

Alexander Heising, *Die römische Stadtmauer von Mogontiacum – Mainz. Archäologische, historische und numismatische Aspekte zum 3. und 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, Verlag Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn 2008; VIII + 353 pages, 50 figures, 32 plates, 23 tables.

Today, given the unprecedented quantitative development of the historical literature, works that evidence a genuine diligence in exhausting a subject matter are not many at all. The patience that any thorough analyses require – time consuming to a great extent – is replaced by the desire for immediate partial results, despite their most likely soon enough invalidation and often, shifting to the sphere of the facile.

The book which we are delighted to popularize belongs to the category of those lengthily prepared and of good quality finished product. The fact remains that unfortunate financial circumstances, which belated its publishing, were also involved in the extended preparation. The author, Alexander Heising, is currently professor of Roman provincial archaeology with the “Albert-Ludwig” University of Freiburg im Breisgau. The volume originates in the MA dissertation *Die römische Stadtmauer von Mainz – Grundlagen ihren Datierung* completed in 1992, subsequently also benefiting of the doctoral thesis’ results concerning the potters in the Roman settlement at Mogontiacum. Although it was ready for print as early as 1997, financial hindrances led to a situation that one would believe unfathomable in Germany: the book will be published only in 2008! Though it is not upgraded at the current year’s level, still, it was completed with references where deemed absolutely necessary.

The volume obviously starts with a *Foreword* (p. [VII] *sq.*), detailing the genesis of the work, the little information we mentioned above on this matter being overtaken from these introductory pages.

A first section of the volume considers the *Topography and history of research* (p. [1]–11). There, the author clarifies the term “Stadt-Mauer” (“town wall”). In fact, when built, namely a few years after mid-3rd century AD, the wall defended the *canabae* of the legionary camp, as only later Mogontiacum would become a proper town also legally. Within the text, the term “Stadt-Mauer” would be used in a general way, for both the legal statuses of the settlement (p. 2 with n. 5).

The precinct had been documented in 52 points by the year 1997, insufficient though for a complete reconstruction of its route. In fact, this precinct underwent two construction stages: the first – just after half 3rd century AD; the second – after the legionary fortress was abandoned, around AD 355, when the route of the novel wall would cross the surface of the former fortification (p. 2). During the first stage, it is very likely that part of the respective wall also extended south-west the fortress, which was thus surrounded by precinct segments on at least three sides. Subsequently, in the 4th century, the surface that the precinct protected would be more reduced, as its south-western side would be built northwards, precisely through the surface of the

then deserted legionary fortification. Nonetheless, the wall route on the south-eastern side during both stages remains unclear (p. 4).

The groundwork of the Roman wall of the first stage would be reused, on several portions, in the construction of the medieval city fortification, except for the side facing the Rhine (p. 2; see also 6 with n. 13; 10 with n. 37; 181).

We underline the author's contribution, via his own archaeological research, in confirming the previous hypothesis according to which the "wall" had not one, but two stages of existence (p. 11, 65-67 - F[und] S[telle] 56).

The catalogue of find spots is the second part of the work (p. 13-71). 61 spots where finds emerged were discussed in order to clarify the precinct route and the chronology of some of its portions. Among respective points, FS 6, 8, 15a, 16 and 59 became known through this work.

The assessment of the first stage of the precinct (FS 1-28) spreads over a generous number of pages (73-179). The author appreciates that the functioning duration of its south-western segment also extends over the 4th century (p. 77 sq.). Dendrological data provided special insights in what the construction time of the wall in this first stage is concerned. In the case of the Rhine-wards side, it was possible to analyse the beams arranged below the foundations for higher stability (see for the construction system Abb. 3a). Most of the logs from where the beams were made were cut between 252 and 253 (254) (p. 88-90). It is noteworthy though that the sample under analysis comprised only 23 beams out of ca. 13,300 estimated to have been used for the complete route (p. 94). In addition, the relative chronology of the pottery related to the wall evidences that the north-west side was built in the second third of the 3rd century AD (p. 87).

