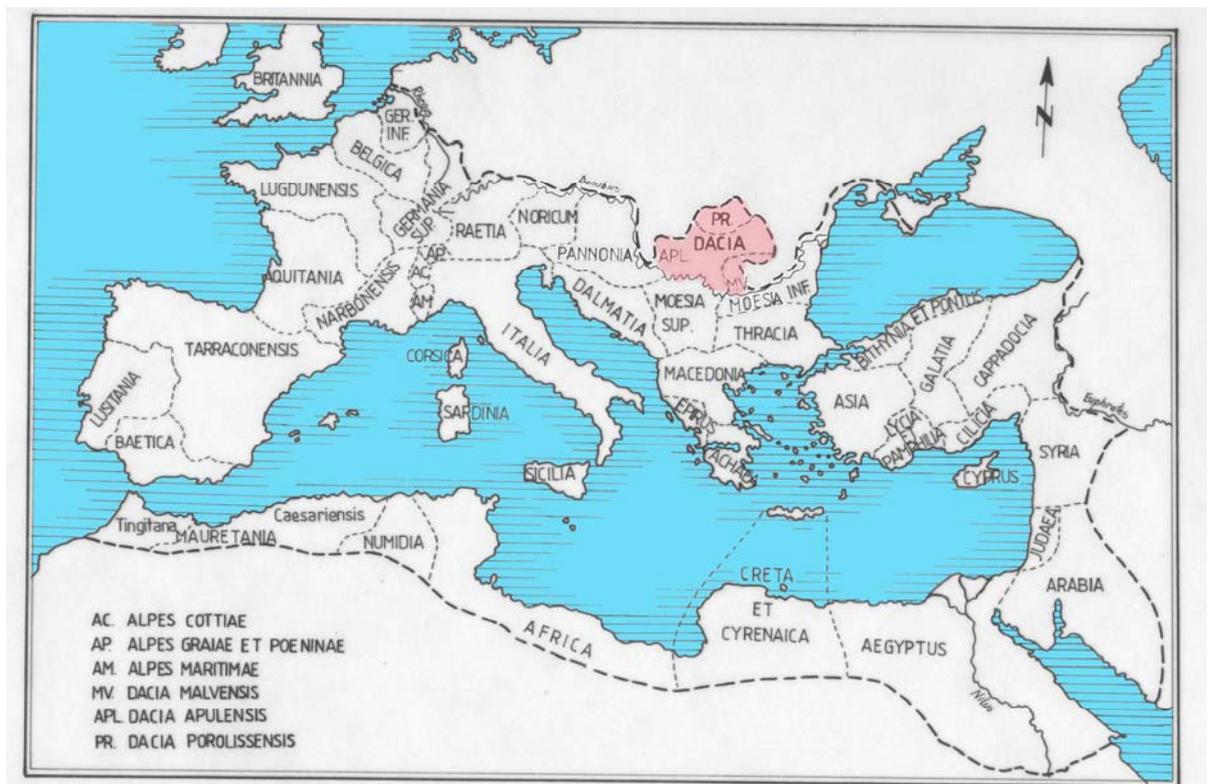


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ON THE LAST INSCRIPTIONS OF ROMAN DACIA

