

**Dacian Cost Benefit Analysis:**

**Systemic Frustration Indicators**

## Systemic Frustration Indicators<sup>678</sup>

### Inclusiveness

In order to examine levels of Roman inclusiveness in Dacia after the completion of the conquest the supposed extermination of Dacian populace must first be examined. It has been argued that the Dacian population was exterminated after the Roman conquest;<sup>679</sup> this argument is primarily based on statements by Eutropius, a 4th century epitomator:

Trajan, after he had subdued Dacia, had transplanted thither an infinite number of men from the whole Roman world, to people the country and the cities; as the land had been exhausted of inhabitants in the long war maintained by Decebalus.

Eutropius, *Breviarium*, 8.6.2.

and Julian, who has Trajan assert:

Alone, I have defeated the peoples from beyond the Istros and I

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<sup>678</sup> A physical expression of systemic frustration was also controlled by internal defences and garrison placement; see the manpower section.

<sup>679</sup> A. Alföldi, "Dacians on the Southern Bank of the Danube," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 29, no. 1 (1939): p.153.

have annihilated the people of the Getae.

Julian, *Caesares*, 28, 327 C-D

If the extermination of the Dacian population could be proven to have occurred this would certainly indicate that an examination of inclusiveness would be pointless. However, ancient conquests rarely if ever involved the complete extermination of a population and it is highly unlikely that the Romans would have actively sought to exterminate the entire Dacian population, as a de-populated Dacia would have provided far less advantage than Dacia with an active workforce.<sup>680</sup> Although Trajan undoubtedly brought a large number of colonists into the newly-established province,<sup>681</sup> a wholesale replacement of the Dacian population would have been extremely costly and time-consuming.

Ruscu sensibly argues that these statements refer to losses through the act of warfare and not through a conscious act of extermination of the whole population.<sup>682</sup> Alternatively, these sources have been argued to refer only to

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<sup>680</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.325.

<sup>681</sup> Eutropius, *Breviarium*, 8.6.2.

<sup>682</sup> Ruscu, "The Supposed Extermination of the Dacians: The Literary Tradition," p.78; Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

the Dacian elite and not the lower classes. That a significant percentage of the lower classes survived is attested by a number of pre-conquest indigenous communities that are known to have continued after the conquest,<sup>683</sup> and other communities that are known to have been relocated from the mountainous regions of the province in order to conform with Roman defensive plans for the province.<sup>684</sup> The significant number of native pottery finds in Roman auxiliary forts,<sup>685</sup> and other communities in Roman-Dacia further demonstrate the continuation of at least a percentage of the population.<sup>686</sup> That the Romans were soon after the completion of the conquest able to recruit significant numbers of indigenous soldiers and cavalrymen into the Empire's service, including at least one ala, six cohorts, one numerus of horsemen and other less regular units,<sup>687</sup> further demonstrates the continued survival of the population as a whole. This recruitment specifically demonstrates the survival of young Dacian men at least approaching military age, and men wealthy enough to be

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<sup>683</sup> Protase, "Der Forschungsstand zur Kontinuität der Bodenständigen Bevölkerung im Römischen Dazien," pp.1004-06.

<sup>684</sup> Ruscu, "The Supposed Extermination of the Dacians: The Literary Tradition," p.78.

<sup>685</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., pp.113; 18-19, mentions finds at Sarmizegetusa Regia, Apulum, and Napoca.

<sup>687</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.322; Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

able to afford horses, suggesting that they may have been members of the elite of the Dacian society. The discovery of lower-status Dacian communities in the archaeological record has proven a difficult task, as has been illustrated by Oltean,<sup>688</sup> largely because many were destroyed either during or immediately after the conquest of the region and the materials utilised to construct these settlements leave little trace in the archaeological record.

The continuation of the lower classes of Dacian society has been demonstrated, though their survival would have had little impact on the demonstrable levels of inclusiveness in Roman-Dacia. It has been amply demonstrated that inclusiveness in the Roman world was a privilege largely restricted to the elite of a conquered region,<sup>689</sup> at least in the period immediately following the conquest.

The alternative argument, that the sources refer to the extermination of the elite, is largely based on the paucity of epigraphic material referring to specifically Dacian names and is equally questionable. Some indigenous tribal leaders are known to have deserted the Dacian cause either at the beginning of, or at some point during, the second Trajanic war against Dacia. It is highly

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<sup>688</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations."

