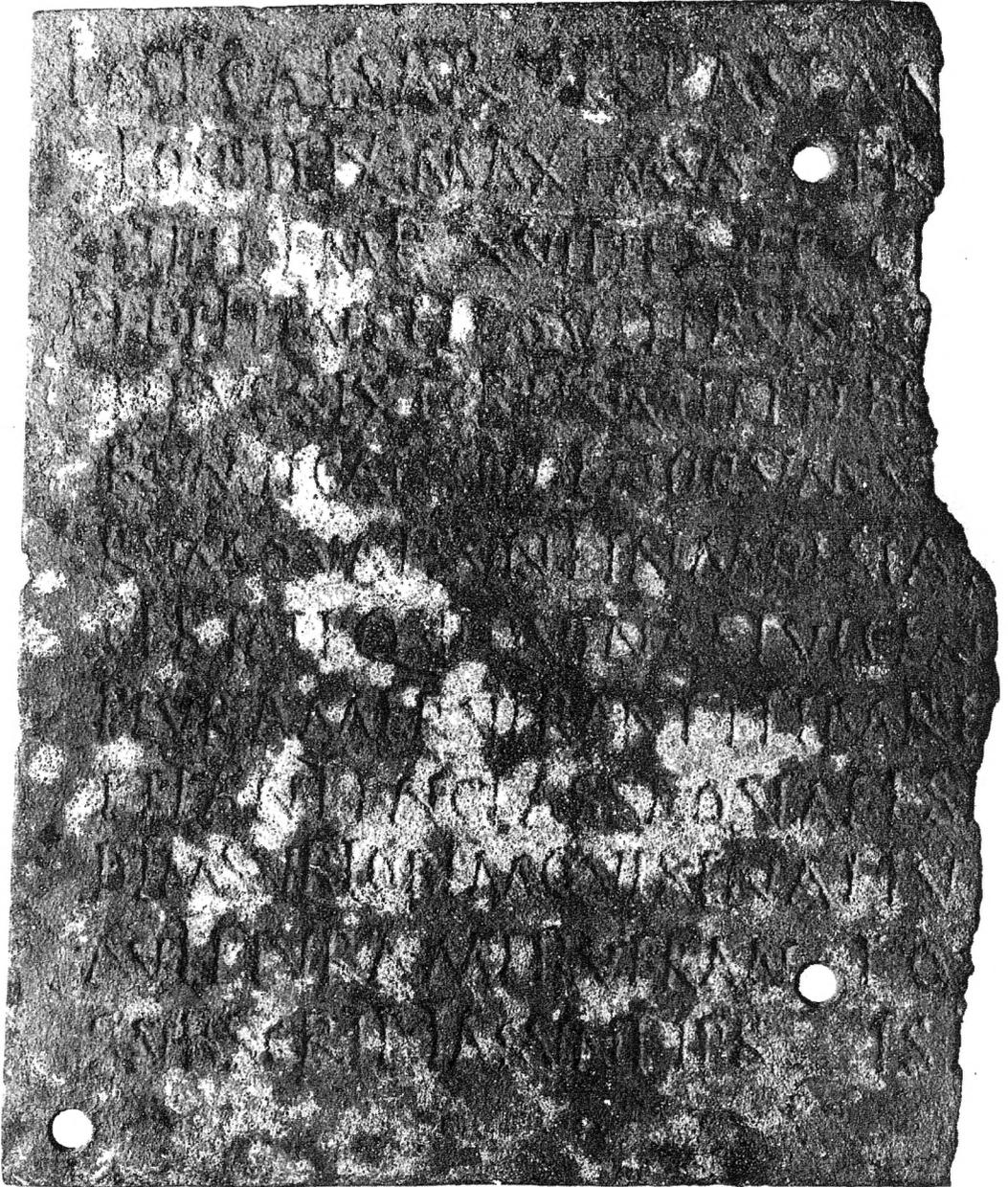


Fig. 2 Tabella I (intus)

On the interior side of the tablet only the left half of the text is preserved:

Tabella I (*intus*) – (Fig. 2)

1 **IMP·CAESAR·VESPASIAN**
 PONTIFEX·MAXIMVS • TR
 VIII·IMP·XVIII·P·P·C
 PEDITIBVS·ET·EQVITIBVS·QV
 5 TIBVS·SEX·I·CRETVM·II·III·BR
 RVM·II·CALCHIDINORVM·V
 RVM·QVAE·SVNT·IN·MOESIA·
 CERIALE·QVI·QVINA·ET·VICEN
 10 PLVRA·MERVERANT·ITEM·RE
 LITANT·IN·CLASS·F·QVAE·EST·
 DEM·SVB·EODEM·QVI·SENA·ET·V
 AVT·PLVR·MERVERVN • T·Q
 SVB·SCRIPTA·SVNT·IPSIS·
 •

