



CULTI E RELIGIOSITÀ NELLE PROVINCE DANUBIANE

A CURA DI
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Livio Zerbini



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Notes on the Cults of National *Numeri* Stationed in the Danubian Provinces

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Despite the great quantity of documentation regarding legions, *alae* and *cohortes* along the Danubian border, a different kind of military units are also documented. These are the so-called “national *numeri*”, which started to spread over the area in the second half of the 2nd century. In order to identify the origin of their members, these regiments, along with the word *numerus*, are normally distinguished by ethnic names in the genitive case as well¹. This is the case, for example, of the *numerus Palmyrenorum* or of the *numerus Maurorum*, both stationed in Dacia and often identified by fort names: *numerus Palmyrenorum Parolissensium* at *Parolissum*, *Tibiscensium* at *Tibiscum* or the *numerus Maurorum Miciensium* at Micia. It is a well known fact that Trajan, after his war against Decebalus, decided to repopulate Dacia by transferring there a

¹ T. MOMMSEN, *Die Conscriptioensordnung der römischen Kaiserzeit*, *Hermes* 19, 1884, 221-222 (= *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin 1910, p. 105-106); ID., *Die römischen Provinzialmilizen*, *Hermes* 22, 1887, 551 (= *Gesammelte*, cit., p. 149) affirmed that during the 2nd century AD the term *numerus* acquired a specific technical meaning. With regard to the ethnic regiments, it would have indicated a particular category of units apart from legions, *alae* and *cohortes*. This interpretation was mostly accepted within the following studies, such as E. STEIN, *Die kaiserlichen Beamten und Truppenkörper im römischen Deutschland unter dem Prinzipat*, Wien 1932, pp. 235, 241; H.T. ROWELL, *Numerus*, in *RE* 17, 1937, columns 1329-1331; A. v. DOMASZEWSKI, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, Köln 1967 (2nd ed.), p. 59; G.I. CHEESMAN, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*, Oxford 1914, pp. 88-89; R. SAXER, *Die Vexillationen des römischen Kaiserheeres von Augustus bis Diokletian*, Wien 1961, pp. 131-132. On the other hand, H. CALLIES, *Die fremden Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats und die sogenannten nationalen Numeri. Beiträge zur Geschichte des römischen Heeres*. BRGK 45, 1964, pp. 184-185 and M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise of the Ethnic Units in the Roman Imperial Army*. ANRW II, 3, 1975, pp. 204-208 (= *Roman Army Studies*, I, Amsterdam 1984, pp. 119-123) have rejected this theory, sustaining that *numerus* could have a general meaning only. Furthermore, they argued that the right designation for the ethnic regiments should be *nationes*, which are recorded by other sources and especially by *HYG. mun. castr.* 30. However, the equalization between national *numeri* and *nationes* has been criticized by P. SOUTHERN, *The Numeri of the Roman Imperial Army*, *Britannia* 20, 1989, pp. 86-89, who sustained that these two words belonged to different kind of units. Finally, a different interpretation has also been put forward by P. LE ROUX, *Les diplômes militaires et l'évolution de l'armée romaine de Claude à Septime Sévère*; *auxilia, numeri et nationes*, in W. ECK, H. WOLFF (eds.), *Heer und Integrationspolitik. Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle*, Köln 1986, pp. 347-374. Starting from the 2nd century AD, this designation indicates regiments derived from the *nationes* and characterized by a tactical employment that was different from that of the other regular units. Cf. also the discussion on the meaning of *numerus* in P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., pp. 83-89 and the detailed history of the studies on the *numeri* in M. REUTER, *Studien zu den numeri des römischen Heeres in der mittleren Kaiserzeit*. BRGK 80, 1999, pp. 365-373.

great number of colonists taken from the whole Empire². During the following period the military importance of the Danubian border became more relevant than before due to the increasing pressure of the populations from north-eastern Europe, which later resulted in the Marcomannic Wars. Evidence from the Danubian provinces thus provides an interesting case study to improve our knowledge of *numeri*, especially with regard to the fact that the sources on these units – epigraphic for the most part – are in general very limited if compared to those that document both legions and *auxilia*.

An examination of the documents concerning sacred inscriptions set up by soldiers who served in the national *numeri* can furnish further information about one of the most relevant problems that concerns the study of these units, that is, the persisting of their ethnic features through time³. In fact, it is generally assumed that after the creation of a national *numerus* with people from certain provinces and its stationing in other provinces quite far away, the enrolment of new recruits was organized *in loco* and in consequence it progressively changed the original ethnical identity. Since the Danubian provinces are characterized by the greatest variety of national *numeri*, an examination of the deities venerated by their members can also provide interesting elements of comparison with evidence from other parts of the empire where *numeri* with the same origin were stationed. Finally, both differences and similarities between the dedications put up by commanding officers, who normally came from the legions, and those by privates and low rank officers are particularly worthy of consideration, in view of the fact that these components could have influenced each other.

All these topics have only been cursorily treated by the most recent and extensive works on the *numeri* by Pat Southern⁴ and Marcus Reuter⁵, for what concerns the Roman world in general, and by Eduard Németh, with regard to the Dacian *numeri*⁶. Nonetheless, the recent book by Mihai Popescu on the religion of the Roman army in Dacia contains a review of the soldiers and their dedications. With regard to the national *numeri*, his observations on the importance that the Moors and the Palmyrenes attributed to their national cults in order to maintain the esprit de corps of their units are particularly interesting⁷. Furthermore, a few years ago another article by Sara

² EVTR. 7,6: *Traianus, victa Dacia, ex toto orbe romano infinitas eo copias hominum transtulerat ad agros et urbes colendas: Dacia enim diuturno bello Decebalii viris fuerat exhausta*. Cf. S. FACCINI, *Auxilia e religione nella documentazione epigrafica della Dacia romana: ufficialità, integrazione e devozione*, in L. ZERBINI (ed.), *Roma e le province del Danubio*. Atti del I Convegno Internazionale, Soveria Mannelli 2010, p. 315; I.A. OLTEAN, *Dacia. Landscape, Colonisation and Romanisation*, London-New York 2007, pp. 53-59; L. BIANCHI, *I Palmireni in Dacia: comunità e tradizioni religiose*. DArch 5 (1), 1987, p. 87 with previous bibliography.

³ Scholars have observed that the enrollment of local recruits from the place where the units were garrisoned seems to take gradually place. This is the case of both *Mauri* (C. HAMDOUNE, *Les auxilia externa africains des armées romaines: III^e siècle av. J.-C.-IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.*, Paris 1999, pp. 169-174) and Palmyrenes (M. MACREA, *Viața în Dacia romană*, București 1969, pp. 212-213).

⁴ P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., pp. 81-140.

⁵ M. REUTER, op. cit., pp. 357-569.

⁶ E. NÉMETH, *Die Numeri im römischen Heer Dakiens*. EphNap 7, 1997, pp. 101-116.

⁷ M. POPESCU, *La religion dans l'armée romaine de Dacie*, București 2004, p. 341.

Faccini examined the most important features concerning the cults of the auxiliary units stationed in Dacia, dedicating a section to the religious habits of the soldiers who served in the *numeri*⁸. This study has led to intriguing conclusions, especially with regard to the non-Roman deities, who are in general more venerated by *numeri* rather than by auxiliary *cohortes* and *alae*. However, the complexity of the topic, concerning in particular the problems exposed above, certainly deserves a further examination. This can be extended not only to Dacia, where the great majority of the documentation has been found, but also to the other Danubian provinces, where sometimes both the same and other national *numeri* are attested. In the present study, the differences in the religious habits of different units will be also taken into account.

A first look over the *numeri* mentioned in sacred inscriptions set up along the Danubian area immediately highlights the great variety of the people documented. Their origin can be approximately subdivided into three groups: the units from western Europe, those from north Africa and those from the middle East. The first group is formed by *numeri* that were originally created among the Britons and the Germans, the *numerus singularium peditum Britannicianorum* and the *numerus Germanorum* respectively. The African troops are composed of only one ethnicity, the *Mauri*. Nonetheless, their religious devotion is evidenced within a fair number of texts, which document the existence of different detachments. These are the already mentioned *numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium* stationed at *Tibiscum* on the river Timiș, and the *numerus Maurorum Miciensium* stationed at *Micia*, on the river Mureș. Moreover, a *numerus Maurorum Hispanorum* has also been documented. The third group, which is formed by the eastern units, is the one characterized by the greatest amount of evidence. Among these, the *numeri Palmyrenorum* are the most mentioned, both the one stationed at *Porolissum* and the one at *Tibiscum*. Dedications set up by soldiers from the *numerus Syrorum sagittariorum*, attested both in Dacia and in Lower Moesia, are also important. Finally, the presence of a soldier connected to the *numerus Hosroenorum* is attested in Lower Pannonia. A special case is represented by a group of inscriptions from Lower Moesia that mention dedications by soldiers who belonged to a *numerus C(- -) R(- -)*⁹. The abbreviation has been traditionally interpreted as *c(ivium) r(omanorum)*, but alternative interpretations, such as *numerus c(ollectus) r(egionariorum)*, have been also put forward¹⁰. Since the ethnic connotation of this unit is difficult to ascertain, it will not be part of the present examination.

⁸ S. FACCINI, op. cit.

⁹ AE 1911, 15 to *Heros Sanctus*; AE 1957, 338 to the *numen perpetuus* of Maximinus Thrax; AE 1975, 743 = AE 1979, 548 to *Diana Regina*; AE 1985, 746 to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, Iuno Regina* and *Diana Invicta*; AE 1987, 884 to *Apollo Sanctus*.

¹⁰ M.P. SPEIDEL, *Regionarii in Lower Moesia*, ZPE 57, 1984, p. 188. Cf. also M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 477.

