

Legio II Italica

XXVII. Legio II Italica. Columns 1468-1476

[1468] Leg. II Italica. Raised by Marcus Aurelius (Dio LIV 24) around 165 AD with men conscripted from Italy (see above col. 1300f.). At first, the legion carried only the official surname "Pia" (still used in 170 AD, CIL III 1980); however, shortly after her creation, the surname "Italica" was added, which later became the [legion's] main name. According to the coins of Gallienus (Cohen V2 388 no. 472-476), the legion's emblem was the she-wolf [Lupa] nursing the twins Romulus and Remus [The stork of III Italica (Cohen V2 388 no. 477) and Capricorn of I Adiutrix or IXX Primigenia (Cohen V2 388 no. 471) were also attributed to the legion, which was the result of misreading II Italica tile stamps]. The [twins] image is likely to represent the zodiac sign of [the Gemini] twins, which belongs to the month ruled by Apollo (May 29th to June 18th). The reason why this sign was given to the legion is hard to see, since it cannot be linked to the nativity of one of the Divi fratres (Marcus April 26th, Verus December 15th). The dies natalis of the legionary eagle is also very unlikely in this case (see below for Leg. VI Ferrata). In any case, the wolf cannot be the [legion's] main emblem, even if it appears among the five emblems of the old pre-Marian legions. We do not know where the legion was garrisoned during her first years. However, like her sister-legion III Concordia, she was undoubtedly used from the very beginning in a way that best served her creator's intentions: to keep the Danubian people's powerful incursions at bay, and especially to protect Italy, until the western troops, which were kept busy in the East, were again available for border protection along the Rhine and Danube [Rivers].

[1469] In this time of quickly changing defensive situations, the legion was unlikely to have kept a permanent base in one of the provinces; she would rather have fought here and there among the mobilized border defense forces under the command of individual legates. The assumption of II Italica having been stationed in her first years in lower Pannonia, where a tile stamp of her has been found (CIL III 10662 -; Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher V 114 note 6), has no firm basis. The explanation that this province had a fighting force of two legions during the Marcomannic Wars, since the governor was of consular rank, lacks evidence. All known legates of Pannonia Inferior of this time were only of praetorian rank. Rather, the legion seems to have been also under the command of Q. Antistius Adventus in his position as leg. Aug. pr. pr. at praetenturam Italiae et Alpium, which he held around 168 AD. In 170 AD, a vexillation of II Italica, together with one of III Italica, was busy erecting the wall of Salonae (CIL III 1980). When the situation changed for the better around 172 AD, the legion probably operated in the Alpine region, primarily in the eastern parts, possibly under the command of Claudius Pompeianus and Helvius Pertinax (Hist. Aug. Pert. 2, 4-6). It is still impossible to say when and where she first set up a permanent camp during her earliest period, before being garrisoned at Lauriacum (cp. Kenner, Der Römische Limes in Österreich VIII 1907 p. 211ff.). It is not totally impossible that a recently discovered large structure, which according to tile stamps, was built by II Italica (cp. the report from Logers in Österreichische Jahreshefte XIX/XX 1919 Beiblatt p. 107-134) at Lotschitz, near the important junction of Celeia, dates back to this time of warfare before 175 AD. This camp, which has almost the same dimensions as the camp at Albing (see below), covered the access from Pannonia to Emona, the gateway to Italy, and to Aquileia, the main base of the defense forces between Italy and Illyricum. This camp's position more or less resembles the military situation as it can be assumed for this phase of the Marcomannic Wars in the early 170s. Obviously, the entire structure was erected simultaneously and was occupied for only a short time. The many tile stamps and their fragments - 204 in all - are very uniform, and a large number of them show not only the legion's name, but also the names of the soldiers who produced the tiles (Mitteilungen der kaiserlich-königlichen Zentral-Kommission 1899, 215. CIL III 143692 = 5757, 2. 3a 4. 11850. 11851 a. b. c. col. 232850. Österreichische Jahreshefte XIX/XX Beiblatt p. 124-134). This was the only case here. No later than in this phase of the wars, when the legion still fought as a part of larger army groups, could Q. Herennius Silvius Maximus have served as legat(us) leg. II Italicae et alae Antoniniana (CIL IX 2213).

