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NOMADS OF THE STEPPES ON THE DANUBE FRONTIER OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE 1ST CENTURY CE. HISTORICAL SKETCH AND CHRONOLOGICAL REMARKS*

VITALIE BÂRCĂ**

Key words: Sarmatians, Aorsi, Alani, Siraces, Iazyges, Roman empire, the north-Pontic area.

Abstract: This study, without aiming for comprehensiveness, attempts, based on sources, either literary, epigraphic, numismatic or archaeological to reconstruct the political and military events involving the Sarmatians in the Lower and Mid Danube regions in the 1st century CE and also the analysis of the aspects related to the entrance and settlement of various Sarmatian tribes in the north-west Pontic area and in the northern part of the territory between the Danube and Tisza rivers. A series of aspects concerning the relations of the Sarmatians with the Roman Empire and the Greek cities in the north-west of the Black Sea in the discussed chronological interval are also tackled. Following the analysis of the ancient written sources, it was noted that for the second half of the 1st century CE, in the north and north-west Pontic area one may speak of a presence of the Sarmatian Roxolani, Aorsi, Alani and Siraces. The presence of the Alani is archaeologically confirmed by the eastern feature burials, emerging in this territory starting with mid 1st century CE, being radically different from the rest of the Sarmatian graves in the area. Moreover, it was concluded that in the current state of knowledge, one may argue that the burials with obvious eastern features in the north and north-west Pontic areas in the chronological interval between mid 1st century – early 2nd century CE are in majority of Alani origin and that the Chinese and Central Asian origin items emerged with the Sarmatians once with the arrival of the Alani, who had been using these artefacts long time before reaching these territories. Last but not least, it was noted that the settlement of the Sarmatian Iazyges in the plain between the Danube and Tisza rivers is an evidence of a global movement (*mutatis mutandis*) of the Sarmatians westwards. Additionally, it was noticed that archaeological finds point to the fact that early Iazyges antiquities in the region are no older than the second half of the 1st century CE and that existent finds date to the end of the 1st century CE. This archaeological reality, also confirmed by the ancient written sources is indicative of the fact that the first Iazyges emerged in the northern part of the territory between the Danube and Tisza likely around CE 50, if not precisely in CE 50 in occasion of the events in *regnum Vannianum*.

Cuvinte-cheie: sarmați, aorși, alani, siraci, iazigi, Imperiul Roman, spațiul nord-pontic.

Rezumat: Studiul de față, fără a avea pretenții de exhaustivitate, încearcă pe baza surselor, literare, epigrafice, numismatice și arheologice reconstituirea evenimentelor politico-militare în care au fost implicați sarmații la Dunărea de Jos și de Mijloc în sec. I p. Chr., dar și o analiză a aspectelor legate de pătrunderea și așezarea diferitor triburi sarmatice în spațiul nord-vest pontic și partea nordică a teritoriului dintre Dunăre și Tisa. De asemenea sunt abordate o serie de aspecte legate de relațiile sarmaților cu Imperiului Roman și orașele grecești din nord-vestul Mării Negre în intervalul cronologic menționat. În urma analizei izvoarelor scrise antice s-a constatat că pentru a doua jumătate a sec. I p. Chr. în spațiul nord și nord-vest pontic se poate vorbi de o prezență a sarmaților roxolani, aorși, alani și siraci. Prezența alanilor este confirmată arheologic de mormintele cu trăsături estice, care își fac apariția în acest teritoriu începând cu mijlocul sec. I p. Chr. și se deosebesc radical de restul mormintelor sarmatice din acest spațiu. De asemenea s-a conchis că în stadiul actual al cunoștințelor se poate afirma că mormintele cu evidente trăsături estice, din spațiul nord și nord-vest pontic, din intervalul cronologic cuprins între mijlocul sec. I p. Chr. – începutul sec. II p. Chr., sunt în cea mai mare parte a lor alanice și că piesele de origine chinezească și central-asiatică și-au făcut

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apariția la sarmați odată cu venirea alanilor care utilizau aceste artefacte cu mult înainte de a ajunge în aceste teritorii. Nu în ultimul rând s-a ajuns la concluzia că așezarea sarmaților iazigi în câmpia dintre Dunăre și Tisa este o dovadă a unei mișcări globale (*mutatis mutandis*) a sarmaților spre vest. De asemenea s-a remarcat că descoperirile arheologice indică faptul că antichitățile iazige timpurii din această regiune nu sunt mai vechi de a doua jumătate a sec. I p. Chr. și că descoperirile existente se datează mai spre sfârșitul sec. I p. Chr. Această realitate arheologică, confirmată și de sursele scrise antice, indică faptul că primii iazigi și-au făcut apariția în partea nordică a teritoriului dintre Dunăre și Tisa, probabil în jurul anului 50 p. Chr. dacă nu chiar în anul 50 p. Chr. cu ocazia evenimentelor din *regnum Vannianum*.

The nomad Sarmatian tribes left their print on Ancient history. During the last centuries BCE and the first centuries CE, they controlled the vast area between the Ural Mountains and the Lower Danube, while starting with mid 1st century CE, they occupied including the territory between the Danube and Tisza, thus becoming a power of the European ancient world. For several centuries, the Sarmatians were the main ethno-political power in both the north-Pontic region and Mid and Lower Danube regions. They also played a significant role in the historical development of the territories they inhabited, influencing the evolution and fate of various peoples.

For instance, in the 1st century CE, together with the Geto-Dacians, beside whom they lived and went through mutual influences¹, the Sarmatians were the main political and military force of the region and a barrier against Roman expansion. Their westward movement impacted, in various time frames, both clashes and relations with the Bastarnae (bearers of the Poienești-Lucașevca culture), the Germanic peoples of the Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures, the Free Dacians in the area of Upper Tisza and east Mid Tisza and also those in east Carpathians and Muntenia plain. From the end of the 2nd century CE, the Goths became the Sarmatian neighbours and a series of relations and military alliances were established between the two peoples against the Roman empire. Among the constant neighbours of the Sarmatians north the Black Sea also count the Greek cities of Tyras, Olbia and Chersonesus as well as the Bosporan kingdom. The westward movement of the Sarmatians led to inevitable collisions with the Roman empire and for a long period, they were ones of the most considerable enemies of the empire.

The Sarmatians interdependence with various populations in the vast space they occupied is noticeable in mutual political, economic and cultural relations. Over time, the Sarmatians left their print on these populations' material and spiritual culture, reacting in turn, to the local peoples and Greek and Roman worlds' influences. Moreover, subsequent direct contacts with the Greek cities, the Bosporan kingdom and the Roman empire, the Sarmatian funerary goods substantially improved. In addition, the archaeological material, and in certain cases, the anthropological, literary and epigraphic material account for the complexity of ethnic processes in the regions where they spread. Last but not least, it is noteworthy that the study of ethnic and cultural processes in the regions the Sarmatians entered and settled over time, is impossible without clarifying their historical role.

In the 1st century and first half of the 2nd century CE – the flourishing period of the Sarmatian culture – archaeological finds on the entire inhabited territory evidence a substantial demographic growth and economic and social development of the Sarmatian tribes. The many graves of Sarmatian commoners and the majority of aristocratic burials performed according to a certain ritual belong to this period. They have rich and diverse funerary goods mirroring the social layers within the Sarmatian society.

In the period under study, the dominant funerary rite in the north-west Pontic Sarmatian environment as well as most part of the north-Pontic area is represented by burials in rectangular pits and northward orientation, and less by southward orientation². Circumstances in the region between the Danube and Tisza are entirely different, the southward orientation of the dead being predominant³. However, by the start of mid 1st century CE, when new Sarmatian waves enter the north and north-west Pontic region, new elements of funerary rites and rituals, specific to Sarmatian groups coming from east

¹ For Geto-Dacian and Sarmatian relations see Bichir 1976, p. 203-214; Bichir 1993, p. 135-169; Babeș 1999, p. 223-239; Bârcă 2002, p. 103-150; Bârcă 2002a, p. 45-97.

² For Sarmatian funerary rite and rituals north and north-west of the Black Sea see Bârcă 2006, 37-60; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 41-48, 99-110, 205-220.

³ Kulcsár 1998, p. 16.

of Don, emerge⁴. It is certain that the distribution of Sarmatian vestiges in the north-west Pontic and Lower Danube region as well as between the Danube and Tisza accounts for both the movement direction as well as the settlement of these territories.

Archaeological finds datable to the 1st century – start of the 2nd century CE in the region north the Lower Danube mouths and those in the northern part of the territory between the Danube and Tisza are also confirmed by ancient literary and epigraphic sources, which we shall discuss below.

One of the first reports that establish the clash between the Sarmatians and the Romans by the Danube is found in Dio Cassius. The report accounts that in 16 BC, the Sarmatians were rejected and driven back to the left of the Danube after having crossed the river and plundered Roman possessions⁵.

The same author reports that during the uprising in Pannonia and Dalmatia, A. Caecina Severus⁶, commander of the Roman army, who fought in 6 CE against the Illyrians and the Pannonians, returned to Moesia⁷ raided by the Dacians and the Sarmatians⁸. Florus, when referencing the events of the first years of the 1st century CE⁹, explains that a Roman military campaign led by Cn. Cornelius Lentulus¹⁰ was directed against the Sarmatians by the Danube¹¹. The constant Sarmatian danger from north-west the Black Sea by the start of the 1st century CE is reported on various occasions by Ovid, who, exiled at Tomis, mentions that the Sarmatians were unyielding by the Lower Danube as early as the first decade of the 1st century CE¹².

Information above is completed by data in the decree honouring Mokaporis, son to Auluporis, strategos of king Rhoemetalces I (12 BC – CE 12), discovered following the excavations in the temple of the Pontic Mother of Gods at Dionysopolis, mentioning a military campaign to the left of the Danube directed against the Iazyges¹³. Although the Romans are not referred to by name in connection to this military campaign, it may be in fact, as well noted by Fl. Matei-Popescu¹⁴, that campaign carried out by Cnaeus Cornelius Lentulus against the Sarmatians recorded by Florus. Fl. Matei-Popescu's argument is that a military campaign past the Danube under Augustus was impossible without Roman involvement. It is though certain that the information in the inscription at Dionysopolis further confirms that the Lower Danube region¹⁵ was in Lentulus's action range.

⁴ The present study is a revised version from a series of previous works in terms of approach and analysis of certain historical and chronological aspects of the Sarmatian history in the north-west Pontic area.

⁵ Cassius Dio LIV, 20, 3. In the 1st century BCE, the Sarmatians occupied steppes between the Don and Dnieper, from where, increasingly regularly, they entered the territory west the Dnieper, reaching the Prut and Lower Danube following raids and other events. Subsequent the collapse of Burebista's kingdom upon his death (BCE 44) and the Geto-Dacians and Bastarnae defeat by the Romans in 28 BCE (Titus Livius, *Periochae*, CXXXIV; Florus, *Bellum Moesicum*, II, 26, 13-15, *apud* FHDR I, p. 524; Cassius Dio LI, 23, 2; LI, 24, 1-4) the Sarmatians occupied the region much easily. Sarmatian vestiges, although few for this period and area, are indicative.

⁶ See for A. Caecina Severus Thomasson 1984, p. 121; Thomasson 1991, p. 43, 45.

⁷ In this case, the use of the name Moesia may be an anachronism in Cassius Dio.

⁸ Cassius Dio LV, 30, 4.

⁹ The exact date of the event is unknown.

¹⁰ For Cn. Cornelius Lentulus (augur) see Thomasson 1984, p. 121-122; Thomasson 1991, p. 41-42, 45. He led the famous campaign against the Getae (see Tacitus, *Annales*, IV, 44, 1 („*Lentulo super consulatum et triumphalia de Getis gloriae fuerat bene tolerata paupertas*”), and according to certain sources, against the Dacians (*Res Gestae...*, V, 30, 47-49, *apud* FHDR I, p. 268; Florus, *Bellum Dacicum*, II, 28, 19, *apud* FHDR I, p. 524 („*Daci montibus inhaerent, inde Cotisonis regis imperio, quotiens concretus gelu Danuvius iunxerat ripas, decurrere solebant et vicina populari. Visum est Caesari Augusto gentem aditu difficillimam summovere. misso igitur Lentulo ultra ulteriorem repulit ripam; citra praesidia constituta. Sic tum Dacia non victa sed summota atque dilata est*”).

¹¹ Florus, *Bellum Sarmaticum*, II, 29, 20, *apud* FHDR I, p. 526. Lentulus's action against the Sarmatians took place by the Lower Danube, where they were constant at the date.

¹² See Ovidius, *Tristia*, I, 5, 62, I, 8, 40, II, 198, III, 3, 6, III, 3, 63, III, 10, 5, III, 10, 34, IV, 1, 94, IV, 8, 15-16, IV, 10, 109-110, V, 1, 13, V, 7, 13, V, 7, 56, V, 12, 58; Ovidius, *Ex Ponto*, I, 2, 45, I, 2, 58, I, 2, 77, I, 2, 112, I, 3, 59-60, I, 5, 49-50, II, 7, 72; Ovidius, *Ibis*, 637. The Sarmatian ethnonym is mentioned by Ovid 31 times.

¹³ Lazarenko, Mircheva, Encheva, Sharankov 2010, p. 36; Matei-Popescu forthcoming. I wish to thank herein also, my friend Florian Matei-Popescu for mentioning this inscription to me and for making available to me the studies analysing this account in the inscription at Dionysopolis.

¹⁴ Matei-Popescu forthcoming.

