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**CONTEXT AND TIME.  
INFLOW AND LONGEVITY OF USE OF ROMAN  
COINS IN THE SETTLEMENTS  
OF THE PRZEWORSK CULTURE\***

**ABSTRACT:** An important element of a comprehensive study of Roman coin finds in the settlement environment of the Przeworsk culture was to determine the time of their influx and functioning within this type of site. The analyses carried out, based on a variety of considerations, indicated complex dynamics in the use of this category of imports and the possible chronological sequences in which they may have been used. At the same time, the main circulation areas of coins within the habitats and the significant correlation between the time of their influx and use and other Roman imports, which largely operated simultaneously here, were identified.

**ABSTRAKT:** Istotnym elementem kompleksowych badań nad znaleziskami monet rzymskich w osadniczym środowisku kultury przeworskiej, było określenie czasu ich napływu i funkcjonowania w obrębie tego typu stanowisk. Przeprowadzone analizy, opierające się na różnorodnych przesłankach, wskazały złożoną dynamikę w użytkowaniu tej kategorii importów oraz możliwe sekwencje chronologiczne, w których mogły być wykorzystywane. Wskazano równocześnie główne strefy cyrkulacji monet w obrębie siedlisk i znaczącą korelację pomiędzy czasem ich napływu i użytkowania oraz innych rzymskich importów, które w dużym stopniu funkcjonowały tu jednocześnie.

**KEYWORDS:** barbarian communities, Roman imports, Roman coin finds, use of Roman coins, archaeological context, cultural interactions

\* The article is based on the results of research conducted as part of the author's doctoral dissertation entitled *Finds of Roman coins from the settlements of the Przeworsk culture*, prepared under the supervision of Prof. Aleksander Bursche, defended at the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw in November 2023 (Romanowski 2023, work available at the Institutional Repository of the University of Warsaw, <https://repozytorium.uw.edu.pl/handle/item/4765>, accessed 12.11.2024). Due to the time frame related to the preparation of the dissertation, the material included in this work take into account finds registered until the end of 2018.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: społeczności barbarzyńskie, importy rzymskie, znaleziska monet rzymskich, użytkowanie monet rzymskich, kontekst archeologiczny, interakcje kulturowe

Finds of Roman coins, which are extremely numerous in Poland and more broadly in the Central European *Barbaricum*, are recorded in contexts reflecting various forms of human activity in the past.<sup>1</sup> Archaeological contexts or their absence determine the categories of finds that we operate by systematizing materials from a given territory.<sup>2</sup> This applies not only to the times of their direct inflow, i.e. the late pre-Roman period or the Roman period, but also indicates the possibility of coins functioning in later periods.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it can inform us about the durability of the use of the material we are interested in, as well as the possible variability of its use. Observing archaeological contexts allows for the study of the diversity of coin functions and processes to which they were subject due to the diverse activity of individual communities, as well as more broadly in intercultural relations.<sup>4</sup>

One of the basic categories of coin finds, determined by the archaeological context, are settlement finds, understood here as coins registered in the area of defined settlement – residential or production sites. The occurrence of monetary finds of this type is documented by inventory statements or the monographs of individual sites of this type. Settlement finds appear as a particularly interesting group of monuments, allowing for observations in the spheres of everyday life (in the “living culture”), and thus giving the opportunity to recreate the actual circulation and function of the coin among the studied communities. Of course, some aspects of everyday life intertwine with the symbolic and magical sphere, but in essence, such research material gives the opportunity to observe the most lively aspect of the use of money. This is particularly important from the perspective of the numerous conditions that affect the selection of objects that shape “dead culture.” At the same time, not only the passive role of coins in the barbarian environment is important, but also their possible active impact on users’s behavior, in contact with a culturally foreign object with a unique specificity among imports.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is the largest group of Roman imports. Approximately 140,000 Roman denarii from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century are recorded in the territory of the northern and central European *Barbaricum* (Bursche 2002, p. 121).

<sup>2</sup> Single finds, group finds, hoards, from cemeteries, graves, settlements (among others Tabaczyński 1959, pp. 41–47; Grierson 1975, pp. 124–139; Suchodolski 2012, pp. 260–271).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. in medieval and modern contexts.

<sup>4</sup> Also in the broad sense of the context in relation to the coin (*spatial context*): Collis 1974; Kemmers 2009, pp. 140–141; Wigg-Wolf 2009, p. 109; Kemmers, Myrberg 2011, pp. 89–91; Krmnicek 2023, pp. 4–8.

<sup>5</sup> This should be seen in the broader perspective of the issue of the biography of things and their agency in the multifaceted impact of man on the object and object on man (on this subject widely, among others Domańska 2008, pp. 34–36; Kobiąka 2008, pp. 227ff.; Kemmers, Myrberg 2011, pp. 87ff.; Marciniak, Chwieduk 2012, pp. 568–569, there is also further literature); Krmnicek 2023, pp. 4–8.

Coins collected in hoards or deposited in cemeteries and graves are characterized by a highly selective choice, resulting from the special nature of these finds, which is not always perceptible to researchers.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the material not subject to these special circumstances is of exceptional research importance.

#### TERRITORIAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL SCOPE

The subject of observation were the finds of Roman coins from settlements, registered in areas inhabited by the population of the Przeworsk culture, which played an extremely important role in shaping the cultural image of the Central European *Barbaricum* in the late Iron Age. The peoples identified with the Lugii and Vandals occupied in various chronological sections most of the territory of today's Poland (except for Pomerania and Masuria), partially expanding to neighboring lands. This formation developed at the beginning of the late pre-Roman period around 180 BC<sup>7</sup> and functioned for more than six centuries until the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>8</sup>

The territorial scope was determined on the basis of two criteria: geographical and cultural. The boundaries of the study areas were determined by rivers and other permanent geographical objects, also taking into account the cultural nature of this area and the extent of the compact settlement of Przeworsk culture. Population movements and the time of settlement of individual regions were also important here. After adopting these geographical parameters, the analysis of the research material was carried out within five regions: Greater Poland, right-bank Mazovia with Podlachia and the Lublin Province, western Mazovia, Silesia and Lesser Poland (Fig. 1).

The time frame of the study is determined by the date of the inflow of coins to these areas. Taking as a basis the dating of the found coins and known archaeological contexts, we can determine the chronological scope of the presented research on phases from A<sub>2</sub> of the late pre-Roman period (approx. 120 BC), to the D<sub>1</sub> phase of the Migration Period (360/370–ca. 450).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the analysis of the collected material covered over 500 years of the presence of Przeworsk culture in the discussed areas. Coins found in such dated contexts with extremely marked issuance dates are – the oldest, republican denarius C. Thalny from 154 BC and the youngest – AE 3 of Valentinian I from 364–375.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Bursche 2008, pp. 403–407; Kontny 2008, p. 107 (in relation to the burials of Przeworsk culture).

<sup>7</sup> Such dating is proposed by Michał Grygiel (2004, pp. 57ff., tables I, II, pp. 81, 82). Phase LTC1b (ca. 180/170 BC); Dąbrowska 1988, p. 225.

<sup>8</sup> Mączyńska 2020, pp. 451, 453, 461, 466.

<sup>9</sup> Chronological references are based on the classification and terminology of K. Godłowski (1970; Godłowski 1974; Godłowski 1985; Godłowski 1988).

<sup>10</sup> From the town of Karsy Małe, Pacanów Commune, Busko District, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship and Zagórzycze (II), Kazimierza Wielka Commune, Kazimierza District, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.



Fig. 1. The territorial scope of the study and its internal regional division. Prepared by A. Romanowski

## MATERIAL BASE

The research material was registered at 131 settlement sites, of which 631 coins are attainable. However, considering the number of coins restored on the basis of information that also take into account the material that is unattainable today, this number can be increased to 1,058 coins and more. Regardless, only attainable material was considered in the analyses, with possible reservations resulting also from historical data. Among the registered material, 96 coins from 40 sites belong to high informational value finds (Group I), 78 coins from 33 sites belong to medium informational value finds (Group II), and 457 coins from 86 sites were assigned to low informational value finds (Group III).<sup>11</sup> This means that 15.2% of the coins were taken in a strict archae-

<sup>11</sup> In terms of the cognitive value of the interpretation levels of the finds, see: Wielowiejski 1980, pp. 7–8; Romanowski 2011 (2012), pp. 82ff.; Romanowski 2023, pp. 27–29.

ological context within the settlement, 12.3% of the coins were loosely deposited in cultural layers outside the captured objects, and 72.5% of the coins came from the top soil layer from the settlement area. As it is clear from this, the material from the finds of group III is the most numerous, while in the other two groups the material is present to a comparable extent (Fig. 2).

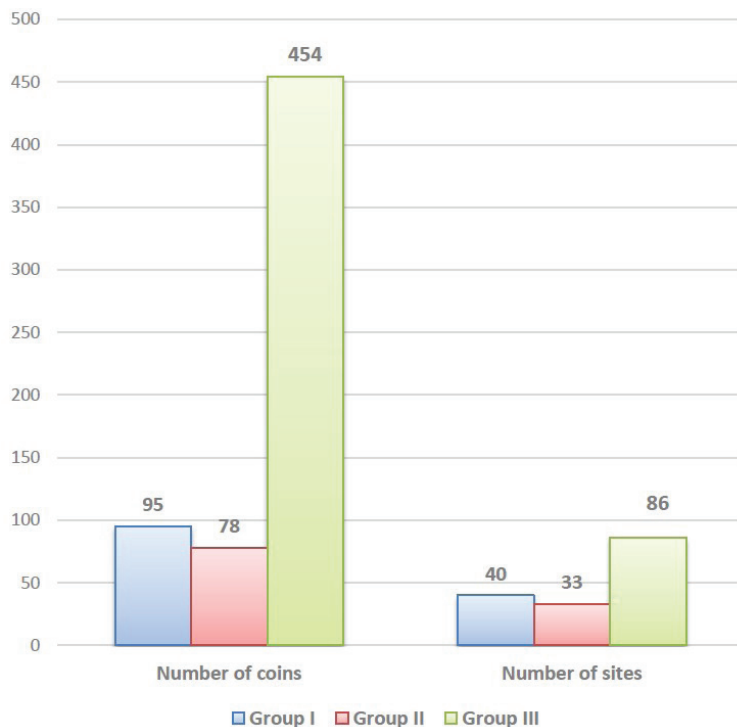


Fig. 2. Number of coins and sites classified into interpretation groups. Prepared by A. Romanowski

## METHODOLOGY

One of the key elements of the research was the analysis of direct archaeological contexts for the found coins and co-occurring portable artefacts, including other industrial imports. Strict determination of the context and determination of the chronology of the object not only gives us the opportunity to infer the function of coins, but also to establish the time of their use within the settlement. At this point, other important issues should also be pointed out, which are necessary to assess the length of use of Roman money within settlements. In a broader perspective, this also applies to other types of archaeological site.

