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PETER BRENNAN

## Combined Legionary Detachments as Artillery Units in Late-Roman Danubian Bridgehead Dispositions

Three entries in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, one in each of Scythia, Pannonia II and Pannonia I, record legionary detachments to which both legions in the province have contributed.<sup>1</sup> There is no feature common to the present description of these detachments which might indicate more exactly their original nature and purpose. It is my aim to search that out and to place such combined legionary detachments, a neglected aspect of late-Roman legionary development, in their proper military and historical context.

Assuming that all such units had a similar original nature and purpose, an assumption that can only be supported by the later argument that they were organised in comparable dispositions, one must first consider the attributes likely to be found in such units. The very involvement of both legions of a province has its implications. Such permanent combining of elements from two provincial legions is an arresting occurrence in the late Empire, for it runs counter to the normal distribution and role of late-Roman legions in Danubian armies. Each legion was usually assigned a specific part of the frontier, which was further divided (in the case of at least eleven of sixteen legions from Noricum to Scythia) into *superior* and *inferior* sectors.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the combined detachments, only one legionary unit in the *Notitia* (occ. 33, 56) is sited outside the front assigned to its parent-legion; this unit (of *II Adiutrix* at Cirpi on the front assigned to *I Adiutrix*) appears to be a later replacement here for the now-vanished part of *II Adiutrix* once given the *inferior pars* of its front (the earlier existence of the latter assured by the complementary *superior pars* – ND occ. 33, 51). Thus the involvement of both legions, especially if the detaching was early, may denote a purpose more than

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<sup>1</sup> ND or. 39, 35; occ. 32, 48; 34, 27. All references to the *Notitia Dignitatum* are to the edition of O. SEECK (Berlin 1876), unless the edition of E. BÖCKING (Bonn 1839–1853) is specified.

<sup>2</sup> D. VAN BERCHEM, *L'armée de Dioclétien et la réforme constantinienne*, Paris 1952, 90 ff. There is a more detailed analysis of this process and an attempt to date at least its initial stages to the tetrarchy in my unpublished Cambridge Ph.D. dissertation, *The Disposition and Interrelation of Roman Military Units in Danubian and Eastern Provincial and Field Armies in the Late Third and Early Fourth Centuries A. D.*, 1972, ch. IV.

merely local in scope; it certainly presupposes one beyond the effective capacity of a detachment from the legion assigned the sector in which the combined unit served – a single legion either did not have in its ranks, or could not spare for permanent detachment, enough soldiers of the type demanded by the situation.

Other late-Roman legionary developments suggest that these soldiers were specialists. Not only does this provide a good reason and the best basis for the permanent uniting of elements from distinct legions, but it is also in line with another major development of the late-Roman legion, its dissolution into those specialist functions which had long been separable, both for training and on campaigns. That process is seen most clearly in the case of the legionary cavalry (*promoti*), for it was concentrated and separated from its parent legions in Egyptian, Oriental and Danubian provinces at a date which can be no later than the tetrarchy and need be no earlier.<sup>3</sup> It is also seen amongst the heavy infantry, for the *lanciarrii*, already separate in Arrian's tactical dispositions, formed under the tetrarchy distinct detachments which were sent from each of the provincial legions *II Traiana* and *III Diocletiana* to the Thebaid.<sup>4</sup> Among Danubian legions, too, there were separate detachments of *lanciarrii*, for the later field army units, *Lanciarrii Lauriacenses* and *Comaginenses*, were in origin Norican legionary detachments.<sup>5</sup> It is probable that the splitting of so many legions into such smaller detachments, a splitting observable in all the Danubian provincial armies listed in the *Notitia* and arguably tetrarchic in its initial stages, found its basic mechanics in already existing specialist divisions within the heavy infantry.

Since the fragmentation of the legion saw the creation of specialist units of cavalry and heavy infantry, it is not implausible that the third distinguishable element in the legion of Vegetius (mil. 2, 2), i. e. the *levis armatura* (specified as consisting of *ferentarii*, *sagittarii*, *funditores* and *ballistarii*) or some part of it, was also concentrated and given a separate identity for more effective use in a new military strategy. Independent units of infantry *ferentarii* (under their new name, *exculcatores*),<sup>6</sup> *sagittarii*, *funditores* and *ballistarii* did exist in late-Roman field armies,<sup>7</sup> but the first three types, which were categorised as *auxilia* when any categorisation is clear, will mostly have been totally new, field army creations;

<sup>3</sup> E. RITTERLING, *Festschrift für O. Hirschfeld*, Berlin 1903, 348; D. HOFFMANN, *Das spätrömische Bewegungsheer und die Notitia Dignitatum*, Düsseldorf 1969, I 248 and 254–5. Arguments contesting the assumption of RITTERLING (which props up the pre-tetrarchic date of separation) and favouring a tetrarchic date are given in my dissertation (cited n. 2), 160 ff.; too complex for easy summary, and not vital here, they will be published soon elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Arr. Alan. 16–18; P. Beatty Panop. 2, 259 f. 285 f. and 301; HOFFMANN, *op. cit.* (n. 3), I 219.

<sup>5</sup> ND occ. 5, 259 = 7, 58–9; HOFFMANN, *op. cit.* (n. 3), I 226.

<sup>6</sup> Veg. mil. 2, 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Exculcatores*: ND occ. 5, 173 and 175 = 7, 20 and 122; 5, 207. *Sagittarii*: ND occ. 5, 170; 174; 193 and 211 = 7, 121; 41; 45 and 75; or. 5, 54–6; 6, 54–6 and 69; 7, 56 (*I*

none reveals any hint of a connection with Danubian provincial legions. While some units of *ballistarii* (categorised as *legiones*, in contrast to the other three types) will have been formed similarly, a good case can be made that one of them (*ballistarii Dafnenses*) was earlier in a Danubian provincial army. As well, this unit, of a type admirably suited to static orientations, as the establishment of *ballistarii* at Cherson reveals,<sup>8</sup> was not the only unit of probable artillery origin in a Danubian provincial army; the combined legionary detachment in Pannonia II also seems to have had such an origin. An analysis of the probable early history of these two units reveals an even closer comparability.

