

HABILITATION THESIS:

**SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY
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1. RESEARCH ON ROMAN SCULPTURE

Consequent to my Ph.D. thesis on Social Status and Image in Roman Dacia I felt necessary to continue the research on honorific and funerary statues, adding a chapter on votive and cult statues in order to create a complete image of Roman sculpture and statuesque in Dacia. I tried to define cult statues *versus* votive statues and statuettes and discuss the possible criteria of separating statue bases of gods from simple altars. The statues themselves are to be divided into two categories, imports and local products (the main criterion is provided by petrographic analysis). Some good quality statues, such as the *Hecate Trimorphis* from *Salinae*, Apollo (or Dionysus) from *Apulum*, or Aesculapius from *Sarmizegetusa*). Like several statuettes, they were produced in workshops from Asia Minor where “classical” models were still at hand. As far as the local production is concerned, I separated the products of the *marmorarii* workshop at Bucova, from other local workshops. I also tried to follow its evolution, from good quality products at the middle of the second century (Jupiter from Ampelum, a perfect replica to Zeus from Otricoli), to mediocre works at the turn of the century (Neptune, Hercules and Diana from Sarmizegetusa), and further to statues where handicraft replaced sculptural art in the third century (e.g. Venus carved by Claudius Saturninus at Sarmizegetusa).

I also improved the typology of male and female funerary statues and I managed to establish firm stylistic dating criteria, which allow a more accurate placing in time of any statue of the kind. The starting point was the evolution of sculpting techniques in architectural decoration, primarily the evolution of Corinthian capitals. Those firmly dated by inscriptions around AD 150 have an elaborate modelling, which renders the organic aspect of the acanthus plant. At the turn of the century and in the first years of the Severans capitals were mass produced, which involved the extensive use of the drill, consequently the leafs resembled more a decorative lance than a real plant. The extensive use of the drill, producing a sharp contrast between lighted surfaces and dark shaded grooves, was introduced at the beginning of the third century as the decoration of the two *nymphae* in front of the forum of Sarmizegetusa (which are also well dated epigraphically). The loss of organic volumes and the reduction of surfaces to geometric planes was completed at the end of the Severans and till the middle of the third century, after which the statuesque production ceases in the Dacian province. (cf. Al. Diaconescu, E. Bota, *La décoration architectonique et sculpturale du "forum vetus" Sarmizegetusa: origine, évolution et chronologie*, în *ActaMN* 39-40/I, 2002-2003 [2004], p. 155-196). Thus, a comprehensive image of Roman stone sculpture in Dacia

was made available in the last years by my studies (Al. Diaconescu, *Male and female funerary statues from Roman Dacia*, în *ActaMN* 47-48/I, 2009-2010 (2012), p. 125-203).

I also continued my studies on equestrian and chariot statues, the last category being linked in most of the cases with the triumphant emperor. A special case is the one of the statues for the young prince Caracalla, who was particularly popular in Dacia and in North Africa, as the multitude of chariot statues for him, erected in these regions, prove. (Al. Diaconescu, *Chariot statues (quadrigae) for Caracalla in Dacia and related monuments*, în *The Impact of Rome on Settlement in the Northwestern and Danube Provinces* (St. Altekamp, A. Schäfer ed.) *BAR Int.Ser.* 921, Oxford 2001, p. 129-159 . New chance discoveries added more examples to the bronze statues (**D. Alicu, Al. Diaconescu**, *Recently Found Fragments of Bronze Statues from Colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa*, în *Eph.Nap.* XVIII, 2008, p. 197-206).

Statuettes and other products of minor arts were also part of my research field in the last decades. I was mostly concerned with the perpetuation of Classical models in the small artefacts, some of impressive quality. In my recent book on “Classicism in Minor Arts of Roman Dacia” (Al. Diaconescu, *Clasicismul în artele minore din Dacia romană*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca 2013), I discussed several pieces, which reproduce Greek and Hellenistic models, or works of the Roman period, which were made in classical style. I tried to show how complex the tracing of the models for provincial artefacts is, and how deceptive it might be when several Classical Greek patterns were mixed in Roman works. In fact, most of the Greek Classical and Hellenistic statuesque creations survived in Roman copies. As a matter of fact even in a province such as Dacia there were some perfect copies of ancient masterpieces (such as the Jupiter from *Potaissa*, which reproduces *Zeus Brontaios* of Leochares). There were also versions of such works (Mercurius from Drobeta, which derives from the *Discobolos* of Policleitos, or the beautiful Jupiter of Potaissa, which copies the *Doriphoros* of the same classical sculptor, adding beard and special haircut, plus attributes such the thunders and a mantle over the left arm and forearm). A special case is the gilded bronze maenad from Sarmizegetusa, which is a combination of the statuettes from the famous vase from Derveni, which was most probably elaborated in the workshop of Lissypus. Most likely, in ancient times a collection of molds representing maenads, produces in that workshop, was circulating as far as Dacia (cf. also Al. Diaconescu, *A Bronze Maenad from Sarmizegetusa*, în *ActaMN*, 35/1, 1998, p. 77-86). A similar case is the clay model from Apulum, which was must have been used in some sophisticated bronze or silver workshop. It renders a neo-attic dance scene, combining a Satyr of Classical inspiration with the maenad

