

The Iconography of *Genius* in the Roman Province of Dacia A Commented Corpus

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Prolegomena

THE INTERNATIONAL research of the last few decades has brought upon significant results in the process of understanding the ancient testimonies on the Roman Genii. The iconographic evidence has benefitted from some major contributions, which have established clearly outlined definitions and essential typological delimitations necessary for the proper identification and interpretation of the figurative portrayals of these deities.¹ However, as Joan Alcock noted on the case of Roman Britain in the works of scholars the term ‘genius’ has different meanings and is still loosely applied² (this is also true for the literature concerning Roman Dacia). Such confusions or hesitations have predominantly appeared in iconography: various deities have been “labeled” as Genius (*genius, génie, genio* etc.), understood more as a type of god.

In this context, this paper focuses on the restricted meaning of the concept, which refers to a Roman deity whose canonical features, attributes and areas of

* This article owes a lot to the research carried out from Nov. 2009 to July 2010, during an internship at the *Accademia di Romania in Roma* and with other academic institutions in Rome, which allowed me to compare the material from Dacia to an extensive corpus of approximately 500 images of Roman Genii from the period spanning between the 1st century BC and the 3rd century AD, over various provinces of the Roman Empire.

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My thanks are also directed to professors Mihai Bărbulescu (my research program coordinator), Alexandru Diaconescu and Radu Ardevan, for certain photographs and/or valuable information for some monuments. I owe the same to Dr. Sorin Nemeti (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca), Coralia Crişan (Petru Maior University, Târgu-Mureş), Oana and Marian Neagoe (History Museum of Drobeta Turnu-Severin).

competence (functions) can be outlined, even if in some cases not so clearly. The aim behind gathering and analyzing testimonies from Roman Dacia was to offer a commented corpus of the images of Genii discovered in this province, over the course of its existence, i.e. the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Thus, we hope to have made a contribution to a more precise identification, typological determination and historical interpretation of the figurative portrayals of Genii from this part of the Roman world.³

Catalogue and comments

OF THE almost 30 analyzed images of possible ‘genii,’ featured mainly on stone or bronze, 8 pieces (5 certain and 3 debatable) were retained here as the corpus of *imagines Geniorum Daciae*. Their presentation followed a framework plan that includes: relevant technical details of the monument, figure, one or two literature references considered to be essential, a short commentary, the (approximate) dating and the iconographical type. In the light of the preliminary research (see *), as well as of the theoretical directions established in the main iconographical studies (see n. 1), I have assigned the portrayals of Genii from this province to a typology that can (or rather should) be applied not only to images, but also to the literary or epigraphic evidence:

A. Personal Genius:

- A.I. Genius familiaris (Patris familias)
- A.II. Funerary Genius (G. of the deceased)
- A.III. Genius Augusti / Imperatoris
- A.IV. Genius dei

B. Social Genius (Genii of communities / social groups):

- B.I. Genius Populi Romani
- B.II. Genii of the administrative units / institutions of the Roman state
- B.III. Genii of civil corporations and associations
- B.IV. Military Genii

C. Genius loci

Entries have been ordered using this typological toolkit, in order to highlight the links between the image discussed and the “canonical” features of the type. The uncertain pieces are highlighted by a question mark near the serial number.

1. (?) Votive statue PERSONAL GENIUS

APULUM (Alba-Iulia)

Marble. 91 x 45 x 24 cm. (Fig. 1)
Muzeul Național al Unirii (History Museum),
Alba-Iulia.

Literature: A. Diaconescu, *Statuaria majoră în Dacia romană* [The Major Statuary in Roman Dacia] (abridged *StatMajDac*), II (2005), p. 89-90, no. 49; Pl. XXXIII, 1.

COMMENT

The statue comes from Apulum, but the circumstances of its discovery are unknown. The togate standing male, wearing *calcei senatorii*, used to hold in his left hand, bended at the elbow at a ninety degree angle, an attribute which is today lost. A. Diaconescu does not identify satisfactory analogies among other statues of *togati* found in Dacia—the missing attribute, probably a *cornucopia*, makes it an unique item from this point of view and it seems to rather point to the statue of a Genius. The researcher also notes: “The only element that does **not** fit the image of a Genius is visible in the right hand, which, instead of making a libation with a *patera*, catches a fold of the toga, in a way that is similar to the funerary statues of *togati*” (p. 90, transl. from Romanian). In fact, it is this particular gesture that gives us an important clue on the nature of this possible Genius. We can establish an analogy with a votive bronze statuette found in Rome, which shows, as the inscription on its base clarifies, the togate Genius of L. Iulius Magnus, deceased, with his head uncovered, having a *rotulus* as an attribute in his left hand, and holding with the right a fold of his toga, in the same manner as the Apulum togate.⁴ Moreover, among the attributes of the funerary Genii that were discussed by H. Kunckel (pp. 44–45), there can be found, besides *cornucopia*, also *rotulus*, *acerra* and the *patera-ara* ensemble; at least 4 sculptures of Genii of the deceased are holding a fold of their togas with their right hands. To conclude, the togate from Apulum would have been

