

Latin theonyms and epithets in the light of epigraphic evidence: The case and declension system

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ABSTRACT

The present paper intends to provide a linguistic analysis of votive texts, with particular regard to the case and declension systems as well as their Latin usage and variants. The aim of the linguistic analysis is to identify variations occurring in the context of votive texts. The epigraphic corpus shows various Vulgar Latin features in theonyms and epithets. The names of the deities are cultural characteristics and are influenced by various factors. The inevitable phenomenon of Roman religiosity manifested itself in religious texts, especially where polytheistic religions were particularly prone to borrowing and assimilation. In the investigation, some questions which the study will attempt to answer: do the case and declension confusions of theonyms and epithets follow the characteristics of the given region? The most common feature of religious inscriptions is that the declension of an epithet follows the declension of the name of the deity and *vice versa*. Another characteristic is the confusion in the case system. Some of these are influenced by facts other than adjective and noun agreement. In some cases, the meaning of the name influences it, in other cases there are cultural reasons for the declension confusion, especially if the inscriptions come from Celtic, Germanic, Greek, or other language areas.

KEYWORDS

Vulgar Latin, Latin linguistics, case syncretism, dialectology

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims to examine the case- and declension confusions of theonyms and common epithets by using the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age (LLDB). The aim of the linguistic analysis is to identify variations occurring in the context of votive texts compared to the given province data. Gods were frequently referred to in inscriptions, usually in connection with their shrines, temples or property, or most obviously in dedications. In these cases, the gods were addressed directly, so precise and respectful wording – as in the *legis actiones* – was essential to identify the addressee accurately.¹ Worshippers sometimes addressed and mentioned gods in inscriptions differently from how the same gods were invoked in their original territory of worship. In some inscriptions, faults occur with the vowels in the first part of the names, mostly in the case of deity names which had non-Roman origin.² According to Adams, the provincial population tended to preserve its original language mostly in the religious sphere.³ Syntactic peculiarities are also displayed in divine names.⁴ The phenomenon is complex and probably has no single explanation. Syntactic mistakes in inscriptions can be explained by several reasons, the most common being contamination between different formulas.⁵

The analysis is based on the Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of the Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age (LLDB) operating in Budapest,⁶ which contains more than 135,000 data sheets on the regional changes and differentiation of the Latin language of the Imperial Age. This study is based on the relative proportion of error types and is based on the LLDB database. Based on the data forms recorded in the LLDB database,⁷ a corpus of fifty-eight (58) declension confusions and one hundred and seventy-four (174) case confusions can be distinguished in divine names and epithets. In the following chapter, every type of case confusion will be considered, regardless of frequency.

Analysing these inscriptions presented its own challenges. On the one hand, specific confusions are not to be compared with their analogues all over the empire, since some gods were not worshipped at the imperial level, but were local deities in specific areas, therefore the distribution of deities throughout the empire is not uniform. On the other hand, due to the specificity of the examined corpus, it is not suitable for a chronological comparison, since all these inscriptions date from the first three centuries of the imperial age, and most of them can be dated to the second-third centuries AD based on changes in epigraphic habits.⁸ For these

¹WISSOWA (1902) 380–382.

²VÁGÁSI (2022).

³ADAMS (2003) 291.

⁴GAENG (1977).

⁵SZABÓ (2016).

⁶The aim of the project entitled “Computerized Historical Linguistic Database of Latin Inscriptions of the Imperial Age” (LLDB, <http://lldb.elte.hu>) is to develop and digitally publish a fundamental computerized historical linguistic database that incorporates and manages the Vulgar Latin material of the Latin inscriptions from the European provinces of the Roman Empire.

⁷The LLDB data forms referred to in this survey represent the status of the LLDB Database (<http://lldb.elte.hu>) on 12/10/2023.

⁸MACMULLEN (1982), BELTRÁN LLORIS (2015).



reasons, relevant examples of each case are discussed separately to demonstrate whether these temporal and spatial units show convincing differences in the distribution of the linguistic phenomena under investigation.

Divine names and epithets employed to characterize the powers and functions of gods play a fundamental role in the history of religions.⁹ Some are applied to a group of gods, such as *Bonus/Bona*¹⁰ or *Magnus/Magna*, others are applied mostly to specific gods, according to their appearance, attributes, origin, or favourite places.¹¹ Among the general epithets, some are rarely present in literary texts, but very frequently in inscriptions, especially in votive dedications.¹² The confusion of divine names in votive texts appears to be due to the specific nature of the names, especially when used for deities or quasi-deities.

2. DECLENSION CONFUSION

Among the fifty-eight (58) items, most confusions are between the second and the third declension (50%), where in more than twice of the third declension replacing the second and the cases the second declension replacing the third (34%,¹³ compared to only 16%).¹⁴ The first declension instead of the third is also a frequent occurrence (21%), and the second declension instead of the fourth (16%).¹⁵ God names are usually in the first three declensions since they are “proper names”, such as personal names,¹⁶ while epithets, determinative qualifiers are also usually in the first three declensions since they are adjectives.

⁹Alvar (1985) 236; KAJAVA (2022).

¹⁰KAJAVA (2022) 57.

¹¹KAIZER (2022).

¹²KAJAVA (2022) 97.

¹³LLDB-140729 (CIL VIII 8247; Numidia, Suburburum); LLDB-134713 (CIL VIII 2608; Numidia, Lambaesis); LLDB-13770 (AE 2001, 1636; Pannonia Superior, Királyszentistván); LLDB-6060 (AE 1971, 323; Pannonia Superior, Cirpi); LLDB-22807 (CIL III 3504; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-19376 (CIL III 3499; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-19327 (AE 1965, 122; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-14773 (TitAq-1, 49; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-9985 (AE 1973, 434; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-143864 (AE 2012, 1155; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum); LLDB-27807 (CIL III 10035; Dalmatia, Raetinium); LLDB-113689 (CIL IV 8100; Latium et Campania, Pompei); LLDB-7528 (AE 1908, 47; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa); LLDB-9521 (AE 2003, 1482; Dacia, Alburnus Maior); LLDB-74933 (CIL XII 1288; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio); LLDB-74932 (CIL XII 1287; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio); LLDB-143865 (CIL XII 1067; Gallia Narbonensis, Apta); LLDB-102863 (AE 1900, 202; Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus); LLDB-103102 (AE 1980, 644; Lugudunensis, Haedui); LLDB-4819 (IMS-4, 106; Moesia Superior, Horreum Margi).

¹⁴LLDB-134715 (CIL VIII 27436; Africa Proconsularis, Mustis); LLDB-142565 (AE 1901, 194; Numidia, Thamugadi); LLDB-134712 (CIL VIII 2608; Numidia, Lambaesis); LLDB-5597 (CIL III 3305; Pannonia Inferior, Alta Ripa); LLDB-14882 (CIL III 3475; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-26637 (CIL XIII 1728; Lugudunensis, Lugdunum); LLDB-2630 (CIL XIII 111; Aquitania, Lugudunum Convenarum); LLDB-9516 (AE 1990, 845; Dacia, Alburnus Maior); LLDB-145454 (CIL VI 30949; Rome).

¹⁵LLDB-111748 (AE 2017, 1032; Germania Inferior, Forum Hadriani); LLDB-117217 (AE 1998, 1051; Pannonia Inferior, Sirmium); LLDB-4717 (CIL III 8244; Moesia Superior, Naissus); LLDB-143781 (AE 2018, 1369; Moesia Superior, Ratiaria); LLDB-143780 (CIL VII 97; Britannia, Isca); LLDB-143783 (CIL V 3218; Venetia et Histria, Verona); LLDB-32410 (CIL III 4444; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum); LLDB-143860 (AE 2018, 1339; Dacia, Apulum); LLDB-32411 (CIL III 10963; Pannonia Superior, Tomordpuszta, near Brigetio).

¹⁶PEELS-MATTHEY (2021) 36.



The distribution pattern of the diagram in Fig. 1 shows that a total of 17%, ten (10) data forms have the name of the god in the second declension instead of the fourth declension,¹⁷ while only 2%, so only one (1) data form where the name of the god is in the fourth declension instead of the second declension.¹⁸ These instances all represent gods embodying abstract concepts. *Bonus Eventus* is the personified god of the good results in agricultural labour, as mentioned by Varro.¹⁹ Inscriptional evidence of the worship of this god is found in several provinces all over the empire.²⁰ Since the term, in this case *eventus*, is of the fourth declension, the name of the god is also of the fourth declension, even if this declension does not usually include a “proper name”.

