

Lower Mureș Valley in the Mid-3rd Century A.D. In the Light of Numismatic Finds

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THE PRESENT study¹ proposes to highlight some politico-economic aspects concerning the Lower Mureș Valley in the age of military anarchy that affected the Roman Empire, on the basis of monetary circulation. The Mureș River is the biggest (left-side) tributary of the Tisza, flowing into it near the town of Szeged, in Hungary.

The discussed area, namely the lower valley of the Mureș River, lies between Săvârșin and Szeged. For a better understanding of the subject, apart from the Lower Mureș Valley, we tried to analyze the coin finds in the neighboring regions, such as the valley of the Crișul Alb river. Given the lack of roads and the depopulation of the area situated to the south, we have not discussed this region.

As it is well known, the geographic boundaries of a region continuously change. Consequently, it would be a great interpretational error to associate actual geographic factors with ancient ones.

A possible image of the region is described by István Ferenczi: “From the actual town of Mukachevo (in Subcarpathian Ukraine) and to the present-day capital of Yugoslavia, water flooded the banks for whole months not only along the Tisza but also on the lower course of all its Carpathian tributaries. Only well into dry summers did watercourses return to their beds, leaving behind vast swamps during the whole year.”²

The analyzed territory is bordered (east and west) by the Roman *castrum* of Micia³ (Vețel) and the ancient settlement of Partiscum (Szeged). This territory constituted a buffer zone between Pannonia and Dacia, an area controlled by the Sar-

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matian Iazyges, a barbarian population who could turn the scales in favor or against the Roman Empire according to their own interests. The road passing through the Mureş Valley was controlled by the Romans, as the stamps of Legio XIII Gemina and the discovery of Roman artifacts in stratigraphic contexts demonstrate.

The western border of Roman Dacia has been much debated. There is no need for us to reopen this discussion; we only mention that the investigated area (the Lower Mureş Valley) was outside the Roman province. Here Dacians and Sarmatian Iazyges continued to live in freedom.

The discovered artifacts confirm the affirmation according to which the western region remained a contact area between Pannonia and Dacia. Archaeological finds, greatly accidental, demonstrate that these western barbarians borrowed some elements from the Romans, especially in terms of material culture.

The Romans exercised their control over the Lower Mureş Valley because the road which connected Apulum and Micia to Partiscum passed through here. This is confirmed by the presence of stamped bricks of Legio XIII Gemina,⁴ a legion which was stationed in Dacia and had its headquarters in Apulum.

Coinage, by its characteristic nature, was meant to be a circulating value, constituting an extremely important source for the analysis of the economic, social, political, and cultural life of human society. Therefore the discovery and interpretation of the Roman numismatic material in this contact area may result in an additional proof of its importance for the Roman world.

The year 166 marked the beginning of the most difficult period of the Empire. The Marcomannic Wars began because of the “conspiracy” of all the peoples from Illirycum to Gaul, involving, apart from the Iazyges, the Quadi, Lacringi, Buri, Roxolani, Costoboci, and others.⁵

Vast territories in Dacia were affected by the Marcomannic Wars beginning with the second half of the year 167, both in Dacia Porolissensis and in the centre of the Transylvanian region. Porolissum failed to stop the invasion, its two fortifications suffering damages.⁶ From the west the barbarian tribes made their way toward the gold-rich areas. The inhabitants of Alburnus Maior hid their documents—wax tablets—in the galleries of the gold mines (the last tablet bears the date 29 May 167).⁷ Damages caused by invasions were observed at Apulum⁸ and mainly at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa⁹ and Tibiscum.¹⁰

In the year 168 Legio V Macedonica was transferred to Potaissa, Dacia, as one of the measures aimed at the strenghtening of the provinces (other such measures were the creation of some new legions such as II Italica and III Italica, positioned near the Danube).¹¹

The Marcomannic Wars greatly affected the Danube provinces, especially Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Inferior.¹² The tragic situation there influenced the commerce and this is mirrored in the coin finds.

In order to highlight this aspect we compiled a catalogue of coin finds, both of isolated items and of hoards (see Appendix 1 and 2).

The first chronological period comprises the Hadrian interval¹³—the Marcomannic Wars. The analysis of the catalogue of isolated coin finds reveals that 9 items of the material originate from as late as the Marcomannic Wars (the coins are from Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus or the members of the imperial family).¹⁴ In three settlements we do not have later finds (Deszk, Dezna, Firiteaz), in two settlements the oldest coins are only from the reign of Philip the Arab (Chisindia and Lipova), in three only from the time of Gallienus or Aurelian (Cenad, Ineu, Pecica) and in one from the Constantinian age (Kisszombor).

Coin finds are quite numerous, the coins probably resulting from military pay. Being a border zone of commercial exchanges, large amounts good quality coins entered this region.¹⁵ We may also observe that, as a rule, finds from the age of Hadrian and Antonius Pius originate from the same sites. Nevertheless, we must consider the fact that the coins of the two emperors found here could also have circulated during the reign of Marcus Aurelius or his son, Commodus, being good quality coins.

