

THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ANCIENT ROME AND DACIA

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Abstract

The work is a study on Ancient Rome and Dacia covering three major aspects: economy, social life and religion. The economic aspect comprises the following: agriculture, crafts, and trade. The social life: family life and social structure. In the case of Rome, the study particularly underlined minting, whilst for the Dacians, the study described the most important citadels from Orăştie Mountains. An important part of paper is religious life, who is directly correlated with the social life, both for Ancient Rome and Dacia. Naturally, towards the end of the work presented Dacian romanisation and especially the contribution of Dacians and Romans to Romanian Christianity. On a practical level, the work tries to answer two essential questions: where do we come from and where do we head to?

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JEL classification: *N3, N6, N9*

1. Introduction

In order to know better who we are, we should start from the sources, from the origins. And what can people in Europe learn about sources of Dacian and Roman origin? From the Dacians we took the survival spirit and the courage to fight against a more often adverse destiny and from the Romans - the tendency to build, to conquer and to possess knowledge.

Roman military campaigns, methodically carried out over seven centuries, have turned a small city-state into the ruler of the largest empire. The first beginnings were in 650 BC, when Etruscans settled in the valley of Tiber. Aristocratic rulers - Tarchu and Mastarna - have found the hills by the Tiber shores to be a favourable location, both strategically and economically.

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Etruscan kings surrounded the city with a defensive wall made out of volcanic tuff on a perimeter of 7 km, achieved a drainage system for the marshes between the hills and a sewer system and built a forum, streets, sanctuaries and dwellings. (Drimba, p. 708)

In the Imperial era, the population of Rome was divided into three tribes corresponding to the Latin, the Sabine and the Etruscan populations. Each tribe was made up of ten curiae. Each curia was divided into ten gentes. And, finally, the gens were divided into several families. The chiefs of families and gentes later made up the class of the patricians.

The members of the 30 curiae met on 30 separate gatherings (Comitia) where they decided on laws to propose or declaring war. The Comitia elected the king and - during the Republican era - the magistrates. The activity of the king was controlled by the Senate, which was made up of 300 Patricians. The king assumed the roles of commander-in-chief of the army, supreme judge and high priest. (Drimba, p.713). Plebeians, i.e. middle and small landowners, traders, craftsmen were free people, who had the right to own land, as well as to conclude legal documents and the obligation to fulfil military service.

Of the over 100 Thracian tribal formations, amongst which the tribes of the Dacians and Getae were the largest and strongest, we would like to mention here several of their branches: Albocense, Biephi, Burs, Crobyzi, Cotense, Caucoense, Carpi, Obulensi, Ovinense, Potulatense, Predavensi, Piengetae, Sense, Tyragetae, Rhadacense, Dacian Carpians. The etymology of the name “Dacians” derives either from “daca” (knife, dagger), their characteristic weapon, or from “daos” meaning to strangle, to press, the name being the Phrygian word for wolf.... They used the wolf-headed snake for the battle flags. The sound it made while running amplified the acoustic resonance. (Georgescu, pp.38-41)

2. Sections

2. Economic Life in Ancient Rome

2.1. Agriculture

The most profitable crops were vine and olive trees, according to the latter Pliny the Elder, who mentioned 15 varieties. At the beginning, they cultivated wild olive trees, but then preferred olive trees brought in from Palestine and Greece. The oil was used for lighting, for medicinal or religious purposes and later for making perfumes. (Bloch, Cousin, vol. I, p.120)

The small properties grew apple, pear, fig, almond trees and rowans, while the latifundia grew, besides these, cherry, pomegranate, quince, walnut and peach trees. In the 1st century AD in Italy were cultivated 41 varieties of pear, 30 of apple, 18 of chestnut, 29 of fig, 12 of plum, 11 of walnut, 9 of cherry and pomegranate. The flowers were used for making perfumes which were exported to Egypt and China.

The range of vegetable was already wide at that time. The most popular mushrooms were *Boletus*. Developing from farmyard poultry, poultry breeding appeared in the 1st century BC. In Sicily bees keeping flourished. Honey was used for preparing medication and wax for manufacturing candles.