<sup>689</sup> Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture Unity, Diversity and Empire*, p.66.

unlikely that Trajan would, after having accepted their assistance, have had them executed, or that they were all killed by opposing Dacian forces. Even though only a small percentage (2-3%) of epigraphic material recovered in Dacia lists definitively Dacian names,<sup>690</sup> the fact that a small percentage are recognisable in the epigraphy demonstrates the survival of at least some of the indigenous elite, as the poor would have been unlikely to have been able to afford these sorts of inscriptions.

Recent research by Oltean and Hanson further clarifies the survival of the Dacian elite. Oltean has argued that bias in the archaeological excavations and inappropriate methodologies have led to a misrepresentation of the remains in Dacia.<sup>691</sup> Work conducted by these two scholars demonstrates the existence of far more villas than previously believed. One region examined through the use of aerial survey and field walking has led to an increase in the believed number of villas from nine to approximately 35. These discoveries have led to a better understanding of the villa in Roman-Dacia and the emerging suggestion that some of these dwellings were occupied by remnants of the indigenous elite.

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<sup>690</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

<sup>691</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations."

Individually each of these points might be argued away in favour of the extant textual material, but combined they present a convincing argument for the survival of a range of indigenous elements from the pre-annexation Dacian society. This makes inclusiveness a real possibility and something that needs to be examined.

Clearly elements of Roman and in particular Trajanic policy can be considered to act contrary to a policy of inclusiveness, such as the ban on clubs and *Hetaeriae* that could be used to form political associations. This policy was enacted in many regions, with a few specific exceptions in regions that had largely Romanised already. The policy of inclusiveness was a clear attempt at reducing the potential for the mobilisation of discontent. Non-inclusive acts such as the banning of clubs and societies, it can be argued, were only introduced because the likelihood of rebellion was decreased even with a slight reduction in inclusiveness in this instance.

The use of the indigenous nobility of a newly-annexed region to reduce the costs associated with the administration of the region was common practice for the Romans, as is demonstrated by the annexations of Britain and Gaul and provides a clear indication that the Romans were significantly inclusive

of the conquered. The local elite were presented with the opportunity to retain a substantial amount of the power and position they possessed prior to the annexation. Grants of Roman citizenship were made to individuals that had proved their usefulness to Rome in the process of annexation,<sup>692</sup> suggesting that those Dacian chieftains who had defected and allied themselves with Trajan during the second Dacian War likely received Roman citizenship as a reward after the completion of the wars.

The native elite were commonly presented with the opportunity to retain some of the power they had held prior to Roman conquest by joining the provincial representative assemblies responsible for the direct administration of various regions of the newly-annexed territory.<sup>693</sup> Their duties as members of a locally-elected concilium included the day-to-day administration of the region. They retained the responsibility for administering law in the region, the maintenance of local amenities, and often the collection of taxes on behalf of Rome.<sup>694</sup>

This use of the local elite clearly reduced the number of administrators

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<sup>692</sup> J. Richardson, *Roman Provincial Administration 227 BC to AD 117*, p.67.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, p.49.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.



that it was necessary to place in a region. Additionally, the use of the local ruling class reduced the potential for the mobilisation of discontent by removing the class most likely to provide leadership for any significant action against Rome's rule. The fact that the native population actively participated in the election of local administrators gave them the feeling of being included in the rule of their province,<sup>695</sup> again reducing the potential for the mobilisation of political discontent.

A recent book by Grunewald further highlights the importance of the Roman policy of inclusiveness towards the indigenous elite of a conquered region.<sup>696</sup> The book, in part, examines the criteria that Rome used for defining the differences between acts they labelled as war and those they defined as acts of brigandage.<sup>697</sup> The differences seem largely to have been a result of who led the action. If an anti-Roman action was led by individuals not recognised as members of the indigenous elite,<sup>698</sup> unless it presented a military threat which could not be ignored, the likelihood was that the Romans would regard the action as nothing more than an act of brigandage which posed no real threat

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<sup>695</sup> Ibid.

