

## TWO STATUES OF BRONZE FROM THE ROMAN PROVINCE DACIA INFERIOR

BONDOC Dorel\*, PENA Mihaela

**Abstract.** This approach is meant to point out an important aspect of the Roman life: the raising of bronze statues. The authors identified and presented two fragments of statues from Dacia Inferior province. One of them comes from Răcari, the other comes from Romula.

**Keywords:** Roman fort in Răcari, statue of bronze, Commodus, Romula - capital of the province of Dacia Inferior, Lucilla.

## 1. Răcari

## 1.1. Introduction: archaeological context

The Roman fort in Răcari (fig. 3-4) has been throughout time the issue of many archaeological excavations<sup>1</sup>. As a result of these researches, there were indications of the shape and the sizes of the fort, the elements of the defensive system, the four gates, the corner towers, the precinct towers and the headquarter. The old and new excavations pointed out four phases of building and rebuilding of the fort, as it follows: 1. the small fort of earth (period 1), raised during the Dacian wars of Emperor Traianus; 2. the large fort of earth (period 2) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century that replaced the small fort; 3. the stone fort (period 3), built in late 2<sup>nd</sup> century and early the 3<sup>rd</sup> century; 4. the rebuilding from mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century (period 4). The garrison of the fort of Răcari was an auxiliary unit- *Numerus Maurorum*<sup>2</sup>.

Along the investigations, there should be mentioned the ones made in 1928 and 1930, led by Grigore Florescu, on the initiative and with the support of the Regional Museum of Oltenia, Craiova<sup>3</sup>. The archaeological discoveries are very rich: pottery, coins, iron objects, bone objects, bronze objects, etc.<sup>4</sup>.

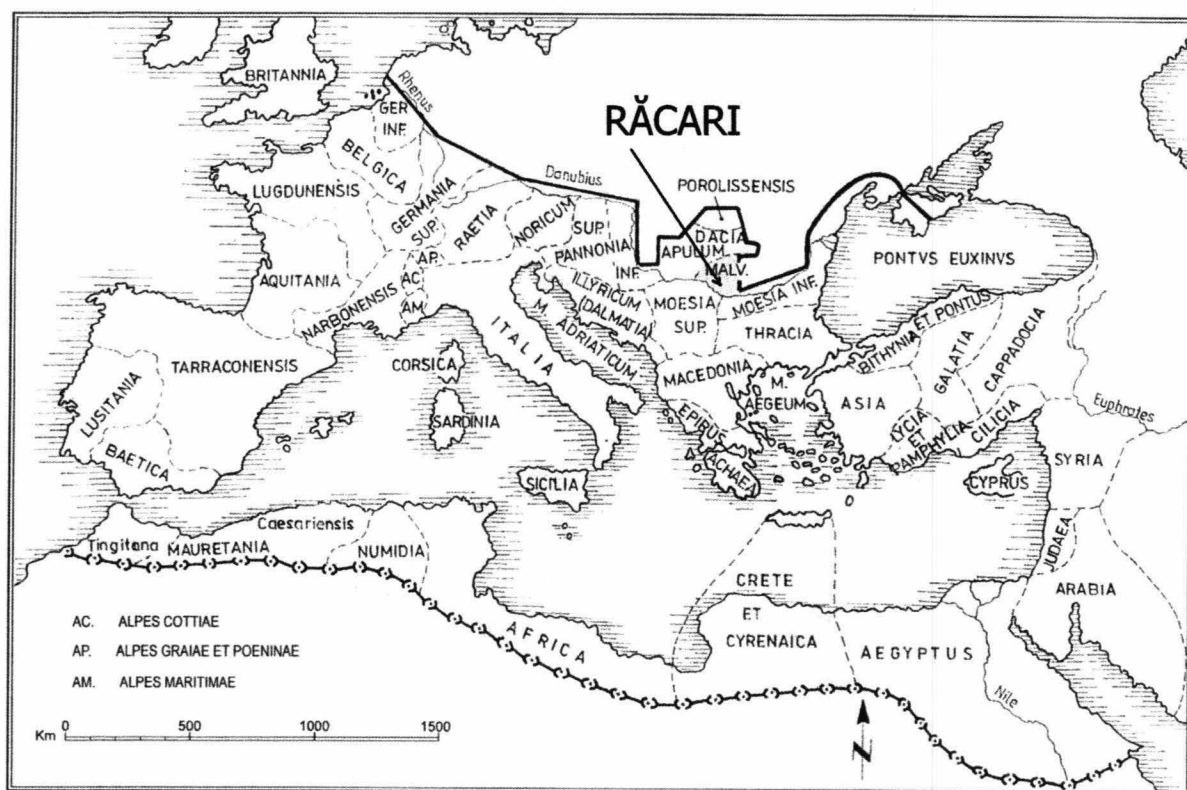


Fig. 1. A map of the Roman Empire during the 2nd-3rd centuries, acc. to N. Gudea). The place of the fort of Răcari is located with an arrow.

\* The Museum of Oltenia, Craiova, Romania, dorelbondoc@yahoo.com.

<sup>1</sup> The stage of the researches and the bibliography, at Dorel Bondoc, Nicolae Gudea, *Castrul roman de la Răcari. Încercare de monografie*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 11-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Inscripțiile Daciei romane*, I, București 1975, no. 29; *Inscripțiile Daciei romane*, II, București, 1977, no. 168.

