

**MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI  
UNIVERSITATEA „1 DECEMBRIE 1918” DIN ALBA IULIA  
FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE ȘI FILOLOGIE  
ȘCOALA DOCTORALĂ DE ISTORIE**



— UNIVERSITATEA —  
**1 DECEMBRIE 1918**  
— ALBA IULIA —

# **PHD THESIS SUMMARY**

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ALBA IULIA  
2022

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**POACHING OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
HERITAGE IN THE ȘUREANU MOUNTAINS.  
HISTORY AND JURISPRUDENCE**

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The PhD thesis titled *Poaching of the archaeological heritage in the Șureanu Mountains. History and Jurisprudence* has as objective the analysis of a phenomenon - *the archaeological poaching*, which has seriously affected the integrity of the archaeological heritage in the Șureanu Mountains and is aiming towards its history but also to compile a *corpus* of the artefacts stolen between 1993-2015. The thesis simultaneously encompasses both the historical and criminological research to achieve an ample image of criminality within the field of protecting the archaeological heritage.

As the topic is an interdisciplinary one, the research methodology involved the capitalization of the information resulting from the documents drawn up by the criminal investigation bodies, following the evolution of the case, including the recovery of the civil damage. In this regard, we began by following the indictments, respectively the orders for closing the criminal cases, reaching the criminal verdicts, respectively the civil ones, which remained final. We also took data from witness statements, that were correlated with the on-site investigation and property survey reports. We then looked at the requests for an international rogatory committee for the recovery of the artefacts. These documents were useful for the preparation of a *corpus* of the patrimony assets discovered (stolen or abandoned on the spot) following the intrusive searches with metal detectors in the area. To the same extent, the map with the places related to poaching discoveries/pits was directly related to the specification of the GPS coordinates in the reports drawn up by the judicial authorities. This is because the realities on the ground no longer correspond faithfully to the situation in the judicial images, and the identification of the pits from which the artefacts were stolen is today difficult due to natural clogging and the growth of vegetation over time. In these circumstances, we considered it necessary to present photographic data of the present situation regarding these poaching pits.

The thesis is structured in nine chapters, accompanied by annexes and plates, and its purpose is to reunite the research of legislative-criminological aspects with the historical research, capitalizing for scientific interest the information contained in the documents from the archives of the courts of law. This interdisciplinary research is the optimal way to highlight the extent of this phenomenon and how severely it has affected the integrity of the archaeological heritage in the mentioned area. Regarding the concept of *archaeological poaching*, we also investigated its usage, starting with the documents drawn up by the judicial bodies, until the specialized published articles after 2005. Consequently, we have drawn up a repertoire of civil and criminal prosecution files, that can be observed within the catalogue that encompasses the artefacts stolen through archaeological poaching actions or held by various persons who could not justify their

provenance, to highlight and analyze the efforts of the authorities to stop the phenomenon, recover and repatriate the stolen artefacts.

**The first chapter** of the thesis is dedicated to *the history of the scientific research* concerning *archaeological poaching*, both from the perspective of published artefacts and legislative evolution, starting with the known stipulations from the medieval period regarding the legal regime of the discovered treasures, up to the imperial ordinances and norms of the twenty and twenty-one centuries. The myth of the *buried treasure* is frequently found in medieval writings and art, having diverse origins, including biblical passages. The location of the hoards was associated with the existence of ancient ruins, thus connecting their image with the places where treasures were hidden. The discovery of large hoards, such as the one or those confiscated by Cardinal Martinuzzi, then governor of Transylvania, led even more in this direction. Moreover, even foreign travelers noted in their writings how the inhabitants of Transylvania hid their artefacts in case of distress. Regarding the legislation, we have shown that in Transylvania the right to a treasure belonged to the monarch, according to customary law. Starting with 1671, due to the Târgu Mureș Diet session, one-third of the discovery had to be returned to the discoverer, if he handed over the discovered artefacts.

