

## Durham E-Theses

---

*The evolution of roman frontier defence systems and fortifications the lower danube provinces in the first and second centuries AD*

John Karavas

### How to cite:

---

Karavas, John (2001) The evolution of roman frontier defence systems and fortifications the lower danube provinces in the first and second centuries AD. Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/3957/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

**THE EVOLUTION OF ROMAN FRONTIER  
DEFENCE SYSTEMS AND FORTIFICATIONS  
IN THE LOWER DANUBE PROVINCES  
IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES AD**

**Volume I**

**JOHN KARAVAS  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published in any form, including Electronic and the Internet, without the author's prior written consent. All information derived from this thesis must be acknowledged appropriately.**

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Classics and Ancient History

University of Durham  
Epiphany 2001



28 MAY 2002

*In memory of Nicholas Karavas*

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE EVOLUTION OF ROMAN FRONTIER DEFENCE SYSTEMS AND FORTIFICATIONS IN THE LOWER DANUBE PROVINCES IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES AD**

*John Karavas, University College  
PhD in Classics and Ancient History  
Epiphany Term 2001*

The defence of the Roman Empire from barbarian attacks depended on two distinct but interrelated features: the actual fortifications on the borders of the imperial provinces and the troops that garrisoned them.

The main aim of this dissertation is to provide a collective analysis of Roman defence systems on the Lower Danube region, i.e. the provinces of Pannonia Inferior, Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior and Dacia. The period of study spans from the early first century to the middle of the second century AD, a period which corresponds to the gradual emergence and final consolidation of the Roman frontier defence systems in the area.

On the basis of the physical evidence that has survived from the frontier fortifications of the Lower Danube area, this study attempts to present a reconstruction of the strategic and tactical situation on the frontier and to provide some fresh observations on the motives behind the creation, purpose and function of Roman frontiers during the early Principate.

After a brief introduction on some of the views that have been put forward on the subject, the main part of the thesis is divided into four separate chapters, one for each of the provinces studied. These chapters study the fortifications themselves in order to establish their date and garrison so as to offer an evaluation of the characteristic features of the defensive system of each frontier sector. The last chapter brings together the above information in order to produce some conclusions on the defence systems in the area, especially in relation to the rationale behind their creation and subsequent development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to a number of people who have helped me throughout the course of my study at Durham. I could only begin by thanking my supervisor, Dr. E. D. Hunt, whose continuous guidance, lively interest, patient advice and valuable corrections and revisions, were indispensable for bringing this study to its final form of completion. I should also like to thank Dr. M. Millet for his very helpful comments during the early stages of this study and for his general support during its development.

The present study would not have been possible without the access to the material and the personal help which I received from a number of scholars working in the region of the Lower Danube. I would like to start by thanking Prof. N. Gudea and Dr. M. Zahariade for providing me with valuable bibliographical reference and for sharing with me their extensive expertise on the remains of Roman fortifications in the area of modern Romania. Special thanks are due to Dr. I. Bogdan-Cataniciu, Dr. T. Dvorski, Dr. D. Isac, Dr. A. Matei, Dr. C. Opreanu, Dr. A. Suceveanu, Dr. Z. Visy and C. Gazdac, for providing me with fresh insight with respect to the particular areas or sectors of the Lower Danube area on which they are currently working on. Furthermore, I should like to express my gratitude to Dr. T. Cvjeticanin for all her help during my visit to Belgrade and Dr. J. Kondic for sharing with me the latest information that has been recovered from excavations in the Iron Gates area; and also to Dr. P. Duczek and Dr. G. Kabakieva for the information on the latest excavations and research in the Bulgarian sector of the Lower Danube 'limes'.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Classics department of the University of Durham, for their generous financial support during my course of study at Durham. In addition, I would like to thank the Dean's Fund Commission (University of Durham), the Eric Birley foundation and the University of Durham for granting me the necessary funds in order to visit both Yugoslavia and Romania.

My research was sustained by the resources of the Durham University Library and the Ashmolean Library, Oxford University. I would like to thank the directors and staff of both institutions for their cooperation and help.

A number of people have all contributed in making the past years enjoyable in various ways. In this respect, I would especially like to thank Jason Campbell, Olga and Xenia Geroulanos, David Heighington, Adam Long, Yiannis Papadimos, Justin Wells, Marinos and Aimilia Yeroulanos; last but not least, Maria Stamatopoulou, for her friendship and moral support during times of crisis. Moreover, I should like to thank her and Dennis Saw for all their help and hospitality during the last two years.

It is very difficult to find the right words to thank one's family. First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother Mary Karavas without whose moral and financial support none of this would have been possible. Her support of my choices throughout my studies has been indispensable. My sister and brother-in-law have both been extremely supportive and very helpful in a number of different ways. For all their help and patience, I can not thank them enough. Last, but definitely not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my wife Marina Yeroulanou for her continuous support, valuable revisions during the last stages of this thesis and for, as it seems, her endless patience.

This thesis is dedicated to my father N. Karavas, the pivot throughout my academic years and my life in general. His constant interest and enthusiasm in my work proved to be a constant source of guidance and inspiration.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Volume I

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of contents	vi
List of tables and maps	viii
I. Introduction	1
i. Past Studies - Aims and Scope of the Thesis	2
ii. Layout of Thesis	7
iii. General Views on Roman Frontiers	8
II. The Province of Pannonia Inferior	17
i. Fortifications in the Province of Pannonia Inferior	19
a. Sector I	19
b. Sector II	38
c. Fortifications in the Interior of the Province	44
ii. Evaluation of the Defence System of Lower Pannonia	47
a. The Julio-Claudian Period	47
b. The Flavian Period	51
c. The Antonine Period	57
III. The Province of Moesia	60
i. Fortifications in the Province of Moesia Superior	69
a. Sector I	69
b. Sector II	78
c. Sector III	97
d. Fortifications in the Interior of the Province	101
ii. Evaluation of the Defence System of Upper Moesia	104
a. The Julio-Claudian Period	104
b. The Flavian Period	110
c. The Antonine Period	115
iii. Fortifications in the Province of Moesia Inferior	118
a. Sector I	118
b. Sector II	123
c. Sector III	129
iv. Evaluation of the defence system of Lower Moesia	138
a. The Julio-Claudian Period	138
b. The Flavian Period	141
c. The Antonine Period	145
IV. The Province of Dacia	150
i. Fortifications in the Province of Dacia	154
a. The Southwest Sector of Dacia Superior (Sector I)	154
b. The Northeast Sector of Dacia Superior (Sector III)	164
c. Fortifications in the Interior of Dacia Superior	168
d. The Province of Dacia Porolissensis (Sector II)	170
e. The Province of Dacia Inferior (Sector IV)	182
f. Fortifications in the areas of eastern Oltenia and Wallachia	197
ii. Evaluation of the defence system of Dacia	198

a. Dacia Superior West (Sector Ia)	198
b. Dacia Superior North-West (Sector Ib)	203
c. Dacia Porolissensis (Sector II)	207
d. The Eastern Part of Roman Dacia: From Trajan to Hadrian	214
e. Dacia Superior East (Sector III)	217
f. Dacia Inferior (Sector IV)	219
V. Conclusions	227
i. The Creation and Choice of Frontier Lines on the Lower Danube	227
a. Rome and the Lower Danube Area during the Julio-Claudian Period	227
b. The Early State of the Frontier	229
c. The Emergence of Linear Frontier Fortification Systems on the Danube river: From the Flavians to the Antonines	231
d. The Nature of Roman Frontier Strategy after the Flavian Period	235
e. The Choice of Rome's Frontier Lines	237
f. Roman defence systems on the Lower Danube frontier: The product of a "Grand strategy"?	240
g. Defence Systems in the Lower Danube Area: Some Observations	243
ii. The Purpose and Function of Roman Frontiers on the Lower Danube	247
iii. The Effectiveness of Roman Frontiers on the Lower Danube: Some Final Remarks	259
Appendix A: The Limes Olbiopolitanus and Limes Tauro-Skythiae	261
i. Limes Olbiopolitanus	261
ii. Limes Tauro-Skythiae	264
Appendix B: The Limes Transalutanus	266
 <b>Volume II</b>	
Abbreviations	1
Bibliography	6
Tables	72
Maps	79

# LIST OF TABLES AND MAPS

## TABLES

1. Troop Disposition in Pannonia Inferior
2. Troop Disposition in Moesia Superior
3. Troop Disposition in Moesia Inferior
4. Troop Disposition in Dacia
5. Fort Constructions Phases on the Frontier of Pannonia Inferior
6. Fort Constructions Phases on the Frontier of Moesia Superior
7. Fort Constructions Phases on the Frontier of Moesia Inferior

## MAPS

1. The Lower Danube area
  
- 2-7. The Province of Pannonia inferior
- 8-13. The Province of Moesia Superior
- 14-19. The Province of Moesia Inferior
- 20-32. The Province of Dacia
- 21-22 & 27-28 The Province of Dacia: Sector I
- 23-24 & 29-30 The Province of Dacia: Sectors II-III
- 25-26 & 31-32 The Province of Dacia: Sector IV
  
2. The Lower Pannonian Limes by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
3. The Lower Pannonian Limes by the end of the first century AD
4. The Lower Pannonian Limes by the middle of the second century AD
5. Troop Disposition in Pannonia Inferior by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
6. Troop Disposition in Pannonia Inferior by the end of the first century AD
7. Troop Disposition in Pannonia Inferior by the middle of the second century AD
  
8. The Fortifications of Moesia Superior by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
9. The Fortifications of Moesia Superior by the end of the Flavian period
10. The Fortifications of Moesia Superior by the middle of the second century AD
11. Troop Disposition in Moesia Superior by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
12. Troop Disposition in Moesia Superior by the end of the Flavian period
13. Troop Disposition in Moesia Superior by the middle of the second century AD

14. The Fortifications of Moesia Inferior by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
15. The Fortifications of Moesia Inferior by the end of the Flavian period
16. The Fortifications of Moesia Inferior by the middle of the second century AD
17. Troop Disposition in Moesia Inferior by the end of the Julio Claudian dynasty
18. Troop Disposition in Moesia Inferior by the end of the Flavian period
19. Troop Disposition in Moesia Inferior by the middle of the second century AD
  
20. Dacia
21. The Fortifications of Dacia Sector I during the reign of Trajan
22. The Fortifications of Dacia Sector I by the middle of the second century AD
23. The Fortifications of Dacia Sectors II-III during the reign of Trajan
24. The Fortifications of Dacia Sectors II-III by the middle of the second cent. AD
25. The Fortifications of Dacia Sector IV during the reign of Trajan
26. The Fortifications of Dacia Sector IV by the middle of the second century AD
27. Troop disposition in Dacia Sector I during the reign of Trajan
28. Troop disposition in Dacia Sector I by the middle of the second century AD
29. Troop disposition in Dacia Sectors II-III during the reign of Trajan
30. Troop disposition in Dacia Sectors II-III by the middle of the second cent. AD
31. Troop disposition in Dacia Sector IV by the end of Trajan's reign
32. Troop disposition in Dacia Sector IV by the middle of the second century AD

## **NOTE TO THE READER**

Where necessary, all modern personal and place names (authors and archaeological sites) throughout the main text have been printed with their respective diacritical signs inserted, so as to provide the reader with an accurate rendering of their form. When transcription from Cyrillic into Latin characters is involved (as in the case of Serbian and Bulgarian authors and place names) and in order to avoid confusion, I have opted for the familiar practice of using diacritical signs instead of phonetic renderings. This practice is still accurate as far as the Serbian language is concerned and, until quite recently, was the standard practice when transcribing from Bulgarian into Latin.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The end of the Augustan era seems to have been a decisive turning point in the historical development of Roman foreign policy, just as Augustus' reign had been the pivotal point for Roman history as a whole. Augustus' last wishes, advising his successors to halt any attempts at further advance and to establish the limits of Roman control behind clearly defined natural barriers were clear and irrevocable: "consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii".<sup>1</sup> Without doubt, Augustus' expressed desire, apart from constituting the first sign of a "frontier policy",<sup>2</sup> appears to have marked the termination of the era of uninhibited expansion, and with it, the old Republican ideal of "imperium sine fine".<sup>3</sup> Peace and recuperation would now become Rome's utmost priority, defence and consolidation, rather than expansion, the objective; the final conquest of the "orbis terrarum", pursued for generations by Rome's Republican leaders and eagerly awaited from contemporary literary figures,<sup>4</sup> would become a thing of the past. It is within this political framework that the creation of clear visible frontier lines – and their most recognisable feature, the Roman 'limes'<sup>5</sup> – enveloping the totality of the empire would come into being in the Roman world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus *Ann.*, i.11, a policy which Tacitus would later fiercely object to, *Agr.* 13. For a comprehensive study of Augustan foreign policy see Wells, *Policy of Augustus*; Meyer, *Aussenpolitik des Augustus*.

<sup>2</sup> Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Virgil *Aeneid* I.279.

<sup>4</sup> Virgil *Aeneid* vi. 794-5, claiming that Augustus would soon extend Roman rule beyond the Indians and the Garamantes.

<sup>5</sup> By definition a term denoting a frontier road, the word "limes" is now continuously used to describe a system or line of frontier fortifications and defences. For the definition of the term "limes", see Forni, "Limes", 213-226; Isaac, "Meaning", 125-147.



“...qui barbaros Romanosque divideret”.<sup>6</sup> This represents one of the few surviving ancient accounts as to the purpose of Roman frontiers: a clear, visible line to separate what was Roman and what was not.

What is quite surprising is the lack of evidence from literary sources on the nature of Roman frontiers and on the issue of the empire’s defence in general, especially if one considers the extensive building activity that occurred during the early Principate. Even Ptolemy, who actually visited certain frontiers of the empire during the first half of the second century AD and saw the actual fortifications, has provided no further account as to their purpose or function.

The only information we can derive from ancient sources are hints as to how contemporary writers perceived the role of Roman frontiers, most of which tend to describe them as a ring of fortifications surrounding the empire, aimed at protecting it from barbarian attacks. Appian states that the Romans “fortify the empire around in a circle with great armies, and they guard so much land and sea as if it were an estate”.<sup>7</sup> Similar descriptions are provided by Aelius Aristeides<sup>8</sup> and Herodian, who cites that the main purpose of the army and the forts on the Rhine and Danube rivers was to shield the empire from external attacks.<sup>9</sup>

## **I.i. PAST STUDIES – AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE THESIS**

Past studies in this subject can be roughly divided into three main groups: a. Archaeological reports of the excavations carried out separately in a particular region or province, which present the evidence and archaeological material that have come to light; b. studies related to the Roman army stationed in a province and c. more general studies on the issue of Roman strategy.

The remains of Roman fortifications have received a fair amount of scientific research and, often, detailed publication over the years. In relation to the

---

<sup>6</sup> SHA *Had.*, xii.6.

<sup>7</sup> *Praef.* 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Or.* 26.82-84; *Ad.Rom.* 81-82.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, 2.9.1, 2.11.5, 6.2.5. See Matern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 111.

Lower Danube area, initial research began during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as part of an effort to identify and establish the topography of Roman fortifications along the Danube river course. It was also at that time, that the first independent studies on individual Roman fortifications in the region began to appear. It was, however, the second part of the century that witnessed a considerable upsurge in the study of Roman fortifications on the Lower Danube, no doubt owing to the significant amount of research which was being conducted at the time in other frontier sectors of the empire. Since then, a substantial number of publications have appeared, which have resulted in the collection of a comparatively large amount of archaeological data. Just to mention a few authors, Biernacka-Lubańska, Bogdan-Cătăniciu, Gudea, Kondić, Mirković, Mócsy, Visy and Zahariade, have all offered comprehensive and extremely helpful research papers in this respect.

Closely following the growth of archaeological research in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of extensive studies started to appear in relation to the Roman army. In addition to Roxan, Spaul and Wagner, individual studies by Beneš, Lőrincz, Radnóti, Russu and Szilágyi have offered invaluable comprehensive compilations of the evidence – military diplomata, brick stamps or other army related material – which can be used to identify which Roman units were stationed on each frontier, as well as the total strength of the Roman army in each province.

Research in the area is continuing, albeit at a slow pace, given the volatile political situation and the perpetual lack of funds in the poverty-stricken Eastern block countries; nevertheless it has managed to yield some new information with respect to Roman forts and military units along the Lower Danube river course.

The third group consists of general studies on the issue of Roman strategy and military planning. Quite remarkably, it has only been the last quarter of the century which has seen a conscious effort by scholars to touch on the rather difficult subject of the purpose and function of Roman frontiers on a broader context. Without doubt, the subject owes much to the original contribution made by Luttwak; since then, studies carried out by Mann, Isaac, Ferrill, Whittaker, Wheeler and lately Mattern, have all contributed towards our understanding of the

nature and purpose of Roman frontiers, both within the context of a particular frontier sector and on an empire-wide scale.

However, despite the abundance of works which invariably fall into one of these three groups, there seems to be a lack of studies that combine the above and which try to present a more general picture as to Roman defence systems in relation to the actual evidence. With regard to the first group, most studies have tended to be rather isolated and limited in their scope, focusing on separate frontier sectors within a province or, at most, single provinces, thus not taking into consideration the fact that Roman frontier sectors and their defence systems were interdependent and worked in close co-operation with each other. In addition, apart from some isolated efforts, there has been no real attempt to apply the available evidence in order to provide a study as to the function and purpose of a Roman frontier defence system within a provincial boundary, let alone within a wider geographical region.

Much of the same criticism can be levelled in relation to studies falling within the second group. While they are very useful in providing comprehensive compilations of all army related material, they do not offer a complete picture of troop deployment along the frontiers and therefore provide little or no information as to the army's role in the defence of the imperial frontier or as to how the pattern of strategic disposition along a given frontier line affects the shape and nature of each frontier defence system and its overall defensive capabilities.

As for the third group, there seems to be a certain number of shortcomings that can be associated with their works: For example, some studies have a limited chronological scope, quite often focusing on the reign of a single emperor without taking into account what happens before and after, which, in my view, is an essential requirement if one is to establish the existence of continuity or uniformity in imperial frontier policy. At the same time, what can also be seen in a number of works, is the relative lack of knowledge or understanding of the actual physical evidence, which has been derived from the rather substantial military investment (fortifications etc) which is visible on almost each frontier of the empire; especially in relation to the purpose and function of the Roman fortifications and garrisons that constituted the backbone of each separate frontier

defence system and the invaluable information they can provide as to the function of Roman frontiers in general. In this respect, there can really be no understanding or comprehension of the nature or purpose of Roman frontiers as a whole without a healthy understanding of what one can describe as the situation "on the ground". It is important to stress here that it is often the case where the disregarding of the physical evidence, can sometimes lead to broad generalisations and misleading or erroneous interpretations.

-----

It is therefore the aim of this thesis to bridge all isolated studies in order to offer some fresh observations on the general purpose and function of Roman frontiers based on the close examination of the actual physical evidence that has survived in the Lower Danube frontier. The Roman defensive system on the Lower Danube as a whole has not been investigated to any significant extent, either with regard to the actual remains of the existing fortifications or to its evolution, structure and function over clearly defined periods of time. At the same time, this particular sector, in my view, constitutes one of the most representative examples of a "Roman frontier": The Lower Danube was one of the most heavily fortified sector of the Roman empire, despite the fact that it corresponded to what was essentially a small fraction of the total length of the imperial frontiers. The frontier line alone is marked by no less than *c.* 180 fortifications,<sup>10</sup> without excluding the possibility that other, as yet unidentified fortifications, might have existed. This area also constituted a key theatre of war during the principate, which brought together an extraordinary number of troops in relation to the rest of the empire: 25-30 % of the total forces of the Roman army, *i.e.* *c.* 110.000 men.

Furthermore, the study has been limited to the first and second centuries AD, which, as will be shown later corresponds to the period between the gradual emergence and final consolidation of each frontier defence system in the area. After the middle of the second century, imperial policy on the frontiers was usually limited to minor modifications or revisions of the existing strategic layout. This study will thus concentrate on three main chronological periods, that is the

---

<sup>10</sup> In relation to the first and second centuries AD.

Julio-Claudian, the Flavian and the Antonine, as it seeks to reveal that the end of each of these periods tends to correspond with major military activity and investment on the Lower Danube frontier.

Within these limits this thesis, by drawing on all the relevant available archaeological evidence, will attempt to establish, as accurately as possible, the dates of all Roman fortifications on the Lower Danube frontier, including their initial erection dates, subsequent occupation phases, and most importantly, their garrisons, which will help to establish the pattern of Rome's strategic and tactical disposition on each frontier sector. On the basis of the evidence it will then seek to provide an incremental in-depth analysis of the historical development, evolution, purpose and function of Rome's systems of frontier defence works on the Lower Danubian frontier line within the above chronological limits, in order to consider three main questions:

- i. Whether the erection of fixed, visible frontier barriers and the construction of integrated systems of defence on the Lower Danube frontier line was the end product of a continuous process of development and activity from the Julio-Claudian emperors up to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.
- ii. Whether the actual choice of the frontier line was a product of rational strategic thinking or, as it has been often described, the result of an ad hoc or accidental decision.
- iii. Establish whether the gradual evolution of the Lower Danube limes reveals a uniformity in the frontier policies of successive Roman emperors during this period, at least as to how these provinces should be defended; and whether these defence systems were the end product of a rational and conscious strategic approach, which following a careful examination of the peculiarities of each province's geographical and topographical realities and a deep awareness of the enemy's capability or potential threat, resulted in a system of frontier defence capable of meeting the empire's essential strategic requirements in the region.

## **I.ii. LAYOUT OF THESIS**

In accordance with the main questions to be considered in this study, this thesis will be divided into five main chapters. In the remaining part of the introduction there is a brief discussion and presentation of the some of the main views that have been put forward on the purpose and function of Roman frontiers.

This will be followed by three main chapters (II-IV) which study each of the Lower Danube provinces, that is Pannonia Inferior, Moesia (Superior and Inferior) and finally Dacia. In each case, the frontier defence systems of these provinces, regardless of their overall strategic significance or the extent of military investment visible on their borders, will be separately discussed in detail. The main emphasis will be placed on the identification and description of the physical remains of Roman fortifications in the area, including both the large military sites (legionary and auxiliary forts) as well as the 'lesser fortifications' (watchtowers or fortified posts).

Each chapter is subdivided into three smaller sections: The first section will provide a short reference to the main historical events that shaped the history of each province from the time of its initial conquest to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; this part will also include a brief discussion on the general topography and geographical limits of each province. The second section consists of a complete presentation of all first and second century Roman frontier fortifications in each of the four Lower Danube provinces. Following a critical evaluation of the available or surviving archaeological and literary evidence, this section seeks to establish each fort's actual location, initial construction date, subsequent phases of occupation and last, but not least, its garrison; in my view, the study of each fortification, the fundamental component of each frontier defence system, can provide valuable insight with respect to particular aspects of Roman frontier policy or strategy, in terms of its driving motivation, evolution or implementation. At the end of each chapter, there is a separate section which includes an overall evaluation of the characteristic or distinctive features of the defensive system of each frontier sector, its evolution, as well as its purpose and overall function in the defence of the empire in general and of the area in particular. This part will also

include maps, showing the pattern of Roman strategic and tactical disposition on each frontier sector as established in the second section of each main chapter, as well as tables showing the garrison of each fort by the end of the three chronological periods under examination.

Three sections have often been discussed in relation to the Danubian frontiers of this period: the Limes Olbiopolitanus, the Limes Thracο-Skythicae and the Limes Transalutanus. As they are not directly related – either chronologically or geographically – to the other Lower Danube frontier sectors, they will be discussed separately in the appendix of the thesis.

Finally, the last chapter of the thesis (V), will draw on the observations made in the previous chapters in order to test the validity of some of the main theories put forward on Roman frontier strategy, to produce some conclusions and remarks as to the three main questions set, and, finally, to provide a general evaluation of the overall purpose and effectiveness of Rome's frontier defences in the Lower Danube basin.

### **I.iii. GENERAL VIEWS ON ROMAN FRONTIERS**

Given the lack of specific information which can be derived from ancient sources, the general questions regarding the function of Roman frontiers have been the matter of speculation for recent scholarship, which has focused on this subject during the last fifty years.<sup>11</sup>

Based on the SHA's original statement, it was A. Alföldi who, in 1949, first put forward the theory that the main purpose for the erection of Roman defensive barriers was to provide an effective line of cultural segregation between the Roman and non-Roman world, a cultural shield designed to protect Roman civilisation by clearly marking off its limits from the barbarian populations that lived beyond it.<sup>12</sup> Judging by the overall defensive layout of Hadrian's Wall in Britain or the shape and structure of Rome's Rhine and Danube frontier sectors,

---

<sup>11</sup> See above, page 2.

<sup>12</sup> Alföldi, "Moral Barrier", 1-16. On the quote see above, note 6.

Alföldi's argument could receive a certain amount of support; in both cases large continuous frontier barriers, whether natural or artificial, provided not only clear lines of separation between the Empire and the Barbaricum but also an increasing degree of control and monitoring of all movement of populations across the frontier. What, however, remains quite questionable in relation to this theory, is whether the Romans ever made any systematic and deliberate attempt at using their frontiers as "moral" or "cultural" barriers or whether Roman frontiers were themselves capable of creating great ethnic divisions in the first place. In addition, it would be difficult to press this theory with respect to the totality of Roman frontiers, as, for one thing, it seems that Roman frontiers outside the European continent were never intended to be closed or prohibitive.<sup>13</sup> Though the movement of populations was closely monitored, there was still a continuous flow of people that ventured beyond and across them. Accordingly, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the Romans made any particular effort to prevent this flow; in the case of the Numidian frontier sector, for example, most scholars have tended to view the "Fossatum" as a device to regulate and control rather than obstruct the seasonal migration of nomadic tribes across the province's borderline.<sup>14</sup> In a similar fashion, the defence system of the province of Arabia which consisted of a line of numerous forts and outposts situated on or near the frontier line (the Via Nova),<sup>15</sup> seems never to have served as a "total" barrier or obstacle against transborder movement, as there was a constant flow of caravan traffic entering the province from the south.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, it seems that, at least in relation to the frontiers of the late Roman period, the Romans often encouraged and established trading relations with the populations that lived beyond the frontier. Augustinus informs us that such trade was restricted to certain places and on certain days, on the condition that the barbarians promised their good behaviour before the officer of the guard.<sup>17</sup> For

---

<sup>13</sup> See the relevant discussion in Le Bohec, *Army*, 147ff; Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 75ff.

<sup>14</sup> Birley, "Frontier Policy", 28; Fentress, *Numidia*, 112; Van Berchem, *Armée*, 44-46.

<sup>15</sup> See Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, 91-103; Sartre, "Frontières". For a detailed discussion of the Arabian-Nabatean defence system, including maps of the fort distribution see Parker, *Roman Frontier*, 63-66.

<sup>16</sup> Graf, "Preliminary Report", 127.

<sup>17</sup> Augustinus, *Epp.* 86.

instance, along the Rhine and Danube frontier sectors, Roman soldiers put up special market places, “macellae”, in which trade with barbarians could take place under military supervision;<sup>18</sup> an inscription from a burgus in Pannonia seems to advertise its purpose, “cui nomen commercium”,<sup>19</sup> while a number of similar macellae have been uncovered along both the Upper Pannonian and Norican frontier sectors.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Alföldi’s notion, that the Romans deliberately aimed at using their frontiers as lines of political, social and cultural segregation as a means for secluding and isolating their world from the barbaricum, seems not to have taken into consideration two further important factors: first, that Rome made a significant effort at establishing frequent diplomatic relations with her neighbours across the frontiers;<sup>21</sup> and second, in relation to the Lower Danube area, that there are at least two occasions where large numbers of barbarian populations were formally allowed to settle within the Empire.<sup>22</sup>

The first scholar to view the Roman frontiers as a firm means of protection was Luttwak, who was actually the first to study the whole defensive system from a clearly strategic point of view and to characterise the frontiers as the empire’s primary mechanism of defence. Luttwak, a firm advocate of the theory that the Romans were well aware of both the subtleties and the limitations of deterrence,<sup>23</sup> has emphasized that the main strategic objective was the creation of a perimeter boundary for the sufficient protection of the empire.

Actually, Luttwak went even further to suggest that the creation and development of Rome’s frontier defence systems as well as the choice of the empire’s frontier lines, were the end product of a pre-conceived comprehensive “grand” strategy and the exercise of a single, uniform, coherent central policy,

---

<sup>18</sup> See R. MacMullen, “Barbarian Enclaves”, 49.

<sup>19</sup> *CIL* iii.3653, as cited by Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 175.

<sup>20</sup> MacMullen, “Barbarian Enclaves”, 49-50.

<sup>21</sup> On this subject, see Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*.

<sup>22</sup> See chapters II.ii.a and III.iv.a. See also Mócsy, *Bevölkerung*, 33-34; Wilkes, “Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians”, 259-260.

<sup>23</sup> Luttwak, *Strategy*, 3.

conceived and applied by successive Roman emperors for the totality of the empire.<sup>24</sup>

Judging from the overall change in the patterns of Roman imperial defence in the course of the late first and early second centuries AD, the gradual evolution in terms of the erection of Roman frontier defences in general appears to reveal a rather remarkable uniformity in the frontier policies of successive Roman emperors. However, though the latter argument seems quite probable and will be studied further in this thesis in relation to the Lower Danube area, it seems that Luttwak's basic proposition for the existence of a "grand strategy" behind the creation of the Roman "limites", entails certain difficulties and has been duly criticised over the years.<sup>25</sup>

For one thing, by examining the defence systems of every single frontier sector of the empire, following their final consolidation by the end of the Antonine era, what becomes immediately evident is the enormous variety of the frontier structures themselves. In Britain, the defence of the province depended on the military establishment concentrated along Hadrian's Wall (manned solely by auxiliaries) in addition to the legionary garrison stationed in the interior.<sup>26</sup> For the protection of the Rhine frontier sector, the Romans alternatively relied on a defensive structure that basically consisted of one single line of defence centred around a linear barrier - the ditch and palisade system - and the massive concentration of troops on the actual frontier line. A similar pattern of perimeter deployment can be observed on the Danube frontier, protected by linear fortification systems but with the notable absence of any artificial barriers.

---

<sup>24</sup> Luttwak's theories have attracted a number of followers, who in one way or another have argued for the existence and exercise of such a 'grand strategy'. For example, see Ferill, "Grand Strategy", 71-85; Wheeler, "Roman Strategy", 7-51 and 215-240; Potter, "Emperors", 49-68. Furthermore, Dyson and Campbell have argued that the choice of Rome's frontier lines were a result of rational considerations, as Rome had a clear view of which boundaries would guarantee the safety of the imperial provinces: Campbell, *Emperor*, 133ff, 382ff; Dyson, *Roman Frontier*, 5.

<sup>25</sup> See Mann, "Frontiers", 508-533; who argued that the creation of the Roman frontiers was accidental, while the frontier defence systems a sign "of failure". Similar views are held in his review of Luttwak's book, (*Power*, 175-183). Also Isaac, *Limits*, 372ff; Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 22ff, who include a comprehensive, detailed discussion on this subject.

Further variations in military and strategic dispositions appear in the case of Rome's Eastern and African borders. In the East, with the majority of the legions stationed nearby the major urban centres in the interior of the provinces, the most striking feature is the almost complete lack of any traces of linear frontier fortification systems comparable to those in the West, which can be dated to the early principate.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, in the case of Rome's frontier sector in the northeast of Cappadocia and especially the Colchis region, the detailed description by Arrian seems to provide another example of an ambiguous frontier state and situation, given the peculiar disposition of Roman auxiliary units in the area.<sup>28</sup> Last but not least, Rome's complex defence system in the Aures mountain range, the "Fossatum Africae", is a peculiar affair in its own right, with the existence of one central nucleus consisting of four different geographical segments or sectors (closures) regularly punctuated by supplementary defences along their course.<sup>29</sup>

In the light of the above, Luttwak's far-fetched – though often ground-breaking – arguments have given rise to a number of criticisms as well as to new theories on the subject of purpose and function of Roman frontiers, especially by scholars who have rather tended to attribute the final shape of Roman frontiers to unconscious or accidental forces.<sup>30</sup>

Isaac on the one hand – based on a study of Roman frontiers in the eastern part of the empire – reconstructs the situation in the east describing the army's role as a mobile army of occupation as opposed to a defensive force. However, although his reconstruction is applicable in the eastern part of the empire, where in a sense there is no frontier to speak of until the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century, it is not that representative of other sectors of the empire, especially that of continental Europe, where the situation is completely different.

---

<sup>26</sup> For a description of Britain's defensive system, see Breeze and Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall* (1976).

<sup>27</sup> See Crow, "Review", 77-91.

<sup>28</sup> Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 56.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed description of the "Fossatum Africae", see Baradez, *Vue aérienne*, esp. 356-358; Fentress, *Numidia*, 108ff; Euzennat, "Frontière d'Afrique", 429-443; Le Bohec, "Archéologie Militaire", 158-179.

Whittaker on the other hand has tended to view the frontiers as an economic “zone” of mainly social and economic significance, and their creation as a means to protect and expand the economic development of the provinces behind them. Whittaker, however, was not the first scholar to go towards this direction, as during the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a considerable effort by a growing number of scholars to establish a possible economic motive behind the erection of Roman frontiers.<sup>31</sup> There can be little doubt that the emergence of this new “direction” owes much to the influence of its leading advocate, Eric Birley, who first put forward the ingenious theory that the main purpose of Rome’s frontier defence systems was to promote and protect the economic development and to speed up the process of Romanisation in the hinterland of the Roman frontier regions.<sup>32</sup>

However, even if arguments related to economy could receive a certain amount of support in the case of Britain, where the gradual emergence of “vici” (civil settlements) in the frontier zone became evident after the erection of Hadrian’s Wall, or in Africa Proconsularis, where the regional segments of the province’s defence system seem to run precisely along the last areas of settlement and cultivable land,<sup>33</sup> it would be quite difficult to press such conclusions further in relation to the totality of Rome’s frontier sectors. On the Rhine and Danube for instance, the picture appears to be rather different. The archaeological remains of civil settlements are quite rare beyond the hinterland of the German frontier, a rather clear indication of the lack of any considerable economic development in these regions.<sup>34</sup> It would perhaps be possible to assume that Rome’s attempt to promote the economic growth of these regions did not simply have the desired effect; however, what should be taken into consideration is that we have no conclusive evidence to suggest that Rome made any considerable or systematic

---

<sup>30</sup> See Whittaker, *Frontiers*, chapter 3, who argues that the existence of a central, “globally” applicable “Grand Strategy” should be regarded as “a priori implausible”. See also Mann, “Frontiers”, 508-533; Isaac, *Limits*, 387-394.

<sup>31</sup> See mainly Wheeler, *Rome*; Lattimore, *Frontier History*; Okun, *Early Roman Frontier*; Poulter, “Frontier People”, 143-152.

<sup>32</sup> Birley, “Frontier Policy”, 26-33.

<sup>33</sup> Mann, “Frontiers”, 527.

<sup>34</sup> Schönberger, “Frontier in Germany”, 170ff.

effort to encourage the economic growth of her frontier regions and, in any case, it is still highly questionable whether the prosperity of the periphery of the frontier zone and its inhabitants was really a matter of great priority or concern for the Roman administration.<sup>35</sup> Under these circumstances, and until a more complete investigation on the subject becomes available, it would be safer to assume that the economic development of civic settlements in the frontier regions should be regarded as a direct consequence rather than the motive or purpose behind the erection of Rome's frontier barriers.

No discussion on the subject of Roman frontier policy would be complete without a special reference to J.C. Mann, who views Roman frontiers as the product of arbitrary or accidental decisions, the result of "failure" and "abdication". According to him, "it is easy to fall into the error of regarding the final known form of the frontier in any particular sector as the end-product of a logical and coherent application of something called 'frontier policy', pursued over generations, as if each stage represented a refinement and improvement of a well thought out basic disposition, and as if the empire had always been working towards its actual greatest extent as the ideal in size and definition".<sup>36</sup> In this sense he views the frontiers as the point where the Roman army simply ran out of steam.<sup>37</sup>

To support his arguments, Mann uses the example of the Germanic tribes beyond the Rhine and Elbe frontier sectors. Since the Germans posed an obvious and constant threat to Roman imperial security,<sup>38</sup> a "real frontier policy", based on Republican precedents, would have called for the conquest of Germany and thus the elimination of the Germanic threat from its roots.<sup>39</sup> As Rome never really managed to provide a convincing solution to the Germanic threat, Mann concludes that the absence of a co-ordinated imperial strategy was the main reason behind

---

<sup>35</sup> See the relevant discussion in Isaac, *Limits*, 373.

<sup>36</sup> Mann, "Frontiers", 514.

<sup>37</sup> Mann, "Frontiers", 508 and 513.

<sup>38</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 37.

<sup>39</sup> Mann, "Power", 179, invoking Tacitus' outcry "tam diu Germania vincitur". (*Germania*, 37).

the eventual fall of the western part of the Roman empire to the Germans in the fourth century AD.<sup>40</sup>

There seems to be no reason to doubt that conquest and expansion, the main strategic instruments of the Roman Republican era, would have settled the German frontier “question” once and for all. After all, in terms of military strength and superiority, the fierce but loosely organised German warriors could offer no match to the overall military capability of the Roman legions. There are, however, certain limitations that deserve further consideration. First, there is always the question of Rome’s limited military resources and the hostility of the terrain itself, which acted as a deterrent for Roman expansion, a fact that Mann duly recognises himself.<sup>41</sup> For example, one should note the massive amount of Roman forces required for Trajan’s offensives against Dacia, which, in the end, resulted in the conquest of what was essentially a small geographical territory compared to the Roman empire. Second, as argued by Luttwak, it seems that the Roman army was best equipped to attack enemies with fixed assets.<sup>42</sup> For example, during Rome’s gradual conquest of the East under the Republic, Roman success was invariably made easier by the fact that the real sources of power in the Hellenised East still evolved around the political structure of the city-state. Accordingly, it could be assumed that the conquest of Dacia under Trajan was, to a certain extent, made easier once the Dacian strongholds and urban centres had been fully occupied; the Dacian kingdom as a whole would soon fade away. However, in the case of the free Germans, the situation appears to have been completely different. In an area with no concentrated or fixed assets of power, and where the real sources of strength were diffused among the small and widely dispersed semi-nomadic rural communities of the different Germanic warrior nations, even the loss of all their primitive townships would not have been a serious blow.<sup>43</sup> In fact, it is rather probable that an extension of Roman arms into German territory would trigger the constant movement of the indigenous populations in search of “safer” areas, from where they could engage in guerrilla

---

<sup>40</sup> Mann, “Power”, 179.

<sup>41</sup> Mann, “Frontiers”, 511.

<sup>42</sup> *Strategy*, 45.

<sup>43</sup> Luttwak, *Strategy*, 45.

warfare activities. Third, though it is quite doubtful whether Roman emperors ever had such limitations in mind, what they might have taken into full consideration was the end, net profitability of further expansion. According to Whittaker, it seems rather clear that Roman emperors had some awareness, however limited, of what he refers to as the “marginal costs of imperialism”.<sup>44</sup> Having this argument in mind, it would be probable to assume that Rome’s decision to freeze the lines of her advance was the result of a shrewd examination of all relevant economic factors and conditions that would be involved in the case of further conquest and expansion; the application of such a “cost-benefit” analysis is rather evident in Appian’s words: “The emperors have aimed to preserve their empire by the exercise of prudence rather than to extend their sway indefinitely over poverty-stricken and profitless barbarians”.<sup>45</sup>

One final mention should be made to the latest contribution to the subject by S. Mattern. A firm opponent of the notion of Roman frontiers ever functioning as defensive systems, she instead focused on – what she refers to as – “the profound psychological impact” of frontiers, and their use as a means to assert and enforce an image of awe and terror against the enemies of the empire.<sup>46</sup> That Rome depended heavily on the image of invincibility for the protection of her empire is very plausible, especially in relation to the original creation of the limes and after the deployment of all available troops to the actual frontier line, where they would become clearly visible to the enemy. It is quite debatable, however, that this psychological dimension can apply equally in relation to the later function of Roman frontiers, as this ‘artificial’ image was bound to wear off after continuous fighting between Rome and her cross-border opponents.

---

<sup>44</sup> Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 86.

<sup>45</sup> Appian *pr.* 5 (trans. Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 86).

<sup>46</sup> Mattern, *Rome*, 171-172 and 207ff, see also 115-116 and 119-121.

## II. THE PROVINCE OF PANNONIA INFERIOR

The history of the province of Pannonia Inferior begins during Trajan's reign, when the province of Pannonia was divided into two parts, Superior and Inferior. This decision was without doubt a result of military necessity and should be explained in relation to the outcome of Trajan's Dacian wars and the new political situation brought about with the creation of the province of Dacia.<sup>47</sup> The geographical position of Roman Dacia, which formed a deep wedge into former enemy territory, had caused the movement of the North Danubian tribes towards the west, and their final settlement in the foreground of the Danubian frontier facing Pannonia.<sup>48</sup> This movement had serious implications for the security of the Pannonian province, as its frontier was now exposed to constant unrest from both the Quadi and Marcomanni on the north and the Iazyges in the east; in this respect, the division of the province aimed at the creation of two separate military commands facing Rome's main threats in the area.<sup>49</sup> Pannonia Superior became responsible for controlling the Quadi and the Marcomanni across the northern part of the province, while the Lower Pannonian frontier sector was assigned with the supervision of the eastern front and primarily the Iazyges, a Sarmatian tribe which resided in the Tisza river plain. Furthermore, the expanded military forces in Pannonia under Trajan, a consequence of the Dacian wars, presented a further implication for the internal security of the empire and of the position of the emperor himself, as this was too large a force to be left in the hands of one single governor.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the consideration of the above political and strategic

---

<sup>47</sup> Pavan, *Provincia*, 412; Barkóczi, "History of Pannonia", 93; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 92-93. For a further discussion on this subject see chapter IV.

<sup>48</sup> Barkóczi, "Sarmatians and Roxolani", 443-453.

<sup>49</sup> See the relevant discussion in Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 92-93.

<sup>50</sup> Fitz, "Military History", 26.

developments led to the division of the province into two parts, which, as all indications suggest, occurred no later than AD 106/107.<sup>51</sup>

Following the division of the province, Lower Pannonia was assigned with the frontier territories from the bend of the Danube in the north up to the point where the Sava river meets the Danube in the south (map 2). In relation to the probable borders of the province, the northern border started by the fort of *Ulcisia Castra*,<sup>52</sup> and then ran southwards towards the east of lake Balaton. At this point, following a vertical line, it turned south, cutting through the Kapos, Dráva and Sava rivers; just south of the latter, it made a sharp turn to the east, ending on the confluence point between the Sava and the Danube, in the immediate west of *Singidunum* (modern Belgrade).<sup>53</sup>

In relation to the history of the province during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the two most important events were the Iazygan attacks of AD 106/107 and 117/118 respectively. The exact details of the first offensive are not known to us; nevertheless, on that occasion, Rome's armies in Pannonia Inferior were successful in quickly repelling the invaders, even managing to defeat them in their own soil.<sup>54</sup> The wars of AD 117-118, however, would have much more serious implications in relation to the security of this province and of the rest of the Lower Danube provinces in general.<sup>55</sup> Despite the initial success of the barbarian incursions, following the conclusion of hostilities by AD 118 Rome was able to restore order across the frontier; after that date, and at least up to the outbreak of the Marcomannic wars under Marcus Aurelius, the province of Pannonia Inferior was not affected by any further barbarian incursions.

---

<sup>51</sup> The dating of the division of the province of Pannonia, is based on the fact that Hadrian is mentioned as the governor of Pannonia Inferior in AD 107 (*CIL* ii 550). See Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 92.

<sup>52</sup> See the section under *Ulcisia Castra* in II.i.a

<sup>53</sup> For a geographical description of Pannonia Inferior, see Soproni, "Geography", 57-59 and fig. 1; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, fig. 59.

<sup>54</sup> A discussion on the events of AD 107, is provided by Balla, "Guerre Iazyge", 111-113; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 95-96; Barkóczy, "History of Pannonia", 94; SHA, *Had.* iii.9. Hadrian, the governor of Pannonia Inferior at the time, took part in the operations against the Iazyges.

<sup>55</sup> The events of AD 117-118 are discussed in chapter IV.

## II.i FORTIFICATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF PANNONIA INFERIOR

### a. Sector I

**Ulcisia Castra (Szentendre):**<sup>56</sup> An auxiliary fortification, situated midway on the road linking the forts of Cirpi and Aquincum, on the probable border between the provinces of Pannonia Superior and Inferior respectively. Excavations at the site have revealed traces of a trapezoidal shaped fort, measuring 205 by 134m, with two inward facing rectangular towers; all visible remains belong to the fort's later (3<sup>rd</sup> century) phase of occupation. On the basis of the surviving evidence, especially brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Thracum c. R. which were unearthed at the first level of occupation of the fort's Porta Praetoria,<sup>57</sup> a stone fort was initially erected at the site during the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>58</sup> There is no evidence for any further reconstruction phase during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Accordingly, there is no conclusive evidence as to which unit became the fort's permanent garrison following the departure of cohorts I Thracum during Hadrian's reign, brick stamps of cohorts I Ulpia Pannoniorum were found at the site, but probably relate to a mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century deployment.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *RLiU*, 76 (plan of fort), 77; Nagy, "Ulcisia Castra", 39-57; Nagy, "Frontier", 146; Nagy, "Indagini", 261-285; Fülep, "Pannonia", 36; Visy, *PLiU*, 76-79; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 168; Gabler, "Occupation", 90; *TIR* L34, 114-115. The fort is mentioned in *Itin.Ant.*, 266, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Nagy, "Ulcisia Castra", 56; Nagy, "Frontier", 146; *RLiU*, 77. According to Lőrincz, "Camp Sites", 85 and "Thrakische Hilfstruppen", 91-100, the presence of a Lower Pannonian unit at Ulcisia Castra demonstrates that the fort was clearly part of the province of Pannonia Inferior after the division of Pannonia by AD 106/107.

<sup>58</sup> The cohorts I Thracum c. R. is first recorded in Lower Pannonia in the military diploma of AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 164) and was therefore probably responsible for the erection of this fort. During Hadrian's reign it was transferred to Burgena (Novi Banovci) in the southern frontier sector of Pannonia Inferior. For this unit see Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 215-216; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Fitz, "Military History", 71-72; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 188-189; Lőrincz, "Thrakische Hilfstruppen", 91-100 (who, however, seems to be confusing this unit with cohorts I Thracum Germanica, stationed at Annamantia at the time).

<sup>59</sup> See Nagy, "Ulcisia Castra", 54.

**Aquincum:**<sup>60</sup> The military and civilian complex of Aquincum is situated in the area of modern Buda (the western half of Budapest) on the left bank of the Danube. The site extends over the zones of six separate districts of Budapest, occupying an area of *c.* 25 hectares, which evolved around an earlier Celtic (Eraviscan) oppidum.<sup>61</sup>

On the basis of the surviving evidence, an auxiliary earth and timber fort was erected at the site (Vizivarós) during the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, by troops serving with *ala* I Hispanorum.<sup>62</sup> This unit appears to have been stationed at Aquincum up to the times of Vespasian's accession, after which it was replaced by *ala* I Hispanorum Auriana.<sup>63</sup> According to a building inscription belonging to *ala* I Tungrorum Frontoniana, a second auxiliary fort was erected at the site of Óbuda (just south of Vizivarós) between AD 73/76.<sup>64</sup> A further reconstruction took place in AD 89, when the existing fort at Óbuda was enlarged (460 by 430m) in order to accommodate *legio* II Adiutrix.

Between AD 105 and 118/119, while *legio* II Adiutrix was involved in Trajan's operations in Dacia and the East, Aquincum was garrisoned by *legio* X Gemina.<sup>65</sup> Following the return of *legio* II Adiutrix, which would serve as Aquincum's permanent garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort was rebuilt in stone (460 by 520m).

---

<sup>60</sup> *RLiU*, 82-88; Visy, *PLiU*, 81-86; Szilágyi, *Aquincum*, 9-60; Németh, "Militärlagen", 79-95; Póczy, "Investigations", 11-28; Póczy, "Excavation", 79-87; Póczy, "Aquincum-Budapest", 7-22; Póczy, Németh, Szirmai and Kocsis, "Legionslager", 398-403; Szirmai, "Preliminary Reports", 91-109; Szirmai, "Forschungen", 187-200; Szirmai, "Barrack-blocks", 259-262; Szirmai, "Chronologie", 683-687; Németh, "Aquincum", 81-87; Németh and Kérdő, "Besatzung", 384-388; Nagy, "Zweiter Lager", 359-366; Nagy, "Frontier", 147-148; Gabler, "Occupation", 85-88; Fülep, "Pannonia", 37-38; Kocsis, "Römischer helm", 350-354; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 114; *TIR* L34, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 3. The Eraviscan fortified settlement was situated on top of the Gellert hill, in the southeast part of Budapest.

<sup>62</sup> *CIL* iii, 10514, 15613 in Németh, "Military Camps", 140.

<sup>63</sup> *CIL* iii, 14348, 14349 in Németh "Military Camps", 140. For the presence of this unit at Aquincum at the time see also Németh, "Militärlagen", 80-82.

<sup>64</sup> See Tóth and Vékony, "Building Inscription", 109-115; Németh, "Forschungen", 675-681; *RLiU*, 88. For this unit see Campona below.

<sup>65</sup> According to epigraphic evidence in Kaba, "Inscripfen", 247-251. See also Lőrincz, "Besatzungstruppen", 310.

**Albertfalva:**<sup>66</sup> An auxiliary fortification, situated in the district of Albertfalva, one of Budapest's peripheral suburbs. The fort sealed off the entrance point through the Rocza valley, one of the major access routes through the Danube and into the province of Pannonia Inferior in antiquity. Its ancient name is unknown, as it is not recorded in any Roman literary sources.

Despite the fact that the entire west side of the fort has been washed away from the Danube river flow, the site has been the subject of an intensive series of archaeological fieldwork over the years. So far, excavations have established four main phases of occupation at the site during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular plan, measuring an estimated 166 by 190m. Visible traces from this early fort include sections of its double earth vallum (4.5m wide), the *porta principalis sinistra*, the *principia*, as well as its timber barracks. According to the available archaeological evidence, it was probably erected during the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>67</sup> The discovery of a layer of burnt matter, found within the earlier level of occupation at the fort's *principia*, clearly suggests that the fort suffered some form of damage, probably during the course of the Sarmatian attacks of AD 91-92.<sup>68</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the earth and timber fort during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Phase III: Rebuilding of the fort in stone, sometime during Trajan's or Hadrian's reign.<sup>69</sup> This fort was of rectangular shape and measured 210 by 186m. It had inward facing round corner and gate towers, while the double earth vallum of the earlier fort was retained. It was destroyed during the Marcomannic wars.

Phase IV: Reconstruction of the stone fort under Marcus Aurelius.

---

<sup>66</sup> *RLiU*, 90 (plan of fort), 91; Visy, *PLiU*, 87-89; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 167; Nagy, "Frontier", 147-149 and n. 16; Nagy, "Albertfalva", 19-69 (on the military diploma found at the site); Mócsy, *Pannonia* 88; Fülep, "Pannonia", 39; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 76, 81 and fig. 3.

<sup>67</sup> Most of the available archaeological material from this site has been extracted from the nearby civil settlement (*vicus*) which is situated to the immediate south of the main fort. The evidence includes a substantial number (some 300 pieces) of *terra sigillata* and other small finds, which are datable to the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD onwards. See Gabler, "Albertfalva", 61-79; Szirmai, "Albertfalva Vicus", 27-51.

<sup>68</sup> See Visy, *PLiU*, 88-89; Fülep, "Pannonia", 39.

<sup>69</sup> A military diploma, datable to 139 AD (in Nagy, "Albertfalva", 19-69) which was found within this phase of occupation provides the *terminus post quem* date for the rebuilding of the fort in stone.

The fort's garrison during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries, has not been established. It is quite probable that a detachment from legio II Adiutrix, stationed at the nearby fort of Aquincum, was also deployed here at the time. However, there is a distinct possibility that the fort of Albertfalva might have served as the base of operations for the province's only ala milliaria, the ala I Flavia Brittanica milliaria c.R.. This unit is first attested in Pannonia in AD 102 (*CIL* xvi, 47). After 110, it becomes part of the army of Lower Pannonia (*CIL* xvi, 164), where it is recorded in all of the province's military diplomata up to AD 186 (*CIL* xvi, 61, 175, 179/180, 112/113, 123, 131 of AD 114, 139, 148, 160, 167 and 186 respectively).<sup>70</sup> So far, no fort in Lower Pannonia has produced brick stamps from this unit. However, the only available epigraphic material from this unit has been found in the vicinity of Aquincum, which would suggest that it was stationed in one of the forts in this frontier sector.<sup>71</sup> Of all Roman fortifications in this particular sector, only three would have been capable of housing an ala milliaria: Campona (Nagy­tétény), Matrica (Százhalombatta) and Albertfalva. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> century garrisons of both Campona and Matrica have now been securely established, it would thus be reasonable to suggest the fort of Albertfalva as the most likely candidate.<sup>72</sup>

**Campona (Nagy­tétény):**<sup>73</sup> The remains of a large auxiliary fort are situated at the point of Nagy­tétény, in the outskirts of Budapest (the 22<sup>nd</sup> district). According to the order of description in our literary sources, this site corresponds with the

---

<sup>70</sup> Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 195, 204-205; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 21; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 7; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Fitz, "Military History", 58-59. For a general history of this unit, see Lőrincz, "Ala I Flavia Brittanica", 357-359.

<sup>71</sup> See Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 204; Fitz, "Military History", 58. Contra Visy, "Notes", 90, who places it at the fort of Bononia (Malata), in the south-east of the province; apart from the absence of any supporting evidence, his view is invalidated by the fact that Bononia was garrisoned by cohorts I Campanorum Voluntariorum during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD,

<sup>72</sup> Campona was garrisoned by ala I Thracum veteranorum sagittariorum. The establishment of cohorts I Alpinorum equitata as Matrica's permanent garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, has now refuted the earlier arguments of Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 205; Fitz, "Military History", 58 and Mócsy, "Százhalombatta", 67, that this fort was the base for ala I Flavia Brittanica milliaria in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. On the deployment of this unit at Albertfalva, see Nagy in *RLiU*, 91, who, however, does not offer any evidence or justification for his argument.

<sup>73</sup> *RLiU*, 92 (plan) 93; Visy, *PLiU*, 89-90; *TIR* L34, 44; Fülep, "Camp de Nagy­tétény", 213-221; Fülep, "Lager von Nagy­tétény", 643-652; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 167; Fülep, "Pannonia", 39-40; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81-82 and fig. 6; Gabler, "Occupation", 90.

Roman fort of Campona.<sup>74</sup> The fort has only been partially excavated, as apart from its northern gate (which has now been restored) not much remains of it today. According to a surviving building inscription, an earth and timber fort (traces of which were discovered underneath the later stone fort) was initially erected at the site during Domitian's reign, by troops from ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana.<sup>75</sup> This unit would serve as the fort's permanent garrison up to the end of Trajan's reign.<sup>76</sup> Sometime between the end of Trajan's reign and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort was rebuilt in stone. This fort was of rectangular shape and measured c. 178 by 200 m. The exact date of this reconstruction has not been established, but it most probably coincided with the arrival and subsequent deployment at Campona of ala I Thracum veteranorum Sagittariorum.<sup>77</sup>

**Matrica (Százhalombatta):**<sup>78</sup> The remains of an auxiliary fortification of square shape, measuring 158 by 158 m, have been discovered at Százhalombatta, about 6 km downstream from Campona. The fort occupies a commanding position on a steep slope overlooking the left bank of the Danube. According to ancient sources, this site corresponds with the Roman fort of Matrica.<sup>79</sup>

Excavations conducted at the fort and the nearby military vicus have so far established two main phases of occupation and construction during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century: Phase I: Earth and timber fort of unknown dimensions; traces from this fort were distinguished underneath the principia and the walls of the later stone fort.

---

<sup>74</sup> Mentioned in *Itin.Ant.*, 245,6.

<sup>75</sup> *CIL* iii, 3400 in *RLiU*, 93 and *TIR* L34, 44.

<sup>76</sup> The ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana was stationed in Dalmatia up to the late 70's AD. It is then transferred to Pannonia (*CIL* xvi, 26 of 80 AD) where it remains until 114 AD (last mentioned in the Lower Pannonian diploma of that year in *CIL* xvi, 61). After that, it was deployed to the fort of Ilişua in Dacia Porolissensis. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 13-14; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 76-79; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 195-197; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 78-80.

<sup>77</sup> This unit is first attested in Pannonia Inferior in the military diploma of AD 139 (*CIL* xvi, 175), but it is probable that it was transferred to this province at an earlier date, perhaps after the departure of the ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana for Dacia; this would mean that the fort at Campona was rebuilt in stone between 114-117/118. The ala I Thracum would be stationed at Campona until the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century (*CIL* iii, 3392, 3395, 10624).

<sup>78</sup> *RLiU*, 94 (plan of fort), 95; *TIR*, L34, 78; Visy, *PLiU*, 91-93; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 169-170; Nagy, "Frontier", 147 and n. 16; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 83, and fig. 5; Mócsy, "Százhalombatta", 59-69.

<sup>79</sup> Attested in *Itin.Ant.*, 245, 5.

According to the material recovered from the lowermost layer of this particular level of occupation, such as Celtic LTD and South Gaul Samian ware, North Italian thin walled cups and brick stamps belonging to ala Scubulorum, this fort was initially erected sometime between the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>80</sup> This phase of occupation lasted until the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century; traces of fire damage, discovered underneath the later stone principia of the fort, suggest that the earth and timber fort suffered some form of destruction, probably during the course of the Marcomannic wars.<sup>81</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone; on the basis of the surviving archaeological evidence, the rebuilding of the fort took place after the Marcomannic wars.<sup>82</sup>

The fort's garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has now been securely established. Following the departure of its initial garrison, the ala Scubulorum, around the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century,<sup>83</sup> the fort became the permanent base of operations for cohors I Alpinorum equitata, until its reconstruction in stone;<sup>84</sup> after that it was garrisoned by cohors Maurorum.<sup>85</sup>

On the road between Matrica and the fort at Vetus Salina (Adony), two fortified posts or watchtowers were discovered at the points of Erscesi and Ivánca (4x4m). Their date has not been established.

---

<sup>80</sup> Evidence cited in Kovács, "Excavations", 425-427 and fig. 6.51; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 83 and fig. 5. There is no evidence to support the claims of Thomas, "Matrica/Százhalombatta", 257, for a Vespasianic initial foundation date. The ala Scubulorum was stationed at Gorsium (see relevant section) up to the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

<sup>81</sup> Kovács, "Principia at Matrica", 49-74, especially 49-51 and figs. 10.1-2.

<sup>82</sup> Kovács, "Százhalombatta", 81-106. All evidence recovered from the first stone level of the fort, cannot be dated earlier than the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; this invalidates the views of Mócsy, "Százhalombatta", 69 (repeated in *RLiU*, 95) and Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 170 who argue that the reconstruction of the fort in stone took place during Hadrian's reign, in 124 AD.

<sup>83</sup> This unit is not recorded in the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century military diplomata of Pannonia Inferior; by 129/130 AD, it is recorded in Germania Inferior (Roxan, *RMD*, no 90).

<sup>84</sup> Kovács, "Inschriften", 247-262 and inscriptions no 4 and 7. This unit was previously stationed at Intercisa (Dunaújváros); it was probably transferred to Matrica by the end of Trajan's reign. The discovery of epigraphic evidence from this unit at the fort has put an end to all earlier speculations pertaining to the deployment of ala I Flavia Brittanica milliaria at Matrica during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, as expressed by Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 205-206; Fitz, "Military History", 58-59; and Mócsy, "Százhalombatta", 69.

<sup>85</sup> Lőrincz, "Cohors quingenaria Maurorum", 257-263.

**Vetus Salina (Adony):**<sup>86</sup> An auxiliary fortification, situated along the imperial frontier road linking the forts of Aquincum and Intercisa. The fort is mentioned in literary sources, while a milestone records its exact position as being 36 m.p. southwards from Aquincum.<sup>87</sup> The site occupies a commanding elevated position near the point where the Danube splits into two separate sections; along with the fort at Albertfalva, it was responsible for guarding the narrow plains of the Csépel-sziget valley.

Only the south-west corner of the fort has survived, as the rest was completely covered by the Danube. Nevertheless, excavations carried out in the surviving sections of the fort have produced a relatively large amount of archaeological material and have clearly distinguished four main phases of occupation and construction at the site:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort (Fort A) of unknown shape and size; finds retrieved from this fort's defensive ditch, including North Italian (Padanian) terra sigillata, early (pre-Flavian) Roman glass types, Savarian type amphorae and coins of Claudius and Nero, suggest an early Flavian initial foundation date.<sup>88</sup> The garrison of this first earthwork fort has not been established; Visy has argued for the deployment of cohorts I Brittonum milliaria at Vetus Salina during the Flavian period, but there is no evidence to confirm it.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> *RLiU*, 98 (plan of fort), 99; Visy, *PLiU*, 96-98; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 49, 88; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 169-170; Nagy, "Frontier", 147 and n. 16; Fülep, "Pannonia", 40-41; *TIR* L34, 118; Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 129-199; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81; Gabler, "Occupation", 88.

<sup>87</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 3; *Itin.Ant.*, 245, 4; *CIL* iii, 3723, 10305-10306 (including the name of the fort). See also *TIR* L34, 118, for further epigraphic evidence recovered from the site.

<sup>88</sup> Evidence sited in Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 129-131, 144-146 (catalogue of finds); Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81; Bezecky, "Amphorae", 96-102. Eleven amphorae, datable between mid and late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, were found at this layer of occupation. Bezecky argues that, as these amphorae are identical to the ones produced at the time in Savaria (a Roman colony in Pannonia since the times of Claudius), it is possible that that the first earthwork fort at Vetus Salina was erected as early as the reign of Claudius. However, such items of daily use were likely to have been used well after their date of creation, while all other finds from this layer can not be dated earlier than the Flavian period. See also Gabler and Lörincz, "Remarks", 174, who on the basis of the pre-Domitianic terra sigillata found at the first level of occupation at Vetus Salina, argue that the fort was erected between 77-82 AD.

<sup>89</sup> See Visy, *PLiU*, 97-98. The cohorts I Brittonum milliaria is attested in Pannonia in the diploma of AD 85 (*CIL* xvi, 31). By 103/106 it is recorded in Moesia Superior (*CIL* xvi, 54), while after AD 106 it is transferred to Porolissum in Dacia (*CIL* xvi, 160 and 163). There is no indication as to where it was stationed during its tour of duty in Pannonia. Beneš, *Auxilia*,

Phase II: Second earth and timber fort (Fort B) of unknown shape and size, situated to the immediate south of the earlier earthwork camp. Sections from this fort's defensive ditch and round south-west corner-tower have been unearthed. Ceramic finds retrieved from this site indicate a late 1<sup>st</sup> century erection date.<sup>90</sup> It was probably abandoned during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, after the reconstruction of Fort A. Its garrison is unknown.

Phase III: Earth and timber fort, erected on top of Fort A. According to the archaeological material found within this level of occupation, which includes ceramic finds and brick stamps belonging to cohorts II Alpinorum, this fort was built by this unit during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>91</sup>

Phase IV: Extension of the previous fort (Phase III of Fort A); this reconstruction phase probably took place during the early years of Hadrian's reign, following the deployment at Vetus Salina of cohorts III Batavorum milliaria.<sup>92</sup>

Phase V: Erection of the first stone fort at the site, on top of the previous earth and timber one. This fort was of rectangular shape and measured c. 230 by 270m; the available evidence suggests that it was built at some point between Hadrian's reign and the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>93</sup>

---

20-21; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 106-107; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 85-86; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 195-197.

<sup>90</sup> *RLiU*, 99; Gabler and Lőrincz, "Remarks", 174-175; Visy, *PLiU*, 98; Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 131-140 (full excavation report) and 141-143. There is no indication as to whether the two forts at the site functioned simultaneously at any point. Perhaps the second fort was erected after some damage occurred at fort A (flooding or a Sarmatian attack during Domitian's wars on the Danube); however, no such traces of destruction have been found at Fort A so far.

<sup>91</sup> *RLiU*, 99; Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 146. The cohorts II Alpinorum, previously stationed in Illyricum, is mentioned in Pannonia after 84 AD (*CIL* xvi, 30). An inscription, datable to Domitian's reign (*CIL* iii, 3261), indicates that it was stationed in the southern sector of Pannonia, at Mursa (Osijek). It was probably transferred to Vetus Salina by the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. By 114 AD, it is recorded in Pannonia Superior (Roxan, *RMD* 153). See Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 201; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 87-89; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135 and fig. 11; Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 146; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 264-265.

<sup>92</sup> The cohorts III Batavorum milliaria was stationed in Raetia up to 116 AD (Roxan, *RMD*, 155). It is first attested in Pannonia Inferior in AD 139 (*CIL* xvi, 175), but I think that Radnóti and Barkóczi (in "Distribution", 210) are right to argue that it was probably transferred to Pannonia Inferior during the Sarmatian attacks of AD 117/118. In this sense, it replaces the cohorts II Alpinorum at Vetus Salina around that time, and, as it was a larger unit than the cohorts II Alpinorum, was probably responsible for the extension of the fort.

<sup>93</sup> *RLiU*, 99; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 169-179; Barkóczi and Bónis, "Adony", 149-152, 153-156 (including finds from the first stone fort at the site): the evidence is not conclusive enough to allow for their dating of the stone fort in the late years of Hadrian's reign.

Phase VI: Subsequent reconstruction of the stone fort during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

The cohorts III Batavorum milliaria was stationed at Vetus Salina throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>94</sup>

**Intercisa (Dunaújváros):**<sup>95</sup> The remains of a Roman auxiliary camp and military vicus have been discovered at Öreghegy, to the immediate east of the town of Dunaújváros. The site is situated on the edge of a steep terrace on the left bank of the Danube, overlooking the southern entrance point to the Csépel-Sziget valley. On the basis of both literary and epigraphic sources, this site has been identified as the Roman fort of Intercisa.<sup>96</sup>

The Dunaújváros Roman military complex is one of the best-excavated sites in Hungary and is still in a very good state of preservation. At present, excavations at the site have clearly established two main phases of occupation:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring *c.* 170 by 200m. Visible traces from this fort were distinguished underneath the later stone one and include sections of its defensive ditch (single) and eastern earth wall, its *via principalis* and its earth and timber *principia*. Its exact date of erection has not been established yet; the discovery of late 1<sup>st</sup> century North Italian and South Gaulish terra sigillata fragments within this fort's earth vallum, has indicated an initial construction date during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD;<sup>97</sup> the possibility of an earlier (early Flavian) date has been put forward, but the evidence

---

<sup>94</sup> This unit has left a substantial amount of epigraphic evidence at the fort: Wagner, *Dislokation*, 95-96 and Lőrincz, *Stempelziegel I*, 17 and n. 32-33; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 213-214.

<sup>95</sup> *RLiU*, 101-103; *TIR* L34, 66; Visy, *PLiU*, 100-105; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 106; Szilágyi, "Limesstrecke", 169; Nagy, "Frontier", 149; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81; Füle, "Pannonia", 41; Barkóczi in *Intercisa I*, 11-60; Barkóczi in *Intercisa II*, 497-544; Vágó, "Ausgrabungen in Intercisa", 109-119; Visy, "Intercisa", 106-111; Lőrincz and Visy, "Baugeschichte", 681-701; Lőrincz, Szabó and Visy, "Neue Forschungen", 362-368; Lőrincz, Szabó and Visy, "Auxiliarkastell von Intercisa 1983", 739-744.

<sup>96</sup> *Itin.Ant.* 245, 3. The site has produced a substantial amount of epigraphic evidence (mostly late Roman): Füle in *Intercisa I*, 194-229, 277-332; Füz, *Inschriften*, 12-223; Lőrincz, "Inschriften von Intercisa", 117-122; Lőrincz and Visy, "Inschriften aus Intercisa", 199-216; *TIR* L34, 66.

<sup>97</sup> *RLiU*, 102-103; Visy, *PLiU*, 101-102; Lőrincz and Visy, "Baugeschichte", 683-689; Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81; Vágó, "Sigillaten", 195-197; Visy, "Inschriften", 87-100; contra Barkóczi (in *Intercisa II*, 501-502), who dates it to Trajan's reign.

is still inconclusive.<sup>98</sup> This phase of occupation lasted until the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, when, according to the available archaeological evidence, the fort was destroyed during the course of the Marcomannic wars.<sup>99</sup>

The garrison of the earth and timber phase of occupation at Intercisa is still a matter of debate. According to a number of brick stamps and an inscription belonging to ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum which were found at the site, it is quite possible that this unit was stationed at Intercisa between c. 92 and 101.<sup>100</sup> Between AD 101-106, the fort appears to have served as a base for ala I Brittonum (Britannica) c.R.<sup>101</sup> It has been suggested that during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars the fort also served as a concentration point for detachments from ala I Flavia Augusta milliaria and ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana, though there is really not much evidence to confirm this.<sup>102</sup> Thereafter, the situation becomes quite unclear; it has been suggested that between AD 106 and 117/118, Intercisa was successively garrisoned by ala I Tungrorum and ala I Flavia Augusta milliaria.<sup>103</sup> Once again, there is no evidence to verify this, while, at the same time, there is now sufficient evidence that Campona was the base for ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana during Trajan's reign. In this respect, I would be inclined

---

<sup>98</sup> See Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 81; Gabler, "Occupation", 88, on the basis of finds cited in Vágó, "Sigillaten", 195-197.

<sup>99</sup> According to a coin of Lucilla and seals of Marcus Aurelius found within a burnt layer of the fort's fossa; Lőrincz and Visy, "Baugeschichte", 700-701.

<sup>100</sup> Lőrincz, *Stempelziegel II*, 23-25 and 62-69 (brick stamps); Fülep in *Intercisa I*, 277-281 (inscription). This unit was previously stationed at Arrabona (Pannonia Superior). It stays in Pannonia until 102/106 AD (mentioned in the diploma of AD 98, *CIL* xvi, 42); by AD 110 it was transferred to Dacia Superior (*CIL* xvi, 57 and 163. See Micia). It remains in Dacia until the late years of Hadrian's reign, after which it was transferred back to Pannonia Inferior (recorded in *CIL* xvi, 175 of 139 AD). See Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 209; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 11; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 52-54; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 75-76.

<sup>101</sup> According to Lőrincz, "Ala I Brittanica", 363-367; Strobel, *Dakerkriegen*, 109, who have established the presence of this unit in the province of Pannonia during Trajan's Dacian wars. After 106 AD, this unit was sent to Gherla (Dacia Porolissensis); during Hadrian's reign, it was brought back to Pannonia Inferior and was deployed at the fort of Alta Ripa (Tolna).

<sup>102</sup> See Lőrincz, "Alen in Pannonien", 3-10; Lőrincz, "Ala I Flavia Brittanica", 357-359. Strictly speaking, no brick stamps from either unit were found at the site. However, given that both units were stationed in this frontier sector at the time, it is possible that Intercisa came under their extended zones of operations during the Dacian wars.

<sup>103</sup> *RLiU*, 101,103; Visy, *PLiU*, 103-105.

to agree with some earlier arguments that have suggested cohorts I Alpinorum equitata as Intercisa's garrison during Trajan's reign.<sup>104</sup>

In relation to the fort's permanent garrison between Hadrian's accession and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, the situation becomes quite problematic. It has been argued that the ala I Thracum veteranorum sagittariorum was stationed at Intercisa throughout Hadrian's reign.<sup>105</sup> Although it is not possible to prove or disprove this theory, the establishment of Campona as this unit's base of operations after 118 AD, should contradict this argument.<sup>106</sup>

In my opinion, a plausible suggestion would be the ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum. According to the available evidence, this unit was stationed in Intercisa until the outbreak of Trajan's Dacian wars. After a lengthy tour of service in Micia (Dacia Superior), it returned to Pannonia Inferior by the last years of Hadrian's reign, where it remained at least until the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>107</sup> Its base of operations during this period has not been established. Most scholars have argued in favour of Rittium (Surduc), on the basis of the strict enumeration of the units in the Lower Pannonian diplomata and the fort's large size.<sup>108</sup> However, no traces from this unit were found at Rittium, while the available epigraphic evidence from this fort has confirmed the cohorts II Asturum et Callaecorum as its garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. More recently, two leading Serb scholars have suggested Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica, a Roman colony in the interior of the province) as the most probable candidate.<sup>109</sup> Epigraphic evidence

---

<sup>104</sup> See Fitz, "Military History", 60-61; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135 and fig. 11; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 211; Nagy, "Albertfalva", 52. However, they are wrong to assume that this unit stayed at Intercisa up to the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, as it was permanently deployed to the fort of Matrica after 118 AD (see relevant section).

<sup>105</sup> *RLiU*, 101; Visy, *PLiU*, 103-105.

<sup>106</sup> The nature of the evidence is very inconclusive, and it must be noted that Visy does not cite any evidence or justification behind his arguments. Given that the site of Intercisa has not produced any epigraphic evidence from this particular unit, my efforts are directed towards the evaluation of the existing evidence and the production of some possible alternative suggestions or interpretations.

<sup>107</sup> The unit is recorded in the diploma of 139 AD (*CIL* xvi, 175). Its last known reference in Pannonia Inferior comes in an inscription found near Aquincum (*CIL* iii 3446), datable to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Fitz, "Military History", 71.

<sup>108</sup> Fitz, "Military History", 71; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 209-210; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135 fig. 11; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 11; Lőrincz, *Stempelziegel II*, 25.

<sup>109</sup> Mirković, "Sirmium", 72 (including bibliography); Milošević, "Sirmium", 103-104.

from this unit has indeed been found at the site; however, it cannot be dated prior to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. At the same time, the stationing of this unit at Sirmium would mark a significant departure from Rome's standard pattern of tactical disposition along river frontiers, which – at least up to the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century – called for the deployment of all available auxiliary units on the actual frontier line, rather than the interior, of each province. Especially in relation to the *ala I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum*, I would find it quite improbable that the Romans would have “relegated” a valuable shock combat missile cavalry unit to mere patrolling duties within the interior of the Lower Pannonian province.

Given that both Rittium and Sirmium seem unlikely to have housed this unit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort of Intercisa should be considered as a possible alternative. As the fort is not known to have housed another unit during this period and the garrisons of all other forts capable of housing an *ala* have been established, it is plausible – by elimination – that the *ala I Augusta Ituraeorum* was stationed at Intercisa. Given that the unit was previously stationed at this fort,<sup>110</sup> it is possible that it returned to the same site after its tour of service in Dacia.

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone; this fort measuring *c.* 175 by 201m and was built during the reign of Commodus and following the deployment at Intercisa of *cohors I Milliarum Hemesenorum*.<sup>111</sup>

On the road section linking Intercisa to both *Vetus Salina* and *Annamantia*, a string of Roman fortified posts and watchtowers have been identified on the ground, mainly through aerial photography. They have not been excavated, but they appear to be of a late 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup> century date.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> As mentioned above, epigraphic material has confirmed the presence of this unit at Intercisa between the last years of the 1st and the first years of the 2nd century AD.

<sup>111</sup> For this unit see Fitz, “Intercisa”, 161-220; Fitz, “Cohors I Milliarum”, 139-144, where he wrongly states that this unit replaced the *cohors I Alpinorum equitata* at Intercisa around 184/185 AD; the *cohors I Alpinorum* was transferred to *Matrica* around AD 118/119. Szabó, “Casque romain”, 421-425 (on an inscribed helmet belonging to *coh. I Milliarum Hemesenorum sag. Equitata c. R.*) argues that this unit came to Intercisa between 170 and 176 AD.

<sup>112</sup> See Visy, Lőrincz, and Szabó, “Pannonische Limesabschnitte”, 235-259; Visy, “Wachtürme”, 166-175.

**Annamantia (Baracs):**<sup>113</sup> An auxiliary fortification, measuring *c.* 152 by 76m, situated between the forts of Intercisa and Lussonium.<sup>114</sup> The site is in a very bad state of preservation, due to the fact that it has been completely covered by the Danube.

