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Military Bath-houses in Britain — a Comment. Louise Revell writes: The long history of excavation of permanent military garrisons has demonstrated that bathing facilities were considered an essential part of military life in Roman Britain. With examples from the South Coast to the Antonine Wall, it is easy to approach baths as an expected part of a fort or fortress, and leave it at that. However, if we look at these examples more closely, it is clear that the precise detail of their structures is more variable, and it is this variability I want to explore here. Discussions of bathing in the Roman Empire have tended to downplay military bath-houses. The fortress baths are included in discussions of the evolution of the imperial style *thermae* of Rome, bridging the evidentiary gap between late Republican baths and the monumental Baths of Trajan.[31] The auxiliary bath-houses are even less well served, with their analysis confined to the identification of parallels within the row and block typologies, or the attempt to identify the units of measurement underpinning their dimensions. In discussions of the significance of bathing, both legionary and auxiliary bath-houses are almost completely ignored.

However, from the recent body of literature on the social role of bathing, it is clear that bath-houses (and in particular the Imperial *thermae*) played an important role in the negotiation of social status during the late Republican and early Imperial period. Janet DeLaine has argued for a change between the Republic and the early Imperial period, articulated in the textual sources and reflected in the archaeological remains.[32] During this period, bathing changed from focusing on cleanliness and hygiene to incorporating wider leisure activities and more opportunities for social interaction. Architecturally, this is not only reflected in the increasing size of the bath-buildings, but also in the facilities which allowed bathers to do more than merely clean themselves. Thus proportionately, the space allocated to hot pools decreases, whilst the unheated spaces increase;[33] this is accompanied by an increase in size, opulence, and complexity of layout, with reduplication of rooms and multiple permutations of route through the various stages of bathing. This change was not uniform, and the Imperial period is marked by variability in bathing facilities, with small private baths remaining alongside the larger public ones.[34] Bathing was an integral part of the routines of the élite day within the urban sphere,[35] with an emphasis not only on where one bathed, but also on markers of social status such as soft towels, perfumed oils, and personal slaves.[36] Discussions have focused almost exclusively on the evidence from the civilian sphere,

31 For example, DeLaine 1992, 257–9.
32 DeLaine 1992; Seneca, *Ep. Moralia* 86.9.6.
33 DeLaine 1992, 259–60.
34 DeLaine 1999, 8.
35 Laurence 1994, 124–32.
36 Nielsen 1993, 119–48; Fagan 1999, 12–39.

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either ignoring the question of bathing as part of a soldier's social routines, or including it as something of an aside.[37] This is in part a by-product of the textual evidence, which concentrates on bathing and élite display within an urban setting. However, it raises the possibility that we can trace the same ideas within the military world. As I shall argue here, the key difference between legionary and auxiliary bath-houses in Britain is not their layout and typology, but their monumentality and the social experience of bathing they engendered.

I shall consider two groups of architecturally similar bath-houses here: the row-type legionary bath-houses, and the block-type auxiliary group from Hadrian's Wall. The legionary group consists of three fortress baths, Exeter, Chester, and Caerleon, all dating to the Flavian period (probably between *c.* A.D. 65 and the mid-80s; see FIG. 2 for the plan of Chester fortress baths). The Exeter baths were the shortest-lived as a result of the transfer of the Second Legion *c.* A.D. 75, when they were apparently reduced in size and later demolished.[38] The other two had a much longer life-span: Caerleon went out of use *c.* A.D. 230, and was stripped of its building materials at the end of the century,[39] whilst Chester continued to be rebuilt until the end of the fourth century.[40] None of these three has been completely excavated, but most of the elements at Chester and Caerleon can be identified, and their dimensions roughly reconstructed, whilst at Exeter only the *caldarium* and the *tepidarium* from the main suite have been excavated, although some of the secondary areas have been identified. All three are typical row-type baths, with the rooms of the main bathing suite arranged sequentially from *frigidarium* to *caldarium*, and all show evidence for a *palaestra*, with Chester and Caerleon also having a *basilica thermarum* and a second heated suite.[41] There are five examples of row-type auxiliary bath-houses from Hadrian's Wall: the best evidence comes from those at Bewcastle and Chesters, with Netherby, Carrawburgh, and Benwell forming the remainder of this group (see FIG. 3 for the plan of Chesters fort baths). All are assumed to be Hadrianic through their association with the more securely dated forts. Their early date in the sequence of the construction of the forts is suggested at Bewcastle, where the bath-house was the first structure on the site.[42] Each was constructed as a block of two rows of rooms, with vestibule, *figidarium*, three *tepidaria* (some possibly with a specialised function), and one *caldarium*. At both Chesters and Bewcastle, the masonry *apodyterium* and adjoining hot dry room belonged to a second phase.[43]

