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THE SENSE OF THE VICTORIA FORMULAE ON ROMAN
INSCRIPTIONS AND SOME NEW EPIGRAPHIC
MONUMENTS FROM LOWER PANNONIA

It is true that the Roman inscriptions furnish us, on the whole, with information about the internal side of life in the Metropolis as well as in the provinces, or, in other terms, about Roman cultural history, in a far higher degree than about external history, both political and military; but, none the less, it must be admitted that where we are lacking in literary evidence, or where this proves a failure, the inscriptions are — at a time where we cannot count any more upon a discovery of some new manuscript of major importance or other form of literary work hitherto unknown —, together with the coins, almost the only source that keeps supplying our knowledge of the history of Roman foreign affairs with fresh and often quite surprising facts. For military history, there are mainly finds of new so-called *diplomata militaria* and inscriptions in honour of the prominent officers, especially where they contain — in concordance with the invaluable Roman custom — an enumeration of the whole official career of the honoured personage. But also the votive inscriptions and epitaphs of simple soldiers bring us new important dates and information about the movements of military units, about wars, fightings, and victories of the individual formations, completely unknown to literary sources.

Out of all the material that belongs to this sphere and enriches our knowledge of Roman political history as well as of historical geography, I have chosen, as the topic of my contribution, the analysis of the term of VICTORIA: it seems worth examining closely, since the very sense of this expression on inscriptions is by no means as unambiguous as it might appear at first sight. For instance, it can be doubted many a time whether it was used as an appellative, i. e. in the meaning of “a victory”, or as a proper name designating the goddess Victory. Even if we

accept the former alternative, we cannot consider it quite unquestionable. Therefore I intend to examine all the formulae of the Roman inscriptions in which the term of *victoria* appears, and to use then the results to a critical analysis of some of the latest epigraphic discoveries made on the soil of Lower Pannonia, which are not without importance also for the history of its trans-Danubian foreland, the actual Middle Slovakia.

The simplest of these formulae is the plain nominative case, *victoria* — perhaps never exemplified on inscriptions, in contrast to the coinage where it may be universally taken for the commemoration of a victory actually obtained, and particularly in those cases where the word *victoria* is specified by a name of the nation or tribe over whom the day was carried. Out of very numerous evidence, some legends may be quoted,¹ such as VICTORIA BRITANNICA on the coins of Caracalla, VIC DACICA on those of Trajan, VICTORIA CARPICA on Philippus', VICT GER (or GERM or GERMA) on Marcus Aurelius' issues, VICT GOTHICA on the coins of the Emperor Claudius II — who became known under the name of Claudius Gothicus just because of that victory —, VICT PArthica on the emissions of L. Verus, M. Aurelius, and Caracalla, some of which find their parallels on the triumphal issues bearing the legends DE GERMANIS, DACIA CAPTA, GERMANIA SVBACTA, etc.

There is one circumstance which all of the quoted legends have in common: the expression *victoria* on coins is an appellative, not a proper name, and thus it signifies a victory, not the goddess, even if it is symbolised quite often — or, better, almost as a rule — by a figure of the goddess Victory on the reverse of the respective coin.

But on the inscriptions, there is a real problem of two different possibilities to be chosen between, which we meet with: a form fairly frequent on them is the dative case, VICTORIAE. Are we to hold this expression for a proper name, personal, and shall we transcribe it with capital letter, *Victoriae*, or is it a common noun, to be written *victoriae*? With regard to the exceedingly numerous analogies on inscriptions dedicated to various deities, the more probable is the possibility that by the VICTORIA here was meant the goddess²; but even in those cases where the word is completed by an attribute derived from the name of the Emperor or the vanquished people, both the name and the figure of the goddess can be regarded as the symbol of an actual, concrete victory only where it can be proved from other sources that the victory really took place. Such is the case of the inscription on the rock of Trenčín, in Slovakia, in which the dative VICTORIAE AVGVSTORVM is to be interpreted definitely as "to the goddess Victory", but in the same time it may be taken in a metonymical sense, as "for the victory awarded by the goddess Victory to both Emperors", Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus. The *raison d'être* of such an interpretation is given not only by the report of Cassius Dio (LXXI 33; III. 273 ed. Boissevain) about the

decisive victory obtained in the critical period over the people, in the very heart of whose dwellings the inscription was engraved, but also by the fact that the victory of the two *Augusti* is proved by a new imperial acclamation they were honoured with, and just in the same space of time the inscription must be dated to, i. e. A. D. 179.³

It goes without saying that the case of the Trenčín inscription is quite unique. It is hardly conceivable that another inscription of an equal kind could be found, enabling us to determine the chronology of the incident recorded in it, as well as to insert it into the corresponding political situation with so great a precision.

The next specimen, most approaching the precedent by its wording, *Victoriae Commod[i ob]honorem [Ul]p. Maximus [et Ul]p. Avitus [II v(iri)] i(ure) d(icundo)*,⁴ is an inscription from the Dacian Ampelum; but it is almost completely enigmatic, because of lack of parallel records, both of epigraphic and literary kind. Owing to its uncertain chronology, it cannot be decided which people it was, the victory over whom was recorded here. Some historians, being at a loss for any other conception, guessed at a victory gained over the Dacians, as suggested by a mention in the Biography of Commodus (SHA, Comm. 13, 5), *victi Daci* — of course not over the free, independent Dacians, but over some rebels among the inhabitants of the Province of Dacia: *in Dacia imperium eius recusantibus provincialibus*.

