

THE LEGIO XXI RAPAX AT MOGONTIACUM

by

LESZEK MROZEWICZ

ABSTRACT: The deployment of the legio XXI Rapax to Mogontiacum (83–89 CE) was an episodic one, but it took place during a fateful period. The events connected with the war against the Chatti and the revolt of Saturninus permanently changed the image of Mogontiacum and Upper Germania, as well as deciding the fate of the legion.

The history of legio XXI Rapax spans some 100 years¹, and only a few of them are directly linked to Mogontiacum. It is assumed that the legion arrived there in 83 CE and remained until 89 CE². Its relocation from Lower Germania, where it had previously been stationed (in Bonna / Bonn), to Mainz was dictated by the war against the Chatti that emperor Domitian embarked on. Initially, however, the XXI Rapax was quartered outside the main camp, which was occupied at the time by the XIV Gemina Martia Victrix and the I Adiutrix. Only after the latter marched out to the Danube front (Pannonia, the war against the Dacians) in 86³ did the XXI Rapax take up quarters in the camp at Mogontiacum, on a hill called Kästrich. The briefness of their time there is probably one of the reasons for the very scarce documentation of its stay. This includes, among others, four inscriptions found in the Mainz area – three funerary ones and a votive relic:

1. *CIL* XIII 6950 = RIESE 1914, 1074 Zahlbach
M. Val(erius) M(arci) f(ilius) Lem(onia tribu) | Matto⁴ Bono|niae mil(es)
leg(ionis) | XXI Rap(acis) (centuria) L(ucii) Fal(toni) Firmi an(norum) |
XL stip(endiorum) XIX h(ic) s(itus) e(st) | t(itulum) f(ieri) i(ussit) h(eres)
f(aciendum) c(uravit)

¹ On the history of the XXI Rapax see RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1781–1791; BÉRARD 2000; SCHMIDTS 2018: 10–12. RITTERLING (col. 1781) held that the legion was created by the emperor Augustus before 8 BCE, but it is also likely that this happened in 15 BCE, in view of the extensive military operations to be launched on the Rhine and the Danube. BÉRARD (p. 49) concurs with L. KEPPIE, who argues that the legion was established either in 41–40 BCE, or shortly following the Battle of Actium; see KEPPIE 1998: 183.

² RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787; BÉRARD 2000: 54–60.

³ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1384–1388; LÖRINCZ 2000: 152–154.

⁴ *Matto* is a name of Celtic provenance; see KAKOSCHKE 2008, pp. 99–100.

2. *CIL* XIII 6951 = RIESE 1914, 1075 Zahlbach
 ---nia mil(es) | leg(ionis) XXI Rap(acis) | ann(orum) XXXV | stip(endiorum)
 XIV h(ic) s(itus) | e(st) h(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit)
3. *CIL* XIII 6951b = RIESE 1914, 1089 Mainz, cathedral, cloister
 ---us P. f. | ---ius --- | ---nus Lyc --- | [---]le]g(ionis) XXI R[ap(acis) ---] | --- s]
 tip(endiorum) X[---]
4. *CIL* XIII 11800 = RIESE 1914, 1076 Mainz, near Gautor
 m[il(es)] | leg(ionis) XXI Rapa(cis) | Domesticis | v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)
 l(actus) m(erito)

None of the inscriptions was found *in situ*. However, it is worth noting that the first two were discovered near Zahlbach, west of the legionary fortress, where a large necropolis⁵ used by the soldiers was located. Inscription No. 3 was found in the cloister of the cathedral of Mainz, outside any archaeological context. The fourth, votive inscription was discovered near present-day Gautor, i.e. on the eastern side of the fortress.

If the dating of the first three texts is beyond doubt and can be safely situated in the timeframe when the legio XXI Rapax was quartered in the camp at Kästrich, the last inscription requires some comment. Its first publisher, K. KÖRBER, supported by the opinion of A. von DOMASZEWSKI, argued that it dated to the period when the legion was stationed in Vindonissa / Windisch (between 46 and 70 CE)⁶. The

⁵ DECKER, SELZER 1976: 524; WITTEYER 1997: 65–68.