Numerus peditum singulariorum Britannicianorum

This unit was probably constituted at the beginning of the 2nd century CE with *pedites singulares* from Britain, and its name was *pedites singulares Britanniciani*¹¹. It participated in the Dacian Wars of Trajan as a unit of the army of Lower Moesia; then it was transferred to Dacia, where in 179 it has been identified as *vexillatio peditum singular(ium) Britannicianorum*, and then in 186 as *n(umerus) Brit(annicianorum)*¹². However, it is attested as either *n(umerus) p(editum) s(ingularium) B(ritannicianorum)*¹³ or *n(umerus) s(ingularium) Brit(annicianorum)* by other inscriptions¹⁴. It was stationed in the camp of Cigmău, situated not far from *Germisara* (Geoagiu Bai), and it was probably a thousand men strong¹⁵. The cults of the soldiers who served in this *numerus* are documented by five inscriptions:

- 1) AE 1992, 1487 = ILD 329: **Nymphis** / *T. Fab(ius) Aquilleienseis*, / *trib(unus) n(umeri) s(ingularium) B(ritannicianorum)*.
- 2) CIL III 1396 = IDR III/3, 243: **Nymphis** / **sanctissimis** / *P. Aelius Marcellinus, signifer / et quaestor n(umeri) Brit(annicianorum)*, / *mortis periculo lib(er)atus v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*. / *Imp(eratore) Comm(odo) Aug(usto) / Felice V et Glabrione / II co(n)s(ulibus)*.
- 3) IDR III/3, 237 = AE 1967, 410 = AE 1971, 386: **I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)** / *[U]lp(ius) Max[i]minus, ((centurio)) / leg(ionis) V M[ac(edonica)] / Gord(ianae), p(rae)positus n(umeri) / s(ingularium) p(editum) B(ritannicianorum)*, / *v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*.
- 4) ILD 318 = AE 2003, 1513: **Dian[a]e / Aug(ustae) s(acrum)**, / *pro sa[l]ute*] et *[i]nc(olunitate) / M. Aur(eli) Anton[i]ni / Pii Aug(usti) et Iu[lia]e / Aug(ustae), matris [Aug(usti), castr(orum)]*, / *senat(us) ac patr[ia]e*, / *C. Val(erius) Valent[inus]*, / *trib(unus) leg(ionis) XIII G(eminiae) An[t(onia)nae]*, || *item trib(unus) n(umeri) sing(ularium) / Brittan[nicianorum] -- -]*
- 5) IDR III/3, 219: *M. Au(relius) Callpurnianus*, / *((centurio)) n(umeri) s(ingularium) B(ritannicianorum)*, **dilbus** (!) **patr/onis** *v(otum) s(olvit) / l(ibens) m(erito)*.

¹¹ CIL XVI 54.

¹² *Vexillatio peditum singularium Britannicianorum*: RMD II 123 = ILD 46 = AE 1987, 843; *numerus Britannicianorum*: CIL III 1396 = IDR III/3, 243. Cf. C.C. PETOLESCU, *Auxilia Daciae. Contribuție la istoria militară a Daciei romane*, Bucuresti 2002, pp. 129-130; E. NÉMETH, *op. cit.*, p. 106; I. PISO, D. BENEÀ, *Das Militärdiplom von Drobeta*, ZPE 76, 1984, pp. 292-293 (= I. PISO, *An der Nordgrenze des Römischen Reiches: ausgewählte Studien* [1972-2003], Stuttgart 2005, pp. 138-139).

¹³ AE 1971, 386 = IDR III/3, 237.

¹⁴ AE 1967, 411 = IDR III/3, 214; AE 1992, 1487 = ILD 329; AE 2003, 1513 = ILD 318.

¹⁵ I. PISO, A. PESCARU, E. PESCARU, *Der Tribun C. Valerius Valerianus in Germisara*, AMN 39-40, 2004, pp. 197, 200; I. PISO, D. BENEÀ, *op. cit.*, p. 293 with previous bibliography. Cf. also CIL III p. 225; TIR L-34, 47.

Another altar dedicated to Philip the Arab and his protective *numen* by the *numerus singularium Britannicianorum* has been excluded from the list above¹⁶. Starting from the beginning of the 3rd century, in fact, this kind of dedications to the supreme commanders of the army, viz. the emperors, are very common among both regular and auxiliary units¹⁷. This inscription is therefore of little use for the present examination.

All the texts come from the area of *Germisara*, and were therefore set up by soldiers who in that moment were serving there. Regarding the *Nymphae* (texts nos. 1-2), it is necessary to stress that in *Germisara* their cult is very well known and referred to in more than ten inscriptions. They evidently belonged to a sanctuary that was connected to the well known baths, whose remains were studied some years ago¹⁸. The cult must have been very popular not only in *Germisara*, but also in the neighboring area. In fact, dedications to both the *Nymphae* and the *Nymphae sanctissimae* were set up by a local *Iiviralis coloniae* and by a *IIIIviralis* from the *municipium Aurelium Apulense*, respectively¹⁹. *M. Lucilius Lucilianus, Augustalis coloniae*, fulfilled a vow to the *Nymphae Salutiferae* for him and one of his colleagues²⁰. The devotion of soldiers who did not belong to the *Britanniciani* is also documented. The most important dedication was put up by *M. Staius Priscus, legatus Aug. pr. pr.*, who, among other things, was governor of Dacia during the reign of Antoninus Pius²¹. Moreover, another dedication mentions an *optio* of the legion *XIII Gemina*²², which was stationed in the neighboring *Apulum*. The inscription no. 2, thanks to the consular dating, can be attributed to the year 186, and it was erected by a low rank officer, *P. Aelius Marcellinus, signifer* and *quaestor numeri*. Both his *nomen* and *cognomen* are too common, so it is difficult to track his ethnic origin. Nevertheless, he probably started to serve as private in the *numerus*, and thus he can be considered a soldier from the ranks.

The inscription no. 1, on the other hand, represents a different case, since it was set up by a *tribunus numeri*, *T. Fabius Aquileiensis*. He is mentioned by two other

¹⁶ CIL III 12573 = IDR III/3, 214 = AE 1891, 78 = AE 1967, 411.

¹⁷ Cf. H.G. GUNDEL, *Devotus numini maiestatique eius. Zur Devotionsformel in Weibinschriften der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Epigraphica 15, 1953, pp. 128-150.

¹⁸ I. PISO, A. PESCARU, E. Pescaru, op. cit., pp. 197-198; A. RUSU, E. PESCARU, *Germisara daco-romaine*, in D. Alicu, H. Bögli (eds.), *La politique édilitaire dans les provinces de l'empire romain. Actes du 1^{er} Colloque Roumano-Suisse*, Cluj-Napoca 1993, pp. 201-214. Cf. also E. DVORJETSKI, *Leisure, Pleasure and Healing: Spa Culture and Medicine in Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*, Supplement to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 116, Boston 2007, p. 99; I.A. OLTEAN, op. cit., pp. 189-190. In general, a specific relationship between the army and thermal baths where wounded soldiers could recover should be excluded, cf. A. BUONOPANE, *Curisti in divisa? Soldati e acque terapeutiche in età romana*, in M. BASSANI, M. BRESSAN, F. GHEDINI (eds.), *Aquae salutiferae. Il termalismo tra antico e contemporaneo*. Atti del convegno internazionale, Padova 2013, pp. 263-272.

¹⁹ ILD 328 = AE 1992, 1486 and ILD 327 = AE 1992, 1485.

²⁰ CIL III 1397 = IDR III/3, 242.

²¹ CIL III 7882 = IDR III/3, 240. CIL III 940 = IDR III/3, 241 = AE 1971, 386a reports another dedication to the *Nymphae Augustae* that he set up *pro salute* of Antoninus Pius, while AE 1993, 1342 = ILD 320 documents a dedication that he erected to the *Genius* of the same emperor. Cf. also PIR S 637.

²² ILD 319 = AE 1993, 1341.

inscriptions: the first is a fragmentary text from *Germisara* with the names of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta²³, while the second is a funerary text that reports the name of his father, *T. Fabius Ibliomarus*, who had been *decurio kanabarum* and was from *Augusta Treverorum*²⁴. A *tribunus numeri* is also attested within the inscription no. 4, in which it is stated that *C. Valerius Valentinus* had previously served as *tribunus* of the legion *XIII Gemina Antoniniana*. In consequence, it seems likely that *Fabius Aquileiensis* came from a previous legionary command and not from the ranks²⁵. Besides, the German origin of his father excludes his belonging to the *Britanniciani*.

The same also applies to the individuals mentioned by inscriptions nos. 3-4. Before becoming *praepositus numeri*, *Ulpus Maximinus* (no. 3) had been centurion of the legion *V Macedonica Gordiana*, which at that time was stationed in Dacia at *Potaissa*. The *XIII Gemina*, where *C. Valerius Valentinus* had served before to command the *numerus* as *tribunus*, had its camp in the neighboring *Apulum*. Since both these inscriptions were set up during the 3rd century, both *Maximinus* and *Valentinus* were almost certainly enrolled either in Dacia or in the other Balkan provinces. Furthermore, the cults of *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* and *Diana* are very common among the troops stationed in Dacia²⁶. A *Diana sancta* is also attested in connection with the *Nymphae* within another inscription from *Germisara*²⁷, while a *praepositus* of the *numerus Germanicianorum* set up a dedication to *Diana* in the same area (see *infra*). Inscription no. 5, a votive altar that reports a dedication to the *dii patroni* by the centurion *M. Aurelius Calpurnianus*, is certainly more intriguing. The presence of the *praenomen* and the abbreviation of the *nomen* in *Au(relius)* suggest a dating to the first half of the 3rd century, almost certainly after the edict of Caracalla. This is the only dedication to the *dii patrii* so far attested for a British *numerus*. However, it is interesting to observe that dedications to the *dii patrii* by the soldiers of the *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibicensium* are attested during the same period (see *infra*). Furthermore, some years before a *templum deorum patriorum* had been restored by the *numerus Maurorum* in *Micia* (see *infra*). Since the inscription of *Aurelius Calpurnianus* to the *dii patrii* testifies an individual act of devotion, it seems reasonable to suppose that during the late Severan age, more than one century after the settlement of the *Britanniciani* in Dacia, the cult of these deities was still alive among the members of this unit. On the other hand, a generic dedication to the *dii patrii* by either a *collegium* or the whole unit could reflect the mere survival of a tradition already fallen in disuse and kept alive only with the purpose of enforcing the esprit de corps of the soldiers by a reference to its British origins.