Finds recovered from the site, which include a number of North Italian and South Gaulish terra sigillata and bronze vessels, suggest an initial phase of occupation between the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>115</sup> There is no further information as to any subsequent rebuilding phases during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century; the fort would not be rebuilt in stone until the reign of Caracalla at the earliest.<sup>116</sup>

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort was garrisoned by cohorts I Thracum Germanica and by a detachment from legio II Adiutrix.<sup>117</sup>

To the immediate south of the fort, traces from two Roman stone watchtowers were discovered at the points of Bolcske and Leanyvar. Their dates have not been securely established, though they appear to be late (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD).

**Lussonium (Dunakömlőd):**<sup>118</sup> The remains of a stone auxiliary fort, measuring *c.* 215 by 70m,<sup>119</sup> have been discovered near the modern town of Dunakömlőd; the fort occupies a commanding position on top of the Bottyánsanc hill, overlooking

---

<sup>113</sup> *RLiU*, 106-107; Visy, *PLiU*, 108-110; *TIR* L34, 28.

<sup>114</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 245, 2. The fort was erected on top of an earlier Celtic civil settlement.

<sup>115</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 108-110; *RLiU*, 107; Szabó, "Vaiselles de bronze", vol.ii, 715-728.

<sup>116</sup> According to a brick stamp, marked **Coh(ors) VII Br(eucorum) Ant(oniniana)** (*CIL* iii, 3757e in *TIR* L34, 28), which suggests that some building activity took place at the fort during this period.

<sup>117</sup> According to brick stamps from this unit found at the site, in *TIR* L34, 28 (*CIL* iii, 10672); *RLiU*, 107; Visy, *PLiU*, 109. The cohorts I Thracum Germanica (which should not be confused, as in Wagner, *Dislokation*, 189, 227, with the cohorts I Thracum c.R., stationed at Burgenae) is first attested in Pannonia Inferior in AD 135 (Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 364); this means that Radnóti and Barkóczi (in "Distribution", 211-212) were right in assuming that it was probably transferred to this province under Hadrian and before the Sarmatian wars of AD 136-138. For this unit see Lőrincz, "Thrakische Hilfstruppen", 91-100.

<sup>118</sup> *RLiU*, 108 (plan), 109; Visy, *PLiU*, 112-114; *TIR* L34, 75; Visy, "Dunakömlőd", 95-106; Visy, "Lussonium", 263-265; Gabler, "Occupation", 86; Fitz, "Eroberung", 555; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 50, 88.

<sup>119</sup> This refers to the preserved width of the fort.

the left bank of the Danube river. According to literary sources, this site corresponds with the Roman fort of Lussonium.<sup>120</sup>

The site, which is in a moderate state of preservation due to river erosion, is still the subject of an on-going archaeological investigation. At present, the only visible remains are confined to sections of the western defence walls and the quadrangular southern gate-towers, which belong to the later (4<sup>th</sup> century) phase of occupation. However, excavations have established the existence of an earlier earth and timber fort at the site – underneath the later stone one – which, according to the available archaeological evidence, was erected between the late years of Nero's reign and the early years of Vespasian's reign.<sup>121</sup> There is no further information as to any subsequent rebuilding phases during the late 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD.

Its initial garrison has not been established; under Trajan and up to the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, it would serve as the permanent base of operations for cohorts I Alpinorum peditata.<sup>122</sup>

**Alta Ripa (Tolna):**<sup>123</sup> The remains of an auxiliary fortification, of unknown shape and size, have been uncovered next to the modern locality of Tolna. The fort is situated near the confluence point between the Danube and Sió rivers. The identification of this site as the Roman castellum of Alta Ripa has been established on the basis of the order of description of an ancient itinerary<sup>124</sup> and the discovery of a milestone which records its exact position as being 18 miles passum from

---

<sup>120</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 4; *Itin.Ant.*, 245, 1.

<sup>121</sup> According to a building inscription (*CIL* iii, 3322) datable to his reign, in *RLiU*, 109 and *TIR* L34, 75. Several finds of mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD date, including North Italian terra sigillata, were also found at the site. There is no conclusive evidence for a Claudian fort at the site, as argued by Gabler, "Occupation", 86 and Fitz, "Eroberung", 555.

<sup>122</sup> Stationed in Pannonia after AD 80 (*CIL*, xvi, 26), this unit is further attested in all 2<sup>nd</sup> century military diplomata after AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 164) in Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 262. Its deployment at Lussonium has been established by the discovery of several of its brick stamps at the site: see *TIR* L34, 75 (*CIL* iii, 3318); *RLiU*, 109; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 207; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 81-82; Fitz, "Military History", 61-62. After 175 AD, it was transferred to the fort at Alisca; it was replaced by cohorts I Alpinorum equitata (previously stationed at Matrica). There is no indication that cohorts I Thracum Germanica was stationed at Lussonium between AD 152-163, as argued by Lőrincz, "Thrakische Hilfstruppen", 91-100.

<sup>123</sup> *TIR* L34, 27; J. Fitz, *RLiU*, 110; Visy, *PLiU*, 116.

Lussonium and 29 miles passum from Lugio.<sup>125</sup> The site has not been the subject of any significant archaeological investigation, as very little remains of it today. This fort was initially erected sometime during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century or the first two decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, in order to serve as the headquarters of ala Siliana c. R.<sup>126</sup> Following the departure of this unit for Dacia Porolissensis in the early 130's AD, it was replaced by ala I Brittonum or Brittanica c.R., which would remain as this fort's principal garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>127</sup>

**Alisca – Ad Latus (Őcsény):**<sup>128</sup> The site consists of a Roman auxiliary fortification and civil settlement (vicus), situated on the left bank of the Sió river and about 1.2 km west of the Danube river. The site is mentioned in ancient literary sources.<sup>129</sup> According to a number of brick stamps from cohors I Noricorum which were discovered within the earliest level of occupation at the site, the fort was probably erected in the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>130</sup> This

---

<sup>124</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 244, 5, which states that the Alta Ripa stood between the forts at Lussonium and Alisca.

<sup>125</sup> *CIL* iii, 3304, 3305.

<sup>126</sup> After serving in Germania Inferior, the unit is transferred to the province of Pannonia, where it is first attested in the military diploma of AD 84 (*CIL* xvi, 30). It is recorded among the garrison of this province up to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (*CIL* xvi, 42 and 47 of AD 98 and 102 respectively). After fighting in Trajan's Dacian wars, it is attested in Pannonia Inferior by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 164). It remained there until the early 130's AD, when it was transferred to the fort at Gilău in Dacia Porolissensis. The fort at Tolna is the only site in Pannonia Inferior to have produced epigraphic evidence from this unit. See Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12-13; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 67-69; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 197-198; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 77-78; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11.

<sup>127</sup> Previously stationed at Gherla in Dacia Porolissensis. It is attested in Pannonia Inferior in the diploma of AD 148 (*CIL* xvi, 179-180), but it is quite possible that it was transferred to Alta Ripa immediately after the departure of ala Siliana. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 7; Russu, "Auxilia", 66; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 20-24; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 195, 204; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 71-72. See also the fort at Intercisa.

<sup>128</sup> *RLiU*, 111; Visy, *PLiU*, 117-118, 120 and fig. 14; (who states that the fort measured 158 by 193 m); Szalog, "Alisca – Ad Latus", 101-105, on the initial identification of the fort; *TIR* L34, 27.

<sup>129</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 244, 4.

<sup>130</sup> One of the earliest known units in Pannonia, the cohors I Noricorum was stationed at Brigetio (Pannonia Superior) until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Barkóczi, *Brigetio*, 11, 18). It was probably transferred to Pannonia Inferior after the division of the province in AD 106, where it is attested in the diploma of AD 110 (*CIL*, xvi, 164). It would remain at this province throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 200; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 172-174; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 297. The

date tends to be further confirmed by the surviving material from this fort, which includes late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century terra sigillata of North Italian and South Gaulish origin.<sup>131</sup>

At some point between AD 114 and 133, the fort was possibly garrisoned by a detachment from cohorts II Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria.<sup>132</sup> Following this unit's departure for Dacia Porolissensis during Hadrian's reign, cohorts I Noricorum would serve as its sole garrison until the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, after which it was replaced by cohorts I Alpinorum peditata.<sup>133</sup>

**Ad Statuas (Várdomb):**<sup>134</sup> An auxiliary fortification situated along the Roman imperial road on the left bank of the Danube, mid-way between the forts at Ad Latus and Lugio.<sup>135</sup> Its exact shape and size has not been established, as most of it was destroyed by the Danube. According to brick stamps belonging to cohorts III Lusitanorum, and as there seems to be no evidence for any previous (Flavian) phase of occupation, the fort was erected during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>136</sup>

Cohorts III Lusitanorum would serve as the fort's principal garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Visy has argued for the presence of a detachment from cohorts II

---

relevant epigraphic evidence from this unit at Alisca is cited in Lőrincz, *Stempelziegel I*, 15-16.

<sup>131</sup> All finds from the fort and vicus at Alisca - Ad Latus (which also include a few bronze fibulae, Roman glassware and pottery fragments and a bronze statuette of Vespasian's wife, Domitilla) are displayed in the Mór Wosinsky museum in the town of Szekszárd.

<sup>132</sup> According to brick stamps from this unit found at Alisca. See Visy, *PLiU*, 120 and fig. 14. This unit is recorded in the military diploma of AD 114 (*CIL* xvi, 61). At some point before AD 133, it was transferred to Buciumi in Dacia Porolissensis (according to the Gherla diploma in Roxan, *RMD*, 35). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 22; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 87-88; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 201.

<sup>133</sup> Previously stationed at the nearby fort of Lussonium.

<sup>134</sup> *RLiU*, 111; Visy, *PLiU*, 120-121; *TIR* L34, 25, including inscriptions *CIL* iii, 3301, 3302, 3768, 3775 and 10280.

<sup>135</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 244, 3.

<sup>136</sup> This unit was transferred from Raetia to Pannonia Inferior during Trajan's Dacian wars. It is attested in the military diploma of 110 AD (*CIL* xvi, 164) and in later 2<sup>nd</sup> century diplomata (*CIL* xvi, 112, 113, of 151 and 160 AD as well as the Regöly diploma of 148 AD (*CIL* xvi, 179-180 in Czalog and Alföldi, "Regöly", 100-112). Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 201; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 164; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135 and fig. 11; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 64.

Asturum et Callaecorum at Ad Statuas during this period, but I have found no evidence to confirm it.<sup>137</sup>

**Lugio (Dunaszekcső):**<sup>138</sup> An auxiliary fortification situated on the terminus point of the imperial road (across the Tisza river valley) linking Pannonia Inferior to Partiscum (Szeged) in Dacia Superior.<sup>139</sup> Its actual size or shape have not been established, as the fort has been only partially excavated.

On the basis of our existing evidence, which includes a substantial number of mid to late 1<sup>st</sup> century North Italian (Po valley) and South Gaulish terra sigillata, the fort was probably erected during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Its initial garrison has not been determined, but it is quite possible that cohors II Asturum et Callaecorum was stationed here during the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>140</sup>

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the cohors VII Breucorum would serve as the fort's permanent garrison.<sup>141</sup> Fülep has argued for the presence of an additional unit during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century at Lugio, namely a detachment from cohors I Noricorum.<sup>142</sup>

This unit was stationed at the nearby fort of Alisca at the time. Given the geographical proximity between the two forts, his theory would seem plausible; however, there is no archaeological evidence to confirm it.

---

<sup>137</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 121.

<sup>138</sup> *TIR* L34, 75, including inscriptions *CIL* iii, 3298-3302 and 10277-78; *RLiU*, 112-113; Visy, *PLiU*, 122-124; Kovács and Maraz, "Dunaszekcső", 299 (a very basic reference to the identification of the fort); Fülep, "Pannonia", 42; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 214, argue for the possible existence of two forts at the site but there seems to be no evidence to confirm this.

<sup>139</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15.3 (as Lougionon); *Itin.Ant.*, 244, 2 (as Lugione).

<sup>140</sup> According to Fülep in *RLiU*, 113 and Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11, who, however, offer no supporting evidence. The unit is stationed in Pannonia after AD 80 (*CIL* xvi, 26, 31). It is attested among the units of Pannonia Inferior in AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 164), after which it was stationed in the southern sector of the Lower Pannonian limes, at Rittium or Ad Militare (Batina). Its whereabouts between 80-110 have not been determined on the basis of archaeological evidence; however, as it appears to have operated in the wider region of the Tolna valley district in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, it is possible that it was stationed at Lugio during the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. See Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 201, 222 and n. 336; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 81.

<sup>141</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 124; *RLiU*, 113; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 101-103; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 213-214. Two votive inscriptions from this unit were found at Lugio, in *CIL* iii, 10277 and 10278.

<sup>142</sup> *RLiU*, 113.

**Altinum (Kölked):**<sup>143</sup> An auxiliary fort of rectangular shape, measuring an estimated 230 by 150m. The fort is located on the Roman imperial road along the left bank of the Danube river course, between the forts of Lugio and Ad Militare (Batina).<sup>144</sup>

An earth and timber fort was initially erected at the site during the early 60's AD, according to the discovery of a number of brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Lusitanorum.<sup>145</sup> There is no information as to whether the fort was rebuilt in stone at any point during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

The fort at Altinum would serve as the permanent headquarters for cohorts I Lusitanorum throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Brick stamps belonging to troops from legio II Adiutrix and cohorts VII Breucorum (from Lugio) were also found at the site.<sup>146</sup>

**Contra Aquincum:**<sup>147</sup> A small auxiliary fortification of square shape, measuring 84 by 86 m. The fort is situated on the right bank of the Danube, opposite the legionary fort of Aquincum. Today, only the remains of the late fort (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century) are still visible. Brick stamps from cohorts VII Breucorum and legio II Adiutrix (of late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century typology), which were found at the site, suggest a late 2<sup>nd</sup> century initial phase of occupation.

**Ad Militare (Batina):**<sup>148</sup> An auxiliary fortification of unknown shape and size, situated on the confluence point between the main course of the Danube river and two of its smaller tributaries. The fort has been completely covered by the Danube and, as a result, has not been excavated to any significant extent.

---

<sup>143</sup> *TIR* L34, 27; *RLiU*, 117-118; Visy, *PLiU*, 125; Fülep, "Kölked", 294.

<sup>144</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 244, 1.

<sup>145</sup> This unit is attested in Pannonia as early as AD 60 (*CIL* xvi, 4). This is the only site to have produced epigraphic evidence from cohorts I Lusitanorum, which means that the unit was stationed at Altinum from the start. According to the existing military diplomata, it remained in Pannonia Inferior throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 199, 223-224 and fig. 2; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 162-163; Fülep in *RLiU*, 117; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 61.

<sup>146</sup> *RLiU*, 117.

<sup>147</sup> *RLiU*, 122-123; Visy, *PLiU*, 84.

<sup>148</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 126; *TIR* L34, 25 (including the relevant inscriptional evidence found at the site); Bulat, "Topografska", 40; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 88; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 59; Klemenc, "Limes", 17; Pinterović, "Baranjskog Limes", 44.

Most of the available information about this fort is derived from a number of brick stamps which were discovered at the site, belonging to cohorts VII Breucorum, II Asturum et Callaecorum and a detachment from legio II Adiutrix, which suggest the function of a fort at Batina by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>149</sup>

There seems to be a significant dispute as to the fort's later permanent garrison. Some scholars, on the basis of the brick stamps belonging to cohorts II Asturum, have argued that this unit was stationed at Batina throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>150</sup> However, the discovery of a substantial amount of epigraphic evidence – datable from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards – from this particular unit at the fort at Rittium (Surduc), would suggest this fort as the unit's permanent base of operations during this period. In this sense, although there exists no epigraphic evidence to support it, it would seem more probable to argue in favour of the deployment of cohorts II Augusta Thracum at Batina during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>151</sup>

**Ad Novas (Zmajevac):**<sup>152</sup> An auxiliary fortification, measuring an estimated 250 by 120m, situated on the crossroad of the imperial road that linked the fortifications on the Danube with Mursa (Osijek) in the interior of the province. Its actual location is recorded in ancient literary sources which state that it stood

---

<sup>149</sup> Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 59; *TIR* L34, 25, including the relevant epigraphic evidence; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 101-103. Their presence at Batina should be associated with Trajan's Dacian wars, when Roman forces stationed in this sector appear to be constantly on the move in order to protect the area between the Sava and Dráva river valley against any sudden lazygan diversions.

<sup>150</sup> Wagner, *Dislokation*, 91; Nagy, "Albertyfalva", 68 and n. 182.

<sup>151</sup> As argued by Visy, *PLiU*, 126; Bulat, "Topografska", 40; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 59; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 214; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Lőrincz, "Thrakische Hilfstruppen", 97. This unit is first attested in Pannonia Inferior in 139 AD (*CIL* xvi, 175). There is no information as to where it came from, though its deployment in this province during Hadrian's reign should be related to the lazygan attacks of 136-138 AD. It remains in this province throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, as it is further recorded in the diplomata of 148, 160 and 168 AD (*CIL* xvi, 179/180, 112/123 and 123 respectively). See Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 367. So far, none of the forts on the Lower Pannonian limes has produced any epigraphic evidence which can be securely ascribed to this unit; in this sense, its deployment at Batina can only be tentatively suggested (as noted by Nagy, "Albertyfalva", 68 and n. 182). However, following the method of elimination, as the garrisons of the other fortifications in Lower Pannonia have been, more or less, securely established, I would therefore find it reasonable to conclude that cohorts II Augusta Thracum was indeed stationed at Batina during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

<sup>152</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 126; Bulat, "Topografska", 41, who gives a size of 200 by 90m; Pinterović, "Baranjskog Limes", 44; Klemenc, "Limes", 17; *TIR* L34, 25.

between the forts of Ad Militare and Teutoburgium in the south.<sup>153</sup> The fort itself has not been excavated, and therefore very little is known about it.

So far, all evidence recovered from the site, which includes amphorae and pottery fragments, two bronze lamps, monetary finds and a brick stamp belonging to legio VI Herculia (*CIL* iii 10665), indicate an initial phase of occupation in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century at the earliest.

## b. Sector II

**Teutoburgium (Dalj):**<sup>154</sup> The remains of an auxiliary fortification have been unearthed near the modern locality of Dalj, in Croatia. The identification of the site with the Roman fort at Teutoburgium, has been established on the basis of epigraphic and literary evidence.<sup>155</sup> The fort occupies a commanding position near the confluence point between the Danube and the Dráva river, thus controlling one of the major access routes into the province of Lower Pannonia in antiquity.

According to brick stamps belonging to ala II Hispanorum Aravacorum and ala I civium Romanorum which were found at the earliest level of occupation at the site, the fort at Dalj was initially erected during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>156</sup> There is no information as to any subsequent rebuilding phases, at least in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

---

<sup>153</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 243, 6.

<sup>154</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 127; *TIR* L34, 110; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 50, 88; Pinterović, "Limesstudien", 67-68; Bulat, "Topografska", 42-43; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 62; Klemenc, "Limes", 19-20.

<sup>155</sup> See *TIR* L34, 110, including the relevant epigraphic evidence discovered at the site (*CIL* iii, 3271-2, 10257-8, 3826). The location of the fort is recorded in Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 3; *Itin.Ant.*, 243.

<sup>156</sup> Epigraphic evidence cited in Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 62 (*CIL* iii, 3271); Pinterović, "Limesstudien", 68; Tóth and Vékony, "Pannoniens Geschichte", 133-161, especially pp 139-140, 156. Both units are attested in the Pannonian diplomata of AD 80, 84 and 85 (*CIL* xvi, 26, 30, 31). In relation to the ala I c.R., in addition to its brick stamps which were found at Dalj, its deployment in this particular frontier sector at the time is further confirmed by an inscription, datable to Vespasian's reign, which was found in the nearby fortified post at Beočin (in Nagy, "Albertyfalva", 59 and n. 91). After participating in the second Dacian war, it was transferred to Dacia (attested in *CIL*, xvi 57 of AD 110). Its later whereabouts are unknown, but the unit resurfaces in the Lower Pannonian diplomata of AD 157 and 163 (Roxan, *RMD*, 102/103, 110 and 113); contra Nagy, "Albertyfalva", 60, who is wrong to record it in the diploma of AD 139 (*CIL* xvi, 175). As it is not recorded in the later military diplomata of Lower Pannonia, its stay in this province was probably temporary; after

After the departure of these units for Moesia Inferior and Dacia respectively, the ala I praetorium c. R. would serve as the fort's permanent garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>157</sup>

**Cornacum (Sotin):**<sup>158</sup> An auxiliary fortification of unknown shape and size, situated on the confluence point between the Danube and the Vuka river. The fort is attested in 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD literary sources.<sup>159</sup> Its exact location has not been established yet; however, the material found at Sotin, which includes pottery and glassware fragments, terra sigillata of North Italian origin and brick stamps from cohorts I Montanorum, can confirm the function of a fort at the site from the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD onwards.<sup>160</sup>

The cohorts I Montanorum would serve as the fort's permanent garrison until the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, after which it was replaced by cohorts I Aurelia

---

that, it either left for another province (unknown) or was destroyed during the Marcomannic wars. Its base of operations during its second tour of duty in Pannonia Inferior has not been established, though some fort in the southern sector of the Lower Pannonian frontier is a distinct possibility. The ala II Hispanorum Aravacorum is stationed in the area during the course of Domitian's wars on the Danube; Dalj is the only site where epigraphic evidence from this unit has been found. It was later transferred to Lower Moesia (see Carsium and Cius). For a history of both units see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 7, 10; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 26, 47-48; Nagy, "Albertfalva", 58-61; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 208; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 67.

<sup>157</sup> This unit is mentioned in the Pannonian diploma of AD 84 (*CIL* xvi, 31). Between the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the end of Trajan's Dacian wars, it is recorded among the units of the Upper Moesian army (*CIL* xvi, 39, 46, 54 of 93, 100, 106 AD). It is attested again in Pannonia Inferior in 110 (*CIL* xvi, 164), where it remains throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (*CIL* xvi, 175, 179, 112, 123 of 139, 148, 160, 167 AD). See Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 62-64; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 198, 208-209; Nagy, "Albertfalva", 61-62; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11. It is epigraphically well attested at Teutoburgium; see Pinterović, "Limesstudien", 68; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 62; *TIR* L34, 110.

<sup>158</sup> Visy, *PLiU*, 127; Pinterović, "Limesstudien", 70; Bulat, "Topografska", 44; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 63; Klemenc, "Limes", 20; Korda, "Tragom Limesa", 59-65 (pg. 60: on the topography and identification of Cornacum); *TIR* L34, 49.

<sup>159</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 1; *Itin.Ant.*, 243, 3; the order of description has allowed for the identification of the Sotin site as the Roman fort of Cornacum.

<sup>160</sup> This unit is attested in Pannonia from AD 80 onwards (*CIL* xvi, 26, 30, 31, 47 of AD 80, 84, 85, 102). After participating in the Dacian wars, it was stationed in Pannonia Inferior where it is recorded in all 2<sup>nd</sup> century diplomata issued for the Lower Pannonian army. So far, Sotin is the only site to have produced epigraphic evidence from this unit. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 46-47; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 170-171; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 200-201; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 292-293; Šašel, "Cohors I Montanorum", 782-786.

Dardanorum Antoniniana.<sup>161</sup> A fragmentary inscription mentioning legio IV Flavia was found at the site;<sup>162</sup> its date has not been established, but it is most likely related to this legion's defensive operations around the Sirmium area during the course of the Marcomannic wars.

**Bononia (Banoštor or Malata):**<sup>163</sup> Traces from what appears to have been a large Roman auxiliary fortification have been discovered near the modern town of Banoštor, in Yugoslavia.<sup>164</sup> The site occupies a commanding position on top of a hill overlooking the left bank of the Danube river. According to the order of description in ancient itineraries and epigraphic evidence, the site has been identified as the fort of Bononia.<sup>165</sup>

The discovery of two inscriptions at the site, datable to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and to Trajan's reign, suggests that the fort was initially erected sometime within the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>166</sup> Thereafter, the fort appears to have remained in service well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>167</sup> however, given that the site has not been excavated, it is not possible to establish the approximate dates of any subsequent phases of construction or occupation at the fort.

Its garrison during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has not been securely established, as all inscriptions found at the site refer to its later garrisons.<sup>168</sup> It is quite probable, on the basis of the enumeration of the units in the military diplomata of Pannonia Inferior, that cohors I Campanorum voluntariorum c.R was stationed at Bononia after

---

<sup>161</sup> Epigraphic evidence cited in Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 63 and Wagner, *Dislokation*, 131.

<sup>162</sup> In Pinterović, "Limesstudien", 70.

<sup>163</sup> *TIR* L34, 76-77; Visy, *PLiU*, 128; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 50, 88; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 222; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 64-65; Klemenc, "Limes", 20-21.

<sup>164</sup> Its exact size has not been established, but the fort appears to have covered an area of approximately 4.5 to 5 hectares.

<sup>165</sup> *Itin. Ant.*, 242, 1; *TIR* L34, 76-77, including the inscriptions mentioning the name of the fort which were found at Banoštor.

<sup>166</sup> The fort is mentioned in all later (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD) literary sources, in *TIR* L34,76-77.

<sup>167</sup> *CIL* iii, 2361 and 3262 in Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 64-65. The first inscription mentions the cohors I Alpinorum equitata, which is known to have operated in the area at the time. The second inscription records some building activity which took place at the fort during Trajan's reign; it does not indicate which unit was responsible for it.

<sup>168</sup> *CIL* iii, 3700-3703, mentioning the equites Dalmatae and a praefect from legio I Jovia.

the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>169</sup> The possibility that the fort at Bononia was the base for ala I Flavia Britannica milliaria c. R. during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has also been suggested,<sup>170</sup> but it seems that this unit was stationed in the northern sector of the province, at the fort of Albertfalva.

**Beočin:**<sup>171</sup> A small fortified post (burgus ?) situated on the left bank of the Danube, midway between the forts of Bononia and Acumincum. It is not mentioned in any ancient itineraries. Small finds and an inscription datable to Vespasian's reign, have confirmed a Roman presence at this site from the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>172</sup>

**Čortanovci-Petrovaradin:**<sup>173</sup> A stone auxiliary fortification, measuring c. 70 by 100 m, situated on the south bank of the Danube, near the city of Novisad in Yugoslavia. At present, all archaeological material found at the site, point to a mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century initial phase of occupation.

**Acumincum (Stari Slankamen):**<sup>174</sup> An auxiliary fortification, overlooking the confluence point between the Danube and the Tisza river. There is very little information available about this fort; in fact nothing really remains of it today, as it has been completely covered by the Danube river flow. Its function from the early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD onwards is recorded in literary sources.<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>169</sup> This unit is first attested in the two military diplomata of AD 148 found at Regöly (*CIL*, xvi, 179/180). It was previously stationed in Dalmatia, according to Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 23. The arguments in favour of its deployment at Bononia belong to Radnóti and Barkóczi, "Distribution", 215; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 114-115; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 15; Fitz, "Military History", 70.

<sup>170</sup> Visy, "Notes", 90. For a discussion on the subject, see the section on the fort of Albertfalva.

<sup>171</sup> *TIR* L34, 35; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 222.

<sup>172</sup> Nagy, "Albertfalva", 59 and n. 91. The inscription belongs to troops from ala I c.R., stationed at the fort of Cornacum at the time.

<sup>173</sup> *TIR* L34, 49-50; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 255; Visy, *PLiU*, 128; Manojlović, "Čortanovaca", 123-125.

<sup>174</sup> *TIR* L34, 23; Visy, *PLiU*, 128-129; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 156; Görinz and Dimitrijević, "Gradine u Starom", 150-155; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 65; Klemenc, "Limes", 21; Piletić and Rasić, "Pregled Radova", 87.

<sup>175</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 242, 1.

After the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, it was probably garrisoned by a detachment from cohorts I Campanorum voluntariorum c.R.<sup>176</sup>

**Rittium (Surduk):**<sup>177</sup> An auxiliary fortification, measuring an estimated 300 by 400 m, situated on the left bank of the Danube. The fort is mentioned in the texts of 2<sup>nd</sup> century itineraries,<sup>178</sup> and along with the fort at Acumincum, Rittium was responsible for guarding the main natural access route through the mouth of the Tisza river valley.

The site has not been the subject of any significant fieldwork, no doubt owing to the fact that most of it has been covered by the Danube river flow. Most information available for this fort was derived during the course of a brief survey conducted in the late 1950's.

In addition to a few small surface finds, such as bronze fibulae, bronze lamps, pottery fragments and coins datable between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>179</sup> the site has also produced several brick stamps belonging to troops from cohorts VII Breucorum and cohorts II Asturum et Callaecorum, which should indicate an initial foundation date within the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>180</sup>

The fort's garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is still a matter of dispute. Some scholars, have argued in favour of ala I Augusta Ituraeorum, on the basis of the

---

<sup>176</sup> According to a brick stamp, marked **OH I C AN** which was found at the site (*AE* (1968), 420). In my view, its reconstruction as (C)**OH**(ors) I **C**(ampanorum) **AN**(toniniana) by Fitz, "Military History", 70 seems quite plausible, given that this unit was stationed at the nearby fort of Bononia; the alternative interpretation (as Cohors I **C AN**(tabrorum) in Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 65) would seem far fetched as this unit was stationed in the Prahovo district (Moesia Superior), some 400 km away from Acumincum. The brick stamp is of a later date (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD), but it is still indicative that cohorts I Campanorum voluntariorum operated between Bononia and Acumincum at the time. See Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 215; Visy, *PLiU*, 129.

<sup>177</sup> *TIR* L34, 96; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 233, including previous bibliography; Visy, *PLiU*, 130; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 65; Piletić and Rasić, "Pregled Radova", 88; Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 95-97; Klemenc, "Limes", 21-22.

<sup>178</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, 297, 15; *Itin.Ant.*, 242, 1.

<sup>179</sup> In Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 95-97; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 65.

<sup>180</sup> This dating is based on the fact that both units, in Pannonia after 80 AD, have left a substantial amount of epigraphic evidence in the Roman forts situated along the Dráva river frontier sector; see Lugio and Batina (which Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 81, mistakenly assigns to Pannonia Superior). Their presence at Rittium should therefore be associated with Domitian's and Trajan's wars on the Danube, when Roman forces appear to be constantly on the move along the frontier.

strict enumeration of the Roman units in the Lower Pannonian diplomata,<sup>181</sup> its presence at Rittium would seem possible given the fort's size, but there is absolutely no evidence to confirm it. On the contrary, the surviving epigraphic evidence from this unit would suggest its deployment in a camp in the vicinity of Aquincum (Intercisa).<sup>182</sup> In this respect, I would argue in favour of the deployment at Rittium of cohorts II Asturum et Callaecorum, which has left a significant number of epigraphic evidence at the site.<sup>183</sup>

According to brick stamps bearing the mark of CFP, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Rittium would also serve as a naval station for the Roman fleet in Pannonia Inferior.<sup>184</sup>

**Burgenae (Novi Banovci):**<sup>185</sup> The remains of a large fortification and naval post<sup>186</sup>, measuring 500 by 600 m, occupying an elevated point on the left bank of the Danube river, are situated near the locality of Novi Banovci (Yugoslavia). Its large size should be attributed to the fact that after the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the fort would serve as the base for legio I Jovia.

Not much is known in relation to the fort's early life, as most of the visible remains and archaeological material from the site belongs to the later (late 3<sup>rd</sup> – early 4<sup>th</sup> century) phase of occupation. According to brick stamps bearing the mark of cohorts I Thracum c. R., it is quite probable that the fort was initially erected during the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>181</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 11; Radnóti and Barkóczy, "Distribution", 209; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 135, fig. 11; Fitz, "Military History", 71.

<sup>182</sup> See the relevant discussion in the section under Intercisa.

<sup>183</sup> *TIR* L34, 96; Visy, *PLiU*, 130; Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 95-97; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 65; Tóth and Vékony, "Pannoniens Geschichte", 156.

<sup>184</sup> Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 96.

<sup>185</sup> *TIR* L34, 43 (including inscriptions in *CIL* iii, 13356-8; 13393, 13395, 13447, 13552, 14137, 15175, which have also helped to identify this site as the Roman fort of Burgenae); Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 231; Visy, *PLiU*, 130; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 66; Klemenc, "Limes", 22; Piletić and Rasić, "Pregled Radova", 87; Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 93-95.

<sup>186</sup> According to brick stamps bearing the mark of CFP, in *TIR* L34, 43; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 66.

<sup>187</sup> This unit was previously stationed at Ulcisia Castra; it was transferred to Burgenae by the end of Hadrian's reign (see Nagy, "Ulcisia Castra", 56) and was probably responsible for the erection of the fort. In addition to several brick stamps (in *CIL* iii, 13393 and 13395; *AE* (1901), 224), a votive inscription, found in the nearby village of Stara Pazova (*CIL* iii, 15138), can also confirm its presence in Burgenae during the mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

The cohort I Thracum c.R. appears to have been permanently stationed at Burgenae during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, after which it was replaced by cohort III Alpinorum equitata. A brick stamp belonging to legio IV Flavia was also found at the site.<sup>188</sup> This legion was stationed at the nearby fort of Singidunum (Belgrade) in Moesia Superior. Unless this is a chance find, its presence at Burgenae should probably be associated with the course of the Marcomannic wars, when detachments from this legion are known to have operated in the area between the Dráva and Sava river valleys.

**Taurunum (Zemun):**<sup>189</sup> An auxiliary camp or naval post, situated on the road that linked Sirmium to Singidunum (Belgrade) in antiquity. Its exact location has not been established, as the fort is believed to lie underneath the town of Zemun (one of Belgrade's larger suburbs). The discovery of several Roman inscriptions and brick stamps in this area suggests that this site corresponds to the fort of Taurunum.<sup>190</sup>

According to brick stamps bearing the mark of CFP, Taurunum served as a base for the Roman fleet in Pannonia.<sup>191</sup>

### c. Fortifications in the Interior of the Province

**Gorsium (Tác):**<sup>192</sup> One of the best excavated and published sites in Hungary, the Roman colony of Gorsium is situated near the village of Tác, in the interior of the province of Pannonia Inferior. From the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD onwards, Gorsium would serve as the seat for the provincial governor of the province of Valeria.

Excavations carried out in the south-east quarter of the later city have established the clear traces of an earth and timber Roman auxiliary fortification of rectangular

---

<sup>188</sup> Klemenc, "Limes", 22.

<sup>189</sup> *TIR* L34, 110; Visy, *PLiU*, 130; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 67; Dimitrijević, "Istocnom Srem", 97-98; Klemenc, "Limes", 22-23.

<sup>190</sup> As recorded by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, ii, 15, 3 and Pliny, *NH*, iii, 148. The epigraphic evidence is cited in *TIR* L34, 110 (*CIL* iii, 10675, 13355, 13394, 15137).

<sup>191</sup> In *TIR*, L34, 110 (*CIL* iii, 10675); Visy, *PLiU*, 130.

<sup>192</sup> Fitz, *Gorsium, Herculia, Tác*; Fitz, "Gorsium 1958", 154-164; Fitz, "Gorsium 1960", 141-152; Fitz, "Gorsium 1983", 179-240; Fitz, "Gorsium 1987", 321-400; Bánki and Fitz, "Gorsium 1985", 93-136; Bánki, "Gorsium 1979", 201-251 (201-204 on forts); Bánki,

shape; according to the existing archaeological evidence – including a number of brick stamps belonging to ala Scubulorum – which were unearthed at this layer of occupation, this fort was initially erected during the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>193</sup>

During the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, a second earth and timber fort was erected at the site, which measured 330 by 195m.<sup>194</sup> Visible traces from this fort include sections of the northern and southern defensive ditch (fossa) as well as the porta decumana. There is no indication as to which unit build or occupied this fort, as the ala Scubulorum had left for the fort of Matrica by the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>195</sup> It is quite probable that it was one of the units stationed at the nearby forts of Intercisa or Vetus Salina.<sup>196</sup>

This fort was permanently abandoned by the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**Mursa (Osijek):**<sup>197</sup> The remains of the Roman military and civilian fortified settlement of Mursa, are situated on the left bank of the Dráva river, near the modern town of Osijek (Croatia). The site lies on the junction of the imperial roads which led from the interior of the province to Rome's Danubian limes sector in the Dráva river valley.

According to the available archaeological evidence recovered from the site, especially brick stamps bearing the mark of cohorts II Alpinorum, it is possible that Mursa served as the headquarters for this unit during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>198</sup> The discovery of epigraphic evidence belonging to legio X

---

“Gorsium 1983”, 179-239; Fedak, “Gorsium 1987”, 321-400; Fitz, Bánki and Lányi, “Gorsium 1980”, 201-228; *TIR* L34, 62-63.

<sup>193</sup> Lőrincz, “Gorsium – Herculia”, 175-191, esp. 175-176; Fitz, “Auxiliarkastell”, 316-321; Gabler and Kocztur, “Terra Sigillata”, 65-88. The ala Scubulorum, was previously stationed in Moesia (Oescus Sector) and is one of the earliest recorded units in Pannonia (*CIL* xvi, 20 of 74 AD).

<sup>194</sup> The date is confirmed by the discovery of terra sigillata, datable to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, which were found at this fort's defensive ditch, in Fitz, “Excavations”, 27-31; Fitz, “Lager”, 187-192.

<sup>195</sup> See above: Matrica.

<sup>196</sup> Lőrincz, “Gorsium – Herculia”, 175-176 argues for the cohorts VII Breucorum; apart from the absence of any supporting evidence, the fact that this unit was stationed in the south-east frontier sector of Pannonia Inferior at the time, should count against his argument.

<sup>197</sup> Pinterović, *Mursa*, esp. pp. 7-43; Pinterović, “Topografiji Murse”, 35-42; Klemenc, “Pannonische Limes”, 60-62; Klemenc, “Limes”, 17-19; *TIR* L34, 82.

<sup>198</sup> Klemenc, “Pannonische Limes”, 61-62; Pinterović, *Mursa*, 7-12. Apart from brick stamps, an inscription (*CIL* iii, 3261) of this unit, datable to Domitian's reign was found near Mursa.

Gemina and VII Claudia, suggests that the fort was also garrisoned by detachments from both legions during the course of Domitian's and Trajan's wars on the Danube.<sup>199</sup> The fort was probably abandoned during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, following the transfer of cohorts II Alpinorum to Vetus Salina. By AD 133, Mursa was elevated to the status of a Roman colony.<sup>200</sup>

---

Pinterović is wrong to argue that this unit was stationed at Mursa until the end of Hadrian's reign; it was transferred to the fort of Vetus Salina by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

<sup>199</sup> *TIR* L34, 82, including the relevant epigraphic evidence; Klemenc, "Pannonische Limes", 61-62; Pinterović, *Mursa*, 14-16, who argues that legio XXI Rapax was briefly stationed at Mursa right before its destruction during Domitian's wars on the Danube (92-93 AD). There is no conclusive indication that Mursa served as a base for XIV Gemina during the Dacian wars of Domitian and Trajan, as argued by Wilkes, "Fortresses", 115.

<sup>200</sup> As attested by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, 15, 4; *Itin.Ant.*, 131, 1. The elevation of Mursa to colonial status by Hadrian is recorded in an inscription (*CIL* iii, 3280).

## II.ii. EVALUATION OF THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF LOWER PANNONIA

### a. The Julio-Claudian period

Judging by the available archaeological and literary evidence, the overall picture with regard to the shape and nature of Rome's defensive system in the province of Pannonia during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD is still quite elusive. Despite the claims of Augustus concerning the constitution of the Danube river as Rome's frontier in this area,<sup>201</sup> there seems to have been little in the way of providing any form of frontier defences or control along its course. Our evidence shows that during this period, military investment on the frontier line was confined only to the area of the North west sector of Pannonia, with the deployment of legio XV Apollinaris at Carnuntum under Augustus and the erection of the first fortified points along the Danube, between Carnuntum and Arrabona, during the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius.<sup>202</sup>

The situation in relation to the east and south east sector of the province of Pannonia (with reference to the territories later assigned to the province of Pannonia Inferior) appears to be far more obscure. For one thing, there is still no conclusive indication as to where the actual frontier line stood or as to which territories in this sector were firmly incorporated into the empire during this period in time.<sup>203</sup> Especially in relation to sector I, that is the area north of the Dráva river and east of the Sirvez river (see map 2), there seem to be no traces of any pre-Claudian occupation.<sup>204</sup> Accordingly, even after the penetration of Roman forces in the area around the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, there was clearly no

---

<sup>201</sup> *RG*, 30.1.

<sup>202</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 49. In addition to the fortifications along the Carnuntum – Arrabona sector, there is a possibility of an early fort at the site of Szákony-Gyaloka (Sopron county) on the eastern bank of the Repce river, as the base of ala I Pannoniorum during Augustus and Tiberius. See Nagy, "Frontier", 149.

<sup>203</sup> On the basis of the surviving evidence, mainly that left behind by the Roman army, we can assume that it was only the territory south of the Dráva river (sector I) and the North western frontier region (between Vindobona and Carnuntum) that were formally annexed within the Empire. See Fitz, "Administration", 125.

<sup>204</sup> Mócsy, "Limes", 627-635; Gabler and Lőrincz, "Remarks", 174-175.

conscious or systematic effort to fortify the frontier line; with the exception of Aquincum, Lussonium and possibly Altinum, the construction of most Roman fortifications along this particular frontier sector was the product of the Flavian period.

As for the area of southeast Pannonia (sector II), the situation appears to be less problematic. The accounts provided by Dio Cassius, Appian and Velleius Paterculus, have been quite helpful in the reconstruction of the principal events that led to the conquest of the territories between the Sava and Dráva rivers.<sup>205</sup> At the same time, the region's formal annexation into the empire and its military occupation from Augustus onwards has been firmly established by archaeological evidence.<sup>206</sup> However, even in this case, there is no evidence for any systematic attempt to establish a permanent military presence along the left bank of the Danube or its immediate hinterland. The attacks against Sirmium in AD 6 clearly demonstrate that there were no regular Roman units stationed in the area at the time, as it was the Moesian army that came to the relief of the besieged town.<sup>207</sup> In addition, and at least up to the advent of the Flavian dynasty, there is absolutely no evidence for the presence of any early Roman fortifications or garrisons along this particular section of the frontier (map 5).<sup>208</sup>

So, what becomes apparent after a brief examination of the available evidence is that, at least up to the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, there was clearly no effort at providing any degree or form of frontier defence and control in the eastern part of the province of Pannonia. An adequate explanation for this complete absence of any early Roman military presence along the Pannonian frontier line can probably be derived from a close consideration of two main factors: first, Rome's principal strategic aims in this area at the time, and, second, Rome's relations with the local populations residing in the territories within or beyond the frontier zone.

---

<sup>205</sup> Appian, iii.15-28; Dio, xlix, 34-38; Velleius, ii.96. See Barkóczi, "History of Pannonia", 87-89; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 33-34.

<sup>206</sup> Note the existence of early Roman glassware and terra sigillata near Mursa since the times of Augustus in Gabler, "Sigillaten", 99-110.

<sup>207</sup> Dio iv 29.3-4. Point made by Eadie, "Development", 209. Eadie is right in noting that Sirmium was just an oppidum at the time.

Without doubt, the pattern of Rome's strategic and tactical disposition in Pannonia during the Julio-Claudian period can provide sufficient indications as to Rome's main strategic objectives in this province at the time. During Augustus reign, Rome's legionary forces in Pannonia consisted of the XV Apollinaris, the VIII Augusta and the IX Hispana; all three were stationed well south of the Dráva river course, at Emona (modern Ljubljana, in Slovenia), Poetovio (Ptuj, in Slovenia) and Siscia (Sisak in Croatia) respectively.<sup>209</sup> Even after the transfer of legio XV Apollinaris to Carnuntum under Augustus,<sup>210</sup> most probably in order to spearhead the Roman offensive against Maroboduus, the other two legions would remain at their previous stations until the early years of Claudius reign.<sup>211</sup> Accordingly, the evidence relevant to the presence or deployment of the Roman army in Pannonia during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century clearly demonstrates that all Roman military concentrations at the time were confined to the interior of the province.<sup>212</sup>

Therefore, in the light of this inward oriented pattern of strategic disposition, it seems that Rome's main strategic directives and concerns in the eastern sector of Pannonia during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, did not focus on the creation of a frontier defensive system but rather on the avoidance of endemic revolts, especially in the aftermath of the Pannonian revolt of AD 6-9. In this sense, it seems reasonable to assume that the Roman army in Pannonia was specifically intended to act as an occupation army: concentrated near the emerging Roman urban centres, its chief task was to ensure the complete and final pacification of the province, the gradual consolidation and integration of Roman territorial possessions in the area and the protection of the emerging military

---

<sup>208</sup> Contra Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 43.

<sup>209</sup> Lőrincz, "Pannonian legions", 285-288; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 110, 112, 115-116.

<sup>210</sup> Or perhaps as early as 35-33 BC, according to Wells, "Emona", 185-190; contra Šašel, "Inscription", 40-42, who argues that the XV Apollinaris was stationed at Emona until AD 15.

<sup>211</sup> Legio IX Hispana was stationed at Siscia until 43 AD, after which it was transferred to Britain. Legio VIII Augusta was transferred to Novae (Svištov) in AD 45; it was replaced, at Poetovio, by legio XIII Gemina. Wilkes, "Fortresses", 110-111.

<sup>212</sup> On the relevant evidence, see Lőrincz, "Territorien", 244-245 and tables 45.1, 45.4; Gabler, "Besitznahme", 199-217. Apart from the Carnuntum – Arrabona sector, Roman

infrastructure in the interior of the province.<sup>213</sup> Within this particular strategic framework, it is also possible to explain the motive behind the erection of the frontier fortifications at Aquincum, Altinum and Lusonium or the deployment of *ala Scubulorum* (maps 2 and 5) at the fort of Gorsium by the end of the Julio-Claudian period. Given the lack of a supporting “*limes*” infrastructure on either flank of this frontier sector, this initiative should not be seen as part of an early attempt to create a system of frontier control, but rather as a means to supervise the local populations residing in this area, especially after the possible settlement, under Nero, of 50.000 barbarians within Pannonian territory.<sup>214</sup>

Moreover, one further reason for the absence of any military investment on the actual frontier line during this period could be seen in the establishment of *clientele* relations with the populations living in the areas of the east and south – east of Pannonia. It seems that, at least during the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, both the frontier and hinterland areas of the eastern part of Pannonia were inhabited by rather peaceful tribes: in the area around Aquincum, there is absolutely no evidence that the local populations, the Azali, the Hercuniates, the Cornacates, the Hermunduri, the Naristae, the Osi or the Cotini<sup>215</sup> ever constituted a threat; in fact, there is no evidence to suggest that the Aquincum area was affected by any transborder incursions, at least during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The same picture seems to apply in relation to the populations living in the area between the Sava and Dráva rivers,<sup>216</sup> where the establishment, under the Julio-Claudian emperors, of “*civitates*” with the native groups seems to have removed any military threat.<sup>217</sup>

Therefore, in this sense, it is reasonable to conclude that the absence of any potential threat and the establishment by Rome of *clientele* relations with the

---

military presence was limited to the interior of the province, in the areas between Poetovio and Scarbantia and the western section of the Dráva river.

<sup>213</sup> Such as the main communication routes and supply lines linking Poetovio to Carnuntum and Siscia to Mursa and Sirmium which were constructed between Tiberius and Claudius. In Mócsy and Gabler, “*Probleme*”, 369-372.

<sup>214</sup> See Mócsy, “*Tampius Flavius*”, 207.

<sup>215</sup> Mócsy, “*Besatzungsperiode*”, 41-46.

<sup>216</sup> Such as the Booi, Eravisci, Taurisci, Scordisci, Iapodes, Dardani, Breuci, Iasi and the Andizetes. See Fitz, “*Limesforschung*”, 219.

populations across the frontier, negated the need to establish any form of permanent military presence along the left bank of the Danube at the period in time.

### **b. The Flavian Period**

From the outset, it appears that the Julio-Claudian defensive layout in Pannonia proved to be quite successful in fulfilling its chief strategic goal, that is the final pacification and consolidation of the interior of the province. After the Pannonian revolt of AD 9, there is no further mention of any further local uprisings in this region; as Pliny records, the situation in the interior of Pannonia was peaceful and stable by his times.<sup>218</sup> Pannonians are increasingly recruited in the Roman army – and in large numbers – by the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century,<sup>219</sup> while, by the turn of the century, acculturation appears to have been so dominant that local officials had replaced the Romans.<sup>220</sup>

Nevertheless, the strategic layout of the Julio-Claudian era in the eastern sector of the province of Pannonia underwent a fundamental change during the course of the Flavian period. This appears to have been a direct consequence of the dramatic change of the political and military situation across the frontier boundaries of the province right before the advent of the Flavian dynasty.

As noted before, the determining factor in Roman frontier policy in Pannonia during the Julio-Claudian period evolved around Rome's relations with her neighbours across the frontier; as long as Rome maintained friendly relations with the populations residing across the Danube, the Pannonian frontier was safe. However, by the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, it seems that the clientele relations with the Marcomanni and Quadi had started to deteriorate, as after the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the Transdanubian populations begin to make their presence felt along the frontier line. At the same time, the appearance and settlement of the Sarmatian tribe of the Iazyges opposite the Aquincum area by the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> For which see Fitz, "Klientel-staaten", 73-85; Eadie, "Development", 219.

<sup>218</sup> Pliny, *HN* iii, 146-147.

<sup>219</sup> Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 64-66; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 39, 51-52.

century,<sup>221</sup> constituted an additional threat for Roman security interests in the area, as, during the late 60's and early 70's the Iazyges would conduct a series of cross-border attacks against the province of Pannonia. In fact, as later events would show, the Aquincum area would become the main target of Transdanubian attacks and incursions during the early principate.

Thus, in the light of the above political developments and with the barbarians posing a constant and visible threat across the frontier, it became rather obvious that Rome's existing defensive structure in Pannonia was no longer suitable for meeting the latest strategic considerations in the area or capable of ensuring the protection of the province's frontier territories. In this context, Rome's strategic response would involve a sharp switch in the overall pattern of tactical and strategic disposition in Pannonia and the complete reorganisation and overhaul of Roman frontier defences along the Danube river course (see maps 3 and 6). The modification of the existing defensive structure was the product of a gradual process, which was planned and executed in several stages.

The first step would involve the full military occupation and the unification of all territories between Aquincum and the Sava river which would result in the final constitution of the Danube as Rome's frontier in the area and its demarcation as the clear line of division between Rome and the barbarians. The second stage would involve the construction of the first string of Roman fortifications along the Danube frontier, which aimed at providing the first elements of frontier defence and control; this was followed by the gradual deployment of all available Roman forces on the actual frontier line, which after the transfer of ala Scubulorum from Gorsium to the frontier and the deployment of the regions sole legionary garrison, the II Adiutrix, at Aquincum after AD 89,<sup>222</sup> resulted in the almost complete demilitarisation of the interior of the province.

According to the available evidence, sector I (Aquincum to Teutoburgium) would be the main recipient of a wide-scale building program during the Flavian

---

<sup>220</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 70.

<sup>221</sup> Perhaps even earlier according to Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 37, 39. See also Barkóczi, "Sarmatians and Roxolani", 443-448; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 259.

<sup>222</sup> Lőrincz, "Besatzungstruppen", 310; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 106.

period.<sup>223</sup> This included the erection of the forts at Aquincum, Albertfalva and Vetus Salina, and the deployment of the first Roman forces (*alae*) along this frontier sector. In addition to the establishment of a permanent military presence and the provision of an adequate system of frontier perimeter control along this frontier sector, the militarisation of the Aquincum area appears to have been part of an initiative which aimed at satisfying one further important strategic imperative: that is, the creation of a unified defence system designed to function in close co-operation with the emerging *limes* system along the northwest sector of Pannonia in the face of the Marcomanni, Quadi and Iazygan front.

Vespasian's initial work on the *limes* of eastern Pannonia (sector I) was brought to a final conclusion under Domitian. In addition to the erection of new fortifications at the points of Campona, Matrica, Intercisa, Annamantia, Alta Ripa, Lugio and Teutoburgium and the completion of the road network along the Danube river course<sup>224</sup> no doubt in an effort to unify and solidify Rome's defensive arrangement along this sector, the deployment of *legio* II *Adiutrix* at Aquincum seems to have further bolstered the system's overall defensive capabilities; apart from the stationing of a legion directly opposite the Sarmatian populations across Aquincum, it facilitated the relocation of the cavalry units previously stationed in this area to forts located downstream of Aquincum (see map 6)

In relation to sector II (the area between the Dráva and Sava rivers), despite the fact that the area remained largely unaffected by any transborder incursions, the creation of an early defensive system along this frontier sector was also a product of the Flavian period. On the basis of our evidence, at least three new fortifications, at Cornacum, Bononia and Rittium were erected along this sector during Domitian's reign. Apart from completing the unification of all Roman territories between Aquincum and the Sava river, the establishment of a *limes* system between the Dráva and Sava rivers also provided a sufficient strategic link between the Aquincum frontier defence system and Rome's legionary

---

<sup>223</sup> Gabler, "Flavian Limes", 76-81 and figs 1-6; Tóth and Vékony, "Building Inscription", 109-115.

<sup>224</sup> Póczy, "Strassennetz", 252-273; Dušanić, "Rimska vojska", 87-108.

concentrations in the Sava area. (see map 3).<sup>225</sup> Despite the fact that the area was not heavily fortified or garrisoned during the Flavian period,<sup>226</sup> the establishment and preservation of peaceful relations with the populations across the frontier meant that the region's auxiliary garrison in addition to periodic visits of detachments from Rome's legionary forces sufficed for the adequate protection of the entire area between the Dráva and Sava rivers.<sup>227</sup>

At the same time, as the area was not threatened by cross-border attacks, the forces stationed in this region also acted as a mobile reserve force for any operations conducted anywhere across the Pannonian frontier; in fact, the participation of forces from this sector in the Danubian wars of Domitian and Trajan is well documented.<sup>228</sup>

Last but not least, special mention should be made of the organisation, under the Flavian emperors, of the Roman fleet in Pannonia, following the erection and establishment of naval stations at Taurunum, Burgenae, Rittium, Aquincum and perhaps Lugio. Although Tacitus mentions its existence as early as the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>229</sup> its sufficient usage as a valuable instrument in the adequate surveillance of the Danube river course should be accredited to the Flavian emperors.

In the aftermath of Domitian's work on the Danube, the Roman defensive system along the eastern frontier sector of Pannonia, would more or less acquire a characteristic pattern of disposition that would see it through the entire period of

---

<sup>225</sup> Following the deployment of the legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia at Singidunum and Viminacium respectively after 86 AD.

<sup>226</sup> There were no more than 2500-3500 men stationed between the Dráva and Sava rivers at any time during the principate. See table 1.

<sup>227</sup> The existence of late 1<sup>st</sup> century epigraphic material from legio II Adiutrix near Mursa and the Danube fortifications of Teutoburgium and Cornacum has confirmed the fact that legionary detachments from Aquincum extended their zones of operations to include the area between the Dráva and Sava rivers. Bulat, "Osijek", 79-87; Bulat and Pinterović, "Izvestaj", 3-50.

<sup>228</sup> Note the participation of ala II Hispanorum Aravacorum in both emperor's wars on the Danube. Units from this sector were also used in Roman offensives across the north and north west of Pannonia Superior, during the Marcomannic wars. See Fitz, "Military history", 68, on the participation of ala I Praetorium c.R (from Teutoburgium) in the Marcomannic wars.

<sup>229</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.*, xii, 30.

Roman occupation. As the map showing the pattern of Roman strategic distribution along the Pannonian limes by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century demonstrates (map 3), the protection of the province's boundaries would basically depend on a single line of defence, consisting of a string of frontier fortifications which formed an uninterrupted chain sealing the entire area of the Danube river course from Aquincum up to Singidunum.

However, following a close examination of the evolution of Rome's frontier defensive system in the province of Pannonia by the end of the first century AD, there are certain conclusions that can be drawn. For one thing, it seems that extra care and a sufficient degree of military planning went into the exact disposition and location of Rome's fortifications on the frontier and the choice of their garrisons. In fact, it appears that these forts were built with special consideration to the barbarians residing across the frontier and according to their real potential as a threat. This, for example, is reflected in the exact positioning of the legionary fort at Aquincum, directly opposite the main area of habitation of the Iazyges. Occupying a commanding strategic position overlooking the northern sections of the Tisza river valley, the fort's position enabled the Romans to keep a close eye on all Sarmatian movement and activity across this stretch of the frontier.<sup>230</sup> An additional example can be seen in the pattern of fort disposition along the limes sector just south of Aquincum, between Campona and Intercisa. Erected on either flank of the Csépel-Sziget valley (see map 3), these forts were specifically intended to seal off and supervise an area which, according to our evidence, represented one of the main targets for Sarmatian incursions into Pannonian territory throughout the early principate.<sup>231</sup> Accordingly, the choice behind the units stationed along this sector seems to have been similarly well judged: all three forts were exclusively garrisoned by cavalry units (see table.), which, given the suitability of the terrain,<sup>232</sup> were ideal for both the sufficient

---

<sup>230</sup> A similar example can be seen in the positioning of Rome's legionary forts along the northern sector of Pannonia, with three legionary bases (Vindibona, Carnuntum and, by AD 100, Brigetio) spread across the Quadi and Marcommani front.

<sup>231</sup> Judging by the traces of destruction, datable to the late 1st century AD, which were found at the fort of Albertfalva. Similar evidence of destruction, datable to the period of the Marcomannic wars, was discovered at the forts of Albertfalva, Matrica and Intercisa.

<sup>232</sup> That is the even ground plains of the Csépel-Sziget valley.

surveillance of the frontier perimeter as well as the mounting of quick retaliatory offensives deep within barbarian territory when deemed necessary.

Similar examples, attesting to the existence and exercise of a conscious and rational strategic plan behind the creation of the Pannonian limes, can be drawn from the fortifications situated between the Sió and Sava rivers. Most fortifications were erected on the confluence points between the Danube and its smaller tributaries, as for example Lugio, Altinum, Cornacum and Rittium. Without doubt, their actual positioning was not accidental, as the flat, even-levelled paths formed by these tributaries represented natural landing points and access routes for barbarian attacks across the Danube frontier. Furthermore, the composition of this sector's auxiliary garrison was not the product of any random decision, as seen in the case of the fort at Teutoburgium. This fort was the headquarters of two ala units by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, which were quite suitable, even ideal, for the adequate supervision and protection of the area between the Vuka, Dráva and Danube rivers.

On the basis of the above arguments, it is reasonable to conclude that the final consolidation of the Flavian limes in the eastern sector of Pannonia, reflects the existence of a carefully executed rational military plan which, after a close examination of the region's topographical realities and morphology of terrain and a careful consideration of the enemy's expected targets of attack, produced a defensive system designed to meet three important strategic requirements: the provision of an effective degree of frontier control, the sufficient surveillance of the frontier perimeter and, finally, the establishment of a defensive system capable of repelling any sudden barbarian cross-border attacks.

At the same time, however, despite the obvious defensive function and purpose of the Flavian frontier defence system in Pannonia, its capabilities and overall potential as a base of tactical supply for forward offensive operations should not be underestimated; in fact, as the Danubian wars of Domitian and Trajan would later demonstrate, the Pannonian limes system would be used as a springboard for Rome's offensives across the Danube.

### c. The Antonine Period

Judging by the map revealing the pattern of Rome's strategic and tactical deployment in Pannonia Inferior by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (map 4), what becomes apparent is the fact that there were no major modifications or revisions in the overall frontier defensive layout of the province. Most work by the Antonine emperors seems to have been directed towards the closing of the gaps between the existing line of fortifications, obviously in an effort to achieve the further consolidation and solidification of the standing defensive structure; but it would not involve any real alterations to the system's overall *modus operandi*. One reason for this was the constitution of the province of Dacia as the nucleus of Rome's defensive system throughout the entire Lower Danube region;<sup>233</sup> this meant that the Lower Pannonian limes system, much like its counterpart along the two Moesian frontier lines, was destined to perform a supporting, corollary role to the Dacian defence system.<sup>234</sup> A second reason is the fact that, during the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the Lower Pannonian limes system appears to have acquitted itself quite well in the adequate protection of the imperial boundaries. The Sarmatian attacks between 92 and 97 AD, directed mainly towards the north and north east sector of Pannonia, never really managed to pose a serious threat to the security of the province; fighting was contained to the area of the frontier zone and despite some initial success – the destruction of the fort at Albertfalva – there is no evidence that the Sarmatians ever managed to penetrate any further. By 107 AD, the situation had changed so rapidly, that the Romans were now capable of launching offensives and defeating the enemy in their own soil.<sup>235</sup> Therefore, in the light of the above, there seems to have been no reason for any substantial changes in the existing defensive structure.

Especially in relation to sector I, Antonine activity seems to have exclusively focused on the reconstruction of the Flavian fortifications in the area; by Hadrian's reign, most forts in this sector had been rebuilt in stone, thus

---

<sup>233</sup> Discussed in the relevant section under Dacia.

<sup>234</sup> Which should account for the outflow of Roman auxiliary units from Pannonia Inferior to Dacia during Trajan's reign. Thereafter, the total army strength of Lower Pannonia would remain stable at 15000 to 16000 men.

<sup>235</sup> SHA, *Had*, iii.9.

acquiring a state of permanence on the frontier that would see them through the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. However, there were some notable changes in Rome's tactical disposition in the area. Alibertfalva, often the victim of cross-border attacks, would be garrisoned by the Pannonian army's finest auxiliary unit, the *ala I Flavia milliaria*; while the nearby forts at Campona, Matrica and Intercisa became the bases of operations for *ala I Thracum sagittariorum*, *cohors I Alpinorum equitata* and *ala I Augusta Ituraeorum* respectively. Without doubt, the deployment of these units along this section of the frontier line was the product of a rational consideration of the threat posed by the Iazyges, who were now fronted by a legion, two cavalry units and a partly mounted infantry cohort. Especially in relation to the *ala I Thracum sagittariorum*, the deployment of a missile cavalry unit in the Aquincum sector seems to further serve this point, as such units were quite well equipped and trained to meet the hit and run tactics usually employed by the barbarians.

However, according to our evidence, sector II was the recipient of a substantial amount of building activity during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Under Trajan, new fortifications were erected at the points of Alisca, Ad Statuas, Ad Militare and Taurunum; Hadrian followed with the erection of the forts at Burgenae and Acumincum.<sup>236</sup> Despite the fact that there is still no indication that the area was ever threatened by external attacks, this military activity should be directly associated with Roman efforts at the further consolidation of the existing line of fortifications and the creation of a unified *limes* system covering the entire Lower Pannonian frontier line. In this context, the fortifications situated south of the Dráva river, in close co-operation with Rome's legionary concentrations near the Sava river and the emerging *limes* system along the frontier line of Dacia Superior,<sup>237</sup> kept full control over the entire territory of the Lower Tisza river plain.

Once again, despite its primary defensive or preclusive mission, the Lower Pannonian *limes* was specifically designed to fulfil a multiplicity of features. Apart from the adequate supervision and protection of the provincial frontier line,

---

<sup>236</sup> Although the possibility of an earlier – Trajanic – phase of occupation is discussed in the text.

the system maintained its overall capability as a line of tactical supply and support for forward offensive operations within barbarian territory. In fact, Roman forward ventures across the frontier and throughout its length were quite frequent. For example, note the construction and preservation of a series of roads linking Pannonia Inferior to the province of Dacia; an inscription demonstrates that regular postal service was conducted on the road between Lugio and Dacia through the Mureş river.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, according to the archaeological evidence discovered between the Danube and Tisza river, it seems reasonable to assume that after the Dacian wars, the Romans maintained full military control of the entire area of the Tisza river plain during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>237</sup> For which see the relevant section in the chapter of Dacia Superior (Sector I).

<sup>238</sup> Barkóczi, "History of Pannonia", 94 and n. 40.

<sup>239</sup> Note the evidence cited in Gabler and Vaday, "Terra sigillata I", 349-350; Gabler and Vaday, "Terra Sigillata II", 83-160, from a sample of 312 terra sigillata and 90 pieces of Roman glassware. Largest concentration across Aquincum, and on roads linking Aquincum to Porolissum, Intercisa to Resculum and Lugio to Micia (Partiscum road). Page 90 and fig. 3: Antonine concentration tables. Most finds, are of the Rhine type (mid-2nd century) but earlier South-Gaul and Italian types were also found.

### III. THE PROVINCE OF MOESIA

The first attestation of Roman military presence in the areas of Moesia, Skythia Minor (Dobrudja) and the Black Sea coast is recorded in the year 71 BC, following the campaigns of M. Terrentius Varro Lucullus against the allies of Mithridates between 73 and 71 BC.<sup>240</sup> However, despite the momentum gained by Lucullus' successes in war, Rome abstained from any direct territorial annexation; instead, what followed was a series of Roman diplomatic activities which aimed at the establishment of clientele relations with the increasingly hostile Geto-Dacian and Tauro-Skythic populations in the area and which culminated with the conclusion of a military alliance with the Greek city-states of the Black Sea coast—the Hexapolis<sup>241</sup> which, by 70 BC, had been constituted as foederati and symmachoi of the Roman People.<sup>242</sup>

Within the next few decades, however, Rome's diplomatic establishment in the region would suffer a series of severe set-backs as, in 60 BC, for reasons which are not yet clear,<sup>243</sup> the Greek city-states of the Pontic Coast decided to revolt and declare their independence from Roman rule.<sup>244</sup> With Rome seemingly reluctant to interfere, the Greek city-states subsequently became an easy prey for the Geto-Dacian tribes which resided in the areas of modern Moldavia and

---

<sup>240</sup> Sallust, *Hist.* iv, 18-19; Strabo, *Geog.* vii, 6,1; Florus, *Bell.Thracicum* i, 39,6; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 277-280; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 24-25.

<sup>241</sup> The former Megarian colonies of Histria (Istros), Tomis, Callatis, Dionysopolis, Odessos and Messembria. It is highly probable that the two remaining Greek city states in the area, Axiopolis and Aegysus, were also involved in this alliance.

<sup>242</sup> Sallust, *Hist.* iv, 18-19; Strabo, *Geog.* vii, 6,1; Florus, *Bell.Thracicum* i, 39, 4-6; Appian, *Illyr.* 30, 85; Dio, xxxviii, 10, 1-3; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 277-280; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 25; Preschlenoff, "Westpontischen Städte" 170-171.

<sup>243</sup> Though, as Dio xxxviii, 10, 1-3; informs us, the Greek city-states had complained about cases of maladministration from the Roman procurator in charge.

<sup>244</sup> Pippidi, *Contributii*, 281; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 26; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6.

Wallachia;<sup>245</sup> between 60 and 46 BC, the North Pontic region would be the subject of a series of successive Geto-Dacian raids, which eventually lead to the conquest of both the Black Sea coast and of Skythia Minor (Dobrudja) by the Dacian king Burebista, in 46 BC.<sup>246</sup>

In the aftermath of these military and political developments on the Danube front, there was a number of serious implications brought about in relation to Rome's security interests in the area, as the Geto-Dacian tribes, having the entire territory between Transylvania and the Pontic coast under their control, came to constitute a significant threat to all Roman possessions south of the Danube. Accordingly, with Rome unable to offer any serious resistance, no doubt owing to the fact that at the time her armies were involved in continuous civil warfare, the Geto-Dacians managed to gradually extend their influence over Northern Thrace and Moesia, thus posing a direct threat to the Roman province of Macedonia itself. However, with the question of succession resolved, and in the face of frequent Transdanubian inroads into Moesia and Thrace, it was only a matter of time until Rome assumed the initiative. In 29 BC, Crassus, the governor of Macedonia, aided by a significant number of legionary forces, launched an offensive against the Bastarnae who in the meantime had overrun Moesia. After defeating them in a pitched battle in the vicinity of Serdica (modern Sofija)<sup>247</sup>, Crassus subsequently crossed into Northern Thrace and Skythia Minor, where, following a series of hard fought campaigns (29-27 BC) against the Thracians, the Getai, the Moesi and the Bastarnae he was able to bring these territories under Roman control.<sup>248</sup>

---

<sup>245</sup> In addition to the Gatae and the Dacians, the Bastarnae and the Costoboci, two Geto-Sarmatian tribes that controlled the area between the Maramures valley (Northeast Romania), and Moldavia, appear to have been particularly active during this time. Russu, "Costoboces", 341-352.

<sup>246</sup> H.Daicoviciu, "Burebista si Dobrogea", 89-96; Petre, "Burebista", 97-104, esp. 97-98, 101.

<sup>247</sup> Dio, li 23-27.

<sup>248</sup> On Crassus' campaigns: Florus, *Bellum Thracicum*, ii, 265, 13-16; Dio, li, 23-27; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 292-4; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 33-34; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6; Suceveanu, "Istoria", 269-284, esp. 283; Kos, "Role of Macedonia", 282-285; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 33; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 258.

The years following the conclusion of Crassus' campaigns in 27 BC, witnessed a number of significant developments in relation to the administration of the newly conquered territories. In Moesia, Roman possessions were assigned to the supervision of the *Praefectura civitatum Moesiae et Trebeliae*, a military and administrative district that initially included the territories between Ratiaria and Oescus.<sup>249</sup> Accordingly, in the north-east, the administration of the areas corresponding to the Danubian frontier sector between Dimum in the west and the mouth of the Danube in the East (Ripa Danuvii) and the Greek city states along the Pontic coast were entrusted to two newly introduced establishments, the *Ripa Thraciae* and the *Praefectura orae maritimae* respectively, which, in turn, were subordinate to the proconsul of Macedonia.<sup>250</sup> With respect to Roman possessions in Northern Thrace and Skythia Minor, their administration was assigned to the "client kingdom" of Thrace.<sup>251</sup>

The period between 20 BC and the turn of the century, appears to have been an era of relatively peaceful conditions for the regions of both Moesia and Skythia Minor, interrupted only by the invasion of Moesia and Macedonia by the Scordisci in 16 BC,<sup>252</sup> and a minor revolt in northern Thrace in 11 BC,<sup>253</sup> which, nevertheless, seem to have been easily crushed by Rome. In the beginning of the first century AD, however, the region of Skythia Minor would once again become the target of a fresh wave of Geto-Dacian transborder incursions, during which, on one occasion, the Getai managed to occupy the Roman strongholds of Aegyssus and Troesmis, by the mouth of the Danube.<sup>254</sup> In response to the increasing

---

<sup>249</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 55; Gerov, *Land Ownership*, 17-18.

<sup>250</sup> The term "Ripa Danuvii" is first mentioned by Tacitus, *Hist.* iii 46, 2. Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 55; Aricescu, *ARD*, 7; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 299; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 35-36.

<sup>251</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 7; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 306; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 47.

<sup>252</sup> Dio, liv 20,7. The Scordisci were a tribe that resided in the area between the Sava and Pincus rivers.

<sup>253</sup> Dio, liv 34,6ff.

<sup>254</sup> Ovid, *Ex Ponto* i, 8, 11-20; iv, 9, 75-80; iv, 16, 15-16. There is little doubt that the initial successes of the Geto-Dacians was due to the glaring absence of any Roman military forces in the area, at least until the late years of Augustus' reign.

danger posed by this renewed Geto-Dacian aggression,<sup>255</sup> Rome launched a counter-offensive spearheaded first by Lentulus and then by Aelius Catus, in which, following a series of victorious campaigns between AD 1 to 10, she was able to re-establish control over Skythia Minor and the Pontic coast.<sup>256</sup>

The reprisal operations mounted by Aelius Catus across the Danube would deal a decisive blow on the power of Cotiso's Dacians;<sup>257</sup> nevertheless, despite the duly advertisement of his successes in war, Augustus chose to withdraw his forces and revert to the frontier line behind the Danube.<sup>258</sup> Thereafter, emphasis was placed on the establishment of clientele relations with the Dacians, and the creation of a security zone on the left bank of the Danube, judging by the statements of ancient sources that Augustus prohibited the founding of civil settlements beyond the Danube boundary.<sup>259</sup>

Following the conclusion of hostilities in AD 15, and with the final traces of Geto-Dacian resistance crushed,<sup>260</sup> Rome's territorial possessions in Moesia were organised into a Roman province (Provincia Moesia),<sup>261</sup> which initially comprised the area between the Sava river in the West (near modern Belgrade), up to the river Oescus in the East. The creation of the province of Moesia, however, seems to have had no immediate effect with regard either to the district of Ripa Thracia, still in existence as a separate administrative entity, or to the administration of Rome's strongholds in Skythia Minor which remained under the supervision of the "client kingdom" of Thrace.<sup>262</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> Strabo, *Geog.* vii, 3.13, who states that the Getai would regularly cross the Danube during this period.

<sup>256</sup> Vulpe, *DID* 2, 25; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 36, 39.

<sup>257</sup> Dio li, 22; liv, 36; lv, 30; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 289ff.

<sup>258</sup> Augustus, *R.G.* 30.

<sup>259</sup> Strabo vii, 3.10; Florus ii.28; Tacitus, *Ann.*, iv.1.

<sup>260</sup> The final traces of Geto-Dacian resistance seem to have been quelled following the recapture of Troesmis by Pomponius Flaccus in 15 A.D. Aricescu, *ARD*, 6.

<sup>261</sup> Ovid, *Ex Ponto* iv, 9; Appian, *Illyrica* 30; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 44; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 25, 44.

<sup>262</sup> Pippidi, *Contributii*, 301-304; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 46-48; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6-7. The administration of the Greek city-states on the Black Sea coast was still the responsibility of the Praefectus orae maritimae, who, from AD 15 onwards, was subordinate to the governor of Moesia. Preschlenoff, "Westpontischen Städte", 173; Opperman, "Ostbalkan", 113.

In relation to the history of Moesia, the most significant event following the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius appears to have been the annexation of the “client kingdom” of Thrace and the organisation of its territory into a Roman province by Claudius in AD 46.<sup>263</sup> However, the creation of the province of Thrace seems to have had minimal consequences with respect to the territory of the province of Moesia, which, at the time, probably extended up to the river Iantra in the east.<sup>264</sup> Some scholars have argued that, in the aftermath of the annexation of Thrace, the territories of Dobrudja and Ripa Thraciae were incorporated into Moesia in AD 46;<sup>265</sup> however, it is now fairly certain that their incorporation did not occur at least until the times of Vespasian.<sup>266</sup>

During Nero’s reign, one further significant event were the campaigns of Plautius Aelianus in the areas of modern Oltenia and Wallachia. Whether Aelianus’ Transdanubian activities were part of a punitive expedition or part of a conscious effort to extend the Roman frontier line across the Danube is still a matter of debate.<sup>267</sup> The absence of any significant traces of Roman military investment in the area at such an early date, would tend to lend support to the former rather than the latter argument. V.Pârvan had once tried to argue that in relation to Aelianus’ campaigns, Nero was responsible for the creation of the first Roman defence system within the territory of Dacia;<sup>268</sup> that is, the creation of an earth vallum, some 300 km long, running from the village of Hinova by the Romanian-Serb border eastwards towards Craiova, across the Olt river and ending

---

<sup>263</sup> Vulpe, *DID* 2, 48-49; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 306-307; Aricescu, *ARD*, 7.

<sup>264</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 55.

<sup>265</sup> Aricescu, “Unitatile militare”, 581-582; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 48; Pippidi, *Contributii*, 306-307; Gerov, “Epigraphische Beiträge”, 165-167.

<sup>266</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 55; Poulter, “Lower Moesian Limes”, 522-523. The arguments in favor of a Vespasianic date for the incorporation of Dobrudja and the Ripa Thraciae into the province of Moesia can be summarised as follows: 1. The absence of any Roman (Moesian) forces in these regions until Vespasian. 2. The continuation of Ripa Thraciae and the post of the Praefectus orae maritimae as separate administrative entities until the AD 70's. 3. Suetonius (*Vesp.* viii) mention of Thrace among the areas annexed by Vespasian, which should allude to the territories of Ripa Thraciae. For a full discussion on the subject see Suceveanu, “Anexare”, 105-123, esp. 118-119 and n.68.