[1470] The legion probably took up a permanent position in the province of Noricum after the emperor's Germanic-Sarmatian triumph in 176 AD, when order had been restored to the provinces along the middle-Danube. Van de Weerd Mus. Belge VII 1903, 101-103 tries to prove (with CIL IX 2593) II Italica's presence in Noricum from 174 AD on, at the latest. The provincial governor also became legionary legate. The legionary camp at Albing apparently was built for and by the legion at this time or shortly later. (It was discovered by the Österreichische Limesforschung in 1904 and 1905; cp. Der Römische Limes in Österreich VIII 1907, 157-172 pl. III). A small number of tile stamps, completely different from those at Lotschitz, give evidence for a link between this camp and II Italica, and for her building activity there (loc. cit. p. 172 pl. 84). However, even this camp was occupied by the legion for only a short time, probably, because it had been placed on an island in the Danube and was too exposed to floods and a rising groundwater table. Perhaps still under Commodus, a new camp, Lauriacum, was erected on better suited ground only 5 km away, near the [confluence of the Danube and its] tributary Enns. (Excavations there were done also by the Österreichische Limesforschung from 1904 on: Der Römische Limes in Österreich VII 5-46. VIII 119-156. IX 1908 87-116. X 1909, 79-114. XI 1910, 1-33). This camp's banner sanctuary [Fahnenheiligtum] altar, which was dedicated by the primipilus to the legion's genius on the 18th of September 191 AD, also shows the camp's interior structures were complete by this date. Therefore, the construction

must have started at least several years earlier. The legion stayed in this camp from the end of the second century to the end of Roman rule in Noricum Ripense, cp. *Itin. Anton.* p. 249, 1, where the "III" in "Lauriaco mp. XX leg. III" has been mistaken for "II I(talica)" (*Not. dign. occ. XXXIV* 39). The large building inscription, which originally dates from 205 AD, and of which there must have been several examples within the camp's premises, cannot mean the erection of the camp itself. Perhaps, it could be attributed to the reconstruction and adornment [Wiederherstellung und Ausschmückung] of one of the interior buildings, probably the principia's courtyard. (The inscription fragments were published and supplemented by Bormann in *Der Römische Limes in Österreich XI* 129-136). The legion's building activity, which is certainly to be taken for granted, was explicitly noted in the last line, added between 211 and 217 AD (Bormann 135). The high level of building activity within the camp is evidenced by the large amount of the legion's stamped tiles, which were probably manufactured not too far away from the camp itself (cp. *CIL III* 5757, 1a. c. e. k. l. n. g. r. t. u. 11849 f. g. h., as well as *III p.* 963 no. 11. p. 964 no. 17 and 18; found during the systematic excavations: *Der Römische Limes in Österreich VII* 1906, 31f, pl. 45, 1-8. *XI* 1910, 49ff. pl. 23, 1-12, together with a graffito IIII NONAS AUGUST[AS] ISAURICUS.

