

Studies in Classical Archaeology 6

# Funerary Portraiture in Greater Roman Syria



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BREPOLS

## 6. ROMAN SOLDIERS' GRAVESTONES IN GREATER SYRIA: THOUGHTS ON DESIGNS, IMPORTS, AND IMPACT

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During the first three centuries CE, between forty and fifty thousand Roman soldiers were permanently stationed in the region of Greater Syria (i.e. Syria, Cilicia Campestris, Iudaea/Palaestina and the northern parts of Roman Arabia).<sup>1</sup> Yet, together they only made up little more than 10 per cent of the Roman Empire's forces and a significantly smaller percentage of the local population in this region. Of an estimated total population of *provincia Syria* of up to four million (or more), the 40,000 to 44,000 soldiers of the Roman army of the Julio-Claudian period only made up around or a little more than 1 per cent of the province's inhabitants. On the whole, therefore, their visibility in everyday life was probably rather low.<sup>2</sup> It might seem somewhat surprising, therefore, that a Greek graffito from the Hisma in southern Jordan claims: 'The Romans always win!'<sup>3</sup> But the author was hardly a rebel frustrated with Roman rule. He is much likelier to have been someone emphasizing the success of Roman soldiers in their effort to fight local brigandage on this particular stretch of the 'Incense Route'. In any event, what this short text serves to remind us of is that when locals in the provinces spoke of 'the Romans' in such general terms they usually referred to

Roman soldiers, for they would have encountered other representatives of the Roman state only on rare occasions (and in small numbers).<sup>4</sup> In times of peace, even the sight of Roman soldiers may have been an exceptional experience for most provincial civilians.<sup>5</sup>

### *Local Syrian vs Roman Military Culture*

Taking 'the Romans' in Greater Syria as the soldiers of the Roman army is of course not to suggest that this military community was culturally and ethnically homogeneous or exclusively defined by Roman urban culture of contemporary Italy. For the epigraphic and papyrological evidence reveals that only a few Roman soldiers of the first three centuries CE serving in Roman Syria originated from Italy and the Latin West, and next to none came from the city of Rome.<sup>6</sup> Since the earliest decades of imperial rule it was not even unheard of that groups of locals without Roman citizenship were enfranchised and recruited into the Roman legions.<sup>7</sup> From a geographical and ethnic point of view, most Roman soldiers in Greater Syria, therefore, were Roman in name only: the majority of them appear to have hailed from eastern provinces.

Having grown up in various different (though mainly eastern) societies and cultures before joining the army in their late teens, a recruit's childhood and youth had left its specific imprint on his personality, and many recruits will have shared some notion of Hellenistic

<sup>1</sup> Counting soldiers of four to five legions and, perhaps, nearly the same number of men serving in the *auxilia*: Tac., *Ann.* iv.5. Cf. Keppie 2000, 182–200; Weiss 2006. However, this is no more than a rough estimate. — Research for this contribution was carried out in the context of the author's fellowship no. UMO-2016/23/P/HS3/04141 of the National Science Centre, Poland. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 665778.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kennedy 2006. Speidel 2009, 474–83. Speidel (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> *IGLS* XXI.138 = *SEG* XL.1524 = *SEG* LVII.1906 = *AE* 1990, 1016: Ῥωμαῖοι ἀεὶ νικῶσιν. Λαυρῆκιος ἔγραψα χαίρει Ζήνων. Cf. Kolb and Speidel 2015, 123–24.

<sup>4</sup> Literary texts by authors from the Roman East also use the term 'the Romans' to refer to other official representatives of the Roman state. Cf. Speidel 2012a, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Speidel 2009, 478–83.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Forni 1992, 84–141.

<sup>7</sup> Speidel 2018, 193–95.

urban culture. Yet once these young men joined the army they were immersed in (and usually absorbed) both a very distinct Roman imperial military culture and routine and the particular traditions of their new military unit.<sup>8</sup> Compared to most civilians, they also acquired a high level of mobility, as service in the Roman army entailed being sent on missions from time to time to places near and far.<sup>9</sup> In spite of their various different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the exposure to the common experience of serving in the Roman army no doubt harmonized the appearance and behaviour of Roman soldiers to a significant extent, thus distinguishing them from civilians and shaping the ways in which they were perceived by local communities.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, there is nothing in our sources to suggest that the outward appearance of a soldier of, say, *legio IV Scythica* from near Zeugma on the Euphrates differed in any fundamental way from that of his contemporary fellow soldier of *legio III Cyrenaica* at Bostra in Arabia. Upon retirement, many veterans, now 'men of honour' enjoying various legal and fiscal privileges, joined the local communities of Greater Syria, and (as far as their surviving monuments suggest) proudly demonstrated their partaking in Hellenistic urban culture.<sup>11</sup> Others, of course, returned to their homes abroad, and yet others came back to their former homes in Greater Syria from service in other provinces.