¹⁵ Matei-Popescu forthcoming. The choice for Lentulus's action by the Lower Danube was also suggested by us (Bărcă 2002a, p. 58-59 Bărcă 2006a, p. 179-180; Bărcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 348), contrary to A. Mócsy's view who suggested a link between the actions of Cn. Cornelius Lentulus and the displacement of the Iazyges to Pannonia (Mócsy 1974, p. 37; Mócsy 1977).

Due to repeated Getae and Sarmatian attacks left the Danube by the start of the 1st century CE, L. Pomponius Flaccus¹⁶, exercised a command by the Lower Danube (before CE 17) and subsequent taken measures, the terrible Danube *ripa* was stabilised¹⁷. In 15 CE, when C. Poppaeus Sabinus (*prorogatur Poppaeo Sabino provincia Moesia additis Achaia et Macedonia*)¹⁸, the first consular governor recorded, the province of Moesia was organised. Originally, it was administered together with the other two provinces by the same governor¹⁹. Only under Claudius, the three provinces would be separated administratively²⁰. Nevertheless, Sarmatian raids over Roman possessions continued, however less intense. An important account is found in the book dedicated by Suetonius to emperor Tiberius. At the moment when this emperor has decided to abandon the state affairs²¹, the Dacians and the Sarmatians ransacked Moesia²².

Therefore, one may reach the conclusion that the Sarmatians were definitely present north the Danube mouths by the end of the 1st century BCE – first half of the 1st century CE, assumption which is also confirmed by archaeological finds²³.

Under emperor Claudius, Roman positions south the Danube are substantially reinforced as Thracia became a Roman province (CE 46)²⁴. In this period, the conflict over the throne of Bosphorus between brothers Mithridates III and Cotys, who also involved the Sarmatian Siraces and the Aorsi²⁵ broke out. Views in the specialty literature argue that events from Bosphorus and the conflict between the Aorsi and the Siraces destabilised the Sarmatian world, hence the westward movement of some Sarmatian groups²⁶. However, we believe that the Roman-Bosporan conflict, involving the Siraces and the Aorsi was of no global character. This event was local in the history of Bosphorus, touching the Kuban region and the territory east of the Sea of Azov. The conflict whereby the Siraces and the Aorsi fought against each other was only an episode in the chain of events. Actually, the westward movement of a group of Sarmatians had several causes, one of which (possibly the most important) was the Alani pressure from the east. It is certain that, upon the end of the conflict, the Aorsi appeared in the region west the Dnieper.

The Aorsi settlement in this region by mid 1st century CE was not singular. In the same period, an eastern nomad group entered the north-Pontic area²⁷. Eastern origin pieces in a series of graves in the north

¹⁶ Legate under the command of governor Poppaeus Sabinus (see Tacitus, *Annales*, II, 66, 1-2). See to this effect Thomasson 1984, p. 122; Thomasson 1991, p. 43.

¹⁷ Ovidius, *Ex Ponto*, IV, 9, 75-80.

¹⁸ Tacitus, *Annales*, I, 80, 1; Stein 1940, 18; Thomasson 1984, p. 122; Thomasson 1991, p. 43, 45.

¹⁹ Tacitus, *Annales*, VI, 39, 3 reports that C. Poppaeus Sabinus governed for 24 years the largest provinces, while Cassius Dio (LVIII, 25, 4) notes he governed the two Moesia and Macedonia during entire reign of Tiberius.

²⁰ Benea 1983, 21. In the period, Moesia's defence was assigned to *IV Scythica* and *V Macedonica* (Patsch 1932, p. 144).

²¹ In 26 CE, the emperor left for Capri.

²² Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 41.

²³ See Bârcă 2006.

²⁴ Eusebius, *Chronicon*, 180, 12-13.

²⁵ Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 15-21.

²⁶ Shchukin 1982, p. 35-37; Shchukin 1989, p. 78 sqq.; Shchukin 1989a, p. 43-44; Vinogradov 1994, p. 164.

D. A. Machinskij consider that the Aorsi entered the north-Pontic area gradually, beginning with the end of the 1st century CE (Machinskij 1974, p. 129 sqq.), while M. B. Shchukin places their westward movement by mid –second half of the 1st century CE. Both authors believe that one of the causes was the Alani pressure from the east.

²⁷ See to this end Skripkin 1990, p. 206-209; Skripkin 1996, p. 162 sqq.; Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 74-75.

These graves, with the dead placed crosswise are the archaeological reflection of the westward movement of new Sarmatian tribes and are deemed, based on archaeologically- sound arguments, Alanic (Skripkin 1990, p. 184-185, 218-219; Skripkin 1996, p. 165-166; Simonenko 1999, p. 128). If true, then they confirm Seneca (*Thyestes*, 629-630), Lucan (Lucanus, *Pharsalia*, VIII, 215-225) and Pliny the Elder accounts (*Naturalis historia*, IV, 80) on the Alani presence north the Black Sea. Moreover, they may also account for two westward movements, one concurrent, when the Aorsi and Alani moved independently, and another, when we deal with an Alano-Aorsi group (Simonenko 1999, 316; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 352). It is not excluded that the group were headed by kings Pharzoios and Inismeos (Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 74-75; Simonenko 1992, p. 158 sqq.; Simonenko 1999, p. 316; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 352), for whom Olbia struck golden and silver coins in the 60ies – end of the 70ies for Pharzoios and end of the 70ies – start of the 80ies for Inismeos (Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 66-82; Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 6-28; Karyshkovskij 1988, p. 108-115, 119. See also Anohin 1989, p. 58-70), deemed by scholars as Aorsi (Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 74, 75; Simonenko 1992, p. 158 sqq.; Krapivina 1993, p. 146-147; Vinogradov 1994, p. 167-169; Zubar 1994a, p. 218-

and north-Pontic region²⁸, as well as certain innovation elements, like for instance the tamga-type signs, including those in Pharzoios and Inismeos scheme, were either brought, carried or are of Alani origin²⁹.

Both archaeological facts³⁰ as well as literary and epigraphic sources, which we shall tackle below, confirm the new settlement of Sarmatian tribes for the mid – third quarter of the 1st century CE. Written sources report that including the Alani – the main cause of this process – reached the Danube mouths in the third quarter of the 1st century CE.

The Sarmatian settlement of the north-west Pontic area corresponds to the extension of the Roman borders up to the Lower Danube. Such proximity “ensured” the Roman world with a considerable neighbour and enemy, who made its presence fully felt over the entire 1st century and the start of the following C.

For the 1st century CE, the movement of the Sarmatian tribes is best noted in Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis Historia*, mentioning the Sarmatian Roxolani, Aorsi, Hamaxobi and Alani in the north-Pontic area³¹. The same author references the Sarmatian Siraces also north the Black Sea³². According to Pliny, they inhabited the entire strip called the “Achilles road”³³, i.e. the territory left Lower Dnieper. Among the newcomers to the north the Black Sea, Pliny also mentions the Alani³⁴, the main cause of the Sarmatian westward movement.

Archaeologically, Aorsi vestiges are related to the early Sarmatian culture. Written sources establish them including in the mid Sarmatian period. This denotes that part of the graves must have belonged to the Aorsi, however which ones is unclear. Aorsi vestiges of the 1st century CE have no uniform and defining peculiarities. This may be due to the Alani emergence and their co-existence and contact, which might have occurred prior settlement in territories inhabited by the Aorsi. In addition, it is possible that part of the Aorsi settled areas west of Don prior the Roman-Bosporan conflict of 45-49 CE³⁵. Finally, it is not excluded that the Aorsi overtook certain customs and tastes specific to the Alani rather quickly³⁶, which would explain the impossibility to identify them archaeologically. It is also possible that

222; Yacenko 2001, p. 48-49) or Siraces (Rusjaeva 1989, p. 192-193; Rusjaeva 1995, p. 24-36). It is argued that part of the nomad group were Alani, who joined the Aorsi aristocracy, thus reaching for a short time frame north the Black Sea (Yacenko 1993a, p. 86). Certain scholars argue that it is hard to assign origin to a certain Sarmatian tribe in the case of the two kings, as they might have been both Aorsi and Siraces (Shchukin 1992, p. 120-121; Shchukin 1995, p. 177; Bârcă 1997, p. 974; Simonenko 1999, p. 316; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 352). A. S. Skripkin tends to support the Alani origin of kings Pharzoios and Inismeos (Skripkin 1996, p. 160-168).

²⁸ See Bârcă 2006; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009.

²⁹ See Yacenko 1993, p. 60-72.

³⁰ See Bârcă 2006; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 99-203.

³¹ Plinius IV, 80.

³² According to ancient sources (Strabo XI, 5, 7; Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, I, 114, *apud* Latyshev 1904, p. 119) this Sarmatian tribe inhabited the steppes in the Kuban region and north Caucasus, where their vestiges are well known due to archaeological digs performed over time (see Marchenko 1996). Archaeological finds belonging to the Siraces are rather expressive and their essential feature is the latitude orientation of the dead (westward mainly). Graves with the dead oriented westwise or eastwise are very rare in the north and north-Pontic area during all stages of the Sarmatian culture. Moreover, they do not seem to be typical to the Siraces. Regarding the north-Pontic Siraces mentioned by Pliny, there are graves which could be definitely of Siraces origin. This indicates that either Pliny the Elder’s account is erroneous or that once settled north the Black Sea, these Siraces lost their specific traits.

³³ Plinius IV, 83.

³⁴ Pliny the Elder also mentions the Aorsi in the Caspian Sea region (Plinius VI, 48), the same area where Strabo placed them (Strabo XI, 5, 8). It is justly believed (Vinogradov 1994, p. 165; Bârcă 1997, p. 960) that this information mirrors historical facts concluding that part of the Aorsi remained in previously inhabited regions, where are later placed by Ptolemy (Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, VI, 14, 9-10, 13), who most likely took over information from Pliny the Elder (Vinogradov 1994, p. 165). Ju. G. Vinogradov argues that Pliny’s information came from Mithridates III, former king of Bosphorus (who lived in Rome between 49-68 CE) and, most likely, from the governors of Moesia, Flavius Sabinus and Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, whose legions fought against the Sarmatian tribes (Vinogradov 1994, p. 165). According to Ptolemy, European Sarmatia was inhabited by Roxolani, Hamaxobi, Aorsi and Alani (Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, III, 5, 7-10). Elsewhere, the author mentions the Aorsi and Alanorsi in relation to Scythia, beyond mountain Imaem (Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, VI, 14, 9-10, 13), i.e. in Lower Volga and west Caspian Sea areas.

³⁵ Skripkin 1990, p. 216; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 354, note 74.

³⁶ Raev 1985, p. 131.

the name Alanorsi³⁷, later mentioned by Ptolemy³⁸, appeared in the start period of the Alani presence in the steppes inhabited by the Aorsi. Certainly, irrespective any explanation, identification of Aorsi vestiges datable to the 1st century CE is difficult.

The Sarmatian global westward movement (*mutatis mutandis*) is evidenced by the Sarmatian Iazyges dispersion and settlement of the plain between the Danube and Tisza. According to Tacitus, in 50 CE, the Iazyges cavalry supported Vannius in his battle against the Suebi³⁹. Elsewhere, Tacitus reports that the various peoples of Germania are separated from the Gauls by the Rhine, from the Raetians and Pannonians by the Danube and from the Sarmatians and the Dacians by mutual fear⁴⁰. The Sarmatian Iazyges inhabitation in the area between the Danube and Tisza in the 60ies -start of the 70ies CE is mentioned by Pliny the Elder as well, who relates that the Sarmatian Iazyges inhabited basins and plains, while the Dacians inhabited mountains and forests, pushed back by the first up to Pathissus (Tisza)⁴¹. Seneca also confirms the Iazyges presence north the region between the Danube and Tisza in the third quarter of the 1st century CE. In *Quaestiones Naturales*, written between 61-64 CE, when referring to borders that separate peoples, the author states that: “*O quam ridiculi sunt mortalium termini! Ultra Histrium Dacos <nostrum> arceat imperium, Haemo Thraces includat, Parthis abstet Euphrates, Danuvius Sarmatica ac Romana disterminet...*”⁴².

Regarding the means and period when the Sarmatian Iazyges reached the Pannonian plain, views are divided⁴³. A. Alföldi argued that they could not have been massively present north-east and east the Pannonian Danube without Roman approval⁴⁴, view which is also expressed by J. Harmatta, who claims that the Sarmatians were settled with Roman approval and support as an intended “buffer” against the Dacians⁴⁵. A. Mócsy suggested a relation between Cn. Cornelius Lentulus actions and the Iazyges settlement as a “buffer” between Pannonia and Dacia⁴⁶. The author, quoting J. Harmatta⁴⁷ also argues in favour of a possible gradual immigration of the Iazyges, hardly noticeable to the Romans by the beginning⁴⁸. J. J. Wilkes appreciated the Iazyges reached the Pannonian plain either by the end of Augustus’s rule or between 17-20 CE⁴⁹. C. Daicoviciu considered that the Iazyges emerged in the area around 20 CE called upon by the Romans for political reasons⁵⁰. C. Opreanu also tends to believe that the Iazyges were settled between the Danube and Tisza as a solution to create a “buffer” between Pannonia and the Dacians around 20 CE⁵¹. Gh. Bichir⁵² and I. H. Crişan⁵³ supported the idea that the Iazyges entered in large numbers the plain between the Danube and

³⁷ The ethnonym Alanorsi represents, according to A. S. Skripkin, the interdependence between the Alani (Skripkin 1990, 216) or the fusion of a part of Aorsi with the newcomers Alani according to K. F. Smirnov (Smirnov 1954, 204), like in the case of other populations (Skripkin 1990, p. 217).