The duration of the coin's operation is often difficult to determine, due to insufficient documentation or the non-obvious stratigraphy of sites. However, observations of a different kind can be used here, one of which is the interpretation of the coin's function, which determines its dynamic and static use. This leads to a certain variation within the total time of its functioning in the "living culture." From this perspective, the dynamic use of the coin is related to its movement – e.g. using it as an object of exchange, means of payment or as a pendant. On the other hand, the time of its static use, limiting the possibility of mobile use, may be a consequence of depositing it in a hoard or using it as a ritual offering. Although the coins are still in use in both cases, the important thing is the change the way they are used, which significantly affects the total longevity of their functioning. Depositing a coin did not have to terminate its relationship with an individual dispenser or community until the physical or emotional (cultural) relationship of the owner or his heirs with the deposit ceased.<sup>12</sup> The cessation of such a relationship could have been caused by various circumstances, therefore the deposit, which was often temporary, became the final place where a coin or other artefact was placed. However, such deposits could also be taken and reused dynamically, changing their functions. Such a change in functionality had a real impact on the state of preservation of coins which, used statically, degraded to a lesser extent than coins used dynamically, and this factor should be taken into account in the assessment of the coin's operation time in a given environment. It should also be kept in mind that the coin may have ended up on the territory of the settlement, where it was finally deposited after its use, perhaps for a long time, in another place.

The issue of assessing the state of preservation, and in particular the degree of wear of the coin in relation to the time of its use, should be considered here.<sup>13</sup> It is important to determine whether the condition of the coin is the result of dynamic use, the mobile nature of which could have had an impact on the degree of surface abrasion, or whether it is the result of mechanical damage resulting, among others, from secondary use, corrosion or other post-deposition factors.<sup>14</sup> An important element of such an analysis is also the ability to determine whether the coin has degraded as a result of long-term use, or whether the degree of its use intensity has determined it.<sup>15</sup> The latter element is difficult to determine in practice, although

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<sup>12</sup> Domańska 2008, pp. 34–36; Kobiałka 2008, pp. 227ff.; Kemmers, Myrberg 2011, pp. 87ff.; Marciniak, Chwieduk 2012, pp. 568–569.

<sup>13</sup> This topic has been repeatedly raised by researchers in relation to money of different eras, where the purposefulness of such research and statistical methods for conducting it were presented (e.g. Grierson 1963; Duncan-Jones 1994; Hoyer 2013; Velde 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Noe 1949, pp. 235–237; Hagen-Jahnke, Walburg 1987, pp. 12–13; Wigg-Wolf 2009, p. 123; Myrberg Burström 2018, p. 250 (the author emphasizes the observation of the physical characteristics of coins – taking into account the archaeological aspects of taphonomy, not only statistical data that may lead to incorrect conclusions); Ghey 2022, pp. 58–59; Hellings 2022, p. 283.

<sup>15</sup> Such a condition, although in relation to modern coins, is indicated by Velde 2013, p. 612.

there are exceptions, such as the use of a coin as a pendant, where we can observe greater wear of the reverse due to the fact that the owner presented the portrait of the ruler.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, a potential analysis of the obverse sides of the coins used in this way is possible, which will approximately be able to indicate the condition of the coin before changing its function.

It is unlikely that Roman coins outside the *limes* (especially those contained in hoards of primary character) were exchanged so intensively between users that it would lead to a strong wear of the coin surface at a relatively fast rate. The low degree of monetization of the Germanic communities living in Central Europe, and thus the relatively small spread of Roman money,<sup>17</sup> indicates that one should not expect a very dynamic transition of coins from hand to hand.<sup>18</sup> There was such an opportunity primarily on the territory of the Empire, before they were transferred to the northern European *Barbaricum*. The decisive factor here was the time and distance that they had to cover in circulation from the place of production.<sup>19</sup>

A certain group of coins redistributed from assemblages, as well as acquired as a result of individual contacts, penetrated into wider social groups. Coins were the subject of various behaviors, some of which may be elusive today, which caused their degradation. Such a category of finds also includes specimens found at settlement sites. Not knowing all the ways of using coins in such a context, it is possible to adopt the general assumption indicated by researchers, i.e. a linear wear of coins over time.<sup>20</sup> In general, their proportional wear to the time of circulation can be assumed, which suggests that heavily worn coins functioned longer.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it can also be assumed that coins in good preservation conditions were not used for a long time or intensively both on the territory of the Empire and in

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<sup>16</sup> Bursche 2008, p. 400.

<sup>17</sup> The exceptions here are commercial emporia, e.g. Baltic Gudme and Lundeberg on Funen, Sorte Muld on Bornholm, or Jakuszowice in Lesser Poland and Gródek Nadbużny in the Lublin region (Bursche 2002, p. 123; Bursche 2008, p. 398).

<sup>18</sup> This is indicated by the model of using coins by *superiores barbarii*, where Roman coins are “special purpose money,” performing prestigious roles, and their exchange is motivated socially, politically or customarily, not due to economic conditions (Bursche 2002, p. 123; Bursche 2008, pp. 398–399). The low degree of monetization of Germanic communities in our lands is also indicated by a small number of coins with low denominations – small bronzes (Bursche 2008, p. 398).

<sup>19</sup> The main group of coins here are the 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century denarii that came in the last decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, collected in deposits after the Trajan’s reform of 107, issued mainly by the mint of Rome. Thus, earlier coins could have been in circulation for several decades on the very heavily monetized Roman market. This can be indicated by examples of pieces from the hoards found in our lands, where the earliest coins are worn to the greatest extent. More heavily worn later specimens could, individually or in smaller groups, circulate more intensively in the Roman state and reach larger assemblages later than some of the copies identical to them chronologically, in better conditions of preservation. The spatial dimension of coin wear is indicated by Velde 2013, p. 636.