If we compare these two groups of buildings, there are clear differences in terms of their monumentality. The legionary baths were prominently placed within the internal layout: at Chester, the baths lie just inside the gate, on the *via principalis*, and at Caerleon, they are at the centre of the fortress, opposite the *principia*. This prominent location was reinforced by their size: at Caerleon they occupied most of an insula, totalling almost a hectare in size. In contrast, those associated with the forts were usually built outside the walls,[44] and the baths at Chesters do not seem to lie on any major access to the fort. At Bewcastle too, although they were within the walls, they do not seem to have been located in the central part of the fort.[45] They are much smaller structures, the Bewcastle baths being 500 m², again suggesting that they would not have dominated their surroundings in quite the same way.[46] The difference in overall size of the building is reflected in the size of the individual rooms: the *frigidarium*, *tepidarium*, and *caldarium* at Caerleon are each 230 m², whilst at Bewcastle the *frigidarium* was 17 m² and the three *tepidaria* combined produced a total area of 49 m². Even with the plunge baths included, the dimensions of the *frigidaria* are 274 m² and 30 m² respectively. Furthermore, the legionary bath-houses are more complex architecturally, with the *frigidaria* and *caldaria* incorporating internal and external apses, features absent in the primary stage at Hadrian's Wall.[47] This architectural elaboration is even more

37 DeLaine 1999, 161; Wilkes 1999, 18–19.
38 Bidwell 1979.
39 Zienkiewicz 1986, 45.
40 Mason 2005.
41 This may also have been the case at Exeter, see Henderson 1999.
42 Gillam, Jobey *et al*. 1993, xv.
43 Gillam, Jobey *et al*. 1993, 22.
44 Johnson 1983, 193–4.
45 See Bidwell 1999, fig. 66.
46 See FIG. 2 for a comparison of Chester and Chesters; Nielsen 1993, 77 draws the same conclusion from a larger sample.
47 The most recent survey of Chesters shows that the *caldarium* apse was secondary; Bidwell 1999, 119.

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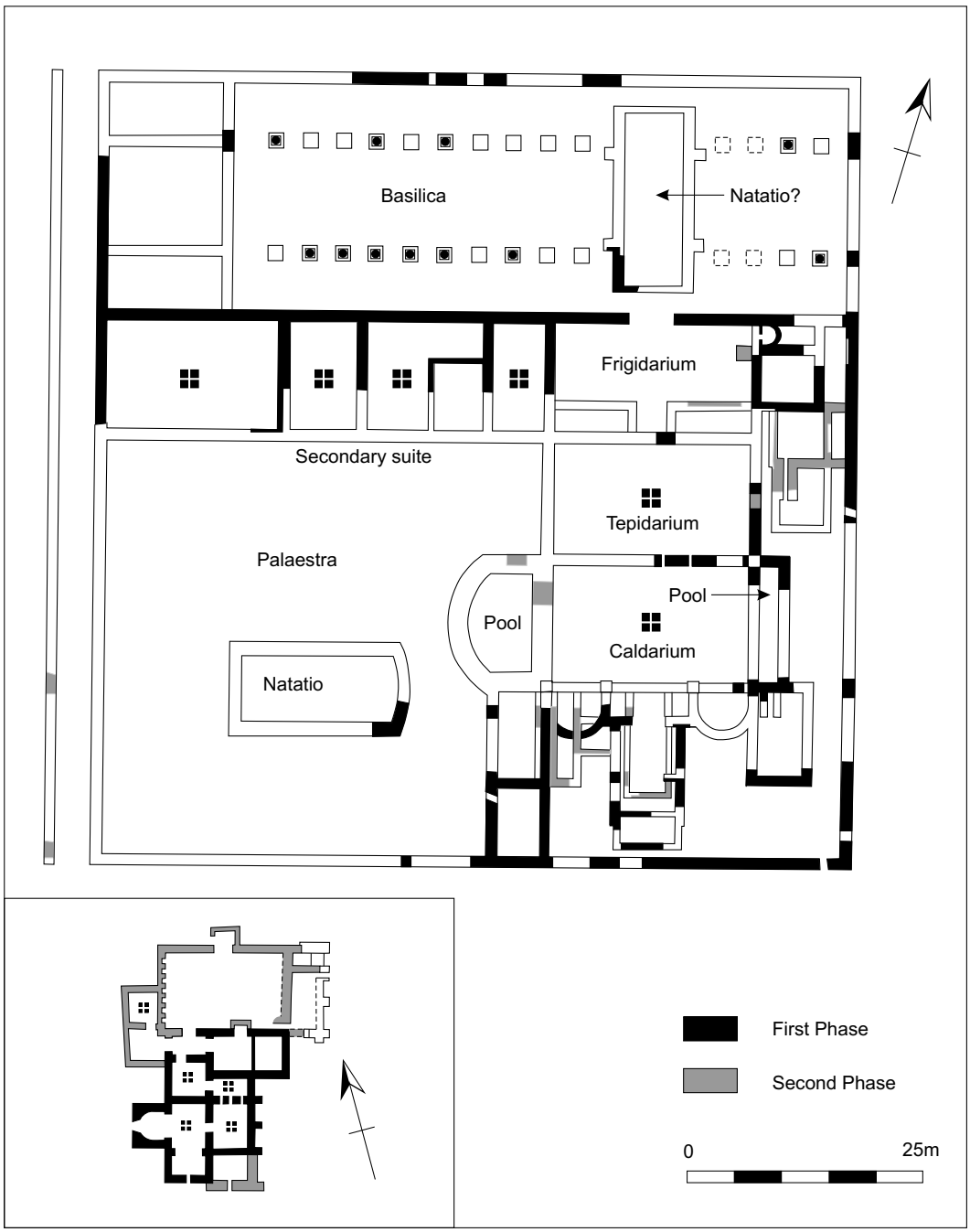


