

## EMPEROR WORSHIP IN LATIN SETTLEMENTS OF LOWER MOESIA (1<sup>ST</sup>–3<sup>RD</sup> C. A.D.)

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The extensive bibliography which deals with the imperial cult makes the approach of any analysis on the subject a difficult job. The overall direction of the imperial cult research points to the importance of the local context in which the cult appeared, context that shaped the latter's institutions and manifestations. This perspective led to the publication of works focusing on the imperial cult in certain areas of the Roman Empire<sup>1</sup>; we therefore have chosen to focus on the imperial cult in the province of Lower Moesia, a topic that constitutes our PhD topic. The present paper is part of the research undertaken in this context.

The study of the imperial cult in Moesia Inferior has to apply two types of standards, as the province was culturally and politically separated into two areas: 1) the area controlled by Greek cities on the Black Sea shore<sup>2</sup>, to which one must add Marcianopolis and Nicopolis ad Istrum further inland, both founded by Trajan but Greek by organization; 2) the area ranging from the Danube southwards to the Thracian border where, even though there existed a number of pre-Roman and pre-urban settlements, those that developed did so in the Roman urban system *ciuitas–municipium–colonia*, with its respective institutions. Given the complex and often different problems concerning these two areas, we have decided to focus in the present paper only on the second one which, *only conventionally*<sup>3</sup>, we will call the Latin area.

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<sup>1</sup> Étienne 1958 [1974] for the Iberian Peninsula, Price 1984 for the province Asia, Liertz 1998 for the Germanies and Gallia Belgica, and of course D. Fishwick's vast work on the imperial cult in the Latin west, which expressed and followed this particular idea – Fishwick 1987, ix.

<sup>2</sup> Of which Histria, Tomis, Kallatis, Dionysopolis and Odessos formed a *koinón* at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D.

<sup>3</sup> The sources show an important number of foreigners settled in this area, and of course there was the majority of the population, which was formed by Thracian tribes. We can only presume the

Twenty-five years ago Elias Bickerman<sup>4</sup> opened a sensitive discussion concerning the imperial cult, which attracted long interventions from the specialists' audience. It is not the place to present these discussions, but we would like to note that most scholars present agreed that the term "ruler cult" was a modern invention, and that we should treat each aspect of emperor worship in its cultural and historical context. We fully agree with this perspective and intend to conduct our investigation accordingly.

- I) First, we will present the historical context in Moesia Inferior, emphasizing the military and urban aspects. Then we will proceed with the research of emperor worship, which we divide into two main sections:
- II) The imperial cult proper, with subsections for the a) municipal and b) provincial cult (both with their respective institutions and manifestations);
- III) Peripheral manifestations of the imperial cult.

## I. The historical context

The monographic approach presents, in this case, a very interesting, yet difficult problem, caused by the specific situation in Moesia Inferior. Without developing this direction, we will focus on its main points of interest and their significance for the imperial cult.

Following a series of military conflicts (such as M. Terentius Varro Lucullus' campaign in 72–71 B.C., during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mithridatic war, C. Antonius Hybrida's campaign in 62–61 B.C. and M. Licinius Crassus' campaign in 29–28 B.C.), the Thracian territory down to the river Danube entered the Roman sphere of influence<sup>5</sup>. This was followed by efforts from governors Lentulus and Catus concerning the pacification (the latter also moved 50000 Getae across the Danube – *Strabo* 7.10) of the area<sup>6</sup>. The province Moesia was created immediately afterwards, and comprised the area between the Morava and Timoc rivers.

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involvement of Thracians in the imperial cult at a local or regional level, as there are no sources to prove it. Even so, one must take this aspect into consideration, as the example of the altar of the Three Gauls, the *Ara Ubiorum* and the *Arae Sestinae* (Fishwick 1987, 102–144) prove the effort made by Roman officials to involve local tribes in emperor worship. In any case, whether foreign or Thracian inhabitants, all sources concerning emperor worship in the non-Greek area of Moesia Inferior follow cult patterns established in the Latin West.

<sup>4</sup> Bickerman 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Vulpe, Barnea 1968, 24–34; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 22–35.

<sup>6</sup> Syme 1971, 49–58.

Two legions ensured the security in the area: *legio III Scythica* and *legio V Macedonica*. They were stationed, at least from Emperor Claudius' reign, at Viminacium (?) and Oescus respectively. This laid the premises for the development of important urban settlements at those sites.

Later on, Emperor Vespasian's reign marks the advance of military units along the Danube, which suggests the annexation of the eastern territories down to the Black Sea to the province<sup>7</sup>. The province was highly militarized, as it was defended by several legions: the *legio VII Claudia* (stationed at Viminacium–Kostolač), the *legio V Macedonica* (stationed at Oescus), maybe the *legio V Alaudae* and the *legio I Italica* (replacing the *VIII Augusta* at Novae from 69 A.D. onwards). Also, an important number of auxilia completed the province's defensive system<sup>8</sup>.

Trajan<sup>9</sup> operated major changes in Moesia Inferior's military in conjunction with the Dacian wars, concentrating the major units on its eastern flank. He brought the *legio XI Claudia* to Durostorum and moved the *legio V Macedonica* from Oescus to Troesmis (the system was completed by *legio I Italica*, stationed at Novae). Over 20 auxiliary units were stationed in forts along the Danube in Moesia Inferior<sup>10</sup>, some of them in newly-built forts, such as those at Rasova, Carsium and Barboși. Also, the *classis Flavia Moesica*<sup>11</sup> had bases at Troesmis, Dinogetia, Noviodunum and Barboși, with a further possible base at Halmyris<sup>12</sup>.

Later on, the only major changes in the province's defensive system were the re-deployment of the *legio V Macedonica* in the Orient during Lucius Verus' Parthian campaigns, following which it was sent to Potaissa, in Dacia. From there it was brought back to Oescus in 271 A.D., following Aurelianus' retreat from Dacia.

From an administrative point of view, after the creation of the province of Moesia (organized around 15 A.D. as an administrative unit), several other units appeared in order to organize and incorporate the territories down to the Black Sea. As early as the reign of Emperor Claudius a *praefectus ciuitatum Moesiae et Treballiae* is attested in the area between Ratiaria and Oescus.<sup>13</sup> Another pre-provincial administrative unit was the *praefectura ripae Thraciae*, which covered the area along the Danube, from Dimum to the Black Sea. An important role was

<sup>7</sup> Suceveanu 1971, 118–120.

<sup>8</sup> Tentea, Matei-Popescu 2004, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> For Emperor Trajan's policy in the Lower Danube area, see Petolescu 2007, 84–91.

<sup>10</sup> Matei-Popescu 2004, 175–238.

<sup>11</sup> Aricescu 1977, 70–74.

<sup>12</sup> Suceveanu *et alii* 2003, 89–96.

<sup>13</sup> ILS 1349.

played in the area by Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, governor of Moesia between 56–66 A.D., who moved 100000 people inside the Empire's borders, probably to create a buffer zone<sup>14</sup>.

In 86 A.D., province Moesia was divided into two units by Emperor Domitianus, Upper and Lower Moesia. The latter was bordered to the West by the Tibritza River, to the East by the Black Sea, to the North by the river Danube (even though its legions' military control covered the Wallachian plain), and to the South by the Thracian border (generally following the line of the pre-Balkans plateau, with a southern salient in the area of the Vit and Osăm Rivers), at an average of 60 km South of the Danube, but retreating to around 40 km South of it in the area of Nicopolis ad Istrum. On the Black Sea coast, the last Lower Moesian city was Mesambria. This was to change during Pertinax's reign<sup>15</sup> or at the beginning of Emperor Septimius Severus' reign, when Marcianopolis and Nicopolis ad Istrum were transferred to Moesia Inferior – thus extending its central territory – and Mesambria to Thracia<sup>16</sup>. Finally, Aurelianus reduced the province, by incorporating its western part into the newly formed province Dacia Ripensis, and later on Diocletianus' and Constantine's reforms saw this area reorganized into two new provinces, Moesia Secunda and Scythia Minor<sup>17</sup>.

The information we presented above is important for our analysis for several reasons. From a geographical point of view, the province is a small one, representing mostly a strip of land along the *limes* – in geographical terms the Danube and the Black Sea. This defines its role inside the imperial system: it was a border province, with a high military profile centered on defending the Danubian front's eastern flank, weakened by the Wallachian salient.

The military aspect had an important influence on the province's urbanization. Even though in the territory which formed the province there existed a number of cities, such as the Greek cities along the sea coast – which always remained *ciuitates peregrinae* –, the province's interior contained only a small number of settlements, such as those implied in the title *praefectus ciuitatum Moesiae et Treballiae*. A series of settlements developed around Roman forts, such as those at Cius, Halmyris, Montana, Novae, Noviodunum, Oescus, Sexaginta Prista, Transmarisca and Troesmis. Another category of urban settlements is that formed around a pre-Roman settlement and the local Roman fort's civil settlement,

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<sup>14</sup> CIL XIV 3608 = ILS 986 = IDRE I 113; Pippidi 1967, 306 (also for Pârvan's and Patsch's views on this subject).

<sup>15</sup> Boteva 1997, 37–38.

<sup>16</sup> Gerov 1979, 224–230.

<sup>17</sup> Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 154–155.

which follows the formula *castellum–canabae–ciuitas peregrina*<sup>18</sup> – such as settlements at Abrittus, Aegyssus, Arrubium, Axiopolis, Capidava, Carsium, Dimum and Durostorum. There are also newly-formed *ciuitates peregrinae* created probably immediately after the organization of the Roman province – *ciuitas Ausdecensium*, *Dianensium*, (L)ibida and Melta. There is also Tropaeum Traiani, which was a Roman civil settlement.

These 22 settlements, plus 8 Greek cities (out of which Marcianopolis and Nicopolis ad Istrum were Trajanic foundations) seem to cover the province's surface with an urban network. The truth is that only very few of them became sizeable towns: Oescus (raised directly to the rank of *colonia* by Trajan)<sup>19</sup>, Tropaeum Traiani (founded by Trajan, probably directly as a *municipium*)<sup>20</sup>, Durostorum (although the civil settlement *canabae Aeliae legionis XI Claudiae* is the only recorded case where *canabae* receive juridical recognition before Septimius Severus<sup>21</sup>, it is mentioned as a *municipium* only from Marcus Aurelius' reign)<sup>22</sup>, Novae (*municipium* from the time of Marcus Aurelius)<sup>23</sup>, Noviodunum<sup>24</sup> and Troesmis (a *municipium* from Marcus Aurelius<sup>25</sup> or Septimius Severus). To synthesize the information: two main periods of major urban development can be identified – the reigns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. These waves of urban development therefore coincide with organization / reconstruction periods following military campaigns. Development can also be seen in settlements of lower importance, especially starting with the Severan period, during which Moesia Inferior reached its highest level of development<sup>26</sup> – Melta (mentioned as a *ciuitas* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century)<sup>27</sup> and Abrittus (mentioned as a *ciuitas* at the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century)<sup>28</sup>. For the Latin part of the province, urban development was strongest in military settlements.

