EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

XXXII
2022

EDITURA ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE

EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

XXXII
2022

ROMANIAN ACADEMY
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF ART CLUJ-NAPOCA

Responsible of the volume: Aurel Rustoiu

În ţară revista se poate procura prin poştă, pe bază de abonament la: EDITURA ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE, Calea 13 Septembrie nr. 13, sector 5, P. O. Box 5–42, Bucureşti, România, RO–76117, Tel. 021–411.90.08, 021–410.32.00; fax. 021–410.39.83; RODIPET SA, Piaţa Presei Libere nr. 1, Sector 1, P. O. Box 33–57, Fax 021–222.64.07. Tel. 021–618.51.03, 021–222.41.26, Bucureşti, România; ORION PRESS IMPEX 2000, P. O. Box 77–19, Bucureşti 3 – România, Tel. 021–301.87.86, 021–335.02.96.

EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

Any correspondence will be sent to the editor:
INSTITUTUL DE ARHEOLOGIE ŞI ISTORIA ARTEI
Str. M. Kogălniceanu nr. 12–14, 400084 Cluj-Napoca, RO
e-mail: choprean@yahoo.com

DTP şi tipar: MEGA PRINT
Coperta: Roxana Sfârlea

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
INSTITUTUL DE ARHEOLOGIE ŞI ISTORIA ARTEI

EPHEMERIS NAPOCENSIS

XXXII
2022

EDITURA ACADEMIEI ROMÂNE

SUMAR – SOMMAIRE – CONTENTS – INHALT

STUDIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHICAL NOTES

REVIEWS

IN MEMORIAM

COMMENTARIA ARCHAEOLOGICA ET HISTORICA (V). 1. ABOUT THE LEGIONARY FORT AT SARMIZEGETUSA IN AD 102–205 (CASSIUS DIO 68.9.7). 2. THE DESTINY OF THE "DACIAN GOLD". ABOUT A KOSON TYPE COIN REUSED IN THE 16TH CENTURY IN A CHRISTIAN (RENAISSANCE) CONTEXT*

Aurel Rustoiu[1]

Abstract: *1. About the legionary fort at Sarmizegetusa in AD 102–105 (Cassius Dio 68.9.7). Cassius Dio (68.9.7) writes that after the end of the first Dacian war of Trajan, in 102 AD, the emperor left a legion in Dacia at Sarmizegetusa and auxiliary troops in other locations. Over time, the fragmentary accounts of Cassius Dio have been interpreted in two main ways. On one hand, the presence of a legionary fort was presumed in Hațeg Country, on the territory of future Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica Sarmizegetusa. On the other hand, this fort (stratopedon) was presumed to have functioned in the Orăștie Mountains, in or next to the Dacian fortress at Grădiștea de Munte, the residence of King Decebalus. The debate has recently been reopened by F. Matei-Popescu and O. Țentea. They place this Roman fort in the Orăștie Mountains, in the close vicinity of the former residence of King Decebalus. Their arguments are based mostly on the recently acquired LiDAR images of the area in question. On these images appears an almost rectangular earthen structure which preceded the stone enclosure and was also ascribed to a Roman fort built after the conquest of Dacia. F. Matei-Popescu and O. Țentea consider that, if the stone enclosure belongs to the period after the second Dacian war of Trajan, the enclosure having an earthen wall must be older, belonging to the period between the two Dacian wars, that is, between AD 102 and 105, this being the fort mentioned in the fragmentary accounts of Cassius Dio. Analysing the available information, the author concluding that the earthen fort from Grădiștea de Munte was more likely built in the context of the second Dacian war, in 105/106 AD. The stratopedon mentioned by Cassius Dio was more likely located on the future place of Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica Sarmizegetusa. Finally, the name of the royal residence of Decebalus, it is less likely to be Sarmizegetusa. This was more likely the indigenous toponym of the place where Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica was later established. The possible identification with Ranisstorum, the place where Tiberius Claudius Maximus brought the severed head and right hand of King Decebalus to Trajan to be shown to the army, can be perhaps taken into the consideration as a working hypothesis.*

2. The destiny of the "Dacian gold". About a Koson-type coin reused in the 16th century in a Christian (Renaissance) context. The "Dacian gold" fired the imagination of many people each time a hoard emerged in the mountains hosting the ruins of the royal residence of King Decebalus. One of the largest hoards was discovered in 1543 (containing coins of Lysimachus and perhaps Koson-types). Before this great hoard, a document from 1494 mentions the discovery in 1491 of a hoard consisting of "small and big" gold coins by some gold panners in the vicinity of Sebeș. There was already a number of Koson-type coins "in circulation" among the Renaissance collectors of antiquities at the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century. In 1520 Erasmus of Rotterdam describes and tries to identify a Koson-type coin, an issue which

* This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0566, within PNCDI III. For previous comments, see RUSTOIU 2012; RUSTOIU 2016a; RUSTOIU 2020; RUSTOIU 2021.

[1] Academia Română, filiala Cluj-Napoca. Institutul de Arheologie și Istoria Artei. Str. M. Kogălniceanu 12–14, 400084 Cluj-Napoca, Romania. E-mail: aurelrustoiu@yahoo.com

have also caused difficulties to other scholars. In this context, the author is analysing a liturgical chalice of the first half of the 16th century, which was once in Alba Iulia and is now preserved in the collections of the Catholic Cathedral of Nitra, Slovakia. The chalice is decorated with ancient gold coins. Among them is a Koson-type coin. Both the manufacturing and the biography of the chalice are relevant from the perspective of the destiny of "Dacian gold" during the late Renaissance. The vessel was first mentioned in an inventory from 1531 of the treasury of the Catholic Cathedral at Alba Iulia. The chalice was donated by a certain Udalricus of Buda, who was the prebendary of a cathedral chapel between 1504 and 1523. At a later date, the chalice was owned by Paul Bornemisza, who was Bishop of Alba Iulia in 1553–1556. He had to leave Transylvania, becoming Bishop of Nitra in 1557. On this occasion he brought over the chalice decorated with ancient gold coins. Udalricus of Buda was a member of the Renaissance humanist circle from Alba Iulia, which included a number of scholars, publishers of ancient texts, epigraphists and antiquities collectors. It might be presumed that the Koson-type coin which Erasmus of Rotterdam attempted to analyse was received through the connections with the humanist scholars from Alba Iulia. This coin, as well as the one inserted into the chalice of Udalricus, could have belonged to a hoard which was perhaps discovered a few decades before the one from 1543. Perhaps the coins in question were found in 1491 by the gold panners from Sebeș. It is however certain that the interest of the Transylvanian and European humanist scholars in this kind of "exotic" discoveries arose during this period, alongside the interest in other types of antiquities of the pre-Roman and Roman Dacia. The chalice from Nitra includes probably the oldest discovery of a Koson-type coin for which we have so far the physical evidence.