FIG. 2. The fortress baths at Chester (after Mason 2005); the baths at Chesters are shown inset to the same scale for comparison of size.

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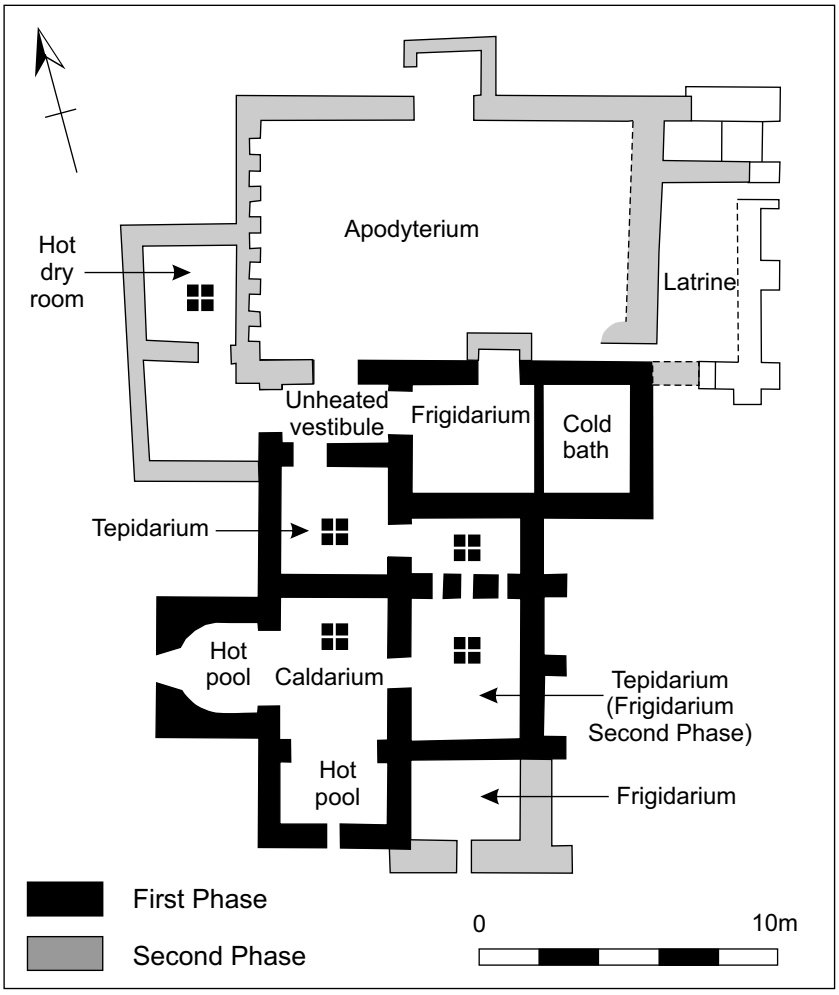