In the Danubian provinces, several events of the life of Mithras were quasi-personified. As a result, the unique, dogmatic system of the cult of Mithras worshipped these abstractions as quasi-deities. One such element is *Transitus*. The shrines of Mithras around Poetovio in Pannonia Superior had altars and statues of the *Transitus dei*, i.e., the “transition of the god”, when Mithras “crosses” the border between mortality and immortality. The reliefs and statues known from the Danubian provinces depict this act of Mithras carrying a bull on his shoulders.²¹

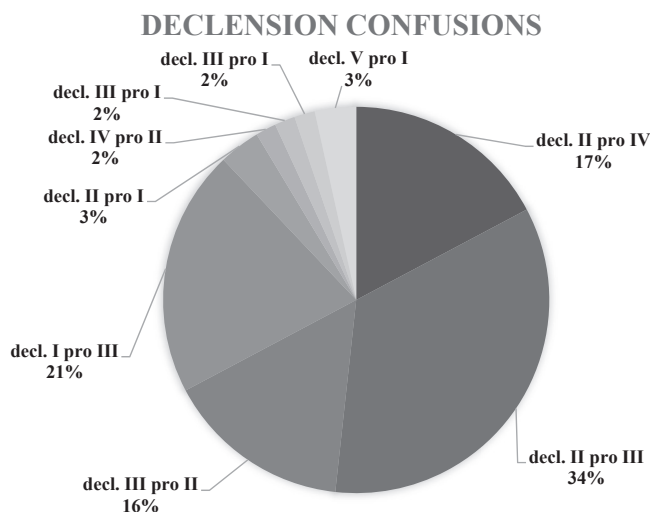


Fig. 1. Declension confusions in divine names 100% = 58 data forms

¹⁷LLDB-111748 (AE 2017, 1032; Germania Inferior, Forum Hadriani), LLDB-117217 (AE 1998, 1051; Pannonia Inferior, Sirmium), LLDB-4717 (CIL III 8244; Moesia Superior, Naissus), LLDB-143781 (AE 2018, 1369; Moesia Superior, Ratiaria), LLDB-143780 (CIL VII 97; Britannia, Isca), LLDB-143783 (CIL V 3218; Venetia et Histria, Verona), LLDB-32410 (CIL III 4444; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum), LLDB-143860 (AE 2018, 1339; Dacia, Apulum), LLDB-32411 (CIL III 10963; Pannonia Superior, Tomordpuszta).

¹⁸LLDB-143623 (RIU-2, 429; Pannonia Superior, Brigetio).

¹⁹Varro *De re rustica* 1. 1. 6.

²⁰One from Germania Inferior, one from Britannia, one from Venetia et Histria, one from Pannonia Inferior and two from Moesia Superior.

²¹Tóth (1977). Lupa 7272 (Germania Superior, Stockstadt), 9325 (Pannonia Superior, Poetovio), 24769 (Germania Superior, Dieburg), 15348 (Dacia, Napoca).



The abstraction of *Transitus* also appears in scenes in complex reliefs and wall paintings.²² The corpus of this abstraction contains a total of eight inscriptions from the regions of Pannonia, Dacia, and Dalmatia,²³ and three of these inscriptions display the form *Transito*. An altar dedicated to *Transito* by *Caius Cassius Apronianus* from Carnuntum (CIL III 4444), another from Apulum in Dacia, dedicated to *Transito* (AE 2018, 1339) and a *Trasito* (CIL III 10963) from Tomordpuszta near Brigetio in Pannonia Superior.

Sedatus has autochthonous origins and is associated with the Celtic tribes of *Breuci* and *Latobici* in southern Pannonia and Noricum.²⁴ His name is mentioned once in the fourth declension (RIU-2, 429; Pannonia Superior, Brigetio), although the context is somewhat problematic. I suggest the following reading: *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Silvan(o) / pro sal(ute) / et in(columitate) A(u)=I>gusti / De(or)um/ Sedatui*. This *Sedatui* dative form may have been influenced by the abstract concept of *sedatus*, which is in the fourth declension and means ‘state of peace’. However, the analogies clearly show that the *Sedato* form was the normative one, with all known inscriptions connected to this god mentioning the name in the second declension.²⁵

In the case of these three gods, the names of the gods, which made up of abstract concepts, posed a problem for their worshippers. The example of *Sedatus* also shows that in the case of *Bonus Eventus* and *Transitus*, the possibility that these names are heteroclitic is not entirely excluded, so perhaps the second declension form was equally normative.

The highest number of case confusions is related to the second and third declensions (20 data forms, 34%), where the names were in the second declension instead of the third. This especially concerns male gods with epithets. Confusion is increased by how second and third declension names and epithets can have the same *-i* suffix, although in different cases.²⁶ There are a few examples of the names of *Iuppiter*, *Dis Pater*, *Apollo*, *Numen*, and *Adonis*²⁷ without epithets being declined according to the second declension. Several typical problems can be identified in this group. For one, *Iuppiter Depulsor* was sometimes declined in the second declension as *Iovi Depulsorio*. This deity was attested on almost fifty altars in the Roman Empire, and his dedications originated from the Norico-Pannonian region, but not exclusively. Epigraphic monuments include three etymological forms of the epithet: *Depulsor* (‘one who removes’), *Depulsorius* and *Repulsor*.²⁸

²²NAGY (2012) 54, Appendix 2.

²³AE 2018, 1339 (Dacia, Apulum), CIL III 14219,8 (Dalmatia, Municipium Malvesatium), RIU-6, 1488 (Pannonia Inferior, Sárkeszi), CIL III 14354,27, CIL III 14354,28 (Pannonia Superior, Poetovio), AE 2011, 966 (Pannonia Superior, Savaria), CIL III 10963 (Pannonia Superior, Tomordpuszta), CIL III 4444 (Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum).

²⁴KERÉNYI (1937–1938), KARKOVIĆ TAKALIĆ (2021).

²⁵*Sedato* PWRE IIA 1010–1012; ILJug-2, 776, 777 (Dalmatia, Stari Majdan), AE 2000, 1087 (Germania Superior, Lopodunum); CIL III 8086 (Moesia Superior, Ratiaria); ILJug-1, 387 (Noricum, Celeia); CIL III 3922 (Pannonia Superior, Neviodunum); CIL III 10335 (Pannonia Superior, Brigetio); CIL III 5918 (Raetia, Vetoniana); AE 2012, 578 (Venetia et Histria, Arusnates).

²⁶FEHÉR (2007) 215. As Fehér mentions, this is primarily an editing error, which also occurs with personal names.

²⁷[IOV]O pro Iovi – LLDB-140729 (CIL VIII 8247; Numidia, Suburum); DITO PATRI pro Diti Patri – LLDB-14773 (TitAq-1, 49; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-7528 (AE 1908, 47; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa); NVMINO pro Numini – LLDB-113689 (CIL IV 8100; Latium et Campania, Pompei); ADONIO pro Adonidi / Adoni – LLDB-9985 (AE 1973, 434; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); APOLLINO pro Apollini – LLDB-103102 (AE 1980, 644; Lugudunensis, Haedui), LLDB-4819 (IMS-4, 106; Moesia Superior, Horreum Margi).

²⁸HAINZMANN (2004), ŠAŠEL KOS (1995=1999).



However, the problem is that these epithets are not mentioned in literary sources, so no definite classical form exists on which to base the normative version. *Depulsorius* is a derivate of *Depulsor*, and all our examples come from Gallia Narbonensis.²⁹ These three different epithets occur in different Roman provinces which share a Celtic indigenous background, the effect of a substrate is not to be excluded, so the relevance of these data must be taken with a pinch of salt. As a result, these items are marked as possibly correct in the Database.

Declension confusions are often caused by mistaken agreement, where the epithet is declined in the same declension of the name of the deity, regardless of the original declension. Occasionally, a third declension epithet may influence a second declension deity name causing the name to be declined in the second declension, e.g. *Iani Patri pro Iano Patri*;³⁰ or conversely, when the god's name is in third declension, its epithet automatically used as the third declension.³¹ The other, larger group of this declension confusion is found in the epithet *Silvestris*,³² which started to be declined as a result of the influence of second declension nouns.³³ The *Silvestris* epithet refers to rural life and have geographical significance. In the Danubian region, *Silvanus* has the function of a forest god under the epithet *silvestris*.³⁴ Fehér believes that the determinative qualifier *silvester* has been transferred to the second declension on the basis of epigraphic data, although these data come from Pannonia.³⁵

A special case of the confusion between the second and third declension is *Dibus* instead of *Diis*. The LLDB database has a separate code for this phenomenon as *-ibus pro -is*, as other effects have to be considered. These *Dibus* forms occur in the formula “to gods and goddesses” and are under the influence of the *Deabus* form.³⁶ The replacement of male and female endings is already found in the names of gods and goddesses, e.g. *dibus*, and in some cases the forms *diabus* or *dabus* can also be found.³⁷ This ambiguity is also reflected in the declension of the name of the mother goddesses,

²⁹LLDB-9521 (AE 2003, 1482; Dacia, Alburnus Maior), LLDB-74932 (CIL XII 1287; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-74933 (CIL XII 1288; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-143865 (CIL XII 1067; Gallia Narbonensis, Apta), LLDB-102863 (AE 1900, 202; Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus).

³⁰The cult of *Ianus* in the Roman province of Dalmatia was particularly popular with ten (10) inscriptions, while nine (9) come from North Africa, four (4) from Dacia, two (2) from Italy, and one from Gaul and Noricum, see [SANANDER \(2016\)](#) 124. LLDB-134715 (CIL VIII 27436; Africa Proconsularis, Mustis), LLDB-142565 (AE 1901, 194; Numidia, Thamugadi), LLDB-134712 (CIL VIII 2608; Numidia, Lambaesis).

