

ACTA CLASSICA UNIV. SCIENT. DEBRECEN.	LIII.	2017.	pp. 43–62.
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**HENRIK FINÁLY AND ROMAN DACIA.  
THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF A 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY HUNGARIAN POLY-  
MATH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMAN PROVINCIAL  
ARCHAEOLOGY IN TRANSYLVANIA<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract:* By any standards Henrik Finály was a true polymath, his overarching interests ranging from mathematics to classical studies, modern linguistics and literature, economics, medieval studies and archaeology. Although he was among the first Hungarian antiquarians to pursue systematic scholarly investigations of Roman Dacia, his contribution in this field has been unfairly downgraded in the intervening years, and his name almost erased from the research history of the province. The main goal of the paper is to provide a comprehensive insight into, and a critical overview of the early stages of Roman Dacia studies through the work of Henrik Finály in the social, political and cultural context of 19<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania.

*Keywords:* history of archaeology, nationalism, Roman Dacia, Transylvania, Austro-Hungarian Empire

**1. The institutional context. Roman archaeology in 19<sup>th</sup> century Transylvania**

Owing to a set of complex local historical particularities, research concerning the archaeology and history of the Roman province of Dacia presents a quite distinctive evolution. Since much of Dacia was situated inside the Transylvanian Basin, a region subject to frequent territorial changes between the Austrian Empire, Hungary and Romania since the mid-1800s, its research history is fragmented by numerous fault lines – by far the most significant one being the reorganization of Europe’s political map at the end of World War I – making the reconstruction of its research history more tedious and less straightforward than in most other cases. For a better understanding of the processes which led

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Phil Freeman from the University of Liverpool for readily sharing his thoughts on the subject with me, commenting my draft and providing me with the text of his forthcoming paper.

to the emergence of various historical narratives regarding Roman Dacia, an investigation of the chronically neglected early phases of its research is called for. Although the initial stages of this process can be traced back to early as the late-15<sup>th</sup> – early-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the first recorded Roman epigraphic collections and corpora by the clerical scholar Ioannes Mezerzius, followed in later centuries by the similarly ground-breaking work by Stephanus Zamosius, Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, Johannes Seivert, to name but a few, its scholarly beginnings in a strict sense can be generally dated to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This period saw the coagulation of a group of antiquarians around the Transylvanian Museum Society (*Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet*)<sup>2</sup> from Cluj/Kolozsvár,<sup>3</sup> founded in November 1859, and resulted in the setting up of one of the largest public antiquities collections in this part of the continent: The Coins and Antiquities Collection (*Érem- és Régiségtár*), its core formed by the large personal collections belonging to Counts József and Sámuel Kemény and László Eszterházy. The Society effectively fulfilled the double role of supra-regional museum of antiquities and scientific society, although the latter was formally banned by the imperial authorities following the failed Hungarian Revolution and Independence War from 1848-49. In conjunction with the first field surveys and excavations, this period saw the gradual shift from an antiquarian perspective to a scholarly approach and method,<sup>4</sup> although it is fair to say that archaeological pursuits in these early stages were almost exclusively connected to the Roman period in this region and remained so until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

Among the founders of the Transylvanian Museum Society (hereafter TMS) we find two young intellectuals, the jurist Károly Torma (1829-1897) and Henrik Finály (1825-1898), a civil engineer, both passionately interested in Roman antiquities and indeed the Roman archaeological heritage of the region. Starting in the late 1850s the archaeological and epigraphic investigations published in the Annals of the TMS (*Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egylet Évkönyvei*) laid the foundations for the archaeological research of Roman Dacia. Theodor Mommsen's tour of Transylvania in the fall of 1857 as part of the documentation effort for the third volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (hereafter CIL III) and his personal engagement with several local antiquarians, among them Torma and Finály, also provided a serious incentive for the commencement of archaeological research in the area. Indeed the first systematic excavation of a

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the paper the original names in Hungarian of the state institutions, associations and journals are given in brackets; furthermore the names of the Transylvanian cities currently part of Romania are given in both Romanian and Hungarian.

<sup>3</sup> Currently: Cluj-Napoca, renamed as such in 1974.

<sup>4</sup> Petruț 2015.

<sup>5</sup> With the notable exception of Zsófia Torma's (1832-1899) work in prehistoric archaeology.

Roman site in Dacia was carried out by Torma between 1858 and 1863 in the auxiliary fort from Ilişua/Ilosva, partly prompted by the impetus of Mommsen's visit, as acknowledged by the author himself.<sup>6</sup> A detailed and surprisingly elaborate excavation report, amounting to a small monograph, was published a few years later.<sup>7</sup> It is also interesting that the very first public lecture organized by the TMS in February 1860 was delivered by Torma and entitled 'Roman traces in northern Transylvania'.<sup>8</sup> During this period Finály, as custodian of the society's Coins and Antiquities Collection, was immersed in the organization, development and expansion of the collection. He undertook several field surveys at a number of Roman sites (see below), recovering artefacts for the collection.

