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From Dacian Hillforts to Roman Forts:
Making of the Roman Frontier on Mid-Olt River Valley

Ovidiu ȚENȚEA¹, Florian MATEI-POPESCU², Vlad CĂLINA³

Abstract. *Within this paper, the authors set out to update the latest interpretations on the location of Roman forts along the middle course of the Olt River. With the exception of the Hoghiz fort, all the other forts are located on the right bank of the Olt River. At the same time, information has been added on the presence of the previous Dacian fortifications in this area.*

Rezumat. *În acest studiu, autorii și-au propus să actualizeze ultimele interpretări privind amplasarea castrelor auxiliare romane de-a lungul cursului mijlociu al râului Olt. Cu excepția castrului de la Hoghiz, toate celelalte castru se află pe malul drept al râului Olt. În același timp, au fost adăugate informații privind prezența fortificațiilor dacice anterioare din această zonă.*

Keywords: *Roman army, Dacia, Dacian fortifications, forts, limes.*

In this study, we review the information and the latest interpretations concerning the location of the Roman forts along the middle course of the Olt, between Hoghiz and Boița (pl. I, II), an area located at the frontier zone between Dacia inferior and Dacia superior. This approach follows upon and extends a recent review⁴; information is added regarding the available data on the previous Dacian fortifications in that area⁵.

In general, the territory that Trajan had occupied north of the Danube coincides with the fortified area of Dacia during Decebalus' reign⁶. In the first year of Hadrian's reign, two new provinces were made: Dacia Superior, covering almost the former Trajanic province, and Dacia Inferior, covering the region between the Jiu and Olt rivers, the Olt River valley and the SE part of Transylvania. All these had been under direct control of the governor of the Moesia inferior

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⁴ ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2021.

⁵ Although the Roman forts were not built in the same places as the Dacian fortifications, in south-east Transylvania some relevant similarities were identified: Inlăceni (Zetea), Odorhei (Odorhei), Brețcu, Boroșneu Mare (Covasna), Hoghiz (Racoș) - GLODARIU 1982, 34.

⁶ GLODARIU 1982, 35, fig. 2.

province. The army of Dacia Inferior, with two exceptions, consisted of auxiliary troops of that province detached to the north of the Danube since the time of Trajan's Dacian expeditions⁷. The reshape of the administrative organization of Dacia from the year 168 did not bring important changes along the Olt River valley. The former Dacia inferior province was also labelled Dacia Malvensis, after 168, but the relation between the two districts is still not clear (highly probable Dacia inferior remained the military district, while Dacia Malvensis would have been the financial district; however, it is not sure at all that they exactly overlapped from the territorial point of view)⁸.

HOGHIZ

The Roman fort from Hoghiz is the largest auxiliary fort located in the south-eastern area of Dacia. This was a strategic point of the greatest importance as it was the crossing point over the Olt River and it was located on the left bank of the river, unlike the neighbouring ones from downstream⁹. The recent discovery of the Ungra Roman fort (Fig. 4, 5) is meant to emphasize the strategic importance of this area. The fortification was built on a high terrace, on the left bank of the Olt River; it is located near the confluence of the Homoroade and the Olt River, at the point called "La Cetate". The site is located about 2 km west of the village of Hoghiz, next to the village of Ungra, located on the opposite bank of the river (Fig. 1).

The fort is noticed on the surface as a quadrilateral outlined by the traces of earthen ramparts. Two different constructions phases were identified during the archaeological excavations¹⁰. The wood and earth fort had a rectangular plan with unknown dimensions, the palisade consisted of a double-wall¹¹. The flattened rampart, with a recorded width of 11 meters and variable heights, up to 2 meters, included two rows of palisades, and it was doubled on the outside by a defensive ditch with an opening of 4 meters and a depth of 1 meter. It was built in the first years of the 2nd century A.D. According to the information obtained from the archaeological research carried out by K. Horedt, the earthen fort was set on fire¹². The traces of archaeological excavations that were not covered with earth are

⁷ PISO 1993, 30-41; PISO 2013, 3.

⁸ PISO 1993, 82-93; PISO 2013, 4.