Al. Heising attempted to deduce a more specific time for the fortification construction start date. On the basis of the available dendrological data, it was placed after April or May of 253, or, even more restricted, not long before respective year's September or October (p. 94).

The establishment of the historical framework of the building works carried out is made *in extenso* (p. 95-179), the author initiating discussion even with the anti-German campaign of Caracalla in AD 213. We are not dealing only with a successful synthesis, but with pages wherein critical emphasis is always apparent and the personal view, pertinent. Certain remarks not strictly concerning the subject matter of the paper seem excellent to us. For instance, when referring to the "*psychological effects of a vexillation being raised*" and invoking cases closer to present days, Al. Heising underlines that the family members of those soldiers in the campaigning vexillation envied the soldiers remained in garrison, which further more affected the military defence capacity (p. 99, note 232).

Joining other specialists, Al. Heising agrees that a clue for the displacement of certain units from certain garrisons to the Eastern campaigns would be the high percentage of eastern coin issues in the monetary circulation from respective stationing places (p. 100). Naturally, the pay of the soldiers involved in the confrontations from the East of the Empire had been paid - at a higher rate than usually - with coins struck in state mints found in the East. The presence there of additional units arriving from the west also determined an increased bronze civic coin production, which was

obviously also used by the soldiers¹. They later returned “home” in the possession of both coin types. Applied judiciously, the method of analysis appears viable, being also used by the Romanian scholars².

Three coin hoards discovered in places where garrisons were located – at Niederbieber, Zugmantel and Eining – might suggest that certain vexillations were dispatched from these points in Maximinus Thrax’s war against the Dacians (and the Sarmatians, we would add) of 236 (p. 111). Although their value as a source in this matter is not entirely certain, if confirmed, one would deal with one of the few cases when the identity of the Roman troops opposed to the two peoples would be accurately known.

The author argues that the vexillation from legion XXII Primigenia involved in the Carpien war under Philippus Arabs and later in the erection of the precinct wall of Romula, would have left Mogontiacum by the end of 245 or the beginning of the following year (p. 114, see also 174)³. However, it is possible that the war against the Carpi did not take place in 245–247, as generally believed, but in 247–248⁴. Therefore, the date of the legion’s departure from its camp should be appreciated as such.

Agreeing with L. Okamura, Al. Heising believes that title *Germanicus Maximus* worn by Philippus Arabs in 247, together with that of *Carpicus Maximus*, is the result of the victory against the Goths, allies of the Carpi, and not over the Franks or Alemanni (p. 114 sq., see also 174)⁵.

The fact that the coins issued under Phillipus Arabs are the last to be more frequently found in Germania Superior *limes* area (those struck under Traianus Decius being more rare) (p. 116) is not surprising. When appreciated globally, circumstances are the same in Dacia as well.

Although the author rejects, based on methodology and justly, Barbara Pferdehirt’s conclusion that the inhabitants of the military *vicus* at Holzhausen would have been received in the nearby fort during the second third of the 3rd century (p. 132, note 433 sq.), he supposes that after 230, the civilian population of the open settlements in the *limes* area moved increasingly and chiefly towards the closest areas where forts or fortified cities lay (p. 133, see also 140), which seems to us very likely.

The city precinct enclosed the area *intra leugam*, hence the *canabae legionis* (p. 152), the legate of *Germania Superior* and the emperor being the supporters of its

¹ The phenomenon of the issue or increased civic Roman coin issue in occasion of the Eastern wars was due to the necessity for the circulation of the small denominations that the soldiers needed (together with those trained in their presence) and does not mirror logistic obligations imposed to respective cities by their presence. Convincingly to this effect, Ziegler 1996.

² Dana, Nemeti 2001, 253 sq.; Benea 2004–2005, 178–180 = Benea 2006a, 105–107; Benea 2006b, 694–697; see already for the way in which these coins reached Dacia: e.g. Mitrea 1968, 212; Mitrea 1971, 125; cf. Pişlaru 2009, 83, 97, 106, 110, 112 sq., 118 sq., 384, 390 sq., 394 sq.

