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DREAMED – BUT LIVED – ANCIENT RELIGIONS IN ROMAN DACIA. RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION AND SPECIALIZATION CONCERNING DREAMING

JUAN RAMÓN CARBÓ GARCÍA

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Abstract: Under the play on words of the title of this article, we make a study for the case of Roman Dacia concerning the forms of religious communication and mediation with the divine by specialists in the interpretation of dreams, from the LAR perspective (Lived Ancient Religion). This is consistent with following the new trends in the historiography of Roman religious studies, focusing primarily on atomising religious experience. The observed forms of religious communication through dreams and the strategies employed for their maintenance, such as the sacralization of space and the fostering of collaboration between groups and individuals, lead us to be able to appreciate in greater depth the richness and complexity of the provincial religious life of Roman Dacia.

Keywords: dreams; religious communication; dreams interpretation; space sacralization; religious individuation.

Rezumat: Jocul de cuvinte din titlul articolului acoperă un studiu de caz din Dacia romană privind formele comunicării religioase și a medierii cu divinul practicate de specialiștii în interpretarea viselor, din perspectiva LAR (Lived Ancient Religion/ Religia Antică Trăită). Acesta urmează noile tendințe din istoriografia studiului religiei romane antice, centrat în primul rând pe atomizarea experienței religioase. Formele observate de comunicare religioasă prin vise și strategiile folosite pentru întreținerea lor, cât și sacralizarea spațiului, încurajarea colaborării între grupuri și indivizi ne permit să apreciem în profunzime bogăția și complexitatea vieții religioase din provincia Dacia.

Cuvinte cheie: vise; comunicare religioasă; interpretarea viselor; sacralizarea spațiului; individualizare religioasă.

¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
una sombra, una ficción,
y el mayor bien es pequeño:
que toda la vida es sueño,
y los sueños, sueños son.

Calderón de la Barca
La vida es sueño, 1635.¹

¹ Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life is a dream* (Close of Act II), 1635: “What is life? ‘Tis but a madness. What is life? A thing that seems, A mirage that falsely gleams, Phantom joy, delusive rest, Since is life a dream at best, And even dreams themselves are dreams”.

The study of dreams and their interpretation in the classical world has long been and continues to be a very relevant subject for historians of Antiquity. Of course, the approaches of such studies have changed over time. We could begin by mentioning the classic study of Auguste Bouché-Leclercq at the end of the 19th century, to continue in the following century with those of J. Pley, K. Latte, H. Kenner, E. R. Dodds, D. Del Corno, J. S. Hanson, or Jacques Le Goff, among others.² Some works have set their sights on related topics such as the content of dreams collected in literary sources, with their circumstances,³ the study of ancient dream books,⁴ the relationship between divinities and dream experiences in the epigraphic register or in papyri,⁵ the role of dreams in Greek and Roman religion, both in general and in terms of individual cults,⁶ or attitudes in relation to the reliability of dreams.⁷ To a much lesser extent and more recently, research has begun to focus on what extent the interpretation of dreams played a role in the religious practices of Greeks and Romans, both in the public and private spheres,⁸ and what importance religious specialists may have had in the interpretation of dreams.⁹

In Classical Antiquity, dreams and their interpretation were of great importance, something attested by the abundant literature on the classification of the different types of dreams and on their interpretation. Naturally, the first classification was based on the difference between dreams that had a meaning and those that did not. Obviously, it is the first which are susceptible to an interpretation and among them were visions, symbolic dreams and oracular dreams. Visions were the more or less vague representations of an event that was to happen later. Symbolic dreams contained some kind of riddle and necessarily required help in order to be correctly interpreted. As for those of the oracular type, they were one of the most widespread forms of communication with the divine in classical times and were characterized by the intervention of a dreamlike figure in the dream of an individual, this being a respected character, a *daimon* or even a god, who gave advice, a prophecy or an order or, on the contrary, intended to annoy or bother the dreamer with a false message or prophecy.¹⁰

² Bouché-Leclercq 1879, RE IX, 18, Stuttgart 1916, s.v. *Incubatio*, col. 1256–1262 (J. Pley); RE XVIII, 1, Stuttgart, 1939, s.v. *Orakel*, col. 861–866 (K. Latte); RE XVIII, 1, Stuttgart 1939, s.v. *Oneiros* col. 448–459 (H. Kenner); Dodds 1951; Lewis 1976; Del Corno 1978; Hanson 1980; Le Goff 1985.