Moreover, a number of antiquarian and historical societies dealing with local history and archaeology started to be established in the last third of the century, e.g. The National Szekler Museum (*Székely Nemzeti Múzeum*) founded in 1879 in Sfântu Gheorghe/Sepsiszentgyörgy, The Historical and Archaeological Society of Hunyad County (*A Hunyadmegyei Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat*) of 1880 in Deva/Déva, and the Historical, Archaeological and Natural Sciences Society from Lower Fehér County (*Az Alsófehérmegyei Történelmi, Régészeti és Természettudományi Egylet*) in Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár of 1886, to name the ones with a notable activity in the field of Roman archaeology.<sup>9</sup> The antiquarian, archaeological and epigraphic pursuits of these associations disseminated in their own journals laid the groundwork for modern archaeological research in Transylvania in general and for studies concerning Roman Dacia in particular. Soon systematic archaeological campaigns were carried out at two of the most important sites of Roman Dacia by the abovementioned associations in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (1881-1893) led by Gábor Téglás and Pál Király,<sup>10</sup> and at Apulum (1888-1908) by Béla Cserni.<sup>11</sup> To this one can add the excavations of the prolific Saxon antiquarian Karl Gooss from the Roman period tumular necropolis at Caşolţ/Hermány/Kastenholz and indeed the fieldwork carried out by Zsófia Torma at the Neolithic site of Turdaş/Tordos.<sup>12</sup> The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw emerge the first coherent narratives

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<sup>6</sup> Torma 1866, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Torma 1866.

<sup>8</sup> Torma 1861.

<sup>9</sup> Bodor 1996, 66-68; Szabó 2016, 154.

<sup>10</sup> Bodor 1996, 78.

<sup>11</sup> Szabó 2016, 99-150.

<sup>12</sup> Bodor 1996, 70, 82-83.

regarding the history of Roman Dacia,<sup>13</sup> accompanied by the first maps of the province depicting its urban and defensive network.<sup>14</sup>

The University of Cluj/Kolozsvár founded in 1872 (adopting the name of the sovereign Franz Joseph almost a decade later in 1881), comprised a separate department for the Study of the Auxiliary Sciences of History, headed by Finály until his passing in 1898. Archaeology lectures, although included in the curriculum, were not the main focus of the department. This changed however, following the appointment of Béla Pósta as head of the Department of Numismatics and Archaeology in 1899, which was at the forefront of professional archaeological training and research in Austria-Hungary during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. State of the art and goals of the current survey

With regard to the state of the art, it is fair to say that interest in the history of archaeology has never been particularly high in this region, with perhaps the exception of certain reviews concerning the evolution of epigraphy, especially the comprehensive study by I. I. Russu, published over four decades ago,<sup>15</sup> and based in part on Mommsen's review in volume three of the CIL published in 1873.<sup>16</sup> To this day, the number of archaeological biographies aimed at the in-depth analysis of the professional activities and achievements of individual archaeologists from the respective period is small. Nevertheless during the last few years this approach has witnessed a gradual intensification, especially with works by I. Bajusz, E. Gáll, Z. Vincze, and Cs. Szabó.<sup>17</sup> Earlier works were restricted to offering sketchy overviews of the archaeological activities throughout the period under scrutiny.<sup>18</sup> A serious disincentive in this case was partly determined by the language barrier, the overwhelming majority of the sources being in Hungarian as are the publications on the subject. None of the aforementioned studies offered a comprehensive picture of the evolution of research concerning Roman Dacia prior to the 'modern' phase of investigations, nor did they provide an analysis with regard to the circumstances which lead to the emergence of the first historical narratives for the province. Indeed

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<sup>13</sup> CIL III, p. 160-161; Mommsen 1885; Király 1894; Kuzsinszky 1895.

<sup>14</sup> Torma 1863a; Torma 1880.

<sup>15</sup> IDR I, p. 33-60.

<sup>16</sup> CIL III, p. 153-160.

<sup>17</sup> Bajusz 2005; Gáll 2012; Boda 2013; Gáll 2014; Vincze 2014 (reviewed in: Petruț 2014); Szabó 2016.

<sup>18</sup> See Macrea 1965; Bodor 1996.

the state of art regarding the research history of Roman Dacia at this stage is still quite fragmentary and piecemeal.

As studies for Roman Britain have effectively shown, an in-depth analysis of the early phases of research regarding individual provinces is crucial, as in many cases they have laid the basis for later narratives and discourses.<sup>19</sup> With this in mind, a comprehensive review of the early stages of research concerning Roman Dacia is desirable, if not necessary, especially with regard to the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the following period, i.e. the two decades leading up to the end of World War I, was the focus of significantly more intensive research, especially that by Zoltán Vincze. Henrik Finály's role is especially relevant in the context of the onset of Roman Dacia studies and their gradual expansion in both academia and the general public. While his published work in this field is not as remarkable in terms of quantity and significance as that of Károly Torma, the case can be made that it produced a major impact on the prestige and popularity of the subject through his frequent public lectures, university courses, his publications and his care for the Coins and Antiquities Collection. The main goal of the paper is to provide a comprehensive insight into, and a critical overview of the early stages of Roman Dacia studies through the work of Henrik Finály.