of Scopas. Other close replicas of Classical statues are: the bronze Hercules from Tibiscum, reproducing a model by Policleitos, and the marble one from Apulum, inspired by Hercules Farnese, but closer to the Lissypian model than the copy in Rome, signed by Glykon. Even a small negative clay model from Apulum reproduces the Hellenistic statue of the muse Polihymnia. Equally Hellenistic must be the model for the burlesque actor from Sibiu Museum, impersonating a philosopher, and the Dionysos from Apulum (if this last piece is not a modern fake). Other works, such as the bronze Apollo from Kunsthistorischesmuseum in Wien., which combines severe style features with late Classical ones, are re-elaborations in eclectic style during the Roman times. This is also the case of the marble Liber Pater from Apulum, combining late Classical and Hellenistic models in a group created in the Augustan period (cf. also Al. Diaconescu, *A Statue of Liber Pater from Apulum (Alba Iulia)*, în *Acta MN*, 38/I, 2001, p. 161-176).). The bronze Venus from Sarmizegetusa is equally a mixture of Classical and Hellenistic prototypes. The only Roman creation is the vessel (*arrybalos, unguentarium*) from Gilau, which depicts scenes of contest from a gymnasium. Despite the Classical outlook of the figures they have no parallel in Classical or Hellenistic art.

As for the future, I intend to investigate other fields of provincial art and eventually produce a synthesis on Roman art in Dacia. The areas of investigation for young researchers are very large in the field of Roman art, not to take into consideration that the old illustration is in many cases so bad (on technical grounds) so that the simple re-engaging of almost any sculpture or relief would worth the effort.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITY.

In over 40 years of field archaeology, I have always tried to improve my excavation techniques, to adopt new methods and multiple approaches. I was never a treasure hunter or an Indiana Jones, but I started in times when private computers have not been invented, nor were digital photography or total stations, and GPS, air reconnaissance, and satellites, were regarded as methods of espionage. Above all, I was not a solitary archaeologist, and preferred to work in large teams. I cooperated with British, German, French, Swiss and Austrian, even with American scholars for the mutual benefit.

My first stage were the excavations in the Roman auxiliary forts at Gilau and Casei. Together with my tutor Dan Isac and my friend Coriolan Oprenau, we discovered multi stratigraphic excavations and above all the importance of identifying timber structures and the first layers of Roman occupation of a site. Our excavations at “*porta principalis dextra*”

and at the headquarters from Gilau were the first ones in Romanian archaeology that described a clear succession of several building phases, each lasting a few decades, and provided the plans of timber structures which preceded the stone buildings.

My second stage was at Roman Sarmizegetusa, (the only colony of Trajan, cultural and religious center of the Dacian provinces), under the direction of Hadrian Daicoviciu till his tragic disappearance in 1984. Here, starting with the early 1980'ies, I had a first contact with British archaeologists (above all Mike Dawson), who introduced me in new archaeological techniques. The main revolution for us was giving up the old-fashioned diary in favor of context sheets. Traditional trenches were also replaced by wider surfaces, each context being excavated entirely and at once, and not cut several times. Together with Ioan Piso and C. Opreanu, I applied these methods at the excavations at EM 23 (started by Mike Dawson and continued by us) and mostly at *praetorium procuratoris*, where I am excavating at present too.

