

INTENSIVE SURVEY IN THE VICINITY OF LATE ROMAN ULMETUM*

by STEVEN A. KREBS (Bloomington)

Discussing the epigraphic monuments found during his excavations (1911–1914) in **Ulmelum** (**Pantelimonul de Sus**) which attest a *uicus Ulmetum* and suggest the existence of some *uillae*, **Vasile Pârvan** argued that, despite the lack of evidence for ceramics and other archaeological finds, an **Early Roman settlement** still existed there until **Late Roman citadel** was built. However, an intensive survey demonstrated that the *uicus* could be identified rather with the **civil settlement** located 3 km to the east, in the vicinity of the so called *Castra Aestiua* (a **camp** intended to be permanently occupied and not only seasonally, as Pârvan concluded). This camp was established sometime between **Flavius Sabinus'** activities as a governor of **Moesia** and Trajan's Dacian wars. A **boundary stone** found there could suggest an Early Roman *centuriatio* dated to the same time. A second candidate for the *uicus Ulmetum* is the **Roman site** at **Râmnicul de Jos**. An **altar** originated from there (CIL III, 14 442) had been dedicated by Roman citizens and veterans from *[ui]co V[...]*, which could be read as *[ui]co V[Imeto]*.

The Late Roman citadel of Ulmetum, situated on the eastern edge of Pantelimonul de Sus (jud. Constanța), is the single most important rural settlement site in Dobrogea. During excavations of the site in 1911–1914 Vasile Pârvan recovered numerous inscriptional monuments, most of which had been incorporated into the walls, towers, and gates of the Late Roman citadel. These monuments provided the bulk of the evidence for the Early Roman settlement called *uicus Ulmetum* and for the villas that hypothetically surrounded it. Pârvan's discussions of these epigraphic monuments and others found elsewhere in central Dobrogea laid the foundation for all subsequent treatments of Early Roman rural settlement in the Romanian part of the province of Moesia Inferior.

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However, two facts stand out. First, Pârvan's excavations inside the citadel did not reveal Early Roman levels of occupation. Second, remains of villas have not yet been found¹. In May and June of 1993 the author of this report conducted an intensive survey in the environs of Ulmetum to search for additional evidence of the Early Roman *uicus* settlement and for traces of the Early Roman villas that supposedly surrounded it. The survey was the last phase of a year-long diachronic study of ancient rural settlement in Dobrogea. The results of the survey discussed in this report lead the author to question long-held opinions concerning the citadel site near Pantelimonul de Sus and the *Castra Aestiua* site located 3 km to the east.

The Environs of Ulmetum

The citadel of Ulmetum lies outside the eastern edge of Pantelimonul de Sus, a small farming village and communal center in the very heart of the Casimcea plateau and of Dobrogea itself (fig. 1). Ulmetum and the modern village are situated on a broad terrace that is bordered by the Pantelimonul (or Ceatalorman) stream along its south slope and by the Valea Mare stream to the north. The terrace, composed of loess resting on green schist, is elevated about 20 m above the brooks, which are fed by springs emerging from the base of the deep loess strata. The brooks merge about one kilometer northeast of the citadel. The combined stream follows a meandering course between the steep slopes of regosols and lithosols that border the alluvial plain of the Pantelimonul valley until it flows into the Casimcea river three kilometers farther east².

From the terrace (120 masl) on which Ulmetum is situated the land rises rather rapidly to a crest of hills, topped by tumuli, which reach heights between 170 and 220 masl along a southern, western, and northern arc. The hills to the northeast reach a maximum elevation of 125 masl. The hills are composed of moderately carbonatic chernozems over deep strata of loess on a bed of green schist; on the chernozems the farmers of Pantelimonul de Sus grow a variety of crops, especially cereals. Only the regosols and lithosols of the Pantelimonul valley's slopes and its alluvial plain are uncultivated, having been left in grass to serve as pasture. The area is almost totally devoid of trees; there are a couple of trees to the north of the village near the head of the Valea Mare. Otherwise the chernozem topsoil is all that remains of a silvosteppe landscape³, which is attested in the old Turkish name for the valley, Ceatalorman.

¹ Al. Suceveanu, *Viața economică în Dobrogea romană. Secolele I-III e.n.*, București, 1977, p. 103.

² *Harta solurilor Republicii Populare Române. Scara 1:200 000. Constanța, București, 1965*, is the source for all references to soils.

³ N. Florea, I. Munteanu, C. Rapaport, C. Chițu and M. Opriș, *Geografia solurilor României*, București, 1968, p. 457, state that carbonatic chernozems come about through the regression of levigated chernozems and of chestnut soils of xerophilous forests. V. Pârvan, *Cetatea Ulmetum II. 1.*

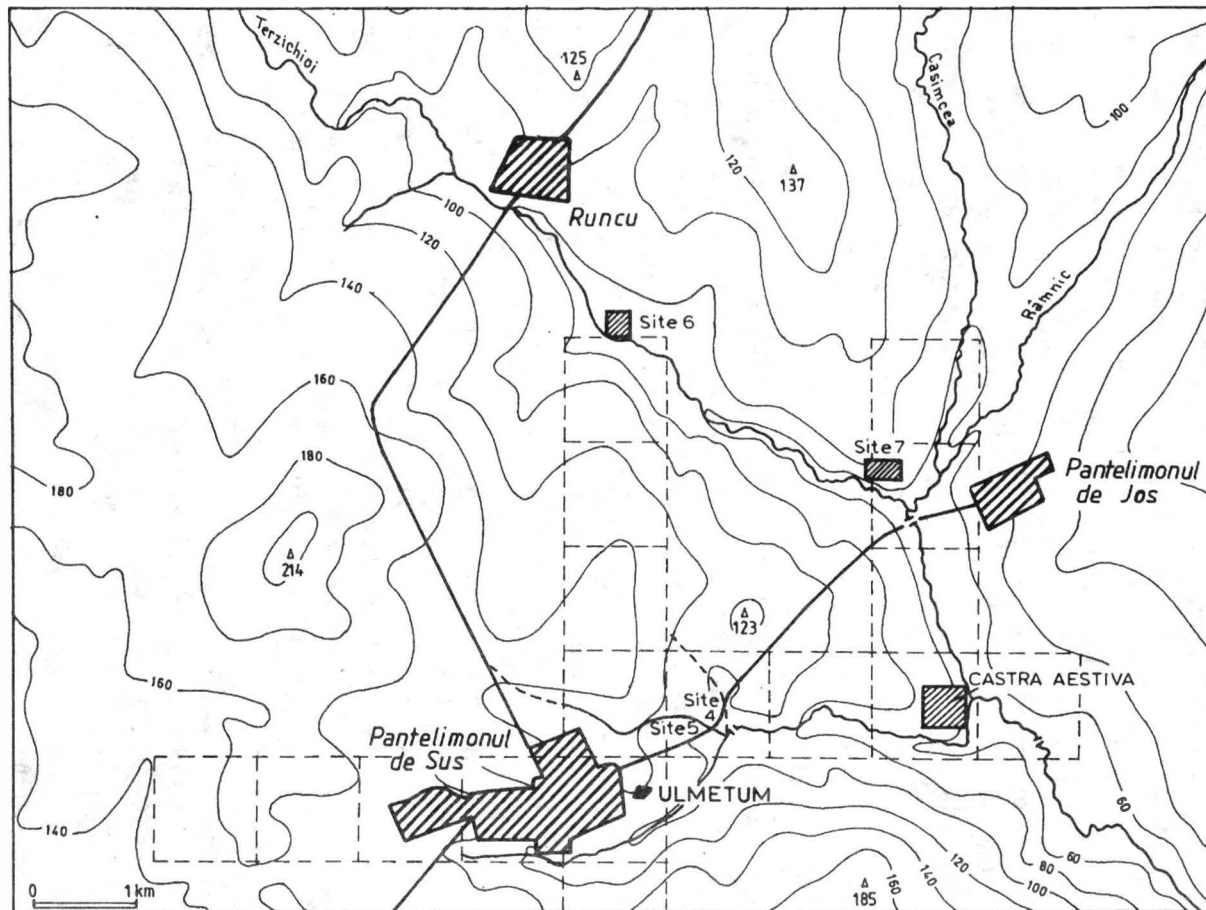


Fig. 1. Environs of Ulmetum with transects and sites.

The Late Roman citadel of Ulmetum is situated in a protected position surrounded by hills at the end of a narrow valley near permanent water sources. Located near the bottom of the water catchment area, the citadel is nearly invisible from the surrounding hill tops. The citadel rests on a terrace that slopes abruptly to the brook (c. 100 masl) and faces the most likely avenue of approach, up the Pantelimonul valley which opens up into the Casimcea valley three kilometers to the east. The Casimcea valley was in antiquity most probably the principal route of penetration into the central plateau region. From the Casimcea valley itself, the citadel cannot be seen. Given the fact that the citadel is hidden from all avenues of approach, it is clear that the builders of the citadel had selected a position particularly suited for defense.

Review of Past Research

Pârvan's excavations revealed a citadel whose perimeter measures 588.94 m along its exterior face and 531.53 m along the interior, enclosing an area of c. 2.17 ha⁴. Projecting from the citadel are ten rectangular towers and three circular corner towers. The two main gates are located in the northwest and southwest walls of the citadel, opening toward the level ground on which the modern village of Pantelimonul de Sus is situated.

Twenty-one epigraphic monuments, which Pârvan found still incorporated into the fabric of the citadel (fig. 2), provided the information for dating phases of the citadel's construction. These monuments range in date from A.D. 163 to 324 or from the second century A.D. to the fourth⁵. Another ten inscriptions were recovered from excavated contexts and eight more were found on the surface. The fact that the large majority of the inscriptions date to the Early Roman epoch, combined with the structural layout of the citadel⁶, indicated to Pârvan a link between the construction of the citadel and Constantine the Great's efforts to refortify the frontier⁷. Further proof for an early citadel came from Procopius who states that

Descoperirile campaniei a doua și a treia de săpături din anii 1912 și 1913, ARMSI 36, 1913, p. 280 and p. 293 (= *Ulmetum* II.1), mentions finding in the excavations two beams of oak. Oak is characteristic of silvosteppe environments.

⁴ I arrived at these measurements by totalling the measures of all the segments that Pârvan noted on his site plan.

⁵ The number and the dates of the monuments were derived from Pârvan's reports as well as ISM V, p. 78–116, nos. 57–91, and Em. Popescu, *Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV–XIII descoperite în România*, București, 1976, p. 213–230, nos. 206–219.

