

## Pattern of Continuity in Geto-Dacian Foreign Policy Under Burebista Paul Vădan

Following the death of Alexander the Great, the ancient world was affected by prolonged political turmoil as many states emerging after 323 BC, both within and without Alexander's former Empire, sought to impose their regional hegemony at each other's expense in an attempt to restore stability. In the context of such discourse in power politics, the Geto-Dacian state emerged and sought to assert itself in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic region under the rule of Burebista in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. Despite modern claims that Burebista's achievements were without precedent in the history of Geto-Dacia,<sup>1</sup> this paper will attempt to place the rule of Burebista in the context of a long tradition of Geto-Dacian foreign policy of assertion and interaction with the Hellenistic *οικουμένη* (*oikoumene* the perceived Greek world as opposed to barbarian lands).

In order to do this, we will need to analyze Burebista's political and economic goals in order to determine whether his rule conformed to an established pattern. Unfortunately, such a project is irreparably flawed because no Geto-Dacian written accounts (if there were any) have survived; all that has been passed on to us in terms of literary "evidence" are approximately four hundred Geto-Dacian words that are still in use in the Romanian language. As a result, scholars are forced to appeal exclusively (and with caution) to Greek and Roman written sources if they are to construct a generally coherent history of the Geto-Dacians. Archeological evidence, on the other hand, is more available, providing a priceless parallel account, especially for the earlier centuries.

Before discussing Burebista's foreign policy, it must first be determined how the Greco-Roman world perceived the people living north of the Danube. The first literary attestation of the Getae comes from Herodotus, who writes in his *Ἱστορίας Απόδειξις* (*Histories Apodeixis* literally *Display of inquiry*): "the Getae [...] are the most courageous and upright Thracian tribe."<sup>2</sup> This passage is critical because, while identifying the Getae as socio-culturally interrelated with the Thracians, it also singles them out as a distinct cultural entity. Centuries later, Strabo also identifies the Getae as "a tribe with the same tongue as the Thracians."<sup>3</sup> However, Herodotus does not make any reference to the Dacians, a term which only appears for the first time in Julius Caesar's account of the Gallic War. He identifies as "Dacians" the peoples living in the intra-Carpathian space when he writes that "the breadth of the Hercynian forest [...] begins at the frontiers of the Helvetii, Nemetes and Rauraci, and extends in a right line along the river Danube to the territories of the Dacians."<sup>4</sup> This distinction has raised questions con-

<sup>1</sup> Crișan, 7 and Tudor, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Hdt. 4. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Strab. 7.3.10.

<sup>4</sup> Caes. *Bel. Gal.* 6.25.

cerning the perceived differences between the Getae and the Dacians as later authors tried to make sense of Caesar's claim. From Strabo's point of view they were culturally inter-related, since "the language of the Dacians is the same as that of the Getae;"<sup>5</sup> an opinion supported by Justin's *Epitome of the Philip-pic History of Trogus Pompeius* where the Dacians are identified as "descendants of the Getae."<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, other ancient sources do not provide more clarity on this topic. For example, the accounts of the retaliation campaigns of Licinius Crassus north of the Danube in 29-28 BC present the difficulty ancient authors themselves had to deal with when discussing potential similarities between the Getae and the Dacians. Cassius Dio, writing sometime between the end of the second century and the beginning of the third century AD, mentions the Getae as the allies of the Bastarnae invading Roman lands south of the Danube.<sup>7</sup> Yet Suetonius argues that Augustus put a stop to the incursions of the Dacian forces,<sup>8</sup> a version corroborated by Augustus himself who proudly declares in his *Res Gestae* that "when an army of Dacians crossed to this side of the Danube, it was defeated and routed under my auspices."<sup>9</sup> Granted, Cassius Dio wrote more than a century after both Suetonius and Augustus, but the distinguished first century AD politician Silius Italicus says of Hannibal in his *Punica* that he "shot from his bow arrows soaked with viper venom [...] which he constantly [took] out from his perfidious quiver, as a Dacian does from the war-torn lands of the Getae."<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this paper it is sufficient to point out that the distinction between the Getae and the Dacians was hopelessly unclear even in the eyes of ancient writers, although they perceived a certain level of uniformity.

The only clearer explanation of Caesar's claim is provided by Strabo, writing between 63 BC and 21 AD. He writes that in the 20s BC "Augustus Caesar sent an expedition against [the Getae]." However, he specifies that "there is also another division of the country which has endured from early times, for some people are called Dacians, whereas others are called Getae," explaining that any difference is merely geographical; the Getae being "those who incline towards the Pontus and the east", while the Dacians "those who incline in the opposite direction towards Germany and the sources of the Ister."<sup>11</sup> To provide clarity, this paper will refer to the peoples living in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space as Geto-Dacians.

The main literary source for the reign of Burebista is Strabo's *Geographikā*. Strabo came from a prominent family which had held high office at the courts of the Pontic kings Mithradates V Euergetes and VI Eupator, and who later transferred its allegiance to Rome when its victory over Pontus seemed very probable; for their services they were later offered Roman citizenship by Pompey.<sup>12</sup> This leads us to believe that Strabo had access to detailed information about the events taking place during his lifetime (64 BC - 24 AD) or a little earlier. He received and promoted an encyclopedic education, was surrounded by the most enlightened minds of the day, such as Boethius, Aristodemus, Diodotus and Xenarchus, and was fortunate enough to travel to the most prominent centers of knowledge of that time: Alexandria and Rome.<sup>13</sup> The fact that he was surrounded by a highly academic environment and that his family's history was intimately connected to some of the events presented in his work makes Strabo a generally reliable source for Burebista's reign and for other accounts as well, *although the familial connection might create biases at some points in his narrative.*

<sup>5</sup> Strab. 7. 3. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Justin. 32. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cass. Dio, *Roman History*, 51. 24-27.

<sup>8</sup> Sue. *Aug.* 21.

<sup>9</sup> Aug. *Res Gestae*, 30.

<sup>10</sup> Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 1. 320-325.

<sup>11</sup> Strab. 7.3.12.

<sup>12</sup> Dueck, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 10-11.

