

THE REFLECTION OF PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE TRAGEDIES IN ANCIENT SOURCES

2. COLLECTIVE TRAGEDIES IN ROMAN EPIGRAPHY

Abstract: The present research, though a stand-alone from many points of view, is the second part of our enterprise dealing with the reflection of individual and collective tragedy in Roman epigraphy. While the first part¹ took into consideration individual tragedies, with death occurred by the hand of latrones, bandits or pirates, the current investigation is focused on what we have defined as traces of collective tragedies. By collective tragedies we understand those events which touched a larger sector of the population, resulted especially following attacks of enemies, or wars. Responsible for these acts of violence is especially the 'other', which falls in to the category of 'barbarian', or enemy. The Dacian wars, the Marcommanic wars, the Parthian expeditions, were some of the military events which lead to large scale acts of violence, and which left epigraphic traces of collective tragedies.

Keywords: *war, inscriptions, Roman Empire, conflicts, commemoration.*

SOURCES AND METHODS

The main sources we have employed are epigraphic, but the nature of the research requires correlation with other types of historical sources, especially literary ones. We will constantly try to connect our epigraphs with attested historical events, in order to place them into context, but also in order to underline how large-scale events are reflected at a personal level. Out of this reason, the first filter we have applied to our sample was chronology; as such, we will be dealing with the inscriptions in a diachronic manner and only within this framework they will be regarded geographically. The spatial distribution is important, but less so than the temporal one, as sometimes we have references to events that have taken place in a different area from the monument's discovery place. A note that cannot be avoided concerns the uncertain dating of most of our inscriptions. Some of them can be dated within half a century, which offers high accuracy for the undertaken analyses, but many cannot. Thus, we even have datings spanning over two centuries, which is, of course, extremely approximate and the conclusions drawn based on them can only be highly deductive or general.

Most of the discussed monuments are funerary and they refer to barbarians, named or unnamed, in a military context. Of course, in the text

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we will not dwell on every monument, as their high number would make the approach unwieldy and ultimately irrelevant for the reader. We will only present on a descriptive manner certain texts, relevant within event-centred or geographic contexts. Of course, we have to keep in mind that we are working on the available epigraphic sample, as there might be more attested soldiers deceased in military conflict, but whose cause of death was omitted on the epitaph.²

One of the notable things that delimitates the current research from its first part are the aggressors. If the first published part of our enterprise brought forth *latrones*, brigands, thieves, this one focuses on outside barbarians, enemies of the empire, warriors,³ and respectively on military clashes. Roman literary sources often called rebelled military leaders, from Spartacus to imperial usurpers,⁴ *latrones*, but we have considered this a high-class propaganda trend, not necessarily reflected by 'minor', every-day-life, epigraphy. Equally, we do not believe that the *latrones* are to be associated with a specific ethnic profile or a political agenda; their brigandage was highly likely economical and they are social, marginal, groups intrinsic to the society of the provinces they inhabit. On the other side, the *hostes* are external menaces, populations outside the Empire's borders, faced and thus threatening especially in the context of military conflicts.

A section at the end of the paper will be dedicated to a comparison between the texts analysed in the previous article and the current ones. For the sake of uniformity, but also because we are mainly interested with the perception of tragedy at a personal level and its reflection in 'every-day' epigraphy, we have not taken into account official monuments, dedications for emperors, governor's honorific texts describing or alluding to wars and military confrontations.

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology of war violence is rather simple and can be divided in certain word groups. First, we have nouns which denominate the enemies, such as *hostes*⁵ and *barbares*,⁶ or more specific ones, such as *Sarmates*,⁷ *Costoboces*,⁸ *Getae*,⁹ etc. Sometimes the enemies are these general barbarians, with their ethnic and regional provenience vague, unimportant for the dedicator, or simply implied, as everyone knew who the Roman army was fighting in a given region, at a certain time. On other monuments, they are named by tribe, thus circumscribing the details of the tragedy. Another group of terms contains verbs describing what exactly happened to the dedicator or commemorated one: *occido*,¹⁰ *obeo*,¹¹

caedo,¹² *interficio*,¹³ *pereo*,¹⁴ or more generally *ἐν πολέμοι*,¹⁵ all referring to death in war or violent skirmishes. *Desidero*,¹⁶ *dispereo*,¹⁷ along with *λαμβάνω*¹⁸ present a different type of situation, alluding to what we would nowadays call 'missing in battle', but also captured – either as a prisoner, or as an unidentified deceased. In these cases, we are certainly dealing with cenotaphs (*monumenta memoriae*), monuments which honour memory and serve as sepulchral stones, but in the absence of the actual, physical remains of the deceased.¹⁹ Our corresponding *corpus* includes only a few verse inscriptions, but the text concerning the death in war of the individuals (be they soldiers or civilians) is not rendered as metaphorically as it is for example expressed in Homer: *πολέμου στόμα αἱματόεντος*²⁰ (in the mouth of the bloody war).

An interesting and useful from the point of view of historical analysis stance is when the *expedition*/ *στόλος*, *στρατεία* (campaign) or the *bellum*/ *πόλεμον* are explicitly named: *bellum Dacicus*,²¹ *expeditio Dacica*,²² *bellum Germanicum*,²³ *expeditio Germanica*,²⁴ *bellum Serdicensis*,²⁵ *expeditio Naristarum*,²⁶ *Parthia decedit*,²⁷ *expeditio Parthica*,²⁸ etc. It is generally difficult to make the differences between a *bellum*/ *πόλεμον* and an *expeditio*/ *στόλος*, and even more difficult to say if, in epigraphy, we have real and absolute delimitations between the two terms.²⁹ Thus, the steps towards pinpointing an event are often deductive, circumstantial and ultimately subjective, based on adjacent clues rather than following strictly the terminology. On a different side, the opinion that *expeditio* does not necessarily refer to a military incursion, advanced by M. Carrol,³⁰ seems extremely relativizing and groundless in a military history context.