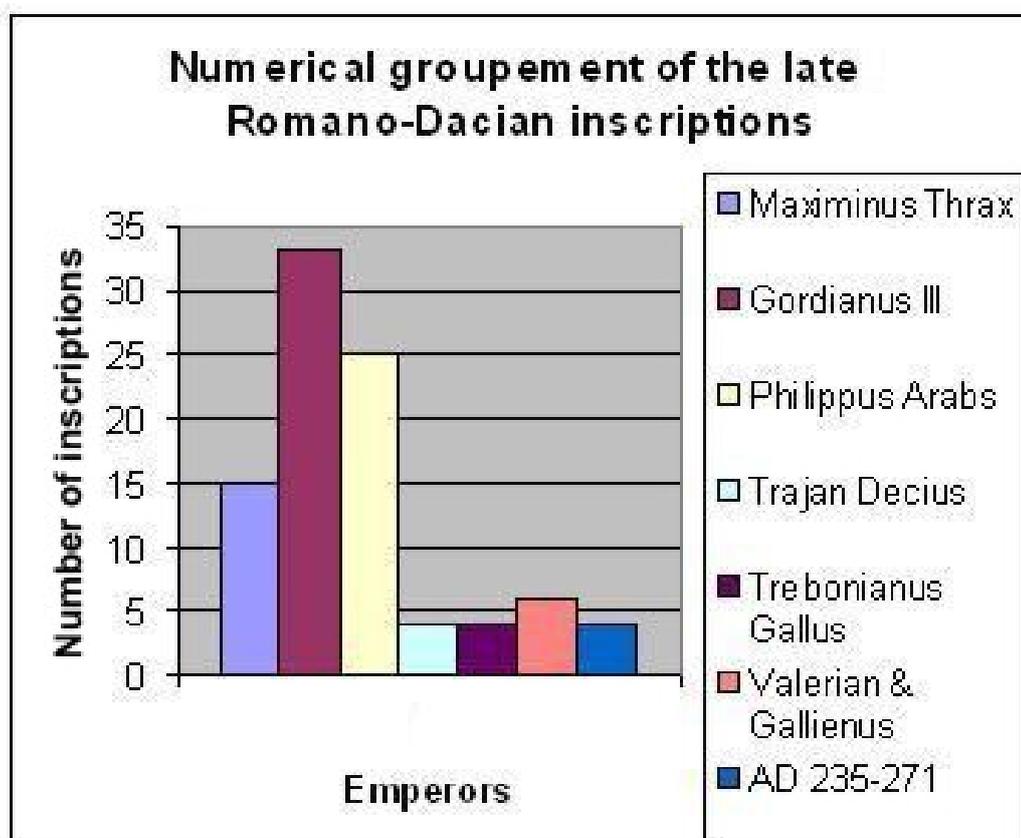
The province of Dacia (A.D. 106-271) is rich in inscriptions. But its epigraphic culture decreased dramatically and finally vanished in the period of the military anarchy (since 235 A.D.).

There are 91 inscriptions of which we can be sure that they belong to this period. Their study offers important conclusions about the Romano-Dacian civilization right before the abandonment of the province.