Judging from his actions, Strabo presents Burebista as a determined leader whose campaigns and rule was so successful that he felt obliged to place emphasis on the importance of his reign by writing:

On setting himself in authority over the tribe, [Burebista] restored the people, who had been reduced to an evil plight by numerous wars, and raised them to such a height through training, sobriety, and obedience to his commands that within only a few years he had established a great empire and subordinated to the Getae most of the neighboring peoples.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, none of the extant sources specify the date of Burebista's ascendancy to the throne, with the exception of Jordanes who identifies him as a contemporary of Sulla, placing the beginning of his reign at around 82 BC.<sup>15</sup> Eager historians from the 50s and 60s such as Rădulescu and Crișan accept this date in light of no other clear information.<sup>16</sup> However, the simple fact that Jordanes wrote in the sixth century AD must at least raise suspicion with regard to the accuracy of his text. In fact, Jordanes' work has been recently catalogued by historians as nothing more than "the result of the Goths' growing awareness or creation of themselves as a people"<sup>17</sup> in the context of late antiquity. Just to show Josephus' confusion concerning Geto-Dacian history, it is enough to quote him that "when Burebista was king of the Goths, Deceneos came to Gothia at the time when Sulla ruled the Romans."<sup>18</sup> Even if we overlook his awkward identification of the Getae and the Goths as the same people, it suffices to point out that earlier in his work he claims that "[the Goths/Getae?] had a learned man Zeutha, and after him Deceneos; and the third was Zalmoxis."<sup>19</sup> This chronology is completely wrong, since all other ancient sources mentioning both Deceneos and Zalmoxis, whom we will discuss in detail later in the paper, agree that they lived centuries apart. Also, Zeutha is not mentioned by any other ancient author; Jordanes might have used a source now lost to us.

While sources (again) do not offer enough information about the position of the territory originally controlled by Burebista, historians are nevertheless relatively certain that Burebista exercised his power from the Orăștie Mountains in south-western Transylvania. Ion Crișan, for example, points to the most impressive fortifications on the Geto-Dacian territory present in this area at that time, as being a center which continued to dominate Dacian politics long after Burebista's demise.<sup>20</sup> Also, Radulescu, Glodariu and Vulpe believe this position demanded that Burebista's initial campaigns be undertaken in north-western Transylvania in preparation for future campaigns in the East.

Indeed, military might has played a crucial role in the political consolidation of all of Geto-Dacia. The name 'Burebista' itself denotes military prowess, with definitions ranging from "the brilliant one" to "powerful" and even to "well-known."<sup>21</sup> Strabo suggests that Burebista "could send forth an expedition of two hundred thousand men."<sup>22</sup> Even if we dismiss this number as exaggerated, it does indicate that his army was a formidable fighting force. In fact, Burebista's first mentioned campaign, undertaken against the Celtic tribes situated in the west of Transylvania, was so successful that "[he] actually caused the complete disappearance of the Boii [...] and also of the Taurisci."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Strab. 7.3.11.

<sup>15</sup> Jordanes. *Getica*. 11.67.

<sup>16</sup> Crișan, 45 and Rădulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 639.

<sup>17</sup> Winks and Matern-Parkes, 210.

<sup>18</sup> Jordanes. *Getica*. 11.67.

<sup>19</sup> Jordanes. *Getica*. 11.39.

<sup>20</sup> Crișan, 70.

<sup>21</sup> Crișan, 43.

<sup>22</sup> Strab. 7.3.13.

<sup>23</sup> Strab. 7.3.11.

Burebista's consolidation of his Geto-Dacian conquests was also facilitated by his strong affiliation with Deceneos, the religious leader of the Geto-Dacians as successor of the semi-legendary Zalmoxis, who controlled the sacred mountain *Cogaeonum* in the Orăștie Mountains in south-western Transylvania. The location of this important religious center has also been interpreted by historians as further evidence for Burebista's Transylvanian origin.<sup>24</sup> Deceneos accordingly played a significant role "to help [Burebista] secure the complete obedience of his tribe,"<sup>25</sup> an achievement not described in detail but which resulted in "the Getae and Dacians [attaining] very great power." Trogus Pompeius also mentions "the progress made by the Dacians because of βασιλεύς (*basileus*) Burobostes," a name interpreted by scholars such as Vladimir Iliescu to be an equivalent of Burebista.<sup>26</sup> Strabo describes his rule as an ἀρχή (*archē*), a term whose meaning was generally used since the time of Homer to describe sovereignty, power and authority. Burebista's undisputed control led Strabo to also call him a *basileus*; according to the Dictionnaire Etymologique, at the time of Homer the word had meant "high-born leader", sometimes even "king".<sup>27</sup> However, by the fourth century, following historical developments during the Classical period and the Greeks' contacts with monarchs such as Amyntas in Macedon, Amasis in Egypt and Cyrus in Persia, *basileus* came to possess very strong regal connotations.<sup>28</sup> Thus, by the time of Burebista, the term came to denote monarchy, kingship and sole rule according to the model of Alexander and his *Diadochoi* (Successors).<sup>29</sup>

Archeological evidence presents a sharp contrast between western Transylvania, containing Celtic ware dating from the third to the second centuries BC, and the typically Dacian culture present in the central area at that time.<sup>30</sup> If we believe Trogus Pompeius that "after having subdued the Pannonians, [the Celts] carried on various wars with their neighbors for many years,"<sup>31</sup> then we have a clearer picture concerning the relations between the Geto-Dacians and the Celts in Transylvania. As part of Brennus' formidable force which had invaded and terrorized the Greek Peninsula and Asia Minor in the third to second centuries BC,<sup>32</sup> the Celts must have been a serious threat whose advance was eventually stopped by the local authorities, of whom we know regrettably little.

According to Strabo, Burebista's advance in Transylvania was so successful that he conquered all the territory east of the Tisza River, the perceived border between the Celtic and Dacian lands, and advanced even beyond this point. According to the Greek author, "this country was laid waste by the Dacians when they subdued the Boii and Taurisci, Celtic tribes under the rule of Critasirus. [The Dacians] alleged that the country was theirs, although it was separated from theirs by the River Parisus."<sup>33</sup> Thus, no other force remained in western Transylvania, at least not for the moment, which could threaten Burebista's regional authority or distract him from future campaigns in the East. Some historians such as Macrea and Jullian have even suggested, based on geographical analogies, a possible alliance between Burebista and the Suebian leader Ariovistus,<sup>34</sup> but there simply is not enough evidence to corroborate this theory.

<sup>24</sup> Strab. 7.3.5.

<sup>25</sup> Strab. 7.3.11.

<sup>26</sup> Rădulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 637.

<sup>27</sup> Chantraine, s.v. "*basileus*."

<sup>28</sup> Drews, 128.

<sup>29</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. "*basileus*."

<sup>30</sup> Babeș, *Spatiuul Carpato-Dunarean*, 517, 520.

<sup>31</sup> Justin, 24.4.

<sup>32</sup> The 'Dying Gaul' series of statues are a vivid reminder of this event: Gates, 282.

<sup>33</sup> Strab. 7.5.2.

<sup>34</sup> The fact that Burebista headed towards the east, while Ariovistus went to face Caesar has raised questions among historians: Macrea, 60.

