

Relationship of temples of Deus Invictus Serapis at Sarmizegetusa and of Apollo at Tibiscum with Emperor Caracalla

Coriolan Horațiu OPREANU

Institute of Archaeology and Art History, Cluj-Napoca

Abstract. The autor is proposing another reconstruction of the building inscription of the temple of Deus Invictus Serapis from Sarmizegetusa, dating it more precisely than I. Piso did (212-217), in AD 213, before 8 October, using as main analogies the three construction plaques from Porolissum. At the same time he links this inscription with one raised as well for Apollo and Caracalla in the shrine from Tibiscum, considering both raised at the same time under the governor L. Marius Perpetuus. He proposes, based on epigraphic evidence, a visit of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta at Tibiscum and Sarmizegetusa in AD 202 on their journey back from Orient and Egypt, even not recorded in the written sources. Then he discusses the journey of Caracalla along the Danube going to Orient in AD 213. The author's conclusion is he had not enough time from 8 October when finished the *expeditio Germanica* to 17 December 213 when attested already at Nicomedia to travel across Dacia till Porolissum. The only acceptable trip is at Drobeta and possible to the *fanum* of Apollo at Tibiscum. All this inscriptions from 213 do not prove Caracalla's visit in Dacia, but the province's desire to get the same benefits as Pannonia and Moesia and the willing of the communities and military units to have the emperor in their places to get advantages. That was the reason everywhere in Dacia were made great preparations expecting the imperial tour, which for many never came.

Keywords: Dacia, Serapis, Apollo, temples, Caracalla

Rezumat. Templele lui Deus Invictus Serapis la Sarmizegetusa și Apollo la Tibiscum și împăratul Caracalla. Autorul propune o altă întregire a inscripției de construcție a templului lui Deus Invictus Serapis de la Sarmizegetusa, datând-o mai precis decât I. Piso (în 212-217), adică în 213 p. Chr., înainte de 8 octombrie, folosind ca analogii trei plăci de construcție de la Porolissum. În același timp, această inscripție este pusă în legătură cu cea dedicată lui Apollo și Caracalla în templul de la Tibiscum, considerând că ambele au fost dedicate în

aceiași timp, sub guvernatorul L. Marius Perpetuus. Pe baza documentației epigrafice, autorul propune o vizită a lui Septimius Severus, Caracalla și Geta la Tibiscum și Sarmizegetusa în 202 p. Chr, chiar dacă aceasta nu este menționată de sursele scrise. Apoi discută călătoria lui Caracalla la Dunăre în 213 p. Chr., în timp ce mergea spre Orient. Concluzia autorului este că nu a avut timp suficient pentru a traversa Dacia până la Porolissum, de la 8 octombrie când s-a încheiat *expeditio Germanica* până la 17 decembrie 213, când este prezent la Nicomedia. Singura călătorie acceptabilă este la Drobeta și posibil până la *fanum*-ul lui Apollo de la Tibiscum. Toate inscripțiile din 213 nu dovedesc faptul că împăratul a vizitat Dacia, ci dorința provincialilor din Dacia de a primi aceleași privilegii ca cei din Pannonia și Moesia și disponibilitatea comunităților și soldaților de a-l primi pe împărat pentru a obține avantaje. Pentru acest motiv, peste tot în Dacia, au fost făcute pregătiri masive în așteptarea vizitei imperiale, care pentru mulți nu s-a mai petrecut.

Cuvinte cheie: Dacia, Serapis, Apollo, temple, Caracalla

Most of the inscriptions dedicated to Serapis and Isis known from colonia Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa in Dacia come from an area belonging to a complex of buildings conventionally named *praetorium procuratoris*, where was the headquarters and private residence of the financial procurator (also *agens vice praesidis* in case the consular governor from Apulum was missing, or was unable to govern) of the province Dacia Apulensis after the reforms of Marcus Aurelius¹. The complex was situated in one, or more *insulae*, having access from *cardo maximus* and being bordered on two sides by two military type granaries² (Pl. I). It is composed of a living area, two baths blocks and a huge open space, considered to be an *area sacra*, due to many votive inscriptions found. Inside the *area sacra* it is supposed it have existed also some small shrines, some being related with the imperial cult³.

¹ For its earlier history when probably was the *praetorium consularis Daciae*, see Opreanu 2010, 49-53, fig. 8.

² Alicu/Paki 1995, 20. For the *horrea*, good analogies in Britain at Corbridge, Birrens and especially at Chesters and Inchtuthil, being placed near the gates (cf. Rickman 1971, 235, fig. 42, 45, 46), the military granaries from Hispania (Salido Dominguez 2009) and in the legionary fortress at Lambaesis very similar as position and plan with those at Sarmizegetusa (Papi/Martorella 2007, 173-174, Fig. 2-3).

³ Piso 1998, 253, Abb. 1.