Irrigation was practised in the area of the superior lakes in Etruria, near Rome. These irrigation channels were made between the 3rd and the 1st centuries BC. Initially the horizontal water mill was used for grinding; later they created the vertical wheel mill, which ensured a better yield. (Bloch, Cousin, I, p.124). Among the oldest animals domesticated, we mention the following: swine, bovine, caprine, equine, ovine. During the classical period, the best wheat from the peninsula could be found in Etruria, in Chiusi. In Umbria spelt was cultivated and in Lazio cereals were used for human and animal nutrition.

As far as the agricultural reforms are concerned, we bring into view the reform of Gaius, which was accompanied by the organisation of the commercial markets, road constructions, connecting the production sources to the outlet locations through a transportation system. Externally, through *lex de Asia*, Gaius adapts the size of the contributions to the one of the harvests, however, limiting the right to overbid the levy rates to the Roman knights. (Bloch, Cousin, I, p.152). These measures favouring the deprived were not pleasing for the aristocracy, so the latter went on to dedicate itself the law from year 111 BC. From the economy of shepherds to the one of farmers and then landowners, from joint ownership to division, from division between the gentes to division between individuals, the law from year 111 gave rise to rustic rights of way for crossing a water surface, a bridge, an aqueduct, an ascension and a contiguity. Thus, by providing freedom to the individual, the property suppressed the freedom for the group. (Bloch, Cousin, I, p. 156)

2.2. Crafts

The specialisation of production started in the 2nd century BC. The most developed regions were Etruria and Campania from the craftsmen standpoint. Some cities specialised in the production of certain objects. At the

beginning, there was a strict work division: some workers only built vaults, others only interior walls; there were specialised shoemakers and bakers. Rome's craftsmen were grouped in corporations: horn-players, goldsmiths, masons, painters, tanners, shoemakers, bronze workers and potters. Wool centres were: Canusium, Luceria, Tarent and Brindisi in the south, Parma, Padua, Modena and Aquileia in the north. (Bloch, Cousin, I, p.164)

Romans learned the technique of metal processing from the Etruscans. The richest ore centers were in the Iberian Peninsula and in Britain. Sardinia had the richest lead deposits and the island of Elba - the iron ones. On Italy's ground, there was copper in Campiglia and in the region of Val Cecina, and veins of silver in Campiglia and Montieri. Romans became very good specialists in casting bronze, by using just the right proportions of tin, zinc and lead. (Drimba, pp. 720-722).

Ceramics were varied: roof tiles, amphoras, lamps, semi cylinder and cylinder flue-tiles. The most famous was the city of Arezzo, from where the ceramic products were exported. The textiles used as raw materials were wool, flax and hemp. Imported cotton and especially silk were very expensive. Rome was famous for cloth, shoes, plough coulter and keys; Cales and Minturnae for iron tools; Venafrum for hoes and roof tiles; Suessa and Lucania for carts and threshing tools; Pompei for presses. (Bloch, Cousin, I, p. 167)

A special importance was granted to luxury carpentry which used sycamore, oak, beech, fir and more rarely cherry and olive tree wood. During the imperial era luxury furniture used rare wood essences: Syrian cedar, Egyptian ebony and African lemon tree wood.

2.3. Trade

The commercial activity was the prerogative of the publicans - public contractors, to whom the State granted the role of collecting taxes and managing public building projects. They represented stock companies, lending large amounts to the State. They later obtained a substantial profit from tax collection.

Commercial exchanges intensified once the official coin appeared, first made out of bronze, then silver. Iron, brass, tin, lead, gold, silver, precious stones, wine, fish, oil were imported from Spain. Cereals, flax textiles, papyrus, fruits, glassware were imported from Egypt. Wine, ceramics, metal, bronze and glass objects were exported to Germany. They imported slaves, horned cattle and horses, as well as natural wigs. They exported bronze items, glassware, luxury

ceramics to Gaul and imported gold, cereals, wool, wine from there. They imported valuable textiles, pepper, cotton and semiprecious stones from India and China.

