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**Monetary circulation in the space
between the provinces of
Dacia and Pannonia**

- Ph.D. thesis summary -

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KEY WORDS:

Numismatics, Coins, Roman Empire, Danubian Provinces, Barbarians, Sarmatians, Iazyges, Dacians, Trade, Commercial Routes, Coin hoards, Prestige economy, Luxury goods.

SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN PARTS OF THE THESIS

INTRODUCTION

Through our modest contribution, we wanted to comprise an important aspect of the large “Tiso-Danubian” region at the boundaries of the Roman Empire, more specifically the 2nd – 4th centuries A.D., by means of the numismatic sources. This is a chapter of history that matters in equal measure the knowledge of the past of the modern peoples who live in these territories and their common European heritage.

Our work is intended as a critical evaluation of the known monetary finds from the “Tiso-Danubian” zone, in order to spot the light on the main features of the Barbarian societies, the social and political events depicted by the numismatic sources, the commercial relations between the Roman Empire and the Barbarians, as well as the way the different tribes interacted with each other. Through our work we tried to establish the role played by the coins in the trading process.

The achievement of those willings requires a previous exposition of the known historical data. Thus, the first part of the thesis is dedicated to the history of the Barbarian territory between Dacia and Pannonia.

HISTORY OF THE POPULATIONS FROM BARBARIAN AREA BETWEEN DACIA AND PANNONIA ACCORDING TO THE LITERARY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

After presenting the geographical conditions of the past, a great introduction follows about the beginnings of the Iazyges Sarmatians, necessary to outline the role and central place that these Barbarians occupied in the researched area from the first half of the 1st century A.D. until the second half of the 4th century A.D. The second part shows a chronological exposition of the main historical events, based on literary sources, archaeological finds, and researches of Romanian and foreign scholars, too.

Briefly, we can assert that a Sarmatian (Iazygean) center of power existed in the space between the Roman provinces of Dacia and Pannonia during the 2nd – 3rd centuries A.D. The migration of the Sarmatians, through the North of the Carpathian range in the first half of the 1st century A.D., in the plain between the Danube and the Tisa, marks the moment when a new period in the history of the Barbarian area of the middle course of the Danube begins. After the end of the Dacian kingdom of Decebalus, the Iazygean center of power would consolidate through the entire 2nd century. The Sarmatians would cross slowly in the valleys of the great eastern affluents of the Tisa river, displacing or overlapping the local communities in the lower areas. The end of the Marcomannic Wars, highlighted by a series of alliances between the Romans and the Iazyges or their neighbours (Quadi, Marcomanni, etc), will bring a relative peace to the Daco-Moeso-Pannonic *limes* until the middle of the 3rd century A.D. This is also the period of the Roxolani migration into the space controlled by the Iazyges. The moment when Dacia is abandoned by the Romans, generally coincides with the debut of a series of conflictive situations in the middle course of the Danube. Many Roman sources speak about the Barbarian incursions in Pannonia and Moesia, highlighting the victorious campaigns of the Emperors from the last decades of the 3rd century A.D. The campaigns of Constantine I and his successors in the “Tiso-Danubian” plain, ended with displacements of population, will change the political *status-quo* of the area, but without dismantling it because the Sarmatian center of power from Western Pannonia would continue to exist. We can suppose that the old system of alliances with the Sarmatians would be continued

after the suppression of the *Limiganti* rebellion in the year 334 A.D. The “Sarmatian Walls”, considered by the majority of historians to have been built then, are a testimony of those events.

The end of the Sarmatian domination, that entity which would be called the “Tiso-Danubian” *Sarmatia*, is directly linked to the appearance of the Huns in the scene of Ancient Europe, who will place here “an end to fighting and living”, as the historian Ammianus Marcellinus (Book XXX) said.

The way in which the literary sources are able to offer an image of the political history of the Barbarian populations located between Dacia and Pannonia, is also interesting. We must accept that those sources give a hint about the area history with a total unequal chronology, but offer information about many questions that the archaeologists are unable to give definitive answers. Because of this, it is necessary a general evaluation by chronological steps of the literary sources. Those sources (for example, Ammianus Marcellinus and Panites Priscus) are useful and match actual researches about the information on matters of geo-morphology and pedology during the Ancient Age.

