

## **Chapter Four:**

### **The Costs and Benefits of the Dacian Annexation**

## Chapter Four: The Costs and Benefits of the Dacian Annexation

The reasons for Trajan's annexation of Dacia have often been described as nothing more than a cynical attempt on the part of a Roman emperor to satisfy a lust for money or glory, or as an avenue for securing his position in the Roman hierarchy.<sup>267</sup> Even if these arguments could be proven to be true it could be argued that an annexation of Dacia would have been unnecessary, as a successful punitive action against the Dacians, with substantial amounts of plundering culminating in the appointment of a Roman-supported client-king, would have achieved the same results.<sup>268</sup> It is therefore too simplistic to explain the cause of the Dacian annexation as a result of the emperor's desire for glory, money, or security for his reign.

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<sup>267</sup> F. Lepper and S. Frere, *Trajan's Column* (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing, 1988), pp.279-80.

Lepper and Frere provide a good synopsis of the opinions of previous authors regarding the cause of Trajan's Dacian Wars.

<sup>268</sup> The fact that Trajan did receive a substantial amount of glory, and was awarded the title *Dacicus*, after the completion of the first war, made no concerted effort to plunder the Dacian fortresses, and allowed Decebalus to remain the Dacian monarch suggests that individually these factors were not of as vital importance to this emperor as they are sometimes described.

Alternatively, some authors believe that the primary reason for Trajan's action against Dacia was the threat that a united Dacia, under the skilled leadership of Decebalus, posed to the security of the Roman Empire.<sup>269</sup> Although undoubtedly the Dacians posed a significant and real threat to Rome, this could again have been eliminated without the need to annex. It is the contention of this work that it was a combination of all these factors that convinced Trajan to expend the vast sums required to defeat and annex the Dacians after the completion of the second war. Furthermore, it is my contention that the decision to annex Dacia was not taken until after the completion of the first war, and that it is likely that the additional intelligence Trajan was able to gather during the course of the first war, and from the garrisons remaining in Dacia during the inter-war period, that helped make Trajan aware of the costs and benefits likely to result from an annexation of the region.

Although there were clear disadvantages associated with this conquest, the Dacian annexation overall provided the Romans with significant advantages. The disadvantages associated with the Dacian annexation

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<sup>269</sup> W. T. Arnold, *The Roman System of Provincial Administration to the Accession of Constantine the Great* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1906), p.160.

included the high expenditure necessary, both for the conquest itself and subsequent infrastructure creation, and the fact that no significant trade barriers were removed by the annexation. Increased manpower requirements to defend the region, and increased hostility on other associated fronts form the geopolitical disadvantages of the Dacian annexation. The advantages resulting from the Dacian annexation include the economic benefits associated with this conquest, improved regional trade, increased local trade, high efficiency economic collaboration and low-cost Romanisation. Geopolitical advantages included tactical and regional strategic advantages. Advantages from the systemic frustration group encompass inclusiveness, satisfied aspirations of the conquered, and no need for extraordinary coercive measures. An increase in glory also proved to be an advantageous internal factor of the annexation of Dacia. This chapter examines each of these points individually and demonstrates that the advantages gained through the conquest of Dacia were sufficiently advantageous to explain the Dacian annexation of AD 106 – 107.

It is clear that Trajan had a relatively thorough understanding of the ethnography, political disposition and the geography of Dacia before he invaded which would certainly have increased as his campaigns in the region

continued. A large amount of this information would likely have resulted from the experiences of the commanders who had preceded Trajan into the region. Caesar had planned an invasion and would, based on previous examples, have undertaken to gain as much of an understanding of the Dacian geography as possible.<sup>270</sup>

Augustus had completed campaigns in the region which would have provided some detailed knowledge of Dacian geography,<sup>271</sup> and the most recent campaigns against the Dacians commissioned by Domitian would have further added to Trajan's understanding of the Dacian geography.<sup>272</sup> It must also be remembered that there had for a long time been significant trade contact between the Dacians and the Romans, with Roman traders encouraged to do business in Dacia, as well as Greek contact, suggesting that the traders may have been a valuable source of geographic knowledge.

It is probable that Trajan actually had experience in the Danubian region, and possible that he had even participated in Domitian's Dacian

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<sup>270</sup> Caes., *BG.*, IV.20.2-4.

<sup>271</sup> Dio, LI.23; Suet., *Aug.*, 63

<sup>272</sup> Dio, LXVII.6.

campaigns prior to his accession.<sup>273</sup> Bennett convincingly argues that Trajan was in command of either the Pannonian or Moesian legions, having recently defeated the Germanic Suebi, when he received the news of his adoption by Nerva.<sup>274</sup> Pliny makes it clear that Trajan had been hailed emperor prior to his accession,<sup>275</sup> clearly demonstrating that he had significant military experience prior to the Dacian campaigns. This suggests that he had little to prove regarding his military skill to the Roman populace when he became emperor. This is further supported by the fact that at least one reason for Nerva's choice of Trajan as successor must be attributed to Nerva's need for military support to protect his own position, a role Trajan would not have been suitable for without the control of a significant military force and preferably a reasonable military reputation.

Therefore, it is also undoubtable that Trajan possessed a very good understanding of the geopolitical situations connected to a Dacian conquest, and the likely political repercussions of Roman aggression in the region.

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<sup>273</sup> J. Bennett, *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp.45-46.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>275</sup> Pliny, *Paneg.*, 8.9.

## The Course of the Dacian Wars

The first Roman campaign of AD 101 appears to have involved two columns of Roman soldiers both departing from stations along the Danube. The first left from Lederata and the second from Dierna, rejoining at Tibiscum before the only major engagement of the first campaign at Tapae. The extant fragment of Trajan's commentary of the Dacian Wars '*inde Berzobis deinde Aizi processimus*'<sup>276</sup> provides the only definitive evidence of the Roman route for the first column into and through Dacia in the first Dacian war of AD 101. After departing from Lederata this column made its way north to Arcidava, Berzobis, Aizi, and Tibiscum where the two columns were reunited. The second column appears to have departed from either Dierna or Transdierna and followed a northwesterly route through the Banat Valley until it reached Tibiscum. It is clear that the first campaign consisted largely of Roman soldiers travelling through the Banat valley in search of an enemy that had retreated to the heavily-defended Carpathian enclave.

The scenes on Trajan's Column representing this segment of the first

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<sup>276</sup> Priscian, VI.13.

campaign support this conclusion by focusing primarily on the Roman army's movement into and through the lowland areas of Dacia.<sup>277</sup> These scenes suggest that Trajan's forces were unopposed in their journey through the Banat Valley, which is known to have contained at least three Dacian fortifications situated on the route of the first column, where resistance might have been expected but did not eventuate.<sup>278</sup> The Roman forces are depicted as cautiously advancing through this region and constructing legionary camps along the way, as was the common Roman practice. It is clear that the Roman forces had no idea of where an engagement with the Dacian forces might occur.<sup>279</sup>

The fact that no engagement is depicted until the battle at Tapae<sup>280</sup> indicates that Decebalus withdrew his forces from the Dacian fortifications in the low-lying Banat Valley sometime before Trajan's crossing of the Danube River in AD 101. Decebalus' actions before the onset of the Roman invasion

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<sup>277</sup> Scenes I – XXXVIII.

<sup>278</sup> G. A. T. Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 7 (1917): p.83. Arcidava, Scenes XIII – XIV; Berzobis, Scenes XVIII – XX; Tibiscum, Scenes XXI – XXII.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. Davies states that the Roman forces heavily fortified their camps in the lowland regions as they did not know that the Dacians had withdrawn; see in particular Apus Fluvius, Scene XII.

<sup>280</sup> Scene XXIV.



illustrate his awareness that his own forces were no match for a Roman army in terrain that suited the heavily-armoured legionaries,<sup>281</sup> who were trained to fight in group formations and formed the backbone of the Roman forces.<sup>282</sup> Trajan and the Imperial army were thereby forced to pursue Decebalus' forces into terrain that was favourable to the Dacian forces and their style of fighting.<sup>283</sup>

Decebalus' choice of Tapae as the site for the first major engagement between Roman and Dacian forces negated many of the advantages that the legionaries would have exploited in the lowlands, thereby reducing the risk of a large-scale defeat that would have been disastrous to Decebalus' strategy. Trajan's army, which was in possession of a significant contingent of cavalry,<sup>284</sup> would have made any engagement in the Banat Valley an extremely hazardous proposition for the Dacian forces who would likely have found themselves flanked and routed. Tapae's terrain had already proven to be unfavourable to the Roman legionaries in AD 88 when the Dacian forces encountered Julianus

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<sup>281</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.88.

<sup>282</sup> D. Williams, *Romans and Barbarians Four Views from the Empire's Edge 1st Century AD* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p.190.

<sup>283</sup> Vegetius, XIII.3; cf. Dio, LVI.14.

<sup>284</sup> Scene XXIV, Casts 57 – 58.

at this location, clearly a significant influence on Decebalus' choice of Tapae as the site of the only battle of the first campaign.<sup>285</sup>

Decebalus' strategy in this phase of the war was based partially on the hope that the Roman forces could be delayed enough so that they would be forced to leave Dacia,<sup>286</sup> or at least the areas of Dacia bounded by the Carpathian Mountains, owing to the onset of winter. This would have given Decebalus more time to gather his allies. It is known that Decebalus was actively attempting to construct an anti-Roman coalition involving various German tribes,<sup>287</sup> the Sarmatians, and the Parthians,<sup>288</sup> yet none of these allies or potential allies are depicted on Trajan's Column in the scenes representing the first campaign. Decebalus' reluctance to be drawn into direct conflict with the Romans in the first campaign, before the battle at Tapae, not only gained him more time in which to assemble these additional forces,<sup>289</sup> but maintained

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<sup>285</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.83.

<sup>286</sup> C. Daicoviciu, "Dakien und Rom in der Prinzipatszeit," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), p.917.

<sup>287</sup> Something Rome had learnt to be wary of since Carthaginian attempts at forming an anti-Roman coalition, F.E. Adcock, *The Roman Art of War under the Republic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p.87.

<sup>288</sup> Pliny, *Epist.*, 10.74; Strabo, VII.3.13.

<sup>289</sup> Daicoviciu, "Dakien Und Rom in Der Prinzipatszeit," p.917.

the appearance of Dacian strength and ensured that he suffered no major reversals before their arrival. Such displays of strength were an essential factor in the construction and maintenance of an anti-Roman coalition.

The terrain at Tapae had proven unfavourable to Julianus' forces in AD 88.<sup>290</sup> It is apparent from the depictions on the Column that this was also the case for Trajan's legionaries. The Column clearly depicts the battle at Tapae as being fought only by the Roman auxiliaries with the legionary forces waiting in the background (see fig. 2.).<sup>291</sup> Lepper and Frere have tried to explain this by stating that the depiction on the Column is meant to represent only the earliest phase of the battle, as the auxiliaries were often sent in before the legionaries followed.<sup>292</sup> Although possible, this explanation seems unlikely owing to the nature and purpose of the Column itself. Trajan's Column was undoubtedly constructed as a piece of imperial propaganda and as such, in an effort to display the superiority of the Romans, its scenes generally centre

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<sup>290</sup> Although Julianus was victorious in this battle, the terrain and Decebalus' use of it prevented Julianus' forces from pursuing the Dacian forces and entering the Orăștie Mountains.

<sup>291</sup> Scene XXIV.

<sup>292</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, pp.68-69, argue that the Column's designer was attempting to avoid depicting the chaotic scenes of the heat of battle when both sides are intermingled.

