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Hdt. 9.80: another beetle in the rose?

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Abstract: The information provided by Herodotos that the Greeks did not collect as booty the costly garments of the fallen Persians after the battle at Plataia in 479 BC, as there were plenty of other precious objects that they plundered (Hdt. 9.80), is contradicted by contextual data for an apophthegm attributed to Pausanias by Plutarch (*Apoph. Lac.* 230e). It is shown that the version preserved by Plutarch is more reliable and that Herodotos slightly altered the facts in his account, using a literary device to emphasize the power and wealth of the Persian army routed at Plataia. The alteration of the facts also made an Athenian slander against the Aiginetans seem more credible.

Keywords: booty, Herodotos, Plataia, Plutarch, textiles, warfare

Narrating the aftermath of the great Greek victory over the Persians at Plataia in 478 BC, Herodotos (9.80) wrote:

[1] … Then Pausanias made a proclamation that no man should touch the spoils, and ordered the helots to gather all the stuff together. They, spreading all over the camp, found there tents adorned with gold and silver, and couches gilded and silver-plated, and golden bowls and cups and other drinking-vessels; [2] and sacks they found on wagons, in which were seen cauldrons of gold and silver. They stripped from the dead who lay there their armlets and torques, and golden daggers; as for the pattern-weaved clothing, it was disregarded (ἐπεὶ ἐσθῆτός γε ποικίλης λόγος ἐγίνετο οὐδείς). [3] Much of all this the helots showed, as much as they could not conceal, but much they stole and sold to the Aiginetans. As a result the Aiginetans laid the foundation of their great fortunes by buying gold from the helots as though it were bronze. (transl. A.D. Godley with minor revisions by the author)

The meaning of this passage is obvious. The booty was so abundant that the Greeks were forced to collect and keep only the most valuable items that they found in the tents and wagons of the Persian camp, as well as on the corpses of the fallen enemy, discarding other

precious objects that were not that expensive compared with the former. The first category of items is illustrated by various gold and silver objects, whereas the items in the second group are represented solely by the pattern-weaved garments.

However, a saying attributed to the general commander of the Greeks at Plataia, the Spartan regent Pausanias, included by Plutarch in his anthology of *Apophthegmata Lakonika* (230e), incidentally shows that the nicely-worked and richly-adorned clothes of the Persians were actually taken as spoils by the Greeks following the battle, in direct contradiction to the Herodotean account[1]:

> When some people were amazed at the costliness of the raiment found among the spoils of the barbarians (ἐν τοῖς λαφύροις τῶν βαρβάρων τὴν πολυτέλειαν τῆς ἐσθῆτος), he said that it would have been better for them to be themselves men of worth than to possess things of worth. (transl. Frank Cole Babbitt)

The historicity of the information is hard to assess, as for many other sayings attributed by Plutarch to Spartan leaders of old time.

Firstly, it should be pointed out that the two sources cannot be reconciled by making the latter refer to another military event. Given the short-lived regency of Pausanias (late 480-478 BC) and the place of the saying among the other six apophthegms ascribed to him, right before the only one explicitly placed in the aftermath of the battle of Plataia of August 479 BC (that reproduces an anecdote also found in Hdt. 9.82), it is unreasonable to hypothesize that the source followed by Plutarch was referring to any other battle than the great clash at Plataia[2].

Whether Pausanias genuinely uttered the words ascribed to him on this occasion is more difficult to tell. On the one hand, they illustrate the philosophical *topos* that the only real and desirable wealth is represented not by material objects, but by moral virtue[3]. On the other hand, unlike many obviously spurious apophthegms, attributed by different authors or by

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[1] There are no references to this issue in other accounts of the battle of Plataia, such as Plut. *Vit. Arist.* 11-21 and Diod. Sic. 29-33.

[2] Cf. Fuhrmann 1988, 336, n. 2 on page 215. The attempt to reconcile the two accounts by placing Pausanias's saying after the preliminary engagement of the Megarians and Athenians against the Persian cavalry led by Masistios, whose body covered by a golden cuirass and a purple tunic was captured and paraded in front of the amazed Greek army (Hdt. 9.20-5) would be misguided for several reasons: the amazement was caused by Masistios's physical greatness and beauty, his behaviour was valiant and worthy of praise, the tightly-fought skirmish was not decisive and thus not an appropriate context for such a saying.

[3] Cf. Pl. *Leg.* 870b; Cic. *Parad.* 6 (42-52).

Plutarch himself to various historical characters, this saying is not found anywhere else and is not credited to anybody else[4].

The saying exhibits the same ethos as the abovementioned following apophthegm in the anthology, reproduced as well by Herodotos, where Pausanias compares the sumptuous banquet which he found prepared for the Persians with the modest barley-cakes eaten by the Greeks captains and soldiers alike[5]. Certainly, Herodotos introduces the anecdote in his narrative by the word λέγεται, thus expressing prudence, if not outright reluctance, and against it also speaks Pausanias's ease of adopting a luxurious Persian way of life a few years later, in Byzantion[6]. Moreover, the contrast between the rich feast of the side attempting conquest in a conflict and the austere meal of the defending side became a literary *topos* in later times, employed to embellish various historical events[7], but as the case at Plataia is chronologically the first and also reported shortly after its completion, this later development should not be considered a compelling argument against its historicity.

Anyway, it is more important to highlight, based on the proximity of the two apophthegms and their similar focus on the contrast between Persian luxury and Greek simplicity, that whatever source Plutarch had for the saying mentioning the looted garments, it should not be regarded as inferior to the account of Herodotos. Both Herodotos and the source of Plutarch relied either on some authentic information (in case we accept the historicity of the sayings) or on the expected corpus of war tales that commonly emerge after major military engagements (in case we find them both to be slightly later inventions).

That Plutarch had access to good alternative sources for the Persian wars is indisputable, considering his *De Herodoti malignitate*, where he specifically mentions and even quotes some of them: the well-known historians Hellanikos and Ephoros (869a), but also Charon of Lampsakos (859b, 861c-d), Lysanias of Mallos (861c), Aristophanes the Boiotian and Nikandros of Kolophon (866f-867a), as well as the poets Simonides (869c, 871b, 872d-e) and Pindar (867c).

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[4] The only slight similarity is provided by a situation that occurred in 395 BC during Agesilaos's war against the Persians in Western Asia Minor: "And once when, by his orders, his prisoners of war were stripped of their clothing and offered for sale by the vendors of booty, their clothing found many purchasers, but their naked bodies, which were utterly white and delicate, owing to their effeminate habits, were ridiculed as useless and worthless." (Plut. *Vit. Ages.* 9.5, transl. by Bernadotte Perrin). I find implausible though the scenario that the apophthegm attributed to Pausanias evolved in a 4th century BC context under the influence of the deeds of Agesilaos.

[5] On apophthegms recorded by Plutarch which he derived from Herodotos, see Hershbell 1993, 147.

[6] Thuc. 1.130.1. See also How and Wells 1928, 324; Flower and Marincola 2002, 251.

[7] E.g. Diod. Sic. 21.12.4-6.

Consequently, I find myself inclined to assume that even if the saying itself might not be wholly historical, its contextual data about the plundering of clothing might well be. The Greeks usually despoiled their fallen enemies, including their garments, in case they were valuable[8]. Additionally, clothes are mentioned among the items taken as booty from the dead or captured Persians on several other occasions when the spoils of war were almost as rich or possibly even richer than at Plataia: in 490 BC, at Marathon[9], in 478 BC, after the fall of Sestos and Byzantion[10], in 466 BC, during the battle of the Eurymedon[11], in 395 BC, during Agesilaos's campaign in Western Asia Minor[12], during Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid empire[13]. There is even a particular case in the early stages of the battle of Plataia, reported by Herodotus, in which such a precious garment is actually captured by the Hellenic army: the purple robe of the Persian commander Masistios, taken together with his cuirass of golden scales and his body and displayed on a cart in front of the ranks[14].

Furthermore, there were no tactical or strategic reasons for the Greeks to conduct only a limited looting of the Persian camp and fallen soldiers. Whereas there was still a certain threat from the surviving Persians and the medizing Greeks, it was not that serious, as demonstrated by the fact that the Hellenic allied army advanced against Thebes from the battlefield only "on the eleventh day after the battle"[15].

It seems then that Herodotos cannot be right in his statement that the precious garments of the Persians were disregarded when the booty was collected from the battlefield and the barbarian camp at Plataia. Herodotos's treatment of this particular matter appears to favour art over historical truth, a trait of his writing which was occasionally denounced in antiquity by Plutarch and various other scholars who even likened the Hallikarnassian historian to Homer and the poets[16]. Desirous of magnifying the wealth and the might of the Persians, as well as the number of their casualties, and thus to bring praise to the Greeks and their accomplishment at Plataia, Herodotos was able to achieve his goal through a relatively minor distortion of facts.

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[8] Iancu forthcoming.
[9] Plut. *Vit. Arist.* 5.5.
[10] Plut. *Vit. Cim.* 9.3.
[11] Diod. Sic. 11.61.1-2, but not confirmed by Thuc. 1.100 and Plut. *Vit. Cim.* 12-3.
[12] Plut. *Vit. Ages.* 9.5, Polyainos 2.1.6.
[13] It is worth mentioning here mainly the thorough depredation of Persepolis: despite the much more wealth that was found in the capital of the Persian Empire than on the battlefield of Plataia, the Macedonians and the Greeks did not disregard at all the costly raiment (Diod. Sic. 17.20.2-3).
[14] Hdt. 9.22.2, 25.1.
[15] Hdt. 9.86.2, with Hignett 1963, 342.
[16] Hershbell 1993, 151-8.

Additionally, this statement strengthened the credibility of his following claim that the Aiginetans made great fortunes by buying booty stolen by the helots at derisory prices: the greater the overall amount of available spoils, the more credible the malicious slander certainly spread by the Athenians due to their long-lasting enmity towards the Aiginetans that peaked at the time when the *Histories* were written[17]. Plutarch, though praising Herodotos's literary style, noted that it was exactly this craft of his as a writer that enabled him to unabatedly insert here and there such calumnies against the enemies of his Athenian patrons and skilfully compared such occurrences with poisonous beetles lurking beneath the beautiful external appearance of roses[18]. It is also telling that the previous passage, narrating the proposal of Lampon of Aigina to impale Mardonios, similarly contains both defamation of the Aiginetans and full acclaim for the Greek success at Plataia[19].

On the other hand, it is curious that the Persian garments and nothing else are singled out both in Plutarch and Herodotos, although from opposed points of view. If Pausanias genuinely uttered the remark attributed to him by Plutarch when confronted with the amazement of his troops at the captured Persian clothing, could this be a trace of certain events – unfortunately impossible to reconstitute anymore – that occurred in connection with the garments during the collection of booty (e.g. quarrels about the shares in booty[20], followed by potentially limited interdictions)? In this case, Herodotos, even though still following his penchant for dramatizing the historical account[21] and gratifying his Athenian friends, might have started in fact from a grain of truth and distorted the facts less blatantly. Such a scenario where Herodotos's misrepresentation of facts would be even less perceptible would underscore even more his great skill as a writer and the necessity to read his work with much awareness of its dual nature, both literary and historical.

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[17] How and Wells 1928, 2: 321; Flower and Marincola 2002, 249.
[18] Plut. *De Her. mal.* 874b, with Hershbell 1993, 153.
[19] Hdt. 9.78-79, with How and Wells 1928, 2: 321 and Flower and Marincola 2002, 244.
[20] Like in the aforementioned case of the sack of Persepolis. See Diod. Sic. 17.70.4-6.
[21] Iancu 2024, 27-8.

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Reflections on miniaturisation. The case of the Tomb of the Five Chairs from the Banditaccia necropolis at Caere

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Abstract: The Tomb of the Five Chairs (it. *Tomba delle Cinque Sedie*) from the Banditaccia necropolis at Caere presents conspicuous characteristics within the Etruscan funerary sphere, involving a miniaturisation process associated to the arrangement of furniture and statuettes present in one of the side chambers of the tomb. This paper aims to explore the process of miniaturisation found here and to reflect on the consequences that this intentional downscaling of objects can produce onto a potential user or onlooker of such a scene. The analysis of this arrangement will allow an insightful look into the deliberate decisions undertaken by agents informing this process and into the enabling of specific responses. Further considerations regarding the characteristics of miniaturisation will also be introduced.

Keywords: materiality, miniaturisation, Banditaccia necropolis, ancestor cult, Etruscan furniture

Towards a definition of miniaturisation

What can be defined as a *miniature*? What can be described as a miniaturisation process? Interestingly, there is no clear definition of miniaturisation, with different criteria being used in order to justify and explore such a practice. For L. Foxhall, "a miniature reproduces in some sense, at smaller scale, another object, whether natural or man-made. Hence it is an imitation or a model (though not necessarily a precise one) of another thing, so that the significance of the miniature and the significance of the original remain linked (and needless to say this may not be in the same ways in all cases)".[1] In this case, the author mentions that a miniature is primarily defined in relation to an original prototype, even if it portrays a rather schematic representation or if it is only a partial representation of the original object.[2] What can be said then about small-scale objects that do not reflect a direct link with an original prototype? D. Bailey considers such an issue and expands on the definition of miniaturisation, proposing two different ways of acknowledging the downscaling of objects "one is to view a small thing as an object that has been reduced in proportion to an original. This is to think in terms of scale. (…) A second way to think about size reduction is to take the human body as the ultimate, essential measure of scale. In this sense there

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[1] Foxhall 2015, 1.
[2] Foxhall 2015, 2.

is only one scale relationship (human body – to – object) and only three significant size categories: life-size, smaller than life-size, and larger than life-size. Thus, thinking about representations in the scale – to – human is a different exercise to thinking in terms of scale – to – original".[3] The significance of the criteria brought forward by D. Bailey is therefore in acknowledging the use of the human body as a scaling comparison and expanding upon the connection to an original prototype in considering an object as a miniature.

On the other hand, within the theoretical approaches proposed by C. Knappett in regard to the phenomenon of miniaturisation, the importance of both aforementioned elements in the defining of miniaturised objects is brought to the forefront. The process of miniaturisation can be characterised as such through the "first-hand experience", referring to the acknowledgement of the dimensions of an object in contrast to the human body, and through the "second-hand experience", representing the attribution of meaning, and considering the "wider assemblage" in order to determine the defining of objects as miniaturised objects.[4] The "assemblage" is namely referring to the "inter-artefactual networks" comprised of both human agents and artefacts.[5] There are four aspects that the author takes into account with the intent of analysing miniaturised objects: frequency, fidelity, distance, and directionality. Frequency refers to how often objects are reproduced at a smaller scale in relation to the original prototype; fidelity concerns the degree of schematism or detail that the miniaturised objects have in regard to the original prototype; distance refers to the spatial or temporal scale of recognition of the miniaturised objects in regard to the original objects; directionality concerns the relation between the small-scale versions and the original objects and namely how miniature objects are created in *response to* the larger-scale objects and not vice versa.[6]

In using such an approach and by bringing together the "first-hand" and "second-hand" experience, C. Knappett acknowledges therefore two steps in considering the miniaturisation process, firstly in accordance with the human body and secondly in accordance with an original object, since the aspects introduced for analytical purposes propose an examination of the relation between the miniature and the object it aims to represent on a smaller scale. Issues still remain however in the defining of a miniature. Can we clearly identify as *miniatures* – or on the contrary

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[3] Bailey 2005, 28-29.
[4] Knappett 2012, 87.
[5] Knappett 2012, 89-91.
[6] Knappett 2012, 92.

deny this attribute – (to) those objects that fulfil just one of the two proposed criteria for the comparisons of scale? Namely, could objects "smaller than life-size", but without an original prototype from which to be created, be identified as miniatures? Furthermore, could we also identify as miniatures objects that are "larger than life-size", but smaller in accordance with the original prototype that they are trying to replicate?

Other significant characteristics of the miniaturisation process that are often proposed and discussed in previous research are represented by the loss of function in miniatures, the degree of abstraction or detail in miniatures, and the distortion of spatial and temporal dimensions. Whereas a loss of function in miniatures has been debated by researchers,[7] it can be acknowledged that the specific measurements provided by them create different affordances that affect their functionality.

Miniaturised vessels for example provide reduced capacities for holding potential liquids or foods.[8] In other cases, specific miniaturised vessels are interpreted as tokens and are supposed to represent a certain quantity of products for inventory purposes;[9] this process suggests not a loss of function, but rather a change in the function that such objects manage to obtain during miniaturisation processes. Miniatures also vary in their accuracy in contrast to the original prototypes,[10] ranging from representing abstract forms alluding to the original objects to detailed representations whose difficulty in creating is therefore increased.[11] Lastly, a downscaling of objects in regard to the scale of the human body enables distinctive sensorial and bodily responses, different from those enabled by the "life-sized" objects. This can create a distorted approach in how humans would relate to the spatial parameters that characterise the context of the miniaturised objects. It is also precisely this 'out of the ordinary' element of miniaturisation that can also produce a distortion of the temporal dimension.[12] D. Bailey proposes that "miniaturism opens up a set of actions, of narratives, of histories that are outside the field of perception that exists in the

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[7] See Foxhall 2015, 2.
[8] Foxhall 2015, 2; Knappett 2012, 99.
[9] Knappett 2012, 98.
[10] Following this criterion, D. Bailey proposes a distinction to be created between the concept of model and that of miniature; whereas the former is seen as an attempt to accurately portray the original prototype at a smaller scale, the latter is acknowledged through its abstract quality or even inaccuracy in connection to the original object (Bailey 2005, 29). This differentiation however becomes problematic when considering that the integration of an item into one of the two categories is dependent on the theoretical cultural reconstruction of both aim and perception of the downsized object in question.
[11] Foxhall 2015, 1.
[12] Bailey 2005, 36-38.

reality of the everyday routine".[13] Miniaturisation can produce therefore a different or even unique way of relating to the world. These characteristics complicate even further the establishing of a clear and uniform definition of miniaturisation; instead, they propose the necessity to acknowledge the existence of *processes* of miniaturisation that prove to be not only quite diverse but also context-dependent – both in its immediacy and in accordance with the larger temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural environment.

Building on such theoretical considerations, a peculiar case-study from the Etruscan world can be brought to the forefront and used as a starting point for further reflections. Namely, this refers to the famous Tomb of the Five Chairs from the Banditaccia necropolis at Caere, whose left-side chamber presents a specific arrangement of 'miniaturised' objects, having been further described as a "Kultraum" or "Cult Room".[14] On the background of the theoretical implications of the miniaturisation process, the analysis of the tomb can only lead to further interpretations regarding the decision-making process behind such a miniaturisation practice and regarding the enabling of specific responses as its result.

The unique arrangement of the Tomb of the Five Chairs

The Tomb of the Five Chairs, built within a tumulus from the Banditaccia necropolis at Caere, is dated to the second half of the 7th century BC. The tomb consists of a main funerary chamber and two side chambers, whereas its special features are attributed to the findings discovered in the left-side room. The access to the tomb is provided by a partially stepped *dromos* that opens into a vestibule where the entrances to the three chambers can be found. The main funerary chamber is surrounded by stone benches on three sides and contains the two funerary beds meant for the deceased couple to be interred within the tomb. The right-side room from the *dromos* presents only one preserved element, a table carved out of the local rock measuring c 70 x 130 cm and 84 cm in height,[15] perhaps an altar.[16] Two additional, smaller rooms seem to connect the side chambers to the main funerary chamber and seem to function rather as access ways. These do not present any preserved elements. No grave goods appear to have been found or documented

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[13] Bailey 2005, 34-35.
[14] Prayon 1974, 14; also Tuck 1994, 620.
[15] Prayon 1975, 110 fn.608.
[16] Pavel 2023, 97.

at the moment of the registered discovery of the tomb around mid-19th century.[17] Additional furnishing elements have been found however in the left-side chamber of the tomb.

Focusing on the specific arrangement provided by the left-side room of this tomb (fig.1), the chamber presents a series of undersized furnishings that have led S. Steingräber to conclude that "la chambre de gauche, qui a donné son nom à la tombe, est pourvue d'un mobilier miniature, qui en fait comme une maison de poupée"[18]. The room measures c. 3 x 2.3 m and onto its western wall, five chairs carved out of the local rock are placed in an organised line, each with a backrest with a cruciform decoration, armrests, and a rectangular footstool. According to F. Prayon, each chair measures on average 70 cm in height, whereas the seating surface starts at c. 50-55 cm from the ground up; the seating area measures 28 x 28 cm; the backrest presents on average 20 cm in height and 44 cm in width; the footstool has on average 15 cm height, 22 cm width, and 15 cm depth.[19] In accordance with the findings from within the room, five small terracotta figurines, out of which only three are preserved nowadays,[20] were meant to have been placed on the chairs. The seated figurines, three male and two female,[21] present a tunic and hold their hands in a specific gesture: whereas their left hands are resting with their palm inwards on their laps, their right hands are stretched forwards with the palms facing upwards. These statuettes measure c. 50-60 cm in height and are also said to measure c. 26-27 cm from their knees to their back.[22]

In front of the five chairs and in front of the statuettes respectively, two tables were placed, although unfortunately these have not been preserved. According to the reconstruction made by F. Prayon based on late 19th century and early 20th century descriptions and drawings of the tomb, the height of the tables was equivalent to the height of the seating surface of the chairs behind them,[23] which places them at c. 50-55 cm in height. The reconstruction of the room furniture made

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[17] Prayon 1974, 4 fn.16.

[18] Steingräber 1997, 101.

[19] Prayon 1975, 108 fn.584.

[20] Two statuettes are displayed in the British Museum, whereas one statuette is preserved within the Capitoline Museum.

[21] Reconstructed as such by researchers given the fact that the two statuettes from the British Museum present female heads placed onto male torsos, whereas the statuette from the Capitoline Museum represents a male (Prayon 2006, 55).

[22] According to the measurements provided by the British Museum in reference to two of the preserved statuettes, inv. no. 1873,0820.637 (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1873-0820-637, site last accessed on 15.08.2024) and inv.no. 1873,0820.638 (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1873-0820-638, site last accessed on 15.08.2024).

[23] Prayon 1974, 10.

by F. Prayon also provides measurements for the tables at around 80 x 30 cm each.[24] To the northern wall of the room, two other 'miniaturised' chairs were placed on top of a platform that measured 100 x 40 cm and 27 cm in height.[25] In contrast, these chairs had a semi-circular shape and a round arm- and backrest; unfortunately, these are also not preserved and hence no secure measurements seem to be documented. Given the measurements of the platform, these chairs however must not have exceeded 50 cm width and 40 cm in depth – and must have been probably much smaller.[26] Next to these, in the northeast corner of the room, a cylindrical basket with a fluted base and a decorative motif on its upper surface was also carved out of the local rock. The upper surface of the basket is only partially preserved, leading to a preserved height of 73 cm and a diameter of 50 cm.[27] In the southeast corner of the room, an altar, now missing, was represented by a single rectangular block with three *cupellae* on its upper surface. The altar was said to measure 65 x 25 cm, and had a height of 40 cm. Besides the furnishings of the room and the five terracotta statuettes, only one other element has been found, namely a golden fibula[28] decorated with sixteen sphinxes and that is hypothesised by W. Helbig to have represented an ornament for the tunic of one of the statuettes.[29]

The generally accepted interpretation of this room, based also on the initial inferences forwarded by F. Prayon,[30] is that it depicts a funerary banquet shared between the ancestors of the family, evoked by the female and male terracotta statuettes, and the deceased couple, evoked by the presence of the two semi-circular chairs placed on the platform (and whose funerary beds were present in the main chamber of the tomb).[31] The undersized nature of the furniture in the room is proposed as an argument by S. Steingräber that this scene has rather a symbolic value,[32] placing therefore the miniaturisation process in connection to the dysfunctionality of the objects. Considering this scene through a miniaturisation standpoint brings however a more nuanced discussion concerning the elements placed within the room. The Tomb of the Five Chairs presents a unique example within the Etruscan funerary sphere of such a particular ensemble of

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[24] Prayon 1974, 5.
[25] Prayon 1975, 108 fn.587.
[26] See also Prayon 1974, 5.
[27] Prayon 1975, 114 fn.643.
[28] The golden fibula is also registered at the British Museum under the inv.no. 1872,0604.740.
[29] See Prayon 1974, 6 fn.20.
[30] Prayon 1974.
[31] Tuck 1994, 620; Steingräber 1997, 101-102; Camporeale 2009, 226.
[32] Steingräber 1997, 102.

arrangements of terracotta statuettes and furniture. A deconstruction of this ensemble might provide a better understanding of the choices made behind this deliberate display and of the effect that such an arrangement might have enabled onto an onlooker of the assemblage.

Miniaturisation and distortion of space

Analysing the room through the perspective of miniaturisation, the most conspicuous elements are represented by the five chairs aligned on the western wall of the room that allowed the placement of the statuettes. When considering the "firsthand experience" according to C. Knappett and using the scale of the human body for comparison, then these chairs deliberately present "smaller than life-size" measurements – these objects of furniture are indeed unusable by the adult human body given their reduced seating surface (of 28 x 28 cm) and given the potential further hindrances produced by the armrests and by the backrests. However, they do not seem to intrinsically present a loss of function, considering that they replicate the original affordances but as seats for the statuettes of the ancestors – perhaps perceived as the ancestors themselves. Despite the small dimensions of the statuettes themselves, a curious interplay of scales also happens between these and the chairs they are placed on, since the statuettes do not reach the armrests, the backrests, nor the footstool, nor do they cover the entire seating area, showing therefore a discrepancy between the measurements of the two elements (fig.2). This might therefore lead to a further distortion of space within the enclosed area, as perceived by a potential observer, one that involves a magnified perception of the chairs. At the same time, these objects entail a high level of detail – the cruciform backrest, the minute addition of the footstool – that suggests that a high degree of effort has been placed in the creation of these miniature chairs and quite possibly that a high degree of "fidelity" was intended in regard to a potential original prototype.

Additionally, the other two chairs of the Tomb of the Five Chairs, the two semi-circular ones placed on the platform, also seem to present "smaller than life-size" dimensions according to the reconstruction by F. Prayon who refers to them as "Miniatursitze".[33] It is most likely, given the restrictions of the platform, that these two chairs were also unusable in regard to the scaling of the human body. Of particular interest is their placement on top of the podium, suggesting that a specific proportionality was taken into account in their arrangement, although now lost. Their shape, as well as the round armrests and backrest, are indicative of a type further found in case-

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[33] Prayon 1975, 108.

studies from the Banditaccia necropolis and elsewhere,[34] and once again propose a high degree of detail involved in their construction. It is difficult to ascertain whether these chairs were deliberately left empty or if they presented associations to other elements, now lost, made for example out of perishable materials.

In what concerns the other furniture elements present within the room, the rock-carved basket, seen as an imitation of the wicker baskets with lids used as household items,[35] arguably offers sufficient space for the potential deposition of grave goods or for the placement of perishable food offerings,[36] having an upper surface reaching c. 50 cm in diameter. Its dimensions do not render such an object dysfunctional, and the same conclusion can be drawn in regard to the two tables placed in front of the five chairs. Their reconstructed data placing their measurements at c. 80 x 30 cm and at a height of 50-55 cm can imply that these could have provided enough space for their theoretical use, for example for the placement of grave goods. The altar also presents a high degree of detail, once again suggesting the care and labour involved behind such furnishings. Despite its small dimensions, the deliberate formation of the three cavities on its upper surface pinpoints to an invitation towards its potential use for activities – such as the deposition of food offerings or perhaps even for practices of libation. The loss of function of these objects in conformity to their dimensions cannot be acknowledged as such and the defining of such objects as miniatures based on their perceived dysfunctionality should be further inquired. Their dimensions do however create specific responses in the embodied behaviour of their potential users, conspicuously different from their "life-size" counterparts.

Quite remarkable in the case of the Tomb of the Five Chairs is the deliberate interplay of scales brought by the specific and intentional arrangement of the elements contained within the room. It is this particular interplay that enhances the 'out of the ordinary' attribute of the room and that further creates a distortion of the spatial and perhaps also of the temporal dimension for a potential observer. That the spatial characteristics were manipulated for a certain point of perception might be further suggested by two other observations made by F. Prayon in the documentation of the tomb: firstly, the discrepancy between the statuettes and the footstool of the chairs was not noticeable given the height of the tables placed before them,[37] and secondly, the

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[34] See *infra.*
[35] Steingräber 1997, 109.
[36] Also S. Steingräber (1997, 109) who sees the tuff-cut imitations as symbolic recipients.
[37] Prayon 1974, 10.

basket from the tomb seems to only be decorated on its upper surface and towards the side of the room entrance,[38] pinpointing therefore to a certain perspective from which the whole scene to be observed.

Patterns of recognition

In pursuit of the "frequency" and of the "distance" criteria as introduced by C. Knappett and as discussed above, an overview of similar structures found within the funerary context, especially focusing on the immediate one of the Banditaccia necropolis at Caere, is necessary. This would not only consider the contextualisation of the Tomb of the Five Chairs but would also provide further reflections on the perception of the miniaturisation process associated to this tomb on the background of the spatial and temporal recognition of such an arrangement.

The most frequent comparison of the five seated statuettes from the Tomb of the Five Chairs is in regard to the two sculpted reliefs found in the Tomba delle Statue at Ceri, in the vicinity of Caere, dated to the first decades of the 7th century BC[39] (fig.3). The Tomba delle Statue, a tomb completely dug into the local rock, presents a longitudinal architecture with a *dromos* leading into the vestibule that in turn leads into the main funerary chamber, albeit smaller, where two funerary beds were shaped out of the rock. On each side of the wall within the vestibule, carved into the local rock was a relief depicting a male figure[40] seated on a throne with a round arm- and backrest, whereas their legs were resting onto a curved footstool. The clothing of these sculpted figures resembles that of the statuettes within the Tomb of the Five Chairs, although the hand gestures seem to differ – whereas their left hands are resting on their laps, with their palms turned downwards, their right hands seem to hold insignia; the left-side relief holds a sceptre with a palmette detail[41], whereas the right-side one holds an object hypothesized to have been a *lituus*.[42] The creation of these reliefs has been linked to a Near Eastern, and particularly North Syrian influence, with their construction based either on imported models or even at the hands of an immigrant artisan of the area settled at Caere[43]. The general interpretation regarding these figures

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[38] Prayon 1974, 10 fn.38.
[39] Steingräber 1997, 102.
[40] Some interpretations consider the two figures to represent a couple instead (Prayon 2006, 53).
[41] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 30.
[42] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 34.
[43] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 47-48.

sees them as ancestors of the deceased interred within the tomb, in an adaptation of the Oriental model into an Etruscan context.

Despite iconographic similarities to the statuettes from the Tomb of the Five Chairs, there are also considerable differences. First of all, these reliefs are said to measure c. 123 cm and 129 cm in height,[44] spatially overwhelming the tomb chamber that reaches a maximum height of 165 cm up to its ceiling[45]. A certain point of perception is also envisioned given the traces that suggest a specific manipulation of the figures and of the walls of the tomb itself for an enhanced point of observation from the entrance to the tomb.[46] Their dimensions and the perception of these reliefs within the tomb chamber makes them rather monumental in appearance, in contrast to those of the Tomb of the Five Chairs.[47] Secondly, whereas the terracotta statuettes are said to present gestures of welcoming of the deceased[48] or of banqueting,[49] the emphasis in connection to the ancestor reliefs is placed on their insignia as symbols of power, and perhaps alluding to political and religious functions. Whereas the two examples might share a similar artistic influence,[50] their specific contexts and their representations – differing in material, technique, measurement, iconographic detail – suggest different outcomes in their perception.

Another association has been made between the terracotta statuettes of the Tomb of the Five Chairs and the existence of anthropomorphic cinerary urns said to portray the deceased[51] (ultimately developing into the so-called *canopi* urns), that represent a more ample phenomenon predominantly found in northern Etruria (particularly in the area around Chiusi) during a chronological period covering the 8th to the 6th centuries BC.[52] Oftentimes such urns have been portrayed seating on thrones, an iconography that tends to be linked to the practice of the funerary seated banquet[53] and that is perhaps more clearly emphasized in specific discoveries linking either

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[44] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 30-31.
[45] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 23.
[46] Colonna and von Hase 1986, 23.
[47] F.W. von Hase emphasizes this point of view throughout the article, claiming also stylistic differences: Colonna and von Hase 1986, 33; 46.
[48] Tuck 1994, 620.
[49] Steingräber 2016, 107.
[50] Tuck 1994, 621.
[51] And that generally tend to be accompanied by distinguishing elements, such as decorative ornaments or insignia of power (Trocchi 2017, 890).
[52] Prayon 2006, 46.
[53] Prayon 2006, 47. See Tuck 1994 for an overview of the development of this practice across Etruria, from its Villanovan roots to its artistic modes of expression during the Orientalizing period.

banqueting utensils among the grave goods[54] or through the further presence of tables.[55] The coeval presence of the practice of seating and reclining banquets during the 7th century BC has already been acknowledged.[56]

Whereas circulation of motifs and models and inter-areal influences should not be neglected, the discussion should however be reframed to the context of the Caeretan *necropoleis* and in connection to the developments present in the funerary sphere and dictated by the elite competition among the aristocratic families of the city of Caere. Remarkable in the context of the Banditaccia necropolis is the widespread presence of rock-cut furniture, pinpointing to relevant parallels to the arrangement from the Tomb of the Five Chairs. Other examples of stone-cut chairs have been found within tombs of the same necropolis, although they all stem from a later chronological horizon; these include the Tomba della Cornice I, Tomba degli Scudi e delle Sedie, or Tomba della Sedia Canina, all dating to the first half of the 6th century BC,[57] although all these chairs are seen to present "life-size" measurements instead. Regarding the first example, two rock-cut rectangular chairs with a footstool and with a rectangular backrest bordered on its margins by two sculpted round discs present a height of 100 cm and a seating surface of 51 x 52 cm.[58] The famous Tomba degli Scudi e delle Sedie presents two seats, each with a round arm- and backrest and with a rectangular footstool. Additionally, they present a carved detail of the seating area. These seats are said to measure c. 115 cm in height and to also have a seating area of c. 65 x 60 cm,[59] reaching in turn "larger than life size" measurements. Of a smaller size is the chair from the Tomba della Sedia Canina, also with a round backrest, that measures 76 cm in height and has a seating surface of 48 x 43 cm.[60] Additionally, a fitting case-study within this chronological horizon stems from the adjacent Monte Abatone necropolis, namely the Tomba della Sedia Torlonia. The Tomba della Sedia Torlonia presents only one chair with a round back- and armrest – also

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[54] Pieraccini 2016, 145.

[55] Prayon 1974, 12, Tuck 1994, 622. Also worth mentioning is the Montescudaio biconical urn, dated to the third quarter of the 7th century BC, showing a similar iconography where a seated figure (the deceased?) is depicted in front of a table filled with food items, whereas a female attendant is standing to their right (Tuck 1994, 618-619).

[56] Pieraccini 2016, 145.

[57] Following their dating at an earlier time (Steingräber 2016, 105); the typology and connected chronology proposed by F. Prayon (1975) dates them to the period between 575-525 BC.

[58] Measurements: complete h. 100 cm; backrest h. 40 cm, w. 63 cm, depth 5 cm; seating surface depth 51 cm, w. 52 cm; legs h. 60 cm; footrest h. 16 cm, w. 51 cm, depth 25 cm (Prayon 1975, 109 fn.591).

[59] Following F. Prayon, who proposes similar measurements for these chairs as those of the chair from the Tomba della Sedia Torlonia (Prayon 1975, 109).

[60] Measurements: complete h. 76 cm; backrest 34 cm; seating surface depth 48 cm, w. 43 cm; substructure h. 42 cm (Prayon 1975, 109 fn.596).

reminiscent therefore of the two from the Tomb of the Five Chairs – that measures 115 cm in height and that has a seating surface of 65 x 60 cm.[61] Interestingly, all these chairs were placed into the vestibule of their respective tombs, namely in the first chamber opening from the *dromos* that led in turn to the entrance(s) of the one main or of the several funerary chambers that contained the funerary beds, although additional funerary beds could have been placed within the vestibule itself.

The presence of stone-cut chairs within tombs, with their particular placement within the vestibule, seems to be a relatively common phenomenon for the Caeretan *necropoleis* of the first half of the 6th century BC[62], with an actual overall predominance of such discoveries in this specific area.[63] Explanations as to their presence in this context are already disseminated by G. Dennis in his 1848 work, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, and still pursued nowadays.

"[referring to the Tomba della Sedia (Canina)] (…) But the marvel of the tomb is an arm-chair, cut from the living rock, standing by the side of one of the two sepulchral couches in the outer chamber, as though it were an easy-chair by the bed-side, or a seat for the doctor visiting his patient! But why placed in a tomb? Was it merely to carry out still further the analogy to a house? Was it, as Visconti suggests, for the use of the relatives who came yearly to hold solemn festivals at the tomb? Or was it for the shade of the deceased himself, as though he were too restless to be satisfied with his banqueting-couch, but must have his easy-chair also to repose him after his wanderings? Or, as Micali opines, was it to intimate the blissful repose of the new life on which his spirit had entered? Was it not rather a curule chair, the *insigne* of the rank or condition of the deceased, showing him to have been a ruler or magnate in the land? It may have been for the support of a cinerary urn; for in the tombs of Chiusi, *canopi*, or vases in the form of human busts, which were probably the effigies of the deceased whose ashes they contained, have often been found placed on earthenware seats of this form".[64]

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[61] Measurements: complete h. 115 cm; backrest h. 40 cm, w. 80 cm; seating surface depth 65 cm, w. 60 cm; substructure h. 75 cm, w. 90 cm; footstool h. 30 cm, w. 50 cm, depth 25 cm (Prayon 1975, 109 fn.593).
[62] Colonna and von Hase (1986, 55-56) present a list of discoveries of tombs presenting stone chairs as furniture, with twelve tombs stemming from the Banditaccia necropolis; three additional discoveries are added to the list under the geographical listing of Caere, including the example stemming from the Monte Abatone necropolis (Tomba della Sedia Torlonia). The frequency of this phenomenon in the Caeretan funerary sphere is visible.
[63] Steingräber 1997, 108-109.
[64] Dennis 1883[1848], 239-240.