<sup>696</sup> Grunewald, *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and Reality*.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., pp.40; 41; 58.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., p.58.

to their rule in the region. Conversely, if the action was led by native nobility then it was defined as a rebellion, likely because the Romans understood that, in the eyes of the native populace, elite participation lent credibility and therefore enhanced the possibility that the action could actually threaten their control in the region. It could also be argued that by labelling an action as an act of brigandage, the Romans were trying to prevent 'loyalist zeal' causing the growth of the forces involved. The events of the Jewish rebellion illustrate this well. This action, although clearly a revolt against Roman rule, was defined as *Latrocinia* because of the lack of elite participation.<sup>699</sup>

The Roman provincial administration system allowed communities who felt that they had been mistreated by a Roman governor to bring the matter to the emperor's attention, demonstrating a relatively high level of inclusiveness, but it has been argued that the only reason that the provincials were given this privilege was to ensure the continued economic prosperity of the province and the Empire. Suetonius put it succinctly in his life of Tiberius when he had the emperor tell his governors that, 'it is the job of a good Shepherd to shear his flock, not to skin it'.<sup>700</sup> Poor governance which led to

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<sup>699</sup> Grunewald, *Bandits in the Roman Empire: Myth and Reality*, p.94.

<sup>700</sup> Suet., *Tib.*, 32.

the impoverishment of a province worked counter to the principles of Rome, which sought to extract long-term profits from its provinces.<sup>701</sup> Additionally, the impoverishment of the provincials significantly increased the potential for the mobilisation of political discontent and the active participation of the native elite in acts of rebellion.<sup>702</sup> Dio's account of the German rebellion assigns Arminius just such a motivation, and places the blame for the loss of the German territory between the Rhine and Elbe rivers on the rapaciousness of Varus' administration.<sup>703</sup>

It appears that the Dacian native population became a part of the Roman-Dacian economy in a very short period of time.<sup>704</sup> Significant amounts of native pottery, found in almost every auxiliary fort,<sup>705</sup> demonstrate that the native Dacians were actively engaged in trade with the Roman garrisons in the province, illustrating that they were actively involved in the economy of the region, and not being excluded in favour of the colonists that had been relocated to Dacia after the conquest.

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<sup>701</sup> Richardson, *Roman Provincial Administration*, p.77.

<sup>702</sup> Tac., *Agric.*, 15, 19.1, 20.1.

<sup>703</sup> Dio, LVI.18.4.

<sup>704</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations."

<sup>705</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

There are few signs of conflict between the civilian population of Roman-Dacia and the military,<sup>706</sup> or between the native population and the colonists.<sup>707</sup> Although it has been argued that the native population were living at a lower level of prosperity than the colonists after the annexation because of the loss of their aristocracy,<sup>708</sup> recent research has demonstrated that this might not have been the case. Discoveries of numerous villas have shed some much-needed light on the survival of the Dacian elite after the conquest.<sup>709</sup> Oltean and Hanson have demonstrated that regions until recently believed to possess only a small number of villas actually possessed many more than previously thought; furthermore some of these villas such as the one found at Sântă Măria Orlea and others have evidence that suggests that they were inhabited by pre-conquest native elite.<sup>710</sup> These new finds are providing significant evidence not only of the continued survival of the Dacian elite but their participation in and acceptance of Roman-Dacia.

Beliefs that the colonists deprived the indigenous population of significant

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<sup>706</sup> Ibid., p.120.

<sup>707</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.145.

<sup>708</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.318.

<sup>709</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations."

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., pp.151-52.

tracts of valuable land, such as those presented by Diaconescu,<sup>711</sup> must also be questioned as these sorts of acts would have alienated at least some of the native population, detracting from rapid Romanisation and likely increasing discontent.<sup>712</sup> The status of the communities in Roman-Dacia illustrate the speed and efficiency with which Dacia became Romanised. Sarmizegetusa Ulpia became the first *colonia* of the new province during Trajan's reign;<sup>713</sup> Napoca and Drobeta, both Hadrianic foundations, were the first *municipia* of Roman-Dacia.<sup>714</sup> Twelve communities in Roman-Dacia possessed city status with eight of these ultimately becoming *colonia*.<sup>715</sup> Although these sites were largely inhabited by Roman colonists, there is also evidence of Dacian participation at these sites.<sup>716</sup>

The Roman policy of inclusiveness provided a moderate benefit to Rome after the conquest of Dacia. Many of the indigenous pre-annexation elite died

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<sup>711</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," pp.127-28.