[1471] That a part of the tile stamps were not from II Italica, but from III Italica, has been stated several times; but although Groller (*Der Römische Limes XI* 1910, 57-60 and pl. 32) argued in favor of this assumption, it has to be definitely canceled out. Precisely the tile stamps Groller used for his line of argument can undoubtedly be identified as coming from II Italica, even if their characters look crude and savaged. Otherwise, epigraphic pieces of information from this place where II Italica stayed for centuries are very scarce: despite a small fragment which cannot be identified any closer and which names a primipil(us) of the legion (*CIL III* 5682 = 11 824), only a few tombstones of active soldiers or veterans have been discovered (*CIL III* 5671 = 11814. 5673 = 11816. 11822 (= 5681 + 5686 + 5687) and 11823 (5681a + 5685). Legion members appear not only at the headquarters, but also at different places in the province where they held official positions. At Virunum, the center of provincial administration, the following officials served for the governor: a beneficiarius cos. (*CIL III* 4820 for the year 238 AD); a strator cos. (*CIL III* 4836 = 11507); a (centurio) frumentarius (*CIL III* 4861) and a frum(entarius) (*CIL III* 4830), who, however, seems to have also been born at Virunum. Other officials appear at known junctions, like Atrans (*III* 11676); Celeia beneficiarii cos. in 192 AD (*CIL III* 5178), 211 AD (*III* 5187), 215 (*III* 5185), 217 (*III* 5189), unknown year (*III* 5180); Bedaium in 226 AD (*III* 5575) and 229 AD (*III* 5580); Unterthörl in 215 AD (*III* 11482); St. Leonhard in 209 AD (*CIL III* 14361), and finally at the Danube border at Passau in 230 AD (*CIL III* 5690). The tombstones of legionaries who had fallen in combat, where mostly, according to the inscriptions, placed in their home towns: at Virunum *III* 4835 (bello desider.) 4836a. 4837. 4841. 4856. 4857 (bello desider.). 4862(?). 11553; furthermore 5218 (o(bito) in exp. Da(cisca)). 5412. 5448. 5567. 5614. (11782). 5663 = 11806. 5688. 11700 (bello desider.). The same seems to be case with the veterans' tombstones in *CIL III* 4853. 5106. 5449. 5624. A dedication of two legionaries in Severus Alexander's time, was placed at Virunum (*III* 4791 add. p. 1046), both were probably in the governor's staff; an altar for Noreia and the province Britannia near Celeia by a (centurio?) of the legion (*CIL III* 5300). The legion's stamped tiles at Celeia (*CIL III* 11849a. b. c), Breg (*III* 5757p), Oberbirnbaum (*III* 5757 f), Heilenstein (*III* 11849 d) are surely to be placed to the findings at Lotschitz (see above). Whether isolated deposits at a few other places, e.g. Mautern (*CIL III* 11849e), allows for any clues about military constructions at the individual locations, is hard to say. On tiles of the 4th century see below. The legion's permanent stationing on Norican soil necessarily led to a changing of the procuratorian province of Noricum to a senatorian one, which was governed by a legate of the emperor in the rank of a praetorian (cp. *Hist. aug. Marc.* 22, 9: provinces … <ex procuratoriis>

[1472] praetorias pro belli necessitate fecit). This governor was also the legionary legate (see below). After the great wars at the Danube had come to a temporary end, it is unlikely that the legion took part in any large-scale warfare during Commodus's reign. In the civil wars after Commodus's demise, however, the legion seems to have played a not unimportant role. In the 3rd century, the legion carried the honorific title p. f. They appear in the following inscriptions (in chronological order): in 200 AD (*CIL XI* 1322), 209 AD (*CIL III* 14361), 211 AD (*CIL III* 5187), 215 (*CIL III* 5185 p. f. Antoniniana), in 217 (*CIL III* 5189) under Caracalla or Elagabalus (*CIL III* 4862: p. f. Antoniniana), under Severus Alexander (p. f. Severiana *CIL* 5449. 5575. 5690. 3270), in 238 AD (*CIL III* 4820), without a date (*CIL III* 4837. 4856. 4857. 5300. 5671. 11553, and on tile stamps from Lauriacum (*Der Römische Limes in Österreich VIII* 1907 p. 453 pl. 73, 1. 2). The legion had the surname pia since her creation (*CIL III* 1980 in 170 AD), and still in September of 191 AD she is still called only II Italica p(ia) (*CIL III* 15208). Since she is called only "II Italica" in 192 AD (*CIL III* 5178), the legion must have earned her honorific title "pia fidelis" after this year and before 200 AD. The only opportunity to do so could have been the civil wars from 193-197 AD. In contrast to an older view (cp. *De leg. X gemina* 61), the denarius that was minted with her name (*Cohen IV* 2 31 no. 261) shows II Italica among the legions at Danube and Rhine which recognized Severus as emperor immediately after his proclamation at Carnuntum in April 193 AD. However, this could not have been the reason for the two honorific titles, since they were not given to the other legions, although they also supported Severus. II Italica must have had an opportunity to show herself as pia fidelis by declaring herself for Severus and keeping up this support despite opposition within the province against this emperor. The legion may even have resisted the provincial governor. Indeed, the inscription of Ti. Claudius Candidus (*CIL II* 4114) explicitly states combat against rebelles hostes publici, i.e. Severus's enemies in Noricum: duci terra marique adversus rebelles h(ostes) p(ublicos) (in Spain) item Asiae, item Noricae. These campaigns could have taken place only in 193 or 196/97 AD. The order of Candidus's positions in the inscription seems at first to hint at the final year, or even a little