⁶ V. Pârvan, *Cetatea Ulmetum. Descoperirile primei campanii de săpături din vara anului 1911*, ARMSI 34, 1912, p. 515 (= *Ulmetum* I).

⁷ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 594–595.

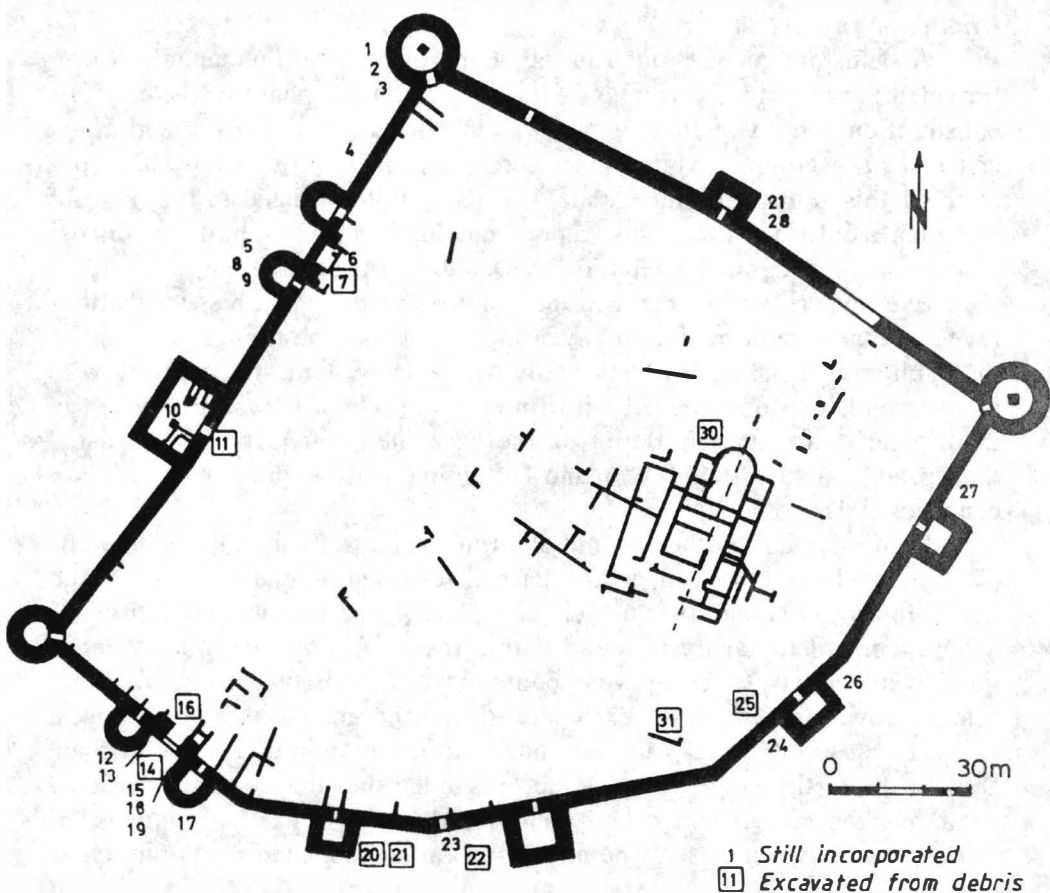


Fig. 2. Ulmetum. Map of the citadel indicating find spots of the inscriptions. 1 Ulm. I, no. 6 (3 cent. A.D.); 2 Ulm. I, no. 5 (3 cent. A.D.); 3 Ulm. II.2, no. 3 (late 2 cent. A.D.); 4 Ulm. I, no. 7 (2–3 cent. A.D.); 5 Ulm. II.2, no. 6 (2 cent. A.D.); 6 ISM V, no. 77 (2 cent. A.D.); 7 Ulm. II.2, no. 10 (6 cent. A.D.); 8 Ulm. II.2, no. 7 (2 cent. A.D.); 9 Ulm. II.2, no. 8 (A.D. 172); 10 Ulm. II.2, no. 13 (A.D. 241–244); 11 Ulm. II.2, no. 14 (3 cent. A.D.); 12 Ulm. I, no. 11 (3 cent. A.D.); 13 Ulm. I, no. 12 (3 cent. A.D.); 14 Ulm. I, no. 13 (2 cent. A.D.); 15 Ulm. II.2, no. 15 (A.D. 178); 16 Ulm. I, no. 14 (2 cent. A.D.); 17 Ulm. I, no. 15 (2 cent. A.D.); 18 Ulm. II.2, no. 16 (A.D. 163); 19 Ulm. III, no. 11 (2 cent. A.D.); 20 Ulm. II.2, no. 18 (2–3 cent. A.D.); 21 Ulm. II.2, no. 19 (2 cent. A.D.); 22 Ulm. II.2, no. 20 (3 cent. A.D.); 23 Ulm. II.2, no. 22 (A.D. 191); 24 Ulm. III, no. 12 (A.D. 198–209); 25 Ulm. I.2, no. 23 (6 cent. A.D.); 26 Ulm. II.2, no. 25 (A.D. 324); 27 Ulm. II.2, no. 27 (3 cent. A.D.); 28 Ulm. I, no. 3 (5 cent. A.D.); 29 Ulm. I, no. 2 (2 cent. A.D.); 30 Ulm. II.2, no. 29 (2 cent. A.D.); 31 Ulm. III, no. 10 (2 cent. A.D.); □ excavated from debris.

Justinian built a new citadel upon the ruins of a deserted stronghold called *Ulmîţon*⁸.

A sandstone plaque found in the debris of the south rectangular tower provided Pârvan with a *terminus post quem* for a final phase of the citadel's construction. On this plaque, which was inscribed with a *chi-rho* and *alpha* and *omega*, a group of young lancers recorded in Latin that they had constructed this portion of the citadel⁹. The inscription, dated to the reign of Justinian, confirmed Procopius' report that Justinian had rebuilt the citadel as part of his program to rebuild the Danube fortifications.

Everywhere within the confines of the citadel Pârvan's excavations revealed evidence of habitation, even in the towers. The most significant of the habitations, socially and politically, was a large domestic structure with an apse built of stone bonded with fine mortar, which Pârvan excavated in the citadel's east quarter. Based on the excavated materials, Pârvan dated the apsed structure to the Romano-Byzantine period, the fourth to sixth centuries A.D.¹⁰.

Running over and beside and abutting this apsed structure were walls of stone packed with earth, which Pârvan regarded as quasi-barbarian and late¹¹. Because Pârvan gives us neither a plan of these stone-and-earth walls nor a record of the artifacts found within them, it is not possible to determine whether any of them were contemporary with the apsed structure. Similar structures were also excavated inside the northwest and southwest gates. Because these walls lacked consistent orientation and many of them abutted the fortification wall, Pârvan concluded that they were constructed later than the citadel and called them "barbarian"¹². The large number of hearths found within these stone-and-earth walls, associated with other types of occupational debris, especially millstones (*râşniţe*), is clear proof that these structures were habitations.

Stone-and-earth walls, such as Pârvan describes, were characteristic not just of "barbarian" periods of habitation but of the Early and Late Roman periods as well. At Histria such walls in the Sacred Area continued in use along the same lines from the earliest period of Roman occupation to the latest. At Ulmetum the bulk of the artifacts, which Pârvan reports finding within these walls, date to the Late Roman period. The earliest

⁸ Procop., *Aed.*, 4, 7, 17–18.

⁹ Pârvan, *Cetatea Ulmetum II.2. Descoperirile campaniei a doua şi a treia de săpături din anii 1912 şi 1913*, ARMSI 36, 1913, no. 23 (= *Ulmetum II.2*); see also Popescu, *op. cit.* (supra n. 5) p. 224–225, no. 211.

¹⁰ Pârvan *Cetatea Ulmetum, III. Descoperirile ultimei campanii de săpături din vara anului 1914*, ARMSI 37, 1915, p. 268 (= *Ulmetum III*).

¹¹ Pârvan, *Ulmetum III*, p. 267–268.

¹² Pârvan, *Ulmetum*, II. 1, p. 283–290, 293, and 298.

datable artifact recovered from these humble structures is a coin of Gordian found before the entrance of the south tower of the southwest gate¹³. The evidence seems to indicate that these structures were built and inhabited soon after the citadel's construction.

Pârvan's reporting does not allow us, however, to identify stratified phases of occupation within the Late Roman period. This Pârvan himself did not do. As proof of fourth century occupation he notes the existence of coins of Constantine the Great and Honorius and of Latin Christian inscriptions¹⁴. Evidence for fifth century occupation is similarly limited as Pârvan notes only coins of Iulius Nepos (474-480) and a Greek Christian inscription¹⁵. It is not possible to isolate stratigraphically these earlier phases of occupation from the last phase of Roman occupation.

But it is the Early Roman period which is the most problematic for the site of Ulmetum. Pârvan, during the course of his excavations and surface reconnaissance, does not appear to have recovered any occupational debris dating to the Early Roman period. Completely absent from his reports is any consideration of the ceramic vessels which an Early Roman population would typically have used for eating, drinking, cooking, and storage. Instead, the picture of Early Roman settlement at Pantelimonul de Sus is based entirely on the thirty-two epigraphic monuments dating to the second and third centuries A.D. found at the site. These monuments, although they provide a great deal of information, are our only source of information about the Early Roman settlement and its inhabitants.

One of the most important of these monuments, ISM V, 62, identifies a settlement called the *uicus Vlmetum* which was inhabited by Roman citizens and Bessi, originally a people from southern Thrace, who may have been forcibly settled here; together they established the settlement some time before the reign of Antoninus Pius¹⁶. The fact that the settlement had attained *uicus* status by a relatively early date led Pârvan to suggest that it must have been a settlement of considerable importance. Such importance, he postulated, had to be due to its proximity to a Roman camp established to oversee nearby native communities as well as a colony of transplanted Bessi.

The monuments indicate in an accumulative fashion that Roman citizens of the *uicus Vlmetum* attained important positions in the administration in the province of Moesia Inferior. Aelius L... attained the position of *buleuta* at Histria and Caius Iulius Quadratus became a *quinquennalis* at Capidava¹⁷.

¹³ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* II.1, p. 289.

¹⁴ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 593.

¹⁵ *Ibidem* I, p. 594.

¹⁶ See V. Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 585–586 and idem, *Descoperiri nouă în Scythia Minor*, ARMSI 35, 1913, p. 2 (= *Descoperiri*).

¹⁷ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 530, no. 2, and *Ulmetum* III, p. 280, no. 12.