⁶ This is particularly due to the fact that two tombstone inscriptions of soldiers of the legio XXI Rapax from Mainz are dated to the first half of the first century, the period when it was based in Vindonissa:

CIL XIII 6949 = RIESE 1914, 1073 = SELZER 1988, 52:
 L(ucius) Marius L(ucii) f(ilius) Pu|pin{i}a (tribu) Baeterris | miles leg(ionis)
 XXI sti|pendiorum | XVI anno(rum) XXXX | hic sit(us) est frate|r faciendum
 | curavit.
CIL XIII 6951a = RIESE 1914, 1086 = SELZER 1988, 51:
 Q(uintus) Mar|cius Balbus m/issicius leg(ionis) XXI et | Celer f(ilius) eius |
 hic siti sunt.

To E. RITTERLING, the presence of the first soldier in Mainz was apparently related to “Ca- ligula’s great operations against the Germans” (cf. SELZER 1988: 52: “Inscriptliche Formulierungen und Art des Steines lassen eine Datierung vor der Mitte des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. zu. Da die 21. Legion aber von 82/83–90 n. Chr. in Mainz stationiert war, muss der Soldat während eines anderen dienstlichen Aufenthaltes in Mainz gestorben sein”), whereas the second serviceman was “vielleicht ein ehemaliger Offiziale des Mainzer Heereskommandanten” (RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1784); on the other hand, according to SELZER (*loc. cit.*), “dürfte der Soldat bei einer Verlegung der Legion in Mainz gestorben sein”. The inscription discovered in Mainz in the area of the University remains problematic; HERZ (1978–1979: 287, no. 21) published it in the following form:

[... Front ?]oni | [... V]ot(uria tribu) Pla(centia) | [milit(es) leg(ionis) XV]I,
 ann(orum) | [... et ... stip(endiorum) ... et ...].

The researcher set out with the premise that the first line includes a plural nominative, and therefore that the text refers to two soldiers who may have been brothers; he also assumed that the third line refers to legio XVI, because “lediglich die legio XVI keinen Beinamen besaß. Damit ist

founder of the monument, a legionary whose name has not survived, may have been transferred to serve on the staff of the governor of Upper Germania. According to KÖRBER, the theory is warranted both in view of the formula of the inscription and the fact that the cult of the (Matres) Domesticae to whom it was dedicated was particularly widespread in Lower Germania, where the legion was based (at Vetera / Xanten, between 9/10 and 43/45 CE), prior to it being relocated to Vindonissa. This is where the founder of the monument would become their follower⁷. On the other hand, E. RITTERLING maintained that the inscription should be dated to the legion's stay in Mogontiacum, but he did not substantiate his claim⁸. This question was resolved by L.J. WEBER⁹, in line with the view advanced by RITTERLING. The essential argument was that Bonna / Bonn had been one of the main centres of the cult of the Matres Domesticae. It was there that the earliest testimonies relating to the cult – dated to 70–89 CE – originate from; the Mainz monument must therefore be placed in their context, especially given the fact that the XXI Rapax was stationed in Bonna (70–83). Thus, it would have been made between 83 and 89; however, assuming that the legio XXI Rapax (or a part of it) was based in Weisenau, about 4 km south of Mogontiacum, the date may be narrowed down to 86–89¹⁰.

The Friedberg relic adds to this modest catalogue of inscriptions; it is an inscription on a small bronze shield¹¹ in four lines of *litteris punctis scriptis*:

5. CIL XIII 7404 = RIESE 1914, 1063 Friedberg¹²
 legionis XXI | Rapacis | (centuria) Sosi(i) | Severi Suli(i) Noti¹³

die Inschrift in die Zeit vor 43 n. Chr. datiert". HERZ's interpretation was approved by the editors of *L'Année épigraphique* (1979, 435), who nevertheless noted that one cannot exclude legio XXI, "qui a mené des opérations dans la région sous Caligula (cf. C.I.L., XIII, 6949)"; this view is shared by U. SCHILLINGER-HÄFELE, although she argues that the text is concerned with one person and reconstructs it as follows:

