

CIVILIANS IN THE FORT. RĂCARI CASE

EUGEN TEODOR, MARIA NICOLAE

Abstract: Documentary sources give little indication about where military families lived. Archaeological evidence comes to support the theory of civilian presence in military milieu, emphasizing the fact that some of the non-combatant personnel left some traces within the fort. The aim of this paper is to present and analyse the artefacts that came to light from the auxiliary fort from Răcari (Dolj County), artefacts that belong rather to civilians and not to military staff. Attention will be put upon the spot where these artefacts have come to light, in order to understand the relationships between different spaces within the camp, but as well the connection between the activities that the discoveries attest and the people who carried them out. Another important feature highlighted by the analysis of these artefacts that point civilian presence in the fort is the way in which the army integrated into provincial society. With the exception of marching camps, most Roman military bases were relatively long-lived communities. Given that a soldier usually served for 20 to 25 years, much of his adult life was spent in active service. While the Roman administrative system would have considered it an expensive option to allow these soldiers to have legitimate Roman marriages, this does not render ordinary soldiers' families non-existent. The presence of ordinary soldiers' families and followers providing food, entertainment and other services within the fort sheds new light on the space available to each soldier, and calculation of the strength of a specific troop based on space. Likewise, the analysis of artefacts discovered within the Răcari fort might suggest the relation established between the fort and the settlements outside its gates.

Keywords: gender archaeology; Roman fort; Dacia Inferior; small objects; statistics.

Rezumat: Sursele literare dau puține indicații asupra locului unde trăiau, zi de zi, familiile militarilor romani. Evidența arheologică vine să sugereze că existau relativ mulți civili în forturi, personalul necombatant lăsând urme concrete ale vieții lor între zidurile de apărare. Scopul acestui articol este de a analiza câteva obiecte din fortul auxiliar de la Răcari (jud. Dolj), în sprijinul acestei ipoteze. Atenția noastră va fi direcționată spre poziția planimetrică și stratigrafică a contextelor unde au apărut artefacte care ar putea interesa în dezbateri, pentru a putea face legătura dintre activitățile corelate obiectelor și principalele zone funcționale ale fortului. Un alt aspect al analizei este felul cum aceste inventare arheologice ilustrează integrarea armatei în societatea provincială. Cu excepția castrului de marș, cele mai multe baze militare romane sunt comunități cu o istorie îndelungată, cel mai adesea de-a lungul mai multor generații. Luând în considerare că un soldat servea în armată 25 de ani (posibil mai puțin în *numeri*), cea mai mare parte a vieții sale de adult se petrecea în serviciul activ. Deși administrația romană a considerat multă vreme că prezența femeilor în forturi ar fi un factor perturbator, existența familiilor „neoficiale” nu poate fi contestată. Civiliile ofereau armatei servicii din cele mai diverse, de la bucătărie, curățenie, comerț sau meșteșuguri, până la divertisment; pe de altă parte, aceiași civili ne vor constrânge să reconsiderăm spațiile de cazare necesare unei unități militare, respectiv să diminuăm trupa combatantă existentă efectiv în forturi. Astfel, obiectele aflate în discuție vor sublinia relația foarte intimă dintre comunitatea dinlăuntru și din afara porților fortului.

Cuvinte cheie: antropologie culturală; castru roman; Dacia Inferior; artefacte arheologice; statistică.

1. Introduction

Gender issues in archaeological research are not quite new¹, nor the criticism against the “schism”². Nevertheless, the subject is almost a brand new one in Romanian archaeology, at least for its Roman *legio*. Therefore, we will produce here the paradox of writing in English, but reasoning mostly on Romanian research. When we firstly proposed this subject, in late 2010³, we thought we will be the first; we were not. Exactly in the same time, a comprehensible first study of the Roman forts from Dacia was published in an engendering perspective, in the *Marisia* journal⁴, which spares us from long introductions. More than that, we are now able to use an existing overview of the issue along Roman camps from Dacia, and to compare Răcari case with Buciumi case⁵, already known.

The central object of debate is the ban against soldiers’ marriage, enacted probably under Augustus, part of a general reform of the army, serving the idea that the presence of women would affect the necessary discipline⁶. The ban did not include a punishment for the infringement⁷, but legal consequences concerning the civil rights of the (unofficial) wife or children. This is the basement for the supposition that one will find exclusively men in a Roman fort dating to the early Principate, precisely their objects and their work products – ramparts, buildings, weapons, military costume implements etc. The soldiers themselves were not very happy with the situation, as one could easily guess, trespassing the ban, as literary testimonies, funerary monuments and, lately, a closer look at the small finds obviously prove. The process of crossing the ban was favored by the new defense concept, from Hadrian onward, which decreased the mobility of troops, intimately linking the garrisons to the social life in a certain province. The emperors which tried to keep the army happy, as Trajan and Hadrian did, progressively diminished the bitterness of the law for the – still – unofficial families. The final result of the process is due to Septimius Severus, the emperor which came directly from the army, imposed by army, who abolished the ban⁸.

The problem is that artefacts that can be connected with women and children are found in contexts which can be dated in the first two centuries AD, as proved for the camp of Vindolanda, including soldiers’ barracks from the early 2nd century⁹. On the other hand, just a minority of soldiers was married (one fifth of them), even in the 3rd century¹⁰. Civilians, others than family, named *lixae* (camp followers) could also be present in the fort¹¹. All these are not just “gender issues”, because finally they will

¹ Gero, Conkey 1991.

² Bahn 1992.

³ The subject was presented at the *International Conference “Defensive System, Military Infrastructure and the Daily Life on the Borders of the Roman Empire”*, Târgu-Mureş, the 3rd-5th of December 2010.

⁴ Vass 2010.

⁵ Vass 2010, 136, 139.

⁶ Alisson 2006, 1.

⁷ Scheidel 2005, 2.

⁸ Campbell 1976.

⁹ Van Driel-Murray 2001.

¹⁰ James 2006, 31-32; suggesting considerably higher figures: Saller, Shaw 1984, 139-144; Phang 2001, 404-409 and Scheidel 2005, 4.

¹¹ Oelschig 1999; Feig Vishnia 2002; James 2006, 32-33.

affect our sense of what a Roman garrison was, what functions had certain areas, and how many soldiers could they really host.

Having to detail some field research about Răcari, we will need a basic description of the fort, along some specifications about the contexts in which focused artefacts were found. Some of those objects are already published¹², others will be included in a catalog within this paper. After that we will make a discussion oriented on artefacts and classes of artefacts, on size of the objects related to human scale, about probabilities and other figures.

2. Basics about the fort from Răcari

The fort is placed in the very middle of modern Oltenia, on Jiu River, 29 km north of Craiova city and 6 km south of Filiași town¹³. Jiu River is the backbone of the communications in Oltenia, placed in the rear side of the Roman defense of Dacia Inferior, being equally remote of Drobeta, Bumbești or Slăveni, the other major fort places from Oltenia. The first fort from Răcari was built by *legio V Macedonica* during the time of Dacian Wars (101–106), which was removed from the new conquered territories soon after that, at Troesmis. The only other military unit attested in Răcari is a *numerus Maurorum* Σ..., being unclear what happened between Dacian Wars and Marcomannic Wars, being unlikely to have a *numerus* before Antoninus Pius¹⁴. The fort is a middle range one, rather large for an auxiliary fort (if different of an “irregular” one), covering about 2.4 ha between walls, as well as other garrisons from Dacia, but unlike *numeri* from Germania¹⁵.

