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Arrian and Procopius on the ancient village named Athens in Colchis

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Abstract: An ancient village in the southeastern Black Sea region was named Athenai (Athens) from the Hellenistic period, and probably earlier. It kept the name, in the form of Atina, down to modern times, though it is now named Pazar in Turkish. It lies between Trapezus and Apsarus on the Turkish coast.

This article discusses ancient sources on it, esp. Arrian and Procopius. These accounts seem different, but can be reconciled, while each shows its own approach and attitudes in ways that have a wider relevance to their works. Suggestions that Athenians were involved there are unpersuasive, though possible local traditions are considered here, including the local tradition of a woman named Athenaea.

Keywords: Black Sea, Caucasus, Atina, Athens, Arrian, Procopius, Athenaea, Pseudo-Scylax

Rezumat: Un sat antic din regiunea de sud-est a Mării Negre a fost numit Athenai (Atena) din perioada elenistică, poate chiar mai devreme. Satul a păstrat acest nume, sub forma Atina, până în timpurile moderne, deși acum poartă numele turcesc de Pazar. Se află între Trapezus și Apsarus, pe litoralul turcesc.

Articolul discută sursele antice despre localitate, mai cu seamă pe Arrian și Procopius. Relatările acestora par diferite, dar pot fi reconciliate, în timp ce fiecare dintre ele reflectă propria abordare și atitudine, în moduri care au o relevanță mai largă pentru operele lor. Sugestiile conform cărora atenienii ar fi fost implicați în întemeierea satului sunt neconvingătoare, deși posibilele tradiții locale sunt luate în considerare, inclusiv tradiția locală despre o femeie numită Athenaea.

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Cuvinte-cheie: Marea Neagră, Caucaz, Atina, Atena, Arrian, Procopius, Athenaea, Pseudo-Scylax

Throughout antiquity there was a general tendency to neglect the coastal stretch between the southwestern extremity of the Colchian lowland, around modern Gonio (ancient Apsarus)¹ and the short string of locations that include modern Rize (ancient Rhizaeum) and modern Trabzon (ancient Trapezus). The masters of the Black Sea and Mediterranean had fewer more obscure regions to consider, while links to the broader world of Asia were awkward and more challenging than other possible passages. Only the broad inclusiveness of myth (Argonautic, mostly) and very occasional nearby events might attract authorial attention. As a result, the region had little of grandeur to attract the interest of historians, while geographers found only a few small places that might seem worthy of mention. Here the main exception was a small settlement at a rocky anchorage-estuary which bore the extraordinary name of Athens, *Athenai* or *Athenae*, a name it shared with (amongst some others) the great city of mainland Greece, resplendent in its grand imperial history and abiding cultural achievements. In what follows we shall examine the traditions that have come down to us about this little Athens, which retained its name into modern times as Atina (now Pazar). In so doing, we shall engage in a case-study of various authorial attitudes. At the same time, we shall consider what we can know and plausibly infer about this Pontic Athens.²

Among the greatest events of this region occurred at the very beginning of the fourth century BC, when Xenophon and his Greek mercenaries finally reached the sea at Trapezus, after their famous odyssey from defeat at the battle of Cunaxa in Mesopotamia. Xenophon embodied his version of the story in his *Anabasis*.³ Among the many lessons in Xenophon's classic for students of our broad region is shifting balance of difficulty and possibility in movement through the complex human and demanding physical geography of this struggle through the mountains to the sea. For, while Xenophon's account and experience were exceptional, and the work of

¹ Archaeology progresses there, e.g. Mamuladze et al. 2016.

² Pontic Athenaion (gen. pl.) in the Crimea might have assisted us, if only our data there were not still more restricted than what we have for Pontic Athens: see Kacharava, Kvirkvelia 1991, 35; cf. 36, on *Athenae*.

³ For discussion and bibliography, see Braund 2021.

outsiders to the region in force, there is nevertheless a powerful evocation here of movement and its issues around all the Caucasus and Pontic Alps.

From the coast, at the proudly-Greek city of Trapezus, the high mountains of the Pontic Alps reached west, towards Sinope and the Hellespont beyond. The east offered options that may well have seemed a road to nowhere – or at least nowhere very appealing to the mercenaries. Westwards lay clearer prospects in more familiar regions. Xenophon relates that the notion of proceeding eastwards to Colchis caused uproar in the army.⁴ Legendary gold there, and suggestions of easy victory, seem to have attracted few of the men who had already fought their way through mountains long enough. The harsh realities of passage eastwards to Colchis will soon have become clear to any who asked local informants around Trapezus, where they were at last among Greeks, whether or not some may have begun to reconnoitre east of Rize. Even today, after considerable recent investment in roadways here, the coastal strip is extremely narrow. It is relieved only by small settlements that cluster around the outlets of streams from the mountains, most of which have still not succumbed to significant habitation. In Xenophon's day the considerable size of his so-called Ten Thousand would not have saved the Greeks from sustained assaults from on high. Already at Trapezus, Xenophon's experienced soldiers had not much enjoyed a taste of fighting the peoples of the heights. For Xenophon makes clear that those above Trapezus were tough opponents in a testing landscape. He calls them *Drillae*, while these seem also to be the warlike *Sanni* (later *Tzani* and the like) of Roman and Byzantine times.⁵

The only option eastwards that was at all plausible was to travel by sea (a land-and-sea project had no advantages). While some of the army were at home enough with sea-travel, we may infer that there was also significant reluctance. All the more so, given the uncertainties and simple ignorance that prevailed about how to move such a force along this little-known coast. There was at least substantial doubt about where a harbour might be found, and whether locals there would receive them with hospitality or violence. We may note, for example, the river of the region that Greeks then seemed to know (if at all) as “Bandits’ River.”⁶ While encouragement might be gained (as Xenophon indicates) from the movement of shipping to and fro

⁴ Xen. *Anab.* 5.6, where the name *Aeetes* in itself evoked dangers enough.

⁵ Xen. *Anab.* 5.2.

⁶ See Braund, Kakhidze 2022; Braund, Inaishvili, Kassab –Tezgör 2022.

off Trapezus, with some also stopping there presumably, that was not enough to dispel the dangerous uncertainties of such a voyage, especially in view of the Black Sea's reputation for violent storms and other hazards.

The extraordinary Mithridates VI Eupator had managed to make his way eastward onto the Colchian plain to Dioscurias (modern Sukhumi) and beyond. His journey figures among the considerable achievements with which he was credited, and reasonably so, but his case was different. As the king passed that way (details are obscure) in the 60s BC, his was a tiny band, and we hear of substantial local welcome for him, even at this time of troubles for him.⁷ This was the dawn of the Roman period in the Black Sea, but still ancient geography had offered very little on the region in general or the village named Athens more specifically. Even Strabo would be neglectful of this humble corner of his world. We can only speculate about the possible existence of lost accounts which might have helped by the first century AD – lost lines of Pseudo Scymnus perhaps, or something in the very fragmentary disquisition on the geography of the Black Sea that we know in the *Histories* of Sallust. It is not until the second century AD and Hadrian's reign that the last finds solid ground of some sort.

Around AD 132 Arrian made a seaborne journey such as Xenophon had not attempted. Arrian's sustained fascination with Xenophon made the comparison significant and inescapable. Since Arrian was governor of Cappadocia, there was some obligation upon him to tackle the task, but his commitment to the memory of Xenophon will also have played with him. After all, this challenging mission seems not to have been tried by others in his post, which may help to account for the air of abandonment that hangs over his account of the eastern Black Sea.

His emperor had laid crucial groundwork, too. For his imperial visit to Trapezus had drawn to him a flock of local rulers and kinglets from near and far. Arrian knew much more about the geography of the region than Xenophon could have known. Corbulo's energetic mapping of Caucasian parts under Nero may well have embraced this obscure coast, especially in view of the growing military importance of Roman supply by way of Trapezus.⁸ Arrian could also be reasonably confident of good enough

⁷ Set in reliable context by McGing 1986.

⁸ See Pliny, *NH* 6.40; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.39 on Trapezus. The wars of AD 69 had also brought some focus to obscure parts of this coast, as Tac. *Hist.* 3.47-8 indicates. Presumably the

receptions as he followed the coast towards Colchis. In fact, he writes a little about that in his *Periplus*, which I have discussed at some length in this regard elsewhere.⁹ However, there was still a significant concern about banditry, as well as the inescapable risks of bad weather and shipwreck. Clearly, sea-travel was most attractive in this region, while roads were poor and minimal, though we should not overstate the ability of locals, in particular, to find ways around their terrain.¹⁰ And, of course, the sea retained many of its horrors even for a Roman governor. Arrian's inclusion of a trireme in his flotilla of cargo vessels may result from abiding anxiety about pirates, too.¹¹

It is in this context that we have our first reliable indications about Pontic Athens, a tiny settlement in the central part of this coastal stretch. Its name is striking: thanks to Arrian, it was not overlooked by Stephanus of Byzantium, whose Byzantine compendium of cities and peoples listed the little place, last, at the end of his short mention of locations named Athens, nine in total. The name mattered to Arrian, as he conveys to his philhellene emperor. As Arrian tells his story, it was a grave storm that caused Arrian's flotilla to seek shelter at Pontic Athens and stop there for two days, but he could hardly have simply passed by a place that bore the name of Greece's renowned cultural capital. Of course Arrian was sensitive to his emperor's massive concern with the great city of Athens, where he had done so much to stamp his name on the city and bring it up to a new physical standard, for example by finally completing its great temple of Olympian Zeus, whose construction had begun as long ago as the time of Pisistratus in the sixth century BC, only a few centuries short of a millennium before.¹² As throughout the *Periplus*, we see the author's interweaving of the practicalities of government and his own activities with a much wider cultural sensibility, which was no doubt welcome to this notably philhellenic emperor. It would be no great surprise if that mixture of concerns featured to some extent also in the Latin letter which Arrian also sent his emperor, apparently not for

formation of the enlarged province of Cappadocia under Vespasian, as well as later concerns of Domitian and Trajan, kept returning Roman imperial minds to the eastern Euxine.

⁹ See Braund, Kakhidze 2022.

¹⁰ Further, Manoledakis 2022, 395, stressing the difficulties; cf. Bryer, Winfield 1985, *passim*.

¹¹ Arr. *Per.* 4 writes of *the* trireme, implying only one, which might also be taken to indicate that the anxiety was not great, for the governor could have called upon more to accompany him.

¹² Suet. *Aug.* 60 indicates concern with the history of this project under Hadrian. Further, Boatwright 2000.

public viewing.¹³ We should also bear in mind Arrian's roots in Bithynian Nicomedia, located on the brink of the Black Sea and with its own strong literary traditions, which included Pontic geography, as best illustrated by the author we call Pseudo-Scymnus, who wrote for a Bithynian king around 100 BC.¹⁴

Arrian's extended storm dramatises the hazards of sea-travel along this coast, around the Black Sea, and as a feature of classical culture more generally. The tiny Athens offered some shelter, which meant that his flotilla suffered limited damage. The small harbour there offered some protection from some winds, as also did the offshore outcrop he mentions, which is presumably the rock which now bears the remains of an Ottoman-period fortress (see Figs. 1 and 2). However, Arrian is clear that there was only limited shelter for his vessels at the coast here. Some ships, perhaps the majority, had to be pulled up onto land. Arrian quietly demonstrates the general success of his response to the storm, from which his party suffered much less damage than might have occurred without his leadership and decision-making, as he implies, rather as Xenophon had had the habit of doing to claim credit. Meanwhile, he largely resists the temptation to expand on the nature of the two-day storm, though that was a favourite literary theme that he might have exploited. Curiously, he says little about Pontic Athens itself. We are told that good timber was available, as usual on this coast, so that repairs could be made after the storm. He is entirely silent about the local population of the town, though his account finds space for mention of local authorities elsewhere on this coast.¹⁵ At our Athens, their advice was no doubt key to his successful response to the storm, and he presumably also benefited from local assistance in the process of timber-gathering and repairs. At the very least, the locals were acquiescent. He suggests that the place was inhabited, as we should expect in view of its relative attractions by the standards of local geography here. The modern name of the town, Pazar, is anodyne, but the name means "Market" in Turkish, which may encourage us to infer that this was a likely focus of exchange and economic activity in ancient times, at however humble a level. We may be sure enough that pastoralist movements through the seasons took flocks, people, and goods up and down between the mountain pastures and the coast in a regular

¹³ *Per.* 13.

¹⁴ See Braund 2019a; see also Bowie 2022.

¹⁵ Further, Braund, Kakhidze 2022.

rhythm of transhumance, while (as also elsewhere in the Caucasian area) upland populations tend to exploit passages that run both across and transversely through such ranges, here potentially to the motley valley of the river Acampsis-Boas, as it was variously named in antiquity.¹⁶

As to the civic fabric of Pontic Athens, Arrian comments only on as sanctuary (*hieron*) that clearly stood out in this little place (a *khoriion*, as he calls it). For him, it was Greek, though he does not explain further, except to state that it was the sanctuary of Athena. We may imagine a temple in this sanctuary, but Arrian does not mention one. Indeed, the modern tendency to translate *hieron* here as “temple” does not assist clarity. While there may have been a temple of some kind, and while Arrian may have considered that structure Greek, we are not really told as much. It may have been enough for Arrian that the sanctuary belonged to Athena, as he understood the matter: that was Greek enough, perhaps, without any Greek-style structure, or Hellenic rituals there. No word of a statue or inscriptions, such as had attracted his attention at Trapezus, where the emperor himself was involved, of course.¹⁷ At least, this apparently Greek sanctuary set Pontic Athens apart from the other small places he found between Rize and Apsarus. This was at least a hint of Greekness there, even a tiny reflection¹⁸ of the cityscape of its famous namesake – complete with the goddess Athena herself. A welcome discovery for Arrian, no doubt, which makes his brevity all the more striking. However, Arrian suggests no grandeur in Pontic Athens. Wood was the obvious building material here, and wooden structures might be considered Greek enough, as Herodotus had declared of Gelonus.¹⁹ Remarkably, while Herodotus had spoken of festivals and Greek cult in regard to his timber temples in Scythia, Arrian is strikingly brief. If he had not explicitly indicated that the settlement at Pontic Athens was inhabited, we might well have inferred that it had been deserted. But he tells us that it had not. Otherwise, he specifies, with the limited harbour-mooring (*ormos*), only a stronghold, which he considers neglected. He does not say that it was abandoned or useless, and we should note his recurrent tendency to comment critically on such installations in the region, as at Apsarus and Phasis, where he took the

¹⁶ On this river and its valley, see Braund, Inaishvili, Kassab –Tezgör 2022.

¹⁷ *Periplus* 1, where we may note his contempt for local culture, as it seems. See Hodkinson 2005; Rood 2011.

¹⁸ Hodkinson points out the playful (or condescending?) tone of Arrian’s treatment of Pontic Athens.

¹⁹ Compare Herodotus’ claims of Greekness among wooden structures in the Scythian interior: Hdt. 4.108-9.

matter in hand. From the very beginning at Trapezus, Arrian, the governor of a great province and associate of the emperor himself, treats Pontic Athens and the rest of the region with an open disdain. This was, after all, an obscure corner of the Roman empire, made interesting by its very obscurity and by its links to great myth and epic tales, most obviously the Argonautic poems. The locals may be mentioned as informants on current practice and interpretation, but they are unreliable even in those limited ways – awful sculpture at Trapezus, barbarous Greek, and a bungled attempt to identify a relic of the great days of the Argonauts at Phasis – here the great governor is quick to offer a better view, evidently confident in his superiority to the locals in all matters.²⁰ Arrian's remarks on Pontic Athens maintain and express these attitudes clearly enough. For there is a strong note of irony in his closing words on this version of Athens – not an abandoned and anonymous place, he seems to say, while clearly viewing the name as ludicrously inappropriate and the small place as all but abandoned, for it appears in his account wholly devoid of locals. While suggesting that the storm had caused him to do the right thing and see this Athens, his gratitude is hollow, however welcome the shelter had been in his time of need. Any port is good in a storm but this was no Athens.

It is the name, the storm and Arrian's claim to good leadership that dominate his account of Pontic Athens. At the same time, his silence on locals there surely speaks volumes. If they had seemed to him to be significantly Greek, he would surely have said as much, but it is only Athena's sanctuary that raised the issue of Greekness for him, with no indication of what currently did or did not happen there. The sanctuary answered for him (albeit without great insistence) the more general and perhaps more interesting question as to how this obscure little place came to be called Athens. It was probably a derivation from the name of Athena herself, he suggests. But he does not attempt to explain how the goddess came to be in this rather unlikely spot. In particular, he says nothing of former Greek settlement there, nor of any explanation that local informants may have offered. For we may be sure that the arrival of the mighty governor of Cappadocia in some force had prompted immediate and intense interest among the leaders of the isolated little town, more used to traders and fishermen – including the vessels which Xenophon had seen sailing off Trapezus. What had the local elite of little Athens had to say about the name

²⁰ *Per.* 9-10.

of their town and its history, we may wonder. Arrian shows no interest and says nothing of them or their words.

Perhaps they had gone so far as to indulge in fantasies of foundation by Athenians. Certainly, some modern writers have been attracted by the notion,²¹ which a local elite might have favoured in principle – though we are nowhere told that here it did in fact. For the very idea was profoundly implausible, while Athena may have gained a presence in many a way. It is true, of course, that Athenians had settled on the north coast of Turkey, but on lush lands to the west, at Sinope and Amisus nearby, where the name Piraeus figured briefly. It is true also that Pericles' pioneering voyage into the Black Sea around 437 was said to have covered a substantial area. Crucially, however, there was no good reason for Athenians to settle at woebegone Pontic Athens, isolated, poor and dangerous. Even a shipwrecked band of Athenians there would have done their very best (rather as Xenophon's comrades) to get out of his area as fast as they might, while imperial Athens can have had no ambition to create a viable outpost here, even at the brief acme of its power. The idea of an Athenian settlement as the reason for the little town's name is wholly unsustainable in the face of these practical concerns, while no extant authority actually claims the truth of such a notion. These observations on Arrian's account are especially important, if we seek to gauge its reliability and precision on Pontic Athens. He had not intended to stop there at all, it seems, until the storm required that he must. The locals were of minimal interest to him there, unlike the various rulers that he mentions or meets elsewhere on this journey. There seems to be no significant military installation there, and no sign of a military force, however small, that might have required his inspection or payment. His presence there was a matter of chance, and his remarks are cursory. We may even doubt that he personally visited the neglected stronghold he mentions, or the Greek sanctuary of Athena. There was important work to be done in overseeing the repairs needed by his flotilla, while the weather remained challenging until his departure. Possibly he did no more than send an adjutant to look around the place and report back to him. His only interest there, beyond shelter and repairs, was the name of this little Athens in a far corner of his world, somehow absurd in the parallel with the great Athens of his emperor and his hero, Xenophon the Athenian, insofar as its name implied such a comparison of complete unequals. Accordingly, Arrian offers an explanation of the name, which does little to connect the great city and the tiny village. He suggests that both derive their

²¹ See Çoşkun 2019, valuably gathering texts, previous scholarship, and opinions.

name from Athena, but without reference to any local view or tradition in Pontic Athens. At least he is clear that his suggestion is no more than speculation (*"it seems to me"*: *Per.* 4.1). In so doing, he gives no reason at all to suspect that the village had been settled by Athenians at some stage.²² And rightly so. For, while Athenians did settle in the Black Sea region at times, notably in the aftermath of Pericles' expedition there around 437 BC, the very thought of Athenian settlers at this wild outpost is surely unsustainable – here was no Sinope or Amisus, no major city, with fine lands and connections to a wider world.

Procopius claims that some in antiquity too think that Athenian colonists (*apoikoi*) founded Pontic Athens. It is unfortunate that he does not identify them, or even make it clear whether he has in mind authors or general opinion, nor how strongly the idea was held. We may compare traditions on the piratical Achaeans, on the northern coast opposite Pontic Athens, who were sometimes held to be descended from Achaeans from mainland Greece who had been separated from the main body of the expedition to Troy (usually by a storm) and had been abandoned to their uncertain fate, so that they even held a grudge against Greeks thereafter – a neat context for their piracy.²³ However, the origin-story of the Achaeans was still more flimsy than the rest of the nest of traditions around the Trojan War, while we are left to wonder whether some claimed that the Athenians who settled Pontic Athens were similarly castaways from the expedition to Troy, the compatriots of those Athenians who did make it to the great siege of Troy. For we need not limit our sense of ancient imagining on Athenian settlement to the historical centuries.²⁴ Of course, Procopius mentions such notions of Athenian settlement only to dismiss them as invalid. Instead, he offers an origin for the name that has not been mentioned in any previous ancient text that we know. Procopius does not identify his source, or even indicate whether it was written, oral, or both. Arrian had certainly given a rather different account of Pontic Athens, and with a rather different attitude. But it should be stressed that Procopius' version is far more reconcilable with Arrian's than seems generally to have been realised among modern scholars.

There is no need, and scant basis, to give priority either to Arrian or to Procopius in the matter of Pontic Athens. Arrian's autopsy is important, but we cannot be sure how much he had actually examined the place and

²² See Braund 2005 in detail.

²³ They themselves had evolved into barbarians, according to the story: see e.g. Gabbert 1986.

²⁴ Further, Erskine 2001.

how far his disdain for this poor Athens has coloured his perception and account, addressed to a similarly disdainful emperor in all likelihood. As for Procopius, our author is unlikely to have visited the place, but he may well have been drawing on the words of sources who had been there, and conceivably even some governmental record at Byzantium. For the eastern Black Sea had acquired a significance and proximity to power in Procopius' sixth century that had been lacking in the days of Arrian and Hadrian, some 400 years before, and in a quite different world order and political geography. However, we may gain benefit from considering our two principal authorities together, as might have been done by earlier scholars, who have had little to say about Procopius in particular in this matter.

Procopius writes, in the fuller of his two passages in regard to Pontic Athens:

καὶ κώμη τις, Ἀθῆναι ὄνομα, ἐνταῦθα οἰκεῖται, οὐχ ὅτι Ἀθηναίων ἀποικοί, ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται, τῇδε ἰδρύσαντο, ἀλλὰ γυνή τις Ἀθηναία ὄνομα ἐν τοῖς ἄνω χρόνοις κυρία ἐγεγόνει τῆς χώρας, ἥσπερ ὁ τάφος ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ ἐστὶ.

A certain village named Athens is settled there,²⁵ not because Athenian settlers established it there, as some think, but because a certain woman named Athenaea in former times became mistress of this land, whose tomb is there down to my day.²⁶

Like Arrian, Procopius makes clear that this Athens is a village, but he shows none of the governor's condescension. He names no sources, but claims up-to-date knowledge, insofar as he states that the tomb of Athenaea is still there. Arrian had said nothing of this, but he had mentioned a Greek-style sanctuary, so that we may well suspect that Procopius is referring to the sanctuary that Arrian had taken to belong to Athena. For there was an easy slippage between the names of Athena and Athenaea, and there was so little to note in Pontic Athens (as it seems) that two different religious centres there with such similar names seem hard to imagine. Moreover, no author mentions the two together. Meanwhile, Athena herself appears nowhere in Procopius' brief

²⁵ That is, between the Romans and the Lazi.

²⁶ Procopius, *Wars* 8.2.10-11

sketch of the little place, nor does the stronghold that held more interest for the governor, as we have seen, than the Byzantine historian. Both authors are attracted by the name of Athens, shared with the great city of Greece proper. Where Arrian sees Athena and absurdity, Procopius offers a local history, centred on a certain Athenaea, a past ruler of the place. Possibly her name and story were part of broader notions of Amazons in and around the region, though Procopius does not make that connection, while he also tends to rationalise Amazon myth.²⁷ Alternatively, we might compare the story of Athenaea here with the remarkable females who occasionally appear in key roles in the early history of Greek colonial settlements elsewhere. A Black Sea instance would be Hermonassa, who had (it was said) emerged as the mistress of a new colonial settlement of the northern Pontus, on the Taman peninsula of south Russia. For among the local traditions of Hermonassa we hear of her leadership in the aftermath of the death of her husband, a certain Semandros, an oikist from Mytilene, whose name means “Tomb of the Husband”. The complexities of tradition around Hermonassa are considerable, but her case serves to illustrate how a female leader might emerge after the death of her husband, as well as the role of a tomb, as better known for Heraclea Pontica, Abdera in Aegean Thrace and elsewhere.²⁸ We should observe too the importance of the tomb of Apsyrtus and its claimed link to the name of Apsarus, along the Black Sea coast from Pontic Athens, as both Arrian and Procopius mention. These two proximate cases may suggest a local taste for traditions concerning naming, tombs, and early settlement-history on this coast.

No firm conclusions are available, but Procopius’ Athenaiia is sufficiently unusual to raise suspicion that Arrian’s Athena was an error, brought on by his general disrespect for Pontic Athens and its people. All the more so, if we accept the hint of local knowledge that seems to be implied by Procopius’ assertion that Athenaiia’s tomb was still to be seen there in his own day, albeit most probably not seen by Procopius himself. However, there is also a disquieting surprise in Procopius’ account of the region, which has been neglected, too. For in another section of his *Wars* his narrative simply asserts in passing that Rize (Rhizaeum), located on the coast between Athens and Trapezus, “is also called Athens”. It is hard to avoid the explanation that Procopius was confused at this juncture, though that need not mean that he

²⁷ See *Wars* 2.3.3-7; 8.2-3.

²⁸ On Hermonassa, see Braund 2019b, esp. on Arrian, *Bithynica* fr.55. On Heraclea and much else, see Malkin 1987, esp. 204-40. For Abdera, see also Graham 2001; Adak, Thonemann 2022.

was confused or in error about Athenaea and her tomb. We may also wonder whether any confusion arises from scribal error, where a copyist's note may have been brought into the body of the text, as if the work of Procopius himself.

Finally, we have seen how attempts to link the name of Pontic Athens to a real settlement do not persuade, so that we are dealing here with traditions, variously local and more widespread. The lack of access to brute reality is inevitably frustrating, but it must be stressed that what was believed was at least as important as any simple truth that we might hope to find with regard to the origins of any name. In this instance, our source material for hard etymology is weak, though we maybe tempted to speculate about how Athenai might have emerged from the various earlier names that we have for places in this area, perhaps as local non-Greek names evolved into toponyms that sounded easier or somehow preferable to Greek ears, and so entered our Greek sources.²⁹ Both Arrian and Procopius indicate in their different terms how the name Athens seemed both familiar and peculiar to the few who took an interest in this obscure corner of their world. Their responses to the name, as well as Stephanus of Byzantium's inclusion of this little place, show how a name may be significant, however it may have come into being, and even when (perhaps especially when) its origins were in profound dispute, as in the case of this Black Sea village of Athens.

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²⁹ Agreement on earlier names for Pontic Athens has proved difficult among modern scholars, and such it is: e.g. Manoledakis 2022, 384; Shipley 2024, 1.216 on Pseudo-Scylax 83.

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Illustrations



1. The offshore rock today, viewed from the mainland.
Photo: E. Kakhidze



2. The offshore rock in the 1930s, viewed from the sea.
From Rickmer Rickmers 1934.

Genitalia sibi devinxit

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Abstract: Issued from a rather insignificant Oriental sacerdotal dynasty of a semi-nomadic ancestry, Elagabalus seemed unfit to rule an Empire whose imagery of power and religious traditions varied considerably from those deeply embedded into the minds of his people of origin. His typical conduct, even if seen immoral, pervert, depraved, etc. could be perceivable through the perspective of a well-defined cultural Eastern legacy. It was not for the first time when the Romans encountered and coped with Oriental cults and customs on their soil, due to their having adopted the Idaean Mother along with her own *chorus cinaedorum* that dissuaded poets like Juvenal. But to fully support an Oriental-type sovereign trying to replace values of their own, that was hardly bearable.

Keywords: Elagabalus, depravity, ritual emasculation, Bassiani, circumcision

Rezumat: Provenit dintr-o dinastie sacerdotală orientală mai degrabă modestă, cu o ascendență semi-nomadă, Elagabalus părea nepotrivit să conducă un Imperiu ale cărui imagini ale puterii și tradiții religioase se deosebeau considerabil de cele adânc înrădăcinate în mentalitățile poporului său de origine. Comportamentul său tipic, chiar dacă era considerat imoral, pervers, depravat etc., ar putea fi perceput prin perspectiva unei moșteniri culturale orientale bine conturate. Nu era pentru prima dată când romanii aveau de-a face cu astfel de culte și trebuiau să facă față și obiceiurilor orientale pe teritoriul lor, dat fiind faptul că o adoptaseră deja pe Mama Ideană împreună cu propriul ei *chorus cinaedorum*, fapt care i-a dezamăgit pe unii poeți precum Juvenal. Dar să susțină pe deplin un suveran de tip oriental care încerca să le înlocuiască propriile valori cele ale sale, deja era un lucru greu de suportat.

Cuvinte-cheie: Elagabalus, depravare, emasculare rituală, Bassiani, circumcizie

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When the Sun of the Bassiani was risen, Syria was far from being a homogeneous region. It was rather like Anatolia, a *melting pot*, where different types of populations, with their religious conceptions, social practices, and commercial routes met. Despite its positioning in close proximity to the sea, the Emesenes were rather continental-oriented. Emesa was at the crossroads of some important international trade routes. It had strong connections with Petra and its spice route, with Palmyra (situated only 60 kilometres North-East), with Hatra in Northern Mesopotamia, Edessa in Osrhoene and the kingdom of Commagene, all very important gateways for the commerce with the Middle East and Central Asia³⁰. This is how aristocratic families of Emesa became enormously rich.

When Strabo mentions the Emesenes, he includes them in the category of the ‘Scenite’ Arabs, because they were pastoralists living in the tents (*scenae*), an accentuation of their semi-nomadic origin. Both Cicero and Strabo designate their rulers as mere phylarchs of the Arabs, while Dio, when referring to their sovereign Iamblichos I, he reminds him as a ‘king of some Arabs’³¹. Arethusa was still their capital during Sampsigeramus I, but then the capital was moved to Emesa. Their kings bore mostly theophoric names like Sampsigeramus (connected to the sun god Shamash)³², Iamblichus (‘a hypochoristic of “Yamlik’el” which would mean “El reign”’³³), Sohaemus (connoting blackness, probably of the cult stone), or Azizus (one of the two Arab star deities, equivalent to the Greek Dioscuri)³⁴. According to Michaela Konrad, the inventory of some tombs from the Tall Abū Shābūn necropolis of Homs, especially those of Sampsigeramus II and his son, may indicate close connections to ceremonial clothing of kings and priest-kings of steppe cultures (‘tunics, trousers and tiaras adorned with small golden fittings’)³⁵, as well as with those of Palmyra and Hatrene kings³⁶. The members of the dynasty became reliable allies of Romans as client kings and had strong connections, including family ties, with all important client kings in the area (Cappadocian, Armenian, Commagenian and Pontic). It was most probably

³⁰ Pietrzykowski 1986, 1811; Levick 2007, 6-7.

³¹ Levick 2007, 10; Butcher 2003, 91-92.

³² Pietrzykowski 1986, 1812; Silva 2018.

³³ Levick 2007, 15.

³⁴ Levick 2007, 18.

³⁵ Konrad 2017, 270.

³⁶ Konrad 2017, 273-5.

during the rule of Azizus in AD 53 that the habit of circumcision was adopted, because of his marriage to Drusilla, the sister of Agrippa II, who was a nephew of Herod³⁷.

The pantheon and cultural traditions of the Emesenes were in fact very eclectic with mostly west-Semitic, Arab and Aramaic deities, but of different origins³⁸. Barbara Levick even states that 'Investigations into the religious life in the area surrounding Emesa revealed the same mix of west Semitic, Babylonian, and Arab as at Hatra and Palmyra, though they conclude that the range of deities on offer there are restrained by comparison. Chaldaean influence has also been detected at Emesa, and the mausoleum of Sampsigeramus is described as being of Mesopotamian type. Topmost is the Semitic, Arab, and originally Babylonian deity El or Il'³⁹. Ilah hag-Gabal, or the god of the mountain, has paradoxically the same type of meaning as Dushara/Dusares of the Nabateans, translated similarly as 'Lord of the mountains' and represented by an aniconic black stone⁴⁰. In fact, the cult of baetyls was widespread in the entire Orient, mostly to the Semitic populations, a reality that made authors like Clement of Alexandria to comment that 'the Arabs worship stones'⁴¹. Other deities venerated in Emesa, like Astarte, Azizos, Monimos, Allath or Atargatis are encountered basically in many local pantheons in the area⁴².

The function of high priest of Elagabal was transmitted to the descendants of the Bassiani, whose family name came from 'bassus', which denominated exactly this kind of function, even if it resonated like a Roman common one. Like their grandfather on matrilineal side, whose name was Julius Bassianus, Varius Avitus (the future Elagabalus) and his cousin Gessius Alexianus (the future Severus Alexander) became also priests of this god. It is probable that they were connected to the royalty, but that is not yet certain.

Of all the main literary contemporary sources related to Varius Avitus Bassianus, none has a minimum of objectivity or at least impartiality in reflecting the image of the emperor. All of them have an interest in vilifying his image and are not concerned at all in explaining the possible motivations of his actions, whether he was or not urged by a specific cultural heritage or a certain

³⁷ Sullivan 1978, 211-5; Butcher 2003, 95-96.

³⁸ Frey 1989, 45-65.

³⁹ Levick 2007, 15; Silva 2018, 37-8.

⁴⁰ Le Bihan 2015, 61. Hammond 1973, 95: "Lord (*dhu*) of the Shara (Mountains)".

⁴¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptikos*, IV, 46, 2; Sanchez Sanchez 2018, 49-50.

⁴² Frey 1989, 65.

Oriental religious *paideia*. In our opinion, as we shall see, it was not only the question for him of *what* he did, but *how* and *why* he was driven and motivated in doing so. And this was probably the most intriguing part. It is worth noting that neither Herodian, nor Cassius Dio were in Rome at the moment of the emperor's accession to the throne or during his short reign. Besides, the 79th book of Dio that we have is merely an abbreviation of Xiphilinus.

Of these literary sources, Herodian seems to come with a more sober and balanced story. In other instances, due to the errors he makes, Herodian is not credited as a full trustworthy source, but in this specific situation, due to Dio's clear hostility and emotional involvement, he seems more reliable than Dio. As an Antiochian, Herodian knew very well the religious and cultural context associated with the cult of Elagabal, and therefore does not try to judge the emperor and his obscenities like Dio, but limits himself to the presentation of facts being, as Pietrzykowski states, 'a more objective and better-informed source'⁴³. He knew Dio's writing very well. Chrysanthou and Rowan insists on the interdependence, if not even intertextuality, of these literary sources. In many instances, Herodian seems to correct Dio's views and stories that seem different to him. There are also numerous details that we only know from Herodian, like the description of the baetyl of Emesa, the great procession involving the black stone in Rome, or the image sent by the emperor from Nicomedia to Rome to be placed on the Senate house above the altar of the goddess Victoria (so that the entering senators to offer the traditional sacrifice and pay their homage both to the emperor and his god)⁴⁴.

The hostility of both Dio and the writer of *Historia Augusta* is shown overtly: 'He was the last of the Antonines (though many think that later the Gordians had the cognomen Antoninus, whereas they were really called Antonius and not Antoninus), *a man so detestable for his life, his character, and his utter depravity that the senate expunged from the records even his name*. I myself should not have referred to him as Antoninus save for the sake of identification, which frequently makes it necessary to use even those names which officially have been abolished.' (HA, 18) The same idea is expressed in the introductory passage of the HA: 'The life of Elagabalus Antoninus, also called Varius, I should never have put in writing—hoping that it might not be known that he was emperor of the Romans—, were it not that before him this same imperial office had had a Caligula, a Nero, and a Vitellius. But, just

⁴³ Pietrzykowski 1986, 1809.

⁴⁴ Frey 1989, 9; Pietrzykowski 1986, 1815.

as the selfsame earth bears not only poisons but also grain and other helpful things, not only serpents but flocks as well, so the thoughtful reader may find himself some consolation for these monstrous tyrants by reading of Augustus, Trajan, Vespasian, Hadrian, Pius, Titus, and Marcus. At the same time he will learn of the Romans' discernment, in that these last ruled long and died by natural deaths, whereas the former were murdered, dragged through the streets, officially called tyrants, and no man wishes to mention even their names'⁴⁵.