Over the first three centuries, therefore, many thousands of 'victorious' Roman soldiers and 'honourable' veterans from this complex, though distinctly military society died in Greater Syria. Questions thus arise. Did the soldiers' origins determine the type and style of their gravestones? And did Roman military funerary traditions impact on those of Greater Syria? Does the evidence reveal the development of regional military funerary practices, and does it allow insights into the interaction between the military and local civilian society? Roman military gravestones have, of course, been studied for many different reasons, as they are essential sources for a great number of subjects relating to Roman military, social, political, administrative, cultural, and religious history. Attempts to systematically investigate

the types and styles of military tombstones in the different branches of the army and in specific provinces, their development over time, and their impact on the local civilian epigraphic traditions (or vice versa) have, on the whole, been rather few.<sup>12</sup> No such attempt has yet been made for the funerary practices of the Roman army in Greater Syria. A few general observations and thoughts may therefore be apposite.

To be sure, any attempt to investigate the funerary traditions of Roman soldiers stationed in the provinces of Greater Syria must take into account that Roman soldiers belonged to an empire-wide organization that was officially styled 'Roman' and was, despite all ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural complexities, firmly rooted within Roman culture. At the same time, their military profession set the soldiers apart from all other inhabitants of the empire.<sup>13</sup> With respect to soldiers' funerary monuments, the latter usually included, above all, references to the deceased's military service in the Roman army, such as the use of military technical terms and allusions to martial skills, achievements, and values. Also, if images adorned their funerary monuments, these generally depicted the deceased soldier in full armour or displayed one or more iconographic attributes or symbols of his military profession. Particularly in the Greek-speaking East of the empire, the use of Latin for funerary inscriptions was also a common expression of military identity. Such elements served to emphasize the soldiers' pride in belonging to the Roman army and were therefore hardly *a priori* negotiable.

On the other hand, local developments, triggered by non-military influence, of the imagery and the types of military grave markers are indeed on record. Thus, for instance, Jon Coulston observed that the 'Rhenish army did not erect *stelae* at this time [i.e. the third century CE], whilst the Pannonian army did', and that the 'predominance of the Danubians [i.e. in the Roman army] went hand in hand with the outburst of 3rd century figural gravestones'.<sup>14</sup> Another well-known example is, of course, the funerary banquet scene which first became popular with Roman soldiers on the Lower Rhine in the Flavian period before it spread to Rome and other frontier provinces.<sup>15</sup> However, it had its origins in Archaic Greece and

<sup>8</sup> 'Syrian' cultural influence: e.g. Tac., *Hist.* 11.80, 111.24; Jos., *AJ* XIX.9.2 (365). Military influence: e.g. Speidel 2009, 26–35.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. recently Herz 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. Speidel 2009, 235–48 and 483–500; 2012a, 15 and 27 with n. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Wesch-Klein 1998, 191–94. 'Men of honour': *P.Euphr.* 1.5 (243 CE). On the subject see now Stoll 2015, 193–94 and 204–05.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. however Schleiermacher 1984; Franzoni 1987; Hope 2000; 2001; 2003; Coulston 2007; Speidel 2009, 235–48; 2014; Waebens 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Speidel 2009, 26–35; 2010; 2018, 195–97.

<sup>14</sup> Coulston 2007, 549.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. e.g. Speidel 1994a, 145; 1994b, 5–6; Bossert 1999, 49–50

the Near East.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the charging horseman scene was used for centuries in Greece in the context of hero worship before it became immensely popular with horsemen of the Roman army on the Lower Rhine and practically all other frontier provinces.<sup>17</sup> In both instances, the dissemination no doubt occurred via Greece's northern neighbour Thrace and was a direct consequence of the recruitment of large numbers of Thracian recruits to the Roman frontier armies. To understand the peculiarities of the dissemination processes of such trends in Greater Syria (or any other region of the empire), another significant characteristic of Roman military gravestones must be taken into account. For individual members of the Roman army had a strong tendency to address the military community as their 'epigraphic audience'. Therefore, as a general rule, soldiers' funerary monuments were erected at a location with a significant and 'guaranteed' military 'audience', such as the cemeteries of a military base or fortress or those located at a city that served as a governor's seat.<sup>18</sup>

Surprisingly, however, in spite of its large military garrison, Greater Syria has not produced the masses of epigraphic evidence that is typical of Roman military garrison places in the West. Gravestones of soldiers of the 'Syrian' legions *III Gallica*, *III Scythica*, *VI Ferrata*, *X Fretensis*, and *XII Fulminata* have only survived in very small numbers and do not allow for statistically relevant comparisons with the funerary monuments of local civilians. Only from *provincia Arabia's legio III Cyrenaica* have soldiers' funerary monuments survived at Bostra in slightly greater numbers. The reasons for this puzzling dearth of evidence are not readily apparent. No doubt, differences in the current state of relevant archaeological research between European and Near Eastern countries play into this result, but they hardly explain the phenomenon altogether. Also, it cannot entirely be excluded that all military cemeteries in Greater Syria, though they once existed, remain undiscovered, or that most Roman soldiers in the Near East used perishable wooden grave markers. However, there is little to recommend such assumptions.