### 3. The life and academic activity of Henrik Finály

Henrik Finály<sup>20</sup> (Figure 1) was born on 16 January 1825 in Óbuda, today part of Budapest, in a Jewish family of Italian origin which relocated to Hungary during the first part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> His uncle Zsigmond Finály (1808-1876) was a well-respected physician and author whose grandson Horace Finály (1871-1945) would become director general of Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas (Paribas) and arguably one of the most influential bankers in 20<sup>th</sup> century France.<sup>22</sup> Upon finishing his secondary school studies, Henrik Finály began studying civil engineering at the Technical University in Vienna in 1842. According to his main obituarist, the historian Sándor Márki, Finály converted

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<sup>19</sup> For two diverging approaches of the subject see e.g. Hingley 1995, respectively Freeman 1997; Freeman 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Full name: Henrik Lajos Finály of Kend (nobiliary title received in 1897), in publications usually appears as Finály Henrik. For detailed biographical data see: Márki 1899, 289-356. Further biographical data in: Szinnyi 1894, 495-499; Kempelen 1937, 71-78; Buday 1925, 2-4; Újvári 1929, 278-279; Bodor 1996, 71-72; Gaal 2001, 91.

<sup>21</sup> Gaal 2001, 91.

<sup>22</sup> See a contemporary account in the Hungarian press: *Budapesti Hirlap* 1928, no. 295 (December 30).

to Catholicism in 1847, planning to pursue a career as a university lecturer in Budapest.<sup>23</sup> He was forced however, to postpone his professional calling with the outbreak of the 1848-49 anti-Habsburg revolution and subsequent civil war, in which he took part as an artillery officer in the Hungarian Revolutionary Army. Following the defeat of the pro-independence forces Finály was drafted as a private in the Austrian Imperial army and sent to compulsory military service in Italy. Upon discharge, he struggled to find employment, in 1851 becoming eventually the tutor to the children of János Bethlen, a Transylvanian aristocrat and politician temporarily moved to Budapest. The death of Bethlen prompted his widow to relocate the family to Cluj/Kolozsvár in Transylvania, with Finály reluctantly following along. After repeated attempts of returning to Budapest, in 1853 he was offered a teaching position at the local Piarist Gymnasium, prompting him to permanently settle in Cluj/Kolozsvár.<sup>24</sup> As a teacher at the respective school and a self-thought but highly skilled Latinist he was actively involved through the 1850s in the project of collating the first modern Latin-Hungarian school dictionary.<sup>25</sup> Eventually he would take over the project, the dictionary being published despite numerous financial difficulties in 1858 in Cluj/Kolozsvár. Finály as its main contributor and editor, was subsequently reworded with the membership of the Hungarian Academy of Science's Linguistics Department.<sup>26</sup> The next defining moment came in November 1859 with the founding of the TMS, headed by Count Imre Mikó, with Finály being appointed as its secretary and starting in 1862 as custodian of the Coins and Antiquities Collection. A decade later the decision to establish Hungary's second university in Cluj/Kolozsvár profoundly impacted not only Finály's career but also the town. While retaining his position as custodian at the Coins and Antiquities Collection, he was appointed as lecturer in the Department of the Auxiliary Sciences of History. Two years later, in 1874 the new journal of the TMS, the *Erdélyi Múzeum* ('Transylvanian Museum') got under way with Finály as its editor. The journal would become Transylvania's leading Hungarian cultural and academic periodical throughout the period leading up to the end of World War I. The founding of the university and the influx of academics mainly from Budapest besides its obvious benefits contributed to tensions between different groups of intellectuals which eventually translated into difficulties in the cooperation between institutions. The most serious issue however, was the acute underfunding of the university by the authorities in Budapest, expressed also in the lack of funds for publishing university handbooks. These conditions were

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<sup>23</sup> Márki 1899, 305.

<sup>24</sup> Márki 1899, 310.

<sup>25</sup> Finály – Régeni 1858.