FIG. 3. The fort baths at Chesters.
(After MacDonald 1931, pl. 57; with additions from Gillam, Jobey *et al.* 1993.)

marked at Caerleon, with part or even all of the *palaestra* surrounded by a portico, and the *natatio* emphasised with an apsed fountain-house at one end.

These differences are repeated internally in both the numbers of rooms and in the quality of decoration. The Caerleon baths comprised a main suite of three rooms, but also a basilica, additional heated rooms, and the *palaestra* and *natatio* already mentioned.[48] At Chester, the baths were built on a similar scale, with two suites of heated rooms, *basilica thermarum* and *palaestra*, and in this instance, possibly both indoor and outdoor swimming-pools.[49] All three legionary baths have produced evidence for mosaics, wall-paintings, and marble wall-linings and mouldings. At Caerleon, one of the heated rooms

[48] Zienkiewicz 1986.
[49] Mason 2005.

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was decorated with a polychrome mosaic consisting of a central medallion surrounded by a series of wreaths,[50] and the vast quantities of loose tesserae suggest other mosaics elsewhere in the building.[51] Similarly, although fragmentary and out of context, the wall-plaster points to elaborate polychrome designs, such as coffering and wreaths, being used to emphasise certain areas and architectural features, and in other places, the walls were adorned with moulded slabs of Purbeck marble.[52] Architectural decoration, such as fluted pilasters, cornice mouldings, and a one metre-deep acanthus frieze, was carved from sandstone.[53] The bath-houses from Hadrian's Wall did not completely lack elaboration: they were designed with multiple heated rooms, forming a single circuit, and possibly including a small warm room with a more specialised function. In addition to the main range, there was a second adjoining suite at both Chesters and Bewcastle, and whilst the extant complexes of anteroom and heated room (probably a hot-dry room) are secondary, the doors to them are primary, suggesting that there were additional facilities from the outset.[54] These external suites may have been similar in form and function to the external *sudatoria* at Hardknott and Vindolanda.[55] There are remains of painted wall-plaster from Bewcastle,[56] the only one of this group to be excavated under modern recording methods, most of it coming from the cold bath within the *frigidarium*, and at Chesters, an altar to Fortuna was discovered in one of the *tepidaria*.[57] However, there are no traces of the wall mouldings and mosaics seen in the legionary bath-houses, suggesting that less was being invested in their decoration.

It is easy to concentrate on 'common sense' causes for these differences, explaining them as being a response to the larger numbers of soldiers stationed within a fortress. This was certainly a factor: a full-strength legion might be up to ten times the size of an auxiliary unit, and this does not include the women, children, slaves, and other hangers-on who, from the evidence of the finds from the drain at Caerleon, also used the facilities. However, this does not account for the different levels of decoration and numbers of facilities, and ignores the differences within a social-based interpretation of these bath-houses. If we try to reconstruct something of the way in which the buildings allowed for movement through the space, and activities within certain areas, we can detect further differences between the two groups. The legionary bath-houses produced a more complex range of facilities: for someone visiting the baths there was a choice of dry and damp hot-rooms, and the multiple cold and hot plunge-baths. In addition, the basilica and the *palaestra* allowed for exercise, whether individually or in groups, and the *natatio* for swimming. The importance of such areas is suggested at the Imperial baths in Rome, where statues cluster in the *palaestra* and around the swimming pool.[58] They would have formed an extended area for games and sports, as well as for meeting and chatting. The auxiliary bath-houses did incorporate a certain level of choice, with the presence of the hot-dry suite, two main *tepidaria*, and one smaller warm room, possibly used for oiling or massage, but they lacked the additional facilities provided by the basilicas and the *palaestra*. Furthermore, there are substantial differences in the allocation of space within the bathing suites themselves. DeLaine[59] has argued that one of the differences between the Republican and the Imperial baths was the increase in the proportion of space allocated to activities other than those for hygiene (i.e. washing). These differences are repeated in the *frigidaria* and *caldaria* of Chester and Bewcastle, where the proportion of wet space to dry space show strikingly different ratios. Within each of the *frigidarium* and *caldarium* at Chester, approximately 20 per cent of the area is given over to pools, whilst at Bewcastle, the proportion in both rooms is approximately 50 per cent. The other baths follow the same trends, and this suggests different priorities in the minds of their architects, with a marked contrast in the proportion of space given over to washing, and the proportion to social interaction. All these elements together point to the two groups of bath-houses serving very different functions, with the

