

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. LIV



HELSINKI 2020

ARCTOS – ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

Arctos has been published since 1954, annually from vol. 8 (1974). *Arctos* welcomes submissions dealing with any aspect of classical antiquity, and the reception of ancient cultures in mediaeval times and beyond. *Arctos* presents research articles and short notes in the fields of Greek and Latin languages, literatures, ancient history, philosophy, religions, archaeology, art, and society. Each volume also contains reviews of recent books. The website is at www.journal.fi/arctos.

Publisher:

Klassillis-filologinen yhdistys – Klassisk-filologiska föreningen (The Classical Association of Finland), c/o House of Science and Letters, Kirkkokatu 6, FI – 00170 Helsinki, Finland.

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ISSN 0570–734–X

Layout by Vesa Vahtikari

Printed by KTMP Group Oy, Mustasaari

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THE INCIDENT AT ELEGEIA

The Meaning of στρατόπεδον in Ioannes Xiphilinus’ *Epitome of Cassius Dio* (S.297,14–21)*

ΚΑΙ JUNTUNEN

ὁ γὰρ Οὐολόγαισος πολέμου ἤρξε, καὶ στρατόπεδόν τε ὄλον Ῥωμαϊκὸν τὸ ὑπὸ Σεβηριανῶ τεταγμένον ἐν τῇ Ἐλεγεΐα, χωρὶς τινὶ τῆς Ἀρμενίας, περισχῶν πάντοθεν αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόσι κατετόξευσε καὶ διέφθειρε, καὶ τῆς Συρίας ταῖς πόλεσι πολλὸς ἐπήγει καὶ φοβερός.

The above passing remark in Ioannes Xiphilinus’ *Epitome of Cassius Dio* describes a Roman defeat by the Parthians that occurred at Elegeia in Armenia in 162 CE.¹ The Roman entity that was involved and subsequently destroyed by the Parthians is defined by Xiphilinus to have been a στρατόπεδον, but what is exactly meant by this term is not clarified by the passage. The first translations of the passage defined the Roman entity simply as an army,² and it was not until 1752 when Hermann Reimarus appears to have been the first to suggest that the term στρατόπεδον could be understood as a legion in this context.³

* I would like to thank the anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions that helped to improve this paper.

¹ Xiph. S.297,14–21 (Cass. Dio 71,2,1). The incident seems to have occurred in early 162 CE as demonstrated by Fronto’s (*Princ. Hist.* 16) statement that the news of it reached Rome before Lucius Verus had left the city. As Verus is known to have left Rome in the summer of 162 CE and reached Antioch in late 162 CE (or early 163 CE at the latest), the incident at Elegeia should be seen to have occurred in the spring of 162 CE. For Lucius Verus’ journey to the East, cf. Barnes 1967, 71; Birley 1987, 125–26; Champlin 1974, 147.

² Le Blanc 1551, 200; Baldelli 1562, 264; Cousin 1678, 380–81; the term often being translated into Latin as *exercitus*.

³ Reimarus (in Fabricius – Reimarus) 1752, 1177–78. The principle translations appear to have

The interpretation of a legion lost at Elegeia does not appear to have emerged in the secondary literature until a century later when Léon Renier suggested that a legion could have indeed been lost and that that legion could have been the *XXII Deiotariana*; an idea that had some support, but also opposition.⁴ After this initial stage of enquiry into the matter the issue appears to have lain dormant for a while, with only a few scholars acknowledging that a legion indeed was lost at Elegeia, while opting not to identify the legion in question.⁵ The possibility has since been brought forward again by Eric Birley, who suggested that the legion in question could have been the *IX Hispana* instead.⁶ This hypothesis has received more support than the previous one(s) and although it too has its opponents, the incident at Elegeia can presently be found as a possible explanation for the loss of *legio IX Hispana*.⁷

Much of the research done so far has concentrated on the lifespans of the said two legions, but relatively little has been done on the meaning of the term *στρατόπεδον* itself, or what our other sources have to say about the incident. Closer examination of the passage and the terminological tendencies of both Ioannes Xiphilinus and his primary source Cassius Dio do cast severe doubts that Xiphilinus meant something as specific as a legion by this term. A thorough survey of the semantic use of the term *στρατόπεδον* not only shows that there

followed his suggestion since, cf. Tafel 1836, 1640; Gros 1870, 5; Cary 1927, 3; Veh 1987, 246 and Stoppa (in Valvo – Stoppa – Migliorati) 2009, 139. The only noticeable exception to this was the first English translation of Cassius Dio by Foster (1906, 247), who preferred to interpret the term to mean a camp.

⁴ Renier 1854, 122; supported by Borghesi 1865, 254; idem. 1869, 375; Rohden 1894, col. 532; Schiller 1883, 639; Schneiderwirth 1874, 158, but opposed by Marquardt 1873, 213n.11; Meyer 1900, 155; Schwendemann 1923, 138n.6; Stein 1899, col. 1841. For more recent comments on this possibility, cf. Keppie 1990, 58.

⁵ Magie 1950, vol. I, 660 (also vol. II, 1529–30n.4); Stark 1966, 235; Stein 1944, 25. Nischer (1928, 503n.9) in an attempt to circumvent the conundrum of the legion's identity suggested that it might have been a newly raised one which had left no traces of its existence at all.

⁶ E. Birley 1971, 74–78. The possibility of *IX Hispana* being the legion lost at Elegeia with references to Birley was first mentioned by Bogaers 1965, 30.

⁷ A. Birley 1981, 220; idem. 1987, 121–22; Eck 1972, 462, but objected to by Keppie 1989, 250; id. 2000, 94; Mitford 1980, 1203n. 98; id. 2018, 72–73n.66; Speidel 1983, 10; Remy 1989, 221. For detailed examination of this theory and the arguments for and against it, cf. Campbell 2018, 134–39. Some scholars still see a legion being lost at Elegeia, but remain uncertain regarding the identity of the lost legion, cf. Garzetti 1974, 476; Mor 1986, 269.

appears to be very precise structural conditions in Cassius Dio when he used this term in the sense of a Roman legion, but also that when Xiphilinus was speaking independently, instead of quoting Dio, he preferred to use other terms when he was referring to the legions. These terminological patterns in combination with what we know about the incident at Elegeia from other sources would seem to suggest that we should interpret the incident as something else than a legion lost in battle.

The Roman defeat at Elegeia in Xiphilinus' *Epitome* of Cassius Dio

The passage that relates the incident at Elegeia originates from an epitome of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* written by Ioannes Xiphilinus, the nephew of the patriarch Ioannes VIII Xiphilinus of Constantinople (1064–1075), in the late eleventh century.⁸ In his epitome, Xiphilinus did not attempt to cover the whole work of Dio, which narrated the history of the Roman Empire from its foundation to Dio's own lifetime in the early third century, but instead he limited his choice of material to the latter half of Dio's work, covering the history of the Empire since the last days of the Roman Republic. Although Xiphilinus does not seem to have altered much the annalistic narrative arrangement used by Dio, he did change the general division of the work by arranging the material from the forty-five books he had chosen for abbreviation into twenty-five chapters, each chapter covering the reign of a single Roman emperor.⁹ This arrangement shows that Xiphilinus' focus was mainly the character and deeds of individual emperors, a fact he himself confirms (Xiph. 87,6–13) while narrating the life of Augustus.

After reaching the end of Hadrian's reign in his epitome, Xiphilinus informed his readers that the books of Dio that described the reign of Antoninus Pius and the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (i.e. until the death

⁸ The approximate date of writing seems to have been between 1071 and 1075 as Xiphilinus (87,6–13) states that he was writing during the reign of the Emperor Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) while simultaneously referring to his uncle patriarch Ioannes VIII (1064–1075) using an expression that would seem to indicate that the latter was still alive, cf. Mallan 2013, 614; Treadgold 2013, 310.

⁹ For Xiphilinus' style and methods of writing, cf. Mallan 2013. Although Dio's books had been roughly of equal length, Xiphilinus' chapters do not follow such uniformity due to their specific subject matter.

of Verus in 169 CE) had not survived to his time. Xiphilinus explained that for this reason he had consulted alternative sources and after providing a brief summary of events covered in the lost books, he would continue the narrative of Dio again (i.e. from spring 169 CE onwards).¹⁰ This means that the passage relating the incident at Elegeia does *not* originate from Cassius Dio, although it tends to be referred to as such, but instead it originates from one of these alternative sources used by Xiphilinus. Consequently, the terminological tendencies of the passage would seem to reflect primarily either Xiphilinus' own linguistic preferences or those of his unknown source.