<sup>3</sup> Grigore Florescu, *Castrul roman de la Răcari-Dolj*, 1931, pp.1-28; D. Bondoc, N. Gudea, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> The catalogue of the discoveries at D. Bondoc, N. Gudea, *op.cit.*, p.139 and the followings.

There has to be mentioned here the large number of fragments of bronze statues<sup>5</sup>. During one of the two excavation campaigns led by Gr. Florescu, he had the chance to discover an important fragment from a bronze statue, which will be presented below.

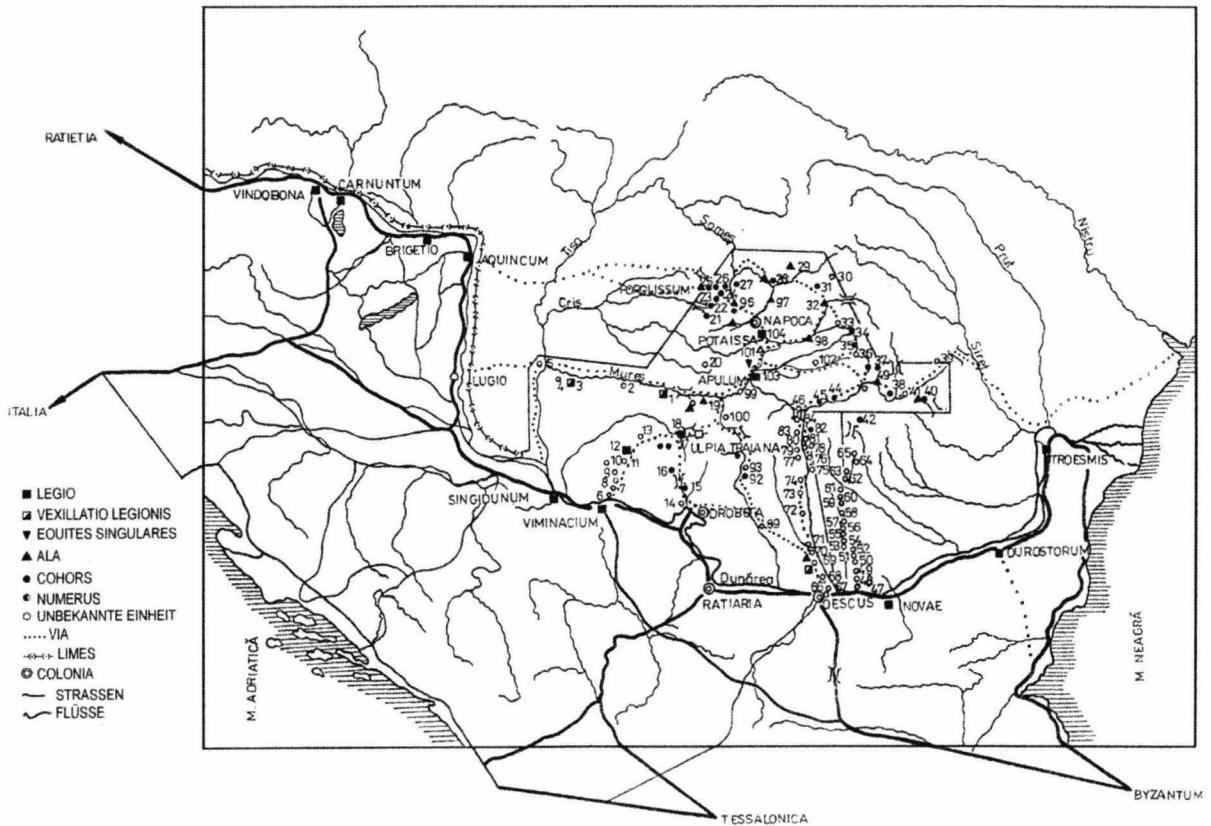


Fig. 2. The map of the defensive system of the Dacian Provinces (acc. to N. Gudea).  
The place of the fort of Răcari is located with the number 89, acc. to Bondoc, Gudea 2009, 77, fig. 2.

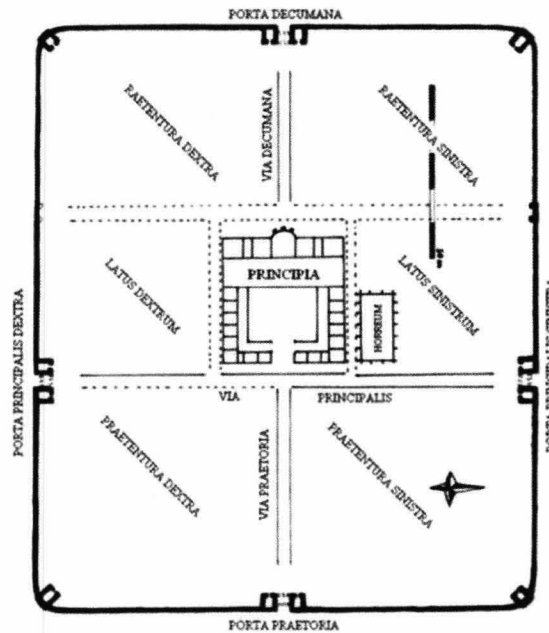


Fig. 3. The Roman fort of Răcari, acc. to Bondoc, Gudea 2009, 96, fig. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Grigore Tocilescu, *Fouilles et recherches archeologique en Roumanie*, București, 1900, p. 140 and 136-139, fig. 78-80; Gr. Florescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21; G. Gamer, *Fragmente von Bronzen statuen aus den römischen militärlägern an der Rhein und Donaugrenze*, Germania, 46, p. 55; D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, București, 1978, p. 293, fig. 82; C. Pop, *Statui imperiale din bronz în Dacia romană*, in *Acta Musei Napocensis*, 15, pp. 147-151; D. Bondoc, *Bronzuri figurate romane. Muzeul Olteniei Craiova*, Craiova, 2000, pp. 23-28; Al. Diaconescu, *Statuaria majoră în Dacia Romană*, Cluj-Napoca (only electronic version), 2004, II, no. 48.



