

THE ROMAN FORT AT ROMITA (DACIA). RESULTS OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY¹

In the north-western part of the Porolissum *limes* several forts are placed at short distances from each other around the most important point in the area: the fort at Porolissum (Fig. 1). One of these forts, near Romita-Certiae (Românași village, Sălaj County, România) is sited on the right bank of the Agrijului valley², close to the (modern) river, at the position where the valley is at its narrowest. The Agrij River runs parallel with the Meseș Mountains to the north and flows into the Someșul Mare River at Jibou. The corridor formed by this valley is one of the easiest to pass through, as is the parallel corridor to the east (Almașului valley), who both form an easy point of entry into the Roman "Hinterland".

The first accounts regarding the Roman ruins at Romita were provided early in the 19th C³, however a report concerning the exact place and dimensions of the fort was provided by C. Torma in 1864⁴. He gives more precise informations in 1880 when he identified also the garrison of the fort as *coh. I Batavorum* and *coh. II Britannica*⁵. Different dimensions of 210 × 150 m were given by P. Király late in 19th C⁶. After mid 20th C V. Lucăcel will report an area of 230 × 185 m and the location of the four gates on the enclosure wall without any archaeological research⁷. Some archaeological inspections were made in the seventies in the vicinity of the fort, inside the Roman baths. Afterwards, a proper archaeological excavation was made in 1996 and 1997 concentrated on the defensive system and *portae praetoria* and *principalis sinistra*, to establish finally the precise dimension of the fort of 187 × 225 m⁸.

During the spring of 2000 a combined team of archaeologists and geophysicists carried out a survey of the Romita site⁹. Several different methods were used, amongst them the normal magnetic measurement, resistivity – and electromagnetic measuring.

¹ The material presented here is an homage paid to J. K. Haalebos, a much regretted scholar, the one who initiated the use of magnetic inspections in specialty studies in Romania, as well. The first results obtained as an outcome of magnetic inspections are those from the fort at Tihău, see J. K. Haalebos, *Nederlanders in Roemenië*, Nijmegen 1999. The following abbreviations have been used more frequently: Bărbulescu 1987 = M. Bărbulescu, *Din istoria militară a Daciei romane. Legiunea V Macedonica și castrul de la Potaissa*, Cluj-Napoca 1987; Hodgson 1996 = N. Hodgson, *A late Roman courtyard house at South Shields and its parallels*, in *Architecture in Roman Britain* (ed. by P. Johnson, I. Haynes), London 1996, p. 135-151; Johnson 1987 = A. Johnson, *Römische Kastelle des 1. und 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. in Britannien und in den germanischen Provinzen des Römerreiches*, Mainz a. Rhein 1987; Matei, Bajusz 1997 = Al. V. Matei, I. Bajusz, *Castrul roman de la Romita – Certiae. Das Römergrenzkastell von Romita – Certiae*, Zalău (Ghid al monumentelor arheologice 4) 1997; Petrikovits 1975 = H. von Petrikovits, *Die Innenbauten römischer Legionslager während der Prinzipatszeit*, Düsseldorf – Opladen 1975.

² For the ancient name of this settlement, see briefly Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 12-13.

³ C. Hodor, *Doboka vármegye természeti és polgári esmértetése*, Kolozsvár 1837, p. 532-535.

⁴ The author records an area surrounded by walls of 280 × 200 feet, cf. C. Torma, *Adalék észak-nyugati Dácia fölke és feliratához*, Budapest 1864, p. 14.

⁵ C. Torma, *A limes dacicus felső része*, Budapest 1880, p. 101.

⁶ P. Király, *Dacia Provincia Augusti I*, Nagybecskerek 1893, p. 414-415.

⁷ See in detail Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 15-16.

⁸ Matei, Bajusz 1997, 18 ff.

⁹ The team comprised of archaeologists from the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen and geophysicists from Utrecht University, both in the Netherlands.

These methods will be explained, as to provide the reader with some insight in what was measured and what not.

The earth can be considered a large magnet, but the magnetic fields differ in time and in frequency. Objects who are magnetic by nature show a marked difference with the natural magnetic fields, and thus with their surroundings. Also, and this is interesting for archaeologists, ceramic products, if baked in an oven at a high temperature, and from a clay which contains particles of iron, take on the magnetic field of the moment and place where they were manufactured. This field then becomes 'trapped' in the finished product. As most often these ceramic products are then transported elsewhere, where they give a marked and different reading when measured compared to their 'new' surroundings. Even after 2000 years. The effect is that in a Roman context especially tiles and bricks, from roofs, floors or heating systems, give very clear readings. When they are used or re-used in the foundations of buildings, these show clearly in the measurements. Thus only magnetic objects or those with a different magnetic field from the surrounding soil will show. Blocks from quarries in a volcanic rock will show when used elsewhere, as will tiles or bricks. Ovens also will show very well, but decayed wood will usually not, nor sun dried clay bricks. The measurements were conducted with a proton based magnetometer, which is very sensitive. These measurements form the basis of most of our results.

A different method is where one introduces a new magnetic field, based on an electric field. This method can produce different results, but in practise it was very much slower than the previous method. Also it is more sensitive to local conditions, which in the case of Romita proved to be unfavourable. Therefore it was used mainly on the *porta principalis sinistra* and parts of the *principia*. In the end hardly any new insights were gathered using this apparatus.

The third method used was by measuring the resistivity. An electric current is sent through the surface, and is then measured at certain intervals. As the current and the intervals can be varied, it is possible to vary the depth accordingly to the estimates of the archaeologists. Unfortunately, the assessment of the depth of the Roman remains previous to the campaign was inaccurate. Therefore a specific appliance was brought to Romita which was more slow and precise then needed. It turned out the Roman remains were much nearer to the modern surface than thought. But what does one measure? The answer is: differences in the capacity to let an electric current pass through. We will give two examples to illustrate this. A stone foundation, set in a sandy soil, will block a current much more than the natural soil. A former ditch, with a different filling than the surrounding soil, can act as a drain, and could therefore be moist, which will show in the measurements as the electric current will pass differently. Based on the interval between the point of entry and the point where the current is measured, a certain time will elapse. The differences in the measured elapsed times will indicate a difference in subsoil structures. It cannot tell what is there, but it can tell something is there.

All methods have several things in common: they should be used on large areas, as they measure differences. Secondly, they cannot be used to pinpoint exactly where certain irregularities occur. They are indicative, but given that they are used over larger tracts, they can be fairly precise. Also they are not able to discern layers, i.e. they can't show the chronology. Ideally these methods should be accompanied with 'real' archaeology. These profiles can also be used as a confirmation of the geophysical work.

All data presented here are indicative, and the measurements could not discern the different phases of the shown structures. A short profile through the canalized Cioroiu showed that in the latest phase blocks from the nearby Măgura-hill were used. This hill is

of a volcanic origin which shows very well in the measurements. All very clear, strikingly present remains can possibly be attributed to this latest phase¹⁰.

The dimensions of the fortification of Romita were measured on site, being approximately 225 × 187 m (see *supra*). According to magnetic measurements, measuring from the centre of the precinct wall, the fort's dimensions are approximately the same as those measured on site: about 230 (north/south) × 192 (east/west) m. Most certainly, the remains that can be seen as an unevenness of the ground represent the dimension of the last phase of the fort. During the previous archaeological research a first timber phase was found, especially on the north, west and east side of the fort's defences. Remnants of this phase were also seen in the profile along the canalized Cioroii (see *supra*). It seems therefore that this earlier phase covered the same area as the latest phase. Chronologically, this earth and timber fort was dated from the very beginning of the province¹¹. However, it is possible that the original fort was smaller, which could imply that there were less soldiers garrisoned in the fort than in the previous phase. An indication for this can be found in the way in which the buildings in the *latera praetorii* were organized (see *infra*).

