



**JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY
AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

Institute of Archeology and Art History of
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca
Technical University Of Cluj-Napoca



Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v8i2>

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN-L 2360 – 266X



Scopus®



**Clarivate
Analytics**



Central and Eastern European Online Library



No. 8.2 /2021

CONTENTS

STUDIES

ANCIENT HISTORY

- Annamária – Izabella PÁZSINT**
PROSOPOGRAPHIA PONTI EUXINI. BYZANTION 5
- Ioan Carol OPRÎŞ**
AN ANONYMOUS *STATIO* OF *CLASSIS FLAVIA MOESICA*
AND LATER *FLAVIANA*. ALL WE KNOW FOR NOW
ABOUT ROMAN RASOVA (CONSTANŢA COUNTY,
ROMANIA) 47

NUMISMATICS

- Dmitriy N. KHMELEVSKIY, Valeriy V. KRUTILOV †,
Maria V. NOVICHENKOVA**
AN IMITATION (FOURRÉE) OF ROMAN REPUBLICAN
DENARIUS SERRATUS FROM THE «L-1» EXCAVATION
AREA IN OLBIA PONTICA (UKRAINE) 65

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

- Marius-Mihai CIUŢĂ, Colin P. QUINN,
Radu V. TOTOIANU**
RADIOCARBON DATA OF FUNERARY DISCOVERIES
FROM MIDDLE BRONZE AGE IN THE MUREŞ VALLEY.
THE WIETENBERG CEMETERY FROM LIMBA-OARDA DE JOS
(ALBA COUNTY, ROMANIA) 75
- Victor SAVA, Adrian URSUŢIU**
THE LATE BRONZE AGE GÁVA POTTERY
FROM THE LOWER MUREŞ 84
- Alexander K. HARIZANOV**
VAULTING TUBE PRODUCTION IN *DACIA MEDITERRANEA*:
A CASE STUDY FROM THE *STRYMON* VALLEY
IN ITS REGIONAL CONTEXT 128
- Stanislav GRIGORIEV**
THE EVOLUTION OF ANTLER AND BONE CHEEKPICES
FROM THE BALKAN-CARPATHIAN REGION TO CENTRAL
KAZAKHSTAN: CHRONOLOGY OF “CHARIOT” CULTURES
AND MYCENAEAN GREECE 148

DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY

- Valeriu SÎRBU, Dan ŞTEFAN,
Maria-Magdalena ŞTEFAN, Eugen Silviu TEODOR,
Ionel CÂNDEA, Alexandru POPA,
Sebastian MATEI, Dragoş MÂNDESCU,
Lucica SAVU, Roxana MUNTEANU,
Dan BUZEA, Valerii KAVRUK, Costin CROITORU,
Stănica PANDREA, Călin ŞUTEU, Bogdan CIUPERCĂ,
Daniel GARVĂN, Aurel VÎLCU, Theodor ISVORANU**
UNHIDING FORESTED LANDSCAPES.
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INDEX
OF SOUTH-EASTERN CARPATHIANS 190

REVIEWS

- Csaba SZABÓ**
DAMJAN DONEV, *THE BUSY PERIPHERY:
URBAN SYSTEMS OF THE BALKAN AND
DANUBE PROVINCES (2ND – 3RD C. AD)*,
ARCHAEOPRESS, ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY
SERIES 61, OXFORD, 2019 202
- Mihaela GLIGOR**
FERDINAND ADDIS, *ROME: ETERNAL CITY*,
UK, HEAD OF ZEUS, 2018 205

