

The efforts of historians and archaeologists to identify ancient ruins found on the soil of our country, with the names of sites referred to in the works of Greek and Latin writers, were not always successful, either owing to lack of precision in the ancient data or owing to insufficient excavations. Even the Dobrogea region, which more than others has held the attention of scientists in our country, has many surprises in store. There still are unidentified or undiscovered ruins. We would mention for instance the ruins of a large fortress, which were discovered as late as 1947, on the valley of the Taița, between the villages Mihai Bravu and Turda, not far from Babadag. Not registered on Dobrogea's historical maps, it seems that it may be identified with *Vicus Novus*, which was identified by an inscription¹, perhaps the same as the *Novó* of Procopius².

Many identifications are based only on texts (itineraries, geographies, a.s.o.). When the sites are more important and the data more abundant and clearer, the literary sources may offer sufficient elements for a precise identification. The identification of a site of minor importance, which appears only occasionally in the ancient texts is more difficult. Identification becomes possible and final only when epigraphic document bearing the name of the site, is found.

Dinogetia may be numbered among the ancient sites, the identification of which does not rely on any epigraphical discovery. It seemed that the problem of the settlement of Dinogetia was solved, the majority of scientists having adopted V. Pârvan's opinion, that «Dinogetia had stood in any case on the right bank of the Danube, most probably at Bisericuța»³. I myself accepted this solution as Pârvan's arguments seemed, until lately, to be undeniable⁴. But, as the excavations undertaken in the ruins of the Bisericuța fortress were progressing, certain doubts arose. This determined us to reconsider the problem of the settle-

¹ CIL, III, 14448, Gr. Tocilescu, *Fouilles et recherches archéologiques en Roumanie*, Bucharest, 1900, p. 203.

² *De aedificiis*, 11.

³ V. Pârvan, *Castrul de la Poiana și drumul roman prin Moldova de jos*, ARMSI, 1913, p. 116;

R. Vulpe, *Histoire ancienne de la Dobroudja*, Bucharest, 1938, p. 165.

⁴ Gh. Ștefan, *Dinogetia I. Risultati della prima campagna di scavi* (1939), «Dacia», VII—VIII, 1937—1940, p. 401.

ment of Dinogetia, not only in the light of literary sources and of previous studies, but also in the light of archaeological discoveries.

The only data concerning Dinogetia previous to the 4th century A.D. appear in three passages in the third book of the Works of the geographer Claudius Ptolemaios. In III, 8, 2, while describing Dacia's boundaries, Ptolemaios

writes: «Eastward (Dacia borders on) the river Istros up the bend (of that river) at the city of Dinogetia, whose geographical position is $53^{\circ}46'40''$; farther on with the river Hierasus which turns away from the Istros at Dinogetia, and goes north and eastward up to the mentioned bend of the river Tyras»⁵.

In another passage, the same geographer (III, 10, 1) describes the Danubian border of Moesia, stating that from Axiopolis to the sea, the Danube is called Istros and that the turning at the fortress of Dinogetia is at $53^{\circ}46'40''$ ⁶.

And lastly, in III, 10, 5, the same writer mentions again Dinogetia among the Moesian towns on the Danube — παρά μὲν τὸν Δανουβίον ποταμόν — placing it immediately after Troesmis (Τροισμίδας)⁷.

Summing up Ptolemaios' data about Dinogetia, it follows that this was quite an important place called — πόλις — that it was situated between Măcin and the mouth of the Prut, on the big bend of the Danube, near the

point where the Siret (the ancient Hierasus) flows into the Danube and that it belonged to the province of Moesia Inferior.

As there were no definite statements whether the site was placed on the right or on the left bank of the river, scientists have split into two camps. Some have taken the fact that the river Hierasus flows into the Danube near Dinogetia as a decisive topographical element and have consequently identified Dinogetia with the ruins of Ghertina or Gherghina (today Bărboși)⁸. Others, influenced

⁵ ἀπὸ δὲ ἀνατολῶν τε ἐντεῦθεν Ἰστρου ποταμῷ μέχρι τῆς κατὰ Δινογέτιαν πόλιν ἐπιστροφῆς, ἧς ἡ θεΐσις νη' μζ' γδ' καὶ ἐτι τῷ Ἱερᾶσῳ ποταμῷ, ὅς κατὰ Δινογέτιαν ἐκτραπείας ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰστρου πρὸς ἄρκτους καὶ ἀνατολὰς φέρεται, μέχρι τῆς εἰρημένης τοῦ Τύρα ποταμοῦ ἐπιστροφῆς.