---oni/[us . f(i)lius] | Vot(uria tribu) Pla(centia) | [--- leg(ionis) | X.]I ann(or)um
 | [--- stip(endiorum) ---

Still, she admits the possibility that it had been a soldier of either the XVI or XXI legion: "Die XVI. Legion hatte zwischen 13 und 43 n. Chr. ihr Standort in Mainz [...]. Da der Verstorbene kein Cognomen trug, ist die Inschrift bei einer Ergänzung zu XXI mit dem Grabstein des L. Marius aus derselben Legion (CIL XIII 6949) zu vergleichen, den Ritterling mit Caligulas Operationen gegen Germanen des Mittelrheins in Verbindung bringt"; see SCHILLINGER-HÄFELE 1977: 502, n. 89; cf. BÉRARD 2000: 55 (with a substantial degree of scepticism).

⁷ KÖRBER 1910: 54; KÖRBER 1911: 127, n. 20.

⁸ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787.

⁹ WEBER 1966: 123.

¹⁰ WEBER 1966: 123–124.

¹¹ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787: "das bronzene Waffenschildchen"; RIESE (*ad n.*): "Rundes Bronzeplättchen"; BÉRARD 2000: 54: "une petite étiquette de bronze"; WAHL 1982: 102: "die Besitzmarke eines Soldaten der 21. Legion".

¹² See also BERGK 1882: 69.

¹³ As interpreted by E. RITTERLING.

Apart from the inscriptions, stamps on building ceramics constitute another primary source concerning the stay of the legio XXI Rapax in Mainz. Twenty-six such artefacts have been found in Mogontiacum, with thirteen specimens found in the very area of the camp or its immediate vicinity¹⁴. They occur in two variants: LE(gionis) XXI R(apacis) and LEG(ionis) XXI R(apacis)¹⁵. The manufacture of Rapax legion bricks began with its arrival in Mogontiacum. At that time, the main production facility used by the units stationed in Mogontiacum was Tabernae / Rheinzabern¹⁶, which to date has yielded two relics bearing the stamp of the legio XXI. The first – LXXI | RAPAX – was published in 1912 by W. LUDOWICI¹⁷ and for a long time offered the only evidence of the legion's activity in Rheinzabern. The second – LEGXXIR – became known only in 2000, having been published by G. WESCH-KLEIN¹⁸.

The legion only took advantage of the brickyard in Rheinzabern for a brief time¹⁹. Shortly after its arrival in Mogontiacum, brick production was transferred to the right bank of the Rhine, to Frankfurt-Höchst (Nied)²⁰, most probably due to

¹⁴ Kästrich (3), Universitätskliniken (4), Universitätskliniken/Kästrich (1); Eisgrubweg (4), Zita-dellenweg (1); see DOLATA 2014: 272–273 (Katalog VI von Ziegelstempeln der legio XXI Rapax).

¹⁵ DOLATA 2014: 269–275; cf. *CIL* XIII 12316, 1–4.

¹⁶ ZEISS 1932; BERNHARD 1990: 533–539 (with further references); the brickyard operated from ca. 45 to ca. 85; it was manned by soldiers of all legions stationed at Mogontiacum: I Adi-atrix, IV Macedonia, XIV Gemina, XXI Rapax and XXII Primigenia; see BERNHARD 1990: 533; WESCH-KLEIN 2000; SCHMIDTS 2018: 53.

¹⁷ LUDOWICI 1912: 114; LUDOWICI 1927: 186; *CIL* XIII 12312; RITTERLING 1911: 39; RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1728; cf. DOLATA 2014: 269–270; SCHMIDTS 2018: 11, 224 (D51).

