

Soldiers of Tracian origin and of Dacian origin
in the auxiliary troops of the Roman army

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This study focuses on the analysis of the auxiliary units of the Roman army and specifically on the contribution made to them by soldiers of Dacian origin and of Tracian origin. First of all, we must underline the importance of analyzing the structures and organization of the Roman army for imperial history. Socially, since a good part of the Roman ruling class, both in the capital and in the provincial centers, even in the most peripheral, has passed, who only a few years, who throughout life, through the military career; and materially, since alongside a good, though often disorganized, mass of information drawn from the documentary sources, there is an enormous quantity of epigraphic testimonies which highlight a rich variety both in military technical terminology and in the distribution and interpenetration between tasks civil and military. In this context, the study of auxiliary bodies plays a very important role. The analysis then of the individual soldiers, their origin and the motivations that underlie their recruitment, more or less consistent in different periods, brings a considerable amount of information that is going to be included in the general framework of Roman history.

The basis of the survey available is constituted, almost exclusively, by epigraphic testimonies. Therefore, all the attestations of the single soldiers of Tracian and Dacian origin have been cataloged and studied, paying attention to both the supposed and presumed chronology for each epigraph.

For the recognition of the Tracian and Dacian origins of the military, the onomastic method was mainly used.

In general, the difficulties encountered by those who in the past have investigated on the Tracian and Dacian, were many, given the extremely reductive documentation. In the last two decades, however, the knowledge of the dynasticism has been renewed, especially the Dacian one, thanks to the growing documentation. All this has helped to improve the understanding of many epigraphs difficult to read and interpret.

For the onomastic reconstruction and recruitment of the military Traci and Daci the military diplomas, the certificates of leave for the auxilia soldiers, that make their appearance since the time of Claudius, are particularly important. The finding of these diplomas provides an appreciable trace on army veterans' allocations and is also of fundamental importance in the compilation of the lists of units present in a single province, since the text itself, when it is kept intact, reports both the dating, both the province in which the provision was issued, and the name of the provincial governor.

The following research methodology was followed:

1. Numerical input. We tried to understand how the recruitment of auxiliaries of tracica and Dacian origin took place and in what quantity within the auxiliary troops of the various provinces; in which areas of the empire their presence was greater; if they were more present in *alae* or *cohortes* and in what quantities over the three centuries analyzed. The differences between the various provinces and between the different periods were analyzed.
2. Cultural contribution. Cultural aspects were investigated. We tried to deduce what was the cultural evolution during the three centuries examined and, in this way, we understood better the civilization, the material and social conditions of the province of belonging of the military, Dacia and Thracia.

Finally we have come to understand if the general framework is unitary or composite and for what reasons.

Therefore, two complete catalogs of:

- Units with ethnic dacians and tracios.
- Military singles of Dacian and tracic origin, in each auxiliary unit known in the provinces of the Roman Empire.

Finally, epigraphic data were discussed and analyzed and, in this way, an answer was given to the main questions that determined the research. This answer will contribute to the historical reconstruction of the Roman army and of Roman history in general.

The first list drawn up was that of auxiliary units with dacian and tracic ethnonyms. The great quantity of regiments of tracic origin and the high number of testimonies that attest to them, both inscriptions and military diplomas, produced some confusions in the past and the more academic contributions were greater, the more difficult the task became. The difficulties do not derive only from different opinions of modern scholars, but initially derive from the confusion of the same Roman engravers

who have confused the regiments on several occasions, doubling the name, or omitting important and appealing attributes like *pia fidelis* or *equitata*. The work of a correct identification of each unit remains a difficult task and could only be convincing in the face of indisputable epigraphic evidence.

There is a notable disproportion between the western provinces and the eastern provinces of the empire with regard to the first allocation of the cavalry units of tracic origin. Seven units are initially allocated in the eastern provinces in the first half of the first century and not beyond, while in the western provinces they are present-

The Dacian wars of Domitian before and Trajan then, create a significant movement of the cavalry troops of tracic origin caused by the participation of the troops in the conflict or caused by the reorganization of the Danubian border under Trajan or Hadrian.

Most cavalry units of tracial origin continue to exist in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

At the end of the fourth century the *Notitia Dignitatum* recalls the *ala Gallorum et Thracum Antiana Sagittariorum*, the *ala Gallorum et Thracum Constantium* and the *ala I Augusta Thracum* which seem to have survived the crisis of the third and fourth centuries. The evolution in the same centuries of the other units that are no longer mentioned in the documents is unknown. They have probably been dissolved or amalgamated in other units.

