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THE REASONS BEHIND *CONSTITUTIO ANTONINIANA* AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ROMAN MILITARY

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Abstract: reconsidering the contemporary sources concerning the *constitutio Antoniniana*, it can be argued that the edict of 212 AD disguised aims primarily connected to the needs of empire's defence system. Caracalla intended at first place to increase state revenue earmarked for the army, and secondly to solve the recurring crises in the recruitment of Roman citizens joining the legions, by extending the pool for legionary enlistment to the empire's entire territory. The new citizens surely felt the hardships of being legionnaires less than did the citizens of long date, who, on the other hand, could continue to prefer service in the *auxilia*. At the same time, the clause excluding *dediticii* from Roman citizenship was meant to safeguard the long ingrained practice of enlisting corps of specialists from subjected populations, which in the course of time would become elite units.

Keywords: citizenship, Roman army, *legiones/auxilia*, *dediticii*, *nationes/symmach(i)arii*, barbarisation.

It has at times been postulated that the so-called *constitutio Antoniniana*¹ elicited little attention from its contemporaries who have, in effect, left behind scanty documentation concerning the edict². It seems, nonetheless, that especially among experts of Roman law, 212 AD³ is now considered the definite date that, by means of a single legislative act having important, immediate ef-

¹ It goes beyond the intent of this work to consider all of the literature produced concerning the *constitutio Antoniniana*. For an overview of the principle writings dedicated to it, see F. De Martino, *Storia della costituzione romana*, IV, 2. Napoli 1975² (1st ed. Napoli 1965), pp. 777-781, with numerous references in the footnotes, and T. Spagnuolo Vigorita, *Cittadini e sudditi tra II e III secolo*. In: *Storia di Roma*, III, 1: l'età tardoantica, crisi e trasformazioni. Torino 1993, pp. 5-50 (here p. 5 footnote 1). The studies useful to the present investigation will be pointed out in the following footnotes.

² This fact in particular has been underlined even recently to equilibrate the great importance given to the edict: see R. MacMullen, *Notes on Romanization*. In: *Changes in the Roman Empire. Essays in the Ordinary*. Princeton 1990, pp. 56-66 (here pp. 60-61); Spagnuolo Vigorita, *art. cit.*, pp. 5-12; 43-50; *Id.*, *Città e Impero. Un seminario sul pluralismo cittadino nell'impero romano*. Napoli 1996, pp. 98-103; 105-109; 136-146.

³ With regard to the differences in dates attributed to the edict, oscillating between 212 and 214 AD and of no concern to the present investigation, see the synthesis of De Martino, *op. cit.*, p. 777 footnote 17.

fects on community statutes and private law, Roman citizenship was extended to almost all the inhabitants of the Roman empire⁴.

The scarcity of sources making explicit reference to Caracalla's edict conferring the status of Roman citizenship on *peregrini* is, in any case, unquestionable⁵, as there are only three sources that can be considered contemporary to the edict:

1) a fragment of the XXII book *Ad edictum* contained in *Dig.* I 5, 17 by Ulpian, the great Roman jurist living in the Severan Age;

2) the quite damaged Papyrus Giessen 40 I, edited in 1910, containing what is considered the Greek text of the edict⁶;

3) mention to the presumed economic considerations behind the edict in Dio LXXV 9, 4-5⁷.

⁴ See, among other things, *J. Gaudemet*, *Institutions de l'antiquité*. Paris 1967, pp. 528-534; *M. Talamanca*, Su alcuni passi di Menandro di Laodicea relativi agli effetti della "constitutio Antoniniana". In: *Studi in onore di Edoardo Volterra*, V. Milano 1971, pp. 433-560; *De Martino*, op. cit., pp. 792-794 (in which the idea for the edict is ascribed to Septimius Severus); *F. Jacques – J. Scheid*, *Roma e il suo impero. Istituzioni, economia, religione*. Paris 1990, It. tr. Bari 1992, pp. 359-372; *L. Amirante*, *Una storia giuridica di Roma*. Napoli 1994, pp. 563-573; *W. Liebeschuetz*, *Citizen Status and Law*. In: *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*. Leiden–Boston–Köln 1998, pp. 131-152 (here pp. 131-135); *L. De Giovanni*, *Introduzione allo studio del diritto romano tardoantico*. Napoli 2000⁴, pp. 20-36 (in which Amirante's position is expressed); *A. Barbero*, *Barbari. Immigrati, profughi, deportati nell'impero romano*. Bari 2006, pp. 43-44.

⁵ The passages of the Greek rhetor Menander of Laodicea in *De divisione generis demonstrativi* (Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν), 3, 1-2 (for the text see *L. Spengel*, *Rhetores Graeci*, III. Lipsiae 1856, pp. 359-367; *Menander Rhetor*, ed. *D. A. Russell – N. G. Wilson*. Oxford 1981, pp. 58-75; discussion in: *Talamanca*, art. cit.; *contra J. Méléze Modrzejewski*, *Ménandre de Laodicée et l'édit de Caracalla*. In: *Symposium 1977. Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte*. Chantilly, 1.-4. Juni 1977. Köln–Wien 1982, pp. 335-363, now also in: *Droit impérial et traditions locales dans l'Égypte romaine*. Aldershot 1990, XII, *addenda* p. 6), as well as the general references, popular among authors of the IV-V centuries, concerning *peregrini*'s integration promoted by the Roman ruling class (see *SHA, Sev.*, 1, 2; *Aug.*, *De civ. Dei*, V 17; *Sid. Apoll.*, *Ep.*, I 6, 2; *H. Wolff*, *Die Constitutio Antoniniana und Papyrus Gissensis 40 I*. Köln 1976, pp. 28-32; *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, art. cit., pp. 7-8), as well as the rare references erroneously attributing the edict at times to Hadrian (*Iohann. Chrisost.*, *Acta apost. hom.*, 48, 1), at times to Antoninus Pius (*Nov. Iust.* LXXVIII 5), and at times to Marcus Aurelius (*Aur. Vict.*, *Caes.*, 16, 12) must be excluded from such a restricted list.

⁶ For the text of the papyrus and its controversial restoration see *FIRA*² I n. 88, pp. 445-449; *J. Méléze Modrzejewski*, *Édit de Caracalla conférant aux habitants de l'empire le droit de cite romaine (constitutio Antoniniana, 212 ap. J.-C.)*. In: *Les lois de Romains*. 7^e édition des «Textes de droit romain», II. Napoli–Camerino 1977, pp. 478-490, now also in: *Droit impérial*, op. cit., X; *J. H. Oliver*, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri*. Philadelphia 1989, pp. 497-498; for the discussion see *Ch. Sasse*, *Die Constitutio Antoniniana. Eine Untersuchung über den Umfang der Bürgerrechtsverleihung auf Grund des Papyrus Giss. 40 I*. Wiesbaden 1958; *De Martino*, op. cit., pp. 781-784; *Wolff*, op. cit., pp. 118-209.

Of the three, the least controversial while most concise and eloquent document is the first one, that by Ulpian: *in orbe Romano qui sunt ex constitutione imperatoris Antonini cives Romani effecti sunt*.

It has been observed that such fleeting notice can only mean that Caracalla's edict had only modest short-term effects having repercussions only on those who lived *in orbe Romano* at the time it was emanated: subsequently, in fact, *peregrini* were still found within the confines of the empire, as in the case of those soldiers belonging to some military bodies who continued to attain citizenship well after 212 by means of their discharge diplomas⁸. Some, however, have objected that on the basis of the sources originating from the cities of the empire and dating to the third century awareness was emerging, prevalent among provincials coming from even the empire's eastern sectors, of the duty to live according to Roman law. This was vigorously reinforced by imperial rescripts following the edict's emanation, dismissing any attempts to make principles contrasting Roman law acceptable⁹. The formula of conceding citizenship and *conubium* present in military diplomas, on the other hand, could be explained as a residual formula that continued to be utilized for at least another century for «a combination of utility and legal archaism». In other words, the diplomas were still necessary both because they served, above all, as documents attesting the *honesta missio*, with all the privileges connected to it, but also because in military zones it was still possible for soldiers to marry *peregrinae* to whom *conubium* needed to be guaranteed. "Concession of citizenship", therefore, remained a traditional clause but by then a no longer necessary one, a part of a document the rest of which continued to be indispensable¹⁰.

⁷ Books LXI-LXXX of Cassius Dio's *Historia Romana* have been almost exclusively passed down from *excerpta* of the Byzantine age and the abridgements by Xiphilinus and Zonaras. The passage in question is contained in A. G. Roos, *Excerpta historica iussu imperatoris Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, II, 2: *excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*. Berolini 1910, p. 391.

⁸ See *Gaudemet*, op. cit., p. 530; *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, art. cit., pp. 8-10; *P. Holder*, *Roman Military Diplomas V*. London 2006, pp. 681-698. The most recent military diploma that we possess was released in 306 AD to an Italian praetorian guard, *Valerius Clemens*. The most recent diploma that we know of concerning an auxiliary, instead, dates to 203 AD: see *W. Eck – H. Wolff*, *Ein Auxiliardiplom aus dem Jahre 203 n. Chr.* In: *idem*, *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*. Köln–Wien 1986, pp. 556-575; *M. M. Roxan*, *Roman Military Diplomas 1985-1993*. London 1994, pp. 314-315.

⁹ See *De Martino*, op. cit., pp. 780-781; *Amirante*, op. cit., pp. 563-566. With regard to the mentioned rescripts, see for example that of 215 AD contained in *Cod. Iust.* IV 19, 2, analyzed by *L. Solidoro Maruotti*, *La tutela del possesso in età costantiniana*. Napoli 1998, pp. 157-161.