²³ IDR III/3, 213 = AE 1971, 385 = AE 1982, 833. The text probably records the restoration of the baths of a military unit that he was commanding, perhaps the *numerus Britannicianorum*.

²⁴ CIL III 1214 = IDR III/5, 2, 527.

²⁵ The only other *tribunus numeri* known to me is a *tribunus numeri Syrorum Malvensium* mentioned by a text from Mauretania Caesariensis (CIL VIII 9381 = 20945 = AE 1977, 864).

²⁶ Cf. S. FACCINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

²⁷ ILD 326 = AE 1992, 1484.

After this quick examination of the votive inscriptions that mention the *numerus Britannicianorum*, it is possible to draw some conclusions: a) as all the monuments that were set up during a period between the reigns of Commodus and Gordian III, the dating can be limited to the 3rd century only, with the sole exception of no. 2; b) inscriptions 3 and 4 mention commanding officers who had already served in the legions, as is probably the case for no. 1²⁸. In consequence, they cannot be considered *Britanniciani*, and their devotion should be regarded as that of Roman soldiers from the legions; c) the two remaining texts (nos. 2 and 5) attest that after a century since the dislocation of the unit in Dacia, soldiers still worshipped not only local deities revered by soldiers from other units, local magistrates and common people (the *Nymphae* of *Germisara*), but also gods imported from Britain (the *dii patrii*).

Numerus Germanicianorum exploratorum

The information about the presence of this unit in the Danubian provinces is quite scarce. Military diplomas do not mention it. The only inscription that provides precise chronological evidence is text no. 6 reported below. It reports the name of a legate of the legion *V Macedonica*, *C. Arrius Antoninus*, who commanded the unit between 175 and 177²⁹.

6) CIL III 12574 = IDR III/3, 262 = AE 1890, 101 = AE 1912, 304 (*Hunedoara*): ***Dianae / sacrum / pro salut(e) / C. Arri Anto/nini, leg(ati) Aug(usti) / pr(o) pr(aetore) / M. Verius Sulperstes, ((centurio)) leg(ionis) / V Mac(edonicae), p(rae)positus n(umeri) G(ermanicianorum), / v(otum) s(olvit)***.

The dedication was set up *pro salute* of the *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, who had probably appointed the centurion commander of the unit³⁰. In spite of this, the text represents both a common cult and the devotion of an individual who was external to the *numerus*. Therefore, it is of little use for the present study³¹.

²⁸ This is not in contradiction with the commanding structure attested for the other *numeri*: cf. P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., pp. 98-102 with previous bibliography.

²⁹ M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 484; E. NÈMETH, op. cit., pp. 105-106. Cf. also C.C. PETOLESCU, op. cit., p. 131; PIR² A 1088.

³⁰ M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., p. 320.

³¹ The same could also apply to CIL III 1343 = IDR III/3, 77 = AE 1977, 705, if we accept Ioan Russu's reading in IDR: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / pro sal(ute) dd(ominorum) nn(ostorum) / [Severi] et Anton(ini) / [[et Getae Caes(aris?)] / [-]CVIL[- -]DEP / a[l]ae Ba[t(avorum)], al(ae) Cam(pagonum) / sub cur(a) Iul(i) / Tere(n)tiani, pr(a)efecti / coh(ortis) s(a)g(ittariorum), coh(ortis) I Vind(elicorum), / coh(ortis) II Fl(aviae) Com(m)agenorum, coh(ortis) I Alp(inorum), / n(umeri) M(aurorum) Tib(iscensium), n(umeri) / [G]erm(anicianorum), [n(umeri) Cam]/[p]estr(orum), [- -] / [- -]S[- -] / [- -]MO[- -]I[- -] / [praefect] us coh(ortis) I [I Fl(aviae)] / [Comma]g(enorum) - - -*. If this interpretation is correct, *Iulius Terentianus*, who commanded both the *numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium* and the *numerus Germanicianorum* during

Numeri Maurorum

The presence of Moorish soldiers in the Balkans is attested for the first time during Trajan's Dacian Wars. They are represented in the scene LXIV of the Trajan Column (Fig. 1), where a battle with the participation of the north African cavalry is illustrated³². Also, literary sources refer to a contingent of Moorish cavalry under the command of Lusius Quietus, a native from Mauretania who joined Trajan during both the Dacian and Parthian wars³³. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Lusius' troops were disbanded by Hadrian³⁴, but a military diploma from the age of Antoninus Pius, dated to 158, documents the presence of *Mauri gentiles* in this province, together with *vexillarii* from north Africa and Mauretania³⁵. According to Michael Speidel, the *vexillarii* had the task of training and disciplining these troops, which are also mentioned as *Mauri equites* by another fragmentary diploma dated approximately to the same period³⁶. Nonetheless, *Numeri Maurorum* are only mentioned within inscriptions dated at least to either the end of the 2nd or the 3rd century, but their organization in *numeri* could have already started under either Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius³⁷. The cults of

his career, supervised the erection of the altar. In the comment to the CIL's lemma, Mommsen interpreted ll. 8-13 as follows: *sub c(ura) Iul(ii) Teret[i]an[i] praef(ecti) eq(uitum?) s(upra?) s(criptorum?)*; *cob(ors) I Vind(elicorum)*; *cob(ors) II Fl(avia) Comm(agenorum)*; *cobors I Alp(inorum)*; *n(umerus) m(ilitum) Ti...* In this case, the *numeri* together with other units could have set up the dedication. Although the reading of Russu seems more convincing, the numerous lacunae make it difficult to come to a definitive solution. For this reason, the text has been excluded from the present examination.

³² S. SETTIS, A. LA REGINA, G. AGOSTI, V. FARINELLA, *La Colonna Traiana*, pp. 355-356, figs. 97-98. Cf. also M. REUTER, op. cit., pp. 391-394.

³³ On the sources concerning this figure cf. M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 391; L. PETERSEN, *Lusius Quietus. Ein Reitergeneral Trajans aus Mauretaniën*. *Altertum* 14, 1968, pp. 211-217; PIR² L 439. The topic has been more recently re-examined by C. HAMDOUNE, op. cit., pp. 142-149.

³⁴ SPART. *Hadr.* 5, 8: *Lusium Quietum sublati gentibus Mauris, quos regebat, quia suspectus imperio fuerat, exarmavit, Marcio Turbone Iudaeis compressis ad deprimentum tumultum Mauretaniae destinato*. Cf. M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 391; P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., p. 93.

³⁵ CIL XVI 108 = IDR I, D16. Cf. C.C. PETOLESCU, op. cit., p. 134; D. BENEÀ, *Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium*. *Banatica* 8, 1985, pp. 140-143; M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise*, cit., pp. 208-209 (= *Roman Army*, cit., pp. 123-124).

³⁶ CIL XVI 114 = IDR I, D29. M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise*, cit., pp. 208-209 (= *Roman Army*, cit., pp. 123-124). Cf. also C. HAMDOUNE, op. cit., pp. 154-155; E. NÉMETH, op. cit., p. 103; D. BENEÀ, op. cit., p. 140.

³⁷ An inscription from *Diana Veteranorum* (Numidia) dated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius, IDR II 445 = AE 1956, 124 = AE 1959, 183 = AE 1962, 390 = AE 1976, 359, mentions *equites Mauri electi ad curam explorationis Pannoniae*; cf. C.C. PETOLESCU, op. cit., p. 134; D. BENEÀ, op. cit., pp. 143-144. According to G. ALFÖLDY, *Bellum Mauricum*, *Chiron* 15, 1985, pp. 101-103, the soldiers who served in the *numerus Maurorum Hispanorum* (texts nos. 7-8) could have been enrolled among the Moors who plundered southern Spain during Marcus Aurelius' reign, cf. also M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 392. The close military relationship between Danubian and African provinces have been underlined by R. BERTOLAZZI, *A new Military Inscription from Numidia, Moesiaci Milites at Lambaesis, and Some Observations on the Phrase Desideratus in Acie*, in W. HECKEL, S. MILLER, G. WRIGHTSON (eds.), *The Many Faces of War in the Ancient World*, Cambridge 2015, p. 308; I.G. FARKAS, *La partecipazione delle truppe del limes danubiano nella spedizione di Antonino Pio contro i Mauri*. *QuadFriula* 21, 2011, pp. 189-195; M.P. SPEIDEL, *Numerus*

the soldiers who belonged to these units are documented by the following inscriptions from Dacia:

