

Two Greek Votive Inscriptions from Singara (Modern Balad Sinjar) in the Duhok National Museum

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Abstract: *Two Greek votive inscriptions from Singara (modern Balad Sinjar), now in the Duhok National Museum (inv. nos. 206–207), date to the 3rd–mid 4th century CE and represent the first securely attributable Greek epigraphic evidence from the site. One dedication honors the Syrian deity Azizus, set up by the cavalryman Flavius Annianus, likely of Cappadocian origin, highlighting the syncretism of local Semitic deities with Greco-Roman religious practice and their appeal to Roman soldiers. The second ex-voto is dedicated to Silvanus by Marrius Gaianus, probably a standard-bearer of Legio I Parthica Severiana, illustrating the transplantation of Western Roman cults to the Eastern provinces. Together, these inscriptions illuminate Singara’s strategic role as a fortified Roman frontier colony, the integration of local and military personnel into religious life, and the cultural and military exchanges between Roman soldiers and indigenous populations. Their preservation in Duhok highlights the importance of museum preservation amid Iraq’s looting and instability.*

Keywords: *Roman Mesopotamia; Singara; Legio I Parthica; Azizus; Silvanus.*

Two Greek votive inscriptions dedicated to the gods Azizus and Silvanus were reportedly discovered in 2009 by local residents at Singara, modern Balad Sinjar (Kurdish Şingal) and were subsequently transferred to the Duhok National Museum (inv. nos. 206–207). The inscriptions arrived together with two additional objects: a table leg with a lion-head protome (inv. no. 204)

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and a herm surmounted by a rounded, table-like top apparently intended for the deposition of objects (inv. no. 205). Since 2013, all four objects have been displayed together in adjacent showcases within the same gallery. The inscriptions represent the first securely attributable Greek epigraphic material from Singara, correcting an earlier, mistaken attribution by Canali de Rossi of a Greek epitaph in the Iraq Museum (Baghdad) that is in fact a pierre errante from Syria.¹ Before the discovery of the Greek votives, the epigraphic record of Singara was limited to two Latin milestones, one dating to the reign of Trajan (*AE* (= *Année Épigraphique*) 1927, 161; Karsi, 116–117 CE) and the other to that of Severus Alexander (*AE* 1958, 241; al-Faghani, 231–232 CE). The former, long thought lost, was rediscovered in 2017 in an exhibition gallery of the Erbil Museum of Civilizations.²

Singara occupied a strategically significant position just south of the Jebel Sinjar range, in the steppe land between the Khabur and Tigris rivers. This location made it a key junction in the overland route network linking the northern cities of Edessa, Nisibis, and Rhesaina with Hatra and the lower Tigris basin to the south (see Appendix II, fig. 2). The region was vital as a corridor for commerce and communication across an otherwise predominantly arid territory, owing to its karstic springs originating in the massif – where snowfall still occurs regularly today.³ Prior to Roman

¹ This was an inscribed tombstone (cf. *IK Estremo oriente* 63) which has been previously seen in the Iraq Museum among materials coming from Nineveh (cf. J. E. Reade, “Greco-Parthian Nineveh,” *IRAQ* 60 (1998) 65–83, at 81–82), but it came from the Muslim cemetery on the plateau east of Der‘ā, Syria (cf. *IGLS* XIV 1,66a).

² For further discussion, see R. Palermo “Words of power. Latin inscriptions and the Roman borderland in Mesopotamia (2nd–3rd c. CE),” in R. Pierobon Benoit (ed.), *Avventure della scrittura: documenti dal Mediterraneo orientale antico* (Naples 2018) 185–203, in part. 192 and 194; R. Palermo, *On the edge of the empires: North Mesopotamia during the Roman period (2nd–4th c. CE)* (London 2019) 29–30 and 87–88. Specifically on the rediscovery of the milestone from Karsi, now in the Erbil Museum, see also Palermo, in *Avventure della scrittura* 202–203.

³ On the toponymy, see Ὁ Σίγγαρος ὄρος (Jebel Sinjar) in Ptol. *Geogr.* 5.18.2; Τὰ Σίγγαρα (Balad Sinjar) in Ptol. 5.18.9; D.C. 68.22.2; Iul. *Or.* 1.18.14; Steph. Byz., s.v. Σίγγαρα. The surrounding region was noted in antiquity for its extreme aridity; cf. Amm. Marc. 20.6.9 *aquarum penuria cunctis circum arentibus*

intervention, this area in northern Mesopotamia was inhabited by nomadic tribes collectively referred to in Greek sources as Σκηνῖται (“tent-dwellers”). These tribes established seasonal encampments and maintained control over halting stations, where they imposed levies on passing travelers.⁴ Among these nomadic groups, the Praetavi held a prominent position, with Singara serving as their primary stronghold. At the time, the city was ruled by King Μάννος (*Ma’anū*), under whose authority the Praetavi managed the surrounding territory.⁵

Roman involvement in the region began with Emperor Trajan’s eastern campaigns, when general Lusius Quietus captured Singara in 115 CE. However, Roman control was brief, as Hadrian withdrew from Mesopotamia in 117 CE. The area remained outside direct Roman rule until Septimius Severus’s campaign against the Parthians. In 197 CE, Severus established the province of Mesopotamia, and Singara became a Roman colony, as indicated by coins naming it *Aurelia Septimia Colonia Singara*.⁶ The colony served as a

locis. For the broader geographical context, see Palermo, *North Mesopotamia* 80–81. On the routes connecting Singara with neighboring urban centers, as reconstructed from ancient sources (e.g., the *Tabula Peutingeriana*) and modern satellite imagery, see M. R. Altaweel – S. R., Hauser “Trade routes to Hatra according to evidence from ancient sources and modern satellite imagery,” *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 35 (2004) 59–86; R. Palermo, “Settlement Patterns and Road Network in Upper Mesopotamia during the Roman Period,” in C. Abadie-Reynal – J.-B. Yon (eds.), *Zeugma VI. La Syrie romaine. Permanences et transferts culturels* (Lyon 2015), 123–137; H. Cameron *Making Mesopotamia: geography and empire in a Romano-Iranian borderland* (Leiden-Boston 2019) 270–273; A. Comfort, *The Roman Frontier with Persia in North-Eastern Mesopotamia: Fortresses and Roads around Singara* (Oxford 2023) 90–117.

⁴ For the Σκηνῖται inhabiting Mesopotamia, cf. Strab. 16.1.26–28; 16.2.11; 16.3.1. For further discussion, see also Cameron *Making Mesopotamia*, 203–214; Palermo, *North Mesopotamia*, 236.