<sup>267</sup> On the campaigns of Plautius Aelianus, see Pippidi, “Frontiera Dunarii”, 366ff; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 41. His successes in war are advertised in *CIL* xiv 3608.

<sup>268</sup> Pârvan, *Getica*, 128-129.

in the area of Ploiești, two hours north of Bucharest.<sup>269</sup> Although the evidence concerning the date and function of this earth vallum is still fairly inconclusive, it appears rather certain that the creation of this defence system should be assigned a much later date, possibly after the final withdrawal of the province of Dacia by Aurelian in AD 271.<sup>270</sup>

However, Roman military activity and investment in the area of the Moesian frontier sector would reach a new height with the advent of the Flavian dynasty and following the initial reorganisation of the Moesian frontier defences under the governorship of Rubrius Gallus; without doubt, this new strategic development was a direct response to increasing Sarmatian hostile activity across the imperial borders, and most importantly, to the re-emergence of the powerful Dacian state under Decebalus.<sup>271</sup>

Daco-Roman relations reached their lowest point during the time of Domitian's accession, following successive Dacian inroads into the province of Moesia between AD 82 and 85.<sup>272</sup> For this exact reason, the province of Moesia was divided into two parts, Superior and Inferior, probably in AD 86.<sup>273</sup> There can be little doubt that the division of the province was a result of military necessity

---

<sup>269</sup> Referred to in Romanian literature as the *Brazda Lui novac du Nord*. See Zagoritz, *Valurile*, 20-21; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 251-256. G. Florescu has argued for a date by the end of Trajan's Dacian wars based on the fact that the eastern part of the vallum runs along the line of the forts at Malaiești, Drajna de Sus and Pietroasa, which appear to be of Trajanic origin; "Problema", 225-232. However, excavations conducted on a number of forts along the western sector of the vallum, at Hînova, Insula Banului and Batoși have only revealed traces of late Roman forts in the area. Accordingly, the foundation date of the fort at Pietroasa has now been firmly established in the fourth century AD as well; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 9 n.59, 60. I would thus, for the time being, be inclined to agree with Vulpe who states 'que sette catégorie de travaux défensifs se rapportait, en general, à une époque tardive', in *Vallum de la Moldavie*, 38; Vulpe, "Getes", 321-322.

<sup>270</sup> Vulpe, "Valla de la Valachie", 272.

<sup>271</sup> On the events of AD 69-70 and the activities of Rubrius Gallus, see Josephus, *B.J.* vii, 89-9; Tacitus, *Hist.* i.79; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 41-42; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 261-263; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 61-63; Aricescu, *ARD*, 7-8; Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 51, 55; Suceveanu, "Anexare", 116-117.

<sup>272</sup> Suetonius, *Dom.* 6,1; Eutropius, vii 23,4; Iordanes, *Getica* xiii, 76.

<sup>273</sup> The division of the province is not attested by our ancient sources. The first attestation of the division of Moesia is recorded in an inscription mentioning L. Funisulanus Vettonianus as governor of Moesia Superior in the last quarter of the first century AD. *CIL* iii, 4013 in Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 25. On this subject see also Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 82.

and both tactical and logistical considerations. By the last quarter of the first century AD, and following the annexation of both Dobrudja and the Pontic coast under Vespasian, the province of Moesia occupied a substantial amount of territories, stretching all the way from the river Sava in the West through Dobrudja, the Danube delta and the Black Sea coast in the east. The shortcomings and difficulties associated with having a single centre of command to control and co-ordinate the sufficient defence and security of such a vast territory were more than obvious, a fact further underlined by the initial success of the Dacian attacks in AD 82 and 85. Thus, in the light of these tactical deficiencies, the division of the province and therefore the creation of two separate administrative districts and defensive-logistical systems in Moesia was of immense value to Roman strategic and military considerations in the Lower Danubian region, as the establishment of two distinct military commands would enable Roman forces to take independent action and generate swift retaliatory responses to any future Dacian attacks against imperial territory.

Following the division of the province, Lower Moesia was assigned with all frontier territories east of Ratiaria (by the confluence of the Lom river with the Danube), and up to the mouths of the Danube in the east, including Skythia Minor and the Pontic coast (map 14); on the other hand, Moesia Superior was responsible for the territories westwards from Ratiaria and up to the area of the Sava river (map 8).

Following a new round of Dacian attacks against Moesia between AD 85-86,<sup>274</sup> Rome would soon assume the offensive; no doubt, Roman security interests dictated that further development of Dacian power could not be tolerated. Despite the major setback suffered by the defeat of C. Fuscus in AD 86,<sup>275</sup> Domitian's subsequent campaigns, spearheaded by Tettius Julianus, were rewarded with the major victory over Decebalus' forces at Tapae, in AD 88.<sup>276</sup> While it is possible that Domitian might have contemplated the final reduction of Dacian kingdom in

---

<sup>274</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 82.

<sup>275</sup> Suetonius, *Dom.* 6,1; Dio lxxvii, 6.5; Iordanes, *Getica* 77; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 83.

<sup>276</sup> Dio lxxvii, 10. For Domitian's campaigns on the Danube see Strobel, *Donaukriege*; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 268-270; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 83; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 72ff.

the aftermath of the victory at Tapae, the revolt of Antonius Saturninus in Upper Germany in AD 89 and the visible threat of Quadi and Iazygan attacks into the territory of Pannonia, forced Domitian to abandon any plans for further expansion and to reach a compromising settlement with Decebalus.<sup>277</sup>

The wars of Domitian against the Dacians seem to have brought about no changes in relation to the territorial holdings of either Moesian province. Some scholars had argued that, in the immediate aftermath of Domitian's peace settlement with Dacia in AD 88, the Roman army established a firm control over the areas of the Banat, Oltenia, Wallachia and South Moldavia.<sup>278</sup> However, on the basis of the existing evidence and with the exception of the fort at Pojejena de Sus, none of the other Roman forts in the above areas have revealed any traces of Domitianic or late 1<sup>st</sup> century activity;<sup>279</sup> this should mean that the above territories were not included into the Moesian provinces until Trajan's reign at the earliest.

By the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and, more specifically, by the time of Trajan's accession to the throne, the armies of both Moesian provinces were substantially enlarged, no doubt in the light of Roman preparations for Trajan's imminent offensive against Dacia. In Moesia Superior, in addition to the province's standing legionary garrison,<sup>280</sup> a military diploma datable to AD 100 has confirmed the further deployment of three *alae* and eighteen *cohortes*;<sup>281</sup> while, at the same time, the Lower Moesian forces were further augmented with the arrival of two legions<sup>282</sup> and twelve new auxiliary units.<sup>283</sup> During the first Dacian

---

<sup>277</sup> Dio lxxvii, 7.1-2.

<sup>278</sup> See Christescu, *Istoria Militara*, 14; Vulpe, "Muntenia si Moldova", 337-357; Vulpe, "Vallachie et Basse Moldavie", 370, based on the erroneous dating of the Hunt Papyrus (published by Fink, "Papyrus 2851", 102-116) to AD 99. A recent epigraphic discovery, in Radulescu and Bărbulescu, "Légats de Trajan", 353-358, has re-dated this document to the post Dacian war years (AD 105-108).

<sup>279</sup> Contra Vulpe, *Piroboridava*, 237-244; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 348.

<sup>280</sup> Consisting of the legions IV Flavia and the VII Claudia.

<sup>281</sup> *CIL* xvi, 46.

<sup>282</sup> The legion XI Claudia, stationed at Durostorum and brought to Lower Moesia sometime around AD 101, and the legion I Minervia, transferred to Novae from Lower Germany in AD 101. See Sarnowski, "Truppengeschichte", 107-122; Strobel,

war, the forces of Moesia Superior would be at the forefront of Trajan's offensives; Lower Moesia seems to have played no important part on this occasion, acting instead as a base of logistic support and primarily as a shield against any Dacian diversion to the right flank of the advancing Roman army. In the course of the second Dacian war, however, the forces of Lower Moesia would be at full flow, participating in the decisive Roman offensive through the Siret and Ialomița valleys, which successfully eliminated the last traces of Dacian resistance in Wallachia and the high grounds of Transylvania.<sup>284</sup>

Following the conclusion of hostilities in AD 106, the province of Lower Moesia was considerably enlarged, as the newly conquered areas of Wallachia, Oltenia and South Moldavia were assigned under its direct responsibility.<sup>285</sup> However, in AD 118, the year of Hadrian's accession to the throne, all Roman Transdanubian strongholds were abandoned,<sup>286</sup> and the frontier line of the province of Lower Moesia was reverted back along the Danube river. In the period between Hadrian's death and the accession of Marcus Aurelius, there seems to have been no significant development in relation to the two Moesian provinces; the only notable exception being the incorporation of the northern and north-western shores of the Black Sea into Lower Moesia's defensive system.<sup>287</sup>

---

*Dakerkriegen*, 83-87; Strobel, "Truppengeschichte", 505-511; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 110-111.

<sup>283</sup> According to the military diplomata of AD 98 to 105: *CIL* xvi 44, 45, 50, 58. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 91-94, Aricescu, *ARD*, 38-40; Aricescu, "Auxilia Limitis Skythici", 117-122; Gerasimova, "Displacement", 5-11.

<sup>284</sup> For the Dacian wars see the chapter on Dacia (section I).

<sup>285</sup> Zahariade, "Structure", 385-393; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 271.

<sup>286</sup> For a full discussion on this subject see the chapter of Dacia (section III).

<sup>287</sup> Following an attack on Olbia by the Tauro-Skythian tribes that resided in north-east Moldavia, around the Dniester river valley. SHA, *Ant. Pius*. ix.9. Kripivina, "Olbia", 177-179. For these two sectors, see Appendix A.

### III.i FORTIFICATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF MOESIA SUPERIOR

#### a. Sector I

**Singidunum:**<sup>288</sup> The legionary fort of Singidunum (modern Belgrade), seat of legio IV Flavia from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD onwards,<sup>289</sup> occupies the lower levels of the later Grand Kalemegdan site,<sup>290</sup> situated on the confluence of the Sava river with the Danube. Excavations carried out on the main site have so far been able to locate only a few traces of the early Roman legionary fort, confined to sections of the V-shaped ditch, the west rampart and the stone foundation of the Porta Decumana. According to the surviving evidence, the first stone fort at Singidunum (Veliki Kalemegdan site), which measured c. 570 by 330m (18ha), was probably built sometime between the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, most likely after the return of legio IV Flavia from Berzobis in Dacia, in AD 117.<sup>291</sup> Not much is known about any subsequent building activity at the fort of Singidunum,

---

<sup>288</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18, 21; M. Popović, "Singidunum", 43-44; Bojović, "Severoistocni", 44-46; Bojović, "Singidunum", 59-65; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36; Mirković, "Fragmenti", 109-115 (with a basic collection of epigraphic evidence); Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 37-49; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 884; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 126-133; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116; Simić, "Singidunum Necropolis", 21-56. The necropolis was discovered underneath today's Trg Republike (Republic square), in the immediate south of the Veliki (Grand) Kalemegdan site. Finds, including coins and ceramic vessels, are datable between the late 1<sup>st</sup> and late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>289</sup> As recorded by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9,3.

<sup>290</sup> Successively occupied by the Byzantines, Turks and Serbs. Given the Celtic ending of the name-place (-dunum), it is probable that the Roman fort was built on the site of an earlier Celtic fortified settlement (oppidum). The existence of the Roman legionary fort within the lower levels of the Veliki Kalemegdan site has been confirmed by a number of brick stamps and ceramic fragments belonging to legio IV Flavia and legio VII Claudia. Bojović, "Fouilles", 71-85.

<sup>291</sup> Between AD 101 and 117 this legion – or, in my view, detachments from this legion – is stationed at Berzobis in Dacia. The dating of the first stone fort at Singidunum is based on the arguments of M. Popović, "Ancient Singidunum", 1-20, and Bojović, "Camp", 53-68. Dating evidence, though still fragmentary at best, includes late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD fibulae (pg. 64 and fig. 7), mosaic tesserae (fig. 3/2), lamps, ceramic fragments (for which see Bojović, *Rimska Keramika*, 33, tab. 15) and coins datable to Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian (pg. 65, n.25).

though its function as the base of legio IV Flavia well into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD is attested in literary sources.<sup>292</sup>

However, recent excavations carried out at the site of the Knez Mihajlova Street, about 500m southwest of the Veliki Kalemegdan fort, have revealed certain traces of what is believed to be an earlier earth and timber Roman legionary fort.<sup>293</sup> At this time, visible remains of this early Roman camp include unearthed sections of a V-shaped ditch and two of the main mud-brick walls. According to all indications, this fort, measuring some 200 by 400m,<sup>294</sup> must have pre-dated the one at Veliki Kalemegdan, and was probably built sometime during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, at the earliest.<sup>295</sup>

**Tricornium (Ritopek):**<sup>296</sup> Auxiliary fort mentioned by Ptolemy and later literary sources,<sup>297</sup> whose precise location has not been identified on the ground. Following the discovery of a fair number of Roman archaeological finds, however, it is now firmly believed that the fort mentioned by the ancient itineraries is

---

<sup>292</sup> Hierocles, *Syn.*, 657,3; Procopius, *De Aed.*, iv, 5,12.

<sup>293</sup> Ivanišević and Nikolić-Đorđević, "Singidunum", 65-146.

<sup>294</sup> Size based on the assumption that the early Roman necropolis, located underneath Trg Republike, must have marked the southeast border of the early Roman camp.

<sup>295</sup> The actual questions concerning this fort's initial construction date and the unit that might have built and occupied it are still unresolved. According to the excavators, the fort was built by legio VIII Augusta sometime in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and was used as this legion's permanent base of operations during its deployment in Moesia between AD 45-69/70. Their argument is based on the discovery at the site of a brick stamp belonging to this legion. In addition to the fact that a single brick stamp hardly constitutes conclusive evidence, there is now sufficient evidence to confirm Novae (Moesia Inferior) as the legion's base between AD 45-69/70. In my view, this fort might have served as the initial base for legio IV Flavia, between AD 86/89 (when the legion is permanently stationed in Moesia) and AD 101/117 (when detachments of this legion operate along the Singidunum – Berzobis area). After AD 117, it might have served as a temporary base of IV Flavia, until the construction of the new stone fort at Veliki Kalemegdan was completed. Archaeological evidence derived from the Knez Mihajlova site could partly support my argument, given the discovery of coins datable between Nerva (earliest find) and Hadrian-Faustina the Elder (latest finds). See Ivanišević and Nikolić-Đorđević, "Singidunum", 143.

<sup>296</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 6; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 131; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 15-16; Bojović, "Castra Tricornia", 85-99; Vučković-Todorović, "Limesa Srbiji", 105; V. Kondić, "Castra Tricornia", 120-123; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 186; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 51; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 95-97; *TIR* L34, 113.

<sup>297</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9, 1 (as Tricornion); *Notitia Dignitatum Oriens*, XLI, 14, 22, 28; Hieroclis, *Syn.*, 657, 5, who describes it as a civitas-polis.

situated in the area of the modern town of Ritopek, about 18 km east of Belgrade.<sup>298</sup> The site has not been the subject of any particular archaeological investigation and the available data is far too meagre and disparate to allow for any definite conclusions in relation to the fort's initial erection date and subsequent occupation phases. Nevertheless, the existence of a Roman fort at Tricornium as early as the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, can be assumed by the discovery at the site of epigraphic evidence belonging to cohorts I Flavia Bessorum, stationed in Moesia Superior between c.100-120 AD.<sup>299</sup>

In addition to serving as a temporary base for cohorts I Flavia Bessorum, the fort of Tricornium appears to have been the permanent base of cohorts I Pannoniorum equitata throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, according to brick stamps and a fragment of a military diploma discovered at the site.<sup>300</sup> Furthermore, there is evidence to support the presence of troops from legio IV Flavia at Tricornium during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, though not enough to suggest the deployment of a permanent legionary detachment.<sup>301</sup>

**Mons Aureus (Seona):**<sup>302</sup> An auxiliary camp, southeast of Tricornium, situated in the vicinity of Seona, and occupying a commanding position on the right bank of

---

<sup>298</sup> The finds consist of an inscription, datable to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, mentioning the name *Tricorniensis*, two exquisite pieces of Roman armour (a cuirass found at Ritopek belonging to a soldier of legio VII Claudia, datable to the reign of Gallienus), as well as a fair number of ceramic fragments and fibulae. V.Kondić, "Castra Tricornia", 121; I.Popović, "Plaque de bronze", 203-205; I. Popović, *Cuirasse romaine* 35-48.

<sup>299</sup> *TIR* L34, 34, 113. The cohorts I Flavia Bessorum is first attested in Moesia Superior in AD 100 (*CIL* xvi, 46). After participating in Trajan's Dacian wars, the unit is transferred to Macedonia in AD 120 (*CIL* xvi, 67). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 18; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 96; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 170; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 143-144; Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 298 and n. 95; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 341; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6.

<sup>300</sup> Fragment mentioning **coh I Pan**(noniorum), datable to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. I. Popović, *Cuirasse romaine*, 35 n.2. This unit is also known as I Ulpia Pannoniorum equitata veterana. Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 39 n. 67, 150, 53 n. 40; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 97; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 48; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 176-177; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 182; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 143-144; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 333; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6.

<sup>301</sup> Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 147-148 and n. 39.

<sup>302</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 7; Vučković-Todorović, *Limesa Srbije*, 105; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 83-85; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 186; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 51, 134-142 (general); *TIR* L 34, 31.

the Danube. A fort measures 130 by 150m = 1.95 ha), and is attested in ancient literary sources.<sup>303</sup>

There is very little available information about this fort; however, the surviving evidence, including ceramic fragments, fibulae and a few coins, suggests a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD initial phase of occupation. The garrison of Mons Aureus is unknown; however, given the fort's geographical proximity to the legionary forts at Viminacium and Singidunum, it is possible that Aureus Mons might have served as a *statio* for detachments from both IV Flavia and VII Claudia.<sup>304</sup>

**Margum (Orasije):**<sup>305</sup> Traces of a large camp (720 by 820m), which were revealed near the modern site of Orasije – Dubravica (on the left bank of the river Margus), have been identified as the Roman fort of Margum.<sup>306</sup> Very little information is available about the site, as it has not been the recipient of any form of archaeological investigation.

For one scholar, Margum was initially erected sometime in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and that, during the course of Domitian's and Trajan's wars on the Danube, it served as a base for legio IV Flavia.<sup>307</sup> This argument seems plausible if we consider the size of the fort at Margum, which was evidently more than

---

<sup>303</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 132.2.

<sup>304</sup> Brick stamps of both VII Claudia and a legio II [...], were discovered near the fort of Aureus Mons (in the area of Brestovik). Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 180. In my opinion, the brick stamp bearing the mark LEG II must belong to legio IV Flavia – Leg II[II Flavia] – as Garašanin's interpretation, for legio II Adiutrix (stationed at Aquincum in Pannonia Inferior at the time) seems a bit far fetched. See also Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 39, n.68; 147, n. 40, who argues for the probability of a permanent detachment of IV Flavia at Mons Aureus during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century; Gudea, "Limes Dakien", 885.

<sup>305</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 12, 15; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 181, 183; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 15-16; 21; Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 116; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 50-55; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 186-187; Mirković, *IMS* II, 207-210, Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 144-145; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 132; *TIR* L34, 45, 79-80.

<sup>306</sup> Mentioned in *Itin.Ant.*, 132, 4, which states that Margum was situated 10 Roman miles from Viminacium. The identification of this site as the fort of Margum is based on an inscription mentioning a Cast. Marg. (Castro Margo or Castris Margensibus). *CIL* iii, 14598, in *TIR* L34, 45. See also Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 52-53.

<sup>307</sup> Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 116, who claims that prior to AD 89, when Domitian forbade the simultaneous deployment of two legions at the same fort, Margum served as a double legionary fort. For the dating of the first fort at Margum, see Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 52-53; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 21, who argue, fairly convincingly, for a Flavian date of construction.

capable of housing a legion; however, there is really no archaeological evidence to prove it.

Although not much is known about the garrison of Margum in the early empire,<sup>308</sup> there is a remote possibility that a detachment of legio IV Flavia was stationed at the fort during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>309</sup> Furthermore, according to what appear to be traces of a small port on the north side of the camp, it is possible that Margum also served as a base for the Classis Flavia Moesica.<sup>310</sup>

**Viminacium:**<sup>311</sup> Legionary fort, situated near the confluence of the Danube with the Mlava River. Very little remains of the site, as it has been completely covered by the modern town of Kostolac.

According to the surviving evidence, an earth and timber fort, measuring c. 443 by 388m, was initially constructed at the site during Domitian's reign at the earliest, probably after the arrival of legio VII Claudia from the eastern part of Moesia in AD 86.<sup>312</sup> It is quite possible that, at least until AD 89, the fort might have served as a double legionary fort for both Upper Moesian legions, the VII Claudia and the

---

<sup>308</sup> During the late empire, the fort is said to have held the Auxilium Margense. *Not.Dign.*, XLI, 24, 39; Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 192.

<sup>309</sup> This argument is based on an inscription found at Margum, (*CIL* iii, 8143, in Mirković, *IMS* I, 29, n. 12), dedicated by a soldier of legio IV Flavia. The exact date of the inscription is not entirely clear, though it can not be dated before the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (as it mentions a veteran by the name Aelius). See also Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 150, for brick stamps belonging to this legion.

<sup>310</sup> Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 216. This argument certainly holds true in relation to the late Empire, when, according to *Not.Dign.*, XLI, 24, 39, Margum was a base for a detachment of the Roman provincial fleet (Classis Stradensis et Germensis).

<sup>311</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 56-73; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 145-158; Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 16-20; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 182; Mirković, *IMS* II, esp.21-38; Zotović, "Viminacium", 47-50; V. Kondić and Zotović, "Viminacium", 94-97 (on the nearby civil settlement and thermae); Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116; *TIR* L34, 119. The fort is mentioned by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9, 3 (as Ouminakion) and *Itin.Antonini* 133, 2 (as Viminacio).

<sup>312</sup> Mirković (*IMS* II, 35) has argued that Viminacium possibly constitutes one of the earliest Roman forts in the area, erected during the reign of Tiberius. There is no evidence, however, for any pre-Flavian phase of occupation at the site. The question of this legion's initial headquarters (before its eventual transfer to Viminacium under Domitian) is still unresolved. I am in total agreement with the arguments of Mirković, that, at least until AD 66, legio VII Claudia is still part of Dalmatia's army ("Roman Policy", 34-35; and *IMS* II, 36. Contra Ritterling, "Legio", 1619, who argued that this legion was transferred to Moesia in AD 57). At some time between AD 66 and 86, it is possible that the legion might have been stationed somewhere in the eastern part of the

IV Flavia;<sup>313</sup> after AD 89, it would become the permanent base of operations for legio VII Claudia.

During the course of Trajan's Dacian wars, the fort at Viminacium would become the concentration point for a significant number of Roman military forces, including the cohorts I Flavia Hispanorum, the III Campestris, the VII Breucorum and a detachment from legio XV Apollinaris.<sup>314</sup> Following the return of legio VII Claudia from the east in AD 117 (after participating in Trajan's Parthian wars), the fort was rebuilt in stone. At some point around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, cohorts III Campestris appears to have been temporarily stationed at Viminacium.<sup>315</sup>

**Lederata (Ram):**<sup>316</sup> The remains of a fairly large auxiliary camp (140 by 200 = 2.8 ha) have been located near the modern site of Ram, which, according to all indications, corresponds to the Roman fort of Lederata.<sup>317</sup>

The lack of any systematic excavation at the Ram site means that there is not much information concerning the exact date of its initial construction or of any subsequent occupation phases. However, its function as early as the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, probably as a bridgehead for crossing the Danube, is indirectly

---

province of Moesia (Oescus-Durostorum region?) in order to cover for legio V Macedonica, which was transferred to the Euphrates frontier between AD 62 and AD 71.

<sup>313</sup> Epigraphic evidence cited in Mirković, *IMS* II, 86-89, 93. The legio IV Flavia is transferred to Moesia Superior from Dalmatia in AD 86. Its initial base of operations is not known, though it is quite possible that, until the completion of its own fort at Singidunum, the legion (or detachments from it) might have operated from Viminacium or Margum.

<sup>314</sup> Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 71; Mirković, *IMS* II, 38 and n. 5; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 53 and n. 141.

<sup>315</sup> This unit is again attested in Moesia Superior by AD 145, where it appears to have remained for a short period of time; by AD 179, it is transferred to Dacia Superior (Drobeta?). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 23; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 30-31.

<sup>316</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 20-23; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 200; Vučković-Todorović, "Limesa Srbiji", 105; A. Jovanović, "Lederata", 69-72; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 37-39; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 132; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 98-101; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 187; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 51; *TIR* L 34 73.

<sup>317</sup> According to *Tab. Peut.* vii, 2, Lederata was located 10 miles west of Viminacium. For the identification of the Ram site as Lederata, see A. Jovanović, "Lederata".

mentioned by Ptolemy<sup>318</sup> and further confirmed by archaeological finds, such as stamps of cohorts II Hispanorum<sup>319</sup> and coins ranging from Tiberius to Domitian.<sup>320</sup> During the course of Trajan's Dacian wars, in addition to the cohorts II Hispanorum, Lederata also appears to have been the temporary base of operations for ala II Pannoniorum, and of a detachment of VII Claudia.<sup>321</sup> Accordingly, although there is some evidence to the contrary, it seems highly unlikely that the cohorts I Cretum was ever stationed at Lederata.<sup>322</sup>

**Sapaja (Translederata):**<sup>323</sup> The remains of a late Roman auxiliary fort (88.5 by 89 = 0.78ha) have been revealed in the immediate northwest of Lederata – Ram, on the site of the Sapaja island, situated on an embankment of the Karaš and Neva rivers (Banat region), in the territory of the Vojvodina province in Yugoslavia. Given its geographical proximity and military connection to Lederata – Ram, it is quite probable that this site might very well correspond to the Roman fort of Translederata, which is mentioned in early 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary sources.<sup>324</sup>

The number of excavations carried out on the site, mainly around the east and west wall sections of the fort, have mostly revealed 4<sup>th</sup> century material clearly

---

<sup>318</sup> *Geog.*, iii, 8, 10. He mentions a fort at Translederata, (probably erected during Trajan's first offensive against Dacia), which implies an earlier fort by the name of Lederata.

<sup>319</sup> This unit, previously stationed in Pannonia, is first attested in Moesia Superior in AD 86 (*CIL* xvi, 46). After participating in Trajan's Dacian wars, it was transferred to Dacia Porolissensis (Bologa), sometime between the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. It is first attested in Dacia Porolissensis in AD 159 (*CIL* xvi, 110). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 40; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 153; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 129; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6, 8.

<sup>320</sup> Dimitrijević, "Sapaja", 60. The coin evidence seems to end abruptly with pieces dated to Domitian's reign. Perhaps this could be taken as an indication that the fort suffered some form of destruction during his or Trajan's Dacian wars. Although there is no conclusive evidence yet, it is believed that Lederata was not in use during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. See A. Jovanović, "Lederata".

<sup>321</sup> The ala II Pannoniorum is transferred to Moesia superior in AD 88 (*CIL* xvi, 35). After participating in Trajan's Dacian wars, it is transferred to Dacia (Russu, "Auxilia", 73). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12; Kraft, *Recrutierung*, 27, 32, 157; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 39, 61. For brick stamps of the units II Hispanorum, II Pannoniorum and legio VII Claudia, see Beneš. *Istoria militara*, 39, n.69.

<sup>322</sup> Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 114, based on an inscription, (*CIL* iii 8074, 20) mentioning soldiers of both II Hispanorum and I Cretum. The I Cretum, however, was stationed at Egeta (Brza Palanka), which is quite far from Lederata.

<sup>323</sup> Dimitrijević, "Sapaja", 29-62; Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 243-244; Rašajski, "Sapaja", 160-161; Kondić "Forschungen", 44; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; *TIR* L 34, 33.

<sup>324</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 8, 10. The fort lies on the Roman road linking Viminacium and Lederata to Drobeta in Dacia.

belonging to the late Roman phase of occupation. The function of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site is, however confirmed by the following: a. the horrea situated in the western sector of the fort, which, given its remarkable similarity to the horrea unearthed in Boljetin and Drobeta (both of which have been securely dated to the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century), could belong to the early Roman fort mentioned by Ptolemy;<sup>325</sup> b. a hoard containing coins ranging from Tiberius to Trajan, as well as scattered brick stamps of VII Claudia, cohors II Hispanorum and ala II Pannoniorum,<sup>326</sup> operating in this area during the course of Trajan's first offensive against Dacia; and c. ceramic fragments, fibulae, and marble statues – busts – of Venus, Fortunae and Mercury found at the site.<sup>327</sup> There is, however, no further information available in relation to subsequent occupation phases or to Sapaja's garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

**Pincum (Velike Gradište):**<sup>328</sup> The remains of the small fort of Pincum (45.5 by 45.5m = 0.20 ha) are situated at the point of Veliko Gradište, on the confluence between the Danube and Pincus river. Very little is known about the site, although the existence of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at Pincum is apparently recorded in literary sources.<sup>329</sup>

The fort's permanent garrison in the early Empire is unknown; however, given the discovery at the site of brick stamps belonging to both VII Claudia and

---

<sup>325</sup> Dimitrijević, "Sapaja", 60-61.

<sup>326</sup> Dimitrijević, "Sapaja", 59.

<sup>327</sup> Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 243-244.

<sup>328</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 23; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 198; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 15-16; Vučković-Todorović, "Limesa Srbiji", 105; Vasić, "Pincum", 1-54; (who establishes the location of the fort, but provides very little further information); Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 132; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 101-103; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 187; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 51; *TIR* L34, 90.

<sup>329</sup> Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 102, based on Ptolemy, *Geog.*, III, 9, 1. Although it is possible that Ptolemy is actually referring to the Sarmatian tribe of the Picenses (who resided in the Pincus river valley) and not to a Roman fort, the function of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort can be assumed on the basis of it being one of the main centres for the gathering and distribution of minerals produced by the Moesian mines by Hadrian's reign. (*Metalla Aeliana Pincensia*).

IV Flavia, it is possible that Pincum might have served as a *statio* for detachments of both Upper Moesian legions.<sup>330</sup>

**Golubac (Cuppae):**<sup>331</sup> The fairly large auxiliary fort of Cuppae (160 by 160m = 2.56ha) is situated near the modern town of Golubac (Serbia) and occupies a commanding position on an elevated bank of the Danube river course. The fort is not mentioned in early literary sources and, as with most forts in this particular frontier sector, the lack of any systematic excavations means that there is very little information available about it.

In fact, the only verification for the existence of a late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD fort at the site is derived from stamps belonging to cohorts I Flavia Hispanorum milliaria equitata and cohorts V Gallorum equitata.<sup>332</sup>

There is no information concerning any subsequent building activity at this fort; according to stamps of cohorts V Hispanorum equitata, however, the camp at Cuppae appears to have served as this unit's base of operations throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>333</sup>

---

<sup>330</sup> Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 885; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 102; Benea, *Istoria militara*, 97.

<sup>331</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 24-26, 27; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 10; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 198; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 51; Vučković-Todorović, "Limesa Srbiji", 105; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 133; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 103-104; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 188; *TIR* L 34, 51. The fort is first recorded in *Itin. Antonini*, 217, 6.

<sup>332</sup> Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 39 and n. 70. The cohorts V Gallorum equitata becomes part of the Moesian army by AD 75 (according to the Taliatae diploma). After a brief deployment in Pannonia Inferior, it returns to Moesia Superior by AD 93 (*CIL* xvi, 39) to participate in the Dacian wars. Its permanent base of operations at the time was the fort at Transdierna. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 34-35; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 176; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 28. The cohorts I Flavia Hispanorum milliaria equitata is first attested in Moesia Superior towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, according to the diplomata of AD 93 and 100 (*CIL* xvi, 39 and 46). After the Dacian wars, the unit was transferred to Dacia (*CIL* xvi, 57 of AD 110) and later to Dacia Porolissensis (Buciumi). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 38-39; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 151-152; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 143; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 118-119; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6, 8. It is believed that this unit was stationed at Cuppae between c. AD 90-110. See Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 118; Gudea, "Militärorganisation", 226.

<sup>333</sup> Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 16-17; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 53 n.142; Dušanić and Vasić, "Military Diploma", 420; Beneš, "Auxilia", 41; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 155-156; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 26; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 135. Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 133, also argues for a temporary deployment of cohorts III Campestris at Cuppae, based on the supposed discovery at the site of tegulae belonging to this unit. So far, I have found no evidence to support either of his claims. Inscriptions of legio IV Flavia have also been discovered at the site (*CIL* iii, 13815; 6297).

**Livadice (Golubac-Grad):**<sup>334</sup> Small fortification (28 by 28m = 0.07 ha) situated approximately 6 km west of Golubac, on the right bank of the Livadički potok stream. This fortification has been considerably destroyed by river erosion; the only visible remains are confined to parts of the south wall sector of stone and mortar, which are preserved to a height of 3.5m.

Ceramic material found within the interior of the fort, suggests a 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century occupation.<sup>335</sup> Its garrison is unknown.

**Brnjica:**<sup>336</sup> The remains of a small fortification (castellum) have been located at the point of Brnjica, approximately 14 km east of Golubac. This fort is not mentioned in any ancient literary source, while its dimensions, occupation phases and garrison are unknown. Although some scholars believe in a late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD initial occupation phase for the Brnjica fort, there is no evidence to support such an argument.

## b. Sector II

**Čezava (Novae):**<sup>337</sup> The auxiliary fort of Novae (143 by 123m = 1.75 ha), occupies a commanding position on an extended Danube bank near the small tributary river of Čezava. The actual remains of the fort are no longer totally visible today, as the site has been partially covered by the Danube. Nevertheless,

---

<sup>334</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 26-27; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 18; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 26; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 246; Pindić and Kovačević, "Gradac", 92-94; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 133; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 45; *TIR* L34, 62.

<sup>335</sup> P.Petrović, "Livadice près de Golubac, fortification romaine", *Starinar* 33-34 (1982-83), 87.

<sup>336</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 28; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 20; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 197; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 49; *TIR* L34, 41. The fort is mentioned in *Itin.Ant.*, 218,1.

<sup>337</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 28; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 22; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 134; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 246; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 26-28; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 20-21; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 77; Pribaković and Piletić, "Čezava 1965", 105-108; Pribaković and Piletić, "Čezava 1966", 103-108; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 51; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36; Pribaković, "Čezava 1969", 150-155; Pribaković, "Čezava 1970", 86-91; Vasić, "Čezava 1986", 897; Vasić, "Čezava 1987", 131-134; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 105-106; Pribaković, "Čezava, forteresse romaine", 114-116; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 39; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 52; *TIR* L 34, 84.

rescue excavations carried out on the site between the 1965 and 1970 have managed to pinpoint the exact dates for the fort's initial construction phase as well as its subsequent levels of occupation.

In relation to the fort's life and function during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, three main phases of occupation have been identified:<sup>338</sup>

Phase I: Earth and timber fort, erected sometime between the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius.<sup>339</sup> The date is confirmed by the discovery at this layer of early 1<sup>st</sup> century terra sigillata as well as of three coins of Claudius.<sup>340</sup> It is highly probable that this early fort received some form of rectification in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century (an enlargement perhaps?), before being destroyed probably sometime during the civil wars in AD 68-69.<sup>341</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort under the Flavians. Most finds discovered within the interior of the fort tend to be dated to this particular phase of occupation.<sup>342</sup>

Phase III: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, probably during Trajan's reign. According to all indications, this fort measured some 140 by 120m (1.6 ha) and was of rectangular shape with round external corner-towers.<sup>343</sup>

The garrison of Novae during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD is not known. Following the conclusion of Trajan's Dacian wars, and for the remainder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, it became the permanent base for cohorts I Montanorum c.R.,<sup>344</sup> and, according to

---

<sup>338</sup> Following the reconstruction in Pribaković, "Čezava 1967", 77-80; Vasić, "Čezava 1982", 91-122, figs 3-5 and 18.

<sup>339</sup> Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33, argues that the fort was initially built by one of the two Moesian legions (IV Skythica and V Macedonica) constructing the Iron Gates road in AD 33/34 (*CIL* iii, 1698 = *ILS* 2281) and could have served as the initial base for one of them. Her argument on the initial erection date of the Novae fort sounds plausible; but there is really no evidence for the presence of either legion at this fort.

<sup>340</sup> Pribaković, Vasić and Rasić, "Čezava 1968", 108-110.

<sup>341</sup> According to the destruction layer which is clearly visible on the top level of "Phase I" at Novae. See Vasić, "Čezava 1982", fig. 18.

<sup>342</sup> Archaeological material discovered at Novae (dating from the 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) includes some 1500 pieces of terra sigillata, and a fair number of late 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman pottery. Vasić, "Čezava", 91-122; Pribaković, "Čezava", 77-80.

<sup>343</sup> A fragment of a military diploma datable to Antoninus Pius (AD 140) was discovered in this layer. Mirković and Vasić, "Militärdiplom", 217.

<sup>344</sup> Finds from Novae include two pieces of amphorae with the name I Montanorum inscribed on them. Pribaković, "Čezava 1969", table 29. This unit should not be confused, as in Šašel, "Cohors I Montanorum", 782-786, with the homonymous one

epigraphic evidence, of a detachment of legio VII Claudia in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>345</sup>

**Zidinac:**<sup>346</sup> Minor stone-mortar fortification (speculum) of square shape, measuring 17.5 by 17.5m, situated on the Right Bank of the Zidinac stream, three km west of Saldum. Still in a fairly good state of preservation, the site at Zidinac has only been partially explored.

With regard to the visible archaeological remains at Zidinac, the fort can only be dated to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD at the earliest. Although the possibility of a late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD occupation phase has been discussed,<sup>347</sup> no traces of an early Roman fort have been identified at the site.

**Saldum (Gradac):**<sup>348</sup> Double site, including remains fort and of a stone wall vallum (clausurae).

Site A: The remains of the Roman fort of Saldum, are located on the modern site of Gradac, on the left bank of the Kožica river. A fort of irregular plan, measuring 43.5 by 31.2m, and with four towers on each corner, three circular and one (N-E) rectangular, the site at Saldum has been the subject of a substantial amount of archaeological investigation.

Extensive excavations carried out on the site have revealed traces of an early Roman earth and timber fort with a wooden palisade, which, according to material

---

stationed in Pannonia Inferior at the time (Cornacum). For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 46; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 168-169; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 142; Dušanić and Vasić, "Military Diploma", 420; Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 298; Gudea, "Militärorganisation", 235; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 294-295; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 25.

<sup>345</sup> Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 105-106, citing an inscription (*CIL* iii 8098 of AD 168) mentioning C.Valerius Macedo, a centurion of legio VII Claudia. Gudea, "Limes Dakiens". 885.

<sup>346</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 31; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 77; Petrović, "Zidinac 1982", 127-128; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 246; V. Kondić, "Forschungen", 45-46.

<sup>347</sup> Petrović, "Zidinac 1969", 148-149.

<sup>348</sup> Kanitz. *Studien in Serbien*, 30; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 27; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 199; Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 135; Petrović, "Saldum-Gradac", 94-96, including coinage datable to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 243; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 29-31; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 77; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 51; Petrović, "Saldum 1982", 127-134; Petrović, "Saldum 1968", 106-108; Petrović, "Saldum 1969", 146-148; Petrović, "Saldum 1970", 84-86; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 188; *TIR* L 34, 98.

found at this level, can be dated to the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>349</sup> The function of the Saldum fort during this period, is also verified by the discovery of brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Antiochensium, I Cisipadensium and I Raetorum, which appear to have operated in this particular frontier sector in the mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>350</sup>

A subsequent reconstruction phase took place sometime between the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, when the fort was rebuilt in stone.<sup>351</sup> Thereafter, no further building activity is recorded at Saldum, although the fort remained in use well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Its garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD has not been established, though it is possible that a detachment of legio VII Claudia was stationed here at some point.<sup>352</sup>

Site B: Next to the fort, traces of a stone - lime mortar wall (vallum), running perpendicularly to the Kožica river bed have been discovered. Not much is known about it, though it appears to be of a later date.<sup>353</sup>

**Gospodin Vir:**<sup>354</sup> The remains of a partially damaged stone-mortar watchtower of rectangular shape, 10.9 by 4.5m, literally carved on a vertical rock on a steep river cliff, are situated near the well-known prehistoric site of Gospodin Vir.

According to archaeological material unearthed from the interior of the site, the watchtower at Gospodin Vir was initially constructed by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century

---

<sup>349</sup> Most archaeological material from Saldum is recorded in Petrović, "Saldum 1968"; "Saldum 1969"; "Saldum 1970".

<sup>350</sup> V.Kondić, "Cantabaza", 53-58. These three cohorts (mentioned in the Taliatae military diploma of AD 75) are among the earliest recorded Roman auxiliary units in Moesia; however, none of them appears to have been permanently stationed at Saldum at any point. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 16, 25, 48-49.

<sup>351</sup> Perhaps as a result of necessity, as the top layer of phase I (earth-timber fort) has revealed traces of severe flooding.

<sup>352</sup> Beneš. *Istoria Militara*, 100, citing a brick stamp of this legion found at the site. Probably mid- 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

<sup>353</sup> Pindić, "Anticke Vojne", 135, and fig. 3 (Kožice vallum); Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18.

<sup>354</sup> Radojčić-Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 34-36; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 78; V. Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 245-246; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 46-47; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48; *TIR* L34, 63.

AD.<sup>355</sup> Although it appears to have remained in use throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, not much is known about its later phases of occupation.

**Gospodin Vir (Manastir):**<sup>356</sup> Small watchtower of square plan, situated on the Manastir site, near Gospodin Vir. Believed to have been part of a complex of small fortifications guarding the Roman road through the Iron Gorge.<sup>357</sup> Only the lower foundation level of the watchtower is still visible today. Material found at the site suggests a 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century occupation.<sup>358</sup>

**Pesača:**<sup>359</sup> A late Roman square tower, 7.5 by 7.5m, situated on a plateau enclosed by the small Pesača tributary, believed to have been built on the site of an earlier Roman fortification, covering an area of 36.4 by 36.4m. Today, only the later structure (tower) is still visible, which was most probably built in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

In relation to the earlier fortification at the site, an early 1<sup>st</sup> century initial phase of occupation has been suggested;<sup>360</sup> however, there is no evidence to verify the existence or function of a Roman fort at this site prior to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century.

---

<sup>355</sup> Archaeological material from Gospodin Vir includes pottery, terra sigillata fragments and coinage (starting from Vespasian) which are datable between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. Minić, "Gospodin Vir", 147-149; Minić and Kovačević, "Gospodin Vir", 101-102. According to Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48, the discovery of a Roman sentry box near the site, containing early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD finds, could confirm the existence of a fortified post in this area by the 30's AD. However, this find should not necessarily be associated with this particular site, as it could be related to the nearby fort at Saldum.

<sup>356</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 36-37; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 79.

<sup>357</sup> Along with Gospodin Vir and Pesača. Traces of the Roman road running through the Iron Gorge have been located right above both watchtowers at Gospodin Vir. In addition, the tablets – inscriptions commemorating the construction of the road (tablets of Tiberius, Claudius and Domitian) – were discovered in the immediate vicinity of Gospodin Vir.

<sup>358</sup> Minić, "Manastir", 153-157.

<sup>359</sup> Kanitz. *Studien in Serbien*, 32; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 32; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 192; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 39-40; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 80; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48; V. Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 245; Minić, "Fortification", 171-175; Minić and Kovačević, "Pesača", 88-89; Minić, "Pesača", 127-128; *TIR* L34, 88.

<sup>360</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48.

**Livadice:** The remains of two fortifications, two km apart, have been discovered at the modern site of Livadice, near Lepenski Vir, at the points of Velike and Male Livadice respectively:

Velike Livadice:<sup>361</sup> Small castellum, measuring some 40 by 40m, or 0.16ha. Its architectural design, when compared to neighbouring structures suggests a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date of initial construction and occupation. According to archaeological excavations carried out in the interior of the site, the fort appears to have been abandoned sometime in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, after suffering a major destruction.<sup>362</sup> Its garrison is unknown.

Male Livadice:<sup>363</sup> Minor fortification or watchtower, 20 by 17.5m, built over an earlier pre-historic fortified settlement. Systematic work carried out during the late 1960's has revealed traces of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD fort at the site, a date further supported by pottery and monetary finds unearthed at the site.<sup>364</sup> Although yet to be confirmed, it is quite probable that this fortified post was also abandoned in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.

**Smorna (Boljetin):**<sup>365</sup> One of the best-excavated and published sites in the Serbian sector of the Danubian frontier line, the auxiliary fort of Smorna is situated near the modern town of Boljetin. According to the available archaeological data, three main phases of occupation have been distinguished:

---

<sup>361</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 27; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 18; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 245; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 41; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 80; Letiča, "Velike Livadice", 179-181; Piletić, "Velike Livadice", 75-76; *TIR* L34, 74.

<sup>362</sup> Stratigraphical analysis has revealed clear traces of destruction at this level of occupation. Piletić, "Tour et Castellum", 187-192.

<sup>363</sup> V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 245; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 26-28; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 80; Piletić, "Male i Velike Livadice", 124-125; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 47.

<sup>364</sup> The shape-plan of this watchtower is identical to other late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD Roman watchtowers. It is generally believed that the fortifications at Male and Velike Livadice were built at the same time.

<sup>365</sup> Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 191; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33; 39-40; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 49-52; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 20-21; Ergegović-Pavlović, "Boucles d' oreilles", 91-95; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 80-81; Zotović and Petrović, "Gradac 1965", 94-97; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 49, 51; Zotović, "Boljetin", 211-225; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 240-242; V.Kondić, "Anticko Utvrđenje",

Phase I: Earth and timber fort with wooden palisade, built sometime in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. No significant traces of this early fort have been discovered so far; however its existence has been verified by early 1<sup>st</sup> century finds at the site.<sup>366</sup> This phase of occupation lasted until c. AD 68-69, when the earth and timber fort was destroyed, probably during the course of the civil wars.

Phase II: Stone fort, reconstructed during the Flavian dynasty, most probably by Domitian. Traces of this fort are visible in the southeast sector (underneath the later, 3<sup>rd</sup> century walls) and the interior of the site, where a horreum and two barracks of Flavian date were unearthed. The majority of finds discovered at Smorna, correspond to this layer of occupation.<sup>367</sup> The size of the first stone fort at Smorna is not known. According to all indications this phase lasted until the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when the fort was destroyed, probably during Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>368</sup> Thereafter, the fort appears not to have been in use, at least for the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Phase III: Reconstruction of the stone fort, probably sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. This particular phase has been very well preserved and investigated.

In relation to the fort's garrison, the situation is not that clear. The discovery of a fragment of a bowl, found in the military necropolis nearby, bearing the names of four soldiers of legio IV Flavia, does not, in my view, represent enough evidence to suggest the deployment of a legionary detachment at Smorna.<sup>369</sup> On the other

---

111-113; V.Kondić, "Boljetin, Lepene", 114-118; V.Kondić, "Boljetin-Gradac", 104-105; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 41; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 189; *TJR* L 34, 38.

<sup>366</sup> Such as fibulae, terra sigillata, fragments of ceramic and bronze vessels as well as bronze coins of Augustus. Petrović, "Boljetin", 91-93; Zotović and Petrović, "Gradac 1967", 69-71. Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33, has discussed the possibility that the early fort at Smorna was built by one of the legions constructing the Iron Gorge road in AD 33/34 (as in the case of Čezava – Novae), and was subsequently used as a base for a legionary detachment. She presents no evidence, however, leading to such a conclusion.

<sup>367</sup> Evidence includes pottery, glassware, fibulae, iron knives, bracelets, arrowheads, an iron spearhead and a few red lamps.

<sup>368</sup> Traces of devastation are clearly marked at this layer. The last finds from this layer include Trajanic coins (numismatic evidence from Smorna ends abruptly with coins of this emperor) and a bronze lamp. Krunić, "Bronze Lamp", 81-85 .

<sup>369</sup> Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 49, 51; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36.

hand, what seems quite probable is the deployment of a detachment from cohorts I Lusitanorum, as brick stamps from this unit were found at the site.<sup>370</sup>

**Ravna (Campsia):**<sup>371</sup> Small fortification, measuring 42 by 40 m, 0.16 ha, built on a bank of the Danube where the river makes a detour around the Poreč island. Most elements of the fort were exhaustively explored during the rescue excavations between 1967-1970.

Although much of what remains of the Ravna fort today belongs to the later (3<sup>rd</sup> century) phase of occupation, traces of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century stone fort have been distinguished underneath the later one.<sup>372</sup> These traces are visible at the gates and towers of the fort, with typical early 2<sup>nd</sup> century square gates partially superimposed by later U-shaped ones.<sup>373</sup> This fort seems to have been in use for only a short period of time, as it appears to have been abandoned immediately afterwards. It is not yet clear whether it was reoccupied at any point during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Its garrison is unknown.

**Taliatae (Donji Milanovac):** The remains of two fortifications have been discovered near the modern site of Donji Milanovac, at the points of Veliki Gradac and Mali Gradac respectively:

Site A (Veliki Gradac):<sup>374</sup> An auxiliary fort (126 by 134m, 1.68ha), occupying a commanding position in the vicinity of the Porečka reka and Paprenica streams,

---

<sup>370</sup> See V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 41; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 39. This unit was permanently stationed at the nearby fort of Taliatae (Donji Milanovac). See also Beneš, *Auxilia*, 44; Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 40 and n. 72.

<sup>371</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 55-56; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18, 21; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 51; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 47-48; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1966", 96-99; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1967", 65-69; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1969", 110-111.

<sup>372</sup> A date further supported by finds including early 2<sup>nd</sup> century ceramics and fibulae, as well as coins dating from Augustus to Trajan. V.Kondić, "Nalaz denara", 55-57; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1982", 233-251.

<sup>373</sup> Tomović, "Ravna", 73-80; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1970", 66-67.

<sup>374</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 35-38; Swoboda, *Forshungen*, 38; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 194; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 233; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 59-61; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 81; Zotović, Kondić, "Fortresses", 48-49; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33; V.Kondić, "Ravna 1965", 97-99; Vučković-Todorović, "Taliatae", 99-102; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 108-109; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 42; *TIR* L34, 55.

about 200m south from the Danube. This fort is well preserved today and received a fair amount of detailed investigation during the 1967-1968 rescue campaigns.

Excavations have revealed traces of a mid-1<sup>st</sup> century earth and timber fort of square shape, which are clearly visible across sections of the earth rampart, the early horreum, and some partially explored structures in the south and central areas of the fort, including an earth and timber walkway.<sup>375</sup> According to a military diploma datable to AD 75, which was found at the site, the fort was rebuilt in stone during the times of the Flavian dynasty, probably as early as Vespasian's reign.<sup>376</sup> Though the existing evidence is still far from conclusive, the fort appears to have remained largely un-restored during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

According to the Taliatae diploma, the fort's initial garrison was the cohorts I Raetorum, which was probably stationed here during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century. After the transfer of this unit to Dacia in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort at Veliki Gradac became the permanent base of operations of cohorts I Lusitanorum,<sup>377</sup> and of a detachment of the Classis Flavia Moesica.<sup>378</sup>

Site B (Mali Gradac):<sup>379</sup> Next to the Veliki Gradac site, traces of what is believed to have been an earlier earth and timber fort (50 by 40m) were discovered at the point of Mali Gradac.<sup>380</sup> Very little information is available on this site.

---

<sup>375</sup> V.Popović, "Donji Milanovac", 265-282.

<sup>376</sup> Vučković-Todorović, "Diplôme militaire", 21-28 and tables I-III. The diploma, belonging to a soldier of cohorts I Raetorum, was found at the same level as the first stone rampart at Veliki Gradac. This is probably the fort mentioned by Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 9, 4.

<sup>377</sup> The cohorts I Lusitanorum is also mentioned in the Taliatae diploma. It is quite probable that both units were simultaneously stationed in the wider area of the Taliatae fort during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, covering the area of the Roman forts at Veliki Gradac, Mali Gradac and Boljetin-Smorna. For a history of these units see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 44,48; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 162-163; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 26; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 277. Cohors I Lusitanorum is well documented in the Veliki Gradac fort. Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 40 and n. 75; Gudea, "Limes Dakien", 886; Gudea, "Militärorganisation", 228; Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 117.

<sup>378</sup> Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 209. I have found no evidence to support the argument by Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33, for the presence of cohorts I Cisipadensium at Taliatae in the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

<sup>379</sup> Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 38; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 193; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48, Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 108-109; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 42; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 189; 191, fig.1; *TIR* L34, 77.

**Porečka Reka:**<sup>381</sup> Complex of fortifications situated on the banks of the Porečka Reka stream, on the intersection of the roads leading to the interior of the province, the Danube frontier and the road over the Miroč mountains to Egeta. Remains from the Porečka Reka military complex include the following:

A. A defensive wall (Vallum), 220m long, 1.5-2m thick, situated at the left bank of Porečka Reka stream; starting from the Danube, the wall runs parallel to the Porečka Reka river bed and ends underneath the Glavica watchtower. According to the existing evidence, this vallum dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century.

B. Two watchtowers of rectangular shape erected at each side of the riverbank; both appear to be of 4<sup>th</sup> century date.

C. A tower, of approximately 10m in diameter, situated on top of the Glavica hill. Its shape and the surviving evidence suggest a 4<sup>th</sup> century occupation date at the earliest.

D. The remains of a square fort, measuring some 60 by 60m (0.36ha), leaning on the vallum section on the right bank of the Porečka Reka stream. Visible remains include a section of the fort's entrance (situated in the south of the fort) and parts of the square corner towers and gateways preserved only on the eastern side of the main fortification wall, which clearly belong to the later, Diocletianic type, quadriburgus. However, archaeological evidence unearthed from a Roman necropolis discovered at the foundation level of the fort's main fortification walls, could, in my opinion, suggest the existence of an earlier fort at the site, perhaps of early to mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century date.<sup>382</sup>

---

<sup>380</sup> Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 48, claim that the earth fort at Mali Gradac belongs to the earliest group of forts in Moesia Superior. According to its shape and the materials used in building it, the fort could indeed be dated to the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. However, there is really no conclusive evidence to suggest any exact dates for the construction or occupation phases at this site.

<sup>381</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 62-64; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 49; Petrović, "Rivière Porečka", 285-291 and figs 3, 4, 5; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 233; Vučković-Todorović, "Ucse Porečke Reke 1967", 62-65; Petrović, "Ušće Porečke Reke", 60-62; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 48; Vučković-Todorović, "Ušće Porečke Reke 1969", 136.

<sup>382</sup> This date is suggested by material which includes pottery fragments, glassware, weapons and coins that are datable from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Vučković-Todorović, "Ušće Porečke Reke 1968", 69-71; Petrović, "Forteresse romaine", 259-275, esp. 260-262. Despite the evidence, neither of them seems to mention anything about an early fort at Porečka Reka.

**Golubinje:**<sup>383</sup> Two fortifications, including an auxiliary castellum (50 by 42m, 0.21ha) and a watchtower (40 by 31m, 0.12ha), were discovered at the points of Malo and Velike Golubinje respectively. Although the evidence is still far from conclusive, there is nothing to suggest the existence of a Roman fort at either site prior to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

**Pecka Bara:**<sup>384</sup> Small watchtower-fortified post, measuring 11.6 by 5m, situated midway between the forts at Hajdučka Vodenica and Malo Golubinje. Little information is available about the site, although certain finds, including three bronze fibulae, ceramic fragments and a few bronze coins suggest a possible mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century phase of occupation.

**Hajdučka Vodenica:**<sup>385</sup> The remains of the small fortification (castellum) of Hajdučka Vodenica are situated on the main Roman frontier road along the Danube bank, across the mouth of the small Mrakonia river.

Excavations carried out on the site have so far revealed the traces of a small stone square fort with round corner towers, measuring some 43 by 41m (0.18ha); this fort appears to have been built using the opus-mixtum technique, that is alternating layers of roughly dressed stones and bricks. Within the interior of the fort, traces of two towers were discovered, one square, lying underneath a later sacred building and one pentagonal, situated in the centre of the main fortification wall. The pentagonal tower is clearly late; the square one appears to belong to the first phase of occupation at Hajdučka Vodenica, which, according to material unearthed

---

<sup>383</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 38; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 49, 51; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 192; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 66-67; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 83; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 245; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 48; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 191; L.Popović, "Malo Golubinje 1967", 61-62; L.Popović, "Malo Golubinje 1968", 68-69; L.Popović, "Malo Golubinje 1969", 140; L.Popović, "Malo i Velike Golubinje 1969", 102-103; L.Popović, "Malo i Velike Golubinje 1970", 58-59; L.Popović, "Malo Golubinje 1982", 297-299; *TIR* L34, 62 (Velike), 77 (Malo).

<sup>384</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 39; Swoboda, *Forschungen*, 52; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 193; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 67-69; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Minić, "Pecka Bara", 301-304; *TIR* L34, 88. This fortified post remained in use well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>385</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 71-72; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 83; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 51; V. Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 232, who gives a size of 50 by 70m; V. Kondić, "Forschungen", 48-49; Čerškov, "Kasnoanticki castellum", 61-62; Čerškov, "Rimsko utvrđenje", 65-67; Čerškov, "Hajdučka Vodenica", 140-142; Petrović, "Hajdučka Vodenica 1969", 98-100; Petrović, "Hajdučka Vodenica 1970", 54-56.

from the northeast section of the perimeter wall, could be dated to the mid-late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>386</sup> The fort appears to have remained in use well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the main fortification at Hajdučka Vodenica, traces of two stone walls (flanked by earth ditches) extending from the western wall of the fort towards the Danube and ending with two round towers, were also discovered at the site.<sup>387</sup> The obvious purpose of this double vallum was to protect the area (wharf) in the immediate northwest of the fort, which probably represented a landing point for enemy forces attacking Moesia. There is no archaeological evidence to suggest when this extension was constructed; most probably, it was built sometime after the abandonment of Dacia by Aurelian in AD 271, in the face of continuous barbarian attacks against the province of Moesia.<sup>388</sup>

The garrison of Hajdučka Vodenica in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD is unknown.

**Tekija (Transdierna):**<sup>389</sup> The remains of two auxiliary fortifications have been discovered at the confluence of the Danube with the small brook of Tekija. Neither fortification is mentioned in ancient literary sources; the name (Transdierna) has been ascribed based on the fact that the site is situated across the Roman fort of Dierna (Orsova) in Dacia Superior. Both forts received a substantial amount of archaeological investigation during the 1968-1970 excavation campaigns.

SITE A: Situated on the right bank of the Tekija brook, a small fortlet, measuring c. 32 by 28m (0.08ha), of irregular rhomboid plan, with four rhomboid towers of various dimensions. Its shape and bricks bearing the marks DA(cia)R(ipensis)DIANA clearly denote a late Roman construction date.

SITE B: On the left bank of the Tekija stream, a military structure of square plan (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century?) was unearthed, built on top of an earlier (late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup>

---

<sup>386</sup> A.Jovanović, "Hajdučka Vodenica", 319-331, esp. 324 and 326-7.

<sup>387</sup> B.Jovanović, "Nalaziste", 55-57, including sketches of the double vallum and fossa.

<sup>388</sup> Or – though this might seem far-fetched – during the last half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, when Dacian attacks against Moesia are at their height.

<sup>389</sup> Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 76-77; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; V.Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 84; Zotović and Kondić, "Fortresses", 49; V.Kondić, "Forschungen", 42; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 37, 39; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 229-232; Vučković-Todorović, "Limes Danubien", 192; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 52; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Tekija 1969", 88-92; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Tekija 1970", 50-53; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 110-111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; *TIR* L 34, 113.

century) rectangular fort, measuring 100 by 84m (0.9ha). This date has been verified by a substantial amount of finds which include weapons, glass goblets, pottery fragments and terra sigillata, lamps as well as coins ranging from Augustus to M. Aurelius.<sup>390</sup>

During the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the fort at Tekija was the permanent base of operations for cohorts V Gallorum and a legionary detachment from legio VII Claudia.<sup>391</sup> After the departure of cohorts V Gallorum for Dacia,<sup>392</sup> a cohort IX Gemina Voluntariorum was stationed here at some point during the early or mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>393</sup>

With the return of V Gallorum to Moesia Superior around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, this unit once again became the permanent garrison of this fort, at least until the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>394</sup>

The fort also appears to have been a station for the Roman fleet in Moesia.<sup>395</sup>

---

<sup>390</sup> Numismatic evidence is cited in P. Popović, "Nalaz rimskih", 91-107. Finds include some 25 Republican pieces and 83 coins from Augustus to Domitian. For other evidence see Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Ziegelstampe", 37-40; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Terra sigillata", 201-210; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Bronzelampen", 49-52; Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Sigillatafunde", 225-229; Tomović, "Tekija", 345-353, tables 1-3. Most finds at the site seem to be datable to the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

<sup>391</sup> Mirković, "Cohors V Gallorum", 173-178. The cohort V Gallorum is attested in Moesia as early as AD 75 (Taliatae diploma), and remains there until the turn of the century, according to the military diplomata of AD 93 and 100 (*CIL* xvi, 39 and 46 respectively); see Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 298. Both units are mentioned in a bronze hemina - container found within the interior of the fort, containing segments of weapons, horse equipment and a soldier's belt. The presence of this auxiliary unit at Tekija, presents additional evidence for the existence and function of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site. Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 40 n.76 (stamps of VII Claudia). There is no evidence to support the presence of cohorts V Hispanorum at Tekija during Trajan's Dacian wars, as stated by Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 117.

<sup>392</sup> On the basis of epigraphic evidence, this unit appears to have been stationed in Dacia (Pojejena de Sus) between AD 101-144. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 35; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 176; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 170.

<sup>393</sup> For this unit, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 56; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 38.

<sup>394</sup> The V Gallorum is again attested in Moesia Superior in a fragmentary diploma of AD 145 (Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 170 and Mirković, "Cohors V Gallorum", 176). Perhaps the return of this unit could coincide with the building of the second fort, the square one, at Tekija. It is not yet certain if or when the cohort IX Gemina Voluntariorum left the fort; the idea that both units might have coexisted at Tekija for some time is possible according to an engraved cup mentioning soldiers of both units, in Cermanović-Kuzmanović, "Transdierna", 337-343. However, as this fort is not large enough to house two auxiliary units, it is possible that a detachment from one of the two might have been deployed in the nearby fort of Hajdučka Vodenica, whose garrison is not known.

<sup>395</sup> Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 209.

**Sip:**<sup>396</sup> A small stone castellum (31 by 29m) of irregular plan, with four rectangular corner towers, situated near the Sip canal. Although the possibility of a Trajanic initial foundation date has been put forward,<sup>397</sup> there is absolutely no evidence to confirm the existence of a fort at Sip before the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

**Karataš (Diana):**<sup>398</sup> Arguably the best preserved, investigated and published site in the entire Lower Danube limes sector, the remains of the fortification of Diana are situated at the modern point of Karataš, near the Đerdap I hydroelectric power plant. The function of an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site is attested in later literary sources: Procopius, writing in the times of Justinian, describes how the erection of a 6<sup>th</sup> century fort at the site replaced the “old work of Trajan”,<sup>399</sup> a statement which in fact led most scholars to argue for a Trajanic initial foundation date for the fort at Diana.<sup>400</sup> However, detailed excavations carried out at the site by J. Kondić (née Rankov) and her team during the late 80’s and early 90’s, have revealed clear traces of at least two earlier occupation phases at Diana, datable to the early and mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD respectively. Therefore, in relation to the function of the fort during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the three following main phases of occupation have been established:<sup>401</sup>

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of almost square shape with round corners, measuring c.110 by 95m, with four main gates flanked by square towers, protected

---

<sup>396</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 49-50; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 149; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 78-79; Petrović and Vasić, “Frontier in Upper Moesia”, 18; Zotović and Kondić, “Fortresses”, 51; V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 244, who identifies it with the late fort at Ducis Pratum; V.Kondić, “Forschungen”, 50; V.Kondić, “Lokaliteti”, 85; B.Jovanović, “Sip”, 57-59; Milošević, “Sip-rimski kastel”, 102-105; Milošević, “Sip”, 150; Milošević, “Fortification”, 357-362; Milošević, “Kosovica”, 363-364; *TIR* L34, 103.

<sup>397</sup> Zotović and Kondić, “Fortresses”, 51.

<sup>398</sup> V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 229; V.Kondić, “Forschungen”, 44; Radojčić and Vasić, *Iron Gates I*, 79-82; Petrović and Vasić, “Frontier in Upper Moesia”, 18; 21; Mirković, “Roman Policy”, 36; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 111-112; Gudea, “Limes Dakiens”, 886; Gudea, “Bericht”, 478-479; Zotović and Kondić, “Fortresses”, 51; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 53; V.Kondić, “Statio Cataractarum”, 43-47; V.Kondić, “Balneum”, 37-42; J.Rankov, “Fouilles des Karataš”, 61-69; J.Rankov, “Karataš 1984”, 7-14; J.Rankov, “Karataš 1985”, 99-100; J.Rankov, “Dianae”, 5-24.

<sup>399</sup> Procopius, *De Aed*, iv,6. By that time, the fort is referred to as Caput Bovis.

<sup>400</sup> Petrović and Vasić, “Frontier in Upper Moesia”, 21 (who argue for a Flavian initial date of construction, and a subsequent reconstruction in stone before Trajan’s Dacian wars); Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 112; Gudea, “Bericht”, 479.

by a double V shaped ditch. Traces of this early earthwork are visible in the west gate of the fortification, underneath the later (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century) stone foundation. This fort is believed to have been erected in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, probably sometime between Tiberius and Claudius.<sup>402</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, which according to all indications took place within the third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Remains datable to this phase of occupation were discovered underneath one of the gates on the south wall of the fort. Most finds from Diana, including pottery fragments and a substantial number of terra sigillata, are datable within this particular phase of occupation.<sup>403</sup>

The fort at Diana suffered major devastation by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, probably during Domitian's wars on the Danube.<sup>404</sup>

Phase III: Reconstruction of the stone fort during Trajan's reign, probably in the eve of his first offensive against Dacia. This is obviously the fort which Procopius refers to. Among other archaeological finds datable to this period, an inscription celebrating the completion by Trajan of the canal that bypassed the Danube cataracts was also discovered.<sup>405</sup>

The garrison of Diana in the early and mid 1<sup>st</sup> century is not known. According to an inscribed fragment from the phalera of a horse harness mentioning the cohors VI Thracum quingenaria equitata, it seems quite probable that this unit (or a

---

<sup>401</sup> Reconstruction following J.Kondić, "Diana", 261-270; J.Kondić, "Earliest Fortification", 81-86 and figs 1-7.

<sup>402</sup> According to J.Kondić, "Earliest Fortification", 83 n.5, the date is based on the reconstruction of the towers situated inside the main fortification wall, which appear to have been of L shape. If she is right, then the shape of these towers could clearly suggest an erection date between the first two decades of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Although I have yet to confirm this, the discovery of brick stamps belonging to legio V Macedonica at Diana (V.Kondić, "Two Military Inscriptions", 72 n.2) could alternatively suggest a date between the late 20's and early 30's AD (when this legion is attested building the road along the Iron Gate gorge in AD 33/34).

<sup>403</sup> Jevremović, "Céramique", 49-58, tables I-XVII; Cvjetičanin, "Potery Evidence", 93-100; J. Kondić and Cvjetičanin, "Terra Sigillata", 49-62; J.Kondić and Cvjetičanin, "Terra Sigillata II", 149-162. In total, 396 fragments have been registered (catalogues in pages 50-59 and 151-159 respectively), most dating in the period between Vespasian and Domitian, but with a few ascribed to the pre-Flavian period of occupation. The earliest specimen has been dated to Nero's reign.

<sup>404</sup> Confirmed by "clearly discernible strata of destruction within the ditches". J.Kondić, "Earliest Fortification", 86 and fig.8.

detachment) was stationed at Diana during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>406</sup> At the same time, the fort was also the base for a temporary detachment from both Upper Moesian legions, which are believed to have been responsible for the construction of the stone floor of the swimming bath at Diana by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>407</sup> There is no further indication as to which unit (if any) was stationed at Diana during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, though the fort appears to have been a permanent station for the Roman fleet in Moesia throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>408</sup>

**Kostol (Pontes):**<sup>409</sup> Auxiliary fort, measuring 125 by 130m (1.60ha), situated near modern Kostol, where traces of the great bridge of Apollodorus were also discovered. According to the available evidence, in relation to the fort's function in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD, three main phases of occupation have been established so far:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of unknown size and shape, datable to the early or mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Traces of this early earth fort were discovered by the north

---

<sup>405</sup> Stating how this canal facilitated the safe navigation through the Iron Gates gorge, "...Periculum Cataractarum Derivato Flumine Danuvi Navigationem Fecit". In Petrović, "Trajanova tabla", 31-38. The inscription is datable to AD 101.

<sup>406</sup> V.Kondić, "Two Military Inscriptions", 72-73; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36. This unit was stationed in Lower Germany until AD 80 (*CIL* xvi, 158). It was probably sent to the Danube as a reinforcement during Domitian's operations in the area (unit in Pannonia in AD 84/85, *CIL* xvi, 30, 31). It is first attested in Moesia Superior in AD 96 (Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 294) with detachments operating from Diana and Viminacium. After AD 110, it is permanently attached to the army of Dacia Porolissensis (Porolissum). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 53; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 143; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 194-195; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6, 8; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 380.

<sup>407</sup> According to a marble plate discovered at the site of the thermae, bearing the marks of both VII Claudia and IV Flavia. The inscription is dated to Trajan's reign. In V.Kondić, "Balneum", 39-40, fig. 1.

<sup>408</sup> Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 209, with traces of a port discovered at the site (figs 5a and 5b).

<sup>409</sup> V.Kondić, *Iron Gate*, 228-229; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 112-114; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Gudea, "Bericht", 479; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 53; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36; Vasić, "Kostol", 101-102 (including finds and stratigraphy); Vasić, "Castrum Pontes", 176-181; Garašanin and Vasić, "Castrum Pontes", 71-97; *TIR* L 34, 92.

and west walls of the fortification, as well as underneath the later forts' left gate (porta principalis sinistra).<sup>410</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, probably at the same time as the construction of Apollodorus' bridge, between AD 103-105.<sup>411</sup> The fort appears to have been temporarily abandoned sometime around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>412</sup>

Phase III: Reconstruction of the stone fort, sometime during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. One major modification associated with this particular phase of occupation was the construction of an earth vallum (flanked by a ditch) in the immediate northwest of the fort, on a bulwark of the main slope facing the Danube.<sup>413</sup>

There are no conclusive indications as to the unit that garrisoned the early fort (Phase I) at Pontes, though cohors III Brittonum presents a distinct possibility.<sup>414</sup> During the course of the Dacian wars, there are a number of auxiliary units attested at Pontes, including the cohortes I Antiochensium, III Campetris, I Cretum, II Hispanorum and III Brittonum.<sup>415</sup> After the reconstruction of the fort

---

<sup>410</sup> According to Garašanin, Vasić and Marjanović-Vujović, "Camp et pont de Trajan", 25-84. Most finds, including ceramic fragments, bowls (p. 60-62) and amphoras (p. 66), are datable to the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; only a few pieces (c.7 %) can be ascribed to an earlier date.

<sup>411</sup> Dio Cassius, lxxviii, 13; Garašanin, "Castellum Pontes", 25-41; fig. 8: general plan; pg 25: on the discovery of the main foundation blocks of the bridge. For the latest report on Trajan's bridge, see Gušić, "Trajan's Bridge", 259-261. This fort is believed to have measured some 112 by 120m.

<sup>412</sup> According to the main excavators, Garašanin, Vasić and Marjanović-Vujović, "Camp et pont de Trajan", the fort appears to have witnessed severe destruction around the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, probably the result of trouble on the Danube during the reign of Antoninus Pius (c. AD 147-158).

<sup>413</sup> Garašanin, Vasić and Marjanović-Vujović, "Camp et Pont de Trajan", 32. The date is based on the fact that the plan of the Phase III fort at Pontes is identical to the contemporary one at Micia in Dacia Superior. Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 21.

<sup>414</sup> This unit is recorded in the diplomata of Moesia Superior AD 100 (*CIL* xvi, 46) and 145 (in Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 203), but was probably stationed at this province throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Brick stamps from this unit were found at the site, and as it becomes the fort's garrison after Marcus Aurelius, it is reasonable to assume that it was stationed at Pontes from the start. For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 22-23; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 112-113; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6.

<sup>415</sup> Garašanin, Vasić and Marjanović-Vujović, "Camp et pont de Trajan", 80; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 112-114, citing an inscription (*CIL* iii, 1703, 1-3). The accumulation of such a large auxiliary contingent at Pontes seems reasonable enough bearing in mind the

under Marcus Aurelius, Pontes became the base of operations for cohorts III Brittonum and a detachment of legio V Claudia.<sup>416</sup>

**Konopište:**<sup>417</sup> A fortified settlement near Pontes. Material found at the site which include fragments of stamps from legio VII Claudia, and evidence from the excavated section of the horreum (datable to Trajan's reign), point to the existence and function of a military post (or logistic centre?) at this point in the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**Kurvingrad (Costol):**<sup>418</sup> Small fortified settlement and naval station, situated one km downstream from Konopište. Today, the site has been completely covered by the Danube. Earlier archaeological work was able to establish traces of a port at the site, while information derived from sections of the excavated horreum suggests a late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD initial phase of occupation.

**Rtkovo:**<sup>419</sup> Minor fortification, measuring 55 by 51m, 0.28ha. Very little is known about this site, which has now been completely obliterated by the Danube.

**Vajuga:**<sup>420</sup> Small auxiliary castellum measuring some 86 by 80m, 0.68ha. The fort has not been the subject of any particular investigation so far, while all finds indicate a 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD occupation.

**Milutinovac:**<sup>421</sup> A small auxiliary fortification, measuring 50 by 60m, 0.30ha. Evidence from this site is scarce as nothing remains of it today.

**Glamija (Ljubičevac):**<sup>422</sup> Small Roman castellum, measuring 25 by 25m, situated near the Milutinovac site. One important find discovered at Glamija was a marble

---

close proximity of Apollodorus' bridge. Without doubt, the fort at Pontes was one of the main starting points for the Roman army during the course of Trajan's offensives against Dacia.

<sup>416</sup> Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 54.

<sup>417</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18, 21; P. Popović, Vukmanovic and Radojčić, "Mala Vrbica", 82-83; P. Popović, "Konopište", 101-103.

<sup>418</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 45; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 149; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 20-21; Trbuhović, "Kurvingrad", 59-61; *TIR* L34, 72.

<sup>419</sup> Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 149; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; *TIR* L34, 97.

<sup>420</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; L. Popović, "Vajuga", 109-110.

<sup>421</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18.

funerary stele, datable to AD 92-96/97, belonging to a M. Titius Proculus, praefect of cohorts I Alpinorum equitata and tribune of legio IV Flavia.<sup>423</sup> However, this should really be treated as a chance find,<sup>424</sup> as there was nothing found within the Glamija fort itself to suggest a pre- 4<sup>th</sup> century phase of occupation.

**Brza Palanka (Egeta):**<sup>425</sup> The remains of three separate auxiliary fortifications have been discovered at the site of Brza Palanka, one of which should correspond to the fort of Egeta, mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary sources.<sup>426</sup>

Fort A: An early (?) Roman auxiliary fort, measuring 106 by 94m (0.99ha), situated at the point of Brza Palanka. Very little is known about this particular fort; given the absence of any available archaeological data to suggest a pre-Flavian phase of occupation, most scholars assume that this fort was built sometime during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD at the earliest.<sup>427</sup>

Fort B: Second auxiliary castellum of irregular plan with rectangular towers, measuring 84 by 33m, situated at the nearby point of Črkveni Potok. Finds within its interior, which include coins datable as early as Vespasian's reign, should indicate a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century phase of occupation.<sup>428</sup>

---

<sup>422</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 43; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 148; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Parović, "Ljubičevac", 137-144; *TIR* L34, 74.

<sup>423</sup> Gabričević, "Monument funéraire", 157-161.