⁶ ἀπὸ δὲ ἄρκτων τῷ εἰρημένῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ Κιάβρου

ποταμοῦ μέρει Δανουβίου μέχρις Ἀξιουπόλεως, καὶ ἐντεῦθεν Δανουβίῳ, καλουμένῳ δὲ Ἰστρῳ, μέχρι τῶν εἰς τὸν Πόντον ἐκβολῶν, οὗ ἡ μὲν κατὰ Δινογέτιαν πόλιν ἐπιστροφή εἴρηται ἐπέχουσα μοίρας νη' μζ' γο'.

⁷ Τροισμίδας νδ' μζ' γο'. Δινογέτιαν νη' μζ' γο'.

⁸ Th. Mommsen and Kiepert, CIL, III, the map 2; C. Schuchhardt, Wälle und Chausseen im

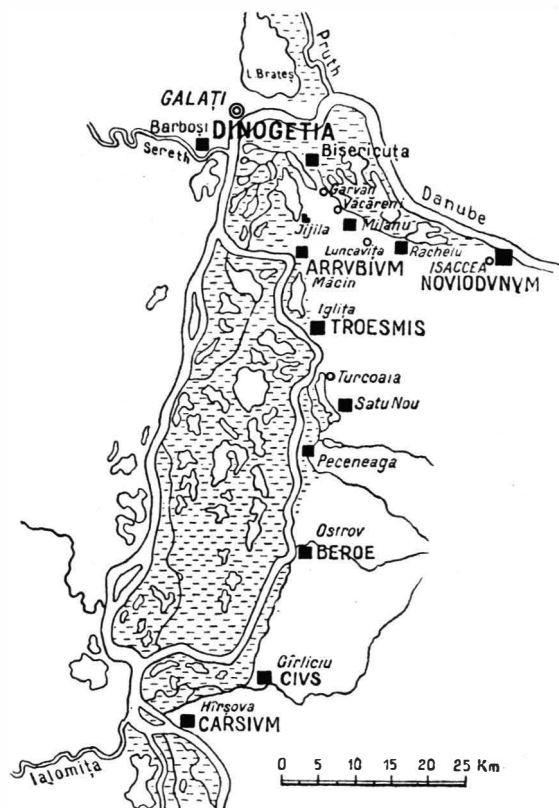


Fig. 1

by the order in which Ptolemaios presents the places on the Danube — *παρὰ μὲν τὸν Δανούβιον ποταμὸν* — as well as by mentioning Dinogetia in later itineraries under changed but easily recognizable forms, support the theory identifying it with the ruins found on the rocky island (today called Bisericuța) on the site of Garvăn village⁹.

G. Schuchhardt, the principal supporter of the first theory of identification, bases his thesis on the following reasons:

a) Dinogetia, according to Ptolemaios, was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the mouth of the Siret, which corresponds with the important ruins of Bărboși.

b) The existence of an important settlement on the right bank of the Danube, in front of the mouth of the Siret was not possible because of the marshes and flood-land stretching here to an average width of over 5 km.

c) The complex of ruins found at Bărboși (Ghertina or Gherghina)¹⁰ is important enough to allow it to be identified with the Ptolemaios Dinogetia. Greek pottery was also found there, which means that an important trading centre must have existed before the Roman conquest.

Schuchhardt does not fail to mention a so-called «Greek colouring in the name of Dinogeteia»¹¹, which is not a serious argument in itself and cannot be taken into consideration. We must also discard his assertion that «between Arrubium (Măcin) and Noviodunum (Isaccea) no traces of ancient dwellings are extant»¹². Such traces, unknown to Schuchhardt, are to be found at Bisericuța and on the Milan hill — between the villages of Văcăreni and Luncavița, as well as on the territory of the Rachelu village. Some ruins, such as those of Bisericuța (Garvăn) and on the Milan hill are quite impressive.

It cannot be denied that on the whole the arguments put forward by the German scholar are sound and at the beginnings were not opposed. Later on, however, when the impressive ruins of Bisericuța were taken into consideration, Gr. Tocilescu, V. Pârvan and others reached the conclusion that Dinogetia should be placed on the right bank of the Danube and identified with those ruins which are more or less in the centre of the big arc made by the river between Măcin and the mouth of the Prut.

A strong argument in favour of this theory is the precise indication found in sources of the 4th century A.D. which situates Dinogetia on the Scythic limes, that is on the right bank of the Danube, between Arrubium and Noviodunum, at a distance from these two sites which enables us to identify it with the fortress at Bisericuța.

