

Legio I Italica

X. Legio I Italica. Columns 1407-1417.

[1407]

- Foundation of the legion and its activities in the Civil War of 69/70
- The legion in Moesia
- Camp in Novae
- In other places in the province and the Chersonessos
- Participation in campaigns outside of Moesia
- Late Empire
- List of legates, tribunes and centurions; origins of personnel

1. Ever reliable Cassius Dio designates Nero as founder of the legion in book LV 24.2: "Nero established the first legion, named Italica, which had its winter quarters in Lower Moesia." The reason for this increase in the number of legions is given by Suetonius Nero 19: "He had also planned an expedition to the Caspian Gates, enrolling a new legion of Italian-born recruits, all six feet tall, whom he called 'The Phalanx of Alexander the Great'."

[1408]

Therefore, the foundation of the legion must have occurred in the last years of Nero's reign. The date on which the aquila and signa were given, which is necessarily the same as the foundation of the legion, is, according to the inscription in CIL III, 7591, the 20th of September (v. Domaszewski West.Ztschr. XIV 1895, 19f.). The year of the foundation can only be 66 or 67 CE, most probably the latter (see v. Domaszewski, above, and the extensive discussion by Buechels De leg. I Ital. 18-23), so that, with otherwise hardly attainable certainty and definiteness, it may be stated that it was September 20th, 67 CE. Von Domaszewski (Philol. LXVI 1906, 162 and Bonn. Jahrb. CXVII 177) points to the career of the tribune Antonius Naso (CIL III, 14387ff and k) to set the foundation in 66 CE. At the time of Nero's death, Naso was tribune of the XVth Urbana, becoming tribune of the XIth Urbana in Galba's reign. At the end of 68 CE he was promoted to tribune of the Praetorian Guard. If, as it seems, he was one of the first tribunes belonging to I Italica, founded in the Fall of 67, he may still have been promoted to tribune of the Vigiles at the start of 68 and again to tribune of Cohors XV Urbana before Nero's death. Advancement at this rate was really quite possible especially for officers of the units in the capital and other examples are known. But on no account should an earlier foundation year be used to explain a quote from Josephus, who, in a speech held in June 66 (see above, column 1261f.), ascribes eight legions to the Rhine army, while it has been proven that there were only seven at that time. Even if I Italica really had been founded in 66, it could not have been counted as a legion in that speech, because while the speech was given in June, the legion was founded in September. Taking account a number of political reasons as well, it must be concluded that Legio I Italica was founded at the end of September, 67 CE.

- Symbols ‐ On coins dating to the reign of Gallienus with the name of this legion, the following can be made out: a boar (Cohen V2 387 nr.455-457. Roth Wien.Num.Ztschr. V 660 Taf. IV 2) and, rarer, a bull or Capricorn (taureau marine Cohen, op.cit. nr.458, see also Roth nr.12-15). Therefore the boar must be regarded as the proper symbol, since that is also depicted on the tombstone CIL III.6230, which belonged in the headquarters of I Italica. A watertight explanation for the meaning of the boar has yet to be found (but see v.Domaszewski West.Ztschr.XIV 116, or Beuchel 28).

History prevented the deployment of the legion for the planned large oriental campaign of Nero.

[1409]

Because of the insurrection of Iulius Vindex, he (Nero) was forced to redirect the legion, which hadn't left Italy, or hadn't progressed too far east as yet, to Gaul to battle the usurper. This occurred in March or April 68 CE. If the

legion managed to engage this revolt, may be doubted. However, at that time the news of Galba's accession to the throne and the ambiguous attitude of Verginius Rufus, who had just defeated Vindex, would have become known. Therefore the legion and the other troops with it, will have continued in the same direction under command of Petronius Turpilianus and Rubrius Gallus (Dio LXIII 27.1). After Nero's death, Galba on his journey through Gaul left the legion there and garrisoned it temporarily in Lugdunum (Lyons). This was probably because Galba mistrusted the Rhine army (with some reason: Tacitus, *Historiae* I.7f;12 and 65), even after the recall of Verginius Rufus, and wanted the legion as support for any eventuality. However, the legion was certainly not part of the Rhine army, as was suggested by Von Domaszewski in *Bonn. Jahrb.* CXVII 177. That contradicts other evidence. Tacitus for instance clearly separates it from the Germanicus Exercitus in *Historiae* I.74. At the start of 69 CE the legion was still in Lugdunum with its legate Manlius Valens (Tacitus, *Hist* I.59;64 and 74). Like the governor of the province Iunius Blaesus, the legion joined the ranks of the emperor Vitellius and was taken from Lugdunum – surely to the satisfaction of this Colony that sympathized with the Rhine army - by the emperor's consort Fabius Valens on his march to Italy for the Civil War against Otho. The legion distinguished itself by its bravery in battle against the Othonians (*Hist.* II.41). During Vitellius's entry into Rome, the eagle of I Italica was among the quattuor legionum aquilae (four eagles of the legions) of the Vitellian army (*Hist.* II.89). When the same army departed Rome to confront Vespasian's troops, the legion was at the end of the column together with XXI Rapax and the vexillations of the British legions (*Hist.* II.100). The latter two legions had been sent ahead to Cremona by Caecina (*Hist.* III.14). Leaderless they were tempted by a successful confrontation of their cavalry to progress several thousand meters from the city and were defeated by the Flavians under Vipstanus Messala. The beaten units were then forced to flee back to Cremona's walls (*Hist.* III.18). A night fight ensued and the soldiers of I Italica and XXI Rapax, who rushed forward to help their comrades, mixed with the other troops without any semblance of order (*Hist.* III.22 “Rapaces atque Italici omnibus se manipulis miscuerant”) and they were completely defeated and laid down their weapons.