The traces of defensive ditches were identified during archeological excavations, but at ground level we can only notice a reddish impression going along the precinct wall, reflecting a different consistency of the ground¹². Archeological excavations identified the middle of the first ditch at about 9.00 m from the exterior side of the precinct wall¹³. However, the ditch that we can see in our plan as a shade of color is a different one, 1.00-1.15 m more to the exterior, representing the last phase of the defensive system in Romita.

The fort's stone wall is visible even in the plan obtained as a result of magnetic prospections. A few of the sandy grit stone shaped blocks that used to face the fort wall were discovered in the excavation¹⁴. The preserved thickness of the precinct wall is 1.40-1.45 m. We can easily notice several interval towers along this wall, one between the north-east corner and the *porta principalis sinistra*, two between this gate and the south-east corner, and once again one between *porta decumana* and the south corners of the fortification and finally several others, probably symmetric but less visible, on the west side of the fortification. They have a usual shape, rectangular and attached to the precinct wall, without being projected towards the exterior. In exchange, the gate towers have a different plan, as they are also rectangular but only a little bit projected outside, which proves they had a different functionality¹⁵. Three of the fort's gates: *porta praetoria*, *portae principales sinistra* and *dextra* are double, each having two corridors, whereas the *porta decumana* has just a simple opening. The corner towers also have a normal trapezoidal plan, their exterior wall being at the same time the fort's precinct wall. During

¹⁰ Some data regarding the early stages of inhabitation in Romita are to be found in Matei, Bajusz 1997, *passim*.

¹¹ Cf. Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 26, 30.

¹² For details on the defense system of the fort at Romita, see Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 20-38.

¹³ Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 32.

¹⁴ Sometimes, such blocks were discovered on both sides of the wall; therefore, it could have been covered with stone blocks on both sides (cf. Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 31); but in this case, the existence of an *agger*, noticed in the excavation (Matei, Bajusz 1997, 35), was useless. Therefore, it is most likely for the space, or at least the supra-structure between the *via sagularis* and the precinct wall to have been open, this being supported by a wooden structure, whose traces were in fact discovered in the excavation, as well. This is probably what this is all about when the authors of the excavations state that they noticed „...the trace of transversal beams that held the palisade pillars...” Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 36.

¹⁵ The archeological excavations at the *porta principalis sinistra* and *porta praetoria* confirm the planimetry of the gate bastions and at the same time provide extremely interesting new information on the inhabitation inside the towers, on the materials discovered here, on the temporary blocking of the gates and on their construction system, see Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 38-57.

the excavations, the existence of an initial earth and wood phase was pointed out to the north, west and east sides and the traces of wooden pests at the gates were identified.

The fortification at Romita is 160 m wide, measured from the interior extremity of the *via sagularis*, having a tripartite internal organization, just like most of the forts in the western provinces of the Empire, with a 60.00 m deep *praetentura*, the *latera praetorii* of about 55.00-60.00 m and a 70.00 m *retentura*. The fact that the fortification in Romita had initially been shorter is also suggested by the dimensions of the buildings in the *latera praetorii*. Thus, the headquarter building appears to be longer than the other stone construction with a visible, clear plan in the *latus praetorii dextrum*. The unusually long headquarter building can be explained by a subsequent necessity of re-dimensioning the structure¹⁶, its exterior extremity being on the back line of the building that seems to be a *praetorium*, just like it should have, right where the *via quintana* should have been placed initially. The interval towers existed and continued to function to its extremity. They are easily visible in the last phase of the precinct. It is normal for the distance between the *via principalis* and *via quintana* in a fort to reflect the dimensions or the length of the buildings in the *latera praetorii* that should theoretically take up its entire depth. There are a few cases in which the *via quintana* is not located in the back of all the buildings in the *latera praetorii*; in such cases, there are open spaces in the places that were not yet built on. The cases in which the buildings in this part of the fort do not have equal depths are more similar to the different situations encountered in legionary fort, where there are other types of buildings with an official resses role in the area behind the *principia*, such as a *valetudinarium*, for example. Where are such buildings, the length of the buildings in *latera praetorii* could be different¹⁷. However, the commandment buildings' extension may have been caused by the restoration of the *retentura* at a certain moment, probably as a consequence of the change of the garrison in Romita. What was the reason for the existence of a bigger commandment building in that particular moment? This can be explained if we ask ourselves which part of the commandment building is extending the most (see *infra*). Therefore, it is possible that there had been initially a fort of smaller dimensions; at least the *retentura* may have been shorter.

The point from which the mapping of a fort begins is at the crossroad between the *via principalis* and the *via praetoria*, right where ancient authors speak of the existence of a *locus gromae*. Therefore, the *groma* marks the entrance in the *principia*. At the same time, it has a religious function¹⁸ as well as a precise, functional role, as it is the point from which prospections begin, by mapping the two main roads¹⁹. The *groma* is epigraphically attested in Lambaesis, in an inscription over the entrance in the *tetrapylon* that marks the

¹⁶ Similar proportions and lengths are to be found in the forts at Rudchester (D. J. A. Taylor, *The Forts on Hadrian's Wall*, BAR B.S. 305, Oxford 2000, Fig. 5) or Benwell (Johnson 1987, Abb. 202), but we do not have enough information on these constructions to be able to come up with a parallelism.

¹⁷ This is the case in Housesteads or Wallsend, see the plans in J. Crow, *Book of Housesteads*, London 1995, p. 50-51, Fig. 30 and N. Hodgson, *The Roman Fort at Wallsend (Segedunum)*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2003, Fig. 10.

¹⁸ Hyginus, *De limitibus* (F. Blume, K. Lachmann, A. Rudorff, *Die Schriften der römischen Feldmesser*, vol. 1, Berlin 1848, p. 170: *posita auspicaliter groma*).

¹⁹ Hyginus 12: *in introitu praetorii partis mediae ad viam principalem gromae locus appellatur quod <quod> tuor viae ibi congruant sive in dictatione metationis posito in eodem loco ferramento groma superponatur, ut portae castrorum in conspectu rigoris stellam efficiant*. Among non-commissioned officers, the following are mentioned by Vegetius 2, 7: *mensores qui in castris ad podismum dementiuntur loca, in quibus tentoria milites figant vel hospitia in civitatibus praestant*. As a *locus gromae*, it is well-known from papyri as well. Even guards were placed there; see R. O. Fink, *Roman Military Records on Papyrus*, London/Michigan 1971, nr. 15, col. 2, 9 and nr. 19, line 6 (dated in 242-256 B.C.). See also RE VII, 2, 1912, 1881; O. A. W. Dilke, *The Roman Land Surveyors*, Plymouth 1971, p. 66, 88, 89 or O. A. W. Dilke, *Archaeological and Epigraphic Evidence of Roman Land Surveys*, ANRW II.1, 1974, p. 571 where he reminds the fact that the *groma* must be "in the centre of the centuriation stone".

crossroad between the *viae principales* and *praetoria* and the entrance in the *principia*²⁰. Since the *groma* is in the Accusative, it is assumed that in this case we are dealing with a construction in itself, and not with the proper topographic instrument²¹. Thus, we are dealing with a *tetrapylon*-type structure, built according to the scheme of a Roman triumphal arch, which marks the crossroad of the *via principalis* and the *via praetoria* in Lambaesis or Dura-Europos, Lauriacum, Rapidum and maybe Haltern²². The cases in which this structure was identified are extremely rare, although the excavations in the *principia* area are regularly quite consistent. But for the legionary fort in Lauriacum, built in the second half of the IInd century B.C. and maybe except for the one in Haltern, the existence of a construction that should indicate the *locus gromae* seems more likely to be a characteristic of the Orient.

