

# A Latin funerary inscription from Kahramanmaraş in Commagene, Southeastern Turkey

## Un'iscrizione funeraria latina da Kahramanmaraş, in Commagene, Turchia sudorientale

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**Abstract:** *This paper presents a funerary inscription in Latin that is displayed in the garden of the museum of Kahramanmaraş in Southeastern Turkey. It is dated to the third century A.D. and associated with the presence of legio III Italica in Roman Commagene*

**Riassunto:** *Questo contributo presenta un'iscrizione funeraria in latino che è conservata nel giardino del museo di Kahramanmaraş, nella Turchia sud-orientale. L'iscrizione è databile al III secolo d.C. e associabile alla presenza della legio III Italica nella Commagene romana.*

**Keywords:** *Funerary inscription, Latin epigraphy, legio III Italica, Kahramanmaraş, Commagene, Asia Minor, Turkey, Roman period*

**Parole chiave:** *Iscrizione funeraria, epigrafia latina, legio III Italica, Kahramanmaraş, Commagene, Asia minore, Turchia, età romana*

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## Introduction

The museum of Kahramanmaraş was founded in 1975 mostly with finds collected from local sites of the region, especially from Germanicia (Γερμανίκεια) in ancient Commagene in south eastern Turkey (fig. 1). The museum was renewed and re-opened with a new exhibition in 2009, after the addition of a new epigraphic hall. Few epigraphic monuments of this museum are known by scholars, and very few of them are in Latin<sup>1</sup>, as the majority of the epigraphic collection consists of Greek inscriptions.

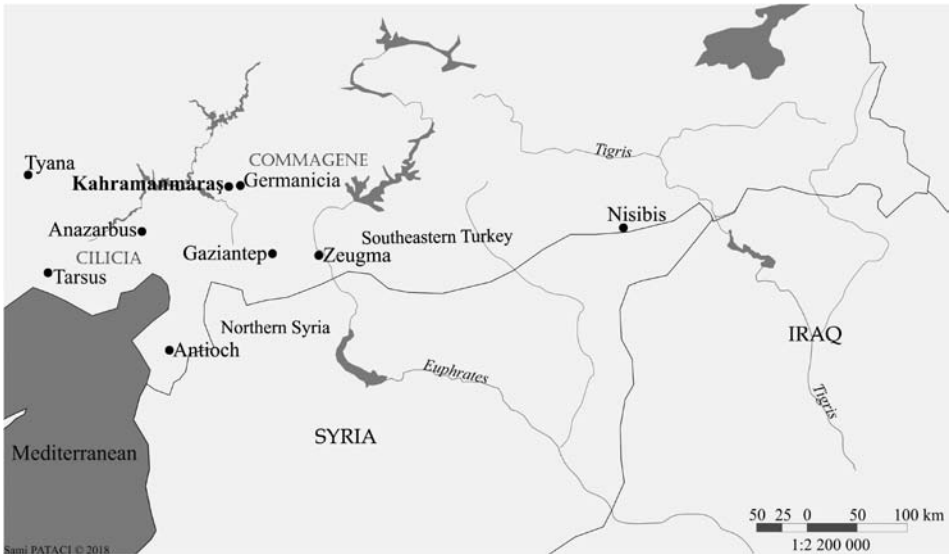


Fig. 1. Places in Asia Minor and elsewhere referred to in the text (by S. Pataci, 2018)

In the side yard of the museum of Kahramanmaraş an unpublished funerary monument with a Latin inscription is displayed (figs. 2a-b). It bears no accession number. The features of the monument are very simple, as it consists in a rough parallelepiped altar, *i.e.* ara. Funerary inscriptions in Latin from Kahramanmaraş and its territory corresponding to the north western Commagene are extremely rare. The richest epigraphic heritage in wider Commagene belongs to Zeugma in the south eastern part of this region. In his principal monograph of 1976, Jörg Wagner catalogued 159 inscriptions from Zeugma and the surrounding area, of which 147

1. Only one Latin funerary inscription is known from Germanicia, belonging to a soldier who died at the age of 30 years, whose name and unit are lost: *CIL* III, 6708 = *IGLS* I, 88: [-----]C[---] / [--- anno]s XXX mi[litavit] [anno]s VII IAV / [---] hered[ibus] rell[ictis] [co]mmanip[ulis] s[uis] [c]urante [-----].

were funerary, mostly in Greek and few in Latin<sup>2</sup>. Also in later epigraphic studies on Zeugma the number of Latin inscriptions appears to be very limited in number<sup>3</sup>. Most of the existing ones are associated with the Roman troops in the region and consist of funerary monuments belonging to Roman soldiers or tile stamps, as in the case of the present inscription. A further funerary example is known from an ancient site called as Aroulis, modern Eneş<sup>4</sup>.



