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## NUMISMATICS

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### WHY DID THEY NOT RECOVER THE HOARDS? INSECURITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**Abstract:** The phenomenon of coin hoarding in ancient Rome has been a subject of considerable scholarly interest. Various factors contributed to the inability of Romans to recover their buried hoards.

**Historical Context:** It is suggested that the practice of burying coins was not universally intended for recovery. Recent archaeological findings, such as the Frome hoard, indicate that many hoards were buried during periods of instability, leading to the assumption that recovery was not always feasible.

**Socioeconomic Factors:** The decline in population and economic turmoil during the later periods of the Roman Empire may have hindered recovery efforts. As communities faced invasions and internal strife, the original owners of the hoards may have perished or relocated, making recovery impossible.

**Archaeological Evidence:** Studies of hoard distributions indicate that many hoards were never recovered, as evidenced by the lack of subsequent finds in the vicinity of known hoard locations. This suggests that the original intent to recover was often thwarted by changing circumstances.

**Keywords:** *coin hoards, insecurity, military and civilian environments*

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#### INTRODUCTION: THE PARADOX OF BURIED WEALTH

For millennia, throughout various countries and cultures, humans have concealed their valuables—coins, gems, weapons, personal artefacts, and symbols of faith—by interring them in the ground. The archaeological record is abundant with such deposits: Roman coin hoards, Viking silver stashes, mediaeval ecclesiastical riches, contemporary warfare loot, and hidden financial holdings. What is remarkable is not only the prevalence of these acts of concealment but also the continual inability of original owners (or their heirs) to retrieve their hidden wealth. This paradox—valuables intentionally concealed yet ultimately unretrieved—resides at the confluence of archaeological evidence, historical narrative, psychology, and socio-political context.

#### THE ROMAN HOARDING PHENOMENON

Few periods are as prolific in archaeological hoards as Roman antiquity. Across the former Empire's expanse – Hispania, Britain, Gaul, the Balkans, the Near East, the North Africa – tens of thousands of coin hoards have been documented, frequently as assemblages of silver denarii, gold aurei, and mixed base-metal coinage. The Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire Project, for example, catalogues over seven million coins in more than 15,000 hoards,

attesting to the ubiquity and scale of this phenomenon (<http://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>).

There were various motivations for these burials:

- Safe storage amid uncertainty: Roman society endured recurrent waves of political turmoil—civil war, invasions, peasant uprisings, plagues. In such times, households, merchants, and military officials frequently resorted to burying portable wealth for protection.<sup>1</sup>
- Hedging against currency debasement: As the Empire's finances faltered, and as coinage debasement accelerated, individuals may have hoarded older, "pure" coins in preference to circulating debased issues.<sup>2</sup>
- Tax evasion and concealment: A practice that survived over time, the south-east Europe case is representative even nowadays in this aspect [sic!]. Roman fiscal systems were notoriously burdensome, especially under emperors like Diocletian.<sup>3</sup>
- Votive offerings: In some instances, what may appear as "hoards" in the archaeological sense were in fact votive offerings, sacrificed for divine favour or as part of funerary ritual, especially when found in or near temples or sanctuaries.<sup>4</sup>

These caches range from modest stashes buried in purses, to urns filled with thousands of coins, to mixed deposits of coins, jewellery, and vessels. A substantial number were clearly intended for later recovery: pots hidden under hearths, chests secreted in house walls, even coins wrapped in waxed cloth or leather pouches.

The general pattern when analysing the hoarding phenomenon was to focus on the reason for the *deposition* of coin hoards.<sup>5</sup> P. Guest pointed out a new trend in the coin hoard study, connecting hoards with monetary history<sup>6</sup> and mentioning an inherent conservatism in numismatics.<sup>7</sup> On the same line, S. Estiot remarked on the continuing split between those who see hoards as markers of insecurity and those who study them in relation to monetisation in more general terms.<sup>8</sup> In discussing the third-century crisis, S. Estiot remarks on the need to escape the dominant 'tyranny of the terminus' through archaeological approaches.<sup>9</sup>