Cohortes of tracic origin are decidedly more numerous than the cavalry units. These are the cohorts called *Thracum* and the two *Bessorum*, coming from the tribe of Bessi, of Tracic origin. The numbers range from I to VII. The *cohors V Thracum* is not identified by the epigraphs, and the cause may have been a premature dissolution of the regiment or the cancellation from official testimony or an *missio ignominiosa*.

The high number of *cohortes* of tracic origin is a clear testimony of the military capabilities of the Thracians considered excellent archers in the first and second centuries.

Three regiments are called *Augusta Thracum* and most likely they are the oldest regiments recruited in Thrace.

Four units of infantrymen are called *syriaca* and they too, are probably quite early training if we take into consideration the case of *cohors III Thracum Syriaca* equatorial sagittaria. The *Syriaca* attribution was applied to units with the same order number and the epithet is most likely attributed to them because they had long settled in Syria.

The regiment with the Germanic epithet shows a long stay on the Rhine area in the provinces of Germany.

There is evidence that most of the Thracum regiments were formed in the first half of the first century, but the two *Bessorum* units were created in the second half. The *ala I Thracum veterana sagittaria* seems to be the only regiment of Tracian origin that was created towards the last decade of the second half of the first century, probably following the split of the veteran *ala Gallorum et Thracum*. There is no evidence of the creation of new regiments of Tracian origin in the second and third centuries, although there have certainly been adjustments and remodeling during the second century.

In this study, for the onomastic analysis, reference was made to the distinction made by Dan Dana with respect to previous studies on the name of the province, which spoke of "traco-daci" names above all to underline and demonstrate the continuity of the indigenous population in the province. According to the studies carried out by Dana, the distinction between the names of Traci and Daci is evident, to such an extent that Traci and Daci can not be said to speak the same language, also because the territory in which they lived was too vast for this to be possible: the languages were similar but not the same. Because of this, the scholar re-proposes the "Traco-Dacian" name-day repertoire, considering as "Traci" the original names of Thrace (also intended as a province), as "Daci" the characteristic names of the daco-mesica area.

In this study the search for soldiers of Tracian origin in the auxiliary troops of the Roman army took place exclusively with the onomastic method. While some series of names are easily recognizable, others are less recognizable: a study of the context of each name and each onomastic series is therefore essential to express an opinion on the dating and geographical origin of the people mentioned.

After having compiled a catalog with bibliographical references and the reference epigraph, the results obtained were discussed.

The first objective was to understand whether the soldiers of Tracian origin and of Dacian origin were enrolled in a more numerous way among the *alae* or among the *cohortes* of the Roman army.

The second objective was to analyze the role of individual soldiers within the auxiliary troops of the Roman army.

Comparing the recruitment of soldiers of Dacian origin with that of Tracian origin, immediately a figure is immediately evident: soldiers of Tracian origin are much more numerous than soldiers recruited in Dacia. The motivations are multiple; first of all the soldiers begin to be recruited in Dacia under the emperor Trajan, then much later than those of Tracian origin. And then, the Thracians were known and appreciated by the Romans for their military skills; they were considered excellent archers (as they had been before the soldiers of Gallic origin coming from Gallia Lugdunense). Likewise, the territorial extension, smaller for Dacia than Thrace and the fact that the Thracian aristocrats under the

Roman regime continue for a long time to represent themselves as an elite also through military service are also important.

Regarding the recruitment of the Dacians, we witness the following phenomena:

- Daci soldiers are more numerous in cohortes than in alae; only two are the soldiers recruited in the numbers of the Roman army.
- Most of the Dacian soldiers were recruited in the 2nd century.
- From Dacia and lower Mesia, only a few soldiers remained in their homeland or in the neighboring Danubian provinces (Pannonia, Mesia). Some were sent to the provinces of Germany and Britain, but most were sent to auxiliary troops stationed in the eastern provinces.

As for the recruitment of the Traci, however, we are witnessing the following phenomena:

- There is not a large numerical difference between the Thracians allocated in the alae and those allocated in the cohortes; but the Thracian soldiers present in the cohortes of the Roman army are more numerous. There are also some Thracians in the numbers.
- Recruitment takes place uninterruptedly from I until the end of the third century
- We are witnessing a phenomenon that does not affect the Dacian soldiers in the same way. In addition to being sent to the western and eastern provinces, the Thracians are also very numerous in the cohorts of Rome.