Any nearer evidence is missing also for the victory of the Emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla, hinted at in the inscription from Brigetio (CIL III 4364, 11 082),⁵ offered, on June 9, 207, by L. Egnatius Victor, the legate of Upper Pannonia, to the Victory of the Emperors and the local garrison, the Legio I Adiutrix; therefore we have no chance, for the moment, to decide whether it concerned a victory obtained perhaps some time in Africa (M. Platnauer, *The Life and Reign of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus*. London 1918, 205, n. 4; Ritterling, *Legio*, in R.-E. XII. 2, 1925, 1398) or, more probably, the fightings on the Middle Danube (M. Besnier, *L'Empire Romain de l'avènement des Sévères au Concil de Nicée* [Histoire Romaine IV. 1.] Paris 1937, 40 sq.; A. Alföldi, *Budapest története*. Budapest 1942, 670, n. 1; L. Barkóczi, *Archaeologia Hungarica* XXXVI, 1957, 517), or an entirely other occasion (J. Fitz, *Der Besuch des Septimius Severus in Pannonien im Jahre 202 u. Z.* *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XI, 1959, 255), either to ascertain whether the dative form *victoriae* may be regarded as expressing a prayer to the goddess of victory, or thanks for the fulfilment of such a prayer and for the granting of a definite military success.

With this problem we meet also in the victorious formulae which are the least disputable at first sight: the prepositional expressions *pro victoria* and *ob victoriam*. All doubts about the function of the term in question as an appellative and not the proper name of the goddess are removed by the circumstance that

these forms appear exclusively in the inscriptions dedicated to some other deity than Victory as the giver of a victory. But there is a new problem here: whether the expression *pro victoria* is to be regarded as a *votum susceptum*, i. e. a wish and prayer for a victory, or a *votum solutum*, i. e. thanks for it. For political history concerned with facts, as well as for military history, naturally the latter case alone comes into consideration. In solving this problem, the decisive factor is, I dare say, the general use of the terms *votum* and *vota*.

The best known *vota*, because recurring regularly every year on the 3rd of January, were those for the welfare of the reigning Emperor, the *vota nuncupata, suscepta pro incolumitate principis*⁶. The same formula was used also in the expression designating victory. Perhaps the most familiar and the most eloquent example of it is furnished by the Acta fratrum Arvalium for the day of the 25th March A. D. 101, on which day Trajan's Dacian War was embarked upon with the *vota [pro salute et red(itu) et victor(ia)]* (CIL VI 2074, p. 530, line 51 sq.), thus with a prayer for the Emperor's health and a happy and victorious return: the precise Greek analogy and equivalent to the Latin preposition *pro* is *ὑπέρ*, meaning quite doubtlessly a request, not thanks for the victorious result. Thus, even if the formula *pro victoria* can sometimes express also thanks for an obtained victory, it is equally doubtless that it generally means a wish or prayer for a future victory, on inscriptions^{6a} as well as on coins⁷, and the more so since the inscriptions are using longer sentences when expressing thanks in a solemn form: cf., for the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, a fragment of the inscription from his triumphal arch at Rome (CIL VI 1014 = ILS 374), or, for Caracalla, an instance from the Acta fratrum Arvalium of the year A. D. 214 (CIL VI 2103 b): *quod salvus atque incolumis --- felicissime ad hiberna Nicomediae ingressus sit*.

On the other hand, only the formulae in which the term of *victoria* is connected with a causal preposition — most commonly with *ob* — can be applied with certainty to a victory actually gained already; they are found in honorary inscriptions of generals, recording the motives for their decorations. As examples of this kind of inscriptions — not too numerous, on the whole⁸ — may be quoted the honorary inscription to L. Vehilius Gratus, decorated *ob victoriam belli Parthici, item [ob vic]tor(iam) belli Germ[a]nic(i) [et Sarmatic(i)]* (ILS 1327), or a similar one, in honour of M. Bassaeus Rufus, the *praefectus praetorio* of the co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, who was rewarded *ob victoriam Germanicam et Sarmaticam* which can, for other reasons, be dated with the utmost probability to the year 177⁹.

With the knowledge acquired from the above analysis of the varying sense of the epigraphic formulae containing the term of *victoria*, we can now proceed to the evaluation of some older, but especially of some quite recently discovered inscriptions, which are regarded as an indubitable testimony about the victorious fighting of the Roman troops with the Dacians who are said to have invaded the

northern part of Lower Pannonia from the actual Middle Slovakia, in the early years of the second decennium of the third century A. D.¹⁰

The inscriptions in question, all of which were found on the comparatively small area in the Vác bend of the Danube, limited in the north and east by the stream of the river, in the west by the original boundary between Upper and Lower Pannonia, which had been shifted farther to the east in 214, and in the south extending up to Intercisa, are the following:

(I) On the very frontier of the stated territory, in Nyergesújfalu, the ancient Crumerum, an inscription was discovered in 1960, dedicated to *Deo invict[os] Serapi pro sal[ute] et victoria imp[er]atoris Caes[ar]is M. Aurel. Antonini* (G. Alföldy, *Studia Pannonica*, 27).

(II) From the area somewhat farther to the south comes an inscription known formerly already, found in Csév, which was dedicated *Iovi Optimo M[ax]imo Neptuno* and, besides, also *Serap[idi] pro sal[ute] et victor[ia] et perpe]tuitate* of the same Emperor, by Alfenus Avitianus, probably the very first *legatus pro praetore* of the newly organised province of Lower Pannonia (J. Fitz, L. Alfenus Avitianus).¹¹

(III) Among the "victorious" inscriptions of this kind is counted by J. Fitz (Soggiorno 16) also the inscription from Aquincum (CIL III 3472 = ILS 2320), dedicated by the *tribunus militum* of the local Legio II Adiutrix, Clodius Marcellinus, *dis militaribus et genio loci pro salute et reditu* of the Emperor Caracalla, just because of the mention of the latter's return.

(IV) Finally, there is an inscription from the south extremity of the territory above described (published by G. Erdély and F. Fülep, *Intercisa I. [Archaeologia Hungarica XXXIII]*. Budapest 1954, 323, No. 326), which must have been a part of a building, perhaps a temple (*opus*) dedicated by the soldiers of the *Cohors Hemesenorum* to their national god Elagabalus: *deo patrio Soli Elagabalo pro salute et victoria Germ[anica]* of the same Emperor Caracalla.