- 7) AE 1978, 662 = AE 1994, 1490 = IDR III/5,1, 219 (*Apulum*): **[I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) D(olicheno)]** / [pro salut]em (!) dol[minoru]m nn[[n(ostrorum)]] [Se]/[veri et A]ntonini e[st] / [Getae, sua] suorumq(ue) / [omnium], Iul(ius) Gracilis / [eques n(umeri)] M(aurorum) Tib(iscensium) ex sing(ulari) / - - - - -
- 8) CIL III 1294 = IDR III/3, 312 (*Ampelum*): **I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)** / M. Aurel(ius) / [A]lexander, / mil(es) n(umeri) Maur(orum) / Hisp(anorum) Antoniniani, ex / iussu dei fe(cit).
- 9) IDR III/3, 302 = AE 1971, 383 (*Ampelum*): **Fortunae / Reduci et Ge(nio n(umeri) / Aur(elius) Redux,** / praef(ectus) n(umeri) M(aurorum) H(ispanorum), / d(onum) l(ibens) p(osuit).
- 10) CIL III 1418 = ILD 245 = IDR III/2, 198a = IDR III/3, 65 = AE 1999, 1293 = AE 2004, 1209 (*Sarmizegetusa*): **Dianae / sanctae / potent(issimae) / num(erus) M(aurorum) / v(otum) s(olvit).**
- 11) IDR III/3, 47 = AE 1944, 74 (*Micia*) (Fig. 2): *Pro salute d(ominorum) n(ostrorum) invictissimor(um) Imp(eratorum) Severi / et Antonini et [[Getae Caes(aris) Aug]]/g(ustorum) et Iuliae et [[Plautillae Aug(ustarum) et]] / [[Plautiani c(larissimi) v(iri) praef(ecti) pr(aetorio), patris]] / [[Augustae]] sub Pomponio / Liberale co(n)s(ulari) Mauri Mic(ienses) / et Iul(ius) Euangelianus praef(ectus) / **templum deorum patrio(rum)** vetustate conlapsum / sua p(ecunia) et opera restituer(unt), / Cilone II et Libone co(n)s(ulibus).*

The *numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium* is also attested by the inscription to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus*, which was set up by the supervision of *Iuli Terentiani*, the prefect who has been already mentioned in the case of the *numerus Germanicianorum*³⁸. For the reasons reported above it has been excluded from the present list. Another text records a dedication to *Silvanus Domesticus* by an *alumnus* of a prefect of the *numerus Maurorum Hispanorum*³⁹. Since the dedicator is a freedman of a commanding officer, his connections with the soldiers of the *numerus* are impossible to demonstrate. The text has therefore been excluded. Finally, another extremely fragmentary inscription from *Tibiscum* could be attributed to a vow made by both a *numerus Maurorum* and a *numerus Palmyrenorum*⁴⁰. However, due to its fragmentary state and the lack of the god's name it has been excluded from the present investigation.

electorum in *Africa and Mauretania*. AntAfr 23, 1987, pp. 193-196; Id., *Numerus Syrorum Malvensium. The transfer of a Dacian army unit to Mauretania and its implications*. Dacia 17, 1973, pp. 169-177.

³⁸ CIL III 1343 = IDR III/3, 77 = AE 1977, 705. Cf. *supra* no. 31.

³⁹ CIL III 1149 = IDR III/3, 325. Cf. C.C. PETOLESCU, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

⁴⁰ IDR III/1, 147. Ioan Russu dubitatively reads [- - - n(umer -) P]al(myren -?) et n(umer -) M[aur - - ?] / [- - - vot]um l(ibent -?) po[suer - - ? - - -].

Regarding text no. 7, if Ioan Russu's reading is correct⁴¹, it must be observed that the cult of *Iuppiter Dolichenus* enjoyed great popularity in the army, especially under the Severans. In the case of the Danubian provinces, it seems that it even had a specific organization of priesthoods⁴², while in Dacia the attestations of the uncommon epithet *Commagenus* are particularly recurring⁴³. It is also important to note that there were particular connections between Dacian legionary and auxiliary units, such as the *cohors prima sagittariorum*⁴⁴, the *cohors III Campestris*⁴⁵ and the legion *XIII Gemina*⁴⁶, and priests of this oriental cult. Therefore, this dedication represents another case of common cult between *numeri* and the rest of the army. The same also applies to texts nos. 8-10. Dedications to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* constitute the largest group among all the auxiliary troops in Dacia⁴⁷. no. 9 is particularly worthy of mention: although the dedication to *Fortuna Redux* and to the *Genius* protector of the unit has been set up by the *praefectus numeri*, it should be noted that dedications to these kind of *Genii* were also erected by soldiers from both the *numeri Palmyrenorum* and *Surorum* on more than one occasion (cf. *infra*). This was in consequence a cult common to both soldiers and commanders. The dedication to *Diana* (no. 10) is the only attestation of the use of the adjective *potentissima* in the cult of this deity. Nonetheless, other similar epithets, such as *compotens*, are not infrequent⁴⁸. Consequently, this monument does not reflect any particularity connected to the origin of the dedicator, and thus it attests to a Roman cult.

The inscription no. 11 from *Micia* bears a dedication to Septimius Severus and his family, and it reports that in 204 the *Mauri Micienses* and their prefect *Iulius Evengelianus* restored a temple dedicated to the *dii patri*. Several scholars have connected these deities to the *dii Maurii*, attested by a good number of inscriptions from north Africa⁴⁹, sometimes identifying them with a triad formed by Jupiter/Ammon, Caelestis/

⁴¹ I.I. RUSSU, *Note epigrafice inscripții din Apulum*. StCl 12, 1970, p. 165 no. 2. M. HÖRIG, E. SCHWERTHEIM, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni*, Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1987, pp. 106-107 no. 155 observe that the D in l. 1 could also be interpreted as *D(epulsori)*.

⁴² M. POPESCU, *Jupiter Dolichenus, ses trois prêtres et les soldats du Danube*, in A. GANGLOFF (ed.), *Médiateurs culturels et politiques dans l'Empire romain: voyages, conflits, identités*, Paris 2011, pp. 167-181.

⁴³ E. SANZI, *Intorno ad alcune epigrafi dolichene di Dacia: ancora un sincopato itinerario storico-religioso della formula «Iuppiter D.M. Dolichenus et Deus Commacenus»...: sulle orme di Ugo Bianchi*. SMSR 31 (1), 2007, pp. 79-88.

⁴⁴ ILD 53 = AE 2004, 1222, where *sacerdotes cohortis* are mentioned.

⁴⁵ ILD 683 = AE 2001, 1707. On the relationship of this unit with the cult of *Iuppiter Dolichenus* cf. I. PRISO, *Studia Porolissensia (I). Le temple Dolichénien*. AMN 38, 2001, pp. 227-232 (= *An der Nordgrenze*, cit., pp. 471-481). See also A. POPA, I. BERCIU, *Le culte de Jupiter Dolichenus dans la Dacie Romaine*, Leiden 1978, pp. 4-7 ad no. 3 and *passim*.

⁴⁶ IDR III/5,1, 221 = AE 1965, 30a = AE 1972, 460 = AE 1975, 719.

⁴⁷ S. FACCINI, op. cit., p. 317.

⁴⁸ See the discussion in V. RĂDEANU, *Diana Sancta Potentissima și maurii de la Micia*. Apulum 41, 2004, pp. 268-269.

⁴⁹ M. BENABOU, *La résistance africaine à la romanisation*, Paris 1976, p. 318; M. BĂRBULESCU, *Interferențe spirituale în Dacia romană*, Cluj-Napoca 1984, pp. 136, 184; D. BENEÀ, *Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium*.

Tanit and Saturnus/Baal⁵⁰. In spite of this, a recent study by Sorin Nemeti has proved that a relationship between the *dii Mauri* and the *dii patrii* from *Micia* is extremely difficult to demonstrate⁵¹. Moreover, according to Nemeti, they should be identified with a triad of African gods venerated under Roman names⁵². These are attested by three votive altars dedicated to *Silvanus*⁵³, *Pluto*⁵⁴ and *Liber Pater*⁵⁵. Their provenience from the temple, whose excavations have brought to light the altar of *Silvanus*, is very likely⁵⁶. The cult of these deities is well attested in the north African provinces, especially in the coastal areas of Numidia and Africa Proconsularis⁵⁷. The dedication to *Pluto* is particularly interesting. In fact, this is the only inscription that reports the presence of this deity in Dacia, while in north Africa this cult is attested by more than seventy texts⁵⁸. The monuments were set up by the same person, a *Rufus*, who is also named as *praefectus* by all the three inscriptions⁵⁹. It is impossible to ascertain whether these inscriptions were already present in the temple at the time of the restoration in 204 or not. Even so, the involvement of two prefects and a *consularis*, who did not probably share the ethnic origin of the soldiers, in both worshipping African gods and restoring their temple seems to prove a considerable vitality of these cults. It is also worth observing that during the same period the cult of *Pluto* – a mostly African cult, which is only attested once in Dacia – shows a great popularity in the African provinces. This is demonstrated by the numerous dedications *pro salute* set up not only in honor of members of the Severan house⁶⁰, but also for other 3rd century

Contribuții la istoria trupelor de Mauri din Dacia. Banatica 8, 1985, p. 152; M. BĂRBULESCU, *La religione nella Dacia romana*. AAPel 68, 1992, p. 151; ID., *Africa e Dacia: gli influssi africani nella religione romana della Dacia*, in A. MASTINO, P. RUGGERI (eds.), *L'Africa romana. Atti del X Convegno di Studio: Oristano, 11-13 dicembre 1992*, Sassari 1994, pp. 1326-1327; C. HAMDOUNE, op. cit., p. 171.

⁵⁰ A. RUSU-PESCARU, D. ALICU, *Templele romane din Dacia*, I, Deva 2000, pp. 92, 94.

⁵¹ S. NEMETI, *Dii patrii ai maurilor de la Micia*. Orma. Revistă de studii istorico-religioase 1, 2004, pp. 36-45.

⁵² S. NEMETI, *Dii patrii ai maurilor*, cit., pp. 42-45. A similar interpretation has been cursorily suggested by M. POPESCU, *Les temples dans le milieu militaire de Dacie*, in C. WOLFF (ed.), *L'armée romaine et la religion sous le Haut-Empire romain. Actes du Quatrième Congrès de Lyon, 26-28 octobre 2006*, Paris 2009, p. 125.