For the purposes of the research all the epigraphs were excluded from which it was not possible to establish with certainty the origin of the soldier (from typical names, such as *Decibalus*, *Diurdanus* or *Damanaeus* or from the mention of *origo: natione Dacus*), they were also excluding the inscriptions in which the name of the troop in which the soldier was enlisted and the province in which the troop was stationed does not appear. Finally, epigraphs that can not be dated at least with partial certainty have also been excluded.

One of the various consequences of the Dacian wars of Trajan was the massive recruitment of Dacian soldiers. These soldiers find themselves in all the provinces of the empire, from Britain and from lower Germany to Cappadocia, Syria, Egypt and North Africa. It is obviously with the conquest of Trajan that things change. And it is at this moment that the first auxiliary units of Dacians are created as in the other new provinces acquired.

Regarding the recruitment of the Dacians in the years of the empire of Trajan, various scenarios are plausible and various situations have been supposed by the scholars. However, it is possible to divide the recruiting waves into four general parts:

The first occurs in the years between 102, then at the end of the first Dacian war and the 105 that is the beginning of the second: in recent years soldiers are recruited among the Dacian war defectors (as shown in the scenes of the Trajan Column); but also Daci recruited south of the Danube, in lower Mesia receiving the *honestae missiones* in 127. In fact, a considerable number of diplomas referring to Dacis dating back to the year 127, and about a dozen showing the same date: 20 August.

And it is in these years, therefore, since the creation of at least two new military units of Daci: the *cohorts I and II Dacorum*. Some authors, such as Dan Dana, speculate that the first recruits of these units come from the south of the Danube, as well as the cases just described of the soldiers who received the *honestae missio* on August 20, 127. Note the strange absence of the imperial name among the epithets of the newly created cohorts. This fact is rather strange and has led to the hypothesis that the soldiers were recruited in the last years of Domitian's reign. The new *ala I Ulpia Dacorum* instead, allocated in Cappadocia, had in the name the epithet of the emperor Trajan.

According to the hypothesis of prof. Piso, the motivation behind this first recruitment by Trajan, is to weaken the Decebalian soldiers contingent. In fact, no Dace soldier remains in the territory of origin, all are sent to different provinces, a rule that had been in force since the Flavian period. The conditions of peace imposed by Trajan, after the first victory, were very hard: the Dacians had to abandon their arms; return the best quality military equipment (made specifically in preparation for the war or obtained largely by the Romans with deception, and the skilled technicians used in view of the war and obtained by deception by the Romans, dismantling the fortresses and freeing all the Roman prisoners still held hostage, to restore the spoils of war of the previous years, to withdraw from the occupied territories and, like all other patronage states, renounce any independent external policy. For *Decebalus*, one of the harshest conditions had to be the renunciation to some territories that were occupied by the Romans, including part of the Banat, all of Wallachia, Oltenia, southern Moldavia and the south-eastern and south-western areas of Transylvania, but *Decebalus* remained on the throne and the kingdom of Dacia, how much resized and disarmed, it continued to exist: its juridical regime remained however that of a state *ntelare*, reduced however to decidedly more unfavorable conditions. Among the conditions of peace, however, there was also, as claimed by prof. Piso, just the compulsory recruitment of Dacian soldiers in the troops of the Roman army, with the aim of weakening *Decebalus* and to replace the part of soldiers who died during the war.

In 103, in the area to the north of the Danube, controlled by the Romans, we witness the first recruitment of soldiers proper. And it is in these years that an auxiliary unit is created that is certainly attributable to Trajan because it has the epithet of the emperor in its name: the *cohors I Ulpia Dacorum*, sent to Syria where it remains throughout the second century. From this unit the first soldiers are laid off in 129 as attested by some military diplomas, all dated to March 22, 129.

The third wave of recruitment takes place in 106 or after the victory of Trajan and to a much greater extent than before to avoid a possible revolt and also because the Dacians were considered skilled military. After the death of Decebalus, the last resistances were destroyed, the Dacian fortifications were destroyed and abandoned: on 11 August 106, as evidenced by the first military diploma issued by the imperial authority for the new province, Dacia was founded.

The Dacians present in the Roman auxiliary units have a double geographic origin: however there are more testimonies of Dacians recruited in lower Mesia compared to the Dacians recruited in Dacia; starting from Traiano. This population, together with the Thracians and the Greeks had always been considered militarily appreciable. The Dacians then, subjected to continuous wars in their territory, with enemies both external and internal, with neighboring tribes hostile to each other that forced them to maintain a constant warlike spirit, were converted into a magnificent military instrument capable of sustaining continuous external struggles. explains their appreciation as a combat force in the Roman army.