In Dacia, traces of an eventual base for a *groma* have been discovered in Turda (Potaissa) under the layer of volcanic tufa that made up the *via praetoria*, at its crossroad with the *via principalis*: a limestone base having a more or less triangular shape²³. Moreover, in Sarmizegetusa, the precise place of the base for the *groma* was identified, under the shape of a 67 × 60 cm stone base²⁴. Just like in Lambaesis, in Sarmizegetusa the *groma* is covered by a rectangular, 14.00 × 8.40 m construction²⁵, as well.

Similarly, there are in Romita four points that most probably represented the bases of columns forming a *tetrapylon*, very clearly visible in the plan of magnetic prospections. This time they were right at the crossroad between the *via principalis* and the *via praetoria*. It is hard to define more accurately exactly what this construction looked like. It was probably like the one in Lambaesis, with several arched openings, even though only four pillar bases can be discerned²⁶. Just like in other places, it is probably not a separate construction, as it appears to be from the plan, being connected to the commandment building by two arches between the southern bases and the building's front wall. The intermediary space between the *tetrapylon* southern limit and the front of the commandment building is about 5.00 m wide. There was probably a portico there, going along the entire front of the building, hard to discern at ground level. The *principia* and implicitly, the *groma* and *aedes* are oriented straight along the road from the fort's axis. The four bases of the monumental construction that marked the *groma* were on the *via principalis*, in a symmetric position, right at the middle of the distance between the *portae principales*. The bases are placed 10 m away from one another, at the northern and southern sides of the *via principalis*, in front of the crossroad with the *via praetoria*. The point in the middle of the construction is about 70.00 m away from the *porta praetoria*, 145 m from the *porta decumana* and 85.00 m from the *portae*

²⁰ CIL VIII 2571: ... *gromam Te[r]tiis Augustani[s].....restituit*, *Ten[a]gino Prob[us] pra[eses] prov[inciae] Nu[m]idia[rum] dedicavit*], re-read by H.-G. Kolbe, *Die Inschrift am Torbau der principia im Legionslager von Lambaesis*, MDAI (R) 81, 1974, p. 284.

²¹ Cf. H.-G. Kolbe, op. cit. (n. 20), p. 293, 295.

²² R. Fellmann, *Die Principia des Legionslagers Vindonissa und das Zentralgebäude der römischen Lager und Kastelle*, Brugg 1958, 139 f., Abb. 56, 58; F. Rakob, S. Storz, *Die principia des römischen Legionslagers in Lambaesis*, MDAI (R) 81, 1974, p. 266; Petrikovitz 1975, n. 78; Johnson 1987, p. 140, Abb. 97. In order to find a few examples of *tetrapyla* and a reconstruction of that at the entrance in the stone forum in Sarmizegetusa, see R. Étienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, *Les fouilles de forum vetus de Sarmizegetusa. Rapport général*, AMN 39-40/1, 2002-2003 (2004), pl. XXIX, XXX.

²³ Bărbulescu 1987, p. 129.

²⁴ The monument is not placed right in the middle of the crossroad between the *decumanus maximus* and the *cardo maximus*. It is positioned slightly back, towards the entrance, on the same line with the portico on the north side of the stone forum, subsequently moved to the south, cf. R. Étienne, I. Piso, Al. Diaconescu, op. cit. (n. 22), p. 64, pl. XXXII, 2, B. 33, 36.

²⁵ *Idem*, op. cit., p. 104, 110.

²⁶ The entrances in the *principia* in Lambaesis have about 7.00 m, F. Rakob, S. Storz, op. cit. (n. 22), fig. 9, pl. 135, 2.

principales. All these dimensions clearly indicate that this is the place in which we would expect to find a monument in the honor of the *groma*.

Principia

The dimensions of the commandment building were initially established solely on the basis of on-site observations, without having carried out any archeological excavations. Thus, considering the differences in level in the central area, the fortification's commandment building was considered to be about 48 (north/south) × 34 (east/west) m²⁷. As a result of magnetic prospections, we can easily figure out that this conformation of the field is due to the existence of a large building, whose approximate dimensions are 50-52 (north/south) × 35-37 (east/west) m, and stretching over an impressive surface of almost 2000 m², thus close to the previous prospections. Still, because of the large dimensions of the fort, the *principia* covers about 4.10 % of it. That represents a normal surface for fortifications in Dacia, where the usual percentage is between 3 and 5 %, with small variations²⁸. Moreover, the ratio between the length and the width of the commandment building is pretty big, about 1.50. In Dacia, it was only overcome by the ratio between the length and the width of commandment buildings in the forts at Inlăceni (1.80) and Titești (1.72)²⁹. As far as Romita is concerned, the explanation can be the fact that the commandment building had initially had, as we previously noted, a 40 m long back line formed by the neighboring building in the *latus praetorii dextrum* and the curtain towers that were on the extremities of this virtual line that had probably been the *via quintana*. Therefore, the *principia* could have had, in an early phase, about 40 (north/south) × 37 (east/west) m (1480 m²), the equivalent of 3.5 % of the fort, provided that the fortification was this big from the very beginning³⁰.

Why was it necessary to have the commandment building extended at a certain point? Maybe because the need of more space was not felt until at a certain moment in time. The part of the *principia* that was probably the most modified dimension-wise is practically the first court yard. Its main role was probably to serve as a place for the soldiers' reunions or to display the statues of emperors or altars for the *Disciplina militaris*³¹. The need for a bigger space is understandable, since two troops were present here. The *principia* was undoubtedly the administrative and also religious space par excellence in a fort; and in those places where several troops were stationed, administrative needs in relation with the *principia* were fulfilled by a very large construction. The surface covered by the commandment building was, basically, directly proportional to the surface of the entire fortification³².

²⁷ The very big dimensions of the building made the authors of the on-site observations to assume that there were two similar buildings here, which used to fulfill similar roles for each of the troops in the garrison, Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 30. Or, this would be the first such case known in the Roman Empire. For epigraphic proof regarding a *principia* used by two troops alike, see Johnson 1987, p. 139.

²⁸ For some comparative dimensions of the forts in other western provinces, see J. K. Haalebos, op. cit. (n. 1), 26, n. 43; D. J. A. Taylor, op. cit. (n. 16), Table 2.

²⁹ In Dacia, commandment buildings are usually more or less square, with very small differences, regardless of the ratio between the length and the width of the forts.

³⁰ Since the fortification was probably occupied by two auxiliary troops from the very beginning, this is not impossible.

³¹ The *principales* used to gather in the front courtyard, the soldiers on the *via principalis*, and the tribunes and centurions in the *basilica*, A. v. Domaszewski, *Die Principia des römischen Lagers*, Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher 9, Heidelberg 1899, p. 155. More suggestively, R. Fellmann states that a generalization is not possible, that situations are not always similar, and the analysis of every commandment building should be carried out individually, R. Fellmann, op. cit. (n. 22), 88. *Contra* H. v. Petrikovits who claims that there is not enough space for all the legionnaires to have been gathered here, Petrikovits 1975, p. 73, n. 71.

³² For the plan of the fort at Vetera, with two legions in the garrison, hence twice the size of other legionary fortifications, the *principia* is twice the size of other similar buildings, see Petrikovits 1975, Taf. 5a, b.

The entrance in the *principia* is not visible. The front side of the building was divided in a few compartments whose dimensions are not distinct in the plan, having a pretty big maximal depth, of about 10.00 m³³. On the western side of the building, a few compartments can be made out, approximately square and with a side of about 6.00 m. In exchange, the divisions on the opposite side are not clear enough, leaving the impression that they never even existed³⁴.