Pannonia II had, listed in the *Notitia*, a *praefectus legionis quintae Ioviae [et] sextae Herculiae in Castello Onagrino*; also at this site, further specified as *Contra Bononiam in barbarico*, was a unit of *auxilia Augustensia*; Bononia itself was a major garrison site of *legio V Iovia* (ND occ. 32, 41, 44 and 48). It was long ago proposed, and has not since to my knowledge been queried, that the name Castellum Onagrinum derives from the *onager*.<sup>9</sup> It would seem a reasonable inference that the most significant element of the fort and its founding unit was its artillery, i. e. that either the combined legionary unit or the *auxilia* or a third, unrecorded unit at Castellum Onagrinum was primarily an artillery unit. The legionary unit is easily recognised as just such an artillery unit, for the legionary ballistic arsenal had, according to Vegetius (mil. 2, 25) ten stone-throwing *onagri*, one per cohort, each serviced by eleven men; late-Roman *auxilia*, on the other hand, were not, as far as is known, particularly associated with *onagri*.<sup>10</sup> As well, the small size of the *onager*-handling contingent, when taken with the need not to denude one legion of this element vital to its local defences, could explain the involvement of both legions in the formation of the new unit. Since, thus, the presence of a legionary unit composed of such artillerymen as the founding unit provides an acceptable explanation for the name of the fort, it is unnecessary, as well as uneconomical, to consider a hypothetical third unit.

*Isaura sagittaria*, though clearly a legion, was a new creation for Isauria before its later seconding); 9, 27. *Funditores*: ND or. 7, 52. *Ballistarii*: ND or. 7, 43 and 57; 8, 46–7; 9, 47; occ. 7, 97 = 41, 23 (see Hoffmann, op. cit. [n. 3], I 181); also Amm. Marc. 16, 2, 5 (by 356 A. D.).

<sup>8</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus (adm. imp. 53, p. 52 Bonn) dates its foundation to Constantine I; Cherson certainly had such a unit by 487/8 A. D. and it may already be instanced by 370/375 A. D. (W. LATYSHEV, IOSPE I<sup>2</sup> 449 with notes).

<sup>9</sup> E. BÖCKING, ad ND occ. 32, 41; B. SARIA, *Onagrinum*, RE 18, 402. For legionary *onagri*, Veg. mil. 2, 10 and 25; 4, 22; E. MARSDEN, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Historical Development*, Oxford 1969, 179 f. and 192 f.

<sup>10</sup> In the earlier Empire it seems that rarely, if ever, did non-legionary units operate artillery, D. BAATZ, *Zur Geschützbewaffnung römischer Auxiliärtruppen in der frühen und mittleren Kaiserzeit*, BJ 169, 1969, 194–207; even if artillery, including the relatively simple *onager* (Amm. Marc. 23, 4, 4–7) was more extensively used in later Empire forts, specialist *ballistarii* remain associated only with units categorised as legions.

To reinforce this suggestion of a unit of artillery at a trans-Danubian site and to support further its identification as a legionary detachment, one should compare a once similar disposition of units at a bridgehead in Moesia II. Although the <Notitia> no longer lists any trans-Danubian units in situ in Moesia II, the site Dafne, opposite the major legionary fort at Transmarisca (ND or. 40, 34),<sup>11</sup> surely once quartered the two units, *Constantini Dafnenses* and *Ballistarii Dafnenses*, now listed in the Thracian field army (ND or. 8, 45–6), to which they had at some stage been withdrawn. Although both are listed among the *legiones comitatenses*, that need not signify that both were originally legions; it is probable that all withdrawn infantry units, whether legions or *auxilia*, were added to the only existing infantry category in the Thracian army list, and that was of legions. The *Constantini* are more easily perceived as a unit of *auxilia*, which often took on dynastic names in this form, particularly on the lower Danube where there was a serialised group surnamed *Constantini* and *Constantiani*;<sup>12</sup> the *Dafnenses* may even belong to this group. If such categorisation is correct, then the units opposite Transmarisca would parallel those opposite Bononia: the *Constantini* would correspond to the *auxilia Augustensia*, the *Ballistarii* to the combined legionary detachment. Since *Ballistarii* was the name used of legionary artillerymen,<sup>13</sup> it is not hard to see the *Ballistarii Dafnenses* as comparable to the legionary detachment at Castellum Onagrinum, that is as a unit constituted of artillerymen from both Moesian legions. There is no proof, but, since it would be improvident to denude a legion completely of an element so essential to local defences as artillery, there must be a strong presumption that any permanently detached legionary artillery unit in a provincial army would derive from both legions of the province rather than from only one.

The existence in Danubian provincial armies of two units of artillery, one at least of them a combined legionary detachment, both of them sited at trans-Danubian sites opposite legionary fortresses, compels one to investigate whether other Danubian provinces had comparable bridgehead dispositions. Certainly such comparable arrangements in each province would accord well with the remarkable overall parallelism of legionary (and cavalry) dispositions in each Danubian province from Scythia to Noricum.<sup>14</sup> More than that, each of the provinces Valeria, Dacia Ripensis and Moesia I seems to show in the <Notitia> the essential elements

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<sup>11</sup> This assertion of Procopius (aed. 4, 7, 7.), which has been generally accepted (e.g. E. POLASCHEK, *Transmarisca*, RE 6 A, 2171; HOFFMANN, op. cit. [n. 3], I 226) is here preferred to the alternative siting on the Danube right bank, as implied by Ammianus (17, 5, 2) and supported, though not compellingly, by P. DIACONU, *In cautarea Dafnei*, Pontica 4, 1971, 311–18.

