

INTRODUCTION

Seeking peace through strength, emperor Hadrian (117–139) went to Numidia in summer 128 to review the fighting skills of Rome's African army¹. He witnessed its maneuvers and critiqued them in speeches to the troops. Afterwards, the army recorded the speeches in an inscription on the parade ground at Lambaesis. Though shortened and broken by gaps, this is the Queen of the African inscriptions, recording the only surviving speeches of an ancient emperor to his soldiers. As our liveliest, richest, and most authentic source for understanding the training and fighting skills of the Roman army, they offer unparalleled insight². Hadrian, accomplished expert on military matters, spoke from experience: he had seen and evaluated countless maneuvers. Coins show him greeting the armies of nearly all frontier provinces, and a passage by Fronto, written not long afterwards, implies that he made the rounds of the troops to inspect their maneuvers and address them with a critique thereof³.

Among military classics, Hadrian's speeches lack Sun Tzu's intricacy and Clausewitz' wealth of detail. But these authors wrote for generals, while Hadrian spoke to soldiers. In the wonted way of mixing critique with praise⁴, his words show leadership in action: they build morale while driving home advice and criticism; they acknowledge skill and eagerness, rewarding them with honor as well as material goods; they deftly retell and praise great deeds. Not theoretical reflections, they are the words spoken to his soldiers by the emperor of three continents.

To recover as much of Hadrian's speeches as possible from the wreck and ruin of time is the purpose of this book. It is for the reader to judge its success in restoring the structure of the inscription and in recreating an often coherent text. The effort itself has been breathtaking: nothing compares with hearing Hadrian's words ring again, down through the millennia.

1. THE MONUMENT ON THE PARADE GROUND AT LAMBAESIS

Lambaesis, the strategic center of Rome's African army, lies some 200 kilometers from the Sahara frontier, in an area of some rain on wooded uplands, scorching heat in summer, and freezing cold in winter. The fortress housed the main force of the Third Augustan legion, nominally 6000 strong, sent there by Trajan (98–117)⁵. As commander of Rome's only legion in Africa outside Egypt, the *legatus Augusti legionis*, was also commander-in-chief of the African army. Besides the legion, he thus commanded three *alae* (regiments of 500 horse each), and six or more cohorts (mixed regiments of 380 foot and 120 horse each)⁶. The *auxilia* thus totaled nearly as many men as the legion, but were strung out in far-flung outposts along the frontier.

From the beginning, Lambaesis had a suitable training- and parade ground, set two kilometers west of the fortress (fig. 1)⁷, for such a *campus* was an essential part of every Roman fort or fortress⁸.

¹ *Historia Augusta*, ›Hadrian‹ 10: ›pacisque magis quam belli cupidus militem, quasi bellum immineret, exercuit‹.

² Suffice it to point to the use made of the inscription e.g. by R. Cagnat 1913, 146–151; H. Delbrück in his *History of the Art of War*, vol. II, 1980, 173–178; Kiechle 1964; Campbell 1984, 77–80; Davies 1989, 107–111; Horsmann 1991, 57; 159–171; 184; and Birley 1997, 210–213.

³ *Historia Augusta*, ›Hadrian‹ 14,10: ›Armorum peritissimus et rei militaris scientissimus‹. Fronto, *Principia Historiae* 11, 208, 7 ff. (Van den Hout 1988): ›Hadriano principe circum-

eundis et facunde appellandis exercitibus satis inprogre‹. Coins: Birley 1997, 122; 140 f. For a lost, but perhaps similar inscription on Hadrian's Wall (RIB 1051) see Birley 1997, 132.

⁴ Cf. Tibullus, 3,8,88: ›Laudis ut adsiduo vigeat certamine miles‹.

⁵ Le Bohec 1989, 369; cf. Janon 1973; Le Bohec 2003, 41–51.

⁶ *Cohortes equitatae*: Hyginus, *De munitione castrorum* 26–27 (Lenoir 1979, 73 ff.); Le Bohec 1989b, 27; Weiss 2002.

⁷ Drawing after Gassend – Janon 1978 and Sartori 2003.

⁸ Davies 1989, 93 ff.; Le Bohec 1989b, 120 f.