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and 70. For civilian gravestones from the city of Rome as a source of inspiration for the design of the tombstones of the *equites singulares Augusti* in the second century CE, see Speidel 1994b, 4.

<sup>16</sup> See Fabricius 1999 for a full and thorough discussion of the evidence. Speidel 1994a, 145.

<sup>17</sup> Pfuhl and Möbius 1977, 310–14; 1979, 310–48. Speidel 1994b, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Speidel 2009, 258–60; 2014, 326. Cf. for instance *AE* 1993, 1572; *CIL* v.893 = *I. Aquileia* II.2772; *AE* 2004, 1143 = *AE* 2005, 1264.

### *Zeugma and Palmyra: Absent Local Soldiers*

That, of course, is not to say that no tombstones at all from known or presumed Syrian garrison places are available for investigating such issues. From the inhabitants of Zeugma on the Euphrates, for instance, which was closely associated with a legionary fortress and a military base for expeditionary troops from the West and from North Africa for at least around two centuries, hundreds of funerary stelae with reliefs and portraits have survived.<sup>19</sup> Yet among them, only a tiny number from the second and third centuries CE commemorate Roman soldiers, and only one fragmentary Latin gravestone of a soldier of *legio IV Scythica* survives.<sup>20</sup> The latter is the only funerary monument from Zeugma of the type of which one would expect to find in significant numbers at a permanent legionary base. Three other gravestones that were designed in the typical manner of local funerary stelae with portrait reliefs show the deceased wearing military dress (i.e. the sagum or chlamys held by a fibula over the right shoulder) (cf. Fig. 6.1).<sup>21</sup> Greek inscriptions on two of these stelae refer to the deceased's military function or rank by a single term, *librarius* (Fig. 6.2), and possibly *b(ene)ff(iciarius)*.<sup>22</sup> They do not, however, mention the name of a military unit, perhaps because everyone from Zeugma and the surrounding region knew that *legio IV Scythica* was meant. Gravestones from *IV Scythica's* soldiers, however, have been recovered from other sites (outposts and soldiers' and veterans' homes), scattered throughout Asia Minor and Greater Syria.<sup>23</sup> As is to be expected, these tombstones bear witness to the adherence to traditional military funerary practices by *legio IV Scythica's* soldiers when buried elsewhere.

The tiny number of soldiers' gravestones from Zeugma (including its immediate surroundings) is puzzling, as a legionary garrison of around five thousand soldiers (or more) for a period of around two hundred years should, in theory, have produced thousands of

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<sup>19</sup> For the Roman army at Zeugma, see esp. Speidel 1998; 2009, 255–71; 2012b, 605–12; Hartmann and Speidel 2013. Funerary stelae: Wagner 1976, 147–273; Skupińska-Løvset 1987; *SEG* xxvi.1500–622, xlvi.1753–54, xlvi.1817–29, li.1901–05, liii.1772–74, lvi.1842, lvii.1766, lxii.1531–64; Crowther 2013, 192–219. See also J. Rumscheid's contribution to this volume.

<sup>20</sup> *AE* 1977, 822 = Speidel 1998, no. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *SEG* xxxvii.1398; *SEG* xlvi.1829 = Kennedy and Graf 1998, no. 23; *SEG* xlvi.1830 = Speidel 1998.

<sup>22</sup> *SEG* xxxvii.1398; *SEG* xlvi.1830 = Speidel 1998, 203–04. Cf. also Crowther 2013, 209.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Speidel 1998, 171–72 and 197–99.



Figure 6.1. Funerary relief of Chrestos wearing military dress. Zeugma, East Necropolis, limestone, early third century CE (after Kennedy and Graf 1998, fig. 23).

Figure 6.2. Funerary stele of Flavius Telegonus, a *librarius*. From Zeugma, limestone, early third century CE. Archaeological Museum Gaziantep, inv. no. 1724 (after Wagner 1976, pl. 47).



gravestones of which one would expect to find noticeable numbers in one or more military cemeteries attached to the legion's fortress at Zeugma or in the near vicinity. Yet all four monuments for soldiers were found in Zeugma's civilian necropoleis. Surprisingly, the same necropoleis produced twice as many (seven or more) Latin gravestones of soldiers from foreign units of various expeditionary armies of the second and third centuries CE.<sup>24</sup> In spite of their Latin language and the occasional iconographic reference to the military profession, these stelae were the products of local stone-cutters.<sup>25</sup> Taken together with the Roman soldiers' predilection for military contexts for their funerary monuments, the above observations suggest that no exclusively military cemetery existed in the vicinity of Roman Zeugma. It is therefore perhaps to be considered that the local legions, *X Fretensis* and *IV Scythica* (after c. 66/67 CE), had their camp and cemeteries elsewhere in the region.<sup>26</sup> As yet, however, repeated surface surveys and satellite imagery analysis of the wider region have only revealed a major

military base for expeditionary troops in the immediate vicinity of the city, but so far no other large military fortress that might be identified as a permanent legionary fortress of the first three centuries CE and no corresponding military cemeteries.<sup>27</sup> As with other cities of Roman Greater Syria, the epigraphic evidence from Zeugma records many names of Latin origin. However, there is nothing to prove that these names refer (mainly) to Roman soldiers.<sup>28</sup> Yet if they did, one wonders why these military men preferred not to identify themselves as soldiers on their gravestones, as their fellow soldiers in other parts of the Roman Empire so proudly did.

