

NUMERUS SYRORUM MALVENSIIUM. THE TRANSFER OF A DACIAN ARMY UNIT TO MAURETANIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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One of the most disputed questions in the history of Dacia is the location of the city of Malva, the capital of the province of Dacia Malvensis. An inquiry into the vicissitudes of a unit of Syrian archers who long patrolled the Dacian border on the Olt river but who eventually were transferred to the fringe of the Mauretanian desert may add, it is hoped, new evidence on this question as well as on a number of other, related aspects of Romania's distant past.

THE NUMERUS SYRORUM SAGITTARIORUM IN DACIA

A unit of Syrian archers apparently came, like most of Dacia's garrison troops, to this province already at its conquest under Trajan. Building inscriptions set up by these *Suri sagittari* in A.D. 137/138 at Bivolari on the Olt river below the Red Tower Pass and at neighbouring Rădăcinești, in the mountains farther to the East, are the earliest datable documents we have of this unit¹.

In about A.D. 160 Sex. Iulius Possessor, prefect of the *cohors III Gallorum*, was *praepositus* of the *numerus Syrorum sagittariorum* as the unit was then called². Perhaps at the same time he was also *praepositus* of the *ala I Hispanorum* and *curator civitatis Romulensium Malvensium*³. If so, the *numerus Syrorum* probably garrisoned the city of Romula as early as A.D. 160. Romula certainly was the unit's headquarter at the time when an *imm(unis) ex n(umero) Sur(or)um sag(ittariorum)* buried his wife there, and when the *librarii* together with the *actarius* of the unit dedicated an altar to Mithra in Romula⁴.

Tile-stamps with the legend *n(umerus) S(yrorum)* have been found in Romula in the second-century camp⁵. Similar tile-stamps appeared in the second-century constructions of the nearby fortress of Slăveni, 15 km south of Romula⁶, but they do not reveal whether

¹ CIL III, 12601 a and b = 13793 and 13794; CIL III, 12604; 12605; D. Tudor, OR³, Bucharest, 1968, SE, 511. The vicissitudes of the unit have been described by H. T. Rowell, *Numerus*, RE 17 (1937) esp. col. 2553; W. Wagner, *Die Dislokation der römischen Auxiliarformationen* (1938) 214–216; D. Tudor, OR³, p. 33 ff.

² CIL, II, 1180 = ILS 1403. Cf. H. G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes*, 1960, p. 504–507; H. Nesselhauf, *Sex. Iulius Possessor*, MadrMitt, 5, 1964, p. 180–184.

³ Nesselhauf, *Possessor*, n. 15. The new inscription of Sex. Iulius Possessor published by G. Picard, RA,

1968, 297 points even more to the simultaneous holding of these jobs.

⁴ CIL, III, 1593 = 8032; AÉ, 1914, 120 = D. Tudor, OR³, SE 89.

⁵ D. Tudor, OR³, p. 303 ff. and perhaps CIL, III, 1633. 20 = 8074. 28 a and b. Tile-stamps found in the wall of Philippus Arabs (D. Tudor, OR³, SE 116), could easily have been reused from earlier buildings.

⁶ CIL, III, 3074.28; 14216.30–31; cf. D. Tudor, OR³, p. 306–311.

a detachment of the *numerus* was stationed there or whether the *numerus* just helped in the construction of the camp.⁷

The change in the unit's name from *Suri sagittari* to *numerus Syrorum Sagittariorum* does not reflect any reorganization since *numerus* was the technical term for army units in general, rather than for a specific type of units⁸. Indeed, both types of names could be used interchangeably for the national units of the Roman army⁹ without any change in the status or the structure of a unit.

The altar to Mithra mentioned above is now lost, but according to an old photograph¹⁰ its inscription should be read as follows: (pl. I)

*Soli invicto Mithrae, libr(arii) cum Anton(io) Z[o]ilo
act(a)r(io) n(umeri) S(yrorum) [---]*

Contrary to the way the inscription has been read until now,¹¹ the third letter of the last line, preserved only in a trace, cannot have been an S. Obviously the specification *s(agittariorum)* is dropped here from the unit's name as not essential for its identification.