Particularly notable is the Valerii family at Ulmetum, to or by whom no less than six monuments are dedicated. Lucius Valerius Maxellius was one of the first magistrates of Ulmetum in c. A.D. 140, while a Valerius Victorinus was a *biarchos* in the army during the reign of Constantine¹⁸. A second Valerius Victorinus may have been an absentee landowner with an estate near Ulmetum¹⁹.

Epigraphic monuments also provide the only information for dispersed rural settlement or *uillae* in the vicinity of Ulmetum. C. Iulius Quadratus is assumed to have owned a villa because of his position at Capidava and because his funerary monument portrays him as both a pastoralist and a farmer²⁰. Aelius L... is accorded a villa solely on the basis of his position at Histria²¹. Valerius Victorinus is assumed to be an owner of a villa near Ulmetum because the dedicator Valerius Nilus was an *actor* or estate manager²². Another villa is asserted on the basis of a boundary stone which had once marked the property of T. Claudius Firminus.²³

Pârvan's reconstruction of the settlement picture at Pantelimonul de Sus includes a native settlement inhabited by Getae and a military encampment and a rural *uicus* settlement inhabited by Romans citizens and transplanted Bessi, surrounded by dispersed farmsteads or *uillae* belonging to Ulmetum's elite. Pârvan suggests that these settlements must lie hidden under the modern village, even though by his own account the earliest coins to be found there date to the time of Constantine the Great²⁴. The problem that persists is that none of these epigraphic monuments can yet be securely linked to occupational debris, such as building stones, bricks, roof tiles, and pottery sherds, which would signal areas inhabited in the Early Roman period. None of the monuments were found in the original contexts in which the dedicators erected them and all had been moved from the place of erection for reuse as building stones in the Late Roman fortifications. Even though many of these monuments were found *in situ* in the archaeological sense, we do not know where they came from or how far they were moved. Scholars have argued that a number of these epigraphic monuments had been moved a considerable distance from the places of erection. Emilia

¹⁸ ISM V, 62; Pârvan, *Ulmetum* II.2, no. 25.

¹⁹ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 556, no. 12 = ISM V, 72, p. 97–98.

²⁰ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 498 and 510, pl. 5/2 and 6/1 = CIL III, 12491 = ISM V, 77. See also Suceveanu, *op. cit.* (supra n. 1), p. 104.

²¹ Suceveanu, *op. cit.*, p. 45 and V. H. Baumann, *Ferma romană din Dobrogea*, Tulcea, 1983, p. 53 and 154, no. 5.

²² Suceveanu, *op. cit.*, p. 67 and 103.

²³ ISM V, 59, and Emilia Doruțiu Boilă, SCIV 15, 1964, I, p. 132, no. 5.

²⁴ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 566.

Doruțiu-Boilă suggests that the funerary monument of Aelius L... came from a village in the Histrian territory²⁵, while G. Florescu has argued that C. Iulius Quadratus' monument originated from Capidava or from somewhere in its territory²⁶. The moving of these monuments in antiquity, sometimes over a considerable distance, and in more recent times²⁷, leaves us with a quandary: did all, some, or even none of the epigraphic monuments found at Ulmetum originally come from the site at Pantelimonul de Sus?

Rationale for Survey and Methodology

The most basic question left unanswered in Pârvan's hypothetical reconstruction of settlement in the Pantelimonul valley is this: Where were the sites located? Nearly all of the inhabitants of this valley in the pre-, Early, and Late Roman periods would have left behind ceramic debris wherever they lived, since they used ceramic vessels in the everyday activities of preparing, consuming, and storing food and drink. Broken vessels would have been discarded in and around residences and settlements. Having little utility for subsequent generations, pottery sherds should have for the most part remained where they were discarded to the present day. Pottery sherds, to which Pârvan gave little consideration, are therefore to be expected at each of Pârvan's hypothesized sites. A search for surface scatters of ceramic remains would be expected to reveal locations of sites as well as their maximal extents and periods of occupation.

The author of this report chose to employ intensive systematic survey as the method of archaeological research for a number of reasons. First and foremost is the fact that it has proven to be the most efficacious means of locating all classes of sites, particularly the smaller and poorer ones which were dispersed around the nucleated centers of population; the hypothetical villas of Ulmetum may be included here. Because of reduced spacing between fieldworkers, which translates into more research time per unit of area, the probability that the smaller sites will be discovered is raised considerably²⁸. The more intensive survey projects conducted in Greece have produced site densities ranging from 1.3 to 4.3 Classical to Late Roman sites per km² in contrast to the more extensive University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition, which yielded only 0.04 sites per km² ²⁹. Invariably,

²⁵ ISM V, 90 and p. 114–115.

²⁶ ISM V, 77, and p. 101–104.

²⁷ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 498, reports that C. Iulius Quadratus' monument had been moved to Runcu by treasure hunters before it came to rest in the Constanța Museum.

²⁸ J. Cherry, in D. R. Keller and D. W. Rupp, eds., *Archaeological Survey in the Mediterranean Area*, Oxford, 1983, p. 375–416, has established that a positive correlation exists between survey intensity and site density.

²⁹ Susan E. Alcock, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 2, 1989, p. 12.

smaller sites make up the majority of the new sites discovered by these surveys³⁰. Wherever such surveys have been conducted in Italy, the results are similar³¹. Second, the results of these surveys have led to the most important new contributions to the subject of rural settlement in classical antiquity³². A third reason is that a single researcher working alone with a limited budget and limited time can collect archaeological data across a significant portion of a landscape, such as that surrounding ancient Ulmetum which had not yet been subjected to intensive systematic survey.

The survey area included primarily the water catchment basin of the Pantelimonul valley, approximately 24 km², in which Ulmetum is situated (fig. 1). This area would certainly have belonged to the citadel. With Ulmetum at the center, an axial sampling model was hypothetically laid out to include a representative sample of the surrounding landforms, at both higher and lower elevations. The model was comprised of four axial transects, five kilometers long by one wide, radiating north, south, east, and west of the citadel. The eastern axis was adjusted in order to include the *Castra Aestiua* site in the sample and to avoid the less promising south slope of the Pantelimonul valley to the east of the citadel (The south slope and the valley bottom were, however, rather thoroughly walked in an unsystematic fashion). Even though transects of this length extended beyond the limits of the catchment basin, five kilometers was chosen because it represents the maximal distance that village-based farmers will generally travel to dispersed agricultural plots³³.

In order to increase the probability of detecting smaller scatters of surface debris that might be representative of smaller farmsteads and villas, the agricultural fields and grasslands surrounding the citadel and the village were systematically traversed at intervals of 25 m³⁴. It must be noted that all distances, both the intervals between passes and the lengths of the passes, were paced off rather than measured and so must be regarded as approximate. During each pass all artifacts were collected within arm's reach. In the agricultural fields straight passes were maintained by following the furrows and crop rows. This method proved to be easier and less time-consuming than trying to maintain straight passes, oriented to the major points of the compass, across the large fields. In the grasslands orange surveyor's flags

³⁰ Eadem, *Graecia Capta. The Landscapes of Roman Greece*, New York, 1993, p. 53.

³¹ G. Barker and J. Lloyd, eds., *Roman Landscapes. Archaeological Survey in the Mediterranean Region*, London, 1991.

³² Alcock, *op. cit.*; T.W. Potter, *The Changing Landscape of South Etruria*, New York, 1979.

³³ G. Davis Stone, *Current Anthropology* 32, 1991, p. 343.

³⁴ The author chose to use 25-meter intervals in order to cover a larger area than would have been possible if he recommended 10-meter spacing. For this recommendation see S. Coccia and D. J. Mattingly, *PBSR* 60, 1992, p. 225.

were set to provide sightlines for each pass. At the end of each pass artifacts were counted and recorded and pottery sherds with diagnostic features were retained for dating and photographing. Each pass with its length and total number of artifacts collected were then noted on plans of the individual survey areas. With artifact densities noted for each pass, it was possible to isolate areas with higher artifact densities and to determine the extent of a surface scatter. An area with high artifact density could then be classified as a site. Areas surveyed and sites found were recorded onto 1:50,000-scale topographical maps.

Ulmetum

In the spring of 1993 only three of the monuments, which Pârvan mentions in his reports, still remained visible at the site. The Valerius Nilus monument still lies *in situ* in the west tower of the southwest gate (fig. 6/1)³⁵. A second, that of Aelius L..., lies between the citadel embankment and the village (fig. 6/2)³⁶. The third, an uninscribed funerary monument, lies up-turned before the entrance to the south tower of the citadel's northwest gate (fig. 6/3)³⁷. Except for a recent illicit digging, which revealed a large pithos just outside the apse of the large domestic structure in the citadel's east quarter, the citadel appears to be much as Pârvan left it.

Ceramics scattered over the ground surface within the citadel and down the slopes immediately below the fortification walls are certainly the result of Pârvan's excavations. Sherds collected from these areas date predominantly to the fourth through the sixth centuries A.D.³⁸. A couple of these sherds may be dated to a broader period, i.e. from the third to the sixth centuries, and possibly even from the second to the sixth. There are many sherds that bear the striated ornamentation typical of the Late Roman period. Pârvan, we may note, recovered from the apsidal structure "diferite fragmente de vase cu ornamente striate de formă comună la Ulmetum"³⁹. The collection, however, also includes ceramics dating to the Early Medieval period, which bear striated ornamentation. Such sherds may belong to the late phases of habitation represented by the late walls which were built over the apsidal structure⁴⁰.

³⁵ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* II.2, no. 125 and ISM V, 72.

³⁶ Pârvan, *op. cit.*, no. 13 and ISM V, 90.

³⁷ Pârvan, *op. cit.*, no. 9.

³⁸ I owe thanks to Alexandru Bamea for dating all the ceramics which I collected. For the dating of pre-Roman ceramics I thank Mircea Angelescu, Sebastian Morintz, and Corneliu Beldiman.

³⁹ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* III, p. 267.

⁴⁰ Supra n. 40. I. Miclea and R. Florescu, *Daco-romanii*, București, 1980, p. 177, mention these 9-11th century ceramics as coming from pithouses of the autochthonous population.

