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The presence of soldiers of provincial origin in the Roman army represents a phenomenon that is essentially related to the phenomenon of political, social and cultural integration of a population subject to the authority of Rome. Beyond any other valences or coordinates of such a process, its research has as its main purpose to capture how the population of the Dacian area became part of the structure of the Roman Empire through the army. Although the main plan of this integration is naturally military, its effects go far beyond this framework. Also, in the ancient world, and especially in Roman society, the army was an extremely important and effective mechanism of assimilation, which operated according to profoundly different coordinates from those of later eras.

Thus, such a research topic is as attractive as can be. The case of the Dacian population, regardless of ethnicity, is no different from that of other provincial populations in the Roman Empire. It would be very useful to carry out in-depth research in this area in order to develop a coherent and comprehensive view of the fate of the Dacians following the Roman conquest and to overcome historiographical tendencies to treat the subject of Dacian identity in a simplistic manner. The study of the presence of the Dacians in the Roman Empire, although it has been approached and has aroused the interest of Romanian historians since the beginning of the 20th century, has led to the formulation of questions that remain unanswered. Despite a century of research on the subject, it is only in the last two decades that we have witnessed a change of perspective that may finally lead to an understanding of a subject whose social stakes are growing and which is becoming increasingly sensitive. The perspective on the historical relationship between the conquered Dacian population and the Roman conquerors is today in urgent need of clarification.

From a historiographical point of view, the timing could not be better. On the one hand, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the explosion of military diplomas discovered (both in an archaeological context and, above all, in an unofficial or obscure one) that followed it provide much more favourable premises for such research than in the past and an arsenal that facilitates and encourages in-depth research. Numerous inscriptions provide information that was not available in the past. On the other hand, the liberation of a new generation of historians from subjectivism and (usually nationalist) political sensitivities has triggered the emergence of extremely solid studies dedicated to the phenomenon of the integration of the Dacians into the Roman Empire and to capturing the proportions and coordinates of their presence both in Dacia and in various other provinces. Of course, the beginning of these studies is synonymous with the article published by Dan Dana in 2003 dealing with the presence of the Dacians in the Eastern Desert of Egypt, based on the ostraka inscriptions, which at the time were recent discoveries.

The choice of the Roman provinces of Africa over other areas of the Roman Empire also has certain advantages that justify research on the subject. Although the presence of military men of Dacian origin can be observed in Britannia and Syria, a superficial survey of the literature reveals that the historical area of the Roman provinces in Africa can be viewed from a different perspective. First of all, Mauretania Tingitana, Mauretania Caesariensis, Numidia, Africa

Proconsularis and Egypt constitute a coherent and varied historical space. Taken together, because of their geographical proximity and relatively similar historical background, they can be analysed together without implying any profound methodological break. At the same time, the political, social and cultural differences between the five are sufficiently visible to capture the diversity of the environment in which the military careers of the soldiers analysed took place. The military profile of Numidia, for example, is profoundly different from that of the rest of Proconsularis Africa. Also, Rome's political control in Mauretania Tingitana was very limited compared to that in Mauretania Caesariensis, which led to the development of a fragile and violent relationship with the indigenous populations. Egypt, for its part, presents itself as an area whose specificity is well known in historiography. Thus, an analysis of the careers of soldiers from the Roman garrisons of these provinces provides various examples of integration. The way in which a soldier in southern Numidia was integrated differs from a soldier in the Eastern Desert of Egypt or a soldier in a Roman city near the Atlantic coast.

The historical area of the Roman provinces in Africa also benefits from a rich history of research. As part of controlled areas or colonial empires of European states where historical studies have been carried out since the 19th century and have continued to the present day in the most professional and extensive manner, the territories now located in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or Egypt (Libya is, in many respects, an exception to the rule) have been the subject of a huge volume of works by specialists in French or British historiography. Thus, although from a certain point of view it may also represent a certain disadvantage (due to a myriad of perspectives, opinions and disputes), the literature devoted to this area is truly abundant.

From a historiographical point of view, the subject is absent in specialized studies, whether in Romania or abroad. An approach that deals with the presence of soldiers from the Dacian area in the Roman provinces of Africa is lacking, despite those studies devoted to tangential subjects. With the exception of the article by Dan Dana mentioned above, the treatment of topics related to the theme of the present work has been done strictly within the framework of broader works. Therefore, an in-depth research of the career and identity of a soldier from the Dacian area and present in the Roman provinces of Africa has not been carried out until now. This makes our research all the more unusual in that we intend to treat the subject

in a way that can be considered, from a certain perspective, quasi-exhaustive. In other words, the paper includes all attested cases of military personnel that fall into the above-mentioned category.

Another extremely important dimension of the research is the in-depth analysis of the identity, lives and careers of the military. The main dimension of the work is the search for all the information that can be extracted from historical sources that can support the creation of as complete a profile as possible of these soldiers. The information we refer to is not strictly related to the sources attesting to the existence of these soldiers, but is present in various sources concerning the history of the castrum, the province, the unit or the community to which they belonged.

