

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE ORIENTAL CULTS IN THE ROMAN ARMY IN DACIA

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Analyzing the votive inscriptions coming from the camps, around them or from unknown places, but having soldiers as devotees, as well as the pieces that can be certainly attributed to soldiers (discovered in camps) we see that some of the most worshipped cults by the soldiers in Dacia are the Oriental ones.

The Oriental deities (Syrian, Palmyrenian, Egyptian, Anatolian, African) are many, but the number of dedications per each god is usually limited. We thus know one dedication for Dea Syria¹, Balmacordes², Ierhabol³, Dii Patriis⁴, Caelestis⁵, Horus⁶. For Turmazgada, syncretized with

¹ At Micia the goddess was worshipped with the epithet Regina by ala I Hispanorum Campagonum, which raised an altar by its prefect M. Plautius Rufinus (*IDR*, III/3, 75).

² Bărbulescu, Mihai, *Din istoria militară a Daciei romane. Legiunea V Macedonica și castrul de la Potaissa*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1987, p.81

³ syncretised with Sol, Ierhabol has an inscription at Tibiscum (*IDR*, III/1, 137), set in honour of two emperors (probably Caracalla and Geta, that is between 211-212), raised by Aurelius Laecanius Paulinus, veteran, *ex custos armorum* in Cohors I Vindelicorum

⁴ These were invoked together with the Genius of Numerus Palmyrenorum on an inscription raised in the camp from Tibiscum by Publius Aelius Servius, veteran *ex optione*, together with his family (*IDR*, III/1, 136); the devotee is the same one who raised an inscription for Malagbel and for an unidentified deity, set for the three emperors, thus confirming the chronology - 211-212 AD (*IDR*, III/1, 149)). His name suggests his father or maybe grandfather had received the citizenship from Hadrian. Even though he is a Roman citizen, the character remains faithfully to his native gods, as he set an inscription for the Genius of Numerus Palmyrenorum, for the Genius of Cohors I Vindelicorum, and also for Dis Patriis, not specifying exactly the identity of these gods (the Palmyrenian Dii Patriis appear at Tibiscum on another altar (*IDR*, III/1, 135). According to the text, the inscription was raised to honour two emperors, probably Caracalla and Geta (211-212 AD). The authors of Tibiscum's monograph wondered whether the mention of the Genius only for Numerus Palmyrenorum and Cohors Vindelicorum would not be a clue that Numerus Maurorum no longer stationed at Tibiscum (Benea, Doina, Bona, Petru, in *Tibiscum*, Ed. Museion, București, 1994, p.113). This inscription remains a proof of the veterans' attachment towards the military environment that is not entirely abandoned, and also the fidelity of the provincials for their national gods.

⁵ Associated on an interesting inscription to Aesculap Augustus, the Genius of Cartagina and of Dacia raised by Olus Terentius Pudens Utidianus, legatus Daciae, former legatus Raetiae (*IDR*, III/5, 41).

⁶ It is a bronze statuette found at Porolissum (Popescu, M., *La religion dans l'armée romane de Dacie*, Ed. Academiei, București, 2004, p.155)

Iupiter, there were raised two inscriptions⁷, the same for Bel⁸, Malachbel⁹, Cybele¹⁰, Saturnus¹¹; two pieces can be related to the cult of Men¹². Deus Aeternus has three, possible four inscriptions¹³, and Isis and Serapis record

⁷ The first, for Iovi Turmazgadi, was raised by cohors II Flavia Commagenorum equitata by its commander, M. Arruntius Agrippinus (*IDR*, III/3, 138). The second was raised by Aurelius Dionisius for Genio Turmazgadade in the temple of the Moorish deities (*IDR*, III/3, 118).