The fort was investigated several times, by several different teams, led by G. Tocilescu (1897–1898), G. Florescu (1928–1929), C. Vlădescu (1991–1992), work resumed in 2003–2010 by E. S. Teodor. Florescu issued a booklet (1931) with a selection of artefacts. Tocilescu’s results were published only in 1968¹⁶. A recent book¹⁷ collects published artefacts and unpublished small finds from the repository of Oltenia Museum, item remarked by L. Vass as containing lots of interesting artefacts under the theme.

Details about the fort from Răcari are available both in Romanian¹⁸ and English¹⁹, therefore we will present here only a minimum necessary to follow the text.

The first fort from Răcari (noted as phase 1), earth-and-timber made, had only 1.8 ha. It was rebuilt, with the same orientation (phase 2), but wider, sometime after the year 157 AD. The fort was completely reconstructed in early 3rd century, with stone walls, on the same plan of the defensive (170 × 141 m between walls), but with different inner lay-out; in the third decade of the 3rd century was completely burned out,

¹² Bondoc, Gudea 2009.

¹³ For the geographical location see Vass 2010, 134, Fig. 3.

¹⁴ Southern 1989.

¹⁵ Southern 1989.

¹⁶ Tudor 1968, 233–256.

¹⁷ Bondoc, Gudea 2009.

¹⁸ Teodor n.d.; Teodor 1996.

¹⁹ Teodor 2009.

being reconstructed almost identical, including the internal plan; those two sequences are noted as phases 3.1 and 3.2. The large stone fort was again completely busted during the *Carpi* invasion (245–247); it was partially rebuilt, in a completely different way (ruins not leveled, internal roads blocked by new features), noted as phase 4. Albeit the field research did not clarified all facts, apparently it was divided in two parts, a northern one, refortified, and a southern one, abandoned as a fort place and filled with so called “civilian buildings”. Our paper uses these phases to describe and ascribe archaeological contexts.

Although detailed annual reports are available on the Internet²⁰, it would be much easier to our reader to have a brief statement about each of the contexts in which artefacts of interest were found in the respect of the proposed subject.

3. Contexts of the finds

For the specific needs of this paper we drawn up a plan of the fort, on which recent archaeological trenches are figured, named further “sections” not only due to a Romanian “tradition”, but also because this is what they are – stratigraphic sections (Pl. I). That was not exactly an option, because otherwise we would prefer working in surfaces, but just a consequence of the poor logistic. Not all the plan is rendered on Pl. I, but only the eastern and central areas of the fort, those in which excavations have been made in the last 8 years. The drawing is made up from different sources, beginning with the general plan published by Gr. Florescu²¹, on which the *horreum* was added, following D. Tudor²². All the stone buildings, as the fortification, *principia* and *horreum*, were dug (and partially destroyed) by the archaeological research performed before the Second World War; those interventions are not marked on the map, but just some isolated old sections from Gr. Florescu or Vlădescu. Our own sections are labeled „S.”, numbered from 1 to 9, and dated with the campaign (five to six weeks each year). The main features of the fort were checked in a topographical survey, even where we did not dig, following the ditch made by Gr. Florescu all around the curtain, visible on the field, or discrete features under the grass, like some walls of *principia*. Some inconsistencies of the old drawings have been observed, mostly inside our own excavations, but they will be revealed here only if connected with our subject.

We will further list the contexts in which relevant artefacts occurred, in chronological order, with a provisional name, giving only the necessary details.

The first *praetorium* was made entirely of wood, with trench foundations, in *latus dextrum*, being a string of relatively square rooms, disposed in U, facing west. Plausible, such a large house, closing a yard, would have posts on the inner part sustaining a porch (not seen; most of the plausible places are inside Vlădescu’s excavation). The building was dismantled *manu militari* and almost all the goods were saved, therefore the archaeological inventory is poor, except for a bag with four *aurei* (Vespasianus, not published), suggesting that not only the position in the camp is right, but the wealth

²⁰ Teodor n.d.

²¹ Florescu 1931.

²² Tudor 1968.

too. The second phase of the *praetorium* is far from being clear, due to the little surface investigated; it is certainly completely different in plan, but also very “clean”. We have only an artefact harvested on the ground level corresponding to the phase 2.

The second phase contains only one other context of interest. It is a large and very deep pit (more than 3.1 m), possibly a well, placed in the southeastern corner of the *atrium* from *principia*. The third phase is represented by a *principia* built up of stone, the fountain being earlier. The pit, no matter the function, was filled with rolling stones and burned stuff resulted from the perished phase 2 (southern and northern palisades, as well as the layer around the *horreum*, are strongly burned), in order to make room for a larger *atrium*.

The third phase - the “stone fort” - gives the absolute majority of the inventory. This phase, made generally with perennial materials, has almost everywhere two distinct sub-phases, the reconstruction being made on the same plan. It makes default exactly *praetorium*, where the generous space needed redesign, after each fire. This is the situation of the Building 3.1, placed beside *via principalis*, that doesn't have the sub-phase 3.2.

Three barracks of the phase 3 have been partially investigated. One is placed facing the eastern rampart and *via sagularis*, with no number on Pl. I (has no “gendering” artefacts). A pebbled alley and another barrack, beginning in the extremity of S.1, named here Barrack 1 (Br1) were westwards. Another barrack (Br2 in Pl. I) is placed at the western end of *praetorium*, overlapping *via quintana*; its orientation, pointing west, or north, it is impossible to be established now.

The Workshop is the most important feature of the fort, related to the artefacts provided for this paper (10 out of 23, that is 43.48%). It is placed inside the *praetorium* area, and has almost 8 m long, on an east-west axis, and at least 5 m on a north-south axis. Its initial floor was made 1.3 m below surface, on which repeatedly manipulations of hot objects were practiced and large amounts of slag were left (of different natures!), being repaired and reconditioned several times for each phase. In the second sub-phase (3.2), the space was divided in two rooms, the western one remaining a workshop, but the eastern half becoming a kitchen, with plenty of animal bones inside. The building ended in the fire put by *Carpi*, in the events around 246, having a collapsed roof. A part of the roof was found undisturbed, the rest being rummaged. At the limit of the two areas, a fragment of human skull was found - a woman (see the Appendix). Obviously, somebody was looking for something, possibly the body, but after a relatively long time, allowing the skeleton to dismember. Was the ruined fort abandoned for so long?

Two discoveries from this set were found in *agger*. The earth rampart was rebuilt and raised for each phase and sub-phase. Those for phases 3.2 and 4, of interest here, were both of clay, usually clean.

Nevertheless, two female items were found there; but women do not make ramparts... We have to admit that those objects were lost in previous situations and brought with the earth.

The catalog makes also reference to some late buildings (Bld1 and Bld2 in Pl. I). Building 1 was made over *via sagularis* - a typical feature of the mid and late

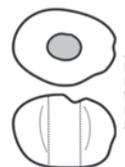
3rd century. Building 2 seems to overlap *via principalis*, but it does not; it stands along it (another feature of the late 3rd century). This is one of those cases when the old plans and the new survey do not fit each other. It also means that the gates from the end of the road should be about 2 meters eastward. But this is not yet proven.

4. Catalogue: artefacts from recent excavations

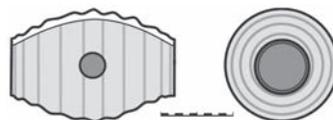
The artefacts are grouped in two broad categories: A) jewellery, adornments and accessories; B) artefacts related to women's activities. Inside each category, they are sorted upon name and inventory number. The last is a field inventory number. Inside each record, the data is provided in the following order: 1. Field number; 2. Category of artefact; 3. Basic raw material (and techniques, where not obvious); 4. Dimensions (mm); 5. Description; 6. Archaeological context; 7. Chronology; 8. Analogies; 9. Comments. 10. Scale (in drawing).