On the moment and on infiltration route of the Iazyges in Western Dacia, is necessary to complete the literary sources with auxiliary sciences. The first problem is the fixation of the route, that is only interpreted from the sources, as many researchers has tried, had determined the error that the migration took place through the South of the Carpathians, a fact that has been infirmed by the archaeological finds. A second problem is the time when the migration took place. A *terminus post quem* is marked by the Roman campaigns in the middle and lower Danube on the first two decades of the 1st century A.D., but specially by the founding of the Kingdom of Vannius in the years 17 –20 A.D. We can also deduce from the literary sources even a *terminus ante quem* of the migration, more precisely the date when the Kingdom of Vannius ends, where we find Iazyg horsemen among his troops (about 50 A.D.). It remains a quite long period for dating, researched by many historians. We consider that this migration took place sometime after the founding of the Kingdom of Vannius, this is the third decade of the new era. This supposition is based on the fact that there is nothing which can make us believe that even from the beginning of the Quadi kingdom, which its existence of about thirty years

matters, the Sarmatians were already present between the Danube and the Tisa. As their presence in the East of the Carpathians at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. was of short time, as exposed by the archaeological discoveries, but at the same time their settlement inside the Carpathian Basin, next to the Quadi and Marcomanni especially during the constitution of the client kingdom of Vannius, we cannot believe that it could be totally omitted from the literary sources, maybe this migration took place shortly after the year 20 A.D. The alliance with the Quadi, maybe indirectly suggested and eased by the Roman policy, could explain the silence of the literary sources. About the Iazygean penetration on the left bank of the Tisa and the direct contact between the Dacians and the Iazyges, we have information from Pliny the Elder, Seneca and Tacitus. Generally, the data are also confirmed by archaeological finds.

The references of the literary sources on the events from the second half of the 1st century A.D. are quite poor. The authors don't tell anything about the campaigns and population displacements started by Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus or the governor of Pannonia Tampus Flavianus. As an example, Tacitus never mentions the active policy in the space between the Tisa and the Danube in the reign of Nero. But he offers valuable information about the events of the years 68 – 69 A.D. Besides the clashes between Romans and Dacians mentioned by Tacitus, we know that in those moments the Iazyges had the political and military power between the Danube and the Tisa. Based on this source, the year 69 A.D. became a certified *terminus post quem* from which we can talk about direct relations between the Romans and the Iazyges settled on the middle course of the Danube.

The events from the last decades before the conquest of Dacia in the researched area are told by some Roman authors: Eutropius, Martial or Pliny the Younger. The problem of those conflicts is cleared enough, being unnecessary to insist about it. But less clear is the fight of Dacians against Iazyges between both Daco-Roman Wars, started by a discussion about a territory of Western Dacia mentioned by Cassius Dio. Even today we don't know the place and the exact chronology of the Daco-Iazygean War, not being sure about the location of the territory "seized" by Decebalus. In this case we follow the most recent opinions which consider that it was a strip of land north of the Mureş river,

not necessarily the Banat area, where the Iazygean presence at this date couldn't be confirmed.

One had identified just two mentions of the Roman - Iazygean Wars of the years 107-108 A.D., one in *Historia Augusta* and the other in a paragraph of Jordanes. Both of them don't give precise information, and what we know is principally due to other sources. For the Roman – Iazygean War of the years 117 – 118 A.D., the main source is *Historia Augusta* and a paragraph of Cassius Dio that mentions the end of the conflicts.

Literary sources about the military events that took place during the reign of Antoninus Pius are almost inexistent. The information from Aelius Aristides, Polynaïos and those who appear on the *Sibilyne Oracles* or *Historia Augusta*, about the situation in the “Tiso-Danubian” *Barbaricum* in the fifth and sixth decades of the 2nd century A.D., are shallow and just had a secondary role in the reconstitution of the political history of the area.