**Chapter II** is an *analysis of the search for treasures*, a phenomenon that we have labelled as *the forerunner of archaeological poaching* since the psychosis that caused it was the same - the desire for wealth. As already mentioned above, in Transylvania, the largest treasure discovered up until this point was the one confiscated by governor Martinuzzi from Romanian fishers or shepherds in 1543. According to contemporary sources of the event, the number of coins was 40000 or 4000, the last figure being more genuine in the opinion of specialists. Of this hoard, 1000 gold coins were sent to Vienna after the cardinal's assassination. The following discoveries of Koson and Lysimach coins took place in the early years of the twentieth century when the locals of the villages of Chitid and Vâlcelele Bune identified right around the ruins of Sarmizegetusa Regia approximately 3203 coins. As a result of the spread of this information, a real gold fever was generated, the mountain being scoured by people who came from other villages of Hunedoara County, such as Bretea Română, Boșorod, Chitid, Grid, Luncani, Ocolișul Mic and Vâlcele Rele, as stated by data found in the scientific literature and the unpublished documents from the archives in Budapest and Vienna.

In this chapter, the documentation started from the sources mentioned in the literature. We also carried out *three documentation stages at the national archives of Austria and Hungary*, where we identified some *unique documents* regarding the monetary treasures discovered by the treasure seekers on Mount Godeanu. Thus, we were able to show what was the exact number of

stolen coins, given the investigation of the tax authorities and especially how many of them ended up at the monetary offices and how many were sold to other people.

Apart from the case of *Sarmizegetusa Regia*, we were able to show that other discoveries of hoards are mentioned in the ancient publications, as well as how the locals were trying to identify the archaeological potential of an area. Thus, I noticed that on the hill of the Cugir citadel, two hoards were discovered with a small number of coins. Treasure seekers are also mentioned concerning the Costești fortress, since 1847. Of these, one donated a ceramic vessel and several coins to Johann Michael Ackner. Searching the natural occurring molehills was the most common way to discover certain artefacts.

**Chapter III** presents the *evolution of archaeological poaching as a phenomenon*, with the four stages established according to the course of the criminal investigation. We have shown here in what circumstances the criminal investigation was started, how the criminal networks were organized, the *modus operandi* and how they were dismantled, respectively the legal classifications retained. Media sources were used for what the criminal investigation did not take into mind due to the facts being prescribed, this leading to the interpellation of the Minister of Internal Affairs, regarding the solutions taken to eradicate poaching in the Șureanu Mountains. Finally, the report in which several artefacts appeared, including a multi-spiral gold bracelet, a pseudo-Lysimach coin, knotted links, and bronze vessels, was a useful documentary material.

In the evolution of the phenomenon, we were able to methodologically establish five stages, which originated in the first discoveries of some hoards or batches of tools, the stages of criminal prosecution and then of the judicial investigation. We have used every five years as a unit of time, except for the second stage, which lasts ten years and is divided into four sub-stages.

The first stage, which was not included in the criminal investigation, begins with the theft of a hoard with Koson coins in 1993, a *raid-type* operation about which we have little information and lasts until 1995 when in the archive of the construction site from Sarmizegetusa Regia were made the first mentions, after the discovery of some tools. During this period, various individuals from the political and military environment appear around the site from Grădiștea de Munte with aerial photographs and military cartographic documents.

The second stage begins in 1996, with the discovery of the hoard of Koson coins on Dealul Muncelului-Fagii Lui Bodea, and lasts until the reopening of the criminal prosecution in the "Dacian gold" file by the Prosecutor's Office attached to the Alba Iulia Court of Appeal in 2004. I mention that this division could be best documented during the criminal investigation, being also the one in which most of the deeds took place, respectively the stealing of the largest hoards and as well as the decontextualization of some tool deposits. At the same time, it is also the most

extensive in terms of period and is subdivided into four stages, depending on certain events that occurred during those years.

The first subdivision was related to the capitalization of the lots from the great monetary treasure discovered in 1996, antithetically named family *legacies* vs. *poached hoards*. After the coins were stolen, attempts were made to capitalize them, the safest way being to the museums or the National Bank of Romania. To conceal their illicit origin, the most well-known scheme, was that of an alleged family inheritance. Also, as during this period the hoard with Lysimach, Pharnaces and Asander coins is discovered, we observe another *modus operandi* for the exploitation of the criminal product - the trafficking on the black market.

