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The Cult of the Capitoline Triad in Roman Dacia
-Summary-

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Summary

This paper proposes a comprehensive analysis of a distinct segment of religious life in Roman Dacia, namely the cult of the Capitoline Triad. This cult represented the official cult of the Roman state, symbolizing a mark of Romanness, and its introduction in Dacia occurred with the founding of the first Capitoline in the first colony of the province, the Colonia Dacia Sarmizegetusa. Our aim is to collect and analyze all the archaeological sources that prove the presence of this cult in the territory of Dacia. Our analysis, however, is not strictly limited to the supreme triad of the Roman pantheon as a whole, but also aims at analyzing the individual cult of each Capitoline deity. The main argument behind the choice of this theme was the lack of a complete repertory that could gather and analyze all these items from a monographic perspective. The aim is to see to what extent the cult of these deities has managed to transcend its strictly official character, illustrating a series of personal aspects, related to the individual religious beliefs and preferences of the worshippers. For this purpose, we have compiled a detailed repertory of all the known pieces in publications, which have been related to these deities. The sources collected in the repertory comprise primarily epigraphic monuments. These are supplemented by figurative material, providing a general picture of the spread of these cults within the province.

In terms of content, the present work is organized in five chapters, grouped in a first analytical section, followed by the most extensive part of the work, which includes the repertory of epigraphic and figurative monuments, which are the basis of this study. In these chapters, the cult of the Capitoline Triad, the cult of Jupiter, the cult of Juno, the cult of Minerva and the question of the cultic places and buildings dedicated to these deities are analyzed in turn. The structure of each chapter devoted to these cults comprises two main parts. The first part has an introductory role, illustrating the evolution and the main characteristics of the respective cult in the Roman world. In the second part, the different aspects of the cult in the province of Dacia are analyzed through the prism of the identified materials. On the basis of the analyzed materials, this subchapter is divided into two levels, epigraphic and iconographic.

As for the cult of the Capitoline Triad as a whole, it is poorly represented within the province, totaling only 14-15 epigraphic attestations and not even one representation identified with certainty. This situation could be explained in part by the cult's official and conservative character, as well as by the influence that the cult of Jupiter had within imperial propaganda,

monopolizing the political and ideological functions that the Capitoline Triad held. At the same time, the dedications dedicated to the Capitoline Triad have an official character, being made by persons from the high administrative apparatus of the province or city, as well as high officers or commanders in the army. For these reasons, the cult of the Capitoline Triad in Dacia appears to us as a manifestation of the political loyalty of the dedicators, without giving us any clue as to the personal religious preferences of the dedicators.

As regards the cult of Jupiter, it proves to be much more complex, accounting for the vast majority of votive dedications in the province. Thus, to date, there are 315 votive inscriptions dedicated to Jupiter and 80 representations depicting the supreme god. However, in the case of this cult as well, we have identified the same formalism in the votive dedications as in the figurative representations of the god, which fall within the classical iconographic patterns found in the rest of the Empire. The epithets encountered are the classical ones, in the vast majority of cases the epithets *Optimus Maximus*, but also other specific epithets such as *Conservator*, *Custos*, *Fulgurator*, *Victor* or *Stator*. Among the more particular epithets identified are *Cohortalis*, *Depulsor*, *Aeternus*, *Paternus*, *Montanus*, *Appenninus* or *summus exsuperantissimus*. As far as the dedicators are concerned, they seem to cover all social strata of the province, from slaves, craftsmen and freedmen to high dignitaries, governors and legion commanders. In the vast majority of cases, the political motivations for practicing the cult of Jupiter are obvious, given the positions held by the dedicators and the brief epigraphic language used in the text of the dedications. However, as we have seen, the presence of specific dedicatory formulas in some votive inscriptions hints at possible personal religious preferences of the dedicators. From case to case, these can vary from indications and oracles received in a dream, to simple dedications placed in the personal health of the dedicator or his family. All these aspects lead us to suspect in some cases a personal preference of the dedicators for the cult of Jupiter, which thus goes beyond the sphere of political interests, represented primarily by the manifestation of loyalty to the Empire.