The Orientalizing and Archaic Caeretan tomb as imitation of coeval domestic architecture has been widely accepted by researchers, with the architectural elements of tombs (doorways, rock-cut windows, roof beams and patterns) and rock-cut furniture (chairs, tables, baskets) seen as a transposition of features of domestic life.[65] In regard to the presence of the chairs themselves, F. Prayon[66] further suggests that these could have represented house furniture usually placed in the vestibule of the house and translated as such in the funerary sphere, particularly within the tombs already discussed. More than simply denoting furniture however, these same chairs have often been attributed the term and concept of *thrones*, suggesting that their presence within tombs denoted a status symbol, placing the deceased among the aristocratic elite of their time. S. Steingräber[67] even proposes that the placement of this furniture object in the vestibule replicated the presence of the *solium* in the patrician domestic interior.

Overall, the connection of such chairs or thrones to the funerary sphere is not a restricted phenomenon to the Caeretan region nor to the timeframe of the construction of the Tomb of the Five Chairs. On the contrary, the discovery of wooden thrones attributed to the Villanovan era, stemming particularly from Northern Etruria, has already been amply discussed.[68] Additionally, exceptional discoveries of "bronze thrones" – wooden thrones with bronze appliques – have also been made in association to the 'princely' tombs from the beginning of the Orientalizing era, especially considering the background of the intensification of elite competition during this time;[69] the throne from the Tomba Barberini at Palestrina, dated to the first half of the 7th century BC, provides a famous example in this regard. Whereas the plurality of funerary contexts these wooden thrones have been found in does not easily lead to a unitary interpretation of their use,[70] their acknowledgement as status symbols is at the forefront. Curious is however the ubiquitous type presented by these thrones,[71] that of a cylindrical shape with a round arm- and backrest, similar then to the two chairs associated with the deceased couple within the Tomb of the Five Chairs. Unfortunately, there is little evidence regarding the possible presence of wooden thrones in the

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[65] Steingräber 2016, 105.
[66] Prayon 1975, 111.
[67] Steingräber 2016, 107-108.
[68] Examples of such wooden thrones seem to stem from necropolises around the regions of Bologna, Imola, and Verrucchio – the latter of which has produced the famous wooden throne from Tomb 89 or Tomba del Trono, dated to the end of the 8th century BC (see Bentini et al. 2018).
[69] Maggiani 2017, 546.
[70] Bentini et al. 2018, 183.
[71] See Bentini et al. 2018.

Caeretan *necropoleis* as a precedent to the phenomenon of stone-cut furniture. The reconstruction of several bronze appliques as having belonged to such a wooden throne discovered in the Tomba Regolini-Galassi from the Sorbo necropolis (c. 675-650 BC) has been more recently reconsidered, with the appliques seen to have decorated a ceremonial carriage instead.[72] It is easy however to entertain the possibility that such wooden thrones, and generally wooden furniture, would have been placed within these tombs of the Banditaccia necropolis – traces of which might have been overlooked also considering the precarious state of preservation. The Tomba della Capanna for example (dated to the first half of the 7th century BC) is said to have presented carbonized remains of what might have most likely been a wooden table.[73]

Another point of interpretation concerning the role of these chairs or thrones involves their potential use, with two different considerations being reflected upon. The first possibility is one that takes into account the material affordances of such objects. These stone-cut chairs are considered to present "life-sized" dimensions and it has therefore been proposed that they could have been used by participants during funerary festivities in honour of the deceased.[74] This is certainly a viable interpretation, given that their size generally tends to be in conformity with the reconstructed acceptable measurements for seating areas in connection to the human body and by comparison to other relevant ancient archaeological sources, placing the acceptable width of a seat between 44 and 48 cm.[75] Comparatively, wooden thrones of the Villanovan age have also been generally considered "life-sized", whereas the bronze ones tend to reach "larger than life-size" measurements,[76] most likely in correspondence to their conspicuous ceremonial role. Whether these were indeed used by the participants of such practices is uncertain, and it can be just as plausible that these were meant to be used by the deceased[77] or even that the two interpretations are simultaneously viable.[78] The presence of only one rock-cut chair in the vestibule of the Tomba della Sedia Torlonia has been placed in connection to the presence of just one funerary bed within the main funerary chamber and was brought as a pertinent argument towards such a symbolic

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[72] Emiliozzi and Sannibale 2018.
[73] Pieraccini 2016, 144.
[74] Prayon 1975, 111.
[75] For a study on the seating area of the Roman Senate, see Ross Taylor and Scott 1969; for a more general approach concerning seating areas in Antiquity (including theatre seats), see Spigel 2012.
[76] Bentini et al. 2018, 172.
[77] Prayon 1975, 111-112; Colonna and von Hase 1986, 37.
[78] Steingräber 1997, 109.

use,[79] although this pattern might not be reflected in other cases.[80] These thrones have generally been associated to both male and female burials in what concerns the interpretation of the rock-cut chairs generally connected to the deceased couple interred within the main funerary chamber. Comparatively, the wooden thrones of the Villanovan period have also been connected to both female and male burials – mainly adult, but also children.[81] Interestingly, two important iconographic documents seems to associate thrones to the practice of textile manufacturing – one of the carvings on the wooden throne of Verucchio (dated to the end of the 8th century BC) shows activities of spinning and weaving undertaken by women, whereas a bronze *tintinnabulum* found as a grave good in the "Tomba degli Ori" at Bologna (dated to the end of the 7th century BC) shows women seated on curved thrones and involved in different activities of textile production.[82] These once again portray the throne as a prestige item for an aristocratic elite.

A different aspect is brought forward in the case of the Tomba Maroi III (dated to the first half of the 6th century BC), where a fascinating discovery links a stone-cut chair directly to the practice of the funerary banquet. A brazier that contained drinking vases and carbonised meal remains, among which those of eggs and mushrooms, was found placed on a throne near one of the funerary beds.[83] Unfortunately, no dimensions of this chair are given in order to examine whether it involved a specific scaling process. Such a deposition of offerings onto the throne itself does bring into question whether other such rock-cut chairs were deliberately and symbolically left empty or whether they were supposed to provide similar amenities for the deceased. In this case, there is a clear association between the throne and the practice of the Etruscan funerary (seated) banquet, although such a connection can only be circumstantially argued in previous examples.

Lastly, a short review of relevant comparisons should be introduced regarding the remaining pieces of furniture, once again considering the perception of such (miniaturised) objects. In contrast to the basket found within the Tomb of the Five Chairs (d. 50 cm, h. 73 cm), four other

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[79] Prayon 1974, 10; Steingräber 1981, 448.

[80] The Tomba della Sedia Canina also presents just one rock-cut chair (although there are three stone funerary beds in the vestibule), whereas the number of deceased meant to be interred within the main funerary chamber cannot be ascertained.

[81] Bentini et al. 2018, 173. One particular case dated to the mid-7th century BC shows a deliberate association between an undersized wooden throne (and other undersized wooden furniture pieces) to the deceased as an infant in an unusual discovery found within one of the graves of the necropolis at Verruchio (Bentini et al. 2018, 172).

[82] Gleba 2013, 799-800.

[83] Prayon 1975, 111 fn.609; Pieraccini 2016, 142.

such baskets have been found in the Campana I tomb from the Monte Abatone necropolis at Caere, dated towards the end of the 7th century BC. Three fluted baskets of smaller dimensions were situated in the room left to the *dromos* and these had an average height of 80 cm and a diameter of 70 cm at their upper surface.[84] The larger basket was found in the main funerary chamber, and this had a height of 128 cm and a diameter of 96 cm.[85] At the same time, the other important discovery of a coeval stone-cut altar within the Caeretan *necropoleis* stems from this tomb. In this context, the altar is found within the main funerary chamber. The altar is carved out of the rock and its design of a rectangular block is completed by a 'backrest' that continues through a carving on the wall itself. The dimensions of this altar reach 115 x 44 cm, with a height of 113 cm, whereas the perpetuation of the design onto the wall gives the impression of the altar reaching 178 cm in height.[86] On the upper surface, this altar also presents three cavities for the likely deposition of offerings or for the performing of libations.

The altar from the left room of the Tomb of the Five Chairs had measurements (65 x 25 cm, h. 40 cm) that seem to correlate with those of other altars not necessarily seen as 'miniaturised' given their different contexts of discovery,[87] and that do not have a lack of use attributed to them. A relevant parallel can be introduced in the case of the altar from the Fosso Arlena necropolis found in the vicinity of a *fossa* tomb and dated to the end of the 7th century BC. The altar is represented by a rectangular block of sandstone presenting three central cavities on its upper surface, as well as several smaller cavities and corresponding drainage channels. This altar measures 23 x 37 cm and has a height of 23 cm.[88] The two inscriptions on the altar stemming from different chronological points suggest the long-term continuity of practices at the altar, from the end of the 7th at least up to the second half of the 6th century BC.[89]

Further reflections

The widespread cultural practice of the funerary banquet is expressed in the case of the Tomb of the Five Chairs largely through a recognisable pattern within the Caeretan *necropoleis* and especially within the Banditaccia necropolis, namely that of domestic furniture, with the

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[84] Prayon 1975, 114 fn.640.
[85] Prayon 1975, 114 fn.641.
[86] Prayon 1975, 113 fn.628.
[87] See also the comparison regarding dimensions of altars in Pavel 2023, 94-97.
[88] Bloch 1955, 64.
[89] *Santuari* 1985, 33.

statuettes reinforcing the connection between ancestor, deceased, and descendant, providing further legitimacy to the aristocratic family. Whether the two thrones were deliberately left empty in a symbolic connection to the deceased or whether further (perishable?) elements were to provide a more visible association, a conspicuous pattern was already established and further establishing itself against the cultural background. Whereas wooden furniture might have been present within the Caeretan tombs prior and coeval to the timeframe in question, namely the second half of the 7th century BC, the Tomb of the Five Chairs seems to represent one of the earliest examples pertaining to the phenomenon of rock-cut furniture within the Banditaccia necropolis to include chairs, tables, altars, and baskets. The miniaturisation process present in the left-side chamber within the tomb seems however to have represented an 'out of the ordinary' setting given the reduced frequency to which such arrangements have been found within Caeretan funerary practices. The patterns of recognition on a spatial and perhaps even on a temporal scale would suggest a particular approach associated to this tomb – whereas the general tendency in the presence of such rock-cut furniture within tombs has been an imitation of its "life-size" mode of expression, and perhaps even towards monumentalisation in an attempt to produce "larger than life-size" elements, the Tomb of the Five Chairs subverts such an expectation.

One last point of discussion should be introduced, and this regards the potential visibility of this scene. An important aspect to take into account is represented by the great care and the costly labour behind the formation of such a miniaturised arrangement that introduces a deliberate transformation of scale. This distortion of space also seems to have been enhanced when observed from the entrance to the chamber, implying an intentional conditioning of visibility towards such a display. How often would such a tomb chamber have been viewed? Whereas we can assume that the tomb was opened for the conduct of funerary rites in honour of the two people, the deceased couple interred within the main funerary chamber, its occasional reopening for further commemorative ceremonies, perhaps in an attempt on behalf of this aristocratic family to continue pursuing its legitimacy amongst a background of elite competition, is difficult to establish. Otherwise, worth considering is how the miniaturised arrangement within the Tomb of the Five Chairs might have left a long-last impression on a potential observer through its "temporariness"[90] instead.

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[90] Osborne 2014, 12.

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Images:

Fig. 1. The arrangement of furniture present in the left-side chamber of the Tomb of the Five Chairs, as reconstructed by F. Prayon (after Prayon 1974, 5 fig. 2).
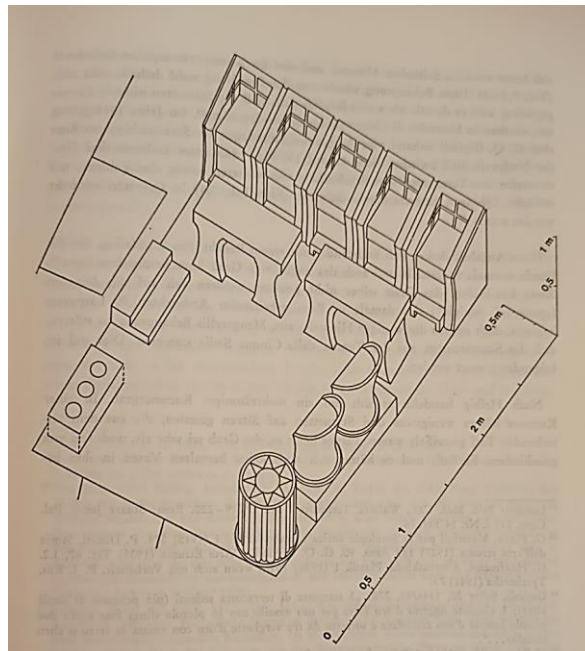
Fig. 2. The placement of the terracotta statuettes onto the five chairs, as reconstructed by F. Prayon (after Prayon 1974, 11 fig. 3).
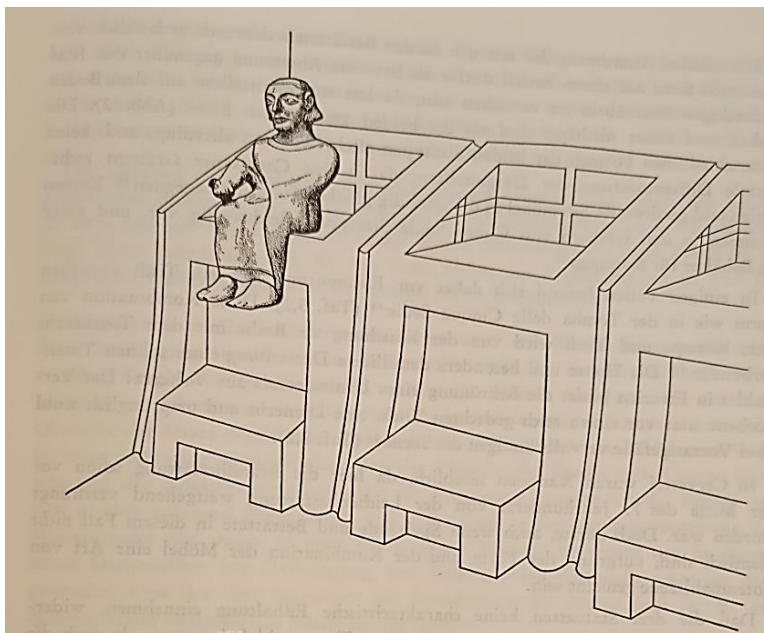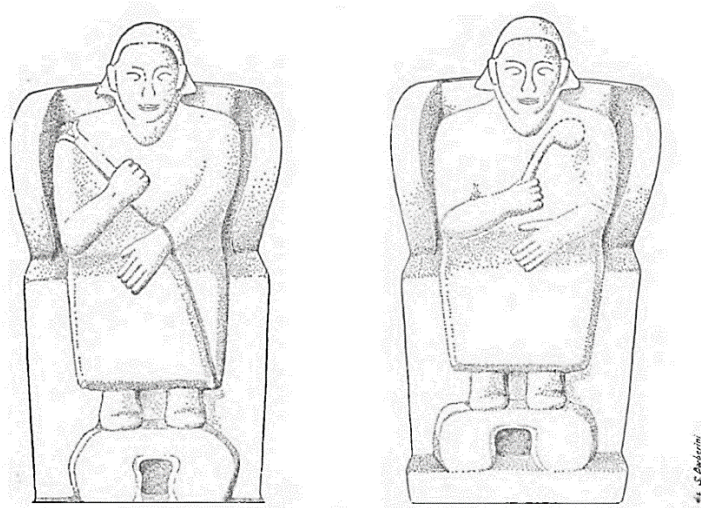
Fig. 3. The two reliefs of the two seated figures sculpted within the walls of the vestibule from the Tomba delle Statue at Ceri (after Colonna and von Hase 1984, 34 fig. 11).

Sending a message: References to the Military and the Golden Age in the coinage of Carausius

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Abstract: Ancient coins, especially during the Roman Empire, were a good way to convey a message throughout the territory (or sometimes to a well-chosen audience) and make yourself known as an emperor, as well as making your achievements known. The third century was a period in which the western part of the empire tried twice to separate from the central authority, the institutions of the empire being imitated. The monetary issues of Carausius, one of the last usurpers from the end of the third century, impressed by the various messages inspired by Virgil's verses, but also by the large number of monetary types, compared to other usurpers. This paper represents a part of my Bachelors thesis and aims to present some results from a statistical point of view of the coin types that express a message regarding the military power of Carausius, and references to the Golden Age.

Keywords: usurper, coinage, legionary issues, *Saeculum Aureum.*

I.   Introduction and Methodology

Coins were a mean of communication between the emperor and the population of the empire, either from a city in Central Italy, or near Hadrian`s Wall. Having this in mind, we can say that publicity fits better to the idea of the emperor spreading the message of his achievements, promises, future policies,[1] and even his personal virtues.[2]

In this paper I will put under the spotlight certain messages that a usurper, whose coinage, through its variety of types, some of them with legends presumably citing the poet Virgil, has captivated academic circles since his first mention. Marcus Aurelius Mausaeus Carausius, or just Carausius as he is best known is this exact usurper on whose policies and publicity messages, I want to shed some light.

For my coins sample I used the online database provided by the American Numismatic Society and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, called Online Coinage of the Roman Empire, or OCRE for short. The total number of coin types in *RIC V* for Carausius are 1146, consisting of three denominations, aurei, antoniniani, and denari, with a few types having an uncertain value, being made of bronze.

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[1] Levick 1982.
[2] Noreña 2001.

Using the definitions given by Erika Manders[3], I handpicked every single coin type and placed each one in a category based on the image and the legend. Some categories could not be used on my sample, because the image and legend of the reverse would not meet the definition. As for this, categories like Unica and Geographical messages are left out.

Because some coins either had a too much of the legend missing, or the image was way worn out, I created a separate category called Unclassifiable. I chose to base my selection only on the legend if it was complete, or the image if it was more significant and the legend was almost missing entirely, taking in account the message transmitted by the coin type as a whole for the types that have a mismatched image and legend. With all coin types in different categories, I started making the statistical analysis, creating different tables calculating different variables. For example, for each category I calculated the number of types, and percentages, each in separate columns for types issued at different mints, or the number of types and percentages of each denomination, and analysing with combined variables, like denomination by mint. A problem that I found while analysing the coinage of Carausius is represented by the coins with missing mint-marks. Entries with no mint-mark entered the analysis under a different variable called Uncertain value (Mint). Because of this I added some new columns to the tables in which I calculated the number of types and percentages from the total of coins without the Uncertain value (Mint). Most of the times, if not always, the results were the same.

Lastly, some coin types either have a blundered legend and image, so placing them in a category could not be possible, or other coin types did not meet the definition of a category to be placed in any of them, so I created a new category called Unclassifiable where I put all those coin types. The present paper contains the analysis and results of the two categories with the most coin types, which offered some interesting results, namely the Military and *Saeculum Aureum* categories.

II.   Historical context

During the suppression of the Bagaudae revolt in Gaul, Carausius distinguished himself and is mentioned by name in ancient sources for the first time. Both Eutropius and Aurelius Victor agree

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[3] Manders 2012, 41-48.

on the fact that Carausius was of common birth[4], the latter adding that he was a citizen of Menapia.[5] After this moment, Carausius was named to drive out the pirates from the sea, Eutropius giving a more exact location of the area in which Carausius was supposed to operate, namely Belgica and Armorica,[6] his base being at Boulogne. Besides having distinguished himself in the campaign against the Bagaudae, Carausius was known for his seafaring experience, being called by Aurelius Victor an "expert pilot".[7]

The breaking moment between Carausius and Maximian is not mentioned in detail, only the fact that Carausius was not actually defending the Channel from pirates, but rather letting them go on with their raids and only attacking them after, as written by Eutropius. Aurelius Victor on the other hand only mentions that Carausius was not returning the stolen goods. Carausius being informed about the plans of Maximian, usurped the imperial power in 286 and took the British provinces under his rule.[8]

In terms of territorial extent of Carausius, it is accepted that he ruled over both the provinces in Britain, Britannia Superior and Britannia Inferior, while on the continental part, the height of his territorial extent can be traced to modern day Rouen, Boulogne-Sur-Mer, and the coastal territories facing the English Channel.

Both authors mention a cease of fighting against Carausius, not providing the motive though, but Eutropius mentions that "peace was eventually concluded, since war had proven to be ineffective against a man so skilled in military matters",[9] and Aurelius Victor says that after the other problems were dealt with "only Carausius was allowed to retain his sovereignty over the island, after he had been judged quite competent to command and defend its inhabitants against warlike tribes".[10]

The war against Carausius started again when Constantius Chlorus, the now *caesar* of Maximian, and Asclepiodotus, his praetorian prefect, conquered Boulogne, the last continental base of Carausius, the siege being mentioned in the panegyric of 297.[11] After the fall of Boulogne,

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[4] Eutropius, 9. 21.
[5] Aurelius Victor, 1. 39.
[6] Eutropius, 9. 21.
[7] Aurelius Victor, 1. 39.
[8] Eutropius, 9. 21.
[9] Eutropius, 9. 22.
[10] Aurelius Victor, 1. 39.
[11] Mynors, Rodgers and Nixon 1994, 118.

the shock was felt in Britain,[12] and Carausius would soon be assassinated by Allectus[13]. Eutropius and Aurelius Victor do not enter in detail about the conquest of Boulogne, rather they wrote that Carausius was assassinated by Allectus. After three years of rule, Asclepiodotus defeated Allectus, and Constantius Chlorus entered victorious in London, Britain being a part of the Roman Empire once again.

III.   Analysis of the reverse types

III.1. The coinage overall

Before analysing the two categories, the coinage overall should be discussed. As I said before, the total number of types issued by Carausius that have a RIC entry is 1146. The figure (Figure 1) below show how each category is represented in regard of the total number of types.
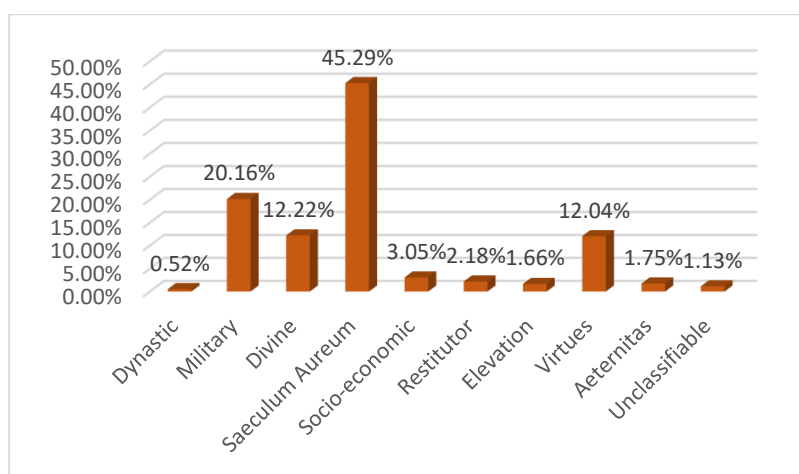
Figure 1 - Percentage of each category from total number of types

From the total number of 1146 coin types, the category with the greatest number of types is by far the Saeculum Aureum, with 45.29% of total coin types being a part of this category. After that, the next three categories have a much smaller representation in comparison to the aforementioned one, 20.16% of types represent the military or are related to that concept, 12.22% of coin types

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[12] Elliott 2022, 134.
[13] Mynors, Rodgers and Nixon 1994, 131.

reference the divine and their association with Carausius, and 12.04% focus on the virtues of Carausius. The rest of the categories do not pass the 5% threshold each.

There is a big difference between some categories, only one category having a percentage over 40%. This could prove that a certain type of message was intended to spread as much as possible, that a new age would start with Carausius. The relative less variety of coin types from other categories might come from the length of his reign, approximately seven years, because a longer reign gives chance to a bigger variety of messages to communicate to the population[14].

Regarding the denominations, Carausius issued gold and silver coinage. Even though during this period, the antoniniani were debased and there was a bronze core with silver alloy, the perception and value of the coin remained unchanged, these coins being present in hoards alongside other silver coins[15]. The great number of antoniniani might come from the need of minting new coins[16] to enter in circulation publicising Carausius as the new ruler, and appeasing the army at the same time.

Denomination	Number of types	Percentage
Aureus	13	1.13%
Antoninianus	1026	89.53%
Denarius	104	9.08%
Uncertain value	3	0.26%
TOTAL	**1146**	**100.00%**

Table 1 - Number and percentages of coin types by denomination

The mints of Carausius tend to be a more problematic subject, mainly because a high number of coin types have no mint-mark, and the fact that the actual location of the C Mint is still debated.[17] This problem could represent a problem in seeing if certain mints focused on a specific message. For this, I created and made two separate calculations. First, I calculated the percentages adding the 576 coin types with no mint-mark in the total. As Table 2 shows, the unmarked coins represent nearly half of the coin types, being at 49.74%.

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[14] Manders 2012, 52.
[15] Casey 1994, 61.
[16] H. P. Williams 2004, 21.
[17] H. P. Williams 2004, 40.

Mint	Number of types	Percentage	Percentage without Uncertain value
C Mint (Camulodunum)	287	25.04%	49.83%
Londinium	207	18.06%	35.94%
Rotomagus	82	7.16%	14.24%
Uncertain value	570	49.74%	
Total without Uncertain values	576	50.26%	100.00%
TOTAL	1146	100%	

Table 2 - Number and percentages of coin types by mints

Before Carausius, there were no mints in the area of northern Gaul and Britain, and after the reconquest of the provinces by Constantius Chlorus, the mint of Londinium continued to issue coins for Diocletian and Maximian, and their *Caesars*. As seen in the table above, there are three named mints, two on the isle, Londinium and the C Mint, and one continental mint, Rotomagus. I chose to use the name C Mint mainly because the debate on where this mint was located, but I added Camulodunum between parentheses firstly because the name Camulodunum is used in the online database from which I extracted the RIC entries. Secondly, Camulodunum was the first capital of the province of Britannia, and it was there that the elite would meet,[18] and where the temple dedicated to emperor Claudius was constructed.[19] The religious importance of Camulodunum remained even after the revolt of Boudica and the change of provincial capital to Londinium, the temple being rebuilt.[20] The small distance between Londinium and Camulodunum is used as an argument against locating the C Mint there, but as in the case of the Gallic Empire, the mints from Augusta Treverorum (Trier) and from Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (Cologne) were at a short distance apart.[21]

The small percentage of coin types issued at Rotomagus can be explained by the short life of the mint, because, with the chronology given by Hugh P. G. Williams, Rotomagus fell early in the reign of Carausius.[22] The rather unequal distribution through the categories can support the idea of a short function of this mint, not having the time to communicate different messages. Another

[18] Casey 1994, 57.
[19] Fishwick 1961, 161.
[20] Fishwick 1961, 167.
[21] Lloyd 1998, 6.
[22] H. P. Williams 2004, 8.

example to support this idea is that the obverse of coins minted at Rotomagus tends to portray Carausius similar to the portraits of Diocletian and Maximian.

Analysing the coin types issued by the Londinium mint from the perspective of the total number of each denomination, some observations can be made. First the 7 aurei from this mint form up to 53.85% of the total number of aurei. This great number of issues from the Londinium mint could be explained by the administrative importance of the city [23] as the provincial capital of Britannia Superior, and its commercial importance given the proximity of the Thames.

Denomination	Londinium	Percentage from Londinium	Percentage minted by Londinium from Total (Denomination)
Aureus	7	3.38%	53.85%
Antoninianus	196	94.69%	19.10%
Denarius	3	1.45%	2.88%
Uncertain value (Bronze)	1	0.48%	33.33%
TOTAL	**207**	100.00%	18.06%
Percentage	**18.06%**		

Table 3 - Number and percentages for each denomination issued by the Londinium mint

It seems that the C Mint followed a specific mint trend, issuing coin types based on silver, antoniniani and denari, as can be seen in

Table 4. Only two types of denari are attributed to the C Mint, forming only 0.70% from the coins minted there, while the rest 285 types are antoniniani,

forming 99.30%. When taking in consideration the whole number of coins, the C Mint issued around 27.78% of the antoniniani, surpassing Londinium with nearly 10%.

Denomination	C Mint (Camulodunum)	Percentage from C Mint (Camulodunum)	Percentage minted by C Mint (Camulodunum) from Total (Denomination)
Aureus			
Antoninianus	285	99.30%	27.78%
Denarius	2	0.70%	1.92%
Uncertain value (Bronze)			
TOTAL	**287**	100.00%	25.04%
Percentage	**25.04%**		

[23] Fishwick 1961, 165.

Table 4 - Number and percentages for each denomination issued by the C Mint

Regarding the continental mint at Rotomagus, Table 5 shows that a variety of coin types from each denomination were issued. The four aurei form 4.88% from the total of 82 coin types issued there, while the bulk is still around the antoniniani, with 92.68% of issues being of this denomination. The presence of these aurei might be explained by the need to promote the new image of Carausius to the elite and the whole population[24].

Denomination	Rotomagus	Percentage from Rotomagus	Percentage minted by Rotomagus from Total (Denomination)
Aureus	4	4.88%	30.77%
Antoninianus	76	92.68%	7.41%
Denarius	2	2.44%	1.92%
Uncertain value (Bronze)			
TOTAL	82	100.00%	7.16%
Percentage	7.16%		

Table 5 - Number and percentages for each denomination issued by the Rotomagus mint

Moving to the different deities represented on his coinage, Carausius associated himself and his rule with a variety of gods and personifications. In his work, Francesco Gnecchi, wrote that Carausius adopted seven deities, namely Hercules, Jupiter, Mars, Minerva, Neptune, Roma, and Sol.[25]

The total number of coin types to represent different gods of personifications of certain concepts is 999. Taking in account what Francesco Gnecchi said, I found 12 gods being associated to Carausius and his reign.

The most represented deity is Pax, being represented on 210 coin types, forming 21.02% from the total number of coin types representing deities. Next is Providentia, less than half of the representation of Pax, having 100 types, meaning 10.01%.

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[24] Elliott 2022, 98.
[25] Gnecchi 1911, 11.
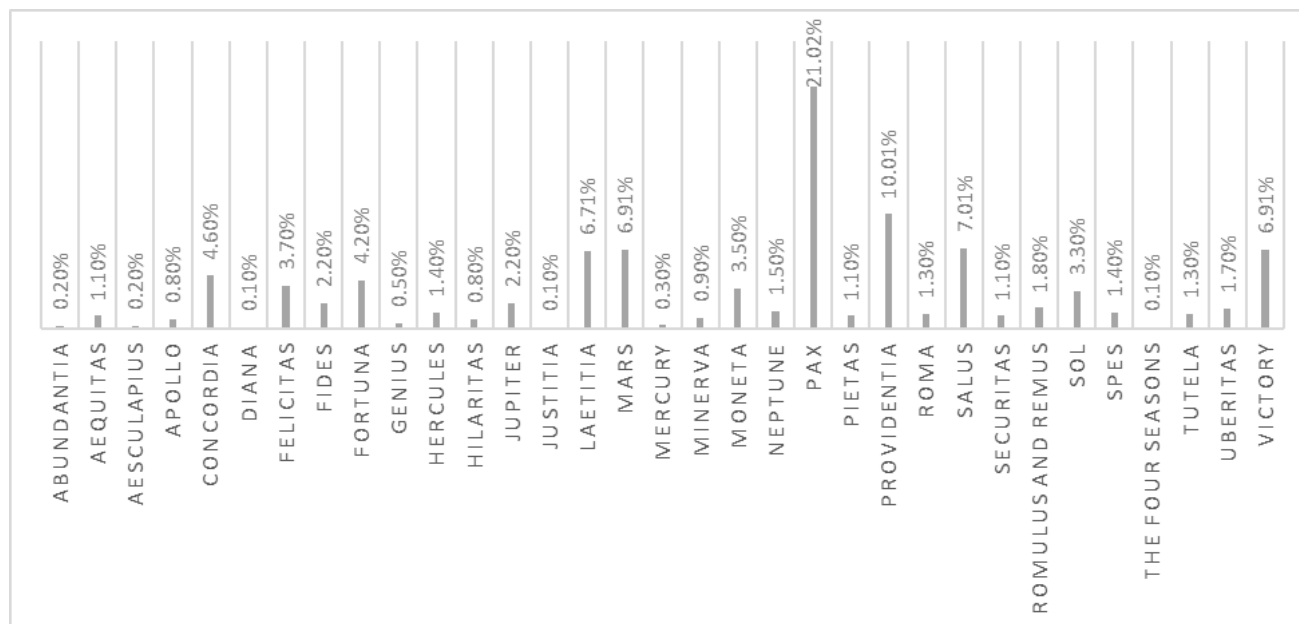
Figure 2 - Representation of deities on coin types

Figure 2 is a visual representation of the percentages of representation on coin types of each deity. The high number of coin types representing Pax would not mean that peace settled the area, but rather the need and hope for peace,[26] which Carausius could guarantee.[27]

With a general view of the distribution by category, denomination, mint, and denomination by each mint, we can make a few observations:

1. The unequal representation of the categories, with one category, the Saeculum Aureum, having a high number of coin types, gives in for the idea that the main message that Carausius wanted to transmit to the population was that of a new age of prosperity and plenty.

2. The continental mint at Rotomagus issued a small number of coin types, possibly because of it being in short use, and in a hurry to pay for the supporters of Carausius.

3. Londinium issued the most gold coinage, possibly because the city was the capital of the province, while the C Mint issued the most antoniniani, taking the spot from Londinium with a small number of issues.

4. Most denari issued under the reign of Carausius do not have a mint-mark.

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[26] Casey 1994, 48.
[27] Shiel 1977, 189.

5. The most represented deity is Pax, being closely followed by Providentia. The number of gods that Carausius adopted is higher than the one proposed by Francesco Gnecchi, with 5 gods and demi-gods being added to this list. The difference might come from the time period, as the 5 gods have a small number of coin types, which might have been discovered after Francesco Gnecchi published his work.

III.2. Military issues

In this category I added coin types with reverses that go around the concept of military, either direct mentions of armed forces, depictions of deities with a militaristic aspect, the *adventus* of the emperor, or trophies and captives. Carausius issued a vast number of coin types that revolve around this theme, as was the trend for the third century coinage[28].

Denomination	Number of types	Percentage
Aureus	5	2.16%
Antoninianus	188	81.39%
Denarius	38	16.45%
TOTAL	231	100.00%

Table 6 - Percentages of coin types from the Military category by denomination

This category shows a bigger variety in terms of denominations, as Table 6 shows. The antoninianus is the best represented denomination in this category, with 188 types, forming 81.39% from the total number of coin types.

In terms of where the coin types from this category were issued, again, the variety can be seen in Table 7, with all the known mints of Carausius minting coins with a military theme. Coins with no mint-mark are present in this category too, with 107 coin types, going at 46.32% of the total number of coin types, while the rest 53.68% have a mint mark.

Mint	Number of types	Percentages	Percentages without Uncertain value
C Mint (Camulodunum)	53	22.94%	42.74%
Londinium	64	27.71%	51.61%
Rotomagus	7	3.03%	5.65%

[28] Manders 2012, 49.

Uncertain value	107	46.32%	
Total without Uncertain value	**124**	**53.68%**	**100.00%**
TOTAL	**231**	**100.00%**	

Table 7 - Percentages of coin types from the Military category by mint

Some observation can be made regarding the mints. The mint of Londinium seems to have the highest number of coin types from the marked types, with 64 coin types bearing its symbol, forming 51.61%. Thus, more than half of the marked coin types of Carausius are minted at Londinium.

By analysing the denomination from each mint, we can see towards what each mint focused on regarding the target audience.

Denomination	Londinium	Percentage from Londinium	Percentage minted by Londinium from Total (Denomination)
Aureus			
Antoninianus	63	98.44%	33.51%
Denarius	1	1.56%	2.63%
TOTAL	**64**	**100.00%**	**27.71%**

Table 8 - Percentages for each denomination issued by the Londinium mint

Starting with Londinium, we can first see that no aurei with military themes were issued, rather the bulk of coin types was based on antoniniani, with 98.44% of the types from Londinium being antoniniani. In regard of the total denominations, here including the types bearing no mint mark, Londinium issued 33.51% from the total number of antoniniani in this category. The single denarius coin type issued by the Londinium mint shows an interesting message. The legend on the reverse is *ADVENTVS AVG*, and it depicts Carausius on a horse holding a sceptre in one hand, while the other hand is raised. This coin type depicts the moment when Carausius entered the provincial capital of Londinium, and being on depicted on both antoniniani and this denarius, shows the importance of transmitting his arrival to the population.[29]

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[29] Elliott 2022, 117.

When analysing the continental issues using Table 9, the first thing that can be seen is the number of coin types, over half of the total issues from this mint being aurei, with 57.14%, while the rest 42.86% being antoniniani.