1ST – 2ND/ 3RD CENTURIES AD. FROM THE DACIAN WARS TO THE SEVERANS

For the 1st century AD the evidence is quite scarce, nonetheless we must mention the great funerary monument from Adamclisi,³¹ which was dedicated to the *fortissimi viri* (around 148 in number) who [*qui ---*] *pro re p(ublica)*

¹² AE 1910, 138.

¹³ AE 1964, 169; AE 2102, 1328, etc.

¹⁴ AE 1985, 622.

¹⁵ Attested however mostly in the Classic and Hellenistic period. For the Roman period (1st – 2nd centuries): see for example SEG 59, 434 = SEG 62, 244 Trachela, both the inscription and the iconography point to it being the tomb of a warrior.

¹⁶ CIL III 10317; CIL XIII 8070; CIL III 4857, etc.

¹⁷ AE 1998, 1139 = CONRAD 285 = ISM IV 187.

¹⁸ ISM III 242 = IGB I² 1.

¹⁹ CARROL 2006, 116; ŠAŠEL KOS 2016.

²⁰ HOMÈRE II. 19.313.

²¹ AE 1965, 223.

²² CIL III 5218.

²³ AE 1910, 138.

²⁴ AE 2004, 1143.

²⁵ ILJug 272.

²⁶ CIL III 4310.

²⁷ CIL III 4480.

²⁸ AE 1941, 10; AE 1905, 163.

²⁹ EHMIG 2013, 133-134.

³⁰ CARROL 2006, 161.

³¹ CIL III 14214 = ILS 9107 = AE 1901, 40 = AE 1904, 228 = AE 1956, 121 = AE 1963, 99 = AE 1963, 100 = AE 1963, 101 = AE 1963, 102 = AE 1965, 39bis = AE 1980, 794 = AE 2008, 1192. For an analysis see among others: GOSTAR 2008.

² REUTER 2005.

³ EHMING 2013, 133-136.

⁴ GRUNEWALD 2004.

⁵ CIL XII 149; AE 1964, 169; AE 2102, 1328; CIL III 3800, etc.

⁶ CIL VII 924; ILLPRON 116; CIL III 13405; CIL III 4850; CIL III 11045, etc.

⁷ IG II2 3411 = IEIeuisis 516.

⁸ AE 1901, 49; AE 2005, 1315, etc.

⁹ CIL III 14416.

¹⁰ CIL XII 149; CIL III 13405; CIL III 13405, etc.

¹¹ AE 1936, 84; CIL III 5218, etc.

morte occubu[erunt ---], and this during the Dacian war of Domitian.³² Another inscription,³³ this time from Madytos, comes also from the 1st century AD, and it is dedicated to an unknown equestrian officer who, among other conflicts, took also part in the first Dacian campaign of Domitian.³⁴ The participation of military men in specific wars is mentioned in various inscriptions,³⁵ usually funerary ones, especially if one was *donis donatus*.

Few inscriptions are dated with certainty during the first half of the 2nd C AD. The first one, chronologically speaking, comes from Germania Inferior, in Bonn, where an *eques* of the *legio I Minervia*, Liberalinus Vitalis,³⁶ died in a war which was assumed to be Trajan's second Dacian war.³⁷ As well regarding the Dacian war is a family epitaph from Intercisa,³⁸ among the deceased is Aurelius Ausianus, the commemorator's husband, about whom we find out explicitly that died in *bello Dacico*. There exists the possibility that the man died in subsequent military clashes involving the Dacians, but this hypothesis seems less likely.

From Vindolanda comes another inscription regarding events from the very beginning of the century.³⁹ Titus Annius [---], a centurion of *cohors I Tungrorum*, was killed in war (in *bello [---] interfectus*) and is commemorated by a son and (probably) an heir. This monument is one of the few epigraphic clues indicating a 'garrison under pressure' at Vindolanda, as we must assume the centurion died in a border confrontation with the northern tribes.

From Britannia as well, but at a distance of about 50 years in time, when circumstances were different, and about 43 kilometres west, from Luguvalium, we have another dedication talking about the border confrontations of the area.⁴⁰ This time, a votive monument was dedicated to Hercules as sign of gratitude from the *ala* which slaughtered a band of barbarians (*caesa manu barbarorum*). The troop was named *Augusta ob virtute*; we don't know anything about the barbarians, their nature and intentions or about the exact place of the clash, but the text, along the previous one, is very relevant for the climate on the Britannia border during the last two decades of the 2nd century. Literary sources affirm that the period was a very strained one in the region. Cassius Dio⁴¹ and *Historia Augusta*⁴² describe a major war during the period, in which the northern tribes crossed the wall and defeated and killed an unnamed Roman general and his army. The emperor sent Ulpius Marcellus, a former governor of Britannia (177-180),⁴³ to solve matters, which he eventually did, in 184. Cassius Dio even mentions an attempt made by Commodus to push the frontier farther north at the end of this war,⁴⁴ which led to a revolt of the local troops. Nonetheless, the Luguvalium inscription might

very well refer to Marcellus's war.⁴⁵

Many inscriptions can be dated during the second half of the 2nd century AD, a period marked by the Marcomannic wars and unrest of the barbarians bordering the Empire. In Dacia, at the limit of our research (related to the nature of the monument), Lucius Apuleius Marcus repairs the annexes of the temple of Liber Pater, burnt during the barbarian invasion.⁴⁶ In Pannonia Inferior, at Intercisa,⁴⁷ we have an explicit reference to the *bellum Germanicum* from the epitaph of Marcus Domitius Super, soldier of the legion *II Adiutrix*, who died in this war. In Aquincum, we have two soldiers from *II Adiutrix*⁴⁸ as well, who died in military confrontations during the same period, but no other details are available. Possibly alluding to the events of the same war are two inscriptions from Germania Superior,⁴⁹ respectively from Britannia,⁵⁰ mentioning soldiers deceased in the Germanic expedition.