<sup>26</sup> Márki 1899, 314.

heavily criticized by Finály in his opening speech as newly elected Rector of the university in 1874.<sup>27</sup> The cumulative problems resulted in the temporary halting of the *Erdélyi Múzeum* and triggered Finály's resignation as the journal's editor. He faced further problems in relation to the constant and futile efforts of securing a permanent place for keeping and exhibiting the Coins and Antiquities Collection, a problem which would remain unsolved for more than a decade after his death. It is worth mentioning that in this period, the collection was open to the public only between 1868 and 1890.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the nature of the department to which he was directly affiliated (auxiliary sciences of history), the curriculum was highly diverse, archaeology courses having only a marginal role. The syllabus comprised subjects such as: historical chronology, diplomatics, paleography, heraldry, numismatics, historical metrology, archaeology and even a course in Roman civilization. Besides classical philology, Finály was also considered a specialist in modern linguistics (Hungarian and German), his other interests including mathematics and economics. In addition to this Finály was the head of the Cluj/Kolozsvár Chamber of Commerce and Industry for a period of 12 years.<sup>29</sup> By all standards, Henrik Finály was a polymath, a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's interconnected and holistic intellectual practices, which permitted the high degree of versatility in his academic career. On the other hand, his openness towards this multitude of scientific domains prevented him from concentrating his efforts on Roman archaeology and epigraphy. This is probably the reason why his name is usually not mentioned next to that of his colleague Károly Torma as one of the founders of Roman Dacia studies.

With regard to his personal life, we know that Finály was married twice. His first marriage ended childless in 1868 with the passing of his wife. His stepson, Gyula Vasady (1845-1881) became a notable antiquarian of the time, who went on to be one of the founders and the first custodian of the National Szekler Museum in Sfântu Gheorghe/Sepsiszentgyörgy. Finály remarried the next year, to Anna Sebesi with whom he had four sons. His second-born, Gábor Finály (1871-1951) would follow in his father's footsteps, working as an archaeologist during the first part of his life.<sup>30</sup> Gábor's research activity and publications in the field of Roman archaeology are quite noteworthy, e.g. he is credited with the publication of the first comprehensive atlas of Roman Dacia in 1911.<sup>31</sup> Henrik Finály passed away on 13 February 1898, shortly after he had overseen the

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<sup>27</sup> Márki 1899, 338-339.

<sup>28</sup> Vincze 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Márki 1899, 299.

<sup>30</sup> Oroszlán 1951 (Gábor Finály's obituary).

<sup>31</sup> Finály 1911.

relocation of the Coins and Antiquities Collection to yet another temporary place of keeping, due to the construction of the new university central building. His four sons would all eventually leave Cluj/Kolozsvár and go on to pursue successful careers in Budapest.

#### **4. Archaeological and epigraphic pursuits**

Finály's shift to archaeology and Roman studies in general can be most effectively described as the result of a combination of factors, translated partially as defining biographical events, some of them highlighted in the previous section. As there is no personal account available concerning this process, its reconstruction involves a degree of speculation. His passion for Latin is well-documented and it is highly likely that it played a role in his affinity for the Roman past. At any rate it certainly allowed him to access and interpret even the more complex Roman written sources such as the texts of the wax tablets from Alburnus Maior (see below). At a general level the attraction of the Roman Empire manifested at all levels of the cultural and political life throughout Europe, especially in regions marked by a desire for national unity, must also be taken into account.<sup>32</sup> The review will follow a loose chronological structure (rather than a thematic one) in order to reflect the evolution of his views and preferences for certain subjects. His publications on the subject are almost without exception in Hungarian (occasionally with German abstracts) with only one piece in Latin, ranging from long papers with generous digressions and lengthy reflections to very punctual and technical studies. The propensity to express his views on a wide range of matters of a cultural, social and political character is often encountered in his archaeological publications and which thus facilitate a closer understanding of his mind-set. Indeed a closer reading of his work is imperative since no archival sources could be integrated into the research thus far.

Finály had the chance to watch Theodor Mommsen at work when he guided the German scholar through Cluj/Kolozsvár in September 1857, during the latter's documentation work for CIL III. In an account of the visit published anonymously in the local press, Finály expressed his admiration for the uncompromising working style of the famous epigraphist.<sup>33</sup> Later, the two would exchange letters, Mommsen enquiring about the wax tablets published by Finály and asking for copies of the *Annals of the TMS*, offering in exchange the al-

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<sup>32</sup> See Freeman 1997, 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> See Kristóf 1930, 136-137.

ready published CIL volumes.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting and in some respect illustrative of Mommsen's style that he did not express any interest in Finály's reading and interpretation of the tablet texts, instead asking only for photographs of them. Indeed Finály did not even feature among the antiquarians and epigraphists whom according to Mommsen had dealt thus far with the inscriptions of Roman Dacia ('*De Dacicarum Inscriptionum auctoribus*'), and which suggests that Mommsen did not think highly of him in professional terms.<sup>35</sup> Towards the end of his life Finály was to criticize the German scholar's approach in terms that are surprisingly valid today (see below). Arguably the most decisive moment which brought Finály on the path of archaeological research was his appointment as custodian of the Coins and Antiquities Collection. The collection which later, in 1899 would number approximately 30 000 artefacts and between 15 000 and 20 000 coins, was among the most comprehensive collections of antiquities in the region.<sup>36</sup> Finály's efforts in organizing, expanding and presenting the collection to the public, determined him to get involved directly with archaeological research.