³ It was also hypothesized they were not legion soldiers displaced from *Mogontiacum*, but soldiers marching home from the Eastern war theatre: Petolescu 1995, 149; Petolescu 2007 (= Petolescu 1996), 124; Petolescu 2000, 318; Petolescu 2010, 205, 303; the same view also in Benea 2004–2006, 175 = Benea 2006a, 102.

⁴ Piso 1974, 303–308 = Piso 2005, 53–59. Defending the almost unanimously accepted theory in Tudor 1976; Ruscu 2003, 153–156.

⁵ I. Piso considered the Taiphals, the Vandals or the Peucini: Piso 1974, 307 = Piso 2005, 58.

construction in virtue of the strategic importance of the location, as "*ihre Errichtung ohne Legion nicht in Frage kam*" (p. 154).

Exemplary analysis is dedicated to the issue of the *Possible events and initiators [in the erection] of the wall at Mainz* (p. 157–169). Defensive reasons must have been primary in its construction (p. 157), however propaganda must also be considered, the author tending to consider emperor Valerianus as the promoter of the city fortification construction (p. 169 and esp. 161 sq.), soon after his usurpation (p. 161). The practical personal reason for the emperor's decision is admirably noted: "*Eine mögliche Zerstörung der unbefestigten Zivilsiedlung hätte die damals noch schmale politische Machtbasis des Valerian leicht erschüttern können, da Mainz nachweislich der Lebensmittelpunkt vieler Angehöriger von Soldaten, darunter auch Hochrangiger Offiziere der am Limes stehenden Truppen war. Wie stark das Wohlbefinden der Angehörigen die Moral der Soldaten beeinflussen konnte, hate nicht zuletzt Alexander Severus schmerzlich erfahren*" (p. 162). Furthermore, the town presented itself as the single unfortified provincial "capital" in the transalpine area of the Empire, being concurrently the most populated town in the north of the province (p. 161).

The author expresses reserves in relation to M. Reuter's hypothesis concerning the collapse of the Raetian sector of the German-Raetian *limes* as early as 254. Such reserves – which we also share – refer to "*die Frage nach dem taktischen Wert eines obergermanischen «Restlimes»*" (p. 163), however considers more punctual matters too (p. 163 sq.)⁶.

The wall length in this first stage, taking into account the south-western side as well, would have measured at least 5175 m, only the Rhine-wards side being not provided with a defensive ditch. Informatively, the author calculated that a displacement of ca. 28,900 m³ of earth was required in order to erect 75–80,000 m³ of enclosure (into which at least 28,000 reused blocks would have been necessary). The beams, needed only for the side in street Hintere Bleiche ("Bleichesenke") area and that facing the Rhine bank would have counted ca. 13,000, which required that at least 1,900–2,216 trees had to be cut, amounting to approximately 13 ha of forest (p. 169 sq.).

At the same time, the author also computed the time required for the wall erection, depending on the number of individuals involved in such action. For instance 2,500–3,500 workers would have carried out the work in 6.2 months (p. 170, 172 sq., Tab. 18). Practically, the author argues that the construction of the fortification would have required the constant work of 2–3,000 men for a period between 6 and 12 months (p. 176).

Although there is no epigraphic record insofar, the wall builders must have been soldiers in legion XXII Primigenia, as the construction was *intra leugam* and its strategic significance was major (p. 173). Soldiers in other troops stationed there must have been also involved in the works (p. 175), while vexillations from other legions might have contributed as well (p. 176).

⁶ Nonetheless, respective hypothesis has distinguished followers, e.g. Sommer 2009, 151, 173 sq., 177, Abb. 9; Scholz 2009, 469–471.

