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VOLUME I



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*These proceedings are dedicated to the memory of
C. Sebastian Sommer,
dear friend and colleague,
man who dedicated his entire life to the Roman limes.*

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CONTENTS: VOLUME I

Session 1 – Fortifications – Fortifying our frontiers

Rebecca Jones, Nemanja Mrđić Introduction to the session	15
Andreas A. Schafflitzl Crumbled stones and burnt wood – results of the excavation on the Raetian Limes in Laimerstadt (Bavaria)	17
Rebecca H. Jones Our ditches are missing! Camps without defences	31
William S. Hanson Understanding the design of the Antonine Wall	45
Horățiu Cociș Low altitude mapping of the frontier fortlets from <i>Porolissum-Brebi</i> . Digital models and frontier interpretations	55
Felix Marcu New LiDAR Data on the North-Western <i>Limes</i> of Dacia	71
Uwe Xaver Müller The internal structure of the legionary fortress of <i>Mogontiacum/Mainz</i> – First insights	85
Steve Bödecker, Lisa Berger Großflächiger Magnetometer – Survey am Legionsstandort <i>Vetera castra</i> und in seinem Umfeld auf dem Fürstenberg bei Xanten	101
Gerald Grabherr, Barbara Kainrath, Stefan Traxler, Wolfgang Klimesch Two Late Antique Fortifications in Northwestern Noricum	111
Gerald Grabherr, Barbara Kainrath, Stefan Traxler Before the Legion Arrives – Roman Military Garrisons around Lauriacum	127
Zbigniew T. Fiema The Roman Fort in Hegra	137
John Peter Oleson Tradition and Innovation in the Trajanic Auxiliary Fort at Hauarra (Humayma), Jordan	151
Mark Driessen, Fawzi Abudanah ‘Power Over’ or ‘Power With’? Monumentality in the Desert: the Roman legionary fortress of Udhruh (Jordan)	163

Session 2 – The Purpose of Roman Frontiers: A Debate

David J. Breeze, Christof Flügel Introduction: The Purpose of Roman Frontiers	181
Eberhard W. Sauer, Jebrael Nokandeh, Hamid Omrani Rekavandi The defensive purpose of Roman frontiers	183
E.P. Graafstal Roman frontiers and raiding	197
Andreas Ph. Thiel The purpose of Roman Frontiers. Controlling movement in and out of the provinces. The simple but unquestionable evidence	213
Alan Rushworth The Purpose of Roman Frontiers: To protect communications and travel in the frontier zone	219
Simon James The Purpose of Roman Frontiers: To keep the troops busy	225

C. Sebastian Sommer

The Purpose of Roman Frontiers – to create an edge to the Empire 229

Christof Flügel

Gleaming more brilliantly than bronze”: The representative value of military architecture at the limits of the Roman Empire 235

Session 3 – Roman Roads – Long Way to Travel...

Vladimir P. Petrović, Francis Tassaux

Introduction to the session247

Francis Tassaux

L’intégration du réseau routier et fluvial dans l’atlas numérisé de l’*Illyricum* (IllyrAtlas)249

Vladimir P. Petrović, Mihai Popescu

De l’Adriatique aux Carpates : voies parallèles, chemins alternatifs, déviations routières 261

Florin-Gheorghe Fodorean

Aspects regarding the roads of Roman Dacia. State of research, new data, new perspectives 271

Ivo Glavaš

Beneficarii consularis stations along the Roman road Aquileia – Dyrrachium: State of research 285

Gerda v. Bülow

Die Bedeutung des Siedlungsplatzes Gamzigrad für das Sicherheitssystem der Provinz Dacia ripensis 293

Ioana A. Oltean, João Fonte

The road to be taken: a GIS-based analysis of the spatial & networking patterns pertaining to the Roman conquest of Sarmizegetusa Regia, Dacia 305

Sara Zanni, Biljana Lučić, Alessandro De Rosa

A spatial approach to mapping Roman roads and buried archaeological sites in the Srem region. The case study of Tapavice site. 317

Session 4 – Hold the Line!!!

Janka Istenič

Roman military campaigns in the eastern hinterland of Aquileia and the western Balkans: hobnail evidence 333

Ran Ortner, Ze'ev Safrai

My Home is My Castle. Combat in built-up areas in the Roman army 341

Shota Mamuladze, Emzar Kakhidze, Lasha Aslanishvili

Roman garrisons on the edge of the eastern frontier 361

Viktor Humennyi

Garrisons of Syria and Roman military strategy during the late second-early third centuries CE Parthian campaigns: the case of Dura-Europos 373

Renate Lafer

Has Septimius Severus ever been in North Africa fighting against the Garamantes? A reconsideration of the campaigns of the emperor 383

Kai J. Juntunen

Ancient Elegeia – Battlefield or Roman outpost? From written sources to archaeological evidence 393

Lorenzo F. G. Boragno

The Frontier and the Mirror. Foreign policy and the Art of Command in Arrianus. 403

Krzysztof Narloch

A Roman heavy armoured cavalry (cataphracti and clibanarii) in the 4th century 427

Elena Klenina, Andrzej B. Biernacki	
Legionary Arsenal from the Period of the Principate in the Light of the Studies of Novae (Moesia Inferior)	437
José Manuel Costa-García, David González-Álvarez, João Fonte, Andrés Menéndez-Blanco	
New archaeological data for the study of the conquest and occupation of NW Iberia in Early Imperial times	453
Zsolt Visy	
Recent research activities along the Pannonian Limes in Hungary	469

Session 5 – A Farewell to Arms

Liviu Petculescu	
The swords in Roman Dacia	487
Frederik-Sebastian Kirch	
Roman and germanic weapons in Weißenburg. Considerations about distribution, types and usage of militaria in the 3 rd century destruction layer in fort and vicus of Weißenburg	505

Session 6 – Production, Industry and Trade

Martin Lemke	
Supplying Novae. The logistic network for provisioning the legio I Italica	519
Damjan Donev	
Patterns of urban settlement on and behind the Danube Limes: a geographical perspective	531
Slavtcho Kirov	
Patrimonium Caesaris dans les provinces danubiennes I – III s. p.C. Les provinces de Mésie Inférieure et de Mésie Supérieure	543
Mateusz Żmudziński	
Comments on Trade in the Danubian Roman Provinces	553
Mirjana D. Vojvoda, Adam N. Crnobrnja	
Circulation of provincial coins "Provincia Dacia" at the territory of present-day Serbia	557
Ivana Ožanić Roguljić, Angelina Raičković Savić	
Evidence of cheesemaking in Lower Pannonia and Upper Moesia	567