¹⁰ See *A. N. Sherwin-White*, *The Roman Citizenship*. Oxford 1973² (1st ed. Oxford 1939), p. 388; *contra Eck – Wolff*, art. cit., p. 575. According to *B. Pferdehirt*, *Die Rolle des Militärs für den sozialen Aufstieg in der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Mainz 2002, p. 229, military diplomas continued to be necessary even after 212 AD exclusively because of the concession of *conubium* to married

The Papyrus Giessen 40 I, instead, is the most controversial document contemporary to the edict¹¹. It has been thoroughly studied by many scholars especially with regard to the clause that excludes the *dediticii* from citizenship, χωρ[ις] τῶν [δε]δειτικίων. It is unfortunate that the part regarding this topic is quite damaged. There is, moreover, no final agreement concerning how the papyrus should be restored¹² and, even more importantly, what the *dediticii*'s exact legal status was, while it seems almost certain that the safeguard clause [μ]ένοντος τοῦ δικαίου τῶν πολιτευμάτων¹³ was the equivalent to that *salvo iure gentium* gathered from the *tabula Banasitana*¹⁴. The majority of modern scholars, in any case, agree that this measure (contained in the papyrus together with two other edicts by Caracalla¹⁵) granted Roman citizenship to all of the inhabitants of the empire with the exception of the *dediticii*, a category that included the populations subjugated by Rome by a formal act of *deditio*¹⁶.

soldiers belonging to the legally inferior category of the *Latini Iuniani* (see *Cod. Iust.* VII 6, 1, 6; cfr. note 16), so that the children did not inherit their mothers' status. Without delving any further into this problem, we will limit ourselves to saying that with regard to the overall picture of military diplomas in the third and fourth centuries, about which *Holder*, op. cit., pp. 695-698 can be consulted, it emerges that those successive to 203 AD were no longer released to the auxiliaries but only to the praetorian guards, soldiers of the urban cohorts, *equites singulares Augusti*, and sailors. Of these categories, as in the past, only the last two received both the *civitas* and the *ius conubii* when they were discharged while the first two received only the *ius conubii*: for the relative formula see *Pferdehirt*, op. cit., pp. 97-107; 229-240.

¹¹ With regard to the difficulty of an identification between the Giessen papyrus and the *constitutio Antoniniana*, see *Sherwin-White*, op. cit., pp. 279-287; *The Roman Citizenship. A Survey of its Development into a World Franchise*. ANRW 1, 2 (1972), pp. 23-58 (here pp. 55-58); *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, art. cit., pp. 8-9.

¹² On these topics see the detailed syntheses by *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, op. cit., pp. 784-793.

¹³ See *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, art. cit., p. 9 and footnote 18. The two clauses can be found on lines 8-9 of the constitution.

¹⁴ The formula contained in the inscription from Banasa, in Morocco, is *salvo iure gentis*: see *AE* 1971 n. 534; *A. N. Sherwin-White*, *The Tabula of Banasa and the Constitutio Antoniniana*. *JRS* 63 (1973), pp. 86-98. More bibliography in *Spagnuolo Vigorita*, art. cit., p. 17 footnote 61.

¹⁵ See *Mélèze Modrzejewski*, *Edit de Caracalla*, art. cit., p. 478.

¹⁶ This particular meaning of *dediticii* is clearly expressed by Gaius, Roman jurist of the Antonine period: *Peregrini dediticii vocantur qui quondam adversus populum Romanum armis susceptis pugnaverunt, deinde victi se dediderunt* (Gaius, *Inst.*, I 14). The term was utilized with the same meaning once again at the end of the fourth century: see *Amm.* XX 8, 13; XXI 4, 8. A category made equal but not equivalent to *dediticii*, was that made up of *Latini Iuniani*, freedmen who had committed terrible crimes: see Gaius, *Inst.*, I 13; 15 (for easy consultation, also see *F. del Giudice – S. Beltrani*, *Dizionario giuridico romano*. Napoli 1993, pp. 139; 256). On the meaning of the terms and the essential information relative to them, see *G. Gayet – G. Humbert*, *Dediticii*. In: *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, II, 1 (1892), pp. 45-46; *A. Schulten*, *Dediticii*. In: *RE*, IV, 2 (1901), coll. 2359-2363; *E. De Ruggiero*, *Deditio (Dediticii), Dediticiorum numero*. In: *Dizionario epigrafico di Antichità Romane*, II, 2 (1910), pp. 1553-1554. A connection between the *dediticii* of Caracalla's edict, understood as subjected barbari-

The present work, in agreement with the *communis opinio* just outlined, will focus on the reasons that persuaded Caracalla to extend Roman citizenship. Until now, in fact, scholars have rarely questioned the intentions implicit in the *constitutio Antoniniana*¹⁷. By analyzing the sources together with historical studies carried out regarding the structure of the army during the Principate, this pages will attempt to demonstrate that the edict of 212 probably disguised aims primarily connected to the needs of empire's defence system.

The starting point of our work is the third document cited above, the one by Cassius Dio. The historian affirmed that Caracalla «issued, moreover, new taxes and increased by 5 to 10% the taxes on the emancipation of slaves, on successions and on legacies, and abolished the right to succession and to exemption from taxes which was guaranteed in these cases to direct relatives: this was the reason why he extended Roman citizenship to all of his subjects, to pay lip service to them but in reality with the intent of using this means to increase his revenue, since foreigners were not required to pay the greater part of these taxes»¹⁸.

ans, and the presence of *peregrini* up until the fourth century AD was already underlined by A. Calderini, I Severi. La crisi dell'impero nel III secolo. Bologna 1949, p. 290; confirmation that by *dediticii* Caracalla meant the barbarian *peregrini* to whom he reserved to himself the right to confer citizenship, comes from G. Wirth, Rome and its Germanic Partners in the Fourth Century. In: W. Pohl (ed.), Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity. Leiden–New York–Köln 1997, pp. 13-55 (here pp. 32-34), followed by Pferdehirt, op. cit., pp. 144-145.

¹⁷ There are three reasons that are usually attributed to the emperor by scholars: 1) the need to render Roman law the only valid one throughout the empire: see for example Talamanca, art. cit., pp. 551-560; J. Scheid, op. cit., pp. 371-372; 2) the intent of gaining the subjects' favor by philanthropic and propagandistic means: see for example L. Pareti, Storia di Roma e del mondo romano, V. Torino 1960, pp. 420-422; S. Mazzarino, L'impero romano, II, Bari 1990⁴ (1st ed. Bari 1973), p. 439; C. Letta, La dinastia dei Severi. In: Storia di Roma, II, 2: i principi e il mondo. Torino 1991, pp. 639-700 (here pp. 674-675); D. S. Potter, The Roman Empire at Bay. AD 180-395. London 2004, pp. 138-139; 3) on the contrary, the rapacious avidity that seemed to have led the sovereign to extend citizenship to increase the pool of tax payers: see, for example, G. Clemente, Guida alla storia romana. Milano 1977, p. 270 (with some reservations). The classic interpretation given by M. Rostovtzeff, Storia economica e sociale dell'impero romano. Milano 2003² (1st It. ed. Firenze 1933, 1st Eng. ed. Oxford 1926), pp. 639-640, is that Caracalla intended not only to increase taxes, but also to widen the number of persons who could be called upon to assume municipal liturgies and, above all, to depress the higher classes, even though the measure achieved few practical short term effects.

¹⁸ Dio LXXVII 9, 4-5: τῶν τε τελῶν τῶν τε ἄλλων ἃ καινὰ προσκατέδειξεν, καὶ τοῦ τῆς δεκάτης ἦν ἀντὶ τῆς εἰκοστῆς ὑπὲρ τε τῶν ἀπελευθερουμένων καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν καταλειπομένων τισὶ κλήρων καὶ δωρεὰς ἐποίησε πάσης, τὰς τε διαδοχὰς καὶ τὰς ἀτελείας τὰς ἐπὶ τούτοις τὰς δεδομένας τοῖς πάνυ προσήκουσι τῶν τελευτώντων καταλύσας (οὗ ἕνεκα καὶ Ῥωμαίους πάντας τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτοῦ, λόγῳ μὲν τιμῶν, ἔργῳ δὲ

Now it is well known that the historian nourished no love for the emperor¹⁹ and, as a consequence, his judgement concerning Caracalla's actions may not have been very objective. That is why it is probably reductive to assume that avidity was the only reason for the measure of 212 AD. It seems more useful to point out that one of the taxes, doubled in quantity, that immediately fell on the newly named citizens was the *vicesima* (now *decima hereditatum*), or the tax that Augustus designated in 6 AD, together with the income tax, to fuel the *aerarium militare*, the coffers kept to pay the veterans' discharge bonuses²⁰ and, probably, later utilized to cover even the *stipendia* of the soldiers in service²¹.

Since we know, from epigraphic attestations, that the *aerarium militare* still existed under Alexander Severus²² and that the *vicesima hereditatum* only later became a section of the *fiscus*²³, nothing can prevent us from drawing a first conclusion: by means of the 212 AD edict Caracalla intended to increase state revenue earmarked for the army.

This hypothesis is confirmed by two other passages: the first is Dio LXXVI 15, 2²⁴, containing the presumed emblematic "political testament" proclaimed by Septimius Severus on his death bed to his two sons: «Get along with one another, *make the soldiers rich* and don't worry about all other men»²⁵. Beyond the symbolic more than historical value of these words, it seems clear that they synthesized the recent activity of a great reformer of the military, who made every effort to improve the economic and social condition of soldiers in Rome's service²⁶. It seems only reasonable to assume then that Caracalla, sole

ὅπως πλείω αὐτῶ καὶ ἐκτοῦ τοιοῦτου προσίη διὰ τὸ τοὺς ξένους τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν μὴ συντελεῖν, ἀπέδειξεν). The translation is ours.

¹⁹ See, among others, *F. Millar*, *A Study of Cassius Dio*. Oxford 1964, pp. 150-160.

²⁰ See *Aug., Res gest.*, 17, 2; *Tac., Ann.*, I 78, 2; *Suet., Aug.*, 49, 4; *Dio LV 25, 2*. The only one to underline that it concerned taxes intended for the *aerarium militare* was, as far as we have been able to verify, *M. Hassall*, *Romani e non Romani*. In: *Il mondo di Roma imperiale. III: economia, società e religione. Parte nona: la società*, edited by *J. Wachter*, London–New York 1987, It. tr. Bari 1989, pp. 165-184 (here p. 181). With regard to the military treasury see *De Martino*, op. cit., pp. 895-897; *M. Corbier*, *L'aerarium militare*. In: *Armées et fiscalité dans le monde antique*. Paris 14-16 octobre 1976, Paris 1977, pp. 197-234.

²¹ See *Suet., Aug.*, 49, 3-4; *Dio LV 24, 9. Contra Corbier*, art. cit., pp. 198-199.

²² See *CIL VIII nn. 2392; 7049*.

²³ On these points see *De Martino*, op. cit., p. 897.