<sup>24</sup> *AE* 1977, 819–21; 2003, 1789–90; 2009, 1550; 2012, 1742. Cf. Speidel 2009, 255–71; 2012b, 610–12. For a Greek funerary inscription of an expeditionary soldier of *legio VII Claudia* that was presumably found at Zeugma, see *IGLS* 1.83.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. also Hartmann and Speidel 2003, 115–18; Facella and Speidel 2011.

<sup>26</sup> The new inscriptions from the stone quarries of Arulis (modern Ehneş) published by Albustanlıoğlu 2015 refer to *legio IV Scythica*, not *IV Flavia felix*, as the editor claims. The photos in his publication clearly bear this out.

<sup>27</sup> Speidel 1998, 168; Hartmann and Speidel 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Latin names: Wagner 1976, 169–71; Kennedy and Graf 1998, 105–08; Yon 2015; Yon 2018, 151, 162, 180 explaining the high frequency of Latin names at Zeugma and Samosata by the presence and recruitment of the Roman army.

The richly documented funerary traditions from Palmyra offer an interesting parallel. As is well-known, the oasis city was a very important recruiting ground in the first three centuries CE and the home of a great many soldiers who served in Palmyra's own militia and in Roman units. More than three thousand funerary reliefs from Palmyra are currently known to have survived the centuries. Yet, while Palmyra's religious imagery contains repeated allusions to the martial world, the local funerary monuments generally shun iconographic references to the military profession, and thus do not adequately reflect its major importance in the reality of everyday life of Palmyrene society.<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the people from Palmyra believed such imagery to be inappropriate in a funerary context. The same might have been true for Zeugma.

### *Bostra: A Split Society?*

At Bostra, the 'capital' of the Roman province of Arabia and the garrison place of *legio III Cyrenaica*, a different pattern emerges from the documentary evidence. Since the early second century CE, Roman soldiers and local civilians lived here side by side. Between 250 and 300 funerary monuments from the second and third centuries CE are known to have survived at this site.<sup>30</sup> Around 15 per cent of these can be identified as gravestones of members of the local military community. Funerary portraits were rather uncommon at Bostra, it seems, but certain epigraphic preferences distinguished the tombstones of the military and the civilian communities.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Latin was the language those who expressly identified themselves as soldiers chose for their gravestones. The same is true for their family members, and both groups, it seems, had their funerary monuments in the same necropoleis that developed along the main access roads to Bostra's legionary fortress.<sup>32</sup> The texts of most members of the military community at Bostra were inscribed on rectangular stelae, funerary altars, or building blocks, whilst unadorned tall and coarse stelae with

rounded or semi-circular tops inscribed with short Greek funerary texts were the typical tombstones of the ordinary local population.<sup>33</sup> Only a few funerary altars were inscribed with Greek texts, and only occasionally did veterans or members of soldiers' families also choose artless funerary stelae of the local type. Deceased with Latin names, however, are not at all uncommon on such simple grave markers.<sup>34</sup> Hence, with relatively few overlaps in the surviving evidence, there were significant differences at Bostra between the tombstones of soldiers and veterans on the one hand and of civilians on the other. In this respect, the funerary monuments from Bostra appear to differ significantly from the respective evidence from Zeugma and Palmyra. Nonetheless, local characteristics of Bostra's Roman funerary monuments suggest that all types were products of local developments.

### *Apamea and Anazarbos: Expeditionary Soldiers' Gravestones*

In any event, the funerary monuments of Roman soldiers from units that were permanently stationed in Syria must be analysed separately from the gravestones of soldiers from Roman expeditionary armies. For expeditionary soldiers usually came to Greater Syria for no longer than the duration of a campaign and with the cultural imprint not only of Roman military service in general but also of their respective homes, units, and garrison places. They were therefore no doubt less likely to influence the funerary customs of local communities and were *a priori* also less susceptible to being influenced during campaigns in this respect. Two cemeteries in Greater Syria have produced a sufficient number of gravestones and are therefore particularly suited to study the epigraphic funerary customs of expeditionary soldiers: one at Apamea on the Orontes and the other at Anazarbos in Cilicia.

Perhaps the best-known example of a military base for Roman expeditionary troops anywhere in the Roman Empire is that of *legio II Parthica* at Syrian Apamea. It is mentioned by Cassius Dio in his description of the events of 217–18 CE, and it is further documented by well over one hundred inscriptions (most of which, however, still remain unpublished).<sup>35</sup> The evidence shows

<sup>29</sup> For Palmyra as an important military recruiting ground, see e.g. Young 2001, 142–50; Tentea 2011; Piso and Tentea 2011; Smith 2013, 167–71; Gatier 2017. Imagery: cf. e.g. Sartre-Fauriat 2012.