The third stage was the French Romanian excavation at the Trajanic forum of Sarmizegetusa, between 1989 and 1994. From the great professor Robert Étienne I have learnt how to manage a large-scale excavation, by putting essential questions, fixing clear far-reaching goals and organizing a great number of workers, students and supervisors. He had also a great understanding of ancient life style and of the way it was reflected by built up structures. He also had a great ability in integrating epigraphic information into the excavation. Our first step was to dismantle the theory of the so called "Palace of the Augustales", launched by Constantin Daicoviciu. Together with I. Piso we launched the idea that *colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa* had two forums, an administrative one and a religious one (cf. R. Étienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Les deux forums de la colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa*, în *REA*, XCII, 1990, 3-4, p. 273-296). The three of us, we uncovered the whole Trajanic forum and provided for the first time in Roman archaeology the complete plan of a timber forum (R. Étienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Le forum en bois de Sarmizegetusa (Roumanie)*, in *CRAI* Paris, 1994, p. 147-164). The stone building, first of limestone ad sandstone, later rebuilt in marble, is probably the best documented provincial forum. Besides numerous small finds not less than 100 inscriptions come from here, which enabled us to interpret the function of each architectural space (R. Etienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Les fouilles dans le "forum vetus" de Sarmizegetusa. Rapport général*, în *ActaMN* 39-40/I, 2002-2003 [2004], p. 59-154 ; R.Étienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *L'Archéologie (Le rapport archéologique)*, în *Le forum vetus* de Sarmizegetusa, I, (publié sous la direction de I. Piso). I worked further on the subject, reconstructing the architectural and sculptural

decoration, which led me to the understanding of the ideological messages and propaganda issues involved in this official building [see I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Testo epigrafico, supporto architettonico e contesto archeologico nei fori di Sarmizegetusa*, în *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina, Roma 18-24 settembre 1997*, Roma 1999, p. 125-137; also see further the chapter on architecture). Combining inscriptions, sculptures and architectural decorations, I tried in my book on the two forums of Sarmizegetusa, to turn an abstract building plan into a living complex.

The next stage was my one and a half year scholarship at Cologne (Köln) alongside prof. Werner Eck, where I completed my Classical archaeological education, concerning Roman architecture, Greek and Roman sculpture and social structure, which enabled me to accomplish my Ph.D. In the late 1990'ies I. Piso and me, together with several German colleagues from Cologne, started excavating the space between “*forum vetus*” and “*forum novum*”, and then the “*cryptoporticus*” of the new forum, built under Antoninus Pius. In the early 2.000, alone we talked the northern half of the new forum *piazza* . It had a complex stratigraphy providing interesting data on the first occupation layers, which contained timber houses built by the Trajanic colonists. These excavations should put an end to the theory of the town emerging directly from a legionary fortress (Al. Diaconescu, *The Towns of Roman Dacia. An overview of recent archaeological research in Romania*, în *Roman Dacia. The Making of a provincial society* (W.S. Hanson, I.P. Haynes ed.) (*Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 56*) Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2004, p. 97-103) .

After an interruption, I returned to *Sarmizegetusa* and with my colleagues from Cluj Museum, Carmen Ciongradi and Emilian Bota, we started an ambitious program of finishing and publishing the many objectives started by our predecessors, partly excavated and never properly published. We concentrated first on the temples area, with very good results at the so-called “Great Temple”, which proved to be a place of imperial cult, where *Hercules-Commodus*, *Diana-Crispina* and *Iuno Sospita* were worshiped. In the last years, Richard Petrowski (Speyer-Heidelberg) and Ioana Oltean (Exeter) joined us for reopening the excavations at the headquarters of the financial governor of Dacia Apulensis, “*praetorium procuratoris Augusti*”. This excavation became also a training ground for students from several universities, such as Exeter, Heidelberg, Wien and Cluj. The site is the first to deal with such a facility serving as a “provincial bank”, and raises a lot of problems concerning the use of different parts of the building.

Another site that I investigated was Apulum, the military and political capital of Roman Dacia. It is the biggest Roman settlement in the middle and lower Danube provinces,

comparable only to Carnuntum. It comprised the fortress of the 13th legion Gemina, which was garrisoned here from Trajan to Aurelianus, and three separate civilian settlements. First, there were the *canabae*, the agglomeration with restricted autonomy, which grew around the fortress. Second, there was an Antonine *municipium* which eventually became *colonia* under Commodus (initially it was a settlement of Trajanic colonists who were settled 2.2 km south of the fortress). Third, there was another town, a *municipium* founded by Septimius Severus (presumably the *colonia nova Apulensis*, mentioned at the middle of the 3rd century). At Apulum was also located the headquarters of the consular governor of the Dacian provinces (*consularis trium Daciarum*). When I first arrived there with I. Piso and C. Opreanu, the topography of this peculiar place was absolutely blurred. In 1989 we determined the position of the eastern rampart and wall of the first town, *municipium Aurelium*, later *colonia Aurelia*, which we identified under the present days quarter of Alba Iulia, known as Partos (initially the Roman settlement was a district, *pagus*, of Sarmizegetusa, which around AD 180 gained municipal status). Further, I located the north wall of the colony and then the western one. On this occasion I discovered by chance the sanctuary of Liber Pater, which I lately excavated. I also identified the southern wall of the Severan *municipium*, which I could thus locate on “Dealul Furcilor” and in the quarter known as Alba Carolina. East of the Roman fortress lied the huge headquarters of the consular governor, which was partly excavated in the 19th century, and published as a huge bath complex, despite several inscriptions mentioning provincial governors and their stuff, which were found there. With I. Piso, we proved that it was part of the governor’s palace, along with other parts of it, which were later excavated. By 1992, when I published the paper on Apulum in the acts of the Swiss-Romanian colloquium [Al. Diaconescu, I. Piso, *Apulum*, in *La politique édititaire dans les provinces de l'Empire romain*, (D. Alicu, H. Boegly eds.) Cluj Napoca, 1993, p. 67-83, the topography of the Roman settlements of Apulum was clear, and each entity had a firm position in the general plan of this huge site [see also Al. Diaconescu, *The Towns of Roman Dacia. An overview of recent archaeological research in Romania*, in *Roman Dacia. The Making of a provincial society* (W.S. Hanson, I.P. Haynes ed.) (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 56) Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2004, p. 103-117 and 134-137].