In general, in Commodus' time few coins were minted and economic recovery did not take place. Therefore older coins were circulated.

The second chronological period lasts from Caracalla to Philip the Arab.

Coins of Caracalla, Elagabalus, Severus Alexander, and Maximinus Thrax were found in at least two sites and it is interesting that they appear in a locality where so far none have been found (Bocsig).¹⁶ Therefore a new settlement may have been founded there (the coins were struck for the members of the imperial family).

The economic crisis began with the Severan dynasty, although Septimus Severus followed a powerful policy of restoring the Empire. The numismatic finds from his reign are even fewer than from the time of Commodus,¹⁷ but this observation can be misleading. It may be explained by the fact that the barbaric world avoided new coins and circulated older ones for a longer time, even though, beginning with the 3rd century, several mints were opened in the entire Empire (because of practical necessities).¹⁸

The military anarchy starting in 235 with the reign of Maximinus Thrax brought several economic and financial changes. The financial problem was not a novelty, but the general situation in the Empire made it acute. Because of the barbarian attacks the number of legions reached 34 in the year 238 and the number of officials was continuously rising. As a result state expenditure increased. The state needing more money, taxes were raised but whole regions could not pay, having been ravaged by barbarian attacks.¹⁹

We have little information on the wars waged by Maximinus Thrax against the free Dacians and at the present stage of research the theatre of war is impossible to locate with precision. Opinions have been expressed that the military operations took place north and north-east of Dacia, while some specialists argue for the western and northern territories of the province.²⁰ If we accept the second alternative, we can state that the disturbances in the region affected commercial relationships and monetary circulation as compared to the previous period.

Stricken by the military anarchy and the crisis in the Empire, the coinage continuously depreciated. Beginning with 238 the antoninianus came back and spread in the whole Empire, but the emperors were constrained to lessen the quantity of noble metal in the coins. The monetary system introduced by Augustus was gradually dying.²¹

From Gordian's reign only one coin was found (Sâmpetru German).

During the rule of Philip the Arab (244–249) took place the grand attack of the Carpi, when the province of Dacia suffered as greatly as during the Marcomannic Wars.²² After defeating the Carpi, Philip the Arab supported the reconstruction of Dacia by different means, refortifying some localities in 248. This reconstruction can be observed also in the economic relations in the part of the Barbaricum taken into consideration now, since the number of isolated finds from this era, as compared to the previous reigns, is higher. It can also be perceived that the sites where coins were discovered tend to be closer to the border of the province of Dacia,²³ which shows that the relationship between the barbarians and the province had changed.

For a general view on the area the numismatic treasures are greatly useful. They constitute important sources of information on the economic life and the social structure; they prove the existence of an economy based on the monetary system both within and outside the province of Dacia. This economy was an integral part of the Roman Empire's economy, going through the same periods of prosperity and decline.²⁴

The region between Dacia and Pannonia was inhabited by a conglomerate of ethnic groups, therefore only rarely and with great difficulty can we distinguish between the Dacian and Sarmatian settlements. Although outside the Roman territory, the inhabitants were deeply rooted in the economic and political life of the Empire, for they were often the allies or enemies of Rome.

This state of things can be observed also by analyzing the numismatic finds in the area. The treasures bear witness to the fact that from time to time the relationship between them deteriorated or a new enemy appeared in the region, which forced the inhabitants to bury their wealth hoping that the problem would be solved and life would resume its normal course, allowing them to enjoy their savings.

The shock caused by the Marcomannic Wars is mirrored in the hoards found at Caporal Alexa, Covăsânț and Kiszombor²⁵ (*Pl. III, fig. 2*), the latest coins being of Faustina Junior or Marcus Aurelius. The period during which these three treasures were accumulated seems to have been quite long, but a closer analysis reveals that generally the accumulation began only from the age of Trajan. In the Caporal Alexa hoard there is only one coin of Nero, the subsequent period being poorly represented as well. We can conclude from this that either the treasure was gathered during the time of the *Optimus Princeps*, or that the coins of Trajan were still frequently used at the beginning of Marcus Aurelius's reign.

In case of Covăsânț hoard (*Pl. III, fig. 1*) one can easily observe that the accumulation period was long. Many coins were added from the age of Vespasian, Trajan,

and Hadrian. Most probably it was an inheritance completed until Antonius Pius (the last coin is of Faustina Senior).

The treasure of Neudorf²⁶ leads to hypotheses rather than conclusions, because of the low number of coins identified or more precisely because of the lack of coin-issuers from Lucius Verus to Aurelian. I do not exclude the hypothesis of an older hoard completed after a certain period or of a “treasure within treasure.”

On the basis of the mentioned numismatic materials, some historical conclusions can be attempted.

The changes suffered by the Roman world reached their peak in the mid-3rd century. The Empire maintaining politico-military and commercial relationships with the barbarians, the changes affected their life as well.