Fig. 4. The Roman fort of Răcari. An aerial photograph, acc. to Bondoc, Gudea 2009, 118, fig. 58.

## 1.2. Description

It is a fragment from a Roman imperial statue (fig. 5-6)<sup>6</sup> of natural sizes. The piece was discovered during the excavations led by Gr. Florescu, in 1929-1930, *in the ruins near the surrounding walsl, approximately of half distance between porta praetoria and the northern corner of the camp*<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, the piece comes from the area of the camp.



Fig. 5 photo

The Roman fort of Răcari. A fragment from the head of a Roman imperial statue.



Fig. 6 drawing (by Ionela Mândră)

<sup>6</sup> Gr. Florescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22; C. Pop, *art. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 149; D. Bondoc, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23, no. 17; *Antique Bronzes* 2003, p. 92, no. 10; Al. Diaconescu, *op. cit.*, no. 7; D. Bondoc, N. Gudea, *op. cit.*, p. 135, fig. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Gr. Florescu, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

In fact the piece is made of two fragments, which are glued today; it has a dark- greenish patina on its surface. Subsequently, it was cleaned and became copper-coloured. The fragment consists of the left side of a man's head including the ear, a bit from the curly hair and a part of the neck. The ear was schematically made, unlike the curly hair rendered by incised lines. The curls were rendered in separate registers. The intention of the craftsman is obviously to render the character's ear completely. It was hollow cast.

The metallographic analysis of the piece is the following: copper (90.5%), tin (8%), very few lead (0.75%), silver (0.20%) and antimony (0.15%). So, the piece was made of good quality bronze<sup>8</sup>.

Sizes: 24cm height; 8cm width; sizes of the ear: 7cm - height; 4cm – width; weight- 560g. The Museum of Oltenia, Craiova, inv. I 7416/ 13728.

As we have already mentioned, the statuary fragment in discussion is a part of an imperial statue of natural sizes<sup>9</sup>, which might have belonged to a Roman emperor.

### 1.3. Identification

Till now, nobody has paid attention (or no one could!) to identify the character, the emperor the statue depicted. As far as chronological framing is concerned there have been expressed two points of view: the former stating that the statue belonged to an emperor who reigned sometime between Emperors Hadrianus and Marcus Aurelius (Gr. Florescu) and the latter, placing it in early 3<sup>rd</sup> century (C. Pop). In our opinion, these suggestions of identification have to be changed, as we are going to demonstrate below.

Because the fragment contains only the ear, some curls and a little part of the neck, so just a few clues, could be and it is surely difficult to determine the depicted character. But, all these details represent together a chance, due to the hairdo, the way the hair "is flowing down" the nape, the disposal of the hair near the ear represent precious clues to determine the period when the statue was «standing», to date and even to identify the character.

There can be noticed the intention of the craftsman to suggest the character's rich and carefully styled hair, at the same time slightly non-conformist, the hairdo having no particular direction. From the beginning, we can establish that the hair of the character was short. An eloquent detail in this respect is that the ear was completely rendered, uncovered by the hair. The artist deliberately rendered the curls in such a way that they did not cover the ear. Towards the lower part of the head, on the neck, the curls are smaller and smaller and they end on the nape. All these details suggest a depiction of a young character<sup>10</sup>. Because the fragment from Răcari rendered the left part of the head, we paid more attention to views which presented this particular side. Of course, my effort was focused from the beginning on bronze statues, but a lot of pleasant surprises were also offered by the marble ones. Absolutely sure, the most important study on Roman statues of bronze is the one made by Götz Lahusen and Edilberto Formigli<sup>11</sup>.

Concerning the identification of the depiction from Răcari, it must be a statue from the period when Dacia was a Roman province, so between AD 106-275. Therefore, the attention has to be focused on the depictions of Roman emperors from this period. From the beginning the possibility to be a depiction of Emperor Traianus is out of question. The portraits of this emperor present him without any exceptions with straight hair, with the hair horizontally cut on the forehead, in his personal style. These stylistic details do not match with our fragment of statue.

We paid attention to statues of Emperor Hadrianus from whom we have a significant number of such monuments. Similar to the piece from Răcari seems to be statues from Jerusalem<sup>12</sup> and Avenches<sup>13</sup>. The hairdo of Hadrianus presents as a distinctive sign the tendency to comb his curly hair on the forehead and on the temples. It can be noticed that his hair covered slightly the upper part of the ear. But in case of the piece from Răcari the ear is completely visible.

Then we thought of the possibility that the fragment could come from a statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who was well represented in the Roman statuary art. From this point of view, if we compare him

<sup>8</sup> The measurements were made by dr. Bogdan Constantinescu, thanks.

<sup>9</sup> Observation made by Al. Diaconescu.

<sup>10</sup> To identify the character rendered by the statue, in 2007, Dorel Bondoc started a serious documentation in the library of Römische Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt. Here, he examined hundreds, maybe thousands representations of heads of the statues of Roman emperors, and he compared them with our piece from Răcari. But his efforts have been rewarded. Sincerely thanks to Mr. Siegmund von Schnurbein and Martin Luth for their trust and support, and also to our colleague and friend, Alexandru Popa.