A few more information appear on the literary sources regarding the Marcomannic Wars. We have Cassius Dio firstly in sight, from which we have important hints about the alliances within the Barbarian populations located between Dacia and Pannonia and the chronology of the battles. From him we know about the permission granted by Marcus Aurelius to the Iazyges for crossing the territory of Dacia to trade with the Roxolani. Also, from this source we have knowledge about different ethnic groups located on the boundaries of Pannonia or Dacia, like the Vandals, who in their migration to the South will influence the history of the populations of the researched area in the next century. We don't know from literary sources about incursions of the Free Dacians from the West during the Marcomannic Wars. Only during the reign of Commodus, the *Sibilyne Oracles* talk about those “megaloï Dahai” pacified by C. Vettius Sabinianus Iulius Hospes, Dacia's governor.

The information from literary sources about the history of the Barbarian space between Dacia and Pannonia during the years 180 – 275 A.D. are very scarce. From Cassius Dio, we know about the measures took by Caracalla during his visit to Dacia, as well as the release of the Dacian hostages by Macrinus, his successor. Until the reign of Maximinus Thrax, we don't have any data about the conflicts between the Dacians and Iazyges from literary sources. The battles of the years 235-236 between the Romans and

the Dacians and Iazyges, told by *Historia Augusta*, could be an allusion to a possible Daco-Iazygean alliance against the Empire.

The same source reminds about conflicts with the Sarmatians during the regime of the usurpers Ingenuus and Regalianus, the embassy of Censorinus in the Sarmatian's country, as well as the victorious campaigns of Aurelianus. The battles with the Iazyges of the years 258 – 260 are also reminded by Jordanes, who later tells us the events after the abandon of Dacia and he also makes a presentation of the ethno-demographic situation on the middle Danube. From him we know about a Vandal presence on the Crişana area.

The same *Historia Augusta* remains the main source regarding the military events of the first decades after the abandon of Dacia. From it we know about the Sarmatians who were defeated by Probus and Carus, because they became a great danger after the abandon of Dacia. After his campaign, Carus would execute or took into slavery tens of thousands Sarmatians. Diocletian's campaigns of 286 and 293, evoked on *Panegirici Latini*, will stress even more the decay of the Sarmatian power in the Tisa Plain. The wars against the Iazyges carried by the Emperors would continue during the Tetrarchy. We find a reference to the fights with the Sarmatians of the year 305 in *Anonymus Valesii*, while the campaigns led by Diocletian and Galerius in the territory of the Sarmatians of Eastern Pannonia, are also reminded even by Eutropius.

This unstable situation would perpetuate in the next decades. Ammianus Marcellinus is the best literary source for the political history of the space between Dacia and Pannonia during the reign of Constantine the Great. From it we know the succession of the events before and during the rebellion of the *Limigantes* and the measures of population redistribution, especially on the boundaries area, taken by Constantine the Great. We also found less detailed descriptions about the *Limigantes* rebellion in *Anonymus Valesii* and Eusebius of Caesarea. The information from Ammianus Marcellinus would also show the fact that after the victorious Roman campaigns of the Tetrarchy, the alliance system would be restarted after being neglected maybe on the second half of the 3rd century A.D. From other sources, like Zosimos or *Panegirici*, we know about the last fights against the Quadi and Sarmatians under Constantius II or Theodosius I.

We can conclude that an unclear and composite image about the history of the space between Dacia and Pannonia emerge from the literary sources. Due to this it is necessary to use all kinds of support that could clear the problem. In our work, we only look about the conclusions obtained from the numismatic research.

ANALYSIS OF THE MONETARY DISCOVERIES IN THE BARBARIAN AREA BETWEEN DACIA AND PANNONIA. CIRCULATION OR MONETARY PRESENCE?

The second part of the thesis is dedicated to the numismatic analysis. We enquired the monetary discoveries between Pannonia and Dacia during the 2nd – 4th centuries A.D. The research method is based on three steps. First, we made the monetary finds repertory (coin hoards and isolated pieces) and we grouped them geographically and by denominations in each spot. Finally we placed them on maps. Then we have tried to separate the Sarmatian archaeological area from the Dacian and Germanic archaeological areas. Only after doing these works, the results were interpreted.