This does not mean that Dio and his chosen expressions did not have any influence on Xiphilinus. In fact, we must acknowledge that there are three possibilities which should be considered. First, that Xiphilinus followed so closely his primary source that he projected the terminological tendencies of Dio even to the sections that did not originate from Dio. Second, that Xiphilinus relied purely on his memory regarding the information discovered from his alternative sources and thus, the chosen terminology reflects his own, late eleventh century Byzantine terminology. Or third, that Xiphilinus copied the description of the incident from his alternative source and used the expressions of his source. Regardless of whether Xiphilinus decided to omit Dio's terminological usage at this occasion it is nevertheless essential to understand how Dio's structural and terminological tendencies limited and affected Xiphilinus' own expressions. But what does Xiphilinus say about the incident itself?

In the epitome, the whole event is covered in a single sentence, but several aspects of the process that could help us decipher the incident are given. First, the entity στρατόπεδον is defined to have been Roman (Ρωμαϊκόν), which strictly speaking just separates it from the opposing "non-Roman" counterpart or elements. The entity is also defined as "whole" (ὅλον), and as it is said to have been destroyed, this signifies that it was fully lost. The start of the passage also defines that the said στρατόπεδον was under (the command) of one Severianus, who can be identified as M. Sedatius Severianus, the legate of the Cappadocian province.¹¹ The first half of the sentence also defines the location of the incident

¹⁰ Xiph. S.256,6–15; S.257,2–5 (Cass. Dio 70,1,1; 2,2). For the loss of Dio's books covering the reigns of Antoninus Pius and the first half of Marcus Aurelius (138–169 CE), cf. Juntunen 2013a.

¹¹ M. Sedatius Severianus (*PIR*² S 306), cf. Alföldy 1977, 220; Groag 1923, col. 1007–9; Piso 1993, 61–65; Rémy 1989, 219–22; Stein 1944, 24–26.

to have been at Elegeia, a place in Armenia.¹² Moreover, this early part of the sentence contains a problematic participle of the verb τάσσω (τεταγμένον), which causes some confusion for the translation.

Just like the term στρατόπεδον, the participle too can have various meanings, depending on what it is referring to. As Cary had understood the Roman entity στρατόπεδον to mean a legion, he translated the participle to mean that the said entity was stationed (i.e. permanently located) at the said location (“[Vologaesius had destroyed] the Roman *legion* ... that was *stationed* at Elegeia”). Foster, in the previous English translation had opted for a different approach as he understood the Roman entity to have been a camp, and thus, he had translated the participle to mean simply the physical location of the camp (“[Vologaesius had destroyed] the Roman *camp* ... *situated* in Elegeia”). But the structure of the sentence also allows a third option, namely that the participle refers to the entity that had been placed under Severianus’ command and not to the physical location (i.e. “[Vologaesius had destroyed] the Roman στρατόπεδον *under the charge* of Severianus at Elegeia”).¹³

Although the various interpretations regarding the meaning of the participle do not tend to change the overall picture of the event much, Cary’s option would imply that a whole legion had been stationed at Elegeia permanently. This is in strict contradiction with what we know about the province of Cappadocia, the rank of its legates and the known locations of its legionary garrison. Throughout the second century, the province is known to have hosted only two legions, one being garrisoned at Satala and the other at Melitene, and the rank of the known legates in the Antonine era confirms its relative inferiority to provinces which hosted three legions (i.e. Britannia, Syria and Pannonia Superior), thus making it unlikely that a third legion could have been stationed in the province.¹⁴

The latter part of the sentence provides a description of the manner how the Roman entity was lost. Xiphilinus states that it was surrounded from

¹² For the identification of ancient Elegeia with the modern village of Ilica, cf. Juntunen (forthc.); Mitford 1980, 1198; idem. 2018, 333n.23.

¹³ A similar construction using the same participle can also be found in Plutarch (*Luc.* 41,2).

¹⁴ Alföldy 1977, 220–21; Keppie 1989, 250; Mitford 1980, 1186–87; id. 2018, 426–50; Remy 1989, 217–23; Speidel 1983, 10–11.



Image 1: The location of Elegeia (Ilca) on the Cappadocian Frontier.¹⁵

all sides (περισχῶν πάντοθεν),¹⁶ while the men and leaders of the entity were shot down (αὐτοῖς ἡγεμόσι κατετόξευσε). Knowing the Parthian excellence in mounted archery, this statement has a strong resemblance to Crassus' defeat at Carrhae. Ioannes Zonaras (fl. c. 1081–1118), a near contemporary of Xiphilinus, who appears to take his description of the event from Xiphilinus, simplifies the

¹⁵ Modified from Hewsen 2001, 14.

¹⁶ All the manuscripts of Xiphilinus read ἐπισχῶν πάντοθεν (faced from all sides), which was amended to περισχῶν πάντοθεν by Friedrich Sylburg (1536–1596).

description by stating that “[Vologaesus] had shot down many Romans and destroyed a whole στρατόπεδον”.¹⁷ Zonaras’ account would seem to make a clearer distinction between the manner how the Roman soldiers died and the act of the στρατόπεδον getting destroyed.

The incident in contemporary accounts

The event is also mentioned by two contemporary sources, namely M. Cornelius Fronto and Lucian of Samosata. Both of these authors confirm that the Roman host was lost, but interestingly both refer to the Roman force using terms which mean simply an army.¹⁸ The fact that both authors use other terms to specify legions elsewhere in their writings would seem strongly to imply that neither of them understood the Roman force at Elegeia to have been something as explicit as a legion.¹⁹ The only other thing that Fronto informs about the incident is that a consular legate had died, a statement confirmed by Lucian, who further provides the name of the Parthian commander responsible of the Roman defeat – Osroes.²⁰ While Fronto does not provide any further details about the incident, Lucian makes several references to it in his essay “How to write history”.

This essay of Lucian is essentially a sarcastic criticism towards his contemporary historians, who often appear to have neglected facts and sacrificed accuracy for flamboyant style. Many of the authors whom Lucian is criticizing wrote about the Parthian War of Lucius Verus, and it is in his references of how they described some aspects of the incident that we get some details of the event itself. One fact that appears to have occurred was that the leader of the Roman force Severianus eventually despaired of their situation and decided to commit suicide.²¹ That Severianus committed suicide seems to have been accepted as

¹⁷ Zonaras 12,2 (... πολλούς Ῥωμαίων κατατοξεύσαντος και ὄλον τὸ στρατόπεδον διαφθείραντος ...). For Zonaras’ dependence of Xiphilinus for the Antonine history, cf. Millar 1964, 3.

¹⁸ Fronto *Princ. Hist.* 16 (*exercitus*), Luc. *Alex.* 27 (στρατία).

¹⁹ Fronto *ad Anton. de eloqu.* 2,2 (*legionem*), *ad M. Caesarem* 1,4,4 (*legiones*), *Princ. Hist.* 15 (*legione*), *De bello Parthico* 8 (*legiones*); *Hist. conscr.* 31 (τὸ τρίτον τάγμα i.e. *legio III Gallica*).

²⁰ Fronto *Princ. Hist.* 16; Luc. *Alex.* 27, *Hist. conscr.* 21; 25. This Osroes is also mentioned by Lucian (*Hist. conscr.* 19) in connection to the Parthian defeat in northern Mesopotamia a few years later.

²¹ Luc. *Hist. conscr.* 21; 25.

common knowledge, but the manner how the legate ended his life appears to have attracted some controversy.

One of the narratives which Lucian (*Hist. conscr.* 21) criticized had claimed that Severianus had decided to fast himself to death, a claim that was rejected by Lucian on the basis that (as far as he knew) the whole incident had lasted only approximately three days, while fasting oneself to death lasts much longer. Lucian continues sarcastically that the historian making this claim had not thought about Osroes and the Parthians, who consequently would have had to wait without attacking the Romans for the legate to die by fasting. This comment appears to betray a fact that the Romans were unable to move from their present position and thus confirms Xiphilinus' statement that they had been surrounded on all sides.

