

Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași  
Facultatea de Istorie • Centrul de Studii Clasice și Creștine

Nr. 21-1/2026

# CLASSICA & CHRISTIANA



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FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE  
CENTRUL DE STUDII CLASICE ȘI CREȘTINE

## *Classica et Christiana*

**21/1**  
**2026**

**Convegno Internazionale (XIV Convegno romeno-italiano)**  
*Crisi e declino nell'antichità greco-romana*  
**(Iași, 17-19 settembre 2025)**

**a cura di**

**Nelu ZUGRAVU**

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**RECENZII ȘI NOTE BIBLIOGRAFICE – RECENSIONI E SCHEDE BIBLIOGRAFICHE / 389**

ISIDOR DE SEVILLA, *Etimologii. XIII-XIV*, ediție bilingvă, ediție îngrijită, traducere din limba latină, studiu introductiv, cronologie și note de Anca CRIVĂȚ, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2025 (*Nelu ZUGRAVU*) / 389; Catherine NIXEY, *Erezie. Isus Cristos și ceilalți fii ai lui Dumnezeu*, traducere din limba engleză de Radu CUCUTEANU, Editura Humanitas, București, 2025 (*Alexandru Eusebie TOMIUC*) / 393; Peter BROWN, *Augustin de Hippona. O biografie*, traducere din limba engleză de Ionela GANEA și Cristian STOICA, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2025 (*Ștefan PUȘCAȘU*) / 397; Peter HEATHER, John RAPPLEY, *De ce se prăbușesc imperiile. Roma, America și viitorul Occidentului*, traducere de Alexandru CORMOȘ, Editura Litera, București, 2025 (*Alecsandru VOICU*) / 401

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**CRONICA – CRONACA / 407**



## SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI / SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI\*

<i>ActaMN</i>	<i>Acta Musei Napocensis</i> , Cluj-Napoca.
<i>BHAC</i>	<i>Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium</i> , Bonn.
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> , Bruxelles.
<i>EDR</i>	<i>Epigraphic Database Rome</i> .
<i>EDCS</i>	Epigraphische Datenbank Claus-Slaby, Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.
<i>EN</i>	<i>Ephemeris Napocensis</i> , Cluj-Napoca.
<i>FHDR</i> , II	<i>Fontes ad historiam Dacoromaniae pertinentes</i> , II, <i>De la anul 300 până la anul 1000</i> , București, 1970.
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> .
<i>Occidente/Oriente</i>	<i>Occidente/Oriente. Rivista internazionale di studi tardoantichi</i> , Pisa-Roma.
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire</i> , éd. par A. Mandouze et al., 4 voll., Paris-Rome 1982-2013.
<i>PLRE</i> , I	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I, A.D. 260-395, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971.
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> .
<i>RIC</i>	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> .
<i>RRMAM</i>	D. French, <i>Roman Roads and Milestones of Asia Minor</i> , Vol. III, British Institute at Ankara, 2012-2016.
<i>SCIVA</i>	<i>Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie</i> , București.
<i>TD</i>	<i>Thraco-Dacica</i> , București.
<i>ThLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> .

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\* Cu excepția celor din *L'Année Philologique* și *L'Année Épigraphique* / Escluse quelle segnalate da *L'Année Philologique* e *L'Année Épigraphique*.





UNIVERSITATEA  
„ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA”  
din IAȘI



Centrul de Studii  
Clasice și Creștine



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IAȘI



FACULTATEA de  
ISTORIE

# CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE

(XIV CONVEGNO ROMENO-ITALIANO)

# COLOCVIU INTERNAȚIONAL

(AL XIV-LEA COLOCVIU ROMÂNŌ-ITALIAN)

CRISI E DECLINO NELL'ANTICHITÀ  
GRECO-ROMANA

CRIZĂ ȘI DECLIN ÎN ANTICHITATEA  
GRECO-ROMANĂ

IAȘI

17-19 SETTEMBRE / SEPTEMBRIE 2025

SALA H, FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE





**CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE  
(XIV CONVEGNO ROMENO-ITALIANO)  
*Crisi e declino nell'antichità greco-romana***

**INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM  
(XIV ROMANIAN-ITALIAN COLLOQUIUM)  
*Crisis and Decline in Greco-Roman Antiquity***

**COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL  
(XIV COLLOQUE ROUMAIN-ITALIEN)  
*Crise et déclin dans l'Antiquité gréco-romaine***

**COLOCVIU INTERNAȚIONAL  
(AL XIV-LEA COLOCVIU ROMÂNNO-ITALIAN)  
*Criză și declin în antichitatea greco-romană***

**Iași, 17-19 settembre / septembrie 2025  
Sala H<sub>1</sub> (Facoltà di Storia / Facultatea de Istorie)**

**Organizzatori / Organizatori**

**Nelu ZUGRAVU, Roxana-Gabriela CURCĂ  
(PN-IV-P1-PCE-2023-1560)**

**COLOCVIU FINANȚAT DE PRIMĂRIA MUNICIPIULUI IAȘI  
PRIN H.C.L. NR. 98/27.03.2025**

## PROGRAMMA / PROGRAM

**Mercoledì / Miercuri, 17 settembre / septembrie 2025**

**13.45-14.00**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Nelu ZUGRAVU**

**13.45-14.00:** Saluti istituzionali e introduzione ai lavori / Salutul organizatorilor Mihai CHIRICA, Primarul Municipiului Iași / Sindaco del Comune di Iași Liviu MAHA, Rectorul Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași / Rettore dell’Università «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» di Iași Lucrețiu-Ion BÎRLIBA, Decanul Facultății de Istorie, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași / Preside della Facoltà di Storia, Università «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» di Iași Nelu ZUGRAVU, Directorul Centrului de Studii Clasice și Creștine, Facultatea de Istorie, Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași / Direttore del Centro di Studi Classici e Cristiani, Facoltà di Storia, Università «Alexandru Ioan Cuza» di Iași

**14.00-14.45**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Roxana-Gabriela CURCĂ**

**14.00-14.30:** Relazione inaugurale / Comunicare inaugurală: Anne VIAL-LOGEAY, *Décadence de Rome, crise(s), ou phénomène cyclique ? Quelques observations sur l’Histoire naturelle de Pline l’Ancien*