The analysis starts with the coin hoards, which represents from a quantitative point of view about 95% of the discovered monetary mass. By charting the places where they were founded and determining the coin hoards horizons, we achieved information about the political and economical history of the researched area. The coin hoards were studied with taking care of their origin, confirmed or supposed, from a certain Barbarian area: Sarmatian, Dacian or Daco-Germanic. The 70 coin hoards from the repertoire make a total of over 19000 coins. In the Sarmatian coin hoards discovered on 47 places, the number of coins is about 14500, while in the traditional Dacians area with finds in 23 places we can only have about 5000 coins. At a double number of Sarmatian coin hoards, the number of coins triplicate. Thus, the Sarmatians, having the political and military control, had a more consistent monetary mass. Although it is noticeable that the majority of the supposed Dacian coin hoards are dated on the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century. The confirmation is in accordance with the area history, in which the role of the traditional communities would diminish constantly during the 3rd century. At the same

time, many of the Sarmatian coin hoards ends on the second half of the 4th century, once with the end of its domination on the Tisa Plain.

From a chronological point of view, in the case of many coin hoards the accumulation begins after the Daco-Roman Wars due to the relative stability. We have a monetary growth until the last decades of the 2nd century. Testimonies of this are the coin hoards of Abony, Caporal Alexa, Csenger, Curug, Elek, Hetényegyháza, Kecel II, Kiszombor, Kócsér, Lăpușnic, Ludos, Mende, Miskolc, Nádudvar, Oradea, Timișoara II, Tiszaföldvár, Tiszanána, Tiszanagyrev, Tyukod and Vânători, comprising over 4500 coins.

After the year 192, the quantity of coins emitted by the Severians and their successors that enters between Dacia and Pannonia diminishes considerably. The fall of the Military Anarchy century is showed by the reduced number of coin hoards with pieces from this century. We can mention the coin hoards of Batâr, Diosig, Kunfeherto (the only *Antoninians* coin hoard discovered between the Danube and the Tisa), Recaș, Timișoara I and Timișoara III.

Starting with Diocletian, but especially under the rule of Constantine I, we confirm a growth of the monetary quantity. Not less than 19 coin hoards from the lazygean area, which its accumulation usually begins in the last part of the 3rd century, continues with high annual mediums during the reign of Constantine I and his heirs.

The way in which the discoveries map highlights the coin hoards horizons, that are linked to notable events of the researched period, it is also important. In the West of Dacia 8 coin hoards were discovered, that could be linked to the Marcomannic Wars and the population displacements of the area (Vandal migration): Aștileu, Băsești, Cap. Alexa, Covasânt, Oarța de Sus, Sighetul Marmației, Pir and Ulmeni. In this case, we can talk about an horizon of coin hoards distributed over a great area of the Mureș Plain up to the northern area of the *Limes Porolissensis*.

In our study we observed some coin hoards that ends with coins minted under the rule of Septimius Severus: Almaș, Elek, Ghirișa, Kecel II, Kiszombor, Mende, Miskolc, Tiszaföldvár and Teceu Mic. From the horizons point of view, we must focus firstly on the three coin hoards next to the Pannonic Danube: Kecel I, Kecel II and Mende, and also

the one from Miskolc, located further north, behind the line of “Sarmatian Walls”. We know that the period between the 2nd and 3rd centuries is marked by the Roxolanian migration, that could influence those burials. It is even difficult to comprise horizons of coin hoards with coins from the 3rd century, because in this century there are still used the coins of good quality from the anterior period.

The events from the middle of the 3rd century are reflected on the finds from six places: Satu Mare, Batăr (coin hoard? hidden under the rule of Gordian), Diosig, Sălacea (last coins are from Gallienus), Neudorf and Șimleu I (last coins are from Aurelian). For example, the coin hoard from Sălacea is mixt, a fact that could make us believe that it is a spoil of war.

Coin hoard horizons can also be supposed on the 4th century. The discoveries map from this century shows a notorious concentration in the Southern area of the Pannonic Bag and the Eastern bank of the Tisa. The menace from the Goths, the intervention of Constantine and the *Limigantes* Rebellion could be the causes of some hiddings. The arrival of the Huns and the end of the Sarmatian domination in the area during the second half of the IV century are reflected in 3 coin hoards discovered at Hajdunanas, Ocsod and Galoșpetreu. The last coin hoard was hidden in the period of the Goth penetration toward the West, pushed by the Huns.