³ For the dreams of emperors, see Weber 2000. About poetry, Walde 2001. In theatrical production, Devereux 1976. For dreams in Apuleius, Hidalgo de la Vega 1992; Hunink 2006. In Cassius Dio, Gascó 1985. In Aristotle, Gallop 1996. In Aelius Aristides, Behr 1968; Cortés Copete 2002; Israelowich 2012. In general, see also Scioli, Walde 2010.

⁴ Especially, Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*. Harris-McCoy 2012; du Bouchet, Chandezon 2012; Weber 2015. See also Del Corno 1969; recently, Lipka 2022.

⁵ The first catalog, with up to 1300–1400 Greek and Latin dedicatory inscriptions, will be Renberg forthcoming a, with a complementary, more synthetic work, Renberg forthcoming b. Numerous *viso/iussu* inscriptions (989) are also discussed in Renberg 2017. Older, Van Straten 1976; Gramaglia 1989; Veyne 1986; Weber 2000; Weber 2005–2006; Kajava 2009. They discuss inscriptions of this kind and quote a significant number, but they do not catalog them. For particular regions, Fernández Fuster 1950 (Hispania); Burnelli 2002 (Gallia Cisalpina); Belfaidi 2012 (North Africa); and Zugravu 1997; Zugravu 2004–2005, and Carbó García 2011 (Dacia).

⁶ Harris 2009; Kajava 2009; Renberg 2010; Weber 2005–2006; Renberg 2017; Renberg 2018.

⁷ Harris 2003; Harris 2009.

⁸ Holowchak 2002; Näf 2004; Harris 2009, 134–139; Renberg 2015.

⁹ Szabó 2018, 73–78.

¹⁰ Fernández López, Prieto Fernández 1992, 205.

In this sense, we find ourselves in the field of epiphanies, an extensive and relevant aspect of religious experience with special significance. They represent direct and intense contacts with the divine presence, in which both divine agency and human agency are equally present.¹¹ Its temporal aspect, emphasizing the “now” and the immediate, produces an intensification of the sensory and cognitive aspects of religious experiences among which would be the direct interventions of the gods, such as in dreams.¹²

Dreams were representations of existing beliefs in society and they changed along with these. In the Roman imperial era, when society progressively aspired to a religion of a more personal type and to a more mystical religious experience, divine revelation through dreams would be almost indispensable, practically an obligation, being considered as a kind of reward to the morality evident in the life of the dreamer. All this comes to explain a part of the attractiveness of cults such as the Isiac cult, which offered precisely a more direct, more personal relationship with the divinity. In their symbolic universe, dreams represented the demonic mediation between the divinity and the initiates, so that they constituted the vehicle by which they received the advice and orders that they had to follow and fulfil to obtain the salvation that union with the divinity supposed.¹³

As we have said, the samples of divine commands expressed in oracular dreams were a very frequent type at that time, with numerous testimonies in literature and in epigraphic monuments about religious acts performed “by the order of the god” or “by the command of the god during a dream”.¹⁴ These were dreams sent by the gods –sometimes through intermediaries, such as those characters or *daimones* that we have just mentioned – who used them to give orders to the dreamer. Those divine commands expressed in dreams or through oracles might need interpretation by a specialist.¹⁵ Are there reasons to think that the priests of the different cults would appropriate the interpretative functions of dreams, thereby establishing an effective mechanism of control over the worshippers of the cult?¹⁶

Certainly, there is abundant evidence of the presence of specialists in the interpretation of dreams both in ancient literature and in the epigraphic and papyrological record.¹⁷ The Romans did not have a specific way to designate those specialists in the interpretation of dreams, but simply alluded to such an ability: *interpretes somniorum* and *coniectores somniorum*.