**14.30-14.45:** Discussioni / Discuții

**14.45-15.00:** Pausa / Pauză

**15.00-17.00**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Dumitru Dănuț APARASCHIVEI**

**15.00-15.30:** Lucrețiu-Ion BÎRLIBA, *La cohors III Collecta : origine et rôle stratégique*

**15.30-16.00:** Roxana-Gabriela CURCĂ, *L’épigraphie honorifique latine durant la crise en Mésie Inférieure* (PN-IV-P1-PCE-2023-1560)

**16.00-16.30 (RO) / 15.00-15.30 (ES):** M.a Pilar GONZÁLEZ-CONDE PUENTE, *Les témoignages épigraphiques de Trebonianus Gallus et Volusianus en Hispanie* (online)

**16.30-17.00:** Discussioni / Discuții

**17.00-17.15:** Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

**17.15-18.30**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Lucrețiu-Ion BÎRLIBA**

**17.15-17.45:** Dan MATEI, *The reuse of lithic spolia in the interventions to the structures of the castra from Dacia in the period of the “military anarchy” (AD 235 - the Aurelianic retreat)*

**17.45-18.15:** Dumitru Dănuț APARASCHIVEI, *Crisis and decline of urban life in the border province of Scythia. The case of the city of Ibida*

**18.15-18.45:** Miguel Pablo SANCHO GÓMEZ, *The Roman army of Aurelian and Probus in the Historia Augusta*

**18.45-19.00:** Discussioni / Discuții

**19.00:** Cena / Cina

**Giovedì / Joi, 18 settembre / septembrie 2025**

**9.00-10.15**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Immacolata ERAMO**

**9.00-9.30:** Dragoș HĂLMAGI, *Civic crisis and private aid: revisiting the epigraphic evidence on shortages and loans in Hellenistic Istros* (online)

**9.30-10.00:** Giusto TRAINA, *The Mithridatic crisis*

**10.00-10.15:** Discussioni / Discuții

**10.15-10.30:** Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

**10.30-12.30**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Luigi PIACENTE**

**10.30-11.00:** Nelu ZUGRAVU, «*Cuncta ad extremum reciderant*»: *retorica della crisi nelle fonti latine tardoantiche*

**11.00-11.30:** Beatrice GIROTTI, *Lessico della resilienza: restitutor*

**11.30-12.00:** Manuela MONGARDI, *Magnia Urbica: l'ultima “Soldatenkaiserin”*

**12.00-12.30:** Discussioni / Discuții

**12.30-15.00:** Pausa pranzo / Pauză de prânz

**15.00-16.15**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Giusto TRAINA**

**15.00-15.30:** Immacolata ERAMO, *La crisi dopo Adrianopoli: strategie narrative*

**15.30-16.00:** Antonella BRUZZONE, *Dal Cosmos al Chaos. Lo spettro della catastrofe in Claudiano*

**16.00-16.15:** Discussioni / Discuții

**16.15-16.30:** Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

**16.30-18.30**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Juan Ramón CARBÓ GARCÍA**

**16.30-17.00:** Dan DEAC, *Isism after the Severans in the Danubian-Balkan region of the Roman world*

**17.00-17.30:** Sorin NEMETI, *Religious Strategies in an Age of Anxiety. Votive Dedications from Roman Dacia from the time of Barrack Emperors*

**17.30-18.00:** Moisés ANTIQUEIRA, *Accompanied by the gods: Diana and Hercules on the imperial coinage of Aemilian (253)* (online)

**18.00-18.30:** Discussioni / Discuții

**18.30:** Cena / Cina

**Venerdì / Vineri, 19 settembre / septembrie 2025**

**9.00-10.45**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Miguel Pablo SANCHO GÓMEZ**

**9.00-9.30:** Lucian MUNTEANU, *Monetary “crises” in the Roman world and coin finds from Barbaricum. The case of Western Moldavia (Romania) in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century*

**9.30-10.00:** Juan Ramón CARBÓ GARCÍA, *Ignorantia de barbaris. Complacency, boast-fulness and security in the Roman worldview in the face of the new bordering peoples in the mid-third century A.D.: from contempt to bewilderment*

**10.00-10.30:** Florica MIHUȚ-BOHÎLȚEA, *The decline of personal freedom in Tacitus’ Annals thought the testamentary practices* (online)

**10.30-10.45:** Discussioni / Discuții

**10.45-11.00:** Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

**11.00-12.15**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Claudia-Dorina TĂRNAUCEANU**

**11.00-11.30:** Emanuel GROSU, *Do ut des: la crisi della fede. Il patto col diavolo o l'estremo pragmatismo di un principio giuridico nel poema Lapsus et conversio Theophili vicedomini (Hrotsvita di Gandersheim, X secolo)*

**11.30-12.00:** Rino MODONUTTI, *Il declino della latinità classica nella riflessione dei primi Umanisti: il caso di Sicco Polenton*

**12.00-12.15:** Discussioni / Discuții

**12.15-12.30 :** Pausa / Pauză

**12.30-13.00**

Moderatore / Moderator:

**Nelu ZUGRAVU**

***Presentazioni libri***

Luigi PIACENTE presenta: MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO, *Hortensius sive de philosophia. Hortensius sau despre filosofie*, a cura di Constantin-Ionuț MIHAI, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, 2025

Flavian-Pavel CHILCOȘ presenta: CLAUDIU-COSTEL LUCA, *Cronologia istoriei Romei în istoriografia latină păgână din a doua jumătate a secolului al IV-lea*, Editura PIM, Iași, 2024

Emanuel GROSU presenta: Claudio LEONARDI *et al.*, *Literatura latină medievală (secolele VI-XV). Un manual*, traduzione e edizione in lingua rumena a cura di Emanuel GROSU, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2025

**14.30-14.45**

**Nelu ZUGRAVU**

**Conclusioni e chiusura lavori / Concluzii; închiderea colocviului**



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THOMAS COLE, *THE COURSE OF EMPIRE* (1836): *THE CONSUMMATION OF EMPIRE, DESTRUCTION*

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## RELIGIOUS STRATEGIES IN AN AGE OF ANXIETY. VOTIVE DEDICATIONS FROM ROMAN DACIA FROM THE TIME OF BARRACK EMPERORS

Sorin NEMETI\*  
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**Keywords:** *crisis, religion, votive, imperial paganism, soldiers.*