³⁸ Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, VI, 14, 9-10, 13.

³⁹ Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 29-30. The Iazyges within the army of Vannius, serving as mercenaries, do not necessarily prove their inhabitation north the Danube-Tisza interfluve. However, we may not exclude this statement given classical sources indicative of the Sarmatian involvement in various military conflicts as mercenaries (see Strabo VII, 3, 17; Appianus, *Mithridates*, 69, 293, *apud* FHDR I, p. 572; Tacitus, *Annales*, VI, 33, 1-3; Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 5, 1.).

⁴⁰ Tacitus, *Germania*, 1, 1.

⁴¹ Plinius IV, 80.

⁴² Seneca, *Quaestiones Naturales*, Praefatio 9, *apud* FHDR I, p. 368.

⁴³ The main view in the Hungarian specialty literature is that the Iazyges mention in the region between the Danube and Tisza in ancient literary sources dates to an earlier period than their first archaeological vestiges in this territory.

⁴⁴ Alföldi 1936, p. 85, note 2. This view is also accepted by E. Nemeth (Nemeth 2007, p. 140).

⁴⁵ Harmatta 1970, p. 41-42.

⁴⁶ Mócsy 1974, p. 37; Mócsy 1977. In previous works, the same author argued that the Iazyges arrived in the Pannonian plain under Tiberius (Mochi 1954, p. 115).

⁴⁷ Harmatta 1970, p. 100.

⁴⁸ Mócsy 1977, p. 446.

⁴⁹ Wilkes 1983, p. 259.

⁵⁰ Daicoviciu 1960, p. 264, 292. This view is also supported by E. Dörner (Dörner 1971, p. 682) and S. Dumitraşcu (Dumitraşcu 1993, p. 72).

⁵¹ Opreanu 1994, p. 194; Opreanu 1998, p. 31.

⁵² Bichir 1976, p. 209.

⁵³ Crişan 1977, p. 279.

Tisza under Tiberius (ca. 20 CE)⁵⁴. A different view was expressed by D. Benea, who argues that the Iazyges reached the Pannonian plain by slow infiltration, without Roman interference, in the first half of the 1st century CE⁵⁵. J. Fitz supports the idea that the Iazyges arrived around 50 CE subsequent an initial gradual and insignificant migration⁵⁶, their settlement not being initiated by the Romans, as this would not have been in their interest. M. B. Ščukin considered that the Iazyges emerged on the current territory of Hungary and Slovakia in 50 CE⁵⁷.

By the start of the last decade of the 20th C, A. Vaday rejected the hypothesis of the Iazyges settlement in the Pannonian field by the Romans in order to set up a safety area between the Roman province of Pannonia and the Dacian kingdom⁵⁸. Arguments include the decline of the Dacian power in this period and the fact that their settlement as “buffer” against the Dacians north the Pannonian plain had no strategic purpose, for this region was not endangered by the Dacians in the first half of the 1st century CE⁵⁹. The lack of Dacian danger in this period may be explained by domestic political and military circumstances and most likely, by the evolution of political and diplomatic relations between the Roman empire and Dacian political establishments, whose number, according to Strabo⁶⁰, were constantly changing. This state of facts is also confirmed by literary sources of the first half of the 1st century CE, which do not mention any Dacian danger or military actions against territories west and north-west Tisza for the period between 20-50 CE. These remarks should be additionally completed by the fact that the settlement of the Sarmatian Iazyges north the area between the Danube and Tisza in the mentioned chronological interval had no point given the efficient Roman control of the Barbarian world north mid Danube. The Quadi, who inhabited the regions north of Pannonia (western Slovakia and Moravia) would exemplify such situation. They had a relation of *amicitia* with the Roman empire, the relation with *regnum Vannianum* being even more closer compared to *amicitia* and *rex amicus populi Romani*⁶¹. Confirmation comes from Tacitus, who, when referring to the events of 69 CE, mentions that the Suebi were the subjects of Rome for a long time and that they were trustworthy⁶².

A. Vaday also noted an interpreting mistake of the term *metanastai* in connection with the Iazyges settlement by the Romans and argued that epithet *metanastae* in fact differentiates between the Iazyges group migrating to the Panonian plain and the main Iazyges tribe, which remained in the Lower Danube area⁶³. Last but not least, the author establishes several dispersion waves of the Iazyges in the area between the Danube and Tisza and believes that the displacement of the entire tribe lasted for a longer period⁶⁴. According to A. Vaday, in 68-69 CE, the king and main tribe had not established yet in the area, the Iazyges playing a role of subordinates in the alliance system of the Quadi, being represented in negotiations by tribe chieftains⁶⁵.

In a recent study, E. Istvánovits and V. Kulcsár agree with J. Fitz’s hypothesis and argue that up to the temporary stage represented by *regnum Vannianum*, Germanic populations were weakened subsequent struggles with the Roman empire, while the Iazyges settlement was possible due to weakening Germanic power⁶⁶. The two authors argue that of the four Sarmatian dispersion waves of the 1st century

⁵⁴ T. Sulimirski considered the Iazyges entered the Pannonian field sometime after 20 CE (Sulimirski 1970, p. 172; Sulimirskij 2008, p. 118).

⁵⁵ Benea 1996, p. 115.

⁵⁶ Fitz 1963, p. 207-208; Fitz 1977, p. 552-555. The Iazyges settlement in the Upper Tisza area around 50 CE is also supported by B. Muscalu (Muscalu 2009, p. 10). J. Fitz argues that the erection of Roman fortifications and the troops stationed on the Danube bank should be related to the settlement of the Sarmatian Iazyges (Fitz 1977, p. 554-555). E. Nemeth (Nemeth 2007, p. 140) also relates the construction of Roman fortification on respective Danube sector to the Iazyges presence north-east and east the Pannonian plain.

⁵⁷ Shchukin 1989, p. 76-78.

⁵⁸ Vaday 1991, p. 75 sqq.

⁵⁹ Vaday 1991, p. 77-78.

⁶⁰ Strabo VII, 3, 11.

⁶¹ Opreanu 1998, p. 22-23. All diplomatic action combined with military action and population displacements carried out by the Roman empire subsequent the establishment of provinces Pannonia and Moesia targeted the efficient control of the Barbarian world north the Danube.

⁶² Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 5, 1.

⁶³ Vaday 1984, p. 179; Vaday 1991, p. 75.

⁶⁴ Vaday 1991, p. 75; Vaday 2003a, p. 225.

⁶⁵ Vaday 1991, p. 75.

⁶⁶ Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2006, p. 204 sqq.

CE established by A. Vaday, the most important was the third – the Iazyges Metanastae, the last being the one around 68-69 CE⁶⁷.

Archaeological finds of early Iazyges vestiges are few in this area, while consequent the analysis of those published over time, one may find they are no older than the second half of the 1st century CE.⁶⁸ Moreover, existent finds that include items with accurate chronological framing⁶⁹ date towards the end of the 1st century CE, fact also noted by other authors⁷⁰, including A. Mócsy⁷¹. Nonetheless, it is obvious that early Iazyges graves with poor goods and no elements allowing accurate chronological framing date rather in 50-70 than 20-50 CE. If the view according to which the Iazyges were settled in the area between the Danube and Tisza around 20 CE were disregarded and the view that they entered this region around 50 CE were accepted then one may note that Iazyges vestiges published over time by Hungarian researchers include graves dated to the third quarter of the 1st century CE. In fact, the view on the Iazyges settlement in the Pannonian plain around 20 CE is not supported by even the accounts of classical authors of the first half of the 1st century CE. Velleius Paterculus, in his **Roman history** drawn up around 30 CE, reporting at length the events under Augustus and Tiberius, mentions nothing on the settlement or presence of the Iazyges east Pannonia. In fact, neither Pomponius Mela, who lived in the first half of the 1st century and wrote **A description of the world** – divided by regions -, mentions the Sarmatian Iazyges in the region between the Danube and Tisza. The author accounts that the Sarmatians controlled both banks of Tanais⁷², that Sarmatia is wider inland than towards the sea, is divided by Vistula and extends downwards to the Ister⁷³. This archaeological fact, confirmed by ancient written sources as well, shows that the first Iazyges emerged north the territory between the Danube and Tisza most likely around 50 CE, if not precisely in 50, on the occasion of the events from *regnum Vannianum*.

The arrival of this first group, who played a secondary role in the area, would be followed towards the end of the third quarter of the 1st century CE by several other dispersion waves in the area between the Danube and Tisza. The displacement of the main Iazyges tribe was most likely the result of the pressure of new Sarmatian tribes coming from east to the north and north-Pontic region in CE 50-60. A secondary cause of lesser contribution to the departure of the main Iazyges tribe from the north-west Pontic area might have been the tense political and military situation in the north-west Pontic area and Vespasian's new border policy in relation to the Lower Danube, which led to the establishment of a more clear boundary on the Danube between Moesia and *Barbaricum*⁷⁴, thus a more efficient control of the north-Danubian "safety space". Additionally, one may not exclude the fact that the Romans might have played a secondary role in the "complete" displacement of the Iazyges in the Danube-Tisza interfluvium, who given the Vannius episode and the increasing power of the Dacians, might have encouraged for political and military reasons, the Iazyges settlement in the area. Last but not least, it must be mentioned here that in a first stage the Iazyges settled down on the northern area of the region between the Danube and the Tisza rivers. This aspect is documented by the concentration of the archaeological finds belonging to the Iazyges discovered on this territory. At the same time, the ancient literary sources support this theory when mentioning the Iazyges on this area on within the context concerning the neighbouring populations in the north⁷⁵. It is certain that starting with the second half of the 1st century CE, the Sarmatian Iazyges are definitely present north the area between the Danube and Tisza. Their settlement there determined changes in the political and military situation of the region and "ensured" the mid Danube Roman borders a new neighbour, who made its presence fully felt over a long period of time.

⁶⁷ Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2006, p. 209.

⁶⁸ A work in progress by Vitalie Bârcă is analysing the vestiges of the early Sarmatian vestiges from the Pannonian Plain together with the matter regarding the moment of settling down of the Iazyges in this area.

⁶⁹ Some of the early Iazyges funerary complexes have poor inventory, while part of the items which are good dating elements are chance finds (see Párducz 1941; Mochi 1954; Vaday 1984; Vaday 1989; Kőnegyi 1984; Tari 1994; Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2006).

⁷⁰ Vaday 1984; Shchukin 1989, p. 76-78.

⁷¹ Mochi 1954, p. 115 sqq.

⁷² Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, I, 115-116, *apud* Latyshev 1904, p. 119. See also in Rostovtsev 1925, p. 98, 99.

⁷³ Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, III, 4, 33-34, *apud* FHDR I, p. 390, 392.

⁷⁴ Opresanu 1998, p. 34.

⁷⁵ See Tacitus, *Germania*, 43.

The extension of the Iazyges settlement southward the interfluvium Danube-Tisza and east Tisza was gradual, as confirmed by archaeological finds, which we shall not discuss herein. It is certain that in the period between the end of the 1st century CE and the beginning of the 2nd century CE, archaeological finds do not indicate, at least in the current state of research, Sarmatian Iazyges inhabitation south the Partiscum-Lugio line⁷⁶ and east Tisza, since they did not control these territories. Incidentally, we would also like to add that currently, no Sarmatian settlement datable with certainty earlier than mid 2nd century CE is known, which is striking given the fact that for the 2nd-4th century CE they are extremely numerous on the entire area between the Danube and the left Tisza plain. This is indicative of the fact that after their displacement to the Pannonian plain, the Sarmatian Iazyges pursued an exclusively nomad lifestyle, specific to the entire Sarmatian world⁷⁷.

In the chronological interval between the beginning of Hadrian's reign and the end of the Marcommanic wars, Sarmatian finds are mainly present by mid Tisza area, the extension of the Iazyges inhabitation south the Tisza-Danube area occurring, as proven by archaeological finds, those west the Romanian Banat included⁷⁸, only by the end of the 2nd century CE⁷⁹.

Regarding the Sarmatian Iazyges inhabitation east mid Tisza, although a few finds are indicative of an early presence (end of the 1st CE) in the territory immediately left the Tisza, most Sarmatian vestiges date starting with the 2nd century CE. The Sarmatian finds in the Western plain of Romania, north Mureș, date in the 2nd-4th century CE⁸⁰. Most likely, as previously mentioned⁸¹, the restoration of the Dacian kingdom in the 1st century CE meant the establishment of its western limit on Tisza. In fact, Pliny the Elder⁸² and Ptolemy⁸³ record that Tisza is the limit separating the Dacians from the Sarmatian Iazyges. Since large rivers did not constitute ethnical and cultural barriers elsewhere, the purpose of this border between the Dacians and the Iazyges had, as argued⁸⁴, a political basis. The fact that the area east of Tisza was under Dacian control at least by the start of the 2nd century CE is confirmed by numerous Dacian vestiges in this territory. It is certain in the current state of research that the Sarmatian systematic settlement, firstly of the left bank of Tisza then in adjacent territories, mainly along Mureș and Crișuri rivers started most likely subsequent the political and military events at the start of the 2nd century CE.

A simple comparison between the settlement of Sarmatian tribes and that of other populations in Strabo⁸⁵ and Pliny the Elder⁸⁶ works shows that at the time when *Naturalis Historia* was drafted, ethnical and political circumstances changed substantially both in the north and north-west Pontic region as well as territories north, north-east and east of the Danube bend. Thus, if Strabo places the Iazyges somewhere between the Dniester and Dnieper, the Roxolani between the Dnieper and Don, and the Aorsi and Siraces

⁷⁶ The view that the Sarmatian Iazyges did not live compactly south the Partiscum-Lugio line under Trajan was expressed by K. Strobel (Strobel 1986, p. 963) and C. Opreanu (Opreanu 1998, p. 48).