⁸ In Upper Dacia there is one inscription in the camp from Tibiscum, set by Aelius Zabbibol, *armorum custos* in Numerus Palmyrenorum (*IDR*, III/1, 134). The years 159-160, the moment when Numerus Palmyrenorum is attested for the first time is the *post quem* time to date this inscription. The deity has a temple at Porolissum that was repaired by Caius Iulius Septimius Castinus, consularis III Daciarum, Ulpus Victorius, procurator of the province and Titus Flavius Saturninus centurion in the legion V Macedonica Pia Constans (Sanie, S., *Culte orientale în Dacia romană*, Ed. Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1981, p.103; Rusu-Pescaru, Adriana, Alicu, D., *Templele romane în Dacia (I)*, Deva, 2000, p.28)

⁹ A fragmentary marble plaque (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.186, pl. VIII/5; *IDR*, III/1, 142) (the only situation where the god is called Malachbel (in the others he is named Malagbel)). The inscription, dated during the reign of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta (211-212 AD) was set by a veteran *ex optione* from Numerus Palmyrenorum - Publius Aelius. This devotee seems to have set another inscription for the same god (*IDR*, III/1, 143).

¹⁰ Inscription from Apulum raised by T. Fl. Longinus, *veteranus ex decurione alae II Pannoniorum*, decurion of Colonia Ulpia Traiana, the municipium Napoca and the canabae of the XIII Gemina legion (*CIL*, III 1100 apud Husar, A., *Celți și germani în Dacia Romană*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj, 1999, p.117), respectively an inscription of C. Statius Pollio, veteran (Moga, V., *Din istoria militară a Daciei romane. Legiunea a XIIIa Gemina*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1985, p.162, 19; *IDR*, III/5, 254).

¹¹ Saturnus Securus is present on the altar of M. Herennius Faustus, legatus Augusti (Moga, *op.cit.*, p.23a; *IDR*, III/5, 314). Very disputed was also the inscription from Potaissa set by P.Raecius Primus, African, beneficiaries legati legionis, Numini Saturno Regi Patri Deorum et Latonae (Bărbulescu, M., Cătinaș, Ana, *Cultul lui Saturnus în Dacia, în Apulum*, XVII, 1979, p.218). M. Bărbulescu believes it is possible for this cult to be a fashion among the soldiers of the legions, as the only inscriptions related to this cult found in Dacia are due to some elements from the legion V Macedonica (Bărbulescu, *op.cit.*, p.48). The association between Saturnus and Latona is unique in the Empire, and, according to M. Bărbulescu, it is an attempt to simplify the pantheon, Latona superposing an African deity (Bărbulescu, M., *Interferențe spirituale în Dacia romană*, Ed. Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p.204).

¹² Bărbulescu, M., *Potaissa. Studiu monografic*, Turda, 1994, p. 164; Țeposu-Marinescu, Lucia, *Statuete antropomorfe de bronz din Dacia*, în *Cimec*, 2003, nr. 133

¹³ he is present in Upper Dacia in the camp from Micia where he is worshipped as the syncretic Silvanus Deus Aeternus, in an inscription raised by Quintianus, decurion of ala I Hispanorum Campagonum (*IDR*, III/3, 133). He is also invoked on the inscription of Gallicanus, veteran *ex beneficiarius consularis*, for him and his family's health (*IDR*, III/5, 27). An inscription was set for Iupiter Optimus Maximus Aeternus. We wonder whether it is about a syncretism or an epithet. We believe the second theory would be

monuments as separate deities as well as a couple¹⁴.

M. Popescu said the penetration of the cult of Iupiter Heliopolitanus in Dacia was due to a special affection of the legionaries, more that of the auxiliaries¹⁵. Indeed, the three altars known so far in Dacia belong to legionary centurions¹⁶, but in our opinion this should not lead to such categorical statements. D. Alicu asserted a possible syncretism, Heliopolitanus being a geographical epithet with no ethnical meaning (the devotees are Italics), related to places or events¹⁷.