The second subdivision has in the foreground the discoveries of hoards and the beginning of the criminal investigation as the result of manslaughter, linked by the media with the crime in the field of cultural heritage. When this offence is investigated, the judicial authorities prosecute poachers at archaeological sites, and the first searches are also carried out, several monetary lots being recovered from both poachers and locals.

The third subdivision is dedicated to the capitalization of the most important stolen artefacts and their reception in the specialists' environment. According to data resulting from the investigation of the judicial authorities, a hoard with ten multi-spiralic gold bracelets was discovered in early May 2000. The hoard was trafficked to the black market of antiques for \$80.000-100.000 each. The Romanian authorities were notified when two items were presented to the German expert in ancient art Barbara Deppert-Lippitz.

The last of the subdivisions of the second stage begins with the journalistic investigation and the media report that came out in 2002, where Radu Tora showed to the public the realities of the archaeological poaching sites in the Șureanu Mountains. For the first time, the camcorder recorded a multi-spiralic gold bracelet, gold coins of the Lysimach type and other artefacts stolen from the sites. After the criminal investigation, these recordings were used as evidence by the judicial authorities and were attacked by the poachers claiming that all the media present is flawed, edited.

The third stage deals with the discovery of the last great hoards, showing how, at the same time as the evolution of the criminal investigation, at least one hoard of kison gold coins was identified, stolen, divided into lots, and capitalized. In addition to this discovery, poachers' actions in archaeological sites continue, with decontextualizing more artefacts.

The fourth stage begins with the recovery of some batches of tools offered for sale by local collectors and ends with the shares of Czech poachers in 2015. It is during this time that a

bronze mold is also discovered, presented in detail in Chapter VII. Since they were called tourists in the media, we have named this stage as being of souvenir hunting and by chance *discoveries*.

In the last stage, we no longer have registered criminal cases that have as object the crime of the cultural heritage in the Șureanu Mountains, but only echoes of the old files. During this period some of the old files that pending before the courts are solved, and convictions are applied. Artefacts were recovered from the old monetary hoards, especially those stolen by Czech poachers.

The extensive part of the thesis is represented by **Chapter IV**, and it encompasses *the history of each treasure and monetary lot*, from theft to recovery, as well as the tools handed over or seized. In addition to these two main categories, we also presented the other categories of artefacts stolen by the poachers of the archaeological sites, such as harness elements, objects of adornment and port, military equipment, bronze vessels, etc. Their correspondence can be found in Annex 3 of the thesis, which constitutes, in fact, the catalogue of artefacts recovered by the judicial authorities during the criminal investigation. Here are highlighted the coinage hoards, adornments, respectively cult objects stolen from the sites of Sarmizegetusa *Regia*, Căpâlna and Piatra Roșie, but also the lots recovered during home searches of the locals or from other persons involved in the theft, trade, or concealing the illicit origin of the artefacts stolen from the archaeological sites. The situation of the artefacts donated to the museum institutions by different persons is also presented. Each recovered artefact was typologically classified, by using analogies with other published artefacts. Also, in the case of the coins, we used expert reports, carried out by specialists in the framework of criminal prosecution or judicial investigation.

Regarding the establishment of the dates of provenance, during the scientific research, we encountered the following situation: the interest of poachers was primarily focused on artefacts made of noble metals and coinage. The other artefacts were abandoned on the spot, from where they were recovered by archaeologists or reburied. Those seized from locals best reflect this situation, as coins have the highest number (2819). However, sometimes iron parts (iron blooms, tools, weapons, vessel elements, etc.) began to be preserved, which were either sold to people who wanted to collect them or were taken to metal recycling centers for collecting scrap metal. We also identified a mixture of coins that were never discovered in the Șureanu Mountains but in the Dobrogea area. This fact was observed in the analysis of seized parts during the criminal investigation from collectors. There is no doubt that this situation is due to the taking over of artefacts from poachers who carried out their criminal activities in several archaeological sites on the territory of Romania.