later (also Hasebrook 102), but at a closer look [Translator's note: original text's meaning is obscure], he could not have fulfilled these tasks at the same time: chasing the *hostes publici* in Spain, Asia and Noricum on the one side, and on the other side leading the troops of Illyricum into war against Niger in Asia minor, then against the Parthians, and finally against Clodius Albinus. This would have led to a chronological collision. Determined resistance in Noricum in 196 AD is hardly likely,

[1473] …since Severus's rule was firmly set in Italy and all surrounding areas and armies. The situation in the spring of 193 AD was different: Severus was only a claimant to the throne, and in nearby Italy, the ruling emperor was Julianus, who had been raised to the purple by the guard. The close connections between the Norican cities and Italy, and especially with the pre-Severan praetorium, are known and could have played an important role when the province had to choose sides. It is therefore quite likely that after Severus's proclamation, large parts of the province declared themselves against him, whereupon Claudius Candidus, a supporter of Severus, had to force them to give up their resistance; II Italica, which had stayed faithful to her emperor, was rewarded with the surnames *pia fidelis* (similar to VII gem. in Spain). At a considerably later date, obviously in 205 AD, Severus ordered the construction of a larger building within the legion's camp (Der Römische Limes in Österreich XI 1910, 129-136). Outside of the garrison province of Noricum, the following soldiers of II Italica seem to have been on normal assignments: the *frumentarii* in Rome (CIL VI 3340. IG XIX 958. Dessau 9080) and the (centurio) *frumentarius* in Luna (CIL XI 1322). Conspicuous is an inscription with a *bf. cos.* of II Italica from Teutoburgium in lower Pannonia (CIL III 3270, from 226 AD), since in provinces with a legion, these officials were chosen exclusively from the local legions, here I or II Adiutrix. Anyhow, it is apparently not justified to postulate a detachment of II Italica in Pannonia Inferior at that date, even if the tile stamps found at Batta (CIL III 10662 a-d) may point in this direction (v. Domaszewski *Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher* V 114 note 6). However, they possibly came to this place much later via the waterway (cp. leg. I Noricum see above 1435). Only a comparison of the tile stamps found at Batta with the material produced in Noricum could answer this question. II Italica definitely took part in emperor Maximinus's Dacian War, as did II Adiutrix from lower Pannonia (CIL III 4857. 5218 = 11691). It took also part in a war against the Goths at an unknown date, probably in the second half of the 3rd century (III 11700); It is unknown, in which war the soldier of tombstone III 4835 was a *desideratus*. The presence of the soldier Lici(nius) Maximinus at Poetovio (III 151846) can certainly be attributed to a late 3rd century campaign. Aurelius Guto, who was buried by a comrade at Pola (CIL V 46), may have died there during a military enterprise/campaign (“bei Gelegenheit einer kriegerischen Unternehmung”). The tombstones CIL V 8277 from Aquileia and V 375 from Cittanuova in Istria, however, do not point at something similar. A *primipilus* of II Italica possibly commanded the Raetian sister-legion III Italica sometime between 238 and 253 AD,