⁵³ IDR III/3, 118 = AE 1944, 75.

⁵⁴ IDR III/3, 116 = AE 1980, 778.

⁵⁵ IDR III/3, 104.

⁵⁶ For the excavations cf. C. DAICOVICIU, *Templul maurilor din Micia*. Sergetia 2, 1941, pp. 117-125 (= Dacia. *Studii și articole privind istoria veche a pământului românesc*, Cluj 1970, pp. 260-264). Cf. also M. POPESCU, *Les temples*, cit., p. 125; D. BENEĂ, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

⁵⁷ S. NEMETI, *Dii patrii ai maurilor*, cit., pp. 43-45, with previous bibliography.

⁵⁸ A. CADOTTE, *La romanisation des dieux: l'«interprétation romane» en Afrique du Nord sous le Haut-Empire*, Leiden 2006, pp. 325-333 with a list of the inscriptions.

⁵⁹ His full name is probably *M. Plautius Rufus*, attested by another inscription from *Micia* as *praefectus alae I Hispanorum Campagonum*: CIL III 1342 = IDR III/3, 75. Cf. H. DEVIJVER, *Prosopographia militarium equestrium*, II, Leiden 1977, p. 646 no. 43 and p. 716 no. 29.

⁶⁰ CIL VIII 9609 = 21482; CIL VIII 18811 = ILAlg II/2, 4586; CIL VIII 26223; ILAfr 495 = AE 1912, 147; AE 1957, 82.

emperors⁶¹. Finally, the use of *Mauri Micienses*, instead of other expressions such as *numerus Maurorum Miciensium* or *milites numeri Maurorum Miciensium*, seems to reveal that the soldiers still considered themselves as Moors, who in consequence were still worshipping the deities of their country. Their ethnicity could be confirmed by funerary texts from *Micia*, where non-Roman names of soldiers who served in the *numerus* are documented⁶². Also, another inscription from Palestine mentions a certain *Augindai, eques ex numero Maurorum* who, according to Speidel, served in the Danubian troops during the Eastern campaigns of Septimius Severus⁶³.

To sum up: as for the *Britannici*, votive inscriptions set up by soldiers who served in the *numeri Maurorum* can be dated to either the end of the 2nd or the first half of the 3rd century. The texts also show a considerable variety of deities: there are traditional Roman gods (*Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* and *Diana*), oriental cults already popular among the soldiers in general (*Iuppiter Dolichenus*), and finally *dii patri* imported from their fatherland. These latter ones were probably venerated under Roman names, although dedications by common soldiers are not attested. With regard to the onomastic of the dedicators, only names that follow the Roman model are documented.

Numeri Palmyrenorum

Palmyreni sagittarii ex Syria are attested in Dacia by diplomas issued in 120⁶⁴ and 126⁶⁵. The first *numerus* is documented by a funerary inscription of a soldier from the *numerus Palmyrenorum* stationed in *Tibiscum*, often identified as *numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* by other inscriptions⁶⁶. Thanks to the information provided by the text in Palmyrene after the epitaph in Latin, it is possible to date this monument to either the end of 159 or the beginning of 160. From the second half of the 2nd century other *numeri Palmyrenorum* are also attested in the Dacian military camps of *Porolissum* and *Optatiana*⁶⁷. During the reign of Decius an inscription from *Porolissum* bears a dedication to Herennia Etruscilla by the *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium sagittariorum civium Romanorum Decianus*⁶⁸. Later on, from this unit a

⁶¹ CIL VIII 25842 = AE 1908, 73 (to Philip the Arab, Philippus II and Octacilia Severa); AE 1905, 35 (to Gallienus); CIL VIII 11217 = ILTun 267 (to Diocletian and Maximian).

⁶² CIL III 7872 = IDR III/3, 176; IDR III/1, 172.

⁶³ AE 1948, 148. M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise*, cit., p. 214 (= *Roman Army*, cit., p. 129).

⁶⁴ RMD I 17 = AE 1958, 30 = AE 1959, 31 = AE 1960, 336 = IDR I 5; IDR I 6a.

⁶⁵ RMD I 27 = AE 1967, 395 = IDR I 8; RMD I 28 = IDR I 9 = AE 1977, 696.

⁶⁶ IDR III/1, 167. Cf. C.C. PETOLESCU, op. cit., pp. 139-141; E. NÉMETH, op. cit., p. 102.

⁶⁷ E. NÉMETH, op. cit., pp. 102-103; P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

⁶⁸ ILD 672 = AE 1944, 56.

cohors Palmyrenorum Porolissensis and an εἰλη ἰππέων ἀριθμοῦ Παλμυρηνῶν Πορολισηνῶν were probably created⁶⁹.

- 12) AE 2006, 1175 (*Tibiscum*): **Minervae / Aug(ustae) et / Genio n(umeri) Pal(myrenorum) / Tib(iscensium)** Val(erius) Rufi/nus, actar(ius).
- 13) ILD 692 = AE 2003, 1468 (*Porolissum*): **Nem(esi) sac(rum)**. / Nepos, / ce(nturio) n(umeri) Pal(myrenorum).
- 14) ILD 690 = AE 1960, 219 (*Porolissum*): **Sil(vano) Do[m(esticum)]** / Mucianuls, optio Pal(myrenorum), / v(otum) po(suit) l(ibens) m(erito).
- 15) ILD 680 (*Porolissum*): **I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo)** / P. Ael(ius) M(alachu(s), / flamen / q(uin)q(uennalis) mun(icipii) / S(eptimi) Por(olissensis) et sacerdos / dei n(umeri) P(almyrenorum) P(orolissensium), / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).
- 16) ILD 663 = AE 1980, 755 (*Porolissum*): Pro salute [I]mp(eratoris) M. Aur[eli] / Antonini Aug(usti) Pii Fel(icis). **Deo / patrio Belo n(umeri) Pal(myrenorum) sagit(tariorum) tem(plum) vi ignis consumptum / pecunia sua restituer(unt), ded(icante) [[C.]] I(ulio) [[Sept(imio) Casti]]no, / co(n)s(ulari) III Daci[ar(um), M.?] Ulpio Victore, / proc(uratore) Aug(usti) provi(nc(iae) Por)ol(issensis), cura agen(te) T. Fl(avio) Saturn[ino, ((centurione)) le]g(ionis) V Mac(edonicae) P(iae) C(onstantis).**
- 17) ILD 213 = AE 1999, 1302 (*Tibiscum*): **Mar(ius?) Aurel(ianus?)**, / princeps n(umeri), / **port[i]cum d(eum) stra(vit)**.
- 18) IDR III/1, 136 = ILD 205 = AE 1983, 795 (*Tibiscum*): **[G]enio n(umeri) Pa[l(myrenorum)] Tib(iscensium)**, / **[G(enio)?] hor(r)e(i), dis p[al]t(riis)** et pro / [sal]ute Augg(ustorum) [n]n(ostrorum) P. Ael(ius) / [Ser?]vius, vet(eranus) e[x] opt(ione) / [n(umeri) s(upra)] s(cripti), ex voto [pos]uit.
- 19) IDR III/1, 134 = AE 1971, 405 = AE 1977, 694 (*Tibiscum*): **Bel[io] deo Palmyr(eno)** / Ae[l(ius) Z]abdibol, / ar[m]orum cus(tos), / e[x] nu]mero / Pal[myrenoru]m / [v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens)] m(erito).
- 20) IDR III/1, 135 = AE 1977, 695 (*Tibiscum*): **Dis Patr(iis)** / Marcel[- - -] / L. Del[- - -] / Palm(- - -) Ti[b(- - -)] / I s(olverunt) l(ibentes) m(erito).
- 21) IDR III/1, 142 = IDR III/1, 149 = ILD 207 = AE 1967, 393 = AE 1983, 797 (*Tibiscum*): **[Deo M]alach[belo] pr[o sal]ute ddd(ominorum) / [nnn(ostrorum) A] uggg(ustorum) P. A[el(ius) Ser?]vius, / vet(eranus) ex op[t(ione) n(umeri) Palm(yrenorum)].**

Votive dedications by soldiers who belonged to the *numeri Palmyrenorum* represent the largest group of sacred inscriptions that mention *numeri*. This phenomenon is not typical of the Balkan area only, but of all the regions where *numeri* are attested. Another specificity of these inscriptions is the abundance of documentation concerning Palmyra's civic deities, whose cult flourished not only around the camps where the

⁶⁹ Documented by CIL III 908 and ILS 9472 = IG X, II/1, 146 = IDRE II 356, respectively.

numeri were stationed, such as *Porolissimu* and *Tibiscum*, but also in the Dacian cities of *Sarmizegetusa* and *Apulum*⁷⁰.

