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ARHITECTURĂ. RESTAURARE. ARHEOLOGIE.

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CAHIERS ARA ARA HEFTE ARA REPORTS



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## RECENZII / BOOK REVIEWS

Agnieszka Tomas, **LIVING WITH THE ARMY I. CIVIL SETTLEMENTS NEAR ROMAN LEGIONARY FORTRESSES IN LOWER MOESIA**, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, 2017, 199 p., ISBN 978-83-61376-35-4.

After publishing a book on the “rural hinterland” of Novae (Svištov, Bulgaria),<sup>1</sup> Agnieszka Tomas, chief deputy of the Polish Archaeological Expedition at the same important Roman site on the Lower Danube, deals in the here reviewed book with all civil settlements developed in the proximity of the legionary fortresses of the Moesia Inferior province. In the past decades, the impact of the Roman army on the social, political and economic development of the various provinces of the Roman Empire became one of the most interesting research subjects in the field of Roman provincial archaeology and epigraphy. This book can very well be integrated in this new trend, for which we should praise the author from the very beginning.

The book is divided into eight chapters, preceded by an introduction (pp. 7-8) and followed by conclusions (pp. 166-169), appendix (p. 170), a list of the referenced ancient authors (pp. 171-172), abbreviations (pp. 172-174), bibliography (pp. 175-196), and lists of figures, tables and charts (pp. 197-199). The chapters are also divided into smaller subchapters.

The first chapter, “Civil Settlement near Roman Military Bases. An overview of the Research Problems” (pp. 10-18) is a critical review of the main theories developed by various scholars, such as A. Schulten, A. Mócsy, Fr. Vittinghof, J. C. Mann, I. Piso, Fr. Berard and many others (it is superfluous to cite all the papers, as the reader can very conveniently find them in the bibliography at the end of the book). The problems raised by the interpretations given to certain Roman terms connected with the military occupation of the land, such as *territorium*, *prata* or *leuga* still remain. Dealing with the *canabae*, we must not forget that the very first appearance in the epigraphic sources dates back to Trajan’s reign and not in Hadrian’s period, as the author maintains (p. 14). Thus, the *canabae Dimensium* (i. e. Dimum, nowadays Belene, westward of Novae, which could have been a legionary fortress in the first century AD, probably prior to the Novae fortress) appears as the western boundary of the *portorium ripae Thraciae* (in fact the former frontier between the Moesia province and the *ripa Thraciae*, the Danubian possession of the Thracian kings, before AD 46) in the two inscriptions preserving the *horothesia*

of the Greek city of Histria on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 100 (ISMI 67, 68, ll. 70-72: *Secundum formam quam accepit ius exigendi portori habebit a finibus canabar(um) Dimensium usque...*). Having an official Roman document issued by the governor of the Lower Moesia province, one should not dismiss the attestation as possible referring merely to the dwellings of the (*civitas*) *Dimensium*.<sup>2</sup>

The second chapter, “The Lower Danubian Lands before the Roman Conquest” (pp. 20-25), represents a very synthetic overview of the area before the coming of Rome, like the following chapter, “The Conquest of Lower Danubian Lands” (pp. 28-29). The references in both chapters are kept to a minimum, nevertheless one can notice the missing of R. Syme’s seminal paper on the origins of the Moesia province,<sup>3</sup> or the pages dedicated to the matter by B. Thomasson.<sup>4</sup> Not to speak of minor shortcomings, such as: “the origins of Roman rule over the Greek colonies on the Black Sea are dated to AD 12” (p. 28), which could have meant that Ovid was relegated beyond the borders of the Roman Empire in AD 8. In fact, they entered the Roman control a little bit earlier, by the end of the first century BC (a recently published inscription at Callatis attests *Cn. Cornelius Cn. f. Lentulus augur* (consul ordinarius in 14 BC)<sup>5</sup> as *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in the area, sometime between 9-6 BC).<sup>6</sup>