Two epitaphs from Pannonia Superior, Emona⁵¹ and Savaria,⁵² dated during the same period, namely the last few decades of the 2nd century, mention two men killed in battle. The war or the *hostes* are not explicitly denominated, but it is reasonable to believe that the men were victims of confrontations with the Germanic tribes. In Brigetio, an *optio* of the *I Adiutrix*⁵³ was killed in *expeditio Naristarum* (the stone is badly deteriorated, but this reading seems most likely). It is justified to assume that the monument refers to the expedition of 172, when the Roman army defeated the tribes allied with the *Marcomanni* – the *Naristi* among them – and Marcus Valerius Maximianus killed Valao, chieftain of the *Naristi*, with his own hand.⁵⁴ Another tombstone from Emona (more precisely from Ig, at the outskirts of the city)⁵⁵ probably dates from the same period: Maximus, son of Vibius, was killed by enemies and commemorated by his brother. The interesting detail in this case relates to the writing errors (*ostes hoccidit*, instead of *hostis occidit*), which might indicate a relatively poor Latin level and the possible every-day use of the native, local language.⁵⁶

For Greece, its conquest by the Romans lead not only to a change in status, by becoming a Roman province, subject to Rome, also lead to significant transformations from a military perspective. As such, the strong warrior character of the Greek cities dissolved, becoming a 'cultural reference',⁵⁷ by the replacement of the local armies with the Imperial one;⁵⁸ and the appraisal of war deed was rather reiterating past events and acts of bravery than contemporary ones.⁵⁹ But evidence is scanty also for these, Philippos son of Aristides⁶⁰ being among the few known πολεμογραφοί, who ἐπέι

⁴⁵ COLLINGWOOD/MYRES 1936, 153.

⁴⁶ AE 1976, 561.

⁴⁷ AE 1976, 554.

⁴⁸ CIL III 3553; CIL III 15159.

⁴⁹ CIL XIII 6317.

⁵⁰ RIB 369.

⁵¹ CIL III 3800.

⁵² CIL III 4184

⁵³ CIL III 4310.

⁵⁴ AE 1956, 124.

⁵⁵ CIL III 3800.

⁵⁶ ŠAŠEL KOS 2015, 53.

⁵⁷ BRÉLAZ 2007, 166.

⁵⁸ BRÉLAZ 2007, 159.

⁵⁹ BRÉLAZ 2007, *passim*

⁶⁰ IG IV 1153 = IG IV² 1, 687; GOUKOWSKY 1995, 39-53.

³² GOSTAR 2008, 131-141.

³³ IK Sestos 53.1 = SEG 31, 675.

³⁴ ISAAC 1981, 67-74.

³⁵ For example: AE 1969/1970, 583 = AE 1974, 589 = AE 1985, 721.

³⁶ CIL XIII 8070.

³⁷ CARROLL 2006, 168.

³⁸ AE 1976, 554.

³⁹ AE 1998, 835.

⁴⁰ CIL VII 924.

⁴¹ CASSIUS DIO, 72, 8.

⁴² HISTORIA AUGUSTA, *Commodus*, 13, 5.

⁴³ BRASSINGTON 1980, 314-315.

⁴⁴ CASSIUS DIO, 72, 10, 2.

πολεμόγραφον αὐδὰν ἔκλαγον ἀμερίων κόσμον ἐπερχόμενος.

Among other ancient authors, Plutarch reflects the general opinion that once with the Roman rule wars were put to an end,⁶¹ and the great peace was established; however, even though the wars between the cities disappeared, confrontations still existed, as such, Achaea, and the other Greek provinces as well, just like the Latin provinces, were still engaged in various military conflicts, especially connected to invasions of population, but also to acts of piracy and brigandage – these two can be classified both as personal and collective tragedies, even though the epigraphic evidence mostly illustrates the personal side.

Among the invasions of barbarian populations, the invasion of the *Costoboci* and the invasion of the Herullians are the best epigraphically attested, pointing to collective tragedies. It is worthy to mention that the *Costoboci* along with the more general term of barbarians are the most commonly pointed at as responsible for personal tragedies, not only collective tragedies.⁶²

For the Greek provinces, the reign of Marcus Aurelius was marked by the invasion of the *Costoboci*; provinces such as Achaea, Macedonia, Thrace and Moesia Inferior have been touched by these invaders.⁶³ Out of these provinces, Achaea provides the richest epigraphic evidence which records the turbulence, and Eleusis (severely touched by the invasion) certainly stands out, through the dramatism reflected by the three inscriptions which make reference to it.⁶⁴ The *Costoboci*⁶⁵ occupied Eleusis in 170/171 AD, sacking the temple of Demeter, fact which is recorded also by Aelius Aristides in his *Eleusian Oration*.⁶⁶ The latter of the three inscriptions from Eleusis mentions a hierophant, possibly identified as C. Iulius Casianus Apollonios of Steiria,⁶⁷ who had a significant social and political position at that time, and who not only saved the sacred objects of the Mysteries, 'evading once the unlawful work of the Sarmatians', but he also initiated Marcus Aurelius and Commodus in 176 AD.⁶⁸ Two statues were dedicated to him following his intervention (one after his deed, and the other after his death). In this context, of the invasion of the Greek territory by the *Costoboci*, L. Iulius Vehilius Gratus Iulianus (*infra*)⁶⁹ was sent to save Achaea from their hands.⁷⁰

