

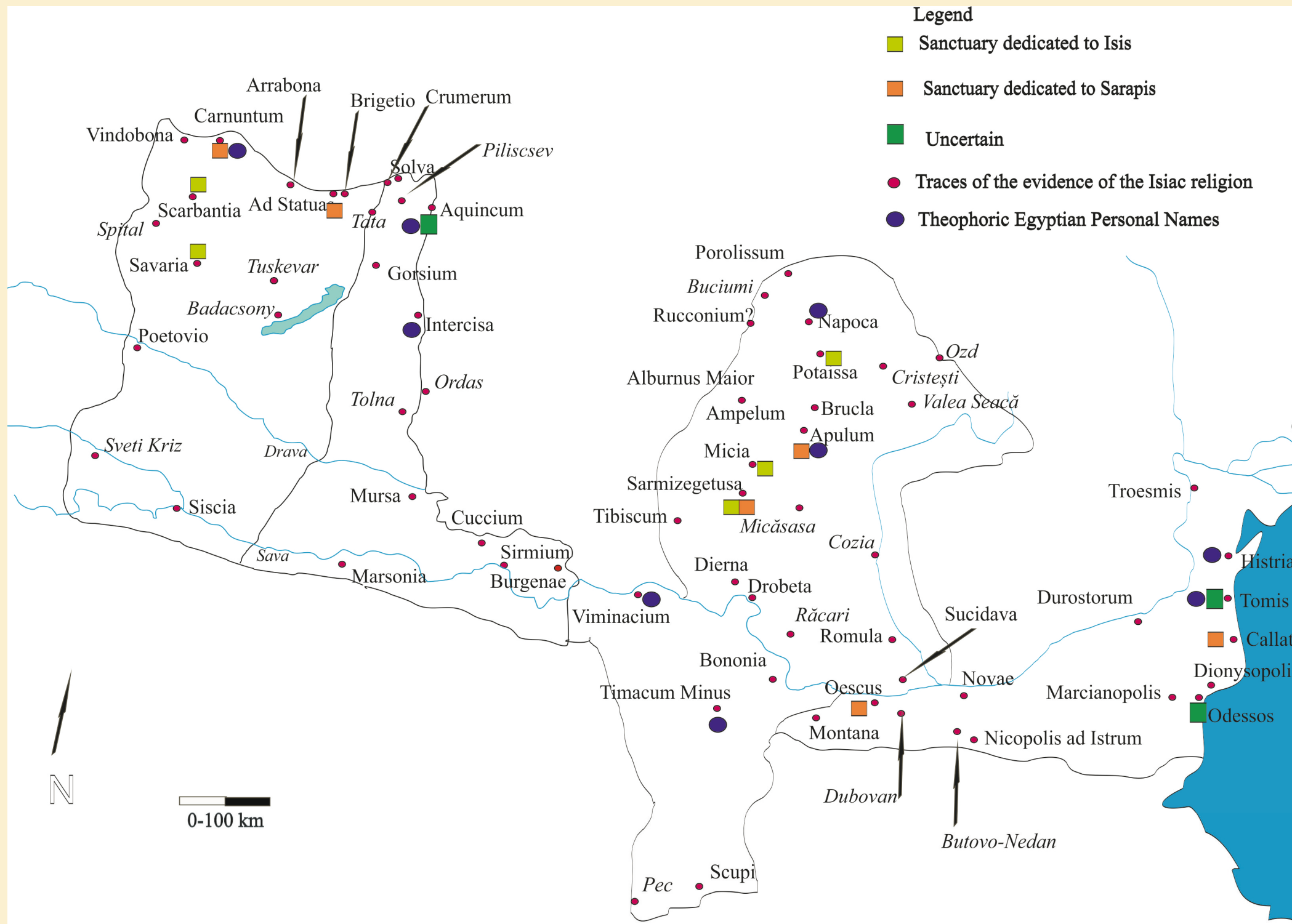


The Egyptian Theophoric Personal Names in the Danubian Provinces of the Roman Empire

