

HABILITATION THESIS
(POST-DOCTORAL THESIS)

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**The Roman History, Economy and Daily Life Reflected by the Numismatic Evidence in
the Provinces from the Middle and Lower Danube (2nd – 4th Centuries AD)**

ABSTRACT

In the years following the defense of my PhD thesis at the University of Oxford in 2002 my research targeted several directions in concordance with the latest international trends in my field of research:

a). The numismatic corpora.

The research was mainly aiming to create a huge database of coin finds from the most important Roman sites from Romania, especially, the former territory of Roman Dacia. At the moment the most important sites of Roman Dacia or the most well researched ones have the numismatic evidence exhaustively published at the highest standards of research in this field.

The research on this direction was not limited only to study and identify more than 6,000 Roman coins but also to analyse the numismatic, economic and historical information provided by the numismatic evidence. Thus, it was possible to establish general and specific patterns of coin circulation, daily life aspects and history of the sites under study.

Visibility of results: 9 books, 7 articles, 8 lectures.

b). The coins and the archaeological context

This part is focused on a case study which turned to be a representative one regarding the interpretation of coin finds from archaeological point of view with the advantages as well as the pitfalls that the coins can provide. The work consisted of 8 years of archaeological campaigns and investigations of the old collections at the largest Roman site from Central and South-East Europe,

Carnuntum, Austria. The results have demonstrated the moments of growth and fall not only at the level of the city but also by each edifice where the archaeological context was provided with accuracy.

Visibility of results: 1 book, 3 articles, 4 lectures.

c). The interpretation of hoards in archaeological context

Owing to the recent updated methodology on coin hoards' analyse the coin deposits were studied according to their final destination, an aspect provided by the context in which they were found and by the historical background of the findspot. The research proved that although all the coin deposits are catalogued as hoards each of them have a different explanation of accumulation and the cause of lost/hiding/placing: a hoard buried in the time of danger; a hoard lost because of a local fire; a purse money thrown in the fire as a robbery at the public baths; a coin deposit as offering when a new house was built.

Visibility of results: 1 book, 3 articles, 3 lectures.

d). The coinage as an element for historical events

At this point comparative statistic indices were used to demonstrate how the coin circulation can indicate the conquest and the abandonment of a Roman province. On the same topic I used the coin imagery and the production date in combination with archaeological data to demonstrate the existence of an unknown historical event.

Visibility of results: 2 articles, 2 lectures.

e). The Roman legislation regarding counterfeiting and the field reality

The analyse of coin finds from various sites have produce a large number of plated/counterfeited coin which in some cases even overwhelmed the genuine ones. When comparing with other sites throughout the Roman Empire I came to the conclusion that Roman Dacia was part of an epidemic phenomenon in which the state played a major role.

Visibility of results: 3 articles, 2 lectures

f). The management of coin supply in the time of crisis

A comparative approach between the coin finds in the Roman provinces from the Middle and Lower Danube have proved that what it has been considered before to be a parallel monetary policy, now, it turns to be a subtle imperial policy to control the coin production and let the towns to worry about the metal to be coined.

Visibility of results: 2 articles, 2 lectures

g) Coins in funerary contexts

I followed the new trend of research regarding the interpretation of artefacts in funerary contexts – symbols of group and individual mentality. Using statistic, comparative methods and databases from a large area (the Middle and Lower Danube) I identified those cases when a specific funerary mentality was running following a deliberate selection of the coin reverses placed in graves. Then, the number, denominations and position of coins in grave and next to them together with the study of epigraphic and literary sources led to understanding of various funerary mentalities in the Roman times.

Visibility of results: 2 articles, 3 lectures

h) Methodological works on reinterpreting coin finds information

When confronted the material with bibliography strong contradictions came to light. The lack of knowledge, the bad training in this field of research or the misinterpretation of evidence were the main causes to reach a false scientific picture. Once these causes were identified and eliminated all those “abnormal” situations turned to follow well-established patterns.

Visibility of results: 2 articles, 2 lectures

Such achievements were made possible following my research activity within the next research grants:

1. Dacia and the Roman Empire in the time of Trajan. Integration and cultural interferences
2. From the Roman denarius to the euro. The Roman coinage in Dacia – the model of the financial integration in Roman Europe (2nd-4th centuries AD)

3. The impact of European monetary economy upon the micro- and macro-zones of the province of Roman Dacia

4. The phenomenology of space and funerary anthropology in the context of archaeological, geophysical and topographical survey at the necropolis of the Roman town of Porolissum (2nd-3rd centuries AD)

5. Warriors and military retainers in Transylvania of the 7th-9th centuries

II. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

In the future, my research is targeting two types of projects:

A. Short-term projects: the numismatic corpus of Drobeta; the numismatic corpus of Tibiscum; the gold coins discovered at Grădiștea de Munte in the 18th-19th centuries; the Roman coin hoard of cast denarii from Alba Iulia (Apulum).

B. Long-term projects: the distribution of coin hoards in the Roman Empire - patterns of violence; to organizing and update the coin database of the Archaeological Park Carnuntum; to organizing and update a coin database for the ancient coin finds from Romania; the identification and the recovery of smuggled ancient artefacts from Romania; archaeological campaigns at the Archaeological Park Carnuntum; archaeological campaigns at Grădiștea de Munte, coin expert.

Some of these projects are already running within the following research grants:

1. Orbis Romanus and barbaricum. The nomad barbarian world (the Sarmatians) around the province of Dacia and its relations with the Roman Empire

2. Roman versus barbarian identity – the phenomenology of acculturation. The case of Roman Dacia and the adjacent barbarian world

3. Fwf-Projekt Sarmizegetusa Regia 1803/1804 (University of Vienna)