<sup>30</sup> *IGLS XIII.1.9170–9435* provide an easily accessible overview over the relevant epigraphic evidence.

<sup>31</sup> For funerary portraits from Bostra, see e.g. *IGLS XIII.1.9386* and 9392.

<sup>32</sup> Family members: *IGLS XIII.1.9170–9205*. Necropoleis: Stoll 2015, 206–07. For the different situation in the villages around Bostra see most recently Stoll 2015, 202–05, with further literature.

<sup>33</sup> *IGLS XIII.1.9206–9435*. Only a few altars were inscribed with Greek funerary texts; e.g. *IGLS XIII.1.9393* and 9397.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *IGLS XIII.1.9246, 9337, 9396, 9413, and 9429*.

<sup>35</sup> Cass. Dio LXXVIII.34.1. Cf. Cass. Dio LXXVIII.28.2, LXXVIII.29.2, and LXXVIII.34.2 and 5. Cf. Cass. Dio LXXVIII.34.5 for 218 CE. Inscriptions: Balty 1988, 97; Balty and van Rengen 1993, 13.



Figure 6.3. Funerary stele of an unknown soldier of *legio II Parthica* wearing a large ring buckle, Apameia, limestone, 217–18 CE (photo: Michael Blömer).



Figure 6.4. Funerary stele of Lucius Septimius Viator, *lanciaris* of *legio II Parthica*, carrying a round shield and *lanceae*, Apameia, limestone (photo: Michael Blömer).



Figure 6.5. Funerary stele of Aelius Verecundinus, centurion of *legio II Parthica* wearing a large ring buckle. Seven *pillei libertatis* caps, Apameia, limestone, 217–18 CE (photo: Michael Blömer).

that the base at Apamea was reused on several occasions during the first half of the third century by the second Parthian legion (as well as, to a lesser extent, by several other expeditionary units: *legio XIII Gemina*, *legio XIV Gemina*, *legio IV Flavia*, *cohors XIV urbana*, and even by some soldiers of the Syrian legions *III Gallica* and *IV Scythica*). Soldiers of *legio II Parthica* at Apamea apparently preferred funerary altars (mainly) adorned with reliefs of standing soldiers of the so-called ‘ring-buckle type’, carrying weapons or holding items of office or sacrificing at an altar (cf. Figs 6.3–6.6).<sup>36</sup> Similar altars with reliefs (though with different imagery) are known from Anatolia and the Near East.<sup>37</sup> The horsemen buried at Apamea in the same period, however, appear to have preferred stelae for their gravestones (cf. Fig. 6.7). Their reliefs showed the deceased on horseback or standing while leading one or two horses. Military funerary reliefs were thus common at Apamea. The imagery is typical of the period and, for the most part, originated in the

Danubian provinces where the majority of the deceased soldiers at Apamea were recruited.<sup>38</sup> In fewer cases, other popular images that had their military origins in Lower Germany, such as the funeral banquet, were also used.<sup>39</sup>

Although the types of monuments and the imagery on the gravestones of the deceased soldiers at the military base of Apamea were typical of the period, they also display a number of characteristics that are clear signs of local influence. Thus, the designs of the monuments at Apamea are simpler, and the craftsmanship is of lesser quality than most equivalent gravestones found at the permanent garrison places of the expeditionary units. The relief on one gravestone of a cavalryman even looks more like a dog than a horse (Fig. 6.7).<sup>40</sup> If expeditionary soldiers from the West expected vaguely similar grave markers to the ones they knew from their permanent bases to be available at Apamea, they surely concluded that, on the whole, the stone-cutters they employed at

<sup>36</sup> For this type, see Coulston 2007; Waebens 2015. Cf. also Gabelmann 1972.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. e.g. *CIL* III.226 = *I. Ankara* 44 (Ankara). *CIL* III.13608 = *IGLS* vi.2928 (Niha, Bekaa Valley).

<sup>38</sup> Coulston 2007, 535–38, 540–42, and 549.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *AE* 1993, 1583; *Ubi Erat Lupa* 13320 (online). Lower Germany: Speidel 1994a, 145.

<sup>40</sup> *AE* 1993, 1593.