Personal tragedy merges with the collective one, as an inscription⁷¹ from an unspecified location in Attica tells the story of Τελεσφόρος Εὐκάρπου Μειλήσιος, of 26 years, who fought in the war against the *Costoboci*, but survived it, dying though afterwards, and leaving behind a child of ten months; Walters supposes that the unlucky war survivor

⁶¹ PLUTARQUE, *De Pythiae oraculis* 28: [---] ἀγαπῶ μὲν ἔγωγε καὶ ἀσπάζομαι πολλή γὰρ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡσυχία, πέπανται δὲ πόλεμος, καὶ πλάναι καὶ στάσεις οὐκ εἰσὶν οὐδὲ τυραννίδες [---].

⁶² For a brief summary see KOVÁCS 2004, 308.

⁶³ See SCHEIDEL 1990, 493-498 for a discussion on the dating.

⁶⁴ IG II² 3411 = IEleusis 516; IEleusis 494; IG II² 3639 = IEleusis 515.

⁶⁵ They are called Sarmatians: IG II² 3411 = IEleusis 516.

⁶⁶ AELIUS ARISTIDES, *Orationes* 19.

⁶⁷ BYRNE 2003, 66.

⁶⁸ CLINTON 2004, 52. He came from a remarkable family. For information on him see the same publication.

⁶⁹ His rich *cursus honorum* is attested by several inscriptions. He ended however being sentenced to death, being also touched by *damnatio memoriae*: CIL XIV 4378.

⁷⁰ VON PREMERSTEIN 1912, 158.

⁷¹ IG II² 9898.

died due to plague.⁷²

Also connected to the invasion of the *Costoboci*, and which reflects both personal and collective tragedy, is an inscription from Elatea, which was elevated for a former Olympic victor, Μνασίβουλος son of Μνασίβουλος,⁷³ who was granted the title ἄριστος Ἑλλήνων,⁷⁴ the individual was responsible for organising a levy and fighting the enemy, but dying in battle. In this case, as well as in the following one we deal with situations in which local forces were gathered in order to fight the invaders.

The following inscription,⁷⁵ from Thespiiai, records another levy this time of Thespian νέοι for a war (τὴν εὐτυχεστάτην καὶ εὐσεβεστάτην στρατείαν) during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the conflict was also presumed to point to the invasion of the *Costoboci*;⁷⁶ however, as it was later on proved, it actually made reference to the recruitment from the Greek cities for the German war,⁷⁷ explaining why a year or two later, the invasion of the *Costoboci* was so powerful.⁷⁸

Reference to the incursion of the *Costoboci* is made also in an epitaph from Moesia Inferior (AD 169-176), from the epitaph we find that Timo Dassius, decurion of the *cohors II Dardanorum*, was killed by the *Costoboci*.⁷⁹ In this case we are explicitly dealing with the death of a military personnel following military confrontations. From nearby Tropaeum Traiani another individual (Daizi Comozi, who died at 50 years old) was *interfectus a Castabocis*, sometime during the second half of the second century AD.⁸⁰ Still from Tropaeum Traiani, an example of personal tragedy, that of Lucius Fufidius Lucianus, a *decurio municipii*,⁸¹ is relevant to bring forward since he was also killed by the *Costoboci*, during his *duumvirate*.

From Macedonia we have inscriptions which stipulate the problems created in the province by various populations, including the *Costoboci*. Two inscriptions are illustrative: one attests the same L. Iulius Vehilius Gratus Iulianus, *procurator Auggustorum et praepositus vexillationis per Achaiam et Macedoniam et in Hispanias adversus Castabocas et Mauros rebelles*⁸² and the other one, this time from Diana Veteranorum in Numidia,⁸³ stipulates the fact that between 175 and 180 a mission was carried on the border between Macedonia and Thrace to fight the *Briseai* (*Briseorum latronum manum in confinio Macedoniae et Thraciae*).

Even though it is connected to the idea of collective

⁷² WALTERS 1988, 46.

⁷³ His deeds were recorded also in the writings of PAUSANIAS 10.34.5: τὸ δὲ Κοστοβόκων τε τῶν ληστικῶν τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐπιδραμόν ἀφίκετο καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἐλάτειαν: ἔνθα δὴ ἀνήρ Μνησίβουλος λόγον τε περὶ αὐτὸν ἀνδρῶν συνέστησε καὶ καταφονεύσας πολλοὺς τῶν βαρβάρων ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ μάχῃ. οὗτος ὁ Μνησίβουλος δρόμου νίκας καὶ ἄλλας ἀνείλετο καὶ Ὀλυμπιάδι πέμπτη πρὸς ταῖς τριάκοντά τε καὶ διακοσίας σταδίου καὶ τοῦ σὺν τῇ ἀσπίδι διαύλου: ἐν Ἐλατεία δὲ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ δρομέως Μνησιβούλου χαλκοῦς ἔστηκεν ἀνδριάς. Apparently, a bronze statue was elevated for him in Elatea.

⁷⁴ For this title see Robert 1929, 13-20.

⁷⁵ SEG 39, 456 = SEG 42, 432 = SEG 62, 302 = IThespies 37.