On the basis of the analysis carried out on the isolated coins found in the Lower Mureş Valley, we observe that, from a commercial point of view, this region was controlled by the Romans who found here a quick connection to Pannonia (the Tisza was not seen as a border but as a geographic occurrence). Another observation is that the finds are limited strictly to the Mureş and Criş Valley, which represented access ways between Pannonia and Dacia through the Iazygian Plain. These discoveries demonstrate that the roads were controlled by the Romans.

Being a region belonging to the barbarian world, the catalogued coins can be as old as Hadrian's reign or even older since the barbarians used old coins, especially for their intrinsic value (good quality metal), in particular when more recent coins were visibly debased, as in the studied era.²⁷ One can also notice a continuity of settlements which could be local power centers which ensured the connection with the major settlements in the Criş Valley (as it can be seen on the annexed map, the linear arrangement of the discovery sites may indicate a secondary road).

The low number of coins issued during the reigns of Caracalla, Elagabal, Severus Alexander, and Maximinus Thrax does not demonstrate the decline of commerce but the population's distrust in the currency present on the market. V. Mihăilescu-Bîrliba was right to state that, though this coin circulated in the provinces, the barbarian world avoided to use it and preferred the older coinage.

The hypothesis of a transition to an economy based on barter is hard to accept, since the significant armed forces stationed in the area meant a substantial inflow of money. The situation can be explained, once again, by the barbarians' view on the Roman coinage, and by their skepticism regarding the situation in the Empire.

While the isolated finds mirror the intensity of everyday economic life, the hoards represent sources of military information. The destruction inflicted by the Marcomanni in Banat caused the burial of the four treasures (Caporal Alexa, Covăsânt, Kiszombor, Neudorf). Moreover, the Mureş Valley was considered by N. Gudea as the main route of the invading Marcomanni towards the centre of the Dacian province.²⁸

If the existence of hoards illustrates the turmoil experienced during the Marcomannic Wars, their absence in the period between the reigns of Septimius Severus

and Philip the Arab indicates a relative calm in the Mureș region, at least up to Decius's rule.

As a conclusion, I wish to state that the lack of systematic excavations in the settlements of that era keeps the question open. The economic development of the Lower Mureș Valley in the 3rd century will be outlined in more detail for certain in the future or it will be subjected to other interpretations.

Appendix 1. Catalogue of isolated finds²⁹

APPENDIX 1. CATALOGUE OF ISOLATED FINDS³⁰

1. 1. **ARAD**, "Ceala," city of Arad, Arad County.
 2. 3rd–5th c. settlement
 3. Discovered by chance.
 4. 3 Denarii: Caracalla(1), Aurelian(2)
 5. No additional specifications.
 6. CMA.
 7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 67, no. 1; P. Hügel, M. Barbu, "Câmpia Aradului în sec. II–IV. p. Hr." in *Acta MP*, XXI, 1997, p. 550, no. 3 s, 576 no. 3 s.

2. 1. **ARAD**, "Ceala," city of Arad, Arad County.
 2. Settlement.
 3. Discovered by chance.
 4. 1D Antoninus Pius, 1D Faustina Senior, 1D Faustina Junior.
 5. In the summer of 1964 workers of G.A.S-Ceala discovered some artefacts from different historical eras. The following materials seemingly originate from graves: two grey clay mugs made on the potter's wheel, a small blackish jar-like vessel made by hand ornamented with dents along the opening, a Roman bronze fibula, and four silver imperial coins: Titus, Antoninus Pius, Faustina Senior, and Faustina Junior.
 6. CMA.
 7. E. Dörner, "Cercetări și săpături arheologice în județul Arad" in *Materiale*, 9, 1970, p. 449–450.

3. 1. **BOCSIG**, village of Bocsig, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Severus Alexander.
 5. One coin of Severus Alexander found while building Beleau Simion's house and donated to the Museum of Arad by Vasile Frențiu in 1976.
 6. CMA.
 7. **Unpublished.**

4.
 1. **BOCSIG**, village of Bocsig, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Iulia Maesa Avers.
 5. One coin of Iulia Maesa found in the old cemetery and donated to the Museum of Arad by Vasile Frenţiu in 1976.
 6. CMA.
 7. **Unpublished.**

5.
 1. **BRUZNIC**, village of Ususău, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D of Hadrian, Septimius Severus, and Philip the Arab.
 5. Without further specifications.
 6. The Museum of Banat in Timisoara.
 7. Mitrea, "Penetrayione commercial e circolazione monetaria prima della conquista" in *EDR*, 11, 1945, p. 88.

6.
 1. **BUHANI**, village of Dezna, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 2AU of Marcus Aurelius.
 5. According to N. D. Covaci, bronze and silver coins of Marcus Aurelius were discovered here.
 6. The National Museum in Budapest.
 7. S. Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p. 27; S. Dumitraşcu, *Dacia apuseană*, p. 125, no. 2; M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 68.

7.
 1. **CENAD**, village of Cenad, Timiş County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D, Faustina Senior, 1D Commodus, 1D Aurelian, one bronze of Gallienus.
 5. The coins were discovered in 1930; they are in private collections in Timişoara.
 6. Nussbaum collection (Hadrian).
 7. D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III-IV*, 1996, p. 459.