XXIV

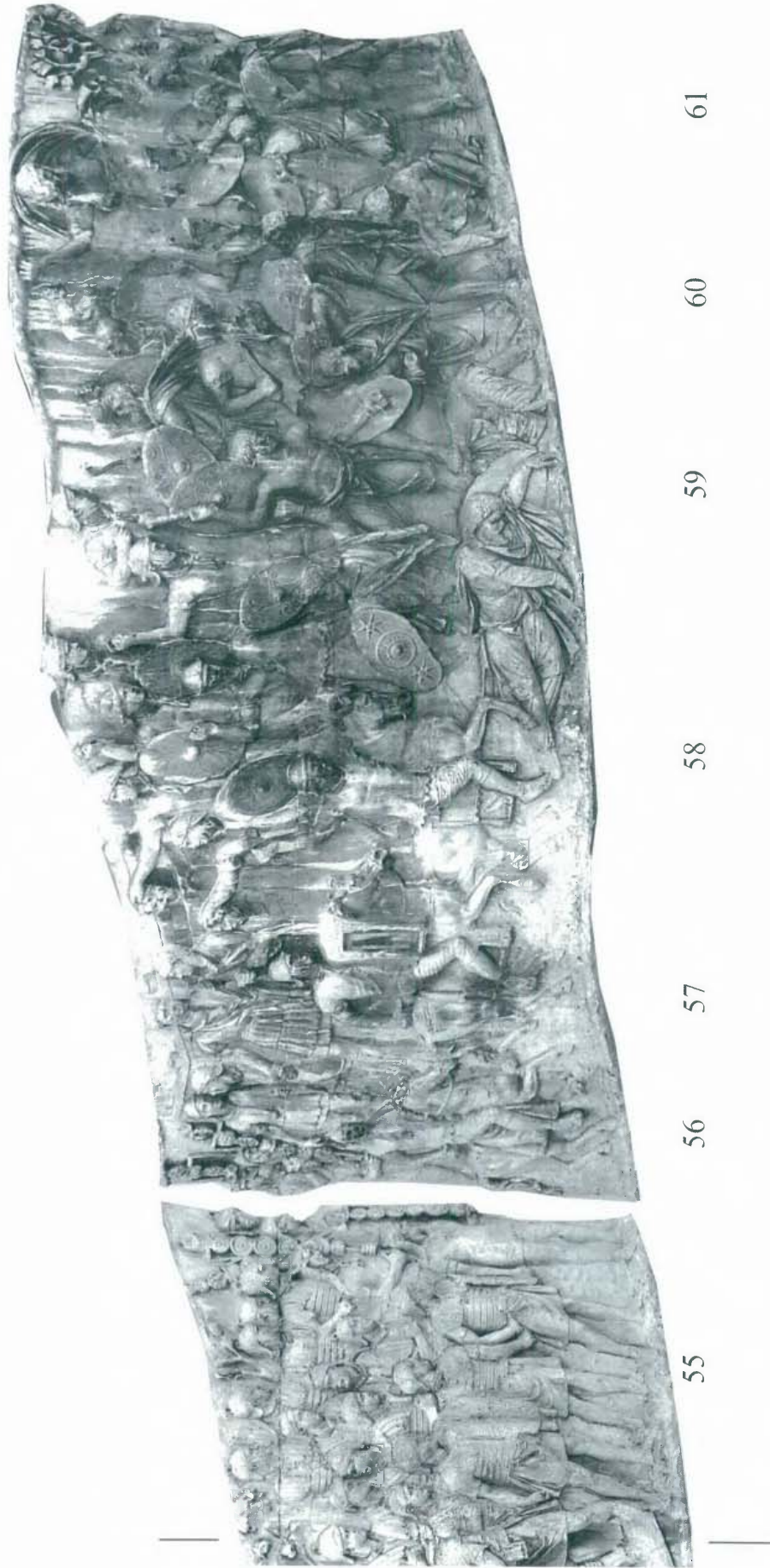


Fig. 2. Trajan's Column Scene XXIV Casts 55-61

on the Roman legionaries whenever possible, whether they are building legionary camps or fighting the Dacians.<sup>293</sup> Any depiction of auxiliaries, who were not usually Roman citizens, defeating the Dacian forces in a conflict where the legionaries took part would be highly unexpected. Therefore, given the purpose of the Column and the nature of the terrain, the battle at Tapae appears to have been fought primarily by the Roman auxiliary forces.

After achieving victory at Tapae, it seems that winter's approach prevented Trajan from advancing to the Dacian capital Sarmizegetusa,<sup>294</sup> leaving us with no literary or physical evidence to demonstrate his goals for the first campaign.

Debate still rages, as it has done since the late 1800s, over which route Trajan used to gain entry into the Orăștie Mountains during the second campaign of the Dacian Wars in AD 102.<sup>295</sup> Much of this debate is due to the fact that Sarmizegetusa Regia was not discovered until relatively recently, and works pre-dating its discovery assumed that Sarmizegetusa Ulpia was

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<sup>293</sup> Williams, *Romans and Barbarians Four Views from the Empire's Edge 1st Century AD*, p.175.

<sup>294</sup> To distinguish between the two Sarmizegetusas, the Roman and Dacian, Ulpia will be added to all references to the Roman capital of Dacia.

<sup>295</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.74; Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, pp.91-94.

actually Decebalus' Dacian capital. The two are actually located nearly 50 km apart, with the Dacian capital located in the Orăștie mountains and Sarmizegetusa Ulpia being located in nearby lowlands. It seems most likely that the Roman forces of the second campaign travelled into the Orăștie Mountains via the Red Tower pass,<sup>296</sup> as an alternative some historians have proposed the Vulcan pass<sup>297</sup> or the re-use of the Iron Gate pass.<sup>298</sup> Although it would be helpful to have a definitive solution to this problem, it is not essential for this work to identify Trajan's precise route. There can be no doubt that the depictions on Trajan's Column of the Roman forces besieging at least two fortifications took place in the Orăștie Mountain range,<sup>299</sup> with the obvious purpose of breaching the Dacian defensive network and thereby gaining access to the capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia.

Between the first century BC and the first century AD the Dacians had constructed a defensive network boasting more than 90 installations, the majority of which were situated in an approximately 200 km<sup>2</sup> region of the

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<sup>296</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.74; Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.92.

<sup>297</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.92; Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.74.

<sup>298</sup> K. Strobel, *Untersuchungen Zu Den Dakerkriegen Trajans: Studien Zur Geschichte Des Mittleren Und Unteren Donauraumes in Der Hohen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn: Dr Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1984), p.191.

<sup>299</sup> Scenes LV and LVI clearly show an advance into mountainous terrain.

Orăştie Mountains.<sup>300</sup> The primary purpose of these installations was the defence of the Dacian capital from any possible assault.<sup>301</sup> This defensive network ensured that any offensive targeted at Sarmizegetusa Regia required the defeat, capture or destruction of a significant number of other fortresses. Considering their placement on natural high points overlooking the approaches into the mountains, this was an extremely difficult task.<sup>302</sup>

The second campaign of the first war, AD 102, was characterised by an aggressive Roman advance into the Orăştie mountains.<sup>303</sup> In this campaign, amid much hard fighting,<sup>304</sup> Trajan was able to achieve the objective which Decebalus' strategy had denied him in the first campaign and gain a foothold in the Orăştie Mountains. Scene LXIV depicts what was probably the last chance for the Dacians to maintain the integrity of the Orăştie Mountain network. The Romans, once they had won this engagement, proceeded to attack the Dacian fortifications located in this region. The Column depicts

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<sup>300</sup> Strobel, *Untersuchungen Zu Den Dakerkriegen Trajans: Studien Zur Geschichte Des Mittleren Und Unteren Donaupraumes in Der Hohen Kaiserzeit*, p.44; Daicoviciu, "Dakien Und Rom in Der Prinzipatszeit," p.890.

<sup>301</sup> Daicoviciu, "Dakien Und Rom in Der Prinzipatszeit," p.890.

<sup>302</sup> Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, p.270.

<sup>303</sup> Scenes LVII – LXXII.

<sup>304</sup> Dio, LXVIII.8.3; Scenes LXIV, LXVI, LXX, LXXI.

the burning of two Dacian fortifications<sup>305</sup> and the assault of three more,<sup>306</sup> corresponding to Dio's statement that Trajan advanced into the mountains and captured one crest after another.<sup>307</sup>

The scenes of Trajan's sieges clearly indicate that Decebalus' forces were forced into fighting a defensive campaign in an attempt to keep the Romans from capturing the political and religious 'heart' of the empire, Sarmizegetusa Regia. The Roman legionaries are depicted as being more heavily involved than they had been in the first campaign.<sup>308</sup> This can largely be attributed to the sorts of activities required in this phase of the Roman operation. The legions were undoubtedly the source of the Roman army's technical skill,<sup>309</sup> the most important asset in the successful resolution of a siege. It should also be pointed out that the legionary's heavy armour and reliance on group tactics made them indispensable in any siege,<sup>310</sup> in contrast to Tapae where they were a liability because of the rugged terrain far more suited to auxiliary

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<sup>305</sup> Scenes LVII and LVIII.

<sup>306</sup> Scenes LXVI, LXX, and LXXI.

<sup>307</sup> Dio, LXVIII.8.3.

<sup>308</sup> Scenes LXXI, Cast 181, LXXII, Cast 185.

<sup>309</sup> Onasander, 40.

<sup>310</sup> See Scene LXXI, Cast 181 Roman legionaries utilising the *Testudo* formation to approach a Dacian fortress, towards the end of the first war.



units. Trajan's success provided him an opportunity to establish garrisons in the heart of the Dacian network<sup>311</sup> forcing Decebalus into a defensive war confined to the Orășties. Decebalus was forced to change his strategy after the events of the second campaign of the first war. The Romans, once within the Orăștie Mountains had stationed garrisons in this region, preventing Decebalus from mounting counter-attacks in Roman territory and taking control of the initiative for the remainder of the Dacian wars.<sup>312</sup>

The Dacians found themselves unable to prevent the Roman advance and capture of their defences. Decebalus, knowing that the Romans were nearing Sarmizegetusa Regia, surrendered before the capital was besieged, ending the first Dacian war. The fact that Decebalus was permitted to remain the Dacian king demonstrates that Trajan had no desire to annex Dacia at this time, rather that his actions in the first war were designed as a punitive measure to demonstrate that Rome was the dominant power in the region and cross-border aggression would not be tolerated. Trajan's success was rewarded with the title 'Dacicus' and Trajan's Column clearly marks the event as a victory (see fig. 3.). Dio described the terms of Trajan's treaty: all

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<sup>311</sup> Dio, LXVIII.9.7.

<sup>312</sup> Davies, "Trajan's First Dacian War," p.83.

Dacian forts were to be razed, the territory taken was to be evacuated, the Dacians were to have the same friends and enemies as Rome, Decebalus was to return all those Romans that had deserted to fight with Dacia, the engineers Domitian had supplied Dacia were to be sent back, and the arms and engines of war were to be handed over to the Romans.<sup>313</sup>



Fig. 3. Trajan's Column Scene LXXVIII Cast 204-205

Dio then proceeds to describe how Decebalus broke these terms by amassing weapons, continuing to receive deserters, rebuilding his fortifications,

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<sup>313</sup> Dio, LXVIII.9.

and trying to coax his neighbours into an anti-Roman coalition,<sup>314</sup> justifying the commencement of the second war in AD 105. The second war of AD 105 – 106 is depicted as a continuation of the Roman destruction of the Dacian defensive network.<sup>315</sup> As the Roman garrisons were already established in the Orăştie Mountains, all the fighting in this war took place in the mountains surrounding Sarmizegetusa Regia. Dio in his account of the Dacian wars indicated that many Dacians deserted and sided with Trajan immediately before the onset of the second war, presumably after they had learned of Trajan's second invasion, leaving Decebalus with a greatly depleted force.<sup>316</sup> Decebalus was no longer able to waste his enemy's campaigning season without actually having to engage Trajan's forces. Decebalus' significantly reduced force increased the chances that he would suffer a debilitating defeat. The Dacians were no longer able to attack the Romans in an attempt to shift the initiative of the war as they had done with the Moesian counter-attack in 101-102. Instead, Decebalus was forced to try to expel an occupying army from the Orăştie complex in an attempt to regain some of the defensive depth and regain the defensive options that he had in the first campaign. He failed

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<sup>314</sup> Dio, LXVIII.10.3.

<sup>315</sup> Scenes CXIII, CXVI.

<sup>316</sup> Dio, LXVIII.11.

# **Dacian Cost Benefit Analysis:**

## **The Economic Factors**

## Economic Factors

### Regional Trade

An examination of the Dacian annexation demonstrates that, although the Romans incurred some losses in regional trade primarily because of a dispute that arose between the Romans and the Iazyges, overall the Romans gained a significant regional trade advantage after the completion of the Dacian annexation. This advantage was primarily the result of changed trade conditions in Moesia, and the taxation applied to goods sold from Dacia to the barbarian peoples in border contact with the western part of the new province.<sup>317</sup> Dacian raids had, prior to the annexation, prevented Rome from fully exploiting Moesia's trade potential and Rome's ability to exploit the rich gold mines of Upper Moesia.<sup>318</sup>

The Dacians were active regional trade participants as is clearly illustrated

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<sup>317</sup> C. Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations" (paper presented at the Roman Frontier Studies 1995, 1997 1995), p.249. Two *stationes portorii* were situated on the western *limes* of the new province at Partiscum and Porolissum, directly facing the most densely populated barbarian regions.

<sup>318</sup> A. Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia, a History of the Middle Danube Provinces of the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p.131.

by their interactions with Greece, the most commercially dynamic nation in the region. Additionally there is evidence that, as early as the Middle Bronze Age, Dacia was involved in sporadic and indirect trade with some distant nations. It is clear that the Dacians engaged in limited international trade with Egypt and nearer Northern Europe, as demonstrated by finds in Dacia of products native to those regions such as glass paste and amber; these finds do not however represent long term trade interaction.<sup>319</sup>

In their immediate region the Dacians traded extensively with neighbouring peoples and this inter-tribal trade is apparently responsible for finds of Dacian metalwork as far away as the Baltic.<sup>320</sup> These finds, however, are scattered and cannot be used as evidence of deliberate, organised or permanent long distance trade. In this period, the Geto-Dacian communities can be characterised as consisting of small tribal communities under the jurisdiction of local tribal chieftains. It is therefore safe to assume that the Geto-Dacians at the time of contact with the Greek colonists of Histria were,<sup>321</sup> for the most part, still utilising a simple barter economy where wealth was

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<sup>319</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.17.

<sup>320</sup> V. Dumitrescu and A. Vulpe, *Dacia before Dromichaites* (Bucharest: Editura Stiintifica si Enciclopedica, 1988), p.56.

<sup>321</sup> In approximately 700 BC.

represented by land ownership.

