The Gravestone of C. Iulius, *optio* of the Legio XII Fulminata

**Abstract:** Cappadocia had two legionary garrisons from the very beginning of Vespasian’s reign: Legio XII Fulminata at Melitene, and Legio XVI Flavia Firma at Satala (from 120 AD replaced by Legio XV Apollinaris). The evidence for the recruits of these Cappadocian legions is, however, still slight. This is mainly because very few relevant inscriptions have been found in Cappadocia itself. For this reason every new document of veterans who served in Cappadocian legions is crucial. In this context the funerary inscription of C. Iulius who returned to his homeland after serving as *optio* in the Legio XII Fulminata gives new evidence on the subject. It was found in the village of Himmetli situated in the territory of Saimbeyli, the district of the Province of Adana. Judging from the letter forms the inscription can be assigned to the II.–III. century AD. The rural settlement where the gravestone was erected is situated immediately to the north of the border between Cappadocia and Cilicia, lying through the line between Kilikiai Pylai and Mazgaç Pass. Accordingly it must have lied in the territory of the Cappadocian polis Kukusos, an important junction of the roads from Kaisareia to Melitene and from Sebasteia to Tarsos. On the basis of the new inscription the authors conclude that the practice of recruitment from Asia Minor continued on a considerable scale throughout the second and third centuries AD; that new materials concerning veterans may indicate that the number of those who returned to their hometown must not be underestimated; and that the funerary inscription of the Cappadocian veteran, C. Iulius, may support the suggestion that Cappadocia, and especially its frontier areas, supplied a high proportion of the total recruits for the Cappadocian legions, like those of the other eastern provinces.

**Keywords:** *Optio*; Veteran; Cappadocian Legions; Kukusos; Melitene; Satala; C. Iulius; Valeria Ma.

The reign of Vespasian was of particular importance for both the administration and the security of the Province of Cappadocia. After having restored the Rhine garrison and settled the Batavian revolt Vespasian focused on the East. He combined Galatia and Cappadocia into a double province in ca. 70/71, just as Nero did before, and appointed the governors of the province among the ex-consuls. He also transferred two legions which built their bases along the upper Euphrates from which they could control...
the client kingdom of Armenia, and defend Cappadocia against the Alan raiders from the north: the Legio XII Fulminata\(^4\) at Melitene, and the Legio XVI Flavia\(^5\) at Satala.\(^6\) Through such administrative and military measures the emperor aimed at a centralization of authority\(^7\) and especially to ensure the rapid construction of the roads,\(^8\) so that subsistence and logistic support for the expeditionary forces could be organized by a single governor quickly.\(^9\) The Legio XII Fulminata continued to be stationed in Melitene as far as at least the beginning of the 5th century AD,\(^10\) while the Legio XV Apollinaris replaced the Legio XVI Flavia in 120 AD and was stationed in Satala until the beginning of the 5th century AD.\(^11\) Besides these two legions Cappadocia had afterwards four \textit{alae} and at least fifteen \textit{cohortes}.\(^12\) That there are numerous milestones on the road between Kaisareia (capital of the province)\(^13\) and Melitene (base of the Legio XII),\(^14\) and that most of the inscriptions on the milestones are written in Latin with the distance given either from Kaisareia or Melitene, bears the trace of the military mobilization in this period of time.\(^15\) The evidence for the recruits of the Cappadocian legions is, however, still slight. This is mainly because very few relevant inscriptions have been found in Cappadocia itself. For this reason every new document of veterans who served in Cappadocian legions is crucial. In this context the funerary inscription of C. Iulius who returned to his homeland after serving as \textit{optio} in the Legio XII Fulminata gives new evidence on the subject. It was found by one of the authors in the village of Himmetli on a slope known as Kuyu Yanı during the epigraphical survey conducted in Saimbeyli, the district of the Province of Adana in 2010 (for the locations see map 1).

\(^4\) It is not exactly known where the Legio XII Fulminata was stationed. For discussion see Uzunoğlu 2012, 108. For the history and the positioning of the legio see E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1705–1710 s. v. Legio (XII Fulminata); Bertrandy – Remy 2000, 253–257; Farnum 2005, 22; see also the comment on L. 3 below.