<sup>12</sup> ND or. 39, 23 and 25–6; 40, 20 and 26; site names may conceal others.

<sup>13</sup> For *ballistarii* as legionary artillery, *Lyd. mag.* 1, 46; *Veg. mil.* 2, 2; *Dig.* 50, 6, 7 (6); *TLL*, *Ballistarii*, vol. 2, 1702.

<sup>14</sup> Further substantiation of this statement, beyond the parallelism immediately apparent in the <Notitia> lists, is given in my dissertation (cited n. 2), chs. 4–5.

of such a major bridgehead disposition, i. e. a trans-Danubian fort garrisoned by a legionary detachment and sited opposite a major legionary fortress (the latter to be distinguished from those forts garrisoned by a part-legion only after the parent-legion had split into several parts). Although none of those legionary detachments is specified in the <Notitia> as composed of artillery or as drawn from both legions of the province, that is an omission which may lie in the nature of that text and its transmission rather than in the actual situation; in each of the relevant entries there is some peculiarity, as will be shown.

There is little general argument against such a composition for the trans-Danubian legionary units or, it is perhaps time to add, against such an original siting and specialisation for the two combined legionary units in Scythia and Pannonia I in the <Notitia> (or. 39, 35; occ. 34, 27). Such bridgeheads form an intelligible part of a forward defence strategy. One can conceive of a strategy in which particular emphasis was placed on one major bridgehead in each province, if it was essentially for offensive purposes – a bridgehead formed by a strongly held fort on the left bank and a major expeditionary and reserve base on the right bank. In that case the artillery was the best equipped specialisation to maintain the trans-Danubian fort, to keep the river crossing open in both directions for the rapid and secure transit of expeditionary forces organised on either a provincial or an imperial scale.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, such a non-local purpose and such a specialisation would suit the attributes which, it was argued earlier, were likely to be found in combined legionary detachments. This is, of course, only one aspect of late-Roman strategy and the deployment of forces on the Danube; it is no contradiction to find that other counter-forts and landing-places continued to be built on the left bank and used and that parts of catapults and other artillery instruments have been found in some of these forts.<sup>16</sup> Trans-Danubian forts, even when built simultaneously, may have had particular and differing roles in an overall military system, but all will have found artillery useful. Where left bank forts were not sited opposite major legionary fortresses (and were thus not part of the strategy here in question) it is probable that they were simply considered more appropriate sites than right bank ones in the sector for achieving the economic regulation and local defence which became the major aims of late-Roman, sectorised provincial forces.

To give greater substance and context to these hypotheses, one must first present

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<sup>15</sup> For the defensive value of artillery, Vegetius, *mil.* 4, 22; Hyg. (*Gromat.*) 58; *Amm. Marc.* 18, 7, 6 (at river-crossings, though on the right bank); E. MARSDEN, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 186 and 197–8; cf. D. BAATZ, *Britannia* 9, 1978, 1 ff.

<sup>16</sup> For counter-forts, A. MÓCSY, *Pannonia*, *RE Suppl.* 9, 640–3; *id.*, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 282 ff. For catapult-fittings in left bank Danubian forts which lie outside my major bridgehead dispositions, N. GUDEA and D. BAATZ, *Teile spätrömischer Ballisten aus Gornea und Orșova (Rumänien)*, *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 31, 1974, 50–72; for details on these two forts, N. GUDEA, *Actes du IX<sup>e</sup> Congrès International, Mamaia 1972, București 1974*, 175–7.

the case for other bridgehead dispositions comparable to those in Pannonia II and Moesia II and then show that they form part of a comprehensible policy of forward defence in accordance with known military history on the Danubian frontier. In Valeria the bridgehead is at Aquincum, which had long been a legionary fortress and is recorded as such in the <Notitia>. <sup>17</sup> Listed opposite in the <Notitia> (occ. 33, 48 and 65) are an *auxilium Vigulum contra Acinco* [tras] in barbarico and a *praefectus legionis trans(i)acinco*, the latter listed extraordinarily, after all other units, even cohorts. The legionary detachment is not described as a combined one from the two Valerian legions (an omission of no significance, since the entry has now lost completely the name of the legion or legions involved) or as an artillery unit, but the following comparison with the situation opposite Bononia makes both likely. In 294 new forts were built opposite Bononia and Aquincum during the extensive reconstruction of the Sarmatian front; <sup>18</sup> such parallel trans-Danubian forts opposite legionary fortresses point to a common purpose and a similar garrisoning unit. Opposite Bononia that unit was a combined legionary unit of artillery and there should have been a similar unit opposite Aquincum; it may be the detachment of the two Valerian legions apparently noted in a fragmentary military inscription of the late third or early fourth century. <sup>19</sup>

Valeria seems to have had in the <Notitia> a second trans-Danubian legionary unit, a detachment of *II Adiutrix in castello contra Tautantum* (ND occ. 33, 55). Since the site, its name probably corrupt, cannot be identified, one cannot specify the strategic role of the unit in Valeria. If the word *contra* is in fact part of the corrupted name of the Castellum, such as a dynastic name from the Constantinian house, then the unit was not across the river and is thus of no concern to the present analysis. If the site was trans-Danubian and opposite Aquincum, <sup>20</sup> the unit will have provided additional local forces from *II Adiutrix*, the legion at Aquincum, to reinforce the artillery unit. A trans-Danubian legionary garrison anywhere else may denote

<sup>17</sup> ND occ. 33, 54. E. RITTERLING, *Legio*, RE 12, 1446; J. SZILÁGYI, Aquincum, Budapest 1956, 13. T. NAGY, *Die Militärbezirke der Valeria nach der Notitia Dignitatum*, AAntHung 7, 1959, 183–94, posited the transfer of *II Adiutrix* from Aquincum, presumably after 290 (CIL 3, 10406), with its division into two parts garrisoning the proximate sites of Alisca and Florentia and the later return of one part to Aquincum. An interpretation of the <Notitia> entries which leaves the legion at Aquincum is possible and preferable, see my dissertation (cited n. 2), 116 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Fasti Hydat. anno 294 (Chron. Min. I 230).