In 1998 I initiated with my friends Ian Haynes and Alfred Schäfer the Apulum Project, which was to reunite students from London, Berlin, Alba Iulia, and Cluj. The objective was the shrine of Liber Pater, which I discovered by chance in 1989 and partly excavated till 1992 [cf. A. Schäfer, Al. Diaconescu, *Das Liber Pater Heiligtum von Apulum*, in *Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion* (H. Cancik, J. Rüpke Hrgst); Tübingen 1997, p.

195-218]. We implemented several new methods, combining land survey with GIS, magnetometry with DPR, or soil analysis and bones, for reconstructing the ancient landscape and life (flora and fauna). The excavation method was borrowed from MOLAS and consisted of Single Context Planning [Al. Diaconescu, I. Haynes, A. Schäfer, *The Apulum Project. Summary report of the 1998 and 1999 seasons*, in *The Impact of Rome on Settlement in the Northwestern and Danube Provinces* (St. Altekamp, A. Schäfer ed.) BAR Int.Ser. 921, Oxford 2001, p. 115-128; cf. ; I. Haynes, *Apulum: the shrine of Liber Pater*, in *Current World Archaeology* (CWA) 10, 2005, p. 38-45]. The most spectacular results came from the combination of several small finds, which eventually shrew a bright light on the complex cult activities that took place in the shrine of Liber Pater. Besides the nice collection of statuettes and inscriptions found by me, the discovery of big cult pits (*favissae*), containing a lot of wasted cult material, enabled us to reconstruct ceremonies and rituals which were performed there. There were of course banquets, small palls or ritual sketches, special cakes and sacred dishes were consumed. Wine (both the new one, *vinum doliare*, and the old one, *vinum amphoridium*) was produced on the spot, and consumed at specific festivals. In the shrine must have functioned several workshops, producing goods used in cult activities, such as big jars for the must (*dolia*), recipients for maturing the wine (*amphorae*), drinking wine cups (*canthari*), bowls for cooking special dishes and clay molds (*crustula*) for baking ritual cakes or vases for burning incenses (*turribula*). There were also more prosaic activities giving good use to the bones and skins of the victims, carving cult reliefs. This made of Apulum project a leading site in cult archaeology, and the many studies published so far prove the importance of small finds in interpreting such an archaeological complex [A. Schäfer, M. Fiedler, C. Höpken, *Sakrale Räume und Kultpraktiken in städtischen Zentren Dakiens*, in *Humboldt-Spektrum* 9 Heft 1, 2002, p. 24-28; A. Schäfer *Sakrale Räume und Kultpraktiken in städtischen Zentren Dakiens*, in *Römische Reichsreligion und Provinzialreligion. Globalisierungs- und Regionalisierungsprozesse in der antiken Religionsgeschichte* (H. Cancik – J. Rüpke Hgg.), Erfurt, 2003, p. 168-174. O serie de date și studii au fost ulterior publicate, v: C. Höpken, M. Fiedler, *Die römischen Gläser von der Grabung eines Liber Pater-Heiligtums in Apulum (Rumänien) - ein Vorbericht*, in *Kölner Jahrbuch* 34, 2002, p. 375-389; C. Höpken, *Die Funde aus Keramik und Glas aus einem Liber Pater-Bezirk in Apulum - Ein erster Überblick*, in: *Roman Mithraism. The Evidence of the Small Finds. Kongreß Tienen 2001*, M. Martens/G. de Boe (Hgg.), *Archeologie in Vlanderen* 5, Brüssel 2004, p. 239-258; M. Fiedler, C. Höpken, *Wein oder Weihrauch? – ‚Turribula‘ aus Apulum*, in *Orbis antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis* (C. Roman - C.