⁵ On the Praetavi, see Plin. *HN* 5.21.86 *mox Arabes qui Praetavi vocantur; horum caput Singara*. On King Μάννος (*Ma’anū*), see D.C. 68.21–22. For the Praetavi, see also Palermo, *North Mesopotamia*, 81 and 237, following J. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads* (London 2003) 415, 434–435.

⁶ Cf. D.C. 68.22 (Trajan’s campaign), 76.9–12 (campaigns of Septimius Severus). For coins from Singara bearing the legend AYP. CEIL. KOA. CINTAPA, see *RPC* VII.2, nos. 3468–3479 and 3481–3483. On Roman Singara, see N.

fortified center in Rome's eastern defenses and the base for Legio I Parthica, raised by Severus. 3rd-century inscriptions show that many legionaries hailed from Asia Minor and Syria (see Appendix I). Stationed alongside the local population, this legion helped establish a lasting Roman military and administrative presence until the mid-4th century. One votive inscription presented in this article explicitly identifies the dedicator as a soldier of Legio I Parthica.⁷

Today, the modern town preserves a walled circuit enclosing about 17 hectares. Architectural remains from the early 4th century CE – such as perimeter walls, U-shaped towers, and fortified gateways – likely represent late Roman modifications to an earlier defense system. Excavations by Oates in the 1950s uncovered significant Roman military architecture. The citadel, located atop an artificial mound on the eastern edge of the settlement, served as a key defensive position. These findings highlight Singara's strategic role as a frontier outpost, critical to the defense of Roman Mesopotamia against Parthian and later Sasanian incursions. The city ultimately fell to the Sasanians in 363 CE after its surrender by Emperor Jovian, following Julian's failed eastern campaign.⁸

Pollard, *Soldiers, cities and civilians in Roman Syria*. (Michigan 2000) 274–275; Palermo, *North Mesopotamia* 81–83; Comfort, *Roman Frontier* 7–15. For the implications of the *colonia* status, see F. G. B. Millar “The Roman *coloniae* of the Near East: a study of cultural relations,” in H.M. Cotton – Guy M. Rogers (eds.), *Rome, the Greek world, and the east* 3 (Chapel Hill 2006), 164–222, in part. at 200–201.

⁷ Σευήρος (sc. συνέταξε) τὰ Παρθικά, τό τε πρῶτον καὶ τὸ τρίτον τὰ ἐν Μεσοποταμίᾳ (D.C. 55.24.4). The III Parthica was stationed at Rhessaena. See also C. Wolff “Legio I Parthica” in Y. Le Bohec (ed.), *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire* (Lyon 2000), 247–249; also Palermo, *North Mesopotamia*, 82, for the origins of the soldiers. After the Sasanian conquest of Singara, the Legio I Parthica is attested at Nisibis (*Not. Dig. Or.* 36.29).

⁸ For ancient descriptions of Singara, see Amm. Marc. 20.6.1–9; 25.7.9, 11. On the archaeology of Singara, see D. Oates *Studies in the ancient history of Northern Iraq* (London 1968) 97–106; S. Gregory – D. L. Kennedy *Sir Aurel Stein's Limes Report* (Oxford 1985) 6–21, 385–391; D. L. Kennedy – D. N. Riley *Rome's Desert Frontier: From the Air* (London 1990) 125–130; S. Gregory *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier. Vol. 2* (Amsterdam 1996) 104–108; Palermo, *North Mesopotamia* 83–87; Comfort, *Roman Frontier* 19–21. For early surveys of sites on the slopes of the Jebel Sinjar, see S. Lloyd, “Some Ancient Sites in the Sinjar District,” *IRAQ* 5 (1938) 123–142.

1. *Ex-voto to the god Azizos*

Provenance: Singara (Balad Sinjar), now in the Duhok National Museum (inv. no. 206).

Date: 3rd–mid 4th c. CE.

Dimensions: height 67 cm.; width 30 cm. (base) and 24 cm. (body); thickness 26 cm. (base) 20 cm. (body).

Description: limestone altar with significant surface weathering and pitting, being broken on top, with the loss of a pediment or decorative motif. Irregular size letters, with a less careful cutting on the last two lines; lunate sigma and epsilon, cursive omega, and alpha with horizontal bar and a stroke protruding on top. In l. 5, a blow has erased the alpha (its upper stroke remains), and the chi is shaped like a barred zeta.



<i>Transliteration</i>		<i>Text</i>
ΘΕΩΜΕΓΙCΤΩ		Θεῷ μεγίστῳ
AZEIZΩΓEN		Ἀζειζῶ Γεν-
NAIAΦΛΑΑAN		ναία Φλά(βιος) Ἀν-
NIANOCIIIΠEYC		νιανὸς ἱππεὺς
5 EYZ▲MENOC	5	εὐξ[ά]μενος
ANEΘHKEN		ἀνέθηκεν.
KΩMANOC		Κώμανος
MAGNOC		Μάγνος. vac.

Translation: To the greatest god, Azizos Genneas, the cavalryman Flavius Annianus set up (this monument) in fulfillment of a vow. The Great Comanus.

This ex-voto is dedicated to Azizos (Ἀζζιζ or Ἀζζιζῶ), a Syrian deity associated primarily with the morning star, but also venerated as a warrior – and occasionally pastoral – deity. His name, rendered in Greek as Ἀζιζος or Ἀζειζος, derives from the Aramaic root ‘zz (“to be strong”), from which forms like ‘zyz (“strong”) and ‘zyzw (“strength”) are also derived. The name was sometimes borne by prominent figures in the region, such as the priest-kings of Emesa.⁹ In the Palmyrene pantheon, Azizos was protector and guide of nomads and caravans, typically depicted as a spear-wielding horseman in desert attire. He was often worshipped alone or alongside Arsu (Arṣū), the god of the evening star, usually shown armed and mounted on a camel (with cuirass, shield and spear).¹⁰

⁹ For King Ἀζιζος of Emesa (dead in 54 CE), see I. *AI* 20.139–141, 158. On the name Ἀζιζος in the Emesene region, cf. *IGLS* V 2184 (Rām’Anzé), 2251, 2303 (Homs [Emesa]), 2565, 2566 (Zaydal). Another priest named Ἀζιζος appears in a Helios dedication by Emeseniens at Coptos (*IGR* I,5 1292). See also J. T. Milik, *Recherches d’épigraphie proche-orientale I. Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à l’époque romaine* (Paris 1972), 198. Latin *Azizus* is attested in military papyri from Dura Europos. See G. F. Grassi, *Semitic Onomastics from Dura Europos. The Names in Greek Script and from Latin Epigraphs* (Padua 2012). On the name’s etymology, see L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos. A study of religious interaction in Roman Syria* (Leiden 1999) 237, with further bibliography.

