

## **Chapter 5:**

### **The Numerical Indicator Scale Summary for the Dacian Annexation**

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This chapter summarizes the material presented in the preceding section, and applies the numerical indicator scale, introduced in the third chapter of this thesis, to the results. The findings of the traditional research are illustrated in graph form in order to provide a synopsis of the advantages and disadvantages associated with Trajan's annexation of Dacia.

### **Economic Factors<sup>759</sup>**

Economic factors resulting from the Dacian annexation were overwhelmingly positive for Rome. Some regional trade losses can be demonstrated, primarily because of the dispute with the Iazyges after the conclusion of the Dacian conquest. The elimination of disruptions to Moesian trade after the conquest however was the primary reason for the improvement in regional trade after the annexation.<sup>760</sup> Furthermore, the Dacians were active participants in trade in their region, therefore benefits were gained by the

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<sup>759</sup> All section headings match those in Chapter 4.

<sup>760</sup> Regional trade has been assigned a value of +6.

increased taxation on trade with the barbarian peoples engaged in trade with pre-conquest Dacia.

Local trade with the newly-annexed region also provided a significant advantage to Rome.<sup>761</sup> Improvements to the trade-related infrastructure of Dacia reduced the costs associated with local trade between Rome and the new province. Although there was undoubtedly some reduction in the available manpower from war-related losses, which ordinarily might have had a detrimental effect on local trade, Trajan's introduction of a significant number of colonists shortly after the annexation ensured that advantage was nonetheless gained from increased local trade. This conquest provided Rome with unrestricted access to many valuable mineral and agricultural resources that helped ensure that this factor was deemed advantageous.

Rome was able to achieve high-efficiency economic collaboration with Dacia after the annexation largely because of the degree of craft-specialisation and centralisation evident in the region.<sup>762</sup> The long-standing economic contact between the Dacian and Graeco-Roman worlds prior to this annexation saw the Dacian economy become more Romanised and complex, engaging in

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<sup>761</sup> Local trade has been assigned a value of +5.

<sup>762</sup> High-efficiency economic collaboration has been assigned a value of +7.

significant trade with a number of external partners and the adoption of the Roman tri-metallic currency. This made it easier to incorporate the indigenous population into the Roman economic system, and provided Rome with a significant advantage.