A more peculiar feature of the conflict which appears to be indicated by Lucian's critique concerns extravagance. The first hint of this comes from Lucian's (*Hist. conscr.* 25) criticism of another historian's claim that Severianus had committed suicide by using a shard of an expensive vessel. Lucian ridicules this statement, pointing out that such a melodramatic display would have been pointless when so many weapons were lying around, but oddly the idea of such vessels being conveniently present in the Roman army does not raise any objection. Something similar is hinted about Lucian's (*Hist. conscr.* 26) criticism of yet another historian who appears to have provided a lengthy funeral monologue for Severianus, delivered by a centurion on the legate's funeral mound. Lucian points out that this speech contained several references to extravagant dishes, vessels and pledges, but the issue for Lucian was not their presence in the speech, but the overlong description of such things in the narrative. In other words, the issue for Lucian in these narratives was not the presence of elements whose factuality was in question, but the overzealous representation of them for stylistic reasons. The fact that several historians apparently made references to such things and that Lucian did not ridicule their presence at Elegeia would seem to suggest that such things were somehow connected to the incident and their existence was common knowledge.

In a similar fashion, neither is the claim that the Roman troops had time to create a funeral mound for their dead commander questioned by Lucian, although he does ridicule the speech given on the mound as a mere copying of the famous funeral speech of Thucydides. Even though it is doubtful that the

Romans had actually made such a mound, the suggestion that one could have been made hints at the possibility that the Roman troops had some relative peace during the conflict. The image we can read between the lines in Lucian's essay is not a legion or larger army engaged in a field battle, but a smaller stationary force under siege. Also, the references to extravagant vessels and dishes, and pledges of good will could mean that the conflict may have begun as something more peaceful that required the presence of such things. As Lucian and Xiphilinus seem to reflect different kind of images of the incident that took place at Elegeia, it is paramount to comprehend exactly what both Cassius Dio and Xiphilinus understood by the term στρατόπεδον.

The meaning of στρατόπεδον in Cassius Dio

The creation of Cassius Dio's *Roman History* had been a monumental task, the search for sources alone taking Dio ten years and then another twelve years spent on writing the compilation from these sources.²² But combining a wide variety of sources into a continuous historical narrative was not enough for Dio, who informs us that he had also purposely read Atticist authors for guidance for stylistic imitation.²³ This stylistic polishing can be observed from the terminological uniformity in choice thematic cases, such as Dio's choice of term(s) to define the Roman legions. Dio's sources would have used several different terms to describe the Roman legions, such as λεγεών (λεγιών), στρατεύμα, στρατόπεδον, τάγμα (σύνταγμα), τάξις (σύνταξις), τείχος, τέλος and φάλαγξ, but most of these are either not used at all or appear in other senses that the terms can mean.²⁴ Dio's

²² Cass. Dio fr. 1,2; 73,23,5, cf. Millar 1964, 32–33.

²³ Cass. Dio 55,12,4–5, cf. Millar 1964, 40–42.

²⁴ For the general use of these terms, cf. Mason 1974, 163–65, 191; also 65 (λεγιών), 86 (στράτευμα), 87 (στρατόπεδον), 90 (σύνταγμα), 90 (σύνταξις), 91 (τάγμα), 91 (τάξις), 92 (τείχος), 92 (τέλος), 97 (φάλαγξ). In Dio's narrative λεγεών and τάγμα do not appear at all (but they can be found in Xiphilinus when he diverts from Dio, cf. below), and neither does σύνταγμα for that matter. τάξις is occasionally used of a battle-line (for all occurrences of this term cf. Nawijn 1931, 779–80), and σύνταξις is used only twice to mean a dense military formation such as a testudo (Cass. Dio 49,30,3 [copied in Xiph. 70,10]; 50,31,5). τέλος appears a few times in the sense of a larger military division (such as expeditionary forces, cf. Cass. Dio 75,3,2) but mostly it is used to define other things (for all occurrences of this term, cf. Nawijn 1931, 786–87). φάλαγξ appears three times in the surviving

choice to use the term *στρατόπεδον* to define the Roman legions was rather unique and may reflect the stylistic example given by Polybius, who is one of the few other Greek historians known to have used this term when referring to the Roman legions.²⁵ If so, then this terminological adaptation could be an indication of stylistic imitation of Polybius by Cassius Dio.

In the extant part of Dio's narrative the term *στρατόπεδον* occurs in total 172 times (including the cases known from the *Excerpta Constantiniana*), usually meaning either a Roman legion or a military camp.²⁶ But there seems to be clear structural conditions which define what is meant by the term, especially when used in the singular form. In the cases when Dio uses the term independently in the singular form, meaning that there are no other terms providing definitional assistance, the term almost always means a camp (71 cases), being essentially the Greek equivalent to the Latin term *castrum*.²⁷ Although Dio's narrative often refers to temporary camps, the term is also used of permanent fortifications such as the Praetorian camp (*castra Praetoria*) in Rome.²⁸ In addition, the term

part of Dio's text and always in the sense of «battle-line» (Cass. Dio 40,21,3; 49,29,4 [copied in Xiph. 69,30]; 49,30,2). The term can be found three further times in Xiphilinus' *Epitome* either in the sense of «battle-line» (Xiph. S.163,11 [Cass. Dio 62,8,2]) or as a reference to the traditional Macedonian phalanx (Xiph. S.329,24 [Cass. Dio 77,7,1]; Xiph. S.334,23 [Cass. Dio 77,18,1]). As Xiphilinus does not use the term more often, these terms most likely originate from Cassius Dio. For the use of *στράτευμα* and *τείχος*, cf. below.

²⁵ Polyb. 1,16,2 (legions, in plural form), 1,30,11 (First legion, defined by number of the legion), but the term can also be found as a definition for an army (Polyb. 1,19,11; 1,34,2), a naval squadron (1,27,9) or a camp (1,43,1).

²⁶ The present study will not include those sources that are known to have used Dio as a source, but can be seen to have largely rewritten the passages (such as Petrus Patricius, Ioannes of Antioch and Ioannes Zonaras), thus making it uncertain whether the used terminology reflects Dio's original wording.

²⁷ Cass. Dio fr. 11,14 (Exc. V 7); fr. 18,7 (Exc. M 33); fr. 36,31 (Exc. V 20); fr. 43,12 (Exc. M 119); fr. 57,33 (Exc. V 37); fr. 57,63 (Exc. P 2); fr. 58,3 (Exc. P 4); fr. 83,6 (Exc. V 71); 36,9,3 (τῷ Ῥωμαϊκῷ στρατοπέδῳ); 36,13,2; 36,45,4; 36,47,4; 36,48,3; 36,52,2; 39,3,1; 39,46,4; 39,52,1; 40,5,2; 40,9,4; 40,32,4; 40,36,2; 40,40,4; 40,42,2; 41,42,1; 41,42,3; 41,50,1; 41,61,2; 42,1,3; 42,11,3; 42,58,4; 43,4,1; 43,4,4; 43,6,1; 43,8,4; 43,38,2; 46,37,2; 46,37,7; 46,39,1; 46,41,1; 46,47,2; 47,1,2; 47,28,2; 47,36,2; 47,38,5; 47,40,7; 47,41,3; 47,47,2; 47,48,3; 47,49,1; 48,25,3; 48,40,4; 49,5,2; 49,8,5; 49,12,2; 49,39,5; 50,13,2; 50,34,1; 51,1,3; 51,10,2; 54,9,6; 54,33,2; 55,1,5; 56,16,2; 57,4,2; 57,5,6; 62,21,2 (Exc. UR 12); 68,9,7 (Exc. U^G 46); 68,20,1 (Exc. U^G 51); 73,16,2 (Exc. V 335); 78,31,3; 79,6,1.

²⁸ Cass. Dio 58,9,5; 58,9,6; 60,17,9.

can also be found in the sense of an army in general, or an encamped army (6 cases) when used independently.²⁹ But when Dio uses the term to mean instead a Roman legion (in 9 cases), he always defines his meaning by using additional definitions, such as the name or numeral of the legion in question, a definition that the entity was composed of citizens (πολιτικός) or that it belonged to the official catalogue of the legions, or quantifying terms such as “single” or “another”, which in combination with the narrative context makes it clear that the term is being used to mean a legion.³⁰

The plural constructions show a rather different approach. In these the term can mean Roman legions when used independently without additional definitions (51 cases),³¹ but the narrative context tends to make it clear whether legions or camps are meant. Many of these occasions involve physical activity, such as στρατόπεδα being on the march, engaging an enemy etc., and as camps are static by nature, the meaning of the term is obvious from the context alone. Occasionally, when Dio speaks of specific legions, or the context of the narrative does not make the meaning obvious (13 cases), he uses the same additional definitions for the plural forms as he does for the singular ones.³²

Sometimes Dio also uses the term about armies in general (7 cases), but as Roman armies were mainly composed of legions there is some room for interpretation what Dio exactly meant.³³ The use of the plural form of στρατόπεδον in the sense of camps is not so common (10 cases), but this seems

²⁹ Cass. Dio fr. 36,10 (Exc. M 62); fr. 57,40 (Exc. V 41); 37,24,2; 40,18,5; 43,30,5; 63,8,4 (Exc. V 251).