<sup>712</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.162.

<sup>713</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.321.

<sup>714</sup> CIL III. 14465, CIL III. 8017.

<sup>715</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.321.

<sup>716</sup> Ruscu, "The Supposed Extermination of the Dacians: The Literary Tradition," p.78.

during the course of the wars,<sup>717</sup> either in combat or by committing suicide before the final defeat, reducing the potential for inclusiveness, and the use of the indigenous elite to administer the new province. The elite that did survive the conquest were clearly included in the administration of the province, providing a moderate advantage overall from this factor. The lower-classes were also included particularly in the economic activities in Roman-Dacia as is demonstrated by the continued spread of native ware after the completion of the conquest.

### **Aspiration**

As with the issue of inclusiveness this factor focuses primarily on the indigenous elite, their reaction to Roman conquest, and their pre-conquest aspirations. The lives of the lower-classes generally changed little regardless of who ruled the region,<sup>718</sup> the fact that the Romans generally used the indigenous elite as local administrators ensured that the lower-class populace did not even necessarily see a change in their immediate leadership after the

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<sup>717</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, pp.168-169.

<sup>718</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.128; Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.40; Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.162.

completion of the conquest. The case in Dacia is somewhat different from the norm as it seems many of the roles that would normally have been filled by the indigenous elite were in fact filled by the elite of the numerous colonists introduced into the province.

Certain aspirations of the remaining Dacian elite, such as the desire to maintain a position of pre-eminence in their society and retain political control to ensure that their aspirations continued to be met can be taken for granted.<sup>719</sup> The actions of the native elite during the reign of Burebista make it evident that during the first movement towards a centralised government in pre-annexation Dacia, a significant number felt that they were losing their positions of pre-eminence through Burebista's absorption of authority and political power.<sup>720</sup> The fear of this loss eventually led to the assassination of Burebista by a collective of Dacian nobles.<sup>721</sup>

By the time of Decebalus' re-unification of the Dacian people these circumstances had changed somewhat, perhaps as a result of better management of the elite on his part. Decebalus' reign apparently saw the

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<sup>719</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.84.

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>721</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11.

existing elite utilised as regional administrators for the crown.<sup>722</sup> This system closely resembled the systems put in place by the Romans after the completion of the annexation.<sup>723</sup> The change in the attitude of the elite to participating as elements of a remote government between the reigns of Burebista and Decebalus is of extreme importance for an assessment of elite aspirations in the post-conquest period, as this clearly reduced the potential for elite involvement in the mobilisation of political discontent.

Pre-annexation Dacia 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>724</sup> It is clear that Dacia was in the grip of what could be termed a self-administered process of Romanisation prior to the annexation of AD 107,<sup>725</sup> changing their political structure from one of individual tribal leaders directly ruling their own tribes to a system where a remote monarch would utilise the society's elite to administer regions on his behalf, changing the currency from a variety of

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<sup>722</sup> Criton, *FHG* IV, 374; Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, pp.93; 102.

<sup>723</sup> Crişan, *Dacii Din Estul Transilvaniei*, pp.185; 88; Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," pp.123-26; Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.51.

<sup>724</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.88.

<sup>725</sup> See the Low-Cost Romanisation section of this work pp.220ff.



individual and varied coinages minted by tribal leaders, to one where the dominant trade currency of the day was utilised throughout the entire nation; and centralising and redistributing surplus produce in order to permit craft-specialisation.

Trajan's annexation occurred at a time when the native nobility and the commoners had already become accustomed to accepting their position as part of a larger administrative body. Unlike some other Roman annexations and attempted annexations the Dacian nobility would have aspired to retaining their positions within the hierarchy that administered Dacia, which was the common practice of the Romans after the completion of an annexation.<sup>726</sup>

If anything the Roman conquest might have increased the nobility's aspirations and their perceptions of achievement. The indigenous elite of Dacia became a part of a much larger and more impressive system post-annexation, with the potential to rise in the Roman hierarchy far beyond what they might have in the previous system.<sup>727</sup> Trajan was himself born in the provinces,<sup>728</sup> and managed to achieve the position of emperor.