One of this was identified as a *Serapeum*. The main evidence is a fragmentary marble inscription (Pl. II/1). The attempts to reconstruct the text gradually developed as the five fragments were discovered and correlated along almost a century. The fragments are kept in the Lugoj Museum, Sighișoara Museum and Sarmizegetusa Museum⁴. It is the merit of I. Piso⁵ to stick together old fragments with new identified ones. Here is the reconstructed text proposed by him:

[*Invicto Deo Sera*]pidi
 et [*Is*]idi frugi]ferae pro salute
 atque incolumitate Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)
 M(arci) [A]jurel(ii) Antonini [p]ii felicis
 [Aug(usti)] Part(hici) max(imi) [Part(hici) sive Britt(anici) max(imi)]
 Britt(anici) max(imi)
 [..... A]jug(?usti) [...]
 [---]

The formula *Invicto Deo Serapidi*, even known from another inscription at Sarmizegetusa⁶, in this case it is more probable to be *Deo Invicto Serapidi*, as we will show bellow. In the second row to the more frequent epithet *Regina* was preferred *Frugifera*. It is recorded on a stone disc from Museo Capitolini, discovered in Rome, being initially placed in the church of S. Maria in Aracoeli where for-sure arrived from the *Capitolium*⁷. Follows the wish often used for the emperors *pro salute et incolumitate*. Rows 3 and 4 are very well-preserved, present no problem to identify the name of Caracalla. A real problem of Piso's version exists in the middle of the 5th row, where the stone is broken. The row starts with the title of *Part(hicus) Max(imus)*, while at its very end it is easy to read *Britt(annicus) (sic!) Max(imus)*⁸. Piso, with no explanation filled in the gap by a second *Parthicus Maximus*, or a second *Brittannicus Maximus*, as he noticed the upper half of a P, or B⁹ was visible at the beginning of the gap. It seems he thought to a mistake of the man who

⁴ Cristea/Tecar 2010, 275, nr. 21.

⁵ Piso 1998, nr. 1, Abb. 2-3.

⁶ IDR III/2, 331; AE 1930, 134.

⁷ CIL VI 351 = ILS 4354.

⁸ The double «b» seems like the man who cut the text in stone was more familiar with the ethnical name *Brittoni* than *Britanni* and their forms used mainly in the titles of the auxiliary units.

⁹ Piso 1998, 256.

executed the writing. Such a mistake is not at all plausible in the titles of the emperor.

The other title known from Caracalla's reign is *Germanicus Maximus*, but as it received it last, with no exception it is placed in inscriptions after *Britannicus Maximus*¹⁰. It was not in the 6th row, as Piso probably believed. The evidence and the solution are offered by other well-known building inscriptions of Caracalla from Porolissum. It is about the three identical inscriptions¹¹ (Pl. III) mentioning a work, probably the gates of the fort, or the whole curtain wall, even not specified in the text. In the two intact plaques the title of *Germanicus Maximus* does not appear. After the title of *Particus Maximus* and before the *Britannicus Maximus* is the title of *pontifex maximus*. The upper part of a P, which is the first letter of the missing word, is obviously in Piso's drawing. So, it is sure the title of *pontifex maximus* was in the gap. This anomalously appears also in an inscription from Intercisa¹². Follow in the inscriptions at Porolissum *trib(unicia) pot(estate) XVI, imp(erator) II, co(n)sul III, p(ater) p(atriciae) proco(n)s(ul)*. The same titles can be considered for the inscription from Sarmizegetusa too. The only small difference is the abbreviation *trib(uniciae) potes(tatis)*, variant also existing on one of the inscriptions for Caracalla from Porolissum¹³.

Our (Pl. II/2) new reconstruction is:

[Deo Invicto Sera]pidi
 et Is[idi frugi]ferae pro salute
 atque incolumitate Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)
 M(arci) [A]urel(ii) Antonini [p]ii felicis
 [Aug(usti)] Part(hici) Max(im)i p[ontif(icus) max(im)i] Britt(annici) Max(im)i
 [trib(uniciae) potes(at)is] XVI imp(eratoris) II co(n)s(ulis) III p(ater) p(atriciae)
 proco(n)s(ulis) et
 ?Iuliae Piae Aug(ustae) Matris Castrorum
 ac patriae templum?...]]

It seems the inscriptions from Porolissum and Sarmizegetusa have the same dating. But Piso dated the inscription from Sarmizegetusa wide, between 212-217, as his reconstruction is wrong.

¹⁰ As he got the title of *Britannicus Maximus* in 209 (cf. Kneissl 1969, 151).

¹¹ Macrea 1957, 222-226, fig. 2-3.

¹² AE 1971, 334.

¹³ Tóth 1978, nr. 9.