³¹*HERCVLI AVGUSTI pro Herculi Augusto* (LLDB-5597 – CIL III 3305; Pannonia Inferior, Alta Ripa); *APOLLINI AVGUSTI pro Apollini Augusto* (LLDB-26637 – CIL XIII 1728; Lugudunensis, Lugudunum); *SOLI INVICTI pro Soli Invicto* (LLDB-14882 – CIL III 3475; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), *MARTI LEHERENNI pro Marti Leherenno* (LLDB-2630 – CIL XIII 111; Aquitania, Lugudunum Convenarum); *[SA]NCTO INVICTO | [S]ABAZI pro Sancto Invicto Sabazio* (LLDB-145454 – CIL VI 30949; Rome).

³²*SILVANO SILVESTRO pro Silvano Silvestri* – LLDB-13770 (AE 2001, 1636; Pannonia Superior, Királyszentistván), LLDB-6060 (AE 1971, 323; Pannonia Superior, Cirpi), LLDB-22807 (CIL III 3504; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-19376 (CIL III 3499; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-19327 (AE 1965, 122; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-143864 (AE 2012, 1155; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum), LLDB-27807 (CIL III 3504; Dalmatia, Raetinium).

³³FEHÉR (2007) 241.

³⁴PERINIĆ (2016) 14–15.

³⁵FEHÉR (2007) 241.

³⁶GALDI (2004) 148.

³⁷VAGÁSI (2022) 453–455.



Matres, which results in the forms *Matrabus* and *Matris* instead of *Matribus*.³⁸ The inscriptional form *Matrabus* occurs in the Venetia et Histria inscriptions around Verona, and I previously suggested this might be as much a result of Gallic influence as of gender distinction justified by other words in Latin, as the plural dative form *matrebo*, ‘to the mothers’ is known from two Gallo-Greek inscriptions (RIG G-64 and RIG I 203).³⁹ The form *Matris* is known from the Gallic area with ten (10) data forms.⁴⁰ This confusion between the first and third declensions shows the uncertainty caused by the distinction between the masculine and feminine dative plural, which is indicative of the insufficient knowledge of Latin among Celtic speakers.⁴¹

Confusion between the first and second declensions is not common in our corpus. The epithet of *Isis* occurs twice in the second declension (2 data forms, 3%).⁴² The attribute of *Isis* – *myrionyma* – is borrowed from Greek (μυριώνυμος) where it is composed of two Greek words: *μυρίος* and *ὄνομα*, literally translated as “with ten thousand names” or “with uncountable names”.⁴³ These two examples could be interpreted as Graecisms, as in Greek only one form existed, *Myrionymos*, for both masculine and feminine forms, e.g. *Sarapis* and *Isis Myrionymos*, whereas in Latin the epithet occurs separately as masculine and feminine, so that the corresponding form is *Myrionymae* in dative.⁴⁴

One data form (1 data form, 2%) has been recorded for the confusion between the third and first declensions: a Dacian altar dedicated to *Iunoni Re|gini pro Iunoni Reginae* (LLDB-147058 – IDR-3-2, 230). As with other types of confusion related to the third declension, the scribe may have consciously used the third declension, which was applied to the epithet as well.

Two data form (3%) represent the confusion between the first and fifth declensions. These altars were dedicated to plural deities, to *Matronae* and *Deae*, and have some indigenous epithet such as *Vacallinehae* (Finke 257) and *Axoniae* (AE 1935, 61).⁴⁵ The epithet *Axonia* was a deity

³⁸VÁGÁSI (2022) 455–459, LUJÁN (2014).

³⁹VÁGÁSI (2022) 457, MEID (1983).

⁴⁰LLDB-15824 – AE 1986, 477 (Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum), LLDB-15811 – CIL XII 2672 (Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum), LLDB-15286 – CIL XII 3085 ((Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus), LLDB-25944 – ILGN 257e (Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25943 – ILGN 257d (Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25942 – ILGN 257c (Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-105594 – CIL XIII 5478 (Belgica, Divio), LLDB-102500 – AE 1963, 116 (Gallia Narbonensis, Andusia), LLDB-25945 – ILGN 257f (Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25940 – ILGN 257a (Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion).

⁴¹BERNARDO STEMPEL DE (2021) 9–20, and 21 n. 2, see *MATRABVS pro Matribus*: LLDB-97662 and LLDB-97663 (CIL XIII 5671; Belgica, Andematunum), LLDB-97664 (CIL XIII 5673; Belgica, Andematunum), LLDB-74934 (CIL XII 1302; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-74935 (CIL XII 1306; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-74937 (CIL XII 1309; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-97665 (CIL XIII 5369; Germania Superior, Vesontio), LLDB-97666 (CIL XIII 5370; Germania Superior, Vesontio), LLDB-97667 (CIL XIII 5371; Germania Superior, Vesontio), LLDB-97668 (CIL XIII 5959; Germania Superior, Ellemum), LLDB-22133 (CIL XIII 2398; Lugudunensis, Bellicum), LLDB-74937 (CIL XII 1309; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio).

⁴²*ISIDI MYRIO|NYMO pro Isidi Myrionymae* – LLDB-24826 (AE 1956, 244; Germania Inferior, Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium), *ISIDI MYRONYMO pro Isidi Myrionymae* – LLDB-60907; Hispania Citerior, Asturica).

⁴³BRICAULT (1994). To the epithet in Germania, see WILLMS (2021) 209–213.

⁴⁴*Isi | Myrionymae* – CIL XIII 3461 (Belgica, Augusta Suessionum); *Isidi Myrioni|mae* – CIL III 882 (Dacia, Potaissa); *[Is] idi / [My]rio|[ny]mae* – CIL III 4017 (Pannonia Superior, Poetovio); *Isidi / Myrionymae* – CIL V 5080 (Venetia et Histria, Sublavio).

⁴⁵*[MATR]ON[IS] | [VACA]LLINEBV[S] pro Matronis Vacallinehis* – LLDB-105595 (Finke 257; Germania Inferior, Aquae Granni); *DIBVS AX|ONIEB|VS pro Deabus Axoniis* – LLDB-148401 (AE 1935, 61; Aquitania, Eliumberrum).



of Gallic River Aisne (*Axona*), *Vacallinehae* were water names from the local and regional environment. The altar was dedicated to a group of deities, the *DIBVS AX/ONIEB/VS*, in which most commentators have recognised male deities. In Gaul, however, the use of the plural form tends to refer to female deities. These hydronym epithets were feminine in Latin, although why the fifth declension was used instead of first is not clear in both cases.

2.1. Territorial distribution of declension confusions

With regard to declension confusions, the question arises: How are these data distributed territorially? Do declension confusions follow the characteristics of the given province?⁴⁶ In our analysis, the territorial distribution of all declension confusions observed in our onomastic corpus leads to two observations. The first impression is that Rome has only one data form and two (2) from the Italian regions.⁴⁷ The second observation is the outstanding proportion of the Gallic⁴⁸ (17) and Pannonian provinces (14).⁴⁹

From the distribution pattern of the chart in Fig. 2, it can be observed that, comparing the total declension confusions in the given province with data in the names of gods, it can be found that the Gallic region⁵⁰ – including Germania Inferior⁵¹ – and the two Pannonias⁵² stand out in

⁴⁶ADAMIK (2014).

⁴⁷[SA]NCTO INVICTO | [S]ABAZI *pro Sancto Invicto Sabazio* – LLDB-145454 (CIL VI 30949; Rome); *BONO | EVENTO pro Bono Eventui* – LLDB-143783 (CIL V 3218; Venetia et Histria, Verona); *NVMINO pro Numini* – LLDB-113689 (CIL IV 8100; Latium et Campania, Pompei).

⁴⁸Gallia Narbonensis (13 data forms), Belgica (1 data form), Lugudunensis (2 data forms) and Germania Inferior (3 data forms).

⁴⁹Pannonia Inferior (8 data forms), Pannonia Superior (6 data forms).

⁵⁰Belgica: *decl. I pro III* – LLDB-105594 (CIL XIII 5478; Belgica, Divio); Gallia Narbonensis: *decl. II pro III* – LLDB-74933 (CIL XII 1288; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-143865 (CIL XII 1067; Gallia Narbonensis, Apta), LLDB-102863 (AE 1900, 202; Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus), LLDB-74932 (CIL XII 1287; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), *decl. I pro III* – LLDB-15824 (AE 1986, 477; Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum), LLDB-15811 (CIL XII 2672; Gallia Narbonensis, Alba Helviorum), LLDB-15286 (CIL XII 3085; Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus), LLDB-25944 (ILGN 257e; Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25943 (ILGN 257d; Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25942 (ILGN 257c; Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-105594 (CIL XIII 5478; Belgica, Divio), LLDB-25945 (ILGN 257f; Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion), LLDB-25940 (ILGN 257a; Gallia Narbonensis, Dourion); Lugudunensis: *decl. II pro III* – LLDB-103102 (AE 1980, 644; Lugudunensis, Haedui), *decl. III pro II* – LLDB-26637 (CIL XIII 1728; Lugudunensis, Lugudunum); Aquitania: *decl. III pro II* – LLDB-2630 (CIL XIII 111; Aquitania, Lugudunum Convenarum).