²⁴ The passage was handed down by *Xiph., Epit.*, p. 324 ed. Steph.

²⁵ Ὁμοιοῦτε, τοὺς στρατιώτας πλουτίζετε, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καταφρονεῖτε. The translation and the italics are ours.

²⁶ Only some of the most important studies regarding military reforms introduced by Septimius Severus are indicated here: *E. Birley*, *Septimius Severus and the Roman Army*. *Epigraphische Studien* 8 (1969), pp. 63-82; *R. E. Smith*, *The Army Reforms of Septimius Severus*. *Historia* 21 (1972), pp. 481-500; *Y. Le Bohec*, *L'esercito romano. Le armi imperiali da Augusto alla fine del*

sovereign from the time of the death of his brother Geta²⁷ a few months earlier, in 212 AD intended to complete one of his father's latest projects that was aborted by his death only a year earlier²⁸.

The second passage, taken from the work by Herodian, another contemporary historian, concerns a further increase in *stipendia* of the praetorian guards and of the Roman soldiers ordered by Caracalla following his brother's assassination, in order to assure their loyalty: «Since he was saved and became the sole ruler, he promised them that he would give each soldier 2500 dracmes and *increased their pay by half*»²⁹. Caracalla seems to have exhorted the soldiers to take the money directly from the temples and from public treasures³⁰, but it is probable that if this really took place the practice served to cover only the *donativum* of 2500 dracmes and not all of the successive wages increased by half.

The objection could be made that this measure was adopted only with regard to the legionaries of *Legio II Parthica* camped in Albanum³¹, that is in favor of the soldiers present in and around the capital at the time of Geta's assassination. But beyond the fact that several other passages allude to other bonuses conceded to the soldiers in general³², it has been calculated that the total of 280 million sesterces earmarked annually for the pay increase³³, ordered by the em-

III secolo. Paris 1989, It. tr. Roma 1992, pp. 255-258; P. Southern – K. Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*. London 1996, pp. 5-9. In synthesis, the military reforms introduced by Septimius Severus were: 1) a pay increase to compensate for inflation; 2) institution of the *annona militaris* (not yet set up as a tax); 3) soldiers were allowed to be married while in service; 4) permission to create military colleges (*scholae*), conceded to graduates still in service; 5) concession to some exterior symbols of prestige; 6) increase of fighting strength; 7) concession to commands for *equites* with the rank of *praefecti, duces, praepositi*.

²⁷ In February 212 AD: see Dio LXXVII 2, 2-6; Herodian. IV 4, 3; SHA, *Sev.*, 21, 6-7; *Carac.*, 2, 4; *Get.*, 6, 1-3; *Aur. Vict.*, *Caes.*, 20, 32; *Eutr.* VIII 19; *Oros.* VII 17, 8; *Zosim.* I 9; *Zonar.* XII 12, pp. 560-561 ed. Pinder.

²⁸ Also *De Martino*, op. cit., p. 794 is inclined towards the latter point of view.

²⁹ Herodian. IV 4, 7: 'Υπισχνείται δὲ αὐτοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σωτηρίας καὶ μοναρχίας ἑκάστῳ μὲν στρατιώτῃ δισχιλίας καὶ πεντακοσίας δραχμὰς Ἀττικὰς, προστίθησι δὲ τῷ σιτηρεσίῳ ἄλλο τοῦ τελουμένου ἥμισυ. The translation and the italics are ours. Cfr. Dio LXXVII 3, 1-2; SHA, *Carac.*, 2, 6. For the equivalence of σιτηρέσιον with *stipendium* in Herodian cfr. Herodian. II 11, 5; VI 8, 8.

³⁰ See Herodian. IV 4, 7.

³¹ See SHA, *Carac.*, 2, 7-8; *Get.*, 6, 1-2.

³² See Dio LXXVII 9, 1; 10, 1; 24, 1.

³³ See Dio LXXVIII 36, 3 ("Tarautas" was the nickname given to Caracalla by some referring to an insignificant bloodthirsty gladiator: see Dio LXXVIII 9, 3). The number provided by Cassius Dio was accepted by A. Passerini, *Gli aumenti del soldo militare da Commodo a Massimino*. Athenaeum 24 (1946), pp. 145-159 (here p. 156).

peror, implied a raise of at least 50% in *stipendia* not only for the praetorian guards, but also for the legionaries³⁴.

Could the *constitutio Antoniniana* resolve other problems of a military nature besides those connected to wages? In our opinion the answer should be sought in the legal levelling implied in the edict between legionaries and auxiliaries. Few scholars have concentrated on this aspect and only fleetingly, considering it merely an automatic, collateral consequence of the measure and without taking into consideration its practical aspects with regard to enlistment³⁵. It seems like a good idea then to investigate in further depth legionary enlistment on the eve of Caracalla's edit.

Nearly 60 years ago Giovanni Forni confirmed, in his still unsurpassed work on the legions of the Principate³⁶, that free birth and citizenship constituted the legal requirements to enlist as a legionary³⁷, and demonstrated that beginning

³⁴ See Herodian in two Volumes. I: Books I-IV, ed. C. R. Whitaker. London–Harvard 1969, pp. 394-395 footnote 3.

³⁵ See, for example, G. L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*. Hildesheim–New York 1971, 1^a ed. Oxford 1914, p. 133; A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Manuel des institutions romaines*, Paris 1931, p. 311; Wolff, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111; Clemente, *op. cit.*, p. 270; Le Bohec, *op. cit.*, pp. 106; 129; Jacques – Scheid, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Barbero, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-50. Others, instead, while examining in detail the possible effects of the edict, did not in any way contemplate its military ones: see J. M. Carrié – A. Rousselle, *L'Empire Romain en mutation des Sévères à Constantin*. Paris 1999, especially pp. 57-65.

³⁶ The author's thesis, illustrated in the following lines, can be found in G. Forni, *Il reclutamento delle legioni da Augusto a Diocleziano*. Milano–Roma 1953, especially on pp. 25-27; 30-64; 103-129. These were substantially confirmed twenty years later in: *Id.*, *Estrazione etnica e sociale dei soldati delle legioni nei primi tre secoli dell'impero*. ANRW 2, 1. Berlin–New York 1974, pp. 339-391, in the light of other data and with an updated bibliography. Other bibliographic updates in: *Id.*, *Supplemento II*. In: *Esercito e marina di Roma antica*. Raccolta di contributi. Stuttgart 1992, pp. 64-115.

³⁷ See Forni, *Il reclutamento*, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-113: even though it was possible to enlist *peregrini*, after prior concession of Roman citizenship, nonetheless the great majority of legionary recruits were required to be citizens by birth, with the exception of the Eastern legions (see also, with some updates, Forni, *Estrazione etnica*, *art. cit.*, pp. 350-352; J. C. Mann, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement during the Principate*. London 1983, pp. 49; 51-52). J. Vendrand-Voyer, *Normes civiques et métier militaire à Rome sous le Principat*. Clermont-Ferrand 1983, pp. 69-77, and Le Bohec, *op. cit.*, pp. 96; 113, pointed out how even the enlistment of free men and slaves was possible at times, but only in emergency situations after prior concession of liberty and citizenship: Tac., *Ann.*, I 31, 4; Suet., *Aug.*, 25, 2; 26, 2, and for the late empire *Cod. Theod.* VII 13, 16 (Honorian edict of 406 AD) attest to this. See also N. Rouland, *Les esclaves Romains en temps de guerre*. Bruxelles 1977, and the review by G. Famiglietti, *Gli schiavi nell'esercito romano: principi e realtà*. *Labeo* 25 (1979), pp. 298-309.

with the times of Augustus and Tiberius there were fewer Roman citizens willing to enlist in the Roman legions³⁸. There were two reasons for this:

- there was a precise, detailed list of physical requirements that legion soldiers needed to meet that were modified whenever there was a fall in enlistments and, in particular, in the later empire³⁹. Many Roman citizens probably did not fulfil all the requirements, especially with regard to those concerning height (between 1.72 and 1.77 m for the *alares* and the legionaries of the first cohorts at the time of Tiberius⁴⁰);

- military service in the legions was harsh and not particularly attractive as the soldiers had to serve long years before they could retire, discharge bonuses were unsatisfactory, the pay barely sufficient, and there was little possibility for career advancement⁴¹.

The solution to these difficulties consisted, already at the beginning of the Julio-Claudian period, in a constantly greater use of provincial elements in the legions: first of all, of citizens originating from the oldest and most solidly Romanized provinces and then gradually from ever more outlying regions, such as

³⁸ The literary sources often make reference to similar difficulties: see Vell. II 110, 7; Plin., *Nat. hist.*, VII 149; Tac., *Ann.*, I 31, 4-5; IV 4, 2; Suet., *Aug.*, 25, 2; Dio LV 31, 1; LVI 23, 2; LVII 5, 4; Macrob., *Sat.*, I 11, 3. Among modern writers see *Forni*, Il reclutamento, op. cit., pp. 25; 30-31; 52-53; 121; as well as *Le Bohec*, op. cit., p. 95, who points out that at times, even though the number of recruits needed annually was not very high, they were forced to recall the veterans (see Tac., *Hist.*, II 82, 1); the French scholar seems to sustain that the difficulty in recruiting legionaries depended on the adoption of selective and elitist criteria: see *Le Bohec*, op. cit., pp. 95; 113; for the two terms see *Vendrand-Voyer*, op. cit., pp. 77-93.

³⁹ See Veg. I 5-6; the date of the *Epitoma* may come from *Cornelius Celsus* during the Tiberian age, or even much earlier, from Cato's *De re militari*, widely used by Vegetius, see Veg. I 8, 10-11; on this subject see *D. Schenk*, Flavius Vegetius Renatus. Die Quellen der *Epitoma rei militaris*. Aalen 1963 (reprint 1st ed. Leipzig 1930), pp. 26-39, whose outline was modified and amplified by *N. P. Milner*, Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science. Liverpool 1996², 1st ed. Liverpool 1993, pp. XVII-XXI. For the modifications in the IV century AD see *Cod. Theod.* VII 13, 3; 22, 8.

⁴⁰ *Forni*, Il reclutamento, op. cit., pp. 25-26; confirming the attention dedicated to the requirement concerning height, some archaeologists have shown that Roman soldiers of the Principate were rather tall, though not so tall as the German warriors: see *M. Junkelmann*, Die Legionen des Augustus. Der römische Soldat im archäologischen Experiment. Mainz am Rhein 1986, pp. 106-107.