Glodariu argues that it was not until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC that the discoveries of Greek products in Dacia indicate the beginnings of a permanent trade relationship.<sup>322</sup> He argues that the preceding trade was too sporadic to indicate a permanent relationship.<sup>323</sup> Although Glodariu is undoubtedly correct in arguing that these finds represent the start of trade relations with the Geto-Dacians, his belief that there was no permanent trade prior to this must be challenged. The evidence indicates that the Greek Black Sea colonists were already utilising what were considered established trade routes east of the Danube that led into both Moldavia and Muntenia by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. In addition, finds such as those from the graves at Zimnicea further indicate that Geto-Dacians were involved in vital and extensive trade earlier than that postulated by Glodariu.<sup>324</sup> The unearthing of Zimnicea's graves which have been dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC has led to the discoveries of a Greek bronze helmet, Greek amphorae, a silver Greek bowl, and Thracian fibulas,

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<sup>322</sup> I. Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, trans. Nubar Hampartumian, vol. Supplementary Series 8 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1976), p.7.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.47.

which suggest the existence of at least some form of regular regional trade.<sup>325</sup> Zimnicea, founded sometime between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC,<sup>326</sup> is more important still when it realised that this settlement has one of the 11 highest concentrations of amphorae find sites in Dacia,<sup>327</sup> suggesting that Zimnicea prospered from and was founded largely to take advantage of regional trade opportunities.

The presence of Greek products in Dacia between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC were most frequent in the southern areas of Moldavia and Muntenia which are directly adjacent to the Dobruja region.<sup>328</sup> The Dobruja region was the area west of the Danube adjacent to the Black Sea where the Greek colonies of Histria, Callatis, and Tomis were located. Examples of foreign goods found in Dacia that date to the earliest period of Dacian trade with these Greek colonies include the Greek vessel found in the Bacău district near the confluence of the Siret and Bistrița rivers, the Attic Kylix found at Poiana, and the Black painted Kylix found at Frumușița.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid., p.46.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>327</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.12.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., p.7.



Built on Lake Sinoe, Histria provided a sheltered harbour some 65 km north of Tomis, the site of Ovid's exile in AD 8 (see fig. 4.). Histria demonstrates the vitality of Dacian regional trade.<sup>330</sup> Founded by Milesian Ionians in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>331</sup> Histria was the first and for some time the major trade partner of the Geto-Dacians.<sup>332</sup> In an extraordinary stroke of luck for archaeologists and historians, Histria has remained uninhabited since its sack by the Slavs in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, providing archaeologists with a wealth of information.<sup>333</sup>

Archaeological finds have clearly demonstrated that Histria was actively engaged in importing products from Greece as early as 650 BC. Objects that have been found include Corinthian, Attic, Milesian, and Chian pottery.<sup>334</sup> The Milesian colonists settled amongst the Geto-Dacians of the Dobruja region and instead of creating enmity by enforcing a claim for land on the local population, the Greek colonists engaged in mutually beneficial

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<sup>330</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.21.

<sup>331</sup> Eusebius dates the foundation of Histria to 657 BC, and although this has been the source of some debate the variation is a matter of some 30 years and therefore not relevant to this discussion.

<sup>332</sup> V. Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, trans. I. L. Charlesworth and M. P. Evans, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p.101.

<sup>333</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.21.

<sup>334</sup> [www.cimec.ro/arheologie/arom/arhtexte.htm](http://www.cimec.ro/arheologie/arom/arhtexte.htm), accessed 25/11/03.

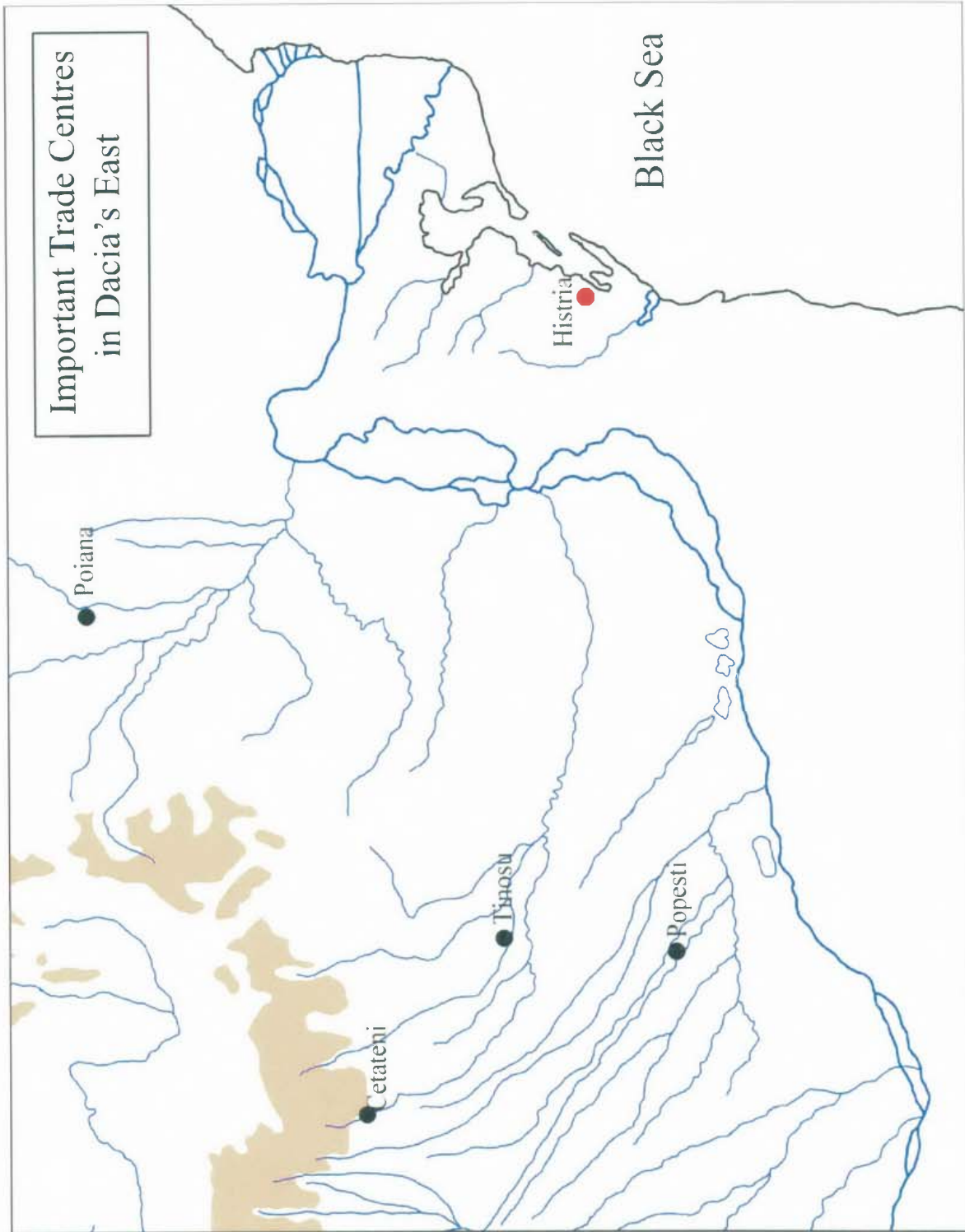


Fig. 4. Important Trade Centres in Dacia's East

trade with the locals.<sup>335</sup> Archaeological evidence has demonstrated that the Milesian colonists even adopted some of the Thraco-Dacian practices of the local population, as is evidenced by some distinctly Thracian burial practices clearly identifiable in the Greek cemetery, illustrating that significant contact between the Greek colonists and the Dacian people existed from an early date.<sup>336</sup> The local population certainly adopted some of the Greek goods that became available through trade, so much so that several modern authors have argued that the Geto-Dacian people rapidly acquired a taste for Greek 'luxury' goods.<sup>337</sup> There can be little doubt regarding Greek trade penetration with coins minted at Histria being found at Costești,<sup>338</sup> and Barboși.<sup>339</sup>

Greek trade to the region centred largely on shipments of olive oil, wine and pottery. The distribution of pottery/sherd finds further illustrates the presence of Greek trade and the spread of that trade within Dacian territory. Because of the unique geographical conditions in Dacia finds are prejudiced

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<sup>335</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.26.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26; Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.85.

<sup>338</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.58; Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.99.

<sup>339</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.70.

towards the lowland regions and the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. Of the 1100 amphorae found in 117 locations in Dacia, less than 0.5% have been found in the inter-Carpathian region.<sup>340</sup> Perhaps the most interesting factor these finds clarify is that the majority of amphorae finds in the extra-Carpathian region (65%) have been discovered in only 11 locations.<sup>341</sup> These finds indicate the likelihood that the Dacians founded several trade centres in order to transfer Greek goods into traditional and more durable containers for transport into the mountainous regions of the Carpathians.<sup>342</sup> Of these locations four represent clear dominance as trade centres: Cetățeni, Popești, Tinosu, and Poiana, all of which are situated along the major trade rivers utilised by the Greeks in Dacia's East and easily accessible from the Dobrodja (see fig. 4). Further highlighting the importance of these communities as trade centres, each clearly falls into a region where the highest concentrations of Greek and/or Macedonian coins have been found.

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<sup>340</sup> Approximately 5 of the total 1100: Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, pp.11; 12.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., p.12: Brăila, Cetățeni, Ciurea, Crăsani, Florești, Medgidia, Poiana, Popești, Răcățiu, Tinosu and Zimnicea.

<sup>342</sup> K. Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," in *Roman Dacia the Making of a Provincial Society*, ed. I. P. Haynes and W. S. Hanson (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2004), p.69.

Finds of coinage and amphorae sherds leave no doubt that Dacia was involved in interregional trade before the Roman conquest, trade that the conquerors would have been able to take advantage of after the annexation. Dacian commercial enterprise was not limited to trade with the Greeks, Macedonians and Romans. There is clear evidence of at least sporadic early trade with other regions such as Egypt, Germania, Scythia, and the various Sarmatian peoples in the region, although the extent and regularity of this trade is difficult to determine because of the paucity of literary and archaeological evidence available. The few finds of Egyptian products which include glass paste, faience beads, and an amulet of the Egyptian deity Bes demonstrate some trade interaction, although it is likely that these objects were bought through Greek intermediaries.<sup>343</sup> There is also evidence that the Dacians were trading primarily for amber with northern European peoples of Germania, and this trade is less likely to have been conducted through intermediaries because of the proximity of the Germans.<sup>344</sup> The valuable find of the gold helmet discovered at Cotofănești, with the clear depiction of a Scythian dagger, provides evidence of the Scythian influence upon the Dacians.<sup>345</sup> The

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<sup>343</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, pp.17; 49

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., p.17; Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.25.

<sup>345</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.29.

Scythian influence on the Dacians can also be demonstrated by the use of Scythian zoomorphic motifs on some Dacian pottery demonstrating cultural and material contact. The Scythians were active participants in the region as is demonstrated by early Greek trade contact with them, suggesting that active trade between them and the Dacians is probable. Additionally there have been finds of curved Illyrian daggers and Celtic swords clearly demonstrating active, pre-Roman trade relations with these peoples.<sup>346</sup>

An examination of potential regional trade partners for the Romans in a post-annexation Dacia must include all of the mentioned peoples, however few were not already engaged in active and direct trade relations with Rome. Therefore Rome would only have gained minor benefits from more direct trade with the peoples situated to the North and East of Dacia. The Daco-Roman conflict would have damaged the trade capacities of some of these peoples, probably including the Costoboci in the northern region of Dacia, the Quadi to the north-west of Dacia, the Carpi in the eastern-most region of Dacia (outside of the Roman-controlled area), the Bastarnae, Scythians and Sarmatian Roxolani east of Dacia, the Sarmatian Iazyges west of Dacia, and the Free-Dacians that had moved outside of the region under Roman control,

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p.49.

further reducing any regional trade advantage gained by the Romans.

The most disadvantageous regional trade element of the Roman conquest of Dacia was the loss of trade with the Sarmatian Iazyges. Prior to the Dacian Wars the Romans had moved and settled the Iazyges in the Hungarian plain and it can reasonably be assumed that there were some ongoing trade arrangements at this time,<sup>347</sup> most likely involving the Iazyges gaining access to the Roman markets in the nearby regions. The Iazyges were Roman allies during the Dacian annexation but fell out with Trajan after the completion of the Dacian wars.<sup>348</sup> The dispute between Rome and the Iazyges centred on the region of Oltenia which the Dacians had taken from the Iazyges during Decebalus' reign,<sup>349</sup> and Trajan's refusal to return these lands to the Iazyges after the completion of the conquest.<sup>350</sup> This dispute led to the Iazyges being banned from attending or trading at the Roman markets in Dacia and in the rest of the Danubian region.<sup>351</sup> It is clear this was an application of economic pressure to a hostile people and would have economically damaged them far

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<sup>347</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, p.37.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>350</sup> Dio, LXVIII.10.3.

<sup>351</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, p.193.

more than Rome. This response however would still have led to an economic disadvantage for Rome because of the loss of a previous trading partner and the associated loss of trade income and taxation. The lack of finds of Samian ware in the Hungarian plain before the reign of Marcus Aurelius,<sup>352</sup> when a settlement was finally reached between this Sarmatian tribe and the Romans, demonstrates that no significant trade occurred between the Romans and Iazyges for some time after the completion of the Dacian conquest.<sup>353</sup> Any trade that Rome might have had with the Iazyges at this time would have been relatively minor as the Iazyges were nomadic horsemen, with little of value to exchange.

It is important to include Rome's existing trade partners in this assessment. Although these cannot be considered new trade partners for Rome after the annexation of Dacia, this conquest did provide significant regional trade benefits as a result of the conquest. The Romans clearly considered the Dacians a threat to the safety of nearby provinces.<sup>354</sup> Moesia, a

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., pp.129; 93.

<sup>354</sup> P. Matyszak, *The Enemies of Rome from Hannibal to Attila the Hun* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), p.213.