<sup>18</sup> For an extensive analysis of the urban settlements, their territories and juridical status, as well as rural structures, see Băltăc 2005, 69–95 and 117–129.

<sup>19</sup> Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 200. For the monumental character of the city's civic center see Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 208–211.

<sup>20</sup> Doruțiu-Boilă 1978, 245–246; Bărbulescu 2001, 119.

<sup>21</sup> Ivanov, Atanasov, Donevski 2006, 226 and 186–242 for the entire presentation of the *canabae* and their juridical status.

<sup>22</sup> Another view places the granting of *municipium* status during the reign of Caracalla – Doruțiu-Boilă 1978, 246–248.

<sup>23</sup> Gerov 1977, 300–301.

<sup>24</sup> Barnea 1988, 80.

<sup>25</sup> Vulpe, Barnea 1968, 167.

<sup>26</sup> For a comprising view on the province's evolution during the Severi see Boteva 1997.

<sup>27</sup> CIL VI 2736.

<sup>28</sup> Ivanov 1981, 50.

This situation has to be taken into account when examining the development of the imperial cult in the province. Even though we can presume that ceremonies which involved the worship or divine honoring of the emperors took place in all types of settlements, it is clear that a proper cult, with structures such as temples, altars and with public ceremonies could not be sustained by most of the small communities, which sometimes could not even sustain normal taxation<sup>29</sup>. The solid relation between urban structures and the evolution of the imperial cult has long been recognized, as emperor worship closely involved public civic institutions and, as a consequence, the urban elite. For an area with close ties to the Greek world, the foundation of two new Greek cities (Nicomolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis) followed the general pattern<sup>30</sup> and boosted the practice of the imperial cult.

## II. The imperial cult

Some scholars<sup>31</sup> have tried to approach the imperial cult as an ensemble of god-like honors (*isotheoi timai*), a social and political practice different of a proper Greek or Roman cult<sup>32</sup>. For our part, we agree with F. Millar that, as long as we have temples, priesthoods and altars dedicated to the imperial persons, imperial sacrifices and religious feasts, we cannot deny the imperial cult the name of “religion” without implying the same for all pagan cults<sup>33</sup>. Therefore these are the sources we will analyze in connection with the cult proper.

### II.a. The municipal cult

Zlatozara Gočeva is the first author that made a separate analysis on the imperial cult in the Latin part of Moesia Inferior, concentrating on the relationship between the cult and romanization<sup>34</sup>. But the author failed to differentiate between monuments *for* the emperor and monuments *to* the emperor, as she considered throughout her work *pro salute* dedications<sup>35</sup> as monuments of imperial cult.

<sup>29</sup> It is the case of the κώμη Χόρα Δάγει – ISM I 378.

<sup>30</sup> Price 1984, 44.

<sup>31</sup> Following the general lines established by Nock 1930; Scott 1932; Nock 1934a.

<sup>32</sup> Among the arguments generally used are the facts that there are no prayers to the emperor, but only for him, that there are no imperial *ex uota*, that there are differences between the religious vocabulary used in traditional cults, and the one used in imperial cults, etc.

<sup>33</sup> Millar 2004, 300.

<sup>34</sup> Gočeva 1990; Gočeva 1998; there is also a short article on the imperial cult at Novae – Gočeva 1994– to which we did not have access.

<sup>35</sup> Fishwick 2004, 352–360: they are proofs of the dedicant’s piety.

Nevertheless, Zlatozara Gočeva made some interesting remarks: at Oescus she considers the temple of Fortuna (built by Commodus) more appropriate for imperial cult ceremonies than the Capitoline temples in the forum. At Novae she emphasizes the role the legion's sanctuary played in the imperial cult, based on the discovery there of the finely carved head of a statue representing Emperor Caracalla<sup>36</sup> and several fragments of bronze statues that she relates to uninscribed statue bases. Zlatozara Gočeva also mentions in relation to the imperial cult the cult of Dea Roma (Aeterna)<sup>37</sup>, of Victoria Augusta<sup>38</sup> and the temple of Sol Inuictus<sup>39</sup>. At Durostorum she also mentions a temple dedicated to Hadrianus and in his health<sup>40</sup>.

Recently, D. Aparaschivei<sup>41</sup> has published an article on the *flamines* from Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior. Besides a prosopographical analysis (which we will not repeat in this paper) for each *flamen*, he correctly disapproves of the restitution *flam(en) Tit(i) Ve[sp(asiani)]* in ILBulg 75 from Oescus, proposing (following N. Sharankov's suggestion) the restitution *flam(en) et II ui[ral(is)]*, which fits in with Oescus' urban status during the Antonines, as well as with a *flamen*'s usual public career.

Our own approach seeks to analyze emperor worship as it developed and manifested itself at different levels – public or private, and within different social categories.

As the imperial cult was first of all the duty of local authorities, we will start with priests of the official cult, the *flamines* and the *sacerdotes*. Then we will proceed with the private associations for lower social categories that did not have access to municipal priesthoods – the *Augustales* and the *cultores*. We will try to establish the type and location of shrines they celebrated the cult in, and finally we will analyze the imperial dedications.

<sup>36</sup> Samowski 1980.

<sup>37</sup> IGLNovae 45.

<sup>38</sup> IGLNovae 46.

<sup>39</sup> It is not clear if this is the temple and altars dedicated to *Sol Augustus*, located outside the Roman fort (Bottez 2006, 292–294 with bibliography) or the temple dedicated to *Sol Inuictus*, located inside the *principia* – Bunsch, Kolendo, Żelazowski 2003, 44–50).

<sup>40</sup> The temple and statue, mentioned by CIL III 7474, are dedicated to an unknown divinity, by the local Roman citizens and in the name of two imperial legates. The dedication is made to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus and for the health of the emperor.

<sup>41</sup> Aparaschivei 2007.

### Imperial *flamines*<sup>42</sup>

The *flamen* was one of the most important religious ranks in the Roman Empire, and it had its origin in the Archaic period. Emperor worship started using this type of priesthood precisely in order to confer the utmost prestige to the imperial cult, as sometimes the ruler's successor was also named his priest. It is the case of Marcus Antonius for Gaius Iulius Caesar and of Germanicus for Augustus. Once adopted, the emperor's flaminatus seems to have been a major one, as during the Julii one of the conditions for becoming a *flamen Augustalis* was to belong to a patrician family<sup>43</sup> (similar priesthoods, implying great prestige and which were also adopted by the imperial cult, were the *solidalitates*)<sup>44</sup>.

The imperial *flamen* was the priest that served in the combined cult of Rome and Augustus<sup>45</sup>, or after the death of the first emperor in that of dead and living emperors. In the Latin West several terms were used – *flamen diuorum Augustorum*, *flamen diuorum et Augustorum*, *flamen Augustorum* etc. – which represented variants meant to indicate exactly to whom the cult was dedicated<sup>46</sup>.

In Moesia Inferior only four *flamines* are attested:

#### Oescus:

1) Gaius Scopius Marcianus (ILBulg 75), 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D., after the reign of Hadrianus. He was also a *duumvir*<sup>47</sup>. Unfortunately, there is no other information concerning him to be found in other inscriptions in the province. Although the restitution proposed in ILBulg 75, which would make Gaius Scopius Marcianus a *flamen* of the deified Emperor Vespasian, is in accordance with the general religious policy of the mentioned emperor<sup>48</sup>, it is difficult to see a continuation of his separate cult in the Antonine period. Therefore we accept D. Aparaschivei's version.

2) Marcus Titius Marci f. Papiria Maximus (ILBulg 16), 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. Besides being a *flamen perpetuus*, he was also a *duumvir quinquennalis* and belonged to the equestrian order<sup>49</sup>. The perpetual priesthood was a mark of his important social standing, and could suggest a retention of his title and

<sup>42</sup> Gysler, Bielman 1994; Chastagnol 1980.

<sup>43</sup> For the entire issue see Lyasse 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Millar 1992, 355; their relation with the imperial *flamines* is yet unknown – Fishwick 1987, 162.

<sup>45</sup> Fishwick 1987, 98–149.

<sup>46</sup> Fishwick 1987, 269–281.

<sup>47</sup> Aparaschivei 2007, 92–93.

<sup>48</sup> Fishwick 1987, *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> Mrozewicz 1999, 68.



prerogatives after his annual term in office<sup>50</sup>, maybe in a priestly college. Earlier in his career, when he was a *duumvir coloniae*, Maximus made a dedication to Mithras. We must stress that we find further connections between the imperial cult and mithraicism at Istros and Novae<sup>51</sup>. M. Clauss has shown the relation between the mithraic hierarchy and that of Roman public life, mentioning that for the Rhenan and Danubian regions mithraicism was an instrument of romanization, and therefore promoted by local authorities<sup>52</sup>.

3) Titus Flavius Titi f. Papiria Valentinus (Ivanov 2005, 219–222), 193–235 A.D. He was also a *duumvir*, *praefectus saltus*, *patronus collegii fabrorum Oesc(ensium) et Apul(ensium)*, *patronus coloniae* and was a member of the equestrian order<sup>53</sup>. Both Valentinus and Maximus belong to the Papiria, and both are members of the equestrian order. This suggests that, once Trajan had raised the rank of Oescus to that of *colonia*, he also promoted a number of citizens to the order of equestrians, and thus laid the premises for the development of an active local aristocracy, as the careers of the two *flamines* prove<sup>54</sup>. The inscription was discovered in Building no. 5, in the eastern part of the forum, and was written on an impressive base (1.74 m high) for the *flamen*'s bronze statue. Building no. 5 seems to have been used for administrative purposes by municipal authorities<sup>55</sup>, which underlines again the close relation between municipal civic and religious authorities.

### Troesmis:

Caius Valerius Longinianus (ISM V 163), Severan period. He was also a *quaestor*, *aedilis* and *duumvir municipii*. His *nomen* is a common one in the inscriptions of Troesmis since the time of Hadrianus, when an important number of soldiers were honorably discharged – among them an important number of Valerii<sup>56</sup>. Longinianus could be the son or even grandson of one of *legio V Macedonica*'s veterans, and his career would be in line with the settlement's development from *canabae* to *municipium*.