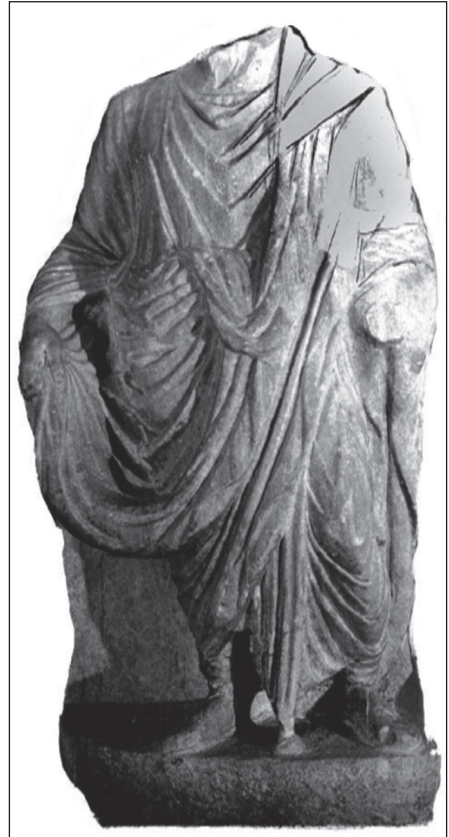


Fig. 1. Photo: A. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac*, II, Pl. XXXIII, 1

a *G. funeraris* of a high-ranking man. However, since no edifying attribute has been preserved, these identifications remain uncertain.

Dating: 2nd c. AD (latter half), Antonine age (for arguments, see A. Diaconescu, p. 90).

Type: A.II – Funerary Genius (?), derived from the *G. familiaris* type.

2. Cult statue GENIUS AUGUSTI

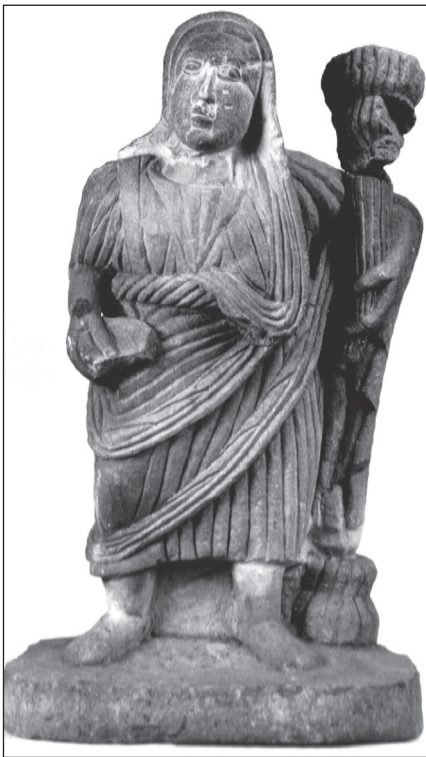


Fig. 2. Photo: Al. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac*, II, Pl. LXI b, 2

SAMUM (Cășeiu, dep. of Cluj)

Limestone. 82 (H. of the statue) x 38 cm (L. of the support) (Fig. 2).

Muzeul Municipal, Dej (Museum of Dej).
Inv. 379.

Literature:

A. Isac, in *Ephemeris Napocensis* III (1993), p. 197–202.

A. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac* II (2005), p. 178–179, no. 50; Pl. LXIb, 2.

COMMENT

The monument, certainly a product of local craftsmanship, is a result of the interwar archaeological excavations performed at Cășeiu, in the Roman military camp. A. Isac discusses in her article (which is the first complete publication of the piece) the earlier references to this statue and correctly identifies the deity as a *Genius Augusti*.

The image of the togate Genius, *capite velato*, performing a libation with a *patera*, is very rarely attested in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, as opposed to the 1st. In fact, after the Claudian era, *G. Augusti*, *G. Populi Romani* or

the Genii of the institutions / corporations had been assigned to cult images built upon the Greek model of the deified Demos.⁵ The imperial Genius *capite velato*, derived from the domestic religious imaginary of *G. familiaris*, had already been replaced in Nero's times with the image of a young god with an unveiled bust (similar to the Greek Demos), generalized beginning with the reign of Domitian.⁶ The most pertinent analogies for the Genius from Samum are therefore easily identifiable

within the major statuary of the 1st c. AD, in which *G. Augusti* frequently appears robed in a toga.⁷

Dating: more likely 3rd c. AD, which makes it one of the latest pieces of the type

Type: A. III – **Genius Augusti**, the oldest subtype.