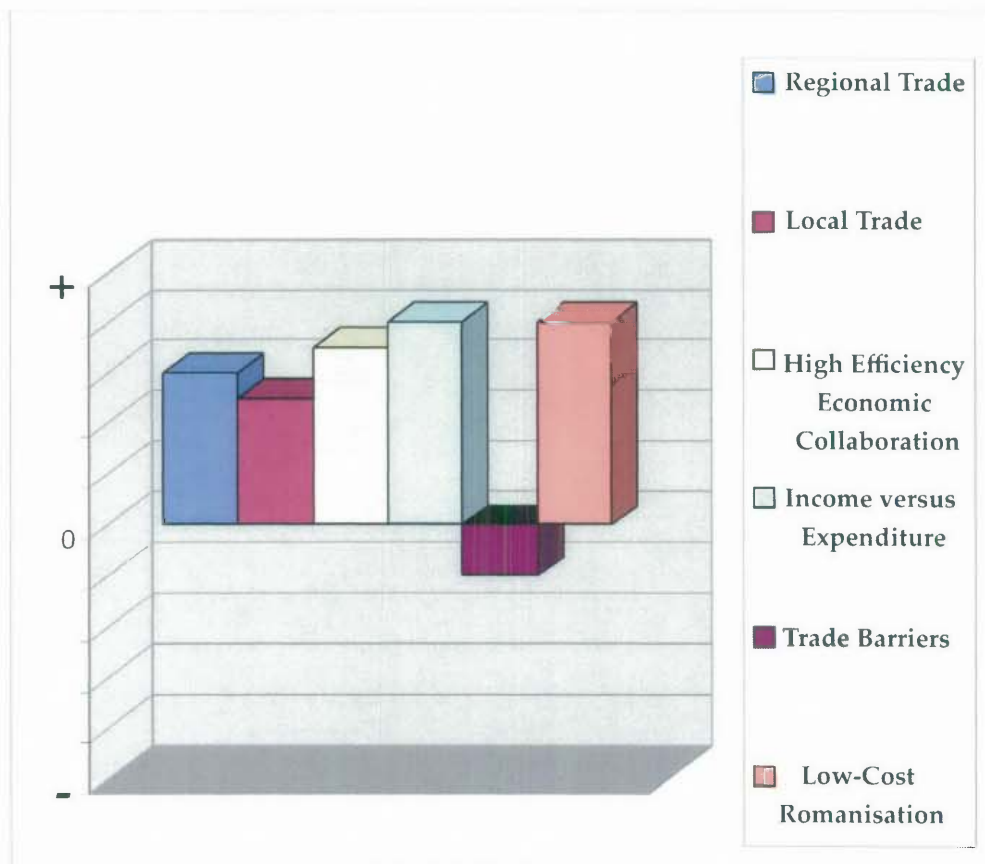


Fig. 32. Dacian Economic Advantage Summary

Although a great many noteworthy expenses were associated with the conquest and annexation of Dacia, the Romans were able to elicit a substantial economic advantage from this annexation.<sup>763</sup> Expenses, including the

<sup>763</sup> Income versus expenditure has been assigned a value of +8.

economic advantage from this annexation.<sup>763</sup> Expenses, including the preparations for the war, the war itself and the ongoing expenses associated with the administration and garrisoning of the region, were exceeded by the plunder captured and more importantly the ongoing wealth generated by exploiting the natural resources of this province. This ensured that what Rome was able to extract from Dacia exceeded these costs, providing Rome with a substantial economic advantage.

The apparent desire of Dacian monarchs for energetic international trade and a lack of evidence to the contrary suggests that the Dacians did not impose trade barriers on Roman trade into the region.<sup>764</sup> This suggests that the Romans gained no advantage from the removal of trade barriers as a result of this annexation. This factor has been deemed to have caused Rome a minor disadvantage because of the demonstrated desire of the pre-annexation monarchs to engage in vigorous trade with Rome.

Like Roman society, Dacia exhibited a highly-stratified social order that had become accustomed to remote governance. Dacia had become a centralised society familiar with producing surpluses and paying taxes,

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<sup>763</sup> Income versus expenditure has been assigned a value of +8.

<sup>764</sup> Changes to trade barriers has been assigned a value of -2.

which would have contributed to a reduction in the costs associated with the process of Romanisation. The high potential for low-cost Romanisation proved substantially advantageous to Rome.<sup>765</sup> The Dacians were, prior to the annexation, readily engaged in a process of self-Romanisation.

The vast majority of the factors examined in order to determine the level of economic advantage accrued by Rome from an annexation of Dacia have been determined to have been advantageous.<sup>766</sup> The Dacian annexation clearly provided Rome and the emperor with a substantial and lasting economic benefit.

## **Geopolitical Factors**

Although two of the five factors examined in the geopolitical section of this work, manpower and hostility on other fronts, resulted in disadvantages to Rome, the three remaining factors, security, tactical and strategic changes, provided advantages important enough to easily counter the disadvantages faced.

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<sup>765</sup> The potential for low-cost Romanisation has been assigned a value of +8.

<sup>766</sup> The only negative factor evident in this grouping is changes in trade barriers with the conquered.

In order to effectively protect the new province from internal and external threats the Romans built and manned two fortresses and 49 forts, which they placed along the boundaries of the new province and near the native population centres in the province, protecting against external threats, acting as a garrison and preventing internal mobilisation of discontent. The placement of two Roman legions, IIII *Flavia* and XIII *Gemina*, in the forts at Apulum and Berzobis and the auxiliary forces in the fortresses illustrates that the manpower required to garrison and defend post-annexation Dacia was the source of a substantial disadvantage to the Romans.<sup>767</sup> Although suggested manpower figures for the region vary significantly, the calculations presented in this work<sup>768</sup> suggest that the troop numbers stationed in the region rose by approximately 32,500 soldiers even though the number of troops stationed on the Danube was reduced by about 10,000 troops between Viminacium and the Olt river.

A further disadvantage to Rome resulted because of the increased hostility evident in the region after the conquest. Although the examination of this factor did not produce evidence for any new hostility, it did demonstrate

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<sup>767</sup> This factor has been rated at -5.

<sup>768</sup> See manpower chapter 4.

the region resulted primarily from Trajan's refusal to return the Banat plain to the Iazyges after the completion of the annexation. Additionally, more direct contact with the Germanic Quadi and Marcomanni increased pre-existing hostility and the potential for Roman territory to be threatened directly.