⁹ CHRISTESCU 1937, 43, 51, 61, 131, 178, 187; HORED *et al.* 1950, 123-130; HORED 1953, 785-815; PROTASE 1977, 191-202; PROTASE 1977a, 303-320; VLĂDESCU 1983, 116, no. 24; VLĂDESCU 1986, 81-91; GUDEA 1997, 66-67, no. 43; GUDEA 2005, 497-498, no. VII. B. 9; MARCU 2009, 207-212, no. 54; ȚENȚEA, POPA 2017, 137-143; ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2021, 10-16.

¹⁰ K. Horedt - 1949, D. Protase-1965-1967; 1975-1979, respectively L. Petculescu-1989.

¹¹ PROTASE 1977b, 197.

¹² HORED 1953, 788.

visible in the central part of the fortification. We could not carry out geophysical measurements across the surface. Traces of archaeological interventions are also visible on the north-eastern side, an area where some massive stone blocks arranged on two layers can still be seen today.

The stone fort (Fig. 2) had a roughly rectangular plan with rounded corners, with the average dimensions of 220 x 165 meters. The double enclosure consisted of a stone double-wall, reinforced with transverse walls arranged at intervals of about 2.80 meters. As far as the corner towers are concerned, we could not identify any separate reinforcing structures; the regular compartments that strengthened the precinct also meets this demand (Fig. 3). The gates located on the southern and eastern sides were excavated and rectangular towers were documented (5.50 x 7 meters). As far as the buildings located in the interior are concerned, some walls belonging to the headquarters building (*principia*) and probably to the *praetorium* were identified, in the area where K. Horedt allegedly had identified a bath¹³.

D. Protase was the first to analyse the connection between the castles of Hoghiz, Brețcu and Drajna de Sus forts based on the stone double wall construction technique, assuming that they were built in the same period¹⁴.

The results of recent mapping and excavations broadly confirm the first plan published in 1950¹⁵, its dimensions are 220 x 165 meters (Fig. 3). The plan that was published 3 years later was slightly modified, taking the shape of a rectangle¹⁶.

The layout plan that resulted from the geophysical prospecting¹⁷ indicates the small irregularities reported in the first excavation campaign, bringing in addition some indicative elements regarding the internal organization of the fort. Buildings are not precisely distinguishable, but one can observe the groupings and the orientations of the buildings from the *praetentura* and from the *retentura*. In *latera praetorii* a large building that can be noticed on the south side; it appears to have been the *praetorium*. No further details are available due to the extensive excavations carried out in the *principia* that remained unearthed (Fig. 2).

Traces of the civil settlement are visible all-around the Roman fort. The most important buildings could have been recently identified in the western and northern side of the fort¹⁸.

¹³ HORED T *et al.* 1950, 124.

¹⁴ PROTASE 1977; PROTASE 1977a. Ioana Bogdan-Cătănciu formulated the hypothesis of the construction of these forts by the Legion *XI Claudia* (BOGDAN-CĂTĂNCIU 1981, 10).

¹⁵ HORED T *et al.* 1950, 124.

¹⁶ HORED T 1953, 789, fig. 2 - 1.3.

¹⁷ ȚEN TEA, POPA 2017.

¹⁸ ȚEN TEA, POPA 2017, 140, 1.4a.

Several auxiliary regiments were accommodated here during the Roman period: *ala Asturum*¹⁹, *cohors III Gallorum*²⁰ and *numerus Illyricorum*²¹.

The stone fort was constructed while Ti. Claudius Constans was praesidial procurator of the province, in 130-132²². Due to the considerable size of the inscription, it is almost impossible that it could come from an honorary monument²³.

UNGRA

Recently, a new fort has been discovered at Ungra, at a distance of about 5 km north from the fort at Hoghiz. It is located on the high terrace of the Homorod river, located to the right of the Olt, in the place named "Pe Deal"²⁴ (Fig. 1). Information about the fortification were published in an initial study that put together the results of multidisciplinary research²⁵, subsequently verified by excavations.

The fort has been noticed on the Corona 1968 satellite photos (Fig. 4). In the meantime, the area has been quite damaged. Its mention was done after a field survey. During 2018 a trial trenches have been excavated in the northern enclosure, near the north-western corner, during which a double *fossa*, shaped as the letter W, as well as the wooden palisade of the fort, were identified. The dimensions of the fortification are 110 x 130 meters (Fig. 5).