The courtyard is about 28.00 (north/south) × 28.00 (east/west) m. It appears to have covered a very large space, about 785 m², taking almost 40 % of the *principia*. If the uncovered space were, however, bordered by rooms on the east side as well, then the yard would have stretched on about 29 % of the commandment building space. The existence of a peristyle or of a colonnade to border the indistinguishable courtyard was necessary, especially in the case of the lack of compartments on that particular side, just like in the cases of Hod Hill sau Pförring. A stronger anomaly can be noted in the north-west corner of the commandment building's courtyard, where there was usually a fountain³⁵.

The walls in the back of the *principia* are thicker, that is why they can be perceived so clearly in the plan. Things stand alike in the case of the division wall between the front yard and the basilica, which seems to be interrupted at the extremities. Since this wall was a *stylobat*, this discontinuity can be normal, as it was not necessary to extend the wall to its extremities, the place functioning as an entrance from the courtyard to the basilica. On the other hand, if there were rooms bordering the courtyard, then it is obvious that the space at the extremities of the *stylobat* was not used.

The considerable thickness of the walls in the basilica area is undoubtedly due to this part of the building's big dimensions: about 12.00 × 37.00 m (444 m²). One cannot identify the place where the *tribunal* used to be, since it was probably made of wood or had weaker walls, hard to detect through magnetic prospections. However, we can notice quite accurately three statue bases or altars inside the basilica, one of these being in front of the *aedes*, just like in other cases, and the other two flanking the first. The existence of a base is also possible in the proximity of the basilica's south-east corner³⁶.

The rooms on the back side are not clearly discernable either; there were probably two on one side of the *aedes* and two on the other. They go about 5 m deep. Unlike them, the main room stretched over 70.00 m², the equivalent of about 10.00 (north/south) × 7.00 (east/west). The room is projected towards the south, about 5.00 m beyond the southern limit of the commandment building, and it probably did not have apses³⁷.

Praetorium

In the *latus praetorii dextrum*, about 30.00 m from the eastern side of the commandment building, we can see in the mapping a large building having a central yard. The construction is aligned to the *via principalis*, it is perpendicular on it and close

³³ Its dimensions are quite big, as compared to other commandment buildings in auxiliary forts, and similar to those of the very big rooms in the *principia* in Potaissa (Turda), see Bărbulescu 1987, p. 137.

³⁴ The commandment buildings that have yards with rooms on one side only were identified in Hod Hill (Johnson 1987, Abb. 182) or Pförring (W. Czyst, K.-H. Dietz, Th. Fischer, H.-J. Kellner, Die Römer in Bayern, Stuttgart 1995, Abb. 195).

³⁵ For the existence of fountains in similar positions, we want to bring into attention the forts in Hofheim (Johnson 1987, Abb. 190), Wiesbaden (Johnson 1987, Abb. 196), Eining (W. Czyst, K.-H. Dietz, Th. Fischer, H.-J. Kellner, op. cit. (n. 34), Abb. 127) or Wallsend (N. Hodgson, op. cit. (n. 17), Fig. 10).

³⁶ Such statue bases must have been a constant feature of the forts. Just like in the *fora*, a suggestive example is that of the four bases, all located approximately in front of the *aedes* in the fort at Wiesbaden, see for the plan Johnson 1987, Abb. 196.

³⁷ The similar case of the central room in Balmuldy, Johnson 1987, Abb. 206.

to the *porta principalis dextra*. The exterior dimensions of the building are: 42.00 (north/south) × 37.00 (east/west) m, on a 1554 m² surface. Thus, this building covers 3.70 % of the fort's surface. It is quite obvious, because of its position and the plan that it has, that this structure is in fact the commander's residence, as it is a peristyle house type of construction.

The inside courtyard, which does not seem to have a portico this time, either, although is probable that it did, is 20.00 × 20.00 (25.00) m large, the equivalent of 450 m². It stretches over 30 % of the total surface of the building. Magnetic anomalies can be noted in the north-east corner of the building, making it possible for the structure to have been enlarged or to have more extra-compartments added, as is the case, for example, for the buildings of the fort commanders in the same *limes* sector: Buciumi, Bologa, Căței or Gilău³⁸.

The existence of several compartments all around the courtyard is also visible. We can notice, on the south side, opposed to the entrance, a large division, about 10.00 × 8.00 m, whose north side is not on the demarcation line of the rooms in the back side, but which is projected a bit towards the yard. The room has similar dimensions to those of an *aedes* of the *principia*, but it is projected in the opposite direction, that is towards the interior of the building. This division in compartments can play the role of a similar *triclinium* and is characteristic to Mediterranean Roman houses, but not necessarily to the *praetoria* in auxiliary forts, apart from a few exceptions³⁹.

We can clearly discern, to the west of this room, three compartments with almost equal dimensions. Symmetrically, it is possible that there had been three compartments to the east of the *triclinium*. Besides, such divisions seem to have existed on all of the four sides all around the yard. Therefore, the structure has all the characteristics of a *praetorium*.

However, a striking element is the existence of a building in the *praetentura sinistra* similar to the first, from the viewpoint of its dimensions, but slightly different plan-wise. The construction is near the *porta principalis sinistra*, aligned to the *via principalis*, about 40.00 m from the *via praetoria* and 30.00 m from the *via sagularis* on the north side of the fort. This is also a structure that has a central yard, but this time its dimensions are bigger. The yard is bordered with big compartments on all sides, probably divided into several smaller, but these smaller spaces are not visible in the plan. The rooms are about 5.00 m deep, but the only clear, 3.00 m wide division is distinct right in the middle of the south side of the building, opposite from the *via principalis*, undoubtedly marking the entrance into the building. The total dimensions of the construction are: 40.00 (east/west) × 37.00 (north/south) m; it stretches over a 1480 m² surface, the equivalent of 3.5 % of the fort. It has been singled out that it has similar dimensions to those of the building in the *latus praetorii dextrum* and to the commandment building. Nevertheless, unlike the building considered to be a *praetorium*, the courtyard of the structure in the *praetentura* stretches over 600 m², its coordinates being 30.00 (east/west) × 20.00 (north/south) m and taking 40 % of the building's total surface.

The existence of a portico all around the courtyard is possible, but due to the poorer quality of the construction, it is possible that it should not be visible in magnetic prospections. Magnetic anomalies can be discerned inside the courtyard, in the south-west corner, therefore we can state that there was probably a water storage tank or a

³⁸ D. Isac, P. Hügel, D. Andreica, *Praetoria in Dakischen Militäranlagen*, SJ 47, 1994, *passim*, Abb. 5, 6, 7, 22, 25; D. Isac, *Castrul roman de la SAMVM – Căței*. The Roman Auxiliary Fort SAMVM – Căței, Cluj-Napoca 2003, p. 148, Fig. 13b

³⁹ For comparisons with Mediterranean-type houses and the *praetorium* at South Shields, see briefly Hodgson 1996, p. 143-149, Fig. 12.9, 12.10, 12.11. Otherwise, the dimensions of the *triclinium* in the *praetorium* in South Shields (10 × 6.60 m) are similar to those of the fort at Romita.

cistern here, close to the entrance, just like for the construction with a central courtyard in the *praetentura* of the fort at South Shields⁴⁰.

What do these two buildings belong to? Due to the probable existence of a *triclinium* in the building in the *latera praetorii*, we assume that it used to be the residence of a person, probably of one of the commanders of the two garrison troops in the Romita fort.

However, judging by its plan, the building in the *praetentura* can play the role of a *praetorium*, *mansio* or lodging place for officials in transit, *fabrica*, *valetudinarium* or storing room⁴¹. All these types of buildings are susceptible to have a rectangular plan, with rooms grouped around a central courtyard. It is pretty obvious that the final labeling of the building can be made only after having carried out detailed archeological research, but the pretty big dimensions of the building indicate a residence, as we shall see. Since it is not easy to make out the clear function of the structure from the plan of the building, visible through the prospections, we shall not discuss here each possible attribution. Summing it up, we are trying to understand if the existence of a second *praetorium* in a fort is possible, and which might have been the reason to explain the existence of two very big residences here.