\(^5\) The legion was formed in 70 AD by Vespasian with the added honorific “Firma” from the remains of the XVI Gallica which had been disbanded because of its role in the Batavian rebellion. Immediately after its creation Vespasian sent the legion to the East. Around 75 AD, vexillations of the Legio XVI Flavia Firma were used for canal and bridge construction work at Antioch (AE 1983, 927; Stoll 2001, 237–238; cf. Gebhardt 2002, 42). At that time, the legion had its garrison at Satala in northeastern Cappadocia (Edwell 2008, 18). The legion joined the campaigns of Trajan against the Parthians between 114 and 116/7 AD (CIL C 1202). Hadrian replaced the Legio XVI Flavia Firma in Satala by the Legio XV Apollinaris and sent it to Samosata in 120 AD (Edwell 2008, 22; Erdkamp 2007, 250). Under Antoninus Pius vexillations of XVI Flavia Fidelis were transferred to Seleucia Pieria which was then under the threat of the Parthians (AE 1903, 252). The legion was renamed XVI Flavia Firma Pia Fidelis when it failed to join Pescennius Niger in 194 AD (AE 1940, 220; cf. Farnum 2005, 23). During the Severan dynasty the Legion seems to have proven so useful, that it also bore the honorific title Severiana (AE 1937, 244; AE 1940, 220). In 198 AD the legion was transferred from Samosata to Sura in Syria (Farnum 2005, 24; 37; Edwell 2008, 234–235). In the early 5th century, the Legio XVI Flavia Firma was still stationed in Sura and was under the command of the Dux Syriae et Eufratensis Syriae (Not. Dig. Or. XXXIII,28: Praefectus legionis sextacentae Flaviae firmae, Sura). For the legion in general see also E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1765–1768 s. v. Legio (XVI Flavia);


\(^7\) Sartre 1995, 173.

\(^8\) Veh 1980, 6.

\(^9\) Eck 2007, 199.

\(^10\) See infra fn. 44.


\(^12\) Speidel 2014, 631.


\(^14\) French 2012, nos. 066–130.

\(^15\) Speidel 2014, 632–633. For the economic results of the military mobilization on the poleis of Asia Minor see Stauner 2005 with a map of important military routes through Asia Minor (p. 45).
Description: Rectangular block of local limestone lying across a tomb on a podium. Well preserved, but broken at the top left corner. The other sides are plain and undecorated. Letters leaning to the left, and larger in the first and the last lines.

H: 0.55 m.; W: 1.02 m.; D: 0.85 m.; LH: 0.04–0.06 m.

Date: II.–III. century AD (according to the letter forms).

Γάϊος Ἰούλιος ὀπτίων 2 στρατηγός ἐπίτμως τοῦ διδακτάτου τάγματος καὶ ἐπανελθὼν ἐπεσκέψασθαι ἀμα Οὐαλερίας Μας Πρίσκου τῆς συμβίου αὐ- vac. αὐτοῖς vac.

«Gaius Iulius erected this gravestone together with his wife Valeria Ma, daughter of Priscus, for themselves when he returned home after serving reputedly as an optio in the Legio XII Fulminata.»

L. 1 ὀπτίων = optio. An optio was the tactical deputy of the centurio. The word is derived from the verb optāre, “to choose”, because an optio was chosen by his centurio. In the imperial period they existed in all the other military formations, such as the cohortes urbaeae, cohortes praetoriae, cohortes vigilum, cohortes auxiliares, and the civil administration, such as optio ab actis urbi, a sort of secretary of a praefectus urbi. In battle, the optio had his tactical place behind the last row. Here his primary task was to ensure the observance of the combat formations of the front rows. As an optio centuriae or centuriones, the second-in-command of a centuria, he commanded the centuria in the absence of the centurio. When an optio was marked out for promotion to the rank of centurio, he was called optio ad spem ordinis or spei or candidatus. Outside of battle there were different areas of use for the optiones: optio ad carcerem or carceris (in charge of the prison cells); (marked out for); optio ballistarioram (in charge of artillery units); optio cornicinum or tubicinum (in charge of the trumpeteers); optio custodiaram (in charge of guard posts); optio equitum (optio in the legionary or praetorian cavalry); optio fabricae (in charge of a workshop); optio navalioram (in charge of boats); optio praetorii (soldier attached to headquarters); optio signiferorum (in charge of the standardbearers); optio statorum (optio of military police); optio tribuni (assistant to a tribunus); optio valetudinarii (orderly in charge of a hospital).