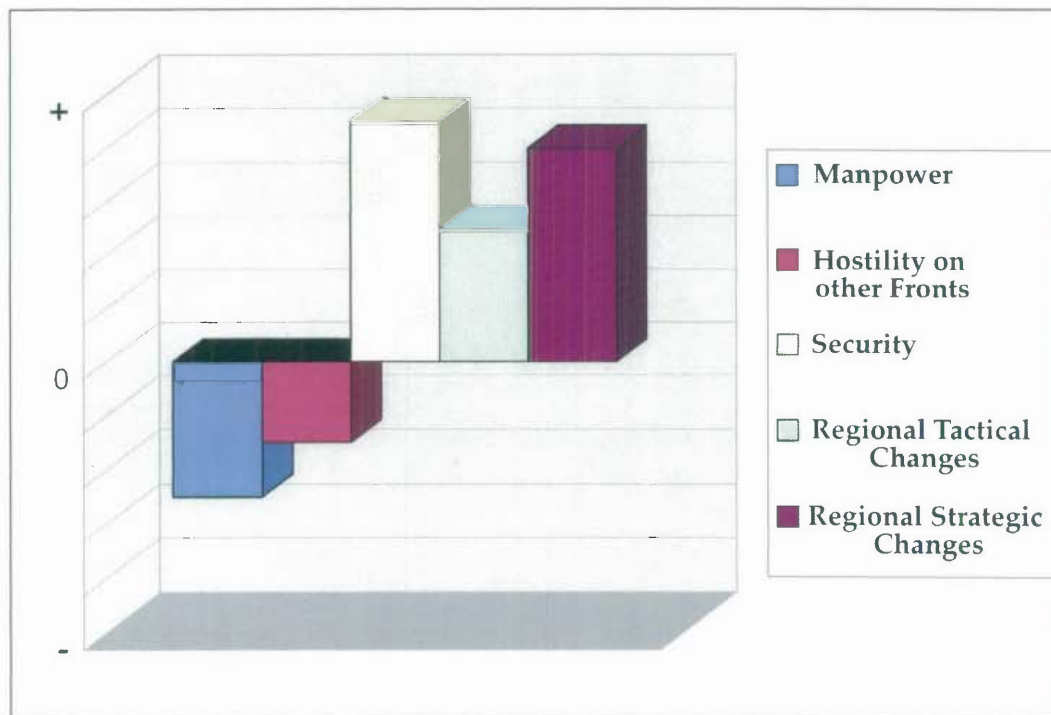


Fig. 33. Dacian Geopolitical Advantage Summary

The Dacian annexation substantially increased the security of the Empire.<sup>770</sup> The Dacians themselves were responsible for significant amounts of damage on the Roman side of the frontier, particularly in Moesia, interrupting the peace and security of the region. In addition to direct hostility from the Dacians, the Romans benefited by breaking up a large stretch of Rome's

<sup>770</sup> This factor has been assigned a rating of +9.



the peace and security of the region. In addition to direct hostility from the Dacians, the Romans benefited by breaking up a large stretch of Rome's enemies along one frontier and preventing the organisation of an anti-Roman coalition potentially including the Roxolani, Iazyges, Bastarnae, and the Parthians by the most centralised people in direct contact with the Roman frontier north of the Rhine-Danube border.

The annexation of Dacia allowed Trajan to position military forces so that he could rapidly assemble a substantial force to counter any emergent regional threat.<sup>771</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Trajan made any serious attempt to curtail all travel through Dacia by nearby Sarmatian tribes. The annexation of Dacia allowed him to monitor and, if he desired, exert control over the movements of these peoples, providing a clear tactical advantage for Rome.

As a result of this annexation Rome benefited from a substantial strategic advantage.<sup>772</sup> This conquest eliminated the most serious and persistent threat on Rome's northern frontier, broke the contact and communication lines between the Sarmatian tribes situated on either side of Dacia, and prevented

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<sup>771</sup> The tactical changes factor has been assigned a +5 rating.

<sup>772</sup> This factor has been assigned a rating of +8.

the potential formation of an anti-Roman alliance.

## Systemic Frustration

The Roman inclusiveness of the conquered provided a moderate benefit to Rome after the conquest of Dacia.<sup>773</sup> A substantial number of the pre-annexation indigenous elite did not survive the wars, perishing either in combat or by committing suicide. This reduction in the numbers of the native elite reduced the potential for Roman inclusiveness to have an effect on Roman administrative expenditures. The practice of using the indigenous elite to administer the new province could not have been as comprehensive as it would otherwise have been. The elite that did survive the conquest were clearly included in the administration of the newly-formed province, providing a moderate advantage overall from this factor by reducing the potential for these elite participating in the mobilisation of political discontent.