⁷⁷ The Sarmatian nomad lifestyle is mentioned by several classical authors, like for instance: Strabo VII, 2, 4, VII, 3, 2, VII, 3, 17; Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, III, 4, 34, *apud* FHDR I, p. 392; Tacitus, *Germania*, 46, 2; Ammianus Marcellinus XXII, 8, 42. Concurrently, the horse appears as instrument and symbol of this ceaseless mobility (Dauge 1981, p. 621-622).

⁷⁸ See also Tănase, Mare 2000 with complete bibliography; evidenced by the few tens of graves discovered in the summer of 2010 during the preventive archaeological digs for the construction of the Arad-Timișoara Motorway.

⁷⁹ This view was also expressed by A. Vaday (Vaday 2003, p. 204 sqq.).

⁸⁰ See for Sarmatian finds in this territory Dörner 1970, p. 445-466; Dörner 1971, p. 681-692; Némethi 1983, p. 134-150; Némethi 1999, p. 31, 45, 47; Dumitrașcu 1993, p. 75, 110; Hügel, Barbu 1997, p. 539-596. At the moment, the earliest finds of Sarmatian presence in western Romania are the graves from Vârșand (Arad County) – dated at the boundary between 1st and 2nd centuries CE (Dörner 1971, p. 688; Dumitrașcu 1993, p. 75, 110) and Sânnicolau Mare (Timiș County) (Bejan, Măruia, Tănase 2011). The scholars who published the grave from Sânnicolau Mare have dated the the incoming of the Iazyges in the Carpathian Basin around the year 20 CE while the grave itself has been dated by them in the 1st century CE (Bejan, Măruia, Tănase 2011, p. 168). Still, in our opinion, the artefacts from this grave as well as the analogies for these artefacts a dating at the end of the 1st – beginning of the 2nd centuries CE.

⁸¹ Opreanu 1997, p. 286-287; Opreanu 1998, p. 48.

⁸² Plinius IV, 80. Pliny's report illustrates, in our view, circumstances in the third quarter of the 1st century CE (60ies start of the 70ies CE).

⁸³ Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, III, 7, 1, III, 8, 1.

⁸⁴ Opreanu 1997, p. 283.

⁸⁵ Strabo VII, 1, 3, VII, 2, 4, VII, 3, 1, VII, 3, 17.

⁸⁶ Plinius IV, 80, IV, 83, VI, 48.

between Don, the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea, Pliny the Elder records the Aorsi somewhere north-west the Black Sea beside part of the Roxolani. They are followed by the Alani, Siraces and the Roxolani. The Iazyges instead, are mentioned as populating the north territory between the Danube and Tisza where are also recorded by Tacitus. Part of the Aorsi remained in previous territories of inhabitation, where are later established by Ptolemy. They are partially independent, partially mixed with the Alani under the name of Alanorsi. A good part of the Siraces remained in their area of origin. Evidence includes archaeological finds⁸⁷ as well as the few mentions of the Siraces in epigraphic sources of the 1st – 2nd century CE⁸⁸.

Beside the Aorsi and the Siraces, Pliny the Elder mentions among the newcomers to the north of the Black Sea the Alani, who, as shown, were the main cause of the Sarmatian westward movement.

For the first time, the Alani are recorded north the Black Sea by Seneca. In *Thyestes*, the author makes a short yet interesting account, the paragraph mentioning that: "...*Hister fugam praebens Alanis...*"⁸⁹. Accordingly, it is believed that the effective presence of an Alani group north-west the Black Sea following raids to the Lower Danube⁹⁰ dates to the second half of the 1st century CE. Furthermore, it is supposed that the Alani in the region were either mixed with Aorsi aristocracy⁹¹ or were a separate group⁹². Although it is certain that in the period, the majority of the Alani inhabited steppes east of Don, obviously subsequent the movement process of the Sarmatians to the west, a group of Alani entered the north and north-west of the Black Sea territory. Most likely, the first Alani who reached the north and north-west Pontic territory were a very strong military group⁹³. Evidence of the Alani presence in the mentioned area is found in both Pliny the Elder⁹⁴, who mentions the Alani just after the Aorsi in the north-west Pontic region as well as Seneca, who as teacher and familiar to emperor Nero, could appreciate the actual situation of the period. Eastern traits graves, emerging in this territory starting with mid 1st century CE, radically differentiating from the rest of the Sarmatian graves in the north and north-west of the Black Sea are also indicative. Specifically, their inventory is very rich, comprising items of eastern origin (animal- style jewellery paralleled in the Bactrian art, parade weaponry, mirrors, including Chinese mirrors, precious metal wares, bronze cauldrons with zoomorphic handles etc.)⁹⁵. Burials in tumuli, large-sized rectangular pits with the dead placed along the walls or the square pits with the dead placed crosswise are deemed of Alani origin. Niche graves and part of the burials in common rectangular pits largely spread during the entire Sarmatian history might have also belonged to the Alani⁹⁶. Last but not least, tamga-type signs were mainly disseminated by the Alani, who were the most significant contributors to their distribution in Eastern Europe steppes.

Among the graves pertaining to the early Alani aristocracy in the north-west Pontic area count those at Kovalevka (Sokolova Mogila)⁹⁷, Trojany⁹⁸, Kozyrka⁹⁹, Vesnjanoe¹⁰⁰, Hrușca¹⁰¹, Mocra (T 2 G 2)¹⁰², Mihajlovka (T 3 G 3)¹⁰³, Porogi¹⁰⁴ etc.¹⁰⁵.

⁸⁷ See Zhdanovskij, Marchenko 1988, p. 42-56; Arheologija SSSR 1989, p. 249-251; Marchenko 1996.

⁸⁸ CIRB, no. 142, 1237.

⁸⁹ Seneca, *Thyestes*, 629-630, *apud* FHDR I, p. 370.

⁹⁰ Skripkin 1986, p. 91; Skripkin 1996, p. 160-168; Yacenko 1993a, p. 83, 85-86; Bârcă 2006, p. 252-254; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 355-358.

⁹¹ Yacenko 1993a, p. 86.

⁹² Skripkin 1996, p. 160-168.

⁹³ It is not excluded that this Alani group politically dominated the other Sarmatians in the area for a short period.

⁹⁴ Plinius IV, 80.

⁹⁵ See Bârcă, Symonenko 2009.

⁹⁶ See Raev 1989, p. 116-117; Skripkin 1990, p. 207-209, 217-218.

⁹⁷ Kovpanenko 1986, p. 66-72, 127, fig. 70-73; Simonenko 2008, p. 74-75, pl. 103-111.

⁹⁸ Grosu 1990, p. 61; Simonenko 2008, p. 71, pl. 85-87.

⁹⁹ Simonenko 1999a, p. 106-118.

¹⁰⁰ Simonenko 1997, p. 389-407; Simonenko 2008, p. 73-74, pl. 100-102.

¹⁰¹ Grosu 1986, p. 258-261; Grosu 1990, p. 53, fig. 16D; Bârcă 2006, p. 319-320, fig. 65.

¹⁰² Shcherbakova, Kashuba 1993; Kashuba, Kurchatov, Shcherbakova 2001-2002, p. 200-213, 226-242, fig. 8-9, 11-17; Bârcă 2006, p. 331-334, fig. 79-81.

¹⁰³ Subbotin, Dzigovskij 1990a, p. 19-21, fig. 15/10-16, 16/1-9; Grosu 1990, p. 92; Dzygovs'kyj 1993, p. 74-75, 201, fig. 33, 36/4-5, 37/2, 6, 8, 38, 43/1-6; Bârcă 2006, p. 329-330, fig. 75-77; Simonenko 2008, p. 76, pl. 118-119.

¹⁰⁴ Simonenko, Lobaj 1991; Bârcă 2006, p. 348-353, pl. 97-111; Simonenko 2008, p. 79, pl. 131-133.

¹⁰⁵ For the analysis of Sarmatian vestiges between the Don and Prut see Bârcă, Symonenko 2009.

The Alani are mentioned for this period in the north-west Pontic area also by Lucan¹⁰⁶, nephew of Seneca and a famous individual in emperor Nero's court, who reports that the Alani were a warrior people who opposed the Romans for a long time and who lived beyond the Danube¹⁰⁷.

Without any connection to the north-west Pontic region, the Alani are recorded for this period by Flavius Josephus¹⁰⁸, Valerius Flaccus¹⁰⁹, Suetonius¹¹⁰ and Martial¹¹¹, for the second half of the 1st century CE, who did not provide further details regarding the territory they inhabited.

Most likely, the Alani and not Albani are referenced in Tacitus's *Historiae*, from where we find that Nero recruited and sent many units from Germania, Britannia and Illyricum to the Caspian Gates for the war against the Albani, however the emperor turned them back in order to repress Vindex's uprising¹¹². Pliny the Elder explains that Nero's planned expedition targeted not the Caspian Gates, but the Caucasian Gates (*Caucasiae portae*) leading through Hiberia to the Sarmatians¹¹³, where as commonly understood, the Alani and not Albani lived¹¹⁴. The Alani are mentioned as the inhabitants of the north-Pontic territory in the first half of the 2nd century also by Dionysius Periegetes¹¹⁵.

The analysis of literary sources concluded that the Alani emerged in the north-Pontic steppes between 50-65 CE, coming from steppes beyond the Caspian Sea and that part of the classical authors separate the Alani from the rest of the Sarmatians¹¹⁶. Moreover, it is believed that the rich Sarmatian graves in large rectangular pits and rich goods formed of eastern items in Eastern Europe steppes emerged in close connection to changes occurring by the start of the 1st century CE¹¹⁷. These new elements in the funerary ritual and material culture serve, according to the author, to distinguish the mid Sarmatian culture, which was basically Alanic. The time gap between the beginning of the mid Sarmatian culture (start of the 1st century CE) and first mentions of the Alani (start of the second half of the 1st century CE) is explained by the usual hiatus between their arrival to Eastern Europe steppes and their record by classical authors as well as by the impossibility to pinpoint the years when the Alani are found in the area west Volga¹¹⁸. It is certain though that the political centre of the new Sarmatian tribes union led by the Alani was for a long time upon Lower Don, where the most significant part of the aristocratic graves assemble¹¹⁹. According to classical authors and archaeological facts, a group of Alani entered the north and north-west Pontic area as well and remained there beside other Sarmatian tribes. Their arrival to Eastern Europe steppes led to the gradual subduing of the other Sarmatian tribes, which Ammianus Marcellinus clearly confirms that they impose their name upon the conquered populations¹²⁰.

In the end, it is noteworthy that in the current state of knowledge, we may ascertain that the graves of obviously eastern features from the north and north-Pontic area dated between the mid 1st century CE – start of the 2nd century CE are largely Alanic. Moreover, it is most clear that Chinese origin items¹²¹ and

¹⁰⁶ One paragraph of *Pharsalia* mentions the always warrior Alani by the Caspian Gates as well (Lucanus, *Pharsalia*, VIII, 215-225, *apud* Latyshev 1949a, p. 324-325). See analysis of reliability and significance of this paragraph in Vinogradov 1963, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷ Lucanus, *Scholia Varia*, VIII, 223, *apud* Latyshev 1949a, p. 334.

¹⁰⁸ Josephus Flavius, *De bello Iudaico*, VII, 7, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Valerius Flaccus VI, 40-47, *apud* Latyshev 1949a, p. 344. See analysis of reliability of this paragraph Vinogradov 1963, 163.

¹¹⁰ Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 2, 2. See also Ambrosius, *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae...* V, 1, *apud* Latyshev 1949c, p. 234. See also Cassius Dio LXVI, 15. On the Alani and Vespasian's eastern policy see Halfmann 1986, p. 39-50.

¹¹¹ Martialis, *Epigrammata*, VII, 30, 2, 6, *apud* Latyshev 1949a, p. 352-355.

¹¹² Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 6, 2. See the analysis of the issue in Lysenko 2002, p. 95 sqq.

¹¹³ Plinius VI, 40.

¹¹⁴ See an analysis in Vinogradov 1963, p. 163-164.

¹¹⁵ Dionysius Periegetes 302-307, *apud* FHDR I, 528.

¹¹⁶ Machinskij 1974, p. 127, 132.

¹¹⁷ Skripkin 1990, p. 214.

¹¹⁸ Skripkin 1990, p. 214-215.

¹¹⁹ Skripkin 1990, p. 215. For these graves see Raev 1986; Bespalj 1992, p. 175-191; Prohorova, Guguev 1992, p. 142-161; Mordvintseva, Sergatskov 1995, p. 114-124.

¹²⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus XXXI, 2, 13.

¹²¹ For Chinese and central-Asian origin finds in the north-Pontic environment see Simonenko 2003, p. 45-65.

central-Asian items¹²² appeared in the Sarmatian environment, including that in the north and north-west Pontic region, once with the arrival of the Alani, who used such artifacts long before reaching these territories.

One of the sources recording the Sarmatians in the north-west Pontic area is the marble plate affixed on the Plautinii mausoleum at Ponte Lucano, near Tibur¹²³. This impressive inscription dated to the 74-79 CE, reviews Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus activity as legate of Moesia between 57/60 – 67 CE¹²⁴.