The attestation of this fort with a wooden palisade is very important given the context of the study of the defensive strategy from this area, where the crossing over the Olt River was ensured. The fort functioned for a shorter period of time comparing to Hoghiz fort.

DACIAN HILLFORTS AND SETTLEMENTS IN HOGHIZ AREA

It is in this area, located at border between Dacia Inferior and Dacia Superior, that several sites have been identified that attest an intense habitation in the Dacian period.

A Dacian settlement was noticed at Cuciulata, located in the middle of the village, in a place called "Stogul lui Coțofan", on a terraced spur. Native pottery predominates among the finds; there are as well three ceramic fragments of Roman import. It seems like the settlement dates

¹⁹ CIL III 8074, 1B = IDR III/4, 242 – tile stamps.

²⁰ IDR III/4, 231 = AÉ 1944, 42 – dating 177-180; CIL III 955 = CIL III 7721 = IDR III / 4, 235.

²¹ AÉ 1977, 711, IDR III 4, 243 – tile stamps.

²² PISO 2000, 235 – reinterpretation of the inscription IDR III/4, 230 = ILD 431; AÉ 2000, 1258; PISO 2013, 134-140.

²³ OPREANU 2003, 319.

²⁴ GRIDAN *et al.* 2017, 851-883; ȚENTEA *et al.* 2021, 17-18.

²⁵ GRIDAN *et al.* 2017, 856, fig. 3, 861, fig. 9.

from the 1st century B.C. -2nd century A.D.²⁶. Another Dacian settlement was also mentioned on a hill in the place named “Pleșița Pietroasă”, about 2 km south-east from the village of Comăna de Jos, based on some pottery fragments discovered on the north-eastern side; it was dated in the period 2nd century B.C. - 1st century B.C.²⁷. The accentuated erosion of the rock does not allow any the chronologic framing of the archaeological material, since the deposition layer is thin. However, the existence of the traces of habitation on the hill could attest to a fortification that can be linked to the settlement on the “Gruicul Văcarului”²⁸. Both localizations, however, are uncertain²⁹.

The most interesting site is Vf. Măgura (at an elevation of 692.5 meters on firing masters plans and military topographic map), located at a distance of about 3.7 km northwest of the Hoghiz fort and at about 500 meters north-east of the point “Stogul lui Coțofan”.

However, the most important settlement is the one from Augustin “Tipia Ormenișului”³⁰. It is located on the hill “Tipia (Tepei)”, on the left bank of the Olt River, in the gorge it forms in the Perșani mountains, at an elevation of 750 meters. A sanctuary, made of three concentric constructions and dwellings, was excavated inside the settlement³¹.

Not far, the Roman fort from Baraolt³² is located approximately 8.8 km north-east from “Tipia Ormenișului” and 24 km west-southwest to the Roman fort of Hoghiz.

Racoș is located in the Olt gorge, in a crossing point between Făgăraș basin and Homoroadele basin, on the one hand, and Baraolt and Bîrsei basin, on the other hand. Two important sites are known here, Dealul Vărăriei and Piatra Detunată.

Vărăriei hill³³ is located on the left bank of the Olt River before leaving the gorge, about 3.4 km from Tipia Ormenișului. It is on this hill that a Hallstattian fortification with two ramparts

²⁶ BICHIR 1961, 352-354.

²⁷ BICHIR 1961, 356.

²⁸ BICHIR 1961, 352-356; BICHIR 1969, 123-152; RAN: 41202.09; LMI: BV – I-s-B-11268 located 1.8 km northeast of the village of Comăna de Jos.

²⁹ The “Stogul lui Coțofan” site is mentioned in the bibliography as being on a barred spur in the middle of the village, but this seems impossible. Additional information: *The site is located on the south-eastern edge of Cuciulata village, at the confluence of the Bârculnicu creek with the Lupșa creek*, which does not correspond to the middle of the village.

The “Pleșița Pietroasă” site: *The site is located 2.5 km east-north-east from Comana de Jos village and 4 km away from the Dacian settlement of “Stogul lui Coțofan”, on the Hotarului creek* (<http://ran.cimec.ro/sel.asp?codran=41202.01>); despite all of this information we cannot pinpoint the exact location of both sites on the map; a slightly error occurs, since in our measurements there are no 4 km between the sites).