50 Zienkiewicz 1986, 273–8.
51 Zienkiewicz 1986, 339.
52 Zienkiewicz 1986, 281–306.
53 Zienkiewicz 1986, 306–12.
54 Gillam, Jobey *et al*. 1993, 18–20.
55 Collingwood 1928; Daniels 1959.
56 Gillam, Jobey *et al*. 1993, 34–6.
57 *RIB* 1449.
58 Marvin 1983, 350–3.
59 DeLaine 1992.

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legionary bath-houses providing far more opportunities to go beyond the basic maintenance of bodily cleanliness.

These different experiences are reinforced through the provision of changing facilities: in the auxiliary bath-houses in the initial phase there are no traces of either an *apodyterium* or a basilica, raising the possibility that bathers entered via a small vestibule and went directly into the *frigidarium*. There may have been some form of wooden structure for disrobing; there is evidence for a wooden *frigidarium* and *apodyterium* at Bearsden on the Antonine Wall,[60] and Baatz has argued that these were employed in auxiliary forts in Britain and Germany.[61] Such timber changing-rooms might have been incorporated in the Hadrian's Wall bath-houses, and all traces obliterated by the later masonry reconstructions. However, even if this is the case, it suggests a different attitude to how the whole bathing experience was viewed. Although the identification of *apodyteria* in the fortress baths is not clear, there are potential examples, such as the heated rooms adjoining the *frigidarium* at Caerleon, and the secondary suite adjoining the basilica at Chester. The basilicas also provided possible spaces for changing, and the excavators at Chester have argued for *apodyteria* adjoining the entrance.[62] The *apodyteria* could be a key area for social interaction, and in most civilian bath-houses of the Imperial period were generously provided for. The importance of these differences is illustrated by the third-century remodelling of the Chesters bath-house, when a stone *apodyterium* and latrines were added, and one of the warm rooms was turned into an unheated room, possibly a second *apodyterium*.

At this point, we might ask whether such differences are really significant: does it matter that legionary soldiers had access to more spacious and opulent facilities than the auxiliary soldier? This question brings us to the heart of the social role of bathing in the Roman world. It is easy to concentrate on the hygienic aspect: the equation of bathing and cleanliness. Whilst this was undoubtedly a factor, it ignores the recent work on how bathing formed part of the way in which Roman society operated on a daily basis.[63] Bathing was a social activity: seeing and being seen, forming social alliances, and maintaining social hierarchies. Where, when and how someone bathed became a marker of issues such as status and gender, and similarly who they met became a way to make and maintain social contacts in a face-to-face society. On a wider scale, it was part of a shared knowledge of what it was to be Roman, and even in Britain a large communal bath-house was a frequent part of the urban landscape. Whilst we tend to concentrate on the main bathing suite of *frigidarium*, *caldarium*, and *tepidarium*, other facilities were equally significant, extending the space and activities for such interaction, their importance demonstrated through the opulence of their decoration.

It is within this discourse that we need to set the differences between the legionary and the auxiliary bathing establishments, and from this, it is apparent that in fact we are dealing with somewhat different social phenomena. This ties in with recent work by military archaeologists, who have begun to question our assumptions about the nature of the Roman army as a homogeneous entity. Both Ian Haynes and Simon James have pointed to the way in which the military units comprised groups of men from different cultural backgrounds, and how the routines of military life, incorporating a shared material culture, were part of the production and maintenance of a unifying military identity.[64] Less attention has been paid to the evidence of military architecture, in spite of the variability between the various forms of permanent garrisons.[65] As outlined here, the differences in layout between the two groups of buildings produced very different experiences of bathing, and consequently played different roles in the maintenance of the social structures of the military groups. The experience of the legionary soldier was clearly part of the same social discourse as that of the civilian population of Italy and the provinces, with the stress on 'non-hygienic' activities, the generous provision of space, and the investment in decoration. In contrast, the auxiliary soldier's visit to the baths was a more functional affair, with the emphasis on washing and cleanliness. The smaller spatial area of the complex as a whole, as well as of the individual rooms, will have curtailed the opportunities for social interaction and display, reducing the importance

60 Breeze 1984.
61 Baatz 1973.
62 Henderson 1999; Mason 2005, 15.
63 See DeLaine 1988, 27–9 for a summary of the characteristics of this approach.
64 Haynes 1999; James 1999.
65 Allason-Jones 2001; James 2001, 88.

