

Karl Strobel, *Untersuchungen zu den Dakerkriegen Trajans*. Studien zur Geschichte des mittleren und unteren Donaoraumes in der Hohen Kaiserzeit. Antiquitas I 33. Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn 1984. 284 pages.

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.

Introduced by chapters on the sources, the topography, and the Dacian army, the mainstay of the work is a detailed account of the units that fought the war and an equally detailed narrative of its two campaigns (AD 101–102 and 105–106). All of this is very thorough and, with few exceptions, may be relied on to be the current status of our knowledge. Sources are used in their best editions; the author has a wide command of the largely German literature of interpretation, of the rich Romanian archaeological literature, and of such a broad spectrum of studies from other countries as perhaps only the fabulous bibliographical treasures of Munich can offer. Critique is the business of reviews, but the sometimes critical remarks offered in the following should not be taken to detract from a work which is sound in every major respect.

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*, *Symmacharii 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.

Honolulu

Michael P. Speidel