The multiple aspects that are nowadays parts of an approach on the hoard study are well-defined by P. Guest: "The contents of coin hoards and the observable similarities or differences between their internal compositions are likely to be crucial in leading to a better understanding of the hoarding phenomenon in the Roman period, though there are also other areas where knowledge could be improved. These include a greater awareness of the context

of deposition – archaeological and topographic as well as historical – which could provide useful information regarding the circumstances of a hoard's burial and non-retrieval. This means looking not just at the vessels in which the coins might have been contained but, in cases where hoards are discovered in settlements, whether they are found inside or outside buildings, if they are found close to doorways, on top of or under floors and surfaces, or in the fills of external features such as ditches and pits."<sup>10</sup>

All the above-mentioned features may indicate economic, financial/monetisation, social, ritualic and insecurity that lead to accumulation and burial of hoards. These aspects were the topic of essential research questions.<sup>11</sup>

### **However, there is one aspect that was not clearly answered: why the hoards were not recovered?**

Certainly, there are hoards that were buried in purpose not to be recovered, such as votive (temple, funeral environments, spring, lakes, rivers), construction offering, or savings (large hoards with internal stratigraphy) or accidental losses (money purse, small number of coins of low value).

There is a large number of hoards, which by context/circumstances of discovery, by quantity (not too large for saving deposit, not too small for accidental loss), the presence of a container indicate that the burial was supposed to be just temporarily. The fact that they were not recovered indicate a tragical situation.

Back in 1900, A. Blanchet compiled approximately 880 finds ("trouvailles") of Roman coin hoards from Gaul, grouped by region and by chronological periods, in order to map patterns of when and where people buried coin hoards. He posits that peaks in hoard depositions correspond to periods of Germanic invasions or incursions into Gaul, and more broadly to times of instability.<sup>12</sup>

On the same line, M. Crawford proposes that the deposition of coin hoards in Italy correlates with periods of internal violence (civil wars, social unrest) during the Late Republic. The logic is: people bury money in times of fear (violence, instability) to protect assets; when things calm, buried hoards are more likely to remain hidden/lost/undiscovered. Crawford finds a reasonably good correlation: periods like the Social War, the civil wars (Marius vs Sulla, later Caesar, etc.) do show increases in hoard depositions. Thus, hoards as a material category can act as a proxy for instability, fear, and internal conflict.<sup>13</sup>

Crawford's method to organize the hoards per periods was applied also for the Roman imperial period in the case of coin hoards from the Middle and Lower Danube. One can notice the concordance between the increase of hoards-finds in the period of violence for each from the provinces from that region.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> HARL 1996, 12-18; HOBBS 2003, 32-44; ABDY 2002, 7-15.

<sup>2</sup> TEMIN 2013, pp. 33, 142; CREIGHTON 2014; HOWGEGO/WILSON 2022, 9-13.

<sup>3</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 7.3-12, 23, 26.2; JONES 1964, 61-68, 130-132; CORBIER 2008, 360-386.

<sup>4</sup> BLAND *et alii* 2020, 56-60; HENRY/MOORHEAD 2022, 214.

<sup>5</sup> NAYLOR/BAND 2015.

<sup>6</sup> GUEST 2008.

<sup>7</sup> GUEST 2015, 105.

<sup>8</sup> ESTIOT 2009, 157.

<sup>9</sup> ESTIOT 2009, 166.

<sup>10</sup> GUEST 2015, 112.

<sup>11</sup> BLAND *et alii* 2020, 5-6.

<sup>12</sup> BLANCHET 1900.

<sup>13</sup> CRAWFORD 1969, 76-81.

<sup>14</sup> GĂZDAC 2010, 195-196.

## METHODOLOGY

Until a decade ago, the research on hoards has been limited by the access to the publications, which in most of the cases, were restricted to a certain territory. At the same time, the large territory and the long duration of the Roman Empire presented challenges for establishing general and specific patterns of coin hoarding.

In his subchapter, "Future challenges", P. Guest has identified "two major obstacles to a more objective and reliable understanding of coin hoarding in the Roman world. The first concerns the point made earlier that Roman coins are perceived invariably as money, that hoards therefore represent stores of monetary wealth, and that hoarders must have intended to recover this wealth at a later date (i.e. the 'emergency' model). The second problem is how coins and coin hoards are dated."<sup>15</sup>

Nowadays, large databases doubled by a broad diversity of filters can clearly reveal a large palette of general and specific patterns of the hoarding process of the Roman imperial coinage, both within the Empire's borders and beyond.