¹⁰ On the god Azizos, see H. J. W. Drijvers, *The Religion of Palmyra* (Leiden 1976) 21; J. Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra* (Leiden 1980) 68–71; M. Gawlikowski, “Les dieux de Palmyre,” *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990), 2605–2658, in part. at 2622–2623; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos* 94–96; T. Kaizer, *The*

The cult of Azizos was syncretized with those of other deities – such as Hermes, Zeus, and Ares – as evidenced in Greek inscriptions from the Decapolis,¹¹ the Hauran,¹² and Emesa.¹³ More concretely, at Edessa, according to Julian the Apostate (citing Iamblichus), Azizos was identified with Ares and worshipped together with Monimos (*Mun'im*), the god of the evening star, associated with Hermes. Both deities were regarded as “attendants” (πάρεδροι) of Helios, highlighting their subordinate but essential roles in a solar cultic framework.¹⁴ Azizos’s assimilation of Ares’s martial attributes likely facilitated the appeal and diffusion of his cult among Roman military circles, also in the western provinces. This is attested by dedications as far afield as Intercisa (Pannonia Inferior)¹⁵ and also

Religious Life of Palmyra. A Study of the Social Patterns of Worship in the Roman Period (Stuttgart 2002) 119–123. On the iconography of this god, see P. Linant de Bellefonds, “Azizos,” *LIMC* III (1986) 69–71. See, for example, a relief depicting Arsū and Azizos which, according to the inscription found below, was dedicated by “Ba’aly, son of Yarhibola, the priest of Azizu, the good and merciful god”: *b ʿly | br yrhibwl' pkl' dy 'zyzw ʾh' tḥ' | wrḥmn* (PAT 0320, 1–3). For the relief, see Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra* pl. LXVIII 1 = Gawlikowski, in *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990) pl. XV 34.

¹¹ Cf. *CIIP* V 7809 (Beit She'an [Scythopolis]). See also A. Ovadia I. – I. Roll, “A Greek Dedicatory Inscription to Azizos,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 38/3 (1988): 177–180.

¹² Cf. *CIG* 4617 (Suwayda [Dyonisias]). See D. Sourdél *Les Cultes du Hauran à l'Époque romaine* (Paris 1952) 75. Cf. also *IGLS* XIV,2 485 (Al-Harra [Eutimia]). See A. Sartre-Fauriat, “Nouveaux dieux et dieux nouveaux dans le Hauran (Syrie du sud) à l'époque romaine,” in M. Blömer – A. Lichtenberger – R. Raja (eds.), *Religious identities in the Levant from Alexander to Muhammed: continuity and change* (Turnhout 2015), 297–312, at 304–305.

¹³ Cf. *IGLS* V 2218 (Homs [Emesa]); *AE* 2016, 1701 (Tallat 'Azzūm). See also J.-C. Decourt – P. Ghanimé-Marion “Une nouvelle dédicace à Azizos à Tallat 'Azzu (Ēmèsène, Syrie),” *Tempora. Annales d'histoire et d'archéologie* 20–21 (2011–2012) 71–78.

¹⁴ Cf. *Iul. Or.* 11.154a–d. See H. J. W. Drijvers “The cult of Azizos and Monimos at Edessa.” In: J. Bergman – K. Drynjev – H. Ringgren (eds.), *Ex orbe religionum. Studia Geo Widengren I.* (Leiden 1972) 355–371; H. J. W. Drijvers *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden 1980) 146–174; M. A. van der Sluijs “Who Are the Attendants of Helios?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129/2 (2009), 169–177. On the identification of the Edessan *Mun'im* with the Palmyrene *Arsū*, see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos*, 94, with bibliography.

¹⁵ For a votive offering to Azizus at Intercisa, see *AE* 1910, 142 = *RIU* V

Potaissa (Dacia), where the prefect of Legio V Macedonica dedicated a temple to *Deus Azizus* under the title of *Bonus Puer Conservator*.¹⁶ Thus, Azizus emerged as a kind of “Semitic Ares” worshipped by Roman troops from the 3rd century CE. The present inscription adds important new evidence for the cult’s diffusion into Mesopotamia, further illustrating the adaptability and geographic reach of this syncretic deity.

The designation of a deity as μέγιστος (“greatest”) functioned as a common form of praise in the Roman East.¹⁷ In the case of Γενναῖα, if we assume a “misspelling” in which αἰ appears in place of ε – just as we also have εἰ in place of ι in Ἀζειζος –, the form may be understood as the dative of Γεννάας, a Hellenized rendering of the Aramaic *gny’* (*ginnaya*, pl. *ginnayē*). The term *gny’* referred both to a specific deity venerated in Palmyra (Genius) and more broadly to a class of protective spirits (genii) associated with trade caravans and desert settlements, often identified simply as “*gny’* of a place”.¹⁸ In Greek, γενναῖος could be applied to such local Syrian divinities

1053. Syrians serving at Intercisa in the *cohors I Hemesenorum* (i.e., from Emesa) introduced eastern cults, including those of Mithras and Sol Elagabal. See J. Fitz, *Les Syriens à Intercisa* (Brussels 1972) 177–195, in part. 182–184 and 192–193 for Azizos.

¹⁶ For this temple, see *CIL* III 875 = *ILS* 4345. See also Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* 170–171. On the cult of Azizos in Dacia, see Sanie S. “Die syrischen und palmyrischen Kulte im römischen Dakien,” *ANRW* II.18.2 (1989) 1272–1316, in part. at 1207–1209. Nonetheless, note that in the Apulum inscriptions (*CIL* III 1130–1138), only *Bonus Puer* is named, sometimes linked to the morning star *Phosphorus*, but not to *Azizus*.

¹⁷ Θεῶ μεγίστῳ Ἡλιουπόλιτι (*IGLS* VI 2730, Ba‘albek), Θεῶ μεγίστῳ κεραυνίῳ Βηχιχί (*IGLS* VII 4041, Hons Soleiman), etc. On μέγιστος and similar epithets for oriental gods, see R. Parker, *Greek Gods Abroad: Names, Natures, and Transformations* (Oakland, CA 2017) 122–124, 141–145.