Keywords: *Dacian wars, Trajan, Decebalus, Sarmizegetusa, Ranisstorum, Dacian gold, Koson, Rennaisance.*

1. About the legionary fort at Sarmizegetusa in AD 102–105 (Cassius Dio 68.9.7)

Cassius Dio (68.9.7) writes that after the end of the first Dacian war of Trajan, the emperor left a legion in Dacia at Sarmizegetusa and auxiliary troops in other locations. The territory southward the Carpathians and down to the lower Danube (where the Hunt papyrus mentions troops belonging to the army of the southern Danubian province[2]) were put under the authority of the governor of Moesia Inferior, while the territories in Banat, Hațeg Country and perhaps on the lower Mureș valley were administered by the governor of Moesia Superior[3].

Over time, the fragmentary accounts of Cassius Dio have been interpreted in two main ways. On one hand, the presence of a legionary fort was presumed in Hațeg Country, on the territory of future Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica Sarmizegetusa[4]. On the other hand, this fort (*stratopedon* in the Greek text of Cassius Dio, considered to be synonym with the Latin *castra*[5]) was presumed to have functioned in the Orăștie Mountains, in or next to the Dacian fortress at Grădiștea de Munte[6], the residence of King Decebalus.

The debate has recently been reopened by two colleagues from Bucharest, one a well-known epigraphy specialist, the other an archaeologist[7]. They place this Roman fort in the Orăștie Mountains, in the close vicinity of the former residence of King Decebalus. Their arguments are based on epigraphic information and older or newer archaeological observations, but mostly on the recently acquired LiDAR images of the area in question[8] (Fig. 1). On these images appears an almost rectangular earthen structure, already known and surveyed through test-trenches by the archaeological team from Grădiștea de Munte many years ago (albeit the

[2] See, for example, VULPE 1976, 121, 140; MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2006, 92–92; MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 216–218; MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, 607 etc.

[3] MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2006, 79; MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, 607–608.

[4] See, for example, DAICOVICIU 1960, 307–308; DAICOVICIU 1972, 327–328 etc.

[5] MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, 602–603.

[6] PETOLESCU 1991, 70; OPREANU 1999–2000 etc.

[7] MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021. See also MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2017, 163–164.

[8] OLTEAN/HANSON 2017.

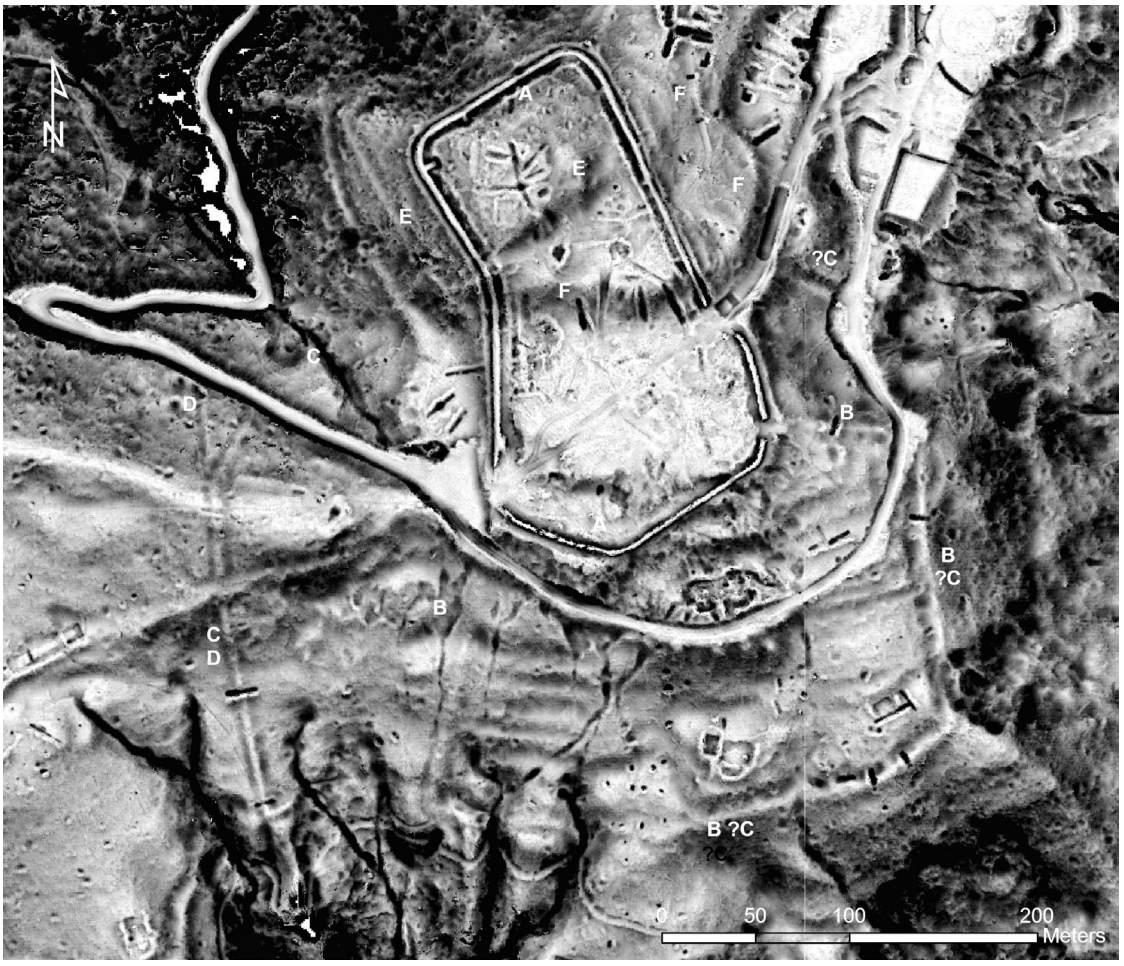


Fig. 1. LiDAR image of the fortifications at Grădiștea de Munte (after OLTEAN/HANSON 2017)

results were never fully published), which preceded the stone enclosure that is still visible today and was also ascribed to a Roman fort built after the conquest of Dacia[9]. F. Matei-Popescu and O. Țentea consider that, if the stone enclosure belongs to the period after the second Dacian war of Trajan (the core of this wall contains not only architectural spolia originating from the area of the Dacian sanctuaries on the terraces X and XI, but also sculptural and epigraphic fragments related to some Roman military units which participated in the Dacian wars, all in secondary position), the enclosure having an earthen wall must be older, belonging to the period between the two Dacian wars, that is, between AD 102 and 105, this being the fort mentioned in the fragmentary accounts of Cassius Dio.

The archaeological site at Grădiștea de Munte and, more generally, the entire system of fortresses from the Orăștie Mountains was almost continuously investigated over more than a century, but unfortunately too little has been published[10]. As a consequence, the debates regarding various aspects related to this huge archaeological site are mostly based on incomplete and disparate data published in various archaeological reports, thus being prone to a lot of speculation. Due to the same reason, the chronology of the fortresses at Grădiștea de Munte is

[9] ȘTEFAN 2005, 325–331, Fig. 166–167, is the first to ascribe the earthen walls to the Roman fort built between the Dacian wars, in AD 102–105.