<sup>424</sup> Unless there is a connection with the fort at Diana. This unit is attested in Moesia Superior by AD 93 (*CIL* xvi, 39) and is also mentioned in the military diplomata of AD 100 and 103/106 (*CIL* xvi, 46, 54). Its presence in this area should be associated with Trajan's Dacian wars, as the unit is later transferred to Pannonia Inferior (Matrica). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 15; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 80; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6, 8; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 259.

<sup>425</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 40-42; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 155; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 86-87; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 114-116; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 52; Petrović, "Brza Palanka 1986", 369-377, including traces for the existence of a 50m fortified port of square shape; *TIR* L34, 57.

<sup>426</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9,3 (Egita); *Itin. Antonini*, 218, 3 (Egeta).

<sup>427</sup> Petrović, "Brza Palanka 1984", 153-166; fig. 140.

<sup>428</sup> Petrović, "Brza Palanka 1984", fig. 142. Given that the two forts were constructed at about the same time, it is not clear whether the one was supposed to supplement or replace the other; there is no further evidence to indicate for how long either of the forts remained in service. In my view, given the presence of cohorts I Cretum and of a legionary detachment from VII Claudia at the Brza Palanka area throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (see note 429), the main fortification at Egeta which Ptolemy refers to should really correspond to Fort A; Fort B, measuring 84 by 33m, is far too small to accommodate a cohort quingenaria and a legionary detachment by itself. In this sense,

Fort C: A third auxiliary fort, situated in the immediate north of Fort B. Its shape (triangular), clearly suggests a late (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century) date of occupation.

According to epigraphic evidence, in the period between the late 1<sup>st</sup> and late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort at Egeta was the permanent base of operations for cohorts I Cretum sagittariorum, and for detachments from legio VII Claudia and the Roman fleet in Moesia respectively.<sup>429</sup>

### c. Sector III

**Ušće Slatinske Reke:**<sup>430</sup> A late Roman auxiliary castellum, measuring 55 by 55m. About 100m away from the main fort, traces of a Roman settlement were discovered underneath a later medieval site, containing a few pieces of Roman pottery datable to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD;<sup>431</sup> this could possibly indicate the function of an early Roman fortified settlement or post at the site.

**Clevora (Mihajlovac):**<sup>432</sup> Stone watchtower, 5.2 by 3.2m, situated along the main road between Kladovo and Negotin. All finds, including pottery fragments and coins (Licinius onwards), indicate a late date of occupation.

---

Fort B should be viewed either as a temporary camp designed to function only during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars, or as an additional fortified post designed to function in conjunction with the other main fort at Egeta.

<sup>429</sup> The cohort I Cretum sagittariorum is first attested in Moesia Superior in the diplomata of AD 93 and 100 (*CIL* xvi, 39,46). After participating in the Dacian wars (there is evidence for a temporary deployment at the fort of Drobeta – Turnu Severin in Tudor, *Olt. Rom.* 3, 83-84), the unit returns to Moesia Superior during Hadrian's reign. There is ample documentation for its presence at Egeta, including a mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century votive to Jupiter (*AE* (1966), 336) in Petrović, "Brza Palanka 1984", 153 and n.2; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 114-116; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 117; Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 40, n.79; Dušanić and Vasić, "Fragment", 420. For a history of this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 28; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 126-127; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 142; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 25; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 385. Also Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 209, fig. 3, for traces of a Roman naval installation at Egeta.

<sup>430</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 53-54; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; 21. A. Jovanović and Korac, "Ušće Slatinske Reke", 191-196.

<sup>431</sup> Janković, "Site", 197-200. The existence of a Roman level of occupation has been confirmed by means of stratigraphical analysis (Traces revealed on level 4 of the site, on top of earlier pre-historic site).

<sup>432</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 54; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 157; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Sladić, "Compte Rendu", 153-154. Sladić cites the discovery of a Hadrianic coin at the site, pg. 153 fig. 4. This must obviously be the result of some

**Mora Vagei:**<sup>433</sup> Watchtower or fortified post of unknown shape and size, situated near Mihajlovac. Although the site has not been the subject of any particular archaeological investigation, there is, nevertheless, enough evidence to confirm its function as early as the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>434</sup>

**Bordej:**<sup>435</sup> A stone-mortar fortification of square shape, measuring 52 by 60m (0.31ha), situated on the main Negotin-Kladovo highway. So far, no traces of an early Roman fort have been distinguished at the site, while all finds, including some 160 brick stamps, can only be dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

**Aquae (Prahovo):**<sup>436</sup> Traces of a large legionary (?) or auxiliary fort, measuring 850 by 485m, have been discovered at the modern site of Prahovo, near the confluence of the Danube with the Timacus (Timok) river. Very little archaeological data is available in relation to this particular site; however, according to the existing evidence, it is quite possible that a Roman fort was initially erected at the site probably within the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, when the fort appears to have been the base for cohorts I Cantabrorum and, perhaps, of legio V Alaudae.<sup>437</sup>

---

typographical error, as the coin in question is clearly a Constantinianic nummus. The existence of this fortified post is first attested in *Tab. Peut.*, vii (as Clevora).

<sup>433</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18, 21, who argue in favour of a Flavian date of construction.

<sup>434</sup> Date confirmed by ceramic fragments datable to the mid and late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Traces of this early fortification are visible underneath the later (III-IV century) one. In Cermanović-Kuzmanović and Stanković, "Mora Vagei", (1986), 453-456.

<sup>435</sup> Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; Cermanović-Kuzmanović and Stanković, "Bordej", 217-219.

<sup>436</sup> Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 135; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 35; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 32, 85-95; Petrović and Vasić, "Frontier in Upper Moesia", 18; V. Kondić, "Lokaliteti", 87-88; Vučković-Todorović, "Iskopavanja", 137-139, (138-139 on Prahovo); Petrović, "Negotina", 141-144; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 886; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 53, 110-126; D. Jovanović, "Aquae - Prahovo", 263-264; *TIR* K34, 17; *TIR* L34, 23; *Itin. Antonini*, 218.4.

<sup>437</sup> This unit is first attested in Moesia Superior in a military diploma of AD 78 (*CIL* xvi, 22). Its later "whereabouts" are unknown. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 24; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 117-118; Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 26; Mirković, "Roman Policy", 35; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 26; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 99. Its presence or deployment at the Aquae fort during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, has been confirmed by Mirković, "Cohors I Cantabrorum", 87-97. Legio V Alaudae was transferred to Moesia after AD 69, where it was later destroyed (AD 86) during Domitian's wars on the Danube. The argument for its deployment at Aquae at the time, in Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 32 (repeated in Beneš, *Istoria Militara*, 43) is based solely on the large size of the fort itself, which was clearly capable of accommodating a legion. In

There is also very little available information in relation to the fort's subsequent phases of occupation, though its function and existence between the early 2<sup>nd</sup> and late 4<sup>th</sup> centuries is recorded in literary sources.<sup>438</sup>

There are no indications as to the auxiliary garrison of the fort at Aquae during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>439</sup> Nevertheless, according to the discovery of a few remains belonging to a Roman port at the site, it is believed that Aquae functioned as a base for the Roman fleet in Moesia Superior, from as early as the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>440</sup>

**Dorticum (Vrav):**<sup>441</sup> Small auxiliary fortification situated near the modern site of Racovica, in the Vidin district of Bulgaria. The fort's occupation between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries can only be verified by literary sources.<sup>442</sup> Stamps of cohorts I Cretum, probably operating in the vicinity during Trajan's Dacian wars, were discovered at the site.<sup>443</sup>

**Bononia (Vidin):**<sup>444</sup> Auxiliary fort situated in the Vidin district of Bulgaria. Nothing really remains of the Roman fort today, as it was later completely covered

---

my view, without excluding the possibility for a temporary stay of this legion at Aquae in the early 70's AD, Margum could be considered as this legion's last base of operations between the late 70's AD and its eventual destruction in AD 86.

<sup>438</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9,3; *Itin.Ant.*, 218,1; Hierocles, *Syn.*, 655,4 (who describes it as a polihinion); Procopius, *De Aedif.*, iv, 6,11. The fort is referred to as Ad Aquas in later sources.

<sup>439</sup> There is really no evidence to suggest that the cohorts I Cantabrorum continued to occupy the fort at Aquae after the Dacian wars, as this unit is not recorded in any of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Upper Moesian diplomata.

<sup>440</sup> Traces of a Roman port, measuring 100 by 40m, were discovered at the nearby site of Kusjak. Finds include the remains of two Roman ships. This port was built in AD 99, according to an inscription (*CIL* iii 1642) celebrating the completion of the port works. Petrović, "Kastell Aquae", 295-298; Petrović, "Inscriptions", Tab. xv, no. 44. Interestingly enough, the remains of two necropolises were also discovered near the fort, containing, among other things, coins datable from Nero onwards.

<sup>441</sup> Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 231, no 26. *TIR* L34, 55.

<sup>442</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9, 4; *Itin.Ant.*, 219,1; *Tab.Peut.*, 7, 4; *Not.Dign.Or.*, 42, 3, 14; Procopius, *De Aed.*, iv, 6.

<sup>443</sup> This unit was stationed at the fort of Egeta-Brza Palanka.

<sup>444</sup> Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 230, no 25; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 81-82; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 354; *TIR* K 34, 28. The fort is mentioned in *Itin.Ant.*, 219,2.

by the medieval Baba Vida fort, though it is believed to have functioned from as early as the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, as the base for cohorts I Cisipadensium.<sup>445</sup>

**Ratiaria (Arčar):**<sup>446</sup> Fort and naval station, occupying the site of a terrace (1.5 by 0.3km) surrounded by the Arčarica River in the east and the Danube in the north. Already a colonia under Trajan,<sup>447</sup> Ratiaria would later become the capital of the province of Dacia Ripensis (after AD 271). Some scholars tend to assume that Ratiaria constitutes one of the earliest Roman fortifications in the province of Moesia, serving as a legionary base for legio V Macedonica (first half of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD)<sup>448</sup> and for IV Flavia during Domitian's wars on the Danube.<sup>449</sup> In fact, the only conclusive evidence we have so far (in relation to Roman military occupation at Ratiaria) comes from the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards, when Ratiaria appears to have been the base for a permanent detachment from legio VII

---

<sup>445</sup> This unit is stationed in Moesia between AD 14/15 and 56/57. After fighting in the east from AD 56/57 to 70, it returns to Moesia, where it is recorded in the Taliata diploma. Around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it was transferred to Thrace. Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 230, no 25, who wrongly refers to it as an ala; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 81-82; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 25; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 24-25; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 494.

<sup>446</sup> Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 96-99; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226,1; Velkov, "Ratiaria", 155-183; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 354; Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 377, 399; Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 209; *TIR* K34, 107; Giorgetti, "Ulpia Traiana Ratiaria", 13-34; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116; Sarnowski, "Provinzialflotte", 261; Brizzi, "Ratiaria", 81-90 on whether Ratiaria was a centre for the Roman fleet in Moesia;

<sup>447</sup> As mentioned by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9, 1-4 and *Itin.Ant.*, 219, 3.

<sup>448</sup> Patch, *Kampf*, 149. His theory has been superseded by the later discovery of epigraphic evidence, which has confirmed Oescus (Moesia Inferior) as the base for V Macedonica during this period of time; Velkov, "Origini di Ratiaria", 9, has argued for the existence of an auxiliary camp at Ratiaria from the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century onwards (c. AD 55/56), which served as the base for ala Gallica; there is no evidence for the presence of this unit in Moesia before AD 86, at the earliest (See note 452).

<sup>449</sup> Mirković, *Rimski Gradovi*, 28-29; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226, 1. Stamps of this legion were discovered at Ratiaria (Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 27), suggesting the deployment of a detachment during and after the course of Trajan's Dacian wars. There is absolutely no evidence to support Mirković's argument that Ratiaria was this legion's initial base of operations between AD 86 (when the legion is transferred to Moesia from Dalmatia) and AD 101. After the abandonment of Dacia by Aurelian, Ratiaria became the base for legio XIII Gemina. *TIR* K 34, 107; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226.1; Mansuelli, "Limes Bassodanubiano", 13-36.

Claudia and legio IV Flavia,<sup>450</sup> and perhaps for a temporary deployment of ala Gallica = ala Veterana Gallorum et Thracum (AD 86-88).<sup>451</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest the permanent deployment of any auxiliary unit at Ratiaria, at least during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>452</sup>

#### d. Fortifications in the Interior of the Province

**Timacum Minus:**<sup>453</sup> Auxiliary fort, situated near the modern village of Ravna, which occupied a commanding position along the Naissus-Ratiaria strategic supply route. Little remains of it today and much of what we know relies on older research and a rescue excavation conducted in 1975-1976. According to the surviving evidence, an earth and timber fort, measuring 138.5 by 110m, was first constructed on the site during the third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>454</sup> by either cohorts I Montanorum or cohorts I Thracum Syriaca.<sup>455</sup>

---

<sup>450</sup> Evidence includes brick stamps belonging to VII Claudia in Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 37-38 (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), and an inscription (*AE* (1938), 95) mentioning a veteran of this legion "conscriptus decurio Ratiariae". For epigraphic evidence relating to detachments from both Upper Moesian legions at Ratiaria see R.Ivanov, "Ratiaria", 27-28.

<sup>451</sup> The identification of this unit as the ala Veterana Gallorum et Thracum belongs to Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8-9; however, there is really no way of verifying his claims. The unit's presence near Ratiaria is argued on the basis of an inscription *ILS* 2205, in Hosek and Velkov, "Finds in Ratiaria", 34. Its presence in Moesia should be strictly associated with Domitian's wars on the Danube, as the unit was part of the permanent garrison of Syria throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries.

<sup>452</sup> Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 298, claim that the cohorts I Cisipadensium might have been stationed at Ratiaria during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, based on the nearby discovery of a military diploma datable to AD 93 (*CIL* xvi, 39). Although failing to understand this particular connection, I could nevertheless still envisage the presence of this unit in the wider area of the Arčarica river plain in the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (having in mind the close proximity between the fort at Ratiaria and that of Bononia, the base for this particular unit at the time).

<sup>453</sup> Petrović, "Station Timacum", 43-56; Petrović, "Timok – Tal", 514-518; *TIR* K34, 125.

<sup>454</sup> Pliny *NH* iii, 140, 149 mentions a fort by the name Timachus Flavius, which most probably is the same with the fort at Timacum Minus. The fort is also mentioned by Ptolemy *Geog.*, 3, 9, 4 (as Timakon). The date has been confirmed by a substantial number of fibulae and ceramics datable to that period. Petrović, "Ravna", 95-97. See also note 453.

<sup>455</sup> The question of the fort's initial garrison is still unresolved, as both cohorts I Montanorum and cohorts I Thracum Syriaca could be considered suitable candidates. Both units, which are among the earliest recorded auxiliary units in Moesia Superior



During the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century the fort appears to have been occupied by cohorts I Thracum Syriaca,<sup>456</sup> following the conclusion of Trajan's Dacian wars, the unit is permanently transferred to Transmarisca, in Moesia Inferior (modern Bulgaria).<sup>457</sup> Sometime in the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort was rebuilt in stone (new measurements: 142 by 112m, 1.7ha), and after AD 169, became the permanent base of operations for cohorts II Aurelia Dardanorum milliaria equitata.<sup>458</sup>

**Horreum Margi (Čuprija):**<sup>459</sup> Roman fortification, measuring 350 by 400m, situated on the right bank of the Margus River, along the main Naissus-Viminacium highway. No traces of an early fortification (pre-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) have been discovered at the site so far; however, the function of a fort at Horreum Margi by the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century (probably as a supply station during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars) is recorded in Ptolemy.<sup>460</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest the permanent or temporary deployment of any military units at this fort during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. According to the

---

(mentioned in the diploma of AD 78 (*CIL* xvi, 22) have left a substantial epigraphic record at the fort. Petrović, "Timok", esp. 44-46 and nos 23, 36-40.

<sup>456</sup> According to epigraphic evidence, this unit is stationed at Timachus Minus between 70-106 AD. During Domitian's wars on the Danube, cohorts I Montanorum (previously stationed in Pannonia Inferior, until AD 85, *CIL* xvi, 31) reappears in Timachus Minus (inscriptions no. 23 and 36 in Petrović, "Timok", which mention the commanders of both units) and probably remains there until the end of Trajan's Dacian wars (mentioned in the Upper Moesian diplomata of AD 96, 98 and 100; Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 291-2, *CIL* xvi, 42 and *CIL* xvi, 46 respectively). Given the existence of these two inscriptions, Dušanić and Vasić, "Moesian Diploma", 298 n.42, make the reasonable assumption that both units occupied the fort at Timachus Minus at the same time. The only problem is that the fort is too small and therefore incapable of holding two units at the same time. This should leave room for two possibilities: either that there is another – unlocated – fort in the vicinity or, most likely, that one of the two units must have operated from one of the forts on the Danube frontier line (perhaps the one at Čezava-Novae, where cohorts I Montanorum is epigraphically attested). For further information about this unit's movement, see Šašel, "Cohors I Montanorum", 782-786; Mirković, "Cohors I Montanorum", 220-224.

<sup>457</sup> *CIL* xvi, 46; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 52.

<sup>458</sup> Epigraphic evidence in Petrović "Timok", 34, 44-45. This unit, along with cohorts I Aurelia Dardanorum and cohorts II Aurelia Nova, were recruited after AD 169 and stationed throughout the interior of the province (Kosmaj region), along the Naissus-Ratiaria road. Dušanić, "Mounted Cohorts", 237-246.

<sup>459</sup> Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 196; Kanitz, *Studien in Serbien*, 68; Piletić, "Horreum Margi 1962", 176-178; Piletić, "Horreum Margi 1963", 89-91; Piletić, "Horreum Margi 1964", 71-72; Piletić, "Horreum Margi 1969", 9-57; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 142-144; *TIR* K 34, 63.

<sup>460</sup> *Geog.* III, 9,4.

available epigraphic evidence, a detachment from legio VII Claudia was stationed here by the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD at the earliest.<sup>461</sup>

**Stojnik:** Small castellum, situated approximately 20km Southwest of Belgrade. The site has not been the subject of any significant archaeological investigation, and no traces for an early (mid 1<sup>st</sup>-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century) phase of occupation have been discovered so far. By the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century (after AD 169/170) it was probably used as a statio for detachments of cohorts I Ulpia Pannoniorum equitata and cohorts II Aurelia Nova Sacorum milliaria.<sup>462</sup>

---

<sup>461</sup> Contra Gudea, "Obermoesischen Limes", 117, who argues in favour of a detachment from legio VII Claudia at this fort from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century onwards. All evidence related to this legion from the fort at Čuprija, in Petrović, *IMS* IV, inscriptions no. 82-88, is clearly datable to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (all inscriptions mention soldiers bearing the name Aurelii).

<sup>462</sup> Evidence cited in Dušanić, "Mounted Cohorts", 237. His argument that Stojnik was the permanent base for the latter unit after AD 170, seems to lack any significant foundation, as the fort was too small and, therefore, incapable of housing a cohort milliaria.

### III.ii EVALUATION OF THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF UPPER MOESIA

#### a. The Julio – Claudian period

Following a brief examination of the remains of the system of fortifications in the province of Moesia Superior, one thing that becomes immediately apparent is that the situation regarding the shape, purpose and aims of the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD evolution of the Roman defence system, is still far from clear (highly obscure). Without doubt, archaeology has now been able to confirm the claims of Tacitus, Florus and Festus about the constitution of the first Roman praesidia on the left bank of the Danube, and the establishment of an initial limes system (denoting the road network) across the Roman territorial possessions in Moesia by Augustus and his immediate successors;<sup>463</sup> such claims have been confirmed so far by the discovery of Julio-Claudian phases of occupation at the sites of the forts of Čezava, Saldum, Smorna, Taliatae (Veliki Gradac), Karataš, Kostol and Bonnonia (Map 8).

In relation to defence sector III (Egeta to Ratiaria), which corresponds to the entire Danube frontier line from the Arčarica river in the West to the Lom river in the East,<sup>464</sup> the “on the ground” situation with regard to the remains of fortifications in the area is still fairly ambiguous;<sup>465</sup> it would seem, however, to represent less of a problem if we take under account the significant military concentrations already deployed in the wider area around Oescus.<sup>466</sup> Given the close geographical proximity, it would be reasonable enough to assume that the defence of this sector at the time depended largely on Roman forces conducting

---

<sup>463</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.*, xii, 15; Florus, ii, 28,18; Festus, *Brev.*, viii, 8.

<sup>464</sup> After the division of Moesia in AD 86, the Lom river would constitute the boundary between Moesia Inferior and Moesia Superior.

<sup>465</sup> As only the fort at Bononia has revealed any definite traces of Julio – Claudian occupation.

<sup>466</sup> During the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the Oescus region would be the seat of one legion (the V Macedonica) and at least four auxiliary units, the majority of which were cavalry ones (Alae Pansiana, Capitoniana, Augustae Scubulorum and Bosporanorum). See the relevant section on Moesia Inferior.

patrols from Oescus and covering the area west of the Lom (Almus) river.<sup>467</sup> In this sense, troops from Oescus with the addition of cohorts I Cisipadensium, stationed at Bononia at the time, would be capable, not only of providing some basic form of frontier perimeter control, but also of ensuring the rapid deployment of Roman forces anywhere along the Arčarica and Lom river valleys in case of emergency, i.e. in case of a transborder incursion or a native revolt.

With regard to defence sector II (Čezava to Egeta), which corresponds to the Danube frontier line formally referred to as the Iron Gates (Đerdap) Gorge, there is now conclusive evidence to prove that this particular sector was the recipient of a significant degree of military activity during the Julio-Claudian period;<sup>468</sup> without doubt, the Romans realised the strategic advantages of this sector as a link between their territorial possessions along the Danube. However, there is still one issue that needs to be addressed. That is, whether the initial erection of these forts and the frontier road linking them, constitutes a conscious and deliberate attempt at providing the first elements of an effective system of perimeter control of the Đerdap limes sector. Alternatively, whether the construction of this string of fortifications could be seen in the context of a wider tactical and strategic scheme, aimed at laying down the foundations for the emergence of a system of frontier defence, or, in other words, of a defensive barrier.

In the light of the existing evidence, and with reference to Rome's overall strategic and tactical disposition in the area (see map 8-11), neither theory seems to hold much credibility. For one thing, the spacing of the forts themselves is at best irregular, therefore ruling out any notions pertaining to the establishment of a system of frontier defence. Accordingly, the overall pattern of Rome's defensive

---

<sup>467</sup> Until the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the territory between Oescus and Ratiaria was assigned to the administrative district of the *Praefectura civitatum Moesiae et Triballiae* (Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 55) and placed under the supervision of an officer from legio V Macedonica: *CIL* v,1838=*ILS* 1349 [P(rimi) P(ilis) leg(ionis) V Macedonicae praefectus civitatum Moesiae et Triballiae]. Furthermore, on the basis of the road building inscription of AD 33/34, there is every reason to assume that troops from legio V Macedonica would extend their zone of operations northwards of Ratiaria to include the territory up to the Timok river valley.

<sup>468</sup> With the construction of at least six to seven new auxiliary forts (Čezava, Saldum, Smorna, Taliatae -both sites- Karataš and Kostol) and the strategic frontier road – supply route – linking them. For the latest report on the Iron Gate frontier road, see Jordović, "Roman Road", 257-258.

disposition in this particular region appears to make even less sense considering the complete absence of any form of Roman military investment during this period on either side of the Iron Gorge frontier sector (the territories to the immediate west of Čezava and the east of Karataš). Given that Rome's nearest military concentrations or standing armies at the time are based near the Drava river in the west,<sup>469</sup> the Oescus region in the east<sup>470</sup> and in the province of Dalmatia in the southwest,<sup>471</sup> it becomes fairly evident that the existence of a separate defensive barrier in the Đerdap region, standing alone and with no present supporting infrastructure within its adjacent territories, would represent a nightmare in terms of logistics and tactical supply. Last, but not least, there is also the question of manpower that needs to be considered, as any system of frontier defence, designed to keep invaders at bay, would naturally require a permanent standing garrison to protect it. In the case of the forts in the Đerdap frontier sector, the evidence so far can only suggest the temporary deployment of one or two auxiliary units and two legionary detachments sometime in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>472</sup> which would hardly constitute an adequate standing garrison by itself.

In this sense it would probably be safer to view this particular strategic arrangement as, simply put, a frontier road (*limes*) guarded by fortified posts along its course, intended to demarcate the actual imperial boundary line, to keep a watchful eye to the immediate hinterland of the frontier zone, and primarily, to ensure the protection and security of Rome's main line of communication and supply via the Iron Gates frontier line. Finally, as far as the question of adequate perimeter surveillance is concerned, the building inscription from the Iron Gates frontier road clearly demonstrates that both Moesian legions could easily extend their zones of operations in order to include the Đerdap territory.

Moving on to frontier sector I (Singidunum to Golubac), the area between the Sava and Pincus rivers, what becomes immediately apparent is the complete

---

<sup>469</sup> With reference to the legionary forces stationed at Siscia, in Pannonia.

<sup>470</sup> The legion V Macedonica along with its auxiliary detail, stationed at Oescus from Augustus onwards. See the relevant discussion under Oescus.

<sup>471</sup> At Burnum, seat of legio XI Claudia between AD 9 to 70. Wilkes, "Fortresses", 115.

absence of any traces of Julio-Claudian activity.<sup>473</sup> This is quite remarkable considering that, from an early date, this region was firmly incorporated into the territories assigned to the province of Moesia.<sup>474</sup> Yet there appears to be no evidence for any form of military activity or involvement in this particular frontier sector at least until the advent of the Flavian dynasty.<sup>475</sup>

Perhaps the situation would have been far less obscure, if the arguments put forward by Benea, about the deployment of legio IV Skythica at Viminacium in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, were indeed accurate.<sup>476</sup> Unfortunately, there is no evidence for a pre-Flavian fortification or garrison at the site of Viminacium. The same, more or less, applies to the theory of Mirković that, after AD 45, legio VIII Augusta was stationed at Singidunum;<sup>477</sup> the evidence she offers is far from conclusive,<sup>478</sup> and there is now sufficient evidence to confirm Novae (in Moesia Inferior) as the legion's permanent base of operations between AD 45-69.<sup>479</sup>

It is, however, quite probable that one reason for this absence of military activity in the Sava river valley during the early and mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, was the

---

<sup>472</sup> From legio IV Skythica and V Macedonica, in charge of the construction of the frontier road running along the eastern section of the Iron Gates gorge (c. 33/34 AD, *CIL* iii 1698 = 13813).

<sup>473</sup> Contra Mirković, "Roman Policy", 33. To this point, I have found no evidence to support her claim that, from an early stage, the area around Singidunum was strategically linked with Rome's military concentrations in both Pannonia and Illyricum. Accordingly, her point (p. 27) on the existence of a continuous early Roman 'limes' system, stretching from Pannonia to the Black Sea, lacks any real foundation.

<sup>474</sup> Following the creation of Provincia Moesia in AD 15, Tacitus *Ann.* I.80. There is no evidence to support the claims of Mirković, "Roman Policy", 35, that the area was part of the province of Pannonia until the times of Vespasian.

<sup>475</sup> Reflecting the views of Syme, "Danube under Trajan", 88: "The whole problem of the defence of the Danubian sector from Aquincum as far as Viminacium is highly obscure". The same obscurity seems to apply in relation to the area of the South Banat, in the immediate north of the Singidunum-Viminacium frontier sector, where, again, there are no traces of Roman military activity until the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Đorđević, "South Banat", 125-133.

<sup>476</sup> Benea, *Istoria Militara*, 34.

<sup>477</sup> Mirković, "Roman Policy", 34.

<sup>478</sup> Mirković, "Roman Policy", 34 and n. 33, cites the discovery of a single brick stamp bearing the mark of this legion, which was found at the Knez Mihajlova street site (see Singidunum). This is most probably a chance find; in any case, the Knez Mihajlova site has produced no evidence for a pre-Flavian phase of occupation.

<sup>479</sup> See chapter III.iii.a.

establishment of some form of diplomatic arrangement by Rome, which either through tribute or threat of reprisals, managed to keep the local populations residing both beneath and beyond the Danube frontier line, under firm Roman control.<sup>480</sup> This is a rational approach considering that after Augustus, the local tribes residing between the Sava and Pincus rivers are never again mentioned within a hostile context.<sup>481</sup> The same seems to apply to the populations occupying the lower reaches of the Tisza river plain and South Banat region, across the Danube, which are not thought to constitute a real threat for the security of the region. In fact, it has to be noted that, at least until the accession of Vespasian, the entire area between the Sava and Pincus rivers appears to have been remarkably free of any notable hostile trans-border incursion.<sup>482</sup>

Perhaps the key to our understanding of Rome's obscure defensive layout in relation to this particular sector – and with it the entire area from the Sava river in the west to the Almus river in the east – would be to address the question of the deployment of Moesia's other legion, the IV Skythica, during the Julio-Claudian period.<sup>483</sup> With Singidunum and Viminacium out of the equation, there are four remaining possibilities: Oescus, Ratiaria, Scupi<sup>484</sup> and Naissus.<sup>485</sup> As far as Oescus is concerned, there is simply no evidence to confirm the presence of legio IV Skythica at this site at any point during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. In

---

<sup>480</sup> The main tribes residing in the Western part of the province of Moesia: Dardani, Celegeri, Triballi, Timachi, Moesi and the Scordisci. Strabo, *Geog.*, viii, 318; Pliny, *NH* iii, 149; Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 9, 1.

<sup>481</sup> In fact, the last known native revolt, by the Scordisci, is recorded in 16 BC: Dio, liv, 20,7. It is also important to note that this area does not seem to have been particularly affected by the Pannonian revolt between AD 6-9, as the Scordisci do not appear to have participated. Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 39.

<sup>482</sup> At least up to the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, most attacks seem to have been directed against the areas around Aquincum in the west and Oescus in the east.

<sup>483</sup> Legio IV Skythica becomes part of Moesia's permanent legionary garrison after AD 6. It is mentioned as one of Moesia's legions (the other being the V Macedonica) by Tacitus, *Ann.*, iv.5 (AD 23). After AD 57, it was permanently transferred to the province of Syria. For a history of this legion see Wilkes, "Fortresses", 108.

<sup>484</sup> Modern Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. On Scupi: Dragojević-Josipovska, *IMS* VI, esp. 21-40; Mirković, "Provinz Obermösien", 831-835; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116; *TIR* K34 (1976), 112.

<sup>485</sup> Modern Niš, in Serbia, the later birthplace of emperor Constantine. On Naissus in antiquity: Petrović, "Naissus", 55-83; Petrović, *Niš*, 165-178; Mócsy, *Gesellschaft*, 90-100; *TIR* K34 (1976), 89.

addition, it would be quite hard to conceive the idea of the simultaneous deployment of two legions at the same fort, while leaving an entire frontier sector completely unmanned. The same scepticism should apply to Ratiaria, where despite some earlier views about the constitution of Ratiaria as a legionary base for either V Macedonica or IV Skythica in the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>486</sup> there is no evidence for any Roman military presence at the site before the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Finally, Naissus, which significantly was only elevated to the status of municipium in the Severan period, has produced no evidence for a Roman legionary presence prior to the late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries.<sup>487</sup> Thus this would leave Scupi, which would later acquire significant importance as the seat of operations for Domitian during his wars on the Danube between AD 86-89,<sup>488</sup> as a far more probable candidate,<sup>489</sup> already a prosperous Roman colony by the times of Vespasian,<sup>490</sup> Scupi is the only site between the two that has so far produced evidence for a pre-Flavian legionary presence.<sup>491</sup>

If this reconstruction is indeed true, then the actual deployment of legio IV Skythica at Scupi would seem to conform with the general pattern of Roman tactical and strategic disposition during the Julio-Claudian era, which basically called for the distribution of legions at key points within the interior of the provinces, rather than the frontier line itself. In relation to the Lower Danube area, this pattern is clearly reflected within the deployment of the entire region's

---

<sup>486</sup> Patch, *Kampf*, 149 (V Macedonica) and Ritterling, "Legio", 1558-1559 (IV Skythica).

<sup>487</sup> Petrović, *IMS* IV, 29-30, 50.

<sup>488</sup> Dušanić, "Scupi", 41-51.

<sup>489</sup> Dragojević-Josipovska, *IMS* VI, 24. She is right to contradict the views of Mócsy (*Pannonia*, 43) that Scupi remained as the legionary base of IV Skythica until the first years of the Flavian dynasty, as this legion was permanently transferred to Syria after AD 57. On the other hand, there seems to be no foundation to her claims (page 24 and n. 6) that the IV Skythica was only stationed at Scupi until AD 22/23 at the latest, before what she describes as the legion's ultimate departure for the Danube frontier line. There is simply no evidence for a suitable legionary fort on the Danube during this period of time.

<sup>490</sup> Birley, "Scupi", 209-216.

<sup>491</sup> My theory is based on epigraphic evidence found at Scupi and mentioning legio IV Macedonica and I Italica: *TIR* K34, 112; Dragojević-Josipovska, *IMS* VI, 24 (nos. 36-37). It is important to note that the IV Macedonica was one of the legions disbanded by Vespasian in AD 69. Accordingly, the I Italica is transferred to Novae in Moesia Inferior in the same year. Its stay at Scupi was obviously temporary, en route to Novae via the

legionary forces: the three legions stationed in the interior of the province of Pannonia and the two legions stationed in Dalmatia.<sup>492</sup> The only exception comes in the case of legio V Macedonica, though its deployment on the actual frontier line should be explained by the fact that the wider Oescus region was the subject of a series of Geto-Dacian raids in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>493</sup>

In this sense, the deployment of IV Skythica at Scupi – a key point within the interior of the province – could provide a valuable insight as to the overall purpose and function of Rome's defensive layout in Moesia during the Julio-Claudian period, as this particular tactical disposition would seem to fulfil three main strategic directives: the final consolidation of all Roman territorial possessions in the area, the protection of the main routes of communication and supply,<sup>494</sup> and lastly, the final pacification of the interior of the province itself by the stamping out of the last vestiges of any local resistance.

#### **b. The Flavian Period**

Roman military investment and activity on the Upper Moesian limes sector would reach a significant height with the advent of the Flavian dynasty. There can be little doubt that Rome's decision to fortify the entire frontier line between the Sava and Almus rivers should be seen as a direct response to the increasing threat posed by Dacian and Sarmatian aggression across the imperial boundary. Ancient sources vividly record the wide scale Dacian attacks against Moesian territory of the late 60's and mid 80's AD while the Dacians' obvious intentions to destroy Rome's emerging military infrastructure on the Danube frontier line is amply demonstrated by the clear traces of destruction datable to this period, which were discovered at the forts at Čezava, Smorna, Tekija and Diana-Karataš.

---

Egnatia. Wilkes, "Fortresses", 109 and 116, mentions Scupi as a possible base for VII Claudia under Claudius and Nero. There is no evidence to connect the two.

<sup>492</sup> The same pattern is also evident in other areas of the empire in the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, such as Spain (initial deployment of three legions despite the fact that Spain did not constitute a frontier province per se) and Africa Proconsularis (legio III Augusta stationed at Ammaedara in the interior of the province).

<sup>493</sup> Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, i, 8, 11-20; iv, 9, 75-80; iv, 16, 15-16; Strabo, *Geog.*, vii, 3.13, who describes how the Getae would frequently cross the Danube during this period.

Rome's response to this intensified Transdanubian hostile activity, seems to hold few surprises: following the same patterns of strategic planning and tactical disposition with other frontier sectors in continental Europe, it would centre around the creation of a perimeter zone of defence along the Danube river course, with the forward movement of all available Roman forces and the erection of a string of legionary and auxiliary fortifications onto the actual frontier line itself.<sup>495</sup> By the end of the Flavian dynasty, the Upper Moesian limes sector would acquire all the characteristic elements of a standard frontier defence system (map 9), i.e., a single horizontally aligned line of defence dominated by the two main legionary fortresses at Singidunum and Viminacium, some nineteen auxiliary castra positioned across the entire region between the Sava and Almus river valleys, and regularly punctuated by a number of smaller fortified posts and watchtowers. The main elements of the Upper Moesian defensive line up were linked in their totality by a complex system of road networks, already in place and final form by the turn of the century.<sup>496</sup>

In light of the available evidence, defence sector I (Singidunum to Golubac) was without doubt the main recipient of Roman military investment during the Flavian period. The complete re-organisation of the region's defences should be considered as a key prerequisite in Rome's desire to improve the preclusive calibre of the Upper Moesian defence system, given that this particular frontier sector not only constituted an important strategic link for Roman forces stationed in both Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Inferior,<sup>497</sup> but also acted as the chief countermeasure and primary defensive shield against the often restless and

---

<sup>494</sup> Especially the main natural route running through the Morava Valley, from Scupi and Naissus through to Ratiaria.

<sup>495</sup> Following the transfer of legio IV Flavia to the Danube frontier around AD 86, the only recorded unit to have remained in the interior of the province was the cohors I Thracum Syriaca at Timachus Minus.

<sup>496</sup> There are two inscriptions, dating from AD 92 and 93, that refer to the final construction of the road through the Iron Gates gorge. Mirković, "Roman Policy", 36 and n. 45. Repairs on this road were carried out under Trajan. During the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, direct communication routes were also established through the Sava and Pincus river valleys, linking the two legionary forts at Singidunum and Viminacium with the forts in Pannonia Inferior and those situated in the Oescus region in the east.

<sup>497</sup> The organisation of this sector's defensive arrangement would at last rectify the obvious strategic and tactical deficiencies encountered in the Upper Moesian defence system of the Julio-Claudian period.

aggressive Dacians or the Sarmatian tribes which resided in the lower plains of the Tisza river valley. To this extent the defensive system laid down for sector I appears to have been particularly well suited to meet Rome's specific strategic objectives in the region, obviously revealing that a great amount of thinking and planning went into both the conception and execution of this particular frontier defence sector. This becomes clearly evident if we take under consideration the location and disposition of Rome's fortifications along the Danube frontier line, and the actual composition of the units that were deployed to garrison it. First, extra care was taken in the exact positioning of the two legionary forts: both fortresses, at Singidunum and Viminacium, occupied commanding positions on the mouths of the Sava and Mlava rivers respectively, whose valleys represented excellent natural landing and invasion points for barbarian attacks across the Danube. In this sense, the placement of combat-hardened, well trained and disciplined infantry units against the fearsome but ill organised enemy forces was a well judged decision, taking into account the obvious tactical advantages and superiority that a Roman infantry unit in close formation had over an enemy that depended solely on loosely conducted hit and run cavalry raids. Accordingly, equal care was given to the disposition of this sector's auxiliary detail; comprised largely of part-mounted units<sup>498</sup> and operating from bases located at regular intervals between the two main legionary forts, the sector's auxiliary forces were ideally suited not only for performing basic surveillance of the frontier perimeter zone (especially in the even-ground plains of the Sava and Mlava river valleys) but also for launching and conducting punitive expeditions across the Danube and into the territory of the lower Tisza river valley, when deemed necessary. There is now sufficient evidence to verify that such forward ventures of Roman cavalry forces into barbarian territory were, in fact, rather frequent during the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>499</sup>

---

<sup>498</sup> Interestingly enough, out of the four auxiliary units recorded in this sector between the late 1<sup>st</sup> and mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, three were cavalry units: the I Pannoniorum equitata at Ritopek, the II Hispanorum equitata at Lederata, and the I Flavia Hispanorum milliaria equitata at Cuppae.

<sup>499</sup> Referring to military finds discovered at the site of Tranlederata across the Danube frontier, as well as in the wider area of the South Banat region in Đorđević, "South Banat", 125-133. The Flavian cross-frontier bridgehead at Pojejena de Sus (Dacia Superior) must have been erected for this purpose. These expeditions reach a significant

Equally sufficient attention was given to the re-structuring of the Roman defences in sector II (Čezava to Egeta), which had actually bore the main brunt of the Dacian attacks of the mid to late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The main strategic and tactical revisions would involve the completion of the principal communication route through the Iron Gates Gorge (which effectively linked the legionary forces of Moesia Superior to those of Moesia Inferior at Novae) but also the construction of additional fortifications aimed at blocking the main entrance points into the province of Moesia. For this reason, most fortifications in the area were actually erected at or near the confluence points of the Danube with its smaller tributaries, which represented natural access routes for barbarian cross border raids;<sup>500</sup> a wise strategic response, especially in the face of the aggression often displayed by the emerging Dacian kingdom of Decebalus.

With regard to tactical disposition in the Iron Gates defence system, the Romans, rather ingeniously, opted in favour of the mixed composition (both cavalry and infantry) in the sector's auxiliary garrison (table II). The advantages offered by this particular tactical arrangement are obvious: the deployment of cavalry units at key points along the system's defensive line, such as the V Gallorum equitata and the VI Thracum quingenaria equitata stationed at the forts of Tekija and Diana respectively, provided an optimal solution for the adequate patrolling of the actual frontier boundary, as well as the protection of the Iron Gates gorge line of communication. At the same time, the utilization of a combination of auxiliary and legionary infantry units in the fortifications blocking the main invasion routes into Moesia provided a significant improvement in the system's overall containment capability, especially against small scale barbarian infiltration (table II).

In my view, one thing that has not been stressed so far, is that, with the re-organisation of the Đerdap frontier defences, the Romans completed a sophisticated strategic move that resulted in the creation of a military infrastructure designed not only to ward off barbarian attacks against imperial

---

height in the eve of Trajan's first offensive against Dacia, obviously aiming at gathering intelligence as to the Dacian's and Sarmatian's combat readiness.

<sup>500</sup> The examples of the forts at Čezava, Zidinac, Saldum, Ravna, Donji Milanovac and Hajdučka Vodenica are quite typical.

territory but also to serve as a supply base for future offensive ventures across the Danube. In fact, despite the system's obvious defensive nature, its overall offensive capabilities should not be underestimated, as the system's ability to sustain prolonged offensives deep into enemy territory would be amply demonstrated during the course of both Domitian's and Trajan's expeditions against the kingdom of Dacia. Especially in the case of Trajan's first Dacian war, the frontier fortifications between Diana and Pontes<sup>501</sup> were used both as a base of logistic supply as well as a gathering point for the participating Roman forces. In addition, most units stationed at the time along the Đerdap frontier sector are known to have been involved in Trajan's initial offensive, as for example the cohorts V Gallorum equitata, I Raetorum, I Antiochensium, I Cisipadensium, I Lusitanorum and VI Thracum.

As for defence sector III (Egeta to Ratiaria), there were no notable revisions in the overall tactical arrangement during the Flavian period, most probably due to the fact that the region appears to have been largely unaffected by cross-border attacks. Despite the erection of two new ancillary fortifications at Prahovo and Dorticum, the fort at Bononia, home of the cohorts I Cisipadensium, remained the pivotal point of the region's defence system, responsible for the supervision of the stretch of land between the Timacus and Almus rivers.

Last but not least, special mention should be made to the organisation, under the Flavians, of the Roman fleet in Upper Moesia, the western arm of the *Classis Flavia Moesica*. It is first attested in Upper Moesian waters in AD 92,<sup>502</sup> following the construction, during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, of a number of naval ports and stations along the existing Roman fortifications on the Danube frontier line, such as the ones at Novae, Hajdučka Vodenica, Taliatae, Diana (after AD 101) and Ratiaria. Without doubt, the presence of Roman ships patrolling the western reach of the Danube, provided the entire Upper Moesian defence system with a much needed first rate surveillance and early warning capability.

---

<sup>501</sup> The fort at Costol-Pontes is where the foundation blocks of Apollodorus bridge have been discovered.

<sup>502</sup> *CIL* xvi 37, in Petrović, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 207.

### c. The Antonine Period

Following the conclusion of Trajan's Dacian wars, the creation of the province of Dacia in AD 106 would bring about a significant change in the overall purpose and defensive structure of the Upper Moesian frontier sector. The change itself would not involve any sharp modification of Rome's standing defensive arrangement nor would it involve any major alterations as to her tactical disposition in the province;<sup>503</sup> in fact, most of the work carried out on the Upper Moesian defences, during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, seems to have been limited to either the rectification or the enlargement of Rome's existing fortifications on the Danube frontier. It would, however, comprise of a notable revision in the strategic imperatives and objectives laid down for all three main defence sectors, especially those of I and II.

Without doubt, the sector most affected by the creation of Dacia was the one corresponding to the Iron Gates (Đerdap) limes section (Sector II), as the region would no longer constitute the actual frontier line. In this sense, it is hardly surprising to see a number of fortifications, such as those at Livadice (both sites), Smorna and Ravna being gradually abandoned during the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. However, not all fortifications in the Đerdap territory were abandoned during this time; on the contrary, the rest of the standing fortifications, including the larger auxiliary forts at Tekija, Hajdučka Vodenica, Taliatae, Diana and Pontes have shown clear traces of uninterrupted occupation throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.- This, by-itself, would generate certain questions as to the role of the Đerdap defence system in the aftermath of the Dacian conquest.

Any ideas implying that the preservation of the Iron Gate's military infrastructure should be seen as part of a wider effort to create a second, reserve line of defence, would seem, in my view, to hold little credibility. Having in mind Rome's traditional conservative approach to matters of frontier defence planning, such notions of "in-depth", reserve systems of defence do not seem to figure highly in her tactical and strategic agenda, at least during this particular period and

---

<sup>503</sup> Rome's total army strength in Moesia Superior would remain stable throughout the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, numbering some sixteen to seventeen thousand men (two legions, two alae and ten cohorts). Gudea, "Exercitus Moesiae Superioris", 231-238; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 42; Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 155; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 244, 260-262.

as far as her Danube river frontier is concerned. It would therefore seem that, following the creation of Dacia, the forces stationed in the Iron Gates territory were assigned with two distinct objectives: the regulation of traffic across the Danubian border, that is, the movement of people from Dacia into Moesia and thus the rest of the Roman empire, and, most importantly, the protection and safeguarding of the main lines of communication and supply through the Iron Gates gorge which linked the Singidunum-Viminacium and Novae-Durostorum frontier defence sectors respectively.

With the relegation of the Iron Gates defence system to an ancillary role, the main strategic emphasis switched to defence sector I, which in joint collaboration with the Roman forces stationed along the Danubian borders of Pannonia Inferior and those operating along the newly emerging frontier defence system in Dacia Superior (the Lederata – Berzobis axis) assumed the responsibility for the protection and control of the entire Tisza river plain.<sup>504</sup>

Concluding, one later tactical development that deserves special mention is the initial attempt, under M. Aurelius, to establish some form of permanent military presence in the interior of the Upper Moesian province, especially in the aftermath of the Marcomannic wars. This is at least implied by the raising (after AD 170) of four new auxiliary cavalry units, the cohorts II Aurelia Nova, II Aurelia Nova milliaria equitata, I Aurelia Nova Pasinatum and II Aurelia Nova Sacorum, which were subsequently deployed at key points around the Kosmaj and Timok valley mining districts, in the northeast and northwest areas of the province.<sup>505</sup> Whether this also constitutes a conscious effort to lay down the foundations for a secondary, reserve line of defence is quite debatable. Dušanić rightly notes that these newly raised equites cohortales were, in general, not shock combat units but rather second rate cavalrymen, limited to mainly supporting duties, such as scouting patrols and the escorting of slow-moving convoys.<sup>506</sup> In this sense, the presence of these auxiliary units in the interior of the province

---

<sup>504</sup> Completing a strategic move which essentially enveloped the Iazyges from three directions (South, East and West) with approximately forty thousand Roman troops.

<sup>505</sup> Dušanić, "Nord-Ouest", 104-106 and 112; Petrović, "Timok", 34-46.

<sup>506</sup> Dušanić, "Mounted Cohorts", 238, based on an argument by Davies, "Cohortes Equitatae", 751-763.

should probably be associated with the protection of the mines in the area and the escorting of the convoys transporting mineral resources to Rome through the Drina river valley and the Adriatic sea.

### III.iii FORTIFICATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF MOESIA INFERIOR

#### a. Sector I

**Salmorus:**<sup>507</sup> Large auxiliary fortification (210 by 180m = 3.78 ha), situated in the vicinity of the Sf. Georgiu village at the point Cetatea Zaporojenilor (northeast Dobrudja), which has been identified with the fort of Salmorus.<sup>508</sup> The excavators assume the existence of an early Roman earth and timber fort at the site, dating to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, superimposing earlier Hellenistic and Geto-Dacian fortified settlements; however, the existing evidence – an altar dedicated to Hercules by legionary detachments of I Italica and XI Claudia – can only attest to a post-101 date for the earliest level of Roman occupation at Salmorus.<sup>509</sup> There is no further evidence for any subsequent reconstruction phases in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, although the fort appears to have been in use well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Apart from the presence of detachments from the two aforementioned legions, there is enough evidence to confirm the existence of a permanent legionary detachment from legio V Macedonica at Salmorus at least until AD 167, when this legion was transferred to Potaissa in Dacia Superior. It has been suggested that Salmorus might have also served as a base for the Classis Flavia Moesica during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, based on what appears to be a port facility in the east side of the fort. This hypothesis has yet to be verified by epigraphic evidence, judging in particular from the absence of any material belonging to the Roman fleet at Salmorus.

---

<sup>507</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 82; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 155 and figs 21-22; Suceveanu and Zahariade, "Dobrudja", 109-120; Suceveanu, Zahariade et al, "Independenta", 97-106; Zahariade, "New Epigraphical Finds", 259-266.

<sup>508</sup> Mentioned in *Itin.Ant.* 226; *Scutum Durae Europae* 14 (as Olymyria).

<sup>509</sup> When legio XI Claudia was transferred to Moesia Inferior. Zahariade, "Halmyris", 312-314.

**Salsovia:**<sup>510</sup> The fort at Salsovia is situated to the immediate southwest of Salmorus, and approximately 2 km west of the modern town of Mahmudia. A fort of fairly average dimensions (120 by 150m = 1.8 ha), Salsovia is attested in literary sources.<sup>511</sup> Concerning the initial occupation phase of this fort, a possible late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date can be postulated according to monetary finds and, most importantly, to the discovery of a fragment of a military diploma datable to AD 97.<sup>512</sup>

Based on the above military diploma which mentions a cohors III Gallorum, it has been argued that this unit occupied the fort of Salsovia in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>513</sup> Though its deployment at Salsovia during the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century is plausible, it becomes problematic if we consider that the cohors III Gallorum was stationed in Dacia Inferior during Hadrian's reign and thereafter.<sup>514</sup>

**Aegyssus:**<sup>515</sup> The remains of a late fort at Aegyssus are situated in the immediate northeast of the modern town of Tulcea, and occupy the site of an earlier Thracian-Odryssan fortified settlement.<sup>516</sup> Although Aegyssus is attested in 2<sup>nd</sup> century sources,<sup>517</sup> no traces of fortifications datable to this century have been discovered at the site; however, its existence as a base for the Roman fleet in Moesia Inferior throughout 2<sup>nd</sup> century, is ascertained by the discovery of a

---

<sup>510</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 82; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 160 and fig. 33; Pârvan, *Salsovia*; I. Barnea, "Salsovia", 515.

<sup>511</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 226,3; *Tab.Peut.* vii, 4.

<sup>512</sup> Pârvan, *Salsovia*, 41-43.

<sup>513</sup> Suceveanu, "Anexare", 116; Pârvan, *Salsovia*, 44; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 141.

<sup>514</sup> This unit is recorded in Moesia Inferior between AD 78 and 114 (*CIL*, xvi, 58). By Hadrian's reign it was transferred to Dacia Inferior (Pons Aluti). During the late Flavian period it is believed to have operated from Sexaginta Prista. For this unit, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 33; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 8-9; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 28; Russu, "Auxilia", 71; Spaul, *Cohors<sup>2</sup>*, 161.

<sup>515</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 81; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 145-146 and fig. 2; I. Barnea, "Aegisus", 18; Sarnowski, "Provincialflotte", 261-266; Poulter, "Town and Country", 79 and n. 23; Barnea and Ştefan, "Limes Skythicus", 23.

<sup>516</sup> As mentioned by Ovid, *Ex.Ponto*, I,8,13; iv 7,21,53.

<sup>517</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* lii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 226,2.

significant number of brick stamps bearing the mark of the Classis Flavia Moesica.<sup>518</sup>

**Noviodunum:**<sup>519</sup> The remains of the fort at Noviodunum are situated nearby the modern village of Isacceia. Excavations carried out on the site have not yet revealed the traces of the early Roman fortifications; however, the function of an early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site has been ascertained by both literary<sup>520</sup> and epigraphic sources: in addition to monetary finds (including coins of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian), brick stamps bearing the title of legio V Macedonica – stationed in the northern part of Dobrudja between c. 106-167 – have been discovered within and in the vicinity of this fort.<sup>521</sup>

Noviodunum's primary function during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, was that of a base for the Roman fleet in Moesia; this is verified by the abundance of brick stamps belonging to the Classis Flavia Moesica which have been discovered at the site. Accordingly, given the discovery of two inscriptions, mentioning a *praefectus* and a *trierarchus* of the Moesian fleet respectively, it is quite probable that Noviodunum was the actual headquarters of the Rome's naval forces in the area during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>522</sup>

---

<sup>518</sup> Condurachi, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 83-88; Aricescu, *ARD*, 31-34. Brick stamps from cohorts II Flavia Brittonum were also found at the site in Opaït, "Cohors II Flavia Brittonum", 297-298. This unit must have operated in the area during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars.

<sup>519</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 81; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 158-160 and figs 22-32; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 22; Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 23; I.Barnea, Mitrea and Angelescu, "Noviodunum 1957", 155-174; I.Barnea and Mitrea, "Noviodunum 1959", 461-473; I.Barnea, "Noviodunum 1977", 103-121, esp.103-108; I.Barnea and A.Barnea, "Noviodunum 1984", 97-105; A.Barnea, "Municipium Noviodunum", 81-83.

<sup>520</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,2; *Itin.Ant.*, 226,1; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,4.

<sup>521</sup> Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 47, 50; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 90.

<sup>522</sup> Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 24 (including bibliography and the inscriptional evidence); Condurachi, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 87; Aricescu, *ARD*, 31-34.

**Dinogetia:**<sup>523</sup> The fort at Dinogetia occupies the site of the Bisericuta island within the Danubian delta. There are no visible traces of an early Roman fortification, as the remains at the site date from the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards. However, Dinogetia is attested in the works of 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary sources<sup>524</sup> and the existence of an early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort is further confirmed by brick stamps belonging to detachments from legio V Macedonica and from cohorts II Mattiacorum equitata, which were stationed in this area in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>525</sup> Furthermore, judging from epigraphic evidence, it is quite certain that, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Dinogetia served as an additional station for the Roman fleet in Moesia.<sup>526</sup>

**Barboși:**<sup>527</sup> The remains of a large fort (150 by 250m = 5.25 ha) have been discovered in the vicinity of the modern town of Galați, occupying an advanced position near the confluence of the river Siret with the Danube. The fort of Barboși is not mentioned in ancient sources. According to a building inscription set up by a detachment of legio V Macedonica, a stone fort was constructed at Barboși in the late years of Trajan's reign, which could assume the existence of an earlier earth and timber fort dating back somewhere between the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and Trajan's Dacian wars. A subsequent reconstruction took place around 145, when the fort was enlarged in order to house the cohorts II Mattiacorum equitata.<sup>528</sup>

---

<sup>523</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 80; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 151 and figs 11-14; Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 24; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 22; I.Barnea, "Dinogetia 1976", 235-236; A.Barnea, "Dinogetia III", 339-346; A.Barnea, "Forteresse", 447-450; A.Barnea, "Cronica", 435; G.Ștefan, "Dinogetia", 317-330; G.Ștefan, Comșa and Mitrea, "Santierul arheologic", 583-598.

<sup>524</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 8,2; 10,1; *Itin.Ant.*, 225, 5.

<sup>525</sup> Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 47, 50; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 90, 92; Aricescu, *ARD*, 12-13. For cohorts II Mattiacorum see Sexaginta Prista and Barboși.

<sup>526</sup> Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 11 and note 23; Condurachi, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 87; Aricescu, *ARD*, 31-34.

<sup>527</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 80; Gudea, "Bericht", 494; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 21; Gostar, "Sedreni-Barboși", 505-511, esp. 508; Sani, "Barboși", 79-82; Sani and Dragomir, "Barboși-Galați", 135-162.

<sup>528</sup> Building inscriptions (*ISM* v.308 and *CIL* iii 7620) cited in Gostar, "Unitatile militare", 107-113.

The importance of Barboși in relation to Roman strategic deployment in north Dobrudja is evident by an examination of its garrison. During the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, detachments from both legio V Macedonica and cohorts II Mattiacorum equitata are present at the fort, with the latter becoming its permanent garrison after AD 145; during the same period, Barboși also appears to have been the base for a permanent detachment of the Moesian fleet.<sup>529</sup>

**Aliobrix:**<sup>530</sup> The fort of Aliobrix is situated near the modern town of Orlovka, in Ukraine. Very little information is available for this particular fort, as the site has been completely obliterated by modern constructions. Ptolemy refers to an early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort,<sup>531</sup> when Aliobrix appears to have been the base for a detachment of legio V Macedonica, and after AD 167, for a detachment of legio I Italica.<sup>532</sup>

Other possible late 1<sup>st</sup> -early 2<sup>nd</sup> fortifications:<sup>533</sup>

**Vallis Domitiana:**<sup>534</sup> The actual location of this fort is unknown. The existence of a 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort is recorded in literary sources,<sup>535</sup> while the name Domitiana could infer to a late 1<sup>st</sup> century initial erection date. There is no further information as to how long it remained in use.

---

<sup>529</sup> Gostar, "Unitatile militare", 107-109; Doroșiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257; Doroșiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 47, 50; Doroșiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 90,92; Aricescu, *ARD*, 11, 28; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 45; Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 11 and n. 22; Condurachi, "Classis Flavia Moesica", 87; Aricescu, *ARD*, 31-34.

<sup>530</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 81; Gostar, "Aliobrix", 987-995.

<sup>531</sup> *Geog.* iii,10,7.

<sup>532</sup> Doroșiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257; Doroșiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 47; Doroșiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 90, 93.

<sup>533</sup> This part refers to Roman fortifications for which there is some, however limited, literary or epigraphic evidence. At this point, concerning the remains of Roman forts at the points of Luncavița and Dunavatu de Jos (ancient Ad Stoma), I find it quite difficult to agree with the views of Zahariade and Gudea (*Fortifications*, 81, no. 49 and 83, no.56) for the existence of early (2<sup>nd</sup> century) forts at these sites solely on the basis of their plan and the fact that they occupy strategic positions.

<sup>534</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 85; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 205; Aricescu, *ARD*, 111, map 2 (pg. 222).

<sup>535</sup> *Itin. Ant.*, 226,5.

**Ad Salices:**<sup>536</sup> A fort under this name is mentioned once in a late 2<sup>nd</sup> century itinerary;<sup>537</sup> its actual location is unknown.

**Argamum:**<sup>538</sup> The fort at Argamum is recorded in Laberius Maximus' *Horotherisia* 1.3-4,<sup>539</sup> which suggests a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century date for the initial occupation phase for this site. The remains of the fort are situated on the point Capul Dolojman, near the town of Jurilovca. There is no archaeological or literary evidence as to any subsequent phases of occupation at this fort, or to its garrison.

## b. Sector II

**Arrubium:**<sup>540</sup> The fort of Arrubium is situated near the village of Măcin, occupying a commanding position on an elevated bank of the Danube. This fort is mentioned in a late 2<sup>nd</sup> century itinerary,<sup>541</sup> however, as in the case of the majority of Lower Moesian forts, no traces of the early Roman fortress have been discovered so far. A late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century date for its initial occupation phase can be assumed by the fact that Arrubium was, from an early date, the base of operations for the ala I Vespasiana Dardanorum;<sup>542</sup> this date has been further confirmed by a number of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century inscriptions found at the site.

---

<sup>536</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 85; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 205; Aricescu, *ARD*, 112, 222 and-map-2.

<sup>537</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 227,1.

<sup>538</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 85; I. Barnea, "Argamum", 43.

<sup>539</sup> In Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 85. Laberius Maximus was the governor of Lower Moesia during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars.

<sup>540</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 80; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 146 and fig. 3; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 15, 21; Zahariade, Museteanu and Chiriac, "Discoperiri Epigraphice", 255-261.

<sup>541</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 225,4, stating that Arrubium was about 9000 Roman feet = 13.5 km away from the legionary fort of Troesmis.

<sup>542</sup> *CIL* iii 7512; *TIR* L35 24; Aricescu, *ARD*, 21, 37; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 33-34; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8, 11. The ala I Vespasiana Dardanorum is attested in the Lower Moesian diplomata of 99-124 AD (*CIL* xvi, 45, 50, 58, 78). Given that, apart from Arrubium, this unit is not epigraphically attested in any other Lower Moesian fort, my hypothesis is based on the fact that the fort of Arrubium must have been the base for this particular unit since the time of its arrival in Lower Moesia.

Accordingly, the function of Arrubium in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD can be further verified by brick stamps from legio V Macedonica.<sup>543</sup>

Apart from ala I Vespasiana Dardanorum and a detachment from legio V Macedonica, there is no further information about any additional units that might have been based at this fort during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; there is therefore no evidence to support Gajewska's argument for the presence of ala II Hispanorum et Aravacorum at Arrubium.<sup>544</sup>

**Troesmis:**<sup>545</sup> Legionary fort situated in the immediate south of the village of Măcin, occupying the site of the Iglița hill on an elevated position on the right bank of the Danube. The fort is well attested in ancient literary sources.<sup>546</sup> No traces of the early Roman fort have been discovered so far, as the only remaining visible traces at Troesmis are datable to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards.

An initial earth and timber fort was erected at the site of an earlier Getic fortified settlement<sup>547</sup> probably sometime in the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, when Troesmis served as the base of ala I Pannoniorum.<sup>548</sup> A subsequent reconstruction phase occurred around AD 105 or 106, when the fort was enlarged in order to house the recently deployed legio V Macedonica.<sup>549</sup> Troesmis remained the base for this legion until AD 167, when V Macedonica was transferred to Dacia. After

---

<sup>543</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 50; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limēs", 90.

<sup>544</sup> Gajewska, *Topographie*, 147, also mentions an ala II Dardanorum in relation to Arrubium; however, as far as I know, no unit by this name was ever stationed in the province of Lower Moesia.

<sup>545</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 80; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 162 and fig.35; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 20-21; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 89; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Municipium Troesmense", 133-144; G.Ștefan, "Troesmis", 43-52; Aricescu, "Unitatile militare", 586-588; A.Ștefan, "Skuthie Mineure", 97-99; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116.

<sup>546</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10, 5; *Itin.Ant.*, 225,2; *Tab.Peut.* vii,3.

<sup>547</sup> Mentioned by Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, iv, 9, 78-79.

<sup>548</sup> Attested in Lower Moesia by AD 99 (*CIL* xvi 44). For this unit at Troesmis, see *CIL* iii 6242, *TIR* L35 73-74. It seems to have departed from Troesmis after the arrival of V Macedonica. Aricescu, *ARD*, 22; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 11, 29.

<sup>549</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257-258; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Teritoriul", 46; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythischen Limes", 90.

167, it was garrisoned by a detachment of legio I Italica, and, according to epigraphic evidence, by a detachment of the Classis Flavia Moesica.<sup>550</sup>

**Beroe:**<sup>551</sup> The remains of the fort of Beroe are situated at the south of Troesmis, near the modern settlement of Frecaței. The excavations carried out to-date have only yielded monetary and ceramic finds dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the traces of the early Roman fort have not been identified, brick stamps from cohorts II Bracaraugustanorum equitata which were discovered nearby the remains of the fort, could suggest an erection date between the reign of Hadrian and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>552</sup>

**Cius:**<sup>553</sup> The remains of a double fortification have been located near the village of Gîrlichiu, on the right bank of the Danube, which has been identified with the Roman fort of Cius.<sup>554</sup> The lack of any systematic investigation on the site means that there is not much information concerning the exact dates of its initial construction or of any subsequent occupation phases; an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century date can be presumed by the fact that it was the base for the cohorts I Lusitanorum Cyrenaica scutata equitata, which was stationed in Skythia Minor during the first half of the century.<sup>555</sup>

**Carsium:**<sup>556</sup> The fort of Carsium is situated near the coastal town of Hîrșova, on the right bank of the Danube river, and is recorded in ancient sources.<sup>557</sup>

---

<sup>550</sup> Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 11 and n. 21.

<sup>551</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 80; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 148; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 20; Petre and Apostol, "Beroe", 165-182.

<sup>552</sup> This date is based on the fact that this unit was stationed in Thrace up to AD 114 (Roxan, *RMD*, 14) and is recorded in Moesia Inferior in AD 145 (Roxan, *RMD*, 165). *TIR* L35, 26-27; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 19, Venedikov, "Diplôme", 68; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 91.

<sup>553</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 79; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 19; Aricescu, *ARD*, 43.

<sup>554</sup> *Itin. Ant.*, 224,5.

<sup>555</sup> The unit is recorded in all Lower Moesian diplomata between AD 99 (*CIL* xvi, 45) and 157 (Venedikov, "Diplôme", 67). It is well attested at the fort of Cius. See *TIR* L35, 33 (*CIL* iii 12480); Beneš, *Auxilia*, 44, Aricescu, *ARD*, 43; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 59.

<sup>556</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 79; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 151 and figs 7-8; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 19; Aricescu, *ARD*, 23; Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 9; Comșa, "Limesul Dobrogean", 767-768; Condurachi, "Skythia Minor", 162-174; Aricescu, "Hîrșova", 351-370.

According to a building inscription, the fort was rebuilt in stone by ala II Hispanorum et Aravacorum in AD 103, which, therefore, verifies the existence and function of an earlier – late 1<sup>st</sup> century – earth and timber fort at the site.<sup>558</sup> There is no information as to any subsequent reconstruction activity at the fort, at least in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Apart from the above unit, it is possible that Carsium was also a base for the Classis Flavia Moesica, though this has not yet been verified by epigraphic evidence.<sup>559</sup>

**Capidava:**<sup>560</sup> The fort, which is recorded in ancient itineraries,<sup>561</sup> is located in the immediate west of the modern town of Capidava (between Hîrșova and Cernavodă), occupying an elevated position on the right bank of the Danube. The fort was most probably built within the first two decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when Capidava served as the base for legionary detachments from both V Macedonica and XI Claudia.<sup>562</sup> Both legionary detachments are epigraphically attested at Capidava until AD 167, when the detachment of V Macedonica was replaced by a detachment from I Italica.

In addition to its legionary detail, Capidava was also the base for a certain number of auxiliary units during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Cohors I Ubiorum was stationed here during the first half of the century and was replaced by cohors I Germanorum

---

<sup>557</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 224,4; *Tab.Peut.* vii, 4.

<sup>558</sup> *ISM* v no.94, in Zahariade, Museteanu and Chiriac, “Discoperiri Epigraphice”, 259; *TIR* L35, 30. This unit was previously stationed in Pannonia Inferior (Teutoburgium). It is first attested in Moesia Inferior in AD 99 (*CIL* xvi, 44). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 10; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 47-48; Gerasimova, “Déplacement”, 9.

<sup>559</sup> See Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 15.

<sup>560</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 79; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 149 and figs 5-6; Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 37; R.Florescu and Diaconu, *Capidava*, 2-24; G.Florescu, “Piatra de hotar”, 317-321; G. Florescu, “Fouilles”, 345-351; R.Florescu and Cheluta-Georgescu, “Sapaturile”, 417-435 (mostly on the later, Byzantine settlement); R.Florescu, “Date noi”, 361-372.

<sup>561</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 224,3; *Tab.Peut.* vii.3.

<sup>562</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Doroșiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 257; Doroșiu-Boilă, “Teritoriul”, 47; Doroșiu-Boilă, “Skythischen Limes”, 89-90; Culică, “Estampilles”, 232. Legio XI Claudia was transferred to Durostorum in Lower Moesia sometime between AD 101-102.

sometime before AD 143;<sup>563</sup> accordingly, brick stamps bearing the mark of ala II Hispanorum et Aravacorum have also been discovered at the site.<sup>564</sup> There is no evidence, epigraphic or otherwise, to suggest the presence of a detachment from the Moesian fleet.<sup>565</sup>

**Axiopolis:**<sup>566</sup> The fort at Axiopolis is situated near the town of Cernavodă, on the right bank of the Danube. There is little available information on the fort, as its walls were used as building material for the construction of the modern town; however, its function by the early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century is recorded in literary sources.<sup>567</sup> Its garrison during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has not been established, though it appears to have been a base for a detachment of the Roman fleet in Moesia.<sup>568</sup> After AD 167, a detachment from legio XI Claudia was stationed at this fort.

**Sacidava:**<sup>569</sup> The fort is situated in the vicinity of the modern town of Dunareni, on the right bank of the Danube, and is mentioned once in ancient literary sources.<sup>570</sup> Extensive excavations carried out on the site have revealed traces of an early Roman fortification, which, according to the shape of the gate-towers on the east side of the fort, appears to date to the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>571</sup> More importantly however, the function of Sacidava during this period is verified

---

<sup>563</sup> The Cohors I Ubiorum is recorded in Dacia Superior (Odorheiul Secuiesc) in AD 144 (*CIL*, xvi, 90). The cohors I Germanorum appears in Moesia Inferior in AD 127. See Aricescu, "Capidava", 79-88 and n. 17; Aricescu, *ARD*, 27; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 36, 54; Gerasimova. "Déplacement", 8-9; Russu, "Auxilia", 74; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 252, 256.

<sup>564</sup> *TIR* L35, 29-30, 23 in Beneš, *Auxilia*, 10,23.

<sup>565</sup> As suggested by Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 15.

<sup>566</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 78; Gajewska, *Topographie*, 147; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 17; I. Barnea, "Date", 69-80; I. Barnea, "Axiopolis", 75-76.

<sup>567</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 8,1; *Itin.Ant.*, 224,2.

<sup>568</sup> According to Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 15 and note 42.

<sup>569</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 78; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 17; Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 51; Scorpan, "Sacidava", 301-328; Scorpan, "Sapaturile", 267-331; Scorpan, "Roman Fortress", 109-116; Scorpan, "Rezultate", 229-251; Scorpan, "Descoperiri", 155-180.

<sup>570</sup> *Tab.Peut.*, vii.3.

<sup>571</sup> According to Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 164, fig. 19.

by the discovery of brick stamps belonging to cohorts II Gallorum,<sup>572</sup> as this unit appears to have operated here during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>573</sup> Sometime during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Sacidava became the base for cohorts I Cilicum (milliaria) equitata sagittariorum,<sup>574</sup> and, according to epigraphic evidence, of a detachment of legio V Macedonica.<sup>575</sup>

**Sucidava:**<sup>576</sup> The fort of Sucidava is situated at the point of Izvoarele, on the right bank of the Danube. No traces of an early fortification have been revealed at the site, though the fort is attested in 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary sources.<sup>577</sup> According to brick stamps discovered at the site, Sucidava was the base for legionary detachments of both XI Claudia and V Macedonica, during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. There is really no evidence to confirm the presence of a mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century detachment from cohorts I Claudia Sugambrorum equitata at Sucidava.<sup>578</sup>

---

<sup>572</sup> Scorpan, *Limes Skythiae*, 51.

<sup>573</sup> This unit is attested in Moesia Inferior between AD 99-105 (*CIL* xvi, 44 and 50). By AD 107, it is recorded in M. Caesariensis (*CIL* xvi, 56) and was later transferred to Britain. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 32; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 8-9; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 135-136; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 157.

<sup>574</sup> This unit is recorded in Moesia Superior until AD 100 (*CIL* xvi, 46). It is first mentioned in Moesia Inferior in AD 134 (*CIL* xvi, 78). The evidence for its presence at Sacidava is presented in Scorpan, "Cohors I Cilicum", 98-102. See also D. Tudor, "Cohors I Cilicum", 45-75; Aricescu, *ARD*, 24; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 119-120; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 24-25; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 8; Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 26; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 397-398.

<sup>575</sup> Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 257.

<sup>576</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 77; Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 17-18; Irimia, "Izvoarele", 141-156; Radulescu and Cliante, "Tezaurul", 127-158, esp. 151-153.

<sup>577</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 224,1.

<sup>578</sup> As argued by Aricescu, *ARD*, 44. This unit is part of the army of M. Inferior between AD 99 and 157, and was later transferred to Syria (*CIL* xvi, 106). According to the available evidence it was stationed in Montana (Mihajlovgrad), in the interior of the province. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 51-52; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 185-186; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 245-246.

### c. Section III

**Durostorum:**<sup>579</sup> The remains of the legionary fort (400 by 390m = 17 ha) of Durostorum are situated near Silistra, in modern Bulgaria. The fort is mentioned in all major ancient itineraries.<sup>580</sup> An early auxiliary earth and timber fort was built at the site sometime in the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, when Durostorum was the base for cohorts II Flavia Brittonum equitata.<sup>581</sup> The fort was enlarged and rebuilt in stone in the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, following the arrival of legio XI Claudia, probably as early as AD 101.

In the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, a detachment of cohorts I Bracarum = I Bracaraugustanorum is attested at Durostorum, though the exact duration of its stay is unknown.<sup>582</sup> There is no evidence to suggest the presence of cohorts III Gallorum at Durostorum at any point during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>583</sup>

**Tegulicium:**<sup>584</sup> The remains of a small fort have been discovered near the modern town of Vetren (Bulgaria), on the left bank of the Danube, which have been identified with the ancient site of Tegulicium.<sup>585</sup> There is very little information available for this site, though its function in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has been confirmed by the discovery of brick stamps bearing the mark of a detachment of legio XI Claudia.

---

<sup>579</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 76; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229; Culică, "Caramizi", 365-377; Culică, "Estampilles", 232; Aricescu, *ARD*, 13; Culică, "Privire", 113-118; Donevski, "Durostorum - Lager", 931-939; Donevski, "Scavi", 239-242; Donevski, "Durostorum - Municipium", 277-280; Donevski, "Legio XI Claudia", 153-158; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 115.

<sup>580</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 223,4; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,2.

<sup>581</sup> *CIL* iii 7478, in *TIR* L35 40. This unit is attested in Moesia Inferior in AD 99 (*CIL* xvi, 45). It was later transferred to Sexaginta Prista. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 21, Wagner, *Dislokation*, 110-111; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 8; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 199; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229, wrongly refers to it as an ala.

<sup>582</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 19. This unit was stationed in Dacia Inferior at the time (Angustia).

<sup>583</sup> As suggested by Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229.

<sup>584</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 76; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 230; T.Ivanov, "Forschungen", 235, fig. 64.

<sup>585</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 223,3; *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 2.

**Nigriniana:**<sup>586</sup> A small fortified post, occupying the site of the modern Kadakojškoto Gradište, in Bulgaria, mentioned in later literary sources.<sup>587</sup> Its function in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD can be assumed on the basis of the discovery at the site of a Roman military diploma datable to AD 145.<sup>588</sup> Its garrison is unknown.

**Transmarisca:**<sup>589</sup> Situated near the town of Tutrakan, the fort of Transmarisca is mentioned in the texts of 2<sup>nd</sup> century itineraries.<sup>590</sup> No traces of the early Roman fortification have been identified at the site, which has been completely obliterated by modern construction; however, an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century initial phase of occupation is suggested by epigraphic material belonging to what appears to have been the fort's initial garrison, the cohorts I Thracum Syriaca equitata.<sup>591</sup> Given the discovery of a brick stamp bearing the mark of legio XI Claudia at Transmarisca, it is possible that the fort was also a base for a detachment of this legion from AD 101.

**Appiaria:**<sup>592</sup> The fort of Appiaria is situated near the town of Rjahovo, in the Ruse district of Bulgaria, and is mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> century literary sources.<sup>593</sup> The actual remains of the fort are no longer visible, having been completely covered by the Danube. Monetary and pottery finds, unearthed during the course of rescue excavations at the site, suggest the existence of an early fort at Appiaria, a

---

<sup>586</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 75; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 228; Velkov, "Géographie Antique", 24-29; Velkov, "Geschichte", 221; R.Ivanov, "Limes", 170.

<sup>587</sup> Mentioned as Nigrinianis or Candidiana. *Itin.Ant.*, 223,3; *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 2.

<sup>588</sup> Torbatov, "Military Diploma", 159-167.

<sup>589</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 75; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 230; Zmeev, "Transmarisca", 45-54; Vlădescu, "Limesului Dunarean", 53-54; Dimitrova-Milčeva, "Limessystem", 869-870.