One of his first actions referred to the relocation to the right Danube bank of 100.000 “transdanubians” (r. 9-13). Vasile Pârvan argued: “**They all are nomads, as they are relocated not as defeated army, but as a migrating people, each tribe with all their own, children and women and respective chieftains.** The scholar adds “**they are a mix Barstarnae-Sarmatian-Getae population from north the Danube mouths**”¹²⁵.

Some authors consider the transdanubians as those Roxolani, Bastarnae and Dacians pushed from the east by the Sarmatians¹²⁶, others believe they were seeking refuge from the Sarmatian pressure from the east¹²⁷ or that they included all peoples able to pay in order to get installed within the empire borders¹²⁸ or that it was intended to create a security space by displacing the population from Muntenia plain¹²⁹. This last statement has no grounds given that on the boundary between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, archaeologically, inhabitation ceases in almost all Getae settlements in the area. It is certain that this action was justified for economic and tax reasons, as resulting from row 11 of the Tiburtine inscription, recording that the empire received them “as tax payers”: *ad praestanda tributa*. The results are recorded in rows 25–26 inferring that Aelianus was the first who, by sending massive grain transports from this province, eased supplies to Rome: „*primus ex ea provincia magno tritici modo annonam p(opuli) R(omani) adlevavit*”¹³⁰.

Another significant accomplishment was the repression of Sarmatian aggressive intentions (*motus orientem Sarmatarum*, (r. 13)), however no further details are given, being only specified that the operation was successful when part of the Moesian army was dispatched to support the expedition to Armenia: (...) “*quamvis parte(m) magna(m) exercitus / ad expeditionem in Armeniam misisset*” (r. 14-15)¹³¹. The expedition against the riders of the steppes must have occurred in the summer-fall of 62 CE¹³². An argument on this line is the fact that one – the *V Macedonica* - of the three legions from the Moesian army was garrisoned for many months in the East on the mission to reinforce the army engaged in the conflict with the Parthians¹³³. All these measures amplified Rome’s prestige. The immediate result of the action is rendered in the following rows of the inscription, reading that Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus “**brought kings, until then unknown or enemies to the Roman people, to the Danube bank which he defended (*in ripam quam tuebatur*) and made them bow to Roman standards; he returned the Bastarnae and Roxolani kings**

¹²² For all innovation elements of central-Asian origin in the Sarmatian environment see Yacenko 1993, p. 60-72.

¹²³ CIL XIV, 3608; IDRE I, 113.

¹²⁴ Pârvan 1926, p. 103; Stein 1940, p. 28-31; Condurachi 1958, p. 119-130; Pippidi 1967, p. 287-301; Suceveanu 1971, p. 112-120; Suceveanu 1977, p. 20-22; Vogel-Weidemann 1982, p. 407; Conole, Milns 1983, p. 186; Gostar, Lica 1984, p. 44-49; Karyshkovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 91; Zubar 1988, p. 20; Zubar 1994, p. 26-27; Leschhorn 1993, p. 76.

¹²⁵ Pârvan 1926, p. 104, note 1 (Translated from the Romanian by Gabriela Safta).

¹²⁶ Patsch 1932, p. 165. Same view in Daicoviciu 1960, 290-291; Bogdan-Cătănciu 1997, p. 28-29.

¹²⁷ Shchukin 1989, p. 79; Shchukin 1989a, p. 44.

¹²⁸ Conole, Milns 1983, p. 186.

¹²⁹ Pippidi 1967, p. 305 sqq. Same view in Bogdan-Cătănciu 1997, p. 28. Em. Condurachi argued that the transdanubians were Getae and that Aelianus proceeded, alike Aelius Catus, to a partial evacuation of the Getae territory (Condurachi 1958, p. 125).

¹³⁰ Pippidi 1967, 309, IDRE I, 113.

¹³¹ CIL XIV, 3608 = IDRE I, 113; Pârvan 1926, p. 103; Pippidi 1967, p. 311.

¹³² Pippidi 1967, p. 311; Suceveanu 1977, p. 21; Shchukin 1989, p. 80; Vinogradov 1994, p. 166. Different views regarding the action against the Sarmatians belong to N. Gostar and V. Lica, who believe it was taken in 66 or 67 CE (Gostar, Lica 1984, p. 49-50).

¹³³ Pippidi 1967, 311. For the history of *V Macedonica* see Matei-Popescu 2010, 35 sqq. with complete bibliography.

their hostage sons or recaptured from their enemies, and the Dacian king, his brothers; from some of them, he took hostages instead¹³⁴.

V. Pârvan noted that the military operations theatre was in Bessarabia and at most in eastern Moldova and that Aelianus's actions were oriented to the north-east¹³⁵. The scholar also observed that these were less likely proper fights, rather a show of force carried on the left bank of Lower Danube¹³⁶. C. Patsch's view is different, believing that the Roxolani, Bastarnae and Dacians were attacked by the Sarmatians coming from the east, who took hostages and forced them to associate¹³⁷. The same author argued that Aelianus defeated the invaders, freeing the prisoners alluded within the inscription, thus causing the downfall of the alliance system¹³⁸. Additionally, D. M. Pippidi believed that *motum orientem Sarmatarum compressit* refers to the Roman repression of a threat compromising Moesian borders¹³⁹. The same author stated that nothing proves that the attack of the Sarmatians from the East targeted firstly the Bastarnae and the Dacians, and therefore believed that the *Sarmatae* implies the Roxolani¹⁴⁰.

Within the context of the Roman policy of the period, we wish to underline certain details of major importance for the discussion herein. It is noteworthy that Aelianus entire action was directed against those Sarmatians who were not at all ones and the same with the Roxolani¹⁴¹. We believe that the use of the term Sarmatians wishes to emphasize the fact they were other Sarmatian peoples than the Roxolani. Some researchers consider those Sarmatians with aggressive intentions as the Iazyges allied with the Aorsi, or only the Aorsi¹⁴², and others deem them Urgi or Iazyges, who raided the Ciscarpathian region¹⁴³. Another view assumes they were Siraces¹⁴⁴ or Alani¹⁴⁵. Following the analysis of the Tiburtine inscription, M. B. Ščukin concluded that the aggressive Sarmatians were the subjects of Pharzoios, and their uprising meant the establishment of this "kingdom" with an obvious anti-Roman orientation¹⁴⁶. The same author argues there were two coalitions: the Romans supported by the Bastarnae, Dacians and Roxolani, while the war was waged against the Sarmatians and the Scythians¹⁴⁷. The author does not precisely identify the ethnical origin of Pharzoios's Sarmatians, stating they could have been both Alani and Siraces¹⁴⁸. It is certain that the inscription clearly specifies that Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus brought kings, until then unknown to us or enemies of the Roman people to the Danube bank¹⁴⁹. Or, information in classical authors' reports and archaeological finds evidence that those unknown could not have been the Roxolani for the simple fact they inhabited as early as the first half of the 1st century CE areas close to Roman "borders". Moreover, since the king of the Roxolani was returned his sons, they might have had a special relation with the Romans and were not those rising against them. The Sarmatians Aorsi and Siraces were familiar to the Romans, either as allies or as enemies, as well. Based on the Sarmatian tribes westward movement, classical authors accounts and archaeological finds we believe that the unknown kings and those aggressive Sarmatians who were repressed are most likely the Alani.

¹³⁴ Pârvan 1926, p. 103 (Translated from the Romanian by Gabriela Safta). See also Pippidi 1967, p. 312; Gostar 1979, p. 129-136.

¹³⁵ Pârvan 1926, p. 103.

¹³⁶ Pârvan 1926, p. 103.

¹³⁷ Patsch 1932, p. 165.

¹³⁸ Patsch 1932, p. 165.

¹³⁹ Pippidi 1967, p. 313.

¹⁴⁰ Pippidi 1967, p. 313.

¹⁴¹ The view that the Sarmatians were not the same with the Roxolani is also supported by Conole, Milns 1983, p. 187; Bârcă 1997, p. 963.

¹⁴² Conole, Milns 1983, p. 187.

¹⁴³ Vinogradov 1994, p. 168.

¹⁴⁴ Rusjaeva 1989, p. 192; Rusjaeva 1995, p. 24-36; Vinogradov 1994, p. 168.

¹⁴⁵ Patsch 1940, p. 165; Yacenko 1993a, p. 83; Skripkin 1996, p. 168; Bârcă 2002, p. 108; Bârcă 2002a, p. 62; Bârcă 2006, p. 256-257; Lysenko 2002, p. 111-112.

¹⁴⁶ Shchukin 1989a, p. 45.

¹⁴⁷ Shchukin 1989, p. 80; Shchukin 1989a, p. 45.

¹⁴⁸ Shchukin 1992, p. 120-121; Shchukin 1995, p. 177. We also expressed this view (Bârcă 1997, p. 974), and recently A. V. Simonenko (Simonenko 1999, p. 316).

¹⁴⁹ Pârvan 1926, p. 103.

Regarding the means which Aelianus enforced in order to fulfil his mission, it is believed (D. M. Pippidi) they were military, however diplomatic negotiations consequent which the Barbarian kings entered in good relations with the Romans may not be excluded¹⁵⁰. The kings' submission to Roman flags is interpreted¹⁵¹ as the loyalty of older or novel clients; henceforth, a previous treaty must have been earlier entered with the Romans, under which they were supported to have their brothers and sons returned from their enemies, most likely, those unknown enemies who were brought to the Danube bank¹⁵². They are probably returned because they were included in the *amicitia* or *societates* system. The common phrase was that of *amicus et socius populi Romani*, in fact used in various variants with the same meaning¹⁵³.

It is also possible that Aelianus forbade the kings to approach Roman borders and requested the payment of damages. However, the inscription does not include information on such terms. Yet, the inscription records the hostages, who among other, were meant to guarantee the payment of damages and confirmed that the Barbarians understood the closed agreements¹⁵⁴. Anyhow, hostage taking from within kings' or tribe chieftains' families is one of the most recorded clauses imposed by the Romans to the Barbarians¹⁵⁵. They guaranteed loyalty to the empire and compliance with Roman terms. In our case, the hostages who the Romans took came most likely from those unknown enemies, relocated to the Danube bank in order to bow to Roman standards.

Lines 21-22 of the Tiburtine inscription, reading that "*per quem pacem provinciae et confirmavit et protulit*"¹⁵⁶ imply that all these events occurred close to province borders, in Lower Danube area. The extension of province borders is out of question. It is believed they refer to either the extension of peace¹⁵⁷ or a temporary pacification of neighbouring lands¹⁵⁸. We believe that the expression above mirrors the Roman policy of broadening the invisible borders of the empire¹⁵⁹, in fact the conclusion and explanation of the actions recorded by the inscription¹⁶⁰.

The Moesian governor actions also supported Chersonesos, under siege by the Scythians, forcing the Scythian king to raise the siege (lines 24-25)¹⁶¹.

That the information in the inscription furthermore confirms the infiltration of new Sarmatian tribes north-west the Black Sea, also noted by ancient literary sources.

Another significant epigraphic source for the history of the Sarmatians in the north-Pontic area that validates certain information in the Tibur eulogy, is the inscription fragment discovered in 1984 at Mangup (Crimea)¹⁶², originating from Olbia¹⁶³. The first lines of the rather recently restored inscription read that an Olbia citizen – his name is unknown, as the inscription is fragmentary – when "**large part of the wheat was destroyed by draught**" crossed the enemy country and obtained food, thus saving the people from famine. The following information within the inscription is of interest for us. We find that he carried out a diplomatic mission with the governors of Moesia (Sabinus) and Aelianus, "**great men, worthy of utmost appreciation for their generosity**" and that part of his demands were fulfilled¹⁶⁴, procuring once more

¹⁵⁰ Pippidi 1967, p. 313-314.

¹⁵¹ Bogdan-Cătănicu 1997, p. 28.

¹⁵² Petolescu 1995, 24; Bârcă 1997, p. 963.

¹⁵³ See Braund 1984, p. 45; Opreanu 1994, p. 202-203. For imperial diplomacy tools regarding the Barbarians see Opreanu 1998, p. 20-26.

¹⁵⁴ Lica 1996, p. 127 with bibliography.

¹⁵⁵ See Lica 1989, p. 40 sqq.; Lica 1996, p. 127-128.

¹⁵⁶ V. Pârvan translated: "**thus he established peace within the province and enlarged its boundaries**" (Pârvan 1926, p. 103) (Translated from the Romanian by Gabriela Safta).

¹⁵⁷ Stein 1940, p. 30; Vinogradov 1994, p. 166.

¹⁵⁸ Pippidi 1967, p. 319.

¹⁵⁹ See Klose 1934, p. 124; Daicovicu 1960, p. 292; Suceveanu 1971, p. 113; Bogdan-Cătănicu 1997, p. 28.

¹⁶⁰ See for the Roman frontier concept Opreanu 1998, p. 14-20 with complete bibliography.

¹⁶¹ In connection with views on this action of Aelianus see Karyshkovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 91; Zubar 1988, p. 19-27; Zubar, Kostromicheva 1990, p. 83-86; Zubar 1994, p. 26-29.

¹⁶² Sidorenko 1988, p. 86-87; Vinogradov 1990, p. 32, note 3; Vinogradov 1994, p. 166-169, notes 91, 93, 95.

¹⁶³ Vinogradov 1994, p. 166-167, notes 89, 90.

¹⁶⁴ Vinogradov 1994, p. 167, notes 91, 92.

bread for the city. The subsequent clause within the inscription is very important as we learn that when in Moesia on diplomatic mission, the Sarmatians movement and war began. He informed the governor he was aware of the hardship and closed an alliance with Rome¹⁶⁵.