Last but not least, the correlation between the two types of analysis mentioned in the previous paragraphs may reflect, in our opinion, a phenomenon whose proportions cannot be ignored. Understanding the latter from a quantitative perspective, together with that of the character of the military careers and the identity of the subjects of this phenomenon have the potential to result in a panorama that gives us the privilege of understanding what was the trajectory of a segment of the Dacian population following the installation of Roman rule and how their integration through the military was achieved. Of course, such a reflection aims to formulate an example that will encourage future research in this direction. The final aim of our paper is, in extenso, to contribute to the understanding of the fate of the Dacians once they became part of the Roman Empire.

The main objective of the paper can be superimposed on the three approaches outlined above. Thus, we aim to capture all the valences of the identity and careers of the military of Dacian origin attested in the Roman provinces of Africa. More specifically, we are concerned with all aspects of their names, family, recruitment, transfer, military activity (expeditions, confrontations) and building (including the construction of land routes), retirement and death. Of course, other similar aspects can also be added, depending on the case.

The chronological milestones of the work are, more or less, understood. In principle, the ethnic and geographical origins of the Roman military is reflected in historical sources from the 1st century AD to the beginning of the 3rd century. However, the integration of those from the Dacian area is visible only with the intensification of contacts between the Roman

authorities and those of the state north of the Danube. The evidence also becomes less and less conclusive with the end of the Antonine dynasty, at least in terms of military diplomas. On the other hand, the number of epigraphic sources from the African area does not diminish significantly until the onset of military anarchy.

An important methodological clarification concerns the terminology used in this work. First of all, the soldiers whose cases are the subject of our research are not distinguished according to ethnic or political criteria. In other words, in a simplified manner, we do not aim to identify all the Dacian soldiers present in the Roman army units in North Africa, nor all the soldiers from the Roman province of Dacia. Both approaches would be inappropriate. The former would exclude either those from Dacia but not of Dacian ethnic origin. The intense colonisation carried out by the Roman authorities when the northern Danube territory became a province naturally led to the emergence of a population whose ethnic origin was different from the indigenous one. For example, a soldier whose origin is mentioned in the epigraphic source in Dacia may have borne a Thracian or Celtic name. In the second case, the use of a strictly geographical criterion would exclude a significant number of soldiers of Dacian ethnic origin recruited from the southern Danube, from the Moesic provinces. It is no mystery (even less so today, thanks mainly to the studies of Florian Matei-Popescu) that the Dacians were present in significant numbers in the territories beyond the right bank of the river and that the Roman authorities carried out extensive recruitment in those areas. Among the auxiliary units founded from ethnic Dacians, there are undoubtedly some whose first recruits came from Lower Moesia or Upper Moesia.

Another theological clarification is made this time with regard to North Africa. We have opted to avoid the phrase 'Roman Africa', as this is more likely to refer to the territory of the province of Proconsularis Africa or, at best, to that of the two Mauretaniae. Thus, we believe that the terminology of 'the Roman provinces of Africa' better reflects our objectives, as it refers to a strictly geographical notion, without any historical or political charge.

The paper is structured in five chapters, the first of which is intended to clarify various aspects relating to general issues concerning the structure and character of the Roman army, the historical area concerned, the presence of the Dacians in Rome's military units and the state of research into Dacian onomastics.

The second chapter is devoted to the historical context of the Roman provinces in Africa. Without dealing with the epigraphic attestations, we have tried to provide a coherent but concise description of the five provinces concerned. Since the historiography relating to this area is enormous, we believe that the framework in which the careers of the soldiers who are the subject of our work developed cannot be truly understood unless the main features of the political and social development of the provinces in question are outlined. Also, the identity of the soldiers of Dacian origin can only be perceived in its integrity when placed in the context of the era in which they had their careers in the Roman army. However, this context is very difficult to perceive without a very careful analysis of a huge volume of sources and scholarly works which, not infrequently, support opposing theories and perspectives. There are several conclusions that we believe we have been able to draw from this research segment. Thus, in our opinion, the well-known conflicts that broke out in Mauretania in the middle of the second century had a significant scope, despite the recent tendency present in historiography to diminish their importance. It is also very visible that the establishment of Roman authority in both Mauretania Caesariensis and Numidia was gradual and that there was a real territorial expansion during the 2nd century. Rome's control over these territories is profoundly different if we compare the state at the beginning of the 2nd century with that at the beginning of the 3rd. Another conclusion that can be drawn without hesitation concerns the clear limits of Roman authority in Mauretania Tingitana. The eastern half of the province was, by and large, under autochthonous control, which created a consistent break from Mauretania Caesariensis. As far as Egypt is concerned, it can be said that there were only two areas of the province where the military presence played an active role: the Eastern Desert and the southern frontier.