<sup>20</sup> Duncan-Jones 1994, p. 181; Velde 2013, p. 611.

<sup>21</sup> Also in relation to Roman coins used in *Barbaricum* (Bursche 2002, p. 122).

*Barbaricum*. In such cases, as noted above, it is possible to assume a static manner of their use, and the total time of their use may be indicated by the individual archaeological context.

In the absence of a suitable model for determining the time of use of coins, due to their degree of wear for the analyzed areas and chronological period, an assumption based on the above-mentioned linear scheme was adopted, aimed at indicating the variation resulting from this type of prerequisite. In the analyzed material, chronological ranges for the period of use of about 50 years or less, from 50 to 100 years and above 100 years were estimated. The life of coins up to 50 years was considered short, from 50 to 100 years was considered relatively short, while above this value was considered long.<sup>22</sup>

#### CHRONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE AND TIME OF COIN INFLOW

The chronological distribution of settlement finds indicates that it reflects the fundamental waves of the inflow of Roman coins to the Polish territory. The main group of analyzed coins belongs to the large waves of inflow of Roman denarii from the last decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, along with the largest one from the end of that century.<sup>23</sup> The groups that came to the Polish territory at that time were formed after 107,<sup>24</sup> as indicated, among others, by the lack of coins from before the reform of Nero and the final dating of the main part of the material to the times of Septimius Severus.

A detailed analysis of the chronological structure of finds from settlements indicates a 3.8% share of Republican coins. They may have flowed into the areas in question as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, but it can also be assumed that they are part of a coin stream that flowed in at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> centu-

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<sup>22</sup> The assumptions presented here are based on the observation of the state of preservation of the coins carried out by the author. Due to the lack of a uniform system of such assessment, subjective determinations of the degree of wear of the surface of coins, which are a component of the basic categories: good, medium and bad condition (see e.g. Dymowski 2011, s. 109), were adopted. Taking into account the known information on the durability of the use of coins in the discussed areas and their archaeological contexts, three chronological ranges were distinguished, which relativize their time of functioning in the settlements of the Przeworsk culture.

<sup>23</sup> Among others Bursche 1994, pp. 472–475; Bursche 2004, pp. 197–198; Dymowski 2011, p. 76; Dymowski 2013, pp. 94, 107.

<sup>24</sup> Ordering the withdrawal from the market of all denarii and aureii from before the reform of Nero in 63 (Kunisz 1969, p. 85; Lucchelli 1998, pp. 160–161; Romanowski 2014, p. 36, footnote 3; Dymowski 2013, p. 111).



ry AD.<sup>25</sup> The single sesterce of Caligula is an exception among the coins of the rulers of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and could have arrived here much later than its minting time indicates – between the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> The individually registered denarii of Galba and Otho are the rarer elements of the 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century denarii hoards, although coins issued in the Year of the Four Emperors occur in such groups.<sup>27</sup> Flavian coins account for 7.2% of all finds, and Antonine dynasty coins are the core of settlement finds, reaching 78.6% of all registered copies. A set of 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century coins with a small admixture of specimens from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century is closed by Severus coins, having a 2.8% share in the discussed category of finds. The group of mainly antoniniani, from the middle and third quarters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (2.0% of all finds), which flowed out of the *limes* as part of tributes paid to Germanic tribes and loot brought north as a result of conflicts with the Empire at that time, is quite clearly indicated. Also, chronologically extreme coins of the same denomination of the Gallic usurpers and Claudius II are the result of political and military events, namely the provision of pay for Germanic troops helping Roman support units.<sup>28</sup> In the chronological structure, 4<sup>th</sup>-century emissions represented in 1.1% of the entire numismatic material can also be distinguished. It is an element of the already marginally incoming small denominations of the Constantinian and Valentinian dynasties.<sup>29</sup>

We see the greatest regional diversity between the issues of the Republic and the end of the rule of the Antonines, where positions from all the discussed areas are represented. Territorial distribution gradually decreases in the Severan emissions, and after this period, coin finds are recorded almost exclusively in the Lesser Poland. The marginal share of coins from other areas<sup>30</sup> goes hand in hand with the general decrease in the presence of Roman coins on the territory of settlements of the Przeworsk culture. Apart from finds from the right-bank Mazovia and Podlachia and the Lublin Province,<sup>31</sup> chronological structures in other territories maintain largely similar proportions among coins dated to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. However, we see significant deviations in the materi-

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<sup>25</sup> In connection with the unrest in the central Danube region related to the rebellion of the Pannonian and Dalmatian tribes (Kunisz 1970, p. 128; Kolendo 1998a, pp. 124–125; Bursche 1995, pp. 87–89; Dymowski 2016, pp. 99–100).

<sup>26</sup> Bełkowska 1981, pp. 133, 140–141; Bursche 2004, p. 197; Zapolska 2013, pp. 106, 109.

<sup>27</sup> For example, in the hoards of Nietulisko Małe (Mitkova-Szubert 1989), Drzewicz (Krzyżanowska 1976), Błotnica Strzelecka (Ciołek 2008, pp. 23–25, no. 14).

<sup>28</sup> Kunisz 1969, pp. 90–103; Bursche 1985, pp. 36, 40; Bursche 1989, pp. 285–286; Bursche 1996, pp. 114–116, 127–129; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> Kunisz 1969, pp. 125–126; Bursche 1988, pp. 38, 41–42, figs 1–2; Bursche 1996, pp. 98–99, 133; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, p. 119.

<sup>30</sup> One find from Greater Poland and western Mazovia.