¹⁸ WESCH-KLEIN 2000: 460, regrettably without graphic documentation: “Bisher war nur ein einziger, dem Typ nach singulärer, zweizeiliger Stempel dieser Legion in Rheinzabern nachge-wiesen: *l(egio) XXI / rapax*. Nun kommt ein weiterer Stemeltyp hinzu: *[LE]G XXI R*; die Schrift (Buchstabenhöhe ca. 2,1 cm) ist erhaben, *XXI* ist überstrichen, das *G* ähnelt mehr einem *C* als einem *G*, zwischen *G* und *X* befindet sich ein eckiger Trenner; das *R* weist einen relativ kleinen Rundbogen und einen langen, relativ weit nach rechts ausladenden Abstrich auf; das einfache, rechteckige Stempelfeld ist vertieft”; BÉRARD 2000: 55, n. 64; the fact that another stamp of the legion XXI Rapax from Rheinzabern actually exists is acknowledged in the scholarly community only with great difficulty, cf. DOLATA 2014 (p. 269: “Ein einziger Ziegelstempel der Einheit wurde in Rheinzabern gefunden (Abb. 70–71) und ist durch die Materialvorlage im Corpus sowie die grundlegenden Veröffentlichungen durch W. Ludowici dokumentiert”) and BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020 (p. 32: “In Rheinzabern ist bisher nur ein einziger (!) gestempelter Ziegel der *legio XXI Rapax* bezeugt...”); *contra*: SCHMIDTS 2018: 11.

¹⁹ It is assumed that the Rheinzabern brickyard ceased to function in 85 at the latest; RITTERLING 1911: 39: “Alle in Rheinzabern erzeugten und gestempelten Truppenziegel der älteren Kaiserzeit fallen also in die Zeit von Claudius (etwa vom Jahre 47 an) bis zum Chattenkrieg Domitians im Jahr 83”; RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787: “Die Ziegeleien der Mainzer L(egionen) in Rheinzabern sind während oder nach dem J. 83 verlassen worden; an ihre Stelle trat die Zentralziegelei in Nied bei Höchst a. M.”; DOLATA 2014: 169: “während des Chattenkrieges von Domitianus 83/85”; SCHMIDTS 2018: 53: “um 85 n. Chr.”.

²⁰ WAHL 1982: 99–100, 119–120; BAATZ, SIMON 1989: 303–304; BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32.

the construction of forts and fortifications between the Main, Rhine and Taunus rivers. The activity of the Mainz unit in the region is attested by numerous finds of bricks with the stamps of the legio XXI Rapax²¹. Excavations in Nied (Frankfurt-Nied) revealed remnants of an extensive facility producing bricks and utility ceramics, whose infrastructure was erected by legion XXI, among others, as documented by bricks with the stamps LEXXIR, LECXXIR, LEXXR²².

In pertinent literature, the closure of the brickyard in Rheinzabern and the launch of the new one in Frankfurt-Nied²³ is the datum point marking the moment when the legio XXI Rapax relocated from Bonna to Mogontiacum. This was a necessary move in view of the war with the Chatti; the legion was reputed to be extremely skilled in and keen on combat, having played a decisive role in suppressing the Batavian uprising²⁴. The vacated camp at Bonna / Bonn was occupied by the newly formed legio I Minervia²⁵. The stamps of the legio XXI Rapax (two specimens) in Tabernae are thought to prove that immediately after the relocation its *vexillatio* arrived there. After a brief sojourn, the unit was transferred to Frankfurt-Nied. Following this line of reasoning, the legio XXI Rapax reached Mainz in 83 and, initially quartered in a camp at Mainz-Weisenau²⁶, it took the place of the I Adiutrix (in 86) at Kästrich once the latter had deployed. The Frankfurt-Nied brickworks then became the main supplier of bricks, needed e.g. for the construction work undertaken in the fortress²⁷.

Nonetheless, this lucid picture, reinforced by the authority of E. RITTERLING²⁸, is only a theoretical assumption, since there are no sources that would unequivocally corroborate it. On the other hand, there is no shortage of doubtful points.

Research at the Roman military camp at Groß-Gerau-Wallerstädten²⁹ (ca. 16 km south-east of Mainz), a site that was abandoned at the beginning of Vespasian's reign³⁰, indicates that its inhabitants obtained their utility ceramics mainly from the facility in Nied. This would imply that it was not established only after Domitian had ascended to power – either during or after the war with

²¹ *CIL* XIII 12317–12322; SCHMIDTS 2018: 53–54, 211 (Kat. D8), 214 (D13), 216–217 (D22).