The next preserved rows of the inscription read that the same individual was on a diplomatic mission to Umabios and the great kings of Aorsia¹⁶⁶. It is worth mentioning that Umabios was followed by the name of another king or kings, however since the inscription is fragmentary, they are unknown. Nonetheless, a series of researchers (those who consider them Aorsi)¹⁶⁷ do not exclude that beside Umabios, the names of the great kings of Aorsia included those of Pharzoios and Inismeos¹⁶⁸. On the basis of the rows analysis, it was fairly concluded that the troubling events and war were ones and the same with the repression of the Sarmatians aggressive intentions in 62 CE, reported by the Tiburtine eulogy¹⁶⁹. Moreover, the mention of the Aorsi country¹⁷⁰, for the first time in Greek linguistics under the geographical term Aorsia, as well as the name Umabios and the phrase great kings of Aorsia, prove that we are dealing in this period with a westward movement of the Sarmatian tribes, which led to the destabilisation of the north-west Pontic region.

Thus, there are two epigraphic sources, one in Latin and the other in Greek, which contain information that partially reference the same events occurring in the north-west and north of the Black Sea, both confirming literary sources reporting on the westward movement of the Sarmatians endangering Roman possessions.

Regarding kings Pharzoios and Inismeos origin¹⁷¹, for whom Olbia struck golden and silver coins¹⁷², views disagree. There are also various opinions concerning the relations between the Sarmatians of Pharzoios and Inismeos with Olbia and the Roman empire. M. B. Ščukin argues these kings established their authority over the city¹⁷³, which struck the golden coins as an anti-Roman political act¹⁷⁴. Other scholars believe that relations between the Sarmatians of Pharzoios and Olbia represented a formal

¹⁶⁵ Vinogradov 1994, p. 167, note 93.

¹⁶⁶ Vinogradov 1994, p. 167-168 and note 96.

¹⁶⁷ Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 74, 75; Simonenko 1992, p. 158 sqq.; Vinogradov 1994, p. 167-169; Zubar 1994a, p. 218-222.

¹⁶⁸ Vinogradov 1994, p. 168-169; Simonenko 1999, p. 304, 317.

¹⁶⁹ Vinogradov 1994, p. 167 and note 94.

¹⁷⁰ It is believed that the Aorsi country was close to both the Danube and Moesia and Olbia and not in the region east of Don (Vinogradov 1994, p. 167), where the Aorsi are recorded until mid 1st century CE. Although we do not disagree with this view, we wish to mention that the inscription provides no clue on Umabios place of origin and the geographical location of Aorsi territory.

¹⁷¹ Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 74-75; Simonenko 1992, p. 158 sqq.; Simonenko 1999, p. 316. Originally, the two kings were deemed Scythian (this view originates in A. S. Uvarov and B. V. Kene (*apud* Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 76), while later, M. I. Rostovtsev argued that Olbia obeyed the Late Scythians (Rostovtsev 1918, p. 155-160). In the second half of the 20th C, the view that Pharzoios and Inismeos were Scythian kings was also supported by A. N. Zograf (Zograf 1951, p. 138), N. P. Rozanova (Rozanova 1956, p. 206-207), D. S. Raevskij (Raevskij 1973, p. 117-119) and T. N. Vysotskaya (Vysotskaya 1979, p. 197). Subsequent a detailed analysis, P. J. Karyshkovskij concluded that Pharzoios and Inismeos were Sarmatian kings (Karyshkovskij 1962, p. 102-121). This view was later supported by D. B. Shelov (Shelov 1975, 127) and M. B. Shchukin (Shchukin 1982, p. 35), and is today accepted by most scholars. Following the analysis of Pharzoios and Inismeos coins as well as their distribution area (see Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 66-82; Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 6-28), it was concluded they were the leaders of a Sarmatian group in the north-west Pontic area (Karyshkovskij 1988, p. 108-115) and that the borders of this kingdom were between Dnieper and Dniester (Vinogradov 1994, p. 168, note 98).

¹⁷² The golden coins obverse portrays Pharzoios and the inscription **ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΑΡΖΟΙΟΥ**, while the reverse exhibits an eagle holding a tamga-type sign in its claws and letters **ΟΛ**, to which adds the archon monogram. Silver coins struck for Inismeos depict the king on the obverse, the tamga sign and the inscription **ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΙΝΕΝΣΙΜΕΩΣ** or **ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΙΝΙΣΜΕΩΣ**, and on the reverse Apollo's head or the city goddess, the bow, the dolphin, the archon monogram and the circular inscription **ΟΛΒΙΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΕΩΝ** (see Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 66-82; Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 6-28; Anohin 1989, p. 64-70).

¹⁷³ Shchukin 1982, p. 36, 37; Shchukin 1989a, p. 44-45; Shchukin 1994, p. 212-218; see references arguing that Olbia was conquered and subdued by force by king Pharzoios in Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 23, note 29.

¹⁷⁴ Shchukin 1989, p. 80.

union¹⁷⁵, while their policy was anti-Roman¹⁷⁶. As mentioned above¹⁷⁷, this does not mean that Pharzoios actually subdued the city. Obviously, relations between Olbia and Pharzoios were complex. Another view maintains that the kings exercised a protectorate over Olbia¹⁷⁸, thus ensuring its security, like Scythian kings did a few centuries earlier¹⁷⁹. It is also argued that the Sarmatians of Pharzoios were rather the subjects of Rome¹⁸⁰, while the protection alliance between Olbia and Aorsi leaders was closed with the involvement of the Moesian administration¹⁸¹. Last but not least, it is worth to take into account the view according to which the Sarmatians of Pharzoios were Rome allies, as separate parties unrelated by any sort of relations¹⁸², while Pharzoios used the city mint to strike golden coins with Roman approval given his accomplishments¹⁸³.

Without insisting on the golden coins issue¹⁸⁴ we wish to mention that the view according to which the golden coins for king Fazoios were struck by Olbia, disobeying and defying Rome, is unjustified, especially since Rome did not prohibit golden and silver coin issues outside the empire. Moreover, there is no undeniable data that Pharzoios was king of the Aorsi, relocated, as per some scholars, by the Romans north-west the Black Sea. There is no definite evidence that Pharzoios was a subject to Rome either. In addition, the view arguing that the Romans gave Pharzoios the right to strike golden coins following his support of Rome is groundless as well. It is only certain that Pharzoios was king of the Sarmatians north-west the Black Sea, who were in close vicinity to Olbia.

Given the difficult circumstances in the area following the arrival of new, unknown and violent Sarmatian tribes, events might have evolved differently. Olbia, surrounded by Barbarians, systematically under attack, facing an even larger threat, appealed to king Pharzoios (who was the leader of a strong union in the area), to ensure protection and support the city defence. In exchange, the city struck golden coins, which served to pay the king and his army. It is not excluded that these Sarmatians also received economic facilities. However, the coins issue does not recognise any official authority of Pharzoios¹⁸⁵.

Finally, we believe that king Pharzoios did not control all Sarmatian tribes in the area between Dnieper and the Danube mouths.

The remarkable governorship of Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus did not succeed in eliminating the Sarmatian danger by the Lower Danube. Moreover, the engagement of Roman troops in the conflict with the Parthians until the end of the 60ies of the 1st century CE weakened the control of Danube borders. Thus, in the winter of 67/68 CE, the Sarmatian Roxolani crossed the Danube and massacred two Roman cohorts, while in

¹⁷⁵ Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 86. Following all existent information, V. V. Krapivina noted there is no evidence on the forced occupation of Olbia and direct subdual to kings Pharzoios and Inismeos (Krapivina 1993, p. 145-146).

¹⁷⁶ See Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 73-75; Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 23-24; Shchukin 1982, p. 36-37; Shchukin 1989, p. 80; Shchukin 1989a, p. 44-45; Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 86.

¹⁷⁷ Karyshkovskij 1982, p. 75-76; Karyshkovskij 1982a, p. 23; Anohin 1989, p. 66; Simonenko, Lobaj 1991, p. 86.

¹⁷⁸ Vinogradov 1994, p. 168; Bârcă 1997, p. 972-973; Bârcă 2006, p. 259. V. M. Zubar argues it is too soon to speak of a Sarmatians protectorate over Olbia for the same period (Zubar 1994a, p. 219). The same author maintains that the Sarmatians led by Pharzoios were the subjects of Rome, while the defence alliance between them and Olbia was closed upon Roman orders (Zubar 1994a, p. 219).

¹⁷⁹ Vinogradov 1994, p. 168. For the Scythian protectorate over the Greek cities see Vinogradov 1989, p. 231-250.

¹⁸⁰ Vinogradov 1994, p. 168.

¹⁸¹ Zubar 1994a, p. 220.

¹⁸² Krapivina 1993, p. 146.

¹⁸³ Krapivina 1993, p. 146. It is considered that Pharzoios's accomplishments for which he received the right to strike golden coins include the Sarmatian involvement on Roman's side in the Romano-Bosporan conflict of 45-49 CE (Krapivina 1993, p. 147), although it is known that the Aorsi who participated in this conflict on Rome's side were led by king Eunones (see Tacitus, *Annales*, XII, 15-21). V. V. Krapivina does not exclude the possibility that the Aorsi were relocated by the Romans closer to the Danube border so to reinforce it. The author also argues that the defence of Olbia was left with the Aorsi of Pharzoios (Krapivina 1993, p. 147).

¹⁸⁴ See Bârcă 1997, p. 970-972.

¹⁸⁵ Regarding Pharzoios portrait on coins naming him basileos, it is not excluded that this was the specific way that Greek cities obtained favours. On the other hand, it may not be excluded this was Pharzoios's condition. It is certain that in this case, the coins served as payment means for the city protection and account for a temporary political status. The coin is a means of propaganda and was used for economic purposes.

the following winter, taking advantage of the civil war in Rome upon Nero's death, the Sarmatian Roxolani, amounting to 9000 riders, plunder Moesia¹⁸⁶. The episode occurred when the *III Gallica* legion, just returned from the East, joined the Moesian troops under the command of M. Aponius Saturninus and defeated the invaders¹⁸⁷.

In 69 CE, subsequent the defeat of the Sarmatian Roxolani who invaded Moesia, governor M. Aponius Saturninus and the Moesian army were summoned to Italy to support Vespasian's forces fighting against Vitellius¹⁸⁸. To avoid that provinces left without sufficient army be exposed to Barbarian attacks, Sarmatian Iazyges leaders were co-opted to fight beside the Romans. The Iazyges chieftains offered both their common warriors and skilled cavalry support. However, the Romans refused for fear they would profit of the internal dissensions or breach the agreement for higher prizes offered by adversaries¹⁸⁹. The Sarmatians seem to have occasionally acted in this manner as Tacitus, when describing events related to conflicts over the Armenian throne in 35 CE, mentions that they took gifts and supported both sides all together¹⁹⁰. Last but not least, in order to secure the provinces by Mid Danube, M. Aponius Saturninus ensured the Suebi support¹⁹¹.

In the fall of 69, after many decades, the Dacians also broke the silence and taking advantage of the situation within the empire, invaded Moesia, assaulting the winter camps of auxiliary cohorts and cavalry, thus seizing both Danube banks¹⁹². It is possible that Sarmatian groups were also involved in this invasion. In the winter of 69-70 CE, the Sarmatians attacked once more Moesia, Fonteius Agrippa, the governor himself being killed. He was replaced by Rubrius Gallus, who succeeded with great efforts to end the war and restore the peace¹⁹³.

After the end of the civil war in Rome by the victory of Vespasian and the surfaced organisational hindrances in the security by the Lower Danube, the Danubian limes defence system was reorganised. Thereby, Moesia would be provided with an army composed of four legions¹⁹⁴. Under the Flavians, the Danubian fleet *classis Flavia Moesica*¹⁹⁵ would be set up and first auxiliaries would be dispatched to Dobroudja¹⁹⁶. Still during the Flavian emperors reign, the Pannonian army was moved to the Danubian border¹⁹⁷. Political and diplomatic relations between the Romans and the Barbarians by Lower and Mid Danube, among whom also the Sarmatians, were most likely regulated in this period. Taken measures were followed by a period of peace by the Danube border of the empire. This period lasted until 85 CE, when the Dacians attacked Moesia and inflicted heavy losses to the Romans. The seriousness of the situation is underlined by Tacitus, who reports that legionary fortresses and even the province control were at stake¹⁹⁸. These Dacian violent attacks over Moesia proved that the "security space" policy was ineffective and that the military reinforcement of the Danube right bank was deficient¹⁹⁹. Changes subsequent Domitian's administrative and military reorganisation of the Moesian defence front by the Lower Danube, the military campaign against Decebalus's kingdom and the political and military circumstances by Mid Danube finally led to the closure in 89 CE of a treaty between the empire and the Dacian kingdom²⁰⁰, pursuant which Decebalus became *rex amicus populi Romani*²⁰¹.

¹⁸⁶ Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 79.

¹⁸⁷ Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 79.

¹⁸⁸ Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 5, 1.

¹⁸⁹ Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 5, 1. Based on this account, it was considered that year 69 CE was the first mention of the Sarmatian Iazyges recognition of Roman suzerainty (Syme 1971, p. 148).

¹⁹⁰ Tacitus, *Annales*, VI, 33, 1-3.

¹⁹¹ Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 5.

¹⁹² Tacitus, *Historiae*, III, 46, 2.

¹⁹³ Josephus Flavius, *De bello Iudaico*, VII, 4, 3.

¹⁹⁴ Aricescu 1977, p. 32-45.

¹⁹⁵ See for *classis Flavia Moesica* Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 245 sqq.