¹¹ Today, the definition of “epiphany” continues to raise a terminological problem and a historiographical question. In this regard, Georgia Petridou defines it as a ‘manifestation of a deity to an individual or a group of people in sleep or in a waking reality, in a crisis or cult context’. Petridou 2015, 2.

¹² See Lipka 2022.

¹³ Hidalgo de la Vega 1992, 175, 199.

¹⁴ Socrates himself said: ‘But, as I believe, I have been commanded to do this by the God through oracles and dreams and in every way in which any man was ever commanded by divine power to do anything whatsoever’, as collected by Plato (Plat. *Apol.* 33c). See note 3.

¹⁵ Hippoc. *Per. dia.* IV, 87 ss.: he said that divine dreams required interpreters, who possessed the art of dealing with such things.

¹⁶ Faced with this way of mediating communication with the divinity, magic could also serve as a mediation, being one of the fundamental enemies of the Greco-Roman sacrificial system, since the magi perverted the sacrificial code for their own evil ends and were an example of the chaos that would result from the disappearance of the religious role of the emperor, guarantor of the social, political and religious order. Gordon 1990, 253–254.

¹⁷ To this end, see Renberg 2015.

On the other hand, there are no signs of an established and recognized formal role for dream interpreters in the context of Greek and Roman cults. And, although the existence of informal consultations with priests of the different cults cannot be ruled out in any case, Renberg points out that it seems that the dreamers themselves or someone related to them could have interpreted the dreams linked to religious aspects which could require some type of interpretation. From the written and visual evidence, it does not appear that worshipers, when faced with questions of the religious realm, consulted specialists in the interpretation of dreams routinely.¹⁸

However, numerous sources give an account of the presence of dream interpreters in specific sanctuaries, although there seems to be no relationship between them, and rather we could think that these specialists chose these places to offer themselves and, of course, be available to all those who needed or could believe that they needed their services.¹⁹ In fact, literary sources do not show dream interpreters or diviners specializing in the interpretation of dreams serving the gods in their sanctuaries, but this only appears in epigraphic and papyrological sources. The problem is that these documentary sources correspond exclusively to the Isiac cult, rather than to the traditional Greco-Roman cults.²⁰

There are no testimonies of dreamlike practices in relation to the Isiac cult in the Dacian provinces. However, from there we have received probably the only epigraphic testimony outside that realm that establishes a direct relationship between specialists in the interpretation of dreams and a specific cult activity.²¹

It is a large, fragmentary votive altar dedicated to Liber Pater by the prefect of the cohort IIII Hispanorum equitata in his *villa rustica*, located southeast of the fort, in the nowadays village of Inlăceni (Harghita County), in ancient Dacia Superior:²²

*Libero Pa[t]/ri Deo P(ublius) Di[dius] / Italicus [praef(ectus)] / coh(ortis) IIII
Hi[sp(anorum) eq(uitatae)] / secund[um] / interpre[tati]/onem so[mni]/orum se [---] / in
tabula[rio? vo]/tum cum v[ovit?].*

¹⁸ Renberg 2015, 235.

¹⁹ Renberg 2015, 239.

²⁰ Harris 2009, 135–136; Vinagre Lobo 2000. See also Renberg 2017, Appendix on Dream-interpreters and Incubation at Egyptian Sanctuaries.