<sup>50</sup> Aparaschivei 2007, 92, citing Hirschfeld.

<sup>51</sup> ILBulg 29; see Bottez 2006, 290–294 for the relation between the imperial cult and mithraicism at Istros, Oescus and Novae.

<sup>52</sup> Clauss 2000, 40–41.

<sup>53</sup> Mrozewicz 1999, 67.

<sup>54</sup> We would like to thank Mr. F. Matei-Popescu for this suggestion, and for all the support given during the redaction of this paper. Two other members of the Papiria are mentioned in inscriptions, both with public careers (ILBulg 18 and 70).

<sup>55</sup> Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 211.

<sup>56</sup> ISM V 136.

One notices that, even though in the same period other settlements became *municipia*, such as Durostorum, Novae and Noviodunum, or had already reached this status – such as Tropaeum Traiani –, only at Troesmis do we find the title *flamen*.

If we analyze all the inscriptions from Troesmis, we will find that only two inscriptions were certainly dated to Hadrian's reign, and as early as that date the *canabae legionis* were already organized. After Hadrianus the number of inscriptions increased and kept a constant level, without showing any remarkable change starting with the promotion to the status of *municipium*.

As far as religious matters are concerned, we find one dedication for Sol (ISM V 169), one for Honos (ISM V 163) and the only mention of an established cult – Marcia Basilissa, priestess of the dendrophori (ISM V 160). To this we oppose dedications to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus and Liber pater (ISM V 162), one for the Capitoline Triad (ISM V 155), one just to I.O.M. (ISM V 164) and six for I.O.M. and for the health of the emperors (ISM V 154, 156–159, 167). It is a clear predominance of the state cult, which is also suggested by the mentions of three augurs (ISM V 166, 180, ISM II 244; the only other *augur* in the province is mentioned at Oescus – ILBulg 141 –, the other important cult center) and two pontiffs (ISM V 151; other pontiffs appear at Oescus, ILBulg 17 and 75). In the *Tabula Imperii Romani* Troesmis is mentioned as the province's juridical (*conuentus*) and religious capital (siege of the *concilium prouinciae*)<sup>57</sup>. We do not know the exact arguments for this theory, which is very important, as usually the capitals of *conuenta* were also regional capitals for the imperial cult.

We find mentions of five public buildings in the epigraphs: one *tabularium* in Antoninus Pius' reign (ISM V 134), a temple built during Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus's reign (ISM V 135), another temple built by a private person during the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. (ISM V 161) and another built during Septimius Severus and his sons' reign (ISM V 167; the dedication is set up for Iuppiter Optimus Maximus and the three emperors). Finally, a very interesting monument is a capital from a temple dedicated to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Sarapis (ISM V 168), which is vaguely dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D.

The I.O.M. dedications, the presence of augurs, pontiffs and the temple of I.O.M. Sarapis indicate the presence of an important centre of the official religion, and thus the presence of a *flamen* here is fully justified.

The information concerning the *flamines* in Moesia Inferior shows that they were of a high social status (which is in agreement with character of the traditional priesthood), and had their term in office as a crowning of a municipal career. If

<sup>57</sup> Gostar 1969, 73–74.

Oescus represented, from the moment it received colonial status from Trajan, an important centre for the official<sup>58</sup>, as well as for the imperial cult, Troesmis developed as a military and religious centre throughout the Antonine period, and only starting with Marcus Aurelius it became a high-profile imperial cult centre.

The title of the priests, *flamen*, and the lack of the name of a specific emperor in the genitive after it, shows that the official state cult was dedicated to the living and deified emperors, a practical solution for both economical reasons (state imperial worship was unified, thus reducing costs) and ideological ones (by combining the cult of the living emperor – officially unfit for Roman citizens – with that of the *diui*, the former did not pose an ideological problem anymore).

### The *sacerdotes*

Municipal priests bore different titles, depending on the local context. In the Three Gauls they usually bore the title *flamen*, but also of *sacerdos*<sup>59</sup>; in the Germanies and Gallia Belgica the titles also varied<sup>60</sup>.

In Moesia Inferior we have only three mentions of *sacerdotes* in inscriptions<sup>61</sup>:

#### Tropaeum Traiani:

Flavius Petronius (Barnea 1977, 350–354), 270–300 A.D. He was a *sacerdos* and, along with Flavius Germanus, *decurio municipii Tropaei*, offered a votive altar to a divinity whose name is now lost. The joint offering between the imperial priest and the municipal magistrate is suggestive and shows that, even though poorly attested, at least in this case emperor worship had a direct relation with the local civic structures. And there is important information concerning municipal structures, as Tropaeum Traiani has yielded until now 8 inscriptions concerning this subject<sup>62</sup>. Our inscription is extremely interesting because of the very late date at which it was dedicated. The last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D. is a period when most institutions of imperial cult had disappeared, both in the Latin

<sup>58</sup> It is here that the only Capitoline temples have been excavated – Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 205–208–, and the third inscription mentioning a *flamen* was discovered in Building no. 5 in the forum – Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 209–211.

<sup>59</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 28; Gysler, Bielman 1994, 97–100.

<sup>60</sup> Liertz 1998, 213–215 for a list of *sacerdotes* and *flamines*.

<sup>61</sup> ILBulg 415 from Paskalevets mentions a [...]*i*us *Verus sacerdos*(os), but we cannot take it into consideration due to the monument's fragmentary state.

<sup>62</sup> AE 1964, 251 = AE 2004, 1270; CIL III 12465; CIL III 12466; CIL III 12473; CIL III 14214.02; CIL III 14214.04; CIL III 14214.06; IDRE II 337 = AE 1964, 252.

and in the Greek milieus. Yet, in Tropaeum Traiani municipal civil and religious life seems to continue even at this late date.

### **Emporium Piretensium:**

[Secun]dinus (ILBulg 443), unknown date. He was a *sacerdos empori Piretensium* who set up a votive altar for his son, Aeternus. The *emporia* were regional commercial centers<sup>63</sup>, developed around a market/fair that did not hold a city-status<sup>64</sup>. This is monument is up to the present moment the only proof of organized public cult in a non-urban structure.

### **Višovgrad:**

The monument is a tombstone of a former priest, Lucius Petronius Sentius (ILBulg 410). Given the fact that he was a citizen, and there is no god name in the genitive following his title, we can presume that he had served as an imperial priest. As there is no information as to where the priest served, we can only suggest that he could have headed the imperial cult in a pre-urban settlement such as the *emporium Piretensium*.

The three monuments give very little information concerning the priesthood. One suggestion is that this function was held by citizens. The title – *sacerdos* – borne by the priests shows that they probably served the cult of living emperors<sup>65</sup>. Although we one would expect such priesthoods in urban centers such as Tropaeum Traiani, the presence of the official imperial cult in non-urban settlements is a surprising factor, and could imply new levels to which the imperial cult was implanted into public life in the province.

### **The Augustales**

The *Augustales*, *seuiri Augustales* or *magistri Augustales* were private religious associations focusing on emperor worship<sup>66</sup>. They were different from other *collegia*, as they had a semi-official status (no doubt because the municipal authorities saw emperor worship as a commendable civic activity); the term *honor*

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<sup>63</sup> Rougé 1966, 108.

<sup>64</sup> Robert 1946, 135.

<sup>65</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 294–295, but concerning the title of *sacerdos prouvinciae* in the Danubian provinces.

<sup>66</sup> Premierstein 1895; Murlot 1895; Ross Taylor 1914; Duthoy 1978, with a comprising overview of research up to that moment; Fishwick 1991, 609–616 for the object of their ceremonies; Tondel 1979 for the *Augustales* in the Danubian provinces.

used when describing *Augustalitas* is one argument in support of this theory (this also implied that every member had to pay a *summa honoraria* to the municipal treasury)<sup>67</sup>.

Another argument is that even though these were private associations, their involvement in emperor worship and high public expenditure (celebration of public festivities and setting up public monuments) was highly appreciated by local municipal authorities, which bestowed upon them a series of honors in return. Among these were their insignia: the *toga praetexta*, the *lictors* with *fascēs* for the *seuiri Augustales*, while the *ornamenta augustalitas* were the crown and the *fascēs*<sup>68</sup>. They also had their own places in theaters and amphitheaters<sup>69</sup>, and decurions would set up statues for them, paid of public funds<sup>70</sup>. But crucial for understanding the driving force behind the *Augustales* was the award of the *ornamenta decurionalia*, that showed they were worthy of decurional honors, denied to them only because of their lower social standing<sup>71</sup>.

The *Augustales* and *seuiri Augustales* were probably made up of members (in the case of the *seuiri Augustales* the name implying a number of six) under 25 years old<sup>72</sup>, elected annually<sup>73</sup>. Scholars tend to agree on the fact that they were usually freedmen<sup>74</sup> or first-generation citizens of non-Italic stock<sup>75</sup>, and came from a commercial/artisan background, which probably influenced their shaping of the institution of *Augustales* similar to a professional association. This explains the many titles which present the *Augustales* as a corporation<sup>76</sup>. A very important fact is that after serving their term in office, the *Augustales* kept their title and became part of an order placed (from a social point of view), beneath the decurions but above the plebs<sup>77</sup>. But, as J. H. Oliver remarks, some of them were

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<sup>67</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1266; Gradel 2002, 230 considers that municipal authorities encouraged *Augustales* in their liberalities in order to spare the public budget, without actually involving them in public government.

<sup>68</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1268 and 1282.

<sup>69</sup> For example at Carnuntum they had reserved the *loca Augustalium* – Tondel 1979, 52. Nock 1934b, 634, shows that these reserved seats helped create a sort of class-consciousness. Kolendo 1981, 310 shows that their position was similar to that occupied by representatives of villages.

<sup>70</sup> Gradel 2002, 230.

<sup>71</sup> Duthoy 1974, 147.

<sup>72</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1282.

<sup>73</sup> Nock 1934b, 631; Duthoy 1978, 1277; *contra* Étienne 1974, 273.

<sup>74</sup> Nock 1934b, 631; Duthoy 1978, 1272.

<sup>75</sup> Oliver 1958, 492.

<sup>76</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1274 and 1285.

<sup>77</sup> Nock 1934b, 634; Duthoy 1978, 1289.

actually men of rank, situation which is presented by the scholar as a means to encourage new citizens to get involved in public matters and, in the meantime, to obtain personal fame, as for a municipal aristocrat there was no moral obligation to take up such a position<sup>78</sup>.