The opposition between Elagabalus and Severus Alexander is very well contrasted both by the Bithynian senator and Herodian. The latter even comforts us with the idea that Alexander was of a kind character and characterized by clemency and philanthropy (Herodian 6, 1, 6-7), and if it hadn't been for the greed of his mother, his rule would have been perfect (Herodian 6, 1, 6-7)⁴⁶.

Like the author of the *HA*, Dio does not follow the same narrative techniques in order to discredit the image of the emperor, in the sense of promoting mostly the **ethnic stereotype** of a *barbarian* that came to the throne of Rome. Thus, even when he uses the epithets that make reference to the foreigners (besides that of the most common 'pseudo-Antoninus'), i.e. the 'Assyrian' and 'Sardanapal', they concern most specifically his effeminacy, passive sexual orientation, debauchery, lack of self-control and his excesses of all kinds due to his passionate frenzy nature of his character.

The emperor was chasing his own chimeras by utterly neglecting the values of the Roman citizens and treating them as subjects in a manner that the Oriental sovereigns did. This attitude not only displeased the aristocratic conservative layers of the society, but managed to outrage them. The passage from *HA*, 20 states that: 'He often showed contempt for the senate, calling them slaves in togas, while he treated the Roman people as the tiller of a single farm and the equestrian order as nothing at all. He frequently invited the city-prefect to a drinking-bout after a banquet and also summoned the prefects of the guard, sending a master of ceremonies, in case they declined, to compel them to come'. But what we are dealing with in this case is a **double cultural misunderstanding** or, as Martin Frey named it, '**a mutual misunderstanding**': 'Elagabal's attempt at religious reform thus initially failed due to mutual misunderstanding, but also due to the lack of

⁴⁵ See Gariboldi 2008.

⁴⁶ Furtado 2020, 194.

willingness on both sides to discard their own traditions and preconceived codes of behaviour'⁴⁷. Because Elagabalus chose to neglect his duties as a Roman emperor and as a *pontifex maximus* as he was expected to do mostly by the senatorial elite, the reaction was that they did not even bother to understand his own personal motivations, as we can see in Cassius Dio's attitude mostly. Both Frey and Sanchez Sanchez underline the fact that it would have been no major problem if the emperor had not had introduced the cult of Elagabal in such an abrupt manner, due to the Roman tolerance regarding foreign cults in general⁴⁸. The alternative was either to introduce the god through the backstage door as Sulla did with the Anatolian Ma while erecting her a sanctuary on the Tiberine island as *Bellona pulvinensis* or *insulensis* or to follow the common Roman procedure of summoning the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* with a petition to formally introduce Elagabal into the Roman pantheon, as few centuries before this procedure was performed to adopt Kybele as Magna Mater deum Idaea. Yet, an aniconic deity like Elagabal 'proved to be diffuse in its conceptualization by the Romans'⁴⁹. But time was not running in emperor's favour. So he acted giving mostly pre-eminence to his cult, to the despair of Dio and conservative members of the society. Thus, according to Cassius Dio (79, 11, 1): 'Closely related to these irregularities was his conduct in the matter of Elagabalus. The offence consisted, not in his introducing a foreign god into Rome or in his exalting him in very strange ways, but in his *placing him even before Jupiter himself* and causing himself to be voted his priest, also in his circumcising himself and abstaining from swine's flesh, on the ground that his devotion would thereby be purer. *He had planned, indeed, to cut off his genitals altogether, but that desire was prompted solely by his effeminacy; the circumcision* which he actually carried out was a part of the priestly requirements of Elagabalus, and he accordingly *mutilated* many of his companions in like manner. Furthermore, he was frequently seen even in public clad in the barbaric dress which the Syrian priests use, and this had as much to do as anything with his receiving the nickname of "The Assyrian"'. As we can see, for Cassius Dio, even circumcision itself was perceived as an act of mutilation.

⁴⁷ Frey 1989, 71.

⁴⁸ Frey 1989, 73-79; Sanchez Sanchez 2018, 48-49.

⁴⁹ Sanchez Sanchez 2018, 50.

But maybe it was not only all about this introduction of his personal and dynastic local cult that matter. He tried to equate and venerate all the aspects of sacredness that could be put in connection to his religious system of values from the region of origin, by imagining theogamies between his god and two different goddesses, trying to make an offspring from a sacred union between him as high priest and a Vestal virgin as the purest representative of another important goddess, and becoming interested in the cults that had similar religious practices and representations like grandiose processions and exotic ceremonies, that involved games with ostentatious display of luxury (*tryphe*), betylic idols, ritual emasculations, effeminate priests, etc. and trying to gather as many as sacred objects from very different religious systems that could have a resonance into his sacred imagery (i.e. the Palladium, the sacred shields of the Salii etc.). According to the *HA*, the same would do Severus Alexander years later in his private prayer room and nobody got scandalized because of that. Elagabalus would thus try to integrate all these useful elements of sacredness in his own system of values. It is not thus by hazard that two curious passages of Cassius Dio and *HA* mention his adoption of the cult of the Anatolian Cybele. Dio's text that we mentioned above (79, 11, 1-2) associates his supposed ritual emasculation to the idea of physical softness, effeminacy, and weakness to pleasures. Yet, the passage of the *HA* (7, 2) seems to be more accurate regarding the ritual dances he was performing together with the emasculated *galli* of Cybele: 'He also adopted the worship of the Great Mother and celebrated the rite of the *taurobolium*; and he carried off her image and the sacred objects which are kept hidden in a secret place. He would toss his head to and fro among the castrated devotees of the goddess, and *he infibulated himself*, and did all that the eunuch-priests are wont to do; and the image of the goddess — which he carried off he placed in the sanctuary of his god.' Yet, it could not be the case of infibulation or castration or any form of genital mutilation. Such an operation was totally forbidden to a Roman citizen, whose body was considered inviolable. He should thus imitate the ritual gestures of Archigalli, high priests of Cybele that were normally chosen among the Roman citizens, could have their own families, but were never got emasculated. Besides, the text here clearly specifies *genitalia sibi devinxit*, which actually means that he bound up or fastened up the genitals in order to reduce their external visibility to the minimum condition.

According to Frey's theory, Elagabalus did not try from the very beginning to impose this pre-eminence of his god. This religious experiment

was perceived by Pietrzykowski and Turcan as a clear attempt to introduce henoteism in Rome⁵⁰. In the first place, he tried to win the favours of the Roman aristocracy by marrying a very wealthy noblewoman, Julia Cornelia Paula, whom he eventually divorced because of a mark on her body. Even if this could be seen as a stupid arbitrariness, in Semitic religious traditions, flawlessness imposed on the body of the priests or priestesses must have been a prerequisite, hence his decision. And this could also explain his need to marry Aquilia Severa as she was the highest and the most distinguished priestess in Rome, flawless in every respect⁵¹. But his impetus to impose Elagabal above the other gods must have come after the beginning of 220, when even on the military diplomas his title of '*Sacerdos amplissimus dei invicti Solis Elagabali*' started to precede that of the *pontifex maximus*⁵².

Elagabalus was the only emperor who succeeded the performance of being twice consecrated. First, when he became the high priest of his personal god of Emesa, whom he so assiduously served. Then, at the moment of his earthly ending, when the Romans beat him to death, cut his body into pieces and threw the remains into the Tiber. By doing so, he became the scapegoat of the Romans, filthy and impure, for he was doomed and consecrated as a *sacer* to the gods of the netherworld⁵³. The *Cloaca Maxima* thus became the *mundus* of their propitiatory offering to appease the supernatural powers in order to restore the natural peace with the gods⁵⁴. Double was the *damnatio* as well⁵⁵. Not only the name of the emperor was erased from the epigraphic documents, but also the local initiatives like those of the Anatolian cities or Alexandria ceased. The black stone was returned to its sanctuary of origin and the cult endured having only a regional importance as before.

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⁵⁰ Pietrzykowski 1986, 1823-24.

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Soldiers on the Move. Legio V Macedonica's Tile Stamps and the Deployment of Vexillations in the 2nd-4th centuries AD

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Abstract: From the 1st to the 4th century AD, various literary and epigraphic sources talk about the deployment of vexillations of the Fifth Macedonian Legion. For the history of the movements of the soldiers of the Fifth Macedonian Legion, we should combine the data from literary sources with three different epigraphic *corpora*: firstly, the epigraphic mentions of the vexillations of this legion in inscriptions containing the careers of some officials or officers, secondly, the data offered by votive or funerary inscriptions regarding soldiers grouped in settlements other than the garrison locations, and thirdly, the distribution of the tile and brick stamps with the abbreviated name of the legion. The history of this legion could be split into four main stages, according to the garrison locations: Oescus I (1st c. AD-106 AD), Troesmis (106-170 AD), Potaissa (170-271 AD), and Oescus II (3rd-4th c. AD). Generally, tile stamps are considered minor epigraphic sources and are often neglected by the mainstream historical discourse. In spite of their minor importance, their chronological value and their distribution, the preference for certain types of stamps in each of the garrison sites and in each historical era, allow the tracing of the collective movements of soldiers in connection with the campaigns of the emperors or with missions in newly conquered or partially controlled territories.

Keywords: Legio V Macedonica, tile stamps, vexillations, epigraphy, military history

Rezumat: Diferite surse literare și epigrafice din secolele I-IV p. Chr. vorbesc despre deplasarea unor vexilații din legiunea V Macedonica. Pentru istoria deplasărilor soldaților legiunii V Macedonica, trebuie să combinăm datele din sursele literare cu

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trei *corpora* epigrafice distincte: în primul rând, mențiunile epigrafice ale vexilațiilor acestei legiuni în inscripții conținând carierele unor oficiali sau ofițeri, în al doilea, datele oferite de inscripțiile votive și funerare despre soldați grupați în alte așezări decât locurile de garnizoană și, în al treilea, distribuția țiglelor și cărămizilor ștampilate cu numele abreviat al legiunii. Istoria acestei legiuni poate fi împărțită în patru etape diferite, în funcție de locurile de garnizoană: Oescus I (sec. I-106 p. Chr.), Troesmis (106-170 p. Chr.), Potaissa (170-271 p. Chr.) și Oescus II (sec. III-IV p. Chr.). În general, ștampilele tegulare sunt considerate izvoare epigrafice minore și adesea sunt neglijate de discursul istoric principal. În ciuda importanței lor minore, valoarea lor cronologică și distribuția în spațiu, preferința pentru anumite tipuri de ștampile în fiecare loc de garnizoană și în fiecare epocă, permit reconstituirea deplasărilor colective ale soldaților în relație cu campaniile împăraților ori cu misiuni în teritorii nou cucerite sau doar parțial controlate.

Cuvinte-cheie: Legio V Macedonica, ștampile tegulare, vexilații, epigrafie, istorie militară

From the 1st to the 4th century AD, various literary and epigraphic sources talk about the deployment of vexillations from the Fifth Macedonian Legion⁵⁶. During its long history, the legion was garrisoned at Oescus (Moesia Inferior), Troesmis (Moesia Inferior), Potaissa (Dacia Porolissensis), and again at Oescus, this time in Dacia Ripensis⁵⁷. From these garrisons, soldiers traveled individually or collectively. Traces of their movements are marked by stone inscriptions (votive altars or funerary monuments) and sometimes by stamps on construction materials, like bricks and tiles⁵⁸. We have to take into account the elementary fact that bricks and tiles could travel by themselves, as reused materials, without the help of the soldiers⁵⁹. This is the case of stray finds of tegular material in small amounts around the main garrison locations⁶⁰. However, sometimes legionary soldiers *in vexillatione* act like a Bauvexillatio, a building detachment, and produce building material, bricks and tiles stamped with the unit's symbols and monograms on the spot.

One tile stamp should not be enough as a source to prove that the troop was present in a certain fort. For the history of the movements of the

⁵⁶ Saxer 1967, 9, 12, 19-20, 41, 46, 52-53, 56, 62, 90, 93.

⁵⁷ Van de Weerd 1907, 9-107; Ritterling 1925, 1572-1586; Bărbulescu 1987, 15-33; Matei-Popescu 2010, 35-75; Petolescu 2021, 105-132.

⁵⁸ Kurzmann 2006.

⁵⁹ Marcu 2010, 214.

⁶⁰ Bărbulescu 1987, 49; Nemeti 2022, 133, 135.

soldiers from the Fifth Macedonian Legion, we should combine the data from literary sources with three different epigraphic *corpora*: firstly, the epigraphic mentions of the vexillations of this legion in inscriptions containing the careers of some officials or officers, secondly, the data offered by the votive or funerary inscriptions regarding soldiers grouped in settlements other than the garrison locations, and thirdly, the distribution of the tile and brick stamps with the abbreviated name of the legion.

There are some major events that the soldiers of the Fifth Macedonian Legion participate in, mentioned by literary or numismatic sources⁶¹. From Josephus Flavius (Bell. Iud. II.18.9) we learn that there were soldiers from the Fifth Macedonian Legion in the army of Cestius Gallus⁶². In addition, for the year 70 AD, the same Josephus Flavius (V.1.6) as well as Tacitus (Hist.V.1) talk about the presence of this legion in the Jewish campaign of Emperor Titus⁶³. Coins minted in Heliopolis (Syria) attest the presence of the legionaries from the V Macedonica and VIII Augusta legions in the Oriental wars of Septimius Severus and Philippus Arabs⁶⁴.

Several inscriptions of historical relevance attest vexillations from the Fifth Macedonian Legion in Thracia during the time of Claudius (in the army of Q. Cornelius Valerianus, *praefectus vexillariorum in Thracia*⁶⁵), in the Battle of Lugdunum in 197 AD (Ti. Claudius Claudianus, *praepositus vexillationum Daciscarum*)⁶⁶, or in Poetovio during the reign of Gallienus as sole emperor (Flavius Aper, *praepositus*)⁶⁷. There are also epigraphic data for the presence of vexillations in various outposts or linked to military campaigns. For example, during the time of Trajan, a vexillation from the Fifth Macedonian Legion is expressly attested in Tyras, on the northern shore of the Black Sea⁶⁸. In the year 170 AD, for the expeditions of the Marcomannic Wars, a vexillation from the Moesian legions, I Italica and V Macedonica, was formed⁶⁹. Under the Tetrarchy, some other vexillations are attested by a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt (POxy 2950) and by an inscription from

⁶¹ Bărbulescu 1987, 16-20.

⁶² Saxer 1967, 12.

⁶³ Saxer 1967, 19.

⁶⁴ Saxer 1967, 52-53.

⁶⁵ CIL II 3272, 2079.

⁶⁶ CIL VIII 7978, 5349.

⁶⁷ AE 1936, 54-57; Horovitz 1957, 333-338.

⁶⁸ AE 1990, 868.

⁶⁹ CIL III 14443.

Somovit in Bulgaria (Iulius Vibius)⁷⁰. There are also some undated mentions of vexillations, probably belonging to the Moesian period, because the V Macedonica from Troesmis is associated with the XI Claudia or I Italica (**Pl. II.3**), which were encamped at Durostorum and Novae⁷¹.

From this picture of the legion's movement in four centuries of existence, sketched according to literary, numismatic and explicit epigraphic mentions of vexillations, one can mainly note the poverty of available information and the difficulties related to the chronology of the events. Could the tile stamps and their typo-chronology help us in this respect?

The tile and brick stamps with the name of the legions change really fast over time. Taking into account the epigraphic (*i.e.*, the abbreviation of the legion's name) and the stylistic criteria (the shape and decoration of the cartouche), the stamps could be organized into a typology. If the stamps are found in all three garrison locations, one may establish typological trees with chronological value, for example a repertory of tiles for Oescus I – Troesmis, one for Potaissa, and one for Oescus II. Each stock of stamps could be placed within a chronological frame, thanks to the identification of the garrison locations⁷². This chronology is pretty broad and if one takes into account the formal and stylistic evolution of the stamps in each garrison's repertory, and the relations between the types and variants associated in closed contexts (like rooms with a hypocaust system, sewers, etc.), it is possible to establish even broader chronological frames.

The stamps are a useful instrument for the study of soldiers' movements across the Empire, thanks to their chronological value⁷³. Before we address the bulk of epigraphic data, we would like to start with an example. Fourteen tile stamps with the name of the Fifth Macedonian Legion were found in 2018 in the fortress of Apsaros, in the ancient Colchis (present-day Gonio, in Georgia), coming from the roof of a building interpreted as a *praetorium*. All the tile stamps are the products of the same stamp. The letter sequence runs like this: COH [.] LVMC⊥H⊥ (**Pl. II.4**)⁷⁴. Although the reading is not totally clear, the abbreviation LVM connected with the letters COH or C for *cohors* is only encountered in the Oescus II repertory, on the stamps

⁷⁰ AE 2001, 1732.

⁷¹ CIL III 13586; AE 1995, 1348; CIL VI 41193.

⁷² Grec 2000, 122-125.

⁷³ Grec 2000, 140-142.

⁷⁴ Karasiewicz-Szczypiorski, Mamuladze, Speidel 2021, 269-280.

from Variana, Romuliana, and Sucidava in Dacia Ripensis. Therefore, the roof tiles from Apsaros were stamped there by the soldiers detached from the Legio V Macedonica from Oescus during the Persian campaigns of Diocletian and Maximian or even later⁷⁵.

In the following part, we will try to identify detachments of the Fifth Macedonian Legion in mission. According to Hunt's *Pridianum*, some soldiers were *in vexillatione*, some *in praesidio*, meaning the garrisons of minor fortifications⁷⁶. It is difficult to establish the nature of the mission starting from stone inscriptions and tile stamps, but we can trace the movements of such a detachment in the Lower Danube area.

The history of this legion could be split into three main stages, according to the garrison locations. For the Oescus I stage (1st c. AD – 106 AD), there are stone inscriptions from Gigen⁷⁷, but the tile stamp types are difficult to date. The types from the Trajanic *praesidia* on the Olt River and in Little Wallachia could therefore be assigned to the period when the legion was garrisoned at Troesmis⁷⁸.

TROESMIS

Tiles with the stamps of this legion, dating from when the legion was encamped in Dobroudja, were discovered at Troesmis (**Pl. I.1-3**)⁷⁹ and the rural area (Horia)⁸⁰, Capidava⁸¹, Arrubium⁸², Dionogetia⁸³ and Noviodunum⁸⁴. On the other hand, stone inscriptions attesting soldiers and veterans from the Fifth Macedonian Legion were found at Troesmis⁸⁵ and Tropaeum Traiani (one centurion and three *evocati*)⁸⁶, at Tomis (twelve funerary inscriptions attesting one centurion, one *librarius*, several *milites* and *veterani*)⁸⁷. One funerary

⁷⁵ Karasiewicz-Szczypiorski, Mamuladze, Speidel 2021, 271-274.

⁷⁶ Fink 1958, 104, 107-108.

⁷⁷ CIL III 12348, 14415; ILB 1, 9, 10, 41, 47, 48, 52, 55, 56, 58.

⁷⁸ Doruțiu-Boilă 1990, 263.

⁷⁹ ISM V 211, 215 a-b, d; Chiriac, Bounegru 1973-1975, 97-99; Alexandrescu 2016, 245-246.

⁸⁰ ISM V 240 a-b.

⁸¹ ISM V 54 a, b.

⁸² ISM V 254 a-b.

⁸³ ISM V 261 a-b.

⁸⁴ ISM V 284.

⁸⁵ ISM V 135, 141, 143, 154, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 172, 174, 179, 185, 186, 188, 192, 194, 196, 201, 202, 203.

⁸⁶ CIL III 14214, 3 a-c, 10.

⁸⁷ AE 1963, 181; AE 1982, 846, 847; AE 1988, 1008; ISM II 140, 184, 192, 193, 226, 458, 466.

inscription is found at Histria⁸⁸. Several other inscriptions are scattered through the province of Moesia Inferior, in several rural settlements like Gârliciu, Băneasa, Horia, Tulcea (*Aegyssus*), Independența, Mircea Vodă, Pliska, Razgrad, Riben, Izvoarele, *Sacidava*, Sinoe (*vicus Quintionis*), Rasova-Pescărie⁸⁹. The distribution of the tiles and bricks and of inscriptions attesting soldiers and veterans does not match in any of these cases. One can presume the existence of a small garrison in the Greek city of Tomis, but a detachment is not expressly attested.

At the beginning of the 2nd c. AD, soldiers from the Fifth Macedonian Legion are attested in several *praesidia* in the recently conquered territory or in a larger territory controlled by the Roman Empire. For example, all three categories of data show the presence of a detachment of soldiers on the northern shore of the Black Sea, at Bilhorod Dnistrovsky, the ancient Tyras⁹⁰. Two honorific inscriptions attest a *vexillatio legionis V Macedonicae* during the reign of Trajan, when the governor of Moesia Inferior was Q. Pompeius Falco⁹¹. Another stone inscription attests a centurion of this legion⁹², meanwhile the tile stamps found there mention a *vexillatio Moesiae Inferioris* (soldiers from the legions I Italica, V Macedonica and XI Claudia) (Pl. II.3)⁹³. There are also tile stamps with the abbreviated name of the Fifth Macedonian Legion belonging to the type I from Potaissa, LEGVM⁹⁴. Emilia Doruțiu-Boilă has presumed that a small detachment from this legion led by a centurion and some *principales* was deployed there during the reign of Trajan, after the Dacian Wars⁹⁵. The same explanation could be proposed for other bridgeheads on the northern shore of the Black Sea, where the tile stamps with the name of the legion were discovered, at Barboși (Pl. II.1)⁹⁶ and Orlovka⁹⁷. The tile stamps from Barboși belong to the types Doruțiu-Boilă b (LEG V MAC) and c (LEG V MC), and therefore should be linked to the Troesmis period.

⁸⁸ ISM I 276.

⁸⁹ ISM V 115; ISM IV 26; ISM V 239; AE 1991, 1386; ISM V 221; AE 1935, 70; AE 2004, 1262; ILB 215; AE 1977, 748; ISM I 336; CIL III 14443.

⁹⁰ Nicorescu 1937, 217-239; Doruțiu-Boilă 1990, 263.

⁹¹ AE 1934, 112; AE 1990, 868.

⁹² AE 1990, 869.

⁹³ AE 1925, 78.

⁹⁴ AE 1925, 77.

⁹⁵ Doruțiu-Boilă 1990, 265.

⁹⁶ AE 1939, 83; AE 1939, 33; AE 1974, 562 a; AE 1975, 738; Doruțiu-Boilă 1972, 57.

⁹⁷ Doruțiu-Boilă 1972, 59.

When the legion was part of Moesia Inferior's army, some soldiers were detached north of the Danube in key places like Stolniceni⁹⁸, intended by D. Tudor as a sort of headquarters during the Dacian Wars, which later, from the beginning of Hadrian's reign onward, became the *praetorium* of the procurator of Dacia Inferior⁹⁹. Here, one can find *tegulae* with the stamps of the *pedites singulares*, of the Legio V Macedonica, or combined stamps with the abbreviated names of the Moesian legions, V Macedonica, I Italica and XI Claudia¹⁰⁰. The stamps of the *Legio V Macedonica* belong to the types Doruțiu Boilă a and c, therefore they are from the period when the legion was encamped at Troesmis¹⁰¹.

The excavations of M. Zahariade in the fort from Drajna de Sus uncovered many tile stamps (76) with the name of the Legio V Macedonica (Pl. II.2), belonging to the types Doruțiu-Boilă a and b with variants¹⁰². Clearly a Bauvexillatio of this legion participated in the building of this fort, together with the soldiers from Legio I Italica, Legio XI Claudia and those of the garrisoned unit, Cohors I Flavia Commagenorum. In Zahariade's opinion, a variant of the Legio V Macedonica stamps from Drajna de Sus are also found at Oescus, being in use during the Oescus I period¹⁰³.

POTAISSA

The main characteristics of the tile stamps from Potaissa are the short abbreviation of the legion's name and the presence of the fidelity epithets, like *pia*, *pia fidelis*, *Antoniniana*, *Severiana* and *Maximiniana* (Pl. III.3-5)¹⁰⁴. Many tile stamps originating from Potaissa are to be found in central Transylvania¹⁰⁵. Most of them are reused building material, spread around Turda during ancient or medieval times. The bricks and tiles with the stamp of the legion discovered at Moldovenești¹⁰⁶, Săndulești¹⁰⁷, Copăceni¹⁰⁸, Mihai

⁹⁸ AE 1966, 312 b; IDR II 557 a, 559.

⁹⁹ Tudor 1964 ; Tudor 1978, 33, 214, 270.

¹⁰⁰ IDR II 556–559.

¹⁰¹ Alexandrescu 2016, 245–256.

¹⁰² Zahariade, Dvorski 1997, 21–22.

¹⁰³ Zahariade, Dvorski 1997, 22.

¹⁰⁴ Grec 2000, 118–165; Nemeti 2017, 146–151; Nemeti 2019, 130–147; Nemeti 2020, 93–96; Nemeti 2022, 129–153.

¹⁰⁵ Szilágyi 1946, nr. I.7 - III. 46, pl. I.7 - III.46.

¹⁰⁶ CIL III 1630 f-g.

¹⁰⁷ CIL III 8066 h-i.

¹⁰⁸ CIL III 8066 k.

Viteazu¹⁰⁹, Unirea¹¹⁰, Micești¹¹¹ or Bogata de Mureș¹¹² illustrate just the distribution of reused building material on the legion's territory during Roman times, or the recycled building material in the Middle Age or in the Modern Era¹¹³. The stamps belong to type VI Potaissa (LVM) (Pl. IV.1-5), but also to types I (LEGVM) (Pl. III.1), III and IV dated starting with the reign of Septimius Severus (LVMP, LVMPF) (Pl. III.3-4)¹¹⁴. Leaving aside the Oriental vexillations attested by epigraphic and numismatic sources, there were soldiers on the move inside the province of Dacia. A cluster of data, stone inscriptions, and a large quantity of stamped bricks indicate Drobeta on the Danube as a centre of the building activity of a detachment from Legio V Macedonica¹¹⁵. Several funerary monuments mentioning veterans from the Legio V Macedonica are known from Drobeta. We know a *veteranus* (Iulius Bassus)¹¹⁶, a *veteranus candidatus* (Aurelius Attelanus)¹¹⁷, but mostly officers and *optiones*. Maecius Domitius was a *centurio*¹¹⁸, C. Domitius Alexander a *signifer*¹¹⁹, M. Valerius Alexander a *strator consularis*¹²⁰, C. Valerius Victorinus a *beneficiarius tribuni*¹²¹, and C. Iulius Melcidianus a *beneficiarius consularis*¹²². All these veterans could belong to the staff of a *vexillatio* detached here from Potaissa probably in the first half of the 3rd c. AD.¹²³ Four variants of the stamps belonging to type VI Potaissa (the short abbreviation LVM) were found at Drobeta (Pl. V.1-4), namely 148 tile stamps discovered in the Roman camps and in the civilian settlement¹²⁴. Three of these variants correspond to a very similar stamp series discovered at Potaissa: two of them are known from the headquarters building and only one from within the baths. If we

¹⁰⁹ CIL III 8966 g.

¹¹⁰ CIL III 1630 h.

¹¹¹ AE 1993, 1327.

¹¹² CIL III 8966 d.

¹¹³ Bărbulescu 1987, 49; Nemeti 2022, 133, 135.

¹¹⁴ Nemeti 2017, 147-149.

¹¹⁵ CIL III 8066 a; IDR II 99 a-I; Benea 1978, 201-202.

¹¹⁶ IDR II 40.

¹¹⁷ IDR II 67.

¹¹⁸ IDR II 36.

¹¹⁹ AE 2005, 1303.

¹²⁰ IDR II 38.

¹²¹ IDR II 39.

¹²² IDR II 41.

¹²³ Tocilescu 1902, 332-333; Nemeti, Marcu 2019, 102.

¹²⁴ Benea 1978, 200-202; IDR II 99.

add the recently reinterpreted retrograde stamp with the trapezoidal cartouche from the headquarters building¹²⁵, we can reach the conclusion that the soldiers charged with the production of tiles and bricks at Potaissa worked in the fort of Drobeta as well.

Near Drobeta, in the Cerna River Valley, in the auxiliary fort of Mehadia, tile stamps of the Fifth Macedonian Legion, belonging to the types I Potaissa (LEGVM) and VI Potaissa (LVM) were discovered¹²⁶. A double stamp, with the name of the Dacian legions, V Macedonica et XIII Gemina, could be a clue for the presence of a legionary vexillation in the fort¹²⁷. Some of these tile stamps were drawn by Caryophilus and were published with the findspot Băile Mehadia (which probably stand for Băile Herculane)¹²⁸. A brick from the baths' pavement was read by the same antiquarian as *vexillatio Daciarum*¹²⁹. Several tile stamps were discovered scattered in the same area in Bersovia¹³⁰, Hinova¹³¹, Gornea¹³², belonging to the types I and VI Potaissa. The tile stamps from Bersovia belong to the type IV Potaissa, with the abbreviation LVMPF, therefore dated from the joint reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla onward¹³³.

It is difficult to explain the presence of a few stamps belonging to the type VI Potaissa in forts like Răcari¹³⁴, Bumbești – Jiu¹³⁵, Bivolari¹³⁶ and Slăveni¹³⁷. Recently published tile stamps from Slăveni show stylistic affinities with the types that are common at Potaissa¹³⁸, and their presence there should probably be linked to the soldiers on the move during the wars from the middle of the 3rd c. AD.

¹²⁵ Nemeti, Marcu 2020, 99-105.

¹²⁶ IDR III.1, 72 c, 100 b.

¹²⁷ IDR III.1, 102 a.

¹²⁸ IDR III.1, p. 98-99.

¹²⁹ IDR III.1, 73.

¹³⁰ IDR III.1, 51 c; AE 1912, 73 b.

¹³¹ AE 1992, 1475.

¹³² IGLR 426.

¹³³ Nemeti 2017, 147-149; Nemeti 2019, 143-144.

¹³⁴ IDR II 167 b, 522.

¹³⁵ IDR II 178.

¹³⁶ IDR II 579.

¹³⁷ IDR II 167 c.

¹³⁸ Bondoc 2021, 23-44.

OESCVS II

The types of tile stamps for the later period of the existence of the legion, when the Fifth Macedonica was part of the army of Dacia Ripensis, are easily recognizable¹³⁹. The abbreviation of the legion's name is often associated with a toponym like Oescus and Varinia¹⁴⁰, or the mention of the *cohortes*, sometimes with the numeral, or the abbreviated function of the commanding officer (PP for *praepositus*, PPRIP *praepositus ripae*) (Pl. VI.1-5)¹⁴¹. The inscriptions are then longer than the previous ones. The toponyms indicate two production centres of the building material, Oescus and Varinia, on the Danube, near Oescus. The toponym should probably be identified as Variana from *Itinerarium Antonini* and *Notitia Dignitatum*, present-day Leskovec¹⁴². Tile stamps produced in this period are spread across a small region on the Danubian frontier of Dacia Ripensis. Most of the finds came from Oescus and Sucidava¹⁴³, but some are also known from Ratiaria¹⁴⁴, Romuliana (Gamzigrad)¹⁴⁵, Transdrobeta¹⁴⁶, Vidin¹⁴⁷ and Romula¹⁴⁸. The distribution of the tiles in the regions shows the new strategy of the Late Roman army, the fragmentation of the legion into smaller units and the deployment of soldiers in small detachments in outposts along the Danube, the so-called *riparienses*. Military campaigns lead the soldiers of this legion to distant places: to Egypt against the usurpers (as the *Notitia Dignitatum* shows)¹⁴⁹ or to Apsaros in Colchis, as indicated by the stamps found there¹⁵⁰.

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The repertory and chronological framing of all the stamps of the Fifth Macedonian Legion throughout its existence is something to be done in the future. Generally, these stamps are considered minor epigraphic sources and are often neglected by the mainstream historical discourse. However, their chronological value and their distribution, the preference for certain types in

¹³⁹ Bondoc 2009, 76, 79-80, 117-118.

¹⁴⁰ AE 1908, 82; Tudor 1938, 412-413.

¹⁴¹ ILD 118; IGLR 290; Bondoc 2006, 239.

¹⁴² Zahariade 2014-2015, 122.

¹⁴³ CIL III 8066 b, c; AE 1930, 90, 91, 94, 95; AE 1944, 66; AE 1976, 582 a, b; AE 2003, 1527.

¹⁴⁴ AE 1903, 129,1; AE 1984, 742 b1, 2, 4.

¹⁴⁵ AE 2002, 1237 a 1-7.

¹⁴⁶ AE 1998, 1115 a-b.

¹⁴⁷ AE 1938, 105.

¹⁴⁸ AE 1914, 121.

¹⁴⁹ Not. Dign. Or. VII, XVIII.

¹⁵⁰ Karasiewicz-Szczypiorski, Mamuladze, Speidel 2021, 269-280.

each of the garrison sites and in each historical era allow the tracing of collective movements of soldiers in connection with the campaigns of the emperors or with missions to control newly conquered or partially controlled territories.

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- Pl. I. Stamps from Troesmis – Iglița (1-3)
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1 LEG·V̄·MC

2 LEG·V̄·MC

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Pl. I

1 

2 

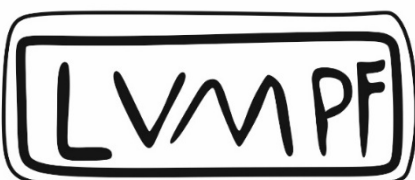
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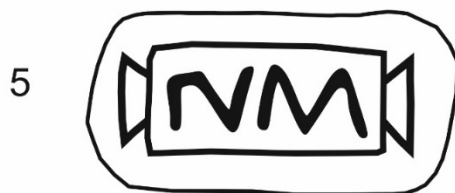
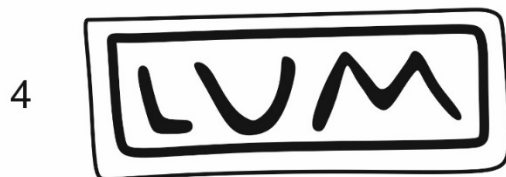
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Pl. III



Pl. IV



Pl. V

1

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VARINIA

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VARIDAL

Pl. VI

***Abolitio memoriae* of Roman sovereigns and usurpers in the 1st - 4th centuries AD – exclusion from the citizen body**

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Abstract: *Abolitio memoriae of Roman sovereigns and usurpers in the 1st-4th centuries – exclusion from the citizen body.* This article examines the phenomenon of *abolitio memoriae* in the Roman Empire, with a focus on the annulment of the legal status of emperors and usurpers during the 1st to 4th centuries A.D. The study analyzes how Roman legal and narrative sources describe the process through which rulers considered *hostes*, *hostes publici*, *tyranni*, or *rebelles* were systematically deprived of their citizenship status and expelled from collective civic memory. A central element of this analysis is the identification of legal phrases that highlight this reality. For instance, terms such as *hostis publicus*, *publicus grassator*, *oppugnator*, *publicus turbator*, *perduellis*, and *proscriptus* underscore the intention of the initiators of the act of condemnation, either the Senate or the emperor, to transform certain disgraced figures into non-persons. These expressions reveal the complex dynamics of *abolitio memoriae* as a means of cultural erasure and political retribution, with the ultimate goal of restoring social and moral order. Through an analysis of narrative, legal, and epigraphic sources, the study examines how *abolitio memoriae* was used as a tool to control collective memory, stigmatizing emperors, usurpers, and rebels considered threats to social and political stability.

Keywords: *hostis*, *tyrannus*, usurper, rebel, social disgrace

Rezumat: *Abolitio memoriae a suveranilor romani și uzurpatorilor în secolele I-IV – excluderea din corpul cetățenesc.* Acest articol examinează fenomenul *abolitio memoriae* în Imperiul Roman, atenția fiind concentrată asupra anulării statutului juridic al împăraților și uzurpatorilor în secolele I-IV e.n. În textul studiului se analizează modul în care sursele juridice romane și cele narative

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descriu procesul prin care conducătorii considerați *hostes*, *hostes publici*, *tyranni* sau *rebelles* erau sistematic lipsiți de statutul de cetățeni și expulzați din memoria colectivă civică. Un element central al acestei analize este identificarea sintagmelor cu valoare juridică ce evidențiau această realitate. De exemplu, termeni precum *hostis publicus*, *publicus grassator*, *oppugnator*, *publicus turbator*, *perduellis* și *proscriptus* subliniază intenția inițiatorilor actului de condamnare, Senatul sau împăratul, de a transforma în non-persoane anumite figuri căzute în dizgrație. Aceste expresii dezvăluie dinamica complexă a *abolitio memoriae* ca mijloc de ștergere culturală și răzbunare politică, cu scopul final de a restaura ordinea socială și morală. Printr-o analiză a surselor narrative, juridice și epigrafice, în studiu s-a examinat modul în care *abolitio memoriae* a fost utilizată ca instrument de control al memoriei colective, stigmatizând împărații, uzurpatorii și rebelii considerați amenințări pentru stabilitatea socială și politică.

