

**"OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY FROM CONSTANȚA**  
**DOCTORAL SCHOOL: HUMANITIES**  
**PhD FIELD: HISTORY**

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE PROVINCE OF SCYTHIA MINOR  
IN 491-641 RANGES. HISTORICAL-NUMISMATICS APPROACH**  
**THESIS ABSTRACT**

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**CONSTANȚA  
2014**

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**The Evolution of the Province of Scythia Minor in 491-641 ranges.**

**Historical-numismatics approach**

**THESIS ABSTRACT**

**Keywords:** *province, Scythia Minor, limes, Anastasius I, Justinian I, regression, currency, hoard, isolated finds, Maurice Tiberius, Tomis, Dobrogea passim.*

The Thesis titled "The evolution of the Scythia Minor province in 491-641 range. Historical numismatics approach", treats a theme studied numismatics specialist historiography, both nationally and internationally.

Option to achieve such scientific research is appropriate for the entire Romanian historiography picture as combines / combines the archaeological information to shape a picture numismatic history of the province of Scythia Minor in 491-641 range. PhD thesis analyzes both the political and economic context and dynamics of monetary circulation and monetary finds repertoire in the late fifth century and the first half of the seventh century. The personal contributions regarding the terms of subject matter is updating information on the evolution of Scythia Minor province of historically and chronologically monetary circulation within 491-641, with a careful analysis of the specific monetary discoveries, the most important centers and fortifications, updating based on sources edit, monetary repertoires, differentiated according to the nature of discoveries. However, we emphasize that there is no specialized historiography work identical to the proposed structure of this thesis or under the same title, edited sources representing most articles and studies, we have consulted and performed original approach to completing picture analysis with supporting graphs and tables.

Historical range proposed for analysis in our thesis is that the onset point of debate since 491, when the Emperor Anastasius I took charge of the Eastern Roman Empire, and converges to the time 641, when completes, definitive, the Roman-Byzantine period in

province of Scythia Minor. Just emergence of monetary programs, shows the emperor Heraclius, post 620, appeared in the seaside area where Empire still kept some positions, we decided to go with historical and numismatic analysis until the end of the reign of Heraclius, to observe the effects of abandonment province by the army and administration.

We chose this range because Scythia Minor had an interesting historical evolution, sinuous, crossing the last period of economic prosperity in the reign of Emperor Anastasius I and Justinian I, the measures initiated, and a period of recoil, due to the presence and attacks by avaro-slave, who have succeeded in the eighth decade of the sixth century, causing the destruction of the entire defensive defense system of the province and its abandonment by the Roman-Byzantine. However, we considered it appropriate to address in terms of historical and numismatic developments Scythia Minor province to reveal the importance that was given to the Eastern Roman Empire, due to its strategic position. Since previous centuries, the region between the Danube and the Black Sea was a "gateway" to Barbaricum Roman civilization, a buffer zone before migrating populations.

The period between 491-641 ranges is undoubtedly one of the most interesting in the history of Scythia Minor province, being marked by important and complex events, illustrated by significant history books - numerous articles, studies, books and monographs - which converge to understanding the evolution of monetary circulation in Scythia Minor.

For a better understanding and knowledge of the history of Romanian lands at the mouth of the Danube in the 491-641 temporarily, along with archaeological material, becoming more abundant, but insufficient, or the rare testimonies submitted by written sources, discoveries Numismatic continues to have a special weight.

History Scythia Minor province enjoyed over time, the attention of specialists, after undertaking numerous archaeological investigations have provided significant historiographical landmarks that helped widen the knowledge, thus constituting an important tool in achieving work synthesis or regional theme.

In terms of historiography mention, without claiming an exhaustive list, general and special works which gave us the possibility to configure a view on political and economic

context in Scythia Minor, and especially, on the dynamics of monetary circulation between 491-641 ranges.

The relevant sources for the work they represent temporal 491-641 ranges historians Ion Barnea<sup>1</sup> and Radu Vulpe and Alexander Suceveanu, Alexandru Barnea<sup>2</sup>. Among other valuable bibliographical sources mention the works of Florin Curta<sup>3</sup> and Alexander Madgari<sup>4</sup> Mihai Sâmpetre<sup>5</sup>, Bucur Mitrea<sup>6</sup>, Gh. Poenaru-Bordea<sup>7</sup>, Radu Ocheșeanu<sup>8</sup>, Ernest Oberlander-Târnoveanu<sup>9</sup>, Mihaela Iacob<sup>10</sup>, Gabriel Custurea<sup>11</sup>, Andrei Gândila<sup>12</sup>, whose works, studies, include articles dealing with various aspects and stages of development progress or regress that characterized the province of Scythia Minor in historical sequence analyzed.