Very important in this respect are too the data in the *Itinerarium Antonini*¹³. He places the name of Dinogetia, using the form *Diniguttia*, between

südlichen und östlichen Dacien, AEM, IX, p. 226 f. With the same meaning Gr. Tocilescu, *Neue Inschriften aus der Dobrudscha*, AEM, XIV, p. 16, n° 33. Later on Tocilescu changed his mind, placing Dinogetia at Bisericuța: *Monumente arheologice și sculpturali*, Bucharest, 1908, II, pp. 639—640.

⁹ W. Tomaschek, *Die alten Thraker*, II, p. 72. Along the same lines, V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁰ Gh. Seulescu, *Descrierea istorico-geografică a cetății Caput Bovis (Capul Boului sau Ghertina)*, Bucharest, 1837.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 227.

¹³ O. Cuntz, *Itineraria Romana*, Leipzig, 1929, 225, 5.

Arrubium and Noviodunum, at nine miles distance from the first and at twenty miles from Noviodunum¹⁴. If we consider the configuration of the soil, the outline of the ancient road could not be very far away from the outline of the present road and the ruins of Bisericuța correspond with the distances mentioned in the Itinerarium.

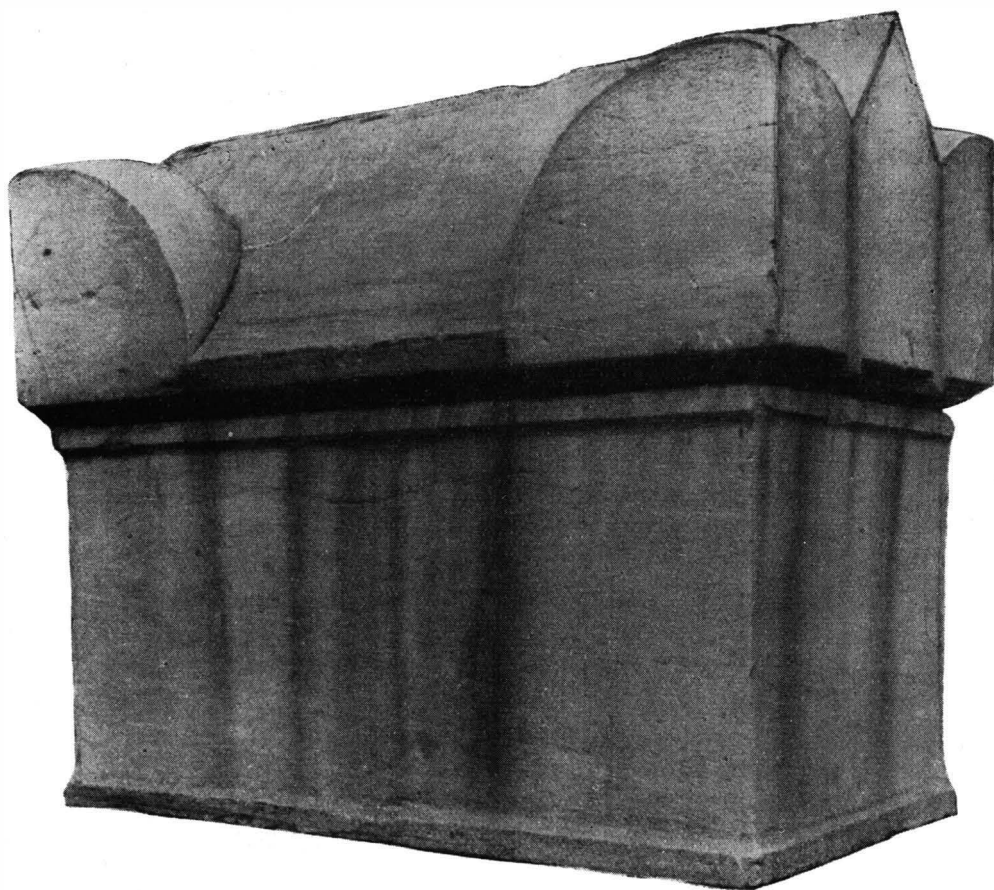


Fig. 2

Other ancient itineraries place it at the same spot. Thus the Ravennat Geographer (178,17) records it under the name of *Divogessia*, and *Not. Dign. Or. XXXIX*, 24, as a castellum called *Dirigothia*. The corrupt forms of the later sources enable us easily to recognize the original name. In the second part of the name *Dirigothia* there clearly appears a tendency illustrated later on, especially by Jordanes: to confuse Getic land with *Gothia* and the Thracian *Getae* with the Germanic *Goths*.

It would seem therefore that the discussion might be considered closed and that taking it up again would be futile. But to be more accurate, beginning with the reign of Diocletianus and Maximianus, the *Dinogetia* of the 4th century

¹⁴ Gh. Ștefan, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

A.D. could no doubt be only on the right bank of the Danube. Doubts remain only concerning the site of Ptolemaic Dinogetia. More precisely, the question is whether the sources of 4th century A.D. refer to the Dinogetia of Ptolemaios' Geography or to another ancient settlement, different from the first but bearing the same name.