**Chapter V** presents the hierarchical *structure and functions of persons involved in the theft and illegal trade in heritage objects*, from guides and simple diggers to collectors and commanders. To the same extent, we presented the role of dealers and experts who helped evaluate and place the artefacts of either auction houses or collectors. Finally, I recall the connections made by some poachers of archaeological sites with high dignitaries, who provided them with protection and the necessary connections to capitalize on the stolen artefacts. In the analysis carried out, we started from the conclusions of Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, which showed how the international market for the illegal trade in antiquities is structured. By analyzing the files that had as object the crime of the archaeological heritage in the Şureanu Mountains, the data presented by the German expert are confirmed. Thus, a distinction was made between the occasional discoverer and the poacher, as well as the revealing of the role played as an intermediary in the placing on the black market. The thesis also presents how an object is stripped of its illicit origin and is "lawfully recycled", by using methods such as exposure in a museum institution or sale through an auction house, so that the asset acquires the appearance of a lawful origin.

In this hierarchical structure, according to the data presented in specialized studies, we have noticed that poachers adapt in the field. Thus, as in the analyzed cases, they were not locals, and they used local guides to pinpoint and help them in the field, as well buying influence or active corruption, either from the political area or from among the officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

**Chapter VI**, analyses how the *archaeological poaching was presented in the mass media*, starting with the series of articles about the robbery of the archaeological site *Sarmizegetusa Regia*, when the Hunedoara MP questioned the Minister of Internal Affairs, demanding solutions to eradicate the theft of artefacts from the mountains. The four stages of the media discourse are presented, in close connection with the evolution of the criminal investigation, with highlighting of what we have defined as the counteroffensive of the poachers of the archaeological sites, throughout the media channels. It wanted to manipulate public opinion through direct attacks on magistrates so that criminals would appear as victims of the judicial system. In this context, the hypothesis of the fake Dacian bracelets was placed, supported by prominent specialists of the academic environment, and promoted until recently on social media networks.

We have classified in three stages the discourse of the media concerning these acts. The first of them has in the foreground the journalistic investigation from November 1999 to January 2000, for which we have titled *the report*. The second stage is based on the cause-and-effect



principle, entitled the *formal accusation and the counteroffensive*. After the prosecution was reopened and the first persons were indicted, they used as several means of defense, including attempts to discredit the prosecution authorities through the media. The counteroffensive was aimed at inoculating the idea that the persons under investigation are the victims of abuse by the judicial authorities, and the recovered assets are forgeries. The penultimate stage includes the judicial investigation, the recovery of assets, as well as the solutions ordered in the cases reached before the court. The last stage has echoes of the cases since during this period there are no longer registered new files that have as object the crime of the archaeological heritage in the Șureanu Mountains, but there were under criminal investigation, respectively judicial investigation, cases disjointed from older ones.

Then, the activity of the mass media was largely limited to taking over the press releases of the Public Ministry, respectively of the Romanian Police, and in the period 2009-2021 the written articles on the crime in the field of protection of the archaeological heritage in the Șureanu Mountains were based on the texts of the communiqués of the mentioned institutions, respectively the procedural stages of the files sent for trial.

**Chapter VII** deals with a sensitive subject, that of the *accidental discovery in antithesis with archaeological poaching*, by using two case studies, one of which was intensely popularized in the media. The first case is related to the bronze mold discovered in 2013 at Sarmizegetusa Regia and the second is a stone vessel identified in the vicinity of the Cugir fortress (on the territorial grounds of Romosel village, Hunedoara county, 80 metres away from its limit). I have presented these cases, highlighting the legal meaning of the notion of "random discovery" and the conditions under which the two artefacts were reported. In essence, the role of this chapter is to underline and delineate the two phenomena. Firstly, archaeological poaching is assimilated to crimes of theft from archaeological sites, criminalized by the criminal law, according to the legislation in the field of cultural heritage. The accidental discovery, as it is currently defined can only be carried out outside the sites and their protected areas. However, if the artefacts resulting from a fortuitous discovery are not handed over within the term provided by the law - and even more they are kept, capitalized, or destroyed - the competent bodies may sanction, contravene, or prosecute the individual/s. Therefore, in certain situations, there may be a causal relationship between these two situations.