<sup>31</sup> Due to a very small sample size.

al from the Lesser Poland, where Trajan's coins were minted, and the issues of subsequent Antonines – Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius – were subject to a certain decline. It is possible that the surplus of Trajan's coins is the result of the intensification of contacts between the population of the Przeworsk culture and Rome during the reign of this emperor. It could also relate to the activity of the Buri tribe and their possible penetration into the Lesser Poland region (and Silesia), or some kind of participation by this tribe in the redistribution of Roman money during this period.<sup>32</sup> It is possible that there was a revival of trade contacts, but also political and military ones related to the Dacian Wars. As signalled by coins from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, finds from outside the Lesser Poland indicate a certain continuity in their inflow, although this may be the result of redistribution as part of contacts between *superiores barbari*, and not directly with the Empire. In Lesser Poland, a small but steady inflow of Roman money can be found until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. However, this should also be seen in the perspective of the long-term functioning of places of central importance, such as the settlement in Jakuszowice (Table 1).

The largest chronological dispersion of coins is observed in group III, which is due to the large number of specimens collected here (67.0% of all), but also a greater range of deposition possibilities in the "living culture." Some of them probably originally rested in objects or cultural layers. Thus, the current dispersion of coins within group III is shaped by a number of factors, including post-depositional conditions. It is difficult to determine from this perspective the exact nature of the coins gathered in this group, e.g. which are genuine losses. Determining the degree of randomness of this type of finds would be interesting from the perspective of the spread of Roman coins among the inhabitants of settlements and their guests. It would also be important to establish intentional behaviors leading to the deposition of coins on or directly below the surface (e.g. throwing away, ceremonial scattering).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Entangled in the war events of that time (Kunisz 1969, p. 64; Strzelczyk 1992, p. 46; Kolendo 1998b, p. 53; Kokowski 2006, pp. 165–166; Romanowski 2010, p. 38; Romanowski 2012, p. 75).

<sup>33</sup> Suchodolski 2012, p. 269.

Table 1. The time of the influx of Roman coins into the areas of settlement of the Przeworsk culture. Prepared by A. Romanowski

| Main Denomination | Issue Time   | Influx Time   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| denarii           | Republic   | 1 <sup>st</sup> c. BC–beginning of 1 <sup>st</sup> c. AD            |
| sestertii         | Julio-Claudian Dynasty<br>Caligula (37–41)   | Last quarter of 2 <sup>nd</sup> c.–first half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> c. |
| denarii           | Year of the Four Emperors<br>Galba–Otho (68–69)  | second half of 2 <sup>nd</sup> c.                                   |
|                   | Flavian Dynasty<br>Vespasian–Domitian (69–96)  |   |
|                   | Nerva-Antonine Dynasty<br>Nerva–Commodus (96–192)  |   |
|                   | The Year of the Five Emperors and Severan dynasty<br>Clodius Albinus–Septimius Severus (193–211) |   |
|                   | Severan Dynasty<br>Caracalla–Severus Alexander (211–235)   | half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> c.  |
| antoniniani       | Crisis of the Third Century<br>Maxyminus I Thrax–Trajan Decius (235–251)                         | half of 3 <sup>rd</sup>   |
|                   | Crisis of the Third Century<br>Gallienus–Probus (253–282)  | third quarter of 3 <sup>rd</sup> c.                                 |
| AE                | Constantinian Dynasty<br>Constantine I–Constantius II (306–361)                                  | 4 <sup>th</sup> c.–(third quarter of 4 <sup>th</sup> c.)            |
|                   | Valentinianic Dynasty<br>Valentinian I–Valens (364–378)  |   |

It should also be noted that the youngest coins are related to stratigraphy, therefore such dated specimens are hidden in the highest layers.<sup>34</sup> This is indicated by a set of coins from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which is recorded essentially only as part of the group III finds.<sup>35</sup> Looking from this stratigraphic perspective, we see a certain regularity. Coins from cultural layers are dated to the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, while in the objects we record examples issued until the time of Septimius Severus.<sup>36</sup> Such a pattern is confirmed by finds from Lesser Poland, where the share of coins also falls within interpretative groups, from III to I. It is different in other regions, where in group I we note a slightly higher number of coins than in group II. This translates into an overall picture, in which group II of finds is 11.5% of all coins, while group I is 14.4%. Such relations between interpreta-

<sup>34</sup> Regardless of the exploration techniques used.

<sup>35</sup> With the exception of single coins of Constantine I from Greater Poland and Constantius II from western Mazovia.

<sup>36</sup> The exception here is the antoninianus of Claudius II from Jakuszowice (31/102), which was deposited in a medieval waste pit, in a secondary context (Godłowski 1995, p. 157, plate 7:2; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, p. 107).

tive groups are probably influenced to a large extent by the state of research. It should be expected that a larger sample of the material, as we see in Lesser Poland, would indicate in other regions a vertical dispersion pattern of finds, in which the number of artefacts increases depending on their stratigraphic location and dating (Fig. 3).