3. Votive statuette GENIUS POPULI ROMANI

ULPIA TRAIANA SARMIZEGETUSA (Sarmizegetusa, dep. of Hunedoara)

Bronze. 8 cm (H) (Fig. 3).

Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane (History Museum), Deva. Inv. 15821.

Literature:

D. Alicu, C. Pop, V. Wollmann, *Figured Monuments from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa* (BAR International Series, 1979), p. 123, no. 278; Pl. CXXIII.

L. Țeposu-Marinescu, *Anthropomorphic Bronze Statuettes from Dacia* (2001), no. 76.

COMMENT

The Genius is portrayed as a beardless young man, with curly hair left flowing down on the shoulders. He is naked from the waist up and the lower part of the body is robed, most likely, in a Greek *palla*, wrapped around the waistline, then passed over the left arm and shoulder in a voluminous fold. The weight of the body rests on the left leg, the right being slightly bent at the knee. He is wearing boots that roll around the medial portion of the shank. The attributes of the Genius are a massive *cornucopia*, held by the left arm, and probably a *patera* (the right hand is missing).

D. Alicu and his collaborators agreed with the opinion formulated in the first publication of the statuette (*Apulum* XVI/1978, p. 187), that the young, divine character is a *Lar familiaris*, but the authors offer no analogies to support this identification. L. Țeposu-Marinescu justly identifies the figure as being a *Genius Populi Romani* (GPR).



Fig. 3. Photo: L. Țeposu-Marinescu, *Anthropomorphic Bronze Statuettes from Dacia*, no. 76

The little public Genius discovered in the first capital of Roman Dacia was executed after an early period prototype (1st c. AD), but it is not clear whether it was an import or a local product. In Rome, the image of GPR was already—since the latter half of the 1st c.—depicted in imposing representations, Romanized versions of the Greek Demos, on public edifices (only seldom in smaller sized shapes, such as statuettes). An example of the canonical image of GPR is a Flavian relief excavated under the Pallazzo della Cancelleria, in Rome, dedicated on the occasion of a *profectio Domitiani*.⁸ The statuette from Sarmizegetusa shows the same features and attributes as the Genius represented on the relief from the capital of the Empire – on a much smaller scale though, according to the function of the object.

Dating: early 2nd c. AD (or even earlier, if it is an import)

Type: B.I – Genius Populi Romani

4. (?) Votive relief GENIUS ORDINIS MUNICIPII

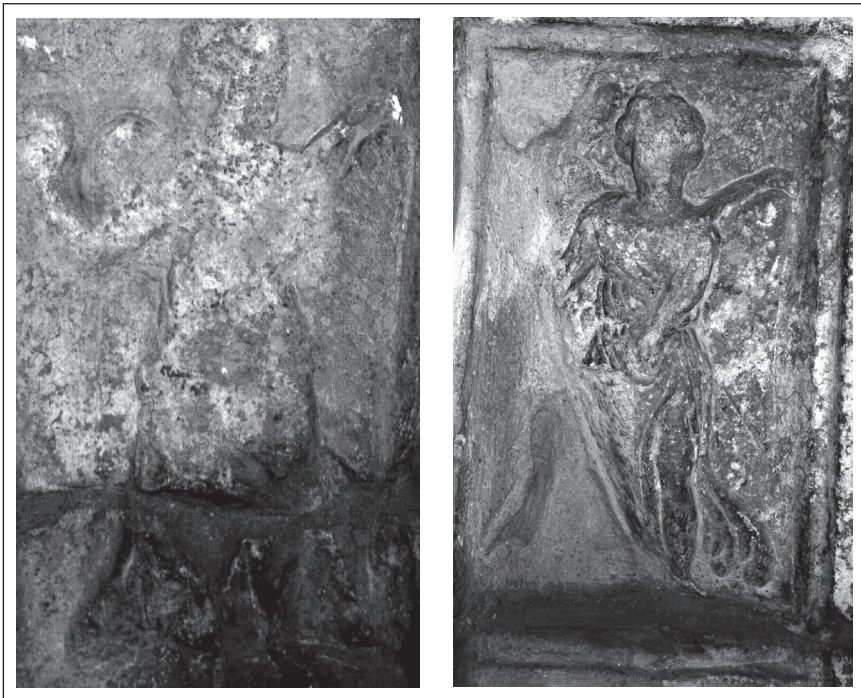


Fig. 4.

a. Left side panel;

b. Right side panel

(Photos: Oana Neagoe, Al. Dudău)

DROBETA (Drobeta Turnu-Severin)

Relief on a limestone altar. 92 × 45 × 42 cm (the *ara*). 44–45 cm (H. of the deities) (Fig. 4).

