

ample remains concerning the second and third centuries. It is an established fact that the former represents one of the most incontrovertible pieces of information on the possession of citizenship (except in the case of usurpation). Nevertheless, aside from this gap, the volume provides a complete overview of issues related to the subject, and the featured contributions are precise and rich, from the point of view of both documentation and bibliography.

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

DONATO FASOLINI
donato.fasolini@gmail.com

CONNECTIONS AMONG ROMAN PROVINCES

CRISTEA (S.), TIMOC (C.), DE SENA (E.C.) (edd.) *Africa, Egypt and the Danubian Provinces of the Roman Empire. Population, Military and Religious Interactions (2nd–3rd centuries AD)*. (BAR International Series 3058.) Pp. x+98, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2021. Paper, £27. ISBN: 978-1-4073-5904-5. doi:10.1017/S0009840X22001822

A great number of studies during the last decades have been dedicated to interregional interactions within the Roman empire. They focus on the influence of the major imperial, cultural and religious centres over the provinces and regions, including *Religionpolitik*, but also on regional cases in order to study the resilience of the Roman empire. The possible interactions between Danubian provinces and other centres such as Italy and Egypt have already attracted scholarly attention, and some of these studies have been published in the BAR International Series. Containing papers presented at an international symposium held in Timișoara in July 2018 and dedicated to one of the keynote speakers and organisers of that event, Prof. Alexandru Diaconescu from Babeș-Bolyai University at Cluj, who passed away in September 2021, the book under consideration broadens the scope of inquiry by examining possible interrelations between the northern and the southern limits of the empire – North Africa and Egypt from one side and the Danubian provinces (Noricum, Pannonia, Raetia, Dacia, Moesia and Illyricum) on the other. Such interest is justified by both the attested pre-Roman connections between Thrace and Egypt with the Egyptian political presence, and the high level of Egyptian religious influence within the Roman empire for various reasons and widespread trade between both African regions and the rest of the empire, including the Danubian provinces. Some of the articles also contribute to the so-called *archaeology of the imponderable*, which allows for the study of such topics as social and individual identity, fear, hope and desire, and how these features manifest in the archaeological record and which broaden our understanding of the ancients' lives.

The volume contains an introduction and eight chapters grouped as follows: the Roman army, public life, and the African and mostly Egyptian influence on the religious life in the Danubian provinces. In the first group are two articles dealing with aspects of the mobility of the Roman troops and veterans from the Danubian provinces in North Africa. The first topic is discussed by F. Matei-Popescu, who, after scrupulously studying the epigraphic

evidence, concludes that the auxiliary *vexillationes* dispatched to Mauretania Caesariensis and Tingitana to participate in Antoninus Pius' Moorish wars between 142–156 CE did not build new detachments, but entire units, i.e. *turmae* were sent instead. The proposed unity of the two Mauretaniae under one governor is a practice that finds a parallel in other provinces including Dacia and may find support in the mention of the *expeditio* that was undertaken by the Roman army, discussed in the second paper. It seems to me that the epigraphic sources also allow the observation that the Danubian troops as a whole were engaged more intensively in the conflict in North Africa in the second war and onward, i.e. after 148, rather than before. The second article by L. Mihăilescu-Bîrliba treats another aspect of the topic – the settling of these soldiers in North Africa and the grounds for it. Based on the epigraphy the author argues for the undertaking of periodic demobilisations of troops from Moesia Inferior to Mauretania Caesariensis, whose veterans married local women and stayed in North Africa, given the relative stability of the Danubian provinces and the fighting capacity of the auxiliary units.

The scope of the rest of the papers, with one exception, is focused on the Danubian provinces and the various aspects of Egyptian presence and influence on society. For instance, L. Ruscu, quoting five published inscriptions from Tomis and Perinthos from the second century CE revealing the existence of trade associations of Alexandrians in these cities, concludes that the disappearance of the royal patronage of the Ptolemies and the enhanced attraction of Thrace led to increased movement of immigrants from Egypt to Thrace, which reversed the Hellenistic pattern.