This brings us to the role played by the *Augustales*, *seuiri Augustales* or *magistri Augustales* from a municipal and imperial perspective. Their public actions consisted mainly, as we have already mentioned, in liberalities of all kinds (which probably determined the decurions to choose *Augustales* among the richest citizens of lower standing)<sup>79</sup>. They also collaborated with the municipal *collegia* and, significantly, with the associations of *iuuenes*, as the latter's inscriptions mention *Augustales* with functions in their institutions, *Augustales* as patrons of *iuuenes* and special honors conferred to *Augustales* by the *iuuenes*<sup>80</sup>. This is significant, as one notices the same strong link between the *gerusiae* and the *epheboi* in the Greek cities; it is normal for local authorities to give a special attention to the education of the youth, not in the old ideal of soldier-citizens, but of citizens loyal to their supreme benefactor, the Emperor. And what better way was there to express their loyalty but in the form of emperor worship?

As to the precise religious role played by the *Augustales*, there remain many unknown factors. D. Fishwick<sup>81</sup> thinks it consisted mainly of vegetal or sometimes even animal sacrifices at their own altar, as well as public participations in processions, maybe carrying imperial images. Their dedications are to the emperor's *genius* or *numen*, to the *numen* of the imperial house, to the *lares Augusti*, to Augustan gods, Augustan abstractions etc.<sup>82</sup> On the whole, they basically had the same religious role as that of associations of imperial *cultores* and that of colleges; what differed was their social standing, also reflected in their name and semi-official character.

So, from the authorities' point of view, the *Augustales* reinforced the social structure by strengthening civic loyalty through emperor worship. From the *Augustales*' point of view, this system helped promote them on the civic scale. J. Tondel has studied in detail the social evolution of the *Augustales* and their families, and his conclusions<sup>83</sup> show that the peak of an *Augustalis*' career was to

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<sup>78</sup> Oliver 1958, 492.

<sup>79</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1269.

<sup>80</sup> Jaczynowska 1978, 36–39; Nock 1934b, 629–630 notices the role played by the *seuiri* in the training of young men in cavalry exercises.

<sup>81</sup> Fishwick 1991, 613.

<sup>82</sup> Duthoy 1978, 1296–1299.

<sup>83</sup> Tondel 1979, 40–43.

occupy a position in their own institution, then a municipal magistracy (in the case of *Augustales* of free origin) or a honorific position in the municipal administration; their sons would have access to all municipal magistracies, which would be obtained or not, in direct relation with the father's *munificentia*<sup>84</sup> (normally only grandsons of freedmen had access to municipal magistracies). So usually no son of an *Augustalis* would take up his father's position, but rather one of his freedmen.

In Moesia Inferior we have *Augustales* mentioned in inscriptions in only two cities, Oescus and Novae:

### Oescus:

1) Titus Iulius Capito (ILBulg 20), 161–168 A.D. Capito was a very important person<sup>85</sup>; along with his brothers C. Iulius Epaphroditus and Iulius Ianuarius he was responsible for the administration of the customs in the Illyricum circumscription, and is mentioned in several inscriptions: in Moesia Inferior at Almus (CIL III 6124)<sup>86</sup> and Lăžane – Malčika (ILBulg 441)<sup>87</sup>, in Noricum at Atrans (CIL III 5121) and in Moesia Superior at Viminacium (IMS II 70). Titus Iulius Capito, like his brothers, was a freedman<sup>88</sup> who managed to make a successful public career. The inscription we are referring to shows he was honored by the *ordo* of *colonia Sirmium* and received from it the *ius sententiae dicundae*, he received *ornamenta decurionalia* from the *ordines* of the *colonia Vlpia Poetouio* in Pannonia Superior, the *colonia Vlpia Ratiaria* in Moesia Superior and the *colonia Sarmizegetusa* in Dacia Superior; he also received *ornamenta duumviralia* from the *ordo municipii Romulensium* and he was a member of the *boule* in Tomis. In Oescus he received the priestly honors from the *ordo coloniae Oescensium*, that also set up his bronze statue through public collection and awarded him decurional and duumviral *ornamenta* by decree. And very important for our subject, he was also the patron of the *Augustales* in Oescus.

The first important information is that there existed an association of *Augustales* in Oescus, at least from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and that it was organized similarly to professional corporations and was led by a *patronus*. It is strange that only this late we have the first precisely-dated inscription to mention the *Augustales*, even though the city was thriving since the times of Emperor Trajan.

<sup>84</sup> Kotula 1997, 35–38 – which resulted in a tendency to impose “municipal dynasties”.

<sup>85</sup> See commentary of IDRE II 319.

<sup>86</sup> A slave from their administration, Hermes, makes a dedication here to their *genius*.

<sup>87</sup> The same slave, Hermes, makes a dedication to the *numina Augustorum*.

<sup>88</sup> De Laet 1949, 398.

In accordance to the honors usually sought by the *Augustales*, Titus Iulius Capito received municipal and colonial *ornamenta* in five cities in different provinces. All of these conferred on the receiver no real power, but the *ius sententiae dicundae* suggests that he had a certain, unclear role in tribunals<sup>89</sup>. All the honors received point out his important social and administrative standing in the area and, in turn, indicate that the *Augustales* in Oescus chose their leaders among the very influential and rich, but not necessarily among their co-citizens – there is no indication that Capito was from Oescus and he received important honors in many places. The function of patron of the *Augustales* is actually mentioned in the second-last place on the inscription.

2) Titus Aurelius Artemidorus (ILBulg 19), 217 A.D. He was *Augustalis* of Oescus, a freedman – he has a Greek *cognomen* and he dedicates the inscription to his patron. His patron was Titus Aurelius Flavinus<sup>90</sup> (from the Papiria), *princeps ordini coloniae Oescensium* and member in the council of five different cities, patron of the artisans' corporation in Oescus and decorated by Caracalla for his brave actions against the Cenni<sup>91</sup>. Thus, the freedman of the chief municipal magistrate sought the highest semi-official position he was allowed.

3) Lucius Valerius Eutyches (ILBulg 43), 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D. He was *Augustalis coloniae*, and made a votive offering. Again, the Greek *cognomen* indicates a freedman; there is a Lucius Valerius Dotianus (ILBulg 37) at Oescus, but no connection can be made between the two.

4) Marcus Disius G(ratus?) (ILBulg 23), 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D. He was *Augustalis coloniae Ulpiae Oesci* and made a votive offering to Iuppiter Optimus Maximus. Although his *cognomen* remains unknown, there is a high possibility that he was a freedman of Marcus Didius Iulianus (ILBulg 44), a *duumvir coloniae*, as the latter's name is the only Marcus Disius in the colony. If this hypothesis is correct, we see again the pattern of a civic magistrate's freedman joining the ranks of the *Augustales*.

5) Unknown name (ILBulg 112), 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D. Only a few words, among which --- *august[alis ---]*, are preserved from the inscription.

### Novae:

Iulius Statilis (IGLNovae 39 = ILBulg 281), 180–250 A.D. He was an *Augustalis municipii Nouensium*, who made a votive offering to Dea Sancta

<sup>89</sup> As the *seuri Augustales* had – Duthoy 1978, 1268.

<sup>90</sup> ILBulg 18.

<sup>91</sup> The ILBulg 18 restitution is [*adu*]ersus *hostes* C[arpos], but Vulpe, Barnea 1968, 202 shows that the inscription more likely refers to the Cenni, against which Caracalla fought in 213 A.D.



Placida. No other Statilis appears in inscriptions in Novae. With no further indication, we cannot presume on his free or servile origin. We can only stress that the development of the local settlement into a *municipium* must have encouraged emperor worship, which was celebrated by the lower-class citizens through the association of the *Augustales*. Actually, the inscription offered by Iulius Statilis is the only one mentioning the *municipium*, and no other members of the municipal aristocracy appear in epigraphs. Even though at Novae there are several I.O.M. dedications and quite a few temples (for popular, “oriental” gods such as Isis and Sarapis, Mithras, Sol, Deus Aeternus and the Mother of Gods, in most cases related to the military milieu), it is clear that local aristocracy consisted mainly of superior ranks in the army, and that urban life was not significantly developed.

We must also mention the name Augustalis (ILBulg 438), attested in the inscription of a Bacchic association discovered at around Butovo. Also, at Ulmetum a Flavius Augustales dedicates an altar and a ceremonial table to I.O.M. and Silvanus, to the health of the emperor and of the members of a cultic association of *consacranis*<sup>92</sup>. J. Tondel<sup>93</sup> highlights the possibility that such *cognomina* could indicate an ancient *Augustalis* the family.

As primary observations on the *Augustales* in Moesia Inferior, it is self evident that the institution of the *Augustales* was not widespread in the Latin settlements of the province, as is the general situation with entire area. On over 2500 *Augustales*, *seuiri Augustales* and *magistri Augustales* inscriptions in the Empire, in Moesia Inferior there are only five certain inscriptions. Also, this institution seems to be (based on inscriptions discovered until now) a late development in the province, as even in Oescus they are certainly attested only as early as Marcus Aurelius. An impediment to the development of this institution must have certainly been the feeble urban development in Lower Moesian cities, as a dynamic public urban activity would have stimulated the creation of associations of *Augustales*; this, however, does not explain why at Troesmis, where we have attested an intense activity on the part of both municipal, as well as pre-municipal authorities, no *Augustalis* is mentioned.

### **The cultores<sup>94</sup>**

Other institutions for imperial cult at a private level were cultic associations dedicated to different aspects of emperor worship. In inscriptions they

<sup>92</sup> See IGLNovae 24 and further on, on the *cultores*.

<sup>93</sup> Tondel 1979, 42.

<sup>94</sup> For corporate worship see Gradel 2002, 213–233.

are designated by the term *cultores domus diuinae / domus Augustae / larum Augustorum / imaginum domus Augustae / larum et imaginum domus Augustae*, or the *collegium numinis dominorum* etc.<sup>95</sup> These titles also indicate the object of their cult – the imperial divine house and Lares, for which the made vegetal and animal sacrifices (as the decoration of the altar from Nola, CIL X 1238, suggests). As far as the social composition is concerned, these associations were usually made up of freedmen and even slaves<sup>96</sup>, who worshipped the living emperor, not the *diui*.