L. 3 τὸ διδόκεσθαι τάγμα = Legio XII (Fulminata). The legion was formed by Julius Caesar in 58 BC and stationed in Gaul and took part in several battles there until 49 BC., then in Italy until 45 BC. It

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16 For optiones in general see Onur 2014, 117–118; Onur 2017, 159–160; Cowan 2013, 27; Le Bohec 2006, 51; Domaszewski 1908, 43–44 nos. 43–45; Cagnat 1907, 183–187.


18 For τάγμα see Strab. 3,3,8: τριῶν ταγμάτων στρατιωτικῶν ἐπιστήσατος; Nic. Dam. frag. 130,28: ἐκρήθη Γαλατίαι σὺν δυοὶ τάγμαις; Plut. Fab. Max. 10,6: τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ταγμάτων καὶ τέταρτον αὐτὶς ἐξαρεῖ; Galb. 27: ἐκ τοῦ πεντεκαιδεκάτου τάγματος; Ios. ant Iud. 14,48: σύν τοῖς ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ Ῥωμαϊκῶν τάγμαιν έπερήπτεσθαι; 14,452: ἔχων δὲ καὶ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἐν τάγμα; bel. Iud. 7,18: Μιμημάνδος δὲ τοῦ διδακτάτου τάγματος; Dion. Hal. ant. 6,42,1: γίνεται δέκα στρατιωτικὰ τάγματα, ἐς ἀνδρῶν τετρακισχιλίων ἔκακλον; 20,1,5: τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς παρενέβαλοι τάγμαιν; Luc. hist. conscr. 31: καὶ τὸ τρίτον τάγμα; Cass. Dio 71,9,1: τὸ τάγμα τῶν στρατιωτῶν τὸ κεραινοβόλον ἱδίος καλούμενον; 71,9,3: καλούσι δὲ τὸ τάγμα αἱ Ῥωμαῖοι.
was discharged in 45 BC, but reformed by Lepidus in 44 BC. It was with Antonius first at Philippi in 42 BC and then in the East between 41 and 31 BC.²⁰ In ca. 41 BC it was renamed XII Victrix²¹ and XII Antiqua²² in ca. 33 BC to emphasise its age. It was with Antonius at Actium in 31 BC. After 27 BC it was renamed Legio XII Paterna²³ to commemorate its service under Julius Caesar. Under Augustus veterans of the legion were settled in Parma²⁴ and Thermae Himeraeae²⁵. The Legio XII was stationed after the reorganization of the army by Augustus in the province of Aegyptus before it was transferred to Raphaneia (Syria) in 25 BC.²⁶ Around 16 BC veterans of the Legio X Fretensis and Legio XII Fulminata were settled in the Augustan colony of Patras, here the legion was mentioned for the first with its final name Fulminata (Greek κεραυνοφόρος).²⁷ At the turn of the century, a vexillation of the Legio XII Fulminata was presumably stationed in the province of Africa Proconsularis (Tunisia).²⁸ In 45 AD Claudius created the Colonia Claudii Caesarii at Ptolemais for the veterans of the four Syrian legions (Legio III Gallica, Legio VI Ferrata, Legio X Fretensis and Legio XII Fulminata).²⁹ In the summer of 60 AD Nero settled veterans of the legion in Tarentum.³⁰ The Legio XII Fulminata took part in the Armenian campaign of the year 62 under the command of Lucius Iunius Caesennius Paetus. After initial minor successes, however, Paetus proved himself unfit for the mission and had to make peace under humiliating conditions and evacuate Armenia.³¹ Corbulo, who had then taken over the command, sent the Legio XII Fulminata back to Syria, where the legion built its new camp in Raphaneia.³² In 63 AD members of the legion were in Thebes (Egypt).³³ In 66 AD Gaius Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, set out with the Legio XII Fulminata under its legate Caesennius Gallus and numerous auxiliary troops from Antioch to put down the Judaean uprising.³⁴ The Legio XII Fulminata invaded Galilee. The cities surrendered without a fight and were spared. On Mount Asamon near the city of Sepphoris over 2,000 insurgents were killed in a battle.³⁵ The legion then returned to the camp at Caesarea Maritima. Then Cestius Gallus attacked Jerusalem, but was forced to abandon the siege and suffered great casualties in his retreat. Maybe the Legio XII lost the legion eagle on the run.³⁶ In the year 70, under the supreme command of Titus, the XII Fulminata advanced from Caesarea and was used in the siege of Jerusalem. Even on this occasion, the Legio XII seems not to have been particularly prominent, so that it was sent to Melitene on the border between Armenia and Cappadocia as a punishment for the defeat suffered in