¹⁸ See a dedication “to Genius, the good and rewarding god”: *lgn’y* | *lh’tb’y* *wškr’y* (*PAT* 1708,3–4). In contrast, see the Khirbet Farwan relief dedicated to “the *genii* of the village of Beth-Phasiel, good and rewarding gods”: *lgn’y dy bryt dy bt psy l lhy’tby* | *wškr’y* (*PAT* 1704,1–2). For this relief in particular, see Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra* pl. LIV 2 = Gawlikowski, in *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990) pl. XV 32. On the term *gny’* (“genie”) as equivalent to *lh’* (“god”), see Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos* 323 with references. On the *genii* of Palmyra, see generally Drijvers, *Religion of Palmyra* 19; Teixidor, *Pantheon of Palmyra* 77–100; Gawlikowski, in *ANRW* II.18.4 (1990) 2637–2638.

not in its usual sense of “noble”, normally reserved for humans, but with the meaning “genius”. Thus, a leonine γενναῖος was venerated in the sanctuary of Zeus at Heliopolis (Baalbek) and Baal-Marcod at Dayr al-Qal’a was styled κύριος γενναῖος.¹⁹ These examples illustrate a semantic shift whereby Greek γενναῖος was adapted to express Semitic conceptions of tutelary or protective deities. This usage should, however, be distinguished from Γεννέας, a separate Syrian deity. A relief depicting this god as a cloaked horseman, armed with quiver and whip, bears the dedicatory inscription θεῷ Γεννέα πατρώω, employing the same dative form as in our inscription. The close iconographic affinity of Γεννέας with Ἀζίζος supports their assimilation here and points to a wider pattern of syncretic convergence among regional Syrian deities.²⁰

The dedicator of this monument, Flavius Annianus, bears a name indicative of elevated status. Following the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212 CE, the name Αὐρήλιος (*Aurelius*) became common among the general populace as a marker of Roman citizenship, while Φλάβιος (*Flavius*) gradually emerged as an adopted indicator of rank among elite imperial officials and soldiers.²¹ Furthermore, the cognomen Ἀννιανός (*Annianus*), derived from Ἄννιος (*Annius*), is primarily attested in Asia Minor and Syria and was similarly associated with prominent individuals.²² Notably, this devotee of the rider god Azizos

¹⁹ On the γενναῖος of Heliopolis, see Dam. Isid. 203. For the γενναῖος of Dayr al-Qal’a, see *IGLS* VIII/1,1, 286, [Κυ]ρίω [γ]ε[ν]ναίω Βαλλμαρκωδι, ἰ τῷ καὶ Μηλριν, etc.

²⁰ For the dedication θεῷ Γεννέα πατρώω by Mazzabanas and his son Marcus, cf. *IGLS* IV 1301 (Bānyās). For the associated relief in the Louvre (AO 3189), see H. Seyrig – J. Starcky “Gennéas,” *Syria. Revue d’art oriental et d’archéologie*, 24/3 (1949) 230–257, in part. at 235–36 and pl. XII. Other attestations include *deo Genea* (*IGLS* VI 2954, Karak Nuh) and θεοῦ κυρίου Γεννέα (*IGLS* Choix 41, Liftaya). On Γεννέας and γενναῖος, see J. B. Yon “De l’araméen en grec,” *MUSJ* 60 (2007) 381–429, in part. at 400–401, with references.

²¹ For *Aurelius* as a default name for new citizens and *Flavius* as a high-status marker, see B. Salway “What’s in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 B.C. to A.D. 700,” *JRS* 84 (1994) 124–145, in part. at 133–140. In the West, Flavius became a courtesy title, akin to “Mr.” See A. Cameron, “Flavius: a Nicety of Protocol,” *Latomus* 47/1 (1988) 26–33.

²² For *Annianus*, see W. Schulze, *Zur Geschichte Lateinischer Eigennamen* (Berlin 1966) 17 and 426. In an 3rd c. CE inscription from Thyateira (*TAM* V:2 933)

identifies himself as a ἵππεύς (i.e., *eques*, legionary cavalryman). In the eastern provinces, the Roman army relied heavily on auxiliary cavalry, often recruited for their horsemanship and knowledge of the terrain. Such units are attested in Arabia Petraea,²³ Syria,²⁴ and also at Singara, where also native horsemen supported the Roman defense during the siege of 360 CE.²⁵

The phrase εὐξάμενος ἀνέθηκεν (“dedicated in fulfillment of a vow”) in ll. 5–6 is a standard formula in dedicatory inscriptions. It is here followed by what appears to be the sobriquet of Flavius Annianus: “the Great Comanus.” The epithet Μάγνος (Lat. *Magnus*) served as an honorific title, conferred in recognition of military distinction – comparable to the title of Pompey “the Great.” In contrast, Κόμανος (Κώμανος in the inscription) points to Anatolian origins, deriving from the ethnonym associated with the city of Κόμανα.²⁶ Of the two cities bearing this name in Anatolia, one in Pontus and one in Cappadocia, the latter is the more plausible referent. Cappadocia was widely known in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE for its horse-rearing industry, supplying cavalry mounts to the Roman army.²⁷ Moreover, Cappadocian Comana was strategically situated along the road from Caesarea to Melitene, which became a key military route following Severus’ Mesopotamian campaign.²⁸

the jurist Annianos was proclaimed “friend of the emperors” (φιλοσέβαστος), being twice high priest of the imperial cult in Asia (ἀσιάρχης). For the name in Syria, cf. also *IGLS* XXI(4) 139 (Nabatea) and XXI(5.1) 2 and 26 (Hauran).

²³ Cf. *IGR* III 1141 (El-Hīt), *IGR* III 1257 (Namara) and *IGLS* XXI(4) 52 (Petra) for *equites* of the *III Cyrenaica*.

²⁴ Cf. *IGLS* V 2346 (Homs [Emesa]) for an *eques* of the *III Gallica*; and *SEG* VII 732, and 801 (Dura Europos) for two *equites* of the *IV Scythica*.

²⁵ *Tuebantur autem hanc civitatem legiones duae ...et indigenae plures cum auxilio equitum* (Amm. Marc. 20.6.8).

²⁶ Also, Κόμανα could be differently spelled: Κώμανα δὲ τῇ πόλει τοῦνομα (Gr. Nyss. *v. Gr. Thaum.* 46.933,30–31). For the etymology and different spellings of Κόμανος, see Schmidhauser, A. U. “KOMANOS.” *CQ* 58/1 (2008) 331–334.