⁵¹*decl. II pro IV* – LLDB-111748 (AE 2017, 1032; Germania Inferior, Forum Hadriani), *decl. II pro I* – LLDB-24826 (AE 1956, 244; Germania Inferior, Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium), *decl. V pro I* – LLDB-105595 (Finke 257; Germania Inferior, Aquae Granni).

⁵²Pannonia Inferior: *decl. II pro IV* – LLDB-117217 (AE 1998, 1051; Pannonia Inferior, Sirmium), *decl. II pro III* – LLDB-22807 (CIL III 3504; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-19376 (CIL III 3499; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-19327 (AE 1965, 122; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-14773 (TitAq-1, 49; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-9985 (AE 1973, 434; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), *decl. III pro II* – LLDB-5597 (CIL III 3305; Pannonia Inferior, Alta Ripa); Pannonia Superior: *decl. II pro IV* – LLDB-32410 (CIL III 4444; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum), LLDB-32411 (CIL III 10963; Pannonia Superior, Tomordpuszta), *decl. IV pro II* – LLDB-143623 (RIU-2, 429; Pannonia Superior, Brigetio), *decl. II pro III* – LLDB-13770 (AE 2001, 1636; Pannonia Superior, Királyszentistván), LLDB-6060 (AE 1971, 323; Pannonia Superior, Cirpi), LLDB-143864 (AE 2012, 1155; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum).



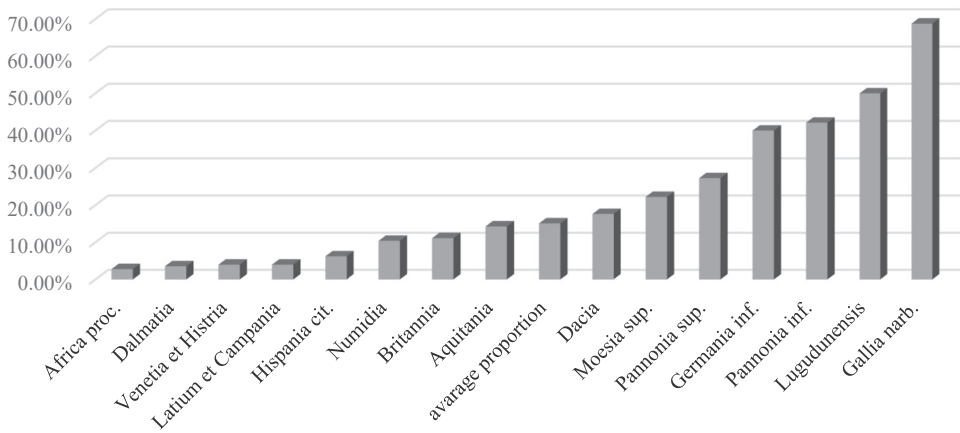


Fig. 2. The proportion of case confusions in divine names compared to all case confusions in each province

terms of having the highest proportion of declension confusions in the god names. However, the two regions show different trends in declension confusions. In the two Pannonias, the most frequent types are second declension instead of the third declension (8 data forms) and second instead of fourth declension, while in the Gallic area the most frequent types are the first declension instead of the third (10 data forms) and second declension instead of the third (5 data forms).

3. CASE CONFUSIONS

Syntactical mistakes in inscriptions, as well as the contamination between different formulas or the scribes' lack of Latin knowledge, especially concerning the inflection of foreign names, can be explained by several factors.⁵³ The amount of data is sufficient (174 = 100%) to draw relevant linguistic conclusions, but it is considered to evaluate each case individually. Below, all types of case confusions recorded in our material will be examined, with particular emphasis on confusions between the dative and the other cases. The most frequent phenomenon here is the confusion of the nominative and dative forms (58% = 102 data forms), since dedications in inscriptions were almost exclusively supposed to use the dative.⁵⁴

3.1. Cases instead of the dative

The names of deities in inscriptions are typically used in formulae that involve the dative. This explains why the most frequent case confusions involve another case instead of the dative. They

⁵³TANTIMONACO (2018) 212.

⁵⁴BATLLE HUGUET (1963) 67.



are often affected by the matching of adjective and noun, but extralinguistic factors are also significant. The use of the nominative, for example, does appear to have held an attraction for the worshippers. This might have been reinforced by how the *nomen* of a god was sometimes abbreviated, which made distinction between nominative and dative impossible in inscriptions. The phenomenon occurs mainly in first declension goddess names. The proportion is much clearer when considering that all sixty-two (62) *Nom./Abl. pro Dat.*⁵⁵ coded data forms indicate

⁵⁵*DAE DIRONA pro Deae Sironae* – LLDB-20172 (CIL XIII 3662; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum), LLDB-35107 (CIL XIII 3143; Lugudunensis, Fanum Martis); *DEA SIRONA pro Deae Sironae* – LLDB-143910 and LLDB-143911 (AE 2018, 1210; Belgica, Mediolanum); *DEA SVL(EVIAE) pro Deae Suleviae* – LLDB-15681 (CIL XIII 6266; Germania Superior, Altaia); *DEA |CAM|LORIGE pro Deae Camlorigae* – LLDB-94355 (CIL XIII 3460; Belgica, Augusta Suessionum); *DEA pro Deae* – LLDB-3394 (CIL XIII 11160; Aquitania, Bituriges), LLDB-16479 (CIL VII 580; Britannia, Cilurnum), LLDB-143918 (CIL XIII 7912; Germania Inferior, Bonna); *DEA DIA|NA pro Deae Dianae* – LLDB-93727 (CIL XIII 11311; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum); *DIA SVRIAE pro Deae Syriae* – LLDB-19739 (AE 1957, 301; Moesia Inferior, Oescus); *DEA SYR(IAE) pro Deae Syriae* – LLDB-9011 (CIL III 7864; Dacia, Micia); *DEA SYRIA pro Deae Syriae* – LLDB-118467 and LLDB-118468 (AE 1947, 142; Syria, Heliopolis); *DEA IVNO|NI pro Deae Iunoni* – LLDB-143919 (RSO 135; Germania Inferior, Civitas Alisinensium); *DEA ROSMERTAE pro Deae Rosmertae* – LLDB-103157 (AE 1968, 306; Lugudunensis, Hadui); *DEA MINER(VAE) pro Deae Minervae* – LLDB-143921 (CAG-89-1, p. 193; Lugudunensis, Autessiodurum); *DEA |MI(NE)R|VA pro Deae Minervae* – LLDB-14841 and LLDB-14842 (AE 1980, 598; Britannia, Durovigotum); *DEA RITONA |PRITONA pro Deae Ritonae Pritonae* – LLDB-143915, LLDB-143916, LLDB-143917 (AE 1928, 185; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum); *DEA EPONE pro deae Eponae* – LLDB-63292 (AE 1939, 235; Lugudunensis, Alesia), LLDB-34551 (CIL XIII 2903; Lugudunensis, Intaranum); *DEA TI|TA|CA pro deae Titacae* – LLDB-93646 and LLDB-93647 (CIL XIII 7624; Germania Superior, Confluentes); *DEA MINER|V|AE pro deae Minervae* – LLDB-34510 (CIL XIII 2892; Lugudunensis, Senones); *DEAE SEQVANA pro Deae Sequanae* – LLDB-33220 (CIL XIII 2865; Lugudunensis, Alesia); *DEAE DIANA pro deae Dianae* – LLDB-1271 (CIL XIII 1495; Aquitania, Arverni); *DEA DIA|NA pro deae Dianae* – LLDB-10370 and LLDB-10371 (CIL VII 46; Britannia, Aquae Sulis); *SIRONA pro Sironae* – LLDB-143912 (AE 1933, 140; Germania Superior, Altaia); *FORTVNA pro Fortunae* – LLDB-16290 (AE 1926, 68; Germania Superior, Mogontiacum), LLDB-29192 (AE 1979, 188; Apulia, Leuca); *MERCVRIO ET |MAIA pro Mercurio et Maiae* – LLDB-35058 (CIL XIII 6157; Germania Superior, Cruciniacum), LLDB-5250 (AE 1997, 1180; Germania Superior, Andemantunnum); *ASCIE|PO |IGIA / ASCLEPIO ET YGIA pro Aesculapio Hygiae* – LLDB-10097 (TitAq-1, 36; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); *YGIA pro Hygiae* – LLDB-9501 (AE 1992, 1480; Dacia, Germisara); *AES|CVLAPIO |ET(?) HYGI|A pro Aesculapio et Hygiae* – LLDB-143922 (IDR-3-2, 174; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa); *ASCLEPIO ET YGIA pro Aesculapio et Hygiae* – LLDB-11113 (AE 1980, 828; Moesia Inferior, Troesmis); *COVE|TINA pro Coventinae* – LLDB-16515 (RIB-1, 1531; Britannia, Brocolitia); *DEO PATERNO |BIVBA pro deo paterno Biubae* – LLDB-98751 (CIL VI 2801; Rome); *APOLLIN(I) () DIAN|A SILVANO pro Apollini Dianae Silvano* – LLDB-6961 (AE 1988, 980; Moesia Superior, Viminacium); *VICTORIA pro Victoriae* – LLDB-28328 (CIL XII 77; Alpes Cottiae, Ebrodunum), LLDB-95523 (CIL VIII 9696; Mauretania Caesariensis, Arsennaria), LLDB-143923 (CIL V 5703; Transpadana, Bergomum); *IOVI O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) () MINERVA pro Iovi Optimo Maximo () Minervae* – LLDB-46215 (CIL VIII 24055; Africa Proconsularis, Gales); *MINERVA pro Minervae* – LLDB-143924 (AE 2000, 935; Aquitania, Ruteni), LLDB-143925 (HEp 2000, 97; Hispania Citerior, Clunia); *INVICTO |MYTRA pro Invicto Mithrae* – LLDB-5904 (AE 1960, 376; Dacia, Apulum); *|D|IANA pro Dianae* – LLDB-5330 (AE 1975, 721; Dacia, Samum); *DIANE RE|GINA pro Dianae Reginae* – LLDB-4225 (AE 1963, 1; Dacia, Ad Aquas); *ASCLEPIO ||HYGIA pro Asclepio Hygiae* – LLDB-121646 (AE 2013, 1322; Moesia Superior, Naissus); *BELONA pro Bellonae* – LLDB-46313 (AE 1993, 987; Lusitania, Turgalium); *BELLONA pro Bellonae* – LLDB-25562 (AE 1955, 31; Lusitania, Turgalium); *BONA DIAE pro Bonae Deae* – LLDB-144132 (CIL VI 30854; Rome); *BON|A DEA|IS pro Bonae Deae* – LLDB-80606 (AE 2010, 1843; Mauretania Caesariensis, Novaricia); *BONA |DEEA pro Bonae Deae* – LLDB-80603 (AE 2010, 1842; Mauretania Caesariensis, Novaricia); *EPONA pro Eponae* – LLDB-122041 (AE 2016, 802; Hispania Citerior, Confluentes).