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²⁰ Keppie 2000, 85.
²¹ CIL XI 6721,29.
²² E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1705 s. v. Legio (XII Fulminate).
²³ CIL XI 1058; cf. E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1705.
²⁴ CIL XI 1058.
²⁵ CIL X, 7349.
²⁶ Le Bohec 1993, 235.
²⁸ Syme 1989, 162; cf. CIL VIII 26580.
²⁹ E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1706.
³⁰ Tac. ann. 14,27; cf. CIL IX 6156.
³¹ Tac. ann. 15,7ff.
³² E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1706.
³³ CIL III 30.
³⁶ Suet. Vesp. 4,5; cf. E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1706.
Around 75 AD fortifications were erected against the Parthians by legions of the legion in the client kingdom of Iberia in the Caucasus. Under Emperor Domitian, a vexillation was stationed in Qobustan on the Caspian Sea. The participation of the vexillations in the Dacian and Parthian wars of Trajan between 114 and 116/7 AD seems probable. In 134/5 AD the Legio XV Apollinaris and a major vexillation of the Legio XII Fulminata took part in the campaign of Flavius Arrianus, governor of Cappadocia, against the Alans. A vexillation of the legion stayed in Trapezus, most probably for this occasion. It is possible that the vexillation of the XII Fulminata was involved in the Marcomannic Wars (167–172 AD) of Marcus Aurelius. It was renamed XII Fulminata Firma Constans by Marcus Aurelius in ca. 175 BC when it did not join the revolt of Avidius Cassius. It was defeated with C. Pescennius Niger at Issus in 194 AD. From than on the documents concerning the legion are very scarce which implies that it might have stayed in the reserve, possibly as a punishment for its behavior in the Civil War. In the early 5th century, the Legio XII Fulminata was under the command of the Dux Armeniae and was stationed with its Praefectus in Melitene.

From the very beginning of the Empire, Asia Minor contributed large numbers of soldiers to the Roman legions. For the mid-first century AD Tacitus mentions the recruitments in Asia Minor for Illyricum and in Galatia and Cappadocia for the Euphrates frontier. New epigraphic documents of the veterans, most of all those found in a much less known region like Cappadocia, also contribute to a better understanding of the history of Roman legions and legionaries in many aspects. First of all they support the suggestion that the practice of recruitment from Asia Minor continued on a considerable scale throughout the second and third centuries AD. Second they draw a different picture from G. Forni’s conclusion from the vast material he had examined that after a long service in far away bases most veterans forgot their hometowns, and the great majority of them did not return, but spent their years of retirement abroad where they had served. So new materials concerning veterans may warn that the number of those who returned to their hometown must not be underestimated. Furthermore some papyri mentioning that furloughs were granted for returning to one’s homeland and that soldiers kept in touch with their hometowns.