The trade on land was facilitated by a network of roads amounting to 90,000 kilometres. They were 3m deep and 4-5m wide. The vehicle used on these roads was the covered 4 horse-carriage which could transport up to 7 people. Every 15 km there were halt stations for rest and changing the horses. (Drimba, pp. 723-725)

The first roads built outside Rome were: Latina, Gabina, Salaria, Norbana, Flaminia, Cassia and Claudia in Etruria. As they grew better and better at this technique, the Romans took inspiration from the methods of the Italics from the North in order to establish the layout and the pavements; from the Etruscans for ditches, water drainage and the wheel-guiding depths; from the Greeks for fixating the stone pavement. (Bloch, Cousin, pp. 169-170) Regarding maritime routes, the first ones were *Stadiasmus maris magni* and *Periplum* from the time of Vespasian. The speed of the ship was low. As a consequence, a war ship advanced with 8 miles an hour and a trade ship with 6. One could thus get from Brundisium to Corfu in 9 hours; from Pylos to Piraeus in 6 days; from Sicily to Carthage in 2 and a half days.

2.4. Public Finances

The State finance system was fuelled from the revenues of the imperial provinces and covered the expenses of the Senate's activities. The rest of the finances administration lay on the emperor who covered the expenses of the army, civil services, as well as the cost of public works. Revenues were made up of revenues of the imperial provinces, indirect taxes and revenues from inheritance without survivors. (Bloch, Cousin, vol. II, p.74) During Tiberius, restrictions for coinage - 16 types in gold and 26 in silver - through the lack of current currency entailed a strong financial crisis in year 33. In order to surpass it, the State Treasury borrowed funds of 100 million sesterces from the State for three years, without interest, but with land as warranty.

Caligula and Claudius minted 75 types of coins in gold and 70 in silver through an inflationist practice meant to eliminate a crisis similar to the previous one. Nero melted old coins and issued lighter ones - 96 *aurei* instead of 84, 92 silver coins instead of 84. (Bloch, Cousin, II, pp.76-77)

Being confronted with a public debt of 40 billion, Vespasian reinstated order, with recovery taxes, for all the public lands and lands that

were not given ownership over, having been usurped; instituted new taxes; sold positions for a higher price. This policy result was the sanitation of the finances. Nerva perceived local taxes for water and baths, criminal fines, entry into service taxes for magistrates on one hand, and on the other hand he created charity institutions to help poor children.

The coin had a downtrend, especially because the needs of the empire were increasing. After Nero's devaluation followed the Flavians'; during Trajan's rule, the silver coin fell down from 88% to 79%; with Marcus Aurelius from 78% to 70%; with Comodus to 67%. The empire grew poor in precious metals and sold more than it bought, whilst the expenditures led to export of cash. (Bloch, Cousin, II, pp. 82-83)

Caraculla made a new achievement: *aureus* was reduced from 1/45 to 1/50 and the denarius was replaced by the *Antoninianus*, which was put in use with a fiduciary value of two denarii, although it only contained one part and a half of the initial denarius' weight in silver. The difference between the legal exchange rate and the actual value of the coins represented a genuine profit for the State.

After 259 a general crash occurs: the silver-metal ratio decreased from 50% to 40% under Decius; from 16.5 to 14 under Valerianus; from 11 to 2 under Gallienus; and coins were allied with copper, lead, tin and zinc. (Bloch, Cousin, II, pp.84-86)

We shall conclude this brief journey through Rome's finances with the reform of Diocletian who minted a fixed gold coin (70, then 60 for the pound) and a pure silver coin (96 for the pound), then a division coin for the *billon* and he put divisional silvered bronze coins into use, serving for the usual exchanges. His edict on prices fixated the pound at 50,000 denarii. Thus, Diocletian crowned his predecessors State empiricism through a systematical directed economy. (Bloch, Cousin, II pp. 87-88)

3. Social and Religious Life in Ancient Rome

3.1. Social Structure

Roman society was divided in social classes based either on ancestry or wealth: nobilitas, equites, free peasants, craftsmen and slaves. Nobilitas comprised both the patricians and the rich plebeians, members of the Senate and individuals having held certain positions of magistrate. Equites of the order of knights was made of great landowners, businessmen, lawyers, jurisconsults mainly dealing with businesses. Many free peasants turned later

into agricultural workers. Slaves were mostly war prisoners and to a lesser extent insolvent debtors, deserters, children sold by their parents.