A) Jewellery, adornments and accessories

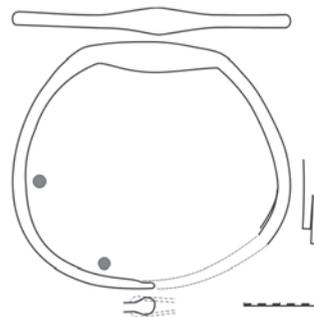
- 1 1. RAC5349; 2. **Bead**; 3. Chalk; 4. D = 13.7 × 10; d = 4.2 × 3.3; H = 10; 5. Bead with ellipsoidal plan and symmetrical hole; irregular, possibly due to the nature of the raw material (soluble); transversal hollows, possibly decoration (the „melon” type); 6. “Workshop”, phase 3.2, (*Praetorium?*), Section 5; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 10. 1:1.



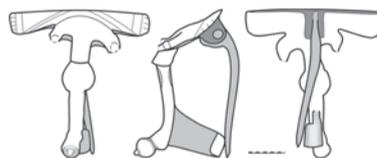
- 2 1. RAC7187; 2. **Bead** (?); 3. Lead bronze; 4. H = 21.8; d max. = 15; d min. = 9; d hole 1 = 6; d hole 2 = 3.5; 5. Barrel-like bead (?) decorated with transversal incisions; two axis holes, which raises serious doubts about the functionality of the artefact; whitish coat of corrosion, as a result of a heavily leaded copper alloy; 6. Wooden building from the first *Praetorium*; Section 7; 7. Early 2nd century; 9. The function is not obvious, neither the gender allocation; 10. 1:1.



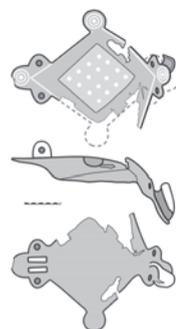
- 3 1. RAC5056; 2. **Bracelet**; 3. Iron; 4. Ext. d = 73 × 65; 5. Bracelet made of round section wire (3.4 mm), narrowed to the open end (3.1 mm), with flattened ending; one end is missing, part in which the wire is double; the front part is thickened, curved inside and rhombic in plan; 6. Ground level, phase 2, (*Praetorium?*), Section 5; 7. Late 2nd century; 8. Absent in Isac classification (Bajusz, Isac 2001, 430, Fig. 2) (To be found in finger-ring classifications?); 9. The flattened end could serve as fastening with the aid of a “U” shape hook, made of two closed wires (see the right side of the drawing); 10. 1:2.



- 4 1. RAC7628; 2. **Anchor brooch**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. H = 39.1 (in functional position); Length (face) = 44.4; Head width = 37; Foot L = 14.4; 5. Typical description of the anchor-shaped head brooches (Cociş 2004, 105, type 20, variant a); fasten system in hinge (Cociş 2004, 30, type 4); catchplate type 4 (Cociş 2004, 31); 6. “Workshop”, phase 3.1, (*Praetorium?*), Section 7; 7. Early 3rd century; 8. Cociş 2004, 200, cat. 1249, type 20a1a3; 201, cat. 1259, type 20a1c2; 9. Răcari brooch does not tightly fit any artefact of Cociş’s catalog, having a longer foot, but it has a good analogy in Răcari (Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 1053); 10. 1:2.



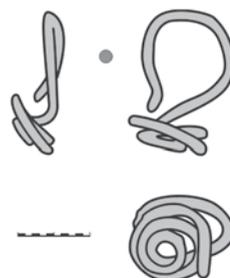
- 5 1. RAC3030; 2. **Enameled brooch**; 3. Cooper-alloy, enamel; 4. Width = 31.3 (preserved); H = 43 (preserved); 5. 1 mm bronze sheet; restituted dimensions: ~ 36 × 44.6 mm; rhombic plan with volutes; missing pin, deformed lower half, missing parts; shifted central rhomb is enameled (original colour uncertain); fasten on hinge, short catchplate; pair holes on each side, for hanging chains; 6. *Agger*, phase 3.2, Section 3; 7. End of the first quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Johns 1996, Pl. 13; Hattatt 2000, cat. 1586; Cociş 2004, 208, cat. 1504 = Porolissum; Cociş 2004, cat. 1511 = Micia (loose connection), both types 24b1 (= Feugère 26b1); 9. The chronology is late for this kind of *fibula* (Cociş 2004, 125), but we date the context (*agger* phase 3.2, with deployed earth from elsewhere), not the object; 10. 1:2.



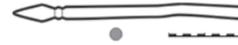
- 6 1. RAC9102; 2. **Bulla**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. H = 23; width (partial) = 17; thickness = 6.2; 5. Very thin bronze sheet (ca. 1 mm); fragmentary and bent, mostly the back side (left in drawing); estimated width = 19.5 mm; 6. Posthole of a wooden building, next to *via principalis*, phase 3.1, Section 9; 7. First quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Diaconescu, Opreanu 1987, 60, Fig. 4/26; Alicu, Cociş, 1988, 225 (other analogies and references), 231 with Pl. I/1-3; Bajusz, Isac 2001, 418, Pl. II/20; 9. The kernel usually closed into a *bulla* is missing, but the dimensions are suggesting something like a cherry fruit; 10. 1:1.



- 7 1. RAC7380; 2. **Earring**; 3. Bronze wire; 4. Hook d = 16.8; loop d = 10.8 × 10.5 section d = 1.7; 5. Made of one round section wire, three times looped at the end; 6. Posthole of a building from the latest phase (4), next to *via principalis*, Section 7; 7. Mid-3rd century; 8. Gramatopol, Theodorescu 1966, 70-71, Pl. XII (20 gold wire earrings); Alicu, Cociş 1988, 235, Pl. V/46 (distant analogy); 9. Right earring; 10. 1:1.



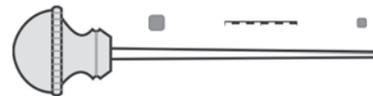
- 8 1. RAC5187; 2. **Hairpin** (miniature); 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. Conserved L = 30; head L = 7; d = 1.6; 5. Fragmentary, incomplete, bent; the upper part is suggesting a pine cone, separated by the body with two incisions, all of 7 mm; round section body (1.6 mm); 6. "Workshop", phase 3.2, (*Praetorium*), Section 5; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Alicu, Cociș 1988, 236, Pl. VI/54; 237, Pl. VII/55; 10. 1:1.



- 9 1. RAC5251; 2. **Hairpin**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. Preserved L = 53.2; head L = 11; max. d = 3.2; 5. Fragmentary, incomplete, the decorated part shaped as a flame, separated from the shaft by two incisions; round section, widened at the upper part of the body; 6. "Workshop", phase 3.2, (*Praetorium?*), Section 5; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Bajusz, Isac 2001, Pl. VII/55; Ciugudean 2002, 299, Pl. IV/4; 10. 1:1.



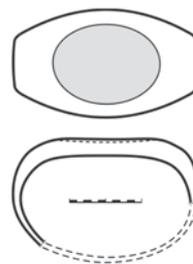
- 10 1. RAC7152; 2. **Hairpin** with detachable head; 3. Silver (head), cooper-alloy (shaft); 4. Preserved L = 48; head L = 13; head d = 12; section width = 2; 5. Mushroom-like silver head, with „pearl-string” on the maximum diameter, with horizontally incised foot; detachable cooper-alloy shaft, with rectangular section, thinner downwards; the pin is broken, but the missing part should be pretty short (no more than 10 mm); 6. "Workshop", phase 3.2, (*Praetorium?*), Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Cool 1990, 160, type 8; 10. 1:1.