(V) Among all these inscriptions mentioning expressly a victory, L. Barkóczi, *Brigetio [Dissertationes Pannonicae II. 22]*. Budapest 1951, 46, as well as J. Fitz, L. Alfenus Avitianus 9 sq., and Soggiorno 16 count also the monumental column from Tata bearing the inscription *Imp. Caes. M. Aur. Antonin.* (CIL III 4274), erected in Caracalla's honour, only because also the figure of Victory is found among the twelve deities represented on it (Sol, Luna, Apollo, Silvanus, Diana, Volcanus, Venus, Mars, Iuno, Victoria, Minerva).¹²

All these records, both strictly epigraphic and monumental, are regarded by their discoverers or commentators as proofs of a victory gained by Caracalla before the 23rd of August 214 — which is the date of the dedication of the Emesene soldiers on the inscription quoted above as No. IV: *X Kal. Sept. Messala et Sabino cos.* — over the barbarians neighbouring with Lower Pannonia on its northern frontier, therefore in the actual Slovakia. The formula *pro victoria*,

however, is no sufficient evidence for it, since it can signify, in accordance with the mentioned analogous cases, a mere prayer just as well as thanks. In favour of the former possibility speak not only the recorded analogies, but, on the inscription No. II, also the last expression of the formula *pro salute, victoria et perpetuitate*¹³ which can have only the meaning of a wish, not of thanks, like on the inscription No. III from Aquincum the combination of *pro salute et reditu*, where the term *pro reditu* corresponds completely with the votum known from the legend FORTVNAE REDVCI struck on the emissions of coins associated with the departure of the Emperors for an expedition, in the sense of a prayer to the Fate to bring back the Emperor safely after the obtained victory.¹⁴

It is therefore not possible to interpret the term of *victoria* on any of the above quoted inscriptions with certainty as implying a definite victory. But still more dubious appear the explanations given hitherto of the nationality of the enemies over whom Caracalla or his commanders were victorious.

All the interpreters concerned have thought of the Dacians who, in their opinion, had moved westwards as soon as the end of the second century; and, having taken their abode in the vicinity of Brigetio, threatened — together with the Germans, and especially with the Quadi — the neighbouring Lower Pannonia, or even launched a pernicious attack upon it.

The only circumstance supporting such a view was found by L. Barkóczy (Dák tolmács 178 sqq.) in an inscription discovered at Brigetio in 1943 which mentions a Dacian interpreter, *interpres Dacorum*. Its dating is established with a comparatively considerable exactitude: the same person, Ulpius Celerinus, is named on another inscription from Brigetio, known before already (CIL III 40988), in the function of a *sal(ariarius)* of the local Legio I Adiutrix which, on this inscription, bears the cognomen of *Antoniniana* that it could have acquired no sooner than the year 198 or, if it is derived from the name of the Emperor Caracalla, 211.^{14a} Barkóczy judged from just this inscription that the Dacians were settled, in those days already, opposite to Brigetio, having got there under the pressure of the same Goths whose movement from the mouth of the Vistula in the direction towards the Black Sea is regarded as the cause also of the pressure of the barbarian tribes in the north from the whole stream of the Danube, which manifested itself in the so-called Marcomannic War.

Such a conclusion is, of course, a little rash, since the presence of an interpreter for the dealings with the Dacians in Brigetio is quite irrelevant for the national conditions in its trans-Danubian neighbourhood: Brigetio was one of the busiest trade centres on the Middle Danube,¹⁵ which, in the milieu of a „half-Balkan“ jumble of all sorts of peoples by that time already, could by no means do without interpreters, and especially for the Dacian language the expansion of which was so considerable in those days.¹⁶ The fact that a mention of a Dacian interpreter in Brigetio reached us is a mere chance, equally as the parallel record from Aquin-

cum in which, besides a Sarmatian interpreter (CIL III 143495), also one for the German language is attested (CIL III 10505) — whom we should expect rather in Brigetio, for the intercourse with the Quadi, but on whose mere existence in Aquincum hardly anyone would dare to build a theory on German settlements in Alföld.

There is, however, also some supposed epigraphic evidence in favour of the opinion that there were Dacians settling in the forefield of Brigetio towards the end of the second century A. D., on whom the Romans were then making wars — if they had not even to defend themselves from their attacks on their own ground.

From Crumerum, situated at the very frontier of Lower Pannonia, far to the north, comes an epitaph (CIL III 3660 = ILS 2308) dedicated to Aur(elius) Satull(us), a soldier of the Legio I Adiutrix of Brigetio, who was killed in action (*decidit*), at the age of twenty-three, *incursu hostis Daciae*, and from Tatabánya the tombstone of Aelius Iustinus, *librarius legati* of the same legion, aged twenty-five, who equally died (*decid[it]*) *in exp(editione) Dacisca*.

But it seems to be rather bold to establish a temporal coincidence between these two inscriptions — undated and, for the time being, undatable — and the precise year 214 A. D. In the first case, namely the inscription from Crumerum, it is just the name of Dacia which proves an evidence against the supposed invasion of the free Dacians into Pannonia, since on a Roman inscription, and even on a military one, it would be hardly possible to use the name of Dacia for anything else but the Roman Province of Dacia: never could it mean settlements of any independent, free Dacians beyond the bounds of that province. It will be, therefore, necessary to think rather of an inroad of some (unnamed) enemy into Dacia, or — if the turn common in the names of towns be accepted here — to suppose a closer connexion between the words *hostis Daciae* on one hand, and between *Daciae decidit* on the other hand, and thus to translate the context as „he died in Dacia in the course of an enemy inroad“. The Crumerum inscription would be, in any case, a part of some kind of cenotaph, similarly as the inscription of Tatabánya, and still another from Celeia (CIL III 5218 and 11601 = ILS 2309), dedicated to Aurelius Iustinus, a legionary of the Legio II Italica, *obito in exp(editione) Dacisca*, or finally the one found in the surroundings of Verona, reading *Papirio Marcellino, decepto a Daciscis in bello proelio* (CIL V 3372 = ILS 8502), in which certainly no one would think of some hypothetical Dacians from the northern neighbourhood of Lower Pannonia.