<sup>11</sup> G. Lahusen, E. Formigli, *Römische Bildnisse aus Bronze. Kunst und Technik*, Hirmer Verlag, München, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 195-196, no. 116, fig. 116.2 and 116.6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 197, no. 117, fig. 117.1.



with other Roman emperors, Marcus Aurelius fully deserved this honour. The statues from Wels<sup>14</sup> and Pécs<sup>15</sup> can be considered similar but the idea is not convincing.

Similar representations with the piece from Răcari belong to statues of Lucius Verus<sup>16</sup>, but these do not correspond exactly to the features of the first. A head of a statue having a comparable hairdo to the one in discussion has been dated in early 2<sup>nd</sup> century (Hadrianus?)<sup>17</sup>; this suggestion was made four decades ago and I think that it is no longer valid today.

A remarkable statue with an unidentified character depiction in the Museum of Boston with an approximately similar hairdo has been dated in early 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>18</sup>. There should also be mentioned here a bust bronze depiction of a character with a comparable hairdo; this piece has been widely dated before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>19</sup>.

There can be noticed that the analogies lead to a dating to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In this context we had to take into consideration the idea that the fragment from Răcari could have belonged to a statue depicting either Emperor Commodus or Emperor Septimius Severus. The probability of the identification with Emperors Pertinax, Pescenius Niger or Clodius Albinus, although not impossible, is hardly to believe. The main arguments are that their reign was short and their political careers were not successful.

The most precise analogy for the statuary fragment from Răcari; is in Florence<sup>20</sup> and it is a representation of Emperor Commodus, the iconographic type Liverpool-Tivoli. The details are so similar, that without any doubt the fragment of statue from Răcari belonged to a bronze statue of Emperor Commodus<sup>21</sup>.

It is easy to see that it was a depiction of Emperor Commodus as a young man. His imposing beard and big hairdo from later depictions are elements that cannot be found on our piece. To be more convincing in this approach, we made a graphic restoration (fig. 7-8) of the head of the statue.



Fig. 7. A graphic restoration of the head of the statue from Răcari, depicting Emperor Commodus.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 225-226, no. 137, fig. 137.2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227, no. 139, with bibliography.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 229-230, no. 141, fig. 141.2, and pp. 231-232, no. 143, fig. 143.4.

<sup>17</sup> H.F. Heintze, *Die Antiken porträts in schloss fasanerie bei Fulda*, Mainz am Rhein, 1968, p. 51, kat. 36, taf. 60.

<sup>18</sup> M. Comstock, C. Vermeule, *Greek, Etruscan and Roman bronzes in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, Boston 1971, p. 151, no. 175.

<sup>19</sup> F. Fleischer, *Die Römischen Bronzen aus österreich*, Mainz am Rhein, 1967, p. 164, no. 223, taf. 113-114/223.

<sup>20</sup> K. Fittschen, *Prinzenbildnisse antoninischer zeit*, Mainz, 1999, p. 64, L. 6, with the bibliography, taf. 104/c-e.

<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, Dorel Bondoc discussed with the lamented Mr. Götz Lahusen in Frankfurt who confirmed this hypothesis; for this we are grateful to him.



Fig. 8. A restoration of the head of the statue from Răcari, depicting Emperor Commodus.

In the present stage of the investigations it is impossible to know if the raising of a bronze statue of Emperor Commodus inside the fort of Răcari was done on a special occasion. Maybe yes, or maybe not. The idea of the raising of the statue due to a possible imperial visit is out of question because it is well-known that Commodus never left Rome during his reign. We have to take into consideration the fact that the emperor liked the Moorish pikemen<sup>22</sup>. This has to be mentioned because the garrison from the Roman fort of Răcari was made of Moors; it is about an auxiliary unit- *Numerus Maurorum*<sup>23</sup>.

Concerning the statue of Commodus from Răcari, there would be other aspects to discuss, but we will stop here with our short considerations and we will retake the discussion later (see below).

## 2. Romula

### 2.1. Introduction: archaeological context

Among the most significant elements of civilization introduced into Dacia, with the conquest and turning it into a Roman province, there are taken into account in the first place, the urban settlements, which then held an important economic, political, cultural and administrative role.

Among the new established cities, there was also Romula (fig. 9), which soon became one of the most important cities in Dacia. The Roman city of Romula was rapidly evolving and had a flourishing economy, information supported by the fact that in less than a century and a half it increased its area of sixteen times<sup>24</sup>.

We can talk about a major urban development, a process that took place in several stages (fig. 10). In addition to the status of capital of the province of Dacia Inferior, Romula was also a major center for craft production and for tax raising on the Roman road from Sucidava to the Olt defile<sup>25</sup>. The strategical and economical importance of the city emerges from the fact that it lies at the intersection of several roads, as follows: two on the Olt River Valley<sup>26</sup> and another one coming from Drobeta<sup>27</sup> (fig. 11).

<sup>22</sup> Herodian, I, XV.

<sup>23</sup> *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, I, no. 29; *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, II, no. 168.

<sup>24</sup> C. M. Tătulea, *Romula-Malva*, București, 1994, p. 40.

<sup>25</sup> D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, București 1968, p. 186; C.M. Tătulea, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>26</sup> D. Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> *Tabula Peutingeriana*, VII, 4.