Session 7 – What about us? Exploring the lives of women and Children on the Frontiers

Elizabeth M. Greene, Jelena Anđelković Grašar, Milica Marjanović, Ilija Danković	
Introduction to the session	577
Olga Z. Špehar, Branka Č. Vranešević	
Mater Castrorum: representation of an ideal Empress or the rebirth of a Republican ideal woman?	579

Session 10 – Going Wild! The Roles of Wild Animals in Life and Death on the Frontier

Sonja Vuković Bogdanović, Sue Stalibrass	
Introduction to the session	591
Mirjana Sanader, Joško Zaninović, Mirna Cvetko	
A new attempt at interpreting arrowheads from the Roman legionary fortresses Burnum and Tilurium in Dalmatia	593
Ozren Domiter, Ivan Radman–Livaja	
The Roman Fishing Implements from Siscia	607

Session 11 – Religion and Beliefs on the Frontiers

Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas	
Introduction to the session	623
Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas	
The Cult of God Mithras on Roman Danube Limes in Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Superior	625
Ozren Domiter	
Understanding the Danubian Horsemen Cult: New approaches	635
Ljubica Perinić	
What are we missing? On the invisibility of Silvanus Orientalis	647
Dan-Augustin Deac	
<i>Instrumenta inscripta</i> from the <i>principia</i> of the Pomet Hill Fort at <i>Porolissum</i> (Roman Dacia)	659
Ljubiša Vasiljević	
The Archeological monuments of Silvanus and his cultural cult communities (Mars, Diana, nymphs and forest deities) in the area of the Danube Limes in Serbia	669
Carsten Wenzel	
Votum solvit! Weihungen von Militärangehörigen und ein zentraler Kultbezirk im römischen Nida (Frankfurt am Main-Heddernheim)	683
Csaba Szabó	
Lived religion and its materiality in Roman Dacia	697

Session 12 – Christianity at the Frontiers

Dominic Moreau, Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska	
Introduction to the session	711
Dan Aparaschivei	
Pilgrims from the province of Scythia in Ephesus	713
Stefanie Hoss	
Christian symbols on the weapons and equipment of Roman soldiers	727

Session 14 – From East to West Our Legions Are the Best!!!

Jürgen Trumm	
Trajan, legio XI and Caius Iulius Quadratus Bassus - the last legatus legionis of <i>Vindonissa</i> (Windisch/Switzerland)	745
Ran Ortner	
The episode of Cestius Gallus and the XII Legion campaign to Jerusalem in 66 CE and its strategic and political outcome - a reappraisal	759

CONTENTS: VOLUME II

Session 16 – Stand Your Ground!

Lecat Zénaïde, Bejaoui Fathi

Les politiques territoriales byzantines en Byzacène aux VIe – VIIe siècles: une stratigraphie de réseaux 801

Michal Dyčka

Modus Operandi of the Odenwald Limes. Implications of the Spatial analyses to the way how could Roman frontiers actually work 815

Elisabeth Krieger

Facts and fiction about reconstructions of watchtowers 829

Ivan Gargano

The Location of 6th-Century Βιθυνάκιον. Status *quaestionis* and Hypotheses 841

Session 17 – Limes in fine? Continuity and Discontinuity of Life in the Forts of the Roman Frontiers

Rob Collins

Introduction to the session 855

Simone Mayer

Who lies there? Late antique inhumation graves at *Augusta Raurica*. 857

Anna Flückiger

Coins, Chronology, Continuity, and the *Castrum Rauracense*: New research on the *Castrum* and its ‘*suburbium*’ during Late Antiquity 867

Berber S. van der Meulen-van der Veen

The Late Roman limes in the Low Countries: (dis)continuity in a frontier zone 879

Session 18 – Transformation of Limes in Late Antiquity

Sylvain Janniard, Vujadin Ivanišević

Introduction to the session 895

Sebastian Schmid

The Roman auxiliary Fort at Arelape/Pöchlarn (Lower Austria) and its Development in Late Antiquity 897

Dominic Moreau

The Concept of “*limes*” in the Textual Sources. A Short Preliminary Study 911

Thomas Becker

Militärisch und/oder zivil? Zur spätantiken Nutzung des mittelkaiserzeitlichen Kastells von Dormagen (Rheinkreis Neuss/D) 923

Harry van Enkevort, Joep Hendriks

The afterlife of the Dutch part of the *limes ad Germaniam inferiorem* 935

Session 19 – Who Were the Limitanei?

S. Thomas Parker

Introduction to the session 945

S. Thomas Parker

Who Were the *Limitanei*? 947

S. Thomas Parker

New Light on the *Limitanei* of the Arabian Frontier 949

S. Thomas Parker

Recent Research on the Arabian Frontier 959

Alan Rushworth

Limitanei: the African perspective 969

Rob Collins

The *Limitanei* of the *dux Britanniarum* 979

Session 21 – Life and Health on the Roman Limes

Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović

Introduction to the session993

Nataša Miladinović-Radmilović, Ilija Mikić, Dragana Vulović

The appearance of ulcer on one skeleton from Viminacium and the possibility of its' treatment in antiquity 995

C. Scott Speal, Goran Stojić

Settlement size, site history, and mortality at Roman Viminacium: Testing the urban graveyard hypothesis 1011

Session 24 – Arts and Crafts along Limes

Ivana M. Popović

Roman Cameos with Female Bust from the Limes Region 1025

Boris A. N. Burandt

Entertaining the Empire – Rome’s frontier forces in Germania and their role in the arena industry 1041

Session 25 – First Contacts between the Roman Military and the local people

Szilvia Bíró, Thomas Grane, Fraser Hunter, Thomas Schierl

Introduction to the session1051

Nick Hodgson, James Bruhn

Roman frontiers create new societies in the lands beyond: a shift to pastoral farming and social re-structuring caused by the building of Hadrian’s Wall 1053

Pete Wilson

Allies, Enemies, Partners or Protagonists? Rome and the Brigantes in the First Century AD 1065

Karl Oberhofer

At the back of beyond? Actual perspectives on the lower Alpine Rhine valley regarding the first Roman contacts 1071

Balázs Komoróczy, Marek Vlach, Ján Rajtár, Claus-Michael Hüssen

The Latest Discoveries and Research Results of the Roman Military Presence in Middle Danube Barbaricum 1089

Fraser Hunter

First contacts in Scotland: a review of old and new evidence 1105

José Manuel Costa-García

The rationale behind the Roman military deployment in NW Iberia during its initial phase (2nd to 1st c. BCE) 1121

Milica Tapavički-Ilić

Limes in Serbia - the early days 1137

Session 26 – Re-evaluating old excavations: are they worth it?