A quite popular deity seems to have been Azizus, with four inscriptions¹⁸. M. Popescu said that „aucune preuve concernant sa

more acceptable as it is an official inscription, raised in honour of the emperor, moreover referring to the rebuilding of a tabularium. Unfortunately, the piece is damaged and does not allow other observations (Wollmann, V, *Materiale epigrafice și sculpturale romane din Muzeul Sebeș*, în *ActaMN*, VII, 1970, p.165; *IDR*, III/5, 205). V. Moga connected the fountain built for Deus Aeternus by Ulpus Proculus and the tabularium to the temple of Aeternus, mentioned in several inscriptions (*IDR*, III/5 23-26, 29), but A. Rusu-Pescaru and D. Alicu believe there is no relationship between them. Otherwise, I. Piso thinks it is about a *tabularium legionis, principis legionis* sau *rationis castrensis* (Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu, *op.cit.*, p.132). Another inscription, for Dominus Aeternus, in honour of the emperor Traian, set by lui L. Antonius Apollinaris, veteran of the legion I Adiutrix comes also from Apulum (*IDR*, III/5, 74).

¹⁴ Four inscriptions were raised for Serapis. He receives on al altar the epithet (Moga, *op.cit.*, 17b; *IDR*, III/5, 317), while other two inscriptions associate Serapis to Isis (Birley, Eric, *The Religion of the Roman Army*, în *ANRW*, II, 16, 2, 1978, p.1521; *IDR*, III/5, 318; *CIL* III 881 apud Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.154). Very interesting is also the dedication of L. Aemilius Carus, legatus augusti III Daciarum, to Serapis, Iupiter, Sol, Isis, Luna, Diana, Dis Deabusque Conservatoribus (*IDR*, III/5, 319). Isis has a bronze statuette in the camp from Drobeta (Berciu, I, Petolescu, C.C., *Les culte orientaux dans la Dacie Méridionale*, Leiden (*EPRO*, 54), 1976, p.30, nr. 10; Stîngă, I., *Viața economică la Drobeta în secolele I-VI p.Chr.*, București, 1998, p.130, pl. 109/1) and another one at Porolissum (Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.155).

¹⁵ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.141

¹⁶ *IDR*, III/2, 243; *IDR*, III/3, 95-96

¹⁷ Alicu, Dorin, *Templele Miciei (II)*, în *Studia archaeologica et historia Nicolao Gudea dicata, Omagiu profesorului N. Gudea la 60 de ani, Bibliotheca Musei Porolissensis*, IV, Zalău, 2001, p.157

¹⁸ an official inscription was raised at Potaissa for Deus Azizus Bonus Puer Conservator to honour the emperors Valerianus, Gallienus and Cornelia Salonina, and for the salvation of the legion V Macedonica, by Donatus, prefect of the legiona, who, according to the text, *templum inceptum perfecit* (256-258)) (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.55; Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu, *op.cit.*, nr. 27). This inscription proofs the reestablishing after the attack of the Carps (Bărbulescu, Mihai, *Din istoria militară a Daciei romane. Legiunea V Macedonica și castrul de la Potaissa*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1987, p.30). The fact that Donatus does

pénétration à l'intérieur des camps n'est encore apparue". Moreover, „au milieu de IIIe siècle, nous remarquons un intérêt plus soutenu pour son culte de la part des chevaliers investis des plus hautes responsabilités”¹⁹.

As a border province of the Roman Empire Dacia has been repeatedly compared to Britain. Studying the phenomenon of the military religion in this province, Georgia Irby-Massie reaches interesting as well as very exciting conclusions that have somehow determined this study.

Referring to Mithras's cult in the Roman army in Britain, the author said that it is about an officers' cult and that „most, perhaps all of the Mithraic material in Britain is military”²⁰.

Mithras's popularity among the soldiers is well known, due to the 7 initiated steps resembling to the army situation, the fight between darkness and light, and the exclusion of women. Tertullian (*De Corona* 15, 4) said that Mithras couldn't be separated from the army because it promoted l'esprit de corps and supposed sacrifice, strength, fidelity.