<sup>590</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 223,1.

<sup>591</sup> This unit was previously stationed in Moesia Superior (Ravna or Timachus Minus). It is attested in Lower Moesia in AD 125, though it appears to have been sent here after the Dacian wars. Wagner, *Dislokation*, 191-192; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 53; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 366. Gerov (*Land Ownership*, 25), has suggested an early Vespasianic date for the initial occupation phase for this fort, citing an inscription in *AE* (1939), 101; however, there is no mention of the Flavians in the text of this inscription, as the inscription itself actually dates to Trajan's reign.

<sup>592</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 75; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229.

<sup>593</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10, 4; *Itin.Ant.*, 222,5.

suggestion which is further confirmed by the presence of ala I Gallorum Atectorigiana at this fort in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>594</sup>

**Tegra:**<sup>595</sup> A small fortification situated near Marten, in the Ruse district of Bulgaria. The lack of any systematic excavation at the site means that very little information is available for this fort. Its function in the mid-late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD can be assumed on the basis of literary sources and by brick stamps belonging to a detachment from legio I Italica.<sup>596</sup>

**Sexaginta Prista:**<sup>597</sup> Situated at the mouth of the river Lom, near Ruse in Bulgaria, Sexaginta Prista is one of the earliest known forts on the Danubian frontier sector of Lower Moesia. Although the traces of the early Roman fort have not been identified yet, the fort is mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> century itineraries.<sup>598</sup> According to epigraphic evidence, an auxiliary fort was probably constructed at Sexaginta Prista during the Flavian period, to serve as the base for cohorts II Mattiacorum equitata.<sup>599</sup> After the departure of cohorts II Mattiacorum for Barboși (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century), the fort was garrisoned by cohorts II Flavia Brittonum equitata and a detachment from legio I Italica.<sup>600</sup>

---

<sup>594</sup> *CIL* iii 12 452 in *TIR* L35, 23; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 12-13; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 3, 15. The unit is attested in Lower Moesia after AD 157 according to the Brestovene diploma (Venedikov, "Diplôme", 66). Poulter, "Lower Moesian Limes", 519, and Gerov, *Land Ownership*, 25, have both argued that *Appiariā* was already garrisoned by the Flavian period. Poulter provides no further evidence for his claim. Gerov cites an inscription, in Besevliev, "Epigrafski prinosi", no. 122; however, so far, I have been unable to locate his source.

<sup>595</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 75; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229.

<sup>596</sup> *Itin. Ant.*, 222,4; Velkov, "Epigraphical Contribution", 8-10.

<sup>597</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 74; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229; Dimova, "Sexaginta Prista", 11-16; Velkov, "Sexaginta Prista", 831; Stančev, "Sexaginta Prista", 231-238; Poulter, "Lower Moesian Limes", 520.

<sup>598</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin. Ant.*, 222,3.

<sup>599</sup> In Moesia as early as AD 78 (*CIL*, xvi, 22), this unit is recorded in all Lower Moesian diplomata between AD 99 and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century. Around AD 145, it was transferred to Barboși, and later to Thrace. For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 45-46; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 243-244.

<sup>600</sup> Evidence cited in Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 74; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 21; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 110-111. For cohorts II Flavia Brittonum equitata, see Durostorum.

Although the name itself (Sexaginta or Sexanta Prista = 60 ships), suggests the existence of a naval base at this fort, so far, no evidence has been found to support this hypothesis.

**Trimammium:**<sup>601</sup> A small fort situated near Pirgovo, in the Tărnovo district of Bulgaria. The existence of an early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort is attested in literary sources,<sup>602</sup> though traces of it have not been discovered at the site so far. Its garrison is unknown.<sup>603</sup>

**Novae:**<sup>604</sup> The remains of the large (c. 17.5 ha) legionary fortress of Novae, which is mentioned in ancient sources,<sup>605</sup> are situated in the immediate west of modern Svištov, in the Tărnovo district of Bulgaria.

One of the earliest known forts in Moesia, the first level of occupation at Novae occurred in the early years of Claudius' reign, when an earth and timber fort was erected to serve as the base of legio VIII Augusta, between AD 45-69.<sup>606</sup> In 69, legio VIII Augusta was replaced by legio I Italica, which subsequently became the fort's permanent garrison. According to an investigation conducted on the north and south gates of the fort (the *porta principalis sinistra* and *dextra* respectively), a reconstruction appears to have taken place at some point during the early 2<sup>nd</sup>

---

<sup>601</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 74; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 228.

<sup>602</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 222,2.

<sup>603</sup> Contrary to the opinion of Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 74, who have argued for the presence of a legionary detachment at this fort, based on an inscription mentioning a *discens mensorem* of legio I Italica, which was found in a nearby necropolis. The inscription itself does not prove that the fort was under the control of a legionary garrison.

<sup>604</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 73; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229; Aricescu, *ARD*, 9-11; Gerov, *Land Ownership*, 25; Čičikova, "Campagnes 1960-1968", 226-234; Čičikova, "Fortification", 277-282; Čičikova, "Forschungen", 55-66; Gudea, "Bericht", 493-494; Čičikova, "Fouilles", 11-18; Gerov, "Rechtsstellung", 113-119; Parnički-Pudelko, "Portes", 9-21; Dimitrova-Milčeva, "Problem", 271-276; Sarnowski, "Fortress", 409-426; Sarnowski, "Ziegelstempel", 17-61; Sarnowski, "Headquarters Building", 303-307; Sarnowski and Trynkowski, "Legio I Italica", 536-541; Donevski, "Aspects", 201-203; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116.

<sup>605</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10,5; *Itin.Ant.*, 221,4; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,1.

<sup>606</sup> The arrival of VIII Augusta at Novae in AD 45 is attested by an inscription mentioning a *tribunus militis* of this legion. *CIL* xi, 6163, in Sarnowski, "Römische Heer", 62. There is no evidence to support Gerov's argument (Gerov, "Rechtsstellung", 114) for an earlier – Augustan or Tiberian – fort at Novae.

century AD, when the fort was rebuilt in stone.<sup>607</sup> There is no further evidence concerning any subsequent reconstructions during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Apart from legio I Italica, which remained as Novae's permanent garrison until the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the fort appears to have witnessed a significant concentration of legionary forces during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars; in addition to a detachment of legion XI Claudia,<sup>608</sup> Novae also appears to have been the base for legio I Minervia at the time.<sup>609</sup>

**Dimum:**<sup>610</sup> A fort situated near Belene in the Pleven district of Bulgaria, Dimum is attested in ancient sources.<sup>611</sup> The existence and function of a late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site is verified by the attestation of Dimum in L. Maximus' *Horrothesia* of AD 100,<sup>612</sup> and by the fact that at some point in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort became the base for ala Solensium.<sup>613</sup> There is no further evidence concerning any possible reconstructions at Dimum during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

**Utum:**<sup>614</sup> The fort of Utum occupies the site of Gulianci in the Pleven district of Bulgaria. The fort is recorded in ancient sources,<sup>615</sup> but due to the lack of any systematic excavations on the site, it has not yet been possible to establish any definite dates for the initial erection or any subsequent reconstructions of this fort. However, an initial occupation phase sometime during the Flavian period seems

---

<sup>607</sup> Sarnowski, ("Fortress", 411, fig.30), based on an investigation of the shape of the early stone gates at Novae, which is typical of other early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Roman fortifications elsewhere in the empire. The discovery of a Trajanic coin at the south gate does not, as Sarnowski has suggested, demonstrate a Trajanic date for the construction of the stone fort at Novae.

<sup>608</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 9, 11.

<sup>609</sup> Sarnowski, "Truppengeschichte", 107-122.

<sup>610</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 73; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226; Mitrova-Džonova, "Dimum", 48-52; R.Ivanov, "Limes", 163, fig.6.

<sup>611</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 10,10; *Itin.Ant.*, 221, 3.

<sup>612</sup> L.Maximus *Horrothesia*, 71-72, in Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 73.

<sup>613</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 13; Gerov, "Städte", 307-308.

<sup>614</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72.

<sup>615</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 221,1; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,1.

highly probable, given the presence of ala I Hispanorum milliaria at Utum in the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>616</sup>

**Securisca:**<sup>617</sup> The fort of Securisca, which is recorded in later sources,<sup>618</sup> is situated near the town of Čerkovica, in the Pleven district of Bulgaria. Very little is known about this fort; accordingly, no further information about it is forthcoming, as the site has been completely destroyed by modern construction. However, the discovery, during the course of earlier rescue excavations, of epigraphic material belonging to ala Bosporanorum – one of the earliest known Roman units in Moesia – should suggest an early 1<sup>st</sup> century initial occupation phase for the fort of Securisca.<sup>619</sup>

**Oescus:**<sup>620</sup> The remains of the legionary fort at Oescus are situated in the immediate north-west of the city of Gigen, in the Pleven district of Bulgaria. The fort, which is well attested in literary sources,<sup>621</sup> occupies a commanding position on the left bank of the Iskâr river, about 5km south of the Danube.

Oescus is probably the earliest known Roman fortification in the Danubian frontier sector of Moesia. An early earthwork fort was erected on the site during the first decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, prior to the deployment of legio V Macedonica at Oescus by AD 15.<sup>622</sup> It has been suggested that, during the reign

---

<sup>616</sup> My argument is based on the fact that ala I Hispanorum milliaria is present at this sector of the Danube limes between AD 86 and 101. After AD 101, the unit is epigraphically attested for a short while at Montana (Mihajlovgrad) in the interior of the province (*CIL* iii 12378, in Beneš, *Auxilia*, 10), before departing for Dacia Inferior (Slăveni) during Hadrian's reign. See also Wagner, *Dislokation*, 44.

<sup>617</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226.

<sup>618</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 221,2; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,1.

<sup>619</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 6; Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 163-165; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 18-19; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 6, 8.

<sup>620</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 227; Gerov, "Oescus", 146-158; Gerov, "Nouvelles données", 1-20; Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 149-152; T.Ivanov, "Untersuchungen", 339-350; T.Ivanov, "Oescus", 40-48; T.Ivanov, "Citta di Ulpius Oescus", 159-170; R.Ivanov, "Limes", 164-165, fig.4; Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116.

<sup>621</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10, 5; *Itin.Ant.*, 220,5; *Tab.Peut.*, vii,1.

<sup>622</sup> This date is based on the conclusive – in my opinion – evidence provided by Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 150-152 (inscriptions of officers of V Macedonica which are datable to Augustus' reign).

of Tiberius, Oescus was also the base for the other Moesian legion, the IV Skythica, a claim which has yet to be verified by archaeological research.<sup>623</sup> However, it is possible, given the discovery of an inscription in the vicinity of the legionary fort, that legio XX was temporarily stationed at Oescus prior to the arrival of V Macedonica.<sup>624</sup>

Between AD 62 and 71, when legio V Macedonica was engaged in operations in the eastern provinces of the empire,<sup>625</sup> Oescus served as the base for ala Pansiana.<sup>626</sup> Following the return of V Macedonica in AD 71, the fort was rebuilt in stone and its territory was substantially enlarged, to an area of approximately 18 ha. During the course of Trajan's Dacian wars, Oescus served as the base for two legionary detachments of legio XI Claudia and legio I Italica, according to epigraphic material which was discovered at the site.<sup>627</sup> Finally, the fort of Oescus was abandoned during Trajan's reign, after the transfer of legio V Macedonica to Troesmis in AD 106; prior to its final abandonment and at least for a short while, it appears to have been a temporary base of operations for ala I Flavia Gaetulorum.<sup>628</sup>

**Augustae:**<sup>629</sup> The fort of Augustae is situated near Hurleč in the Vraca district of Bulgaria and, along with Oescus, is one of the earliest known Roman fortifications in this particular sector. Surprisingly, the fort is only attested once

---

<sup>623</sup> The suggestion belongs to Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 152, and there is absolutely no evidence to support it. This legion was probably stationed at Scupi at the time. See the relevant discussion in Chapter (Moesia Superior).

<sup>624</sup> *ILS* 2270 in Poulter, "Lower Moesian Limes", note 5. Legio XX was one of the legions destroyed in the Varian "disaster" of AD 9. Its presence in Moesia at the time should be associated with the punitive expeditions conducted by Aelius Catus and Lentulus in the region between AD 1 and 10.

<sup>625</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.*, iv.6.

<sup>626</sup> This unit appears to have been stationed at Oescus, together with legio V Macedonica, since the early years of Claudius' reign. See Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 155, 165; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 317; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12.

<sup>627</sup> R.Ivanov, "Tuiles", 43-44.

<sup>628</sup> In Moesia Inferior under Trajan (*CIL* xvi 45 and 48). It is recorded in Pannonia Inferior by AD 114, (Roxan, *RMD*, 87). For its presence at Oescus, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8; Aricescu, *ARD*, 21; Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 35; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 9.

in literary sources,<sup>630</sup> though it appears to have functioned between the 1st and 4th centuries AD.

There is not much available information in relation to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century occupation phases of the Augustae fort; however, the function and existence of an early 1<sup>st</sup> century AD fortification at the site, is ascertained by the presence of ala Augusta, one of the earliest recorded Roman units in Moesia,<sup>631</sup> and ala Capitoniana at Augustae during the early Julio-Claudian period.<sup>632</sup>

**Variana:**<sup>633</sup> The fort is situated at the point of Selanovci in the Vraca district of Bulgaria. An early 1<sup>st</sup> century initial phase of occupation has been confirmed by epigraphic material belonging to a detachment of ala Capitoniana.<sup>634</sup>

#### Other Possible 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century Fortifications

**Iatrus:**<sup>635</sup> The fort is situated on the left bank of the Jantra river, near Krivina in the Ruse district of Bulgaria. The fort is not recorded in any early literary sources. Excavations conducted on the site have unearthed the foundations of a medium-sized stone fort, the remains of which are datable to the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD at the earliest. As no traces of earlier occupation phases have been identified yet, the function of a 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort can only be suggested by the discovery at the site of epigraphic material (including brick stamps, tiles and inscriptions) belonging to a detachment of legio I Italica. There is no evidence to confirm the

---

<sup>629</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 71; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 227; Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 152-153; R.Ivanov, "Limes", 162-163, fig.3.

<sup>630</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 220,2.

<sup>631</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 6.

<sup>632</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8, 16; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 323. Both units are attested in Moesia before the accession of Claudius, according to epigraphic evidence: *AE* (1912), no. 187; Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 153, fig. 3 (inscription in). The ala Capitoniana is also known as ala I Gallorum Capitoniana and ala I Claudia Gallorum Capitoniana.

<sup>633</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 71; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 229.

<sup>634</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8.

<sup>635</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 73; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 227; T.Ivanov, "Festungsmauer", 23-41; T.Ivanov, "Ausgrabungen", 152-161; T.Ivanov, "Yatrus". 184-199; T.Ivanov, "Donau-Limes", 67; Wachtel, "Iatrus", 134-141.

existence of a fort or the presence of a garrison at Iatrus during the Flavian period.<sup>636</sup>

**Asamum:**<sup>637</sup> Also known as Asemus, this fort is situated beside Musevljevo in the Pleven district of Bulgaria, near the confluence of the Danube with the Osâm river. The fort is no longer visible, as its area is completely covered by the Danube river. According to Pliny, a fort must have functioned at this site in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>638</sup>

**Valeriana:**<sup>639</sup> A fortification situated near Dolni Vadin in the Vraca district of Bulgaria. The fort has not been the subject of any archaeological research as it is completely covered by the Danube. According to literary sources, a fort must have functioned at this site in the mid or late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>640</sup>

**Cebrium:**<sup>641</sup> A Roman fort occupying the site of Gorni Cibar, in the Mihajlovgrad district of Bulgaria. According to literary sources, a fort must have functioned at this site in the early or mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>642</sup>

---

<sup>636</sup> As suggested by Gerov, *Land Ownership*, 25.

<sup>637</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 228.

<sup>638</sup> Pliny, *NH* iii, 26,149.

<sup>639</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 72; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 226.

<sup>640</sup> *Itin.Ant.*, 220,4.

<sup>641</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 71; Biernacka-Lubańska, *Fortifications*, 227.

<sup>642</sup> Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 8,2; *Itin.Ant.*, 220,1.

### III.iv EVALUATION OF THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF LOWER MOESIA

#### a. The Julio-Claudian Period

The main focus of Roman military investment and activity in Moesia inferior during Julio-Claudian period seems, from an early date, to have centred around the rather substantial military concentrations deployed in the wider vicinity of the Oescus river.<sup>643</sup> This, at least becomes evident by the Julio-Claudian phases of occupation discovered at the forts of Securisca, Oescus, Augustae, Variana and probably Asamum which, from the first decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD onwards, became the permanent seats of operations for legio V Macedonica, and alae Bosporanorum, Pansiana, Augusta and Capitoniana.<sup>644</sup>

The actual motive behind the concentration of Roman military forces around Oescus should not, in any way, be confused with the gradual emergence of an early system of frontier defence in the region. Despite the almost universal conviction that exists among scholars that these fortifications were, from the outset, specifically intended to function as part of a defensive system against the Dacian threat,<sup>645</sup> this particular tactical arrangement does not have the makings of a proper defence system at all. The spacing of the forts is highly irregular and, as in the case of the Upper Moesian frontier sectors during this period, there is no present military infrastructure at either side of the Oescus region. Furthermore, as to the question of its function as a defensive shield against the Dacians, there are two further important points that need to be considered: First, that following the establishment of a permanent Roman military presence in the Oescus region, the Dacians tend to divert the main direction of their attacks towards the (largely

---

<sup>643</sup> It is important to note that the Oescus river constituted the eastern frontier of Moesia, after its organisation as a province around AD 15.

<sup>644</sup> Legio V Macedonica was deployed to Oescus at around AD 10. It is possible that the ala Pansiana also used the same fort as its permanent base of operations during this period. Ala Bosporanorum was based at Securisca, while detachments from the remaining two auxiliary units operated in the area between the forts at Augusta and Variana.

<sup>645</sup> Leading advocates include Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 33; Gerov, "Epigraphische Beiträge", 147-148; B.Rankov, "History of Montana", 40.

unprotected) area of Skythia Minor (Dobrudja),<sup>646</sup> a fact that the Romans themselves must have been aware of; second, that after the successive defeats of the Dacians at the hands of Lentulus, Aelius Catus and Pomponius Flaccus in the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>647</sup> the Dacians seem to remain fairly quiet at least up to the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>648</sup>

In this sense it would probably be best to regard these military concentrations as an essentially mobile army of occupation, its function oriented towards the control and final pacification of the territories lying in the interior of the province. The construction of these early fortifications and the deployment of Roman garrisons at this point, should then be seen in the context of Rome's effort to control and supervise the local populations residing in the Roman territories between the Oescus and Lom rivers, especially after the two consecutive transplantation of 100.000 Geto-Dacian populations within imperial territory during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>649</sup>

One further argument against any claims pertaining to the establishment of an early Roman defence system around Oescus during this period, is the question whether these early fortifications actually represent the final line of Roman advance in this particular region. In my view, it is highly questionable whether the Romans actually regarded the Danube river as their final, definite frontier line in the area. On the contrary, judging by the overall conduct of Roman foreign policy in the wider area of modern Oltenia and Wallachia during the course of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD – predominantly manifested by successive offensive expeditions into Dacian territory – it seems that the Romans never really abandoned their designs on the Geto-Dacian territories lying across the Danube. Therefore, the chief Roman strategic objective at the time does not lie with the creation of any form of an early defence system in the area but rather with Roman intentions to retain the

---

<sup>646</sup> Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, I, 8, 11-20; iv, 9, 75-80; iv, 16, 15-16, where the Geto-Dacians managed to occupy the Roman strongholds at Aegyssus and Troesmis.

<sup>647</sup> Vulpe, *DID* 2, 25; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6.

<sup>648</sup> The establishment of "peaceful" conditions in the region is confirmed by the Roman decision to allow the transplantation of Geto-Dacian populations within imperial territory during the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. See below.

<sup>649</sup> Under Aelius Catus and T. Plautius Silvanus respectively. Strabo, *Geog.*, vii, 3, 10; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 37, 41; Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 259-260.

offensive initiative by keeping the enemy constantly engaged in combat, in full accordance with the trend established by the armies of the Republican era. It would thus be reasonable to conclude that the main purpose behind the concentration of Roman military forces in the Oescus region, was to act primarily as a spearhead and supply base designed to facilitate and sustain future offensive operations across the Danube, especially given the suitability of the terrain. If anything, the composition of the region's auxiliary detail is quite revealing to this extent; made up entirely of cavalry units, it would be quite hard to believe that these forces were only employed for mere patrolling and defensive duties, given their unquestionable value as a vanguard for quick offensive action across the Danube.

Moreover, I find it hardly a coincidence that the construction of new fortifications and the influx of new units and reinforcements in the eastern part of the Moesian province tend to correspond with Roman preparations for major offensive ventures into barbarian territory. The forces deployed in the Oescus region were in the forefront of the campaigns launched by Lentulus and Aelius Catus against the Dacians in the wider area of Southern Wallachia and Skythia minor during the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>650</sup> It is important to note that apart from the legio V Macedonica, an additional legion, the XX, was temporarily deployed at Oescus for this exact reason; accordingly, note the deployment of legio VIII Augusta at Novae in AD 45,<sup>651</sup> and the influx of additional auxiliary cavalry forces in the area after AD 44.<sup>652</sup> This tactical move should again not be interpreted in any way as an effort to consolidate the Roman defences on the Danube, as, with the exception of Novae, the inflow of new units does not coincide with the erection of any new fortifications on the actual frontier line.<sup>653</sup> On the contrary, and having in mind the actual composition of these auxiliary

---

<sup>650</sup> Dio, li 22; liv 36; lv 30; Pippidi, *Contributii* 289; Vulpe, *DID* 2, 25; Aricescu, *ARD*, 6. See the introduction to chapter III.

<sup>651</sup> Which probably meant that, by that time, the province of Moesia extended its territory up to the river Jantra in the east.

<sup>652</sup> Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 32-33.

<sup>653</sup> For this exact reason, I find it quite hard to agree with the arguments made by Zahariade and Gudea (*Fortifications*, pp. 25 and 33) that these forces were specifically deployed to boost the Roman defensive capacity in the frontier territories between the Oescus and Jantra rivers.

reinforcements,<sup>654</sup> it is rather clear that these additional Roman forces were specifically deployed in order to participate in Plautius Aelianus' punitive expeditions across Oltenia and Wallachia.

To summarise, Rome's tactical and strategic disposition in the eastern part of Moesia during the Julio-Claudian period seems to follow closely the guidelines set during the old Republican era, still dictated by the drive for further territorial conquests. Without doubt, the supervision and patrolling of Rome's existing territorial possessions along the Danube were still an integral part of the system's daily strategic agenda. As previously shown, the Roman forces stationed at Oescus at the time did in fact extend their zones of operations to cover the entire frontier area up to the river Čezava in the west. However, the inescapable conclusion is that Rome's tactical concentrations around Oescus still have the fundamental characteristics of an army on the move: a mobile army of occupation switched firmly on the attack, a system fully optimised for offensive operations and assaults deep into barbarian territory. It is rather clear that the terms "defensive" and "preclusive" would not enter the system's function or capacity, at least until the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

## **b. The Flavian Period**

From the outset, there seems to be one dominant and recurring factor in relation to Roman military investment and activity in the Lower Moesian frontier region during the Flavian period: the orientation of Rome's tactical disposition and the configuration of her defences and fortifications on the Danube frontier line tends to be constantly modified in accordance with the changing nature of geopolitical factors, especially with the incorporation of new territories into the Moesian province.

This is essentially the pattern established after the incorporation of the kingdom of Thrace under Vespasian and the formal annexation of the territories of

---

<sup>654</sup> Once again made up predominantly of cavalry forces, including the *alae Gallorum et Thracum Antiana* and *Moesica felix Torquata* and the *cohors I Aquitanorum veterana* and *III Augusta Cyrenaica sagittariorum equitata*. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 91-93; Aricescu, *ARD*, 35-37.

Skythia Minor and the Black Sea coast into the province of Moesia after AD 86. Vespasian, without doubt, realised the obvious strategic problems and tactical deficiencies associated with having too many separate military commands, especially in what can only be described as a frequently threatened theatre of war.<sup>655</sup>

The formal incorporation of these territories into the province of Moesia would then be followed by the construction of new fortifications and the establishment of a permanent Roman military presence on the right bank of the Danube. There can be little doubt that the main reason behind the tactical and strategic re-shuffling of Rome's military assets in the Dobrudja frontier sector should be examined in the context of the overall failings of the previous defensive structure in the region, where garrisons from the former "client" kingdom of Thrace were responsible for the protection of the entire Danube river bank from the Jantra river in the west to the Black Sea coast. The system had proved to be utterly unreliable; Strabo commends on the ease with which the Dacians would cross the Danube at that point,<sup>656</sup> while the successive Dacian inroads into the territory of Skythia Minor in AD 69, 82 and 85 could only serve to further highlight the fact that Roman resistance to transborder attacks was quite minimal.

This is the main reason why the Romans find themselves increasingly replacing the existing Odryssan garrisons in Skythia Minor with their own military forces. The redeployment of all forces from the interior of the province onto the actual frontier line is a clear sign that the Romans had achieved the pre-existing goal of pacifying the interior of the provinces. Their main strategic concern was now the powerful kingdom of Dacia across the border. To this end, the Romans directed their efforts at boosting the preclusive capacity and capability of their frontier defences; they would proceed with the complete reorganisation of the region's defences, with the erection of no less than eleven new fortifications –

---

<sup>655</sup> Up to the accession of Vespasian, there are no less than four separate commands responsible for the administration of a relatively small stretch of land: The *Ripa Danuvii*, responsible for the territories between the Oescus and Jantra rivers; the *Ripa Thraciae*, responsible for the territories of Skythia Minor and the former kingdom of Thrace; the *Praefectura orae maritimae* for the former city-states of the Black Sea coast and finally the *Praefectura civitatum Moesiae et Trebeliae*, for the territories east of Ratiaria.

<sup>656</sup> Strabo, *Geog.*, vii 3.13.

mainly on the Dobrudja frontier sector – and the substantial increase in the region's standing auxiliary detail.<sup>657</sup>

The establishment of this new tactical and strategic arrangement was carried out with two prime objectives in mind. First, without doubt, it aimed at the final consolidation of all territorial possessions in the region and the final, clear demarcation of the actual frontier line. Second, and most importantly, as a direct response to Dacian aggression, it aimed at the provision of the first elements of an adequate system of frontier perimeter control which, in turn, was designed and executed with the intent of intimidating the enemy by deploying Roman forces against them.

The main question here is whether these major tactical and strategic revisions also represent a change in the overall nature and character of the Lower Moesian defence system; in other words, whether the Flavian period signals a sharp switch to the defensive with regard to the strategic function of the Lower Moesian system of fortifications and military concentrations. After all, the overall conduct of Roman frontier policy during the Flavian period tends to point to that direction, as the emergence of full blown "limes" systems was a typical product of the Flavian era, at least in relation to other frontier provinces in continental Europe, as clearly shown in the cases of Pannonia Inferior and Moesia Superior. However, it is highly questionable whether this switch also occurs in the case of Lower Moesia, as there are no real indications that the province's forces were destined to assume a purely defensive role at that time. In fact, Rome's overall tactical and strategic disposition in the area tends to suggest otherwise; in this case, the main strategic impetus does not seem to lie with the plugging of holes in the region's frontier defence line but rather with the amassment of armies specifically intended for future offensive operations; there is no other way to explain why certain areas in the northern part of Skythia Minor remained largely undefended until the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. This can be directly assumed after a closer examination of the province's legionary and auxiliary disposition. Despite the

---

<sup>657</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 91-93, Gerasimova, "Dislocation", 32-33; Vučković and Todorović, "Diplôme militaire", 21-28. Units include the *alae* I Flavia Augusta Britannica equitata?, I Vespasiana Dardanorum and I Hispanorum milliaria and the cohorts I Cilicum milliaria, III and VII Gallorum and I Claudia Sugambrorum.

inclusion of the territory of Skythia Minor up to the Danube delta during the Flavian period, the legionary forces of Lower Moesia still remained deployed in the Oescus-Novae region following the exact same pattern of deployment of the Julio-Claudian period (with the V Macedonica at Oescus and the I Italica at Novae). This represents a marked difference with the other provinces on the Danube, such as Pannonia and Moesia Superior: in both provinces, the general tendency in relation to Flavian tactical disposition was the re-deployment of all legionary forces at key entrance points along the main expected areas of attack, no doubt in an effort to enhance the defensive capability of the frontier defence systems. This is not the case in Lower Moesia: despite the fact that the area of Skythia Minor remained without doubt the main target for transborder attacks during this period, no legion would be deployed in the region until the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Furthermore, in relation to the province's auxiliary disposition, there are two significant factors which should be taken under consideration. First, that the majority of the province's cavalry forces were once again stationed along the Oescus-Jantra frontier sector, which, as in the Julio-Claudian period, represented the main invasion point for Roman offensives across the Danube; second, that the two major inflows of both legionary<sup>658</sup> and auxiliary forces<sup>659</sup> into Lower Moesia tend again to coincide with the two major offensives carried out by Domitian and Trajan against Dacia.<sup>660</sup>

Therefore, on the basis of these arguments and judging by the overall pattern of disposition and orientation in the Lower Moesian system of

---

<sup>658</sup> Including legio XI Claudia, stationed at Durostorum and brought to Lower Moesia sometime between AD 101 to 103, and legio I Minervia, transferred to Novae (L. Moesia) from Lower Germany in AD 101. Sarnowski, "Truppengeschichte", 107-122; Strobel, *Dakerkriegen*, 83-87; Strobel, "Truppengeschichte", 505-511; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 106, 110-111.

<sup>659</sup> Twelve auxiliary units are attested for the first time in Lower Moesia (military diplomata of AD 98 to 105: *CIL* xvi 44, 45, 50, 58). The alae II Hispanorum et Aravacorum, I Claudia Gallorum and the cohorts I Bracaugustanorum, I Hispana Veterana, II Mattiacorum, II Gallorum, I Ubiorum, I Lepidiana, I Tyrriorum, I Lusitanorum Cyrenaica, II Chalcidenorum and I Germanicorum. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 91-94, Aricescu, *ARD*, 38-40; Aricescu, "Auxilia Limitis Skythici", 117-122; Gerasimova, "Déplacement", 5-11.

fortifications and military concentrations during the Flavian period, it would be reasonable to conclude that this system was specifically designed and implemented to fulfil two distinct strategic objectives. In relation to sector III, the military concentrations along the Oescus and Jantra rivers retained their explicit offensive character, as the entire system's primary purpose was to sustain the ability to launch wide-scale offensives deep into enemy territory, as long as the Dacians and Sarmatians constituted a threat. On the other hand, the frontier defences situated along sector II, were charged with a distinct defensive mission, that is the protection of the region of Skythia Minor against any Dacian diversion across the Danube.

There is, in fact, one event that lends support to this argument and with it, to the rationale behind the Flavian tactical and strategic arrangement in Lower Moesia in general. In AD 101, during the course of Trajan's first Dacian war, at the time when Roman forces from sector III were engaged in the decisive offensive across the Olt river (in modern Oltenia), the Roman frontier defences in sector II were successful in repelling a wide scale Dacian diversion across the territory of Skythia minor.<sup>661</sup>

### **c. The Antonine period**

It seems that the one apparent determining factor behind the overall shaping of Roman frontier policy in the province of Lower Moesia during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, was without doubt the ever-changing nature in the course of Daco-Roman relations. As long as the Dacian kingdom existed and constituted a threat, Lower Moesia provided the military infrastructure for future wars of conquests. With Dacia gone, and with the constitution of its territories as a province after 106, the main emphasis would thereafter focus on a series of major revisions in both the tactical and strategic disposition of the Lower Moesian system of fortifications.

---

<sup>660</sup> In both cases, two separate offensive diversions across Wallachia and Oltenia were launched from the Oescus-Novae defence axis.

With reference to the available archaeological evidence, the establishment of a proper frontier defence system and the assumption of a purely defensive and preclusive role for the forces stationed along the frontier line in Lower Moesia, was clearly a product of the Antonine period.

The massive fortifying of the entire frontier line of Lower Moesia under the Antonine emperors, was, in this case, not so much a direct response to cross border threat, but rather part of a deliberate attempt to constitute the Lower Moesian limes system as a secondary, ancillary defence line in support of the emerging system of fortifications along the borders of Dacia Inferior. This was a tactical revision dictated by wider strategic considerations, especially in light of Dacia's constitution as the main stalwart of defence in the entire Lower Danubian region. For this reason, there was a significant outflow of auxiliary units from Lower Moesia into Dacia Inferior during the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>662</sup> Nevertheless, despite the drastic reduction in Lower Moesia's total military strength, the permanent presence of three legions, five alae and eleven cohorts (c.22.000 men) was still quite adequate for the firm supervision of what was basically a small stretch of frontier land.<sup>663</sup>

The rationale and overall concept behind the establishment of a frontier defence system in Lower Moesia seems once again to hold few surprises as it is practically identical to that dominant in Roman frontier defence systems elsewhere in the empire. Judging by the final shape it would acquire by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (map T6), it basically consisted of a single, perimeter line of defence, dominated by a string of legionary and auxiliary fortifications located at regular

---

<sup>661</sup> Jordanes, *Getica* 18.101; Decebalus' diversion into the territory of Lower Moesia, including the course that his forces followed and a narrative of the main battles fought is discussed in Vulpe, *DID* 2, 85-92; Vulpe, "Dio Cassius", 234-265, especially 239-241.

<sup>662</sup> Such as the alae Asturum and I Claudia Gallorum and the cohorts II Flavia Commagenorum, II Flavia Bessorum, I Bracaugustanorum, I Hispana Veterana, II Gallorum, I Ubiorum and the I Tyrriorum Sagittariorum. (*CIL* xvi 75 of 123 A.D., units that formed the first Roman garrison of Dacia Inferior). Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 195-216.

<sup>663</sup> Following the arrival of ala I Gallorum et Pannoniorum and the cohorts I Bracarum, I Chalcidenorum and I Cilicum (which returned to Lower Moesia after a tour of duty in the eastern provinces of the empire) between 123-138 A.D. (military diploma of AD 134 and 137: *CIL* xvi 78, 83), the auxiliary strength of the province would still consist of a fairly

intervals along the Danube frontier line and finally inter-connected by a dense network of frontier roads. The whole system was further complemented by the widespread use of naval forces conducting patrols along the Danube.<sup>664</sup>

The main emphasis of Roman military activity and investment was directed at boosting the defensive capabilities of the system in general and of defence sectors I and II in particular. Following the rebuilding of the existing fortifications in stone, after which they would acquire the same permanent character with the other fortifications in the Lower Danube region (following a trend of the Antonine period), new forts were erected across the borders of Skythia Minor, no doubt in order to bolster the integrity and solidity of the Lower Moesian defence system.

The actual location and disposition of these new fortifications followed a rational approach which was once again rapidly modified in order to adapt to the morphology of the terrain, by using the advantage of natural obstacles, such as rivers, rugged terrain or densely forested areas. In this case, geography determined the actual configuration, structure and disposition of the entire defensive system. The province's three legionary fortresses, at Novae, Durostorum and Troesmis, were erected along the inner deviation of the Danube river course and across the main expected barbarian landing points. Additional fortifications, garrisoned by auxiliary infantry units or legionary detachments, were erected at the confluence points of the region's main tributaries with the Danube in order to block the main invasion points.<sup>665</sup> Accordingly, auxiliary fortifications containing cavalry units were situated opposite the main river valleys that represented ideal forward access routes for quick retaliatory reprisals across the frontier, i.e. near the Ialomița, Siret or Argeș river valleys.<sup>666</sup>

On the basis of this particular tactical and strategic disposition, there are three important conclusions that can be drawn in relation to the Antonine system

---

adequate total of approximately eight thousand men. (5 *alae* and 11 cohorts). Aricescu, *ARD*, 44-45; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 99-104; Torbatov, "Military Diploma", 159-167.

<sup>664</sup> The *Classis Flavia Moesica*, had its headquarters at Noviodunum. Additional naval bases were established at Aegyssus, Dinogetia, Barboși, Aliobrix and Trosemis.

<sup>665</sup> Such as the forts at Salmorus, Salsovia, Aegyssus, Noviodunum, Aliobrix, Cius, Capidava, Axiopolis, Sacidava and Sucidava. The same pattern of disposition is seen in the case of the region's legionary fortresses at Durostorum and Troesmis.

<sup>666</sup> Such as the fortifications at Dinogetia, Barboși, Arrubium and Carsium.

of frontier defence in the province of Lower Moesia: First, that the final execution and consolidation of this defence system was the product of a carefully planned and rational approach, which aimed at providing the province with an adequate system of frontier control. Second, that the Romans possessed a satisfactory command of the area's geography and distinct topographical realities, a knowledge which they applied to the system's gradual establishment and which enabled them to use the form of the terrain to suit the system's preclusive attributes. Third, and most importantly, the actual configuration of this defensive arrangement signals a sharp change in the orientation and direction of the entire defence system, as it shifts towards the north and northwest areas of the province which, by that time, had become the most likely expected area of cross-border attacks. Therefore, following the constitution of Dacia as a Roman province, which inevitably resulted to the forced movement of the Sarmatian populations into the area of South Moldavia, its main purpose would now centre around the strict supervision of the Skythian and Sarmatian populations residing in the territories between the Danube and the Dniester river. It is therefore in the context of this new strategic objective that legio V Macedonica would be permanently transferred from Oescus to Troesmis after AD 106.

To conclude, whereas the actual shape and final structure of the frontier defence system in Lower Moesia can hardly be described as a novelty, there are nonetheless two rather unique features evident within this system, at least in comparison to the other frontier sectors in the Lower Danube area.

The first has to do with the legionary presence. Although the deployment of legionary detachments along different fortifications on the frontier is rather common, the pattern of legionary disposition seen in Moesia Inferior has no precedent, as a legionary detachment was stationed at virtually every Roman fortification, regardless of size, along the borders of the province; to these, we should also add the permanent legionary detachments stationed in the cities along the Black Sea coast, the territories of the Crimean peninsula and the wider region around Olbia after the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The extensive use of legionary detachments was obviously intended to increase the overall defensive quality of the system, as, after all, the legionaries were the par-excellence troops of the Roman army; but it also seems to follow the explicitly Lower Moesian trend

of having mixed component units (infantry and cavalry, whether legionary or auxiliary) stationed at the main fortifications along the frontier line. Nevertheless, the main point here is that the Lower Moesian legions were probably the most over-stretched, overworked legions in the Empire.

The second unique feature has to do with the widespread use of defensive bridgeheads or earth ditches (vallums) even at forward positions across the Danube frontier line, such as the ones which were discovered opposite the forts at Barboși and Pietroșani (opposite the fort at Sacidava),<sup>667</sup> which provided a notable contribution in the final consolidation of the key zones of the Lower Moesian defence system. In addition, their utilization can provide further testimony as to the use and adaptation of the terrain to suit the needs and to strengthen the elements of the Roman defensive system, as well as to their satisfactory geographical knowledge of the territories across the Danube frontier.

---

<sup>667</sup> Opposite the fort at Barboși, there is a 13 mile long system of turf ditches and walls stretching between the Prut and Siret rivers. Its date has not been firmly established yet, though it is most probably contemporary with the erection of the Barboși fort (c. AD 103). For a further discussion on this subject see Zahariade, Gudea, *Fortifications*, 34, including the relevant bibliography.

#### IV. THE PROVINCE OF DACIA

Following the conclusion of Trajan's Dacian wars in AD 106,<sup>668</sup> with the capture of Sarmizegethusa and the death of Decebalus, Trajan organised the newly conquered areas into a Roman province (Provinciae Daciae), comprising the territories of the Banat region in the West, the whole of Transylvania and Oltenia in the East, up to the area of the Carpathian mountain range.<sup>669</sup> With respect to the frontier perimeter of the province, the actual boundary line of Roman Dacia left the Danube northwards along the Tisza and Mureş river lines in the West, turned eastwards through the Someş valley and the East Carpathian basin in the north, and then followed the course of the Olt river southwards through the South Carpathian mountain rings and back to the Danube river bank (map 20).<sup>670</sup>

With respect to this new strategic and political development in the Lower Danube it would seem that the emerging problem for Roman security interests in the area was that the creation of the Dacian province by Trajan had brought a great change in the lives of her Transdanubian neighbours. The new province, along with the incorporation of the Dobrudja region into Lower Moesia, secured the control of the valley routes westwards towards the Carpathians (areas that prior to AD 106 were inhabited by the Iazyges), and had immediate consequences for the

---

<sup>668</sup> For Trajan's Dacian wars see Strobel, *Dakerkriegen*; H.Daicoviciu, "Guerre Dacique", 109-124; H.Daicoviciu and Florescu, "Kriege", 94-106; C.Daicoviciu, *Transylvanie*, 77-91; C. Daicoviciu, *Istorie Romaniei*, 305-362; Gostar, "Guerres Daces", 373-374; Gostar, "Armée romaine", 115-122; Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 277-282; C.Daicoviciu, "Dacia Capta", 174-188; Syme, "Danube under Trajan", 122-134; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 6-14; Vulpe, "Getes", 332. For ancient accounts see Dio lxxvii, 9 and Eutropius vi, 23.

<sup>669</sup> The territories of Wallachia and South Moldavia in the East were assigned to the province of Moesia Inferior. Zahariade, "Structure", 387-388. For the early political and administrative organisation of Dacia under Trajan, see Macrea, "Organisation", 121-131; Macrea, "Organizarea", 121-130; Dobó, "Gouverneurs", 91-93; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 61ff.

<sup>670</sup> Gudea, "Recent Research", 802.

North Danubian tribes which used the Dobrudja for winter pasture.<sup>671</sup> Apart from this, the annexation of Dacia and the establishment of Roman garrisons along the right bank of the Danube formed an impenetrable obstacle that hindered communications between the North Danubian tribes, which found themselves squeezed between Roman provinces in the west, east and south of the Carpathian basin.<sup>672</sup> In the light of this newly emerged situation, it is hardly surprising that the Sarmatian tribes, struggling for suitable land to settle in, started to cause considerable trouble in the area. In AD 107, right after the creation of the Dacian province by Trajan, the Iazyges launched an attack on the territories of both Dacia and Pannonia Inferior.<sup>673</sup> Although, on that occasion, Rome's armies were successful in repelling the invaders, future events would demonstrate that the solution reached by Hadrian in AD 107 was far from permanent;<sup>674</sup> in AD 117, the Iazyges, the Sarmatian tribe which occupied the stretch of land along the Tisza river plain, mounted a fresh attack on the provinces of both Dacia and Pannonia Inferior.<sup>675</sup> This attack seems to have had serious implications for the security of the newly created province, as the Iazyges, taking advantage of the change of political scenery in Rome with the death of Trajan and of the fact that Roman units were still engaged in operations in the eastern provinces of the empire, broke through the western front of Dacia along the Banat region and poured into the province. Despite Rome's desperate attempts to restore order across the frontier, the depleted Roman forces in Dacia stood little chance of quick success against the invaders; without doubt, the subsequent death of the governor of Dacia Quadratus Bassus in the hands of the Iazygi, must have done little to uplift the morale of the defending Roman soldiers.<sup>676</sup> Accordingly, the overall military situation in Dacia reached an even more critical stage when the Iazyges were soon joined by the Roxolani – another Sarmatian tribe which occupied the plain to the northeast of the river Olt and which Trajan had constituted as a “friendly kingdom” by the

---

<sup>671</sup> Poulter, “Frontier People”, 147.

<sup>672</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 100.

<sup>673</sup> SHA, *Had.* iii.9. See also the relevant section under the province of Pannonia Inferior.

<sup>674</sup> Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 95, 99.

<sup>675</sup> SHA, *Had.* vi.6. For a detailed discussion of the events of Rome's war against the Iazygi, see Dobias, “Expédition”, 147-154.

<sup>676</sup> Balla, “Military History”, 39-40.

payment of tribute<sup>677</sup> – who in turn launched an attack against the province of Lower Moesia and the southeastern frontier sector of Dacia.

By the end of AD 117, the Iazyges and the Roxolani, assisted by the “free” Dacian populations still residing within the territory of Roman Dacia<sup>678</sup> and possibly by other North Danubian tribes,<sup>679</sup> had managed to roam through the whole plain between the Danube and the Transylvanian plateau, thus posing an immediate threat on all the Lower Danubian provinces.<sup>680</sup>

News of the Iazygan-Roxolani attack and of Quadratus’ death reached Hadrian while he was still in Iuliopolis in Bithynia.<sup>681</sup> He immediately entrusted the conduct of the war to Trajan’s trusted general, Marcius Turbo, by giving him command of both Lower Pannonia and Dacia.<sup>682</sup> Soon after, Hadrian himself went to the seat of war, where he concluded a peace treaty with the Roxolani, as the author of the HA attests: “cum rege Roxolanorum, ... cognito negotio pacem composuit”.<sup>683</sup> Thus, having broken the double alliance, Marcius Turbo was given a free hand to deal with the Iazyges, who were still active across the frontier regions of southern Dacia and Lower Pannonia. The details of Turbo’s campaigns against the Iazyges are not known to us, but it appears that hostilities had ended by the middle of May AD 118, as Hadrian could afford to return to Rome by the 9th of June.<sup>684</sup> A peace treaty was concluded with the Iazyges and, although we are

---

<sup>677</sup> Their king, a certain Rasparaganus, had been complaining of a diminution of tribute. SHA, *Had* vi.8.

<sup>678</sup> C.Daicoviciu, “Militärdiplom”, 541-553, considers the possibility that a Dacian rebellion occurred concurrently with the Sarmatian attacks of AD 117-118.

<sup>679</sup> The possibility of the participation of the Marcomani and the Quadi is discussed in Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 101. Though it is still uncertain, it is possible that the Quadi joined forces with the Iazyges, according to the inscription referring to the ‘expeditio Suebica et Sarmatica’: *CIL* iii 6818.

<sup>680</sup> Orosius, vii.13.4; C.Daicoviciu and H.Daicoviciu, “Dacia Malvensis”, 347.

<sup>681</sup> Fitz, “Legati Augusti”, 251.

<sup>682</sup> SHA, *Had* vi.6-7. This is indeed an extraordinary command if we consider that both Lower Pannonia and Dacia were imperial provinces (governed by legates of senatorial rank) and Turbo was only a knight. Since there was a precedent in such ‘an anomaly’ in Egypt, Hadrian elevated Marcius Turbo to the same status as the Egyptian praefect.

<sup>683</sup> SHA, *Had* vi.6-8.

<sup>684</sup> *CIL* vi 32374; Fitz, “Legati Augusti”, 251; Balla, “Military History”, 41. However, Mócsy places the end of hostilities in AD 119, in *Pannonia*, 100.

not aware of the actual terms of this treaty, it appears certain that Hadrian agreed to withdraw Roman forces from east Moldavia<sup>685</sup> and to abandon all Roman possessions and territories in West Wallachia and South Moldavia, thus constituting the Olt river as the eastern frontier line of the Dacian province.<sup>686</sup> This withdrawal seems to have taken place between AD 118-119 at the latest, given the terminus post quem date of occupation suggested by the archaeological evidence from the advanced forts of the Wallachian plain at Drajna de Sus, Mălăiești, Tîgșor, and Rucăr.<sup>687</sup>

Following the final abandonment of Wallachia and South Moldavia, Hadrian entrusted Marcus Turbo with the initial re-structuring of the Dacian defenses<sup>688</sup> and promptly proceeded with the political and administrative re-organization of the Dacian province. In AD 120, probably for reasons of military necessity, Dacia was divided into two parts, Superior and Inferior.<sup>689</sup> An additional subdivision occurred by AD 123, when the north-western part of Dacia Superior became the province of Dacia Porolissensis.<sup>690</sup> Dacia Superior, with its capital at Apulum, was placed under the command of an imperial legate, while Inferior and Porolissensis were placed under a procurator.<sup>691</sup>

---

<sup>685</sup> "Peace was restored" in the words of Orosius vii.13.3 and Eusebius *Chron.* II, 164-165 (trans. Schoene). For the abandonment of East Moldavia, as part of this treaty, see Poulter, "Frontier People", 147 n.19.

<sup>686</sup> MacKendrick, *Dacian Stones*, 139-140. This event was probably interpreted by Eutropius, *Chron.* viii.6.2, as Hadrian's thoughts or intentions of abandoning the whole province of Dacia. See C.Daicoviciu, "Dacia Capta", 180-2. For a separate discussion on this subject see section IV (Dacia Inferior).

<sup>687</sup> I.Barnea and Ștefan, "Limes Skythicus", 23; Ștefan, "Drajna de Sus", 115-144.

<sup>688</sup> Marcus Turbo's work was much appreciated by the people of Ulpia Traiana (Sarmizegethusa) who paid him special honors as recorded in *CIL* iii 1462.

<sup>689</sup> C.Daicoviciu, "Division", 231-235; Balla, "Military History", 40. The existence of Dacia Inferior is attested as early as AD 120, in *CIL* iii 2830 = *ILS* 1056; Roxan, *RMD* no.17.

<sup>690</sup> Dacia Porolissensis is attested for the first time in a military diploma of AD 123. Roxan, *RMD*, no.21; Russu, "Militärdiplom", 155-177. Some scholars have argued that the creation of Dacia Porolissensis occurred at the same time as the division of Superior and Inferior. Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 313; however, others have put forward the view that Porolissensis was created at a later stage, Russu, *Dacia*, 94; C.Daicoviciu and Protase, "Diplôme Militaire", 63-70, esp. 68.

<sup>691</sup> Wilkes, "Romans, Dacians, Sarmatians", 275.

## IV.i FORTIFICATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF DACIA

### a. The Southwest Sector of Dacia Superior (Sector I)

**Pojejena de Sus:**<sup>692</sup> Auxiliary fortification, measuring 148 by 185m, situated opposite the Moesian fort at Cuppae. On the basis of the available evidence, this fort was probably built during the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, as a bridgehead for Domitian's offensive against Dacia.<sup>693</sup> Between AD 101 and the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it would serve as the base for cohorts V Gallorum (equitata).<sup>694</sup>

**Dupljaja:**<sup>695</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated along the road of the Lederata-Tibiscum strategic axis, to the immediate north of the auxiliary fort at Translederata-Sapaja (see Moesia Inferior). This fort has not been the subject of any systematic investigation, and very little is known about its phases of occupation or the unit that garrisoned it. Given its location, it is reasonable to assume that it is contemporary to the other forts on the Lederata-Tibiscum defence sector, and was therefore probably erected during the course of Trajan's first offensive across Dacia.

**Grebenac:**<sup>696</sup> The remains of two separate earth and timber auxiliary fortifications have been discovered near the modern town of Grebenac, at the points of Cetatea Mare (110 by 130m) and Cetatea Mica (60 by 110m) respectively. Not much is known about either fortification, though it seems likely that they served as

---

<sup>692</sup> Gudea, "Bericht", 478; Gudea, "Militärorganisation", 225, 229 and n.2; Gudea, "Date noi", 333-343; Gudea and Bozu, "Pojejena", 181-185 and fig. 3; *TIR* L34, 91.

<sup>693</sup> Gudea, "Bericht", 478; Gudea, "Date noi", 333-343.

<sup>694</sup> Gudea, "Militärorganisation", 229 and n. 1, figs. 3-5. Stamps from both IV Flavia and VII Claudia were also found at the site. On cohorts V Gallorum see Transdierna (Moesia Superior).

<sup>695</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 25; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 218; *TIR* L34, 57.

<sup>696</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 26; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 218; *TIR* L34, 64. For their use as temporary marching camps for Roman forces operating across the Danube from Lederata, see Đorđević, "South Banat", 131.

temporary marching camps during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars. There is no information as to whether they were occupied at any point after the creation of the province of Dacia in AD 106.

**Arcidava (Vărădia):**<sup>697</sup> Auxiliary fortification, measuring 154 by 172m, situated on the right bank of the Caras river (one of the main tributaries of the Mureş river). An initial earth and timber fort was erected at the site during the first Dacian war, between AD 101 and 102.<sup>698</sup> After AD 106, its outer defence walls were rebuilt in stone, following the destruction of the earlier earth and timber fort during the second Dacian war. During the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort of Arcidava-Vărădia would serve as a temporary base for cohorts I Vindelicorum milliaria,<sup>699</sup> and would remain in use throughout Trajan's reign; thereafter it appears to have been abandoned by Hadrian.<sup>700</sup>

**Vršac:**<sup>701</sup> Small auxiliary fortification, situated along the Lederata-Tibiscum imperial road. The site has not been the subject of any systematic investigation. Brick stamps belonging to legions IV Flavia and VII Claudia, ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana and cohorts I Hispanorum – units that participated in Trajan's first offensive against Dacia through the Lederata-Tibiscum invasion route – were found at the site, indicating that this fort was probably erected sometime between AD 101 and 102. Following the withdrawal of all Roman forces from the Banat region in the early years of Hadrian's reign, the fort at Vrşac was abandoned.

---

<sup>697</sup> G.Florescu, "Arcidava", 60-72; Macrea, *Viata*, 38; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 12, 41-42; Gudea, "Sistemul defensiv", 73; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 26-27; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Tudor, *Orase*, 48; *TIR* L34, 30.

<sup>698</sup> Contra Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 12, who argues that the fort was originally built in stone during the first Dacian war. The existence of an earth and timber phase has been firmly established by the excavations carried out by G. Florescu in 1933.

<sup>699</sup> Attested in Dacia by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi 163). Russu, "Auxilia", 74, places it at Arcidava; however, as Bogdan-Cătănicu (*Evolution*, 12) rightly notes, the fort, measuring 172 by 154m, was too small to have held a cohort milliaria. Given that the unit is epigraphically attested at Tibiscum as well, it might have operated from both forts simultaneously. Russu, "Elemente syriene", 167-186, esp. 173; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 55-56; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 288-289.

<sup>700</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 12.

<sup>701</sup> Garašanin, *Nalazista*, 217-218; Tudor, *Orase*, 53; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 349 (on epigraphic material belonging to cohorts I Hispanorum); Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 28; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; *TIR* L34, 121.

There is no further information as to whether the fort was re-occupied at any point during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.

**Centum Putei (Surducul Mare):**<sup>702</sup> Auxiliary fortification, measuring 127 by 132m, situated to the immediate southwest of the legionary fort at Berzobis. Centum Putei is one of the few Roman forts in the Banat region mentioned in ancient literary sources.<sup>703</sup> An earth and timber fort of square shape was erected at the site sometime between AD 101 and 105. Thereafter, and at least until the end of Trajan's reign, it would serve as the base for a permanent detachment from legio IV Flavia.<sup>704</sup> Following a brief period of abandonment during Hadrian's reign, the fort was re-occupied and rebuilt in stone in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (140's). There is no further information as to any subsequent rebuilding phases at the site or as to the fort's garrison.

**Berzovia (Bersobis):**<sup>705</sup> Legionary fort, measuring 410 by 490m, which occupies an elevated position on top of a steep slope overlooking the Bîrzava stream. The fort is mentioned in later literary sources.<sup>706</sup>

An earth and timber fort of square shape was initially erected at the site sometime during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and, at least until AD 117, it was the permanent base for a large detachment from legio IV Flavia.<sup>707</sup> The fort at Berzovia would be abandoned in AD 117, after the departure of its legionary detachment for Singidunum in Moesia Superior.

---

<sup>702</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 54; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 13; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 29; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; *TIR* L34, 45.

<sup>703</sup> *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 3.

<sup>704</sup> According to brick stamps of legio IV Flavia found at the site, in Protase, "Surducul Mare", 345-348.

<sup>705</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 48-51; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 6, 13, 42; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 29-30; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; M.Moga, "Bersobis", 51-58; Glodariu, "Legio IV Flavia Felix", 429-435; Protase, "Legio IV Flavia", 49-51; *TIR* L34, 36.

<sup>706</sup> *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 3.

<sup>707</sup> And not for the entire legion, as argued by most Romanian scholars. For a full discussion on the subject see section IV.ii.

**Aizisis (Fîrliug):**<sup>708</sup> Small auxiliary fortification of square shape, measuring 110 by 30m. The site has not been the subject of any archaeological survey and, therefore, very little is known about it. Given its position along the Lederata-Tibiscus main invasion route, it was probably built to serve as a marching camp during Trajan's first Dacian war. The fort was most probably abandoned after Rome's withdrawal from the western Banat region between AD 118-119.

**Dierna (Orșova):**<sup>709</sup> Small auxiliary fortification, situated approximately 250m north of the Danube river, opposite the fort at Transdierna, in Moesia Superior. Apart from its actual location, there is no available information as to its size, the material used in its construction or its initial erection date. Bogdan-Cătănicu has argued that Dierna, along with the Roman fortifications at Mehadia and Teregova, was probably erected in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>710</sup> This, in my view, is quite puzzling if we take under consideration three important factors. First, the discovery at the site of brick stamps belonging to troops from cohorts I Brittonum milliaria, which operated in the area in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century. This unit, previously stationed in Moesia Superior, was at the forefront of Trajan's first offensive against Dacia, as it was one of the Roman units attested in the first Dacian military diplomata of AD 106 and 110.<sup>711</sup> By 123, it had become a permanent part of the garrison of Dacia Porolissensis, in the north.<sup>712</sup> Hence, the discovery of brick stamps of this unit at Dierna, should at least indicate the existence and function of an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site. Second, given the existence of an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort by the name of Transdierna across the Danube, it would be quite hard to assume that a fort by the name of Dierna was erected at a later date. Third, the area around Dierna represented the main landing point for all Roman forces

---

<sup>708</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 50; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 30; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 86; *TIR* L34, 26.

<sup>709</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 18-22; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 31; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 86; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 21; *TIR* L34, 53. The site is mentioned by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 8, 10 and *Tab. Peut.*, vii, 4 (as Tierna).

<sup>710</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 21.

<sup>711</sup> *CIL*, xvi 160 (106 AD); *CIL*, xvi 57, 163 (110 AD). Benea, "Cohors I Ulpia Brittonum", 45-52; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 20-21; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 106-107; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 195.

<sup>712</sup> Macrea, "Exercitus", 153-154; Russu, "Auxilia", 69.

attacking from the Pontes region (Moesia Superior) via Apollodorus' bridge, during Trajan's first and second Dacian war. Therefore, it seems that the fort at Dierna constitutes one of the first Roman bridgeheads and fortifications erected on Dacian soil, probably as early as AD 101-102.

There is no further information as to any subsequent rebuilding phases at the fort or its later garrison.

**Praetorium (Mehadia):**<sup>713</sup> Auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 116 by 142m, situated on the left bank of the Cerna stream. The fort at Mehadia is in a bad state of preservation due to river erosion, and the only visible remains – including the trapezoidal shaped towers – belong to the later (3<sup>rd</sup> century) phase of occupation.

An earth and timber fort was erected at the site during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, judging by the discovery of brick stamps bearing the marks of legio IV Flavia and VII Claudia, which operated in the region during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars. Sometime before the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort was rebuilt in stone, when it became the permanent base of operations for cohorts III Delmatarum milliaria equitata.<sup>714</sup>

**Ad Pannonios (Teregova):**<sup>715</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Timiș river, along the Dierna-Tibiscum road. Not much is known about its initial erection date, though traces of an earth and timber outer wall section underneath the later (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) stone one indicate an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century occupation phase. In the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, a stone fort of rectangular shape,

---

<sup>713</sup> Macrea, Gudea and Moțu, *Mehadia*; Macrea, "Sapaturile arheologice", 139-141; Tudor, *Orase*, 30-33; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 31-32; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 42; *TIR* L34, 93. The fort is attested in *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 4 (as Pretorio).

<sup>714</sup> This unit was stationed in G. Superior until AD 134 (*CIL*, xvi 80). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 31; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 132-133; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 174; Russu, "Auxilia", 71; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 305-306. The fort itself was incapable of holding a cohort milliaria equitata, which means that detachments from this unit must have operated from other forts in this particular sector, such as Dierna (Orșova), whose garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has not been established.

<sup>715</sup> Gudea, "Teregova", 97-101; Tudor, *Orase*, 35; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 32; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 42; *TIR* L34, 25. The fort is mentioned in *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 4.

measuring 100 by 125m was erected at the site which, at least until the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, served as a base for cohorts VIII Raetorum equitata.<sup>716</sup>

**Tibiscum (Jupa):**<sup>717</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the right bank of the Timiș river and arguably one of the most important Roman military centres in the province of Dacia Superior. Excavations carried out at the site have so far distinguished three main phases of occupation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, which is located in the far north-east corner of the later stone fort. Its actual size has not been established yet. Visible remains include sections of the earth and timber wall (c. 6m wide and 1.20m high) and of the double earth ditch. This fort was probably erected during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars (AD 101-106). Its garrison is unknown.

Phase II: Stone fort of rectangular shape, measuring 89 by 107m. This fort was built on top of the earlier earth and timber one. Visible remains include sections of the southern corner-tower and eastern gate-towers (*porta Decumana*). Brick stamps belonging to legio IV Flavia were found at this level, indicating that the rebuilding of the fort took place sometime between AD 106 and 117. After AD 117, and at least until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it became the base of operations for cohorts I Vindelicorum milliaria.<sup>718</sup>

Phase III: Southwards extension of the existing rectangular stone fort, whose dimensions were increased to 195 by 310m. Gudea, based on the actual shape and building technique of the fort, has argued that this extension took place in the mid-

---

<sup>716</sup> Previously in Pannonia, this unit is attested in Dacia by AD 109 (Roxan, *RMD*, 148). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 49-50; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 181-182; Russu, "Auxilia", 73-74; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 297. It was stationed at the fort of Inlăceni, in the northern part of the province of Dacia Superior until the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Its arrival at Teregoava should coincide with the rebuilding of the stone fort at the site. Macrea, "Cohors VIII Raetorum", 341-345.

<sup>717</sup> Benea, "Tibiscum", 451-460; M.Moga, Medeleț and Benea, "Tibiscum", 215-218; Petrescu and Rogozea, "Tibiscum", 107-136; Dingă-Petrovszky and Russu, "Diploma militara", 61-73 (with some basic reference to the fort); Németh, "Tibiscum", 205-210; Bona, Petrovszky and Rogozea, "Tibiscum", 311-322; Tudor, *Orase*, 37-42; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 33-34; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Gudea, "Bericht", 480-481; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 10, 13, 21-22; *TIR* L34, 111. The fort is mentioned by Ptolemy, *Geog.*, iii, 8,4 (Tiviskon); *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 4.

<sup>718</sup> Previously stationed at Arcidava-Vărădia. For this unit, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 55-56; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 196-199; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 191-192; Radnóti, "Dislokation", 143; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 288-289.

2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>719</sup> It seems, however, that this extension took place at a much earlier date, probably as early as AD 118-119, on the basis of the epigraphic material left behind by cohortes I Vindelicorum milliaria and I Sagittariorum milliaria equitata at Tibiscum.<sup>720</sup> Both units were forced to abandon their stations, at Arcidava and Zăvoi respectively, after Hadrian's withdrawal from the south-west Banat region. The absence of epigraphic material belonging to either unit from any other fort in the area, clearly suggests that their transfer to Tibiscum took place immediately after Hadrian's military pull-out. Given the obvious incapability of Fort II (which measured 89 by 107m) to hold two such large units, then the extension of the fort at Tibiscum must have coincided with the arrival of the two units, hence AD 118 or 119.

Apart from the two auxiliary units mentioned above, troops from two further units, the numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium and numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium, operated from this fort during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>721</sup>

**Zăvoi:**<sup>722</sup> Auxiliary (legionary?) fortification, situated on the left bank of the Bistra river, to the immediate north-east of Tibiscum and west of the Dacian capital of Sarmizegethusa. Very little remains of it today, as the north-east section has been completely obliterated by the Bistra river.

According to the available data, an earth and timber fort of square plan was erected at the site during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars. Gudea has argued that this fort measures approximately 336 by 336m,<sup>723</sup> if this is true, then it is possible that the fort might have served as a temporary base for one of the Roman legions (the I Minervia ?) right before the final assault on Sarmizegethusa in AD 106.

---

<sup>719</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 33.

<sup>720</sup> M.Moga, "Tibiscum 1970", 135-146, esp.146; Gostar, "Tibiscum", 471-477.

<sup>721</sup> Russu, "Elemente Syriene", 167-186; Benea, "Numerus Palmyrenorum Tibiscensium", 131-140, who argues that this unit was transferred from Syria to Tibiscum under Hadrian (pg. 140); Benea, "Numerus Maurorum Tibiscensium", 139-153; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 22, n.183; M.Moga, "Tibiscum 1974", 129-132.

<sup>722</sup> Macrea, *Viata*, 222; Protase and Zrinyi, "Raport preliminar", 75-79; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 13; Tudor, *Orase*, 43-44; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 35, 37; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; *TIR* L34, 26, who identifies it as ancient site of Agnaviae.

<sup>723</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 35, 37.

Although it has been argued that Zăvoi was abandoned soon after AD 106,<sup>724</sup> it seems that the fort continued to function at least until the end of Trajan's reign. A number of brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Sagittariorum milliaria equitata were discovered at the site;<sup>725</sup> given that this unit was probably transferred to Tibiscum under Hadrian, then the fort must have been its base of operations during Trajan's reign.

The fort at Zăvoi was permanently abandoned after AD 117-118.

**Micia (Vețel):**<sup>726</sup> Auxiliary fortification, which occupies a commanding position overlooking the lower plains of the Mureș river valley along the main strategic road linking Dacia Superior to Pannonia Inferior.

Over the years, the fort at Micia has been the subject of a substantial amount of archaeological investigation. So far, two main phases of occupation have been distinguished at the site during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular plan. The remains consist of sections of the outer defence walls (4m wide and 1.3m high). Very little is known about this particular phase of occupation, though the discovery of brick stamps belonging to legio IV Flavia, cohorts II Flavia Commagenorum equitata and ala I Augusta Ituraeorum Sagittariorum at this layer, suggest an initial erection date within the first two decades of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>727</sup>

Phase II: Stone fort of rectangular plan and trapezoidal corner-towers, measuring 181 by 360m. Visible remains include sections of the south main gate-towers (Porta Praetoria), the south-west corner-tower and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century horreum.

---

<sup>724</sup> Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 13.

<sup>725</sup> Bozu, "Cohors I Sagittariorum", 131-134. For this unit, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 50-51; Russu, "Auxilia", 74.

<sup>726</sup> C. Daicoviciu, "Micia", 1-45; Petolescu, "Vallée de Mures", 367-372; Petculescu, "Descoperiri epigrafice", 84-88; Petculescu, "Castrul roman - Micia", 109-114; Petculescu, "Diploma militara", 131-133; Petolescu and Mărghitan, "Micia", 247-258; Tudor, *Orase*, 120-129; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 37-39; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Gudea, "Bericht", 482; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 14, 22, 43-44; *TIR* L34, 79-80.

<sup>727</sup> Both auxiliary units are attested in Dacia by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 57, 163), and are well documented at Micia. The ala I Augusta Ituraeorum was transferred to the fort at Intercisa (see relevant section) in Pannonia Inferior between AD 144 and 150 (attested in the Pannonian military diploma of 1/7/150 AD = *CIL* xvi, 99). Russu, "Auxilia", 67, 70; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 11, 27; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 52-54 and 124-126; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 404-405.

According to all indications, the rebuilding of the fort in stone took place in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

During the mid and late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the fort at Micia served as the permanent base of operations for cohorts II Flavia Commagenorum equitata, the ala I Hispanorum Campagonum,<sup>728</sup> the numerus Maurorum Miciensium and troops from legio XIII Gemina.

**Abrud:**<sup>729</sup> Small earth and timber fortified post of rectangular shape, measuring 40 by 50m. The fort is situated to the immediate north-east of Micia. The surviving material from this fort is limited to two sections of the earth and timber wall. The fort appears to be contemporary to that of Micia, though it is still unclear as to how long it remained in service.

Its garrison is unknown, though it is highly probable that units stationed at Micia might have operated from this fort (the numerus Maurorum Miciensium ?).

**Cigmău:**<sup>730</sup> Small auxiliary fortification, situated on the road linking Micia to the legionary fortress at Apulum. Brick stamps belonging to the pedites Singulari Brittanici were found at the site, suggesting an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century initial phase of occupation.<sup>731</sup>

**Costești:**<sup>732</sup> Small fortification of unknown size. Fieldwork on the site has revealed clear traces of destruction, probably during the Dacian wars. Appears to have been abandoned soon afterwards.

---

<sup>728</sup> Which replaced the ala I Augusta Ituraerorum between AD 144 and 150. This unit is epigraphically well attested at Micia (*CIL* iii, 1342-3, 1377-8, 1380). See Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 101-102; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 10-11; Russu, "Auxilia", 67. A brick stamp from cohorts II Hispanorum Scutata equitata (from Bologna) was also found at Micia, in Petolescu, "Cohors II Hispanorum", 43-49, which indicates the close strategic connection between the two forts. Petolescu, "Cohors II Hispanorum", 43-49.

<sup>729</sup> M.Moga and Mesáros, "Abrud", 141-149; Tudor, *Orase*, 196; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 39; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Gudea, "Bericht", 482; *TIR* L34, 23.

<sup>730</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 130-137; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 103-104; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 15; *TIR* L34, 47. It is possible that this is the fort of Germisara mentioned in the *Tab. Peut.* viii, 1.

<sup>731</sup> Gostar, "Germisara", 57-87. This unit is attested in Dacia by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 57). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 57.

<sup>732</sup> Crișan, "Costești", 74-89.

**Orăștioara De Sus:**<sup>733</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated near the modern village of Bucium. Only a section of its eastern wall (including the northeast corner-tower) survives today. The rest of the fort has been completely obliterated by the Albia river. According to the excavators, the fort seems to have had two main phases of occupation:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of unknown size and shape, probably built during Trajan's reign. Traces of this early fort have been discovered underneath the later stone corner-tower.

Phase II: Stone fort of rectangular plan, measuring 135 by 183m. The rebuilding of the fort in stone probably took place during Hadrian's reign.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort was garrisoned by the *numerus Germaniciorum*<sup>734</sup> and troops from *legio XIII Gemina*.<sup>735</sup>

**Bulci:**<sup>736</sup> Small fortified post, situated on the left bank of the Mureș River, on the course of the Roman road linking the larger Roman fortifications at Micia and Partiscum. The finds unearthed at the site include traces of an earth and timber wall and brick stamps belonging to *legio XIII Gemina*, which suggest an early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century phase of occupation.

**Aradul Nou:**<sup>737</sup> Small fort along the Partiscum-Micia road through the Mureș river valley. Its exact location has not been securely identified yet. Brick stamps belonging to *legio IV Flavia* and *legio XIII Gemina* discovered in the vicinity of its presumed location, suggest the existence and function of an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at this point.

---

<sup>733</sup> C.Daicoviciu and Gostar, "Santierul arheologic", 350-353; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 104-105; *TIR* L34, 41.

<sup>734</sup> Gostar, "Orăștioara de Sus", 493-501; Gostar, "Numerus Germaniciorum", 241-244; Glodariu, "Numerus Germaniciorum", 543-545; Speidel, "Building Inscription", 143-144; Russu, "Auxilia", 75; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 58.

<sup>735</sup> *CIL* iii, 8064 in Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 104.

<sup>736</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 59; Macrea, *Viata*, 229-230; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 23; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 82; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 24; Mărghitan, *Fortificatii*, 98-100; *TIR* L34, 43.

<sup>737</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 58; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 23-24; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 82; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 15; *TIR* L34, 30; Mărghitan, *Fortificatii*, 102.

**Sânnicolaul Mare:**<sup>738</sup> Small fortification, situated on top of a hill overlooking the left bank of the Mureş river. The site itself has not been excavated, though brick stamps of legio XIII Gemina were found at the foot of the hill, suggesting the existence of an early or mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site.

**Cenad:**<sup>739</sup> Auxiliary fortification of unknown size, situated near the left bank of the Mureşul Bătrîn stream. Brick stamps of early 2<sup>nd</sup> century typology belonging to legio XIII Gemina were discovered at the site, indicating the possible initial construction date for this fort.

**Partiscum (Szeged):**<sup>740</sup> Small fortified post, on the road linking Dacia Superior to Pannonia Inferior, situated near the confluence point of the Mureş and Tisza rivers. The site has not been excavated and therefore very little is known about it. It is believed that this fort is contemporary to the other fortifications along the Mureş river course (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century).

### **b. The Northeast Sector of Dacia Superior (Sector III)**

**Brîncoveneşti:**<sup>741</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the right bank of the Mureş river, whose valley represented the probable border between Dacia Superior and Dacia Porolissensis and one of the main natural passes into the province of Dacia through the Carpathian mountain range.

Excavations carried out on the site have so far determined two main phases of occupation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD:

---

<sup>738</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 58; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 24; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 82; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 24; *TIR* L34, 103.

<sup>739</sup> Borza, "Cenad", 551-553; Tudor, *Orase*, 57-59; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 24; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 82; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 24; Mărghitan, *Fortificatii*, 102-106; *TIR* L34, 45.

<sup>740</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 57-58; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 25; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 109; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 871; Gudea, "Defensive System", 82; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 24; *TIR* L34, 87; Mărghitan, *Fortificatii*, 106-112.

<sup>741</sup> Protase and Zrinyi, "Brîncoveneşti 1975", 57-69; Protase and Zrinyi, "Inscriptii", 95-110; Protase and Zrinyi, "Brîncoveneşti 1994", 75-169; Protase, "Brîncoveneşti 1977", 379-386 and fig. 2-3; Tudor, *Orase*, 268-270; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 57; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Gudea, "Bericht", 482-483; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 18, 22-23; *TIR* L35, 29.

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape. Traces of this early fort have been discovered underneath the eastern section of the later fort's stone walls. Its exact date of erection has not been established, though it is quite possible that it was built during the late years of Trajan's reign or the early years of Hadrian's reign. Its garrison is unknown.

Phase II: Stone fort of rectangular shape, measuring 144 by 177m. The reconstruction of the fort in stone took place sometime during Hadrian's reign, when Brîncovenеști became the permanent base of operations for ala I Nova Illyricorum.<sup>742</sup>

**Călugăreni:**<sup>743</sup> Auxiliary fort, situated on the left bank of the river Niraj, which is one of the main tributaries of the Mureș river. An earth and timber fort of rectangular shape was initially erected at the site during Hadrian's reign. This date can be deduced by the fact that the rebuilding of the fort in stone (now measuring 140 by 163m) must have taken place at the same time with the arrival of cohorts I Alpinorum equitata at Călugăreni, which was transferred from Pannonia Inferior to Dacia Superior around AD 144.<sup>744</sup>

A detachment from legio XIII Gemina was stationed at this fort during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

---

<sup>742</sup> The dating of the stone fort to Hadrian's reign, can be inferred by the fact that this unit is the same with the numeri equitum Illyricorum, previously attested at Apulum (*ILS* 2209), which was reorganised into an ala during Hadrian's reign. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 58-59; Russu, "Auxilia", 75; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 218. Therefore, its arrival at Brîncovenеști should coincide with the erection of the stone fort at the site. Russu, "Ala I numeri Illyricorum", 93-104, including inscriptions *CIL* iii, 6284, 8074, 8077; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 22 and n.187.

<sup>743</sup> Protase, "Călugăreni", 209-214; Tudor, *Orase*, 271; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 57-58; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 22; *TIR* L35, 31.

<sup>744</sup> This unit is mentioned in the Upper Moesian diploma issued in AD 106 (*CIL* xvi, 54). After participating in Trajan's Dacian wars (recorded in *AE* (1939), 81), it is transferred to Pannonia Inferior (Matrica). It appears in Dacia Superior in AD 144 (*CIL* xvi, 90); by AD 148, it was sent back to Pannonia Inferior. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 15; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 82-83; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 165-166; Russu, "Auxilia", 67-68; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 223; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 259-261.

**Sărățeni:**<sup>745</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 140 by 146m, situated to the immediate southwest of Călugăreni, near the Niraj river course. The fort occupies a strategic location on the entrance point of the Bucin natural pass, thus blocking one of the main access routes into the Dacian province through the Carpathian mountain range.