⁷⁶ PLASSART 1932, 731-738.

⁷⁷ For the German war see among others: BIRLEY 1968, 290-333.

⁷⁸ Jones 45-48.

⁷⁹ AE 2005, 1315.

⁸⁰ AE 1901, 49 = CIL III 14214.2.

⁸¹ IDRE II 337 = AE 1964, 252 = ISM IV 49.

⁸² ILS 1327 = CIL VI 41271 = CIL VI 31856 = AE 1888, 66 = AE 2014, 75 = IDRE I 18; PIR² I 615.

⁸³ IDRE II 445 = AE 1956, 124 = AE 1959, 183 = AE 1962, 390 = AE 1976, 359 = AE 2009, 77 = AE 2010, 83 = AE 2014, 75.

tragedies but on the other way around, we mention the joining of individuals in different military confrontations, in the area of origin or further away. As such, we have a number of inscriptions which attest the death of the soldiers mostly as a result of their dangerous profession. One inscription makes reference to the Spartans involved in the war of Lucius Verus against the Parthians, the epitaph commemorates one of the Spartans who was involved in the battles.⁸⁴ Besides this we also have from Moesia Inferior the epitaph of an individual named Valerius Valens, *defunctus in expeditione Parthica*,⁸⁵ and another individual from Timacum Minus who was *interfectus in expeditione Parthica*.⁸⁶ Further on, an honorific inscription from Oescus, dedicated to the *primus pilus and princeps ordini coloniae*, Titus Aurelius Flavinus, specifies that at some point during his career he fought with the *Getai*, but important is also the mentioning *(ob) res prospere Tyrae gestas*,⁸⁷ which might be connected to the invasions of the barbarians in the northern Greek cities of the Black Sea.⁸⁸ Probably related to these tensions on the northern shores is also a certain *bellum Bosporanum*,⁸⁹ dated sometimes between 210 and 220 AD; an inscription from Preslav, Moesia Inferior records the fact that a *beneficiarius consularis* of the *Legio I Italica Alexandriana* was involved in this war but that he safely returned from it (*multis periculis in barbarico liberatus*).⁹⁰

A rather large group of monuments, dated during the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd, comes from Noricum. At Celeia, Mattus Adiectus,⁹¹ about whom we know nothing except the fact that he was 40, was killed by the Mattzaris, an otherwise unknown tribe. It is hard to say if we are dealing with a small local tribe, or a misspelling – nonetheless, the second option seems less likely, as the name doesn't resemble anything else either. The tribe might have been a group of the Iazyges or the Scythians,⁹² as the etymology seems to be eastern: in Armenia, Ptolemy records a town named Mazara,⁹³ while the personal name Mazarosis is of Iranian origin. Three soldiers from Virumum were also killed during the same interval: Aelius Leonatus and a comrade whose name was not kept were *interfecti a barbaris in canabae legionis*,⁹⁴ while Aggaeus,⁹⁵ *hexarchus* of the *ala*, was killed by military life, thus we suppose in a violent manner as well. From the same place, Aurelius Ursus,⁹⁶ soldier in *II Italica*, died during a mission; the monument doesn't say if we are dealing with a far-away war or local confrontations, as we would be inclined to believe. This group of epitaphs indicates, in our opinion, massive confrontation that took place at one point during the Marcommanic wars in Noricum. The death of soldiers in the legionary *canabae* is the un-doubtable mark

of barbarian incursions within the province.

Additionally, there is indirect epigraphic proof of collective tragedies through the building of the city walls, as pointed by several inscriptions,⁹⁷ from the second and third centuries AD: at Kallatis inscriptions attest the reconstruction of towers and of the city walls,⁹⁸ which took place when Valerius Bradua was governor of Moesia Inferior (AD 172). In this case we know that the work was partially supported by two relatives, the *pontarchai* Titus Aelius Minucius Athanaion and Titus Aelius Minucius Moschion, and partially through taxes; at Athens the walls are rebuilt, along with towers, after the Herullian invasion, more precisely during the time of Probus (276-282 AD),⁹⁹ similar initiatives are attested also at Tomis.¹⁰⁰

3RD CENTURY AD

This period is the one with most inscriptions, which is somehow understandable, if we take into account the numerous unrests that marked the era, safe – arguably – its first decades. Most of the texts dating from the first half of the century come from the two provinces of Pannonia. From a *vicus Teutonis*, situated in the area of Aquincum, comes the epitaph of a certain Aurelius (the rest of the name is not readable),¹⁰¹ dead in *expeditio Germanica*.¹⁰² Most probably the monument talks about Caracalla's Germanic wars.¹⁰³ Referring to the same war, in Intercisa we have the monument of Aelius Constitutus,¹⁰⁴ coming from a military family and a former soldier of *legio II Adiutrix*, deceased as well in *bello Germanico*.

In Aelium Cetium (Noricum), we have a different kind of 'narrative', alluding to events from the reign of the same emperor, but the epitaph talks not about local confrontations, but of a soldier died afar,¹⁰⁵ in *expeditio Parthica*. The monument, based on context and paleography, seems to be later than Lucius Verus's Parthian war, thus indicating Caracalla's expedition or Macrinus's ulterior fights as the most plausible options.¹⁰⁶ Probably at the same war is alluding the dedication for Aelius Flavianus and Aelius Iustianus,¹⁰⁷ two soldiers from Aquincum who died in *expedition Parthica*, as well as Septimius Ingenius's epitaph from Carnuntum¹⁰⁸ In these cases, where death or disappearance occurred in distant wars, we are almost certainly always dealing with cenotaphs.