Trying to establish a finest chronology we need to get first a deeper insight into the sources concerning Caracalla's actions. In AD 212 the emperor was in Rome. He killed Geta between 17 December 211 and 7 January 212¹⁴. A period of terror followed in Rome and in the provinces, 20 000 people being killed, as Cassius Dio recorded¹⁵. Sometime during the spring of 213 Caracalla left Rome for Gaul. In Gallia Narbonensis the milestones near Nice were raised between 1 January-6 October 213¹⁶ and the governor of the province was put to death by Caracalla¹⁷. From here, he followed the Rhone valley towards Upper Germany reaching Mogontiacum (Mainz) on the Rhine, the traditional Roman operation base in *Barbaricum*. Then he stopped at Aquae (Baden-Baden) and in the fort at Abusina (Eining)¹⁸. *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* recorded that in 11 August 213 the emperor arrived at the frontier of Raetia and crossed it in *Barbaricum*¹⁹. The same source mentions that at 8 October 213 in Rome, on the *Capitolium* was hailed the *Victoria Germanica* of Caracalla²⁰. M. Macrea dated the construction inscriptions at Porolissum before 6 October 213 because of the missing of the title *Germanicus Maximus* and *imperator III*²¹. Recently, F. Marcu, without any footnote, dated the inscriptions at the end of 213 and in 214, which is not possible²². Long time ago, J. Fitz made the observation that the inscriptions dedicated to Caracalla from the first half of the year 213 do not contain the title of *proconsul*, which in his opinion means that the emperor was still in Rome²³. In this respect the inscriptions from Porolissum and the moment when the works were finished can be placed in the second half of 213, but no later than 8 October.

But how can we be sure the inscription from Sarmizegetusa has the same chronology? The main argument is the missing of the title *Germanicus Maximus* and the same position in the text of title *pontifex maximus*. It is known Caracalla's relation with the cult of Serapis who

¹⁴ Królczyk 2011, footnote 6 with bibliography.

¹⁵ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 4, 1.

¹⁶ Królczyk 2011, 210.

¹⁷ SHA, Caracalla 5. 1: *Narbonensem proconsulem occidit...*

¹⁸ Królczyk 2011, 211.

¹⁹ Scheid 1998 Fr. 99 a: *...per limitem Raetiae ad hostes extirpandos barbarorum terram introiturus est...*

²⁰ Scheid 1998 Fr. 99 a: *...ob salutem victoriamque Germanicam...*

²¹ Macrea 1957, 224.

²² Marcu 2011, 128.

²³ Fitz 1966, 202 who mentions the inscription CIL XI 2086 = ILS 451, dating 3 May 213.

became strongly linked with the imperial cult²⁴. That was the reason many officials of the Roman army and administration raised inscriptions to Serapis and Isis (identified with Iulia Domna) and wishing health, or something else to the emperor and his mother. These proves of loyalty are frequent after the death of Geta (february 212) and the arrival in Oriental expedition (beginning of 214). The best analogy for the inscription at Sarmizegetusa comes from Carnuntum. It is a fragmentary monumental limestone inscription found occasionally in 1979 in the field at Bruck an der Leitha²⁵ (Pl. IV/3). The first row was reconstructed [*Deo Invicto*] *Sarapidi et [Isidi Reginae]*. Formula *Deo Invicto* can be found in an inscription dedicated to Serapis and Caracalla from Pannonia at Nyergesújfalu (Crumerum)²⁶ (Pl. IV/2). For this reason, being inscriptions dedicated to the emperor as well and being more official, we prefer it also for the inscription at Sarmizegetusa, instead of more colloquial *Invicto Deo*. The reason of the imperial dedication at Carnuntum is [*pro salute Victoria et in*] *columitate*. The choose of *Victoria* in the reconstruction is based on the existing in the preserved fragment of the title *Germanicus Maximus*. At Sarmizegetusa the formula is only *pro salute atque incolumitate*, the missing of *Victoria* fitting very well with the missing of title *Germanicus Maximus*. In the Carnuntum epigraph it is sure the last title is *Ger(manicus) Max(imus)*, as it is followed by *pont(ifex) max(imus)*. The chronology of the inscription from Carnuntum is sure after 8 October 213. The inscription at Sarmizegetusa is earlier, before 8 October 213. The 7th row of our reconstruction is supposing the mention of *Iulia Pia Augusta Mater castrorum ac patriae*. We have the right to think she was also honored by the inscription not only because Serapis is accompanied by Isis in the inscription, but also because the same situation is recorded by the inscription from Carnuntum. Finally, it is the same inscription which suggests the inscription at Sarmizegetusa was also a construction inscription of a *templum*. The verb explaining the action could have been *fecit*, as in the inscriptions from Porolissum, or an earlier construction inscription from Sarmizegetusa of Septimius Severus and sons, without anybody else from the provincial staff added, or *restituerunt*, as at Carnuntum. The financial procurator of Dacia Apulensis, or the provincial governor were, probably, the dedicants of

²⁴ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 15, 5; Mráv 2000, 83-88.

²⁵ Bricault/Veymiers 2014, 173, 613/0703.