The discovered coin hoards also highlights the evolution of the relations between the Sarmatians and the Dacian tribes. The finds along the Mureș and the eastern affluents of the Tisa shows a penetration of the Sarmatians to the East of the Tisa during the 2nd century. We started this supposition from the analysis of five coin hoards. The first one, discovered at Covăsânt, has the latest coin dated to the middle of the 2nd century (Faustina Senior), which supposes a burial due to a menace that came from the West or the North. It is possible that this coin hoard belonged to a local who buried it due to the Sarmatians attacks. The coin hoard of Elek is attributed to the Sarmatians and has its last coin dated on 192; it reinforces the hypothesis that on this date the Sarmatian tribes had crossed to the left bank of the Tisa and entreder the plain between the Criș and Mureș. Also, the discovery of Salonta presents an interesting situation. We have a “tailed coin hoard”, where the 141 Republican and Augustean coins are completed with a coin from

Commodus, a sign that the last owner (probably a Sarmatian), got an older coin hoard (maybe from a local) and buried it at the end of the II century. Likewise, the coin hoard of Vânători with its 150 denarii from Domitian to Hadrian, could suggest a burial by its owner due to some menace coming from the West. Maybe, that until the end of the 2nd century, the Sarmatians could reach the plains to South of the Timiș river. On behalf of this hypothesis it came the coin hoard of 160 denarii from Ludoș (in the Serbian Banat), that ends with a coin from Iulia Domna. It also could be from a local that hides it from the Iazygean menace?

We can deduce from the analysis of the coin hoards a co-operation between the different tribes of Dacia and Pannonia, facilitated by coins. Our interest is to know at what level took place that kind of relations, if the coin-based exchanges are reserved only to the elites or can we talk about more ample economic relations? From a general view over the dimensions of the coin hoards, we noticed that the majority are small accumulations up to 100 pieces, especially silver coins. So, their owners weren't very wealthy people, but individuals of middle condition. We can suppose that the coin-based economy spreads toward the lower social classes. Even if, it initially enters the elite as a sign of a prestige economy, the development of trade routes between the provinces but also between the Empire and Barbaricum would determinate the access to the coins and the acceptance of the pieces by ever larger categories of Barbarians as an exchange tool.

It should be reminded here that the reduced number of coin hoards and isolated findings from the left bank of the middle course of the Danube in comparison with the more Eastern areas of the lower Tisa Plain, could suggest a commerce largely based on en-gros and barter exchanges. This affirmation is sustained by the wealth of the Danubian coin hoards, who also could indicate a more reduced role of the coin in the commercial scene.

The next chapter of the numismatic research follows the **isolated findings**, more precisely, expose a series of statistical data about the number of findings, their chronological distribution, discovery contexts (settlements, tombs, pieces without context) and analysis by metals and nominals. The repertoire of isolated findings covers 321 localities, that in their surroundings appear one or more monetary findings. The coins placed in the catalogue came from casual findings, settlement contexts or necropoles

dated in the 2nd – 4th centuries. The total number is over 1200 pieces (the mean is 3,73 coins/place); from those, around 800 coins can be better researched chronologically and typologically¹. We noticed that the total number of coins from the repertoire (coin hoards and isolated findings) comprise over 20000 pieces, from which the isolated findings is represents about 5% of the total.

The number of isolated coins minted until Septimius Severus (inclusive) that enters the researched area represents 55,11% of the total number of analyzed coins, while the most of them were minted in the period Antoninus Pius – Marcus Aurelius. The coinage of the 3rd century, until Diocletian², only comprises 11,4% of the total. The coins minted from Diocletian and until Theodosius I represents around 33,5% of the total and the most powerful growth is noticed in the first, five decades of the 4th century. In the second half of this century, with the fall of the political power in the area, the monetary circulation would be completely destroyed.

The research by metals and nominals also offers important data about the way in which the Barbarian societies receive and accept the coins.

If the silver coins predominate in the researched area during the 2nd century and the first two thirds of the 3rd century, the monetary reforms of Diocletian and Constantine the Great would determine an almost total reduction of the silver coins that enter the analyzed area. Through all the 4th century, the percentual distribution based on nominals changes. From the total coins of this century, 87% are bronze pieces.

