

### Auxiliary swords worn on the left. (Cont.)

I would like to add another picture to what is now a growing file of soldiers wearing their swords on the left. This time from one of the column bases at Mainz. The soldier is what appears to be legionary this time, he is depicted wearing a mail shirt and carrying a curved scutum. There is no indication of centurionate such as any detailing of a *crista transversa*.



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### Auxiliary cresting.

Another sculpture of an auxiliary soldier shown with helmet cresting has been spotted by Caballo. It comes from Trajan's Column. The crest is depicted as a small brush-type crest. This type is reminiscent of the crests of legionary soldiers shown on the column of Marcus Aurelius. Note also that the soldier carries the shield blazon chosen for the Batavians!



I also found another depiction, this time from the column of Marcus Aurelius. Albeit a little late for our display timeframe I thought I would include it with the other evidence as it is so similar in appearance to the soldier from Trajan's Column.

The soldier at the top of the picture appears to be an auxiliary commander ordering troops to advance. He wears a mail shirt, (legionaries are depicted on the monument wearing segmented armour) and his helmet again bears the short brush-type crest, and he carries an oval *clipeus*, the same as the auxiliary soldiers below him. The trooper pictured centre-left also has the same crest type.



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### Archer's thumb-rings evidence of use in Britain.

As the bow and arrow developed in various regions of the world, a number of techniques were created for pulling the bowstring and releasing the arrow. Many Asian cultures historically used a technique referred to as the "Mongolian release," This method was common in areas such as China, Japan, Korea, Persia, Turkey, and India, as well as various areas of North Africa. The Mongolian release necessitates the use of a thumb ring or guard, usually in the form of a cylindrical or lipped ring. Early examples of archer's thumb-rings have been found in Zhou dynasty graves in China. (1100 - 221 B.C.) These early thumb-rings are a version of the lipped form.



there, I'd like to place an order for a pound or two of good venison sausages!

### Peroni

As Pudens suggested, the Hamians, from Syria were probably using this method, or at least well aware of this method of loosing arrows. I am unaware that any thumb-rings have been identified from a first century context in Britain. There are certainly finds of such items from late second and third century contexts. The possible reason for this is that the Syrians weren't in Britain in the first century.

The earliest documentary evidence found of *Cohors I Hamiorum Sagittaria* (not *sagittariorum*) in Britain, is from the late first quarter of the second century AD. The evidence is in the form of a military diploma, dated July 17th 122AD. (CIL XVI 00069) Another, slightly later, is dated to November 16<sup>th</sup> 124AD found at Stannington in Yorkshire. (CIL XVI 00070 – RIB 2401.6)

An altar dedicated to the Syrian Goddesses by a newly arrived Syrian was found at Catterick in Yorkshire, and possibly predates the diplomas, but there is no mention of the cohort on the stone. (RIB 726)

“DEAE SVRIAE ARA GN...O...”

The text is very similar to another altar from Carvoran (*Magnis*) dated to 163–166AD. (RIB 1792)

The unit then transferred to the legionary-built fort at Bar Hill and occupied it from 142-157 AD. They then moved to Carvoran where it was responsible for building the fort in stone. It is from this period (142 AD onward) when we are likely to start to see archaeological evidence of thumb-rings.

So to conclude, the use of thumb-rings within our display timeframe of 50 –150 AD is acceptable, with the caveat that the other equipment displayed by the archers is in concordance with the early to mid second century.

Spaul suggests (COHORS<sup>2</sup> BAR International series 841 2000) that the principle reason for a whole *quingenary* unit of archers based on Hadrian's Wall at this period, was possibly to supply meat and game, (which may have been abundant in the area), to the other garrisons. This is backed-up by other mentions of hunters (*Venatores*) from the fort at Birdoswald. (RIB 1905). So, all you Hamians out