THE NUMERUS SYRORUM IN MAURETANIA CAESARIENSIS

The town of Numerus Syrorum (Lalla Marnia), similar to its present function as Algeria's border town on the railroad to Morocco, was during the third century A.D. the westernmost outpost of Mauretania Caesariensis. It was linked by a road to the northeast with the town of Siga on the seaboard¹². Milestones of A.D. 217/218 from this road¹³ provide the first datable evidence for the existence of the town and thus a *terminus ante quem* for the arrival of the unit that gave the town its name. Yet Numerus Syrorum is clearly part of that chain of roads, fortresses and towns created by Septimius Severus as the outer *limes* of Mauretania¹⁴. This *nova praetentura* was already well under construction at the turn of the second to the third century A.D.¹⁵ and even though Numerus Syrorum as the furthest flung link of the chain may have been built last, there can be little doubt that its garrison arrived in Mauretania already during the rule of Septimius Severus.

The unit itself is known only from two inscriptions which are now lost and of which only a corrupt tradition exists: one seems to be an altar dedicated by Lentinius Priscianus,

⁷ A dedication to the *genius centuriae* put up by a *sig(nifer) n(umeri) Syrorum s(agittariorum)* at Piuia Pietrei at the mouth of the Ialomitza river, opposite Carsium in Lower Moesia, suggests that a detachment of the unit came there for some reason: CIL, III, 7493. Wagner, *Dislokation*, 216 thinks of a different unit.

⁸ H. Cailies, *Die fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats*, 45, BerRGK, 1964, 130–225, esp. p. 181 ff. *Contra*: Wagner, *Dislokation*, p. 215.

⁹ E. Brittones and *numerus Brittonum*, cf. CIL, XIII, Index, 95. A change in the unit's organization has been assumed by D. Tudor, OR³, p. 352. If it were true, however, that Hadrian created a new type of national troops with the specific title of *numerus* then one would not expect to find in his last year the *Suri sagittari* lacking this title.

¹⁰ I am very much indebted to Professor Tudor of the Romanian Academy for having procured the photograph formerly belonging to Dr. Vasile Pârvan. Dr. D. Tudor also informed me that the stone is now lost.

¹¹ AÉ, 1914, 120; Tudor, OR³, SE 89. For other dedications of an *actarius* with *librarii* see CIL, XIV, 2255 = ILS 2398 and AÉ, 1898, 108. It is not likely that the last letter of the fifth line should be expanded into *p(rae)p(ositi)*, since *actarii* are generally referred to their units, not to their commanders. *Contra*: A. v. Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* (2nd ed. by B. Dobson, 1967) p. 313.

¹² P. Salama, *La voie romaine de la vallée de la Tafna*, BullArchAlg, 2, 1966–1967, p. 183–217, an excellent article.

¹³ AE, 1967, 652. Cf., CIL, VIII, 10464; 22626 = AE, 1940, 37; 22628.

¹⁴ E. Albertini, *La route-frontière de la Maurétanie Césarienne*, BSGAO, 1928, p. 33–48. P. Salama, *Nouveaux témoignages de l'oeuvre des Sévères dans la Maurétanie Césarienne*, Libyca, 1, 1953, p. 231–261 and Libyca, 3, 1955, p. 329–367.

¹⁵ Salama l.c. 364.

prae[p(ositus)?] n(umeri) Syrorum, the other a tombstone for an *optio* of the unit, killed in action perhaps as late as A.D. 272¹⁶. Two other tombstones for men of the *numerus* came to light at Caesarea, the capital of the province.¹⁷

While the name of the town and the inscriptions cited make it obvious that a *numerus Syrorum* was stationed during the third century at the place of present-day Lalla Marnia, they unfortunately do not reveal much about the origin, the structure and the fate of the unit. However, the huge fortress — apparently 250 by 400 meters in circumference with towers every ten meters and vaulted buildings in the interior¹⁸ — that was still standing when the French occupied the place suggests that the unit was one thousand strong and that it was concentrated in this one locality to secure the large plain of the Angad to the West.