Muzeul Regiunii Porților de Fier (Museum of Drobeta Turnu-Severin). Inv. L, II. 9.

Literature:

A. Bărcăcilă, *Une ville daco-romaine: Drubeta* (1934), p. 33; *Arhivele Olteniei* 13/1934, p. 81–84.

IDR II, 21.a, p. 33 (for the inscription).

COMMENT

The monument was discovered broken into several pieces in the military camp of Drobeta (1928). The altar had been dedicated *Gen(io) ord(inis) mun(icipii) H(adriani) [Dr(obetensie/-ium/-ae)]*, by a “mayor” of the municipium (*quattuorvir*) and also *pontifex*.⁹ Two winged figures have been sculpted onto the sides; they were considered by A. Bărcăcilă (p. 81) to represent the feminine Genius of Drobeta. However, both winged characters should be identified with a *Victoria alata*,¹⁰ the more so since wings are **not** a canonical element in the iconography of Roman Genii.

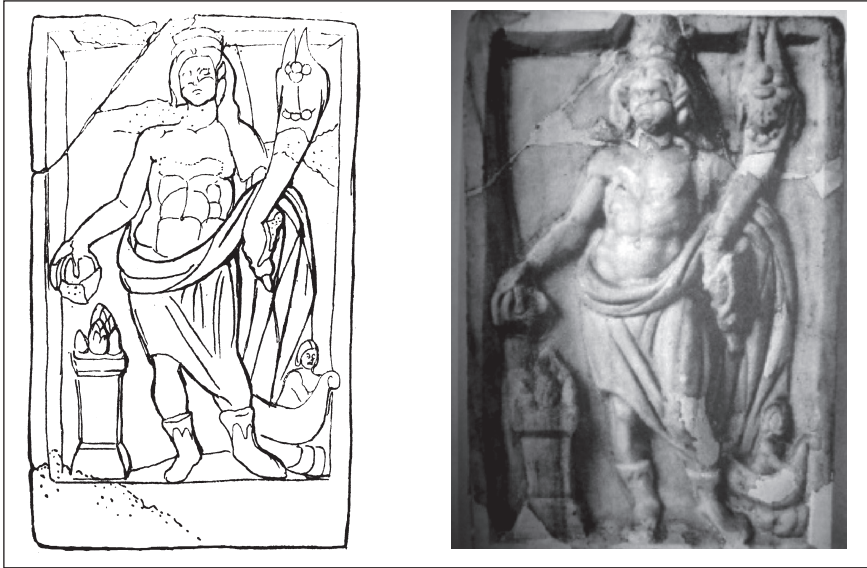
Still, as it is improbable that none of the sculpted deities would be the one to which the shrine was consecrated, we might consider it possible that one of them represent(s) the *G. ordinis municipii*, perhaps the one on the right side panel (Fig. 4.b), dressed in a *chiton*, holding in her left hand a thin *scaeptrum* and a *patera* or a crown. In the absence of more revealing details and of the final portion of the right arm, the divine figure most likely represents a Victoria, but one may consider this goddess bearing a scepter the tutelary Genius of Drobeta.¹¹

The manner of execution of the reliefs evidently points to local craftsmanship, with figurative elements distant from those of classical realism, negligently executed (e.g. the final ribs of the wings on their inferior section, the scepter, the crown in the hand of Victoria were rather scribbled) and is, overall, of poor quality.

The initial placement of the altar must have been the town’s *forum*, from where it was moved during the 4th c. AD to the fort near the Danube by a tribune named Lupus, who had tipped the monument over to make it into an *ara Iovis Co(ho)rtalis*, as highlighted by the text hastily incised on the only panel left free. The reuse of the altar clearly did not take into account the “official” religious character of the initial dedication. The motivation behind the gesture of the tribune remains unclear. We can, however, see his indifference (or even “impiety”) towards the *Genius ordinis* as proof of the dependence of the cult of the “institutional” Genii on the existence or proper functioning of that institution (in this case *ordo decurionum* was non-existent at the time when the tribune moved the shrine).

Dating: **Hadrian’s age**—possibly on the occasion of the raising of Drobeta to municipal status (121 AD).

5. Votive relief GENIUS NAUTARUM



a. Drawing by E. Zefleanu (*loc. cit.*)

Fig. 5.

b. Photo: C. Mihăilă (*loc. cit.*)

APULUM (Alba-Iulia)

Marble. 46 x 29 x 4,5 cm. (Fig. 5).