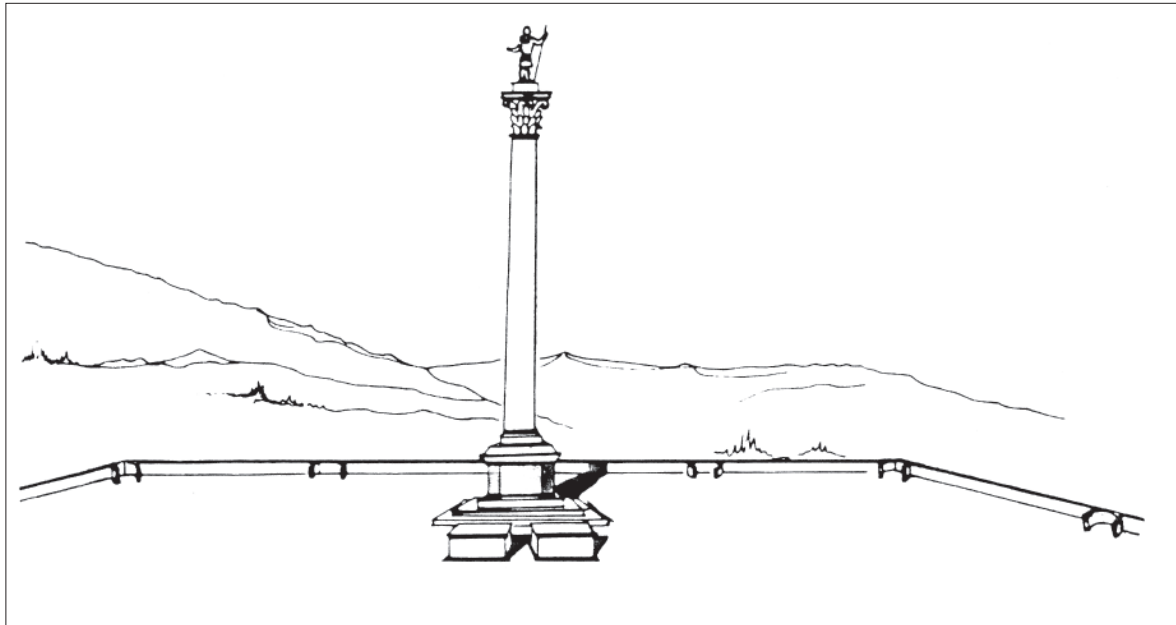


Fig. 1 The parade ground of legion III Augusta at Lambaesis.

The parade and training ground was a piece of level land, 200 meters square, with a 60-cm wide perimeter wall, built of irregular blocks⁹. Since only the lower parts survived into modern times, we do not know how high the wall was. It had a west and an east gate, and on the inside twelve semi-circular structures that may have been water basins rather than towers or gun-emplacements¹⁰. In an area of flagstones in the middle of the parade ground stood a viewing platform or *tribunal*. It was on the corner pillars of this platform that Hadrian's speeches to the African army were engraved.

A square base about two meters high with sides four-and-a-half meters long, the viewing platform was topped by a Corinthian column, nine meters tall, perhaps crowned with a statue of Hadrian¹¹. There is no way of knowing whether platform and column were in place when the emperor came in June 128, or whether they were set up afterwards to commemorate his visit. In our new reading of the dedication, Hadrian approved the training ground; hence it seems by that time to have been finished.

Hadrian may have addressed the legion from this platform. With many men away on outpost duty or in Carthage, far fewer than 6000 legionaries would have been there to hear his speeches. The full number of men would have fit into the space, though to hear the emperor's voice they would have had to gather closely¹². It seems, however, that Hadrian spoke to the legionaries present in four or more groups: the *pili*, *principes*, *hastati* and the legionary horse.

⁹ Discovered in the 19th century, it was long mistakenly called the ›Western Camp‹ or ›Camp of the Auxiliaries‹: Gsell 1901; Cagnat 1913, 436–440; Leschi 1957, 199; Janon 1973, esp. p. 210–215, with map p. 253. Field 10, referring to the building of a wall as part of the maneuvers, hardly means the parade-ground wall itself, as argued by Janon, for one day's work can no more than have embellished the permanent training ground. Le Bohec 1989, 407.