Roman province founded by Tiberius in AD 15,<sup>355</sup> in particular had suffered from Dacian raids and incursions for most of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>356</sup> The Dacian raid of AD 69 which was barely repelled by Licinius Mucianus, who happened to be travelling through the region with his army,<sup>357</sup> and the raid of AD 85-6 which saw the Dacians killing the Roman governor of Moesia, Oppius Sabinus,<sup>358</sup> demonstrate the considerable pressure on the Moesians by their Northern neighbour. This affected their ability to fully exploit their trade potential and Rome's ability to exploit the rich mineral resources of Upper Moesia.<sup>359</sup> Trajan's annexation therefore allowed this region to develop its trade potential more fully, clearly providing a significant regional trade advantage to Rome.

Changes to regional trade after the annexation of Dacia have been considered a significant advantage to Rome.<sup>360</sup> Although the Romans do not appear to have gained access to any new regional trade partners, improved

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<sup>355</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.162.

<sup>356</sup> Matyszak, *Enemies of Rome*, p.216.

<sup>357</sup> Bennett, *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*, p.86.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86; Wilcox, *Barbarians against Rome, Rome's Celtic, Germanic, Spanish and Gallic Enemies*, p.28.

<sup>359</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia and Upper Moesia*, p.131.

<sup>360</sup> The Numerical Indicator Scale values will be provided in the following chapter.

trade-related infrastructure in the form of hard-surfaced roads, and more direct access to some tribes in regions known to have traded with Rome prior to this annexation would have reduced the transportation costs associated with inter-regional trade. The cessation of interruptions to the trade potential of Rome's Moesian province also contributed to make this factor of significant benefit to the Empire.

### **Local Trade**

Roman trade with Dacia improved significantly after the completion of the Roman conquest, even though there was an undeniable reduction in indigenous manpower. The Romans supplemented the available manpower in Dacia with a large-scale influx of Roman colonists, and also relocated many of the native settlements to lowland regions that possessed more direct access to river transport, the most economically viable method of transporting goods into and out of Dacia.<sup>361</sup> Roman road-building also increased the overall efficiency of Dacian trade and significantly reduced the costs of overland transport. The costs associated with the overland transport of goods on

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<sup>361</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.250, suggests that the placement of a *collegium nautarum* at Apulum was used to transport trade goods including salt and possibly iron along the Mureş river.

Roman roads was approximately half that of the costs of transport on unmade roads.<sup>362</sup>

If the extermination of the Dacian population could be proven to have occurred this would certainly indicate an extreme disadvantage to Roman local trade with the region. The potential extermination of the Dacian populace is examined in more detail in the inclusiveness section below. Ruscu's interpretation of the ancient sources as referring only to the Dacian elite, and not to the Dacian people as a whole is likely correct.<sup>363</sup> Recent research into villa ownership suggests that there is evidence for the survival of some indigenous elite after the completion of the conquest.<sup>364</sup> There can be little doubt that a significant proportion of the Dacian population survived after the annexation by Rome. Examinations of inscriptions in newly-urbanised regions of Roman-Dacia, although presenting a low number of finds with Dacian names, confirms the continuation and presence of at least some of

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<sup>362</sup> Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*.

<sup>363</sup> D. Ruscu, "The Supposed Extermination of the Dacians: The Literary Tradition," in *Roman Dacia the Making of a Provincial Society*, ed. I. P. Haynes and W. S. Hanson (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2004), pp.75ff.

<sup>364</sup> I. A. Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," in *Roman Dacia the Making of a Provincial Society*, ed. I. P. Haynes and W. S. Hanson (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2004), p.152.

the native populace,<sup>365</sup> as does the number of native pottery finds.<sup>366</sup> The continuation of the indigenous communities in Dacia is further evidenced by the foundation of new native settlements after the completion of the wars. This relocation of the indigenous population most likely occurred because of a Roman desire to situate native settlements in regions more readily garrisoned and overseen.<sup>367</sup>

It must be accepted that the Dacian population was significantly reduced directly as a result of war casualties and Trajan's removal of as many as 10,000 Dacians for use as gladiators in his triumphal celebrations.<sup>368</sup> That a significant number of Dacians survived the supposed extermination is demonstrated by the finds of Dacian indigenous pottery in Roman auxiliary forts built after

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<sup>365</sup> I. Piso, "Die Soziale und Ethnische Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung in Sarmizegetusa und Apulum," in *Prosopographie und Sozialgeschichte*, ed. W. Eck (Köln: Böhlau publishing house GmbH, 1993), pp.331.

<sup>366</sup> A. Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," in *The Journal of Roman Archaeology*, ed. I. P. Haynes and W. S. Hanson (Portsmouth: 2004), pp.118-19.

<sup>367</sup> D. Protase, "Der Forschungsstand zur Kontinuität der Bodenständigen Bevölkerung im Römischen Dazien," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), pp.1004-06.

<sup>368</sup> Dio, LXVIII.15.1.

the completion of the annexation.<sup>369</sup> Additionally, any actual loss had little effect on local trade, in part because of the rapid influx of the large number of colonists moved into the newly-annexed region by the Emperor shortly after the conquest.<sup>370</sup> This influx of colonists certainly replenished any lost manpower and would have compensated for any shortfall in commercial activity relatively quickly, suggesting that there was no significant loss in Dacia's ability to function as a commercial centre.

When the Romans conquered an area it was common practice to set about securing the province and also ensure that it was included into the Empire's economy.<sup>371</sup> The improvements to trade-related infrastructure, particularly the roads, significantly reduced the costs of trading with this region. Figures presented in Greene's work suggest that overland transport costs on unmade roads would have cost more than twice as much as transport on the solid roads constructed by the Romans.<sup>372</sup> The large influx of colonists into the region not only prevented the potential collapse of the local economy, but

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<sup>369</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.248.

<sup>370</sup> Eutropius, *Breviary*, 8.6.2.

<sup>371</sup> B. Gerov, *Landownership in Roman Thracia and Moesia (1st-3rd Century)*, trans. Vessela Zhelyaskova (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1988), p.194.

<sup>372</sup> Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*, p.40.

also potentially enhanced and consolidated the economic developments of the previous 150 years if the colonists introduced were already familiar with Roman economic institutions and trade practices.<sup>373</sup> The 150 years preceding the Roman annexation of Dacia had seen the Dacians, primarily under the leadership of Burebista, voluntarily modify their existing economy to one which was more compatible with that of the Romans so that they could take advantage of Roman trade.<sup>374</sup>

The enforced shifting of Dacian population centres away from the mountainous regions<sup>375</sup> to the more readily controlled lowlands after the completion of the annexation further increased the economic advantage that the Romans gained.<sup>376</sup> An examination of the placement of both the

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<sup>373</sup> Oltean, "Rural Settlement in Roman Dacia: Some Considerations," p.160, questions the level of Romanisation of some of the colonists, particularly those working in the gold-mining district. The rapid nature of the Romanisation of Dacia suggests that the majority who dwelt in the newly-built urban centres were indeed significantly Romanised before they were brought to Dacia.

<sup>374</sup> See high efficiency economic collaboration section following

<sup>375</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.248.

<sup>376</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.51; The abandonment of the Dacian hill-forts did not occur immediately after the completion of the Roman conquest, as is demonstrated by the Roman bath-house constructed at Sarmizegetusa Regia, rather the movement of the native population into the lowlands occurred as a part

new urbanised Roman sites and the relocation of indigenous communities illustrates the importance of the Dacian river system to trade, as most of the new settlements were placed adjacent to these rivers in order to take advantage of the cheapest available method of goods transportation.<sup>377</sup> This, combined with the Roman construction of 'hard' roadways, ensured that the transportation of Dacian trade was as efficient and cost effective as possible.

That water transport had already been a significant element in trade is illustrated by patterns of Greek trade. Histria in particular is known to have traded throughout a large area of the eastern half of Dacia.<sup>378</sup> Parvan and Glodariu have expressed the belief that the normal trade route taken by the Histrians involved them sailing through Lake Sinope, into Lake Halmyris, and into the Peuce arm of the Danubian delta, from there sailing along the Danube until they reached one of the four major rivers that would take them further inland.<sup>379</sup> These rivers, the Sereth, Jalomița, Dimbovita, and Olt

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of a broader pattern of change.

<sup>377</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.250.

<sup>378</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.85.

<sup>379</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.59; Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.93: Parvan names the same rivers except exchanges the Dimbovita with the Argeș.

(see fig. 5), would then give them access to many of the inland Geto-Dacian settlements.<sup>380</sup>

The Romans utilised these waterways for the transport of trade goods, as the Greeks had before them, primarily because of two factors: water transport was more likely to result in the fragile amphorae, which were utilised as container vessels for liquid and other goods, reaching their destination intact, and river transport was a cheaper alternative to overland transport.<sup>381</sup> Greene has calculated the cost differential for the transportation of goods by various means; his analysis of Roman transportation costs in Germania is perhaps closest to transport in Dacia particularly in terms of terrain and the lack of hard-surfaced roads.<sup>382</sup> Greene's study suggests a cost ratio of 1: 5.9: 62.5 for sea: river: land transport, illustrating that trade goods conducted via the river system would have cost less than 10% of the cost of overland transportation of the same goods on roads without a hard surface such as those made by the Romans.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.93.

<sup>381</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.59.

<sup>382</sup> Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*, pp.39-40.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.



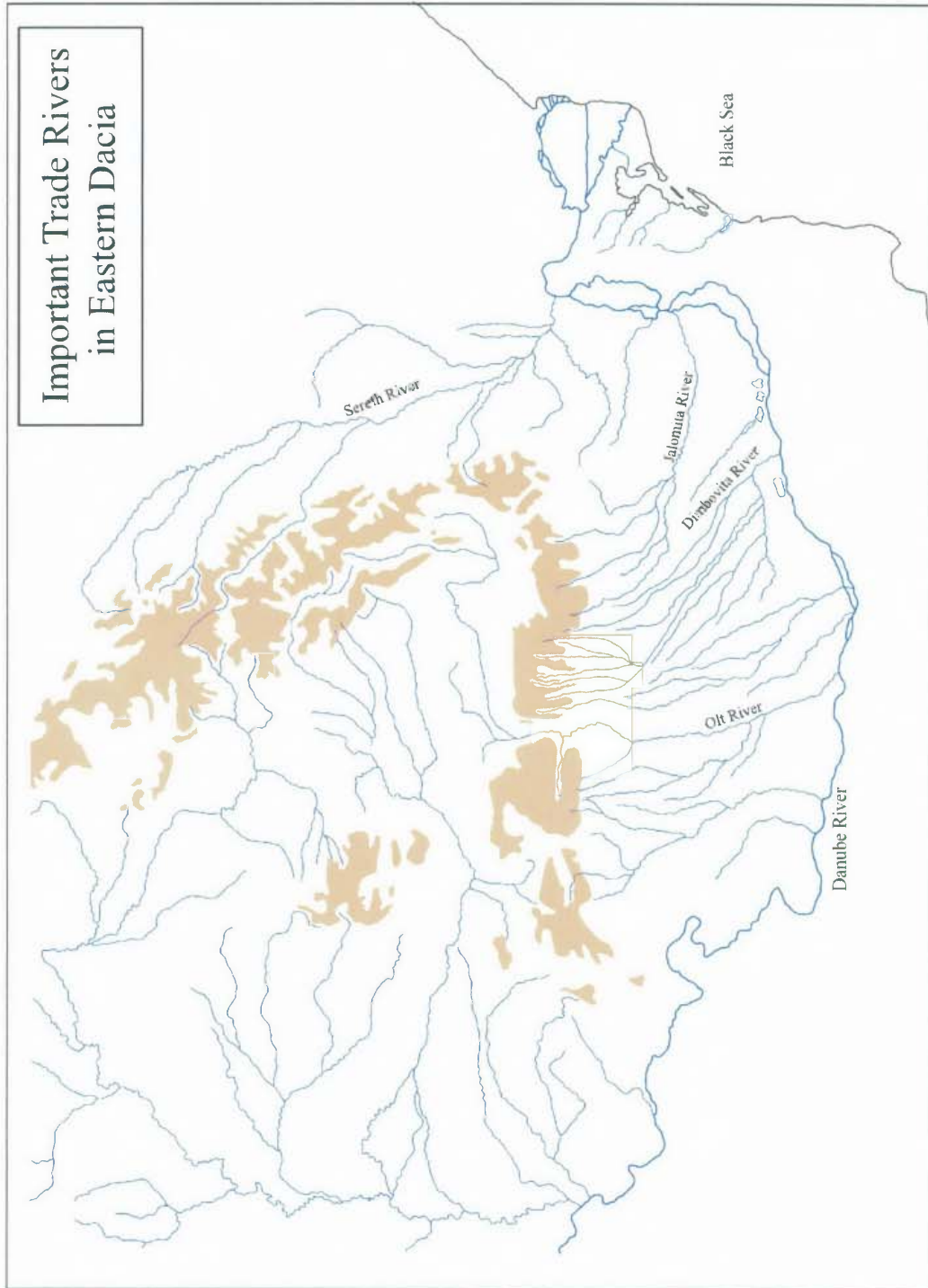


Fig. 5. Important Trade Rivers in Eastern Dacia

Before the Roman annexation many Dacian communities were located in the mountains without direct access to river transportation. This suggests a reliance on the use of overland transportation, particularly of high-priced goods, into areas which did not have access to a sufficiently large river able to support river-going merchant vessels.<sup>384</sup> The rivers in question often took early Greek traders into the valleys that the great Dacian fortifications of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC were to overlook. The use of the extensive river system in Dacia by the Greek traders certainly goes some way towards explaining why the vast majority of Greek pottery sherds that have been found within Dacia have been found in the lowland regions, as river transport into the mountains would not have been possible. Further, it has been argued, I think correctly, that transport of fragile pottery largely imported only for its contents into mountain regions over rough terrain would have been impractical.<sup>385</sup> It is therefore far more likely that the goods within the amphorae would have been transferred into more suitable containers after reaching the valley closest to its intended destination.<sup>386</sup> Therefore, communities without access to river-borne trade would have the goods they sought transported to them overland

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<sup>384</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.61.