8.
 1. **CHISINDIA**, village of Chisindia, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Antoninus Pius, 1D Philip the Arab.
 5. Data by S. Marki, cited by Dörner.
 6. CMA.
 7. S. Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p. 27; S. Dumitraşcu, *Dacia apuseană*, p. 126, no. 4; M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 68, no. 9.

9. 1. **CHIȘINEU-CRIȘ**, town of Chișineu-Criș, Arad County.
 2. Settlement.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. AE Trajan and 1D Elagabal.
 5. On the site of the Pumping Station, fragments of pots made on potter's wheel from fine grey paste were also found.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. S. Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p. 28, S. Dumitrașcu 1993, *Dacia apuseană*, p. 126; P. Hügél, M. Barbu, "Câmpia Aradului în sec. II–IV. p. Hr." in *ActaMP*, 21, 1997, p. 578, no. 15a.
10. 1. **DESZK**, Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.
 5. The finds are accompanied by no further specifications.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. Fülöp, "Újabb tanulmány a római érmek szarmata kori foraljáról a mai magyar Alföldön", in *Arch.Ért*, 1976, p. 257.
11. 1. **DEZNA**, "În Vii," village of Dezna, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. Bronze and silver coins of Marcus Aurelius.
 5. No additional specifications.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. S. Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p.27; S. Dumitrașcu, *Dacia apuseană*, 1996, p. 126; M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
12. 1. **FIRITEAZ**, village of Șagu, Arad County.
 2. Settlement.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Antoninus Pius, 1D Marcus Aurelius.
 5. Data by Egon Dörner.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III–IV*, 1996, p. 459; M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
13. 1. **FRUMUȘENI**, village of Frumușeni, Arad County.
 2. Settlement?
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Commodus.
 5. No additional specifications.
 6. Unspecified.

7. M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
14.
 1. **INEU**, town of Ineu, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. Coins of Commodus and Gallienus.
 5. The coins were discovered in 1867 near Moroda, on the bank of Cigher.
 6. The National Museum in Budapest.
 7. S. Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p. 24.
 15.
 1. **KISZOMBOR**, Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. Germanic necropolis.
 3. Systematic excavation.
 4. 1 D Lucius Verus, 1 AE Constantius II (?)
 5. The coin of Constantius has a hole on it and was probably used as a pendant.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. Párducz, "A nagy Magyar Alföld római kori leletei. Römerzeitliche Funde des grossen ungarischen Alföld" in *DolgSzeged*, VII, 1931. p. 84.
 16.
 1. **KISZOMBOR**, Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. Sarmatian necropolis.
 3. Systematic excavation.
 4. 1D Traianus, 1D Faustina Senior, 1D Hadrianus, 1D Marcus Aurelius, 1D Commodus.
 5. Coins discovered in stratigraphic context.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. Párducz, "A nagy Magyar Alföld római kori leletei. Römerzeitliche Funde des grossen ungarischen Alföld" in *DolgSzeged*, VII, 1931. p. 84.
 17.
 1. **LIPOVA**, town of Lipova, Arad County.
 2. Settlement.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. Coins of Faustina Junior and Philip the Arab.
 5. As a result of the excavations made during the construction of the Agricultural Secondary School in 1886, amber, Roman coins, and half of a Roman sepulchral stone representing a man wearing toga were found.
 6. The Museum of Banat in Timisoara.
 7. M. Barbu, P. Hügél, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
 18.
 1. **NĂDLAC**, town of Nădlac, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Traian, 2D Hadrian, 1D Antoninus Pius, 1D Severus Alexander, 1D Faustina Junior, 1D Julia Domna .

5. The abovementioned coins identified by Prof. Moisil are in Sildan collection in Nădlac.
 6. Sildan collection.
 7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
- 19.**
1. **PECICA**, town of Pecica, Arad County.
 2. Isolated find.
 3. Rescue excavations.
 4. 1D Antoninus Pius, 1D Faustina Junior, ANT Etruscilla, 1D Julia Domna, ANT Gallienus, 1D Aurelian.
 5. No additional specifications.
 6. CMA.
 7. D. Benea, *Dacia sud-vestică în secolele III-IV*, 1996, p. 459; M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
- 20.**
1. **SÂNPAUL**, village of Șofrinea, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Lucius Verus.
 5. Data by Egon Dörner.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. **Unpublished**
- 21.**
1. **SÂMPETRU GERMAN**, village of Secusigiu, Arad County.
 2. Unspecified find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Gordian.
 5. Incomplete data by Dörner, mentioned in his notes where he also drew a sketch of the coin.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. **Unpublished.**
- 22.**
1. **SÂNNICOLAU MARE**, town of Sânnicolau Mare, Timiș County.
 2. Isolated finds.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1 D Commodus.
 5. Tombstone, brick bearing the stamp le(gio) XIII Gemina in different variants, including with anthroponym.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. P. Hügel, M. Barbu "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 70; M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Câmpia Aradului în sec. II-IV. p. Hr." in *ACTA MP*, 1997, p. 585.