[1474] …and also served as *praepositus* of III Augusta (CIL III 4855), after this legion had been shifted [to a different location] as an act of punishment. II Italica's obedience to the legitimate emperor Gallienus, at least until about 261 AD, is shown by coins struck with her emblem and her surname V *pia* V *fidelis*, VI *pia* VI *fidelis*, and VII *pia* VII *fidelis* (cp. Kolb *Wiener Numismatische Zeitschrift* V 1873, 71 pl. IV 5). After Septimius Severus reorganized the praetorian cohorts and replenished them with soldiers from the legions, members of II Italica were also taken up into the guard; an example for such a translation is the inscription CIL VI 2672: Aur(elio) Saturnino eq(uiti) coh. VIII *pr(aetoriae)*… *militavit* in leg(ione) *secunda Italica tesserarius ann(is) VI*. In the chaos of the late 3rd century, probably no sooner than in Maximian and Constantius's great wars against the Germans, a mobilized force of II Italica was transferred to the lower Rhine, where it became an independent unit and formed the Cologne bridgehead Deutz (Divitia) garrison, from which place it took over its surname. After Constantine's reorganization of the armies of Gaul and the Rhine area, this legion was one of the best units. When this army moved over the Alps in 312 AD, in order to make Constantine emperor instead of Maxentius, the Legio II Divitensium was taking part in the campaign. Witnesses for her losses in the bloody battles are several tombstones found at several places near the Via Flaminia, along which Constantine advanced towards Rome (CIL XI 4787 (Spolegium) Florio Baudioni viro ducenario protectori ex ordinario leg. II Ital. Divitensium) placed by Val(erius) Vario optio leg. II Divitensium; to the same time belongs CIL XI 4085 (Ocriculum) Val(eri) Saturnini mil(itis) leg. II Ital(icae)… After Constantine's army had entered Rome victoriously, Val(erius) Genialis *milex legionis secunde Divitensium Italice signifer* died there at age 50, after 26 years of service (CIL VI 3637). This unit, which was later just called the Divitenses, had, together with her similarly created sister-legion, the Tongrecaeni, an especially high position in Constantine's elite field army, the *legiones palatinae* (Not. dign. occ. V 4 = 147. VII 5). However, this is not the place to describe her changeful story in the course of the 4th century. Her mother-legion, II Italica, stayed in her old garrison province of Noricum, but in the context of the large-scale changes of the entire armed forces since the late 3rd century, the legion was placed among the lowest group of units, the *legiones ripenses* (border-legions = [“Grenzlegionen”]). In the early 5th century, II Italica was still in this position according to the “Notitia Dignitatum” (Not. dign. occ. XXXIV 37-39) and under the command of the *dux Pannoniae Primae and Norici Ripensis*. The main headquarters was still at Lauriacum, but sub-units were stationed at Lentia (Linz), and equipped with *liburnae* [swift galleys] for river traffic surveillance at Ioviacum (Schlägen).[= Schlögen]

[1475] Therefore, it was II Italica's task of cover the western part of Noricum's long border along the Danube, from the Inn tributary to below the Enns tributary, while the eastern part was controlled by I Noricum, which had been newly formed under Diocletian (see above under leg. I Noricum, col. 1434f.). From this late 4th century

period comes a large group of tiles, which according to the imprinted stamps, were manufactured in II Italica's brickyards. As far as this can be seen, they were all produced within a short time, which, however, cannot be dated more precisely with the existing material, yet. [Translator's note: new clues hint at Valentinian I's time]. II Italica's lively production of these tiles was ordered by Ursicinus v(iri) p(erfectissimus), who, according to the 4th century duchy system, was simultaneously dux of Noricum Ripense and Pannonia Prima (Not. dign. occ. XXXIV), so his command included all garrisons from the Inn tributary to a point below Raab [= Győr in Hungary]. This stamp's text differs only little and has in most cases two lines. The first line mentions the dux's orders, and the second one, II Italica's brickyard place-name: temp(erante) Ursic(ino) v(iro) p(erfectissimo) du(ce) / leg(ionis) II Ital(icae) Alar? (cp. CIL III 11853 and p. 2328, 50, cp. 5757, In. LEG II ITAL AL). According to this dux's area of command [„Ausdehnung des Kommandos“], II Italica's tile material can be found not only in the Norican, but also in the Upper Pannonian soil at Vindobona, Carnuntum, and surrounding areas (CIL III 4656. 11350. 11375 p. 232842). The text differs a little: LEG II ITALPET; temp(erante) Urs(icino) duc(e); so legion's tile ovens location was different: ;Pet; The most comprehensive collection and discussion of this group of tile stamps was done by Kubitschek (Jahrb[uch] f[uer] Altertumsk[unde] V 251b-253). A tile factory was run under the same dux, by Legio X Gem. in Vindobona, e.g. R[öm]isch[er] Limes in Österr[eich] II Pl. VIII 23; see below under Leg. X Gem.