<sup>1</sup> Ion Barnea, *Perioada Domnatului (sec. IV-VII)*, in „Din istoria Dobrogei”, (coord. Radu Vulpe, Ion Barnea), vol. II, Editura Academiei, București, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Alexandru Suceveanu, Alexandru Barnea, *La Dobroudja Roumaine*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Florin Curta, *Apariția slavilor. Istorie și arheologie la Dunărea de Jos în veacurile VI-VII*, Editura Cetățea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Alexandru Madgearu, *Continuitate și discontinuitate culturală la Dunărea de Jos în secolele VII-VIII*, Editura Universității din București, București, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Mihai Sâmpetre, *Situația Imperiului romano-bizantin la Dunărea de Jos la sfârșitul secolului al VI-lea și începutul celui de-al VII-lea*, SCIV, 22, 2, 1971.

<sup>6</sup> Bucur Mitrea, *Monedele și prăbușirea Dobrogei la sfârșitul secolului al VI-lea*, Pontica, 7, 1974, p. 49-72; Idem, *Un tezaur de monede bizantine descoperit la Constanța*, Pontica, 16, 1983, p. 239-362.

<sup>7</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, *Monnaies byzantines des VI-VII siècles en Dobroudja*, dans „Actes du XIV Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines”, Bucarest, 6-12 septembrie, 1971, (coord. M. Berza, E. Stănescu), vol. III, Editura Academiei, București, 1976; Idem, *Note numismatice dobrogene*, SCN, 4, 1968, p. 397-404; Gheorghe Poenaru-Bordea, V. H. Baumann, *Monede romane și bizantine provenite din nordul Dobrogei*, Peuce, 4, 1975, p. 133-173; Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, E. Nicolae, A. Popescu, *Contributions numismatiques à l'histoire de Noviodunum aux VI-VII siècles*, SCN, 11, 1995, p. 135-161.

<sup>8</sup> Radu Ocheșeanu, *Câteva monede bizantine din secolele VII-XI e.n. descoperite în Dobrogea*, Pontica, 14, 1981, p. 309-314.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, *La monnaie dans l'espace rural byzantin des Balkans orientaux - un essai de synthèse au commencement du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Peuce, 1 (14), 2003, p. 341-411; Idem, *Cronica descoperirilor monetare din nordul Dobrogei*, Peuce, 8, 1980, p. 499-513.

<sup>10</sup> Mihaela Iacob, *La circulation monétaire à (L)Ibida (Scythie Mineure) du V<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in „Byzantine Coins in Central Europe between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Century”, M. Woloszyn (ed.), Moravia Magna. Seria Polona, vol. III, Kraków, 2009, p. 61-79; Eadem, *Le trésor de solidi romano-bizantins découvert à Ibida (Scythie mineure)*, in „Simpozion de numismatică dedicat centenarului Societății Numismatice Române (1903-2003)”, Chișinău 26-28 noiembrie 2003, București, 2005, p. 77-79.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel Custurea, *Unele aspecte privind penetrația monedei bizantine în Dobrogea în secolele VII-X*, Pontica, 19, 1986, p. 273-278; Idem, *Noi descoperiri monetare bizantine din Dobrogea (sec. V-VII)*, Pontica, 41, 2008, p. 533-562; Idem, *Monede bizantine recent descoperite în Dobrogea (sec. VI-VII)*, Pontica, 45, 2012, p. 617-635; Antoaneta Vertan, Gabriel Custurea, Gabriel Talmăchi, *Descoperiri monetare în Dobrogea (XI)*, Pontica, 30, 1997, p. 371-387.

<sup>12</sup> A. Gândilă, *Sixth-to-Seventh Century Coin Circulation in Dobrudja*, CN, 9-11, 2003-2005, p. 109-166.

At the same time, we were a great help and contributions of strangers researchers, among which: C. Morrisson<sup>13</sup>, V. Parušev<sup>14</sup>, T. Gerasimov<sup>15</sup>, V. Ivanov<sup>16</sup>, whose work provides information about Roman-Byzantine coin circulation in the area of the province Scythia minor. However, of particular relevance to the historiography dedicated and works have addressed the theme of the chroniclers, among which: Procopius of Caesarea<sup>17</sup>, Ioannes Malalas<sup>18</sup>, Agathias<sup>19</sup>, John of Antioch<sup>20</sup>, Menander Protector<sup>21</sup>, Theophylact Simoc<sup>22</sup>, Theophanes Confessor<sup>23</sup>, Nicephorus<sup>24</sup>.

Regarding the conceptual and methodological framework, we specify that we followed the analysis of monetary circulation consecrated by Gh. Poenaru-Bordea and Radu Ocheșeanu<sup>25</sup>, or monetary parts counting, percentage identification for each issuer in the period under review (491 -641) and calculating the coefficient currency / year reign and, where appropriate, the folles coefficient / year reign. Thus, we could refer phenomena currency market Scythia Minor province, pointing fluctuations in a certain lords, who allowed us to interpret the data we report both regional politico-military events and monetary reforms. On the other hand, in our approach, we combined various historiographical sources, bringing them together, analyzing them from several points of view, taking into account several aspects, and interpreting them, sometimes including tabular or graphical form.

