



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 13, 1998

1998

WOLFFENBÜTTEL



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H O L Z H A U S E N

Herausgegeben von:

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Zuschriften und Manuskripte erbeten an:

Redaktion TYCHE, c/o Institut für Alte Geschichte, Universität Wien, Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1, A-1010 Wien. Beiträge in deutscher, englischer, französischer, italienischer und lateinischer Sprache werden angenommen. Disketten in MAC- und DOS-Formaten sind willkommen.

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Bei der Redaktion einlangende wissenschaftliche Werke werden angezeigt.

Auslieferung:

Verlag A. Holzhausens Nfg. GmbH, Kandlgasse 19–21, A-1070 Wien

Gedruckt auf holz- und säurefreiem Papier.

Umschlag: IG II² 2127 (Ausschnitt) mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Epigraphischen Museums in Athen, Inv.-Nr. 8490, und P.Vindob. Barbara 8.

© 1998 by Verlag A. Holzhausens Nfg. GmbH, Wien

Eigentümer und Verleger: Verlag A. Holzhausens Nfg. GmbH, Kandlgasse 19–21, A-1070 Wien.

Herausgeber: Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer, Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber,
c/o Institut für Alte Geschichte, Universität Wien, Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1, A-1010 Wien.

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Hersteller: Druckerei A. Holzhausens Nfg. GmbH, Kandlgasse 19–21, A-1070 Wien.

Verlagsort: Wien. — Herstellungsort: Wien. — Printed in Austria.

ISBN 3-900518-03-3

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CONSTANTINE ZUCKERMAN

Constantiniani — *Constantiniaci* from Pylai. A Rejoinder

In a short paper published in this journal I proposed a revised reading and a dating of an epitaph from Pylai which belonged to a soldier in the δεύτερον βάνδον Κωνσταντινιακῶν who probably died on August 15, 531¹. I related the military unit in question to the *auxilium palatinum* of *Constantiniani* listed in the Notitia Dignitatum Orientis among the troops of the second *magister militum praesentalis*². This three-page study provoked a 24 page of rebuttal by Ralf Scharf who, while admitting my reading and dating of the epitaph, objects in very strong terms to the identification of the Κωνσταντινιακοί as Notitia's *Constantiniani*. To quote the high point of Scharf's introduction: „Denn wie sich im Verlauf der Abhandlung herausstellen wird, hieße es im Bezug auf die Notitia Dignitatum und deren Textkritik geradezu die Büchse der Pandora öffnen, wollte man die Identifikation Zuckermans unbesehen akzeptieren“³. After reading Scharf's article I have no doubt that my proposed identification has indeed „opened Pandora's box“, yet I still wonder how and why it should undermine the bases of the textual criticism of the Notitia.

The identification of the Κωνσταντινιακοί as *Constantiniani*, which I did not consider necessary to argue in any detail, is based on the old observation that in the military nomenclature of the Notitia the suffixes *-ianus* and *-iacus* are interchangeable. Thus we have forms *Constantiani* and *Constantiaci*, *Theodosiani* and *Theodosiaci*, *Honoriani* and *Honoriaci*, *Arcadiani* and *Arcadiaci* applied to units without any visible distinction, the suffix *-iacus* being, expectedly, mostly attested to in the Greek east. Scharf attacks this reasoning on two levels. On the one hand, he introduces a semantic distinction, at least in one case, between the forms in *-ianus* and in *-iacus*. On the other hand, even when he claims no such distinction, he asserts that once the unit was christened, the given form of the name became consecrated and would not be modified in any context. Both these claims are highly contestable.

There is nothing to support Scharf's assertion that the exact form of each unit's name was so sacred that any deviation, even a switch from a Latin to the equivalent „graecized“ suffix, required an official approval. The author believes though that the government would not care to initiate such changes, since „dies hätte einen erheblichen bürokratischen Aufwand erfordert und wäre letztlich eine reine Spielerei des-

¹ C. Zuckerman, *Le δεύτερον βάνδον Κωνσταντινιακῶν dans une épitaphe de Pylai*, *Tyche* 10 (1995) 233–235.

² Notitia Dignitatum, *Or.* VI 52, ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1876, p. 17.