Denomination	Rotomagus	Percentage from Rotomagus	Percentage minted by Rotomagus from Total (Denomination)
Aureus	4	57.14%	80.00%
Antoninianus	3	42.86%	1.60%
Denarius			
TOTAL	7	100.00%	3.03%

Table 9 - Percentages for each denomination issued by the Rotomagus mint

But when taking into consideration the total number of aurei from this category, the continental mint takes the spot with 80%. All of them depict Concordia, so we can see a focus on propagating the idea of harmony inside the army[30] was followed by Carausius too. Other deities were depicted on the reverse of coin types issued by all mints. Figure 3 is a visual representation of the percentages of coin types depicting different deities.
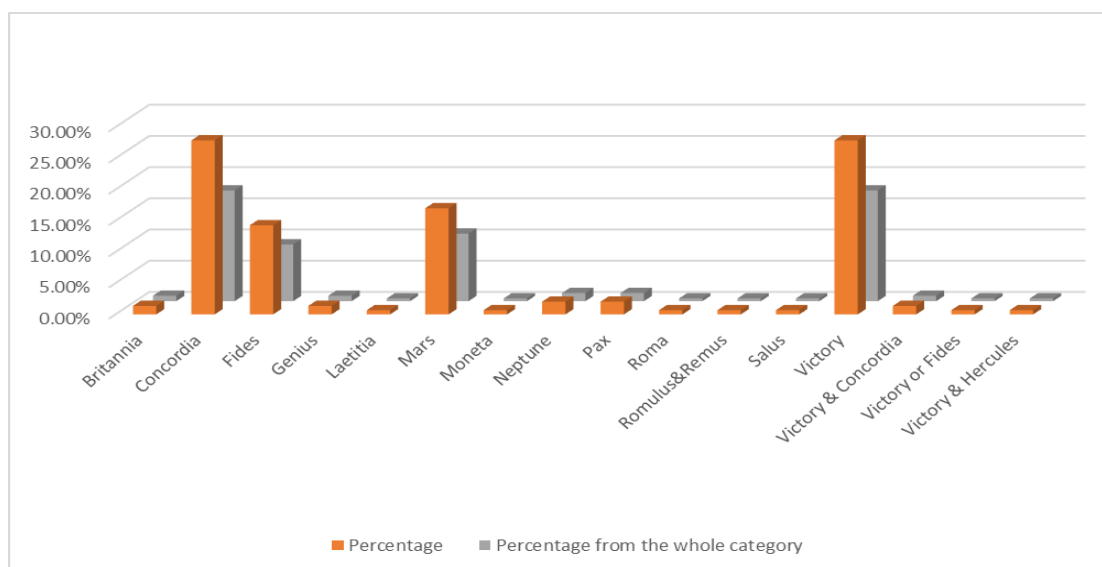

Figure 3 - Percentages of deities depicted on reverses in the Military category

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[30] Manders 2012, 90-91.

To see the broader image, I chose to analyse the deities from two different point of views, first I analysed the percentage for each deity from the total number of types depicting deities, which is 127. The second point of view is from the total number of coin types in the whole category, so I could see the distribution of each deity in comparison to other sub-themes inside the category.

The first place in number of coin types issued is contested between Concordia and Victoria, both being depicted on 41 coin types, forming 27.89% from the total number of coins depicting deities, and 17.75% from the total number of coins from this category. There are instances in which both personifications are depicted together, or Victory being depicted alongside other deities. If we take those instances, the most depicted is Victory. It is most normal that Victory should be the most depicted, as her depictions are met very often from the start of the Roman Empire, towards its end.[31] The use of messages regarding Victory helped the emperors, and in this case, Carausius, to provide legitimacy and show the population that he deserves to rule.[32] An interesting type depicts three winged Victories on the reverse, two of them holding a wreath, while the third hold both a wreath and a palm, accompanied by the legend *VICTORIV CARACSI AV* (RIC V Carausius 530).

Besides the actual representation of Victory, different coin types make a reference to a German campaign of Carausius. These coin types have two different legends, one of them announcing the victory over the Germans, with different variants of *VICTORIA GERM*, while the other legend is *GERMANICVS MAX V*. With types bearing the first legend, they might make a reference towards his victories over the Saxon raiders,[33] as they were presented by the ancient authors. In regard of the second legend, other authors came to the conclusion that it might copy issues from other emperors.[34]

The presence of Mars is not a surprise, as he was mostly depicted on coins with different aspects regarding the military, here forming 17.01% from the total number of coins depicting deities in this category. His presence could be explained by the fact that Mars is the mythological father of Romulus and Remus, giving him a connection to the birth of the Roman state, and one of his aspects as the god of war, besides other areas which are under his protection.[35]

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[31] Gnecchi 1911, 62-63.
[32] Manders 2012, 78.
[33] Birley 2005, 383.
[34] Birley 2005, 383.
[35] Manders 2012, 115-117.

Returning to Figure 3, another represented deity is Fides, giving space for the idea that the loyalty of the army was another message that Carausius wanted to transmit, and maintaining the army loyal through coinage. Because the army in the third century had the power to literally name another emperor, and the success of an emperor depended on the loyalty and support of the army,[36] it is clear on why types depicting Fides are in such great number.

As I said before, Concordia is the only deity that is depicted on aurei. Table 10 depicts the distribution of each deity by denomination. Even though Victory is the most depicted on coin types, the presence of Concordia can show that the message of harmony inside the army primes, and focuses on the elite.[37] When observing the denari, Concordia is present too, being depicted on 10 different types, forming 26.32% from the total number of denari in this category. It is followed by Fides, with 7.89%, and Victory with on 5.26% both of the total number of denari from this category. It can be observed that the bulk of coin types depicting Victory are antoniniani, with 39 different types, meaning 20.74% from the total number of antoniniani.

Deity	Aureus	Percentage of Aurei from total Number of Aurei (Military)	Antoninianus	Percentage of Antoniniani from total Number of Antoniniani (Military)	Denarius	Percentage of Denari from total Number of Denari (Military)
Britannia					2	5.26%
Concordia	4	80.00%	27	14.36%	10	26.32%
Fides			18	9.57%	3	7.89%
Genius			2	1.06%		
Laetitia			1	0.53%		
Mars			2	13.30%		
Minerva			3			
Moneta					1	2.63%
Neptune			3	1.60%		
Pax			3	1.60%		
Roma			1	0.53%		
Romulus & Remus			1	0.53%		
Salus			1	0.53%		
Victory			39	20.74%	2	5.26%
Victory & Concordia			2	1.06%		
Victory or Fides					1	2.63%
Victory & Hercules					1	2.63%
TOTAL	4	80.00%	103	65.43%	20	52.63%

Table 10 - Percentage of coin types depicting deities in the Military category by denomination

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[36] Manders 2012, 63.
[37] Heskster 2003.

Britannia is depicted on two different denari types, both of them bearing the legend *IXPICTATA MIL*, most probably an adaptation of the *EXPECTATE VENI* types which will be discussed later.

Figure 4 represents the percentages of each deity and what mint issued the specific type. As we can observe, the coin types with no mint-mark tend to be the most numerous. Another observation is that only Concordia and Fides are depicted by all mints, strengthening the aforementioned argument that harmony and loyalty of the army were the most wished aspects from the army. Mars and Victory are absent from the continental mint, possibly because the reality on the field could not pave way for a message depicting a victorious Carausius.

The C Mint tends to focus on the depiction of deities in this category, with 77.36% of coin types from this mint fulfilling this purpose, while Londinium issues only 40.36% of the coin types depicting deities in this category.
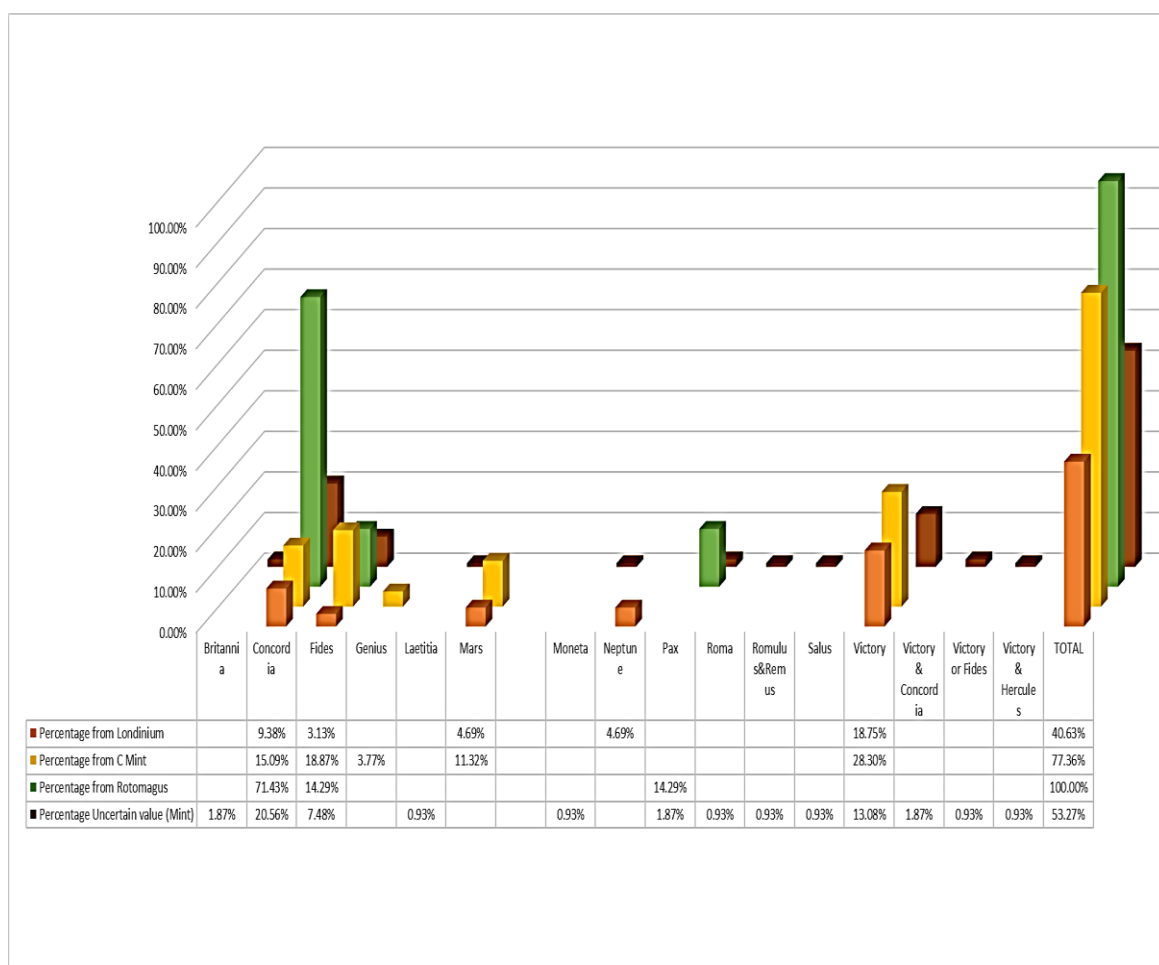

	Britannia	Concordia	Fides	Genius	Laetitia	Mars	Moneta	Neptune	Pax	Roma	Romulus&Remus	Salus	Victory	Victory & Concordia	Victory or Fides	Victory & Hercules	TOTAL
Percentage from Londinium		9.38%	3.13%			4.69%		4.69%					18.75%				40.63%
Percentage from C Mint		15.09%	18.87%	3.77%		11.32%							28.30%				77.36%
Percentage from Rotomagus		71.43%	14.29%						14.29%								100.00%
Percentage Uncertain value (Mint)	1.87%	20.56%	7.48%		0.93%		0.93%		1.87%	0.93%	0.93%	0.93%	13.08%	1.87%	0.93%	0.93%	53.27%

Figure 4 - Percentage of coin types depicting deities in the Military category by mint

If we were to separate the coin types of this category in different sub-themes, the representation of deities is one major sub-theme, while the other major sub-theme is the direct mentions of legions.

The discussion on the legionary coinage of Carausius was approached by different authors. In my research, I found ten named legions, the praetorian cohorts, and I found two coin types that do not match the legions that were listed. As it can be seen in Table 11, the total number of coin types that mention legions are 46, meaning that 19.91% from the total number of coin types from this category make a direct reference to one of those legions.

Legion	Number of types	Percentage	Percentage from the whole category
LEGIO I Flavia Minervia	3	6.52%	1.30%
LEGIO II Avgvsta	3	6.52%	1.30%
LEGIO II Parthica	9	19.57%	3.90%
LEGIO IIII Flavia Firma	10	21.74%	4.33%
LEGIO VI Victrix	1	2.17%	0.43%
LEGIO VII Clavdia	4	8.70%	1.73%
LEGIO VIII Avgvsta	3	6.52%	1.30%
LEGIO XX Valeria Victrix	3	6.52%	1.30%
LEGIO XXII Primigenia	2	4.35%	0.87%
LEGIO XXX Vlpia Victrix	3	6.52%	1.30%
Praetorian cohorts	3	6.52%	1.30%
LEGIO III Gallica (?)	2	4.35%	0.87%
Total	**46**	**100.00%**	**19.91%**
TOTAL OF CATEGORY	211		100.00%

Table 11 - Percentages of coin types mentioning legions

The first observation comes from the actual number of mentions. Ten legions mentioned is a very big number for a small area like Britannia and northern Gaul. If Carausius had actually controlled those legions, it would have been enough to conquer the whole western part of the Empire.[38] With this in mind we can presume Carausius had parts from some of those legions, or at the same time tried to issue coins commemorating some distant legion in hopes that they would join him.[39] From all those legions listed in the table, only Legio II Augusta, Legio VI Victrix, and Legio XX Valeria Victrix were present and attested in the provinces of Britannia at that time.[40] Even though those legions were located in Britain, the legion depicted on most types is Legio IIII Flavia Firma which had its base in Singidunum (modern day Belgrade), in Moesia Superior,[41] being depicted on 21.74% from the legionary coin types, and on 4.33% from the total number of coin types in this category.

Legion	Aureus	Percentage of Aurei from total Number of Aurei (Military)	Antoninianus	Percentage of Antoniniani from total Number of Antoniniani (Military)	Denarius	Percentage of Denari from total Number of Denari (Military)
LEGIO I Flavia Minervia			3	1.60%		
LEGIO II Avgvsta			3	1.60%		
LEGIO II Parthica			9	4.79%		
LEGIO IIII Flavia Firma	1	20.00%	7	3.72%	2	5.26%
LEGIO VI Victrix			1	0.53%		
LEGIO VII Clavdia			4	2.13%		
LEGIO VIII Avgvsta			3	1.60%		
LEGIO XX Valeria Victrix			3	1.60%		
LEGIO XXII Primigenia			2	1.06%		
LEGIO XXX Vlpia Victrix			3	1.60%		
Praetorian cohorts			3	1.60%		

[38] Casey 1994, 83.
[39] Oman 1924, 58.
[40] Casey 1994, 82; Elliott 2022, 99.
[41] Dando 2010, 130; Elliott 2022, 99.

LEGIO III Gallica (?)			2	1.06%		
TOTAL	**1**	**20.00%**	**43**	**22.87%**	**2**	**5.26%**

Table 12 - Percentage of coin types mentioning legions by denomination

In terms of denominations, Table 12 shows that the bulk of coin types that mention legions are antoniniani, numbering 43 types, and forming 22.87% from the total number of antoniniani in this category, which is less in comparison to the depiction of deities. As it can be observed, the only legion that is depicted on other denominations other than antoniniani is Legio IIII Flavia Firma, being mentioned on a single aureus, forming the remaining 20% of the aurei in this category, and on two denari.

Legion	Londinium	Percentage from Londinium	C Mint (Camulodunum)	Percentage from C Mint	Uncertain value (Mint)	Percentage from Uncertain value (Mint)
LEGIO I Flavia Minervia	2	3.13%	1	1.89%		
LEGIO II Avgvsta	3	4.69%				
LEGIO II Parthica	6	9.38%	3	5.66%		
LEGIO IIII Flavia Firma	5	7.81%	3	5.66%	2	1.87%
LEGIO VI Victrix	1	1.56%				
LEGIO VII Clavdia	3	4.69%	1	1.89%		
LEGIO VIII Avgvsta	3	4.69%				
LEGIO XX Valeria Victrix	2	3.13%	1	1.89%		
LEGIO XXII Primigenia	2	3.13%				
LEGIO XXX Vlpia Victrix	3	4.69%				
Praetorian cohorts	1	1.56%			2	1.87%
LEGIO III Gallica (?)	2	3.13%				
TOTAL	**33**	51.56%	**9**	16.98%	**4**	3.74%
Percentage	**71.74%**		**19.57%**		**8.70%**	

Table 13 - Percentage of coin types mentioning legions by mint

Adding the perspective of which mint issued coin types for which legion, gave an interesting result that can be seen in Table 13. Most legionary coin types were issued by the Londinium mint. There are no cases in which a legion was mentioned by another mint, and Londinium did not mention that particular legion. Even when other mints issued for a legion, the Londinium mint issued more types, as can be seen in the case of Legio IIII Flavia Firma, having five types issued at Londinium, three at the C Mint, and two types that are unmarked.

While analysing the legionary coin types in the database I found two types that did not name a specific legion, the legend saying only *LEG III [...]*, and the image depicting a bull (RIC V Carausius 66 & 67). With other coin types where the legend on the reverse was incomplete, I could easily find other similar types, but in this case those two types were not similar to the others. Based on the image of the bull depicted on the reverse and the lettering being *III [...]*, I considered the following legions as possible candidates for those two types: Legio III Gallica, or Legio IIII Scythica. Legio III Gallica used two bulls as their emblem, while Legio IIII Scythica used a single bull,[42] so if taken as this, the latter would be a better candidate. The problem in giving credit to any of these two legions is the fact that both of them, during the third century had their base of operation in the east, Legio III Gallica being located in Danaba,[43] and Legio IIII Scythica in Sura as described in the Notitia Dignitatum.[44]

Some other ideas should be taken in consideration. First, there is the fact that during the third century, legion emblems were not used correctly, and their depiction on coins could differ.[45] Second, there is a possibility that Carausius had access to the recruitment pool of Maximian, before the usurpation.[46] This might explain the presence of so many legions in his coinage if their presence on the coin types is taken as a sign that a part of that legion was under his command.

These ideas are based on possibilities, and until another types, with photographs are published, the real meaning of those two coin types cannot be explained.

Another type worth mentioning is for Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix. During the third century, this legion was stationed on the Rhine, at Xanten.[47] The panegyric of 297 mentions that a legion was

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[42] Dando 2010, 120, 132.
[43] Dando 2010, 123.
[44] Dando 2010, 134.
[45] Shiel 1977, 190.
[46] Elliott 2022, 99.
[47] Casey 1994, 84; Elliott 2022, 99.

seized.[48] Casey suggests that it is about Legio XXX Ulpia Victrix, which was the closest to the area of the usurpation,[49] and it might have been a part of the force that was under the command of Carausius when he was tasked with fighting against the Saxon sea raiders.[50]

From this category we can make a few observations:

1. Even though Rotomagus issued the least number of types, it issued the most aurei.
2. The most depicted deities are Concordia, Mars, Victory, and Fides.
3. The C Mint focuses more on depiction of deities in regard to the military, while the mint of Londinium focused more on commemorating the legions.

III.3. Saeculum Aureum references

Carausius, emulating what an emperor would do, struck coins with promises of a better future, promoting that, through his abilities, a new golden age would come over the empire,[51] or at least over the provinces that he ruled over. This category, contain types that promoted immaterial benefits for the population of the empire.[52]

This category has the most numerous coin types, 519 different coin types. Below in Table 14, it can be observed that the total number of types are present in all denominations, including the uncertain bronze issues. The bulk is represented by antoniniani, with 475 types, forming 91.52%. Here we have the second most issued types of denari (37), surpassed only by one type in the Military category, while the number of aurei (5) are equal in both categories.

Denomination	Number of types	Percentage
Aureus	5	0.97%
Antoninianus	475	91.52%
Denarius	37	7.14%
Uncertain value (Bronze)	2	0.39%
TOTAL	519	100.00%

Table 14 - Percentages of coin types from the Saeculum aureum category by denomination

[48] Mynors et al. 1994, 127-128.
[49] Casey 1994, 84.
[50] Frere 1978, 378-379.
[51] Manders 2012, 187.
[52] Manders 2012, 187.

For this category, as with the last two categories, all mints issued types, and their distribution can be seen in Table 15. The C Mint issued the most coin types, with 130 from the total of 519, meaning that 25.05% from the total of coin types in this category and 46.93% from the total of marked types in this category bear the mark of this mint.

Mint	Number of types	Percentage	Percentage without Uncertain value
Londinium	107	20.62%	38.63%
C Mint (Camulodunum)	130	25.05%	46.93%
Rotomagus	40	7.71%	14.44%
Uncertain value	242	46.63%	
Total without Uncertain value	277	53.37%	100.00%
TOTAL	519	100.00%	

Table 15 - Percentages of coin types from the Saeculum aureum category by mint

Analysing the distribution of each denomination by mint helped in understanding on which denomination was the focus for each mint. Starting with the Londinium mint, we can observe in Table 16 that all the aurei types from this category were issued there. One of the two bronze types were minted in Londinium, depicting the personification Pax.

Denomination	Londinium	Percentage of denominations by Londinium	Percentage from total Denomination (Londinium)
Aureus	5	4.67%	100.00%
Antoninianus	100	94.39%	21.26%
Denarius			
Uncertan value (Bronze)	1	0.93%	50.00%
TOTAL	107	100.00%	

Table 16 - Percentages for each denomination issued by the Londinium mint (Saeculum aureum category)

The C Mint, as mentioned above, is the most prolific mint in this category, as it was in the Divine representation category before, but there was no variety in terms of denomination, as it can be seen in Table 17. All issues of the C Mint in this category consists of antoniniani.

Denomination	C Mint (Camulodunum)	Percentage of denominations by C Mint (Camulodunum)	Percentage from total Denomination (C Mint)
Aureus			
Antoninianus	130	100.00%	27.37%
Denarius			
Uncertan value (Bronze)			
TOTAL	**130**	**100.00%**	

Table 17 - Percentages for each denomination issued by the C Mint (Saeculum aureum category)

In contrast, the continental mint shows some variety (Table 18), issuing nearly an equal proportion of antoniniani and denari when analysed from the total number of their particular issues, with 8.00% of the antoniniani and 5.41% of the denari. When analysing only from the perspective of the issues of that mint, a focus on antoniniani can be seen, with 95% of coin types issued by the Rotomagus mint being antoniniani.

Denomination	Rotomagus	Percentage of denominations by Rotomagus	Percentage from total Denomination (Rotomagus)
Aureus			
Antoninianus	38	95.00%	8%
Denarius	2	5.00%	5.41%
Uncertan value (Bronze)			
TOTAL	**40**	**100.00%**	

Table 18 - Percentages for each denomination issued by the Rotomagus mint (Saeculum aureum category)

Before analysing each deity and their representativeness in this category I would like to mention that in this category I added personifications that make reference to the immaterial benefits that Carausius would have brought, like Pax, Laetitia, Fortuna. I also added the types depicting Britannia, accompanied by the legend *EXPECTATE VENI*, because they made a direct reference to the poet Virgil[53], and portrayed Carausius as the bringer of stability in the empire.[54]

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[53] De La Bédoyère 2005.
[54] Casey 1994, 48.

Deity	Number of types	Percentage
Abundantia	2	0.39%
Britannia (EXPECTATE VENI types)	16	3.08%
Concordia	2	0.39%
Felicitas	29	5.59%
Fides	1	0.19%
Fortuna	25	4.82%
The Four Seasons	1	0.19%
Hilaritas	8	1.54%
Laetitia	59	11.37%
Pax	207	39.88%
Providentia	1	0.19%
Salus	68	13.10%
Securitas	5	0.96%
Sol	18	3.47%
Spes	14	2.70%
Tutela	13	2.50%
Uberitas	17	3.28%
No specified deity	33	6.28%
TOTAL	**519**	**100.00%**

Table 19 - Percentages of deities represented on coin types (Saeculum aureum category)

As it can be observed in Table 19, the most represented is Pax, with 207 coin types, forming 39.88% from the total number of types in this category. The next most represented is Salus, followed closely by Laetitia, with 13.10%, respectively 11.37%.

Using the information compiled in Table 20, it can be said that all deities were depicted on antoniniani, mostly following the trend set in the previous table. Pax is depicted on three out of five aurei, while Salus is depicted on the other two. Carausius seems to follow the trend of the third century in regard to this category, with the numerous types depicting Pax, Salus and Felicitas.[55]

Pax was usually interpreted as a reward from the gods after a successful war.[56] During the third century, this idea slowly shifted towards a hopeful scenario of peace, rather than peace as a result of war.[57] Most depictions of Pax in this category depict her standing and holding an olive branch, a symbol of peace, but there are some instances in which she is depicted seated, or walking, and

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[55] Manders 2012, 192.
[56] Gnecchi 1911, 54.
[57] Manders 2012, 200.

sometimes she holds different objects. One of the aurei depicting Pax is accompanied by the legend *PAX CARAVSI AVG*, and it clearly emphasise the peace that Carausius will bring.

As I already mentioned, Salus is the second most depicted in terms of coin types. The personification of health seems to be represented in different waves in the first half of the third century, while towards the end of the century appearing more constantly on imperial coinage.[58] The well-being of the state was linked to the health of the emperor,[59] so this might be an explanation for why Carausius issued those types. Another observation is about the aurei depicting Salus, both of them contain in their legend the double, respectively triple G. While on the first type, Carausius is depicted on the obverse, on the second type, it is Maximian who is depicted. These legends, with the aforementioned information could be interpreted that the health of all three emperors.

Deity	Aureus	Percentage of Aurei from total Number of Aurei (Saeculum aureum)	Antoninianus	Percentage of Antoniniani from total Number of Antoniniani (Saeculum aureum)	Denarius	Percentage of Denari from total Number of Denari (Saeculum aureum)	Uncertain value (Bronze)	Percentage of Bronze issues from total Number of Uncertain value (Bronze) (Saeculum aureum)
Abundantia			2	0.42%				
Britania (EXPECTATE VENI types)			11	2.32%	5	13.51%		
Concordia			2	0.42%				
Felicitas			27	5.68%	2	5.41%		
Fides			1	0.21%				
Fortuna			22	4.63%	3	8.11%		
The Four Seasons			1	0.21%				
Hilaritas			8	1.68%				
Laetitia			57	12.00%	2	5.41%		
Pax	3	60.00%	197	41.47%	5	13.51%	2	100.00%
Providentia			1	0.21%				
Salus	2	40.00%	64	13.47%	2	5.41%		
Securitas			5	1.05%				
Sol			16	3.37%	2	5.41%		
Spes			14	2.95%				
Tutela			13	2.74%				
Uberitas			4	0.84%	13	35.14%		

[58] Manders 2012, 213.
[59] Manders 2012, 212.

No specified Deity			30	6.32%	3	8.11%		
TOTAL	**5**	100.00%	**475**	100.00%	**37**	100.00%	**2**	100.00%
Percentage	**0.97%**		**91.70%**		**7.14%**		**0.39%**	

Table 20 - Percentages of deities by denomination (Saeculum aureum category)

The happiness of the century, and other forms of happiness and bliss are portrayed on coinage through the depictions of Felicitas. Analysing the coin types issued by Carausius, those depicting Felicitas would almost completely be accompanied by the legend *FELICITAS TEMPORVM*, or other variations, a legend that was used by many emperors during the third century.[60] A particular coin type that bears the legend *TEMPORVM FELICITAS* depicts the Four Seasons playing as children (RIC V Carausius 1016). This coin type, while observing the evolution of the concept of the Golden Age that started with Augustus since his first saecular games, could make a reference to a part of the myth surrounding this concept about the four ages of man.[61]

In Table 19 and Table 20 it can be seen that I added coin types depicting Sol. All coin types bear the legend *ORIENS AVG*, or a variation of this legend. Normally, this kind of legend, combined with the depiction of Sol, would make a reference to military activities in the eastern borders of the empire, but in this part of the empire it could make a reference to a renewal and the dawn of a new period and age brought by Carausius.[62]

Augustus used the works of poets like Virgil to promote the concept of the Golden Age.[63] It seems that Carausius understood the importance of communicating this kind of message and issued coin types with a clear Virgilian reference, first through the *EXPECTATE VENI* types, then through the marks R.S.R. and I.N.P.C.D.A.

The *EXPECTATE VENI* types, regardless of the denomination, depict Britannia holding either a trident, or an ensign, clasping hands with Carausius holding a sceptre. This imagery combined with the legend that makes a reference to the Aeneid and can be translated like "Come, O expected one", portrays Carausius as a saviour, legitimising his rule,[64] and at the same time follows the tradition of reinaugurating the Golden Age, adding an oracular origin.[65] Direct reference to the

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[60] Manders 2012, 196.
[61] Barker 2015, 168.
[62] Manders 2012, 127-128.
[63] Barker 2015, 161.
[64] Casey 1994, 48.
[65] Barker 2015, 165.

work of Virgil was rather rare, especially on coins[66]. The knowledge of Aeneid and other works of the classics would not be unknown in the provinces of Britain. In his writing, Tacitus mentions that Agricola "trained the sons of the leading men in the liberal arts".[67] A tile with the first verses of the Aeneid was discovered in Silchester, and different mosaics found in villas across England depict different scenes from the Aeneid.[68] From this we can at least be sure that the elite would understand and appreciate the message communicated through these coin types.[69]

Regarding the R.S.R and I.N.P.C.D.A., even though the second mark is present only on two bronze medallions.[70] The letters were interpreted differently throughout the time, with *In Nomine Principis Carausii Donavit Allectus* for the I.N.P.C.D.A.[71] and *Rationalis Summae Rei* for the R.S.R.[72] But now it has been accepted by most authors that the letters form two verses from the Fourth Eclogues written by Virgil, which translated is "The Golden Age returns, now a new generation is let down from heaven above".[73]

Coin types depicting Uberitas, the personification of fruitfulness is depicted on four antoniniani and 13 denari, most of the time depicting an image of a woman milking a cow, and always accompanied by the legend *VBERITAS AVG* or other variations of this legend. Usually on imperial coinage she is depicted as a woman holding a cornucopia in one hand and in the other a purse, that was sometimes interpreted as grapes or a cow's udder.[74] For the coin types of Carausius, this has been interpreted as referencing Virgil, but there have been counter-arguments because in Virgil's work goats were described, not cows.[75] The difference, from goats to cows might come from the Latin word for udder being *uber*.[76] I think that the use of the woman milking a cow, in combination with the aforementioned legend makes a reference to Virgil's work, so that the message would be clearer to a bigger part of the population, not only the elite that learned about the literary classics, that Carausius promised a new Golden Age.

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[66] De La Bédoyère 2005, 190.
[67] Tacitus, *Agricola*, 1. 21.
[68] Barret 1978, 307-310.
[69] Birley 2005, 376.
[70] Carson 1973, 1-2.
[71] Shiel 1977, 165.
[72] Shiel 1977, 97-98.
[73] De La Bédoyère 2005, 189.
[74] Gnecchi 1911, 62.
[75] De La Bédoyère 2005, 193.
[76] Barker 2015, 168.

Another reference used by emperors to signify a new age of prosperity was through the Saecular Games, a tradition started by Augustus.[77] He marked this moment with coins depicting a *cippus*, a low column, with other emperors following this trend to mark the moment of their own Saecular Games.[78] One type issued by Carausius bears this type of reverse, a *cippus* with the inscription *COS IIII*, accompanied by the legend *SAECULARES AVG*. This coin type might reference to a possible event held by Carausius in the year of his fourth consulship, which might be around the year 290. Having the information from the panegyrics and the other contemporary authors, around that period, Maximian failed to invade the isles and peace was made with Carausius, something that surely had to be celebrated by Carausius.[79]

When analysing the distribution of each deity and personification by mint some observations can be made. Regarding the *EXPECTATE VENI* types, only four types bear the symbol of the C Mint, while the rest have no mint-mark.

	Abundantia	Britannia (EXPECTATE VENI types)	Concordia	Felicitas	Fides	Fortuna	The Four Seasons	Hilaritas	Laetitia	Pax	Providentia	Salus	Securitas	Sol	Spes	Tutela	Uberitas	No specified diety	TOTAL
Percentage minted by Londinium from Total (Saeculum aureum)			0.19%	0.77%		0.77%		0.77%	1.93%	11.56%		3.28%	0.58%	0.58%				0.19%	20.62%
Percentage minted by C Mint (Camulodunum) from Total (Saeculum aureum)	0.19%	0.77%		1.35%		0.96%		0.19%	4.05%	10.60%		2.12%	0.19%	1.35%	1.54%			1.73%	25.05%
Percentage minted by Rotomagus from Total (Saeculum aureum)				0.77%		0.77%						2.31%				2.50%	0.39%	0.96%	7.71%
Percentage minted by Uncertain value (Mint) from Total (Saeculum aureum)	0.19%	2.31%	0.19%	2.70%	0.19%	2.31%	0.19%	0.58%	5.39%	17.73%	0.19%	5.39%	0.19%	1.54%	1.16%		2.89%	3.47%	46.63%

Figure 5 - Percentage of coin types depicting deities in the Saeculum Aureum category by mint

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[77] Barker 2015, 161.
[78] Barker 2015, 164.
[79] Barker 2015, 169.

It seems that, as with the Divine category, the C Mint was more diverse in terms of the actual number of different deities, depicting a total of 11, while the Londinium mint issued types for nine. Pax is distributed rather equal between the Londinium mint and the C Mint, both having a percentage around 10%-12%. Some coin types issued by both the C Mint and the Londinium mint are depicting Laetitia, a personification that is associated with the successful and satisfaction that comes from distribution of provisions, and can sometimes be represented only by a galley.[80] Some coin types depicting galleys were minted at Rotomagus, so this might explain a possible transport of provisions over the English Channel.

The continental mint at Rotomagus issued coin types focusing on Tutela, the personification of protection, with all the known 13 types being issued here only, and Salus. It can be observed that the only types depicting Uberitas that have a mint-mark were issued by this mint, the others bearing no mint-mark.

From the analysis of the representations regarding a new age of prosperity on the coin types of Carausius, we can make the following observations:

1. There was a focus to communicate the message of a future prosperity and a new Golden Age.
2. References to literary classics are present in the coinage of Carausius, and some adaptations were made, possibly to make the message accessible to a wider audience.
3. The C Mint issued more types in this category, with the most depicted deity being Pax. Londinium issued all the aurei in this category.
4. The standardisation of coin types and altering of some messages can be seen in the types bearing the legend *ORIENS AVG*.

IV.   Conclusions

This paper was written with the aim of analysing the military messages and references to a new age of prosperity that Carausius wanted to communicate to the population of the Empire through the use of coinage. Usurping the imperial title towards the end of the third century, he already possessed a template of how to do and what to express.

The appeasing of the army and securing its loyalty was one of the four main categories of messages that Carausius focused during his reign. Contrary to the trend of the third century, these

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[80] Gnecchi 1911, 48.

types of messages were not the main focus on coin types, but second. An emperor needed to show gratitude towards the legions that were under his command, and that is what Carausius did too. Throughout that analysis, more legions were commemorated than expected, with many of them being stationed in the other part of the empire at that time. I accept both ideas regarding these legionary issues, commemorating just parts of the legions that were actually under the command of Carausius using the names of the legions themselves, and at the same time possibly throughout circulation these coin types would have been used as a mean to persuade the rest of the targeted legion. The presence of so many legions being commemorated by Carausius could be explained by combining both ideas, because some of the legions were in Britannia at that time, and at least one legion was in the Rhine area and it is mentioned in the panegyrics that it went under the command of Carausius.

In this category the most aurei were issued by the mint at Rotomagus, all of them depicting Concordia Militum. With this information, alongside the information that on some of the issues from Rotomagus, the portrait of Carausius is rather similar to that of Maximian and Diocletian, I tend to believe in the idea that he was declared emperor there, because the need to issue coin types to be used as donatives towards the army were a priority as a newly declared emperor. The fast need of coin types in combination with the lack of a mint in the area meant that with the creation of this mint, new workers were needed to make dies from what they had at hand (e.g. coins portraying Diocletian).

The most representative category by far was the Saeculum aureum, with nearly half of the coin types in this sample being here. At the same time, it gave the most results regarding what type of message did Carausius wanted to communicate. If for the other categories the messages were more direct, or it did not need a certain level of knowledge, here some messages were more subtle. It seems that either Carausius himself, or people that were thinking and producing the dies, knew about classical literature. This knowledge can be observed through many references to Virgil and the concept of the golden age returning through Carausius. Using these references Carausius wanted to prove himself worthy of the imperial title, and at the same time, in my opinion, these coin types communicated the same overall message to both people that understood the references or those who did not and took the message at face value. Some adaptations were made to provide the same message to the audience, regardless of education, as in the case of the Uberitas coin types, in which instead of the personification of plentifulness, a cow being milked is depicted. Especially

in these coin types I see a good way to communicate the message that Carausius will bring plenty, firstly appealing to the educated population with references to the works of Virgil, and with the image of a cow being milked appealing to the rest of the population. For both instances the message was clearly communicated, Carausius reign will provide benefits to his supporters.

Using more subtle messages and references to classical literature could be explained by possibly higher number of educated people in Britannia, if we take in consideration the increasing number of villas that were either constructed, or repaired during the second half of the third century in that area, and the abandonment of villas in Gaul.

Regarding other benefits, it seems that the main focus of Carausius was to promote the idea of peace. It is unclear if the idea of peace was a promise, or he did try to communicate that peace was already established. For the second idea, it might be an interesting take, if we take in the fact that the continental mint did not issue any types depicting Pax.

When observing the distribution of denomination and different messages in each category, I came to a conclusion that there could have been a specialisation of the mints in terms of what message was to be communicated. The C Mint issued most coin types making reference to gods, personifications of certain concepts, the virtues of Carausius, and the *EXPECTATE VENI* types, while the Londinium mint focused more on the military issues, and issued the most aurei. In the case of the number of aurei, this could be explained by the importance of Londinium as capital of the province, but regarding this separation of messages, I would propose a possible specialisation of these mints.