²² WOLFF 1893: 259–262; SCHMIDTS 2018: 11; see HAMPEL 2012; HAMPEL 2014.

²³ BAATZ 1989: 302–304.

²⁴ Tac. *Hist.* IV 78, 1 (the battle of Trier); RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1786; BÉRARD 2000: 54.

²⁵ The legion is referred to in RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1420–1437.

²⁶ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787; BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32; cf. BÉRARD 2000: 55.

²⁷ All bricks made by the legio XXI Rapax which have been discovered to date in Mainz originate from the Frankfurt-Nied facility, as attested by geochemical analysis; see DOLATA 2014: 269–280; BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32.

²⁸ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787.

²⁹ HAHN, HELFERT 2012: 109–112; BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32.

³⁰ Troops would afterwards be stationed at the camp of Groß-Gerau “Auf Esch”, built in the early years of the reign of Vespasian; HAHN, HELFERT 2012: 112; SIMON 1989: 322.

the Chatti³¹ – but that it was already functioning in the times of Vespasian³², and probably even earlier. One is therefore compelled to reconsider the moment when the brickworks became operational³³, as well as the dating of the arrival of the legio XXI Rapax in Mainz and its involvement in Nied. If we hold to the opinion that it was Domitian who decided that the legion be transferred from Lower Germania, this may have happened in 82 CE³⁴, having been correlated with the establishment of the legio I Minervia; an earlier date cannot be ruled out either (end of Vespasian's rule?, Titus?), but at present this cannot be conclusively ascertained³⁵. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that investigations at Nied have yielded artefacts with the stamps of all the legions which made up the garrison of Mogontiacum between 70 and 89/90³⁶, as well as those of the cohorts I Asturum³⁷. The latter unit is likely to have been stationed at the nearby *castellum* of Frankfurt-Höchst³⁸.

The arrival of the legio XXI Rapax in Mogontiacum involves the question of its billeting. At that time the quarters at Kästrich were occupied by the legions I Adiutrix and XIV Gemina Martia Victrix. Accommodation became available only when the Adiutrix had marched out to Pannonia in 86 CE. The obvious

³¹ An overview of opinions is provided in BAATZ, SIMON 1989: 303; cf. PFERDEHIRT 1983: 309

³² HAHN, HELFERT 2012: 112; BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32; an earlier date of the launching of brick and ceramics manufacturing in Frankfurt-Nied was argued by J. WAHL, who suggested the period of Vespasian's reign; he also stressed that a Roman military outpost ("militärischer Stützpunkt") may have already existed in the Höchst/Nied area under Claudius-Nero: WAHL 1982: 99, 118–120, esp. 120: "der Betrieb in Nied [kann] nicht erst während des Chattenkrieges eingesetzt haben, sondern spätestens gegen Ende der Regierungszeit des Vespasian oder Titus".

³³ HAHN, HELFERT 2012: 112: "Die Versorgung des Lagers von Wallerstädten mit Gebrauchskeramik scheint in erster Linie aus der Produktionsstätte Frankfurt a. M.-Nied erfolgt zu sein. Dies steht jedoch [...] im Widerspruch zur Datierung des Produktionsbeginns. Da aufgrund des Fundmaterials von einem Belegungsende des Lagers von Wallerstädten und einem Belegungsbeginn am neuen Standort Groß-Gerau 'Auf Esch' in (früh-) vespasianischer Zeit ausgegangen werden kann, erscheint eine Vordatierung des Produktionsbeginns in Nied als unumgänglich".

³⁴ See BÉRARD 2000: 55.

³⁵ See BURGER-VÖLLMECKE 2020: 32: "Damit steht [...] der Zeitpunkt für die Stationierung der legio XXI Rapax wieder zur Diskussion, die zur Vorbereitung der Chattenkriege etwas früher nach Mainz verlegt worden sein konnte als das bisher postulierte Datum von 83 n. Chr."; cf. WAHL 1982: 99: „[es] scheint im Raum Höchst/Nied schon unter Claudius oder Nero ein militärischer Stützpunkt bestanden zu haben".