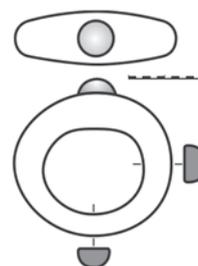
- 11 1. RAC7137; 2. **Hairpin**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. L (bent) = 110; head d = 72; shaft d = 36; 5. Enlarged rounded head (mushroom shape), round section, thicker at the middle, very thin at the end (below 0.4 mm); bent and fragmented, but complete; restituted length = 125 mm; 6. Building from the latest phase (4), next to *via principalis*, Section 7; 7. Mid-3rd century; 8. Alicu, Cociș 1988, 236, Pl. VI/57; Ciugudean 2002, 298, Pl. III/3; formal head analogy: Elefterescu 2008, cat. 121-123; 10. 1:2.



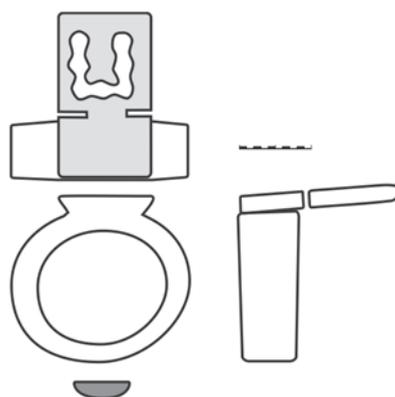
- 12 1. RAC0129; 2. **Ring**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. $D^* = 24.3 \times (16.4)$; $d = 20.1 \times (13.3)$; stone $d = 14.1 \times 10.5$; 5. D-shape section, widening to the bezel (missing oval stone). Broken inferior loop; 6. Barrack, west end of the Section 1; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Hica-Cîmpeanu 1980, 660, Fig. 2/2; Alicu, Cociș 1988, 232, Pl. II/17; Bajusz, Isac 2001, 417, Pl. I/2 (ratio w/h = 1.47); 430, Fig. 2, type II.1; Facsády, Verebes 2007, 6, Fig. 9 (type III); 9. Unusual ratio between width and height of the loop (~1.5); a male ring (?) transformed for an unusual gracile lady or a child (variant: a ring intended to be worn on the thumb); the narrowest diameter (13.3 mm) is below adult women scale; nevertheless, this is a marriage ring (Johns 1996, 65, Fig. 3.27), or at least similar; 10. 1:1.



- 13 1. RAC7693; 2. **Ring**; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. $D = 21 \times 19$; $d = 13 \times 11$; pearl $d = 5$; 5. d shape section ring, widened and flattened to the whitish “pearl” from above; low quality cooper-alloy (iron like rust); the “pearl” seems made of bronze too, of better quality (with tin?); 6. Barrack (phase 3.2) at the western end of Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. British Museum no. reg. 1900, 1122.4 (gold, 1st-2nd century); missing in classifications made for Dacia Porolissensis (Bajusz, Isac 2001), and for Aquincum (Facsády, Verebes 2007); 9. Dimensions are recommending a pre-teenager; 10. 1:1.

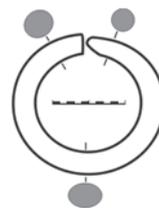


- 14 1. RAC7335; 2. ‘Key’ ring; 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. $D = 23.8 \times 22.2$ (with bezel); $d = 17 \times 15$; bezel = 12.2×21.7 ; 5. “Key”-ring, transitional type (Johns 1996, 56, Fig. 3.15, down-right); D-shape section, easy widening to the bezel. The plaque is welded on the ring in an obtuse angle. The ring is slightly skewed (or deformed). The whole decoration is a bit asymmetric; 6. “Workshop”, phase 3.2, (*Praetorium?*), Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Cristești (Man 2011, 197, Pl. CXLVIII/19); Johns 1996, 56, fig. 3.15, right-down; 9. Woman size; 10. 1:1.

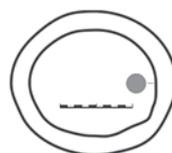


* D = external diameter; d = internal diameter.

- 15 1. RAC7775; 2. **Ring** (loop?); 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. $D = 20 \times 18.4$; $d = 14 \times 13$; section from 3×3 to 3.5×3.9 ; 5. Little ring with opened ends, of which one is narrowed; relatively round section, variable in dimensions; no mechanical stress observed; 6. Barrack (phase 3.1) at the western end of Section 7; 7. First quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Discovered by chance; for typology see Facsády, Verebes 2007, 9, Fig. I/c (type VIII b); 9. If considered finger-ring, it rather fits a teenager than an adult women; 10. 1:1.

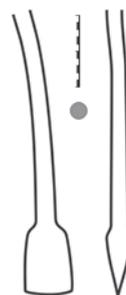


- 16 1. RAC7612; 2. **Ring** (loop); 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. $D = 22 \times 19$; $d = 16.8 \times 14$; round section from 2.9 to 2.3; 5. Cooper-alloy ring with welded ends; the section is round but not homogenous, ranging from 2.3 to 2.9 mm, not counting the welding node; 6. "Workshop", phase 3.1, (*Praetorium?*), Section 7; 7. Early 3rd century; 8. Discovered by chance; Alicu, Cociş 1988, 231, Pl. I/4-8; Isac, Gaiu 2006, Pl. 1/9; Facsády, Verebes 2007, 10, Fig. I/d (type X a); 9. If a ring - the size is for a slender woman or a teenager; but the function is not obvious, neither the gender attribute; the diameters ratio (1.2) is typical for fingerings, but the weld is not; no mechanical stress observed; 10. 1:1.



B) Artefacts related to women's activities

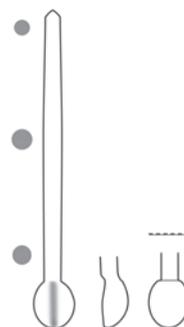
- 17 1. RAC5321; 2. **Spatula** (fragment); 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. Preserved $L = 27$; handle $d = 2$; spatula = $9.4 \times 6.1 \times 5.1$; 5. Fragmentary, incomplete, handle with round section; trapezoidal ending, with sharp front edge; 6. "Workshop", phase 3.2, (*Praetorium*), Section 5; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Diaconescu, Opreanu 1987, 59, Fig. 3/21 (as medical scoop); 9. The medical purpose can't be excluded (for removing a tooth, for instance); the sharp front edge better recommends this tool for handling ointments, usually employed in makeup; 10. 1:1.



- 18 1. RAC7716; **Spatula** (fragment); 3. Cooper-alloy; 4. L (partial) = 17; handle = 2.6×2.2 ; 5. Fragmentary spatula, with rectangular handle section; flattened end, quasi-trapezoidal in plan (maximum width = 5.3 mm); 6. Barrack (phase 3.2) at the western end of Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 10. 1:1.



19 1. RAC7641; 2. *Spatula* (scoop ear? *ligula*?); 3. Bone; 4. Length = 84; Spoon = 11 × 12.3; Handle D1 = 4; D2 = 5.3; D3 = 4.8; 5. Made of bone, nicely polished, with round section handle, wider in the middle height; spoon-like end; 6. Barrack (phase 3.2) at the western end of Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 8. Ciugudean 2002, 300, Pl. V/2 (scoop ear, spoon 4.5 × 4.8); Elefterescu 2008, 217-220 (*auriscalpia*, width <7 mm), 221 and 223 (width 9-10 mm, cosmetic use; wrong graphic scale; see description); 9. Artefacts with a spoon transversal diameter over 8 mm are unlikely to be useful in the cavity of an ear; 10. 1:2.