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Roman Provincial Coinage – a mirror of the urban landscape. The case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*

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Abstract: The Roman Provincial Coinage provides one of the most complex sources of information regarding ancient cities. In conjunction with archaeological surveys and epigraphic data, it can offer essential insights into the reconstruction of the landscape of the minting city. This is also the case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, founded by Trajan to commemorate his victory over the Dacians. It exhibited a complex urban organization that is primarily reflected in the archaeological discoveries. Numerous architectural elements (gates, temples) are present in the local coin emissions, particularly from the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) when *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and other cities of *Moesia Inferior* experienced an explosion of monetary types. There are also several examples of buildings, such as the *nymphaeum*, that have yet to be discovered but appear on the coins of the city. This presentation will offer a virtual visit to *Nikopolis ad Istrum* through the lens of its provincial coinage from the end of the 2nd century to the 3rd century AD.

Key-words: coinage, architecture, *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, archaeology.

Introduction

The Roman Provincial Coinage represents an essential source in the study of the urban landscape of ancient cities. This category consists of 5 typologies as following: the issues of "client kings" (for example, the rulers of the Bosporan Kingdom), the provincial ones (*Dacia*), "koinon" coins, the civic coinages, and alliance coins. They usually have the emperor's image on the obverse, but also depictions of other members of the imperial family. The reverse is characterized by the illustration of elements which are linked to the local identity such as: deities that are worshiped in the city, personifications of different elements of its' landscape (mountains, rivers, etc.), but also architectural monuments.[1]

The reverse of these coins holds considerable significance in our current discussion. The provincial coinages portrayed various depictions of city gates, and other architectural features. The studies of Price and Trell,[2] A. Burnett[3] and C. Howgego,[4] raise several vital queries: 1. To what extent do these representations correspond to the reality as unearthed by archaeological

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[1] Description and typologies presented on the Roman Provincial Coinage platform accessed at https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/introduction/whatisrpc on 13.07.2024.
[2] Price and Trell 1977.
[3] Burnett 2002.
[4] Howgego 2005.

excavations?; 2. Could they be considered a reliable source for a possible reconstruction of the image and urban landscape of an ancient city?

Andrew Burnett brings into light an important aspect presented by T. Drew-Bear in his work *Representations of Temples on the Greek Imperial Coinage* and which would be the methodological basis of the current study. Both authors consider that numismatic sources should be 'treated in this respect with great caution, for clearly such depictions attain their full value as evidence only when they can be compared with the results of actual excavation of the monuments they portray.'[5]

The present research focuses on the case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, which had a various production of monetary types depicting monumental structures in the period under discussion – mainly from the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) until the one of Gordian III (238-244 AD).

Jordanes and Ammianus Marcellinus bring into discussion the foundation of the city. The first one states that *Nikopolis* was inaugurated as a result of the victory of Trajan over the Sarmatians: *[Nikopolis] quae iuxta Iatrum fluvium est constituta notissima quam devictis Sarmatis Traianus et fabricavit et appellavit Victoriae civitatem*.[6] Ammianus Marcellinus presents the foundation of *Nikopolis* as an event commemorating Trajan's victory over the Dacians: *Nicopolis quam indicium victoriae contra Dacos Traianus condidit imperator*.[7] *Nikopolis ad Istrum* was, in the first place, part of the province of *Thrace*.

The destiny and appearance of the city was powerfully affected by the attacks of Costoboci (starting from 170 AD).[8] After these events, *Nikopolis* entered a new phase of its' development: the construction of defences and new public buildings. As Andrew Poulter mentions, the fortifications including city gates and curtain walls were built during the 170s, in the forthcoming period after the invasions and destructions.[9] In the last decade of the 3rd century AD, it was transferred to the territory of *Moesia Inferior*.[10] During the Severan period, the city had a powerful development from many points of view, including the monetary production.[11]

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[5] Drew-Bear 1974, 63; Burnett 2002, 148.
[6] Iordanes, *Getica* 18.101.
[7] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum libri qui supersunt*, XXXI, 5. 16.
[8] Bowman, Garnsey, Rathbone 2008, 171.
[9] Poulter 1992, 74.
[10] Boteva 1996, 174.
[11] Poulter 1995, 13.

A brief presentation of the archaeological excavations included in the present study

Considering the intricacy of the research questions, it is also necessary to consider the archaeological surveys and excavations conducted in the city. These have a crucial role in identifying the elements depicted on coins and in reconstructing the urban landscape.

The ruins of *Nikopolis ad Istrum* were identified by Felix Kanitz in 1871. This event led to the beginning of several actions of research in the region starting from 1899 and continuing during the first part of the 20th century under the surveillance of G. Seure[12] and T.V. Dobrouski.[13] In 1945, T. Ivanov began an excavation programme that was later transformed into a regular one. The most substantial part of this analysis is based on the results and studies published by Andrew Poulter after the British research programme on the site of *Nikopolis* between 1985-1992.[14] During this period, the excavation team examined several key elements in the current discussion, including the city's defences.[15] The resistivity measurements carried out as part of the named project had an essential role in determining the structure of the roads of the city, but also of its overall composition.[16]

The importance of this specific study would be more detailed in the presentation of the studied monetary types and their correlation with the archaeological reality, which will depict a virtual visit to *Nikopolis ad Istrum* (end of the 2nd century – 3rd century AD).

The city gates of *Nikopolis ad Istrum* through the lens of its' provincial coinage

Regarding the numismatic evidence, it is essential in portraying and illustrating various aspects of ancient cities. M. Rostovtzeff highlighted this fact by stating that: 'Hundreds of thousands of coins [....] have revealed to us not only the external appearance of many ancient cities but also the main feature of every aspect of their life — walls, streets, gates, and public and private buildings.'[17]

This was also the case for *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. Its' monetary production illustrates diverse types of city gates, starting with the reign of Septimius Severus. The first one is AMNG I 1331,

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[12] Seure 1907, 257-276.
[13] Poulter 1999, 8.
[14] See Poulter 1995, Poulter 1999, Poulter 2007.
[15] Poulter 1999, 11-12.
[16] Poulter 1992, 74.
[17] Price and Trell 1977, 15.

which was minted during the magistrature of L. Aurelius Gallus (201-204 AD) (Figure 1).[18] The obverse of the coin shows a laureate bust of Septimius Severus. The reverse is quite unique and portrays a city gate flanked by towers, with a doorway, through which a small tetrastyle temple can be seen. Above, there is another building visible.[19] One interesting study from *Buletinul Societăţii Numismatice Române (Romanian Numismatic Society Newsletter)*, intitulated *Les villes fortifiées de la Péninsule Balkanique, d'après les monnaies de l'époque romaine*, also describes the depiction of the city gate, and describes it as follows: '[avec] une porte, entre des tours, qui est surmontée d'un fronton a trois corps.'[20] The same category of reverse could be observed again on the coin types AMNG I 1339 (Figure 2[21]), and AMNG I 1585 (Figure 3[22]), the latter of which was minted during Caracalla's reign.

The second type is identified in the time of Macrinus (the magistrature of M. Claudius Agrippa – 217-218 AD) (Figure 4).[23] Here, the reverse depicts a closed city gate, flanked by two-battlemented towers with a third tower rising from the center (Varbanov no. 3345).[24] The description of the reverse is completed by the next fragment: '[la porte] est flanquée de deux tours, de diamètre relativement petit, munies de créneaux ; au centre du système défensif, au-dessus de l'entrée, s'élèvent une galerie basse et une troisième tour dont la base, se confond avec la courtine.'[25] Based on both descriptions, we observe the complexity of this coin type, which does not only depict the gate, but also the curtain that is continuing the defences of the city.

During Elagabalus' reign, the representation of city gates on the coins of *Nikopolis* underwent a change, and there are two different types of depictions. One of them shows the

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[18] Coin type AMNG I 1331 accessed at
https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=68536|73|739|ce0bfeae9b95c758c90f35f28995614d on 4.07.2024.
[19] Pick 1898, no. 1331.
[20] Blanchet 1923, 5.
[21] Coin type AMNG I 1339 accessed at
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[23] Coin type Varbanov 3345 accessed at
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[24] Varbanov 2005, 282.
[25] Blanchet 1923, 5.

monumental structure under discussion with two flat towers (Figure 5 – Varbanov 3827[26]), which is distinct from the previous designs. The second type of depiction from the mentioned rule puts into spotlight the gate with two battlement towers, but we also observe a *quadriga* between them and two horses, one on each tower (Figure 6 – Varbanov 3986,[27] AMNG I 2003[28]).

The rule of Gordian III marked the appearance of a new representation of the city gate (Figure 7 - AMNG I 2107[29]). This architectural element is characterized by two round towers, one door, and four pinnacles in the center. By examining the chronological sequence of these coin types, a noticeable diversity of city gates becomes apparent. Nonetheless, it remains uncertain whether equivalent structures existed in the field.

Another question that could be addressed is if each type corresponds to a different gate of the city or represents depictions of the evolution of a certain gate during various reigns.

Fortunately, a useful point of reference for reconstruction purposes is the southern gate and curtain of *Nikopolis*, which was uncovered in a good condition during the British archaeological excavation programme conducted between 1985 and 1992. Andrew Poulter describes its' principal characteristics:

'a single chamber, built from large ashlar blocks of limestone, not bonded with mortar but joined by iron clamps. [The] inner entrance was 2.75 m wide, its southern portal 2.65 m in width. One pair of responds, on the southern, outer side of the gate, protected the settings for a two-winged door and the inner faces of the northern responds were cut by vertical grooves to retain a portcullis (Figure 8).'[30]

Based on the detailed description from the archaeological record, a possible comparison and analysis could be made with the above-mentioned monetary types. The aspect that is identified

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[26] Coin type Varbanov 3827 accessed at
https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1797304|4149|1059|2e5b70f1e5d8dd79ca5e6d47dff382ea on 5.07.2024.
[27] Coin type Varbanov 3986 accessed at
https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=756300|1406|384|d40484e69ff9eec3b87e15727e979c54 on 5.07.2024.
[28] Coin type Varbanov 3986, AMNG I 2003 accessed at
https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=756300|1406|384|d40484e69ff9eec3b87e15727e979c54 on 5.07.2024.
[29] RPC VII. 2, 1263 accessed at https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/7.2/1263 on 14.07.2024.
[30] Poulter 1995, 85.

in the case of all reverse depictions is the illustration of the big rectangular limestone blocks that are considered the main construction material.

The coin types AMNG I 1331 (or AMNG I 1339, AMNG I 1585) – mirrors of the Western gate?

The city gate represented during the reign of Septimius Severus, and in the time of Caracalla is the one which has the most recognized features in the archaeological record and allows an accurate identification for the moment. The other coin types are still the subject of a complex ongoing analysis that could also allow the association with a possible equivalent on the field. The type AMNG I 1331 (together with AMNG I 1339, and AMNG I 1585 respectively) is characterized by an impressive structure, which could be the western gate of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. But which elements illustrate this aspect?

One of them is the depiction of the towers. In the field, Andrew Poulter explains the differences between the structures of the city gates of *Nikopolis*. The ones that have been excavated were the Northern and Southern ones, but the Western entrance was also surveyed.

The last mentioned one was subject to continuous robbery of material, an activity that created the so-called "robber-trenches" around it. The archaeologists studied these structures and concluded that their form and composition indicate the fact that the Western gate was flanked by towers, a feature that was not present in the case of the other entrances.[31]

The posed question refers to the possibility of depicting the Eastern gate. Based on the archaeological plan of *Nikopolis* (Figure 9[32]), it is highly unlikely that this is the case. One argument is given by the fact that the Western part of *decumanus maximus* had a width of 7.80 m and is also strongly elevated and decorated (for example, with a *propyleion*). The Eastern road to the city had a width of 6.15 m and it was constructed in a much more simpler manner.[33]

As a result, the eastern gate could not have a complex depiction comparable to the one present on the discussed coin types. Also, it is usually widely considered that the coins depict the most important elements of the city, and in the case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, the western gate seems to be the most significant entrance, being accompanied by a *peristylium*, and an impressive *propyleion*.

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[31] Poulter 1995, 95.
[32] Poulter 1995, 3.
[33] Poulter 1992, 72.

On the reverse of the discussed coin types, a small tetrastyle temple could be observed. Regarding this matter, the research is still in an incipient phase. However, Andrew Poulter mentions that L. Slokoska discovered an inscription that commemorates the construction of a temple in the agora during Hadrian's reign.[34] It is difficult to state that the temple on the coin could be the one which was commemorated in the mentioned inscription, considering the powerful destruction of the city during the attacks from 170s AD. However, we could consider the mentioned hypothesis as a possible one, but with a reserve because of the lack of supplementary details.

The coin type depicts above the gate a complex structure which could be interpreted in diverse ways. As the city plan (Figure 9) shows, the Western entrance to the *agora* is enhanced by the construction of a *propyleion*.[35] The structure is dated between 145 and 161 AD, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, based on the inscription from the architrave.[36] Its appearance is reconstructed by Ivan Tsarov (Figure 10) and we could identify common elements with the building from the discussed types, such as the triangular front and columns.[37]

The next possible equivalent in the field could be the *peristylium* that is represented on the city plan after the *propyleion*. For it, we don't have a visual reconstruction, but Ivan Tsarov describes it: 'A high single-sashed door led to a small peristyle with a water mirror – a pool (*piscina*). It was encircled by six columns joined by decorative railings.'[38] Again, the columns could be identified in both the description and the reverse type, and we could also propose the idea that the middle component could depict a part of the *peristylium* especially through the 3 illustrated arches.

On the eastern side from the *agora*, the plan shows a considerable building named *thermoperipatos*. The construction is dated in 184/5 AD, during the reign of Commodus.[39] In its' case, we also have pictures that constitute an important contribution in the possible identification of the discussed coin types. From the one included by Ivan Tsarov in his book (Figure 11[40]), it could be distinguished that the pediment in the photo is striking similar with the typology depicted on the coins. The *thermoperipatos* also has on the pediment the symbol of a shield with a spear, as

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[34] Ivanov et al. 1986, 86; Sharankov 2014, 28-9.
[35] Poulter 1992, 72.
[36] IGBulg. II 604 accessed at https://inscriptions.packhum.org/text/168660?&bookid=186&location=1687 on 16.07.2024.
[37] Tsarov 2009, 20.
[38] Tsarov 2009, 19.
[39] IGBulg. II 615.
[40] Tsarov 2009, 26.

visible on the photo from the archaeological site (Figure 12[41]). The same pattern is clearly visible on the reverse of the types AMNG I 1331, 1339 and 1585. This observation is also made by Andrew Poulter based on the elements discovered on site.[42]

The mentioned and detailed aspects show a high possibility that the coin types under discussion could represent depictions of the Western gate of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, which was also considered the most important entrance in the city. As far as the other entrances are concerned, there are still multiple elements that must be studied and analysed before any attempt of identification could be made.

Later city-gate monetary types: expressions of local identity or standardized motives?

This part of the current study is in a preliminary phase, considering the complexity of the subject. As a result, the details that were observed until the present moment will be included to assure the most accurate disponible at the moment.

According to the discussion, Andrew Poulter's research suggests that after the Severan dynasty, *Nikopolis ad Istrum* still featured city-gate coin types, which were also common in other cities of the region. It is plausible that these coin types lacked any specific local significance.[43] For the moment, this sentence could not be completely accepted or, on the opposite, denied.

Still, one interesting example that could contribute to the current analysis regards the type of city-gate depicted during the reign of Gordian III (AMNG 2107 – Figure 7). This illustration is dated to the period of the magistrate Sabinius Modestus (241-242/3 AD).

Here, a similar depiction could be identified in *Markianopolis* during the magistrature of Tullius Menophilus (238-241 AD) (Figure 13[44]). In both cases, are observed common features such as: two round towers, the 4 pinnacles, and the appearance of the entrance in the gate. Despite a clear resemblance of the two coin types, it is still difficult to explain the possible switch from the depictions illustrating a powerful local identity to several standard ones.

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[41] Photo accessed at https://wikimapia.org/25248885/Thermoperipatos on 16.07.2024.
[42] Poulter 1995, 95.
[43] Poulter 1995, 95.
[44] Coin type AMNG 1170 accessed at
https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=502747|899|201|8bcadc24a38bbe22242a2672c2fae0e7 on
16.07.2024.

The *nymphaeum* of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*

The following case is complex and interesting, because here coins are the only sources that reflect the possible existence of a *nymphaeum* in *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. But, before discussing the mentioned idea, it is necessary to analyse the definition of this monumental structure in general.

Price and Trell (1977) describe it as a 'temple of decorative type dedicated to the nymphs often including a watering place.'[45] Another definition is that detailed by J. E. Lendon who emphasises on the fact that for a long time there was no clear characterization for the building. He illustrates several elements that could be followed in the description: 'a frontage of at least 15 meters, a main water-receptacle open to the sky, elaborate decoration, usually in the <<tabernacle>> or <<aedicular>> (columns and niches) style, adorned with statues and rare marbles.'[46]

The difficulty that appears in our discussion is how we could consider that the representations on the coins are genuine and reflect the existence of a *nymphaeum* in *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. Price and Trell list the city among the places where this kind of building could be identified.[47] However, this could not be totally sure until it would not be discovered from an archaeological point of view, an aspect that was mentioned as a methodological part of the current research. Still, there are a few details that could bring to light high chances of the existence of a *nymphaeum*.

Generally, the presence of a complex water system is linked to it.[48] *Nikopolis ad Istrum* had an impressive circuit composed of aqueducts, public baths, etc. Ivan Tsarov describes it as follows:

'The western aqueduct of *Nicopolis*, about 25 km long, collected water from the cave near today's village of Musina, Pavlikeni municipality. Through its several branches, the underground river poured its water into the octagonal series stone catchment (*caput aquae*). Then it ran along a masoned, arched canal (*specus*) towards the city distribution reservoir (*castellum aquae*) which is the best-preserved ruin today, about 4 m high. The canal crossed the valley of the Rositsa River on a 17m high and about 3 km long arcade, specially constructed for the purpose. At the west end of Dichin village, the canal changed its direction and headed east. [….] After passing near the modern Malak Resen village and the western city necropolis, it supplied the water to the above-

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[45] Price and Trell 1977, 44.
[46] Lendon 2015, 123.
[47] Price and Trell 1977, 44.
[48] Lendon 2015, 124.

mentioned reservoir, from where it was distributed and reached the city quarters and homes along clay water-mains.'[49]

The detailed presentation of Ivan Tsarov also depicts the importance of the aqueducts in the functioning of the public baths, fountains, and of the highly possible *nymphaeum*.[50]

Another aspect that could be taken into consideration is the presence of the nymph Pan in the coinage of the city (Figures 14 and 15 - coins from the reigns of Commodus[51] and Elagabalus[52]). He is usually connected to the nymphs, and, as a result, to the water sources.[53] Despite the absence of the archaeological discovery of the structure, its' general aspect still can be detailed based on the coin types that depict it. One accurate description is presented through the online catalogue *Corpus Nummorum*, which also encompasses two different typologies of the building.

As far as the example from the reign of Septimius Severus is concerned (governor Lucius Aurelius Gallus) (Figure 16[54]), the *nymphaeum* has:

'a two-story semi-circular column façade on a three-tiered base, framed by rectangular *aediculae* on both floors. The first floor is marked by a row of columns, in the second the columns are arranged in pairs and crowned by a triangular pediment. The lateral *aediculae* are each formed by four columns with an architrave. The roof entablature extends over the entire building. Between the base of the columned façade and the steps, a series of smaller niches is visible, from which the water flowed.'[55]

The reign of Macrinus is marked by a significant change in the appearance of the *nymphaeum* (Figure 17[56]). Besides the old structure, we could see that an arch between the two rows of columns occurs. Based on the analysis conducted by Bluma L. Trell, is possible that the

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[49] Tsarov 2009, 28-29.
[50] Tsarov 2009, 28.
[51] Coin type AMNG I 1242 accessed at https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/moesia/nikopolis/t.html .
[52] https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=340299|609|642|b6cfc20dd488724a0a2502ccc685f348.
[53] Roman 2010, 384.
[54] CN Coin 54052 accessed at https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/coins/54052 on 16.07.2024.
[55] Description accessed at https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/coin-of-the-month/2023/8/?lg=en on 16.07.2024.
[56] Coin type Varbanov 3382 accessed at https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2168248|5211|218|5f3a97f814beaf18ee822dbe163ba6ff on 16.07.2024.

new element was the result of several additions in the period between Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) and Elagabalus (218-222 AD). The case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum* would not represent the only one where changes appear from one period to another. For example, Perge registered a similar action during the Severan dynasty. The role of the arch could have been to allow the entrance to the semicircular colonnade space.[57]

One of the questions that could be formulated regarding the general structure of the *nymphaeum* is linked to the absence of the water-basin from the numismatic depictions. Because of the lack of archaeological explanations, the different possibilities are detailed based on similar cases from other cities of the Roman Empire. Two scenarios could be distinguished in the case of the basin's depiction. The first one explains that the structure was localized between the spouts wall and the steps (as in Xanthos, for example), and, because of this it is not visible on the coin depiction. Another possibility could have been to situate the basin below the stairs. In this case, the water was poured over the steps (this hydraulic system was the one attested in Corinth).[58]

As far as the local significance of the *nymphaeum* coin types is concerned, we could formulate several preliminary observations. One of them concerns the reason of constructing such a structure in *Nikopolis*. The city had a considerable population originating from *Asia Minor*, especially, *Nicaea* and *Nicomedia*.[59] On the territory of *Asia Minor*, the *nymphaeum* has developed starting with the Flavians,[60] and we could consider that the people who came to *Nikopolis* from this region implemented the idea of this kind of construction.

As it was explained for each component of the urban landscape of the city, we also must analyse whether the detailed representation of monumental *nymphea* has or not any local significance. If we compare the types from *Nikopolis ad Istrum* with examples from other cities, all of them are different.

Basing the observations on the *nymphaeum* from *Hadrianopolis* (Thrace) (Figure 18[61]), the differences are clear. This one has a much more complex structure and is also represented together with diverse statues. The construction from *Neocaesarea* depicted on coins of Severus Alexander (Figure 19[62]) is even more different than the one illustrated in *Nikopolis*. Here, the steps are not

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[57] Trell 1978, 156.
[58] Trell 1978, 156.
[59] Aparaschivei 2010, 129.
[60] Lendon 2015, 126.
[61] CN Coin 6750 accessed at https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/coins/6750 on 16.07.2024.
[62] RPC VI, 6525 accessed at https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/6/6525 on 16.07.2024.

even included on the reverse, and, a statue is also identified in center of the monument, elements which are not observed in the image of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*.

Considering the presented types and comparisons, we could state that it is highly possible that a *nymphaeum* existed in the city, and, even more, its representations were linked to the reality. Still, the current observations must be treated carefully, because of the lack of sufficient archaeological evidence.

Conclusions

The current study represents an archaeological and numismatic overview of several key-elements of the urban landscape of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. The main difficulty was to establish a clear methodology of analysis regarding the credibility of coin types depicting buildings, which was and still is an interesting and, at the same time, risky matter.

As it was mentioned in the introduction, the present research confirms the idea that numismatic sources (in our case, the Roman Provincial Coinage) could signify an essential piece in terms of reconstructing ancient landscape. However, they have to be used with care and caution throughout the comparison and association of other categories of material such as the archaeological one. In the case of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, the described methodology unveiled interesting discussions and possible images of its landscape. The city-gates offer a complex set of questions and interpretations.

At this moment, at least one identification is relatively clear, even if some reserves have to be maintained. As we have seen, the elements of archaeological record (the succession of western entrance structures, widths, and position on the plan) show a strong probability that the reverse of the coin types AMNG I 1331, 1339, and 1585 has as an equivalent in the field - the Western city-gate. The strong association of the superstructure present in these coin types with the *thermoperipatos* is also a considerable argument in favour of the mentioned identification (see the archaeological plan – Figure 9; the *thermoperipatos* is the building that comes next to the *agora*). If this is the correct correlation, then it could be stated that the engravers represented almost the entire *decumanus maximus* on the coin with several of the most important buildings.

Coming to the case of the *nymphaeum*, the analysis is clearly more complicated because of the absence of its' archaeological discovery. For this building, the coins represent the most detailed category of source, but we couldn't consider that they depict the exact appearance. However, as it

was presented, there are several key-points that indicate a possible existence of this kind of building in *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, such as coins with the nymph Pan, and an impressive water structure archaeologically identified.

As far as the local character of this depiction, it could be considered that the image of *Nikopolis' nymphaeum* is clearly different in style, and composition compared to other cases such as *Hadrianopolis* or *Neocaesarea*. This could reflect a high grade of the city's identity, which is illustrated by the different types of the building that could be linked to possible additions over time.

Architectural elements of the landscape (for example, temples) still have to be analysed, and compared to a considerable range of other examples in order to arrive at a possible explanation. However, the presented monumental depictions show a complex organization of the city and allow a virtual tour through the lens of numismatic and archaeological sources.

List of abbreviations

AMNG I = Behrendt, Pick, *Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien, Die antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands Band 1. Dacien und Moesien* (1898)

CN = *Corpus Nummorum*

IGBulg II = Mihailov, G., *Inscriptiones graecae in Bulgaria repertae. Vol. 2. Inscriptiones inter Danubium et Haemum repertae* (1958).

RPC = *Roman Provincial Coinage*

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Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

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Fig. 6

Fig. 7   Fig. 8

Fig. 9   Fig. 10
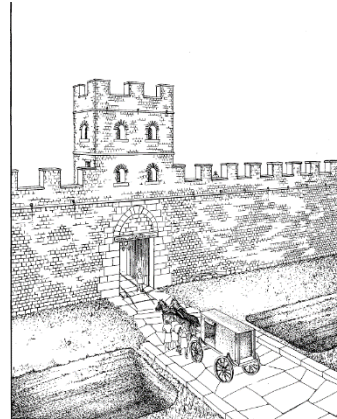
Fig. 11   Fig. 12

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

Fig. 15

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Fig. 17

Fig. 18

Fig. 19

Preliminary Observations on Roman Landscape in *Moesia Inferior*

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Abstract: The arrival of the Romans at the Lower Danube and transforming this area into the Roman province of Moesia Inferior led to a radical change of the landscape. A wide space is occupied and organized by the army. The Romans slowly introduced their own model of territorial administration. It took them almost two centuries and required enormous military resources since the local population mounted fierce resistance. It is still difficult to assess accurately what effect the Roman conquest and the subsequent period of Roman occupation had on the development of the landscape. There can be emphasized few aspects in which the landscape was transformed under the Roman rule: changes in pattern of rural settlements, changes in the nature of land use and agrarian exploitation and changes in organizing the road network. Currently available data are unequal for various archaeological sites and issues outlined. Taking into account not only the position of Moesia – a province at the periphery of the Roman world, characterized by the coexistence of two important cultural patterns: Greek and Roman, without leaving aside the native element, but also the dimensions of its territory, we shall focus on few sites, better studied from the point of view of the Roman landscape and representative for the three sub-regions of Moesia Inferior: limes, the Greek coastal cities and the interior of the province.

Keywords: *Moesia Inferior*, Roman landscape, *Novae*, *Troesmis*, *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, *Tropaeum Traiani*, *Histria*

The study of the landscape has always been embedded in archaeological research, but the importance of its systematical study from the archaeological perspective begins to take shape only in the 70s of last century. The landscapes not only are constructs of human populations but they also are the milieu in which those populations survive and sustain themselves. A landscape approach provides cultural–historical frameworks to evaluate and interpret diverse observations about spatial and temporal variability in the structure and organization of material traces. Thus, landscape is a cultural process.[1]

Although, there were in the past some studies analyzing the landscape, the interest for this kind of investigations in the Romanian scientific literature, is relatively new. Studies to be concerned with landscape reconstruction were performed for *Histria*, by which were investigated the relationships between the city and its territory, based on the position of the

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[1] Anschuetz et al. 2001, 161-162, 173.

necropolis and roads and taking into account environmental changes.[2] Some others were focused on the prehistory time.[3]

Archaeological landscape should be perceived as the result of change in the environment as a consequence of social, economic and cultural opportunities or constraints caused by natural factors.[4]

Establishing a relationship of interdependence between man and space is determined by the existence of factors coming from both sides – natural and anthropogenic. Archaeological approach of them from an integrative and cumulative perspective represents the essence of what has to be understood by the concept of landscape archeology.

Any attempt to recreate the Roman landscape at the Lower Danube should follow the next steps: a comprehensive approach to value the existing literature with regard to the subject matter; an interdisciplinary analysis of the data from archeology and related disciplines (multiple sources – historic ancient narrative sources, epigraphy, cartography, aerial and satellite photography); a combinatory analysis of data mentioned above after which relations of relative chronology can be established between the various elements, which may provide clues to the dynamics of the landscape and the areas occupied by humans.

From the geographical point of view area of the Lower Danube consists of several separate units (Balkan Mountains, Dobruja Plateau, Danube Valley, and Delta etc.), real puzzle of ecosystems characterized by the variety of resources and forms of habitat.

The arrival of the Romans at the Lower Danube and transforming this whole area into the Roman province of Moesia Inferior lead to a radical change of the landscape. A sprawling space is occupied and organized by the army, resulting in an imperial province located by the border. The operation is carried out gradually – an expression of policy of „small steps" practiced by the Romans – over several stages, military organization, with all necessary infrastructure (fortifications, roads, *mansiones*, *mutationes*, points of customs stations) being doubled by civil measures to integrate in the new administrative body the local settlements and the Greek towns from the Black Sea Coast, to which are added the new founded Roman settlements.[5]

Moesia Inferior had been established as a Roman province already in the early first century AD. Significant civilian presence in inland Dobruja prior to the second century is

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[2] Alexandrescu 1970; Alexandrescu 1971; Alexandrescu 1978; Alexandrescu 2001; Doruțiu-Boilă 1971; Ștefan 1974; Ștefan 1975; Ștefan 1976; Preoteasa et al. 2012; Preoteasa et al. 2013.
[3] Nicolaescu 2013.
[4] Heilen 2005, 20, 73, 74.
[5] Panaite 2016a.

debatable based on extant evidence, but the cities of the Black Sea coast at least were closely connected to Rome from the time of Augustus. The new political reality brought important changes on the administrative, religious and social levels. The relative autonomy of the cities from the Hellenistic period ended. Regardless of their legal status – *civitates foederatae, liberae et immunes* or *stipendiariae* – the cities had to take into account Roman interests and demands. Step by step the social framework also changed, as more and more Romans became involved in the cities' trade and internal political life. In the same time, Roman citizenship was acquired by many of the cities' occupants.[6]

An intermediate stage in the organization and takeover of control over this territory is represented by the presence of strategies. There are traces of the Thracian *strategiae* in the area of the future Lower Moesia, and especially in *Scythia Minor*. Members of the aristocracy became *strategoi* under the Roman rule, which proves that up to Trajan–Hadrian the administration of the Lower Danube territory laid on the former aristocracy. Moreover, it seems that the system was not instantly abolished when this area was assigned to the province of *Moesia* after AD 46.[7] Rome maintained the Thracian strategies for a long time because the loyal Thracian elites voluntarily adopted elements of Roman culture, frequently functioning as cultural intermediaries. On the other hand, the strategies represent the future *territoria* of the new founded Roman settlements.

The Roman advance towards the eastern limits of the future *Moesia Inferior* was a slow process that started with AD 46. One of the key elements of this process was the establishment of a legion at Novae, in the literature there is the opinion that Augustus VIII built the first camp here. Recently this idea was challenged, the author of the new hypothesis bringing convincing arguments in support of the hypothesis that, in fact, the camp was built by the *I Italica* legion, the military unit being the only legion that stationed at this important point on the Danube limes until the end of antiquity[8]. This process ended only during Trajan's reign with the building of the fortresses and forts in the area of *Scythia Minor*.[9]

The impact on local settlement of the arrival of large numbers of Roman troops along the Danube appears now to have been less than was believed to be the case in the past, as archaeologists are now less willing to rely on simple external explanations for the end of this

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[6] Matei-Popescu 2014a.
[7] Matei-Popescu 2018.
[8] Lemke 2018.
[9] Petculescu 2005; Opriş 2006.

or that settlement. This is all the more the case for the interior of the province where even the longer-term effects of being in the Empire for centuries are in some areas hard to detect.[10]

What now seems even clearer is that the Roman military cordon along the river was the core of a complex pattern of relationships based on settlements and installations on either side of the river. In that sense the river Danube was no longer a line of demarcation but rather the spine for a military and civil association that grew up in the second century and continued more or less intact until the later decades of the fourth century AD.[11]

Implementation of Roman forms run parallel with measures for the integration in the empire. It is a well-known fact that along the borders (limes) near every military fortification there is always – at least one – civil settlement depending on it and working for its benefit. The Roman authorities will be concerned primarily of creating the infrastructure which ensures the cohesion of space, which became functional in terms of production and trade, administration and military.

Factors that determine the shape of space and the creation of a specific landscape have their origin in an element of necessity: water and food supply, the need for raw materials, defense and ability to respond quickly in case of attack, communication etc.[12] Romans will impose a new system of land ownership, of making agriculture and farming and will decisively influence the organization and distribution of rural settlements. Water provisioning and the access to row materials primarily stone and clay create in the landscape aqueducts and quarries. Each settlement administrates a territory whose limits are visibly marked on land. They all were well connected by a network of land routes. As time is passing next to them appear the cemeteries, flat or barrow. All this is nothing else than the basic elements of a new reality: Roman provincial landscape.

The province of *Moesia Inferior* was crossed by important, long-distance, north-south and east-west routes. Because of its position, it was an important link between the Danube provinces, Orient and Upper Italy and there was a particular military need to allow the passage of large bodies of troops. Even if there are not so many preserved traces of them on the basis of milestones inscriptions, as the main source, a reconstruction of the roads network in the area was achieved. For the first time, *Moesia Inferior* saw properly constructed roads built with military precision; they represent the motorways of the Roman period, providing links between

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[10] Weaverdyck 2016.
[11] Țentea 2016.
[12] Aston 1985, 11-29.

settlements and allow quick movement within province, both for civilians and for the army, if needed (Fig. 1).[13]

The largest population that Romans meet at the Lower Danube is the Getae.[14] Information about them appears in written sources, to which are added the archaeological information.[15] Even so, reliable archaeological evidence is surprisingly limited.

Earlier scholars believed that large areas at the Lower Danube may have become almost unpopulated. This is increasingly refuted, but relatively few sites have produced evidence for continuous occupation even so. These are made harder to identify securely by the difficulties involved in dating later La Tène period finds, but there are still a number of sites where unbroken settlement is highly likely.

Historical and archaeological sources[16] give data of a significant demographic development within the area inhabited, but the pattern of occupation and settlement of the territory is still unclear. The existence of significant variations within the types of Getae settlement is generally accepted and there are some studies dedicated to producing typologies of Getae settlement.[17]

Most part of these sites have somewhat stereotypical descriptions, most of the time mentioning the ceramic fragments and/or construction materials, when, in fact, these stereotypes relate to the methods of collection, interpretation and evaluation of the data for the whole territory. In addition, there is still a lack of systematic coverage of the territory and no unitary method of recording.

The local toponyms ending in *-dava*, *-sara*, *-upa* are linked with *Dacia* and *Moesia*, while those ending in *-mbria / -bria*, *-diza*, and *-para* were seen as related to Thrace. A specific geographical distribution of the endings has been observed, and it is possible that this reflects the language differences among the tribes living in those lands. Linguists have tried to find links between these suffixes and the function or origin of these settlements, but the variety and inconsequence of the toponyms indicate that it may not be an obvious relationship. Fortified settlements usually have the endings *-dava / -deva* or *-dova*, but other suffixes such as *-dina*, *-bria*, *-diza*, *-para / -bara*, and *-leba*, *-ora / -oros / -oron* may also apply to them. The fortified

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[13] Panaite 2015. See also Madzharov 2009.
[14] Bâltâc 2011, 28-35.
[15] Irimia 1980; Irimia 1981; Irimia 1983; Irimia 2007; Irimia 2010.
[16] Irimia 1980, especially relevant is the map on the p. 115; Irimia 1983, especially relevant is the map on the p. 75.
[17] Irimia 2007, 137-141.

settlements whose names are considered to be Celtic have suffixes which end in *-unum / -dunum*, as well as *-briga / -birga* and *-rate*.[18]

In southern part of the frontier, it was noticed a concentration of place-names ending in -dava, characteristic of the Geto-Dacian hill-forts, which is indicating that the Roman army on its arrival in this region found a lot of local tribes dwelling in fortified sites according to their traditional habits. In the limes area, however, there is evidence only for a few, very small native sites surviving until the middle of the second century AD.[19]

Extensive field research carried on both sides of the Danube, more ex-tensive South of the Danube, between Svishtov and Krivina completes the data we have about the area in the pre-Roman period and offers a possible model for territorial organization. It was noted that the North and North-West region of Bjala (fortification located at South of Krivina and dated in the La Tène era) settlements occupy an area of about 10,000 square meters and are arranged like a network, the distance of approx. 4–5 km each other and on the valley South of Svishtov, each settlement occupies under 5000 sqm, and the access to water is lacking. From these settlements comes a small amount of pottery, which may be an indication for short periods of use or for their seasonal nature. Most of them date back to the Hallstatt and data for the next era are much less common.[20]

Ancient sources provide information about two operations of transfers of population in the area, which according to sources would have been uninhabited. Performed during the first century, the two well-known operations belong to Aelius Catus[21] and Silvanus Aelianus.[22] Romanian historiography combats, with various arguments, archaeological included,[23] the interpretation that the area would have been deserted, while Bulgarian historiography supports the colonization of South Dobrudja with Thracian elements.[24]

Very likely the area was depopulated after frequent clashes in the area, but not so, as to arrive at the idea of a desolate region. In the population transfers we have to see rather the imperial authorities' actions organizing and strengthening the area near the border, doubled by an economic interest.[25] This action was primarily of a fiscal nature, as is apparent from the inscription, which praises Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus: *ad praestanda tributa*, but also

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[18] Tomas 2016, 46-49.
[19] Bărbulescu 2001, 286.
[20] Conrad, Stančev 2002; Conrad 2006, 312–14; Conrad 2008. See also Tomas 2009.
[21] Strab., 7. 3. 10.
[22] *CIL*, XIV, 3608.
[23] Suceveanu 1977, 20, 21, 31-34.
[24] Torbatov 1997.
[25] Mrozewicz 2013.

with immediate consequences: *primus ex ea provincia magno tritici modo annonam p(opuli) R(omani) adlevavit.*[26]

The reorganization of the limes of the *Moesia Inferior* by Trajan accomplished the division of the territory of the province in three different parts: the bank of the Danube, the interior and the littoral. Each of these zones not only represented a geographical unit but at the same time developed administrative features and even ethnic characteristics. Even so, they mutually supplemented each other, ultimately composing a cohesive whole, with the Roman army playing a decisive role.[27]

The Danube's bank was a frontier area, organized as a military district and became the most Romanised region of Moesia Inferior. Among the most investigated centers, together with the territories that belonged to them, which offer an image of the organized hinterland working for their benefit there are *Novae* and *Troesmis*.