²¹ In this study, we deal with religious communication and specialization concerning dreaming in Roman Dacia, so we present some useful examples to illustrate the studied aspects, most of which come from the provincial capital in Apulum to get a local focus on sacralization of space and religious communication. It is neither our aim nor our intention to make a repertoire of inscriptions concerning dreams in Roman Dacia with an in-depth analysis of all of them, a study which, on the other hand, has been already developed by Nelu Zugravu and other authors mentioned below. The role of the sacralization of space, from the LAR perspective (“Lived Ancient Religion”), emerged from the research group of the University of Erfurt led by Jörg Rüpke, with the European project *Lived Ancient Religion; Questioning “cults” and “polis religion”* of the University of Erfurt, within the framework of the research group “Religious individualization in historical perspective”. This perspective puts the focus on key theoretical notions such as “sacralization of space”, “religious appropriation”, “religious individualization”, “group identities” and “strategies for the maintenance of religious communication”, which are some of those introduced in this new LAR school. The “sacralization of space” would be defined as a spatial strategy of religious communication between humans and superhuman divine agents. Csaba Szabó has been the researcher who first introduced these notions in the studies on religion in Roman Dacia, but they have yet to gradually make their way into the Romanian literature of the specialty. See especially Szabó 2018.

²² IDR III/4, 284.

This inscription is the only one that uses the expression *secundum interpretationem somniorum*, to refer to the dedication of an altar made because of the interpretation of some dream.²³ Of course, the epigraphic record throughout the Empire shows that it was quite common for dedicants to different gods to express that those same dedications or some other religious activity that they also recorded in their inscriptions were due to a dream that had impelled them to do them.²⁴ The usual formulas in Latin were those of *ex viso / visu*, while in Greek we can find κατ' ὄνειρον, καθ' ὄραμα, κατ' ἐνύπνιον, καθ' ὕπνον, or κατ' ὄναρ; all of them have the meaning of “according to a dream” or “in compliance with a dream”, expressions of oracular dreams, then. In Dacia, the most common Latin formula, *ex viso / visu*, appears in more than thirty cases, but we can also detect other formulas, both in Latin and Greek: *ex praecepto, ex imperio, iusso dei, ex iussu dei, a deo iussus, somno monitus, signum numinis, ἐξ ἐπιταγῆς*.²⁵

The terms used in the epigraphic record to refer to the commandments during dreams could be ambiguous, according to Renberg, who pointed out that the distinctions between them are not as clear as some modern scholars have considered. But the prefect Publius Didius Italicus, who is known by another inscription of Inlăceni,²⁶ with a typically Roman name, seems to have deliberately chosen such a specific expression, unlike what might have happened with someone unaware of the Roman epigraphic tradition or with customs typical of another culture.²⁷

Despite this, the exact nature of the form of interpretation of the dream is uncertain. The aforementioned ambiguity of some formulas, whose relationship with dreams is almost unquestionable, such as ἐπιταγή, which could perfectly refer to an oracle, together with the vagueness of some references, does not demonstrate, however, an ambiguity of the experiences of the dedicant. But ambiguity or ambivalence should perhaps be related above all to the epigraphic conventions in use, as Fassa has pointed out.²⁸

And yet, in the inscription of Inlăceni, since the divinity receiving the dedication was Liber Pater, it is difficult to think of a priest or temple staff at the service of the god with attributions or concrete experience in the interpretation of dreams. It is much more likely that Italicus consulted a diviner with experience in dream interpretation, especially if some kind of “dream-interpretation tablet” came into play in the process. Renberg even points out the possibility that this interpreter could have been some amateur, some friend or comrade with experience, and even the prefect himself, interpreting his own dream, and affirms that this would have been the case of a good part of the more than four hundred dedicants of inscriptions referring to dreams, who did not consider it necessary to specify that they

²³ The formula *secundum interpretationem* also appears in inscriptions with a context of oracular interpretation, as in the case of an inscription from Corninium, Dalmatia, in which we read *secundum interpretationem Clarii Apollinis* (CIL III 2880 = ILS 3230a), or in another from Housesteads, Britannia dedicated to the gods and goddesses: *Dis Deabusque secundum interpretationem oraculi Clari Apollinis coh(ors) I Tungrorum* (CIL VII 633 = ILS 3230 = RIB I 1579). See Nemeti 2012b.