3.2. Family

In the Roman family, the authority of the father during the Republic was unlimited and absolute. The father of the family had the right of life and death over his wife and children, whom he could maltreat, kill, or sell as slaves. Gradually these despotic rights disappeared. Eight or nine days after the child was born, after the father recognised him as a son, the ceremony of purification took place, where the child was given a name and an amulet put on around their neck. The amulet served to protect the child and was worn by boys until they were 17 years old and by girls until they were getting married. At 17, the young man was taken to the Forum to become a Roman citizen, with the right to vote and being fit for the military service. (Drimba, p. 735)

3.3. Housing and Homes

Peasants' homes were shabby huts, with walls of beams covered with clay and thatched roof; consisting of one single room called "atrium", which had a large opening on the ceiling, where light and rainwater came in. At the beginning, the life of the Roman family was concentrated in the atrium, which also had a religious function. Later, several lateral rooms opened up from the atrium. There were bathrooms in the houses of the rich. Besides the city house ("domus"), large landowners also had a farm dwelling (villa rustica) on their property, which was inhabited only in certain periods of the year.

Most of Rome's inhabitants lived in rented houses called insulae, built on wooden structures and having 5-6 storeys. (Drimba, pp. 725-728)

3.4. Religion

Roman religion was based on a divine pantheon influenced by Greek beliefs. The old Roman priesthood comprised the king, the flamens of the three great gods (Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus) and "pontifex maximus" or the high priest, position which during Caesar started to belong to the emperor. Jupiter represented sovereignty, Mars was the god of war and Quirinus represented protection and nutrition. Subsequently, during Tarquins a new triad appeared: Jupiter Maximus-Junona-Minerva. The domestic cult, which had the earth at its centre, consisted of animal sacrifices and food and floral offerings destined to the ancestors. Marriage was celebrated at home under the auspices of the feminine deities - Tellus, Ceres. Later, Junona became the warrant of matrimonial vows. (Eliade, Culianu, pp. 246-247).

4. Economic Life in Dacia

4.1. Dacian Citadels

Citadels and fortified settlements constitute eloquent proofs regarding the military engineering technique of these constructions. The defensive centre of the Dacian State, located around the political and administrative one, was made up of a system of citadels, fortresses, fortified locations in Orăştie Mountains. There we may find citadels with stone walls belonging to the system of Dacian fortifications from Costeşti-Cetăţuie, Costeşti-Blidaru, Sarmizegetusa Regia, Lunca-Piatra Roşie, Băniţa and Căpâlna. There and inside the Carpathian Arch approximately 40 citadels have been identified.

Costeşti-Blidaru is located at 705m altitude on the Blidaru hill, with an opening towards the Mureş Valley and another one towards Grădiştea Muncelului. It represents the most impressive military fortification from the Orăştie Mountains. The walls are built with local stone, blocks of micaschist, roughly shaped, alternating with blocks of limestone. The rooms between the walls were based on a room for storing provisions and on top there were the casemates, provided with platforms on which war machines were installed. The water tank is worth mentioning, located on the slope of the hill, consisting of a quadrangular room (8x6.2m) at 5m depth with double or triple walls coated with impenetrable mortar. (Pescaru&Pescaru, 2008, pp.19-20).

Costeşti-Cetăţuie is located at the altitude of 561m, with an oval top, 160m long and 17m wide in the South and 25m wide in the North. Inside the citadel, at the north and south ends two monumental constructions were erected. They are called dwelling-towers. These edifices were built in a mixed technique: the lower part was made in the manner known as *murus Dacicus* and was continued in the upper part with a wall of larger bricks, barely burnt, glued with clay. The total height of the towers was of approximately 6m. (Pescaru&Pescaru, pp.22-24).