Novae, the legionary camp and the Late Antique and Byzantine town, is among the most important limes sites. Excavation over the past 50 years[28] have confirmed the strategic position of the fort of the *legio I Italica* and the town of *Novae* in the Roman defense and settlements networks. The hinterland of the legionary base, to the south of the Danube, lies between the Osâm and Yantra rivers (Fig. 2).[29] Recently a few research projects were undertaken in order to investigate the territory controlled by the *legio I Italica*.[30] They perfectly fit into the topics trend of landscape archaeology.[31]

The intensive surface research of the last years offers us valuable information regarding the space occupation degree but also its organization. The large number of identified objectives dating back to Roman times indicates the intensity of the occupation of the area depended on the city. Most of it, divided into lots, was intended for the cultivation of the land, even if it may be evidence of small-scale agriculture. Certainly, animal husbandry was widely practiced, the soldiers' food being supplemented with other products, some even imported. The small pottery and building materials workshops were completed nearby, with the Butovo center producing mainly for the supply of the legion's camp.

An important role in the economic and craft activities in the area is also played by the veterans of the legion who remain in place or by veterans from the area, who return after

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[26] *CIL*, XIV, 3608 (= *ILS*, 986); Panaite 2016a, 158; Tomas 2016, 48.
[27] Duch 2017.
[28] Dyczek, Kolendo, Sarnowski 2001; Kolendo 2008; Dyczek, Kolendo, Sarnowski 2008; Biernacki (ed.) 1995; Biernacki (ed.) 2006; Biernacki (ed.) 2008.
[29] Sarnowski 1988, 41-44.
[30] Conrad, Stančev 2002; Conrad 2006; Conrad 2008; Tomas 2013; Tomas 2014.
[31] Tomas 2016; Tomas 2017, 31-92.

completing military service. This is also the case with *Marcus Aurelius Statianus*. Born in the Nicopolitan territory, he performs his military service in the fleet of Ravenna, and after leaving the hearth he becomes an *actor* and deals with crafts in a rustic villa in the territory of Novae.[32] As can be seen from the inscriptions, the population is made up of Roman citizens. Some of the soldiers mention about themselves the position held: *frumentarius*, *librarius*, etc.

After the end of the conflicts with the Dacians and the stabilization of the area, the *canabae* and the *vicus*, together with the settlements in the territory, go through a period of peace that favors them. An intense constructive activity is registered in the territory, many of the discovered bricks bearing the stamp of the *I Italica* legion. This is the period when the army is more of a „peace" one! The Novae center functions as a magnet not only for the local population but also for some high-ranking officials.

The important changes introduced by Septimius Severus, which allowed soldiers to live with their families, the diminishing importance of legal status, and perhaps the invasions of the mid-third century, are factors that will make the inhabitants of *vicus* to move closer by the walls of the camp. The construction of the civil annex Novae II will thus appear as a necessity. The result of these transformations will be the integration of the once clearly separated units (the fortification and the civil settlement next to it) into a *civitas*.

Located in the northwest of Dobrudja, Troesmis occupies a strategic key position on the Roman Danube limes, as the place where *legio V Macedonica* was quartered. The wide-spread area of the ruins that is dominated by two fortifications extends to the East of the Danube. The Western one is the place of the local civitas and the Eastern one represents the late Roman and Byzantine settlement.[33]

Troesmis is a typical site for the areas located near the border, because there are epigraphically attested, and recently also archaeologically, the settlement of the local population civitas, the military settlement *canabae* and the *castrum* (Fig. 3). The three defensive walls are not contemporary and they defend an area of extra muros settlement, whose dimensions in time became smaller and smaller.[34] Although a very important site, it has never been systematically excavated except some rescue excavation.[35] Recently a research project has investigated the site,[36] focusing on the transformations undergone by settlements at the Lower Danube in Antiquity. By applying innovative archaeological documentation and evaluation

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[32] Tomas, Sarnowski 2007.
[33] Ştefan 1971.
[34] Bogdan-Cătăniciu 1984, 47; 49.
[35] Simion et al., 1980.
[36] Alexandrescu, Gugl (eds.) 2014; Alexandrescu, Gugl 2015; Grabherr, Kainrath (eds.) 2016.

methods, the site of *Troesmis* was examined in order to serve as an example for the transformation of the settlement and habitat from the second to the early thirteenth century AD. The most important achievements until now are the location of both *canabae* and necropolis and most important, the fortification where *legio V Macedonica* was quartered.[37]

The fortifications mentioned above represent the only two fortifications studied from the landscape point of view. The analyses of their territories allow as reconstructing how it was organized. The presence of the military units is the main feature of it, but inside there is also a strong civilian component which is active in direct connection to the army, as long as we are in a frontier area.

The creation of urban centers in the hinterland of the frontier formed part of a general reorganization of the Eastern Balkans, carried out on imperial instructions, following the conquest of Dacia. *Nicopolis ad Istrum* and *Tropaeum Traiani* are two of them.

Nicopolis ad Istrum – the City of Victory was founded by Emperor Trajan in 110 AD.[38] According to the latest investigations seems to be erected either on an earlier Thracian settlement, or a timber fort active for a short period of time and built during the military confrontations from the end of first century AD and early second century AD.[39] Beyond this, the town-plan of *Nicopolis* follows the Greek model. The citizens are mainly Greek speakers and the area was already, for a long period of time, under the Greek-Thracian influence.[40] The Romans, Latin speakers – according to epigraphical data, are instead, very active in the territory controlled by the city.[41] Intensive surveys proved a very dense network of settlements and villas, especially on its Western part, while on the Eastern one could be an imperial estate.[42] The Roman territory in relation to the Greek city makes *Nicopolis ad Istrum* a turning plate between the Greek culture in the south or overseas, and the Latin culture, closer to the limes area.

On the highest plateau from the Southern Dobrudja, near Adamclisi (Constanţa County, Romania) there is a unique complex formed of three monuments a funerary altar, a tumulus and a triumphal monument.[43] Among the three of them, only the dating of the triumphal monument does not raise any questions. According to the dedicatory inscription it was inaugurated in 109 AD. The Triumphal Monument is considered to be built in honor of the Romans' victory over

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[37] Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016. See also Tomas 2017, 104-08.
[38] Iordanes (*Getica*, 101): [Nicopolis] *quae iuxta Iatrum fluvium est constituta notis-sima quam devictis Sarmatis Traianus et fabricavit et apellavit Victoriae civitatem*; Amm. XXXI. 5.16; Vulpe 2002, 49-51; Boteva 2014; Poulter 1986.
[39] Vladkova 2001; Vladkova 2002; Paunov, Topalilov 2013.
[40] Ruscu 2007a, 214-215; Ruscu 2007b.
[41] Conrad 2002, 104-110, especially 110, table 1 and 111 fig. 1; Tomas 2009, 45 table 3.
[42] Poulter 2002, 19; Poulter 1995.
[43] Sâmpetru 1984.

Decebalus during the confrontations in the First Dacian War; but still, there are different opinions according to which it was constructed after the final victory over the Dacians and their allies and the transformation of Dacia into a Roman province.[44] In the immediate vicinity there are the ruins of *Tropaeum Traiani*, a city, also founded by Trajan, developed and directly related to these monuments.[45]

The emergence of this settlement was influenced, in our opinion by the factors, related more to ideology and imperial propaganda than to pragmatism. A *municipium* from the very beginning,[46] probably founded on the site of a local settlement,[47] the city administrated a large territory where Roman settlements, inhabited by colonists and veterans, some aquaeducts, stone *querries* and *villae* rusticate were identified and partially investigated.[48] Some Greek communities are also attested in the territory.[49] Old topographical map of the area[50] and mapping of the tumuli registered on the territory[51] allows the reconstruction of the main features of the landscape. Based on them and on the study of the aerial photography the line of the roads connecting the settlements from the territory with the city of *Tropaeum Traiani* and further, to the rest of the province were identified (Fig. 4).[52]

The two cities presented above are characterized by important territories. Their emergence is due to the political efforts of the Roman authorities in order to organize the area after conquering Dacia. Both have a civilian character and they are the model of organizing the hinterland of the province already experienced by the Romans in other parts of the empire.

At the beginning of the Christian era the old Greek colony of *Histria* became part of the Roman Empire.[53] The new political reality brought important changes on the administrative, religious and social levels. This new era was felt to be a second foundation of the city. Now it is built the early Roman city-wall.[54] During Roman times, *Histria* had a territory[55] divided into two separate administrative units: a territory which it was embedded in a wider area, a so-called "area of influence". Within these limits, one should distinguish between the territory of the city itself – *chora*, where the lands belonged, divided into tribes, to

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[44] Poulter 1986, 519; Matei-Popescu 2014b, 205 and n. 2.
[45] Barnea et al. 1979.
[46] Popescu 2013.
[47] Panaite 2016b.
[48] Panaite 2006; Bâltâc 2011, 109.
[49] Barnea 1969.
[50] Panaite, Alexandrescu 2009, especially annex 2, 447-449.
[51] Oltean 2013.
[52] Panaite, Miu (Bem) 2016.
[53] Suceveanu 1990; Suceveanu 2010; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991.
[54] Histria I, 285-293; Alexandrescu 2001, 181-82.
[55] Avram 1990; Avram 2006.

the Greeks or Romanized Greeks citizens of the city and *regio Histriae*, much wider, which from the juridical point of view depends on the city, but where the real control was belonging to the civil and military Roman authorities.[56]

Inside the *regio* elements of Roman colonization are predominant, while the Greek ones are concentrated in the *chora*. The *regio* is separated from the city and administered by its own magistrates. Besides the rural settlements already mentioned, in the *regio* there are typical Roman sites: *villae rusticae* and a *statio* for *beneficiarii consulares*.[57] During Greek period the necropolis is situated between the city and the *chora*.[58] Space disposal of ancient tumuli indicates land area and its topography, which can also lead to some very interesting conclusions on the evolution of the relief at *Histria*.[59] During the Roman period the Greek necropolis maintains the same position, some of the tumuli being used for secondary burials. Analyzing the aerial photos, it was stated that from the very beginning a funerary area was established in direct correlation with streets, roads and plots.[60] There were also noticed two road systems, the first of roads oriented NS – EW, and the second of roads oriented NNW – SSE / ENE – WSW. Inside the necropolis those roads represent the limits of the burial plots.[61] A wall in the NW marks the limit between the necropolis and the field for agriculture. The two superimposed roads systems could represent a second parceling of the necropolis, without being able to specify when exactly was done (Fig. 5).[62]

Histria proves itself, a prevailing Greek city, in which Roman elements were identified at different levels: administrative, military, economic, social etc. During this period, *Histria* keeps its previous organization but gets a number of new features which are defining a new reality. The Romans preserved much of the existing planning elements of the city and territory and added to them new ones; new settlements and forms of organization and as an integrative element have developed a network of roads.

Based on the examples listed above one can assume that the landscape experienced substantive changes: the emergence of Roman-type urbanism, a large increase in settlement numbers and settlement density, diversification in the range and function of settlements, and probably also diversification in the organisation and division of the land itself.

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[56] Matei-Popescu 2013.
[57] Panaite 2010; Panaite 2014.
[58] Alexandrescu 1966; Alexandrescu 1971, 28.
[59] Angelescu 2009.
[60] Doruțiu-Boilă 1971, 45.
[61] Alexandrescu 1971, 31–32.
[62] Alexandrescu 1971, 30–32; Alexandrescu 1978, 341.

The Roman settlement pattern in the study area reveals itself as largely pragmatic. The great majority of settlements are located within areas which would have had arable potential. The agriculture seems to be the main occupation, although the data at our disposal are more supposed than demonstrated. Villas and small towns represent the key-element of the settlement pattern. The location of rural settlement is influenced mostly by the major towns, in addition to their extensive extra-mural/sub-urban activity, but outside these centres a dense occupation has also been traced.

Another factor influencing the location of the settlement is the local road network. Next to the main roads, as for example the limes road, there is a dense network of local roads, connecting villages and villas with major cities.

The location of sites with industrial activity is dictated by various factors, such as the location of resources or of the markets for products. The availability of limestone and sandstone was widespread and, therefore, the quarries seem to be located near major centres of demand. In most cases they are clearly connected to the transportation network. The same is the case of the pottery centres.

The elements presented above allow us a first attempt to reconstruct the provincial landscape at the Lower Danube. In order to produce some general conclusions, all the information has been brought together into a coherent system to facilitate both area-wide and detailed on-site analysis, and permit its evaluation as a whole.

It is still difficult to assess accurately what effect the Roman conquest and the subsequent period of Roman occupation had on the development of the landscape. Clearly, large numbers of new features were introduced, new types of settlement were constructed and new activities were carried out.

Three main ways in which the landscape was transformed under the roman rule changes in pattern of rural settlements, changes in the nature of land use and agrarian exploitation and changes in the ways in which the inhabitants perceived and thought about their world. Roman elements were identified at different levels: administrative, military, economic, social and so one. During this period this area gets a number of new features which are defining a new reality. The Romans preserved some of the existing elements and added to them new ones; new settlements and forms of organization and as an integrative element have developed a road network.

Topography and the water courses are the major factors in determining the access network throughout the area. The main trade and communication routes give more structure than ever before to the organisation of the landscape and the emergence of settlement. This

influenced the location of the military bases (there was a massive Roman military presence in *Moesia Inferior*), which in turn influenced the construction of the road network. The Roman army was clearly an important factor in *Moesia Inferior*. Military sites are associated with the emergence of Romanised settlements, *canabae* and *vici*, which played an important role in the urbanisation of the province. Many army veterans were colonised the province as landowners (legionary veterans) or as the inhabitants of towns and some of them be-came active in local municipal administration.

Vici as well as the *canabae* provided important centres for a large number of activities and services directed at both the army and the civilians, including industry, trade, transport and religious activities. Through their functions these sites had a huge impact and contributed to the rapid Romanization of the territory. More than in terms of administration or markets, the Roman army crucially influenced the development of the rural landscape through the construction and maintenance of the communication system. This influenced the location of settlements and ultimately made the whole landscape mechanism work.

Roman rule affected the native population, as well as the whole landscape in the conquered territories. The emergence of Roman-type towns, the broad diversification of the range and function of settlements, and the particular way of organizing space probably had a more significant impact on the pre-existing system than any other previous changes during prehistory.

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Fig. 1 – Roman roads in *Moesia Inferior*
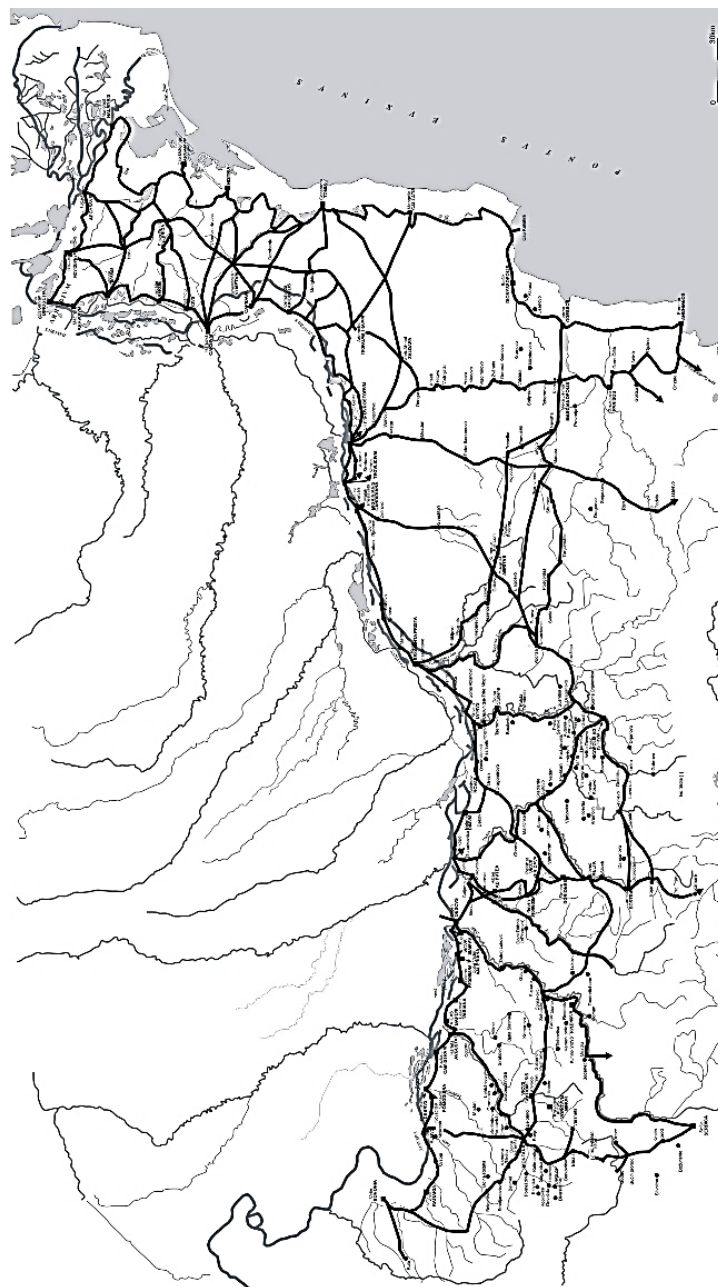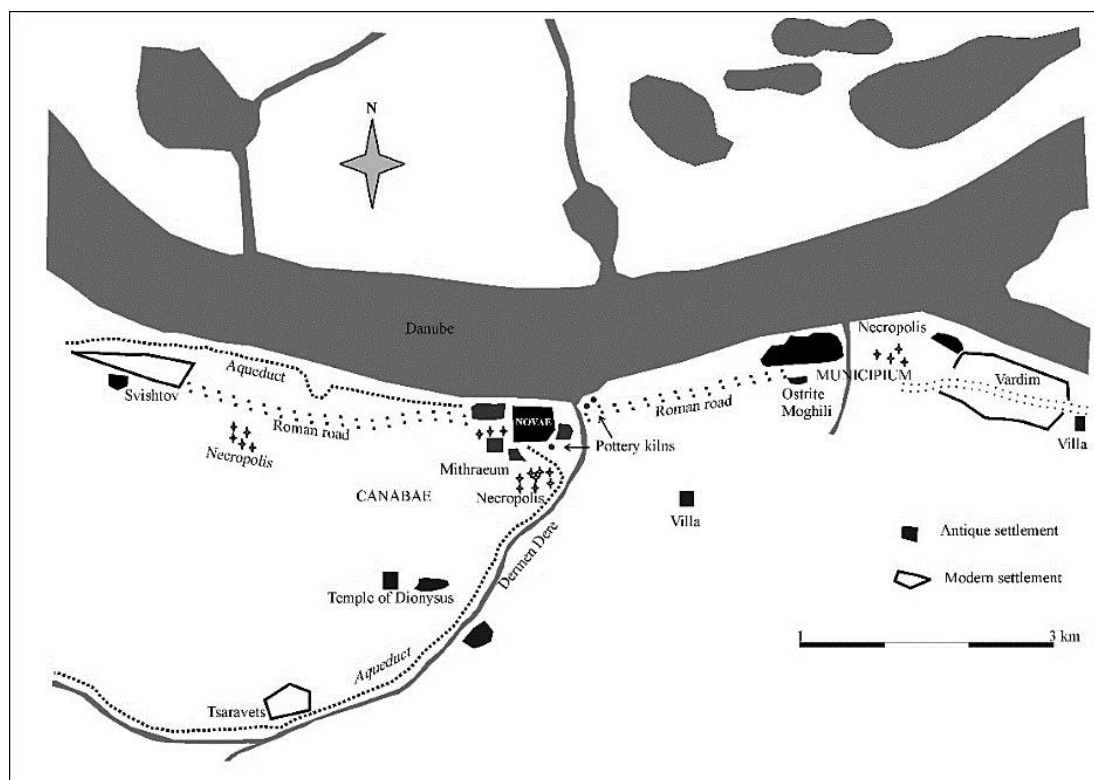
Fig. 2 – Novae and the surrounding territory (after Sarnowski in Dyczek et al. 2008)

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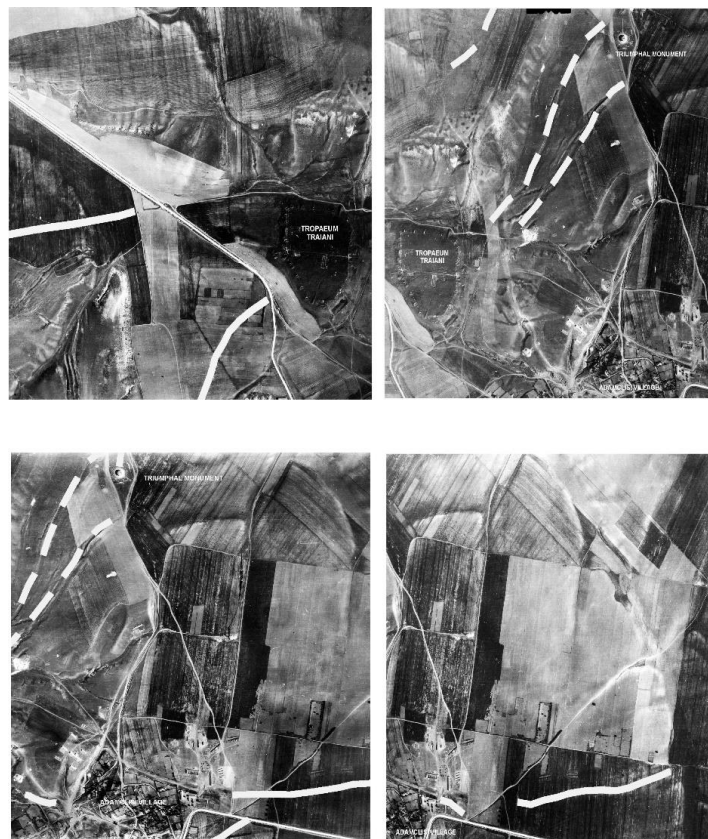
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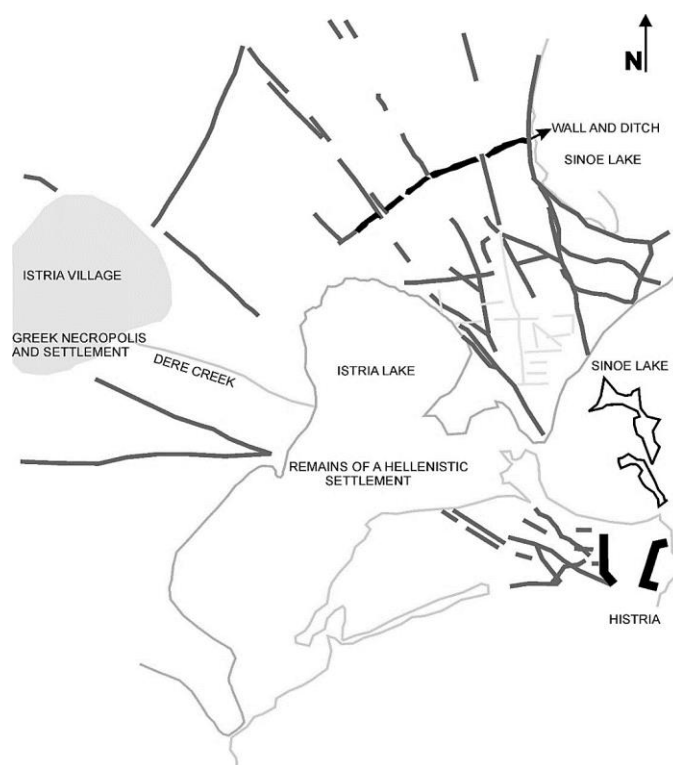
Fig. 5 – *Histria* – Roman roads and funerary plots

Romanian ethnographic interpretations from the 20th century regarding women representations on Trajan's Column and the *Tropaeum Traiani*

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Abstract: The present study analyses the description of women's clothing depicted on Trajan's monuments of propaganda (the Column of his Forum in Rome and the *Tropaeum Traian*, at Adamclisi, Romania) as interpreted over time by Romanian historians and ethnologists, highlighting the often overreaching use of these monuments as evidence for the continuity of Romanian habitation on north of the Danube. The critical and comparative analysis of these perspectives offered by certain Romanian researches seeks to emphasize the ideological influence that shaped the academic writing during the communist era.

Keywords: Trajan's Column, *Tropaeum Traiani*, Romanian folk costume, ideology, Daco-Roman continuity thesis

Argument

In a 2017 presentation[1] we explored the depiction of women on Trajan's Column in Rome as integral component of a cohesive visual discourse that reinforced Trajan's image as a political and military leader of the Roman Empire during his reign from 97 to 117. His moderation and wisdom were meant to „extend" to the entire population of the state he conducted – citizens and non-citizens alike, whether long-time residents or newly integrated into the borders of the Roman world.

The presence of women on Trajan's Column[2] is primarily associated with religious scenes, the depiction of acts of submission, and post-military actions. Female figures are notably absent from compositions portraying the clashes of opposing armies. This aspect contrasts with the

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[1] „The Women on the Trajan's Column – between ancient ideological discourse and modern interpretation" in *Dacia Capta e Imperatore Traiano*, colloquio internazionale, Roma, 29-31 maggio 2017.

[2] The compositions featuring female figures can be grouped into several categories based on their thematic focus (the numbering of the scenes follows the system established by C. Cichorius): (a) Public Processions (*ouationes* and religious ceremonies): depicted in scenes LXXX, LXXXIII-LXXXIV (the disembarkation and procession in Apollonia), scene LXXXVI (the religious sacrifice at Dyrrachium), scenes XC and XCI (Trajan's arrival in the Banat region (?) and his pacification by the local population, who later participate in a religious ceremony); (b) City Foundations: Nicopolis ad Istrum, scene XXXIX; (c) Post-Military Contexts: scene XXX (the controversial capture of Decebalus's sister), scene LXXVI (the capitulation after the first war and the return of Dacian families to their homesteads), the damaged scene CLV (showing the return of the entire population from the mountains following the Roman victory in 106 AD); (d) Torture of Prisoners: scene XLV (likely linked to the following scene, according to R. Vulpe's interpretation (Vulpe 2002, 42-43).

appearance of women on the reliefs of Marcus Aurelius's Column,[3] which stood on the *Via Lata* (the intra-urban segment of the *Via Flaminia*) at the northern entrance to the capital. Here, female bodies are shown mixed among male silhouettes, subjected to violence as Roman legions attacked and burned settlements.

On Trajan's Column, where groups of women participate in public ceremonies or in *uenire in fidem* actions (swearing allegiance), adult female figures are kept distant from the violent gestures of conquerors. They are placed near or among elderly male characters and children (with the exception of scene XLV). We consider that this iconographic aspect can be explained by Roman socio-mental frameworks, shaped by legal precepts in which the existence of a woman was fundamentally tied to the familial sphere.

The most challenging episode to interpret is depicted in scene XLV, where a group of five women tortures male prisoners. These women have been identified either as priestesses of a local cult[4] who are maltreating Roman prisoners or as inhabitants of the Moesia region, inflicting harsh treatment on Dacian envoys or prisoners.[5] Based on the arrangement of their head coverings, we observe that these women closely resemble those in scene XXXIX (depicting the founding of the city of Victory on the Danube River). This observation challenges R. Vulpe's proposal that the event portrayed in scene XLV took place in the mountains.

The women depiction on Trajan's Column demonstrate their seamless integration into the narrative intent of the entire spiral frieze, conveying some message rich in substance (*substantia*), moderation (*moderatio*), and constancy (*constantia*). Holding the title of *pater patriae*, Trajan utilized the visual display of his victory and that of his Roman armies at the Lower Danube as a meticulously premeditated message, carefully balanced and consistent with his social policies. Ancient sources, for instance, highlight that Trajan's rise to power marked the end of imperial abuses against families involved in inheritance matters.[6] Pliny the Younger explicitly emphasizes this in his praise of the Antonine emperor upon his entry into the Senate.[7] In relation to the imperial

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[3] For the entire discussion, see Beckmann 2011, 181 sqs.; Dillon 2006, 244-271.
[4] Vulpe 2002, 58-59.
[5] Protopopescu 1998, 328-336.
[6] Pliny the Younger, *Paneg.*, 43: "… our wills are now secure. No longer is there a single heir to everything under the pretext that he is, or is not, named as an heir in the will. No one seeks your help anymore for false or unjust deeds. No one finds refuge with you in their anger, madness, or lack of piety. And you are not named as an heir because one person offended another, but because you deserve to be. You are included as an heir in the wills of friends and omitted by strangers…"
[7] Pliny the Younger, *Paneg.*, 2, 6-7; 3, 2.

image, the scenes featuring women (and children) on the Column in Trajan's Forum convey an imperial message imbued with humanity toward subjects, associated with justice (but also determination) even toward enemies. This aligns with the accolades delivered by Pliny the Younger in 100 AD, later published. Fully understanding the significance of these compositions extends – on the artistic level – the polemic between Trajan's leadership and that of the tyrant Domitian, who was violently overthrown in 96 AD. Thus, we can only align with Filippo Coarelli's assertion that: „la colonna è (...) una proiezione esterna, una traduzione in linguaggio figurativo dei *commentarii de bello Dacico* ospitati nella vicina biblioteca, destinata ad esaltare, visualizzandola in forme monumentali, la sapientia di Traiano",[8] a Princeps named *uir fortis sapientisque*.

As we argued in 2017 during the international colloquium „*Dacia Capta e imperatore Traiano*", the ideological significance of this monument is not confined only to the ancient centuries. It was reactivated in the modern and contemporary eras within the intellectual framework of historical nationalism, redefined through the lenses of „Romanian-ness" and Marxist doctrine. In Romanian historiography, the column of Rome along with the triumphal monument of Adamclisi (Romania)[9] has been regarded as „solid evidence" not only of the Dacian-Roman wars but also of the composition and distribution of the Dacian population and their neighbours, over whom the Roman legions advanced. Moreover, the scenes depicting female figures on these monuments have been drawn into the currents of debates about the continuity of our ancestors in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space, particularly focusing on the issue of identity markers in clothing.

The feminine folk costume in the Romanian ethnographic works until the second World War

One of the aspects considered in these discussions (whether academic or political) was the clothing of the local Dacians (both men and women), which became a key argument for our national identity and the millennia-long continuity of the Romanian people. Interpretations of the Roman or Mediterranean origins of the Romanian folk costume—formulated in the 17th century by Johannes Troester and Laurentius Toppeltinus—were abandoned in the 19th century in favour

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[8] Coarelli 1999, 13-14.
[9] A recent analysis with further bibliography in Bohîlțea Mihut, Fulger 2021.

of Dacian origins (Froehner, 1865; A.I. Odobescu,[10] 1874), even though the contributions of colonists brought to Dacia by the Romans (Ch. de Bonqueron, 1869) were also considered.

More realistic and attentive to the morphology of the Romanian national costume, A. D. Xenopol admitted as Dacian only „the way of wearing the hair," highlighting the differences in both male and female clothing. In Xenopol's view, although most of the influences on Romanian folk costume came from the Slavs, he acknowledged that it is „a creation of the national taste, shaped to some extent by the conditions of the climate in which it originated."[11]

"Geții sunt purtători de *bracca*, precum spune Ovidius, (…) femeile aveau două tunici – una lungă până în călcâie și alta deasupra până la genunchi, prinsă într-o agrafă la piept iar pe cap purtau o legătoare care, slobodă, le acoperea părul cu totul. S'a susținut de unii scriitori că costumul țeranului român ar reproduce cu esactitate îmbrăcămintea vechilor Daci. Numai portul perului se asemănă, pe când bernevicii sau ițarii sunt strîmți și încrețiți pe picior, iar nu largi ca bracca Dacilor. Acoperirea corpului se face cu cămaşa, care deşi semăna cu tunica internă a Dacilor, nu are nimic caracteristic; pe de-asupra însă țeranii români portă bondiță, cojocul sau sumanul, iar nu mantaua dacă. Căciula nu semănă cu fesul fără ciucur al Dacilor. Brîul de curea lată şi împodobit cu alămuri e străin îmbrăcămintei străbunilor noştri" (...) "La străbunii noştri nu se aflau cămaşă cu altițe, nici fotele reținute de un brîu, părțile cele mai osebitore ale veşmintelor femeilor române. Deşi cuprinde multe elemente slavone, el este o creațiune proprie a gustului național, determinat până la un punct de condițiunile climatului în sânul căruia a luat naştere."

["The *Getae* are said to wear *bracca*, as Ovid mentions. (...) The women wore two tunics – one long, reaching the ankles, and another above the knee, fastened with a clasp at the chest, and on their heads, they wore a headband that, loosely, covered their hair entirely. Some writers have claimed that the Romanian peasant's costume accurately reproduces the clothing of the ancient Dacians. Only the way of wearing the hair is similar, whereas the *bernevici* or *ițari* are tight and gathered around the leg, unlike the loose *bracca* of the Dacians. The body is covered with a shirt, which, although similar to the inner tunic of the Dacians, lacks any distinctive characteristics.

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[10] Earlier considerations on this topic appeared in *Notice sur les antiques de la Roumanie* (1867), where it was argued that Romanian folk costumes have some Oriental elements, although their characteristics align with the clothing of Latin, Slavic, Hungarian, and even Breton peoples. Later, in 1874, in the Odobescu's work *Artele în România în periodul preistoric* /*The arts in Romania during the Prehistory* (published in *Opere complete*/ *Complete Works*, III, Bucharest, 1908), the Dacian origin of the shepherds' attire from Țara Hațegului was asserted. It was claimed that the head coverings of our peasant women are identical to those worn by Dacian women.
[11] Xenopol 1888, 88.

However, Romanian peasants also wear a *bondiță*, *cojoc*, or *suman*, not the Dacian cloak. The hat is not like the Dacian cap without a tassel. The wide leather belt decorated with brass is foreign to the attire of our ancestors. Our ancestors did not wear a shirt with *altițe*, nor the *fotele* tied by a belt, which are among the most distinctive parts of Romanian women's clothing. Although it contains many Slavic elements, it is a creation of the national taste, shaped to some extent by the conditions of the climate in which it originated."]

Later, deeper roots are sought beyond the Dacian era, tracing back to the Thraco-Illyrian foundation, through the authority of historians and ethnographers such as N. Iorga[12] (in 1912) and Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș[13] (later, in 1945).

The involvement of the scenes on the column in this debate is somewhat revisited in the monumental work of V. Pârvan, *Getica* (1926), which also considers the reliefs on the monument at Adamclisi, asserting that there are clear differences in the depiction of the native attire on the two monuments.[14]

„Tipul femeiesc al geto-dacilor de pe Columna lui Traian prezintă deosebiri mari – atât pentru trăsăturile feței, cât și pentru portul părului și în îmbrăcăminte – față de monumentul de la Adamclisi. „Columna" înfrumusețează și idealizează, apropiind pe dace de tipul clasic sudic, „Monumentul", dimpotrivă, este foarte realist și redă pe femei în toată nemlădierea, sărăcia și simplitatea vieții lor țărănești: fața expresivă, dar unghiulară și masivă, părul pieptănat cu cărare la mijloc și strâns la spate, o cămașă cu mâneci scurte și o fustă peste ea de la brâu în jos (metopele 48 și 49). Pe columnă vedem tipuri feminine foarte frumoase purtând încă o manta bogat drapată

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[12] In Iorga's opinion (demonstrated during a lecture delivered at the summer courses at Văleni, in 1912), the origin of the Romanian folk costume must be „compared to that of people surrounding us" (p. 6), (...) „there is nothing Roman in our costume" (p. 14), the Romanian folk costume formed within the Balkan-Carpathian cultural area once inhabited by the Thracians, which is why there are similarities with the costumes of other neighboring peoples, extending as far as the north, to the Swedish-Finnish region (p. 16).

[13] In his work on our folk costume, *Vechimea portului țărănesc / The Antiquity of the Peasant Costume*, published in 1945, Al. Tzigara Samurcaș searched the origine of Romanian traditional costume back to the Eneolithic period (Tzigara Samurcaș 1945, 4-6). However, referring to the female representations on the triumphal monument at Adamclisi, which were often compared to the scenes with women on Trajan's Column, this author clearly emphasizes that: „Femeile reprezentate pe cele trei metope ale monumentului de la Adamklissi poartă o cămașă lungă, încrețită la gît și piept, dar *cu mîneci scurte de tot, acoperind numai umerii, ceea ce este cu totul neobișnuit în portul nostru femeiesc* (s.n.)"; [„The women represented on the three metopes of the monument at Adamclisi wear a long shirt, gathered at the neck and chest, *but with very short sleeves, covering only the shoulders, which is completely unusual in our female costume* (emphasis added)."]