¹⁰ Gun emplacements: Gsell 1901, 320 ff. Water basins: Cagnat 1908, 12; Cagnat 1913, 437 f.; Le Bohec 1989, 407.

¹¹ Leschi 1957, 198; Le Bohec 2003, 46. For an artist's reconstruction of column and statue see Janon 1977, 5. Viewing: Arrian, *Tactica* 38,2: τοῖς ἐπὶ βήματος ὀρώσι. For such a *bema* see Davies 1989, 97 ff.

¹² Vegetius 2,15. On the formal setting of *adlocutiones* see Campbell 1984, 72 ff.; Bishop 1990; Stoll 2002, 267.

For many years after 128, this training ground served for parades and ceremonies, with the inscription of the emperor's words on *disciplina* there for the men to see. Later recuttings show that the inscription long continued to be read, though some have said that the monument fell into disrepair after the legion's dissolution in 238. Upon its return in 253, the legion recut its name on the dedication and the foreword (field 1). For hundreds of years the inscription thus kept alive the memory of Hadrian's visit to the African army, holding up the skilled performance of the troops in 128 as an *exemplum*, a standard to strive for by those who came after. The monument thereby lifted exercises and ceremonies to the height of imperial pomp and purpose¹³.

With the coming of Arabs in the Middle Ages, Hadrian's monument fell in ruin. Some time during the one-and-a-half millennia after the fall of Roman Africa, the column crashed and the platform crumbled. Yet when the French arrived in the mid-nineteenth century much of it was still lying where it fell. The drawing in figure 2 shows the state of the monument in 1851¹⁴.

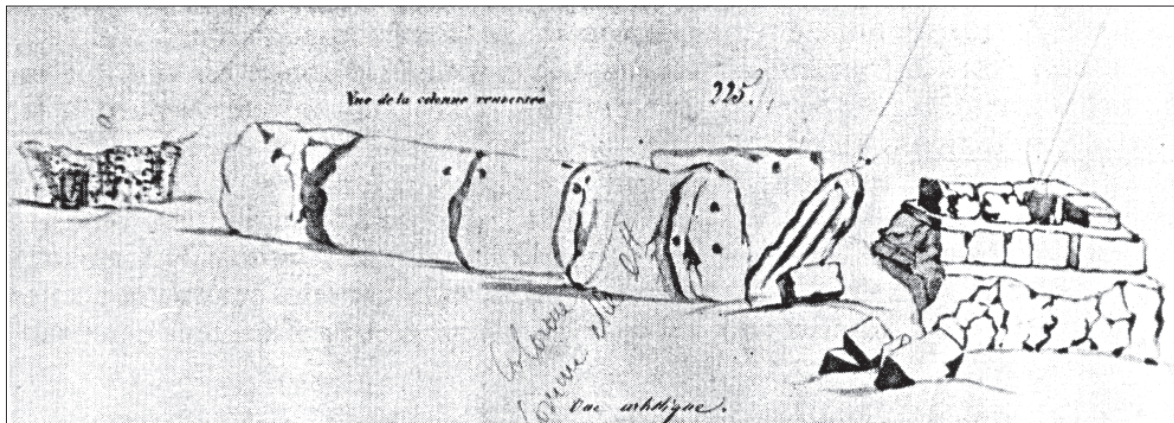


Fig. 2 Hadrian's monument when re-discovered in the mid-nineteenth century.

The lower blocks of the platform were still in place, and the large blocks in the foreground are of the kind on which the inscription was carved. Sadly, by the end of the 19th century, stone thieves had made away with much of the marble¹⁵. Today, both platform and column are gone; yet four of the sixteen inscribed blocks survive, as do over a hundred small fragments: enough to recover a good part of Hadrian's speeches.

¹³ Cagnat 1913, 441: >... réservé sans doute pour certains cérémonies militaires, défendue, en tout cas, par la mémoire d'un grand événement local et d'un des empereurs qui ont le plus fait pour l'armée romaine et la prospérité des prov-

inces<. Janon 1973, 214. Army ceremonies on the campus: Davies 1989, 100ff.; Stoll 2001, 116 f.