³⁰ The coordinates are 46.018808; 25.469923.

³¹ COSTEA 2004, 114 -116; COSTEA *et al.* 2006, 71 – 73.

³² POPA 2015, 164; MATEI-POPESCU, ȚENEA 2016, 15.

³³ The coordinates are 46.015770, 25.426469.

and a defensive ditch was discovered. The inner rampart, that was identified across a length of about 525 meters, was doubled on certain segments, on the outside by another wave, identified across a length of 225 meters³⁴.

Piatra Detunată (Durduia)³⁵ is located on the left bank of the Olt River, at about 1.4 km west of Tipia Ormenișului. During the first Iron Age this hill was fortified with a 6 – 7 meters high inner rampart, doubled by another one. There is a trench between the two ramparts. The Dacians have built a 4 meters thick wall on the large rampart; the wall was built from local limestone, earth and wooden beams. The wall has been identified across a distance of 118 meters. The timeframe for the dating of this precinct starts from the 1st A.D. The majority of the Latène discoveries date from the time of the Roman conquest³⁶. All these hillforts and settlements are located at approximately equal distances both from the Hoghiz fort and the Baraolt fort.

CINCȘOR

The next fort under discussion is the one from Cincșor (Fig. 6 - 9). It is located about 4 km east from the village, on the right bank of the Olt River, in the place called Burgstadt / Grădiște³⁷. Its traces are no longer visible on the surface, which is why it has been identified following numerous excavations carried out over time³⁸. For the most part, the fort has been destroyed by soil erosion. The surveys carried out over time had as their main objective the identification of the fort. The south-western corner of this fortification (Fig. 8) was rebuilt after correlating the information accumulated over time and the extension of a previous section; this argued for the existence of a wooden and earthen fort that was later replaced by a rectangular one, with a stone enclosure; its dimensions are not mentioned. Within the fort, the prints of some walls from a wooden construction could be identified.

On the surface one can notice the trace of archaeological trenches; they are mostly covered (Fig. 8). By correlating the cartographic information to what is known from publications and from the field in a digital model of the terrain, obtained by the drone flights,

³⁴ COSTEA 2004, 76; ȘTEFAN, ȘTEFAN 2021, 196.

³⁵ The coordinates are 46.021740; 25.451562.

³⁶ COSTEA 2004, 113 – 114; COSTEA *et al.* 2015.

³⁷ CHRISTESCU 1937, 44, 51, 61, 183; TUDOR 1968, 281; TIR L 35, 32; VLĂDESCU 1983, 115, no. 23; POP 1983, 43-46; VLĂDESCU 1986, 81; DRAGOTĂ 1987, 276-280; ISAC, ISAC 1994, 103-112; GUDEA 1997, 67-68, no. 44; GUDEA 2005, 497, no. VII. B.8; MARCU 2009, 202-203, nr. 54; ȚENŢEA *et al.* 2021, 19-22.

³⁸ I. Pop - 1974-1975; I. Pop, L. Petculescu-several archaeological campaigns in between 1980 and 1989, D. Isac 1992.

we are able to bring forward some scenarios concerning the shape of the fort (Fig. 8, 9). The most likely scenario gives us a rectangular outline of the fortification, with the sides of 130 (south) x 110 meters (west)³⁹. We intend to obtain further relevant information through geophysical survey that will be conducted in the future.

The accommodation of the cohort II Flavia Bessorum is attested by the discovery of brick and tile stamps⁴⁰ and by a funerary monument, set by a prefect of this unit⁴¹. A bronze parade mask was discovered in 1986, near the fort, during the works on the Olt riverbed. It had probably been placed there by a horseman during a religious procession⁴².

DACIAN HILLFORT OF BREAZA

The Dacian fortification closest to the Cincșor fort is the one from Breaza⁴³, located about 20 km to the south. The medieval fortress overlapped the Dacian one. It was located about 5 km south of the Breaza village, at the confluence of the Văii Pojorâții with the Valea Brescioarei. The Dacian hillfort had an enclosure, about one-meter-thick, built of stone bound with clay. Limestone blocks were found in the medieval fortification; they were shaped with hollows (“dovetail”), in the Hellenistic technique used in several Dacian hillforts. The dating based on pottery indicates the timeframe in between 1st century B.C. - 1st century A.D. From the nearby settlement comes a treasure trove of Roman Republican coins dated in the 1st B.C. was discovered⁴⁴.