The very precious detail given by Ptolemaios that Dinogetia was placed in the neighbourhood of the point where the Siret flows into the Danube remains a strong argument against its identifications with the ruins of Bisericuța. The excavations at Bisericuța also supplied us with other arguments against this identification, as we shall see below. That is why we consider it necessary to take up this problem again, relying on ampler archaeological information than Schuchhardt or V. Pârvan, the main representatives of the two opposite theories, had at their disposal.

First of all we must keep in mind the fact that the name of Dinogetia does not appear in any epigraphic document. Thus, the only method which might lead to some solution of the problem under discussion would be to place the discoveries at Bărboși and those at Bisericuța face to face and draw conclusions from these facts.

Let us start with the settlement at Bărboși. This is well-known owing to a series of epigraphic and archaeological discoveries. The first references are to be found in Miron Costin's Chronicle¹⁵. He reproduces in translation the text of an inscription of Trajan's time, about which he says: «During Duca Voivode's reign a stone from Galați was brought here in the town of Iași. And this stone is of marble on which there are Latin characters which I, myself, have read. . . » a.s.o. He also speaks about a fragment «of a big stone, brought from Galați to the church», from which inscription «one can only understand so much as: *Severus Caes, Rom. imp*».

Dimitrie Cantemir¹⁶ also quotes these two inscriptions, but mistakes the ruins of Gherghina (Bărboși) with those of Καπούτ Βόες = *Caput Bovis*. He mentions the discovery of some coins as well¹⁷.

The researches made in 1836 at Galați and Gherghina by G. Seulescul, professor of history at the Iași Academy, resulted in the publication of the first work on this fortress and on the antiquities collected by the Galați boyars, Colonel Balș and C. Ventura and presented by them to the Iași Museum. Seulescul, later confirmed by Pârvan¹⁸, speaks of three groups of ruins: a) the Roman castle, on a promontory near the Bărboși railway station of today; b) stretching towards the Siret, the old «town», whose beginnings are prior to the Roman occupation and where bronze statues, fragments of walls and architectural pieces (columns, capitals), and water drains were found; c) the «town» of the Roman period, on the border of the high terrace, covering, according to Pârvan, an area of about 4 ha, as well as the cemetery of the same period.

V. Pârvan's researches, communicated at a meeting of the Rumanian Academy on September 20, 1913, show even more conclusively the impor-

¹⁵ *Cartea pentru descălecatul dintiiu a Țărei Moldovei*, cap. V, apud V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, pp. 14—15.

¹⁶ *Hronicul vechimei a Romano-Moldo-Vlahilor*, III, 16.

¹⁷ V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, pp. 15—16.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 17.

tance of the Bărboși ruins, by completing his predecessors' information and by enlarging upon it.

Despite these conditions we can nevertheless realize the historical and cultural significance of this important group of ruins dating from the 2nd-3rd century A.D. Thus, the official inscription, on marble, put up in 112¹⁹, known even during Miron Costin's time, which certainly refers to «the inauguration here of an important building»²⁰, is of exceptional value.

We must also add other epigraphic documents²¹, such as: inscriptions on stone, tiles with the seal of the *IInd Mattiacorum* cohort, of the *Vth Macedonica* and *Ist Italica* legions, and of the Danubian fleet — *classis Flavia Moesica*²², which had a «statio» here. In connection with this, one might formulate a hypothesis that the fleet used the arm of the river called «the dead Siret» as a place of shelter. It is certain that the Roman vicus at Bărboși represented more than a mere military settlement. In fact, a very intensive life developed around the castle, as may be seen from the numerous stone and marble monuments, as well as in the existence of a rural territory, whose centre was at Bărboși. Among the monuments discovered there it is sufficient to mention the well-known sarcophagus (Fig. 2), impressive by its dimensions as well as by the significance of its presence at Bărboși. This sarcophagus, cut in marble in Asia Minor — as may be inferred from the inscription on the lid and on the sarcophagus itself: 'Επὶ 'Αλφίου Μοδέστου 'Ασιάρχου²³, — was brought ready-made for the eternal rest of a citizen who lived and was to be buried in the cemetery of the settlement, at the mouth of the Siret. This proves that men of great means, either veterans or landlords, or merchants who had acquired great wealth were settled here. Such a splendid monument, as the one mentioned above, and others about which archaeological discoveries speak, were not available to everyone.