We have no direct proof for the existence of such private associations in Moesia Inferior. What we do have are two dedications for the *domus diuina* (CIL III 12468 = AE 1894, 109 and CIL III 7601); although there is no proof they had anything to do with a private association focused mainly on emperor worship, we have evidence for private religious associations at Novae (IGLNovae 24; 205–211 A.D.) and Ulmetum (ISM V 66 and 67, dated to 178 and 191 A.D. respectively). The monuments from Ulmetum belong to an association of *consacrani Siluani Statoris*; the first monument is dedicated by the association's *quaestor*, and the second is dedicated to I.O.M. and Silvanus, for the health of the emperor and *consacranorum*. The association at Novae was called the *consacranis Iouianorum*, and it spared a certain Caius Staboratius, former *beneficiarius consularis*, the membership fee. What is very important for our subject is that the relief offered to the *consacranis* in exchange for their generosity bears the figures of the Capitoline Triad, with Emperor Septimius Severus represented as Jupiter. Therefore such private associations could also play a role in imperial worship, even though at a much lower key.

### **Places of worship. Imperial shrines and shrines used for imperial worship**

Imperial worship complexes were extremely varied in type. There were imperial temples, altars and shrines, but there were also shrines improvised in pre-existing buildings, there was worship of the emperor as a *synnaos theos* in another god's temple, in imperial porticoes or agonistic complexes.

As far as imperial temples are concerned, there is practically no typology to be drawn out, as their characteristics changed due to local particularities. But several characteristics of the municipal temples have been noticed by H. Hänlein-Schäfer<sup>97</sup>:

<sup>95</sup> Gradel 2002, 217, 220; for the cult of the *domus diuina* also see Fishwick 1991, 423–435.

<sup>96</sup> Gradel 2002, 222–223.

<sup>97</sup> Hänlein-Schäfer 1985, 31–36.

1) some of the municipal imperial temples were built in the *forum* / *agora* in order to take advantage of the prestigious position offered by the civic centre<sup>98</sup>; these temples tend to be bigger than those of other divinities; 2) others were built in ports, and insured their dominant position by high *podia*, thus marking the dominance of the Roman power (Eresos, Caesarea, Alexandria); 3) some temples were built on naturally dominant locations, such as hills or mountains in the city; 4) and many imperial temples used pre-existent shrines which enjoyed important local, regional or even international prestige, such as those built on the Acropolis in Athens, in the Asklepion in Messene etc.

As far as Moesia Inferior is concerned, we would like to begin by saying that there is only one direct mention of a temple in the province's Latin settlements (CIL III.1 7597). There are a series of temples mentioned at Troesmis (ISM V 135; ISM V 161), Durostorum (CIL III 7474), or Cloșca (ISM V 238), whose gods remain unknown.

In the case of the *flamines*, worship must have taken place in a public and prestigious context, in or around the *forum*. For Oescus, Zlatozara Gočeva<sup>99</sup> mentions the temple of Fortuna as a more likely place of imperial worship<sup>100</sup>, rather than the Capitoline temples. Even though it is very possible that imperial worship took place in Fortuna's temple, it is hard to see the official municipal cult celebrated for the emperor as a *synnaos theos*. Our opinion is that the official imperial cult must have been celebrated in a temple or at an altar within the civic centre, maybe even in architectural (physical or axial) connection to the Capitoline temple. No such building has been discovered yet, to our knowledge.

At Troesmis it is difficult to emit any hypothesis, as excavations did not reveal the early Roman city. The official temple or altar must have been located in the civic centre. But in which of the two urban centers present there? Hopefully, future excavations will bring some kind of answer to this problem.

The *sacerdos* at Tropaeum Traiani could have served in a temple, but most likely at an imperial altar located in the public area around the *basilica forensis*. As for the priest in *emporium Piretensium* (modern Slomer), we presume he served at an altar, such as the one in *pagus Scunasticus* in Dalmatia<sup>101</sup>. But there is also the possibility of a rural temple.

<sup>98</sup> See also Schalles 1992, 193–194; 196: in certain cases Capitoline temples, the traditional religious centres within the civic ones, were replaced by imperial temples.

<sup>99</sup> Gočeva 1998.

<sup>100</sup> AE 1987, 893.

<sup>101</sup> Abramič 1955, 235–236.

For example CIL III.1 7597 mentions a temple and *arca* (treasury coffer? probably a piece of religious furniture) dedicated to Emperor Caracalla by a certain [...]rius, in the name of the Roman citizens residing in *uicus Cleuant*[...]. Unfortunately, the place of discovery is unknown. Although it was a custom for inhabitants of rural settlements around a city to set up monuments in those cities in order to obtain maximum visibility, it is hard to imagine the same for a temple, as this type of monument implied constant heavy expenses. Therefore we assume that this was a rural imperial temple, probably run by a *sacerdos*. The monument on which the text was inscribed is described in the corpus as the base of the emperor's statue. This would give us the image of a temple of Caracalla, with the emperor's cult statue and religious furniture inside.

The *Augustales* functioned in their own cult building, which housed the altar at which they worshipped the emperors. These buildings were usually located in the vicinity of forums or civic centers<sup>102</sup>, "within easy reach of the municipal altar or temple of imperial cult"<sup>103</sup>. In Oescus the portico Building no. 6 (incompletely excavated), opposite the Capitoline temples, is a likely candidate for a cult-building for corporate imperial worship<sup>104</sup>. In Novae we have no information concerning the ground plan of the civic centre, and therefore can only presume that the cult building of the *Augustales* functioned in connection with it.

Other private corporations must have had the imperial altar, or an altar at which they also worshipped the emperor or imperial house, in the building in which their *collegium* functioned. No such buildings have been identified yet in any sites in Moesia Inferior, but at Lăžane – Malčika (maybe brought from Nikopol?) two altars with similar dedications (ILBulg 441 and 442: to the imperial *numen* and the *genius publici portorii*) suggest the existence of a local cult building in which imperial worship was celebrated at a corporate level.

The *basilica forensis*<sup>105</sup> in Tropaeum Traiani presents a very interesting archaeological situation: its main (northern) entrance was blocked at a later date by an annex, which has an apse at its eastern end. Initially considered a Christian chapel, it was later on identified as a *uestibulum*, and as a consequence could have contained a pagan shrine in its apse<sup>106</sup>. Because of its connection to the civic basilica, this shrine could have represented one of the places where imperial worship was celebrated in a public setting in the city.

<sup>102</sup> See the case of Sarmizegetusa in neighboring Dacia – Piso 2006, 167–169.

<sup>103</sup> Fishwick 1991, 613.

<sup>104</sup> Ivanov, Ivanov 1998, 211.

<sup>105</sup> Built during the reign of Constantine, according to Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 200.

<sup>106</sup> We would like to thank Prof. Alexandru Barnea for this information.

Following future excavations, special attention should be paid to a possible role of civil basilicas in emperor worship in urban settlements in Moesia Inferior. This type of building started to have – usually in military settlements – apart from an administrative role, an increasingly religious one, especially in connection to emperor worship<sup>107</sup>. The situation in Tropaeum Traiani seems to confirm this in a civil settlement.

More information on cult buildings in which public imperial worship, but not the official cult, was celebrated, comes from the military milieu. Sources as the *feriale Duranum*<sup>108</sup> and wall paintings from the same site prove that public imperial celebrations were part of military life, and it involved both simple soldiers and officers<sup>109</sup>. In Novae, a military shrine existed in the southern part of the *principia*, and in this rectangular room was discovered the head of a statue of Emperor Caracalla<sup>110</sup>, which – as mentioned above – Zlatozara Gočeva relates, along with fragments of bronze statues, to uninscribed statue-bases also found there. This suggests that some kind of imperial worship or honoring took place there.

The temple dedicated to *Sol Augustus* in Novae is also to be related to the military milieu, as it was dedicated by the fort's prefect<sup>111</sup> and provided a public context for a form of imperial worship<sup>112</sup>. It is unfortunate that the dimensions and general characteristics of such an important and interesting monument were not published. The only information we have is that this temple had a S-N orientation, and that in its longitudinal axis three altars were set, one with the dedication *Soli Augusti* (the central altar), another with the name of the dedicant, T. Flavius Sammius Terentius, the fort's prefect. The third altar and two other monuments were recuperated from the former *mithraeum* that existed on the same spot (destroyed by the Gothic invasions). The temple of *Sol Augustus* was probably built during Aurelianus' reign, and it demonstrates the strong connection solar and imperial theology played in this area.

## Object of worship in the imperial dedications

### Dedications to the emperor

In the Latin settlements of Moesia Inferior only four monuments dedicated to emperors as divinities were discovered:

<sup>107</sup> Schalles 1992, 194.

<sup>108</sup> Fishwick 1991, 593–608.

<sup>109</sup> Fishwick 1992.

<sup>110</sup> Sarnowski 1980.

<sup>111</sup> Bottez 2006, 292–294.

<sup>112</sup> For the close relation between solar theology and the imperial cult see Turcan 1978.

At Pliska was discovered a monument consecrated to the two emperors (AE 1944, 11): *Augg(ustis) / sa(c)r(um)*. The formula indicates a sacred act performed to the emperors as divine beings.

The same formula, followed by a *pro salute* dedication, was used on an altar set up in Nicopolis ad Istrum<sup>113</sup> by Lucius Oppius Maximus and Lucius Oppius Ianuarius, priests of the Mother of Gods and Liber Pater respectively, members of the *uexillum Nouensium Oppianorum*. We have included this monument in our analysis because, even though set up in Nicopolis ad Istrum, the monument was dedicated by two priests from Novae and sheds light on the type of imperial ceremonies that were celebrated in the headquarters of the *legio I Italica*.

A dedication to Sabina Tranquillina, called *sanctissima*<sup>114</sup>, was discovered at Belmel, but was probably set up in *civitas Montanensium* (CIL III 14211.09 = IDRE II 316 = AE 1896, 116; 241–244 A.D.). It was dedicated by the *cohors Gemina Dacorum Gordiana*<sup>115</sup>.

Finally, there is the inscription from Durostorum (AE 1985, 727), dedicated to the *bona conscientia*, to the emperors and the emperors' *numen*. The association of the emperors with a deified abstraction was a common practice, used to show the qualities of that emperor's reign, as well as to provide an ideological solution for worshiping an emperor during his lifetime<sup>116</sup>. In this inscription the dedicant clearly went one step further, placing the emperor on a divine scale.

### The imperial *numen*

The imperial *numen* was clearly the most popular object of imperial worship in the area we focus upon. The imperial *numen* has been the subject of many analyses<sup>117</sup>, because it involves the problem of the emperor's divinity. The

<sup>113</sup> Tsarov 1995.