FELDIOARA

The Feldioara Roman fort was located on the right bank of the Olt River, on a lower terrace, on the site called Cetățea/Cetate, south of the present-day village (Fig. 10)⁴⁵. A taller portion, shaped as an earthen rampant, corresponding to the north-eastern corner, is visible. Fragmentary artefacts can be visible in the field, in the civil settlement.

³⁹ ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2019 22, fig. 3.8.

⁴⁰ IDR III/4, 181; ILD 426.

⁴¹ IDR III/4, 179.

⁴² DRAGOTĂ 1987, 276-280.

⁴³ Breaza (Lisa municipality, Brașov County, location Cetate / La Turn: 45.654860; 24.885950)

⁴⁴ NĂGLER 1969, 89-123, Sibiu; LUPU 1969, 261-269; COSTEA 2004, 160 -162; POENARU – BORDEA, ȘTIRBU, 1971, 265 - 282.

⁴⁵ CHRISTESCU 1937, 190; TUDOR 1968, 282; TIRL 35, 41; GUDEA, POP 1977, 333-338; GUDEA, POP 1980, 289-291; BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU 1981, 84 no. 271; VLĂDESCU 1983, 115, no. 22; VLĂDESCU 1986, 80-81; GUDEA 1997, 68-69, 45; GUDEA 2005, 496-497, no. VII. B. 7; GUDEA 2008a; MARCU 2009, 205-206, no. 51; ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2021, 23-25.

The excavations carried out by N. Gudea and I. Pop (1973-1979) highlighted two construction phases. The first fort had a rampart 8 meters wide and 1.25 meters in height and a defensive ditch with an opening of 11 meters and a depth of 1.25 meters. The prints of the wooden gates from the north-east and north-west sides were identified. Two sides of the stone fort were noticeable across a length of 137 meters, respectively 114 meters; they have the same orientation as the previous fortification. The *porta praetoria*, on the north-eastern side, and the *porta principalis sinistra*, on the north-western side, together with a trapezoidal corner tower and a rectangular curtain tower were excavated. Two barracks in the *praetentura sinistra* (Fig. 10) were partially uncovered.

The *cohors II Flavia Numidarum*, attested through tile stamps⁴⁶, was most likely accommodated within the fort.

DACIAN HILLFORT OF ARPAȘU DE SUS

The Dacian fortification closest to the fort of Feldioara is the one from Arpașu de Sus, about 9.2 km to the southwest. The fortification is located to the south-east of the village, on the plateau "Tinosu", bounded by the Arpaș river and the Plăvaia creek⁴⁷. The site offers a particularly good visibility along the Olt Valley and towards the Hârtibaciu plateau. Its defence was ensured from the south because there is no pass across the Făgăraș Mountains. The fortification belonging to the type "spur/barred promontory" was defended from three sides by steep ravines. A 6-meter-thick earth rampart that included a palisade composed of four rows of thick wooden pillars separated the settlement from the rest of the plateau. Outside there was a trench about 13 meters wide and 2.20 meters deep from the base of the rampart. The dwellings (quadrangular or round) were built of wood and clay. The fortification has been dated in the 1st century B.C. - 1st century A.D.⁴⁸.

BOIȚA

The Boița Roman fort from is located in the immediate vicinity of the Olt bend, before entering the gorge⁴⁹. Traces of it, particularly earth from the archaeological excavations but

⁴⁶ IDR III/4, 174, 176, 177 – *Antoniniana*.

⁴⁷ The village of Arpașu de Jos, Sibiu County, location Cetățeaua – Calea Fânului: coordonates 45.73030; 24.624743.

⁴⁸ MACREA, BERCIU 1955, 615-621; MACREA 1957, 145 – 149 (145, fig. 18); MACREA, GLODARIU 1976; COSTEA 2004, 87.

