

## Legio I Parthica

XVI Legio I Parthica. Columns 1435-1436. Tr. Jeroen Pelgrom

[1435]

Created by Septimius Severus together with II and III Parthica (see also 1308f) in support of his large-scale plans for war against the Parthian empire and to garrison the new provinces which were created from conquered territory in AD 197 or somewhat later. Right from the start, the legion was stationed in the province of Mesopotamia, as Cassius Dio LV.24.4 (&ldquo;Seueros ta Parthika to te prooton&hellip; en Mesopotamia&rdquo;) attests somewhat later. The location of its headquarters is perhaps mentioned in a fragmentary Greek inscription (Bull. Hell. IX 1885, 81, somewhat imperfect in Dessau 9477). The legion&rsquo;s name which is lost at the beginning of &ldquo;&hellip; hetis legioon estin en Suigarois tes Mesopotamias pros tooi Tiqrei potamooi&rdquo; is probably I Parthica. If the translation of the garbled first part &ldquo;Seberianes Antoonianes&rdquo; is correct, then the legion also carried the imperial name &ldquo;Severiana Antoniniana&rdquo;.

[1436]

This name cannot originate from the short period when Elagabalus and Alexander jointly reigned in AD 222, as the nickname &ldquo;Antoniniana&rdquo; certainly would have preceded the other then. In fact this could be evidence &ndash; the only example so far &ndash; that already under Septimus Severus the legions (though perhaps only those in the east) had begun to carry the surname of the emperor. In this case, the inscription must have been written under Severus and Caracalla and would prove that the headquarters of the legion was already at Singara before AD 211. Legio I Parthica still had her headquarters at Singara in AD 360 (Ammianus Marcellinus XX.6.8). After the capture of Singara by the Persians, as described by Ammianus, the legion was transferred to Nisibis-Constantina, where she is mentioned by the Notitia Dignitatum Orientis XXXVI.26, during the reorganization of the Tigris-district.

Monuments with inscriptions from the legion are quite rare and do not give any important information about its history. It is certain that the commander of the legion, which was stationed in Mesopotamia, a province governed by an imperial procurator governed (v. Domaszewski, Wien. Stud. VI.297), was an Equestrian praefectus instead of a senatorial legatus (Hirschfeld S-Ber. Akad. Berlin 1889, 434). In support of this, C. Iulius Pacatianus, from the reign of Severus, was a &ldquo;procure(ator) prov. Oshoenae&rdquo; before he became commander of the legion (CIL XII.1856). A second one, Iulius Iulianus, from the ranks of the bucenarii, erected under Philippus (AD 244-249) a monument in Arabian Bostra for a &ldquo;praef(ectus) alae&rdquo;, which identifies him as a praepositus (CIL III.99): Iulianus must also have commanded an ala when he was the commander of the legion.

Several inscriptions mention centurions of the legion: &ldquo;C. Sulgius Caecilianus&rdquo; (CIL VIII.1322), &ldquo;M. Septimius M. f &hellip;.lis&rdquo; (Dessau 9201). A soldier from &ldquo;preinio Parthika&rdquo;, who was born in Balbura, erected a tombstone for himself and his mother in Lycia (Cagnat IGR III.479). A person belonging to I Parthica seems to be mentioned on a small fragment from Cyrenaica (AE 1913 nr.149). A son of a soldier from I or III Parthica erected a tombstone for him in Cilicia (Cagnat IGR III.814).

It is very doubtful whether the centurion &ldquo;Pompoovios Dareios&rdquo; from the Palmyrian inscription Cagnat IGR III.1046 from AD 224/5, served in I Parthica, as Waddington suspects: it is perhaps more likely that III Gallica was meant. Another Palmyrian inscription (CIL III.138 add.) does not mention a speculator from I Parthica, as previously suspected, but rather from III Gallica, as is proven by CIL III.14385b. Also in inscription CIL III.187 add. P.992 = Suppl. 14393 does not, in spite of its supposed corrected reading (Bull. Hell. XXI p.74 nr.21), refer to I, but rather to II Parthica, which is proven by the surnames of the latter (see also entry for Legio II Parthica). Falsified inscriptions which mention the legion are numerous.