Fig. 1

2. J. WAGNER, *Seleukia am Euphrat/Zeugma* (Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B, Nr. 10), Wiesbaden 1976, p. 84: two funerary texts from Apameia (SEG XXVI, 1488-1489); p. 111: three mosaic texts from Asağı Çardak (SEG XXVI, 1491-1493); pp. 112-113: three funerary texts from Nisibis (SEG XXVI, 1494-1496); 130: a public honorific inscription (SEG XXVI, 1498); pp. 130-131: an altar dedication (SEG XXVI, 1499); 132-136: four funerary Latin texts for legionaries (later edited in J. WAGNER, «*Legio III Scythica in Zeugma am Euphrat*», in *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms II. Vorträge des 10. Internationalen Limeskongresses in der Germania Inferior*, Köln, Bonn 1977, pp. 533-536, nos. 1-4 = AE 1977, 819-822); pp. 136-143: seven legionary tile stamps in Latin (cf. WAGNER, «*Legio III Scythica...*», *cit.*, pp. 537-539, nos. 1-7 = AE 1977, 823); pp. 173-273: 138 funerary inscriptions, only three of which (p. 216, p. 231 and p. 262 = AE 1977, 818) are in Latin and originate from Zeugma (SEG XXVI, 1500-1622). Three other stamps are edited in WAGNER, «*Legio III Scythica...*», *cit.*, p. 536, no. 5 and p. 539, nos. 8-9 = AE 1977, 824)]

3. C. CROWTHER «Inscriptions on stone», in W. AYLWARD (ed.), *Excavations at Zeugma, conducted by Oxford Archaeology*, Los Altos, CA 2013, pp. 203-204, no. 4, and pp. 211, no. 15.

4. CIL III, 14396c = IGLS I, 79: *Leg(io-) III[I?] ---/PR [---]*.



*Fig. 2a-b. A funerary inscription in Latin in the museum of Kahramanmaraş, southeastern Turkey (photo by G. Kan Şahin, 2004)*

### A Latin funerary inscription

Material: Local yellow-reddish cream-coloured limestone.

Provenance: Unknown, possibly somewhere in the province of Kahramanmaraş.

State of preservation: Damaged on the upper frontal edges and sawed at the basis, with the consequent loss of a few letters at the beginnings of l. 1 and 2, as well as at the end of l. 1, and the lack of the bottom part of l. 7. The rest of the text is still well preserved, with the exclusion of the broken edges.

Measurements: max. h. 38.7 cm, w. 34.9 cm, th. 3.6 cm, h. of letters: l. 1 6.1 cm (w. 3.6 cm), l. 2 5.4 cm, l. 3 5.4 cm, l. 4 5.3 cm, l. 5 5.4 cm, l. 6 3.9 cm, l. 7 c. 6.0 cm and h. of the interval between the lines c. 1.2-1.0 cm.

Monumental typology: parallelepiped funerary altar.

Date: Second decade of the third century A.D. on the basis of historical considerations.

Transcription:

[-----]  
[.]is, immunis  
[l]eg(ionis) III Ital(icae),  
vix(it) ann(os) XLV,  
mil(itavit) ann(os) XX[V?].  
5 `C(aius?)` Claud(ius) Candi-  
dus, colle(ga) et  
h(eres), f(aciundum) c(uravit).

Translation:

[(*This is the tomb of*) ...],  
*soldier exempt from the duties*  
*of the Third Legion Italica,*  
*who lived for forty-five years,*  
*who served twenty (-five?) years in the army.*  
C(aius?) Claudius Candidus, his  
colleague and  
heir, took care that it was done.

Epigraphic comments: The limestone block is very damaged along the upper margin of the engraved surface, with the loss of the first section of the text, and along the upper side margins, with the consequent disappearance of some of the initial and terminal letters of the first two lines. Moreover, it is cut at the bottom, so that the letters of the last line remain only in the upper portion.

The furrow of the letters is very flared, with an effect particularly accentuated in the apical ends of the strokes of some letters, in particular at the top of the A.