³⁰ Dio Cass. 38,8,5 (another legion); 38,46,3 (Tenth legion); 40,27,3 (ἐκ καταλόγου); 45,13,3 (the Martian [legion] and the Fourth legion); 49,34,3 (single legion); 54,11,5 (Augustan legion); 78,13,4 (Alban legion); 79,7,1 (Third Gallic legion); 79,7,3 (Gallic legion). This dependence on additional definitions was pointed out earlier by Mason (1974, 164).

³¹ Cass. Dio fr. 40,28 (Exc. M 100); 36,17,1; 37,50,6; 38,43,4; 40,44,1; 40,62,3; 40,65,2; 40,66,1; 40,66,4; 41,1,4; 41,4,3; 41,13,1; 41,62,1; 42,30,1; 42,46,1; 42,49,3; 42,52,1; 43,29,1; 43,35,4; 45,39,1; 46,17,4; 46,23,4; 46,27,3; 46,29,4; 46,30,4; 46,40,1; 46,42,3; 46,43,5; 46,47,3; 46,54,2; 47,26,7; 47,28,1; 48,25,2; 49,12,4; 49,19,1; 49,40,2; 50,25,2; 51,3,1; 51,7,7; 52,16,2; 52,20,4; 55,10,17 (Exc. V 180); 55,24,1; 56,16,4; 56,24,5; 57,2,1; 57,2,5; 58,25,1; 60,21,3; 74,2,5 (Exc. V 337); 78,34,6.

³² Cass. Dio 38,8,5 (three legions); 38,41,4 (four legions); 38,47,2 (πολιτικά); 40,18,1 (ἐκ τοῦ καταλόγου); 40,64,4 (two legions; πολιτικά); 46,46,6 (πολιτικά); 48,2,3 (two legions); 52,25,6 (πολιτικά); 53,15,1 (πολιτικά); 55,23,2 (πολιτικά); 55,23,4 (two legions; *Claudiae*); 55,23,7 (Augustan legions); 60,15,4 (πολιτικά; Seventh and Eleventh *Claudiae*).

³³ Cass. Dio fr. 57,74 (Exc. U^G 7); 36,31,4; 41,61,3; 43,35,3; 43,38,1; 47,40,2; 62,22,1 (Exc. UR 12).

to be primarily caused by the fact that legions on campaign usually shared a single camp, thus making the need to use the plural form of camp(s) in the narrative less common.³⁴ Although in most cases the semantic value of the term is explicit, there are nevertheless two occasions when the precise meaning of the term is in doubt, and these cases deserve closer inspection.

In the first case Dio (78,40,1) recounts how the son of Macrinus was captured at Zeugma by a Roman officer, Claudius Pollio. Who Pollio exactly was, is defined with a reference to his rank, which is stated to have been a centurion of the στρατόπεδον (i.e. τοῦ στρατοπέδου ἑκατόνταρχος), which is rather peculiar as on every other occasion when Dio refers to centurions, he does not give any further definitions of their rank. This is also the case of the two other centurions mentioned in the same passage, who had captured and afterwards killed Macrinus, but both of whose rank is given simply as centurions without such additional definitions.³⁵ As it goes to Dio's tendencies to indicate rank, it should be noted that throughout his work he does not give official titles, but instead refers to people as being in charge of the said entities (i.e. provinces, legions, etc.), and thus the given phrase would seem to indicate that Pollio was the centurion in charge of the στρατόπεδον.

This would seem to suggest that Pollio was no mere centurion, but instead a senior one, seemingly the camp prefect who would have been the acting senior officer present at Zeugma, the base of *legio IV Scythica*, if the legionary legate and the *tribunus laticlavius* were absent. That Pollio possessed a rank above the normal centurionate is also suggested by his extraordinarily fast social advance afterwards, being first charged with the suppression of unrest in Bithynia and then, being enrolled among the former consuls, made the legate of Germania Superior.³⁶ As camp prefects in reality belonged to the equestrian order, the

³⁴ Cass. Dio fr. 23,3 (Exc. M 42); 41,53,1; 47,27,4; 47,35,6; 47,45,3; 48,23,2; 48,30,1; 53,26,1; 56,24,4 (τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων στρατόπεδα); 57,12,3.

³⁵ Aurelius Celsus (Cass. Dio 78,39,6), who arrested Macrinus in Chalcedon in Bithynia, and Marcianus Taurus (Cass. Dio 78,40,2), who killed Macrinus while escorting him through Cappadocia.

³⁶ The possibility that Claudius Pollio (*PIR*² C 770), the person mentioned by Dio (78,40,1; 79,2,4; 79,3,1) to have held these three positions during the reigns of Macrinus and Elagabalus, was in fact one and the same person, is generally accepted with a certain amount of caution, cf. Barbieri 1952, 204 (no. 991), 550–51; Leunissen 1989, 246–47; Rémy 1989, 114. The primary concern causing doubt about this identification seems to be the literal interpretation of Dio's choice of words, indicating Pollio to have been just a mere (legionary) centurion before his sudden promotion to the senatorial

identification of Pollio as belonging to this class would partially explain his extraordinarily rapid promotion to the senatorial order.³⁷

That Dio preferred to identify the post of *praefectus castrorum* with the phrase “centurion of the camp” is also supported by the fact that the only occasions when he uses the term prefect (ἔπαρχος) is when he refers to the Praetorian prefects.³⁸ Neither does this expression seem to be unique, for we can also find it in Arrian, who uses a similar expression in his work *Against Alans* (*contra alanos* 2) to define the centurion in charge of the legionary camp (ἐκατόνταρχος, ὅσπερ ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου). Thus, the expression “centurion of the camp” would seem to be Dio’s attempt to define Pollio’s rank as a senior centurion, which a camp prefect (i.e. *praefectus castrorum*) would have been from Dio’s upper class point of view.

The second case involves P. Valerius Comazon whose experiences of responsibility before being appointed to the command of the Praetorian Guard are belittled by Dio (79,4,1). Dio states that Comazon, who was of lowly origin, had not previously held other positions of responsibility except that over the στρατόπεδον. What Dio means here is uncertain as much of his narrative that could elaborate the background of Comazon is lost, but that much is obvious that he uses this as a derogatory remark. Dio states that Comazon had begun his career as a regular soldier, which indicates that he belonged to the lower social classes, below the senatorial and equestrian orders. Consequently, it would seem that Dio is suggesting that Comazon had previously been only a camp prefect (at best), a rank he seems to have associated to be little better than a common centurion, as we saw with the case of Pollio.³⁹

Although the principal term which Cassius Dio used for Roman legions was στρατόπεδον, there are a few isolated occasions when he can be found to

order among the former consuls, a doubt which is lifted if we identify him instead as a *praefectus castrorum*.

³⁷ Rapid social advancement, especially during the Severan dynasty, is a clear subject of objection in Dio (78,13,1), but he does bring forth other cases where individuals were promoted directly to posts reserved for former consuls, such as Aelius Triccianus (*PIR*² A 271), the prefect of *legio II Parthica*, whom Macrinus made the legate of Pannonia Inferior (at the time a two legion province) in 217 CE (Cass. Dio 78,13,4), and M. Oclatinus Adventus (*PIR*² O 9), who was Macrinus’ colleague as praetorian prefect, and whom the latter made a consul and city prefect (Cass. Dio 78,14,1–2).

³⁸ For Dio’s use of the term ἔπαρχος, cf. Nawijn 1931, 300.