<sup>19</sup> N. GOSTAR, *StudClas* 5, 1963, 305–6 (= AE 1963, 182) in the rereading of the first lines argued in my article: AE 1963.182 (Sacidava): *New Readings and Interpretation*, ZPE 33, 1979, 161 ff.

<sup>20</sup> So A. GRAF, *Übersicht der antiken Geographie von Pannonien*, Budapest 1963, 134 n. 2; no site has much to be said for it, as was recognised by VAN BERCHEM, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 97 n. 3, in espousing a site opposite Florentia «faute de mieux»; but some have much to be said against them. Taurunum in Pannonia II (as A. HOLDER, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, Leipzig 1922, 2, 1773) is certainly wrong.

either the opening up of a second major bridgehead in Valeria in unknown circumstances (if it was sited opposite a major legionary fortress) or special local requirements (if it was not so sited; compare the trans-Danubian legionary fort at Dierna: ND or. 42, 37). However, since the unit, wherever its site, is listed in the <Notitia> only fourth of the six detachments of *II Adiutrix*, its deployment will have been a relatively late development; its existence does not contradict an original strategy of one major bridgehead per province, a strategy executed in Valeria around 294 A. D.

In Dacia Ripensis the bridgehead is at Oescus, the fortress of *legio V Macedonica* since its withdrawal from the trans-Danubian province.<sup>21</sup> Listed across the river at Sucidava in the <Notitia> (or. 42, 39) is a *praefectus legionis quintae Macedonicae*. Its position in the <Notitia>, separated as it is from the other three detachments of *V Macedonica* by the five from the other Dacian legion, *XIII Gemina*, would be unique for an ordinary detachment of *V Macedonica*, but it would parallel the position of the certain combined detachments, which are all listed last among legions (ND or. 39, 35; occ. 32, 48; 34, 27). Thus its oddness would disappear if it was in origin a combined detachment from both Dacian legions, with the words *et tertiaedecimae Geminae* being lost in the transmission of the text (and the <Notitia> frequently omits words in repetitive descriptions of legionary detachments).<sup>22</sup> There is no unit of *auxilia* opposite Oescus to parallel those opposite Bononia, Aquincum and Transmarisca, unless *trans Oesco* is the correct reading of the so far unidentified, and possibly corrupt, Transluco with its *auxilium Claustrinorum*.<sup>23</sup>

Each element of a comparable bridgehead in Moesia II is disputable, but a case can be made for the existence of such a disposition at Margum. A *praefectus militum . . . contra Margum in castris Augustoflavianensibus* listed in the <Notitia> (or. 41, 33) assures the presence of a trans-Danubian unit there. It is likely to be a legionary unit, listed as it is after the legions specified by number and name and before the *milites exploratores*, which are usually taken to be legions in their final state of dissolution;<sup>24</sup> if its nature was once specified, the word now lacking after *militum* might have been *ballistariorum* (from both Moesian legions) rather than *exploratorum*. Although there is no solid evidence for a legionary fortress at Margum itself, if *legio IV Flavia* ever had its section of frontier divided into *superior* and *inferior* sectors – and since eleven of the sixteen legions from Scythia to Noricum reveal such sectorisation in the <Notitia> it is likely that it once also applied to the

<sup>21</sup> ND or. 42, 13; IAA 219; E. RITTERLING, *Legio*, RE 12, 1581; 1720.

<sup>22</sup> ND or 39, 31 and occ. 34, 38 (lost number); occ. 34, 25 and 29 (lost name); occ. 33, 65 (lost number and name).

<sup>23</sup> ND or. 42, 27. BÖCKING (ad loc.) tentatively sought it opposite Lucernariaburgus or Laccoburgus (Procop. aed. 4, 6, 20 and 26); so RE 6 A, 2170 and H. VETTERS, *Dacia Ripensis*, Wien 1950, 13. That need not end the quest.

<sup>24</sup> D. VAN BERCHEM, op. cit. (n. 2), 93.



other five (the now disintegrated legions of Moesia I and Dacia Ripensis and *legio X Gemina* in Pannonia I) – then Margum is the most likely site for the part of the legion, now missing, which was originally assigned the lower sector. While the siting of a legion there in the ‘Antonine Itinerary’ (133) is probably a misplacement of its proper attribution to Viminacium in the next line, at least one late-Roman expeditionary force crossed the Danube near Margum, thus pointing to a strongly fortified base, perhaps a legionary fortress.<sup>25</sup>