<sup>114</sup> Although this formula marks a difference between the empress' divinity and that of a traditional god, as does the epithet *θεά* used often in inscriptions at Nicopolis ad Istrum (IGB II 613, 618, 619, 623, 626, 631, 632, 633, 634 and 640), it nevertheless reflects a common view of imperial divinity.

<sup>115</sup> Adding an imperial epithet to a military unit was a way of honoring the emperor, and at the same time the permission to adopt the imperial epithet was a statement of the good relation between that unit and its emperor. Apart from the above-mentioned cohort, the *legio I Italica* was called *Antoniniana* under Caracalla and Elagabalus, and *Seueriana* under Septimius Severus – Bunsch, Kolendo, Żelazowski 2003, 45 with bibliography.

<sup>116</sup> Fishwick 1991, 455–474.

<sup>117</sup> Fishwick 1991, 375–422 (which reunites several revised previous articles) with comprising bibliography, Pötscher 1978; Gradel 2002, 234–250.

idea supported by many scholars is that the *numen* represented the inner functional property of a god, his quintessential property, that which makes him a god<sup>118</sup>. The cult of the *numen Augusti* was instituted by Tiberius immediately after Augustus' death, thus establishing the emperor as an intermediary being between man and divinity; the new cult served as an important instrument for romanization in newly conquered or pacified territories<sup>119</sup>. One of the main problems approached by researchers was if *numen* in inscriptions refers to living or dead emperors.

One finds mentions of the imperial *numen* at:

Durostorum (AE 1985, 727; 161–169 A.D.) in the above-mentioned dedication to *bona conscientia*, *nn(ostrorum) Impp(eratorum)* and *n[um(ini)] Augg(ustorum)*. As the dedication is for the the two living emperors, it is likely that the inscription is referring to the *numina* of the *diui*.

Lăžane – Malčika<sup>120</sup> (ILBulg 441; 161–168 A.D.), in one of the inscriptions mentioning the three brothers in charge of the *publicum portorium Illyrici et ripae Thraciae*. The dedication is made to the *numen* of the emperors and the *genius p(ublici) p(ortorii)*. It is very likely that the dedication refers to the *numen* of the living emperor. The person who sets up the monument is Hermes, a slave in the administration of the customs service.

A similar inscription was later set up in the same place as the previous (ILBulg 442; 182 A.D.) and is dedicated to *I.O.M. et num(ini) Aug(usti) n(ostri) et p(ublici) p(ortorii)*. D. Fishwick considers that the third divinity is also the *genius p(ublici) p(ortorii)*, and that the lapicid left out *genius*, mentioned in the first inscription, in order to save space. The monument was set up by slave of the customs administration. The two inscriptions are very similar and fit the description of corporate emperor worship celebrated by freedmen, their slaves and imperial slaves. All this evidence suggests the existence of a local cult, probably celebrated at a corporate level (see above, at cult buildings for corporations), starting with the time of Marcus Aurelius.

At *ciuitas Montanensium* (modern Montana; Montana II 3; 235 A.D.) an altar is dedicated to the *numen perpetuus* of Maximinus Thrax by the *n(umerus) c(iuium) R(omanorum) [[Maximinianus]]*<sup>121</sup> *deuotus numini maiestatique eius*.

The formula *deuotus numini maiestatique eius / eorum* is an established formula that appears early in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.<sup>122</sup> and becomes very popular

<sup>118</sup> Fishwick 1991, 383; Gradel 2002, 235.

<sup>119</sup> Fishwick 1991, 388–390.

<sup>120</sup> These two inscriptions are treated in Fishwick 1991, 386, as coming from Nicopolis ad Istrum.

<sup>121</sup> For imperial epithets of military units, see above n. 115.

<sup>122</sup> Fishwick 1991, 388; Gundel 1953.

among soldiers in the western provinces.<sup>123</sup> Although it does not always constitute a proof of the actual worship of the imperial *numen* –as is the case of the inscription dedicated to the perpetual imperial *numen* in the previous inscription–, the formula shows that by the third century the cult of the imperial *numen* had become an integrant part of public religiosity.

In Latin settlements from Moesia Inferior we find it, apart from the above-mentioned inscription, again at *ciuitas Montanensium* (modern Montana; CIL III 14211.09 = IDRE II 316 = AE 1896, 116; 241–244 A.D.), where the already-presented dedication to Sabina Tranquillina was set up by the *cohors gemina Dacorum Gordiana miliaria deuota numini maiestatique eius*.

In the same city the *cohors III colecta deuota numini maiest(at)is eius* (Emperor Valerianus), represented by its tribune, Aelius Maximus, set up an altar (Montana II 4; 253–259 A.D.).

In Oescus a monument was dedicated to Emperor Diocletianus by the praetorian prefects Afranius Hannibalianus and Iulius Asclepiodotus (ILBulg 8; 285 A.D.), both devoted to the emperor's *numen* and *maiestas*.

In Tropaeum Traiani we also find the formula, once on a fragmentary inscription (CIL III 12471; 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D.), and again – slightly modified – on the inscription marking the city's reconstruction under Constantine and Licinius in 316 A.D. (IGLR 170; 316 A.D.), dedicated by the praetorian prefects *numini eorum semper dicatissimi*.

The gathered evidence indicates that the cult of the imperial *numen* in Moesia Inferior seems to have been celebrated especially by the military, often as a collective cult rendered by an entire unit, led by their officer. This makes us think of the ceremony represented by a wall painting in Dura<sup>124</sup>, in which an officer offers incense in front of the statues of Pupienus, Balbinus and Gordianus III, as well as of the public religious feasts mentioned by the *Feriale Duranum*. The formal honoring of the emperor's *numen* in inscriptions was also part of the administrative authorities' obligations, even though it probably constituted a formality. The best level at which the proper cult is attested is the corporate level, where members of (religious?) associations set up altars for the imperial *numen* (the evidence at Lážane – Malčika).

### *Domus diuina*

D. Fishwick considers that, even though initially the term *domus diuina* signified the 'house of the *diuus*', in time it came to represent the imperial family

<sup>123</sup> Fishwick 1991, 391.

<sup>124</sup> Fishwick 1992, 64.



as successors of deified emperors and thus likely to be deified as well – hence the divine character<sup>125</sup>. The cult of the divine imperial house seems to have been celebrated mostly at the level of religious associations<sup>126</sup>.

Two inscriptions mentioning the *domus diuina* were discovered in Latin settlements of Moesia Inferior, one set up in Tropaeum Traiani (CIL III 12468 = AE 1894, 109; 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D.) by Quintus Lucilius Piscinus, centurion of the *legio I Italica*. It is dedicated *in hon(orem) d(omus) d(iuinae)* and *Soli inuicto sacrum*, which suggests that we are not dealing with a religious cult proper, but more with an awareness of the divinity of the imperial institution. To the same conclusion leads the another inscription, with an unknown findspot (CIL III 7601), dedicated [*In honore*] *m d[omus diuinae]* and to the emperor.

### Augustan epithets

The attachment of the genitive *Augusti* / *Augustorum* or the epithet *Augustus* / *Augusta* to the name of a god in an inscription intended to profoundly associate the living emperor to that respective divinity, to appropriate its specific powers for the emperor and his family. Still, D. Fishwick explains, in time this practice became a custom that meant just to express the dedicant's loyalty<sup>127</sup>, and in no way can these formulas mean that the dedicant identified the god with the emperor<sup>128</sup>. This seems to be confirmed in Moesia Inferior, where apart from dedications for gods with the Augustan epithet, monuments for the same gods with their simple name were discovered – the case of Diana at Montana (29 inscriptions alone and five together with Apollo), where the hunting goddess had a popular cult, Bonus Euentus (IGLNovae 3, 5, 6 and 7) and the Quadriuias at Novae (IGLNovae 42). Yet the relief of the Capitoline Triad (IGLNovae 24) and probably the relief of Hercules, dedicated to Hercules Augustus (ILBulg 421, see below), could suggest that isolately, this was not the case, and dedicants identified their emperor with a certain god's attributes<sup>129</sup>.

The following table presents the evidence of Augustan Gods attested in the area of interest.

<sup>125</sup> Fishwick 1991, 423–435.

<sup>126</sup> Gradel 2002, 216–219.

<sup>127</sup> Fishwick 1991, 446–448.

<sup>128</sup> Fishwick 1991, 453.

<sup>129</sup> A certain case comes from Tomis – Bordenache 1965, 221–222 and fig. 10, where a bust of Tranquillina (?) represented as Isis was discovered.

LOCATION	AUGUSTAN EPITHET	DEDICANT	REFERENCE	DATE
Almus (Lom)	Nemesis Augusta	Caesius Amandus beneficiarius	AE 1900, 198.	?
Montana	Diana Augusta	P. Ael. Clemens <i>b.c leg. I Italicae</i> and Aurelia Rufina	Montana II 19	Around 250 A.D.
Montana	Diana Augusta	C. Aemilius Donatus, <i>c. leg. XI</i> <i>Claudiae</i>	Montana II 18	150–200 A.D.
Montana	Diana Sancta Augusta	T. Flavius Iulius, <i>c. leg. I Italicae</i> and <i>praepositus numeri</i> <i>ciuium Romanorum</i>	Montana II 30	200–250 A.D.
Montana	Diana Lucifera Augusta	Sergilianus, <i>uilicus</i>	Montana II 32	200–250 A.D.
Nikopol	Diana Augusta	Arius Coryphus, <i>p. p. leg. I Italicae</i>	ILBulg 143	211–217 A.D.
Novae (Svištov)	Diana Augusta	M. Ulpius Peregrinus, <i>trib.</i> <i>Leg. I Ital.</i>	IGLNovae 10	180–230 A.D.
Novae (Svištov)	Victoria Augusta Panthea sanctissima	L. Maximus Gaetulicus, <i>p. p. leg. I Ital.</i>	IGLNovae 46	184 A.D.
Novae (Svištov)	Quadriuiæ Augustæ	Fortunatus Lucius	IGLNovae 41	101–250 A.D.
Novae (Svištov)	Bonus Euentus Augustus	Maesius <i>p. p.</i>	IGLNovae 4	182 A.D.
Novae (Svištov)	Sol Augustus	T. Flavius Sammius, <i>praef. kast.</i>	Najdenova 1998, 171–172, nos. 2–3.	270–275 A.D.
Pavlikeni	Hercules Augustus	Maximus Baradi	ILBulg 421	?
Tropaeum Traiani	Neptunus Augustus	<i>uexil. leg. I Ital.</i> <i>M(oesicae) et V</i> <i>Ma(cedonicae)</i> <i>D(acicae) Trop[ae]i</i> <i>(agens) sub curam</i> <i>Eptidi(i) Modesti</i> <i>(centurionis) leg. V</i> <i>Mac. et Valeri</i> <i>Clementis</i> <i>(centurionis)</i> <i>leg. I Ital.</i>	Popescu 1964, 198, n. 73.	?