The interpretation of the text on the two sides of the diploma is as follows:

Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus, pontifex maximus, tribunici(a) potestat(e) VIII, imp(erator) XVIII, p(ater) p(atriciae), censor, co(n)s(ul) VIII. Peditibus et equitibus, qui militant in cohortibus sex: I Cretum, II et III Bracaraugustanorum, II Calchididorum, VII Gallorum, (I) Ubiorum, quae sunt in Moesia sub Sex(to) Vettuleno Ceriale, qui quina et vicena stipendia aut plura meruerant, item remigibus qui militant in class(is) Flavia, quae est in provincia M(oesia) dem sub eodem qui sena et vicena stipendia aut plura meruerant, 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 i] is quas [postea duxissent, dumtaxat singili singulas].

Translation:

The Emperor Caesar Vespasian Augustus, supreme priest, awarded tribune authority for the ninth time, declared imperator for the 19th time, father of the fatherland, censor and consul for the eight time. To the infantry and cavalrymen that serve in the following six cohorts, I Cretum, II and III Bracaravgustanorum, II Chalcidenorum, VII Gallorum and I Ubiorum, located in Moesia under the command of Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis, who have served twenty five years or more, as well as to the rowers [navy soldiers] who serve in the Flavian navy located in the Province Moesia under the same command and who have served twenty-five years or more, whose names are listed below, to them personally and to their children and inheritors, [the imperator]

grants the right of Roman citizenship, as well as to those who [were alone, with] those who [later took (whom they later married), i.e. individual with individual (woman)]

General observations

Military diplomas are important documents because they provide information about the position and movement of military regiments, about the chronology and the *cursus honorum* (order of honorary titles) of the Emperor, consuls, military commanders, etc. Until recently, this military diploma was the only find of this type to have been made in the territory of Macedonia. A second fragment of a military diploma, issued in 151 AD under Antoninus Pius, was discovered in 2009 at the archaeological site of Scupi.⁷ The lower half of the diploma on which the name of the owner should be stated was not preserved. Information about the names of the consuls, the date of issue of the diploma and the names of the witnesses were also not preserved. This represents a loss of some very important data about the early military history of Scupi and the Province of Moesia in the 1st century AD.

Period of issue of the diploma

The Vespasian diploma is missing the lower half of the page which should contain the names of the consuls in the period when the diploma was issued, i.e. the precise year and date of issue. The only way to determine at least the approximate date of issue of the diploma is Vespasian's *cursus honorum*, i.e. the number and the order of his honorary titles and services, above all his tribune power, consulship and imperium. On July 1, 77 AD, Vespasian received the tribune power (*tribunicia potestas*) for the ninth time, with duration until June 30, 78⁸. In 76 AD he was appointed Emperor for the 16th, 17th and 18th time, and he still held these titles in 77 AD. He probably received the title Emperor for the 19th time in 77 AD, still holding it at the beginning of 78 AD, while in the second half of this year he received the title Emperor for the 20th time. His eighth consulship began on January 1, 77 AD and lasted until January 1, 78 AD.⁹

The number of Vespasian's titles in our diploma (*tribunicia potestas* VIII, *imperator* XVIII, *consul* VIII) is identical to the information on a military diploma from Montana in present-day Bulgaria. (In 77/78 AD, the region of

⁷ The diploma was presented by Maja Basotova, MA at the XXI MAND Symposium held in 2010 in Strumica, and shall be published in the 21st issue of *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologicae*. The territory of modern Macedonia during the Roman imperial period belonged to the provinces Moesia Superior, Macedonia and Thrace. Located deep behind the line of major military operations, there was no need for increased military presence. Hence it is understandable why the number of discovered diplomas is so small in our country.

⁸ Tacitus, Hist. II 79, The beginning of Vespasian's reign is considered to be July 1, 69 AD, when he was proclaimed as Emperor by his soldiers. Accordingly, his tribune power (*tribunicia potestas*) began and was renewed on that date each year.

⁹ Crun M. Mc. – Woodhead A. G., 1961, 4 – 6; Sandys J. E., 1976, 232 – 233, 238 – 240, He received his first consulship in 51 AD during Claudius's reign, and his second on January 1, 70 AD.

Montana belonged to the Province of Moesia; after the division into Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior in 86, it belonged to the Province of Moesia Inferior).¹⁰ The diploma was issued on the seventh Ides of February (VII Idus Februarias), during the consulship of *L. Ceionio Commodo* and *D. Novio Prisco*, i.e. February 7, 78 AD.