<sup>385</sup> Greene, *The Archaeology of the Roman Economy*, p.19.

<sup>386</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.69.

after they had been deposited at the nearest river-based trade centre. The Roman reorganisation of settlements in Dacia reduced the need for overland transport and the construction of 'hard' surface roads reduced the costs where this was still required.

An examination of trade between the Dacians and the Greek colonists of the Black Sea coast helps to clarify the types of goods that Rome would have gained direct access to after the annexation of the region.<sup>387</sup> The Geto-Dacians presented an opportunity for extremely important trade to the Greeks. They were known to be exceptionally resource rich, having the richest ore mines in Europe.<sup>388</sup> These mines produced plentiful supplies of gold, silver, copper, iron and lead – additionally the Dacian quarries produced marble, limestone, andesite, sandstone and schist, all valuable construction materials.<sup>389</sup> Furthermore, the Greek traders are known to have traded for Geto-Dacian

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<sup>387</sup> Greek trade in the region is to a large extent more clearly determinable than Roman trade.

<sup>388</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.206.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p.206; Volker Wollmann, *Der Erzbergbau, die Salzgewinnung und die Steinbrüche im Römischen Dakien* (Cluj-Napoca: Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis XIII, 1996), p.218ff.

salt, slaves,<sup>390</sup> and rights to fish in Geto-Dacian territory.<sup>391</sup> The most important and likely commodity that the Geto-Dacians possessed however was surplus agricultural produce which was of importance to both the Greeks and the Romans.

Lockyear hypothesises that coin hoards found in Dacia may in fact represent only limited periods of intense trade, primarily for the purchase of slaves between circa 75 BC and 65 BC followed by a gap of approximately 25 years, and another less significant influx of Roman trade between the 40s and 30s BC, about the time of the Caesarian Civil Wars.<sup>392</sup> Alternatively Glodariu, who presents the details of approximately 370 different coin finds (hoards and singles), makes a convincing argument that there was no period of decline in Roman trade with Dacia once it had begun, rather that the evidence indicates a continuing growth of Romano-Dacian trade.<sup>393</sup> Lockyear illustrates some of the difficulties associated with the use of coin finds in Dacia as evidence of trade, perhaps the most disturbing being that there is still much uncertainty

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<sup>390</sup> There is some question over the extent and even the existence of a slave trade with the Dacians; due to the nature of the evidence it is very difficult to determine the nature and size of this trade, however see SOL omicroniota 53 about Getae slave populations.

<sup>391</sup> As at Barboși west of the Greek colony of Histria.

<sup>392</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.65.

<sup>393</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, pp.58; 241-65.

as to the percentage of Roman Republican Denarii that are actually copies manufactured by the Dacians themselves. Some estimate as many as 35% of coins found are actually high-quality Dacian imitations indistinguishable to the naked eye from the originals.<sup>394</sup> Even though this would certainly skew the results of any analysis of Romano-Dacian trade, it does not detract from the fact the Romans were engaged in significant trade with Dacia. As Opreanu argues, the coin finds particularly in the Wallachian plain and those of Crişana, demonstrate the continued strong economic ties between Rome and Dacia.<sup>395</sup>

Although it is almost impossible to present an accurate indication of the volume of trade between Dacia and the Graeco-Roman world the number of Roman coin finds in Dacia (see fig. 6) exceeds, even when imitations are taken into consideration, the number of hoards found in many other countries with a reputation for high-volume trade with Rome, illustrating that Dacia must have been an extremely active commercial entity.<sup>396</sup> There are no literary sources that provide us with any real indication of either the volume of trade

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<sup>394</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.66.

<sup>395</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.249.

<sup>396</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.56.

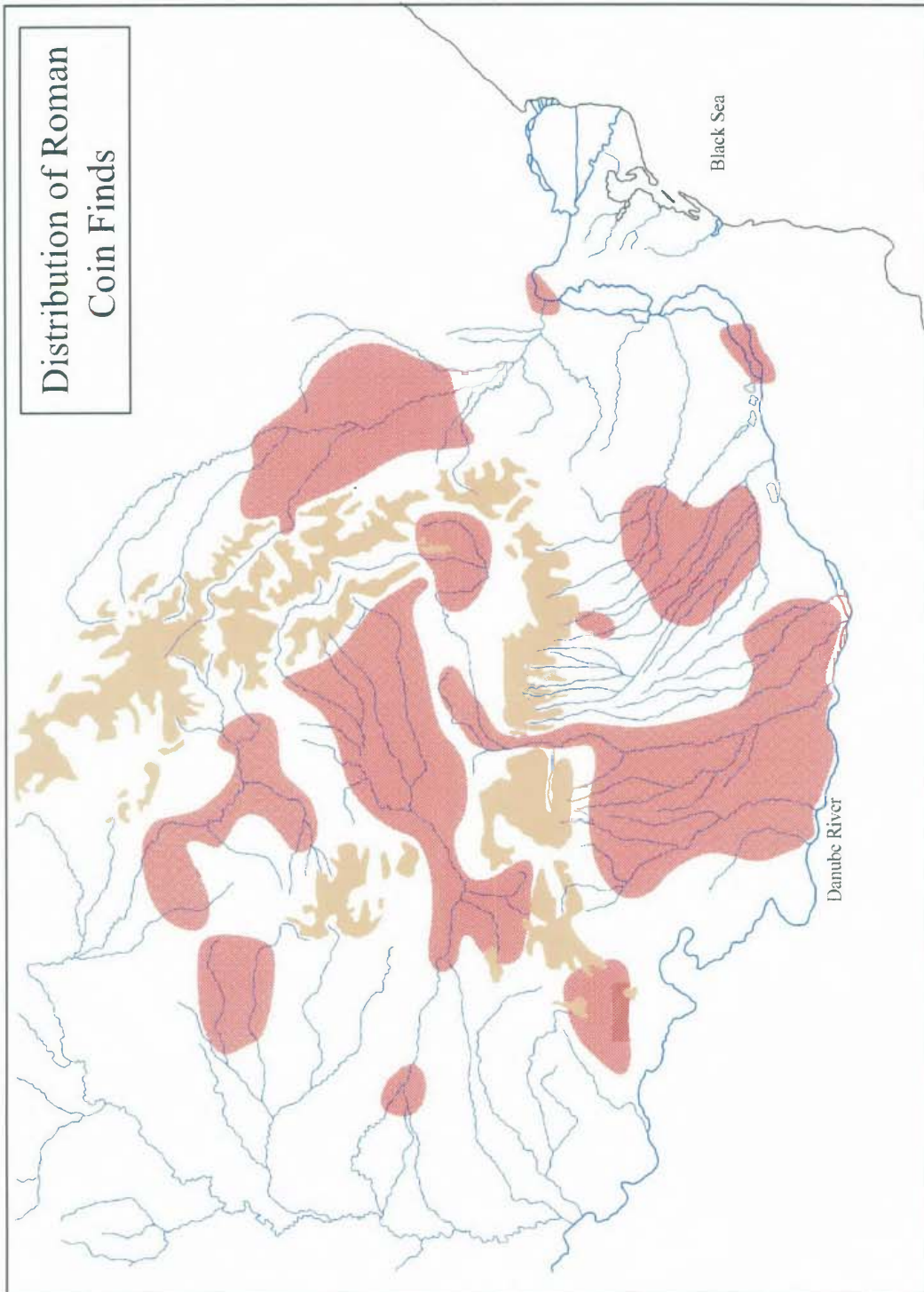


Fig. 6. The Distribution of Roman Coin Finds in Dacia

or the types of goods traded with Dacia.<sup>397</sup> It is clear that the Dacians were not renowned for the production of a single type of product, therefore we must assume Dacian trade centred on relatively generic produce unlikely to survive in the archaeological record or difficult to identify as being of Dacian origin. Dacian trade goods likely included cattle, leather, furs, honey, beeswax, slaves, timber, grain, salt, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead and valuable construction materials.<sup>398</sup>

The Dacians possessed substantial quantities of high-quality agricultural land. That they were able to produce significant surpluses is suggested by their ability to divert significant amounts of manpower away from food production in order to be able to build their magnificent mountain fortresses. These numbered about 90 in a 200km<sup>2</sup> region of the Carpathian mountain range during the reigns of Burebista and Decebalus.<sup>399</sup> The placement of some high-status settlements near various salt mines also indicates the importance that was attributed to these resources by the Dacians.<sup>400</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., pp.56-57.

<sup>399</sup> Strobel, *Untersuchungen zu den Dakerkriegen Trajans: Studien zur Geschichte des Mittleren und Unteren Donaupraumes in der Hohen Kaiserzeit*, p.44; Daicoviciu, "Dakien Und Rom in Der Prinzipatszeit," p.890.

<sup>400</sup> V. Crişan, *Dacii Din Estul Transilvaniei* (Bucharest: Editura Carpatii Rasariteni, 2000)

finds of Roman coin hoards in the immediate vicinity of the salt mines at Cluj-Someșeni, Corund, Derna, Odorhei, Sărata în Buzău, Sîngeorzu Nou, Sînpaul în Harghita, Tg. Ocna and Turda-Saline demonstrates a particularly vibrant trade in salt with the Romans.<sup>401</sup>

Improved local trade resulted in a significant advantage for the Romans after the annexation of Dacia. Local trade would have significantly benefited from improved infrastructure in Dacia, and the increase in manpower created by the relocation of numerous colonists to the region after annexation.<sup>402</sup> The Dacians possessed many valuable trade goods that the Romans were able to exploit after this conquest, including access to the richest gold mines in Europe, silver, iron, copper and lead mines, as well as a substantial amount of agricultural produce, and the valuable salt mines. The enforced movement of Dacian communities away from the mountainous regions of Dacia to lowland areas closer to easily exploited transport routes helped reduce the costs of trade with Dacia and ensured a significantly advantageous outcome for the Romans.

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p.186.

<sup>401</sup> Glodariu, *Dacian Trade with the Hellenistic World*, p.57.

<sup>402</sup> Which easily compensated for any losses that occurred during the war.



## **High Efficiency Economic Collaboration**

Continuing and frequent contact with the Graeco-Roman world, prior to annexation, saw the Dacian economy develop into something that could easily be incorporated into the Roman Empire as it was so similar to the economy of Rome. This similarity provided excellent potential for high efficiency economic collaboration between Rome and the province of Dacia. An understanding of the origins and importance of Dacian trade to its immediate region and beyond is important in demonstrating how the economy of Dacia functioned prior to the Roman annexation of the region, which will in turn help to demonstrate the potential benefits to Rome of high efficiency economic collaboration with Dacia. The origins of Dacian trade with the Graeco-Roman world and how this trade developed until the 1st century BC, when Burebista reigned and the economy of Dacia changed dramatically, will be examined to illustrate how the Dacian economy changed from a local to a national trade system with some external influences that would have provided Rome with little benefit, to a truly international trade economy easily incorporated into and profitable to the Roman Empire.

During the period under consideration, the Dacian economy evolved

quite substantially, largely as a result of the influence of the Greek Black Sea colonists, the Celtic peoples that migrated into Dacia in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, and the introduction of Roman trade also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It will become apparent throughout the course of this discussion that the development of Dacian trade practices over the period in question saw Dacia shift from what could be described as an unsophisticated tribal economy, under the control of individual chieftains, and primarily based on barter that would not have presented the Romans the opportunity to efficiently exploit the trade potential of Dacia. What replaced it would more correctly be termed an import/export or market economy, offering at least as much to the major powers in the region as the outside world brought into Dacia; a system which was vastly more compatible with the economic enterprises of the Roman Empire.

The Black Sea colonies, particularly Histria, were extremely important to the development of the Dacian economy. Contact with these colonies clearly accelerated the technological and economic development of the Geto-Dacian people,<sup>403</sup> and had a profound effect on the commercial structures of Geto-Dacian society. These colonies, and the regular trade and contact that

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<sup>403</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, pp.94; 96.

resulted from their proximity, exposed the Geto-Dacian culture to the ways of the more advanced Greek society<sup>404</sup> and the effects of centralisation and craft specialisation, all factors that would prove important to the potential for high efficiency economic collaboration after the Roman conquest more than 600 years later.

It was Greek trade, particularly that from the Black Sea colonists, that introduced the Geto-Dacians to the silver coinage that was the trade norm in the major civilisations throughout the period under consideration.<sup>405</sup> Also throughout this period we see the Geto-Dacians imitating the coinage of other peoples in order to participate in the wider trade community. Before they were able to imitate this coinage, the Geto-Dacians had to learn how coinage was minted, which they did from their Celtic invaders in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>406</sup> Greek coinage introduced some time around 600 BC in time became the trade standard. The Greek standard weight, also adopted by the Macedonians, was 17 grams of silver. Greek coins have been found throughout Romania with finds concentrated in particular areas: just north of the Danube, particularly between the Rhabon and Jalomita rivers in the south of Dacia; just east of the

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<sup>404</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.42.