Design & layout:
Petru Ureche

Reviews

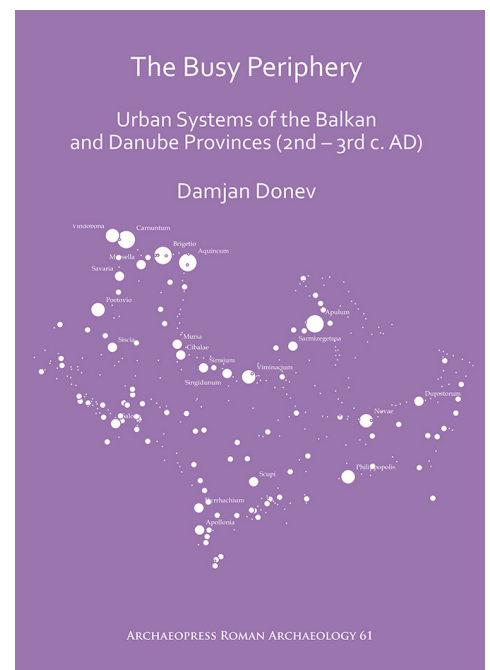
Damjan Donev, *The Busy Periphery: Urban Systems of the Balkan and Danube Provinces (2nd – 3rd c. AD)*, Archaeopress, Roman Archaeology Series 61, Oxford, 2019, ISBN-10: 1789693497, 380. p.

The monograph of Damjan Donev is the result of a five-year long research project carried on in the framework of the ERC Advanced Project entitled “An Empire of 2000 cities: urban networks and economic integration in the Roman Empire” coordinated by prof. Luuk de Ligt at the University of Leiden. This project between 2013 and 2018 represents one of the many, important scientific endeavours of the recent scholarship focusing on the long-term and in-depth analysis of urbanisation and urbanity in the political, economic, demographic, and religious history of the Roman Empire¹. This project created a unique chance for researchers to unite the often-contradictory debates on urbanity and the impact of Roman urbanisation in all the Roman Empire, including the often-neglected Danubian provinces and the Balkan². This area was granted to Damjan Donev who was working at the project of Ligt as a postdoctoral researcher. Previously to this book, Donev’s research was focusing on particular rural and urban settlements and typologies of urbanisation and settlement-analysis in the Balkan and Danubian provinces (the author included regio X from Italia, Macedonia, Dalmatia, Pannoniae, Moesiae, Thracia and Dacia)³.

In the introduction (1-13.p.) the author presents shortly the place of the study in current scholarship of ancient urbanism, focusing only on the major currents of historiography, arguing that in older literature the focus was on the particularities and monographic studies of individual settlements, while his methodology is opening a new tendency of a large-scale and a geographic network-study of the cities. In his short paragraph arguing on why he choose the Balkan and Danubian provinces as a unit of the Roman Empire, the author shortly mentioned, that it was more a pragmatic choice (accessibility of the literature and languages) and claimed, that this region “never became closely integrated enough to form a compact territorial block within the Roman Empire” (4.p.). Donev’s most intriguing – and probably, most problematic – statement comes already in the short sub-chapter which aims to define the data-set of his book. The author argued, that “using population size thresholds as criteria for the attribution of urban status is likely to lead to an incomplete settlement map [...], following the juridical status of the settlements will provide only a slightly more accurate picture” (6.p.). This claim certainly goes against the traditional view of classical archaeology, literary sources and Roman studies, which unanimously argued, that the urban nature of the Roman settlements can be defined by their legal status (municipia and coloniae). Donev questions this definition and categorisation, however in the short introduction didn’t present a detailed answer and methodological alternative for a new, more elaborate terminology of urbanity. In his short argument – based on the project’s definition on urban and the settlement

Csaba SZABÓ

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
csaba.szabo@ulbsibiu.ro



DOI: 10.14795/j.v8i2.631
ISSN 2360 – 266X
ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

1 LIGT et alii 2014; ROBINSON 2016; HANSON 2016; RAJA-SINDBÆK 2018; WOOLF 2020; RÜPKE 2020; PELLEGRINO 2020; HOUTEN 2021.

2 About the notion see: ALFÖLDY 2004 and SZABÓ 2020.

3 DONEV 2016; DONEV 2020.

system – Donev used a very flexible terminology of urbanity, based on agglomerations of 5 ha, stone structures, local institutions and centrality of the settlement. Donev usually avoid the notions of “town” or “cities”, instead he uses the more flexible and complex notion of “urban systems”. Town and urban centre is used by Donev only for self-governing and central settlements of urban systems, while the other types are labelled after their economic functions (ports, road stations, mining colonies, garrison settlements etc.) or named as town-like or non-agrarian agglomerations. The author presents his struggling effort faced by many of us working on the Danubian provinces when it comes to the monumental amount of the bibliography produced by 12 countries and local archaeological traditions. Donev presents shortly also the study outline, giving short abstracts of each of his major chapters. He concludes that his aim is to shift the focus on urbanity towards the distribution of size-categories, as well as the micro-locational and functional variations or the changing density of the settlement networks, however his methodology needs a more careful, detailed presentation as it was shortly summarised in his introduction. Based on the contemporary debates on the problematic aspects of the limits of urbanity, the differences between Roman towns and cities and the dichotomy between urban and rural, a more elaborated discussion on terminology and the levels or qualities of urbanity would be necessary for the contemporary readers – space theorists, Roman archaeologists or others focusing on urbanity in the Roman world.