[10] DAICOVICIU/FERENCZI/GLODARIU 1989.

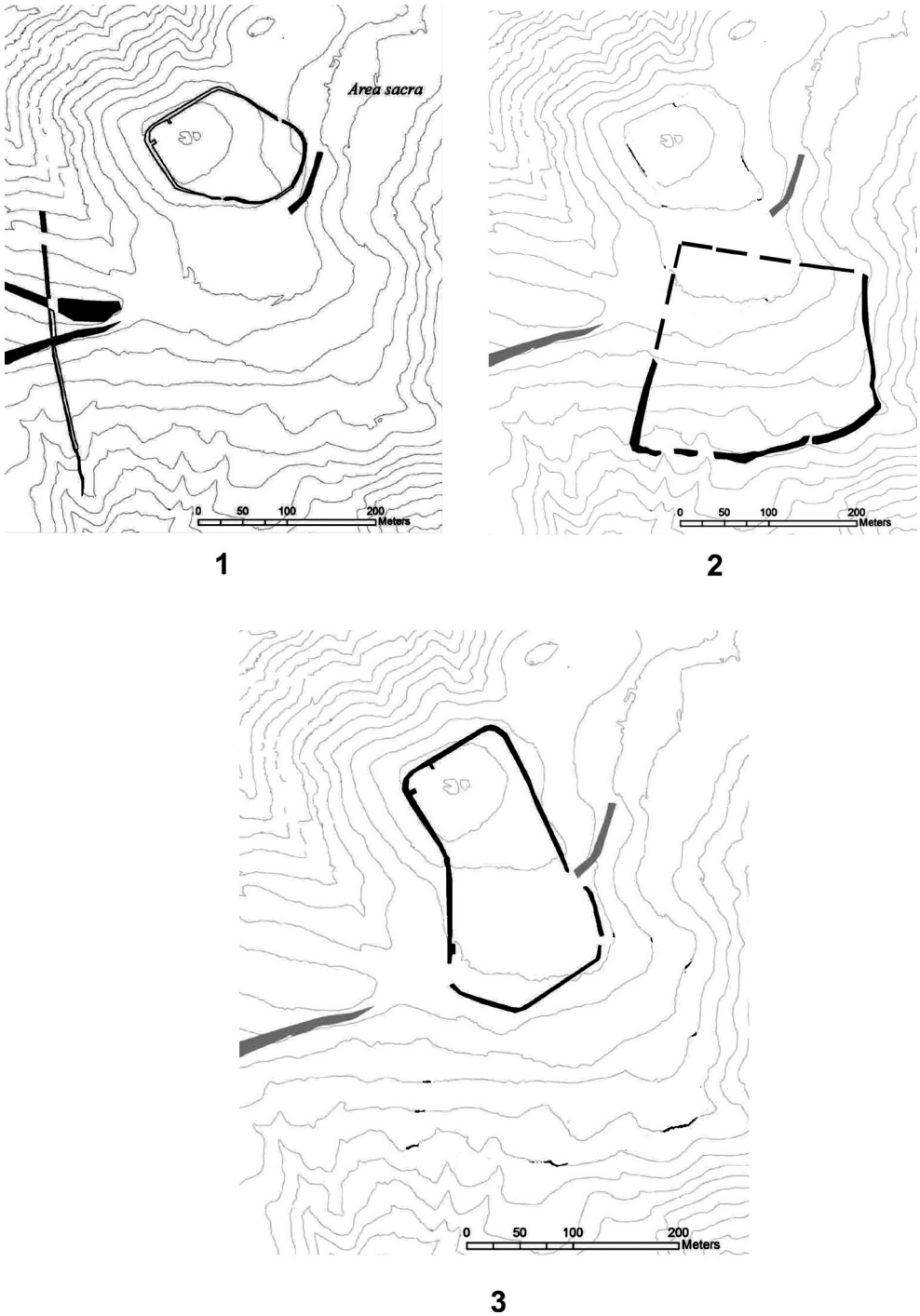


Fig. 2. Succession of the fortifications at Grădiştea de Munte (adapted after OLTEAN/HANSON 2017)

still far from clear. However, starting from the available information, a chronological succession of the defensive elements identified in archaeological excavations and partially on the published LiDAR images can be tentatively reconstructed. This proposed reconstruction differs in what concerns some details from the one published by I. A. Oltean and W. S. Hanson[11] (Fig. 2).

[11] OLTEAN/HANSON 2017, 439–442, Fig. 7–8.

1. The first fortress from Grădiștea de Munte surrounded the northern hilltop which hosts the terraces I–III. The archaeological traces of the fortification and the habitation inside of it were destroyed by subsequent Roman interventions[12], but on the slope of the southern side, the archaeological excavations conducted by I. Glodariu in 1984–1994 allowed the identification of the wall line of the pre-Roman fortress[13]. This wall was probably dismantled by the Dacians in AD 102 to comply with the stipulations of the peace treaty concluded with the Romans. Its layout seems to largely correspond to the one recently proposed by Oltean and Hanson.

To the west of the Dacian fortress and the subsequent fortifications built by the Romans, both the older archaeological excavations and the published LiDAR images indicate the existence of an earthen wall that is perpendicular to the ridge which allowed the access towards the fortress. This earthen wall is similar to the barrier fortification at Bucova (Caraș-Severin County), in the Transylvanian Iron Gates pass that was identified as Tapae[14], the location of a decisive battle from the first Dacian war of Trajan (Cassius Dio 68.8.1–2). Therefore, this wall from Grădiștea de Munte can be ascribed to the Dacians, being most probably built in the context of the first war against the Romans.

2. The first Roman fort having an almost rectangular shape is located to the south of the Dacian one. It consisted of an earthen wall with a palisade, which was also investigated in the past by archaeologists, as it can be observed on site and on the LiDAR images. The southern and eastern sides are clearly visible[15], and so is some of the western side, while the northern side was affected by the construction of the stone fort during the following phase. Even in this case, despite some bumps that can be seen on the LiDAR image, the northern side seems to have been located on the large terrace to the south of the Dacian fortress, not far from the foothill. The archaeological excavations conducted by I. Glodariu identified in this area some traces of a double palisade which he dated to the period between the two wars and ascribed it to the Dacians[16]. Still, this palisade could have also belonged to the northern side of the Roman earthen fort. One production area (at least one smithy) probably functioned inside this fort, being identified under the southern side of the stone fort, above the minting workshop dated to the kingdom period[17]. On the other hand, it is still difficult to establish a stratigraphic relation between the "Roman baths" from the south of the stone fort[18], inside the earthen fort, and any of the two Roman enclosures.