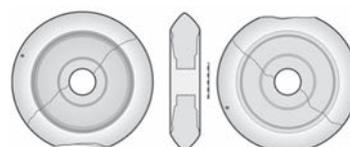
20 1. RAC8076; 2. *Spatula*; 3. Iron; 4. L = 104; handle section = 37 × 33; spoon = 12 × 13; 5. Relatively rectangular handle; little active end, spoon-like shape; the thickness makes the tool relatively unhandy, but the rust could be responsible for that; 6. *Principia*, atrium, pit (fountain?), Section 8; filling from the second phase (final); 7. End of the 2nd century; 8. Read 2001, 95, item 708; 9. Close analogies in two classes of artefacts, with different utility: ear scoop (cosmetics and medicine) and *ligulae* (specialties eating device); ear scoop is endemic on detectorists' sites (especially in UK); see better documented Metropolitan 74.51.5491 ("ear probe")*; this spoon is even wider (12 mm), that qualifies the artefact as a tiny *spatula* of cosmetic use, not as a scoop ear; 10. 1:2.



21 1. RAC0032; 2. *Spindle whorl*; 3. Clay, turned; 4. Max. d = 17.4; hole d = 7.4; H = 22.2; weight = 6.12 g. (restituted ~ 9 g); 5. Coarse fabric, sandy, yellowish-brown, barrel shape, without decoration; partially broken; 6. Civilian (?) house, Section 1; 7. Mid-3rd century; 8. Gudea 2008, Pl. XXIX/9; Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 424; 9. The type is not very usual (H > D); 10. 1:2.

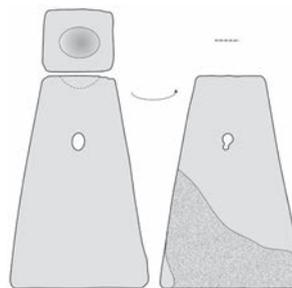


22 1. RAC0179; 2. *Spindle whorl*; 3. Bone, lathed; 4. D = 37; hole d = 7; H = 7.8; weight = 10 g; 5. Well-polished, decorated with concentric circles; broken in half; 6. *Agger*, last phase, Section 2; 7. Mid-3rd century; 8. Alicu, Nemeş 1982, 365, Pl. IX/3 ("rondel"); Alisson 2006, 8, Fig. 1/a; Gudea 2008, Pl. LXXI/9; XXIX/4; 10. 1:2.



* See also <http://www.hr-replikate.de/katalog/indep/detail.php?lang=en&image=0127>, from Augusta Raurica.

- 23 1. RAC7502; 2. **Loom weight**; 3. Clay; 4. H = 85; upper base = 30 × 37; lower base = 55 × 54; 5. Burned clay weaving weight; the initial hole was round, 2 mm in diameter, enlarged by use to 4 × 6 (5 × 7) mm; one side broken; on the upper base there is an alveole, with diameters of 16 × 12 mm and 5 mm deep, probably as a result of a secondary use (support for spinning?); 6. Walking level (pebbles paved courtyard), phase 3.2, west to the “Workshop”, Section 7; 7. Second quarter of the 3rd century; 10. 1:3.



5. Comments on categories of artefacts

Following the order chosen in the catalog above, we will proceed presenting some problems connected with each type. We used the data published by L. Vass²³, slightly modified, to which the artefacts from our own catalog were added.

| object type | overall | Răcari |
|---------------|---------|--------|
| bead | 20.55% | 18.64% |
| bracelet | 4.74% | 11.86% |
| brooch | 4.35% | 6.78% |
| bulla | 0.40% | 1.69% |
| comb* | 0.79% | 3.39% |
| earring* | 0.79% | 1.69% |
| hairpin | 39.92% | 11.86% |
| necklace | 0.79% | 0 |
| pendant | 3.95% | 1.69% |
| ring | 8.30% | 6.78% |
| spatula* | 1.58% | 6.78% |
| spindle whorl | 13.44% | 27.12% |
| weight* | 0.40% | 1.69% |

Table 1. “Sexing” artefacts in Roman forts from Dacia. Comparative data regarding overall data (253 items) and Răcari figures (including Bondoc, Gudea 2009) (Items with asterisk are based only on Răcari).

Beads are well represented in forts, apparently much better than in other type of sites²⁴, which is odd; they represent 20.55% from all “gendered” artefacts from forts and 18.64% in Răcari²⁵. Our own are not only few, but unaccustomed; bead no. 1 is ellipsoidal and we found no exact match, though a kind of analogy is another bead from Răcari²⁶, made of glass paste, also not round in plan; bead no. 2 is also a

²³ Vass 2010.

²⁴ Like some cemeteries; see, for instance, Damian et alii 2008, where they make completely default (on over 300 graves). Yet beads are not absent in Roşia Montană area, as proved by discoveries in habitation from Balea or in the cemetery from Tăul Săucilor-Pârăul Porcului (kindly information provided by Ionuţ Bocan).

²⁵ Counting also Bondoc, Gudea 2009.

²⁶ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 1132; see yet Benea 2008, Pl. II/1-7; 9-10.

rare form, finding a good equivalent in Răcari as well²⁷. Having a second hole, on another axis, bead no. 2 could have various functions, like hanging, from its middle, another pendant. Its context, dated in early 2nd century, suggests rather a military function.

On overall statistics, bracelets take almost 5% from the evidence, but almost 12% in Răcari (see Table 1). That is pretty much. Catalog number 3 finds no match, although some formal similarities could be found²⁸. Regarding the others published, except one made of silver²⁹, which can be a military sign of honor, the others, made of glass, are likely female accessories. Of course, on auxiliary forts of the irregular troops, this judgment should be applied taking into consideration the ethnic origins, where known. Accustomed for Celts or German warriors, bracelets were an abnormal Roman social behavior, becoming a sign of bravery from the practice of looting the killed enemies; therefore, men wearing bracelets had a precise meaning, and *those* bracelets are anyway made of gold (for high ranking officers) or silver (for others), being large and heavy artefacts, more frequent during the first two centuries³⁰.

The first brooch of our catalog (no. 4) is included in Vass selection of types ascribed to females³¹, Cociș type 20b, styled as “anchor *fibula*”, frequently associated with fine silver chains for hanging pendants³², sophisticated fashion incompatible with a functional military outfit. Anyway, the best analogies for the brooch no. 4 come from the sub-type 20a, considering both design and dimensions. A very close analogy is to be found in Răcari.

The second brooch (cat. no. 5) is related to Cociș type 24b1, not considered between *fibulae* worn by women. There is only one straight analogy in Dacia, from Porolissum; anyhow, the type is not rare³³. The reason why we took it in this collection is simple: the brooch has a pair of little holes on both ends from the longer axis, which would make sense for hanging chains, as suggested by the horizontal display of the drawing from catalog, standing in British Museum exhibition.

Bulla is not a casual object in a fort. This special and symbolic recipient, wore as a pendant, as a sign of a child³⁴ born free³⁵. This is especially interesting in a camp inhabited by *numeri*³⁶; the artefact was found in a building confining *praetorium* area. The custom of wearing *bullae* is as Roman as possible (with Etruscan origin), strongly suggesting that the officer in command was a Roman citizen, and, more than that,

²⁷ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 582 “pendant”.

²⁸ Metropolitan acc. no. 17.190.1657, gold, or 17.190.1651, gold, credited for the 4th century.

²⁹ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 1102.

³⁰ Sas 2004, 354.

³¹ Vass 2010, 130, Fig. 1.

³² Cociș 2004, 105.

³³ See British Museum reg. no. 1872,0604.785; 1904,0602.1; 1990, 1003.1; 1990, 1003.3 etc., usually not earlier than the 2nd century AD.