What is evident from these inscriptions is that four out of thirteen were set up by soldiers. Moreover, the “augustified” gods are usually those usually invoked by soldiers – Diana, Nemesis, Hercules, Sol<sup>130</sup> and Victoria. An interesting occurrence is the invoking of Neptunus Augustus at Tropaeum Traiani, a city nowhere near a body of water, by an entire unit. One should more likely search for the evidence of an earthquake maybe?

## II.b. The provincial cult

One of the most important instruments of imperial control in the Latin West and in the meantime the most prestigious political battleground for the provincial elites was the provincial cult and its priesthood. These issues have been the subject of several analyses, among which the most important are the works of R. Étienne, J. Deininger, and D. Fishwick; for the Greek East the fundamental work is that of S. R. F. Price<sup>131</sup>.

The cult evolved from local to regional and finally to provincial level<sup>132</sup>; it aimed at reuniting representatives – *legati* – of all the civic communities in a particular province in the common celebration of emperor worship at a provincial shrine. This allowed the respective communities to develop a special relationship with the emperor through ambassadors sent to inform emperors of honors decreed by the provincial assembly, and in return to ask for certain privileges or favors.

The provincial priest<sup>133</sup> bore the title of *flamen* or a *sacerdos*, followed by his position's area of exercise. The priest was chosen, without regard of the juridical status of his hometown, from among the *legati* to the *concilium prouvinciae*, and was always the member of wealthy aristocratic families. The receival of the provincial priesthood usually marked the peak of a brilliant municipal career, usually suggested by the formula *omnibus honoribus apud suos functus*<sup>134</sup>.

For Moesia Inferior, the problem of the provincial cult was briefly described by J. Deininger<sup>135</sup>, who noticed the scarcity of information on the provincial cult in the Danubian provinces, mentioning the two provincial priests at Troesmis, which he considered the provincial centre.

<sup>130</sup> Alongside the altar dedicated to *Sol Augustus* there is another, dedicated to *Sol inuictus*, recuperated from the ancient *mithraeum* (Najdenova 1998, 171, nr. 1).

<sup>131</sup> Étienne 1974; Deininger 1965; Price 1984; Fishwick 1987 and the monographical volumes Fishwick 2002a; Fishwick 2002b and Fishwick 2004.

<sup>132</sup> Fishwick 2002a, *passim*.

<sup>133</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 291–309.

<sup>134</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 299.

<sup>135</sup> Deininger 1965, 113–115, 120.

E. Korneman, D. Fishwick, Zlatozara Gočeva and lately D. Aparaschivei<sup>136</sup> support the idea of the provincial cult centre at Oescus, as a more developed urban centre and seat of four municipal *flamines*. D. Fishwick is not convinced of the location of the provincial centre at Troesmis, and dates the inscription mentioning Tiberius Vitales before the mid 160's, when the *legio V Macedonica* was moved to Potaissa. As before Marcus Aurelius Troesmis was not an urban centre, the location of the provincial centre there is unlikely, and D. Fishwick supports the idea that Oescus was the provincial centre of Moesia Inferior<sup>137</sup>.

The two inscriptions mentioning the provincial priests were, as mentioned, discovered at Troesmis. The first one is ISM V 194, dated vaguely to the second c. A.D. – hence the chronological problem rose by D. Fishwick. The former *beneficiarius*, veteran of the *legio V Macedonica* and former provincial priest Tiberius Vitales, who lived for sixty years, set the tombstone during his lifetime. Strangely enough, Tiberius Vitales was not a Roman citizen, a fact that D. Fishwick explains by a lack of citizens at Troesmis<sup>138</sup> – another case of a non-citizen provincial priest is Albinus Albui in Lusitania (AE 1946, 201). We do not necessarily agree with this, as one of the founding stones of the civil settlement at Troesmis is the Hadrianic honorable discharge for around 300 soldiers of the *legio V Macedonica* (ISM V 137), and there are quite a number of citizens mentioned in later inscriptions. Nevertheless, the choice of a non-citizen for what was supposed to be the province's highest magistracy remains a mystery, the only possible explanation being that Vitales had an important position locally, which resulted in his receiving the provincial priesthood.

The second inscription (ISM V 151; 218–222 A.D.) is written on the base of a statue of Emperor Elagabalus, set up by *T(itus) Fl(auius) Nouius Rufus leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)* and *M(arcus) Ulp(ius) Antipater sacerdos prouin(ciae) et bis duumviral(is)*, who set up the monument *ob hon(orem) pontif(icatus)*. The priest was a citizen of Greek origin, who probably held the provincial priesthood in the middle of his municipal career, which he later resumed and became pontifex, the function he held at the moment of the dedication.

As far as the priestly title is concerned, D. Fishwick noticed that in Moesia Superior, as well as in the Danubian region, the title *sacerdos prouincia* indicates that the cult focused on the living emperor at an altar, without the joint cult of the

<sup>136</sup> Kornemann 1901, 135; Fishwick 1978, 1234; Gočeva 1990, 142–144; Aparaschivei 2007, 95–96.

<sup>137</sup> Fishwick 2002a, 179–180 and Fishwick 2004, 183.

<sup>138</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 286.

goddess Roma<sup>139</sup>. Also, the formula *omnibus honoribus apud suos functus*, popular in many provinces, is not used here, and instead the priest's *cursus* is noted.

Regarding the problem of the provincial centre, we think that there are several points to be considered:

- a) there are not one, but two mentions of the provincial priest at Troesmis, and none elsewhere;
- b) the provincial priesthood was a prestigious position, which would surely have been mentioned in the many inscriptions set up by officials at Oescus starting with the beginning of the second century; no such mention appears, even though many other priesthoods are attested;
- c) as we have mentioned in our analysis of municipal priesthoods, beginning with the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Troesmis became an important urban and religious centre, thus becoming eligible for housing the provincial assembly;
- d) D. Fishwick's dating of the inscription mentioning Tiberius Vitales can be set back after the *legio V Macedonica* left and Troesmis became a *municipium*<sup>140</sup>, as there is at least one inscription (ISM V 160) mentioning a veteran of the legion that can surely be dated after 170 A.D. Therefore his main argument can no longer stand.

Although this would be an exception, our conclusion is that there was no provincial assembly of Moesia Inferior until Marcus Aurelius' reign. It is hard to believe that an institution with such an important public profile would not appear in sources that comprise several hundred inscriptions (inscription that otherwise mention numerous public positions and institutions). And the motive for this absence lies precisely in this public profile. A provincial cult implied important expenses on the part of the representatives, as well as the member communities. Until the time of Marcus Aurelius, apart from Oescus and the Greek cities<sup>141</sup>, Moesia Inferior was made up of non-urban communities that could hardly be expected to support such a high-profile institution. It is quite possible that Oescus, clearly the strongest centre of imperial cult, played a regional role until the 160's. But, if so, it was unofficial. The first established provincial cult is mentioned twice, only at Troesmis, and that is where we would place the provincial shrine.

<sup>139</sup> Fishwick 2002b, 294–295.

<sup>140</sup> We must also remember that, as mentioned above, the provincial priest was not necessarily chosen from cities of the highest juridical status – Fishwick 2002b, 297–298.

<sup>141</sup> Which, by the way, abound in sources concerning the federal emperor worship celebrated by the West Pontic *koinon*.

### III. Peripheral manifestations of the imperial cult

The imperial cult, as we have seen, was not a unitary religious phenomenon, as it was spread in all the social segments and took different shapes according to the different local contexts. Apart from information concerning imperial worship, we will present further monuments concerning phenomena indirectly connected with the imperial cult.

#### Cult of Roma

The cult of goddess Roma<sup>142</sup> was set up when Roman influence grew in the Greek East, and was a form of worshiping the Roman power, along with cults dedicated to Roman generals<sup>143</sup> and gods that symbolized the good relationship between the Greeks and Romans<sup>144</sup>. During the Principate goddess Roma became an associate of Augustus in the imperial cult<sup>145</sup> and, when appearing separately, represented the power and dominance of the Roman state.

In Latin settlements of Moesia Inferior the established cult of Roma is attested only at Oescus (ILBulg 75)<sup>146</sup>. Here *Cl(audius) Ael(ius) Optim[us] pontif(ex) et h[ar(uspex)] col(oniae), sacerdos* [deae] *Rom(ae)* set up a honorary inscription to the wife of *flamen* Gaius Scopi<sup>us</sup> Marcianus, mentioned above. We do not agree with the possibility of a joint cult of Rome, the living emperor and the *diui*<sup>147</sup> at Oescus, as the title of the *flamen* would have mentioned it. Instead, the priest is clearly in charge only of the goddess', and not of a combined imperial cult. But at the same time it is clear that the cult of goddess Roma gravitated in the sphere of the traditional state and official imperial cults, having as *sacerdos* a person as important as the city's *pontifex* and *haruspex*. From a social point of view, the priest of Roma had probably received his citizenship during Hadrian's reign, and belonged to the local aristocracy.

The other two inscriptions are dedicated to the deified city of Rome. At Durostorum (Donevski 1976, 62–63, nr. 3; 235–236 A.D.) the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* Domitius Antigonus, his wife and two sons set up a monument dedicated

<sup>142</sup> Mellor 1975.

<sup>143</sup> Fishwick 1987, 46–47.

<sup>144</sup> One such case is the temple of Concordia in Kallatis, where the treaty between the city and Rome was set up – ISM III 1.

<sup>145</sup> Fishwick 1987, *passim*.

<sup>146</sup> The cult of Roma was also celebrated in Greek cities such as Odessos (IGB I<sup>2</sup> 48) and Nicopolis ad Istrum (IGB II 701).

<sup>147</sup> Aparaschivei 2007, 93.

*Diuinib[us] Romae aeternae* and *Ge[ni]o prouinciae*, and at Novae – Svištov (IGLNovae 45) an altar or statue base was consecrated to *Vrbs Roma Aeterna*.