- 23.** 1. **SZEGED**, “Bogárzó,” Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. Sarmatian grave.
 3. Systematic excavation.
 4. 1 D Elagabal
 5. No additional specification.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. Párducz, “A nagy Magyar Alföld római kori leletei. Römerzeitliche Funde des grossen ungarischen Alföld” in *DolgSzege*d, VII, 1931. p. 98.
- 24.** 1. **SZEGED**, “Öthalom,” Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. Sarmatian grave.
 3. Systematic excavation.
 4. 1 D Faustina Senior, 1 D Caracalla.
 5. Apart from the coins found in the investigated graves, before the systematic excavations began, other pieces also surfaced: 2 AE Maximianus Herculius (236–305), 1 AR suberate, undeterminable, 1 AE undeterminable.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. Párducz 1943–1950, *DolgSzege*d, III, p. 186.
- 25.** 1. **ŞEITIN**, village of Şeitín, Arad County.
 2. Settlement.
 3. Surface research.
 4. 1D Marcus Aurelius and 1D Lucilla.
 5. Pots made on potter’s wheel from grey fine paste, Roman import ceramics, were also discovered.
 6. Unspecified.
 7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, “Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană,” in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
- 26.** 1. **TROAŞ**, “Gomila,” village of Săvârşin, Arad County.
 2. Isolated find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1AE Philip the Arab.
 5. A coin of Philip the Arab catalogued by C. Daicovicu as being issued by Trajan also originates from the territory of the village. Iosif Dohangie, the teacher owning this coin sent an appendix on paper to the coin.
 6. Private collection.
 7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, “Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană,” in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.
- 27.** 1. **VARIAŞU MARE**, village of Iratoş, Arad County.
 2. Isolated find.
 3. Discovered by amateurs.
 4. 1D Marcus Aurelius.
 5. Fragments of ceramics from pots made on potter’s wheel from grey fine paste, Roman import ceramics, were also discovered.

6. Unspecified.
7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 71, n. 36.

28. 1. ZĂDĂRENI, village of Zădăreni, Arad County.

2. Isolated Sarmatian grave.
3. Unspecified.
4. 1D suberate Marcus Aurelius, 1D Antoninus Pius (**Unpublished**)
5. Finds discovered in a grave in the year 1957. The original of the piece is dated to 170–171. The second piece surfaced also from a Sarmatian grave in 1958.
6. CMA.
7. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, "Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană," in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.

29. 1. ZERINDUL MIC, village of Mișca, Arad County.

2. Isolated find.
3. Discovered by amateurs.
4. 1D Lucius Verus.
5. Data by Egon Dörner.
6. Private collection of Prof. Molnar.
7. **Unpublished.**

APPENDIX 2. CATALOGUE OF COIN HOARDS³¹

1. 1. CAPORAL ALEXA, village of Sântana, Arad County.

2. Unspecified.
3. Approx. 25 pieces.
4. In 1902 a hoard of Roman imperial denarii was found here; the greatest part of the deposit was alienated. 25 pieces are known: Nero—1 D, Vespasian—4 D, Domitian—4 D, Trajan—15 D, Hadrian—1 D, Faustina Junior—1 D, Lucilla Veri—1 D.
5. Al. Sășianu, *Moneda antică în vestul și nord-vestul României*, 1980, p. 99; S. Dumitrașcu, *Dacia apuseană*, 1993, p. 124; P. Hügel, M. Barbu "Câmpia Aradului în sec. II–IV. p. Hr." in *ACTA MP*, 1997, p. 578.

2. 1. COVĂȘĂNTȚ, village of Covășăntț, Arad County.

2. 500 D.
3. Approx. 168 pieces.
4. In the western part of the locality a hoard of approximately 500 imperial denarii was discovered at the end of the 19th century; the majority of it has been lost. 168 pieces can still be identified, issued by the following emperors and members of the imperial families: Nero—2 D, Galba—2 D, Vittelius—3 D, Vespasian—36 D, Titus—16 D, Domitian—8 D, Nerva—1 D, Trajan—63 D, Hadrian—36 D, Hadrian for Sabina—1 D, Antoninus Pius for Faustina Senior—1 D.

One the site Fântâna lui Roman fragments of ceramics from grey fine paste originating from pots made on potter's wheel and fine ceramics imported from the Roman

world were discovered. The existence of a dwelling dated to the 3rd–4th century is presumed.