The god with the highest number of attestations among the Palmyrene soldiers is *Belus*, the Semitic *Baal*⁷¹, whose name is recorded by inscriptions 16 and 19 from *Porolissum* and *Tibiscum*, respectively. No. 16, after the dedication *pro salute* in honor of Caracalla, records the restoration of a temple destroyed by a fire⁷². The expression *pecunia sua restituer(unt)*, which presupposes that the abbreviation N in l. 3 is spelled out as *n(umeri)* and not *n(umerus)*, indicates that the expenses were probably sustained not only by the *numerus Palmyrenorum* stationed at *Porolissum*, but also by the *numeri* from *Tibiscum* and *Optatiana*. The consecration by the consular governor, who is assisted by the *procurator* of the *Parolissensis*, testifies to the great importance that the authorities attributed to the event⁷³. The text is very similar to the inscription that some years before had been put up to record the restoration of the temple of the *dii patrii* by the *Mauri Micienses* (no. 11). Concerning the governor, the formula used by this latter inscription is different. However, the expression *sub Pomponio Liberale consulari* seems to suggest both his patronage and direct influence in the realization of the project. The same applies to no. 16, where the participle *dedicante* indicates the physical presence of the highest authority of the province at the inauguration of the new temple. The fact that the commanding officer, *T. Flavius Saturninus*, directed the works is also interesting, since a similar task was probably held by the commander of the *Mauri Micienses*, *Iulius Euangelianus*. It is interesting to observe that in Dacia there are no other inscriptions that record such interventions for the restoration of temples. The only exception could be a text from *Tibiscum*⁷⁴. It attests that *Septimius Diomedes, tribunus cohortis I Vindelicorum*, restored the temple of Apollo at his own expense during the governorship of *Octavius Iulianus*, whose name is reported in the ablative case without either prepositions or verbs that could better specify his role. In any case, considering the diffusion of Apollo's cult, it seems improbable that this was a peculiarity of the unit under the command of *Octavius Iulianus*⁷⁵. A more intriguing

⁷⁰ Cf. S. NEMETI, *I dii Patrii dei Bene Agrud*, in L. RUSCU, C. CINOGRAFI, R. ARDEVAN (eds.), *Orbis Antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis*, Cluj-Napoca 2004, pp. 643-650; L. BIANCHI, op. cit.; S. SANIE, op. cit., pp. 1229-1243.

⁷¹ On the cult of this deity in Dacia cf. J.R. CARBÓ GARCÍA, *Los cultos orientales en la Dacia romana: formas de difusión, integración y control social e ideológico*, Salamanca 2010 (*non vidi*); S. NEMETI, *I dii Patrii*, cit., pp. 643-647; M. POPESCU, op. cit., pp. 146-148; L. BIANCHI, op. cit., pp. 91-93 and *passim*; S. SANIE, op. cit., pp. 1229-1233.

⁷² The temple was originally dedicated to *Liber Pater*, whose cult is documented by ILD 687 = CBI 540. Only after the fire it was re-consecrated to *Belus*: cf. A. RUSU-PESCARU, D. ALICU, op. cit., pp. 50-52; L. BIANCHI, op. cit., p. 91 with previous bibliography.

⁷³ According to M. POPESCU, *La religion, cit.*, pp. 319-320, the restoration of the temple could have occurred on occasion of Caracalla's visit to *Porolissum*.

⁷⁴ ILD 199 = AE 1987, 848.

⁷⁵ According to M. POPESCU, *La religion, cit.*, pp. 87-88, the comparison between this inscription and IDR III/1, 128 = ILD 200 = AE 1987, 849 would suggest that for governors it was customary to sacrifice

comparison with the case of the Dacian Palmyrenes is represented by an inscription from El Kantara (Numidia), where a *numerus Hemesenorum* was stationed starting from the reigns of either Septimius Severus or Caracalla⁷⁶. The text reports that *C. Iulius Aelurio*, centurion of the legion *III Augusta* and *praepositus numeri Hemesenorum*, took care of the realization of a garden sacred to the *deus Solis*, the civic deity of Emesa⁷⁷. The inscription documents that the garden was *constitutum per C. Iulio (!) Aelurione (!) pra(e)p(ositum)*, thus revealing that the work was commissioned by someone else, perhaps the soldiers of the *numerus* or a superior officer. Consequently, a certain interest towards the civic cult of a *numerus* seems to be attested in the case of the African army too⁷⁸.

A priesthood of *Belus* should be recognized in the expression *sacerdos dei numeri* reported by no. 15⁷⁹. The inscription concerns the fulfillment of a vow to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* by *P. Aelius Malachus*, *flamen quinquennalis* of *Porolissium* and *sacerdos dei numeri Palmyrenorum Porolissensium*. *Malachus'* belonging to the *numerus* is uncertain. Since he is a notable of the city, he could perhaps be identified as a veteran⁸⁰. At any rate, it is important to stress both the existence of a specific connection between the *numerus* and a priesthood of a *deus patrius*⁸¹, and the fact that this office was held together with a traditional Roman one, that of *flamen quinquennalis*. Silviu Sanie has underlined the fact that the worshipping of both Palmyrene and Roman gods attested by this inscription can be interpreted as proof of the multicultural attitude of the Dacian Palmyrenes⁸². However, Luca Bianchi observed that, although the dedicator is a *flamen* of the city, the dedication to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* could also be interpreted as a reference to a supreme deity in general, and not necessarily to the Roman Jupiter⁸³. In spite of this, the worshipping of gods who did not belong to the

to Apollo with the assistance of tribunes for the safety of the imperial family.

⁷⁶ On the topic cf. M. REUTER, op. cit., pp. 499-500; Y. LE BOHEC, *Les unites auxiliaires de l'Armee Romaine en Afrique Proconsulaire et Numidie sous le Haut Empire*, Paris 1989, pp. 118-120.

⁷⁷ AE 1933, 46. The preservation of the cults of the *Hemeseni* is also stressed by Y. LE BOHEC, *Les unites*, cit., p. 119.

⁷⁸ Another text from El Kantara (AE 1933, 47), after a dedication to the Severan family, mentions both the restoration of a temple consecrated to the *deus Solis* and the replacement of his statue by another *praepositus numeri Hemesenorum* and centurion of the legion *III Augusta*, *Iulius Draco*. However, as observed by M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 499 the restoration could be interpreted as a personal initiative of the officer.

⁷⁹ M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., pp. 325-326; L. BIANCHI, op. cit., p. 95.

⁸⁰ M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., p. 325. Cf. also D. BENEÄ, *Integrarea culturală a palmyrenilor în Dacia romană*. Apulum 39, 2002, pp. 185-186; I. PIŞO, op. cit., p. 229 (= *An der Nordgrenze*, cit., pp. 476-477).

⁸¹ It is difficult to postulate the existence of a specific priesthood for the unit. *Flavius Barhadadi* from *Apulum*, *sacerdos* of Jupiter Dolichenus *ad legionem* (i.e. the *XIII Gemina*, cf. IDR III/5, 221 = AE 1965, 30), was the priest of a temple located among the *canabae* of the legion. The three *sacerdotes dei* (i.e. Jupiter Dolichenus) *et cohortis* (i.e. the cohort *III Campestris* from *Porolissium*, cf. ILD 683 = AE 2001, 1707) worshipped the god in a temple situated in the *vicus* close to the camp, cf. I. PIŞO, op. cit., p. 229 (= *An der Nordgrenze*, cit., pp. 476-477) with previous bibliography.

⁸² S. SANIE, op. cit., p. 292.

⁸³ L. BIANCHI, op. cit., p. 95.

Palmyrene pantheon seems to be well attested among other soldiers who served in the *numeri Palmyrenorum*. A text from *Tibiscum* (no. 12) records a dedication to *Minerva Augusta* and to the *Genius numeri Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium* by an *actarius*, *Valerius Rufinus*. Other inscriptions from *Porolissum* are dedicated to *Nemesis* (no. 13) and *Silvanus Domesticus* (no. 14) by two *principales*, *Nepos*, centurion of the *numerus*, and *Mucianus, optio Palmyrenorum*, respectively. Therefore, there is no need to postulate that the dedication to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* attested by no. 15 referred to other deities rather than to the traditional Roman Jupiter. Moreover, as indicated by the formula *v(otum) s(olvit)*, *Aelius Malachus* was also sincerely devoted to this deity, thus documenting how the cult of Palmyrene deities could coexist together with that of the traditional Roman gods. Another case of mixed devotion is represented by text no. 18. It records a dedication *pro salute* of the two *Augusti* (probably Caracalla and Geta) to the *Genius numeri*, to another deity – probably a *Genius horrei*⁸⁴ – and to the *dii patrii* of the Palmyrenes. The same dedicator, a *veteranus ex optione*, also set up the altar to *Malachbelus* (no. 21). This god, together with *Belus*, has to be included among the *dii patrii* from Palmyra. These are also mentioned by text nos. 18, 20 and, almost certainly, by text no. 17. The latter records the paving by a *centurio princeps*, a certain *Mar(ius?) Aurel(ianus?)*, of a *porticus deum*, which should have been located among a *schola* utilized by the Palmyrenes in the camp of *Tibiscum*⁸⁵.

Regarding inscription no. 21, it is necessary to note that *Malachbelus*, the messenger of Baal who is more often called *Malagbel* (Malakbél)⁸⁶, appears to be extremely popular among the Palmyrene civilians in Dacia⁸⁷. In fact, an inscription from *Sarmizegetusa* mentions his name first, and before *Belus*, in the list of the Palmyrene *dii patrii*, whose temple had been restored by a *Iiviralis* of the city⁸⁸. It is also interesting to note that in Numidia this god is venerated under the name *Malagbelus*, not only by soldiers from the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, but also by a *legatus Augg(ustorum) pro praetore*, *A. Iulius Piso*⁸⁹, and a centurion of the legion III Augusta⁹⁰. As in the case of the votive texts from *Tibiscum* and *Porolissum*, the most important Numidian dedications can be dated to

⁸⁴ Another dedication to a *Genius horrei* is documented in Germania Superior (CIL XIII 11802 = AE 1904, 180, cf. M.P. SPEIDEL, A. DIMITROVA-MILČEVA, *The Cult of the Genii in the Roman Army and a New Military Deity*. ANRW II 16.2, 1978, p. 1553).

⁸⁵ M. POPESCU, *Les temples*, cit., pp. 122-123; I. PISO, D. BENEÀ, *Epigraphica Tibiscensia*. ActaMusNapoca 36, 1999, pp. 104-106 ad no. 8.

⁸⁶ On the cult of this deity in Dacia cf. J.R. CARBÓ GARCÍA, op. cit. (*non vidi*); S. NEMETI, *I dii Patrii*, cit., pp. 647-648; M. POPESCU, *La religión*, cit., pp. 149-150; L. BIANCHI, op. cit., pp. 93-95; S. SANIE, op. cit., pp. 1233-1235.