Based on the text it is clear that our diploma was issued during Vespasian's reign in the period of his ninth tribune power when he was elected as Emperor for the 19th time and as consul for the eight times. Thus, although we lack the correct date of issue of our diploma, the period of issue can be narrowed to between July 1 77 AD and 1 July 78 AD.¹¹

Legatus Augusti pro praetore Moesiae (Legatus of the Province of Moesia)

According to a military diploma issued in 75 AD from Taliatae (present-day Donji Milanovac in Serbia), Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis was the legatus and at the same time commander of the military regiment stationed in the province of Moesia.¹² Our diploma and the one in Montana (Bulgaria) confirm that Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis was still legatus of Moesia in 78 AD.¹³ In 69/70 AD, Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis arrived in Moesia as a commander of the 5th Macedonian Legion (*Legio V Macedonicae*), which had returned to Moesia after its previous transfer to the East and participation in the Jewish-Roman War.¹⁴ It is assumed that Vespasian promoted him to the rank of *legatus* (governor) of the Province of Moesia as a reward for his contribution in the Jewish-Roman War.¹⁵ In the diploma from Debelc (Bulgaria) issued on 20 of September 82, Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis is still regarded as *legatus* of Moesia.¹⁶ There are no records of how long he performed as legatus of Moesia, but it was probably until the period between 82 and 85/6 AD when C. Oppius Sabinus was appointed legatus of Moesia.¹⁷

10 Велков И., 1923/24, 83 - 98; CIL XVI, 22 = RMD IV 208; Илиева П., 1999, 9–13.

11 Matei Popescu F., 2006/2007, 34, provides data on another diploma (RMD V 325) issued on 07. 02. 78 on which the names of the cohortes are preserved: *I Cretum, II Chalcidenorum, [...] Gallorum, Ubiorum*. The cohortes mentioned in this diploma are identical with some of the cohortes in our diploma. It can be assumed that this is a case of the same decree being copied: Vespasian's constitution, passed on 07. 02. 78 AD. Accordingly, we can assume that the date of issue of our diploma from Rašče is probably the same, i.e. 07. 02. 78 AD.

12 Вучковић - Тодоровић В., 1968, 26; RMR I 2.

13 CIL XVI 22 = RMD IV 208 (the diploma was issued on 7 February, 78).

14 Mirković M., 1996, 29 - 33. The *Legio V Macedonica* stayed in Moesia during the first half of the 1st century, together with the *Legio IV Scythica*, from whence it was transferred to Syria some time before 62 AD. Иванов П., 1999, 87 - 89, thinks that the *Legio V Macedonica* was transferred from Moesia to the East in 62 AD.

15 Mirković M., 1968, 182; Mirković M., 1977, 172, note 5: it is probable that the cohorts *I Antiohensium, I Cisipadensium* and *I Raetorum* listed in the diploma from 75 AD (RMD I 2) arrived in this period along with the *Legio V Macedonica*. This is probably also when the cohort I Thracum Syriaca, which is noted as Moesian in 78 AD, arrived. Иванов П., 1999, 87 - 89: Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis was one of Vespasian's most effective and reliable officers during the Judean war. After its arrival in Moesia, the legion base was located in Oescus.

16 CIL XVI 28; Mirković M., 1977, 179; Matei Popescu F., 2006/2007, 35.

17 Matei Popescu F., 2006/2007, 31 - 32, note 3. It is assumed that *C. Oppius Sabinus* was appointed as governor (legatus) of Moesia in 84 AD. He was the last governor of undivided Moesia.

Military units

The names of six cohortes are stated:

I CRETVM

III BRACARAVGVSTANORVM

II BRACARAVGVSTANORVM

II CALCHIDINORVM

VII GALLORVM

VBIORUM (probably I Ubiorum)

Cohors I Cretum.¹⁸ Based on military diplomas issued in 94,¹⁹ 96,²⁰ 100,²¹ 132/133,²² 152, 157,²³ 160²⁴ and 161²⁵ AD, this cohort has been confirmed as part of the regiment of *Moesia Superior*. This cohort was one of the military units (4 *alae* and 29 *cohortes*) that stayed by the Danube for a longer period of time during Trajan's Dacian wars (101–102 AD and 105–106 AD). These military units constituted the military potential of *Moesia Superior* until the formation of the province *Dacia*. Some of these military units, among which was the cohort I Cretum, stayed for some time in the newly formed Province of *Dacia*, and after the division of *Dacia* they stayed in *Dacia Superior*.²⁶ This is confirmed in the military diplomas issued in 110 and 114 AD, where the unit is mentioned as part of the regiment of *Dacia* and bears the epithet *Sagittaria*.²⁷ Many bricks with the seal of this cohort have been discovered in the close vicinity of the Danube limes.²⁸ Later, after the division of *Dacia* into three parts (118/119 AD), Cohort I Cretum was reinstated in *Moesia Superior*, where it was stationed in *Egeta* on the Danube (present-day Brza Palanka in Serbia) until the end of the 3rd century.²⁹ In addition to evidence from the military diplomas, we find confirmation of the cohort's presence in *Moesia Superior* during the 1st century in a tomb monument in *Naissus* dedicated to a veteran serving in this cohort. The monument was dated between the second half of the sixth decade and the first half of the ninth decade of the 1st century.³⁰ The presence of this cohort in *Moesia* is connected