As for the relationship between the Danubian soldiers and the Mithras's cult, Anna Tatarkiewicz said that: „on considère les soldats pas tellement comme des adeptes les plus fervants, mais comme des plus fervants propagateurs du culte dans l'Empire”²¹.

The number of monuments known in the military environment of Dacia discovered so far is quite scanty²² (but he is the most worshipped

again the earlier works on the temple of Deus Azizus does not mean he is an Oriental (*Ibidem*, p.79). The legion finishes an action started by the civilians, due to the crises of the IIIrd century. Domaszewski included Azizus among the *dii militares*, and thus the action of the legion is an official one (Rusu-Pescaru, Alicu, *op.cit.*, p.134). Another theory says that this was a measure to revive the pagan cults in a time when Christianity was spreading. M. Popescu believes it is about a health god (Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.135). Another inscription for Deo Forti Phoebus Apollini Parthico was raised at Potaissa by C. Cassius Vitalis, centurion of the legion V Macedonica Pia Constans (Macrea, M., *Viața în Dacia romană*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1969, p.194). Decimus Iulius Rusonius, *custos armorum*, raised at his turn an inscription for Deus Bonus Phosphoros Apollo Phythius (*CIL*, III, 1138 apud Moga, *op.cit.*, p.154, 1; *IDR*, III/5, 307), while Firminus Bellicus, veteran ex *cornicularius*, for Bonus Puer (Sanie, *op.cit.*, nr. 56).

¹⁹ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.133

²⁰ Irby-Massie, Georgia L., *Military religion in Roman Britain*, Leiden, 1999, p.81, 115

²¹ Tatarkiewicz, Anna, *Soldats et le culte de Mithra dans les provinces Mésie Supérieure, Mésie Inférieure et Dacie à la lumière des inscriptions*, in *Novensia*, 14, 2003, p.242

²² We know so far 2 statuettes and 10 reliefs with cult scenes from the Mithraic iconography (Gudea, N., Bozu, O., *A existat un sanctuar mithraic la Pojejena?*, in *Banatica*, 4, 1977), two of them with inscription (one mentions the name Dizo Posidoni, possibly of the devotee, the other is dedicated to Deo Invicto (*IDR*, III/1, 12-14). The

Oriental deity), most of them coming from the civil sites. The analysis of the inscriptions²³ shows a different situation from Britain, namely that most of the devotees are mere soldiers.

Related to the cult of Mithras is also the cult of Sol. A recent study on the military religion in Dacia said that „nous percevons une nette orientation des légionnaires, surtout des officiers supérieurs, vers le culte du dieu Sol”²⁴. For the time being we believe that such a statement is hazardous, based on three inscriptions²⁵ raised, indeed, by the provincial elite (legati legionis)²⁶.

discovery of the 12 pieces having in center the scene of the killing of the bull, in the north-eastern tower of the camp from Pojejena, suggested the existence of a temple. Mariana Crînguș, without denying this theory, connects the monuments to the legion IIII Flavia Felix (Crînguș, Mariana, *Le culte de Mithras à Pojejena*, în *SIB*, XXVI-XXVII, 2002-2003, p.207). One bronze statue, the same scene, now missing, came from Drobeta (Berciu, Petolescu, *op.cit.*, nr. 28, pl. XVIII; Bărcăcilă, Al., *Monumentele religioase ale Drubetei*, în *AO*, 1934, p.32, fig. 46). The same scene might appear on a relief from Apulum set by a consular beneficiarius whose name is not preserved (*IDR*, III/5, 291), and on a relief from Dierna (*IDR*, III/1, 36)