The second chapter presents the genesis of the Roman settlement networks in the Balkan and Danubian provinces, focusing especially on the settlement chronology. Donev shortly mentions here the problematic notion of settlement-continuity and discontinuity from the pre-Roman times to the Roman period, arguing, that this can be only attested in urban context in the Greek cities of the Adriatic and Black Sea region, but also on the territory of Illyria and Macedonia.

Donev presents each region following a similar methodology and structure: in Upper Macedonia and Epirus 70% of the towns and settlements (again, a recurrent terminological confusion in contrast with the methodological introduction) were founded in pre-Roman times, during the Hellenistic period (32 in Hellenistic times, 21 in Roman times attested archaeologically). In the northern Adriatic Donev identified 12 pre-Roman urban systems and only 4 Romans which shows a similar pattern as in Illyria and Macedonia, urbanised much intensively before the Roman conquest. In Dalmatia we will see the same pattern, with more than 35 pre-Roman settlements and only 18 from the Roman period. A different model was attested in the two Pannoniae where Donev identified only 7 urban systems from pre-Roman period. The problematic identification of these settlements represents one of the challenges of his criteria presented in the introduction, especially in middle sized urban systems, where the archaeological material is often partially and fragmentarily documented, and the criteria set by the author in his methodology are hard to test. Each province are presented by the list of settlements (ancient and modern name, pre-Roman phase, status), a statistics on the chronological profile of the major agglomerations

and at least one map. In some cases, the legend is hardly visible unfortunately for the reader, the settlements are presented in small dots without differentiating their status or chronological aspects, while in other maps, where these chronological features are presented, the name of the settlements are not featured. In the conclusion of the first chapter, the author presents the chronological categories of all the studied provinces: from this we can find out, that almost 200 urban-like settlements (urban systems) were founded by Romans and around 100 had an archaeologically attested, pre-Roman existence.

In the next chapter, Donev presents the genesis of the Roman urban network and the newly founded settlements in the discussed historical region. Some of the diagrams in the book – such as the one presenting the number of large construction projects in the old towns of Illyria and Epirus – are hardly visible unfortunately (56.p.). The structure of this chapter follows the previous one, each region is presented shortly, but with a rich and comprehensive bibliography, focusing on the newly established urban systems. In each case, Donev highlighted some of the specificities of the regions, such as the high number of vici in Dobrudja and the highly militarised aspects of the settlements in Dacia, resuming a century long research in the subchapters dedicated to this complex topic.

The fourth chapter deals with the settlement size distribution, a topic which produced also heavy debates in historiography and represents one of the most provocative subjects in ancient demographics. The author established a list of 40 garrison settlements with the ratios of built-up to walled areas. Based on this list, the largest territory of an urban settlement from the Danubian provinces we can find in Aquincum, Carnuntum, Apulum, Singidunum, Viminacium, Brigetio, the major legionary fortresses and conurbations. Donev argued, that the model of the twin-towns – which persisted in the historiography for a long time – can be attested only in Pannonia and Dacia and it is completely missing in the two Moesiae. The author concludes the chapter with a complex, but hardly visible table on the distribution of settlements across size-categories (fig.IV. 19., 114.p.). From this we can read, that most of the settlements (70%) were small, less than 15 ha, however Donev mentions, that in many of the cases it was hard to estimate the size of the settlements and their territory. The most suggestive map of the book is the map IV.1. which shows the size of the cities (a similar map was reproduced ingeniously on the cover of the book): it shows clearly, that the largest urban systems and settlement concentrations were formed along the Danube, which represents the main communication road in this region of the Roman Empire. Vindobona, Carnuntum, Aquincum, Brigetio, Sirmium, Singidunum, Viminacium, Novae – and somehow, as exceptions – Poetovio, Sarmizegetusa and Apulum represents the major urban settlements. This reflects also the inseparable nature of urbanisation and militarisation, the formative role of the Roman army in the settlement-history of this region, a well-known and well documented fact in the old literature too.