³⁹ Whittaker (1970, 65n.1) also recognizes Comazon’s previous position as a *praefectus castrorum*.

have used two alternative terms for this purpose, namely *στράτευμα* and *τείχος*. The first of these is the more common one and Dio uses the term primarily to indicate armies in general, the term often being used in the plural form in the more rhetorical sections of his narrative, such as speeches and dialogues, when he needs to feature the Roman military, not as an active actual participant but as a rhetorical figure representing the military might that was used to achieve political control. In modern translations of Dio many of these sections have the term translated as legions, even though no precise units or unit types are indicated in the narrative.⁴⁰ But in addition to these rhetorical cases the term can be found in the precise sense of a Roman legion four times, its meaning defined by the use of the same additional definitions which can be seen in the cases involving the term *στρατόπεδον*.⁴¹ These same regulations can also be observed in the two cases when *τείχος* is used instead of *στρατόπεδον*.⁴² Interestingly, these alternative terms tend to occur in connection with Dio using the term *στρατόπεδον* of the Roman legions, seemingly in an attempt to avoid repeating the same term again in the sentence.⁴³

It would seem that not only does Dio use very precise terms when speaking of different military entities, such as armies in general, dense military formations, or specifically legions, but also that very precise structural rules occur how these terms are being used. On every occasion when the term *στρατόπεδον* can be found in Dio's surviving narrative in a singular form without additional definitions, it means either a camp or an army. This alone casts severe doubt that the passage describing the incident at Elegeia could refer to a legion lost in battle, as it too defines the lost Roman entity with a singular form of the

⁴⁰ Cass. Dio 37,44,3; 41,3,4; 41,5,4; 42,40,5; 44,34,5; 45,9,3; 45,19,4; 45,20,4; 45,22,3; 45,25,1; 45,42,1; 46,12,1; 46,24,2; 46,25,2; 47,22,4; 47,26,2; 48,39,3; 50,13,3; 50,26,1; 52,8,4; 52,18,2; 52,22,4; 56,19,1; 57,3,1; 57,6,2; 59,22,1; 60,30,4 (Xiph. S143,4); 69,14,3 (Xiph. S249,26); 76,11,1 (Xiph. S321,13); 77,1,3 (Xiph. S326,26); 77,18,2 (Xiph. S334,31); 78,16,2; 78,17,3; 78,40,3; 79,2,1.

⁴¹ Cass. Dio 38,47,2 (Tenth legion); 40,65,1 (*ἐκ τοῦ καταλόγου*); 40,65,3 (narrative continuation of the previous case); 52,22,4 (two legions; *πολιτικά*).

⁴² Cass. Dio 53,15,2 (*πολιτικά*); 79,7,1 (IV Scythica).

⁴³ When Dio speaks of the Tenth legion, the term he first uses of it is *στρατόπεδον* (Cass. Dio 38,46,4), but a few sentences later he refers to the same legion with the term *στράτευμα* (Cass. Dio 38,47,2). In a similar fashion, when Dio is required to name two legions in the same sentence, the first legion is referred to with the term *στρατόπεδον* (Cass. Dio 79,7,1: Third Gallica), but the second legion is referred to with the term *τείχος* (Cass. Dio 79,7,1: Fourth Scythica).

term στρατόπεδον without any of the usual additional definitions we can see occurring when the term is used to define a legion. The question is whether these structural conditions we see in Cassius Dio also occur in Xiphilinus.

Xiphilinus and the abbreviation of Cassius Dio

The role of Ioannes Xiphilinus in the process of preserving Cassius Dio's narrative is not yet fully understood, and consequently he is still often judged as a mere copyist. This is also the reason, why his epitome is merely cut into fragments and excerpted into the corpus of Dio and studied as parts of Cassius Dio, whether the writing actually originated from Dio or not. A closer examination reveals a much more complex compilation where Xiphilinus was able either to retain or alter Dio's original description by a combination of quotes, omissions and selected rewritten elements.⁴⁴ Whether Xiphilinus retained Cassius Dio's expressions that included the term στρατόπεδον, and if the patterns we see in Dio's narrative also occur as such in Xiphilinus can be deciphered by comparing his epitomized narrative to the still existent parts of Dio's narrative.

In total the term στρατόπεδον can be found 54 times (including the Elegeia incident) in Xiphilinus' epitome. In 24 cases we have the corresponding section in Cassius Dio intact, and from these it can be observed that Xiphilinus copied Dio's original text quite closely. The grammatical constructions and thus the original meaning of the term in these sentences are what Dio intended and thus, we find Xiphilinus using the term in the singular form to mean a camp (12 cases), *castra Praetoria* (2 cases) or an army in general (1 case) when used independently, and once a Roman legion when used with additional definitions.⁴⁵ The plural cases also reveal identical patterns as seen in Dio as the term can be found to mean either camps (2 cases) or legions (2 cases) when

⁴⁴ Juntunen 2015, 123–24, 133–38; Mallan 2013, 617–25.

⁴⁵ **Camp:** Xiph. 5,31 (Cass. Dio 36,52); 18,27 (Cass. Dio 41,50,1); 20,21 (Cass. Dio 41,61,2); 21,1 (Cass. Dio 42,1,3); 29,13 (Cass. Dio 43,38,2); 44,1 (Cass. Dio 47,1,2); 52,27 (Cass. Dio 47,41,3); 67,23 (Cass. Dio 49,12,2); 127,16 (Cass. Dio 57,5,6); S.292,5 (Cass. Dio 73,16,2 [Exc. V 335]); S.344,30 (Cass. Dio 78,31,3); S.347,25 (79,4,1). **Castra Praetoria:** Xiph. 149,31 (Cass. Dio 58,9,5); 150,7 (Cass. Dio 58,9,6). **Army:** Xiph. S.176,13 (Cass. Dio 63,8,4 [Exc. V 251]). **Legion:** Xiph. 15,21 (Cass. Dio 40,27,3; ἐκ καταλόγου).

used independently,⁴⁶ while with the meaning of legions four further times can be found when the term is used with additional definitions.⁴⁷ From these cases it can be observed that Xiphilinus did not essentially make any changes to the original structures or expressions used by Cassius Dio, but incorporated them as such into his own work.

The situation would seem to be similar on the occasions (25 cases) when we do not have an intact version of Dio's original text. In the singular form, the term appears in the sense of camp (7 cases) or *castra Praetoria* (10 cases) when used independently,⁴⁸ and twice as a legion when used with additional definitions.⁴⁹ The plural forms also continue to follow the patterns seen in Cassius Dio, the term appearing in the sense of camps (3 cases) or legions (1 case) when used independently,⁵⁰ and twice as legions when used with additional definitions.⁵¹ All these cases have the appearance of following Dio's original text, and none of them break the patterns that can be seen from the extant part of Dio's work. There are nevertheless four further occasions (in addition to the Elegeia case) when Xiphilinus uses the term στρατόπεδον; twice clearly on his own, and twice when its origin is debatable.

The two occasions when Xiphilinus uses the term independently refer to the Roman armies of the Republican era. The first case (in a short foreword to the summary of Dio's book 41) stating that Caesar's armies (στρατόπεδα) were more experienced than those of Pompeius, while the second case refers

⁴⁶ **Camps:** Xiph. 50,19 (Cass. Dio 47,35,6); S.212,25 (Cass. Dio 66,20,2). **Legions:** Xiph. 125,26 (Cass. Dio 57,2,1); 126,21 (Cass. Dio 57,2,5).

⁴⁷ Xiph. 14,20 (Cass. Dio 40,18,1: τοῦ καταλόγου); 113,5 (Cass. Dio 55,23,2: πολιτικά); 113,20 (Cass. Dio 55,23,4: two legions); 113,27 (Cass. Dio 55,23,7: Augustan legions).

⁴⁸ **Camp:** Xiph. S.167,19 (Cass. Dio 62,16,3); S.197,13 (Cass. Dio 65,11,1), S.240,24 (Cass. Dio 68,31,3); S.298,2 (Cass. Dio 74,7,2); S.299,2 (Cass. Dio 74,8,2); S.353,20 (Cass. Dio 79,19,2); S.353,32 (Cass. Dio 79,20,1). **Castra Praetoria:** Xiph. 173,22 (Cass. Dio 60,1,3); S.146,19 (Cass. Dio 60,35,1); S.148,7 (Cass. Dio 61,3,1); S.188,30 (Cass. Dio 64,6,1); S.216,12 (Cass. Dio 66,26,3); S.282,27 (Cass. Dio 73,1,2); S.286,22 (Cass. Dio 73,8,2); S.288,20 (Cass. Dio 73,11,1); S.288,27 (Cass. Dio 73,11,2); S.352,18 (Cass. Dio 79,17,1).

⁴⁹ Xiph. S.196,20 (Cass. Dio 65,9,3: Pannonian legion i.e. *legio VII Claudia*); S.198,23 (Cass. Dio 65,14,3: Third Gallica).

⁵⁰ **Camps:** Xiph. S.246,24 (Cass. Dio 69,9,2); S.262,5 (Cass. Dio 71,10,5: μήτηρ τῶν στρατοπέδων); S.329,23 (Cass. Dio 77,7,1). **Legions:** S.328,2 (Cass. Dio 77,3,1).