[14] Pârvan 1926, 168.

peste haina lungă, stilizată clasic cu un lung chiton, bogat, iar pe cap un fel de testemel, care acoperă părul, înnodat la spate sub conciu."

[„The female type of the Geto-Dacians on Trajan's Column shows significant differences – both in the facial features and in the hairstyle and clothing – compared to the monument at Adamclisi. The *Column* beautifies and idealizes, bringing the Dacians closer to the classic southern type, whereas the *Monument* is very realistic, depicting the women in the rawness, poverty, and simplicity of their peasant life: an expressive but angular and massive face, hair parted in the middle and pulled back, a short-sleeved shirt, and a skirt over it, from the waist down (metopes 48 and 49). On the column, we see very beautiful female types wearing a richly draped mantle over a long, stylized classical garment with a long, elaborate chiton, and on their heads, a type of headscarf that covers their hair, tied at the back under the chin."]

The qualitative differences in iconography between the two monuments are, naturally, part of a broader debate concerning the transmission of the official artistic program to the provincial region of the Lower Danube. They also pertain to the integration of Roman construction techniques within the provincial context, regardless of the materials used[15] – topics that fall outside the focus of this discussion.

The post-war ethnography regarding the feminine folk costume

In the first two post-second war decades, part of the historical and ethnographic literature still focuses on the Dacian, Thracian, and Illyrian origins of the Romanian folk costume, and in this interpretive context, the reliefs on Trajan's Column and on the *Tropaeum* Traiani are once again used as arguments. For D. Protase,[16] the differences in representation between these monuments suggest the existence of two important variants – the costume of the elite represented on the column and that of the common people, as depicted on the Adamclisi monument. Forced comparisons are also made between the decorative patterns on Bronze Age clay statuettes (dated in the 3rd and 2nd millennia) and the *fota* of traditional Romanian folk costume.[17]

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[15] See also Negru, Mihuț-Bohîlțea, Săvulescu, Poll, Lițu, Bottez 2017.
[16] Protase 1966, 172.
[17] Dumitrescu 1961 – using the archaeological documentation discovered in the necropolis of Cârna, Vladimir Dumitrescu sustained the existence of the embroided shirts, girdles (*bete*, lb. rom.), and fringed skirt (*opreg*, lb. rom.) since Prehistory.

Involved in the research of the monument at Adamclisi, alongside a team that included ethnologists, Florea Bobu Florescu proclaims that: „the extraordinary similarity between the Dacian and Illyrian costumes and the Romanian one, which even reaches exact overlap (sic!), constitutes proof that the genesis of the Romanian costume is Thracian-Illyrian."[18] Identifying the Dacian ethnicity in all the representations of the triumphal monument, including those of women and civilians, this researcher outlines a true „creed" about the ethnographic role of the trophy and the column, while also assigning the Romanian traditional costume the status of an „uninterrupted chronicle" of the continuity of the Romanians in these lands.

„În esența lui, portul popular românesc este de tradiție tracică și ilirică, cu unele prezențe pre-traco-ilirice. Analiza comparativă a portului popular românesc cu al țărilor vecine și europene în general a dus la constatarea unor similitudini cu portul albanez și grecesc, care se explică istoric, albanezii fiind continuatorii ilirilor, iar grecii fiind influențați de traci, după cum știm de la scriitorii elini. (...) portul popular românesc reprezintă o cronică istorică neîntreruptă (sic), a cărei primă pagină se citește pe monumentul de la Adamklissi și pe Columna lui Traian."[19]

[„In essence, the Romanian traditional costume is of Thracian and Illyrian tradition, with some pre-Thracian-Illyrian influences. The comparative analysis of the Romanian traditional costume with those of neighboring countries and Europe in general has led to the observation of similarities with Albanian and Greek costumes, which can be explained historically, as the Albanians are the successors of the Illyrians, and the Greeks were influenced by the Thracians, as we know from the Greek writers. (...) The Romanian traditional costume represents an uninterrupted historical chronicle (sic!), the first page of which can be read on the monument at Adamclisi and on Trajan's Column."]

Ignoring the evidence and what other specialists had already been noted regarding the women's shirts in traditional attire, by figures such as Al. Tzigara-Samurcaș,[20] Fl. Bobu Florescu develops an extensive argument about the correspondence between the „contemporary" Romanian woman costume and the clothing of women depicted on Adamclisi triumphal monument (metopes

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[18] Florescu et alii 1969, 284.
[19] Florescu et alii 1969, 414.
[20] Which Florea Bobu Florescu also cites on p. 603, note 1, of his work on the *Adamclisi Monument* Tropaeum Traiani (2nd edition, Bucharest, 1961), even providing the text of Tzigara-Samurcaș.

48 and 49), adding their correspondence to this the scenes from the column, especially scenes XXX and XCI. Bringing into discussion the morphology, tailoring, and distribution area of shirts with pleats at the neck (widespread in „northern Moldova and very sporadically in the rest of Moldova and Muntenia"), and shirts with pleats and collars („in Moldova, Muntenia, Oltenia, Banat, and a large part of central and southern Transylvania), Fl. B. Florescu is firmly convinced that these types of garments are represented on the metopes at Adamclisi.[21]

To the issue of the multiple variants of the traditional women's shirt, he offers either functional explanations („for enlarging the shirt, to facilitate movement") or attributes it to the manner of creating the garment („manipulation during sewing"). Analogies with female representations on „funerary stelae from the Thracian space and even further" (sic!) are sought, but they do not meet the approval of the ethnographer-archaeologist and historian due to their schematism; therefore, he considers that „none of them have the documentary value of those on the Adamclisi monument.

The simplified line is also felt in the depiction of Dacian shirts on Trajan's Column."[22] Nevertheless, when discussing the particularities of the sleeves of the dresses in scene XCI, Florescu refers to the twisted-sleeve blouse from the Vrancea area: „Until new discoveries, the Dacian women's shirt is the only plastic testimony of absolute documentary realism (sic!) from the 2nd century, thus being earlier than the Coptic type dated to the 4th century."[23]

Fl. B. Florescu traces back in time to the protohistoric period (as Vl. Iliescu had done before), and is convinced that among the Bronze Age artefacts he can identify types of stitching „marked by lines: on the shoulder, over the elbow, and at the bracelet." According to Fl. B. Florescu, these are „stitches that reappear today on the current garment with a Dacian structure."[24] Considered as „an ethnographic document of exceptional value," the „Dacian shirt" also attests[25]

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[21] Florescu 1961, 604: „Cele două tipuri de cămăşi de pe monumentul de la Adamklissi, primul fără guleraş, iar al doilea cu guleraş, îşi au deci corespondentele lor actuale. Cu alte cuvinte, structura cămăşilor reprezentate pe monumentul de la Adamklissi este însăşi structura cămăşilor purtate şi astăzi de ţărăncile noastre."[„The two types of shirts on the Adamclisi monument, the first without a collar and the second with a collar, have their modern counterparts. In other words, the structure of the shirts depicted on the Adamclisi monument is the same as the structure of the shirts worn by our peasant-women today."]
[22] We consider this assessment not only gratuitous but also incorrect; a simple comparison of the female garments on the two monuments actually shows the opposite.
[23] Florescu, 1961, 609.
[24] Florescu 1961, 609.
[25] Florescu 1961, 604: „Într-adevăr, în Moldova de nord există un tip de cămaşă numit « cămaşă cu altiţă » sau « cămaşă cu brezărău », realizat din patru foi de pînză, două pentru trup şi două pentru mîneci (fig. 310). Gura de la gît a acestui tip de cămaşă se obţine şi ea prin simpla încreţire a foilor de pînză care formează trupul şi mînecile. Acest

to the presence of the *altiță* (a rectangular piece of cloth that connects the sleeves to the shoulder, chest-piece, and back-piece of the shirt) on Trajan's monuments.

Such conclusions have circulated through the ethnological literature, often appearing in brief introductory passages, simply to circumvent the scrutiny of censors who controlled the publication of academic papers, as seen in the case of the renowned specialist in traditional costume, Maria Hedvig Formagiu. Others have used Fl. B. Florescu's statements either out of ignorance or conviction. In his 1973 synthesis on Romanian ethnography, Ioan Vlăduțiu (a prominent figure in Romanian ethnology at the time, who was entrusted with the publishing of the Romanian Ethnographic Atlas) reaffirmed the significance of ancient monuments for „understanding the origins and evolution (sic!) of Romanian attire."[26]

In our presentation of 2017, we tried to demonstrate the lack of validity of these claims, which are still perpetuated by part of the Romanian ethnological literature. Our arguments were primarily based on historical considerations and on the comparison of elements of traditional Romanian costume with the depictions on the column and *Tropaeum Traiani*. Thus, we emphasized that:

-The „laborious" demonstration of considering the column and the triumphal monument at Adamclisi as „undeniable" evidence regarding the origin and continuity of the Romanian people and the Romanian folk costume is based on erroneous or at least debatable premises. The scenes on the column itself depict different female garments, especially in terms of (1) the way the head is covered[27] and (2) the appearance of the attire.[28] These details suggest the existence of multiple

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tip de cămaşă este deci identic cu cel dacic şi socotim inutil să-i mai redăm croiul." [„Indeed, in Northern Moldavia there is a type of shirt named « shirt with *altiță* » or « shirt with *brezărău* », made by four pieces of cloth, two for the body and two for the sleeves (fig. 310). The neckline of this type of shirt is also obtained by simply creasing the sheets of cloth that form the body and sleeves. This type of shirt is identical to the Dacian one and, therefore, we consider unnecessary to reproduce its pattern."]

[26] Vlăduțiu 1973, 358: "...este cunoscut faptul că reprezentările de pe columna lui Traian și monumentul de la Adamclisi prezintă importante imagini ale costumului popular purtat de daci, precum și a croiului îmbrăcămintei, ceea ce are o mare însemnătate pentru înțelegerea obârșiei și evoluției portului popular românesc." English version: „... it is well-known that the depictions on Trajan's Column and the monument at Adamclisi provide significant images of the folk costume worn by the Dacians, as well as details of the garment's cut, which are crucial for understanding the origin and evolution of Romanian folk costume."

[27] For example, the headband in scene 76 of the homecoming, which is flatter in scene 39 of the founding of the city of Nicopolis ad Istrum, no longer appears in scene 91, where women participate alongside men in the sacrifice performed by Trajan.

[28] The women's clothing in scene 39 does not have sleeves, while in the other two scenes, the tight cut of the sleeves is different. In scene 91, the sleeve appears twisted along the arm; the lower part of the clothing of the women in scene 45, who are torturing prisoners, is successively crossed with horizontal cords (or bands).

local population groups with distinct clothing characteristics, assuming the accuracy of the ethnographic information in the sculptural program of the spiral frieze.

Moreover, in Fl. B. Florescu's demonstrations, the military context and the possible localization of the scenes on the column, which are still unresolved by historians, are regrettably disregarded. There is still no agreement on whether the population depicted in scene XCI is from Banat (as Radu Vulpe, for example, claims) or from south of the Danube (according to other historians, including C. C. Petolescu[29]). This localisation is linked to the long-standing discussion about the routes taken by the imperial army toward Sarmizegetusa at the beginning of the second war in 105-106. As for the ethnic identification of the civilian population depicted on the Adamclisi monument, the situation is even more complicated. The exact sequence of the metopes is not known. However, if these scenes, which have been introduced into ethnographic demonstrations, are part of the group of metopes depicting the exhibition of prisoners after the Roman victory, then the women in metopes 48 and 49 could belong to the local population group (the extra-Carpathian Dacians), although we cannot exclude the possibility of ethnic affiliation with the other two ethnic groups (Germanic and Sarmatic). It cannot be stated with certainty that the female attire is proof of ethnic identity, as the barbarian coalition that fought at Adamclisi seems to have been made up of human groups who cohabited on the left bank of the Danube and who experienced mutual influences. In this regard, one can point to the fur-lined caftan worn both by Sarmatian men and Dacians, as well as the weapons used by the barbarian men depicted on the metopes (for example, the long sword, wielded with both hands, is used by both Germanic fighters and those identified as Dacians from Muntenia). Therefore, the premise that all the women depicted on these monuments are „certainly Dacians" is far from being proven (see infra, fig. 1).

- In terms of ethnographic and clothing issues, it must be said that all the variations of Romanian women's folk costumes reveal an attention to cover the entire female body, always carefully marking the difference between the upper and lower part with a belt (see. fig. 2), with each part of it being covered individually, and the belt is fastened at the waist (not under the bust, not over the hips). This is a way of conceptualizing the costume that does not match the „Dacian" garments depicted on ancient monuments.

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[29] Petolescu 2014, 151.

Fig. 1 – Women clothing on Trajan's Column and the triumphal monument from Adamclisi

scene 91 of Trajan's Column[30] – Local population participating to a religious ceremony conducted by Trajan

Metope 48, *Tropaeum Traiani* (lupa 21563)

Metope 49, *Tropaeum Traiani* (lupa 21564)

Fig. 2 – Morphological types of women folk costum proving the separated pieces of the traditional women clothing, (after M. H. Formagiu, *Portul popular românesc*, 1974, fig. 23)

As can be observed, the costume on the Column covers the female body completely, does not have a waist girdle, and the way the garment is fastened under the chest resembles more the Greek *peplos*, with *kolpos* (pleats over the hips), while the upper part of the body shows a kind of *apoptigma*. The girdle of the women on the metopes of *Tropaeum Traiani* is tied below the waist,

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[30] For all the scenes of the Trajan's Column we used Vulpe 2002.

which assures us that the garment was long, made from a single sheet without waist seams or skirts worn over it. However, none of these features are known in our folk costume. Additionally, and this is regrettably overlooked by the ethnologists of the second half of the 20th century, but noriced by Tzigara Samurcaș in 1945, none of the variants of Romanian women's shirts have sleeves as short as those seen on the *Tropaeum Traiani* monument (see fig. 3). The shortest sleeve found in traditional Romanian folk costume is adorned with a long frill extending beyond the elbow and covering most of the forearm. This style, observed in regions such as Maramureş, Oaş, Sibiu, and Apuseni Mountains, is, in fact, a later influence originating from Central European and Germanic traditions.

Fig. 3 – Romanian traditional women's shirts

The two Romanian type of women's shirt:

- **carpatian type:** short shirt (ia) – a, carpatian long shirt (cămaşă or cămeşoi) – b

- **"poncho" type:** short shirt – c: long shirt - d

(Hedwig-Maria Formagiu, *Portul popular românesc*, Bucharest, 1974, figs 12, 14, 15)
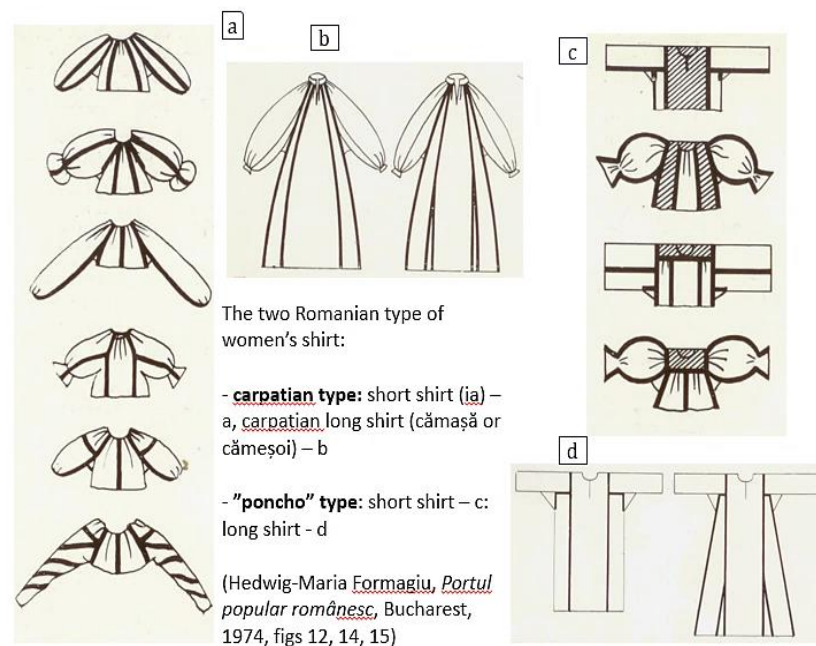
The rolled-up sleeve shirt from the Vrancea area (with restricted circulation in the Curvature Carpathians and the Câmpulung Muscel area) that Fl. B. Florescu argued for millennial clothing continuity (and that he identified in the clothing of the women of scene XCI on the column) is actually a clothing item with a late and ephemeral existence, already disappeared in the 19th century, which had been introduced by boyar and princely families following influences from Western Europe.[31]

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[31] Nicolescu 1970, 111 with fig. 59; 113 with fig. 60; Formagiu 1974, 23.

Fig. 4 – the inexistent *altița* on Trajan's Column
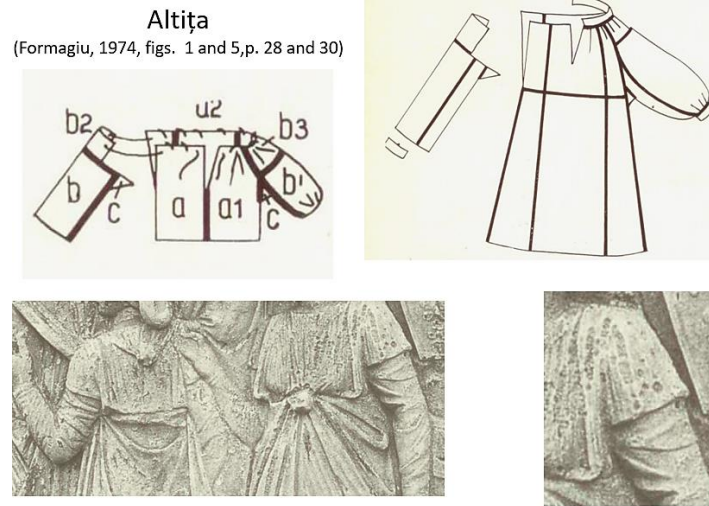
The *altița* he saw at Adamclisi[32] was brought by Florescu from the villages in northern Moldova and corroborated with the sleeves of the women's clothes in scene XCI, ignoring the piece of clothing on top (visible also in the women represented from behind) which, in fact, makes it difficult to observe the „sleeve seam".

As for the demonstration of the identification of the neck pleats of contemporary women (with or without a headband) in the clothing on the discussed ancient monuments, this seems unnecessary to us. At Adamclisi, the „dress", made from long and whole pieces of fabric wide enough to be worn without subsequent corseting after sewing on the edges, is naturally tightened with a string at the top in order to be worn. This is a common pleat, created for functional reasons, and cannot be considered a distinctive identity feature.

Regarding footwear, which was not neglected by Fl. B. Florescu and many ethnologists who followed him, the column provides generous depictions of men's footwear, which are indeed very similar to the *opinci* worn for centuries by the Romanian population. However, the situation is different with women's footwear. The only scene in which we actually see the feet of adult women and children is scene XCI, and here again, it is necessary to consider the issue of the location of this population. In the other representations on the column, the lower part of the female bodies is not shown, and on the *Tropaeum*, the women do not wear shoes at all.

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[32] Very curiously, since there is no „sleeve" in the women's clothes on the metopes, it seems more like an extension over the shoulder of the sheets of material on the front and back; or, the *altița* connects the rectangular-shaped material of a wide sleeve to the top of the breast-pieces and back piece of the shirt.

Concluding remarks

Unfortunately, such associations – suggesting supposed but unproven transmissions of clothing cuts and patterns over time and space, without clear evidence of the movement of the population wearing a specific set of clothing, as well as the parade of details and morphological schemes – have managed to „make a career" not so much in historical literature, but especially in ethnological literature (as I mentioned). There is no doubt that the Romanian traditional shirt of the women, *ia cu altiță*, represents an element of Romanian identity wear, being recently included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. However, the search for this blouse or shirt with the same cut characteristics in the reliefs of the column and the *Tropaeum Traiani* seems to disregard the entire demographic-historical evolution of the area north of the Lower Danube over the last 2000 years. Of course, today we know the historiographical explanations for that academic position from the 1950s-70s – within the context of the communist regime's rise to power, where ideology repeatedly distorted the discourse of specialists. What struck us, however, is the fact that, despite the freedom of expression – including in the scientific realm – installed in the Romania after 1989, some of the most sought-after references are still phrases written primarily to please the oppressive authorities in power during the last century (*vide infra*).

Fig. 5 – Maria Bâtcă, *Costumul popular românesc/The Romanian Folk costume*, București, Centrul Național pentru Conservarea și Promovarea Culturii Tradiționale, 2006 – pages 6-7

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A New Milestone from the Reign of Maximinus Thrax, discovered at Istros (Romania)

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Abstract: The paper presents a milestone that attests the restoration of a road connecting *Istros* to the settlements south of it, during the reign of emperor Maximinus Thrax.

Keywords: Istros/Histria, Roman road, Maximinus Thrax, territory, Late Roman spolia

The article presents a relatively new epigraphic discovery, made in 2017 on the acropolis of *Istros* / *Histria* (Istria, Constanța County, Romania), in the *Acropolis Centre-South* Sector,[1] coordinated by a team from the „Dinu Theodorescu" Laboratory of Archaeology (Faculty of History, University of Bucharest).

The excavation, which started in 2013, uncovered an *insula* built in the 6th c. AD, repaired and modified in the second half of the same century, and with a last phase of repairs/changes in the internal plan at the beginning of the 7th c. AD. The stone was discovered in a debris layer in a baulk between two trenches, therefore in a secondary position (Fig. 1), in a space conventionally called **NNSp04.**[2] This space seems to have been created in the *insula*'s first phase and was separated from **NNSp05a** to the north by the projections of **Z007**. In the second phase, **Z009** was added between the two projections of **Z007**, so that it left in its western end an almost 1m-wide entrance. We do not know to which wall the epigraphic monument came from, and therefore from which construction phase.

Given the bad preservation of the stone, we used *Reflectance Transformation Imaging* (RTI)[3] to enhance the reading of the text (Fig. 2). But it was impossible to obtain a good photograph/3D model, so the current illustration serves more to understand the general characteristics of the block, than for reading the actual text.

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[1] For further information on this excavation, see the preliminary report for the 2019-2020 (Bottez *et al.* 2024), with the complete bibliography in n. 1.

[2] Bottez *et al.* 2024, 210, fig. 4.

[3] We would like to hereby thank Prof. Adam Rabinowitz (University of Texas in Austin) for creating the RTI model and Dr. Dragoș Hălmagi for the epigraphic indications.

Milestone (Fig. 3). Fragmentary limestone column (Hmax 0.64 m, circumference 1 m). Discovered in 2017 in the *Acropolis Centre-South* Sector, in **baulk C006-C024**, square E₁, **context 6001/24001**, at +0.31 m; inventory no. 915/2017. At present in the *lapidarium* of the Histria site museum. Four rows are preserved; the height of letters 3.5-4.5 cm; space between rows 2.5-3 cm. The writing is very badly preserved. Date: 236-237 AD.

  [*Imp(erator) Caes(ar) C(aius) Iul(ius)*]
  [*Verus Maximianus Pi-*]
  [*us Fel(ix) Invictus*]
  [*Aug(ustus) et C(aius) Iul(ius) Verus*]
  [*Maximus nobiliss*]-
1 *ịm(us) Caes*[*ar re*]*stị-*
  tuerunt per
  Fl(avium) Lucillianụ-
  m leg(atum) pr(o) pr(aetore) m(illia) p̣(assum)
    vacat
    - - - -

L. 1-2: the formula *restituerunt* allowed for the clear identification with a milestone.

L. 3-4. Flavius Lucillianus is already attested as a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, as our inscription is identical to a *milliarum* discovered in Corbu,[4] and attributed to the secondary road connecting *Istros* to the settlements at Săcele – Vadu – Corbu, leading southwards.[5]

Translation:

„The Caesar and Emperor Caius Iulius Verus Maximins, Pius, Felix, Invictus Augustus, and the Caius Iulius Verus Maximus, the most noble Caesar, had <this milestone> redone, under the supervision of Flavius Lucillianus, pro praetorial imperial legate. A thousand paces."

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[4] ISM I, 321; Tocilescu 1900, 211, no. 40 (= CIL III, 14462); Doruțiu-Boilă 1964, 133, no. 9; Panaite 2010, Vol. II, 27, no. 27
[5] Panaite 2010, vol. I, 110.

It is clear that, given its initial use, as well as the traces of cutting that show the stone was reused as building material in the Late Roman *insula* Iα, we can safely assume it is in fact in at least its tertiary position. The stone was maybe brought from the Istrian territory at the end of the 3rd-beginning of the 4th c., when the city was rebuilt following the Gothic raid in the decades before.

The monument marks the repair of the afore-mentioned road during the reign of Maximinus Thrax. As the commentary of ISM I, 320, in early 238 AD the province of *Moesia Inferior* was revolting against the emperor, which means the road and its milestones must have been restored at a prior date.

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Fig. 1. Discovery spot (red dot) on the general plan of the Acropolis Centre-South Sector

Fig. 2. The RTI model

Fig. 3. The milestone

Monastic Landscape in Early Christianity – Case Studies from the Fourth Century

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Abstract: This article explores several case studies of key monastic foundations in both Eastern and Western Christianity in order to underline the symbolic significance of landscapes, such as deserts, gardens, and rivers, within monastic literature. The rhetoric surrounding these spaces often idealized isolation and spiritual retreat while simultaneously acknowledging the social and physical proximity of monasteries to urban centers and significant commercial routes.

Key-words: cenobitism, landscape, Pachomius, Basil of Caesarea, Paulinus of Nola.

Where were monastic communities located and how did written accounts represent the monastic landscape? The aim of this paper is to explore the rhetoric on landscape in which Late Antique monasteries were integrated and the underlying symbolism. In so doing, I will be referring to several instances of Late Antique monasteries founded in the fourth century in both Eastern and Western Christianity. Unlike other scholars, such as Darlene L. Brooks Hedstrom, who referred to "monastic archaeology,[1]" I will examine sources related to monasteries whose archaeological remains have not been explored, for several reasons: either they disappeared due to natural phenomena, or archaeological surveys have not been initiated. Thus, I will be using the definition of landscape provided by Jacob Ashkenazi in his study of Syrian monasticism based on a slightly later text: „landscape is both a medium and a process, as well as a text and a context, not merely a passive part of nature or a passive background to human activity.[2]" Since this article focuses on monastic communities, I will leave aside of the present investigation the problem of the anchorites and how sources reflect their use of landscape, problem that has been explored much more in scholarship.[3]

In the following, I will discuss about the sources referring to communities from both Eastern and Western Christianity. The monastery in Tabennesi (Upper Egypt) was founded in the first half of the fourth century by Pachomius (292-346). It initially included a male

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[1] Brooks Hedstrom 2017.
[2] Ashkenazi 2023, 75-105.
[3] See among others, Rapp 2016, 95-99.

monastery (joined, among others, for a while by his brother, John) and a female convent, built for his sister, Mary.[4] Almost at the same time, the pious household of Emmelia and her children in Annisa (Cappadocia) was transformed into monastery mainly due to the influence of her daughter, Macrina (c. 327 – 19 July 379), the elder sister of the famous Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea (329 – September 378), Naucratius (? – 357), and Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335 – ca. 395).[5] In 390s, Paulinus (354 – 431) and his wife, Therasia, decided to renounce their impressive wealth and to found a monastery in Nola, which soon became a pilgrimage center.[6] The example of Paulinus might have influenced Sulpicius Severus (c. 360-c. 420) and his wife, whose name remains unknown.[7]

The Image of the „Desert"

One of the most widely used image in association with early monasticism is that of the desert. Rhetoric on desert and the projection of the ascetic spaces as deserts have a significant role. Early monastic literature frequently referenced the dichotomy between the desert and the city. The desert was the perfect place for imitating on earth the angelic, contrasting with the bustling city filled with crowds. In this sense, Jerome of Stridon advises in a letter bishop Paulinus of Nola, who was seeking to spend his life in a monastery, to seek solitude away from cities, where most temptations might hinder his vocation. Thus, Jerome recommends him to retire to the countryside, and to pray in solitude:

> „Be assured that, whether you dwell here or elsewhere, a like recompense is in store for your good works with our Lord. Indeed, … as long as you live in the country one place is as good as another. Forsake cities and their crowds, live on a small patch of ground, seek Christ in solitude, pray on the mount alone with Jesus, keep near to holy places: keep out of cities, I say, and you will never lose your vocation. My advice concerns not bishops, presbyters, or the clergy, for these have a different duty. I am speaking only to a monk who having been a

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[4] See all the sources related to these foundations in *Pachomian Koinonia* 1980.
[5] See among others Elm, 1996, 79-105.
[6] Mratschek 2001, 514.
[7] Paulinus of Nola, 1966 *Letter* 5.6, 57.
Paulinus of Nola 1967, *Letter* 31.1, 125-126.
Sévère 1967b, 334-335.

man of note in the world has laid the price of his possessions at the apostles' feet."[8]

According to Jerome, the status of monk implies living in solitude. Since Paulinus has chosen the highest philosophy, he should follow the model of the ancient philosophers. Moreover, since he is also seeking Christ, he should imitate the prophets, the apostles, and the holy men of the desert:

> „if you desire to be in deed what you are in name—a monk, that is, one who lives alone, what have you to do with cities which are the homes not of solitaries but of crowds? Every mode of life has its own exponents. For instance, let Roman generals imitate men like Camillus, Fabricius, Regulus, and Scipio. Let philosophers take for models Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Let poets strive to rival Homer, Virgil, Menander, and Terence. Let writers of history follow Thucydides, Sallust, Herodotus and Livy. Let orators find masters in Lysias, the Gracchi, Demosthenes, and Tully. And, to come to our own case, let bishops and presbyters take for their examples the apostles or their companions; and as they hold the rank which these once held, let them endeavour to exhibit the same excellence. And last of all let us monks take as the patterns which we are to follow the lives of Paul, of Antony, of Julian, of Hilarion, of the Macarii. And to go back to the authority of scripture, we have our masters in Elijah and Elisha, and our leaders in the sons of the prophets; who lived in fields and solitary places and made themselves tents by the waters of Jordan. The sons of Rechab too are of the number who drank neither wine nor strong drink and who abode in tents."[9]

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[8] Jerome 1953, *Lettre* 58, 77-78.
[9] Jerome 1953, *Letter* 58, 78.

Through these examples, Jerome warns Paulinus that monks should live in the desert, while priests should live in the cities.[10] As he has chosen the highest philosophy, he can only be a monk and, hence, Nola's area is a spiritual desert.

Rooted in earlier sources, which used the same opposition in order to express by means of visual images the ethical contrast between goodness/truth and evilness/falsehood, the opposition desert/city became a widespread literary tool. The desert was also the place where an ascetic could fight the devil directly. In terms of location, the desert mentioned in monastic writings was not necessarily an arid, uninhabited place, but the term could symbolically designate a space located at a certain distance from the inhabited world. Nevertheless, in opposition to the earthly city, it became the symbol of the spiritual city.[11] The metaphor of the desert was spread in both Eastern and Western monastic literature.[12]

Monasteries – between Isolation and Connectivity

Rhetoric on the ideal spots of the monasteries underlines the isolation of the communities. However, sources also suggest that, in spite of their integration into an isolated landscape, they were also accessible to diverse visitors. Indeed, monasteries had a significant social impact due to the relatively short distance between communities and cities found in their proximity.

Paulinus of Nola seems to have complied to Jerome's ideal living spot. In a letter describing his early ascetic retreat following the calumnious accusations against him for the death of his brother, he refers to the Classic commonplace of the country life, which offers him leisure and withdrawal from the everyday public activities:

„Finally, when I seemed to obtain rest from lying scandal and from wanderings, unbusied by public affairs and far from the din of the marketplace, I enjoyed the

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[10] One should take into consideration the fact that Jerome's rhetoric against monk-priests might have been influenced by his own negative experience. Although ordained, he has never managed to use his clerical status.

[11] Goehring 1993, 281-296.

[12] The volume of Djikstra and Van Dijk 2006 groups papers dealing with the literary construct of the desert in the Western hagiographies. As the authors demonstrate, rhetorical praising of the ascetics for having chosen the harshness of the desert in order to pursue their vocation does not always indicate a factual true. Besides the metaphorical understanding of the „desert," in some cases the spot where monasteries developed was not necessarily a choice of the ascetics, but represented the only available option for the pursuit of asceticism. In other words, the situations in which the desert metaphor was adapted to the pious aristocratic households were frequent.

leisure of country life and my religious duties, surrounded by pleasant peace in my withdrawn household."[13]

This account reflects the literary representation of the country villa and its function, not only in Paulinus' conversion to asceticism, but also for the surrounding inhabitants. Known as a *topos* of leisure, the villa and the garden became the place where Paulinus was able to escape his legal and social duties and to contemplate God freely. It is to this place that Paulinus invites his friend, Sulpicius Severus: "I shall set you in the monastery not merely as a lodger of the martyr who lies close by [i. e. Felix], but also as a husbandman in his garden.[14]"

In the Nola complex, Paulinus made efforts to incorporate elements of pre-existing beliefs in the area, with the aim of attracting a large number of believers and convince them to embrace Christianity. Thus, he included customs that had long been linked to secular religious needs. A close reading of Paulinus' texts reveals not only his pastoral concern to understand, explain, and, in a sense, legitimize these new cultic forms, but also the growing role of saint veneration, which, during Paulinus' time, was undergoing significant development. This was the function of the pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Felix, in Nola.[15]

Besides the accessibility for pilgrims, the ascetic dwelling in Nola had an even broader communal context. Paulinus transformed Nola not only into a center of asceticism, but also into one of Christian hospitality. This gradual transformation was facilitated by a network of hospitality that allowed Nola to evolve from the initial rural sanctuary into a prominent cultural and ascetic center in the region.[16]

Classical literature tended to idealize two spots. The garden and the pasture had been ideal places for one's peaceful retreat from society. Late antique sources coming from the monastic *milieu* tended to ascribe the same roles to the space, which the authors called a „desert", be it a real arid place, or rather a symbolical desert. Apart from deserts, in some

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[13] Paulinus of Nola 1966, *Letter* 5.4, 56: „Postea denique ut a calumniis et peregrinationibus requiem capere uisus sum, nec rebus publicis occupatus et a fori strepitu remotus ruris otium et ecclesiae cultum placita in secretis domesticis tranquillitate celebraui."
[14] Paulinus of Nola 1966, *Letter* 5.15, 64.
"Tum ego te non in monasterio tantum uicini martyris inquilinum, sed etiam in horto eiusdem colonum locabo."
[15] Aulisa and Carnevale 2005, 120-121.
[16] See a thorough study on this transformation in Mratschek 2001, 511-553.

instances, monastic founders identified their places of retreat with gardens. Their descriptions are not always realistic; instead, they rather offer ideal representations.

Sulpicius Severus placed the dialog with his monastic *amici*, Gallus and Postumianus, in the garden of the monastic-villa at Primuliacum.[17] The setting of this dialog reminded the readers of the Classical, Ciceronian dialog in the gardens of his villa.

Writing to his friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea describes the remote ascetic dwelling on the estate of his own family, in Annisa. His account is full with Classical motifs used in the description of an ideal place in which he would be able to fully dedicate himself to what he calls „philosophy," which, in fact, is the representation of the monastic life:

> „There, God has opened on me a spot exactly answering to my taste, so that I actually see before my eyes what I have often pictured to my mind in idle fancy. There is a lofty mountain covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies beneath, enriched by the waters which are ever draining off from it; and skirted by a spontaneous profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence; so as even to surpass Calypso's Island, which Homer seems to have considered the most beautiful spot on the earth. Indeed, it is like an island, enclosed as it is on all sides; for deep hollows cut off two sides of it; the river, which has lately fallen down a precipice, runs all along the front and is impassable as a wall; while the mountain extending itself behind, and meeting the hollows in a crescent, stops up the path at its roots. There is but one pass, and I am master of it. Behind my abode there is another gorge, rising into a ledge up above, so as to command the extent of the plains and the stream which bounds it, which is not less beautiful, to my taste, than the Strymon as seen from Amphipolis. For while the latter flows leisurely, and swells into a lake almost, and is too still to be a river, the former is the most rapid stream I know, and somewhat turbid, too, from the rocks just above; from which, shooting down, and eddying in a deep pool, it forms a most pleasant scene for myself or anyone else."[18]

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[17] Sévère 2006, 1, 1, 2, 102.
[18] Basil of Caesarea 1926, *Ep*. 14, 2, 107-109.

For Basil, the quietness of life (ἡσυχία – the Greek equivalent of the Latin *otium*[19]) and isolation of this place are essential for his commitment to asceticism. Even more, the ideal landscape for ascetic communities seems to be, for Basil, one that fosters both individual spiritual growth and communal responsibility, as Basil emphasizes several times in his *Asketikon*,[20] a collection of questions and answers on ascetic life, which soon became a reference for monks and nuns in Cappadocia and beyond.

Even though he hints to the remoteness of the ascetic retreat, Basil immediately refers to the people from the nearby villages, who come to the river and to the lake, attracted by its multitude of fish.[21] This detail seems to be accurate, since Gregory of Nazianzus also mentions the river and fishing. In some of his epigrams, he refers to the death of Basil's brother, Naucratius, who was living as a monk in the same spot.[22]

> „156. – Om Naucratius, the Brother of Basil the Great
> Naucratius was once freeing his fishing-net from a
> sunken rock in the roaring eddies of the river. The
> net he did not free, but was caught himself. Tell
> me, O Word, how the net landed the fisherman,
> Naucratius, an example of pure life, instead of fish.
> As I conjecture, both grace and death came to him
> from the water."

> „157. – On the Same
> Naucratius died in the eddy of the envious river,
> entangled in the toils of his sunken net, so that,
> mortal, thou mayst know the tricks of this life, from
> which this fleet-footed colt was removed."