<sup>405</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.94.

<sup>406</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.50.

Danube and following the Sereth river northwards in the western region of Dacia; and in the eastern region of Dacia in the vicinity of the Mureş river.

By the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC both gold and silver Macedonian coins dated from the reigns of Philip, Alexander and Lysimachus were clearly established in Dacia.<sup>407</sup> Grave finds, like the one at Zimnicea which contained a bronze coin belonging to Alexander's reign, confirm the presence of Macedonian coinage and trade within Dacia.<sup>408</sup> These finds demonstrate increased economic contact with the Macedonians, particularly in the areas immediately north of the Danube, spread roughly between the Rhabon and Jalomita rivers. Macedonian coinage by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC had made it as far as Northern Transylvania.<sup>409</sup> Interestingly, Dacian annular money (small golden rings) mined at Gemenea and discovered at Turnu Măgurele and several other sites<sup>410</sup> has been discovered alongside Macedonian and Thasian coinage, indicating the contemporaneous use of annular money for some time after Dacian contact with and adoption of minted coinage which later became

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<sup>407</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, pp.99; 101.

<sup>408</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.47.

<sup>409</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.100.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p.98.

the exclusive currency of Dacia. The Dacians appear to have learnt the art of minting their own coinage from the Celtic peoples that inhabited Dacia. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards and certainly by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Celts from eastern Slovakia, including the Scordisci, Boii, and Taurisci,<sup>411</sup> had inhabited Moldavia and Besarabia and the region directly north of these (modern day Ukraine).<sup>412</sup> By 200 BC these peoples were well-established in Moldavia. Parvan utilises a study of place names in an attempt to determine which sites were Celtic or at least influenced by a Celtic presence.<sup>413</sup> It is clear that these Celtic peoples settled in large numbers in the Transylvanian region and added to the Dacian economic development, particularly in the production of quality metalwork.

Although there is clear evidence of Roman trade activity in this region earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, it was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century that Roman trade became an undeniably important element of the Dacian economy, and led to significant changes in the way that Dacians traded with external powers. During the reign of Burebista the Dacians stopped minting their own currency

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<sup>411</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11.

<sup>412</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.112.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113.

and adopted the Roman trade standard, the Denarius.<sup>414</sup> Burebista's decision to adopt the Roman currency was the result of two factors. As discussed earlier Burebista was the first monarch to unite the Dacian people – in order to do this he defeated the Celts living in Dacia and was required to defeat the other Dacian tribal leaders.<sup>415</sup> One method of reinforcing Dacian unity was for Burebista to introduce a unified currency, and the reason for the choice of the Roman Denarius was most likely the combined result of this, and a desire for increased international trade with the most powerful trading nation in the region.

The Dacians actually started to mint their own imitations of the Roman Denarius as is evidenced by the find of Roman coin dies at five separate locations.<sup>416</sup> This adoption of the Denarius and the extensive previous trade contact first with the Greeks and then with the Romans clearly enhanced the potential for high-efficiency economic collaboration after the completion of the Roman conquest.

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<sup>414</sup> I. H. Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, trans. Sanda Mihailescu, 2nd ed. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste Romania, 1978), p.192.

<sup>415</sup> Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.145.

<sup>416</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.68.

Frequent and intensive contact with Graeco-Roman world prior to annexation ensured that the potential for high efficiency economic collaboration was substantial. It is evident that the Roman economy could easily incorporate the Dacian system as the two were very similar.<sup>417</sup> The similarity between these systems resulted primarily from Burebista's Romanisation of the indigenous Dacian economy to further his own political ends and take advantage of an increase in Roman trade. Additionally, Dacian centralisation and craft specialisation created a situation where the integration of the Dacian economy created a substantial advantage for the Romans.

### **Income versus Expenditure**

It seems likely that the conquest of Dacia provided enough income to cover the majority of the expenses associated with the annexation and administration of this region, although it is clear that the expenses involved in the annexation and administration of Dacia were substantial. Trajan expended vast sums of money to fund not only the two wars against Dacia, but also during the three year's preparation preceding the war. These preparations involved substantial building projects,<sup>418</sup> the movement of vast numbers of

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<sup>417</sup> Although the Roman system was undoubtedly more advanced.

<sup>418</sup> Including a 3 kilometre long canal near the Iron Gate, a rock-cut tow-path following

troops,<sup>419</sup> and the raising of new legions which must be factored into the overall costs of this annexation. It is however also clear that the Dacian annexation provided a great deal of income. One source indicates that the price of gold in Egypt dropped by 25% because of the amount of gold that entered the market after the completion of the Dacian annexation.<sup>420</sup> The source of much of this wealth was the Roşia Montana region, which is known to have possessed among the richest gold mines in Europe.<sup>421</sup>

John Lydus provides figures based on those presented by Crito, Trajan's physician, for the plunder that the emperor was able to collect from the Dacian treasury after the completion of the Dacian conquest.<sup>422</sup> It is highly likely that these figures are exaggerated, however they do provide an indication of the wealth this annexation provided.<sup>423</sup> Dio provides an account of the discovery of this treasure which had been concealed under a Dacian river to hide it from

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the course of the canal, large-scale building program to house the invasion force, and increasing the capacity of the ports J. Sasel, "Trajan's Canal at the Iron Gate," *Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973): pp.79-82.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., p.79.

<sup>420</sup> K. W. Harl, *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. To A.D. 700* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.79.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., p.82.

<sup>422</sup> John Lydus, 127.3

<sup>423</sup> S. Vryonis jr., "The Question of the Byzantine Mines," *Speculum* 37, no. 1 (1962): p.12.



the Romans, indicating that this was the Dacian monarchy's treasury most likely accumulated over a substantial period of time.<sup>424</sup> The figures presented by Lydus of 5,000,000 pounds of gold and 10,000,000 pounds of silver<sup>425</sup> have been suggested to be as much as ten times too high.<sup>426</sup> Even if the original figures are divided by a factor of 10 the resulting figures of 500,000 pounds of gold and 1,000,000 pounds of silver would still have been an incredibly large one-time influx of wealth into the imperial treasury. In order to contextualise even the vastly reduced figures presented, the silver plundered alone would have amounted to approximately 103,000,000 denarii, enough to pay more than 340,000 regular legionaries for a year; the gold would have paid for more than another 1,800,000 troops.<sup>427</sup> Lydus also mentions countless goblets and

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<sup>424</sup> Dio, LXVIII.14.4.

<sup>425</sup> John Lydus, 127.3; over 2,250,000 kilograms of gold and 4,500,000 kilograms of silver.

<sup>426</sup> Bennett, *Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*, p.101.

<sup>427</sup> These figures are based on the principle that:

- the average legionary received 300 denarii/annum during this period,
- 1 pound of silver = 103 denarii (after Trajan's reforms of AD 107),
- 1 pound of gold = 44 aurei (after Trajan's reforms of AD 107),
- 1 aureus = 25 denarii.

To put these figures into some perspective Augustus in the *Res Gestae* tells us that he spent a total of 600,000,000 denarii on payments to plebs, discharged soldiers, and the treasury during his time as princeps. The plunder from the Dacian conquest alone totalled 653,000,000 denarii. <http://www.personal.kent.edu/~bkharvey/roman/sources/economy.htm>, accessed 25-1-2005.

other objects that cannot be adequately factored into these calculations.

Although the figures presented above represent only a one-off influx of wealth, the Dacian gold mines of the Roşia Montana region, which have been described as the richest in Europe,<sup>428</sup> and the Dacian copper and silver mines would have provided significant continuous income after the completion of the conquest.<sup>429</sup> As a part of Trajan's colonisation program, he very quickly settled trained miners in the Roşia Montana region in order to fully exploit the potential of these mines.<sup>430</sup> These mines would have provided the imperial treasury with both a short-term financial benefit through their sale and an ongoing income from the production of ore. Mines were owned by the imperial treasury, which sold half of the mine to private investors on very strict terms; one document dated to Hadrian's reign demonstrates that the sale price for a silver mine was 4000 sesterceces.<sup>431</sup> Once purchased, a mine was required to remain in continuous operation or it would be seized by the local procurator for re-sale.<sup>432</sup> All ore recovered from the mine was halved daily

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<sup>428</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.206.

<sup>429</sup> L. C. West, "The Economic Collapse of the Roman Empire," *The Classical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1932): p.98.

<sup>430</sup> Vryonis, "The Question of the Byzantine Mines," p.12.

<sup>431</sup> Smallwood, *Nerva-Hadrian* 439.2.

<sup>432</sup> Smallwood, *Nerva-Hadrian* 439.5.

before smelting took place, with one half retained by the private owner of the mine and the other half paid to the imperial treasury.<sup>433</sup> The rules regarding the transport of ore between designated hours, and the penalties for ore theft or not maintaining or continuously working the mine clearly demonstrate the importance the Roman administration placed on the income produced by mining. The income generated by the sale of mines and the half share of the ore recovered were completely new sources of wealth for Rome above and beyond any trade dealings in effect before the annexation.

Additionally, there is clear evidence that the Dacians possessed other resources in abundance that the Romans certainly exploited for financial gain after the annexation. The quantity of iron found in Dacia, more than in any other European region outside of the empire, demonstrates that the Dacians possessed a series of highly profitable iron ore deposits.<sup>434</sup> Finds of unworked iron in nearby barbarian regions that lacked their own iron deposits have been linked to the Dacian iron mines in the Roşia Montana.<sup>435</sup> There are also suggestions that the Dacians possessed tin mines, an essential component

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<sup>433</sup> Smallwood, *Nerva-Hadrian* 439.1.

<sup>434</sup> Discussed in more detail in Scurity section pp.267ff.

<sup>435</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic Relations", p.250.

in the manufacture of bronze.<sup>436</sup> Other important sources of income from Roman-Dacia included the rich agricultural land of the low-land regions in Dacia, fishing rights, and stone quarries.

A substantial number of additional troops were stationed in Dacia after the completion of the war, which created a significant expense. An examination of the approximate costs of this garrison is important as these costs define a base limit as to how much income the Dacian conquest needed to generate annually in order to cover the expense of the garrison alone. Estimates of the costs of maintaining the Roman army in Dacia, by the time of Caracalla's reign, have been placed as high as 1 billion *Sestertii* per annum.<sup>437</sup>

While works by Speidel, and Alston allow us to determine the costs associated with the rank and file soldiers and some of the officers, the calculations presented here cannot account for the commanders of the legions

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<sup>436</sup> Vryonis, "The Question of the Byzantine Mines," p.12.

<sup>437</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.120; unfortunately Diaconescu does not provide the calculations used to achieve this figure. This figure is certainly far higher than can be attributed to the defence of Dacia during Trajan's reign, at least in part because the pay for a normal legionary during this period was less than half that of a legionary during Caracella's reign. Y. LeBohec, *The Imperial Roman Army* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1994), p.212.

nor the higher ranking officers. Based purely on the number of centurions (of differing ranks) and the ordinary soldiers, the expense of one legion in wages alone would equate to approximately 8,242,000 sestertii per annum or 2,060,500 denarii per annum. In addition to this figure, the pay for the various auxiliary units stationed in Dacia must also be calculated. It is safe to assume that the auxiliary forces of the Roman army were paid at least three-quarters of the amount that their legionary counterparts were paid.<sup>438</sup>

Therefore, based on these figures 6000 auxiliaries would have cost the emperor approximately 1,500,000 denarii per annum. Based on calculations of troop numbers in Dacia presented in the manpower section of this work,<sup>439</sup> this would equate to an approximate expense of just over 7,500,000 denarii per annum. Hence, a total of approximately 12,000,000 denarii per annum seems a sensible figure for the annual costs of the Dacian garrison.<sup>440</sup> In addition to this

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<sup>438</sup> R. Alston, "Roman Military Pay from Caesar to Diocletian," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994): p.113; M. Speidel, "The Pay of the Auxilia," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973): p.144; M. Speidel, "Roman Army Pay Scales," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): pp.87 - 106.

<sup>439</sup> Manpower section pp.244ff.

<sup>440</sup> It must be reiterated that this figure does not include the wages for officers which could conceivably have doubled this, however as there is no clear evidence of the costs associated with these individuals they have been excluded from these calculations.

figure the 29,500 troops discharged or moved in AD 110 must be included.<sup>441</sup> Combined this would represent a cost of approximately 60,000,000 denarii for the defence and establishment of the province of Roman-Dacia in the first three years after the annexation, less than one tenth of the booty Rome collected during the annexation.

There were considerable additional expenses incurred as a result of the Dacian annexation, including the costs associated with the movement of Dacian settlements from the mountains to the lowlands.<sup>442</sup> The construction of Apollodorus' bridge over the Danube, which is described by Dio as consisting of 20 piers of stone set 170 feet apart and connected by arches (see fig.7) was clearly a massive and expensive undertaking,<sup>443</sup> as was the foundation of the provincial capital Sarmizegetusa Ulpia. There was also the construction of canals allowing the Roman river fleet to move along the Danube, the construction of stone fortifications built along the course of the Danube in AD 99 - 101 before the onset of the first war,<sup>444</sup> and the relocation of the numerous

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<sup>441</sup> C.I.L 16.57, 16.160, 16.163.

<sup>442</sup> Protase, "Der Forschungsstand zur Kontinuität der Bodenständigen Bevölkerung im Römischen Dazien," pp.1004-06.