The *numerus* very likely remained here until the western section of the Mauretanian limes was given up, perhaps by Diocletian.¹⁹ The inscription of A.D. 272 at any rate is the latest we hear of the unit while the town of Numerus Syrorum survived as a christian, Latin-speaking community well into the fifth century.²⁰

IDENTIFICATION OF THE TWO UNITS

Despite repeated assertions to the contrary²¹ the Dacian and the Mauretanian *numerus Syrorum* are actually one and the same unit. The name of the unit in both provinces is identical. In Dacia the *numerus* is known only during the second century²², in Mauretania only during the third century. The term *sagittariorum*, lacking in the Mauretanian documents, is equally missing on a Dacian inscription. The simultaneous occupation of several camps by the unit in Dacia points to a large-size unit²³, and so does its fortress in Mauretania.

However, conclusive evidence for the identity of both units comes from the formula for tomb inscriptions in the Mauretanian town of Numerus Syrorum. There, tombs are called *domus Romula*²⁴, a term that occurs nowhere else and that remains inexplicable²⁵ unless one assumes the unit came from Romula in Dacia. The soldiers and their families apparently gave their tombs in the new country the same significance — that of a house — as they had done back in Romula²⁶.

¹⁶ CIL, VI, 9962; 9964. The *numerus* has been described by R. Cagnat, *L'armée romaine d'Afrique* (2nd ed. 1913), p. 251; H. T. Rowell, *Numerus*, 2553 f.; P. Salama, *Tafna*, p. 212 ff.

¹⁷ CIL, VIII, 21015; 21017.

¹⁸ St. Gsell, *Atl. Arch. Alg.*, 41, 1; but cf. Cagnat, *Armée*, p. 628, n. 8.

¹⁹ E. Albertini, *Route-frontière*; J. Carcopino, *La fin du Maroc Romain*, MEFR, 1940, p. 349–448 = *Maroc Antique*, p. 231–304; but see now the important corrections necessary in view of the late inscriptions found at Altava: J. Marcillet-Jaubert, *Les inscriptions d'Altava*, 1968, n^{os} 67 and 122; see also P. Salama, *À propos d'une inscription maurétanienne de 346 après J.-C.*, *Libyca*, 2, 1954, p. 205–229.

²⁰ CIL, VIII, 21802 (A.D. 460).

²¹ R. Cagnat, *Armée*, p. 251; W. Wagner, *Dislokation*, p. 215; implied by H. T. Rowell, *Numerus*, 2553, and D. Tudor OR³, p. 352 ff.

²² For alleged later tile-stamps see above, n. 5.

²³ H. T. Rowell, *Numerus*, 1336.

²⁴ CIL, VIII, Index, p. 352; E. Janier, *Inscriptions, latines du musée de Tlemcen*, *Libyca*, 4, 1956, 71–84 esp. p. 81. All datable tombstones from Numerus Syrorum use this formula, from A.D. 272 (CIL, VIII, 9964 where line 11 most probably read *domum Rom(ulam) instituerunt*) to A.D. 460 (CIL, VIII, 21802). Even if only Janier's inscription of A.D. 336 is accepted as the first instance of the use of this term, the persistence of its usage for well over a hundred years makes its use a century earlier quite likely.

²⁵ Cf., ILS, 8083. Janier's interpretation that the people concerned wanted to express their being romanized non-Romans is certainly erroneous.

²⁶ In Romula sarcophagi were meant to be houses for the dead, witness AË, 1957, 334. Soldiers of the unit and their families were buried in sarcophagi, of., CIL, III, 1593 = 8032.

SEX. IULIUS IULIANUS, TRIBUNUS NUMERI SYRORUM MALVENSIVM

The transfer of the Dacian *numerus Syrorum* to Mauretania is explained by, and in turn explains, a much disputed tombstone from near Caesarea with the following inscription (Pl. II) ²⁷:

D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) Sex(tus) Iul(ius) Iulianus | ex Germania(m)superiorem/
tribunus n(umeri) Syrorum M(a)l/vensium, hic sepultus est, | dum deducit iuniores Bessos/
(mille) in Tingitana(m) provinci(a)m, |qui vixit annis XXXXV cui|monimentum fecit|
Iul(ius) Ingenuus frater|¹⁰ et heres, curante| Sacimatho| liberto eiusdem| defuncti.