Although the site has received a fair amount of archaeological investigation, there exists no conclusive evidence as to the fort's initial date of construction. Traces of an earlier earth and timber fort have been discovered underneath the trapezoidal corner towers and quadrilateral gate towers of the later (late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century) stone fort, suggesting the existence and function of an early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site.

According to brick stamps found at the site, the fort at Sărățeni was garrisoned by a detachment from cohorts I Alpinorum equitata between AD 144-148.<sup>746</sup> Its permanent garrison is not known.

**Inlăceni:**<sup>747</sup> Auxiliary fort, situated at the entrance point of the main access route through the Tîrnava Mică river valley. The fort is still in a good state of preservation today, and is arguably the best excavated site in this particular frontier sector. According to the remains at the site, three main phases of occupation have been uncovered at the site:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of square plan, measuring 140 by 142m. This fort was erected around the late 130's, after which it served as a temporary base of operations for cohorts VIII Raetorum equitata.<sup>748</sup> Brick stamps belonging to troops from legio XIII Gemina were also discovered at this particular layer.

---

<sup>745</sup> Székely, "Sf. Gheorge 1961", 185-186; Székely, "Sf. Gheorge 1962", 331-336; Tudor, *Orase*, 268; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 58-59; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 22; *TIR* L35, 64.

<sup>746</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 15; Russu, "Auxilia", 67-68; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 223; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 82-83.

<sup>747</sup> Gudea, "Inlăceni", 149-273; Tudor, *Orase*, 275-276; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 59-60; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 18; *TIR* L35, 47.

<sup>748</sup> First attested in Dacia in the military diploma of AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 57 and 163). It is recorded building the fort at Inlăceni in an inscription datable to AD 129 = *AE* (1960), 375, in Macrea, "Cohors VIII Raetorum", 341-343. It was subsequently transferred to the fort of Ad Pannonios – Teregova in the Banat region, by the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 49-50; Russu, "Auxilia", 73-74; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 188; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 278-279.

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, retaining the same shape and size (142 by 146m) with the previous fort at the site. Surviving material from this phase of occupation consists of sections of the outer defence walls, the main gate-towers (4.5 by 5.5 m), the principia and the stone horreum. The rebuilding of the fort in stone took place sometime between the late years of Hadrian's reign and the early years of Antoninus Pius' reign, following the arrival of cohorts IV Hispanorum equitata.<sup>749</sup> The fort appears to have been severely damaged during the Marcomannic Wars.

Phase III: Reconstruction (repair) of the stone fort during the reign of Caracalla.

**Oderheiul Secuiesc:**<sup>750</sup> Auxiliary fortification, whose exact location has not been identified yet. The existence and function of an early or mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site has been established by the discovery of brick stamps from cohorts I Ubiorum.<sup>751</sup>

**Sînpaul:**<sup>752</sup> Auxiliary fortification of rectangular plan, measuring 133 by 150m, situated near the end of the Vlahița natural access route through the Carpathian mountain range. It is believed that the fort had two separate phases of occupation, as traces of an earth and timber fort were distinguished underneath the later stone one. There is no conclusive evidence as to the dating of either phase of occupation, though the early fort appears to be of an early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date. This fort was garrisoned by the numerus Maurorum S(agittariorum?).<sup>753</sup>

---

<sup>749</sup> Which replaced the cohorts VIII Raetorum equitata. The cohorts IV Hispanorum is first attested in Dacia Superior in the military diploma of 144 AD (*CIL* xvi, 90). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 40-41; Russu, "Auxilia", 72; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 223-224; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 155. This unit is well documented at Inlăceni; Russu, "Materiale epigrafice", 181-195 and inscriptions nos. 4 and 5; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 133-134.

<sup>750</sup> Székely and Ferenczi, "Ordohei", 345-348; Tudor, *Orase*, 276; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 60-61; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; *TIR* L35, 54-55.

<sup>751</sup> Previously stationed in Moesia Inferior (Capidava). It is attested in Dacia Superior by AD 144 (*CIL* xvi 90), but generally thought to have been brought to Dacia during Hadrian's reign. The Oderhei district is the only place in Dacia where epigraphic evidence from this unit has been found. Russu, "Auxilia", 74, 76; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 224; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 54; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 252.

<sup>752</sup> Ferenczi and Ferenczi, "Sînpaul", 401-404; Tudor, *Orase*, 277; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 60; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, 46, 52; *TIR* L35, 67.

<sup>753</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 60; Russu, "Auxilia", 76; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 224.

**Olteni:**<sup>754</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Olt river, on the entrance of the Tusna mountain pass.

According to the main excavators, a stone fort of rectangular plan, measuring an estimated 100 by 140m, was initially erected at the site probably during Hadrian reign.<sup>755</sup> There is no conclusive evidence as to any further reconstruction phases, though the fort appears to have remained in service well into the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Brick stamps belonging to a cohort **IV Be(ssorum?)** were discovered at the site, though its exact dates of deployment at Olteni are unknown.<sup>756</sup>

### c. Fortifications in the Interior of Dacia Superior

**Sighișoara:**<sup>757</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Tîrnava Mare river, in the immediate rear of the Brîncovenești-Călugăreni defence axis. Excavations carried out on the site have only revealed traces of a single phase of occupation, an earth and timber fort, measuring 133 by 180m, with a double earth ditch (vallum) and a 9m wide earth and timber outer defence wall. The excavators of the site have argued in favour of a Hadrianic date for the initial construction of this fort, based on the discovery of Hadrianic coins which were found in the fort's defensive ditches;<sup>758</sup> this, however, hardly constitutes concrete evidence, as Roman coins were known to circulate for quite some time after their initial date of issue. On the other hand, a mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century initial erection date would seem

---

<sup>754</sup> Székely, "Descoperiri epigrafice", 133-144 (including epigraphic material from the forts at Inlăceni and Odorheiul); Tudor, *Orase*, 278; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 61-62; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Gudea, "Bericht", 488; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 25, 30; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 85-96; *TIR* L35, 55.

<sup>755</sup> The dating of the fort is based on the excavators' report, though the relevant dating material has not been published.

<sup>756</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 18; Russu, "Auxilia", 68; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 119. This is the only known reference to this unit. Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 62 has identified this unit with cohort **IV Be[ntasiorum]**; I have found no records to prove that such a unit ever existed. Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 224, offers a different interpretation, as **IV Be(lgarum)**; again, no unit by this name is known to have ever served in the Roman army. See Gostar, "Studii Epigrafice II", 178 for its identification as cohort **II Bessorum**.

<sup>757</sup> Mitrofan and Moldovan, "Sighișoara", 99-109; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 24; Tudor, *Orase*, 175; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 106-107; *TIR* L35, 65-66.

<sup>758</sup> Mitrofan and Moldovan, "Sighișoara", 106.

plausible, considering that the practice of building forts in earth and timber becomes obsolete before the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Its garrison is unknown, though brick stamps from legio XIII Gemina indicates the presence of a legionary detachment at this fort during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

**Cristești:**<sup>759</sup> Auxiliary fort believed to have been located on the right bank of the northern stretches of the Mureș river, on the probable border between the provinces of Dacia Superior and Dacia Porolissensis. Its exact location has not been established and not much is known with regard to its shape, size or probable phases of occupation. The discovery, however, of brick stamps belonging to ala I Bosporanorum at Cristești, has confirmed the existence and function of an early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century fort at the site.<sup>760</sup>

**Războieni:**<sup>761</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated along the main strategic road between the legionary forts at Apulum and Potaissa. The site itself has not been excavated, though traces of a stone fort measuring an estimated 110 by 150m, are visible at the site. There is no evidence to suggest the existence of an earlier (earth and timber) construction and the exact date of its initial construction has not been established. However, brick stamps of ala I Batavorum milliaria discovered at the site, suggest the presence of a Roman fort at Războieni as early as Hadrian's reign.<sup>762</sup> This unit would remain as the fort's permanent garrison for the best part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, as this is the only site in Dacia to have produced epigraphic evidence from this particular unit.

---

<sup>759</sup> Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 24 and n. 200-201; Tudor, *Orase*, 272-273; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 103; *TIR* L35, 36.

<sup>760</sup> Also known as ala I Gallorum et Bosporanorum. One of the earliest recorded Roman auxiliary units in the Lower Danube (stationed at Securisca in Moesia Inferior since the times of Claudius), it is first attested in Dacia Superior in the military diploma of AD 158 (*CIL* xvi, 108), though it is generally believed to have been transferred to Dacia during Hadrian's reign. Gudea and Zrinyi, "Ala I Gallorum et Bosporanorum", 51-58; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 6-7; Russu, "Auxilia", 65-66 (who mistakenly refers to it as an ala milliaria); Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 216; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 18-19.

<sup>761</sup> Boița et al, "Războieni"; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 24; Tudor, *Orase*, 206; Gudea, *Dakische limes*, 105-106; *TIR* L34, 95; Băluță, "Războieni", 83-85 (with a basic reference to the fort).

<sup>762</sup> This unit is first attested in Dacia Superior in AD 144 (*CIL* xvi, 90), though it was probably transferred to Dacia from Pannonia during Hadrian's reign. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 6; Russu, "Auxilia", 65; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 16-17. It is further attested in the military diplomata of AD 157 and 158 (*CIL* xvi, 107 and 108).

**Bumbești:**<sup>763</sup> Auxiliary fort, situated on the right bank of the Jiul river. Two main phases of occupation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century have been distinguished at the site:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort, of unknown size, which seems to have been erected during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars, according to brick stamps belonging to cohorts IV Cypria discovered at this layer.<sup>764</sup> This unit remained at Bumbești until at least the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when it was replaced by cohorts I Aurelia Brittonum.<sup>765</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone during the reign of Septimius Severus, according to a building inscription datable to AD 201.<sup>766</sup>

**Cătunele, Vîrtop, Jigoru, Patru Peak, Comarnicel, Muncelul:**<sup>767</sup> A string of Dacian fortified civil settlements and fortifications situated at the foothills of the Oraști mountain, near the Dacian capital of Sarmizegethusa. They were occupied and briefly used by the Roman army during the course of Trajan's second offensive against Dacia but were abandoned immediately afterwards.

#### d. The Province of Dacia Porolissensis (Sector II)

**Resculum (Bologa):**<sup>768</sup> Auxiliary fortification occupying a commanding position on the mouth of the Crișul Repede river. The fort at Bologa, which is still in a

---

<sup>763</sup> G. Florescu, Bujor and Matrosenco, "Bumbești", 103-117; Bujor, "Santierul", 419-423; Tudor, *Orăse*, 362-363; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 98-99; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 18-25; *TIR* L34, 43; A. Barnea, "Cronica", 434.

<sup>764</sup> In Moesia Superior until 103 AD (*CIL* xvi 54); this unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 57), and was probably responsible for the construction of the fort at Bumbești. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 29; Russu, "Auxilia", 71; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 389.

<sup>765</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 29.

<sup>766</sup> *CIL* iii, 14216, 27.

<sup>767</sup> Borza, "Tibiscum", 209-243; C. Daicoviciu and Ferenczi, *Asezarile*, 17-56; Tudor and Davidescu, "Cătunele", 62-80; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.*, 32; Tudor, *Orase*, 362-363, 387; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 14; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 97-99; Gudea, "Bericht", 483 (on Comarnicel); Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 16-18; *TIR* L34, 45 (Cătunele), 120 (Vîrtop), 68 (Jigoru), 48 (Comarnicel), 81 (Muncelul).

<sup>768</sup> Macrea, "Bologa", 196-232 (initial excavation report); Gudea, "Bologa-Resculum", 7-55; Gudea, "Bologa", 121-150; Gudea, "Materiale arheologice", 169-215; Gudea, "Römerlager", 313-329; Chirilă and Gudea, "Bologa", 115-123; Macrea, *Viata*, 38; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 39-42; Tudor, *Orase*, 252-253; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 15-17, 38, 48; *TIR* L34, 96.

very good state of preservation, is probably one of the best excavated and published sites in the area of Roman Dacia.

An earth and timber fort of rectangular shape with a single defensive ditch, measuring 125 by 160m, was erected at the site during the latter half of the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The dating of this phase is based on the discovery at this layer of brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Brittonum milliaria Ulpia torquata, which was also responsible for the construction of the fort.<sup>769</sup>

A subsequent reconstruction phase took place sometime between AD 110 and 117, when the fort was enlarged (125 by 225m) in order to house the cohorts II Hispanorum Scutata equitata.<sup>770</sup> This phase of occupation would actually last until the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, when the fort was rebuilt in stone, probably during the reign of Septimius Severus. This layer has produced a significant amount of remains, including ceramic tiles (tegulae), fibulae, glass ornaments and a substantial number of Roman coins dating from Nero to M. Aurelius.

During Hadrian's reign, the cohorts II Hispanorum Scutata would be joined by cohorts I Aelia Gaesatorum milliaria; both units would constitute this fort's permanent garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>771</sup>

**Buciumi:**<sup>772</sup> Auxiliary fortification which occupies a strategic position on the confluence point between the Sîngiorzului, Lupului and Mihăiasa streams. During

---

<sup>769</sup> Macrea, "Bologa", 200-201; Gudea, "Inscriptii", 413-437; Gudea, "Bologa-Resculum", 18. This unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 106 (*CIL* xvi, 160). It probably operated from Bologa until AD 110 or 114 at the latest, after which it was transferred to the fort at Porolissum. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 20-21; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 106-107; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 195-197.

<sup>770</sup> This unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 109-110 (Garbsch, "Military Diploma", 284; *CIL* xvi 57, 163). It was sent to the fort at Bologa immediately after the departure of cohorts I Ulpia Brittonum milliaria, probably as early as AD 110. Gudea, "Inscriptii", 419-420. For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 39-41; Russu, "Auxilia", 72; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 152; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 129-130.

<sup>771</sup> The cohorts I Aelia Gaesatorum is attested in Dacia Superior in the military diploma from Gherla of AD 133. The name Aelia denotes that it was raised during Hadrian's reign, as there is no record of a unit by the name of cohorts I Gaesatorum before that. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 31; Russu, "Auxilia", 71; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 134-135; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 479. The fort is barely large enough to quarter a cohorts equitata and a cohorts milliaria at the same time; in this sense, the existence of an additional Roman fortification in the near area, as yet unidentified, is a distinct possibility.

<sup>772</sup> Gudea, "Buciumi", 7-112; Macrea et al, "Buciumi", 149-155; Gudea, "Ceramica Dacica". 299-311; Chirilă, Gudea et al, *Buciumi*; Isac, "Terra sigillata - Buciumi", 155-

the excavations of the late 1960's and early 1970's, two main phases of construction and occupation were distinguished:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort, of rectangular plan, measuring 128 by 160m. Surviving traces from this early fort consist of sections of the earth and timber defence walls and the southern main gateway (Porta Praetoria). According to the surviving epigraphic evidence, this fort was erected by troops serving with the cohorts I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum in AD 109-110.<sup>773</sup> After AD 133, the cohorts I Augusta Ituraeorum was replaced by cohorts II Nervia Brittonum milliaria, which thereafter became the fort's permanent garrison until the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>774</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone during the reign of Caracalla.

**Largiana (Românași):**<sup>775</sup> Traces of an auxiliary fortification have been discovered near the locality of Românași, on the left bank of the Agrijului stream, which has been identified as the fort of Largiana.<sup>776</sup> The fort lies on the junction of the two main Roman highways in the province of Dacia Porolissensis, linking the fort of Porolissum to Resculum (Bologa) and Napoca (Kluj) respectively.

The site is currently under fresh investigation, since the initial work carried out in the early 1960's did not reveal much information as to the fort's initial erection date or to any subsequent phases of occupation. By 1998, the time when I last visited the fort, two trenches had been cut across the outer defence walls, which confirmed the existence of at least two construction phases: one earth and timber

---

172; Gudea and Landes, "Reconstituire grafica", 247-272; Gudea and Cociș, "Fibulae romane", 49-58; Tudor, *Orase*, 252-254; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 41-43; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 38-39; *TIR* L34, 41-42.

<sup>773</sup> Gudea et al, *Buciumi*, 117 and fig. 12.1. The dating of the first occupation phase at this fort is based on the fact that the cohorts I Augusta Ituraeorum is attested in Dacia as early as AD 109 (Garbsch, "Military Diploma", 284); by AD 114, it was transferred to Porolissum. This unit was also responsible for the erection of the first fort at Certiae (Romita). For a history of this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 41-42; Russu, *Auxilia*, 72-73; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 440.

<sup>774</sup> Russu, "Buciumi", 305-317; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 22; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 201.

<sup>775</sup> Tamba, "Roman Fort"; Tamba, "Castrul Largiana", 7-57; Macrea, Rusu and Mitrofan, "Porolissum", 485-504, esp. 499-501; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Citeva consideratii", 181-190; Tudor, *Orase*, 252; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 43-44; Gudea, *Limesul Daciei*, 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Bogdan-Cataniciu, *Evolution*, 17; *TIR* L34, 73.

<sup>776</sup> Recorded in *Tab. Peut.*, viii, 3.

fort, believed to have measured c. 125 by 153m, and a later stone one (c.130 by 157m), of rectangular shape, which was built on top of the earlier fort.<sup>777</sup>

According to brick stamps from cohorts I Hispanorum quingenaria which were discovered at the lowermost layer of the early earth and timber defence walls, this fort was probably erected during the second decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>778</sup>

There is no further information available yet as to when the fort was reconstructed in stone, although at present the evidence seems to point out to a date between the late 130's and mid 140's AD.<sup>779</sup> The cohorts I Hispanorum quingenaria would serve as the fort's permanent garrison until at least the last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>780</sup> At some point during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort also served as a temporary base for a detachment from cohorts VI Thracum, though the actual duration of its stay at Românași is unknown.<sup>781</sup>

**Romita (Certiae ?):**<sup>782</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated near the right bank of the Agrijului stream, which most probably corresponds to the Roman fort of Certiae.<sup>783</sup> The fort itself had not been the subject of any significant archaeological investigation until recently, probably owing to the partial destruction of the site by the Cetății river stream. At present, the surviving

---

<sup>777</sup> I am grateful to Prof. N. Gudea and Dr. D. Tamba for letting me take a close look at the actual trenches, and for showing me the latest finds from the site.

<sup>778</sup> This unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 110 (*CIL* xvi 57 and 163). Between AD 129 and 140, it was stationed in Dacia Inferior. Gudea, "Cohors I Hispanorum", 53-63; Gudea and Zahariade, "Spanish Units", 63-64; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 36; Russu, "Auxilia", 72, 74; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 146-147.

<sup>779</sup> See Tamba, "Castrul Largiana", 26-27.

<sup>780</sup> This unit is attested in the military diplomata of AD 159 and 164 (*CIL* xvi 110 and 185). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 36-37; Russu, "Auxilia", 72, 74; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 109.

<sup>781</sup> This unit was stationed at the nearby fort of Romita at the time, though detachments from it are known to have operated from both Românași and Porolissum. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 53; Russu, "Auxilia", 74; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 194-195; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 380-381. Tamba, "Roman Fort" argued for the presence of two further units, which are epigraphically attested at Românași: cohorts II Britannica milliaria and cohorts V Lingonum. The relevant evidence has not been published yet.

<sup>782</sup> Matei and Bajusz, "Roman Fort - Romita"; Matei and Bajusz, "Castrul roman - Romita", 5-247; Macrea, Rusu and Mitrofan, "Porolissum", 499-504; Tudor, *Orase*, 244-245; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 45; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 37; *TIR* L34, 46.

<sup>783</sup> Mentioned in *Tab. Peut.*, viii, 3.

archaeological evidence can confirm the existence of two main phases of construction and occupation:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, with a V-shaped ditch, measuring c.225 by 187m. Traces of this early fort were discovered during the latest excavations at the site.<sup>784</sup> Brick stamps from cohorts VI Thracum and cohorts I Ituraeorum sagittariorum which were found at this layer, suggest that this fort was probably erected sometime during Trajan's reign.<sup>785</sup>

Phase II: Stone fort of rectangular shape, with an estimated size of 225 by 187 m. According to the available evidence and to epigraphic material left behind by cohorts II Brittanica (Britannorum) milliaria, this fort was probably erected during the early years of Hadrian's reign.<sup>786</sup>

Throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the fort at Certiae would serve as the permanent headquarters for cohorts II Britannica milliaria and cohorts VI Thracum; there is no conclusive indication for the presence of cohorts I Batavorum milliaria at Romita at any point.<sup>787</sup>

---

<sup>784</sup> Matei and Bajusz, "Castrul roman - Romita", 21-28.

<sup>785</sup> Matei and Bajusz, "Castrul roman - Romita", 27, 67-76. Both authors argue that a Hadrianic initial foundation date seems quite probable on the basis of two Hadrianic coins which were found within the gravel (pebble) path leading to the fort (pg. 28). These two coins hardly constitute concrete evidence; the dating of the fort during Trajan's reign should be ascribed to the presence of cohorts VI Thracum and I Augusta Ituraeorum, which are first attested in Dacia in AD 110 (*CIL* xvi 163). For the cohorts VI Thracum *equitata* see the forts of Largiana (Românași) and Porolissum; for cohorts I Ituraeorum Sagittariorum see Buciumi and Porolissum.

<sup>786</sup> Matei and Bajusz, "Castrul roman - Romita", 55-57, 85, 99. This unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 110 (*CIL* xvi 163) and in Dacia Porolissensis by AD 120 and 123; however, brick stamps from this unit, found at the fort of Samum (Cășei), suggest that it was stationed at Porolissensis from the start. It leaves Samum for Romita after AD 119 and was probably responsible for the erection of the stone fort. For a history of this unit, see Gudea, "Cohors II Britannica", 153-157; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 21; Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 220; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 110; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 198; Isac, "Date noi", 178; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 86.

<sup>787</sup> See Matei and Bajusz, "Castrul roman - Romita", 95-98. The cohorts I Batavorum milliaria was stationed in Pannonia Superior up to AD 113 (Roxan, *RMD*, 86). It is first recorded in Dacia Porolissensis in AD 133 (Daicoviciu and Protase, "Diplôme Militaire", 63, 65, 68). It appears to have been initially stationed at the fort of Turda-Potaissa; if it went to Romita, it must have been after AD 167 in any case, when Turda became the base for legio V Macedonica. For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 16-17; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 218, 220; Russu, "Auxilia", 68; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 92-94; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 169; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 211.

**Porolissum:**<sup>788</sup> One of the best excavated and preserved sites in Romania, the military and civilian complex of Porolissum occupies a commanding position overlooking the entire area between the Pometului and Ortelecului streams. The site consists of two separate auxiliary fortifications, which are situated on top of the Pomet and Citera hills respectively.

SITE A (Pomet Hill): Earth and timber auxiliary fort of rectangular shape, measuring 225 by 295m. On the basis of the surviving evidence, especially brick stamps belonging to the legions IV Flavia and XIII Gemina<sup>789</sup> and to cohortes VI Thracum and V Lingonum,<sup>790</sup> it is believed that this fort was erected right after the conclusion of Trajan's Dacian wars (AD 106). This phase of occupation lasted throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, as the fort was not reconstructed in stone until AD 213.<sup>791</sup>

After c.114, the fort of Porolissum would serve as the permanent base of operations for cohorts V Lingonum, I Ulpia Brittonum and I Ituraeorum Sagittariorum.<sup>792</sup>

SITE B (Citera Hill): An earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 60 by 95m. Although the evidence is still inconclusive, this fort is believed to be contemporary to the one at Pomet hill and was therefore probably erected during

---

<sup>788</sup> Gudea, *Porolissum*; Gudea, "Pomet-Moigrad", 7-129; Gudea, "Pomet 1977-1979", 83-90; Gudea, "Pomet 1980-1982", 120-129; Gudea, "Descoperiri arheologice-Porolissum", 65-75; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 45-50; Gudea, "Bericht", 485-486; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 872; Gudea, Chirilă, Matei et al, "Porolissum 1979", 286-292; Gudea and Chirilă, "Pomet 1983-1985", 120-126; Gudea and Chirilă, "Pomet 1986-1987", 149-154; Gudea and Chirilă, "Pomet 1988-1991", 144-145; Chirilă and Gudea, "Monetare antice I", 139-140; Chirilă and Gudea, "Monetare antice II", 189-190; Isac and Gudea, "Terra sigillata – Porolissum", 191-202; Macrea, Rusu and Mitrofan, "Porolissum", 492; Tudor, *Orase*, 243-252; *TIR* L34, 92-93.

<sup>789</sup> See Gudea, "Pomet-Moigrad", 27, 43-44 and figs. 12.1, 12.2; V.Moga, *Istoria Militara*, 22, 67.

<sup>790</sup> Both units, after participating in the Dacian wars, are recorded in Dacia by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 163). The cohort VI Thracum is later based at Romita (Certiae). For this unit see, Beneš, *Auxilia*, 53-54; Russu, *Auxilia*, 69; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 380-381; Gudea, "Cohors VI Thracum", 219-226. The cohort V Lingonum would remain at Porolissum throughout the second century. See Beneš, *Auxilia*, 42-43; Russu, *Auxilia*, 73; Gudea, *Porolissum*, 169-170; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 182.

<sup>791</sup> On the basis of two building inscriptions which were found at the stone gates of the fort. Gudea, *Porolissum*, 761, no. 5-7.

<sup>792</sup> Gudea, *Porolissum*, 167-170; Gudea, "Pomet-Moigrad", 27. For cohort I Ulpia Brittonum see Resculum. For the I Ituraeorum Sagittariorum, see Buciumi and Certiae (Romita).

Trajan's reign.<sup>793</sup> Its initial garrison has not been established through epigraphic evidence, though it is likely that troops from the fort at Pomet hill were stationed here at the time. At some point around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, this fort was rebuilt in stone (66 by 101m); by the late years of Antoninus Pius' reign, it had become the base for the *numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensium*.<sup>794</sup>

**Tihău:**<sup>795</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated near the right bank of the Someș river. Excavations carried out at the site have so far established two main phases of occupation and construction:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 128 by 138m. This fort was initially erected sometime between AD 106 and 110, according to a building inscription belonging to a detachment from *legio XIII Gemina*.<sup>796</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone (new size: 129 by 144m), which probably took place within the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, following the arrival at the fort of *cohortes* I Cannanefatium.<sup>797</sup>

**Cășei (Samum):**<sup>798</sup> Auxiliary fortification occupying a commanding position on a steep slope along the western course of the Someș river, one of the main access routes into the northwestern part of Transylvania in antiquity. The site is currently the subject of a new series of excavations; however, the fort is generally believed to have been initially constructed in earth and timber sometime during Trajan's

---

<sup>793</sup> Gudea, *Porolissum*, 83-93; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 49-50.

<sup>794</sup> See Beneš, *Auxilia*, 61; Russu, *Auxilia*, 76.

<sup>795</sup> Macrea and Protase, "Tihău 1961", 384-386; Macrea and Protase, "Tihău 1962", 67-79; Protase, "Tihău", 75-101; Tudor, *Orase*, 255; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 50-51; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 17-18; *TIR* L34, 111.

<sup>796</sup> *CIL* iii 838, 6248 in *TIR* L34 111.

<sup>797</sup> This unit is not attested in Dacia until AD 154 (Roxan, *RMD*, 47), but it is generally thought to have been transferred to Dacia Porolissensis during Hadrian's reign. Wollman, "Cohors I Cannanefatium", 150-152; Wollman and Bot, "Tihău", 429-440 esp.431; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 23-24; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 219; Russu, "Auxilia", 70; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 116-117; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 238.

<sup>798</sup> Panaitescu, "Cășei", 1-30; Ferenczi, "Limesul de nord", 37-45; Ferenczi, "Subsectorul Cășei – Ileanda", 127-152; Tudor, *Orase*, 259-262; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 51-53; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 110; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Gudea, "Bericht", 486; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 17; *TIR* L34, 99.

reign, according to brick stamps from cohorts II Britannica (Britannorum) milliaria which were found at the earliest level of occupation.<sup>799</sup>

The fort was subsequently rebuilt in stone (approximate size 165 by 165 m); on the basis of the surviving evidence, there is no indication as to when this reconstruction took place. After the early years of Hadrian's reign, Samum became the permanent base of operations for cohorts I Britannica milliaria equitata.<sup>800</sup>

**Ilișua:**<sup>801</sup> Auxiliary fortification situated on a high plain of the Magura plateau, near the right bank of the Ilișua stream. According to the available evidence, three main phases of occupation have been established:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring c. 120 by 135m. This fort was erected in the immediate aftermath of Trajan's Dacian wars, most probably by a detachment from cohorts II Britannica milliaria.<sup>802</sup>

Phase II: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 183 by 175m. This second fort was constructed on top of the previous one in AD 114, according to a building inscription from ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana.<sup>803</sup>

---

<sup>799</sup> According to Isac, "Date noi", 178. This unit was stationed at Samum up to the end of Trajan's reign and was later transferred to Certiae (Romita).

<sup>800</sup> This unit is first attested in Dacia in AD 109 and 110 (Garbsch, "Military Diploma", 284 and *CIL* xvi 57). It is mentioned among the units stationed in the province of Dacia Porolissensis in the diplomata of AD 123 (Russu, "Militärdiplom", 156), 159 and 164 (*CIL* xvi, 110 and 185) and was stationed at Cășei until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 20; Russu, "Auxilia", 68-69; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 104-105; Kraft, *Recrutierung*, 171; Macrea, "Exercitus", 153-154; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 193-194; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 84-85.

<sup>801</sup> Protase and Gaiu, "Ilișua"; Tudor, *Orase*, 263-267; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 53-54; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Gudea, "Bericht", 486; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 39; *TIR* L35, 46.

<sup>802</sup> On the basis of a brick stamp found at the earliest level of occupation at the site. See Isac, "Date noi", 177-178; Gudea, "Cohors II Britannica", 156-157. During Trajan's reign, this unit was stationed at Samum (Cășei). According to the latest excavation reports from Ilișua (Protase and Gaiu, "Ilișua") it is quite probable that a detachment from legio XIII Gemina might have also been involved in the construction of the first earth fort at the site.

<sup>803</sup> *CIL* iii, 789 = *AE* (1960) 218 of AD 131. Up to AD 113/114, it was stationed in Pannonia Inferior. Thereafter it remained as Ilișua's permanent garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Protase, "Ala I Tungrorum", 249-253; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 13-14; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 222; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 76-79; Kraft, *Rekrutierung*, 49.

Phase III: Reconstruction of the fort in stone during Hadrian's reign (now measuring 180 by 187m) by ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana.

**Livezile:**<sup>804</sup> Earth and timber fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 120 by 166m, situated near the right bank of the Racilor stream. Ceramic finds recovered from the site suggest that the fort was probably erected during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (after AD 106),<sup>805</sup> though the existing evidence is still far from conclusive. This fort appears to have been abandoned sometime before the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Its garrison is unknown.

**Orheiul Bistriței:**<sup>806</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Budac river. The site has been partially excavated only. Two main phases of occupation and construction have been established to this point:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort measuring 130 by 190m. This fort was erected during the second decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, according to brick stamps from cohorts I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum milliaria equitata found at this layer.<sup>807</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone (rectangular shape, measuring 144 by 203m); according to the excavators, the material recovered from the principia and the stone balneum of the fort suggest that this reconstruction took place shortly after the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>808</sup> The cohorts I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum milliaria

---

<sup>804</sup> Protase and Dănilă, "Livezile", 531-540; Tudor, *Orase*, 270; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 54-55; Gudea, *Limesul Daciei*, 111; Gudea, *Limes Dakiens*, 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 18; *TIR* L35, 49.

<sup>805</sup> Protase and Dănilă, "Livezile", 536 and fig. 5.

<sup>806</sup> Macrea and Protase, "Orheiul Bistriței", 113-121; Tudor, *Orase*, 268-269; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 55-56; Gudea, *Limesul Daciei*, 111; Gudea, *Limes Dakiens*, 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 18; *TIR* L35, 55.

<sup>807</sup> This unit is attested in Dacia by AD 110 (*CIL* xvi, 57 and 163). After AD 110, it was deployed in the northern part of Dacia (according to *CIL* iii, 1627); by AD 120/123 it is recorded as part of the garrison of Dacia Porolissensis where it remains until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 38-39; Russu, "Auxilia", 72; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 222; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 151-152; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 118-119; Gudea and Zahariade, "Spanish Units", 64; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154. Protase, "Coorti I Hispanorum", 505-506, has discussed the possibility that this unit might have also built the nearby earth and timber fort at Livezile and that detachments from it operated from both forts until the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (when the fort at Livezile was abandoned). His theory seems basically sound, given that both forts were constructed at around the same time, but there is no archaeological evidence to support it.

<sup>808</sup> Macrea and Protase "Orheiul Bistriței", 114-115.

equitata would serve as the fort's permanent garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**Gilău:**<sup>809</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on top of a hill overlooking the Someșul Mic river, along the interior road linking Napoca (Kluj) to the Roman fortifications in the western frontier sector of the province of Dacia. The fort itself is still in a rather good state of preservation and has been extensively excavated and published.

An earthwork fort of square shape, measuring 130 by 116m, with a wooden palisade and a single V-shaped defensive ditch was erected at the site sometime between AD 106 and the end of Trajan's reign (AD 117). Traces of this early earthwork fort are still visible in the northwest corner of the later stone fort and include sections of the principia and the early atrium. The dating of this fort is based on the discovery of a fragment of a brick stamp belonging to [c]oh[ors] I P[annoniorum] veterana equitata<sup>810</sup> and, most importantly, on the fact that a subsequent reconstruction phase took place between 117-118 AD, following the deployment at Gilău of ala I Siliana torquata.<sup>811</sup>

This second earthwork fort at Gilău was of rectangular plan and measured 137 by 221m. This particular layer has actually produced a significant amount of finds, including a military diploma datable to AD 127,<sup>812</sup> an inscription set up by the

---

<sup>809</sup> Rusu, "Cercetari", 687-716; Macrea, Rusu and Winkler, "Gilău", 453-461; Isac, Diaconescu and Opreanu, "Gilău - Campaniile 1976-1979", 29-54; Isac, "Terra sigillata - Gilău", 65-80; Isac, "Inscriptie imperiala", 189-195; Tudor, *Orase*, 232-233; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 100-101; Gudea, "Bericht", 486; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 38, 40-41, 44; *TIR* L34, 61.

<sup>810</sup> The actual reconstruction of this brick stamp belongs to Isac, "Castrele", 15 and pl. IV, fig. 1. This unit is attested in Dacia as early as AD 109 (Garbsch, "Military Diploma", 284). In AD 117-118 it was transferred to Moesia Superior (Tricornium). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 48; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 176-177; Russu, "Auxilia", 73; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 333.

<sup>811</sup> The ala Siliana was previously stationed in Pannonia inferior (last attested in the military diploma (*CIL* xvi, 164) of AD 110. It is generally believed to have been sent to Dacia Porolissensis during the Sarmatian attacks of AD 117-118, although it is not recorded within the province's units until AD 133 (in the Gherla diploma: C.Daicovicu and Protase, "Diplôme Militaire", 63). For the history of this unit and its deployment at Gilău, see Isac, "Ala Siliana", 39-67; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12-13; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 219; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 67-69; Holder, *Auxilia*, 288-289.

<sup>812</sup> Isac, "New Military Diploma", 69-73.

commander of the ala I Siliana (AD 134-135) and a substantial number of bronze and ceramic finds (fibulae and terra sigillata).<sup>813</sup>

The fort was rebuilt in stone around the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD;<sup>814</sup> the ala I Siliana remained as its principal garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

**Gherla:**<sup>815</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the interior strategic road linking Napoca to the Roman forts at Căței and Ilișua, in the northern frontier line of the province of Dacia Porolissensis. The fort at Gherla is the least documented fort in the province of Dacia Porolissensis as most of it has been obliterated by one of the tributaries of the Someșul Mica river.

On the basis of a building inscription set up by troops from ala II Pannoniorum we do know that a stone fort functioned at the site after AD 143;<sup>816</sup> the inscription itself does not specify whether it relates to the erection of a new fort or to the reconstruction of an earlier (earthwork?) one, while no actual traces of an earlier fort have been discovered at the site. However, the discovery at the site of two military diplomata datable to AD 123 and 133,<sup>817</sup> and the fact that the ala II Pannoniorum (whose presence at Gherla has been established through the discovery of several brick stamps) is attested in Dacia as early as AD 109,<sup>818</sup> clearly suggest the existence of a fort at Gherla prior to 143, and probably as early as Trajan's reign.

**Optatiana (Sutor):**<sup>819</sup> Auxiliary fortification of unknown size, situated near the confluence point between the Almașului and Căpuș streams. The site has not been excavated and the surviving material from the site is far too meagre to provide

---

<sup>813</sup> In Isac, "Castrele", tables II-IV, XXII-XXXI.

<sup>814</sup> According to the archaeological data recorded in Isac, Diaconescu and Opreanu, "Porta principalis", 85-97; Isac, Diaconescu and Opreanu, "Principia", 85-101.

<sup>815</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 237-238; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 102-103; Gudea, "Bericht", 486; Jungbert, Pop and Chifor, "Gherla", 661-667; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 18, 37, 41-44; *TIR* L34 60-61.

<sup>816</sup> *CIL* iii, 832-834 in *TIR* L34, 60.

<sup>817</sup> Russu, "Militärdiplom", 155-176; Russu, *Dacia*, 19; Daicoviciu C. and Protase, "Diplôme Militaire", 63-70; Roxan, *RMD*, 21 and 35.

<sup>818</sup> Garbsch, "Military Diploma", 284. Significantly, Gherla is the only fort in Dacia to have produced evidence from this particular unit. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 12; Russu, "Auxilia", 66; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 39, 61; Holder, *Auxilia*, 285-286; Macrea, "Exercitus", 154.

exact information as to the fort's original foundation date or its phases of occupation.<sup>820</sup>

As for its garrison, a funerary inscription mentioning an ala milliaria was found at Sutor,<sup>821</sup> which led Both Russu and Beneš claim that this unit was stationed at Sutor during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD;<sup>822</sup> however, apart from this inscription, there is no further evidence that such a unit ever existed in Dacia, as it is not mentioned in any of the military diplomata issued in the province of Dacia Porolissensis. Several brick stamps belonging to the numerus Maurorum O[ptatiensium] and the numerus Palmyrenorum O[ptatiensium] were discovered at the site, indicating that these two units were garrisoned at Optatiana; however, their exact dates of deployment at this fort are not known.<sup>823</sup>

**Potaissa (Turda):**<sup>824</sup> Seat of legio V Macedonica after AD 167, the fort of Potaissa occupies a commanding position on top of a hill facing the Aries river. All remains at the site belong to the later legionary fort; however, on the basis of two inscriptions belonging to cohorts I Batavorum milliaria which were found at the site, it is possible that, prior to the erection of the legionary fort, Potaissa might have served as a base for this unit between Hadrian's reign and AD 167.<sup>825</sup>

---

<sup>819</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 235; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 101-102; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 39; *TIR* L34, 86. The fort is mentioned in *Tab. Peut.*, viii, 3.

<sup>820</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 41, claims that a fort existed at Sutor at the times of Antoninus Pius. There is really no evidence to support her claims.

<sup>821</sup> *CIL* iii 7644.

<sup>822</sup> Beneš, *Auxilia*, 27; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Russu, "Ala milliaria", 137-141.

<sup>823</sup> *CIL* iii 1633=8074, 27 and *CIL* iii 1471= *AE* (1951), 217 in Russu, "Note epigrafice", 459-461; Russu, "Elemente syriene", 167-186, esp. 174. Russu is convinced that the numerus Palmyrenorum Optatiensium was stationed at Sutor by the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century; he does not offer any convincing evidence.

<sup>824</sup> Bărbulescu, *Potaissa*; Bărbulescu, "Castrul", 7-81 (including further bibliography); Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 109-111; *TIR* L34, 93; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 116.

<sup>825</sup> Epigraphic evidence cited in Bărbulescu, *Potaissa*, 36. There is actually no evidence for any earlier forts at the site. This unit is attested in Dacia Porolissensis between AD 133 and 164 (see Romita-Certiae). Its base of operations at the time has not been established, as earlier views concerning its deployment at Romita have not been verified by epigraphic evidence. Given the existence of the above inscribed monuments, it is possible that it was stationed at Potaissa before the arrival of legio V Macedonica.

#### e. The Province of Dacia Inferior (Sector IV)

**Brețcu (Angustia):**<sup>826</sup> Auxiliary fortification situated along the course of the Oituz pass, one of the major access routes through the south-eastern sections of the Carpathian mountain range. The fort itself has not been the subject of any recent study; in fact, much of what we know about Brețcu is derived from an excavation carried out on the site in the early 1950's.

During the excavations at the site, two main phases of occupation were distinguished at the fort:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort, of rectangular shape, measuring 135 by 172m. Its exact date of construction cannot be ascertained, as this fort could have been erected within the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>827</sup>

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, now measuring 141 by 179 m. This fort presents certain peculiarities as to its architecture: a. its corner-towers are round and facing inwards; b. the towers on each side of the main gateway (porta praetoria) are of rectangular plan, while the remaining towers on the east, west and north of the fort are square. This reconstruction phase probably took place around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, following the arrival and deployment at Brețcu of cohorts I Bracaraugustanorum.<sup>828</sup> A brick stamp from cohorts I Hispanorum veterana quingenaria equitata was also discovered at the site; this unit operated at the time along the fortifications on the Olt river line, probably from the fort of Arutela.

---

<sup>826</sup> Gudea, "Brețcu", 255-332; Macrea, "Brețcu", 285-311; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 331; Tudor, *Orase*, 279-280; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 62-63; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Gudea, "Bericht", 488; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 30, 41; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 83-85; *TIR* L35, 23.

<sup>827</sup> Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 84 and Gudea, *AMP* 4 (1984), on the basis of the terra sigillata finds from this fort (pg. 301, 307 and fig.25, 1-4). Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 30, assumes the existence of a fort at the site by Hadrian's reign.

<sup>828</sup> This unit was previously stationed in Moesia Inferior. It is first attested in Dacia Inferior in the military diploma of 140 AD (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196 = Roxan, *RMD*, 39). Although brick stamps from this unit were found at the fort of Boroșneu Mare as well, Angustia was its headquarters during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. For this unit see Bakó, "Cohors I Bracaraugustanorum", 631-635; Gudea and Zahariade, "Spanish Units", 65-66; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 89; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 18-19; Russu, "Auxilia", 68; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 224; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 84; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 33-34; Gostar, "Studii Epigrafice II", 180; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 97-100.

**Boroşneu Mare:**<sup>829</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification of rectangular plan, measuring c. 130 by 198m. The fort was situated near the mouth of the Olt river and was designed to block the entrance point of the main access route through the Buzău river. Very little is known about this fort, as only a section from its eastern gate-tower has survived from antiquity. There is an inscription, recording the building activity carried out by a certain **ala I ..a....** in the area during Hadrian's reign;<sup>830</sup> whether or not this inscription is related to the original construction of the fort at Boroşneu Mare is not known. Nevertheless, brick stamps belonging to an **ala Gall[orum]** and to cohorts I Bracaraugustanorum confirm the existence of a Roman fort at the site by the early years of Antoninus Pius' reign.<sup>831</sup>

**Comalău:**<sup>832</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification of irregular shape (sides measure 70, 70, 50 and 40m), with projecting rectangular towers, situated near the left bank of the Negru river. There is no evidence for the function of an early Roman fort at the site. Its shape and the position of its towers clearly suggest a mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century initial date of construction.

---

<sup>829</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 279; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 331; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 64; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 873; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 30; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 82-83; TIR L35, 28.

<sup>830</sup> In Székely, "Transilvaniei", 344-351. Székely mistakenly identifies this unit as the **ala I [L]a[tobiorum]**, as such a unit never existed. There is a *cohors* I Latobiorum et Varcianorum, which, however, was stationed in Germania Inferior at the time (Roxan, *RMD*, 52). See Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 30 and n. 274, who identifies this unit as the *ala* I Batavorum, stationed in Dacia Superior at the time (Războieni).

<sup>831</sup> This unit, which is also recorded as *ala* I Capitoniana or *ala* I Claudia Gallorum Capitoniana, was previously stationed in Moesia Inferior (Augustae and Variana). It is attested in Dacia Inferior in the military diploma of AD 140 (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196 = Roxan, *RMD*, 39). It remains in Dacia Inferior at least until the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD; in addition to Boroşneu Mare, this unit also operated from the fort at Slăveni. For this unit see Speidel, "Ala I Claudia", 375-380; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 8-9; Russu, "Auxilia", 163; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 37; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 72-73; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 116-117.

<sup>832</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 278; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 331; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 64-65; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 3 and n.513; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 82; TIR L35, 34.

-- "Limes Alutanus": Roman fortifications along the Olt river line

**Hoghiz:**<sup>833</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Olt river. The fort is believed to have been erected near the probable border between the provinces of Dacia Inferior and Dacia Superior.

An earth and timber fort of rectangular shape is generally believed to have been erected at the site during Trajan's reign, possibly as early as the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>834</sup> The fort's garrison is unknown, although a legionary detachment from legio XIII Gemina is recorded at Hoghiz during Hadrian's reign.<sup>835</sup>

A subsequent reconstruction phase took place around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when the fort was rebuilt in stone and enlarged (165 by 220m) in order to house the ala I Asturum.<sup>836</sup>

**Cincșor:**<sup>837</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, situated on the right bank of the Olt river. There is no evidence for an earlier earth and timber occupation phase at the site.<sup>838</sup> The discovery of brick stamps from cohors II Flavia Bessorum suggest that the stone fort at Cincșor was constructed during

---

<sup>833</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 280-281; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 333; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 66-67; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 10, 25, 29-30, 34; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 81-91; Protase, "Castre romane", 191-202 (including some information on the fort at Brețcu); *TIR* L35, 46.

<sup>834</sup> Following the end of the Dacian wars, according to Horedt, "Hoghiz", 785-815. The dating is based on the actual shape and architecture of the earth and timber fort (p.785). The usual reservations as to the accuracy of this method in the dating of forts should apply here as well.

<sup>835</sup> *CIL* iii, 953.

<sup>836</sup> Attested in Dacia Inferior in AD 140 (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196=Roxan, *RMD*, 39). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 6; Russu, "Auxilia", 65; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 68; Holder, *Auxilia*, 265; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 10-11; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 116; Gostar, "Studii Epigrafice II", 179-180. Up to AD 99 (*CIL* xvi, 45) it was stationed in Moesia Inferior. It is known to have participated in Trajan's Dacian wars (Strobel, *Dakerkriege*, 106). After AD 106 and up to 140, its whereabouts are unknown, which could well mean that it was deployed to Dacia Inferior from Trajan onwards. If this reconstruction is true, and given that Hoghiz is the only fort in Dacia where this unit is attested, then it might have also been responsible for the erection of the earth and timber fort at Hoghiz, therefore adding further credibility to the dating of this early fort to Trajan's reign.

<sup>837</sup> Pop, "Atestari recente", 43-46; Tudor, *Orase*, 281; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 333; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 67-68; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Gudea, "Bericht", 488; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 25, 30; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 81; *TIR* L35, 32 (including two inscriptions from cohors II Flavia Bessorum).

Trajan's reign or the early years of Hadrian's reign at the latest.<sup>839</sup> This unit appears to have served as the fort's garrison throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**Feldioara:**<sup>840</sup> Auxiliary fortification situated on the left bank of the Olt river, just south of the entrance point to the Arpas pass. The fort has been partially excavated, as only its northwest corner survives today. Traces of two main phases of occupation have been established so far:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape. Traces of this fort's earth and timber walls are still visible today. This fort was probably erected to serve as a marching camp during Trajan's Dacian wars. There is no information as to the unit that build it.

Phase I: Reconstruction of the fort in stone (measuring 114 by 137m), with square gate-towers and trapezoidal corner-towers. This fort was probably rebuilt sometime during Hadrian's reign, following the arrival and deployment at Feldioara of cohorts II Flavia Numidarum equitata.<sup>841</sup> Its presence at Feldioara is attested by a number of brick stamps,<sup>842</sup> and the absence of epigraphic evidence from this unit in any other fort in Dacia, suggests that it was stationed here immediately after its arrival in Dacia Inferior and was therefore responsible for the construction of the stone fort at the site

**Boița (Caput Stenarum):**<sup>843</sup> Small earth and timber auxiliary fortification, measuring c.44 by 48m, situated near the left bank of the Olt river. A brick stamp

---

<sup>838</sup> Contra Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 68.

<sup>839</sup> Attested in Dacia Inferior in the military diploma of AD 129 (*CIL*, xvi, 75). After fighting in the Dacian wars, this unit remains in the area of the Olt river frontier line, where it is also attested at the fort of Stolniceni-Buridava. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 18; Russu, "Auxilia", 68; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 97; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 83-84; Holder, *Auxilia*, 301; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 116; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 342.

<sup>840</sup> Gudea, "Feldioara", 269-291; Tudor, *Orase*, 282; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 334; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 68-69; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Gudea, "Bericht", 489; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 25, 30; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 80-81; *TIR* L35, 41.

<sup>841</sup> First attested in Dacia Inferior in AD 129 (*CIL* xvi, 75). For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 47; Russu, "Auxilia", 73; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 102-103; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 173-174; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 37, 115; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 474.

<sup>842</sup> Pop, "Cohors Numidarum", 289-292.

<sup>843</sup> Macrea, "Casolt-Boița", 407-443; Lupu, "Boița", 411-422; Tudor, *Orase*, 372; Horedt, "Limesstrecke", 334; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 69-70; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111;

from legio XIII Gemina indicates that the fort was initially constructed during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>844</sup> There is no conclusive evidence as to how long this fort remained in service. A fragment of a brick stamp from a cohors I ..... was discovered at the site; however, there is no way to establish its identity and therefore the dates of its deployment at Boița.<sup>845</sup>

**Copăceni (Praetorium):**<sup>846</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification of square shape, measuring c.64 by 64m. This site can probably be identified with the Roman fort of Praetorium, which is mentioned in literary sources.<sup>847</sup>

According to two building inscriptions found at the site, the fort was initially constructed in AD 138 by the numerus Burgariorum et Veredariorum.<sup>848</sup> It appears to have been badly damaged sometime in the early 140's, but would remain in service until the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century, when it was partially destroyed by the

---

Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Gudea, "Bericht", 489; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 28-29; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 79-80; *TIR* L35, 30.

<sup>844</sup> Lupu, "Boița", 416. He believes that the presence of troops from legio XIII Gemina at Boița should be associated with military operations carried out in the region during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and that the fort was erected during this period. In my view, the fort's shape, building materials and technique used in its construction, clearly suggest an earlier initial foundation date. In addition, detachments from legio XIII Gemina are known to have operated along the Olt river during Trajan's Dacian wars, before its deployment to Apulum. Therefore, it seems more probable that the fort was erected during Trajan's reign rather than later.

<sup>845</sup> Lupu (p. 419, followed by Vlădescu, *Armata*, 36), considers it to be the cohors I Tyrriorum sagittariorum. This unit is mentioned only once in Dacia Inferior, in the military diploma of AD 140 (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196=Roxan, *RMD*, 39). Its base of operations is not known. It is generally believed to have been part of the army of Moesia Inferior (stationed at the city of Tyras) during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Beneš, *Auxilia*, 53-54; Russu, "Auxilia", 74; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 111; Aricescu, *ARD*, 63. Its brief presence in Dacia Inferior should probably be associated with the Sarmatian attacks in AD 137-138. In my view, this brick stamp could well belong to either cohors I Hispanorum veterana quingenaria equitata or cohors I Bracaraugustanorum, which were stationed at the nearby forts at Arutela and Brețcu respectively.

<sup>846</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Limes Alutanus", 815-830; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Praetorium", 108-112; Tudor, "Praetorium", 77-88; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 252, 254 and fig. 8; Dvorski, "Investigations", 216, 218; Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 274; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 92-93; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 876; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 28-29; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 68-70; *TIR* L35, 35.

<sup>847</sup> *Tab. Peut.* viii, 1.

<sup>848</sup> *CIL* iii, 13795=*ILS* 8909; *CIL* iii 13796=*ILS* 9180. The fort was built by order of the financial procurator Titus Flavius Constans, which shows the particular involvement of local officials in the establishment and consolidation of Rome's frontier defences. For the

Olt river course,<sup>849</sup> and subsequently replaced by the nearby fort at Racovița (Praetorium II).<sup>850</sup>

**Perișani and Titești:** Two small auxiliary fortifications, situated 2km to the immediate east of Copăceni, across the Olt river.

At Perișani,<sup>851</sup> traces of a square fort are clearly visible in aerial photographs of the site. Its existence is further supported by some surface finds, such as a few fragments of Roman pottery. The site has never been excavated and therefore there is no available information as to its approximate date of occupation or its garrison.

At Titești,<sup>852</sup> there is a stone auxiliary fortification or fortified post of rectangular shape, measuring 57 by 48m. The site has only been partially explored, which is quite surprising considering the fort's overall good state of preservation.

There is a rather unique feature encountered in the architecture of this particular fort: it only had two gates, situated on its east and west sides (porta praetoria and porta decumana); later on, the eastern gate appears to have been blocked, leaving the fort with only one main entrance point.<sup>853</sup>

---

numerus Burgariorum et Veredariorum see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 57; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 204-205; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 105-107.

<sup>849</sup> Evidence cited in Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Limes Alutanus", 816; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Praetorium", 108-109.

<sup>850</sup> For the fort of Racovița see Vlădescu, "Racovița", 15-21; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Cercetările arheologice", 345-349; Dvorski, "Investigations", 216, 220; Tudor, *Orase*, 372; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 298; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 93; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 28-29; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 70-79; *TIR* L35, 60. The fort lies approximately 500 m north of Copăceni. The idea that this fort was erected around the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, after the first destruction of the fort at Copăceni has been put forward (see the relevant section in Gudea, *Dakische limes*, 93). There is no evidence at all to suggest any phases of occupation at this site prior to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

<sup>851</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 296; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 91-92; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 25; *TIR* L35, 57.

<sup>852</sup> Poenaru-Bordea and Vlădescu, "Titești", 581-591 and figs 1, 3-4; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 253-254 and fig. 7; Dvorski, "Investigations", 216; Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 314; Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 242; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 92; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 876; Gudea, "Bericht", 491; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 29; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 65-67; *TIR* L35, 71.

<sup>853</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 253-254, fig. 7. A similar architectural arrangement, using only two gates, is also encountered at the fort at Rădăcinești.

There is no epigraphic evidence as to when this fort was constructed; the rectangular shape of its gate-towers and the fact that its ground plan is almost identical to the Hadrianic forts at Copăceni and Arutela (see beneath), suggest a Hadrianic initial construction date.<sup>854</sup>

Its garrison has not been established; on the basis of fort's identical plan to that of Copăceni (Praetorium), Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea have come up with the plausible theory that the fort at Titești was built and garrisoned by troops from the numerus Burgariorum et Veredariorum, which was responsible for the construction of the fort at Copăceni.<sup>855</sup> In this sense, and given the geographical proximity between the two forts, it seems that the fort at Titești (and perhaps at Perișani as well) acted as a forward fortified post for the troops stationed at Praetorium and was specifically intended to augment the Roman army's surveillance radius in this particular section of the Olt river line.

**Arutela (Bivolari):**<sup>856</sup> Stone fortified post, measuring 60 by 60m, situated on the right bank of the Olt river, about 6-7km south of Copăceni. The fort is mentioned in ancient literary sources.<sup>857</sup> The site has been only partially explored, as the lower half of the fort was obliterated by the course of the Olt river. Surviving material from this fort include restored sections from the Porta Praetoria (situated in the northeast side of the fort), the fort's headquarters (principia), the stone praetentura and horreum (both restored) and the fort's north and northeast stone

---

<sup>854</sup> Arguments belonging to Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 254; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 28; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 92; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 66-67. I would like to thank both Dr. Ionna Bogdan-Cătănicu and Prof. N. Gudea for discussing their arguments as to the fort's chronology with me.

<sup>855</sup> Vlădescu, Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 254.

<sup>856</sup> Tudor, "Arutela", 579-585; Tudor, Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Arutela I-II", 8-45; Tudor, Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Arutela III-IV", 19-26; Poenaru-Bordea, Vlădescu and Stoica, "Arutela V", 124-125; Poenaru-Bordea and Vlădescu, "Date noi", 101-111; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Fortifications", 253-254; Dvorski, "Investigations", 216, 219; Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 266-270; Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 242; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 91; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 27-28; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 46-60; *TIR* L35, 27.

<sup>857</sup> *Tab.Peut.*, viii, 1.

walls, including the square-shaped corner-towers. One interesting aspect is the absence of towers on its two side-gates (Porta principalis dextra and sinistra).<sup>858</sup>

According to a set of building inscriptions, this fort was originally constructed in AD 138 by the *surii sagittarii*.<sup>859</sup> It would remain in service until at least the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>860</sup> Its garrison during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has not been established; two brick stamps, belonging to soldiers of legio V Macedonica and cohorts I Hispanorum veterana equitata were also found.<sup>861</sup>

Lying to the immediate south of Arutela and about 100m west of the Roman road along the Olt river, is the site of **Jiblea**,<sup>862</sup> where Tudor believed that a Roman fort of rectangular shape with earth walls and a single defensive ditch, measuring “60 by 100 paces” had once functioned.<sup>863</sup> His theory was not confirmed by any finds; in fact it is debatable whether this is a Roman fort at all, as no evidence dating back to the Roman period was discovered at the site.<sup>864</sup>

**Rădăcinești**:<sup>865</sup> A stone fortified post of rectangular shape, measuring 63 by 57m, situated about 4km east of Arutela. The fort is still in a very good state of

---

<sup>858</sup> Plans of this fort published in Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, fig. 64.1; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 60; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Fortifications”, 248, fig.2; Tudor, Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Arutela III-IV”, 20.

<sup>859</sup> *CIL* iii, 12601, 13793, 13794. This unit is the same with the *numeri Syrorum sagittariorum* and was probably raised in the early years of Hadrian’s reign. Around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, it was temporarily transferred to the province of Baetica (*CIL* ii, 1180=*ILS* 1403). It returns to Dacia Inferior by AD 160, and was deployed at the fort of Romula.(Reșca, see beneath). Epigraphic evidence from this unit has also been found at the fort of Rădăcinești (see beneath). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 62-63; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 214-215; Russu, “Auxilia”, 76; Petolescu, “Auxiliarheiten”, 127; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 92-100.

<sup>860</sup> The latest finds from the site include coins of Elagabalus. Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Fortifications”, 257.

<sup>861</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Fortifications”, 257. Cohors I Hispanorum operates from this fort between AD 129-140 (see Largiana-Românași).

<sup>862</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 293; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 90; Gudea, “Limesul Daciei”, 112; Gudea, “Limes Dakiens”, 875; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 27; *TIR* L35, 48.

<sup>863</sup> Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 293.

<sup>864</sup> Forcing Tudor to later revise his opinion in *Olt.Rom.* 4, 293, stating that this was probably a medieval site. Both Gudea and Bogdan-Cătăniciu include this site in their list of Roman fortifications of Dacia Inferior.

<sup>865</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Rădăcinești”, 477-486; Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, “Fortifications”, 249-250 and fig. 3; Dvorski, “Investigations”, 216; Tudor, *Orase*, 371; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 303; Tudor, “Limes Alutanus”, 237, 242; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 90;

preservation. There are some interesting architectural features present at this fort: as Titești, it only had two entrance gates; these gates had no towers on top of them (as the fort at Arutela), while its corner-towers were very small on size and almost circular in shape.

As Arutela, it was originally constructed by the *numeri Syrorum sagittariorum* in AD 138.<sup>866</sup> It served as an advanced fortified post for the troops stationed at Arutela; a similar pattern of disposition is also seen between the forts at Copăceni and Titești (see above).

**Castra Traina (Sîmbotin):**<sup>867</sup> Stone auxiliary fortification situated on a hill by the confluence point of the Olt river with the Trantul stream. The actual size of this fort is unknown, as only the eastern section of the fort's stone defensive walls (c. 70m long) survives today. Despite some earlier reservations,<sup>868</sup> the latest excavations at the site have revealed clear traces of an earth and timber phase with a double defensive ditch, underneath the later stone one; finds recovered from the timber barracks and sections of the *via praetoria* and *via singularis*, suggest that it was built during Trajan's reign, probably during the course of the Dacian wars.<sup>869</sup> The fort was rebuilt in stone probably during Hadrian's reign.<sup>870</sup> Tudor has argued that prior to its rebuilding in stone, the fort had suffered significant damage, according to what he describes as layers of burnt matter visible

---

Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 25, 29 and fig. 52; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 62-65; *TIR* L35, 60.

<sup>866</sup> *CIL* iii, 12603-12605.

<sup>867</sup> Tudor, Nubar and Purcarescu, "Castra Traiana", 245-249, figs 1-2; Marinescu and Vlădescu, "Cercetarile arheologice", 102-119; Dvorski, "Investigations", 218-219 and fig. 7; Tudor, *Orase*, 369; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 272-273; Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 239, 242; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 89-90; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Gudea, "Bericht", 491; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 9, 27, 30-31 and fig. 47; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 43-46; *TIR* L35, 66. The fort is mentioned in *Tab.Peut.*, viii, 1.

<sup>868</sup> Discussed in Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 27 and note 245. Tudor, who was in charge of the first excavations at Sîmbotin in the late 1960's (see note 867), did believe in the existence of an earthwork fort at the site; he did not find any evidence for this, which led him to conclude that the fort was probably built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century: Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 271-272.

<sup>869</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Castra Traiana", 223-229; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 60.

<sup>870</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Castra Traiana", 226-227. This argument is based on the discovery at the site of fragments of pottery, terra sigillata and Roman glassware, which the authors have dated to Hadrian's reign.

underneath the stone phase;<sup>871</sup> his theory however was not confirmed during the latest excavations at the site. The fort remained in continuous service up to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

Its garrison has not been established. The discovery of a brick stamp from cohorts I Hispanorum veterana equitata, has led certain scholars to argue for the temporary deployment of a detachment from this unit at Castra Traiana.<sup>872</sup>

**Buridava (Stolniceni):**<sup>873</sup> Auxiliary fortification situated near the confluence point of the Olt river with the Govora stream. This site probably corresponds with the Roman fort of Buridava.<sup>874</sup> Significantly enough, Buridava is one of the forts mentioned in the Hunt papyrus;<sup>875</sup> therefore confirming its existence from AD 105 onwards.

The fort has not been excavated, as nothing survives of it today. Apart from its probable location,<sup>876</sup> there is no information as to its size or shape. Instead, attention has shifted to the nearby Roman civil settlement (vicus) at Stolniceni, where a substantial number of epigraphic finds, including brick stamps from cohorts I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria, cohorts II Flavia Bessorum, cohorts I Hispanorum veterana equitata, the *pedites singulares* as well as evidence from all three Lower Moesian legions (I Italica, V Macedonica and XI Claudia), have clearly confirmed the occupation of the site by the Roman army from AD 101-102.<sup>877</sup>

---

<sup>871</sup> Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 242.

<sup>872</sup> Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 101-102; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 91-92. Avram and Avasiloiăi, "Castra Traiana", 193-195, have argued that this unit was responsible for the erection of the earth and timber fort at the site. As far as I know, this brick stamp was discovered within the stone layer of occupation, not the earth and timber one.

<sup>873</sup> Bichir and Bardașu, "Stolniceni 1983", 336-344; Bichir and Sion, "Stolniceni 1992", 255-268; Bichir, "Stolniceni 1982", 43-54; Dvorski, "Investigations", 218-219 and fig. 6; Tudor, *Orase*, 366; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 311; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 88-89; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 7-9, 26-27, 30,31; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 43; A. Barnea, "Cronica", 439; *TIR* L35, 68-69.

<sup>874</sup> Mentioned in *Tab.Peut.*, vii, 4.

<sup>875</sup> Fink, "Papyrus 2851", 102-116.

<sup>876</sup> The identification of its exact location still remains problematic. See Dvorski, "Investigations", 218.

<sup>877</sup> Bichir, "Buridava", 93-104; Bichir, "Stolniceni 1989", 45-56; Tudor, "Buridava 1968", 17-29; Tudor, "Buridava 1964", 345-351; Tudor, "Garnisons de Buridava", 404-410; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 90-91; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 28-29, 33, 59-

The fort appears to have remained in service up to the end of the Roman occupation of Dacia.<sup>878</sup> Its garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century is not certain. A brick stamp, bearing the mark **co[ho]rs M B** was found at the site, near the thermae of the civil settlement. Most scholars tend to allocate this stamp to cohorts I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria;<sup>879</sup> despite the inconclusive nature of our evidence, the possibility for the deployment of this unit or a detachment from it at the fort of Buridava is still worth considering.<sup>880</sup>

**Pons Aluti (Ioneștii Govorii):**<sup>881</sup> Small earth and timber fortification, situated on the left bank of the Olt river.<sup>882</sup> The fort has not been excavated and therefore little is known in relation to its size or shape. Brick stamps bearing the mark of cohorts III Gallorum (equitata ?) were discovered at the site, suggesting that the fort was probably built by this unit either during Trajan's Dacian wars or in the early years of Hadrian's reign.<sup>883</sup>

South of Ioneștii Govorii, traces of a small Roman fortified post (?) have been discovered at the locality of **Drăgășani**.<sup>884</sup> There are still certain reservations as to

---

64. The site has produced an impressive amount of Roman finds, including pottery, terra sigillata, iron and bronze vessels, glassware and coins ranging from Trajan to Aurelian.

<sup>878</sup> Although the civil settlement continued to exist well after the Roman army's withdrawal. See, Bichir, "Stolniceni 1988", 101-118.

<sup>879</sup> *CIL* iii 14216, 25 = *IDR* ii, 560. The reconstruction belongs to Gostar, "Studii epigrafice II", 175-183, esp. 182-183. See also Beneš, *Auxilia*, 22, Russu, "Auxilia", 69; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 87; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 90-91.

<sup>880</sup> This unit becomes part of the army of Dacia inferior after AD 140 (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196; Roxan, *RMD*, 39). So far, Buridava is the only fort to have produced an epigraphic record from this unit.

<sup>881</sup> Dvorski, "Investigations", 218 and fig.5; Tudor, *Orase*, 366; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 290-291; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 87; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 26; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Nouvelles Recherches", 333; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 42-43; *TIR* L35, 47.

<sup>882</sup> *Tab.Peut.* vii, 4.

<sup>883</sup> This unit is not officially attested in Dacia Inferior until AD 129 (*CIL* xvi, 75). Up to AD 114, it was stationed at Sexaginta Prista in Moesia Inferior (*CIL* xvi, 58), and was probably transferred to Dacia Inferior in AD 118-119. After 154, it was sent to M. Tingitana (Roxan, *RMD*, 48). Beneš, *Auxilia*, 33; Russu, "Auxilia", 71; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 138; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 90; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 161; Gostar, "Studii Epigrafice II", 180. Between 101-106 it took part in Trajan's Dacian wars (Strobel, *Dakerkriege*, 130), which led Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 290-291, Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 39 and Vlădescu, *Armata*, 90, to date the erection of the fort at Pons Aluti to this period.

<sup>884</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 366; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 304-305; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 87; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 26;

whether this is a fort or a civil settlement;<sup>885</sup> in any case, there is no available information as to its dates of construction or occupation.

**Acidava (Enoșești):**<sup>886</sup> Small fortification situated near the right bank of the Olt river, mentioned in ancient itineraries.<sup>887</sup> Only its south-east corner survives today, as the fort fell victim to the construction of the modern railway leading to Bucharest.

According to brick stamps belonging to cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum,<sup>888</sup> and to cohorts I Thracum Syriaca,<sup>889</sup> the fort was initially built in earth and timber during Trajan's reign. This is perhaps the reason why locals tend to refer to this site as "Cetatea lui Trajan" (Site of Trajan). The fort was later reconstructed in stone, with an approximate size of 40 by 40m. Evidence recovered from the site, including brick tile fragments, terra sigillata and stamp-decorated pottery tend to

---

Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 42; *TIR* L35, 51. This is probably the Roman site of Rusidava mentioned in *Tab. Peut.*, vii, 4.

<sup>885</sup> See Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 26 and note 232. Contra, Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 305, Gudea, *Dakische limes*, 87 who describe it as a fort in their lists. Vlădescu, who was in charge of the field excavations at the site (1982-1983), claims that he could not specify the precise location of the fort. (Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 42).

<sup>886</sup> Dvorski, "Investigations", 217 and fig. 3; Tudor, *Orase*, 356-357; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 264-265 and fig. 79; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 86; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakien", 875; A. Barnea, "Cronica", 435; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 26 and note 234; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Nouvelles Recherches*, 336; Vlădescu, *Fortificațiile*, 40-42; *TIR* L35, 41.

<sup>887</sup> *Tab. Peut.*, vii, 4.

<sup>888</sup> Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 23. This unit was part of the army of Moesia Inferior up to at least AD 105 (*CIL* xvi, 50). After participating in Trajan's second Dacian war (Strobel, *Dakerkriege*, 127), it is recorded operating along the forts in Wallachia (Drajna de Sus, Mălăiești, and Tîrghșor – see section IV.i.f). After the abandonment of these forts between AD 114-117, it is deployed along the Olt frontier river line. Therefore, the construction of the fort at Enoșești should fall within the late years of Trajan's reign. This unit was later deployed at the forts of Romula and Slăveni. This unit is later attested in the military diploma of AD 140 (Gerov, "Militärdiplome", 196=Roxan, *RMD*, 39). For this unit see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 26-27; Russu, "Auxilia", 70; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 91-92; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 123-124; Spaul, *Cohors*<sup>2</sup>, 403; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 89.

<sup>889</sup> A.Barnea and Ciucă, "Acidava", 147-155. This unit was previously stationed at Timachus Minus (Moesia Superior). It appears to have remained at Acidava up to the end of Trajan's reign, after which it was transferred to Transmarisca (Moesia Inferior).

place this reconstruction phase between the late years of Hadrian's reign and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>890</sup>

Its garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century has not been established through epigraphic evidence, though it is quite probable that a detachment from cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum, stationed downstream at Romula, might have used this fort as an additional base of operations.

**Romula (Reșca):**<sup>891</sup> A civil and military complex situated on the right bank of the Olt river, mentioned in ancient literary sources.<sup>892</sup> The complex consists of a fortified civil settlement<sup>893</sup> and three(?) separate auxiliary fortifications situated on top of two hills overlooking the Olt river line. The site has been the subject of a substantial amount of archaeological fieldwork and is probably the best excavated and published site along the Olt frontier line; however, these excavations have still not been able to clarify certain aspects relating to the precise occupation dates of this military complex.

**Site A:** Auxiliary fort of rectangular plan, measuring c. 182 by 216m.<sup>894</sup> This fort had two main phases of construction:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of unknown shape and size, with a single defensive ditch; visible traces from this fort include sections from its outer defence walls. It was probably built during the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, judging by the discovery of epigraphic evidence from legio V Macedonica and XI Claudia.<sup>895</sup>

---

<sup>890</sup> A.Barnea, "Cronica", 433-440; Dvorski, "Investigations", 217; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 40-42 and Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 86 date it to Hadrian's reign.

<sup>891</sup> Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Romula 1977", 353-361; Poenaru-Bordea and Zahariade, "Romula 1980", 106-121; Popilian, Chitu and Vasilescu, "Romula", 324-326; Benea, "Insigna militara", 69-74; Tudor, *Orase*, 342-361; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 303-304 and fig. 42; Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 243-244; Dvorski, "Investigations", 217; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 85-86; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 25-26; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 34-40; *TIR* L35, 62.

<sup>892</sup> *Tab.Peut.* vii, 4.

<sup>893</sup> Which by AD 158-159 at the latest had become a municipium (*CIL* iii, 7249=*ILS* 1465). See Tudor, *Orase*, 349; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 303-304.

<sup>894</sup> Plan and dimensions of the stone fort. For this fort, see Vlădescu and Poenaru-Bordea, "Romula 1976", 4-13.

<sup>895</sup> Both Lower Moesian legions operated in the region during Trajan's Dacian wars. Epigraphic evidence cited in Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 251-271, esp. 255 and fig. 13; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 67-68 and n. 16; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*,

Phase II: Reconstruction of the fort in stone, probably under Hadrian. This fort had no corner towers, while the defensive ditch of the earlier earth-and-timber fort was replaced by a brick wall, about 2 m in breadth. This fort was probably erected after the deployment at Romula of a detachment from cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum.<sup>896</sup> The existing evidence suggests a continuous occupation of this site until the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

**Site B:** Auxiliary fortification, measuring 100 by 100m. There is no available information in relation to this fort.

**Site C:** Auxiliary fortification(?) of unknown size and shape. Sections of a single defensive ditch were discovered at this particular site, which might have been part of the fortifications of the civilian settlement.

**Slăveni:**<sup>897</sup> Auxiliary fortification, situated on the left bank of the Olt river. The fort is still in a quite good state of preservation.

According to the existing evidence, an earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 169 by 190m, was erected at the site during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars. This date has been confirmed on the basis of epigraphic evidence from various units such as the legio V Macedonica, XI Claudia and XIII Gemina, the alae I Hispanorum and I Claudia Miscellanea and the cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum.<sup>898</sup>

---

85; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 85-88; Vlădescu, *Fortificății*, 34-40; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 28 and n. 229.

<sup>896</sup> *CIL* iii 8074=IDR ii, 382, in Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 92. Tudor, *Orase*, 344. Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian army*, 23, argue that the typology of these brick stamps are datable from AD 117-118 onwards. See also the relevant section under Acidava. Vlădescu, *Armata*, 85-88, unconvincingly places the construction of the fort to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, on the basis of what he describes as stratigraphical observations and numismatic evidence.

<sup>897</sup> Tudor, "Rôle défensif", 399-403 (including the relevant epigraphic evidence); Tudor, "Diploma militara", 30-32 (fragment of a diploma datable to AD 160 or 167); Popilian, "Slăveni", 344-355 (mostly on the civilian settlement (vicus) located next to the fort, but still useful); Tudor, *Orase*, 357-359; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.*, 306-311; Tudor, "Limes Alutanus", 239-240 and fig. 2; Dvorski, "Investigations", 215, 216-217; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 83-85; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 30-34; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 25-26; *TIR* L35, 67-68.

<sup>898</sup> Tudor, "Trupele - Slăveni", 13-22; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 255; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 59, 68; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 84 fig. 69; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 82-85.

Traces from this early fort have been established underneath the walls of the later stone fort, while sections from the fort's Porta Praetoria, the principia and timber barracks have been clearly identified.

This earth and timber phase of occupation lasted until AD 205, when the fort's walls and inner buildings were rebuilt in stone.<sup>899</sup> It was garrisoned by ala I Hispanorum and perhaps from detachments of cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum.<sup>900</sup>

**Tia Mare:**<sup>901</sup> A presumed fortified post near the right bank of the Olt river. The site has not been excavated and there is not much evidence to suggest that this is a Roman military site in the first place.

**Islaz:**<sup>902</sup> Military complex situated near the modern village of Islaz, near the confluence point between the Olt, Danube and Racovița rivers. The site consists of two separate fortifications, none of which has received any systematic investigation.

Site A: Roman fortification of unknown shape and size, situated on the left bank of the Rakovita stream, at the locality referred to as "Cetatea Racovița". Its entire southeast section is now covered by water. There is no available evidence as to when this fort was erected; given its location, it most probably served as a forward bridgehead and concentration base for Roman forces attacking from the Oescus-Novae sector during Trajan's first Dacian war. There is no indication as to how long it remained in service.

---

<sup>899</sup> *CIL* iii, 13800

<sup>900</sup> The ala I Hispanorum remained at this fort at least until the Severan age, as it was responsible for its reconstruction in stone in 205. It is well recorded at Slăveni (*IDR* ii 505-508). For this unit, see Beneš, *Auxilia*, 27; Russu, "Auxilia", 66; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 74-75; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 43-45; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 85; Gostar, "Studii Epigrafice II", 180. See also note 898. The cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum is also attested at Romula and Acidava. A brick stamp from cohorts I Bracaraugustanorum was also found at the site. Bakó, "Cohors I Bracaraugustanorum", 631-635.

<sup>901</sup> The location of the presumed fort is recorded in Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 314 and Tudor, *Orase*, 336. Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 83 believes it to be a small Roman stone fortification, measuring 30 by 30m; he cites no evidence and his description of the fort is quite vague. I would therefore tend to agree with Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 25, n. 224, that this is most probably a civil settlement.