Cuvinte-cheie: *hostis*, *tyrannus*, uzurpator, rebel, dizgrație socială

Introduction

At the beginning of the movie *Gladiator*, the character Maximus Decimus Meridius, played by Russell Crowe, utters the words: "What we do in life echoes in eternity". In order to emphasize the significance of narrative sources in conducting scientific research, we will also refer to the work of Tacitus, *Historiae*, in the pages of which he expresses the following: *mortem omnibus ex natura aequalem oblivione apud posteros vel gloria distingui*¹⁵¹. These phrases perfectly reflect the Roman view of posterity, as the actions during one's life determined how a person was remembered in the collective consciousness - either commemorated or damned through a harsh process known as *abolitio memoriae*. Another modern phrase used by researchers to highlight this complex ancient phenomenon, which has persisted in various forms up until the contemporary period, is *damnatio memoriae*.

The condemnation to oblivion took place in several stages. Initially, the person in question was excluded from the civic body, a fact highlighted in narrative, legal, and epigraphic sources through the use of judicially significant terms such as *hostis* or *hostis publicus*. The action was initiated either by a *senatus consultum* issued by the Roman Senate, a practice specific to the period between the first century and the second half of the second century, or by the direct will of a sovereign, a situation observable from the

¹⁵¹ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 21.1.

reign of Septimius Severus (193-211). The latter practice began to solidify in the 3rd century, reaching its full development in the fourth century

Other stages of the condemnation included: confiscation of property, annulment of wills, and invalidation of all rulings, decisions, and customs imposed by the deceased sovereign/usurper. His name was erased from official records, and inscriptions made in his honour, as well as iconographic representations, were altered or destroyed. His honours were revoked, his commemoration was prohibited, and his body was desecrated. Among the vexations applied to the body were: decapitation and the procession of the head; dismemberment through: mutilation, tearing or breaking into pieces; other punitive measures included: strangulation, hooking, throwing the body into rivers or burning it; leaving the body to the birds or dogs; throwing the body to the lions; desecrating the body with a horse; stripping the body; tying it up; crucifixion; the sack punishment; the pitchfork punishment; interference with the burial ritual.

In addition to those previously mentioned, we also add verbal and physical violence intended to affect the victim emotionally and psychologically, but it is important to note that these actions did not have a legal character: the corrosion of personality or physique; insult, throwing filth, pulling hair or beard, slapping the face, and, last but not least, stabbing the throat with a sword. The same punishments were applied to supporters of the condemned. Society generally reacted with joy, considering the removal of these socially harmful elements as beneficial. The victim's birthday became a *dies nefastus*.

The first century

Caius Iulius Caesar (Caligula) (37-41 AD) was the first Roman ruler whose memory faced a form of condemnation to oblivion, although it is important to note that this was not enacted within an official context or through a *senatus consultum* issued by the Senate¹⁵². Thus, his condemnation was *de facto*. Nonetheless, records indicate that within the Senate, there was an intention to issue a legal decree to elicit public disdain toward him. However, as Cassius Dio and Zonaras reported, Claudius (41-54 AD), Caligula's successor, opposed this initiative¹⁵³. Despite the fact that the Senate did not condemn his memory, in the view of several ancient and

¹⁵² Zugravu 2012, 262, n. 97.

¹⁵³ Cassius Dio, LX, 4; Zonaras, XI, 8. See also Drijvers 2006, 13, 17-18; Haymann 2018, 265.

Byzantine authors, including Philo of Alexandria, Pliny the Elder, Flavius Iosephus, Cassius Dio, Zosimus, and Georgius Monachus, the sovereign became an enemy of the cities; a devourer of the people; a plague; the cause of all evils; a torment of humanity; a tyrant¹⁵⁴.

In the year 42 AD, shortly after Claudius was appointed as Augustus, Lucius Arruntius Camillus Scribonianus, *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of the province *Dalmatia*, at the insistence of Lucius Annius Vinicianus, a Roman senator who was among the leaders of a pro-republican faction, expressed intentions to seize power. However, his ambition was doomed to fail at an early stage, as he and his collaborators were eliminated and labelled as *hostes*. Scribonianus was considered a provocateur of civil war; an author of a popular movement intended to divide society; an individual who harboured thoughts and plans to rebel; a seducer of the legions to persuade them to change their oath; his action was regarded as a revolt; a rebellion against Claudius¹⁵⁵.

If the *abolitio memoriae* of his predecessor, Caligula, was *de facto*, in the case of Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (54-68 AD), the first official condemnation of a Roman emperor was carried out. Tacitus reported that until that time, there had been no condemned emperor¹⁵⁶. Nero was designated as *hostis* shortly before ending his life, which enabled the enforcement of actions against him¹⁵⁷. This episode was recorded by Suetonius, Cassius Dio, Eutropius, Orosius, John of Antioch, and Zonaras¹⁵⁸. In an effort to emphasize the bloody nature of the emperor, Pliny the Elder described Nero as *hostis generis humani*, while Eutropius employs the phrase *bonis omnibus hostis fuit*¹⁵⁹. Confronted with the new reality and abandoned

¹⁵⁴ Philo, *Leg. ad Gai.*, 4; 14; 31; 44; Iosephus, *AI*, XIX, 1.3; 10; 12-13; 16; 19; 2.2-4; 3.3; Pliny the Elder, VII, 45; Cassius Dio, LIX, 3; 20; Zosimus, I, 6.2; Georgius Monachus, *Chron.*, III, 116 (in PG 110, 383).

¹⁵⁵ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 89.2; II, 75; *Ann.*, XII, 52; Suetonius, *Claud.*, 13.2; 29.2; 35.2; *Otho*, 1.2; 3; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* III, 16; Cassius Dio, LX, 15-16; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, IV, 5; Orosius, VII, 6, 6-8; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 7. See also Kienast 2004, 95; Zugravu 2012, 265-266, n. 108; Parat 2016, 191-207; Zugravu 2022b, 321-322, n. 75.

¹⁵⁶ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 16.1.

¹⁵⁷ Varner 2001, 48; Flower 2006, 199-200, 212, 332 (n. 4), 333 (n. 6); Varner 2004, 47, 49-50, 66, 71, 73, 78-81, 84-85; Kienast 2004, 97; Potter 2004, 98; Drijvers 2006, 13, 18; Zugravu 2012, 280, n. 144; Pearson 2016, 132; Haymann 2018, 265, 267; Królczyk 2018, 869; de Jong 2019, 23.

¹⁵⁸ Suetonius, *Nero*, 49.2; Cassius Dio, LXIII, 27; Eutropius, VII, 15.1; Orosius, VII, 7.13; John of Antioch, fr. 174; Zonaras, XI, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Pliny the Elder, VII, 46; Eutropius, VII, 14.1. See also Champlin 2003, 40-41, 280 (n. 11); Zugravu 2022b, 352, n. 147.

by most of his supporters, Nero decided to flee to the country house of one of his freedmen, Phanon, located north of Rome. Among those who followed him, besides Phanon, were Sporus, Epaphroditus, and Neophytus¹⁶⁰.

Shortly after his escape, during the night of June 9-10, the emperor decided to take his own life, but not before uttering the well-known phrases: *nec amicum habeo nec inimicum* and *qualis artifex pereo*¹⁶¹. Thus, the Julio-Claudian dynastic continuity came to an end, and socio-political instability began to take hold.

According to some researchers, including John Pollini and Fred S. Kleiner, Nero was subjected to a *de facto* condemnation¹⁶². Other historians, such as Edward Champlin, argue that the emperor was not condemned to oblivion at all¹⁶³.

The rise of L. Sulpicius Galba (68-69) was prompted by the revolt of Vindex. When he was proposed as emperor, Galba rejected the titles of *Caesar* and *Imperator* but accepted that of *legatus senatus ac populi Romani*¹⁶⁴. When the news reached Nero, he persuaded the Senate, as reported by Plutarch, to declare Galba *πολέμιος*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Latin term *hostis publicus*¹⁶⁵. In the same vein, his successors, Marcus Otho (69), Aulus Vitellius (69), and Flavius Vespasianus (69-79), were regarded as *hostes*. In the context of the civil wars that ensued after Nero's death, the term *hostis* had multiple meanings - it signified exclusion from the political body; it reflected the

¹⁶⁰ Iosephus, *BI*, IV, 9.2; Tacitus, *Hist.*, III, 68.1; Suetonius, *Nero*, 48.1 and 3; 49.2-3; Cassius Dio, LXIII, 27 and 29; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 5.16; Eutropius, VII, 15.1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, V, 7; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 68; Orosius, VII, 7, 13; John of Antioch, fr. 174; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 69. See also Bruun 1989, 41, 48, 52; Champlin 2003, 4-5, 272 (n. 8); Zugravu 2012, 280, n. 144; Zugravu 2022b, 355, n. 154.

¹⁶¹ Suetonius, *Nero*, 47.3; 49.1-3; Cassius Dio, LXIII, 28-29; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, V, 8; John of Antioch, fr. 174. See also Champlin 2003, 5-6. 37, 49-51, 272 (n. 10), 282 (n. 29); Zugravu 2012, 281, n. 147. Concerning Nero's death, the sources present varying accounts: some authors, such as Flavius Iosephus (*BI*, IV, 9.2), Aurelius Victor (*Caes.*, 5.16), Eutropius (VII, 15.1), and Orosius (VII, 7.13), supported the account of suicide; others, including Suetonius (*Nero*, 48.3; *Dom.*, 14.4), Cassius Dio (LXIII, 29; LXVII, 14), and John of Antioch (fr. 174), mentioned that he was assisted by Epaphroditus. Furthermore, Pseudo-Aurelius Victor (*Epit. Caes.*, V, 7) is the only one who noted that he was aided by Sporus, while Evagrius Scholasticus (*HE*, III, 41) wrote that he was killed by his own soldiers. See also Zugravu 2012, 280-281, n. 145; Zugravu 2022b, 355-356, n. 155.

¹⁶² Pollini 1984, 547; Kleiner 1985, 94-95.

¹⁶³ Champlin 2003, 29.

¹⁶⁴ Suetonius, *Galba*, 10.1; 11; Plutarch, *Galba*, 5.1; Cassius Dio, LXIV, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Plutarch, *Galba*, 5.2. See also Kienast 2004, 102; Flower 2006, 212; Haymann 2018, 265, 267.

perceptions of the factions competing for supreme power, and characterized the rivalries among emperors. According to Tacitus, after his defection from Galba, Otho addressed his soldiers in the camp, questioning whether he would be perceived as a *princeps* or as an enemy of the Roman people¹⁶⁶. After his death, the citizens of Rome altered their attitude toward him. Initially, they praised him at the beginning of his reign. During the conflict with Vitellius, they prayed for his success. However, after he chose to commit suicide, hoping that his death would put an end to the Roman bloodshed, the population of the capital ridiculed his memory; his name was no longer associated with that of a *princeps* but rather with the term *πολέμιος*¹⁶⁷. Regarding Vitellius, Tacitus reported that, in the early stages of the conflict with Otho, the Senate declared him a *hostis publicus* and a parricide¹⁶⁸. Furthermore, the Roman historian addresses the legal degradation of Vitellius while emphasizing the humane attributes of Otho. Despite being embroiled in a civil war, Otho chose to overlook the situation and granted clemency to Lucius Vitellius, the brother of his adversary; he resolved that Lucius would accompany Cornelius Donabella into exile¹⁶⁹. Both Suetonius and Pseudo-Aurelius Victor noted that at the conclusion of the civil war between Vespasian and Vitellius, which culminated in the victory of the former, the leader of the Flavian camp ensured that the daughter of his former enemy received a substantial dowry and was married¹⁷⁰. In a similar context, during the military conflicts occurring between 68 and 69 AD, Othonian supporters perceived the Vitellians as *hostes*¹⁷¹; the Vitellians held the Othonians in the same regard¹⁷²; the Vitellians classified the Flavians as adversaries¹⁷³; while the

¹⁶⁶ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 37.2.

¹⁶⁷ Cassius Dio, LXV, 1. For the suicide of Otho, see Iosephus, *BI*, IV, 9.9; Tacitus, *Hist.*, II, 49.2-3; Suetonius, *Otho*, 11.2; *Vit.*, 10.3; Plutarch, *Otho*, 17.3; Dio Cass., LXIV, 14-15; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 7.2; Eutropius, VII, 17.3; Orosius, VII, 8.6; John of Antioch, fr. 177; Chronicon Paschale (in PG 92, 590). See also Drijvers 2006, 15; Zugravu 2012, 287, n. 168; Haymann 2018, 265, 267; Zugravu 2022b, 364, n. 178.

¹⁶⁸ Tacitus, *Hist.*, II, 85.5.

¹⁶⁹ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 88.1.

¹⁷⁰ Suetonius, *Vesp.*, 14.1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, IX, 2. See also Zugravu 2012, 293, n. 185.

¹⁷¹ Suetonius, *Otho*, 9.1; Tacitus, *Hist.*, II, 42.2; Plutarch, *Otho*, 10.3; 11.2-3; 12.2 and 4; 15.1 and 3; Cassius Dio, LIV, 11.

¹⁷² Suetonius, *Vit.*, 10.3; Tacitus, *Hist.*, II, 41.1-2; 43.2; 45.1.

¹⁷³ Suetonius, *Vit.*, 15.2; 16.1; 17.1 Tacitus, *Hist.*, III, 8.4-6; 22.1; 23.3; 38.8; 41.4; 42.3; 54.5; 61.2-5; 77.1-2; 79. 4; 84.6; Cassius Dio, LXV, 10-11; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 8.6.

Flavians reciprocated this perception towards the Vitellians¹⁷⁴. Against Titus Flavius Domitianus (81-96), who was subjected to *abolitio memoriae*, Lactantius wrote that the Senate issued decrees ensuring that even after his death, he would suffer eternal disgrace (*ignominiam sempiternam*):

- it was decreed that the former *princeps* should receive a burial befitting a gladiator. Consequently, Domitianus's body was retrieved by undertakers with extraordinary mockery, as described by Eutropius, and placed in a pauper's coffin, buried without any form of pomp. The funeral, held at his estate on the outskirts of Rome, was organized by Phyllis, his wet nurse. Shortly thereafter, she moved the emperor's remains to the mausoleum of the Flavian family and mixed them with the ashes of Julia, the daughter of Titus (79-81)¹⁷⁵;

- his decrees were annulled¹⁷⁶. Additionally, at the beginning of Nerva's reign (96-98), exiled individuals were recalled; those arrested for violating imperial majesty were released; and unlawfully confiscated properties were restored¹⁷⁷; furthermore, Nerva enacted a law that annulled marriages between uncles and nieces; this measure aimed to abolish a custom practiced by Domitianus himself¹⁷⁸;

- his shields were taken down posthumously, with the Senate deciding to bring ladders to reach them¹⁷⁹.

The imposition of *abolitio memoriae* on Domitianus and the actions undertaken by the Senate reveal a significant repudiation of his legacy, highlighting the shift in his social standing from *princeps* to *hostis*. Additionally, these measures reflect an intention to eradicate any remnants of his influence within society, as evidenced by the defacement of inscriptions that had been established in his honour.

In the second half of the first century, there were additional rebellions:

1. during the reign of Nero:

¹⁷⁴ Tacitus, *Hist.*, III, 8.3; 9.1; 10.1; 15.1; 16.1; 17.1; 18.1; 20.2; 23.2-8; 26.4; 28.2; 48.2-4; 73.2.

¹⁷⁵ Pliny the Younger, *Pan.*, 52.4; Suetonius, *Dom.*, 17.3; Lactantius, *Mort.*, III, 3; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 11.8; Eutropius, VII, 23.6; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XI, 13; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 96; Orosius, VII, 10.7; John of Antioch, fr. 190. In contrast, Cassius Dio (XVII, 18) wrote that his body was secretly buried by his wet nurse. See also Zugravu 2012, 314, n. 248; Zugravu 2022b, 393-394, n. 265.

¹⁷⁶ Lactantius, *Mort.*, III, 4.

¹⁷⁷ Cassius Dio, LXVIII, 1-2; Eusebius, *HE*, 20.8-9; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 97; Orosius, VII, 11.2.

¹⁷⁸ Cassius Dio, LXVIII, 2.

¹⁷⁹ Suetonius, *Dom.*, 23.1.

a) Lucius Clodius Macer, the *legatus* in *Africa*, instigated a rebellion in 68 AD but was subsequently killed by the procurator Trebonius Garutianus on the orders of Galba¹⁸⁰;

b) Caius Iulius Vindex, the governor of *Gallia Lugdunensis*, who had Celtic origins, organized a rebellion in the early part of 68 AD but was defeated by Lucius Verginius Rufus, who was commanding *Germania Superior*, and chose to commit suicide¹⁸¹.

2. during the reign of Galba: Caius Nymphidius Sabinus, the son of Nymphidia, a former slave, and prefect of the guard, promised the Praetorian Guard a substantial reward if they abandoned Nero and supported Galba. He subsequently claimed descent from Caligula; however, Plutarch identified his father as the gladiator Martianus. He attempted to have himself proclaimed emperor, an endeavour that ultimately failed, leading to his death at the hands of Galba's soldiers¹⁸².

3. during the reign of Domitianus: Lucius Antonius Saturninus, the governor of *Germania Superior*, orchestrated a rebellion against Domitianus from 88 to 89 AD. In response, A. Bucius Lappius Maximus, the governor of *Germania Inferior*, and Norbanus, the procurator of *Raetia*, were dispatched to suppress the insurrection. Saturninus ultimately met his end by decapitation, and following the quelling of the revolt, retaliatory measures and executions were carried out¹⁸³.

4. False Neros:

a) between the end of Galba's reign and the beginning of Otho's reign: *Pseudo-Nero I*, a slave from *Pontus* or a freedman from Italy skilled in playing musical instruments and reportedly resembling the former emperor, managed to manipulate various social groups, including deserters, soldiers, and

¹⁸⁰ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 7.1; II, 97.2; IV, 49.4; Plutarch, *Galba*, 6; 13; 15; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 9. See also Kienast 2004, 10.

¹⁸¹ Pliny the Elder, *XX*, 160; Iosephus, *BI*, IV, 8.1; Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 51.1-3; 65.2-4; III, 62.2; IV, 17.3; 57.2; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.*, VI, 10; IX, 19; Suetonius, *Nero*, 40.1 and 4; 41; *Galba*, 8.1; 9.2; 11; Plutarch, *Galba*, 4-6; 29.1; Cassius Dio, LXIII, 22-26; Emperor Julian, *Caes.*, 310 D; *SHA*, *Alex. Seu.*, I, 7; *Quadr. tyr.*, I, 1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, V, 6; Orosius, VII, 8.1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 9; John of Antioch, fr. 174; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 645. See also Kienast 2004, 100-101; Zugravu 2012, 279-280, n. 141; Zugravu 2022b, 354-355, n. 153.

¹⁸² Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 5.1 *Ann.* XV, 72.4; Plutarch, *Galb.* 8.1; 14-15. See also Champlin 2003, 4, 7, 146-147; Kienast 2004, 104.

¹⁸³ Suetonius, *Dom.*, 6.2; 7.3; 10.5; Cassius Dio, LXVII, 11; *SHA*, *Pesc.*, IX, 2; *Alex. Seu.*, I, 7; *Quadr. tyr.*, I, 1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XI, 9-10; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 14. See also Kienast 2004, 119; Zugravu 2012, 312-313, n. 244 and 245; Zugravu 2022b, 391, n. 260.

physically strong slaves, in exchange for grand promises. He was ultimately killed by Lucius Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas, the governor of *Galatia* and *Pamphylia*, after which his body was taken to Rome¹⁸⁴;

b) during the reign of Titus: Terentius Maximus (*Pseudo-Nero II*), originally from *Asia*, allegedly bore a resemblance to the deceased emperor in both appearance and voice, and he managed to attract various peoples to his side. He sought refuge with Artabanus III (79-81), the king of the Persians; however, when his true identity was discovered, the false Nero was killed¹⁸⁵;

c) during the reign of Domitianus: *Pseudo-Nero III*, an impostor of uncertain social status, allegedly succeeded in gaining the support of the Persians, who were prepared for a potential confrontation with the Roman Empire. Emperor Domitianus reportedly struggled to secure the "extradition" of this individual¹⁸⁶;

5. refused usurpation: after the revolt of Caius Iulius Vindex was suppressed, the troops commanded by Lucius Verginius Rufus proclaimed him emperor. Additionally, the soldiers tore down the portraits of Nero, mocking them as they threw them to the ground and smashed them¹⁸⁷. Verginius declined the throne, and despite one soldier inscribing imperial titles on the standards, he succeeded in pacifying the troops and convincing them to abandon such plans. Following the death of Otho, the soldiers attempted once again to bestow the imperial purple upon him, but once again, they were met with refusal¹⁸⁸.

The second century

In the second century AD, the following examples are known: Avidius Cassius (175), Commodus (180-192), Septimius Severus (193-211), Didius Iulianus (193), Pescennius Niger (193-194), and Clodius Albinus (193-197).

The genesis of Caius Avidius Cassius' aspirations for the imperial throne must be situated within the context of rumours regarding the death of the legitimate ruler, Marcus Aurelius (161-180). The actions of the protagonist of the rebellion in April 175 significantly influenced his fate;

¹⁸⁴ Tacitus, *Hist.*, II, 8-9; Cassius Dio, LXVI, 9; Zonaras, XI, 15. See also Pappano 1937, 385-390.

¹⁸⁵ Cassius Dio, LXVI, 19; John of Antioch, fr. 187; Zonaras, XI, 18. See also Pappano 1937, 390-391.

¹⁸⁶ Suetonius, *Nero*, 57.2; Tacitus, *Hist.* I, 2.1. See also Pappano 1937, 391-392.

¹⁸⁷ Cassius Dio, LXIII, 25. See also Hainsworth 1962, 93, n. 45; Varner 2004, 47.

¹⁸⁸ Tacitus, *Hist.*, I, 8.1; II, 5.1; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.*, II, 1; VI, 10; IX, 19; Plutarch, *Galba*, 6.2-3; Cassius Dio, LXIII, 25. See also Hainsworth 1962, 93-95; Levick 1985, 320, 329 (n. 55), 332, 334-336, 341, 343; Brunt 1990, 15; Królczyk 2018, 868.

although he gained the support and recognition of the troops under his command, the majority of Roman senators, remaining loyal to Marcus Aurelius, declared him a *hostis publicus* and decided to confiscate his wealth. He was also perceived as *tyrranus*; *rebellis*; *suspectus*; an ingrate; an opportunist seeking succession; an individual with the intention of seizing the empire by force; a traitor whose actions would undermine faith in people, in the importance of virtues, in the concept of friendship, and would sow discord among those around him; a treacherous individual who lacked the courage to directly engage with the legitimate emperor and the Senate to present his grievances; a general less skilled in military strategy than Verus, the governor of Cappadocia, who remained loyal to Marcus Aurelius; a descendant of the Cassii family who despised imperial rule, could not tolerate the emperors' names, and used diatribes when referring to them; naturally inclined towards rebellion, which led him to adopt a hostile attitude towards the emperor. His reign represented: a *furor*; a *tyrannis*; an *impietas*; a *rebellio*; a *defectio*; a *consensus*; the result of a tumultuous judgment; a horror that would surpass, in its gravity, conflicts with external enemies or civil wars; an act of public indiscipline that would affect the citizens; the manifestation of vile conspiracies; an injustice against legitimate governance. The usurper was slain by a centurion named Antonius and a decurion; his head was delivered to the emperor.

His supporters, generals, senators, and the populations of *Syria*, *Iudeea*, *Cilicia*, and *Aegyptus*, were considered: *hostes*; *inimici*; *conscii*; *seditiosi*; *rebelles*; *proscripti*; conspirators; disloyal; militarily inferior to the Roman troops; ungrateful for their military deeds, and despite their leader, Cassius, being likened to an eagle or lion, they were nothing but crows and deer¹⁸⁹.

Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus, frequently compared by ancient authors to emperors like Caligula, Nero, and Domitianus due to his character, faced *abolitio memoriae* as a result of an official Senate decree, enacted promptly after his death. Ancient historians employed various terms to highlight his new social status as a public enemy: *hostis*; *hostis publicus*;

¹⁸⁹ Codex Justinianus, IX, 8.6; Cassius Dio, LXXI, 17; 22-31; Tertullian, *Apol.*, 35.8-10; *ad Scapulam*, 2.5; Philostratus, *V. soph.*, II, 1.32; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXI, 16.11; XXII, 5.4-5; *SHA, Marc.*, XV, 6; XXIV, 5-9; XXV, 1-10; XXVI; XXVII, 1; *Au. Cass.*, I, 4-9; II; VI, 6; VII, 1-7; VIII, 2-11; X; XI, 1-3; XII, 1-10; XIII, 4; *Clod. Alb.*, VI; *Quadr. tyr.*, I, 1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 19; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XVI, 11; John of Antioch, fr. 201. For an analysis of the *abolitio memoriae* of Avidius Cassius and his supporters, see Chilcoş 2024, 89-101.

*hostis patriae; hostis senatus; hostis deorum; hostis deorum atque hominorum; hostis generis humani*¹⁹⁰.

In the early months of 193 AD, the reign of Publius Helvius Pertinax represented a hope that all injustices committed during the previous regime would be avenged. However, it was not long before the edge of the sword became an instrument of fate, as the Praetorian Guard terminated his life, turning his head into an object of pride and display¹⁹¹. After his death, Marcus Didius Iulianus bid a significant sum for the throne, and the ancient writers painted a negative portrait of him, highlighting his extravagant, disorganized character and indulgence in pleasures. Additionally, he was perceived as indifferent to public affairs and greedy for pleasure¹⁹². In the Roman collective mindset, Didius Iulianus came to be regarded as the moral author of Pertinax's death, viewed as a usurper, a parricide, and a briber¹⁹³. The hatred and contempt expressed by the citizens, along with the criticisms, curses, and mockery directed at Didius Iulianus, led to social tensions in the Roman capital reaching a critical level, necessitating military intervention; the name of Caius Pescennius Niger was also called out, given his significant popularity in Rome, as a means to aid the city¹⁹⁴. Due to the lack of widespread support for Didius Iulianus, on April 9, the year 193, just 11 days after his acclamation as *Augustus*, Lucius Septimius Severus was proclaimed emperor by his soldiers. During the same period, Pescennius Niger was also

¹⁹⁰ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 2; Eutropius, VIII, 15; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 17,10; Orosius, VII, 16.4; *SHA, Comm.*, XVIII, 2-5; 12; XIX, 1. For a detailed analysis of the condemnation of Commodus, the various implications of the term *hostis*, the perception of the emperor, and the specific stages of the phenomenon of *abolitio memoriae* that unfolded following his death, see Chilcoş 2020, 172-185.

¹⁹¹ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 10; *SHA, Pert.*, XIV, 7; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XVIII, 2. Herodian (II, 5), Aurelius Victor (*Caes.*, 18.2; 20.1 and 9), Eutropius (VIII, 16); Jerome (*Chron.*, a. 193; 194), Orosius (VII, 16.5-6; 17.1), Zosimus (I, 7.1; 8.2), John of Antioch (fr. 205), Cassiodorus (*Chron.*, a.193), Jordanes (*Rom.*, 274; 275), Malalas (*Chron.*, XII, 14) only noted that he was killed by the soldiers. See also Zugravu 2012, 364, n. 364 and 365; Zugravu 2017, 51-52, n. 58; Zugravu 2022b, 460, n. 404.

¹⁹² Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 11-12; Herodian, II, 6-7; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 19.4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XIX, 1; John of Antioch, fr. 206. The author of the *SHA (Did. Iul.*, III, 8-10) describes him as a temperate man who showed respect for his predecessor. See also Zugravu 2012, 368, n. 376.

¹⁹³ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 13; *SHA, Did. Iul.*, III, 7; IV, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 13; Herodian, II, 7-8; 11; *SHA, Did. Iul.*, IV, 2-7; VI, 1; VII, 9-11; *Seu.*, V, 1; *Pesc. Nig.*, II, 2-3; John of Antioch, fr. 206. See also Varner 2004, 160; Zugravu 2012, 368, n. 377; Zugravu 2022b, 467-470, n. 433.

recognized as emperor, while Decimus Clodius Albinus initially declined the offer from his troops.

On the eve of the civil war, Didius Iulianus succeeded in convincing the Senate to declare Septimius Severus a *hostis publicus*. He granted his supporters a one-day grace period during which they could switch allegiance; otherwise, they would also be considered *hostes*¹⁹⁵. Ultimately, fate favoured Septimius Severus, while the one in Rome, abandoned by most of his supporters, sought the mercy of the victors. Didius Iulianus planned for senators, priests, and vestal virgins to act as the representatives of his intentions, who were to go out to meet the Severan army. However, the augur Pautius Quintillus disagreed and, rallying the senators to his side, insulted Didius Iulianus by stating: “he who cannot resist an opponent with arms should not be emperor”¹⁹⁶. Furious, Didius Iulianus ordered the punishment of the senators, but he later reversed this decision, as he did not want to be seen as an enemy himself¹⁹⁷. Septimius Severus was offered a partnership in rule; however, suspecting his opponent of hidden intentions, he chose to remain an enemy and to eliminate him¹⁹⁸. At the conclusion of the war, as he still regarded his former adversaries as *hostes*, Septimius Severus did not leave his tent until a procession of 100 senators came to greet him¹⁹⁹.

In the section dedicated to Septimius Severus, the anonymous writer of the fourth century employs the term *hostis* in close connection with highlighting a phenomenon that affected the Roman Empire during the years 205-207 – banditry. In this context, the phrase *latronum ubique hostis* serves as an example in which a term predominantly bearing negative connotations – *hostis* – is assigned a positive significance. This underscores the emperor's role as a restorer of public order and his intention to resolve the conflict – *latrocinium* – initiated by harmful social elements, thieves, robbers, and criminals, who coalesced around a central figure, Bulla Felix²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁵ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 16; *SHA, Did. Iul.*, V, 3-4; VI, 8; *Seu.*, V, 5; VI, 6; Herodian, II, 12; John of Antioch, fr. 206. See also Kienast 2004, 156; Birley 1999, 98; Southern 2004, 31; Sage 2020, 47, 184 (n. 88).

¹⁹⁶ *SHA, Did. Iul.*, VI, 6.

¹⁹⁷ *SHA, Did. Iul.*, VI, 8.

¹⁹⁸ *SHA, Did. Iul.*, VII, 7.

¹⁹⁹ *SHA, Seu.*, VI, 1.

²⁰⁰ Cassius Dio, LXXVI, 10; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 20.21; *SHA, Seu.*, XVIII, 5; Zosimus, I, 8.2. See also Birley 1999, 169; Shaw 2004, 363-364, 366-371; Zugravu 2012, 375-376, n. 387; Sage 2020, 119-120, 201 (n. 62); Zugravu 2022b, 475-476, n. 454.

Ultimately, their leader was captured and subjected to the punishment of being thrown to the beasts – *damnatio ad bestias*.

After consolidating his power in Rome, Septimius Severus turned his attention to the East, where Pescennius Niger held significant political and military power. The emperor did not delay in declaring war against his rival, but not before designating both Niger and Asellius Aemilianus, the proconsul of *Asia* and his most loyal supporter, as *hostes publici*²⁰¹. Several confrontations ensued between the two armies, but the most notable took place at *Perinthus* in Thrace, *Cyzicus*, *Nicaea*, and near *Issos* in *Cilicia*. The outcome favored the Severan faction, and Pescennius Niger, who sought refuge in Antioch, attempted to reach the territory controlled by the Parthians but was captured and executed²⁰². Three years later, a new civil war would challenge the newly established Severan dynasty, with Clodius Albinus as the leader of the opposing faction. During his campaign in the East, Septimius Severus sought to secure the support of the troops in the western regions of the empire by granting Clodius Albinus the title of *Caesar*, thereby creating the impression that he was associated with the imperial authority and was a legitimate successor to the throne²⁰³. However, once the eastern provinces were pacified, Septimius Severus revealed his true intentions: to establish himself as the sole ruler of the empire. To legitimize his claims to the throne and to confer succession rights upon his heirs, Geta and Bassianus (Caracalla), he asserted a connection to the former imperial family by declaring himself the son of Marcus Aurelius and the brother of

²⁰¹ *SHA, Seu.*, VIII, 13; *Pesc. Nig.*, V, 7. See also Kienast 2004, 160; Varner 2004, 157, 160; Haymann 2018, 265, 267; Sage 2020, 55.

²⁰² Cassius Dio, LXXIV, 6-8; Herodian, II, 7-8; III, 1-4; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 20.8; Eutropius, VIII, 18.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVI, 8.15; *SHA, Seu.*, VIII, 6-17; IX, 1; *Pesc.*, V, 2-8; VI, 1; *Quadr. tyr.*, I, 1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XX, 2; Orosius, VII, 17.2 and 5-6; Zosimus, I, 8.1; John of Antioch, fr. 206-209; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 670; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 21. See also Birley 1999, 98, 105, 107-121, 246 (n. 13); Potter 2004, 99, 103-105, 108, 110, 112, 116, 121, 605 (n. 135); Southern 2004, 28, 32-38, 46-47, 84, 290 (n. 30 and 31), 291 (n. 34) 292-293 (n. 41), 294 (n. 44), 344-345 (n. 1); Varner 2004, 7, 157-158, 160; Mennen 2011, 39, 108 (n. 106), 146, 196-199, 214; Zugravu 2012, 371, n. 382; Pearson 2016, xvii, 14; Sage 2020, 9-10, 45-46, 53-64, 67-68, 70-71, 74, 77, 81, 83, 85, 98, 101-102, 138, 145, 149, 185 (n. 20), 194 (n. 13); Zugravu 2022b, 467-470, n. 433.

²⁰³ Cassius Dio, LXXIII, 15; Herodian, II, 15; III, 5; 7; *SHA, Clod. Alb.*, III, 3 and 6; VI, 7; X, 3. See also Birley 1999, 98, 244 (n. 22); Potter 2004, 102; Southern 2004, 31-31, 290 (n. 29); Varner 2004, 157; Mennen 2011, 23, 194; Zugravu 2012, 372, n. 384; Pearson 2016, 14; Sage 2020, 45; Zugravu 2022b, 467-470, n. 433.

Commodus. In this regard, according to the account provided in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, in 196, he persuaded the Senate to declare Clodius Albinus, his former ally, a *hostis publicus*; this legal degradation also extended to his supporters²⁰⁴.

On the other hand, Herodian states that the army, following a speech delivered by Septimius Severus, declared Clodius Albinus an enemy. This address by the emperor reportedly took place shortly before the capture of the city of *Byzantium* and was crafted to have a profound psycho-emotional impact on the soldiers. Severus highlighted the qualities of his own army – bravery, combat experience, and loyalty – as well as his own virtues, such as benevolence and keeping his promises. Albinus was labelled a traitor, coward, ignorant, and incapable of commanding troops; he was described as negligent for allegedly favouring the company of dancers, and his actions were deemed hostile. He was compared to Niger; however, unlike Niger, against whom Severus had waged war on equal terms and "out of necessity", Albinus was accused of attempting to illegitimately seize the throne. Furthermore, his army was regarded as one of islanders and was perceived to be numerically inferior²⁰⁵.

In reality, Albinus anticipated the events that were to unfold, proclaimed himself *Augustus*, and moved into Gaul with his troops in 196 or 197. Following extensive preparations, the two factions confronted each other on the battlefield. Initially, Albinus' faction appeared to have favourable prospects, but the decisive battle took place north of the city of *Lugdunum* (Lyon) on February 19 (197). Defeated, Albinus sought refuge in a house near the *Rhodanus* (Rhône) River, where he subsequently committed suicide²⁰⁶.