In some fortifications, there is another building that comes out, with an interior courtyard and rooms all around, situated in another part than in the *latera praetorii*, also interpreted as being a *praetorium*. In Britannia, such buildings were identified in the *praetentura dextra* of the fort in Hod Hill and in the *praetentura sinistra* of the fort in The Lunt, Baginton⁴². The second *praetorium* in Hod Hill, larger than the one behind the commandment building was probably built for the *praefectus equitum*, superior in rank to the centurion that was in command of the legion vexillations that were stationed there, as well⁴³. The one in The Lunt, Baginton, which is also bigger than the one near the *principia*, suggests the presence of a more numerous "staff" "needed here by activities of which the *gyrus* is the chief archaeological indication"⁴⁴. Another analogy for the existence of two *praetoria* can be found in Caernarfon (*Segontium*); one of them is in the *latera praetorii*, and the other in one of the corners of the fort, attributed to an official responsible for ore extraction⁴⁵.

Two buildings with a central courtyard and recognized as being possible *praetoria* were also identified in Rottweil, which was probably a fort with several troops garrisoned here, on both sides of the commandment building⁴⁶. Furthermore, to the east of the commandment building in Straubing, an aerial photography unveils the existence of two buildings with a central courtyard, with rooms around⁴⁷.

We do not know what generally happens in the forts where two troops are attested, like the one in Strageath, for instance⁴⁸. Were there two commanders, or just

⁴⁰ Hodgson 1996, p. 135, 137, Fig. 12.3.

⁴¹ Briefly, for every type of building, see Petrikovits 1975, Bild 20, 23; Johnson 1987, *passim*; N. Hodgson, op. cit. (n. 17), p. 139-140.

⁴² Johnson 1987, p. 160, Abb. 182, 187.

⁴³ Johnson 1987, p. 160.

⁴⁴ D. R. Wilson, *Roman Britain in 1973*, *Britannia* 5, 1974, p. 431.

⁴⁵ See Hodgson 1996, 143. The existence of two *praetoria* was discussed in relation to the fort at South Shields as well; one of them has been clearly located in the *praetentura* (Hodgson 1996) and the other one is supposed to be located in a normal position in the *latera praetorii* (P. Bidwell, S. Speak, *Excavations at South Shields Roman Fort I*, Newcastle upon Tyne 1994, p. 39-40); however, the existence of the latter has not been verified, see Hodgson 1996, p. 143.

⁴⁶ D. Planck, *Arae Flaviae I*, Stuttgart 1975, p. 24-98.

⁴⁷ W. Czysz, K.-H. Dietz, Th. Fischer, H.-J. Kellner, op. cit. (n. 34), p. 519-520.

⁴⁸ However, the fort's dimensions are pretty small, and therefore it is most likely that only part of two troops were stationed here, and not the full strength of both troops, cf. S.S. Frere, J. J. Wilkes, *Strageath* (Excavation within the Roman Fort 1973-1986), *Britannia Monograph Series* 9, London 1989, 135.

one? Theoretically, and according to historical sources, there should have been two commanders, therefore two *praetoria*, as it would be hard to believe the two would have lived together. However, it is obvious in the case of the fully-researched fort in Strageath that there is only one *praetorium* here⁴⁹. Therefore, due to the specificity of each particular case, it is obvious that each fort must be analyzed alone, and that generalizations are not possible.

It is pretty obvious that the commander with the highest rank has, at least theoretically, the supreme authority in a fort with more than one auxiliary troop. But as far as the sources are concerned, there is no express mention, at least according to our knowledge, of the existence – or inexistence – of several *praetoria*. In some cases, it is certain that there were lodging facilities for each of the officers and implicitly, of the commanding officers⁵⁰, especially since each of the officers was undoubtedly accompanied by his entire family⁵¹.

Therefore, since there is at least a theoretical possibility, the dimensions of the structure in the *praetentura sinistra* in Romita encourage us to believe that it used to have a residential role. However, other destinations are not excluded, since buildings having reasonably big dimensions and a central courtyard proved to be *fabricae*, thanks to inside discoveries, in the case of the fortifications at Oberstimm or Wiesbaden; especially since big water storage tanks have been identified in the courtyards of both buildings⁵². A similar situation seems to be encountered in the courtyard of the construction in the *praetentura sinistra* at Romita. Besides, there is another argument against the attribution of this structure to a *praetorium*: we can see that the compartments all around the courtyard are divided according to a rather regular plan, whereas this situation is considered to be quite rare in the case of a *praetorium*, especially as a consequence of the many additions and because of the functions of the different rooms.

The reason for which the second *praetorium* in Romita could have been placed in the *praetentura* could be the lack of space in the *latera praetorii*, as the peristyle house was situated in the *dextra*, and probably two *horrea* in the *sinistra* (see *infra*). This internal planning could be the consequence of dividing the fort between the two troops, in two longitudinal halves. As one of the troops probably had smaller effectives, at least so did the *coh. VI Thracum* at a certain point, it could have taken the half to the west of the fort. Moreover, the granary for the entire effective was placed here, as there was plenty of space.

Horrea

According to the magnetic prospections' mapping, two long and narrow buildings seem to have existed in the *latus sinistrum*, perpendicular on the *via principalis*. Their length seems to be similar to that of the commandment building, but it is hard to establish their width. They were probably no more than 10.00 m wide. Even though buttresses cannot be discerned, as a consequence of the planning and of their position, it is possible for the two buildings to have been granaries.

⁴⁹ See *idem*, op. cit. (n. 48), *passim*.

⁵⁰ Polybios mentions that, although more than one legion camped in one fort, each officer had his own, well-established allotted place (Polybios VI, 27-28), it is true that the consuls' tents had to be in the central part of the fort, together with other official buildings (Polybios VI, 32).

⁵¹ The attestations on the Vindolanda plates alone are sufficient (A. K. Bowman, J. D. Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing-Tablets. Tabulae Vindolandenses II*, London 1994, p. 29, 30), confirmed by archaeological discoveries in the building of the commander of the same fort for instance, cf. R. Birley, J. Blake, A. Birley, *The 1997 Excavations at Vindolanda. The Praetorium Site. Interim Report, Haltwhistle 1997*, *passim*.

⁵² Johnson 1987, p. 160-161, Abb. 180, 196.

Therefore, the two 50.00 m buildings situated 15.00 m away from the *principia*, having a 10.00 m intermediary space could both be *horrea*. The space they took up was undoubtedly quite big, and especially the length/width ratio, since normally the ratio is 1: 2 or 1: 3. At any rate, the surface they were on was about 4 % of the fort, a relatively big percentage, as compared to other forts, where these granaries took up about 1.5-3.50 %⁵³.

The intervallum area

Along the north side of the fort, in the vicinity of the precinct opposite the *praetentura dextra*, another 3.00 (east/west) × 7.00 (north/south) building is visible in the plan, stretching over 224 m². If the width of this building goes up to the fort's precinct wall, it will have a surface twice as big, of about 480 m². The function of this building with a rectangular plan is even harder to establish, at the premises were suitable to hold many functions, which could be indicated with accuracy only through archeological research. The building can play a residential role; it can be the fort's stables, storehouse, *fabrica* or could even have a utilitarian role.

Barracks

Traces of barracks were identified in the 1990's only on the edges of an artificial canal, so called S1, with no systematic excavations having been carried out. In the opinion of the archeologists the placement of these barracks in the *retentura* is pretty clear⁵⁴. As the small valley whose shore was embanked flows from the east to the west and cuts off the width of the *retentura*, the identification of the barracks, usually placed *per scamna* (in this case, parallel with the valley), is carried out with difficulty. Therefore, a confirmation of the barracks and their attribution to the different troops stationed in Romita can be inoperative at this stage⁵⁵.