2. When the legions of the conquered legions of Vitellius were spread across the empire, which was done immediately after the victory…

[1410]

…(Tac. *Hist.* III.35 “The defeated legions were dispersed over Illyricum for their allegiance was still ambiguous in the Civil War”), Legio I Italica was ordered to Moesia. It was one of the units the new governor of this province, Fonteius Agrippa, was provided with from the army of Vitellius to occupy them with foreign wars in the interest of peace and prudence (*Hist.* III.46). The legion was part of the army which was heavily defeated in the winter of 69/70 by the Sarmatians who had invaded Moesia. Agrippa was killed on this occasion (Josephus, *Bellum Iudaicum* VII.4.3). When his successor, Rubrius Gallus, managed to chase the enemy from the province with new reinforcements, still in the course of 70 CE, the army – both legions and auxilia – in the province were reordered.

a) It's unknown where Legio I Italica was initially camped. But it's highly probable that it was already in the same place known for later periods, namely Novae (near modern Sistov). This city had already had a legionary camp during Nero's reign, but it's garrison, VIII Augusta, was now in Germania Superior. The other legionary camps in Moesia, Viminiacum and Oescus, were occupied by other legions. Durostorum and Troesmis, further east in the Danube delta, were no focal points for the border defences as yet. Therefore, Legio I Italica was probably in Novae since Vespasian's reign. A tombstone (CIL III 7441) was found there, dating from either the Flavian or at the latest Trajanic period, and a second one (CIL III 6232 p.1366) is probably from Novae (see *Westd.Ztschr.* XIV 17 footnote 74). There is sufficient evidence to prove the stay of the legion in this place for centuries: firstly, Ptolemy III.10.5 (see also *De leg. X gem.* 49, note 1, *Beuchel* 61ff. and *broad basics Kubitschek Jahrb.f.Altertk.* VI 1912, 24ff.), secondly *Itinerarius Antonini* 221.4, then *Geographia Ravennatis* 187.7; 189.10 and the *Notitia Dignitatum Orientalis* XL 30 and 31.

The number of surviving monuments stands in no relation whatsoever to the hundreds of years of the legion's stay in the area. Even roof tiles with the legion's stamp are rare, or at least only a few have been made known (CIL III 785, 1.6239a, 7617, 14464-1, and on the left bank of the Danube near Novae, near modern Re ka: CIL III 12522). The altar to the Bonus Eventus (good outcome) of the legion comes probably from the shire of the standards (see Von Domaszewski *West.Ztschr.* XIV 17, footnote 74). This altar (CIL III 6223) was set up by the legion's primipilus in 182 CE, another altar (CIL III 750, add.p.992 and 1338), also from the shrine, to Liber Pater was dedicated by another primipilus is the altar dedicated to the dis militaribus genio virtuti aquiliae sanct(ae) signisque (To the military gods, the spirit of courage and another primipilus on September 20th 224, clearly on the birthday of the legion (CIL III 6224).

[1411]

The sacrifice of a simple miles can be found in CIL III 7438. Apart from the tombstones referred to above CIL III 6232 and 7441, a tombstone from a veteran has been found in Novae (CIL III 756 add.p.993). CIL III 6233 = 7598 and 6234 probably belong to veterans as well, compare CIL III 12366, a tombstone of an ex centurione veterano.

b) The other inscriptions found in the camp and its surroundings, either concern single centurions and principales in the service of the provincial governor, small detachments for guard or other public duties, or finally retired soldiers, partially settled in the area by official grant. There's not a trace of the legion having stayed anywhere else in the province.