³⁶ Specifically, the legions I Adiutrix, XIV Gemina Martia Victrix and XXI Rapax; see WOLFF 1893: 257–268; a certain departure may be seen in a specimen bearing the stamp of the legio VIII Augusta, which after 70 CE was based in Argentorate / Strasbourg, at a considerable distance from Frankfurt-Nied; it is not unlikely that it ended up in Mogontiacum purely by chance, see BAATZ, SIMON 1989: 303: "Von der 8. Legion fand Wolff nur einen einzigen gestempelten Ziegel, der aus einer anderen Ziegelei gekommen sein könnte".

³⁷ CIL XIII 12419; C. CICHORIUS, s.v. *cohors I Asturum (equitata)*, RE IV 1 (1900), col. 245; SPAUL 2000: 72–74.

³⁸ STEIN 1932: 164; PFERDEHIRT 1983: 309; BAATZ, SIMON 1989: 303; SCHMIDTS 2018: 15.

question arises as to where the legio XXI Rapax was stationed up to that time. E. RITTERLING claimed that it was stationed in Weisenau, located on the Rhine, 3.5 km south of Kästrich³⁹. However, the area of the military camp there – approximately 3.5 hectares – is nowhere near the space required by a legion-sized unit⁴⁰, at least at its full strength. It is possible that a proportion of the legionaries were quartered in Weisenau, while the remainder were billeted in other locations. F. BÉRARD suggested that the legion may have been quartered somewhere on the *limes* that the Romans were building at the time, and pointed to Hanau-Kesselstadt on the Main⁴¹, where an unfinished 14-hectare camp has been discovered⁴². This was not enough for an entire legion, but it would have fully sufficed to have part of it (*vexillatio*) reside there⁴³. It is presumed that it was built under Domitian⁴⁴; it is theoretically possible – as F. BÉRARD suggested – that soldiers of the legio XXI Rapax contributed to the construction, but this must remain no more than conjecture. The work may have been interrupted before its final completion⁴⁵ either by the war with the Chatti (83–85) or by the change of strategy brought about by the revolt of Saturninus⁴⁶. However, a concept advanced by J. WAHL⁴⁷ is worth noting at this point. Namely, that the camp at Hanau-Kesselstadt had been intended from the outset for a half a legion. Its construction began “during or rather after the war with the Chatti”, when the I Adiutrix and XIV Gemina Martia Victrix were stationed at Mogontiacum on the Kästrich hill. After the first of these legions deployed in 86 to Pannonia, its place in the camp was taken by the legio XXI Rapax. This may have been the reason why the construction work at Kesselstadt was discontinued. With this argument in mind, it could be assumed

³⁹ RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787.

⁴⁰ STÜMPEL 1961: 302: “Eine Lagergröße von ca. 150:230 m halten wir für möglich”; HASSEL 1969: 107; WITTEYER 2006: 329; regarding the surface area of legionary camps see BAATZ 1962: 80.

⁴¹ BÉRARD 2000: 55: “il faut éventuellement envisager plutôt une installation plus avancée sur le *limes*, peut-être dans la grande enceinte d’Hanau-Kesselstadt, sur le Main, qui paraît n’avoir jamais été achevée”.

⁴² This would make it the largest fort (*castellum*) of the Upper Germanic *limes*; CZYSZ 1989: 336.

⁴³ CZYSZ 1989: 334–337; the suggestion that Hanau-Kesselstadt may have been an (unfinished) camp, capable of accommodating only part of the legion was advanced by BAATZ 1993: 171: “Für eine vollständige Legion reichte der Raum [14 ha] jedoch nicht. Als Besatzung war entweder eine Legionsabteilung vorgesehen oder eine aus mehreren Alen und Auxiliarkohorten zusammengesetzte Truppe”; cf. BAATZ 1962: 80; BAATZ 1973: 536.

⁴⁴ BAATZ 1973: 542–543; WAHL 1982: 100; BAATZ 1993: 171.

⁴⁵ Considering the location of the fort – directly on the navigable Main, right at the mouth of the Kinzing, which flows into the Main – CZYSZ (1989: 336) believes it possible that the site was by default conceived as a storage and trans-shipping facility for supplies intended for the Roman troops: “Nach seiner ausgewählten Lage am Mainufer möchte man weniger an eine Garnison größerer Truppenkontingente als eher an einen Depot- und Umschlagplatz für Versorgungsgüter denken”.

