

Trajan's coinage related to the Dacian Wars  
The first Dacian War (A case analysis)

Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu

- abstract -

The interesting topic of the reflection of the Dacian Wars in the coinage of the Trajan's reign was discussed so far by many foreign and Romanian scholars, such as: G.A.T. Davies, H. Mattingly and E.A. Sydenham, C. Moisil, M. Durry, E.T. Salmon, Iudita Winkler, L. Rossi, M. Macrea, G.G. Belloni, N. Hannestad, Carmen-Maria Petolescu and the writer of these lines.

Unfortunately, all the pre-1997 contributions were based on the obsolete chronology of the issues given by Cohen or Mattingly and Sydenham, and took into consideration only the issues on which were clear "Dacian" representations or inscriptions.

Based on the new chronological approach of P.V. Hill, the author undertook a through analysis of the imperial propaganda as reflected by the monetary issues struck in connexion with the first Dacian War, in the mint of Rome, as well as in some provincial mints, such as Alexandria in Egypt. The new chronology proposed by Hill proves that many issues related to the First Dacian War were struck since 101 until 104, and not during 101-102 A.D. as it was asserted so far. The monetary representations of these issues included not only classical topics, such as representations of Dacia or Dacians, but also depictions of the main deities under whose protection was placed the war: *Hercules, Mars, Minerva, Jupiter, Virtus, Dea Roma*. Several issues emphasize the importance of the Victory (including the rather unusual representation of *Victoria Navalis*). The role of the Senate and of the Emperor is highlighted by several issues struck during 102-103.

Most of the monetary representations used on the coinage related to the First Dacian War struck by Trajan are more or less connected to the old monetary representations used by Augustus, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, though some innovations were introduced during the years 102-104, such as those of the *Senat, Pax* or *Felicitas* receiving the submission of the Dacians.

In spite of the long established common opinion, neither the representations of the Dacians nor *Dacia* shown on the coins are faithful ethnographical reflections of the defeated people, such as it was known by the contemporary Romans. Most of the prototypes of the "Dacian" representations can be found in the standard depiction of the "Oriental Barbarians", such as Parthians, Jews or Germans. In this respect, the coinage of Trajan shows many similarities with the monetary representations used by Vespasian, Titus and Domitian.