**Chapter VIII** presents one of the thorniest problems, namely the situation of private collections, which has generated a real conflict between the authorities and their owners and it concerns the archaeological artefacts, whose legal origin could not be justified. This situation is due to a long line of incompetence both in the case of holders and in the case of certain civil

servants in the institutions with the role of managing cultural heritage. Within this chapter, I have specified the legal regime of archaeological artefacts, starting from the stipulations of Article 136, paragraph 3, according to which the public goods of the subsoil are the exclusive object of public property. It is nowhere mentioned that this would exempt from these stipulations the artefacts in the subsoil of the privately owned land. Thus, even if the archaeological artefacts were discovered on private property, they belong to the state by law, and the person who discovered them must necessarily hand them over within the time limits provided by the law. In criminal investigation files, the most used formula of defense, when the authorities identified and seized for confiscation of such objects, was the appeal of the family inheritance. As we have pointed out in the case of inheritances, there is a legislative stipulation in which such claims can be easily disputed. Thus, according to law no. 63/1974 on the protection of the national cultural heritage, the person who owned at its entry, or subsequently acquired cultural artefacts as defined in the normative act, had the obligation to declare them for their registration in the centralized record, under the sanction of confiscation and transfer to state property, within 30 days from the entry or within 15 days from their acquisition. Those stipulations were indeed repealed by decree of the Council of the National Salvation Front 90/5 February 1990 on the establishment and organisation of the Commission of Museums and Collections, but they provide the prosecution with a system of verifying the assets allegedly inherited.

Regarding the regulation of the acquisition regime of the objects that make up these deposits, there is a *legal confusion between the collection and the accumulation of artefacts*. As provided by law, the collection can be defined as such only when it has been established and accredited for this purpose by the Ministry of Culture, after the approval of the *National Commission of Museums and Collections* has been obtained in advance. To acquire that opinion, it is necessary to cumulatively fulfil several *criteria*, such as the existence of its movable property, systematically constituted and coherently, of adequate space, of a suitable organizational chart and of the sources of financing to support the activity for a minimum of one year, otherwise, it cannot be a collection, but an accumulation of artefacts. The establishment of these accumulations of artefacts by different persons can be explained only if the stipulations regarding the obligation to surrender the artefacts discovered by chance, their concealment and capitalization, the purchase from sources other than authorized economic operators, as well as actions of theft from archaeological sites, unsupervised historical monuments, or the theft from accredited collections, respectively owners of artefacts, are not respected.

Moreover, to be able to use the name of the collection, the owner must obtain under the law *its accreditation from the National Commission of Museums and Collections*. Then to fulfil

all the obligations regarding the insurance of microclimate conditions, the restoration and conservation regime, ensuring security, monitoring the condition by accredited specialists, etc. If these conditions are not met cumulatively, rigorously required by the normative act, the person concerned does not have in his possession a collection within the meaning of the law, but an accumulation of artefacts. In this case, the owner does not meet the legal criteria of collector, but represents a collector of cultural artefacts without a legal origin, with suspicion of concealment. The situation is more significant for artefacts that have not been registered with any institution, without inventory and compliance with the legal provisions, where the owner/s made requests for restitution, after freezing, superficially admitted by the non-specialized court. The legal regime of private collections clearly states that their owner/s must comply with the legal stipulations regarding the sources of acquisition, accreditation, and storage of artefacts, as well as the obligations in case of disposal.

**The last chapter** of the thesis summarizes the situation in the protection of the national cultural heritage, presenting the urgent solutions that need to be approved so that the criminal phenomenon treated in this paper does not show any more ascending lines. The syncope of the protection structure within the judicial police are highlighted, this leading to a significant decrease in cases concerning cultural heritage crime at the level of the prosecutor's offices. Also, the lack of long-term educational measures is felt through acts of vandalism of archaeological sites and public threats of the people involved in their administration. At the time I am writing these lines, the fortresses from Costești-Cetățuie, Costești-Blidaru, Piatra Roșie, Bănița and Căpâlna are still without guard or any significant protection. The procedures for ensuring this obligation are delayed for unknown reasons, given that according to the stipulations in force, the guarding of the sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List is provided without payment by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The number of police officers specialized in combating crime in the field of cultural heritage was at the beginning of 2021 comprised of 14 individuals, with graduate studies in the fields of History, Art History, Architecture and 28 others, with various degrees. During the autumn of 2021, their number was completed with eight more classifications.