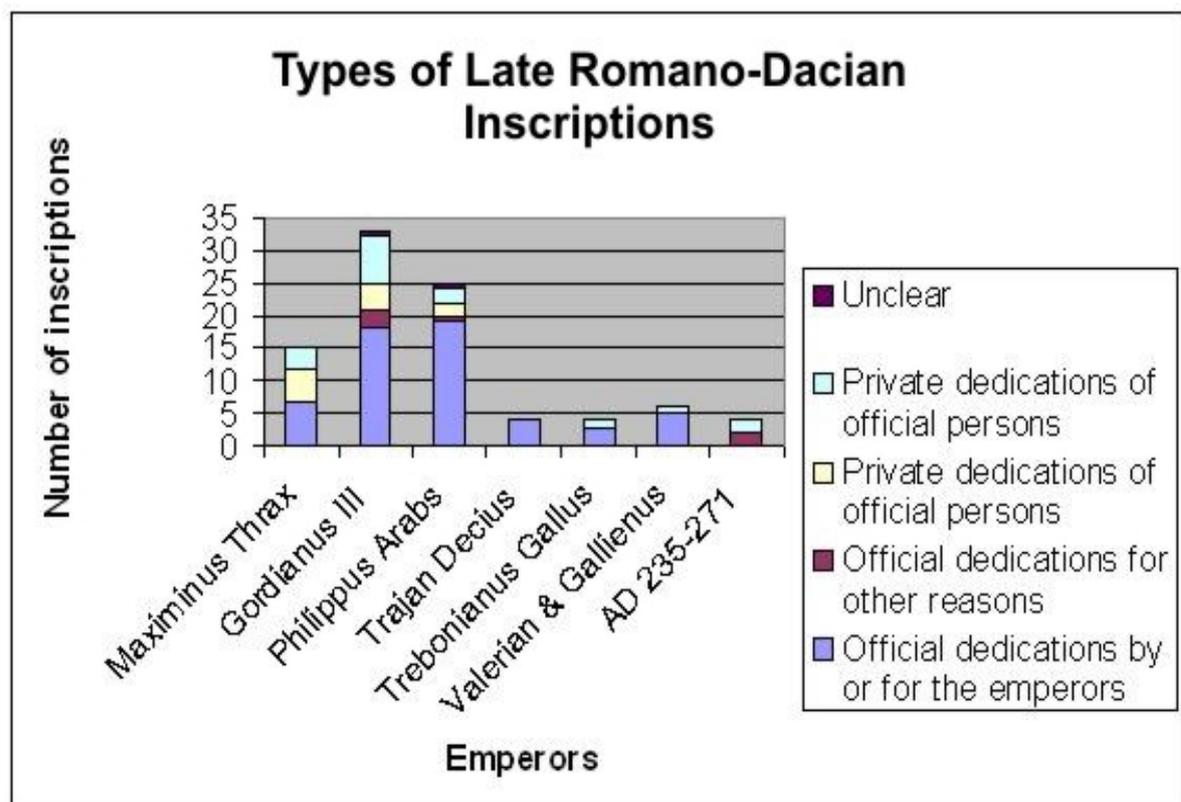


Dacia in the Roman Empire

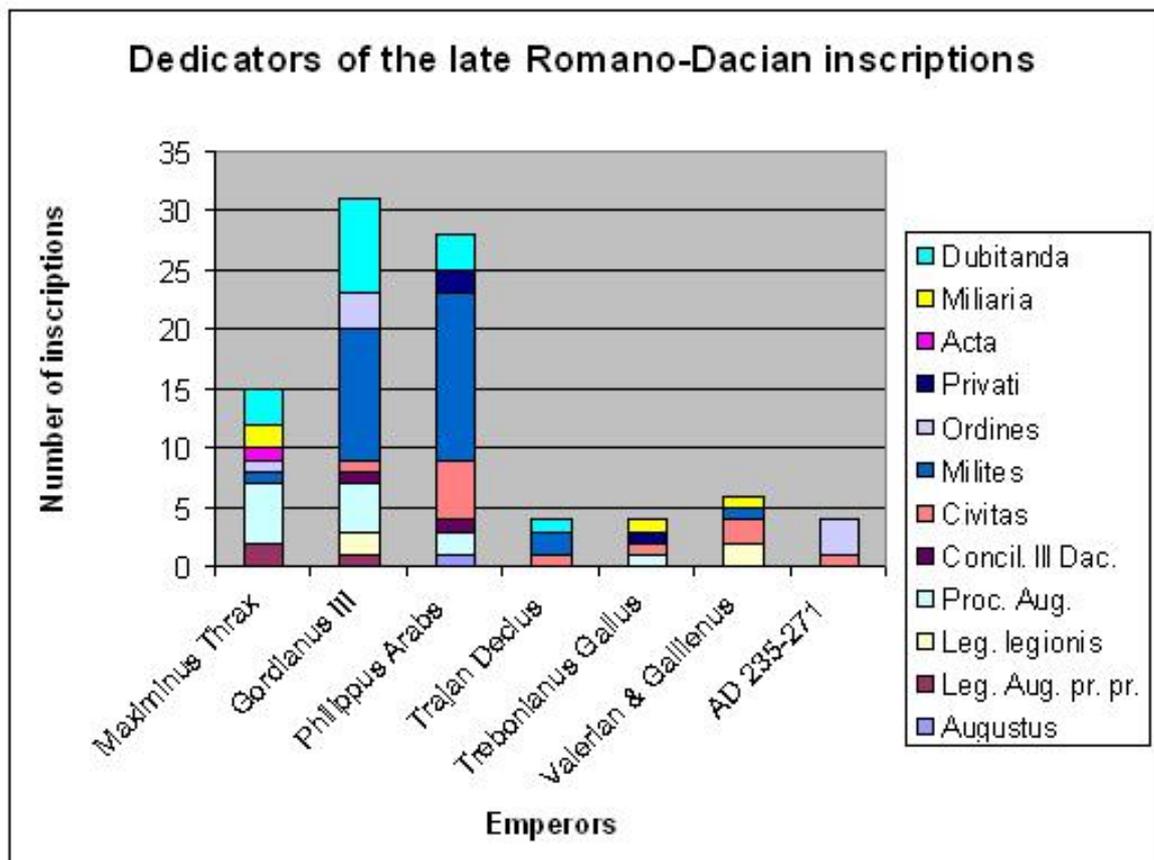
1. The reduction of the number of inscriptions is obvious (see Table I). The trend became catastrophic after Philippus Arabs, a clear sign of the general crisis. Only of one inscription can we be sure that it dates back to the reign of Gallienus alone (CIL III 1560).