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of bathing in the maintenance of social groups and hierarchies. Why the bath-houses were constructed with these differences is more complex, particularly as both types were in all probability constructed by a legionary workforce. It probably reflects different attitudes on the part of the Roman authorities towards the needs and requirements of the citizen legionary soldier, and the predominantly non-citizen auxiliary soldier (a prejudice perhaps echoed in Vegetius 1.3). Whatever the reason, the result was two very different experiences of a visit to the bath-house for the different types of soldier, undermining an assumed homogeneity of a military life-style. However, these differences did not remain static, and at Chesters the construction of a stone *apodyterium* and the transformation of one heated room into a second *apodyterium* perhaps demonstrate a changing expectation amongst the auxiliary soldiers of what a visit to the baths was about within the Roman world.

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University of Southampton
louise.revell@soton.ac.uk

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The Missing Weapons at Carlisle. M.P. Speidel writes: Some time before A.D. 105, Docilis, decurion of *ala I Gallorum Sebosiana* at Carlisle, wrote an ink-tablet letter to Augurinus, the prefect of his *ala*, listing the *lanciarii* in his unit that lacked *lancea*-spears or other weapons. Roger Tomlin published Docilis' letter with a rich commentary in *Britannia* 1998:[66]

Docilis Augurino praefecto
suo salu[tem].
Ita ut praecepisti lanciar<i>or[um]
quibus lanciae deessent om-
nia nomina subiecimus, aut
qui lancias pugnatorias aut
qui minores subarmales aut
qui gladia [i]nst[i]tuta non
hab[e]bant. Turma [s]enio[r]is
Genialis: [Ve]r[e]cundus lanciam
pugnatoriam item subarmales duas
- - - (etc.)

'Docilis, to Augurinus his prefect, greetings. As you ordered, we have attached below all the names of lancers who were missing lances, either who did not have fighting lances, or who (did not have) the smaller *subarmales*, or (who did not have) regulation swords. Troop of Genialis senior: Verecundus, (one) fighting lance and two *subarmales*. (etc.)'

Tomlin's text seems sound, including that of the long, much broken list of entries here omitted. His interpretation of *lanciarii* and *subarmales*, however, calls for reconsideration.

Tomlin suggested that the term *lancearii* in line 3 refers to all the horsemen of *ala I Gallorum*,[67] replacing the usual term *equites*. Such usage, however, is unparalleled, and it is hard to see why all the horsemen of the unit should be called *lancearii* when some, almost certainly, fought as *sagittarii*-bowmen, as *contarii*-lancers, or as slingers or javelinmen. Hadrian's speeches and Arrian's *Tactica* show that most cavalry units trained with all these weapons.[68] Units could have *sagittarii* and *contarii* specialists in their ranks without referring to this fact in their titles, an example being the Pannonian *ala I Canninefatium*, whose horseman Adiutor is depicted on his gravestone from Tipasa in Mauretania as a *contarius*-lancer holding a very long *contus* with both hands, while his unit is nowhere qualified as *contariorum*.[69] It seems therefore, that Docilis' *lancearii* refer only to those men of his *ala* who fought with *lancea*-spears, which would mean that others specialised in other weapons. Alternatively, one may consider reading: *Conalar<i>or[um]*, which also seems to fit the extant traces and would make better sense.

The term *lancearii* is better not translated as 'lancers', nor *lancea* as 'lance', tempting though it may be,[70] for in English 'lance' refers to a very long thrusting spear. In Latin, on the other hand, *lancea* is

66 Tomlin 1998, 55–63, No. 16, whence *AE* 1998, 839.
67 Tomlin 1998, 60.
68 Speidel 2006, 89f.; Arrian, *Tactica* 44.2.
69 Viator: Speidel 1992, 64. For the inscriptions of *ala I Canninefatium* see Lőrincz 2001, 179–83.
70 Tomlin 1998, 58 translates 'lancer' and 'lance', but see his note 84 (p. 55).

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