This wide-ranging, well-balanced survey of Trajan's war against the Dacian king Decebalus should be required reading for anyone studying 'Rome's largest military enterprise since the civil wars'. Not so much a thesis or a set of theses, but rather a comprehensive account of what is known, the excellence and usefulness of this work lies in its competent handling of a huge bibliography and its convincing discussion of a very large number of disputed points, laying to rest scores of mistaken notions and confirming numerous views that had wrongly been challenged.

The introduction ends somewhat in mid-air and lacks a statement defining what the work under discussion is meant to accomplish. In the survey of interpretations of Trajan's Column one would expect mention of the fact that the historicity of the relief sequence was established by the recognition of the emperor's final adlocutio in scene CXLVII (Röm. Mitt. 78, 1971, 167–174). In his chapter on Trajan's Column as a historical source (p. 22 ff.) the author wisely treads a middle ground; the metopes of the Adamklissi monument are put into a meaningful sequence (Appendix 3).
The chapter on topography makes much of Dacia's mountainous relief, but the three maps (why at the end of the volume?) are so poor they show none of it. Also, surely the valuable discussion of Trajan's generals (pp. 62–80) should not fall under the heading 'Truppengeschichte'!

The discussion of the army units involved in the war (pp. 80–154) is the longest chapter of the book. The subheading 'Irregular Units' combines two very disparate things that should be treated separately: the equites Illyriciani, equites ex Syria, exploratores Germanici (cf. Epigr. Studien 13 [1983] 63–78), and the pedites singulares Britannici were all detachments of regular auxiliaries, while the Palmyreni sagittarii, Symmachiani Astures, Suri sagittarii, Mauri, Marcomanni, etc. were ethnic units, i.e. nationes. The confusion, since Th. Mommsen, about the term numerus is still echoing in the statement (p. 149) that the pedites singulares Britannici in the later 2nd century were 'transformed' into a numerus, when actually they had always been a vexillatio = numerus.

In appendix 5 Strobel rightly rejects Gauer's mistaken identification of the nationes as regular auxilia, and of the regular auxiliaries as praetorians. The source of his arguments, down to the very details, might have been acknowledged as Gnomon 1980, 591 ff. The language is clear and, mercifully, avoids 'technical' jargon; misprints are few. At times one wishes sweeping statements, such as 'führt in die Irre', would be explained by a word or two.

After such a fine study, worthy rather of a 'Habilitation', than of a mere Ph. D. thesis, the scholarly world looks eagerly forward to the author's announced companion study on the Dacian wars under Domitian.

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