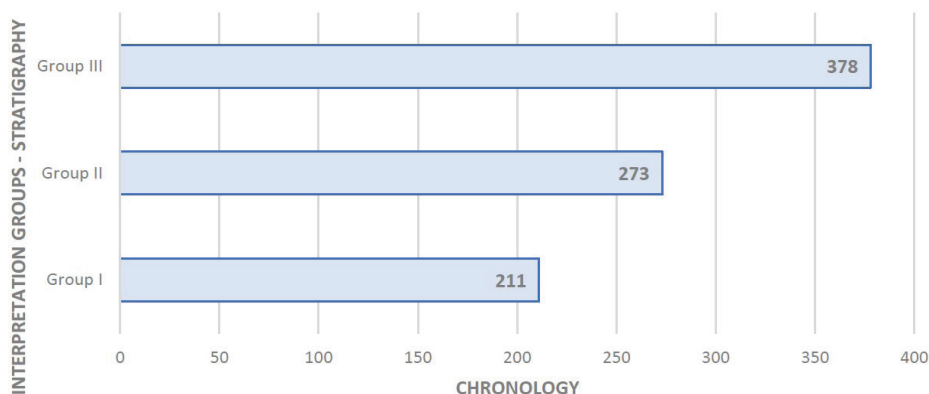


Fig. 3. Coin dispersion pattern at settlement sites of the Przeworsk culture. Prepared by A. Romanowski

These proportions basically reflect the monetary mass used in the Central European *Barbaricum* and indicate the types of coins that were in demand in the areas occupied by the population of the Przeworsk culture. Denarii, which were primarily the subject of thesaurization, were also redistributed. It should be noted, however, that this was small scale in relation to the denarii at the disposal of the Germanic inhabitants of our lands. Characteristic for settlement sites is the significant presence of subaerati, which we almost do not record in hoards from *Barbaricum*, and the lack of gold coins.<sup>37</sup> We also register a few bronze coins.

When it comes to the distribution of denominations in the interpretative groups, the greatest diversity is observed within group III, where almost all types of coins registered on the settlements occurred. The broad denominational representation within this group goes hand in hand with data on the chronology of coins. We see a less diverse set within group I, where there were no small bronze coins from the 4<sup>th</sup> century – unspecified folles and other bronzes. The least diverse set of denominations are present among the finds of group II. In all groups, the largest part are full value denarii, and the second largest group are the denarii subaerati. In groups I and II, antoniniani and sestertii are also present,<sup>38</sup> while the rest of the denominations are found only in group III (Fig. 4).

<sup>37</sup> The number of subaerati is probably underestimated, due to difficulties in identifying this material: Bursche 1997, p. 36; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, pp. 114–115.

<sup>38</sup> We can also mention a single drachma positioned in group I.

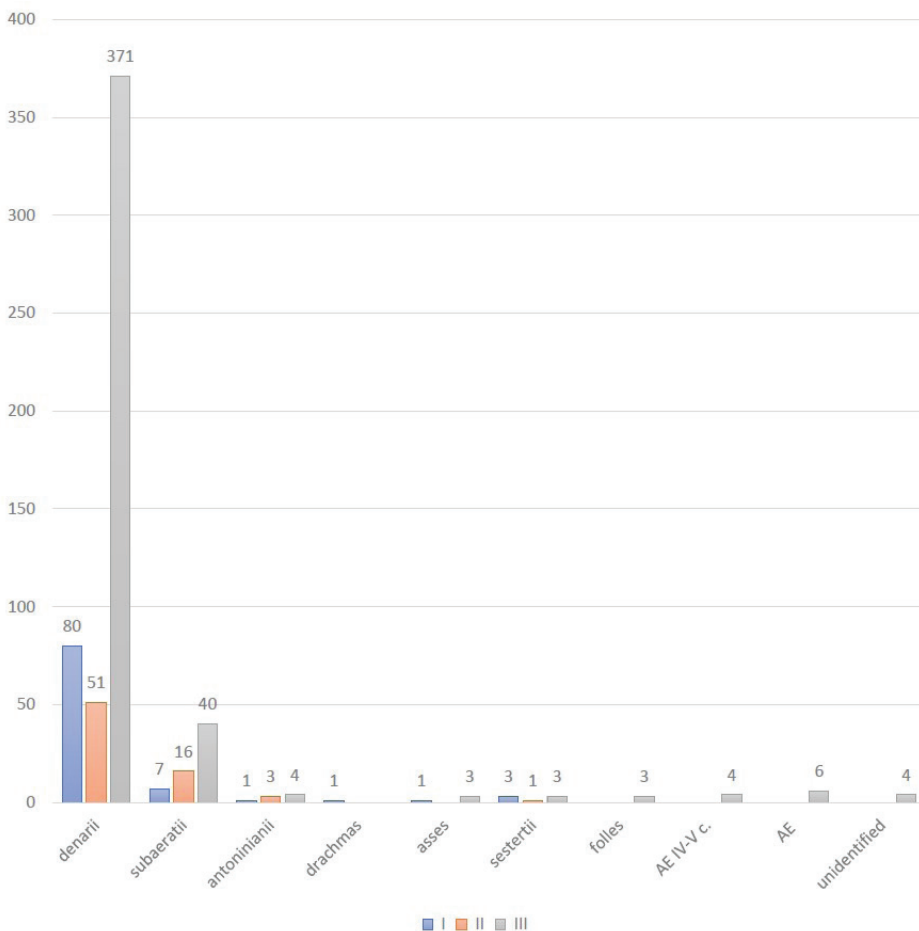


Fig. 4. Finds of Roman coins from Przeworsk culture settlements. Denomination structure – groups I–III. Prepared by A. Romanowski

#### TIME OF USE OF ROMAN COINS

The time of use of Roman coins should be viewed from a broader perspective, bearing in mind the internal diversity in the total time of their use and their possible changes in functions. We can therefore distinguish here: 1. the time of circulation of coins in the Empire; 2. the time of their use from leaving the borders of the Empire to arrival in the settlement; 3. the time of use within the settlement; 4. the time of use within the object. At the same time, the time of use within the object may be shorter than the use of the coin more widely in the settlement.