²⁶ RIU 3 753; AE 1962, 40; Mráv 2000, 81, Abb. 11/2.

the epigraph. Piso is thinking that could be an unknown procurator²⁷. Taking into account our new chronology of the inscription the governor of the three Dacias in charge that moment was, probably, L. Marius Perpetuus²⁸. It does not matter if himself was or was not the dedicant of the inscription and of the temple, but the action was sure a political-propagandistic action destined to send a message of loyalty and support from the highest command of Dacia. The same is attested in an inscription from Iaz, near Tibiscum, dedicated to *Apollo Conservator Maximus Sanctissimus* and to Caracalla²⁹ (Pl. V/2). Being well-known also the great importance of Apollo for the destine of the emperor³⁰, the dedication of the governor is not an ordinary votive action, but a political one proving his loyalty to the emperor³¹, just in case he will visit the sanctuary, as did at Phoebiana (Eining) on the Raetian *limes* where he started the *expeditio Germanica* in 11 August 213, choosing this place

²⁷ I. Piso is believing that only a financial procurator was able to build a temple in his *praetorium* and he reconstructs a fragmentary inscription in Greek, considered as the construction inscription of the temple of Serapis (Piso 1998, 258, Abb. 4; 5), where he thinks can read in the 2nd row a name Κα[σ]σιος ΑΛ[...] dated, with no serious evidence, in AD 212-217 (Piso 2013, 207, nr. 98 a). More, this name is unknown between the Roman knights. Anyway the reconstruction is not convincing. Even we accept in the 2nd row was the name of the dedicant, the reconstruction Cassius is not the only possibility. It can be as well Caesidius (second part of the word being more damaged than Piso would have been wished, see his photo) an attested procurator who put an inscription to Serapis (IDR III/2, 331). Piso dated him in 230?-235? only because that was the period empty in his list (Piso 2013, 226-227, nr. 101). In our opinion the inscription to Deus Invictus Serapis and Isis is the construction inscription of the temple and not the fragmentary Greek one. The Latin inscription is surely dated in 213, before 8 October, so it is hard to believe the Greek one can be earlier (first months of 213?). So the office of a so-called Cassius Al... doesn't seem real in this period.

²⁸ Piso 1993, 169-177, nr. 38 placed him as governor between 212/213-215. The only well datable inscription is that from Napoca (AÉ 1960, 226) from 214, based on the consuls.

²⁹ Piso/Rogozea 1985, 214-217, nr. 2, Abb. 2.

³⁰ The visiting of the oracle of Apollo Clarius by Caracalla in 213, as E. Birley proposed, is possible only if it happened by intermediary, the emperor being impossible to be present in Asia Minor that year before 17 December. The 11 inscriptions all over the Empire mentioning *dis deabusque secundum interpretationem oraculi Clarii Apollinis* could be from Caracalla's time (even it is not the only possibility) referring to an imperial consultation of the oracle (See: Nemeti 2012, 420).

³¹ The connection of the temple of Apollo Clarius from Sagalassos with the imperial cult, at Talloen/ Waelkens 2004; Talloen/Waelkens 2005.

probably because here was the temple of Apollo Grannus³², where he probably had prayed.

The similitude with the action of rebuilding the temple in Carnuntum and the standardization of the texts are evidences of this idea. It seems that also the strange text of the three building inscriptions from Porolissum were composed in the circle of the governor and his staff. They have similitudes with the epigraph from Sarmizegetusa in the writing of the emperor's titles as we have seen and also avoid mentioning any provincial high clerk and any military unit, which is unusual for the building inscriptions. Maybe the text was sent to Porolissum as was written in the inscription and nobody from the staff of Dacia Porolissensis, or the commanders of the military units didn't dare to add the name of the local procurator and of the auxiliary unit which worked, in a suspicious and confuse atmosphere after Geta's death.

The inscriptions raised in 213, mainly the inscriptions from Porolissum and now the one from Sarmizegetusa and Tibiscum, were usually interpreted by the researchers in the context of the visit of Caracalla in Dacia. Ancient written sources mention a visit of the emperor Caracalla in Dacia while he was ready to leave Danube frontier for the Oriental expedition. *Historia Augusta* is recording that Caracalla: *Dein ad Orientem profectorem parans omissio itinere in Daciam resedit*³³. So he had no intention to go to Dacia, which was not on his way, but at a moment (we do not know exactly where was his location) something happened in Dacia (we do not know what) as he decided to change his route (*omissio itinere*) and go to Dacia, if we believe the text of *Historia Augusta* is precise. Cassius Dio is writing that the emperor arrived in Thrace, being not any more concerned about Dacia and crossed, not without danger, the Helespontus³⁴. This source says only that he was at a moment concerned about Dacia (not necessary he travelled inside the province) and it is pointed the last European segment of his journey. Obviously he arrived in Thrace leaving one of the Danube's fortresses, as Novae, for example. The third source, Herodianus, is only mentioning that the emperor inspected the forts along the Danube, before arriving in Thrace, which in our opinion supports he passed through the fortresses

³² Cassius Dio, LXXVIII, 15, 6; Królczyk 2011, 207.