⁴⁹ CHRISTESCU 1937, 108; MACREA 1959, 407-437; LUPU 1960, 411-422; TUDOR 1968, 372; TIR L 35, 30; TUDOR 1978, 270-271, nr. 9, 315 (baths); VLĂDESCU 1983, 114-115, no. 21; VLĂDESCU 1986, 79-80; ALBESCU 1990, 112; GUDEA 1997, 69-70,

without any ruins visible, are partially visible about 2 km east of the present-day village, in the Rude / La Rude location, on the high terrace located to the right of the Olt River. Numerous traces of Roman origins can be easily distinguished in the field, following ploughing, particularly at the edge of the high terrace, south-east from the fortification (Fig. 11 - 13). Unfortunately, a coherent plan was not yet published⁵⁰. Ioana Bogdan-Cătănciu proposed some additions to some of the defensive elements of the fortification (Fig. 12, 13).

We are dealing with a quadrangular fortification, with rounded corners and dimensions 45x50 meters, a double wall 1.50 meters thick, surrounded by a double defensive ditch; on the west side a gate has been partially identified.

A large construction (20x50 meters) was identified 80 meters southeast of the fort; the archaeological research has not been completed. The heating and bathing facilities can belong to the baths used by the garrison of the fortification or to a complex of a larger size. The remains of a building (11x10.5 meters), interpreted by N. Lupu as a *statio* or a *tabularium portorii* were discovered nearby. Numerous ceramic fragments were noticed within the area of the civil settlement around the fort; from its territory, about 60 meters northwest of the fortification, in the ruins of a construction with a stone foundation and a wooden structure, a monetary treasure probably buried in the context of the Carpi invasion of 247 A.D. was discovered.

The data collected in the recent years have increased our knowledge regarding the internal organization of the fort, providing a partial image of the fortification, but also of some constructions from the civil settlement, as well as their connection to the main road or to the river communication arteries.

The discovery of a tile (brick) stamp of the Legion XIII Gemina⁵¹ led to the hypothesis of a possible presence of a detachment during the early years of Roman rule in Dacia (*Bauvexilation?*). A tile (brick) stamp belonging to the type *COH I...*⁵² was also discovered; it was attributed either to the cohort *I Tyrriorum sag*, or to *I Commagenorum sag*, without there being at this time decisive elements in favour of either hypothesis since the ceramic building material could be transported from another area where it could be produced.

no. 46; LUPU 2002, 71-106; DUDĂU 2006, 65, no. 11; 97; MARCU 2009, 187-188, no. 40; ȚENȚEA 2012, 66; SCHUSTER 2013, 237-253; ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2021, 25-29.

⁵⁰ MACREA *et al.* 1957; LUPU 1958; 1968-1976; BRANGA 1979.

⁵¹ IDR III/4, 84

⁵² IDR III/4, 85

Conclusions

With the exception of the Hoghiz fort, the two other Roman forts along the Olt River from Feldioara and Cincșor were located next to the Dacian hillforts from Arpașu de Sus and Breaza, but on the opposite side of the river. The Hoghiz fort is located to the left of the Olt River, in front of a ford crossing, in an area that opened to the south toward two possible lanes through which access could be ensured to Râșnov and from there further on towards the mountain pass⁵³.

Under similar geographical conditions, such as mandatory crossing points or certain sections of roads, some forts were built in the same areas that had been previously defended by the Dacian fortifications. Forts were mostly built along communication pathways and in the vicinity of water sources. The location of the Dacian hillforts and settlements took into account mainly the configuration of the landscape, that facilitated the natural defence.

Most of the Dacian settlements were reported on the left side of Olt River, either in the vicinity of the river floodplain (Cuciulata, Comăna de Jos, Beclean, Voila), or bounded from two sides by the streams of tributary rivers (Arpașu de Sus, Breaza, Copăcel, Șercaia, Șinca). They were located near the hillforts built on promontories, probably surrounded by forests, which provided favourable conditions for refuge.

The habitation is more intense on the right side of the Olt River during the Roman period; this advocates the thesis that had been already brought forward, concerning the abandonment of the Dacian settlements from the left side of the Olt River for the inside the Roman province⁵⁴.