Gazdac. edd.) Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 510-516; M. Fiedler, *Kultgruben eines Liber Pater-Heiligtums im römischen Apulum (Dakien)*, *Germania* 83, 2005, p. 95-125; I. Haynes, *Apulum: the shrine of Liber Pater*, in *Current World Archaeology (CWA)* 10, 2005, p. 38-45; M. Fiedler, C. Höpken, *Das „gemeinschaftliche“ und das „private“ Opfer: Beispiele aus dem Spektrum von Votivpraktiken in römischen Heiligtümern, dargestellt an Befunden aus Apulum und Sarmizegetusa (Dakien)*, in *Kult und Kommunikation. Medien in Heiligtümern der Antike* (C. Frevel, H. von Hesberg Eds.) Wiesbaden 2007, p. 435–466; iidem, *Spardosen und Miniatur - Spardosen – Neufunde aus dem römischen Apulum (Rumänien)*, in *Keramik auf Sonderwegen* (M. Harzenetter, G. Isenberg Eds.) Mainz 2007, p. 95–99; A. Schäfer, *Überlegungen zur Votivreligion am Beispiel ritueller Deponierungen in Gruben*, in *Kultur der Antike. Transdisziplinäres Arbeiten in den Altertumswissenschaften* (U. Egelhaaf- Gaiser/D. Pausch/M. Rühl Eds.) Berlin 2011, p. 278–308; idem, *Gruben als rituelle Räume: Das Fallbeispiel eines bakchischen Versammlungslokals in der Colonia Aurelia Apulensis*, in *Rituelle Deponierungen in Heiligtümern der Hellenistisch-Römischen Welt* (A. Schäfer, M. Witteyer Hrsgg), *Mainzer Archäologischen Schriften Bd. 10*, Mainz 2013, p. 183-198; I. Haynes, *Advancing the systematic study of ritual deposition in the Greco-Roman World*, in *ibidem*, p. 7-19; A. Schäfer, *Deliberat Destruction and Ritual Deposition as Case Study in the Liber Pater – Sanctuary of Apulum*, in *Ephemeris Napocensis* 24, 2014, p. 39-50].

With some of the young participants at Apulum project we organised a new „training excavation” in the buiding next to the shrine of Liber Pater, which seemed to be related to the Mithras cult, but after only two campains we could not reach any firm conclusion.

The Roman town of Napoca was my next step. I executed a rescue excavation in the north-east corner of the Roman town, which proved to be very rich in information. The stratigraphy revealed several phases, starting with a poor Trajanic layer, followed by some industrial activities and the by three superposed timber structures, which were all demolished and burnt. For each one small finds provided good dating evidence. Stone houses emerged only with the Severan dynasty, which is acceptable for a remote corner of the Roman town. After a period of scare activity in the 15th and 16th century new building emerged. The most important results regarding the Renaissance period is the accurate dating of the introduction of enameled pottery around the middle of the 16th century (Al. Diaconescu et alii, *Excavations at „Central Store”, Cluj-Napoca (September and December 2006)*, in *ActaMN* **49/I, 2012, p. 125-176**). In addition, some years later I made an evaluation trench, which revealed the stratigraphy in front of the building of our university, starting with the 19th

century and descending to the Roman layers. This 5 m deep excavation was the most complex one I ever conducted, and enabled me to test the method of excavation and of recording the data with a team of experienced ex-students (which proved to be the best excavators).

The most complex excavation project I conducted was the TETAROM III (NOKIA VILLGE) one, which involved investigating a surface not less than 1,300 ha. Besides a 7th-8th century village an almost contemporary cemetery, investigated by my colleague dr. Ion Stanciu. I had the chance to excavate a Roman farm, dating from the first half of the third century, and where horses were bred for the benefit of ala II Pannoniorum from Gherla. This was a new experience since the structures were different from those currently found in a Roman town or in a fort.

Besides field archaeology I launched myself in theoretical research concerning methods of investigation and recording archaeological data, adapting digging guides and manuals, and proposing models for Romanian research.

Future plans in archaeology depend on many factors, mostly concerning the financing, but I would like to develop studies on ancient environment and climate changing.

3. RESEARCH ON ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

Being confronted in Sarmizegetusa and elsewhere with rather well preserved built-up structures and with architectural remains, such as columns and pediments, I was attracted by the reconstruction of ancient monuments. In Romanian literature there were enough unprofessional attempts, mostly due to ignoring well preserved monuments which should provide good analogies, and to the lack of theoretical notions.