The other three chapters were dedicated in part to a province or group of provinces. Thus, in the third chapter we have followed the cases attested in the sources referring to soldiers of Dacian origin present in Mauretania Tingitana and Mauretania Caesariensis. Without delving too deeply into the subject and the conclusions of the chapter, we can point out, first of all, that more soldiers are attested in the western province than in the eastern one. Specifically, only four epigraphs mention such soldiers in Mauretania Caesariensis, while in Tingitana there was a whole wave of discharges (which implies, *autotmat*, also the existence of a wave of conscription) that can be observed in the middle of the 2nd century. Most probably, the soldiers in question were discharged one or two years later than their normal term (after the end of the 25 years), as a

result of the very tense situation in the province. Also, of the eight soldiers present in Mauretania Tingitana, only one is known to have been a member of a cohort. Six of them were part of a cavalry unit, and about the eighth we do not have enough information. In addition, the one in an infantry unit is also the only one who was not present in the southern half of the province, but in its northern extremity at Tingis. Another remarkable fact about the cases in Mauretania Tingitana is the evidence of early recruitment, before Dacia became a Roman province. It concerns a soldier recruited in the year 99 who was undoubtedly from the Dacian population of the southern Danube.

As for the soldiers from Mauretania Caesariensis, they stand out in three different but no less interesting situations. One of them was certainly conscripted in 106 and released in 131, which easily suggests the context of his enlistment. Either as a prisoner of war or a voluntary enlistment, this soldier, named Diurdanus, joined the Roman army following the conquest of Dacia by Trajan. Another case, though not very easy to date, is that of Mattius, son of Priscus. Although both he and his father bear Latin anthroponyms, two of his sons have undoubtedly Dacian names: Diurdanus and Dada. Last but not least, a military man named Decineus is attested on a relatively late funerary inscription from the late 2nd or even early 3rd century. He was part of an auxiliary cohort and was in charge of the burial of one of his comrades whom the inscription designates as his brother.

As for the soldiers of Numidia and Africa Proconsularis, whose cases are grouped in the fourth chapter, we are dealing with a more consistent number than in the provinces in the western neighbourhood. The first aspect to be mentioned is the existence of numerous members of the 3rd Augusta Legion who came from the Dacian area. Numidia, as part of Africa Proconsularis, but also as a province in its own right, is the only territory in the Roman-ruled territory of Africa in which there were legionaries of Dacian origin, since there are no similar records in Egypt, which is the only province in which such units existed. Perhaps the most impressive epigraphic source both in Numidia and in the whole of the work is a laterculus which attests to the presence of no less than 21 soldiers originating from Napoca. However, despite a long line of disputes and historiographical opinions, the ethnic character of these veterans is Thracian, not Dacian. Most likely, they were the sons of Thracian auxiliaries colonised in Napoca following conflicts between the Roman authorities and the Yazidis. Apart from these, four other soldiers were also

part of the 3rd Augusta Legion, while three soldiers were enlisted in auxiliary units. The earliest career is that of a veteran named Flavius, son of Sterissa, who was recruited also from the southern Danube territory in 102, perhaps as a result of the conflict between the Dacians and the Romans. There is some possibility that a legionary named Caius Attius Clemens was recruited in 106 at the same time as the one from Mauretania Caesariensis mentioned above, but this is only a guess, as the interval in which the inscription can be dated is longer. Two later cases, though not necessarily contemporary in terms of recruitment, also attract our attention. Thus, both a legionary named Caius Aelius Iulianus and an auxiliary soldier named Fuscus Victorinus were active during the reign of Septimius Severus. The range we consider most likely for the career of the latter is between 198 and 223, but this is only a hypothetical approximation. Also, in the case of the same Fuscus Victorinus it should be pointed out that he was present in an exceptional geographical area, in the southern extremity of Numidia, close to the desert area. The case of this soldier, also a native of Napoca, may be considered the most remote known record of all the soldiers of Dacian origin in the Roman army.

Last but not least, the fifth chapter is dedicated to Roman Egypt. A truly exceptional province in terms of its political, social and cultural character, it contains the largest number of records of Dacian soldiers in the whole Empire. An extremely large number of soldiers with Dacian anthroponyms has been found on ostracods in the Eastern Desert, but this is difficult to establish because of the repeated occurrences of the same name and the impossibility of distinguishing between homonymous soldiers or the repeated attestation of the same soldier. It should be pointed out that very few of the soldiers in Egypt can be traced by any other name except for the name and place where they were present during their career. The units to which they belonged are mostly unknown. However, their role in that specific environment is very clear. In short, the Dacian military of the Eastern Desert, most of whom were recruited shortly after Dacia became a province and were of northern Danubian origin, were mobilised mainly to guard the land routes linking the interior of the province to the two Red Sea ports, but also to take care of the smooth running of the mining carried out in the main quarries in the region, especially those at Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites.

Thus, we can draw, very briefly, a series of conclusions that capture the main issues arising from the present research. First of all, it can be noted that there was a significant presence of military men of Dacian origin in the Roman provinces of Africa. Although this is a strictly quantitative perspective, it cannot be neglected. It is also possible to see an impressive variety in the routes taken by these soldiers and in the nature of their careers and activities, depending on the province and the time they were present there. Moreover, a significant proportion of these soldiers faced exceptional historical circumstances and situations, such as those who were active during the native rebellion in Mauretania Caesariensis and Tingitana. Others, on the other hand, had stable careers free of unusual events, as was the case with most of those in the Eastern Desert. Last but not least, it is important to once again argue the need for further research in this direction, as it can result in a very welcome clarification of our perspective on Dacian identity.