One of the few soldiers recruited north of the Danube is *Diurdaus*, recruited in 106, at the end of the war, and sent to Mauretania Caesariensis. The same origin could be conceivable for the recruits of the *cohors I Ulpia Dacorum*.

In summary, it is now certain that Dacian recruitment was particularly important during Trajan's reign and they were not only present within their ethnic units (*alae* and *cohorts Dacorum*), but, in a substantial number, also in others unity as in the *ala Sulpicia* and the *cohors IIII Thracum* in Lower Germany and in the *ala I Ulpia Contariorum milliaria civium Romanorum* in Lower Pannonia. The reasons for the recruitment are different for each period of time described, even though generally due initially to the weakening of the enemy and the repeated conflicts on the lower Danube, and subsequently to the control and integration of the peregrines of the lower Mesia and Dacia. The dates of these recruits range from the formation of the first contingents, then from the end of the first Dacian war, until the end of the second war. As far as mobility is concerned, they are present on all the frontiers of the empire, both Western and Eastern, especially in Lower Germany, Britain, Syria and

Mauretania. The control of populations, forced or voluntary recruitment, service in distant provinces go hand in hand with the will of the Dacian soldiers to preserve their identity: they were married to women of their same origin who accompanied her husband during the service, they gave names given to their children, continued to have uses and customs of their homeland. But, on the contrary, the veterans returning home, returning to their province of origin after years of service and experience in distant places, knowing Latin and Roman practices, with children born and raised elsewhere, were certainly a fundamental contribution to integration of these two cultures which is the one that best understands the impact of the Roman conquest in these territories.

In the years 126-127-128 there is another massive recruitment, certainly in relation to the liberation of the Dacian soldiers recruited during the first Dacian war. This is attested for the three diplomas of 151-152-153 (Mesia superiore, Germanie and Mauretania Tingitana) this wave seems to have influenced rather the lower Danube because, for the moment, we do not know the situation of the province of Dacia.

Most of the Traci soldiers are recruited in the first century for their great qualities as archers. From the second half of the second century they began to be recruited also in the legions and other elite bodies, so much so that in the III century they were, together with Illyro-Pannoniani, the predominant element, especially in the legions of Danubian and Rhenish limes. . The Romans knew well the military ability of the Thracians and their recruitment was very important, as had happened previously for the Gauls coming from Gallia Lugdunense.

It is precisely this massive presence in the Roman army that has made possible the great visibility of the Thracians in epigraphic sources, leading to an ever more satisfying knowledge of their name-day.

Very often the Thracians, assimilating to military use, indicate their origin by referring to urban centers. Thus emerged, with the highest number of attestations, Philippopolis, Serdica, Hadrianopolis, Traianopolis and even more modestly Anchialus, Pautalia and Beroea. At least in most cases, this indication is an approximation that refers not so much to the urban center as to its territory; not infrequently this indication is followed, however, by other specifications (regiones, pagi, vici) that refer to subdivisions characteristic of the territorial organization of their province. This attention to detail happens frequently in the soldiers of the auxiliary troops stationed in Rome and is almost absent among the soldiers of other geographical areas. This can be considered a reflection of the desire to give information to the inhabitants of Rome, potential readers of these long lists, which certainly had little confidence with the territorial order of Thrace; but above all, it can also be read as an expression of attachment to the country of origin and its administrative specificity. Sometimes the indication of

provenance, combined with other clues, helps to clarify obscure points in the reading or interpretation of some inscriptions.

Two centurions of tracic origin are allocated in the II Thracum cohorts in Lower Germany: Aurelius Bitus and Bisa. They militated in the first half of the third century, suggesting that the promotion to higher degrees of the soldiers who worked for a long time in the same unit became a common practice at that time. There is a centurion Bessus in the cohorts II Gemella Thracum in Numidia in the 2nd century. Two other regiments have given back two names of centurions of tracic origin, Iulius Teres in the cohorts I Flavia Bessorum in Macedonia (unit that has given back many names of Thracians) and Diza in the cohorts I Thracum in Crimea. Both regions are known for having a high density of tracial population as evidenced by the inscriptions.

Aelius Tarsa is a centurion of tracic origin known in an auxiliary unit of non-tracial origin. Aurelius Mucianus is a centurio deputatus in the first half of the III century.