The letters have a fairly regular distribution and relatively homogeneous dimensions, but they have been engraved freely, without preliminary guidelines and letter outlines, so that the same letter may have a various shape in different occurrences, with a wider or narrower form and diversified disposition of strokes, lines, bars and arms. Some strokes have an irregular shape.

The first line of the original text is completely missing. In this place the name of the deceased should be engraved, which apparently ends at the following line.

L 1: The fracture of the left border led to the disappearance of both the first letter and the upper part of the stroke of the letter I. The last letter is almost completely illegible, with the exception of part of the inferior arc.

L 2: The letter deleted due to the initial fracture can easily be integrated (L). The central stroke of the numeral is shorter than the lateral ones.

L 3: Of the last letter (V) only the first descending stroke is preserved.

L 4: At the end of the line there seems to be a slight trace of the descending stroke of the numeral V (*quinque*) next to XX (*viginti*). The empty space left in the pagination of the text, in fact, would make its presence possible, but the stone surface is seriously damaged in this area, more than at the previous line.

L 5: At the beginning of the line the trace of a C can be detected, larger than the other letters, engraved, however, at a later moment and external to the pagination. It may be interpreted that the addition of the *praenomen* after the completion of the text, could be the result of a rethink or correction by the lapicide.

L 7: The cut of the base of the stone block has comported the loss of the lower part of the three letters, but the abbreviation HFC is clearly identifiable.

Peculiar to this monument is the regular use of *hederae distinguentes*, which have large dimensions in the first lines and then decrease in the subsequent ones.

Historical comments: The inscribed block was a portion of a funerary monument dedicated to an unknown soldier of the *legio III Italica*, who lived for forty-five years, twenty of which or perhaps more spent in the *militia*. The comrade and heir *Caius(?) Claudius Candidus* erected the sepulchre in his memory. The name of the dedicator, to which the *praenomen* can be attributed only hypothetically, is derived from the imperial onomastic and impedes obtaining information that may be useful for the reconstruction of the historical and chronological context.

Regarding the name of the deceased, only the possible termination of the *cognomen* remains in genitive form, which is attributable to a range of onomastic elements too wide to be of some help in this context. However, it is also probable that the stone block has been sawed also on the upper side, so that more than one line of the text has disappeared at the beginning of the inscription and that the termination may concern another function performed by the deceased. The years of life, XLV, would favour the integration of the numeral at the end of the sixth line as XXV, thus extending his legionary military service for almost 25 year, beyond the usual terms of 20 years. However, cases are also documented in which the military service seems to have started at a slightly older age, *i.e.* 25 years<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether he was a veteran who had prolonged his period of military service or a soldier who was at the end of his service. Nevertheless, considering not only that the deceased belonged to the group of the *immunes*, but also and foremost the figure of the dedicator of the funerary monument, who qualifies himself as his colleague and heir, the deceased must have been an active soldier. Indeed, the use of the term *collega* suggests that both the men were in service at this time as *immunes* of the legion.

In his function as *immunis* this anonymous soldier was exempt from the heavier and undesirable duties and *corvées* to which the legionaries were subjected, even though without any pay increase. The *immunes* ('those who were exempted') were

5. For example, the soldier of the *legio III Cyrenaica*, *C. Iulius Marcellinus*, who died at the age of 35, after serving for 11 years (*CIL* III, 14138, 3).

in fact legionaries excused from some of the fatigues, being part of the routine tasks, because they possessed some specialised skill or ability, which qualified them for special services<sup>6</sup>. These specialists were present in every unit of the Roman army, but the term *immunes*, which defines them as a whole, became common only starting from the second century A.D.<sup>7</sup>. A recent study has shown that during the second century A.D. in a legion that had a little over 5,000 legionaries, there were 1,100 graduates other than the centurions, of which 620 were *immunes* and 480 *principles*<sup>8</sup>.

The first and most extensive definition of the military *immunitas* is to be dated to the second part of the second century A.D. It belonged to *Tarutienus Paternus* or *Tarrutenius Paternus* who was a jurist, military commander as well as a praetorian prefect under *Marcus Aurelius* and *Commodus* (177-182) and wrote a military treatise now lost<sup>9</sup>. In a passage preserved by the *Digest*<sup>10</sup> he qualified as *immunes* the soldiers who were excused from *munera*, and listed in this category a long and inhomogeneous series of specialists and functions. Some centuries later, *Vegetius*<sup>11</sup>, who offered a similar but abbreviated and confusing list of specialists connected with the *immunitas*, resumed his considerations. In contrast with these sources, the rich epigraphic documentation attests that, as in this case, the majority of the soldiers excused from the *munera* considered themselves simply as *immunes*, whereas few of them beside the *immunitas* specified the particular function they performed<sup>12</sup>.