Sarmizegetusa Regia is located at an altitude of 1,000m and is made of three distinct parts: the fortress, the sacred area and the civil constructions. The latter consists of dwellings, barns, workshops, stairs, paved roads and water pipes. The terrasses on which the civil constructions were built are anthropogenic, but only the ones from the sacred area are supported and protected by strong walls built through the *murus Dacicus* technique; in ancient times, they had a height of up to 12-14m. (Pescaru&Pescaru, pp. 26-28). One metallurgical workshop and two blacksmithing workshops existed there.

Dacian astronomy-related knowledge is confirmed by the great round sanctuary from Sarmizegetusa Regia. The sanctuary consists of three concentric circles. The outer circle with a diameter of 29m is made up of 104 blocks of andesite 45cm tall; the second of 210 parallelipedic pillars, of various shapes and sizes, succeeding each other in a regular order of 6 narrow pillars and tall of 120-135cm, plus one wide and short of 55-65cm. The third circle was made up of 84 wooden poles, covered in ornamental terracotta plates. In the centre, there is a line of 34 wooden poles delimitating an apse-shaped room. (Drimba, p.799)

The function of the andesite sun was that of an altar. The monument is erected in andesite and limestone and consists of a support made out of limestone blocks, the first row located where the central sun meets the end of the andesite rays, and the second row is at the other end of the andesite rays. The total diameter of the altar was of 6.98m, and the thickness of pavement was of 0.30m. It is made of a central disk with 1.46m in diameter and 10 long rays of 2.76m. (Pescaru&Pescaru p.31)

We find appropriate the words of famous historian Hadrian Daicoviciu, who stated in his work *Dacii*: “Daco-Getae knew how to assimilate the invaders (Scythians, Celts), at the same time adopting from them the advanced elements of their material culture. They knew how to learn from their neighbours... but they especially knew how to melt together the elements of the foreign civilisations, to pour them into new moulds, specific only to them, and appropriate them.... The Dacians learned a lot from the Greeks about the building techniques. But the fortresses from the Orăştie Mountains are not Greek, They are Dacian... In its own way, the complex from the Orăştie Mountains is unique in the world”. (Daicoviciu, p. 123).

This complex is the most known UNESCO heritage listed site in Romania.

4.2. Economy, Crafts, Ceramics

Theoretically the land belonged to the monarch. *Comati* had the triple obligation towards the State - to pay the taxes, to participate in public works and to fulfill military obligations. Besides the village community type of common funciary property, there also existed the private property of the comati and the private property of the king, nobles and priests.

The foundation of the economy was agriculture and cattle breeding. They used the iron coulter plough since the 3rd century BC. They used to grow lentil and wheat, barley and rye as cereals. The first varieties of wheat

they used were *Triticum monococcum* and *Triticum dicoccum* Schrank. This activity contributed to the sedentarisation and increase of the population. Later in the area of Cucuteni they cultivated: *Triticum compactum*, *Triticum vulgare*, *Triticum globiform*, Vicia and proso millet. Maintaining the old types of cereal showed the permanence of the locals, while the expansion of the cereal range indicated the development of the local population.

They intensely practised bees keeping, fishing and they grew vine. Wood was exported to Greece for boat construction.

Dacian craftsmen worked the iron and the brass, the silver and the gold. By reducing the copper ore at a temperature of 1085 degrees and by mixing it with tin, they obtained bronze, which they used for various tools and adornments. (Drimba, p 794)

Dacian craftsmen started using the potter wheel since the first half of the 5th century BC. The local production of characteristic Daco-Getae ceramics appeared during the 5th to the 4th centuries BC. At its peak (1st century BC - 1st century AD), Daco-Getae pottery was made on the wheel. Under the influence of Greek pottery, vessels painted with geometric motives or vegetal elements, animals and birds appeared later on. Most used colours were red and brown, and more rarely yellow and black. Birds and animals were rendered moving or resting, having symbolic meanings.