³³ SHA, Vita Caracallae, 5, 4.

³⁴ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 16, 7.

of Moesia Inferior at least till Novae³⁵. In conclusion, only *Historia Augusta* explicitly recorded a visit in Dacia, the others being more evasive. But the most relevant epigraphic document to our discussion is the new fragment from *Acta Fratrum Aroalium* which attests the presence of Caracalla in his winter headquarters at Nicomedia as early as 17 December 213³⁶ and not only in the next winter as was supposed before. In conclusion, Caracalla travelled from the frontier of Raetia to Nicomedia between 8 October and 17 January 213. Now the question is if in that period of approximately two months there is room for a travel from the Danube till Northern Dacia, at Porolissum and back and then to Thrace and Nicomedia. In this new light year 214 is out of discussion. It seems the emperor was at Aquincum and Intercisa, but a direct crossing of the Hungarian plain to Porolissum from Aquincum is less probable. The rainy days of November and the dangerous crossing through the Iazyges territories exclude in our opinion such a possibility. So the only reasonable variant remains a travel from Drobeta along the imperial road to inner Dacia.

Very useful in our attempt to reconstruct Caracalla's journey through Danubian provinces towards Asia Minor from 213 is the information we have concerning another travel of the imperial family in 202 when Septimius Severus and sons were travelling back from Orient and Egypt crossing Moesia and Pannonia³⁷. The emperor was directing to Carnuntum to feast at 9 April 202 his ten years of reign, inaugurating on his way many roads, bridges, public and religious buildings³⁸. He passed Augusta Traiana in Thrace and then from Philippopolis crossed Haemus Mountains to Nicopolis ad Istrum, recently transferred in Lower Moesia. It is not sure he continued the journey along the Danube, but there is good reason to consider he visited Novae, as legio I Italica was the first unit acting against Pescennius Niger who controlled the Bosphorus. Next information we have is that he arrived in 18 March 202 at Sirmium, then continued to the North on the Danube, passing Intercisa³⁹ and very probable Aquincum and finally Carnuntum, both getting from the emperor the status of *colonia*⁴⁰. As also Drobeta was

³⁵ Herodian, IV, 8, 1.

³⁶ Scheid 1998, Fr. 99 b, 445.

³⁷ Herodian, III, 10, 1.

³⁸ CAH 2005, 247.

³⁹ CAH 2005, 247-248.

⁴⁰ Mráv 2013, 213-216.

granted with the rank of *colonia* between 198-209⁴¹, it is very probable this event happened during Severus journey from 202. That means it is realistic to think he came from Novae on the Danube to Drobeta. Another inscription from Iaz-Tibiscum⁴² (Pl. V/1) dedicated to Apollo is *pro salute dominorum nostrorum* Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Geta and the governor of the three Dacias L. Octavius Iulianus, dating between 200-202⁴³. At Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa a construction plaque found in the first half of the 19th century at Nopcea manor from Zam, today in the museum from Deva (Romania), records the names of emperors Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta in Nominative case, followed only by the verb «*fecerunt*» and it was dated between 200-209⁴⁴. Usually, when in inscriptions the name of the emperor is in Nominative case, it is considered as a sign of his direct interest, or that the work was done at his order and those who executed the work were in tight connection with him⁴⁵. It is very plausible that the building was inaugurated in 202. Even not recorded in the written sources a journey of Septimius Severus from Drobeta to Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa has logic⁴⁶. It is highly probable that ten years later, in 213 Caracalla reconstruct on the other direction the itinerary done together with his father. It had the same reasons to do this: he needed political support of the army and communities from the provinces after dubious death of Geta and was marching along the military roads of the Danubian provinces gathering troops from the legions which were loyal to his father. We can guess that while still in Pannonia, probably around the beginning of November 213 (maybe at Sirmium), something happened concerning Dacia and he decided to action. He had to pass Singidunum and maybe Viminacium before arriving in Drobeta. That means he was already in Dacia. The question is if he resolved the problems of Dacia from Drobeta, or he continued his trip on the military road to Tibiscum, Ulpia Traiana, Apulum, Potaissa, Napoca, Porolissum. We can only speculate, how

⁴¹ Mráv 2013, 218-219.

⁴² Piso/Rogozea 1985, 211-214, nr. 1, Abb. 1; AE 1987, 848; ILD 199.

⁴³ Piso/Rogozea 1985, 213.

⁴⁴ CIL III 1451 = IDR III/2, 21.

⁴⁵ Horster 2001, 44.