²³ Mithras is invoked as Sol Invictus on an altar from Romula raised by *librarii cum Antonio Zoilo actario praepositi Numeri Surorum* (Berciu, Petolescu, *op.cit.*, nr. 52; *IDR*, II, 341). He is also worshipped by the soldiers from ala II Gallorum et Pannoniorum (*CIL*, III, 12540) or by those from the legion XIII Gemina as Sol Invictus Mithras (Tatarkiewicz, *op.cit.*, 6, 11, 15; *IDR*, III/5, 286, 282, 285), Invictus Mithras (Tatarkiewicz, *op.cit.*, 5) or Deus Invictus Mithras (*Ibidem*, 9, 10; *IDR*, III/5, 270, 271). Mithras is worshipped at Potaissa by mere soldiers: Aurelius Montanus (gives him the epithet Invictus), Aelius Maximus and Aurelius Dolens (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.268, nr. 68; Tatarkiewicz, *op.cit.*, 2003, nr. 1-2). The deity appears probably also on an altar from Hoghiz raised by Honoratus, *praefectus cohortis III Gallorum* (*IDR*, III/4, 235) or on a relief with the tauroctonia scene from Apulum, set by an imaginifer – M. Ulpus Linus (*IDR*, III/5, 290)

²⁴ Popescu, *op.cit.*, p.132

²⁵ *IDR*, III/5, 350, 353, 354; Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.266-267, nr. 58, 60

²⁶ Although the social position and their time of staying in Dacia would exclude, at first glance, their votive monuments from our analysis, as M. Bărbulescu said, „as well as the most spread cults from Dacia have influenced the beliefs of some high ranking characters during their “Dacian service”, the special cults they worshipped might have influenced in some measure the preferences of the “permanent” inhabitants of the province. Thus it is justified the analysis of the religion of some passing through Dacia individuals (2-3 years)” (Bărbulescu, M., *Interferențe spirituale în Dacia romană*, Ed. Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p.219). We believe such a statement is not justified. There are deities we encounter only on the commanders' altars, as well as deities that appear only on inscriptions raised by the inferior ranks, with no interferences or imitations. Anyhow, we appreciate that religious imitation is a superficial explanation.

Moreover, we should not forget the inscription from Slăveni for ala I Hispanorum pia fidelis set by principales²⁷. I. Berciu and C. Petolescu believed that “les soldats syriens de Romula étaient adeptes du culte du Soleil invancu, il est permis d’affirmer que les propagateurs du culte mithriaque à Romula ont été les soldats recrutés en Orient: numerus surorum sagittariorum et cohors I Flavia Commagenorum”²⁸.

The second most worshipped Oriental deity in the Roman army from Dacia (after Mithras) is Iupiter Dolichenus²⁹. I.P.Haynes does not include

²⁷ IDR, II, 510; Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.74; Berciu, Petolescu, *op.cit.*, nr. 55

²⁸ Berciu, Petolescu, *op.cit.*, p.19

²⁹ At Micia he is dedicated an altar (*aram*) by a prefect from cohors II Flavia Commagenorum (IDR, III/3, 67), whose name is not preserved. At Ampelum instead, Aurelius Gaius sets an inscription as consular beneficiarius for the emperor Gordian's „*imperi perpetui*” (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.256) (this dates the inscription between 238-244 AD). The most known inscription comes from the camp Pojejena, set by Q. Petronius Novatus, prefect of the cohort V Gallorum (IDR, III/1, 11). Another inscription comes from Apulum and if its reinterpretation is correct, it was raised between 211-212, for the health of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta by Iulius Gracilis, soldier in Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium and in the guard of the province governor (Piso, Ioan, *Ein unechter beneficiarius in Apulum*, in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 103, 1994, p.207-208); I. Piso reinterpreted the lines 7-8, where the former authors have read [...] M BF EX SING / [COS] as [MI N] M TIB EX SING / ...).