²⁰⁴ *SHA, Seu.*, X, 2; *Clod. Alb.*, IX, 1; XII, 3. See also Kienast 2004, 161; Birley 1999, 119, 121, 247-248 (n. 1); Southern 2004, 35 (n. 36); Varner 2004, 158; Birley 2005, 175, 179; Mennen 2011, 201; Zugravu 2012, 372, n. 384; Haymann 2018, 265, 267; Sage 2020, 68; Zugravu 2022b, 467-470, n. 433.

²⁰⁵ Herodian, III, 6. Also see Birley 1999, 247-248 (n. 1).

²⁰⁶ Cassius Dio, LXXV, 6-7; Herodian, III, 5-8; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 20.10-11; Eutropius, VIII, 18.4; *SHA, Seu.*, X-XI; *Clod. Alb.*, VII-IX; *Quadr. tyr.*, I, 1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XX, 2; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 205; Orosius, VII, 17.5-6; Zosimus, I, 8.1; John of Antioch, fr. 210; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 671; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 19: places the defeat in Thrace. See also Birley 1999, 121-28; Potter 2004, 110, 112-113, 128; Southern 2004, 28, 34-39, 42, 46-48, 84, 251, 289-290 (n. 25), 291 (n. 35), 292-293 (n. 37-43), 297-298 (n. 62); Varner 2004, 100, 158-159; Mennen 2011, 57, 64, 200-204; Zugravu 2012, 372, n. 384; Pearson 2016, xvii, 14; Sage 2020, 7-9, 41, 45, 52, 54, 62, 64, 67-75, 77, 81, 126-127, 136-138, 145, 148-150, 171 (n. 13); Zugravu 2022b, 467-470, n. 433.

There is also epigraphic evidence regarding the exclusion from the citizen body of Septimius Severus's two former opponents, as well as their supporters, as follows:

An inscription discovered at *Terraco* in *Hispania*, dated between 198–199 AD, was dedicated by Silius Hospes, a *hastatus* of *legio X Gemina* and *strator*, in honour of Tiberius Claudius Candidus, who is referred to as *optimus praesidus* - EDCS-05503146.

According to the inscription, Tiberius Claudius Candidus held key roles across the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus, actively participating in major military conflicts during this period. His career began as *praefectus* of the unit *cohors II civium Romanorum* in *Germania Inferior*, likely between 171-174, during the rule of Marcus Aurelius. He was subsequently promoted to *tribunus militum* in *legio II Augusta* in *Britannia* around 174-177. Between 177/178-180, he served as *praepositus copiarum* during the Germanic expedition (*expeditio Germanica*). From 180-182, he held the position of *procurator XX hereditatium* in *Gallia Lugdunensis*, *Belgica*, and *Germania*, tasked with collecting the 5% inheritance tax on property transfers. Under Commodus, who granted him senatorial rank and praetorian insignia, Candidus managed the financial affairs of various eastern cities, such as Nicomedia and Ephesus, and served as *legatus* to the governor of *Asia*. During the civil wars at the close of the second century, he aligned with Septimius Severus, acting as *dux exercitus Illyrici* in campaigns against Pescennius Niger (*expeditio Asiana*), the Parthians (*expeditio Parthica*), and Clodius Albinus (*expeditio Gallica*). Cassius Dio recounts that during a confrontation between Severus and Niger near *Nicaea* and *Cius*, Candidus chastised his troops for their lack of courage, a weakness nearly resulting in a severe setback for Severus' forces. Remorseful, the soldiers rallied, ultimately securing a victory. In 195, Candidus was tasked with quelling remaining support for Severus' former opponents, designated as *hostes publici*, in *Asia* and *Noricum*, where he served as *dux terra marique*. Following Clodius Albinus' defeat in 197, Candidus was appointed governor of *Hispania Citerior*. Notably, Candidus' name on the inscription was chiseled out but later restored, suggesting subsequent changes in his posthumous reputation²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁷ Cassius Dio, LXXIV, 6. See also Fitz 1966, 831-846; M. Avi-Yonah 1966, 139, n. 11; Alföldy, 1968, 120, 123 (n. 68), 126, 127 (n. 77), 128, 139, 140; Fitz 1969, 132, n. 1; Birley 1999, 109-110, 116, 118, 121-122, 125, 131, 246 (n. 4 and 9), 247 (n. 20 and 24), 248 (n. 2, 5 and 15), 250 (n. 5); Potter 2004, 104, 605 (n. 139); Southern 2004, 33, 47, 290 (n. 30), 291 (n. 32); Birley 2005, 310, n.

1. An inscription discovered at *Caesarea Maritima* (Har Qesari) was placed on the base of a column statue made of gray-blue marble. It was dedicated by Mevius Romanus, a centurion and *strator*? of *legio VI Ferrata Fidelis Constantiana*, to his superior officer, Lucius Valerius Valerianus, who was referred to as *vir incomparabilis*. The column currently bears three inscriptions: two are in Latin and one in Greek. However, the column has been reused at least five times, as noted in academic literature. The first text is dedicated to Lucius Valerius Valerianus and shows signs of erasure to make way for another. The second text was erased to accommodate the one numbered four, while the third text suffered the same fate as the second, being removed for the fifth inscription. The fourth text, composed in Greek and dating from 260-276 AD, was dedicated by Novius/Nonius Alexander, an unknown figure likely serving as a *ἐκατόνταρχος* or a tribune, who honoured Aurelius Maron, the imperial procurator and governor of the province of *Syria Palestine*, who was regarded as a *φίλος*²⁰⁸. The fifth text was composed in Latin, dates from 284-305, and the dedicant was Aurelius Clemens, a procurator with the rank of *vir perfectissimus*, who honored Emperor Diocletianus²⁰⁹.

The distinguished career of Lucius Valerius Valerianus is presented in reverse chronological order - *HD*, 006228. Based on the text and subsequent reconstructions outlined in various scholarly studies and *corpora* of inscriptions, his *cursus honorum* began in *Pannonia*, where he held two roles: initially as *praefectus* of a cohort, although its name is lost, followed by *tribunus cohortis I milliariae Hemesenorum civium Romanorum*. Later, he served as *praefectus* of the cavalry unit *ala I Hispanorum Campagonum* in *Dacia*. These posts were held under Emperor Commodus, who eventually appointed him as *procurator* of the imperial estate in *Cyprus*. It is widely accepted that Valerianus attained the title *praepositus equitum peregrinorum* also during Commodus' reign, likely in a Danubian province. From there, at the outset of hostilities between Septimius Severus and Didius Iulianus, he joined the former's faction, evidenced by his role as *praepositus* of a military contingent during the campaign against Rome, indicated by the term *expeditio urbica*. Following this, he participated in the campaign against Pescennius Niger in

44; Speidel 2005, 62; Mennen 2011, 146, 196-199, 201-202, 206, 209, 214; Sage 2020, 55-57, 65-66, 71-72, 74, 101, 185 (n. 20).

²⁰⁸ Negev 1961, 83; M. Avi-Yonah 1966, 135; Christol 1976, 170-176; Speidel 1981, 363; Eck 2010, 179.

²⁰⁹ Negev 1961, 83; M. Avi-Yonah 1966, 135, 141; Christol 1976, 169; Speidel 1981, 363-364; Speidel 1985, 322, n. 3; Eck 2010, 179.

the East, as marked by the phrase *expeditio Asiana*, where he served as a commander during the decisive battle at *Issus* in 194, alongside Publius Cornelius Anullinus, as noted by Cassius Dio²¹⁰. Both Niger and his supporters are labeled as *hostes publici* in the text. Valerianus' military service continued without pause; in 194-195, he engaged in another campaign, this time *adversus Arabes*, where he held the position of *praepositus sumae*, overseeing either military or financial matters, denoted as *expeditio Mesopotamena*. Due to a gap in the inscription, it is thought that Valerianus subsequently gained the rank of *procurator* in an unknown province before assuming the same role in *Syria Palestina*.

The online epigraphic platforms *Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg* and *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby* date the inscription to 212–220 and 212–215, respectively. In various issues of the French journal for epigraphic studies, *L'Année épigraphique* (from the years 1968, 1972, 1975, and 1988), the inscription was attributed to Caracalla's reign, while the 1994 issue provided a more precise dating to 212–214/215²¹¹. Regarding *corpora* of inscriptions, the situation is as follows: in *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima*, edited by C.M. Lehmann and K. G. Holum, the inscription is dated between the early third century and 222²¹². In *Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae. Inscriptiones extra fines Daciae repertae Graecae et Latinae (saec. I.II.III)*, vol. II: *Illyricum – Oriens – Africa septentrionalis* (IDRE, II), edited by Constantin C. Petolescu, it is suggested to postdate 212²¹³. Barnabás Lőrincz, in *Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften*, did not provide a specific date but referenced secondary bibliography²¹⁴. In *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae / Palaestinae*, II: *Caesarea and the Middle Coast 1121–2160*, edited by Walter Ameling, Hannah M. Cotton, Werner Eck, Benjamin Isaac, Alla Kushnir-Stein, Haggai Misgav, Jonathan Price, and Ada Yardeni, with contributions from Robert Daniel, Avner Ecker, Michael Shenkar, and Claudia Sode, with the assistance of Marfa Heimbach, Dirk Koßmann, and Naomi Schneider, the inscription is chronologically positioned between 212–217²¹⁵.

²¹⁰ Cassius Dio, LXXIV, 7; LXXV, 3.

²¹¹ AE 1966, 495 = AE 1969/1970, 612 = AE 1971, 476 = AE 1985, 829 = AE 1991, 1579 = AE 2000, 1233 = AE 2001, 1968.

²¹² GLICMar, 4.

²¹³ IDRE II, 415.

²¹⁴ RHP, 285.

²¹⁵ CIIP II, 1284.

Opinions among scholars remain divided. For instance, M. Avi-Yonah dates the inscription to 218–222, thus within Elagabalus's reign, whereas Jenö Fid and Lajos Balla assert it belongs to Caracalla's reign²¹⁶.

Richard Duncan-Jones suggests a date no earlier than 211, probably between 219–220, while Michael P. Speidel places it during the reign of either Septimius Severus or Caracalla²¹⁷. The inscription is also mentioned by other researchers, among whom we mention A. Negev, Michael Christol, Anthony R. Birley, Werner Eck, Michael Sage²¹⁸.

The third century

In the first half of the third century, the following emperors were declared *hostes*: Geta (211–212), Macrinus and his son Diadumenianus (217–218), Elagabalus (218–222); during the period of military anarchy, Maximinus Thrax and his son Maximus (235–238), Priscus (250), and Aemilianus (253).

Publius Septimius Geta and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Caracalla) (211–217) were the successors of Septimius Severus. In the works of ancient historians, the personalities of these two emperors are presented in antithetical terms. Geta is portrayed as possessing a gentle nature and refined interests, in stark contrast to Caracalla, whose character is described as cruel, vengeful, unfriendly, envious, suspicious, and even murderous²¹⁹. Caracalla was also accused of having an incestuous relationship with his mother, Iulia Domna; however, as numerous historians have pointed out, this information is nothing more than a malicious allegation²²⁰. Although they were brothers, the two harboured intense hatred toward each other. Each feared assassination by the other and, as a result, they were constantly accompanied by guards. Despite attempts at reconciliation, the animosity between them was too great, ultimately culminating in the murder of Geta

²¹⁶ M. Avi-Yonah 1966, 136–141; Balla 1967, 85–88; Fitz 1969, 126–140; Fitz 1990, 161–162.

²¹⁷ Duncan-Jones 1970, 107–109; Speidel 1981, 363–364; Speidel 1985, 321–326.

²¹⁸ Negev 1961, 83; Christol 1976, 169, n. 1; Eck 1996, 131; Birley 1999, 98, 113, 117, 244 (n. 24), 246 (n. 13); Eck 2007, 97 (n. 77), 244–245; Eck 2010, 179; Sage 2020, 59–61, 66, 186 (n. 35 and 36).

²¹⁹ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 11–13; Herodian, IV, 3; Eutropius, VIII, 20.1; *SHA, Seu.*, XX, 3; *Carac.*, I, 3–4; II, 1 and 3; IX, 3; *Get.*, IV, V, 1; 4; VII, 4 and 6; Orosius, VII, 18.2; Zosimus, I, 9.2; John of Antioch, fr. 213. Aurelius Victor (*Caes.*, 21.2), described Caracalla as a "patient, friendly, and calm man". See also Zugravu 2022b, 484 (n. 478), 487–488 (n. 485).

²²⁰ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 21.3; Eutropius, VIII, 20.1; *SHA, Seu.*, XX, 2; XXI, 7; *Carac.*, X, 1; *Get.*, VII, 3; *Macr.*, II, 4. See also Zugravu 2012, 382–384, n. 408; Zugravu 2022b, 488, n. 487.

in 211²²¹. Herodian notes how Caracalla ran through the palace, exclaiming that he had escaped a great danger. Upon encountering the soldiers, he requested an escort to the Praetorian barracks; after promising them large sums of money, he persuaded them to acclaim him as sole emperor and to declare Geta an enemy of the state. Eutropius and Orosius wrote that the condemnation of the emperor began during his lifetime, first branding him *hostis* before his death. According to the anonymous fourth-century writer, Caracalla claimed that his brother "beset him on all sides with hostile intrigues" and accused him of treason, ultimately declaring him *hostis publicus*²²². Caracalla ruled alone until April 8, 217, when he was assassinated by Iulius Martialis near *Carrhae* during his campaign against the Parthians. The conspiracy was orchestrated by Marcus Opellius Macrinus, the *praefectus praetorio*²²³. According to Cassius Dio, many wished for *abolitio memoriae* to be applied to the deceased, but this was not officially enacted. Out of fear of the soldiers, Macrinus refrained from declaring his predecessor a *hostis*, instead preferring to leave such matters to the Senate and the Roman people²²⁴; pretending to be in mourning, Macrinus commanded that the body be cremated and granted him deification²²⁵. However, in the *Scriptores*

²²¹ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 1-5; LXXVIII, 23; Herodian, IV, 4; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 20.32-34; Eutropius, VIII, 19.2; *SHA, Seu.*, XX, 3; XXI, 6-8; *Carac.*, I, 1; II, 5; VIII, 5-6; *Get.*, VI, 1; *Macr.*, II, 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXI, 3; Zosimus, I, 9.2; John of Antioch, fr. 213; Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*, III, 41; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 672. See also Birley 1999, 188-189, 256 (n. 3); Potter 2004, 133-138; Varner 2004, Mennen 2011, 150, 172, 209; Zugravu 2012, 380-381, n. 405; de Jong 2019, 21-22; Sage 2020, 113, 117, 135-136, 145-146; Zugravu 2022b, 484, n. 479.

²²² Herodian, IV, 6; Eutropius, VIII, 19.2; *SHA, Carac.*, I, 1; II, 4; VIII, 4; Orosius, VII, 17.8. See also Kienast 2004, 166; Birley 1999, 189; Potter 2004, 138; Varner 2004, 6-7, 77, 156, 163, 168, 170-172, 174-176, 179-180, 182-184, 198-199, 215, 276; Drijvers 2006, 17; Zugravu 2012, 380-381, n. 405; Haymann 2018, 265, 267; de Jong 2019, 21; Sage 2020, 194 (n. 14); Zugravu 2022b, 350, n. 479.

²²³ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 18-19; 21; LXXVIII, 1-6; 9; 11; 17-18; 41; Herodian, IV, 10-13; *SHA, Carac.*, VI, 4-7; VII, 1-2; IX, 5; *Macr.*, IV, 7-8; V, 2-5; *Diad.*, I, 1; *Hel.*, II, 3; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 217; Orosius, VII, 18.2; Zosimus, XII, 12; John of Antioch, fr. 214-215; Chronicon Paschale, a. 219; Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*, III, 41 Zonaras, XII, 12. Aurelius Victor (*Caes.*, 21.5), Eutropius (VIII, 20.2), Festus (21.3), Pseudo-Aurelius Victor (*Epit. Caes.*, XXI, 6), Cassiodorus (*Chron.*, a. 218), Synkellos (*Chron.*, 672) and Jordanes (*Rom.*, 277) wrote that he died of natural or unspecified causes in *Edessa*. Malalas (*Chron.*, XII, 25) wrote that he was killed in the palace. See also Birley 1999, 190-192; Potter 2004, 121, 144-147; Southern 2004, 54, 193, 299 (n. 70); Mennen 2011, 30 (n. 24), 160-162, 166-167, 210, 212 (n. 80); Zugravu 2012, 384, n. 409; Sage 2020, 112, 137, 237; Zugravu 2022b, 489-490, n. 490.

²²⁴ Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 17-18.

²²⁵ Kienast 2004, 163; Potter 2004, 147; Southern 2004, 55, 57, 300 (n. 71); Varner 2004, 184; Zugravu 2012, 385, n. 411; Zugravu 2022b, 490-491, n. 492.

Historiae Augustae, the expression *paricida et incestus, patris, matris, fratris inimicus* was used, with the author intending to emphasize the emperor's contentious nature²²⁶.

Caracalla's successor, Macrinus, was the first sovereign of equestrian origin²²⁷; He was proclaimed emperor three days after Caracalla's death, on April 11 (217), coinciding with the birthday celebration of Septimius Severus²²⁸. Initially, the new sovereign enjoyed the support of both the Senate and the army, but Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Elagabalus) was able to gather sufficient backing to depose him. When the news of the demise of Macrinus and Diadumenianus reached Rome, the Senate, as noted by Cassius Dio, declared the former emperors *hostes* as a demonstration of loyalty to the new regime represented by Elagabalus²²⁹. In Herodian's view, the novelty of the situation alarmed the senators and citizens, but they recognized that Macrinus was solely to blame for his own death. Constrained by the circumstances, they accused him of negligence and superficiality. The author of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* notes that the senators hurled reproaches and curses at him²³⁰. After being declared *hostes*, both suffered *abolitio memoriae*²³¹. The supporters of the former emperors were also regarded as *hostes*²³².

In the context of the civil war that preceded the restoration of the Severan dynasty, Macrinus sent a letter to Rome to inform the Senate of Elagabalus's rebellion, stating that "war was declared against him <Avitus>, his cousin, and against their mothers and grandmother". In other words, this resulted in the designation of Elagabalus as *hostis publicus*²³³. Additionally,

²²⁶ *SHA, Carac.*, XI, 5.

²²⁷ Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 11; 15; 41; Herodian, V, 1; *SHA, Macr.*, IV, 1; V, 6; VII, 1. See also Birley 1999, 192; Potter 2004, 146, 236; Southern 2004, 2, 54-55, 246, 254, 299-300 (n. 70); Varner 2004, 184; Mennen 2011, 23, 184; Zugravu 2012, 385-387, n. 412; Sage 2020, 137; Zugravu 2022b, 491-492, n. 494.

²²⁸ Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 11; Herodian, IV, 14; Aurelius Victor, 22.1; Eutropius, VIII, 21; *SHA, Macr.*, VI, 5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXII, 1; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 218; Zosimus, I, 10.1. According to Zonaras (XII, 13), four days after the death of Caracalla. See also Varner 2004, 184; Zugravu 2012, 385-387, n. 412; Zugravu 2022b, 491-492, n. 494.

²²⁹ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 2.

²³⁰ Herodian, V, 5; *SHA, Hel.*, III, 3.

²³¹ Kienast 2004, 169, 171; Varner 2004, 185; Zugravu 2012, 387-389, n. 414; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2022b, 494-495, n. 500.

²³² Zosimus, I, 11.1.

²³³ Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 38. See also Southern 2004, 58, 300-301 (n. 73).

the faction supporting Macrinus believed that they faced a declared enemy on the battlefield²³⁴. Elagabalus was considered *hostis* even after he was killed and removed from power, as the Senate issued several sanctions intended to undermine his socio-political identity²³⁵.

Throughout Elagabalus's reign, multiple rebellions occurred:

1. Aelius Decius Triccianus, who served as governor of *Pannonia Inferior* during Macrinus's reign, organized a rebellion in 218 but was killed by soldiers²³⁶. *Abolitio memoriae* was applied to him, as evidenced by several inscriptions in which his name was chiseled out: EDCS-32300144 (a. 217); 29601468 (a. 217-218); HD, 006036 (a. 217); 018323; 073557 (a. 217); 073941 (a. 217); 073942 (a. 217); 074886 (a. 217-218); 074897 (a. 217-218); 074898 (a. 217; 074985 (a. 217-218);

2. Gellius Maximus, the son of one of Caracalla's physicians and a senatorial tribune of the *Legio IV Scythica*, organized a rebellion in 219 but was sentenced to death²³⁷;

3. Verus, the commander of *legio III Gallica*, dared to aspire to supreme power in the region of *Syria* in 219²³⁸. *Abolitio memoriae* was applied to him, and the legion was disbanded, as indicated by several inscriptions in which the name of the military unit was chiselled out: EDCS-22300040 (a. 213-217); 79700091 (a. 211-212); HD, 022130 (a. 211-217); 027253 (a. 211-222); the legion was reestablished under Severus Alexander;

4. Seius Carus, an influential, wealthy, and prominent figure, was allegedly accused of harbouring separatist sentiments; he was said to have conspired with the soldiers of the *legio II Parthica*. However, he was captured, and his trial took place in the imperial palace, where he was subsequently executed²³⁹;

²³⁴ Herodian, V, 4.

²³⁵ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 1; 20-21; Herodian, V, 8; Eutropius, VIII, 22.1; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 222; Orosius, VII, 18.5; *SHA, Hel.*, XVII, 1-3; 5-6; XXXIII, 7; *Seu. Alex.*, VI, 5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit., Caes.*, XXIII, 6-7; John of Antioch, fr. 218; Zosimus, I, 11.1; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 223; Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*, III, 41; Zonaras, XII, 14-15. See also Drijvers 2006, 15; Zugravu 2012, 396-397, n. 427; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2022b, 503, n. 509.

²³⁶ Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 13; LXXIX, 4; LXXX, 4; *SHA, Carac.*, VI, 7. See also Southern 2004, 56, 58, 300 (n. 72); Mennen 2011, 166-167; McHugh 2017, 30-31, 58-59.

²³⁷ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7. See also Kienast 2004, 176; Potter 2004, 152, 614 (n. 136); Mennen 2011, 31, n. 29; McHugh 2017, 55, 59, 320.

²³⁸ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7. See also Kienast 2004, 176; Potter 2004, 152, 614 (n. 136); Mennen 2011, 31, n. 29; McHugh 2017, 55, 59.

²³⁹ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 4. See also Southern 2004, 58; McHugh 2017, 58-59, 133.

5. Caius Iulius Septimius Castinus, known to the soldiers for his energy and the numerous responsibilities he held, as well as for his friendship with Caracalla, was said to have orchestrated a rebellion in *Bithynia*, for which he was executed²⁴⁰;

6. Sulla, a senator and former governor of *Cappadocia*, is said to have become entangled in intrigues. On his journey back to Rome, he encountered Gallic soldiers and attempted to win their support; he ultimately ended up being killed²⁴¹;

7. Seleucus, who according to Polemius Silvius was a usurper against Elagabalus, led a rebellion dated between 221 and 222²⁴². This could refer to Iulius Antonius Seleucus, governor of *Moesia Inferior* who was transferred to Syria, or Marcus Flavius Vitellius Seleucus, *consul* in 221; there is an inscription in which the name Seleucus has been chiselled out: *HD*, 026367 (a. 221);

8. *Ignotus* I, the son of a centurion, he allegedly sought to incite turmoil within the same *legio III Gallica*²⁴³;

9. *Ignotus* II, a cloth weaver allegedly sought to incite a rebellion within *legio IV Scythica*²⁴⁴;

10. *Ignotus* III, a private citizen allegedly dared to address the fleet anchored at *Cyzicus*, his actions fueled by thoughts of rebellion; he may have been a supporter of Castinus²⁴⁵;

11. Valerianus Paetus, who worked as a sculptor of effigies, was allegedly accused by Elagabalus, as noted by Cassius Dio, of conspiring to incite a rebellion in *Cappadocia*, leading to his execution. Paetus was originally from *Galatia*, but according to the Bithynian historian, the art in which he was trained allowed him to create ornaments that he presented to his wives. Indeed, these gold ornaments bore his portrait, which may have prompted Elagabalus to consider a potential usurpation²⁴⁶;

²⁴⁰ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 4. See also Southern 2004, 58, 300 (n. 72); McHugh 2017, 55-57, 59, 97, 250, 324.

²⁴¹ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 4. See also McHugh 2017, 57.

²⁴² Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 176; Zugravu 2012, 399-400, n. 433; McHugh 2017, 70, 324.

²⁴³ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7. See also McHugh 2017, 55.

²⁴⁴ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7. See also McHugh 2017, 55.

²⁴⁵ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7. See also McHugh 2017, 56.

²⁴⁶ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 4.

12. according to Cassius Dio, there were also other attempts at usurpation in various regions, as the unscrupulous ambition of those aspiring to power had grown to such an extent that, in the absence of any real chances of success and without genuine merits, numerous individuals engaged in the pursuit of authority, causing disturbances²⁴⁷.

The tragic fate of Severus Alexander (222-235) brought the ruler into contact with the mechanism of social disgrace on two occasions. The first episode occurred during his early childhood, in a context where he had been adopted by his cousin Elagabalus and had attained the status of *nobilissimus Caesar*. According to Cassius Dio, Herodian, the anonymous author of *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, John of Antioch, and Zonaras, Elagabalus began to regret the act of adoption and consequently sought the Senate's approval to revoke the title of *Caesar* from his cousin; however, this request was met with reluctance and ultimately failed. The situation did not end there; upon realizing that his will was disregarded by the senators, Elagabalus devised plans to eliminate his relative through assassination. Thus, the one who was supposed to adopt the conduct of a father and serve as a role model for his adopted son resorted to hiring assassins to carry out his intention. He allegedly commanded members of Severus Alexander's inner circle to take his life, whether in the bath or by using poison or a dagger, offering large rewards and honours to those who would undertake such a mission. He also sought to convince soldiers to annul Severus Alexander's status as *Caesar*. Moreover, agents were dispatched to deface the inscriptions and statues of his cousin, an act that, once executed, incited the anger of the soldiers, who harboured affection for the young emperor and desired vengeance. Although the troops were calmed by Elagabalus's promise to change his ways and distance himself from harmful social elements, the old thoughts and intentions resurfaced in the ruler's mind. This ultimately could not protect him from the sword that brought about his death in the latrine, serving as an instrument of fate that facilitated the transition of Roman imperial governance from an infamous *princeps*, remembered in the annals of history by the epithets *Impurus*, *Tiberinus*, *Tractatius*, *Sardanapalus*, to one regarded as "too good and necessary for the state", as Severus Alexander was considered in the writings of the anonymous author²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁷ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 7.

²⁴⁸ Cassius Dio, LXXIX, 19-20; Herodian, V, 8; *SHA, Hel.*, XIII, 6-8; XIV, 2; John of Antioch, fr. 218; Zonaras, XII, 14. See also Zugravu 2012, 396-397, n. 427; Zugravu 2022b, 503, n. 509.

The second episode was orchestrated posthumously, and was initiated by Maximinus Thrax, who was responsible for the assassination in 235²⁴⁹. Herodian, Eusebius of *Caesarea*, Orosius, Rufinus of *Aquileia*, the author of *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, John of Antioch, Georgius Monachus, Zonaras, and Georgius Cedrenus have provided accounts regarding the manifestations of this phenomenon. Consequently, individuals close to the deceased emperor, specifically those related to his family, as well as his servants and friends, were regarded as *suspecti*. The wrath of Maximinus Thrax was directed at them, resulting in various executions; furthermore, his edicts were no longer deemed worthy of consideration²⁵⁰.

During the reign of Severus Alexander, several rebellions occurred:

1. Lucius Seius Herennius Sallustius, the father-in-law of Severus Alexander and father of his wife, Gnaea Seia Herennia Sallustia Barbia Orbiana, allegedly incited the Praetorian Guard to revolt around the year 227 due to misunderstandings with the empress mother, Iulia Mamaea²⁵¹;
2. Taurinius / Taurinus have been proclaimed *Augustus* in *Mesopotamia* around 226-227 or 231-232, and, fearing capture by the legitimate sovereign, he reportedly threw himself into the Euphrates River²⁵²;
3. Uranius, who is thought to have had obscure origins based on the notion that his ancestors were slaves, as noted by Zosimus, was reportedly proclaimed emperor in the region of *Edessa* sometime in 229, but he was captured and killed. However, Polemius Silvius placed him during the reign of Elagabalus. It is possible that he was a relative, likely the father, of another usurper of the same name who later emerged between 253 and 254²⁵³;
4. the fictitious usurper: Ovinus Camillus, as described in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, is portrayed as a senator from an ancient family who harboured thoughts of rebellion and aimed to seize power. Upon

²⁴⁹ Broșteanu 2020, 104; Broșteanu 2022, 45; Luca 2022, 165.

²⁵⁰ Herodian, VII, 1; Orosius, VII, 19.1-2; Eusebius, *HE*, VI, 28; *SHA, Maxim.*, IX, 7-8; John of Antioch, fr. 220; Georgius Monachus, *Chron.* (in PG 110, 543); Cedrenus, *Hist., Comp.* (in PG 121, 491); Zonaras XII, 16.

²⁵¹ Herodian, VI, 1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 181-182; Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 399-400, n. 433; McHugh 2017, 134, 136-138, 325.

²⁵² Herodian, VI, 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXIV, 2; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 182; Potter 2004, 618, n. 217; Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 399-400, n. 433; McHugh 2017, 184, 203, 250, 326; Syväne 2021, 29-30; Broșteanu 2023, 135.

²⁵³ Zosimus, I, 12.2; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 31; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 674-675. See also Kienast 2004, 176; Potter 2004, 166; Southern 2004, 62, 302 (n. 80), 308-309 (n. 96); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 399-400, n. 433; McHugh 2017, 184-186, 203, 250, 291 (n. 25), 326; Syväne 2021, 30.

learning of Camillus's intentions and confirming them, Severus Alexander summoned him to the palace, expressing gratitude for his willingness to take on state responsibilities. Subsequently, the emperor introduced Camillus to the Senate as a partner in imperial authority and bestowed upon him insignia more valuable than his own as a sign of recognition. In anticipation of a campaign against barbarian forces, the sovereign encouraged Camillus to participate, and upon observing the effort he exerted, provided him with constant support. Ultimately, when Camillus decided to relinquish his position, the emperor, demonstrating clemency, allowed him to retire safely to his estate, ensuring he would be respected by the soldiers. This fictional character would later be killed by Maximinus Thrax²⁵⁴.

In 238, after the Senate aligned itself with the two Gordians, Maximinus Thrax, his son Maximus, and all their regime's supporters were officially declared *hostes publici*, *hostes senatus*, and *hostes populi Romani*, marking the formal initiation of their condemnation to oblivion. This ruling continued to be upheld during the reigns of emperors Pupienus and Balbinus (238)²⁵⁵. Upon learning of the events in Carthage, specifically the acclamation of the two Gordians as *Augusti* and the Senate's defection against him, Maximinus addressed the army. The emperor praised his soldiers for their bravery displayed in battles against the Germanic tribes, Sarmatians, and Persians, ridiculed the Carthaginians for their support of the Gordians, and criticized the Roman populace, blaming them for their fickle, unstable, and easily frightened nature. He described the senators as adversaries of discipline and promoters of a dissolute lifestyle. Ultimately, he resolved to wage war against Rome and the senators, who were cursed and regarded as enemies²⁵⁶.

There are also two inscriptions that utilize the term *hostes publici* to emphasize the exclusion of the two Maximini from the civic body; furthermore, in one of these inscriptions, it is noted that their reign was perceived as a *saevissima dominatio*, as follows:

²⁵⁴ SHA, *Alex. Sev.*, XLVIII. See also Kienast 2004, 182; Mennen 2011, 255; McHugh 2017, 246, 300 (n. 3).

²⁵⁵ Herodian, VII, 7-9; 11; VIII, 6; SHA, *Max.*, XV, 2; 5; 9; XVI, 5-6; XVII, 6; XVIII, 2; XX, 8; XXIV, 2; XXVI, 2-4; *Gord.*, XI, 1; 7; 9-10; XII; XIII, 6; XIV, 3; *Max. Balb.*, I, 4; II, 11; X, 2-3; John of Antioch, fr. 224. See also Kienast 2004, 183, 185; Potter 2004, 169-170; Southern 2004, 67; Varner 2004, 200-202, 205; Zugravu 2012, 407-408 (n. 444), 409-410 (n. 447); Pearson 2016, 132, 134, 151; Haymann 2018, 265; Antikeira, Da Silva 2022, 20; Zugravu 2022b, 523-526 (n. 547), 528-529 (n. 552).

²⁵⁶ Herodian, VII, 8; 10; VIII, 1; SHA, *Max.*, XVII-XVIII; *Gord.*, XIII-XIV; John of Antioch, fr. 224.

A dedication to Mars Gravidus, dating from 238 to 249, was discovered in *Aquincum* (Budapest), located in *Pannonia Inferior*. This dedication was made by Clodius Celsinus, likely a centurion in *legio II Adiutrix* - HD, 027768.

The dedicant was dispatched in the presence of *vexillationes* from *Moesia Inferior* to *Viminacium* to ensure the removal of the names of certain *hostes publici*. The identities of those labeled as enemies have been a topic of intense debate within historiography. Referring to the French journal of epigraphic studies, *L'Année épigraphique*, the situation is as follows: in the 1936 issue, it was stated that the individuals in question were the sons of the usurper Fulvius Macrianus, namely Titus Fulvius Iunius Macrianus and Titus Fulvius Iunius Quietus, who had expressed separatist intentions in 259/260, during the reign of Gallienus; the 1940 issue highlighted that G. Heuten published a study that included the inscription, aiming to compile all texts containing the term *cantabrum*; the 1950 issue noted that Maximinus Thrax and his son, Maximus, were implicated; the 1975 issue announced the publication of a new study on this subject, while the 1976 issue pointed to studies in which Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus were considered the sovereigns referenced in the inscription; the 1980 issue featured an article in which Philippus Arabs and his son were described as the emperors labeled as public enemies; the 2011 issue showcased scientific contributions that focused on either the Maximinus or Philippus²⁵⁷.

In the *corpus* of inscriptions titled *Tituli Aquincenses, I: Tituli operum publicorum et honorarii et sacri*, published in 1989 in Budapest and edited by Péter Kovács and Ádám Szabó, it was asserted that the condemned emperors were either the Maximinus Thrax and his son or the Philippus Arabs and his son. Additionally, a comprehensive bibliography was provided²⁵⁸.

Among scholars, four hypotheses have been proposed regarding the identities of the respective emperors:

a) The Macrian hypothesis, which was proposed by András Alföldi and adopted by Arthur Stein; E. M. Shtajerman acknowledged the contribution of Egger but aligned with Alföldi's viewpoint²⁵⁹; The Maximinian hypothesis, initiated by Rudolf Egger, who argued that the

²⁵⁷ AE 1935, 164b = AE 1939, 181 = AE 1949, 151 = AE 1949, 201b = AE 1972, 377 = AE 1973, 435 = AE 1976, 547 = AE 2008, 1145.

²⁵⁸ TitAq I, 213.

²⁵⁹ Alföldi 1935, 280-284; Stein 1940, 105; Shtajerman 1964, 433-435.

Macriani or Regalianus and his wife, Sulpicia Dryantilla, should not be considered. This hypothesis has been further adopted in the research of historian Florian Matei-Popescu; in the context of several scientific meetings organized by the Center for Classical and Christian Studies (Faculty of History / „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iaşi), historian Nelu Zugravu expressed his viewpoint, which aligned with the hypothesis that the two sovereigns considered *hostes* were Maximinus Thrax and his son, Maximus²⁶⁰;

b) The hypothesis concerning Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus, which was accepted by Jenő Fid and Radnóti Aladár. The latter, while referencing the studies of Alföldi, Egger, and Stein, concluded that the dedicant, Clodius Celsinus, might have perceived the reign of these two emperors as a *saevissima dominatio*. This perspective was also considered more credible by István Stefaits²⁶¹;

c) The hypothesis concerning the two Philippi, which was supported by Slobodan Dušanić and Christian Körner. Miroslava Mirković also advocated this idea, noting Alföldi's publication while acknowledging that it had been corrected by Egger. Moreover, Mirković commended Egger for rightly observing that the power mentioned in the inscription was characterized as a *saevissima dominatio*, suggesting that, under certain circumstances, it could have lasted longer than the brief usurpation of the Macriani²⁶².