¹⁴ After Le Bohec 1989, 409.

¹⁵ Gsell 1901.

2. SCHOLARSHIP

In 1851, L. Renier brought word of the inscription to the attention of the learned world¹⁶, and scholarship about the text began. It took its twists and turns. In 1881 Gustav Wilmanns published a scholarly edition of the text in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*¹⁷. Thirteen years later, a new CIL edition became necessary, for new fragments had been found, and, as Johannes Schmidt noted, researchers working to restore missing words had been misled by inaccurate drawings in the 1881 publication¹⁸. Hardly had Schmidt's revised edition appeared in 1894, when new excavations at the parade ground uncovered a large block with the beginning of the inscription and part of the end, as well as many small fragments¹⁹ – spectacular finds that overturned the reconstruction of the inscription in the CIL.

For a hundred years thereafter the inscription was accessible to scholars only in the chaotic mix of a high-quality but now obsolete CIL edition, provisional publications in journals of many loose fragments, and a somewhat jumbled selection by Hermann Dessau²⁰. Yet, given the importance of the text, scholars used the available pieces of it, whatever the state of its overall presentation. Those interested in training and battlefield tactics of the Roman army were at times badly served thereby, for the gaps in the text proved to be pitfalls. In a typical misreading, army scholars read ›if you want to attack, you have to charge‹, or ›ride in serried ranks‹, or ›gallop‹²¹, when all Hadrian had said was ›ride through the middle of the field‹. The most astonishing mistake thus handed down is the one that has Hadrian saying in field 2 that he would have excused the legion had it given up training for a long time, which contradicts everything Hadrian stood for²².

Still, scholars made progress over the years. Héron de Villefosse healed the misread passage *in campos allete*, restoring it to *in Commagenorum campo salieti[s]*, ›you will jump (on your horses) on the Commageni training ground‹²³, and he found the true reading of the passage *hast[is usi] quamquam brevibus et duris*, ›though having used short and hard spears‹²⁴. W. Seston saw that Hadrian's *auctor* (field 26) was Trajan. Louis Leschi first realized that the inscription was laid out not over two but four pillars, and Marcel Le Glay brilliantly identified Hadrian's companion Viator (field 29) as the commander of his *Equites Singulares* horse guard.

In the 1970s, Marcel Le Glay planned a new edition of the inscription. Yann Le Bohec, Le Glay's student, and a team of other, mostly French, scholars brought this plan to fruition in 2003 by gathering all the published pieces and making known, for the first time, the drawings and measurements of 79 fragments made by Ch. Godet in 1940. Their volume constitutes the richest commentary on Hadrian's speeches so far²⁵. However, they did not try to reconstruct the text. This is the aim of the work at hand.

¹⁶ Janon 1973, 193; Le Bohec 1977, 71.

¹⁷ CIL VIII, 2532.

¹⁸ Schmidt 1894, CIL VIII 18042. Drawings by nature are less accurate than photographs: Schmidt's own drawing of field 2 lets one believe that at the end of line 4 *quaternos* were possible, although there is only space for *quinos* (below, p. 32).

¹⁹ Héron de Villefosse 1899.

²⁰ CIL VIII 18042; decisive find: Héron de Villefosse 1903; unconnected fragments: Héron de Villefosse 1899. Dessau 1892 and 1916 for a long time was the single most useful text.

²¹ Lammert 1931, 53; Kiechle 1965, 124; Voisin 2003, 25; Wolff – Berthet 2003, 116. Gallop: Davies 1989, 110.

²² Cf. *Historia Augusta*, ›Hadrian‹ 10,2 (quoted above, note 1); Le Bohec 2003, 123–132.

²³ Field 29. AE 1904, 54; Dessau 1916. Contra: Gagé 1952, 193 ff.

²⁴ Field 29. Héron de Villefosse 1903, 196, improving on his publication 1899, CXCVIII. Different: Lassère 2003, 90.

²⁵ Le Bohec et al. 2003. Outstanding earlier commentary: Mueller 1900.