It was extremely hard to discern traces of the barracks' walls in the magnetic prospections' planning, as they were probably made of wood. However, we can still notice, in the *retentura sinistra*, a few narrow and long constructions stretching over the entire width of the space between the *intervallum* and *via decumana*. Therefore, the archeologists' findings can be valid: it is certain that the buildings here were oriented *per scamna*. Thus, the buildings in the area can be over 50.00 m long – very big dimensions for mere barracks, but the many compartments inside, about 4.00 m wide suggest that these were indeed barracks. In this case, the outcome would consist in structures of about 55.00 × 10.00 (?) m, covering 550 m² surfaces. Or, the barracks' dimensions vary around 325 m², having limits of about 125-550 m² ⁵⁶. Therefore, especially as a consequence of the pretty big space taken up by a barracks, the *contubernia* are quite big, too, close to the ones that can be found in legionary forts.

If these are barracks, even if made of wood, they were probably built on a stone base; that is why we can still discern in our plan at least the orientation and the length of the structures. Similar constructions, probably having the same dimensions, can be found in the *praetentura dextra* as well, but we cannot state their number with precision. It would also be inoperative to make scenarios regarding the number of soldiers in the fort in relation to the fort's dimensions without knowing neither technical details, nor the plan of all the buildings in the fort, since the number of soldiers in a

⁵³ P. Gentry, Roman Military Stone built Granaries in Britain, BARBS 32, Oxford 1976, Table 1, Fig. 5. For a couple of more detailed dimensions of several forts in Britannia, see D. J. A. Taylor, op. cit. (n. 16), Tab. 5.

⁵⁴ Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 60-61.

⁵⁵ The valley's winding course makes the interpretation even more difficult, see Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 62.

⁵⁶ Cf. D. Davison, The Barracks of the Roman Army from the Ist to the IIIrd Centuries A.D., BAR IS 472, Oxford 1989, p. 8.

troop depends greatly on very many unknown factors and since there is no fixed number firmly decided upon.

Troops

The fort at Romita was probably built by the *coh. VI Thracum* and the *coh. I Ituraeorum*⁵⁷. If the second troop is a *milliaria*, its replacement, at some point in the IInd century with the *coh. II Britannorum* ∞ is normal, although the latter was probably an *equitata*⁵⁸. E. Tóth also tries to prove the fact that the *Ituraei* troop is a *milliaria*. He states that the S that appears in the final part of the stamps, written down as in a mirror and sometimes having the extremities elongated, is in fact the abbreviation for *milliaria*, respectively an upside down ∞⁵⁹. The only problem is the fact that a few *praefecti* of this troop are mentioned in some inscriptions, therefore, either the troop turns from a *milliaria* into a *quingenaria* at a certain point, or, like in other cases, the *praefecti* lead troops having much larger effectives than we would expect⁶⁰.

The *coh. II Britannorum* was most probably stationed at Romita in the first half of the IInd century, replacing the *coh. I Ituraeorum*. The cohabitation with the *coh. VI Thracum* being proven by many tile stamps, some discovered in the same archeological contexts, it is possible that from the seventh decade of the IInd century, the garrison of the fort in Romita be made of the *coh. II Britannorum* and the *coh. I Batavorum*, both *milliariae* troops, the latter replacing the Thracian cohorts.

Coh. II Britannorum

The first attestations of this troop are the abbreviations of the troop's name on tile stamps in Germania Inferior, in Xanten⁶¹ and Vechten⁶², and more recently the recording of the troop in the diplomas in 81 and 83/84 (ZPE 143, no. 1)⁶³. Once the Dacian Wars took place, the unit was dislocated towards Moesia Superior, being recorded in the diploma in the year 100 (CIL XVI 46). Between 109 and 164 A.D., the troop appears to be a part of Dacia's army, and subsequently, that of Dacia Porolissensis⁶⁴.

The stamp that attests the *coh. II Brittanorum* in the fort in Ilișua is different from those in Romita, because of the existence of an abbreviation for *milliaria*. A similar stamp

⁵⁷ The stratigraphic conditions in which the stamps bearing the abbreviation of these troops were discovered make the excavation's authors support the idea of the two cohorts alone having built the fort, see Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 95.

⁵⁸ *Coh. I Ituraeorum* is attested only in the diplomas in 109 (AE 1990, 860 = RMD 148) and 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3), therefore it is possible to have left the province in the first half of the IInd century B.C. The letter E appears at the end of the stamps attesting it at Vechten, in Germania Inferior, it is probably an abbreviation for *equitata* (CIL XIII 12425), see G. Alföldy, Die Hilfstruppen der römischen Provinz Germania Inferior, Epigraphische Studien 6, Bonn – Düsseldorf 1968, p. 8. Some authors doubt that there have been riders in this troop, as well, see N. Gudea, *Contribuții la istoria militară a Daciei romane*. 3. *Cohors II Britannica de la Romita*, AMP 7, 1983, p. 156. Although this troop is only attested by stamps, the "ex silentio" argument in what the term *equitata* is concerned is not operative.

⁵⁹ E. Tóth, Porolissum. Das Castellum in Moigrad. Ausgrabungen von A. Radnóti, 1943. Régészeti Füzetek II/19, Budapest 1978, p. 50-51. The same opinion can be found in O. Țentea, *Cohors I Ituraeorum sagittariorum equitata milliaria*, Orbis Antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis, Cluj-Napoca 2004, p. 809.

⁶⁰ Other cases of *praefecti* to lead *milliariae* troops, such as *I Tungrorum* (CIL VII 638-42) and *II Tungrorum* (CIL III 1918, CIL VIII 5532) are attested; see W. Ensslin, RE XXII, 2, 1954, 1278-1283.

⁶¹ CIL XIII 12424.

⁶² CIL XIII 12425; G. Alföldy, loc. cit.

⁶³ [---]RITTON[---] appears in *tabella I*, identified with the *coh. II Brittonum milliaria*, see W. Eck, A. Pangerl, *Sex. Iulius Frontinus als Legat des niedergermanischen Heeres*, ZPE 143, 2003, p. 205-211.

⁶⁴ Military diplomas are dated to 109 (AE 1990, 860); 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3); 133 (IDR I, 11 = RMD 35); 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47) and 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64; CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19 and IDR I, 20 = RMD 63).

and two other stamps absolutely identical with the one published from Ilișua were discovered in the fort and in the *vicus* in Cășeu, in relatively clear stratigraphic contexts: the first inhabitation level in the *praetorium*, dated Trajan – Hadrian, respectively the first phase of the *vicus* in the vicinity of the fort⁶⁵. Thus, it was concluded that this troop built the forts in Cășeu and Ilișua in their first phase (Trajan), without knowing in what order or if not simultaneously⁶⁶. The “bigger” frequency of tegular stamps of the *coh. II Brittanorum* in the fort in Cășeu could be a clue regarding the fort’s garrison in the first inhabitation phase⁶⁷. During Trajan’s reign, the garrison troops are not known for certain in either of the two forts. In this period, the surface of the fortification in Cășeu is bigger by almost a hectare than that of the fort in Ilișua⁶⁸. However, the *coh. II Britannorum* could have been stationed in either of them and could have participated, with material or personnel, to the constructions in the neighboring fort. It is not excluded either that the *coh. I Britannica milliaria equitata* should have also been stationed in the fort in Cășeu from the very beginning, taking into account the dimensions of the fortification, which were quite large, anyways.