the nominative standing instead of the dative. Adams⁵⁶ noted that ‘it might be suggested that in compound phrases, (...) writers did not feel the need to inflect all the elements’ – which may be the case for deities with multiple qualifiers or in lists where the inscription is dedicated to several deities at once.

Sometimes words and divine names are repeated in the text of an inscription, especially in the case of altars where the god’s name is mentioned in a way that does not fit the rest of the inscription. Two altars from Moesia Superior, Babe have the same divine names repeated in different cases: *[I]ovi s(acrum) / [Iup]piter / Cresce(n)s / Mucati / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*⁵⁷ and *I(ovi) O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Iuppiter / M(arcus) Aur(elius) Cre[s]/centio pr(o) / se et su<i=O>s / et civ<i=E>s / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)*.⁵⁸ On both altars, the text begins in the dative, while the divine name is repeated in the nominative in the second or third line. It is not clear why the engraver broke the syntax and placed the god’s name in the nominative case in the middle of the text. In similar cases, it would have made more sense to place the name on the top of the altar in nominative case, as in the case of the altar from Carnuntum (AE 1905, 243)⁵⁹ where the name of the god *Hercules* was carved on the top of the altar, outside the rest of the text. Here the carver had enough space on the face of the altar to include the god’s name. Another altar was dedicated to *Deus M(ithras) / vota / Rufus / v(otum) s(olvit) m(erito) p(osuit)* from Dacia (AE 1911, 41). On some Dacian altars *Iuppiter* is mentioned in the nominative: *Iupp(iter) M(aximus) / Sabidas Hutri / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)* (AE 2016, 1318)⁶⁰ and *Iup(piter) Aur(elius) / Floru[s] / vot(um) sol(vit)* (CIL III 880).⁶¹ However, none of these are confusions, the statue belonging to the inscription was more likely to belong to the god, and therefore it was not considered necessary to give a dedication using the dative. As these items stood in the sanctuary of the god/goddess, worshippers might not have felt the need to use the divine name in the dative or, on the contrary, they might have wanted to reinforce the importance of the divine name by repeating it.

Indeed, some inscriptions are more difficult to interpret, mainly due to how the carver keeps changing the cases. Although the use of the formula with either one case or the other could certainly work, the mixed cases definitely indicate a problem. An inscription from Rome dedicated to *Optumus Maximus / Caelus (A)eternus Iup[pi]/ter Iunoni Reginae / Minervae iussu liben[s] / dedit* (CIL VI 81) and an altar from Mactaris, Africa Proconsularis has the divine names alternating in the nominative and the dative: *Apollo Genius / Libero P[atrio] / Cereri Ca[stae(?)]* (AE 1953, 48). These data must be treated with caution, as the confusion of each case has its own problems.

⁵⁶ADAMS (2013) 210, for example *IOVI O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) (I) MINERVA pro Iovi Optimo Maximo (I) Minervae – LLDB-46215* (CIL VIII 24055; Africa Proconsularis, Gales) and ADAMS – DE MELO (2016).

⁵⁷AE 1911, 169.

⁵⁸AE 1911, 167.

⁵⁹*Hercules // L(egio) XIII G(emina) pro / sa(lu)te cen/turi(a)e*

⁶⁰AE 2016, 1318; Dacia, Porolissum – LLDB-147726.

⁶¹CIL III 880; Dacia, Potaissa – LLDB-147725.



The most frequent phenomenon is the confusion between the nominative and the dative with 23%, forty (40)⁶² data forms. Further data forms (another 35%, sixty-two (62)) may be considered assuming that all *Nom./ Abl. pro Dat.* are examples for using the nominative instead of the dative, which is reasonable considering that both nominative and dative constructions are attested and as such, were traditionally accepted in epigraphy. However, the fact that twenty-two (22) of the forty (40) data sheets can be interpreted as simple abbreviations⁶³ makes it difficult to interpret our data. These confusions occur in the first declension goddess names (*Minerva, Victoria, etc.*)⁶⁴.

⁶²[NVTRI]X *pro Nutrici* – LLDB-78387 (ILAlg-2-3, 9630; Numidia, Phuensium); *PLVTON pro Plutoni* – LLDB-9004 (AE 1980, 778; Dacia, Micia), LLDB-142248 (AE 1903, 318; Numidia, Nicivibus); *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) | CONSERVATOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Conservatori* – LLDB-5789 (CIL III 1085; Dacia, Apulum); *AQVIAE pro Aquis* – LLDB-60329 (AE 1989, 377; Lusitania, Conimbriga); *LARES pro Laribus* – LLDB-28865 (Conimbri 11; Lusitania, Conimbriga); *GENIVS LIBERO (I) CERERI pro Genio Libero (I) Cereri* – LLDB-138576 (AE 1953, 48; Africa Proconsularis, Mactaris); *APOLLO (I) LIBERO (I) CERERI pro Apollini Libero Cereri* – LLDB-138575 (AE 1953, 48; Africa Proconsularis, Mactaris); *IVNO REGINA pro Iunoni Reginae* – LLDB-95539 (CIL VIII 21559; Mauretania Caesariensis, Cohors Breucorum); *ME[RCVRIO] | DEFENSOR pro Mercurio Defensori* – LLDB-93374 (CIL XIII 11697; Germania Superior, Aventicum); *SO[LI] INV[ICTO] BELO | MAL[A]GBEL HIE[ROBOLO] pro Soli Invicto Belo Malagbello Hierobolo* – LLDB-91414 (AE 2011, 1084; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa); *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) STATORI | I[TEM] DEPVLOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Statori item Depulsori* – LLDB-91020 (CIL III 895; Dacia, Potaissa); *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) | DEPVLOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Depulsori* – LLDB-143884 (CIL III 4033; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio); *DEABVS S(ILVESTIBVS) | VIRGINES pro Deabus Silvestribus Virginibus* – LLDB-45199 (AE 1934, 210; Moesia Superior, Ulpiana); *LIBER pro Libero* – LLDB-145457 (CIL VI 30964; Rome); *DEO INVICTO METRAS pro Deo Invicto Mithrae* – LLDB-28062 (CIL III 4808; Noricum, Virunum); *HERCVLES GE[NIVM] SABV[R]IANENSIVM pro Herculi Genio Saburianensium* – LLDB-89084 (AE 1975, 886; Africa procinsularis, Hippo Regius); *M[A] | TER MAGNAE pro Matris Magnae / Matri Magnae* – LLDB-21445 (CIL XIII 7865; Germania Inferior, Bonna); *SO[LI] MITRAE pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-5907 (AE 1960, 243; Dacia, Apulum); *SOL M(ITHRAE) pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-143866 (ILB 161b; Belgica, Geminaicum); *SOL SERAPI pro Soli Serapi* – LLDB-90409 (CIL VI 707; Rome); *DEO SOL pro Deo Soli* – LLDB-56601 (AE 1957, 76; Africa Proconsularis, Sufetula); *DEO SOL INV[ICTO] pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143867 (AE 1920, 129; Germania Superior, Argentorate); *DEO SOL pro Deo Soli* – LLDB-143868 (CIL XIII 6392; Germania Superior, Vicus Nadiensis); *DEO SOL INVICT(O) pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143869 (CIL XIV 3566; Latium et Campania, Tibur); *SOL pro Soli* – LLDB-143870 (CIL XIII 2869; Lugudunensis, Rotomagus); *DEO SOL IN[VICTO] pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143871 (CIL VIII 2675; Numidia, Lambaesis); *SOL SOC(IO) pro Soli Socio* – LLDB-143872 (CIL III 3384; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); *S(O)LI [I]N[V]I[C] pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143873 (RIU-5, 1098; Pannonia Inferior, Intercisa); *SOL I(NVICTO) pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143874 (CIL III 10364; Pannonia Inferior, Intercisa); *SOL M(ITHRAE) pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-143875 (CIL VI 718; Rome); *SOL IN(VICTO) pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143876 (AE 1977, 289; Venetia et Histria, Anauni).