⁴⁶ Boteva 2010, 234 affirms that the emperor's journeys to Lower Moesia and Thrace were much more numerous than that recorded by the written sources, based on regional complexes of commemorative coins issued by towns and on many honorary inscriptions.

many days were necessary for such a two-ways journey⁴⁷. Anyway once on the Danube at Singidunum and Viminacium area the province and the communities of Dacia probably ask him to come and did preparations to demonstrate their loyalty and obedience to the emperor. If we take into account that from Novae he had to walk in November - 17 December and to cross the Haemus Mountains, not to mention the stops in very loyal towns, as Nicopolis ad Istrum, for example, it doesn't seem realistic he travelled till to the North of Dacia, at Porolissum. Usually the passing of the imperial court with the army and the supplies was a complicated matter. It had to be planned in details with rest places and requisitions in advance from local communities, which slowing the march⁴⁸. We can at least accept he, joined only by the praetorians, briefly visited the *fanum* of Apollo from Tibiscum, probably inaugurated together with his father in 202, to pray for his health and journey⁴⁹, leaving the army and the logistics on the Danube line. The other known inscription from the shrine of Apollo at Tibiscum, raised to *Apollo Conservator Maximus Sanctissimusque*, put by the governor from Apulum L. Marius Perpetuus using the *tribunus* of *cohors I Vindelicorum* from Tibiscum, demonstrates at least that the visit was expected. Among the epithets of Apollo, *Sanctissimus* is related to the emperor as he is named *Dominus Noster Sanctissimus* in an inscription from Apulum raised by the *legatus* of the 13th legion *Gemina* for the health of the emperor⁵⁰, *Sanctissimus Antoninus Augustus* in a honorary inscription

⁴⁷ Today there are 470 km on road between Drobeta and Porolissum, that is 317 Roman miles. The Roman army was marching during campaigns 12 miles a day (Diaconescu 1997, 8), that means were necessary 26 days to cover this distance and the same to be back. Of course the imperial court need more, if we only take into account the smaller length of daylight in November and the stops in towns and forts. In conclusion, a visit of Caracalla in Dacia is not possible to imagine in AD 213. If we are using ORBIS, the geospatial network model of the Roman world (<http://orbis.stanford.edu>), the distances calculated for autumn are: Carnuntum - Drobeta 19, 1 days; Drobeta - Porolissum 14, 4 days (and back); Drobeta-Nicomedia 21, 2 days. The total is 69,1 days of travel, without counting the stops in many towns and military bases from Pannonia, Dacia, Moesia and Thrace.

⁴⁸ CAH 2005, 244.

⁴⁹ Cassius Dio, LXXVII, 15, 5 is writing that Caracalla was ill and he spent nights praying in the temples of Apollo Grannus, Aesculapius and Serapis. Many from his staff were obliged daily to bring gifts to gods and he himself was often coming, performing all the required rituals and hoping his own presence will help improving his health.

⁵⁰ CIL III 1129.

from Porolissum raised by *cohors V Lingonum Antoniniana*⁵¹ and *Sanctissimus Imperator Antoninus Augustus* on a honorary altar from Micia⁵².

Both inscriptions from Sarmizegetusa and Tibiscum were put at the same time, probably expecting an imperial visit, but we cannot be sure if it really happened. They were both raised, probably, under the office of the governor L. Marius Perpetuus, before 8 October 213. All these inscriptions are not proving Caracalla's journey in Dacia⁵³, but the interest of the authorities, the army and communities to keep a good relation with the emperor and to transmit their loyal attitude. By its geographical position Dacia was disadvantaged compared with Pannonia and Moesia, as it was outside the emperor's way. Dacia wanted to get the same benefits, so the only thing that was possible to be done was the raising of epigraphs and statues of the emperor and his mother hoping they will appreciate and will be generous if will pass over their fort, or town. In fact, the construction inscriptions from Porolissum and from the temple of Serapis at Sarmizegetusa, as well as the honorary one from Tibiscum, being erected before 8 October 213 are proofs that Caracalla was not in Dacia in 213, as we know precisely he was far away from Dacia that time⁵⁴.

Illustrations

Pl. I: *Praetorium Procuratoris* from Sarmizegetusa with S - Temple of Serapis (after Piso 1998).

Pl. II: Inscription dedicated to Serapis and Isis honoring Caracalla and Iulia Domna from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa: 1) photo and reconstruction by I. Piso and 2) new interpretation by the author.

Pl. III: Three identical construction inscriptions from Porolissum (after Tóth 1978).

Pl. IV: 1.-2. Honorary inscriptions for Caracalla from Piliscsev and Nyergesújfalu in Pannonia; 3. Construction inscription of the temple of Deus Invictus Serapis from Carnuntum (after Mráv 2000).

Pl. V: Inscriptions from the temple of Apollo in Tibiscum (after Piso/Rogozea 1985).

⁵¹ Tóth 1978, 26, nr. 12.

⁵² IDR III/3, 55.

⁵³ More detailed discussion at Opreanu 2015.