<sup>902</sup> Dvorski, "Investigations", 215; Tudor, *Orase*, 336; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 291; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 82; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 25-26, 30-31. Information about the fort's shape and estimated size is provided by Vlădescu, *Armata*, 81; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 29-30.

Site B: Fortification of rectangular (?) shape, measuring an estimated 120 by 340m, situated at the point of Islaz-Verdea. Its lower half has been completely covered by the Danube. This fort is most probably contemporary to the one at Cetatea Racovița.

#### **f. Fortifications in the Areas of Eastern Oltenia and Wallachia<sup>903</sup>**

A number of Roman fortifications have been identified in the Lower Wallachian plains, at the points of **Drajna de Sus**, **Mălăiești**, **Tîrgșor**, **Filipești**, **Pietroasele** and probably **Cîmpina**. All forts were erected during the course of Trajan's Dacian wars and served as temporary marching camps and strongholds for the Lower Moesian expeditionary force. They were subsequently abandoned by AD 117-118, following the final withdrawal of Roman forces from the areas of Wallachia and Oltenia under Hadrian.

---

<sup>903</sup> G.Ștefan, "Drajna de Sus", 115-144; G.Florescu and Bujor, "Mălăiești", 271-279; G.Florescu, "Problema", 225-232; Diaconu and Constantinescu, "Tîrgșor", 537-546; Petolescu, "Zone sous-carpatique", 510-514 and fig. 1; Brandl, *Ziegelstempeln*, 50, 99, 141; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian army*, 17-23, 50, 62, 63-65, 67; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 5, 9-10, 21, 26, 40, and n. 59, 66, 68-70; *TIR* L35, 39, 41, 50, 58. All sites have produced a substantial amount of epigraphic evidence belonging to V Macedonica, I Italica and XI Claudia, and cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum.

#### IV.ii EVALUATION OF THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF DACIA

After the creation of the province of Dacia in AD 106, only three out of the nine or so legions that had participated in Trajan's Dacian wars remained within the province's territory: the XIII Gemina and the I Adiutrix at Apulum and the IV Flavia at Berzobis.<sup>904</sup> With the exception of legio XIII Gemina, which remained in Dacia until the province's final abandonment by Aurelian in AD 271,<sup>905</sup> the other two would be present in Dacia for only a short period of time, until the early years of Hadrian's reign at the latest.<sup>906</sup>

##### a. Dacia Superior West (Sector Ia)

The surviving evidence in the southern part of the Banat region, at the south-west corner of Roman Dacia, has clearly confirmed that the forts lying on the natural road linking Lederata to Berzobis, which had previously served as temporary marching camps and supply bases during Trajan's Dacian wars, received a significant amount of rebuilding under Trajan. It thus becomes clear that, in relation to Rome's main strategic objectives and overall tactical and defensive layout in this particular region, two important conclusions can be drawn: first, that from the outset, this string of fortifications was specifically intended to become the region's primary frontier defensive shield; and second, that the preservation and the safeguarding of the Lederata-Berzobis line of tactical

---

<sup>904</sup> Gudea, "Defensive System", 84. Given the Roman common practice forbidding the simultaneous deployment of two or more legions in the same fort since the times of the Flavians, it is quite surprising to see these two legions stationed at Apulum at the same time. There is a recent discussion on this subject in Opreanu, "Legio I Adiutrix". See also the relevant discussion later on in this chapter.

<sup>905</sup> For the history of the legion in Dacia, see V.Moga, *Istoria militara*; V.Moga, "XIII Gemina", 323-330; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 111-112. Traces of its headquarters at Apulum (Alba Julia) were recently discovered underneath a base of the Romanian National Army. By the time of my last visit to Alba Julia in 1997, excavations had unearthed sections of the stone Porta Praetoria of the later (3<sup>rd</sup> century) fort. An initial report of the excavations carried out on the site was provided by Vasile Moga during the 17<sup>th</sup> Limes Congress in Zalau. Moga, "Apulum", 79-80.

<sup>906</sup> Parker, *Legions*, 159.

communications and supply was of immense importance for Rome's tactical and strategic considerations in the entire region, as it facilitated the quick deployment of Roman forces anywhere across the Timiș and Tisza river valleys and ensured the final consolidation of Roman territorial possessions in the area.

The pivotal point in this particular arrangement was the legionary fort at Berzobis, the size of which was enlarged in order to accommodate a large detachment from legio IV Flavia Felix. A number of scholars have argued that the entire legion was stationed here between AD 106 and 117;<sup>907</sup> however, there are certain problems related to this argument, especially in relation to Rome's tactical disposition along the western sections of the Danube frontier line: if the entire legion was transferred from Moesia Superior to Berzobis in Dacia during Trajan's Dacian wars, that would mean that, following the temporary departure of legio VII Claudia from Viminacium by AD 114 to participate in Trajan's Parthian wars, the entire Danube frontier sector between the Drava and the Margus rivers was left with no standing legionary garrison at all. In fact, it would also mean that, in relation to the Danube frontier line itself, Rome's nearest legionary concentrations were to be found at Aquincum (Pannonia Inferior) and Novae (Moesia Inferior), thus leaving a 700km stretch of frontier line without any legionary presence. This would come into direct contrast with Rome's applied frontier policy in that area since the times of the Flavians, as the Upper Moesian legionary forces constituted an integral part and a key component in Rome's defensive scheme in the entire Lower Danubian frontier sector. At the same time, as the earth and timber fort at Singidunum has shown traces of continuous occupation during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and as most forts lying between Berzobis and Singidunum were manned by detachments of legio IV Flavia during Trajan's reign, it would be safer to assume that large detachments from this legion were stationed at both Singidunum and Berzobis at the time, thus bringing the Lederata-Berzobis line of communication under their direct zone of operations.

As a means to extend the operational striking range and surveillance radius of the region's standing legionary forces, further Roman fortifications or fortified posts of Trajanic origin were strategically located along the Lederata-Berzobis

---

<sup>907</sup> Protase, "Legio IV Flavia" 49-51; Glodariu, "Legio IV Flavia Felix", 429-435.

imperial highway at the points of Surduc-Centum Putei, Virset (Vršac), Grebenac, Dupljaja and Aizisis, whose obvious purpose was to secure the main lines of communication along the South Banat region. To these, one should add the important fortification of Trajanic date found at Arcidava-Vărădia, home at the time of cohorts I Vindellicorum milliaria. Although, with the exception of Vršac and Centum Putei, the existing amount of research has not been able to identify the garrisons of the rest of the fortifications along the Lederata-Berzobis fortified line, it would be reasonable to assume that troops from either legio IV Flavia or cohorts I Vindellicorum milliaria operated here at the time.

In the immediate east and south-east of the Lederata-Berzobis fortified line, the preservation of all Roman fortifications situated along the Dierna-Apulum natural road, seems to have been part of a rather ingenious tactical and strategic move intended to add greater depth and flexibility to Rome's standing defensive layout in the southern Banat region. That this was a conscious and deliberate move is clearly confirmed by two facts: first, that at least until the end of Trajan's reign, both lines were specifically intended to function simultaneously; second, that apart from the retention and subsequent use – under Trajan – of the existing fortifications (built during the Dacian wars) at Tibiscum, Dierna and Zăvoi, Roman building activity along the Dierna-Tibiscum axis would continue well after AD 106 with the erection of two new fortifications at Praetorium (Mehadia) and Ad Pannonios (Teregova).<sup>908</sup> At the same time, the existence of a strategic connection between the Dierna-Tibiscum and Lederata-Berzobis fortified lines is underlined by the deployment of detachments from legio IV Flavia along both lines. In this sense, judging by the overall picture of Roman strategic and tactical disposition in the Southern Banat region during Trajan's reign, what becomes immediately apparent is the existence of a true double 'limes': two defensive lines, arranged in an 'in-depth' pattern of disposition unique to the rest of the Lower Danube frontier sectors, whose main purpose was to act as the region's primary defensive shield as well as an additional line of lateral communication aimed at facilitating the quick deployment of troops anywhere across the Banat area in case of emergency. Furthermore, the fortifications situated on the Dierna-Tibiscum

---

<sup>908</sup> Where, despite some earlier reservations (see section IV.i.a), excavations carried out at these forts have now yielded clear traces of early second century activity and occupation.

defence axis seem to have fulfilled an additional function with respect to Rome's defensive layout in the region: their location along the main imperial highway that linked Dierna to the administrative capital of Dacia at Apulum,<sup>909</sup> also suggests that, if the frontier defences were overrun, these fortifications would prevent enemy penetration by blocking the main access routes to the interior of the province.<sup>910</sup>

The defensive attributes offered by this particular tactical and strategic arrangement are quite significant. These two fortified lines, in close co-operation with the legionary forces operating from Berzobis, Singidunum and Viminacium (up to AD 114), formed a potent and effective defensive shield adequate enough to repel any Iazygan incursion launched through either the Timiș or the Mureș river valleys. The overall effectiveness of the Trajanic defensive structure in the Banat region is without doubt demonstrated by the fact that this region would remain largely unaffected by any external invasions throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

-----

In relation to the evolution and development of Rome's defence system in the south-west corner of Roman Dacia during and after Hadrian's reign, surveys conducted on the sites of the forts at Arcidava-Vărădia, Surduc-Centum Putea, Berzobis and Zăvoi have established that Hadrian was responsible for the abandonment of all existing Roman fortifications along the Lederata-Berzobis defence line, probably as early as AD 118. This has actually led Barkóczi to argue that Hadrian might have abandoned the Banat region as a whole, perhaps as part of his peace settlement with the Iazyges in AD 118-119.<sup>911</sup> However, this argument has not been substantiated by any evidence which, on the contrary, has shown that Roman civil settlements in the Banat area continued to exist and flourish much

---

<sup>909</sup> For a detailed description of the Dacian road network, see Condurachi and Daicoviciu, *Romania*, 134.

<sup>910</sup> Mainly by blocking the alternative natural road leading to Sarmizegethusa from the west, through the Vișeu defile and along the Mureș river valley.

<sup>911</sup> Barkóczi, "Sarmatians and Roxolani", 443.

after Hadrian's reign<sup>912</sup> and that the Romans appear to have maintained effective control of that territory.

Nevertheless, the withdrawal of Roman forces from the western Banat area appears to be quite surprising if we consider that the Roman defences in the region fulfilled an important function in the protection of the entire south-western frontier line of Dacia, first as a defensive shield against the often aggressive Iazyges in the Lower Tisza plain and, second, as a strategic link between Dacia and Rome's military concentrations in Moesia Superior. The answer to this puzzle could perhaps be found within the terms of Hadrian's peace settlement with the Iazyges in AD 118. As Bogdan-Cătăniciu argues "the effect of the peace imposed upon the Iazygi by Hadrian was a period of comparatively peaceful relations which, we believe, account for the reduction in military forces deployed along this sector of Dacia's frontier line",<sup>913</sup> an argument further substantiated by the almost simultaneous reduction of the total forces stationed in Pannonia Inferior.<sup>914</sup> Furthermore, it is possible that an alternative explanation could be derived by Hadrian's recognition of the fact that a tactical re-arrangement or re-shuffling of his forces in this particular sector should be enough to compensate for the abandonment of the Lederata-Berzobis defence line; this, at least, seems to be implied by the full transfer of legio IV Flavia from Berzobis to Singidunum (modern Belgrade) in AD 118-119,<sup>915</sup> and the re-deployment of most units previously stationed along the Lederata-Berzobis line, such as the cohors I Vindelicorum milliaria and the cohors I Sagittariorum milliaria, to Tibiscum.<sup>916</sup> Consequently, and with the later deployment – under Antoninus Pius – of cohors

---

<sup>912</sup> M.Moga and Gudea, "Banatului", 129-146; Daicoviciu, "Banatul si Iazygii", 98-108.

<sup>913</sup> Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 22. This reduction included the troops of legio IV Flavia, previously stationed at Berzobis, which were transferred to Singidunum in Moesia Superior.

<sup>914</sup> With the transfer of legio X Gemina from Aquincum to Vindobona in Pannonia Superior. Alföldy, "Truppenverteilung", 138; Le Bohec, *Army*, 170; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 110.

<sup>915</sup> Parker, *Legions*, 159; Wilkes, "Fortresses", 108. This legion would work in close connection with legio VII Claudia at Viminacium, which is situated on the frontier road linking Singidunum to Lederata.

<sup>916</sup> To these, one should add the deployment under Hadrian of two further units at Tibiscum, the numeri Palmyrenorum and numeri Maurorum Tibiscensium. The fort at

III Delmatarum milliaria equitata and cohorts VIII Raetorum equitata at Praetorium and Ad Pannonios respectively, this sharp switch in the region's new strategic and tactical layout should not have affected the overall deterrence capabilities of Rome's defensive structure on either side of the Lower Tisza plain; in addition to maintaining high levels of mobility that could ensure the quick deployment and combined use of both cavalry and heavy infantry forces anywhere along or beyond the frontier line, the new defence system could still guarantee the adequate surveillance of the frontier perimeter as well as the close control and monitoring of all Iazygan movements across the Banat region.

#### **b. Dacia Superior North-West (Sector Ib)**

In the western boundary of Roman Dacia, along the Mureş river line, scholars have been puzzled by the absence of any significant lines of fortifications on the actual frontier perimeter;<sup>917</sup> this becomes quite striking considering that this sector was responsible for guarding all access routes leading from the north and north-west into the provinces' gold-mine region, situated between the lower plains of the Orastie mountain range and the lower course of the Mureş river. The only notable exception appears to have been the line of fortifications situated along the eastern reaches of the Mureş river, at the points of Bulci, Aradul Nou, Sănicolaul Mare, Cenad and Szeged. Although research in the area has not been able to provide much information concerning these forts, the discovery of brick stamps belonging to the legion IV Flavia clearly suggests that these fortifications were an integral part of Rome's defence system in the north-west corner of Dacia Superior as early as Trajan's reign. Nevertheless, judging by their actual location along the Mureş river line, it seems hardly convincing that these small fortified points were

---

Tibiscum would thus become the mainstay of Rome's defensive structure in the south Banat region throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

<sup>917</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 14-15; Ferenczi, "Limesului de vest", 565-567, argued for the existence of a series of frontier defence earthworks, datable to the second century AD, along the line of the forts at Micia, Abrud and Bologna. So far, no evidence that could support this theory has come to light. Accordingly, Dumitrascu, "Contributii", 483-491, published the preliminary report of his excavations in the Mureş valley area, which revealed traces of an earth vallum, doubled by a ditch, at the lower reaches of the Crişul alb and Crişul Negru rivers; no accurate date has been established yet; however, it is possible that the earthworks might well belong to the early second century AD. Gudea, "Recent Research", 802.

intended to form the region's main defensive barrier by themselves;<sup>918</sup> if anything, their irregular spacing and the lack of any standing military infrastructure in their immediate rear clearly indicates that they were incapable of acting and, therefore, not intended to function as such. On the contrary, it seems that the main function of these fortifications was to demarcate the actual limits of Rome's territorial possessions in the west of Dacia and to control the eastern section of the strategic road linking Apulum and Dacia to Lugio (Dunaszekcső) in Pannonia Inferior.<sup>919</sup> Therefore, as to the question of the adequate defending of the western part of Roman Dacia and the protection of the Dacian gold mine region during Trajan's reign, other possibilities should be considered.

For one thing, the close proximity of Rome's legionary bases to the Dacian gold mine region should explain the absence of any significant military investment on the boundaries of this specific frontier sector. Given the discovery of epigraphic evidence from legio XIII Gemina at the forts situated along the Mureş river as well as the forts at Orăştioara and Micia, it is clear that detachments from this legion, in conjunction with troops from legio IV Flavia, had brought the Mureş river valley under their zone of operations and, therefore, their direct control. In this respect, the troops from the two legions stationed at Apulum at the time, in addition to the military concentrations around the Berzobis and Tibiscum defence axis, constituted a substantial and powerful military force capable enough of repelling any enemy incursions or of dealing with any marauding trespassers. Therefore, in relation to the defence of the Dacian gold-mine region and of the Lower Mureş valley, it appears quite probable that instead of investing on the frontier perimeter itself, Trajan opted for an internal line of defence, whose purpose was to ensure the adequate surveillance of the entire course of the Mureş river valley and to control and block all the main entrances to the region, and thus to the interior of the province. This particular pattern of tactical disposition is further reflected in the location of the powerful military stronghold at Micia. Micia, which occupied a strategic position on the left bank of the Mureş river,

---

<sup>918</sup> As argued by Gudea, "Defensive System", 82.

<sup>919</sup> A strategic road cut through and used by the Roman forces of Lower Pannonia during Trajan's Dacian wars. Despite the fact that the western section of this road was entirely within enemy (Iazygan) territory, it seems to have remained under Roman control throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

possessing a commanding view over the plains that bordered the gold bearing region. Its tactical and strategic importance in the sector's defence system is underlined by the fact that from AD 106 the fort was the base for two auxiliary units, the ala I Augusta Ituraerorum Sagittariorum and the cohorts II Flavia Commagenorum, as well as a detachment from legio XIII Gemina; given the suitability of the terrain, the presence of a missile cavalry unit ensured the adequate surveillance of both the frontier perimeter and the hinterland as well as the rapid intervention of Roman forces throughout the area in the case of an enemy incursion.

On the road linking Micia to the legionary base at Apulum, the two forts at Cigmău-Germisara and Abrud, are believed to have already functioned during the time of Trajan. The fort at Cigmău, situated on the right bank of the Mureş river (to the east of Micia), augmented the surveillance radius of the troops stationed at the fort of Micia; the fort at Abrud, accordingly, appears to have marked the natural road that led from Apulum to Potaissa, as well as the entrance to the alternative road that passed through Ampelum and Abrud.

Moreover, in the immediate rear of the Micia-Apulum-Cigmău defence line, the Roman fortifications erected during the course of the Dacian wars, at Comarnicel, Patru Peak, Jigoru Patru, Muncelul, as well as those at Costeşti, Luncani and Orăştioara de Sus, continued to function well into the second decade of Roman Dacia. Bogdan-Cătănicu has rightly stated that the main purpose of these forts was to quell the last traces of Dacian resistance in central Transylvania,<sup>920</sup> as it appears that the interior of the province was still troubled by internal unrest, even after its annexation by Trajan.<sup>921</sup> Nevertheless, judging by the geographical location of the forts at Orăştioara de Sus, Costeşti and Luncani and given their close proximity to the Dacian gold-mine region, it seems reasonable to argue that these forts were also responsible for the supervision and protection of the Dacian gold mines. At the same time, however, the existence of a strategic connection between the fortifications around the Orasti mountain and

---

<sup>920</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 10.

<sup>921</sup> Balla, "Military History", 39-40. The discovery of traces of destruction at the fort of Costeşti seems to further confirm his view.

Rome's frontier stronghold at Micia,<sup>922</sup> suggests that these fortifications might have also served as a second, intermediate line of defence with a clear outward orientation: a supporting fortified line, designed to act both as a rearguard for the troops stationed on the frontier, as well as an additional means to ensure the sufficient blocking of all access routes towards Transylvania and northern Oltenia. In this sense, judging by the descriptive breakdown of Roman fortifications in the area, it is possible to conclude that adequate and efficient defensive measures were already in place in the western frontier line of Dacia, even by the times of Trajan.

-----

After Trajan's reign and for most part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, the protection of the western boundary of Dacia would remain largely dependant on the Micia-Cigmău-Abrud defence axis, and more specifically on the considerable number of troops stationed in the fort of Micia, which continued to serve as the base for two auxiliary units. During Hadrian's reign and up to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, no significant additions or modifications appear to have taken place as to the overall layout of this particular defence system; the only change involved a switch in the garrison at Micia, where ala I Augusta Ituraerorum Sagittariorum was replaced by ala I Hispanorum Campagonum after AD 144.

In the immediate rear of the Micia-Abrud defence line, however, there appears to have been a significant development in relation to the string of Roman fortifications in the Orastie mountain range. Evidence from the forts at Costești, Luncani, Muncelul, Comarnicel, Patru Peak and Jigoru, which were constructed in the immediate aftermath of the Dacian wars, has indicated that these forts were permanently abandoned after the early years of Hadrian's reign; the only exception applies to the fort at Orăștioara de Sus, which continued to exist well up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and was probably kept in place to supervise and protect the area around

---

<sup>922</sup> Confirmed by the fact that the unit stationed at Orăștioara de Sus, the Numeri Germaniciorum Exploratorum, appears to have frequently operated on the frontier line, as it is also epigraphically attested at the fort of Micia. Gostar, "Orăștioara de Sus", 493-501, esp. 494.

the Dacian gold mines.<sup>923</sup> The main reason behind Hadrian's decision to withdraw Rome's forces from the interior of the western part of Dacia becomes rather evident if we consider that, by this point, these fortifications seem to have fulfilled their main purpose: that is, to quell the last traces of Dacian resistance in the region of central Transylvania and especially around the vicinity of the former Dacian capital at Sarmizegethusa. Accordingly, given that the western part of Dacia appears to have remained largely unaffected by any enemy transborder incursions for the most part of the early second century AD,<sup>924</sup> the existence and use of this string of fortifications as a second, intermediate line of defence, as discussed earlier in this section, would no longer hold any meaningful military or tactical value. On the contrary, the abandonment of these forts would result in the release of significant numbers of troops, which could be subsequently re-deployed to other, more threatened frontier sectors.

### **c. Dacia Porolissensis (Sector II)**

Work on most of the Roman defences and fortifications in the North-west part of Dacia, generally referred to as the "Limes Porolissensis", began under Trajan and was completed by the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Judging by the actual location and disposition of the Roman fortifications within this particular frontier sector, what is quite evident is the existence of an elaborate defensive system consisting of three separate successive lines of defence, arranged in an in-depth fashion. From the outset, it appears that the "Limes Porolissensis" were assigned with a number of very specific strategic tasks: to ensure the sufficient surveillance of the frontier perimeter, to control and monitor all population movements across the frontier line by blocking all access routes to the interior of the province, and, finally, to provide a solid line of tactical communications that could guarantee the quick deployment of Roman forces

---

<sup>923</sup> Its function as a means to supervise the production outflow from the Dacian gold mines is confirmed by the presence at this fort of the *numeri Germaniciorum* and a detachment from *legio XIII Gemina*.

<sup>924</sup> In fact, this particular frontier sector does not seem to have witnessed any considerable combat action during the Iazygan attacks in AD 117-118.

anywhere across the region and act as a concentration point or spring-board for any forward offensive operations.

At the core of the *Limes Porolissensis*, the most important function in the defensive layout in the region appears to have been performed by the auxiliary fort at Porolissum. Situated on a steep slope of the Pomet hill, the fort occupied a commanding strategic position, overlooking the entire frontier sector between the northern subsidiaries of the Crişul river and the lower reaches of the Mureş river. Its prominent position in the sector's defences is ascertained by the fact that, from an early date, Porolissum was the base for a considerable number of troops, some two to three thousand in total.

As a means to ensure the adequate supervision of the frontier perimeter and to guard the main access routes through the narrow valleys of the Mureş river, a quite comprehensive defensive structure would evolve within the surrounding area of the Porolissum site (see map 23). In the immediate front of the Porolissum fort, an additional number of Roman fortifications and smaller watchtowers were erected along the course of every surrounding hill-top in order to extend the surveillance radius of the Porolissum fort and to double-up as an early warning system. Accordingly, marking the entrance to the main access routes through the mountains, were sections of a defensive ditch made out of earth and timber; its exact date has not been ascertained yet, though it appears to have been part of the defensive structure in the area since the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>925</sup> Therefore, judging by the overall picture of the defensive structure surrounding the Porolissum military complex, what becomes immediately apparent is the existence of a pattern of strategic disposition which is quite unique in relation to the other frontier sectors in the Lower Danube region or, for that matter, the rest of continental Europe (see map). In fact, the only sector which seems to find close parallel is the defensive structure seen in *Africa Proconsularis*, centred behind the sections of the *Fossatum Africae*.

On either side of the Pomet fortification complex, Roman forts of Trajanic origin were consciously placed at strategic points along the main access routes leading into the interior of the province. Apart from the thoroughness and

proficiency evident in the regional disposition of these fortifications, however, what must also be noted is the great amount of attention applied by the Romans as to their actual garrisons; in my view, the actual choice of the units deployed within these fortifications was the end product of a well conceived and executed plan, which took under consideration both the particularities in the morphology of the terrain as well as the different fighting styles, qualities and attributes of each unit. At Buciumi, for example, the main function of this fort was to guard the important access routes through the Ragului and Poicului valley passes. As both passes are very narrow and surrounded by intervening hills, the deployment at this fort of a heavy infantry unit, first the cohorts I Augusta Ituraeorum and then the cohorts II Nervia Brittonum, used to fighting in close formation on even ground and tight spaces, was quite ideal. At the forts of Certiae (Romita) and Largiana (Românași), which were designed to block the entrances of the passes through the Crișul Repede river, the deployment and combined use of two heavy-infantry units – the cohorts II Britannica milliaria and the cohorts I Hispanorum quingenaria respectively – was again quite ideal for the effective patrolling and adequate protection of these access routes as well as the quick and decisive engaging of the enemy anywhere along the Crișul Repede river valley.

Accordingly, in the northern sector of the Porolissum complex, the fort at Tihău was responsible for the sufficient safe-guarding of the passes leading through the lower reaches of the Mureș river and the northern most tributary of the Crișul Repede river. For this reason, two units, the cohorts I Cannanefatium and a detachment from legio XIII Gemina were stationed at Tihău throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Once again, what is important here is the actual choice of units; the Cannanefatii, much like their close cousins the Batavians, were exceptional swimmers and are known to have excelled at fighting with full armour along river courses.<sup>926</sup> Therefore, their deployment along the Mureș and Crișul rivers can be further used as a testament to the exemplary planning behind Rome's tactical disposition in this particular frontier sector.

---

<sup>925</sup> See Matei, "Limes Porolissensis", 93-100.

<sup>926</sup> The swimming feats of the Batavians would also impress Hadrian (Dio, lxi. 9). Also note the inscription (*ILS* 2558) mentioning the Batavian soldier who crossed the Danube fully armed.

In the interior of the Buciumi-Porolissum-Tihău defence axis, an intermediate ring of Trajanic fortifications, at Gilău and Gherla, acted as a second, supporting line of defence and tactical communications. Both forts were garrisoned by cavalry units, the cohorts I Pannoniorum equitata and the ala II Pannoniorum respectively; when combined, these two units constituted a potent mobile reserve force capable of providing quick support to the region's frontier defences, of ensuring the adequate surveillance and protection of all Roman lines of communications in the area and of quickly denying any further enemy access into the interior of the province in the event of a frontier defence breakdown. At the same time, however, this reserve force, in conjunction with the substantial military concentrations stationed at Porolissum, could at any point switch to the offensive and form the spearhead for any retaliatory operations within enemy territory. Finally, the preclusive capabilities of the centre core of the "Limes Porolissensis" defence system were further enhanced by the existence and function of a third successive defence line, formed by the fort at Turda-Potaissa which, under Trajan, was manned by a detachment of legio XIII Gemina.

At the south-west and north-east edges of the Porolissensis sector, the solidification of the region's frontier defence system was completed with the erection of two fortifications of Trajanic origin, at Resculum (Bologa) and Ilișua respectively. The fort at Resculum (Bologa), situated at the south-east corner of the province of Dacia Porolissensis, played a key role in Rome's defensive disposition in the area, as it was responsible for guarding the narrow passage through the southern reaches of the Crișul Repede valley, one of the major access routes from Barbaricum to the north-east part of Dacia. However, the geographical disposition of the fort at Resculum and the actual composition of its garrison can once again provide ample proof as to the existence of a certain rationale behind Roman military and strategic planning. The fort occupied a commanding position on top of a hill overlooking the confluence point between the Crișul Repede river and the Sacueului stream. On either side, the fort is surrounded by mountains, which formed an insurmountable obstacle for any enemy flanking manoeuvres; this means that any enemy incursion within this sector could only be launched through the narrow valley passage (the Poeni pass) formed by the Crișul Repede river, which constituted the direct zone of operations for the troops stationed at

Resculum. It is for this reason that the fort at Resculum would be garrisoned by cohorts II Hispanorum equitata. The presence of a cavalry unit could ensure the adequate patrolling of the Crişul Repede valley and could also guarantee the quick engaging and interception of the enemy anywhere along its course. At the same time, the erection of a string of smaller fortified posts and watchtowers along the top of the hills facing Resculum<sup>927</sup> provided a swift solution to the only problem associated with the geographical disposition of this fort, i.e., the existence of intervening mountains that constituted a significant obstacle for adequate lateral communications between the fort at Resculum and the rest of the Roman fortifications along the "Limes Porolissensis". In this respect, these watchtowers provided both an effective visual link with the nearby fort at Buciumi as well as an additional means for the efficient surveillance of the Crişul Repede valley (see map).

Finally, in the north-east corner of Dacia Porolissensis, the defence of this particular frontier sector was entrusted to the troops stationed at the fort of Ilişua. The fort at Ilişua, was located on a high plain of the Magura plateau which enabled it to command an imposing view over the entire area north of the Someş river. From the very start of its life it was to hold ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana; given the suitability of the terrain, the presence of a cavalry unit could ensure the rapid deployment and intervention of Roman forces throughout the northern part of the province of Dacia Porolissensis.

---

Following the creation of the province of Dacia Porolissensis by Hadrian in AD 123, the new province would comprise the entire northern territories of Roman Dacia, from the lower course of the Mureş river in the west, all the way up to the eastern section of the Carpathian mountain range in the east. Given the considerable military investment that this particular region had witnessed during

---

<sup>927</sup> So far, some sixty-six fortified posts and watchtowers have been discovered along the course of the mountains facing the Roman forts from Resculum (Bologa), and all the way to Tihău. Apart from the adequate surveillance of the frontier perimeter, these watchtowers also ensured the sufficient communication link between all forts situated in the southern and central sector of the Dacia Porolissensis defence system. For these watchtowers see Gudea, "Militärlagers von Bologa", 507-530; Gudea, "Istoria Daciei Porolissensis 1", 143-218; Ferenczi, "Crişul Repede", 201-206.

Trajan's reign, Hadrian and his immediate successors appear not to have made any significant modifications or alterations to the overall plan or strategic disposition of Rome's defences in the area. On the other hand, there was a substantial increase in the number of troops stationed in Dacia Porolissensis as, under Hadrian, one ala, the Siliana c.R. and three cohorts, the I Batavorum milliaria, the Aelia Gaesatorum milliaria and the I Brittonum milliaria equitata were transferred to this province, bringing the total to four alae and twelve cohorts, some twelve to fourteen thousand men.<sup>928</sup>

In relation to the north-west corner of the Dacia Porolissensis defence perimeter, no changes of any significant note were made on Rome's existing defensive and strategic layout in the area, the only exception being the extension and later reconstruction in stone of the fort at Gilău, which, under Hadrian, became the base of ala Siliana c.R.

In the northern region of the province, to the immediate north-east of the main Porolissum military complex, the overall preclusive capabilities of Rome's defensive system in the area were further enhanced with the erection of two new fortifications by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, at the points of Cășei-Samum and Orheiul Bistriței. With the construction of these two fortifications the Romans seem to have provided a swift and decisive solution to the two main problems associated with their previous strategic and tactical disposition in the region: first, the absence of an adequate defensive barrier that could guarantee the protection of the northernmost part of Dacia Porolissensis, which, under Trajan, appears to have remained largely undefended;<sup>929</sup> second, and most importantly, the requirements for an adequate strategic link between the Dacia Porolissensis defence axis and Rome's newly emerging defence system in the eastern part of Dacia Superior, to the rear of the eastern section of the Carpathian mountain range.

The fort at Cășei-Samum, situated to the immediate east of the fort at Tihău, occupies a commanding position on a steep slope along the western course of the Someș river, thus blocking one of the main access routes to the northern part

---

<sup>928</sup> Protase, "Exercitus", 227-234; Russu, "Hilfstruppen", 215-226; Russu, "Ala Milliaria", 137-141; Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 157-159; Wagner, *Dislokation*, 241, 255; Roxan, *RMD*, no.35.

of Transylvania. The fort at Orheiul Bistriței, accordingly, was responsible for the protection of the plains formed by the Someș and Budac river valleys. These two forts, in close co-operation with the already existing fort at Ilișua, would form an internal defence line, in the shape of a triangle, which would control and protect all access routes throughout the north-east frontier sector of the Dacia Porolissensis. Without doubt, the three cavalry units stationed at these forts, the ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana, the cohorts I Brittonum milliaria equitata and the cohorts I Flavia Hispanorum milliaria equitata, constituted a sizeable and formidable mobile force which was capable of meeting Rome's strategic requirements and imperatives in this particular frontier sector; operating in an area which can only be described as optimal cavalry ground, this force could conduct scouting operations along and beyond the frontier perimeter, secure all access routes leading into the interior of the province and guarantee the quick and decisive interception of the enemy anywhere across the Someș river region.

To conclude, the evolution of the Dacia Porolissensis system of frontier defence, from the times of their original inception under Trajan to their final consolidation under Hadrian and his immediate successors, appear to be a clear testament to the rationale behind Roman strategic planning. To my mind, the actual pattern of strategic and tactical disposition implemented in this particular frontier sector was the product of a conscious and rational strategic approach which reflects a full awareness of both the enemy's expected direction of attacks and of the area's geographical and topographical realities. Thus, using the region's peculiar morphology of terrain to their advantage and by employing the right military units for the task, the Romans provided the region with a potent and effective defensive structure, capable of satisfying three important strategic requirements: first, the adequate surveillance of the frontier perimeter and of the territories lying beyond and beneath it. Second, the effective protection and safeguarding of all access routes leading into the interior of the province; and third, with the establishment of a substantial military infrastructure behind the actual frontier line and the deployment of no less than seven cavalry units in the interior of this sector, the ability to conduct and sustain rapid retaliatory offensive operations deep into enemy territory at any given point.

---

<sup>929</sup> With the exception of the fort at Ilișua.

#### **d. The Eastern Part of Roman Dacia: From Trajan to Hadrian**

Given the open opposition which usually accompanied Hadrian's reversion to a generally defensive policy, his decision to abandon all Roman possessions to the north and east of the Olt river line was bound to be the subject of a great deal of criticism from ancient literary sources.<sup>930</sup> However, the series of political events that marked the year of Hadrian's accession, seem to demonstrate that his decision was a result of military and strategic necessity as well as logistic considerations. For one thing, Hadrian's first year in power witnessed a series of simultaneous revolts in Britain and Mauretania,<sup>931</sup> while, at the same time, the Jewish uprising that had broken out in AD 115, was still raging hard in Cyrenaica, Egypt and Cyprus.<sup>932</sup> Accordingly, in the Danubian region, the initial success of the Sarmatian raids of AD 117-118 against the province of Dacia, had managed to expose both the vulnerability of Rome's defences in the area as well as the rather precarious hold that the Romans had over that territory. In relation to the eastern part of Dacia in particular, having in mind the length of the frontier line that Rome had to defend,<sup>933</sup> and the relative ease with which the Roxolani managed to roam the entire area of Wallachia and South Moldavia, it became rather clear that, in order to counteract the constant aggression of the Transdanubian tribes in the eastern part of Roman Dacia, a new system of frontier defence control had to be introduced to ensure the adequate protection of Rome's possessions in the area. Last, but not least, from a strategic point of view, the actual geographical location of both Wallachia and South Moldavia presented certain tactical and logistic problems in connection to Rome's defences in the region, especially as the existence of the intervening sub-Carpathian mountain range posed a significant

---

<sup>930</sup> Eutropius, *Chron.* viii.6.2; Festus, *Brev.* xiv.

<sup>931</sup> SHA, *Had* v.2-3.

<sup>932</sup> Dio, lxxviii, 32.1-3; Eusebius, *HE* iv.2.2. For a detailed discussion of the events in the Jewish revolt of AD 115-117, see Fuks, "Jewish Revolt", 98-104; Smallwood, "Palestine", 500-510.

<sup>933</sup> Which, at least until the first year of Hadrian's reign, formed an almost unbroken horizontal line starting from the Tisza river in the West, through the south-east reaches of the Carpathian mountain range up to the Siret river, and ending in the Danube river delta in the east, along the Black sea coastline.

obstacle for lateral communications between them and Dacia proper; in the event of a sudden Sarmatian diversion anywhere along the eastern reaches of the Carpathians, Roman defences in both Wallachia and Moldavia would be immediately at risk of being cut off from the rest of Rome's military concentrations in Dacia. In the light of these circumstances, Hadrian's decision to abandon Wallachia and South Moldavia should be seen as a tactical withdrawal designed to meet with Rome's new strategic requirements and military considerations with regard to Dacia's frontier defences, mainly by reverting to a more easily defensible and recognisable physical frontier line along the Olt river.

At the same time, however, despite the withdrawal of Roman troops from Wallachia and South Moldavia, Rome's effective political control over these territories and the populations that inhabited them, seems not to have been affected in any significant extent. In fact, in addition to the establishment of clientele relations with the Roxolani,<sup>934</sup> it is probable that "Hadrian encouraged the revival of a political formation (within the abandoned territories) which, in exchange for its protection, was under obligation to keep the peace and to promise to render assistance to the Roman army".<sup>935</sup> Therefore, while retaining Wallachia and South Moldavia under his sphere of influence, in the form of "extra-provinciam" territories, Hadrian's withdrawal appears to have presented Rome with an additional political advantage: the actual appeasement of the restless Roxolani, mainly by the rendering of a suitable piece of land which they could inhabit, and which would, as a consequence, ensure both their cooperation as well as their peaceful settlement across the boundaries of the empire.

Most importantly, however, it is highly probable that the actual decision behind the abandonment of the above territories might not have been Hadrian's in the first place. On the contrary, an examination of the evidence derived from a number of Roman fortifications in the areas of Wallachia and South Moldavia seems to demonstrate that Trajan was the one responsible for the gradual withdrawal of Roman troops from these two areas, a fact which could, at least in

---

<sup>934</sup> Apart from the payment of annual tribute, it appears that the Roxolani king was allowed to settle in the Roman empire and was even granted the Roman citizenship by Hadrian. Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 100.

<sup>935</sup> Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 21; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 273-275.

connection to Dacia, provide a certain degree of proof for Hadrian's statement that he had indeed invoked Trajan's secret instructions to withdraw.<sup>936</sup> In South Moldavia, in the two main fortifications in the area, at Piroboridava and Piatra Neamt along the Siret river line, the withdrawal of forces appears to have commenced as early as the first decade of the second century AD, possibly as early as 105/106 considering the date suggested by the Hunt Papyrus.<sup>937</sup> Accordingly, in relation to the string of Roman fortifications in the Wallachian plains (at Drajna de Sus, Mălăiești, Tîrgșor and Filipești), which appear to have been permanently abandoned by AD 118, research in the area has established that in fact these fortifications had been the subject of systematic abandonment since AD 114-115.<sup>938</sup> Furthermore, the notion that Trajan himself was contemplating the abandonment of Wallachia and South Moldavia could be further supported by his simultaneous redeployment and concentration of all Roman forces from Wallachia to the existing forts of Trajanic origin along the Olt river line<sup>939</sup> – at Sîmbotin (Castra Traiana), Ionești Govorii, Buridava, Racari, Slăveni, and Izlaz – which under Hadrian would form the frontier boundary of the eastern part of Dacia. In this sense, it would be possible to conclude that Hadrian brought to a final conclusion a plan originally conceived and executed by Trajan, which, from the outset, aimed at the abandonment of all defences to the north, east and south of the Carpathian mountains and their substitution by two new fortified lines along the Carpathian mountain range and the Olt river line respectively.

---

<sup>936</sup> SHA *Had.v.3*.

<sup>937</sup> Vulpe, *Piroboridava*, 34; Vulpe, "Muntenia si Moldova", 351-352; Gostar, "Cetatile", 146.

<sup>938</sup> G.Florescu, "Problema", 225-232; G.Florescu and Bujor, "Mălăiești", 271-279; Diaconu and Constantinescu, "Tîrgșor", 537-546. Zagoritz, *Mălăiești*, 8, based on numismatic evidence, considers a date between AD 116-117 for the final abandonment of this fort.

<sup>939</sup> Confirmed by the redeployment between AD 114 and 118 of both cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum and cohorts II Flavia Bessorum along the Olt river line. Both units had previously operated along the Roman forts in South Wallachia, at Drajna de Sus, Rucăr and Voinești. For a discussion on this subject, see Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 55ff, 63-66 and figs 1 and 26-27.

### **e. Dacia Superior East (Sector III)**

In relation to the newly created province of Dacia Superior, the final abandonment of the area of South Moldavia meant that the north-east sector of the province would become responsible for the protection of the entire north-east frontier perimeter of Dacia.

Based on the existing amount of archaeological evidence, it is now certain that Hadrian was clearly the one responsible for the creation of a strongly fortified defence system across the north-east frontier of Dacia Superior. Starting from the northern section of Dacia Superior, the most important function in connection to Rome's strategic and defensive deployment in the region, was performed by the fort at Brîncovenеști, situated on the left bank of the Mureș river. This fort was assigned with the supervision and protection of the main access route that ran through a separate section of the eastern Carpathian mountain range and along the Mureș river valley. For this reason, even from the start of its life, it would become the base of ala I Nova Illyricorum.

In the central section of the "limes" of Dacia Superior, in the immediate rear of the eastern part of the Carpathian mountain range, defence was entrusted to a string of internal fortifications, identified at the points of Călugăreni, Sărățeni and Inlăceni. The fort at Călugăreni, was situated on the left bank of the river Niraj, one of the main tributaries of the Mureș river in the north-east of Dacia; its position enabled it to command an imposing view over the entire area of the Mureș river valley in the north, as well as to the main access routes through the Carpathian mountains to its immediate west. The fort at Sărățeni, accordingly, situated to the immediate south west of the Niraj river, was intended to block the entrance routes through the Tîrnava Mică valley and to work in close connection with the fort at Călugăreni. Their permanent garrisons have not been established. However, the temporary deployment of cohorts I Alpinorum equitata (between AD 144-148) and of a detachment of legio XIII Gemina is quite demonstrative of a conscious military plan designed to ensure the adequate protection of these important access routes and probable enemy penetration points; without doubt, the combined deployment and use of a cavalry regiment, recruited from a mountainous region, with a heavy infantry unit was an ideal choice for any likely

combat along the narrow mountain passes through the Carpathians. To the south of Sărățeni, the fort of Inlăceni was responsible for the safe-guarding of the south-east section of the Tîrnava Mică valley and especially for the main natural pass through the Ortovan river stream. As the even-ground lower plains of the Tîrnava valley represented good cavalry ground, it comes as no surprise to find a mounted unit stationed at this fort: first, the cohorts VIII Raetorum equitata and later, after AD 144, the cohorts IV Hispanorum equitata.

The defence system covering the full course of the north-east frontier sector of Dacia Superior was completed with the erection of three further fortifications to the south of the main Călugăreni-Inlăceni military axis, identified at the points of Odorheiul-Secuiesc, Sînpaul and Olteni. In addition to the protection of the north-east corner of Dacia Superior, the main function of the first two forts was to guard the important pass through the south-west section of the eastern Carpathian range, at the north-west part of the Olt river valley. Both forts are currently the subject of fresh investigation; however, from epigraphic evidence, we do know that, during Hadrian's reign, cohorts I Ubiorum and the numeri Maurorum S[agittariorum?] were stationed at Odorheiul and Sînpaul respectively. As for Olteni, situated in the immediate south-east of Sînpaul, the actual location of the fort suggests that it was intended to fulfil three important strategic tasks: first, along with the forts at Odorheiul and Sînpaul, the adequate supervision and protection of the northern stretch of the Olt river; second, the need for a rear-guard in the south-east sector of the Dacia Superior defence system, intended to avert any attempts for a sudden enemy south-east diversion or flanking manoeuvre launched through the Olt or Negru rivers; and third, the requirements for a strategic link between Rome's fortifications in Dacia Superior and those lying in the north east of the province of Dacia Inferior, at Boroşneu Mare, Angustia and Hoghiz.

Finally, in the immediate rear of the Brîncoveneşti-Călugăreni-Sînpaul frontier defence system, an intermediate ring of Hadrianic fortifications, at Războieni, Cristeşti and Sighișoara, provided additional support to the region's strategic and tactical layout, mainly by acting as a second, "in-depth" line of defence. The forts of Războieni and Cristeşti were the quarters of alae I Batavorum and I Bosporanorum respectively, which were brought to Dacia during Hadrian's

reign. The stationing of two cavalry units at these points was obviously of extreme strategic and tactical significance, if the forts were to function both as a rearguard for the troops stationed at the frontier as well as a base for the quick deployment of Roman forces anywhere across or beyond the frontier perimeter.

In essence, judging by the actual location of Rome's fortifications in the area, the pattern of strategic disposition chosen for this sector would closely follow the guidelines first established in the defensive system of Dacia Porolissensis: basically, an in-depth system of defence, where Roman fortifications were placed at key strategic locations along the main access routes leading through the Carpathian mountain range and into the interior of the province. The strategic advantages offered by the establishment of such a defensive arrangement have already been noted. Moreover, as this particular defence system had proved its effectiveness in Dacia Porolissensis – the area remained largely unaffected by barbarian invasions throughout the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD – the establishment of a similar system along the frontier sector of Dacia Superior was rather predictable. In relation to the province of Dacia Superior, however, this particular pattern of disposition would offer one further benefit; along with the conscious and deliberate use of the advantages offered by the presence of the Carpathian mountain range – without doubt a significant obstacle for enemy penetration by itself – it obviously negated the need for any elaborate and, therefore costly, lines of frontier perimeter defence. At the same time, following the same pattern of tactical disposition as the Limes Porolissensis, the deployment of predominantly cavalry units along the fortifications in the interior of the province, resulted in a defensive system capable of ensuring the full surveillance of both the frontier line and the interior access routes, of blocking all possible enemy penetration points and of quickly engaging and intercepting the enemy anywhere across the region.

#### **f. Dacia Inferior (Sector IV)**

In relation to the fortifications situated in the province of Dacia Inferior, the controversy surrounding the dating, purpose and strategic connection of the two fortified lines along and across the course of the Olt river line, generally

referred to as the “Limes Alutanus” and “Limes Transalutanus”,<sup>940</sup> has been an ongoing saga of epic proportions among Romanian classical literature; without doubt, this controversy has been fuelled by the relative lack of archaeological evidence and material derived from the surviving Roman forts in this particular region, which has led to a number of theories with a varying, often limited degree of accuracy and validity. From the outset, however, it must be noted that the purpose of this study is not to get entangled or involved in the endless debate and controversy surrounding the subject; but rather, following a close and careful examination of the available evidence, to produce some fresh insight as to the overall evolution of Rome’s defensive disposition along the frontier line of Dacia Inferior during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

#### The “Limes Alutanus”

On the basis of the available archaeological evidence, it is now beyond doubt that most of the Roman fortifications situated along the Olt river line, namely at Islaz, Slăveni, Romula, Acidava, Buridava, Castra Traiana, Boița, Feldioara, Hoghiz and perhaps Cincșor and Pons Aluti, were initially erected during the course of Trajan’s Dacian wars. The primary purpose behind their initial construction was to serve as temporary marching camps during the two offensives launched through the Olt river line, aimed at assaulting the Dacian strongholds situated in the north-east sections of modern Oltenia and of the Transylvanian high plateau. Following the conclusion of the Dacian wars, almost all of these fortifications, with the exception of the two forts at Islaz, would be preserved throughout Trajan’s reign. In my view, as the Olt river did not constitute the actual frontier line at the time, the preservation of these fortifications was specifically intended to meet three primary strategic requirements: first, the control and safe-guarding of the Roman line of tactical communications and supply that ran parallel to the Olt river line; the protection of this road was of immense strategic importance as it was the only such line that the

---

<sup>940</sup> There is no mention of either “term” within the texts of our ancient literary sources. Their naming as such was the product of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; however, as both terms have been universally established and accepted among scholars of Roman frontier studies, their

Romans possessed throughout the entire regions of Oltenia and South Wallachia. Second, the final pacification and consolidation of Rome's territorial possessions in the wider area of the Olt river valley. Third, along with the existing Roman fortifications in the Lower Wallachian plain,<sup>941</sup> the close supervision of the Roxolani, who had settled in the valleys east of the Olt river.

After the final abandonment of all territories east of the Olt river in AD 117/118, the Olt river line came to mark the official imperial frontier for the newly created province of Dacia Inferior. As I have previously noted, the process of the demilitarisation of the territories of Oltenia and south Wallachia, with the abandonment of all Roman fortifications in the area and the redeployment of all Roman forces along the forts on the Olt river line, was a gradual one, extending from *c.* AD 114 to 118. It thus becomes clear that Trajan, much like Hadrian and his immediate successors, realised the strategic value and tactical advantages offered by the creation of a clearly demarcated physical frontier line along the Olt river; by utilising their already existing fortifications in the Olt river valley, the Romans managed – with minimal further cost – to produce a fortified line which could, in close co-operation with Rome's standing military infrastructure along the frontier perimeter of Moesia Inferior, ensure the adequate supervision and close control of all populations residing across the areas of South Moldavia, Oltenia and Wallachia.

According to the surviving evidence, Hadrian was responsible for the further solidification and consolidation of the Roman defensive structure along the Olt river line, with the erection of at least four new fortifications, at Copăceni, Titești, Arutela and Rădăcinești.<sup>942</sup> Accordingly, in the period between AD 118 and 140 at the latest, there would be a substantial increase in the province's

---

use within this study, though arbitrary, is made as a matter of convenience. For the latter, see Appendix B.

<sup>941</sup> At Mălăiești, Drajna de Sus, Filipești, Tîrgșor, Voinești and Rucăr.

<sup>942</sup> Or six, if we count the forts at Cincșor and Pons Aluti, whose initial erection date tends to overlap the period between the late years of Trajan's reign and the reign of Hadrian.

auxiliary garrison, with the final deployment of three *alae* and seven cohorts along the frontier line of Dacia Inferior and the Olt river fortifications.<sup>943</sup>

Judging by the overall picture of Rome's strategic disposition in the area by the end of Hadrian's reign (map 26) it becomes clear that Roman building activity on the Olt river line during this period focused on the central section of the "Limes Alutanus", in the area between the Calimanești and Satului streams.<sup>944</sup> The main aim here was to demarcate the course of the actual frontier line, but most importantly, given the lack of any fortifications in this section during Trajan's reign, to provide a necessary and efficient strategic link between Rome's military concentrations north of Boița and south of Sîmbotin (Castra Traiana). Therefore, by the end of Hadrian's reign, the "Limes Alutanus" would acquire a shape and pattern of disposition quite different to the other frontier lines in Dacia but very typical of Rome's frontiers along the rest of the Danubian or Rhine provinces: basically a single, perimeter line of defence, with no supporting or reserve fortified lines behind it, which comprised of a continuous string of fortifications aligned along a clearly visible and defined physical river frontier.

On the basis of their presumed physical resemblance to other frontiers on the Danube and Rhine rivers, it would be easy to describe the "Limes Alutanus" as an elaborate, full blown river frontier defence system which was specifically designed to perform a similar function to that of their other Rhine or Danubian counterparts: i.e., to act as a defensive barrier which could provide an effective preclusive shield against any barbarian invasions and thus ensure the adequate protection of the imperial frontier line. However, a closer examination of the actual disposition of Rome's fortifications on the Olt river, reveals a certain number of shortcomings. For one thing, there is the rather irregular spacing of the forts. Whereas their spacing tends to be rather normal in the central section of the "Limes Alutanus" (between Boița and Pons Aluti), it becomes highly irregular towards the southern sector; note, for instance, the huge gaps between the forts of

---

<sup>943</sup> Including the units stationed to the immediate north-east of the main sector of the "Limes Alutanus", the *ala Gallorum* (at Boroșneu Mare) and the *cohors I Bracaraugustanorum* (at Angustia). The province's total auxiliary strength is recorded in the military diploma of 140 AD (Roxan, *RMD*, 39). It is quite probable that most units were transferred to Dacia Inferior before that date, and during the reign of Hadrian.

<sup>944</sup> The area in which all four new forts of Hadrianic origin were erected.

Pons Aluti and Acidava, or between Slăveni and the Danube river course. The existence of such wide-open gaps along a river frontier defence line is highly unusual for the Romans; if anything, it is not compatible with their applied pattern of strategic disposition along the rest of the Rhine and Danube “limes” sectors, where the spacing of their forts tends to be quite regular and consistent.

Furthermore, there is a distinct inconsistency in the actual positioning of the forts themselves, which again is very untypical of perimeter defence systems elsewhere in continental Europe, where all fortifications are naturally placed behind the actual river course.<sup>945</sup> This way, rivers could be used as an additional obstacle for enemy crossings. In the case of the Olt river frontier, however, out of the fourteen or so 2<sup>nd</sup> century fortifications along the “Limes Alutanus”, only eight are placed behind the *left bank* of the Olt river; the remaining six, at Castra Traiana, Rădăcinești, Titești, Arutela, Praetorium (Copăceni) and Hoghiz, are actually placed across the *right bank* of the Olt River and, therefore, across the actual frontier line and in enemy territory. The location of these forts would make sense if they were intended to act as advanced fortified posts or watchtowers for Roman fortifications behind the frontier line, as seen in the case of Rome’s fortified posts across the frontier line of Pannonia Superior;<sup>946</sup> however, with the exception of Titești,<sup>947</sup> the rest of these advanced bastions have no corresponding Roman fortifications behind them. Therefore, what becomes rather apparent from the above is that the pattern of fort disposition seen along the Olt river line tends to bear very little physical resemblance to that along the rest of the Danube or Rhine river frontiers.

Last but not least, there is also the problem of the actual size of the forts along the Olt river course. With the exception of Slăveni, Romula, Feldioara and Hoghiz, all other forts along the “Limes Alutanus” are quite small;<sup>948</sup> with an average size of *c.* 55 by 56 metres, these forts are quite below the “standard” size

---

<sup>945</sup> The only exception being Barbosi, in the north-west corner of Moesia Inferior.

<sup>946</sup> With reference to the watchtowers situated across the Danube, in front of the legionary base at Carnuntum. See, Swoboda, “Trajan”, 9-21; Mócsy, *Pannonia*, 104ff; Soproni, “Limes”, 220-221.

<sup>947</sup> Which acted as an advanced fortified post for the fort at Praetorium.

for a Roman auxiliary fortification. In fact, on the basis of their size, they should be termed as “burgi” or small “castella”, rather than auxiliary “castra” per se. For this reason, it should come as no surprise to find the forts along the central section of the “Limes Alutanus” being exclusively garrisoned by numeri (c. 300 men) instead of auxiliary cohorts,<sup>949</sup> therefore rendering them incapable of acting as the principal fighting platforms and key defensive components behind a proper frontier defence system.

In the light of the above arguments and judging by their distinct pattern of fort disposition, it is reasonable to conclude that the “Limes Alutanus” were never intended to fulfil the same purpose as Rome’s other perimeter defence systems along the Rhine or Danube frontier sectors; if anything, given their small size and irregular spacing, Rome’s fortifications along the Olt river line could have hardly constituted an effective deterrent or defensive shield for any determined enemy attacks. In this sense, it would seem that the “limes Alutanus” were specifically designed with a different function in mind.

In order to draw some conclusions as to the probable purpose behind the “limes Alutanus”, one must take under consideration both the status of Rome’s relations with the populations residing across the Olt river valley, as well as the actual potential threat – or lack of – that these populations were thought to constitute. The establishment of clientele relations with the Roxolani after AD 118, which resulted in their peaceful settlement along the eastern boundaries of Dacia, would bring about an era of generally peaceful conditions across the Olt river area; without doubt, the fact that there is no mention of any Roxolani attacks against the province of Dacia Inferior after 118 AD<sup>950</sup> and for the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, would further demonstrate this. Therefore, following an appraisal of the political situation across the border and as the Roxolani were not deemed to constitute a visible threat, it would seem that the “limes Alutanus” were

---

<sup>948</sup> Note, for instance, the sizes of the forts at Acidava (40 x 40), Rădăcinești (54 x 56), Boița (45 x 50) or Arutela (60 x 60).

<sup>949</sup> The forts at Arutela, Praetorium, Rădăcinești and Titești.

<sup>950</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the Roxolani took part in the Iazygan attacks between AD 136 and 138, as mentioned by *SHA*, Aelius, 3.5-6. According to the archaeological evidence, the Iazygan raids were confined in the area west of the Lower Tisza plain, and were primarily directed against the province of Pannonia Inferior.

deliberately intended and designed to act as an “open” frontier, rather than a closed or “preclusive” one; in this sense, the main purpose of Rome’s fortifications in the area would be to control and monitor the movement of populations across the Olt river frontier line and into the province of Dacia Inferior, not to prevent it.

Their function as frontier check-points or “custom” stations, rather than defensive platforms, can thus account for both the small size of the forts on the Olt river frontier line and the deployment of lightly armed and moderately trained troops along its central sector. Most importantly, however, the function of these forts as such could also justify the existence of a peculiar pattern of strategic disposition along the “limes Alutanus”. In this context, only their use as a means to regulate the movement of people on either side of the border could explain why some of the forts on the Olt river were erected across the actual frontier line; accordingly, the conscious and exact positioning of all forts on the confluence points of the Olt river with its major tributaries, thus controlling what constituted the main natural crossing points for any cross-border traffic, could account for the irregular spacing between the forts.

The function of the “limes Alutanus” as an essentially “open frontier”, where the primary emphasis was placed on the concentration of most fortifications along the main entrance points across the border, should not mean that Rome’s security apparatus along the Olt river course was incapable of ensuring the adequate day to day supervision and protection of the entire frontier perimeter line. To this extent, the “limes Alutanus” owe much to the deployment of four, maybe five,<sup>951</sup> cavalry units at key strategic positions along the river. This mobile force, operating in full or in smaller detachments, could extend its zones of operations to conduct patrols along the frontier line and thus prevent any unauthorised infiltration. Troops from *ala I Hispanorum*, stationed at Slăveni, could in co-operation with the cavalry forces stationed between Oescus and Novae, ensure the full perimeter surveillance of the southern-most part of this sector. Accordingly, the remaining cavalry units, deployed along the forts at Boroşneu, Hoghiz, Feldioara and perhaps Arutela and Castra Traiana, could carry

out similar patrolling or scouting operations along the northern sector of the “Limes Alutanus”. As for the central section of the Olt river line, between *Castra Traiana* and *Slăveni*, the absence of any cavalry units was balanced by the concentration of heavy infantry forces, such as the *I Augusta Nervia Brittonum milliaria*, the *III Gallorum* and the *I Flavia Commagenorum*, which could still conduct basic perimeter surveillance and deal with any low-scale penetration.

Furthermore, the deployment of cavalry units at certain forts which are situated across the actual frontier boundary, such as the ones stationed at *Boroşneu*, *Hoghiz* and *Castra Traiana*, indicates that these mobile forces were also specifically intended to operate well beyond the actual frontier line. In this sense, the forward stationing of these units, along with the existence of advanced fortified posts across the frontier perimeter, demonstrates that the Romans, despite their withdrawal from *Oltenia* and *South Wallachia* in AD 118, still maintained a strong military presence in the areas lying east of the Olt river line; this military presence, combined with the active use of diplomacy, ensured that they never ceased to exercise a sufficient degree of military and political control over these territories and the people that inhabited them.

In the light of the above arguments, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the evolution and final consolidation of the “limes Alutanus” reveal the existence of a rational strategic approach, which reflects a deep awareness of the political and military situation across the border. This resulted in the establishment of a defensive structure which, despite its shortcomings as a “proper” frontier defence system, was still capable of meeting Rome’s primary strategic requirements in the region: the close monitoring of all cross-border traffic, the adequate surveillance of the frontier perimeter and last, but not least, the preservation of Rome’s effective control over the territories and populations east of the Olt river.

---

<sup>951</sup> Considering the possibility for the deployment of detachments from *cohors I Hispanorum veterana equitata* at *Arutela* and *Castra Traina*.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS**

### **V.i. THE CREATION AND CHOICE OF ROME'S FRONTIER LINES ON THE LOWER DANUBE**

As seen previously, the creation of the Roman limes systems across the frontier sectors of the Lower Danube provinces, and the formulation of Roman frontier policy, evolved around three distinct chronological stages, over three clearly defined periods of time.

#### **a. Rome and the Lower Danube Area during the Julio-Claudian Period**

Roman frontier policy on the Lower Danube area during the Julio-Claudian period was dominated by the need to achieve the full pacification of the interior of the provinces. It has been suggested that Rome's major security problems throughout the Julio-Claudian period, were not so much the sporadic transborder incursions of hostile populations beyond the frontiers but rather the result of native revolts within the empire; for this reason the Roman army acted as a mobile reserve force in character, its main purpose being to guard potential spots of internal unrest.<sup>952</sup> This reconstruction seems to certainly apply for the early Julio-Claudian period, where the full pacification of any recently acquired territory is after all the primary strategic directive for any advancing or occupation army. As seen in the maps depicting the Roman defensive systems in each Lower Danube province by the end of the Julio-Claudian period, (maps 2, 8 and 14) it seems that, from the outset, each system indeed reflects a clear inward orientation. The pattern of Roman tactical and strategic deployment in the Lower Danube area during the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD demonstrates that Roman strategy at the time evolved around the need to keep a watchful eye on the populations residing in

the interior of the provinces rather than the provision of a system of frontier control. Throughout this period, and for the security of her territorial possessions, Rome depended solely on the substantial concentration of legionary and, to a lesser extent auxiliary, forces stationed in forts located at strategic points within the interior of the provinces, and usually near the emerging urban centres. This is clearly seen in the deployment of Rome's legionary forces in Pannonia, Moesia and Dalmatia during this period. Without doubt, this pattern of deployment clearly reflects Roman wariness or concerns against internal local uprisings, especially in the aftermath of the Pannonian revolt between AD 6-9.

However, the above reconstruction does not seem to apply equally for the rest of the Julio-Claudian period. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that the period between Claudius and Nero, was characterised by a series of initial efforts aiming at pushing the limits of imperial control towards the Danube river and the gradual unification and military occupation of all Roman territories along the frontier. The military occupation of the frontier territories between the Danube and Sió rivers, the incorporation of the area between the Dráva and Sava rivers in the eastern section of Pannonia under Nero, or the eastwards extension of the frontier territory of Moesia up to the Jantra river under Claudius,<sup>953</sup> are quite demonstrative of this new strategic trend.

Accordingly, the examples of some early military building activity on the Danube banks, such as the establishment of permanent military concentrations in the eastern frontier sections of Moesia (Oescus-Novae area), the construction of an early limes system along the Iron Gates gorge or the erection of the first fortifications on the eastern section of the Pannonian frontier line, further suggest that, between Tiberius and Nero, the Danube river course itself became a focus of Roman military activity. As discussed before, this early investment on the frontier was initially prompted by the need to supervise the local populations that were settled by the Romans within imperial territory.<sup>954</sup> However, the preservation of these defences and the subsequent building activity that took place along their

---

<sup>952</sup> Luttwak, *Strategy*, 17-18.

<sup>953</sup> Following the annexation of the kingdom of Thrace under Claudius, in 46 AD.

<sup>954</sup> See chapters II.ii.a and III.iv.a.

lines between Claudius and Nero,<sup>955</sup> suggests that by that time Rome's strategic outlook had begun to include the military supervision of her frontier territories, not just the interior of the provinces; a fact which is further supported by the increasing presence of Roman legionary forces across frontier territories after Tiberius.<sup>956</sup>

From the above examples it is reasonable to conclude that, in relation to the Lower Danube area and contrary to Luttwak's reconstruction, a further evolution in Roman imperial strategy occurred towards the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. This evolution was arguably the result of the recognition of the fact that by the times of Claudius' accession, endemic revolts in the Lower Danubian basin had become virtually extinct, which thus assumes the prior full pacification of the interior of the Lower Danube provinces. In this sense, towards the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Roman frontier strategy would come to include three new important strategic directives: first, the need to ensure the initial military occupation and unification of Roman territorial possessions up to and along the Danube river line. Second, especially after the construction of the first frontier roads around the Iron Gates or the Oescus-Novae sectors, to secure the protection of the emerging military infrastructure on the frontier line or interior of each province that facilitated the quick movement of troops and supplies across provincial territory; and third, as indicated by the substantial concentration of cavalry forces near the Oescus-Novae axis after Tiberius, to assist forward offensive operations or reconnaissance missions into enemy territory.

## **b. The Early State of the Frontier**

In the "evaluation" sections of each chapter, one factor stressed repeatedly concerned the often ambiguous state of the Roman frontier line, or, more

---

<sup>955</sup> Note for instance the Iron Gates or the Oescus-Novae frontier sectors, where Roman building activity is recorded continuously between Tiberius and Nero.

<sup>956</sup> Apart from the Oescus-Novae sector, evidence has shown that Rome's legions in both Moesia and Pannonia at the time had extended their zones of operations to include the supervision of the frontier territories between the Dráva, Sava and Pincus rivers. Note the evidence found from both V Macedonica and IV Skythica in the Iron Gates sector around AD 33, or that from legio IX Hispana in the area between the Dráva river and Sirmium.

specifically, the relative obscurity in the picture of Roman frontier defensive systems in certain sectors of the Lower Danube during the Julio-Claudian period, such as the entire territory between the Dráva and Pincus rivers. As discussed before, the lack of any real or perceived external threat across those sectors and the establishment by Rome of friendly or “clientele” relations with most of the populations residing behind or beyond the frontier, negated the need for the provision of early frontier defence systems or for the establishment of a permanent military presence along the entire course of the left bank of the Danube. It seems that, as a rule, periodic visits from Roman legionary forces were deemed sufficient for the preservation of peace and order in these territories. The fact that no cross-border attacks of any note are reported up to at least the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD in these sectors, can thus justify the relative absence of any continuous form of perimeter defence on the frontier at the time. Therefore, Roman military activity on the frontier line during this period was justifiably confined to those areas where prior experience had shown that barbarian attacks were to be expected. This can be seen in the initial militarisation of the sector south of Aquincum, across the area where the Iazyges had settled by the end of the Julio-Claudian period; or in the limes work on the Oescus-Novae frontier sector, opposite the Olt river line, which was one of the main routes for Dacian inroads into Moesia from Burebista onwards.

However, in addition to the above, the existence of what appears to be an underlying connection between any Roman military activity on the frontier line and increase in transborder barbarian aggression could also account for the absence of any Roman military activity in certain sectors of the Danube frontier line during this period. The fact that, despite the constitution of the Danube as the Empire’s official frontier line from Augustus onwards, the Roman army had set its foot only on limited occasions on the Danube river course, seems to have triggered little or no response from the populations residing across it. A quite interesting notion is that as soon as the Roman army appears in bulk on the Danube river course, barbarians tend to react aggressively. It is hardly a coincidence that the frontier line between Carnuntum and Arrabona becomes a major theatre of war during the early principate after the deployment of legio XV Apollinaris in this sector by Augustus’ reign. It is again not a coincidence that the Iazyges increase

their attacks on Roman soil following the erection of the first frontier fortifications between Aquincum and the Dráva river by the late Julio-Claudian period; or that Geto-Dacian attacks in the eastern sections of Moesia, intensify or increase proportionately to Roman military activity on that part of the border (the Oescus-Novae axis).

There is really no way to establish whether the Romans were aware of such a connection at the time or whether this connection had any effect in the formulation of imperial strategy on the Lower Danube during this period. However, if the Romans had indeed recognised this connection, it is possible that, at least during the early phases of Roman military involvement in this particular region, where the Romans were primarily pre-occupied with the pacification and consolidation of the territories in the interior of the provinces, their wariness in triggering any response or aggression from the populations across the Danube might have prevented them from fortifying certain specific sectors of their frontier. In other words, in theory at least, it is possible that the absence of any degree of military investment in some sectors of the Danube frontier at the time was not the result of some form of inefficiency or complacency in Roman strategic planning during the Julio-Claudian era; but rather the product of a conscious and careful decision by Rome to avoid making new enemies across the frontier. This could be the case for the reportedly "peaceful" areas, such as the one between the Sava and Pincus rivers in the western section of Moesia, where cross - Danube enemy activity was almost non-existent at the time. The decision by Rome to refrain from any full military involvement in this frontier sector might have been prompted by the possible recognition of the fact that any attempts to proceed with the direct militarisation of the area could have resulted in the creation of new threats across the frontier.

### **c. The Emergence of Linear Frontier Fortification Systems on the Danube river: From the Flavians to the Antonines**

As the evidence on the ground clearly demonstrates, the Flavian period marked a decisive turning point in the overall strategic situation on the Lower Danube frontiers. This period was primarily characterised by a significant change

in both the pattern of Rome's tactical and strategic disposition along the boundaries of the Lower Danube provinces and the configuration of her defence systems in each frontier sector (maps 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18).

There are several factors that appear to have brought about this switch in Roman frontier strategy during the Flavian period. First, the need to demarcate the final limits of imperial control, no doubt in accordance to what Hodgson describes as the "obsessive Roman need to delineate the ordered internal space of the empire at any given time".<sup>957</sup> Second, the further need to proceed with the full integration, unification and military occupation of all territories situated on the left bank of the Danube. Third, and most importantly, the evident inability of the previous defensive system to ensure the protection of Rome's frontier territories against barbarian attacks, as the initial success of the Geto-Dacian and Sarmatian attacks between AD 69-70 tend to demonstrate.

The creation and extensive re-organisation of Rome's defence systems along the Lower Danube frontier sectors was by no means carried out overnight nor was it, as it was once commonly assumed, the work of a single emperor. On the contrary, a look at the maps depicting the chronological phases of construction of Roman frontier fortifications on the Lower Danube, suggests that the creation and emergence of the Roman linear frontier fortification systems was the result of a continuous process of development which originated under the Flavians and was carried out to a conclusion by the Antonine emperors. Following the conclusive unification of all frontier territories and the final demarcation and constitution of the Danube river as the definitive frontier line, the switch in the pattern of Rome's strategic and tactical disposition would materialise under several successive stages: As the border line acquired increasing definition it also acquired an increasing degree of military investment. The first step was the re-deployment of all Roman forces on the frontier line, which resulted in the full military occupation of all frontier territories on the left bank of the Danube but also in the complete de-militarisation of the interior of the provinces; following the transfer of legio IV Flavia from Dalmatia to the frontier line in the wider area of the Sava river valley around 86 AD, only two units in the entire Lower Danube area remained in the

---

<sup>957</sup> Hodgson, "Relationships", 62.

interior after that date.<sup>958</sup> The permanent stationing of all Roman legionary and auxiliary forces on the Danube was then followed by the erection of a continuous line of frontier fortifications, both as accommodation bases and as defensive points, and by the initial construction of a road system linking these forts between them. By the end of the first century AD, the Lower Danube banks came to be enveloped by a continuous string of fortifications in a linear arrangement.

In this sense, the original creation of linear systems of fortifications across the Lower Danube frontier line was the definitive product of the Flavian period. As the evidence suggests, the basic ingredients of each frontier defence system were, more or less, in place by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. These are, without doubt, the forts depicted in Trajan's column, as our evidence has now clearly proved the prior existence of a substantial number of fortifications and smaller fortified posts along the Lower Danubian limes before the outbreak of the war.

In relation to the Danube river, the further development and consolidation of the existing frontier defence systems was the dominant factor behind the frontier policy of Roman emperors during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. In fact, all across the Danube river frontier, there were no major modifications or alterations to the existing defensive layout or to Rome's overall standard pattern of strategic disposition. Antonine military activity, in general, was confined to sealing off areas where the previous defences had proved unable to perform and to the creation of a unified chain of frontier fortifications enveloping the totality of Rome's frontiers in the Lower Danube area; during this period, the road network, linking systems between them, and enabling the quick transport of troops and supplies across the frontier was also completed.

One significant departure from the established order of things was the conquest of Dacia. In the light of the overall military and strategic situation that had risen in the area of the Lower Danubian frontier line by the end of the first century AD, especially after the successive Dacian inroads against the Moesian provinces, the conquest of Dacia was indeed the result of military necessity and

---

<sup>958</sup> The cohorts I Thracum Syriaca, stationed at the fort of Timachus Minus (Moesia Superior), between 70-106 AD and the ala Scubulorum at Gorsium up to the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

defensive considerations.<sup>959</sup> The presence of a formidable and often hostile opponent across the entire course of the Lower Danube constituted a clear and constant danger for Roman security and economic interests in the area. The political and economic development of Rome's provinces in the region, especially those of Upper and Lower Moesia, would have faced severe limitations without total protection from any outside threat.<sup>960</sup> In this sense, the conquest of Dacia resulted in the complete elimination of the Dacian threat – thus solving a frontier question once and for all – and in the subsequent alleviation of pressure from the frontier sectors of both Moesian provinces, as Rome's primary strategic and defensive orientation would now shift away from the Danube river line; this presented a significant tactical advantage to Rome, especially in terms of manpower resources, as it facilitated the release of forces from the middle course of the Danube and their concentration along the open sectors of the frontier, east of the Olt or west of the Tisza river line.<sup>961</sup> The creation of an adequate security zone north of the Danube would, as a consequence, guarantee the provision of the necessary safety conditions that would enable Rome's political, administrative and economic institutions in the Lower Danubian provinces to flourish.

Accordingly, with the annexation of Dacia, the Romans seem to have completed an offensive action that successfully managed to split up the barbarian front by separating – and thus cutting in half – the combined force of Rome's foremost adversaries in the area, the Iazyges in the west and the Roxolani, their natural allies in the east.<sup>962</sup> The strategic-geographical position of Dacia, forming an advanced bastion deep into enemy territory, presented Rome with two further significant tactical advantages: a fortified surveillance zone that could provide a close watch on all enemy movement across the frontier and a basis for the creation of a defensive bulwark for the protection of the other Danubian provinces, which in turn, would considerably enhance Rome's overall offensive and defensive capabilities in the Lower Danube region.

---

<sup>959</sup> Gudea, "Defensive System", 69.

<sup>960</sup> As Luttwak, *Strategy*, 214 and n.122 argues, "an *economic* frontier strategy on that sector was incompatible with the survival of so strong a neighbour".

<sup>961</sup> As seen in the transfer of V Macedonica from Oescus to Troesmis after AD 106.

<sup>962</sup> Gudea, "Recent Research", 802.

#### **d. The Nature of Roman Frontier Strategy after the Flavian Period**

According to Luttwak, Roman frontier strategy between the Julio-Claudian and the Flavian and Antonine periods was primarily characterised by two distinct switches: That between a “hegemonic” to a “territorial empire” and, in relation to the emerging frontier defence systems, the permanent switch to a “preclusive” mode of defence.<sup>963</sup> In relation to the Lower Danube area, there is enough evidence to confirm the validity of the former argument. For one thing, this period as a whole is characterised by the creation of visible frontier lines that, more or less, defined the last limits of imperial territorial control. Accordingly, by the times of Domitian’s accession, most client states on the periphery of the Lower Danube river course had indeed been subjected to direct Roman administration. The kingdom of Thrace was formally annexed by the Roman empire in AD 46; the territory of Dobrudja (Skythia Minor) came under direct provincial administration during Vespasian’s reign.

However, as for Luttwak’s latter argument, despite the obvious switch in the pattern and configuration of the empire’s defensive disposition and the provision of the first real elements of frontier control, it is quite doubtful whether Roman frontier strategy after the Flavian period signifies a permanent switch to the purely defensive or preclusive. In fact, evidence on the ground suggests that at least until the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the Roman limes systems – the defining product of Flavian frontier strategy – did not possess a state of permanence on the frontier. The evidence derived from the building phases of each fort on the Lower Danube frontier sectors points towards this direction (see tables 5-7). Most fortifications on the Lower Danube are still made of earth and timber up to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD which, in my view, denotes their still temporary status and function on the frontier; in fact, and on the basis of their shape, building material and “primitive” outer defences, Flavian fortifications on the Danube are more reminiscent of the temporary marching camps of the late Republic or early Empire rather than the elaborate permanent stone structures of the late Empire. In relation to the Lower Danube, Roman frontier installations acquire a permanent status on the border only after Trajan’s reign and, in a number of cases, even much later: in

---

<sup>963</sup> Luttwak, *Strategy*, chapter 2 and especially pages 19, 22-23, 74 and fig. 1.2.

the eastern sector of Pannonia (table 5), out of the twenty two or so 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century frontier fortifications, none were rebuilt in stone during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; only five were rebuilt in stone during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Interestingly enough, the forts rebuilt in stone are situated in the Aquincum-V. Salina sector, which, as argued before, was the most threatened sector of the eastern Pannonian frontier line during this period. A further six were rebuilt in the period between the Marcomannic wars and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; accordingly, there is no indication or evidence for any rebuilding activity from the remaining forts during the first or second centuries AD.