Previous editors considered the last letter of the third line to be an E, producing the name *Mevensium* which would obviously refer to the garrison town of the *numerus*. Yet a place called Meva is altogether unknown. Indeed, a blow-up of the letter in question (Pl. III) shows that the upper and middle transversal bars of the alleged E are missing, so that one has to read L. MLVENSIVM, phonetically impossible, reveals its meaning when compared to line six where the word *provinci(a)m* shows elision or ligature of an A with an M. This being the only type of elision or ligature in the text it is methodically correct to apply it to line 3 and to read *Malvensium* ²⁸.

Iulianus' unit, therefore, had been stationed in Dacia Malvensis and there can be no doubt that it is identical with both, the Dacian and the Mauretanian *numerus Syrorum*. Iulianus' title *tribunus* again points to the large size of the unit, probably one thousand strong ²⁹.

Could Sex. Iulius Iulianus have led 1000 recruits from Thracia to Mauretania while his own unit was still stationed in Dacia? ³⁰ Hardly, since that would have taken him away for too long from his primary duty. Besides, it would be a strange coincidence to find the commander of a Dacian unit and the unit itself in the same African province, but at different times. One may assume, therefore, that when Iulianus died at Caesarea his unit was already in Mauretania. On the other hand, it could not have been there for very long since it still retained the surname *Malvensium* which certainly soon became obsolete and was dropped ³¹.

It is possible that the Thracian recruits and the *numerus Syrorum* had come from the lower Danube to Africa together under the command of Iulianus ³². Yet if so, one would perhaps expect the text to read somewhat like *dum deducit n(umerum) s(uprascriptum) et iuniores Bessos (mille) in Mauretanium*, i.e. to mention the transfer of the *numerus*, too. Thus, it seems more likely that Iulianus either took command of the recruits in Thracia

²⁷ CIL VIII, 9381 & 20945 = ILS 2763 & *add.*, discussed e.g. by Rowell, *Numerus*, 2554; J. Carcopino, *Sala au temps des Antonins*, MEF 1931, 1–32 = *Maroc antique*, 203 f.; J. Marion, *La liaison terrestre entre la Tingitane et la Césarienne*, BullArchMaroc 4, 1960, p. 442–447; Salama, *Tafna*, p. 214.

²⁸ The reading is confirmed by the squeeze of the CIL preserved at the *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin. I am grateful to Dr. Krummrey/Berlin for making this squeeze accessible to me. In line six I would prefer the reading *Tingitan(a)m* according to squeeze and photograph, but the M would be so thin that only inspection

of the stone itself could remove doubts about its reading. The same is true for the reading *ex Germaniam* in the second line, with ligature of A and M. Both these readings would be supported by concinnity of case endings.

²⁹ Cf. Ptolemy, *Geography*, 4, 1, 3; *Itinerarium Antonini*, 11; Windberg, *Mulucha*, RE, 16, 1933, p. 514–516.

³⁰ Thus Rowell, *Numerus*, 2554.

³¹ I owe this comment to Dr. Nesselhauf, Konstanz.

³² If Sex. Iulius Iulianus commanded the unit already in Romula one may wonder whether Aelius Iulius Iulianus, *aedilic(ius) col(oniae) Romul(ae)*, AE, 1957, 334, was not a relative of his.

when he was on his way to join the unit in Mauretania³³ or else that he met them at their arrival in Africa to lead them by way of Numerus into Tingitana.

STRATEGIC REASONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF THE NUMERUS FROM DACIA TO MAURETANIA

The need for troops in western Mauretania at the turn of the second to the third century is well illustrated by the reinforcement of the army of Mauretania Tingitana with 1000 Thracian recruits. Since the entire provincial army of Tingitana amounted to less than 10 000 troops³⁴, this was a very considerable prop, certainly necessitated by a war, due either to a rebellion or to the expansion of Roman domination. The same situation emerges from the appointment in about A.D. 200 of a governor in Tingitana with the title *pro legato*, i.e. with command over specially transferred legionary troops³⁵. From A.D. 202 onwards both provinces were united under the command of one governor,³⁶ likewise an extraordinary measure, indicating that the troubles had also gripped Mauretania Caesariensis.