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<sup>726</sup> Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes*, pp.272-73.

<sup>727</sup> Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture Unity, Diversity and Empire*, pp.64; 66.

<sup>728</sup> Bennett, *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*, p.1.

That the native nobility aspired towards authority within the Roman system can be demonstrated by their ready adoption of the process of Romanisation after the conquest.<sup>729</sup> A clear indication of this can be demonstrated by the decreasing use of native ware in favour of Roman material culture, and the building and habitation of villas.<sup>730</sup>

Although the elite are the primary focus of an examination of aspiration, the commoners were also given opportunities to become part of the Roman system and advance their own positions. This was primarily through military service, which eventually led to the granting of Roman citizenship and increased legal rights.<sup>731</sup> Within two generations a native family could better their position considerably under Rome rule.<sup>732</sup> Therefore, it seems that the majority of the Dacian population continued to live in much the same way as they had prior to the annexation, although now in the relatively dispersed low-density communities that had been relocated to the low-lands, closer

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<sup>729</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.145; Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.322.

<sup>730</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

<sup>731</sup> Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D.*, pp.142-43.

<sup>732</sup> Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes*, p.275.

to the Roman garrisons.<sup>733</sup> Frequent contact brought about through regular trade with the Roman forces and the colonists rapidly disseminated Roman material culture to even the lowest-class members of the native population, contributing to their rapid Romanisation.

The last major grouping to be considered in an examination of indigenous aspirations in Dacia has to be the colonists relocated to Dacia by the emperor after the completion of the annexation. Evidence suggests that many of these colonists were themselves not highly Romanised at the time of relocation.<sup>734</sup> They would however have received the same benefits as the native population for participation in the Roman system. Evidence further demonstrates that the colonists also showed a clear tendency towards the adoption of Roman material culture, and the acceptance of Roman ways.<sup>735</sup>

Significant advantages were gained by Rome through the similarities between the aspirations of the native population and what the process of Romanisation engendered, clearly reducing the potential for the mobilisation

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<sup>733</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.40.

<sup>734</sup> Although it would have to be argued the rapid Romanisation evident in Dacia could only have occurred if the majority of the colonists were already at least somewhat Romanised.

<sup>735</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.160.

of political discontent. The lack of the mobilisation of political discontent in Dacia after the conquest provided significant advantage to the Romans.

## **Discontent**

There is no substantial evidence illustrating the interactions between the Roman occupation forces, the colonists and the indigenous population. To some degree this must be taken as evidence for relatively peaceful interaction between the two, as it is likely that any serious incidents of mobilised discontent would be visible in the archaeological record if not in the literary sources. The evidence that is available demonstrates that the Dacian population were actively engaged in trade with at least the Roman auxiliary fortresses placed nearest where they lived.<sup>736</sup> This suggests a lack of widespread discontent.

Dacian commoners might demonstrate feelings of discontent if Rome was seen to be imposing additional burdens upon them such as the obligation to pay the central authority previously unknown taxes, or substantially raising the level of taxation in the region. The Dacians are known to have been paying taxes prior to the annexation. No evidence for the introduction

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<sup>736</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.155.

of additional burdens exists;<sup>737</sup> although there is no evidence of the extent of the pre-annexation taxes levied, it has been demonstrated elsewhere that the taxation rates imposed by Rome were often below those that had been imposed by an indigenous monarch.<sup>738</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that the Romans felt that they needed to implement an extra-ordinary regime of coercion or repressive measures in order to maintain the internal security of the Dacian province. Standard Roman coercive techniques are easily identified in the destruction of the Dacian fortresses and the placement of auxiliary forts at important crossroads and communications centres.<sup>739</sup> The Roman garrisoning of newly-annexed territory was common practice; the fact that Roman-Dacia possessed a sizable garrison for some time after the completion of the annexation should not be taken as a demonstration that the Romans were overly concerned with potential internal political discontent. Rather, the Dacian garrison demonstrates the dual concerns of internal control and the equally significant

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<sup>737</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.102.

<sup>738</sup> Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome*, p.73; in the case of Macedon the Roman tax rate was approximately half what it had been under the indigenous kings.