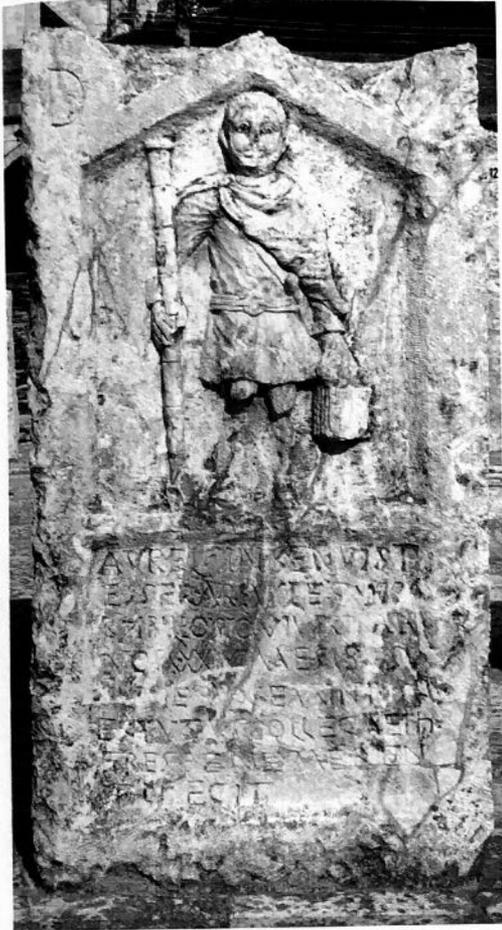


Figure 6.6. Funerary stele of Aurelius Ingenuis, *tesserarius* of *legio II Parthica* wearing a large ring buckle. Apameia, limestone, 242–44 CE (photo: Michael Blömer).

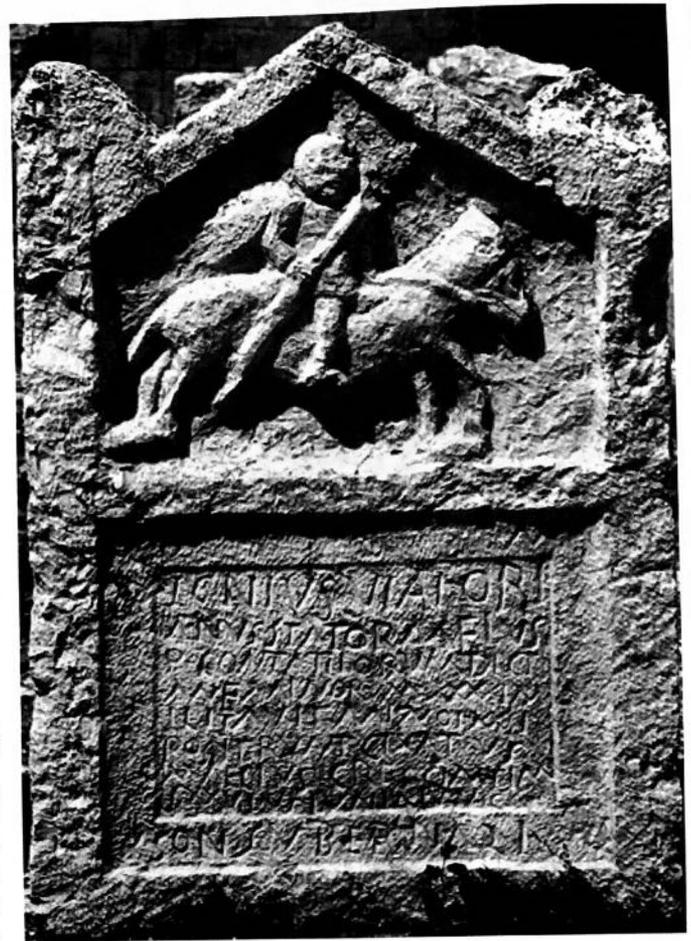


Figure 6.7. Funerary stele of Ignius Viatorianus, *stator* of *ala I Ulpia contariorum*, Apameia, limestone, 252 CE (photo: Ortolf Harl).

Apameia were less skilled or less well trained as sculptors than their counterparts at home. What is more, certain types of popular grave markers at Albanum, like the *cupa funeraria* or elegant marble plates, or even the kind of funerary altars soldiers of *legio II Parthica* could hope for at 'home', were apparently altogether unavailable at Apameia. Roman expeditionary soldiers, it thus appears, had to adapt their expectations regarding design and quality of their funerary monuments abroad to the capabilities of local craftsmen, as the sculptors from their home bases evidently did not take part in military campaigns.

Much the same conclusions can be drawn from soldiers' funerary monuments which have survived at Cilician Anazarbos. A site next to this city was chosen as the base for the emperor's horse guard during the Eastern campaigns of the Severan dynasty.<sup>41</sup> Among the 661 inscriptions from Anazarbos, which Mustafa Sayar collected and published in 2000, one sarcophagus, five funerary altars, and four (or six) stelae commemorate expeditionary soldiers of the third century CE. The units

on record are: *equites singulares Augusti*, *legio II Parthica*, *cob. VI Hispanorum*.<sup>42</sup> These tombstones are recorded as having been recovered from a local cemetery that was set aside for deceased imperial soldiers. Six funerary monuments are for *equites singulares Augusti*.<sup>43</sup> Yet none of the splendid figural stelae that were so typical of the horse guard's cemetery at the capital have been found at Anazarbos, and only one altar bears a funerary banquet scene that was so popular at Rome. Here in Cilicia, the *equites singulares* used mostly unadorned gravestones: four rectangular funerary altars and two stelae. All monuments bear Latin inscriptions.<sup>44</sup> Two altars also carry a Greek version below the Latin funerary text (cf. Fig. 6.8).<sup>45</sup> These monuments attest to their authors' great familiarity not only with the Greek language but also with military technical terms. The repeated use of the expression *memoriae causa* and the accusative case

<sup>42</sup> *I. Anazarbos* 1.63–68, 70–72, and 530.