The river he describes is the river Iris and the episode is also referred to in the *Life of Saint Macrina*, written by Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil and Naucratius.[23]

Basil's letter quoted above received three replies from his friend, Gregory of Nazianzus. In his fourth letter, Gregory of Nazianzus uses extensive rhetorical figures in admiration of

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[19] Rousseau 1994, 71-72.
[20] See *Asketikon* 2005 and the thorough introductory study by Anna M. Silvas.
[21] Basil of Caesarea 1926, *Ep*. 14, 1, 106-107.
[22] Gregory of Nazianzus 1919, *Epigrams* 156; 157; 158, 468-469.
[23] Grégoire de Nysse 1971, 9, 168-172.

Basil's ascetic retreat. Just as Basil's previous epistle, this one is also quoting Classical motives (such as the „Pontic darkness", or the „Augean dunghill"):

„For my part, I'll admire your Pontus and Pontic burrow as an abode fit for exile, what with the ridges that loom overhead; the beasts that put to the test your trust in the location; the isolated spot that lies down below, even if it is a mousehole with the august appellations of thinkery [Aristophanes, *Nubes* 91–104], monastery, and school; the thickets of wild flora and the wreath of rugged mountains that puts shackles on you, not a crown; the mediocre climate and the longed-for sun, which you can make out only as if through smoke, O Pontic and Sunless Cimmerians [*Odysseus*, 11.13–19], sentenced not only to a six-month-long night (which, in fact, people say is the case) but also to not having even one unshaded part of being alive, the whole of life being one long night and truly the shadow of death [*Psalms* 22(23):4] […]. Shall I praise the road, both narrow and treacherous [*Matthew* 7:14]? Whether it leads to the Kingdom or to Hell, I don't know; for your sake, may it lead to the Kingdom! As to the region in between, what do you want? Should I falsely call it an Eden and the fount that was divided into the four sources from which the whole world takes drink [*Genesis* 2:10–14], or a dry and waterless desert that some Moses will make habitable once he uses his staff to make a stone gush forth [*Exodus* 17:1–6]? For whatever escaped the rocks became dried-up gullies, and whatever escaped the gullies became thornbushes, and what loomed over the thornbushes became a cliff. The road on top is also steep and dangerous on either side; it focuses the mind of travelers and trains them for safety. The river rages down below; to you, O Grandiloquent One and Maker of New Names, it must seem like the tranquil Strymon of Amphipolis, but it is no richer in fish than in stones, and it feeds into no lake but rushes down into the deep. For it is great and fearful, and it drowns out the psalmodies of those who stand over it. Compared to this, the cataracts and the catadupes are nothing! That's how loudly it inveighs against you day and night. Rugged and impassible, muddy and undrinkable—its only beneficial aspect is that it doesn't sweep away your abode when the torrents and storms drive you

crazy. That's what I think about those Islands of the Blessed, if you are in fact blessed. Go ahead, admire the crescent-shaped bends that choke off, rather than fortify, access to your foothill, the ridges that hang overhead—making for you a life like Tantalus's [cf. *Odysseus* 11.582–92]—and the drafts of cold air and the earth's ventholes that refresh you when you're worn out, and the songbirds that do indeed sing, but about hunger, and do indeed fly, but over the desert. You say that no one comes for a visit except to go hunting, but you should also add, except to gaze upon you dead folk."[24]

Gregory continues with the same tone in his fifth letter, in which he refers to the time when he and Basil had spent together on the same spot.

„How could I pass by those vegetableless gardens that don't deserve the name? And the pile of Augean manure [cf. Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*. 2.5.5] that we cleared out of the house and used to fill the gardens after I, a vintner, and you, a glutton, dragged the dung-bearing wagon with these necks and these hands that still bear the scars of the toils—O Earth, Sun, Air, and Virtue [cf. Aeschines, *In Ctesiphontem*. 260; D., Or. 18.127?]! (for I can write in a tragic style too)—not to bridge the Hellespont [Herodotus, *Histories* 7.33–36] but to flatten out a riverbank?"[25]

This ascetic retreat, situated in a serene and isolated location facilitated not only contemplation and spiritual growth, according to the ideals expressed by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus. In addition, it was accessible to the community nearby, as testified by several episodes recounted in the *Life of Saint Macrina*.[26]

Other accounts of monastic foundations refer to the choice of a certain landscape for the settlement of an ascetic community. The same motifs of the desert and the rivers appear in the accounts. For example, for the foundation of the monastery in Tabennesi, Pachomius chose a

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[24] Gregory of Nazianzus 2019, *Ep*. 4, 59-60.
[25] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Ep*. 5.
[26] In addition, Anna. M. Silvas actually explored the place. She found the most probable site where Naucratius' accident took place. See for details Silvas 2007, 73-95.

„deserted village" surrounded by very fertile land, easily accessible through the Nile River from the nearby cities and through well-known roads from the surrounding villages: „Led by the spirit, he covered a distance of some ten miles and came to a desert village on the river's shore called Tabennesi."[27] All the *Lives* of Pachomius mention the „desert village" in all accounts, which is an indication of the fact that Pachomius and the first monks who followed him found there standing buildings or ruins, which they could relatively easily repair or adapt for their own community.[28]

Conclusions

The monastery in Anissa, mentioned above where Basil and Naucratius lived, was in the proximity of the old Via Pontica, which made it easily reachable. In the West, Nola and Primuliacum were situated at crossroads of circulated routes. The written accounts about Primuliacum reveal that it was not far from Toulouse and Narbonne. [29]

The sites of monasteries were represented as ideal spots, continuing the ancient tradition of the philosophers' retreat at villa or at the *otium*. At the same time, the monasteries themselves were perceived as enclaves, able to ensure the ascetics' withdrawal from society.[30] Far from being merely descriptions of ideal places for ascetic devotion, the passages quoted above offer symbolic representations of diverse aspects related to the ascetic life practiced inside communities.

Desert was represented, rhetorically, as both a physical and symbolic space. As demonstrated in this study, the desert was often portrayed as the ideal location for asceticism, offering ascetics an opportunity for spiritual purification and at the same time a retreat from the distractions of urban life. This image of the desert was not always a literal one, but rather a symbolical representation of isolation that allowed for deep contemplation and ascetic practices. The rhetorical common places of the desert as a space of divine encounter and spiritual warfare were not confined to Eastern monasticism but were also pervasive in the West, where figures such as Jerome and Paulinus of Nola echoed similar themes.

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[27] *Pachomian Koinonia* 1980, Bohairic *Life* 17, 39-40.
Pachomian Koinonia 1980, G1 12, 305.
[28] Brooks Hedstrom 2017, 159-160.
[29] Sévère 1967a, 32-38.
[30] Dey 2004, 357-371.

On the other hand, while the rhetoric often idealized the desert as a remote space, it is clear that monastic communities were not entirely isolated from the surrounding world and were not necessarily placed at a long distance from it. The strategic placement of monasteries near cities or along major trade routes allowed for both spiritual retreat and engagement with the broader community. Written accounts, in fact, reveal a dual aspect of „monastic geography” – both removed from the world and yet tightly connected to it. The monasteries served not only as centers of personal salvation but also as *loci* of social influence.

The case studies presented in this article, including the monastic foundations of charismatic characters such as Pachomius, Basil of Caesarea, and Paulinus of Nola, reveal the interplay between geography, ascetic practice, and religious rhetoric. These founders' choices of landscape were not arbitrary, but were infused with deeper theological meanings, aiming to shape the spiritual lives of those who inhabited these spaces. In the symbolic geography of early monasticism, the idealization of the desert, gardens, and rivers reflected broader cultural values and the aspirations of the monastic movement to separate itself from the secular world while still remaining connected to it.

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Cat Jarman, *The Bone Chests: Unlocking the Secrets of the Anglo-Saxons*, 2023, London, William Collins Publishers, 272p., ISBN-10: 0008447322, ISBN-13: 978-0008447328

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The Bone Chests: Unlocking the Secrets of the Anglo-Saxons este o lucrare amplă ce reunește osteoarheologia cu istoria documentară a Angliei, ce are ca scop aflarea câtor mai multe detalii despre diferite personalități istorice de seamă și timpul în carea acestea au trăit.

Lucrarea de față a fost redactată de Dr. Cat Jarman, ce este un bioarheolog și un arheolog de teren ce s-a specializat în istoria medievală timpurie a Scandinaviei, numită și *Viking Age*; editor la revista *British Archaeology* și este cunoscută pentru bestseller-ul *River Kings: The Vikings from Scandinavia to the Silk Roads*. Pe lângă analiza osteologică de bază, autoarea recurge la analize de izotopi stabili, ADN și datări cu carbon pentru a afla cât mai multe detalii despre trecutul indivizilor aflați în studiu.

Lucrarea însumează 272 de pagini, organizată în 8 capitole principale cu subcapitolele aferente. Pe lângă acestea se mai adaugă la începutul lucrării cuprinsul, o notă a autorului, două subcapitole intitulate *Winchester 1642* și *Winchester Cathedral 2012*; planul Catedralei Winchester și o hartă a Angliei din anul 880 AD., în final se regăsește un epilog, ilustrațiile, lista ilustrațiilor, un index și bibliografia. Bibliografia este structurată exemplar și ne oferă o serie de: studi preliminarii despre cuferele funerare, texte generale despre istoria scandinavă și cea anglo-saxonă, baze de date online ce oferă cititorului un punct de plecare în studiul Evului Mediu Timpuriu Englez, diverse surse primare și documente de arhivă, surse secundare referitoare la Winchester și surse secundare ce cuprind diverse lucrări și articole despre istoriamedievală timpurie a Angliei.

Din punct de vedere narativ, la începutul fiecărui capitol autoarea a optat pentru realizarea unei schițe mai mult sau mai puțin fictivă, fie din evenimente marcante pentru cuferele funerare și catedrală (*Winchester 1642*; *Winchester 1525*; *Winchester 1539*), fie din prezent (*Winchester Cathedral 2012*) scrise cu font italic. Scurtele schițe joacă un rol destul de important în lucrare deoarece ajută la contextualizare, diversitate (fără acestea textul ar fi pur liniar și cronologic,

adeseori monoton) și cititorului îi este mai ușor să înțeleagă cum aceste coșciuge au ajuns să se păstreze în catedrală. Micile istorisiri joacă un rol secundar în ideea principală a autoarei care este aceea de a nara istoria regilor (și nu numai) anglo-saxoni.

Prin utilizarea unor obiecte istorice, în cazul de față cuferele funerare, ne este prezentată istoria târzie a anglo-saxonilor, a incursiunilor normande, influența normandă asupra Angliei și unificarea diferitelor regate ce vor forma Regatul Angliei în perioada medievală clasică.

La baza studiului realizat de Cat Jarman stau cele 6 coșciuge, sau cutii funerare aflate pe un soclu realizat din calcar, aflate pe laturile altarului din Catedrala Winchester. Inițial se credea că în aceste coșciuge se află rămășițele osoase a 11 indivizi, personalități istorice de seamă, din perioada Anglo-Saxonă, ce au contribuit la formarea Regatului Angliei și implicit a Regatului Unit actual. Din punct de vedere cronologic cuferele datează din secolul al XVI-lea, însă ar conține fragmente osoase de la primul rege creștin al Wessex-ului ce a murit în secolul al VII-le AD. până la William Rufus ce a domnit în secolul al XI-lea. De asemenea, istoria ne spune că în aceste coșciuge s-ar afla și căpetenia de origine daneză Cnut alături de soța sa și arhiepiscopul de Canterbury.

Din nota autorului și capitolul *Chest II: Threats*, prin intermediul unui proiect realizat de cercetătorii de la Universitatea din Bristol aflăm că este posibil ca cele aproximativ 1300 de fragmente osoase provin de la 23 de persoane, printre care s-ar afla și două cu vârsta cuprinsă între 10 și 15 ani. Studiul încercă să descopere identitatea indivizilor ce se află depuși în cele 6 coșciuge prin intermediul diferitelor analize de specialitate, însă chiar și cu acest avans tehnologic de care ne bucurăm în prezent, este greu să decelăm cu exactitate identitatea/proveniența acelor fragmente osoase. Printr-o simplă răsfoire a lucrării aflăm că este vorba de personalități de seamă din secolul al VII-lea AD. până în secolul al XI-lea.

Majoritatea personalităților aflate în discuție au fost depuse în vechea catedrală ce datează din secolul al VII-lea iar cu extinderea sa în secolul al X-lea și înlocuirea cu clădirea actuală, a cărei construcții a început în secolul al XI-lea, scheletele au fost dezhumate și înhumate de nenumărate ori, astfel identitatea și proveniența lor nu mai poate fi specificată cu exactitate. La începutul capitolului *The lost chest: Memory*, ne este relatat de către autoare faptul că episcopul Richard Fox la 1525 a adunat și împărțit rămășițele osoase cât mai bine cu putință și le-a depus în 10 coșciuge noi ce aveau pictat pe ele numele celor ce se aflau înăuntru.

Dintre cele 10, doar 6 se mai păstrează până astăzi. În primul paragraf din *Winchester 1642* ne sunt relatate evenimentele care au dus la distrugerea unor cufere din catedrală, fiind vorba de Primul Război Civil Englez și de William Waller ce a pătruns în catedrală cu armata sa distrugând majoritatea obiectelor de cult. În capitolul *Chest II: Threats*, ultimul subcapitol *The Remains*, ne sunt expuse unele dintre piedicile întâmpinate de cercetători: scheletele nu mai sunt de mult *in situ*, ele fiind mutate în diverse locuri în decursul istoriei, iar printre acestea se află și oase de origine animală.

Cuferele funerare sunt menționate rareori în text, posibil și din cauza incertitudinii ce le înconjoară. Coșciugele au fost pictate cu numele unor personalități din istoria Angliei, însă fragmentele osoase sunt amestecate, ce face greu de formulat o concluzie clară asupra identității osemintelro. De asemenea, organizarea cronologică a oaselor în funcție de numele pictate nu a fost posibilă deoarece până și acestea au fost realizare aleatoriu, în secolol al XVI-lea.

Pe lângă descrierea și analiza fragmentelor osoase din cufelele de la Catedrala Winchester, pentru a înțelege mai ușor, a oferi dinamism textului și pentru o contextualizare mai amplă a studiului descris în lucrare, autoarea oferă cititorului diverse cazuri similare, de descoperiri osteologice, din Regatul Unit sau spre exemplu Germania, relevante pentru studiul din lucrarea de față (în unele cazuri aceste exemple apar cu font italic ce poate fi uneori derutant pentru cititor).

Ne este descrisă identificarea rămășițelor osoase a reginei de origine anglo-saxonă Eadgyth, ce a fost căsătorită cu Împăratul Otto cel Mare. Chiar dacă inscripțiile de pe coșciugul de plumb indicau că acele fragmente aparțin reginei, diverse analize au fost realizate pentru a se dovedi cu exactitate identitatea lor. Analiza antropologică a oaselor a confirmat faptul că oasele aparțin unui individ de sex feminin, cu vârsta cuprinsă între 30 și 40 de ani, ce prezenta pe capetele femurale semne rezultate în urma activității de călărit. Pentru a se afla locul nașterii, dieta și dacă individul provine din afara Germaniei, au fost realizate analize de stronțiu și izotopi stabili de oxigen, analize realizate pe smalțul dentar.

Chiar dacă la început textul este puțin ambiguu (firul narativ/cronologic alternează), autoarea descrie foarte clar și explicit evenimentele istorice, diverse progrese în cercetare care au făcut posibilă o nouă perspectivă asupra analizei osteologice. Ne sunt descrise noi tehnici de analiză ce combină arheologia și osteologia cu genetica, istoria, biologia, arhivistica. Autoarea expune destul de limpede ideile pe care vrea să le trateze, o atenție destul de mare este dată și

surselor istorice sau arheologice, iar concluziile sunt atent formulate, în limita rezultatelor analizelor de specialitate.

Conchizând, în această lucrare se regăsesc multiple exemple de tehnici dar și de tehnologii interdisciplinare care aduc un plus de valoare diverselor domenii de cercetare; autoarea nu se limitează doar la o abordare a subiectului din punct de vedere istoriografic și arheologic. Textul în sine, chiar dacă este redactat în limba engleză, este unul simplu de înțeles fără prea mulți termeni de specialitate, iar procedurile de analiză sunt explicate în amănunt.

Graham Harman, Christopher Witmore, *Objects Untimely. Object-Oriented Philosophy and Archaeology*, Cambridge, Hoboken, Ed. Polity Press, 2023, 225 p., ISBN: 978-1-5095-5656-4

Vlad-Ioan CIUR

ICEM "Gavrilă Simion", Tulcea

Lucrarea *Objects Untimely. Object-Oriented Philosophy and Archaeology* este rezultatul unor conversații dintre arheologul Christopher Witmore, profesor de Arheologie și Studii Clasice în cadrul Texas Tech University și filosoful Graham Harman, profesor de filosofie la Institutul de Arhitectură din California de Sud din Los Angeles cu prilejul întâlnirii lor în cadrul *Haragan Lecture* de la Texas Tech University. Subiectele principale ale discuției lor, materializate în această carte apărută în luna iunie a anului 2023, sunt conceptul de timp și ontologia orientată pe obiecte (prescurtat OOO), ambele teme având un rol deosebit pentru ambii autori, în domeniile lor de specialitate.

Argumentele și opiniile autorilor sunt prezentate într-un mod echilibrat raportat la cuprinsul volumului, acesta fiind împărțit în cinci capitole, primul cu caracter introductiv în tematica discuției, două capitole semnate de fiecare autor în parte și alte două, constituite din dialoguri redactate între C. Witmore și G. Harman, pentru a detalia ideile expuse în capitolele individuale și de a prezenta similitudini între abordările legate de timp și OOO în arheologie, respectiv în filosofie și cum acestea ar putea fi puse în practică în elaborarea unor noi metode teoretice în studiul trecutului.

Astfel, în capitolul al doilea, intitulat *The Antiquity of Time: Objects Greek*, C. Witmore oferă numeroase exemple de artefacte și monumente din spațiul grecesc dintr-un amplu cadru cronologic (din preistoria Greciei până în epoca modernă) pentru a-și construi discursul legat de percepția timpului în arheologie, precum și despre importanța obiectelor în studiul istoric. În ceea ce privește rolul obiectelor în înțelegerea trecutului, acesta oferă o perspectivă diferită față de cea antropocentrică, în care obiectele sunt, după opinia autorului, diminuate la un rang inferior, subordonat oamenilor. Un exemplu relevant, pe care autorul îl oferă de fiecare dată când poziția sa în legătură cu subiectul este contestată de către colegii săi este apeductul construit în timpul împăratului roman Hadrian la Atena, despre care C. Witmore afirmă că „Apeductul nu ar fi existat fără caracterul fizic al mortarului, cărămizii și pietrei, combinate cu geometrie, muncă

și experiență". Exemplul oferit portretizează abordarea sa referitor la obiecte, nu prin prisma rangului lor subordonat față de oameni, ci ca elemente de sine stătătoare și care, de multe ori, dăinuie în timp pentru o perioadă mult mai îndelungată față de creatorii umani. C. Witmore propune o interpretare detaliată, elaborată în „șapte pași", a poziției obiectelor și a componentelor lor în societate de-a lungul istoriei. În continuarea sa urmează un capitol format din dialogul dintre autori pe baza discursului din capitolul precedent.

În cel de al patrulea capitol, *Objects as the Root of Time*, este rândul filosofului G. Harman să își prezinte poziția asupra subiectului. Tema centrală este constituită în jurul unor școli de gândire care s-au preocupat cu percepția asupra timpului, astfel că autorul prezintă abordările a numeroși filosofi legat de problematica menționată, precum cele ale lui Aristotel, Platon, Immanuel Kant, Martin Heidegger etc. Totodată, G. Harman discută despre diverse modele teoretice create și folosite pentru înțelegerea obiectelor în relație cu societatea umană. Unul dintre modelele prezentate este format din patru „piloni" reprezentând caracterul obiectelor în relație cu funcționalitatea și simbolismul lor, și anume RO (*real object*) , RQ (*real quality*, SO (*sensual object*) și SQ (*sensual quality*). Totodată, cei patru piloni teoretici pot fi asociați prin axe care sugerează interacțiuni conceptuale între obiecte (SO-SQ, RO-SQ, RO-RQ). Acest capitol, chiar dacă este formulat într-o manieră mai puțin accesibilă publicului neutru comparativ cu cel al arheologului C. Witmore, este o dovadă a erudiției și a studiului aprofundat al conceptului de OOO. De asemenea, este urmat de ultimul capitol, sub forma unui dialog pornind de la ideile lui G. Harman.

Întrucât formatul volumului este constituit în mare parte sub forma unui dialog între autori, ideile sunt expuse într-un cadru mai personal, dorindu-se ca cititorul să se afle în poziția unui „auditor" la această discuție. Totodată, descrierea oferită de C. Witmore diverselor peisaje din Grecia, suprapuse cu scurte istorisiri din multimilenara sa istorie denotă cunoștințele sale impresionante față de un spațiu atât de bogat din punctul de vedere al patrimoniului istoric și cultural, iar portretizarea scrisă a peisajelor, la care sunt adăugate ilustrații sugestive din zonă, influențează pozitiv percepția cititorului asupra mesajului transmis.

Din dorința de a aduce argumente concludente care să sprijine opiniile autorilor și să semnaleze necesitatea aprofundării subiectului, sunt de părere că subiectivismul acestora este unul accentuat, chiar dacă apreciem volumul ca fiind o expunere personală. Acest aspect este menționat și de către C. Witmore însuși, amintind de criticile și reticența manifestată de către

colegii săi. Făcând parte din sfera științelor umaniste, atât arheologia cât și filosofia au la bază percepții subiective în metodologia lor, dar un subiectivism exacerbat poate constitui o piedică în cercetare în cadrul unui domeniu precum cel al arheologiei, în care obiectivismul trebuie să primeze.

Scopul volumului, după cum și autorii îl menționează, este de a crea o nouă teorie asupra timpului în arheologie, de această dată având ca element central obiectele, nu oamenii, prin adoptarea modelelor teoretice propuse de G. Harman și analizate de C. Witmore din cadrul ontologiei orientate pe obiecte. Un demers ambițios, dar care este, în opinia mea, susceptibil de a trasa unele concluzii premeditate, mai ales în cazul arheologiei teoretice. Totuși, acest aspect nu reduce în niciun mod meritele autorilor pentru realizarea acestei lucrări și nici nu subestimează nivelul avansat al cunoștințelor celor doi manifestat pe tot cuprinsul textului, iar prezentarea conceptului de OOO și integrarea sa în cercetarea arheologică consider că este un plus pentru evoluția domeniului.

În cele din urmă, prin cartea *Objects Untimely. Object-Oriented Philosophy and Archaeology* autorii doresc să atragă atenția asupra unei noi perspective legate de rolul obiectelor de-a lungul istoriei omenirii și de modul în care acestea influențează percepția asupra trecerii timpului. Într-o perioadă dominată de interdisciplinaritate în practica arheologică, consider că o astfel de abordare care poate fi clasată drept interdisciplinară la nivel teoretic este una benefică pentru dezvoltarea ambelor domenii (arheologie și filosofie), însă, cel puțin din perspectivă arheologică, îndepărtarea sau diminuarea importanței factorului antropic reprezintă un dezavantaj în înțelegerea mai amănunțită a naturii atât utilitară, cât și simbolică, a oricărui obiect indiferent de vechimea sa.

Melanie M. Beasley, Andrew D. Somerville (eds.), *Exploring Human Behavior Through Isotope Analysis. Applications in Archaeological Research*, **Springer, 2023, 303 p., ISBN: 978-3-031-32266-2, ISBNe: 978-3-031-32268-6, DOI:** https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32268-6

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This work represents the effort of a collective of researchers from different backgrounds but with a single purpose: to analyze the anthropic behaviors by means of stable isotopes in addition to the traditional methods of archeological frameworks.

Application of multi-isotopic analyses can shed a new light on how human behavior is interpreted in different circumstances but also the limitations of these type of studies. The presented case studies from experts from different backgrounds are structured in a specific manner to be understood by researchers who are not specialized in stable isotopes, and targets researchers and students alike by providing different approaches for archaeologists how to interpret and analyze the data resulted from multi-isotopic analysis but also what to expect from these types of investigations.

The book is divided in 5 major parts, each encapsulating vital research topics not only from an archaeological perspective, but also from an inter- and pluridisciplinary perspective, such as human diet, human-animal interactions and also migration patterns and mobility.

This work is a beneficial addition to the archaeological research, mostly due to the fact that traditional archaeology methods can answer a very limited questions regarding the research topics mentioned previously.

The book's introduction has a more personal note than other works from the field, in which the author highlights the pros, the cons and the overall challenges involving stable isotope analysis and the need for interdisciplinary approaches and how can tools designed for an initial purpose can be used for other disciplines and how did these kinds of methods evolve other time.

For a better understanding of the concept of stable isotope analysis, the principles of each isotope analysis are broken down in separate parts, each representing the stable isotope in question and what results can we expect from the analysis. The results might also vary

depending on the bone preservation but also on the method used to extract the collagen and the accuracy of the equipment.

Multi-isotopic analyses have come a long way and in recent years, with an influx of overwhelming and positive outcomes for the archaeological research. This topic is highlighted in the second part of the book which deep dives into the paleodiet and life history, as the title suggest.

The chapters within this part tackle one of the quintessential subjects regarding the diet of children, namely the weaning age of children from past populations, comparing foragers' children with the farmers' children and if the transition from a period to another affects the diet or not.

As we can see from the very beginning, this book is not limited by geography nor by a certain time period from history or prehistory. This adds benefits to the multi-isotopic approaches, as it can focus of the emergence of populations before colonizations, as explores the dietary patterns of the pre-Columbian Maya civilization (Belize), but also can explore the micro-regions (West Polynesia) and the impact of the agriculture on an isolated land and the population's diet, as intensive agriculture, adaptability of the communities to local and non-local sources of food in the event of climate changes can be also determined through stable isotope analysis.

The biogeochemistry of the bone collagen and the apatite were already a debated subject as the bones and the teeth are primarily used as materials in the multi-isotopic analyses but current methodological approaches revealed a new set of data in regards to the dental calculus and as a new potential source of isotopic signature, generating positive data in addition to the information provided by the bone collagen and apatite, a topic discussed at length in a chapter within the book.

In the third part of the book, the authors engage in a discussion of a topic that has already been debated before but the topic of human-animal husbandry has so many branches and still open cases, which generate opportunities for further research.

In the chapters within this part, the domestication of animals and the human-animal interactions is discussed at length by analyzing different aspects during the prehistoric societies but also during pre-Colonial and Viking periods by giving insights about animal managements through the stable isotope data. The authors also noted that most of the isotopic data we currently have in regards to the human-animal interactions are mostly done in Europe, the management of domestic and wild animals are still in debate.

The collapse of societies is one of the most debated topics, primarily related to the climate changes. The last part of the book compresses two chapters which aim to shed new light on this type of evens and detail aspects of the collapse from multiple points of views which can give fresh perspectives regarding the mobility of the humans, migration patterns and switch in dietary practices.

In conclusion, rather than focusing solely on a specific topic and method, the editors organized the chapters to reflect the novelty approaches as needed for providing balanced introductions and foundations in crossing disciplinary boundaries. Given the new methodological approaches in biogeochemistry and answering some of the most burning questions regarding the human diet and mobility, with old and new bibliography, the book *Exploring Human Behavior Through Isotope Analysis. Applications in Archaeological Research* is a comprehensive and an exhaustive work which can help provide current and relevant data regarding the archaeological process and can be used as a tool to help researchers from all fields in reconstruction past behaviours.

Irene Vallejo, *Papyrus. The Invention of Books in the Ancient World*, trad. Charlotte Whittle, Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 2023, 464 p., ISBN: 9781529344004

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Ce îi poți oferi unei persoane care pare să aibă totul? Cu ce poți impresiona pe cineva care bea praf de perle doar pentru că poate? Marc Antoniu îi oferă Cleopatrei ceva ce depășește orice valoare materială: cunoaștere. Îi oferă o colecție impresionantă de 20,000 de cărți; o avere mai prețioasă decât toate comorile lumii la un loc.

Vallejo expune în cartea ei valoarea neprețuită a cuvântului și ne poartă într-o aventură imersivă ce explorează originile acestuia, evoluția sa în literatura clasică și cea contemporană. Prin anecdotele sale captivante și reflecțiile personale, autoarea creează o adevărată odă dedicată cuvântului, ca un gest profund de iubire și apreciere pentru puterea sa de a influența și transforma lumea din jur.

Papyrus nu este doar o carte despre cărți; este o incursiune în inima cunoașterii umane, o călătorie fascinantă în trecut, unde cititorul este ghidat prin lumea tumultoasă a Egiptului Antic, a civilizațiilor mediteraneene și, în sfârșit, pe drumurile agitate ale Romei antice. Atunci, papirusul era mai mult decât un simplu material de scris; a reprezentat o emblemă a cunoașterii și puterii.

Cartea este alcătuită din două părți. Prima parte urmărește evoluția și consumul papirusului în Grecia antică, concentrată pe măreața Bibliotecă din Alexandria, care a pornit ca o simplă idee și a devenit ulterior un simbol al progresului uman, al cunoașterii universale și un rezultat a mândriei liderilor. În a doua parte, Vallejo explorează papirusul în timpul domniei romane și îl analizează în contextul Romei antice.

Autoarea expune felul în care Roma antică a încercat să își îmbogățească patrimoniul cultural prin introducerea și adaptarea moștenirii literare grecești. Cultura romană, deși impresionantă în realizările sale materiale, se afla în umbra Greciei în ceea ce privește bogăția și rafinamentul său cultural. În domeniul literaturii, scriitorii romani erau mai rari și mai puțin renumiți decât cei greci, producând o cantitate mai mică de opere. Pentru a compensa, romanii recurgeau adesea la angajarea scribilor greci, mulți dintre aceștia fiind sclavi ai nobililor, pentru a copia și traduce cărți grecești în limba latină. Aceste copii erau apoi integrate în bibliotecile romane și prezentate deseori drept opere originale ale literaturii romane.

Volumul este un cameleon literar. Este istoric, datorită subiectului academic pe care-l cercetează cu atenție, este fictiv prin modul meticulos în care sunt reconstituite evenimente din trecutul îndepărtat și, totodată, capătă o dimensiune biografică prin perspectiva personală a autoarei asupra modului în care cărțile i-au influențat viața.

Cartea se deschide asemenea unei povestiri: un rege își trimite vânătorii de cărți să găsească suluri de papirus pentru o măreață bibliotecă din Alexandria. Suntem purtați prin atelierele de scribi și devenim martorii conversațiilor și schimburilor comerciale care au avut loc în piețele antice, unde sulurile de papirus erau prețuite la fel de mult ca aurul.

Vallejo navighează cu pricepere în intersecția papirusului cu religia, politica și economia, dezvăluind complexitatea influențelor care au modelat producția și consumul său.

Papyrus explorează impactul alfabetizării și educației în societățile antice, evidențiind puterea transformatoare a limbajului scris. Într-o epocă în care accesul la cunoaștere era adesea rezervat doar unor privilegiați, disponibilitatea extinsă a papirusului a deschis drumul spre cunoaștere tuturor.

Prin intermediul papirusului, antichitatea a fost capabilă să păstreze și să transmită cunoștințele și gândurile lumii sale. De la înregistrarea evenimentelor istorice la păstrarea textelor religioase și filozofice, papirusul a fost o componentă centrală a culturii și societății antice. În acest sens, autoarea oferă o perspectivă tridimensională asupra lumii antice, evidențiind modul în care papirusul a influențat nu numai modul în care oamenii comunicau, ci și cum gândeau și trăiau.

Irene Vallejo ne expune puterea pe care o poate avea o singură carte în formarea și influențarea unui individ. Să luăm exemplul lui Alexandru cel Mare, o figură centrală în *Papyrus*. Rămas în istorie ca simbol al mândriei și curajului, Alexandru obișnuia să doarmă cu o copie a *Iliadei* sub pernă, carte ce i-a marcat profund mentalitatea și i-a alimentat dorința arzătoare de victorie. Cuvântul este o forță deosebită, mai mare decât ne-am putea închipui, iar acest exemplu ilustrează puterea extraordinară a cuvântului scris în conturarea gândirii și comportamentului uman.

În timpul domniei faraonilor Ptolemaici, papirusul a devenit o comoară inestimabilă, dorită cu fervoare, considerată esențială pentru progresul intelectual. Faraonii s-au dedicat în întregime achiziționării, furtului și copierii fiecărui papirus pe care îl puteau găsi, adăugându-le rapid la colecția lor aflată în continuă expansiune; o colecție care își va găsi locul sub acoperișul celebrei Biblioteci din Alexandria.

Biblioteca din Alexandria este un vis pierdut în timp; locul unde secretele lumii erau păstrate între paginile prăfuite ale miilor de papirusuri, o parte din ele, acum, cenușă. Biblioteca

era o comoară culturală și academică, adăpostind cele mai importante lucrări ale lumii antice, de la poezie și filozofie până la știință și matematică, iar datorită acesteia, orașul Alexandria a devenit un centru istoric al învățăturii, capitală a cunoașterii, adăpostind cele mai importante opere ale omenirii.

În *Papyrus*, autoarea împletește trecutul cu prezentul, dorind să expună felul în care cărțile au conturat nu doar lumea antică, ci și lumea de astăzi.

Papyrus îi îndeamnă pe cititori să reflecteze asupra moștenirii durabile a tehnologiilor de scriere antice în era digitală. Pe măsură ce ne bazăm din ce în ce mai mult pe dispozitive electronice pentru lectură și comunicare, experiența tactilă de a manevra un sul de papirus poate părea o relicvă a trecutului. Totuși, principiile fundamentale ale diseminării și conservării informațiilor rămân la fel de relevante astăzi ca și acum milenii.

Papyrus este un volum care îmbină cu măiestrie rigurozitatea științifică cu farmecul literar.

> *...words, which are scarcely a puff of air; the stories we tell to give meaning to chaos and to survive it; the true, false, always provisional knowledge we scratch across the hard rock of our ignorance.*[1]

Cu amplitudinea sa vastă, atenția meticuloasă la detalii și înțelepciunea profundă, lucrarea reprezintă o dovadă a puterii durabile a cărților de a contura perspectiva noastră asupra trecutului și de a lumina calea spre viitor.

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[1]Irene Vallejo: *Papyrus. The Invention of Books in the Ancient World*, trad. Charlotte Whittle, Marea Britanie: Hodder and Stoughton, 2023, p. XIX, trad. mea: „...cuvinte, care abia dacă sunt o suflare de aer; poveștile pe care le spunem pentru a da sens haosului și pentru a supraviețui în fața lui; cunoașterea adevărată, falsă, întotdeauna provizorie, pe care o gravăm pe piatra dură a ignoranței noastre."

Csaba Szabó, *Roman Religion in the Danubian Provinces. Space sacralization and religious communication during the Principate (1st-3rdcentury AD)*, **2022**, **Oxford, Oxbow Books Publishing, 312 p, ISBN 1789257840, 9781789257847**

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Culminând un demers academic riguros și inedit, lucrarea *Roman Religion in the Danubian Provinces –Space sacralization and religious communication during the Principate (1st–3rdcentury AD)* își consolidează caracterul de referință în studiul sacrului în provinciile dunărene printr-o contextualizare istorică la nivel extra-provincial a unui fenomen complex, prezentat prin prisma unor terorii și ipoteze moderne, explicate într-o manieră plăcută și accesibilă.

Cu o activitate academică de peste zece ani, Csaba Szabo s-a axat încă de la începutul carierei sale pe studiul antichității clasice, cu o atenție specială asupra manifestărilor religioase și cultelor din provinciile romane danubiene, publicând în ultimul deceniu nouă cărți și peste cincizeci de studii de referință, surprinzând într-o manieră modernă și plăcută fenomenului sacrului în antichitate. În cazul de față, Csaba atacă problematica diversității și tipologia manifestărilor religioase după criteriul dimeniunilor actului și a concepției spațiului sacru, cercetând atestările acestora într-o perioadă a schimbării constante. Urmând cursul râului Danubius, autorul ne introduce într-un studiu complex din Provinciile Raetia și Pannonia, până în Moesia Inferior și Dacia, oferindu-ne o imagine a unei societăți complexe, omogene cultural și religios, unde individualismul are un rol central în cultura materială și imaterială a societății antichității târzii.

Încă din introducere, Csaba ne prezintă o abordare modernă asupra metodologiei unei lucrări pe un subiect atât de discutat: O încercare de a realiza o fuziune a curentelor istorice și arheologice vestice, dominate de abordări holistice, psiho-culturale și post-procesualiste, cu evoluția istoriografică estică, ce păstrează un puternic caracter positivist cu un interes ridicat asupra lucrărilor de inventariere și tipologizare, ce după spusele autorului prezintă în continuare o metodologie și perspectivă colonialistă, bazată pe dihotomii și analize prin cercetări comparative. Astfel, lucrarea de față se axează atât pe concepte vestice cum ar fi *glocalizarea*, *Ancient Lived Religion* și conceptele de arheologie spațială ale lui David Clark păstrând

adâncile legături sociale, economice și militarece definesc Provinciile Romane la nivel macro, meso și micro. Toate aceste categorii sunt susținute prin prezentarea amplelor inventare și surse primare catalogate în zona estică, prezentate de autor într-o manieră aproape poetică și incitantă, calități rar întâlnite într-o creație academică.