**The conclusions** of this interdisciplinary research concern both fields stated at the beginning: History and Law. Thus, the historical component concerns the evolution of archaeological poaching as a phenomenon, emphasizing the link between it and the search for treasures, and even the establishment of a causal link between the two. Also, considering that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Austrian tax authorities were also confronted with a feverish search for hoards at Grădiștii de Munte, on which occasion the ancient ruins that form the patrimony of the site *Sarmizegetusa Regia* of today were discovered, we can conclude that the

similarity between the searches of the peasants of that time and those of the poachers from 1996 to 2007 is high, only the technical equipment being more evolved.

The result of these actions was the theft from the archaeological sites of an impressive number of artefacts made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, which were either capitalized or destroyed, some of them not yet recovered. The case files that we studied show that 33 individuals were convicted for their crimes. Of these, only 12 have served custodial sentences, and currently, none of them is incarcerated. For the other defendants, the execution of the sentences was ordered to be suspended under supervision during probation periods, but four served various periods of pre-trial detention, which were deducted from their final sentence. At the same time, against some convicts, the courts have also taken the security measure of prohibiting access (for a fixed period) to the archaeological sites where they committed the acts.

The amount of money representing the compensation of the damages that these persons have to pay to the Romanian state are 279.164 lei, 5.226.698\$ and 2.090.051€, as follows: 1.562.066 € in file 41/97/2005; 49.523 lei and 351.164 € in the file 04652/221/2008\*; € 34.790 and € 11.578 in the criminal case 5591/221/2010, representing the precautionary seizure for a person removed from criminal prosecution (death) in the criminal case 151/P/2005; 4550 € in criminal case no. 5230/97/2013; \$ 5.215.120 and € 22.905 in case 55/97/2017, which resolved the civil side of the criminal case 7525/97/2012; 160.741 lei in the criminal case 1335/97/2017; € 111.576 in the criminal case 322/55/2017 and 12.500 lei in the criminal case 1796/272/2017. To these are added judicial expenses for 238.500 lei. Two cases, one criminal and one civil, are still pending before the courts.

Regarding the increase in the number of authorized owners of metal detectors and their connection with the phenomenon analyzed in the present paper, several aspects must be noted. Firstly, for the purchase and possession of such a device, it is necessary to obtain a permit from the authorities. The major difference between the authorized individuals and poachers in archaeological sites is that the persons who seek to obtain an authorized device are persons of good faith, passionate about archaeology and do not run the risk of making detections in archaeological sites, thus becoming criminals. Also, with a few exceptions, they hand over the discovered artefacts within the legal term, often giving up the reward provided by law. Their activity is a *hobby type*, not a criminal practice to traffic the artefacts discovered. However, although the phenomenon is increasing worldwide, I believe that the archaeological heritage should be taken and researched by specialists and preserved for future generations of archaeologists. It is indeed a subjective opinion, but there is no barrier for someone who wants to form and become an archaeologist. Amateurism in this discipline would imply a decrease in

professionalism and in this way of the security of the heritage. Rather, a long-term strategy would be appropriate to train specialists on both sides and thus collaborate to eliminate the conflict between archaeologists and amateurs.

*The epilogue* represents my considerations about the benefit brought to the research of the history of the social elites in the Şureanu Mountains. Even if the discoveries are unequivocally exceptional, the destruction of the context and the hunt for artefacts are not beneficial, given that the public discourse reiterates the idea of preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage to future generations.

The work is accompanied by nine annexes, the most extensive being the *catalogue of stolen artefacts*, followed by the *repertoire of criminal and civil files* that had as object crime, respectively the recovery of civil damages. At the same time, a situation of *the Koson coins put up for auction* in the period 1994-2021 is presented, with the mention of the institution that organized the auction, the lot, the purchase value, the type of stamp and the provenance. Finally, like the repertoire of criminal cases and the catalogue of recovered assets, there is also the annex on press articles, which represent important parts and complete the text of the paper, providing references to how the media discourse on this phenomenon has evolved or modified.