At the moment of his death, due to causes that cannot be verified, the anonymous soldier from Kahramanmaraş and his colleague, *C.(?) Claudius Candidus*, were performing some special services within a detachment (*vexillatio*) of their legion, the *III Italica*, whose presence in Commagene or in its neighbourhood appears somewhat surprising and requires to be explained.

6. J. NELIS-CLÉMENT, *Les beneficiarii: militaires et administrateurs au service de l'empire (I<sup>er</sup> s. a.C. - VI<sup>e</sup> s. p.C.)*, Paris, Bordeaux 2000, pp. 64-65, *passim*; M.A. SPEIDEL, «Specialisation and promotion in the Roman imperial army», in L. DE BLOIS (ed.), *Administration, prosopography and appointment policies in the Roman empire. Proceedings of the first workshop of the international network impact of empire (Roman empire, 27 B.C.- A.D. 406)*, Leiden, June 28- July 1, 2000, Amsterdam 2001, pp. 50-61; J. NELIS-CLÉMENT, «Non-Commissioned officers, NCOs: Principate», in Y. LE BOHEC, G. BRIZZUOLI, E. DESCHLER-ERB, G. GREATREX, B. RANKOV, M. REDDÉ (eds.), *The encyclopedia of the Roman army*, Malden MA, Oxford, Chichester 2015, pp. 687-689; D.B. CAMPBELL, «The *immunes*. Clerks, artisans, and specialists», in *Ancient Warfare* XI, 2, 2017, pp. 55-57.

7. M.A. SPEIDEL, «Specialisation and promotion...», *cit.*, p. 51. All the dates indicated in the text are to be considered as A.D.

8. D.J. BREEZE, «The career structure below the centurionate», in *ANRW*, II, 1, Berlin, New York 1974, pp. 435-436.

9. Dio Cass. LXXI, 12, 3; LXXI, 33, 3. Cf. *PIR*<sup>3</sup>, T 35; D. LIEBS, «Ein Bildnis des Pandektenjuristen Tarutienus Paternus», in *ZSav* 119, 2002, pp. 348-351; D. LIEBS, *Hoffjuristen der römischen Kaiser bis Justinian* (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse NUMERO), München 2010, p. 47; G. MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni per la ricostruzione storica dell'Impero romano da Marco Aurelio a Commodus*, Milano 2011, pp. 528-532.

10. *Dig.*, I, 6, 7.

11. *Veg., mil.*, II, 11.

12. Cf. D.B. CAMPBELL, «The *immunes*...», *cit.*, p. 56.

The *legio tertia Italica* was enrolled together with the twin *legio secunda Italica* by a decision of *Marcus Aurelius*<sup>13</sup> and was intended to be stationed in the province of *Raetia*, while the second legion was destined to the *Noricum*, in prevision of the military campaign against Sarmatians and Germans<sup>14</sup>. The *dilectus* was conducted in Italy, presumably in coordination with that of the twin second legion managed by *Iulius Verus*<sup>15</sup>, with the *officium* of *Ti. Claudius Proculus Cornelianus*<sup>16</sup> and eventually of *M. Claudius Fronto*<sup>17</sup>. It occurred perhaps in 165<sup>18</sup>, or a little later, between 165 and 166 or between 166 and 167<sup>19</sup>. Nonetheless, as can be inferred from the

13. Dio Cass. IV, 24, 4.

14. Cf. M.A. SPEIDEL, «Marcus Aurelius. Der pflichtbewusste Philosoph in der Gewalt der Umstände», in M.A. SPEIDEL, *Heer und Herrschaft im römischen Reich der hohen Kaiserzeit* (Mavors Roman army researches XVI), Stuttgart 2009, pp. 177-178. On the Third Legion see K. DIETZ, «Legio III Italica», in Y. LE BOHEC (ed.), *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire. Actes du congrès de Lyon, 17-19 septembre 1998*, Paris 2000, pp. 133-143.

