

The Roman Colonial Coins as a Manifestation of Identity (235-275 AD).

The main objective of the project is to investigate the cultural situation of Roman colonies based on its local coinages in the declining stage of Roman provincial coinage. These centers founded in the distant lands of the Roman Empire shared common features. Their coins was one of such universal characteristic. Most of the coins were inscribed in Latin. Furthermore a few popular types were presented on their reverses. The founder with a plow and a pair of oxen signifies the official foundation of colony, while the legionary standards indicate on the military past of the colonists. The mentioned types supported by others (She-wolf, Marsyas) proofed the Roman nature of the colonies, which supposed to be the enclaves of the Roman culture. However while the colonies developed, strictly local motives were being introduced (myths, city gods and sanctuaries). This process intensified in 2nd Cent. and the eventual effect can be observed on the coins from mid 3rd Cent. when the provincial coins start to disappear. The coins with Roman and local themes were struck interchangeably or even simultaneously. The syncretic culture was a result of this process and was represented by the officials identifying themselves as the Romans and the locals. By analyzing the colonial coinage I am planning to examine if the coins from 3rd Cent. maintained the Roman features or if they abandoned it along with the progress of integration.

The main method used in the process of work will be an analysis of coins struck in Roman colonies in a period between 235 -275 AD, that is from the death of Alexander Sever and the crisis of power, till the dusk of colonial coinage under Aurelian (270-275 AD). A few stages of the analysis will regard the iconography, the legends and metrological data. I will try to determine if the colonial mints cooperated (die-sharing), or just worked in isolation. Furthermore the coins will be compared with other coins struck in provincial and imperial mints. Other iconographic sources will be also take in consideration. Another point will be an attempt to answer what could affect the choice of motives. Eventually an epigraphic analyze is necessary to conduct, due to fact that some 3rd Cent. coins were bilingual (Latin and Greek). Moreover some errors and mixing the Latin letters with the Greek substitutes are the indicators of die-cutters and minters culture. A database and a catalog containing all of the colonial coins of examined period, are planned to be created as a part of the work, which can be an useful tool for the researchers of 3rd Cent. crisis.

As soon as the general situation of colonial coinage will be presented, I will confront it with the processes of integration between the descendants of colonists and indigenou inhabitants. The ancient literary sources and archaeological founds will be also investigated. My research will be supported by the current assumptions in the field of anthropology and sociology.

Despite the fact that the Roman provincial coinage has become recently more popular among the scholars, the colonial coinage as a separate phenomenon is still left aside. Therefore the results of my research can reveal the new aspects of Roman colonial coinage struck in 3rd Cent. The coins can expose the process of integration in the dynamic period. The findings of archaeologists, historian, epigraphists and anthropologists can be complemented by my research. Eventually, I plan to take part in the discussion on the sophisticated issue of "Romanization" and the role of colonies in this process. Beyond doubt, one of the result of the project will be a new perspective of cultural processes in East part of Roman Empire in 3rd Cent.