The tracial origin decurions mentioned in the auxiliary units appear above all in units of tracic origin (example: Mucatra in the Thracum veterana sagittaria wing). A certain concentration of traces of tracic origin can be observed on an altar dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus, and are dec (uriones), dupl (icarii), if [sq (uiplicarii) from the *ala I Cannanefatium* from Gerulata. The list includes, among other names, a group of three Traci: *Aulusanus*, *Bersolus* and *Brincasis*, but the list is confusing. The common dedication does not specify what position each individual has in the cavalry regiment, so it is impossible to assign with absolute certainty the degree of decurion to someone. On a fragment of Corbridge we remember *T. Vindalici Eptacenti*. *Vindalicius* is a name of Celtic origin and is followed by the name of tracic origin *Eptacentus*.

We know another decurion, *Flavius Bassus* of tracial origin but the auxiliary unit where he was allocated is unknown.

The total of principales allocated in the auxiliary troops of the Roman army is quite high. They cover a wide range of degrees. Regarding the units not of tracic origin, a significant number comes from the *ala I Britannica* allocated to Apamea, from the *ala Vespasiana Dardanorum* coming from *Arrubium*, given a list of soldiers and principales transferred in the body of equites singulares, *ala I Contariorum* and the *ala I Cannanefatium* in Gerulata. Epigraphic testimonies show a multitude of degrees for the Thracian soldiers. The administrative positions mentioned in the inscriptions known up to now and held by the Thracians were the following: stratores tribuni, statores, adiutores, singularis consularis and tabularius.

A stator praefectus of tracial origin is recalled: *Aurelius Doriso* from the *ala I Ulpia Contariorum*.

An adiutor, *Flavius Bithus*, is known in the *ala Aurelia Dardanorum*, allocated to *Timacum Minus* (Ravna).

We know an imaginifer, *Brisenus* which appears in the *ala II Pannoniorum*.

Two other *vexillarii* are known. Both come from *cohortes* and both bear the same name: *Tara* from the *cohors III Thracum* in the first half of the III century and *Aurelius Tara*, from the *cohors III Campestris*, also in the III century.

Aurelius Mucatralis was a *tubicen* of the *ala I Britannica*. Also a *cornicines* is mentioned in the same *ala*: *Aurelius Disas*. Both were recruited in Thrace for the same unit in the first decade of the third century. An important position in the auxiliary regiments was taken by the optionals who were military *principales*, and this sometimes gave direct access to the centurion. *Mucianus* has the degree of *optio* in the *Numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium* in the Dacia Porolissensis, in Porolissum.

Even the study of veterans is important for understanding the evolution of the tracic society. An example is Heptapor Isi filius Bessus who had received the *honesta missio* as attested by the military diploma of 8 July 158, after having served in the *ala Gallorum et Bosporanorum* in *Dacia Superior*. The two names, of the father and the son, are both of tracial origin, as is also attested by the mention of the tribe of belonging, that of the Bessi.

Some Traci whose *origo* is indicated come from the Bessi tribe. The *origo* is sometimes referred to simply with Bessus and other times with other variants: *domo Bessus*, *natus Bessus*, *natione Bessus*. The high percentage of recruitment of soldiers from this sector compared to other regions of Thrace indicates a repeated and massive project among this population. In the early years of the Flavi reign, 1000 recruits form two regiments: the *cohors I Flavia Bessorum* and the *cohors II Flavia Bessorum*. In 200 a new mass take-over took place in the area of the Bessi, when a considerable number of 1000 Bessi were sent to Mauritania Tingitana to strengthen the auxiliary units of the army of the province. This testimony once again suggests the exceptional demographic situation of the Bessi lands at the beginning of the 3rd century, able to offer a large number of recruits without a particular demographic effort, as well as the propensity of the Roman authorities to use intensely recruits from the mountain tribes Bessi, well known for their physical robustness and their warlike predisposition.

The total number of soldiers of tracic origin in the different *alae* and *cohortes* is quite high.

The military figures between the *alae* and the *Thracum cohortes* and the military of tracic origin sent to other regiments are very different. The proportion is 30:83.

The fact could be explained because the number of other regiments is much larger than those of tracic origin, which entailed a wider range of mentions in epigraphs.

Soldiers of tracica origin in *alae* appear inferior to the soldiers stationed in the *cohortes*. If it is not a fortuitous situation created by the information available, it is possible that the soldiers recruited in Thrace having great equestrian attitudes were directed more towards the mounted squadrons of the *cohortes* than towards the *alae*.