Muzeul Național al Unirii (History Museum), Alba-Iulia. Inv. 646.

Literature:

E. Zefleanu, in *Apulum III* (1947–1949), p. 173–175, no. 4; Fig.2.

C. Mihăilă, *Relieful votiv în provincia Dacia. Cultele greco-romane* (Diss. Cluj-Napoca, 2008), p. 56–57, no. 66.

COMMENT

The bas-relief was accidentally discovered during the diggings done at the foundations of the house owned by a private person from Alba-Iulia (1945), in an area that used to belong to the civil territory of the Colonia Apulensis. No further details regarding the archaeological context of the discovery are known.

E. Zefleanu (pp. 173–174) inventories all the elements that compose the image of this deity. The bas-relief, recently restored, highlights the polished features of the Genius, a young male with an unveiled torso, wearing a mantle wrapped around his waist and elegantly held over the left arm, which is flexed at the elbow in order to sustain both the weight of the fold and the *cornucopia*. The Genius, wearing simple

boots ending at the mid section of his shanks, appears in a position of realistic counter post, faithfully recreated by the sculptor. The rich hair is left falling over the shoulders. On his head he is wearing a tall *kalathos*, and with his right arm, brought slightly to the forefront, he is performing a libation above a lit altar. Near the left leg of the Genius we can see, in spite of the miniature size, a human character—a child, believes C. Mihăilă (p. 57), but this is improbable—with his head uncovered, sitting in a boat, in fact steering it.

The meaning of the sculptural ensemble associated to the Genius is interpreted by E. Zefleanu (p. 174) as relevant to the identification of the deity as a *Genius nautarum*, “protector” of the Apulenses that sailed on the Mureș river. It is indeed plausible that the sculptor wanted to highlight the domain of competence of the Genius by the symbolic representation of a typical member of the group that invoked his protection, a *nauta*. The sculpture has a single clear analogy, unnoticed till now, a fine marble statuette that portrays a Genius associated with a miniature human being sitting in a boat (*infra*, 6.), discovered some 66 miles upstream of Alba-Iulia, in the rural settlement of Cristești.

Dating: probably 2nd c. AD

Type: B.III – Genius of a civil corporation (*nautae*).

6. Votive statuette

GENIUS COLLEGII (NAUTARUM ?) / VICI

Cristești (dep. of Mureș)

Marble. 70 cm (H) × 27 cm (L. of the base) (*Fig. 6*).

Muzeul de Arheologie și Istorie (History Museum), Târgu-Mureș.

Literature:

A. Zrínyi, in *Marisia VII* (1977), p. 98; Plate L.

N. Man, *Așezarea romană de la Cristești* (*Diss. Cluj-Napoca*, 2002), p. 282, nr. 6; Pl. CLXIX/6.

COMMENT

The Roman Genius from Cristești is holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand and is dressed in a long cape wrapped around his left shoulder, leaving the bust naked and covering the lower half as low as the ankles. In the right hand, now lost, he was most likely holding a *patera*. The footwear consists of sandals, portrayed in a simple manner. The rich hair falls free in realistic curls over the shoulders. On the head the

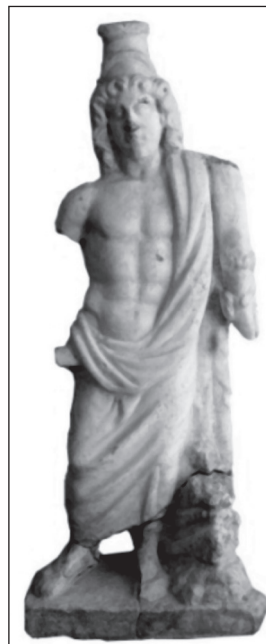


Fig. 6.

Photo: Coralia Crișan

deity wears a high *kalathos*, similar to the one worn by the Genius from Apulum (*supra*, 5.)

As regards the iconographic type, A. Zrínyi (p. 98) identifies analogies to statues of Genii from Saalburg and Philippeville. From this point of view, if we examine the images of Genii preserved in the museum of Saalburg,¹² we find enough examples of Genii portrayed with similar features and attributes. But these Genii are all **military**. None of them has any associated scene representing a man in a boat, on the subtly outlined crest of a wave. Without mentioning this secondary, but essential, scene, A. Zrínyi identifies the sculpture with a Genius “of abundance”, but I am not aware of any other such Genii and, regardless of this aspect, it does not explain the meaning of the secondary character. N. Man (p. 282) includes in the description of the monument the miniature scene, in which she identifies a female character (improbable though) sitting in a boat, but does not explain the general meaning of the sculpture.

