2. THE SPREAD OF THE IUPPITER DOLICHENUS CULT IN THE ARMY

The earliest known document of the Dolichenian religion outside Commagene is a military one: a building inscription of a temple to Iuppiter Dolichenus at Lambaesis in Africa, dedicated by the commander of the legion there in A.D. 125/126: 4

1 Pro s[alute] et incolumitate imp(eratoris) Cae[s(aris) Traia]ni Hadriani Augusti, Sex(tus) Iuli[us Maio]r, legatus ipsius pro praetore, templu[m I(ovi) o(ptimo) m(aximo) D]olicheno dedicavit.

It is a remarkable coincidence that the earliest reliably dated Mithraic monument belongs to the same decade and mentions the priesthood of a governor of Lower Moesia,6 for the two cults thus had very similar beginnings in the West,—if it is true that western Mithraism originated in Cilicia, i.e. in the country adjoining Commagene,6 and that it was accepted into the empire at the time when Pompey subdued the Cilician pirates in 67 B.C.7 Apparently both cults expanded into the empire when their homeland was annexed and both came out into the open—according to our present state of knowledge—during the third decade of the second century, both at first in high ranking military or gubernatorial circles. Not all of this is sheer coincidence, for the two monuments show, each in its way, that the 'new' oriental religions now enjoyed the active sup-

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4 CIL VIII, 2680 = 18221 = Dessau 4311a = M 286, see below, p. 66 f. For the date see Thomasson (1972) Numidia.

5 CIMRM 2206 (Histria): Τύχη ἀγαθή Ἡλεοὶ Μίθρας (i) ἀνεκτητοί (i) ἐπὶ Ιουλίου Σεουήρο[ι] φιλατικοῦ κτλ. For the correct reading and the date see A. Stein (1940) 66, who is right to point out that Iulius Severus was governor, not beneficiarius. The remarks of Schwertheim (1974) 269 ff. to the effect that Mithraism in Germany began already in the first century A.D. are not convincing: men of units stationed on the limes could easily come to Hedernheim, the principal settlement in the area and make dedications there, as Schönberger (1973) points out; while Schwertheim's number 91 needs not refer to cohors Ituræorum at all, perhaps the letters in question read tur(mae).

6 Thus Will (1955) 163 ff.

7 Plutarch, Pompey, 24.
port of the provincial governors and thus had found suitable conditions to expand and make converts in the army and the administration. Both used these conditions energetically, for other monuments follow closely thereafter.

The extent to which the cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus spread in the Roman army can be gauged from the dedications erected to the god by entire units. Such dedications are rather rare for oriental gods, except where they are the home gods (*dii patrii*) of the units, and they are entirely lacking for Mithras who was worshipped by select groups of initiates in secret rites underground. By contrast, the number of corporate dedications to Iuppiter Dolichenus is quite sizable.

*Detachment of the Misenum fleet at Ostia in A.D. 186:*

Right half of a stone plaque

2 [Adnuent]e imp(eratore) Caes(are) Com[modo Antonino] Pio Felice sacr(um) qu(od) [vov(erant) I(ovi) o(ptimo)] m(aximo) Dulic(eno) milit(es) cl(assis) [pr(aetoriae) Mis(enensis) cum es]sent Ostia sub[cura—]ti Iusti tr(ierarchi) VII id(us) [—Com]-modo Aug(usto) V co(n)s(ule) [sub sacerdote] Ter(entio?) Prisco.

*Cohors I Cretum in Upper Moesia:*

Bronze tablet (*tabula ansata*) of unknown date from Egeta.

3 *I*(ovi) *o(ptimo) m(aximo) *Dolicheni (sic) c(o)hor(s) I Cretu(m).

*Cohors II Raetorum in Upper Germany:*

Altar from castellum Saalburg

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8 See below, note 110.

9 To the following list one might add a *collegius (sic!) veteranorum* and the 2 *signiferi* of *legio III Augusta 'cum adiutoribus suis'* who made dedications to Iuppiter Dolichenus, cf. M. 249 and M. 289, perhaps also RIB 1896 of *cohors I Asia Dacorum*, but there the reference to Iuppiter Dolichenus is not above suspicion. For officers making dedications to the god see below, pp. 66 ff.

10 CIL XIV, 110 = M 264.

11 AE 1968, 453.

12 CIL XIII, 7457 a & b = M 327 = Schwertheim (1974), 52 c.