²⁷ For the Cappadocian horses, sought after for their speed, cf. Opp. *C.* 1.171, Nemes. *Cyn.* 241, Veg. *Mulom.* 3.6.4, SHA *Gord.* 4.5. For instance, they were used in the army of Dura Europos: cf. *P.Dura* 56A–C.

²⁸ On the Caesarea–Melitene road during the Parthian campaigns, see T. B. Mitford, “Some Inscriptions from the Cappadocian Limes,” *JRS* 64 (1974) 160–175, at 172–174; T. B. Mitford, “Cappadocia and Armenia Minor.

In sum, the phrase Κόμᾱνος Μάγνος likely originated as a laudatory acclamation among fellow soldiers, hailing Annianus as “the great cavalryman who came from Comana”.²⁹ While Annianus may have embraced such praise, the inscription makes clear that he first attributed his military success to the rider god Azizus associated with Genneas, thereby expressing devotion to deities venerated in Syria.

2. *Ex-voto to the god Silvanus*

Provenance: Singara (Balad Sinjar), now in the Duhok National Museum (inv. no. 207).

Date: 3rd–mid 4th c. CE.

Dimensions: height 75 cm; width 25 cm. (base), 21 cm. (body), 25 cm. (top); thickness 20 cm. (base), 16 cm. (body), 20 cm. (top).

Description: Limestone altar with moldings at the top and a human head relief at the end of the inscription. The inscription is in irregular letters, which become smaller and more compressed, especially in the final two lines. In CIAOYANΩ and MAPPI, ligatures appear with O and P in superscript. The omicron loop in l. 2 closely resembles the rho loop in l. 3 – possibly due to a mistaken start of MAP, as suggested by the alpha without a bar, resembling the lambda above. E^KAKTOC in l. 5 is a haplography error for EKTAKTOC.

Historical Setting of the Limes,” *ANRW* II.7.2 (1990) 1169–1228, in part. at 1206–1208. Milestones from Comana (*IKomana* 9–60) indicate ongoing military use in the late 2nd and 3rd centuries.

²⁹ For nicknames based on traits (especially among athletes and gladiators) or ethnic origins, W. Decker, “Beinamen antiker Athleten,” in P. Mauritsch – W. Petermandl – R. Rollinger – Chr. Ulf – I. Huber (eds.), *Antike Lebenswelten Konstanz-Wandel-Wirkungsmacht: Festschrift für Ingomar Weiler zum 70. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden 2008) 161–174.

*Transliteration*

ΘΕΩ ΜΕ
 ΓΙCΤΩCΙΑ⁰
 ΟΥΑΝΩΜΑ^P
 ΠΙ⁰ΓΑΙΑΝΟC
 5 Ε^KΑΚΤΟCΛΕΓ
 ΑΠΙCΕΥΧΑΡΙC
 ΤΩΝΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ☩

Text

Θεῷ με-
 γίστῳ Σιλ{ο-}
 ουανῶ Μάρ-
 ῥι(ος) Γαιανὸς ν.
 5 ἔκ<τ>ακτος λεγ(ιῶνος)
 α' Π(αρθικῆς) Σ(εβηριανῆς) εὐχαρισ-
 τῶν ἀνέθηκεν. ☩

l. 5 Ε^KΑΚΤΟC lapis = ἑκτακτος

Translation: To the greatest god Silvanus, Marri(us) Gaianus, supernumerary of Legio I Parthica Severiana, set up this ex-voto in gratitude.

This votive offering is dedicated to “the greatest god Silvanus.” A Roman deity associated with forests and wilderness, Silvanus enjoyed considerable popularity among imperial troops, particularly along the Danubian frontier, where Latin dedications are well attested.³⁰ By contrast, dedications in Greek – such as this one – and

³⁰ For soldiers accounting as worshippers of Silvanus, see P. F. Dorcey, *The*

from the Eastern provinces are very rare. One notable exception is the consecration of an altar and forest by two Roman individuals at Mytilene (Lesbos).³¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that soldiers stationed in the East carried the cult of Silvanus with them, paralleling the westward spread of the cult of Azizos discussed above. In the 1st century CE, for instance, members of Legio IV Scythica, operating near their base at Zeugma on the Euphrates, left several Latin inscriptions to Silvanus at the stone quarries of Arulis, often pairing him with *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus*.³² Incidentally, this same legion later took part in preparations for Septimius Severus' Parthian campaigns, with detachments constructing a fort at Eski Hissar in Osrhoene in 197 CE.³³ In sum, the limited number of attestations

Cult of Silvanus: A Study in Roman Folk Religion (Leiden / New York 1992) 121–122. Specifically on dedications to Silvanus in the Danube frontiers, see M. L. Dészpa *Peripherie-Denken. Transformation und Adaption des Gottes Silvanus in den Donauprovinzen (1.–4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)* (Stuttgart 2012); L. Perinić, *The Nature and Origin of the Cult of Silvanus in the Roman Provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia* (Oxford 2016).

³¹ Καλῶ ἄγνῳ Σιλβανῶ τὸ ἄλσος καὶ ἰ τὸν βωμὸν καθοσιώσαν Πρ. Αὐφίδιλος Σκούρρας καὶ Κο. ἰ Περώνιος Σεβήρος (*IGR* IV 48 = *IG* XII,2 122). See Dorcey, *Cult of Silvanus* 67. Cf. also the bilingual inscription from Rome (*IGUR* I 195, late 2nd c. CE), where Silvanus is invoked as *custos* / φύλαξ (“protector”) of the *Papiria gens*.

³² For these inscriptions, cf. *IGLS* I 67–71. See also Dorcey, *Cult of Silvanus* 68; M. A. Speidel “Legio IIII Scythica, its Movements and Men,” in D. L. Kennedy (ed.), *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies* (Ann Arbor, MI 1998) 163–204, in part. at 176–179. According to Pollard (*Soldiers* 242 n. 7) these dedications “probably were intended to propitiate him [sc. Silvanus] for the disturbance caused by the quarrying”. For Silvanus as patron of workers in the quarries, see Dorcey, *Cult of Silvanus* 25, 30, 59–60, 62–63, and also 89.

³³ Cf. *AE* 1984, 917 (brick stamp) and 918 (building). See Speidel, in *Zeugma of the Euphrates* 174; M. A. Speidel “Legio IV Scythica,” in Yann Le Bohec (ed.), *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire* (Lyon 2000) 327–337, in part. at 355; Palermo, *North Mesopotamia* 38. For the *IV Scythica* in the Parthian wars, see also D. L. Kennedy “The Garrisoning of Mesopotamia in the Late Antonine and Early Severan Period,” *Antichthon* 21 (1987), 57–66, in part. at 58–59. In general, for the reorganization of Osrhoene by Severus, see J. Wagner, “Provincia Osrhoenae: new archaeological finds illustrating the military organisation under the Severan dynasty,” in S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia* (Oxford 1983), 103–123.

in the Roman Eastern provinces likely reflects the patchiness of the evidence we have rather than the cult's absence in the region.