Many inscriptions refer to deaths in the Dacian wars from the 240s (beginning during Maximinus's reign and having a peak in 246-247 AD), which were a series of clashes and attacks by local tribes, resulting in the burning of Dacian

⁸⁴ IG V, 1, 816.

⁸⁵ ISM V 185 = CIL III 6189.

⁸⁶ AE 1905, 163 = ILJug 1312 = IMS III.2, 33.

⁸⁷ AE 1900, 155 = ILBulg 18 = AE 1999, 1326 = CIL III 14416 = ILS 7178.

⁸⁸ According to PETOLESCU 2014, 378.

⁸⁹ PETOLESCU 2010-2011, 277-279.

⁹⁰ AE 1991, 1378 = AE 2011, 1142 = SARNOWSKI 1991, 137-141 = PETOLESCU 2010-2011, 277-279.

⁹¹ CIL III 5234.

⁹² ŠAŠEL KOS 2016, 218.

⁹³ PTOLEMEUS 5, 12, 1.

⁹⁴ CIL III 4850; EHMIG 2013, 135.

⁹⁵ CIL III 4832.

⁹⁶ AE 1936, 84.

⁹⁷ IG II² 5199; IG II² 5200.

⁹⁸ ISM III 97; ISM III 98; ISM III 99 = SEG 49, 1016 = SEG 54, 666; ISM III 100 = IGR I 651 – the last two inscriptions make reference to the same construction works.

⁹⁹ FRANTZ 1988, 10; For the repair of towers: IG II² 5201 = SEG 38, 192 = SEG 47, 236.

¹⁰⁰ ISM II 21.

¹⁰¹ AE 2004, 1143.

¹⁰² AE 2004, 1143.

¹⁰³ HISTORIA AUGUSTA, *Caracalla*, 5, 6.

¹⁰⁴ AE 1910, 138.

¹⁰⁵ CIL III 5661.

¹⁰⁶ HISTORIA AUGUSTA, *Macrinus*, 8, 3-4.

¹⁰⁷ AE 1941, 10.

¹⁰⁸ CIL III 4480

cities,¹⁰⁹ Philip the Arabs taking the *cognomen ex virtute* of *Carpicus*¹¹⁰ and Decius calling himself *restitutor Daciae*.¹¹¹ Although these might be clues that the confrontations were quite serious, they might be regarded with circumspection, given the emperors' of the period propagandistic need to stress on any – even if minor – victory over the barbarians. Nonetheless, epigraphy seems to support the gravity of the conflict, as they register a considerable number of deaths in these confrontations: from Intercisa (Pannonia Inferior), Saturninus¹¹² was *desideratus in Dacia* and Publius Aelius Proculus¹¹³ died after a long career at *castellum Carporum* (un-localized seat of the *Carp*,¹¹⁴ probably the same as the one mentioned by Zosimos¹¹⁵), Aurelius Satul[---]¹¹⁶ from *I Adiutrix* died in the Dacian war and was commemorated by his family in modern-day Bajna (Pannonia Superior), Aurelius Iustinus from Celeia (Noricum),¹¹⁷ soldier of the II Italica, died in *expeditione Dacisca*, as well as Veponius Quartinus¹¹⁸ from the same legion, commemorated at Virunum. *Dacisci* seems to be a rather common name for the Dacians during the period, as it also appears on a monument from Verona.¹¹⁹ As we can see, important vexillations of troops from the Danubian provinces were mobilized for this series of confrontations.

The period was also marked by confrontations with the Parthians in the East – ulterior to the ones mentioned above. Ingenuus from Timacum Minus (Moesia Superior),¹²⁰ soldier of *VII Claudia*, was one of the victims of the wars waged between 230-270 AD in the east.

In what concerns Moesia Inferior the evidence points mostly, besides the *Costoboci*, to the barbarians as inflictors, the inscriptions attesting their presence mostly in 2nd and 3rd century AD, while the literary sources point to the beginning of the 1st century AD as being a turbulent period due to barbarian incursions, the following century being represented as relatively calmer due to the Roman intervention;¹²¹ previously the attacks of the *Getae*, *Bessi* and *Sarmatae* were at least more commonly recorded in the literary sources.¹²² Their incursions touched civilians and soldiers; from the latter category we have an inscription which mentions a *miles legionis* from Moesia Inferior (*vicus Trullensium*) who was *deceptus a barbaris*.¹²³ Since the individual was engaged in military life this case is an example of a collective tragedy, the incursion of barbarians, which reflects into a personal tragedy as well. Such evidence is also recorded in a third century inscription from Gytheion (Achaia), which renders poetically an example of battle between Athenians and barbarians (we have no other

information on whom exactly where the enemies), some of the Athenians dying in a sea battle under their sword.¹²⁴

As previously mentioned, besides the *Costoboci*, the Herulians¹²⁵ were also at the head of an invasion which touched Greece and especially Athens, and this in the turbulent third century AD. The trajectory which the Herulians had during the invasion has not been clearly defined, the literary sources pointing to several routes.¹²⁶ In 267 AD they sacked Athens, but were chased from the city by P. Herrenius Dexippus; however, from there they went further in the northern Peloponnese.¹²⁷ Among the most widespread information rendered by the literary sources concerning this dark episode for Athens is the fact that the books of Athenians were spared due to the fact that these made them focus on something else than war.¹²⁸