He had a temple at Porolissum where an inscription for the emperor Gordian III and the cohort III Campestris was raised. N. Gudea and D. Tamba, the first who published the inscription, said it mentioned a temple and a tavern and that it was raised by M. Aurelius Italus, IIIIvir of the municipium, Antonius Mavius, veteran and decurion, IIIIvir of the colonia, Acius Flavus and Caius Marcius Vegesius, *sacerdotes* of Iupiter Dolichenus and of the colonia (Gudea, N., Tamba, D., *Porolissum. Un complex daco-roman la marginea de nord a Imperiului Roman. III. Despre templul zeului Iupiter Dolichenus din municipium Septimium*, Zalău, 2001, p.25). I. Piso suggested a different reconstruction of the text. He believes there are three devotees, not four: M. Aurelius Flavus (not Italus), M. Antonius Maximus (not Mavius), IIIIvir of the municipium (not of the colonia, led by IIviri) and Aurelius Flavus, decurion of the municipium and *vegesimarius*. I. Piso considered the three persons as possible *sacerdotes* of Dolichenus and of the cohort III Campestrorum, similar to another inscription from Porolissum (Heidenreich, Christophe, Schmidt, *Hierarchie et structure des unites palmyreniennes*, in *Army and Urban Development in the Danubian Provinces of the Roman Empire*, Alba-Iulia, 2000, p.302; Piso, Ioan, în *Studia Porolissensia (I): Le temple dolichénie*, in *ActaMN*, 38/1, 2001, p.229), where P.Ael. Malachus is flamen municipii and sacerdos of Numerus Palmyrenorum, without being part of the mentioned unit. I. Piso believed they were official priests of the cohort, serving the cult of Dolichenus in the vicus (in the important communities there were 3 *sacerdotes*), that is somehow similar to the situation of Flavius Barhadadi. M. Antonius Maximus could have been a veteran from cohors III Campestrorum. The other two devotees have the same names, thus I. Piso believes it is

him in the military religion, and not even among the “accepted cults”. „for there is no datable evidence for the worship of the god in Syrian units

possible for them to be father and son (Piso, Ioan, în *Studia Porolissensia (I). Le temple dolichénien*, *ActaMN* 38/1, 2001, p.229).

Another center of the cult was also the camp from Cășei, where we know three inscriptions raised by consular beneficiaries (two of them were raised by Scantius Lucius (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.12; Schallmayer, Egon (coord.), *Der römische Weihbezirk von Osterburken I. Corpus der griechischen und lateinischen Beneficiarier-Inschriften des Römischen Reiches, Forschungen und Berichte zur vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden Württemberg*, 40, 1990, nr. 529; Isac, Dan, *Castrul roman de la Samum-Cășei*, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, Pl. VIII; 1; for the duplicates see also Ștefănescu, Atalia, *Note epigrafice. Despre semnificația unor dublete din Dacia romană*, în *Apulum*, XLI, 2004, p.271-278), the third by P.Ael. Proculus, *beneficiarius consularis legionis V Macedonicae Gordianae*, who sets an inscription *pro salute sua et suorum omnium* (Popa, Al., Berciu, I., *Le culte de Jupiter Dolichenus dans la Dacie romaine*, Leiden (*EPRO*, 69), 1978, nr. 17).

Inscriptions for Dolichenus are known at Romita, raised for Gordian III and Sabina Tranquillina (the name of the devotee – unknown (Russu, I.I., *Note epigrafice. Inscriptii din Dacia Porolissensis*, în *ActaMN*, V, 1968, p.457 et sqq.)) and at Buciumi, for Caracalla and Geta set by P.Iulius Firminus, *beneficiarius consularis* (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.52); A. Popa and I. Berciu said that at the beginning the inscription was set for Geta and Caracalla, but after the death of Geta the two DD and NN were deleted, and so Caracalla remained alone (Popa, Berciu, *op.cit.*, p.16). We should not forget the inscription of Gaius, *optio* in cohorts I Hispanorum from Orheiul Bistriței, discovered on the bronze dolichenian hand from Myszkow (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.18).