**Abstract:** *The text examines religious practices in Roman Dacia during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, a period marked by political instability and the rise of the so-called “Barrack Emperors.” While earlier historians viewed this crisis mainly as political, scholars like Mario Mazza argue that it stemmed from deeper socio-economic changes, such as the decline of urban elites, inflation, and pressures on imperial administration and military defense. These changes influenced religious behavior across the Empire. During this time, pagan religion underwent significant transformation. Traditional polytheism gave way to forms of worship emphasizing a supreme god and more personal relationships with the divine – what Paul Veyne calls the “second paganism.” In this system, gods were seen less as equal partners in ritual exchange and more like powerful rulers who issued commands through dreams and oracles. At the same time, the imperial cult shifted to focus on the living emperor as the primary symbol of unity and loyalty, especially within the army. In Dacia, where evidence largely comes from military and urban inscriptions, this *religio castrensis* (the “religion of the camp”) is clearly visible. Honorary and votive frequently refer to the divine majesty of the emperor, the Capitoline Triad, and military gods such as Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules. The Severan dynasty and certain soldier-emperors, especially Philippus Arabs and Gordian III, were particularly honored. Additionally, Eastern deities popular among soldiers – such as Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras, and Azizos –, had dedicated temples and inscriptions in the province, reflecting personal and protective religious strategies during a time of insecurity. Local cults and healing deities also appeared, though less frequently. Some inscriptions reveal elements of hierarchical or “monarchic” paganism, where different gods were seen as manifestations or servants of a supreme divine power. This suggests that even before Christianity became dominant, paganism was already restructuring itself in response to social and spiritual anxieties. In conclusion, the votive inscriptions of Dacia illustrate how religion served as a tool for reinforcing military loyalty, imperial ideology, and personal protection during a period of widespread uncertainty. While the evidence is limited, it aligns*

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*with broader patterns of religious transformation seen across the Roman Empire in the third century.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *criză, religie, inscripții votive, păgânism imperial, soldați.*

**Rezumat: Strategii religioase într-o epocă a anxietății. Dedicatii votive din Dacia romană din perioada împăraților soldați.** *Textul examinează practicile religioase din Dacia romană în secolul al III-lea d.Hr., o perioadă marcată de instabilitate politică și de ascensiunea așa-numiților „împărați soldați”. În timp ce istoricii mai vechi au interpretat această criză în principal ca fiind una politică, cercetători precum Mario Mazza susțin că ea a avut la bază transformări socio-economice mai profunde, precum declinul elitelor urbane, inflația și presiunile asupra administrației imperiale și apărării militare. Aceste schimbări au influențat comportamentul religios la nivelul întregului Imperiu. În această perioadă, religia păgână a suferit transformări semnificative. Politeismul tradițional a făcut loc unor forme de cult care puneau accentul pe un zeu suprem și pe o relație mai personală cu divinitatea – ceea ce Paul Veyne a numit „al doilea păgânism”. În acest sistem, zeii nu mai erau percepuți ca parteneri egali într-un contract, ci mai degrabă ca suverani puternici care transmiteau porunci prin vise și oracole. În același timp, cultul imperial s-a orientat tot mai mult către împăratul în viață, ca principal simbol al unității și loialității, în special în cadrul armatei. În Dacia, unde dovezile provin în mare parte din inscripții militare și urbane, această religio castrens (,,religio taberei”) este clar atestată. Inscripțiile onorifice și votive fac frecvent referire la maiestatea divină a împăratului, la Triada Capitolină și la divinități militare precum Jupiter, Marte și Hercule. Dinastia severiană și anumiți împărați-soldați, în special Philip Arabul și Gordian III, s-au bucurat de o onoare deosebită. În plus, divinități orientale populare în rândul soldaților – precum Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras și Azizos – aveau temple și inscripții dedicate în provincie, reflectând strategii religioase personale și protective într-o perioadă de insecuritate. De asemenea, apar și culte locale sau divinități vindecătoare, deși mai rar. Unele inscripții dezvăluie elemente ale unui păgânism ierarhic sau „monarhic”, în care diferiți zei erau considerați manifestări sau slujitori ai unei puteri divine supreme. Aceasta sugerează că, înainte ca creștinismul să devină dominant, păgânismul își restructura deja formele ca răspuns la anxietățile sociale și spirituale. În concluzie, inscripțiile votive din Dacia ilustrează modul în care religia a funcționat ca instrument de consolidare a loialității militare, a ideologiei imperiale și a protecției personale într-o perioadă de incertitudine generalizată. Deși dovezile sunt limitate, ele se aliniază unor modele mai largi de transformare religioasă observabile în întregul Imperiu Roman în secolul al III-lea.*

The so-called crisis of the third century overlaps with what we call the age of the Barrack Emperors (*Soldatenkaisers*), which traditionally begins with the reign of Maximinus Thrax and ends with the establishment of the first Tetrarchy. Both the ancients themselves and modern historiography perceived this era as being marked above all by a crisis of governance, by endemic political instability with multiple usurpations and

emperors raised to power by the army. This model of government and political instability, especially when contrasted with the Golden Age of the adoptive emperors or even the Severan period, was regarded as essential in defining the crisis.<sup>1</sup>

In his work *Lotte sociali e restaurazione autoritaria nel III secolo d.C.*, Mario Mazza examines the third-century crisis within the broader framework of the socio-economic and cultural transformations that shaped the Empire during this turbulent period. For Mazza, governmental instability is merely an epiphenomenon of deeper structural changes that produced, in his view, a systemic crisis.<sup>2</sup>

The Roman Empire was a constellation of autonomous communities governed by a municipal elite – what Rostovtzeff called the “urban liberal bourgeoisie”, the driving force behind the Principate.<sup>3</sup> With the onset of economic crisis, marked by inflationary pressures and the impoverishment of this class, urban life began to decline. Dysfunction in the imperial administrative system and the Empire’s inability to fend off coordinated barbarian invasions led soldiers to assume political power by elevating generals *ad hoc* to the throne. These soldiers came overwhelmingly from humble backgrounds – rural people and the urban plebs.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Drinkwater, *Maximinus to Diocletian and the ‘Crisis’*, in A. K. Bowman, P. Garnsey, A. Cameron (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. XII. The Crisis of the Empire, A. D. 193-337*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 18-66; G. Alföldy, *The Crisis of the Third Century as Seen by Contemporaries*, *GRBS*, 15, 1974, 89-111; J.-M. Carrié, A. Rousselle, *L’empire romain en mutation: L’empire romain des Sévères à Constantin. 192-337*, Paris, 1999, 89-144; M. Christol, *L’Empire romain du III<sup>e</sup> siècle. 192-325 apr. J.-C.*, Paris, 2006, 77-190; L. de Blois, *The Crisis of the Third Century A.D. in the Roman Empire: A Modern Myth*, in L. de Blois, J. Rich (ed.), *The Transformation of Economic Life under the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Second Workshop of the International Network Impact of the Empire (Roman Empire, c. 200 B.C. - A.D. 476)*, Nottingham, July 4-7, 2001, Amsterdam, 2002, 204-217.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mazza, *Lotte sociali e restaurazione autoritaria nel III secolo D. C.*, Roma-Bari, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*<sup>2</sup>, I, Oxford, 1957, 103-104, sqq.; M. Mazza, *op. cit.*, 72-91.