In a different context, Bálint Kuzsinszky merely noted the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the inscription, identified the dedicant, and outlined his assigned mission, which involved the removal of the names of certain adversaries. Concurrently, Thomas Pekary points out that the inscription was edited by Alföldi and discussed by Egger and Jenő Fid, concluding that special military units known as *vexillationes* were dispatched for the destruction of images and the erasure of the names of the condemned. Finally, François Chausson suggested that the inscription could pertain to any of the following sovereigns: the two Maximini, the two Philippi, or Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus²⁶³. An inscription dedicated

²⁶⁰ Egger 1940, 219-224; Matei-Popescu 2010, 272.

²⁶¹ Aladár 1954, 60-61; Fitz 1971, 249-253; Stefaits 1972.

²⁶² Mirković 1969, 58-61; Dušanić 1976, 434-438; Körner 2002, 296-299.

²⁶³ IMS II, 51-52. See also Kuzsinszky 1934, 200, n. 384; Pekary 1985, 136-137; Chausson 1998, 180-181.

to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and other deities, dating from July 1 242, during the consulship of Caius Vettius Gratus Atticus Sabinianus and Caius Asinius Lepidus Praetextatus, was discovered in *Mogontiacum* (Mainz), in *Germania Superior*. This inscription was erected by [---]us Annianus, the son of Lucius - *HD*, 055289.

Anninus expressed his wishes for well-being, security, and victory for Emperor Gordianus III, his wife, Furia Sabinia Tranquillina, and their entire family. The dedicant detailed his accomplishments as a member of a judicial college and a military tribune in the legions, outlining his administrative and military responsibilities. Of particular interest to our research are the lines in which it is noted that Anninus was dispatched, in the context of the tumultuous events of 238, to the *regio Transpadana*, specifically to *Mediolanum* (Milan), where he was tasked with recruiting men and manufacturing arms, an objective that was to be achieved against the *hostes publici*, a term employed to describe the two Maximini and their supporters²⁶⁴.

Regarding the emperors whose reigns coincide with various phases of what is contemporarily referred to as the "Crisis of the Third Century" or "Military Anarchy", which followed the leadership of Gordianus III (238-244), it is known that specific measures related to the phenomenon of *abolitio memoriae* were applied in relation to their socio-political identities. This reality can be supported not by narrative sources, but rather by epigraphic evidence related to the following emperors: Philippus I *Arabs* (244-249) and his son Philippus II (244-249) - *HD*, 000270 (a. 247); 007026 (a. 248); 022565 (a. 244-247); 023125 (a. 244-249); 076303 (a. 245) etc.²⁶⁵; Traianus Decius (249-251) and his sons Herennius Etruscus (250-251) and Hostilianus (250-251) - *HD*, 001517 (a. 250); 007089 (a. 251); 020349 (a. 251); 078643 (a. 250) etc.²⁶⁶;

Trebonianus Gallus (251-253) and his son Volusianus (251-253) - *HD*, 000736 (a. 251-253); 001006 (a. 253); 012115 (a. 252); 054805 (a. 251-253); 054806 (a. 251-253) etc.²⁶⁷; Valerianus I (253-260) and his successors Gallienus (253-268), his first son from his marriage to Egnatia Mariniana, while from another marriage to Cornelia Gallonia, he had Licinius Valerianus, and Valerian II (256-258) and Saloninus (258-260), who were his grandsons - *HD*,

²⁶⁴ Egger 1940, 222.

²⁶⁵ Kienast 2004, 198, 200; Zugravu 2012, 418-419, n. 458; Pearson 2022, 33, 261 (n. 2), 283 (n. 19); Zugravu 2022b, 539-540, n. 579 and 580.

²⁶⁶ Kienast 2004, 204, 206-207; Zugravu 2012, 424-425 (n. 469), 428 (n. 474); Pearson 2022, 262 (n. 9), 275 (n. 15); Zugravu 2022b, 546-549, n. 592 and 593.

²⁶⁷ Kienast 2004, 209-210; Zugravu 2012, 429-430, n. 476; Zugravu 2022b, 551-552, n. 598.

013638 (a. 253-260); 022571 (a. 254); 026286 (a. 256-257); 052648 (a. 261-268); 061764 (a. 253-260) etc.²⁶⁸; Aurelianus (270-275) - *HD*, 021135 (a. 272-274); 025875 (a. 270-275); 043071 (a. 274); 045578 (a. 270-272); 055847 (a. 274) etc.²⁶⁹; Probus (276-282) - *HD*, 026164 (a. 276-282); 027640 (a. 280); 028870 (a. 282); 045580 (a. 282); 061765 (a. 276-282) etc.²⁷⁰; Carus (282-283) along with his sons Carinus (283-285) and Numerianus (283-284) - *HD*, 006789 (a. 283-284); 023246 (a. 283-284); 033589 (a. 284); 045032 (a. 282-283); 045581 (a. 284) etc.²⁷¹.

We note that two of the aforementioned emperors were first granted apotheosis before being condemned to oblivion:

1. Traianus Decius and Herennius Etruscus - *HD*, 030921 (a. 251): the term *divus* was applied in reference to the emperors²⁷²;
2. Carus - *HD*, 006789 (a. 283-284); 25404 (a. 283-284); 033577 (a. 284); 033580 (a. 284); 053081 (a. 284): terms such as *divus* and *genitor* were employed²⁷³.

Furthermore, three of the emperors mentioned above were rehabilitated and granted apotheosis, as confirmed by narrative and epigraphic sources through the use of the term *divus*:

1. Trebonianus Gallus and Volusianus - *EDCS*-22901808 (a. 253-260)²⁷⁴;
2. Aurelianus - *HD*, 013726 (a. 275)²⁷⁵;
3. Probus - *HD*, 005279 (a. 285-290)²⁷⁶.

A unique case in this period is represented by *Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus*, the governor of *Moesia Inferior*, who was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in July 253. While en route to Rome, Trebonianus Gallus persuaded the Senate to declare him *hostis*. Following Gallus's death, the

²⁶⁸ Kienast 2004, 218, 221; Zugravu 2012, 442-443 (n. 501), 446-448 (n. 508); Zugravu 2022b, 583, n. 650.

²⁶⁹ Kienast 2004, 234; Zugravu 2012, 465-466, n. 547; Zugravu 2022b, 599-601, n. 687.

²⁷⁰ Kienast 2004, 253; Zugravu 2012, 478-479, n. 564; Zugravu 2022b, 615, n. 716.

²⁷¹ Kienast 2004, 258, 260-261; Zugravu 2012, 482-483 (n. 569), 484-485 (n. 573); Antikeira 2017, 31-32, n. 71; Zugravu 2022b, 618-619, n. 723.

²⁷² Kienast 2004, 204; Zugravu 2012, 424-425, n. 469; Zugravu 2022b, 546-547, n. 592.

²⁷³ Kienast 2004, 258; Zugravu 2012, 482-483 (n. 569), 484-485 (n. 573); Zugravu 2022b, 618-619, n. 723.

²⁷⁴ Kienast 2004, 209; Zugravu 2012, 429-430, n. 476; Zugravu 2022b, 551-552, n. 598.

²⁷⁵ Eutropius, IX, 15.2; *SHA, Aur.*, XXXVII, 1; XLI, 1; 13; John of Antioch, fr. 238. See also Kienast 2004, 234; Zugravu 2012, 465-466, n. 547; Zugravu 2022b, 599-601, n. 687.

²⁷⁶ *Panegyrici Latini*, IV [8], 18.3. See also Kienast 2004, 253; Zugravu 2012, 478-479, n. 564; Zugravu 2022b, 615, n. 716.

senators retracted their decision and, compelled by circumstances, acknowledged Aemilianus as *Augustus*. Several editors of the work *Liber de Caesaribus*, including P. Dufraigne, H. W. Bird, K. Groß-Albenhausen, and Nelu Zugravu, have underscored the "cowardly and duplicitous behaviour of the senatorial aristocracy"²⁷⁷. Following the removal of Aemilianus by Valerianus I, it is known that the former was subjected to *abolitio memoriae*, as evidenced by epigraphic material, since several inscriptions dedicated to him were erased - *EDCS*-46400015 (a. 253); 65600129 (a. 253); 65600130 (a. 253); *HD*, 028851 (a. 253).

Between the years 235 and 284, separatist movements, rebellions against legitimate authority, and acts of usurpation became endemic within Roman society; consequently, multiple claimants to the throne emerged:

1. during the reign of Maximinus Thrax:

a) Caius Petronius Magnus, a former *consul* who opposed the emperor in 235, saw his plans unravel at an early stage and was subsequently eliminated along with his supporters²⁷⁸; his name was also erased from inscriptions - *EDCS*-08201037 (a. 223);

b) Titus / Quartinus, who in 235 aspired to supreme power, encouraged by the discontented Osrhoene archers angered by the death of Severus Alexander, ultimately met his end through decapitation by his associate, Macedo (or Macedonius). Macedo presented his severed head to Maximinus, only to subsequently be eliminated himself²⁷⁹.

2. during the reign of Gordianus III: Marcus Asinius Sabinianus, *proconsul* of *Asia* from 239 to 240, orchestrated a plot in *Africa* in 240. In response, the governor of *Mauretania* was dispatched against him. After a siege, Sabinianus' supporters, perceived as conspirators, ultimately

²⁷⁷ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 31.1-3; Eutropius, IX, 5-6; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXI, 1-3; Zosimus, I, 28-29; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 254; John of Antioch, fr. 229; Jordanes, *Get.*, XIX, 105; *Rom.*, 285-286; Zonaras, XII, 21-22. See Potter 2004, 252; Southern 2004, 76-78, 193, 223, 236, 309 (n. 97 and 98), 346-347 (n. 16), 353-354 (n. 63), 356 (n. 80); Zugravu 2012, 428-429, n. 475; Zugravu 2022b, 553, n. 602 (the phrase in quotation marks above). See also Kienast 2004, 212; Varner 2004, 209; Haymann 2018, 265; Broșteanu 2022, 49; Pearson 2022, 115-116, 122-123, 141-152, 160, 162; Antikeira 2023, 177, 195-196 (n. 137); Broșteanu 2023, 133, 135.

²⁷⁸ Herodian, VII, 1; *SHA, Maxim.*, X; *Tr. Tyr.*, XXXII, 2. See also Kienast 2004, 186; Potter 2004, 169; Southern 2004, 303, n. 82; Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 406, n. 442; Pearson 2016, 88-89; Syv  ne 2021, 68-69.

²⁷⁹ Herodian, VII, 1; *SHA, Maxim.*, XI, 1-6; *Tr. Tyr.*, XXXII, 1. See also Kienast 2004, 186-187; Potter 2004, 169; Southern 2004, 64, 303 (n. 82); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 406, n. 442; Pearson 2016, 89-90; Syv  ne 2021, 69.

surrendered him to the authorities, pleading for clemency from the legitimate ruler. This event is believed to have taken place in Carthage²⁸⁰.

3. during the reign of Philippus Arabs:

a) Marcus F. Ru. Iotapianus initiated a usurpation movement in 248 or 249, finding fertile ground in one of the Eastern regions - *Cappadocia*, *Mesopotamia*, or *Syria* - driven by the excesses committed by Caius Iulius Priscus, *rector Orientis* and brother of Emperor Philippus. The central figure of this separatist movement was ultimately stripped of his social status by the sword, as he was executed by decapitation²⁸¹;

b) Tiberius Claudius Marinus Pacatianus, who in 248 received the support of troops from the Danubian region - specifically those stationed in *Moesia* and *Pannonia* - in his bid for supreme power, was swiftly suppressed, as noted by Zosimus²⁸²;

4. during the reign of Trainus Decius:

a) Iulius Valens Licinianus, whose usurpation took place in Rome in 250, capitalized on the absence of the legitimate emperor, who was engaged on the Balkan front against the Carpi and Goths²⁸³;

b) Titus Iulius Priscus, governor of *Thracia*, proclaimed himself emperor around the year 250 after reaching an agreement with the Goths. His rule was short-lived, and he was subsequently declared *hostis patriae*²⁸⁴;

²⁸⁰ SHA, *Gord.*, XXIII, 4-5; Zosimus, I, 17.1. See also Kienast 2004, 197; Potter 2004, 229-230, 632 (n. 57); Southern 2004, 68; Mennen 2011, 59, 255; Pearson 2016, 185-186; Syväne 2021, 114, 126.

²⁸¹ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 29.2; Zosimus, I, 20.2; 21.2; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 38. See also Kienast 2004, 202; Potter 2004, 239-240, 248, 250; Southern 2004, 73, 251, 307-308 (n. 93); Mennen 2011, 39, 255; Syväne 2021, 177-181, 183-184, 189, 192; Broşteanu 2022, 48; Pearson 2022, 22-26, 34, 67, 147, 185, 227; Zugravu 2022b, 543-544, n. 587; Antikeira 2023, 21, 88, 133-134, 182 (n. 32).

²⁸² Zosimus, I, 20.2; 21.1-3; Zonaras, XII, 19. See also Kienast 2004, 201; Potter 2004, 240, 244, 250, 635 (n. 108), 636 (n. 18); Southern 2004, 73-74, 251, 307-308 (n. 93); Mennen 2011, 143 (n. 25), 255; Syväne 2021, 164-165, 177, 179, 182-189, 192, 211; Antikeira, Da Silva 2022, 20; Pearson 2022, 20-23, 25-29, 52, 147, 227; Antikeira 2023, 119 (n. 30), 133-138, 141, 180 (n. 7), 181 (n. 12 and 13), 183 (n. 32).

²⁸³ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 29.3; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXIX, 5; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 40; SHA, *Tr. Tyr.*, XX, 3; Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 55.9. See also Kienast 2004, 208; Southern 2004, 75, 308 (n. 95); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 425, n. 471; Pearson 2022, 61-62, 267 (n. 7); Zugravu 2022b, 545-546, n. 590; Broşteanu 2023, 133.

²⁸⁴ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 29.3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 40; Jordanes, *Get.*, XVIII, 103. See also Kienast 2004, 208; Potter 2004, 246, 250; Southern 2004, 222; Mennen 2011, 255; Pearson 2022, 71-72; 81, 268 (n. 23); Syväne 2021, 181-182; Zugravu 2022b, 544-545, n. 588; Antikeira 2023, 22.

5. between the reign of Trebonianus Gallus and the beginning of that of Valerianus I: Lucius Iulius Aurelius Sulpicius Severus Uranius Antoninus, a usurper who is believed to have operated in *Emesa* between 253 and 254, is known to us primarily through numismatic sources. His rebellion is likely a consequence of the attacks by Sapor on the region; he was probably eliminated by Valerianus I after 254²⁸⁵.

6. at some point between 248 and 253: Mar. Silbannacus, possibly a usurper, perhaps even a Roman emperor, known to us through numismatic sources; 'Mar.' could be an abbreviation for one of the following names: Marcus, Marcius, Marius, or Marinus²⁸⁶.

7. during the reign of Gallienus:

a) Ingenuus, the commander of the troops in *Pannonia* and *Moesia*, was proclaimed emperor in 258 or 260 but was defeated at the Battle of Mursa by Gallienus, whose forces were led by the general Aureolus. The usurper ultimately met his end by either being captured and killed or by choosing to commit suicide by strangulation. Claudius II Gothicus, the future emperor, also played a role in the effort to eliminate this usurper²⁸⁷;

b) P. Cassius Regalianus, or P. Cornelius Regalianus, *dux Illyrici* and governor of *Pannonia Superior*, usurped power in 259 or 260 with the support of the Moesian troops, following the capture of Valerianus I by the Persians. His removal did not occur due to the intervention of Gallienus, but as a result of a conflict with the Sarmatians, during which he perished on the battlefield²⁸⁸;

²⁸⁵ Kienast 2004, 211; Potter 2004, 249-250, 277, 301; Southern 2004, 76, 308-309 (n. 96 and 99); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 399-400, n. 433; Syv  nne 2021, 30; Pearson 2022, 140-141, 164-165, 185; Antikeira 2023, 21, 194 (n. 121).

²⁸⁶ Estiot 1996, 105-117; K  rner 2002, 277 (n. 2), 386-388, 393; Kienast 2004, 202; Potter 2004, 250; Mennen 2011, 255; Syv  nne 2021, 153-157, 163, 179, 186, 189, 209 (n. 12); Pearson 2022, 147-150, 279 (n. 46); Antikeira 2023, 21, 27 (n. 26), 134, 180 (n. 6).

²⁸⁷ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.2; Eutropius, IX, 8.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXI, 16.10; *SHA*, *Tr. tyr.*, IX; X, 1 and 14-15; *Claud.*, VII, 4; Orosius, VII, 22.10; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 45; Zonaras, XII, 24. See also Kienast 2004, 223; Potter 2004, 256, 639 (n. 177); Southern 2004, 79, 212, 252, 309-310 (n. 100), 314 (n. 15), 363 (n. 9); Mennen 2011, 216-218, 119 (n. 100), 220, 222 (n. 115), 238, 255; Zugravu 2012, 436 (n. 491), 441-442 (n. 498), 449-450 (n. 517); Bro  teanu 2022, 48, 52; Pearson 2022, 187-189, 192, 195, 213, 224, 289 (n. 20); Zugravu 2022b, 550-551 (n. 597), 560-562 (n. 612 and 613), 580-581 (n. 645), 585-587 (n. 657).

²⁸⁸ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.2; Eutropius, IX, 8.1; *SHA*, *Gall.*, IX, 1; *Tr. tyr.*, X; *Claud.*, VII, 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 45. See also Kienast 2004, 223-224; Potter 2004, 256, 639 (n. 177); Southern 2004, 79, 87-88, 103, 250, 309-310 (n. 100), 314 (n. 15), 317-318 (n. 27); Mennen 2011, 216, 218-219, 222 (n. 115), 238, 255; Zugravu 2012, 436-437, n. 492; Bro  teanu 2022, 48, 52; Pearson 2022, 224, 228, 232, 289 (n. 20); Zugravu 2022b, 561-

c) Cyriades / Mareades / Mariades / Mariadnes, a character who, according to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, is said to have had an impressive social status, being wealthy and of noble origin, but around his personality revolved two negative variables - debauchery and degenerate morals. These negative traits would have fuelled a conflict between him and his father, the latter being disappointed by the kind of heir he had. As a result, Cyriades fled to the Persians, but not before plundering his own family of large amounts of gold and silver. Using his persuasive qualities, he would have convinced Shapur, the Persian king, to attack Roman territory, leading to the conquest of Antioch, *Caesarea*, and, consequently, the emergence of usurpation tendencies. The outcome was his acquisition of the titles *Caesar* and *Augustus*. Reaching this new social rank, Cyriades would have become the protagonist of a great social anxiety in the East, shaking it with his own forces. Continuing along this negative path, he would have killed his own father, but all of this, along with his reign, which was compared to tyranny and audacity, would not last long, as Cyriades would be killed in a conspiracy led by his own subordinates. His elimination occurred in the context of Valerianus initiating war against the Persians. The anonymous author of the fourth century concluded the section dedicated to this tyrant by stating that history had not recorded anything further worthy of remembrance, except that he was a traitor who had sought refuge with the Persians, a parricide who killed his father, and whose rule was characterized as *aspera tyrannis* and *summa luxuria*.

In the version found in the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, a certain Mariades, who guided the Persians to Antioch, an event that led to the plundering of the city and the killing of many of its inhabitants, is said to have ended up being burned alive by his former allies.

In the version provided by the anonymous continuation of Cassius Dio's work, the character is named Mariadnes. According to the author, he was positioned in Sapor's camp near Antioch, and the more prudent citizens decided to abandon the city, while most of the common people chose to align with him.

According to John Malalas, during the reign of Valerianus, Mariades was an official of Antioch who was expelled from the council due to his mismanagement of the chariot races he was responsible for; he had embezzled public funds allocated for the hippodrome. As a result, he fled to

Persia and promised the Persian emperor, Shapur, that he would betray Antioch. After the Persians plundered, burned, and destroyed the city, Mariades was beheaded for his treason against his own country²⁸⁹;

d) Titus? Fulvius Macrianus (Macrianus *maior*), a *rationibus*, proclaimed his sons, Titus Fulvius Iunius Macrianus (Macrianus *minor*) and Titus Fulvius Iunius Quietus, as *Augusti*, an event that took place in *Syria*. Their usurpation, which was supported by Balista/Ballista/Callistus, lasted from 260 to 261. The downfall of the Macriani occurred within the context of a campaign initiated by them in *Thracia*, with their demise orchestrated by none other than Aureolus. The younger son, Quietus, who remained in the East, sought refuge in *Emesa*, where he was besieged by the forces of Odaenathus and ultimately killed by the city's inhabitants, likely incited by Balista. The latter was subsequently killed by Odaenathus²⁹⁰;

e) Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi, a general subordinate to the Macriani, was dispatched by them in 261 against Valens *Thessalonicus*, the governor of *Achaia*. As Valens reportedly thwarted his plans, Piso retreated to *Thessalia*, where, with the support of certain supporters, he seized power. Unfortunately for him, this new social status brought him nothing more and nothing less than his own death, as he was ultimately killed²⁹¹;

f) Valens *Thessalonicus*, the proconsul of *Achaia*, seized power at a time when Piso was marching toward him in 261. However, he could not enjoy his newly elevated position, as after eliminating his opponent, he himself ultimately met his demise at the hands of soldiers²⁹²;

²⁸⁹ Anonymus post Dionem, fr. 1 (in *FHG* IV, 192) = Petrus Patricius, fr. 171; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII, 5.3; *SHA, Tr. tyr.*, II, 1-4; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 26. See also Kienast 2004, 216-217; Potter 2004, 248-249, 252, 301; Syväne 2021, 180; Pearson 2022, 127-129, 276 (n. 2, 3 and 6), 277 (n. 7).

²⁹⁰ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.3; *SHA, Gall.*, I, 2-5; II-III; *Tr. tyr.*, X, 14-15; XI, 2; XII-XIV; XV, 4; XVIII-XIX; XXI, 1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 45; Zonaras, XII, 24. See also Kienast 2004, 224-227; Potter 2004, 256, 259, 263, 274, 639 (n. 177 and 180); Southern 2004, 79, 100-101, 103, 237, 250, 309-310 (n. 100), 316 (n. 21), 317-318 (n. 27), 360 (n. 13); Mennen 2011, 30 (n. 6), 32, 147-148, 165, 222-226, 255; Zugravu 2012, 436 (n. 491), 441-442 (n. 498); Syväne 2021, 181, 210 (n. 40); Pearson 2022, 177, 205-207, 209, 213-214, 216, 228, 232-233, 294 (n. 2); Zugravu 2022b, 565-566 (n. 619), 580-581 (n. 645).

²⁹¹ *SHA, Gall.*, II, 2-4; *Tr. tyr.*, XIX, 2; XXI. See also Kienast 2004, 226; Mennen 2011, 226-227, 238, 255; Zugravu 2012, 436 (n. 491), 441 (n. 497).

²⁹² Ammianus Marcellinus, XXI, 16.10; *SHA, Gall.*, II, 2-4; *Tr. tyr.*, XIX; XX, 1; XXI, 1-2; Pseudo- Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 4. See also Kienast 2004, 227; Mennen 2011, 222, 226-227, 238, 255; Zugravu 2012, 441, n. 497.

g) Lucius Mussius Aemilianus *signo* Aegippius, the prefect of Egypt, is believed to have usurped power following a revolt in Alexandria, supported by soldiers. Gallienus personally intervened to eliminate him, dispatching General Aurelius Theodotus against Aemilianus, who captured him and ultimately strangled him in prison²⁹³;

h) Memor, a Moor responsible for supplying Egypt with grain, is reported to have planned a conspiracy but was killed due to the interventions of General Aurelius Theodotus²⁹⁴;

i) Aureolus, the former commander of Gallienus, whose military training contributed to the elimination of other usurpers, harbored hidden ambitions and seized power in 267 or 268 in *Mediolanum*, despite having been dispatched to the region to confront Postumus I²⁹⁵;

j) fictional usurpers:

j.i. Celsus, *privatus ex tribunis in Africa*, purportedly lived on his own lands and was proclaimed emperor sometime between 260 and 268 by Vibius Passienus, the proconsul, and Fabius Pomponianus, a general. However, after a mere seven days of rule, he was assassinated by Galliena, a supposed cousin of Gallienus. Following his death, his body was reportedly thrown to the dogs, and the inhabitants of *Sicca* subsequently hanged it. The same indignity was inflicted upon his iconographic representations, which were hung on a cross while the crowd gathered to insult the memory of the deceased²⁹⁶;

j.ii. Trebellianus, a pirate leader, reportedly instigated a revolt and was proclaimed emperor in *Isauria* sometime between 260 and 268. He is said

²⁹³ Eusebius, *HE*, VII, 11; *SHA, Gall.*, IV, 1-2; V, 6; IX, 1; *Tr. tyr.*, XXII; XXVI, 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 4. See also Kienast 2004, 227-228; Southern 2004, 103, 317-318 (n. 27); Mennen 2011, 148, 222, 226, 255; Zugravu 2012, 440, n. 496; Pearson 2022, 178.

²⁹⁴ Anonymus post Dionem, fr. 4 (in *FHG* IV, 193) = Petrus Patricius, fr. 177; Zosimus I, 38. See also Kienast 2004, 228; Mennen 2011, 222, 226, 255.

²⁹⁵ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.17; *SHA, Gall.*, II, 6-7; III, 1; IV, 6; V, 6; VII, 1; IX, 1; XIV, 6-9; XXI, 5; *Tr. tyr.*, X, 14-15; XI; XII, 13-14; XIII, 3; XIV, 1; XV, 4; XVIII, 1 and 3; *Claud.*, V, 1-5; *Aur.*, XVI, 1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, I, 45; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 4; Zosimus, I, 40.1; John of Antioch, fr. 233; Zonaras, XII, 25. See also Kienast 2004, 228-229; Potter 2004, 256, 259, 263-264, 372; Southern 2004, 89, 100-101, 104, 106, 108-109, 272, 309, 310 (n. 100), 312 (n. 7 and 8), 316 (n. 20), 317 (n. 26), 319 (n. 32), 368 (n. 34); Mennen 2011, 161, 216-219, 221-222, 224, 231-232, 234-237, 239, 255; Zugravu 2012, 441-442 (n. 498), 445-448 (n. 507 and 508), 450 (n. 518); 461 (n. 538); Pearson 2022, 188, 212; Zugravu 2022b, 513-515 (n. 528), 560-561 (n. 612), 580-582 (n. 646), 583-585 (n. 653).

²⁹⁶ *SHA, Tr. tyr.*, XXIX; *Claud.*, VII, 4. See also Kienast 2004, 230; Zugravu 2012, 436, n. 491.

to have minted coins and constructed palaces but was ultimately defeated and killed by Camsioleus, a general in the service of Gallienus, who hailed from Egypt and was the brother of Aurelius Theodotus²⁹⁷;

j.iii. Saturninus, regarded as one of the most distinguished generals in Gallienus's service, as portrayed in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, reportedly accepted the title of emperor conferred upon him by soldiers sometime between 260 and 268 due to widespread discontent with the policies of the legitimate sovereign. However, not long thereafter, due to his strictness, he was killed by the very soldiers who had elevated him to supreme power²⁹⁸.

8. during the reign of Claudius II *Gothicus* (268-270): Claudius Censorinus, a fictional usurper mentioned solely in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, is said to have held several significant offices. While working his lands near *Bononia* (Bologna), he was proclaimed emperor and humorously referred to as Claudius. His usurpation reportedly occurred sometime between 268 and 270. Due to his excessively harsh treatment of the soldiers, a behavior that catalyzed growing resentment towards him, he eventually reached a point where he was no longer tolerated by those around him. According to the anonymous author, he was killed by the very soldiers who offered him the social status of sovereign²⁹⁹.

9. during the reign of Aurelianus:

a) Domitianus II, *dux Aureoli fortissimus et vehementissimus*, who was involved in the battles against the Macriani and, according to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, claimed to be part of the family of Domitianus and Domitilla, purportedly usurped power in the region of Gaul sometime between 270/271 and 272. According to Zosimus, he was suspected of plotting against the legitimate authority, which ultimately led to his arrest and subsequent punishment³⁰⁰;

b) Felicissimus, *procurator a rationibus/rationalis/procurator fisci*, rose to prominence as the leader of a revolt by the mint workers in Rome, which took place between 270 and 271. The uprising was violently suppressed,

²⁹⁷ SHA, *Tr. tyr.*, XXVI. See also Kienast 2004, 229; Potter 2004, 647, n. 86; Zugravu 2012, 436-437, n. 491 and 492.

²⁹⁸ SHA, *Gall.*, IX, 1; *Tr. tyr.*, XXIII. See also Kienast 2004, 230; Zugravu 2012, 436, n. 491.

²⁹⁹ SHA, *Tr. tyr.*, XXXIII. See also Kienast 2004, 232.

³⁰⁰ SHA, *Gall.*, II, 6; *Tr. Tyr.*, XII, 14; XIII, 3; Zosimus, I, 49.2. See also Kienast 2004, 237; Southern 2004, 112; Mennen 2011, 222, 224, 255; Zugravu 2012, 461, n. 538; Antikeira 2013, 207.

leading to considerable bloodshed and the deaths of numerous senators, equestrians, and soldiers in the process³⁰¹;

c) Septimius / Septiminus, a Roman soldier who claimed the title of emperor in *Dalmatia* between 271 and 272 was quickly killed by his soldiers following his attempted usurpation³⁰²;

d) usurpers of doubtful existence:

d.i. Firmus, an influential merchant originating from *Seleucia*, reportedly seized control of Egypt driven by anger, despite lacking the formal attributes of an emperor. Known to have been an associate of Zenobia, he was swiftly defeated by Emperor Aurelianus and ultimately met his end, either by suicide or execution by hanging³⁰³;

d.ii. Sponsianus, a presumed usurper, is thought to have operated in *Dacia* during the latter half of the third century, within a timeframe approximately between 244 and 274. Alleged coins bearing his name have been discovered, yet his existence has sparked significant debate among scholars. Some argue for the historical reality of Sponsianus, while others question the authenticity of such claims³⁰⁴;

d.iii Urbanus, who reportedly organized a conspiracy sometime between 271 and 272, was swiftly punished, as recorded by Zosimus³⁰⁵.

10. the Gallic Empire:

a) Marcus Cassianius Latinus Postumus, *praeses* of the province of *Germania Inferior*, usurped power in 259/260 amidst the socio-political instability facing the Empire, establishing what became known as the Gallic

³⁰¹ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 35.6; Eutropius, IX, 14.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXX, 8.8; *SHA, Aurel.*, XVIII, 4; XXI, 5-6; XXXVIII, 2-4; XXXIX, 8; L, 5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXV, 4; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 49; Zosimus, I, 49.2; 61.3; John of Antioch, fr. 236; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 30. See also Kienast 2004, 238; Southern 2004, 112-113, 220 (n. 38); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 461-462, n. 539; Antikeira 2013, 202-216; Zugravu 2022b, 596-597, n. 681.

³⁰² Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXV, 3; Zosimus, I, 49.2. See also Kienast 2004, 237-238; Southern 2004, 112; Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 461, n. 538; Antikeira 2013, 207.

³⁰³ *SHA, Aur.*, XXXII, 2; *Quadr. tyr.*, I-VI. See also Kienast 2004, 238; Southern 2004, 117-118, 122, 322-323 (n. 47); Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2022b, 321-322, n. 75.

³⁰⁴ Körner 2002, 277 (n. 2), 389-391; 393; Kienast 2004, 203; Potter 2004, 250; Mennen 2011, 255; Syv  ne 2021, 153-157; Pearson 2022, 225-228, 232, 292-293 (n. 23, 24 and 27), 294 (n. 30); Pearson et al. 2022, 1-33; Antikeira 2023, 21, 27 (n. 27), 180 (n. 6). For the perspective of Romanian researchers Emanuel Petac and Florian-Matei Popescu, see <https://hotnews.ro/monedele-cu-chipul-mparatului-roman-din-dacia-sponsianus-un-fals-ridicol-din-toate-punctele-de-vedere-opinia-specialistilor-95157> (accessed at 20.10.2024).

³⁰⁵ Zosimus I, 49.2. See also Kienast 2004, 237; Southern 2004, 112; Mennen 2011, 255; Zugravu 2012, 461, n. 538.

Empire. He engaged in warfare against barbarian tribes and, predictably, against Gallienus, who made several attempts to overthrow him. Postumus met his end in 269 while suppressing a usurper within his own realm, Laelianus; this occurred after he restrained his own troops, who, having secured victory over their former adversary, had sought to pillage in celebration³⁰⁶; he was subject to *abolitio memoriae*, as evidenced by various inscriptions - HD, 022224 (a. 260-269); 044953 (a. 260-262); 069874 (a. 263-268);

b) Ulpius Cornelius Laelianus, *legatus* of *legio XXII Primigena* stationed at *Mogontiacum* (Mainz), or governor of the province of *Germania Superior*, revolted against Postumus between February and June/July/November 269, following victories over the Germanic tribes. However, the rebellion was short-lived, as Postumus organized a military campaign against him, culminating in a siege of *Mogontiacum*, during which Laelianus was killed, either by his own soldiers or by his adversary³⁰⁷;

c) Marcus Aurelius Marius, referred to by some ancient authors as a *ferri opifex*, but in reality a figure well-versed in military art, was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers who had killed Postumus. His name alluded to Gaius Marius (157-86 BC), the renowned Roman general known for his military reforms, or to the emperor Marcus Aurelius. His reign was brief, likely lasting only three months, between June/July/September and

³⁰⁶ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.8; Eutropius, IX, 9.1; *SHA, Gall.*, IV, 3-6; *Tr. tyr.*, III-IV; Orosius, VII, 22.10; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 3; Jerome., *Chron.*, a. 267; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, I, 45; Zosimus, I, 38.2; John of Antioch, fr. 230; Zonaras, XII, 24. See also Kienast 2004, 243-244; Potter 2004, 257, 260-261, 263, 266, 276, 278, 640 (n. 104), 641 (n. 213); Southern 2004, 36, 79-80, 84, 88-89, 93, 97-98, 100, 103-104, 118, 186, 216-217, 250-253, 309-310 (n. 100), 312-313 (n. 9), 315 (n. 19), 316 (n. 20), 323-324 (n. 50 and 51), 354 (n. 64 and 65), 362-363 (n. 8 and 9), 367-368 (n. 31 and 34); Mennen 2011, 32-34, 40, 216, 220-221, 235, 238, 256; Zugravu 2012, 437-440 (n. 493 and 495), 441 (n. 498), 443-444 (n. 504), 449-450 (n. 517), 451-452 (n. 520); Broșteanu 2020, 168; Broșteanu 2022, 48-49; Pearson 2022, 189, 201, 219, 221-223, 228-229, 231-233, 272 (n. 22), 291 (n. 15, 16 and 17), 292 (n. 18), 294 (n. 30); Zugravu 2022b, 360-361 (n. 170), 472 (n. 443), 513-515 (n. 528), 563-564 (n. 615), 572-576 (n. 630, 631, 632, 633, 634 and 635), 580-581 (n. 645), 585-587 (n. 657), 611 (n. 710); Broșteanu 2023, 133.

³⁰⁷ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.8; Eutropius, IX, 9.1; *SHA, Gall.*, XXI, 4; *Tr. tyr.*, III, 7; IV, 1; V, 4-5; 8; VI, 3; VIII, 1; XXXI, 2; *Claud.*, VII, 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXII, 4; Orosius, VII, 22.11; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 45. See also Kienast 2004, 244-245; Potter 2004, 265-266; Southern 2004, 118, 323 (n. 50); Mennen 2011, 235, 256; Zugravu 2012, 437-440 (n. 493 and 495), 451-452 (n. 520); Zugravu 2022b, 472 (n. 443), 574 (n. 632), 575-576 (n. 634 and 635).