Therefore, Burebista's campaign in north-western Transylvania must be regarded as a counter-offensive against an invading force. Buried Celtic jewelry and other expensive objects and remains of destruction in Celtic settlements have allowed historians to date Burebista's campaign to the 60s BC; after this date Celtic presence and influence seems to have ceased.<sup>35</sup> Because of his military success, 1970s and 1980s communist historiography hailed Burebista as "unquestionably one of the leading figures and heroes of the first half of the first century BC" and as "one of the greatest men of genius that Antiquity had ever produced."<sup>36</sup> While such claims with nationalistic undertones must be rejected, we can nevertheless agree with contemporary historians such as Vulpe, Glodariu and Rădulescu that Burebista's initial campaigns were the first stage of a policy of consolidation in order to secure his position in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space.<sup>37</sup>

Gheorghe Tudor sees Burebista's actions as a unique effort whose success led to the creation of "the first centralized and independent state in the multi-millenary history of the Romanian people."<sup>38</sup> Omitting again the nationalistic flavor of such comments, it must be pointed out that Burebista's actions are not without precedent. The first detailed literary attestation of a centralized Geto-Dacian polity on the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic political stage appears in the context of a major revolt of the *poleis* on the western bank of the Pontus Euxinus against Lysimachus, the self-proclaimed "king of Thrace". According to Diodorus Siculus the uprising took place in 313 BC, ten years after the death of Alexander the Great and two hundred and fifty years before Burebista. He gives us an account of how Odessos, Istros, Tomis and Dionysopolis expelled the Macedonian garrisons at the instigation of Callatis<sup>39</sup> and claimed *αυτονομία* (*autonomia*, independence, self-governing), taking advantage of the distraction caused by the Third War of the *Diadochoi* (315-311 BC) in which Lysimachus also participated. The Greeks were supposedly assisted by "the Thracians and Scythians whose lands bordered upon their own."<sup>40</sup> The conclusion of the conflict in 311 BC between Antigonos and Kassander, Ptolemy and Lysimachus obliged them all to agree, among other things, "that the Greeks be autonomous." However, "they did not abide by these agreements."<sup>41</sup> Whether the revolt was successful or not is less relevant than the fact pointed out by A. Vulpe that this event created a precedent regarding Geto-Greek diplomatic relations. His argument is based on the claim that the Thracians assisting the Greeks were actually Getae. He admits that Diodorus' text does not mention the Getae anywhere with regard to this episode, but he appeals to the cultural closeness between the Getae and the Thracians to prove his point, given that the dominant population living both east and west of the Danube River crossing the Dobrogea region was Getic.<sup>42</sup> Helen Lund, who presents more recent conclusions based on excavation of Getic sites in Dobrogea, corroborates Vulpe's theory.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Diodorus Siculus makes a clear distinction between the Thracians assisting the Greeks living north of the Haemus Mountains and the Odrysian Kingdom of Seuthes the Thracian to the south of the mountain range.<sup>44</sup>

Later events suggest that the revolt led by Callatis did not succeed in bringing stability to the Black Sea region. Twenty years after the Greek revolt and subsequent peace agreement, sources attest a punitive expedition of Lysimachus to the north of Thrace against Dromichaetes, whom Diodorus Siculo-

<sup>35</sup> Radulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 642 and Crişan, 86.

<sup>36</sup> Crişan, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Radulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 635.

<sup>38</sup> Tudor, 93.

<sup>39</sup> Diod. 19.73.

<sup>40</sup> Diod. 19.73.

<sup>41</sup> Diod. 19.105.

<sup>42</sup> Vulpe, *Istoria si Civilizatia*, 461.

<sup>43</sup> Lund, 43.

<sup>44</sup> He tells of how Lysimachus, marching south of the Haemus to face Antigonos, met Seuthes at the pass over the Haemus Mountains: Diod. 19. 73.

lus identifies as the *basileus* of “the Thracians [who had] captured Agathocles, the king’s son, but [who then] sent him home with gifts;”<sup>45</sup> in the next paragraph he specifies that the ‘Thracians’ are actually Getae.<sup>46</sup> This event is also attested by Strabo, who argues that Lysimachus “not only ran the risk but actually was captured alive.”<sup>47</sup> Pausanias offers an integrated version of the events surrounding Dromichaetes. While he initially agrees with Diodorus that “Agathocles [...] was taken prisoner by the Getae,” he also accepts Strabo’s suggestion that these events took place during a single campaign, since “[Agathocles] was serving with [Lysimachus] then for the first time,” not excluding the possibility, on the other hand, that the expedition might have ended instead with the capture of Lysimachus.<sup>48</sup>

However, for the purposes of this paper, it is important to point out that all accounts of the conflict between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes agree that it was in fact the Macedonian monarch who initiated the hostilities.<sup>49</sup> Even Diodorus agrees that the hostility of the Getae came “in the hope of recovering [...] that part of their territory which Lysimachus had seized.”<sup>50</sup> Accepting Diodorus’ more detailed version makes sense in the historical context of the expedition. Although none of the sources give details concerning the capture of Agathocles, Diodorus does say that his release resulted from the Getae’s loss of hope for victory against Lysimachus, “since almost all the most powerful kings were now in agreement, and were in military alliance one with another.”<sup>51</sup> The reference here is aimed at the end of the Fourth War of the Diadochoi, placing the campaign of Lysimachus after the battle of Ipsos in 301 BC,<sup>52</sup> a generally accepted inference since he was in Asia Minor before that time; the Loeb translation of Diodorus dates these events between 294 and 292 BC.<sup>53</sup>

Dromichaetes must have responded to Lysimachus’ aggressive policy in the area over the decades, which likely had disruptive consequences for commercial relations between the Getae and the Greeks, leading Helen Lund to conclude that “the [Greek] cities found themselves the object of competition between Macedonian and Getic ‘protectors’.”<sup>54</sup> Archeological data is indeed able to demonstrate the importance of commerce in Dromichaetes’ time by providing a model of the nature and development of trade in the region. The extensive character of trade goods is evidence that the closeness between the Getae and the Greek colonies facilitated communication and exchange between the two civilizations as early as the seventh century, soon after the Milesian colonies were founded. Archeologists have revealed that Greek pottery was the most sought-after product. Its popularity among the natives encouraged imports from many locations in the Greek world, as is attested by many examples of amphorae from Chios, Lesbos, Heraclea and especially Thasos.

That Dobrogea was a critical node of interaction is shown by the process of distribution of Greek products, first appearing (obviously) in Dobrogea, then in Moldova and then even across the Carpathians.<sup>55</sup> One of the most important outcomes of extensive trade between the Getae and the Greeks was the introduction of the potter’s wheel on the territory of the Geto-Dacians around the sixth century BC. It was initially believed that this was a consequence of the Celtic invasions of Transylvania during the fourth century BC, but many earlier examples of Getic imitations of Greek pottery disprove this hypothesis.<sup>56</sup> As a matter of fact, by the time of Dromichaetes wheel-made Geto-Dacian pottery imitating

<sup>45</sup> Diod. 21.11.

<sup>46</sup> Diod. 21.12.

<sup>47</sup> Strab. 7.3.14.

<sup>48</sup> Paus. 1.9.6.

<sup>49</sup> Strabo. 7.3.8. and Paus. 1.9.6.