THE END OF THE 3RD CENTURY AD

While the period is marked by major and constant military confrontations, it is also defined by a dramatic quantitative decrease of the epigraphic sources, as the epigraphic habit became irrelevant. Thus, we only have a few inscriptions from this interval mentioning direct confrontations with the barbarians. Details on the events that lead to death are even rarer. Aurelius Victor from Celeia,¹²⁹ soldier of *II Italica*, was *bello desideratus hoste Gutica*; given the period, it is possible that the man fought in Cniva's Gothic tribes.¹³⁰ Gratus Artilleus and Clodius Glamusus, *centuriones* of the legion *VIII Augusta*, died in a war waged around Serdica (*bellum Serdicensis*) and are commemorated by fellow centurions in Sirmium.¹³¹ The occurrence which led to the death of the two are probably to be dated 260-261. The first string of events corresponds to the unrest around Regalianus's short reign, which ended in 260 at Sirmium, when he was killed by a coalition of parts of his own army and the *Roxolani*.¹³² The battle of Serdica could as well be placed one year later, in 261, when Gallienus was fighting Macrinus in the area.¹³³

GENERAL UNREST

A rather significant number of inscriptions (around 20) cannot be dated with more accuracy than 100-200 years ranges. Nor the contexts of discovery, nor the text or other elements of the monuments can offer clues for a more accurate dating. Nonetheless, they help us see the larger picture and contribute to the image of a world in which military conflict on a larger or smaller scale was a constant.¹³⁴

Among them, worth mentioning are the monuments erected for civilians killed by enemies. Thus, at Singidunum,

¹⁰⁹ PETOLESCU 2010, 281-282.

¹¹⁰ ZOSIMOS, I, 20, 1.

¹¹¹ CIL III 1176.

¹¹² CIL III 3336.

¹¹³ AE 1965, 223.

¹¹⁴ But most plausibly situated in modern-day Moldavia, outside the province (PISO 2005, 58).

¹¹⁵ ZOSIMOS, I, 15.

¹¹⁶ CIL III 3660.

¹¹⁷ CIL III 5218.

¹¹⁸ CIL III 4857.

¹¹⁹ CIL V 3372; ŠAŠEL KOS 2016, 218.

¹²⁰ CIL III 4480.

¹²¹ WOLFF 2003, 79.

¹²² WOLFF 2003, 81.

¹²³ ILBulg 155 = CIL III 12392.

¹²⁴ IG V, 1, 1188.

¹²⁵ For Herullian invasion of Athens see more recent: CHIOTI 2018.

¹²⁶ FRANTZ 1988, 1-3.

¹²⁷ FRANTZ 1988, 2.

¹²⁸ FRANTZ 1988, 2 who quotes the corresponding literary sources.

¹²⁹ CIL III 11700.

¹³⁰ IORDANES XVIII, 101; ŠAŠEL KOS 2016, 217.

¹³¹ ILJug 272.

¹³² HA, *Tyranni Triginta, Regalianus*, 2.

¹³³ HA, *Tyranni Triginta, Macrinus*, 12; ŠAŠEL KOS 2016, 219.

¹³⁴ VANACKER 2012, 31-32 argues on this matter for the Balkans area mostly during the 1st C AD; he considers that the uprising and revolts were minor and don't necessarily need to be considered as part of the Empire's 'meta-history', but, nonetheless, doesn't deny the constant character of military clashes.

we have a woman, Serenia Quarta,¹³⁵ *interfecta ab hoste*. The monument cannot be dated with more accuracy than 2nd-3rd C AD, and the text offers no additional details. Similarly, from Stobi, a monument dated sometimes between the 1st and the 3rd century AD mentions death caused *ab hoste*.¹³⁶ With the same loose dating, an epitaph from Virunum commemorates an unnamed man,¹³⁷ *interfectus a barbaris*. Killed by barbarians as well was a man from Neviodunum.¹³⁸ As well from Pannonia Superior, but this time from Brigetio, comes an inscription from the first half of the 3rd century,¹³⁹ richer in details than the previous ones; it is an epitaph for Titus *quodam Dominus sive Passeris*, a 26 years old merchant, killed by barbarians. Another example comes from Timacum Maior in Moesia Inferior, where an inscription mentions the fact that the son of Publius Maius Clementinus died in an ambush in Rome (*in sacra urbe*).¹⁴⁰ Besides these, we also mention various other inscriptions:¹⁴¹ in central Greece an individual was killed in a war,¹⁴² another individual from Kallatis might have died in a war,¹⁴³ while another one from Sexaginta Prista was *occisus in pugna*, his brother, a *miles* of the *cohors I Lusitanorum* elevating his funerary monument.¹⁴⁴

CAPTIVITY AND RELEASE FROM CAPTIVITY

Even though the epigraphic sources do not provide many examples which illustrate the taking of hostages, the literary sources are more abundant especially for the first three centuries AD.¹⁴⁵ Prisoners could have been not only those who were actively involved in battle, and whom fell into captivity (voluntarily by surrendering, or imposed),¹⁴⁶ but also of those individuals who were not involved in battle (the civilian population), or whom fell prey to piracy.¹⁴⁷ As such, for example during the time of Domitian (81-96 AD), Martial in his Epigrams makes reference to the Roman hostages taken following the Danubian wars (81-86 AD).¹⁴⁸

The role of barbarians as life threatening sources is found in inscriptions not only in what concerns the military, but also the civilians, as such, at Kallatis a priest, Αὐρήλιος Φλάβιος Μάρκος,¹⁴⁹ makes a dedication following his safe return home after the barbarians captured him (ληφθῆς ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων, σωθῆς ἐλθὼν). A resembling life event occurred to an individual from Durostorum,¹⁵⁰ whose personal name is unknown to us, and who was *receptus ex captivitate barbarorum*. Of course, the context in which the individual was taken as hostage was not necessarily the result of a 'collective tragedy'. A similar fate could have also had Aurelius Ditusanus, a *strator* tribune from Sacidava

¹³⁵ AE 1934, 179 = IMS I 52.