⁸⁷ S. NEMETI, *I dii Patrii*, cit., pp. 647-649; L. BIANCHI, op. cit., pp. 91-93.

⁸⁸ CIL III 7954 = IDR III/2, 18. In the text *Malagbel* is followed by *et Bebellabamon*, whose interpretation should be *Bel (et) Bel Abamon*. On the topic cf. S. NEMETI, *I dii Patrii*, cit., pp. 643-647.

⁸⁹ AE 1933, 42 = AE 1980, 953. Cf. Y. LE BOHEC, *La troisième légion Auguste*, Paris 1989, pp. 388-389.

⁹⁰ CILVIII 2497. Cf. Y. LE BOHEC, op. cit., p. 168.

the Severna age, as demonstrated by the name *numerus Palmyrenorum Severianorum*⁹¹ and by dedications *pro salute* to both Severus Alexander⁹² and Julia Mamaea⁹³. With regard to the inscription in honor of Severus Alexander, it has been noted that the long list of soldiers from the different *centuriae* who set up the monument is mainly characterized by Roman names⁹⁴. At any rate, this is also the case of the inscription to *Malachbelus*, which was set up by a certain *P. Aelius [Ser?]vius*. Also, all the names on the inscriptions reported above are mostly Roman. Even if some Palmyrene *cognomina* such as *Zabdibol* (no. 19) and *Malachus* (no. 15) are sometimes attested, they are preceded by traditional Roman *praenomina* and *gentilicia*.

In summary: the votive dedications by soldiers who served in the *numeri Palmyrenorum* are characterized by a great variety of deities. The most important ones, thanks to their diffusion and veneration in important sanctuaries, are *Belus* (Baal) and *Malachbelus* (Malakbêl). Their cult was included among the *dii patrii*, who are attested by another good number of inscriptions. As in the case of the *dii patrii* of the *Mauri Micienses*, both the governors of the province and the officers in command of these *numeri* seem to have paid close attention to the restoration of the temples dedicated to these gods. It is interesting to note that in Numidia similar initiatives are attested concerning another civic deity, the *deus Solis* of the Emesenes. Also, the Palmyrenes set up a certain number of dedications to traditional Roman deities, such as *Minerva Augusta*, *Nemesis*, *Silvanus Domesticus*, and to the military *Genius* of the unit. Finally, it is important to observe that the majority of the dedicators bears either Roman names or Palmyrene *cognomina* that follow Roman *praenomina* and *gentilicia*⁹⁵.

Numerus Syrorum Sagittariorum

Three inscriptions from the area of *Romula* record the existence of *Suri Sagittarii*⁹⁶. They bear dedications to Hadrian and are dated to 138, thus representing the earliest attestation of this unit in Dacia. Later, another text from *Hispalis* (in the province of *Baetica*) dated to the age of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus mentions the career

⁹¹ AE 1940, 150.

⁹² CIL VIII 8795 = 18020 = AE 1940, 149.

⁹³ AE 1948, 219.

⁹⁴ L. BIANCHI, op. cit., p. 95. The only individual with a name from Palmyra seems to be *C. Cannius Malcus*. Other *cognomina*, such as *Donatus* and *Tertullus*, would indicate an African origin. Cf. M.G. MANNA, *Le formazioni ausiliarie di guarnigione nella provincia di Numidia da Augusto a Gallieno*, Roma 1970, p. 72.

⁹⁵ Between the end of 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd, the progressive Romanization of the names of the Syrian soldiers in Dacia has been observed by H. SOLIN, *Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnischdemographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände*. ANRW II 29.2, 1983, p. 768.

⁹⁶ CIL III 12601a = 13793 = IDR II 575 = AE 1891, 47; CIL III 12601b = 13794 = IDR II 576; CIL III 12605 = IDR II 585.

of a knight who, among many other things, was *praepositus numeri Syrorum* and *curator civitatis Romulensium*⁹⁷. This *numerus* is also attested by a sacred text from the province of Moesia Inferior, where a detachment of this unit was probably sent⁹⁸. The monument can be approximately dated to the beginning of the 3rd century (*infra* no. 22). In any case, during the reign of Septimius Severus the *numerus* was moved to *Lalla Maghnia*, in Mauretania Caesarensis, where numerous funerary texts with the formula *domo Romula* are documented⁹⁹. There are three votive inscriptions set up by people who served in this unit:

22) CIL III 7493 = IScM V 127 (*Carsium*): **Genio cent(uriae)** / Fl(avi) Ianuar(i) / Fl(avius) Avitianus, / sig(nifer) n(umeri) Suro[r]um s(agittariorum), eius / voto libye(ns) (!) / posuit.

23) IDR II 341 = AE 1914, 12 (*Romula*): **Soli Invicto Mithra[e]** / libr(arii) cum / Anton(io) Z[o]l[i]lo, act(ario) [p(rae)p(ositi)] / n(umeri) S(urorum), p(osuerunt).

24) IDR III/1, 2 = ILD 174 = ILJug I 282 = AE 1980, 732 (*Kajtasovo*): **Vict(oriae)** / V(ictrici) / Vatern(ius) / Cas(s)ian(us), / eq(ues) t(urmae) e / n(umero) S(urorum).

As observed by Mihai Popescu, the dedication to the *Genius centuriae* (no. 22) underlines the relevant role attributed to the deity who protected the detachment while on mission in the territories around the mouth of the Danube¹⁰⁰. In this regard, an interesting comparison is provided by inscription no. 9, in which the *Genius* of the *numerus Maurorum* is worshipped together with *Fortuna Redux*, who would ensure the safe return of the unit after a mission. Furthermore, the *cognomen Avitianus* seems to suggest a Syrian origin of the dedicator¹⁰¹. A Syrian ancestry is also easy to recognize in the case of the main dedicator of inscription no. 22. It documents a vow to *Solis Invictus Mithra* by the scribes (*librarii*) of the unit, who were represented by the secretary of the commander (*actarius praepositi*) *Antonius Zoilus*¹⁰². Considering the great popularity of both *Mithra* and *Sol Invictus* among the Roman army in general, and in particular among the troops stationed in Dacia without any distinction regarding their origin¹⁰³, the dedication of *Zoilus* and his colleagues cannot be considered as a peculiarity of the

⁹⁷ CIL II 1180 = AE 1965, 237 = AE 1971, 171 = AE 1991, 993.

⁹⁸ M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 547.

⁹⁹ M. REUTER, op. cit., pp. 547-548. Cf. also E. NÉMETH, op. cit., p. 105; P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁰⁰ M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., pp. 322-323.

¹⁰¹ M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., p. 323.

¹⁰² An Hellenized Syrian, according to I. BERCIU, C.C. PETOLESCU, *Les cultes orientaux dans la Dacie méridionale*, Leiden 1976, p. 23.

¹⁰³ Cf. M. POPESCU, *La religion*, cit., pp. 126-132; S. FACCINI, op. cit., p. 318; S. SANIE, op. cit., 1209-1218.

soldiers who served in this *numerus*¹⁰⁴. The reading of inscription no. 24, discovered in a small town close to the border between Lower Pannonia and Dacia, is disputed. According to Anna Šašel, ll. 4-5 should be read as *eq(ues) t(urmae) E(- -) / v(otum) s(olvit)*¹⁰⁵. This reading could be supported by the fact that the *numerus Syrorum* is normally considered a unit formed by *pedites*, as suggested by its organization in *centuriae*¹⁰⁶. At any rate, the cult of *Victoria Victrix* can be included within the traditional military ones. Therefore, with regard to the cults reported by texts nos. 22 and 23, it does not represent an exception.

In conclusion, the votive dedications of the *Suri Sagittarii* show a considerable Romanization. As in the case of the other *numeri*, the dedicators are mostly *principales*, but their names still indicate a Syrian origin. It is important to note that all the texts should be approximately dated between the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd. This demonstrates that these two features, Romanization and ethnicity, were frequently coexisting after circa sixty years from the first stationing of the *Suri* in the Danubian area.

Numerus Osrhoenorum

The scarcity of documentation that affects this unit makes it difficult to reconstruct its history.

Literary sources attest that units of bowmen from Osrhoene were employed during the Germanic wars of Caracalla¹⁰⁷, Severus Alexander¹⁰⁸ and Maximinus Thrax¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, only three inscriptions mention soldiers from Osrhoene. The first two are an altar to *Fortuna Regina* from *Magontiacum* dated to the reign of Maximinus (although the reading is extremely uncertain)¹¹⁰, and a funerary text from Mauretania Caesarensis¹¹¹. Both of them report only the word *Osrhoeni*. The third is the only one that documents the existence of *Osrhoeni* organized in a *numerus*:

25) CIL III 10307 = RIU V 1073 = AE 1969/70, 514 (*Intercisa*) (Fig. 3): **I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) Barsemis Abbei, / dec(urio) alae Firmae / Katafractariae / ex numero Hos/roruorum (!), mag(ister) / coh(ortis) ((milliariae)) Hemes/(e)n(orum) d(omo) Carris,**

¹⁰⁴ Although according to I. BERCIU, C.C. PETOLESCU, *Les cultes, cit.*, p. 19 the propagation of this cult in *Romula* should be connected with the presence of Syrian soldiers from both the *numerus Syrorum* and the *cohors II Flavia Commagenorum*.

¹⁰⁵ ILJug I 282.

¹⁰⁶ M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 548.

¹⁰⁷ DIO 77 (78).14.1.

¹⁰⁸ HEROD. 6.7.8; LAMPR. *Alex.* 61.8.

¹⁰⁹ CAPITOL. *Maximin.* 11.8.

¹¹⁰ CIL XIII 6677a. Cf. M. REUTER, op. cit., p. 520.