5. Al. Sășianu, *Moneda antică în vestul și nord-vestul României*, 1980, p. 104–108; S. Dumitrașcu, *Dacia apuseană*, 1993, p. 124; P. Hügel, M. Barbu “Câmpia Aradului în sec. II–IV. p. Hr.” in *ACTA MP*, 1997, p. 579.
3. 1. **KISZOMBOR**, Csongrád County, Hungary.
 2. 41 D.
 3. 41 D.
 4. Within this locality a hoard consisting of 41 Roman imperial denarii issued from Galba to Septimius Severus was found. The chronological distribution of the coins is the following: Galba—1 D, Vespasian—1 D, Titus—1 D, Trajan—6 D, Hadrian—12 D, Antoninus Pius—15 D, Marcus Aurelius—5 D.
 5. Biróné Sey 1997–1998, p. 17, n. 3; Farkas, Torbágyi 2008, p. 258.
 4. 1. **NEUDORF**, village of Zăbrani, Arad County.
 2. 220 D.
 3. 220 D.
 4. In the fields of the locality a hoard of 220 pieces was found. Coins of Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Aurelian have been identified.
 5. M. Barbu, P. Hügel, “Monede romane imperiale descoperite în zona arădeană,” in *Ziridava*, XVIII, 1993, p. 69.



Notes

1. The author also wishes to express her gratitude to Dr Radu Ardevan and Mihai Bărbulescu for the help offered during the elaboration of this paper.
2. István Ferenczi, “Valea Mureșului și expediția militară a lui Marcus Vinicius,” *Ziridava* XVIII, 1993, p. 44.
3. The material from Micia is not included in the analysis, since the *castrum* belonged to the province of Dacia.
4. Sándor Márki, *Arad vármegye monographiája*, Arad, 1892, p. 23; Peter Hügel, “Cărămizile romane ștampilate descoperite la Cladova (jud.Arad),” *Ziridava*, XIX–XX, 1996, p. 73–76; Mircea Barbu, Peter Hügel, George Pascu Hurezan, Eugen Pădureanu, *Repertoriul arheologic al Mureșului Inferior: Județul Arad*, Timișoara, 1999, p. 36.
5. I have chosen the Marcomannic Wars as the lower time limit because they meant a serious blow for the Roman economy as well.
6. Nicolae Gudea, “Dacia Porolissensis în timpul războaielor marcomanice,” *Acta MP*, XVIII, 1994, p. 79. He affirmed that Porolissum was less affected than the provinces of Dacia Apulensis and Malvensis, and their situation influenced the economic life and especially the monetary circulation of the northern province.
7. IDR, I, p.175.

8. CIL, III, 1769.
9. IDR III/2, 11.
10. Marius Moga, Doina Benea, "Tibiscum și războaiele marcomanice," *Tibiscus*, V, 1978, p. 135; Doina Benea, Petru Bona, *Tibiscum*, Bucharest, 1994, p. 21.
11. Mihai Bărbulescu, *Din istoria militară a Daciei romane. Legiunea a V-a Macedonica și castrul de la Potaissa*, Cluj-Napoca, 1987, p. 24.
12. Nicolae Gudea, "Dacia Porolissensis în timpul războaielor marcomanice," *Acta MP*, XVIII, 1994, p. 79.
13. I have chosen Hadrian's rule starting from the observation that good quality coins circulated for a longer period.
14. See Appendix 1 (nos. 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29) and map I.
15. Virgil Mihăilescu-Bîrliiba, "Geld und Heer in einer kaiserlichen römischen Grenzprovinz. Der Fall von Dacia Porolissensis," in N. Gudea (ed.), *Roman Frontier Studies. Proceedings of the XVIIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Zalău, 1999, p. 809–810.
16. See appendix 1 (no.: 3, 4) and map I.
17. See appendix 1 (no.: 7, 10, 13, 14, 22) and map I.
18. Georges Depeyrot, *La monnaie romaine, 211 av. J.-C. – 476 ap. J.-C.*, Paris, Ed. Errance, 2006, p. 136–138.
19. Michel Christol, *L'Empire Romain du III-e Siecle (192–325)*, Ed. Errance, Paris, 2006, p. 153.
20. Eduard Nemeth, *Politische und militärische Beziehungen zwischen Pannonien und Dakien in der Römerzeit / Relații politice și militare între Pannonia și Dacia în epoca romană*, Ed. Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 226.
21. Michel Christol, *L'Empire Romain du III-e Siecle (192–325)*, Ed. Errance, Paris, 2006, p. 154.
22. Mihai Bărbulescu et al., *Istoria României*, Ed. Corint, Bucharest, 2002, p. 51.
23. See appendix 1 (no. 5, 8, 17, 26) and map I.
24. Viorica Suciuc, *Tezaurul monetar din Dacia romană și postromană*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujană, 2000, p. 271.
25. See appendix 2 (no. 1, 2, 3) and map II.
26. See appendix 2 (no. 4) and map II.
27. Virgil Mihăilescu-Bîrliiba, *La monnaie romaine chez les Daces orientaux*, Bucharest, 1980, p. 83–90, 96–99.
28. Nicolae Gudea, "Dacia Porolissensis în timpul războaielor marcomanice," *Acta MP*, XVIII, 1994, p. 70.
29. The catalogue of isolated finds contains the following fields: 1. The name of the locality; 2. The type of finds; 3. The character of finds; 4. The number of finds; 5. Former research; 6. Current location of the materials; 7. Bibliography.
30. The catalogue of isolated finds contains the following fields: 1. The name of the locality; 2. The type of finds; 3. The character of finds; 4. The number of finds; 5. Former research; 6. Current location of the materials; 7. Bibliography.
31. The catalogue of coin hoards contains the following fields: 1. The place of discovery; 2. The initial quantity of the coins found; 3. The preserved and identified quantity; 4. The context of discovery; 5. Bibliography.