The project run by the Ashmolean Museum and the Oxford Roman Economy Project, University of Oxford – Coin Hoards of Roman Empire (CHRE) – (<http://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>), together with a continually growing network of collaborators, has created the largest database of coin hoards of the Roman Empire. It has recently reached a milestone of over 18,200 entries, comprising more than 7,500,000 coins.

With 41 filters that can be use either one at a time, or as many as you want simultaneously, the CHRE application is a very powerful tool to search for various aspects that the Roman imperial hoards may reveal both within and beyond the frontiers of the Empire.

For the topic of this paper, we selected the hoards containing over 100 coins and up to 10,000. The reason was to avoid those hoards that were not intended to be recovered, such as daily loss, votive and construction offerings, or big savings accumulations. At the same time, following the strong increase of coin debasement after the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, the chronological segment was limited to the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Regarding, the geographic area of research was limited to the territory of the Roman Empire within the same chronological segment. Methodologically, this option was chosen as the hoarding phenomenon on various territories outside the Roman Empire may encounters different reasons for hoarding and non-recovery causes.<sup>16</sup>

## CASE STUDIES

### Kalkriese

To test the utility of such an application we should start with a certain case where we know the hoards were not recovered because of a violent event: the well-known episode of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (Germany) in AD 9. An

episode that is well documented by multiple categories of sources: literary,<sup>17</sup> archaeological,<sup>18</sup> numismatic.<sup>19</sup>

The CHRE filters were set for the terminal years of hoards (based on latest coins) to the chronological segment of AD 2-14 (not AD 9 because some hoards may not be available for a precise coin data level, so we used the last year of Augustus), the data type: Hoard, the country (for the area) Germany and the number of coins to 2-100,000 (in this case we lowered the number of coins as we expected that the soldiers may have hoarded/saved/carry on them less than 100 coins).

The distribution map reveals 22 hoards of which 8 were located at Kalkriese – the main place of the battle in AD 9 (map 1).

Furthermore, if we consider the site of Haltern am See as the ancient fort of *Aliso* (Berke 2014) – where, according to Velleius Paterculus it was the last point of resistance of the Roman troops against the Germanic tribes<sup>20</sup> –, the only three hoards found here (map 1), within the area of the fort, then we have quite a clear picture on the reason for non-recovery of these hoards.

### Period of AD 20-60

According to CHRE, the mapping of coin hoards ending with coins within the chronological segment of AD 20-60 reveals a very distinctive concentration area: central-south-east region of Britain (map 2a).

The large presence of the Roman coinage in Late Iron Age/pre-Roman Britain (pre-43 AD) has multiple explanations: trade and exchange; subsidies/diplomacy; prestige/symbolic use; ritualic purpose.

Long before Rome invaded Britain, there was active trade and diplomatic contact between southern Britain and the Roman world – especially northern Gaul (modern France/Belgium). Large numbers of Republican denarii (2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> c. BC) and early imperial coins (Augustan–Tiberian) found at southern coastal sites such as Hengistbury Head, Richborough, and Canterbury.<sup>21</sup>

B. Cunliffe presents a detailed discussion of pre-conquest trade networks between southern Britain and northern Gaul; identifies coin influx through commerce and political gifts.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, C. Haselgrove traces continental influence on British coinage and the early importation of Roman coins as bullion and prestige objects,<sup>23</sup> while R.D. van Arsdell demonstrates a steady flow of Roman coins via trade and diplomacy.<sup>24</sup>

After Julius Caesar's expeditions to Britain (55–54 BC), Rome maintained diplomatic relationships with some southeastern British rulers. Caesar himself records that

<sup>17</sup> Velleius Paterculus, 2.117.1-2.120.6.

<sup>18</sup> SCHLÜTER/WIEGELS 1999.

<sup>19</sup> BERGER 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Velleius Paterculus, 2.120.4.

<sup>21</sup> CREIGHTON 1992; REECE 1968, 200-216; BRIGGS/HASELGROVE/KING 1992, 1-62.

<sup>22</sup> CUNLIFFE 2005, 505-514.