¹¹¹ CIL VIII 9829.

et / Aur(elia) Iulia, coniux / plus (!), v(otum) s(oluerunt) l(ibentes) m(erito). / Aurelia Thicimim / et Aurelia Salia et / filias (!) Barsimia tit(ulum) / d(edicaverunt) c(um) s(upra) s(criptis).

Barsemis Abbei started his career in the *numerus Osrhoenorum*, but later he was promoted *decurio alae Firmae Katafractariae*. He finally became training officer (*magister*) of the *cohors milliaria Hemesenorum* after 240, when the *ala Katafractaria* passed through Pannonia Inferior¹¹². Consequently, the monument was set up some time after *Barsemis Abbei* had ended his service in the *numerus*. According to Michael Speidel, the lack of Roman elements in the name of the soldier would represent a significant example of the barbarization of the Roman army during the 3rd century¹¹³. In spite of this, it is also true that the omission of both *praenomen* and *gentilicium* is a common phenomenon at this time. Furthermore, it should be noted that not only *Barsemis Abbei*, but also his relatives, who bear the *gentilicium Aurelius*, dedicated a monument to the most important Roman deity. As noted above, this happened after *Barsemis Abbei* had already served in different units and after becoming *principalis*. However, unlike the *numeri* examined above, the *numerus* in which he was enrolled came from a region that had become a permanent Roman possession only under the Severans. Therefore, both his adaptation to serve as officer in other units and his devotion to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* seem to demonstrate a notable degree of integration into Roman culture¹¹⁴. It is finally worthy of note that the *cohors milliaria Hemesenorum* from *Intercisa*, where *Barsemis Abbei* was serving, set up a dedication to the *deus patrius Solis Elagabalus* for the safety of Caracalla during his German campaign¹¹⁵. Consequently, considering both the strong Oriental religious tradition of the unit and the eastern origins of *Barsemis*, his fulfillment of a vow to *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus* can be interpreted as both a declaration of loyalty to the Roman institutions and a personal act of devotion to the most important Roman god.

¹¹² O. HARL, *Die Kataphraktarier im römischen Heer: Panegyrik und Realität*. JRGZ 43 (2), 1996, pp. 607-608, no. 1; M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise, cit.*, p. 229 (= *Roman Army, cit.*, p. 146); J. FITZ, *Alcuni cursus honorum nelle province danubiane*. Epigraphica 36, 1974, pp. 103-106; ID., *Les Syriens à Intercisa*, Bruxelles 1972, pp. 136, 138.

¹¹³ M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise, cit.*, pp. 228-229 (= *Roman Army, cit.*, pp. 145-146).

¹¹⁴ According to J. FITZ, *Alcuni cursus, cit.*, pp. 104-105, *Barsemis Abbei* was already serving as *decurio* in the *numerus*.

¹¹⁵ RIU V 1139 = AE 1910, 133: *Pro salute et Victoria / Germ(anica) Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M. Aur(eli) Severi / Antonini Pii Felicis Aug(usti), / Parth(ici) Max(im)i, Brit(annici) Max(im)i, Germanici / Max(im)i, pontificis) max(im)i, p(atris) p(atriciae), trib(unicia) pot(estate), / co(n)s(ulis) IIII, deo Patrio Soli Elagabalo mil(it)es coh(ortis) ((milliariae)) Hem(esenorum) Anton(in)ianae. / Dedicatum opus X Kal(endas) Sep(embres), / Messala et Sabino co(n)s(ulibus)*. In 202, probably on occasion of a visit of Septimius Severus, the cohort had already dedicated a temple to this deity (AE 1910, 141 = RIU V 1104), cf. J. FITZ, *Les Syriens, cit.*, pp. 90-91.

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the documentation examined above shows a great variety of devotional practices. Dedications set up by soldiers who served in the *numeri peditum singulariorum Britannicianorum, Maurorum, Palmyrenorum* and *Syrorum Sagittariorum* honored both traditional Roman deities, such as *Iuppiter Optimus Maximus, Diana, Silvanus Domesticus*, the military *Genii*, and gods imported from their fatherland, such as the *dii patroni* of the *Britanniciani*, the *dii patri* of the *Mauri*, and the Palmyrene *Belus* and *Malachbelus*. The cult of local gods from the region where the unit was stationed is also attested, as in the case of the *Nymphae* from *Germisara*, worshipped by the *Britanniciani*. A good part of these documents can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century, approximately one century after the first stationing of *Britanniciani, Mauri* and *Palmyreni* in the Danubian provinces. It is important to note that the majority of the monuments were set up by officers from the ranks, the *principales*. Unlike privates, they received a more conspicuous salary and were probably characterized by a higher degree of Romanization. However, it is reasonable to suppose that their religious habits were not too different from those of the soldiers under their command. In fact, collective dedications set up by the whole unit were addressed to both ethnic gods, such as *Belus* in the case of the *numeri Palmyrenorum*, and Roman gods, such as *Diana potentissima*, in honor of whom a *numerus Maurorum* fulfilled a vow in *Sarmizegetusa*.

The examination of the evidence concerning the sanctuaries where the *dii patri* of these units were venerated is also interesting. The *dii patri* of the *Mauri Micienses* were worshipped under Roman names even by superior officers who had not been enrolled in the *numerus*, as demonstrated by the altars to *Silvanus, Pluto* and *Liber Pater* set up by a *praefectus*. Moreover, their sanctuary was restored at the expenses of both another *praefectus, Iulius Evangelianus*, and the soldiers of the *numerus* under the patronage of the governor. The same situation is attested for the sanctuary of *Belus*, which was restored by the *numeri Palmyrenorum* under the supervision of their commander, a centurion of the *V Macedonica*, with the intervention of both the governor of the three *Daciae* and the *procurator* of the *Dacia Porolissensis*. Both these temples were restored during the reign of Septimius Severus, thus documenting that in this period the military authorities paid considerable attention to the religious habits of the soldiers who were serving in the national *numeri*. The traditional cults from their countries were evidently considered to be an essential part of their cultural identity. Consequently, they were used with the purpose of enforcing the esprit de corps and preserving its ethnic features connected to the military skills of the soldiers.

In a study on the “Romanization” of religion in the *alae* and *cohortes*, Ian Haynes observed that through attending the official ceremonies and experimenting different

social environments the soldiers who served in the *auxilia* gradually changed their cultural identity¹¹⁶. A similar phenomenon seems to be attested with regard to the Danubian *numeri* between the end of the 2nd and the 3rd century. Nevertheless, in some cases the maintenance of traditional cults from native regions appears to be an important feature of the service in these regiments. At the same time, the worshipping of traditional Roman gods, the military *Genii*, and local deities who were also venerated by soldiers from legions and other *auxilia* seems to point to the fact that national *numeri* were culturally well integrated in the Roman army. Therefore, in the case of the Danubian provinces, they should not be regarded as mere contingents of barbaric soldiers who represented the corruption or progressive decay of the imperial army¹¹⁷. Rather, they should be identified with regular units that were characterized by a specific cultural identity connected to their military specialization.

¹¹⁶ I.P. HAYNES, *The Romanization of Religion in the 'Auxilia' of the Roman Imperial Army from Augustus to Septimius Severus*. *Britannica* 24, 1993, p. 157.

¹¹⁷ This thesis has been sustained by M. SPEIDEL, *The Rise*, cit., pp. 208-209 (= *Roman Army*, cit., pp. 145-147), who particularly focuses his attention on the case of the *Mauri* and Orientals soldiers such as *Barsemis Abbei* (cf. *supra*). The barbaric connotation of national *numeri* have also been recently stressed by S. KERNEIS-POLY, *Les «numeri» ethniques de l'armée romaine au I^e et III^e siècles*. *RSA* 26, 1996, pp. 69-94, who maintains that the settlement of ethnic units at the borders of the Empire had the purpose to keep a separation between the barbaric populations and the areas characterized by Roman civilization. Nevertheless, the integration into the Roman world has been postulated by F. VITTINGHOFF, *Zur angeblichen Barbarisierung des römischen Heeres durch die Verbände der Numeri*. *Historia* 1, 1950, pp. 389-407. On the same side, but with a more prudent approach, P. SOUTHERN, op. cit., p. 110; C. HAMDOUNE, op. cit., pp. 185-186; M. REUTER, op. cit., pp. 380-385 and 426-427.



Fig. 1 - Trajan's column, scene LXIV



Fig. 2 - IDR III/3, 47 = AE 1944, 74. Courtesy of Ioan Piso



Fig. 3 - CIL III 10307 = AE 1969/70, 514. Image provided by ubi-erat-lupa.org (Lupa 6049)

Il volume, pubblicato per iniziativa del Laboratorio di studi e ricerche sulle Antiche province Danubiane del Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici dell'Università degli Studi di Ferrara, raccoglie i testi delle comunicazioni presentate al II Convegno Internazionale «Roma e le province del Danubio», tenutosi a Ferrara dal 20 al 22 Novembre 2013, sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica Italiana, con il patrocinio del Ministero degli Affari Esteri Italiano e dell'Association Internationale d'Épigraphie Greque et Latine.

Questa pubblicazione, curata da Livio Zerbini, attraverso i contributi di alcuni dei più autorevoli storici, studiosi e ricercatori del mondo danubiano in età romana, provenienti da quindici Paesi, consente di fare lo *status quaestionis* sui culti e sulla religiosità nelle province danubiane, il cui interesse in questi anni ha riscontrato un notevole impulso.

Gli scavi archeologici più recenti e gli esiti delle ultime ricerche mettono sempre più in evidenza che il mondo provinciale danubiano non costituisce un organismo uniforme e omogeneo, in quanto ogni provincia è caratterizzata da una propria identità, i cui tratti specifici meritano di essere ulteriormente indagati e studiati.

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