Flavius Barhadadi, *sacerdos Iovi Dolicheni ad legionem XIII Gemina* sets an altar for Dolichenus and Dea Suria Magna Caelestis, for the wellbeing of the Roman Empire and the legion (*IDR*, III/5, 221). Probably the inscription was raised on the occasion of emperor's Caracalla visit to Dacia. The formula *Pro salute Imperii / Imperatoris* in more frequent during the Severian dynasty, due to the part the empresses played in the spreading of the Oriental cults (Berciu, Popa, *op.cit.*, p.178). The name of the devotee (in translation "son of the god Hadad") is Syrian (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.211). C. Valerius Ingenuus, *signifer*, raised an inscription for the emperors Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta (*IDR*, III/3, 15, fig. 13). A quite personal dedication was made by Veturius Marcianus, veteran, *somno monitus ex praecepto / ex praescripto numinis Aesculapi* for the health of him and his family (Moga, *op.cit.*, p.163, 33ab; Merlat, Pierre, *Répertoire des inscriptions et monuments figurés du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*, Paris-Rennes, 1951, p.37; *IDR*, III/5, 220). The soldiers from the legion V Macedonica also raised two inscriptions (Sanie, *op.cit.*, p.257, nr. 13; *IDR*, II, 198; the second inscription is probably late).

We know a bronze relief with Dolichenus dressed as a military, standing on the bull, from the camp of Răcari (Berciu, Petolescu, *op.cit.*, nr. 20, pl. II; Popa, Berciu, *op.cit.*, nr. 30, pl. XI), a marble head coming from a large statue from the camp of Drobeta (Popa, Berciu, *op.cit.*, nr. 20, pl. VII, 2), and a beautiful statuette from the camp of Ilișua (*Ibidem*, nr. 21, pl. VIII).

between the retirement of their initial recruits and the cult's rise in popularity in the army as a whole. Only with the less popular, but ethnically distinctive deities can we realistically hope to see evidence for the survival of native beliefs associated with regimental origins"³⁰. Pierre Merlat said that „son aspect de divinité légionnaire ... frappe dès l'abord” and that „Dolichenus jouait aux yeux des militaires le même rôle que le traditionnel Iupiter Optimus Maximus, dieu suprême des protecteurs de l'armée, dont il s'était précisément attribué la fonction la plus expressive pour les soldats”³¹.

Georgia Irby-Massie rejects the idea that Dolichenus would be the supreme god of the army, especially of the limes army. She agrees to P. Merlat that the god was worshipped because he embodied the attributes of the emperor, and its monuments suggested the idea of power³².

If Dolichenus became or not the supreme god of the army, or the large number of dedications has a different explanation we do not know. Anyhow, the short review of the dolichenian monuments suggests that Dolichenus is not entirely a legionnaire deity.

Another exciting observation has attracted our attention, that Mithras and Dolichenus are not worshipped in Britain in the same place³³. This is an aspect that in Dacia is not confirmed also. The two gods are present at Pojejena, Drobeta, Apulum. There could be a possibility for the two gods to be present in these sites on different chronological moments. The bronze statue of Mithras and the marble head of Dolichenus from Drobeta could not be dated. The inscription of Dolichenus from Apulum was set during 211-212 but the one for Mithras cannot be dated. As for the Mithraic reliefs from Pojejena and the inscription of Q. Petronius Novatus, there is a slight possibility to ascertain their contemporaneity, as the reliefs were dated between 150-250 p.Christian, while Novatus' inscription sometimes at the middle of the IInd century AD.

The inscriptions discovered in the military environment in Dacia shows that soldiers worshipped the gods belonging to “accepted” cults (Dea Syria, Sol Invictus, Iupiter Dolichenus, Iupiter Heliopolitanus, Mithras). Their preferences go towards Dolichenus and Mithras, but most of the inscriptions are still dedicated to Greek-Roman gods.

³⁰ Haynes, I.P., *The Romanisation of Religion in the Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army from Augustus to Septimius Severus*, in *Britannia*, XXIV, 1993, p.149.

³¹ Merlat, P., *Jupiter Dolichenus. Essai d'interprétation et de synthèse*, Paris, 1960, p.101-102.

³² Irby-Massie, *op.cit.*, p.66.

³³ Irby-Massie, *op.cit.*, p. 206