My first attempt was the main south gate of the fort at Gilau (*porta principalis dextra*) and the defenses of that fort. Against pure theoretical propositions made for similar structures I argued that well preserved cases should be first taken into consideration.

The best opportunity I had to explore this subject was the forum of Sarmizegetusa, where both the preserved fragments and analogies provided a promising object of study. First, I determined that the building was designed according to firm mathematic proportions, which were used for other contemporary buildings, such as the forum at Burnum in Dalmatia. Here the arches of the basilica are still standing and provide a perfect analogy for the façade of the basilica from Sarmizegetusa. The marble columns, which I studied together with Emilian Bota, are well preserved to allow a convincing reconstruction. Other elements, such

as the two monumental *nymphaea* in front of the forum, are equally well preserved and with the help of analogies they also could be reconstructed (including the statues that adorned them and the building inscriptions). They have good analogies in Asia Minor [cf. Al. Diaconescu, E. Bota, *Epigraphy and Archaeology. The Case of the two recently excavated nymphaea from colonia Dacica Sarmizegetusa*, în *Orbis Antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis* (C. Roman, C. Găzdac et alii ed.), Cluj Napoca 2004, p. 470-501]. In the end the detailed study of the architectural decoration and of the sculpture from the Trajanic forum of Sarmizegetusa led us to elaborate credible reconstructions of this unique monument, which await materialization (Al. Diaconescu, E. Bota, *Le forum de Trajan à Sarmizegetusa. Architecture et sculpture*, Editura Mega, Cluj Napoca 2009).

A further reconstruction is that of the so-called Great Temple. Here by using all surviving architectural fragments, I put forwards together with Emanuel Demetrescu from Rome, a convincing proposal of restoration, which will be published soon and awaits materialization.

The second field of investigation concerning Roman architecture was to determine the function of an architectural space or volume, in order to turn an abstract plan into a life full building. First, I took under discussion the so-called *principia*, in fact the headquarters buildings of military troops. In fact, the term *principia* designated the offices occupied by *principales* – non commissioned officers, the complex being a forum. The twisted and complicated evolution of this kind of edifice shows how related are civilian and military compounds, and how primitive the idea is that civilian forums just copied military headquarters (see Al. Diaconescu, *A Case of Hellenistic Influence on Roman Architecture. Military headquarters and civilian forums*, în *Eph. Nap. XVIII, 2008, p. 57-73*). **In this respect I tried to re-evaluate the two forums of Sarmizegetusa, where the great number of honorific monuments is a proof of an intense public life** (I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Testo epigrafico, supporto architettonico e contesto archeologico nei fori di Sarmizegetusa*, în *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina*, Roma 18-24 settembre 1997, Roma 1999, p. 125-137). More than that, the comparison with other forums similar in plan (*Lopodunum, Burnum, Venta Silurum*) which had few statues if none at all, shows that the social structure and mentality in a colony of veterans differs from that of a *municipium* or a *civitas*. The attempt of showing how animated the two forums of Sarmizegetusa were, resulted in my book: *Forurile Sarmizegetusei. O plimbare imaginară prin centrul politico-administrativ al "micii Rome de la poalele Retezatului"*, Editura Mega, Cluj Napoca 2010, second edition, completed and reviewed, Editura Mega, Cluj Napoca 2014).

Another monument I tried to make out is the amphitheater of Sarmizegetusa. After gathering all surviving architectural elements, I managed to propose a new reconstruction of it, less big as priory supposed, and in the end, I reached the conclusion that the number of spectators was half of what it had been supposed before, i.e. not more than 2.200 persons. With my colleague Emilian Bota, I came with a new proposition of reconstruction, based also on the understanding of the plan, with specialized entrances, which gave way to different social categories, according to the Roman custom.

The next challenge were civilian houses in towns and farms. Starting from my excavations at Jucu, I launched myself in a typology of urban and rural houses in Dacia and in the reconstruction of these structures. I tried to separate huge villas (such as Dalboset), which were probably summer residences of senatorial governors, from big manors (Ciunafaia and Apahida), belonging to members of the local equestrian order, and residences of rich farmers, cottages (such as Rahau, Chinteni, and Miercurea), and finally households of middle class peasants (Jucu, Deva, Cincis, Apold). In the case of town houses I tried to do similar distinctions between rich villas, medium houses and small ones.