This marble from Cristești was imported from Asia Minor, as was proven in the petrographic study conducted by H. W. Müller and collaborators on 112 marble objects from Roman Dacia.¹³ Actually, the Oriental accents are visible in the shape of the *kalathos* and in portraying the facial features of the god.

As previously mentioned, the only satisfactory analogy is the Apulense relief that most likely represents a *Genius nautarum*, tutelary deity of those who carried out transport activities on the Mureș river, organized into a *collegium*, a civil association typical for the imperial era. While at Cristești there isn't any epigraphically attested *collegium nautarum* to speak of, the religious message that comes from the monument discussed here allows for the interpretation of the deity as a *G. (collegii) nautarum*. Moreover, the archaeological context of the discovery points to the headquarters of a college.¹⁴ We cannot however completely ignore the possibility of a *G. fluminis* (personification of the Mureș river), whose divine patronage may have been extended upon the entire *vicus* of Cristești.

Dating: First part of the 3rd c. AD

Type: B.III – Genius of a civil corpus, *nautae* (perhaps B.II or even C.).

7. Cult statue SOCIAL GENIUS (MILITARIS ?)

POTAISSA (Turda)

Limestone. H: 143 cm (46—the head; 97—the body) (*Fig. 7.*).

History Museum, Aiud. Inv. 7716 (head), 3376 (body).

Literature:

A. Diaconescu, *StatMagDac* II (2005), Cat. V. 42, p. 168-169; Pl. LXIb, 1.

I. Nemeti, S. Nemeti, in *Ephemeris Napocensis*, XIV-XV (2004-2005), p. 91-100.

COMMENT:

The original height of the statue was probably close to natural size (a portion of the neck was destroyed and the section under the ankles is missing for both legs), which makes it a cult statue. Unfortunately, no information is available on the archaeological context of the discovery.

The first complete publication of the piece pertains to A. Diaconescu, who recomposed the broken statue. Notable here are the main features of the composition, typical of a G. publicus: the character is young, beardless, showing an unveiled torso, wearing a mantle that is strapped to a fold over his left shoulder and then wrapped around his left forearm; the hair flows in dense volutes, skillfully detailed, over his shoulders; on his head he is wearing a (broken) sacral crown, either a *kalathos*, or, less likely, a *corona muralis*; in his left hand he is holding the horn of plenty, scarcely preserved today. S. Ferri, who at the time (1933) was unaware of the existence of the body, interpreted the head as belonging to a goddess (Cybele, supposes Lucia Țeposu-David),¹⁵ but noted the resemblance to the provincial portraits of Mithras. A. Diaconescu (p. 169) assumes that the model which served as inspiration for the local artist originates from Asia Minor or Greece, and the statue could portray any of the following Genii: *loci*, *canabiarum*, *castrorum*, *municipii*.

I. Nemeti and S. Nemeti adopted a different approach: after identifying an analogy with the figure of a Genius depicted on a Mithraic shrine from Poetovio, they



Fig. 7.

Photo: Al. Diaconescu, (*loc. cit.*)

attempted to trace a historic correlation between the two monuments: the model would have been transmitted via the movement of some legionnaire vexillations from Potaissa to Poetovio in the times of Gallienus, thus also contributing to the spread of Mithraism (p. 93–95). The authors consider the Genius of Potaissa to be a divine character typical of the Mithraic cult/cycle (p. 96). However, a functional difference is to be mentioned regarding the two representations. At Poetovio, the central deity of the shrine is, as mentioned in the inscription, *Deus Sol Invictus Mithras*, portrayed on the right side of the altar (see I. N. – S. N., p. 92). Therefore, the associated figure on the opposite side, a Genius, must have patronized another essential part of the lives of the worshipers: as they were soldiers (officers), one can think of a *G. militaris*, associated here to Mithras, as the main deity of the dedicators.

On the other hand, in the case of the Genius of Potaissa, we could see, eventually, a seed of religious syncretism between the figure of the Oriental god and Genius, a most popular tutelary deity with the military medium, epigraphically attested several times in Potaissa (2nd–3rd c. AD).¹⁶ However, in the absence of other contextual elements, it is difficult to establish the real significance of the Mithraic “touch.” The function of this Genius would have been primary related to the main social status of his worshippers (a military unit rather than a civilian settlement).

Dating: First part of the 3rd c. AD

Type: B.IV – Genius of a military unit¹⁷ (more likely than B.II.)

8. (?) Gem SOCIAL GENIUS

ROMULA (Reșca, dep. of Dolj)

Engraved onyx. 1,2 × 1 cm. (Fig. 8).

Disappeared in the illegal trade with antiques.