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37 Ios. bel. lud. 7,18: μεμνημένος δὲ τοῦ δωδέκατος τάγματος, ὡς Κεστίου στρατηγοῦντος ἐνέδωκαν τοῖς Ἰουδαῖοι, τῆς μὲν Συρίας ἀυτὸ παντάπασιν ἐξήλασεν, ἦν γὰρ τὸ παλαιὸν ἐν Ῥαφανέαις, εἰς δὲ τὴν Μελιτηνὴν καλομένην ἀπέστειλε∙ παρὰ τὸν Εὐφράτην ἐν μεθορίοις τῆς Ἀρμενίας ἐστὶ καὶ Καππαδοκίας; Cass. Dio, 55,23,5: τὸ δωδέκατον τὸ ἐν Καππαδοκία τὸ κεραυνοφόρον; Proc. aed. 1,7,3: ἐν λεγεῶνι δὲ δυοδεκάτῃ ἐπάττοντο, ἢ ἐν πόλει Μελιτηνῆς τῆς Ἀρμενίας τὸ παλαιὸν ἔδρας; see also CIL III 13639 l. 4–5: et legat(um) l[eg(ionis) XII Fulm(inatae) Me]l[itene].

38 Mitchell 1993 (1), 119–120.
39 AE 1951, 263.
40 Bennett 1997, 96.
41 Erdkamp 2007, 262.
42 CIL III 6745.
44 E. Ritterling, RE XII.2, 1925, 1708.
45 ILS 2748; 2760; AE 1972, 179; IPrusias ad Hypium 45.
46 Not. Dig. Or. XXXVIII,14: Praefectus legionis duodecimae fulminatae, Melitena.
47 A well known example is the original recruitment of the Legio XXII Deiotariana in Galatia. Recruits from Asia Minor for the Egyptian legions and many Asiatics in the legions VII (Claudia) and XI (Claudia) during their earlier stay in Dalmatia are also well known: Forni 1953, 6lf.
48 Tac. ann. 13,7 and 35; 16,13.
49 As M. Speidel (1980, 744) had pointed out that similar observations might be made for the recruitment of auxiliary units and for the origin of legionary centurions from Asia Minor.
50 Forni 1953, 41–42; Forni 1974, 359.
51 PMich 466 (letter from a legionary to his father dating 107 AD) lI. 38–40: ἐργασίαν δὲ δόσω εὐθέως ἐὰν
their countries of origin keeping estates in their homelands and managing them through their intimates, give evidence against Forni’s conclusion. Thirdly the funerary inscription of the Cappadocian veteran, C. Iulius, may support Mann’s conclusion from the evidence of other provinces that the Cappadocian legions, like those of the other eastern provinces, soon ceased to be dependent on the western provinces for their recruits, and that Cappadocia, and especially its frontier areas, supplied a high proportion of the total.

In the area between Anazarbos and Hierapolis/Komana epigraphic documents of the Legio XII Fulminata have been found so far only in the vicinity of Hierapolis. This evidence considered in the light of the inscription introduced here suggests that the southern border of Cappodocia was an important source of manpower for the Legio XII Fulminata.

The ancient cemetery in the village of Himmetli, where the gravestone of C. Iulius was found, is situated immediately to the north of the border between Cappadocia and Cilicia, which lies through the line between Kilikiai Plylai, where an inscription mentions ὅροι [Κι][ι]δίκον, and the Mazgac Pass, where in a Byzantine rock inscription the border of a bishopric (probably the bishopric of Kukusos) and thus the border between Cappadocia and Cilicia is mentioned (see map 1). The nearest known settlement in the vicinity is Baka (modern Feke), situated some 15 kilometers to the southwest. But this rural settlement was a village and fortress dated to the Byzantine period. So it is most plausible to suppose that the cemetery in Himmetli must have lain in the territory of the Cappadocian polis Kukusos, lying some 40 kilometers to the northeast. Kukusos was an important station located by the Itinerarium Antonini on the road from Melitene to Tarsus.

There are several grave sites with a few tombs around the village. One of them has three tombs including that of C. Iulius and his wife Valeria Ma. It must be the one situated across the inscribed block (fig. 1). Here stands a sarcophagus broken all around on a podium. Architectural elements of the tomb structure are scattered around. These remains suggest an aedicula tomb with a sarcophagus on a podium.

For a dedication of C. Helvius Capreolus, centurio of the Legio XII Fulminata, to Asklepios Soter see IKomana no. 93. The Ulpius Apollinarius mentioned in a funerary inscription (IKomana no. 296) had served as centurio的概率 in the Legio XII Fulminata.