<sup>4</sup> M. Mazza, *op. cit.*, 381-423.

The spread of Christianity, alongside episodes of persecution under Decius and Valerian,<sup>5</sup> as well as Aurelian's solar cult,<sup>6</sup> are interpreted as reactions by Roman authority to the growing pressure exerted by the new faith. Mazza's book offers a materialist-dialectical reading of the third-century Roman crisis, presenting it as a systemic collapse rooted in socio-economic transformations: the disappearance of servile labor, the embryonic emergence of the colonate, technological stagnation. These developments triggered administrative and political dysfunction, compounded by the disintegration of the ideological glue of society – the imperial cult and the worship of the official pantheon.<sup>7</sup>

Paul Veyne believed that religious systems evolved in tandem with social transformations, following the same principle whereby social structure determines ideological superstructure. In an influential article, he argued that Hellenistic religiosity was followed by a “second paganism”, which developed alongside the progress of Christianity. Unlike the earlier era – characterized by contractual negotiations with the gods on a footing of relative equality – in this second paganism the deity assumed the role of a benevolent monarch. His commands were sought, received, and obeyed as oracles, often delivered in dreams. To the ritualism of the earlier period was added a verbalized piety: ex-votos became confessions of gratitude to the god, public affirmations of his majesty and merits.<sup>8</sup>

Several authors describe this period as an “age of anxiety” stretching from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine, marked by the dissolution of the pagan religious system and its eventual disappearance

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<sup>5</sup> G. Th. Oborn, *Why Did Decius and Valerian Proscribe Christianity?*, *ChHist*, 2/2, 1933, 67-77; Chr. J. Haas, *Imperial Religious Policy and Valerian's Persecution of the Church*, *ChHist*, 52/2, 1983, 133-144.

<sup>6</sup> G. H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, Leiden, 1972, 131-162 (on religious policy of Aurelianus).

<sup>7</sup> M. Mazza, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> P. Veyne, *Une évolution du paganisme gréco-romain: injustice et piété des dieux, leurs ordres ou “oracles”*, *Latomus*, 45, 1986, 259-283; some of this characteristics are common to the whole paganism – A. D. Nock, *Studies in the Graeco-Roman Beliefs of the Empire*, in *idem, Essays in Religion and the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, I, 1972, 33-48.

with Christianity's complete victory.<sup>9</sup> The third century was one of crisis and transformation, but after it was overcome, the Empire was reborn, reformed and bureaucratized, emerging as a Christian empire led by an absolute monarch, earthly representative of the Christian God, and supported by a vast, well-organized Church. The newly institutionalized faith became the new social bond, providing imperial subjects with a way out of the age of anxiety and laying the foundations for a durable social order.<sup>10</sup>

What, then, are the characteristics of this "paganism of crisis"?<sup>11</sup> Jean Gagé used the expression "imperial paganism" asking rhetorically whether, in the third century, one could even speak of a paganism that was not imperial in nature.<sup>12</sup> Following Lukas de Blois, however, we can observe the decline of the imperial cult as it had been practiced during the first two centuries of our era: under the soldier-emperors no new temples were built for emperors or members of the imperial family, the *sodales Augustales* are no longer attested, nor even the *ordines Augustalium* in the cities of the Empire. The imperial cult was redefined under the pressure of the crisis of imperial authority, and at its center was no longer the *divi* but the living emperor himself – *restitutor orbis*, partner of the supreme god Jupiter, of Sol Invictus, of Elagabalus, Hercules, and others.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety. Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine*, Cambridge University Press, 1965, 3-5.

<sup>10</sup> A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity*, London-New York, 2000, 13-149; P. Veyne, *Când lumea noastră a devenit creștină (312-394)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Comprehensive outlines of the evolution of the Late Paganism in the III<sup>rd</sup> century A. D. - Fr. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion*, London, 1938, 466-472; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*, Oxford University Press, 1979, 223-235; G. Fowden, *Late Polytheism*, in A. K. Bowman, P. Garnsey, A. Cameron (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History. XII. The Crisis of the Empire, A. D. 193-337*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 521-572.

<sup>12</sup> J. Gagé, *Le paganisme impérial à la recherche d'une théologie vers le milieu du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, Mainz, 12, 1972, 3.

<sup>13</sup> L. de Blois, *Emperorship in a Period of Crises. Changes in Emperor Worship, Imperial Ideology and Perceptions of Imperial Authority in the Roman Empire in the Third Century A.D.*, in L. de Blois, P. Funke, J. Hahn (ed.), *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire. Proceedings of the Fifth Workshop of the International Network Impact of the Empire*

Thus Gagé defined this “imperial paganism”: confronted both with the rise of Christianity, which undermined the loyalty of the troops, and with the Mazdean religion of their Sasanian enemies, the soldier-emperors want to restore the so-called *religio castrensis*. This new social bond meant to foster loyalty to the emperor and the state drew on several elements: the cult of living rulers and their families, the worship of the official pantheon (especially the Capitoline Triad), and the veneration of military gods, both official (Mars, Victoria, Hercules) and unofficial (Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras, Azizos, etc.).

Third-century paganism thus found itself in direct confrontation with the emergence of Christianity. Alongside the intellectual debate reflected in apologetic writings, there were also waves of persecution instigated by imperial authority, such as those under Decius and Valerian, culminating in the Great Persecution under Diocletian and Maximian.<sup>14</sup> The comparison with Christianity, carried out in diffuse dialogues at various levels of society, led to the adoption of common themes and to a reordering of the polytheistic system into a clear hierarchy: a supreme monarch-god at the top, with the rest of the deities reduced to the rank of messengers and servants of this high god (dwelling in the ether, eternal, beyond the passage of time).<sup>15</sup> The emergence of this pagan monotheism was itself a symptom of the restructuring of classical polytheism.