⁶³[NVTRI]X *pro Nutrici* – LLDB-78387; *PLVTON pro Plutoni* – LLDB-9004, LLDB-142248; *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) | CONSERVATOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Conservatori* – LLDB-5789; *AQVIAE pro Aquis* – LLDB-60329; *LARES pro Laribus* – LLDB-28865; *GENIVS LIBERO (I) CERERI pro Genio Libero (I) Cereri* – LLDB-138576; *APOLLO (I) LIBERO (I) CERERI pro Apollini Libero Cereri* – LLDB-138575; *IVNO REGINA pro Iunoni Reginae* – LLDB-95539; *ME[RCVRIO] | DEFENSOR pro Mercurio Defensori* – LLDB-93374; *SO[LI] INV[ICTO] BELO | MAL[A]GBEL HIE[ROBOLO] pro Soli Invicto Belo Malagbello Hierobolo* – LLDB-91414; *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) STATORI | I[TEM] DEPVLOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Statori item Depulsori* – LLDB-91020; *I(OVI) O(PTIMO) M(AXIMO) | DEPVLOR pro Iovi Optimo Maximo Depulsori* – LLDB-143884; *DEABVS S(ILVESTIBVS) | VIRGINES pro Deabus Silvestribus Virginibus* – LLDB-45199; *LIBER pro Libero* – LLDB-145457; *DEO INVICTO METRAS pro Deo Invicto Mithrae* – LLDB-28062; *HERCVLES GE[NIVM] SABV[R]IANENSIVM pro Herculi Genio Saburianensium* – LLDB-89084; *M[A] | TER MAGNAE pro Matris Magnae / Matri Magnae* – LLDB-21445; *SO[LI] MITRAE pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-5907; *SOL M(ITHRAE) pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-143866; *SOL SERAPI pro Soli Serapi* – LLDB-90409; *DEO SOL pro Deo Soli* – LLDB-56601; *DEO SOL INV[ICTO] pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143867; *DEO SOL pro Deo Soli* – LLDB-143868; *DEO SOL INVICT(O) pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143869; *SOL pro Soli* – LLDB-143870; *DEO SOL IN[VICTO] pro Deo Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143871; *SOL SOC(IO) pro Soli Socio* – LLDB-143872; *S(O)LI [I]N[V]I[C] pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143873; *SOL I(NVICTO) pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143874; *SOL M(ITHRAE) pro Soli Mithrae* – LLDB-143875; *SOL IN(VICTO) pro Soli Invicto* – LLDB-143876.

⁶⁴GALDI (2004) 30 explains this phenomenon as an effect of the tendency to create an -a case.



This type of case confusion has some interesting aspects, such as *Sol* instead of *Soli* in fourteen (14) instances.⁶⁵ An altar dedicated to *Deo Sol* (CIL XIII 6392, LLDB-143868) from Vicus Nediensis (Germania inf.) shows that the abbreviation can be assumed, a case confusion is more realistic, considering that the altar had enough space to engrave a letter *i*. In some cases, the worshipper's name could have affected how the name of the divinity was written. For example, an altar was dedicated to *Dea Syria* in the nominative, as was the name of the worshipper's *Marcus Ulpius Phoebus* (CIL III 7864 – LLDB-9011, Dacia, Micia). The name of the god *Mithras* features in the Greek variant nominative *Mytra*⁶⁶ on an altar from Apulum, Dacia (AE 1960, 376, LLDB-5904).⁶⁷ However, a change omitting the iota in the dative case can be observed in the Greek inscriptions of the 2nd century, which could have also affected Latin language inscriptions dedicated to Mithras.⁶⁸ In any case, the formula *votum solvit libens merito* at the end of the inscription clearly shows that the god's name should be in the dative.

The second most frequent phenomenon was the confusion between the genitive and dative with 26% and forty-five (45) data forms. In most cases, the context is clear, such as with *Isidi Victricis Iunoni* instead of *Isidi Victrici Iunoni* (CIL IX 5179 – LLDB-35874; Picenum, Asculum). Half of the examples are *Mercuri* instead of *Mercurio*.⁶⁹ These confusions occur mostly in the Gallic region, but not exclusively. This phenomenon can also be interpreted as an abbreviation. However, one of the examples where the context is clear and the abbreviation is less likely is the pedestal of a statue (CIL XIII 8726 – LLDB-104062), where there would have been space for the *o* to be carved.⁷⁰

In third place, with a rate of 6% rate and eleven (11) data forms,⁷¹ is the confusion of the dative and accusative cases. Any data that confirms an accusative pro dative confusion requires very

⁶⁵LLDB-5907 (AE 1960, 243; Dacia, Apulum); LLDB-143866 (ILB 161b; Belgica/Germania Inferior, Geminiacum); LLDB-90409 (CIL VI 707; Rome), LLDB-143875 (CIL VI 718; Rome); LLDB-56601 (AE 1957, 76; Africa Proconsularis, Sufetula); LLDB-143867 (AE 1920, 129; Germania Superior, Argentorate); LLDB-143868 (CIL XIII 6392; Germania Superior, Vicus Nadiensis); LLDB-143869 (CIL XIV 3566; Latium et Campania, Tibur); LLDB-143870 (CIL XIII 2869; Lugudunensis, Rotomagus); LLDB-143871 (CIL VIII 2675; Numidia, Lambaesis); LLDB-143872 (CIL III 3384; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-143874 (CIL III 10364; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); LLDB-143873 (RIU-5, 1098; Pannonia Inferior, Intercisa); LLDB-143876 (AE 1977, 289; Venetia et Histria, Anauni).

⁶⁶For a survey on the infinite variation of the god's name, see SZABÓ ET AL. (2016) 93 n. 8.

⁶⁷BEU-DACHIN (2014) 121.

⁶⁸GALDI (2004) 31.

⁶⁹LLDB-104062 (CIL XIII 8726; Germania Inferior, Noviomagus Batavorum); LLDB-103025 (AE 2016, 1015; Gallia Narbonensis, Carpentorate); LLDB-94398 (CIL XIII 3607; Belgica, Tungri); LLDB-62608 (CIL V 7874; Alpes maritimae, Cemenelum); LLDB-143886 (CIL XIII 1523; Aquitania, Arverni); LLDB-143887 (CIL XII 508; Gallia Narbonensis, Aquae Sextiae); LLDB-143888 (AE 1917-18, 54; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio); LLDB-143889 (CIL XIII 6267; Germania Superior, Altaia); LLDB-143890 (CIL XIII 6222; Germania Superior, Borbetomagus); LLDB-143891 (Aquae Flaviae-1997, 79; Hispania Citerior, Aquae Flaviae); LLDB-143892 (CIL II 5706; Hispania Citerior, Legio / Legio VII Gemina); LLDB-143893 (HEp 1997, 317; Hispania Citerior, Saguntum); LLDB-143896 (CIL II 425; Lusitania, Vice...); LLDB-143897 (HEp 2013, 137; Lusitania, Capera); LLDB-143898 (RIU-1, 166; Pannonia Superior, Scarbantia); LLDB-143899 (CIL III 4562; Pannonia Superior, Vindobona); LLDB-143900 (CIL V 5601; Transpadana, Sibirium); LLDB-143901 (CIL V 8245; Venetia et Histria, Aquileia); LLDB-143902 (InscrIt-10-5, 866; Venetia et Histria, Brixia); LLDB-121817 (AE 1983, 686; Aquitania, Burdigala).