It's noteworthy that all known memorials are from Moesia Inferior only and are completely lacking in Moesia Superior, with the exception of a tilestamp found in Turn Severin (CIL III 8072), which possibly dates from the Dacian wars of Domitian or Trajan. Another exception is the tombstone of a veteran who settled in Scupi (CIL III 8198). The statement that the legion was garrisoned in Moesia Inferior from when the province was founded in 86 CE, is confirmed by the lack of evidence in Moesia Superior.

Apart from former centurions of the legion (CIL III 6192 and 12411) and an active service one who set up a tombstone to his parents in Oescus (CIL III 7428), we find a number of single centurions who were certainly on the staff of the provincial governor. Among them were two centuriones frumentarii in CIL III 7420 (in Lom) and 12371 (in Kutlovica) as is CIL III 6192 (Troesmis in 173 CE); CIL III 778 = 7514 (in Gerthina) and CIL III 12468 were probably on the staff. CIL III 12388 and 13720 are unsure in this respect. The following principales were on the staff of the governor: beneficiarius consularis in III 12408 in III 13719 from Altimir. Several scattered tombstones of veterans of the legion (III 6144; 7555; 12354; 12409; 14207-40 = 12398; 14422) only point to the area of origin of the deceased. About the same goes for the single tomb- and dedicatory stones of soldiers deceased while still in service, as the legion recruited largely from its own province, like everywhere else from the middle Imperial period (see for instance CIL III 12394 from 215 and 12442 or Kalinka Ant. Denkmäler aus Bulgarien nr.412. See also the small fragment 12434). On the other hand, tombstones of veterans of the legion from Oescus (CIL III 12352 and 14491 from Celei on the left bank of the Danube) may be explained by the founding of this veteran Colony by Trajan. Veterans of the legions in Moesia Inferior were settled there (see column 1287), seemingly between or a short time after the Dacian wars.

In reality, the legion occupied several small outposts in the province in militarily important places with small units detached from the main base in Novae.

[1412]

Von Beuchel, p.77, has rightly emphasized that that kind of commitment of Legio I Italica can only have occurred in the western part of the province, from the border with Moesia Superior until Sexanta Prista, halfway between Novae and Durostorum. This is understandable if one realizes that the legion occupied the westernmost legionary camp (of three) in the province in the 2nd century CE after the closing down of the legionary camp at Oescus under Trajan, just as the legion had earlier been the easternmost legion in the province. These dispersed bases can only be proven in a few specific cases. At least one larger detachment was continually garrisoned in Almus (Lom), the last large city on the Danube before Moesia Superior. Principales of this garrison are enumerated on CIL III 14409-1 (discussed by Van de Weerd, *Trois legions rom. du Bas-Danube* 259ff.) The centurio frumentarius (CIL III 7420) from Antoninus Pius's reign probably belonged to the same border guard detachment. Beuchel's claim (p.76), that a vexillatio of I Italica temporarily took over the garrison of Troesmis when V Macedonica left its permanent base there in Marcus Aurelius's reign cannot be proven by the inscriptions of centurions (see above) nor by a tile stamp (III 6239c). On the other hand, the altar to Neptune (CIL III 14433) found to the west of Durostorum (probably moved during fortress construction in Silistria) was set up by a vexillatio leg. I Ital(icae) (and V Maced.?) during construction works of some sort. It's text has, even after the i

Naturally, Legio I Italica also had to give up officers and men for vexillations sent out from the army of Moesia Inferior for the

[1413]

vexillationibus Ponticis apud Scythia(m) et Tauriam. A tile stamp found in the small fort of Ai-Todor (Charax) on the Crimean coast

3. Memorials showing participation of the legion in specific wars outside of its province are rare. We may of course assume

Though not improbable, the tile stamps found in Africa (CIL VIII 10474, 13 and p.911) do not prove that I Italica sent a vexillatio

[1414]

is illuminated more closely by inscriptions of A.Iulius Pompilius Piso … Berenicianus. Before he got a command in Africa

The words of the *Historia Augusta* Albinus 6.2 “egit et legionem quartanorum et primanorum” (He commanded the

A substantial number belonging to soldiers of I Italica…[1415]

(CIL III 2008, 2009, 2010, 2023, 2032, 8719, 12898, 12899), in part set up comrades of the deceased, confirm without doubt th

The dedicatory stones set up by ‘benefecarii conularis’ of the legion found on Dalmation soil (CIL III 1906 in