3. The Roman stone fort partially superposed the earthen one[19]. Many architectural spolia were used in its construction: stone blocks from the former Dacian fortress, and stone

---

[12] This is clearly visible in older archaeological excavations and also in the recent large-scale ones conducted by G. Florea and his team (information kindly provided by G. Florea, to whom I want to warmly thank).

[13] GLODARIU 1995, 125–126, Fig. 3.

[14] Archaeological excavations carried out by a team directed by I. Glodariu.

[15] GLODARIU 1995, 126, Fig. 3: "Les mêmes militaires (Romains) ont construit aussi le vallum en forme de croissant, qui commence à côté du portail sud de la citadelle romaine, descend sur le versant de l'éminence et s'arrête en bordure d'une profonde ravine".

[16] GLODARIU 1995, 125.

[17] GLODARIU/IAROSLAVSCHI/RUSU 1992; GLODARIU 1995, 125.

[18] PEȚAN 2018, 258–285.

[19] It is worth noting that the standing walls of the stone fort that can be seen today are not ancient, being the result of recent interventions. The original walls were dismantled and then rebuilt during the restoration works in the 1980s. As a student in 1987–1988, I have witnessed another "restoration" of the walls. Large parts were again dismantled because the core filling added in 1980 was pushing against the wall faces and the structure was close to collapsing. Due to this situation, the walls were dismantled and rebuilt on the same location with the help of a platoon of conscripted soldiers from the unit of mountain infantry from Brad, but the stone blocks were randomly placed to fit into the new wall. Consequently, the entire construction technique of this "murus dacicus" actually

Fig. 3. Fragments of columns from the Dacian temples from the sacred area reused in the eastern wall of the Roman fort (photo A. Rustoiu, October 2022).

columns and bases (Fig. 3) from the Dacian temples on the terraces X and XI (perhaps also from those on the terrace IX, if a pre-conquest temple indeed functioned there[20]), all in secondary position. Roman figurative monuments and inscriptions belonging to the troops which participated in the Dacian wars, and perhaps also in the construction of Roman fortifications[21], were also found in secondary position in the core of the walls or on their external face[22].

belongs to the archaeologists and soldiers who worked on it during that period and has nothing to do with the ancient construction technique. As far as I know, only the part containing columns retrieved from the Dacian temples remained intact.

[20] MATEESCU ET AL. 2021, 94.

[21] GLODARIU 1995, 125–126, Fig. 3; OPREANU 1999–2000. The inscription "with weapons" belonging to the Legion IIII Flavia Felix, discovered in 1804, was frequently interpreted, including in MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, as part of a triumphal monument erected after the first Dacian war to the east of the fortress. However, A. Pețan has demonstrated that the inscription, broken in two pieces, of which one is still preserved in the Museum of Deva, was found in 1804 in the building ("Roman baths") to the south of the stone fort, in two different rooms, probably fallen from the enclosure wall of the fortification (PEȚAN 2017; PEȚAN 2018, 320–331).

[22] OPREANU 1999–2000, 155–156, Tab. 1, notes that the position of Roman spolia in the walls is problematic

Therefore, the succession of the fortifications at Grădiștea de Munte is quite clear, but the absolute chronology is difficult to establish given the scarcity of relevant archaeological data. That is why the dating of the earthen fort to the period between the Dacian wars (AD 102–105) or only after the end of the second war (AD 106) is still debated and the discussions are mainly taking into consideration the information provided by Cassius Dio about a century after the events. In order to clarify this controversial issue, the first step should be to analyse what Cassius Dio understood when using the toponym "Zermisegethusa" in the paragraph in question.

In general, the specialists who discussed this aspect have opted for two different interpretations. Some have considered that the author of *Roman History* was mentioning the residence of Decebalus from the Orăștie Mountains, while others have opted for the capital of the Roman province from the Hațeg Country, future Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica, which also included in its name the toponym Sarmizegetusa.

As previously noted, when referring to the royal residence of Decebalus, his "seat of power", Cassius Dio uses the plural Greek term τὰ βασίλεια (*ta basileia*)[23], which in Latin was translated as *Regia*: 67.10.3; 68.8.3; 68.14.13; 68.14.4. The only occasion when the toponym Sarmizegetusa is used, it is indicating the fort in which the Roman legion was headquartered and which could not be *basileion* or royal. Therefore, the toponym Sarmizegetusa (*Zermisegethusa* according to Cassius Dio) most likely designates a location in the Hațeg Country, where the future Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica was later established[24]. This is the reason for including the indigenous toponym in the official Roman name of the city, as it has also happened in many other cases, e.g. Drobeta, Dierna, Napoca, Potaissa etc. Although Cassius Dio writes a century after the Dacian wars, he must have sourced his information from writers who were contemporaneous to the events, perhaps from the *Commentaries* of Trajan or more likely from *Getica* of Criton[25]. On the other hand, he is not mentioning anywhere the name of the royal residence, which may suggest that the location and its name were already forgotten. That is why there is no reason to doubt that the military camp and its legion left behind in Dacia by Trajan after the first Dacian war was located on the place of future Colonia (Sarmizegetusa). The name of the city must have been familiar to Cassius Dio, who was governor of the nearby Pannonia at the beginning of the 3rd century AD.

An indirect argument for placing the Roman garrison in another location and not at Grădiștea de Munte is the episode of the capture of Longinus, the commander of the legion left behind in Dacia in AD 102–105, by Decebalus. Longinus was identified with Cn. Pinarius Aemilius Cicatricula Pompeius Longinus, the former governor of Moesia Superior and the two provinces of Pannonia[26]. Cassius Dio (68.12.1–5) writes that Decebalus summoned Longinus, the commander of the legion, at his residence and held him prisoner, then negotiating with Trajan his release in exchange for the withdrawal of Roman troops from the occupied territories. The king's action failed, as Longinus had poisoned himself. From this description, it can be deduced that Longinus was held prisoner for many days while the negotiations were conducted through emissaries. Thus it is hard to believe that a legion headquartered at Grădiștea de Munte, in the immediate vicinity of the royal residence, would have witnessed these events passively, without attempting to save its commander. On the other hand, with the legion headquartered at Sarmizegetusa in the Hațeg Country, quite far from the royal residence of Decebalus, the Roman soldiers would have been prevented from reacting rapidly.

---

since their location differs from one study to another, even when the authors were members of the team investigating the site at Grădiștea de Munte. This imprecision is raising questions regarding their original position.

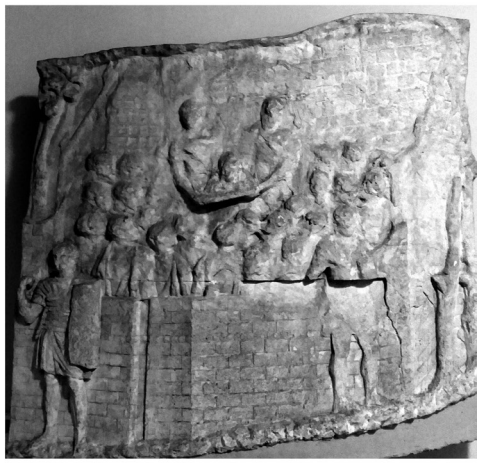
[23] MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, 603.