Whether the *numerus Syrorum* was sent to Mauretania in reaction to or in anticipation of such a war, we cannot tell, but its transfer certainly meant expansion of the Roman military presence. While its installation in its new garrison place may have been for reasons of defense, it could equally well have been intended to be a starting point for a land connection between the two Mauretaniae³⁷.

The name of the place Numerus Syrorum corresponds to those of other fortresses along the *nova praetentura*, such as Ala Milliaria and Cohors Breucorum. It does not mean that there was no previous native settlement³⁸ for in the case of Cohors Breucorum such a settlement is well attested³⁹. Nevertheless, the coming of the *numerus* meant a step ahead in the urbanization and romanization of southern Mauretania which was part of the policy of Septimius Severus⁴⁰.

The withdrawal of the *numerus* from Dacia Malvensis is also significant. Septimius Severus, expansionist that he was, advanced the frontier on the Olt river, too, by establishing a new *limes* farther to the East. Different to the situation in Mauretania, though, no concomitant urbanization was planned,⁴¹ so no increase in troop strength was necessary. To the contrary, as we now learn, a major reduction of the provincial army of Dacia Malvensis was possible at the very time the *limes transalutanus* was built. This confirms the view that the new frontier north of the Danube was not the result of hard-fought conquest or a precaution against a threat of war but simply the creation of a security zone for the prosperous settlements that had sprung up along the Olt river.⁴²

³³ A parallel would be the case of the *protector* Abin-naeus, who in A.D. 340 on the way from the Thelaid to Byzantium was given the mission to take recruits along to Hierapolis. *P. Abinn.* 1.

³⁴ H. Nesselhauf, *Zur Militargeschichte der Provinz Mauretania Tingitana*, Epigraphica, 12, 1950, p. 34–48.

³⁵ C. Iulius Pacatianus, see Pflaum, *Carrières*, p. 605–610.

³⁶ Cf. B. Thomasson, *Praesides Provinciarum Africae, Opuscula Romana*, 7, 1969, p. 193 ff.; for Cn. Haius Diadumenianus and Q. Sallustius Macrinianus, cf. Pflaum, *Carrières*, p. 602 ff.

³⁷ For this question cf. Carcopino, *Fin du Maroc*; Marion, *Liaison*; Salama, *Tafna*, p. 213 ff. The problem

will be discussed more fully in the *Festschrift* for Garcia y Bellido (forthcoming).

³⁸ Thus Rowell, *Numerus*, 2554.

³⁹ E. Albertini, *Route-Frontière*, 36; its name was Kaputurbe.

⁴⁰ Salama, *Témoignages*, esp. p. 329 ff.

⁴¹ D. Tudor, *OR*³, p. 263.

⁴² E. Fabricius, *Limes*, RE, 13, 1926, p. 645. Perhaps Fabricius is right in his assumption that the *limes transalutanus* (and also the transfer of the *numerus Syrorum*?) dates from after A.D. 205, the time when the camp in Slaveni on the Olt river was built (CIL, III, 13800; 13801 = 14216, 16). Yet it could be that some camps were maintained, or even improved, simultaneously on the Olt river and along the *limes transalutanus*.

The withdrawal of the *numerus Syrorum* was justified indeed, for the time of Septimius Severus marks for Dacia the beginning of an epoch of peace and prosperity, the climax in the life of the province.

ROMULA MALVA, THE CAPITAL OF DACIA MALVENSIS ⁴³

Does *Malvensium*, the newly established surname of the *numerus Syrorum*, indicate the province or rather the city where the unit came from? The latter seems to be true. The unit's name falls into a pattern with those of the other national *numeri* of the Roman army, the surnames of which invariably denote their garrison towns. To mention only a few examples from Dacia itself,

numerus Maurorum Miciensium
numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium
numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium
numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium
numerus Palmyrenorum Optatianensium
 etc. ⁴⁴

refer to Micia, Tibiscum, Porolissum and Optatiana respectively. Accordingly, *numerus Syrorum Malvensium* refers to Malva.