18 RE, IV/1 (1901), s.v. Cohors, 276/40.

19 CIL XVI 39 (issued on 16 September 94)

20 RMD I 6 (issued on 12 July 96)

21 CIL XVI, 46 (issued on 8 May 100)

22 RMD IV 247 (issued on 9 September 132/133. On this diploma it has the epithets *Sagittaria*)

23 On these diplomas, the cohort has the epithet *Sagittaria*.

24 CIL XVI 111 (issued in the period January/February 160)

25 RMD I 55 (issued on 8 February 161)

26 Гарашанин М. - Васић М. – Марјановић Вујовић Г., 1984, 51 - 53, with listed literature about the division of *Dacia* and the military units stationed in certain Dacian provinces.

27 CIL XVI 163 (issued on 2 July 110 AD), RMD IV 226 (issued on May 114 AD), the epithet *Sagittaria* that was given to the cohort is logical as Crete was famous for its fine archers.

28 Вулић Н., 1931, 41, n° 91; Dušanić S. – Petrović P., 1963, 369, note 27; Петровић П., 1984, 153, note 7 with provided literature. The discovered bricks with seals indicate that it participated in the construction of Trajan's bridge on the Danube and the fortification in *Drobeta* (CIL III 1703). The location of its camp in *Dacia* is not determined with certainty: it is assumed to have been located somewhere between Rome and Turn Severin. It is further assumed that it stayed in *Transleiderata* (present-day Banatska Palanka) until 110 AD.

29 Герасимова В., 1969, 5 - 11; Mirković M., 1977, 176; Петровић П., 1984, 153. The cohort was stationed in *Egeta* from the middle of the 2nd century according to the inscriptions discovered in the temple of *Jupiter Dolihenus* (Вучковић Тодоровић Д., 1966, 176).

30 Dušanić S. – Petrović P., 1963, 365 - 370; IMS IV 34, the monument is dedicated to *Ti. Claudius Valerius* who

with the arrival of *Legio V Macedonica* from the east some time after 71 AD, when they probably stayed in *Naissus* for a certain period.³¹ The cohort remained in Moesia after that, which is confirmed by our diploma and also by another military diploma relating to the same constitution from 78 AD.³² As previously mentioned, the cohort I Cretum remained in Moesia Superior until the end of the 3rd century following the administrative reorganisation implemented by Domitian and the division of Moesia into two provinces.

Cohors II Bracaravgustanorum (equitata ?) was one of a series of cohorts whose members were recruited in the region *conventus Bracarenensis* with its capital at *Bracara Augusta* (present-day Braga in northern Portugal). This city belonged to the imperial province of *Hispania Tarraconensis* and became the capital of the province of *Gallaecia* following the reforms of Diocletian.³³ The early history of the cohort is almost unknown, but it is assumed that it might have arrived in the Balkans at the same time with its sister unit *Cohors I Bracaraugustanorum*. Evidence indicates that this latter cohort, the first of the series, served in Dalmatia in the Julio-Claudian period.³⁴ Our diploma further supports this theory. This cohort must have existed in the reign of Claudius, for if we extract 25 years or more of service from the date of discharge (77/78 AD) we are left with 52/3 AD as the year of recruitment. This is the earliest confirmation of the presence of the cohort in the territory of Moesia before its division into Superior and Inferior in 86 AD. Although there is no epigraphic proof, it is assumed that the cohort may have been sent to Thrace as early as in Claudius's reign, right after the formation of the province in 46 AD. This is due to the cohort's presence in a diploma discovered in the region of *Nicopolis ad Istrum – regio Nicopolitana* in the village of Pisarevo, near Orjahovica, in the vicinity of Veliko Trnovo in northern Bulgaria. This was issued in 114 AD and confirms that the cohort belonged to the army corps of Thrace.³⁵ A tomb monument found in the village of Šipka near Kazanluk North Thrace, dedicated to the cavalier *Celsus Marius* who died after 24 of service in this cohort suggests that the cohort remained in Thrace in the following period. The inscription is dated to the reign of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius.³⁶ The possibility that the inscription should be dated to an earlier time is based on the style of the letters, but also on the proof of the transfer of the cohort to Moesia Inferior in 145 AD.³⁷ The cohort is mentioned in an inscription from Trajan's period in the honorary duties (*cursus honorum*) of *A. Atinius Paternus*.³⁸

originated from *Hierapytna* on Crete.