⁴¹ See the arguments, also supported by data provided by the papyri, contained in *Forni*, Il reclutamento, op. cit., pp. 31-48; 120; *Id.*, Estrazione etnica, art. cit., pp. 354-359; on the low level of prestige associated with service in the Roman legion see also *Gaudemet*, op. cit., p. 532. On the economic straits of the Roman soldiers see Plin., *Nat. hist.*, VII 149; Tac., *Ann.*, I 17; 78, 2; Suet., *Nero*, 32, 1; regarding the period of service (on the average 25-26 years from the beginning of the first century: see *Forni*, Il reclutamento, op. cit., pp. 142-144; *P. Le Roux*, L'armée romaine et l'organisation des provinces ibériques d'Auguste à l'invasion de 409. Paris 1982, p. 263) see Aug., *Res gest.*, 16; Tac., *Ann.*, I 17, 2; 78, 2; Dio LIV 2, 6; LV 23, 1; LVII 6, 5.

Thracia and *Pannonia* in the third century⁴². On the other hand, even enlistment of legion soldiers “born in the camp” (the so-called *castris*⁴³) became ever more diffuse, especially between the second and third centuries⁴⁴. Finally, the practice of conceding citizenship as an extraordinary measure in exceptional situations and even to some *peregrini* at the time of their enlistment or after their discharge became increasingly frequent beginning with Marcus Aurelius⁴⁵.

Nonetheless, despite these expedients, the crises in the enlistment of legionnaires became progressively more frequent. This was likely due to the fact that, decade after decade, Roman citizens preferred to enlist in the *auxilia*, or in those units of the army in which citizenship was not required. As explained above, already beginning at the end of the first century AD, while the legions were widening the confines of their enlistment pools to the provincials of lower social classes, the auxiliary corps began to draw increasingly from Roman citizens. As a consequence, the two types of units became progressively closer to one another, also with regard to the use of arms and tactical deployment⁴⁶.

This picture was drawn clearly by K. Kraft who focused on the enlistment of *alae* and *cohortes* near the Rhine and Danube rivers. By analyzing the names, the *tribus* and the *origo* indicated in the epigraphs and in the military diplomas of the soldiers of the auxiliary units, the scholar formulated tables illustrating their legal status in 4 successive periods: the pre-Flavian period; the Flavian-Trajanic period; from Hadrian to approximately 170 AD, and from the end of

⁴² See *Forni*, Il reclutamento, op. cit., pp. 30; 52-64; 121; *Id.*, Estrazione etnica, art. cit., pp. 362-385; *Junkelmann*, op. cit., pp. 105-106; *Le Bohec*, op. cit., pp. 105-106. There are numerous literary attestations: Tac., *Agr.*, 32; *Hist.*, II 21; 57; 93; III 24, 3; IV 19; *Ann.*, III 40; XIII 7, 1; 35, 1; XVI 13, 3; Suet., *Galba*, 10, 2; Pseudo-Hygin., *De mun. castr.*, 2 (l'edizione di riferimento è *M. Lenoir*, Pseudo-Hygin. Des fortifications du camp. Paris 1979); Herodian. II 11, 4-5; VI 8, 2; Aur. Vict., *Caes.*, 3, 14.

⁴³ See, for example, *CIL* III n. 6627.

⁴⁴ See the data gathered by *Mann*, op. cit., pp. 56; 65-66; 95-96 (tab. 11); 105-106 (tab. 13); 120-122 (tab. 17); 134-136 (tab. 21); 146 (tab. 25); 154-155 (tab. 29). See also *M. M. Roxan*, Observations on the Reasons for Changes in Formula in Diplomas circa AD 140. In: *Heer und Integrationspolitik*, op. cit., pp. 265-292 (here pp. 277-281); *Le Bohec*, op. cit., pp. 106-107; 113; *Jacques, Scheid*, op. cit., pp. 180-186.

⁴⁵ With respect to this, see *Mann*, op. cit., pp. 52-53; 64-66, which underlines how even the enlistment of *peregrini* was more intense in those areas where the colonies of veterans were less numerous; *Bouché-Leclercq*, op. cit., p. 293, maintained that admission into the legions normally guaranteed the right to citizenship to the point of making the army a kind of “factory for new citizens” (see also *Le Bohec*, op. cit., p. 126); but if this was true for the auxiliary corps (after discharge), it seemed to be less true for the legions, in which cases of enlistment of *peregrini* were, as has been said, exceptional. On this topic see also footnote 37.

⁴⁶ See *Le Bohec*, op. cit., pp. 120; 125; *G. Cascarino*, L'esercito romano. Armamento e organizzazione. Vol. II: da Augusto ai Severi. Rimini 2008, pp. 87; 99.

the second to the beginning of the third century AD⁴⁷. The result was synthesized in a table by Le Bohec⁴⁸:

	Ali		Coorti	
	Peregrini	Cittadini romani	Peregrini	Cittadini romani
Giulio-Claudii	48	7	44	0
Flavii-Traiano	32	19	27	17
Adriano-170 ca.	13	10	13	17
Fine II-inizio III sec.	0	38	3	43

The conclusion, also confirmed by other studies⁴⁹, is evident: at the beginning of the empire the auxiliary units were made up almost exclusively of *peregrini*, usually barbarians⁵⁰. Between Vespasian and Marcus Aurelius the flow of fully entitled citizens increased progressively without ever becoming exclusive. Finally, between 170 and 210 AD approximately, the *peregrini* practically disappeared from the *auxilia*. It can also be noted that, on the average⁵¹, the cavalry *alae* received the greater number of Roman citizens out of those enlisting in the auxiliary troops.

These data can be considered a simple consequence of the diffusion of Roman citizenship in the course of the decades⁵² and of the increase in the *origo*

⁴⁷ K. Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung der Alen und Kohorten an Rhein und Donau*. Bernae 1951, pp. 79-81; in order to read the tables use the lists of soldiers on pp. 140-199 of the same volume; for the methodology utilized and the discussion on the diffusion of Roman citizenship among the auxiliaries, see *ibid.*, pp. 69-78; on the *cohortes civium Romanorum* see *ibid.*, pp. 82-99.

⁴⁸ See Le Bohec, *op. cit.*, p. 125 (presented here in the Italian translation).

⁴⁹ See G. Alföldy, *Die Hilfstruppen der römischen Provinz Germania inferior*. Düsseldorf 1968, pp. 105-110; M.-P. Arnaud-Lindet, *Remarques sur l'octroi de la civitas et du conubium dans les diplômes militaires*. REL 55 (1977), pp. 282-312 (here pp. 291-292).

⁵⁰ See Tac., *Hist.*, II 22, 2; *Ann.*, III 33, 5; 42, 1.

⁵¹ On the basis of the table, in fact, the percentage of *cives Romani* in the four periods result: 1) 12,7% in the *alae*; 0% in the cohorts; 2) 37,3% in the *alae*; 38,6% in the cohorts; 3) 43,5% in the *alae*; 56,7% in the cohorts; 4) 100% in the *alae*; 93,5% in the cohorts.

⁵² See Forni, *Il reclutamento*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110; 115. It is to be noted, incidentally, that the new recruits enlisted in units already rewarded, as a whole, with citizenship (the divisions called *civium Romanorum*), did not automatically receive citizenship at enlistment: see V. A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army*. London 1981, p. 227.

*castris*⁵³, but they could also be explained by a precise choice on the part of Romans who were enlisting.

It can be hypothesized, in fact, that over the course of the first two centuries of the empire, Roman citizens opted ever more frequently to enlist in the *auxilia*⁵⁴ and not in the legions, thus setting off the already mentioned crisis in legionary enlistment. In particular, the *cives* tended to serve in the cavalry *alae* rather than in the cohorts probably for two reasons: the greater prestige associated to service in the mounted troops and the fact that the pay of the *alares* was equivalent to that of the *equites legionis*⁵⁵.

This point was solidly confirmed by M. A. Speidel's studies based on data furnished by literary sources as well as by some papyri and tablets. It emerges from the study, in fact, that during the first three centuries of the empire the basic pay of an auxiliary infantryman was 5/6 that of a legionary infantryman or cohortal horseman, while a horseman belonging to an *ala* or to a legion earned 7/6. Only the imperial guards earned a higher salary⁵⁶.

But why was service in the *auxilia* preferred to that in the legions?⁵⁷ A possible answer to this question has been furnished by Vegetius in a chapter in which the fourth century author explained the legions' decadence: «There is also another reason why the legions have become weakened: the fatigue of military service is greater in them, just as the arms are heavier, the assignments more numerous, the discipline more rigorous. To avoid all this, *most hurry to*

⁵³ See H. T. Rowell, *The Honesta Missio* from the *Numeri* of the Roman Imperial Army. YCIS 6 (1939), pp. 73-108 (here p. 86 footnote 37).

⁵⁴ On this preference of the *cives* see A. H. M. Jones, *The dediticii and the Constitutio Antoniniana*. In: *Studies in Roman Government and Law*. Oxford 1960, pp. 129-140 (here p. 140), who, however, did not look into the reasons behind it; instead, M. P. Speidel, *The Pay of the Auxilia*. JRS 63 (1973), pp. 141-147 (here pp. 146-147), attributes it to the good wages of the auxiliaries. Letters of recommendation written to get assigned to better places were quite common: see Junkelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁵⁵ The legionary cavalry, however, unlike the auxiliary one, was quite limited in number: 120 horsemen per legion up until Gallienus' time (see *Le Bohec*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34), versus the 500-1000 effective horsemen in the numerous *alae*. It thus offered a greatly inferior possibility of enlistment.

⁵⁶ See M. A. Speidel, *Roman Army Pay Scales*. JRS 82 (1992), pp. 87-106 (in particular the tables on pp. 93; 101). According to R. Alston, *Roman Military Pay from Caesar to Diocletian*. JRS 84 (1994), pp. 113-123, there was no difference whatsoever between the wages of the legionaries and the auxiliaries.

⁵⁷ This fact, the reasons behind which we will try to clarify, was only stated by S. Kerneis-Poly, *Les numeri ethniques de l'armée romaine au II^e et III^e siècles*. RSA 26 (1996), pp. 69-94 (here p. 71). According to Arnaud-Lindet, *art. cit.*, pp. 303-304, this situation would have meant fewer privileges for the auxiliary *peregrini* (visible in the military diplomas beginning in 140 A.D.), with the aim of reducing the disparity within the auxiliaries.

take an oath in the auxiliary troops where they sweat less and earn wages more rapidly»⁵⁸.