<sup>23</sup> HASELGROVE 1987.

<sup>24</sup> VAN ARSDELL 1989.

<sup>15</sup> GUEST 2015, 110.

<sup>16</sup> BURSCHE 2008.



Map 1. The distribution of hoards in CHRE, pointing out the area of Kalkriese (<https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>).



a



b

Map 2. The distribution of hoards: AD 20-60 (a); AD 70-90 (b) (<https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>).

he received hostages and tribute from British kings like Cassivellaunus and the Trinovantes.<sup>25</sup> In later decades, Rome likely sent coins and luxury goods to friendly rulers as gifts or payments – similar to the subsidies given to allied Gallic or Germanic chiefs.<sup>26</sup>

The ritualic purpose of hoarding it is a long-term debated aspect<sup>27</sup> including the presence of Roman coins in hoards placed in sacred contexts.<sup>28</sup>

It is clear that before the conquest of Britain, there was already a large presence of Roman coinage that was hoarded for various purposes

Returning to the hoards' distribution maps, again, as we have eliminated those hoards that were not intended to be recovered. Therefore, these maps may suggest an insecurity situation (or more) at a large scale.

The 1<sup>st</sup> century AD in Britain, is a period of time known for conflicts. The end of the first century BC and the beginning of the next one saw major tribal warfare, the Catuvellaunian expansion on the Trinovantes, followed by a dynastic violence within Cunobelinus's house.<sup>29</sup> Geographically, these internal conflicts occurred on the southern and east parts of Britain (map 3).

In AD 43, the Roman invasion of Britain took place, and, gradually, the Roman army conquest England and Wales.<sup>30</sup>

Then, in AD 60-61, the Boudican revolt swept the southeastern areas of Britain.<sup>31</sup> The violence scale of this event is testified by the destruction of important Roman towns such as *Camulodunum* (Colchester), *Lodinium* (London) and *Verulamium* (southwest of the modern city of St. Albans).<sup>32</sup>

According to the CHRE application the concentration of the selected 'British' hoards with the latest coins minted between AD 20 and 60 corresponds with the area where all the above-mentioned events took place (map 2a). At this point, three aspects must be taken into account: historical, geographical and numismatic. These episodes of large-scale state of insecurity occurred at circa 20 years distance and took place on the same geographic area. On the other hand, the latest coins of the hoards may offer a *terminus post quem* from the date of minting. All these aspects imply that we cannot say for certain which of the hoards may not have been recovered because of the internal tribal conflicts, the Roman invasion of AD 43 or the Boudican revolt of AD 60-61.

Certainly, one may say that the tribal warfare and the Boudica event took place mainly in the southeastern part of Britain, the territories of the Iceni and the Trinovates (map 3), while the Roman invasion targeted the southern coastland and the inland. An indirect argument for such a

hypothesis may be the statute of 'Roman friendly territories' in the pre-Boudica (the Iceni, the Regni tribes).<sup>33</sup>

Whatever the reason for non-recovery of these hoards were, methodologically, another aspect that the CHRE application reveals clearly indicate that the concentration of hoards discussed above was caused by a large-scale insecurity situation(s). Using the same filters provided by CHRE, but modifying the chronological segment to hoards ending with coins minted in the period of AD 70-90, the result indicates a situation in a stark contrast with the previous period of insecurity in Britain. The hoards are almost missing (map 2b).

On the other hand, the map of hoards distribution for coins minted between AD 70-90 revealed a strong concentration zone around...Mount Vesuvius. Thus, another major insecurity moment, this time caused by a natural disaster – the eruption of AD 79 – is reflected by the non-recovery of hoards (map 2b).

### The Dacian Wars

The Dacian Wars were among the fiercest and bloodiest conflicts fought by the Roman Empire during its imperial height. Both sides were well-organized, determined, and resourceful, which made the wars exceptionally hard-fought and memorable even by Roman standards. According to Dio, it was "the most important war the Romans have waged so far".<sup>34</sup>

Following the ancient authors, the military manpower involved on both sides was massive. From the first Roman expeditions in Dacia under Domitian (AD 85-87) to Trajan (AD 101-102, 105-106) tens of thousands of soldiers were involved. Trajan's army may have numbered over 150,000 men, including auxiliary troops and engineers. The fighting was intense and prolonged, with sieges, scorched-earth tactics, and close combat. Both sides suffered enormous casualties –entire Roman legions took heavy losses, and the Dacian population was devastated by the end.<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, we can agree that the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD was a period of strong insecurity at the Lower Danube, where the military operations took place (Dacia, nowadays Romania).