To assess the time of use of Roman coins on settlements, the time of their inflow outside the borders of the Empire is important, which determines the beginning of

their functioning in a barbarian environment and the dating of the sites where they were found. With this in mind, we can determine the total possible life of the coins, which we close with the end dates of the functioning of settlements. From this perspective, Republican coins that came to the discussed areas in their main part in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC or in the first years of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD could have been in use for up to 500 years.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the general assumption that denarii issued since the time of the Flavian dynasty to the Severians flowed into the settlements of the Przeworsk culture in the last decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or at the end of this century makes it possible to assess,<sup>40</sup> depending on the situation, the time of their use outside the *limes* from several to nearly 300 years. Bronze coins minted between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, which may have flowed into our lands in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century,<sup>41</sup> may have been in use for about 200–300 years, depending on the site.

By positioning the remaining numismatic material in its proper inflow chronology, we can see the shrinking possibilities of its total operating time on settlements. Denarii, antoniniani and bronze coins from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and its last quarter, which came soon after the dates of their minting,<sup>42</sup> could be used for about 150–200 years. Single coins from the 4<sup>th</sup> century of the Constantine and Valentinian dynasties, which could be found in the area in question in the middle or third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>43</sup> did not have much time to be used within the settlements – reaching up to several decades. For regions located on the right bank of the Vistula – parts of Mazovia, Podlachia and the Lublin Province – the time of using Roman coins is shortened due to the assumption resulting from the shorter time of functioning of the Przeworsk settlement there, to phases B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub> (ca. 160–end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century). In practice, this means that the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup>-century denarii that flowed in at that time could have functioned there for a very short time – even only a few years.

However, the above assumptions are of a general nature, because the time limits are determined on each occasion by detailed dating within the sites. However, within these archaeologically determined dates, one should see a significant complexity of factors affecting the time of functioning of coins within settlements. These include, among others, determining the exact time of arrival of the coin at the site and its final deposit. Both elements are difficult to determine precisely. We cannot determine

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<sup>39</sup> They are found in widely dated contexts, even to the beginnings of the Migration Period.

<sup>40</sup> In the case of tin-lead copies of Roman coins, a slightly later time of their use on settlements can be assumed.

<sup>41</sup> Bełkowska 1981, pp. 133, 140–141; Bursche 2004, p. 197; Zapolska 2013, pp. 106, 109.

<sup>42</sup> Kunisz 1969, pp. 90–103; Bursche 1985, pp. 36, 40; Bursche 1989, pp. 285–286; Bursche 1996, pp. 114–116, 127–129; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, p. 119; Dymowski 2013, pp. 113–114.

<sup>43</sup> Kunisz 1969, pp. 125–126; Bursche 1996, pp. 98–99, 133; Bursche, Kaczanowski, Rodzińska-Nowak 2000, p. 119.

the history of the coin between its departure from the borders of the Empire and reaching the settlement, while the time of depositing the coin, even within the object, can be fluid. The above-mentioned variability of the coin's function and the attitude of its owner or owners to the deposited item are also important here. Deposits could be taken and reused dynamically, changing their functions once again.

The above observations indicate that the time of use of Roman coins at settlement sites should be treated flexibly. The range of possibilities here is wide, depending on individual cases. As part of the formula adopted here – three time ranges and other chronological and traseological determinants, we see a fairly even distribution of the material, indicating differentiation within more general units of time. This statement allows us to see, only from the perspective of the time of use, the complexity and dynamics of the use of Roman money in the settlement environment, and therefore in Germanic everyday life.

## CONCLUSIONS

The dates of issue of coins and the time of their inflow to the discussed areas indicate that they functioned here (outside the eastern settlement zone) throughout their settlement by Przeworsk culture communities, which means for about 500 years. The dynamics of the inflow of Roman money varied over time, depending on the current economic and political relations of the Germanic inhabitants of our lands with the Empire. We can see the reflection of these relations, among others, at settlement sites, where the finds of coins with their structure, both chronological and nominal, correspond to the main waves of the inflow of Roman money to Polish lands. As a result of the analyses carried out for individual regions, a different degree of spread and inflow of Roman money into the discussed areas was noticed. The supra-regional character was primarily due to the inflow of coins dating from the times of the Republic to the end of the Nerva-Antonine dynasty, while the distribution of finds was decreasing over time since the Severan issue, to later concentrate almost exclusively in Lesser Poland. We mainly observe an analogous distribution of the chronological and denominational structure between individual areas. However, we note here a certain significant regionalism, manifested in the already mentioned increase in the number of Trajan's coins and a decrease in the number of issues of subsequent Antonines in settlement finds from Lesser Poland and some local differences in the structure of coins issued from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Settlement finds are characterized by a dual identity. We see here, first of all, similarities to the set of coins contained in the hoard pool – mainly the 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-century denarii. On the other hand, we register here the 1<sup>st</sup>-century coins, which were almost unnoticed in the hoards, and after the issue of Severus, the chronolog-

ical structure is significantly similar to coins from loose finds. Such an observation makes it possible to conclude that the coins used by the inhabitants of the settlements were primarily the result of the redistribution of hoards. At the same time, however, they penetrated the habitats as a result of individual or group activity of local communities, especially from the second quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

Based on a number of prerequisites regarding the time of the inflow of coins to settlements, the dating of archaeological contexts, layers and sites, and changes in the functionality of coins, internal diversity in the total time of their use was noticed. Distinguishing the static and dynamic means of their use, which had an impact on the degree of their wear, allowed for a more flexible assessment of the functioning time of coins within the settlements. They could have been used for several to several hundred years, sometimes independently of the complete dating of the settlement site or object. The issues seen in this way indicate the complexity and dynamics of using Roman money in the Przeworsk settlement environment. We can also see here the general regional division, related to the aforementioned specificity of the Przeworsk culture settlement areas located in its eastern zone. While Roman coins could potentially be used until the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century west of the Vistula line, regardless of the date of their inflow, in the regions located east of the Vistula their operation within the Przeworsk culture settlements ended in phases B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub>–C<sub>1a</sub>. One should also see a significant correlation between the date of inflow and use of coins and other Roman imports, which to a large extent functioned here simultaneously, creating a comprehensive picture of technological and cultural transfer.