[24] About the existence of a Roman earthen fort (later built in stone?) before the establishing of the Colonia, see BĂIEȘTEAN 2012, note 1, with the previous bibliography.

[25] PETRE 2004, 348–351.

[26] MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021, 607–608, with the bibliography.

1



2

3

Fig. 4. 1. Scene of the suicide of Decebalus on Trajan's Column. 2. Scene of the presentation of the severed head and right handle of Decebalus on Trajan's Column (copies of the Column's friezes in the National Museum of the History of Romania in Bucharest, photos A. Rustoiu). 3. Capturing of King Decebalus on Ti. Claudius Maximus's tombstone (after SPEIDEL 1970a).

Lastly, one eyewitness of the events from the time of the Dacian wars is also offering useful information for the topic in question. This is Tiberius Claudius Maximus, who distinguished himself during the wars against the Dacians, according to his tombstone discovered in 1965 at Grammeni in Macedonia[27]. During the second Dacian war of Trajan, Ti. Claudius Maximus was heading a unit of *exploratores* who were chasing Decebalus. The king was running away from his royal residence (Cassius Dio 68.14.2) when the Roman commander managed to reach him, so he killed himself with a *sica*[28]. The scene is represented both on the Trajan's Column and on the aforementioned tombstone[29] (Fig. 4/1, 3). Ti. Claudius Maximus brought the severed head and right hand of the enemy of Rome to the emperor, who showed the gruesome trophy to the troops. This episode was also taken over by imperial propaganda, being rep-

[27] SPEIDEL 1970a; SPEIDEL 1970b.

[28] For the symbolic and sacrificial role of the Dacian *sica* and its involvement in the suicide of King Decebalus, see RUSTOIU 2007; RUSTOIU 2016b; RUSTOIU 2018.

[29] SPEIDEL 1970a, Pl. 13–15.

resented on the Column on scene CXLVII (Fig. 4/2). The place where Trajan was headquartered was most likely a fort, which is mentioned in the funerary inscription as *Ranisstorum*.

The toponym only appears in this inscription and its precise location is still a matter of debate. M. Speidel, who first published the inscription, presumed on the basis of corroborating the written information with the scenes on the Column that the location, perhaps an important centre, was somewhere close to Apulum, considering that the Dacian fortress at Piatra Craivii could have been the last refuge of King Decebalus[30]. On the other hand, I. Glodariu considered that *Ranisstorum* must have been located closer to the royal residence in the Orăștie Mountains, perhaps at *Sub cununi*, a site which produced finds and inscriptions dated to the time of the Roman province commemorating the victory against the Dacians[31]. However, A. Peţan has recently offered strong arguments for the absence of any physical evidence of a Roman fort dated to the time of the Dacian wars at *Sub cununi*[32].

In order to identify the location of *Ranisstorum*, it is necessary to take into consideration the entire context of Roman conquering of the royal residence. It is quite clear that during both the first and the second war, the Roman army was directly commanded by Trajan. When the royal residence fell into the hands of the Romans and Decebalus ran away, among the first to arrive must have been the emperor and his legionaries. The latter needed to rapidly build a temporary earthen fort to accommodated them and secure their position. This could be the earthen fort that appears on the LiDAR images, and which belongs to the second construction phase of the fortifications at Grădiștea de Munte, discussed above.

It can be therefore concluded that the earthen fort from Grădiștea de Munte was more likely built in the context of the second Dacian war. At least some of the troops that left inscriptions on local limestone blocks could have participated in its building. These inscriptions were reused in the core of the walls of the stone fort which was built shortly after the entire region was conquered. In any case, the Roman presence at Grădiștea de Munte must have lasted longer than the period immediately after the conquest. The Roman buildings, at least one having a mosaic floor that I was able to see during the archaeological excavations conducted by I. Glodariu at the end of the 1980s, in which I participated as a student under the supervision of my professor, and which were recently re-excavated by the team working at Grădiștea de Munte[33], suggest that the Roman presence lasted longer, perhaps a few decades[34]. Other types of evidence include the Roman workshops, like the ones producing glass objects on the Terrace IX[35] or the workshop in which the famous bronze mould was recently discovered[36].

---

30 SPEIDEL 1970a; SPEIDEL 1970b.

31 GLODARIU 1981.

32 PEŢAN 2021. A. Peţan remarks that the reading of this inscription in OPREANU 1999–2000, 86, stating that the severed head and right hand of Decebalus were brought to Traian *from* Ranisstorum and not *at* Ranisstorum, is erroneous: see PEŢAN 2021, 88, n. 57.

33 The results are not published.

34 The building with a mosaic floor could potentially be dated also to the reign of Decebalus, that is, before the Roman conquest. Similar constructions in the Mediterranean style were sometimes provided by the Romans as gifts for the allied Barbarian chieftains from the vicinity of the frontier. One relevant example is the lavishly furnished structure identified at Bratislava-Castle Hill, which was built in the Augustan period by masons from the Mediterranean basin for an allied local leader from the Bratislava oppidum, who was able to control the main regional routes of communication, the Amber Route and the middle Danube waterway (see EGRI 2019, 93–94, with the previous bibliography; MUSILOVÁ 2021). For similar situations on the northern side of the middle Danube frontier, see VARSIK 2021. However, it is impossible to say whether the building in question can be dated to the period before or after the Roman conquest until the results of archaeological excavations at Grădiștea de Munte are published (and perhaps not even after that).

35 IAROSLAVSCHI 1997, 101, who dates the workshop to pre-Roman times.

36 FLOREA 2015.

Regarding the name of the royal residence of Decebalus, it is less likely to be Sarmizegetusa, as it was stereotypically imprinted on the archaeological research and the public historical imaginary. Sarmizegetusa was more likely the indigenous toponym of the place where Colonia Ulpia Traiana Dacica was later established. The geographer Claudius Ptolemy (3.8.4) is the only ancient author who associates Sarmizegetusa with the residence of King Decebalus (*Zarmizegethusa basileion*, in Latin *Regia*). However, he is writing in about the middle of 2nd century AD and in the list of settlements from Dacia he includes both older toponyms and others from the provincial times. Therefore, he may have associated *Sarmizegetusa* and *to basileion* due, on one hand, to the existence of Colonia Ulpia Dacica Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the main city of Roman Dacia during his times, whose importance could have been conflated with that of the royal residence, and on the other hand, the erroneous interpretation of the sources that he used. If Sarmizegetusa was not the name of the Dacian royal residence identified by archaeologists at Grădiștea de Munte, then the possible identification with *Ranisstorum*, the place where Tiberius Claudius Maximus brought the severed head and right hand of King Decebalus to Trajan to be shown to the army, can be perhaps taken into the consideration as a working hypothesis. Unlike all ancient authors writing later, Ti. Claudius Maximus surely knew where he met the emperor. This must have been the earthen fort built in the context of the second Dacian war, in AD 106, at Grădiștea de Munte.