It is clear then that the Roman military settlement established at Bărboși, in a region which had long been frequented and, perhaps inhabited by Greek traders before the Roman occupation, brought to this trading centre the necessary security to enable merchants to develop their trade. With the help of epigraphic information, we realize that the castle of Bărboși, built during Trajan's reign, as well as the civil settlement around it, enjoyed a period of prosperity²⁴ during the 2nd century A.D. The inscription from this period found on that well-known votive altar, discovered at Sendreni and dedicated to Hercules the Victorious by *Iulius Iulianus, qui et Rundacio, q(uin)q(uenalis)*²⁵, gives us further data on the rural Daco-Roman territory (as it is called by V. Pârvan). Already towards the middle of the 3rd century A.D., difficulties connected with the attacks of Carps and Goths arose, which soon led to the abandonment of the settlement by the Romans.

¹⁹ CIL, III, 777.

²⁰ V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²¹ CIL, III, 7514 (= 778), 7517, 7515, 7516.

²² V. Pârvan, *op. cit.* p. 22 f.

²³ C. Moisil, BCMI, II, 1910, p. 86 and V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, pp. 20—21.

²⁴ The inscriptions CIL, III, 777, 7514, 7517, 7515, 7516.

²⁵ N. Velichi, *Necropola și altarul votiv de la Sendreni* (Sendreni), Județul Covurlui, BCMI, 1912, p. 120 f. with an addition by V. Pârvan. The altar is to be found at the Historic Museum of the Galați Region

In fact, all archaeological materials discovered up to now do not go beyond the 3rd century A. D. Even coins, as many as we know, cease in this century ²⁶. Only quite exceptionally Cantemir mentions a coin of Constans ²⁷, although the presence of Roman coins in territories occupied by barbarians is not very unusual.

In conclusion, though methodical excavations were made at Bărboși on a small scale, the extent of the settlement, the number as well as the quality of the discovered monuments prove that no matter what the name of the ancient settlement, it had an important economic and military significance for the region at the mouth of the Siret. Judging by the archaeological remains, its period of prosperity seems not to have exceeded the 3rd century A.D. It is true that V. Pârvan formulated the hypothesis that the camp at Bărboși was held by the Romans up to the 6th century A.D. He wrote: «If the settling of the camp at Bărboși is to be established under Trajan's reign, its complete devastation could not have taken place before the 6th century A.D. For like *Lederata* in Banat, *Drobeta* and *Sucidava* in Oltenia, *Daphne* in Wallachia, the fortress at Gherghina as well as the other strong points mentioned on the left bank of the Danube» ²⁸ were absolutely necessary and had to be maintained even after 270 A.D. for safeguarding the Empire. This hypothesis is not based in any archaeological or epigraphic proof. That is why we think that the evacuation of the bridgehead between the Siret and the Prut with its centre at Bărboși took place in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. and represented one of the Romans' first territorial losses upon the Lower Danube.

Let us now study the situation at Bisericiuța. The ruins of the fortress, at about 7 km SE of Galați, on a mound in the Danube marshes, had long been known ²⁹. The way the ruins were preserved gave the impression that this was one of the most important among the ancient settlements in the north of the Dobrogea. The first excavations started only in 1939, being part of a big archaeological campaign organized by the Bucharest National Museum of Antiquities. The excavations carried on year after year confirmed the importance of the object, only not in the way expected. True, a Roman fortress was discovered, the beginnings of which could not be older than the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century A.D. and which was still in existence in the 6th century A.D. The building technique, the form of the fortress, the inventory itself are all characteristic of this later Roman-Byzantine period. On its ruins, many centuries later, an early feudal settlement was erected (10th-12th century A.D.). As regards the epoch of the Roman occupation, i.e. 2nd and 3rd century A.D. the archaeological remains are poor as compared with those at Bărboși. The transformation of the mound at Bisericiuța into a fortress was undoubtedly preceded by a rural Geto-Roman settlement. Quite likely, a modest military camp existed there, but on no account could

²⁶ V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, p. 18, mentions among the newest those of Philip the Arab and of Severus Alexander; Gh. Ștefan, *Nouvelles découvertes dans le « castellum » romain de Barboși*, « Dacia », V—VI, 1935—1936.

²⁷ V. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 25.

²⁹ Gr. Tocilescu, *Monumente arheologice și sculpturali*, pp. 639—640.

it be compared to the one at Bărboși. Traces of fortifications dating from this period were not found. The settlement became important as a military position only when the Empire, after losing its territories on the left bank of the river, was obliged to establish its defences on the Danube.