August/September/November of 269, with his base in *Augusta Treverorum* (Trier), where he was ultimately killed on the orders of Victorinus³⁰⁸;

d) Marcus Piavonius Victorinus, who had a military career and attained the social status of *consul* in 268 alongside Postumus, was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers at *Augusta Treverorum*, which became his base. The main concerns of his reign, which lasted from late 269 to 271, revolved around preventing the escalation of separatist tendencies within the Gallic Empire, as some regions, particularly *Hispania* and parts of *Gallia Narbonensis*, expressed intentions to recognize the authority of Claudius II *Gothicus*. Victorinus ultimately met his demise in *Colonia*; he was killed by a jealous husband whose wife he allegedly attempted to seduce, according to ancient sources. The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* states that he had a son, Victorinus II, to whom he or his mother, Victoria or Vitruvia - thus the child's grandmother - bestowed the title of *Caesar*. The fate of Victorinus II was tragic, as he was killed by soldiers shortly after his father's removal. Both father and son were reportedly buried together near *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*. Researchers generally consider the son to be a fictional character³⁰⁹;

e) Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus (Tetricus I), a representative of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy and *praeses* of *Aquitania*, was proclaimed emperor with the support of the soldiers, although it is less likely that this occurred at the behest of Victoria, as some ancient authors have claimed. His reign lasted from 271 to 274, during which Tetricus faced challenges arising from military pressures. Between 272 and 273, he bestowed the title of *Caesar* upon his son, Tetricus II. During the battle of *Campus Catalaunicus* (Châlons-sur-Marne), Tetricus defected to Aurelian, leading to the reintegration of the separatist provinces back into the Empire³¹⁰;

³⁰⁸ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.9-12; Eutropius, IX, 9.2; *SHA, Tr. tyr.*, VIII, 1; 3; XXXI, 1; Orosius, VII, 22.11; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, I, 45. See also Kienast 2004, 245; Potter 2004, 265-266; Southern 2004, 118, 323 (n. 50); Zugravu 2012, 451-452, n. 520; Zugravu 2022b, 575-576, n. 634 and 635.

³⁰⁹ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.9-12; Eutropius, IX, 9.3; *SHA, Gall.*, VII, 1; *Tr. tyr.*, VI-VII; XXIV, 1; XXXI; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXIV, 3; Orosius, VII, 22.11; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 49. See also Kienast 2004, 246; Potter 2004, 261, 266, 272, 641 (n. 213); Southern 2004, 118-119, 217, 265, 315 (n. 19), 323-324 (n. 50, 51 and 52); Mennen 2011, 256; Zugravu 2012, 451-452, n. 520; Zugravu 2022b, 573 (n. 631), 576 (n. 635), 577-579 (n. 639 and 643).

³¹⁰ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.14; 35.3-4; Eutropius, IX, 9-10; *SHA, Tr. tyr.*, V, 3; XXIV-XXV; XXXI, 2-3; *Aur.*, XXXII, 3-4; XXXIII-XXXIV; XXXIX, 1-3; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXV, 7; Orosius, VII, 22.11; 23.5; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 268; 273-274; Zosimus, I, 61.2; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 49; Zonaras, XII, 27. See also Kienast 2004, 247-249; Potter 2004, 261, 272; Southern 2004,

f) Faustinus, the governor of *Gallia Belgica*, instigated a rebellion against Tetricus I between 273 and 274, with his base of operations located at *Augusta Treverorum*. This insurrection had a significant impact on Tetricus I's reign, prompting him to seek assistance from Aurelian³¹¹.

11. Palmyra:

a) Septimius Odaenathus and Septimius Herodianus (Hairan I); Odaenathus played a pivotal role during the Crisis of the Third Century, stepping forward as a key leader in the defense of the Eastern Roman provinces after the disastrous defeat and capture of Valerianus. He successfully pushed back the Persian forces and secured major victories, including the capture of Ctesiphon, the capital of the Persian Empire. For his achievements, he was honoured with the title *corrector totius Orientis*, granting him authority over the Roman East. Despite this recognition, he governed with considerable autonomy, laying the groundwork for the brief but influential Palmyrene Empire. His reign brought stability to the region and was instrumental in protecting the Roman Empire from collapse in the East. Additionally, he played a crucial role in eliminating usurpers like Quietus and Balista, serious threats to the security of the Roman Empire. Odaenathus's life and leadership came to an abrupt end when he was assassinated alongside his son in 267. In the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Odaenathus was categorized among the tyrants. However, this classification, as well as the association of the title *imperator* by the anonymous author with this skilled defender of Roman state interests, should not lead us to interpret that he usurped power, as historian Nelu Zugravu has also emphasized.

b) Odaenathus is likewise referred to as a *tyrannus* in the work of Polemius Silvius. Conversely, other authors, such as Eutropius, Festus, Zosimus, Hieronymus, Jordanes, Orosius, Synkellos, Malalas and Zonaras, portrayed him in a positive light, while John of Antioch merely noted that he was assassinated³¹²;

119-120, 217, 315 (n. 19), 323-324 (n. 51, 52 and 53), 354 (n. 66); Mennen 2011, 33, 256; Zugravu 2012, 463-465, n. 543 and 545; Broșteanu 2022, 49, 54; Zugravu 2022b, 573 (n. 651), 577-580 (n. 643 and 644).

³¹¹ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 35.4; Eutropius, IX, 13.1; Orosius, VII, 23.5; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 49. See also Kienast 2004, 249; Southern 2004, 119-120; Mennen 2011, 256; Syväne 2021, 158, 181, 210 (n. 40); Zugravu 2022b, 594, n. 674.

³¹² Eutropius, IX, 10; 11.1; 13.2; Festus, 23.2; *SHA, Val.*, IV, 2-4; *Gall.*, III, 1-5; V, 6; X; XII, 1; 6; XIII, 1-5; *Tr. Tyr.*, XIV, 1; XV-XVII; XVIII, 1; XXI, 5; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 45; Zosimus, I, 39.1-2; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 266; John of Antioch, fr. 231; Orosius, VII, 22.12; 23.4; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 290-

c) Maeonius, a relative of Odaenathus; regarded as the nephew by Zonaras or the cousin according to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Maeonius is alleged to have killed both Odaenathus and his first son. The anonymous author suggests that Maeonius was driven by envy, which fuelled his desire to usurp power, possibly with encouragement from Zenobia. Zonaras recounts that conflicts between Maeonius and Odaenathus ended in tragedy with a double homicide. In Synkellos's account, he is referred to simply as Odaenathus³¹³;

d) Septimia Zenobia, L. Iulius Aurelius Septimius Vaballathus Athenodorus and Herennianus (Hairan II), her sons, are noted in historical accounts. There was also another son, Timolaus, who, according to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, was a brother of Herennianus. Zenobia was the ambitious queen of the Palmyrene Empire in the third century, known for her strategic and diplomatic skills. After the assassination of her husband, Odaenathus, who had defended the Roman East against Persian invasions, she assumed control of Palmyra. Zenobia expanded her empire by conquering Egypt, parts of *Asia Minor*, and *Syria*. She declared her son, Vaballathus, emperor and took the title of *Augusta*, establishing a virtually independent Palmyrene state that challenged Roman authority. Her rise to power led to a confrontation with Aurelianus, who sought to reassert Roman control over the East. In 272 AD, following a series of military campaigns, Aurelianus defeated Zenobia and captured her. She was brought to Rome, where accounts of her fate vary - some suggest she was paraded in Aurelianus' triumph and lived out her life in relative comfort, while others indicate a more tragic conclusion.

According to the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Zenobia ensured that both Herennianus and Timolaus were adorned in garments befitting emperors during public assemblies or discussions of state matters. The anonymous author further remarked that there was little else of significance to note about Timolaus, aside from his inclination towards study and his potential to become an accomplished rhetorician. Among historians, it is widely accepted that he may represent a fictional character³¹⁴;

291; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 26-28; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 716-717; Zonaras, XII, 23-24. See also Zugravu 2003, 347-348, n. 382; Kienast 2004, 239-240; Mennen 2011, 30, 32-33, 70, 222, 224-226, 231-232, 238, 240, 256; Zugravu 2012, 436, n. 491; Broşteanu 2020, 168; Pearson 2022, 185-186, 193, 217, 228, 232-233, 287 (n. 12 and 13), 290-291 (n. 7); Zugravu 2022b, 565-568, n. 619.

³¹³ SHA, *Tr. tyr.*, XV, 5; XVII; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 717; Zonaras, XII, 24. See also Kienast 2004, 241.

³¹⁴ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 33.3; 34.7-8; Eutropius, IX, 13.2; Festus, 24.1; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 273-274; SHA, *Gall.*, XIII, 1-5; *Tr. tyr.*, XXIV, 4; XXVII-XXVIII; XXX; *Aur.*, XXII, 1; XXV-XXVIII; XXX, 1-2;

e) Septimius Antiochus, likely a relative of Zenobia, was proclaimed emperor in 273 by the Palmyrenes following her removal. Although Aurelianus did not execute him, he instead sought revenge on the cities that had supported Antiochus. In the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, he is referred to as Achilleus³¹⁵.

12. during the reign of Probus:

a) Bonosus, who usurped power at *Colonia Agrippina* between 280 and 281, was ultimately defeated by Probus and chose to hang himself³¹⁶;

b) Proculus, who seized the imperial purple at *Lugdunum* around the year 280, was captured by Probus and subsequently killed³¹⁷;

c) Caius Iulius Saturninus, believed to have been an associate of Probus, allegedly usurped power in *Syria* around 279, 280, or 281. After being abandoned by his supporters, he fled to *Apamaea*, where he was ultimately killed, although not through the direct intervention of the legitimate sovereign³¹⁸;

d) An *Ignotus* in *Britannia*, believed to have served as the governor of the province due to the influence of a friend, Pomponius Victorinus, over the

XXXI; XXXIII, 2; XXXIV, 3; XXXV, 4; XXXVIII, 1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 49; Zosimus, I, 39.2; 44.1; 50-56; 59; Orosius, VII, 23.4; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 274; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 291; Malalas, *Chron.*, XII, 26; 28; 30; Sykellos, *Chron.*, 717; 721; Zonaras, XII, 27. See also Zugravu 2003, 348-349, n. 384; Kienast 2004, 241-242; Potter 2004, 251, 260, 263, 266-268, 270-272, 275, 288, 641 (n. 1), 643 (n. 23), 644 (n. 31 and 33); Southern 2004, 6, 102, 109, 116-117, 120, 239-240, 278, 316 (n. 22), 317 (n. 25), 321-322 (n. 43, 44, 45 and 46), 324 (n. 53), 360 (n. 13 and 14); Mennen 2011, 34, 231-232, 256; Zugravu 2012, 458-459, n. 533; Broșteanu 2022, 54; Pearson 2022, 233; Zugravu 2022b, 567-568 (n. 619), 590-591 (n. 667 and 668), 593 (n. 671), 595 (n. 677), 623-624 (n. 730).

³¹⁵ *SHA, Aurel.*, XXXI, 2; Zosimus, I, 60.2; 61.1. See also Kienast 2004, 242; Southern 2004, 117, 322-323 (n. 47); Mennen 2011, 256.

³¹⁶ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 37.4; Eutropius, IX, 17.1; *SHA, Prob.*, XVIII, 5; XXIV, 7; *Quadr. tyr.*, XIV-XV; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXVII, 2; Orosius, VII, 24.3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 53. See also Kienast 2004, 255; Potter 2004, 277; Southern 2004, 130, 329 (n. 70); Mennen 2011, 256; Zugravu 2012, 477, n. 562; Zugravu 2022b, 550-551 (n. 597), 612-613 (n. 712); Broșteanu 2023, 133.

³¹⁷ Eutropius, IX, 17.1; *SHA, Prob.*, XVIII, 5; XXIV, 7; *Quadr. tyr.*, XII-XIII; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXVII, 2; Orosius, VII, 24.3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, I, 53. See also Kienast 2004, 255-256; Potter 2004, 277, 647 (n. 84); Southern 2004, 130, 329 (n. 70); Mennen 2011, 256; Zugravu 2012, 477, n. 562; Zugravu 2022b, 550-551 (n. 597), 612-613 (n. 712); Broșteanu 2023, 133.

³¹⁸ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 37.3; Eutropius, IX, 17.1; *SHA, Prob.*, XVIII, 4; *Quadr. tyr.*, VII-XI; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXVII, 2; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 281; Orosius, VII, 24.3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 53; Zosimus, I, 66.1; 67, 1; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 293; John of Antioch, fr. 241; Synkellos, *Chron.*, 723; Zonaras, XII, 29. See also Kienast 2004, 256-257; Potter 2004, 277; Southern 2004, 130, 329 (n. 70); Zugravu 2012, 476, n. 561; Zugravu 2022b, 612-613, n. 712.

sovereign Probus, allegedly organized a rebellion in the region. The specific year of the usurpation remains unknown. This rebellion was suppressed by Probus with the assistance of Pomponius Victorinus, a Moor, whom he accused of being responsible for the events in *Britannia*; Victorinus was sent to atone for his errors. To remove the usurper, Victorinus resorted to an ingenious ruse. As a reward for his efforts, he was appointed consul in 282³¹⁹.

13. during the reign of Carinus: Marcus Aurelius Sabinus Iulianus, *corrector Italiae regionis Venetiae et Histriae*, usurped power upon hearing the news of Carus's death, around the years 283/284-285, with his authority extending into *Pannonia*. He was ultimately defeated by Carinus *in campis Veronensibus* or in *Illyricum*³²⁰.

The fourth century

In the fourth century, alongside the term *hostis*, other phrases emerged to emphasize usurpation, violations of imperial majesty, and deviations from the law: *tyrannus*, which became synonymous with usurper; *rebellis*; *rusticus*; *latro*; *pirata*; *grassator*; *oppugnator*; *turbator*; *perduellis*. The term *tyrannus* designated one who seized power either of their own volition or at the urging of an associate. It also referred to an emperor who, despite his legitimacy, was defeated by an opponent of the same social standing. The term *tyranni* encompassed former rulers whose memory was not "rehabilitated by a successor", as highlighted by Adrastus Omissi³²¹.

In the panegyric delivered at *Augusta Treverorum* in 313, commemorating the victory at the Milvian Bridge, Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius (306-312) was labelled *hostis rei publicae*, indicating that he was regarded in this light even during the civil conflict. It is possible that he was declared *hostis* prior to his ultimate defeat, particularly during the so-called "conference" at *Carnuntum* in 308, which included Diocletianus (284-305), Maximianus I *Herculius* (285-308/310), and Maximianus II Galerius (c. 293-

³¹⁹ Zosimus, I, 66.2; 67.1; John of Antioch, fr. 241; Zonaras, XII, 29. See also Potter 2004, 277; Southern 2004, 329 (n. 68).

³²⁰ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 39.9-10; Zosimus, I, 73.3 = John of Antioch, fr. 246; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXVIII, 6; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 57. See also Kienast 2004, 263; Southern 2004, 134-135, 331 (n. 2); Mennen 2011, 256, 267; Zugravu 2012, 483-484, n. 571; Zugravu 2022b, 625-626, n. 733.

³²¹ Humphries 2008, 85-86; Szidat 2010, 27-32; Omissi 2016, 180-182; Omissi 2018, 21-34 (30 the expression in quotes above); Tantillo 2021, 28, 35.

311), and sought to address the tensions present within the Tetrarchy³²². The initial phase of the final conflict between Constantinus and Maxentius was advantageous for the Constantinian faction, prompting the Roman populace to label the latter as a deserter and a betrayer of public safety³²³. Overwhelmed by anxiety, the usurper sought the support of certain senators to consult the Sibylline Books. Lactantius and Zosimus recorded that the response received - that on that day the enemy of the Romans would die - emboldened him to lead his troops into battle and confront his opponent³²⁴.

The prophecy was fulfilled; however, the defeated enemy turned out to be Maxentius himself, as he, overwhelmed on the battlefield, perished in the waters of the Tiber³²⁵. Additionally, historiographical and patristic sources have highlighted various negative traits, including arrogance, cruelty, violence, inability to govern, and debauchery³²⁶.

³²² *Panegyrici Latini*, IX [12], 18.2; Lactantius, *Mort.*, XXIX, 1-2; Eusebius, *HE*, VIII, 13.14; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 40.8; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXIX, 6; Zosimus, II, 10.4-5; John of Antioch, fr. 253; Chronicon Paschale, a. 307 (in PG 92, 694). See also Kienast 2004, 291; Potter 2004, 435; Southern 2004, 171; Varner 2004, 216; Zugravu 2012, 493 (n. 582), 498 (n. 594), 502 (n. 601); Kristensen 2016, 327, 332; Tantillo 2021, 29, 35; Zugravu 2022b, 659-660 (n. 792), 668-669 (n. 810).

³²³ Lactantius, *Mort.*, XLIV, 7; Zonaras, XII, 1.

³²⁴ Lactantius, *Mort.*, XLIV, 8; Zosimus, II, 16.1. See also Potter 2004, 357-358, 667 (n. 116).

³²⁵ *Panegyrici Latini*, IX [12], 17.2; 18.3; X [4], 29-31; Lactantius, *Mort.*, XLIV, 1-9; Eusebius, *HE*, IX, 9, 4-8; VC, I, 38; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 40.23; Eutropius, X, 4.3; *SHA*, XXXV, 6; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 312; Orosius, VII, 28.16; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, I, 2.2-7; Sozomos, *HE*, I, 3-4; Prudentius, *Contra Symm.*, I, 481-483; Anonymus Valesianus, IV, 12; Zosimus, II, 15.2-4; 16.2-4; Chronicon Paschale, a. 306; 311; Consularia Constantinopolitana, a. 312; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5802 [309/10], 5814 [321/2]; Zonaras, XIII, 12. See also Varner 2001, 56; Kienast 2004, 299; Potter 2004, 357-358, 362-364, 375, 381-382, 403, 435, 439, 456; Southern 2004, 172-175, 342-343 (n. 57 and 58); Varner 2004, 4, 6, 11, 100, 214-220, 223; Humphries 2008, 85-86, 88-97, 100; Szidat 2010, 161-162, 289-290, 296, 335; Zugravu 2012, 502-503, n. 601; Omissi 2016, 181; Kristensen 2016, 323-343; Tantillo 2017, 134, 143, 145, 149; Haymann 2018, 265; Omissi, 2018, vii, 39, 46 (n. 30), 48, 56-57 (n. 78), 72 (n. 2), 106, 109-110, 116-135, 138-139, 141-143, 145-151, 159, 176-177, 271 (n. 90), 303-305; Zugravu 2019a, 102; Zugravu 2019b, 253; Tantillo 2021, 16-18, 20, 28-29, 36, 39; Zugravu 2021, 125-126; Zugravu 2022b, 668-669, n. 810.

³²⁶ *Panegyrici Latini*, IX [12], 4.4; 14.2 and 5; 16.2; X [4], 8.3; 9.4; 30.1; Lactantius, *Mort.*, XVIII, 9; Eusebius, *HE*, VIII, 14.2-6 and 11-14; VC, I, 33-36; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 40.19-20; Eutropius, IX, 4.3; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XL, 14; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, I, 2.1; Zosimus, II, 14.4; Zonaras, XII, 33. See also Potter 2004, 362; Southern 2004, 174; Varner 2004, 216; Zugravu 2012, 506-507, n. 612; Zugravu 2022b, 666-667, n. 806.

There are also inscriptions - four in the Italian region and two in the African region - that highlight the reality shaped around the perception of Maxentius as a *tyrannus* and his rule as a *saevissima tyrannis*:

a) inscriptions discovered in the Italian region:

1. An inscription dating from 315-316, placed on the triumphal arch constructed by the Roman Senate and people in honor of Constantinus I, commemorates his victory in the war against Maxentius and his faction. This outcome was attributed to divine inspiration and the greatness of mind of the first sovereign, who was proclaimed *liberator urbis* and *fundator quietis*. Additionally, the inscription celebrated the ten-year anniversary of his rule - *EDCS-17600785*³²⁷.

2. An inscription dating from 312-324, 313, or 313-316, discovered in the *Forum Romanum*, was commissioned by the Roman Senate and people in honor of Constantinus I and another sovereign, though the name of the latter has not been preserved. The two emperors were described as undefeated in bravery and divine virtue, as well as *liberatores* and *restitutores rei publicae* - *HD*, 027236³²⁸.

3. An inscription discovered in the *Forum Romanum*, dating from 324- 337, does not preserve the name of the emperor to whom it was dedicated; in any case, the recipient of the message, likely Constantinus I, is referred to as *conservator nominis romani*, *propagator orbis sui*, *extinctor factionum tyrannicarum*, and *domitor gentium barbarum*. The phrase *factionum tyrannicarum* was intended to highlight the emperor's victories in the campaigns initiated against Maxentius and Licinius - *HD*, 027239³²⁹.

4. An inscription dating from 315-316, discovered at *Antina* in the province of *Latium et Campania / Regio I*, was placed at the base of a statue by the Senate and people of the respective settlement in honour of Caius Vettius Cossinius Rufinus, *vir clarissimus*, who was designated *patronus dulcissimus* in gratitude for his just conduct in fulfilling the duties associated with the role of *corrector Campaniae* and for the protection he provided to the

³²⁷ Potter 2004, 360-362, 375, 435; Southern 2004, 176; Varner 2004, 144, 216; Humphries 2008, 95, n. 68; Clauss 2013, 294-296; Mitthof 2013, 201, no. 57; Humphries 2015, 156-157, 159, 162; Kristensen 2016, 325-327; Omissi 2016, 181; Tantillo 2017, 142-145; Omissi 2018, 131-132, 135, 152 (n. 241).

³²⁸ Kalas 2015, 183 (n. 1), 185 (n. 60); Tantillo 2017, 145, n. 45; Tantillo 2021, 41-42, no. 4.

³²⁹ Kalas 2015, 185, n. 140; Tantillo 2021, 31, 42 (no. 7); Mathisen 2023, 101 (n. 72), 102 (n. 80).

community mentioned above during the *saeuissima tyrannis* of Maxentius - *EDCS-20400852*³³⁰.

b) African inscriptions:

5. An inscription, placed on the base of a statue shortly after 312, was discovered in *Lambaesis* (Tazoult), in the province of *Numidia*. The dedicants may have been soldiers from *legio III Augusta*, the inhabitants/civilians of the colony, or those from the entire province. Ignazio Tantillo proposed the idea that the statue base most likely did not support an effigy of Constantinus I, but rather one of the *genius* of the legion, or of the colony, or even of the entire province - *EDCS-24800717*³³¹.

6. An inscription dating from 313, placed at the base of a statue of the sovereign Constantinus I, was discovered at *Thugga* (Dougga) in the province of *Africa Proconsularis*. The dedicant was Caius Annius Ceionius Anullinas, *vir clarissimus* and *legatus Nimidia*. The victor of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge was described as *extinctor tyrannicae factionis, victor, and defensor provinciarum suarum atque urbium* - *HD, 045350*³³².

In the following sections, we will focus our attention on the usurpers of the fourth century, with the objective of identifying the phrases used in legal or literary sources to highlight them, as well as those that emphasized the very act of rebellion against the *imperium*.

Initially, for the Tetrarchic period (284/293-324), we will refer to Marcus Aurelius Mausaeus Carausius (286-293), who usurped power in *Britannia*. He was considered a *usurpator, rebellis, pirata, and archipirata* – *abducere classem; occupare legionem; intercludere peregrinum; contrahere mercatorem; sollicitare barbaros; haurire imperium; capessere imperium; remittere imperium; sumere purpuram; efficere imperatorem; vindicare imperium; retinere imperium*³³³.

³³⁰ Potter 2004, 388; Davenport 2013, 228-229; Tantillo 2021, 33, 42 (no. 6).

³³¹ Tantillo 2017, 145-146; Tantillo 2021, 30 (n. 55), 41 (no. 1).

³³² Khanoussi, Mastino 2003, 424-427; Mastino, Ibbas 2014, 374; Tantillo 2017, 146-148; Tantillo 2021, 30 (n. 52), 33, 41 (no. 3).

³³³ *Panegyrici Latini*, IV [8], 12.1; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 39.20-21 and 39-40; Eutropius, IX, 21.1; 22.1-2; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXIX, 3; Orosius, VII, 25.3-4 and 6; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 289; John of Antioch, fr. 247; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 297; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5788 [295/6]; Zonaras, XII, 31. See also Potter 2004, 284-285, 288, 297, 650 (n. 123 and 137); Southern 2004, 6, 32, 138-143, 149-150, 186, 203, 218, 269, 332-333 (n. 6-9 and 11); Kienast 2004, 278; Varner 2004, 212-213; Humphries 2008, 85-86; Szidat 2010, 413, 415; Zugravu 2012, 490-491, n. 578; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2019a, 102; Zugravu 2021, 119-121; Zugravu 2022b, 634- 645, n. 749.

In the same vein, Allectus (293-296), who was *rationalis summae rei* or *praefectus praetorio* under Carausius, killed the latter and replaced him as *tyrannus* in *Britannia*. He was considered a *hostis, latro*, leader of a *nefariae factionis*, and his rule was compared to a *coniuratio, nauticae rebellionis, lues*, and *scelus*; his supporters were *hostes, inimici, latrones – extorquere imperium; eripere imperium*³³⁴.

Also, Aelius (Helianus) / Aelianus and Amandus, the leaders of the *Bagaudae* movement in Gaul during the early part of Diocletianus' reign, were perceived as *hostes, rustici, latrones, rebelles, agrestes*, while their followers were seen as an *imperitam et confusam manum, monstrorum biforminum, ignori agricolae, rustici vastatores*. Their end came during the military campaign initiated by Maximianus I Herculus between 285-286³³⁵.

Around the year 286, a certain Iulianus is said to have caused disturbances. According to Aurelius Victor, he acted in *Africa* alongside the *quinquegentanae*, who represented a confederation of Mauritanian tribes that had come into conflict with Roman authority. In the view of Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, Italy was the scene of the public disorder orchestrated by Iulianus, who, to avoid capture, allegedly drove a dagger into his ribs and threw himself into the fire³³⁶.

Furthermore, Aurelius Achilleus (297-298), the former *corrector Aegypti* of the usurper Lucius Domitius Domitianus (Domitianus III / 297), who is known through numismatic and papyrological sources, continued the rebellion but was killed during a long eight-month siege coordinated by Diocletianus. He was considered *rebellis, perduellis, tyrannus*, and *concitator* of

³³⁴ *Panegyrici Latini*, IV [8], 12; 13.4; 14; 15.1 and 5; 16.2-4; 17.1-2; 18.1 and 6-7; 19; Aurelius Victor, 39.41-42; Eutropius, IX, 22.2; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 300; Orosius, VII; 25.6; Zonaras, XII, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 279; Potter 2004, 288, 292; Southern 2004, 6, 149-150, 186, 218, 335 (n. 20 and 21); Varner 2004, 212-213; Humphries 2008, 85-86; Szidat 2010, 207, 415; Zugravu 2012, 490-491, n. 578; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2019a 102; Zugravu 2022b, 643-644, n. 765 and 766.

³³⁵ *Panegyrici Latini*, II [10], 4.3-4; III [11], 5.3; VII [6], 8.3; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 39.17 and 19; Eutropius, IX, 20.3; Orosius, VII, 25.2; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 288; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5788 [295/6]; Zonaras, XII, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 276-277; Potter 2004, 281, 649 (n. 112); Southern 2004, 137, 155, 200, 252, 331-332 (n. 4-6); Szidat 2010, 413, 415; Zugravu 2022b, 629-632, n. 744 and 745.

³³⁶ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 39.22; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXIX, 3-4. See also Kienast 2004, 277; Zugravu 2012, 492, n. 580; Zugravu 2022b, 635-636, n. 750.

a *sediti*; his leadership was perceived as *perduellio* – *induere dominationem; efficere imperatorem; desciscere romanam potestatem; invadere Aegyptum*³³⁷.

In 303, as Eusebius of *Caesarea* mentioned, an unknown individual (*Ignotus*) attempted to seize power in Melitene³³⁸.

In the same vein, Eugenius, the commander of a military unit of 500 soldiers stationed in *Syria*, at *Seleucia*, was proclaimed emperor by his subordinates in 303, becoming an unwilling usurper, as highlighted by Libanius, the famous rhetoric teacher from Antioch, known for his writings on rhetoric, culture, urban life, politics, and religion in the fourth century AD. This revolt was also mentioned by Eusebius of *Caesarea*, but Libanius was the one who provided accurate information about the causes of the rebellion, its unfolding, its suppression, and, as expected in such contexts of socio-political instability, the reprisals that followed. Thus, the soldiers responsible for this insurrection were tasked with deepening the port's mouth in *Seleucia*, and at night they were forced to bake their bread for their rations; consequently, they no longer had time to rest. According to Libanius, these unbearable conditions led the soldiers to conceive thoughts of rebellion, and acting on impulse, they compelled Eugenius to assume the status of emperor, although it should be noted that he had the choice between the new social position or death, if he had refused. After carrying out their intentions, the soldiers resorted to a perpetual Bacchic initiation, an activity that lasted for several hours and during which the plan that would bring them death was conceived - namely, organizing a march to Antioch. At dusk, the soldiers entered the city, but the effects of their drunkenness were still strong and made them disoriented; the city's citizens offered armed resistance, using bars against the spears of the troops; even women participated actively in the fight. By nightfall, each soldier lay dead, and the rebellion itself was neutralized. After this episode, Diocletianus, whom Libanius characterized as a ruler lacking the virtue of restraint in attacking the lives of his subjects, instead of honouring the citizens for their sacrifices in eliminating the rebels, took revenge on both cities, even though they had

³³⁷ *Panegyrici Latini*, IV [8], 5.2; V [9], 21.1; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 39.22-23; 33 and 38; Eutropius, IX, 22.1; 23.1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XXXIX, 3; Orosius, VII, 25.8; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 289; 298; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 297; 300; *Get.*, XXI, 110; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5786 [293/4]; 5787 [295/296]; Zonaras, XII, 31. See also Kienast 2004, 267, 270-271; Potter 2004, 334, 660 (n. 2); Southern 2004, 150, 335 (n. 22), 361 (n. 16); Szidat 2010, 207, 265 (n. 1066), 413, 415; Zugravu 2012, 491-492, n. 579; Zugravu 2019b, 253; Zugravu 2022b, 635-636, n. 750.

³³⁸ Eusebius, *HE*, VIII, 6.8.

no blame in the events. In both cases, the execution of the leaders of each city was ordered, among the victims being representatives of Libanius' family, such as his grandfather, who was beheaded³³⁹.

Lastly, Lucius Domitius Alexander (308-310/311), who usurped power in North Africa, was considered *stolidus, debilis, timidus*; he allied with Constantine I against Maxentius, but was eliminated following the incursion of the Praetorian Prefect Caius Ceionius Rufius Volusianus – *incubare dominatum; facere imperatorem apud Carthaginem*³⁴⁰.

In the second part of Constantine I's reign, the protagonist of the subversive actions was Calocaerus (333/334-335), *magister pecoris camelorum*; he usurped power in *Cyprus* but was defeated by Flavius Dalmatius, the emperor's half-brother, after which he was sent to *Tarsus* in *Cilicia*, where he received the punishment he deserved; after the rebellion was suppressed, the usurper was captured, tortured and burned alive; he was considered *usurpator, demens* and was likened to *serviles* and *latrones* – *capessere regnum; moliri rem novam; aspirare rem novam*³⁴¹.

A particular case from the period following the death of Constantine I is represented by Constantine II (337–340), one of his sons, whose base was in *Augusta Treverorum*. As a successor to his father, after 337, he had to share the empire with his brothers, Constans (337–350) and Constantius II (337–361). The dynastic principle provided him with the legitimacy of power. Each of the brothers inherited certain territories: Constantine II was allocated the prefecture of Gaul, Constans received the prefectures of Italy,

³³⁹ Eusebius, *HE*, VIII, 6.8; Libanius, *Or.*, 19.45; 20.17-21. See also Potter 2004, 570.

³⁴⁰ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 40.17-19; 28; *SHA, Hel.*, XXXV, 6; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XL, 2; 6; 20; Zosimus, II, 12.2-3; 14.2-3. See also Kienast 2004, 293; Potter 2004, 351, 388, 666 (n. 91); Humphries 2008, 96; Szidat 2010, 280 (n. 128), 289-290, 296, 415; Zugravu 2012, 499 (n. 595), 502 (n. 600), 509 (n. 621); Zugravu 2022b, 664-665, n. 804.

³⁴¹ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 41.11-12; Orosius, VII, 28.30; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 334; Anonymus Valesianus, VI, 35; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, I, 63; Philostorgius, *HE* (A7, 11a-b); Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5825 [332/3]. See also Neri 1992, 20-21, 23, 32, 55, 230, 280; Kienast 2004, 300, 308-309; Potter 2004, 289, 345 (n. 9); Szidat 2010, 258 (n. 1029), 413, 415; Omissi 2018, 153, 155; Tantillo 2021, 17, n. 6; Zugravu 2022b, 683-684, n. 837. Regarding the manner of Calocaerus' death, the works of Orosius (VII, 28.30), Jerome (*Chron.*, a. 334), and the fragmentary Latin chronicles commonly referred to as the Anonymus Valesianus (*Excerpta Valesiana*) only mention that he was slain in the context of his *seditio*. According to some editors of the antic source materials who have interpreted the passage from Aurelius Victor regarding the usurper, Calocaerus was not burned alive, but rather crucified, as this was the punishment applied to bandits.

Africa, and *Illyricum*, and Constantius II controlled the prefecture of the East. As the eldest, Constantinus II assumed the title *maximus triumphator Augustus* and sought to assert his superiority over his brothers. This personal ambition served as the catalyst for tensions with Constans, which eventually materialized in a series of armed incursions. The most significant of these, sealing Constantinus II's fate, took place in March–April 340 near *Aquileia*. Here, Constantinus II fell into a trap set by Constans' commanders and was killed. The aforementioned Roman city once again witnessed the deposition of a *princeps*, as it had in 238 with Maximinus Thrax, who became a victim of military betrayal, and as it would again in 388 during the final confrontation between Theodosius I (379–395) and Magnus Maximus (383–388). Shortly after his elder brother's removal, Constans proclaimed himself *maximus victor ac triumphator Augustus*. As a final form of social disgrace, Constantinus II was publicly declared *publicus et noster inimicus*, his status effectively reduced from emperor to an "unperson", as Timothy Barnes notes. Additionally, he was labelled as *hostis publicus*³⁴².

It was not the first time that the Constantinian dynasty experienced a tragedy involving violence against another family member. In this context, we may recall the elimination of Crispus (317–326), the eldest son of Constantinus I, at *Pola*, and Fausta, the emperor's second wife, in Rome in 326. It is possible that the decision to execute them and subsequently condemn them to oblivion was driven by allegations of an adulterous relationship between the son and his stepmother³⁴³. In the autumn of 337, shortly after the death of Constantinus I, the majority of the collateral branch

³⁴² Codex Theodosianus, X, 8.4; XI, 12.1; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 41.22; Eutropius, X, 9.2; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLI, 21; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 340; Rufinus of Aquileia, *HE*, X, 16; Orosius, VII, 29.5; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 5; 15.1; 25.4; Sozomenos, *HE*, III, 2; Philostorgius, *HE*, III, 1; Theodoret of Cyrus, *HE*, II, 16.21; Zosimus, II, 41.1; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 342; Malalas, *Chron.*, XIII, 15; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5831 [338/9]; Cedrenus, *Hist., Comp.* (in PG 121, 520); Zonaras, XIII, 5. See also Barnes 2014, 5 (the expression between quotation marks above), 159, 197, 212–213 (n. 19); Kienast 2004, 310, 312; Szidat 2010, 31 (n. 52), 59, 61, 162, 212, 403; Zugravu 2012, 525–526, n. 665; Haymann 2018, 265; Omissi 2018, 156; Humphries 2020, 158, n. 7; Zugravu 2022b, 694–696, n. 862.

³⁴³ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 41.11; Eutropius, X, 6.3; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 11.20; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLI, 11–12; Orosius, VII, 28.26; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 325; *Vir. ill.*, LXXX; Sozomenos, *HE*, I, 5.1–2; Philostorgius, *HE*, II, 4; Zosimus, II, 29.2; Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*, III, 40; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5816 [323/4]; Zonaras, XIII, 2. See also Kienast 2004, 305, 306; Varner 2004, 221–22; Szidat 2010, 49–50, 402; Zugravu 2012, 505–506 (n. 609), 517–518 (n. 645); Zugravu 2022b, 682–683, n. 836.

of the dynasty was eliminated. This episode took place in Constantinople. During this purge aimed at removing potential claimants to the throne, Flavius Dalmatius and Iulius Constantius, half-brothers of the emperor from their father Constantius *Chlorus'* marriage to Theodora (likely the daughter of Maximianus I *Herculius*), lost their lives. Also killed were Flavius Iulius Dalmatius, *Caesar* (335–337), and Hannibalianus, who held the titles *nobilissimus* and *rex regum et Ponticarum gentium*, both sons of Flavius Dalmatius. The only survivors, spared due to their young age, were the children of Iulius Constantius - Flavius Claudius Constantius Gallus and Flavius Claudius Iulianus - and Iulius Popilius Nepotianus Constantinus, who would later become emperors³⁴⁴.