2. The destiny of the "Dacian gold". About a Koson-type coin reused in the 16th century in a Christian (Renaissance) context

The "Dacian gold" fired the imagination of many people each time a hoard emerged in the mountains hosting the ruins of the royal residence of King Decebalus. On each occasion, a real "gold rush" had started, involving locals and newcomers, and even officials or the state administration. This had happened around the middle of the 16th century and then at the end of the 18th century and in the first decades of the 19th century, when the Austrian imperial financial authority (Hofkammer) got involved in the recovery of treasures found by the peasants from this region, and initiated the first large-scale excavations at Grădiștea de Munte[37], and again in 1990–2000, when numerous illegal treasure-hunters using metal detectors unearthed many hoards consisting of gold or silver coins and jewellery[38] (Fig. 5/1–2).

One of the largest hoards (unless there was more than one) was discovered in 1543[39]. It was said that the hoard was found in the riverbed of the Strei, which was identified as the ancient Sargetia, based on a Renaissance age interpretation of the accounts of Cassius Dio (68.14.4) about the treasures of King Decebalus[40] (Fig. 6). The hoard (or hoards?) of gold objects and coins (Lysimachus and perhaps Koson?) was most likely found in the area of the Dacian royal residence at Grădiștea de Munte. Most of the hoard was taken over by Cardinal Martinuzzi, the governor of Transylvania. After he was assassinated by General Giovanni Battista Castaldo in

[37] See further PEȚAN 2018, 46–83, with the bibliography.

[38] LAZĂR ET AL. 2008 etc. This fascination for the "Dacian gold", which was recently rekindled, also contributed to the production of a number of documentaries in which scientific opinions are combined with cinematic adventures, for example the BBC production "The hunt for Transylvanian gold" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjnpDF4IkKw) or the History Channel one "The mystery of Dacian gold" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbZTElv8J2Q).

[39] See further PEȚAN 2018, 52–68, with a critical interpretation of the documents and the recent bibliography.

[40] This interpretation reappeared later in other works, for example in the writings of Abraham Ortelius from the second half of the 15th century. On the map of "Dacias and Moesias", which was printed in several editions between 1579 and the first decades of the following century, Ortelius places the Sargetia River, where Decebalus hid his treasures, next to Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (see PEȚAN 2022).

1 2

Fig. 5. 1. Scene of the capturing of Decebalus' treasures on Trajan's Column (copy of the Column's frieze in the National Museum of the History of Romania in Bucharest, photo A. Rustoiu). 2. The first group of gold bracelets looted from the archaeological site at Sarmizegetusa Regia and recovered by the Romanian authorities in 2007: assemblage and details (photo A. Rustoiu).

1551, the great hoard was scattered and its pieces were then owned by various adventurers or aristocrats, including some from the imperial court in Vienna[41].

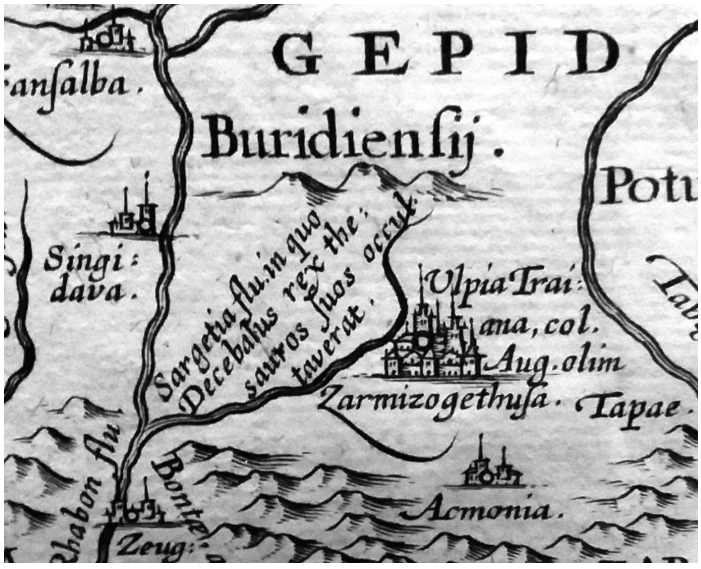


Fig. 6. Detail on the map of A. Ortelius showing the place where the treasures of Decebalus were discovered in the riverbed of the Sargetia (National Museum of Maps and Old Books Bucharest, photo A. Rustoiu, November 2022).

However, before the discovery of this great hoard, a document from 1494 mentions the discovery in 1491 of a hoard consisting of "small and big" gold coins by some gold panners in the vicinity of Sebeș, "in the place of an old and ruined fortress"[42]. It has been presumed that the hoard actually came from the area of the fortress at Grădiștea de Munte and the coins in

[41] WINKLER 1972, 188–192; PEȚAN 2018, 52–68, with the bibliography.
[42] ANGHEL 2008, 333–334; PEȚAN 2018, 47–48.

questions were ancient[43]. Either from this hoard, or from another, there was already a number of Koson-type coins "in circulation" among the Renaissance collectors of antiquities at the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century. In a letter from 1520 sent to Bishop Johannes Turzo of Breslau, Erasmus of Rotterdam describes and tries to identify a Koson-type coin, an issue which have also caused difficulties to other scholars[44].

Therefore, the gold Koson-type coins which were already discovered during the Renaissance period became quite well-known among the scholars in order to trigger some discussions. In this context, the history of some of these coins discovered in the Orăștie Mountains is worth exploring further.

Recently, Claudiu Purdea has published a study about the reuse of Koson-type coins during the Renaissance and the modern times mainly in jewelleries (finger-rings, necklaces etc)[45]. One of the case-studies concerns a silver cup that has a number of ancient gold coins inserted into its outer body, two belonging to the Koson type. The cup is now preserved in the National Hungarian Museum, but it was acquired in 1886 from the Protestant parish of Ambud, in Satu Mare County. The two Koson-type coins are forgeries, probably of the Renaissance period, and the cup was made sometime in the first half of the 17th century in a Transylvanian Saxon workshop, very probably at Sibiu[46].

C. Purdea also mentions a liturgical chalice of the first half of the 16th century, which was once in Alba Iulia[47] and is now preserved in the collections of the Catholic Cathedral of Nitra, in Slovakia. I recently had the opportunity to see the chalice in an exhibition in the Bratislava Castle during a stage of documentation, part of an inter-academic research project[48]. The chalice is decorated with ancient coins which are original. Among them is a Koson-type coin. Both the manufacturing and the biography of the chalice are relevant from the perspective of the destiny of "Dacian gold" during the late Renaissance.