²⁴ In this sense, more than 400 inscriptions in Greek and Latin are preserved with testimonies of these mentions. Renberg forthcoming a.

²⁵ Zugravu 1997; Zugravu 2004–2005; Carbó García 2011; Nemeti 2012a, 53–60.

²⁶ IDR III/4, 278.

²⁷ Renberg 2015, 245.

²⁸ Fassa 2016, 60.

themselves or their amateur colleagues had been in charge of the interpretation. He thus concludes that the interpretation of dreams could be attributed to a specialist available in the environments of the sanctuaries, as well as in the forums of the cities – a professional interpreter of dreams or a diviner with that capacity – or an amateur of interpretation, but not someone officially consecrated to the service of the cult of Liber Pater.²⁹

It is inevitable to reach this conclusion when it is observed that, except for the inscription dedicated to Liber Pater in Inlăceni, there is no clear evidence that the interpretation of dreams had anything to do with the decisions to erect epigraphic monuments with dedications reflecting dreams, either in Dacia or in the rest of the Empire, with the other general exception already mentioned of the Isiac cult. This could be explained in two different ways: first, that there was no need for the intervention of any specialist – or any related amateur – in the interpretation of dreams leading to religious activities; and as a second possibility, when there were religious communications with the divine through mediators, specialized or amateur dream-interpreters, these were not a fact considered of importance by the dedicants or even that such consultations were something really so routine that normally there was no reason to mention them.

Without discarding the second of these explanations, since there is a similar problem for the omens, as we will see below, Renberg leans towards the first, considering that it would have the support of the Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* and other literary sources,³⁰ while Eleni Fassa believes that epigraphic conventions should not be underestimated, either globally in Roman *oikumene* or on a local scale. At the time of collecting such experiences in the texts of the dedications of the inscriptions, epigraphic conventions required the language to be concise and homogeneous. A practice could end up becoming a convention thanks to certain advantages and because most people could easily understand it.³¹

In this way, the imperative formulas in relation to dreams to which we have been referring would not be viewed ambiguously or with little clarity by most of the population that could read them in the inscriptions. And precisely this need for a concise and homogeneous language in epigraphic conventions – most of the time also due to the lack of space on the epigraphic support – could speak in favour of the mediations of intermediaries in religious communication, the interpreters of dreams, not being included in the vast majority of inscriptions because they are something of secondary importance or something merely routine in the procedures for religious communication through dreams.

As we pointed out a moment ago, a situation similar to this – but unrelated to dreams – would occur in the case of omens, which normally fostered the development of religious activities, as it is known from literary sources, but which almost never appear explicitly in votive inscriptions. We can see an example in Dacia in a votive column from Apulum, dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which narrates the struggle between an eagle and a snake, interrupted by both dedicants. There is no mention of an interpretation or an interpreter of the omen:³²

²⁹ Renberg 2015, 246.

³⁰ Renberg 2015, 256–257.

³¹ Fassa 2016, 60.

³² CIL III 7756 = ILS 3007 = AE 1980, 734 = IDR III/5, 136.

I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Aur(elius) Marinus / Bas(s)us et Aur(elius) / Castor Polyd/i circumstantes / viderunt numen / aquilae descidis(s)e / monte supra dracone(m) / res validavit / supstrinxit aquila(m) / hi s(upra) s(cripti) aquila(m) de / periculo / liberaverunt / v(oto) l(ibentes) m(erito) p(osuerunt).

Certainly, the interpretation of dreams could be behind the decision to make part of the inscriptions that have reached our days and that collect dreamlike experiences, but it seems that it was not worth collecting the consultations themselves, the participation of a specialist professional or an amateur, intermediary in religious communication with the divinity, but without being a priest or someone from the worship staff of the sanctuaries.