³⁴ See http://www.vroma.org/images/mcmanus_images/nerochild.jpg (the future Emperor Nero as a child, wearing *bullae*).

³⁵ Diaconescu, Opreanu 1987, 59; Alicu, Cociș 1988, 225; girls are not excluded: Bajusz, Isac 2001, 400; Sas 2004, 369.

³⁶ Southern 1989.

probably a military with service in cavalry³⁷. That would be perfectly proper for leading a large military unit like this *numerus Maurorum*...

Earring is another rare item on a camp inventory, missing from Vass's list; it is known as a male item, for Roman history, but rather as extravagance of oriental fashion³⁸. Obviously the class of artefacts could be legitimate included on "sexing" small finds. The motive of evidence scarcity could be the fact that Roman earrings are usually very fine adornments, composed by many tiny elements, difficult to survive in archaeological layers (if not gold involved), or to be correctly identified on small "unknown fragmentary artefacts".

The hairpins are the most numerous female related artefacts found in forts from Dacia (almost 40%, Table 1). The provocative figure made some thinkers to imagine all kind of possible (miss-) functions of the artefact, like fastening clothes³⁹ or writing with a pseudo-*stilus*⁴⁰; why not the bare knife, for writing? The basic condition for improvising functions is *to have* the object. Could a (metallic) hairpin be used for writing on *tabella cerata*? Of course! A lady would do so⁴¹... The finds from Răcari are less common (12%). Our catalog's four artefacts are of four different types, from which no. 10 is less encountered, but not unknown⁴².

The rings are the most present kind of artefact in our catalog (nos. 12-16), picturing 5 different types. First (no. 12) is a common type, with an oval (missing) stone. The second ring (no. 13) is not usual at all, being more an improvisation (a loop with an added bronze "stone"). The third one (no. 14) is the most interesting, another infrequent artefact, second of his kind known for Dacia, labeled with the generic name of "key"-ring⁴³. Apparently it has lots of analogies in Răcari⁴⁴, but those are (chest-) keys attached to a loop, for hanging on the belt. At the origin, one century earlier, such little keys could be attached also to a proper fingering. With clear practical purposes, at the beginning, the object evolved to a symbolic item ("Key of the House"), key-like plaques, with hole designs, being attached at larger fingerings, but the practical aim was completely lost, being obvious that neither Răcari, nor Cristești artefacts are usable for locks. This is why it is named "the transitional (key-) type"⁴⁵.

Many troubles make the simple loops, in two variants, with opened ends (no. 15), or with welded ends (no. 16). They are considered either loops, or rings, but the motivation for one or the other is not transparent. We need some criteria before taking chances and make a decision. For instance, an open loop has no mechanical

³⁷ Stout 2001, 77.

³⁸ Stout 2001, 77; Allison 2006, 5.

³⁹ Elefterescu 2008, 222.

⁴⁰ Becker 2006, 36.

⁴¹ For hairstyles as gender and social messages: Bartman 2001, especially 105 with Fig. 8 (use of hairpin). For other uses of hairpins, like torture tool: Treggiari 2007, 148.

⁴² Cool 1990, 160.

⁴³ Johns, 1996, 55-56; see also <http://www.flickr.com/photos/museumoflondon/4755264050/sizes/z/in/photostream/> and <http://www.shenley.u-net.com/romanfinds.htm>.

⁴⁴ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. nos. 630-639.

⁴⁵ Transition to pure decorative models, with lavish decorative extended bezel, see Johns 1996, 57, Figs. 3.16 and 3.17.

strength and should rather be a “ring”. A closed loop with a D shape section would be, as well, a ring. Also, a closed loop with unequal diameters, if made of copper alloy, could be also a fingering. The sizes are also important. Vass⁴⁶ took his cautions and decided - a little bit too on scent - that one should count as female objects only the rings below 17 mm on the inner diameter. We made the next step, asking an old jeweler from Bucharest which are the most common measures for wedding rings (Table 2).

| Diameter | Women | Men |
|----------|-------|-----|
| 15 | 1 | |
| 16 | 6 | |
| 17 | 19 | 1 |
| 18 | 40 | 4 |
| 19 | 20 | 8 |
| 20 | 8 | 20 |
| 21 | 6 | 40 |
| 22 | | 19 |
| 23 | | 7 |
| 24 | | 1 |

Table 2. Wedding rings’ diameters (mm) for our days people from Bucharest. Estimates (jeweler Ioan Busuioac), percent.

This is not quite a “statistic”, but it is better than the “archaeologist’s hunch”. Consequently, the most usual measure for men is 21 mm on inner diameter, and the most usual female measure corresponds to 18 mm; for less than 17 mm there are only 7 percent of the women... Using our-days data could be debatable, because the size of people evolved; on the other hand, the folks from Bucharest are not quite farmers, with palms formed on rough works, as soldiers in a camp should be. As estimates they are, such comparative data could be useful ranging specific measures, as already tried on other categories of artefacts (shoes⁴⁷ or bone “rondels”⁴⁸).

If so, a 19 mm inner and smaller diameter ring would be a female ring (probability 71.4%), and a 20 mm diameter would mean a male ring (same probability). On statistic supported by 38 rings previously published, resulted that only 3 fulfill the condition of a “male size”, that is below 8%⁴⁹; these are artefacts of different types (including those with twisted ends, currently considered more feminized, being technically similar to some earrings), from which one is a massive gold ring⁵⁰. With such enhanced - even not perfect - criteria, the set of artefacts which could be considered for a gendered analysis, as that undertook by Vass, would certainly increase.

⁴⁶ Vass 2010, 132.

⁴⁷ Van Driel-Murray 2001.

⁴⁸ Allison 2006, 7.

⁴⁹ Inflicting thus with an old authoring idea (Gramatopol 1971, 21) that the earrings are typical female adornment, and the ring would be also a typical male thing. The art historian was referring anyway to adornments made of precious metals, and for that he could be right.

⁵⁰ Alicu, Cociş 1988, cat. no. 23.

We cannot close the rings' section without mentioning three silver rings from Răcari⁵¹, published only as photographs, with no dimensions, so they can't be used in this paper (they also miss from the report from Table 1).

The artefacts collected under the generic of *spatulae* (nos. 17-20) are new in the debate about gender in Dacia. The reasons why they were avoided till now are obvious: they can be medical devices, or cosmetic implements, but other uses (like tools for eating delicacies) are not excluded; their capacity to be multi-functional tools is also easy to guess. The selected artefacts divide in two groups: the first comprises two little *spatulae*, both fragmentary (nos. 17-18), with the active end enlarged, flat shovel like shape. Their tiny dimensions seem to exclude medical utility (except for dental purposes?), recommending powder manipulation, as those used in make-up. The second group is made of two miniature *ligulae*, with relatively long handles but very small spoons. This kind of objects is formally connected with ear scoops, but, for anatomical reasons, spoons wider than 7-8 mm would be unusable inside a human ear. The only other utility seems to be for handling delicacies inside or from tiny glass jars⁵².

Spindle whorls are the most "feminist" archaeological artefacts and one of the most frequent finds on forts (see Table 1). Their significance is not contested even by the most conservative of the archaeologists⁵³, being deeply connected with the status of married women, from antiquity to the 20th century⁵⁴. The first item (no. 21) has not the most usual form, but it is a spindle whorl anyway. The second item, made of bone, could raise questions. Previous studies, performed on rich contexts, thoroughly investigated, allowed yet the distinction between similar morphologies, but completely different functions, like beads, spindle whorls or furniture fittings⁵⁵. Our item 22 is fulfilling the conditions of outer diameter between 35 and 48 mm and central hole between 6 and 9 mm, to be pretty sure that it is a spindle whorl. In Romanian archaeology, for similar objects are used concepts like "playing token" (which regularly has no hole or a very small one⁵⁶) or "rondel", just a word for "I don't know"⁵⁷.