⁷⁰[D]eo / Mercuri(o) / Friausio / [S]implicius / Ingenu(u)s / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)

⁷¹LLDB-118403 (CIL XIV 2254; Latium, Albanum), LLDB-23192 (CIL III 10442; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-22825 (CIL III 3393; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-39227 (AE 1990, 503; Lusitania, civitas Interanniensis), LLDB-141138 (AE 1940, 18; Africa Proconsularis, Thubursicum Numidarum), LLDB-67908 (ILAlg-2-2, 4678; Numidia, Thibilis), LLDB-143634 (AE 1994, 1446; Pannonia Inferior, Sirmium), LLDB-102960 (AE 1992, 1203; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-143927 (CIL VI 303; Rome).



careful examination, since the possibility that the inscription included a statue, given (*posuit, fecit, donum dedit*) in the accusative must be excluded.⁷² The ritual and archaeological context is very important in this type of case confusion, where the possibility that a statue of the god or goddess was placed above the altar, but it unfortunately broke off. Another explanation is possible due to Greek influence.⁷³ In Greek, the usual votive formula includes the name of the dedicator, the divinity's name, and the single word *ἐὐχὴν* “a vow” in the accusative.⁷⁴ Greek inscriptions often refer to the honoured person in accusative when referring to the dedication of a statue portraying that person, which is usually found on statue bases, e.g. *Genium c(oloniae) [C(laudiae) Savariae] / cum suo tem[plo]* from Savaria (CIL III 4153).⁷⁵ This form is undoubtedly found with the *Genii*.⁷⁶

Examples of the replacement of ablative and dative include 2% and three (3) data.⁷⁷ These examples occur in the fourth declension, however, it is possible to talk about the influence of the *u*-stem neuter nouns, where both *-u* and *-ui* dative were equally normative.⁷⁸

3.2. Cases instead of genitive

Other cases instead of genitive occur in our corpus with 5% and eight (8) data, of which two data to accusative instead of genitive,⁷⁹ three (3) items to nominative instead of genitive⁸⁰ and three (3) data to dative instead of genitive.⁸¹ In one example *cum signo Nemesem* instead of *cum signo Nemesis* (CIL XIV 34 – LLDB- 82421) from Ostia,⁸² the reason for the confusion can be easily identified from the context, i.e. he donated several things to the goddess *imaginem argenteam* and probably confused whether he gave them as enumerative or with *cum*. Examples of nominative instead of genitive are in the context of the priest of some god (*sacerdos, pontifex*, etc.), i.e. *pontifex dei Sol pro pontifex dei Solis* (CIL VI 846 – LLDB-90411) from Rome. Two of the examples are from Rome and one from Carthage. The three data forms for dative and genitive confusions are from Belalis Maior, Africa Proconsularis: *ex iusso Iovi | Zabazi pro ex iussu Iovis Sabazi* (AE 1961, 81 – LLDB-135431), from Germisara, Dacia: *Numini | Aesculapio | et Hygiae pro numini Aesculapii et Hygiae*

⁷²Cf. CIL III 6772 (Cappadocia, Caesarea) – *Solem / Soli Invicto / M<i=Y>thrae / pro salute et incolu/mitate Chresimi AAugg(ustorum) nn(ostorum) dispensatoris / Callimorphus ar<c=K>a/rius eiusdem / votum solvi / libens animo*, where a statue of the god Sol was dedicated and given to the invincible Mithras.

⁷³GALDI (2004) 209–213.

⁷⁴STOLK (2017).

⁷⁵MYLONPOULOS (2018) 232.

⁷⁶CIL III 6576 (Aegyptus, Alexandria) – *Genium / [(centuriae) Aurel(ius) Aeternalis posuit; RIU-2, 387 (Pannonia Superior, Brigetio) – [G]enium cen[tu]/[r]i(a)e ... posuit, AE 1931, 120 (Dacia, Micia) – Genium Miciae ... stravit, CIL XIII 6482 (Germania Superior, Civitas Alisinensium) – Genium c(ivitatis) / Alisin(ensis) ... donavit, CIL XIII 6540 (Germania Superior, Vicus Aurelius) – G]enium cum basi..., etc.*

⁷⁷LLDB-45999 (CIL XIII 6670; Germania Superior, Mogontiacum), LLDB-143861 (CIL III 14354,27; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio), LLDB-143862 (CIL III 14354,28; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio).

⁷⁸FEHÉR (2007) 255.

⁷⁹CVM | SIGNO NEMESEM pro cum signo Nemesis – LLDB-82421 (CIL XIV 34; Latium, Ostia).

⁸⁰LLDB-136224 (AE 1968, 553; Africa Proconsularis, Carthago), LLDB-90411 (CIL VI 846; Rome), LLDB-72011 (CIL VI 32465; Rome).

⁸¹LLDB-135431 (AE 1978, 863; Africa Proconsularis, Belalis Maior), LLDB-143782 (AE 1971, 29; Rome).

⁸²... *imaginem / Matris deum ar/genteam p(ondo) I cum / signo Nemesem...*



(IDR-3-3, 231 – LLDB-9055) and from Rome: *signum Boni Eventui pro signum Boni Eventus* (AE 1971, 29 – LLDB-143782). In all cases, however, the context may again have confused the engraver, “by order of Iupiter Sabazius an altar was erected to Liber Pater”, that another divine name (Liber Pater) was in dative form,⁸³ and “to *Bonus Eventus* and *Tutela* had the shrine and badge of *Bonus Eventus* made by *Marcus Iunius Agathopus* with his son”⁸⁴ and “to *Aesculapius* and *Hygia*”.

3.3. Cases instead of accusative

Five (5) data forms, at 1% represent the confusion where the ablative is used instead of the accusative, with code *Abl. pro acc. in obiecto directo*.⁸⁵ Each of these has an alternative code, since in these cases the dropping of final *-m*,⁸⁶ the mark of the accusative singular, may also explain the misspelling of the names. This is also the case on a relief (AE 1940, 73) depicting *Iuno Dolichena*, with the inscription: *Iupiter Dolichenus* ordered the relief of the goddess *Iuno* to be made for him.⁸⁷

3.4. Territorial distribution of case confusions

The territorial distribution of case confusions is much more varied than that of the declension confusions. Most of the data come from the Danubian provinces with 24%, thirty-six (37) data forms, and from the Gallic regions with 21%, forty-two (42) data forms (see Fig. 3). From Rome, however, nine (9) data forms are already available for the case confusions. These data are in line with the findings of Adamik,⁸⁸ who, while examining the African case system, made an analysis of the case confusions in the Roman Empire in the period of our study (1st–3rd century AD). Almost the same amount of data is available from Africa, Gallia and Germaniae and Italy.⁸⁹ A comparison with the rest of the non-religious inscriptional material shows that in Gaul and Germaniae, the confusion between the genitive and the dative dominated with 29.1% compared to the 9.1% of the accusative and ablative confusion.⁹⁰ The other provinces dominant in our corpus, namely the two Pannonias, are not represented separately in Adamik’s paper but as part of the Illyrian provinces, while the ratios show ($25.4/14.9 = 1.7$) that the merger of the genitive and the dative was able to keep up with the accusative and the ablative.⁹¹

⁸³ *ex iussu Iovi(s) / Zabazi / ara posit(a) / Libero Patr(i) cura / M(arci) Oppi Vitali(s)*

⁸⁴ ... *Bono Eventui / Tutelae cellae / Lucceianae / M(arcus) Iunius Agathopu[s] / cum Agathopo fil(io) / aedem et signum / Boni Eventui ... facie[ndum cur(avit)] ...*

⁸⁵ *DEVM SOLEM MITHRA () RESTITVIT pro Deum Solem Mithram restituit* – LLDB-106419 (CIL XIV 61; Latium, Ostia), *HABEBIT HERONE pro habebit Heronem* – LLDB-19846 (ILBulg 190; Moesia Inferior, Trullensium), *DITE PATREM POSUIT pro Ditem Patrem posuit* – LLDB-102864 (AE 1940, 134; Gallia Narbonensis, Arausio), *IVNONE FACERE pro Iunonem facere* – LLDB-59725 (AE 1940, 73; Rome), *IOVE FECIT pro Iovem fecit* – LLDB-44534 (Hild 7; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum).

⁸⁶ ADAMIK (2019b).

⁸⁷ *Iovi Optimo Maximo Dolicheno / ex iussu ipsius Iunone(m) facere / I(ucius) Apronius Heliu[s] pro se et uxore / et fili(i)s suis et familiae suae d(onum) d(edit) / per sacerdote(m) Chaibione(m)*

⁸⁸ ADAMIK (2019a) 26–29.

⁸⁹ Case confusions in Gallia and Germaniae with 264 data forms, from Italy with 189 data forms, and from Africa with 237 data forms.

⁹⁰ ADAMIK (2019a) 26.

⁹¹ ADAMIK (2019a) 29.