The archaeological documents at Bisericuța, prior to the 4th century A.D. are few as compared to those at Bărboși, apart from pottery and minor objects. The very small number of epigraphic documents is significant. The entire inventory of ceramic inscriptions prior to the 4th century A.D. consists of one tegula with the seal of the *Vth Macedonica Legion*, two with the seal *CIC* (perhaps *Cohors prima Cillicum*), two with the seal of the *IInd Mattiacorum cohort*, these were found outside the rocky island of Bisericuța; two with the seal *TROS (mensium)* produced in a workshop in Troesmis, and, lastly, a graphite scribble on a shard, bearing the inscription: *DEMITTE ME-MIL. COH. II*. More significant are the inscriptions on stone. We can only mention two unimportant splinters from funeral inscriptions, having two or three characters inscribed on them. The only fragment of an inscription with a more complete text discovered during the excavations at Bisericuța, comes from another ancient centre.

This object was discovered in 1948 in the northern part of the fortress and is here presented for the first time.

It is a small fragment from a grindstone plate, broken on all four sides, 0.39 m in length, 0.34 m in width, between 0.064 and 0.106 m thick. The space bearing the inscription is even smaller, owing to the splintering of the sides of the stone. Only six fragmentary lines are left of the entire inscription. Unfortunately the first line is so damaged that only traces of a vertical line and two loops of an omicron or sigma may be perceived (fig. 3).

ΥΚΑΙΚΑΤΡΩΝ
ΑΙΑΙΩΝΙΟΥΔΙΑΜ
ΜΠΟΤΑΤΟΥΥΠΑΤΙΚΟ
5 ΥΡΒΑΚΚΟΧΡΥΣΙΠΠΙ
ΠΟΤΑΤΗC

A first reconstruction enables us to complete with a large degree of probability, in 1. 2 αὐτοῦ or, Σεβαστοῦ in 1. 5 Αὐρ.(έλιος) and in 1. 6 λαμ]-προτάτης by analogy with λα]μπροτάτου from 1. 4 and with a series of inscriptions which contain a similar formula. The most important element obtained as a result of this operation is the formula αὐτοῦ (τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ) καὶ Κάστρων (1. 2) which must necessarily be preceded by a noun, it being impossible to give the exact case of this noun. This noun can only be μήτηρ as suggested by lines 2 and 3. Thus we obtain the formula μήτηρ αὐτοῦ or τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ his mother (the emperor's mother) and the camp's, which is a very important element for establishing the date of the inscription. In fact several empresses appear with the epithet of *mater castrorum*: Iulia Domna, Septimius Sever's wife, Iulia Mamaea, Alexander Sever's mother, and Cornelia Salonina, Gallienus' wife.

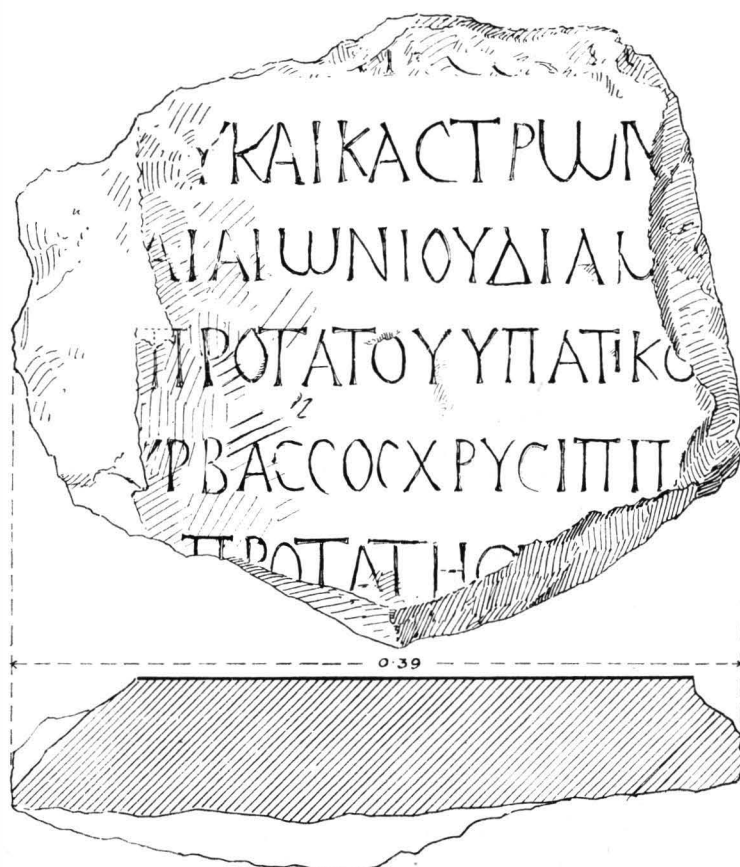


Fig. 3

We exclude the last one as she could be only μήτηρ Κάστρων but not the emperor's too. Consequently we only have to choose between the former two. Both appear with the same appellation in a great number of inscriptions, which makes the choice very difficult. Anyhow, the inscription dates from the beginning of the 3rd century A.D., either under Caracalla's reign, or, more likely, under that of Alexander Sever (222–235).