15. E. GROAG, «Iulius (525)», in *RE* X, 1, 1918, coll. 850-852; *PIR*<sup>2</sup>, I 618; *DNP* 6, 44 [II 144]; B.E. THOMASSON, *Laterculi praesidum. Vol. I ex parte retractatum*, Göteborg 2009, 14:24; MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni...*, *cit.*, p. 49, note 2 and pp. 300-302.

16. IDRE II, 451 = AE 1956. 123 = AE 1991, 1691 = AE 1992, 1866 (from *Lambaesis*, Numidia): *Ti(berio) Cl(audio) Proculo / Corneliano / praef(ecto) coh(ortis) II Bra(carum) / trib(uno) coh(ortis) mil(iariae) Ael(iae) / Dacor(um) praef(ectus) al(ae) / Sulpiciae proc(uratori) / provinc(iae) Syriae / ad rationes putandas / proc(uratori) metal(lorum) Pannonic(orum) / et Dalmaticorum proc(uratori) / kalend(ari)i Vegetiani in Hisp(ania) / item ad dilectum cum / Iulio Vero per / Italiam tironum / II leg(ionis) Italicae / proc(uratori) regionis / Thevestinae / proc(uratori) IIII p(ublicorum) A(f)ricae / Inventus / Aug(usti) lib(ertus) tabul(arius) / [[leg(ionis) III] Aug(ustae)]. On *Ti. Claudius Proculus Cornelianus*, cf. Y. LE BOHEC, «*Ti. Claudius Proculus Cornelianus*, procureur de la région de Theveste», in *ZPE* 93, 1992, pp. 107-116.*

17. *CIL* VI, 41142 = *CIL* VI, 1377 = *CIL* VI, 31640 = IDRE I, 10 = AE 2013, 13 (from Rome): *M(arco) Claudio [Ti(beri)] filio Q[uir(ina)] / Frontoni co(n)s(uli) / leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciarum Daciarum et [Moesiae] / super(ioris) simul leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) provinciarum III] / Daciar(um) leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) Moesiae super(ioris) [et] / Daciae Apule(n)sis simul leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) prolvinciae Moesiae super(ioris) comiti divi Veri / Aug(usti) donato donis militarib(us) bello Ar(meniaco) et Parthico ab Imperatore An(tonino) Aug(usto) et a divo Vero Aug(usto) corona / murali item vallari item classica item / aurea item hastis puris IIII item vexillis / IIII curatori operum locorumq(ue) publicor(um) / misso ad iuventutem per Italiam legen(dam) leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) pr(o) pr(aetore) exercitus legionarii / et auxilior(um) per Orientem in Armeniam / et Osrhoenam et Anthemusiam ductor(um) leg(ato) Augg(ustorum) legionis primae Minervilae in ex(s)peditionem Parthicam deducen(dae) leg(ato) divi Antonini Aug(usti) leg(ionis) XI Cl(audiae) praetori aedili curuli ab actis senatus quaestori urbano Xviro stlitibus iudicandis / huic senatus auctore Imperatore M(arco) Aulrel(ia) Antonino Aug(usto) Armeniaco Medico / Parthico maximo quod post aliquo<d=T> selcunda proelia adversus Germanos / et Iazyges ad postremum pro r(e) p(ublica) fortiter / pugnans ceciderit armatam statuum [poni] / in foro divi Traiani pecunia publica cen[suit]. On *M. Claudius Fronto*, cf. E. GROAG, «*M. Claudius Ti. f. Quirina Fronto* (157)», in *RE* III, 1899, coll. 2722-2723; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> C 874; *DNP* 3, 17 [II 31]; THOMASSON, *Laterculi...*, *cit.*, 20:45, 21:15 and 21:34; MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni...*, *cit.*, pp. 220-222.*

18. J.C. MANN, «The raising of new legions during the Principate», in *Hermes* 91, 1963, p. 485. Cf. E. RITTERLING, «Legio», in *RE* XII, 1-2, 1925, who refers to 165 (col. 1468) and to 165-166 (coll. 1300-1301 and 1532).