Romula can be considered among the earliest urban centers from Dacia which received the title of *municipium*. The city was awarded this rank in the second century AD, the event was supposed to have taken place during the reign of Emperor Hadrianus<sup>28</sup>.

Another moment difficult to fit chronologically is the time when Romula was promoted to the rank of *colonia*, which most likely happened during the reign of Emperor Septimius Severus (AD 193-211)<sup>29</sup>. However, in the time of Emperor Philippus the Arab, Romula had already this rank<sup>30</sup>.

So far, seven fragments of imperial bronze statues come from Romula<sup>31</sup>. We will insist upon one of the most significant of them.

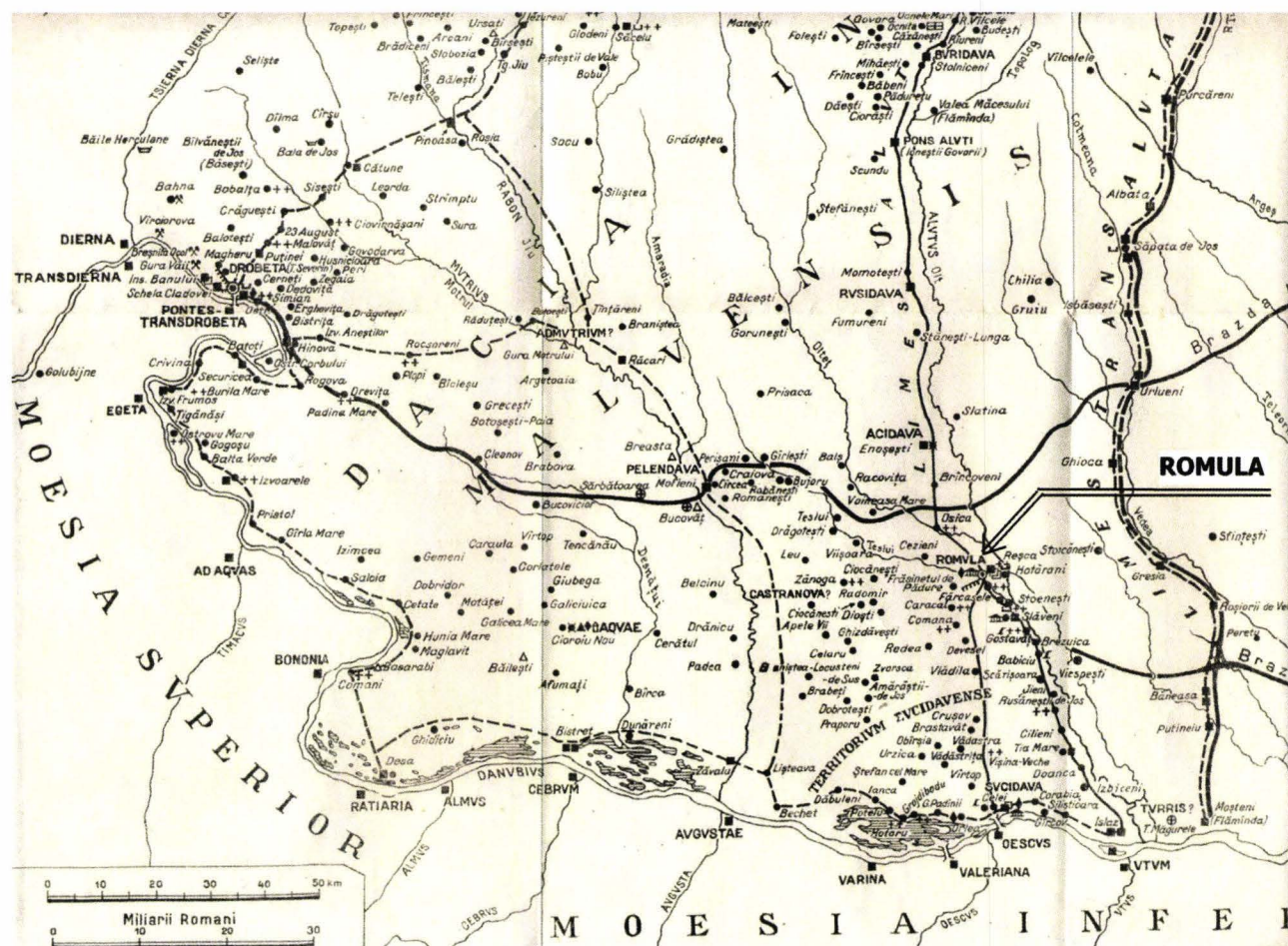


Fig. 9. The location of Romula on the map of Roman Oltenia (Dacia Inferior), acc. to Tudor 1978.

<sup>28</sup> D. Tudor, *Orașe, târguri și sate în Dacia romană*, București, 1968, p. 349; C.C. Petolescu, *Orașele romane din Oltenia. Note toponimice și epigrafice*, in *Drobeta*, XX, 2010, p. 213.

<sup>29</sup> C.M. Tăulea, *op. cit.*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, II, pp. 144-145, no. 324.

<sup>31</sup> C.M. Tăulea, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103: eight fragments; C. Pop, *Roman statues in Dacia*, in *Antique Bronzes 2003*, pp. 36-37: eighth fragments; Al. Diaconescu, *op. cit.*, passim: seven fragments.