Orsolya Láng

Introduction to the session 1149

Simone Mayer

Digging in the archives – The 19th century excavations of J. J. Schmid in *Augusta Raurica* (CH) 1151

Tomasz Dziurdzik, Michał Pisz, Mirko Rašić

Demystifying the Roman fort at Gračine (Bosnia and Herzegovina) 1159

Eduard Nemeth

Different methods, different terms: understanding old excavations 1171

Jost Mergen

Niederbieber and Early 19th-Century Research at the *Upper Germanic-Raetian Limes* 1179

Session 27 – Saxon Shore

Sofie Vanhoutte

Cross-Channel Connections. The fort at Oudenburg within its wider context: new insights into the *Litus Saxonicum*. 1199

Nathaniel F. Durant

The Saxon Shore Forts and Hadrian's Wall in the 3rd to 5th centuries A.D. 1213

Session 29 – Mapping the Edge of Empire

Richard Talbert, Boris Rankov

Introduction to the session 1225

Brian D. Turner

Velleius Paterculus on the Frontiers 1227

Session 30 – [Continuation of] Building materials: Elements of construction, elements of expression?

Craig A. Harvey, Tanja Romankiewicz, Guus Gazenbeek

Introduction to the session 1239

Craig A. Harvey, M. Barbara Reeves

The Manufacture of Ceramic Building Materials from the Roman Fort at Haurra (Modern Humayma, Jordan) 1241

Piotr Dyczek, Janusz Reclaw

"House of the peristyle" from Novae: House of the centurion of the first cohort of *Legio I Italica*? 1257

Tomáš Janek

On the research of ceramic building material from Vindobona and its surroundings. 1269

Martin Mosser, Michaela Kronberger, Beatrix Moshhammer, Andreas Rohatsch, Roman Skomorowski

Stone extraction for Vindobona. Regional Infrastructure and Economic Relationship by the Example of a Legionary Garrison in Pannonia 1285

Session 31– Bath Buildings

Stefanie Hoss, Bebina Milovanović, Emilija Nikolić

Introduction to the session 1301

René Ployer, Eva Steigberger

My bath is in my fort? Bath buildings in military contexts in Noricum and western Pannonia 1303

Session 34 – Roman Egypt

Dmitry Karelin, Maria Karelina, Tatiana Zhitpeleva, Peter Sheehan

Babylon of Egypt: The reconstruction of the Diocletianic fortress 1319

Session 35 – Small finds assemblages as a means to understanding social and economic patterns within the settlements close to Roman camps

Hannes Flück, Paul Franzen

Introduction to the session 1335

Paul Franzen

Weights as an indication for trade and commerce and as a means to determine whether the context is military or civilian 1337

Orsolya Láng, Andrew Wilson

Millstones from the settlement complex of Aquincum: preliminary research 1347

Session 36 – General Session

Peti V. Donevski

Was Durostorum the seat of the Lower Moesian governor? 1361

Posters

Sven Conrad, Lyudmil F. Vagalinski, Nadezhda I. Kecheva, Lyuba A. Traykova

Fortifications and settlements from the 1st to the 6th c. at the Mouth of the Yantra River (Lower Danube, Bulgaria) 1373

Dorel Bondoc

The Roman fortress and the detachment of Legio VII Claudia from Cioroiu Nou, Dolj County, Romania 1389

Regine Fellmann Brogli, Jürgen Trumm, Sabine Deschler-Erb, Andrew Lawrence, Michael Nick

Offering to the gods – a ritual deposition and religious communication in *Vindonissa* 1401

Adam Pažout

How to trace and date the Roman roads? Case study from the *territorium* of Antiochia Hippos: Between the desert frontier and the sea 1405

Alik Nikolaevich Gabelia

Pitiunt is a fortification of Pontus Limes 1421

Joanneke van den Engel-Hees

Hidden gems: Roman finds in the PUG-collection in Utrecht 1431

Pavlina Vladkova, Julia Valeva

Fresco fragments from the *extra muros* residence in Novae (Sector VIIIA) 1437

C. Sebastian Sommer

Military Raetia – achievements and development since 2015 1447

Phillipa Walton

Barbaricum in *Britannia*? The Fosse Way as a frontier to coin use 1459

Monica Gui

Scrawl, scribble, doodle - Graffiti on bricks and tiles from the military environment of Roman Dacia 1459

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Circulation of provincial coins "Provincia Dacia" at the territory of present-day Serbia

ABSTRACT

The lack of bronze coins of the senate issues in circulation in the Danubian and Balkan provinces at the start of the 3rd century was especially pronounced and was probably the main reason for opening the provincial mint in Viminacium in 239 and subsequently in Dacia in 246. Opening these two mints represented the official way for temporarily solving the problem in the functioning of the Empire's monetary system. However, it seems that the two newly founded mints had different roles. As shown by comparative analyses of monetary finds of these two mints, issues of Viminacium were intended for broader circulation, while issues of the province of Dacia seem to have been minted solely for the needs of the domicile province.

Relatively small presence of Provincia Dacia issues at territory of present-day Serbia, nevertheless shows that they had certain significance in monetary circulation in this part of Roman empire.