The structure of the thesis is an analysis of three chapters addressing different aspects of the evolution of sinuous political-economic-social-numismatic province

<sup>13</sup> C. Morrisson, V. Popović, V. Ivanisević (ed.), in collaboration with M. Oeconomides, B. Mitrea, Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, I. Turatsoglu, Y. Youroukova, *Les Trésors monétaires byzantins des Balkans et d'Asie Mineure (491-713)*, dans „Realités Byzantines“ (in continuare RB), 8, 2006; C. Morrisson, *La fin de l'antiquité dans les Balkans à lumière des trésors monétaires des VI<sup>e</sup> et VII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, dans „Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres“, vol. 151, Paris, 2007, p. 661-684.

<sup>14</sup> V. Parušev, *Antični monetni ot Kaliakra*, Izvestija-Varna, 27 (1991), p. 20-31.

<sup>15</sup> T. Gerasimov, *Kolektivni nakhodki na monetni*, Izvestija-Sofia, 25, 1962, p. 222-237.

<sup>16</sup> V. Ivanov, *Njakolko monetni nakhodki ot južna Dobrudža*, Dobrudža, 12, 1995, p. 310-312.

<sup>17</sup> Procopius din Cesarea, *Despre Războiul*, VII, (FHDR, II); Idem, *Istoria secretă*, Traducere și introducere de H. Mihăescu, Editura Academiei, București, 1972; Idem, *De aedificiis*, IV, (FHDR, II).

<sup>18</sup> Ioannes Malalas, *Cronografia*, (FHDR, II).

<sup>19</sup> Agathias, *Istoria*, V, (FHDR, II).

<sup>20</sup> Ioan din Antiochia, *Cronica*, (FHDR, II).

<sup>21</sup> Menander Protector, *Fragmente*, 9, (FHDR, II).

<sup>22</sup> Teofilact Simocata, *Istoriile*, I, (FHDR, II).

<sup>23</sup> Theophanes Confessor, *Cronografia*, I, (FHDR, II).

<sup>24</sup> Nicephorus, *Scurtă istorie*, (FHDR, II).

<sup>25</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *Probleme istorice dobrogene (sec. VI-VII) în lumina monedelor bizantine din colecțiile MINA Constanța*, SCIVA, 31, p. 377-396.

Scythia Minor, beginning with the reign of Anastasius I (491-518) and by the end of the reign of Heraclius (610-641).

**Chapter I** reveals aspects of the political, economic and social in the province of Scythia Minor in the late fifth century and the first half of the seventh century.

The first subchapter treats the period from 491-565, with a focus on administrative reforms, economic and social events Emperors Anastasius I and, especially, by Justinian I. The interval analyzed for Scythia Minor was the last stage of development in various issues, which will be detailed in this first chapter.

The second subchapter describes the evolution of Scythia Minor province after taking reign of the Emperor Justin II and until 602. It should be noted that in this historical sequence starts the disintegration of the Danubian limes, due to successive attacks by Slavic-Avar.

The third chapter addresses the issue of dissolution Danubian limes and implications province of Scythia Minor (602-641), Phocas and Heraclius during kings, when there were great changes / mutations in the Balkan-Danube area, especially by determining the area of the slave population.

**Chapter II** examines aspects of monetary circulation centers (pollis - Greek sites and large fortifications) in the province of Scythia Minor, beginning with the reign of Anastasius I (491-518) and the end of the reign of Heraclius (610-641).

The first subchapter deals with the evolution of monetary circulation in the range 491-565, in all derived from the analysis of monetary or parts counting on issuers and nominal type, calculation of statistical indicators currency / year and folles / year, interpreting data and making graphs and tables illustrative. All this information from the numismatic I related the events that had a positive or negative impact on the historical development of the province.

The second subchapter's subject analysis politico-military and economic conjunctures have converged during recoil by monetary circulation in Scythia Minor, between 565-641, but when issues fall Danubian limes in the year 602, as a result of the revolt of Phocas, Byzantine and late Roman authority in the province.

**Chapter III** entitled *The Directory of Scythia Minor monetary discoveries in the late fifth century and the first half of the seventh century* is developed in two chapters, consistent, dedicated hoards repertoire discoveries and the discovery of coins isolated.

The first section describes and analyzes the monetary treasures present in Scythia Minor, from the year 491 until the year 641, the statements regarding issuers, monetary workshops that were issued pieces, time deposit and concealing historical stage in which the process of hoarding. I also played schematically in tabular form, thesauri structure of the issuer, the nominal type, number of pieces.

The second section presents the batch of coins isolated discovered in the province of Scythia Minor on settlements (structured in alphabetical order), issuers, workshops monetary nominal type, number of pieces. Depending on the amount of coins discovered in a certain locality, we used tables and graphs illustrating, on which I could seize numismatic historical development of the province in the rural sector. I paid special attention and Dobrogea lot *passim*, due to the number of copies meant to supplement the historical picture of the province of Scythia Minor.