⁴⁶ BAATZ 1973: 543; CZYSZ 1989: 336.

⁴⁷ WAHL 1982: 100–101.

that it had been designed to accommodate roughly half of the complement of the XXI Rapax. The remainder of the legion would have been quartered elsewhere, for instance at Weisenau. The plans were nevertheless abandoned in the wake of the defeat on the Danube. This is of course a hypothesis, but one that fits nicely into the context of events and tallies with the evidence acquired to date.

The revolt of L. Antonius Saturninus⁴⁸ in 88/89 decided the fate of the legio XXI Rapax. The predominant notion in the literature is that after the revolt had been suppressed the legion was sent as punishment to Pannonia, where it was wiped out in a clash with the Iazyges in 92⁴⁹. Adherents of this thesis, backed by the authority of Emil RITTERLING, rely primarily on the accounts by Suetonius⁵⁰ and Eutropius⁵¹, who spoke of the annihilation of an unnamed legion and its legate in 92 CE. Given the absence of information relating to the XXI Rapax after 89 CE, RITTERLING associated these reports with that particular legion⁵². However, the problem is that no trace of its stay in Pannonia has been found so far, which makes RITTERLING's view all the more precarious. Hence, it would appear more advisable to follow François BÉRARD, who recommended that instead of using the argument *ex silentio*, one should opt for the concept advanced by Theodor BERGK towards the end of the nineteenth century⁵³. BERGK held that the legio XXI Rapax was disciplinarily disbanded by Domitian immediately after the suppression of the revolt because it had most zealously supported the usurpation of Saturninus. Arguments in favour are supplied by several inscriptions from Vindonissa, where the XXI Rapax was stationed in 46–69: its name had been expunged by hammer blows, clear evidence of *damnatio memoriae*⁵⁴. It is hardly conceivable that this could have happened to a “living” legion⁵⁵.

⁴⁸ Concerning the revolt of Saturninus see BERGK 1882; RITTERLING 1893; WALSER 1968; STROBEL 1986.

⁴⁹ RITTERLING 1893: 232–234; RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1788–1789; STROBEL 1986: 217; STROBEL 1988: 216.

⁵⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 6, 1: “expeditiones [...] suscepit [...] in Sarmatas legione cum legato simul caesa” (Martinet).

⁵¹ Eutrop. *Brev.* VII 23, 4: “in Sarmatia legio eius (i.e. Domitiani) cum duce interfecta est” (Hellegouarc’h).

⁵² RITTERLING 1893: 232–234; RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1788–1789.

⁵³ BERGK 1882: 67–71; see BÉRARD 1994: 225; BÉRARD 2000: 55–60.

⁵⁴ There are four such inscriptions: (1) *CIL* XIII 11514; (2) *AE* 1934, 18 = *BRGK* XXVII 1937, 60b; (3) *CIL* XIII 5201 + 5237 = *AE* 1971, 275; (4) *CIL* XIII 5200 + 11515 = *AE* 1971, 274; the first two were found at the camp, within the *principia*, whereas the remaining two were discovered outside the camp perimeter, although they certainly originated from the gates of the fortress; see BÉRARD 2000: 50–51; HARTMANN 1986: 53–70.

⁵⁵ See the arguments advanced by RITTERLING (1924–1925: 1788–1789), who attempts to interpret that particular case as a local event of a private nature: apparently, that was an act of revenge by the Helvetii, residents of Aventicum, for the massacre they had suffered in 69 at the hands of the soldiers of the XXI Rapax. This would mean that they had unhindered entry into the camp...

In the long history of Mogontiacum, the sojourn of the legio XXI Rapax was but an episode, but it took place at a fateful time. The events connected with the war against the Chatti and the revolt of Saturninus permanently changed the image of Mogontiacum and Upper Germania, as well as deciding the fate of this legion. After the revolt had been suppressed, the emperor Domitian decided to have the legion disbanded.

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
moesia@amu.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0002-4670-1959

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