KEY WORDS: ROMAN PROVINCIAL COINAGE, "PROVINCIAL DACIA", SERBIA, VIMINACIUM

The lack of bronze coins of the senate issues in circulation in the Danubian and Balkan provinces at the start of the 3rd century was especially pronounced and was probably the main reason for opening the provincial mint in Viminacium in 239 AD, and subsequently in Dacia in 246 AD. The lack of small bronze denominations was particularly evident in Moesia Superior and both Pannonias.¹

In Pannonia Superior, from the beginning of the reign of Septimius Severus, there was an extraordinary increase in the number of *limesfalsa* coinage, which compensated for the lack of Senate issues. The minting of *limesfalsa* coins ceased at the beginning of the rule of Gordian III, and the cessation of his coinage can be linked principally with the start of operation at the

¹Borić-Brešković 2011, 417–418, ref. 34–49; Vojvoda, Petrović 2011: 288–289; Vojvoda, Jeseretić 2012: 121–122; Vojvoda 2013: 159–160; Vojvoda, Mrđić 2015: 14–17, ref. 10–13; Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, 15–16; Borić-Brešković, Vojvoda 2018, 74, ref. 3; Vojvoda, Crnobrnja 2018, 133, ref. 10.

mint in Viminacium, and partly with the opening of the mint in Dacia.²

An analysis of the monetary finds from Moesia Superior, which includes the reign of Commodus, shows that bronze provincial coins of the Asia Minor, Thracian and Lower Moesian mints were not so frequent, whereas coins from the Macedonian mints were more numerous. During the rule of Septimius Severus, his sons and Elagabalus, the situation changed. In that period one notices a quantity of provincial bronze coins that was twice as high than before, wherein the largest number of issues came from the Macedonian mints, primarily Stobi. Also, the inflow of coins from the Bithynian mint of Nicaea gradually increased, the largest inflow of which was registered during the reign of Severus Alexander. The situation remained the same, even during the initial years of the rule of Gordian III. The opening of the mint in Viminacium and the start of circulation of its coins was immediately reflected in the reduced inflow of coins from the Nicaea mint. In the period from Philip I to joint reign of Valerian I and Gallienus, almost all the finds of provincial issues originated from the mint in Viminacium, and the issues from the province of Dacia and the Nicaea mint were represented in a lesser measure (Graphs. 1 and 2)

The majority of known Provincia Dacia coin finds, from the territory of present-day Serbia, have already been published. The volume of published finds includes several collections: the Belgrade City Museum (183 pcs),³ Viminacium from archaeological excavations (11 pcs),⁴ National Museum in Požarevac (43 pcs),⁵ from Mačva district (4 pcs),⁶ as well as specimens from

10 published coin hoards (62 pcs).⁷ We know that a certain number of Provincia Dacia coins is still unpublished and comes from several museums in Serbia (Map 1). For example from the National Museum in Belgrade (105 pcs),⁸ and we also known that Archaeological Museum in Zagreb keep (12 pcs) which originating from the territory of Serbia.⁹

The discovered coins of Provincia Dacia, which were from a proportionately far smaller production compared with the Viminacium mint, played their role in monetary circulation at the territory of present-day Serbia. With a total of 416 pieces registered so far, coins of Provincia Dacia, compared with the monetary finds of the Viminacium mint, account for 8.33% in hoard finds (Graph. 3) and 5% of individual finds (Graph. 4).

Finds from the territory of present-day Serbia are also illustrative for the analysis of overall production of the Dacia mint. On the basis of all known specimens, a far greater representation was registered at the fifth year of the local era (ANNO V, i.e. 250/251 AD) with 42.50%. These are issues that were minted for Trajan Decius, Trebonianus Gallus and members of their families. Following are the third, first and second year of the local era, while only ANNO VIII is prominent among the later years (Graph. 5).

On the other hand, the circulation of Provincia Dacia coins is quite different at the territory of the domicile province. The frequency of coins of the first year of the local era is the highest in Dacia, and it only dropped as the years progressed. The index is a little lower in the second year and then it registers a drastic drop in

²Martin 1992, 9; Găzdac 2005, 499–500; Găzdac, Alföldy- Găzdac 2008, 136, ref. 10; Nađ 2012, 387–388, Table 2; Borić-Brešković, Vojvoda 2018, 74, ref. 4;

³Црнобрња 1993.

⁴Vojvoda, Mrđić 2015, 341–342, cat. 2605–2608; Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, 439–440, cat. 3283–3285; four pieces are unpublish.

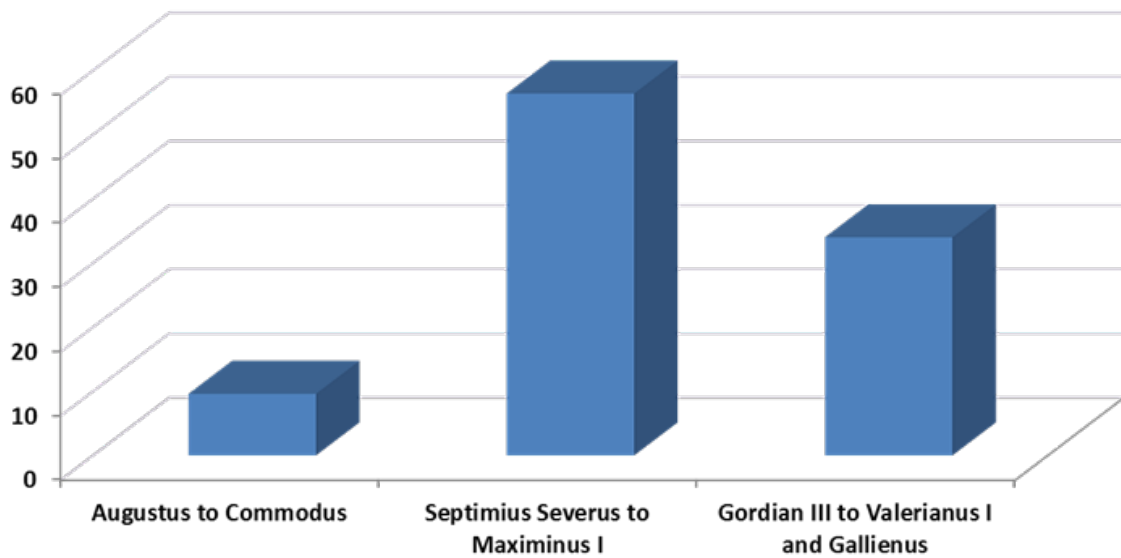
⁵Бенцаревић, Бранковић 2016, 143–167.

⁶Борић-Брешковић, Петровић 2012, 149, cat. 80–83.