<sup>443</sup> Dio, LXVIII, 13.1-13.6.

<sup>444</sup> Sasel, "Trajan's Canal at the Iron Gate," p.79.

## XCIX



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Fig. 7. Trajan's Column Scene XXIX Casts 259-261

colonists into the newly-established province.<sup>445</sup>

The Dacian annexation provided substantial advantages to the income of Rome, even though there were many costs associated with the preparations for the Dacian campaigns, the war itself, and the defence and organisation of the province after the completion of the wars. The plunder Trajan was able to seize at the end of the wars provided a substantial one-off injection of wealth that in conjunction with the seizure of the gold mines of the Roşia Montana

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<sup>445</sup> Eutropius, *Breviary*, 8.6.

region, the richest gold mines in Europe and the equal of the Spanish mines, and other valuable resources such as the numerous salt mines, agricultural land and other ore deposits, exceeded the expenses of the preparations for the war, the war itself, and the ongoing expenses of garrisoning and defending the province.

### **Trade Barriers**

As has already been demonstrated, the Dacians were involved in a significant amount of trade with the Romans and other nations before the Roman annexation. There is no evidence that the Dacians imposed trade barriers of any sort; in fact, evidence indicates the opposite, that international trade had been encouraged by the Dacian kings, demonstrating that the annexation would not have increased Roman profits as a result of reduced trade barriers.<sup>446</sup>

We know that from the time of Burebista at the latest, that taxes were being levied on the native population in Dacia. It seems unlikely that the Dacian monarchs, who had clearly developed a taste for imported luxury

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<sup>446</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.86; Parvan, *Dacia an Outline of the Early Civilizations of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries*, p.106.



goods, imposed any form of levy on external goods crossing the frontier; however direct evidence of this is lacking. It is known that the Dacian monarchs taxed their citizens,<sup>447</sup> and it can also be assumed that if the taxes imposed on cross-border trade were significant there would be some evidence of Roman complaints about them. It seems most likely that the Dacian monarchs restricted their revenue-raising to taxes levied on the native population - this said, it seems unlikely that the Dacians sought to stifle trade in any way. Unless some evidence of significant trade barriers can be demonstrated this factor cannot be seen as advantageous to Rome, and will here be classed as a minor disadvantage because they did not actually reduce or eliminate any trade barriers by conquering Dacia.

A lack of trade barriers presented the Romans with a minor economic disadvantage after the conquest of Dacia. This disadvantage resulted from the fact that no barriers to trade were evident pre-conquest suggesting that the Romans could have continued trading or intensified trade without incurring the costs associated with an annexation.

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<sup>447</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.102.

## **Low-Cost Romanisation**

The centralisation evident in pre-conquest Dacia significantly reduced the costs associated with the Romanisation of this region. Like the Romans the Dacians possessed a class-based social hierarchy, significant centralisation and a Romanised currency. All of these eased the process of assimilation into the Roman Empire, and thereby reducing the time necessary to integrate the province into the empire reduced the costs associated with Romanisation.

True centralisation can only be demonstrated by control of the state's economy, politics and military resting in the hands of one body. This body can be made up of a group of individuals such as the Roman Senate in the republican period or a single individual as was the case in both the Roman Empire and Dacia. Furthermore, this form of centralisation allows communities to produce specialty goods primarily for trade (often demonstrated by the presence of serial production) in lieu of subsistence produce necessary for their day-to-day survival.<sup>448</sup> The centralisation of production allows communities to develop a more complex and profitable economic structure than they would otherwise be capable of. That pre-Burebistan Dacia possessed at best

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<sup>448</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.44.

a simple form of centralisation at a sub-state level is demonstrated by Strabo, who describes the Dacians of this period as being formed by individual tribal units, lacking a common government or ruler.<sup>449</sup>

Much like their conquerors, Dacian society possessed a high-level of stratification in their society by Burebista's reign.<sup>450</sup> The Dacian social structure consisted of three clearly distinguishable classes, the *comati* (the 'long-haired ones'), the *tarabostes* who came to be known as the *pilleati* (see figs. 8. and 9.),<sup>451</sup> and a religious hierarchy of priests. This stratification closely matched the class divisions within contemporary Roman society, eliminating the need for the Roman system to be imposed over the existing native system.

Burebista established the first unified Dacian 'nation' at about the time of Caesar's reign. The unification process undertaken by Burebista, which is not discussed in detail in any of the extant sources, clearly involved a combination of peaceful and military persuasion.<sup>452</sup> It is highly apparent that not all the rulers of the various Dacian tribal conglomerations willingly submitted to

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<sup>449</sup> Strabo, VII.3.8.

<sup>450</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, pp.99; 102.

<sup>451</sup> Jordanes, *Getica*, 40; The *pilleati* took their name from the *pilleus*, a Phrygian-style cap.

<sup>452</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.84.



Fig. 8. Dacian *Comatus*  
Photo: Dr. Geoff Adams 2006

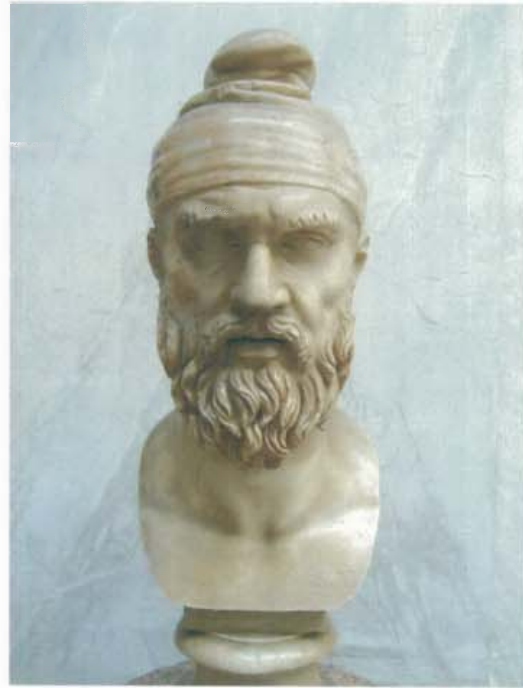


Fig. 9. Dacian *Pilleatus*  
Photo: Dr. Geoff Adams 2006

unification, most likely because it would have been obvious to them that they would lose their positions of pre-eminence in the tribal society that preceded the unification.<sup>453</sup> The fact that some of these tribal leaders were involved in Burebista's assassination circa 44 BC demonstrates the displeasure of some of his contemporaries at the unification and their relegation to inferior roles in the Dacian hierarchy.<sup>454</sup>

It is however likely that Burebista had the support of a significant percentage of the lower classes in his quest to unify the various Dacian

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<sup>453</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11; Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.84.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

tribes, without which any attempt at unification would almost certainly have failed.<sup>455</sup> Burebista's army would primarily have consisted of soldiers drawn from these lower classes.<sup>456</sup> Burebista utilised the sizeable personal army he was able to assemble to expel or incorporate several Celtic peoples, the Scordisci, the Boii and the Taurisci, that had migrated into and dominated some regions of Dacia,<sup>457</sup> to enforce his unification agenda, and to conquer the Greek colonies in the Dobrudja region.<sup>458</sup> It is also clear that Burebista had the support of at least one important contemporary religious figure, Deceneus, who was described by Strabo as possessing influence equal to that of the king himself.<sup>459</sup> The support of a key religious figure such as Deceneus significantly assisted Burebista's unification program by lending a divine legitimacy to his actions. Burebista, through a mix of diplomacy and warfare, 'achieved a powerful state within a few years and subjected to the Getae the bulk of the neighbouring populations'.<sup>460</sup>

Burebista's adoption of the Roman Denarius as the official currency of

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<sup>455</sup> Ibid., pp.79-81.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid., p.84.

<sup>457</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11; Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.84.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Strabo, VII.3.5; Jordanes, *Getica*, XI.67.

<sup>460</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11.

Dacia is an important element of his unification policy. Prior to the unification the various Dacian and Celtic tribal chieftains were minting their own coins under their own authority. The transition to a single coinage mirrored the transition to a single ruler and demonstrably removed the authority of the various tribal chieftains to determine the currency of their tribe. Additionally, the choice of Roman coinage as the currency of the Dacian people heightened the potential for an increase in foreign trade, and the pre-annexation Romanisation evident in Dacia.

Evidence indicates that the centralisation of Dacia, which accompanied the unification of the region, allowed Burebista to implement a taxation system similar to that of the Romans, drawing imperial revenues from the extents of his domain,<sup>461</sup> and utilising these to further enhance the process of centralisation and the construction of centralising infrastructure such as the fortress complex in the Oraştie Mountains. Specifically-assigned nobles who had been tasked with the oversight of important regions collected tax revenues under Burebista's authority.<sup>462</sup>

Dacian centralisation was organised around the native elite who were

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<sup>461</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.102.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102; Crişan, *Dacii Din Estul Transilvaniei*, p.188.

utilised to control peripheral resources and assets on behalf of their monarch who could not be physically present because of the scale of his kingdom. The familiarity with a centralised control system presumably eased the process of Romanisation in this region after the completion of the conquest. The native elite were unlikely to support or initiate a rebellion as they stood to lose their position and wealth if they displayed anti-Roman tendencies. The Roman administration did not actively hinder or prevent the existing indigenous nobility from participating in the governance of their region.<sup>463</sup> Instead, participation of the native elite in the new government was actually encouraged, not only in order to accelerate the process of Romanisation, but also to reduce the potential for rebellion and take maximum advantage of the continuation of existing centralising features. Although there are few specific examples of the participation of the native elite after the Dacian annexation, the epigraphic evidence demonstrates the participation of at least a small number of the native elite in the province's governance.<sup>464</sup> Furthermore, there is substantial evidence to indicate that it was common practice for the Romans to absorb those native elites that willingly adopted Roman ways into the

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<sup>463</sup> J. Richardson, *Roman Provincial Administration 227 BC to AD 117* (London: MacMillan Education, 1976), p.67; S.L. Dyson, *The Creation of the Roman Frontier*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p.274.

<sup>464</sup> Ruscu, "The Supposed Extermination of the Dacians: The Literary Tradition," p.78.

government in other provinces;<sup>465</sup> conversely, the native commoners living in low-density agricultural settlements rarely saw any significant change.<sup>466</sup> This was a clever and deliberate tactic on the part of Rome as it reduced the pool of potential rebellion leaders. This is discussed in more detail in the systemic frustration section to follow.

A centralised economy was more easily and rapidly incorporated into the Roman Empire. The Dacian economy had been centralised by Burebista and this was continued by Decebalus. Craft specialisation in Dacia further demonstrates the existence of a complex centralised control system.<sup>467</sup> The centralisation of political and economic control in Dacia allowed the Romans simply to replace the Dacian officials used to administer the various components of the system with their own designated authorities, drawn from the native elite, the vast number of colonists introduced shortly after the annexation,<sup>468</sup> or the Romans themselves. The Romans received the financial benefits associated with the annexation of Dacia more rapidly than they would

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<sup>465</sup> P.A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.267.

<sup>466</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.40.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>468</sup> W. S. Hanson and I. P. Haynes, "An Introduction to Roman Dacia," in *Roman Dacia the Making of a Provincial Society*, ed. W. S. Hanson and I. P. Haynes (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2004), p.18.



have in areas that demonstrated less centralisation and craft specialisation.

Burebista, the first Dacian to centralise and unify the various Dacian tribes reigned for a total of about 40 years. In this time approximately 90 fortresses were built, or at least commenced, under his authority. Building work of this scale required the quarrying and moving of millions of blocks of stone,<sup>469</sup> and an enormous workforce to sustain the exhaustive building program. Although it has been suggested that Burebista sought the assistance of the Greeks to build this network of fortifications, it seems unlikely that the Greeks brought in to assist with this project were the labourers responsible for the construction work itself. It is possible that Burebista employed Greek master architects, and other similarly skilled professionals may have participated in the design of the *murus dacicus* used at many of these forts.<sup>470</sup> Some of their experienced engineers may have been used to oversee the construction, however the use of foreigners in this way can not be used to disprove Dacian centralisation.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.112.

<sup>470</sup> Sarmizegetusa Regia, Costeşti, Piatra Roşie, Blidaru, Băniţa, Căpîlna.

<sup>471</sup> Even if the Greek builders provided a very substantial percentage of the labour force utilised to build the fortification system in Dacia, it could be argued that the ability to pay them demonstrates at least some degree of centralisation. It is most likely that Burebista, after conquering the Dobrudja and its Greek colonies, employed Greek specialists to assist with his building program.

It is likely that Burebista drew the majority of his labour force from the native Dacian population, which further demonstrates the unification and centralisation in Dacia during much of Burebista's reign.<sup>472</sup> Had Dacia lacked a relatively sophisticated form of centralisation it would have been impossible for Burebista to raise the required workforce from amongst the indigenous population, let alone have been able to redirect surplus agricultural produce to ensure that they were adequately fed.<sup>473</sup>

Perhaps the clearest evidence of Dacian centralisation, and Burebistan policy in regards to centralisation, is provided through an examination of the placement and purpose of the Dacian fortifications. These fortifications were primarily located in economically or strategically important areas where they could oversee activities vital to the state.<sup>474</sup> An examination of the Dacian fortifications demonstrates that they acted as central points for the political control of the Dacian society and as the residences of the politically empowered nobility. In many cases they also provided for the religious needs

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<sup>472</sup> W. Groenman-van Waateringe, "Urbanization and the North-West Frontier of the Roman Empire," in *Roman Frontier Studies 1979 Papers Presented to the 12th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, ed. W. S. Hanson and L. J. F. Keppie, *BAR International Series* (Oxford: B.A.R, 1980), p.1039.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>474</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, pp.185; 188.

of the surrounding communities,<sup>475</sup> and were responsible for the defence of both the populace and regions of economic importance.