Finally conclusions presented *the evolution of Scythia Minor province during 491-641 chronological, historical and numismatic perspective*.

The thesis concludes with bibliographic landmarks that were the basis for this paper.

The fifth century was the province of Scythia Minor, as well as for almost the entire European region of the Eastern Roman Empire, one of the general crisis, due to Hun invasions in the first half of the century, as well as internal conflicts, arising from the presence active Goths in the Balkan Peninsula. Also the religious and socio-economic contradictions emphasized the insecurity situation in the Empire<sup>26</sup>.

After the death of Emperor Zenon (491), the Eastern Roman Empire entered a new phase of reconstruction under the Emperor Anastasius I strategy (491-518), which implemented the three policies to bring stability and prosperity of the Empire.

Due to fiscal strategy adopted and implemented, and severe methods of administration and religious policy promonophysic, during the reign of Anastasius I have

<sup>26</sup> Alexandru Suciu, Alexandru Barnea, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

been many social movements. The largest rebellion manifested itself in the diocese of Thrace, between 513-518 ranges, under the leadership of Vitalian<sup>27</sup>.

The first part of the reign of Anastasius, accounting for 491-512 years, local money market broke little new currency<sup>28</sup>, and its value of Follis had a low, approaching the value of the period after the collapse of limes Scythia<sup>29</sup>. Also, note that the issued Follis in the range in 498 has the weigh between 13.90 g and 16.19 g<sup>30</sup>.

Initiate reform of Anastasius was conducted in two stages, first in the year 498, and the second in the year 512. The 498 was the introduction of large pieces of bronze, multiples of noummia, presenting on the obverse brand value and logo mint. Thus, the new denominations were follis site, noummia 40 (M), half of follis (K) and the quarter-Folles or decanoummia (I)<sup>31</sup>. Although reform in the year 498 was designed to overcome the crisis lasting petty cash, degraded and intrinsic value, almost zero, and bring even the Roman-Byzantine civilization borders a large number of currencies, this did not happen, even more, the huge mass of poor quality coin replaced the previous currency quality.

Also, remember that for this first period of the reign of Anastasius, monetary circulation was widespread in urban areas, with monetary findings in three fortifications, new urban settlements and in four villages<sup>32</sup>.

In the latter part of the reign of Anastasius (512-518) signaled an increase of 40 times the value of the coefficients currency / year and Follis / year.<sup>33</sup> Also in this period, due to constructive policy on limes, was marketed a coin twice heavier than the previous period, respectively pentanoummia (E)<sup>34</sup>. Figure coefficient currency / year and could find the explanation by economic policy undertaken by Emperor until his rebellion

<sup>27</sup> I. Miculescu, *Revolta lui Vitalian în contextul politicii religioase și economice a lui Anastasius I*, în „Glasul. Bisericii”, an XLIII, 1984, nr. 7-9, p. 569-583; Vezi și Alexandru Madgearu, *Armata din provincia Scythia în apărarea ortodoxiei. Revolta generalului Vitalianus*, în „Revista de istorie militară”, 2001, 2 (66), p. 37-41.

<sup>28</sup> In 498 was adopted a monetary reform which established four bronze denominations (Follis, oboloi, decanumion, pentanumion), all having entered the sign of the value.

<sup>29</sup> Radu Ocheșeanu, Viorel Radu, *Circulația monetară în perioada 395-491/518 în Dobrogea*, în „Istro-Pontica”, 2000, p. 455-483.

<sup>30</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 385-388.

<sup>31</sup> Manuela Dobre, *Observații asupra circulației monetare de la Durostorum în timpul lui Anastasius I*, în „Cercetări numismatice”, 7, 1996, p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> Gabriel Custurean, *Date noi privind circulația monedei bizantine în Dobrogea (secolele V-VII)*, Pontica, 37-38, 2004-2005, p. 493.

<sup>33</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 385-388.

<sup>34</sup> Manuela Dobre, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

Vitalianus from the years 513-518<sup>35</sup>. The measures taken by the monetary area Anastasius had intended to stop "the proliferation issues bronze coins devalued"<sup>36</sup> by introducing new songs whose real value is closer to nominal. The number of coin finds belonging to this phase increased both in urban areas (approx. 8 fortifications) and rural areas (approx. 10 hauls)<sup>37</sup>.

Although he continued, in general, the policy begun by Anastasius, the new emperor **Justin I** (518-527) condemned the Monophysite religious beliefs of its predecessor, being adept of decisions taken at Chalcedon<sup>38</sup>.

The beginning with the reign of Justin I (518-527) we see a substantial increase in the quantity of money, present value bronze coins in the local market almost doubled<sup>39</sup>. We believe that this was due to the continuation of the policy of Anastasius I, Justin recovery Danubian limes, especially after the liquidity of the opposition of Vitalianus<sup>40</sup>.