Another problem that got our attention is about the subaerated denarii which appears in isolated findings. From over 400 denarii of the 1st – 3rd centuries, 5,2% are subaerated. This quite high percentage is a good indicator of the commercial functions that the coin underwent on the populations located between Dacia and Pannonia. The economic role of the coin is also confirmed by the superior percentage of coins that shows up in findings without context or in settlements, besides the ones found in tombs. It cannot be omitted the fact that many of the coins from the 1st – 2nd centuries that appear in tombs dated in the 3rd – 4th centuries had a great wearing, showing that they were used

¹ The other coins couldn't be determined, or the bibliographic references were shallow.

² Without the coins minted under Septimius Severus and Diocletian.

a very long period of time before being taken away from the economic circuit by placing them on tombs or transforming them into pendants.

The conclusion of this chapter is that the majority of the coins which entered the Barbarian world between Dacia and Pannonia were minted in the 2nd century, especially during the rule of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. They reached the area due to trade, diplomatic relations or armed conflicts. The deep fall of the Military Anarchy century would be followed by a substantial growth in the first half of the 4th century. Although this revitalization would never attain the maximum from the prosperous period of the Antonine Dynasty .

A great part of the numismatic analysis, sights the **important places in the monetary and commercial traffic**, following the determination of some Barbarian power centers between Dacia and Pannonia. To identify the trade routes and the exchange points, beside the numismatic material gathered, we used other categories of imported objects which entered the area under research: *terra sigilata*, stamped pottery, fibulae and glass beads. The superposition and comparison of the places with the find locations permit us to identify both the principal military/commercial roads that linked Dacia to Pannonia or Moesia, as well as the Barbarian areas where the dominant tribes had their residence. For studying the important places and directions of the monetary traffic, we divided the analyzed period in three chronological stages, in connection with the important events in the history of the area: 106 – 192, 192 – 275 and 275 – second half of the 4th century. We also applied this delimitation to the charting of the places with the findings location.

We can distinguish two phases of the trade in the analyzed territory. The first is the so-called “provincial phase”, which starts in the period of the first Antoninians, in the first decades after the foundation of the Dacia province. It is a phase of consolidating the links between the newly founded province and the Western Roman territory. The security of the Ripa Pannonica could only be assured by the establishment of a clientelar relationship with the Iazygean center of power on the middle course of the Tisa. Indeed, after the wars of 117 – 118 A.D., for almost half a century we witness a relative stability of the area. This fact assured the development of the trade in the well determined directions. The great quantity of coins minted under the rule of Trajan, Hadrian and

Antoninus Pius that enters the area indicate both a clientelar relationship and also the start of exchange relations. The many Roman discoveries along the Mureş river, as well as the many coins from the Iazygean power center delimited by the Criş, Mureş and Tisa rivers, suggest close links between the Barbarians and the Empire.

A second commercial period, the “imperial phase”, begins to develop since the middle of the 2nd century and, after the interruption caused by the Marcomannic Wars, it would have a period of maximum flourishing ranging from the rule of Septimius Severus until the first quarter of the 3rd century. In this epoch, many *terra sigilata* pots and accessories – jewels (especially fibulae) from the Western provinces workshops would enter the Barbarian market. The import of glass beads, that started especially from Tibiscum and Porolissum (Roman Dacia), also meets a period of apogee. The depreciated coins minted in the period after the rule of Septimius Severus had a weak penetration in the “Tiso-Danubian” space. Most probably we have the use of an older monetary fund as market currency.

The trade begins to decline from the second half of the 3rd century. The commercial routes are affected by the new population groups that entered the area, while the centers of power move towards the South. In the first half of the 4th century, the commerce can be only noticed to the South of the Mureş, in the new Sarmatian center of power that keep contact with the Roman centers of the Danube.

We noticed that in the period of commercial apogee at the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century, the imported Roman goods are concentrated at the points of confluence of the Eastern tributaries in the area of the middle course of the Tisa river. The existence of placement markets in those territories gave us the right to believe in the existence of a Iazygean center of power where the luxury Roman goods and the coins were concentrated.