Finály's first publication in this field, entitled: 'The wax tablets discovered in the Transylvanian mines and the ancient Roman cursive writing'<sup>37</sup> is in many ways one of his most interesting pieces. The paper focuses on three Roman wax tablets (IDR I, 33, 41, 48) from the gold mines of Alburnus Maior and which had entered the said collection. It also contains many reflections which transcend into questions of 19<sup>th</sup> century statecraft and national identity. In accordance with the practice adopted at the TMS, the paper was presented before its issue in the Annals in front of an audience consisting of members of the society at its periodic scientific meetings. The first of the three documents (IDR I, 33) published in the Annals originally comprised three tablets (triptych), however only two came into the collection of the TMS.<sup>38</sup> As a result of the author's investigations, the third tablet was identified in a publication by the Romanian clerical scholar Timotei Cipariu in the annals of the Gymnasium from Blaj/Balázsfalva from 1858.<sup>39</sup> Despite the faulty transcription of the text by Cipariu, Finály managed to piece together the three tablets and provide a correct reading and interpretation of the document. In the search for analogies he provided a reading for a tablet (IDR I, 35) previously published in 1856 by János Érdy, former custodian of the National Hungarian Museum's antiquities

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<sup>34</sup> Finály 1904, 427-430.

<sup>35</sup> CIL III, p. 153-160.

<sup>36</sup> Vincze 2014, 172.

<sup>37</sup> Finály 1861.

<sup>38</sup> Finály 1861, 79-81.

<sup>39</sup> Finály 1861, 76, note 7.

collection, but without the transcription of the text.<sup>40</sup> The other two tablets discussed by Finály (IDR I, 41, 48) provided less information due to their poor state of preservation. All in all, it can be said that among the currently known 25 wax tablets from Roman Dacia (IDR I, 31-55), four such documents were initially published and interpreted by Finály.

More interesting are however his comments at the end of the paper comprising allusions to the political situation of his times and analogies between Roman history and contemporary realities. The first comments were triggered by previous speculations on the ethnic origin of the persons mentioned on the wax tablets, especially Érdy's assumptions of the Scythian and Pecheneg origins of some of the names from the texts and their direct link to the formation of Hungarian ethnicity. Finály dismissed vigorously these claims as ridiculous, citing a passage from Tacitus' account of the Germans (*'hanc gentem propriam, sinceram et tantum sui similem existere'*) to affirm the affinities in character between the Hungarian people and the ancient Romans.<sup>41</sup> He went on to write that it is not surprising to find non-Roman populations in Dacia,

'...as the imperial authorities never set out to impose their own customs and laws upon the conquered peoples, allowing even the population of the provinces to maintain their own religions and laws, demanding only taxes and military service in return.'<sup>42</sup>

It is clearly an allusion to the Austrian authorities, which following the defeat of the armed independence effort in 1849 initiated an authoritarian regime which lasted until 1867 when the Austro-Hungarian dual state was born. The last paragraph of the paper is even more straightforward in this sense:

'What would have become of that nation if next to its beautiful timocracy providence would have permitted the invention of representative autonomy. The shiny Capitol would still be standing and proud Rome would continue to legislate the matters of the World. Instead by holding on to its centralization, the beautiful state plunged into the hands of tyrant emperors and arrogant praetorians, and weakened by its rotting core it collapsed under its own weight as soon as the first external convulsions had reached its borders.'<sup>43</sup>

There are two issues here worth highlighting. First, there is the analogy between the exceedingly centralized and decadent nature of Roman rule and the repressive nature of the Austrian regime of that time. Some years later, in an archaeological monograph regarding the site from Ilişua/Ilosva, Károly Torma expressed his view that the main purpose of the Roman rule in Transylvania

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<sup>40</sup> Finály 1861, 75 (note 1), 76.

<sup>41</sup> Finály 1861, 87.

<sup>42</sup> Finály 1861, 87, my translation.

<sup>43</sup> Finály 1861, 88, my translation.

was the exploitation of its natural resources, this being the reason why most of its settlements had a military nature.<sup>44</sup> It is hard once again not to see the connection between past and present. The second issue concerns the cultural connections between the Romans and the Hungarians. The concept that Hungarian national ethos incorporated elements of Roman antiquity at a spiritual and cultural level has constantly cropped up in the discourse articulated in Hungarian antiquity reception as shown by historian Péter Erdősi, who in this sense speaks of the ‘ancient heritage’ as an organic part of Hungarian national mythology.<sup>45</sup> A similar point was made by Torma during the first lecture of the TMS held in February 1860 and published in the same number of the *Annals* as ‘Roman traces in Northern Transylvania’, speaking in similar terms of Romans and Hungarians as agents for the dissemination of civilization.<sup>46</sup>