31 Mirković M., 1977, 172 -173; Петровић П., 1984, 153, note 7, it is assumed that the cohort arrived in Moesia in pre-Flavian times. It is not known where its camp was located, although it is assumed that it was located somewhere between Ram (*Lederata*) and Turn Severin.

32 Matei Popescu F., 2006/7, 34 with referred literature, especially RMD V 325 where the mentioned diploma issued on 07. 02. 78 is published.

33 RE III 1899, 802 s. v. Bracara Augusta, Bracari

34 Alföldy G., 1962, 249 – 250;

35 Paunov E. – Roxan M. M., 1997, 275;

36 IGBulg III, fasc. 2, no. 1471.

37 RMD III, 165. The cohort was probably transferred to Moesia Inferior during the reign of Antoninus Pius at the latest, as confirmed by diplomas issued in 145 and 152/154 AD.

38 CIL VI 1838 = ILS 2727, RE,IV, s.v. Cohors, 256/ 20, *M. Atinius Paternus* was later decorated as tribune of

Cohors III Bracaravgustanorum belongs to the same series of cohortes as *II Bracaravgustanorum*.³⁹ The early history of the cohort is almost unknown, but on the basis of the data on our diploma it can be assumed that it arrived in the Balkans at the same time as its sister units *I and II Bracaraugustanorum*. Its presence is confirmed in Britain in the years 103,⁴⁰ 122,⁴¹ 124,⁴² 126, 146 and 158 AD.⁴³ Bricks bearing the seal of this cohort have been discovered in Manchester (without precise dating) and the *Melandra* fortification (deserted after 140 AD).⁴⁴ The presence of the cohort in Raetia in the 2nd century is confirmed by a military diploma issued in the period 140/144 AD (RMD I 58/95).⁴⁵ The cohort *III Bracaravgustanorum* is mentioned in a diploma from Syria issued in 139 AD.⁴⁶

Cohors II Chalcidenorum⁴⁷ is known from military diplomas issued in 92, 97,⁴⁸ 99,⁴⁹ 127,⁵⁰ 134,⁵¹ 138,⁵² 145,⁵³ 146,⁵⁴ 152/154⁵⁵ and 157 AD⁵⁶ to have been one of the military units stationed in Moesia Inferior. Our diploma dates from the period before the division of Moesia into the two provinces of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior. In addition to our diploma, the cohort is mentioned in another diploma issued with the same constitution from 7 February 78 AD.⁵⁷ This proves that this cohort was and remained part of the army corps of Moesia initially and later of Moesia Inferior for a prolonged period. There is no epigraphic evidence to identify where the cohort was stationed.

Legio X Fretensis at the time of Trajan's campaign in Parthia.

39 RE III 1899, 802 s. v. Bracara Augusta, Bracari

40 CIL XVI 148

41 CIL XVI 69

42 CIL VII 1195 (privilegia militum)

43 Jarret M., 1994, 57

44 Jarret M., 1994, 57

45 Knight D. J., 1991, 207,

46 RE, IV, sv. Cohors, 256/20-60; Knight D. J., 1991, 207, note 33. It is believed that the cohort of the same name which has been identified in Syria Palestina is not the same cohort that stayed in Raetia in the 2nd century but belongs to a special series of cohortes formed with the special purpose of serving in the east (CIL XVI 87). He refers to the opinion of M. Roxan (RMD 69) that the cohort transferred to Palestine was a cohort with the same name which had previously served in Britain.