Ceramics collected from the slope at the east end of the village, in the area between the kiln, excavated by A. Panaitescu⁴¹, and the old fountain (c. 600 m southwest of the citadel), are datable to the same broad periods, the Late Roman and Early Medieval, as those recovered at the citadel. Among the debris in this area, where the villagers dump refuse, was found the only sculpted architectural fragment seen in over a month of survey (fig. 6/4). The fragment which bears a scroll is probably part of an entablature. In this area near the fountain Pârvan found a first century B.C. Greek *collegium* inscription⁴². The evidence affirms Pârvan's assertion that the citadel's extramural settlement extended a considerable distance to the southwest, at least along the edge of the terrace⁴³. Repeated searches through the streets in this part of the village, however, failed to yield any ancient ceramics. Still, it must be noted that an older wall upon which a modern wall has been built runs beneath the southeasternmost intersection of the village.

Sites 4 and 5 (fig. 3)

Site 4 occupies the brow of the terrace which is bordered by the Valea Mare and the Valea lui Pană. Only the brow of the terrace between the line of electrical poles and the road to Pantelimonul de Jos was intensively surveyed. Because the high grass of the pastureland north of the electrical poles precluded effective survey, that part of the terrace was not systematically surveyed; it was nevertheless evident that the surface scatter continued across this area. The intensively surveyed part of Site 4 covers c. 1.5 ha.

Site 5 occupies the terrace to the south of Site 4. The site is bordered by the Valea Mare to the north and the road to Pantelimonul de Jos to the south. The area south of Site 5 and the road, occupied by barns and an abandoned tower facility, was not surveyed. Although the entire c. 20 ha area of the terrace was intensively surveyed, ceramic densities appear to indicate that Site 5 was limited to the eastern part of the terrace, an area of c. 8 ha⁴⁴.

⁴¹ A. Panaitescu, *Pontica* 14, 1981, p. 303–308.

⁴² Pârvan, *Ulmetum* 11.2, no. 30.

⁴³ Idem, *Ulmetum* I, p. 500.

⁴⁴ I have arbitrarily chosen six ceramic artifacts per 100 m walked as a density sufficient to indicate the presence of a site. Each 100 m pass in which 6 or more artifacts were recovered is marked on the site plans. The area of each site is assumed to include all passes with an artifact density of six-plus. Densities of six-plus are deemed to be sufficient evidence for habitation areas on the terraces, where Sites 4 and 5 are located, given the fact that this density is greater than the densities recorded in any of the cultivated fields contiguous to Pantelimonul de Jos, where visibility was very good. In areas of grassland, which are undisturbed by the plow, fewer artifacts are apt to reach the ground surface. Furthermore, grass cover renders the artifacts less visible to the searcher.

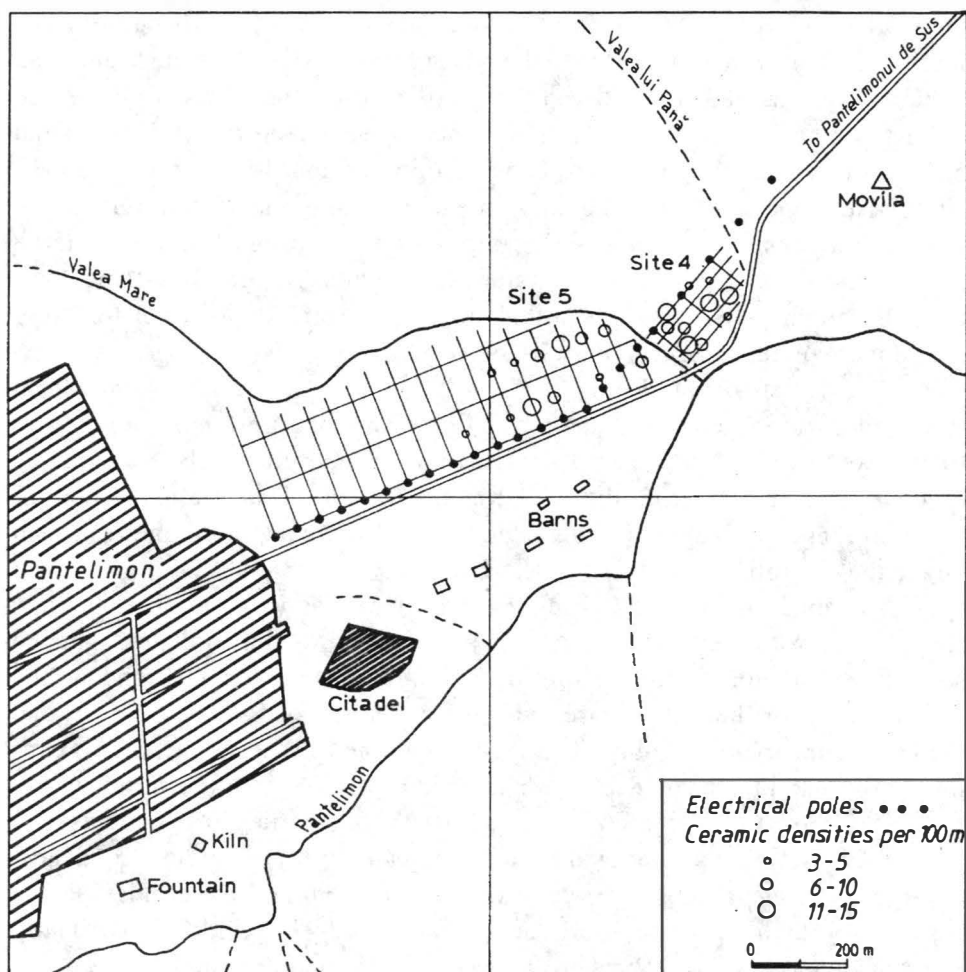


Fig. 3. Ulmetum. Combined plan of sites 4 and 5.

The homogeneity of the pottery collected from Sites 4 and 5, which belong to the same periods as those noted for the citadel, the fourth through sixth centuries A.D. and the Early Medieval period, allow us to see these sites as a continuation of the citadel's extramural settlement. As at the citadel, no ceramics were found that would indicate habitation on these sites before the fourth century.

Numerous fragments of ancient roof tiles indicate that permanent structures had once occupied Sites 4 and 5. It should be noted that both sites lack the quantities of stone that one might expect to find on a settlement site. This lack of stone should not, however, be used as evidence that habitations were

constructed of ephemeral materials or that the sites were not occupied. The lack of stone may instead be due to the construction activities of the Muntenian settlers, who arrived in 1886⁴⁵. These settlers used the stone from the old Tatar settlement of Ceatalorman, which was located in the areas of Sites 4 and 5, as well as from the citadel, to construct homes and property walls on the site of the modern village. The only archaeological evidence that remains to attest to the presence of Tatar settlers are the green-glazed ceramics scattered across both sites. The fate of the Tatar settlement which the Muntenian settlers thoroughly cleared of all usable stone may serve as a model for other abandoned ancient sites in central Dobrogea.

The scatter of Late Roman and Early Medieval ceramics extends from the citadel to the Valea lui Pană, one kilometer to the northeast, and 750 m to the southwest along the village's southeast margin. It also extends as much as 500 m back from the Pantelimonul stream. The ceramic evidence, therefore, indicates an extensive settlement occupying a two kilometer stretch along the Pantelimonul stream's left bank⁴⁶.

It is apparent from the absence of similar ceramics along the stream's right bank, from the schist quarry to the village's western margin, that the settlement did not extend in this direction. It also did not extend to the hillside north of the Valea Mare (with the exception of Site 4). The ceramic evidence appears to corroborate Pârvan's hypothesis that the citadel's extra-mural settlement extended beneath the modern village. Excavation within the village itself would be needed to further substantiate this conclusion.

The most unexpected finding to be drawn from the ceramic evidence, given Pârvan's hypotheses concerning Early Roman and pre-Roman settlement in the area, is the total absence of native La Tène and of specifically Early Roman ceramics. Nowhere in the vicinity of the citadel is there any evidence of occupation before the fourth century A.D. The only evidence of human presence before the construction of the citadel are the first century B.C. inscription found by Pârvan and a stone scraper, dating to the Upper Palaeolithic, that the author found in the streambed below the citadel. Based on the ceramic evidence alone, one would have to conclude that the area was not settled in the pre-Roman and the Early Roman epochs.

Castra Aestiua

Pârvan discovered and excavated portions of an earthen *castra* with embankment and ditch in rectangular form, which measured 220 x 150 m

⁴⁵ Pârvan, *op. cit.* I, p. 500–501.

⁴⁶ T.J. Wilkinson, *Journal of Field Archaeology* 9, 1982, p. 323–333.

covering 3.3 ha, 3 km to the east of Ulmetum at the confluence of the Pantelimonul stream and the Casimcea river⁴⁷. Pârvan believed it was a temporary camp and called it the *Castra Aestiua* or 'summer camp', because there were no stones in the embankment to serve as a nucleus or a protective covering. The absence of stones inside the earthen defenses led Pârvan to conclude that there were no permanent habitations. Based on its form alone, Pârvan dated the camp to the Early Roman period, between the reigns of Trajan and Valens. Although Pârvan mentioned the presence of ancient ceramics, he makes no record of them⁴⁸. A. S. Ștefan confirmed the existence and the layout of the *Castra Aestiua* through aerial photography but otherwise provided no new information⁴⁹.

The *Castra Aestiua* occupies a gentle southward-facing slope, which rises from 55 to 70 masl. The site is situated on open ground in a zone of blond soils, which in 1993 was covered with foot-high oats. The site could not be seen from a high vantage point on the south slope of the Pantelimonul valley. No traces of the embankment and ditch system were detected during fieldwalking.

Survey over the location of the *Castra Aestiua*, however, revealed much more information about the site than that provided by Pârvan. A gridded plan of the survey area⁵⁰, which incorporates Ștefan's aerial photograph of the *Castra Aestiua*, shows the varying densities of pottery sherds and roof tiles collected from both inside and outside the defensive system (fig. 4). High density areas outside the embankment appear to indicate extramural habitation areas. Circumscription of all 100 m passes with six-plus ceramic densities indicates a site covering as much as 10 ha.

Among the ceramics, which included fragments of amphorae, were Early Roman sherds which date mostly to the second and third centuries A.D.; a couple of sherds range in date from the second to the fourth centuries. A lack of Late Roman sherds, such as those at Ulmetum, largely confirms Pârvan's dating of the site and suggests that the site was abandoned before or during the fourth century. The absence of sherds characteristic of the post-classical periods indicates that the site was never occupied again.

⁴⁷ Pârvan, *Descoperiri*, p. 526-531.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 528.

⁴⁹ Al.-S. Ștefan, *Recherches de photo-interprétation archéologique sur le limes de la Scythie Mineure à l'époque du Bas-Empire*, in D. M. Pippidi ed., *Actes du IX^e Congrès international d'études sur les frontières romaines, Mamaia, 6-13 septembre 1972*, București, 1974, p. 95-108.