Finally, I tried to reinterpret sacred buildings, from classical temples to reunion chapels. The traditional Roman temple, which is to be met mostly in Italy and the western provinces, comprises a large rectangular yard surrounded by porticos (called in inscriptions “*templum cum porticibus*”) and has in the back a shrine on a high podium (called *aedes*). Such are several cult buildings from Sarmizegetusa: the Capitolium, the Great Temple and the one of Liber Pater. Besides there were also shrines (*fana*) and chapels (*aedes*). In my paper [Al. Diaconescu, *Temples of ethnic communities (assembly halls) in Roman Dacia. An architectural prospective, în ActaMN 45-46/I, 2008-2009 (2011), p. 135-192*] I gathered some cases from Dacia of such cult places which served also as reunion halls for ethnic groups, Palmyrenians in Porolissum and Sarmizegetusa, Maurs in Micia and the Dalmatian kin of Sardeates in Alburnus Maior. The first resemble simple shrines from Syria, without any Greek or Roman influence, like the great temples from Palmyra. The Maurs built three cult rooms for their triad, and the Dalmatians erected only altars, without venerating any cult statue. All had low benches for ritual bankets, which is a distinctive feature for such assembly rooms. I also tried to produce artistic reconstructions of these cult places, showing how different they were from Classical temples.

My future plans regarding this domain are ambitious. I have started working at a book on “Roman Architecture in Dacia”. In this respect I have done a complete typology of urban

houses and farms, of military headquarters and of bath buildings. I also look forward to realize a “Gide of good practices in restoring Roman buildings” which is badly needed in Romania (and elsewhere).

The new fields of research are also vast, from a detailed study of timber structures and vernacular architecture, to building techniques, especially CBM and mortar analysis, which would provide a good background for future restorations.

4. STUDIES ON ROMAN WEAPONS, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, TACTICS AND STRATEGY

Starting with an early study on military equipment from the fort at Gilau (Al. Diaconescu, C. Opreanu, *A Note on Military Equipment from Romania*, BAR, int. ser., 336, 1987, p. 157-166 și Al. Diaconescu, C. Opreanu, *Bronzuri romane din castrul de la Gilău*, SCIVA, 38, 1, 1987, p. 52-71) I dedicated myself to the research of Roman weapons and equipment related to tactics and strategy (Al. Diaconescu, *Dacia under Trajan. Some observations on Roman tactics and strategy*, in *ActaMN* 34, I, 1997, p. 13-52). In this respect I tried further to emphasize the relation between fighting techniques of the cavalry and the controle over the so called Transylvanian Plain. Then I argued that the province of Dacia Porolissensis was organized by Marcius Turbo aiming to controle the salt trails towards the north-west part of the Hungarian Plain. In a paper to be published I then demonstrated that all three Dacian provinces were organized with the purpose of controlling the trade with the Barbarians.

For the immediate future I have finished a book on the rich military equipment forum din the Trajanic forum of Sarmizegetusa. I estimate that future directions of investigation are opened to those sturdiing both Roman and Barbarian weapons and fighting techniques.

Also related to strategy was the administration of Roman Dacia. In the absence western “*civitates*”, besides urban and military *territoria*, there were districts administrated by the auxiliary forts, such as “*regio Ansamensium*” under the jurisdiction of the tribune of *coh. I. Brittanica* from Casei, or “*territorium Arcobadense*”, under the rule of the prefect of *ala Tungrorum Frontoniana* from Ilisua. Actually most of the forts were placed in the vicinity of Dacian citadels, and probably perpetuated their administrative and political role (Al. Diaconescu, *The Towns of Roman Dacia. An overview of recent archaeological research in Romania*, în *Roman Dacia. The Making of a provincial society* (W.S. Hanson, I.P. Haynes ed.) (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 56) Portsmouth, Rode Island

2004, în special p. 122-128 and idem, *Dacia and the Dacian Wars*, în *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 21, 2, 2008, p. 589-594). In a study written two years ago and which is awaiting publishing I tried to develop this theory (Al. Diaconescu, *Dacia in A Companion to the Archaeology of the Roman Empire*, B. Burell ed. Which will appear in the series *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*).