*Is this period of insecurity reflected by a certain concentration of hoard-finds?*

The CHRE application may have the answer!

Methodologically, in order to map the distribution of hoards the filters were set as: terminal years: 80-102 (the limit AD 102 was chosen as the CHRE use the Roman Imperial Coins catalogue dating, thus, the next chronological segment for Trajan's coins will be AD 103-111, the 5<sup>th</sup> consulate, which give a false picture for our target period); the other two filters, the data type and the number of coins

<sup>25</sup> Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* V.12–14, V.21–22.

<sup>26</sup> Strabo, *Geography* 4.5.2.

<sup>27</sup> HILL 1995.

<sup>28</sup> KING 2008, 61-68; BLAND 2020, 129-131.

<sup>29</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11-12; Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Caligula*, 44.2.

<sup>30</sup> Dio Cassius, 60.19-22; FRERE/FULFORD 2001, 45-55 with further bibliography.

<sup>31</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, 14.31-37.

<sup>32</sup> Tacitus, *Annales*, 14.31-32; 14.32-33; HINGLEY/UNWIN 2006, p49-50, 63, 67, 70 – with doubts whether *Verulamium* was destroyed during the events of AD 60-61 or by the fire of AD 80.

<sup>33</sup> CUNLIFFE 2024, 159-160, figure 61; HINGLEY/UNWIN 2006, 19 and figure 11.

<sup>34</sup> Dio Cassius, 67.6.1-6.

<sup>35</sup> Dio Cassius, 67-68; BENNETT 1997, 87-105; STROBEL 2010, 242-269; SCHMITZ 2019, 78-84, 89-105.



Map 3. The tribes of pre-Roman Britain  
 (based on: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Britain.south.peoples.Ptolemy.jpg>).

remained the same as in the case of the other military events – the Teotoburgium Forest.

The CHRE database provided for this period of AD 80-102 a number 215 hoards. A short look at the area of the Lower Danube shows a distinctive concentration of hoards near the Danube and around the mountainous area of the Dacian capital Sarmizegetusa (map 4a). An interesting aspect is the number of hoards found near the Danube but in the province of Lower Moesia.

Again, the hoarding process may have been caused by the economic/monetization reasons but why where not these hoards recovered and concentrate on a distinctive area? Another insecurity moment(s)?

In AD 85, this province was heavenly devastated by the Dacians which led to the first Roman expedition in Dacia.<sup>36</sup> In the winter of AD 101-102, in order to force a Roman withdrawal from Dacia of Trajan's army, or at least a part of it, the Dacians crossed the Danube and attacked the Roman forts in the province of Lower Moesia.<sup>37</sup>

### The Carpic and the Gothic Wars (AD 245-251)

The two events are probably two of the most known major violent events known in the history of the Roman Empire at the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

For this study, the two events were analysed together as it is difficult to distinguish between the hoards non-recovery because of the Carpic war or because of the events which took place under the reign of Trajan Decius.

The massive attacks of the Carpic tribes in AD 245-247 have been described as one with a big impact on the provinces on the Lower Danube.<sup>38</sup> In AD 247 the emperor took part in this difficult war against the Carpi.<sup>39</sup> This war seems to have been over by the end of AD 247 – beginning of 248, when the emperor received the title *Carpicus Maximus*.<sup>40</sup>

In AD 250/251 the large invasion of Goths in Moesia Inferior took place,<sup>41</sup> in which the Carpi were also involved.<sup>42</sup> The huge quantity of hoards ending with coins of Trajan Decius has even made some authors to try to establish putative itineraries of the Goths' movements.<sup>43</sup>

In order to see whether the hoard distribution may reflect or not the level of these large-scale insecurity events in the Balkans in comparison to the rest of the Roman Empire, the terminal year for hoards were set in CHRE application to AD 239-250 – not to interfere with hoards that may have include the latest coin before AD 238 or to have the coins of Trebonianus Gallus (AD 251-253) because of the overlapping last/first years of reign.