Huge vessels, with the diametre of over one metre were produced so that to serve for storing cereals, as well as glasses for domestic use, medical or religious purposes. The Dacian cup was a sort of mug with the upper part wider and bent towards the exterior, with one or two handles, being the emblem of the local style. (Pop&Bolovan, 2013, p. 14).

Currency. At the beginning, the Dacians used the Makedonian coin, namely Philip II's and Alexander the Great's silver coins. Later on, their own coins appeared, which had as model Philip II's silver tetradrachm, which had the head of Zeus on the front and a rider on a horse on the back. They gradually stood out through striking local style elements. To a lesser extent there were other coinages on the territory of Dacia imitating the tetradrachms of Phillip III or coins of the Larissa-Apollo type. (Donoiu, pp. 6-7) Out of the silver coins presented by the specialist Ion Donoiu, the following are worth mentioning: Rasa and Criciova type Dacian coin, Ramna type coin, Agriș, "rider with bird", Tulghieș, Crișeni-Berchieși, "with janiform head", Prundu-Jiblea. (Donoiu, pp. 20-48)

4.3. Trade Relations

Daco-Getae have established trade relations, especially with the Greek world, since the 7th century BC. They imported oil, wine, tools, weapons, garments and art items. They exported cereals, cattle, honey, wood, hides and salt.

In the 5th century BC the Greek currency appeared in Dacia. In the 3rd century BC, Daco-Getae minted their own silver coin, imitating the Greek one. Daco-Getae coinage lasted for almost three centuries. Until 106 AD, Dacians minted the Roman coin with a very good technique. (Drimba, p. 797) They imported luxury products, wine, oil, bronze items and glassware from Rome.

Referring to trade, the famous historian H. Daicoviciu makes the following statements in his work *Dacia de la Burebista la cucerirea romană*: “The circulation of merchandise, coins and people between the shore of the Black Sea and Orăștie Mountains proves that the old trade roads continued to be used. During Burebista and Decebalus neither the path from the Danube bent northward by the Siret river, nor the roads from the Argeș and Dâmbovița valleys had lost their significance. But together with them an increased significance was gradually acquired by the roads leading to Italy. That was the trade path coming on the Sava valley; once it reaches the Danube, we must imagine it splits: one branch crosses Banat and the Transylvanian Iron Gates gorge towards the Mureș river; another crossed Oltenia penetrating Transylvania through Vâlcan Pass; and the third, after it continued down on the Danube, it went northward on the Olt valley towards Turnu Roșu”. (H. Daicoviciu, p. 193)

5. Social and Religious Life in Dacia

5.1. Social Organisation

The nobles were the *tarabostes* or the *pileati* amongst which the king, the priests and the high priest were chosen. The nobles - heads of tribes, of gentes of large families - were large landowners and military rulers. Among these *tarabostes* the king used to recruit his dignitaries charged with political, military attributions or even control over the internal order, management of tax collection and surveillance of public works (Drimba, p.792)

Nobles wore a cloak pinned on the shoulder with a fibula, with a hood for bad weather, and their exclusive dressing garment were the headpieces indicating

their rank, the ones for summer were made out of flax cloth and the ones for winter out of wool. (Georgescu, p. 56)

The Dacian State had a theocratic character, meaning the priesthood played the role of the highest rank, with a huge moral and political influence in the State. Priests held the monopoly of the scientific and religious activities: they studied astronomy, medicine, and dealt with theological and moral issues. The high priest was the king's most prestigious and obeyed counsellor, practically a genuine viceroy.

The second social class was made of the common people, *comati* or *capillati*. Legally they were free people: peasants, shepherds and traders. Until Dacia was conquered by the Romans, the Slaves had an insignificant role in the economy.

The settlements were of rural type with a sedentary character. Settlements from the Coțofeni culture emphasize that the dwellings had two rooms, out of which one was a living room and the other was a kitchen with the oven; they were oriented from East to West; average size was 3.5 x 7.5m; in certain dwellings, there were holes for provisions. (Moisin, p.170).