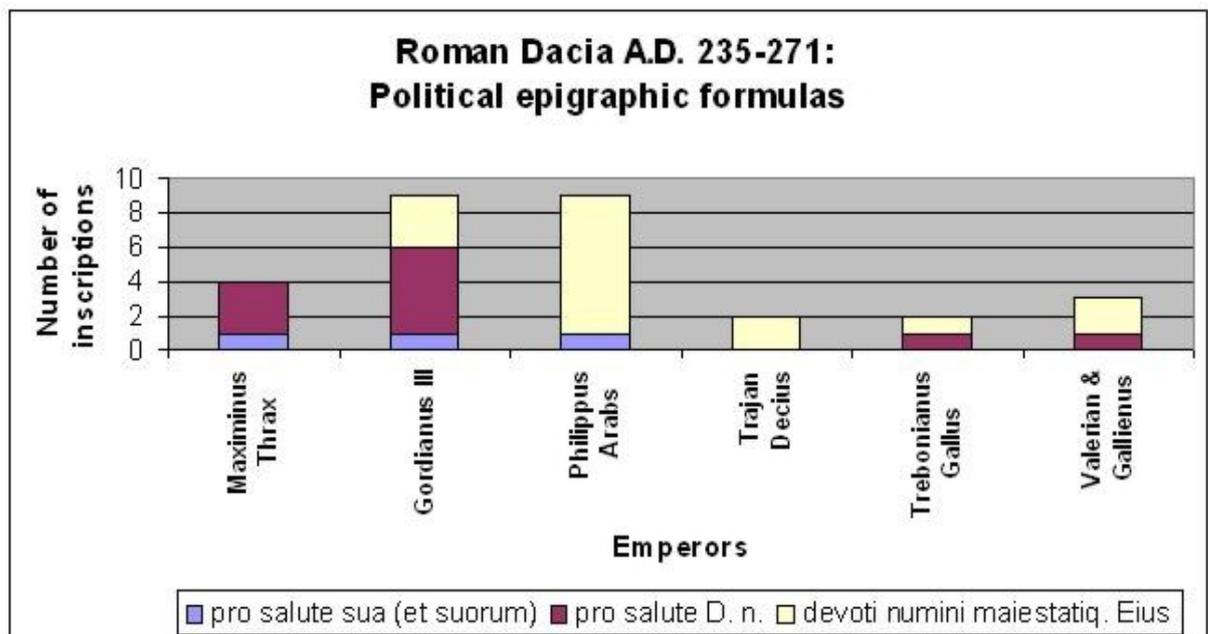
2. The increasing percentage of official texts among the monuments of each reign is also obvious (see Table II). It shows the decline of the traditional civilian society and of its elites.



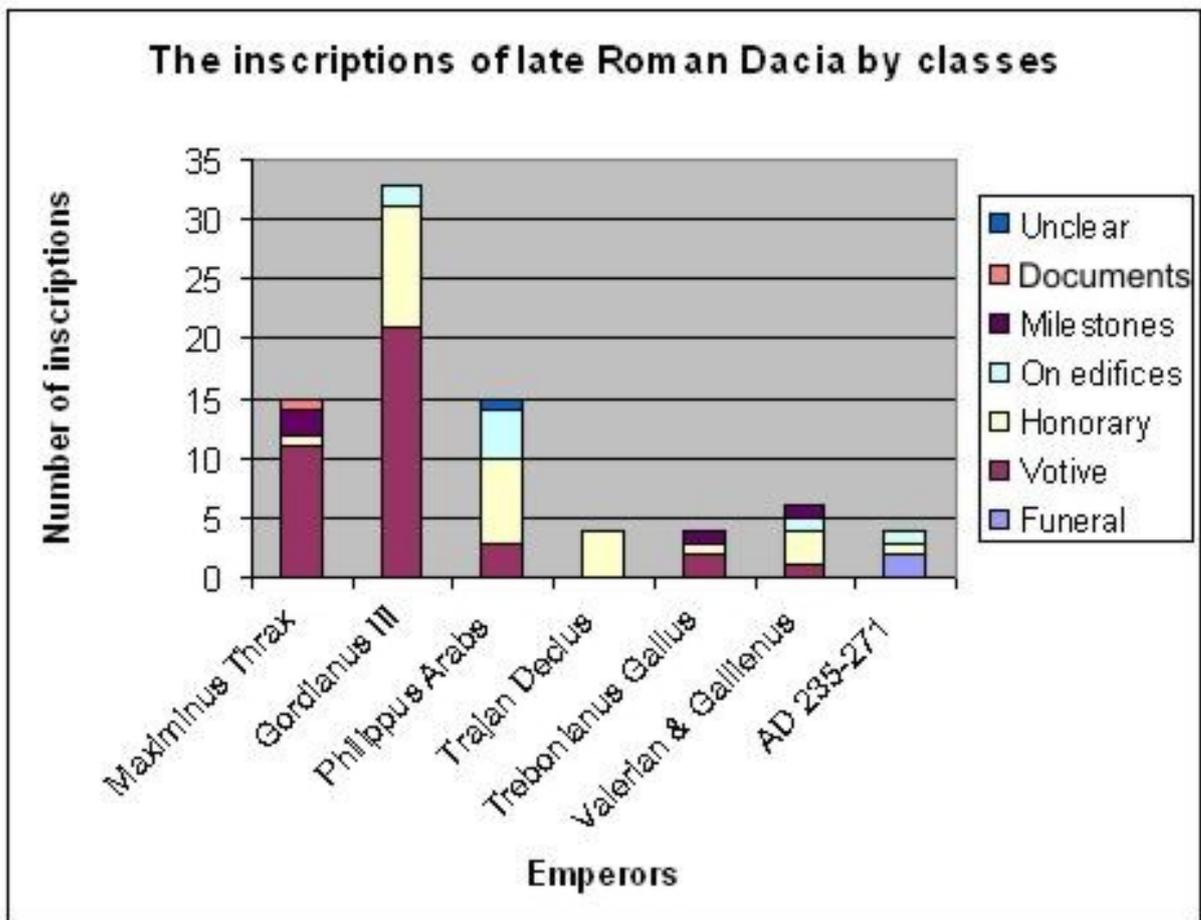
3. This phenomenon is evident if we analyse the dedicators from this period of crisis, too (see Table III). The number of monuments erected by the highest stately officials, and also those of the local aristocracies or the rather wealthy people, decreased rapidly and almost vanished after 249 A.D. Despite their small number, the most frequent ones were the military inscriptions (dedicated by individuals or units) or the inscriptions of the local governments – i. e. official texts, “job tasks”.