<sup>43</sup> *I. Anazarbos* 1.63–68; Speidel 1994b, nos 688 and 688a–e.

<sup>44</sup> *I. Anazarbos* 1.72 is a fragment.

<sup>45</sup> *AE* 1991, 1550 = Speidel 1994b, no. 688 = *I. Anazarbos* 1.63; *AE* 1991, 1551 = Speidel 1994b, no. 688a = *I. Anazarbos* 1.64. Cf. also *I. Anazarbos* 1.72 (a fragment).

<sup>41</sup> See Sayar 1991; Speidel 1994a, 62–63.

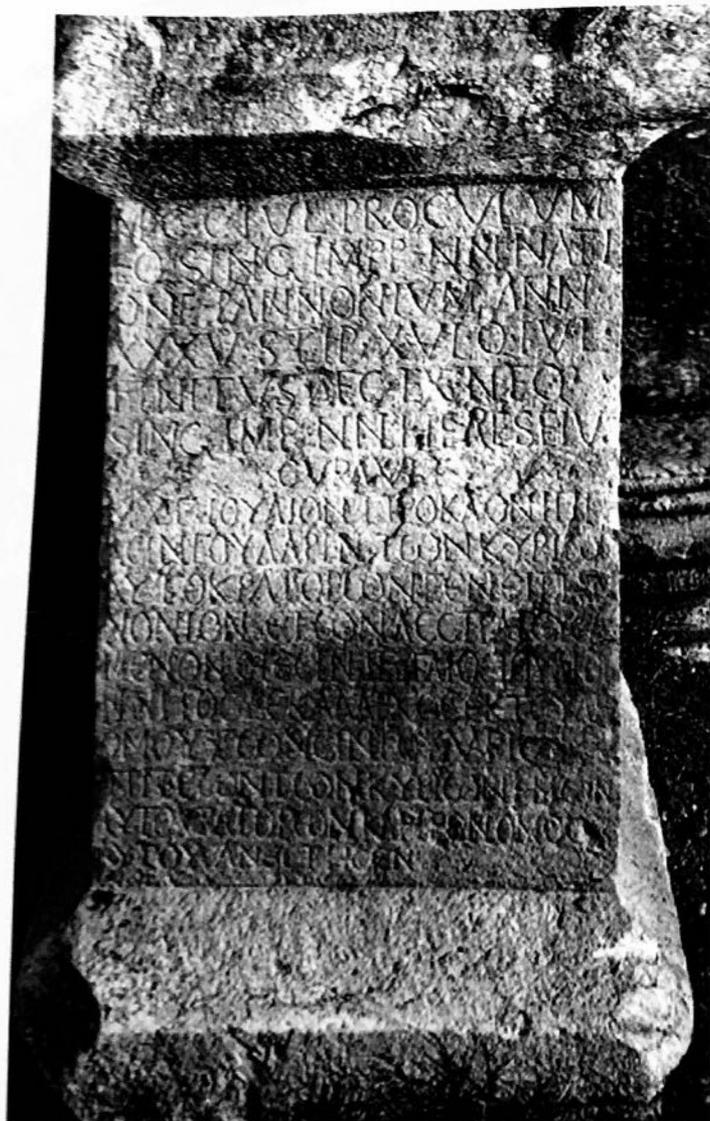


Figure 6.8. Bilingual funerary altar of Gaius Iulius Proculus, *eq. sing. imp. nn.* Anazarbos, limestone, 197–218 CE (after Speidel 1994b, no. 688a).