It is thus not possible to regard any of these conjectural testimonies about an expedition against the Dacians (*expeditio Dacisca*) or an inroad of theirs (*incursu hostis Daciae*) as applicable with certainty to the Dacians dwelling on the left side of the Danube, and the less so to endeavour after a reconstruction of the directions of the supposed three invasions which are said to have all been directed against Aquincum (see the plan No. 1 in G. Alföldi, *Studia Pannonica* 30).

It appears a priori to be little probable that the graves of the killed soldiers were marked by epitaphs directly on the battle-fields; and in the case of the tombstone from Crumerum, moreover, the same negative conclusion may be drawn from the very absence on it of the formula *h. s. e.*

But this is not enough: It is highly questionable even whether, during the first years of Caracalla's reign, the Dacians did dwell at all in the region where they are looked for on the basis of the above-mentioned inscriptions.

Who was it to be meant in those inscriptions by the name of Dacians? First of all, the possibility may be perhaps excluded that the Dacians in question were the inhabitants of the Province of Dacia: the official terminology could hardly have admitted that it might have been necessary to wage a military expedition against the nations who were then integrant parts of the Roman Empire, and have thus indicated the existence of some rebellion, or — after all of the free inhabitants of Roman provinces had been vested with the Roman *civitas* by the Constitution of Caracalla — even the existence of a civil war.¹⁷ (We may but remember with what delicacy the leading circles in Rome, at the celebration of the triple triumph with which the last republican Civil War was closed in 30 B. C., evaded the embarrassing truth that Octavianus was, as a matter of fact, celebrating his triumph over his own colleague-triumvir, Antony.) That is also why none of the interpretations given hitherto of the above quoted inscriptions thinks of the Dacians of the Roman province, but all of them hold for certain that it must be thought of those who were dwelling outside the boundary of the Province, or, in other terms, of the free Dacians. There is no doubt that such Dacians did exist still in the second and third centuries, in spite of the express assertion of an inscription from Corinth, dedicated to C. Caelius Martialis, a participant in the Second Dacian War of Trajan, in 107—113, *qua universa Dacia devicta est*.¹⁸

Those free Dacians who did not belong to the bounds of the province are mentioned in the period preceding by some thirty years Caracalla's succession to the throne: it was in the time of the general attack of all the northern neighbours on the Empire, which is usually designated by the inaccurate term of Marcomannic Wars. The legate of Dacia, (C. Vettius) Sabinianus (Iulius Hospes)¹⁹ intended to satisfy — at least partly and for the moment — the avidity of those free Dacians for soil, which kept manifesting itself in their incessant inroads into the territory of the Province, by promising them he would settle 12,000 *Δακῶν τῶν προσόρων* on the grounds of the province, *ἐν τῇ Δακίᾳ τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ* (Cassius Dio LXXII 3, 3; III 284, ed. U. Boissevain). Commodus, assuming the rule, wanted to make the other Dacians respect the boundary of the Province, by one of the terms of his treaty of peace dictated to them in A. D. 180, in which they bound themselves under oath that they would let unsettled and uncultivated a zone of their territory bordering on the Roman province in a width of 40 stadia, i. e. nearly 8 km.: *ἀναγκάσας τοὺς ἄλλους ὁμόσαι ὥστε μήτ' ἐνοικήσειν ποτέ*

μήτ' ἐννεμείν τεσσαράκοντα στάδια τῆς χώρας σφῶν τῆς πρὸς τῇ Δακίᾳ οὐσης.

If we wish to form an estimate of the area occupied by those free Dacians, it would be necessary to ascertain, in addition to its eastern boundary which was fixed by the frontier of the Province of Dacia,²⁰ also its western border. The written sources are, unfortunately, very scarce indeed. The most ancient is Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* (VI 25, 2), giving a description of the situation of the Hercynian Forest which is said here to extend from the head of the Danube, running at first parallel with this river up to the territory of the Dacians and the Anartii, where it turns aside from the Danube to the left (i. e. to the north): *Hercynia silva oritur ab Helvetiorum et Nemetum et Rauricorum finibus rectaque fluminis Danubii regione pertinet ad fines Dacorum et Anartiorum. Hinc se flectit sinistrorsus diversis a flumine regionibus*. It is questionable which place is meant by Caesar in this „turning aside“ from the Danube. Brandis, *Dacia*, in R.-E. IV. 2, 1901, 1952, thought of the bow of the mountains of Mátra, Bükk, and Hegyalja, protruding to the north-east from the Vác bend of the Danube. But since the settlements of the Dacians in Augustus' days reached westward up to the Morava river (Marus-March),²¹ and because Caesar's words, in a strict interpretation, do not imply anything more than that the Hercynian Forest diverged from the stream of the Danube which — it is to be presumed — was keeping its original direction (*recta regione*), and as in the first century B. C. all the sharp changes of direction of the Danube were not yet known,²² we shall perhaps have to identify the mentioned part of the Hercynian Forest, diverging from the river, rather with the Lesser Carpathians where the deviation of the mountain chain from the stream of the Danube is most striking, even for an observer of to-day who would arrive, like Caesar, from the west, and proceed eastwards. For the whole large plain of Southern Slovakia separates in this region the mountains of the Hercynian Forest from the Danube, up to their next mutual approach behind the Hron river. Also F. G. De Pachtère²³ and lately A. Alföldi²⁴ interpret the quoted passage of Caesar as referring to the Lesser Carpathians.