The next chapter of the book presents the agricultural territories of the provinces. Donev here argues, that the land to population ratio was not always sensitive to the economic

profile of the settlements. He claims, that the good pedologic and climatic conditions allowed a great deal of flexibility in the settlement siting. In many cases however, his estimates are purely hypothetical and as in Dacia and some other provinces too, there are few studies focusing on the paleobotanical realities and the study of historical geography and historical flora.

An important contribution of the book is the 6th chapter, which presents the administrative territories of the urban systems. Donev here presents with vivid and well readable maps the epigraphic distributions around the cities, suggesting that the territorium of an urban settlement can be estimated based on the epigraphic material and the mobility of the urban staff. On his map focusing on the distribution of urban and non-urban sectors, Donev represented the large territories of urban areas, however in some parts (especially in the north of Porolissum and the Barbaricum between Pannonia and Dacia – the world of the Sarmatians) it is unsure, why large territories without any urban settlements identified are represented as “urban territoria” (map VI.82., 272. p.).

The volume of Damjan Donev ends with an exhaustive bibliography, which is certainly gives the most comprehensive bibliographic collection on urbanity, urbanism and settlement-history in the Danubian and Balkan provinces of the Roman Empire. He end his book with an appendix, serving with a comprehensive catalogue of towns and settlements, built-up area, agricultural and administrative territory.

The monograph of Damjan Donev is a product of an innovative, new methodological approach on Roman urbanity, which aimed to question the traditional approach on the settlement distribution, territorial analysis of urban systems in the last few years. His book deals with a territory, which is extremely heterogenous, fragmented not only in ancient times, but especially in contemporary historical and disciplinary context. Thus, his work is a provocative, but ungrateful task due to the complexity of the region and its historiography. Based on the rich material used in his sophisticated methodological approach, this book will remain an important contribution in the problematic and booming field of urban and spatial studies as well.

REFERENCES

ALFÖLDY 2004

ALFÖLDY, G., Die ‘illyrischen’ Provinzen Roms: von der Vielfalt zu der Einheit. In: Urso, G. (ed.), *Dall’Adriatico al Danubio. L’Illirico nell’età greca e romana. Atti del convegno internazionale Cividale del Friuli, 25-27 settembre 2003 (I Convegni della Fondazione Niccolò Canussio 3)* (Pisa: Edizioni Ets), 207-220.

DONEV 2016

DONEV, D., Were There Large Villages in the Balkan Provinces Under the High Empire? *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 1, 99-114.

DONEV 2020

Donev, D., The top-ranking towns in the Balkan and Pannonian provinces of the Roman Empire, *Arheološki vestnik* 71, 193-215.

HANSON 2016

Hanson, J. W., *An Urban Geography of the Roman World, 100 BC to AD 300* (Oxford: Archaeopress).

HOUTEN 2021

Houten, P., *Urbanisation in Roman Spain and Portugal: Civitates Hispaniae in the Early Empire* (London: Routledge).

LIGT et alii 2014

Ligt, de L./Houten, P./Willet, R., An empire of 2000 cities: urban networks and economic integration in the Roman empire, *Tijdschrift voor Mediterrane Archeologie* 52, 64-65.

PELLEGRINO 2020

Pellegrino, F., *The Urbanisation of the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire A Juridical and Functional Approach to Town Life in Roman Gaul, Germania Inferior and Britain* (Oxford: Archaeopress).

RAJA- SINDBÆK 2018

Raja, R. /Sindbæk, S. M. (eds.), *Urban Network Evolutions: Towards a high-definition archaeology* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press).

ROBINSON 2016

Robinson, Th.A., *Who Were the First Christians?: Dismantling the Urban Thesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

RÜPKE 2020

Rüpke, J., *Urban Religion: A Historical Approach to Urban Growth and Religious Change* (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter)

SZABÓ 2020

Szabó Cs., Danubian Provinces: History of a Notion, *Transilvania* 6, 88-96.

WOOLF 2020

Woolf, G., *The Life and Death of Ancient Cities: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).