Starting with the fourth chapter we enter in *medias res*, “The Case of Novae in Lower Moesia” (pp. 32-91), the backbone of the book, based on historical, epigraphic and archaeological evidence. The result is a useful synthesis, a small monograph, on the important legionary centre of Novae, which will surely become a starting point for future research on the subject. The chapter is divided in various subchapters devoted to different aspects, starting from the geographic location, late Iron Age settlement or settlements in the area, the origins, the name itself and the further development of the fortress up to the fifth century AD. The author seems to support the idea that the name could have a Latin root (p. 41), due to the scarcity of late Iron Age discoveries, being probably related with *canabae Novense*, the new *canabae* settlement, in respect

<sup>2</sup> Ptolemy III, 10, 9: Δειμήνσιοι. See also CIL III 12399 = ILB 237: *sta(tio) Dim(ensis)*; and CIL V 2391, 2392, 2858, 3901, 3902a, 32549 = AE 1894, 19: *reg(io) Dime(n)sis* – Patsch 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Syme 1971, pp. 40-72.

<sup>4</sup> Thomasson 1991, pp. 39-46.

<sup>5</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1379; Thomasson 2009, p. 20:007.

<sup>6</sup> Avram, Ionescu 2007-2009: [ὁ δ]ᾶμος / [Γν. Κορηλιῷ Λέντλω Αὐγ]ορι πρ[ε]σβευτᾶ Σεβαστοῦ / [καὶ ἀντιστρατᾶ γω εὐεργέτ]α καὶ πά[τ]ρω[ν]ι τὰς πόλιος.

<sup>1</sup> Tomas 2016.

to the older one belonging to the *VIII Augusta* legion, previously probably accommodated at Novae between 46 and 69 (this assumption is based only on an inscription, reused in a Late Antique grave, the archaeological evidence at Novae did not bring any confirmation, the older layers being only related with the Neronian period; one should not forget that the *IV Scythica* legion was part of the army in Moesia up to AD 56/57, probably accommodated elsewhere, being therefore possible that *VIII Augusta* had been sent to Moesia only after the transfer of the *IV Scythica* legion to Syria). It is difficult to decide, the name seems to have Latin roots, but one should have expected it to be related with the fortress, thus (*castra*) *Nova* (just like *Vetera* at Xanten in Lower Germany). I am more inclined to take into consideration a native name, which has been taken over and slightly adapted by the Romans. Moreover, the location just in front of the Zimnicea large late Iron Age settlement, beyond the Danube, should not have been random and one could expect the name to have been related with the unattested native name of the Zimnicea settlement. A large subchapter deals with the *canabae legionis* (pp. 41-77), located all around the fortress, with the exception of Danube's bank, where a military harbour was probably in place.

Some of the most important buildings within the *canabae* are extensively presented by the author, such the large *villa* situated in the direct proximity of the north-western corner of the fortress, probably used as *praetorium* by the *legatus legionis* or as "a residence in which high-ranking military and civilian officials, including emperors, could stay during their visits to Novae" (p. 56); and the *mithraeum* located 150 m west of the south-western corner of the fortress (pp. 57-60).

One of three altars dedicated to *Sol (Mithras)*, uncovered *in situ*, was set up by *T. Flavius Sammius Terentianus, praefectus castrorum*.<sup>7</sup> Resuming the archaeological surveys on the remaining ruins, the author was able to correct some of the observations of the first archaeologist,<sup>8</sup> V. Najdenova, who excavated the shrine back in the '80s. Thus, the building had only one phase of construction, which goes back to the Severan period (here T. Sarnowski makes a personal observation during the excavations back in 1984-1985 which proves to be decisive: in the niche of the western podium wall stamped bricks of the legion bearing the image of a *liburna* were used; this type of stamp was dated in the second half of the second century, the shrine being therefore built by the end of the second century or in the very first years of the third century),<sup>9</sup> and the altars could be dated before

the mid third century AD and not during Aurelian times, as I also previously asserted, following Najdenova's assertions.<sup>10</sup> The very location at the southern limits of the *canabae*, the direct implication of the *praefectus castrorum* and of the *librarius legionis*, and the dedication to *Sol Augustus*, thus the direct connection with the imperial cult, are all undeniable proof that it was a public initiative of the legion and not a private endeavour exclusively. One can imagine that the cult of *Sol Mithras*, already syncretic, has been brought to Novae as a consequence of the participation of an important detachment of the legion at the expedition against Pescennius Niger.<sup>11</sup>