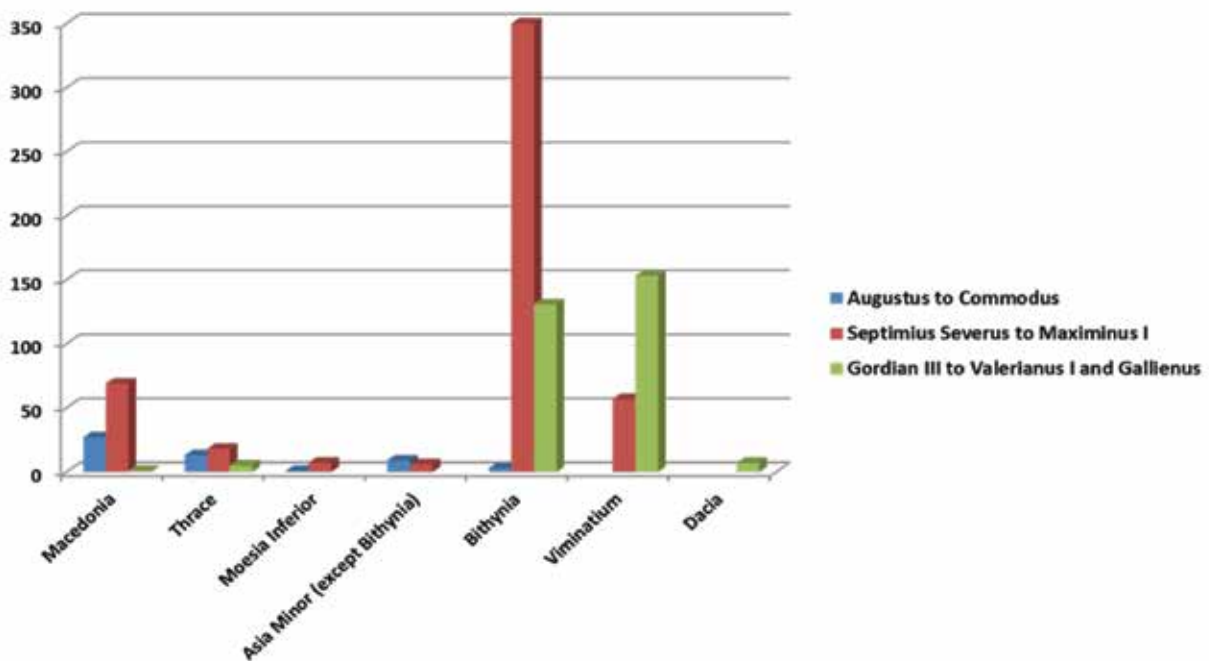
⁷**Bošnjane**, Varvarin, 2 pcs (cf. Борић-Брешковић 1988, 89–96); **Brežane**, Požarevac, 2 pcs (cf. Вулић 1905, 92–93); Вујковач, Vranjska Вања, 12 pcs (cf. Борић-Брешковић, Митровић 2014, 87–134; **Vlajića Brdo I**, Smederevska Palnaka, 14 pcs (cf. Арсенијевић 1997, 43–108); **Vranje, surroundings**, 3 pcs (cf. Борић-Брешковић 1988, 89–96); **Vrkašice**, Sremska Mitrovica, 10 pcs (cf. Орлов 1970, 153–161); **Izvore**, Kosovska Mitrovica, 2 pcs (Стаменковић, Самарцић 2013, 163–181); **Popovac**, Paraćin, 2 pcs (cf. Борић-Брешковић 1979, 39–54); **Sremska Mitrovica**, 8 pcs (cf. Орлов 1972, 153–161); Ћурђија, surroundings, 7 pcs (cf. Борић-Брешковић 1983, 69–84); Борић-Брешковић, Петровић 2012, 136, ref. 6; Бенцаревић, Бранковић 2016, 149, ref. 31–41.

⁸We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Mrs. Borić-Brešković from National Museum in Belgrade, for the kindly shered information.

⁹Savagna 2012, 183, ref. 5; Бенцаревић, Бранковић 2016, 150, ref. 45; We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to colleague Miroslav Nađ from Archaeological Museum Zagreb, for the kindly shared information.



Graph. 1 – Presence of the entire provincial coinage in Moesia Superior, according periods



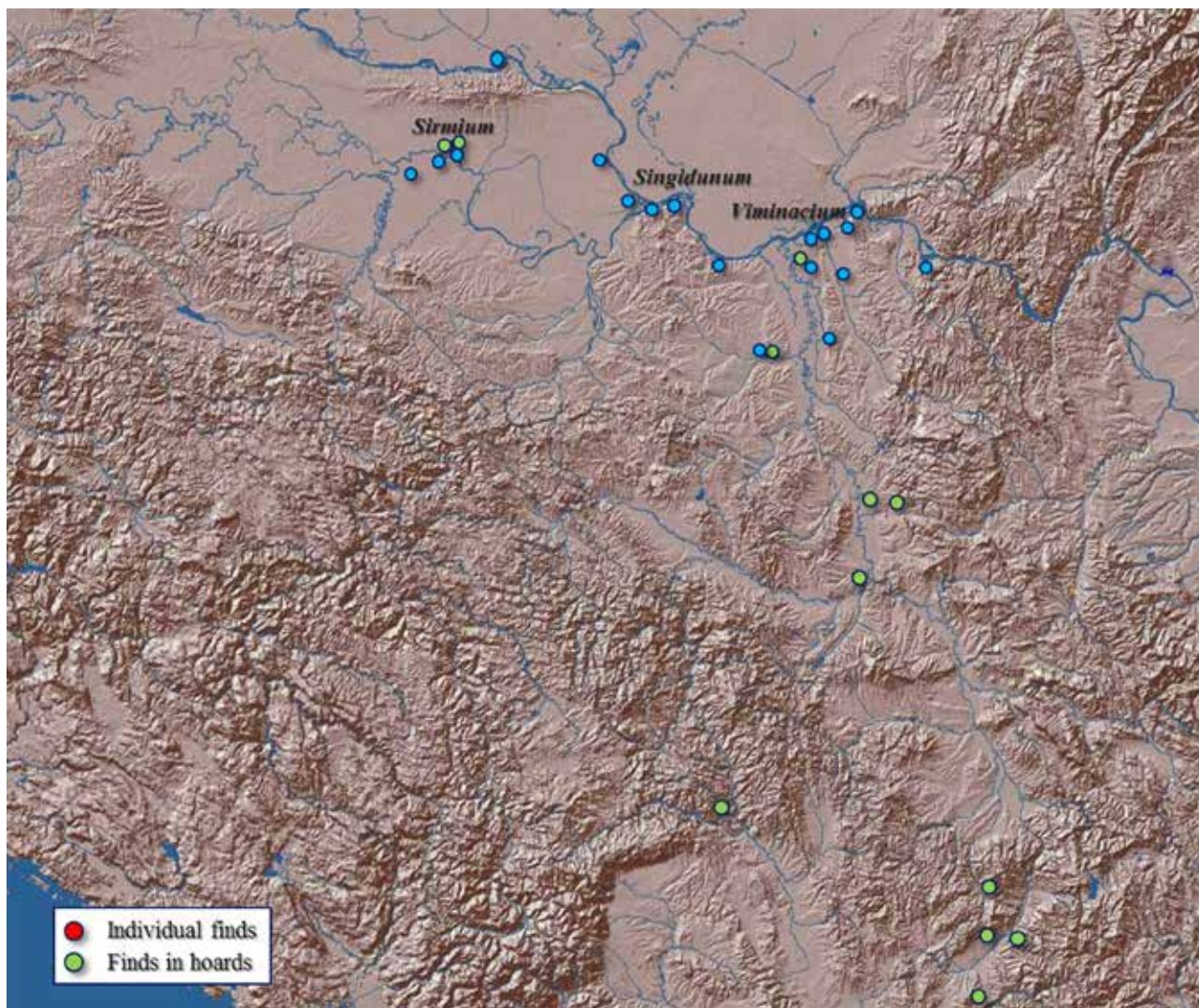
Graph. 2 – Presence of the provincial coinage from the Balkan and Asia Minor mints in Moesia Superior