5. GENERAL STUDIES ON ROMAN DACIA

My research on strategy and administration opened for me other general fields of investigation, such as the Romanization process. In the case of Dacia I made the distinction between what the Germans call “Romanisation”, i.e. an intense process, orchestrated by the state, mainly through massive colonization and reseating of military units. The “Romanisierung” was a more gentle process, Barbarian immigrants and natives being gradually attracted by the Roman way of life. Starting from the epigraphic behavior and the attitude towards statues, which I investigated in my Ph.D. thesis, I developed a more comprehensive theory about four main ethno-cultural zones within the province. The first comprises the territories intensely colonized with veterans and civilians who already enjoyed Roman citizenship: i.e. Sarmizegetusa and its *pagi*, above all Apulum. The second zone contains the Hadrianic *municipia*, Napoca, Drobeta and Romula, where a strong nucleus of colonists, most of them of peregrine extraction, closely interacted with natives, and after one generation they were all granted Roman citizenship. Follow the towns that emerged under Septimius Severus from the civilian settlements around the big military establishments (Potaissa, Apulum, Porolissum, Tibiscum, possibly Micia). Here prevailed the new citizens, many of them Marci Aurelii (who benefited from *Constitutio Antoniniana* from A.D. 212). The fourth cultural zone, the rural provincial society, was very complex. In east Dacia and in the western Mountains, there were communities of Norico-Pannonian farmers, or of Dalmatian and Micro Asian miners. At their turn native Dacians inhabited the military districts mentioned above, being in close relations with the auxiliary forts, where their presence is archaeologically well attested [a first account in Al. Diaconescu, *The Towns of Roman Dacia. An overview of recent archaeological research in Romania*, în *Roman Dacia. The Making of a provincial society* (W.S. Hanson, I.P. Haynes ed.) (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 56) Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2004, p. 87-142; the idea was later developed in studies published so far only in Romanian].

In the near future, after publishing my contribution to the above mentioned Companion to the Archaeology of the Roman Empire, I intend to produce a synthetic overview on Roman Dacia.

6. RESEARCH ON POST ROMAN DACIA

The history of post Roman Dacia was part of a political debate since the 18th century, when the Romanians from Transylvania initiated their struggle for political rights, and was accentuated at the middle of the 20th century, when territorial feuds between Romania and Hungary reaches their peak. After several decades, I argued that this should be a purely scientific matter and should be treated as such: instead of searching for arguments against or for the survival of the provincial population in the former province of Dacia, one should concentrate on studies concerning social structures, political aggregations, day to days life. In this respect I have drawn attention with my colleague C. Opreanu on this relaxed way of putting the problems, giving several examples. Later I launched myself in studies on the local society of the 4th century, when Roman traditions were still vivid in Dacia, and in the absence of the Roman authorities, or of any Barbarian (Gothic) direct domination, a local aristocracy emerged (like in Britain). Their presence is indicated by Late Roman status symbols, such as crossbow broches, inscribed rings, and belt buckles, studs, or strap terminals, all borrowed from the garments of Late Roman officials (Al. Diaconescu, *Ornamenta dignitatis. Grababzeichen und symbole des sozialen Status bei den lokalen Eliten von Dakien nach dem aurelianischen Rückzug*, in *ActaMN*, 36/1, 1999, p. 203-243).

A second direction of investigation was the spread of the Christian belief north of the Danube. My main study in this respect concerned Late Roman and Early Byzantine lamps. Thus I proved that most of them date from the 6th century, when the Early Byzantine Empire regained the Danube frontier, and emperor Justinian ordered to the bishops to cross the river and preach the Christian faith to the people living there. The artefacts of Christian origin, mostly lamps, were found only within the borders of the former province of Dacia, which indicates that the new faith was adopted primarily by Latin speaking people, inhabiting within the borders of the ancient Roman province.

In addition to such studies, and in anticipation of a monograph of early Christianity in Dacia (*Dacia Sacra*, which is my main project in this respect, I also published lectures on Jewish history and the early spread of Christianity, paying a special attention to archaeological evidence.

7. ORIENTAL STUDIES

I was initially forced by the circumstances to teach “Ancient Oriental History” to the students, but in time I found myself more and more attracted to the subject. Since, on one hand most of them cannot read German, French and Italian literature, and can stand only a few pages in English per day, and on the other hand the texts in Romanian are mostly translations from Russian (Soviet) manuals, I decided to write a synthesis on the main Oriental civilizations, which I developed later into three volumes. The ones on Ancient Egypt and Ancient Mesopotamia are mostly informative (although I tried to produce personal comments on art, architecture and religion). The volume on the emergence of the “civilization” in Middle East contains the most recent discoveries in north Syria and south Turkey, and is a completely new approach of the matter, totally different from what Romanian students were used to.

I also dealt in the last years with the Oriental provinces of the Roman Empire, which proved to be by that time richer and more civilized than the European part of the ancient world. In this respect, I studied the oriental communities in Roman Dacia and the influence of Micro Asian and further eastern provinces in art and architecture. I also made a documentary film about Palmyra, which is now valuable because it contains many images of monuments that were in-between destroyed.

As for plans concerning the future, in my capacity of director of the newly inaugurated “Center of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Studies” (<http://middle-east.centre.ubbcluj.ro/>), I am planning with my colleagues to initiate a line of master degree studies on oriental civilizations, which would meet a strong need of our society.