<sup>50</sup> Diod. 21.11.

<sup>51</sup> Diod. 21.11.

<sup>52</sup> Vulpe. *Istoria si Civilizatia*. 462.

<sup>53</sup> Loeb, 15-17.

<sup>54</sup> Lund, 43.

<sup>55</sup> Vulpe. *Istoria si Civilizatia*. 464, 468.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 491.

Greek styles such as the *kantharos*, *lekythos*, *amphora* and *krater* replaced earlier hand-made lower-quality pottery as the dominant style.<sup>57</sup>

Based on this evidence it may be inferred that Dromichaetes took advantage of Lysimachus' departure from Thrace and sought to consolidate his position in the area, most importantly to re-establish direct commercial contact with the Greek *poleis* at the expense of the belligerent Macedonian monarch.<sup>58</sup> This leads one to the conclusion that the Getae were fully aware of and involved in events taking place in Thrace at that time. P. Delev goes so far as to suggest that Dromichaetes' actions were partly encouraged by Antigonid agents working against Lysimachus who later retracted their support once peace was concluded in 301 BC.<sup>59</sup> Although the analogy is tempting, it remains improbable given the lack of clear evidence.

After ambushing Lysimachus somewhere north of the Danube, Diodorus continues, "Dromichaetes [...] kissed him and even called him 'father'," and then, while at dinner, he "obtained the return of the districts that Lysimachus had seized, placed a diadem on his head, and sent him on his way."<sup>60</sup> This fragment has led historians to believe that "Lysimachus [had to] abandon the West Pontic cities to Getic control.<sup>61</sup> The term *pater* (father) is used in Diodorus' text as denoting kinship and suggesting "exceptionally kind address to those who had previously been unfortunate, [revealing] the kindness which was about to befall them."<sup>62</sup> Dromichaetes is presented as a shrewd politician who, realizing the opportunity at hand, sought an understanding which would bring regional stability, lest "other kings, possibly more to be feared than their predecessor, would assume the authority of Lysimachus."<sup>63</sup> This has led Lund to conclude that Dromichaetes was well aware that eliminating Lysimachus would have destabilized relations among the Diadochoi, making Demetrius, Lysimachus' rival, "undesirably strong."<sup>64</sup> This presumed alliance was sealed by the symbolic placing of a diadem on Lysimachus' head and his swearing that "for the future he would endeavor to aid [Dromichaetes] as a friend and not to fall short in returning kindness for kindness," then giving his own daughter in marriage to Dromichaetes.<sup>65</sup> Memnon mentions that prisoners were nevertheless kept by the Getae as a precaution, suggesting real diplomatic behavior.<sup>66</sup>

The same kinship relationship is mentioned by Strabo who writes that the two kings concluded peace "and made a compact of friendship, and then [Dromichaetes] released [Lysimachus]."<sup>67</sup> The use here of *φιλοῖς* (*philois*) denotes friendship between states while showing affectionate regard between equals.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, whether one gives credence to Diodorus' description of Lysimachus' capture or judges it as being too moralistic, what is significant is the fact that Dromichaetes is portrayed by Greek literary sources as acting in accordance with the Hellenistic model of a monarch. He also appears to have detailed knowledge of the subtleties of Hellenistic diplomacy, being considered by ancient sources as an active participant in events taking place in Thrace around 300 BC. Finally, the description of Dromichaetes as *basileus* — a term already explained in detail — by both Diodorus and Strabo has been interpreted as evidence for the first mention of a centralized political force of the Getae.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Berciu. *Băstinașii*. 121.

<sup>58</sup> Lund, 44.

<sup>59</sup> Delev, 389.

<sup>60</sup> Diod. 21.12.

<sup>61</sup> Lund's conclusion is supported by Pippidi also: Lund, 49.

<sup>62</sup> Dickey, 78-79.

<sup>63</sup> Diod. 21.12.

<sup>64</sup> Lund, 48.

<sup>65</sup> Paus. 1.9.6.

<sup>66</sup> Memnon, FGrHist III B 434 F 5, quoted by Vulpe, 462.

<sup>67</sup> Strab. 7.3.8.

<sup>68</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. "*philia*."

<sup>69</sup> Vulpe. *Istoria si Civilizatia*. 463.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of crucial evidence we are left in the dark about the fate of Dromichaetes or of his political organization after the 290's BC. This silence raises the supposition that he was ultimately unsuccessful in decisively imposing his authority over the Western Black Sea region. Whatever the case, A. Vulpe has argued that it is improbable that Dromichaetes was a victim of the Celts in the context of their invasion of the Greek mainland in the 280's and 270's, given that there is no evidence that the invaders ever advanced north of the Odrysian kingdom.<sup>70</sup> Despite this, there is evidence of continuity of interaction between the Greek *poleis* and the Getae along the same lines of Dromichaetes' "protectorate" of the latter over the former. Two invaluable inscriptions have been found among the ruins of Istros. The first inscription (ISM I 8), from the third century BC, was dedicated in honour of Diodoros of Thrasycles, Proclitos of Pherecles and Clearchos of Aristomachos who "on being sent to Zalmodegikos, concerning the soldiers, [...] managed to bring back the hostages, sixty in all, by convincing Zalmodegikos to hand back her proceeds."<sup>71</sup> Judging from the etymology of the name, it is generally accepted that Zalmodegikos was a Getic leader. Also, judging from the fact that he had such influence over Istros suggests that he belonged to a powerful military formation situated somewhere in west or north-west Dobrogea;<sup>72</sup> of course this also suggests that the Greeks did not dispose of a powerful military.

The second inscription (ISM I 15) dates from around the second century BC, and it too praises the success of Agathokles in trying to 'convince' – a euphemistic term used in Hellenistic decrees to describe a bribe – a certain Thracian called Zoltes to abstain from plundering the Istrian hinterlands with his army.<sup>73</sup> The inscription further tells us that "later, the Thracians breaking the oaths and the agreement and plundering the hinterland of the *polis*, [...] he convinced *basileus* Rhemaxos to send one hundred horsemen for the defense of the *polis*." After they did not prove enough, Agathokles convinced Rhemaxos "to [further] send six hundred horsemen to the *polis*, who, being victorious in battle, defeated Zoltes."<sup>74</sup> The description of Rhemaxos as *basileus*,<sup>75</sup> a title awarded neither to Zalmodegikos nor to Zoltes despite Pippidi's suppositions,<sup>76</sup> suggests that the Greeks were clearly able to discern between regional warlords and more powerful and better organized Getic Hellenistic-like polities in the Western Black Sea region under the leadership of *basilei* such as Rhemaxos and Dromichaetes. Therefore, there is evidence for Geto-Dacian continuity of a "Pontic policy" with the Greek *poleis* having a decisive factor in asserting regional hegemony; efforts which would be hampered in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century with the arrivals of Mithridates VI Eupator and of Rome in Dobrogea.