Pre-annexation Dacia, like Rome, was a highly stratified society which demonstrated a clear movement towards centralisation and craft specialisation under the control of a geographically remote central government.<sup>774</sup> The pre-annexation aspirations of the Dacian hierarchy appear to have been compatible with those of the Romans for the province after the conquest, which provided

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<sup>773</sup> Inclusiveness has been rated at +6.

<sup>774</sup> This factor has been given a rating of +6.

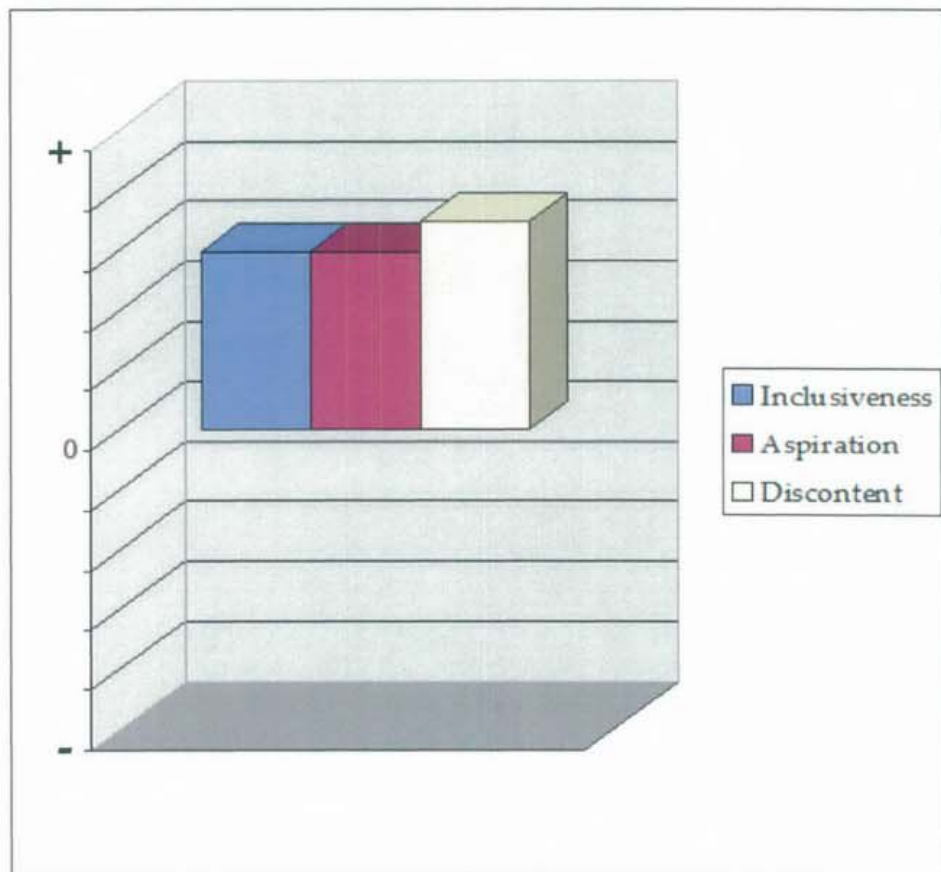


Fig. 34. Dacian Systemic Advantage Summary

significant advantages for Rome. Decebalus' reign saw the indigenous elite operating as regional administrators on behalf of the crown. This system, of local administrators imbued with power by a central authority controlling local day-to-day governance, closely resembles the systems put in place by the Romans after the completion of the annexation, significantly reducing the potential for the mobilisation of political discontent, and accelerating the adoption of the process of Romanisation after the conquest.

Evidence indicates that the interactions between the Roman occupation

forces, the colonists and the indigenous population were relatively peaceful in the post-annexation period. The Dacian population were actively engaged in trade with nearby Roman fortresses often supplying them with native pottery. Additionally, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the Romans were required to implement exceptional coercive or repressive measures in Dacia after the completion of the conquest. This suggests that levels of discontent were low, and did not become mobilised illustrating a substantial advantage gained by Rome.<sup>775</sup>

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<sup>775</sup> Discontent has been rated at +7.