For the legionary recruitments of XII Fulminata see also Mitchell 1993 (I), 139; for the inscriptions of legionaries of XII Fulminata found in Asia Minor see Öztırk – Pilevelni 2011, 113. For the Asian recruits of other legions see Eck 2009, 138–139; Speidel 1983, 17–20; Speidel 1980, 736.

CIL III 228 = IGR III 892; cf. Hild 1977, 58.

Bean 1950, 561: ὅροι | Μωξεῖ(μο) ἐπισκόπου.


the same axis there are two other tombs with a similar structure. The well preserved door frames and the lintels of the tombs can still be seen (fig. 2). These three tombs are situated ca. 60 m. away from each other. It is likely to suppose that the other two tombs might have belonged to individuals who had family ties with C. Iulius. The tombs were probably constructed by a road. Two more tombs were also found in the rural settlement. One of them has a vaulted roof and a sword relief on the inner narrow wall (fig. 3–4). Some architectural remains with cross decoration (fig. 5) scattered all around the village indicate settlement continuity into the Byzantine period.

Neither Iulii nor Valerii are known from Kukusos. But some are known from the neighboring poleis, Hierapolis/Komana in the north and Anazarbos in the south. It is hard to determine if the optio of the Legio XII had had family ties with any one of these Iulii. As to the name of his wife, Valerii are not known in the vicinity of Hierapolis, but several examples are known from Anazarbos: Lucius Valerius Niger and his son Lucius Valerius Varus Pollio both of whom hold the office of demiurgia and the priesthood of Dea Roma; Valeria Plutina, wife of Marcianus, an imperial freedman; and Valeria

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62 For the tombs by the roads see e.g. Hesberg – Zanker 1987, 17–18; Cormack 1997, 140; Spanu 2000, 172; Cormack 2004, 29; ITyana 91–93.
63 For Hierapolis see IKomana 322 (index); for Anazarbos see IAnazarbos 287 (index).
64 IAnazarbos no. 21.
65 IAnazarbos no. 371.
Atinia\textsuperscript{66} who died young. On the other hand the cognomen Ma was a very common name in Hieropolis/Komana.\textsuperscript{67} The name owes its popularity in the city to the famous temple of the goddess Ma which had more than 6,000 temple slaves in Strabo’s time.\textsuperscript{68} Mas, a version of the name, is known in Anazarbos.\textsuperscript{69}

Abbreviated Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>Domaszewski</td>
<td>A. von Domaszewski, Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres, Bonn 1908.</td>
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</tbody>
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\textsuperscript{66} IAnazarbos no. 497.

\textsuperscript{67} Twenty individuals bearing this name are known, of whom two had Roman citizenship (Aeliana Ma and Aemilia Ma): IKomana 323 (index); for Ma and her granddaughter, Ma alias Claudia on an inscription from Hierapolis in the Kayseri Museum see Takmer et al. 2006, no. 1.

\textsuperscript{68} Strab. 12,2,3; see also IKomana 146–149; Baz 2009, 65–67.

\textsuperscript{69} IAnazarbos nos. 287; 391 (uncertain). The name is also documented as a male name: Zgusta 1964, 177 § 839–3.
The Gravestone of C. Iulius, optio of the Legio XII Fulminata

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Özet

Legio XII Fulminata’da *optio* olarak Askerlik Yapmış olan C. Iulius’un Mezartaşığı


«Gaius Iulius, 12. Legio’dan *optio* olarak saygı bir şekilde askerlik hizmeti yaptktan sonra (vatannına) geri dönünce Priscus’un kızı olan eşti Valeria Ma ile birlikte (bu mezar) kendileri için yaptırdı.»

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Optio*; Veteran; Kappadokia Lejonları; Kukusos; Melitene; Satala; C. Iulius; Valeria Ma.
Fig. 1. The tomb of C. Iulius and Valeria Ma.

Fig. 2. Two other tombs on the same axis with the tomb of C. Iulius and Valeria Ma.

Fig. 3. Another cemetery in Himmetli with two tombs.

Fig. 4. Tomb with vaulted roof and a sword relief on the inner narrow wall.

Fig. 5. Architectural remains with cross decoration.