In general, in terms of the province of Scythia, at this time there is an increase of statistical indicators Coins / year and folles / year in most centers, with some exceptions<sup>41</sup>. This is due to the attack of 517-518 Antes, who invaded the south Danubian provinces, affecting and Histria or Dinogetia.

We believe that after the death of Justin, on 1 August 527, the Eastern Roman Empire, and with it the province of Scythia Minor will knew the last era of maximum flowering, during the reign of **Justinian** (527-565). This period is one of the most controversial and most spectacular eras of world history. And in our opinion is the last stage of manifestation of Roman civilization in the province of Scythia Minor.

<sup>35</sup> Ion Barnea, *Contributions to Dobrogea History under Anastasius I*, Dacia, N.S., 4, 1960, p. 363-374. Vezi și Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, *Monnaies byzantines des VI<sup>th</sup>-VII<sup>th</sup> siècles...*, p. 205.

<sup>36</sup> Manuela Dobre, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>37</sup> Gabriel Custurea, *Date noi privind circulația monedei...*, p. 493.

<sup>38</sup> Council of Chalcedon (the sixth Council of Chalcedon) stressed the dual nature of Jesus Christ (human and divine), condemning Monophysitism, which supported only the theory of the divine nature of Christ. Eastern Roman Empire faced thus during the sixth and seventh centuries, with many conflicts between supporters of the two religious theories

<sup>39</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 385-388.

<sup>40</sup> Ion Barnea, *Perioada Domnăutului...*, p. 412-414. Vezi și I. I. Rusu, *Obârșia și răscoala lui Vitalianus*, în „Omagiu lui P. Constantinescu-Isăi cu prilejul împlinirii a 70 de ani”, Editura Academiei Române, București, 1965, p. 133-139.

<sup>41</sup> Alexandru Suceveanu, Mihail Zahariade, Florin Topoleanu, Gheorghe Poenaru-Bordea, *Halmyris I. Monografie arheologică*, Editura Nereamia Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 181.

Militarily, the province of Scythia Minor, beginning with the reign of Justinian I (527-565), crossed lately recovery fortifications, with a deadline this year 559, when there is a series of destructions of town's province<sup>42</sup>. The end of this phase was observed for the first time and confirmed Dinogetia archaeological research conducted in the cities of Histria, Sucidava, Noviodunum, Aegyssus and Halmiris<sup>43</sup>. Also two coins issued by Justinian, Tropaeum Trajani discovered in a fire level<sup>44</sup>, seem to confirm the situation described above.

In economic terms, the province Scythia experienced during this emperor fluctuated due attacks migratory populations that succeeded mainly in the second half of the reign. This has caused monetary inflation which led to the drafting and adoption of economic measures of monetary reform.

Thus, after the monetary reform of 538, bronze coins Folles got renewed parity Empire gold coin, the solidus, one solidus equivalent Folles 210 now<sup>45</sup>. Also bronze coin weight increased after the reform of 538, reaching 24,94g. In the year 543 there was a further decrease in weight bronze coin weighing 21,83g it and to end the reign Folles reached a standard of 18,19g<sup>46</sup>.

After the year 565, Justinian bequeathed to his successors a state was in a difficult situation from several points of view, particularly in relation to socio-economic, financial and military. Thereafter, the empire had to face great pressure exerted by various migratory populations and rival states: Avars, Slavs, Persians, Lombards, Visigoths and Berbers.

Emperor Justin II (565-578) inherited from his uncle a vast empire, but surrounded by powerful enemies and hostile. To restore the imperial treasury, exhausted by expeditions, wars and tributes Justinian, he refused to pay subsidies to the barbarian

<sup>42</sup> Alexandru Suceveanu, Alexandru Barnea, *La Dobroudja roumaine et romano-byzantine. Histoire économique et romanisation*, in „Dialogues d'histoire ancienne” (In continuare DHA), vol. 14, 1998, p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Ion Barnea, *Perioada Domnăutului...*, p. 429-430.

<sup>44</sup> Alexandru Suceveanu, Alexandru Barnea, *La Dobroudja roumaine et romano-byzantine...*, p. 131.

<sup>45</sup> W. Hahn, *Moneta Imperii Byzantini, I. von Anastasius I bis Justinianus I (491-565)*, I, Wien, 1973, p. 27; A. R. Bellinger, P. Grierson, *Anastasius to Maurice 491-602. Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, Washington DC, 1966, p. 84-87; D. M. Metcalf, *The Origins of the Anastasian Currency Reform*, Amsterdam, 1969, p. 87-90; P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, London, 1982, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> W. Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 27; A. R. Bellinger, P. Grierson, *op. cit.*, p. 84-87; D. M. Metcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 87-90; P. Grierson, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

peoples. Empire Policy was put in a difficult situation, because in the next period, was in continual conflict<sup>47</sup>.