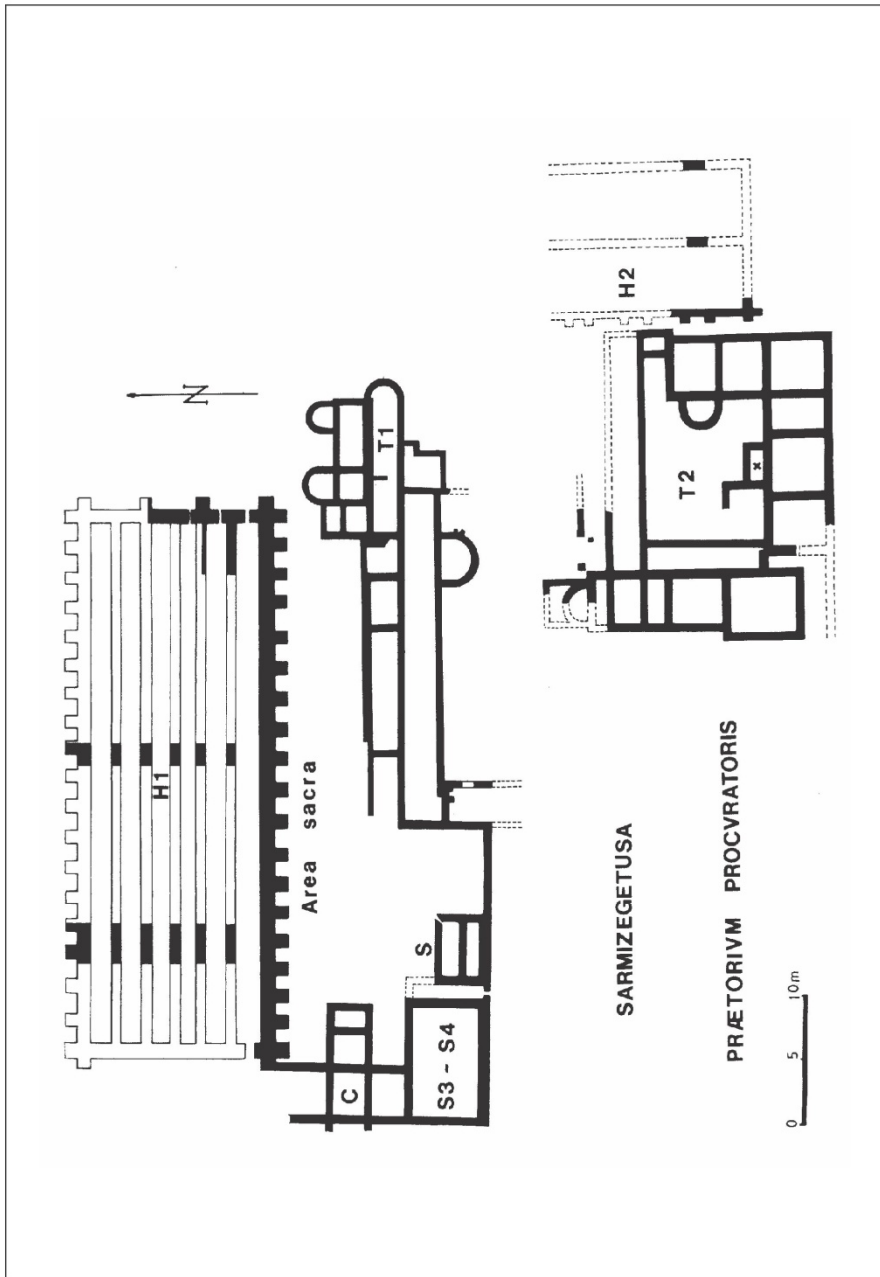
⁵⁴ Caracalla's journey in Dacia in 213 was rejected with various arguments by Mráv/Ottományi 2005 and Szabó 2003.

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Pl. I



INVICTO·DEO·SER·API·DI
 ET·SI·DI·FRUGIFERAE·PRO·SALVTE
 ATQVE·IN·COLVMITATE·IMP·CAS
 MA·VRELA·NTONINI·PII·FELICIS
 AV·G·PART·MAX·PONTIF·MAX·BRIT·T·MAX·
 AV·G·

1.

DEO·INVICTO·SER·API·DI
 ET·SI·DI·FRUGIFERAE·PRO·SALVTE
 ATQVE·IN·COLVMITATE·IMP·CAS
 MA·VRELA·NTONINI·PII·FELICIS
 AV·G·PART·MAX·PONTIF·MAX·BRIT·T·MAX·
 TRIB·POTES·XVI·IMP·II·COS·III·PP·PRO·COS·ET·
 IVLIAE·PIAE·AV·G·MATRIS·CASTRORVM
 ACPATRIAE·TEMPLVM

2.