The Roman centers for distributing merchandises towards *Barbaricum* are linked to the starting points of the most important roads from Pannonia, Dacia or Moesia. About the products from the Western workshops, Aquincum would play a distinguished role. It is from here that important roads toward *Barbaricum* started. The first road crossed the Danube and continued toward the North and Northwest, supplying with products the Quadi markets. The second road went to the East, touching the Tisa river in the area of

the actual Tiszafüred and continues further toward Porolissum. Another route started from Aquincum and went Southeast, touching the Tisa river in the confluence area of the Criş (Csongrád); here it probably intersected with the road that started from Intercisa toward the East and continued further alongside the Mureş river towards Dacia.

The road that started from Lugio toward Partiscum and far away on the Mureş river up to Micia and Apulum has been certainly archaeological confirmed.

The road alongside the Timiş river had a unique importance for exporting the glass products of Tibiscum toward the Barbarian market.

The mentioned West – East routes were intersected by the road that started from the Danube following the course of the Tisa to the North until being close to the river's elbow area, from where it continued Southeast up to Porolissum.

We affirm at the chapter's end that in the 2nd – 3rd centuries, the analyzed Barbarian area was strongly influenced by the Roman Empire both from Pannonia and Dacia. The Roman products entered in the area politically controlled by the Sarmatians, and are concentrated in the area of their power centers on the middle course of the Tisa river. The populations from the upper Tisa but also the Western Germanic tribes (Quadi), take benefit out of the trade with Rome. The first ones were strongly influenced by the powerful commercial center of Porolissum, which offered them manufactured products in exchange for raw materials. At the same time, the Quadi following their old tradition of collaborating with Rome (Pannonia), and having permanent relations on the commercial and military spheres with their Southern Sarmatian neighbours, would plentifully benefit from the monetary and goods traffic of this period. The presence of imported Roman goods in the Free Dacian settlement areas of the West and Northwest of the Roman province is quite reduced, which is a sign of a politically dominated population and a weakly represented elite.

We assist in the 4th century to the instalation of a powerful Germanic center East of the “Sarmatian Walls” and to the North of the Criş river. The Northern trade routes would slowly lose their importance. The Sarmatians would come South of the Mureş river and continue their relationship with Rome via a South – North route alongside the wall system.

The social function of the coin inside the tribal societies of the west of Roman Dacia is the subject of another chapter. In the text of this chapter there are analyzed the imitations, coin–jewels and gold coins. By the study of those categories of pieces, we want to demonstrate a prestige role of the coin in the Barbarian society, much more important than in the provincial area communities, but also to notice the differences that appear between the different tribes or ethnical groups. About the imitations, we can affirm that the counterfeit coins (made in the Empire or the Barbarian world) – as their weight and title indicates – weren't struck for a fraudulent use but for supplying the lack of cash; even the hoarding of those imitations shows that they were prized and represented a value (a material or symbolical one). The simple fact that those coins appears in settlement contexts or are hoarded, indicates us that they had circulatory value and their owners considered them like the official coins.

A clearer indicator for the social role of the coin in the Barbarian world than in the case of imitations, are the pieces transformed in pendants – perfored coins and those which had a link for hanging. The repertoire of isolated coins gather not less than 36 of those specimens, present in 24 places. Percentually, they represent around 3–4% of the total number of isolated pieces. Also over two thirds are found in tombs. We could affirm that the great number of coin – jewels from the “Tiso-Danubian” Barbarian area, compared with the situation inside the provinces³, reveals a more outlined prestige role of the coin in the society.

The gold coins (their appearance and their datation periods) are determinant for establishing the political and social relations in the area. We identified 21 locations where appear 26 isolated discoveries of gold coins. In 19 locations, those pieces are dated to the end of the 3rd century and the next one, while 11 of these finds are concentrated on the North of the Crişul Repede river and the East of the “Walls”, limitating in this zone an area of Germanic political domination (Gepidic?), who kept a clientelar relationship with Rome. The other isolated gold coins from the end of the 3rd century and the 4th century are concentrated in the area of the “Sarmatian Walls” of the Banat. Also in this area it appeared two coin hoards that contained gold pieces. Those are the hoard of Biled (Timiş

³ The phenomenon looks to be very limited in the Roman provinces of the Danubian basin (nothing about this on *Găzdac 2002*).