⁵⁰ The northern limit of the survey area followed the irrigation line, which extends from two barrows, located to the east of the citadel just to the south of the Pantelimonul de Jos road, to the bank of the Casimcea. The only area to the north of this line which was walked is a plot of pastureland along the Casimcea immediately north of the *Castra Aestiua*.

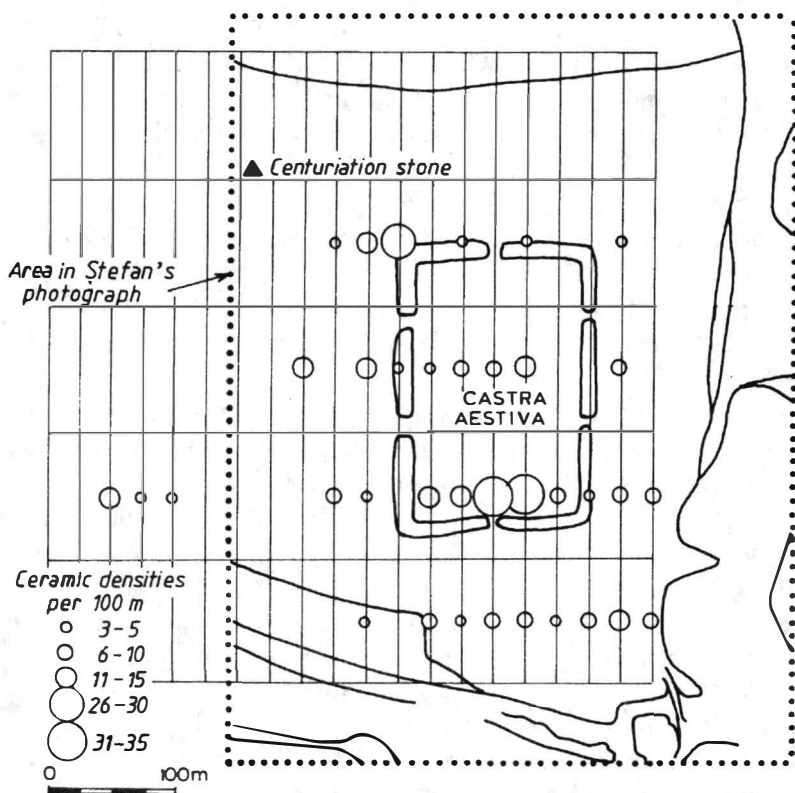


Fig. 4. Plotting of ceramic densities in the area of the *Castra Aestiua*.

Thinly scattered over the entire site were small pieces of green schist. The green schist seemed to be limited to the area of the site. Even though green schist forms the basal layer beneath the blond soils, it appears to be an otherwise uncharacteristic surface feature of this zone of blond soils. The presence of green schist only in the area of the site suggests that it arrived by human agency. The presence of green schist, a durable material which the ancient inhabitants of Dobrogea typically used to construct habitations, and roof tiles, a strong indicator of permanent habitations, on the site along with pottery sherds renders Pârvan's conclusion that the *Castra Aestiua* was a seasonal encampment untenable.

A further indication of the permanence of Roman occupation on the site is a centuriation stone or *terminus*, found outside the camp, c. 100 m to the northwest (fig. 7a-b). The stone, which measures 0.81 m high and 0.2–0.24 m thick at its base and 0.155–0.16 at the top, is inscribed on its top with a *decussis*. The *decussis* was a mark which Roman *agrimensores* typically inscribed atop each boundary marker in a centuriated landscape. The existence

of a centuriation stone in association with a permanent Early Roman encampment may indicate that a Roman colony was established here (see *addendum*).

Ceramics collected from the site also provide evidence of pre-Roman occupation. Sherds of the native Dobrogean culture of the Hallstatt and La Tène periods indicate that a native settlement existed on the site of the *Castra Aestiua* during much of the first millennium B.C. The most narrowly datable pre-Roman sherd, however, belonged to a fourth century B.C. Greek fishplate with a black slip. The sherd indicates that the pre-Roman inhabitants of the site had at least minimal contact with Greek settlements nearer the Black Sea coast.

The evidence suggests that the Roman military established a permanent encampment on the site of a pre-Roman native settlement situated at the confluence of the Casimcea and Pantelimonul streams. The evidence does not prove, of course, continuity of settlement from the pre-Roman period to the Early Roman period. Continuity does appear likely given the fact that other Early Roman *castra* were established on or near preexisting native settlements both along the right bank of the Danube and in the interior of Dobrogea. The association of a centuriation stone with an Early Roman military encampment suggests an organized colonization scheme. Inscriptions from Ulmetum mentioning *ciues Romani et Bessi consistentes* provide clues as to who may have been settled around the *Castra Aestiua*.

Runcu

Another site (6) was discovered at the end of the north survey axis, about 4.5 kilometers from the citadel, just to the south of the agricultural buildings belonging to Runcu village, where the Terzichioi river bends more to the east. The site is situated on a gentle slope just above the floodplain to the left of the river, in a fallow field, composed of blond soils. The field, 270 m wide, was bordered to the west by a grassy dump area and to the east by an area left in native grass; because of the high grass neither of these areas were surveyed. The area surveyed was about 2.7 ha. Although the whole field was strewn with sherds, the densest concentrations belong to a smaller area of c. 1 ha in the center of the survey area. The site here was limited to areas with artifact densities of ten or more per 100 m rather the six plus density figure used at the other sites because fallow allows much better visibility which facilitates higher collection rates.

At the edges of this 1 ha site appeared two very dense concentrations of sherds. One concentration in a c. 10 x 10 m area was associated with clear evidence of burning and appears to be a habitation, which had only been recently disturbed by cultivation; ceramics from the burned material date to the Hallstatt period. Across the site are scattered pieces of green schist, which again appear to be uncharacteristic of this zone of blond soils. As at the *Castra Aestiua*, the presence of green schist may be due to human agency.

The surface scatters indicate that the site was occupied in the Hallstatt, La Tène, and Roman periods as well as the eighth to eleventh centuries A.D. The Roman ceramics could not be dated exclusively to either the Early or the Late Roman periods. Like the *Castra Aestiua*, we have here a pre-Roman settlement site that was occupied again in the Roman period.

C. Scorpan mentions a Roman period site in the vicinity of Runcu at which were found “fragmente primitive lucrate cu mână, două fragmente cenușii lucrate la roată cu ornamente lustruite și un castron lucrat cu mână cu gura largă și marginea teșită, ușor spre interior”⁵¹. It is uncertain whether the site found in the survey is to be identified with Scorpan’s site, since he does not mention the pre- and post-Roman ceramics. The village of Runcu extends for more than a kilometer to the north along the left bank of the Terzichioi. Given this distance, it is possible that there are two Roman sites.

Pantelimonul de Jos

The last site (7) found during the spring of 1993 is situated on a hill slope which lies to north of the confluence of the Terzichioi with the Casimcea, about 2 km north-northwest of the *Castra Aestiua* and about 1 km northwest of Pantelimonul de Jos. The hill, composed again of blond soils, rises gently to 100 masl from the Casimcea River to the east. The southwest side of the hill has been undercut by the Terzichioi branch of the Casimcea forming an abrupt embankment. Atop this embankment sits the site.

The survey was started from a point adjacent to some abandoned farm equipment and extended to the east and the north; only a small part of the field was walked due to the fact that it was discovered on the last day of the survey. The entire field was covered with sunflowers up to 1 m in height creating conditions of very poor visibility. Despite the poor visibility, the northeast part of this site yielded the densest concentrations of ceramics found anywhere during the survey. The very dense concentrations, which were as high as 35 sherds per 50 m, included mostly Eneolithic sherds. In the same area were recovered four flint tools, two cortices, a bladelet, and a scraper; another Eneolithic bladelet was found in a plot of stony pastureland along the Casimcea river immediately to the north of the *Castra Aestiua*, about 200 m north of the irrigation line. The Eneolithic site covers an area measuring 120 × 200 m or 2.4 ha but probably extends farther north. Across the Eneolithic site were also scattered Roman ceramics. Roman ceramics which included amphorae and bricks with impressed finger marks were also scattered farther to the southeast; the lack of a significant concentration did not permit identification of a habitation nucleus. As at the Runcu site, the Roman ceramics could not be dated more narrowly to the Early or to the Late period.

⁵¹ C. Scorpan, *Pontica* 3, 1970, p. 150.

Although no Hallstatt or La Tène remains were found at the Pantelimonul de Jos site, it is possible to predict that a more complete survey will reveal such remains. The three sites with pre-Roman remains, Pantelimonul de Jos, Runcu, and *Castra Aestiva*, are located in zones of blond soils. These sites occupy gentle south-facing slopes above the alluvial soils of the Casimcea floodplain. By contrast, the citadel of Ulmetum, where no pre-Roman settlement remains have been found, is situated on a flat terrace comprised of chernozem soils and bordered by steep slopes of regosols and lithosols. The correlation between pre-Roman settlement and sites and blond soils gains validity, when the Eneolithic sites⁵², the Hallstatt and La Tène sites, and the Classical/Hellenistic sites of east central Dobrogea are plotted onto a soils map (fig. 5). All of the sites dating to these periods in the Casimcea valley are concentrated in or very near zones of blond