Modern commentators to this passage have rightfully pointed out that the *auxilia* to which reference is made are the *auxilia palatina* of the later empire⁵⁹, new units with their own history and not comparable to the old *alae* and *cohortes*⁶⁰. And what if the affirmations of Vegetius, an epitomist of works dating from the beginning of the second century BC to the second century AD⁶¹, reflected a similar situation in the Principate?

Vegetius' allusion to the rapidity in promotions and to minor fatigue appears to be confirmed if we consider that, during the first centuries of the empire, soldiers drawn from the *alae* and *cohortes* made up the *singulares* of the provincial governors or, more precisely, their elite personal guards⁶². Some recruits may have been assigned to the *singulares* already during their first year of service, while there were no upper age limit⁶³. After serving at least three years in the *singulares* it was possible for soldiers to be transferred to another unit, immediately acquiring a higher rank, at times even that of a centurion or a decurion⁶⁴.

It would seem, therefore, that in many cases promotions for the *singulares* were, in effect, more rapid than in other units. Normally, in fact, a legionary infantryman not possessing an equestrian rank could hope to achieve the rank of centurion after 14-15 years of service, not to mention the time for further career advancements⁶⁵. Service in the *singulares*, instead, implied rapid advance-

⁵⁸ Veg. II 3, 4-5: *Est et alia causa, cur attenuatae sint legiones: magnus in illis labor est militandi, graviora arma, plura munera, severior disciplina. Quod vitantes plerique in auxiliis festinant militiae sacramenta percipere, ubi et minor sudor et maturiora sunt praemia*. The translation and italics are ours. The *plura munera* are confirmed by Amm. XVIII 2, 6.

⁵⁹ See Milner, op. cit., p. 33 footnote 3; M. Formisano – C. Petrocelli, P. Flavio Vegezio Renato. L'arte della guerra romana. Milano 2003, p. 134 footnote 21. Both, however, affirmed that the source utilized by Vegetius considered the auxiliaries as the classic *alae* and *cohortes*: see Milner, op. cit., p. 31 footnote 4; M. Formisano – C. Petrocelli, op. cit., p. 131 footnote 14.

⁶⁰ These were principally foreign soldiers, for the most part German, raised outside of the empire. With regard to the *auxilia palatina*, see especially the recent works by C. Zuckerman, Les «Barbares» romains: au sujet de l'origine des *auxilia* tétrarchiques. In: L'armée romaine et les barbares du III^e au VII^e s. Colloque de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Textes réunis par Françoise Vallet et Michel Kazanski. Condé-sur-Noireau 1993, pp. 17-20; M. P. Speidel, Raising New Units for the Late Roman Army: *Auxilia Palatina*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996), pp. 163-170; *Id.*, The Four Earliest *Auxilia Palatina*. *RÉMA* 1 (2004), pp. 133-146.

⁶¹ See Milner, op. cit., pp. XVII-XXVIII. The considerations regarding the secondary role of the auxiliary forces also in the past, expressed by Veg. II 2, 9, corroborate our hypothesis.

⁶² M. P. Speidel, *Guards of the Roman Armies*. Bonn 1978, pp. 6-11; Le Roux, op. cit., p. 275.

⁶³ See Speidel, op. cit., pp. 104-114, footnotes 63-65.

⁶⁴ See Speidel, op. cit., pp. 7; 51-52.

⁶⁵ See Forni, *Il reclutamento*, op. cit., pp. 47-48; Maxfield, op. cit., pp. 243-244.

ments, to the point that it has been compared to a kind of officers' school⁶⁶. It would also seem that the mere fact of being a *singularis* carried a certain amount of prestige with it⁶⁷.

It is true that also the legionaries could become members of the staff of the provincial governors as, for example, *stratores* and *beneficarii*⁶⁸, but it is probable that the high number of *singulares* at the disposition of the governors made it easier for auxiliaries to attain more promotions with respect to their colleagues in the legions. In fact, with reference to the probable number of *pedites* and *equites singulares* at the governor's disposition, it would seem that at least in the garrisoned provinces it was equal to or exceeded that of the normal *alae* and *cohortes* (500-1000 men). This can be deduced by the fact that entire *alae* and *cohortes singularium* were constituted and deployed as needed to other war zones⁶⁹. On the contrary, there were always a limited number of men in the detached legionary *principales* of the governors' staff⁷⁰.

Summing up the considerations outlined in the preceding pages, recurring crises in the recruitment of native born Roman citizens joining the legions seem more than plausible. Considering this, consequent to the important paternal reforms, as well as in expectation of imminent campaigns⁷¹ such as the Parthian one⁷², Caracalla evidently intended to solve the problem once and for all by extending the pool for legionary enlistment to the empire's entire territory. The new citizens, provincials only partially Romanized and part of the empire for only a relatively short period of time, surely felt the hardships of being a soldier in the legion army less than did the citizens of long date, accustomed to the privileges of being *cives*. These latter, on the other hand, could continue to pre-

⁶⁶ See *Speidel*, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

⁶⁷ This can be deduced by the fact that in inscriptions commissioned by these soldiers, only the rank of *singularis* and not the name of the *ala* or *cohors* were specified: see *Speidel*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶⁸ See *Speidel*, op. cit., pp. 11; 49 and footnote 269 (the *stratores* are to be identified with the 200 σωματοφύλακες, "body guards", of Arrian., *Acies contra Al.*, 22). Regarding these and other *principales* or graded troops, deployed under the governors, see *A. Passerini, Legio*. In: *DizEp*, IV (1949), pp. 549-628 (here pp. 603-605).

⁶⁹ See *Speidel*, op. cit., pp. 11-15; 54-66.

⁷⁰ Considering, for example, the already cited 200 *stratores*, at footnote 68 (given that the identification is correct), or the *speculatores*, of which there could be no more than 10 in each legion present in the province (See *Passerini, Legio*, art. cit., p. 604).

⁷¹ The necessity of enlisting legionnaires, and the relative difficulty in doing so, increased considerably precisely on the eve of important military campaigns: See *Mann*, op. cit., pp. 52-56; 66.

⁷² For Caracalla's Parthian campaign (216-217 AD) see Dio LXXVIII 1-6; Herodian. IV 9, 10-13; SHA, *Carac.*, 6.

fer service in the *auxilia*⁷³, where the *peregrini* had almost entirely disappeared, until the proportions levelled out.

This perhaps explains why large numbers of Thracians and Pannonians began to appear in the Roman army beginning in the early third century AD. Notoriously corpulent physically and endowed with a fierce, bellicose nature⁷⁴, these men quickly became the ideal candidates to serve in the Danubian legions⁷⁵, the backbone of the western army. The *constitutio Antoniniana* eliminated, *de facto*, with one single sweep whatever legal obstacles (except with regard the requirement of *ingenuitas*) that could jeopardize legionary service and practically abolished the need to recur to expedients such as the *ad hoc* concession of citizenship to *peregrini* every time there was a scarcity of recruits⁷⁶.

At the same time, it is also possible that the clause excluding *dediticii* from Roman citizenship was meant to safeguard the long ingrained practice of enlisting units of specialists from less Romanized populations, if not from subjected tribes living outside of the provincial borders.

We know that perhaps already at the beginning of Domitian's rule, but especially under the Antonines, probably in response to the progressive Romanization and standardization of the *auxilia*⁷⁷, the Roman army was supplied by a

⁷³ At that point, on the other hand, the auxiliaries had found their collective identity and a strategic autonomy within the provincial armies: see *P. Le Roux*, Les diplômes militaires et l'évolution de l'armée romaine de Claude à Septime Sévère: *auxilia, numeri et nationes*. In: Heer und Integrationspolitik, op. cit., pp. 347-374 (here pp. 347-357).

⁷⁴ See for example Mela II 16; Flor. II 27; *Pan. Lat.*, II 2, 2 (in: Panegirici latini, edited by *D. Lassandro – G. Micunco*. Torino 2000, pp. 74-75); *Amm.* XXVII 4, 9; *Solin.* 21, 3; *Anon.*, *Expos. mundi*, 50. But it is enough to point out the portrayal of the "semibarbarian" emperor Maximinus: see Herodian. VI 8, 1; SHA, *Maxim. duo*, 2, 2-4, 3; nonetheless, the category of the "Illyrian emperors", often associated with the sovereigns succeeding the Severan emperors, should be reconsidered: see *G. Brizzi*, "Soldatenkaiser", *Illyriciani* ed altri problemi. RSA 8 (1978), pp. 89-115; *Id.*, More on *Illyriciani* e Soldatenkaiser: some other proposal to bring the problem into focus in: Dall'Adriatico al Danubio. L'Ilirico nell'età greca e romana. Atti del Convegno internazionale, Cividale del Friuli, 25-27 settembre 2003. Pisa 2004, pp. 319-342.

⁷⁵ And not just in these: during the second and third centuries the Thracians are recorded even in the legions in Spain, Numidia and Arabia: see *Forni*, Supplemento II, art. cit., p. 112.

⁷⁶ As has been underlined repeatedly, just as the creation of whole legions of non-citizens (the *I* and *II Adiutrix* were made up of sailors of the navy who gained citizenship through special military diplomas), these concessions were entirely anomalous in the West: see *Maxfield*, op. cit., pp. 230-231; *Junkelmann*, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

⁷⁷ See *Maxfield*, op. cit., pp. 35-36; *Le Bohec*, op. cit., pp. 36-37; *I. Haynes*, Military Service and Cultural Identity in the *Auxilia*. In: *A Goldsworthy – I. Haynes* (eds.), The Roman Army as a Community. Including Papers of a Conference held at Birkbeck College, University of London on 11-12 January, 1997. Portsmouth 1999, pp. 165-174; *O. Schmitt*, Stärke, Struktur und Genese des comitatensischen Infanterienumerus. BJ 201 (2001), pp. 93-111 (here pp. 106; 107-108); *Barbero*, op. cit., pp. 21-22. In this regard it should be pointed out that, symptomatic of the transformations taking place in the second and third centuries, the ethonyms of the wings and cohorts

growing number of units of barbaric origin, not part of the regular army and encouraged to perpetuate their own martial traditions⁷⁸, but commanded by Roman officers. In sources from the early empire, these were usually designated by the generic name of *numeri* or *nationes*⁷⁹, lightly armed mobile units made up of specialized warriors unfamiliar with Roman military tradition but with special functions (especially archers and horsemen) making them indispensable in certain war zones⁸⁰.