During the reign of Justin II (565-578) has been a quantum leap present on the local currency, which could indicate some prosperity. However, this large amount of currency, amid inflationary trends, caused, in fact, rising prices<sup>48</sup> and purchasing power was slightly less effective. It is also known that the Emperor Justin II was forced to face the Avar's attacks from the years 566 and 573. In these circumstances, the imperial mints had to introduce large quantities of bronze coin, but poor quality. Towards the end of his reign, the province Scythia money market there is a decline in monetary circulation due to resume payment of stipends in gold by the Avars from 574, to secure the Empire on the Danube border<sup>49</sup>, severely affected by previous attacks of the Avars, but particular slave population. From this period dates Byzantine bronze coin hoard (55 copies), found in Topalu, Constanta County<sup>50</sup>.

After the death of Justin II, on 4 October 578, Tiberius became the new emperor of Constantinople, under the name of **Tiberius II Constantine** (578-582). The new king was concerned that in the East to make peace with the Persians, and keep heading West Empire in Italy and Spain, while in the Balkans, the situation deteriorated significantly Empire during his reign due to military actions Slav and Avars. Regarding the situation Danubian provinces, it became dramatic, due to the presence and stationing large numbers of Slavs, who for four years have systematically looted the entire Balkan Peninsula. If during the previous reign of Tiberius II, Slavs contented only with shares of plunder of provinces located south of the Danube, from the seventh decade, their presence became constant, producing many shortcomings Empire and uncertainty within the borders.

During the reign of Tiberius II Constantine, monetary circulation was maintained at a high level in the province of Scythia Minor. Barbarian incursions since 581 is not

<sup>47</sup> In the following decades, conflicts with the Persians and Avars Slavs were replaced at short intervals, with devastating effects and adverse consequences for the Eastern Roman Empire, leading to loss of the Balkan Peninsula and territories in Africa and Asia at the expense of the Slavs, Persians and later the Arabs.

<sup>48</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

<sup>49</sup> Ion Barnea, *Perioada Domnării lui...* , p. 430-431.

<sup>50</sup> I. R. Dimian, *Căteva descoperiri monetare bizantine pe teritoriul R.P.R.*, SCN, 1, București, 1957, p. 191-192.

Byzantine coin depress local market penetration. I concur, so researchers Radu Ocheșeanu opinion and Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, which unperturbed monetary circulation after events since 581, would explain the slave population in the Balkans by entering areas other than the province or by seeking authority imperial to give confidence in a new bronze coin improved<sup>51</sup>.

However, the Empire failed to support this financial policy, particularly because determining Slavs in the Balkans<sup>52</sup>. Against this historical background, the imperial government was forced to degrade bronze coin, reaching quota of 1 solidus to 600 *folles*<sup>53</sup>.

Emperor Maurice Tiberius (582-602) was the last representative of the Justinian Dynasty. The first step of the throne was to conclude peace with the Avars, which were recognized dominion over the city Sirmium. During his reign, Emperor Maurice endeavored to restore imperial treasury, impoverished by previous king's expenses, but also to defend the borders of the state exposed to the high pressure of the Avar-Slav, Sassanid Persians, Lombards and Visigoths.

Although the strategy adopted by Maurice was unpopular and attracted a number of complaints among subjects, we believe that this is not a motivation to minimize the role of reformer. Basically, its intention to restructure the military sphere system can be considered and attempts to modernize, adapt to new realities facing the Empire. Trying to solve urgent financial problem and to minimize costs army led to a reclassification of structures in civil administration. All these aspects would support the hypothesis that Maurice can be considered a reformer of the time, but misunderstood and unsupported by contemporaries, which stopped the implementation of the measures adopted by the king.

Beginning with the reign of Maurice Tiberius (582-602), the Eastern Roman Empire was in a permanent state of insecurity caused by the presence and actions Avar Slavs, who, after occupying the city Sirmium (582), successive attacks initiated south of the Danube, endangering stability in the Balkans and affecting the evolution of cities. Barbarian Invasions, combined with periods of plague, caused, in the second half of the

<sup>51</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

<sup>52</sup> Aurelian Petre, *Byzance et Scythie Mineure au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, dans „Revue des études sus-est européennes“, XIX, 3, 1981, p. 557.

<sup>53</sup> Gh. Poenaru-Bordea, R. Ocheșeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

sixth century, the depopulation of the Balkan provinces, which have weakened the ability of defense and retaliation Empire before the various challenges.

A negative impact on the evolution of Scythia Minor province have represented waves of invasions from the years 576-586, 593, 602 and 614, which led to the termination of urban life and the end of Roman-Byzantine coin penetration in this area<sup>54</sup>.

The historical stage 565-602, Scythia Minor province, as well as the entire Balkan region has experienced difficult times due to the Slav and Avars attacks that after conquering the city Sirmium (582) were followed, resulting, ultimately, decay whole Danube limes.

