

Cristian Gazdac (Cluj-Napoca)

General prototypes and specific iconography in the trajanic imperial ideology.

Trajan's Column versus numismatic programme

Trajan's Column is among the most well-known monuments of Antiquity. For generations, scholars were referring to this monument as a unique source, a fresco of Roman way to depict historical events – the Dacian wars; to illustrate military equipment at a certain moment; the image of “Dacian” as a barbarian; the imagery of Roman mentality as a world conqueror depicted on a triumphal monument.

Still, is this monument unique on all these aspects or it is unique through an excellent combination between historical sources and prototypes of an ideological program?

The presentation is bringing up a comparative approach between the Trajan's column and the numismatic imagery of the ideological program of the Roman propaganda machine.

The exceptional sculptural skill of those who have carved the column brought to the light, in fact, a long and well implemented imagery of the Roman imperial ideology of conquering.

And what else can be used as a witness to the development of imperial ideology than the coinage, this mass-media of the Roman Empire. The entire iconography of Roman imperial ideology can be tracked down from Augustus to the end of Roman monetary system.

Therefore, the Trajan's Column will be seen as a well thought mixture of historical narration of the Dacian wars with implementation of clearly marked themes of Imperial ideology that are also demonstrated by the monetary types going backwards and forwards from Trajan.

At the same time, the numismatic evidence will be used to analyze if, indeed, the coinage can support the idea of “Hadrian's Column of Trajan” as it has been suggested before (Amanda Claridge, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 6, 1993, 5–22).

Furthermore, based on such analyze of numismatic program and column - i.e. the numerous coin series with Trajan's column on the reverse - we can also forward the hypothesis that Marcus Aurelius was not finished during his lifetime as no such coin type was minted. And the variety of the numismatic imagery was still at its climax under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus for such an important monument to be missed from minting.