A special form of dream-vision was the practice known as *incubatio*, usually in connection with the healing of diseases, which was basically the reception of the faithful in sanctuaries, where they spent the night after having followed an established ritual: fasting, prayer, bathing and sacrifice. The Greek word would be *enkoimesis*, that is, “to sleep in a temple”. During the night, if the worshipper managed to maintain the attitude that was expected of him, he would be able to see the divinity through dreams, receiving advice on the problems that affected him and thus being able to achieve healing. Then he used to record it through inscriptions or in literary works. This would be the case of the *Sacred Discourses* of Aelius Aristides, who narrates his long stay in the *Asklepieion* of Pergamon, where he hoped to be able to obtain the healing of his ills through the *incubatio*. This procedure had precisely been reaching a more significant boom in connection with the very extension of the cult of the Panhellenic god Asklepios.³³

In relation to this importance of dreams in the cult of Aesculapius, an inscription of Apulum precisely collects the formula *ex praecepto numinis Aesculapii somno monitus*, that is, “following the order of the divine power of Aesculapius, who advises him during his dream”:³⁴

I(ovi) o(ptimo) m(aximo) D(olicheno) / ex praecepto / num(inis) Aesculapi(i) / somno monit(us) / Veturius Marci/an(us) vet(eranus) l(egionis) XIII G(eminae) p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) suor(um)q(ue).

However, the epigraphic monument is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus and some relationship with Aesculapius can be detected. The cult of Aesculapius had a remarkable diffusion in Dacia, with a sanctuary of some importance in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa and another one in Apulum, and has even reached our days an inscription dedicated to its variant of Pergamum, although this does not collect any expression of a dream as a cause of its erection, such as those we are dealing with in this study.³⁵

The Syrian divinity, in fact, had among other attributes those of healer and savior, and hence its approach to Aesculapius. In this case, that capacity could be understood as the attribute of a divinity of supreme kind that gathered the attributes present among

³³ Aristid. *Sac. Orat.* See Fernández López, Prieto Fernández 1992, 206; Cortés Copete 2002, 51–68; Diomidis 2010.

³⁴ CIL III 1614 = 8044 = CCID 158 = IDR III/5, 220.

³⁵ CIL III 1417a = ILS 3854 = IDR III/2, 164.

other divinities of the Greco-Roman pantheon, perhaps a henotheistic tendency among the worshippers of Dolichenus, by accumulating divine attributes and powers of other popular divinities of the moment.³⁶ His association with traditional healing divinities, such as Apollo and Aesculapius, is attested with epigraphic and iconographic material from even the sanctuary of Dolichenus on the Aventine in Rome.³⁷ This has also been interpreted from a medical point of view, arguing that the priests of the divinity of Commagene were specialized in fields that were different from those of the *asklepieia*,³⁸ but it seems that the inscriptions in which we can see those associations of Dolichenus with Apollo or Aesculapius suggest that it was not about any kind of competition or domination between the cults, but rather about collaboration and equality between the divinities.

Similarly, and also in Apulum, in another inscription on a statue base, a soldier of the *legio XIII Gemina* declares that he built a fountain and dedicated an inscription to Deus Aeternus by the mandate of the god Apollo – *ex iussu dei Apollinis*– at a rather late time for Dacia, such as the years AD 238–244:³⁹

*Ex iussu dei / Apollinis fon/tem Aeterni Ulp(ius) / Proculinus / speculator / leg(ionis)
XIII G(eminae) Gordia/nae a solo resti/tuit.*

Although in Dacia no particularity can be observed in relation to the ritual of *incubatio*, it should be noted that religious specialists in the interpretation of dreams – *interpretes somniorum*, *conectores somniorum* – usually monopolized access to the few places where *incubatio* was possible in the context of the province. The experience of visiting an *asklepieion* involved a psychological and emotional impact, but also an economic investment. The price of access to the *incubatio* had to be paid, in the same way that many visitors paid in some cases for the healing services of the *clinicus* – as in the case of Apulum – and, more commonly, *ex votos*, such as votive altars or also statues and reliefs shaped like body parts, thus being one of the most characteristic aspects of religious communication and the sacralization of space.