A long time, historians thought the centurion Phocas revolt of 602 represented a significant moment in the history of the Eastern Roman Empire, especially the end prebizaean domination period in the Lower Danube. Moreover, the year in question was considered a turning point between Antiquity and the Middle Ages<sup>55</sup>.

After the coup of 602 and elimination of Maurice and members of the imperial family, and especially Phocas was proclaimed emperor of Constantinople. Taking advantage of the chaos in the Empire, Avars resumed hostilities with the Empire, triggering, south of the Danube, a new attack. This situation prompted to enter a new understanding Phocas, unfavorable, whereby Empire undertakes to pay a higher tribute, so as to prevent further invasions. For several years, on the Lower Danube, was installed peace, which allowed penetration of coins issued by Phocas and the local market of Scythia Minor<sup>56</sup>.

The process of disintegration and abandonment limes occurred gradually and was not a consequence of a single event - the rebellion of Phocas in 602<sup>57</sup>. The process of loss of control of the imperial army on the northern area between the Danube and the Balkan

<sup>54</sup> C. Morrisson, *op. cit.*, p. 661-684; Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, *Les échanges dans le monde rural byzantin de l'est Balkans (VI<sup>th</sup>-XI<sup>th</sup> siècles)*, dans „Les villages dans l'Empire Byzantin (IV<sup>th</sup>-XV<sup>th</sup> siècles)“ (edit. J. Lefort, C. Morrisson, J. P. Sodini), Paris, 2005, p. 382.

<sup>55</sup> Alexandru Madgearu, *The end of the Lower Danubian Limes: A violent or a peaceful process?* in „Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica“, XII, Iași, 2006, p. 151.

<sup>56</sup> Idem, *The Province of Scythia and the Avaro-Slavic Invasions (576-626)*, in BalkSt., 37, 1, 1996, p. 52; Vezi și A. Gândilă, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>57</sup> Alexandru Madgearu, *The Downfall of the Lower Danubian Later Roman Frontier*, in „Revue Romaine d'Histoire“, XXXVI, 3-4, Bucharest, 1997, p. 316; Mihail Zahariade, *Scythia Minor. A History of a Later Roman Province (284-681)*, with contributions by Virgil Lungu and Zaharia Covacev, in Pontic Province of the Later Roman Empire, I, Amsterdam, A.M. Hakkert, 2006, p. 66-67.

mountains from Iron Gate to the Danube Delta and the Black Sea began practically at the end of the reign of Justin II and ended in the early years of the reign of Heraclius<sup>58</sup>.

In the period under review were discovered more than 3000 isolated coins and 20 coins<sup>59</sup>. Monetary circulation experienced a different evolution in terms of the place of discovery of the coin: urban or rural.

Thus, in urban areas, monetary circulation was developed because economic activities undertaken, and executed administrative or military sector. Also, in urban areas it was found that the volume was higher monetary circulation and penetration currency us through commodity exchange activities - cash or payment of the balance, there was faster<sup>60</sup>.

Regarding rural areas during the same period a failure, almost entirely of commodity exchange activities - money (explanation being that their villas, real "engines" of economic, producing money in previous centuries, have disappeared from the province of Scythia early fifth century, following the devastating attacks of the Huns), and came in hard currency due to taxes payable in kind and, more rarely, in cash<sup>61</sup>.

History of space between the Danube and the Black Sea held in chronological interval 491-641 footprint prosperous periods due to measures initiated by the emperors , Anastasius I and Justinian I, who targeted cities in the province of Scythia Minor restoration and implementation of reforms that led to development of a monetary economy, and mark a stage marked by successive attacks Avars-Slavs, raids that led to the disintegration of the entire military defense system in the Balkans.

Monetary reform initiated by Emperor Anastasius I (491-518) since 498<sup>62</sup>, produced in Scythia Minor, a resurrection of monetary circulation, which is in "agony" since the late fourth century, revival which manifested , especially during the reign of Emperor

<sup>58</sup> Maria Comşa, *Slawen und Awaren auf rumänischen Boden, ihre Beziehungen zu der bodenständigen romanischen und späteren frührumänischen Bevölkerung*, in „Die Völker“, München, 1987, p. 222-223.

<sup>59</sup> Gabriel Custurea, *Date noi privind circulația monedei...*, p. 493.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>62</sup> Although reform in the year 498 was designed to overcome the crisis lasting petty cash, degraded and intrinsic value, almost zero, and bring even the Roman-Byzantine civilization borders a large number of money initially failed to do this thing, nay, huge mass of poor quality coin replaced the previous currency quality.

Justin I (518-527) and Justinian I (527-565), who continued political and economic trajectory applied by their predecessor.

The period of prosperity was, however, overshadowed by the attacks of migratory populations<sup>63</sup>, but also the emergence and occurrence of natural disasters and epidemics, which, ultimately, especially after 575/6, destabilized the Eastern Roman Empire in the Balkan region.