That commercial and financial interest continued to influence politics in the Dobrogea region during the third and second centuries is proven by the seminal work of Ioan Glodariu. Trade continued to grow in the Black Sea region, especially the wine and oil markets, which were dominated in turn by Sinope, Rhodes and then Thasos. Pottery, however, experienced a sharp decline because of competition from Geto-Dacian potters whose skill almost rivaled that of the Greeks.<sup>77</sup> Exports on the other hand, dealt generally with raw materials such as wood, leather, honey, silver from the Apuseni Mountains, and above all salt, a resource which was in high demand in the Balkan Peninsula, as its own reserves were insignificant.<sup>78</sup> After Roman involvement in the East, there seems to have been considerable demand for salt in Italy as well, eventually turning the Geto-Dacian salt mines into the northern counterpart of the

<sup>70</sup> Vulpe, 463.

<sup>71</sup> Pippidi. *Contribuții la Istoria Veche a României*. 170-171.

<sup>72</sup> Babeș. *Spațiul Carpato-Dunărean în Secolele III-II a.Chr.* 504.

<sup>73</sup> Pippidi. *Străinii de peste Mări*. 228-229.

<sup>74</sup> Pippidi. *Contribuții la Istoria Veche a României*. 190-191.

<sup>75</sup> Pippidi. *Străinii de peste Mări*. 225, 227.

<sup>76</sup> His own unsupported opinion is that Zalmodegikos "must have been" a *basileus*: Pippidi, *Contribuții la Istoria Veche a României*, 172.

<sup>77</sup> Glodariu, 16-17.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 56-57.



Egyptian granaries supplying Rome.<sup>79</sup>

According to archeological evidence, actual trade took place through strategically-positioned trade posts throughout the Geto-Dacian territory. For example, we have Brad and Poiana, the most important settlement in Moldova, situated on the Siret River which pours in the Danube Delta, allowing for a direct trade route east of the Carpathians.<sup>80</sup> Another settlement on the Danube was Zimnicea, an intermediary between the southern and northern regions. Other sites worth mentioning are Popești, in the area of modern-day Bucharest, and those in the Bran Pass at Cetățeni connecting Transylvania to the extra-Carpathian territories.<sup>81</sup>

This trade network was very effective and very profitable, if we believe extensive numismatic evidence, but it relied on the volatile political situation in the Dobrogea region. We have thousands of Greek and Macedonian coins which penetrated Dobrogea and then spread both south and north of the Carpathians, especially in the above-mentioned settlements of Poiana, Zimnicea, Popești and Cetățeni and more particularly at the salt mines;<sup>82</sup> about 2900 *tetradrachms* were issued by Thasos alone.<sup>83</sup> As a matter of fact, Greek influence was so significant that Geto-Dacians used the model of Greek and Macedonian coins to launch their own issues on the market, with regional variations, as early as the fourth century BC. Dies found at Tilișca, the most important numismatic center situated in the Orăștie Mountains, attest this.<sup>84</sup> The most famous example is that of a Getic leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC from northern Dobrogea who actually inscribed on his coins “ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΟΣΚΩΝΟΣ.” Some historians have been persuaded that this shows superior political conscience from the Getae,<sup>85</sup> and although the suggestion is tempting, there is not enough information to be able to know for sure whether this Moskon actually understood the full significance of the word *basileus*. It does suggest, however, an active Geto-Dacian interest in maintaining both cultural and economic relations with the Greeks. Therefore, one may argue that, seeing the opportunities of adopting the most popular coin in the Balkan region, the Geto-Dacians took this decision for pragmatic economic reasons in light of the great reach of the Greek coin.<sup>86</sup>

Therefore, Burebista's subsequent interest in the Western Pontic *poleis* was fueled by their economic and strategic potential, which had attracted the attention of the Geto-Dacians for centuries and which proved to be an essential element in the consolidation of a state. Writing in the 1960s, T. Blavatskaia saw Burebista's re-orientation towards the east as proof of an attempt to create a powerful anti-Roman front. However, there is no clear evidence to support such a claim. On the other hand, we must agree with Pippidi, who sees Burebista's actions towards the Greek *poleis* on the western bank of the *Pontus Euxinus* as a continuation of the centuries-old aspirations of previous Getic regional rulers to control the economic and strategic aspects of these cities.<sup>87</sup>

By the time Burebista made his appearance in Mikra Skythia, as Strabo calls Dobrogea, the region was the scene of endemic conflict between the advancing power of Rome and Mithridates VI Eupator. The expansive policies of a reformed Pontic Kingdom led Marius to warn Mithridates “either to be greater than the Romans or to obey them,”<sup>88</sup> following the integration of the Western Pontic Greek

<sup>79</sup> Gramatopol, 37.

<sup>80</sup> Glodariu, 66.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 67-68.

<sup>82</sup> Chițescu, 24.

<sup>83</sup> Glodariu, 47.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>85</sup> Babeș, *Spațiul Carpato-Dunărean în Secolele III-II a. Chr.*, 505.

<sup>86</sup> It has actually been suggested that it was the hugely profitable salt trade that brought about the adoption of Greek and later Roman coins; it was especially used for leather treatment in the smelting of armour: Gramatopol, 25, 50.

<sup>87</sup> Tudor, 93. Blavatskaia, 7. Vulpe, Glodariu and Rădulescu, *Burebista*, 635. Pippidi, *Străinii de peste Mări*, 282.

<sup>88</sup> Plut. *Marius*, 31.

colonies into the Pontic system of alliances. As in the case of Geto-Dacian perception of these *poleis*, the Pontic Kingdom deemed them as critical in its successful expansion and assertion in Thrace due to their commercial and economic potential and to their strategic position.<sup>89</sup> Inevitably, war broke out between the two states by 89 BC. The Romans moved against the Pontic monarch in a series of campaigns, first led by Sulla (87-85 BC) and then by Terentius Varro Lucullus (74-67 BC), with a clear plan to drive Mithridates out of Europe across the Bosphorus straights. To do this, Lucullus followed a plan of seizing Mithridates' Pontic possessions. It appears that Apollonia was the first *polis* to fall under Roman authority after putting up steadfast resistance. Following Apollonia's conquest and subsequent destruction as punishment, Mesambria, Odessos, Dionysopolis, Callatis, Tomis and Istros yielded one by one to Roman power.<sup>90</sup>

An inscription unearthed at Callatis describes a treaty between the Greek colony and Rome. The presented clauses of neutrality, mutual help and the possibility of amending the treaty only with mutual consent led scholars to conclude that the submission of the Pontic cities was ratified through a *foedus* treaty;<sup>91</sup> the fact that it was concluded on a basis of equality suggests that Rome recognized the economic and strategic importance of the conquered cities and sought to conciliate them. Despite this, in 62-61 BC a massive revolt of the Western Pontic cities against Roman authority took place. This was probably caused by the governor of Macedonia Antonius Hybrida, who, Cassius Dio reports,