Small sections dedicated to different aspects of the daily life in the *canabae*, such as the cults, manufacture and agriculture, and the afterlife (graveyard locations) complete the chapter, along with two small sections on the *statio portorii* and the possible location of the *amphiteatrum militare* at the north-eastern corner of the fortress (pp. 61-77).

The next subchapter deals with the civilian *vicus* located at Ostrite Mogili, some 2.5 km east from the legionary fortress (p. 77-80). Relatively small in size (15 ha), compared to the size of the *canabae* settlement, it is impossible to tell if it could have been the core of the possible *m(unicipium) N(ovaensium)* (as many scholars, cited by the author, p. 80, had asserted), attested by a single inscription on an altar set up by an *augustalis*.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the chapter, the epigraphic evidence is presented in four tables, collecting the inscriptions on the solar cult, *Mithras* and *Sol, Bacchus* and private names (for Tab. 4, no. 1, *C ANTON MAG*, read as *C(aii) Anton(ii) mag(istri?)* – but *C. Anton(ius) Mag(nus)*, p. 137, Tab. 10, no. 1, see now J. Żelazowski's paper where two tile stamps *C(aii) Anton(ii) Magni* discovered during the excavation at the *valetudinarium* are published;<sup>13</sup> Żelazowski gives the reading *C(aii) Anton(ii) Magn(i)*, but the ligature between N and I is clear on the photo and drawing on the brick and tile stamps (pp. 87-91). Here I only add a short discussion on a badly preserved votive plate depicting *Mithras* slaying the sacred bull: Tab. 1, no. 7 = Tab. 2, no. 7, given with two different readings. Looking at the picture one can only read: *C · A vac. TRAL · V / ex · v(oto) · p(osuit)*. Both proposed readings of the first line are doubtful: *[Deo?]Ca[uti?]* *[Mi]trae?* (V. Najdenova)

<sup>7</sup> AE 1998, 1129.

<sup>8</sup> See also Tomas, Lemke 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Tomas, Lemke 2015, p. 240.

<sup>10</sup> Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> For the role played by the legion in those years see Matei-Popescu 2010, pp. 84, 89-90. The *vexillatio* of the units of the Lower Moesia province were headed by the *legatus legionis I Italicae*.

<sup>12</sup> AE 1964, 224 = ILB 281.

<sup>13</sup> Żelazowski 2015.

or *[Mu]catralu(s)*.<sup>14</sup> If we admit the *interpunctio* between the first two letters on the first line, then the reading is almost certain *c(ustos) a(rmorum)* of the *legio I Italica*.<sup>15</sup>