N. Gudea states that the unit built the garrison of the fort in Romita, where it was probably stationed with the *coh. VI Thracum*, which was a *quingenaria*⁶⁹. The quoted author orders the stamps of the *coh. II Brittanorum* discovered in this fort into 11 types comprising different variants, without being able to analyze them from a stratigraphic viewpoint, as well⁷⁰.

In fact, as a consequence of the very large number of tile stamps discovered at Romita, it is quite likely that the troop should have been stationed here subsequently. This is where the subsequent (?) known attestations of this troop come from: the stamps in which it bares the imperial name *Antoniniana*⁷¹. The fortification at Romita stretches over an impressive surface for an auxiliary fort: 4.20 ha, thus having two troops in its garrison⁷². Since there is no other unit *II Britannorum* attested in inscriptions or military diplomas, the existence of two troops with the same name is quite improbable⁷³. We would also want to remind the fact that usually, in abbreviations on tile stamps, the sign for *milliaria* is omitted from the troops’ names; it is the case of the stamps at Romita, the existence of this sign is more an exception than a rule⁷⁴.

The authors of more recent excavations in the fort at Romita are tempted to order the different tile stamps chronologically, classifying them especially according to the

⁶⁵ D. Isac, *Date noi cu privire la cohors II Britannica (milliaria)*, AMP 11, 1987; D. Isac, F. Marcu, *Die Truppen im Kastell von Cășeu: cohors II Br(ittanorum) milliaria und cohors I Britannica milliaria c.R. equitata Antoniniana*, Limes 17, 1997 (1999), Zalău, p. 587. The third fragmentary stamp in Cășeu, with the abbreviation COH II BR...R is interesting, both as a discovery and as type. The tile bearing this stamp was found in the fort’s *porta principalis dextra*, and was probably reused, and a C is probably missing before the last R, the short form from *c(ivium) R(omanorum)*, see D. Isac, F. Marcu, loc. cit. Or, in military diplomas from 109 (AE 1990, 860) and 110 (CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3), this unit was *c(ivium) R(omanorum)*.

⁶⁶ D. Isac, op. cit. (n. 65), p. 179-180.

⁶⁷ Idem, op. cit., p. 180.

⁶⁸ D. Protase, C. Gaiu, G. Marinescu, *Castrul roman de la Ilișua (jud. Bistrița-Năsăud)*, Bistrița, 1997 = *Castrul roman și așezarea civilă de la Ilișua (jud. Bistrița-Năsăud)*, RB 10-11, 1996-1997, p. 45-52. The troop from Britannia seems to have been an *equitata* in Germania Inferior, its name is abbreviated in the stamps at Vechten as *coh(ors) II Br(ittanorum) m(illiaria) e(quitata)*, but otherwise we have no other proof that this troop also possessed cavalry detachments.

⁶⁹ N. Gudea, op. cit. (n. 58), p. 156; Idem, *Contribuții la istoria militară a Daciei romane. 4. Cohors VI Thracorum*, AMP 8, 1984, p. 222-223.

⁷⁰ N. Gudea, *Contribuții la istoria militară a Daciei romane. 3. Cohors II Britannica de la Romita*, AMP 7, 1983, p. 155, pl. 1.

⁷¹ Most of these kinds of stamps were discovered in late levels; see Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 90-91, Fig. 9.

⁷² Matei, Bajusz 1997, 67 f.

⁷³ Contra Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 97.

⁷⁴ We are enumerating here a couple of troops that are not *milliariae*, although tegular stamps do not reflect it: *coh. I Britannica*, *coh. III Campestris*, *coh. I Sagittariorum* etc.

shape of the letters⁷⁵. Such a chronological classification may involve several risks, the most important being that the stratigraphic context could be ignored. Stamped tiles come especially from the vestiges of one of the fort's gates. The authors of the archeological excavations themselves insist that the stamp type considered to be „the earliest” was discovered both at bigger depths and in the upper level⁷⁶. Therefore, taking into consideration the permanent reuse of the tiles, it is very hard to put them in a chronological frame. In addition, it does not necessarily arise from the different abbreviations of a troop's name that there are chronological discrepancies among them, as they may very well be contemporaneous with one another (see *infra*).

The four tiles from Românași bearing the stamp of the coh. II *Britannorum* could have gotten here as construction material. And still, the COH II BR – type stamps⁷⁷, with an R in the top part, were not found at Romita or Porolissum. Or, even the *ala Siliana* types of stamps from Viștea, in the vicinity of the garrison fort in Gilău, are a different type from those in the above-mentioned fort, and do not prove with accuracy the presence of the *ala* here⁷⁸.

The fact that there are no inscriptions on it referring to this unit, and no information about it (structure, expeditions etc.) is curious, but the excavations in the fort at Romita were mainly focused on one of the *portae*, and less on the *latera praetorii*, where we would expect inscriptions to be, as proven by the three or four bases in the *basilica* that can be perceived in the magnetic prospections planning. Many of the stamped bricks or tiles come from the *thermae* by the fort.

If the COH II BRTS (retrograde S) - type stamps discovered only in Porolissum are rounded up coh. II *Britannorum Severiana*, maybe this can mean that the troop was moved here, but more probably that it sends construction material⁷⁹.

Coh. I *Ituraeorum*

The only attestations of the coh. I *Ituraeorum* on military diplomas are from 88 A.D., placing it among the troops of Syria⁸⁰, and respectively from 109 (AE 1990, 860) and 110 (CIL XVI 57 = IDR I, 2), in Dacia's army. The stamps in Porolissum reminding of this unit are identified in contexts dated to the 3rd century A.D. and beginning of the 3rd century A.D.⁸¹. On the other hand, the two stamps in the fort at Romita, belonging to the same type as one of those discovered in Porolissum, are associated to early levels of the fort and *thermae*⁸². We cannot be sure of the place where the troop was garrisoned. Nor can we know when the cohors was transferred to Thracia⁸³. In 135 A.D. the troop seems to be present in Cappadocia. It is mentioned among the troops led by Arrian against the Alanians, but subsequently it is not attested in this province anymore⁸⁴.

⁷⁵ Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 88-89.

⁷⁶ Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 89.

⁷⁷ M. Macrea, M. Rusu, I. Mitrofan, *Șantierul arheologic Porolissum*, Materiale 8, 1962, Fig. 20.

⁷⁸ See F. Marcu, *Military tile-stamps as a guide for the garrisons of certain forts in Dacia*, *Orbis Antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis*, Cluj-Napoca 2004, 572.

⁷⁹ J. Szilágyi, *A Dáciai erődrendzser helyőrségei és a katonai téglabélyegek* (Die Besatzungen des Verteidigungssystems von Dazien und ihre Ziegelstempel), Budapest 1946, 56, pl. XVIII/268. Another explanation is the fact that the reversed S really represents an abbreviation for *milliaria*. E. Tóth asserts, regarding the coh. I *Ituraeorum*, that the reversed S, sometimes a bit elongated at the extremities, present at the end of the stamps, is really a ∞ reversed, see E. Tóth, loc. cit. (n. 59).

⁸⁰ CIL XVI 35. For a detailed history of this troop, see O. Țentea, loc. cit. (n. 59).

⁸¹ J. Garbsch, N. Gudea, *Despre cea mai veche diplomă militară eliberată pentru provincia Dacia*, AMP 14-15, 1991, p. 71.

⁸² The troop is considered to be, together with the coh. VI *Thracum*, the garrison of the Romita fort in the earthen precincts stage, dated to Trajan's times, Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 91-93.

⁸³ It is mentioned in inscriptions in Thracia: AE 1897, 123; AE 1907, 50; CIL XI 2113.

⁸⁴ Arrian, *Alan.*, 1; P. Holder, *Auxiliary deployment in the reign of Hadrian*, London (reprinted from Documenting the Roman Army, BICS Supplement 81, London 2003), p. 102, 117, Tab. 16.