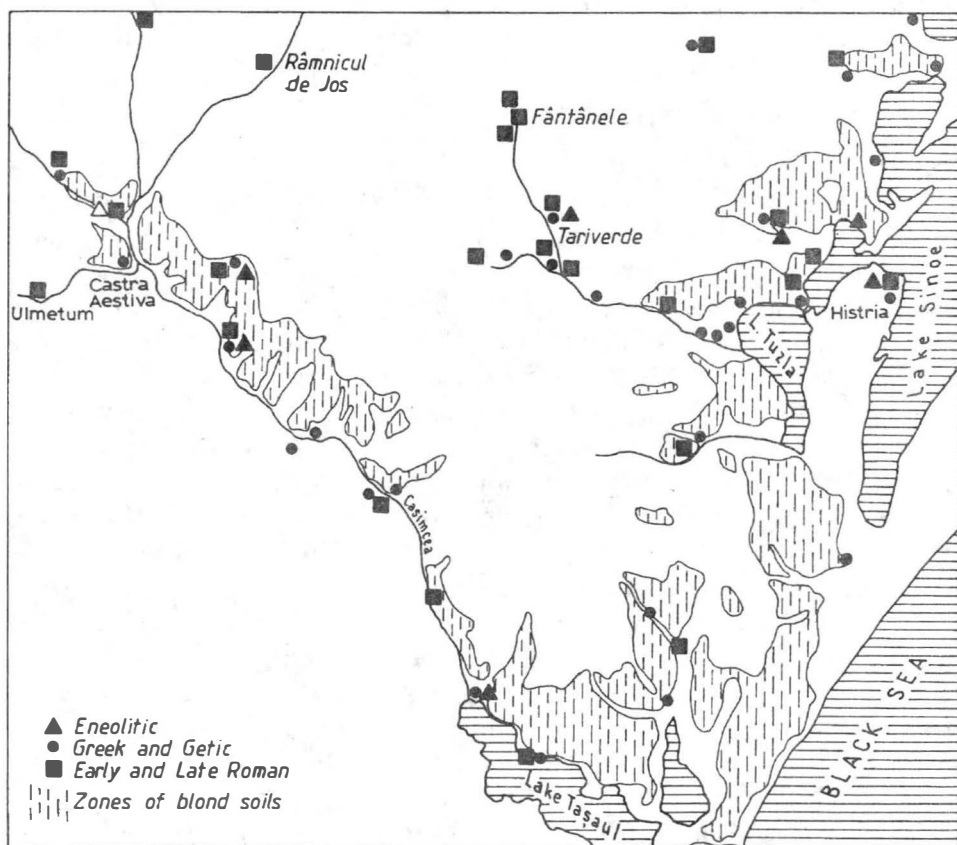


Fig. 5. Zones of blond soils and sites of pre-Roman settlement.

⁵² P. Haşotti, *Pontica* 21–22, 1988–1989, p. 7–21.

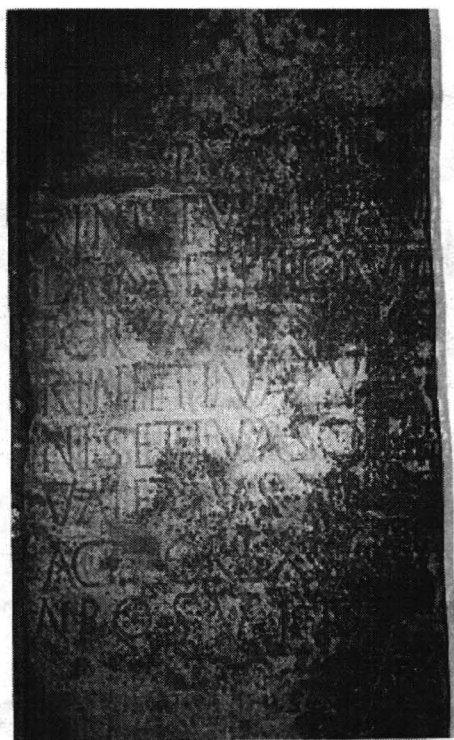
soils. Because sites belonging to these periods are less numerous than Early Roman sites, it may be inferred from the site numbers that the populations of the pre-Roman periods were less numerous than that of the Early Roman period. It was therefore possible for the pre-Roman populations to concentrate their settlements in zones which they found most favorable for agriculture. A possible explanation for this preference is that blond soils have a higher capacity to retain moisture than the more fertile chernozems; in semiarid Dobrogea higher subsoil moisture meant more successful harvests. In the Early Roman period, when the population greatly increased, agricultural settlement was extended into areas of chernozems, for example, which the pre-Roman populations had not exploited. This correlation suggests that the middle Casimcea valley, which has slopes of blond soils on the both sides of the river from Gura Dobrogei in the south to Runcu and Pantelimonul de Jos in the north, was an area favorable for settlement. Future surveys are likely to reveal more pre-Roman sites in the middle Casimcea valley than are known today.

Hypotheses

The primary goals of the survey, which were to find evidence of occupation, particularly pottery, dating to the Early Roman epoch to support the abundant epigraphic evidence for a *uicus* settlement at Pantelimonul de Sus and to find the remains of *uillae*, hypothesized from epigraphic evidence, in the vicinity of the citadel of Ulmetum, were not realized. This is due to the fact that no Early Roman ceramics were found in or near Pantelimonul de Sus and the citadel. Completely lacking also is any evidence of native settlement in the period preceding Roman intervention in Dobrogea. If not for the Early Roman inscriptions found in the citadel, the ceramic evidence would lead one to conclude that Pantelimonul de Sus was not settled before the fourth century A.D.

There are two possible explanations for the lack of linkage between the ceramic record and the epigraphic record. The *uicus* of Ulmetum and its necropolis remain completely interred beneath the village of Pantelimonul de Sus. Or the *uicus*, its necropolis, and the villas were all located elsewhere, either farther up the surrounding hills at some distance from the springs or outside the Pantelimonul valley entirely.

Given the lack of new archaeological evidence for Early Roman settlement around Pantelimonul de Sus, the *Castra Aestiua* emerges as the most important Early Roman site in the survey area. The structural features of the camp along with the ceramic evidence confirm Pârvan's dating of the *Castra Aestiua* to the Early Roman epoch. The measurements of the camp,



1

2



3



4

Fig. 66. Ulmetum. 1. Valerius Nilus monument; 2. Aelius L... monument; 3. uninscribed monument; 4. architectural fragment.

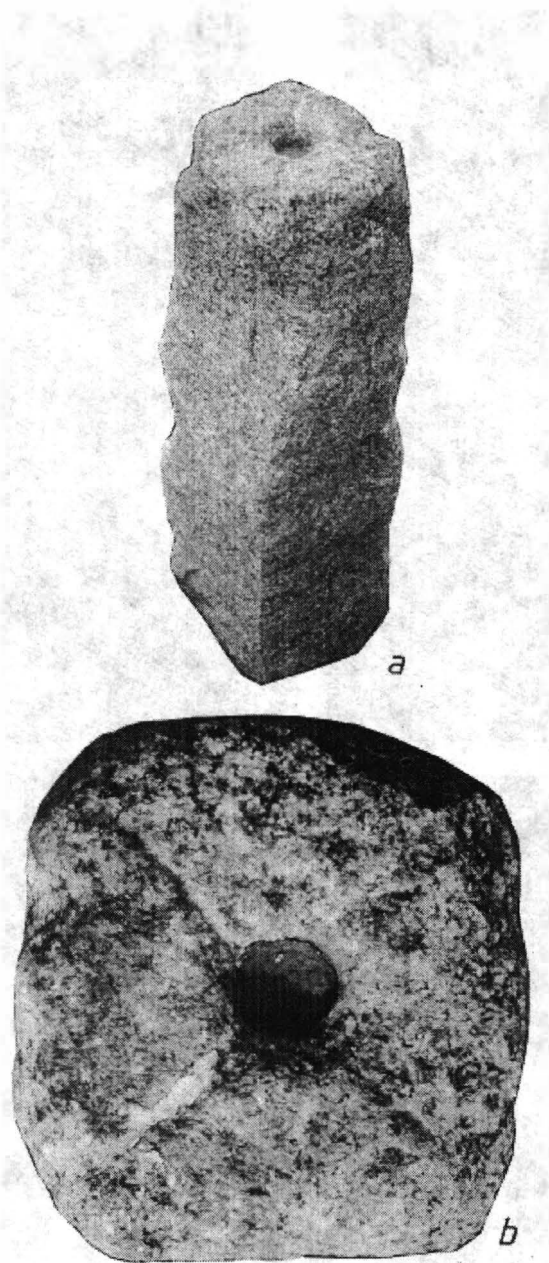


Fig. 7. a-b centuriation stone at the *Castra Aestiua*.

220 x 150 m, fit remarkably well the 3:2 ratio of length to width, recommended for a legionary camp in the *de Munitionibus Castrorum*⁵³, a treatise written in the second or the third century A.D.⁵⁴ If ten meters are allowed for the camp's embankment-and-ditch system, the camp proper measures 210 x 140 m or 6 x 4 *actus*, a perfect 3:2 ratio. The gateways of the camp appear to be provided with *tituli*; *titulus*-type gateway constructions date to the period between Claudius and Septimius Severus⁵⁵.

Pârvan's conclusion, however, that the camp was only seasonally occupied and without permanent habitations, is refuted on the basis of pottery sherds and roof tiles found on the site. More recent research shows that Early Roman encampments along Rome's northern frontier were typically constructed of turf and timber, not of stone⁵⁶. A large proportion of these timber-and-turf encampments, even though they were permanently occupied, were never rebuilt in stone. Even though many fortifications dating to the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian were constructed *de nouo* from stone, many others, especially the auxiliary forts, were still constructed in turf and timber. The 3.3 ha area of the *Castra Aestiua* places it in the class of auxiliary forts, which continued to be erected in earth and timber in the Flavian period, when many legionary forts were being rebuilt in stone⁵⁷.

That the camp was intended to be permanently occupied can also be inferred from the centuriation stone. The stone is evidence of the Roman authorities' intention to colonize the land and to establish a permanent settlement around the camp. Centuriation of the landscape surrounding the *Castra Aestiua*, because it involved a considerable investment of manpower, time and money, would not have been undertaken if the camp and the civil settlement were not intended to be permanent.

The strategic importance of the *Castra Aestiua* has never been fully realized in the archaeological and historical literature. This is due to the importance which Pârvan accorded to the site at Pantelimonul de Sus. Pârvan hypothesized the existence of a permanent camp to explain why the settlement here achieved *uicus* status at such an early date (before A.D. 140). Consequently, he reckoned that the *Castra Aestiua* was only a marching camp that the garrison at Pantelimonul de Sus used during summer campaigns. Given the new evidence, pottery, roof tiles, and green schist, that the *Castra Aestiua* was a permanently occupied encampment, and a centuriation

⁵³ A. Johnson, *Roman Forts of the 1st and 2nd Centuries AD in Britain and the German Provinces*, New York, p. 31.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3, suggests that the treatise was written no later than Marcus Aurelius, while the OCD dates it to the third century.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 59–65.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 250.

stone which indicates that the *Castra* was the centerpoint of a colonization scheme for settling Roman citizens and Bessi, we can assign much greater importance to the *Castra* site.

It appears now that the *Castra Aestiua* was sited in the midst of an enclave of native settlement in the middle Casimcea valley. The existence of native settlements at the *Castra* itself and at Runcu are certain. The camp's position on open ground in the lowland is fairly typical of Early Roman encampments elsewhere⁵⁸. Such positions allowed the garrisons to deploy quickly against native populations. The garrison of the *Castra Aestiua* was aided in its efforts to oversee the native Dobrogean population by the construction of a road through central Dobrogea, linking the *Castra* to Tropaeum Traiani in the south and to Ibida and Noviodunum in the north.