Compared to the cult of Jupiter, the cult of the goddess Juno in Roman Dacia is minor. Few reliable representations of the goddess are known, and votive inscriptions mention Juno mostly within the Capitoline Triad or in association with Jupiter. She is venerated in Dacia primarily as a member of the Capitoline Triad and wife of the supreme god, under the name of *Iuno Regina*. Because of these aspects, the sincere religious preferences of the worshippers are difficult to identify. The cult of Juno must have enjoyed a certain popularity among women, as suggested by the dedication of Marcia Cara at Ulpia Traiana. As the patron goddess of women

and the family, Juno was probably worshipped in domestic cults, less visible in the public arena, characterized by more modest manifestations of faith that leave no archaeological traces.

The cult manifestations are not very numerous in the case of the goddess Minerva either. She is mentioned in 32 or perhaps 33 votive inscriptions, and her image can be recognized in 41 representations. Almost half of the votive inscriptions dedicated to Minerva invoke the goddess within the Capitoline Triad. Most often the goddess is invoked without an epithet, and of the epithets given, *Augusta* is the most frequent, followed by *Victrix*, *Sancta* and *Supera*. The official character of his cult is evidenced by the presence of several commanders and financial procurators among the worshippers. The analysis of epigraphic material has revealed the popularity of his cult within the army, especially among the technical and administrative staff. At the same time, the goddess has enjoyed greater popularity among intellectuals whose professions are related to the practice of writing, such as *actarii* or *librarii*. Last but not least, the goddess Minerva is also worshipped by some craftsmen. We can thus observe that the great majority of the dedicators have trades classified among those occupations under the patronage of Minerva, which leads us to consider as sincere the great majority of votive offerings dedicated to the goddess by these worshippers. In terms of figurative material, the representations of the goddess Minerva are the most varied in comparison with the other deities of the Capitoline Triad. These include, in addition to votive reliefs and statuettes, numerous smaller representations, some of a utilitarian nature, such as armor linings, ceramic molds and appliques. This variety also seems to suggest a popularity of the goddess that goes beyond the official aspects of her cult and seems to be linked to some personal preferences of the commissioners of these items. Therefore, we can consider that among the Capitoline deities, Minerva is the deity that comes closest to the needs and preferences of its worshippers, its cult going beyond the sphere of official cults, being among the deities whose cults were practiced because of a sincere devotion of their worshippers and not only because of political interests, motivated by the desire for social advancement.

With regard to the cult buildings in Dacia, they are almost absent. With the exception of the Capitolium at Ulpia Traiana, there are no other known cult buildings dedicated to the Capitoline Triad or to any of the deities that compose it. Although some temples dedicated to Jupiter are epigraphically attested in Apulum, they have not been identified in the field so far. At the same time, the various theories regarding the existence of sanctuaries in certain centers of Dacia, based on some archaeological finds, appear to us to be largely arbitrary. In most

cases, these assumptions have been made on the basis of partial investigations or isolated finds, which often cannot be conclusively linked to a specific structure.

Therefore, the cult of the Capitoline Triad in Roman Dacia had a distinctly official role, generally being practiced only by prominent figures of the provincial administration and the army. However, the main political and propagandistic functions of this cult were absorbed by the cult of Jupiter, who is often invoked without the two goddesses. For this reason, with a few exceptions that appear to reflect sincere devotion from the dedicators toward the supreme god, the vast majority of dedications fall within the sphere of political loyalty. This same official character is generally reflected in the worship of the other two goddesses as well. However, as we have seen, particularly in the case of Minerva, beyond the official gestures, the multitude of dedications to the three deities also reveals votive offerings that reflect sincere and personal feelings on the part of the worshippers. Thus, if the Capitoline Triad as a whole represents only an emanation of imperial power and the religion of political loyalty, the individual cults of the three deities manage to capture some personal gestures of the worshippers, thus portraying a much broader picture of these cults.

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Paus. = Pausanias, *Ἑλλάδος Περιήγησις*.

Plin., *HN* = Plinius Maior, *Naturalis Historia*.

Serv. = Servius, *Vergilii Aeneidos Comentarium*.

Suet. = Suetonius, *De vita caesarum*.

Livy = Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*.

Varro, *Ling.* = Varro, *De Lingua Latina*.

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