<sup>739</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.127.

concern with potential external threats, as has been discussed in more detail in the manpower section of this thesis.<sup>740</sup> The Romans did not utilise any exceptional coercive or repressive measures in Dacia after the completion of the conquest.

Systemic frustration indicators for the annexation of Dacia demonstrate that due to significant class stratification, centralisation, craft-specialisation and Roman inclusiveness this key grouping proved advantageous to Rome after the completion of the conquest.

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<sup>740</sup> See above.

## **Dacian Cost Benefit Analysis:**

### **Internal Factors**

## Internal Factors

### Glory

The annexation of Dacia was clearly considered a very important annexation that indisputably and significantly enhanced the glory of the emperor and the state.<sup>741</sup> In part, the increased glory developed as a result of the understanding of the Dacians that the Romans possessed prior to the completion of this annexation. It also resulted from a deliberate effort to demonstrate the difficulties associated with the annexation, with the emperor communicating the idea of the warlike nature of the enemy to the people of the empire. These ideas were communicated through a variety of artistic and literary works.

Although not many literary works concerning the Dacian annexation survive, there is evidence that Trajan wrote a commentary of his Dacian campaigns,<sup>742</sup> Rufus at least intended to write an epic poem,<sup>743</sup> and that Trajan's physician Criton who accompanied the emperor into the wars also

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<sup>741</sup> Pliny, *Epist.*, VIII.IV.1-3.

<sup>742</sup> Priscian, VI.13.

<sup>743</sup> Pliny, *Epist.*, VIII.IV



wrote an account of the events.<sup>744</sup> What survives of Dio's account and Pliny's advice to Rufus suggests that this annexation was well-received and written about in very favourable terms.

It is almost certain that a canonical work like that of Herodotos would have been well known to many of the literate Roman elite.<sup>745</sup> As such it is not difficult to imagine that statements about the potential power of a united Thracian kingdom may have added to the desire to ensure that Dacia did not succeed in creating an empire of their own by uniting all the Thracian peoples:

The population of Thrace is greater than that of any country in the world except India. If the Thracians could be united under a single ruler, or combine, they would be the most powerful nation on the earth, and no one could cope with them.

Hdt. V.2.

.This is especially powerful when they were capable, even in the early stages of unification limited to Dacia itself, of threatening Roman assets south of the Danube, and thereby added to the glory that a victorious emperor could claim.

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<sup>744</sup> Criton, *FHG*, IV, 374.

<sup>745</sup> Ath., III.114c; III.119d; IV.146; Cic., *leg.* 1.5; *Div.* 2.56.116.

Furthermore, Herodotos' statement that 'The Getae' (known to the Romans as Dacians)<sup>746</sup> were '... the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes',<sup>747</sup> made them even more threatening opponents as they possessed the potential to follow a popular leader into a prolonged campaign, something the other peoples North of the Danube and Rhine had proven incapable of.

A successful annexation was seen as a demonstration of Trajan's superior military capabilities, significantly enhancing his glory. It can be assumed that the Romans felt that the greater the difficulties involved in a campaign, the greater the glory for the victor.<sup>748</sup> This would have been even more so if a campaign by another emperor against the same people had failed in recent memory.

The upper-class Roman populace would have been well aware that Caesar had considered mounting a Dacian invasion because of their willingness to interfere in Roman politics. Although it cannot be said that Caesar failed to annex Dacia, because he was assassinated, the fact that perhaps one of Rome's most prolific conquerors had considered an invasion of Dacia would have

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<sup>746</sup> Strabo, VII.3.1.

<sup>747</sup> Hdt., 4.94.

<sup>748</sup> Cicero, *de officiis*, I.XIX.64.

enhanced the glory associated with a victory over the Dacians. Augustus had claimed to have subdued the Dacians in his *Res Gestae*;<sup>749</sup> the fact that Domitian and Trajan had trouble in this region in their respective reigns suggests that although Augustus managed to orchestrate some successful punitive actions against the Dacians he had certainly not subdued them. The fact that Domitian had so recently made a failed attempt at conquering the Dacians and that he had entered into what has been described by some primary sources as a shameful treaty with Decebalus the Dacian monarch,<sup>750</sup> only added to the glory that Trajan could claim as a result of his success.