The area was intensively inhabited during the Dacian period, numerous hillforts and open settlements being noticed in the field; many of these are related to iron and salt deposits. However, it is not possible to accurately specify whether they lasted until the the Dacian war (with the possible exception of the fortification from Racoș - Piatra Detunată)⁵⁵. Therefore, it is almost impossible to draw a historical conclusion, but one should stress that no Roman fort overlapped any previous native settlement or hillfort; the situation is the same across the whole of Roman Dacia⁵⁶.

⁵³ Also, the location of the Râșnov fort, as well as that of the former Dacian settlement from the nearby height, indicates their role in supervising the road towards Rucăr - Bran - Depresiunea Bârsei - GLODARIU 1982, 36.

⁵⁴ DRAGOTĂ 2014, 242-242.

⁵⁵ COSTEA, SAVU, BALOS 2008; AE 2009, 1178: (*centuria*) *Cl(audii) Cor(n)elius Acustus* vel *Acusius* (a helmet fragment). The hillfort here has been considered as a possible centre of a larger power structure enclosing other hillforts from South Eastern part of Transylvania.

⁵⁶ MATEI-POPESCU, ȚENTEA 2016, 8.

We must also highlight the concentration of the Roman forts (Ocland, Baraolt, Hoghiz and Ungra - Rupea 6) around the former native important site from Racoș. The high concentration of Dacian sites could be interpreted as an indisputable proof that at the end of the 1st century A.D. one of the main Dacian power structures was there located, possibly the one targeted by M'. Laberius Maximus expedition, directly mentioned by Cassius Dio⁵⁷.

The eastern frontier of the Dacia superior seems to have been established in the same time with that of Dacia Porolissensis, due to the need to ensure the coherent closure of the defensive system along the Eastern Carpathian Mountains. The need to set up a connection with the south-east of Transylvania became obvious when the construction of the defensive system of the province of Dacia Porolissensis was completed⁵⁸. This hypothesis should urge for more caution when the identification of the wooden ramparts of the forts in this area is put, a priori, in connection with the construction of these fortifications immediately after the making of the Dacia province; this is in addition to the methodology of archaeological interpretation.

The first wave of the Roman colonization, the one mentioned by Eutropius⁵⁹, can be observed on a high scale only in the western part of Dacia; intense road construction and resource exploitation activities and the founding of the first city (*colonia Ulpia Traiana Augusta Dacica Sarmizegetusa*) were carried out during Trajan's reign. Thereafter, we can assume that another important number of colonists came together with the auxiliary units deployed from Pannonia inferior, following the making of Dacia inferior and the organisation of the frontier of the province during the first years of Hadrian's reign. This however remains to be proved, but different waves of the Roman colonization of Dacia must be taken into account.

It is highly likely that the groups of people from Pannonia and Noricum, mostly peregrines, who were colonized in the south of Dacia superior (Cașolț, Calbor, Ocna Sibiului), on the *ager publicus populi Romani*, divided between the army and the imperial *fiscus*, since no Roman self-governing communities are there attested, arrived with these troops. In fact, the lack of the Roman communities has been already highlighted on the Dacian eastern frontier⁶⁰, as well, and, partially, on the frontier of the Dacia Porolissensis province, with the exception of Porolissum itself, of course. The number of the above-mentioned arrived colonists seems to have been

⁵⁷ Cass. Dio 68, 9, 4 (*excerpta Ursiniana*), reports that M'. Laberius Maximus had been taken hostage Decebalus' sister from a stronghold, which should be located somewhere in that area along the Olt River valley; STROBEL 1984, 192-193.

⁵⁸ MATEI-POPESCU, ȚENŢEA 2016, 19.

⁵⁹ Eutr. *Brev.* 8, 6, 2.

⁶⁰ MATEI-POPESCU, ȚENŢEA 2016, 8-9.

smaller than those that had arrived previously, during Trajan's reign, when the phenomenon was much larger, given the conditions of a numerically superior military presence.

An intensive colonization implies assigning vast territories and displacing populations on a larger scale. In the south of Dacia, we have attested even a few settlements where the archaeological research seems to indicate the continuity of the habitation from the end of the Latène until the provincial period.

Abbreviations

CIL - *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin.

IDR III 4 - *Inscripțiile Daciei romane III. Dacia Superior 4 (zona răsăriteană)*, (I.I. Russu), București, 1988.

ILD - C.C. Petolescu, *Inscripțiile latine din Dacia*, București, 2005.