⁵¹ Xiph. S.276,9 (Cass. Dio 72,15,2: Κομοδιανά); S.291,11 (Cass. Dio 73,14,3: three legions; πολιτικών).

to the troops that Cato handed over to Scipio in Africa in 47 BCE.⁵² In the latter Dio (42,57,3) had used the plural στρατεύματα to define the troops under Cato, which Xiphilinus changed into the plural form of στρατόπεδον. Given the fact that both passages are highly rhetorical in nature, while it is doubtful that Xiphilinus was aware of the composition of the Roman republican armies, it would seem unlikely that he meant something as specific as legions with either passage but just generally troops or armed forces.

Similar tendencies can be observed from the two cases where we do not have Dio's original version intact for comparison. In the first one Xiphilinus defines Cn. Pompeius Longinus' position in Dacia in 105 CE as being the leader of the Roman στρατόπεδον (στρατόπεδον ῥωμαϊκόν), which must mean the Roman forces occupying the southern portions of Dacia (i.e. Banat) that were annexed after the First Dacian War of Trajan.⁵³ As Longinus had previously been the legate of Moesia Superior and Pannonia, which both had garrisons containing several legions (and other troops), the force under his command at the time must have been larger than a single legion, and thus Xiphilinus must mean an army by this expression.⁵⁴ In the second case Xiphilinus defines the opposing parties during a native uprising in Britannia in 184 CE as the British tribes beyond the wall (either Hadrian's or the Antonine wall) and the Roman forces (Ῥωμαίων στρατόπεδα).⁵⁵ There is nothing in the passage that could indicate that some precise troops, such as legions, are meant, and thus a more general translation of troops or forces seems more appropriate.

These few cases would seem to indicate that in Xiphilinus' own usage the term στρατόπεδον had a semantic value meaning generic troops or forces, and thus its modern equivalent would be an army. But this raises another question, namely by which terms would Xiphilinus have in his own words defined a precise military entity such as a legion? Fortunately, there are a few

⁵² Xiph. 16,7–12, and 25,9–26,2.

⁵³ Xiph. S.232,18 (Cass. Dio 68,12,1). The core of the occupying force seems to have been the two legions (*IV Flavia* and *XIII Gemina*) stationed at Sarmizegethusa and Berzebis, cf. Bennett 1997, 95; Lepper – Frere 1988, 295.

⁵⁴ Cn. Pinarus Aemilius Cicatricula Pompeius Longinus (*PIR* P² 623) can be confirmed as legate of Moesia Superior from September 94 CE (*AE* 2008: 1716; *CIL* XVI 39; *RMD* 335) to July 96 CE (*RMD* 6) and then as legate of Pannonia in February 98 CE (*CIL* XVI 42; *RMD* 81); cf. Bennett 1997, 76; Eck 1982, 322–30.

⁵⁵ Xiph. S.272,3 (Cass. Dio 72,8,2), cf. Hekster 2002, 62.

occasions when Xiphilinus breaks from Dio's narrative and does just that. On two occasions when we can confirm from Dio's original that he was speaking precisely of legions, Xiphilinus diverts from Dio's terminology and elaborates the passages in his own words.

In the first case, Dio (41,58,1) describes in a rather long rhetorical fashion how the Roman forces opposing each other at Pharsalus in 48 BCE were similar in armament and appearance as they originated from the same place. This passage clearly refers to the legions, both sides being armed in a similar fashion and originating from the Italian peninsula. In Xiphilinus (19,18) this rhetorical expression of comparison is summarized, and Xiphilinus states that the opposing "τάγματα" of the same origin ended up slaughtering each other due to the lust for power of Caesar and Pompeius. In the second case, Dio (55,23,7) had explained how some legions (στρατόπεδα) were amalgamated and thus, were henceforth called by the title of "Gemina". Again, Xiphilinus (113,17) elaborates the passage by adding that when two "τάγματα" had been amalgamated the new unit was called "Gemina".

The term can also be found in the description of the battle at Issus between the forces of Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger, where Xiphilinus (S297,30 = Cass. Dio 74,7,1) defines the forces of Niger using the term τάγματα. As the term τάγμα does not exist in the surviving books of Cassius Dio, it would seem that this passage was also summarized by Xiphilinus in his own terms. These passages would seem to suggest that for Xiphilinus the preferred term for a Roman legion was τάγμα. Fortunately, there is one further occasion when Xiphilinus speaks more plainly in his own words which helps us to determine his terminological preferences.

This passage concerns the famous Rain Miracle that occurred during the Marcomannic Wars of Marcus Aurelius. After providing Dio's original narrative of the event, Xiphilinus makes a rather unique disruption from his quite passive role as an epitomizer and criticizes Dio for allocating this incident to pagan practices. Xiphilinus continues to explain that it was actually a division of Christian soldiers that caused the salvation of the Roman army through their prayers. The term Xiphilinus uses for this Christian division is again τάγμα, a term he uses five times in the passage, and to make its meaning explicit, he defines τάγμα as a military unit that the ancients (i.e. Romans) called λεγεών.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ τάγμα: Xiph. S.260,26 (Cass. Dio 71,9,1); S.261,1 (Cass. Dio 71,9,3); S.261,2 (Cass. Dio 71,9,3);

He further explains that it was for this reason that the unit in question was named “the thundering legion”, the reference being to the name of *legio XIII Fulminata*, while referring to the unit with both of the terms τάγμα and λεγεών. The Christian version of the “Rain miracle” in Xiphilinus clearly originated from Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5,5,1–7), who provides the same details, but referred to the Roman legion only with the term λεγεών, which confirms that the other term τάγμα was Xiphilinus' own terminological preference.⁵⁷

It would appear that when Xiphilinus was merely copying Cassius Dio, he followed the same terminological patterns which we can see in Dio's narrative. Thus, in those cases which obviously derive from Dio, the meaning of the term στρατόπεδον can be found to be either a camp or an army when used independently in the singular form, while the few occasions when the term is used in the singular form to mean a Roman legion, it is always accompanied by additional definitions. When Xiphilinus can be found to have diverted from Dio's original script and rewritten things anew with his own words, the term he used for a legion was apparently always τάγμα, while the term στρατόπεδον appears to have been used to indicate general military forces. This is in line with other Byzantine historians who were Xiphilinus' contemporaries such as Michael Attaleiates, Michael Psellus and Ioannes Scylitzes who use the term στρατόπεδον only in the sense of either a general army or a camp (or an encamped army).⁵⁸

S.261,6 (Cass. Dio 71,9,4); S.261,15 (Cass. Dio 71,9,6). λεγεών: Xiph. S.261,2 (Cass. Dio 71,9,3); S.261,12 (Cass. Dio 71,9,5).

⁵⁷ For a full analysis of this passage in Dio/Xiphilinus and Eusebius, cf. Kovacs 2009, 26–38, 45–50.

⁵⁸ **Army:** Attalates *Hist.* 2,2 [8]; 5,1 [18]; 6,12 [29]; 7,14 [41]; 17,3 [104]; 17,3 [105]; 17,7 [108]; 17,9 [111]; 17,16 [117] (twice); 17,17 [118]; 17,20 [120]; 18,5 [125]; 18,7 [127]; 18,10 [128]; 18,12 [132]; 18,14 [133]; 18,16 [134]; 19,2 [139]; 20,8 [148]; 20,24 [163]; 21,8 [174]; 23,1 [183] (twice); 23,2 [183]; 23,9 [188]; 28,6 [227]; 33,11 [282]; 34,4 [289]; 34,6 [290]; 35,5 [297]; Psellos *Chron.* 1,5; 1,10; 1,11; 1,26; 1,29; 1,32; 1,33; 3,7; 3,9; 3,10; 6,83; 6,84; 6,86; 6,87; 6,103 (twice); 6,104; 6,113; 6,119; 7,5; 7,8; 7,13; 7,14; 7,22; 7,70 (three times); 7(Rom),23; 7(Rom),24; 7(Rom),24; 7(Rom),27; Psellos *Hist. synt.* 71; 74; 74; 100; 103; Scylitzes *Syn.* 4,23 [75]; 6,2 [116]; 9,8 [203]; 9,10 [207]; 10,10 [218]; 15,17 [308]; 19,4 [394]; 19,20 [407]; 21,8 [442].

camp: Attalates *Hist.* 20,7 [147]; Psellos *Chron.* 7,10; 7,11; 7,35; 7(Rom),11; 7(Rom),14; Scylitzes *Syn.* 1,2 [6] (twice); 3,9 [36]; 3,13 [40]; 4,23 [77]; 6,25 [145]; 9,13 [209]; 10,8 [216] (twice); 10,12 [219]; 11,15 [246]; 14,8 [267]; 15,9 [295]; 15,14 [305]; 16,4 [319]; 16,12 [331]; 16,23 [342]; 16,30 [346]; 16,40 [356]; 16,43 [363]; 18,5 [380]; 19,20 [407]; 21,6 [433]; 23,11 [497].