<sup>36</sup> SCHMITZ 2019, 79.

<sup>37</sup> STROBEL 2010, 247-248; SCHMITZ 2019, 99-100.

<sup>38</sup> *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani*, 2, 657; LORIOT 1975, 793.

<sup>39</sup> Zosimos I, 20, 2-3; MÓCSY 1974, 203; PISO 1974, 306; GÁZDAC 2010, 193-197; GÁZDAC 2012, 175; VARBANOV 2017, 230-267.

<sup>40</sup> KIENAST 1996, 198.

<sup>41</sup> GEROV 1977, 133; GEROV 1980, 96; VARBANOV 2017, 268-304; GÁZDAC 2012, 175; VARBANOV 2020, 268-304.

<sup>42</sup> Lactantius, 4,3; Iordanes, 91.

<sup>43</sup> GEROV 1977, 134; GEROV 1980, 111-112.

The resulted map of hoards' distribution in CHRE indicate without doubts that the Carpic and Gothic wars in the Balkans were the main reason for the non-recovery of hoards (map 4b).

### The chaos (AD 251-270)

The Roman Empire was in the midst of one of its most chaotic and dangerous periods – part of what historians call the Crisis of the Third Century (AD 235-284).<sup>44</sup> This specific span saw widespread raids and invasions by multiple external enemies, internal revolts, and breakaway states.

Germanic Invasions took place on the Rhine and the Danube frontiers. Between circa AD 250 to AD 260. Franks raided deep into Gaul and even reached Spain. Alamanni and Juthungi invaded Raetia and northern Italy.<sup>45</sup> At the battle of Lake Benacus, in AD 268, the Roman forces defeated a major Alamannic invasion of Italy.<sup>46</sup>

The territory of Pannonia became a troubled province on the Middle Danube with a frequent series of external raids by Suebi and Sarmatians<sup>47</sup> and which culminated in the war of AD 258-260 against the barbarians.<sup>48</sup> Aside from these attacks, Gallienus had to fight the usurpers Ingenuus<sup>49</sup> and Regalianus,<sup>50</sup> proclaimed emperors by the Moesian and Pannonian troops.<sup>51</sup>

In the Balkans the Gothic raids continued affecting the areas of Moesia, Thrace, Greece, Asia Minor, and the Aegean. Large naval raids took place across the Black Sea struck Byzantium, Cyprus, Ephesus, and Trapezus (Trebizond). Temples and cities along the coast were looted and burned.<sup>52</sup>

In AD 267-268, a massive Gothic invasion through the Aegean led to sacking of cities like Athens, Corinth, Sparta, and Argos. The Athenian historian Dexippus led local resistance and reportedly defeated a Gothic force near Athens.<sup>53</sup>

The battle of Naissus in AD 268/269 marked the one of the most decisive Roman victories of the century against the Goths.<sup>54</sup>

All these events must have left a mark on the burial/hiding but especially on the non-recovery of hoards. The CHRE application reveals a horizon of 940 hoards ending with the latest coins minted between AD 253 and AD 268. Their distribution and concentration areas coincide with the main regions where all the above-mentioned major insecurity events took place: the north-west and west of Gaul, Pannonia, Balkans, the west coast of Asia Minor (map 5).

<sup>44</sup> HEKSTER/DE KLEIJN/SLOOTJES 2007; KLAUS-PETER/HARTMANN/GERHARDT 2014.

<sup>45</sup> DRINKWATER 2007, 53-79.

<sup>46</sup> WATSON 1999, 43.

<sup>47</sup> Eutropius IX, 8,2; SHA, *Triginta Tyranni*, 10, 1.

<sup>48</sup> MÓCSY 1974, 209.

<sup>49</sup> SHA, *Triginta Tyranni*, 10,1; Aurelius Victor, 33,2.