47 Roxan M., 1997, 294, note 58;

48 Matei Popescu F.- Tantea O., 2006, 108, table 4. (The diploma of 92 AD was issued on 14 June, while the diploma of 97 AD was issued on 9 September)

49 CIL XVI 45 (issued 14 August 99 AD)

50 Roxan M. M., 1997, 298, table 2, (issued 20 August 127 AD)

51 CIL XVI 78 (issued on 2 April 134 AD)

52 CIL XVI 83 (issued on 28 February 138 AD)

53 RMD III 165 (issued on 7 April 145 AD)

54 RMD IV 270

55 RMD I 50

56 Matei Popescu F.- Tantea O., 2006, 108, table 4 (issued on 8 February 157 AD)

57 Matei Popescu F., 2006/7, 34. On the diploma issued on 7 February 78 AD (RMD V 325) the names of the following cohortes have been preserved: *I Cretum, II Chalcidenorum, [...] Gallorum, Ubiorum*. The names of these cohortes are also found on our diploma. The date of issue of this diploma is identical with the date of issue of the diploma (7 February 78 AD) discovered in Montana in present-day Bulgaria (CIL XVI 22). This is an indication that these diplomas belong to the same decree (constitution), as does our diploma, i.e. it should be assumed that the date of issue is probably the same (7 February 78 AD).

Cohors VII Gallorum.⁵⁸ From the diploma discovered in *Taliata* (present-day Donji Milanovac in Serbia) it is known that this cohort was part of Moesia's corps as early as 75 AD.⁵⁹ Our diploma confirms that the stay of this cohort in Moesia continued in the subsequent years, i.e. until 77 - 78 AD. The precise location of its stay in Moesia remains unknown. According to data from diplomas issued during Trajan's reign in 99⁶⁰ and 110/113 AD, it was stationed in Moesia Inferior.⁶¹ On the basis of this data, it is assumed that the cohort participated in Trajan's Dacian Wars as part of the army corps of Moesia Inferior. It was probably transferred to Syria in Trajan's reign, where it remained a part of the corps for a long period, as is confirmed by one military diploma issued in 134/138.⁶²

Cohors (I) Ubiorum. Our diploma is from the period before the division of Moesia (86 AD), which suggests that this cohort was part of Moesia's army corps as early as 78 AD, which is only confirmation of the known data from Moesia's diplomas issued in 75 and 78 AD.⁶³ Later, after the division of Moesia, the cohort remained in Moesia Inferior where, according to the data from the military diplomas discovered so far, it subsequently remained for a long period. It was noted as being one of the military units of Moesia Inferior in diplomas issued in 92,⁶⁴ 97,⁶⁵ 99⁶⁶ and 105.⁶⁷ It is included in the military units of Moesia Inferior which participated in Trajan's Dacian Wars. During this period it participated in the construction of the *Capidava* fortification (*Topalu-Constanta* in Romania), as is confirmed by seals discovered on the bricks and by the tomb monument of a veteran serving in this cohort.⁶⁸ After the Dacian Wars it remained in Dacia for a certain period. This region (Transylvania) had originally belonged to Dacia Superior, but would later be included in Dacia Inferior during Hadrian's reign, which is confirmed by the diploma dated to 119/129 AD (RMD V 374).⁶⁹ In the last years of Hadrian's reign the cohort is recorded as having been amongst those serving in Dacia Superior.⁷⁰ The cohort *I Ubiorum* would remain in this province until at

58 RE IV 1, s. v. Cohors, 292/30;

59 Вучковић Тодоровић Д., 1968, 21 - 49; RMD I 2 (issued on 22 April 75 AD);

60 CIL XVI 45 (issued on 14 August 99 AD)

61 CIL XVI 58 (issued in the period 110–113 AD)

62 CIL XVI 103

63 Matei – Popescu F., 2006/2007, 34, tabela II, the cohort *I Ubiorum* (without designation number - prima is mentioned for the first time as part of Moesia's regiment in the diploma issued in 75 AD (RGZM 1). In the diploma issued on 7 February 78 AD (RMD V 325), the names of the following cohorts were preserved: *I Cretum*, *II Chalcidenorum*, [...] *Gallorum*, *Ubiorum*. The names of these cohorts are also found on our diploma. The date of issue of the diploma is identical with the date of issue of the diploma (07 February 78 AD) discovered in Montana – today's Bulgaria (CIL XVI 22). It is an indication that these diplomas belong to the same decree (constitution), as does our diploma, i.e. it should be assumed that the date of issue is probably the same (7 February 78 AD).

64 Petolescu C. – Matei Popescu F., 2008, 365, note 59.

65 Weiss P., 1997, 233 – 238, n 4 (issued on 9 September 97 AD)

66 CIL XVI 44 (issued on 14 August 99 AD)

67 Petolescu C. – Matei Popescu F., 2008, 365, note 62.

68 Opris I., 2006, 238 – 239.

69 Герасимова В., 1969, 8 - 9; Ilkić M., 2009, 65, 68. The diploma from *Asseria* was issued in 125/6 AD and refers the regiment of Dacia Inferior.