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## KONTEKST I CZAS. NAPŁYW I DŁUGOTRWAŁOŚĆ UŻYTKOWANIA MONET RZYMSKICH NA OSADACH KULTURY PRZEWORSKIEJ

(Streszczenie)

Jedną z podstawowych kategorii znalezisk monet determinowaną archeologicznym kontekstem, są znaleziska osadnicze zarejestrowane na terenie zdefiniowanych stanowisk o charakterze osadniczym – mieszkalnym lub produkcyjnym. Ta szczególnie interesująca grupa zabytków, pozwala na dokonanie obserwacji w sferach życia codziennego (w „kulturze żywej”), dając możliwość odtworzenia rzeczywistego obiegu i funkcji monet wśród badanych społeczności.

Przedmiotem obserwacji były znaleziska monet rzymskich zlokalizowane na terenie osad ludności kultury przeworskiej, które w liczbie 631 egzemplarzy zarejestrowano na 131 stanowiskach. Materiał badawczy został zestawiony w ramach wydzielonych regionów geograficznych i skupisk osadniczych w granicach Polski. Znaleziska monetarne podzielono równocześnie na trzy grupy o różnym poziomie informacyjnym, których podstawą były konteksty archeologiczne. W trakcie prac nad prezentowanym materiałem, przeprowadzono liczne analizy porównawcze, obserwacje archeologicznych kontekstów oraz indywidualnych cech monet, wskazujących na sposoby ich użytkowania w „kulturze żywej”. Przy czym istotna tu była nie tylko pasywna rola monet w środowisku barbarzyńskim, ale także ich aktywny wpływ na zachowania użytkowników, w zetknięciu z kulturowo obcym obiektem o wyjątkowej wśród importów specyfice.

Jednym z kluczowych elementów badań, było określenie czasu napływu i funkcjonowania rzymskich monet w obrębie osad ludności kultury przeworskiej. Zasadniczą rolę odegrała tu analiza bezpośrednich kontekstów archeologicznych, wzięto jednak pod uwagę także inne czynniki, m.in. stany zużycia monet, przyjmując liniowy w czasie stopień ścierania się ich powierzchni. Podjęte obserwacje wskazują na zróżnicowanie czasu i dynamikę użytkowania monet, także ze względu na zmienność ich funkcji. Decydujące było tu wydzielenie dynamicznego i sta-

tycznego sposobu ich wykorzystywania, co doprowadziło do zaobserwowania zróżnicowania wewnątrz całkowitego czasu funkcjonowania monet w „kulturze żywej”. Taka zmiana funkcjonalności miała m.in. realny wpływ na stan zachowania monet, które wykorzystywane statycznie degradowały się w mniejszym stopniu niż monety użytkowane dynamicznie i należy brać ten czynnik pod uwagę w ocenie czasu ich funkcjonowania w danym środowisku.

Rozkład chronologiczny znalezisk osadniczych wskazuje, że odzwierciedla on zasadnicze fale napływu monet rzymskich na ziemię polską. Główna grupa analizowanych monet, należy do największych fal napływu rzymskich denarów z ostatnich dekad II w., wraz z największą z końca tego stulecia. Najznaczniesze zróżnicowanie regionalne widzimy pomiędzy emisjami Republiki a końcem panowania Antoninów, gdzie reprezentowane są stanowiska ze wszystkich omawianych terenów. Różnorodność terytorialna stopniowo maleje w emisjach Sewerów, a po tym okresie znaleziska monet notujemy niemal wyłącznie w Małopolsce, gdzie widzimy niewielki, lecz stały napływ rzymskiego pieniądza do końca IV w. Badania wskazują także, na związek chronologii monet ze stratygrafią, w związku z czym najmłodsze egzemplarze zalegają w warstwach najwyższych.

Rzymskie monety użytkowane przez mieszkańców osad, były przede wszystkim efektem redystrybucji skarbów. Równocześnie jednak przenikały tam, w wyniku indywidualnej bądź grupowej aktywności lokalnych społeczności, zwłaszcza od 2. ćwierci III w. Monety mogły być użytkowane od kilku do kilkuset lat, co wskazuje m.in. na złożoność i dynamikę posługiwania się rzymskim pieniądzem w przeworskim środowisku osadniczym. Widzimy tu także generalny podział regionalny, związany ze specyfiką terenów osadnictwa kultury przeworskiej, zwłaszcza tych położonych w jego wschodniej strefie. O ile bowiem, rzymskie monety mogły być potencjalnie użytkowane do połowy V w. na zachód od linii Wisły, to w regionach położonych na wschód od tej rzeki, czas ich funkcjonowania w obrębie osad kultury przeworskiej, zakończył się w fazach B<sub>2</sub>/C<sub>1</sub>–C<sub>1a</sub>. Istotną obserwacją jest także, znacząca korelacja pomiędzy czasem napływu i użytkowania monet oraz innych rzymskich importów, które w dużym stopniu funkcjonowały tu jednocześnie, tworząc całościowy obraz transferu technologiczno–kulturowego.

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