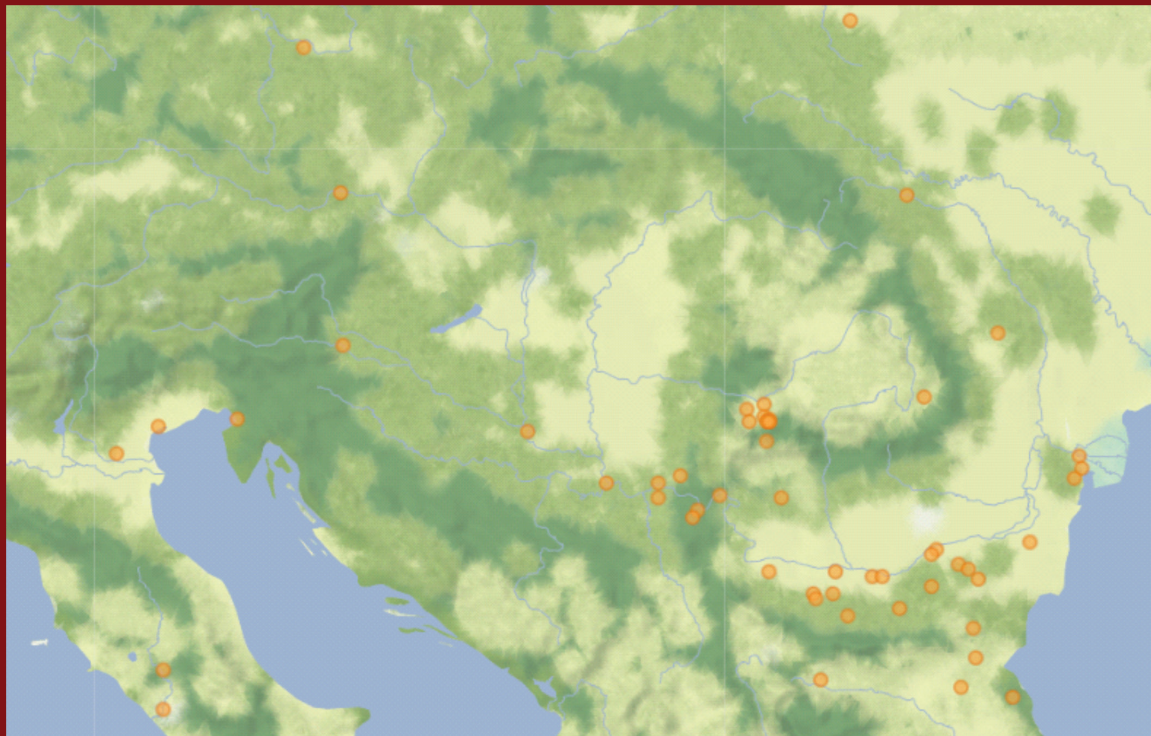
<sup>50</sup> SHA, *Triginta Tyranni*, 9; Aurelius Victor, 33,2.

<sup>51</sup> MÓCSY 1974, 206.

<sup>52</sup> STOEV 2020.

<sup>53</sup> MALLAN/DAVENPORT 2015, 203-226.

<sup>54</sup> Zosimus 1,42.