the third.¹⁰ Graph 6 illustrate a significant increase in issues of the third year of the local era is registered at the territory of present-day Serbia.

During 249-250 AD, that is ANNO IV, a large drop in production was registered both in Dacia and Moesia

Superior, after which the biggest inflow of Provincia Dacia coins was registered at the territory of present-day Serbia the following year. Moreover, an increase is also observed in Dacia, but far below the maximum registered in Moesia Superior in the fifth year of the local era. From then on, until the end of operation of

¹⁰Găzdac 2008: 275, 277, Fig. 9; Găzdac, Alföldy-Găzdac 2008:152, Fig. 10; Borić-Brešković, Vojvoda, 2018, 86, ref. 66.



Map 1 – Distribution of »Provincia Dacia« coins at the territory of present-day Serbia

the mint, the registered inflow of this type of coins was approximately the same in both provinces, with only ANNO VIII being a little more prominent in frequency.

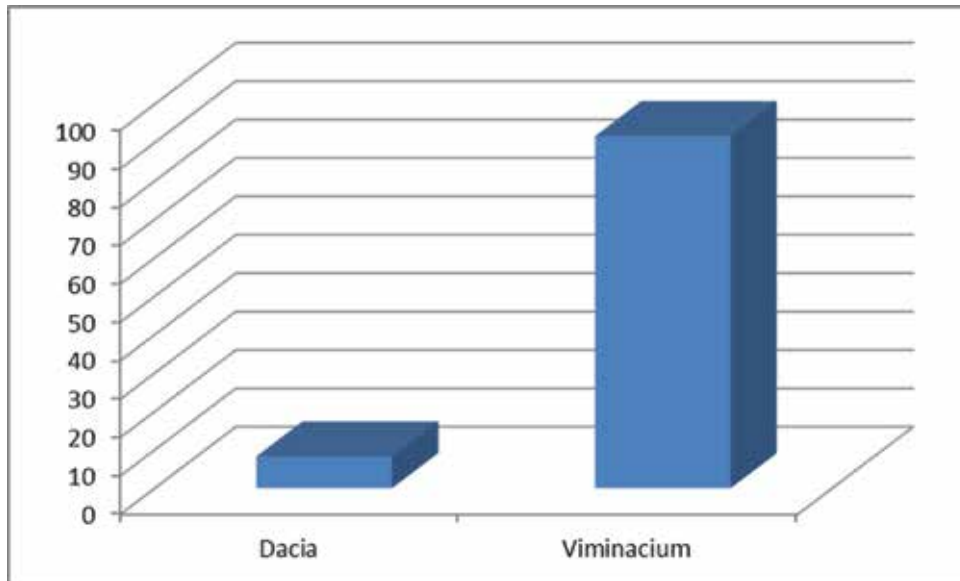
The following graphs demonstrate that issues of the Dacia mint had different roles in circulation in the domicile province compared with Moesia Superior and both Pannonias (Graphs. 6-8).¹¹ The inflow of coins from the Dacia mint in both Pannonias is almost identical to that in Moesia Superior. In the domicile province of Dacia, this inflow differs, especially in the initial years of the mint's operation. It should be stressed that, from the years 249 and 250 AD, monetary finds of this mint are encountered almost exclusively in the southern parts of the province. This is one of the facts

that speaks in favour of the claim that the mint was located in Apulum, and not in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. Besides, Apulum was the base of the Legio 13th Gemina, and the ore-rich areas in the Western Carpathians were also nearby.¹²

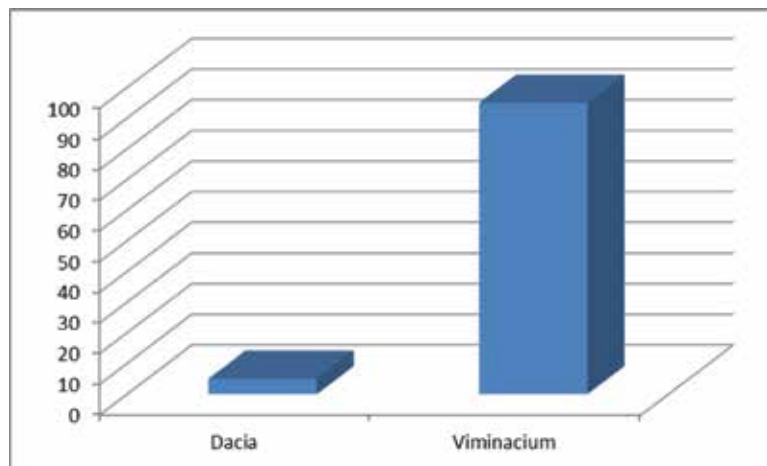
Events in the Roman Empire, especially in the eastern Balkans, certainly affected to the work of the Viminacium and Dacia mints. Due to the usurpation of Pacatianus, who used Viminacium as his base, and the subsequent conflict between Philip I and Trajan Decius during the summer of 249, there was a brief interruption in operation in both provincial mints. 10th year of local era, from October 248 -October 249, being completely absent in Viminacium, while the mint in Dacia

¹¹Găzdac, Alföldy-Găzdac, 2008, 139–140.