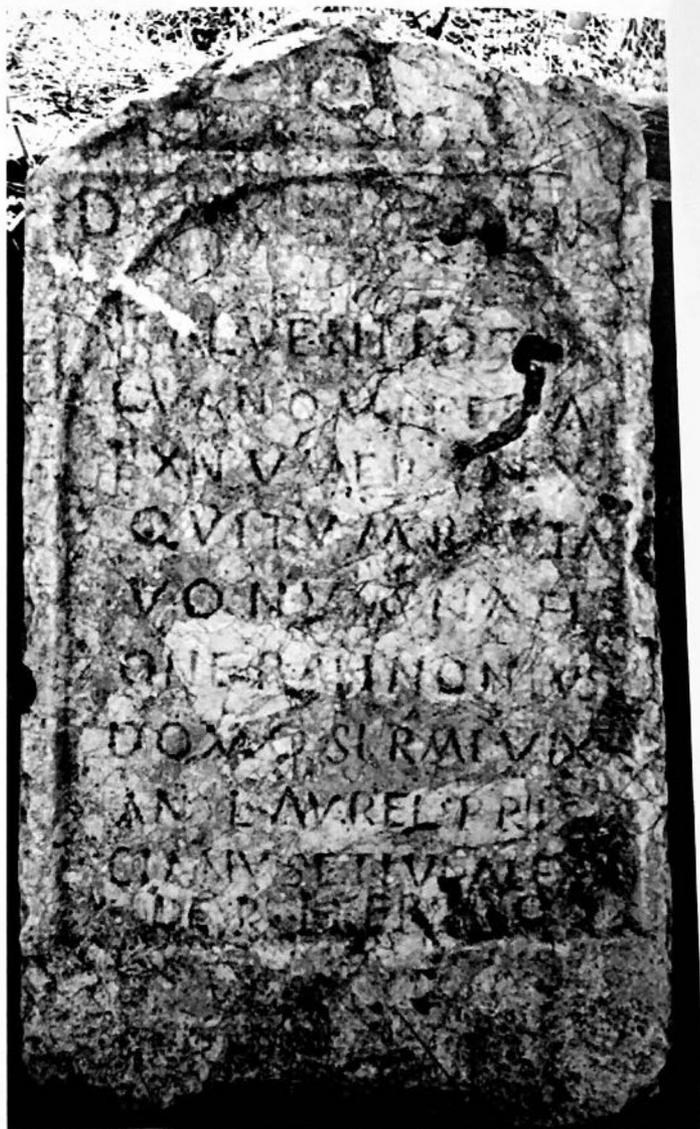


Figure 6.9. Funerary stele of Calventius Silvanus, veteran of the *eq. sing. Aug.*, Anazarbos, limestone, 197–218 CE (after Speidel 1994b, no. 688d).

of the name of a deceased soldier, a Pannonian, betrays an author who was even fully acquainted with the epigraphic formulae in use in the Greek-speaking parts of the Roman world.<sup>46</sup> If Anazarbos's military gravestones were indeed set up in a distinct military cemetery, the Greek version likely served to impress fellow soldiers with the deceased's erudition rather than being an attempt to communicate with Anazarbos's citizens.<sup>47</sup> Strangely, the latter are not (yet?) known to have used rectangular funerary altars. They appear instead to have

preferred pillar-shaped funerary altars, which in turn do not seem to have appealed to expeditionary soldiers. Again, a great many names of Latin origin are on record in the surviving epigraphic evidence from Anazarbos.

Two funerary stelae of *equites singulares Augusti* are of a local type with an inscribed niche that is crowned by a triangular pediment between two corner acroteria (cf. Fig. 6.9). This type is well-attested in Anazarbos but apparently not known from the horse guard's cemetery at Rome.<sup>48</sup> Yet, similar types were in use in the first-century army on the Rhine, where it had been introduced by

<sup>46</sup> *AE* 1991, 1551 = Speidel 1994b, no. 688a = *I. Anazarbos* 1.64; *AE* 1991, 1555 = Speidel 1994b, no. 688d = *I. Anazarbos* 1.68; *I. Anazarbos* 1.530.

<sup>47</sup> Pace Stoll 2015, 206–07 n. 517.

<sup>48</sup> *AE* 1991, 1554 = Speidel 1994b, 688e = *I. Anazarbos* 1.67; *AE* 1991, 1555 = Speidel 1994b, no. 688d = *I. Anazarbos* 1.68.

soldiers and sculptors from north-eastern Italy.<sup>49</sup> From its Italian origins in the region of Aquileia, this type also spread further north-east towards the Upper/Middle Danube. Possibly, therefore, soldiers from the Danube provinces had previously introduced this type of stele at Anazarbos. Be that as it may, the 'Danubian' horse guards from the Severan period were no doubt pleased to recognize a familiar format and were happy to use it for their own gravestones.

### *Conclusions*

Thus, where the surviving evidence allows careful attempts at reconstructing local funerary traditions of the civilian and military communities of the major garrison places in Greater Syria during the first three centuries CE, it reveals much regional variety, the existence both of distinct local military and civilian funerary traditions and of various forms of mutual influence on the choice and designs of funerary monuments. It is evidently essential to make a distinction between the evidence from permanent garrison places and that from expeditionary bases. Overall, however, the currently accessible, relevant funerary monuments suggest that in either case, existing local civilian practices had a greater influence on the development of Roman military funerary traditions than vice versa. Do soldiers' funerary monuments from Greater Syria indeed indicate through their inscriptions and iconography that the members of the Roman army were characterized by dual identities, a military and a local civilian one, as Oliver Stoll recently suggested?<sup>50</sup> If so, those soldiers buried in Zeugma and Palmyra appear to have dropped their military identity almost immediately upon leaving the army. Or are their funerary monuments simply unsuited to provide such insights? The latter seems more likely, but in any event it is essential to keep in mind that the extremely lacunose state of our evidence from Greater Syria renders all general pronouncements on such issues contestable.

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<sup>49</sup> Bossert 1999, 49–50 and 130, Taf. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Stoll 2015, 210–11.

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