¹³⁶ AE 2012, 1328.

¹³⁷ ILLPRON 116.

¹³⁸ CIL III 13405.

¹³⁹ CIL III 11045.

¹⁴⁰ AE 1901. 20 = ILJug 1274 = CIL III 14588 = IMS III 2 = ILS 8150.

¹⁴¹ See for example: SEG 40, 213.

¹⁴² IG IX,2, 1256.

¹⁴³ ISM III 147.

¹⁴⁴ AE 2004, 1257.

¹⁴⁵ GUEYE 2013 analyses most of the literary sources.

¹⁴⁶ GUEYE 2013, 32, fig. 1.

¹⁴⁷ DUCREY 2019, 85.

¹⁴⁸ GUEYE 2013, 278; for a survey of the literary sources see GUEYE 2013, table IX, 275-278.

¹⁴⁹ ISM III 242 = IGB I² 1.

¹⁵⁰ CIL III 12 455 = AE 1895, 58 = ISM IV 111.

whom the inscription records as *dispersitus est in barbarico*.¹⁵¹

COMPARATIVE TABLEAU

When mapping the conflicts, we notice on the one hand that the evidence is influenced by the significance of the area and its epigraphic habits; on the other hand, we notice the fact that most of the conflicts are attested, as in the case of the 'personal tragedies', on the one hand in border areas, and on the other hand in important cities at a local level. However, overall the inscriptions which make reference to more general conflicts which touched the lives of many are spread all over the Empire, providing a glimpse into the collective tragedies over three centuries.

From a chronological perspective, the evidence for the Greek part of the Empire can be dated, only in some cases with precision, while in most cases we have either a slight general dating (ex. the first century AD), or an extremely general dating (second – third century AD). Overall, most of the datable inscriptions from all of the provinces come from the second and third centuries AD. However, in some particular cases, as for example in what concerns Greece, before the Romans, most of the evidence comes from the Classic and Hellenistic periods, much richer in events, which are more widely attested in inscriptions; all these gave grounds in this case for a series of specific studies. For example, for Lakonia, P. Low¹⁵² has authored a study on the war-dead (ἐν πολέμοι), including an analysis of the literary and epigraphic sources, but also E. Zavvou.¹⁵³

When comparing the personal and the collective tragedies we notice that only in around half of the cases does the evidence for a province comprise reference to both types of unfortunate events. Out of these Noricum and Pannonia Superior are extreme examples, in which collective tragedies are frequently attested, while personal tragedies lack. Both in relation with the epigraphic habit, and with the military dynamic is the very well representation of Achaëa and Moesia Inferior. In general, when comparing the evidence of the two types of tragedies from the Greek part of the Empire we notice dramatism and poetic nuances in the texts (see for example the fragmentary epigram from Rhamnous¹⁵⁴), as well as a more „personal” tone in the information on the deceased (we could for example compare the dense and emotional epitaph of Τελεσφόρος Εὐκάρπου Μειλήσιος,¹⁵⁵ with the collective epitaph of Flavius Fuscinus and Flavius Romanus.¹⁵⁶

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

We tend to believe that when we are dealing with war farther away, with a real expedition and not local border skirmishes, this fact is mentioned on the epitaph. Of course, we cannot consider this as a rule, but we can surely deal with it as a general truth. This hypothesis could be supported, for example, by the fact that there are so few mentions despite the high number of funerary monuments belonging to

¹⁵¹ AE 1998, 1139.

¹⁵² LOW 2006, 85-109.

¹⁵³ ZAVVOU 1992-1998, 297-299.

¹⁵⁴ SEG 40, 213; the fragmentary text is believed by the first editor Petrakos 1986, 21 to point a connection with the Persian Wars.

¹⁵⁵ IG II² 9898.

¹⁵⁶ AE 1964, 169.

military men. However, in the case of the inscriptions from Achaëa, we see that even local conflicts, following invasions (and probably due to this fact) are intimately narrated, as tales of courage (as for example the saving of the sacred objects of the Mysteries), or bad luck (as for example the unfortunate soldier who was wounded in the fight with the *Costoboci*, but died after returning home).

Correlated with the previous article on personal tragedies, as well as with the literary sources, we have an image of general unrest, agitation and violence which is the result of smaller and bigger conflicts, as well as attacks on behalf of lawless groups. As a general tendency, we notice that the *Costoboci* are the most commonly mentioned as invaders/ attackers who inflicted death across the Empire.

As a form of epigraphic habit, we see that personal tragedies are outnumbered by the collective ones, not meaning necessarily that they were underrepresented, but certainly collective tragedies had more 'changes' to be written down in history.

Table no. 1. Epigraphic attestations of personal and collective tragedies across the Roman Empire.

	Personal	Collective
Achaëa	4	12
Alpes Poeninae	1	-
Aquitania	1	-
Baetica	2	-
Belgica	1	-
Britannia	-	4
Dacia	1	-
Dacia Inferior	2	-
Dacia Superior	-	1
Dalmatia	4	1
Germania Inferior	-	1
Germania Superior	1	2
Hispania Citerior	3	1
Hispania Tarraconensis	-	1
Gallia Lugdunensis	3	-
Gallia Narbonensis	1	-
Lusitania	-	1
Macedonia	1	3
Moesia Inferior	4	16
Moesia Superior	4	5
Noricum	-	11
Pannonia Inferior	1	11
Pannonia Superior	-	9
Thrace	2	2

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