“had inflicted many injuries upon the subject territory as well as upon that which was in alliance with Rome, and had suffered many disasters in return [after] taking away their plunder from them. When he tried the same tactics on the allies in Moesia, he was defeated near the city of the Istrians by the Bastarnian Scythians who came to their aid; and thereupon he ran away.”<sup>92</sup>

We later find out from the same author that it was the Getae who actually led the revolt, seizing the battle standards of Hybrida and placing them in a strong fortress called Genucla.<sup>93</sup> Vasile Pârvan suggested that Burebista himself might have commanded the Greco-Getic-Scythian force against the Romans, given that his western campaign was by then supposedly finished.<sup>94</sup> However, his name is not specifically mentioned by any literary source, a detail which has prompted some historians to disbelieve this claim, and further argue that he might have needed more time to re-organize his army after the campaign in Transylvania. The military historian Colonel Gheorghe Tudor supports Blavatskaia's claim of an anti-Roman front by arguing that support for the Greek cause from Burebista was actually possible if we believe Strabo's affirmation that he could muster a considerable fighting force. Tudor claims that even if he did not personally lead the attack, Burebista could send the troops dislocated south of the Carpathians who were already preparing for the eastern campaign.<sup>95</sup> Although it is an attractive theory, it rests solely on the supposition that such eastern assistance was meant as no more than a reconnaissance force in Dobrogea after 61 BC.<sup>96</sup> But since the actual eastern campaign would take place only six years later, this is very unlikely.

Returning to Burebista, the incorporation of the Pontic colonies into the Dacian Kingdom

<sup>89</sup> Boatwright, Gargola, Talbert, 214.

<sup>90</sup> The fact that Strabo (7.6) mentions that Varro Lucullus took the statue of Apollo from Apollonia in order to take it to Rome has been interpreted by historians as proof that the city fell after hard fighting and plundering: Pippidi, *Străinii de peste Mări*, 277.

<sup>91</sup> The text was supposedly put up in the *agora* and at Rome also, in the temple of Concord: Pippidi, *Străinii de peste Mări*, 279.

<sup>92</sup> Cass. Dio, *Roman History*, 38.10. Livy also mentions the unsuccessful campaign of Hybrida: Liv. *Periochae*, 103.59.

<sup>93</sup> Cass. Dio, 51.26.

<sup>94</sup> Radulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 646.

<sup>95</sup> Tudor, 84, 92.

<sup>96</sup> Tudor, 92.

suggests that he was fully aware of the socio-political conditions affecting Dobrogea, while taking advantage of the retreat of Mithridates and of the setbacks suffered by Rome after the Greek revolt, in order to impose his authority over the Greeks.<sup>97</sup> Recalling a visit to Mikra Skythia in 96 AD, Dion Chrysostomos describes Burebista's conquest when writing that "[Olbia] does not have a size fitting to its former glory because of the many barbarian conquests [...] No more than one hundred and fifty years ago, the Getae took both [Olbia] and other *poleis* situated on the left shore of the *Pontus Euxinus*, up to Apollonia."<sup>98</sup> This has helped historians date Burebista's campaign to somewhere around the 50s BC.

Further information provided by fragmentary decrees has not only confirmed this date, but has also given some details about the Greeks' wars supposedly against Burebista. For example, a fragmentary inscription (IGB I 323) from Mesambria mentions three *στρατηγοί* (*strategoí*, generals) who took part in the war against Burebista, without naming other disasters.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, a decree dating from around 50 BC was found at Istros in honour of Aristagoras of Apaturos for his services to the community "following the disaster afflicting the city, when the *polis* was without walls and its people were again in danger along with their wives and children." Aristagoras is portrayed "negotiating with skill with the *βαρβάροι* (*barbaroi*, meaning "foreigners" but also the derogatory term "barbarians") who ruled the land, and in other occasions giving citizens the necessary amount for ransom;"<sup>100</sup> the hostility of the Greeks towards their conquerors may explain the use of *barbaroi* in this context. Therefore, historians have conjectured that, while some *poleis* such as Olbia, Istros and Mesambria initially resisted Burebista and ended up partially destroyed, the others, namely Tomis, Callatis, Odessos, Dionysopolis and Apollonia submitted to his will without a fight.<sup>101</sup> Due to lack of precise evidence, archeologists unfortunately can not tell for certain in what order the Greek cities fell under Burebista's control.<sup>102</sup>

The campaign of incorporation undertaken by Burebista on the Pontic left shore must have ended by 48 BC, the accepted date for the issuing of the Decree in honour of Acornion of Dionysopolis (IGB I2 13); it informs us that "Burebista had recently become the greatest king of Thrace, ruling over the whole territory on this side of the [Danube] and on the other."<sup>103</sup> This inscription found on the territory of present-day Bulgaria is the most important source for the policy of Burebista as King of Dacia, presenting an unprecedented level of political discourse. The text itself speaks of the great deeds of Acornion who, on being sent to Burebista, "went to him, became his best friend, talking to him and advising him with respect to the most important questions, winning the king's goodwill for the benefit of the city."<sup>104</sup> It is possible to connect the 'goodwill' of Burebista towards the Dionysopolitans with their voluntary submission to his authority. In this case, one may argue that the citizens of Dionysopolis had plans of their own and took advantage of the coming of Burebista in their own efforts "to contribute to the good of the country in all possible ways."<sup>105</sup> Such policy seems to have been dictated by the realization of the complicated position Dionysopolis was in, being caught in the middle of a power struggle between the major powers in the region at the time: Dacia and Rome.

The fact that prior to the acclamation of Acornion, Dionysos the eponymous god of the city "had no priest at all," has been interpreted by Pippidi as evidence for a precarious economic situation

<sup>97</sup> Radulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 647.

<sup>98</sup> Dion Chrys. *Orationes*. 36.4.

<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, the only secondary source mentioning the inscription does not provide the text itself: Pippidi, *Străinii de peste Mări*, 283.

<sup>100</sup> Pippidi. *Străinii de peste Mări*. 284-285.

<sup>101</sup> Pippidi. *Străinii de peste Mări*. 283.

<sup>102</sup> Radulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 647.

<sup>103</sup> Crișan, 48.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

in Dionysopolis. This might have originated from long years spent under costly foreign domination.<sup>106</sup> As the treaty itself shows, a prominent figure such as Acornion was needed to finance excessive expenses under the administration of Hybrida: “while [Caius] Antonius was spending the winter there, he (again) took the crown of the god (becoming a priest), beautifully and magnificently carried out processions and sacrifices and gave the people plenty of meat.”<sup>107</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that by approaching Burebista the Dionysopolitans sought to gain a better economic deal.