Trajan emphasised the difficulties involved in this campaign and clearly depicted the Dacians as noble, manly and warlike, a theme also prevalent in regards to the Germans portrayed in Tacitus' work *The Germania* that was written during Trajan's reign. Trajan staged very lavish games after the completion of the Dacian annexation. Dio informs us that the games lasted for 123 days, that 11,000 animals were killed and 10,000 gladiators fought.<sup>751</sup> The enormous scale of these games was undoubtedly intended to impress the population of Rome, and show them the warlike nature of the enemy he

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<sup>749</sup> Aug., *Res Gestae* 30.2.

<sup>750</sup> Dio, LXVII.7.

<sup>751</sup> Dio, LXVIII.15.1.

defeated.

Trajan used the booty from the Dacian campaigns for a monumental building program. This included the forum of Trajan, and so many other building projects that he received the nicknamed 'Ivy' because his name appeared on so many buildings.<sup>752</sup> He clearly increased his own glory by spreading the prosperity gained from the booty taken during the Dacian campaigns in this way, and providing himself a medium with which to advertise his success and the character of the enemy he had defeated. Trajan's forum was decorated with symbols of the Dacian victories in order to ensure that the source of the wealth that allowed such ostentatious building projects to proceed was obvious to all (fig. 31).

After the completion of the conquest, sculptural representations referring directly to the Dacian annexation abounded. The most spectacular of the symbols is, of course, Trajan's column. The column, which was dedicated in AD 113 in a quasi-documentary way graphically depicts the course of the Dacian wars over a 220 metre spiral frieze,<sup>753</sup> with over 2500 human figures represented. This monument, which towered to a height of 30 metres at

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<sup>752</sup> *Epitome de Caesaribus*, 41.13.

<sup>753</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.73.



Fig. 31. Statue of Dacian Noble  
Photo: Dr. Geoff Adams 2006

the heart of the newly-constructed Trajan's forum, surrounded by statues depicting Dacian warriors, was clearly intended to focus public attention on the immense struggle that led to the annexation of Dacia in AD 107.<sup>754</sup> At the top of the column the Senate placed a statue of Trajan, associating him directly with the Dacian conquest. This direct association was further illustrated by the depiction of Trajan in the frieze on the column no less than 50 times, further highlighting his active participation in the wars themselves.

Trajan's conquest of Dacia was also celebrated on the triumphal arch at Beneventum and the Adamklissi monument dedicated to Mars Ultor. The Adamklissi monument is of particular interest as it was constructed by soldiers who had participated in the Dacian conquest. This monument, although lacking the detail or artistic qualities of the column, served an important role in the promotion of the emperor's glory, particularly in the regions surrounding its location. The Tropaeum Traiani was built in the Dobrudja region close to the homeland of the Sarmatian Roxolani and would have acted as a deterrent to future aggression whilst clearly stating that the Roman army under the leadership of Trajan had defeated and conquered the Dacians and their allies. Furthermore, a statue of Trajan in military garb with a cowering barbarian at

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<sup>754</sup> Ferris, *Enemies of Rome: Barbarians through Roman Eyes*, pp.77-78.

his feet was placed on display in the Athenian Agora, spreading the message of Trajan's Dacian victories to those whose Black Sea colonies were subjugated by the conquered, and further enhancing his glory.<sup>755</sup>

The depiction of the defeated Dacian became the iconic image of Trajan's reign, demonstrating beyond doubt that the Dacian annexation was the single most important act of Trajan's reign in his own eyes.<sup>756</sup> The fact that some of these depictions were only completed during Hadrian's reign demonstrates the importance of this action in the eyes of his successor and the Roman populace as well, illustrating the intensity of the glory Trajan's actions attracted.

The number of Roman coins minted during Trajan's reign directly referring to the Dacian defeat is quite extraordinary, numbering at least 30 different coins with a great many more less-explicitly referring to the same annexation.<sup>757</sup> These coins clearly demonstrate the importance that Trajan,

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<sup>755</sup> Ferris, *Enemies of Rome: Barbarians through Roman Eyes*, p.77.