IMP·CAES·MAR·ANTONINVS
PIVS·AVG·FELIX·PARTI
CVS·MAXIMVS·PON
TIFEX·MAXIMVS·BRIT·
MAXIMVS·TRIB·POT·
·XVI·IMP·II·COS·IIII·
·P·P·PRO·C·S·FECIT·

IMP·CAES·M·AVR
ANTONINVS·PIVS·AG·
FELIX·PART·MAXIMVS
PONTIFEX·MAX·BRIT·
MAX·TRIB·POTESTATIS·
IMP·II·COS·IIII·P·P·PR·C·S·FECIT

IMP·CAES·M·AVR·ANTONI
NVS·PIVS·AVG·FELIX·PARTI
CVS·MAXIMVS·PONTIFEX·
MAX·BRIT·MAX·TRIB·P·ES·
·XVI·IMP·II·COS·IIII·P·P·PR·
COS·F·E·C·I·T·

IOVI OPTIMO MAX
 NEPTVNO SERAPIDI
 PRO SALVE VICTORIA
 E PERPETVITATE
 IMP CAESARIS
 MAURELANTONINI
 PII FELICIS AVG
 LA FENVS AVIANVS
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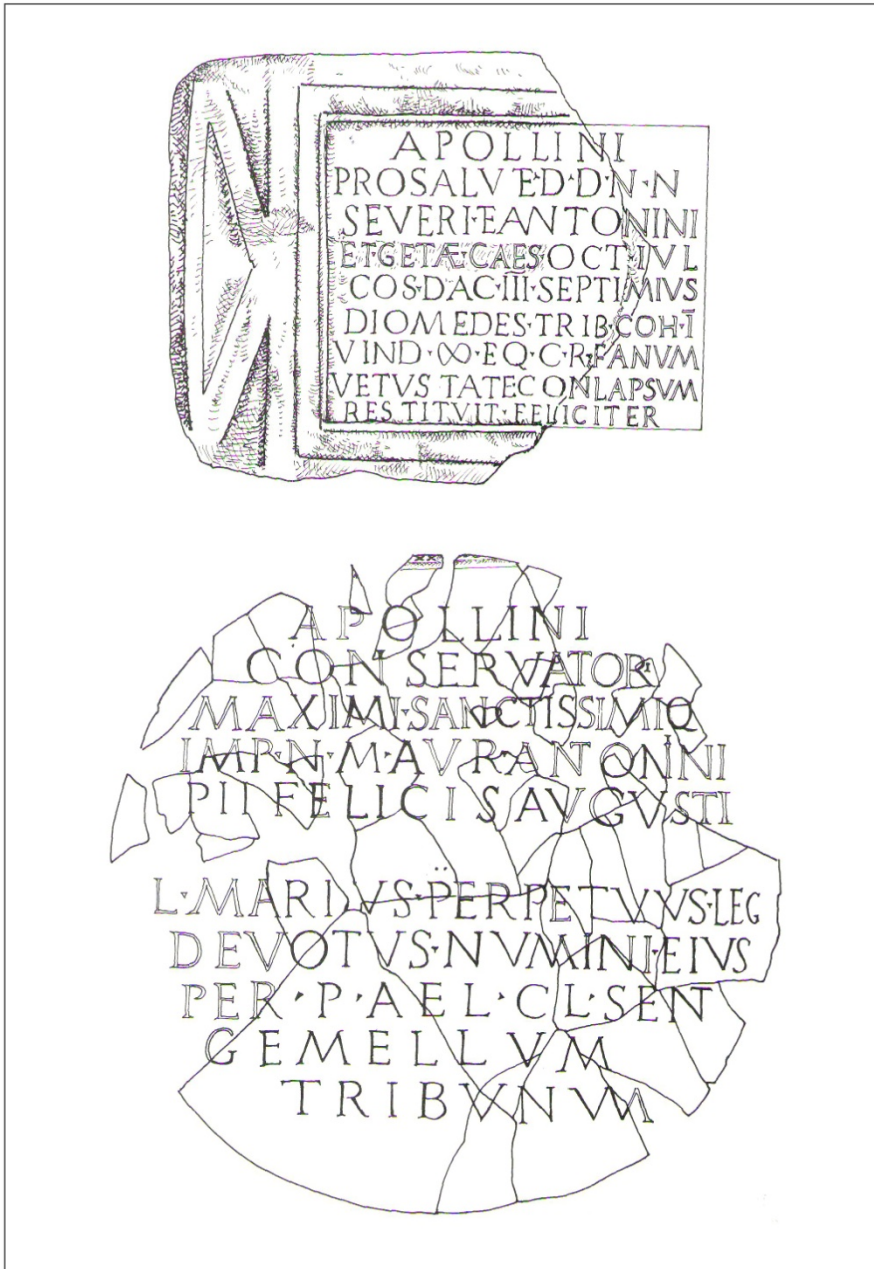
1

DEO INVICTO
 SERAPI PRO SAL
 ET VICTORIA IMP
 CAES M AVRELI
 ANTONINI

2

3

DEO INVICTO	SERAPIDI ET	ISIDI REGINAE
PRO SALVTE VICTORIA ET IN	COMMITATE IMP C	CAES M AVRELI ANTONINI PII FELICIS
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IVLIAE PIAE AVG MATRIS CAS	PRORVM ACPATR	AE TEMPLVM VETVSTATE CONLAPSVM
RESTITVIT P CORNELIVS ANV	LLINVS SLEGLEC	IIII GMV ANTONINIANAE D NMQ EORVM



Pl. V