In conformity with Caesar's notion of the extent of the area inhabited by the Dacians is Strabo's information (VII 3. 1, p. 295) saying that the territory of Southern Germany, occupied by the Hercynian Forest settled by the Suebi, borders directly on the Geti, i. e. the Dacians.²⁵ This is, of course, a statement valid only at a time when the Sarmatian Iazyges, who had repelled the Dacians from the Morava river eastwards, up to the region behind the Tisa, had not yet invaded the Great Hungarian Plain. Till then, the Dacian settlements had reached westward up to the Morava river, but, according to a report of Pliny the Older (*Nat. Hist.* IV 12, 80), they were pushed back, behind the Tisa, by the invasion of the Iazyges some time between the year 15 A. D. and the beginning of the twenties.²⁶

Towards the end of the first century A. D., an account by Tacitus (*Germ.* 1)

adds new information to the estimate of the extent of the Dacian region: Tacitus affirms that the boundary between the Germans and the Dacians is formed by mountains: *Germania omnis a Sarmatis Dacisque mutuo metu aut montibus separatur*. By these he is sure to have meant the mountain chain that still Ptolemy (II. 11, 4 sq.; III. 5, 1; 7, 1; VIII. 10, 2) called „the Sarmatian mountains (*Σαρματικὰ ὄρη*) and which it is possible to identify, with certainty, with the mountains extending in a large curve from the Vác bend of the Danube to the north-east, and join, in the Tatra, the enormous bow of the Carpathians, the ancient Bastarnian Alps. It is only to be expected, a priori, that this bow or line, forming the water-shed between the tributary rivers of the Danube and those of the Tisa, was also a dividing line of nationalities. This supposition is confirmed by the subscription of the Ist book of the Soliloquies of the Emperor Marcus, by his statement that the book had been written on the river Hron, in the region of the Quadi: *ἐν Κουάδοις πρὸς τῷ Γρανούα*. The German Quadi were thus settled in the seventies of the second century A. D. — that is to say, some forty years before the reign of Caracalla — on the Hron river, their homes reaching, of course, at least as far as the river Ipel' (Ipoly) which flows into the Danube in a direction parallel, on the whole, with the Hron, merely about 9 km. farther to the east.^{26a} And since it was, with the utmost probability, just the valley of the Ipel' where may be laid the dwellings of the Osi,²⁷ attested, if not already by the *Elogium Tusculanum*²⁸ before the beginning of our era, so at the latest from the end of the first century A. D., up to the Marcomannic Wars,²⁹ since, furthermore, the settlements of the Celtic Cotini may be localised on the Upper Hron, and those of the Suebian Buri — neighbouring, in the west, directly upon the Quadi (Cassius Dio LXXI 18 and LXXII 2, 4) and, in the east, upon the Dacias (ibid. LXVIII 8, 1) — with the utmost probability in the valley of the Upper Váh, and since, consequently, there was indeed no room left in the actual Middle Slovakia for the Dacians,^{29a} we are returning back to the statement of Ptolemy that the north-western boundary of the Dacians were the Sarmatian Mountains. This fact alone seems to me to exclude any possibility that the free Dacians could have invaded Lower Pannonia from the valleys of the rivers Hron and Ipel' at the beginning of the third century. Why should they have taken the trouble over such a long detour; in order to get, by an outflanking manoeuvre, to Aquincum, when they had a far shorter and easier route across Alföld? In both cases they had to cross the Danube in the sectors equally well protected not only by the two mighty military camps, Brigetio and Aquincum, but also by a series of minor fortresses (*burgi*) built by the Emperor Commodus in order to strengthen the Pannonian *limes* in that region.³⁰

The fact that there were the Sarmati dwelling in Alföld could hardly imply any serious obstacle, as this steppe-people lived in a state of perpetual hostility to the Romans, and even if they had not taken an active part themselves in a predatory

incursion, they hardly could be expected to prevent others from waging it.

Of course, an objection could be raised that the national conditions in that region might have changed during those thirty years which had elapsed from the Marcomannic Wars to the period of Caracalla's reign. For instance, there are just the Osi who can be supposed to have been emigrated from their ancient settlements behind the Danube into Pannonia,³¹ so that their ancestral homes could have been then occupied by the Dacians. But there is a fact again which contradicts such a conjecture: The whole of the area from Brigetio eastwards up to the natural boundary of mountains was occupied, at least to the end of the second third of the fourth century, as well as it had been at the second, by the German Quadi — as follows from the accounts of Ammianus Marcellinus about the military campaigns of the Emperors Constantius II (337—361) and Valentinianus (364—375) against the said tribe. In the reign of the former, the Roman armies advanced towards Brigetio, in order to suppress also there the last remnants of the war against the Quadi who *were inhabiting those places*,³² and when Valentinianus reached Brigetio in 375, the Quadi submitted themselves to him, *viso exercitū in gremio regni solique genitalis*. It follows also from the narration of the same author that the Quadi of the surroundings of Brigetio were then occupying the region still farther to the east — as far as the Sarmatian Mountains: Ammianus Marcellinus describes how the Emperor advanced from Alföld to Aquincum, and having built there a pontoon-bridge for all events, he crossed then the river in another place and proceeded against the Quadi who took refuge, in their perplexity and uncertainty, to the impassable mountains, apparently the Nógrád Mountains, where they lay in wait for his arrival.³³

Under these circumstances it is very difficult to imagine that the Dacians would have got thus far, from such a distance as the borders of the Province of Dacia, and that they could, from the territory on the opposite side of the Danube (i. e. from the area between the actual Komárno and Esztergom), launch an attack upon the domain of the Empire, some time in the years 212—214, and finally that Brigetio, together with its surroundings, might be then annexed to Lower Pannonia from fear of them.

Just as dubious as the existence itself of any free Dacians in the above-said territory is also the dating of the conjectural fightings of the Romans with them. The invasion was dated to the second half of the year 212, but definitely before the end of that year, for the only reason that with the supposed suppression of it was connected the conferment on three legions of Upper Pannonia of the honorary cognomen of *Antoniniana*, appearing on the inscription from Carnuntum already (CIL III 4452 and 11093 = ILS 2382 = E. Vorbeck, *Militärischriften aus Carnuntum* [Röm. Forschungen in Niederösterreich 2], 1954, No. 241) which can be dated with precision between the 10th and the 21st of December 212. But the supposition that the honorary cognomina derived from the names of the

Emperors were conferred on the military units exclusively as a distinction for their war success is far from being provable:³⁴ they could be received just as well on the occasion of the Emperor's visit³⁵ as a manifestation of loyalty of the legionaries, similarly as it was the case of the same cognomina which were accepted by the municipalities in order to show their loyalty when the ruling Emperor was visiting them on one of his journeys round his provinces. Even the formulae like the one on the above quoted inscription of the special military ranks of the three legions *Antoninarum* of Upper Pannonia, *devotissimi numini eius* (i. e. the Emperor's), or *numini eius semper devotissimus* on the Aquincum inscription of the tribune Clodius Marcellinus who was transferred from the Legio X Fretensis Antoniniana to the Legio II Adiutrix Antoniniana (CIL III 3472), commend such explanation.