The disintegration of authority in the administrative and military realms also encouraged the revival of local particularisms and the rise of regional cults in places such as Gaul and Illyricum. Hercules Magusanus, appearing on coins of the Gallic Empire,<sup>16</sup> and the explo-

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(*Roman Empire, 200 B. C. - A. D. 476*), Münster, June 30-July 4, 2004), Leiden-Boston, 2006, 272-273.

<sup>14</sup> L. de Blois, *Christians and Roman Imperial Politics. The Changing Position of Christians in the Third Century A. D.*, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 2001, 105-123.

<sup>15</sup> P. Mastandrea, *Un neoplatonico latino Cornelio Labeone. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Leiden, 1979, 159-177; P. Athanassiadi, M. Frede, *Introduction*, in P. Athanassiadi, M. Frede (ed.), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, Oxford, 1999, 16-18; P. Van Nuffelen, *Pagan Monotheism as a Religious Phenomenon*, in S. Mitchell, P. Van Nuffelen, *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2010, 16-33.

<sup>16</sup> B. H. Stolte, *Die religiösen Verhältnisse in Niedergermanien*, ANRW, II.18/1, 1986, 626-629.

sion of Danubian Horsemen reliefs at Sirmium<sup>17</sup> are only two examples of these religious particularisms and of the popularity of local cults at the time.

These, then, were the features of third-century paganism – if indeed one can speak of a single paganism, rather than of multiple overlapping ones, as M. Christol suggested. Alongside a purely philosophical paganism, there also existed a more popular religiosity centered on healing divinities, an urban paganism, as well as rural cults rooted in local traditions, some of which proved difficult to assimilate into Roman culture.<sup>18</sup>

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How are these phenomena, observed on the scale of the Empire, reflected in the votive epigraphy of Dacia under the soldier-emperors? Our modern knowledge is limited by the so-called “epigraphic habit”, which restricts our documentation to urban and military environments.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, inscriptions are generally dated by imperial titulature and epithets rather than by consular year, and therefore tend to reflect above all the *religio castrensis* and the so-called “urban paganism” of the equestrian and municipal elites.

The religion of the camp is particularly well represented, and we can document it through both honorific and votive inscriptions. There was a standard religious observance in the Roman army, attributed to the reforms of Augustus, but it is only explicitly documented in the reign of Severus Alexander, specifically for the years 225-227 CE. The evidence comes from a religious calendar written on papyrus and discovered at Dura Europos. This document, known as the *Feriale Duranum*, preserves the dates of the religious year as it was celebrated in the Roman army of the third century CE.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> D. Tudor, *Corpus Monumentorum Religionis Equitum Danuvinorum*, II, Leiden, 1976, 51-54.

<sup>18</sup> M. Christol, review on J. Gagé, *Le paganisme impérial à la recherche d'une théologie vers le milieu du III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse*, Mainz, 12, 1972, 3-20, *RÉA*, 75/1-2, 1973, 427-428.

<sup>19</sup> R. MacMullen, *The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire*, *AJP*, 103, 1982, 233-246; J. C. Mann, *Epigraphic Consciousness*, *JRS*, 75, 1985, 204-206.

<sup>20</sup> J. F. Gilliam, *The Roman Military Feriale*, *HThR*, 47/3, 1954, 183-196; D. Fishwick, *Dated Inscriptions and the Feriale Duranum*, *Syria*, 65/3-4, 1988, 349.

The days are divided into three principal groups: imperial anniversaries (*natales* of Divus Julius, of various *divi* and *divae*, and *dies imperii* of Trajan, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Severus Alexander, and members of his family); certain public festivals celebrated by all (such as the *Kalendae Ianuariae*, the *natalis Martis patris Victoris* on March 1, the *Quinquatria* from March 19-23, the *natalis Urbis Romae aeternae* on April 21, the *Vestalia* on June 9, the *Neptunalia* on July 23, and others); and, finally, only three specifically military festivals proper: the *honesta missio* on January 7 and two *Rosaliae signorum* on May 10 and 31.<sup>21</sup>

In the forts of Dacia, the emperors of the second century are poorly represented in the series of honorary inscriptions carved on statue bases.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, the Severan dynasty enjoyed particular popularity. Septimius Severus and his family were honored with statues and inscriptions in the forts of Turda (Potaissa), Bumbesti-Jiu, Moigrad (Porolissum), Slăveni, Jupa (Tibiscum), Vețel (Micia), Bologna, Buciumi, and Ilișua (Arcobara)<sup>23</sup>. Elagabalus had statues at Alba Iulia (Apulum) and Turda (Potaissa), while Julia Mamaea was honored at Ilișua (Arcobara), Mehadia, and Râșnov (Cumidava)<sup>24</sup>. Among the soldier-emperors, the best represented is Philippus Arabs and his family, who had statues at Turda (Potaissa), Cigmău, Drobeta, Ilișua, Inlăceni, Moigrad, and Slăveni<sup>25</sup>. Maximus Caesar and Herrenia Etruscilla each

<sup>21</sup> A. D. Nock, *The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year*, *HThR*, 45/4, 1952, 187-188.

<sup>22</sup> S. Nemeti, *Religio castrensis. Une étude de cas de Potaissa*, *Electrum*, 31, 2024, 118-119.

<sup>23</sup> M. Bărbulescu, *Inscripțiile din castrul legionar de la Potaissa / The Inscriptions of the Legionary Fortress at Potaissa*, Bucharest, 2012, 94-99, no. 9, fig. 29-38; *AE* 2012, 1208; M. Bărbulescu, *op. cit.*, 100-143, no. 10-11 = *AE* 2012, 1207 = *AE* 2015, 15 = *ILD* II, 945; *ILD* I, 555 = *AE* 2012, 1206 = *AE* 2015, 15 = *ILD* II, 944; *CIL* III 14485a = *IDR* II 174; *AE* 2019, 1243; *AE* 2016, 1311 = *ILD* II, 130; *AE* 1979, 491 = *ILD* I, 491; *AE* 1958, 230 = *ILD* I, 659; *AE* 1944, 51 = *ILD* I, 660; *AE* 2015, 1142 = *ILD* I 661; *CIL* III 13081 = *CIL* III 14216, 16 = *IDR* II 497; C. Timoc, *Un nou monument fragmentar din marmură cu inscripție descoperit întâmplător la Tibiscum-Jupa, Banatica*, 26/1, 2016, 383-388; *CIL* III 1343 = *IDR* III.3, 77 = *ILD* II, 900; *CIL* III 1343 = *IDR* III.3, 77 = *ILD* II, 900; *AE* 2015, 1149; *AE* 2015, 1150; *AE* 2018, 1335; *CIL* III 795.