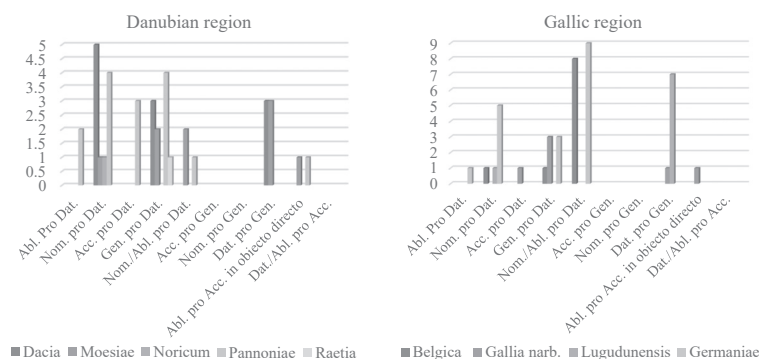


Fig. 3. Case mergers in the Danubian and in Gallic region (1st-3rd c. AD). Danubian region: 100% = 37,⁹² Gallic region: 100% = 42⁹³

⁹² *Abl. Pro Dat.*: LLDB-143861 (CIL III 14354,27; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio), LLDB-143862 (CIL III 14354,28; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio); *Nom. pro Dat.*: LLDB-9004 (AE 1980, 778; Dacia, Micia), LLDB-5789 (CIL III 1085; Dacia, Apulum), LLDB-91414 (AE 2011, 1084; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa), LLDB-91020, (CIL III 895; Dacia, Potaissa) LLDB-5907 (AE 1960, 243; Dacia, Apulum), LLDB-143884 (CIL III 4033; Pannonia Superior, Poetovio), LLDB-143872 (CIL III 3384; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-143873 (RIU-5, 1098; Pannonia Inferior, Intercisa), LLDB-143874 (CIL III 10364; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-45199 (AE 1934, 210; Moesia Superior, Ulpiana), LLDB-28062 (CIL III 4808; Noricum, Virunum), ; *Acc. pro Dat.*: LLDB-23192 (CIL III 10442; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-22825 (CIL III 3393; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-143634 (AE 1994, 1446; Pannonia Inferior, Sirmium); *Gen. pro Dat.*: LLDB-5597 (CIL III 3305; Pannonia Inferior, Alta Ripa), LLDB-14882 (CIL III 3475; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum), LLDB-143898 (RIU-1, 166; Pannonia Superior, Scarbantia), LLDB-143899 (CIL III 4562; Pannonia Superior, Vindobona), LLDB-9516 (AE 1990, 845; Dacia, Alburnus Maior), LLDB-4427 (CIL III 1591; Dacia, Romula), LLDB-143905 (CIL III 7820; Dacia, Alburnus Maior), LLDB-58460 (CIL III 11926; Raetia, Vettoniana), LLDB-120958 (AE 1985, 760; Moesia Inferior, Iatrus), LLDB-6571 (AE 1966, 336; Moesia Superior, Egeta); *Nom./Abl. pro Dat.*: LLDB-19739 (AE 1957, 301; Moesia Inferior, Oescus), LLDB-11113 (AE 1980, 828; Moesia Inferior, Troesmis), LLDB-6961 (AE 1988, 980; Moesia Superior, Viminacium), LLDB-9011 (CIL III 7864; Dacia, Micia), LLDB-9501 (AE 1992, 1480; Dacia, Germisara), LLDB-143922 (IDR-3-2, 174; Dacia, Sarmizegetusa), LLDB-10097 (TitAq-1, 36; Pannonia Inferior, Aquincum); *Abl. pro Acc. in obiecto directo*: LLDB-19846 (ILBulg 190; Moesia Inferior, Trullensium), LLDB-44534 (Hild 7; Pannonia Superior, Carnuntum).

⁹³ *Abl. Pro Dat.*: LLDB-45999 (CIL XIII 6670; Germania Superior, Mogontiacum); *Nom. pro Dat.*: LLDB-21445 (CIL XIII 7865; Germania Inferior, Bonna), LLDB-143866 (ILB 161b; Belgica/Germania Inferior, Geminiacum), LLDB-143867 (AE 1920, 129; Germania Superior, Argentorate), LLDB-143868 (CIL XIII 6392; Germania Superior, Vicus Nadiensis), LLDB-143870 (CIL XIII 2869; Lugudunensis, Rotomagus); *Acc. pro Dat.*: LLDB-102960 (AE 1992, 1203; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio); *Gen. pro Dat.*: LLDB-104062 (CIL XIII 8726; Germania Inferior, Noviomagus Batavorum), LLDB-143889 (CIL XIII 6267; Germania Superior, Altaia), LLDB-143890 (CIL XIII 6222; Germania Superior, Borbetomagus), LLDB-103025 (AE 2016, 1015; Gallia Narbonensis, Carpentorate), LLDB-143887 (CIL XII 508; Gallia Narbonensis, Aquae Sextiae), LLDB-143888 (AE 1917-18, 54; Gallia Narbonensis, Vasio), LLDB-94398 (CIL XIII 3607; Belgica, Tungr); *Nom./Abl. pro Dat.*: LLDB-20172 (CIL XIII 3662; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum), LLDB-143910 and LLDB-143911 (AE 2018, 1210; Belgica, Mediolanum), LLDB-94355 (CIL XIII 3460; Belgica, Augusta Suessionum), LLDB-93727 (CIL XIII 11311; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum), LLDB-143915, LLDB-143916 and LLDB-143917 (AE 1928, 185; Belgica, Augusta Treverorum), LLDB-35107 (CIL XIII 3143; Lugudunensis, Fanum Martis), LLDB-103157 (AE 1968, 306; Lugudunensis, Hadui), LLDB-143921 (CAG-89-1, p 193; Lugudunensis, Autessiodurum), LLDB-63292 (AE 1939, 235; Lugudunensis, Alesia), LLDB-34551 (CIL XIII 2903; Lugudunensis, Intaranum), LLDB-34510 (CIL XIII 2892; Lugudunensis, Senones), LLDB-33220 (CIL XIII 2865; Lugudunensis, Alesia), LLDB-143918 (CIL XIII 7912; Germania Inferior, Bonna), LLDB-143919 (RSO 135; Germania Inferior, Civitas Alisinensium), LLDB-15681 (CIL XIII 6266; Germania Superior, Altaia), LLDB-93646 and LLDB-93647 (CIL XIII 7624; Germania Superior, Confluentes), LLDB-143912 (AE 1933, 140; Germania Superior, Altaia), LLDB-16290 (AE 1926, 68; Germania Superior, Mogontiacum), LLDB-35058 (CIL XIII 6157; Germania Superior, Cruciniacum), LLDB-5250 (AE 1997, 1180; Germania Superior, Andematunum), LLDB-102913 (AE 1946, 155; Gallia Narbonensis, Glanum); *Abl. pro Acc. in obiecto directo*: LLDB-102864 (AE 1940, 134; Gallia Narbonensis, Arausio).



In the corpus of theonyms and epithets, these areas can be examined separately. In the Gallic areas significantly fewer examples of case confusions occur, while in the Danubian region, almost all types of case confusions can be found, the most common being the confusion between the nominative and the dative. In this respect, especially the inscriptional material from Dacia and Pannonia is notable.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the material analysed, it can be concluded that in some cases the declension confusion has cultural reasons, indicating the use of a certain language, especially if the inscriptions are from Celtic, Greek, or other language areas. Among these are the inscriptions dedicated to mother-goddesses, where the *-abus* ending can be interpreted not only as an over-confirmed ‘feminism’, but also as a continuation of the *-abos* plural dative of the proto-Celtic **ā*-stem nouns.⁹⁴ The opinion of Bernardo Stempel⁹⁵ is convincing in this case, who explains the phenomenon mainly by the inadequate knowledge of Latin of the population who also speak Celtic. The single form *Sedatui*, which is known from Pannonia (RIU-2, 429), might also be the result of a Celtic influence, if the Celtic name of the god was already part of the **o*-stem declension and the inscription preserves the **-ūi*⁹⁶ singular dative of the **o*-stem declension. However, the inscription had a very poor quality, and its reading is ambiguous, and the identity of the dedicator is not known, thus not providing any evidence to make a definite statement. The influence of the Celtic language behind the forms *Axoniebus* (AE 1935, 61) and *Vacallinebus* (Finke 257) can also only be assumed.⁹⁷ Greek influence has mainly been observed in the use of accusative case instead of dative case, due to Greek inscriptions where the honoured person is in accusative case when referring to the dedication of a statue portraying that person.

Votive inscriptions sometimes contain combined formulas with hypercorrect forms.⁹⁸ Establishing relevant linguistic conclusions is difficult due to the diversity of the corpus under study. In addition to the frequent errors in the divinities’ names, dialectological changes may also cause a loss of agreement between inflected and uninflected forms. In some cases, a territorial variation is also detectable, e.g. declension confusions are more characteristic of Pannonian votive inscriptions. Pannonia and the Gallic provinces have been shown to be prominent among the provinces, as they have the highest number of case and declension confusions in the names of gods and epithets. Divine names are only distinguished in declension and case confusions, the proportion of which in Pannonia is the highest compared to other case and declension confusions in the province. Considering the total case and declension confusions, etc., i.e. the *nominalia* category, in Pannonia Inferior it amounts to 7.6% and in Pannonia Superior to 5.9%.⁹⁹ Although local specificity cannot be identified of the inscriptions from Pannonia,

⁹⁴VÁGÁSI (2022) 457.

⁹⁵BERNARDO STEMPER DE (2021) 21.

⁹⁶SZEMERÉNYI (1997) 184.

⁹⁷DELAMARRE (2007) 36, BERNARDO STEMPER (2003).

⁹⁸BEU-DACHIN (2020) 53.

⁹⁹FEHÉR (2003).



considering only those case and declension confusions that occur in divine names or epithets, proportion of case and declension confusions in the names of gods and adjectives is found, 47%.

However, the examples cited in this article frequently occur together with other, less standardized features. The overview provided by our data confirms that Vulgar Latin, the living language managed to influence even a setting as conservative as dedications and divine names, while the results are consistent with the trends evident all over the empire, attesting the gradual disintegration of the case system.

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