¹⁹⁶ Suceveanu 1977, p. 22-23; Strobel 1989, p. 11 sqq. On the Roman auxilia in Moesia Inferior see Matei-Popescu 2001-2002; Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 167-244.

¹⁹⁷ Mócsy 1974, p. 80 sqq.

¹⁹⁸ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 41.

¹⁹⁹ Opreanu 1998, p. 35.

²⁰⁰ Cassius Dio LXVII, 7, 2-4.

²⁰¹ See Opreanu 1998, p. 35 with complete bibliography.

In these conflicts between the Romans and Dacians, the Sarmatians did not get involved. There are no records on conflicts between the Sarmatians in the north and north-west of the Black Sea and the Romans for subsequent years either. Most likely, these Sarmatians had closed “treaties” with the empire and received subsidies. Only the Sarmatian Iazyges, inhabiting the northern part of the region between the Danube and Tisza battled the Romans in 89 CE on the Suebi side²⁰². It is worth mentioning that during the Roman expedition against enemies by Mid Danube, Roman troops would act against them advancing on Decebalus’s kingdom territory²⁰³, which proves that Decebalus honoured the terms of the peace treaty closed in 89²⁰⁴. In 92 CE, the Iazyges fiercely attacked Pannonia, massacrating *XXI Rapax* legion²⁰⁵. Due to the quick response of the Roman army led by Domitian, circumstances improved and the Iazyges were defeated in the same year²⁰⁶. It is certain that wars under Domitian with the Barbarian populations by Mid and Lower Danube were the most dangerous and powerful conflicts of the Roman empire with the neighbouring peoples to that point²⁰⁷. Last but not least, the many troops dispatched starting with Domitian to Pannonia and Moesia as well as Trajan’s journey along Mid and Lower Danube in the winter of 98/99²⁰⁸, aimed especially at inspecting troops and forts and at initiating forts and connection roads construction²⁰⁹, account for Rome’s increasing concern for this region by the end of the 1st century CE.

Approximately in the same period, the Sarmatians north-west the Black Sea disturbed the inhabitants of the Greek cities in the region. Dio Chrysostom, who visited Olbia in 95 CE²¹⁰ reports that the city was constantly under the attack of Barbarian tribes and that Sarmatians and Scythians inhabited close to it. When speaking about Kallistratos, an Olbia citizen, Dio mentions his war skills and courage and that he killed many Sarmatians, taking some of them prisoners. The author says that when gathering to listen to his speech, almost all Olbians were bearing arms²¹¹. Although tense situations were regular, the Olbians attempted to establish peace relations with the Sarmatians. Evidence is provided by epigraphic sources, which even though dated to the 2nd century CE, record that the Olbians often sent envoys to the Scythians and Sarmatians most likely to prevent attacks²¹².

Ten years after the events of 92 involving the Iazyges, the Sarmatian Roxolani, inhabitants of the north and north-west Pontic steppes took part in the first Daco-Roman war as allies of the first. Several scenes on the Column of Trajan²¹³ and the inscription from Adamclisi (*Tropaeum Traiani*) record the Sarmatians [*devicto exerc]itu D[acorum et Sarmata]rum...*²¹⁴. The Dacian and Roxolani attack over Roman garrisons in Moesia Inferior took place in the winter of 101-102. The invasion of the anti-Roman coalition ended in disaster, as they were defeated by Roman forces led by Trajan himself²¹⁵. Following the invasion and fights in Moesia, Callidromus was taken prisoner. We find from a letter of Pliny the Younger to Trajan²¹⁶ that he was slave to Laberius Maximus, governor of Moesia Inferior in 101-102 CE. Callidromus was taken hostage by Susagus and brought to Decebalus, who sent him back as gift to Pacorus, king of the Parthians. The emissaries who gave Callidromus away to the Parthian king travelled a long road, most likely, by north the

²⁰² Cassius Dio LXVII, 5, 2.

²⁰³ ILS 9200. *Caio Velio Salvi filio Rufo...bello Marcomannorum Quadorum Sarmatarum adversus quos expeditionem feciter regnum Decebali, regis Dacorum...* Tacitus, *Historiae*, I, 2, 1 accounts in relation to these events about *...coortae in nos Sarmatarum ac Sueborum gentes*.

²⁰⁴ In *Bellum Suebicum item Sarmaticum* vexillations of five legions were involved (Strobel 1989, p. 104).

²⁰⁵ Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 6, 1. See Mócsy 1974, p. 84-85; Strobel 1989, p. 100.

²⁰⁶ Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 6, 1. Against the Marcomanni and Quadi, the Roman empire had to wage another war. It took place in 97, under Nerva and ended in Roman victory (see Strobel 1989, p. 104 sqq.).

²⁰⁷ Strobel 1989, p. 111.

²⁰⁸ Patsch 1937, p. 57; Strobel 1984, p. 159-160.

²⁰⁹ Strobel 1984, p. 159 sqq.

²¹⁰ Vinogradov 1989, p. 264.

²¹¹ Dionis Chrysostomi, *Orationes*, XXXVI, 7-8.

²¹² Latyshev 1887, p. 190; IOSPE I², no. 39, 51, 54.

²¹³ Cichorius 1896, scenes XXXI-XXXII, XXXVII.

²¹⁴ Petolescu 1991, p. 54, note 265; Petolescu 1995a, p. 224.

²¹⁵ Petolescu 1991, p. 64-66; Petolescu 1995a, p. 223-226.

²¹⁶ Plinius Minor, *Ad Traianum epistolae*, 74, 1 *apud* FHDR I, p. 478; for a complete analysis of this letter see Tudor 1956, 19-30.

Black Sea, through territories inhabited by the Sarmatian Roxolani, Aorsi, Siraces and Alani, who definitely sided with Decebalus. Regarding Susagus, he was most likely a Sarmatian chieftain²¹⁷, whose name was well too known to the emperor, therefore the rank mention was no longer necessary.

The Sarmatian Iazyges were neutral to the Sarmatian Roxolani, allies of the Dacians. Cassius Dio work²¹⁸ contains relevant information to this end, informing us that the Iazyges were neutral during the first war, which was to the Roman benefit²¹⁹. This may be confirmed by the fact that Decebalus attacked the Iazyges subsequent the closure of the peace treaty of 102 CE and occupied certain territories, which Trajan, despite the Iazyges request, did not return by the end of the second war with the Dacians²²⁰.

The Sarmatian Roxolani did not participate in the confrontations of the second Daco-Roman war. It is not excluded that this was due to an agreement with the Roman empire concluded around the second war²²¹, of which we only know that *stipendium* was paid to the Roxolani²²². This policy of the Roman diplomacy aimed at ensuring their neutrality, so the Roxolani did not get involved in the military clashes of the second Daco-Roman war. The result of these diplomatic actions was that attacks of the Sarmatians in the north-west of the Black Sea over Roman possessions by Lower Danube ceased until Trajan's death.

There is little information on the war between the Iazyges and the Romans of 107-108. We only know that its main cause was the territory that Decebalus seized sometime between the two wars, however which Trajan, in the aftermath of the second war against the Dacians, did not return to the Sarmatian Iazyges²²³. The Iazyges precise conduct in this conflict is unknown, yet it is known that Hadrian, as governor of Pannonia Inferior²²⁴, defeated them²²⁵.

The main reason of conflict between the Roman empire and the Sarmatian Iazyges during the first years of the Roman province of Dacia, similarly to that by the start of Hadrian's reign (117-119)²²⁶ was the territory mentioned by Cassius Dio, located most likely north Mureş river, in Arad field or Crişana²²⁷. It is certain that it was not a large scale conflict, as confirmed by the brief information provided by archaeological and ancient literary sources.

In 117, by the end of Trajan's reign, the political and military crisis breaks out by Lower and Mid Danube, challenging the recently installed Roman control.

Based on the events reported in *Historia Augusta*²²⁸ and a careful analysis of the events occurring by the Lower and Mid Danube in 117-119, the Sarmatian Iazyges attack over Dacia and the Roxolani attack over Moesia Inferior were somewhat concurrent, although their causes differed²²⁹.

The Iazyges attack over Dacia was most likely initiated as early as the fall of 116 or the winter of 116/117 CE. They claimed the territory west of Dacia and the restoration of relations with the Sarmatians in the north Pontic area²³⁰. The attack over the empire occurred precisely when its defence weakened following the departure of significant contingents, including from Dacia, to the Parthian front²³¹. By the end of 117 – start of 118, during clashes with the Iazyges, the Dacian governor himself, C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus²³² sent to Dacia in the summer of CE 117 prior Trajan's death, fell in battle²³³. The

²¹⁷ Tudor 1956, p. 21 sqq.; Bârcă 2006, p. 261; Bârcă, Symonenko 2009, p. 364.

²¹⁸ Cassius Dio LXVIII, 10, 3.

²¹⁹ Mócsy 1974, 94 considers the Iazyges as Rome allies.

²²⁰ Cassius Dio LXVIII, 10, 3. See Opreanu 1998, p. 47-48.

²²¹ Opreanu 1994, p. 207.

²²² *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 6, 6–8.

²²³ Cassius Dio LXVIII, 10, 3.

²²⁴ The Iazyges defeat was possible with military aid from Dacia (see Balla 1969; IDR III/1; Piso 1993, p. 212).

²²⁵ *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 3, 9.

²²⁶ See for the analysis of these conflicts Balla 1969, p. 111-119; Strobel 1986, p. 906-967; Opreanu 1997, p. 281-290; Opreanu 1997a, p. 28-50; Opreanu 1998, p. 47-54.

²²⁷ Opreanu 1997, p. 281-290; Opreanu 1998, p. 47 sqq.

²²⁸ *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 6, 6.

²²⁹ See Russu 1973; Strobel 1986, p. 923-924; Opreanu 1998, p. 52 sqq.; Opreanu 1998a, p. 61.

²³⁰ Opreanu 1997, p. 281-282, 287-288; Opreanu 1998, p. 52; Opreanu 1998a, p. 61.

²³¹ See for the troops dispatched by Trajan from the Danube Strobel 1986, p. 945-946

²³² For Bassus career in Dacia see Piso 1993, p. 23 sqq.

²³³ Strobel 1986, p. 946.

worsened situation led to the temporary appointment of the skilled Q. Marcius Turbo as governor of Dacia and Pannonia Inferior²³⁴. In order to command the army of the two provinces, Turbo was awarded the honourific title of *praefectus Aegypti*²³⁵ the single imperial office of equestrian rank bearer of an *imperium* identical with that of senatorial rank governors²³⁶. Sometime in the summer of 118 CE, following joint action of troops from Pannonia Inferior and Dacia, he defeated the Iazyges²³⁷.

Short while after Trajan's death on August 9, 117, the Roxolani rebelled. Thus a paragraph in **Historia Augusta** mentions that when emperor Hadrian learnt about the Sarmatian and Roxolani uprising, he sent the armies, went to Moesia and established peaceful relations²³⁸ with the king of the Roxolani, who complained about little stipends. The paragraph does not specify whether the Roxolani attacked Moesia Inferior or not²³⁹. The fact they complained about reduced stipends, could mean in fact, as noticed²⁴⁰, they feared that the new emperor would not preserve Trajan's policy in what they were concerned. Confronted with these circumstances, Hadrian came to Moesia Inferior where he negotiated with the Roxolani the new terms of their relations²⁴¹. It is certain that Hadrian succeeded in making the king of the Roxolani *amicus populi Romani*²⁴². Most likely, P. Aelius Rasparaganus *rex Roxolanorum*²⁴³ was the individual with whom Hadrian negotiated the relation of *amicitia*²⁴⁴. This results rather clear from the inscriptions at Pola recording P. Aelius Rasparaganus *rex Roxolanorum*²⁴⁵ and his son P. Aelius Peregrinus who erects tombstones, while alive, for him and *Attiae Procilliae* daughter of *Quintus*, for the freedwomen and their successors²⁴⁶. As well noted, the Roman citizenship granted by Hadrian to the king of the Roxolani and son is one of the greatest awards which a *rex amicus* could obtain for services to the Roman empire²⁴⁷. It is not known how long this "treaty" between the Roxolani and the Roman empire lasted, however one may argue that events most likely occurred in the winter/spring of 118 CE²⁴⁸. The king and son presence within the empire is indicative of the fact they were at some point exiled from their "country" by a rival anti-Roman group²⁴⁹, seemingly by the start of Antoninus Pius's reign²⁵⁰. A direct consequence of the events by the Lower Danube is the abandonment of south Moldova and Muntenia, part of Moesia Inferior and the establishment of the south-eastern border of Dacia on Olt river. Subsequent the 117-118 events, however in the virtue of the treaty closed with the Roxolani, the Sarmatians were most likely allowed to settle these territories²⁵¹. The relocation and settlement

²³⁴ *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 6, 6-8; see Russu 1973, p. 36-56; Piso 1993, p. 31 sqq.; for the extraordinary command of the two provinces and their armies by Turbo see Ruscu 2003, p. 92-103 with complete bibliography and views.

²³⁵ *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 7, 3.

²³⁶ Ruscu 2003, p. 103 with bibliography.

²³⁷ In the summer of 118, Hadrian appoints Q. Marcius Turbo as governor of the pacified Dacia and charges him with the province reorganization (see Russu 1973, p. 56 sqq.; Piso 1993, p. 32 sqq; Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2003, p. 32; Eck, MacDonald, Pangerl 2005, p. 33.

²³⁸ *Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 6, 6-8.