Although Dacian fortresses differed from their counterparts in the West, this should not be taken as evidence that they did not serve a centralising function. Western-style fortifications tended to be larger than their Dacian counterparts which allowed them to encompass a civilian population, manufacturing facilities, and religious precincts within their walls, thereby providing a demonstrable centralising and urbanising effect on the population.<sup>476</sup> Conversely, Dacian fortifications were rarely large enough to be inhabited by a significant civilian population. Evidence indicates that often they were intended to house no more than 30 professional soldiers and members of the native nobility,<sup>477</sup> and therefore could not have functioned as an intense urbanising feature in Dacian society, although several did have the space required to accommodate civilians in times of strife. Dacian fortresses do demonstrate signs of associated religious and manufacturing facilities, although those responsible for the design of Dacian fortresses placed the

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<sup>475</sup> Sarmizegetusa Regia, Costești, Bănița, Blidaru, Căpîlna, Piatra Roșie.

<sup>476</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.36.

<sup>477</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.123.

associated manufacturing and religious precincts outside of the defensive walls proper.

The most influential element in the design of the Dacian fortifications and the most obvious cause of the differences between the Dacian forts and those of the West was the topography of the region. The extremely mountainous terrain that made the Dacian fortresses so difficult to besiege also limited the amount of contiguous space available for construction. Therefore, the lack of intensive urbanisation and defensive infrastructure for the manufacturing and religious precincts should not be seen as detracting from the fortifications' overall function as centralising features of Dacian society.

Many of the fortresses were constructed on artificially terraced areas in order to enlarge the available surface area sufficiently to include what they did. The best example of the creation of artificially terraced areas and the lengths that the Dacian workforce was required to go to in order to counter the difficult topography is the Dacian capital at Sarmizegetusa Regia, situated in the Oraştie Mountains. Here, archaeologists have determined that 13 such terraces were built in order to provide sufficient levelled ground to support the Dacian capital.

The Dacian fortresses, built between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, were used to establish the oversight and control of dispersed agricultural communities and other economic resources of Dacia. These fortresses were populated by Dacian nobles appointed by their king to protect important economic zones, access routes, the populace, and to collect taxes.<sup>478</sup> The fact that these fortresses form a coherent control infrastructure for the dispersed settlements in Dacia demonstrates the concept of a central authority rather than the construction of competing tribal centres.<sup>479</sup>

One cluster of fortifications and their associated settlements, located in Eastern Transylvania, along with some examples from outside this region, demonstrate how these sites participated in the centralisation of Dacia. This survey will be restricted to a relatively limited geographical area for two reasons: the quality of the information published by Viorica Crişan lends itself to the choice of this region over others including the Dacian capital and its surrounds, and an examination of the entire network would consume an excessive amount of space.

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<sup>478</sup> Crişan, *Burebista and His Time*, p.111.

<sup>479</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.123.

The placement of the Eastern Transylvanian fortresses in order to provide political and military control of an entire region clearly demonstrates the centralising effect of Dacian fortifications.<sup>480</sup> Furthermore, examination of fortress placement in Dacia dated before the Roman conquest demonstrates that the placement of fortifications in Dacia had a clear association with the location of residential settlements. For the purposes of this investigation Eastern Transylvania is divided into three settlement areas, according to the most populated zones. The first zone, bounded by C. Cetății in the north and the fortress of Bădeni in the south-east, contained approximately 11 fortresses<sup>481</sup> and 38 unfortified settlements dated to the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD. The majority of the settlements and fortifications in this zone were located along the Mureș River, though some were located further north towards the Gurghiu River. The second zone bounded by the fortresses of Jigodin in the west and Sîndominic in the north possessed at least 8 fortresses and 16 unfortified settlements, situated along the upper Olt river and its tributaries. The third easily-defined zone in the East Transylvanian region was bounded by the fortresses of Covasna in the

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<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> C. Cetății, Sărăteni, Ghindari, Praid, Șoim Mare, Eliseni, Boiu, Albești, Por. Mari, Odor. Sec., Bădeni.

south-east and Biborțeni in the north. This region contained six forts and 43 settlements situated west of the Oituz pass.

Each of these regions contained a significant number of civilian settlements and a sufficient number of fortresses to provide centralising points for the collection of taxation, oversight, and protection. These forts were deliberately located in areas of high population concentration.<sup>482</sup> It is clear that the majority of fortifications built during the reigns of Burebista and Decebalus were constructed in regions of economic or strategic importance, enhancing the centralising effect of these structures.<sup>483</sup>

Additionally, these fortifications acted as centres of manufacturing, industry and religion. Centralised control of an area can be further demonstrated by the centralisation of manufacture and industry which requires complex distribution networks in order to assure the exchange of primary produce for necessary manufactured goods. Tribal organisation generally failed to centralise industry.<sup>484</sup> There are instances where even tribal societies could be

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<sup>482</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.

<sup>483</sup> Crișan, *Dacii Din Estul Transilvaniei*, pp.185; 188.

<sup>484</sup> H. Hodges, *Technology in the Ancient World* (United States of America: Michael O'Mara Books Limited, 1970), p.250.

organised sufficiently to undertake elaborate building programs to construct tombs, meeting places, temples, and fortresses.<sup>485</sup> These were rather isolated events however and not a network of fortifications, such as the one in Dacia, that produced a coherent entity greater than the individual parts.

Dacian fortifications, particularly Sarmizegetusa Regia, display intense economic activity demonstrating their role as centralised manufacturing points.<sup>486</sup> Excavations at Sarmizegetusa Regia have uncovered an enormous number of tools associated with a variety of manufacturing activities.<sup>487</sup> Over 400 iron tools have been catalogued, including tongs, hammers, and anvils, (see fig. 10) all clearly associated with the manufacture of metal products (see fig. 11).<sup>488</sup> Additionally, a substantial number of agricultural tools have also been discovered.<sup>489</sup> This is of particular interest as Sarmizegetusa Regia was not directly in a position to engage in agricultural production,<sup>490</sup> illustrating

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid., p.248.

<sup>486</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.44.

<sup>487</sup> MacKendrick, *The Dacian Stones Speak*, p.66.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid., p.66.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Sarmizegetusa was located at an elevation of over 1300 metres above sea level in the Oraştie mountains, with all available space dedicated to the fortress, manufacturing and religious precincts.



that this site provided tools for surrounding agricultural settlements, a clear demonstration of craft centralisation and specialisation and the importance of this fortress to the surrounding communities.



Fig. 10. Iron Working Tools discovered at Sarmizegetusa Regia

The head of the priests was the high priest. His residence was on the sacred mountain Cogaionon (Sarmizegetusa), where the Dacian kings often came to seek his advice. For the people, the high priest was almost considered a god, and that is the reason why his will was always respected.<sup>491</sup> The importance of this is that it demonstrates a centralised control of religion, especially when the placement of religious sites within the fortifications is recognised, particularly in Sarmizegetusa Regia. Religious centralisation also evident at other Dacian fortresses such as Costești, Blidaru and Piatra Roșie.

Burebista's death led to a reversion to the tribal system, albeit with less

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<sup>491</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11.



Fig. 11. Agricultural Tools discovered at Sarmizegetusa Regia

dispersion, and substantially more centralisation. Strabo's description of the circumstances in Dacia not long after the death of Burebista: 'The number of parts into which the empire had been divided was five, though at the time of the insurrection it had been four,'<sup>492</sup> demonstrates the fact that Dacian society was again split into tribal communities after Burebista's death, which meant that some of the centralising features he had introduced into Dacian society ceased to exist, likely from competition between various nobles. This is not to suggest however that the Dacians lost all of the centralisation that had been achieved during Burebista's reign.

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<sup>492</sup> Strabo, VII.3.11.

This centralisation was repeated and enhanced upon by Decebalus when he re-united the Dacian peoples prior to the reign of Domitian. Again there is ample evidence that Decebalus was seen as the sole ruler of the Dacian people after his accession. The ancient sources refer to Decebalus as the king of the Dacians during both Domitian's and Trajan's invasions of Dacia,<sup>493</sup> in each instance Decebalus is the sole party directing the Dacian negotiations with the Roman invaders about resolving the contemporary conflicts.<sup>494</sup> Additionally, it was Decebalus that Trajan pronounced *rex amicus* after the resolution of his first Dacian war in 103 AD,<sup>495</sup> and it is the death of Decebalus that signaled the end of the Dacian wars in 106 AD and has been memorialised as such on Trajan's column (fig. 12).

Although the majority of Dacians lived in small land holdings and hamlets,<sup>496</sup> the effect of both the Dacian and later the Roman fortresses was to create a web centred on them thus to some degree joining these communities into a whole and thereby centralising the population. Until recently, many

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<sup>493</sup> Dio, LXVII.6.1, LXVIII.6.2.

<sup>494</sup> Dio, LXVIII.9.1, LXVIII.9.4, LXVIII.9.5, LXVIII.11.1.

<sup>495</sup> Dio, LXVIII.9.5-6.

<sup>496</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.125.



Fig. 12 Trajan's Column Scene CXLVI Cast 389.  
'Decebalus' Suicide'

archaeologists believed that Roman sites in Dacia were built over existing Dacian settlements.<sup>497</sup> This would have provided ample evidence of the continuation of the centralisation put in place by the Dacian monarchs, but it has since been proven untrue.<sup>498</sup> After the completion of the conquest, Roman

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<sup>497</sup> Crişan, *Dacii Din Estul Transilvaniei*, p.189.

<sup>498</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.123.

sites were founded on new, previously unpopulated sites.<sup>499</sup> Recent studies have indicated that pre-Roman settlements continued after the annexation, in much the same way they had previously.<sup>500</sup> Although urbanisation is an indicator of centralisation it should not be seen as a prerequisite; Dacian centralisation clearly existed and was utilised by the Romans after the annexation.<sup>501</sup>

Although the Romans built new urban centres on previously uninhabited sites, these were utilised as centralising features of this newly-annexed region. The Roman decision to build on previously uninhabited sites can be seen as a strategic one. The centralising feature of the Dacian society were the mountain fortresses built in locations favourable to Dacian warriors, but these locations were not defensibly sound for Roman legionaries who were far more capable combatants in open terrain. Therefore, the Roman choice of building urbanised communities in the Dacian plains was consistent with an overall defensive strategy.<sup>502</sup> Dacian centralisation was maintained by these

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<sup>499</sup> Ibid., p.121.

<sup>500</sup> Lockyear, "The Late Iron Age Background to Roman Dacia," p.40; Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," p.128.

<sup>501</sup> Diaconescu, "The Towns of Roman Dacia: An Overview of Recent Archaeological Research," pp.126-27.

<sup>502</sup> Opreanu, "Roman Dacia and Its Barbarian Neighbours. Economic and Diplomatic

communities and auxiliary fortifications, where we find the most evidence of Dacian continuity in the form of native trade goods.

Some authors still point to the very few demonstrable Dacian remains dated to the post-war period as evidence for the extermination of the Dacian people.<sup>503</sup> If correct, this would invalidate much of the argument for the continuation of pre-annexation centralisation. The arguments for extermination however place too much weight on very few literary sources that it can be argued were merely exaggerating the results of this conflict. To believe that the Dacian people, who must have numbered well over 1 million, were either completely wiped out or nearly wiped out seems to be highly unlikely. It is clear from the material remains that there was continuity of the Dacian people, albeit in small dispersed settlements and not in the newly-urbanised Roman centres. One reason for the paucity of material evidence is the fact that many of the material remains of this culture due to their composition would not have survived to be discovered by archaeologists.<sup>504</sup>

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Relations", p.248.

<sup>503</sup> A. Alföldi, "Die Verlorene Enmannsche Kaisergeschichte und die *Caesares* des Julianus Apostata," in *Bonner Historia Augusta colloquium*, ed. J. Straub (Bonn: 1968), p.153.

<sup>504</sup> Extermination theory is discussed in more detail in the inclusiveness section to below.

The high potential for low-cost Romanisation proved substantially advantageous to Rome. The Dacians were already accustomed to control by remote entities based largely on a stratified class hierarchy, and, prior to the annexation, were already engaged in some self-Romanisation, as is demonstrated by their adoption of Roman coinage and a centralised administration relying on regional administrators. This centralisation, combined with an increasing tendency towards craft specialisation, demonstrably increased the potential for low-cost Romanisation. Pre-annexation centralisation and craft specialisation allowed the Romans to rapidly and inexpensively incorporate the province of Dacia into the Empire.

Overall the Dacian annexation proved to be substantially economically advantageous to the Romans, with the majority of factors presenting significant advantages to Rome. Only one economic factor registered as a minor disadvantage: changes in the trade barriers with the conquered. This disadvantage was easily countered by the significant advantages Rome benefited from. The Dacian annexation benefited Rome with a substantial advantage because of the relatively low cost of Romanising the region, significant advantages to both regional and local trade, substantial advantage

because of high-efficiency economic collaboration with Dacia, and although substantial, the expenses associated with the campaigns and the retention of the province were exceeded by the income Rome was able to generate. An assessment of the economic factors demonstrates that Rome received significant economic benefits as a result of this annexation.