It is therefore not possible to regard the fightings of the Romans with the free Dacians in the years 212–214, or an invasion of the latter into Lower Pannonia, as satisfactorily proved, and the less so in a period when the line of the *limes* in this sector became almost insurmountable because, the boundary between the two Pannoniae having been moved on eastwards as far as beyond the junction of the Váh (Waag) with the Danube, the defensibility of the *limes* fortifications was substantially heightened owing to the annexation to Lower Pannonia of the whole military zone of the camp of Brigetio, i. e. of the entire Legio I Adiutrix, as well as of some auxiliary units garrisoned at Almásfüzitő, at Crumerum (the actual Nyergesújfalu), and at Salva (Esztergom). Even the presence of the Emperor can be guessed at for that period, on the south shore of the Danube, when he was passing through that region on the occasion of his oriental expedition.³⁶

Against the above stated facts, it is possible to argue only that these could have been just the reasons why the invasion failed and the Dacians were defeated — an argument which seems to be supported by the mentions of a victory on inscriptions, especially on the one from Nyergesújfalu. But it has been demonstrated — and this was the original aim of the present contribution — that the formula *pro victoria* which occurs on both of the inscriptions in question, does not signify, as a rule, a victory actually gained, but merely a *votum susceptum*, a prayer for it.

The case of the inscriptions with the formula *pro salute, reditu et victoria*, which were dedicated to Septimius Severus, almost as a mass phenomenon, in Pannonia in the year 202, is by no means comparable with that of Caracalla's: Septimius Severus was, in 202, on his way back to Rome after the victorious conclusion of his eastern campaign, whereas Caracalla was, in 214, marching through the same country when undertaking an expedition against the Parthians, the victorious result of which could be then only wished for in advance.

NOTES

¹ A more exhaustive enumeration is given by S. W. Stevenson—C. R. Smith—F. W. Madden, *Dictionary of Roman Coins*. London 1889, 860 sqq.; Max Bernhart, *Handbuch zur Münzkunde der römischen Kaiserzeit*. Textband. Halle (Saale) 1926, 245 sqq.

² Latte, Victoria, in W. R. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie* VI, 1924—1937, 294 sqq.

³ J. Dobiáš, Nový nápis ze Zany (*Diana Veteranorum*) a římský nápis na skále trenčinské. (A New Inscription from Zana and the Roman Inscription on the Rock of Trenčín.) *Listy filologické* LXXX, N. S. V, 1957, 179—196; the same author, *La seconda spedizione germanica* (see note 9) 9 sqq.

⁴ CIL III 7842. Cf. J. M. Heer, *Der historische Wert der Vita Commodi in der Sammlung der Scriptorum historiae Augustae*. Philologus. Supplementband IX, 1904, 175; transcription by Domaszewski.

⁵ In both of the instances Győr (the ancient Arrabona) as the finding place of this inscription is indicated; but in fact it was found at Brigetio (Ritterling, *Legio*, in R.—E. XII. 1, 1924, 1325, and XII. 2, 1925, 1398 f.; L. Barkóczy, *Brigetio* [Dissert. panonicae II. 22]. Budapest 1951, 62, No 241).

⁶ G. Henzen, *Acta fratrum Arvalium quae supersunt*. Berolini 1874, 89 sqq.. — On vota extraordinaria, see *ibid.*, 114 sqq.

^{6a} A most convincing proof is furnished by the inscription of Ostia, dedicated *pro salute et reditu imp. Antonini Aug., Faustinae Aug. liberorumque eorum etc.* (CIL XIV 20 = ILS 372) because in this instance, the mentioned Empress Faustina never returned home from the Emperor's expedition against the usurker Avidius Cassius, on which she had accompanied her husband together with the whole family: she died at the Cappadocian Halala.

⁷ Paul L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts* I. Stuttgart 1931, 215 sqq. with note 930.

⁸ Enumerated by Paul Steiner, *Die dona militaria*. *Bonner Jahrbücher* 114/115, 1906, 47 sqq. Cf. B. Barbieri, *Nuove iscrizioni di Marsala*. *ΚΩΚΑΛΟΣ*, studi pubblicati dall'Istituto di Storia Antica dell'Università di Palermo VII, 1961, 16 ff.

⁹ CIL VI 1959 = ILS 1326. Cf. J. Dobiáš, *Expediitio Germanica secunda et tertia*. „Českou minulostí“. (Volume of papers dedicated to Prof. V. Novotný in occasion of his 60th birthday.) Praha 1929, 16 sq.; the same author, *La seconda spedizione germanica degli imperatori Marco e Commodo alla luce delle iscrizioni*. *Atti del terzo Congresso internazionale di epigrafia greca e latina* (Roma 4—8 Settembre 1957). Roma 1959, 6 sq.

¹⁰ Bibliography; L. Barkóczy, *Dák tolmács Brigetiobán* — Ein dakischer Dolmetscher in Brigetio. *Archaeologiai értesítő*. Ser. III, V—VI, 1944—1945, 178—192; G. Alföldy, *Studia Pannonica* 2. *Serapis oltár Nyergesújfaluból* — Ein Serapis-Altar aus Nyergesújfalu. *Ibid.* 1961, 26—31; J. Fitz, *L. Alfenus Avitianus* [István király múzeum közleményei. A. Tanulmányok Fejér megye múltjából 10]. *Székesfehérvár* 1960; The same author, *Il Soggiorno di Caracalla in Pannonia nel 214* [Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma. Quaderni di documentazione II. 2, 1961]; The same, *A Military History of Pannonia from the Marcomann Wars to the Death of Alexander Severus (180—235)*. *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XIV, 1962, 25—112.