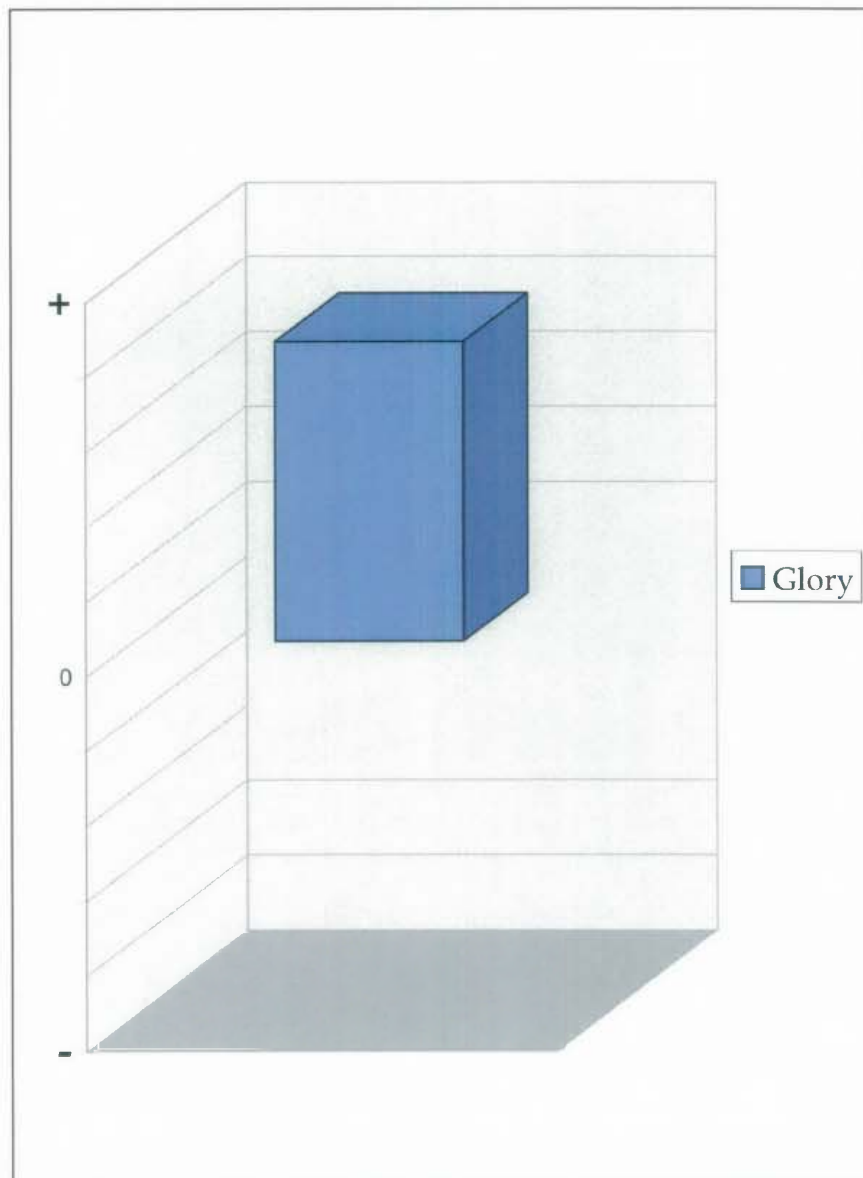


Fig. 35. Dacian Internal Advantage Summary

## Internal Factors

The annexation of Dacia was extremely well-advertised by Trajan and his contemporaries through a variety of media. The Dacian defeat became the iconic representation of this emperor's reign. Numerous literary works about this success were written or planned, Trajan's forum was comprehensively decorated with depictions of Dacian warriors bearing proud stances, with

their warlike nature clearly illustrated on the spiral frieze of Trajan's column and on Roman coinage minted after the victory. The multitude of depictions bearing the image of the emperor actively participating in the defeat of the Dacians, either in his role as commander of the Roman army, giving orders or receiving embassies, or as a mounted combatant riding down enemy soldiers were undoubtedly intended to maximise the glory Trajan could claim as a result of this annexation.<sup>776</sup>

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<sup>776</sup> This factor has been assigned a value of +8.