<sup>24</sup> *AE* 2007, 1197 = *ILD* I, 935; *AE* 2012, 121; *CIL* III 798; *IDR* III.1, 76 = *AE* 1912, 5; *IDR* III.4, 221 = *AE* 1959, 16.

<sup>25</sup> M. Bărbulescu, *op. cit.*, 164-165, no. 15, fig. 70 = I. Piso, *Epigraphica Potaissensia*, in L. Zerbinì (ed.), *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane. Atti del*

received a dedication at Moigrad (Porolissum)<sup>26</sup>, while Gallienus is attested at Mehadia.<sup>27</sup> For Gordian III, three dedications are known, from Turda (Potaissa), Bologa, Buciumi, and Jupa (Tibiscum)<sup>28</sup>. Although the chance discoveries of inscriptions have preserved only this sample, it is nonetheless representative of a fortress courtyard in the third century AD. About 80% of the dedications document statues or statuary groups of the Severan dynasty and a few soldier-emperors, the most popular being Philippus Arabs and his family, and Gordian III. Philippus Arabs' popularity is explained by his presence in Dacia during the war against the Carpi and Goths in 247-248 AD and by the measures he implemented, which earned the emperors the title *restitutores orbis totius*.<sup>29</sup>

The epigraphic formulas of the honorary inscriptions conform to the common practices of the imperial cult in the provinces: monuments are dedicated to the *numen* and *maiestas* of the emperors, while the dedicants are *devoti numini maiestatique eorum*; sometimes we also encounter the formula *pro salute imperatoris*. In all such cases, what was publicly worshiped was the divine component of the living emperors (*numen Augusti*) together with one of their imperial virtues, namely *maiestas*.<sup>30</sup> The *Feriale Duranum* shows that the *dies imperii* of emperors who had passed among the gods (*divi et divae*) continued to be celebrated in the forts.

Other inscriptions reflect the imperial cult more directly. Two inscriptions from Apulum are dedicated to the *Genius* of Emperor Gordian III.<sup>31</sup> One was set up by Petronius Polianus<sup>32</sup>, *vir clarissimus*,

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*II Convegno Internazionale Ferrara 20-22 Novembre 2013*, Bologna, 2015, 435-437, no. 5, fig. 7 a-b; *CIL* III 12573 = *IDR* III.3 214; *IDR* II 10; *AE* 2006, 1127 = *ILD* 1008; *IDR* III.4 269; *AE* 1944, 55 = *ILD* I 668; *IDR* II 500-503; *AE* 2018, 1361; *CIL* III 1379 = *IDR* III.3 58; *CIL* III 1380 = *IDR* III.3 59.

<sup>26</sup> *AE* 1979, 494 = *ILD* I, 666; *AE* 1944, 56 = *ILD* I, 672.

<sup>27</sup> *CIL* III 1577 = 8010 = *IDR* III.1, 77.

<sup>28</sup> M. Bărbulescu, *op. cit.*, 166-169, no. 17, fig. 72; *AE* 1972, 472 = *ILD* I, 619; *AE* 2016, 1332 = *ILD* I, 635; *AE* 1997, 1295 = *ILD* I, 214.

<sup>29</sup> C. Körner, *Philippus Arabs. Ein Soldatenkaiser in der Tradition des antoninisch-severischen Prinzipats*, Berlin-New York, 2002, 134-157.

<sup>30</sup> I. Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford, 2002, 234-250; C. Fenechiu, *La notion de numen dans les textes littéraires et épigraphiques*, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, 230-240.

<sup>31</sup> *CIL* III 1017 = *IDR* III.5, 81.

<sup>32</sup> I. Piso, *Fasti provinciae Daciae, I, Die senatorische Amtsträger*, Bonn, 1993, 264.

legate of the XIII Gemina Legion; another, whose dedicant is lost, associates the emperor's *Genius* with *Virtus Romana*.<sup>33</sup>

Two *procuratores* and one *decurio* dedicated altars to the Capitoline Triad between 235-249 AD. In the case of Q. Axius Aelianus<sup>34</sup>, the triad is associated with *omnes dii immortales*<sup>35</sup>; for P. Aelius Hammonius.<sup>36</sup> with the *dii consentes*, *dii deae immortales* and ten other named gods, essentially forming the procurator's personal pantheon.<sup>37</sup> A decurion and *aedilis* of Napoca, L. Laelius Terentianus, addressed the triad for the health of Gordian III and Sabina Tranquillina.<sup>38</sup>

To illustrate loyalty to the official religion, we can add seven inscriptions from this period dedicated to Iupiter Optimus Maximus (once with the epithet *Fulgurator*), offered by various officers and *optiones*.<sup>39</sup> The Capitoline Triad and the supreme god of the pantheon were venerated within the framework of that imperial paganism whose nucleus was the religion of the camp. Added to this are the *dii militares* of the Greco-Roman pantheon or Eastern deities favored by soldiers. Two inscriptions are dedicated to Mars, with the epithets *Augustus* and *Gradius*. The dedication to Mars Augustus comes from a Roman *eques*, a *decurio* at Apulum, M. Antonius Valentinus, who also held the high office of *sacerdos Arae Augusti coronatus Daciarum trium*.<sup>40</sup> This is a dedication that indicates the persistence of the imperial cult in its most traditional forms in the mid-third century. Another senator, Simonius Iulianus,<sup>41</sup> *praeses Daciarum*, dedicated a votive altar to Hercules Sanctus.<sup>42</sup> Thus, alongside imperial statues in the forts, beneficiaries of public rituals performed by officers and soldiers, we also find these votive dedications to the emperors, the Capitoline Triad, and the

<sup>33</sup> *CIL* III 1159 = *IDR* III.5, 368.