¹¹ CIL III 3637. Emendated reading in: L. Barkóczy, *Az V-S betűk sajátos összekötési módja a pannoniai feliratokon* — Eine spezielle Ligatur der V-S-Buchstaben auf pannonischen Inschriften. *Archaeol. értesítő* 1941, 26, No. 6. An almost complete counterpart to the quoted formula is furnished by the inscription of Porto, dedicated *ὕπερ σωτηρίας καὶ ἐπαρόδου καὶ αἰδίου διαμονῆς* of the Emperors Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Iulia Domna (IGRRP I 380). On Alfenus, besides Fitz's quoted paper, cf. also his new paper *Legatū Augusti pro*

praetore Pannoniae Inferioris. Acta antiqua Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae XI, 1963, 287 f.

¹² Arnold Schober, Der Götterpfeiler von Totis. Belvedere VI, 1924, 177 sqq. (not available here); L. Barkóczy, Brigetio [Dissertationes Pannonicae II, No. 22]. Budapest 1944, Taf. LVIII, 1–3. Cf. Weinreich, Zwölfgötter, in W. R. Roscher, Ausführ. Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie VI. 809 sqq.; Ch. Picard, L'autel circulaire du Dodéka théon d'Ostie et le culte des douze dieux dans l'Empire romain. Revue des études latines XXIII, 1945, 44–47; Erwan Marec, Un témoignage du culte des douze grands dieux à Hippone. Libyca VII, 1959, 121–140.

¹³ Unless the word *perpetuitas* might have been used in a lowered sense, as an equivalent to the expression *incolumitas*, just like in the thanksgiving formula in the Acta fratrum Arvalium quoted above (p. 40).

¹⁴ The legend FORT RED or, in full, FORT REDVCI, is not to be taken always for a thanksgiving form for a return, as e. g. in the well-known example of Augustus who, on the return from the Orient in 19 B. C., accepted, out of all the honours offered to him, only the one of consecrating of an altar to the goddess Fortuna Redux (Τύχην Ἐπαναγώγῳ) by the Senate (V. Gardthausen, Augustus und seine Zeit II. 2, 483 sq., n. 187): this follows most convincingly from the fact that when some Emperors were leaving for a military expedition abroad, coins bearing the legend PROPECTIO AVG as well as those with FORT RED were struck quite simultaneously, although it is out of the question (also from other reasons) that the Emperor could have returned from his expedition in the meantime (C. H. Dodd, Chronology of the Eastern Campaigns of the Emperor Lucius Verus. Numismatic Chronicle 1911, 213 and Chronology of the Danubian Wars of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus. Ibid. 1913, 172 sq.; Paul L. Strack, Untersuchungen zur röm. Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts I. Stuttgart 1931, 215 sqq. with n. 930). Therefore, also the simultaneously issued coins with the legend SALVTI AVG may be interpreted only as a wish for the health for the coming expedition, not as thanks for the Emperor's happy and safe return.

^{14a} The cognomen *Antoniniana* is applicable not exclusively to Caracalla, though in the majority of cases, it is he who would be meant by it, since it is met with as early as under Septimius Severus. The term of 201, given by G. M. Bersanetti, I soprannomi imperiali variabili degli *auxilia* dell' esercito romano. Athenaeum XXVIII, N. S. XVIII, 1940, 110 ff. was pushed back to the year 198, if not even to 196, by J. Fitz, Der Besuch des Septimius Severus in Pannonien im Jahre 202 u. Z. Acta archaeologica Academiae scientiarum Hungaricae XI, 1959, 254.

¹⁵ Cf. an inscription therefrom, CIL III 4288, dedicated *genio commercii et negotiantium* of the place, in addition to other material evidence about the local trade in which also Oriental merchants, and especially the Syrians, played an important part: J. Dobiáš, Orientální vlivy v římském Podunají — Oriental Influences in the Roman Danubian Basin. Volume dedicated to Prof. J. Bidlo in occasion of his 60th birthday. Praha 1928, 27 sqq.; the same author, Le strade romane nel territorio cecoslovacco [Istituto di studi romani. Quaderni dell'Impero Le grandi strade del mondo romano V]. Roma 1937, 8 sq. with n. 13–15; L. Barkóczy, Brigetio 20 sq.

¹⁶ Carl Patsch, Beiträge zur Völkerkunde von Südosteuropa V. 2. Der Kampf um den Donaauraum unter Domitian und Trajan. Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philos.-hist. Kl. 217, 1, 1937, 181 sq.

¹⁷ A different matter are the accounts of chronicles or annals, as well as those of biographies (see above, p. 39).

¹⁸ Oscar Broneer, Excavations in the Agora at Corinth. American Journal of Archaeology XXXVII, 1933, 567 sq. = L'Année épigraphique 1934, No. 2. H.-G. Pflaum, Les carrières procuratoriennes équestres sous le Haut-Empire romain I. Paris 1960, 170, N. 74.

¹⁹ A. Betz, Vettius 43), in R.-E. VIII A 2, 1958, 1866.

²⁰ M. Macrea, Apărarea graniței de vest și nord-est a Daciei pe timpul împăratului Caracalla. Studi și cercetări de istorie veche VIII, 1957, 215—251.

²¹ Strabo VII 1. 3. p. 290: *τά γε τῶν Σοήβων* --- *ἔθνη τὰ μὲν ἐντὸς οἰκεῖ, τὰ δὲ ἐκτὸς τοῦ [Ἐρκανίου] ὄρουμοῦ, ὁμοῖα τοῖς Γέταις*; Pliny the Older, Nat. Hist. IV 12, 80 (see n. 26).

²² K. Müller, Die ältesten Weltkarten VI. Stuttgart 1898; E. Polaschek, Ptolemy's Geography in a new light. Imago mundi XIV, 1959, 32 sq.

²³ F. G. De Pachtère, Salluste et la découverte du Danube. École française de Rome. Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire XXVIII, 1908, 82 sqq.

²⁴ A. Alföldi, Zur Geschichte des Karpatenbeckens im I. Jahrhundert v. Chr. [Ostmittel-europäische Bibliothek 37]. Budapest-Leipzig 1942, 10 and 24.