Literature: D. Tudor, “Pietre gravate descoperite la Romula”, in *Apulum* VI (1967), p. 219, no. 45; Fig. 5/5.

COMMENT:

The gem was seen amongst other engraved stones, at an antiques dealer, by a collector who copied it in wax, according to the information that D. Tudor had. The stone had been discovered in Romula, probably being a product of the

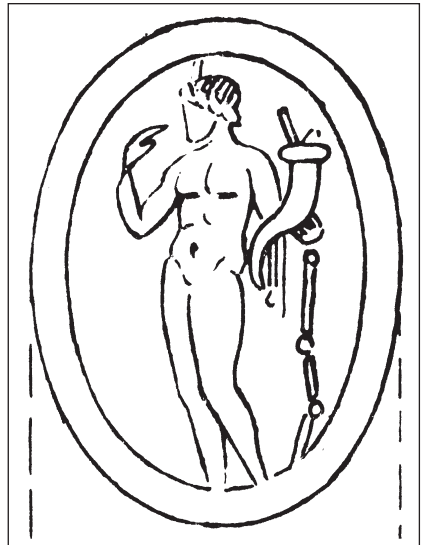


Fig. 8.
Drawing by D. Tudor (*loc. cit.*)

local craftsmen. The Genius is represented as a nude, beardless, standing young man, whose right hand is pointing to his mouth, while he is holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand; on his head, the deity is wearing a sacral *corona*, and not two “horns” (as stated in the only previous publication of the piece).

Two aspects are problematic. The first is what D. Tudor assumes to be a piece of cloth dropping from the Genius’ left elbow, hanging to the ground. The representation of that object is evidently a schematic one (the material and its size could not allow the engraver to portray details in a more realistic fashion), and its meaning remains obscure. The second element that is non-specific to the image of a Genius consists of the character’s symbolic gesture of raising his right hand to his mouth, instead of doing a libation with the *patera*. A plausible analogy for this gesture can be made with the image of Harpokrates from other gems¹⁸: he is asking for silence, in which case we could see a religious syncretism (but Harpokrates is a *puer* god, and his solitary representations, without the company of his mother Isis, are rare). If we decide, however, to ignore this gesture (which is not at all prudent), all the other elements lead to the image of a public, social Genius (perhaps a GPR).

Dating: undetermined (2nd or 3rd c. AD)



Notes

1. E.g. Hille Kunckel, “Der römische Genius,” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, XX. Heidelberg, 1974 (abr. H. Kunckel)—an extensive iconographic study, based on the material found in Italy and the western provinces; Ilaria Romeo, s.v. “Genius,” in *LIMC* VIII/1, p. 599–607 & VIII/2 (1999), p. 372–377 (abr. I. Romeo); Fulvio Canciani, s.v. “Populus. Populus Romanus,” in *LIMC* VII/1, p. 438–443 (1997). See also Joan Alcock, “The Concept of Genius in Roman Britain,” in M. Henig and A. King (eds.), *Pagan Gods and Shrines of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1986); Marion Mattern, “Zum Genienkult am obergermanischen Limes,” in *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani. Deutschland*, II/12 (Mainz, 2001).
2. “The Concept of Genius” (*cit. supra*, n. 1), p. 113.
3. Also, a secondary repertoire resulted from the examination of the documents: approx. 20 pieces whose exegesis proposed flawed or questionable identifications of Genii in the province of Dacia, but for the sake of concision these will be presented within the framework of a more extensive study, that will also include the bases of statu(ett)es that bear an inscription and are dedicated to Genii (almost a half of the 56 epigraphic testimonies of Genii in Roman Dacia).
4. H. Kunckel, p. 44; F V 15 = Taf. 61,4.
5. Cf. the statuette of Ulpia Traiana (Corpus, no. 3.), as well as the monumental relief from Rome cited below (n. 8).
6. See H. Kunckel, p. 26–28 and 46–48; A. Diaconescu, loc. cit..