It does not follow, however, that Burebista was not aware of or that he did not understand such diplomatic discourse. To provide clarity, we must look at the epigraphic evidence provided by the decree. The term *basileus* having already been discussed, the next striking element is the construction *ἔν τῃ μεγίστῃ φιλίᾳ*. Crișan translates this as “best friend;” the literal translation would actually be “into the greatest friendship.” However, the connotations of this construction are much more encompassing. Taking the dative case, its more precise meaning has been translated as “being accepted in the family circle as a sign of the highest regard by superiors towards their dependents.”<sup>108</sup> As a result, it may be safely argued that the Greeks perceived Burebista as being familiar with the subtleties of Hellenistic diplomatic language, since such a title was often used at the Hellenistic courts.<sup>109</sup>

The prominence of Dionysopolis is worth looking into in detail because it reveals more about diplomatic relations between Burebista and the city than we might expect at first glance. Representations either of Dionysos or of figures prominent in his cult found on jewelry, pottery, coins, or other decorative material such as bone unearthed in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space suggest the prominence of the god in Thracian religion. Furthermore, Herodotus tells us that “the only deities [the Thracians] worship are Ares, Dionysos and Artemis.”<sup>110</sup> This has been interpreted as mutual recognition of the Greek and Geto-Dacian pantheons through association; Artemis, for example, was equated with Bendis.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, it may be inferred that Dionysos provided the channel for a privileged kinship relationship between Acornion, as priest of Dionysos, and Burebista, given the prominence of Dionysos in both Greek and Geto-Dacian religion. This is not unusual since such a relationship was characteristic of the interaction between *poleis* and monarchs during the Hellenistic period.<sup>112</sup>

Based on this information, we can only infer why Burebista chose Acornion as his diplomat, since the decree does not disclose his reasons for such a decision. What the inscription does tell us, however, is that “on being sent by King Burebista as ambassador to Cnaeus Pompeius, son of Cnaeus, emperor of the Romans and meeting him in Macedonia near Heraclea Lyncestis, [Acornion] fulfilled the tasks assigned to him by the king, winning for [Burebista] the Romans’ goodwill and conducting negotiations for his homeland.”<sup>113</sup> Obviously, the decree serves to glorify Acornion, but the fact that Burebista nevertheless appointed him as his intermediary suggests that the fact that Acornion was Greek and that he was from a town which had rebelled against Rome influenced the King’s decision. In that case, one may argue that Acornion’s Greek pedigree was probably meant to smooth relations between Burebista, a relatively unknown yet powerful individual from the Roman perspective, and Pompey.

The aims of this diplomatic mission must be studied as a result of Burebista’s Pontic campaign. It is not so much the fact that he sought international recognition of his conquests<sup>114</sup> – which was

<sup>106</sup> Pippidi, *Străinii de peste Mări*, 281.

<sup>107</sup> Crișan, 48.

<sup>108</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. “*philia*” and “*megistan*”.

<sup>109</sup> Rădulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 651.

<sup>110</sup> Hdt. 5.7.

<sup>111</sup> Sanie, 93.

<sup>112</sup> Jones, 50-51.

<sup>113</sup> Crișan, 48.

<sup>114</sup> Rădulescu, Glodariu, Vulpe, *Burebista*, 649.

clearly welcome – as much as an attempt to conciliate the Romans. The right of conquest was a generally accepted concept throughout the Hellenistic world, but when Burebista decided to incorporate into his Dacian Kingdom *poleis* which were tied to Rome through a *foedus* treaty, he automatically declared war on Rome; a *foedus* agreement once enacted was valid in perpetuity, no matter what the political circumstances.<sup>115</sup> From the point of view of Dionysopolis, it also sought conciliation with Rome, since it had revolted against its authority. Numismatic evidence further attests the idea that Burebista's expansion was not favourably regarded. The number of coins entering the Dacian Kingdom dramatically decreased to about 33% of its initial number during the 60s and especially in the 50s BC.<sup>116</sup>

In theory, however, Pompey did not have the authority to grant such a pardon. Yet the designation of Pompey as *αυτοκράτορα* (*autokratora*) in the Decree to Acornion suggests that, both in Burebista's and in the Dionysopolitans' eyes, he indeed could. The term was used to identify an absolute ruler, authors using it as a synonym for 'dictator' and 'imperator'. Most importantly, Plutarch, writing the life of Pompey, used *αυτοκράτωρ* (*autokrator*) to present him specifically as "the Emperor."<sup>117</sup> We also know for a fact that, following his short-lived victory over Caesar at Dyrrhachium on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, his soldiers hailed him as "imperator," which was later translated into Greek as *autokrator*.<sup>118</sup> This is further corroborated by Caesar and Appian who mockingly observed that "Pompey sent letters to all the kings and cities magnifying his victory" before the battle at Pharsalus took place "and he expected that Caesar's army would come over to him directly."<sup>119</sup>

Unfortunately, the decree does not specifically mention what Burebista offered Pompey in exchange for "the Romans' goodwill." Appian reproduces one of Pompey's speeches to his troops in which he proudly says that "we may say that all the nations of the East and around the Euxine Sea, both Greek and Barbarian, stand with us; and kings, who are friends of the Roman people or of myself, are supplying us soldiers, arms, provisions, and other implements of war."<sup>120</sup> Therefore, it may be argued that Burebista offered Pompey military assistance against Caesar in the Civil War, since by that time Burebista's kingdom had reached its maximum limits, reaching and controlling the western bank of the Pontus Euxinus.

Cooperation between Pompey and Burebista is further suggested by the discovery of coins representing Juba, a Numidian king in friendly terms with Pompey, in four hoards of Republican denarii on the territory of the Dacian Kingdom.<sup>121</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that Burebista had no choice but to attempt an alliance with Pompey. Beside his recent victory over Caesar, Pompey controlled the territories next to Dacia and also the trade routes into the Black Sea which he made safe from pirates. An alliance with the victorious Roman general would have contributed to the development of trade between Dacia and the Greco-Roman world,<sup>122</sup> given that an eventual increase of the number of *denarii* entering into Dacia depended, as mentioned earlier, on the diplomatic relations with Rome; the Republican *denarius* replaced Greek money as the dominant currency throughout the entire Geto-Dacian territory by the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>123</sup>

For a short period of time it looked as though Burebista's gamble would pay off and his diplomatic schemes come to fruition. Unfortunately for him, Pompey was defeated by Caesar on the 9<sup>th</sup> of

<sup>115</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. "*foedus*".

<sup>116</sup> From 1101 in the 90's, 3672 in the 80's and 1342 coins in the 70's, the number dropped to 408 in the 60's and 562 in the 50's BC: Chițescu, 10.

<sup>117</sup> Liddell and Scott, s.v. "*autokrator*."

<sup>118</sup> Crișan, 49.

<sup>119</sup> App. BC. 2.63. Caes. Civ. 3.72.

<sup>120</sup> App. BC. 2.51.

<sup>121</sup> Chițescu, 10.

<sup>122</sup> Glodariu, 59.

<sup>123</sup> Hoards have been found from the northernmost point of Transylvania to the south-easternmost point of Dobrogea: Chițescu, 13.