Artefacts connected with weaving, like the loom weight (no. 23), are still obscured about "sexing finds", partially due to a generalized conviction that both men and women were involved in antique weaving⁵⁸, partially due to the scarcity of archae-

⁵¹ Gramatopol 1971, Figs. 3, 7, 13.

⁵² See the interesting collection published recently by Elefterescu 2008, cat. nos. 217-223, for both functions discussed.

⁵³ With funny exceptions, like Bondoc, Gudea 2009, 196, for which spindle whorls are some kind of sweethearts' souvenirs... See instead better balanced questions about spinning and weaving in Roman forts in James 2006, 34-35. Anyway, spinning is mentally connected not only with marriage, but with slavery too (Hemelrijk 2004, 150; Treggiari 2007, 10), dishonorable and unlikely association for an armed man. Speaking about "man" under the label of gender, we should carefully watch the dichotomy between free and enslaved men, working both inside a fort and in civilian society.

⁵⁴ Girls education: Lightman, Lightman 2008, 163-164; woman as *lanifica*: Treggiari 2007, 16; "working wool" like a life-time job and the goddess of Fate - "The Spinner": Sebesta n.d.; spinning in Greek classic tradition: Suhr 1963; ethnographical references (weaving and fate prediction, marriage, etc): Pavelescu 1995; spinning as effeminacy: Allison 2006, 5-6.

⁵⁵ Allison 2006, 7, table 1.

⁵⁶ Alicu, Nemeş 1982, 349.

⁵⁷ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, 196, 199 etc.

⁵⁸ Extended references in Wild 2002, 29; Allison 2006, 5.

ological finds. However, commentaries connected with Roman customs or public mentality stress the connection between spinning and weaving, as symbols of the married women, as a householder and keeper of the tradition, something that girls should be taught for a proper future⁵⁹. Of course, there are also accounts about men wearing beads or earrings, or even working in a... weaving *officina*. This is the case with Valerius Licinianus Licinius - the Younger, the adopted son of the Emperor Licinius and *caesar* before 324, whose life was spared in the aftermath of the final defeat of his father, but he was turned into a slave and sent to work in an imperial *officina*, a weaving mill⁶⁰. Like other narratives of the kind, this story is an exemplary one in a negative way, telling us *what is not* a man (weaver, as long as “weaving mill” was rendered in Greek as *gynaecēi*) or a Roman citizen (slave). In our case, the item 23 from the catalog is a loom weight with a particular feature - an alveole on the upper part - which directly connects it with spinning. The paucity of this item on Roman sites from Dacia could be explained by the fact that around the year 100 the warp-weighted loom was displaced - but not completely replaced - by the two-beam loom, which worked without weights⁶¹.

6. Distribution of “gendered” finds in space and time

One of the earliest GIS applications studying the distribution of artefacts inside forts was performed on some small sites from Germany⁶². Although the option was right, as the author explained, her conclusions seem now not fully applicable in larger forts, as Buciumi and Răcari. The idea that the place of the women, in a garrison, would be closer to the gates, or along the roads driving to the gates, is contradicted by both Vass’s analysis⁶³ and ours (see Pl. I). Most of the items on the list were collected in an area suspected to be a *praetorium*, which is normal, being outside the ban of marriage and conforming to a long tradition of officers’ rights⁶⁴. Looking again on the map from Plate I, we can see that such items were found also in two barracks (investigated only in part), placed far away from gates or the main roads, as well in other places (as *agger* area), where no woman-goods were expected. As a secondary observation, useful in reading the plan: the northern area of the fort from Răcari, almost empty, was our colleague’s - Dorel Bondoc - sector of research. In his recent monograph, heavily cited here, he lists, among over 1200 items of the catalog, 38 of which were incorporated in the report from Table 1; of those, only one item is from its own excavation (on Section 6), the rest being the result of old research, traditionally not interested for the link between the object and the context. Among those 38 items, two fragmentary combs are also counted, another class of scarce artefacts

⁵⁹ For instance Hemelrijk 2004, 20-22, 27, 56, 72; for Late Empire revalorization of weaving: Lightman, Lightman 2008, 21, 34, 277.

⁶⁰ Evans Grubbs 1995, 285.

⁶¹ Wild 2002, 11.

⁶² Allison 2006.

⁶³ Vass 2010, 136-137.

⁶⁴ Allason-Jones 2007.

in Dacian forts⁶⁵ and obliterated from previous analyses. If true that combs, in general, can be of Germanic origin (much more frequent in Germanic sites), in this case we are dealing with *copper alloy* combs⁶⁶, which points out to a Roman manufacturer but also on wool combing, operation that precedes and prepares spinning⁶⁷.

Shifting on the distributions along the timeline, the first two phases of the fort from Răcari are very poor. It looks that the ban worked... In fact, the ban could work out along the 2nd century, but the general inventory to ascribe for those two phases is almost proportional poor. The first appearance of women in fort preceded Septimius Severus reign anyway. Yet the lift of the ban helped the process, driving to dramatic changes of the internal layout of the forts, earlier than the “chalets” phenomenon, in the 4th century, as suggested by researches in South Shields⁶⁸.

| fort | obj. no. |
|---------------|----------|
| Bologa | 2 |
| Brâncovenești | 7 |
| Buciumi | 40 |
| Cășei | 17 |
| Feldioara | 8 |
| Gherla | 23 |
| Gilău | 27 |
| Ilișua | 42 |
| Inlăceni | 4 |
| Porolissum | 13 |
| Potaissa | 1 |
| Praetorium | 7 |
| Răcari | 59 |
| Râșnov | 3 |
| TOTAL | 253 |

Table 3. Distribution of the “gendered” artefacts on forts from Dacia.

| obj. type | Buciumi | Gilău | Ilișua | Răcari |
|----------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| bead | 35.00% | 18.52% | 33.33% | 18.64% |
| bracelet | | 7.41% | | 11.86% |
| brooch | 5.00% | | | 6.78% |
| <i>bulla</i> | | | | 1.69% |
| comb | | | | 3.39% |
| earring | | | | 1.69% |
| hairpin | 42.50% | 40.74% | 38.10% | 11.86% |
| pendant | | 14.81% | 7.14% | 1.69% |
| ring | | 18.52% | 9.52% | 6.78% |
| <i>spatula</i> | | | | 6.78% |
| spindle whorl | 17.50% | | 11.90% | 27.12% |
| weight | | | | 1.69% |

Table 4. Types of artefacts’ distribution in the first four better represented forts.

Concluding, the place of the fort from Răcari looks now prominent (Table 3). But things are rarely what they appear to be. Potaissa is *legio V Macedonica* head-quarter, Porolissum is the greatest auxiliary fort, and other large forts are missing from the list (let’s say only those already mentioned in Oltenia), therefore we are still far from some relevant outcomes... For a camp excavated at most as a quarter of the surface, as Răcari, the figures are already great; even sweeping off the doubtful artefacts, around 50 are left, suggesting an overall of at least 200 artefacts of interest

⁶⁵ A hypothesis explaining why combs are so rare in Roman Dacia is suggested by the fact that lots of *wooden* combs were discovered in wet lands (or extremely dry, like Egypt), including in forts (Derks, Vos 2010), material extremely rarely surviving on Romanian soils.

⁶⁶ Bondoc, Gudea 2009, cat. 749-750.

⁶⁷ Wild 2002, 5-6.