Coh. VI Thracum

The Thracian unit was part of the army of Germany in the year 80 (CIL XVI 158), in 84 (CIL XVI 30) and 85 (CIL XVI 31) of that of Pannonia, and subsequently, of the troops of Moesia⁸⁵. It will be mentioned for the first time in Dacia, and then in Dacia Porolissensis in the diploma in 110⁸⁶. It is hard to specify whose fort this garrison was, in the north-western *limes* area. Taking into account the bigger number of tiles and bricks bearing stamps found in the fort at Romita, it is highly possible for this troop to have been stationed here⁸⁷. These stamps were ordered typologically, but it can still be risky to attempt the elaboration of chronologies mainly on the basis of the shape or the letter combinations on the stamps⁸⁸. It is interesting that the CO VI T abbreviation type was discovered only in Porolissum, where it seems to be part of a subsequent context⁸⁹.

No inscription is known in Dacia in which the troop or its soldiers be mentioned. It is not out of the question that the unit may have left Dacia after 164 A.D., probably being present in Britannia, and recorded on the lead seals in Brough under Stainmore⁹⁰.

Coh. I Batavorum ∞

The inscription (CIL III 839 = ILS 2598) discovered at Romita, dedicated by *vet(eranus) ex dec(urione) Florius Virilis* to a centurion in the *coh. I Batavorum ∞* can prove that the troop or the vexillations of it were present here at a certain point in time. This is however an uncertain fact⁹¹, what is harder to accept is only the presence of the centurion here. The case of the fort at Românași, in the vicinity of Romita, where this troop is also attested is similar (CIL III 841).

The Batavian troop had initially been a part of Pannonia and Pannonia Inferior's army, and was recorded in the diplomas in 98 (CIL XVI 42), 100/2 (RMD 144), 113 (RMD 86), and subsequently pointed out, starting with 130-131 (ZPE 141, 241-251, nr. 5) or 133 (IDR I, 11 = RMD 35) in the army of Dacia Porolissensis. Here, it continues to be attested in the diplomas in 151 (AMN 38/1, 54), 154 (IDR I, 17; RMD 47) and in those in 164 (CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19; IDR I, 18 = RMD 64; IDR I, 20 = RMD 63; AE 1999, 1103).

Maybe it is after the middle 2nd century that this cohort replaced the *coh. VI Thracum*, being transferred from Potaissa once the *leg. V Macedonica* was stationed here, as M. Bărbulescu assumed⁹². It is true that the surface of the fort at Romita, however impressive it may have been, may not be big enough for the full effectives of two auxiliary troops, but this way we could explain the existence of two *praetoria* of similar dimensions, since the garrison troops' commanders had the same rank. After this exchange of troops, the fort at Romita and its internal organization will have another shape, namely the one suggested by the plan obtained through magnetic prospection.

⁸⁵ CIL XVI 46; RMD 6.

⁸⁶ CIL XVI 163 = IDR I, 3. Subsequently, it is present in diplomas from 114 (RMD IV 226); 154 (IDR I, 17 = RMD 47); 164 (IDR I, 18 = RMD 64; CIL XVI 185 = IDR I, 19 and IDR I, 20 = RMD 63).

⁸⁷ 22 such pieces were discovered in the excavations carried out in the 1990's, among which 5 inside the fort, Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 72.

⁸⁸ This troop's stamps seem to have been discovered at Romita even in early levels. We can thus assume the troop was stationed in this fort from the beginning of the 2nd century, Matei, Bajusz 1997, p. 78.

⁸⁹ N. Gudea, op. cit. (n. 69), p. 221-222.

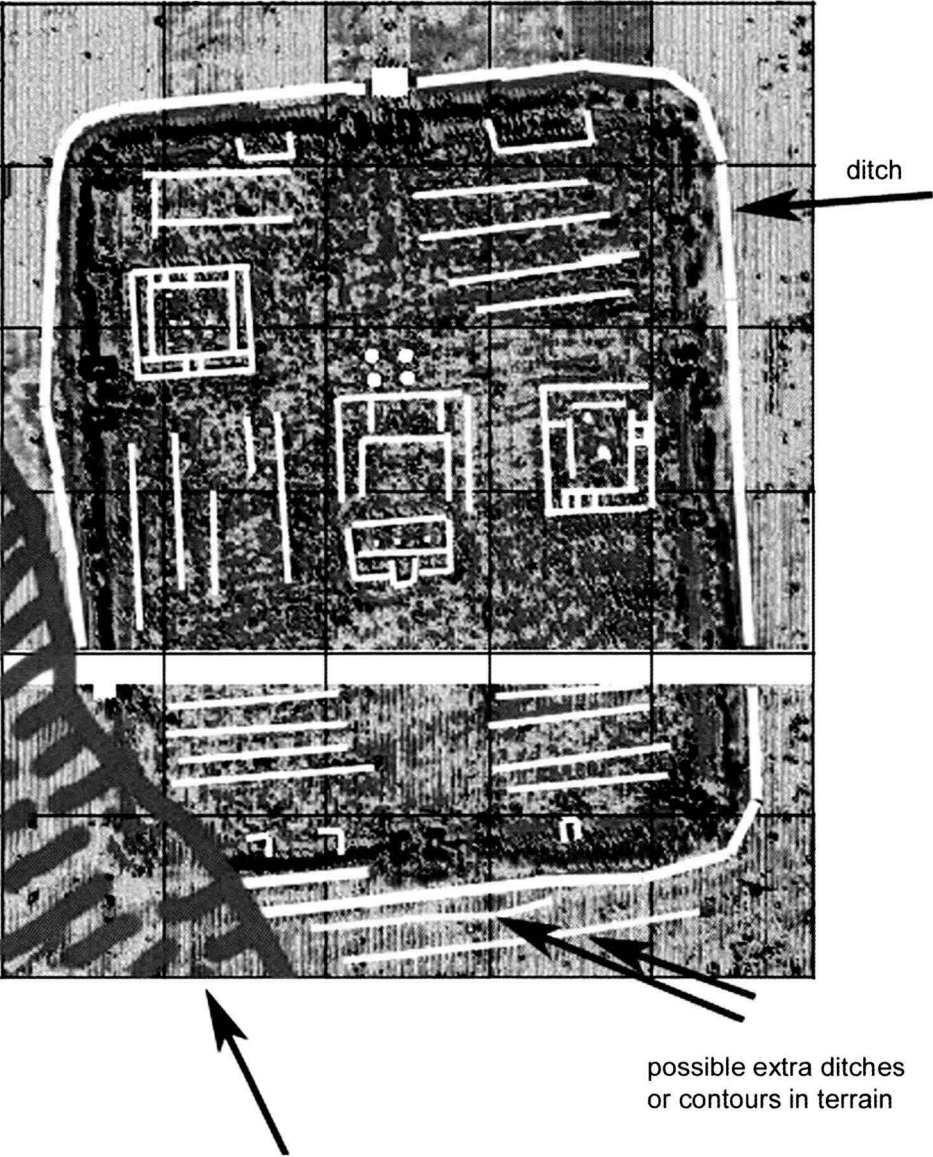
⁹⁰ J. E. Bogaers, *Troupes auxiliaires Thraces dans la partie Néerlandaise de la Germania Inferior*. Limes 9 Mamaia 1972, p. 455; P. A. Holder, *The Roman Army in Britain*, London 1982, p. 122.

⁹¹ Some authors assert this troop was surely present at Romita after the arrival of the legion *V Macedonica* at Potaissa, where the Batavian unit is attested as well (CIL III 13766, 13767), see Bărbulescu 1987, p. 36.

⁹² Bărbulescu 1987, p. 36.



1. Geographical survey at Romita.



2. Geographical survey at Romita (the internal planning).