Lastly, Gallus *Caesar* (351–354), the half-cousin of Constantius II, was dismissed and eliminated due to his numerous excesses, as well as suspicions surrounding a potential usurpation of the throne. Ammianus Marcellinus portrayed Gallus's physical appearance in a favourable light: he was strikingly handsome, with well-proportioned features, blond, wavy hair, and a beard that lent him "an air of mature authority"³⁴⁵. Nevertheless, Gallus's character was notably bloodthirsty, leading to perceptions of him as follows: a man with a savage spirit, a killer of both men and innocents, the author of numerous atrocities, a person of fierce temperament inclined toward tyranny, and one whose actions were marked by cruelty and tyranny³⁴⁶.

In the mid-fourth century, a new architect of intrigues stepped onto the Roman political stage: Flavius Magnus Magnentius (350–353), *gentis barbarae*, who orchestrated a conspiracy against Constans. This plot culminated during a banquet on January 18, 350, in *Augustodunum*, where he was proclaimed *Augustus*. Magnentius was regarded as a *usurpator*, a

³⁴⁴ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 41.22; Eutropius, X, 9.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXI, 16.8; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 338; Orosius, VII, 29.1; Anonymus Valesianus, VI, 35; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 25.3; III, 1.8; Sozomos, *HE*, V, 2.8; Zosimus, II, 40.1-3; 45.1; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5829 [336/7], 5830 [337/8]; Zonaras, XIII, 5. See also Kienast 2004, 307-308; Szidat 2010, 57, 403; Zugravu 2012, 523-524 (n. 660), 525-526 (n. 664); Zugravu 2022b, 693-694, n. 861.

³⁴⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 11.28.

³⁴⁶ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 42.12; Eutropius, X, 13.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XIV, 11.1-23; XXI, 13.11; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 354; Orosius, VII, 29.14; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 34.1-5; Sozomenos, *HE*, IV, 7.5-7; V, 2.19; Philostorgius, *HE*, IV, 1; Zosimus, II, 55.2-3; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 67; John of Antioch, fr. 260; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5846 [353/4]; Zonaras, XIII, 9. See also Kienast 2004, 318-319; Szidat 2010, 42 (n. 119), 47 (n. 136), 171, 195, 209, 212, 244, 259, 271, 322, 403; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2022b, 705-706, n. 879, 880 and 881.

tyrannus, and the perpetrator of a criminal act, possessing a cruel nature, and his rule was labeled a *tyrannis*, and a *usurpatio*; his followers, particularly his soldiers, were perceived as *hostes*. He fought numerous battles against Constantius II but, facing defeat, chose to kill his relatives and associates to prevent their capture by his opponent and then died by his own sword at *Lugdunum*. Following his death, Magnus Decentius Caesar (350–353), his brother, also chose the path of suicide by hanging himself – *capere habitum venerabilem; obtinere imperium; arripere imperium; occupare regnum; usurpare imperium; invadare imperium; movere rebellio*³⁴⁷.

There are also inscriptions that attest to Magnentius being referred to as a *tyrannus*, and his reign has been placed in a synonymous relationship with the concept of tyranny or plague, being regarded as a *pestifera tyrannis*:

a) inscriptions discovered in Rome:

1. An inscription dating from 352–353, which was placed at the base of a statue in the Roman Forum, near the Arch of Septimius Severus, and whose dedicant was Neratius Cerealis, *vir clarissimus* and *praefectus urbi*. The sovereign Constantius II was titled *restitutor urbis Romae atque orbis, extincor pestiferae tyrannidis, victor ac triumphator, semper Augustus* -EDCS-17600800³⁴⁸.

2. An inscription dating from 357, placed on the base of an obelisk situated in the Circus Maximus, commemorates the monument erected during the visit of Constantius II to the Roman capital. The event was described by Ammianus Marcellinus, who recounted that the erection of the obelisk was considered an operation that was believed to be extremely

³⁴⁷ Codex Theodosianus, IX, 38.2; XV, 14.5; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 41.23 and 25; 42.5 and 9–10; Eutropius, X, 10.2; 11.1; 12.1–2; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLI, 22; XLII, 4–6 and 8; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 350; 351, 353; Orosius, VII, 29.8 and 12–13; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 25.32 and 39; Sozomenos, *HE*, IV, 1 and 7; Philostorgius, *HE*, III, 22; 25–26; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 67; Zosimus, II, 45.3–4; 46–54; John of Antioch, fr. 260; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5849 [356/7]; Zonaras, XIII, 6–8. See also Kienast 2004, 313, 319–321; Potter 2004, 456–457, 471–474, 477; Humphries 2008, 85; Szidat 2010, 10, 31 (n. 55), 35 (n. 74), 42 (n. 120), 149, 162, 192, 199, 209, 215, 217, 219, 222–224, 226, 228, 233, 236–239, 241, 244–245, 248, 251, 259, 261, 264 (n. 1058), 268, 272, 274–275, 277–278, 280, 282, 285, 287, 289, 292, 296–297, 302–303, 305, 306 (n. 1257), 307, 309, 310 (n. 1281), 311, 314–315, 317–319, 321–322, 325, 327, 328 (n. 1376), 329–330, 332 (n. 1393), 333 (n. 1394 and 1397), 335–336, 338–340, 388–389, 403, 413, 415; Zugravu 2012, 531 (n. 682), 532–534 (n. 684–690); Humphries 2015, 156, 158–164, 166; Antikeira 2018, 3–5, 9, 13, 15–16; Haymann 2018, 265; Omissi 2018, 163–168; Zugravu 2018, 364; Antikeira 2019, 2–3, 5, 8–10; Zugravu 2019b, 253; Humphries 2020, 159–179; Zugravu 2020, 492, n. 95; Tantillo 2021, 21, 25, 32, 39; Zugravu 2022b, 696–698 (n. 865), 701–704 (n. 875–878); Zugravu 2023, 527.

³⁴⁸ Humphries 2015, 160–161, 163–164; Kalas 2015, x (no. 3.5), 177 (n. 72), 178 (n. 96), 180 (n. 32), 186 (n. 73), 191 (n. 50); Omissi 2018, 179; Tantillo 2021, 32, 42–43 (no. 8).

difficult, even impossible, and posed significant risks to the lives of those involved in such an endeavour. Due to the large number of scaffolding beams used, the area was said to have transformed into a "forest of scaffolding", which even blocked the sun's rays from reaching the ground. Thousands of men were summoned to contribute their efforts towards raising the monumental structure, and the exemplary cooperation among them facilitated the realization of such a grandiose project - EDCS-18200409. Based on the verses inscribed on the obelisk, several categories of characters are delineated. On one side, there are two main characters: Emperor Constantius II, the protagonist, and the Eternal City, Rome, which is designated as the victim. There is an interdependent relationship between the two, as the actions of the former have a direct impact on the development of the latter. Additionally, there is an antagonist, the cruel tyrant (*taetro tyranno*), a phrase used to refer to Flavius Magnus Magnentius, who was ravaging (*vastante*) Rome, which urgently needed a saviour. In this context, Constantius II intervenes, being the only one capable of restoring the honour of the city tarnished by the enemy's actions, a mission entrusted to him based on his status as *dominus mundi*. The protagonist succeeds in killing the tyrant, an action highlighted by the verb *caedo/caedere*, and ultimately recovers the entire land (*toto orbe recepto*).

Once the tyrant is defeated, the stage for the revitalization of Rome's dignity can be initiated, a process that is difficult but not impossible. Constantius II, who is both *victor* and *ovans*, has several supporting characters and allies on his side. The first and most important of these is the obelisk, which is associated with certain phrases intended to highlight the multiple significances tied to the role this grand monument was to play, namely, that of restoring the prestige of the city on the seven hills:

- phrases that conferred legitimacy to Constantius II's actions, based on the fact that, as the son of Constantinus I, he inherited a task initiated by his father, also highlighting his adoption of a benevolent, affectionate, and caring approach toward the city. Thus, the monument was referred to as the *opus* of Constantinus I, who is emphasized in the text by the noun *pater*; the *munus* of Constantius II for the city; the *donum* of Constantius II; a *decus* that Constantinus I, with the desire (*volens*) to bestow it as an honor (*ornatum*) for the city bearing his name, that is, Constantinople, had torn from the rocks of Thebes;

- phrases that emphasize the utility of the obelisk within the city: it was perceived as a construction meant to equal the gifts of renowned triumphs (*clari exaequet dona triumphis*);

- phrases that demonstrate the relationship between Constantius II and the obelisk, as well as the monument's role in establishing the idea of prosperity and peace within the Roman collective consciousness, which society achieved thanks to the sovereign's rule, and the fact that, under his leadership, victories against those threatening public safety became a constant outcome, while the maintenance or restoration of peace during times of distress became recurring themes: thus, the obelisk became a sublime trophy, a gift worthy of the sovereign's triumphs (*sublime tropaeum principis et munus condignis usque triumphis*); a glory that was wrenched from reddish metals, preserved for the sovereign for a long time, and then returned to him, but only after the removal of the tyrant (*nunc veluti rursus rufis avulsa metallis emicuit pulsatque polos haec gloria dudum auctori servata suo cum caede tyranni redditur*);

- phrases illustrating the grandeur of such a monument and, implicitly, the efforts required to move it: the obelisk was described as a something that had never been borne by any land nor seen by any era (*et quod nulla tulit tellus nec viderat aetas*); it was compared to the Caucasus mountains, considered a massive Caucasian mass, a considerable portion of the mountain, about which it was rumored that no skill, effort, or strength of hands could move it (*quod nullo ingenio nisuque manuque moveri caucaseam molem discurrens fama monebat*); it was characterized as an enormous mass of stone, about which no one believed it could be raised to the heavens (*non crederet ullus tantae molis opus superas consurgere in auras*).

The transportation of the obelisk to Rome becomes an objective that concerns the gods, who are portrayed as witnesses to all the stages of the process, just as Constantinus I is, thus giving special significance to the plan itself (*sed gravior divum tangebatur cura vehendi*). However, the idea of *Virtus*, which governed the sovereign and represented another ally, to whom everything was subject, intervened in favour of Constantius II, granting him the power to command (*iussit*) the earth and the turbulent waters - thus, nature itself - to facilitate the monument's transportation (*Constantius omnia fretus cedere virtuti terris incedere iussit haut partem exiguum montis pontoque tumentis*). Another witness to the entire relocation of the obelisk is the Tiber, who admires the transport vessel (*credidit et placido vexerunt aequora fluctus litus ad Hesperium Tiberi mirante carinam*).

In the end, Constantius II manages to fulfil the long-unrealized desire to move the obelisk, a project that had remained unaccomplished for a long time, not due to contempt, but because such a task was considered arduous; this positive outcome was highlighted through phrases such as: *dicavit; condidit; emicuit; pulsat*³⁴⁹.

3. An inscription dating from 353-357, which was placed in the Forum Boarium, near the Arch of Ianus. According to the text, Constantius II was referred to as: *maximus triumphator totius orbis terrae; liberator urbis et fundator quietis; extingtor superbi tyranni factio; vindex libertatis Populi Romani in hostes*, the latter being accused of savagely murdering Constans, the sovereign's brother, with cruel brutality, giving themselves free rein to act - AE 1997, 123³⁵⁰.

b) inscriptions discovered in *Latium et Campania / Regio I*:

4. An inscription, dating from the period 312-360, which was placed on the base of a statue and discovered in *Laurentium Lavinium* (Pratica di Mare / Pomezia). According to the text, a *tyrannus* had reduced the privileges of the inhabitants of the aforementioned settlement by withdrawing the grain rations they were receiving. These rations were later reinstated by a legitimate emperor, possibly Constantinus I or Constantius II. Thus, the antagonist mentioned could be Maxentius or Flavius Magnus Magnentius - HD, 029919.

Regarding the perspective adopted in the French journal of epigraphic studies *L'Année épigraphique*, the situation is as follows: in the 1911 issue, it was pointed out that the term *tyrannus* was used in reference to Maxentius, the adversary of Constantinus I; in the 2016 issue, it was noted that a new reconstruction had been published and a new study was indicated. On a different note, in volume IX of the *Ephemeris Epigraphica corpus* of inscriptions, the hypothesis formulated around Magnentius was adopted. Concerning the online epigraphic platforms that have included the inscription in their databases, the following can be observed: on the *Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby*, the chronological framework was highlighted; on the *Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg*, no dating was specified; on the *Electronic Archive of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*, the dating was established, and it was considered that it could refer to either Maxentius or Magnentius³⁵¹.

³⁴⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII, 4.1-23. See also Humphries 2015, 156, 158-160, 167; Omissi 2016, 180, 181 (n. 53), 185 (n. 70); Omissi 2018, 190-191; Tantillo 2021, 32, 43 (no. 10).

³⁵⁰ Tantillo 2021, 43, no. 9.

³⁵¹ EE IX, 592 = AE 1910, 162 = AE 2013, 200 = EDR, 072376.

When analysing the text, Walter Dennison, one of the first researchers to dedicate studies to this inscription, noted that the term *tyrannus* was used in the singular, and thus late usurpers, such as Magnus Maximus and his son Flavius Victor, could not be considered. Furthermore, based on the fact that the text emphasized that a sovereign had restored grain rations in the region, he concluded that the author of this action was none other than Constantinus I, and the tyrant was Maxentius. In supporting his argument, Walter Dennison referred both to juridical and narrative sources. Among the latter, he used three texts that state that during Maxentius' regime, there was a great shortage of food, and the people suffered as they had never suffered before: *Vita Constantini*, written by Eusebius of *Caesarea*; *Chronographus anni CCCLIV*, a compilation of chronological and calendrical texts created in 354 by Furius Dionysius Filocalus, a well-known stone engraver from the second half of the fourth century; and the panegyric delivered at *Augusta Treverorum* in 313. Additionally, the author consulted the works of Aurelius Victor and Zosimus³⁵².

In addition, G. A. Cecconi considered Walter Dennison's arguments to be pertinent. Fritz Mitthof appreciated that it referred to one of the two contenders for legitimate power mentioned above, Maxentius or Magnentius. Carlos Machado added the inscription to a table of reused statue bases in the Italian space of the late antiquity. Ignazio Tantillo included the inscription in a concise study on the incidence of the term *tyrannus* on monuments and agreed with the inconclusive hypothesis regarding the identity of the figure in question, upon which *abolitio memoriae* was applied³⁵³.

A survivor of the purges within the Constantine dynasty, which, as previously highlighted, followed immediately after 337, was Flavius Iulius Popilius Virius Nepotianus (350), the grandson of Constantinus I, as he was the son of Eutropia, the emperor's step-sister. He usurped power in Rome on June 3, 350. His "adventure" of seizing imperial power was facilitated by the support he received from a band of gladiators. Although he eliminated the city's prefect, Anicetus, who had been appointed by Magnentius, he encountered fierce resistance from the latter's supporters. After 27/28 days of holding power, during which "everywhere, houses, markets, streets, and temples were filled with blood and corpses, like funeral pyres", Nepotianus was killed along with his mother by Marcellinus, the *magister officiorum* of

³⁵² Dennison 1910, 285-290.

³⁵³ Cecconi 1994, 119, n. 35; Mitthof 2013, 201, no. 57; Machado 2017, 354; Tantillo 2021, 33, 46 (no. 21).

Magnentius. This member of the Constantine family was not only seen as a usurper. For Magnentius' faction, he became a *hostis*, a *tyrannus*, and the Roman plebs perceived him as a man of foolish nature. His reign was considered a *tumultus*, *rebellatio*, *improbitas*, the product of his cruel beginnings, which made him hated by all. His supporters were seen as *hostes* and *perditi* – *facere imperatorem apud Romam; rapere Augustum nomen; vindicare imperium; invadare imperium*³⁵⁴.

A special case would be Vetranio, *magister peditum/militum* in *Pannonia*, who between March 1 and December 25, 350, is believed to have usurped power at *Sirmium* or *Mursa*, but not as a result of any rebellious plans, rather at the insistence of Constantia, sister of Constantius II, who sought to ensure that this region of the Empire would not fall under the control of Magnentius. As highlighted by several scholars and source editors, including Nelu Zugravu and Moisés Antigueira, Vetranio's social condition would be synonymous with that of a "loyal usurper"³⁵⁵.

The list of usurpations in the mid-4th century concluded with Silvanus (355), *magister peditum*. After abandoning the cause of Magnentius in favour of Constantius II, he was sent by the latter to Gaul, with the mission of driving out the barbarians who were ravaging the province. Due to the intrigues of several imperial officials, including Dynamius, a servant in the emperor's transport services (*actuarius sarcinalium principis iumentorum*), Lampadius, *praefectus praetorio*, Eusebius Mattyocopa, former officer of the emperor's domains (*ex comite rei privatae*), and Aedesius, former head of the

³⁵⁴ *Panegyrici Latini*, XI [3], 13.2-3; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 42.6-8; Eutropius, X, 11.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII, 1.1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLII, 3; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 350; Orosius, II, 29.11; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 25.10-11; Sozomenos, *HE*, IV, 1.2; Philostorgius, *HE*, VII, 24; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 67; John of Antioch, fr. 260; Zosimus, II, 43.2-4; Chronicon Paschale, a. 349; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5849 [356/7]. See also Kienast 2004, 314, 321; Potter 2004, 472, 691 (n. 160), 707 (n. 93); Szidat 2010, 134, 177, 196 (n. 776), 217, 219, 222, 226, 237 (n. 942), 238, 244, 251, 253, 259, 268, 274, 278, 289-290, 307, 359, 388, 403, 413, 415; Zugravu 2012, 531-532, n. 683; Humphries 2015, 162, 166; Haymann 2018, 265; Omissi 2018, 215-216, n. 110; Antigueira 2019, 2; Humphries 2020, 161-164, 166-168, 174 (n. 75); Zugravu 2022b, 701-702, n. 876.

³⁵⁵ Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 42.1-3; Ammianus Marcellinus, XV, 1.2; Emperor Julian, *Or.* I, 30 d; 33 a-b; III, 76 d-e; 77; Eutropius, X, 11.1; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLI, 25; Libanius, *Or.* I, 81; II; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 351; Orosius, VII, 29.10; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 28.16-20; Sozomos, *HE*, IV, 4.2-3; Philostorgius, *HE*, III, 22; Zosimus, II, 44.1-4; Chronicon Paschale, a. 350 (in PG 92, 727, 729); Consularia Constantinopolitana, a. 351; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5849 [356/7]; Zonaras, XIII, 7. See also Kienast 2004, 321-322; Zugravu 2012, 529-530, n. 679; Antigueira 2018, 1-21; Antigueira 2019, 1-12; Zugravu 2022b, 324 (n. 85), 398 (n. 279), 512 (n. 526), 513-515 (n. 528), 629 (n. 743), 699-700 (n. 869, 870 and 871); Zugravu 2023, 527.

imperial chancery (*ex magistro memoriae*), Silvanus was accused of attempting to usurp power. The only person who defended him, denying the slanders against him, which reached Constantius II, was Malarichus, the commander of the foreign guard (*gentilium rector*). Thanks to Florentius, the deputy head of the chancery (*agens tunc pro magistro officiorum*), who was able to demonstrate that the accusations against Silvanus were unfounded, he was absolved of any guilt, and legal proceedings were initiated against the conspirators. However, Silvanus, having learned only of the plots devised against him, and urged by Laniogaisus, a *tribunus*, decided to usurp power on August 11, 355. Against him was sent Ursicinus, *magister equitum*, accompanied by a relief corps that included Ammianus Marcellinus and Verinianus. On September 7, 355, Silvanus was assassinated by his own soldiers, who had been swayed by the emperor's envoy.

Among all the usurpations of the 4th century, that of Silvanus stands out because, unlike the others, the individual involved in the 355 episode did not have a well-established plan for seizing imperial insignia. As noted by Ammianus Marcellinus, Aurelius Victor, and Zonaras, he was compelled to assume power, and among his reasons were the following: the awareness that Emperor Constantius II had a capricious personality; the anxiety that, if surrendered to the barbarians, he would be betrayed to the official authorities; the fear that the emperor would believe falsehoods and, without trial or investigation, would have him executed.

He was perceived as a man capable of solving problems, a worthy general, a person with a gentle nature, calm and resilient. On the other hand, he was considered a usurper, a *tyrannus*, a man driven by *metus* or *dementia*, *timidus*, *proscriptus*, *fortissimum perduellem*; his reign was regarded as *tyrannis*, *res novae*, *defectio* – *efficere imperatorem*; *usurpare habitum Caesarem*; *surgere ad culmen imperialem*; *colere purpureum a draconem et vexillum insignis ad tempus abstractum*³⁵⁶.

³⁵⁶ *Panegyrici Latini*, XI [3], 13.3; Aurelius Victor, *Caes.*, 42.14-16; Eutropius, X, 13.1; Ammianus Marcellinus, XV, 5.1-38; 6.2-3; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, LXII, 10-11; Jerome, *Chron.*, a 354; Orosius, VII, 29.14-15; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, II, 32.11; Sozomos, *HE*, IV, 7.4; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 67; Theodore of Cyrus, *HE*, II, 16.21; John of Antioch, fr. 260; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5849 [356/7]; Zonaras, XIII, 9. See also Kienast 2004, 322; Potter 2004, 473, 480-482, 504, 521; Szidat 2010, 30 (n. 51), 131 (n. 522), 186, 188, 201, 218, 220 (n. 850), 222, 224, 232, 236, 238 (n. 949), 239, 245, 249, 251, 261, 275, 278, 289, 300, 309 (n. 1273), 312-314, 318, 321 (n. 1330), 324-326, 328-329 (n. 1375 and 1376), 334, 335 (n. 1417), 403, 413, 415; Zugravu 2012, 535-536, n. 692 and 693; Zugravu 2017, 45-46, 61 (n. 98), 64 (n. 108), 104 (n. 42), 143 (n. 264, 265 and 272); Omissi 2018, 17-18,

Some scholars argue that during this period, there may have been another figure driven by ambitions of usurpation, potentially identified as Carausius II, who may have assumed power in Britannia between 354-358 or in 409. His existence is suggested by certain coins discovered in Britain. However, his reign remains contentious, with historians debating whether this figure was real or merely fictional³⁵⁷.

During the joint reign of the brothers Valentinian I (364-375) in the West and Valens (364-379) in the East, Roman society faced a "tetrarchy of machinations", with the key figures of this phenomenon operating in different regions of the Empire and at different points in time.

Following the chronological course of events relevant to this study, Procopius (365-366), a career military officer and diplomat, was the first figure in the latter half of the fourth century to display dissident tendencies against legitimate authority. Due to his familial ties with the former ruler, Iulianus the Apostate (361-363), Procopius assumed power in Constantinople on September 28, 365. The events during his eight-month usurpation represented the final attempts of the waning Constantinian dynasty to re-establish its influence on the Roman political scene. Upon learning of this troubling situation, Valens, the legitimate emperor of the Eastern Empire, was overtaken by anxieties, while his brother, Valentinian, faced the dilemma of whether to intervene militarily, a decision that ultimately did not materialize. Procopius was labeled as *usurpator*, *tyrannus*, and *hostis*. Valentinian himself called him *hostem suum fratrisque solius* but refrained from assisting Valens, as the Alamanni posed a threat to the entire Roman world. Though Valens struggled with this *bellum intestinum*, he received crucial support from Flavius Arbitio, a former *consul* and Roman general noted for his military accomplishments under both Constantinus I and Constantius II. Through Arbitio's influence, Procopius was condemned as a *publicus grassator*, *rebellis*, *novator*, *oppugnator internae quietae*, *praesumptor*, and *protervitas auctor*. Owing to his subversive character, Procopius was perceived as a crafty spy, due to his frailty and dishevelled appearance, he was likened to a beast or brute, a man capable of skilled deception, whose behavior was a disgrace to all honours. His supporters were branded as *hostes*, *perduelles*, *desertoris*, *homines despecti*, and *umbratiles*, condemned for their complicity in the revolt. Procopius's rule was

24, 30, 50, 86 (n. 60), 169, 180, 193, 201, 215; Zugravu 2018, 368, n. 347; Humphries 2020, 159; Tantillo 2021, 29; Zugravu 2022b, 706-708, n. 883.

³⁵⁷ Evans 1887, 191-219; Boon 1957, 235-237; Sutherland 1945, 125-133; Stevens 1956, 345-349; Kent 1957, 78-83.

thus regarded as *res novae, seditio, tyrannis, ausus tumultus, publicus turbamentum, and infaustus dominatus – invadare imperium; adfectare imperium; insurgere contra imperatorem; assumere potestatem; appellere imperatorem*³⁵⁸.

The usurpation of Procopius attracts attention also due to the way his death was described. Based on historiographic and patristic sources, we can identify three different versions on this subject. According to a first perspective, which we find in Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, Jerome, Orosius, Zosimus, and Jordanes, the usurper Procopius either lost his life during the civil war or was executed by order of Valens; no details are provided regarding the manner in which he was eliminated³⁵⁹. In a second version, which is closer to historical truth and found in the writings of Ammianus Marcellinus and Philostorgius, Procopius was beheaded; afterward, a procession of his head followed, with it being displayed in the cities that had supported him, after which it was sent to the West, to Valentinian³⁶⁰. A third version of his death can be found in the works of Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodorus Lector, John of Antioch, Theophanes the Confessor, and, much later, in the 11th–12th centuries, in the writings of Georgius Cedrenus and Zonaras. According to these authors, the usurper was not beheaded but instead received a far more severe punishment: he was tied to two trees bent to the ground, and, when the trees were released, he was torn in two³⁶¹.

³⁵⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII, 14.3; XXVI, 5.8-9 and 13; 6.1-6; 10 and 11-18; 7.1-14; 8.1-14; 9.1-10; 10.1-15; XXVII, 2.10; 4.1; 5.1; XXXI, 3.4; Philostorgius, *HE*, IX, 5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, LXVI, 4; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 366; *Ep.* LX, 15; Orosius, VII, 32.4; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, IV, 5.1-4; 9.8; Sozomenos, *HE*, VI, 8.1-3; 39.4; Zosimus, IV, 4.2-3; 5.2-5; 6.1-5; 7.1-4; 8.1-5; 10.1; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 72; John of Antioch, fr. 276; Theodorus Lector, *Ep.* 162.3-8; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 308; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, 5859 [366/7]; Cedrenus, *Hist., Comp.* (in PG 121, 542-543); Zonaras, XIII, 16. See also Kienast 2004, 332; Potter 2004, 480, 517, 522-525, 533, 536, 700 (n. 235); Szidat 2010, 23 (n. 22), 29-30 (n. 43, 44, 51), 35 (n. 74), 39 (n. 99), 42 (n. 117), 56, 58, 72 (n. 230), 74 (n. 239), 75 (n. 245), 86, 105, 108, 133, 164 (n. 644), 168, 180, 186, 195, 208, 210 (n. 824), 216, 222, 231 (n. 907), 233, 234 (n. 917), 236-237, 238-241, 243-245, 247, 250 (n. 997), 259-260, 265 (n. 1066), 268, 271, 273 (n. 1105 and 1106), 274, 276, 279, 282-283, 285-286 (n. 1159), 287-290, 292, 295, 297-298, 300 (n. 1232 and 1234), 302-305, 308-310, 313, 317, 335, 337, 339 (n. 1440), 372, 376-377, 393, 401, 404, 414-415; Zugravu 2012, 565-566, n. 772; Humphries 2015, 167; Zugravu 2017, 42 (n. 21), 45-46, 54 (n. 66), 58; Haymann 2018, 265; Omissi 2018, 24, 46 (n. 30), 50, 94, 228-250, 260, 305; Zugravu 2018, 344, n. 68; Tantillo 2021, 39.

³⁵⁹ Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLVI, 4; Jerome, *Chron.*, a. 366; *Ep.*, LX, 15; Orosius, VII, 32.4; Zosimus, IV, 8.3-4; 10.1; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 308.

³⁶⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVI, 9.9; 10.6; XXVII, 2.10; Philostorgius, *HE*, 9.5.

³⁶¹ Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, IV, 5.1-4; Sozomenos, *HE*, VI, 8.1-3; Theodorus Lector, *Ep.* 162; John of Antioch, fr. 276; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, 5859 [366/7]; Cedrenus, *Hist., Comp.* (in PG 121, 542-543); Zonaras, XII, 16.

This extreme form of punishment recalls the manner in which Sinis, the giant bandit from Greek mythology, was punished. Sinis is mentioned in Bacchylides' *Dithyramboi*, Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*, Caius Iulius Hyginus' *Fabulae*, Publius Ovidius Naso's *Metamorphoses*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, and Pausanias' *Description of Greece*. According to legend, Sinis terrorized travellers. Under the pretense of needing help, he would force his victims to bend trees to the ground with him. Suddenly, he would release his hold, catapulting his victims into the air, causing them to perish upon hitting the ground. In another version, Sinis himself bent two pine trees to the ground, tied his victims' limbs to the trees, and released them, tearing his victims apart. Because of his behaviour, Sinis was called *Pityocampites*. His misdeeds ceased when he encountered Theseus. The Greek hero defeated him in battle and, as a form of humiliation, subjected him to the same punishment he had inflicted on others, using two pine trees³⁶².

Regarding this version adopted by some writers, it is nothing more than a pure invention intended to discredit Valens. However, in Roman society, there was another instance in which dismemberment using trees was prescribed, but this occurred in an earlier period, before the reign of Procopius. This refers to an episode mentioned in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, which is believed to have taken place during the reign of Aurelianus. It describes a measure that the soldier-emperor is thought to have implemented primarily during military campaigns, in which he severely punished soldiers guilty of committing adultery with the wives of their hosts³⁶³. This form of punishment is also mentioned by Eusebius in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in the section dedicated to the methods by which Christians were martyred. He specifies that special machines were used to bend the trees to the ground³⁶⁴.

Similarly, Marcellus (366), *protector* and commander of the garrison in *Nicaea*, who was related to Procopius, usurped power for a brief period after his death. His rule was considered a *rebellio*, a *praesumptio levis*, a *trepidatio*, and he was viewed as a "sinister shadow of a ruler", a *dux rebellio*, and a *noxius mancipium*. His followers became *hostes*, though some, in their

³⁶² Bacchylides, *Dith.*, XVII [XVIII]; Apollodorus, III, 16; Diodorus of Sicily, 4, 59.3; Hyginus, *Fab.*, 38; Ovidius, *Met.*, VII, 440; Plutarch, *Thes.*, 8.2; Pausanias, I, 37.4; II, 1.4. See also Cohen 2001, 112; Powell 2001, 194; Powell 2015, 432-434, 448.

³⁶³ SHA, *Aurel.*, VII, 4. See also Allard 2001, 31.

³⁶⁴ Eusebius, *HE*, VIII, 9.2.

criminal actions, were driven by poverty and despair. His end came when Equitius, Valens' *magister militum*, captured him and threw him into prison, where he suffered horrible tortures – *capessere principatum*³⁶⁵.

In a similar vein, Theodorus (372), a *secundicerius notariorum*, was implicated in a trial concerning magic and the offense against imperial majesty initiated in 371/372 in Antioch. His trial, along with that of other individuals, took place within the context of religious persecutions during the reign of Valens. The reason for his arrest, torture, and execution was his aspiration to the status of *princeps*, following an oracle's prediction that Valens' successor would be a person whose name contained the letters *th*, *o*, and *d*³⁶⁶.

No less significant was the usurpation of Firmus (372/3-374/5), who was proclaimed emperor by the *equites quartae sagittariorum cohortis* and the *pedites Constantiani*, encompassing the regions of *Mauretania* and *Numidia*. Thanks to a military intervention orchestrated by Theodosius the Elder, after three years of conflict, Firmus was defeated and ultimately committed suicide by hanging. He was labelled *perniciosus*, *contumax*, *hostis implacabilis*, *rebellis*, *publicus turbatoris*, *perduellis*, *temerator quietae*, and *latro*. His supporters, especially the African tribes such as the Mazices, Isafenses, Jubaleni, and Iesalenses, were branded *hostes*, *perfidii*, and *feroces*. Firmus himself regarded his rebellion as criminal and a reckless endeavour, though he justified his actions on the grounds that Romanus, the *comes Africae* (Count of Africa), had committed numerous abuses – *desciscere imperium; constituere regem; invadare regnum*³⁶⁷.

During the joint reign of Emperors Flavius Gratianus I (367/375-383) and Flavius Valentinianus II (383-392) in the West, and Flavius Theodosius I (379-395) in the East, two usurpations took place that left a lasting impact on

³⁶⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVI, 10.1-6; Zosimus, 4.4-5; 8.3-5; John of Antioch, fr. 277. See also Kienast 2004, 332; Szidat 2010, 210, 222, 310, 389, 404, 415; Zugravu 2017, 50 (n. 56), 59 (n. 93).

³⁶⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 1. 5-44; 2; Philostorgius, *HE*, IX, 15; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLVIII, 4; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, IV, 19.1-7; Sozomenos, *HE*, VI, 35.1-9; Zosimus, IV, 13.3-4; John of Antioch, fr. 277; Theodorus Lector, *Ep.*, 209; Cedrenus, *Hist., Comp.* (in PG 121, 548); Zonaras, XIII, 16. See also Szidat 2010, 183, 238, 258, 264, 322, 390-391; Zugravu 2017, 49 (n. 54), 78-79 (n. 183), 80 (n. 191), 81 (n. 193), 82 (n. 200 and 201), 106.

³⁶⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 5.1-56; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLV, 7; Orosius, VII, 33.5-7; Zosimus, IV, 16.3. See also Camps 1984, 185-188; Kienast 2004, 329; Laporte 2004, 282-297; Potter 2004, 544, 708 (n. 117 and 118); Szidat 2010, 17 (n. 8), 31 (n. 54), 201, 218-219, 231 (n. 907), 258, 293, 313, 338, 343, 372, 405, 414-415; Zugravu 2012, 558-559, n. 755; Zugravu 2016, 337, 351 (n. 236 and 237); Zugravu 2017, 91-92, 133-134, 184-185 (n. 18), 197 (n. 100), 199 (n. 105), 200 (n. 108), 210-211 (n. 146); Zugravu 2018, 347-348 (n. 112), 348, 364.

the Roman collective consciousness. The central figure of the first was Magnus Maximus (383-388), *comes Britannianum*, who was proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in *Britannia* in the spring of 383. From there, he crossed into Gaul, where, after a battle near the *Parissi* (Paris), he defeated the forces of Gratianus; the latter was forced to flee but was captured and killed at *Lugdunum* (Lyon). Maximus' son, Flavius Victor, was appointed *Caesar*, and later, in the second half of 383 or in 384, elevated to the status of *Augustus*. Although recognized by Theodosius I, Maximus invaded territories under the control of Valentinianus II, forcing him to seek refuge in *Thessalonica*. Ultimately, Theodosius I intervened in the conflict, and after a series of victorious battles, captured the Hispano-Roman emperor, ordering his punishment and disgrace through decapitation. His successor was soon killed by the Frankish general Arbogastes.

Magnus Maximus was regarded as *hostis, usurpator, tyrannus, carnifex, carnifex purpuratus, latro, avarus, cruentus, impius, nefarius caput, praedo, publicus proditor, publicus spoliatur, fugitivus*. He was also compared to a *servus seditiosus, belua furens, cliens, rebellis servus, amens*, and to Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum (Acragas), known for his cruel nature. Moreover, he was accused of aligning himself with *perfidia, nefas, iniuria, impietas, libido, and crudelitas*. Lastly, his reign was perceived as a *tyrannis, scelus, and mallum pestis*. His supporters were judged as *insulani, exules, perfidi, miseri, publici proditores, hostes, rebelles, agmen infernum*, partisans of a *sacrilegae factio*, and a *nefariae factio* – *arripere tyrannidem; vindicare Galliam; facere Augustum; emergere tyrannidem; creare imperatorem apud Britanniam; insurgere contra imperatorem; affectare regnum; habere regnum*³⁶⁸.