It has been solidly demonstrated that, due to the effect of local enlistment and the occasional concession of citizenship *ob virtutem*⁸¹, towards the end of

were no longer being utilized in inscriptions: see *H. Callies*, Die fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Principats und die sogenannten nationalen *Numeri*. Beiträge zur Geschichte des römischen Heeres. BRGK 45 (1964), pp. 130-227 (here p. 186).

⁷⁸ See Arrian., *Tact.*, 44: Hadrian was praised by the author for this initiative. See also *E. Gabba*, Sulle influenze reciproche degli ordinamenti militari dei Parti e dei Romani. In: Atti del convegno sul tema: la Persia e il mondo greco-romano (Roma 11-14 aprile 1965). Roma 1966, pp. 51-73, now in: *Per la storia dell'esercito romano in età imperiale*, Bologna 1974, pp. 7-42 (here p. 39).

⁷⁹ The term *numeri* is usually utilized but *nationes* was proposed as an alternative (see *Ps.-Hygin.*, *De mun. castr.*, 19; 29; 43); in any case, even though each *numerus* was a division on its own, the use of the general category *numeri* facilitates the discussion with regard to irregulars. See *Cheesman*, op. cit., pp. 85-90; *H. T. Rowell*, *Numerus*. In: RE, XVII, 2 (1937), coll. 1327-1341; 2537-2554; *J. C. Mann*, A Note on the *Numeri*. *Hermes* 82 (1954), pp. 501-506; *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 173-225; *M. P. Speidel*, The Rise of Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army. *ANRW* 2, 3 (1975), pp. 202-231; *Le Roux*, art. cit., pp. 357-374; *P. Southern*, The *Numeri* of the Roman Imperial Army. *Britannia* 20 (1989), pp. 81-140; *Kerneis-Poly*, art. cit. (the *numeri* are considered a sub-group of the *nationes*).

⁸⁰ With reference to the employment of *numeri* during times of war, which depended on their various specializations, see *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 199-210. On the *numeri exploratorum* or *explorationes* see *E. Stein*, Die kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat. Wien 1932, pp. 260-268; *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 215-225; *R. Wiegels*, *Numerus exploratorum Tribocorum et Boiorum*. *Epigraphische Studien* 12 (1981), pp. 309-331.

⁸¹ With regard to the exceptionality of diplomas released to the *numeri*, which remained less privileged troops with respect to the *auxilia*, see *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 195-198; 215; 224. On the contrary, according to *Rowell*, *The Honesta Missio*, art. cit., pp. 73-87; *F. Vittinghoff*, Zur angeblichen Barbarisierung des römischen Heeres durch die Verbände der *Numeri*. *Historia* 1 (1950), pp. 389-407 (here pp. 402-403); *G. Forni*, Contributo alla storia della Dacia romana. *Athenaeum* 36 (1958), pp. 3-29; 193-218 (here pp. 22-25), the *numeri* soldiers, just as the regular auxiliaries, regularly gained citizenship for themselves and for their children at the end of their turn of duty, and not only in particular circumstances. For *Arnaud-Lindet*, art. cit., pp. 297-298; 304, instead, citizenship was conferred on *numeri* soldiers and not to their children, while *Le Roux*, art. cit., pp. 367-370, distinguished between *gentiles* and *foederati*. Finally, *Stein*, op. cit., pp. 234; 241; *Kraft*, op. cit., pp. 120-121; *Mann*, art. cit.; *Maxfield*, op. cit., pp. 229-230, firmly believed in the non-Romanization of the *numeri*, where the concept itself of "Romanization", however, is different from "the diffusion of Roman citizenship".

the second century AD even the *numeri* had begun to lose their original ethnic characteristics and to be confounded with the regular auxiliary units⁸², which in turn, as we have said, were made up almost entirely of *cives*.

The first sure examples of ancient *numeri* transformed into regular units dates, moreover, precisely to the beginning of the third century. Rowell made reference, above all, to the *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium* stationed in Dacia⁸³, out of which a *cohors* and an *ala* were born⁸⁴. Moreover, the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, a cavalry regiment stationed in Coptos, Egypt, in 216 AD⁸⁵, might have been the *ala octava Palmyrenorum* included in *Not. Or.* XXXI, 49, among the troops at the disposition of the Egyptian *dux Thebaidos*. Finally, the *numerus equitum Sarmatarum*⁸⁶ seems to have been transformed first into an *ala*⁸⁷ and later into a *cuneus equitum*⁸⁸.

Just as over the course of time the ancient *numeri* were in part transformed into different units, some of which disappeared, the same was true for the specific meaning that the term *numerus* had acquired. In the nomenclature of the late Roman army, in fact, many troops possessed the title of *numerus*, an equivalent for *milites* with the generic meaning of “military unit”, which no longer had anything in common with the ancient ethnic *numeri* of the Principate⁸⁹.

The bestowal of Roman citizenship, which resolved, on the one hand, the problem of legionary enlistment, would have, on the other, completed over time

⁸² See *Stein's* arguments, op. cit., pp. 236-241; *Rowell, Numerus*, art. cit., coll. 1340-1341; *Id.*, *The Honesta Missio*, art. cit., pp. 79-84; *Vittinghoff*, art. cit., pp. 394-399; *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 194; 199; 210-215; 226-227; *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., pp. 203; 223; 228; *Schmitt*, art. cit., p. 108; *Barbero*, op. cit., pp. 27-28. The units from the East, and especially the *Palmyreni*, maintained their ethnic identity until the third century AD: see *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 190-194. Even the *auxilia* from the same birthplace tended to escape the rule of local enlistment and to maintain their Eastern character: see *Cheesman*, op. cit., pp. 82-84, with *Kraft's* clarification, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

⁸³ See *CIL* III n. 803. The study is found in *Rowell, Numerus*, art. cit., coll. 1340-1341; 2549-2550; 2552-2553; *Vittinghoff*, art. cit., p. 402.

⁸⁴ See *CIL* III n. 908; *ILS* III, 2 n. 9472. See also *Stein*, op. cit., p. 238.

⁸⁵ See *IGRR* I n. 1169.

⁸⁶ See *CIL* VII n. 218.

⁸⁷ See *CIL* VII nn. 229-230.

⁸⁸ See *Not. Occ.* XL, 54; *M. G. Jarrett*, *Non-Legionary Troops in Roman Britain*. *Britannia* 25 (1994), pp. 35-77 (here p. 43 n. 14). *Contra Stein*, op. cit., pp. 238-239.

⁸⁹ See *R. Grosse*, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*. Berlin 1920, pp. 29; 54; *Rowell, Numerus*, art. cit., col. 1341. The term, however, could have had a general meaning even during the first centuries of the empire: see for example *CIL* VI nn. 3216; 3259; 3311; 31139; *Tac., Agr.*, 18, 2; *Hist.* I 6, 2; *Plin., Ep.*, X 29, 2; 30, 2; *Suet., Vesp.*, 6; *Pseudo-Hygin., De mun. castr.*, 23; 25; 30; 39; 45; 47; *Tert., Apol.*, 37, 4; *Dig.* III 2, 2, 1; XXIX 1, 38, 1; XXXVII 13, 2. On this subject see *Callies* art. cit., pp. 175-181.

the process of “reconversion” of the existing *numeri* in regular troops, who were similar to the *auxilia* and Romanized from the point of view of combat techniques. It thus became necessary to find a way to conserve an area from which to draw a minimal enlistment of non-Roman soldiers⁹⁰ specialized in the use of special arms and tactics. Caracalla found the solution by resorting exclusively to real barbarian warriors, enlisted from beyond the confines of the empire, or to entire communities that had been transferred to imperial territories⁹¹: precisely the *dediticii*.

We know once more from his contemporaries, Cassius Dio and Herodian⁹², that Caracalla, in effect, enlisted warriors coming from territories beyond the Rhine and the Danube⁹³, constituting special body guards, the so-called Λέοντες, as well as some divisions of σύμμαχοι. These barbarians were preferred by the sovereign to regular soldiers to the point that he enjoyed dressing in Germanic robes, including a cloak, called *caracallus*, from which the emperor received his nickname⁹⁴.

We can presume, then, that these warriors distinguished themselves visibly, both with regards to their clothing and their battle techniques, from Roman soldiers, with whom there was bad blood⁹⁵, and that they were excluded from citizenship as well as from placement in units armed in a traditional Roman manner. If that was true, it is possible that Caracalla’s σύμμαχοι were *peregrini* and thus necessarily *dediticii*, directly tied to the severan dynasty, or belonging to groups that had been already subjected⁹⁶, although still scarcely integrated.

In effect, the particular use of the Greek term σύμμαχοι and that of the Latin *symmach(i)arii* is striking in the works of two historians from the second century, Ps.-Hyginus and Arrian. Reference was made twice by Ps.-Hyginus⁹⁷ to the *symmacharii*⁹⁸, together with but distinctly from the *nationes*⁹⁹. Accord-

⁹⁰ The lower percent incidence of these units with respect to the entire army, in the period before the fourth century, has been reported by R. MacMullen, *How big was the Roman Imperial Army?* Klio 62 (1980), pp. 451-460 (here p. 454).

⁹¹ We have several allusions to the deportation and the consequent enlistment of barbarians in the third century, after the *Severi*: see SHA, *Prob.*, 18; *Pan. Lat.*, IV 9, 1-4 (in: *Panegirici latini*, op. cit., pp. 142-143); *Amm.* XXVIII 1; *Zosim.* I 71. On the difficulty of connecting these episodes to the formation of specific military units see *Barbero*, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

⁹² See Dio LXXVIII 5, 5-6,1; Herodian. IV 7, 3.

⁹³ See *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., p. 226.

⁹⁴ On the *caracallus* see Dio LXXVIII 3, 3.

⁹⁵ See Dio LXXVIII 6, 4.

⁹⁶ For example, during the wars of Marcus Aurelius: see Dio LXXI 11, 1; 12, 1.