The existence of a main road through central Dobrogea is a hypothesis that Pârvan constructed on the basis of locations of important Early Roman sites and of milestones⁵⁹. That this road followed the course of Casimcea is based on two pieces of information, the position of the *Castra Aestiua* and the altar of Aelius Ingenuus found by tomb robbers near Râmnicul de Jos, four kilometers to the north. The altar, dated to the second and to the first half of the third century, identified Aelius Ingenuus as a *beneficiarius consularis* detached from the *legio XI Claudia*⁶⁰. Because a *beneficiarius consularis* typically served at a *statio* or road station, Pârvan hypothesized the existence of such a road station between Râmnicul de Jos and Nistorești. Given the short distance between Râmnicul de Jos and the permanently occupied *Castra Aestiua*, it is possible that Aelius Ingenuus was stationed at the *Castra*.

With the emergence of the *Castra Aestiua* as the focal point of Roman domination and of Early Roman colonization and settlement in central Dobrogea, the existence of a *uicus* at Pantelimonul de Sus appears to be less likely. The lack of Early Roman ceramic cooking pots, tableware, and storage vessels leaves us without an archaeologically attested settlement context to which we might connect the numerous Early Roman epigraphic monuments. There is at present only one solution to this quandary: the *uicus Ulmetum* mentioned in three inscriptions was not located at the citadel site but at the *Castra Aestiua* or one of the other Early Roman settlements known to have existed in the Casimcea valley.

The *Castra Aestiua* is a likely candidate, given its proximity and importance. Furthermore, the ceramic evidence indicates that it was abandoned at about the same time (c. A.D. 300) that settlement began on the citadel

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁵⁹ Pârvan, *Ulmetum* I, p. 577–578.

⁶⁰ *Idem*, *Descoperiri*, p. 518–526 and Doruțiu-Boilă, SCIV 15, 1964, 1, p. 131 and n. 2.

site. It appears that the inhabitants of the *Castra Aestiua* moved their settlement from its lowland position in the Casimcea valley to a more inaccessible and defensible position near the springs of the Pantelimonul valley. Here they proceeded to erect the citadel, using the epigraphic monuments erected in and around the old settlement. They may have even transported most of the green schist from the old to the new settlement. The series of Gothic invasions, which hit Dobrogea from A.D. 238 to 284, may very well have prompted the inhabitants of the *Castra Aestiua* site to move their settlement to the less visible and less accessible citadel site. This sort of settlement shift occurred all along Rome's northern frontier in response to the barbarian invasions⁶¹.

Scholars have argued that specific monuments, such as that of Aelius L..., were transported from abandoned settlements at a considerable distance for construction of the citadel. If we accept that monuments came from farther afield than the *Castra Aestiua*, we must also admit that many of the stones may have come from the *Castra*. That few stones are to be found at the *Castra* today need not deter us. Pârvan's account of the dismantling of Ceatalorman, the abandoned Tatar settlement, by the Muntenian settlers of Pantelimonul de Sus, and the scanty remains attesting to its existence, illustrates the thoroughness with which later inhabitants could obliterate the archaeological remains of an earlier settlement.

A second candidate for the *uicus Vlmetum* is the unresearched Roman settlement site at Râmnicul de Jos, from which according to Emilia Doruțiu-Boilă an altar dedicated to Antoninus Pius originated⁶². Reconstructions of the inscription have suggested that the dedicators were the Roman citizens and veterans of *[ui]co V...* Current readings of the inscription, therefore, suggest that there were two *uicus* settlements in the middle Casimcea valley. But, if we take into account the fact that an upper case *u* in standard Early Roman orthography was inscribed as an upper case *v*, it is possible to suggest an alternate reading of the inscription. In the inscription the *u*'s of 'sacrum', 'salute', and 'Aug(ustus)' are consistently inscribed as upper case *v*'s. *[Vi]co V...* could also be read as *[Vi]co V[Imeto]*. If this suggestion is accepted, we have a fourth inscription that mentions the *Vicus Vlmetum* rather than a second *uicus*. It is also possible that the inscription's dedicators were Roman citizens and veterans residing in the *Castra* settlement rather than the Râmnicul de Jos settlement, pursuant to the earlier suggestion that the *beneficiarius consularis*, Aelius Ingenuus, and a detachment of his legion, *legio XI Claudia*, may have been stationed at the *Castra Aestiua*.

⁶¹ S. Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications*, Totowa, NJ, 1983, p. 249.

⁶² CIL III, 14442; Doruțiu-Boilă, *op. cit.*

Conclusion

The intensive survey, conducted in the environs of Pantelimonul de Sus in the spring of 1993, made extensive use of a form of archaeological evidence, which Vasile Pârvan largely disregarded, ceramics. Because Pârvan concentrated almost exclusively on architectural remains and epigraphic monuments, the reserve of archaeological data contained in the ancient ceramics scattered around the citadel and across the surrounding countryside remained untapped. Tapping into this reserve was expected to reveal the locations of villas, hypothesized on the basis of epigraphic information, and of other sites surrounding the citadel. Ulmetum, which Pârvan had deemed to be a multi-period site occupied from pre-Roman times to the end of classical antiquity, was expected to be an index against which sites found during the course of the survey could be measured. Consequently, the results of the survey were unexpected and new hypotheses had to be formulated to explain them.

Pârvan's hypothesis that the *uicus* of Ulmetum was located at Pantelimonul de Sus was based on four epigraphic monuments found in the citadel. The absence of Early Roman ceramics in and around the citadel have rendered this hypothesis improbable. Because of the absence of ceramics on the surrounding hill slopes, it appears unlikely that there were any villas in the vicinity of the citadel. On the other hand, the spread of Late Roman ceramics across the terraces to the east of the village and along its southeast margin indicates a very extensive Late Roman extramural settlement. The Early Roman epigraphic monuments probably came from settlement sites in the Casimcea valley, such as the *Castra Aestiua*, which were dismantled when the inhabitants moved to a more protected position at the head of the Pantelimonul valley. The shifting of the settlement and the construction of the citadel were responses to the long series of barbarian invasions in the third century A.D.

Survey of the *Castra Aestiua* site has brought to light archaeological evidence that the site was occupied during Hallstatt, La Tène, and Early Roman periods. The lack of Late Roman ceramics indicates that the site was abandoned about the same time that the citadel was established. The combined evidence of Early Roman pottery, roof tiles, and a centuriation stone provide proof that the *Castra* was a permanently occupied encampment, not a seasonally occupied marching camp as Pârvan suggested. The *Castra Aestiua* appears to have been the focal point of Early Roman colonization and settlement in the middle Casimcea valley.

Examination of the pottery sherds scattered across the surface of four sites discussed in this report has resulted in fuller chronologies than have

heretofore appeared in the archaeological literature. Only the Pantelimonul de Jos site appears to be an unknown site. From this evidence it has been suggested that ancient settlement was first concentrated on the blond soils bordering the Casimcea river and then spread out from this center as settlement numbers increased. Although other Roman settlement sites in the middle Casimcea, at Cheia, Grădina, Râmnicul de Jos, and Nistorești, are known, the full chronologies of occupation may yet be incomplete. Of the four localities only Cheia has yielded evidence of La Tène or Hellenistic settlement⁶³. Continuation of the survey, which only touched on the Casimcea valley, on a more intensive level is needed to further validate the survey results, to reexamine previously discovered Roman sites to determine the full chronologies of occupation, and to search for the remains of unknown sites in the interstices. Only with such research will we begin to understand the full impact of Roman intervention on the native population of the Casimcea valley.

The citadel of Ulmetum, the best preserved and the most extensively investigated site in central Dobrogea, will continue to occupy a central place in archaeological research. Given the conflicting hypotheses about the site, Pârvan's and the ones presented here, reexcavation is clearly a priority. Questions about the chronology of the site need to be settled. While attention needs to be given to the post-Romans levels of occupation, which Pârvan only very summarily recorded, future excavations must reach below the Late Roman strata to determine with certainty whether or not the site was occupied in the Early Roman period.

Addendum: Boundary stone of the Castra Aestiua

The boundary stone, possibly of granite, measures 0.81 m high with horizontal dimensions of 0.2 x 0.24 m at the base and 0.155 x 0.16 m at the top. The sides and base of the stone are roughly hewn but carefully fashioned so that it can stand upright without support. The stone bears no inscription on its sides (fig. 7a–b).

The top of the stone was carefully smoothed. Into its center was drilled a hole 0.095 m deep. From the central hole to the four corners radiate lines, inscribed into the smoothed surface. The central hole and the radiating lines form a *decussis*, which the Roman *agrimensores* inscribed into boundary stones delimiting the centuries of a centuriated landscape.

The *decussis* is attested on centuriation or, properly speaking, delimita-

⁶³ M. Irimia, *Pontica* 13, 1980, p. 80, n. 131, mentions a habitation level with hearths and third century B.C. Greek ceramics. V. Sirbu, *Pontica* 16, 1983, p. 45, mentions a Thasian amphora stamp dating to 370–330 B.C.

tion stones from Italy and Tunisia. CIL I, 2639, which was found at Atina in Lucania, is incised with lines radiating from a central circle or *O*⁶⁴. This cylindrical stone bears an inscription identifying the commission of three for judging and assigning lands, C. Sempronius, A. Claudius and P. Licinius. Mention of this commission dates the stone to 132/131 B.C. A second example of the *decussis* is found on a rectangular centuriation stone dating to the reign of Tiberius⁶⁵. The stone was found at the foot of Djebel Oum Ali in Tunisia. The *decussis* is formed by a rough circular depression from which radiate incised lines that bisect the sides of the stone. Its dimensions are 0.65 × 0.33 × 0.24 m. The inscription on its side gives its location in the centuriation scheme: *D(extra) D(ecumani) LXXXX, V(ltra) K(ardinem) CCXXXV*.

The Roman *agrimensores* inscribed *decusses* on boundary stones to permanently mark where lines of a survey, oriented to the major points of the compass, intersected on the ground⁶⁶. A stone bearing a *decussis* would have marked the point on the ground where the land surveyor had set up his *groma*. E. H. Warmington has suggested that stone *termini* would have marked only the corners of centuries, while oaken stakes would have marked individual plots within each century⁶⁷. If roads corresponded to the *limites* of centuries, the *termini* of the centuriated landscape would also have marked the main crossroads⁶⁸. The arms of the *decussis* on the *terminus* at the absolute center of the centuriation survey would probably been marked with the letters *KM* for *kardo maximus* and *DM* for *decumanus maximus*⁶⁹.