70 Petolescu C. – Matei Popescu F., 2008, 365, note 63. In the diploma from *Micia* from the last year of Hadrian's reign it is mentioned as part of Dacia Superior's regiment. This is confirmation that this region, with Hadrian's reforms, was separated from Dacia Inferior and restored to Dacia Superior.

least the end of the 2nd century, while the bricks with seals imply that its campus was located in present-day *Odorheiul Secuiesc*.⁷¹

Classis Flavia Moesica

Our diploma is especially important because it informs us that with this constitution the navy (rowers) of the Moesian fleet were discharged together with the infantry and cavalry of the six cohortes listed above. The naval veterans are mentioned as part of the military corps of Moesia province under the command of *Sextus Vettulenus Cerialis*.

Little is known about the Roman fleet on the Danube in Moesia Superior due to the scarcity of evidence. It is believed that some parts of the fleet had been stationed on the Danube from the time of Augustus but that the fleet not was organised as a Moesian fleet with the epithet Flavia until the reign of Vespasian or Domitian.⁷² The presence of the fleet on the Danube in Moesia Superior is connected with the need for its participation in the construction of the land road through the Đerdap Gorge in the 1st century AD.⁷³ Epigraphically, the existence of *Classis Flavia Moesica* has its earliest confirmation in a military diploma from Dacia issued in 92 AD.⁷⁴ Opinions differ as to the date upon which the Moesian fleet received its epithet *Flavia*, thus forming the *Classis Flavia Moesiaca*. According to some researchers, this happened during Vespasian's time,⁷⁵ while others believe it probably happened during Domitian's preparations for the Dacian war.⁷⁶

The mention of the Moesian fleet with the name *Classis Flavia Moesica* on our military diploma is solid proof that it happened during Vespasian's reign, i.e. that even in 78 there was a special Moesian fleet with the epithet Flavia. If it is known that the members of the navy served for 26 years, then we are left with the year 52 AD as the year of recruitment, in the period of Claudius, which indirectly indicates the existence

71 Petolescu C. – Matei Popescu F., 2008, 365, note 64 – 65.

72 Петровић П., 1990, 207 - 215, note 6 – 10 with referred literature. The stay of the fleet at the Danube in Moesia Superior in the first half of the 1st century is considered problematic; Иванов П., 1999, 104 - 107, note 117, 118, with referred literature.

73 Петровић П., 1990, 207-208, Mirković M., 1996, 30 – 37. The preserved inscriptions at Gospodin Vir and Lepena indicate that the land road through Upper Đerdap Gorge was finished as early as 33/34 AD, which would have been hard to accomplish without the participation of the navy. According to other inscriptions (Claudius's tabula from 46 AD and Domitian's writings from 92/93 AD), the land and water roads were regularly maintained and expanded throughout the 1st century. Later, during Trajan's times, the land road through the Lower Đerdap Gorge was constructed by cutting into the rocks and the water channel was dug and it went around the cataracts of the Iron Gate. These construction works provided conditions for the smooth sailing and disembarking on the bank. The Danube waterway had enormous economic and military strategic importance for the safety of this part of the border. It allowed free and safe sailing, the transport and supply of troops, connections between military fortifications built in the impassable gorge, and protection of the Roman territory from insurgencies of peoples living on the left bank of the Danube.

74 CIL XVI, 37.

75 Иванов, П., 1999, 104, note 119, with referred literature.

76 Mirković M., 1996, 37. It is believed that *Classis Flavia Moesica* was organized during Domitian times as part of his preparations for invading Dacia. Mirkovic believes it would have been unsafe in the previous period for the fleet to sail because there were then no permanently garrisoned military fortifications to protect the ports along the banks of the Danube.

of the Moesian fleet as early as this period.⁷⁷ The mention of the Moesian fleet with *Classis Flavia* on our diploma of 78 AD is the earliest confirmation for the use of this epithet so far discovered.

General finds

Finally, we should attempt to explain why this military diploma appeared in the region of Scupi. There are two possibilities. One is that the owner of the diploma had been recruited from this region and later returned to his homeland after completing military service. Because the diploma lacks the part which usually lists the name of the recipient with a reference to his origin, ethnicity and place of birth, it is difficult to confirm this hypothesis.⁷⁸ The other possibility is that some of the cohortes mentioned in the diploma were stationed at a border outpost in the Skopje region and that, after having been discharged and granted citizenship and the right to marriage, some of the veterans may have decided to remain in the territory where they had served.⁷⁹

This region includes both the border of the wider Scupi territory and part of the western border of the Province of Moesia.⁸⁰ Somewhere in this region, perhaps at the Žeden Mountain, would have been the border between the Province of Moesia Superior and the Province of Macedonia. The Polog valley never belonged to the territory of Scupi, i.e. to Moesia.⁸¹ One of the roads, the crossing from Scupi to Polog, leads through the Derven Gorge. This road was guarded with a fortification at the site of Kale to the west of Gorno Svilare.⁸² Only the lower regions, the Svilare plain and the lands along the banks of the Vardar were suitable for settling.⁸³ On the basis of the evidence currently available, it would be unwise to speculate as to which of the listed cohortes stationed in the fortification near Gorno Svilare the veteran belonged who later settled in the fertile fields near the village of Rašče. We therefore await future finds to answer the queries and hypotheses presented above.