⁹⁷ On the controversial identity of the author of the *De munitionibus castrorum* and the work’s date, see *Lenoir*, op. cit., pp. VII-XVI; 111-133, §§ 122-143; *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., p. 206; *Kermeis-Poly*, art. cit., pp. 77-78.

⁹⁸ See Pseudo-Hygin., *De mun. castr.*, 19; 43: *symmacharii et reliquae nationes*.

ing to Stein, Callies and Speidel, they did not refer to *numeri-nationes*, which already began to be included as regulars in the army, but to heterogeneous groups including provincial militias, temporary allies, war prisoners who defected to the Romans, mercenaries and, precisely, even contingents imposed on defeated enemies¹⁰⁰. Confirming this heterogeneity, the *symmacharii*, in another of Ps.-Hyginus' passages¹⁰¹, seem to be a wide category including even the *nationes*, and there was seemingly not as yet any clear distinction between the two¹⁰².

The diversified and as yet not well defined nature of the *symmacharii* is particularly evident in Arrian's writings, as he used both the noun οἱ σύμμαχοι¹⁰³ and the collective τὸ συμμαχικόν¹⁰⁴, but in both cases reference was being made to irregular troops aggregated to that army which the author, the governor of *Cappadocia* under Adrian, conducted against a band of *Alani* invaders around the year 135 AD¹⁰⁵. At least two different typologies of σύμμαχοι are referred to by Arrian:

1) provincial militias made up of soldiers coming from *Armenia minor*¹⁰⁶ and from the cities of Trabzon¹⁰⁷ and Rizion¹⁰⁸, that is, from territories included in the *Cappadocia* province;

⁹⁹ The list of the *nationes* is found in Pseudo-Hygin., *De mun. castr.*, 29; 30: *Palmyreni, Getuli, Daci, Brittones, Cantabri*. Probably here, with *Getuli*, reference is to people coming generally from Northern Africa, for example *Mauri*, often attested among *numeri*. See also *Lenoir*, op. cit., p. 80, § 79.

¹⁰⁰ See *Stein*, op. cit., p. 235; *Callies*, art. cit., pp. 167-172; *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., p. 207 and footnote 25. At the time of Alexander Severus and Maximinus these were principally Moors, Osroenians, Armenians, and at times even Parthians (deserters or prisoners): see Herodian. VI 7, 8; VII 1, 9; 2, 1; SHA, *Alex. Sev.*, 61, 8; *Max.*, 11, 7.

¹⁰¹ See Pseudo-Hygin., *De mun. castr.*, 29.

¹⁰² See *Lenoir*, op. cit., pp. 78-79, §§ 76-77: «Les "alliés" sont peut-être d'un statut légèrement différent de celui des "peuplades", mais en sont assez proches pour qu'Hygin puisse les confondre». On this question see also *Le Roux*, art. cit., pp. 370-371.

¹⁰³ See Arrian., *Acies contra Al.*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ See Arrian., *Acies contra Al.*, 7; 25.

¹⁰⁵ See Dio LXIX 15, 1. For the date see *A.B. Bosworth*, *Arrian and the Alani*. HSCP 81 (1977), pp. 217-255 (here pp. 218-219).

¹⁰⁶ These troops are probably to be identified, a century later, with the Armenian soldiers mentioned in *ILS* III, 2 n. 8851. Horsemen and archers from *Armenia Minor* were mentioned even in the fourth century in Anon., *Expos. mundi*, 43.

¹⁰⁷ Trapezus, the future Trabzon, was *liberum oppidum*: see Plin., *Nat. hist.*, VI 11; *W. Ruge*, *Trapezus* 2). In: *RE*, II Reihe, 6, 2 (1937), coll. 2214-2221.

¹⁰⁸ A port on the Southern coast of the Black Sea, to the east of Trapezus. For this and other geographical indications see *M. A. Speidel*, *The Development of the Roman Forces in Northeastern Anatolia*. New Evidences for the History of the *Exercitus Cappadocicus*. In: *A. S. Levin – P. Pellegrini* (eds.), *The Late Roman Army in the Near East from Diocletian to the Arab Conquest*.

2) soldiers from Colchis, a region outside of the empire, located at the north-eastern border of the *Cappadocia* province. With regard to this reign and its neighbours (Iberia and Bosphore), it is known that, at the eve of his Parthian campaign, Trajan *Hiberos, Bosphorianos, Colchos in fidem Romanae dicionis recepit*¹⁰⁹, recognizing their sovereigns as vassal kings: this lexicon would seem to indicate an act of formal submission very similar to a *deditio*¹¹⁰. On the other hand, still in the fourth century there are many examples of capitulation, not defined expressly as *deditio*, that were not followed by acquisition of the territory by Rome, but only by the obligation to furnish recruits or provisions and the right, for the Roman emperor, to interfere in assigning or confirming the local sovereign¹¹¹.

Proceedings of a Colloquium held at Potenza, Acerenza and Matera, Italy (May 2005). Oxford 2007, pp. 73-90 (in particular the map on p. 87).

¹⁰⁹ See Fest., *Brev.*, 20, 2; the almost identical formula is found in Eutrop. VIII 3, 1 and in Hier., *Chron.*, p. 194 ed. Helm. On the different investitures of the title of king by Trajan and Hadrian see Arrian., *Periplus Pont. Eux.*, 11.

¹¹⁰ The strict relationship between *fides*, *clientela* and *deditio* was pointed out by Cic., *Off.*, I 35; the subject was discussed in great depth by J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république*. Paris 1963, pp. 41-56; W. Dahlheim, *Struktur und Entwicklung des römischen Völkerrechts im dritten und zweiten Jahrhundert v. Chr.* München 1968, pp. 25-52; W. Flurl, *Deditio in fidem*. Untersuchungen zu Livius und Polybios. München 1969, pp. 146-155; 177-184; G. Freyburger, *Fides*. Étude sémantique et religieuse depuis les origines jusqu'à l'époque augustéenne. Paris 1986, pp. 142-154; M. Torelli, *Dalle aristocrazie gentilizie alla nascita della plebe*. In: *Storia di Roma, I: Roma in Italia*. Torino 1988, pp. 241-261 (here p. 243). Bosworth accented the formal subjection of the Colchis, art. cit., pp. 227-228; however, he later considered its soldiers as "native recruits", and did not distinguish them from Armenians or from the men from Trabzon and Rizion belonging to Arrian's army: see *ibid.*, p. 234. More illuminating, Wirth, art. cit., pp. 17-18; 22 underlined aspects relative to the *deditio* of eastern monarchs and the fact that this concept could be expressed also by means of the terms *fides e dicio*.

¹¹¹ See *Pan. Lat.*, II 10, 3-5 (Franks); *Amm.* XIV 10, 9-16 (Alamans); XVII 10, 3-4 (Alamans); XVII 12, 19-20 (Sarmatians); 13, 3 (Sarmatians); XXVIII 5, 4 (Saxons); XXIX 4, 7 (Alamans); XXX 6, 1-2 (Quadians); XXXI 10, 17 (Alamans). A vivacious debate has developed with regard to the evolution of *deditio* from Republican times to the period of the late empire. It would seem that, especially in imperial times, it is possible to trace a certain continuity in the legal interpretation of *deditio in fidem*: this unconditional surrender of a people external to the empire, following defeat on the battleground or a simple request by the interested parties, made Rome the lord of persons and things belonging to that same people (see Liv. I 38, 1-2; V 27, 12-14), with the consequent annulment of the legally defined existence of its individual members. Later at the act of *deditio*, however, the empire almost never opted for the reduction to slavery of the subjected people or the acquisition of its territory, but to the "restitution to itself", in a subordinate position with respect to Rome so as to be able to stipulate a non equal *foedus* with it ("Kapitulation als Vertrag": see K. Ziegler, *Kriegsverträge im antiken römischen Recht*. ZRG 102 (1985), pp. 40-90, qui pp. 89-90), which usually implied a military contribution, in men and/or supplies in exchange for imperial benefits. This hypothesis was already formulated by M. Lemosse, *Le régime des relations internationales dans le Haut-Empire romain*. Paris 1967, pp. 17-45; later the conclu-

In effect, the subjection of the Colchis' region and of the other two reigns was rendered, in a poignant iconographic display, on a series of coins engraved with the eloquent *regna adsignata* legend¹¹². As can be seen in the example shown below, the act of submission is rendered quite evident by the fact that the emperor is seated on the *tribunal* in a raised position with respect to the three kings, who stand as they render homage and seemingly receive the symbols of regal power from the hands of Trajan himself¹¹³:



The dependence of Colchis on Rome during the Antonine age could find further confirmation in the fact that, according to Procopius, Trajan deployed detachments of Roman soldiers in its territory¹¹⁴. This event is confirmed by

sion was drawn that *foederati* were always, in the first place, *dediticii*, at least until the time of Halaric: see especially *M. Cesa*, Impero tardoantico e barbari: la crisi militare da Adrianopoli al 418. Como 1994, pp. 17-21; *Wirth*, art. cit.; *P. J. Heather*, *Foedera and foederati of the Fourth Century*. In: *W. Pohl* (ed.), *Kingdoms of the Empire*, op. cit., pp. 57-74; *T. S. Burns*, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C.-AD 400*. Baltimore 2003, pp. 245-247; *M. Palazzi*, *Alarico e i foedera tra IV e V secolo. Aspetti delle relazioni internazionali fra Impero romano e barbari in epoca tardoantica*. In: *Romani e barbari. Incontro e scontro di culture. Atti del convegno – Bra, 11-13 April 2003*. Torino 2004, pp. 187-208.

¹¹² See *H. Mattingly – E. A. Sydenham*, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, II. Vespasian to Hadrian. London 1926, p. 291, n. 666; *D. Magie*, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ*, II. Princeton 1950, p. 1465 footnote 32; *J. W. Eadie*, *The Breviarium of Festus. A Critical Edition with Historical Commentary*. London 1967, p. 139; *D. Braund*, *Georgia in Antiquity. A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia, 550 BC-AD 562*. Oxford 1994, pp. 179-180.

¹¹³ The image is that of a sesterce dating to 114-117 AD, taken from the following site: www.coinarchives.com/a/results.php?search=regna+adsignata&s=0&results=100.

¹¹⁴ See Procop., *Bell. Goth.*, IV 2, 16.

two allusions by Arrian relative to small garrisons located at the mouth of the Phasis River and at Sebastopolis under Hadrian¹¹⁵.