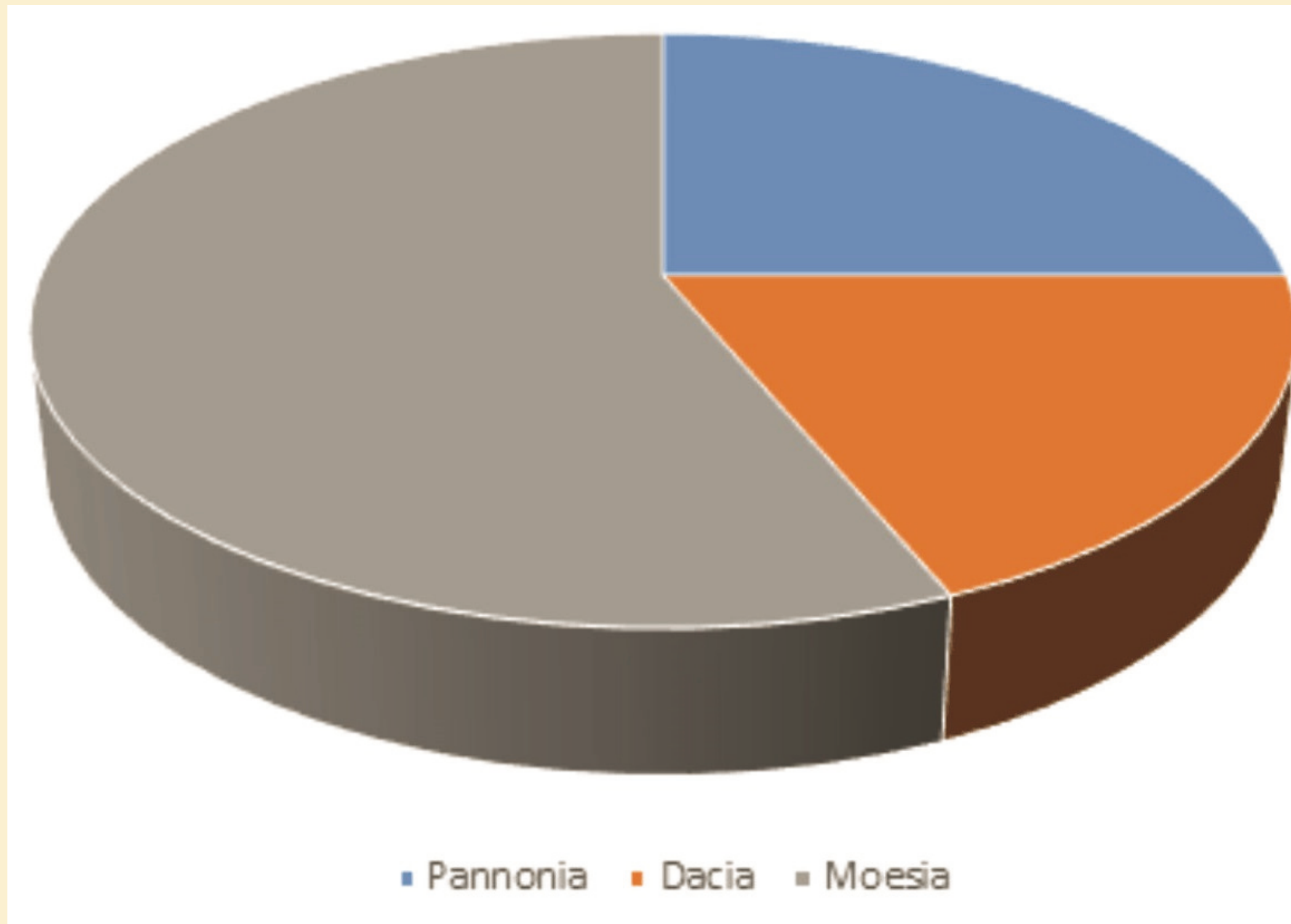
Dan Augustin Deac, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.



Geographical area under analysis (re-drawn after the Danube Limes–UNESCO World Heritage/Pen&Sword/CHC---University of Salzburg, authors: David Breeze and Kurt Schaller)



Map of the Danubian provinces of Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia and the settlements where the theophoric personal names occur in accordance with the traces of the Isiac religion.
©D. Deac



Statistical analysis of the theophoric personal names of Isis, Sarapis, Harpocrate and Anubis in the Danubian provinces of Pannonia, Dacia and Moesia.
©D. Deac

Introduction and scope

As a member of the Romans 1by1 Project team headed by Dr. Rada Varga (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) I had the opportunity to revise an aspect previously not stressed upon while analyzing the Isiac religion in the Danubian provinces of Dacia, Moesia and Pannonia (for the subject Deac 2013), namely the theophoric personal names of the deities with an Egyptian background. One may only imagine the stories of men and women, from rich to poor, from Roman citizens to slaves, from civilians to soldiers, flocking into the *forum* of a provincial Danubian town in a typical day. Each individual came with its own history and **name**, yet among these names some record cases of Egyptian theophoric origin. This presentation summarizes the responses to important questions related to Roman onomastic studies and Roman religious phenomena in the same time: Where these individuals originating in Roman Egypt? Who got these names: citizens, slaves, freed-men and -women? Did these theophoric personal names had something in common with the Isiac religion established in the Danubian provinces of the Roman Empire? The theophoric personal names under analysis are *Sarapio*, *Σαραπίων(ος)*, *Serapia*, *Isidorus*, *Isidora*, *Ἰσιδωρος*, *Εἰσιδωρος*, *Arphocras* or *Enubico*, a theophoric personal name coming from the god Anubis according to I. Toth (Tóth 1977, p. 150, no. 4). These individuals are encountered in *Aquincum*, *Carnuntum* or *Intercisa* in the Pannonian provinces, *Napoca* or *Apulum* in the Dacian provinces and, respectively, in *Viminacium*, *Timacus Minus*, *Histria* and *Tomis* in the Moesian provinces.

Where these individuals originating in Roman Egypt?