The dedicator of this altar, offered as a thank-offering, is Marrius Gaianus. The name Γαϊανός (also attested as Γαειανός, with ει in place of ι) is well documented in Asia Minor and Syria and corresponds to the Latin *Gaianus*, a name widely borne in the eastern provinces, including by non-Roman soldiers – for example, among members of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura-Europos.³⁴ The first element Μάρρηι, here written with a superscript omicron (ο), is by contrast rare: in this form it is attested only in a funerary inscription from Seleucia on the Euphrates. It may represent the vocative of Μάρρηις or Μάρρηιος (Lat. *Marrius*), the latter sometimes understood as a variant or local spelling of Μάρτιος (Lat. *Marius*).³⁵ An alternative explanation is, however, that Μάρρηιος reflects an independent name formation rather than a mere variant of Μάρτιος. In this connection, it is worth considering the possibility that it is a theophoric or otherwise meaningful name ultimately derived from the Aramaic *mr̥y*’ (“my lord”). Such an etymology would broadly accord with other name formations attested in the region, for example Μάρρηϊνος alongside Μαρῖνος, plausibly connected with *mr̥n* (“our lord”),³⁶ and Μάρρηϊνβας, generally understood to reflect *mr̥ny-*

³⁴ For instance, a *Gaianus* son of Iarhabole (*PDura* 82 col I,13), and an *Aurelius Gaianus* son of Themarsa (*PDura* 100 col. XXXIV,17), among other examples. See also Grassi, *Semitic Onomastics* 44 and 179; also J. B. Yon “Compte rendu: G.Fr. Grassi, *Semitic Onomastics from Dura Europos. The Names in Greek Script and from Latin Epigraphs, History of the Ancient Near East Monographs XII*, S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, Padoue.” *Topoi* 20/2 (2015) 645–656, in part. at 654.

³⁵ Εὐθύμι, Μάρρηι οὐδὶς ἀθάνατος (*IGLS* I 114). See also Wagner *Seleukeia am Euphrat, Zeugma* (Wiesbaden 1976) 225–226 no. 92. Cf. *IGLS* V 2118 (Homairiya) for Μάρρηιος, and *PDura* 100 col. XVI,14 for *Aurel(ius) Marrius*. In Wagner *Seleukeia* 219 no. 80 (= *SEG* XXVI 1563), the published photograph (Tafel 41 no. 80) suggests that Μάρρηις, rather than Μάρρηος, may be the correct reading. Also, the name Μάρτις is sparsely attested in Syria: cf. *IGLS* II 389 (Fāfirtūn) and 426 (Refādē).

³⁶ For Μάρρηϊνος, cf., for instance, *IGLS* VII 4059 (Halat) and *SEG* VII 994 (El-Hīt [Eithae]), etc. Μαρῖνος is attested in particular in northern Syria and Mesopotamia. See Grassi *Semitic Onomastics* 222.

hb (“our lord has given”).³⁷ These names illustrate the range of phonetic and morphological adaptations by which Aramaic elements could be rendered in Greek onomastics in the eastern provinces. That such linguistic interferences were not unusual is demonstrated by other several well-known parallels. At Tilli in northern Mesopotamia (modern Çattepe), a Roman veteran dedicated an altar to Zeus Olympios with a bilingual Greek–Aramaic inscription in which the Aramaic divine title *mrlh*’ (“lord of lords”) is rendered in Greek as Μαρηάλλη.³⁸ Likewise, a bilingual graffito from Dura-Europos invokes the Hatrene triad Maren (“Our Lord”), Marten (“Our Lady”), and Bar-Maren (“Son of Our Lords”). While the Aramaic text clearly reads *mrn wmrtn wbrmryn*, the Greek version reproduces these names only approximately, using Μαρείνος (twice), Μαρίνος υἱός, and possibly Μάρ[θαν δέ]σπο[ινα].³⁹ In sum, these parallels serve chiefly to illustrate the broader linguistic context in which names like Μάρρις and Μάρριος are to be understood, underscoring the permeability of Greek naming practices to Semitic influence in the East.

In l. 5, before λεγ(ῶνος), we expect to find the title or function of an official within the legion, so the preceding letters should represent a military term rendered in Greek. The letter E displays an elongated lower stroke that connects it to the following A, and between these two letters there is a scratch – irregular in shape and

³⁷ For Μαρρίνβας, cf. *SEG* VII 461 (Dura-Europos). See also Grassi *Semitic Onomastics* 225, with Yon in *Topoi* 20/2 (2015) 655–656. On the double rhos (ρρ) of these names, see Milik, *Recherches d'épigraphie* 332–333.

³⁸ Διὶ Ὀλυμπίῳ | Μαρη[α]λλῇ | [Αν]τώνιος | Δομιτιανὸς | οὐετρανὸς | [ε]ὐξάμεν[ος] | ἀνέστησα (*IK Estremo oriente* 56). Of the Aramaic inscription enough is preserved to read *mrlh*’. See C. S. Lightfoot – J. F. Healey “A Roman Veteran on the Tigris,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 17 (1991) 1–7.

³⁹ See A. Caquot “Nouvelles inscriptions araméennes de Hatra [II].” *Syria* 30 (1953) 234–246, in part. 244–245. For an alternative reading of the Greek (Μαρτ[θ]εν σ[ύμβιος αὐτοῦ]), see Milik *Recherches d'épigraphie* 334–335. For further discussion, see R. Bertolino “Les inscriptions hatréennes de Doura-Europos: étude épigraphique,” in P. Leriche – M. Gelin (eds), *Doura-Europos. Études IV* (Beirut) 199–206, in part. 201–202 (no. 1); *Corpus des inscriptions sémitiques de Doura-Europos* (Naples 2004) 53–54 (no. AH.X.01). On the triad, see Kaizer “Some Remarks about the Religious Life of Hatra,” *Topoi* 10 (2000) 229–252, in part. at 233 and 236–237.

