

## THE LEGIO XXI RAPAX AT MOGONTIACUM

by

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

The history of legio XXI Rapax spans some 100 years<sup>1</sup>, and only a few of them are directly linked to Mogontiacum. It is assumed that the legion arrived there in 83 CE and remained until 89 CE<sup>2</sup>. Its relocation from Lower Germania, where it had previously been stationed (in Bonna / Bonn), to Mainz was dictated by the war against the Chatti that emperor Domitian embarked on. Initially, however, the XXI Rapax was quartered outside the main camp, which was occupied at the time by the XIV Gemina Martia Victrix and the I Adiutrix. Only after the latter marched out to the Danube front (Pannonia, the war against the Dacians) in 86<sup>3</sup> did the XXI Rapax take up quarters in the camp at Mogontiacum, on a hill called Kästrich. The briefness of their time there is probably one of the reasons for the very scarce documentation of its stay. This includes, among others, four inscriptions found in the Mainz area – three funerary ones and a votive relic:

1. *CIL* XIII 6950 = RIESE 1914, 1074 Zahlbach  
M. Val(erius) M(arci) f(ilius) Lem(onia tribu) | Matto<sup>4</sup> Bono|niae mil(es)  
leg(ionis) | XXI Rap(acis) (centuria) L(ucii) Fal(toni) Firmi an(norum) |  
XL stip(endiorum) XIX h(ic) s(itus) e(st) | t(itulum) f(ieri) i(ussit) h(eres)  
f(aciendum) c(uravit)

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

<sup>2</sup> RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1787; BÉRARD 2000: 54–60.

<sup>3</sup> RITTERLING 1924–1925: 1384–1388; LÖRINCZ 2000: 152–154.

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