### Public spectacles

The imperial cult was primarily a public phenomenon, and as such was conceived to dominate public festivities and entertainment, in order to obtain maximum popularity. In the case of imperial cult buildings we have stressed the fact that their location was chosen in such a way as to connect to traditional religious and civic centres in order to obtain the same prestige. The same applied to public spectacles, so besides imperial festivities, during traditional ones imperial cult features such as processions, sacrifices etc were introduced. Therefore each public event was deliberately related to emperor worship or honoring.

Games and banquets were among the favorite public events, and constituted occasions for the manifestation of the imperial cult, making it impossible to study emperor worship without devoting special attention to these phenomena<sup>148</sup>.

In Moesia Inferior we have a special situation concerning such public festivities. In the province's Greek<sup>149</sup> cities we have numerous and important sources concerning both religious festivities (imperial or not) and public games, with an important role played by gladiatorial fights<sup>150</sup>. Yet in Latin settlements we have practically no such information.

The only references concerning the logistics of public games we managed to find are two inscriptions from Montana. The first one (Montana II 9; 147 A.D.), is dedicated to Diana by the tribune *c(o)h(ortis) I Cil(icum)* and mentions the capture of bears and bisons for the imperial combats with beasts given by Antoninus Pius to celebrate 900 years since the foundation of Rome<sup>151</sup>. The other inscription (Montana II 1) mentions two soldiers specialized in hunting – *im(m)unes uen(atores) Iul(ius) Longinus et Fl(auius) Valerius*. Even though there is no mention of gladiatorial or beast fights in the Latin settlements, such soldiers must have provided animals for the province's Greek cities that did put up such shows.

<sup>148</sup> The bibliography on the subject is impressive, which forces us to mention only the most important general contributions: Robert 1971; Fishwick 1987, 574–590; Ville 1981; Newby 2005.

<sup>149</sup> In Istros, Tomis, Kallatis, Dionysopolis, Odessos, Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis.

<sup>150</sup> Initially considered by scholars a typical Roman practice that failed to gain ground in a culturally different Greek East, it was proved by L. Robert as a very popular public activity in both old and new Greek cities.

<sup>151</sup> Velkov, Alexandrov 1988, 273.

## Imperial statues

Another phenomenon indirectly related to emperor worship is the practice of setting up imperial statues in public spaces. We will exclude from our analysis cult statues in temples or at altars (such as the one set up in the temple of Caracalla – CIL III.1 7597) or religious gold or silver imperial statues<sup>152</sup> such as that of Commodus offered by En[ni]us Repertu[s] in a temple in Dionysopolis or those mentioned by Ovid in his house<sup>153</sup>.

Imperial statues were not only honorary monuments: they were also endowed with the ability of offering sanctuary, which demonstrates their religious attribute.<sup>154</sup> Such monuments were present in all urban settlements, and even though they had no role in the cult, they transmitted the idea of the emperor's divinity.

So far we have identified in Moesia Inferior the following imperial statues / statue bases:

LOCATION	OBJECT OF THE DEDICATION	MONUMENT	DEDICANT	DATE (A.D.)	REFERENCE
Axiopolis	Iulia Domna	statue base	<i>nautae uniuersi Danuuii</i>	193–211	CIL III 7485
Durostorum	Faustina Minor	statue head	?	169–176	Bordenache 1965, 219 and fig. 6
Durostorum	Severus Alexander?	statue head	?	222–235	Ivanov, Atanasov, Donevski 2006, 138 and fig. 18.
Durostorum	Gordian III	statue head	?	241	Bordenache 1965, 221 and fig. 9
Durostorum	Aurelianus/ Tacitus/ Florianus?	statue head	?	270–280	Bordenache 1965, 222, and fig. 11
Novae	Septimius Severus	statue base	<i>primi ord(ines) et centurion(es) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae)</i>	195–196	ILNovae 57b
Novae	Septimius Severus and sons	statue base	?	198	ILNovae 63

<sup>152</sup> Pekáry 1985, 66–80.

<sup>153</sup> Ov. Pont. 4. 9. 109 sq.

<sup>154</sup> Gaius Inst. 1. 53; Plin. Ep. 10. 74. 1 – these cases show that demanding sanctuary at the emperor's statue was an actual practice. Not that it was always respected – Pekáry 1985, 130. Pliny also made suspected Christians offer wine and incense to the emperor's statue, which he had brought along with statues of other gods – Plin. Ep. 10. 96.



LOCATION	OBJECT OF THE DEDICATION	MONUMENT	DEDICANT	DATE (A.D.)	REFERENCE
Oescus	Hadrianus	statue base	?	117–138	ILBulg 5
Oescus	Traianus Decius		?	249	ILBulg 7
Oescus	Antonine empress	statue	?	100–150	Bordenache 1965, 220 and fig. 7
Sexaginta Prista	Septimius Severus	statue base	the people of Nicopolis ad Istrum <sup>155</sup>	202	Velkov 1986, 28.
Sucidava	Commodus	statue and base	Claudius Xenophon imperial procurator, Zoticus and Salvianus, <i>uilici</i>	180–192	CIL III.1 8042
Troesmis	Elagabalus	statue base	M. Ulpius Antipater, <i>sac(erdotalis) prouin(ciae)</i> and the Roman governor T. Flavius Nouius Rufus	218–219	ISM V 151

The Antonine empress from Oescus is a colossal statue, which indicates that the princess was represented as a *diua*. As far as the colossal statue of Emperor Aurelianus / Tacitus / Florianus from Durostorum, it is difficult to believe that it was the representation of a *diuus* and not of an emperor-god, as in those troubled times it is hard to see emperors supporting cults dedicated to their predecessors. The statue set up by the former provincial priests with the help of the provincial governor, marking the former's taking up the office of *pontifex*, shows the strong connection between the imperial cult, the traditional state cult and the practice of setting up statues.

\*

The following conclusions can be drawn from the facts presented above.

The historical and geographical contexts of the province Moesia Inferior indicate that its small dimensions and low degree of urban development in the “Latin area” are a direct consequence of its initially predominant military role. During the 1<sup>st</sup> c. A.D., the space covered by the future province Moesia Inferior

<sup>155</sup> The fact that the statue was set up by the people of Nicopolis ad Istrum prompted V. Velkov to support the theory that at that moment Sexaginta Prista was part of its territory – Velkov 1986, 28.

had no urban settlements (apart from the Greek cities on the Black Sea coast, which represent a different historical phenomenon and therefore are not treated in the present paper). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. A.D. there are two important phases of development: 1) the reign of Trajan, who raised Oescus to the rank of *colonia* and founded Tropaeum Traiani (probably directly as a *municipium*) and 2) the reign of Marcus Aurelius, who probably raised Durostorum, Noviodunum, Novae and Troesmis to the rank of *municipium*, inaugurating a period of urban development that continued during the Severi.

These data are suggestive when compared to the chronology of the monuments directly or indirectly related to emperor worship.

First of all, no monuments related to emperor worship appear before the reign of Trajan. And when they finally appear, it is only at Oescus, which clearly played a very important role in the official cult of the emperors.

Secondly, in the rest of the province's Latin area no monuments of emperor cult are certainly dated before the reign of Marcus Aurelius; most important, all priesthoods or cult associations are dated with certainty only starting with Marcus Aurelius' reign. And with the emperor-philosopher's reign Troesmis emerged as a very important municipal centre of state cults (proved by I.O.M. dedications, the presence of augurs and pontiffs) and emperor worship, the latter headed by an imperial *flamen*. Moreover, Troesmis is the only attested seat of the provincial cult. Other smaller municipal centres of imperial worship in this period were Novae (with a college of *Augustales* and other cult associations) and Tropaeum Traiani (a *sacerdos* mentioned late in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. A.D.). Small centres in non-urban settlements existed at *emporium Piretensium*, *uicus Cleuant...*, probably at Lážane-Malčika / Nikopol and maybe at Višovgrad.

The end of emperor worship should be placed in the interval 270–300 A.D., when an imperial *sacerdos* still functioned at Tropaeum Traiani, the emperor was associated with Sol in the temple at Novae and a colossal imperial statue was dedicated at Durostorum, despite the hardships endured by the entire area during the invasions and military anarchy.

We can also infer that emperor worship must have been celebrated, in a non-institutionalized manner (that is not in imperial shrines), in all military centres, as indicated by monuments from Novae, Durostorum, Axiopolis, Sucidava and Montana. These celebrations could take place both inside and outside the military compounds, as is the case of the temple of *Sol Augustus* at Novae or the setting up of dedications to Diana Augusta in Montana (obviously in the goddess', and not in an imperial temple).

From a social point of view, even though there were clear class distinctions, emperor worship was celebrated at every social level. And as M. P. Charlesworth (quoted by A. D. Nock) put it:

**...while the classes were all closely related to Augustus, they were sharply separated from one another.**<sup>156</sup>

The general scheme looked as follows:

- 1) At the top of the municipal hierarchy the official imperial cult focused on the *diui*, was closely related to traditional state cults and was headed by *flamines* at Oescus and Troesmis; the provincial cult, focusing on the living emperor and attested at Troesmis, represented the peak of the municipal career.
- 2) Lower-profile official cults focusing on the living emperor (headed by Roman citizens bearing the title *sacerdos*) existed at Tropaeum Traiani, *emporium Piretensium* and maybe Višovgrad. The last two locations could suggest a network of small centres of emperor worship in non-urban settlements.
- 3) For freedmen and slaves of well-to-do status and with public-career aspirations there were private associations for emperor worship, such as the colleges of *Augustales* in Oescus and Novae, which represented the key to social promotion.
- 4) The lower categories of citizens, freedmen and slaves must have also used private associations, focused on emperor worship or not, to show their loyalty; no imperial-worship association is directly attested (maybe the monuments from Lážane–Malčika indicate such an institution), but religious associations are attested at Novae and Ulmetum; also, there were the usual colleges, such as the *nautae uniuersi Danuuii* in Axiopolis, which could undertake manifestations related to emperor worship. Private religious associations should not necessarily be considered a rare occurrence, as their members could not afford high expenses<sup>157</sup> and they are therefore rarely attested by monuments such as those from Novae and Ulmetum.

Although present in most of the important Latin Lower Moesian centres, emperor worship was less developed here than in other provinces and even than in Greek cities on the Black Sea coast. It seems to have emerged as a late development, boosted by imperial initiative and urban development and in direct relation to them.

<sup>156</sup> Nock 1934b, 636.

<sup>157</sup> The altar from Nola is an exception explained in Gradel 2002, 219, as it was a reused altar.

This explains its feeble development even in the Severian period when, in contrast to the province's Greek cities, no imperial feasts or games are attested.

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