How the center of the *decussis* was typically indicated on centuriation stones is uncertain. The editor of CIL I, 2639 does not indicate how the center was formed. On the Tunisian stone the center appears to have been formed by rough chiseling. On the *Castra Aestiua* stone the center was clearly bored or drilled with great care. Given this care and the depth of the hole, it is possible that the hole was intended to support a land surveying instrument of some sort such as a sighting pole. Another possible function for such a hole is suggested in the *de terminibus* section of the *Corpus Agrimensorum*: "If a boundary stone is hewn square and has a dot on its side, it indicates a spring. But if it has a hollow on top, it indicates a well at the boundary"⁷⁰. This leaves the question: Did the hole atop the *Castra Aestiua* stone function merely as a topographic indicator for the existence of a well or did it serve a function in the actual surveying of the land?

⁶⁴ E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* IV, Cambridge, 1940, p. 166–169.

⁶⁵ P. Troussset, *Antiquités Africaines* 12, 1978, p. 127–129 and fig. 3.

⁶⁶ Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 164, n. 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 166.

⁶⁸ O. A. W. Dilke, *The Roman Land Surveyors*, New York, 1971, p. 89.

⁶⁹ Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁷⁰ Dilke, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

That the *terminus* marked a corner or intersection in the centuriated landscape around the *Castra Aestiua* is fairly certain. Because the stone has no inscription indicating its position in the centuriation scheme, we cannot know which corner or intersection the stone would have marked or how much land was centuriated. But, given that the area of the site, 10 plus ha, which includes both the intramural and extramural areas, is only a fraction of the area of a single century, 200 *iugera* or 50.4 ha, it is possible that only a single stone was needed. The *agrimensor* may have set one stone as a benchmark from which the camp and the settlement was laid out. In the case of the *Castra Aestiua* it may not have been necessary to indicate the *decumanus* and *kardo* but only the *gromae locus*, the central point in a military camp⁷¹.

Given the lack of inscription, the stone can only be dated by its shape and by its archaeological context. The fact that the stone is nearly square in section dates it to the Empire⁷²; the rectangular Tunisian stone noted above is dated to the reign of Tiberius. Centuriation stones of the Republican era, on the other hand, were cylindrical. Its association with an Early Roman encampment likewise suggests an Early Roman date.

To arrive at a more precise date, it is necessary to consider the historical context in which the camp was established and the surrounding landscape centuriated. O.A.W. Dilke notes: "Since colonies were normally established on *ager publicus*, centuriation came to be commonly associated with colonies"⁷³. *Ager publicus* or conquered land taken from the native inhabitants of Dobrogea was available for colonization and settlement as early as 72 B.C., when M. Terentius Varro Lucullus suppressed the native populations in the region. However, the earliest direct evidence for colonization in central Dobrogea is ISM V, 62, dated to A.D. 140, which mentions the *ciues Romani et Bessi consistentes* of the *uicus Vlmetum*. If it is accepted that the centuriation scheme at *Castra Aestiua* was intended to receive some of these settlers, this inscription gives us a certain *terminus ante quem*.

It is unlikely that an organized colonization of veterans or citizens in Dobrogea would have occurred before 29 B.C., given the unstable sociopolitical situation in Italy up to that time. In the years following his consolidation of power, Augustus appears to have settled his veterans in Italy itself. Furthermore, organized colonization is unlikely to have occurred before the annexation of the province of Moesia Inferior, including Dobrogea, in the first century A.D. The date of this annexation is an unresolved question.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 103.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

While historical tradition places it at A.D. 46, scholars have argued for dates as early as the reign of Tiberius or as late as the reign of Vespasian⁷⁴.

The two letters of Flavius Sabinus, dating to A.D. 50 and 56 respectively, indicate that the Roman administration was already actively engaged in settling boundary disputes in central Dobrogea before the reign of Vespasian⁷⁵. It is, of course, difficult to imagine Flavius Sabinus settling such disputes without access to troops, even though "no permanent military unit is attested, either epigraphically or archaeologically in Dobrogea until the reign of Vespasian"⁷⁶. If Sabinus had troops at his command, there must have been camps for quartering them at this early date. If Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus did indeed settle a significant number of transdanubians in Dobrogea between A.D. 57 and 67, his soldiers would have needed permanent encampments from which to oversee these people⁷⁷. It is on the basis of such evidence that Vasile Pârvan concluded that the province of Moesia had been settled by Roman civilians and had already been thoroughly romanized by the start of the second century A.D.

Since it appears likely that the *Castra Aestiua* was established sometime between Sabinus' activities and Trajan's Dacian wars, it is suggested that the centuriation stone should date to this period. Still, to argue definitively for an earlier or a later date for the camp's construction or for the establishment of the centuriation scheme requires more evidence than is currently available. A more thorough archaeological reinvestigation of the *Castra Aestiua* is needed to resolve this issue.

O CERCETARE INTENSIVĂ ASUPRA ÎMPREJURIMILOR CETĂȚII ROMANE TÂRZII DE LA ULMETUM

REZUMAT

Cetatea de la Ulmetum (Pantelimonul de Sus, jud. Constanța), cercetată în 1911–1914 de Vasile Pârvan, a fost datată în epoca romană târzie, săpăturile arheologice nerelevând nici o locuire de epocă romană timpurie. Pe de altă parte, descoperirile epigrafice (inscripții încastrate în zidul de incintă al cetății) atestă în sec. II–III un *uicus Vlmetum* și sugerează existența unor *uillae*, în vreme ce săpăturile efectuate de Pârvan la 3 km est de cetate au condus la descoperirea unui castru. Interpretând rezultatele cercetărilor sale,

⁷⁴ A. Aricescu, *The Army in Roman Dobrudja*, Oxford, 1980, p. 6–7.

⁷⁵ J. H. Oliver, GRBS 6, 1965, p. 155.

⁷⁶ Aricescu, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ CIL III, 14 442.

Pârvan susținea existența unui *uicus* care ar fi precedat cetatea târzie și, alături de acesta, a unui castru sezonier (*Castra Aestiua*).

Autorul a procedat la o cercetare intensivă de suprafață (mai–iunie 1993), atât pe teritoriul cetății, cât și în împrejurimi (*Castra Aestiua*, Runcu etc.), urmărind îndeosebi distribuția spațială și cronologică a materialului ceramic (pentru metodă vezi n. 28–34). Confirmând, pe de o parte, lipsa materialelor de epocă romană timpurie pe teritoriul cetății Ulmetum, pe de altă parte, existența acestora în perimetrul castrului situat în apropiere (interpretat ca un castru permanent, nu sezonier, de epocă flaviană), autorul presupune că o așezare civilă compusă din coloniștii romani și bessi atestați de inscripții constituită în jurul acestui castru ar putea fi identificată cu *uicus Vlmetum* menționat de monumentele epigrafice. Mai mult decât atât, descoperirea unei borne de hotar (vezi *addendum*) databile, după formă, în sec. I p.Chr., ar putea indica o *centuriatio* în zonă, efectuată cândva între legația moesică a lui Flavius Sabinus și războaiele daco–romane ale lui Traian.

Un alt candidat la identificarea cu *uicus Vlmetum* ar fi situl (necercetat) de la Râmnicul de Jos: aici s-a descoperit inscripția fragmentară CIL III 14 442, în care *[ui]co V[- -]* poate fi întregit *[ui]co V[lmeto]*.

EXPLICAȚIA FIGURILOR

Fig. 1. Împrejurimile cetății Ulmetum.

Fig. 2. Ulmetum. Planul cetății cu locurile de descoperire a inscripțiilor. 1 Ulm. I, nr. 6 (sec. III p.Chr.); 2 Ulm. I, nr. 5 (sec. III p.Chr.); 3 Ulm. II.2, nr. 3 (sfârșitul sec. II p.Chr.); 4 Ulm. I, nr. 7 (sec. II–III p.Chr.); 5 Ulm. II.2, nr. 6 (sec. II p.Chr.); 6 ISM V, nr. 77 (sec. II p.Chr.); 7 Ulm. II.2, nr. 10 (sec. VI p.Chr.); 8 Ulm. II.2, nr. 7 (sec. II p.Chr.); 9 Ulm. II.2, nr. 8 (172 p.Chr.); 10 Ulm. II.2, nr. 13 (241–244 p.Chr.); 11 Ulm. II.2, nr. 14 (sec. III p.Chr.); 12 Ulm. I, nr. 11 (sec. III p.Chr.); 13 Ulm. I, nr. 12 (sec. III p.Chr.); 14 Ulm. I, nr. 13 (sec. II p.Chr.); 15 Ulm. II.2, nr. 15 (178 p.Chr.); 16 Ulm. I, nr. 14 (sec. II p.Chr.); 17 Ulm. I, nr. 15 (sec. II p.Chr.); 18 Ulm. II.2, nr. 16 (163 p.Chr.); 19 Ulm. III, nr. 11 (sec. II p.Chr.); 20 Ulm. II.2, nr. 18 (sec. II–III p.Chr.); 21 Ulm. II.2, nr. 19 (sec. II p.Chr.); 22 Ulm. II.2, nr. 20 (sec. III p.Chr.); 23 Ulm. II.2, nr. 22 (191 p.Chr.); 24 Ulm. III, nr. 12 (198–209 p.Chr.); 25 Ulm. I.2, nr. 23 (sec. VI p.Chr.); 26 Ulm. II.2, nr. 25 (324 p.Chr.); 27 Ulm. II.2, nr. 27 (sec. III p.Chr.); 28 Ulm. I, nr. 3 (sec. V p.Chr.); 29 Ulm. I, nr. 2 (sec. II p.Chr.); 30 Ulm. II.2, nr. 29 (sec. II p.Chr.); 31 Ulm. III, nr. 10 (sec. II p.Chr. A.D.); □ fragmente descoperite în dărâmături.

Fig. 3. Ulmetum. Planul siturilor 4 și 5.

Fig. 4. *Castra Aestiua*. Distribuția descoperirilor ceramice în aria cercetată.

Fig. 5. Zonele de soluri galbene și siturile pre-romane.

Fig. 6. Ulmetum. 1 monumentul dedicat lui Valerius Nilus; 2 monumentul dedicat lui Aelius L...; 3 monument anepigraf; 4 fragment arhitectural.

Fig. 7. a–b piatră de centuriatie de la *Castra Aestiua*.