The chalice in question, held by the St. Emmeram's Cathedral in Nitra, was most likely also produced in a workshop from Sibiu in the late Gothic style with some Renaissance elements. The foot, the bulge on the stem and the lower part of the chalice were decorated with six gold coins each, which were inserted one under another (Fig. 7/1). The vessel includes 18 coins, of which 15 are of the *aureus* or *solidus* types of the 1st – 5th centuries AD, two are Byzantine of the 6th century AD, and one is a Koson-type coin of the 1st century BC. The latter is inserted into the row of coins on the lower part of the chalice, with the obverse (the figure of a consul with two lictors)[49] on the outside[50] (Fig. 7/2).

The biography of the chalice is quite compelling. The vessel was first mentioned in an inventory from 1531 of the treasury of the Catholic Cathedral at Alba Iulia as belonging to the Sf. Anna Chapel. This was built by Bishop Ferencz Várday on the northern side of the cathedral, between the Renaissance-style Lázó Chapel and the northern transept. The chalice was donated by a certain Udalricus of Buda, who was the prebendary of the cathedral chapel between 1504 and 1523 (the year of his death). At a later date, the chalice was owned by Paul Bornemisza,

[43] PEȚAN 2018, 48.

[44] PEȚAN 2018, 50.

[45] PURDEA 2020.

[46] PURDEA 2020, 76–79.

[47] PURDEA 2020, 77. The donor of the chalice is Udalricus and not Uldaricus, as misspelled in C. Purdea's article.

[48] The project called *Connectivity in the Iron Age in the Carpathian Basin* runs in 2020–2023 on the basis of the Agreement and Programme of Scientific Cooperation concluded between the Romanian Academy and the Slovak Academy of Science. The research team of our institute includes Aurel Rustoiu, Mariana Egri, Andreea Drăgan and Adrian Căsălean.

[49] WINKLER 1972, 178–179.

[50] MIKÓ 1993; KOLNÍKOVÁ 2002; KUCHARÍK 2021.

Fig. 7. 1. The chalice with ancient gold coins from the Cathedral of Nitra (after KUCHARÍK 2021).
2. The Koson-type coin inserted in the upper row on the chalice (after KOLNÍKOVÁ 2002).

who was Bishop of Alba Iulia in 1553–1556. He had to leave Transylvania when the cathedral was taken over by the Protestant princes, becoming Bishop of Nitra in 1557. On this occasion he brought over the chalice decorated with ancient gold coins, which is kept nowadays in the treasury of the Cathedral of Nitra. In the will of Paul Bornemisza from 1577, it is clearly mentioned that the liturgical chalice was taken from Alba Iulia[51].

Returning to Udalricus of Buda, he was a member of the Renaissance humanist circle from Alba Iulia, which included a number of scholars, publishers of ancient texts, epigraphists and antiquities collectors. Some of them, for example Tamás Pellei, were in direct contact with Erasmus of Rotterdam[52]. It might be presumed that the Koson-type coin which the Dutch scholar attempted to analyse was received through these connections with the humanist scholars from Alba Iulia. This coin, as well as the one inserted into the chalice of Udalricus, could have belonged to a hoard which was perhaps discovered a few decades before the one from 1543, the latter being better known and leaving a lasting impression on that period and even later. Perhaps the coins in question were found in 1491 by the gold panners from Sebeș, or they belonged to another hoard which emerged in about 1500 in the surroundings of the Dacian royal residence at Grădiștea de Munte. It is however certain that the interest of the Transylvanian and European humanist scholars in this kind of "exotic" discoveries arose during this period, alongside the interest in other types of antiquities of the pre-Roman and

[51] MIKÓ 1993, 141–142.
[52] MIKÓ 1993, 142–143.

Roman Dacia[53]. The chalice from Nitra includes probably the oldest discovery of a Kosontype coin for which we have so far the physical evidence.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANGHEL 2008
GH. ANGHEL, Descoperiri de tezaure antice din aur în zona Munților Orăștiei menționate în cronicile medievale și documente moderne. In: A. Lazăr et al. (eds.), Combaterea criminalității contra patrimoniului cultural european – Combating the criminality against the European cultural haritage (București 2008), 333–368.

BĂIEȘTEAN 2012
G. BĂIEȘTEAN, Castrul de la Sarmizegetusa. Sargetia 3 (39), 2012, 131–150.

DAICOVICIU 1960
C. DAICOVICIU, Apariția și formarea relațiilor sclavagiste în Dacia. Perioada Burebista-Decebal. In: C. Daicoviciu et al (eds.), Istoria României I (București 1960), 255–344.

DAICOVICIU 1972
H. DAICOVICIU, Dacia de la Burebista la cucerirea romană (Cluj 1972).

DAICOVICIU/FERENCZI/GLODARIU 1989
H. DAICOVICIU/ȘT. FERENCZI/I. GLODARIU, Cetăți și așezări dacice în sud-vestul Transilvaniei (București 1989).

EGRI 2019
M. EGRI, Connectivity and social dynamics in the Carpathian Basin (1st century BC–1st century AD). An archaeological investigation (Cluj-Napoca 2019).

FLOREA 2015
G. A. FLOREA (ed.), Matrița de bronz de la Sarmizegetusa Regia (Cluj-Napoca 2015).

GLODARIU 1981
I. GLODARIU, Din nou despre Ranisstorum. Apulum 19, 1981, 51–57.

GLODARIU 1995
I. GLODARIU, Addenda aux "Points de repère pour la chronologie des citadelles et des établissements daciques des Monts d'Orăștie". Acta Musei Napocensis 32.I, 1995, 119–134.

GLODARIU/IAROSLAVSCHI/RUSU 1992
I. GLODARIU/E. IAROSLAVSCHI/A. RUSU, Die Münzstatte von Sarmizegetusa Regia. Ephemeris Napocensis 2, 1992, 75–58.

IAROSLAVSCHI 1997
E. IAROSLAVSCHI, Tehnica la daci (Cluj-Napoca 1997).

[53] The humanist circle from Alba Iulia included, among others, Adorján Wolphard of Cluj, the last Catholic parish priest in town before the Reformation, János Megyericsey (Ioan Mezertius), the archdeacon of Cluj and canon of Alba Iulia, who travelled in Italy and collected Roman inscriptions, and is considered the founder of Latin epigraphy in Dacia, Salathiel Tordai, the archdeacon of Dăbâca, who collected Roman monuments, the aforementioned Tamás Pellei, Stephanus Taurinus etc (MIKÓ 1993, 142; see also RUSSU 1975, 37–38). Árpád Mikó has noted that "[i]t was a spiritual environment that merged classical erudition and Christian belief, an atmosphere where the idea of Udalricus Budai's chalice with "pagan coins" could have been conjured and realized".

KOLNÍKOVÁ 2002
E. KOLNÍKOVÁ, Mince vo výzdobe nitrianskeho liturgického kalica. Pamyatki múzéa 3, 2002, 52–57.