³ R. Scharf, *Constantiniaci = Constantiniani? Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik der Notitia Dignitatum am Beispiel der „constantinischen“ Truppen*, *Tyche* 12 (1997) 189–212, see 189 for the phrase quoted.

jenigen gewesen, der die Listen auf dem aktuellen Stand halten sollte“⁴. Even if such strict adherence to the Latin name-form attested by the Notitia were the rule in the official practice, one would hardly expect it in a Greek epitaph; one could make a long list of adaptations, apart from even more frequent misspellings, which the names of military units undergo in Greek, especially in private documents⁵. But the main point is that the perfect rigidity of the military nomenclature imagined by Scharf never existed in reality. One eloquent example is that of the *legio V Macedonica* (Not. Dig., Or. XXVIII 14) which is mentioned in two official documents issued simultaneously, ca. 399 — the same *tribunus*, Fl. Gaiolus, is mentioned in both — once as *Quintani* (CPL 267) and once as *legio Macedonica*⁶. Both documents were issued to authorities outside the legion, both are contemporary with the Notitia Dignitatum Orientis, produced in 401⁷, and yet both adapt the legion’s name freely. In each specific context, official or private, each unit was, in fact, designated with the degree of precision necessary for its unequivocal recognition. Thus leaving Scharf’s a priori notions aside, we should examine his concrete arguments which concern the use of adjectives derived from emperors’ names. Was there really a distinction, in meaning or in usage, between the forms *Constantiniani* and *Constantiniaci*?

Most of Scharf’s article consists of detailed listings of units whose names derive from the names of Constantine the Great, his three sons Constantine, Constantius and Constans, his father Constantius and, eventually, of the likely sounding placenames. On the basis of this survey, the author believes to be able to make precise distinctions between the units named after the different members of the imperial family (p. 207). Unfortunately, the attribution of *Constanti*-based adjectives to each of Constantine’s sons — this is, of course, the main challenge — is never accompanied by a morphological analysis and produces, therefore, most incoherent results.

a. In chapter I, Scharf distinguishes between garrison units named after Constantine and those named after his son Constantius: „Die frühere hätte nach Kaiser Constantin I. den Namen *Constantini*, die spätere nach seinem Sohn Constantius II. den Namen *Constantiani* getragen“ (p. 192, n. 10). The generally admitted attribution of

⁴ Scharf (cited n. 3) 190–191.

⁵ One example should suffice. The *numerus Germanicianorum* in a fifth or sixth century epitaph of a soldier νουμέρο[υ] Γερμανικίων(ων) was tentatively identified by the editor as the legion of *Germaniciani seniores* or as the cavalry squadron of *Germaniciani seniores* of the Notitia (Or. IX 34 and 20, respectively), see D. Feissel, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du III^e au VI^e siècle*, Paris 1983, p. 44–45, n° 26. The former identification was retained without further argument and greatly elaborated upon by R. Scharf, *Germaniciani und secundani — ein spät Römisches Truppenpaar*, *Tyche* 7 (1992) 197–202, who does not even mention the fact that the official name of the unit was reduced in the epitaph by half, thus depriving it from a crucial semantic marker, *seniores*, which distinguished between the legion in question and its daughter-unit of *Germaniciani iuniores*.

⁶ CPL 199, reedited by C. Zuckerman, *Legio V Macedonica in Egypt. CPL 199 Revisited*, *Tyche* 3 (1988) 279–287, cf. the corrections by J. J. L. Smolenaars, K. A. Worp, *CPL 199 Revisited*, *Mnemosyne* 42 (1989) 501–502. In P. Ross. Georg. III 10, the unit is referred to as νουμέρος κυντωνών.

⁷ See C. Zuckerman, *Comtes et ducs en Égypte autour de l’an 400 et la date de la Notitia Dignitatum Orientis*, to appear in *Antiquité tardive* 6 (1998).

the *Constantiani* units to Constantius II is here imposed by the context: as Scharf's list shows, they are mostly attested to in Constantius' eastern realm.

b. In chapter III, Scharf argues at length that the different units of *Constantiaci* derive their name from emperors named Constantius. This again, while hardly new, would provide no matter for debate, if not for the surprising conclusion of the chapter (p. 206). It bears on a contract of sale from 359 featuring Fl. Agemundus, *senator γουμέρου ἀύσιλ[ιαρίων] Κωνσταντιακῶν* (BGU I 316). This *auxilium* of *Κωνσταντιακοί/Constantiaci* was identified, since U. Wilcken, as the *auxilium palatinum* of *Constantiani* in the Not. Dig., Or. V 52⁸. Scharf rejects this identification which would, as he clearly sees, undermine beyond repair his argument against the equation *Κωνσταντινιοκοί = Constantiniani* in the epitaph from Pylai. So the reader is instructed that two distinct *auxilia* units were created: the one of *Constantiaci* named after Constantius II and the one of *Constantiani* named after his brother Constans. The *Constantiani's* attribution to Constantius fourteen pages before seems to be forgotten.

c. In chapter V, Scharf surveys the linguistic usage of Ammianus Marcellinus and discovers that the adjective forms *constantiacus* and *constantianus* are strictly equivalent and synonymous, both derived, of course, from the name Constantius.