Caius Iulius Valens served as a *clinicus* at the *asklepieion* of Apulum, where *incubationes* took place on a regular basis. The specialists in the *incubatio* not only had elements of religious knowledge, but also religious understanding. They used to work in a sacred area – *locus sanctus* – since the spatial organization of health care was very strictly related to sacralized spaces.⁴⁰ As a *haruspex*, he also had knowledge of private or public divinatory practices and rites, and it is highly likely that he used them in parallel to his medical function in the *asklepieion*, as a local interpreter or oracle. He most likely acted as a private *haruspex* before officially becoming a *haruspex* of the Colonia Aurelia Apulensis from 222.⁴¹

³⁶ Merlat 1960, 104 and 208.

³⁷ CIL VI 408; CIL VI 413.

³⁸ Szabó 2008.

³⁹ CIL III 990 = IDR III/5, 31.

⁴⁰ See Szabó 2004.

⁴¹ He appears in several inscriptions, being identified as *haruspex coloniae*: IDR III/5, 297, 356, 364, 367, 388. See Szabó 2018, 64–66.

As Csaba Szabó pointed out, the different small religious groups would have created a specific local religious communication with their own religious narratives expressed through a specific iconography and religious practices inside the sanctuaries, using different strategies for the maintenance of the sacralized spaces.⁴²

Also, the cult of Glykon and its oracle in Abonouteichos, in Paphlagonia, reached great importance in the second half of the second century AD, including a system of divination through dreams, as Lucian of Samosata relates in a satirical way in his work, *Alexander or the False Prophet*.⁴³ We know 2 inscriptions dedicated to this god in Dacia and in both the same formula is mentioned, *iusso dei*, referring to their erection by command of the god.⁴⁴ Precisely, Alexander gave name to the divinity also following a divine order that he interpreted, as Lucian tells us.⁴⁵

Activities such as *incubatio* or dream interpretation were presented with different variations and individual options, according to the usual rules of diversification that we can find in the context of the Roman health care system. In the case of the two dedicants of the Glykon inscriptions, a particular case of religious individuation takes place.⁴⁶ They assumed a unique religious identity from the moment they chose Glykon over Asklepios or other healing divinities with similar attributes. Precisely, Alexander of Abonouteichos introduced this intention by founding the cult of Glykon, to make it different, more competitive, in relation to the other individual options.⁴⁷ At the same time, this great variety of options in the religious market⁴⁸ of health divinities, as well as activities and sanctuaries, fostered in some way the competition between them and, as we pointed out further back, also the collaboration between these groups and individuals.⁴⁹

Near the *asklepieion* of Apulum, but unrelated with it, we can also detect the presence of the cult of Nemesis, and even outside the sacred area, in the *praetorium consularis*, but in any case, with testimonies related to the field of dreams. First of all, we have a votive statue with inscription, dedicated by the aforementioned Caius Iulius Valens, *haruspex* and *antistes*.⁵⁰

[N]emesi Reginae / C(aius) Iul(ius) Valens harus(pex) / col(oniae) Apul(ensis) et ant(istes) huisc(e) loci / somnio monitus l(ibens) p(osuit).

And, secondly, we have a small votive altar or perhaps statue base dedicated to Nemesis by Terentius Marcianus, a *beneficiarius*, who rebuilt a temple after an experience of direct contact with the divine, because of a dream:⁵¹

⁴² Szabó 2018, 75, 137.

⁴³ Lucian, *Alexander*. See Sfameni-Gasparro 1996; Sfameni-Gasparro 1999; Chaniotis 2002; see also Hidalgo de la Vega 2001, 221–224; Gascó 1997.

⁴⁴ IDR III/5, 85, 86.

⁴⁵ Lucian, *Alexander*, 16.

⁴⁶ On the concepts of individualization and individuation for historical research, see Rüpke 2013a; Rüpke 2013b; Rüpke 2015.