KUCHARÍK 2021
J. KUCHARÍK, Chalice of ancient coins. In: J. Kucharík (ed.), Romans and Slovakia. Exhibition catalogue (Bratislava 2021), 304–305.

LAZĂR ET AL. 2008
A. LAZĂR ET AL. (eds.), Combaterea criminalității contra patrimoniului cultural european – Combating the criminality against the European cultural haritage (București 2008).

MATEESCU ET AL. 2021
R. MATEESCU ET AL., 18. Grădiștea de Munte, Orăștioara de Sus, jud. Hunedoara, Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România. Campania 2020 (București 2021), 94–98.

MATEI-POPESCU 2010
F. MATEI-POPESCU, The Roman army in Moesia Inferior (Bucharest 2010).

MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2006
F. MATEI-POPESCU/O. ȚENTEA, Participarea trupelor auxiliare din Moesia Superior și Moesia Inferior la cucerirea Daciei. In: E. S. Teodor, O. Țentea (eds.), Dacia Augusti Provincia. Crearea provinciei (București 2006), 75–120.

MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2017
F. MATEI-POPESCU/O. ȚENTEA, I primi insediamenti romani nella Dacia: il contributo dell'esercito. In: C. Parisi Presicce et al. (eds.), Traiano. Construire l'Impero, creare l'Europa. Catallogo della mostra (Roma, 29 novembre 2017 – 16 settembre 2018) (Roma 2017), 163–168.

MATEI-POPESCU/ȚENTEA 2021
F. MATEI-POPESCU/O. ȚENTEA, Notes on the Roman camp (stratopedon) in Sarmizegetusa Regia (Cassius Dio 68.9.7). In: K. Narloch et al. (eds.), Nunc decet caput impedire myrto. Studies dedicated to Professor Piotr Dyczek on the occasion of his 65th birthday (Warsaw), 601–610.

MIKÓ 1993
Á. MIKÓ, A chalice with "pagan coins" from the early 16th century is the chalice of Udalricus Budai, the prebend of Gylafehérvár, in the treasury of Nytra cathedral? Ars Decorativa 13, 1993, 137–144.

MUSILOVÁ 2021
M. MUSILOVÁ, Roman traces on the Acropolis of Bratislava Celtic Oppidum. In: J. Kucharík (ed.), Romans and Slovakia. Exhibition catalogue (Bratislava 2021), 25–37.

OLTEAN/HANSON 2017
I. A. OLTEAN/W. S. HANSON, Conquest strategy and political discours: new evidence of the conquest of Dacia from LiDAR analysis at Sarmizegetusa Regia. Journal of Roman Archaeology 30, 2017, 429–446.

OPREANU 1999–2000
C. OPREANU, Castrul roman de la Grădiștea Muncelului (Sarmizegetusa Regia). Cronologia și semnificația sa istorică. Ephemeris Napocensis 9–10, 1999–2000, 151–168.

PEȚAN 2017
A. PEȚAN, Date noi despre inscripția "cu arme" de la Sarmizegetusa Regia. Arheovest V.2, 2017, Szeged, 981–999.

PEȚAN 2018
A. PEȚAN, Sarmizegetusa Regia. 1. Redescoperirea cetății (Dacica 2018).

PEȚAN 2021
A. PEȚAN, Grădiștea de Munte – Sub Cununi (Hunedoara county). The file of a forgotten archaeological site. Marisia 3, 2021, 79–98.

PEȚAN 2022
A. PEȚAN, Abraham Ortelius, Harta veche a Daciilor și a Moesiilor – Vetus descriptio Daciarum Moesiarumque. Traducere din limba latină, studiu introductiv și note A. Pețan. Ediție bilingvă (Alun 2022).

PETOLESCU 1991
C. PETOLESCU, Decebal regele dacilor (București 1991).

PETRE 2004
Z. PETRE, Practica nemuririi. O lectură critică a izvoarelor grecești referitoare la geți (Polirom 2004).

PURDEA 2020
C. PURDEA, De la monede la bijuterii. Studiu asupra reutilizării emisiunilor numismatice antice cu legenda Koson. Sargetia 11 (47), 2020, 69–100.

RUSSU 1975
I. I. RUSSU, Însemnătatea și dezvoltarea epigrafiei în Dacia. In: I. I. Russu (ed.), Inscripțiile Daciei Romane 1 (București 1975), 33–63.

RUSTOIU 2007
A. RUSTOIU, Thracian "sica" and Dacian "falx". The history of a "national" weapon. In: S. Nemeti et al. (eds.), Dacia felix. Studia Michaeli Bărbulescu oblata (Cluj-Napoca 2007), 67–82.

RUSTOIU 2012
A. RUSTOIU, Commentaria Archaeologica et Historica (I). 1. The grave with a helmet from Ciumești – 50 years from its discovery. Comments on the greaves. 2. The Padea- Panagjurski kolonii group in Transylvania. Old and new discoveries. Ephemeris Napocensis 22, 2012, 159–183.

RUSTOIU 2016a
A. RUSTOIU, Commentaria archaeologica et historica (II). Banatica 26, 2016, 73–100.

RUSTOIU 2016b
A. RUSTOIU, Slashing knives (hiebmesser) – Curved dagger (sica, -ae). Their function and symbolic role in the La Tene panoply of weapons. Acta Musei Porolissensis 38, 2016, 199–221.

RUSTOIU 2018
A. RUSTOIU, The functional and symbolic life of the "Dacian" *sica* from its beginning until today. In: E. Nemeth (ed.), Violence in Prehistory and Antiquity (Kaiserlautern und Mehlingen 2018), 69–91.

RUSTOIU 2020
A. RUSTOIU, Commentaria archaeologica et historica (III). Ephemeris Napocensis 30, 2020, 11–38. https://doi.org/10.33993/ephnap.2020.30.15

RUSTOIU 2021
A. RUSTOIU, Commentaria archaeologica et historica (IV). Ephemeris Napocensis 31, 2021, 69–90. https://www.doi.org/10.33993/ephnap.2021.31.69

SPEIDEL 1970A
M. SPEIDEL, The captor of Decebalus. A new inscription from Philippi. Journal of Roman Studies 60, 1970, 142–153.

SPEIDEL 1970B
M. SPEIDEL, *Ranisstorum*, ultimul punct de sprijin a lui Decebal. Acta Musei Napocensis 7, 1970, 511–515.

ȘTEFAN 2005
A. S. ȘTEFAN, Les guerres daciques de Domitien et de Trajan: architecture militaire, topographie, images et histoire (Rome 2005).

VARSIK 2021
V. VARSIK, Roman residences for Germanic nobles. In: J. Kucharík (ed.), Romans and Slovakia. Exhibition catalogue (Bratislava 2021), 93–109.

VULPE 1976
R. VULPE, Studia Thracologica (București 1976).

WINKLER 1972
I. WINKLER, Considerații despre moneda "Koson". Studii și cercetări de istorie veche 23.2, 1972, 173–199.