¹²Găzdac-Alfoldy, Găzdac 2005, 651; Găzdac, Găzdac-Alfoldy 2008, 145–146.



Graph. 3 – Presence of »Provincia Dacia« and Viminacium coins in hoards from the territory of present-day Serbia



Graph. 4 – Presence of »Provincia Dacia« and Viminacium individual coin finds from the territory of present-day Serbia

issued 4th year of its lokal era, only after the Senate's recognition of Decius in October 249 and there is no issue of the same lokal year for Philip I, while ANNO IV began in July or August 249.¹³

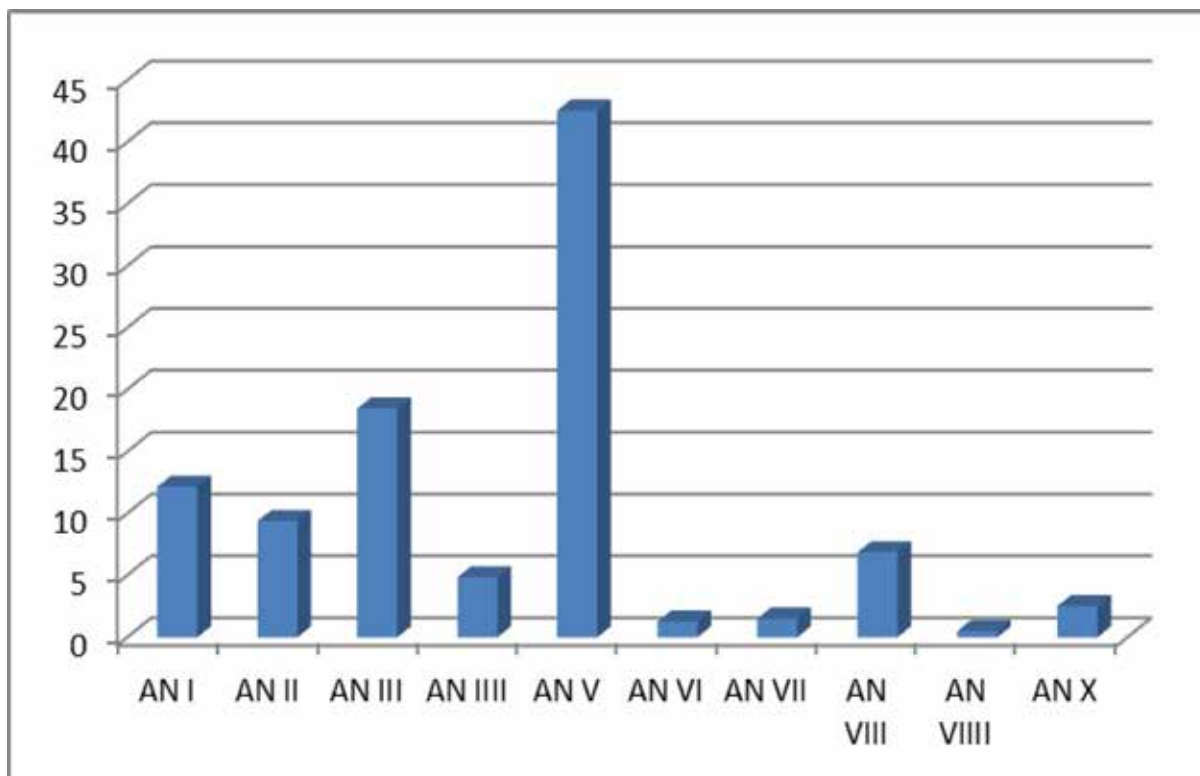
The events from 250-251 AD, (the 12th year of the Viminacium era and 5th year of the Dacia local era) are in connection with the military activities of Gothic tribes and their raids of the Moesia Inferior and Thracia, also with the stay of Trajan Decius in the Balkans and his passing through Viminacium. In summer 250 AD, Decius was in Moesia Inferior and, after the victory at Nicopolis on the Danube, he crossed into Dacia

where he defeated the Carpi, and returned to Thracia in autumn.¹⁴The increased presence of the military was certainly reflected in the greater output of both Balkan mints during 250-251 AD. The mints in Dacia and Viminacium supplied the military units that were transferred to the war zones and the hinterlands.

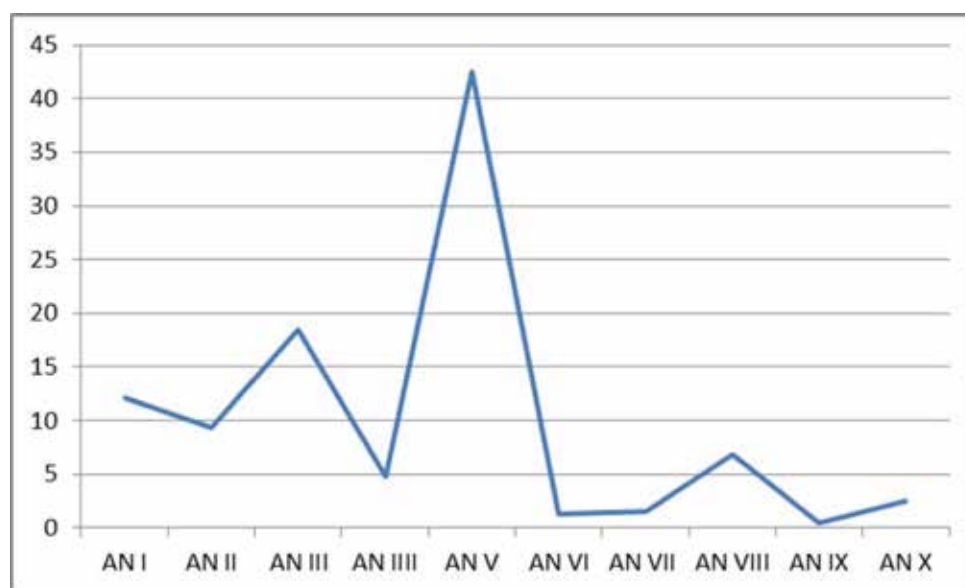
The highest concentration of Provincia Dacia coins was registered along the Danube limes, especially in Viminacium and its nearer and broader vicinity. The areas with the second most frequent monetary finds of such a type is along the Morava land route southwards, all the way to Vranje and its vicinity. A lone find, out-

¹³Găzdac, Găzdac-Alfoldy 2008, 141–142.