5.2. Dacian Calendar System (civil and for rituals) was structured based on a 13-year cycle. The years from a cycle were of 4 types, depending on their number of days; they had 364, 365, 366 and 367 days. The succession of the types of years within a cycle was fix.

A year in the Dacian civil calendar had 47 weeks. The weeks from the civil calendar were of 3 types: of 6, 7 and 8 days. The succession of the weeks was permanently constant and was given by the numerical structure of the small circular sanctuary. A year in the Dacian calendar for rituals had 60 weeks, each one having 6 days. Each ritualistic year was corrected at the end with the help of some specifically built structures, with 4, 5, 6 or 7 days, lining up with the civil calendar.

The Dacian calendar system always positioned the first day of the new year in the first day of the week. The correction days (of the year, of the cycle and of the century), each one had a material correspondent in the numerical structure of the sanctuaries. The Dacian calendar had the tendency of remaining behind the astronomic cycle, so as to correct that one day was added. (Bobancu, Samoilă, Poenaru, 1980, pp. 163-164).

5.3. Religion

Their belief in immortality made Dacians transcend death and throw themselves into battle with a wild courage, convinced they were going to a

better world. I.C. Drăgan considers that the Thracians have offered other people their own gods: Dionisie, Bendis, Ares, Hermes and Apollo. Dionisie became Dyonisos for the Greeks and Bacchus for the Romans. Goddess Bendis became Artemis for the Greeks and Diana for the Romans. Ares became Mars for the Romans.

M. Eliade considers that the “Zalmoxis character can be described as follows: a) a daimon or a theos revealing an eschatological doctrine and creating an initiatory cult depending on the ontologic regime of the post-mortem life; b) in other words, Zalmoxis is not a supernatural being of a cosmic or institutional type, considered to be there since the beginning of tradition, like other Thracian gods Herodotus talks about; Zalmoxis appears in a religious history preceding him, he inaugurates a new eschatologic era; c) the revelation brought to the Getae is communicated through a scenario used by various characters aiming to create a new era or to establish an eschatological cult; d) the central idea in the message Zalmoxis brings refers to the survival or immortality of the soul, e) but because the return of Zalmoxis in flesh and bones does not make a proof for immortality, this episode seems to reflect a ritual unknown to us.” (Eliade, 1980, p. 46).

Zalmoxis is perceived by various authors as: philosopher (Iordanes), priest, prophet (Strabo), law-maker (Diodorus, Carolus Lundis), religious and political reformer (Herodotus, Iordanes, Origenes), doctor (Plato), civilising hero (Herodotus, Strabo), king (Plato; Iordanes), demigod or daimon (Herodotus). (Georgescu, 204)

6. Contribution of the Dacians and Romans to Romanian Christianity

The oppression of the locals during Hadrian is more tempered than during Trajan. Later, relations between Dacians and Romans are more relaxed, fact proved by the apparition of the Dacian dragon as religious and military symbol. Other proofs are the presence of the Dacian dragon on Roman coins, on the Triumphal Arch from Thessaloniki and on the Danubian knight's reliefs. (Oltean, 357)

The priests caste from Sarmizegetusa disappeared and its function of mediation with the deities was taken by forefathers or ancestors. After the cult of the “Forefather-God” was suppressed by the Romans, forefathers become gods, without the Romans stopping that as well, because Roman religion of the domestic protection was at its peak. (Oltean, 361)

The Romanian Christianity owes the absence of fear of death and the absence of receptivity for the written culture to the Dacians religiousness. The latter made that later in history, in Romanian churches appeared the Cyrillic writing of Slavic influence. Absence of fear made that during the Second World War, the Romanian army had the third death toll of the fighting countries. (Oltean, 2008, 391-393) Surveys conducted during the first decades after the creation of the Romanian unitary State show that 63.09% of the respondents gave a positive answer to the question about whether they believed or not in the survival of soul after the death of the body. (Bologa, p. 151) Both religions had rural forms.