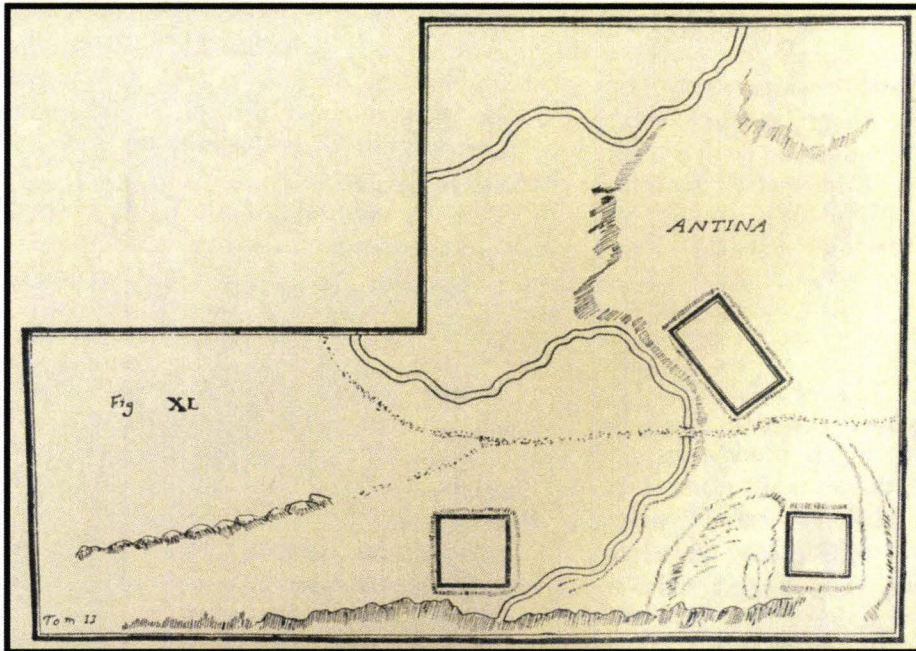


Fig. 10. Roman fortifications of Romula, acc. to Marsigli 1726.

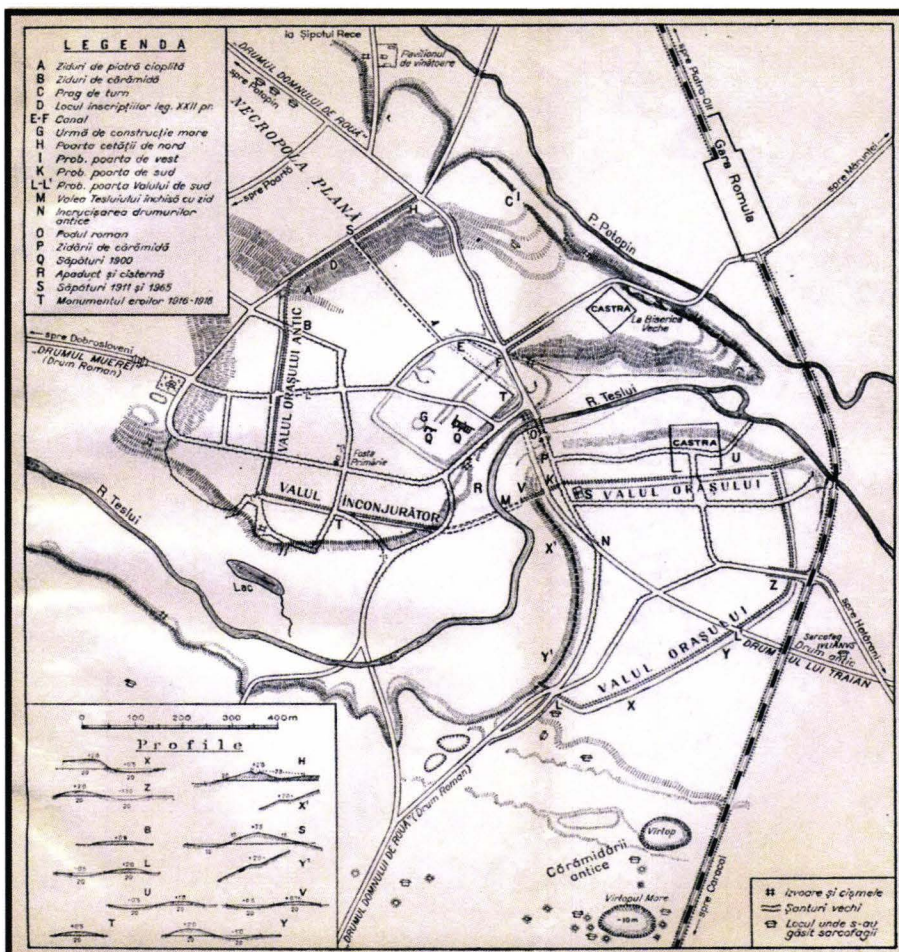


Fig. 11. The Roman city of Romula, acc. to Tudor 1968c.



## 2.2. Description

It is a fragment from a bronze statue of natural sizes, depicting a female character (fig. 12-14); the context of the discovery is unknown; it seems that it was a fortuitous discovery; the preserved sizes: 11.5 x 10 x 11.5cm. Due to the presence of corrosion, the piece was cleaned at some point and now it is copper-coloured. It was molded hollow inside (fig. 15).



Fig. 12.