A similar pattern arises after an examination of the forts along the frontier line of Moesia Superior (table 6). Out of thirty-one forts in total, only five or six were rebuilt in stone during the first century AD; however, judging by the example of the fort at Saldum, this could well have been the result of necessity, due to flooding, if anything else. Our evidence about the stone phases of forts is indeed minimal, as a number of fortifications were built in earth and timber during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century as well. There is not much evidence in relation to the remaining first century forts, but none of them appear to have been rebuilt in stone before the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD at the earliest.

Unfortunately, the inconclusive nature of the evidence cannot allow for the reconstruction of a similar pattern in the case of the Lower Moesian forts, as the dates for their actual building phases are unknown (table 7). However, from the forts where evidence does exist, a similar pattern can be partly observed: From the six first century forts which have revealed traces of an earth and timber phase, only one was reconstructed in stone during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; the rest only after the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Furthermore, additional evidence for the above can be derived from an examination of the auxiliary units stationed in the Lower Danube frontier forts during the Flavian period. As seen in the tables of disposition for each province (tables 1-3), units change bases of operations on a quite frequent basis during this period. This movement should be interpreted due to the imminent launching of Roman offensives against Dacia; but the situation remains as such even during peacetime. Most units usually become the permanent garrison of a fort after

Trajan's or Hadrian's reign. There is, in fact, an interesting connection between the two, as there are a number of examples where the rebuilding of a fort in stone occurs after the deployment of the unit which would become its permanent garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

The above examples demonstrate that Rome's frontier defence systems along the Lower Danube would not acquire a permanent character at least until the early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, which, therefore, leads to the conclusion that the switch to a preclusive and purely defensive mode of disposition can only be ascribed to the period after Trajan and Hadrian.<sup>964</sup> In fact, and as a general remark, it seems that the Lower Danube limes systems as a whole assume a state of permanence and an increasingly preclusive role in close correspondence to the emergence of Rome's defence systems in Dacia; especially as the latter becomes the Empire's key strategic player and primary offensive generator in the area. In relation to the Flavian limes systems, however, the evidence displays a picture of a frontier still on the move, essentially characterised by the deployment and use of mobile forces, stationed in as yet temporary forts. Despite their evident use as a mechanism of frontier defence and control, the Flavian frontier fortification systems on the Lower Danube still retain a fundamentally offensive outlook and character; in fact, as argued in the evaluation sections of each separate frontier sector, one of the remarkable attributes of the Flavian limes systems was its ability to sustain forward operations across enemy territory, as seen in the cases of Domitian's and Trajan's Dacian wars.

#### **e. The Choice of Rome's Frontier Lines**

Recent scholarship on the subject has argued that the choice of Rome's river frontier lines was by no means rational, but rather the product of arbitrary and accidental decisions or the point where the Roman army simply ran out of

---

<sup>964</sup> Contra Whittaker, *Frontier*, 86. On the basis of the evidence described above, it is quite difficult to accept his view that the Danube frontier retained its offensive character at least until the times of Commodus and after his addition of double forts and *burgi* across the frontier line. As the evidence suggests, such *burgi* or smaller fortified posts were in place on the frontier from the late 1<sup>st</sup> - early 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards. See the relevant discussion in the section on the purpose of the frontier.

steam.<sup>965</sup> Much criticism has been levelled as to whether rivers can be considered as a considerable obstacle to determined enemy attacks. Their effectiveness as a defensive deterrent will be discussed at a later point.<sup>966</sup> However, turning back to the original question, that is as to the rationality behind the choice of the Danube as a frontier line, most criticisms have focused on the evident limitations of Roman geographical knowledge in general, which essentially acted as a considerable obstacle for any conscious decisions as to which frontiers could guarantee the safety of the empire. As F. Millar has shown, it is true that Roman geographical knowledge on a wider scale – though by no means negligible<sup>967</sup> – was still in a very primitive stage.<sup>968</sup> This, according to Whittaker, resulted in the production of “eccentric, not scientific decisions”, as rational decisions for the shape and extent of Rome’s frontiers were fatally flawed by the essential lack of accurate geographical information.<sup>969</sup>

However, it seems that most “flaws” in Roman geographical knowledge tend to be viewed in rather absolute terms. Even if Rome’s level of sophistication in terms of global geographical knowledge left much to be desired, this should not mean that the Romans were not fully acquainted with the particular local topographical realities of the regions situated right across their main sphere of interest, i.e. their frontiers. For one thing, as argued previously, the pattern of Roman strategic disposition tends to orient itself according to the region’s topographical realities and the morphology of the terrain. This inevitably presupposes an adequate topographical understanding of the territories situated immediately across the frontier, a fact which is further demonstrated by an examination of the Dacian frontier sectors.<sup>970</sup> Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the Romans made serious and conscious efforts to collect information about the territories or the populations in the periphery of the imperial boundaries. This collection took many forms, usually through the interaction of Roman

---

<sup>965</sup> Mann, “Frontiers”, 508, 513. See also Isaac, *Limits*, 392-397 and 417.

<sup>966</sup> See the section on the effectiveness of the frontier, at the end of this chapter.

<sup>967</sup> On this subject, see the recent discussions by Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, esp. 112-120; Nicolet, *Space*, 66ff.

<sup>968</sup> Millar, “Emperors”, 15-18; see also Isaac, *Limits*, 402.

<sup>969</sup> Whittaker, *Frontier*, 62-63, 69; Isaac, *Limits*, 397 and 417.

officers with local chieftains and traders on the frontier line or, alternatively, with the launching of expeditions across it.<sup>971</sup> An example of the latter in relation to the Danube region, exists in the expeditions of P. Silvanus across Dacian soil in the AD 50's. It is reasonable to assume that this expedition must have been useful in the gathering of geographical information, which was in turn used for both Domitian's and Trajan's offensives across the Danube. Jordanes informs us that the roads through Tapae and Butae were the main natural entrances to Dacia at the time;<sup>972</sup> it is no surprise to see that both these passes were repeatedly used for Roman offensives across Dacia. Accordingly, it seems quite hard to imagine that the Romans would have launched such deep offensives across enemy territory without an elementary understanding of where they were going in the first place. On the contrary, Trajan's pincer movement through the Lederata – Tibiscus axis and the Olt river line which ultimately resulted in the complete encirclement of Sarmizegethusa (AD 105-106), demonstrates that the Romans knew precisely where the main Dacian strongholds were located at the time and the best ways to attack them. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Rome had both the willingness and the ability to comprehend the particular topographical realities of each separate region beyond her outer limits of control.

In light of the above, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, that the Romans possessed an adequate topographical understanding of the territories across their frontier. Second, that the choice of the Danube river as Rome's frontier line in the area was both conscious and deliberate, following a rational assessment of the region's geographical realities and conditions. In this respect, it seems reasonable to agree with the expressed view that the Romans had a clear view of which boundaries could guarantee the safety of the imperial provinces.<sup>973</sup> For a start, the Danube river itself offered considerable strategic advantages: In addition to its obvious usefulness as an ancillary line of communications and supply and as a natural basis for the creation of a frontier defence system, what the Danube river also offered was a clearly visible line of division and demarcation

---

<sup>970</sup> For a further discussion on this subject see below section V.i.g.

<sup>971</sup> See Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 16-38, for a comprehensive discussion on this subject.

<sup>972</sup> *Getica*, 74.

<sup>973</sup> As argued by Dyson, *Creation*, 5; Campbell, *Emperor*, 133ff; 382.

between Roman and non Roman territory which, in turn, negated the need for costly artificial barriers, such as Hadrian's Wall; in this respect, the Danube river course was the only physical barrier in this area capable of providing the clearest possible line of trespass. Ancient sources describe the Danube as a definitive frontier;<sup>974</sup> barbarians are specifically asked to respect and recognise it as such.<sup>975</sup>

#### **f. Roman defence systems on the Lower Danube frontier: The product of a "Grand strategy" ?**

From the outset, and in relation to the initial stages of development of Rome's defence systems in the Lower Danube area, there seems to be no real evidence for the prior existence and application of a central "grand strategy", enveloping the totality of the Lower Danubian frontier sectors.<sup>976</sup> For one thing, despite the evident similarity in the overall pattern of strategic disposition, there are distinct variations in the theme and purpose of each of Rome's defence systems in the area. Accordingly, there is a distinct discrepancy in the degree of Roman military activity and investment even within frontier sectors of the same province during this period. In Pannonia Inferior for example, there is a visible difference in the density and spacing of both fortifications and troops in the sectors between Aquincum and the Sió river (sector I) and that between the Palus and Sava rivers (sector III): Despite their roughly equal length, the first sector was guarded by seven fortifications and c. 8000-8500 men, while the latter by three fortifications and c. 1000-1500 men (see maps 3 and 6). This situation would not change under the Antonine period, as sector III was garrisoned by no more than 2000-2500 men throughout the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (map 7). A similar discrepancy in the degree of militarisation among different sectors is visible in the eastern sections of Moesia Inferior (maps 15 and 18); note the density of fortifications and troops between the Jiul and Jantra rivers, as opposed to the complete lack of Roman forts, datable to the Flavian period, in the area between Durostorum and Carsium. At the same time, the dense network of fortifications observed between Golubac and

---

<sup>974</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* i. 9; iv 5; Josephus, *BJ* ii. 16.4 / 363, 377.

<sup>975</sup> Florus ii, 28-29.

<sup>976</sup> See chapter I.iii.

Taliatae and the Iron Gates frontier sector in Moesia Superior (map 9) has no real equal throughout the Lower Danube frontier line.

Further variations in the theme, purpose and degree of military activity along separate frontier sectors are also evident in the case of the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century limes systems in the Lower Danube area. In Lower Moesia, there is a distinct discrepancy in the degree of militarisation and fort distribution between sectors III and II (maps 16 and 19). Accordingly, the frontiers of the Dacian province are quite demonstrative of this variation, as there are evident differences in the pattern of strategic and tactical disposition along each separate sector to start with. For example, the pattern of disposition seen in the “Limes Porolissensis” or the northeast sector of Dacia Superior (maps 24 and 30) is unique throughout the Lower Danube area. In addition, note the differences in the defensive system of the Banat region (map 22) – basically consisting of two (and later one) horizontal lines of fortifications situated well behind the probable frontier line in the area – as opposed to the “Limes Alutanus” sector (map 26).

Furthermore, there is little evidence for any form of pre-emptive strategic initiatives on the Danube frontier line during this period of time. On the contrary, the construction of the Roman limes in each frontier sector seems to be a product of specific strategic responses to the new geo-strategic challenges emerging beyond the imperial boundaries; more specifically, to the threat posed by barbarian cross-border attacks as and when they manifest themselves across the frontier. After the mid-1<sup>st</sup> century and throughout the period under study, it became a recognisable fact that the main threat to Roman security was posed by the increasingly hostile movements of populations across the frontier, as the successive barbarian attacks of the period against imperial territories tend to demonstrate.<sup>977</sup>

Rome’s strategic response to transborder aggression was primarily translated into intense camp building activity on the frontier either as primary defensive points or as a means to assist the concentration of forces for imminent

---

<sup>977</sup> With reference to the Barbarian attacks of AD 69, 82-85, 86-89, 92.

retaliatory offensives across the frontier.<sup>978</sup> The evidence derived from the construction dates of each Roman fort along the Lower Danube limes can help towards the establishment of a clear pattern between cross border attacks and Roman military activity on the frontier. In fact, Rome's major building phases on each limes sector, corresponds and heightens proportionately to barbarian attacks. The Sarmatian and Geto-Dacian attacks of AD 69-70 were the main cause for Vespasian's initial work on the Lower Pannonian and Moesian limes. The second wave of Transdanubian attacks, those of AD 85-86, is what prompted the extensive camp-building activity of the last decade of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and the redeployment of Rome's legionary forces on the frontier after AD 86. The construction of new fortifications on the Lower Pannonian frontier under Trajan and Hadrian was the direct result of the Sarmatian attacks of AD 107-108. Similarly, the emergence of a continuous linear frontier defence system enveloping the northwest corner of Lower Moesia (between Carsium and Noviodunum – map 16) and the transfer of legio V Macedonica at Troesmis in AD 106, was a direct strategic reaction to the Dacian and Roxolani attack against Moesia in 101 AD.<sup>979</sup>

Response as opposed to initiative is also the main theme behind the construction of the Dacian limes. One quite illuminating example can be derived from the fortifications situated in the northeast area of Dacia Superior (map). The fact that all forts in this sector were initially erected during Hadrian's reign, indicates that they were specifically part of as a response to the Roxolani attacks in the northeast part of Dacia between AD 117-118.

Therefore, barbarian aggression is the dominant factor behind the evolution and creation of the Roman defence systems in the Lower Danube area between the Flavians and the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. This is the main reason for the evident discrepancy in the degree of militarisation between different sectors, as described

---

<sup>978</sup> On this point, see the relevant discussion in chapters III.ii.b and III.iv.b. The erection of new forts and the tactical reinforcement of the Oescus – Novae and Singidunum-Viminacium axis corresponds to preparations for Domitian's offensives against Dacia. However, this should not be seen as a strategic initiative, as both activities were clearly re-active in character, following the Dacian attacks against Moesia between AD 85-86.

<sup>979</sup> As it was through this particular sector (and through the Siret and Ialomița rivers) that the Dacians launched their attack. See Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, fig. 27.

above: heavily fortified sectors, such as sector I in Pannonia Inferior or sector II in Lower Moesia, correspond to areas which were frequently threatened by barbarian attacks. In this respect, the main evolving theme behind the creation and development of the Roman *limes* in the Lower Danube follows a quite strict pattern: Barbarian attacks – prompt Roman military response; barbarians intensify attacks – Roman military activity increases. Hence, and as a concluding remark, the gradual evolution in Roman strategic disposition on the Lower Danube was not the product of a pro-active “grand strategy”, but rather the product of an assessment and subsequent military reaction to the direction from which trouble and danger were usually expected.

#### **g. Roman Defence Systems in the Lower Danube Area: Some Observations**

The fact that the emergence or creation of Rome’s frontier defence systems in the Lower Danube area was not the product of a central uniform strategy, should not rule out the existence of a uniform policy and a rational military plan with respect to their subsequent development and consolidation. Seen as a whole, the gradual evolution of the Lower Danube frontier fortification systems, as developed under the auspices of successive emperors and where each stage indeed represented a refinement and improvement over the previous one,<sup>980</sup> reflects the existence of a remarkable uniformity in Roman frontier strategy as to the choice of the empire’s overall mode of defence and pattern of strategic disposition in the area, the end product of which were the linear fortification systems visible on each frontier sector by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>981</sup>

The existence of certain revolving patterns within the development and final disposition of each frontier defence system in the Lower Danube area throughout the period under study, can provide further evidence for the above. In a previous section, I have discussed how the direct militarisation and the construction of frontier defences in each sector was the product of specific strategic responses to barbarian attacks. From the outset, it is important to note that, regardless of the emperor in charge,

---

<sup>980</sup> Contra Mann, “Frontiers”, 514.

<sup>981</sup> On this point see also Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 59, 62-63.

Rome's response to barbarian aggression follows the exact same pattern and principal guidelines: the construction of frontier fortifications followed by the deployment and concentration of forces on the frontier line directly across them.

Within this wider strategic response, there are several patterns that can be established in relation to the subsequent development of each limes sector and the disposition of forts and troops under successive emperors. In fact, and as a general rule, the pattern of both fort and troop disposition as well as each system's overall orientation and configuration throughout this period, is primarily determined by two factors: the barbarians across the frontier (direction – nature of threat) and the morphology of the terrain. For one thing, there is a direct relationship between fort and unit distribution and the main targets of barbarian attacks, as a density in Roman fortifications and troops can be observed in what were the more frequently threatened sections of each frontier. For example, there is a close network of forts and a substantial concentration of troops on either side of the northern section of the Tisza river valley, the main area of habitation of the Iazygi during the early principate: sectors I and II in Pannonia Inferior (Aquincum- Lussonium and Alta Ripa to Ad Militare) and Sector III in Dacia (Limes Porolissensis). A similar connection can be established in the case of the Lower Moesian limes (maps 15 and 16), where during the Flavian period, a dense distribution of forts and troops can be seen along sector III (Oescus-Novae); this sector is situated opposite the valley between the Jiul and Olt river, where the relief of the terrain itself favoured Dacian military activity across the frontier. After the conquest of Dacia, and as the Roxolani become the only remaining threat across the frontier, there is intense camp building activity and deployment of Roman forces along sector II in Lower Moesia (Durostorum – Barboși) and sector III in Dacia Superior (Brîncovenesti to Sînpaul) during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century; both sectors faced the wider region occupied by the Roxolani at the time, that is the area between the lower reaches of the Prut, Siret and Ialomița rivers.

On the other hand, a relative scarcity of both troops and fortifications can be observed along the sectors which, at least until the Marcomannic wars, were not particularly affected by cross-border attacks. This is quite evident in relation to Rome's frontier sectors on either side of the wider Banat region (the Lower Tisza river valley): sector III of Pannonia Inferior (Teutoburgium-Taurunum) and especially sector I of Dacia Superior, where no fortifications or troops are

recorded along the right bank of the Tisza river, the province's probable frontier line during this period. Similar examples can be seen along sector I (Salmorus – Noviodunum) of Lower Moesia and the southern section of the Limes Alutanus (sector V in Dacia Inferior), where no barbarian attacks are recorded during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Furthermore, throughout the development of the Lower Danube limes, there seems to be a direct relationship between fort disposition and the main landing or penetration points for barbarian attacks. Most Roman forts in the area, regardless of their initial erection date, were specifically placed on the confluence points of the Danube with its smaller tributaries, which represented natural crossing points across the frontier. Their specific use as a means to block primary barbarian landing points, can be further inferred by the fact that, in a number of cases, additional defences (ditches or stone walls) were later incorporated alongside some forts' ramparts in order to seal off and protect the immediate area in front of them.<sup>982</sup> A slight variation of this pattern can be observed in the case of the Dacian frontier sectors, where there is a clear relationship between fort disposition and main access routes into the interior of the province.<sup>983</sup> The forts at Micia, Resculum (Bologa) and those along the Limes Porolissensis in general are quite reflective of this pattern, as forts were specifically positioned along – and therefore intended to block – each of the access routes through the Crişul river and the north western section of the Carpathian mountain range (maps 22 and 24). A similar pattern of disposition is seen in Sector III (map 24), where each fort controlled the access routes through the north eastern section of the Carpathians and the northern section of the Limes Alutanus (map 26), where forts were specifically intended to guard the natural access routes through the Buzău and Bran passes.

The above examples demonstrate the existence of one further pattern or connection in relation to the development and execution of the Lower Danube

---

<sup>982</sup> See, for example, Hajdučka Vodenica, Porečka Reka, Brnjica, Taliatae (Moesia Superior) or Barboşi (Moesia Inferior). Such defensive structures were the product of the late Empire, but are still indicative of the initial use of forts to block main landing points for barbarian attacks.

<sup>983</sup> For a brief discussion on the general disposition of forts in Dacia, see Gudea, "Defensive System", 77.

limes during this period: that between the overall distribution of troops and forts and the morphology of the terrain. There is a substantial concentration of forts and troops along sectors where the relief of the terrain favours barbarian cross border activity; an understandable scarcity along sectors where the terrain does not. As mentioned previously, the considerable degree of military investment observed along the Oescus-Novae axis under the Flavians or sector II during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in Moesia Inferior, should be explained by the fact that both sectors are situated opposite river valleys where the suitability of the terrain facilitated the concentration of enemy forces for attacks across the frontier (maps 15-16 and 18-19). A similar pattern can be seen in sectors I and II of Pannonia Inferior (maps 4 and 7), where there is a visible concentration of troops and forces facing the wider area of the Csépel-Sziget valley (forts 3-7) and the valley area between the Sió and Dráva river (forts 10-14); without doubt, the even-levelled nature of the terrain along these valleys presented an ideal ground of operations for lazygan cavalry forays across the Lower Pannonian frontier. Last but not least, there is the further example of the disposition of Rome's legionary forces between the Sava and Margus rivers (sector I in Moesia Superior), the area which corresponds to the southern sections of the Lower Tisza river valley (map 13).

As further proof for the above, there are two quite indicative examples where the general unsuitability of the terrain across the frontier negated the need for any substantial military concentrations along it. One is the case of sector I (Salmorus to Noviodunum) in Moesia Inferior, where there is a visible scarcity of fortifications and infantry or cavalry forces; in fact, on the basis of the surviving evidence, this sector was exclusively patrolled and guarded by the Roman fleet (map 19). The reason for this should be seen by the fact that this sector faces the marshland area between the Danube Delta and the Black sea, undoubtedly a considerable deterrent in itself for barbarian movement across the frontier. A second example is evident in the Iron Gates frontier sector during the Flavian period (maps 9 and 12). Despite the existence of a relatively dense network of fortifications, this sector consists mainly of smaller fortified posts or watchtowers interspersed between the few larger auxiliary forts. At the same time, there is a complete lack of troops or forts between Taliatae and Hajdučka Vodenica; a similar lack between Pontes and Egeta. In this case, the morphology of the terrain

determined the strategic and tactical disposition of this sector: as Mócsy rightly argues, “on this stretch of the Danube there was hardly any danger from Dacians and Sarmatians, as the towering cliffs, and the very steep slopes on the river’s southern bank, doomed any attack to failure from the start”.<sup>984</sup>

The existence of such clear patterns within Rome’s strategic and tactical disposition on the Lower Danube limes leads to a series of important conclusions with respect to the development and consolidation of Rome’s frontier defence systems in the area. For one thing, it demonstrates the existence of a remarkable uniformity in Roman frontier strategy throughout this period, in terms of both fort and troop distribution. Second, that Rome’s military response in each case was the product of an adequate awareness and anticipation of the main likely targets of barbarian attacks and of a sufficient understanding of the topographical realities of each region across the frontier; without doubt, geography and the varying direction of threat is the main reason for the evident variation in Rome’s frontier defence systems themselves.<sup>985</sup> Furthermore, an examination of the Lower Danube limes as a whole, demonstrates that a sufficient degree of military planning went into their creation, as, in each case, the pattern of disposition was conscious and the product of a rational consideration of geography, morphology of terrain and the nature of the threat; each system subsequently adjusts itself to meet these strategic criteria. In this respect, the overall configuration and orientation of each frontier defence system on the Lower Danube was the product of a rational military plan, which, following an assessment of region’s topographical realities and the direction of attacks, aimed at providing an effective system of frontier control and protection.

#### **V.ii. THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF ROMAN FRONTIERS ON THE LOWER DANUBE**

Despite the existence of some rather clear and reflective ancient perspectives on the subject, it is quite surprising to see that it is the most obvious purpose of Roman frontiers, i.e., to protect the Empire from barbarian attacks, that

---

<sup>984</sup> *Pannonia*, 47.

has received the greatest amount of criticism by recent scholarship.<sup>986</sup> Without doubt, much criticism has been levelled as to whether Roman frontiers and their linear defence systems as a whole can be considered an effective deterrent against barbarian attacks and whether they were designed to perform such a purpose in the first place.<sup>987</sup> The question of the general effectiveness of Roman frontiers will be discussed at a later point; however, and as an initial point of reference, it would seem that the key to our understanding of the true purpose of Roman frontiers lies within the distinction between “defensive capabilities” and “defensive purpose”.<sup>988</sup>

From the outset, following an examination of Rome’s frontiers in the Lower Danube area, there is little evidence to verify the notion that Roman frontier defence systems of the early imperial period consisted mainly of barely protected larger forts without anything in-between.<sup>989</sup> On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest the presence of quite elaborate linear fortification systems in place on the Lower Danube frontier from the late 1<sup>st</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Especially in relation to watchtowers and smaller fortified, the surviving evidence clearly contradicts the idea that such smaller installations were the product of the late empire.<sup>990</sup> One quite demonstrative example, can be seen in the case of the Upper Moesian frontier sector, where a number of watchtowers or smaller fortified posts are visible on the frontier line by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (map 9): Pincum, Livadice (Golubac Grad), Saldum, Gospođin Vir (both sites), Malo and Velike Livadice (Lepenski Vir), Ravna, Taliatae (M. Gradac), Malo Golubinje, Pecka Bara, Hajdučka Vodenica, Konopište, Slatinske Reke and Mora Vagei. A similar example can be drawn from the frontier sector of Dacia Porolissensis, where archaeological evidence has clearly confirmed the existence of a continuous line of watchtowers covering the entire area in front of the

---

<sup>985</sup> See above, section V.i.f.

<sup>986</sup> For a brief discussion on the purpose of Roman frontiers, including both ancient perspectives and recent discussions on the subject, see chapter I. See also, Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 173-180; Mattern, *Rome*, 109-122.

<sup>987</sup> See Mann, “Frontiers”, 513; Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 60-62; Isaac, *Limits*, 411-415.

<sup>988</sup> A distinction first noted by Daniels, “Fact and Theory”, 360.

<sup>989</sup> As argued by Mann, “Power”, 180.

<sup>990</sup> See, Hodgson, “Relationships”, 65.

auxiliary forts between Bologa and Porolissum.<sup>991</sup> Archaeological excavations have not yet verified the existence of such a string of smaller military installations along the Lower Pannonian or Lower Moesian frontier lines during this period.<sup>992</sup> However, given their undeniable presence in Moesia Superior at the time, it is reasonable to assume that their lack along both of the above frontier sectors could well be the result of the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence. In this sense, on the basis of the examples drawn from the frontier sectors of Moesia Superior and Dacia Porolissensis, it is reasonable to conclude that a system of ancillary frontier installations, albeit not as elaborate as that of the late empire, existed and was in use from the early Empire onwards.

Turning back to the original question, on the general purpose of Roman frontiers, some recent interpretations have tended to view Roman frontiers as an expanded zone of control enveloping both sides of the border, where Roman fortifications were primarily intended to control the flow of traffic and trade across it.<sup>993</sup> However, in the Lower Danube area, one of the Empire's most heavily fortified – and thus important – frontier sector, following a close examination of the available evidence, there is not much evidence to suggest that Roman frontiers were ever supposed or intended to perform such a function, at least during the period under study.

For one thing, there is very little evidence for what could be described as an 'open' or 'permeable' frontier. The only possible exception with respect to the Lower Danube area can be seen in the case of the central section of the Limes Alutanus (Dacia Inferior, map 26 and 32).<sup>994</sup> Given the peculiar pattern of disposition of Roman fortifications in this sector, with small fortified posts situated on both sides of the border and along the main entrance points into the

---

<sup>991</sup> No less than 66 watchtowers and 8 further fortified posts, datable to the early-mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD have been discovered between the Crișul Repede and Someșul Mare valleys. See Gudea, "Linia Fortificatii", 143-218. For the line of watchtowers opposite the fort of Bologa, see chapter IV.ii.c.

<sup>992</sup> In Pannonia Inferior, only Beočin can be dated to the period under study. Most other watchtowers unearthed along the frontier line, appear to be datable to the period of the late Empire. Similarly, in relation to Lower Moesia, only the fortified posts at Nigriniana and Tegulicium have revealed traces of an early or mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century occupation.

<sup>993</sup> See mainly Whittaker, *Frontiers*, 75ff; Isaac, *Limits*, 415.

<sup>994</sup> See chapter IV.ii.f.

province, it is indeed possible to argue that these forts could have acted as frontier "check points"; accordingly, the exclusive deployment of essentially low combat value troops (*numeri*) along the forts in this particular sector, could further demonstrate their function as a means to regulate and monitor the movement of traffic across the frontier zone. However, even in this case, there are two facts that need to be taken into consideration. First, that this particular example is confined to a small section within a wider frontier sector; and, second, that it is definitely not representative of the rest of the Lower Danube frontiers. At the same time, it is quite possible that this example could alternatively be interpreted as a means of maintaining full military control within a small strip of land beyond the actual frontier line, not just regulating traffic along or across it.

Furthermore, there is always the question of whether Rome actively sought or encouraged contact with the populations residing across the frontier, at least during this period of time. Austin and Rankov, based on general study of Rome's river frontiers throughout the Empire, have made certain important observations that tend to confirm the opposite:<sup>995</sup> first, that at least up to the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, all Roman forts are deliberately positioned on one side or bank of each river. Second, and given the existence of natural barriers (rivers) across each frontier zone, which presented a considerable obstacle for lateral communications between Rome and the populations on the other side of the border, that there is an almost complete lack of any permanent bridgeheads or points of contact across the frontier that could have facilitated cross-border movement and trade. Indeed, in the case of the Lower Danube frontiers, there seems to be minimal evidence for the existence of such bridgeheads across the Danube during this period; in fact, most such forward installations were clearly the product of the late Empire. Before the creation of Dacia, only two forts are known to have existed across the actual frontier line, those at Pojejena de Sus and Translederata (Moesia Superior). However, in both cases, judging by their location along the main invasion routes into Dacian territory, it would seem that these forts were specifically erected to be used as military bridgeheads and supply bases for Domitian's and Trajan's offensives against Dacia. Accordingly, after the creation of the Dacian province, the only visible example of a cross-frontier bridgehead datable to this period is the

fort at Barboși (Moesia Inferior). However, its disposition and the existence of a system of additional earth ditches in the area in front of it,<sup>996</sup> should denote its use as a defensive point intended to block, rather than control, movement across the frontier.

These examples tend to demonstrate that, at least during this period, trade or contact points between Rome and the populations residing across the frontier were deliberately kept at a minimum. In fact, the absence of permanent bridgeheads across the river and the general lack of 'open' frontiers on the Lower Danube area, clearly denotes Rome's wariness at providing easy access points to her cross-border neighbours.<sup>997</sup> At the same time, it seems that the general portrayal of the Roman limes as a means to regulate traffic and trade across the frontier does not take into account two further important factors: first, the evident existence of heavily fortified and garrisoned areas – such as the Limes Porolissensis in Dacia (map 30) or the Aquincum sector in Pannonia Inferior (map 7) – which clearly reflect a picture of very prohibitive and sealed military zones; second, as discussed previously, that the pattern of Rome's strategic or tactical disposition on each Lower Danube frontier sector, adjusts or re-configures itself in order to block or prevent cross-border movement, not to assist it. In fact, with respect to the Lower Danube limes, their essentially defensive orientation demonstrates that, at least up to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Rome's primary strategic directive focused on keeping the barbarians outside imperial territory. In this respect, and on the basis of the above observations, it seems rather clear that the Lower Danube limes systems as a whole were specifically designed and intended to serve a fundamentally military and defensive purpose, that is to protect the Empire from barbarian attacks.

-----

Despite the existence of a similar pattern of strategic and tactical disposition along Rome's frontiers on the Lower Danube, basically consisting of a single linear cordon of frontier fortifications with no reserve capability, each

---

<sup>995</sup> See the relevant discussion in Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 173-177.

<sup>996</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, fig. 34.

<sup>997</sup> As argued by Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 176-177.

sector, as seen, was specifically designed to fulfil different functions according to the strategic requirements and the nature of the threat across each border region. At the same time, however, each frontier defensive system as a whole was clearly designed to work in close co-operation with its adjacent counterparts as part of a wider defensive or offensive scheme involving the totality of Rome's frontiers in the Lower Danube region.

As a general introduction, Rome's defensive layout across the Lower Danube frontiers consisted of two basic elements: one static, namely the fortifications situated throughout the frontier line and the inter-connecting road network that facilitated the quick transport of troops and supplies along its course; and one mobile, namely the legionary, auxiliary or naval garrisons stationed in each fort. On a day to day basis, both elements played a major part in the adequate surveillance and control of the frontier perimeter, which was an essential, even primary function of Roman frontiers in general. Especially in relation to the troops on the frontier, there is no reason to suppose that they ever assumed an inert or stationary role, waiting in their semi-permanent bases until a military crisis occurred. On the contrary, there is enough evidence to suggest that Roman forces, operating in small detachments and using the forts throughout the frontier line as further accommodation or surveillance points, were constantly on the move in order to ensure the strict and complete military supervision of the entire course of each frontier sector.

This seems to certainly apply with respect to Rome's legionary forces in the Lower Danube area. The example of the Lower Moesian legions,<sup>998</sup> is quite reflective of this strategic trend, as detachments from all three legions are known to have operated throughout a number of separate forts on the frontier line. A similar example is evident in the case of Dacia's sole legionary garrison, the XIII Gemina. Despite the fact that its official headquarters (Apulum) were situated at a considerable distance behind the province's actual borders, it is nevertheless quite indicative to see that a substantial number of permanent detachments from this legion are recorded operating along forts in different frontier sectors of the province (maps 27-30). Accordingly, and on the basis of the available epigraphic

---

<sup>998</sup> See chapter III.iv.c and map 19.

evidence, it seems that Rome's auxiliary forces in the region had also assumed a wide surveillance or operational radius. In Pannonia Inferior, detachments from cohorts I Campanorum voluntariorum covered the entire area between the forts at Bononia and Acumincum (table 1), while in Moesia Inferior, troops from cohorts II Mattiacorum were stationed in both Barboși and Dinogetia after AD 145 (table 3). Further examples are seen in the province of Dacia Inferior (table 4). Detachments from cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum are recorded throughout three separate forts in this frontier sector, namely Romula, Slăveni and Acidava. During their tour of duty in Dacia Inferior between AD 129-140, troops from cohorts I Hispanorum are attested in both Arutela and Castra Traiana; while cohorts I Bracaraugustanorum is known to have operated from both Angustia (Brețcu) and Hoghiz.

In addition, even where epigraphic evidence is lacking, there is one quite significant fact that confirms the idea that the Roman auxilia operated from more than one fort at a time, thus further demonstrating the element of mobility behind Roman frontiers in the Lower Danube area:<sup>999</sup> with the exception of Pannonia Inferior and Dacia Porolissensis, there is a distinct discrepancy between the number of forts and the total number of units along the rest of the Lower Danube frontier sectors. In Moesia Superior, there are 19 auxiliary fortifications as opposed to only 12 auxiliary units (2 alae and 10 cohortes) known to have been stationed in the province.<sup>1000</sup> In Moesia Inferior, the number of frontier fortifications outweighs that of the province's total auxiliary detail: 31 or 32 forts vs. 16 units (5 alae and 11 cohortes).<sup>1001</sup> Similar examples can be found in the case of both Dacia Superior and Inferior: 22 forts as opposed to 13 auxiliary units for the former;<sup>1002</sup> 19 forts for only 12 units for the latter.<sup>1003</sup>

---

<sup>999</sup> The examples below are based on an examination of the number of troops vs. forts by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

<sup>1000</sup> According to the military diploma of AD 159/160 (*CIL* xvi, 111).

<sup>1001</sup> On the basis of the Brestovene diploma of AD 157/158 (Venedikov, "Diplôme", 61-68). The disproportion between number of troops and forts in Lower Moesia, was first noted by Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 45-47.

<sup>1002</sup> Three alae and ten cohortes, according to the diplomata of AD 144 and 157 (*CIL* xvi, 90 and 107).

<sup>1003</sup> Three alae and nine cohortes. Roxan, *RMD*, 39.

In the evaluation section of each frontier sector, a second point frequently noted with respect to the function of Roman frontiers was their use as a means to sustain forward ventures across the frontier line either in the form of reconnaissance missions or quick retaliatory offensives. Without doubt, their overall ability to maintain such deep offensives in times of major military operations, involving a substantial concentration of forces, is evident in the cases of both Domitian's or Trajan's wars against Dacia. Although, on a daily basis and especially in relation to Rome's river frontiers, Austin and Rankov are quite right in arguing that, up to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, deep patrols across the frontier were essentially limited due to the lack of supply bases or bridgeheads on the opposite bank of the river, in my view, there is nevertheless still enough evidence to suggest that even during the period under study, Romans made conscious efforts at maintaining a close watch over the immediate territories across her frontiers.<sup>1004</sup>

For one thing, even during the late Flavian period there are some, albeit limited, examples of Roman bridgeheads across the Danube, such as the ones at Pojejena de Sus, Translederata and Barboși; their forward positioning within what was enemy territory at the time, surely demonstrates their use as advanced supply bases for quick sorties or patrols in the stretch of land across their sector of the frontier. Furthermore, given the Roman army's overall capability in terms of logistics and military engineering, it seems that crossing the river on a daily basis was not much of a problem. Dio commends on the ease with which Romans could bridge a river; in fact, it appears to have been a standard training practice for the Roman army, regularly performed during exercises.<sup>1005</sup> Batavian soldiers impressed Hadrian with their ability to swim across the Danube in full armour and engage the enemy in his own territory.<sup>1006</sup> At the same time, in addition to its patrolling duties, the Roman fleet on the Danube could always be used to transport troops on the other side of the border.

Last but not least, in the case of the Lower Danube, there is the strategic significance of Dacia and its defensive system, where the configuration of the Dacian frontier sectors in addition to the absence of any large continuous natural

---

<sup>1004</sup> See the relevant discussion in Austin and Rankov, *Exploratio*, 184-185.

<sup>1005</sup> lxxi, 3.

<sup>1006</sup> Dio lxi, 9; *ILS* 2558.

barriers that could hinder access, enabled Rome to maintain a sufficient degree of military control over the territories across her actual frontier lines. The use of Dacia as a base for prolonged offensive operations deep into barbarian territory is well documented during times of military crisis.<sup>1007</sup> However, there is good reason to assume that similar forward operations occurred during peacetime as well. There is one quite interesting factor evident in the pattern of Rome's tactical disposition in Dacia (maps 28, 30 and 32): without exception, all cavalry forces were deployed along open access areas or where the terrain across the frontier favoured quick forward offensive or reconnaissance operations. To establish this connection, it is important to draw on some examples from the Roman cavalry's battlefield tactics, training exercises or manoeuvres, which always aimed at the interception and defeat of the enemy in the open, rather than fighting him behind a fixed line of defence.<sup>1008</sup> The Batavians are one obvious example, crossing the Danube in order to engage the enemy in their own territory. Cavalry troops in Africa were subjected to rigorous training as to how to throw their javelins and spears at speed, in order to intercept the enemy on the run.<sup>1009</sup>

In my view, the above observations indicate that even before the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the systematic military supervision of territories across the frontier was part of Rome's daily strategic agenda on the Lower Danube area. In addition, they also demonstrate that rapid cavalry sorties within enemy territory, quite useful in gathering intelligence and information on the barbarian's battle readiness, tactics as well as the amount of resistance offered, was one of the primary daily functions of Roman frontier garrisons.

Nevertheless, and as discussed throughout this thesis, the main function of Roman frontiers on the Danube during this period was, without doubt, to protect the empire from barbarian attacks. However, one thing that needs to be considered at this point is the actual nature of the threat that the barbarians across the Lower Danube frontiers really constituted: for it seems that, at least during this period,

---

<sup>1007</sup> See Zahariade, "Tactics", 604 and fig. 6.138.

<sup>1008</sup> Such tactics of forward offensives are described by Vegetius, I. 1, 9, 10, 19, 27; ii, 23; Arrian, *Tactica*, 40, describing the Cantabrian manoeuvre.

<sup>1009</sup> *ILS* 2487, 9133-9135, in Campbell, *Roman Army*, 18-20.

small raiding parties or what Luttwak has described as “low intensity threats”,<sup>1010</sup> represented the main bulk of barbarian military activity along the Lower Danube frontiers; it is important to note that in the period corresponding to the final consolidation of the Lower Danube limes, that is the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, there is only one notable example a wide scale barbarian offensive, that of AD 117-118.

On the basis of an examination of the Lower Danube frontiers, it seems that all sectors were primarily designed and therefore intended to function against such low scale barbarian infiltration. In relation to the Lower Danube, there is no evidence to confirm Luttwak’s model of escalation warfare in response to wide scale barbarian attacks:<sup>1011</sup> contrary to his reconstruction, Rome’s legionary bases in this area were positioned right on the frontier line. At the same time, the evidence clearly contradicts his views with respect to the use of Rome’s legionary forces as a strategic reserve, coming into play only in the case of major attacks; as discussed previously, legionary troops, much like their auxiliary counterparts, assumed an active role in the day to day supervision of the frontier perimeter and therefore in dealing with small scale raiding parties. In fact, it is the absence of any reserve lines of defence and the perimeter pattern of strategic and tactical deployment of the Lower Danube limes which clearly reflects that the total protection of the frontier line itself against essentially low-level infiltration was their primary strategic objective.

— One second point which deserves attention is whether the barbarians across the Lower Danube frontiers, especially after the demise of the Dacian kingdom, were capable of launching such wide scale offensives in the first place. What must be considered first, is the actual number of troops that the two main remaining threats in this region, the Iazyges and the Roxolani, could furnish in battle. On the basis of the existing evidence, there can be no real estimate of the total size of the enemy’s forces at any given point; however, there is one incident that could be used as a rough guide. Tacitus, describing the Roxolani attack against Moesia in

---

<sup>1010</sup> *Strategy*, 61, 69-70.

<sup>1011</sup> Luttwak, *Strategy*, 76-77 and fig. 2.4.

AD 69, mentions that the enemy forces consisted of *c.* 9000 cavalry.<sup>1012</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that this number denotes the entire strength of the Roxolani armed forces. Nevertheless, the description of Tacitus is still quite reflective, as his use of the words “with high hopes”, could be taken as an indication that this number must have corresponded to the main core of the Roxolani army. This, in my view, could be further supported by the fact that, following their complete defeat on that occasion, the combined force of the Roxolani must have been seriously curtailed, as they remain quiet at least until their attacks against Dacia in AD 117. In this respect, one must consider the disparity in actual size between the Roxolani forces and the better trained and equipped Roman army: the Roxolani were surrounded by no less than 45-50000 Roman troops and this only counting the forces stationed at any time along the corresponding frontier sectors on either side of the Wallachian plain and excluding those that would have been sent as a reinforcement.

A further consideration applies to the usual mode of operations employed by the barbarians during this period.<sup>1013</sup> From the outset, even in the few cases of what could be described as large-scale offensives, there is no indication that the barbarians ever contemplated the actual occupation of Roman territory. With no logistical capability to their name, they were not in a position to sustain forward operations far from their bases or communities, unless it involved (as in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) the full migration of the tribe. In fact, on the basis of the evidence, small scale hit and run attacks, aimed primarily at plunder and booty, appear to have been the main driving factor behind barbarian incursions during this period. Even the Dacians, who were capable of amassing a substantial army on certain occasions,<sup>1014</sup> seem to have confined their operations to such quick pillaging activities; a further indicative example can be derived from the passage referring to the fact that barbarians were most vulnerable when laden with booty and – significantly – were trying to retreat.<sup>1015</sup>

---

<sup>1012</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.*, i. 79.

<sup>1013</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the tactical deficiencies of barbarian forces and their overall incapability to pursue or sustain prolonged offensives see Goldsworthy, *Roman Army*, 42-53 and 74.

<sup>1014</sup> Strabo, *Geog.*, 7.3.12, commenting on the 200,000 men under the command of Burebista.

<sup>1015</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.*, i.79. Further examples of the central role of looting behind barbarian attacks are cited in Tacitus, *Ann.*, i.68; *Hist.*, 4.60; Dio, lvi, 22, 2-3.

At the same time, there is a quite illuminating piece of evidence, which demonstrates Rome's primary strategic concern against such low-scale banditry along her frontiers; an inscription which refers to the construction of *burgi* and *praesidia* on the frontier line specifically for blocking the crossings of bandits (*latrunculi*) on the stretch of the Danube across Aquincum.<sup>1016</sup>

It would seem that the Romans, after almost a century of fighting on the frontier must have been deeply aware of the above tactics and the real threat that the barbarians constituted. On the basis of the true nature of cross-frontier threat, their pattern of strategic and tactical disposition, with every available unit on the frontier seems to be quite indicative of the overall function of the Lower Danube frontiers during this period; without doubt, such perimeter systems of defence were particularly well suited to ensure the total safeguarding of Roman frontier territory, especially against low scale infiltration or rapid hit and run attacks.

Finally, one last reference should be made to the notion concerning the use of Roman frontiers as a means to intimidate or terrify the enemy.<sup>1017</sup> The idea that this could be one of the possible motives behind the original creation of Rome's frontier defence systems cannot be ruled out, as Roman frontiers or the placement of all available troops across them must have made a serious impression or impact on the barbarians, especially at first contact.<sup>1018</sup> However, in my view, it is quite debatable whether this can be associated with the primary purpose and function of Roman frontiers in general. As argued previously, when the Roman army starts to appear in bulk on the Danube, cross-border attacks tend to become more frequent. The fact that as Roman frontier military activity increases, the barbarians nevertheless continue to launch their attacks clearly suggests that possible Roman efforts to intimidate the enemy did not have the desired effect. It would thus seem that, after prolonged fighting on the frontier, initial impressions had started

---

<sup>1016</sup> *CIL* iii, 3385, in Isaac, "Limes", 130-131.

<sup>1017</sup> This notion is the central theme in Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy*, 109-122. On the psychological impact of frontiers on the barbarians see also Luttwak, *Strategy*, 47 (using the term 'psychological dimension of power') and Wheeler, "Roman Strategy", 35-36.

<sup>1018</sup> There is a quite indicative incident, described by Ammianus, 18.2, which clearly reflects the great impression that Roman frontiers made on barbarians (in this case the Alamanni) at first contact.

to wear off, as barbarians must have realised that – despite its overall superiority in tactics or logistics – the Roman army was not invincible.

### **V.iii. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ROMAN FRONTIERS ON THE LOWER DANUBE: SOME FINAL REMARKS**

Perhaps the greatest testament to the overall effectiveness of Roman defence systems on the Lower Danube during the early principate can be derived from the fact that the period under study is essentially characterised by long periods of uninterrupted peace; after the creation and establishment of the Roman *limites* on the Danube, barbarian attacks against imperial territory become quite sporadic. It is rather interesting to see that even in the relatively few cases where the barbarians manage to breach the frontier defences, the system's overall containment abilities should be recognised, as it was generally successful in repelling the invaders and of keeping the barbarians out of imperial territory. Accordingly, it is important to note that, throughout this period, fighting, with the exception of the Sarmatian attacks of AD 117-118, was usually contained on the frontier line itself or across it; damage in any case seems to have been limited to the destruction of the odd frontier fortification with no further penetration.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of Rome's frontiers on the Danube should not be evaluated on the basis of their capacity to withstand a determined wide scale barbarian attack, but rather on their capability to contain small scale incursions or raids, which, as described previously, represented the main bulk of barbarian military activity on the frontier at the time. In this respect, it is important to note that without the safety net provided by the linear cordon of fortifications and troops on the frontier, barbarians would have been successful in carrying out their main plundering or looting operations virtually unopposed. Attacks would have been more frequent without a visible deterrent on the frontier, and the Romans would not have been capable of any previous warning. After all, as seen in the case of Rome's pattern of strategic disposition during the Julio-Claudian period, the deployment of forces within the interior of the provinces hampered the ability of the Roman army to prevent any sudden cross-border attacks; by the time Roman forces reached the frontier, the barbarians would be long gone. In this sense and following a careful consideration of

the real threat that her enemies across this region constituted, Rome's frontier defence systems in the Lower Danube area were particularly well suited and effective in meeting their main strategic imperative of the period: the total protection of the frontier perimeter against small scale barbarian incursions.

One final remark as to the effectiveness of Roman frontiers, is related to the aura of confidence or sentiment of security that they inspired to the populations of the Roman Empire at the time, as vividly recorded in the words of ancient sources on the subject.<sup>1019</sup> It is for this exact reason, that the pattern of strategic and tactical disposition on the Lower Danube frontiers remains essentially unchanged from the times of their original foundation and throughout the period under study.

---

<sup>1019</sup> Aelius Aristeides, *Ad.Rom.*, 81-82; Appian, *Praef.* 5 and 7.



## APPENDIX A

### THE LIMES OLBIPOLITANUS AND TAURO-SKYTHIAE

#### a. Limes Olbiopolitanus

This section relates to the region of the northwest Black sea coastline, between the mouths of the Dniester and the Bug rivers, in the areas of modern Moldavia and Ukraine.

During the last quarter of the century, and in the aftermath of a series of excavations conducted in the region, there has been a significant effort by a number of scholars to establish the existence and function of a full-blown Roman defence system along this particular frontier sector during the 1st century AD.<sup>1</sup> According to the main excavator, this defence system emerged in the mid-1st century as a reaction to Tauro-Skythian attacks against the territories of Olbia and Tyras,<sup>2</sup> and evolved into a 'comprehensive' limes system by the end of the century, consisting of fourteen fortifications, including castra, oppidums and praesidia, as well as two defensive ramparts (valla); this system, centred around Olbia and Tyras, was supposedly designed to protect the entire frontier sector between the Siret, Dniester and Bug rivers.<sup>3</sup>

The main problems which, in my opinion, render the existence and function of a 1st century defence system around Tyras and Olbia as highly improbable, can be summarized as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup> Bujškich, "Limes Olbiopolitanus", 192-199, including full bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> Which, by that time, had been included within the Roman sphere of influence in the region. Tacitus *Ann.*, xii, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Bujškich, "Limes Olbiopolitanus", 192-196, including a full schematic representation of this supposed defence system (pg. 196, pl. 1).

i) The complete lack of any literary or epigraphic evidence. There are no ancient sources to suggest the presence of any Roman forces or fortifications in this area during the 1st century AD, let alone the existence of a fully operational defence system. In fact, no Roman forces are epigraphically attested in the region before the mid-2nd century.<sup>4</sup>

ii) The absence of a mid-1st century strategic-logistic infrastructure to support this particular defence system. Given that there is no significant Roman military presence or defensive infrastructure in Dobrudja and Skythia Minor before the late 1st century AD, then the nearest Roman military concentrations to Tyras and Olbia would be those deployed in the Oescus-Novae sector of Moesia, some 600 and 800 km away; the tactical, strategic and logistical limitations associated with such an arrangement are obvious.

iii) The lack of a Roman military establishment and defence system at Olbia before the mid 2nd century AD is further confirmed by the events of AD 150, when during a Tauro-Skythian attack against Olbia, Antoninus Pius had to send troops to the area to repel the invaders.<sup>5</sup>

Roman efforts towards the militarisation and the establishment of permanent garrisons in the region began during the first quarter of the 2nd century AD, and reached a considerable height by the mid-late 2nd century. The two main military and strategic concentrations were situated in the former Hellenistic cities of Olbia and Tyras. At Olbia,<sup>6</sup> a detachment of legio V Macedonica was stationed within the fortified town in the mid 2nd century; after AD 167, it was replaced by detachments from both XI Claudia and I Italica.<sup>7</sup> At Tyras, finally, the existence of an impressive military establishment by the late 2nd century is verified by the

---

<sup>4</sup> Vexillations of legions V Macedonica, I Italica and XI Claudia (see below). At this point, I think that Bujških's claim ("Limes Olbiopolitanus", 198) for the "stay of small groups of Roman mercenaries, perhaps from Thracia, in the Lower Bug - Lower Dnieper regions as early as the first half of the 1st century AD" lacks any real substantiation.

<sup>5</sup> SHA, Ant.Pius, ix, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 84, no. 60; Wasowicz, *Olbia Pontique*, 120-126; Kripivina, "Olbia", 177-191; Sarnowski, "Römische Heer", 76-83.

<sup>7</sup> All three legions are epigraphically well attested at Olbia during this period. Aricescu, *ARD*, 12-15; Doroiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 267 (epigraphic evidence for all three); Nicorescu, "Garnizoana Romana", 218-220.

presence of detachments from all three Moesian legions as well as temporary detachments from cohorts I Cilicum and I Hispanorum veterana.<sup>8</sup>

### **b. Limes Tauro-Skythiae**

The Limes Tauro-Skythiae consist of the sector covering the south tip of the Crimean peninsula, between the Black sea and the sea of Azov.

Roman military involvement and the extension of Roman control and influence over the old Hellenistic civil settlements in the Crimean peninsula is first attested by literary sources in the mid 1st century AD.<sup>9</sup> During the Flavian period and until the end of the 1st century, Rome appears to have further consolidated her stronghold over the region, as the Crimean peninsula came within the zone of operations of the Roman fleet in the Black sea.<sup>10</sup>

Following the conclusion of the Dacian wars and in the period between the early and mid 2nd century AD, Roman military activity in the Crimea was further intensified, mainly with the deployment of both legionary and auxiliary detachments within the territories of the old Hellenistic urbanised centres along the Crimean coast line. By the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when the area was officially incorporated into the Roman empire and the province of Moesia Inferior,<sup>11</sup> the regional defence system would centre around the military concentrations in the two main strategic points of Charax and Chersonesus. At Charax, archaeological evidence has verified the presence of a legionary

---

<sup>8</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 12-15; Nicorescu, "Garnizoana Romana", 218-220; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Stampila", 260, 265 and n. 30; Doroțiu-Boilă, "Skythishen Limes", 90; Sarnowski, "Römische Heer", 78-83 (including all inscriptional evidence); Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 84, no. 63; Aricescu, *ARD*, 24; Tudor, "Cohors I Cilicum", 45-75.

<sup>9</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* xii, 15.

<sup>10</sup> On the presence of the *Classis Ravenensis* at Charax, see Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 12. The detachment of the fleet from Ravenna must have operated in the region before the creation of the *Classis Flavia Moesica*, thus suggesting a pre-Flavian date for the initial Roman military occupation of the Crimean peninsula. This hypothesis is further supported by a statement from Flavius Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii, 16.4, who mentions that, by the Flavian times, the area had been completely subjugated by 3000 troops and 40 ships. There is no evidence to suggest the presence of Roman infantry units in the Crimea before the first quarter of the 2nd century AD; Josephus must be referring to naval forces.

detachment from V Macedonica between the early and mid 2nd century AD, as well as a temporary stationing of a detachment from cohorts II Hispanorum et Aravacorum;<sup>12</sup> after 167, the city would serve as the base for a permanent detachment from legio I Italica,<sup>13</sup> and for a detachment of the Classis Flavia Moesica.<sup>14</sup>

At Chersonesus, a fort covering an area of 100 by 75m has been identified next to the walled city, probably designed to serve as a base for the Roman fleet in Moesia.<sup>15</sup> In addition to naval forces, infantry units were also permanently stationed at Chersonesus, including detachments from all three Lower Moesian legions<sup>16</sup> and a temporary deployment of cohorts II Lucensium.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> According to Ptolemy, *Geog.* iii, 10. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 265; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Skythischen Limes”, 90; Nicorescu, “Garnizoana Romana”, 218-220; Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 83, no. 57; Sarnowski, “Römische Heer”, 78-80.

<sup>13</sup> Sarnowski, “Römische Heer”, 80-82; Aricescu, *ARD*, 15; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 265.

<sup>14</sup> Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Zahariade and Gudea, *Fortifications*, 83, no. 58; Zahariade and Bounegru, *Forces Navales*, 12, including epigraphic evidence for the function of Chersonesus as a naval station (pg. 12 and 27).

<sup>16</sup> V Macedonica: Aricescu, *ARD*, 11; Sarnowski, “Römische Heer”, 76-83; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 260, 267. XI Claudia: *CIL* iii, 782; Aricescu, *ARD*, 17; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 267. I Italica: *CIL* iii, 14215; Aricescu, *ARD*, 15; Doroțiu-Boilă, “Stampila”, 267.

<sup>17</sup> *CIL* iii, 14214; Nicorescu, “Garnizoana Romana”, 220; Aricescu, *ARD*, 19; Sarnowski, “Römische Heer”, 83.

## APPENDIX B

### THE “LIMES TRANSALUTANUS”

This section refers to the string of Roman fortifications and fortified posts which are situated across the Olt river frontier line. The “Limes Transalutanus” consist of a single line of sixteen or seventeen fortifications, which runs almost parallel to the “Limes Alutanus” at a distance which varies between 10 and 50 km. Along its southern sector, following the course of the forts between Flămînda and Gresia, traces of an earth vallum have been discovered, which consisted of two separate sections (*clousurae*).

Most of the forts along this line are in a very bad state of preservation and have not been the subjects of any significant or systematic archaeological fieldwork;<sup>1</sup> their location and actual identification on the ground has been primarily established on the basis of aerial photography or on a series of brief surveys conducted in the region. For this reason, there is a striking lack of material and evidence originating from the forts on the “Transalutan” defence line; without doubt, matters have been made worse by the fact that all data recovered from the region before 1940 were lost or destroyed during the Second World War.

As a result, there is a general tendency among most Romanian scholars to use the evidence retrieved from one or two sites in order to provide some information as to the approximate dating, overall purpose and function of the *entire* Transalutan fortified line. This has subsequently led to a number of far-fetched – if not erroneous – theories and interpretations, as the problems associated with such an

---

<sup>1</sup> A fresh series of archaeological excavations on the Transalutan line, headed by Dr. Ioanna Bogdan-Cătăniciu, resumed in the summer of 1996. The preliminary results have so far brought no new or important evidence to light. During a recent conversation, Dr. Bogdan-Cătăniciu expressed her deep scepticism as to whether these excavations can actually provide any fresh insight as to the dating or function of this line.

approach are obvious. In addition to the scantiness and inconclusive nature of the available evidence, one must also consider the rather distinct chronological discrepancy which, as discussed below, exists between the initial foundation dates of each fort: out of the sixteen or seventeen forts on this line, five have produced no evidence as to their erection date; about eight or nine appear to have been initially constructed during or after the reign of Septimius Severus, while only three have produced evidence or traces of a 2<sup>nd</sup> century occupation phase. Out of these three, however, it is important to note that only the fort at Cumidava (Rîșnov), which significantly is not part of the “Limes Transalutanus” line per se, has revealed traces of a continuous occupation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Therefore, on the basis of the surviving evidence, there seems to be nothing to confirm the views of certain scholars concerning the function of this defensive line from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards;<sup>2</sup> on the contrary, it seems very likely that the “Limes Transalutanus” were part of a forward push that took place in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> or early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

#### Roman fortifications across the Olt river line

**Flămînda:**<sup>3</sup> A large auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring an estimated 350 by 390m, situated across the left bank of the Danube. Its southern section has been completely covered by the river flow. Visible traces from this fort are confined to sections of its northern and eastern earth and timber wall; more recently, traces of the *via singularis*, with a north-east orientation have been identified.

The fort's initial foundation date has not been established and there is no information as to its dates of occupation. Bogdan-Cătăniciu, has argued that during the course of Trajan's second Dacian war, apart from the main Roman advance through the Olt river line, there was a additional pincer movement that

---

<sup>2</sup> See mainly Bogdan-Cătăniciu and Gajewska (below).

<sup>3</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 287; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 70; Gudea, “Limesul Daciei”, 112; Gudea, “Limes Dakiens”, 874; Gudea, “Bericht”, 491; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 7-8, 33 and fig. 59; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, “Repères Chronologiques”, 461 and 464; Bogdan-Catanciu, “Nouvelles Données”, 259, 261-262; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87-88 (who argues for a Severan date); *TIR* L35 4.

followed the line of the Flămînda-Rucăr axis (through the Transalutan line of defences). Given that Flămînda would represent the main landing and concentration point for this offensive, as Bogdan-Cătănicu concludes, the fort was most probably built during this period in time.<sup>4</sup>

Judging by the fort's size, shape and architecture, there is a certain plausibility to her theory; however, neither argument can be confirmed on the basis of archaeological evidence, as there is absolutely no epigraphic material to establish the presence of Roman forces at Flămînda during or after the Dacian wars.

**Putineiu:**<sup>5</sup> A small earth and timber fortification of square shape, measuring 53 by 53m, situated near the left bank of the Calmațui stream.

On the basis of the fort's square plan and architecture, some scholars have postulated an early to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date of occupation.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, there is a severe dearth of archaeological data recovered from this fort and, therefore, there is really no way to securely establish any phases of occupation before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>7</sup>

**Băneasa:**<sup>8</sup> Earth and timber auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring c.126 by 180m. The site has not been the subject of any significant archaeological fieldwork; the only visible traces are confined to sections of its turf wall (c.10m

---

<sup>4</sup> Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Repères Chronologiques", 264.

<sup>5</sup> Tudor, *Orășe*, 374; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 297; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 71-72; Gudea, "Bericht", 490; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 32, 34-35 and fig. 60; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Repères Chronologiques", 461; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limesul Roman", 55; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 271; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Nouvelles Recherches", 349; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Nouvelles Données", 264; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 74; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 86; *TIR* L35 21.

<sup>6</sup> See Bogdan-Cătănicu above.

<sup>7</sup> Finds from Putineiu are limited to a few pottery fragments and a small number of coins which were found at the fort's earth agger. Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Repères Chronologiques", 461 and n. 4, believes that the earliest coin find from Putineiu is a sestertius of Antoninus Pius which can therefore be used in the dating of the fort to the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. This hardly constitutes solid evidence, while the coin in question is so badly preserved that its date can not be securely established (a fact recognised by Bogdan-Cătănicu herself in *Evolution*, 35); in fact, it could well belong to one of the emperors of the Severan dynasty.

<sup>8</sup> Tudor, *Orășe*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 265-266; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 72-73; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 35 and fig.61; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Nouvelles Données", 262; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 269 and n. 7; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 86-87; *TIR* L35 11.

wide, 1.7m high). The material recovered from the site so far is limited to a few pottery fragments and a few coin issues datable from Septimius Severus onwards; all finds therefore indicate an early 3<sup>rd</sup> century initial occupation phase.

To the immediate northeast of this site, traces of an additional earth and timber fortified post, measuring 45 by 63m have been discovered. There is no information as to its date.

**Roşiorii de Vede:**<sup>9</sup> Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 51 by 52m, situated near the left bank of the Bratcov stream. The only datable evidence recovered from this fort consists of a few coins issued between Commodus and the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, which suggest an early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD initial foundation date at the earliest.

**Valea Urluii:**<sup>10</sup> A probable earth and timber fortified post of rectangular plan, measuring 47 by 72m. The site has not been excavated and there is no information as to its dates of occupation.

**Gresia:**<sup>11</sup> Earth and timber fortified post of rectangular shape, measuring 50 by 60m. The site has not been excavated and there is no available information as to its dates of occupation. There is absolutely no evidence to support any arguments for an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD erection date.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 260-262; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 73; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 92; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 31, 33; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Repères Chronologiques", 463 (who argues for an early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD initial foundation date without citing any real evidence); Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 270, 271 and note 7; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87; *TIR* L35 63.

<sup>10</sup> Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 315; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 74; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 31 and n. 280.

<sup>11</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 354; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 287; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 74; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Gajewska, *Limes Transalutanus*, 92-93; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 33 and n. 297; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Données", 264; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 271; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87; *TIR* L35 44.

<sup>12</sup> As in Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Données", 264 and "Limesul Roman", 55; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 105. Both scholars have based their arguments on the resemblance in shape of the fort at Gresia to those at Putineiu and Flămînda; the dating of the latter forts has already been questioned.

**Ghioca:**<sup>13</sup> Auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 75 by 102m. Its dates of occupation have not been determined.

**Urluieni:**<sup>14</sup> The remains of two separate auxiliary fortifications have been unearthed at the locality of Urluieni, at the confluence point between the Mărăcina and Cotmeana rivers. Neither site has received any extensive fieldwork.

In relation to fort A, two main phases of construction have been established so far: Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring an estimated 105 by 123m. Unearthed traces include sections of the North-east earth and timber wall. Phase II: Stone fort of identical shape and size to the previous one. This fort had square gate-towers (sides measure 5.5, 5.5, 4.90 and 5.5m) and trapezoidal corner-towers, while visible traces also include sections of the eastern gateway (*porta principalis sinistra*) and the fort's fully uncovered headquarters (*principia*), which measured 30 by 31.5m. Attached to the north side of the *principia*, traces of two further buildings (a basilica and what appears to be an *oikos*) were also discovered.

The dating of either phase of construction is still a matter of dispute, as the available evidence from this fort is too meagre to allow for any definite conclusions. The finds from this fort can so far only establish a definite 3<sup>rd</sup> century phase of occupation; any arguments in favour of an earlier (2<sup>nd</sup> century) date are, therefore, purely hypothetical. Indeed, some scholars tend to date the erection of the stone fort within the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, on the basis of its overall plan and the square shape of its gate-towers.<sup>15</sup> This would then mean that the earlier earth and timber fort was erected at the site during Trajan's reign, a date which can not be verified from the available evidence. Bogdan-Cătăniciu, the principal excavator of the site, tends to favour an initial foundation date within the

---

<sup>13</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 320; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 74-75; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 113; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Données", 262; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87; *TIR* L35 43.

<sup>14</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 315; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 75-76; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874-875; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 93; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Recherches", 337-338; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Repères Chronologiques", 461-462 and figs 2-4; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Données", 261-262; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87; *TIR* L35 76.

<sup>15</sup> See Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 93; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 874. Contra Tudor, *Orase*, 375 and Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87, who argue for a Severan date of construction.

first years of the Roman occupation of Dacia; as for evidence, she cites the discovery of a sestertius of Domitian, which is the earliest datable piece of evidence from this fort.<sup>16</sup> This find hardly constitutes sufficient evidence and it must be noted that the majority of the coins found at the site are of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century date. In any case, and at least until new evidence is brought to light, it would be safer to leave the question of this fort's initial occupation phase open.

To the immediate south east of fort A, there is an additional fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 85 by 112m. Once again, there is no conclusive evidence as to this fort's approximate dates of occupation, though most finds tend to suggest an early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD date.

**Fîlfani:**<sup>17</sup> A small earth and timber auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape measuring 62 by 93m. The site has not been excavated and there is no information as to its initial erection or its span of occupation.

**Săpata de Jos:**<sup>18</sup> The remains of two fortifications are situated near the left bank of the Cetatii stream, between the localities of Săpata de Jos and Lingești. Neither site has been the subject of any recent archaeological fieldwork; in fact, most of what we know about these forts is derived from the surveys conducted in the area during the late 1930's.<sup>19</sup>

Site A: Earth and timber fort (later rebuilt in stone) of rectangular shape, measuring 89 by 125m. The remains of this fort are limited to a small section of the northeast fortification walls. All finds from this fort suggest a Severan initial

---

<sup>16</sup> Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Repères Chronologiques", 461-462.

<sup>17</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 260; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 76; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 94; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 87-88; *TIR* L35 42.

<sup>18</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 305-306; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 76-77; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874-875; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 94-96; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 36-37, 40 and n. 313-314; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 88; *TIR* L35 64.

<sup>19</sup> The initial excavation reports belong to Cristescu, "Săpata de Jos", 435-447.

foundation date.<sup>20</sup> This fort is believed to have been destroyed during the Carpic invasions of 242 AD.<sup>21</sup>

Site B: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 35 by 46m, situated about 40m southeast of the larger fortification. Its exact dating has not been determined, but there is no evidence to suggest an occupation phase prior to the early or mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

**Albota:**<sup>22</sup> Earth and timber auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 56 by 81m, situated near the left bank of the Albota stream. The site has not been excavated. So far, the existing evidence can only point out to an early to mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century initial occupation phase.

**Purcăreni:**<sup>23</sup> A small auxiliary fortification of rectangular shape, situated near the left bank of the Doamnei stream. Its actual size has not been determined; the fort was partially destroyed after the construction of the Braşov-Piteşti modern highway.

There is no information as to erection date. At present, the surviving evidence recovered from this fort suggests a 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD initial occupation phase.

**Jidava (Cîmpulung):**<sup>24</sup> The site consists of two fortifications, situated near the confluence point between the Drăceştilor and Tîrgul rivers.

---

<sup>20</sup> Mainly coins which are datable from Commodus onwards. See Cristescu, "Săpata de Jos", 444-445; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 270 and n. 7.

<sup>21</sup> See Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Repères Chronologiques", 467; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 305-306; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 77; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 88.

<sup>22</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 262-265; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 78; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 96; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 89; *TIR* L35 22.

<sup>23</sup> Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 297; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 79; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 96; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 88; *TIR* L35 60.

<sup>24</sup> Popescu and Popescu, "Jidava-Cîmpulung 1968", 67-79; Popescu and Popescu, "Jidava-Cîmpulung 1970", 251-253; Popescu, Petolescu and Cioflan, "Cîmpulung (Jidava) 1984", 15-18 (including information on both Roman forts at the site); Cioflan, *Jidava-Cîmpulung*, 3-18 and figs 1-12, including the fort's ground plan (pp.10-11); Bogdan-Cătănicu, *Evolution*, 8, 34, 52; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limesul Roman", 55; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Limes du Sud-Est", 271; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Nouvelles Données", 264; Bogdan-Cătănicu, "Repères Chronologiques", 464; Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 293-296; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 79-80; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 112; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 875; Gudea, "Bericht", 490; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 96-97; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 89-91; *TIR* L35 57.

Site A: Stone fort of rectangular shape, measuring 132 by 99m. The excellent state of preservation of the fort has allowed the restoration of large sections of its stone walls, its gate and corner-towers as well as its interior buildings (the principia, the praetorium and the horreum). There is little doubt that the fort standing today is a product of the Severan era; however, there seems to be a significant dispute as to this fort's initial erection date. Some scholars, most notably Bogdan-Cătănciu, Gudea and Gajewska believe in the existence of an earlier fort, built during the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, probably as early as the Dacian wars. Their arguments are primarily based on the square shape of the fort's towers and on what they describe as the existence of small finds which are datable to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>25</sup> However, after an examination of the actual excavation reports, it seems that most finds from this fort, including a few pieces of Roman glass, pottery-ceramic tiles, a few bronze fibulae and coins ranging from Commodus to Philip the Arab which were unearthed near the area of the principia, suggest that the fort was initially built during the Severan era.<sup>26</sup>

The discovery at Jidava of a brick stamp belonging to cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum seems to have added further ambiguity as to the fort's original foundation date. This unit is known to have operated in the Olt river area from Trajan's Dacian wars to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The exact dating or chronology of this brick stamp cannot be securely established; given, however, the lack of any corresponding 2<sup>nd</sup> century material from the site, then the unit's possible presence at the Jidava fort should be associated with the Severan building activity along the "Transalutan" line.

Site B: About 300m south of the main fort at Jidava, there is a smaller earth and timber fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 80 by 60m. There is no information as to its dates of occupation.

---

<sup>25</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 81; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 96-97 and 105. Bogdan-Cătănciu in *Evolution*, 34 and n. 305 and "Repères Chronologiques", 464, argues for the existence of at least three earlier phases of construction-occupation prior to the fort standing today; there is no such reference in the actual excavation reports, while, on a recent visit to the fort at Jidava, I saw no traces of an earlier (pre-Severan) fort at the site.

<sup>26</sup> All finds from Jidava are displayed in a small museum erected within the site of the fort. They were recently published in Cioflan, *Jidava-Cîmpulung*, 3-18 and figs 10-12. There is no real way for me to examine the accuracy of the method employed in the actual dating of these finds (especially in the case of the pottery fragments and the bronze

**Voinești:**<sup>27</sup> Earth and timber auxiliary fortification situated near the confluence of the Tîrgul and Dimbovița rivers. Its actual size and shape have not been determined. According to the existing evidence, mainly brick stamps belonging to legio XI Claudia and cohorts I Flavia Commagenorum, the fort was probably erected during or immediately after Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>28</sup> There is no further information as to how long the fort remained in service; the evidence is still inconclusive, but it is quite possible that the fort was abandoned in the early years of Hadrian's reign.<sup>29</sup>

**Rucăr:**<sup>30</sup> Earth and timber fortification of rectangular shape, measuring 40 by 60m, situated on the left bank of the Dimbovița river. The site was partially excavated during the brief fieldwork surveys of the early 1970's, where sections of the fort's earth and timber walls (5.20 by 0.80m) and an earth corner-tower were uncovered. According to brick stamps belonging to legio XI Claudia and cohorts II Flavia Bessorum, the fort was constructed during or after Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>31</sup> It is quite probable that a detachment from this unit remained at Rucăr throughout Trajan's reign; however, after its transfer to the fort of Cincșor under Hadrian, it appears that the fort at Rucăr was subsequently abandoned.<sup>32</sup> There is no evidence to suggest whether it was re-occupied at any later point.

---

fibulae), but the people in charge of the museum are convinced that they are of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century date.

<sup>27</sup> Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 81; Gudea, "Bericht", 490; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, pg. 9 and note 52.

<sup>28</sup> Bădescu, "Stampilele", 291-296 and fig. 1; Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 50, 63-65 and 109. They argue, on the basis of the typology of the aforementioned brick stamps, that the fort at Voinești was built after AD 106. See also Brandl, *Ziegelstempeln*, 142 and figs 15-16.

<sup>29</sup> Probably following the abandonment of Southern Wallachia by AD 117-118.

<sup>30</sup> Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Cercetari", 276-288; Tudor, *Orase*, 374-375; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 304; Gajewska, "Limes Transalutanus", 97-98; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 81; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 97-98; Gudea, "Limes Dakien", 875; Gudea, "Bericht", 490; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, *Evolution*, 7-8, 21; Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Nouvelles Données", 264; *TIR* L35, 62.

<sup>31</sup> See Zahariade and Dvorski, *Lower Moesian Army*, 50; Beneš, *Auxilia*, 18; Russu, "Auxilia", 67; Petolescu, "Auxiliarheiten", 83; Vlădescu, *Armata*, 122-123. The cohorts II Flavia Bessorum operated in the region during and after Trajan's Dacian wars; at the time, it is also attested at the fort of Stolniceni (Buridava). During Hadrian it was stationed at the fort of Cincșor. See Gostar, "Studii epigrafice II", 180.

<sup>32</sup> According to Bogdan-Cătăniciu, "Cercetari", 286-288.

**Cumidava (Rîșnov):**<sup>33</sup> A large auxiliary fortification situated near the right bank of the Bîrsa river. Sections of its interior buildings (the principia, the praetentura and the horreum) and its four main gate-towers have been restored. According to the available evidence, two main phases of construction have been distinguished so far:

Phase I: Earth and timber fort of rectangular shape, measuring 110 by 114m. Traces of its walls have been established underneath the later stone ones. This fort was probably built during Trajan's reign, on the basis of the archaeological material recovered from this particular layer.<sup>34</sup> Its garrison is unknown.

Phase II: Stone fort, built on top of the previous one, measuring 124 by 118m. This fort had rectangular gate-towers and trapezoidal corner-towers. With the exception of the principia, most internal buildings were made out of earth and timber. In the middle of the fort, next to the principia, the remains of a basilica (20 by 8m) were also uncovered. According to the available evidence, the reconstruction of the fort in stone took place sometime around the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>35</sup> Its garrison during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD has not been established.

---

<sup>33</sup> Gudea and Pop, *Rîșnov - Cumidava*, esp. 9-44, 46-66 and figs 2-5, 10-34; Macrea, "Cumidava 1941", 234-261; Macrea, "Cumidava 1950", 61-69 and figs 2-3 (building inscription datable to Alexander Severus); Tudor, *Orase*, 374-376; Tudor, *Olt.Rom.* 3, 231; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 64-65; Gudea, "Limesul Daciei", 111; Gudea, "Limes Dakiens", 874; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 8-9, 34 and notes 306-308; Bogdan-Cătănciu, "Nouvelles Données", 264; Bogdan-Cătănciu, "Repères Chronologiques", 464, 467; Bogdan-Cătănciu, "Limesul Roman", 55-57; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 91-92; *TIR* L35, 34-35.

<sup>34</sup> Including early 2<sup>nd</sup> century pottery fragments, glassware, imported (South Gaulish type) terra sigillata, fragments of bronze lamps and fibulae and coins datable between Domitian and Hadrian. See Gudea and Pop, *Rîșnov - Cumidava*, 46-62 and figs 42-59.

<sup>35</sup> Gudea and Pop, *Rîșnov - Cumidava*, 63-64; Gudea, *Dakische Limes*, 66; Bogdan-Cătănciu, *Evolution*, 34 and note 308; Vlădescu, *Fortificatiile*, 92.