- During the 3rd century CE, probably especially the 2nd half, personnel of I Italica was promoted to the ‘praetorium’ relatively frequently (CIL VI 2601, 2785, 2883 = 32578. See also VI 2759, in which Legio Moesiaca may quite probably understood as I Italica). This preferential treatment of the legion may be understood in relation to the origin of the recruits of the legion. They consisted in large part of Thracians, well known at the time for their ferocity in battle (see also column 1353). This circumstance is also the reason why a mobilized detachment of the legion, together with its sister legion XI Claudia, belonged to the ‘mobile army’ (comitatenses) in the Diocletianic period. In Constantine’s reign they were incorporated into the palace troops, the ‘legiones palatinae.’ They are the ‘primani’ from the Notitia Dignitatum Orientalis VI.5 = 45. This pair of legions, the ‘primani’ and ‘undecimani’, is the only one in the ‘palatinae’ to originate in the old army of the Danube army. Its history can no longer be followed here. The building inscription from Cius in Scythia (CIL III 7494) was probably set up by the legion. The ‘primani’ named here should be this legion, instead of I Iovia as was assumed before (see column 1407). The same perhaps goes for the ‘primanorum legio’ in the army of Julian in 357 CE (Ammianus XVI 12.49), see column 1431.

- The old core legion I Italica was at the time of the Notitia still based in Novae (Notitia Dignitatum Orientalis XL 30-32), where both halves of the troops guarding the banks of the Danube were divided between Novae and Sexagintaprista. The legion was tasked with guarding the western part of the border on the river in Moesia Inferior.

Legati legionis:

- [L.An?]nius L.f.Stel.Gallus Vecilius Crispinus Mansuanus Marcellinus Numisius Sabinus, Trajan’s reign, CIL III 6813.

- M.Fabius m.f.Quir.Magnus Valerianus, period of Commodus-Severus, CIL XI 2106

- L.Iulius Lucilianus, CIL III 784

- A.Iulius Pompilius A.f.Corn.Piso T.Vi[bius Varus ...] Laevillus Berenicianus praepositus legionibus I Italicae et..., Marcus Aurelius's reign, CIL VIII 2582, 2744 and 2745

- T.Manlius Valens in 69 CE, Tacitus, Hist. I.64

- L.Marius L.f.Quir. Maximus Perpetuus Aurelianus, around 193 CE, CIL VI 1450

- L.Novius Crispinus Martialis Saturninus, under Antoninus Pius, CIL VIII 2747, 18273

- Q.Plarius Sardus [...Eggus] Ambibulus leg. leg. I I[talicae in Moesia] inferiore, Bull.archéol. 1911, p.142 nr.17, see under II Adiutrix, column 1452ff.

- Q.Servaeus Fuscus Cornelianus c.v., CIL XI 1432, 1433

- Unknown, CIL VI 31777(?), X 3872

Tribuni militum:

- C.Aetrius C.f.Lem.Naso, probably Domitian's reign, CIL XI 5745

- Q.Maesius C.f.Picatianus (Iatycl.), Antoninus Pius's reign around 150 CE, CIL V 4338

- Memmius's Anies. Barbarus, CIL II 2635

- Nummius Hor.Verus, Trajan's reign, CIL XI 3100, see also III 7739

- Ti.Plautius Ti.f.Papiria Felix Ferruntianus, Commodus's reign, CIL III 619

- Sex.Quintilius Sex.f.Ani.Valerius Maximus. (Iatycl.), CIL XIV 2609, Hadrian's reign

- C.Vettius C.f.Volt.Sabinianus Iulius Hospes, Antoninus Pius's reign, AE 1920.45

- Unknown, Trajanic period, CIL XII 3169

- Unknown, Hadrianic period, Bull.Dalm. XXXVII 1944, p.33.

Praefecti legions:

- L.Terentius Valentius, AE 1902.207

[1417]

- M.Aurel.Iustus,domo Horrei Margensis Moesiae superioris, ex (trecenario) p.p. in 224 CE, CIL III 7591

- L.Betutius L.f.Pal.Furianus p.p., CIL XI 385

- C.Iul.Carianus p.p....ex equit romano, CIL III 750 add.

- M.Maesius Geminus Bononia p.p. in 182 CE, CIL III 6223

- …us D.f.Octavius Secundus Curi(bus) Sab(inis) primipil leg. Eiusdem (I Ital.)</I>, Hadrian’s reign, CIL III 7334.