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Abstract

The Lower Mureș Valley in the Mid-3rd Century A. D. in the Light of Numismatic Finds

The study intends to analyze the economic relations between the Roman province of Dacia and the barbarians living west of it, on the basis of numismatic finds. As a political entity, the Iazygian Plain was situated between the Roman provinces of Dacia and Pannonia. The Mureș played an important part during Antiquity, because it was navigable and thus it represented the shortest way between the two provinces since the Danube was too far away. The artifacts and coin hoards constitute very important sources which can offer information on the economic, social, and political life in the Lower Mureș Valley. Together with the epigraphic sources and the stratigraphic context in which they were found, the coins can offer us information on social changes and strata, wars, and commercial routes.

Keywords

Coins, barbarians, Romans, Marcomannic Wars, trade

Plate I. Isolated monetary discoveries, from Antoninus Pius to Philippus Arabs

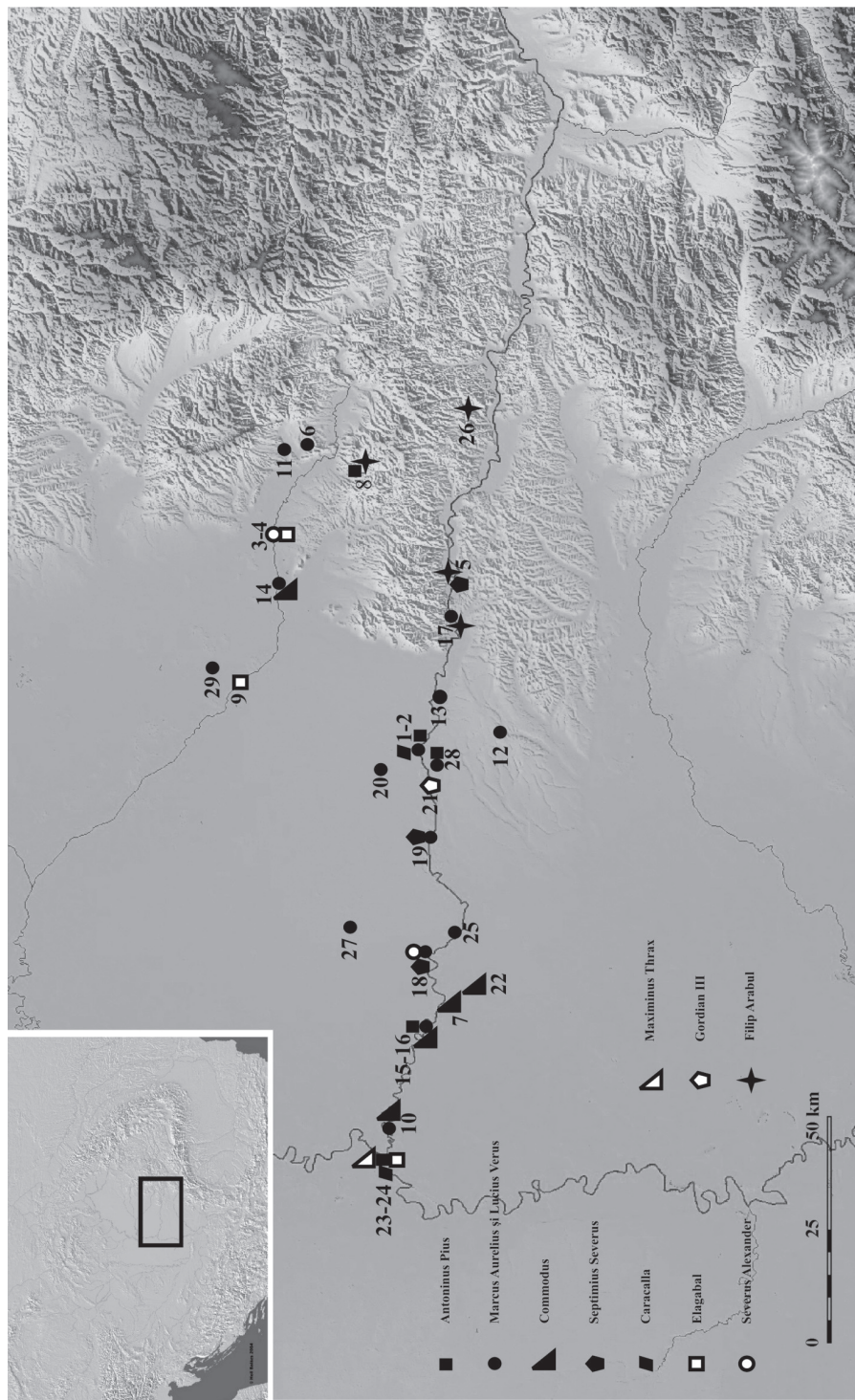


Plate. II. Coins hoards

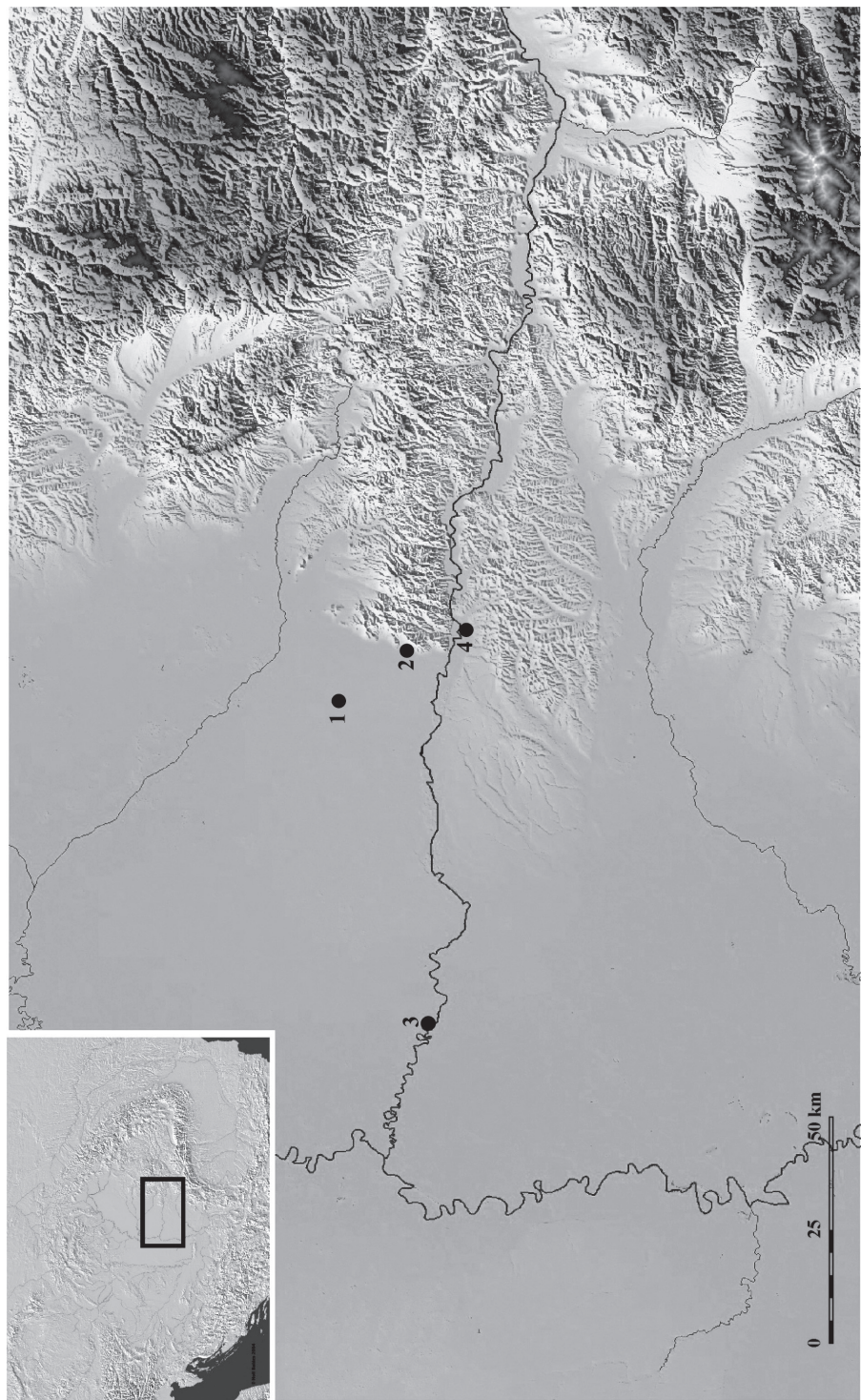


Plate III.

1. Coins distribution in the hoards of Covărsânt, Arad County;
2. Coins distribution in the hoard of Kiszombor, Csóngrád County, Hungary.

Nr.	Emperor	Reign	Nr. of coins	Enters/ year
1	Nero, Galba, Vitellius	54–69	6	0,4
2	Vespasian, Titus	69–81	47	3,91
3	Domitian	81–96	1	0,06
4	Traian	98–117	34	1,8
5	Hadrian	117–138	24	1,14
6	Antoninus Pius	138–161	1	0,04

1

Nr.	Emperor	Reign	Nr.of coins	Enters/ year
1	Galba	68-69	1	1
2	Vespasian, Titus	69-81	2	0,16
3	Traian	98-117	6	0,31
4	Hadrian	117-138	12	0,57
5	Antoninus Pius	138-161	15	0,65
6	Marcus Aurelius	161-180	5	0,31

2