Neither Scythia, Pannonia I, nor Noricum reveals in the ‘Notitia’ any sign of a major trans-Danubian site, quartering either legions or *auxilia*. While it is possible that there never existed in these provinces such sites garrisoned in a bridgehead disposition, it is perhaps something more than coincidence that two of the only three provinces which have no trans-Danubian legionary garrisons in the ‘Notitia’ did have, although now in a different disposition, combined legionary units (such as were in other provinces associated with trans-Danubian garrisons of artillery, certainly in Pannonia II and arguably in four other provinces). The combined legionary units in Scythia and Pannonia I may once have been sited in trans-Danubian garrisons from which they had been withdrawn by the time of the ‘Notitia’ compilation; the withdrawal of the *Dafnenses* units from a comparable site in Moesia II warns that at least one trans-Danubian legionary unit had been transferred to meet new realities. One can readily suggest an appropriate site in each province. In Scythia it is opposite Noviodunum, which certainly was itself a legionary fortress; as well, it was here that Valens crossed his expeditionary army in 369.<sup>26</sup> In Pannonia I the most likely site is opposite Carnuntum, itself a longstanding legionary fortress; it was the base for Valentinian’s offensive in 375, and perhaps the crossingpoint for the advance force of Merobaudes, if one is right in assuming that the *barbarici pagi*, which he was to devastate, were still across the Danube frontier.<sup>27</sup> On Noricum it is best to remain as silent as our sources; the absence of a bridgehead disposition on this stretch of the river frontier would come as no surprise.

If these combined detachments were once at trans-Danubian sites, and if they were constituted of artillery, this would allow a common original purpose for all three certain combined detachments and a homogeneous origin and a common dis-

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<sup>25</sup> Optaf. Porphyr. carm. 6, 22 ff. (Constantine in 323). The presence of a toll station at Margum (CIL 3, 8140) attests the value of the site in general communications.

<sup>26</sup> ND or. 39, 25 and 32–3. Amm. Marc. 27, 5–6. For the important Roman fort opposite Noviodunum, its dates not yet conclusively ascertained, N. GOSTAR, Aliobrix, Latomus 26, 1967, 987–95.

<sup>27</sup> ND occ. 34, 26; E. SWOBODA, Carnuntum, Graz-Köln 1964, 32–82; E. RITTERLING, Legio, RE 12, 1739; Amm. Marc. 30, 5, 2 and 13. Carnuntum was, according to Ammianus, (*oppidum*) *ductori exercitus perquam opportunum*, and the *statio proxima* from which Valentinian checked the covetous assaults of barbarians may even have been the trans Danubian fort (for one certainly existed, SWOBODA, op. cit., 253).

position and purpose for a trans-Danubian legionary unit in each province from Scythia to Pannonia I. It is no strong argument against this proposition that the detachments in Scythia and Pannonia I, far from being described as artillery in the <Notitia>, are some kind of marines. In Pannonia I it is not only the soldiers of the combined detachment who are called *milites liburnarii*, but those in two of its three legionary detachments (as well as those in three of the five in Noricum, a province combined with Pannonia I in the <Notitia><sup>28</sup>); thus, this would seem to be a late development, whereby a new strategy based heavily on river patrolling turned into marines many legionary detachments trained originally in other specialisations. In Scythia, the <Notitia> (or. 39. 35) has a *praefectus ripae legionis primae Ioviae cohortis . . . et secundae Herculiae musculorum Scythicorum et classis in Plateypegiis*, the latter part emended by MOMMSEN to read . . . *et classis musculorum Scythicorum . . .* Whatever the proper reading, and one cannot be sure that the site even currently was not trans-Danubian, the legions seem to be associated with *musculi*, a local version of a small boat apparently well suited to travel in deltas.<sup>29</sup> In the <Notitia>, Scythia and Moesia II are no longer serviced by the general Danube fleet (now called *classis Histrica*); their naval needs are met by *auxilia* units (at least one of *milites nauclarii* in each) and by specialised boats – *musculi* in Scythia and *naves amnicae* in Moesia II.<sup>30</sup> The method of manning these latter, with seconded soldiers (*deputati*) of unspecified origin, seems to reveal a stopgap procedure, and thus their creation will have been a relatively recent measure. It is equally likely that the combined legionary detachment had also been recently seconded to serve on the *musculi* in Scythia. That the source of the seconded soldiers in Moesia II was not also a combined legionary detachment is probably because that unit was the *ballistarii Dafnenses*, and it had already been withdrawn to the field army (ND or. 8, 46). Since it is clear that the current marine service of the combined legionary units in Pannonia I and Scythia is no indication of their earlier role, one is left to speculate on it. There is no reason not to see them as artillery units in trans-Danubian forts; there is some, though tenuous, reason to see them as such.

Underlying the preceding analysis has been the assumption that all the legionary trans-Danubian forts were sited near the river bank. Only two of the forts, however, those at Sucidava and Dafne, were certainly so sited and it is the view of A. MÓCSY that the unidentified forts built in 294 *in Sarmatia contra Acinco et*

<sup>28</sup> ND occ. 34, 26–7. 37. 40 and 41; on *liburnarii*, S. PANCIERA, *Epigraphica* 18, 1956, 151.

<sup>29</sup> CGL III 205. 28: *musculus, parva navis*. For *milites muscularii* at Massilia on the Rhone delta, ND occ. 42, 16. For *platypegia* on the Nile, P. Oxy. 1652; 2715; SB 9614; R. RÉMONDON, *RPh* 28, 1954, 204–6; it is uncertain whether in the Scythian entry it specifies a second type of boat, or refers to an unidentified site, but the implications remain similar.

<sup>30</sup> ND or. 39, 20 and 35; 40, 22. 28 and 36.