<sup>34</sup> I. Piso, *Fasti provinciae Daciae*, II, *Die ritterlichen Amtsträger*, Bonn, 2013, 227-235 (procurator of Dacia Apulensis cca. 235/236-?238 A.D.); M. Bărbulescu, *Interferențe spirituale în Dacia romană*, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, 216-217.

<sup>35</sup> *CIL* III 1423 = *IDR* III.2, 244.

<sup>36</sup> I. Piso, *op. cit.*, II, 240-245 (the mission in Dacia is dated between cca. ?243-?245/246 A.D.).

<sup>37</sup> *IDR* III.2, 246; M. Bărbulescu, *op. cit.* 193-198.

<sup>38</sup> *CIL* III 858.

<sup>39</sup> *CIL* III 824 = 7632; *CIL* III 1596; *IDR* III.2, 249; *ILD* 881; *CIL* III 1054; *IDR* III.5, 171; *ILD* 765; *IDR* III.3, 237; *IDR* III.4, 277; *IDR* III.1 183 = 245; *ILD* 197.

<sup>40</sup> *CIL* III 1433 = *IDR* III.2, 266.

<sup>41</sup> I. Piso, *op. cit.*, I, 203-207; D. Simonius Proculus Iulianus (?241-?243 A.D.)

<sup>42</sup> *CIL* III 1573; *IDR* III.1, 66.

gods who conferred victory – Jupiter, Mars, and Hercules. The phenomenon identified by Jean Gagé, an imperial paganism centered on the cult of living sovereigns and the *religio castrensis* as a bond fostering loyalty to emperor and state,<sup>43</sup> is clearly visible in the honorary and votive epigraphy of Dacia.

The popular stratum of this military religiosity is suggested by the presence of eastern deities, part of the *sacra peregrina*: Jupiter Dolichenus, Mithras, Azizos, or the celtic goddess Epona.<sup>44</sup> In fact, the only two cult buildings known to have been constructed in Dacia during the era of the Barrack-Emperors were dedicated to these divinities. At Porolissum, three priests of Jupiter Dolichenus and of *cohors III Campestris* – M. Aurelius Italus, M. Antonius Maximus, and Aurelius Flavius –, built a temple in the *vicus* under Gordian III.<sup>45</sup> At Potaissa, Donatus, probably *praefectus (castrorum) legionis*, completed between 256 and 258 AD a temple whose construction had begun earlier, somewhere in the *canabae* of the legion. The temple was dedicated to the god from Emesa, Azizos, called in the dedicatory inscription *Deus Azizos Bonus Puer Conservator*.<sup>46</sup> For Dolichenus, three other inscriptions from Dacia date to the Barrack-Emperors time,<sup>47</sup> and for Azizos at least one more from the same era<sup>48</sup>. Probably many of the undated inscriptions dedicated to Azizos *Bonus Puer*, also belong to these decades, deriving from the contact of legionaries from Apulum and Potaissa with the cult center at Edessa in Syria during expeditions to the eastern front in the campaigns of Severus Alexander, Gordian III, Philippus Arabs, or Valerian.<sup>49</sup> Mithras appears incidentally in a dedication by a soldier of Legio V Macedonica<sup>50</sup> and in an inscription by the vice-governor Q. Axius Aelianus, in a strange association with Mars Camulus and the Gallo-Roman pair Mercury and Rosmerta.<sup>51</sup> The

<sup>43</sup> J. Gagé, *op. cit.*, 9-13.

<sup>44</sup> *IDR* III. 5, 68.

<sup>45</sup> *ILD* 683; N. Gudea, D. Tamba, *Porolissum. Un complex arheologic dacoroman la marginea de nord a Imperiului Roman*, III, *Despre templul zeului Iupiter Dolichenus din municipium Septimium*, Zalău, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> *CIL* III 875.

<sup>47</sup> *IDR* III.3, 297; *ILD* 769 = *AÉ* 2006, 1124; *AÉ* 1971, 392.

<sup>48</sup> *ILD* 264.

<sup>49</sup> S. Nemeti, *Le syncrétisme religieux en Dacie romaine*, Cluj-Napoca, 2019, 196.

<sup>50</sup> *CIL* III 879; *ILD* 951.

<sup>51</sup> S. Nemeti, *op. cit.*, 139-141, 143.

horse-goddess, adored by cavalry soldiers, is mentioned on an altar dedicated by another vice-governor, M. Aurelius Marcus,<sup>52</sup> during the reign of Philippus Arabs or Trebonianus Gallus.<sup>53</sup> These preferences reflect rather personal strategies of communication with the divine, part of a *religio militum* not prescribed by calendars such as the *Feriale Duranum*. Dolichenus and Mithras are *dii invicti* ensuring victory and worldly salvation. Azizos was borrowed directly from sanctuaries in conflict zones, perhaps due to his oracular character (being identified with Apollo Pythius) or his protective power against plague carried by soldiers from the East (and indeed, a pandemic known as the “plague of Cyprian” struck in the mid-third century).<sup>54</sup>

Very few dated dedications illustrate popular paganism. A handful of inscriptions by equestrian officials, officers, or soldiers are addressed to healing gods – Aesculapius and Hygieia,<sup>55</sup> to Diana,<sup>56</sup> or to Silvanus Domesticus.<sup>57</sup> In 235 AD an album of a Dionysiac association (*spira*) is recorded at Napoca.<sup>58</sup> An altar to Vulcanus may be connected with protection against fire.<sup>59</sup>

Several altars, especially in military contexts, are dedicated to personifications of fortune and prosperity, such as Fortuna<sup>60</sup> or the goddess of destiny, Nemesis. In one case, Fortuna bears the epithet *Redux*,<sup>61</sup> while Nemesis appears as *Regina*.<sup>62</sup> Two further altars are dedicated to the protective *Genii* of communities. Procurator Q. Axius Aelianus dedicated an altar to the *Genius coloniae Sarmizegetusae*,<sup>63</sup> while two magistrates of a *vicus* in northeastern Dacia dedicated one to the *Genius territorii Arcobadarensis* in 246 CE.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> I. Piso, *op. cit.*, II, 253-256. On the altar from Apulum (*IDR* III.5, 68) I. Piso read the erased names of the two emperors as *Galli et Volusiani*, and propose the dating between 251 and 253 A. D. The erased names could also belong to others emperors like Maximinus Thrax and Maximus or the two Philippi.

<sup>53</sup> *IDR* III.5, 68.