⁶⁸ Hodgdon, Bidwell 2004, 153-154.

lost in fort. Applying the algorithm of the lost coins (about 3–4% each year) we speak about around... 7000 objects worn by women and children, in an overall less than one century of certain occupation. Speaking – shortly – about the children, they seem to be about half of the civilians in the fort (see the comments from Catalogue)... Making calculations oriented to the people, taken as an optimistic average of 10 items for each civilian (no matter slave or free, woman or child), for 5 generations, the total estimate number of civilians in the fort, on more or less permanent bases, is 140, thus for every three soldiers in the fort (500, as a loose base) there was one civilian⁶⁹; that is an average rate, lower in the beginning, larger to the end, when the pure military presence could be much diluted, as expected for a military crises and financial failure.

As concerning the distribution of classes of artefacts in the best represented four forts (Table 4), the distribution of artefacts has good similarities (for an *incomplete* report). The situation from Răcari, in this comparison, is peripheral only in what concerns a deficit of hairpins and an excess of spindle whorls. Giving the fact that almost all comparison terms from the lists above are from northern Dacia, inside Carpathian Mountains (Dacia Superior and especially Dacia Porolissensis), we may provisionally guess that those differences could be due to some regional habits.

7. Short conclusions

Progresses have been made in criteria regarding “sexing” some classes of artefacts, as shoes, bone “rondels” or rings; on others, like *spatulae*, there is a long way to run; others, like glass recipients, never occurred in speech. The presence of non-combat people in Roman forts is today beyond doubt, even if inclusion of some artefacts on this agenda is not “beyond any doubt”. The pretention of a “necessary” absolute certitude⁷⁰ is absurd, just for the simple fact that archaeology is not an “exact” science; in fact, who can have an absolute certitude that pottery found in a fort is not made or manipulated by women? No rational researcher would ever ask for that.

There is a trend in research, oriented more and more on querying the small finds and engendering artefacts⁷¹. This paper is not about being in trend, but to get a way out from that “positivist” science of archaeology⁷², delighted to describe, too shy to conceive.

We would like to conclude paraphrasing Silvia Tomášková⁷³ and Simone de Beauvoire, together: “*The body [of evidence] is not a thing, it is a situation, because the archaeological evidence is the consequence of research questions*”.

⁶⁹ Huge figures if compared to those from the auxiliary fort from Ellingen (Zanier 1992, apud Allison 2006, 6); there are some evidently methodological differences into the calculation.

⁷⁰ Becker 2006, 37.

⁷¹ Pitts 2007, 699–700.

⁷² Criticism in Allison 2001, 203; Vass 2010, 128.

⁷³ Tomášková 2006, 20.

Appendix. Anthropological notes

A fragmentary skull was discovered during the excavation campaign 2005 - frontal bone broken in two parts - in Section 5, division 16, context 5018, at 53 cm below the actual soil. The stratigraphic situation excludes the hypothesis that the bones were dumped in a trash-pit, because the "workshop" was completely filled with its own burned ruins (the roof tiles level is *above* the bones).

The bones were analyzed by Sandu G. Vasile, anthropologist at the National History Museum of Romania from Bucharest, which presented a technical report. We present here only his conclusions: the fragment of skull belongs to a woman, most probably in the early adult age (20 to 34 years old).

A second opinion was asked to Andrei Soficaru (Institute of Anthropology, Bucharest), which, at that time, run a Fulbright scholarship in Ohio State University; consequently, he was not able to study the bones, but only some snapshots and measurements performed by the archaeologist. Promising a future detailed study of the remains, dr. Soficaru sent us just some brief and preliminary conclusion: the frontal bone belongs to a woman dead before 40, but most likely between 20 and 24 years old.

Full reports will be published in a specialized publication.

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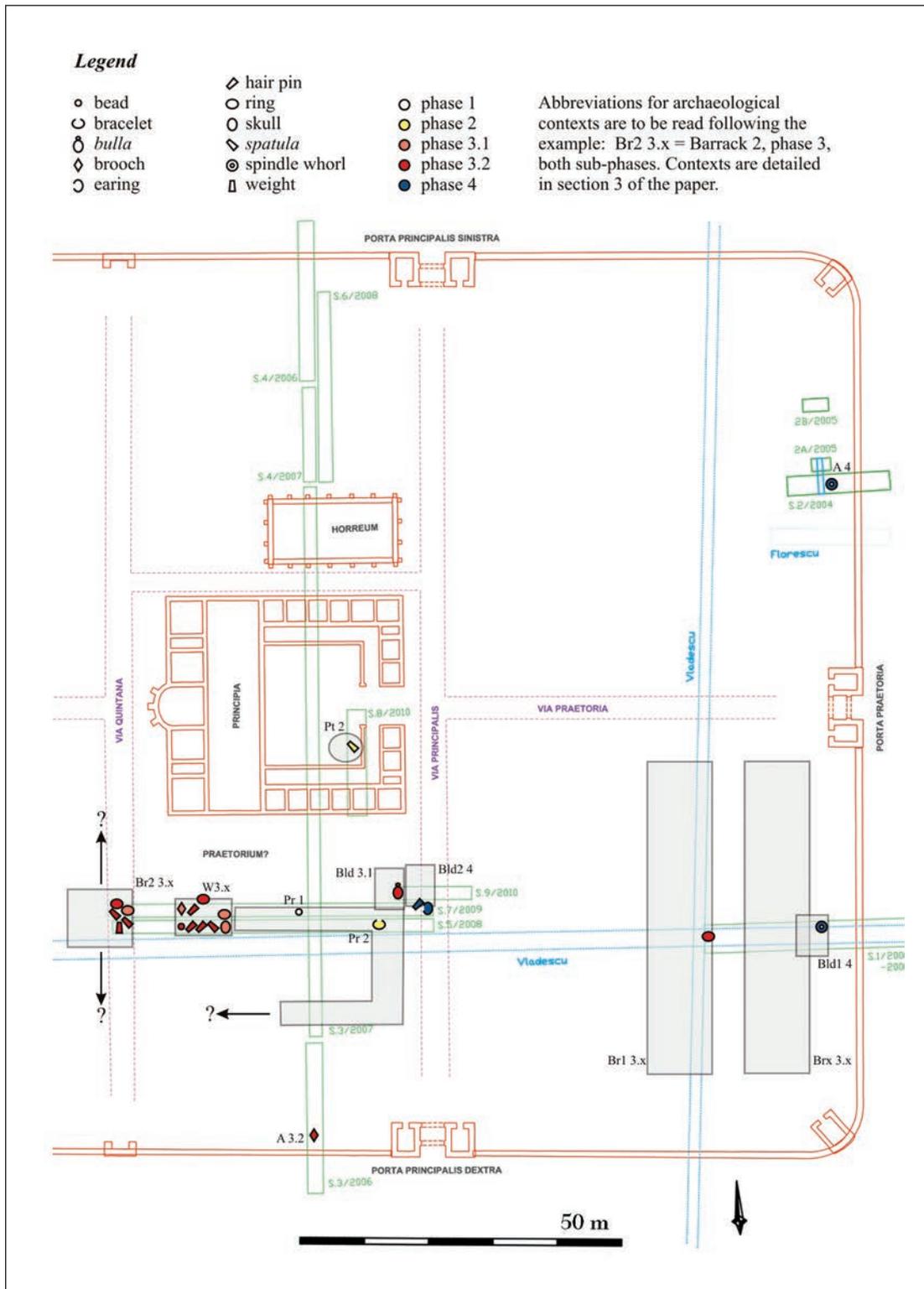
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Eugen S. Teodor,
esteo60@yahoo.co.uk

Maria C. Nicolae,
corina_nicolae@gmail.com

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest



Pl. I. The fort from Răcari (Dolj county). Partial plan with diggings from 2003-2010.