The man who tried to reduce the effects of monetary inflation Empire faced since the end of the reign of Justinian I was his successor, Justin II (565-578). It has sought cancellation stipends migratory populations and restoring imperial treasure drained reserve the expeditions organized by Justinian I. That might explain the presence of large number of coins<sup>64</sup> issued by the province of Scythia Minor Justin II, which actually did not mean economic prosperity; it was the effort to stop inflation Empire monetary circulation. It is also known that then Emperor Justin II was forced to face Avars' attacks from the years 566 and 573. In these circumstances, the imperial mints had to introduce large quantities of bronze coin, but poor quality. Towards the end of his reign, provincial money market found a decline in monetary circulation due to resume payment of stipends in gold by the Avars from 574, to secure the Empire on the Danube border, severely affected by previous attacks of the Avars and Slavic tribes.

During the reign of Emperor Tiberius II Constantine (578-582) and Maurice Tiberius (582-602), the province of Scythia Minor has entered a period of economic decline and military emphasized, particularly as a result of repeated attacks of the Avars and Slavic tribes.

During the reign of Tiberius II Constantine, monetary circulation was maintained at a high level in Scythia Minor. Barbarian incursions since 581 is not Byzantine coin depress local market penetration. Unperturbed monetary circulation after evens from the year 581 was explained by the penetration of Slavs in the Balkans in areas other than the

<sup>63</sup> Situation in the province Scythia Minor and the Eastern Roman Empire from the death of Justinian was extremely difficult, pressure migratory populations in northern Danube becoming more oppressive and defensive ability of increasingly reduced.

<sup>64</sup> This large amount of currency, amid inflationary trends, caused, in fact, rising prices and purchasing power was slightly less effective.

province of Scythia Minor or imperial authority by trying to give confidence in a new bronze coin improved.

Beginning with the reign of Emperor Maurice Tiberius, the Slavs, situated north of the Danube, began, gradually, to settle south of the Danube. Scythia Minor province has suffered from attacks undertaken by the Avars and Slavic tribes 586, 594/5, when we speak about occupation, temporary area.

All these events have brought the province to the fifth century, when the monetary economy had insularity, being active only around strong urban centers, constituting also a gap in the defense Danubian limes, the process of disintegration and abandonment limes occurring gradually, in stages. On the territory of Scythia Minor, Danubian limes collapse caused deep social transformation, economic, political and military, as in the whole Balkans Empire. The local population has dramatically decreased, compared with the glory which is in large cities having either been abandoned or have acquired a rural aspect. With all these changes, we believe that the local population could not disappear into the mass of Slavs, as they tried to demonstrate some foreign researchers, evidence of continuity of the local population is the presence of Latin place names invoice.

Beginning with the reign of Phocas (602-610) and the early years of the reign of Heraclius (610-641), monetary circulation in Scythia Minor, situated at a modest level, was maintained in several centers and fortifications in the province who managed to cope Slavic and Avars attacks succession to the great raid of 614-619 years to end monetary exchange economy. However, in some centers in the seaside (Tomis, Callatis) or from the limes (Noviodunum) monetary economy had a rudimentary character, at least until the establishment of the Bulgarians (680) in the area, and then finally ceased to resume his Ninth century. All these events have marked the evolution of historical and numismatic Scythia Minor province led to the establishment of hoards, such as 570-580 years from Halmyris, Axiopolis, Slava Rusa, or the 594-595 range from Abrit (Zaldapa) Adamclisi Histria or the 601-602 years from Histria and glory Russian.

Regarding the nominal structure have important role permeation paths of movement and mint issuer. For chronological interval analyzed, we find that the money market in Scythia Minor at present many coins are issued by the studio of Constantinople, followed by one at Nicomedia, Cyzic and Thessaloniki.

Monetary circulation experienced a different evolution in terms of the place of discovery of the coin, urban or rural. Thus, in urban areas, monetary circulation was developed because economic activities undertaken, and executed administrative or military sector. It also notes that urban traffic volume was higher monetary and currency penetration us through commodity exchange activities - cash or payment of the balance, there was faster. Regarding rural noticed the missing almost entirely of commodity exchange activities - money<sup>65</sup> and currency had entered a weaker penetration due to taxes payable in kind and, more rarely, in cash.

Statute border province was a disadvantage for economic development, and political-military Scythia Minor province being in the path of migratory populations attacks. By the year 540, Scythia Minor province experienced a period of economic prosperity, as indicated by the coefficient currency / year. From 538-540, when Emperor Justinian program formalized and restorations and creations of various cities, the development of the province, as well as the whole Balkan basin, the succession was marked both attacks Slavo-Cutrigures and Slav-Bulgarian-Hun, which led the stagnation of economic development and the devastating effects of the plague.

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<sup>65</sup> One explanation may be that their villas, real "engines" of economic, producing money in previous centuries, have disappeared from the province of Scythia Minor since the fifth century, following the devastating attacks of the Huns.

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