more lightly incised – as if the stonemason had attempted to use the available space to insert a correction. A very plausible interpretation is that, upon reaching the sequence KT, the stonemason realized that he had omitted this cluster of letters earlier and clumsily tried to insert them later between the E and A. At most, the trace could be seen as a right-leaning K. Alternative reconstructions are also conceivable. If, for example, the intended letter was Ξ (or perhaps a form of Z such as that attested in the Azizos inscription), the resulting reading would be ἔξακτος, the Greek transliteration of the Latin *exactus*. The presence of *exacti* as clerical or administrative personnel within the legions is well established; however, the term itself is confined to Latin sources.⁴⁰ Moreover, it would be somewhat paradoxical for an administrative officer – whose responsibilities entailed meticulous oversight of documentation – to have tolerated or overseen a conspicuous error in the inscription of his own title.⁴¹

On balance, EKTAKTOC remains the most plausible reading. If this was indeed the stonecutter's intention, the term may be taken to describe Marrius Gaianus as an ἑκτακτος (“supernumerary”), that is, a soldier serving outside the regular rank structure. In military contexts, such a designation could encompass a range of auxiliary or specialist functions, including standard-bearer, trumpeter, herald, or aide-de-camp.⁴² According to the inscription, Marrius Gaianus served in Legio I Parthica (Greek: λεγιών α' Παρθική), a unit raised by Septimius Severus in connection with his Parthian

⁴⁰ *D(is) M(anibus) | C(aius) Octavius Cae|cilianus mil(es) exac|tus legionis III Aug(ustae) vixit an|nis XXVII hic situs est (CIL VIII 2956)*. See also Y. Le Bohec, *La Troisième Légion Auguste* (Paris 1989) 193.

⁴¹ The term ἔξακτος is not attested as a loanword; rather, the attested form is ἐξάκτωρ (or ἐκξάκτωρ), which comes from the Latin *exactor*, meaning “tax collector.” See E. Dickey, *Latin Loanwords in Ancient Greek: A Lexicon and Analysis* (Cambridge 2023) 133–134. However, ἐξάκτωρ does not provide a suitable reading in the present context, nor do other options (for instance, the adjectives ἑντακτός and ἑπακτός).

⁴² Καθ' ἑκάστην δὲ ἑκατονταρχίαν ἑκτακτοὶ ἄνδρες τέσσαρες ἔστων, σημειοφόρος καὶ σαλπικτής καὶ ὑπηρέτης καὶ στρατοκέρυξ (Arrian *Tac.* 14.4). Cf. Ael. *Tact.* 9.4, 16.2, 4; Ascl. *Tact.* 6.3. See also DGE s.v. I 1.

campaigns.⁴³ The legion played an active role in these operations and was subsequently awarded the honorific titles *Severiana*⁴⁴ and *Severiana Antoniniana* – the latter plausibly linked to the elevation of Severus's son Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Caracalla) as co-ruler in the aftermath of the war.⁴⁵ Its principal base is generally identified as Singara, which was later elevated to the status of *colonia*. Numismatic evidence indicates the continued presence of the legion, or at least of detachments or veterans associated with it, at Singara in the 3rd century. For example, coins minted there under Gordian III (238–244 CE) depict a vexillum inscribed ΛΕΓ ΑΠ (cf. Appendix II, fig. 1), a legend conventionally expanded as Legio I Parthica.⁴⁶ While such imagery does not in itself identify specific personnel, it provides a plausible background for the epigraphic abbreviations used by individual soldiers. On this basis, it is possible that the abbreviation ΛΕΓ ΑΠC in the inscription was intended to indicate Marrius Gaianus's legionary affiliation. If so, one might further suggest that a soldier serving as a standard-bearer – or in another capacity loosely classifiable as ἑκτακτος – could have employed an abbreviated formula already familiar from the vexilla of the unit.

While officers of equestrian rank – *praefecti*, military tribunes, centurions, and other senior commanders – are well attested in the epigraphic record, they were typically Roman citizens, some of high-status (equestrians).⁴⁷ In contrast, judging from his name,

⁴³ Cf. *Tyriaion* 8,4–5 for a Lycian veteran serving ἐν λεγεῶνι πραιμοπαρθικῷ. The legion was established in 195 CE, according to Kennedy, in *Antichthon* 21 (1987), 59–60. For an earlier date, see P. Edwell, *Between Rome and Persia. The middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman control* (London / New York 2008) 216 n. 122.

⁴⁴ Cf. *AE* 1987, 878,5 (*Severiana*); *IGLS* XIV,2 622,2 (Σεουηριανή) with Wolff, in *Les légions de Rome* 248 n. 20. See also J. Fitz, *Honorific titles of Roman military units in the 3rd century* (Bonn 1983) 117.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Laph2007* 11.30,5–7 (Σεβηριανή Αντωνινιανή) with Wolff, in *Les légions de Rome* 249 n. 25 and 26. See also Fitz, *Honorific Titles* 67.

⁴⁶ Throughout the 3rd century CE, the legions' name and emblem (the centaur) were reproduced on coins of Singara and Rhesaina. See Stoll 2009: 302–325. For coins of Rhesaina also showing a *vexillum* with the legend LEG III P S, see Kennedy, in *Antichthon* 21 (1987) 61; Pollard, *Soldiers* 273–274; Palermo, *North Mesopotamia* 93–94.

⁴⁷ For instance, cf. *AE* 1958, 239,3 for a *tribunus militum*, *CIL* VIII 1322,6

Marrius Gaianus was likely recruited from the native population of Mesopotamia, joining the ranks of a detachment stationed in the region.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the Roman annexation of Mesopotamia, detachments of the legion were permanently stationed in the province to safeguard against renewed incursions by the Parthians and, subsequently, the Sasanian Persians.⁴⁹ A funerary inscription from a veteran of Aphrodisias attest to the considerable mobility of these detachments: “In this sarcophagus is buried Marcus Aurelius Kal[---]s, veteran of the Legio I Parthica Severiana Antoniniana, which is the legion at Singara in Mesopotamia by the river Tigris.”⁵⁰ Although Singara itself was not located on the Tigris, the reference to the river becomes intelligible if the inscription is understood as encompassing the wider *Tigritana* region, within which Singara exercised significant influence. In fact, troops stationed at Singara were deployed eastward to garrison posts along the western bank of the Tigris, near present-day Mosul, where they may have been assigned for extended periods.⁵¹ During such extended

for a *centurio*, also *PEuphr.* 9,15 for a *πριμίπιλος*, and *AE* 1987, 878,3 for one *hastatus*. See also Appendix I.

⁴⁸ Ammianus (20.6.8) mentions *indigeni plures* as part of the defensive force at Singara in 359 CE.