²⁵ *Τὸ δὲ νότιον μέρος τῆς Γερμανίας* --- *τὸ μὲν συνεχὲς ἀκμῆν ὑπὸ τῶν Σοήβων κατέχεται ἔτ' εὐθὺς ἢ τῶν Γετῶν συνάπτει γῆ.*

²⁶ *Superiora autem inter Danuvium et Hercynium saltum usque ad Pannonica hiberna Carnuntus Germanorumque ibi confinium campos et plana tenent Iazyges Sarmatae, montes vero et saltus pulsi ab his (i. e. Iazygibus) Daci ad Pathissum amnem a Maro.* Interpreted by J. Dobiaš, The Expedition of M. Vinicius, cos. 19. B. C., beyond the Danube. Eunomia I, 1939, 250. For the date of the invasion of the Iazyges, the same author, Regnum Vannianum. Český časopis historický XLIV, 1938, 251 sqq.

^{26a} I. Bóna, Beiträge zur Archäologie und Geschichte der Quaden. Acta archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae XV, 1963, 239—307, with a map on p. 297.

²⁷ C. Müllenhoff, Deutsche Altertumskunde II. 326; J. Dobiaš, Epigrafické studie k dějinám a národopisu československého území v době římské (Epigraphic Studies to the History and Ethnography of the Czechoslovak Territory in the Roman Period). 3. Osi. Časopis Národního Musea XCVII, 1923, 220—229. E. Polaschek, Osi, in R.-E. XVIII. 2, 1942, 1581 sq., preferred to this interpretation the one given by V. Ondrouch, Der römische Denarfund von Vyškovce aus der Frühkaiserzeit [Práce Učené společnosti Šafaříkovy v Bratislavě 15]. Bratislava 1934, 35 sqq., who, explaining the series of tribes enumerated by Tacitus (Germ. 43: *Retro Marsigni, Cotini, Osi, Buri terga Marcomanorum Quadorumque claudunt*) not in the order from the west to the east, as Tacitus used to do, but erroneously (proved by J. Dobiaš, K výkladu Tacitovy Germanie [To the Explanation of Tacitus Germania], chapter 43. Listy filologické LXV, 1938, 14—30, and against Ondrouch's objections *ibid.* 252—262, reply p. 263—272) as if they were enumerated from the Vác bend of the Danube in a straight northern direction, to the Carpathians, puts the Osi north of the Cotini (in the Slovakian Ore Mountains), in the direct neighbourhood of the supposed Illyrian component part in the archaeological finds of the so-called Púchov Culture, which H. Beninger attributes to the Sidones of Ptolemy — in his opinion Bastarnian. But the only reason for Polaschek's choice is the very weak argument that „there are no such Illyrian *Bodenfunde* in the Ipel' valley“.

²⁸ In its line 6, the incomplete COTINOS O[--- has been completed in *Osos* since the first edition, Ant. von Premerstein, Ein Elogium des M. Vinicius Cos. 19 v. Chr. Oesterr. Jahreshfte VII, 1904. Only Fr. Miltner, Augustus' Kampf um die Donaugrenze, Klio XXX, N. F. XII, 1937, 215 sq., tried to complete it as *Cotinos Quados*. Against which opinion, J. Dobiaš, Kotinové. Český časopis historický XLIII, 1937, 480 sq., n. 3, and The Expedition of M. Vinicius, cos. 19 B. C., beyond the Danube. Eunomia I, 1939, 54 sqq.

²⁹ Tacitus, Germ. 28 and 46; SHA; Marcus 22, 1.

^{29a} The fragments of the so-called „Dacian“ pottery, found at the lower streams of the said rivers, cannot be used as a proof against this inference drawn from literary sources which enumerate the single tribes explicitly by their names; the ethnical classification of those frag-

ments is — in spite of their conventional designation — completely enigmatical, and their chronology is equally uncertain and hardly compatible with the period about 200 A. D.: all attempts made up to the present at their dating have attributed them to a far earlier period.

³⁰ J. Dobiáš, *Expeditio Germanica Secunda et Tertia*, 29 sq.; J. Fitz, *A military history of Pannonia* 76 sq.

³¹ J. Dobiáš, *Epigrafické studie k dějinám a národopisu československého území 3. Osi. Časopis Národ. Musea XCVII. 1, 1923, 220 sq.*

³² Ammianus Marcellinus, XVII 12, 21: *His in barbarico gesis Bregetionem castra commota sunt, ut etiam ibi belli Quadorum reliquias, circa illos agitantium tractus, lacrimae vel sanguis exstinguerent.*

³³ Ammianus Marcellinus, XXX. 5. 13: *Praemisso igitur Merobaude - - - ad vastandos cremandosque barbaricos pagos - - - Valentinianus Acincum propere castra commovit navigiisque ad repentinum casum coniunctis et contabulato celeri studio ponte per partem aliam transiit in Quados, speculantes quidem ex diruptis montibus eius adventum, quo plerique ancipites incertique accidentium cum suis caritatibus secesserunt, sed stupore defixos, cum in regionibus suis contra quam opinabantur augusta cernerent signa.*

³⁴ Ritterling, *Legio*, in R.-E. XII. 1, 1924, 1324 sq. and XII. 2, 1925, 1367 sqq.; G. M. Bersanetti, *I soprannomi imperiali variabili degli auxilia dell'esercito romano. Athenaeum XXVIII, N. S. XVIII, 1940, 107 sqq.*; J. Fitz, *Besuch des Septimius in Pannonien* (see n. 14a) 254 sq.

³⁵ So J. Dobiáš, *K datování římských cihel ze Starého Města na Můravě* (The Dating of Roman Bricks from Staré Město in Moravia). *Archeologické rozhledy* XIV, 1962, 60, n. 10.

³⁶ This objection to the explanation of G. Alföldy, *Studia Pannonica* 31, was raised by J. Fitz, *Il soggiorno di Caracalla*, 14, n. 78. Fitz himself is connecting the hints of the inscriptions at a Dacian war rather with the account in Cassius Dio LXXVIII. 27. 5. III. 435 ed. Boissevain, that Caracalla came to an agreement with the Dacians and received hostages from them.