¹⁴Bacih 2012, 16–19.



Graph. 5 – »Provincia Dacia« coins from present-day Serbia, according to the minting years

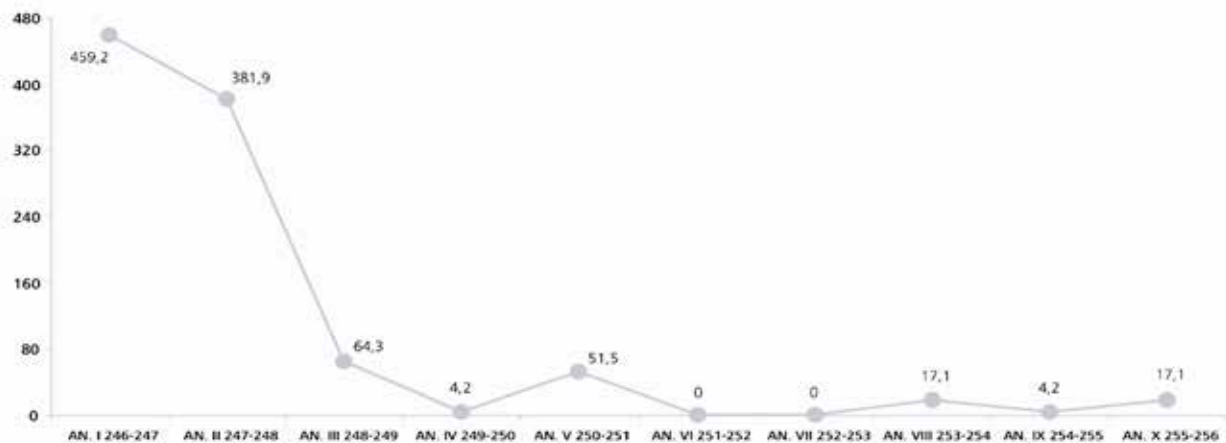


Graph. 6 – Presence of »Provincia Dacia« coins at the territory of present-day Serbia

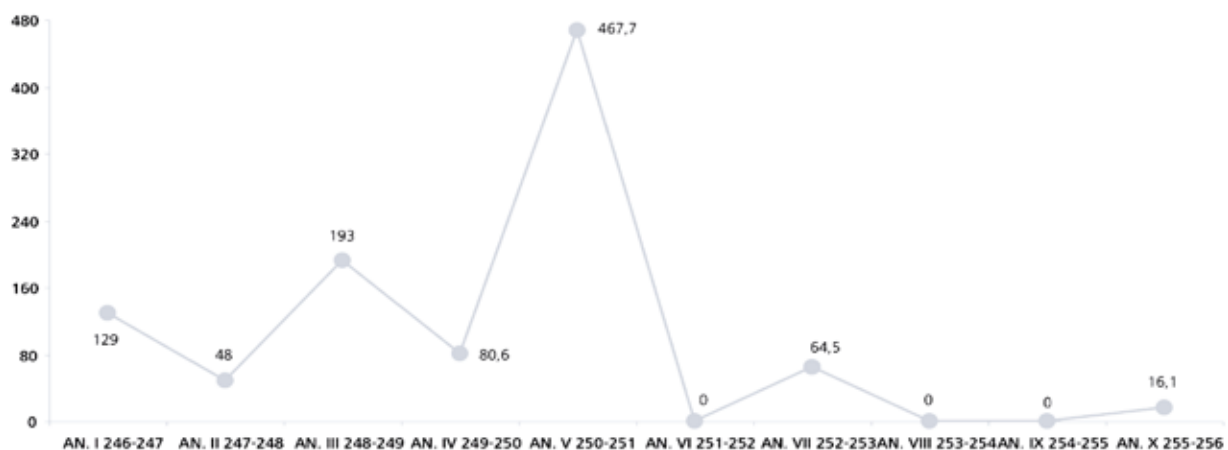
side of these directions, is the hoard from the village of Izvore near Kosovska Mitrovica, which is probably the result of insufficient exploration. The third significant area of concentration of Provincia Dacia coinage was noticed along the Sava valley, especially in its lower part.

The founding of the mint in Viminacium and, a little later, in Dacia, represented an official attempt to tem-

porarily solve the problem in the functioning of the Empire's monetary system. However, it seems that the two newly established Balkan mints had different roles. Viminacium issues had a far greater production and a broader area of circulation, while issues of the province of Dacia seem to have been minted solely for the needs of the domicile province. Besides, Viminacium issues were more frequent than Dacian ones even in Dacia. Only in the period from 246 to 249 did the mint



Graph. 7 – Coin index of the »Provincia Dacia« coins in Dacia (according Găzdac, Alföldy-Găzdac 2008, 152, fig. 9)



Graph. 8 – Coin index of the »Provincia Dacia« coins in Pannonia Superior and Pannonia Inferior (according Găzdac, Alföldy-Găzdac 2008, 146, fig. 4)

in Dacia have a greater output and exceed the number of Viminacium issues in Dacia, whereas Viminacium issues were once again more frequent after the reign of Philip I until Valerian I.¹⁵ The production of the two Balkan mints, in Dacia and Viminacium, represented the way to manage the monetary crisis in the middle of the 3rd century AD and supply the military with the necessary coins.

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¹⁵Găzdac 2008, 275, 277, Fig. 9; Găzdac, Alföldy-Găzdac 2008, 152, Fig. 10; Borić-Brešković, Vojvoda 2018, 86, ref. 65.

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