For almost a third of these individuals the place of origin is known such as: *Cybira* (Lycaonia) (AE 2004, 1223), *Neapolis* (Siria) (ISM II, 97, 98, 188), *Nicomedia* (Bithynia) (ISM II, 328), *domo Asiae* (Deac 2012, p. 38-39, cat. no. 4) while only one *Κορνούτος* known also as *Σαραπίωνος* is a follower of the Isiac religion in *Tomis*, and a member of the Alexandrian merchants established in this *polis* (RICIS 618/1005). One may easily notice that without doubt (except the case from *Tomis*), there is no direct link between Egypt and the ethnicity of the individuals bearing these theophoric personal names. For the vast majority of the above mentioned individuals who mention it, their origine is in the Roman East.

Social status

Σαραπίων(ος) which is the most common personal name occurs especially in the *poleis* of *Histria* and *Tomis*. The individuals bearing this name are members of the local elite. One exception is *Caius Valerius Sarapio* known from two inscriptions from *Apulum* (Deac 2012, p. 37, 39, cat. no. 2A fig. 2 and 2B). *Isidorus/ Ἰσιδωρος* is a *cognomen* encountered especially in the military environment as soldiers in the legions stationed on the Danubian frontier and in the *polis* of *Tomis* on the Western shore of the Black Sea. There are also freedmen and slaves bearing the personal name *Arphocras/ Arpocras* in *Napoca* (Deac 2012, p. 37-38, cat. no. 1 fig. 1) or *Aquincum* (Tóth 1977, p. 150-151, no. 5). On the other hand the women bearing these names are all freedwomen or slaves such as *Isidora* or *Serapia*, known from funerary inscriptions (Toth 1977, p. 151, no. 7). Statistically, most of the individuals were awarded *civitas romana*, their cognomen bearing an Egyptian theophoric personal name. However there are no direct clues of linking these individuals with Egypt, except of one singular case.

Did these theophoric names had something in common with the Isiac religion established in the Danubian provinces of the Roman Empire?

All theophoric personal names of Isis, Sarapis, Harpocrate or Anubis were identified in settlements where traces of the materiality of the Isiac religion were already found. *Tomis* which is by now the most important center of the Isiac religion in Moesia, its traces stretching from the 2nd c. BC to the 4th c. AD, is the settlement where most of the theophoric personal names occur. Other important settlements are *Apulum*, *Aquincum*, *Intercisa*, *Timacus Minus*, *Viminacium*, *Carnuntum* and *Histria* where the Isiac religion flourished in the 2nd-3rd centuries AD (Deac 2013). The exceptions is *Napoca* where for now, no traces of the public manifestation towards Isis, Sarapis and their *sunnaoi theoi* were identified. In conclusion the theophoric personal names of the divinities originating in Egypt are known especially in the settlements where the Isiac religion flourished in the 1st-3rd centuries AD, these names being a proof of the "embracement" of this religion in the area (*cf.* Fraser 1960, p. 1-54; also for Egypt: Clarysse, Paganini 2009, p. 68-89). These names occur as *cognomina* of the local elites on the Western Pontic shores even from the 1st BC -1st century AD (Deac 2013, p. 37-42) due to the presence of the Isiac religion there, and as personal names of soldiers and *humiliores* in the other parts of the Danubian area, which mainly date after the Isiac religion was established as a "universal" and "official" religion during and after the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD).

Bibliographic references:

AE= L'Année épigraphique, Paris 1888.
Clarysse, Paganini 2009= W. Clarysse, M. C. D. Paganini, *Theophoric Personal Names in Graeco-Roman Egypt. The Case of Sarapis* in: Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete 55, 2009, p. 69-89.
Deac 2012= Dan Deac, *Numele teoforice ale triadei egiptene (Isis, Serapis și Harpocrate) în Dacia romană* [The Theophoric Names of the Egyptian Triad (Isis, Sarapis and Harpocrate) in Roman Dacia], in: *De antiquitatis* 5/2012, 36-44.
Deac 2013= D. Deac, *Prezența și influențele egiptene la Dunărea de Mijloc și de Sus: provinciile panonice, dacice și moesice (sec. I-IV p. Chr.)* [The Egyptian Presence and Influences at the Middle and Lower Danube: the Pannonian, Dacian and Moesian Provinces (1st-4th c. AD)], PhD Diss., Cluj-Napoca, 2013.
Fraser 1960= P. M. Fraser, *Two Studies on the Cult of Sarapis in the Hellenistic World*, in: *Opuscula Atheniesia*, III, 1960, p. 1- 54.
ISM= *Inscriptiones Schyitiae Minoris*, București, 1983-.
RICIS= L. Bricault, *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques (RICIS)*, Paris, 2005.
Tóth 1977= I. Tóth, *Die ägyptischen theophoren Personennamen in Pannonien*, in: *Studia Aegyptiaca* III, Budapest, 1977, p. 149-159.

This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PNII-RU-TE-2014-4-0488.

Kontakt | contact details:
Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.
Address: 1st Kogălniceanu street, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-County, Romania.
E-mail address: dandea12@gmail.com.