The next chapter “Other Civil Settlements near Lower Moesian Legionary Bases” (pp. 94-108) gathers the evidence from the other three legionary centres of Lower Moesia: Oescus, Durostorum and Troesmis. Here I only add two comments on the Oescus case: firstly, I underline that C. Baebius Atticus was *praefectus civitatum Moesiae et Treballiae*<sup>16</sup> after being *primus pilus legionis V Macedonicae*, as *primipilaris*, and not at the same time as the author asserts (p. 95); secondly, the fortress was not occupied only by the mentioned auxiliary regiments between AD 62 and 71, while *V Macedonica* legion was sent to the East, but also by *legio III Gallica* at least in AD 67-69 (and not at Durostorum in AD 79, as the author asserts, p. 99), together with the mentioned auxiliary regiments.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the Troesmis case, one can now consult the impressive volume published by the team conducting an archaeological survey project between 2010 and 2014.<sup>18</sup> For the Durostorum fortress and the *canabae* settlement, the evidence is scarce, as the area is nowadays overlapped by the buildings of the Silistra town (Bulgaria). More could have been done in the area of the *vicus* located at Ostrov (Romania), but the extensive archaeological excavations were only partially published and no real survey was ever conducted in order to establish the size and character of the settlement. Nevertheless, based on the little we know, I think that we can conclude that the civilian settlement here was the core of the later *municipium Aurelium Durostorum*. Interesting to point out that everywhere on the Lower Moesian frontier the *canabae* are much larger in respect with the civilian settlements (unfortunately at Troesmis the surveys were not able to locate the *vicus*), although the latter were definitely the cores of the future *municipia*. This shows once again that the Roman towns at the Lower Danube were relatively small in size (probably with a small number of inhabitants), the largest centres being by far the military ones. The Oescus case is different, since it was a *colonia deducta* and the former *civitas Triballorum* was not at all involved in the foundation of the *colonia*

(in fact there are no traces of it on the ground after the moment when the legion was settled at Oescus at the end of Tiberius’ reign; the same is also valid for *colonia Ratiaria*, where *civitas Moesorum* was not at all part of the foundation of the *colonia* – it is highly possible that both *civitates* ceased to exist during the second half of the first century AD).

In the next three chapters the author synthesizes the available evidence for the four legionary centres and raises some questions.

Thus, the sixth chapter, “Inside or Outside the Military Base? The Organization and the Role of the Extramural Space” (pp. 110-120), deals with the “organization of the extramural space and its delimitation”, “street network and traffic”, as well as with the main buildings in the *canabae*. By error, map C of the Fig. 59 (p. 113), although pretending to show the situation at Troesmis, actually depicts Novae.

The seventh chapter, “The Inhabitants of Lower Moesian Extramural Settlements. Regional Diversity or Social Unification” (pp. 122-154) based almost exclusively on the epigraphic evidence (collected in the synoptic tables) provides a useful survey on the people attested in the vicinity of the legionary centres.

At Oescus, I think we can also add *Q. Pompeius Eutyches*, freedman of *Q. Pompeius Falco*,<sup>19</sup> *legatus legionis* during Trajan’s first Dacian expedition and thereafter *legatus Augusti pro praetore Moesiae inferioris*.<sup>20</sup> The monument can date from the period when his patron commanded the legion at Oescus. There are also some veterans who died while the legion was still at Oescus which are not mentioned by the author (I agree that the inscriptions could be dated after the foundation of the *colonia*, if so, they were nevertheless part of the first veterans settled at Oescus).<sup>21</sup> A subject which would have deserved special discussion is *L. Varronius Felix*, who died at Riben (probably *Ad Putea* – 12 Km south-east of Oescus), where he retired (the funerary monument was set up by his daughter and his son-in-law).<sup>22</sup> What kind of property he would have had at Riben and to which territory might it have belonged during the second half of the first century?

To the list of the veterans from Durostorum, now *Iulius Ponticus, veteranus*, must be added, who set up an altar for *Iupiter Optimus Maximus*, discovered at Ostrov.<sup>23</sup>

The last chapter, “The Problem of Military Management, Civilian Administration and the Municipal Status of Lower Moesian Frontier Towns” (pp. 156-164), is by far one of the most interesting, as the author

<sup>14</sup> ILNovae 20 = IGLNovae 38 = AE 1999, 1329. Picture available at the Heilderberg Epigraphic Database (<http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD042601/iiiif#?cv=0&locale=de-DE&c=0&m=0&s=0&r=0&xywh=-1183%2C-112%2C3975%2C2222>).

<sup>15</sup> See AE 1978, 707 = ILB 294, where *c(ustos) a(rmorum)* is cut on the bottom of the altar: *Marti [et] / Genio a[r] / mamen[t(arii)] / [V]al(erius) Cresc(ens) / c(ustos) a(rmorum)*; Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> CIL V 1838 = ILS 1349; Dobson 1978, p. 190, no. 55.