The Attalates references are given with paragraph and section numbers according to the Kaldellis and Krallis edition (2012) with the older Bekker edition (1853) page numbers following in brackets,

For these authors the term to indicate larger military units was always τάγμα.⁵⁹

An alternative explanation?

These terminological patterns and preferences that we can witness occurring in Cassius Dio and Ioannes Xiphilinus do not support the assumption that the term used to describe the lost Roman entity at Elegeia meant something as specific as a legion. None of the usual additional terms of definition that we can find in Dio to signify the meaning of the term στρατόπεδον as a legion can be found in Xiphilinus' phrasing, and thus the semantic value of the term would seem to be either an army or a camp. Neither does the term Roman (ῥωμαϊκόν), which is the adjective used of the entity by Xiphilinus, appear elsewhere as such an additional definition. In fact, Xiphilinus used the expression στρατόπεδον ῥωμαϊκόν earlier (Xiph. S.232,18 = Cass. Dio 68,12,1) to mean the Roman army occupying the southern part of Dacia, while Cassius Dio (36,9,3) used the same phrase to signify a Roman camp.

The possibility that the phrasing originates from one of the alternative sources used by Xiphilinus is of course possible, but less likely given the rather limited account Xiphilinus provides for the lost era in the books of Cassius Dio available to him. Although we cannot establish with absolute certainty from what source Xiphilinus was able to find his account of the Parthian War, there are good reasons to assume it was the now lost *Parthica* by Asinius Quadratus written in the early third century.⁶⁰ After all, Quadratus is mentioned by name as the source that provided information regarding the death of Antoninus Pius, an event that precedes the description of the Parthian War of Lucius Verus.⁶¹ Also,

while Scylitzes references are given with paragraph and section numbers according to the Thurn edition (1973), with the page numbers of the same edition following in brackets as both styles are commonly used.

⁵⁹ In Xiphilinus' time the larger field units (whether infantry or cavalry) were officially known as the *tagmata*, and this is the term Byzantine sources always use for such larger formations. For Byzantine tagmatic formations, cf. Treadgold 1995, 28–29 (origin), 64–86 (size).

⁶⁰ For the life and literary production of Asinius Quadratus, cf. Cornell – Levick in Cornell 2013, 612–16; Jacoby 1926, 300–3; Manni 1971, 191–201; Zecchini 1998, 2999–3021.

⁶¹ This reference is often assumed to originate from Quadratus' other work Χιλιετηρίς, but given the fact that Xiphilinus does not provide any information about the political events that occurred during

the only longer political narrative that Xiphilinus provides from his alternative sources concerns the Parthian War of Lucius Verus, a topic that would have been at the core of Quadratus' *Parthica*. And lastly, the historiography that precedes Xiphilinus does not seem to identify any other Greek sources that described the events of this war and could be shown to have survived to Xiphilinus' lifetime.⁶²

Unfortunately, most of Quadratus' works have been lost with only some minor fragments surviving as quotes in later works. It cannot thus be established how he would have understood the term στρατόπεδον, or which term he would have used to define the Roman legions. In principle, some hypothetical avenues that could shed some light on the issue – such as the common terminology in Quadratus' time or terminological preferences of his assumed models – could be explored. It has been hypothesized that Quadratus' work was intended to be a continuation of the earlier work titled *Parthica* by Arrian, possibly even to the point of emulating the style and terminology of his predecessor.⁶³ Although most of Arrian's contemporary works have not survived to our time either, enough remains to establish something of his preferred terminology. These reveal that Arrian used the terms τέλος and φάλαγξ for the legions, while the term στρατόπεδον can be found to be used for a camp or a fort.⁶⁴

The surviving second and third century historiography does not provide much support either as Herodian (c. 170–240) can be seen to have favoured the term φάλαγξ to define Roman legions, while Appian (c. 95–165) used τέλος.⁶⁵

the reign of Antoninus Pius, but instead he described the Parthian War of Lucius Verus that had its origin in the reign of Pius, it seems more likely that the reference to Pius' death originates from the *Parthica*, the death of Pius marking the beginning of the conflict with Parthia.

⁶² Although Lucian of Samosata made references to several historians writing about the Parthian War of Lucius Verus, none of them are recorded by anyone else. Quadratus' *Parthica* on the other hand can be seen to have been used by later historians as testified by *Historia Augusta* (4th century), Evagrius (4th century), Stephanus of Byzantium (5th/6th centuries) and Agathias (6th century), cf. Cornell – Levick 2013, 615–16.

⁶³ Jacoby 1926, 300–1; Zecchini 1998, 3009–10.

⁶⁴ τέλος: *Suda* s.v. ὑπό οἱ (τὸ ἑβδομον τέλος); φάλαγξ: Arr. *Acies* 5; 6; 15; 22; 24; στρατόπεδον: Arr. *Acies* 2; *Peripl. M. Eux.* 17,2.

⁶⁵ Hdn. 8,2,2; 8,4,6; App. *B. Civ.* 1,57; 1,58; 1,79; 1,80; 1,90; 1,91; 1,92; 1,100; 1,109; 1,111; 1,116; 1,118; 2,13; 2,24; 2,29; 2,32; 2,39; 2,44; 2,46; 2,47; 2,49; 2,54; 2,60; 2,68; 2,76; 2,78; 2,79; 2,82; 2,92; 2,94; 2,96; 2,110; 2,118; 3,6; 3,24; 3,25; 3,43; 3,45; 3,46; 3,47; 3,48; 3,49; 3,51; 3,56; 3,59; 3,62; 3,65; 3,66; 3,67; 3,70; 3,71; 3,72; 3,74; 3,75; 3,77; 3,78; 3,79; 3,80; 3,83; 3,84; 3,85; 3,86; 3,88; 3,90; 3,91; 3,92; 3,93; 3,96;

The contemporary epigraphy, which can be seen to reflect colloquial speech, used the term στρατόπεδον mainly in titles such as *mater castrorum* (μήτηρ στρατοπέδων), where it obviously referred to camps, or used it as a reference to provincial armies (*exerciti*), while the term used to identify specific legions is always λεγεών/λεγιών.⁶⁶ All these aspects are in line with Byzantine lexicons such as Suda, which defines the term στρατόπεδον to mean either an army or the camp location of the army, while explaining that λεγεών was the term among the Romans that defined a division of six thousand men.⁶⁷ These terminological explorations cast further doubt that Xiphilinus could have meant something as specific as a legion, but if not a legion lost in battle, then what did happen at Elegeia in 162 CE?

In addition to the meaning of the term στρατόπεδον in Xiphilinus, the incident at Elegeia has many other open questions. If Severianus was attempting an invasion of Armenia, then why would he have been operating with a single legion if he had three under his jurisdiction? Given the lessons that the Romans had learned about operating in Armenia, especially during the wars waged under Nero and Trajan, it would seem unlikely that a Roman legate would have ventured into Armenia with inadequate forces if he intended to invade the kingdom.⁶⁸ In any event, it is also doubtful that the Roman legates even possessed the right to operate far outside their provincial boundaries at this point of time anymore. Thus, we need to ask what was the legate doing at Elegeia of all places and whether that location could be seen to lie within Severianus' provincial jurisdiction.

3,97; 4,1; 4,2; 4,3; 4,7; 4,58; 4,59; 4,60; 4,61; 4,63; 4,65; 4,74; 4,75; 4,86; 4,87; 4,88; 4,99; 4,102; 4,107; 4,108; 4,115; 4,117; 4,118; 4,121; 4,122; 4,131; 4,133; 5,3; 5,5; 5,6; 5,8; 5,12; 5,14; 5,20; 5,22; 5,23; 5,24; 5,25; 5,26; 5,27; 5,29; 5,30; 5,33; 5,34; 5,43; 5,46; 5,50; 5,51; 5,53; 5,56; 5,61; 5,75; 5,78; 5,87; 5,97; 5,98; 5,103; 5,104; 5,105; 5,110; 5,112; 5,115; 5,116; 5,122; 5,123; 5,127; 5,128; 5,137.

⁶⁶ *Mater castrorum*: IG II² 1076; IG IV 704; IG VII 80; *Exercitus*: *IvE* 672; 3028; 3080.

⁶⁷ *Suda* s.v. στρατόπεδον ἐποιήσαντο; λεγεών.