<sup>54</sup> S. Nemeti, *op. cit.*, 190-196.

<sup>55</sup> *CIL* III 1560 = *IDR* III.1, 54 = *ILD* 184; *ILD* 278; *ILD* 948.

<sup>56</sup> *CIL* III 1003 = *IDR* III.5, 63.

<sup>57</sup> *ILD* 488.

<sup>58</sup> *CIL* III 870.

<sup>59</sup> *ILD* 686.

<sup>60</sup> *ILD* 947.

<sup>61</sup> *CIL* III 1422 = *IDR* III.2, 206.

<sup>62</sup> *CIL* III 827 = 7633.

<sup>63</sup> *ILD* 281.

<sup>64</sup> *ILD* 800 = 1011.

To conclude, let us consider three inscriptions that illustrate religious phenomena of hierarchical paganism with a monarchic god and his divine messengers. An altar dedicated by two *aediles* of the colony of Apulum, P. Aelius Ursio and P. Aelius Antonianus, is addressed to Priapus Pantheus.<sup>65</sup> The ithyphallic god of agricultural abundance is here understood as a pantheic deity and receives the epithet *Pantheus*. A statue from Napoca depicts him with fruit but also with the eagle and thunderbolt, attributes of Iupiter.<sup>66</sup>

A second altar recalls Servius' remark that "no one knows the true names of the gods" (*Aen.* II. 351: *Deorum vera nomina nemo novit*).<sup>67</sup> Pistorius Rugianus,<sup>68</sup> *vir clarissimus*, legate of Legio XIII Gemina Gordiana, dedicated an altar *Deae Nemesi sive Fortunae*.<sup>69</sup> This uncertainty regarding the name of the goddess invoked parallels the question "to which gods am I to appease...?" – as Henk Versnel put it.<sup>70</sup> We are close to the theological oracles of Apollo at Claros, mentioned by Macrobius (after Cornelius Labeo), or the *Theosophia Tubi-gensis*, where Apollo is asked: "Who is god? Who is Iao? Or whether he himself is a god?"<sup>71</sup> Here Pistorius Rugianus hesitates over the name, as though the functions of the two goddesses merged into one.

A third inscription belongs to the same register: a *speculator* of Legio XII Gemina, Ulpius Proculinus, tells us that *ex iussu dei Apollinis fontem Aeterni... restituit*.<sup>72</sup> With the formula *ex iussu*,<sup>73</sup> we are in the domain of the "second paganism" described by Veyne, in which

<sup>65</sup> *CIL* III 1139 = *IDR* III.5, 308.

<sup>66</sup> C. Pop, *Precizări în legătură cu câteva piese sculpturale antice din Muzeul de Istorie Cluj*, *ActaMN*, 4, 1967, 491-492, nr. 3, fig. 4.

<sup>67</sup> On the ignorance of real names of the gods see M. Simon, *Anonymat et polyonymie divins dans l'Antiquité tardive*, in *Aa.Vv., Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich*, Roma, 1980, p. 513-518.

<sup>68</sup> I. Piso, *op. cit.*, I, 261-263 ("...ist sein Legionskommando in Dakien in die zweite Hälfte der Herrschaft Gordians zu datieren").

<sup>69</sup> *CIL* III 1125 = *IDR* III.5, 294.

<sup>70</sup> H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods. Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*, Leiden-Boston, 2011, 43-49.

<sup>71</sup> Macrobius, *Sat.*, I, 18, 19-21; A. Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon. Pratiques et traditions oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive (II<sup>e</sup>-VI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Leiden-Boston, 2005, 110-112.

<sup>72</sup> *CIL* III 990 = *IDR* III.5, 3.

<sup>73</sup> N. Zugravu, *Divinități și experiențe onirice în Dacia*, *EN*, 14-15, 2004-2005, 101-122; J. R. Carbó García, *Loc cultos orientales en la Dacia romana. Formas de difusión, integración y control social e ideológico*, Salamanca, 2010, 571-580.

Apollo commands the believer in a dream (a kind of oracle, as Marcus Aurelius put it) to restore the fountain of the god Aeternus. Who exactly this Aeternus was is harder to say. For F. Cumont, he was a Syrian *baal* worshiped in the Latin West as Aeternus, Deus Aeternus, or Iupiter Optimus Maximus Aeternus.<sup>74</sup> An inscription from Ulpia Sarmizegetusa<sup>75</sup> associates *Deus Aeternus* with Iuno and with intermediary beings called *angeli*,<sup>76</sup> which suggests an interpretation as a form of the Jewish Yahweh. The distribution of inscriptions, today found mainly in Dacia, Moesia, and Pannonia, suggests rather the resurgence of religious phenomena circumscribed to the Danubian region.<sup>77</sup>

The analysis of provincial religiosity under the soldier-emperors is based on few votive inscriptions (about 50) dated to 235-260 CE.<sup>78</sup> Certainly, many of the undated inscriptions in the corpus of Dacian epigraphy also belong to this period, but in the absence of dating criteria they were left aside. The small sample size and the limitations inherent in epigraphic habit, as well as the provenance of most inscriptions in military and official contexts, are relativizing our conclusions. Nevertheless, by sketching these phenomena on the scale of the empire, where literary texts and many more dated sources exist, we have been able to illustrate the same tendencies in the province north of the Danube. No trace appears of any polemic or conflict with Christians, nor of their presence in Dacia during this period. What is evident, however, is the emphasis placed by officials and the army on strengthening *disciplina militaris* and the soldiers' loyalty to state and emperor through the worship of deities prescribed by the *religio castrensis*.

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<sup>74</sup> F. Cumont, *Les dieux éternels des inscriptions latines*, RA, I, 1888, 184-193.

<sup>75</sup> *AÉ* 1914, 106 = *IDR* III.2, 190.

<sup>76</sup> F. Cumont, *Les anges du paganisme*, *RHR*, 72, 1915, 159-165.

<sup>77</sup> J. Bartels, A. Kolb, *Ein angeblicher Meilenstein in Novae (Moesia Inferior) und der Kult des deus Aeternus*, *Klio*, 93, 2011, 423.

<sup>78</sup> About the epigraphic manifestation in the last decade of the province of Dacia see R. Ardevan, *Once More on the Last Inscriptions of Roman Dacia*, in R. Ardevan, E. Beu-Dachin (ed.), *Mensa Rotunda Epigraphica Napocensis*, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, 125-160.



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