²³⁹ Upon the analysis of literary sources, C. C. Petolescu rejects any Roxolani attack (Petolescu 1993, p. 161-162).

²⁴⁰ Opreanu 1998, p. 52.

²⁴¹ Negotiations main lever was according to C. Opreanu, the stipends (Opreanu 1994, p. 207).

²⁴² Opreanu 1994, p. 207; Opreanu 1998, p. 53.

²⁴³ CIL V, 32.

²⁴⁴ Russu 1973, p. 47, note 41; Vaday 1977, p. 27-31; Opreanu 1994, p. 207; Opreanu 1998, p. 53; Opreanu 1998a, p. 62.

²⁴⁵ CIL V, 32.

²⁴⁶ CIL V, 33.

²⁴⁷ Braund 1984, p. 39; Opreanu 1998, p. 53; Opreanu 1998a, p. 62.

²⁴⁸ C. Opreanu argues that Hadrian arrived by the Lower Danube in the spring of CE 118 (Opreanu 1998, 52), and K. Strobel and Dan Ruscu place it by the end of CE 117 (Strobel 1986, p. 957; Ruscu 2003, p. 90).

²⁴⁹ Wilkes 1983, note 108; Opreanu 1994, p. 207; Opreanu 1998a, p. 63.

²⁵⁰ Petolescu 2010, p. 307.

²⁵¹ On the views on the start date of the Sarmatian infiltration in the Muntenia field see Bichir 1977, p. 191; Bichir 1996, p. 304; Harhoiu 1993, p. 46-50; Niculescu 2003, p. 184-186; Bogdan-Cătănicu 1997, p. 140, 142; Diaconu 1980, p. 284; Oța 1999, p. 887; Oța 2007, p. 51; Babeș 1999, p. 234 sqq.; Opreanu 1998, p. 63-64; Opreanu 1998a, p. 73-74; Sîrbu, Bârcă 1999, p. 93-94; Sîrbu, Bârcă 2000, p. 258-261; Bârcă 2002, p. 110-111; Bârcă 2002a, p. 64-65. A work in progress by Vitalie Bârcă (2014, journal *Dacia*, volume LVIII) is focused on a critical re-consideration upon some of the Sarmatian artefacts coming from the Wallachian Plain, as well as on the analyse of the moment of Sarmatian incoming and settling down on this area.

of Sarmatian groups in Muntenia plain was well controlled by the Romans. Current archaeological finds seem to confirm this was no massive settlement, at least until the Marcomannic wars²⁵². Following a careful analysis of Sarmatian vestiges on Muntenia territory and their corroboration with data in the ancient sources we may argue that Roman control over the Sarmatian inhabitation in the area was constant²⁵³. In this period, the Sarmatians in the north and north-west Pontic area were kept under careful supervision as well, since the Roman military presence there²⁵⁴ aimed at both defending the Greek cities and surveilling the Sarmatians. It is certain that following the conflicts of 117-119, the Iazyges and Roxolani were relocated in the previously existent Roman alliance system, which ensured the Roman world by Mid and Lower Danube a period of 50 years of peace. The main consequence of the political and military crisis by the start of Hadrian's reign consisted in the abandonment of territories (Muntenia plain and Dacian territories located west the Western Carpathians) and the reorganisation of Dacia²⁵⁵. Nonetheless, it is certain that the Sarmatians represented over the entire 2nd century CE as well as in the preceding century, a major danger for the Roman empire. Sarmatian Iazyges, Roxolani and Alani counted among the Barbarian peoples who conspired and attacked the empire under Marcus Aurelius²⁵⁶, one of the most important military conflicts of the Roman empire during the first two centuries CE.

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²⁵² The Marcomannic wars were key in Rome's foreign policy, shaping on a still far horizon the great crisis of the empire. As expected, these wars left archaeological traces. Finds indicate that in the second half of the 2nd century CE, most likely in the wars period or immediately after their end, Sarmatian finds in Muntenia and territories west Prut river increase significantly. In Muntenia, occupied areas are the south-east, especially those between rivers Buzău and Călmățui and those between the lower courses of Argeș and Ialomnița. Chance finds are found up to Olt, yet their number is scarce. Starting with the second half of the 2nd C, the Sarmatian presence in the area between Prut and Siret also intensifies. Their extension is notable especially in Moldova Plain and river courses like Bârlad.

²⁵³ This view was also expressed by other authors (Oța 1999, p. 887; Oța 2007, p. 51-53; Petolescu 2000, p. 324).

²⁵⁴ See Nicorescu 1937, p. 219; Nicorescu 1944, p. 501-510; Sarnowski 1989, p. 71-75; Karyshkovskij 1959, p. 116-118, no. 7; Karyshkovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 94 sqq.; Karyshkovskij 1988; Son 1986, p. 60-68; Son 1993, p. 21-23, 31-35; IOSPE I², no. 4; CIL III, 781; Kadeev 1981; Shelov 1981, p. 52-63; Bujskih 1991; Krapivina 1993; Zubar 1994; Gudea, Zahariade 1997. For including the north-west Pontic Greek cities in Rome's influence area see Bârcă 1999; Bârcă 2004 with complete bibliography.

²⁵⁵ See Piso 1993, p. 32 sqq.

²⁵⁶ Historia Augusta, *Marcus Aurelius*, 22, 1.

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ABRÉVIATIONS

- ActaAntArch – Acta Antiqua et Archaeologica. Acta Universitatis de Attila József Nominatae, Szeged.
- ActaArchCarpathica – Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Krakow.
- ActaAnthung – Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest.
- ActaArchHung – Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest.
- ActaDebr – Acta Classica Universitatis Debrecienensis, Debrecen.
- ArchHung – Archaeologia Hungarica. Dissertationes Archaeologicae Musei Nationalis Hungarici a Consilio Archaeologorum Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae redactae, Budapest.
- ActaMN – Acta Musei Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
- ActaMP – Acta Musei Porolissensis, Zalău.
- Alba Regia – Alba Regia. Annales Musei Stephani regis, Székesfehérvár.
- AMNG I.1 – B. Pick, Die Antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands I.1. Die Antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien, Berlin, 1898.
- AMNG I.2 – B. Pick – K. Regling, Die antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands I.2. Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien, Berlin, 1910.
- Analele Banatului – Analele Banatului, Muzeul Banatului, Timișoara.
- AncSoc – Ancient Society, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, Leuven.
- ANRV – Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Herausgegeben von Hildegard Temporini und Wolfgang Haase, Berlin-New York.
- Antaeus – Antaeus, Communicationes ex Instituto Archaeologico Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest.
- AP URSR – Arheologichni pam'yatki URSR, Kiev.
- Apulum – Apulum. Buletinul Muzeului Unirii Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia.
- ArchPolski – Archeologia. Rocznik Instytutu Historii Kultury Materialnej Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Wracław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk.
- ArheologijaKiev – Arheologija. Nacional'na akademiya nauk Ukraini. Institut Arheologii, Kiev.
- ArhMold. – Archeologia Moldovei, Insitulul de Arheologie, Iași.
- ArhRozhledy – Arheologické Rozhledy, Praga.
- ARMSI – Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice, București.
- ASGE – Arheologicheskij sbornik Gosudarstvennogo Ermitaya, Leningrad.
- AȘUI – Analele Științifice ale Universității „Al. I. Cuza” Iași.
- BAR Int. Ser. – British Archaeological Reports, International Series, Oxford.
- BMA – Biblioteca Memoriae Antiquitatis, Piatra-Neamț.
- BerRGK – Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes, Frankfurt am Main.
- BMA – Biblioteca Memoriae Antiquitatis, Piatra-Neamț.
- BullÉp – Bulletin épigraphique, Paris.
- CAB – Cercetări Arheologice. Muzeul Național de Istorie, București.
- Carpica – Carpica, Carpica. Complexul Muzeal „Julian Antonescu” Bacău, Bacău.
- Cercetări Arheologice – Cercetări Arheologice, Muzeul Național de Istorie a României, București.
- CCA – Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, București.
- CIL – Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin.
- CIRB – Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani, Moskva-Leningrad, 1965.

- CCDJ – Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos, Muzeul “Dunării de Jos”, Călărași.
- Dacia – Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, București, I-XII (1924-1928); Nouvelle Série: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București.
- DMÉ – Debreceni Déei Múzeum Évkönyve, Debrecen.
- Drevnejšij temenos Ol'vii – Drevnejšij temenos Ol'vii Pontijskoj, MAIET Supl. 2, Simferopol, 2006.
- Eurasia Antiqua – Eurasia Antiqua. Deutsche Archäologisches Institut, Berlin.
- EphemNap – Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
- EpigrAnat – Epigraphica Anatolica. Zeitschrift für Epigraphik und historische Geographie Anatoliens.
- FGrHist = F. Jacoby (éd.), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin (et Leyde) 1923-.
- FolArch – Folia Archaeologica, Budapest.
- FHDR I – *Fontes ad historiam Dacoromaniae pertinentes / Izvoare privind Istoria României I*, București, 1964.
- FÖ – Fundberichte aus Österreich, Wien..
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- HD – Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg.
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- Historia – Historia. Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte, Leipzig.
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- IG VII – W. Dittenberger (éd.), *Inscriptiones graecae VII : Megaridis, Oropiae, Boeotiae*, Berlin 1892.
- IGBR I² – G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, Sofia, 1970.
- ILS – H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*, I-III, Berlin, 1892-1916.
- IOIb – T. N. Knipovich, E. I. Levi, *Inscriptiones Olbiae (1917-1965)*, St. Petersburg, 1968.
- IOSPE I² – V. Latyshev, *Inscriptiones orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini I²*, Darmstadt, 1965.
- ISM I – D. M. Pippidi, *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae I. Inscriptiones Histriae et vicinae*, București, 1968.
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- Istros - Istros. Buletinul Muzeului Brăilei. Brăila.
- JAMÉ – Jóna András Múzeum Évkönyve, Nyíregyháza.
- JRGZM – Jahrbuh des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums zu Mainz, Mainz.
- KBN – Korpus Bosporskih nadpisej, Moskva-Leningrad.
- KESAM – Kocheniviki evraziskij stepi i antichnyj mir, Novocheercassk..
- KSIA – Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta arheologii, Moskva.
- LIMC – Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae, Zürich, 1981-1999.
- Materiale (MCA) – Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, Institutul de Arheologie Vasile Pârvan, București.
- MemAntiq. – Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra-Neamț.
- MFME – A Móra Ferek Muzeum Evkönyve, Szeged.
- MIA – Materialy i issledovanya po arheologii SSS, Moskva-Sk.Petersburg
- MittArchInst – Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest.
- Mousaios – Mousaios. Buletinul Științific al Muzeului Județean Buzău NAV - Nizhnevolzhskij arheologicheskij vestnik. Volgogradskij gosudarstvennyj universitet, Volgograd.
- Nilsson, GGR I² – M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion, I. Die Religion Griechenlands bis auf die griechische Weltherrschaft*, München, 1955.
- Památky Archeologické - Archeologický Ústav Akademie Věd České Republiky, Praha.
- RE – G. Wissowa (ed.), *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, München.
- PBF – Prähistorische Bronzefunde, München.

- PAS – Praehistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa, Berlin.
- PAV – Peterburgskij arheologičeskij vestnik, Sankt Peterburg.
- Pontica – Pontica. Studii și materiale de istorie, arheologie și muzeografie, Constanța.
- Pontus, Paphlagonien, Bythynien, Berlin, 1957.
- PZ – Praehistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin–New York.
- RA – Rossijskaya Arheologiya. Institut arheologii Rossijskoj akademii nauk, Moskva.
- Rapoartele M.N.A. – Rapoartele Muzeului Național de Antichități, București.
- Revista Muzeelor – Revista Muzeelor, București.
- RevBistriței – Revista Bistriței. Complexul Muzeal Bistrița-Năsăud, Bistrița.
- RG – W. H. Waddington, E. Babelon, Th. Reinach, *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*². 1, Pont et Paphlagonie, Paris, 1904–1925.
- RÖ – Römisches Österreich, Wien.
- Rphil (Botez) – Revue Philologique, Paris.
- SA – Sovetskaya Arheologiya. Institut arheologii Akademii nauk SSSR, Moskva.
- SAA – Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași
- SCIV(A) – Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie), Institutul de Arheologie “Vasile Pârvan” București
- Studii și Cercetări de Antropologie – Studii și Cercetări de Antropologie, Institutul de Antropologie Fr. Rainer, București.
- SAI – Studii și articole de istorie, București.
- SGE – Soobshcheniya Gosudarstvennogo Ermitaya, Leningrad.
- SEG – *Supplementum epigraphicum graecum*, Leiden 1923-1971, Alphen aan den Rijn 1979-1980, Amsterdam 1979-2005, Boston 2006.
- SCIV(A) – Studii și Cercetări de Istorie veche și Arheologie, București.
- StCl – Studii Clasice, București.
- Stratum plus – Stratum, Vysshaya Antropologičeskaya Shkola, Chișinău.
- StSatu Mare – Studii și comunicări, Satu Mare.
- SNG BM – Sylloge nummorum graecorum, The British Museum, IX/1. The Black Sea, London, 1993.
- SNG von Aulock – Sylloge nummorum graecorum, Deutschland, Sammlung von Aulock.
- Thrac-Dacica – Thrac-Dacica, Academia Română, Institutul Român de Tracologie, București.
- Tyragetia – Tyragetia. Arheologie Istorie Antică, Muzeul Național de Arheologie și Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău.
- VDI – Vestnik drevnei istorii, Institut vseobshchej istorii Rossijskoj akademii nauk, Moskva.

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