Unfortunately, the rest of the inscription cannot be completed. As it usually happens, the most important elements are missing. Thus, in 1.4 reference is made to a λαμπρότατος ὑπατικός (*clarissimus consularis*), presumably the governor of the province, but his name is not preserved. The name of Aurelius Bassus Chrisippos used in the nominative case, in 1.4, is probably the name of the man who erected the monument, but we have no means of establishing his official quality.

The word λαμ]προτάτης in the last line demands a noun after it, which, in the refined style of the text can only be the word πόλεως followed by the name of the respective town.

The examination of the text, leads to the conclusion that it belongs to an inscription, put up by Aurelius Bassus Chrisippos, by order of a town, whose name we do not know, in honour of an emperor and his mother, who bears the title of *mater castrorum* and also probably in honour of the governor of the province³⁰.

Any attempt to reconstruct the text of the preserved fragment has an approximate value, as it can only give the general meaning of the inscription. This is due to the conditions in which the fragmented text has been preserved and because it does not offer any possibility of re-establishing the length and the number of the lines. Only as *exempli gratia* we suggest the following solution:

Ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ. πὲρ τῆς τοῦ
 Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Μ. Αὐρ. Σευήρου
 Ἀλεξάνδρου³¹ Σεβ(αστοῦ) καὶ Ιουλίας Μαμ-
 μαίας³² μητρὸς αὐτοῦ] καὶ κάστρων[σωτηρίας
 τε καὶ νείκης κ]αὶ αἰωνίου διαμ[ονῆς
 αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ λαμ]προτάτου ὑπατικοῦ]
 Α]ὐρ(έλιος) Βάσσος Χρύσιππος
 τῆς Λαμ]προτάτης [Ἰστριανῶν
 πόλεως].

Translation: Hail! Good health and victory to Caesar Emperor M. Aurelius Alexander the August and to his mother Iulia Mamaea, mother of the «castra». May they live for ever. So too the most glorious consular... Aur. Bassus Chrisippos (by the decision of the council and of the people) of the most glorious (town of the Istrians).

³⁰ It is not unusual to honour the governor. However, this passage might be interpreted differently, either by completing with ἐπὶ τοῦ Λαμ]προτάτου ὑπατικοῦ, IGRR, 1143, or accepting κατὰ

κέλευσιν τοῦ λαμ]προτάτου ὑπατικοῦ IGRR, I, 7171.

³¹ or Μ. Αὐρ. Ἀντωνείνου.

³² or Ἰουλίας Δόμνης.

The presence of this inscription in the ruins of the fortress at Bisericuța raises the problem of its origin. Considering the language of the inscription as well as the epithet λαμπροτάτη serious objections arise against its being of local source. The Greek language was currently used only in the Pontic towns of Dobrogea. It would have been most unusual to use the Greek language at Bisericuța, when Latin was spoken in more important settlements on the Danube valley, such as Troesmis, especially if we take into consideration that the inscription has an official character.

Beginning with the epoch of the Severs, the title of «most glorious» is frequently used in Greek towns³³, but does not appear in the Danube settlements. Thus, a local origin for the inscription is out of question.

According to our opinion it could only have come from one of the Greek towns along the Black Sea coast. How and by what means this stone from Tomis, or, more likely, from Histria, reached the Bisericuța fortress cannot be definitely stated. Of course it is not the only inscription which is discovered at a great distance from the place where it was carved. Concerning our problem let us bear in mind the most significant fact, that the only stone bearing a more or less important inscription and dating from a time prior to the building of the fortress at Bisericuța, was brought from elsewhere, probably in order to be used as building material.

The conclusion that may be drawn by analysing the results of excavations at Bisericuța is very important for the problem under discussion. The fact is that in the 2nd—3rd century A.D., there was a rural Geto-Roman settlement on the mound of Bisericuța, resembling many other rural settlements in Dobrogea; it could in no way be compared with the one at Bărboși, either as regards the period of its construction, or its military and economic significance. Its real importance, starts only with the reorganization of the limes when a fortress was built here, that is to say — as we have already shown elsewhere — in the Tetrarchy days. Most of the discoveries made at Bisericuța belong to the interval between the 4th and the 5th century A.D.