<sup>17</sup> Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup> Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016.

<sup>19</sup> CIL III 7433 = ILB 84.

<sup>20</sup> Matei-Popescu 2010, pp. 47 and 55.

<sup>21</sup> Matei-Popescu 2010, p. 46 (ILB 58 and 63).

<sup>22</sup> ILB 215.

<sup>23</sup> AE 2013, 1340 = 2014, 1139.

tries to offer a historical view of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence discussed in the book.

Leaving aside Oescus, where the *colonia deducta* is part of Trajan's policy to make *coloniae veteranorum* in the area of the former legionary fortresses (Poetovio, Ratiaria, Oescus and Sarmizegetusa), the Troesmis case is one of the most interesting on the entire Danube frontier of the Empire. To the epigraphic corpus from Troesmis, we can now add the fragments of the *lex municipii Troemensium* given by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus during their joint reign,<sup>24</sup> thus approximately 15 years after the legion was sent to fight in the Parthian war and thereafter to Potaissa in Dacia Porolissensis. This opens an entire discussion upon the fortress and the settlements from Troesmis during this relatively long period, after the departure of the legion and the foundation of the *municipium*.

From an archaeological point of view little had been known from the early Roman period. This situation changed now through the efforts of the team involved in the Troesmis archaeological project, led by Cr. Alexandrescu and Chr. Gugl. The team was able to locate the fortress, the *canabae* and the military amphitheatre, and some of the graveyards.<sup>25</sup> Up to this moment the supposed late Iron Age settlement and the civilian *vicus*, attested by the epigraphic evidence, were not located on site.

The duality *canabae* – *vicus/civitas Troemensium* was generally admitted since R. Vulpe's article on the "*canabenses et Troemenses*",<sup>26</sup> *cives Romani (et veterani) consistentes* being apparently attested both in the *canabae*<sup>27</sup> and in the *vicus* or *civitas* (simply called Troesmis).<sup>28</sup> The *ordo Troemensium* before the *municipium* is also

epigraphically attested.<sup>29</sup> Although the chronology is not clear, it seems to me that the three statue bases could have been set up in the same time (they were all reused in the Byzantine fortification from Troesmis, in the North tower, the so called "Westfestung"<sup>30</sup>) for the governor of the province, the legate of the legion and for the *praefectus castrorum* around 170.

One of the most interesting assumptions of the author is: "It is possible that *cives Romani consistentes Troesmi* were all Roman citizens living in the *canabae* and its surroundings (*civitas*) acting together, the as a member of the magistrate performed duties jointly for two communities" (pp. 157-158). If the assumption will prove to be correct, some of the problems regarding the two settlements at Troesmis and the possible *synoikismos* which led to the foundation of the *municipium* might be solved, since there was only one core of Roman citizens receiving the municipal grant (it is clear now that *municipium Aurelium Troemense* was a *municipium civium Romanorum*; curiously enough there are no Roman citizens with native background, by native meaning Thracian/Getic,<sup>31</sup> being impossible to speak about the granting of the citizenship to former peregrine inhabitants of the *civitas*). Comparing with the other legionary centres, Troesmis has more resemblance with Oescus, since it is possible that the civil settlement would have been a native *civitas* (or *territorium*, which is epigraphically attested,<sup>32</sup> similar with the attested *territorium Capidavense*<sup>33</sup>), and not a Roman *vicus*, as in the case of the settlements from Ostrite Mogili and Ostrov. This particularity could be explained by the fact that Troesmis, like other centres on the Danube (surely Axiopolis and Aegyssus), was the centre of a Thracian *strategia*,<sup>34</sup> and reorganized as a *civitas* by the Romans

<sup>24</sup> Eck 2016: *municipium Marcum Aurelium Antoninum Augustum Troemensium* or *municipium Marcum Aurelium Antoninum et Lucium Aurelium Commodus Augustum Troemensium*; see also W. Eck, *Troesmis und seine lex municipalis. Publikation der erhaltenen Kapitel und Kommentar*, in Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016, pp. 483-514.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016, pp. 151-195; 445-449.