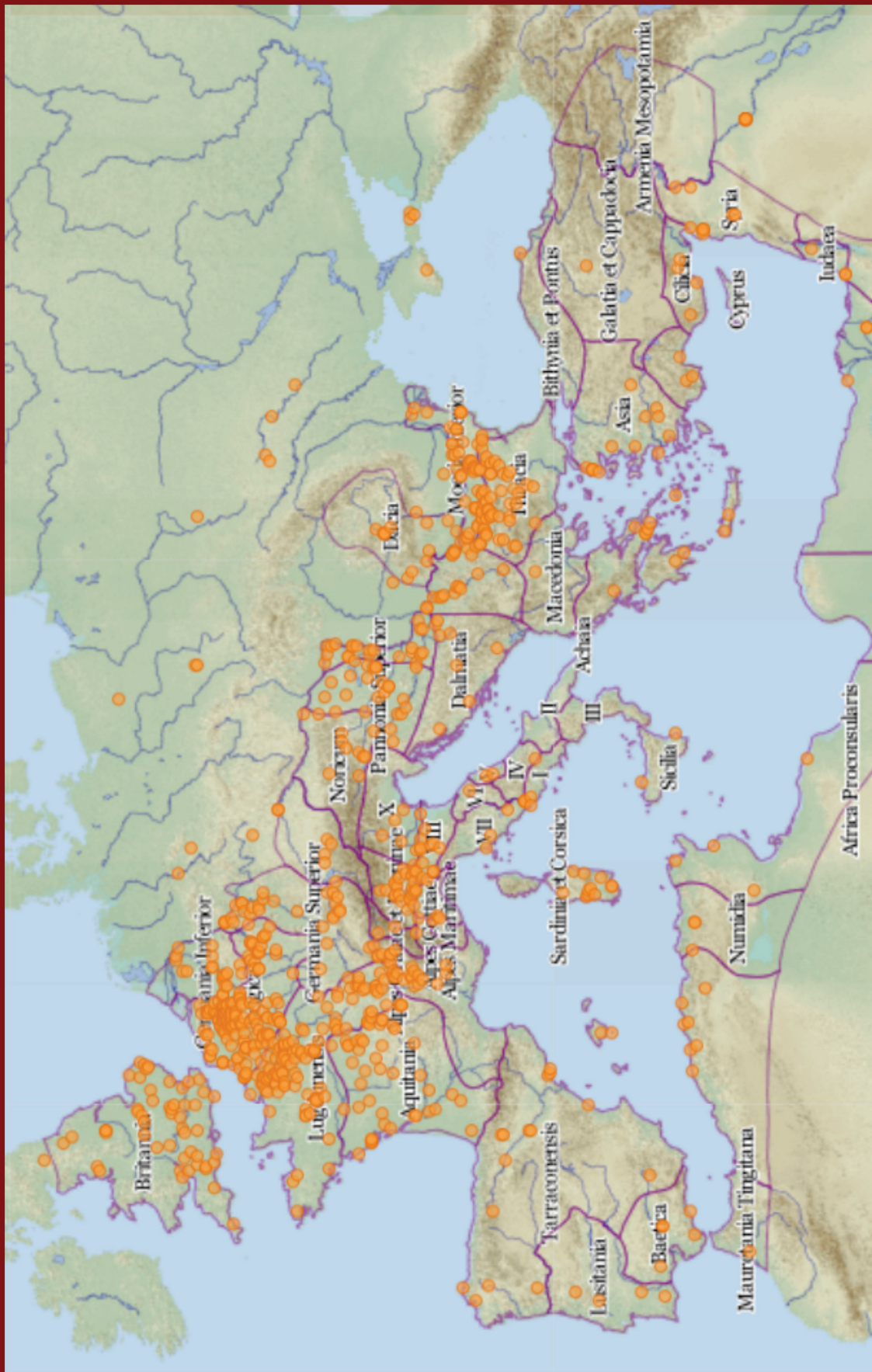


a



b

Map 4. The distribution of hoards: AD 80-102, the area of the Lower Danube (a); AD 238-251 (b) (<https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>).



Map 5. The distribution of hoards: AD 251-270 (<https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>).

## CONCLUSIONS

The possibility to use CHRE application – a huge database of Roman hoards that covers large chronological segment(s) and geographic area(s) and, complementary, a large variety of filters, may allow to identify patterns of the hoarding phenomenon within and beyond the Roman frontiers.

The case studies presented here indicate – via CHRE – that the reason for the non-recovery of hoards were major insecurity events, invasions/wars. This pattern of hoarding is reflected by a strong concentration of hoards on a certain the geographic area at a specific chronological segment, usually confirmed by ancient literary and epigraphic sources and archaeological layers of destruction/fire.

Again, when discussing the hoarding phenomenon, one should consider the two different aspects:

1. the reason for burial/conceiving/hiding;
2. the reason of non- recovery.

The first aspect involves causes such as economic, safekeeping, emergency, ritual ones.

The second one indicate an insecurity state of facts at a collective or individual level. Beside collective episodes of violence (wars, invasions), individual mortality, displacement, memory lapses, environmental transformation also destroyed the possibility of retrieval.

Roman hoards thus reflect not only episodes of instability but also enduring human vulnerabilities. They remain in the ground as archaeological witnesses to the crises of the Empire and the frailty of human planning.

Ultimately, archaeologists and historians must draw on a tapestry of clues – material, textual, and circumstantial – to reconstruct both motivations for burial and the circumstances of non-recovery.

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