19. The date 165/166 was preferred, among others, by: A.R. BIRLEY, *Marcus Aurelius. A biography*, London 1966, rev. ed. 2001, p. 249; E. DĄBROWA, *Legio X Fretensis. A prosopographical study of its officers (I-III c. A.D.)*, Stuttgart 1993, p. 59, no. 45; DIETZ, «Legio III...», *cit.*, p. 133; B. LÖRINCZ, «*Legio II Italica*», in *Les légions de Rome...*, *cit.*, p. 145; SPEIDEL, «*Marcus Aurelius...*», *cit.*, pp. 177-178.

epigraphic documentation, the recruitment must have been subsequent not only to the return of *Iulius Verus* from his office as the governor of the province of Syria and the participation to the campaign of *Lucius Verus* against the Parthians<sup>20</sup>, but eventually also to the consulate suffect covered *in absentia* by *M. Claudius Fronto* during the second half of the year 165 or eventually the first half of 166<sup>21</sup>.

After an initial period of employment between *Noricum* and the neighbouring provinces together with the *II Italica*<sup>22</sup>, around the year 175, the *III Italica* established a permanent base in *Castra Regina* (modern Regensburg), where it was destined to remain for more than two centuries, until its transfer to *Vallatum* (modern Waltenburg), within the same province<sup>23</sup>. Under *Septimius Severus* the legion received the epithet *Severiana*<sup>24</sup>. In 213, following the campaign against the Alamanni, on the occasion of the passage of Caracalla in *Raetia* and the visit of the sanctuary of Apollon Grannus<sup>25</sup>, near Feimingen, the ancient *Phoebiana*, the legion received the epithet of *Antoniniana*; and subsequently, in 238, that of *Gordiana*<sup>26</sup>.

Only two pieces of evidence connect the troops of *Raetia* to an oriental context. The first is provided by the Greek version of the famous trilingual inscription of Naqsh-e Rostam, north of *Persepolis*, which celebrates the achievements of Shāhpūr I who reigned between 241-272. Among the troops in the retinue of Valerian and defeated by the Sasanian army in the spring of 260, it is listed under με[τ' αὐτο]ῦ ἀπὸ Γερμανῶ[ν ἔθ]ν[ους], ἀπὸ Περσίας ἔθνους, ἀπὸ Νωρικῶ ἔθνους...<sup>27</sup>. But the reference could have concerned also one or more of the *cohortes Raetorum*, of which the first is attested in a permanent way in the province of Asia, while others were established in Dacia and in *Moesia inferior*<sup>28</sup>. Likewise generic is the mention of Raetian troops in the Aurelian's army during the campaign against Zenobia in 271-272<sup>29</sup>.

From the epigraphic point of view, the presence of soldiers and officers belonging to the third legion is well documented in *Raetia* and in the neighbouring territories, between the Alpine zone and the Danubian landscape, while the known documen-

Otherwise, M. CORBIER, *L'aerarium Saturni et l'aerarium militare. Administration et prosopographie sénatoriale* (Publications de l'École française de Rome 24), Rome 1974, pp. 235-236, is inclined for dating to 166/167. Cf. MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni...*, *cit.*, pp. 221-222 and pp. 300-302.

20. *CIL* III, 2732 = III, 8714; *CIL* III, 199. Cf. MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni...*, *cit.*, p. 301.

21. Discussion in MIGLIORATI, *Iscrizioni...*, *cit.*, pp. 221-222, who indicates as most probable the year 165.

22. Cf. *CIL* III, 1980 = *CIL* III, 8570 (from Salona, Dalmatia), with mentions of the epithets of the twin legions, respectively *Pia* and *Concordia* (169-170).

23. Both the settlements are mentioned at the beginning of the fifth century A.D. in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (XXXV, 17: *Praefectus legionis tertiae Italicae partis superioris, Castra Regina, nunc Vallato...*). Cf. DIETZ, «*Legio III...*», *cit.*, p. 135.

24. *AE* 1991, 266 (from Rome).

25. Dio Cass., LXXVIII, 15, 4-6; *IvEph* 802.

26. Cf. DIETZ, «*Legio III...*», *cit.*, p. 143.

27. *RGDS* 20 = *IK Estremo oriente* 261, 20.

28. Cf. J. SPAUL, *Cohors<sup>2</sup>. The evidence for and a short history of the auxiliary infantry units of the Imperial Roman Army* (BAR int. Series 841), Oxford 2000, pp. 275-287 (in part. pp. 276-278).