In the following years Finály would carry out his only field surveys, traveling to a number of Roman sites across Transylvania, fulfilling the yet unofficial role of inspector for archaeological heritage under the authority of the TMS, usually after being notified by local antiquarians (Figure 2). His first ‘archaeological excursion’ took place in the spring of 1862, with the original destination of Hunedoara/Vajdahunyad to examine some archaeological finds which had emerged during earthmoving in the vicinity of the medieval Corvinus castle. On this occasion Finály was joined by Károly Torma, a detailed account being published in the *Annals* of the TMS in the next year with the title: ‘An archaeological excursion to Vajda-Hunyad and its surroundings’.<sup>47</sup> The first stage of their journey was to Deva/Déva and the nearby village of Vețel/Vecel, the site of a large Roman auxiliary fort and civilian settlement, its Roman name Micia unknown until the publication of Torma’s findings on this subject in 1880.<sup>48</sup> Upon inspecting the site and based on the military stamped tiles Finály concluded that he was most certainly dealing with a Roman fort, expressing doubts regarding the hypothesis previously put forward that its Roman name was Pons Augusti.<sup>49</sup> Finály also makes the clarification that inscriptions discovered and registered during this expedition will be published by Torma (which he did so in the same number of the *Annals*),<sup>50</sup> who in his view was much more competent in the field of epigraphy. Furthermore Finály pledged to abstain from the publication of inscriptions until the compre-

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<sup>44</sup> Torma 1866, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Erdősi 2008, 196-197; Petruț 2015, 397.

<sup>46</sup> Torma 1861, 44-45.

<sup>47</sup> Finály 1863.

<sup>48</sup> Torma 1880, 45.

<sup>49</sup> Finály 1863, 137.

<sup>50</sup> Torma 1863b.

hensive epigraphic corpus of Dacia, planned by Torma was published.<sup>51</sup> Moving from Deva, the two reached Hunedoara/Vajdahunyad, the original focus of their investigations. After registering the epigraphic and sculptural material gathered by a local antiquarian, they proceeded to excavate a structure visible on the ground, and which was found to be adorned with Roman sculptures brought from the nearby Roman site of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, which however proved to be medieval.<sup>52</sup> The last stage of their journey was to the site of the Roman *colonia* at Apulum, in Partoş/Marosportus, today part of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár. There they witnessed the systematic destruction of the Roman ruins and looting of archaeological artefacts by the constructors. Unable to take action, they returned to Cluj/Kolozsvár.

The next archaeological excursion was carried out in 1863 and was to the site of the auxiliary fort at Bologa/Sebesváralja, the detailed account being published a few years later in the third issue of the Annals with the title: 'Roman traces in north-western Transylvania'.<sup>53</sup> The scenario was similar to the last one. The visit was made at the invitation of a local antiquarian who procured a number of Roman stamped tiles from the locals. The inspection of the site resulted in its swift identification with a Roman fort, although when assessing the civilian settlement, Finály exaggerated its importance, believing it was a *colonia*.<sup>54</sup> The report also contains the catalogue and the description of the Roman finds discovered at the site (Figure 3). With virtually no epigraphic material, the ancient name of the site was naturally unknown at that time. Resculum, which until recently was considered to be the Roman name, was retrieved by Torma decades later,<sup>55</sup> although based on the detailed analysis of Ptolemy's map of Dacia, the correct name seems to have been Rucconium.<sup>56</sup>

In the next years, the construction of Transylvania's rail system, especially the line between Arad and Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár, started in 1865, and going through a number of important Roman sites, caused considerable damage to the archaeological heritage but at the same time produced a large number of artefacts. Unfortunately lacking the appropriate legislation for the protection of the archaeological heritage, only a small proportion of it could be retrieved by the TMS. Among the exceptions one can mention a marble Mithraic relief (Figure 4; Lupa 15348) from Micia recovered during railway construction works and published by Finály in the columns of a weekly paper from Budapest, entitled

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<sup>51</sup> Finály 1863, 137-138.

<sup>52</sup> Finály 1863, 140.

<sup>53</sup> Finály 1866a.

<sup>54</sup> Finály 1866a, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Torma 1880, 47-50.

<sup>56</sup> Nemeti 2014, 65.

