II. OFFICIAL POLICY TOWARDS THE CULT OF IUPPITER DOLICHENUS

Augustus despised, and encouraged others in official positions to despise such oriental religions as had no traditional standing in Rome, be it the Egyptian cult of the Apis bull or the Jewish cult at Jerusalem. The religious calendar for the Roman army shows that this attitude became policy still recognizable in the list of festivals of A.D. 223-227 found in the archives of cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura-Europos. That list, the so-called Feriale Duranum, prescribes numerous festivals to be observed in honor of the Roman state gods, including recently deified emperors: clearly, it was kept up to date. Yet no festival is found on that list in honor of any oriental god, notwithstanding the fact that the oriental religions at that time had reached a high point in their popularity among soldiers and officers of the Roman army.

Is one to conclude that Augustus' attitude still prevailed as official policy in the second quarter of the third century? Certainly not. To be sure, it follows from the Feriale Duranum that no oriental god, by that time, had yet joined the traditional state gods. Yet, numerous other documents evince how much original despise had turned into publicly acknowledged respect for these religions. Indeed, seeking to enlist the ever growing religious fervour as a support for the state, Aurelianus before long would give the Syrian Invincible Sun a prominent position among the state gods, while Constantine would do even more for the exclusive Galilean Christ. The cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus is lost from sight before this

204 Suetonius, Aug. 93: Peregrinatarum caerimoniorum sicut veteres ac praeceptas reverentissime coluit, ita ceteras contemptui habuit. - - non modo in peragranda Aegypto paulo deflectere ad visendum Apin supersedit, sed et Gaium nepotem, quod Iudaem praetervehens apud Hierosolyma non supplicasset, conlaudavit. For the time of Tiberius see Tacitus, Ann. 2, 85: Actum et de sacris Aegyptiis Iudaicisque pellendis. For Claudius ibid., 11, 15: quod nunc segnius fieri publica circa bonas artes socordia, et quia externae superstitiones valescant.

205 Fink (1971) 422 ff. with literature, of which see in particular Fink-Hoey-Snyder (1940), Nock (1972), and Gilliam (1954).
happened, having reached the peak of its popularity during the Severan age, but it had certainly shared in the official toleration and respect for the oriental religions so noticeably on the increase during the second and third centuries A.D. Just how much this cult was officially tolerated or even encouraged in the army is of great interest, for it touches upon the intensity with which its teachings and rituals gripped the minds of the soldiers, and it reveals an important aspect of the spiritual policy with which the emperors strove to keep the empire together.

All claims to the effect that the emperors, and in particular the Syrian-African house of the Severi, publicly propagated the Dolichenian cult can easily be discarded. The cult spread vigorously in the army long before the ascension of Septimius Severus.206 The discussion of the Kömlöd tablet in the previous chapter showed there is no substance to the statement that Iuppiter Dolichenus had come to occupy the sanctuary of the standards, replacing Iuppiter Capitolinus as the highest god of the army. Thus, the widely accepted opinion, derived from the interpretation of that tablet, that Iuppiter Dolichenus was somehow made the tutelary divinity of the army, is wrong. Secondly, an inscription from Lower Pannonia, recording that the emperors had a temple of D[iximo] restored, needs in no way refer to Iuppiter Dolichenus: very likely a temple to Divus Marcus was meant.207 Finally, the so-called statues of Severus Alexander as Iuppiter Dolichenus and Julia Mammaea as Iuno Dolichenae from Carnuntum and Chesters in no way reveal such an identity.208

206 See above, p. 10.
207 CIL III, 3342 = Merlat (1951) 69, see Mócsy (1962) 738 f.; the inscription CIL III, 3343 from Sár pensele (Gorsium?) (M 70) I(ovi) o(ptimo) [m(aximo)] Dolcheno pro sal(ute) dd(ominorum) nn(ostrorum) Augg(ustorum) tot(ius) pr(ovinciae) sacerdotes[s] is not a late Roman solidarization against Christianity, as demonstrated by Fitz (1959) 241 f., but it is not necessarily connected with the visit of Septimius Severus in Pannonia either, cf. A. Birley (1971) 213 f. and thus cannot be taken as evidence of any support by Septimius Severus for the cult of Iuppiter Dolichenus, contra: Fitz (1959) followed by Mócsy (1962) 738, Kádár (1962) 38.
208 Against the erroneous views of Domaszewski (1895) 145 and lately again of Harris (1965) 64 see Hoey (1939) 462 and e.g. Swoboda (1964) 195 with plate 52.