The knights of tracic origin that are documented in the auxiliary units of non-tracial origin are an evident testimony of the particular military ability of the Thracians considered excellent archers, as had previously happened with the Gauls (coming only from Gallia Lugdunense), considered excellent soldiers from the Romans.

But the reasons can be multiple. For example, for the Batavians to enter the Roman army was a way to redeem themselves. They were very poor so entering the army could aspire to something better. The army is the mirror of society.

Comparing the situation of the *alae* and the Thracum *cohortes*, in which most of the recruits of soldiers of tracic origin take place in the first century, in the case of *alae* and *cohortes* non-Thracum the supply of soldiers of Tracic origin intensified in the II and III century.

It is the 2nd century the moment of greatest recruitment in Thrace, as the impressive number of military diplomas granted to veterans show. It culminates with the record of 1000 recruited Bessi sent to Mauretania Tingitana to support the auxiliary units present in that province.

In conclusion, some considerations can be made.

The large-scale and long-lasting process of generations of Thracians in auxiliary regiments was a component of the exceptional human and material resources that Rome used. The difficult progress of Rome in the eastern regions of the Balkan peninsula, with victories and defeats, had required much diplomacy in political relations and constancy in military actions. The setting of the Traci regiments began long before the creation of the province itself, with contingents extracted from the forces of its strenuous ally, but also from the environment of wild tribes of the mountainous regions. This force constituted the central nucleus of the future first auxiliary regiments organized, equipped and trained to fight as an integral part of the Roman army. The increase in forced recruitment among the free tribes was accompanied by abuses and extortions inflamed and witnessed by discontent and revolts. It is very probable that the Roman administration will carry out its policy towards the disobedient mountain tribes of Thrace in the years following their two great uprisings. Except perhaps some of the irregular communities that have been mixed with the Galli contingents, the population could have

been encouraged to enroll in auxiliary regiments in such a large number that a considerable number of this type of unit was established and distributed to different sections of the border. Even before Thrace as a province. The number of units created in the first century is quite significant, 28 auxiliary regiments, *alae* and *cohortes* called *Thracum*.

The presence of the Thracians in the auxiliary units of the Roman army is part of a general process intentionally planned by the Roman authorities, to integrate large masses of provincials into this vast category of forces.

The Thracians were known in antiquity as excellent archers, a fact proven by hunting scenes depicted in visual art. There are three mounted archery cavalry units, specifically called *sagittarius* or *sagittariorum*. Also two cohorts of infantrymen were called *sagittaria* / *sagittariorum*. The regiments of Thracian origin have actively participated in military events inside and outside the borders. Their brave behavior in combat under various circumstances has been duly rewarded with higher titles or rewards. The epithets that some will have throughout their existence: *constantium*, *victrix*, *pia fidelis*, or distinctions as a *torquata* *enclave* are evidence of their value and their reliability in the defense of Roman values and order in wartime.

Starting perhaps from the middle of the second century AD, and especially after Septimius Severus, we find Thracians in the most prestigious military bodies in Rome: the *praetoria* cohorts, the guards riding the emperor, as well as the sailors of the Italian fleet.

If the full cultural homogeneity, in the armies of Rome, was never reached, the question certainly arises of the way in which a multiplicity of cultures and traditions merged and eventually survived.

According to a well-known theory, Rome, when it conquered a province, had clear objectives: first the security of the border, internal security and, the point that most affected my study, the possibility of recruiting soldiers.

From the epigraphic documentation we can see that, during the Imperial period, the recruits of the military Thracians (and also Dacians) constituted a massive presence in all the regiments of the Roman army.

They are used primarily and especially almost exclusively in ancillary units, which may also be "ethnic" units, such as *alae* / *cohortes Bessorum* / *Dacorum* / *Thracum*, rather than in other troops. The Thracians and the Dacians are recruited not only in ethnically *alae* or *cohortes*, but also, in different proportions, in other formations, differently connoted. This fact in itself is not surprising, because it has long been known that while maintaining the original name, *alae* and ethnic cohorts changed their composition over time, as did the recruitment system.

After answering the initial questions that, three years ago, had determined the beginning of this great research, I hope to have given a, albeit small, support to the knowledge of the recruitment of soldiers of tracic origin and of Dacian origin within the Roman army. Finally, I hope that this answer will contribute to the historical reconstruction of the Roman army and of Roman history in general.

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