‘Roman antiquity discovered in Hunyad County’.<sup>57</sup> Once the building of the line reached Partoš/Marosportus and implicitly the territory of Roman Apulum (*colonia Aurelia Apulensis*), the situation quickly escalated into an archaeological disaster according to Finály’s account, published in 1867 (‘Newly discovered antiquities in Marosportus’).<sup>58</sup> In spite of the instructions of the ministry and the building companies, the archaeological material was systematically destroyed, while the seemingly valuable artefacts were looted.<sup>59</sup> At the end of his report, Finály pledged to publish a detailed description of the retrieved material.<sup>60</sup> Incidentally Karl Gooss was also present in Apulum at that time (August 1867) providing a detailed and valuable account of the destruction.<sup>61</sup> A few years later Finály published a Roman hoard originally containing 700 coins (of which 612 preserved) from Apulum ending with the issues of emperor Commodus, known since in the archaeological literature as the ‘Apulum I’ hoard.<sup>62</sup> Notwithstanding the somewhat misleading indication from the title i.e. ‘*inter rudera municipii Apulensis*’, it was recently shown that the find actually comes from the railway works and thus the territory of the *colonia*.<sup>63</sup> The hoard was since lost, being known exclusively from Finály’s publication.<sup>64</sup> It is still unclear whether the rest of the artefacts mentioned were ever published. The organization of the coin collection in the custody of the TMS was one of his primary objectives as custodian of the Coins and Antiquities Collection, especially since his expertise in the field of numismatics was well-known. This work produced a catalogue which included Roman and later (medieval and modern) material alike.<sup>65</sup> In 1868 the TMS hosted the meeting of the Hungarian Historical Society, during which the Coins and Antiquities Collection was presented to the most important scholars in archaeology from Budapest. Finály received the praise of Flóris Rómer, the custodian of Antiquities Collection within the Hungarian National Museum.<sup>66</sup> Finály later would present the most valuable pieces of the Collection at two International Expositions in Vienna (1873) and Paris (1878).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Finály 1865.

<sup>58</sup> Finály 1867.

<sup>59</sup> Finály 1867, 205.

<sup>60</sup> Finály 1867, 205.

<sup>61</sup> See Szabó 2015, 137-140.

<sup>62</sup> Finály 1873; Găzdac 1996.

<sup>63</sup> Szabó 2015, 141.

<sup>64</sup> Găzdac 1996, 135.

<sup>65</sup> Finály 1866b.

<sup>66</sup> Rómer 1869, 32.

<sup>67</sup> Vincze 2014, 16.

The next period witnessed Finály's return to epigraphy. Absolved from his pledge to restrain from epigraphy by the appearance of Mommsen's CIL III in 1873, he published a series of important inscriptions from Roman Dacia. The first of the papers, entitled 'New archaeological finds' includes two inscriptions from Apulum (IDR III/5 218, 277), one from Ocna Mureş/Marosújvár (IDR III/4, 67a) as well as the brief description of a number of Roman artefacts from Potaissa.<sup>68</sup> His reading and interpretation of the texts is correct by present standards apart from occasional minor mistakes caused by the fact that he only had access to the facsimile copies of the inscriptions. He next published a series of inscriptions from Turda/Torda, which he mistakenly identified with the Roman site of Salinae instead of Potaissa.<sup>69</sup> The mistake is difficult to explain, as the correct identification of the site's Roman name had already been made by Mommsen.<sup>70</sup> The three inscriptions would later be included in the *Supplementum* volume to CIL III published in 1902 (CIL III, 7670, 7684, 7697). Arguably the most important inscription assemblage was published by Finály in his 1881 paper entitled *Epigraphica*.<sup>71</sup> The same year marked the beginning of excavations at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the paper featuring five inscriptions, two of which were recovered during work at the site by members of the Historical and Archaeological Society of Hunyad County. Copies of the inscriptions were sent to Finály by Zsófia Torma.<sup>72</sup> The well-known votive building inscription dedicated to the *Diis Patriis* by Publius Aelius Theimes (IDR III/2, 18) was the first of this group. A copy of the text was also sent by Zsófia Torma to the renowned Oxford orientalist Archibald Henry Sayce, who presented his insight in a detailed reply.<sup>73</sup> The second inscription from the group is a votive altar dedicated to the Oriental deity Nabarze Deo (IDR III/2, 307). Further three inscriptions were recovered during excavations at the Mithras sanctuary:<sup>74</sup> IDR III/2, 277, 281, 293.

Some years later in an essay entitled 'Why and how should we learn Roman history?' and intended seemingly as a manifesto for ethics in Roman studies, Finály made some surprising critical remarks for the contemporary trends in the research, and in particular Mommsen's methods citing the *Römische Geschichte* published in 1856. Finály's critical stance could even be worthy of the post-

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<sup>68</sup> Finály 1874.

<sup>69</sup> Finály 1877, 144.

<sup>70</sup> CIL III, p. 172.

<sup>71</sup> Finály 1881.

<sup>72</sup> The younger sister of Károly Torma.

<sup>73</sup> Finály 1881, 295-296.

<sup>74</sup> Finály 1881, 298-299.

modern critique of historical sciences and archaeology, as it argues that historical discourse is deeply rooted in present realities:

‘A new approach was introduced by Drumann, which is also being followed by Theodor Mommsen. The hallmark of this school of thought is the apparent embrace of the ancient sources, but in reality they proceed to view the past from the perspective and the standards of modern statecraft, thus losing the basic condition for fair judgement. Wherever there are insufficiencies in the sources they wantonly supplement them based on nothing more than their own imagination; wherever their uptake is in contradiction with the word of the sources, they forcefully alter their meaning to bring it to consent with their own preconceived ideas. Making use of their resourcefulness they constantly endeavour to read into the sources their own theories rather than extracting the facts which the ancient author intended to transmit. They arbitrarily base their suppositions on sporadically occurring ancillary comments in the ancient texts, and wherever some renowned ancient author refuses to play into their theories, they blame it on the inconsistencies of the said text and willing or unwilling distortions by the author. It is plain and clear that this school also proceeds to dismiss the ancient sources wherever it suits them, the only difference is that their methods are somewhat smoother.’<sup>75</sup>