Prior the erection of the precinct at Mogontiacum, soldiers in *legio XXII Primigenia* had contributed in the construction of those at *Colonia Ulpia Traiana* (Xanten) (105/106 p. Chr.) and Romula in Dacia (completed in AD 248⁷). Soldiers involved in the building action from Dacia together with those in *legio VII Claudia* and likely *numerus Surorum sagittariorum* with the garrison precisely at Romula⁸ would have amounted to 900–2000 men. The author yet points out that other troops, unidentified still in any way, must have been requested to contribute in the effort⁹. From the Romanian literature related to *Romula*'s precinct, the author quotes only D. Tudor's articles of 1941¹⁰ and 1965¹¹, as well as the inscription volume IDR II (p. 174), which is natural since only what was accessible, physically and linguistically, could be quoted. More recent contributions¹², even though do not essentially change the known data, are still little steps forward a better understanding of the monument.

The legion vexillation returned to Mainz in 248 or no later than the first part of the following year. Perhaps some of its soldiers, with the construction experience acquired in *Dacia*, had been the basis of the builders team of the wall in their own garrison town (p. 175).

The assessment of the second stage of the wall (FS 29-61) is comprised between p. 181–203. By the end of the seventh decade of the 4th century AD (364–370), the legionary fortress is deserted (p. 184, 186), while an invasion of the Germans already in 355 or their control over the area between 355 and 357 might have led to the fire that damaged its *praetentura* (p. 194). The precinct change during its second stage, in fact a “Stadtmauerreduktion”, was integrated in the general programme of reorganisation of the Rhenan *limes* under Valentinianus. The winter of 368–369 was appreciated as the start moment of the fortification construction, which was completed in either 371 or 374 when the emperor would have likely made the “reception” of the works, historical-epigraphic sources recording him to have stopped at Mogontiacum during the two mentioned years. Among all works attributed to Valentinianus in the area of the Rhenan border, the approximately 35,000–40,000 m³ of structure in the Mogontiacum wall register it as the most consistent effort (p. 201 sq.).

⁷ We believe that the building activity in the Romula wall could have started in the preceding year or even sometime before that (depending on the cronology of the Carpien (and probably Gothic-Roman war which determined its erection), as the soldiers could not have been engaged in battle all the time, or at least not all those mobilized for the war in *Dacia*.

⁸ Still, we must draw attention that with good arguments, M. P. Speidel argued the transfer of the *numerus* to *Mauretania* at the turn of the 2nd – 3rd centuries: Speidel 1973b, esp. 171–174 = Speidel 1984, esp. 171–174; cf. Speidel 1973a, 545 sq.

⁹ C. M. Tătulea also considered *cohors I Flavia Commagenorum*, believing it to be constantly quartered at Romula (Tătulea 1994, 43, 77 sq.; in the latter problematic, a similar position previously at Vlădescu 1983, 35–no. 5; 52), stationing which is possible, however not certain (see in this matter, Marcu 2004, 577, no. 9; 585; 592, no. 9). About the *cohors I Flavia Brittonum Malvensis*, it still remains open if its “home” base was here: Marcu 2002–2003 (2004), 224 with note 53 sq.; cf. 228 sq. and table 1. For R. Ardevan, Romula would have become a point without troops when it became a *municipium* (under Hadrianus), invoking similar situations elsewhere: Ardevan 1998, 31 sq.

¹⁰ Tudor 1941.

¹¹ Tudor 1965.

¹² Tudor 1978, 187 sq.; Popilian, Chițu, Vasilescu 1983, 324; Vlădescu, Amon, Florescu 1991, 11 sq., Fig. 3; Negru et alii 2007; a synthetic view in Tătulea 1994, 43 sq., Fig. 8.

800 m of wall were erected, to which, according to another route option, further ca. 700 m would add, hence the entire precinct route erected in the second stage would have possibly spread over ca. 1,500 m. According to the author's calculations, if approximately 500 workers had worked each day, the wall would have been erected in approximately 12–18 months. Respective workers must have been soldiers, but also German chieftains, who might have been co-interested to participate in the building activity by providing labour and supplying building material. However, it seems that in an overwhelming percentage, the building material consisted of *spolia*, which is specific to building works under Valentinianus.