³⁶⁸ Codex Theodosianus, XV, 14.6-8 and 10; *Panegyrici Latini*, II [12], 23.1 and 3-4; 24.1-2 and 5-6; 25.1 and 5; 26.3; 28.3; 29.4; 30.5; 31.1-3; 32.1 and 3; 34.1-2 and 4; 35.1 and 4; 36.2; 37.2-3; 38.1; 40.3-4; 42.3; 43.3; 44.3; 45.5; 46.4; Ambrosius, *Ep.*, 40.22; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLVII, 7; XLVIII, 6; Jerome, *Ep.* LX, 15; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 73; Palladius of Galatia, *HL*, 35.2; Orosius, VII, 34.9-10; 35.1-10; Augustine, *Ciu.*, V, 26; Hydatius, *Chron.*, a. 386, 388; Prosper Tiro, *Chron.*, a. 388; Zosimus, IV, 35.3-6; 37.1-3; 43.1-3; 44; 45.3-4; 46.2-3; 47.1-2; Philostorgius, *HE*, X, 5 and 8-9; Rufinus of Aquileia, *HE*, XI, 14; 15; 17; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, V, 11.1-2 and 6-9; 12.1 and 9-11; 14.1-10; Sozomenos, *HE*, VII, 13.1 and 8-11; 14.2; Theodore of Cyrus, *HE*, V, 12.1; 15; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 384; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 316; John of Antioch, fr. 279-280; Malalas, *Chron.*, XIII, 36; Procopius of Caesarea, *Bella.*, III, 4.16; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5874 [381/2], 5877 [384/5], 5880 [387/8]; Zonaras, XIII, 18. See also Kienast 2004, 339, 342; Potter 2004, 545, 550-552, 561, 564-567, 709 (n. 154), 710 (n. 165 and 166); Humphries 2008, 85; Szidat 2010, 22, 30 (n. 45 and 50), 32, 36 (n. 85), 42 (n. 118), 59, 62, 66, 99, 102, 197, 216, 222-223, 237, 249, 260-261, 266 (n. 1071), 269 (n. 1085), 270, 273-275, 277-278, 293, 302, 307, 310-312,

Six inscriptions have been identified that were created in honour of Theodosius I, Valentinianus II, and Arcadius. These inscriptions contain phrases such as *tyranni* and *saevi tyranni dominatio* to characterize Magnus Maximus and Flavius Victor, as well as to describe what their reigns would have represented.

Four of these inscriptions were discovered in Rome, near the Roman Forum, in the area of the *Comitium*. These were placed at the bases of statues depicting the aforementioned emperors. In the case of the first three, dating from 389-391, the dedicant was Ceionius Rufius Albinus, *vir clarissimus* and *praefectus urbi*; for the fourth inscription, dating from 388-392, the name and social status of the dedicant are unknown. The emperors were characterized as *extinctores tyrannorum*, *auctores publicae securitatis*, *defensores aeternae urbis*, and *depulsores saevorum tyrannorum dominationis* - EDCS-19900156³⁶⁹; 19000535³⁷⁰; HD, 028279³⁷¹; 030756³⁷².

In the same vein, two inscriptions were discovered in Constantinople, representing *carmina*. The message of the first inscription sought to highlight the urban policy implemented by a ruler named Theodosius to enhance the city's appearance, but after the defeat of a *tyrannus* - HD, 019287. The dating of the inscription, the identity of the mentioned sovereign, and that of the defeated tyrant have been intensely debated among scholars. First and foremost, it should be noted that the two verses that make up the inscription were first mentioned in the 17th century by Jean Sirmond (1582-1649), a representative of French Humanism who built his career closely connected to the royal court of France; he was a historian, poet, royal counsellor, writer, diplomat, editor of classical Latin works, and the official historiographer for King Louis XIII (1613-1643)³⁷³. The

313 (n. 1288), 315-318, 323, 327 (n. 1361), 331, 340, 405-406, 415; Zugravu 2012, 571-573 (n. 792), 577-578 (n. 805-807); Humphries 2015, 156-157, 160, 164-167; Szidat 2015, 121-123, 125, 133; Zugravu 2017, 51-52, n. 58; Haymann 2018, 265; Zugravu 2019b, 89, 95; Humphries 2020, 160-167; Tantillo 2021, 18 (n. 8), 21, 29, 37, 40 (n. 89), Zugravu 2021, 127, 129-131; Zugravu 2022a, 23-24 (n. 43) and 24; Zugravu 2022c, 213, n. 36; Zugravu 2023, 517.

³⁶⁹ Humphries 2015, 161 (n. 43), 169; Kalas 2015, 192, n. 64; Omissi 2016, 177, n. 33; Omissi 2018, 286, n. 176; Tantillo 2021, 32-33, 44 (no. 13).

³⁷⁰ Humphries 2015, 161 (n. 43), 169; Kalas 2015, 192, n. 64; Omissi 2016, 177, n. 33; Omissi 2018, 286, n. 176; Tantillo 2021, 32-33, 43-44 (no. 11).

³⁷¹ Humphries 2015, 161 (n. 43), 169; Kalas 2015, x (no. 3.8), 192 (n. 64); Omissi 2016, 177, n. 33; Omissi 2018, 286, n. 176; Tantillo 2021, 32-33, 44 (no. 12).

³⁷² Omissi 2016, 177, n. 33; Omissi 2018, 286, n. 176; Tantillo 2021, 32-33, 44 (no. 14).

³⁷³ Jean Sirmond, 700.

existence of the inscription was confirmed in 1889 by Josef Strzygowski, who published it in 1893³⁷⁴. According to one perspective, adopted by Jonathan Bardill, Mark Humphries, and Adrastus Omissi, the inscription would date from 388-391, the sovereign would be Theodosius I, and consequently, the defeated tyrant would be Magnus Maximus. The verses themselves would have been placed on a triumphal arch built by the sovereign after the conflict with Magnus Maximus and Flavius Victor, which, over time, would have been incorporated into the city's fortification system, now known as the Golden Gate³⁷⁵. According to another hypothesis, accepted by Philipp Schweinfurt, R. Janin, Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, Cyril Mango, and Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger, the inscription would date from 425, with the emperor being Theodosius II (408-450), while the tyrant would be John (423-425), *primicerius notariorum*, who usurped power after the death of Honorius and was eliminated following a civil war³⁷⁶. According to another viewpoint, found in Simon Malmberg's studies, the tyrant in question could be Priscus Attalus, *prefectus Urbi* in 409, who usurped power in the West in two contexts, with the support of the Visigoths: the first rebellion occurred around 409-410, and the second in 414-415, but both were doomed to failure. The protagonist of these separatist tendencies ended up being socially disgraced in the context of a triumph organized in Rome in 416 by Emperor Honorius, after which he was exiled; the inscription has also been included in the studies of Ignazio Tantillo³⁷⁷.

The second inscription, dating from 388-392, was placed on an obelisk, under the direction of the city prefect, Proculus; the monument itself was mentioned by Emperor Julian the Apostate. The inscription was meant to poetically evoke Theodosius' victory over Magnus Maximus. The verses stated that, initially, the monument was reluctant to obey the serene masters (*dominis serenis*), as the legitimate sovereign and his sons were called, even when it was commanded (*iussus*) to proclaim the victory over the slain tyrants (*extinctis tyrannis*), referring to Magnus Maximus and Flavius Victor. However, since all things would bow to Theodosius and his everlasting offspring (*omnia Theodosio cedunt subolique perenniter*), the monument

³⁷⁴ Strzygowski 1893, 1-3.

³⁷⁵ Bardill 1999, 671, 683-686, 690; Humphries 2015, 161; Omissi 2016, 190-194; Omissi 2018, 286, n. 176.

³⁷⁶ Schweinfurt 1952, 265-266, 270-271; Janin 1964, 269-270; Müller-Wiener 1977, 297; Mango 2000, 179, n. 45; Neslihan Asutay-Effenberger 2007, 54-61.

³⁷⁷ Malmberg 2014, 156-161; Tantillo 2021, 33, 44 (no. 16).

ultimately accepted being defeated (*victus*) and subdued (*domitus*), before being raised to the heavens (*elatus ad auras*), an action that took place under the supervision of Proclus. There is also a Greek inscription that points out how the obelisk lay on the ground for a long time, like a burden, and that the only one who could raise it was Theodosius, indicating that there had been previous attempts to lift it, but without success - *HD*, 065179³⁷⁸.

The core of the second usurpation centred around Flavius Eugenius (392-394), *magister scrinorum*, who was proclaimed emperor by Arbogastes but was eliminated by Theodosius I. He was considered *hostis*, *tyrannus*, *usurpator*, and *praedo*, while his supporters were regarded as *hostes*. His reign represented a *mota*, *seditio* – *invadare regnum; affectare regnum*³⁷⁹.

The fourth century concluded with the rebellion of Gildo (397-398), a Roman general of Berber origin from the region of *Mauretania Caesariensis*. He was the son of King Nubel and the brother of Firmus, the usurper of 372/3-374/5, as well as of Mascezel, Sammac, Dius, and Mazuca; he also had a sister, Cyria³⁸⁰. In the context of the military operation orchestrated by Theodosius the Elder against Firmus, Gildo served under Roman general's command, facilitating the arrest of Vicentius, the *vicarius* of Romanus, as well as the capture of several rebel leaders, namely Belles and Fericius³⁸¹. As a reward for his role during the turbulent period of his brother's rebellion,

³⁷⁸ Emperor Julian, *Ep.*, 48. See also Schweinfurt 1952, 265, 270; Bardill 1999, 684 (n. 36), 689, 695 (n. 122), 696; Malmberg 2014, 159, n. 18; Humphries 2015, 161; Omissi 2016, 178-186; Omissi 2018, 287-288; Tantillo 2021, 33, 44 (nr. 15).

³⁷⁹ Codex Theodosianus, VII, 18.9.2; XV, 14.9 and 11-12; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epit. Caes.*, XLVIII, 7; Palladius of Galatia, *HL*, 35; Philostorgius, *HE*, XI, 2; Jerome, *Ep.* LX, 15; Orosius, VII, 35.10-21; Polemius Silvius, *Lat.*, 76; Rufinus of Aquileia, *HE*, II, 31-33; Ambrosius, *Ep.*, 61.1-7; 62.1-4; Augustinus, *Ciu.*, V, 27; Socrates Scholasticus, *HE*, V, 25.1-16; Sozomenos, *HE*, VII, 22.4-8; 24.1-9; Theodoret of Cyrus, *HE*, V, 24.1-17; Hydatius, *Chron.*, a. 392; 394; Prosper Tiro, *Chron.*, a. 392; 395; Zosimus, IV, 54-58; Cassiodorus, *Chron.*, a. 392; 394-395; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 317; John of Antioch, fr. 280; Malalas, *Chron.*, XIII, 33; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chron.*, a. 5882 [389/90]; 5884 [391/2]; 5885 [392/3]; 5886 [393/4]; Zonaras, XIII, 18. See also Bardill 1999, 689, 693-694; Kienast 2004, 343; Potter 2004, 529-530, 532-533, 552, 569, 705 (n. 41), 710 (n. 171); Szidat 2010, 27 (n. 36), 28 (n. 41), 32, 39 (n. 98), 55, 129, 133, 153, 164, 182, 214, 215 (n. 836), 221 (n. 857), 222, 229, 265, 274, 281 (n. 1137), 376, 395 (n. 1639); Zugravu 2012, 578-580 (n. 807), 581 (n. 816); Malmberg 2014, 153, n. 5; Szidat 2015, 122-126, 130-132; Haymann 2018, 265.

³⁸⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 5.2; 6.11; Claudian, *de bello Gild.*, 335-336; 347; 389-390; Zosimus, V, 11.3-4; Orosius, VII, 36.4; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 320; Marcellinus Comes, *Chron.*, a. 398. See also Kienast 2004, 329.

³⁸¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIX, 5.6; 21.24.

Emperor Theodosius I appointed him *comes et magister utriusque militiae per Africam*, a position he held from 386 to 398³⁸². Gradually, he distanced himself from legitimate imperial authority, with the first episode of alienation occurring during the confrontation between Theodosius I and Eugenius, the usurper of 392-394, when Gildo refused to send reinforcements to the Theodosian faction³⁸³.

In the autumn of 397, he revolted against the rule of Honorius (395-425), halted the grain shipments from Africa to Rome, and recognized the authority of Constantinople. These actions were a result of the intrigues of Eutropius, a notable figure of the era who rose to the highest social ranks, being appointed *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, patrician, and consul in the East³⁸⁴.

The events outlined above sparked what is known as the Gildonic War, which ended unfavourably for the rebels. In this context, Mascezel, the brother of the rebel Gildo, driven by a desire for revenge after his relative ordered the murder of his children, and serving under Stilicho, the *magister militum* in the West, initiated hostilities. Gildo's forces were defeated, and he chose suicide by hanging. He was declared *hostis publicus* and was perceived as: *usurpator; rebellis; demens; praedo; tyrannus*; a despiser of the dual youth rule of Honorius and Arcadius (395-408), and a man who longed for power; a person whose soul was agitated by envy; one who used deceit to kill his relatives; driven by madness; fearful on the battlefield; a private individual who came to possess a province; a victim of a range of vices, from greed to carnal desires; a terror to the living; an heir to the wealth of the dead; a defiler of unmarried girls and corrupter of married women; an element of discord between the imperial brothers, Honorius and Arcadius; a possessor of wavering loyalty; a wicked individual who deserved the punishment used by Tullus Hostilius, the legendary king of Rome (672-640 BC), in the case of the traitor Mettius Fufetius, the dictator of Alba Longa, that of being torn apart by having his limbs tied to chariots moving in opposite directions;

³⁸² Codex Theodosianus, IX, 7.9; Claudian, *de bello Gild.*, 153-156

³⁸³ Claudian, *de bello Gild.*, 246-247; *de VI cons. Hon.*, 104-105; 108-110.

³⁸⁴ For an analysis of the rise of Eutropius, a notable figure of late 4th-century Roman society, his condemnation to oblivion following the imperial edict issued on August 17, 399, by emperors Arcadius (383-408) and Honorius (393-423), addressed to Aurelianus, the prefect of the praetorian guard, and the sanctions imposed against him, as well as the perception of his personality, see Chilcoş 2022, 443-504.

an ominous figure; a deserter; a traitor; a malicious person; an odious character; a prisoner. His supporters, including the Donatists, were perceived as enemies *hostes; satellites*; the mad offspring of Juba. His Nasamonian soldiers were considered cowardly and lazy; his Garamantean troops were described as not skilled in swordsmanship, but rather in begging; his Autolole forces were seen as swift of foot, particularly in retreating to the desert. His reign represented *dementia; ausus; res novae; rebellio; crimen*, a criminal act orchestrated by the East; an evil, profaning deed, which, under the false auspices of transferring loyalty from Rome to Constantinople, sought to create the impression of legitimate governance; a perfidy based on Eastern power; a perfidy that needed to be condemned; a terrifying disaster that was surpassed in shame and dishonour only by the appointment of Eutropius as *consul* – *usurpare Africam excerptam a societatem publicam se ausum; niti obtinere Africam; commovere rebellionem in Africam; rapere Libyam; tenere Libyam*³⁸⁵.

There are also inscriptions that record Gildo's designation as *hostis publicus* and *rebellis*. Near the Arch of Septimius Severus, in the Roman Forum, fragments of an inscription were gradually discovered, with the first finds occurring in the mid-16th century and others at the beginning of the 20th century. Although the majority of the inscription has been lost, the full text is known due to a copy made at the time of the discovery. The inscription dates from 398 and was placed at the base of a statue, commemorating the defeat of the usurper Gildo. It was dedicated by the Senate and the Roman People, who rejoiced in the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of Africa to the Empire (*vindicata rebellione Africae restitutione laetus*). The text was composed in honor of the emperors-brothers, Honorius and Arcadius, who were referred to as *invictissimi* and *felicissimi*; in another fragment, it is emphasized how Honorius, described as *armipotens*, protected, defended, and intervened in support of Libya – *EDCS-17600825*³⁸⁶.

³⁸⁵ Codex Theodosianus, VII, 8.7; IX, 40.19; 42.19; Chronica Gallica of 452, a. 397-398; Claudian, *de bello Gild.*, 6; 15-16; 66-67; 69; 113; 147; 157-158; 161-200; 205; 236; 247; 253-255; 257; 261; 263-265; 282; 323; 332; 339-340; 381; 388-404; 437; 466; in *Eutr.*, I, 399-400; 412-414; 504-505; II, *praef.*, 69-71; *de cons. Stil.*, I, 1-6; 7-10; 18-20; 245-270; 271-281; 333-385; II, 256-262; III, 13; Symmachus, *Ep.*, IV, 5.2-3; Prosper Tiro, *Chron.*, a. 398; Orosius, VII, 36.2-12; Marcellinus Comes, *Chron.*, a. 398; Zosimus, V, 11.2-4; Jordanes, *Rom.*, 320; Paulinus the Deacon, *V. Amb.*, 51. See also Szidat 2010, 26, 27 (n. 34), 28, 30, 160, 201, 204, 211, 213-214, 280-281, 358, 405-406; Wijnendaele 2019, 299, 308-312, 318-319, 322; Tantillo 2021, 21.

³⁸⁶ Baldarotta 1998, 317.

A second inscription, dating from the period 400-405, was placed at the base of a statue and reflects the celebratory atmosphere in Rome following the defeat of Gildo and the restoration of the grain supply. The dedication was made by the barge-owners and fishermen of the city, with the recipient being Flavius Stilicho, who was referred to as *vir clarissimus et illustri magistro utriusque militiae* - HD, 024202³⁸⁷.

Finally, a third inscription, dating from 398 and placed at the base of a statue, was created in honor of Stilicho, who is referred to as *vir illustrissimus*. The text highlights the social rise of the recipient of the message, who had reached the pinnacle of glory (*ad columen gloriae*), as well as his familial ties to the imperial family. Furthermore, it emphasizes how Africa was liberated, thanks to his advice and oversight (*Africa consiliis eius et provisione liberata*). The dedication was made by the Senate and the Roman people - EDCS-18100539³⁸⁸.

Conclusions

As observed, exclusion from the civic body was defined and reinforced through a series of juridical and symbolic terms, each contributing to the process of "civil death" applied to the condemned. The article highlights essential terms used in various contexts, intended to designate the following social categories: the disgraced sovereign, the counter-emperor defeated by his opponent, the usurper who sought supreme power, the supporters of such figures, and, ultimately, the way in which their reign or act of rebellion was perceived:

- phrases used in relation to legitimate sovereigns who fell into disgrace or were eliminated by political opponents, as well as towards usurpers: *hostis, hostis publicus, proscriptus, tyrannus, saevus tyrannus, rebellis, latro, usurpator, suspectus; pirata, archipiratam, rusticus, agrestis, perduellis, concitator, stolidus, debilis, timidus, demens, servillis, fortissimum perduellem, publicus grassator, novator, oppugnator internae quietae, praesumptor, protervitas auctor, ferinus, bestia, dux rebellio, noxius mancipium, perniciosus, contumax, hostis implacabilis, publicus turbatoris, temerator quietae, carnifex, carnifex purpuratus, avarus, cruentus, impius, nefarius caput, praedo, publicus proditor, publicus spoliatur, fugitivus, servus seditiosus, servus rebellis, belua furens, cliens, amens, privatus, monstrum, transfuga, malignus, profanus, captivus;*

³⁸⁷ Wijnendaele 2019, 310.

³⁸⁸ Baldarotta 1998, 317.

- phrases used to designate the supporters of deposed sovereigns or usurpers: *hostes, hostes publici, suspecti, latrones, factio, rustici, rebelles, imperitam et confusam manum, monstrorum biforminum, ignori agricolae, rustici vastatores, perditii, desertoris, homines despecti, umbratiles, factionis conscios, inimici; conscii; seditiosi; perfidi, feroces, insulani, exules, miseri, proditores publici, agmen infernum, sacrilegae factio, nefariae factio, satellites, vesana, ignavi; proscripti;*

- phrases that highlighted the reign of such figures: *usurpatio, coniuratio, tyrannis; saevissima dominatio; saevissima tyrannis; pestifera tyrannis; rebellio, nauticae rebellionis, impietas; furor; consensus; lues, scelus, seditio, aspera tyrannis, summa luxuria, perduellio, tumultus, ausus; ausus tumultus, rebellatio, improbitas, saevis exordiis, res novae, defectio, protervitas, publicus turbamentum, infaustus dominatus, praesumptio levis, trepidatio, temeritas, mallum pestis, mota, dementia, crimen, terror.*

These terms were used not only to mark official exclusion but also to emphasize the social danger these individuals represented. The aim was not merely to discredit them but to sever them completely from the values of the Roman state. Such labeling served to justify the removal of these figures from collective memory and to reinforce public hostility against them.

In particular cases, like that of Emperor Nero, expressions such as *hostis generis humani* and *bonis omnibus hostis fuit* were also employed. In the case of Commodus, the following phrases predominated: *hostis patriae; hostis senatus; hostis deorum; hostis deorum atque hominorum; hostis generis humani*. The two Maximini became, among other things, *hostes populi romani*. Maxentius was referred to as *hostis rei publicae*. The social status of Constantinus II underwent a transition, from that of *princeps* to that of *publicus et noster inimicus*. Procopius became, for Valentinian, *hostem suum fratrisque solius*.

Thus, the extreme nature of the condemnation was emphasized, aimed at reinforcing the idea of the absolute danger these individuals posed to public order and morality. As we can observe, the practice of *abolitio memoriae* extended beyond the secular boundaries of Roman society, beyond relations with political entities such as the Senate, the concept of the republic, or the members of the community, showing that the condemned individual was excluded even from the fundamental values of humanity and from divine protection.

The majority of those subjected to *abolitio memoriae* attempted to usurp legitimate power, thus seeking to instate disorder, as highlighted by the use of the following phrases: *abducere classem; occupare legionem; intercludere peregrinum; contrahere mercatorem; sollicitare barbaros; haurire imperium; capessere imperium; capessere regnum; remittere imperium; sumere purpuram; efficere imperatorem; vindicare imperium; retinere imperium; extorquere imperium; eripere imperium; induere dominationem; efficere imperatorem; desciscere romanam potestatem; invadere Aegyptum; incubare dominatum; facere imperatorem apud Carthaginem; moliri rem novam; aspirare rem novam; capere habitum venerabilem; obtinere imperium; arripere imperium; occupare regnum; usurpare imperium; invadere imperium; movere rebellio; facere imperatorem apud Romam; rapere Augustum nomen; usurpare habitum Caesarem; surgere ad culmen imperialem; colere purpureum a draconem et vexillum insignis ad tempus abstractum; adfectare imperium; insurgere contra imperatorem; assumere potestatem; appellere imperatorem; capessere principatum; desciscere imperium; constituere regem; invadere regnum; arripere tyrannidem; vindicare Galliam; facere Augustum; emergere tyrannidem; creare imperatorem apud Britanniam; insurgere contra imperatorem; affectare regnum; habere regnum; usurpare Africam excerptam a societatem publicam se ausum; commovere rebellionem in Africam; rapere Libyam; tenere Libyam.*

Therefore, each of the terms highlighted in this study contributed to the process of "legal marginalization" applied to those considered a threat, reflecting a juridical and symbolic process by which they were formally and morally removed from the civic body of the Roman state. Through the use of specific legal language, the practice of *abolitio memoriae* thus functioned as an instrument of social and political control, legitimizing state authority and reshaping collective memory in favor of preserving order and unity within the Roman Empire.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Annamária-Izabella Pazsint, *Private Association in the Pontic Greek Cities (6th century BC-3rd century AD)*, Peeters, Leuven - Paris - Bristol CT, 2022, 387 p.

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The present work is based on the doctoral thesis of the author Annamária-Izabella Pazsint, translated and revised after the defence which took place in 2019, and represents a comprehensive study on the phenomenon of private associations in the Pontic cities from the 6th century BC to the 3rd century AD. It is a social history and prosopographic study, providing essential information on the development of associations from their emergence in this geographic area until their decline in the 3rd century AD. A. I. Pazsint employs a multidisciplinary approach, using archaeological, epigraphic, and literary evidence to conduct network analyses of interconnected members from various associations.

The work, comprising 387 pages, is structured into six chapters, along with an introduction, conclusions, glossary of terms, appendices, figures, and illustrations. The appendices contain two extensive catalogues: one listing all epigraphic sources used in the study, and another listing all association members present in the inscriptions, 1983 individuals in total. The figures and illustrations include a thematic map, a table showing the geographical distribution of terminology, statistical graphs on the geographical distribution of inscriptions and associations, the chronological distribution of inscriptions, their types based on the city, and the types of materials used.

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Annamária-Izabella Pázsint begins the work with an introduction that provides an overview of the research history up to the present, followed by the objectives she aims to achieve through this study.

The first chapter, “Terminology”, focuses on the variety of ancient and modern terminology used to name or represent associations in the Greek cities along the shores of the Black Sea, illustrating the specific semantic and lexical diversity within this geographic context. Complementing this chapter is the glossary at the end of the work, which includes definitions of terms designating associations, their members, or specific functions within them (priestly, secular, or roles related to games or competitions).

The second chapter, as indicated by its title, “Overview of the Sources”, provides a quantitative analysis of the vast array of sources examined in the author’s doctoral thesis. This chapter outlines the geographical and chronological distribution of inscriptions and associations, with the aim of identifying the evolution and flourishing of the phenomenon, which, in some cases, occurred under the Pax Romana. The primary sources are epigraphic, totalling 205, with 108 from the northern Black Sea region, followed by 90 from the western shores, and finally, 7 from the south. Additionally, literary and iconographic sources are presented. A few sentences outline the differences between associations and their members from one region to another, though these aspects are more fully developed in subsequent chapters.

In the next three chapters, the author provides a coherent narrative on the multitude of information related to the phenomenon of associations, examining each shore of the Black Sea individually, moving from local realities to regional contexts. Each chapter addresses a region, further divided city by city, with the aim of highlighting local attributes that contribute to a comprehensive view of associative life in Pontus. Where possible, the author clearly outlines the particularities of each association.

Thus, in the third chapter, “Private Associations on the Southern Shore of the Black Sea”, the author presents the forms that the associative phenomenon takes in the cities on the southern shore of the Black Sea, where it is weakly represented by a small amount of epigraphic material (7 inscriptions) from Amisus, Sinope, and Amastris. These inscriptions document different types of associations, mostly confined to a brief time frame, namely the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. However, in this area, the limited amount of archaeological research is a factor in the scarcity of materials. The

seven inscriptions are of mixed types: two are dedications, one is of unknown nature, one is honorary, and the rest are funerary.

The fourth chapter, *Private Associations on the Western Shore of the Black Sea*, is much more abundant than the previous one and describes the associations on the western shore, where both archaeological and epigraphic materials are plentiful (90 inscriptions). Most associations (70) are attested in Apollonia Pontica, Odessos, Dionysopolis, Bizone, Callatis, Tomis, and Histria. In this area, associations emerged early, in the 4th century BC, with a significant flourishing during the Roman era, ending in the 3rd century AD. Here, the cosmopolitan nature of the associations is evident, with mentions of origin as a criterion for integration (e.g., Οἶκος τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων in Tomis, Σύνοδος Ἡρακλεωτῶν in Callatis), which is to be expected in major urban centers. In some cases, there is evidence of the secular continuity of certain associations, such as Ταυρεσταί in Histria, which maintained its activity from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. Some associations were centered around popular deities like Cybele, Demeter, Dionysos, and Poseidon, as well as lesser-known ones like Hecate, Isis, and Anahita. Associations devoted to the imperial cult or specific professions are also present.

The fifth chapter, *“Private Associations on the Northern Shore of the Black Sea”*, traces the development of associative life on the northern shore of the Black Sea, which has the most abundant epigraphic material (108 inscriptions and 37 associations) with items from Olbia, Chersonesos, Theodosia, Cimmericum, Panticapaeum, Myrmecium, Tanais, Phanagoria, Hermonassa, and Gorgippia. Here, the associative phenomenon developed according to the distinct needs of each polis: in a major port city like Gorgippia, associations oriented toward navigation arose (Θέασος ναυκλήρων), while in other poleis, inscriptions reveal that membership in certain associations offered deceased individuals the guarantee of modest funerary monuments (e.g., in Phanagoria: Θίασος περὶ ἱερέα τὸν δεῖνα). Meanwhile, in places like Tanais, there were associations dedicated to Theos Hypsistos (for example, Σύνοδος ἡ περὶ Θεὸν Ὑψιστον).

The final chapter, titled *“Parallel Lives”*, aims to explore the similarities and differences among the associations discussed in the previous chapters, focusing on members (their social and legal status, the involvement of women, children, and young people), the functioning of associations (associative offices, imitation of polis practices, finances, longevity and local

role, and local particularities of occupational associations). The chapter then continues with the identification of Pontic individuals (Ποντικοί) who are epigraphically attested in associations outside Pontic cities. Lastly, the author provides an overview of the decline of the associative phenomenon.

In conclusion, two main trajectories are outlined: one suggesting that the associative phenomenon in the private sphere of Pontic cities has a fragmented character influenced by the political, social, and economic evolution of the region, and the other indicating that this phenomenon played a marginal role compared to other regions of the Greek world.

This work results from research focused in two directions: first, to create a monograph of this geographic area by collecting all accessible epigraphic material and compiling a corpus, and second, to develop a database from the epigraphic information and use it for social network analysis. Thus, the methodology used in this study combines both traditional methods and modern approaches from other research fields. In this sense, Annamária-Izabella Pázsint's work represents a remarkable contribution to the study of private associations in Pontus, offering well-documented new perspectives on a social and cultural phenomenon that was marginal in this geographic area. The detailed analysis of the epigraphic material, combined with modern methodologies and an organized structure, provides a comprehensive and complex view of the internal dynamics of these associations, thus achieving the objectives stated in the introduction.

George Cupcea, *Latin Inscriptions from Legionary Fortress of Apulum, TYCHE – Verein zur Förderung der Alten Geschichte in Österreich, Wien 2024, 212 p.*

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L'ouvrage d'une grande complexité a pour sujet principal l'analyse de plusieurs inscriptions de la forteresse légionnaire d'Apulum et qui ont une pertinence archéologique, compte tenu du lieu de découverte. La plupart des inscriptions sont également analysées en fonction du contexte archéologique, de sorte que les informations et les résultats obtenus par l'auteur sont de même beaucoup plus larges. George Cupcea est chercheur dans le domaine de l'histoire antique et également directeur adjoint du Musée national d'histoire de Transylvanie, son activité scientifique s'étendant à plusieurs domaines : l'archéologie, l'histoire militaire, mais aussi l'épigraphie latine. Le matériel épigraphique a attiré l'attention de l'auteur depuis 2015, période au cours de laquelle il a recherché plusieurs inscriptions liées au sujet de son doctorat.

La recherche comprend à la fois un corpus d'inscriptions et une étude monographique, mais l'outil de travail principal reste les sources épigraphiques. En effet, la méthode d'analyse choisie étant la méthode quantitative, mettant l'accent sur le lieu de découverte, mais aussi le texte gravé, plus précisément pour ceux à qui ces monuments étaient dédiés (à des divinités ou à des empereurs), mais aussi le lieu où ils sont placés.

Structurellement, l'ouvrage est divisé en plusieurs chapitres et sous-chapitres comme suit : Préface (p. 9-11), Introduction (p. 11-17), *Principia*. Centre administratif et religieux de la *castra legionis XIII Geminae* (p. 19-75), *Basilica* (p. 75-81), Autour de l'aedes (p. 85-110), *Armamentaria* (p. 113-116), Inscriptions découvertes aux autres parties du camp légionnaire (p. 123-172), un inventaire des découvertes épigraphiques antérieures du camp militaire (p. 173-187), suivi

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de par un court épilogue, la liste des illustrations, tableaux, annexes, abréviations, bibliographie et planches dressées avec le plus grand soin.

L'introduction donne une brève présentation de l'organisation de la province de Dacie depuis la conquête avec les changements ultérieurs apportés sous les empereurs Hadrien et Marc-Aurèle, lorsqu'une redistribution et une réorganisation de la province ont eu lieu sur fond de divers conflits frontaliers. En outre, une brève histoire de la ville d'Apulum est soulignée, considérée comme l'un des centres administratifs les plus importants de Dacie, étant le lieu où était stationnée la XIII légion de Gemina depuis la conquête jusqu'au retrait d'Aurélien.

Dans le troisième chapitre (*Principia*), cinq monuments épigraphiques sont analysés : une inscription de construction et un autel de cérémonie dédié à Sérapis, situés à l'entrée, deux socles de statues, celui de la famille impériale et celui de Julia Domna, et une dédicace d'un *tertastylum* et d'un aigle d'argent par un *primus pilus*. Dans tous ces cas, une réintégration minutieuse du texte est effectuée, en illustrant pour chaque cas des analogies, soit de la province, soit surtout de l'empire. Une attention particulière a été portée aux inscriptions assez fragmentaires (notamment celles dédiées à Sérapis), la réunification étant réalisée grâce à l'étude approfondie de l'auteur par rapport à ce culte respectif mais aussi dans d'autres parties de l'empire.

Dans les quatre chapitres suivants, un autel et une statue de Mars, une liste de centurions, un petit socle de statue pour *Genius armamentarii*, un autel pour *Genius centuriae*, un autel et une statue de Némésis, un relief votif, une liste de soldats, les noms et les titres d'Élagabal, et la pierre tombale d'un *hastatus*.

Dans le chapitre relatif aux découvertes archéologiques antérieures, l'auteur, à l'aide de graphiques, parvient à reproduire une statistique de la répartition des dédicaces, du lieu de découverte, mais aussi du profil des dédicataires. En termes de monuments épigraphiques à fonctionnalité votive, le dieu *Iupiter Optimus Maximus* est le plus vénéré (en 23 inscriptions), tandis que le nombre d'autres dédicaces aux divinités du panthéon gréco-romain est relativement uniforme. Les empereurs sont également présents sur les monuments épigraphiques, mais leur nombre est réduit, et en ce qui concerne les dédicataires, on peut observer que l'espace sacré est dominé par les commandants de légion qui élèvent principalement des inscriptions pour Jupiter seul ou avec Junon et Minerve. Par rapport aux monuments épigraphiques analysés dans les chapitres précédents, on a observé que dans ce cas, peu de conclusions peuvent être tirées en référence au lieu de

découverte, compte tenu du contexte dans lequel ils ont été trouvés, mais aussi du fait qu'ils ont le même repère.

A travers la réintégration et l'analyse complexe de ces sources épigraphiques, on constate que la recherche scientifique a atteint son but, car les conditions de la découverte ont été précisément établies par la recherche archéologique. Concernant la dédicace sur les monuments épigraphiques, on a observé que plus de la moitié des inscriptions étaient érigées pour les empereurs, le reste étant destiné aux dieux. Concernant le lieu de découverte dans la *principia*, il est à noter que chaque monument a été découvert dans une zone qui avait une certaine fonctionnalité, sachant déjà que le bâtiment du siège était à la fois un lieu de rassemblement et un lieu d'exposition, étant le point central d'une légion. L'auteur conclut que la cour est utilisée exclusivement pour les monuments impériaux, tandis que les monuments votifs dédiés aux dieux sont situés, en règle générale, dans des espaces clos. Quant aux dédicataires, ceux qui occupent des postes supérieurs (commandant de la légion, divers centurions, commandant de la première cohorte) expriment presque toujours leur dévouement à l'empereur, la loyauté politique étant présente sur la plupart des monuments épigraphiques. Quant aux officiers inférieurs, leur manière de s'exprimer est plus personnelle.

En conclusion, l'un des principaux mérites de cette étude monographique est l'illustration de la pertinence des monuments épigraphiques dans un contexte archéologique. Une analyse minutieuse et systématique des sources se trouve dans l'exemplification de différentes analogies de l'empire, mais aussi par la recherche successive d'une bibliographie consistante. Malgré le fait que les monuments épigraphiques ne semblent pas liés les uns aux autres, chacun ayant une fonctionnalité différente, l'auteur parvient à capturer des observations liées à la nature, au texte et à la culture matérielle des inscriptions. La quantité d'informations incluses et examinées est impressionnante. Ainsi, nous pouvons affirmer que le travail de l'auteur représente une contribution scientifique importante, d'une part pour le domaine de l'épigraphie et de l'histoire militaire et d'autre part, pour l'histoire de la ville d'Apulum.

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