In the last decade of his life, Finály’s publications became scarcer. In 1888<sup>76</sup> he received the visit of British scholar Francis Haverfield, who while touring some antiquity museums of eastern Austria-Hungary, stopped to look at the Coins and Antiquities Collection of the TMS.<sup>77</sup> According to his account, Haverfield was pleased with the collection, stating that ‘it deserves a visit from every antiquarian tourist’.<sup>78</sup> Although it is not directly related to Roman Dacia, Finály’s involvement in the saving of the spectacular silver and gold finds assemblage from the late-5<sup>th</sup> century AD princely grave from Apahida (Cluj County) must be highlighted here. His detailed publication of the assemblage can also be considered as exemplary for that time, especially for someone with little expertise in the archaeology of the Migration Period.<sup>79</sup> Lastly, his final contribution mentioned here is a paper published in 1895, less than three years before his death, entitled ‘Interesting Roman antiquity’.<sup>80</sup> The article featured three reliefs depicting a pair of human ears, two of them with votive inscriptions (IDR III/2, 224, 230) and at third without text. Although the artefacts came from Gâr bou/Csákigorbó in today’s Sălaj County, they were originally discovered at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The sculpted human ears are a symbolic reference to the so-called *theoi epekooi*, i.e. the gods who listen to the requests of the worshiper. This interpretation being unknown at that time, meant that

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<sup>75</sup> Finály 1888, 209, my translation.

<sup>76</sup> For the correct year of the visit see: Freeman *forthcoming*.

<sup>77</sup> Haverfield 1891.

<sup>78</sup> Haverfield 1891, 12-13.

<sup>79</sup> Finály 1889a; Finály 1889b.

<sup>80</sup> Finály 1895.

Finály considered that the depictions marked the dedicant's recovery from an unspecified auditory condition.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusions

It is indisputable that Henrik Finály was not the pivotal figure (which he might have been) in this early phase of Roman Dacia studies, and the present paper does not argue otherwise. As already stated, he was a symptomatic product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century's holistic and encyclopaedic approaches to science and culture in this region, a conception with obvious roots in the Enlightenment. His over-arching interests spanning from mathematics to classical studies, modern linguistics and literature, economics, medieval studies and archaeology, as well as his proactive and intense involvement in the cultural life of his town and the administration of the TMS and later the University (combined with the acute underfunding of the university which undermined his publication programme) effectively prevented him from setting an agenda for Roman archaeology in Transylvania, even in the initial period when only him and Károly Torma were involved in this research domain. In this sense he was a true polymath, probably the last one in Transylvania. However, as this paper has hopefully demonstrated, his contribution to the beginnings of Roman Dacia studies has been unfairly downgraded in the intervening years, and his name almost erased from the research history of the province. His contribution in this field is linked first of all to the popularisation of the Roman heritage of Transylvania mainly towards the Hungarian and Hungarian-speaking public, especially in a period when this was almost entirely absent from the cultural agenda of this region. Although by far not as prolific as his colleague and peer Torma, Finály's publications reflect a high standard for the period, revealing his familiarity with the contemporary archaeological literature. This is especially noticeable in his epigraphic work, where most of his readings still stand today, partly because his excellent knowledge of Latin, although some of the interpretations he put forward have naturally since become superseded. Moreover some of his insights are surprisingly modern, especially his thoughts and criticism of Mommsen and his method, which in some sense are valid even today.

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<sup>81</sup> Finály 1895, 367-368.



Figure 1.

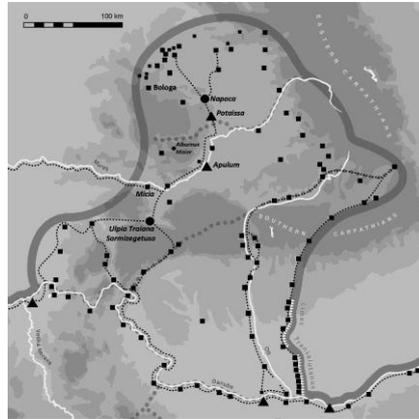


Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

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#### List of illustrations

- Figure 1. Photograph of Henrik Finály (Buday 1925, 2).
- Figure 2. Map of Roman Dacia with the sites investigated by Finály (based on the original at: [www.limes-oesterreich.at/html/maps\\_download.php](http://www.limes-oesterreich.at/html/maps_download.php))
- Figure 3. A plate illustrating Roman finds from Bologna (Finály 1866a).
- Figure 4. Drawing of the Mithraic relief from Hunyad County (Finály 1865).

(ISSN 0418 – 453X)