An overview of Ammianus' usage, rather than being relegated to the last chapter, could have been a good start to — and, at the same time, the end of — Scharf's enquiry. It demonstrates that the distinction between *Constantiani* and *Constantiaci* could not serve as a semantic divider. Not only the two forms cannot be repartitioned between Constans and Constantius (the former derivation is morphologically excluded), but it would not occur to Constantius to distinguish this way between two *auxilia* named after himself either. No speaker of Latin (or Greek) would take the Notitia's *Constantiani* and the *Κωνσταντιακοί* of BGU I 316 for two different units. The same is true regarding the *Κωνσταντινιοκοί/Constantiniani* of Pylai. The two forms meant exactly the same and could replace one another.

The critical part of Scharf's article is not limited to a lengthy attempt to contest the equation *Κωνσταντινιοκοί = Constantiniani*. He also rejects the explanation of the phrase *δεύτερον βάνδον* as indicating a subdivision of the original unit into (at least) two smaller tactical sub-units (as argued in my paper). Scharf proposes a different explanation of the phrase which underlies, in his reasoning, an alternative identification of the contested unit („... gerade die Numerierung könnte ein Indiz für die Identifikation der Einheit oder der Einheiten liefern“). Both his proposals and the way they are presented deserve careful scrutiny⁹.

Scharf begins with the observation that the Notitia Orientis lists, among the frontier garrisons stationed on the Danube, seven „constantinian“ units of which five are, in his view, numbered sequentially. (The rather evasive term „‘constantinische’ Verbände“ is employed throughout the article to designate all units with the element

⁸ U. Wilcken, *Papyrusurkunde über einen Sklavenkauf aus dem Jahre 359 n. Chr.*, Hermes 19 (1884) 417–431; on this text, Zuckerman (cited n. 6) 283. Pace Scharf (cited n. 3) 206, with n. 47, not the unit of *Constantiaci* but only the soldiers' families (*familia*) were stationed in Ascalon.

⁹ They are exposed in the Schlußbetrachtung, p. 211–212, p. 211 for the phrase quoted.

Constant- in the name¹⁰). The author hypothesizes that emperor Justinian undertook a substantial — though otherwise unrecorded and hitherto unsuspected — military reorganisation which consisted in withdrawing at least some of these „constantinian“ units from their frontier forts, uniting them in one „Korps“ and integrating them in the mobile army. The military formation thus created bore the name of *Constantiniaci* and its composing units were numbered sequentially, which explains the appearance of the second *bandon* of the *Constantiniaci* in the epitaph. Then, in a footnote (n. 65), the author abruptly dismisses five out of the seven units, precisely those five which are numbered in the Notitia, disqualifying them from the projected „Korps“ because of their names („aufgrund ihres Namens“), *Constantini* and *Constantiani*.

Scharf does not bother to name the two remaining units, one of which becomes, in his scheme, the ancestor of the *Constantiniaci* of Pylai. But one has no trouble finding them in the Notitia. These are the cavalry *cunei* of *Constantiaci* in Moesia Prima (*Or.* XLI 12) and of *Constantiniani* in Dacia Ripensis (*Or.* XLII 21). Then two questions arise. How is it that by putting the *Constantiaci* and the *Constantiniani* together Justinian created a „Korps“ (of two units?) of *Constantiniaci*? And which unit was it, the Moesian *Constantiaci* or the Dacian *Constantiniani*, which emerged — conforming to Scharf’s premise that „Die Eigennamen der ‚constantinischen‘ Truppen innerhalb und außerhalb der Notitia Dignitatum blieben in der unterschiedlichsten sprachlichen Umgebung stabil“¹¹ — as the *Constantiniaci* of the epitaph?

My original identification of the *Constantiniani* as the *auxilium palatinum* of the second *magister militum praesentalis* was based on the assumption that this unit was attested to by the epitaph in the region in which it was traditionally stationed, i. e. in western Asia Minor. I am not seduced by Scharf’s candidate(s), whose appearance in Pylai would imply a change of location and status. And if I did not argue the equation Κωνσταντινιακοί = *Constantiniani* in my original paper, it was because I considered its logic obvious. The unit was named after emperor Constantine, which means that it was created in the first half of the fourth century. Since it survived to the sixth century, it is necessarily listed in the Notitia Dignitatum. The Notitia, however, never employs the form *Constantiniaci* (though it features the suffix *-iacus* for other emperors); it is, therefore, inevitable that the *Constantiniaci* of Pylai are designated in the Notitia by the alternative, semantically equivalent name-form of *Constantiniani*. This is why the reader discovers — if, of course, he cares to check in the Notitia himself — that also the *Constantiniaci* according to Scharf are Notitia’s *Constantiniani*.

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Constantine Zuckerman

¹⁰ Here Scharf (cited n. 3) 211, commits a minor oversight. He states that three of the Danubian district commanders alone, the *duces* of Scythia and of two Moesiae, controlled seven „constantinian“ units, while in fact one needs to consider all four Danubians commands, Dacia Ripensis included, in order to reach the count of seven.

¹¹ Scharf (cited n. 3) 211. While presenting this „finding“ as the first premise and the conclusion of his article, the author makes no attempt to substantiate it by evidence.