7. Actually, the “perfect” analogy (as defined by A. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac* II, p. 179) is represented by a famous statue of G. Augusti, now in the *Rotonda* of the Vatican (see H. Kunckel, p. 78: A 1 = Taf. 8,1 and 9,1). Another relevant analogy would be a marble statue dating from the 2nd century AD, from Naples—I. Romeo, p. 603, no. 63.
8. H. Kunckel, p. 40; p. 79-80, P 9 = Taf. 20,1.
9. The inscription ends with 3 almost completely blurred lines (7–9), from which A. Bărcăcilă (p. 33) managed to only identify *QVOD*, which should be interpreted as a relative pronoun next to a hypothetical *FE[ci]* (the solution of *IDR* II, 21a, p. 33). C.C. Petolescu (in “Note epigrafice VI,” *SCIVA* 33/1, 1982, p. 12) goes as far as to read: *Quod [Cn(aeus) Aemilia?]/nus fe[ci de su]/o eod[em(que) dedic(avit)]*, but the reconstitution relies on very few certain letters.
10. The iconographical details brought up as arguments by A. Bărcăcilă for the identification of the divine figures as Genii are not consistent:
 - the supposed *patera* found in the hands of each of the deities: this cannot be the case of the deity that is holding the object at shoulder level (see *Fig. 4.a*), as *patera*, an instrument essential in the performing of (wine) libations, often present in the iconography of the Roman Genii, is never held at so high a level: it would defy the simple logic of the utility of this instrument, which used to be pointed downwards, towards an altar; certainly, the object seen in the right hand of the deity is a *corona laurea*, a common attribute of Victoria;
 - a snake resting on one wing of each deity: in fact both deities have a deteriorated or even destroyed wing, in contrast with the well preserved upper rib of the other, which can thus create the illusion of a snake (as it resulted from the research that I carried out in Drobeta together with museographer Marian Neagoe).
11. Examples of goddesses worshipped as municipal patrons (or of other settlements) have already been offered in the old study of J.-A. Hild, s.v. “Genius,” in *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, II/2 (Paris, 1896), p. 1493, col. 1. See other relevant cases (Caelestis, Venus, Minerva, Ceres), from the African provinces, in the book of A. Cadotte, *L’interpretatio Romana en Afrique du Nord sous le Haut-Empire* (Leiden, 2007).
12. H. Kunckel, C I 5–6, p. 101; C I 88–100, p. 109–110.
13. H. W. Müller, B. Schwaighofer, M. Benea, I. Piso, A. Diaconescu, “Marbles in the Roman Province of Dacia,” in M. Schwoerer (ed.), *Archéomatériaux – Marbres et autres roches* (Bordeaux, 1999), p. 131–140.
14. The statuette was found in a very large building (see A. Zrínyi, pp. 93-94, 98; plates LIV, XLIII), in a room whose shape (rectangular, provided with an apse), size and placing suggest a *schola / aedes collegii*—for analogies, cf. A. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac* I, p. 330, 332, 337–345 (especially 338-339: the *aedes fabrum* of Sarmizegetusa); E. Marcu, “Places of Worship in Forts,” in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, 41-42/I (2004-2005), p. 77-80.
15. *apud* A. Diaconescu, *StatMajDac* II, p. 168.
16. See M. Bărbulescu, in “*Signum originis*”. *Religie, artă și societate în Dacia romană* (București, 2009), p. 56–60; *CIL* III, 7672.
17. For analogies, e.g. I. Romeo, p. 602, no. 20, 22; H. Kunckel, C I 64 = Taf. 80.2.
18. L. Țeposu-David, “Colecția de geme a Muzeului Brukenthal din Sibiu,” in *Muzeul Brukenthal. Studii și comunicări*, 12 (1965), p. 97–98, no. 29–30 (2nd–3rd c. AD): Harpokrates appears nude, with a *cornucopia* held in the left hand and raising the other to his mouth, in the typical symbolic gesture of this deity.

Abstract

The Iconography of *Genius* in the Roman Province of Dacia. A Commented Corpus

This article refers to the concept of *genius* as designating a Roman deity, with canonical features, attributes and competence domains (i.e. religious functions). In the light of some major achievements regarding the images of Roman *Genii*, published in the last decades in the international literature, taking into account the dispersed and not always accurate information on the iconography of the *Genii* in Roman Dacia, it seemed appropriate to gather material relating to images of *Genii* from this province, to briefly comment on their features and significance and to provide a typological assignment.

From a list of approx. 30 deities that have received a *genius* “label” in the scholars’ works, this corpus presents the 8 (5 certain and 3 debatable) known figurative portrayals of *Genii* in Roman Dacia, mostly sculptures in marble or limestone, from the Roman settlements of *Apulum*, *Cristești* (Mureș Dep.), *Drobeta*, *Potaissa*, *Romula*, *Samum*, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, datable in the 2nd or 3rd century AD. The *Genii* depicted on these monuments are mostly provincial illustrations for the social *Genii*, pertaining to the *Genius publicus* iconographical type, but some have unusual details: e.g. the *Genii* from *Apulum* and *Cristești*, seen as divine guardians of a *nauta* shown in his boat; the Mithraic appearance of the *Genius* from *Potaissa*; the very late (3rd c. AD) cult image of a togate, *capite velato*, *Genius Augusti*.

Keywords

Roman religion, Roman Dacia, *Genius*, iconography, cult of the *Genii*.