*Bononia* (Chron. Min. I 230) were built not on the river bank (the traditional view) but deep in the country of the Sarmatians.<sup>31</sup> If he is correct, my assumption is vitiated, but his argument is not a conclusive one. It has its basis in the acute observation that the words *in barbarico*, used in siting the forts opposite *Bononia* and *Aquincum* in the <Notitia>, were not used elsewhere in that text to describe the sites of the numerous listed counter-fortifications. In the light of hints of Diocletianic activity beyond the Sarmatian frontier, possibly including the construction of forts, he argued that *in barbarico* in the <Notitia> carried additional significance and referred to forts in the barbarian interior. His linguistic point may be right, even though in the general literature and epigraphy of the fourth century *barbaricum* certainly began at the left bank.<sup>32</sup> He may not, however, be right in assuming that the forts sited *in barbarico* and those built in 294 *in Sarmatia* according to the chronicle correspond exactly. For there is another point of the <Notitia> usage worth noticing: *in barbarico* is used in describing the sites of the *auxilia* (ND occ. 32, 41; 33, 48), but it is not used in describing those of the legionary units (ND occ. 32, 48; 33, 65). This might be a simple omission, as the fact that both units opposite *Bononia* are given the same site *Castellum Onagrinum* seems to suggest; but there is another possible explanation which grants significance both to the use of the words and to their omission. There might once have been two forts opposite both *Bononia* and *Aquincum*. The *auxilia* forts were in the interior and thus had their peculiar position distinguished as *in barbarico*; the absence of *in barbarico* from the description of the legionary forts sited near the left bank represents normal <Notitia> usage for such counter-forts. Whether all the forts were built simultaneously or at different times one cannot say; the words of the chronicle do not preclude either possibility. If there were separate *auxilia* and legionary forts, one has to account for a different error in the <Notitia>, for it sites both Pannonian units at *Castellum Onagrinum*. In the <Notitia> (occ. 33, 48) the comparable *auxilia* opposite *Aquincum* has its site described simply as *in barbarico* with no specific site name. It is possible that the *auxilia* opposite *Bononia* was also at a site with no specific name, and when it was later withdrawn to *Castellum Onagrinum* the name of that new station was appended to the old entry. While this interpretation of the <Notitia> entries, though no more conclusive than that of MÓCSY, remains a possible one, my assumption of the site of the legionary forts is not invalidated.

My argument so far has left to one side the historical context of the creation of the bridgehead dispositions; it will be incomplete unless it can show that such dispositions had an appropriate role in the military reconstruction of the Danubian front as it developed in the late third and early fourth centuries. Such evidence as exists for the creation of the trans-Danubian forts suggests that those on the

<sup>31</sup> A. MÓCSY, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, London 1974, 269.

<sup>32</sup> For examples, TLL, *Barbaricum*, vol. 2, 1732, 7 ff.; 1733, 55 ff.; I. WEILER, *Orbis Romanus und Barbaricum*, *Carnuntum-Jahrbuch* 1963–4, 34–9.

upper Danube were built under the tetrarchy, those on the lower Danube under Constantine. Major constructions across the Danube on the Sarmatian front (i. e. opposite Aquincum and Bononia) are attributed to the early tetrarchy (Chr. Min. I 230);<sup>33</sup> further, they betray no association with Constantine, a man who honoured his family liberally in naming new, and even old sites. On the other hand, major constructions at the bridgeheads opposite Transmarisca and Oescus are specifically associated with Constantine. Procopius attributes to him the fortification opposite Transmarisca; the site even commemorates him, if the coin legend *Constantiniana Dafne* preserves its full name.<sup>34</sup> It was probably at Oescus that he built his stone bridge across the Danube (Aur. Vict. Caes. 41, 18; RIC VII, 331 no. 298); coin discoveries reveal significant construction under him at Sucidava opposite Oescus, clearly refortification for use in conjunction with the bridge, since Sucidava had a pre-Constantinian (probably pre-tetrarchic) fort.<sup>35</sup> While one cannot tell the full story of warfare and frontier policy on the various Danubian fronts from the tetrarchy to Constantine, a brief survey will show that the ascription of trans-Danubian forts which is implied above accords very well with the changing focus of barbarian warfare on the Danube and with the progressive implementation of an offensive Roman frontier policy of forward defence from the upper to the lower Danube, as both are revealed in the imperial *cognomina devictarum gentium*, in the coinage, in the meagre and often allusive literary sources and in the archaeological findings.

The Sarmatians and, to a lesser extent, the Germans of the upper Danube were the prime Roman concern on the Danubian front under Diocletian and the early tetrarchy. He had two Sarmatian acclamations by 1 March 293 and four by 9 December 301 (probably by 299), as against one (or probably two) German acclamations deriving from wars on the upper Danube (about 289 and 299) and only one Carpic (or Gothic) title to record a campaign lower on the Danube (not long before

<sup>33</sup> The left bank fort opposite Aquincum, earlier dated to the tetrarchy (H. VON PETRIKOVITS, *Fortifications in the North-Western Roman Empire from the Third to the Fifth Centuries A. D.*, JRS 61, 1971, 193; A. Mócsy, RE Suppl. 9, 642), has now been given a Constantinian dating (Mócsy, in: *Roman Frontier Studies 1969. Eight International Congress of Limesforschung*, Cardiff 1974, 195); a good example of the warning of VON PETRIKOVITS (art. cit. 183–4; 193–9) that the dating of forts from towers and ground plans (and they have not changed) is suspect method.

<sup>34</sup> Procop. aed. 4, 7, 7; RIC VII, pp. 72, 574–5 nos. 29–38 (Constantinople) cannot be unrelated to the site, despite the reasoned doubts of P. DIACONU, loc. cit. (n. 11). Its unit (*Constantini Dafnenses*: ND or. 8, 45) seems to verify the connection.

<sup>35</sup> For this as the bridge site, D. TUDOR, *Les ponts romains du Bas-Danube*, Bucuresti 1974, 135 ff. As for its date, 328 A. D., as in the Paschal Chronicle (Chr. Min. I, 233), is likely (Constantine was at Oescus on 5 July: CTh 6, 35, 5), but not sacrosanct. For the Constantinian, as well as the earlier, fortification work at Sucidava, D. TUDOR, *Sucidava*, Brussels 1965, 71 ff.; GH. POENARU BORDEA, MCA 10, 1973, 141–6; V. BARBU, SCIV 24, 1973, 27 ff.