August 48 BC at Pharsalus. We do not know whether Burebista's supposed help actually reached Pompey or not, just as we are left in the dark concerning whether Burebista participated in the battle itself or not. However, with Pompey out of the way, a confrontation between Burebista and Caesar was inevitable since the former had become the latter's personal enemy by supporting Pompey. On this note, Appian writes that Caesar "conceived the idea of a long campaign against the Getae and the Parthians. The Getae, a hardy, warlike, and neighboring nation, were to be attacked first," a claim supported by both Suetonius and Strabo.<sup>124</sup> Caesar, Appian continues, also "sent across the Adriatic in advance sixteen legions of foot and ten thousand horsemen." We later learn from the same Appian that this contingent was appropriated after 44 BC by Marcus Antonius for his personal aims against Octavian on the pretext that "the Getae, learning of Caesar's death, had made an incursion into Macedonia and were ravaging it."<sup>125</sup>

As a matter of fact, the death of Burebista corresponded with the death of Caesar, following a *coup d'état* which reduced his kingdom into four, then five parts. Strabo adds that "such divisions, to be sure, are only temporary and vary with the times."<sup>126</sup> Due to Burebista's keen understanding of the subtleties of Hellenistic diplomatic language, the Geto-Dacians continued to play an active role on the international political scene. However, the fragmentation of his kingdom has led some scholars to suggest that Burebista's model was not viable, as the regional character of the Geto-Dacian territory was too powerful.<sup>127</sup> The implication of such a conclusion is that the suggested policy of consolidation and assertion was nothing but an isolated and individual effort, not a segment of an entire process defining centuries of Geto-Dacian policy in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space. Later events, however, prove the opposite.

We learn from Suetonius that during the Civil War between Octavian and Marcus Antonius which had erupted soon after Caesar's death, "Marcus Antonius writes that Augustus first betrothed Julia to his own son Antony, and later to Cotiso, king of the Getae, at the same time requesting in turn the hand of the king's daughter for himself."<sup>128</sup> Even if this was just one of many ways in which Marcus Antonius sought to taint the image of Octavian, it is significant that the Geto-Dacians still play a role in the political discourse of the time. Furthermore, Plutarch writes in the biography of Marcus Antonius that on the eve of the battle of Actium a commander by the name of Canidius "advised Antony to send Cleopatra away, to withdraw into Thrace or Macedonia, and there to decide the issue by a land battle. For Dicomus the king of the Getae promised to come to their aid with a large force."<sup>129</sup> Based on numismatic evidence, there is reason to give credence to Plutarch's claim given that out of a total of 1260 *denarii* dated between 39 and 31 BC no less than one thousand of them have been identified as actual part of Marcus Antonius' own coin issues for the legions.<sup>130</sup>

Strabo further argues that even after fragmentation, the Getae "are capable, even today, of sending forth an army of forty thousand men."<sup>131</sup> Although the expression "even today" has been interpreted by Susan Pothecary to mark the beginning of Pompey's reorganization after Mithridates' defeat,<sup>132</sup> in this case it definitely marks the death of Burebista, since he died much later than Pompey. Therefore, disintegration of the Dacian Kingdom does not seem to have affected the pattern of active implication in Greco-Roman affairs as a way to gain regional stability. On the contrary, it shows conti-

<sup>124</sup> App. 2.110. Sue. *Div. Iul.*, 44. Strab. 7.3.5.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* 3.25.

<sup>126</sup> Strab. 7.3.11.

<sup>127</sup> Petolescu, Radulescu, *De la Burebista la Cucerirea Romană*, 655.

<sup>128</sup> Sue. *Aug.*, 63.

<sup>129</sup> Plut, *Anthony*, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Chițescu, 10.

<sup>131</sup> Strab. 7.3.12.

<sup>132</sup> Pothecary, 246.

nunity as Geto-Dacian regional kings sought alliances with prominent figures such as Octavian and Marcus Antonius, who could in turn provide security and privileges.

Cassius Dio provides more information about the Geto-Dacians in the aftermath of Octavian's victory in the Civil War. While discussing the retaliation campaign of Licinius Crassus against a supposedly invading army of Dacians and Bastarnae, he points out that "the Bastarnae [urged] him not to pursue them, since they had done the Romans no harm."<sup>133</sup> This incident may suggest that the "barbarian" invaders consciously tried to avoid a confrontation with Rome, being fully aware of the diplomatic implications of such an act. On that note, it may be argued that Crassus' campaigns were actually aimed at avenging the shameful defeat of Antonius Hybrida and to recover his lost standards. Cassius Dio relates that "after this success he gave no respite to the rest of the Getae [...], he advanced against Genucla [...] because he heard that the lost standards [...] were kept there."<sup>134</sup> This episode is mentioned neither by Suetonius nor Augustus, who actually writes in his *Res Gestae* that "when an army of Dacians crossed to this side of the Danube, it was defeated and routed under my auspices [and I] forced the Dacian peoples to submit to the orders of the Roman people."<sup>135</sup> This omission has been interpreted as a check on the growing prestige and influence of Crassus, given that he had gained *spolia opima* while in Thrace,<sup>136</sup> in an attempt by Octavian to avoid another Civil War with Crassus as contender to the title of Princeps.<sup>137</sup> Most importantly, however, Cassius Dio specifically mentions that "[Crassus] completed [the enemy's] destruction with the help of Roles, the king of a tribe of the Getae." As a reward for his assistance, "Roles visited Octavian, [being] treated as a friend and ally."<sup>138</sup> This last observation offers clear insight into what a king of a small polity could hope for on the international political stage in the aftermath of the transition from the Hellenistic Age to the Roman Empire. At the same time, it also shows how such regional kings could be manipulated and drawn into the political games of those aspiring to or possessing the supreme office of Princeps. Roles is an example of such a leader who adapted quickly to the new diplomatic language, which depended on personal loyalty to the Emperor, thus assuring his continued existence within the Roman *κόσμος* (*kosmos*, world, universe).

In conclusion, Burebista's foreign policy operated on a grander scale than earlier Geto-Dacian leaders, but nevertheless adhered to the same patterns of consolidation within the Hellenistic *oikoumene* defined through economic and diplomatic interaction with the western Pontic Greek cities. However, this tradition did not end with Burebista's demise, but continued under later Geo-Dacian rulers, providing them with the premises needed to adapt to the changing political environment in the Mediterranean world after the rise of Augustus as Princeps.

<sup>133</sup> Cass. Dio, 51.24.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. 51.26.

<sup>135</sup> Aug. *Res Gestae*, 30. Sue. *Aug.*, 21.

<sup>136</sup> Cassius Dio mentions that he would have gained such a prestigious glory if he had been in supreme command: Cass. Dio, 51.24.

<sup>137</sup> Wells, 15, 56.

<sup>138</sup> Cass. Dio. 51.24.

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