The 150 plates that compose the illustration of the work are ordered chronologically, starting with the cartographic documents of Mount Godeanu, the place from which the first hoards were stolen, followed by the unpublished sources from the archives in Vienna and Budapest. A map of the Şureanu Mountains, marked with the *discoveries of hoards* from the period of the 1800s until 2013, highlights the material from which the artefacts were made and the distribution in the field. *Each stolen treasure* through the actions of poachers in archaeological sites is presented distinctly, starting from the judicial photographs, and reaching the present situation. Since due to the clogging of pits in some cases, recognizing them in the field is difficult. In addition to monetary hoards and those with plurispiralic bracelets, we also presented *the poaching pits* from which they were recovered by archaeologists, tools and other artefacts abandoned by poachers. Unfortunately, they were not the subject of criminal prosecution, and today due to the change in the situation on the ground, not all of them are observed, but the number of assets recovered only from the archaeological site *Sarmizegetusa Regia*, exceeds 1000. The fortresses of Piatra Roşie and Căpâlna were investigated in the same way.

*The coins* are selectively illustrated, highlighting the main types (Koson and Lysimach gold coins, republican and imperial denary, Greek, Dacian coinage, etc.). I have not been able to draw up exhaustive graphic representations of these artefacts, as their number 5171, has already

required a huge amount of work for their morpho-metric and photographic documentation. Description for each artefact can be observed within the catalogue.

At the same time, we presented the lots or *deposits* of artefacts, that are part of the archaeological heritage, *donated* by different individuals to the museum institutions, specific to the sites in the Șureanu Mountains. I mention here the one donated by an anonymous person to the Corvin Castle Museum in Hunedoara, the one "donated" to the National Museum of History of Transylvania during the criminal investigation by a defendant, the one purchased by the president of the "Millenium III" Foundation and subsequently donated to the National Museum of History of Romania, and the one donated in 2010 by a local from the village of Alun (Boșorod commune).

I also centralized all *the published artefacts* within the period between 2000-2021, which the authors mentioned to come from the activity of poachers who carried out their criminal activity in the archaeological sites in the analyzed area. Some of these artefacts were purchased by people who wanted to set up private collections.

The typology of the artefacts stolen by poachers from archaeological sites in the period 1993-2015 is a diverse one, and their number exceeds thousands, therefore the illustration regarding weapons, tools, harness components, adornment and port parts, metal vessels elements is also a selective one, also due to the workload necessary for the processing of photographic documentation, with the same indication that the complete descriptions are included in the catalogue. However, in the case of persons who have purchased artefacts to collect them or sold such artefacts, we have shown a greater degree of caution as to the provenance of the assets seized by the criminal investigation bodies from these persons, can also be stolen from other sites, not only from those analyzed in this paper. I have also presented some of these cases because I was able to show in this way how dynamic the market for these artefacts was and how an attempt was made to conceal the illicit origin by capitalising on people who wanted to collect them.

The stone vessel from Cugir and the mold from Sarmizegetusa Regia were framed in the illustration of the chapter that analyzes the random discovery with the archaeological poaching.

The best documented from an illustrative point of view is, without reservation, the *Czech poachers' campaign* in 2015, when in the perimeter of the sites from Bănița, Costești-Blidaru, Costești-Cetățuie and Piatra Roșie, 266 pits were dug with, 202 artefacts being stolen -159 archaeological artefacts (weapons, tools, ornamental targets, nails, links, vessel fragments, bronze tin fragments, etc.), 29 coins (six of them from the outside area), two rings and 12 artefacts recovered from the household waste of the guesthouse where they were accommodated. In this

case, we have presented the spatial distribution of the pits in each case, as well as the artefacts recovered due to the home searches.

In the end, I considered it appropriate to present the up-to-date situation of the protection structures in the field of national cultural heritage at the level of the Public Ministry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We can observe that at least on paper there is an evolution of these structures through the framing respectively the training of specialists in the field of cultural heritage protection.