1 March 297).<sup>36</sup> Early tetrarchic coins make reference to Sarmatian victories, but to no other, and contemporary panegyrists confirm this emphasis.<sup>37</sup> Rome was presumably able to concentrate on this front because the inter-barbarian fighting on the lower Danube of the 290s (Pan. Lat. 11 [3], 17) made any positive military action on her part there unnecessary. Making and grasping her opportunity she began on the Sarmatian front the policy of offensive war and forward defence of which the construction of major bridgeheads at Aquincum and Bononia around 294 was an essential part.<sup>38</sup> The victory over the Marcomanni a little later would be an appropriate date for the creation of a similar bridgehead at Carnuntum.<sup>39</sup>

In the next decade, while imperial titulature records a further three Sarmatian acclamations,<sup>40</sup> it also reveals five Carpic ones (four between 20 November 301 and 7 January 304 or 305 at the latest and another before 311 and probably much earlier).<sup>41</sup> The focus of war had transferred to the Carpic front. Unfortunately, the exact location of this front is not clear, but there is some indication that the Carpi, who had earlier been associated with the lower Danubian frontier facing Moldavia and Wallachia, had moved into part of the evacuated Roman trans-Danubian province of Dacia; it was a province they had often attacked in the past.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The dating of these victories given by T. D. BARNES, *Imperial Campaigns*, A. D. 285–311, Phoenix 30, 1976, 175–88, is accepted, except for *Sarmaticus III* and *IV* (*IV* cannot be dated more closely than before *Germanicus VI*), so both may be early under the tetrarchy; also, the Marcomannic war of 299 (Chr. Min. I 230) may have produced a title (probably *Germanicus VI*, certainly not a Sarmatian one).

<sup>37</sup> RIC VI (see the index, p. 705; most mints, often, significantly, portraying fort-gates). Pan. Lat. 11 [3], 5, 4; 7, 1; 8 [5], 5, 1; 10, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Chron. Min. I 230; A. MÓCSY, *op. cit.* (n. 31), 268 ff., summarises and extends the case for «the partial occupation of Sarmatian territory by Roman troops».

<sup>39</sup> Placed in 299 by the Chronicle which dated those opposite Aquincum and Bononia to 294 (Chron. Min. I 230); Aur. Vict. Caes. 39. 43.

<sup>40</sup> Four victories lay some claim to the three acclamations: (i) one before 24 February 303 alluded to in an anecdote in Lactantius (mort. pers. 13, 2), but not necessarily a recent one; (ii) one while Galerius was Augustus before the departure of Constantine (Exc. Vales. 2, 4), thus between 1 May 305 and probably 7 January 306 (BARNES, *art. cit.* [n. 36], 191–2); (iii) one implied by the order of Constantine's titles between 25 July 306 and mid-307 (BARNES, *loc. cit.*); (iv) one after 11 November 308 implied by Licinius' titles, possibly the victory, not specified as Sarmatian, of 10 June 310 (CIL 3, 5565; BARNES, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>41</sup> For *Carpicus II–V*, J. KOLENDO, *Les guerres contre les Carpes pendant les dernières années de la tétrarchie*, Hommages à Marcel Renard, Brussels 1969, 2, 278–85. The absence of *Carpicus* from the titulature of Licinius (his *dies imperii* 11 November 308) and from that of Constantine, unless *Gothicus* is an equivalent (his *dies imperii* 25 July 306), might allow a date for the last Carpic title fairly close to those for *Carpicus II–V*.

<sup>42</sup> For the Carpi earlier, R. VULPE, *La Valachie et la Basse-Moldavie sous les romains*, Dacia n. s. 5, 1961, 385 ff.; PATSCH, *Carpi*, RE 3, 1608 f. For their movements against and into Transylvania and Oltenia, D. TUDOR, *Historia* 14, 1965, 374–6 with n. 29; E. COMȘA, *Nouvelles études d'histoire* 3, 1965, 26 ff. Galerius' mother surely came from trans-Danubian Dacia when she fled across the Danube to Dacia Ripensis from Carpic attacks (Lact. mort. pers. 9, 2).

The claim *Dacia restituta* made by a panegyrist on 1 March 297 (Pan. Lat. 8[5], 3, 3), and certainly associated with the first Carpic or a Sarmatian title (or both), shows the turning of Roman attention to the Dacian front. The constant warfare with the Carpi after 301 and the contemporary Sarmatian wars, if, as is likely, they concerned the neighbouring Sarmatians of the Banat, could represent the renewal of Rome's search, interrupted by more pressing wars elsewhere, for a viable solution to the needs of this front. Even if the Carpic wars also affected the lower Danube, the major focus of Roman concern seems to have been the Dacian, not the Thracian (Gothic) front. No trans-Danubian fort was built at Dafne, and if the pre-Constantinian fort at Sucidava was now garrisoned by artillery, a possibility not excluded by major Constantinian work there, then its strategic role can be related to the Dacian front. It is surely no accident that the reception of Carpi into the Empire in 304/305<sup>43</sup> is so close to the most likely date for the building opposite Margum of a fort from which Rome could control (and perhaps aid) the Sarmatians of the Banat and whoever now inhabited the Carpic lands in Dacia. Nomenclature suggests the date, for the site was called Constantia (Priscus in FGH IV 72), the camp *Castra Augustoflavianensia* (ND or. 41, 31); the names, taken together, are most appropriate to honour Constantius as Augustus (1 May 305 to 25 July 306) when Galerius might have wished to mend strained political relations (Exc. Vales. 2–4). The existence of a bridgehead at Margum by 323 might explain why Constantine crossed the Danube there on a Sarmatian expedition.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the selection of Margum and Bononia for glorification by Porphyrius might allude to the entry and exit of Constantine's army via bridgeheads at these sites, an example in practice of the strategy postulated in this paper. In the light of all this, it is less likely that Constantine created and named the fort opposite Margum in connection with his wars in Sarmatian lands.<sup>45</sup>