The Roman inheritance is related to the ritual, the impressive number of holidays and religious tolerance. The Romanians, direct descendants of the Romans, naturally inclined towards the rite and not the abstract principles, chose a Christianity that lacks doctrine fighting. (Oltean, 2008, 394-396) We base these assertions on Drăghicescu “The metaphysics of Christianity was never understood by Romanians the foundation of Christianity in our case is the ritual” (Drăghicescu, p.277) and Pamfilie who found “more than 100 pagan holiday days, days appropriate for work, where the only thing women do is chat.” (Pamfilie, p. 231)

Trajan’s Column can be better understood through the following wholistic options and particular solutions:

a. Typified scenes - such as sacrifices, battles, marches and rests, messengers and prisoners - are conceived as a group and as the crowd. The main feature of the crowd is the equal size of the faces rendered on the vertical half, so that even more of them can fit. The crowd is used in order to represent the Dacians.

b. The narrative is mostly descriptive. There are only five personifications on the entire column: Danuvius, Jupiter Tonans, Night, Victory writing on a shield and Dacia devicta.

c. The fighting itself occupies a quarter of the frieze.

d. The succession of the scenes on the Column is from left to right, except for the scenes marking the return back in time.

e. The narration sculpted on the Column is a narrative report.

The Roman lifestyle spread continuously throughout more than two centuries, from its old core of the province that Emperor Trajan had created, towards the West, the North and especially the East. Christians existed in Dacia since the 2nd and the 3rd centuries, being able to freely manifest

themselves after 274 AD. Starting with 313, when Emperor Constantine the Great turns Christianity into an official religion, local Christianity received new influences. (Pop, Bolovan, p. 36)

What was said so far is completed by the famous psychologist Daniel David: "Romanians' genetic profile fits very well into the one of the populations from Europe - more precisely the populations from Central and Eastern Europe, with small differences and nuances. Romanians' genetic background probably has a Dacian-Thracian influence, older and especially in the past; a southern influence, probably because of the Greek-Roman populations from the Roman Empire and Byzantine Empire; a Norse influence, probably Slavic; and an Asian influence following the migrations. (David, p. 91)

7. Conclusions

Both Ancient Dacia and Rome were influenced by the Greek civilisation. From the perspective of agriculture, the common elements are: bees keeping, growing vine and cereals. From the trade point of view, Dacia was in deficit compared to Rome. The essential element making the difference is that Romans emphasised on building roads, while Dacians only emphasised on building citadels. The constructions of roads for the Romans appeared because of the empire's needs for development. Dacians had something Romans were craving for: gold. This was the reason which started the Daco-Roman wars.

Practically, Romans were more organised, more expansive and with a strong desire to civilise barbarians. Dacia was not fully conquered; only the Dacian capital was conquered and ploughed. From a religious standpoint, the faith in immortality made Dacians particularly brave in battle. Dacia was defeated by Rome's greatest emperor in history - Trajan - who, paradoxically, was not born in Rome. From the union of the two people, the Romanian people was gradually formed throughout the centuries. We inherited religious ritual from the Romans and something more priceless from the Dacians: the absence of fear of death and the religiousness. From an economic perspective, Roman civilisation was superior to the Dacian one, but from a social and religious perspective, Dacian culture was superior to the Roman one. We bring a reason to support the affirmation: slaves were negligible in number in Dacia compared to the rest of the population; and an extremely important argument: Dacians were not afraid of dying.

But how many of us still consider ourselves to be Romans or Dacians? I believe it is not by accident that in Romania there are still so many festivals of Dacian-origin. A better knowledge of our history is the first step to take. The next step becomes very important and present: Where do we head to? What is Romania's destiny?

A first answer is like an essential connexion, like a connecting bridge between the West and the East. Romanians adapted in quite large numbers in Italy because Italians resemble us a lot in: hospitality, generosity and human warmth.

The second answer is that Romania's destiny is Europe. I think that Romanians from Italy together with Italians and Italians living in Romania together with Romanians achieve together a modern, democratic, tolerant and competitive Europe.

8. References

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