⁴⁷ See Chaniotis 2002.

⁴⁸ About this notion, Petridou 2016.

⁴⁹ Szabó 2018, 78.

⁵⁰ AE 1930, 6 = IDR III/5, 297.

⁵¹ CIL III 14474 = IDR III/5, 295.

Nemesi / deae Ter(enti)us / Marcia[n/u]s b(ene)ff(iciarius) tem/pl(u)m a novo / fecit ex / viso / v(otum) s(olvit).

Both monuments, as well as the reconstruction of the aforementioned temple, were performed by an order of divinity through a dream, probably by a ritual of *incubatio*. Szabó points out that the possible proximity of a theatre identified by a geophysical survey would also prove that in urban planning in Dacia the origin of the local elite would play a very important role, in addition to the economic and geographical specificities.⁵²

In the case of Apulum we would be talking about a fairly remarkable community of people originally from Pergamum, Ephesus and other cities in Asia Minor.⁵³ An old *aedilis* dedicated an inscription to Jupiter Sabazius with the formula *a deo iussus fecit*, that is, “he did it by command of the god”.⁵⁴

[?Iovi o(ptimo) m(aximo) S]abasio / [pro salute i]mp(eratoris) Caes(aris) / [M(arci) Aur(elii) Ant]onini Pii Fel(icis) / [Aug(usti) et Iuliae] Aug(ustae) matris / [Aug(usti) a deo i]ussus fecit / [...] Marcianus / [aedil]icius.

And, in the same locality, an anonymous dedicant, but of probable Minor Asiatic origin due to the epithet carried by the divinity, dedicated an inscription by order of the (goddess) Mater Troklimene.⁵⁵

Ἐξ ἐπιτ/αγῆς μη/τρὸς Τρο/κλιμήνης/ς.

These dedications reveal the character of these divinities, with a very direct connection with religious usages in Asia Minor, as well as that form of religiosity expressed by their worshippers, who manifested a predisposition to submissively accept divine orders dictated in response to their requests, either through oracles or through dreams, so that the worshippers were doomed to a situation of submission to divinity, thus internalizing their dependence on the absolute power of the gods in such a way that they could practically feel their slaves.⁵⁶ The conception of that divine omnipotence that is revealed in these inscriptions through total obedience to the orders manifested in dreams implied the acceptance of the worshippers of their position as a *servus dei*. They would be expressions of the social relations that arise when religion demands the submission of the faithful, as a true *deditio in fidem*.⁵⁷ Thus, in these formulas collected in the epigraphic monuments, the existence of a religious tension is detected. In them, the divinity, dominator of its

⁵² Szabó 2018, 46.

⁵³ On the presence of groups originating in Asia Minor in Apulum and their forms of religious communication, see Szabó 2018, 78–98.

⁵⁴ AE 1961, 82 = IDR III/5, 225.

⁵⁵ CIL III 7766 = IGR I 543 = IDR III/5, 256 = CIGD 17.

⁵⁶ Lozano 2007, 355: the conception of an absolute power of the gods over the worshippers would have had its origin in the East, being a prominent and characteristic feature of its people when it comes to assuming and manifesting their religiosity. In inscriptions of Asia Minor, the followers of these gods could appear defined as slaves without actually belonging legally to that group of society.

⁵⁷ Alvar 2001, 239–240.

worshippers, exerts its determining influence on them. And these dedications were the result of divine commands, expressed to the faithful through dreams.⁵⁸

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As observed, the forms of religious communication through dreams, specific rituals such as that of the *incubatio* and the participation of specialists in the interpretation of dreams – although almost not attested in the epigraphic record in Dacia –, and the strategies employed for the maintenance of such religious communication, such as the sacralization of space and the promotion of collaboration between groups and individuals, they lead us to be able to appreciate in greater depth the richness and complexity of the provincial religious life of Dacia in the broader context of religious practices related to dreams in the Roman Empire.

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⁵⁸ Lozano 2001, 107.

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