<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> Coins directly referring to the Dacian annexation include: RIC 208; RIC 292; RIC 45; RIC 96; RIC 98; RIC 99; RIC 147; RIC 147b; RIC 218; RIC 219; RIC 220; RIC 222; RIC 223; RIC 225; RIC 286; RIC 287; RIC 292; RIC 307; RIC 356; RIC 503; RIC 510v; RIC 527; RIC 528; RIC 534; RIC 556v; RIC 558; RIC 561; RIC 586; RIC 587; RIC 621v; RIC 623a; RIC 679. Other

who had the authority to determine what would be depicted, placed on the victorious Dacian campaigns, and the degree to which he believed that these victories would garner favourable opinions of his reign. This is further demonstrated by the fact that many of the coins depicting a captive Dacian seated on his arms continued to be minted until approximately AD 111, some four years after the completion of the Dacian conquest. Imperial coinage, it can be argued, also served a more subtle purpose, as a psychological deterrent to other enemies both within the Roman Empire and those beyond the frontiers, very much like the purpose served by the Adamklissi monument, whose geographical placement and depictions clearly identify its purpose.

These coins are interesting also for their depictions of the Dacians. Several Trajanic coins depict a Dacian seated on his weapons,<sup>758</sup> either

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coins also referring to the Dacian annexation without actually utilising the word Dacia or depicting an item that must be Dacian, but that can be identified with the Dacian conquest through a combination of minting date and depiction include: *RIC* 113v; *RIC* 208; *RIC* 256; *RIC* 257; *RIC* 52; *RIC* 59; *RIC* 60; *RIC* 61; *RIC* 65; *RIC* 67; *RIC* 100; *RIC* 102; *RIC* 114; *RIC* 115; *RIC* 116; *RIC* 126; *RIC* 128; *RIC* 129; *RIC* 131; *RIC* 154; *RIC* 157; *RIC* 161; *RIC* 162; *RIC* 163; *RIC* 178; *RIC* 187; *RIC* 188; *RIC* 189; *RIC* 190a; *RIC* 194; *RIC* 202; *RIC* 203; *RIC* 204; *RIC* 212; *RIC* 134; *RIC* 432; *RIC* 485; *RIC* 489; *RIC* 537; *RIC* 543; *RIC* 549; *RIC* 487; *RIC* 538; *RIC* 545; *RIC* 550; *RIC* 582; *RIC* 410; *RIC* 411; *RIC* 417; *RIC* 434; *RIC* 436; *RIC* 503a; *RIC* 521.

<sup>758</sup> See particularly: *RIC* 96; *RIC* 98; *RIC* 99; *RIC* 218; *RIC* 219; *RIC* 561.



as a bound captive or with his head resting on his hand. Although clearly depicted as defeated, the fact that the Dacians in all these cases are shown near their arms and armour clearly demonstrate the Roman perception of the aggressive character associated with this enemy. It can be argued that Trajan's representation of the Dacians gives his audience an insight into the reasons behind the Dacian wars. The Dacians as depicted have retained their masculinity and, importantly, their warlike nature.

Trajan's glory was further enhanced by the depiction of himself actually participating in the battles that led to the conquest of Dacia. No less than eight coins depict a mounted Trajan riding down the enemy: a single Aureus (*RIC* 208), a single Denarius (*RIC* 291), three Sestertii (*RIC* 534, *RIC* 537, *RIC* 543), two Dupondii (*RIC* 538, *RIC* 545), and a single As (*RIC* 543), which can be taken as evidence that Trajan wanted himself to be seen as an active and vibrant participant in the campaigns by all strata of Roman society, and particularly the lower classes.

If it is accepted that the coins depict the publicly-given reason for the war, then Trajan's Dacian coinage clearly indicates that the reason he presented to the Roman people was that the Dacians were a warlike people and that this

was why Trajan spent the time and money annexing the region. If however the depictions on the coinage illustrate the nature of the people then Trajan has, instead, added to his glory by depicting the Dacians as difficult to conquer because of their military ability.

Dacian centralisation, craft-specialisation and the inclusiveness of the Roman administrative system combined to reduce the actual occurrence of mobilised political discontent ensuring that an annexation of Dacia resulted in a Roman advantage in this key grouping.

The following chapter presents a summary of the results from this chapter and applies the numerical indicator scale to graphically represent these results in a way that will clarify the overall advantage or disadvantage Rome and Trajan received as a result of the Dacian annexation AD 106-107.