

Reviews

Ovidiu Țentea, *Ex Oriente ad Danubium; The Syrian Units on the Danube Frontier of the Roman Empire*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-napoca, 2nd edition, 2012, pp. 234, ISBN 978-606-543-206-2.

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v1i1.15>
ISSN 2360 – 266X
ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

The volume has 234 pages, of which the last 6 are plates with a map of the Danubian provinces and drawings of the stamps belonging to the units which have activated in this area.

The introductory chapter (1–7) outlines the reasons for the choice of research topic, a brief overview of the geography and history of the Danubian area, a history of the Roman military research in each of the provinces from this area and the structuring of the work.

The second chapter, *The background: The Roman Near East* (p. 9–26), intends to present the most significant historical and cultural aspects defining the Near East communities from which the Syrian troops located on the Danubian limes were raised. The recruiting areas for this units are: *Syria*, placed in vicinity of a reputable adversary, the Parthian Kingdom; *Commagene*, in Anatolian area, between Black Sea and *Syria*; the Territories of the Ituraeans, a section of the former Seleucid kingdom, in the Mount Lebanon area; *Osrhoene*, located in the Taurus Mountains area; *Canatha*, located north-east of *Bostra*; *Emesa*, the Palmyra’s gate to the Mediterranean Sea; *Antiochia*, placed by Ptolemy on the Orontes; *Palmyra*, surrounded by Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains and the dessert of Hauran and *Arabia*, where it was the former Nabataean Kingdom. Most of these areas are located on major trade routes between the Mediterranean area and the Middle and Far East.

The third chapter, *The Syrian units deployed to the Danube frontier* (p. 27–78), study the history of 23 units recruited from those regions of the Near East who/that during their history have reached on the Danube limes. The troops are being presented in alphabetical order of their names. Their history of the units was reconstituted on the basis of epigraphic sources (especially military diplomas), tile stamps, and the analysis of small-finds (especially weapons and military equipment). Among the 23 units, we are counting six *alae* (I–VI), twelve *cohorts* (VII–XVIII) and five *numeri* (XIX–XXIII).

The *alae* are: I. *ala Celerum Philippiana*, II. *ala I Commagenorum milliaria sagittaria*, III. *ala nova firma cataphractaria Philippiana*, IV. *ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittaria*, V. *ala I Oshroenorum sagittaria* and VI. *ala I Septimia Surorum*. Among them, *ala Celerum Philippiana* and *ala nova firma cataphractaria Philippiana* were raised in third century, acting in the Danube area for a short time, as escorts or as part of an expeditionary army.

The presence of *ala I Oshroenorum sagittaria* and *ala I Septimia Surorum* in *Pannonia* is supposed on the basis of a tile stamp discovered at *Brigetio* and an inscription from *Carnuntum*. The other two cavalry units, *ala I Commagenorum milliaria sagittaria* and *ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittaria* were camping the Danube limes forts *Commagena* (Tulln), in *Noricum* and *Rittium* (Surduk), in *Pannonia Inferior* in the second and at least the first part of the third century.

The cohorts raised from the Near East and which were in connection with the Roman frontier in the Danubian area are:

VII. *cohors I Aelia milliaria sagittaria equitata* camped at Klosterneuburg;

VIII. *cohors I Antiochensium sagittaria*, who was involve in the construction of the fort at *Drobeta (Moesia Superior and Dacia Superior)*;

IX. *cohors quingenaria Canathenorum et Trachonitarum*, recorded at *Ad Flexum*, in *Pannonia*, were is brought in 176 p. Chr., probably in the same time with *cohors I Aurelia Antoniniana milliaria Hemesenorum sagittaria equitata civium Romanorum* (XIII) at *Intercisa* and *cohors I Aurelia Antoniniana milliaria Surorum sagittaria equitata* (XVII) at *Ulcisia Castra*.

X. *cohors II Chalcidenorum sagittaria*, with the possible garrison place at *Sucidava*, in *Moesia Inferior*;

XI. *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum sagittaria equitata?*, involved in the operations carried out during Dacian Wars in the today Muntenia area, as belonging to *Exercitus Moesiae Inferioris*. The cohort is recorded in Hadrian's reign among the *Dacia Inferior* units, at *Romula*, *Slăveni* and *Acidava*;

XII. *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum equitata sagittaria*, stationing, after the administrative reforms of AD 118/119, in the fort at *Micia*, in *Dacia Superior*;

XIV. *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittaria*, at the beginning of 2nd century is transferred from *Pannonia Inferior* to *Dacia Porolissensis*,

XV. *cohors I Ituraeorum sagittaria equitata? milliaria*, recorded also in *Dacia Porolissensis*, at *Romita* and *Porolissum*;

XVI. *cohors I sagittaria*, stationing at *Tibiscum* and *Drobeta*, in *Dacia Superior*,

XVII. *cohors I Tyrorum sagittaria* garrisoned at *Caput Stenarum*, in *Dacia Inferior*.

All the oriental *numeri* placed on Danube *limes* are stationing in Roman Dacia. Those are: *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* (XIX), at *Tibiscum* and *numerus Palmyrenorum O (...)* (XXI) stationing in *Colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa* area, in *Dacia Superior*, *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium* (XX), at *Porolissum*, in *Dacia Porolissensis* and *numerus Surorum sagittaria* (XXII), recorded in the same forts as *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum sagittaria equitata* (XI) in *Dacia Inferior*.

The 4th chapter, *Deities chosen for worship* (p. 79–86) is devoted to the gods worshiped by Oriental units based on Danube area and for witch inscriptions were dedicated. These are both deities of the roman Pantheon, receiving perhaps an oriental attribute, either Oriental deities.

In the 5th chapter, *Fighting style and military equipment* (p. 87–95), we are introduced to the world of fighting style and weapons typical to the archers, Oriental units being specialized in this type of combat. Those are the re-curved bow, the trilobate arrows and the Levantine equipment.

Then comes a brief chapter of Conclusions (97–100) and then Annexes (101–200). The Annexes includes a repertory of inscriptions erected by the soldiers of the Oriental units (Annex A, 103–156), a repertory of the stamps (Annex B, 157–162), a repertory of the military diplomas from *Moesia*, *Dacia* and *Pannonia* and of the units from these provinces (Annex C, I, 163–190) and the records of the units in military diplomas, inscriptions and tile stamps (Annex C, II, 191–200).

The last pages of the book contain Abbreviations and Bibliography (201–202), an Index of toponyms, ethnonyms, anthroponyms, unit names and names of deities (225–228) and the six plates (230–234).

This book is extremely useful to both the researchers

dealing with the study of *limes*, especially the Danube one, either those who are studying the Roman army in the East because it provides an in-depth analysis of both the communities of origin of the Syrian soldiers and the troops raised from this area and placed on the Danube frontier.