⁶⁸ That Severianus might have contemplated an armed intervention against the Parthian actions in Armenia is suggested by Lucian of Samosata's (*Alex.* 27) anecdote about the oracles given by the pseudo-prophet Alexander of Abonuteichos to the Roman legate. Although Harmon (1961, 223) translates the key terms in this section with the clinical modern word "invasion", Lucian is actually stating that Severianus was contemplating whether to attempt an entrance (εἰσδοδος) into Armenia (i.e. to cross the border) and after he had thrown (εἰσβάλλω) himself into the enterprise he got himself defeated. The actual scale of Severianus's actions or his intentions are not clarified.

Cary's assumption that a legion was *stationed* in Elegeia seems unlikely for geo-political reasons alone. The assumed site of ancient Elegeia lies at the nexus of two valleys leading from Armenia into the Roman province of Cappadocia. The northern valley leads to the legionary fortress at Satala, while the southern one leads to the Euphrates River crossing that was covered by the legionary fortress at Melitene, thus making it highly unlikely that Elegeia could have hosted a legion, as such defence-in-depth deployments are not known from other sectors of the Roman frontier.⁶⁹

As far as ancient Elegeia itself is concerned, it seems that it had a very limited presence in the history books. It makes its first appearance on the stage in 114 CE when a Roman army under the Emperor Trajan encamped there, the location functioning as the place where Parthamasiris, the Parthian nominee for the Armenian throne made his formal surrender of sovereignty to Trajan.⁷⁰ Cassius Dio, who is our source for this episode, refers to the Roman camp with the terms τάφρευμα, which essentially signifies a temporary encampment, and στρατόπεδον. The use of the term τάφρευμα would seem to indicate that prior to Trajan's visit there had not been any significant settlement in the location. One nevertheless seems to have developed there as Claudius Ptolemy (c. 150 CE) names Elegeia (Ἠλεγία) among the settlements in Armenia located along the Euphrates River. Whether this settlement was of a civilian or military nature is unknown, but after the incident in 162 CE the entity disappears from history, which would seem to indicate that it was literally destroyed, just as Xiphilinus stated to have occurred to the mysterious στρατόπεδον at Elegeia.

If we dare to assume that the elements hinted at by Lucian have some truth in them, then one of the only occasions where their presence in a Roman army would make perfect sense would have been a diplomatic encounter between the Roman legate and his Parthian counterpart. Such occasions would have included mutual pledges of good faith followed by both parties feasting each other in turn, which would have included some exquisite dishes served on elaborate vessels as

⁶⁹ For a geopolitical survey of the ancient Elegeia and its relation to the Cappadocian defences, cf. Juntunen (forthc.).

⁷⁰ Cass. Dio 68,19,1–20,4 (Exc. U^G 52). A fragment from Arrian's *Parthica* retained by Stephanus of Byzantium (*Ethnica* s.v. Ἠλέγεια) also mentions Elegeia. This fragment most likely originates from Arrian's description of this same event and may have been the primary source used by Cassius Dio for his version.

each host would have tried to outdo the other.⁷¹ The reason for such an encounter would undoubtedly have been the question of the Armenian throne that seems to have been recently left vacant.⁷² Also, the location where such encounters tended to take place were the borders between the states, and if such an event was agreed to occur at Elegeia, then it would appear to have marked the eastern end of the Cappadocian border.

The precise number of participants at such encounters are not usually mentioned by our sources, but the opposing forces at Elegeia may not have been overwhelmingly large. The few such occasions that are mentioned show that the number of troops depended on the stature of the dignitaries and the severity of the situation, while the retinues are stated to have been roughly equal in size.⁷³ In a rare exception regarding details, Tacitus relates how Tiridates, the Parthian nominee to the Armenian throne, suggested to Corbulo such an encounter at the Euphrates River, stating that he would bring a thousand cavalrymen and the Romans could bring as many as they pleased as long as they did not wear protective armour or shields. Tacitus explains that Tiridates' intention in allowing the Romans to bring more men than him was to catch them off guard while being vulnerable, but he was disappointed in his intention when Corbulo arrived on the scene with over ten thousand fully equipped troops, Tiridates being dismayed both by the equipment and numbers of the Romans.⁷⁴ This attempted deceit during a diplomatic encounter, which we can see as a *topos* related especially to easterners in the Greco-Roman literature, may also be behind why the situation at Elegeia escalated into open conflict.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Jos. *AJ* 18,102–103; Vell. 2,101,3.

⁷² Early medieval Armenian legends suggest that the King of Armenia had unexpectedly perished after being caught in a sudden snowstorm. The Parthians, being closer geographically to Armenia, seem to have filled the vacant throne with their candidate Pacorus, who might have been the naxarar lord Bakur of Siunik, cf. Juntunen 2013b, 168–9.

⁷³ As related during Crassus' meeting with Surenas (Cass. Dio 40,26,4); Gaius Caesar' meeting with Phraates V (Vell. 2,101,1) and Vitellius' meeting with Artabanus (Joseph. *AJ* 18,102).

⁷⁴ Tac. *ann.* 13,37–38.

⁷⁵ Cass. Dio 40,26,1–27,2 (Surenas); Tac. *ann.* 13,37 (Tiridates); Vell. 2,102,1–2 (Adduus). It should also be noted that this is exactly what happened to Cn. Pompeius Longinus who was captured during a diplomatic encounter with Decebalus and whose death Fronto (*de Bello Parthico* 2) equates with that of Severianus. Lucian of Samosata's (*Hist. conscr.* 31) statement that some Roman historians expected to see the Parthian commander Osroes to be thrown to the lions does suggest that the

Given that at Elegeia there were no members of Parthian or Roman ruling houses present, nor were there active hostilities between Rome and Parthia at the time, it is possible that both sides had agreed to limit their retinues to only a thousand or so troops. In Severianus' case that would have meant his personal guard (the *equites et pedites singulares*) reinforced perhaps with a few auxiliary units and/or legionary vexillation. Some of these troops may have even formed a garrison of a possibly outpost at Elegeia, which would have been an ideal location for such a fort, being at the nexus of two major routes leading in and out of Armenia at the headwaters of the Euphrates River.⁷⁶ Trajan's choice to encamp at Elegeia in 114 CE signifies its importance and an outpost would also explain the settlement at this location mentioned by Claudius Ptolemy.

Another conundrum is the reason why Severianus despaired so much that he decided to commit suicide. At Rhandaia in 62 CE another Roman army had been able to hold out against a siege by the combined forces of Armenians and Parthians operating under the Parthian king Vologaeses I (51–78 CE) for several weeks and even then they had been able to save themselves by surrendering.⁷⁷ The fact that resistance appears to have collapsed in three days at Elegeia is another indication that the Roman force was relatively small. The same is implied by the Parthian unwillingness to take advantage of the incident by invading Cappadocia, which would seem to suggest that the provincial garrison had survived relatively intact. At least both of the legions (*XII Fulminata* and *XV Apollinaris*) stationed in the province continued to survive well into the fifth century. Perhaps the disgrace of defeat was too much for Severianus' pride, or perhaps the cause of his despair was of a more human nature as his son also appears to have disappeared from history at this point in time.⁷⁸

Romans felt deep antagonism towards him, which appears to suggest that he was “guilty” of more than just defeating a Roman army at Elegeia.

⁷⁶ Similar outposts were located on the Pontic coastline, the most important of which was Apsarus to the north-east of Elegeia with a garrison of five cohorts.

⁷⁷ Cass. Dio 62,21,1–22,2; Tac. *ann.* 15,11–17.

⁷⁸ M. Sedatius M. f. Quir(ina) Severus Iulius Reginus (*PIR*² S 307) appears as a patron of the Ostian *collegia* along with his father c. 145–152 CE (*CIL* XIV 246–248; 250). Beyond this nothing else is known about him, but given the custom of upper class sons following their fathers into important commands, it is possible that Severus served under his father in Cappadocia just as Titus had served under Vespasian during the Jewish War (66–69 CE).

Conclusions

There appears to be very little to support an idea of a legion lost in battle. The terminological tendencies of both Cassius Dio and Ioannes Xiphilinus would seem to indicate that Xiphilinus' expression meant either a general armed force or a camp; the former of these two alternative explanations being in line with the contemporary accounts of the event written by M. Cornelius Fronto and Lucian of Samosata. Lucian's narrative on the other hand seems to indicate a failed diplomatic encounter rather than a field battle, and thus the term στρατόπεδον could in this context mean either the armed retinue of the Roman legate (i.e. army) or the possible Roman outpost where the mentioned encounter might have taken place (i.e. a camp). In any case, this example shows the importance of understanding literary narrative and its elements in their true context, when a translation of a single word can change the interpretation of the whole event.

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