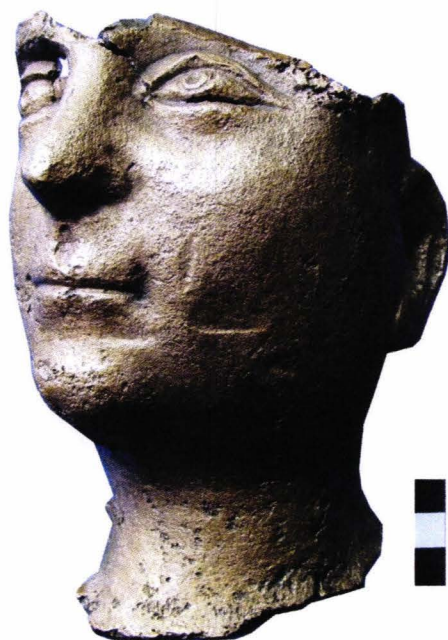


Fig. 13.

Romula. A fragment from the head of a Roman imperial statue (photos).

It was published for the first time by C.M. Tătulea<sup>32</sup>; at that time the editor considered it to belong to a statue depicting Empress Julia Domna. This identification was also considered possible by C. Pop<sup>33</sup>, but we will see in the following pages whether it is correct or not.

The piece was republished (Dorel Bondoc) in 2003; at that time we thought it could be a depiction of Empress Julia Mamaea<sup>34</sup>. At present, in ten years after this date, we are able to give up this identification, given the arguments we expose below.

The statue was preserved in a significant part containing the face, the left ear and partly the neck. Above the eyes, the statue is broken. The left ear (the only preserved) has a height of 5.5cm. Obviously, the statue was destroyed intentionally, in a moment that cannot be specified.

Brief description of the depicted character: large, almond-shaped eyes, contemplative gaze; following the line of the eyes, the eyebrows are slightly arched; the slightly elongated ears have prominent lobes, which are also blunt (perhaps due to earring wearing); the nose is small, straight, with the slightly raised tip and small and narrow nostrils; the part that separates the two nostrils is prominent and slightly oblique; the mouth is small, well shaped, with lips slightly tightened, the upper one is thinner; the recess (groove) at the top lip is highlight; the jaw is strong; the face is round, with round cheeks and highlight cheekbones; small but prominent chin; short neck.

<sup>32</sup> C.M. Tătulea, *op. cit.*, p. 103 and fig. 28/1.

<sup>33</sup> C. Pop, *Roman statues...*, p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Bondoc, Dincă, *Bronzuri figurate romane. Muzeul Romanătiului Caracal (Bronzuri figurate romane de la Romula) / Roman figurines of bronze. The Museum from Caracal (Roman figurines of bronze from Romula)*, Craiova, 2003, p. 46.

The whole expression of the face shows a mysterious but also somber and detached smile, suggesting a state of calm. All the details lead to a young female character, very likely a beautiful woman, maybe within an age between 25-30 years (fig. 16-17).



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.

Romula. A fragment from the head of a Roman imperial statue (photos).



Fig.16-17. Romula. Graphic restorations of the head of the statue. Drawing by Gabriela Filip.



### 2.3. Identification

We have been affected in our research by the fact that the fragment of the statue did not preserve any leftover from the original hairstyle. As such, we had to focus our attention only on the existing anatomical details and comparing them with other antique statues and depictions on coins.

From the beginning, it cannot be considered a depiction of any of the Syrian empresses from the early third century<sup>35</sup>. These empresses were depicted with rich eyebrows almost close together and with an aquiline nose<sup>36</sup>, which is not the case of our statue. The statues depicting Julia Domna have usually the ears covered by hair styled curls, and it is not the case here. Even if the ears are not covered by hair styled curls, as presented, the identification<sup>37</sup> of the character with Julia Mamaea, is no longer acceptable, because statues and coins depicted her with an aquiline nose. Therefore, the identification of our statue from Romula with an empress from the first decades of the third century should be excluded.

For the early 2nd century there are no more arguments. Pompeia Plotina, the wife of the Emperor Traianus and Sabina, the wife of Emperor Hadrianus had totally different features than the character we are discussing about here.

The lack of the almond-shaped eyes (Plotina) or the long nose (Sabina) make it impossible to identify the character depicted by the statue from Romula with any of the two empresses already mentioned. The thin and tightened lips of the statue raised for discussion here, do not fit with the sensual and fleshy lips of Faustina Maior, the wife of the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Moreover, in the hairstyle of Faustina Maior, the hair curls left the auricle uncovered, however they are extend from the forehead down in the form of a ringlet, this is also another mismatch.

Our possibilities to identify the character depicted by the statue are restricted at an imperial female character from the second half of the second century. In this case, two hypotheses should be taken into account: either it is Faustina Minor, the wife of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, or it is Bruttia Crispina, the wife of Emperor Commodus.

Viewed from the front, even though it has many similarities with the statue of Romula, Crispina was depicted<sup>38</sup> with a prominent nose, which practically dominated her entire physiognomy. The stretched skin and the apparent calm cannot hide the fact that this depiction shows a character marked by sadness and non-fulfillment.

Most likely the statue from Romula would therefore depict Empress Faustina Minor. The thin eyebrows, almond-shaped eyes, smooth skin, small chin, straight nose, even ear exposure, all of these support the identification of the character depicted by the statue from Romula with this empress. But we cannot fail to notice some differences, as follows: the depicted character has thin lips and shorter neck, and the ears are slightly elongated, with prominent lobes. These differences, though minor at first sight, should make us analyze more details.