- Unknown: [pri]nc(eps)(?), CIL XI 245

Centuriones:

- L.A….C…., CIL III 14215-4

- Aelius Artemidorus 7 fr(umentarius), CIL III 12371

- P.Aelius Monimus, CIL III 13720

- P.Aelius P.f.Romanus ex Mysia, CIL VIII 2786

- L.Antonius L.f.Arn.Felix <I>Karthagine CIL III 6185

- M.Aur.Iason. CIL III 12388

- Blandius C.f.Vol.Latinus, CIL XII 2601

- Ti.Claudius Ti.f.Vitalis, Trajan’s reign, CIL VI 3584

- Cornelius Firmus, period of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, CIL III 7514

- C.Iulius Crescens, CIL III 7428

- Iulius Verecundus, CIL III 6232

- Q.Lucilius Piscinus, CIL III 12468

- C.Maenius Haniochus Corinthi, Hadrian's reign, CIL III 42

- L.Messius Firmus 7 fr(umentarius)</I>, CIL III 7420

- Petronius Fortunatus, CIL VIII 217 and supplement p.2353 = ILS 2658 addendum p. CLXXIX

- [Tuccius], CIL VIII 3005

- Valerius Clemens, CIL III 14433

- C.Val(erius) Firmus, CIL III 6176

- L.Val(erius) L.f.Proclus, Domitianic-Trajanic period, CIL III 12411

- Vasellius Marcellus, CIL III 7441

- Unknown CIL III 6192

Soldier's origins:

- Italia: Ariminum, CIL III 12352; Aug.Bagiennorum, CIL V 7667

- Narbonensis: Lucus Aug., CIL III 8198

- Macedonia: Heraclea, III 7441; Nicopolis (Sergia tribu) III 6144; Nicopolis (Papiria tribu) III 12397

- Thracia: provinciae Traciae CIL XIV 3631; Had(rianopolis)? Kalinka p.409; Philippopolis CIL VI 2601 (Thrax cives Filopopulitanus</l>), CIL VI 2785 (cives Filopopulitanus)

- Pamphylia: Aspendus CIL III 14491

- Unknown: Gal…, CIL III 6232 [1413] vexillationibus Ponticis apud Scythia(m) et Tauriam. A tile stamp found in the small fort of Ai-Todor (Charax) on the Crimean coast gives an indication of building activities by this detachment. The stamp reads that the tiles used there were produced on the orders of a centurion of Legio I Italica (CIL III 14215-4: per L(ucium) A… C… (centurionem) leg. I It(alicae) prae(positum) vex(illationum) Moes(iae) inf(erioris)(by order of Lucius A…C… centurion of Legio I Italica, commander of the vexillatio of Moesia Inferior). A tombstone of a soldier of I Italica, probably dating to the end of the 2 or the start of the 3 century CE, represents the legion among the legions staying in the Chersonesos as well. 3. Memorials showing participation of the legion in specific wars outside of its province are rare. We may of course assume that the legion took part in the Dacian wars under Domitian, just as in the Trajan’s campaigns in Dacia. In the latter case, this is borne out by the inscription of the centurion Ti.Claudius Vitalis (CIL VI 3584) the “promotus ex leg(ione) V Mac(edonica) in leg(ionem) I Ital. donis d(onatus) torquibus armill. phaler. Cornona vall(ari) bello Dacico” (promoted from Legio V Macedonica to Legio I Italica, earned torques, armillae, phalerae and a Corona Vallaris in the Dacian war). This can only concern the first Dacian war, as the same man was again decorated in another “bello Dacico” when he already served in I Minervia. The tribune C.Nummius Verus (CIL XI 3100) of I Italica can only have been decorated by Trajan for his services in one of the Dacian Wars as well. Even more so since a man with the same name was Ilvir of the Colonia Apulensis at least two generations later (CIL III 7739). The inscription of a soldier of I Italica in Potaissa (CIL III 889) can in my opinion not be dated to Trajan’s reign. Inscriptions also point to participation of at least a vexillation of I Italica in the eastern wars of Trajan, as they show detachments sent out of the province (L.Paconius

Proculus CIL VI 32933). The inscription from Bettir (CIL III 13586 = 14155-2, see also column 1291) that has often been understood as proof for the engagement of vexillations of the legions from Moesia Inferior in the Jewish wars in Hadrian's reign (for instance Beuchel 82f.), is doubtful. This question can only be answered once it becomes clear that the inscription actually concerns vexillations of several legions instead of only a career of one centurion in several legions. Though not improbable, the tile stamps found in Africa (CIL VIII 10474, 13 and p.911) do not prove that I Italica sent a vexillation to combat the Mauric revolt during Antoninus Pius's reign. The interpretation of the former can hardly be "LEG I ITA", while the origin of the one in the museum of St. Germain is very much in doubt; see also the sober conclusion of Cagnat, "armée rom. d'Afrique 108f., vol. 2, 119). The in itself obvious part in the defense of the lower Danube provinces in Marcus Aurelius's reign,