

Sorin Cociş

**The Brooch Workshops from Dacia and the other
Danubian Provinces of the Roman Empire
(1st c. BC – 3rd c. AD)**

ROMANIAN ACADEMY
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART HISTORY CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Preface

As is widely recognized, the study of the metallic elements of ancient dress - the only part that has reached us - allows much better than other investigations, except for those relating to the mortal remains of the human body, to know the belonging of people to certain groups and consequently their mobility. For this reason some distribution maps of the different types have been prepared for a long time - and they are constantly evolving - but they must rely, to base their validity, on identifying the points of greatest concentration or better the manufacturing centres. Sorin Cociş has become a true master in this field.

Finally we have this long awaited book in our hands. The work written by Sorin Cociş comes after a wide and prolonged series of studies, developed for over thirty-five years, dedicated to the Romanian fibulae and their dissemination, even beyond the borders of the current state, - according to a tradition coming directly from the great nineteenth-century scholars - of the types mainly attested in that territory. In this work, remarkable for its breadth of setting, a vast area is examined: it goes from Raetia (part of Switzerland and today South-East Germany) to Dacia, crossing the Noricum and Pannonia, or current Austria, Hungary and Serbia. The author's point of view is clear: he wants to analyze, by comparison, the areas from which merchants, soldiers and inhabitants of Roman Dacia probably came, bringing with them besides countless other things models for dress and consequently the fibulae, immediately locally produced. The result is a very interesting picture in this respect of the middle and lower Danubian area. The chronological range is obviously that of the life of the Roman province of Dacia, that is, from Trajan to Aurelian. This fact alone is enough to point out the particular position of this work that overcomes the regional syntheses - now fundamental not only for the Balkan area, even if included within the state boundaries - and obviously the catalogues dedicated to individual cities.

The volume examines and reports critically the data relating to 59 workshops, located in practically all forms of possible settlements (from military to civil, including even single villas). In the conclusion the author focuses on the different characteristics of the workshops, which could be specialized in fibulae manufacturing, or capable of achieving a wider spectrum of products or even inserted in an artisan district. What emerges is a very broad picture, from which it can be deduced that the production was disseminated in a multiplicity of workshops, perhaps partly active only for a short time (a generation?). And therefore ceased due to urbanistic needs of enlargement of the city or the lack of the owners / workers. When it is possible to have ample documentation, it is observed that for the most part in these workshops, not only - as is obvious - were fibulae produced, but also other varieties of metal objects.

The entire volume is noteworthy for its concrete interest in technology with special reference to production methods. For this I believe that it will be an essential work not only for archaeologists, but in general for those who are more interested in the evolution of material culture.

The contrast between the (supposed) production of fibulae in many places in central Europe, attested sometimes by a single specimen or a little more, and the great abundance revealed by the archaeological research in Romania, where are found semi-finished brooches, molds, places of production etc., is striking. Among the former there is also the case of Aquileia.

The discussion on Dacia takes us back to the enormous efforts made by the Romans to keep the entire area under control - essentially military -: they involved the displacement of people (soldiers and civils) and of means, the creation of infrastructures, the construction of housing, barracks, fortifications and new settlements. All this in a short time and with the support of the most advanced logistics of that time. Obviously they also moved the ways of life and habits, the food, the clothing's type and with it the fibulae. It is of great interest for us to observe, from the pages of this volume, on the one hand the continuation of the Roman provincial traditions - originating in particular in the Pannonian and Norican areas - and on the other to emerge, fruit of an incipient and inevitable acculturation, new forms that we see as new types of fibulae, which are evidently the spy of a great complexity of relationships that strongly influences the identity of the inhabitants of the new province.

By now we can say that, thanks also to the all worthy and important works of Sorin Cocis and his valiant colleagues, the Danubian area is known and studied like those, traditionally endowed with a more affluent literature - started long before - of Germany, Gaul and Britain.

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Foreword

Brooches are, after coinage and pottery, the most important artefacts for dating archaeological sites. Although recognized from hundreds of publications, brooches are less known from their production *officinae* and manufacture technology points of view. Precisely these aspects shall be discussed herein.

This work contains the results of long-term investigations which, first and foremost, required thorough documenting, which for the most part was supported by the material yielded by the field research. Originally, the proposed aim was to examine the brooch workshops known in Roman Dacia, in the context of the research project completed by the end of 2016 (National Scientific Research Council 2016, *project no. PN-II-ID-PCE-2012-4-210*). *Later, the approach was extended to the level of all Danubian provinces, a geographic area that today covers territory parts of nine European states, also to the analysis of most recent finds reported, over the course of its drafting, in the examined areas.*

My thanks go to all who kindly provided me unpublished material, yielded by archaeological excavations, in museum collections, doctoral theses, for mentioning references, but also exchange of ideas as well as the draft of the rich illustrative material: S. Biro (Iseum Savariense Régészeti Múhely és Tárház), M. Buora (Civici Musei di Udine), G. Bounegru (National Museum of the Union in Alba Iulia), V. Barcă, (Institute of Archaeology and Art History of Cluj-Napoca, further I.A.I.A), D. Elefterescu (Museum of the Lower Danube in Călărași), Chr. Flügel (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege München), M. Feugère (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), Cr. Găzdac (I.A.I.A), F. Gogâltan (I.A.I.A), M. Gschwind (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege München), Knauseder (Universität Salzburg), V. Lăzărescu (I.A.I.A), D. Matei (I.A.I.A), S. Mustață (Babeș- Bolyai University), I. Nemeti (National Museum of Transylvanian History based in Cluj-Napoca), C. Oprean (I.A.I.A), M. Pauli (Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege München), L. Petculescu (National Museum of Romanian History), Al. Popa (Universität Regensburg), G. Rasbach (*Römisch-Germanische Kommission*), A. Rustoiu (I.A.I.A.), V. Rusu-Bolindeț (National Museum of Transylvanian History based in Cluj-Napoca), H. Sedlmayer (Österreichische Archäologische Institut Vienna), N. Sey (Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Archaeological Sciences, Budapest), Th. Schierl (Kulturhistorisches Museum Mühlhäuser), I. Stanciu (I.A.I.A), N. Șugar (I.A.I.A), A. Ursuțiu (I.A.I.A), V. Voișian (National Museum of Transylvanian History based in Cluj-Napoca), and H.-U.Voss (*Römisch-Germanische Kommission*).

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The author