By contrast, the term *Malvensium* can hardly derive from the name of the province of Dacia Malvensis, for indications of the province to which an army unit belongs are generally given in the singular, not the plural form of the adjective, e.g.

cohors I Thracum Germanica
cohors II Gallorum Macedonica
cohors I Flavia Brittonum Malvensis
 etc. ⁴⁵

Thus Malva — or Malvum, or *colonia Malvensis* — was the garrison place of the *numerus Syrorum* in Dacia. Its location must be sought somewhere along the Olt river where the unit was stationed, and it must have been an important city because it gave its name to the province of Dacia Malvensis. Yet it is not mentioned by Peutinger's Table on the great route that leads from the Danube along the Olt river over the Red Tower Pass into Transylvania. It must therefore be hidden under the name of another city on this route. This can only be Romula, the largest city on the Olt river, already suspected to have been the headquarter of the *numerus* because of the inscriptions found there and likely to have had such a double name because of Sex. Iulius Possessor's position as *curator civitatis Romulensium Malvensium* ⁴⁶.

It follows that Romula and Malva are one and the same city — if indeed Malva existed as a separate name and not only in the adjective form of *Malvensis* or *Malvensium* appended to Romula ⁴⁷.

⁴³ The following was read at the Sixth International Congress for Greek and Latin Epigraphy, Munich, September 1972. I am indebted to the ensuing discussion there.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g. I. I. Russu, *Auxilia Provinciae Daciae*, SCIV, 23, 1972, p. 63–77.

⁴⁵ Cf. e.g. F. Vittinghoff, *War die Kolonie Malva mit Romula (Resca) identisch?* ActaMN, 6, 1969, p. 131–147,

esp. p. 132, n. 7. For more examples see Wagner, *Dislokation*, p. 238 ff.

⁴⁶ Above, n. 2. Below, n. 50.

⁴⁷ The name could have been *Romula Malva*, perhaps meaning 'Little Rome' on the place of the Dacian city of Malva', a name very well possible in view of the future importance and rank of the place; *contra*: Vittinghoff, *Kolonie*. Alternatively it could have been *Romula Malvensis*, Romula being a native, latinized place-name, and the

Perhaps the use of the term *domus Romula* on the one hand and of *numerus Syrorum Malvensium* on the other reflects popular versus official usage. Since there existed several places with the name Romula⁴⁸, official usage abroad may have preferred the term *Malvensis* while people called their city simply Romula⁴⁹.

Unless evidence to the contrary comes to light, one may assume that Romula Malva was the capital of Dacia Malvensis in the same way as Apulum was the seat of the governor of Dacia Apulensis and Porolissum perhaps initially of Dacia Porolissensis.

The surname *Malvensium* cannot derive from the river *Malva* which emptied into the sea somewhere on the Mauretanian coast, (29) for Lalla Marnia lies on no such river. The surname shows, therefore, that Iulianus' unit had been stationed in *Dacia Malvensis* and that it is identical with both, the Dacian and the Mauretanian *numerus Syrorum*. Iulianus' title *tribunus* again points to the large size of the unit, perhaps one thousand strong.

THE PROVINCE OF DACIA MALVENSIS

Ever since the correct reading for Sex. Iulius Possessor's position as *curator civitatis Romulensium Malvensium* was established, it has been hard to doubt that *Dacia Malvensis* comprised present-day Oltenia between the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube⁵⁰. If any further proof were needed, the tombstone of Sex. Iulius Iulianus would provide it, for it gives the name *Malvensium* to a unit that had been stationed on the Olt river.

Dacia Malvensis, therefore, comprised a good part of the former province of *Dacia inferior*. Why, then, was there a change in the name of the province in about A.D. 169?⁵¹ It has rightly been argued that this change must be seen in connection with the renaming of *Dacia superior* to Dacia Apulensis at about the same time⁵², and that it was probably caused by a change in the territorial extent of these provinces⁵³. The dearth of our sources does not allow us to pinpoint all such changes, but one reorganization has much to recommend itself: the cessation of the Banat from *Dacia inferior* to *Dacia superior*.