Explorând manifestării religioase cu caracter macro, meso și micro, Csaba Szabó ne conturează o lume dintr-o perspectivă rar utilizată de către istorici, anume a conviețuirii religioase și ritualice ce reflectă un mozaic cultural și social al provinciilor danubiene puternic individualizate. Un univers mitic dinamic grație importului și exportului de divinități se lasă observat într-un spațiu al sacrului ce dă naștere unor plurități de fenomene și manifestări religioase, culte obscure ce se desfășoară în privat sau banchete și ritualuri ce se hrănesc din energia a unei întregi comunități. Autorul reușește să rupă ritualul de cetatea omului și îl descoperă și în grotele, luminișurile și câmpurile acestor provincii în constantă schimbare, toate prezentate cu mult patos de către autor. Parcurgând lucrarea, ne sunt prezintate teritoriile provinciale ca având mai multe straturi în coexistență și în continuă relație, unde cultele prezente la nivel macro au o forță de influență ridicată și sunt deschide dialogului inter-socialși inițiază evenimente la scară mare,timp în care cultele meso-sau micro-sunt mai puțin afectate de schimbările administrative, militare sau sociale și se prezintă mai reticente față de contactul dinafara spațiului local, al inițiaților sau chiar o introvertire absolută prin cultele individuale. Astfel, istoria socialului și individualului apare pe plan principal, timp în care istoria geo-politică, a provinciilor, este folosită ca o ”schelă de susținere” a manifestării religioase, fiind în consecință pe plan secundar.

Lucrarea începe definirea fundației macro-regionale a componentor administrative bine explicate și schițate a le unui Imperiu în schimbare ca *Genius Portorii Ilyrici*, *Officium* roman, și suita *Collegium*-urilor ce-și lasă o puternică impresie prin grandoarea altarelor, băilor termale sau a pelerinajelor din spațiile intra / extra-muros, toate vorbind de o intensă deplasare de energie în contactul cu sacrul prin cultele lui Mithras, cultele solare și al geniilor, *Magna Mater* și *Neptunus*, cât și *Asclepius* și *Jupiter Maximus*. Cu o bază bine definită ce nu exclude manifestările mai restrânse, suntem invitați să intrăm în sferele *meso-spațiilor sacre*, identificate de Csaba drept o formă asemănătoare manifestărilor *macro* dar cu o accesibilitate, vizibilitate, densitate și cultură materială mai redusă. Aici ne sunt dezvăluite culte mai exotice, în spații închise sau zone mai lăturalnice dar tot în cadrul unui centru urban sau rural, cum este cel allui *Isis*, al șarpelui Glikon, variante glocale ale lui *Mithras*, Bacchusși *Artemis*, cât și deități autohtone, ca cel al *Domna et Domnus*. La nivelul cel mai intim, Csaba Szabo se lovește de probleme meta-istorice și al puținelor urme materiale descoperite, moment în care definiția

spațiului micro și încercarea de a prezenta doar exemple concrete prezintă o clară limitare în dezvoltarea subiectului. Acțiunea micro-impune legături intime și foarte individuale cu spațiul sacru, definită drept ”*Housing the Gods*” prin caracterul adesea direct de comunicare, al tatuajelor sau modificării corporale, al altarelor din spațiul casnic sau al podoabelor, cum este cazul cultului lui *Asclepeia*din Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, unde corpul bolnav este un element de comunicare cu sacrul pentru participanții ritualurilor, cât și al statuetelor cu rol ritualic casnic, ca cea al lui *Apollo*din Dacia Romană.

Un caracter special al acestei lucrări în contextul apariţiilor bibliografice recente este utilizarea unui „*arsenal*” complex de termeni și idei moderne cu rol atât în formearea unei baze metodologice solide și clare cititorilor, cât și impunându-se, spre speranța mea, cu rol de referință în implementarea noilor concepte și idei în studiul istoriei la nivel local. Astfel, întreaga lucrare este structurată pe o variantă proprie a conceptului de ”spațiu sacru” ce prezintă ideile lui Michel Foucault, Kim Knott și taxonomia spațiului de Peter Biehl și Francois Bertemes, unde Csaba împarte manifestările religioase după dimensiunea actului / materialității manifestării în ”Macro- / Meso- / Micro-spațiu”, element fundamental al acestei lucrări, analizele provinciilor fiind prezentate prin trinomul taxonomiei spațiului, în detrimentul împărțirii geografice. Un alt element esenţial este impactul *glocalizării romane* în spațiul Est-European, concept introdus în studiul societății romane în de către Ronald Robertson și David van Alten, unde religia poate fi văzută ca un sistem de comunicare cultural, și poatefi înțeleasă prin studii de comunicare și analiza contactelor grupurilor sociale. În cele din urmă, păstrând vie istoria socială și a individului, ne este introdusă ideea de *Lived Ancient Religion*, definit de Jörg Rüpke, ce explorează fațete inovative și adesea neglijate de studiul descriptiv arheologic sau al dihotomiei polis-sacru, cum ar fi aproprierile locale, individualismul religios, religie „în facere” și întruchipări specifice ale actului și prezenței sacrului. Astfel, Csaba ne prezintă o alternativă modernă a discursului istoric clasic pe care o consider mult mai relevantă și plăcută: identificarea și plasarea manifestărilor în cadrul unor grupuri distincte, ce prezintă într-un nivel macro (etnie, administraţie, culte imperiale) similarităţi dar analizând originea, pachetul cultural dobândit și în constantă schimbare, cât și contextul local și glocal, sunt entități sociale unice, a căror complexitate nu se poate rezuma la simple împărțiri de ordin administrativ, militar, al specializării și generalizări ale anumitor curente istoriografice de secol XX.

Conchizând, Csaba Szaboa creat o lucrare esenţială oricărui amator al istorieiromane și al artei sacrului, o lecturăplăcută atât unui public avizat / specializat, cât și tinerilor studenţi sau trecătoruluia cărui atenție a fost luată de frumoasa friză reprezentată pe copertă. *Roman Religion in the Danubian Provinces: Space Sacralisation and Religious Communication*

During the Principate (1st–3rd Century AD) este o carte excelentă, ce invită publicul să împrumute din pasiunea autorului prin paginile scrise cu patos de către Csaba, oferindu-le instrumentele necesare continuării studiului și după ce pun cartea în bibliotecă, poate chiar dezvoltându-le o pasiune ce depășește limitele unei lecturi ocazionale.

Colin Webster, *Tools and the Organism: Technology and the Body in Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine*, **Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2023, 320p., ISBN: 978-0-226-82877-0, ISBNe: 978-0-226-82878-7**

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Cartea intitulată „*Tools and the Organism: Technology and the Body in Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine,,* scrisă de Colin Webster este împărțită pe 6 capitole și are ca temă principală studiul relației dintre corpul uman și tehnologie în contextul medicinei din antichitatea greco-romană. Autorul explorează modul în care medicina din această perioadă a interpretat corpul uman, boala și diferitele metode utilizate în tratarea bolilor. Pentru a evidenția modul în care tehnologia și instrumentarul medical au influențat și au fost influențate de aceste teorii medicale, el își bazează cercetarea pe mai multe surse antice esențiale, precum scrierile lui Hippocrate, Galen și ale lui Plinius cel Bătrân. De asemenea, cartea oferă un context istoric din care se pot înțelege diferitele perspective asupra corpului uman și diversele problemele medicale din acea epocă. Lucrarea se concentrează pe modul în care aceste diferite perspective medicale au fost influențate de tehnologia și instrumentarul medical disponibil în perioada antichității greco-romane.

Autorul interpretează conceptul de tehnologie într-un sens larg, cuprinzând atât procesul de creare a lucrurilor, cât și rezultatul acestui proces. Această definiție poate cuprinde atât structuri fizice, cât și activități sau procese cum ar fi gătitul sau prepararea și amestecarea ierburilor. Toate aceste aspecte făceau parte din arsenalul experienței medicilor antici, care le utilizau pentru a ilustra sau a descrie fenomenele care aveau loc în corpul uman. Autorul sugerează o evoluție treptată a conceptelor despre corp, începând cu epoca lui Hippocrate. În privința compoziției organismului și a ceea ce se credea că acesta conține, el o vede ca pe o colecție de instrumente, termenul „*organa"* fiind utilizat pentru a desemna organele interne, o apariție inițială a acestui termen fiind atribuită lui Platon. Deși se acordă mai puțină atenție instrumentelor medicale specifice și modului în care acestea erau utilizate, se recunoaște totuși creșterea în complexitate a acestora de-a lungul timpului.

Primul capitol al cărții numit „Hippocrates and Technological Interfaces" se concentrează pe legătura dintre medicină și tehnologie în perioada lui Hippocrate și analizează modul în care acestea au interacționat și s-au influențat reciproc în antichitate. Webster introduce conceptul de „interfață tehnologică", prin care se referă la orice dispozitiv sau tehnologie care a fost folosită pentru a trata corpul uman. El descrie modul în care aceste interfețe tehnologice au jucat un rol important în dezvoltarea medicinei antice și au ajutat la îmbunătățirea eficienței și a preciziei tratamentelor medicale. În același timp, autorul subliniază importanța fundamentelor teoretice ale medicinii antice și impactul lor asupra dezvoltării interfețelor tehnologice. Mai departe, autorul discută despre teoria umorală a lui Hippocrate, care credea că sănătatea depindea de echilibrul dintre cele patru umori ale corpului uman (sânge, bilă galbenă, bilă neagră și flegmă). Autorul analizează modul în care această teorie a influențat dezvoltarea diferitelor tehnologii medicale din acea perioadă. O altă temă dezvoltată în această primă secțiune se referă la modul în care tehnologia a influențat abordarea ginecologică. Deși rolul femeii în medicina antică nu a fost întotdeauna recunoscut, unele dintre practicile ginecologice antice aveau la bază tehnologii inovatoare care au jucat un rol important în îmbunătățirea sănătății femeilor. În cadrul capitolului, Webster concluzionează că tehnologia și medicina din antichitatea greco-romană erau interdependente și că dezvoltarea lor a fost influențată de o varietate de factori, cum ar fi stadiul de dezvoltare a cunoștințelor medicale, accesibilitatea materialelor și resurselor tehnologice și nevoile specifice ale pacienților în cauză.

În al doilea capitol, intitulat „The Origins of the Organism", atenția se îndreaptă către modul în care medicina antică a început să adopte conceptul de organism și impactul acestuia asupra evoluției tehnologiilor medicale. Webster examinează modul în care, în Grecia antică, medicina se concentra inițial pe tratarea diferitelor simptome ale corpului uman, fără a distinge bolile ca entități separate. Autorul urmărește modul în care concepția de organism a început să se contureze odată cu apariția filosofilor Presocratici și cum s-a dezvoltat ulterior odată cu lucrările lui Empedocle și a altor teoreticieni antici. Se analizează evoluția instrumentelor și tehnologiilor medicale în paralel cu aceste teorii. Webster explică cum acest concept de organism a influențat dezvoltarea procedurilor medicale, de exemplu operațiile chirurgicale și examinarea sângelui și a urinei. De asemenea, se discută despre impactul acestei concepții asupra înțelegerii corpului uman ca întreg, facilitând astfel dezvoltarea unor tehnologii medicale mai precise și eficiente, precum instrumentele chirurgicale specializate pentru diferite părți ale corpului. Autorul

explorează, totodată, influența altor discipline, cum ar fi filosofia și științele naturale, asupra evoluției tehnologiilor medicale din acea perioadă, ajungând în final la concluzia că dezvoltarea conceptului de organism care au reprezentat un punct de cotitură important în istoria medicinei greco-romane, conducând la dezvoltarea unor instrumente și proceduri medicale mai complexe și mai precis orientate către tratarea bolilor în ansamblul lor, nu doar a simptomelor. Astfel, acest capitol oferă o analiză detaliată a influenței conceptului de organism asupra evoluției medicinei și tehnologiilor medicale în lumea antică, reprezentând o contribuție semnificativă la înțelegerea istoriei medicinei și științelor.

În cel de-al treilea capitol, „Aristotle and the Emergence of the Organism" autorul se focalizează pe lucrările lui Aristotel legate de concepțiile sale referitoare la natura și structura organismelor vii. Este expusă perspectiva lui Aristotel referitoare la partea cea mai importantă, dar invizibilă și nedetectabilă a ființelor vii - sufletul. Aristotel credea că sufletul este responsabil pentru toate funcțiile unui organism și că există trei tipuri de suflet: vegetativ, animalic și uman. El credea, totodată, că totalitatea organismului diferă de totalitatea componentelor sale, ceea ce a dus la posibilitatea de a descrie corpul ca un sistem sinergic.

Cel de-al patrulea capitol „The Rise of the Organism in the Hellenistic Period" se referă la importanța perioadei elenistice, care a reprezentat un moment de dezvoltare a medicinei și a științei antice, perioadă în care anatomia, abordarea organismelor și cercetarea corpului uman și a bolilor acestuia au început să se dezvolte într-un mod mai complex. Autorul descrie o serie de personalități ale perioadei elenistice care și-au adus contribuția la dezvoltarea medicinii și a anatomiei. Printre aceștia se numără și Herophilus din Calcedon, despre care Webster arată că a introdus disecția corpului uman ca metodă de cercetare științifică. Acesta a ajutat la dezvoltarea anatomiei, iar unele dintre descoperirile sale au rămas valabile pentru o lungă perioadă de timp. Alți scriitori importanți, prezentați de autor, sunt Galen și Erasistratus.

Pe lângă acestea, se discută despre titlul de medic și igiena publică practicată în perioada romană. Acest capitol dezvăluie cum cercetarea corpului uman a generat bazele pentru dezvoltarea uneia dintre cele mai importante științe moderne - medicina.

În cel de-al cincelea capitol „The Organism and Its Alternatives" sunt examinate alternativele la conceptul de organism în medicina greco-romană și dezvoltarea de tratamente bazate pe simptome. Autorul analizează ideea post-Erasistrateană privind organele anatomice individuale și modul în care a fost respinsă și dezvoltată de alți medici, precum Asclepiades of

Bithynia. Aceștia au dezvoltat în locul organismului unitar o viziune diferită, bazată pe modularitatea corpului omenesc, și au încurajat dezvoltarea unor metode de tratament diferite. De asemenea, este prezentat cum a fost dezvoltată o medicină empirică, care se concentra pe simptomele bolii și nu pe cauzele acesteia, și cum a fost influențat modul de abordare a bolilor în medicina greco-romană. Se discută despre tratamentele bazate pe așa-numita „tehnică a respirației." Aceasta era un tip de terapie centrată pe utilizarea de apă și aer pentru a trata boli, și a fost dezvoltată în special de Erasistratus din Ceos.

Ultimul capitol, „Galen and the Technologies of the Vitalist Organism" examinează contribuția lui Galen la înțelegerea corpului uman și abordarea sa. Autorul explică cum Galen a fost influențat de ideile lui Hippocrate, dar și de alții filozofi, cum ar fi Platon și Aristotel. Galen este descris de autor ca o personalitate cu o vastă cultură și un interes neobișnuit de larg în diferite domenii de cunoaștere. Webster analizează modul în care Galen a abordat corpul uman, întocmind descrieri ale diferitelor componente ale corpului, și a construit un model detaliat de funcționare a corpului omenesc. Acesta a considerat corpul uman ca un organism vitalist, care funcționează ca o unitate organică integrată și a accentuat importanța funcționării corecte a diferitelor componentele ale corpului pentru menținerea sănătății. Autorul subliniază, de asemenea, ideea lui Galen despre căile naturale de vindecare, considerate ca fiind cele mai bune pentru înlăturarea bolilor în antichitate, dar și despre practica vânătăilor – o tehnică de tratament care a consta în provocarea vânătăilor pacientului cu scopul rezolvării problemei pacientului.

Consider că lucrarea „Tools and the Organism: Technology and the Body in Ancient Greek and Roman Medicine" de Colin Webster oferă o analiză amplă și interdisciplinară a relației dintre corpul uman, medicină și tehnologie în contextul antichității greco-romane. Împărțită pe șase capitole, lucrarea explorează modul în care medicina din această perioadă a interpretat corpul uman și bolile sale, evidențiind influența tehnologiei și a instrumentarului medical asupra evoluției acesteia. Autorul se bazează pe surse antice esențiale, precum scrierile lui Hippocrate, Galen și ale lui Plinius cel Bătrân, pentru a oferi o perspectivă amplă asupra acestui domeniu. Fiecare capitol explorează o temă specifică, cum ar fi rolul interfețelor tehnologice în medicina lui Hippocrate, dezvoltarea conceptului de organism sau alternativele la acesta în perioada post-Erasistrateană. Se subliniază importanța perioadei elenistice în evoluția medicinei și a științei, evidențiind contribuțiile unor personalități precum Herophilus și Galen. În final, autorul evidențiază contribuția lui Galen la înțelegerea corpului uman și abordarea sa

integrală. El analizează conceptul de organism vitalist și susține importanța căilor naturale de vindecare promovate de Galen.

Prin urmare, cartea oferă o perspectivă cuprinzătoare asupra relației complexe dintre medicină, tehnologie și filozofie în antichitatea greco-romană, oferind o contribuție semnificativă la înțelegerea istoriei medicinei și științelor.

Toby Wilkinson, *Ramesses the Great: Egypt's King of Kings,* New Haven (CU)-Londra, Yale University Press, 2023, 240 p., ISBN 978-0-300-25665-9

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În cadrul acestei recenzii mi-am propus să fac o prezentare și o analiză extrem de detaliată a recentei lucrări scrisă de către egiptologul Toby Wilkinson numită *Ramesses the Great: Egypt's King of Kings*, aceasta este o lucrare de excepție în care autorul își propune să prezintă foarte amănunțit domnia cunoscutului faraon Ramses al II-lea din perioada Regatului Nou a Egiptului Antic, dar înainte de a trece și a face recenzia propriu zisă a cărții aș dori mai întâi să ofer câteva informații esențiale despre autorul și structura acestei cărți. Lucrarea aceasta a fost publicată la Editura Yale University Press și a apărut destul de recent în anul 2023, iar în ceea ce privește structura ei trebuie spus că aceasta este alcătuită din 240 de pagini și este împărțită într-o introducere, cinci capitole care la rândul lor sunt împărțite în alte subcapitole, genealogie, note de subsol, bibliografie și index. În privința autorului trebuie menționat faptul că Toby Wilkinson este un renumit egiptolog și academician britanic ale cărui lucrări sunt complet esențiale pentru studierea istoriei Egiptului Antic.

Principalul scop al acestei lucrări așa cum dorește să se sugere încă din titlul acesteia este să prezintă o imagine de ansamblu a ceea ce a reprezentat cu adevărat atât pentru Egiptul Antic cât și pentru continuitate domnia regelui Ramses al II-lea care în timp a ajuns să capete și apelativul „cel Mare". În introducerea cărții, autorul prezintă principalele motive pentru care a ales să scrie această carte despre Ramses al II-lea și încearcă să ofere niște răspunsuri posibile la întrebarea de ce faraonul Ramses al II-lea a fost singurul faraon din istoria Egiptului Antic care a purtat și titlul de Ramses cel Mare.

Primul capitol al cărții este împărțit în patru subcapitole și este dedicat mai ales evenimentelor premergătoare care au dus la ascensiunea lui Ramses la tronul Egiptului. Totul începând astfel cu moartea regelui Tutankhamon, care neavând urmași masculini direcți la tronul Egiptului a produs o succesiune la conducere mai întâi a regelui Ay și mai târziu al lui Horemheb. Aceasta din urmă fiind comandantul armatei egiptene antice, a avut posibilitatea să-l numească ca succesor pentru tron la finalul domniei sale pe un alt oficial important al armatei și anume pe Paramses cunoscut și sub numele său de monarh de Ramses I cel care avea să pună bazele cunoscutei dinastii Ramesside care a fost una dintre cele mai importante dinastii ale Egiptului Antic și din care face parte și regele Ramses al II-lea.

Al doilea capitol care este alcătuit din trei subcapitole, Wilkinson decide să îl dedice conflictului care a existat între Egipt și Regatul Hitit și care a constituit un punct culminat în lunga domnie a regelui Ramses al II-lea. Conflictul dintre hitiți și egipteni a căpătat în timpul lui Ramses al II-lea o dimensiunea atât de mare încât a dus în mod inevitabil în anul 1274 î.Hr la Bătălia de la Kadesh. Deși bătălia de la Kadesh a fost prezentată de către propaganda lui Ramses al II-lea ca fiind o mare victorie a egiptenilor asupra hitiților, totuși rezultatul acesteia nu a fost unul decisiv pentru niciuna dintre cele două părți beligerante. Chiar dacă nu a fost o victorie realmente pentru egipteni, bătălia aceastӑ a pregătit calea lui Ramses spre un triumf diplomatic rezultat cu semnarea tratatului de pace din anul 1259 î.Hr și stabilitatea unei alianțe benefice între cele două regate.

În al treilea capitol alcătuit din două subcapitole, autorul prezintă realizările regelui Ramses al II-lea în plan cultural și arhitectural. Ca și orice alt monarh distins aceasta a ales să se remarce nu numai pe plan politic și militar, dar și pe plan cultural unde a decis construirea de noi temple și construcții la Karnak și Abydos, dar dintre toate acestea cel mai important rămâne templul de la Abu Simbel care reprezintă una dintre cele mai remarcabile construcții din timpul domniei sale. O altă construcție impunătoare pe care Ramses al II-lea a decis să o realizeze și care merită o atenție sporită este templul mortuar de la Ramesseum situat în necropola tebană din Egiptul de Sus, la vest de râul Nil vizavi de actualul oraș modern Luxor. Totodată Ramses al II-lea a decis să construiască și un nou oraș Pi-Ramses care avea să fie capitala Egiptului în timpul domniei sale și care avea să aibă și un rol militar în eventualitatea unui posibil conflict care avea să urmeze cu hitiți.

În penultimul capitol alcătuit tot din două subcapitole, sunt arătate aspecte din viața personală al lui Ramses al II-lea, atât modul cum a ales să se legitimeze ca monarh dar și relațiile sale intime. În privința modului cum a ales Ramses al II-lea să se legitimeze aceasta a făcut-o prin realizarea mai multor liste regale precum lista regală de la Saqqara sau canonul regal din Torino care conțin numele tuturor regilor egipteni până la Ramses al II-lea. Prin acest mod Ramses și-a câștigat oficial legitimitatea în fața supușilor săi dar și împotriva oricărui putea să îi conteste domnia. În legătură cu relațiile intime trebuie remarcat următorul fapt și anume că Ramses s-a evidențiat foarte mult în acest domeniu având foarte multe soții unele dintre ele foarte cunoscute precum regina Nefertari sau prințesa hitită Maathorneferure, dar și mulți copii așa cum a fost dovedit de sursele istorice care s-au păstrat.

Ultimul capitol alcătuit la rândul lui tot din două subcapitole este dedicat atât concluziilor dar și modului cum a fost receptată domnia regelui Ramses al II-lea atât de către contemporani antici ai lui Ramses și urmași acestuia dar și de oamenii contemporani. Astfel ca

și în cazul celorlalți predecesori ai săi, și Ramses al II-lea a fost preocupat de chestiunea vieții de apoi motiv pentru care a hotărât încă de la începutul domniei sale construirea propriului său mormânt în Valea Regilor. Chiar și după ce decesul și ceremonia funerară a acestuia au avut loc, din cauza evenimentelor care au urmat trupul regelui nu a fost lăsat în pace, în timpul dinastiei a 21-a aceasta a fost mutat într-o grotă alături de mumiile altor regi egipteni și a fost descoperit în anul 1881. În anul 1975 trupul mumiei lui Ramses a intrat în contact cu o ciupercă care risca să o distrugă în întregime drept pentru care a fost nevoie de trimeterea acesteia în Franța pentru a rezolva problema.

Deși mumia regelui Ramses al II-lea nu a putut încă în totalitate să beneficieze de odihna veșnică totuși fiind vorba de un faraon cu o domnie foarte lungă și cu multe realizări este destul de clar ca această a ajuns să reprezintă o figură importantă a Vechiului Egipt dar și un model veritabil pentru următoarele generații de succesori la tronul Egiptului. Drept dovadă în acest sens constă în faptul că regii care au urmat după moartea lui Ramses al II-lea au încercat să îl imite într-un totul pe aceasta, fie prin adoptarea unei titulaturii identice sau asemănătoare pe care Ramses a avut-o fie să încerce să îi egaleze realizările sale. Domnia lui Ramses al II-lea a dus și la inspirarea și crearea atât de opere de literatură de ficțiune dar și de filme și multe altele în care acest faraon se află în prim plan.

Lucrarea în sine este una destul de remarcabilă, mai ales modul cum autorul ajunge să se raporteze la domnia lui Ramses al II-lea reușind prin acest lucru să sintetizeze anii lungi de domnie pe care acest faraon i-a avut. Per total autorul aduce suficiente dovezi și argumente care întăresc și mai mult motivul pentru care lui Ramses al II-lea i s-a acordat apelativul „cel Mare”. Ca și principale argumente sunt aduse în discuția durata domniei sale care a fost foarte lungă și care intră în contrast cu speranța de viață care exista atunci în Egiptul Antic și care nu depășea 30-40 de ani, dar și realizările sale pe plan politic și militar și construcțiile înfăptuite de aceasta. Cartea prezintă și unele dezavantaje prin faptul că acoperă un pic cam prea succint unele evenimente din domnia acestui rege dar și relațiile intime pe care Ramses le-a avut. Totuși fiind o lucrare scrisă de către un egiptolog important precum Toby Wilkinson care se ocupă cu cercetarea amănunțită a sursele egiptene antice, aceasta poate să ajute la crearea unei noi viziuni a cine a fost și a ce a reprezentat mai exact pentru egipteni antici regele Ramses al II-lea.

În concluzie lucrarea *Ramesses the Great: Egypt's King of Kings* scrisă de Toby Wilkinson reprezintă o lucrare complet esențiale pentru oricine care vrea să studieze istoria regelui Ramses al II-lea a cărei conducere și-a lăsat o amprentă fundamentală asupra Egiptului din toate punctele de vedere atât în plan politic și militar când Egiptul atinge apogeul puterii sale în relația cu celelalte state din Orient Apropiat, dar și în plan cultural datorită numărului

foarte de mare de construcții realizate de aceasta și care au constituit și un model pentru succesori care i-au succedat la tronul Egiptului.

Marechal Sadi, *Bathing at the Edge of the Empire. Roman Baths and Bathing Habits in the North-Westerm Corner of Continental Europe*, **The Archeology of Northern Europe (vol. 2), Turnout, Belgium, Brepols Publishers, 2023., 304 p., ISBN: 978-2-503-60066-6, eISBN: 978-2-503-60067-3, doi: 10.1484/M.TANE-EB.5.129940**

Cătălin UDEANU

Universitatea din București

Sadi Marechal este un istoric belgian care a studiat arheologia la Universitatea din Ghent, fiind specializat în arheologie mediteraneeană romană. Disertația acestuia pentru studiile de masterat s-a axat pe studierea băilor romane existente în Peninsula Iberică. Acesta și-a continuat studiile în aceeași arie de cercetare, urmând studiile doctorale la Universitatea din Ghent (2012 - 2016) și pe cele post-doctorale în intervalele 2018 - 2022 și 2022 - 2025, în cadrul aceleiași instituții de învățământ superior. Este membru al grupurilor de cercetare ARCHAEO - Archaeology, GCLA - Ghent Centre for Late Antiquity, GIKS - Ghent Institute of Classical Studies. În prezent ocupă un post de asistent pentru Arheologie Provincială Romană și Arheologie Mediteraneeană Romană.[1]

În lucrarea *Bathing at the Edge of the Empire. Baths and Bathing Habits in the North-Western of Continental Europe*, publicată ca al doilea volum din seria *The Archeology of Northern Europe*, Sadi Marechal studiază băile romane aflate la periferia nord-vestică a Imperiului Roman, motivând că, până în prezent, acestea nu au primit atenția cuvenită din partea cercetătorilor. Istoricul belgian și-a propus verificarea mai multor ipoteze care să clarifice impactul acestor edificii asupra obiceiurilor populațiilor indigene care au luat contact cu civilizația romană, distribuția acestor construcții la nivelul ariei studiate (Marechal și-a propus să verifice dacă aceste construcții au apărut numai în mediul urban sau există alte modele de distribuție geografică) sau impactul societăților locale asupra arhitecturii, elementelor decorative, aspectelor tehnice ale băilor romane. Lucrarea este cu atât mai interesantă cu cât autorul a menționat că *„până acum, nu a existat o prezentare generală a băilor romane în această parte a Europei. Mai mult decât atât, constatăm o creştere*

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[1] Dr. Sadi Marechal, https://research.flw.ugent.be/en/sadi.marechal

importantă atât în ceea ce privește cantitatea cât și calitatea datelor arheologice, în ultimii 30 de ani."[2]

În *„Bathing at the Edge of the Roman Empire"*, Sadi Marechal explorează complexitatea băilor romane și a obiceiurilor asociate băii în colțul de nord-vest al Europei continentale, o regiune adesea considerată periferică în contextul Imperiului Roman. Prin această lucrare, Marechal nu doar că adaugă o nouă dimensiune la înțelegerea noastră a vieții cotidiene romane, dar oferă și o perspectivă detaliată asupra modului în care cultura romană a influențat și a fost adoptată de populațiile locale. Autorul își propune să arate cum băile romane, ca simboluri ale avansului tehnologic și arhitectural roman, au fost adoptate și adaptate într-o regiune îndepărtată a imperiului.

Lucrarea se bazează pe o abordare metodologică riguroasă, combinând analiza arheologică detaliată cu sinteza istorică. Sadi Marechal a compilat un catalog impresionant de băi romane din regiune, utilizând date provenite din săpături arheologice și studii anterioare. Această abordare polifocală permite autorului să ofere o imagine cuprinzătoare asupra subiectului, evidențiind varietatea și complexitatea fenomenului balnear roman în nord-vestul Europei.

Cartea este structurată într-un mod care facilitează înțelegerea treptată a subiectului, începând cu o introducere generală, urmată de capitole dedicate cercetării anterioare, arhitecturii băilor, tehnologiei, materialelor de construcție și decorațiunilor, relația dintre băi și societate și, în cele din urmă, concluzii.

În capitolul I, intitulat *Băile comunale - un fenomen roman?*, Sadi Marechal oferă o introducere în istoria băilor publice romane. Acesta menționează că nu intenționează să prezinte evoluția generală a fenomenului, ci să evidențieze anumite aspecte importante ale culturii băilor, necesare pentru înțelegerea fenomenului și contextualizarea acestuia în provinciile romane. Autorul alege să discute astfel 5 elemente esențiale: geneza băilor romane, motivele care au stat la baza popularizării băilor și îmbăierii, linia neclară care delimitează băile publice de cele private, cazul special al băilor termale și răspândirea acestora la nivelul imperiului.

Capitolul al II-lea, denumit *Cercetări anterioare asupra băilor romane în Nord-Vest*, prezintă o cercetare amănunțită a băilor romane existente în nord-vestul imperiului. Autorul alege împărțirea acestuia în subcapitole, prezentând istoricul cercetării acestora - primele

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[2] Marechal Sadi, *Bathing at the Edge of the Empire. Roman Baths and Bathing Habits in the North-Westerm Corner of Continental Europe*, The Archeology of Northern Europe (vol. 2), Editori Paul S. Johnson și Sam Turner, Editura Brepols Publishers n.v., Turnout, Belgium, 2023, p. 19.

săpături arheologice efectuate, intervențiile pentru salvarea și conservarea monumentelor și săpăturile contractuale, având ca scop explicarea modului în care băile romane din zona analizată au fost integrate în contextul general al băilor publice.

În Capitolul al III-lea, intitulat *Nord-Vestul continental roman, un loc gol pentru băi?*, se concentrează asupra echilibrului existent între băile private și cele publice în zona studiată și răspândirea acestora la nivelul celor trei administrații romane existente în acel spațiu. Autorul subliniază faptul că în contextul băilor din mediul rural, precum cele aparținând vilelor, analiza acestuia are două dimensiuni: una axată pe studierea factorilor naturali (sol, relief, surse de apă) și una axată pe cercetarea factorilor antropici (drumuri, așezări umane).

Capitolul al IV-lea, numit *Arhitectura băilor*, este dedicat cercetării, de o manieră clasică, a fenomenului băilor romane, prin prisma arhitecturii acestora, în regiunea studiată. Sadi Marechal investighează tipologia planurilor, dimensiunea, diferitele camere ce compuneau ansamblul unei băi romane, făcând astfel distincția între băile publice și băile private. Capitolul este construit pe baza datelor arhitecturale existente și reexaminarea planurilor incluse de către autor la finalul lucrării, în *Catalog*. Sadi Marechal precizează că, pe lângă oferirea unei sinteze a informației indexate, capitolul își propune să realizeze o comparație între stilul roman și cultura băilor existentă în bazinul mediteraneean.

În Capitolul al V-lea, intitulat *Tehnologia băilor*, autorul analizează tehnologia din spatele băii romane, descriind în detaliu sistemul de funcționare al acesteia. El dedică mai multe subcapitole sistemului de încălzire, hypocaustul, încălzirea pereților, alimentarea cu apă, eliminarea apelor uzate, menținând totodată distincția între băile publice și cele private. În ceea ce privește arhitectura, informațiile referitoare la băile romane, structurate la finalul cărții, sunt comparate cu tehnologia de construire utilizată de către romani în zona mediteraneeană a imperiului.

Capitolul al VI-lea, denumit *Materiale de construcții și decorațiuni*, este dedicat elementelor structurale utilizate de romani pentru edificarea băilor, precum și elementelor de design utilizate de aceștia. Autorul a divizat efortul de cercetare în mai multe subcapitole, analizând, pe rând, diferitele tipuri de piatră folosite, elementele ceramice specifice băilor, marmura și alte materiale cu rol decorativ, mozaicuri, fresce și alte elemente destinate înfrumusețării construcțiilor.

În Capitolul al VII-lea, numit *Băile și societatea*, încorporează rezultatele prezentate în capitolele anterioare, cu scopul de a analiza implicațiile socio-culturale și societale ale introducerii băilor în aria studiată. De asemenea, capitolul este structurat în subcapitole, fiecare dintre ele prezentând faza inițială a introducerii băilor, ideile clasice cu privire la sănătatea

corpului uman, aspectul acestuia, idei ce au migrat alături de băile romane, pe măsură ce aceste obiceiuri au fost adoptate de elitele romane, dar și modul în care accesibilitatea în cadrul băilor relevă schimbările culturale și excluziunea socială.

Una dintre cele mai importante contribuții ale lucrării este demonstrarea modului în care băile romane au servit ca mijloc de romanizare, dar, în același timp, modul în care practicile locale au influențat utilizarea și designul acestora. Istoricul belgian evidențiază adaptabilitatea și flexibilitatea culturii romane, precum și interacțiunea dintre cultura romană și cele autohtone. În plus, detalierea tehnologică și arhitecturală oferită în carte adaugă o nouă dimensiune înțelegerii noastre asupra inovațiilor romane în construcția și gestionarea spațiilor publice.

Prin investigația sa meticuloasă, autorul nu doar că documentează arhitectura băilor romane și tehnologiile aferente, ci, de asemenea, aduce în discuție materialul de construcție și decorațiunile, subliniind nu doar aspectele funcționale, ci și pe cele estetice și simbolice ale acestor spații. Cartea evidențiază rolul central al băilor în societatea romană, nu doar ca locuri de purificare fizică, dar și ca spații sociale vitale, puncte de întâlnire unde se întrețineau relații, se făceau afaceri și se discutau evenimentele zilei.

Marechal extinde cercetarea dincolo de simplele structuri, abordând modul în care băile și practicile de baie ilustrează interacțiunile dintre sfera culturală romană și cele autohtone. Această perspectivă contribuie semnificativ la înțelegerea proceselor de romanizare și a dinamicii puterii în provinciile Imperiului, evidențiind cum elemente ale culturii și vieții cotidiene romane au fost adoptate, adaptate sau chiar rezistate de populațiile locale.

Pe lângă aportul teoretic și metodologic, *Bathing at the Edge of the Roman Empire* servește și ca un catalog valoros, oferind detalii precise despre diferitele situri arheologice examinate, ceea ce îl face o resursă indispensabilă pentru cercetători, studenți și oricine este interesat de arheologia romană sau de istoria vieții cotidiene în antichitate.

În concluzie, cartea lui Sadi Marechal nu este doar o impresionantă realizare academică, ci și o poveste captivantă despre cum spațiile și practicile de baie din Imperiul Roman nord-vestic reflectă complexitatea vieții într-o lume în schimbare. Prin această lucrare, Marechal contribuie semnificativ la înțelegerea noastră a trecutului și a modului în care obiecte și practici aparent banale pot oferi perspective profunde asupra structurii sociale, culturale și politice a unei epoci. „Bathing at the Edge of the Roman Empire" este o lucrare esențială pentru oricine este interesat de arheologia romană, istoria tehnologiei, sau studiul interacțiunilor culturale în Imperiul Roman.

Cronica activității Centrului de Istorie Comparată a Societăților Antice – 2024

Florica (Bohîlțea) Mihuț

16 Februarie 2024 – lansare de carte (colaborare cu Muzeul Municipiului București) – Alexandru Barnea, *Omnia mea uobis*, 2 vol., București, Editura Universității din București.

27 martie 2024 – conferință susținută de dr. Matthew Fox, profesor de Studii Clasice la School of Humanities, University of Glasgow, UK, intitulată *Statues and Self-Realisation: a classical effect on protagonists in 19th and 20th century fiction and cinema*

Sesiunea anuală – 19-20 aprilie 2024

- *Habitatul uman din Preistorie în Antichitatea Târzie – analize și interpretări*
- 18 comunicări realizate de 25 de autori afiliați la Universitatea din București; ICEM ”Gavrilă Simion”, Tulcea; Institutul de Arheologie ”V. Pârvan”, București; Institutul de Cercetări Socio-Umane „C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” din Craiova, al Academiei Române; Institutul de Antropologie Fizică ”Fr. Rainer”, București.