The next chapters discuss details of religious life in some parts of both areas, which were caused by the immediate presence of immigrants or through indirect influence, so-called Egyptianism. Thus, J. Hangartner's article presents a comparative analysis of the Asclepius cult in North Africa and Dacia, Apulum and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegethusa in particular. A perception of the Roman cult as dominated by features originating in the eastern provinces is common to both areas, while features of local society and history, including the possible exercise of *Religionspolitik* in North Africa, differ within the so-called *interpretatio Africana*. Two case studies – one from Thrace, the other Dacia – follow Hangartner's analysis. V. Atanassova discusses some material evidence from Serdica for Serapis and the Isis cult; a fragment of a pediment with a dedication to Zeus-Capitolius-Helios-Sarapis and local coinage suggest that temples for both existed. L. Bricault, D. Deac and I. Piso analyse the epigraphy of the Isiac cult in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegethusa. Each of these seventeen inscriptions, previously published, were found in the *praetorium procuratoris* and are assumed to refer to a *Serapeum* that was located within the complex and that was built in Caracalla's time. It is believed that most of them were discovered in this *Serapeum*. Special attention is paid to one inscription that, although fragmentary, seems to contain exhortations for the initiations into the cult of Isis referring to Book 11 of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

The last two chapters are more theoretical. C. Szabó focuses on modern scholarship on Egyptianism and its perception as a religious influence in the vast region of Western Illyricum. The link between Egyptianism and Africanism in the Danubian provinces is, however, obscure, and Africanism could not be attested yet in the region under consideration for sure. Cristea and Timoc discuss the concepts, methodology and specific terminology that should be used when studying the 'Egyptian' material and deities of Egyptian origin or Egyptised ones, with specific reference to the few examples from Dierna in Dacia. The authors attempt to study as far as possible the social context of this religiosity, which is more complex and dynamic than previously thought.

The book deals with the interrelations between two areas within the Roman empire that differed radically in climate, culture and geography. At first glance, the dissemination of Egyptianism from the second century onwards in the Empire, including the Danubian

provinces, and taking into account pre-Roman interrelations attested in Thrace, may justify this approach. But the specifics of Egyptianism and the nature of Africanism, which, as revealed by Szabó, cannot be applied to Egyptianism, make such an approach more or less unconventional. For instance, the articles by Hangartner, Mihăilescu-Bîrliba and Szabó clearly reveal that North Africa did not become attractive for people from the Danubian provinces as a whole. One may recall the refusal of the Danubian veterans to settle in Mauretania Caesariensis, despite the possibility of owning land and economic prosperity for the demobilised veterans and their descendants, as well as the dispatch of *iuniores Bessos (mille)* to Mauretania Tingitana in the second half of the second century (CIL 3.9381), which left no mark on local life. It seems that both regions developed in their own way, and the similarities attested between them should not be regarded as a mark of interrelations but as a consequence of their inclusion within the Roman world. As both regions were border zones of the empire, and North Africa was among the greatest trade centres of the Roman world, a possible approach to studying the interrelations between the Danubian provinces and North Africa could be as *limes* provinces and through the trade network. This approach remains beyond the scope of the book. Most of the essays study various forms of Egyptianism based on the material from Dacia and the vast area of Western Illyricum. The articles of Szabó and Cristea and Timoc represent an important step forward in this direction by studying the local material through the latest methodology and achievement that makes clear distinctions between the so-called Egyptianism of materials, practices, behaviour etc. and the influence that is due to the presence of an Egyptian agent. Sadly, this approach did not find its place in all the contributions; most of the studies are limited geographically or by the sources used. For instance, Atanassova makes a complex study of the available sources, but within the framework of a case study on Serdica; thus her observations cannot be applied to Thrace in general. Similarly, Ruscu limits her study to five inscriptions, although numerous small finds and even mosaic pavements reveal the arrival of Egyptians in Thrace and even of an Egyptian entering the provincial elite. The contribution of Bricault, Deac and Piso presents a glimpse of the Isiac cults in Dacia, but based on the epigraphic monuments only. The limitation of the sources undoubtedly makes the studies incomplete. In addition, more caution is needed when using some types of sources for the dissemination of Egyptian or Egyptised cults, such as, for example, provincial coinage and architecture, i.e. the interpretation of a cult building as a 'temple'. Recent epigraphic studies reveal a broad range of terms referring to other possible interpretations of the buildings, some of which may in fact have hosted several cults, as seems to be the case in Serdica. The remains in Sarmizegethusa interpreted as those of the *Serapeum* do not indicate the ordinary temple building as well.

The chapters do not cover all the aspects of the possible interrelations between the Danubian provinces and Egypt and North Africa, such as, for example, trade in its various forms. Sadly, it seems that not all of the studies presented at the symposium found their way into the publication. Despite this criticism, the editors' and authors' efforts are admirable and the use of new analytical concepts like 'lived ancient religion' and 'resilience theory' is the only possible way to study the issues discussed in the book. The methodology and terminology proposed, although applied to scanty material, shows the 'path' that such studies should follow; one hopes that this book will inspire more scholars to consider the interrelations of other Danubian provinces such as Moesia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Pannonia Inferior, Pannonia Superior, Noricum and Raetia, not only with Egypt and North Africa, but also with other regions of the Roman empire.

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

IVO TOPALILOV
itopalilov@yahoo.com