While it has not yet been established with certainty whether and how much of the Banat belonged to *Dacia inferior*, it is quite possible that *Dacia superior* was so named because it was situated higher up in the mountains⁵⁴. If so, *Dacia inferior* comprised essen-

Malvi or *Malvenses* a Dacian tribe. The fact that such a tribe is not yet attested means nothing given the dearth of our sources about the Dacian tribes. In view of the great number of possible meanings of these names and with the exact form of Malva not yet established (cf. n. 49), it would be rash to conclude with Vittinghoff, *Kolonie*, that such a double name is impossible.

⁴⁸ Vulic, RE, I A, 1914, 1037; Pliny, n.h. 3, 11; Isidor, Orig, 15, 1, 71.

⁴⁹ Malvensis occurs only in the title of the province (e.g. CIL, VI, 1449 = ILS, 1107; CIL, III, 13704 = IG, X, 2, 1, 147 = ILS 9009), in the official names of the *numerus Syrorum* and of the *cohors I F M Bryttonum Malvensis* (CIL, III, 13704 = IG X, 2, 1, 147 = ILS, 9009), in a military diploma (CIL, XVI, 144) and perhaps in a praetorian *littercululus* (CIL, VI, 32563, 3, 9) aside from the inscription of Sex. Iulius Possessor (above, n. 2) where the addition Malvensium was necessary to avoid confusion with Romula Hispalis (Pliny, n.h. 3, 11). By contrast, Romula occurs on two inscriptions found in the town itself (AE, 1957, 334; CIL, III, 803 = ILS, 510), in the tombstones from *Numerus Syrorum*

(CIL, VIII, Index, 352), and in an inscription mentioning the foremost cities of the Lower Danube where no confusion was to be feared (CIL, III, 753 7 7429 = ILS, 1465).

⁵⁰ D. Tudor, Sextus Iulius Possessor in Dacia, *Omagiu C. C. Giurescu*, Bucharest, 1944, p. 523–531; Nesselhauf, *Possessor*; Vittinghoff, *Kolonie*. Contra: C. Daicoviciu, most recently in: *Din nou problema Malva*, ActaMN, 7, 1960, p. 124–129.

⁵¹ See CIL, VI, 1499 as dated by Pflaum, *Carrières*, p. 510–513.

⁵² CIL, VI, 1377 = ILS 1098.

⁵³ C. and H. Daicoviciu, *M. Claudius Fronto et Dacia Malvensis*, Acta of the Fifth Epigraphic Congress 1967, p. 343–347.

⁵⁴ *Britannia superior* comprised certainly Wales with the legions at Chester and Caerleon, Dio 55, 23; *Britannia inferior* the less mountainous area of York, but unfortunately the direction of the border is not known. Cf. A. Birley, *Septimius Severus*, 1971, p. 197. For the Banat see M. Macrea, *Organizarea provinciei Dacia*, ActaMN, 3, 1956, p. 121–151, esp. p. 138.

tially the lower territory along the Danube, i.e. parts of the Banat and Oltenia. By the end of A.D. 168, however, the Banat no longer belonged to the lower province. Cl. Fronto was the *legatus Augustorum pro praetore provinciae Moesiae superioris et Daciae Apulensis* and surely his two provinces must have been contiguous⁵⁵. Dacia Apulensis thus reached now down to the Danube, comprising parts of the Banat. This change of territory would make excellent sense, because Fronto thus controlled the continuous frontline that threatened Moesia from the north and Dacia from the West. Such a change, furthermore is much less complicated than other arrangements that have been suggested to explain why the former names were changed⁵⁶.

DOMUS ROMULA AND THE ROMANIZATION OF ORIENTAL UNITS IN DACIA

Antonius Zoilus, the *actarius* who dedicated in Romula an altar to Mithra, bears a Greek name. This not only shows that the *numerus Syrorum* continued to receive recruits from the Orient while it was stationed in Dacia, but also that these men cherished their native religion and customs. Thus, an inscription in Syriac language found in Romula⁵⁷ could well have been written by a member of the *numerus*⁵⁸. The unit, therefore, has been credited with having introduced a lot of oriental customs and beliefs into the life of Romula⁵⁹.