The new perimeter enclosed approximately 118 ha, namely around two thirds of the original surface. Only a fifth part from the surface of the deserted former legionary camp was enclosed now. In Al. Heising's view, it is possible that this "fifth part" (representing around 4 ha) quartered the late troop with the garrison at Mainz – *milites Armigeri*, unless they were garrisoned somewhere else in the city or lived beside their families (p. 202 sq.).

A German summary (p. 205 sq.) and another in English (p. 207 sq.) are followed by an appendix-chapter (p. 211–223). It comprises a section tackling *Theories on the forming of coin hoards in the first half of the 3rd century AD (level: 1997)* (p. 211–223); the impressive list of abbreviated works (p. 224–271 – singularly quoted works are not found there, which evidences the author's consistent documentary effort); the list of the illustrative material origin (p. 272); 16 lists dedicated to various issues (273–322). Finally, the judiciously drafted plates opportunely end the book (p. [324]–[353]).

The illustration is black-white, the general print appearance being well cared for.

We argue that the difficult task of discussing the issue of the precinct wall at Mogontiacum and, subordinately, of various archaeological, historical and numismatic aspects of the 3rd and 4th in terms of this issue, was successfully completed by Al. Heising. All source categories were exploited to the highest degree, without yet claiming much more than they could provide; the author's analytical spirit was fully manifest, yet not redundant; and the much stand-taking was well grounded and opportune. We can enjoy now a clear and objective view of the archaeological monument in the matter of his route, chronology, building manner, the reasons for the construction and those who determined its erection. The related approach of the mentioned aspects for the 3rd – 4th centuries was performed at the same quality standard.

In recommending this volume to the readers, we propose a wonderful mix of affection for Roman history, scholarship, much work, respect for the predecessors' work and a refined criticism. Let Dacian Romula's wall be treated the same!

Bibliography

Ardevan 1998

R. Ardevan, *Viața municipală în Dacia romană*, Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica X, Timișoara 1998.

Benea 2004–2005

D. Benea, *Armata Daciei și campania din Orient a împăratului Gordian al III-lea*, AB S. N., XII–XIII, 2004–2005, 171–185.