Legati legionis: In the first period after her creation, the legion was certainly under the regular command of legionary legates; we know the name of only of these legates, who, accordingly, belongs to Marcus's time (see above Col. 1469, 66ff.): Q. Herennius Silvius Maximus c(larissimus) v(ir) legat. leg. II Italicae et alae Antoniniana CIL IX 2213. After the legion had received a permanent garrison in Noricum, and this province's administration had been handed over to a man of praetorian rank, the legion was under the command of this provincial governor [Statthalter]. The following ones commanded the legion: C. Memmius C.f. Quir. Fidus Iulius Albius, in 191 AD, CIL III 15208. VIII 12442, comp. PIR II p. 363, no. 340. P. Cosinius [Felix?], CIL III 152081, probably under Severus. [Ti. Claudius Candidus, CIL II 4114, see above] M. Iuventius Surus Proculus, in 201-205 AD,

[1476] CIL III 5712. 5715. 5723 = 11837. 5746. (R[öm]isch[er] Lim[es] in Österr[eich] X 105/6). Pollien[us] Sebennus, in 206 AD, Dio LXXVI, 9, 2, comp. CIL III 5537. ;Sabinus, successor of Sebennus, Dio LXXVI, 9, 2. CIL III 5727. M. Munatius Sulla Cerialis, shortly before 215 AD, CIL III 11743. PIR II p. 392, no. 538. C. Macrinus Decianus, around 260 AD, CIL VIII 2615.

Praefecti: P. Vibius P.f. Marianus, CIL VI 1636. Tribuni militum: Macius Severinus, CIL XII 1356. (Petronius Priscus [Iatlic.], CIL III 5657 = 11898), but probably came from a local family (cp. CIL III 11693 = 5259) and may have served as laticlavus in an entirely different legion. ;Pollio, v. e. trib. leg. II Italicae praef. coh. I Thracum Sy[riacae], unpublished inscription from Ephesus [comment by A. Stein]. Sex. Ticiasenus Sex. f. Clu(stumina) Allianus, CIL XI 4371. ;Cn. f. ;V ;[trib.] mil. leg. II I[talica?], Revue épigr. Du midi de la France 1893 (Avril-Juin) p. 238 no. 964.

Primi ordines and centuriones : M. Gavius Firmus Vellin(a) Firmo Picen(o) p.p. in 191 AD, CIL III 15208. Val(erius) Cl. Quintus p.p CIL III 4855. Unknown, primi pil., CIL III 5682 = 11824 ; optio [p(rimi) p(ili)]?, Dessau 9080. Florius Baudio, protector ordinarius, early in the 4th century, CIL XI 4787. Fl(avius) Mucianus, (centurio) fr(umentarius), in 200 AD, CIL XI 1322. Q. Carinius [Ama]bilis (centurio) frument(arius), Dessau 9080. [C. Mascu]lius [Mas?]culus > [= centurio] fr(umentarius), CIL III 4861; cp. III 4787. [M. Petronius Fortunatus, CIL VIII 217, is according to Suppl. col. 2353 not II, but I Italica] L. Sep[ti]m[us] T[ert]inus [centurio?], CIL III 5300. ;Saturninus, promotus ad [centurionatum] leg. II Italicae, CIL VIII 10718 = p. 17626. Soldiers' national origin [„Heimatsangaben“] Italia: Tereventum (CIL IX 2593, cp. Van de Weerd Musée Belge VII 1903, 101f.). Cp. CIL V 375. 4367. 8277. Noricum: CIL III 8730.

-leg. II Pannonica is = II adiutrix (no. XVIII), called this way only in the Mainz inscription CIL XIII 6849: Fl(avi) Pusinnionis optio(nis) leg. II Pannonicae, probably from the late 3rd or early 4th century; see above col. 1451, 58ff.