4. In return, the texts containing political formulas, which expressed ideological conformism and the faithfulness towards the state, became more and more important (see Table IV).



5. One has to point to a change as far as the different classes of inscribed monuments (see Table V). Funeral stones, the public and the private documents, are extremely scarce, votive inscriptions are also not very numerous. On the other hand, there are a lot of honorary inscriptions and some inscriptions on edifices.



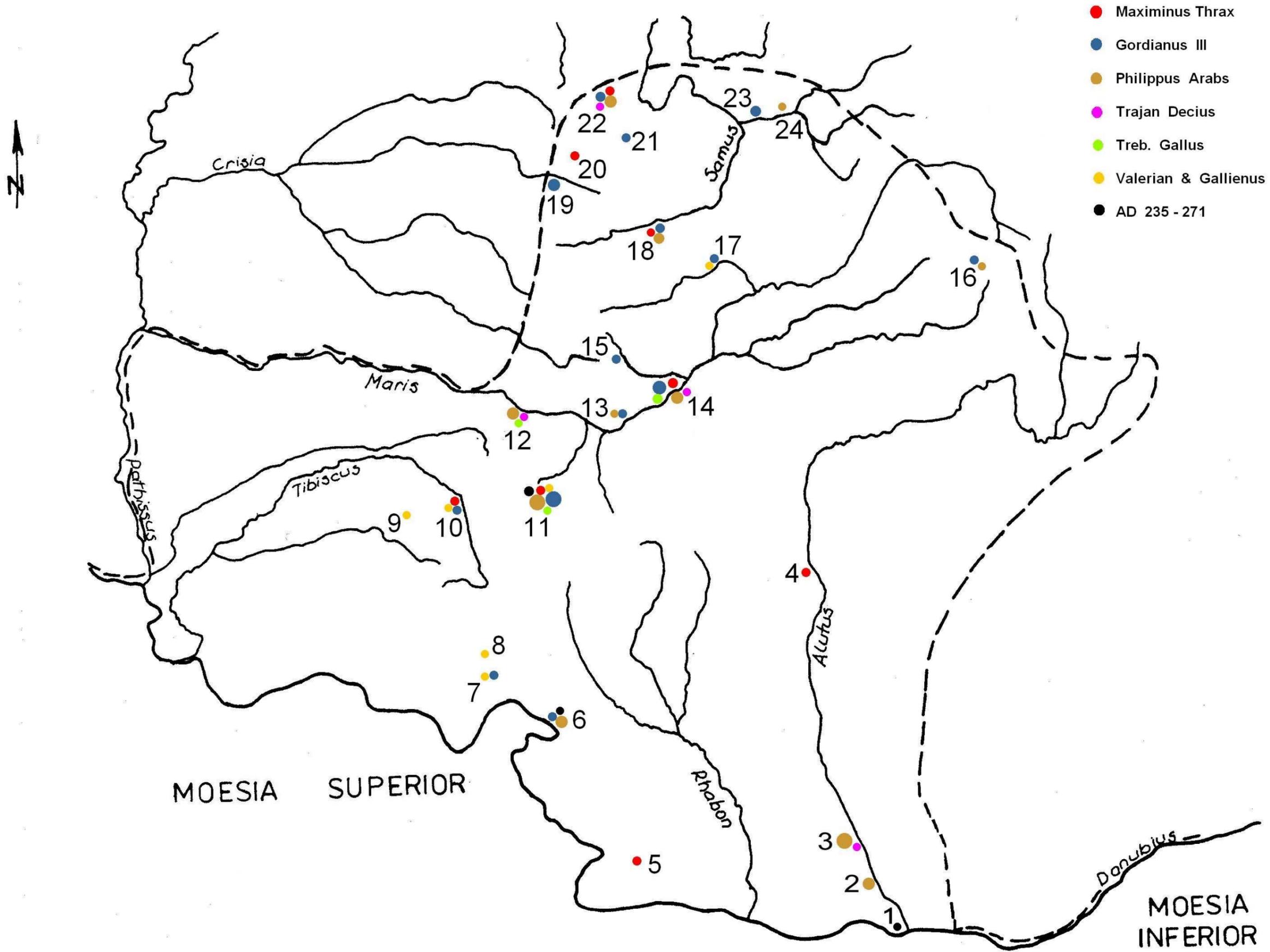
6. The historic scholarship became aware about a certain concentration of epigraphic sources in several areas and moments indicating some special events. In 238 many monuments were erected mostly in the main settlements, in connection to the brutal end of Maximinus Thrax' reign. The inscriptions dated between A.D. 247-248 show the consequences of the Carpic war and the following reconstruction, especially in south-eastern Dacia. There were two other "epigraphic horizons": one occurred around the year 250 and the other dated back from 257-258. They were also in connection with political events (the war against the Goths, the former, and the establishment of the Danubian regional commandment under Valerianus Junior, the latter).

7. The geographic area of the epigraphic finds is important as well (see the map). The gradual reduction of the inscribed monuments is visible, as well as the concentration of the last ones in south-western Dacia.

Key to the map:

1. *Sucidava*; 2. *Slaveni*; 3. *Romula*; 4. *Racovitza*; 5. *Cioroiul Nou*; 6. *Drobeta*; 7. *Baile Herculane*; 8. *Mehadia*; 9. *Lapusnicel*; 10. *Tibiscum*; 11. *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*; 11. *Micia*; 13. *Germisara*; 14. *Apulum*; 15. *Ampelum*; 16. *Inlaceni*; 17. *Potaissa*; 18. *Napoca*; 19. *Bologa*; 20. *Almasu Mare*; 21. *Certiae*; 22. *Porolissum*; 23. *Samum*; 24. *Ilisua*.

The size of the dots expresses the number of found inscriptions.



8. Some private dedications of several municipal aristocrats (dating back from about A.D. 235-271) show the difficult survival of the traditional social elites during the general crisis. They are to be related to the contemporary official inscriptions erected by the municipalities. Such monuments tell us about the permanence of the Romano-Dacian civilization, even in the years right before the abandonment of the province.

9. This idea is confirmed somehow by the good quality of most of the late inscriptions. Their language is rather correct, one cannot find specific irregularities for this period; their graphic is also very good, and sometimes even beautiful.

As conclusion, one can assert the dramatic collapse of the Romano-Dacian epigraphic culture, till its total dissolution, a process showing the amplitude of the crisis and the social shock endured by the provincial upper classes. It is noteworthy, that the data offered by the epigraphy match with the conclusions given by archaeological and numismatic researches (even about the temporal and spatial groupement of the sources). At the same time, the continual erection of inscriptions, even on a reduced scale and with an “epigraphic habit” obviously modified, attest also the permanence of the provincial civil society, and of its basic cultural behaviors, too, until the Roman withdrawal from the province. This Romano-Dacian society is not essentially different from other contemporary ones of the border provinces, having similar problems and manifestations.

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