- Benea 2006a D. Benea, *L'armée de la Dacie et la campagne de l'empereur Gordien III en Orient*. In: V. Mihăilescu-Bîrliha, C. Hriban, L. Munteanu (eds.), *Miscellanea romano-barbarica. In honorem septagenarii magistri Ion Ioniță oblată, Honoraria 2*, Bucharest 2006, 97-108.
- Benea 2006b D. Benea, *Dakien im Orientalfeldzug des Severus Alexander. Die in Nicăa geprägten Münzen*. In: C. Gaiu, C. Găzdac (eds.), *Fontes Historiae. Studia in honorem Demetrii Protase*, Biblioteca Muzeului Bistrița, Seria Historica 12, Bistrița-Cluj-Napoca 2006, 693-698.
- Dana, Nemeti 2001 D. Dana, S. Nemeti, *La Dacie dans les Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, ActaMN, 38/1, 2001, 239-257.
- Marcu 2004 F. Marcu, *Military tile-stamps as a guide for the garrisons of several forts in Dacia*. In: L. Ruscă, C. Ciongradi, R. Ardevan, C. Roman, C. Găzdac (eds.), *Orbis antiquus. Studia in honorem Ioannis Pisonis*, Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis XXI, Cluj-Napoca 2004, 570-594.
- Marcu 2002-2003 (2004) F. Marcu, *Comments on the identity and deployment of cohorts I Brittonum*, ActaMN, 39-40/1, 2002-2003 (2004), 219-234.
- Mitrea 1968 B. Mitrea, *Observații numismatice și istorice asupra tezaurului de monede romane imperiale descoperit la Ionești Govorii*, SCN, IV, 1968, 209-222.
- Mitrea 1971 B. Mitrea, *Un document numismatic din a doua jumătate a secolului al III-lea: tezaurul de monede romane imperiale de la Olteni (județul Vâlcea)*, SCN, V, 1971, 115-143.
- Negru et alii 2007 M. Negru, P. Gherghe, L. Amon, G. Mihai, *Noi informații cu privire la centura de apărare a orașului Romula (jud. Olt)*. Campania 2007, Drobeta, XVII, 2007, 109-115.
- Petolescu 1995 C. C. Petolescu, *Scurtă istorie a Daciei romane*, București 1995.
- Petolescu 1996 C. C. Petolescu, *Carpții în lumina izvoarelor narative și epigrafice*, Acta antiqua et archaeologica, 3, Iași 1996, 43-54.
- Petolescu 2000 C. C. Petolescu, *Dacia și Imperiul Roman. De la Burebista până la sfârșitul Antichității*, București 2000.
- Petolescu 2007 C. C. Petolescu, *Contribuții la istoria Daciei romane. I*, București 2007.
- Petolescu 2010 C. C. Petolescu, *Dacia. Un mileniu de istorie*, București 2010.
- Piso 1974 I. Piso, *Războiul lui Philippus cu carpții*. In: H. Daicoviciu (ed.), *In memoriam Constantin Daicoviciu*, Cluj 1974, 301-309.
- Piso 2005 I. Piso, *An der Nordgrenze des Römischen Reiches: ausgewählte Studien (1972-2003)*, Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien, Bd. 41, Stuttgart 2005.
- Pislaru 2009 M. Pîslaru, *The Roman coins from Potaissa. Legionary fortress and Ancient town*, Publicațiile Institutului de Studii Clasice 11, Cluj-Napoca 2009.
- Popilian, Chițu, Vasilescu 1983 Gh. Popilian, Șt. Chițu, M. Vasilescu, *Săpăturile arheologice de la Romula*, MCA. A XV-a Sesiune anuală de rapoarte, Muzeul Județean Brașov-1981, București 1983, 324-326.
- Scholz 2009 M. Scholz, *Die spätantike Besiedlung der östlichen Schwäbischen Alb*. In: J. Biel, J. Heiligmann, D. Krause (Hrsgg.), *Landesarchäologie. Festschrift für Dieter Plank zum 65. Geburtstag*, Forschungen und Berichte zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Baden-Württemberg, Bd. 100, Stuttgart 2009, 469-501.

- Sommer 2009 C. S. Sommer, *Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marc Aurel...? – Zur Datierung der Anlagen des Raetischen Limes*, Bericht der Bayerischen Bodendenkmalpflege, 52, 2011, 137–180.
- Speidel 1973a M. P. Speidel, *Malva and Dacia Malvensis located through the discovery of a numerus Syrorum Malvensium in Mauretania*. In: Akten des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik, München 1972, Vestigia. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Bd. 17, München 1973, 545–547.
- Speidel 1973b M. Speidel, *Numerus Syrorum Malvensium. The transfer of a Dacian army unit to Mauretania and its implications*, Dacia N. S., XVII, 1973, 169–177.
- Speidel 1984 M. Speidel, Roman Army Studies. Vol. I, Amsterdam 1984.
- Tătulea 1994 C. M. Tătulea, *Romula – Malva*, Bucharest 1994.
- Tudor 1941 D. Tudor, *Obergermanische Vexillationen der legio XXII Primigenia bei Romula in Dakien*, Germania, 25, 1941, 1, 239–241.
- Tudor 1965 D. Tudor, *La fortificazione delle citta romane della Dacia nel sec. III del'e.n.*, Historia, 14, Wiesbaden 1965, 368–380.
- Vlădescu 1983 C. M. Vlădescu, *Armata romană în Dacia Inferior*, Craiova 1983.
- Vlădescu, Amon, Florescu 1991 C. M. Vlădescu, L. Amon, M. Florescu, *Date noi privind sistemul de fortificații din cartierul de sud-est al orașului Romula-Malva*, Revista Muzeului Militar Național, I, București 1991, 10–12.
- Ziegler 1996 R. Ziegler, *Civic coins and imperial campaigns*. In: D. L. Kennedy (ed.), *The Roman army in the East*, JRA, Supplementary Series 18, Ann Arbor, MI 1996, 119–227.

Dan Matei

“Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca
danmatei_mail@yahoo.com