77 Петровић П., 1986, 46 - 50; Петровић П., 1990, 208, note 9; Mirković M., 1996, 30. One proof of Claudius's construction activities for the maintenance and expansion of the land road through the Đerdap Gorge is the inscription engraved in a rock at Gospođin Vir, dated to 46 AD.

78 Based on the year of issue of the diploma (78 AD), the soldiers were recruited in 52/53 AD, in Claudius's time. So far there is no historic, epigraphic or archaeological evidence to confirm this early recruitment of soldiers in the auxiliary units originating from the Scupi region.

79 It is possible that some of the cohorts listed in the diploma participated in the construction activities connected with the establishment and founding of the city of Scupi. Dušanić S. 1986, 225 - 231; Mirković M., 2000, 365 - 375, with referred literature. According to statistical analysis of the place of discovery of the diplomas and the origin of their holders, it has been determined that most of the retired veterans remained, i.e. settled near their place of service.

80 Mócsy A, 1970, 29, 62 - 75; Mikulčić I., 1971, 466 - 469; IMS VI, 1982, 15 - 19;

81 Mikulčić I, 1971, 466 - 469, the terrain recognitions and find confirmed with great certainty this opinion that corresponds to the data provided by Ptolomaus (Ptolemaus II, 16, 1; III, 9, 1), although the prevailing opinion was that the Polog valley also belonged to the territory of Moesia province during Roman times. (Vulić N, 1924, 243 - 245; Papazoglu F., 1957, 81);

82 Микулчиќ И., 1982, 78 - 80, The site is located on the right bank of the Vardar, 2 km to the west of Gorno Svilare nad 1.6 km from Rašče. It has a dominant position and controls the road for the Polog at the entrance of Derven Gorge. This is a case of typical frontier castel, frontier outpost, viewpoint at the border with the Scupi territory, i.e. at the border there are two castels opposite each other Gradište - Dvorci on the southern bank and Kale - Orašje on the northern bank.

83 IMS VI, 1982, 114, n 106, This conclusion is confirmed by a find on a tombstone dated in the 2nd century.

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Резиме:**Римска војничка диплома од Веспасијановиот период
најдена во Скупи**

Во 1993 г. случајно беше најден дел од бронзена војничка диплома, Се работи за поголем фрагмент со неправилна форма, околу една зачувана четвртина од бронзената диплома со правоаголна форма. Се работи за една таблица од дипломата, со зачувани внатрешна и надворешна страна. Била изработена од висококвалитетна бронза и е добро зачувана. Текстот на надворешната страна е читлив, додека има потешкотии да се разбере тој од внатрешната страна заради слоевите од калцинација и корозија.

Војничките копии се индивидуални копии на царските декрети со кои се гарантираат одредени правнички права и привилегии на ветераните. Истите претставуваат идентична копија на оригиналниот царски указ кој бил изложен на јавно место во Рим. Обично, римските дипломи се униформни во нивниот изглед и содржина. Се состојат од две бронзени табlici, поврзани заедно со бронзена жица низ две перфорации. Натписот е испишан на сите 4 страни, следејќи една формула, со помали или поголеми варијации. Текстот е испишан двапати, еднаш по целата должина на фронталнта, надворешна страна и надолж двете внатрешни страни, со поголеми букви. Последната надворешна страна ги содржи имињата сведоците, кои се римски граѓани, кои ја потврдуваат автентичноста на копијата со восочни печати. Текстот испишан на надворешната страна бил за да се избегне постојаното отворање и со тоа да се допринесе за оштетување на дипломата.

На дипломата од Скупи недостасува делот кадешто се наведени името на носителот и референцата кон неговото потекло или етничка припадност. Сепак, можни се две претпоставки околу носителот. Едната е дека сопственикот на оваа диплома бил по потекло од овие краишта и дека после ислужувањето на воениот рок, се вратил дома. Другата претпоставка е дека некоја од кохортите кои се споменати во самата диплома била сместена во граничните стражарници во околината на Скопје и дека после отпуштањето од војската и примањето на цивилните права и правото на брак, некои од ветераните решиле да останат во областа која ја бранеле.

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