⁴⁹ For instance, cf. *IGLS* XIV,2 622,3–4 for a veteran of the Legio I Parthica who retired “after having traveled the world and taken part in two fights” (τὸν κόσμον ἐκδειμήσας ἐν δυοῖ πνγμαῖς ἀθλεύσας). The legion also received the name *Alexandriana* (*AE* 1926, 87,8) during the wars of Severus Alexander against the Sassanids (231–233 CE), and *Philippiana* (*IGLS* XIII,1 9090,3) during the brief reign of Phillip the Arab (244–249 CE) after the death of Gordian III. See Fitz, *Honorific Titles* 117 and 177.

⁵⁰ [Ἐν τῇ] σορῷ κεκή[δευτ]αι Μ(ᾱρκος) Αὐρ(ήλιος) Καλι[....]ς οὐετρανὸς Ι [ἀπὸ λε] γιῶνος πρῶ[ι] τ[ης] ΙΙ[α]ρθικῆς Σε[ι]βηριανῆς Ἀντωνινιανῆς ἥτις λεγιὼν ἐστὶν ἐν Σινγάροις τῆς Μεσοποταμίας πρὸς τῷ Τίγρει ποταμῷ (*LPh*2007 11.30). For this inscription and its chronology (between 198–217 CE), see M. P. Speidel and J. Reynolds “A veteran of legio I Parthica from Carian Aphrodisias,” *Epigraphica Anatolica* 5 (1985) 31–35. Also note that Pollard (*Soldiers* 273 n. 90) and Palermo (*North Mesopotamia* 73) both argue that part of the Legio I Parthica, if not all, would be based in Nisibis by the mid-3rd century CE.

⁵¹ *Mil(ites) leg(ionis) | IP(arthicae) Sever(ianae) [Alexandrian(ae)] | q(ui) mil(itare) coeperunt | Messal(a) et Sabino | co(n)s(ulibus)* (*AE* 1926, 87,6–10). On this inscription found near Mosul, see Palermo, in *Avventure della scrittura* 195. These soldiers began service under the consuls Messala and Sabinus in 214

postings, the army likely relied on aides such as Marrius Gaianus, whose knowledge of the local landscape and languages would have also been valuable. In this context, Marrius Gaianus may also have taken part in the religious practices of his comrades, including the worship of Silvanus, a deity particularly associated with the military. In this light, the inscription provides a suggestive example of Roman-local interaction in northern Mesopotamia and may reflect processes of cultural exchange or hybridization arising from prolonged military presence in the eastern provinces.

In sum, the two Greek inscriptions housed in the Duhok National Museum provide interesting evidence of Roman military and cultural presence in Mesopotamia, highlighting Singara's strategic role as a frontier garrison and revealing the integration of Roman soldiers into local religious and social life. Within the broader historical context of Singara's geopolitical importance and contested control, these inscriptions offer a valuable micro-historical perspective that deepens our understanding of the city's role in the Roman East and its place in Roman-Persian rivalry. Their complex journey from the site to the Duhok museum also illustrates the wider challenges Iraq faces due to archaeological looting amid political instability. For this reason, many artifacts have remained unpublished and little known.⁵² Fortunately, the inscriptions are preserved in the Duhok National Museum and thus spared destruction or looting – unlike, for example, the Mosul Museum after the ISIS occupation

CE; see I. Mennen *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, AD 193–284* (Leiden 2011) 125–126 and 258. By the Sasanian Wars (230–232 CE), they had served nearly two decades. On a now-lost inscription mentioning *occuli legionum* near the Tigris, see D. L. Kennedy “A lost Latin inscription from the banks of the Tigris,” *JPE* 73 (1988) 101–103. For the defensive line between Singara and the Tigris, see Palermo *North Mesopotamia* 154–158; Comfort, *Roman Frontier* 16–89. The best-known camp is Zaguræ (Ain Sinu). See Oates, *Studies* 80–92; Palermo *North Mesopotamia* 131–141.

⁵² For a comparable initiative enhancing access to Iraq's heritage, also offering new data on code-switching between Greek and Aramaic in a religious context, see I. Bucci – M^a-P. De Hoz – T. Kaizer – M. Moriggi “The first known inscription from Hatra in Greek and Hatran Aramaic: new insights into sociolinguistics and religion at the city of the Sun.” *IRAQ* 87 (2025) 37–67.

in 2014 – ensuring scholarly access to material that might otherwise have been lost.

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Appendix I: table

Previously known soldiers of the I Parthica

Name	Rank	Period	Evidence
<i>C. Iulius Pacatianus</i>	<i>praefectus legionis</i>	Late 2 nd c. CE	<i>CIL</i> XII 1856
<i>Clodius Caerellius</i>	<i>centurio</i>	206 CE	<i>CCID</i> 537
<i>Aurelius Kornous</i>	<i>veteranus</i>	early 3 rd c. CE	<i>Tyriaion</i> 8
<i>Niketes</i>	<i>veteranus</i>	early 3 rd c. CE	<i>I.Ankara</i> 188
<i>Marcus Aurelius Kal[---]s</i>	<i>veteranus</i>	early 3 rd c. CE	<i>I Aph</i> 2007 11.30
<i>Claudius Claudianus</i>	<i>veteranus</i>	early 3 rd c. CE	<i>IGLS</i> XV 1, 210
<i>C. Sulgius Caecilianus</i>	<i>centurio</i>	early 3 rd c. CE	<i>CIL</i> VIII 1322
<i>C. Lucius Marcellus</i>	<i>veteranus</i>	226–227 CE	<i>IGLS</i> XIV 2, 622
<i>Hispanus Victor</i>	<i>hastatus</i>	222–235 CE	<i>AE</i> 1987, 878
<i>Q. Petronius Quintianus</i>	<i>tribunus militum</i>	238–241 CE	<i>AE</i> 1958, 239–240
<i>Iulius Iulianus</i>	<i>praefectus legionis</i>	244–249 CE	<i>IGLS</i> XIII 1, 9090
<i>Aurelius Va[---]</i>	<i>primus pilus</i>	252 CE	<i>PEuphr.</i> 9

Appendix II: figures

Fig 1: *RPC* VII.2 n° 3484 (source: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/7.2/3484>)

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Obverse: CAB TPANKYAAINA CEB (bust of the *Augusta* Sabinia Tranquillina)
Reverse: CINTAPA, AEG A Π (inscribed *vexillum* with the legend λει(ών) α' Π(αρθική)).

Fig 2: Upper Mesopotamia in Roman times