29. *Zos.*, I, 52, 3: καὶ ἔτι γε Νωρικῶς καὶ Ραιτοῖς, ἅπερ ἐστὶ Κελτικὰ τάγματα.

tation concerning the presence of soldiers of the legion in the oriental provinces of the empire is very limited<sup>30</sup>. Yet, it should be noted that two centurions of the legion are mentioned in two distinct monuments, both from *Apulum* (*Alba Iulia*), in Dacia, evidently in relation to the temporary presence in the area of a *vexillatio* of the legion. The first monument<sup>31</sup>, a votive dedication by the centurion *Ulp(ius) Vitalis*, does not offer much information. On the other hand, the second monument<sup>32</sup>, which consists of a dedication given by the centurion *M. Ulp(ius) Caius* in honour of the governor of the province *L. Marius Perpetuus*, is much more interesting. The reference to the governor enables to accurately date this monument or perhaps both monuments (presumably erected in the same period of time) and to link it to a specific historical context of particular interest.

In fact, *L. Marius Perpetuus*, brother of *L. Marius Maximus*, who was a well known general and historian<sup>33</sup>, was governor of the province of *Moesia inferior* and then of *Dacia* in the years 212/213-215<sup>34</sup>. Very close to the Severan family, like his brother, who in those years was *proconsul* in Asia, *Marius Perpetuus* received Caracalla during his visit to the province, which was probably carried out in 214<sup>35</sup>,

30. The hypothesis of a presence following *Septimius Severus* during the campaign in the East against Pescennius Niger (DIETZ, «*Legio III...*», *cit.* pp. 138-139), based on an issue of *denarii* by the mint of Alexandria, characterized by the portrait of *Julia Domna* and apparently mentioning the *legio III Italica* (RIC IV, 1, 608A), should certainly be discarded. As in the case of similar issues with the portrait of *Septimius Severus* (Cohen 262 = RIC IV, 1, 7: LEG III ITAL TRP COS; Cohen 263: LEG III IT AV TRP C), these productions were presumably made at the beginning of 194 and addressed to the *legio III Augusta*, and they copied (with considerable misunderstanding) the minting made in Rome also for the *III Italica*; cf. the interesting observations of Doug Smith's website entitled as *Ancient coins*, formerly *Ancient Greek & Roman coins. An educational site on Roman coins, Greek coins and other ancient coins* <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/dougsmith/feac44leg.html> (01/01/2019).

31. CIL III, 1178 = IDR III, 5, 436.

32. CIL III, 7785 = IDR III, 5, 402.

33. F. MILTNER, «*L. Marius Maximus* (48)», in RE XIV, 2, 1930, coll. 1828-1831; G. BARBIERI, *L'Albo senatorio da Settimio Severo a Carino* (193-285) (Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto italiano per la Storia antica, fasc. 6), Rome 1952, p. 219, no. 1100; PIR<sup>2</sup> M 308; DNP 7, 908 [II 10]; THOMASSON, *Laterculi...*, *cit.*, 9:14, 10:94, 26:178, 33:72 and 39:127. See also A. BIRLEY, «*Marius Maximus: the consular Biographer*», in ANRW II, 34, 3, Berlin, New York 1997, pp. 2678-2757.

34. I. PISO, *Fasti Provinciae Daciae, I. Die senatorische Amtsträger* (Antiquitas I. Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte 43), Bonn 1993, p. 169-170, no. 38. Cf. F. MILTNER, «*L. Marius Perpetuus* (57)», in RE XIV, 2, LUOGO 1930, col. 1836 (211-222); BARBIERI, *L'Albo senatorio...*, *cit.*, p. 87, no. 357; PIR<sup>2</sup> M 311; DNP 7, 909 [II 13]; THOMASSON, *Laterculi...*, *cit.*, 20:51 and 21:53.

35. The dating to 213 of the imperial visit in Dacia, commonly accepted, has recently been the subject of a revision by M. CHRISTOL, «Caracalla en 214: de Nicomédie à Nicomédie», in A. HOSTEIN, S. LALANNE, *Les voyages des Empereurs dans l'Orient Romain. Époques Antonine et Sévérienne*, Arles 2012, pp. 155-167. On the basis of the recomposition of some fragments of the *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* conducted by J. SCHEID, «Le protocole arvale de l'année 213 et l'arrivée de Caracalla à Nicomédie», in G. PACI (ed.), *Epigrafia romana in area adriatica. Actes de la IXe Rencontre franco-italienne sur l'épigraphie du monde romain, organisée sous le patronage de l'AIEGL e del ministero degli affari esteri, Macerata, 10-11 novembre 1995*, Pisa 1998, pp. 339-451, it is in fact possible to date the military campaign of Caracalla on the Rhine front between summer and autumn of 213 and his arrival, in difficult conditions, in Nicomedia in December of the same year. During this time, there would not have been the possibility to make a digression in Dacia, which therefore must be placed during 214 (CHRISTOL,