<sup>26</sup> Vulpe 1953, pp. 562-568, no. 2; AE 1960, 337 = ISM V 158, l. 9-10: [q(uin)q(uennalis) canab(ensium) / et dec(urio) Troesm(ensium) – the reading *quinquennalis* is sure, as in the l. 16 *ob honor(em) q(uin)q(uennalitat)is* appears.

<sup>27</sup> ISM V 141, l. 3-4: *c(ives) R(omani) cons(istentes) canab(is) leg(ionis) V Mac(edonicae)*; CIL III 6166 = ISM V 154, l. 10-11: *vet(erani) et c(ives) R(omani) cons(istentes) ad / canab(as) leg(ionis) V Ma(cedonicae)*.

<sup>28</sup> CIL III 6167 = ISM V 157: *c(ives) R(omani) Tr[oesmi] consist(ent)es*?. In the ISM V 135, a *territorium* is attested, but it is impossible to tell whether it is one of the legion (*canabae*) or the *civitas*.

<sup>29</sup> CIL III 6195 = AE 1950, 170 = ISM V 143; CIL III 6182 = ISM V 144; CIL III 6183 = ILS 1116 = ISM V 145.

<sup>30</sup> Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016, pp. 31 and 129-150.

<sup>31</sup> For an overview see Mihailescu-Birliba 2015 and the Tab. 14-16, pp. 144-149, within the book under review, where, with only one exception before the foundation of the *municipium (Iulius Dizzace*, the father of a soldier of the legion, *Valerius Valens*, who died in L. Verus' Parthian expedition, CIL III 6189 = ISM V 185), no people with Thracian origin are epigraphically attested at Troesmis, both before and after the foundation of the *municipium*. There are some Roman citizens of peregrine origins, but they seem to have been more related with the Greek milieu of the province on the Western Coast of the Black Sea or of the Eastern provinces.

<sup>32</sup> ISM V 135, l. 7-9: *territor[ri] ... templ[um] a so[lo] ... vet(eranis) et c(ivibus) R(omanis)? con[sistenti]bus ... ]*.

<sup>33</sup> CIL III 12491 = ISM V 77, l. 7-11: *lo/ci princeps quinquenn[alis] territo[rri] / Capidavensis*.

<sup>34</sup> Matei-Popescu 2018.

after AD 46. When the legion was transferred at Troesmis before AD 106, the fortress and the *canabae* partially overlapped the *territorium civitatis*. This is only a scenario but since no traces of another settlement were found during the mentioned archaeological surveys, it is possible that the two settlements were located in close proximity, being difficult to set the limits only through surveys.

From my point of view, regarding the situation at Durostorum (pp. 158-159), it was the *vicus* from Ostrov (24 ha) that received the municipal grant, probably at the same time with Troesmis, by the end of Marcus Aurelius' reign. Receiving the municipal grant during Marcus Aurelius' reign (probably in the same time with Troesmis) and having the *canabae* attested in AD 209,<sup>35</sup> it seems to me more likely that the *vicus* from Ostrov was been the core of the *municipium*.

The same could be valid for Novae (p. 159-162), where it was the *vicus* from Ostrite Mogili (15 ha) that became *municipium* perhaps only in the Severan period. But, if we admit the date, we cannot exclude the *canabae* from the discussion, since it might receive the municipal grant as a reward of taking Septimius Severus' side during the war with Pescennius Niger. Therefore, I am agree with the author, taking into account the size and the modest discoveries in Ostrite Mogili area, it is highly possible that the *canabae* received the municipal grants during the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

To sum up, we should praise the author for writing a stimulating book, providing the entire available evidence, both epigraphic and archaeological, and challenging many of the older assumptions, thus bringing the discussion on the Lower Danube area during the early Roman period at an entirely new level.

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<sup>35</sup> ISM IV 100-101.