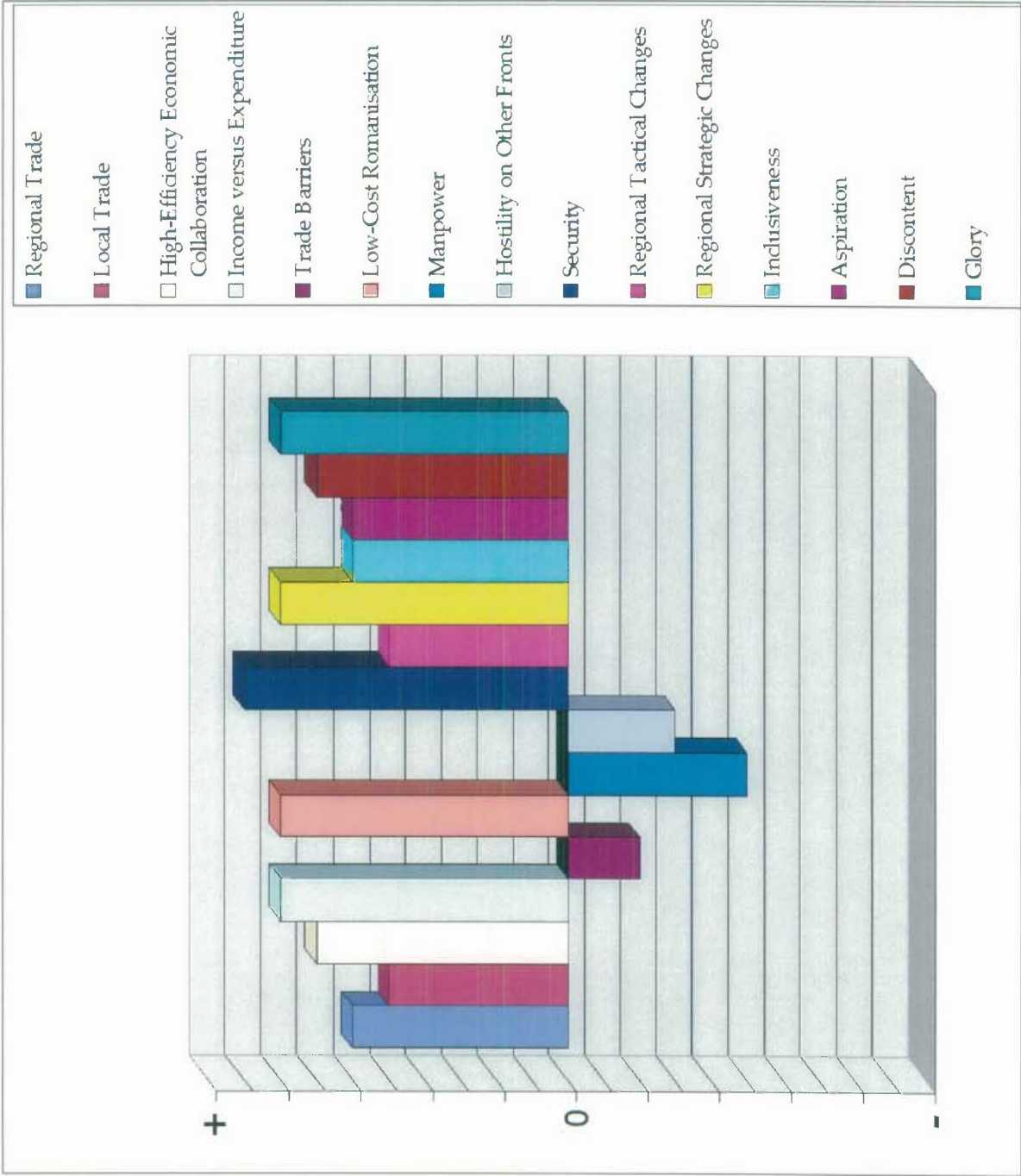


Fig. 36. Overall Dacian Summary



## Summary

The Dacian annexation was the source of several Roman disadvantages, however overall this annexation resulted in significant advantages for Rome and Trajan. This is demonstrated by a comprehensive assessment of the four key areas examined in chapter four: economic advantage, geopolitical advantage, systemic frustration, and internal factors. The combined assessment graph below provides a clear visual representation of the level of advantage received by Rome as a result of a successful annexation of this province. It seems likely that prior to engaging in this act of conquest that Trajan engaged in some form of assessment of the likely costs and benefits of annexing Dacia, and concluded that the overall result would create significant advantages of himself and the empire.

The final chapter of this thesis examines the potential advantages and disadvantages that would likely have resulted from an annexation of the German controlled territory beyond the Rhine River, in order to provide an example of the use of the methodology presented to assess the likelihood of advantage and to act as a contrast to the results achieved for the Dacian annexation.

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