The fortress erected here at the beginning of the 4th century A.D. is typical of that period. Built on a small site, fortified with strong walls and having a natural protection from the surrounding marshes, the fortress could successfully fulfil its defensive mission. The choice of the isolated mound at Bisericuța is due especially to its defensive value. Yet it should be mentioned that from an aggressive point of view, the fortress had no value whatsoever. That is why, as long as the Roman Empire was not obliged to adopt a defensive policy on the Danubian border and as long as it controlled the bridgehead on the left bank, the fortification of the mound was not necessary.

In conclusion our opinion is that the Ptolemaios' Dinogetia could not be situated at Bisericuța-Garvăn, because the 2nd and 3rd century A.D. archaeological remains are too poor to justify either the name of πόλις used by Ptolemaios or even the mentioning of that fortress side by side with the really important sites of Troesmis and Noviodunum.

³³ In the inscriptions at Histria, it is found at p. 34, and *Histria I*, 1954, p. 533, n° 17).
least Empire Caracalla's time (V. Pîrvan, *Histria IV*,

It is much more probable that Dinogetia was on the left bank of the Danube, at Bărboși. This, taking into consideration the ancienty of the settlement, the great number of ruins, the multitude and variety of the monuments, could justify its insertion in that series of settlements which the ancient geographer mentions as towns. The fact that Dinogetia is mentioned may also be explained by its importance as border point between Moesia and Dacia.

Evidently, the order in which these settlements were recorded by Ptolemaios, namely Axiopolis, Troesmis, Dinogetia, Noviodunum, gives the impression that they must have been placed, without exception, on the right bank of the river. But if we admit that Ptolemaios used a fluvial itinerary, it is possible that he mentioned the ports in that order irrespective of the bank on which they were situated. Between Troesmis and Noviodunum — not mentioning Măcin which we exclude as it can not be identified with Dinogetia — no other port was placed on the right bank of the Danube. It is difficult to imagine Bisericuța situated at some distance from the Danube from which it is separated by numerous sand dunes, as having been a port. Moreover there are no discoveries to support this theory. We only have to consider Bărboși in favour of which is the fact that a *statio* of the Roman fleet (*Classis Flavia Moesica*) was there. The station at Bărboși, significant from a military and administrative point of view, was more important for travellers than rural settlements such as the one at Bisericuța.

If we admit that Dinogetia of the 2nd century A.D. can only be at Bărboși, how shall we explain the sources appearing with the 4th century A.D. which place it on the right bank of the Danube? In fact, *Itinerarium Antonini* as well as *Notitia Dignitatum Orientis* mention the sites on the route of the *limes*, with the respective distances and the military units.

The answer to this question could be only hypothetical, as long as we have no epigraphic evidence. We think that as a result of the barbarians' pressure, the Empire was obliged to withdraw from the territory between the Siret and the Prut. Thus, the omission of Dinogetia in *Tabula Peutingeriana* seems significant. In fact, recent studies have reached the conclusion that the itinerary on which *Tab. Peut.* is based was drawn up between 251 and 271 A.D.³⁴ Eug. Manni³⁵ based on the study of some details on the Rhine asserts that the work could not be older than 260 A.D. Consequently, if Dinogetia is not mentioned in *Tab. Peut.*, it means that Dinogetia did not at that time belong to the Empire any more, that it had remained on the territory occupied by the barbarians and that the new one was not yet built. *Itinerarium Antonini* mentions a new Diniguttia, built on the right bank of the Danube, during Diocletian's time. When the Bărboși garrison left the fortress, part of the population took refuge in the north of Dobrogea. It is most probable that, together with the population which settled on the right bank of the Danube, the old name of the fortress had been transferred to the new fortress which was then built on the mound, today called Bisericuța. A most impressive analogy is offered by the transfer of the name of Dacia to the new province founded by Aurelian on the territory of Moesia Superior.

³⁴ C. Daicoviciu, « Revue de Transylvanie », VI, 1943, p. 54. and *La Transylvanie dans l'antiquité*, Bucharest, 1945, p. 184, n. 2.

³⁵ *L'impero di Gallieno*, Roma, 1949, pp. 30—31.

The fortress built on the mound at Bisericuța, which replaced the abandoned castrum on the other side of the Danube, also received the name of that castrum. If this castrum had remained under Roman domination, the transfer of the name could not be explained. We think that the castrum at Bărboși had been definitely abandoned in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. At any rate, in the 4th century A.D. it was no longer under Roman domination because when Valens undertook his expeditions against the Goths, his operations were carried out either at Daphne or at Noviodunum. Had the Romans still possessed the Bărboși bridgehead, they would have used it on that occasion.

GH. ȘTEFAN