County), composed of 2000 coins (gold, silver, bronze)⁴ and the one from Borča (Serbian Banat), composed of 18 gold coins of the 4th century. The two hoards appear in the new area of Sarmatian domination South of the Mureş river. The gold coins (which came both from isolated finds or hoards) are relatively numerous in the Sarmatian power centers of the 4th century. From that we deduce, for that period, a better represented social stratification than in the past centuries.

As a conclusion, we notice that alongside its economical function, the coin played a pronounced social role in the tribal society between Dacia and Pannonia. The few imitations, many coin – jewels and gold pieces show us that their owners have seen in the coin not only an instrument destined to exchanges, but also a value with rank and symbolical connotations.

The analogies and differences among the Barbarians between Dacia and Pannonia and those from the neighbouring Barbarian areas (Iazyges and Dacians of the West, populations of the upper Tisa, Quadi, Muntenia's Getae, Carps) forms the text of the penultimate chapter from the analytical part. We noticed that in the study of the monetary phenomena in the area between Dacia and Pannonia, the two numerical dominating groups of population in the II – III centuries, the Sarmatians and the Dacians of the West, have analogies with the neighbouring Barbarian areas. If the situation of the Iazyges is very similar to the realities inside the Vandal, Quadian or Carpic community, on the Dacians of the West, the coin presence has analogies in the settling area of the Getae. Those realities are directly linked to the role that the Barbarian tribes had in the area. The warrior elite is well represented on the Sarmatians, Germanics and Carps, from where we can observe areas with cash concentration and a significative number of coin hoards. In the case of the Dacians of the West, the monetary reality was imposed by the Roman control, the lack of a powerful elite and the permanent Germanic and Sarmatic pressure from the North and West.

⁴ The percentage of gold coins from the hoard is unknown.

The final chapter of the numismatic analysis looks to offer an answer to the question that if between Dacia and Pannonia the coin could be watched as part of a monetary economy or it just played a social role and only represented a prestige good and for determining the rank inside the Barbarian community. Finally we can strongly affirm the fact that the monetary circulation between Dacia and Pannonia depended in a great measure on the traced directions from the inside of the *limes*. From this point of view, the world of those tribal entities appears as a prolongation outside the Roman provincial life. Even further, the affirmation that the coin represents a mean of exchange and a standard of value even more pronounced than in some isolated and less exposed to Romanization areas inside Dacia, isn't uninspired at all. The fact that the tribes of the Porolissum, Aquincum or alongside the lower Mureş area knew and used imperial coins –“strong currency” of the time – even more often than some local communities left inside the province in areas of difficult access and less attractive from the commercial point of view, appears as evident. We can talk about a limited monetary economy on the Sarmatians and Dacians. The fundamental distinction from the Roman world isn't linked to the absence of the coin, but to its relative restricted role played within the society. The trade contacts based on coins especially pointed a small exchange that took place between partners of middle condition, indicating us the role won by the coin in this kind of relations. The monetary findings show also the civilizing role that Rome had and how the Dacians kept a relative independence after the year 106.

We must remark the fact that for the Iazygean society, the economical function of the coin and its social function must be analyzed from an unitary perspective. Things evolve within society located at the periphery of the Roman world; if in the first three centuries A.D. it is noticed a tendency toward precious metal coins, the penetration on market of the bronze “small change”⁵ during the next centuries came to confirm the spread of the commercial exchanges based on coins.

⁵ Even inside the Empire, the bronze coins predominated in the IV century; see also *Piso 2008*.

The number of monetary finds, that are differentiated concentrated by areas, contours a relation of center-periphery within the Iazygean system and living area. The presence of coins, some of them very weared, in the areas of contact with other tribes shows the mercantile affinities of those warrior-shepherds. The discoveries located alongside the ditches of the West of Crișana shows an intense trade with the Eastern areas.

In conclusion, we can state that the coin, present in the Sarmatian society, represents an exchange tool and at the same time played an important social role. This kind of perception is specific to nomadic or seminomadic societies, and can be even observe in the actual populations that still live under those ancestral settings.

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