The only imperial female character in the second half of the second century, whose features match perfectly with the characteristics of the statue from Romula is Lucilla, the daughter of Faustina Minor and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The striking resemblance between the two women should not mislead us (fig. 18-19). The contour of the arched, thin eyebrows, the almond-shaped eyes, slightly sunken in their sockets<sup>39</sup> the small, straight and slightly raised nose, the thin lips, the small chin, the perfect skin leaves no room for doubt to certitude that the character depicted by the statue from Romula is Lucilla.

<sup>35</sup> C. Pop. *Roman statues...*, p. 37; D. Bondoc. D.R. Dincă, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> Al. Diaconescu. *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> D. Bondoc. D.R. Dincă, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> M. Kerrigan. *O istorie întunecată. Împărații romani de la Iulius Caesar la căderea Romei*, the edition București (trad. L. Decei). 2010, p. 169.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 179.



Fig. 18. A coin of Faustina Minor,  
acc. to [www.google.roimgres](http://www.google.roimgres), young Faustina.



Fig. 19. A coin of Lucilla,  
acc. to [ww.wildwinds.comcoinssear5s5475](http://ww.wildwinds.comcoinssear5s5475).

This is the first statue of Lucilla identified so far in Dacia. There could probably be others about which we have no knowledge. Generally, in the whole Roman Empire there are just a few preserved statues of Lucilla and not always identified<sup>40</sup> with precision.

### 3. Historical an archaeological commentary

We are dealing with two statues of children (Commodus and Lucilla) of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, raised in two different locations (Răcari and Romula). There might be others, maybe not identified so far. Because we do not know of inscriptions from this period found at Răcari or Romula, the motivation and the context of raising these statues is difficult to determine.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of the fact that neither Emperor Marcus Aurelius nor his children, Commodus and Lucilla, had ever visited Dacia. As we have already mentioned, both characters, Commodus and Lucilla, were depicted as young persons. From this point of view, the logic of common sense would indicate that the raising of their statues occurred in the time when their father, Emperor Marcus Aurelius lived.

For the statue of Commodus found in the fort of Răcari, such a moment may have happened on the occasion of his association to the reign in AD 176 or 177, at the age of 16. This event, associated with his declared sympathy for Moor riders<sup>41</sup>, could have led to the raising of a bronze statue which depicted him, in the fort of Răcari, where the garrison was constituted by a *Numerus Maurorum*<sup>42</sup>.

It is also possible that the inhabitants of Colonia Romula have raised the statue of Lucilla in the same time. After the accession of Commodus to the Roman imperial throne, this was less likely, whereas Lucilla became a character of secondary importance. The indifference and coldness with which her brother, Commodus, treated her, made Lucilla to plot against him. This brought her end (she was exiled to the island of Capri and then executed in the year 182, at the age of 36 years).

The most plausible dating of the two statues in the last years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius can be supported by other arguments, too. Thus, in AD 176, Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus celebrated the victories over the Germans and Sarmatians. And in 177, Marcus Aurelius triggered a broad military operation against the Quasi, Marcomans and Iazygi.

The history of Dacia during the reign of Marcus Aurelius is rather unknown because the greater part of his reign was occupied by wars in the East and the middle Danube. Due to the needs imposed by the "Marcomanic wars", the province of Dacia was subject to a process of reorganization<sup>43</sup>, and Legio V Macedonia was moved from Troesmis to Potaissa. During this time, the very capital of the province was in danger (double threat), whereas an inscription was dedicated to Emperor Marcus Aurelius by: *[co]lonia Vlp(ia) Traian(a)*

<sup>40</sup> L. Goldscheider, *Roman Portraits*, Phaidon edition, Oxford University Press, New York, 1940, fig. 77; V. Poulsen, *Les portraits romans. De Vespasien à la Basse Antiquité*, II, Copenhagen, 1974, pp. 106-107, nos. 93-94; R. Bol, *Das Statuenprogramm des Herodes- Atticus- Nymphäums*, Berlin, 1984, tafel 51, 53, 56.

<sup>41</sup> Herodian, I, XV.

<sup>42</sup> *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, I, no. 29; *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, II, no. 168.

<sup>43</sup> C.C. Petolescu, *Reorganizarea Daciei sub Marcus Aurelius*, in *Studii Clasice*, XXIV, 1986, pp. 131-138.



*Aug(usta) Dac(ica) [Sar(mizegetusa)] ancipiti periculo virtutibus restituta*<sup>44</sup>, and the death of governor M. Claudius Fronto on the battlefield denotes the existence of a very serious situation. On the south-eastern boundary of Dacia, the inscriptions recorded a number of undue cumulation of orders (with the provisional title *praepositus*), due to gaps in the body control auxiliary troops of the border<sup>45</sup>.

A motivation to raise the two statues (Commodus and Lucilla) from Răcari and Romula could be most probably in gratitude shown to the imperial family by the soldiers of the fort of Răcari and by the inhabitants of Colonia Romula, to repel any external attack or to restore the delicate situation in the time of the "Marcomanic wars". That is because, as I have already mentioned, the south-eastern border of Dacia was affected by the "Marcomanic wars"<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, III, 7969: *Inscriptiile Daciei romane*, III/2, 76.

<sup>45</sup> C.C. Petolescu, *Dacia răsăriteană și Moesia Inferioară pe timpul domniei lui Marcus Aurelius*, in: *Civilizația romană în Dacia* (coord. M. Bărbulescu), Cluj-Napoca, 1997, p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> D. Tudor, *Oltenia romană*, București 1978, p. 36; C.C. Petolescu, *Dacia răsăriteană...*, p. 52-59.