As for the lower Danube, it was only after 324, it seems, that Rome began an offensive policy against the Goths, the major barbarians facing her here. To say this is not to ignore the defensive reconstruction of the lower Danube *limes* under the tetrarchy. However, according to Ammianus (31, 5, 17), after their repulse from the Roman Empire under Aurelian, the Goths refrained *per longa saecula*

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<sup>43</sup> Amm. Marc. 28, 1, 5; Aur. Vict. Caes. 39, 43. The date 295 in the chronicles – Fasti Hydat. (Chron. Min. I 230) and Jerome Chron. (p. 226 HELM) – is too early; the first Carpic title of 296/7 is the earliest possible date and a panegyric referring on 1 March 297 to peoples transplanted in Thrace and Gaul does not mention it (Pan. Lat. 8[5], 21, 1). It seems best to identify the unnamed barbarians driven out by Goths at the time of Diocletian's *vicennalia*, 303–304 (Lact. mort. pers. 38, 6) with the *Carpi* taken into the Empire before his abdication on 1 May 305 (Vict. loc. cit.; Jord. Get. 91); for an alternative identification as *Sarmatae*, J. MOREAU, Lactance: De la mort des persécuteurs, in: Sources chrétiennes 39, Paris 1954, 2, 411 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Optat. Porphyr. Carm. 6, 22 ff.

<sup>45</sup> For these wars, T. D. BARNES, The Victories of Constantine, ZPE 20, 1976, 149–55.

from direct action against the Empire, occasional raids excepted. There seems little hint in the coinage or in the admittedly exiguous literary sources that these *saecula* came to an end before 324. Even if the victory title *Gothicus*, occasionally occurring before 324, is not equivalent to *Carpicus*,<sup>46</sup> but alludes to an actual war with the Goths under Licinius, it was probably only the Gothic devastation of Thrace and Moesia,<sup>47</sup> undoubtedly in the context of the withdrawal of frontier troops for the civil war of 324, which made a new Roman initiative imperative; it was also a time when relative peace on the Sarmatian front and freedom from actual or threatening civil war made concentration on the Gothic front possible. It is only now, against the background of two Gothic acclamations and one Dacic one (to set beside one Sarmatian war, which stemmed largely from an earlier Gothic one),<sup>48</sup> that an offensive policy is instanced here. Julian (Caes. 329C) explicitly asserts the Constantinian reoccupation of (parts of) trans-Danubian Dacia, which is implied by the Constantinian milestone beyond the new bridge at Sucidava, by the bridge itself and by other constructions in trans-Danubian areas said to be contemporary.<sup>49</sup> Further, the renunciation of a policy of subsidies to the Goths (Euseb. VC 5, 4) assumes an effective Roman control, or at least surveillance, of the lands beyond the *ripa Gothica*.

The foregoing analysis has tried to show that in each of the Danubian provinces (leaving aside Noricum and Raetia, where neither evidence nor inference is available), a composite detachment was formed from both its legions; that it was constituted mainly from the *ballistarii* of those legions, though possibly including useful adjunctive components, such as other parts of the missile-wielding *levis armatura* or naval personnel and equipment; and that it was established in a trans-Danubian fort opposite a major legionary fortress to form a permanent bridgehead for the better execution of an offensive military policy through expeditionary armies (imperial and provincial). This arrangement was not organised at the same time in all provinces. It should come as no surprise that Rome, who had a time-honoured, and necessary, policy of concentrating when possible on one front at a time, implemented this policy of offensive war and forward defence first on the upper

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. BARNES, Phoenix 30, 1976, 192; id., ZPE 20, 1976, 150; I prefer to regard the one secure tetrarchic instance (AE 1936, 10) as an error (as J. KOLENDO, Eirene 5, 1966, 146, but cf. 148 n. 32), and the Constantinian ones (ILS 695 of 315 A. D.; 8942 of 315 A. D.; 696 of 318 A. D.) as referring to a Gothic victory won by his colleague Licinius between 312/313 (the title is absent from ILAlg. I, 3958) and 315. No view fits all the evidence, without the assumption of some abnormality.

<sup>47</sup> Exc. Vales. 21; Lyd. mag. 2, 10; 3, 31 and 40. There seems no compelling reason to see this incursion as a mere doublet in confused sources of the slightly earlier Sarmatian war, as does BARNES, ZPE 20, 1976, 152.

<sup>48</sup> AE 1934, 158; BARNES, ZPE 20, 1976, 150-3.

<sup>49</sup> AE 1939, 19; D. TUDOR, Les ponts romains du Bas-Danube, Bucuresti 1974, 140 ff.; 160 ff.; COMŞA, art. cit. (n. 42), 29 f.

and middle Danube (opposite Aquincum and Bononia around 294, perhaps Carnuntum around 299 and Margum around 305/6), when she regarded the Sarmatians and the neighbouring barbarian peoples as her most dangerous enemies on the Danube. Under Constantine, when Sarmatian affairs were relatively settled and Gothic incursions turned Roman eyes to the lower Danube, he extended a similar policy to this front (opposite Oescus, Transmarisca and Noviodunum). Later still, when economic conditions and the military situation made it difficult to sustain the luxury of trans-Danubian garrisons of this type in so many provinces, some of the detachments (those opposite Carnuntum, Transmarisca and Noviodunum – at different times) were withdrawn for service more in line with current needs and realities.