before the continuation of his journey to the East and the first preparations for the expedition against the Parthians. On that occasion, some detachments or *vexillationes* of the legions also had to be part of the imperial retinue stationed in the northern provinces, visited and crossed by Caracalla during the second half of 213, which presumably accompanied the prince on his journey to Nicomedia. A third centurion of the third legion is documented in Sarmizegetusa<sup>36</sup>, bearing witness to a presence of some consistency in the province.

The participation of elements of the third legion to the imperial escort during Caracalla's journey to the East seems to be confirmed by some monuments discovered in *Perinthus*, that played a central role in the communication network between the Danubian area, Thrace and the province of Asia, and that may have been object of the passage of the imperial cortege on several occasions, at the end of 213 and during 214. The city was also closely linked to the Severan family, having sided in favour of *Septimius Severus* during the conflict against *Pescennius Niger*. Here, a funerary monument, consisting of a *stela* depicting a soldier which mentions a *Equester Paulus*, a soldier of the *legio III Italica Antoniniana*<sup>37</sup>, was erected by the heir, *Au[relius ---]rius*, who likely was enrolled in the same unit. Some other funerary *stelae* from *Perinthus* have very similar typological and iconographic characteristics, so that one might think of the contemporary presence of a group of soldiers, from the same legion, who eventually died during their stay in the city or its neighbourhood; but these monuments are lacking the epigraphic part, with the sole exception of invocation to the *Dii Manes*<sup>38</sup>, so that this consideration remains just hypothetical.

After wintering again at Nicomedia, in 215 Caracalla moved to Antioch, crossing the Anatolian provinces. The route can only be vaguely reconstructed<sup>39</sup>, but it seems to have interested Tyana, *Tarsus* and the territory of *Anazarbus*. It is not unlikely that even in this phase of the journey some detachments of the third legion could have been part of the retinue and that some of the soldiers among them could have received special assignments to be held in the different communities and centres visited or otherwise affected by the passage of the imperial cortege; the ancient Germanicia may have been one of these.

In this context, the presence of soldiers and in particular of *immunes* like the two men mentioned in the inscription of Kahramanmaraş may find full justification. In fact, they could have been entrusted with some special tasks related to the transit

«Caracalla...», *cit.*, pp. 161-162; cf. already C. LETTA, «Il “naufregio” di Caracalla in Cassio Dione, nell'*Historia Augusta* e nei commentari degli arvali», in *ZPE* 103, 1994, p. 189.

36. *AE* 2010, 1383 = *AE* 2014, 90.

37. *CIL* III, 14207, 6 = *AE* 1898, 122 = *Perinthus* 79. Cf. E. KALINKA, «Antiken zu Perinth», in *JOAI Beibl.* 1, 1898, coll. 115-116, no. 16, fig. 27.

38. *Perinthus* 84, 85 and 87. The first two texts were already published by KALINKA, «Antiken zu Perinth...», *cit.*, coll. 116-118, nos. 17-18; figs. 28-29. Of some interest is also a monument for a soldier of the *legio II Italica* (*AE* 1998, 1184 = *AE* 2003, 1557).

39. Herod., IV, 8, 6. Cf. H. HALFMANN, *Itinera principum. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich*, Stuttgart 1986, pp. 224 and pp. 227-229.

in the region and to the different stops accomplished by the emperor and the imperial cortege. In order to organize the imperial journey it was necessary to develop adequate logistic solutions, including the preventive collection of information, the guarantee of control and security in the territory, the coordination of a direct network with local authorities, the assurance of unlimited supply for men and animals, the finding of suitable accommodation etc., and the immunes may have exercised in this context their technical skills or specialised expertise.

## **Conclusion**

The Latin inscription from Kahramanmaraş is, so far, the only document surely offering evidence of the presence of a soldier and eventually detachments of the third legion Italica in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. Considering the different historical circumstances in which this presence may have taken place, it can be argued that it is to be connected to the journey made in 215 by Caracalla through Asia Minor to reach the province of Coele Syria and Antioch.