On the other hand, it is known that Syrian units in Dacia received non-Syrian recruits as well⁶⁰. This is probably true also for the *numerus Syrorum* even though there is no direct evidence available yet⁶¹. Accordingly, the language of command will have been Latin⁶². The soldiers probably also married local girls⁶³ so that one may assume that they were romanized to a fair degree.

This is now confirmed by their adherence to the burial customs of Romula—so thoroughly that they took them along to Mauretania, calling their tombs there *domus Romula*. Unfortunately, we do not know how such a *domus Romula* looked like, since no excavation reports from Lalla Marnia are available. In Romula, at any rate, and all over Dacia Malvensis, a tomb was not only called *domus*⁶⁴ but sarcophagi were actually fashioned in the shape

⁵⁵ CIL, VI, 1377 = ILS 1098. Vittinghoff, *Kolonie*, 146 assumed Fronto may have commanded already then the armies of the other two Dacias, but if so, certainly his title would have been *leg. Augg. III Daciarum* as it was in the following year. There is no reason to believe that in A.D. 168 the civil government would have been a bother to Fronto but not in A.D. 169.

⁵⁶ C. and H. Daicoviciu, *M. Claudius Fronto*, suggest a fusion of *Dacia superior* and *Dacia inferior* in A.D. 168, out of which Dacia Malvensis would have been carved as a separate province already in the following year. However with Dacia Malvensis now firmly located in Oltenia this would have meant an unlikely backtracking on the part of Marcus Aurelius, as the authors themselves concede.

⁵⁷ Silviu Sanie, *O inscripție siriacă la Romula*, in *ArkMold*, 4, 1966, p. 355–359.

⁵⁸ The only other semitic inscription from Dacia, a Latin-Palmyrenian bilingue, comes from an *optio* of

the *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* (CIL, III, 7999). Alternatively, the inscription from Romula could come from a member of the *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum* or the Syrian merchant community, cf. D. Tudor, *Sirienii în Dacia inferioară*, *Apulum*, 9, 1971, p. 659–664.

⁵⁹ D. Tudor, *OR*³, p. 312; idem, *Sirienii* . . . , p. 661.

⁶⁰ AÉ, 1914, 102: 2 Thracians in the *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium*.

⁶¹ The assumption of Callies, *Fremde Truppen*, 193, n. 358, that Claudius Montanus CIL III, 8032, came from the Alps is no more than a guess. In Mauretania, in A.D. 272, a soldier of the *numerus* is of Celtic origin: Massimarus, CIL, VIII, 9964, cf. Holder, *AS*, 2, 432 & 454.

⁶² *Contra*: Domaszewski, *Rangordnung*, 60

⁶³ I. I. Russu, *Elementele syriene în Dacia*, *ActaMN*, 6, 1969, p. 175 considers Claudia Amba, CIL, III, 1593 = 8032, to have had a Celtic name.

⁶⁴ AÉ, 1957, 334.



Pl. I. — Altar to Mithra fom Romula.



Pl. II. — Tombstone of Sex. Iulius Iulianus from Caesarea/ Mauretania. Institut d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne, Aix-en-Provence, cliché no. 26157.



Pl. III. — Blow-up of plate 2 — third line, the last two letters.

of houses ⁶⁵. Soldiers of the unit and their families used such sarcophagi ⁶⁶ thereby adopting local ⁶⁷ burial customs. The fact that they retained them even after their transfer to Mauretania makes it possible for us to grasp in one instance the actual process and the depth of the romanization of oriental units in Dacia.

⁶⁵ Cf. D. Tudor, *OR*³, p. 402 ff and the literature cited by I. Berciu-W. Wolski. *Un nouveau type de tombe*, *Latomus*, 29, 1970, p. 928 n. 2 and n. 3.

⁶⁶ Cf., CIL, III, 1593 = 8032, obviously a sarcophagus in bricks.

⁶⁷ If the custom had been brought from Syria, the soldiers would hardly have called such tombs *domus Romula*.