Once the heterogeneous nature of Arrian's σύμμαχοι has been confirmed, it becomes clear that they distinguished themselves not only from the legions and the *auxilia* but also from the *nationes*, although in a less evident way¹¹⁶. We have noted, in fact, that the ethnic groups and the *civitates* mentioned by Arrian are included neither in Ps.-Hyginus' list of *nationes* nor in the *numeri* specified in the diplomas and other epigraphic sources, and thus it would seem that they constituted an at least partially diversified typology. This point seems confirmed also by the fact that the only inscription of the Roman world attesting the term *symmacharii* refers to the *Astures* of the Trajanic period, never mentioned anywhere else as belonging to a *numerus*¹¹⁷. The allies mentioned by Arrian, moreover, also included ὀπλίται, that is, the heavy infantry, a function that does not seem to coincide with the light weaponry that distinguished, as we explained above, the *numeri*.

The difference between *symmacharii* and *nationes* has already been studied by Kerneis-Poly¹¹⁸. On the basis of an analysis of the passages cited by Ps.-Hyginus, he considered the former, *foederati*, the traditional allied contingents already existing in the Julio-Claudian period, wherever the latter constituted a newly created subgroup as the result of the policy, begun in a marginal way between the first and second century AD and becoming systematic between the second and the third centuries, of deporting barbarian *dediticii*¹¹⁹. The *dediticii* thus, according to Kerneis-Poly, could be identified with a part of the *numeri*, the *nationes*.

In our opinion, on the contrary, the development outlined above, tracing the σύμμαχοι of Arrian and Ps.-Hyginus' time to those of Caracalla's, probably reflects a slow evolution of the term, which from a generic word indicating "allied units" of any kind, including the *dediticii*, gradually distinguished itself

¹¹⁵ Arrian., *Periplus Pont. Eux.*, 9, 3; 10, 3. The two garrisons constituted the extreme borders of Roman control (see *ibid.*, 17, 2), and they existed perhaps from the first century AD: see Braund, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

¹¹⁶ Even the list of the military forces present in *Cappadocia* at the end of Hadrian's epoch, drafted by Cheesman, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160, did not contemplate *numeri*.

¹¹⁷ See AE 1926 n. 88=1935 n. 12: *C. Sulpicio Ursulo praefecto symmachiariorum Asturum belli Dacici*.

¹¹⁸ See Kerneis-Poly, *art. cit.*, pp. 81-92.

¹¹⁹ A list of these groups is found in Kerneis-Poly, *art. cit.*, pp. 82-84. The idea that the *dediticii* of the II century AD constituted *numeri* was already expressed by Rowell, *The Honesta Missio*, *art. cit.*, pp. 98-101. It should be remembered that the *deditio* and transplantation of populations seem to have been utilized since the time of Augustus, when they still conserved their barbaric nature, to gain precious *auxilia* for the empire: see L. Bessone, *Stirpi barbariche e Impero sul Reno e sul Danubio*. Firenze 1977, pp. 18-20.

from the so-called *numeri*, until it became identified exclusively with the former¹²⁰ at the time of Herodian and of Cassius Dio and thus after Caracalla's edict. It seems then impossible to affirm, as did Kerneis-Poly, that *numeri* = *dediticii*. Moreover, it should be remembered that, in order to sustain his theory, the author translated Hyginus' *nationes reliquae* as "supplementary *nationes*," which does not seem semantically correct.

If anything, *numeri* appeared to have been, as they were defined by Callies, a particular category of the *Hilfskontingente* whose particular history led to their incorporation in the regular army, precisely during a period when deportation, on the other hand, was becoming systematic. This, as far as we are concerned, permits us to conserve the substantial *numeri* = *nationes* equivalence¹²¹ and to postulate, instead, that Caracalla's σύμμαχοι constituted the new typology of barbarian troops, introduced by the emperor particularly with reference to the imperial guards.

The final separation between *numeri-nationes*, on the one hand, and σύμμαχοι-*dediticii*, on the other, therefore, was clarified only at the time of the *constitutio Antoniniana*, bringing to term a process begun in the previous century¹²². From that moment on, in fact, the *Hilfskontingente* would be identified as *dediticii* of a non-Roman legal status, excluded from *civitas*¹²³.

In effect, the only unit clearly distinguished as made up of *dediticii* in the nomenclature dates precisely to the Severan period. Reference is being made to the *Brittones dediticii*, identified in due course by Rowell in an inscription com-

¹²⁰ Identification perhaps was facilitated by the fact that the *dediticii* themselves, already in the IV century, did not possess a unitary physiognomy, probably because the condition of each group was different depending on the circumstances: see *C. R. Whittaker*, *Rome and its Frontiers. The Dynamics of Empire*. London–New York 2004, pp. 206-207.

¹²¹ See also, on other bases, *Le Roux*, art. cit., pp. 370-374. The equivalence, moreover, is sustained by the substantial homogeneity with regard to the various ethnonyms of the *numeri*, which is something that we know from the inscriptions and the list of *nationes* furnished by Ps.-Hyginus: see *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., pp. 206-207 and footnote 23. If anything, it would seem possible that Ps.-Hyginus used the term *nationes* in place of *numeri* because the latter was intended in its generic meaning, clearly certified even before the end of the empire, of a "military unit" (see footnote 89).

¹²² On the process concerning the origin and transformation of ethnic units as an enduring phenomenon, see *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., p. 207 and footnote 26. The importance of the *constitutio Antoniniana* was underlined by *Kerneis-Poly*, art. cit., pp. 92-94, although with the already mentioned interpretive differences concerning the status of the *numeri*.

¹²³ *Speidel*, *The Rise*, art. cit., pp. 213-223; 228, although positioning the development of these units precisely between the second and third centuries, did not connect it with Caracalla's *dediticii* but preferred to distinguish the «regular *nationes*», assimilated with the *auxilia*, from the «*nationes* of a more unmixed barbarian type».

ing from Walldürn, along the *limes* of *Germania superior*¹²⁴: they bore the attribute of *Alexandriani* and, in fact, the inscription dates to 232 AD¹²⁵. It is reasonable to hypothesize then that the *deditio* of the group, from which these soldiers originated, took place during the Britannic campaign of Septimius Severus between 209 and 211 AD¹²⁶, or precisely at the eve of Caracalla's edict.

But the creation and successive relocation of units made up of barbarians precedently defeated was attested to by Cassius Dio already in the second century¹²⁷, demonstrating that recourse to them, together with gradually "regularized" *numeri*¹²⁸, had already begun to take place many decades earlier or precisely during the age of Arrian and Ps.-Hyginus, in a long term process.

What Caracalla intended by the clause introduced in his edict was to secure and to regularize a long held practice and to safeguard, for the future, the ethnic composition of similar units. He made sure, in fact, that the legal mechanism of the *deditio* would continue to furnish units of specially trained *peregrini*, whose impossibility of obtaining citizenship without an *ad hoc* imperial concession

¹²⁴ See *CIL* XIII n. 6592=*ILS* III, 2 n. 9184. The analysis of the inscription is contained in *Rowell*, *The Honesta Missio*, art. cit., pp. 87-104; *Sasse*, op. cit., p. 112-116; *M. Lemosse*, *L'inscription de Walldürn et le problème des déditices*. *Ktéma* 6 (1981), pp. 349-358 (according to which the unit would have been constituted by Roman citizens who, because of some kind of offence, were punished with the attribution of the *dediticii* status); *Kerneis-Poly*, art. cit., pp. 73-76.

¹²⁵ Beginning with the third century AD military units added an adjective to their title, derived from the name of the reigning *princeps*, and changed it at his death to substitute it with that of the new sovereign: see *C. Cichorius*, *Ala*. In: *RE*, I, 1 (1893), coll. 1224-1270 (here coll. 1225-1226); *Cohors*, in *RE*, IV, 1 (1900), coll. 231-356 (qui coll. 233-234); *E. Ritterling*, *Legio*. In: *RE*, XII, 1 (1924), coll. 1211-1328 (qui coll. 1324-1325); *Callies*, art. cit., p. 185.

¹²⁶ See *Dio* LXXVI 14, 3.

¹²⁷ See, for example, the Iazyges subjected by Marcus Aurelius in *Dio* LXXI 16, 2: Cassius Dio uses the very term *συνμαχία*, by chance to define the cessation of 8000 horsemen by the Iazyges subdued by the Romans.

¹²⁸ Soldiers of the *numeri* received different military diplomas depending on the unit's ethnic group. This may be due to the fact that the rights recognised to them varied depending if the unit was constituted by *gentiles*, or, more precisely, by members of a *gens* governed by their own particular law, or by *foederati*, tied to Rome by specific clauses in a treaty. This is demonstrated by the differences in the diplomas released to the *Mauri gentiles*, on the one hand, and those intended, instead, for *Mauri equites* and *Palmyreni sagittarii*, on the other: see *Le Roux*, art. cit., pp. 367-370.

would impede excessive Romanization¹²⁹. That is how the σύμμαχοι-*symmacharii*, just as the Λέοντες of Caracalla's guards, became elite troops¹³⁰.

All of this did not, naturally, imply that the *numeri*, distinguished by their ethnonym, would disappear, as we have epigraphic attestations about them from the third¹³¹ and at times even the fourth and fifth centuries¹³², but marked the birth of a new way of meaning barbarian detachments and of keeping alive their distinctive characteristics with respect to the precedent formula, whose failure was due to the constant diffusion of Roman citizenship.

¹²⁹ Barbero, op. cit., pp. 45-53, even while admitting that it is impossible to interpret the Papyrus Giessen in an unambiguous manner, believes that the effect of the clause on the *dediticii* was that of keeping a fringe of the population in the condition of *peregrinitas*, but that on a military level, at least during the Severan Age, the repercussions were quite modest.

¹³⁰ See, for example, the *equites et pedites iuniores Mauri* commanded by the ex tribune of urban cohorts T. Licinius Hierocles, in *CIL VIII n. 20996=ILS I n. 1356*. Discussion in Speidel, *The Rise*, art. cit., pp. 215-216.

¹³¹ Moreover, as already mentioned, the eastern *numeri*, especially the Palmyrenian ones, still maintained their ethnic character even at the beginning of the third century AD: see Callies, art. cit., pp. 190-194.

¹³² See the *numerus Herulorum* in *AE 1949 n. 86; ILS I nn. 2796; 2801*.