TIR L 35 - Russu, I.I., Gostar, N., Ivanov, T., Popescu, Em., Protase, D., Tudor, D., *Tabula Imperii Romani. Romula - Durostorum - Tomis. L 35*, Bucharest, 1969.

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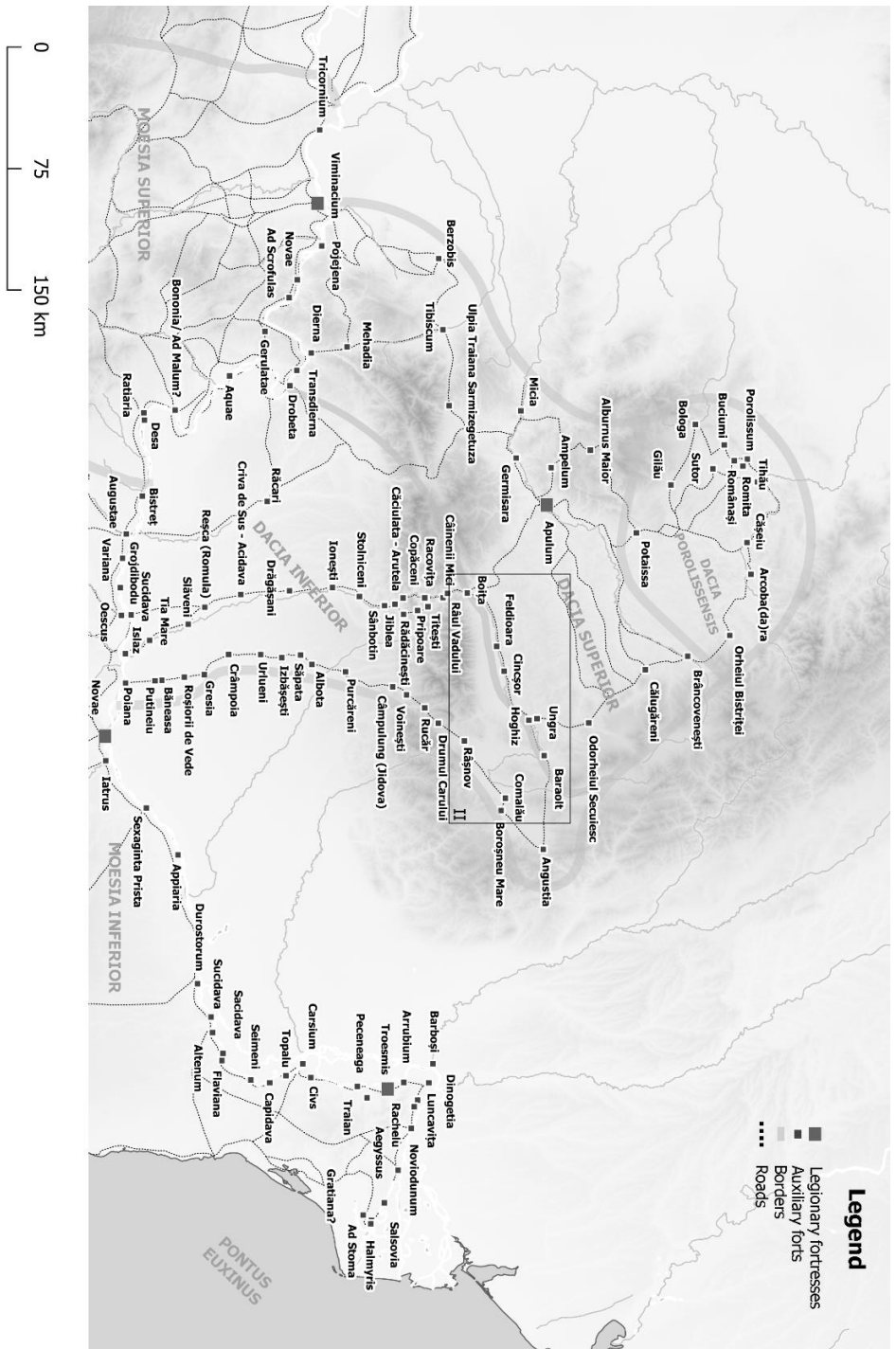
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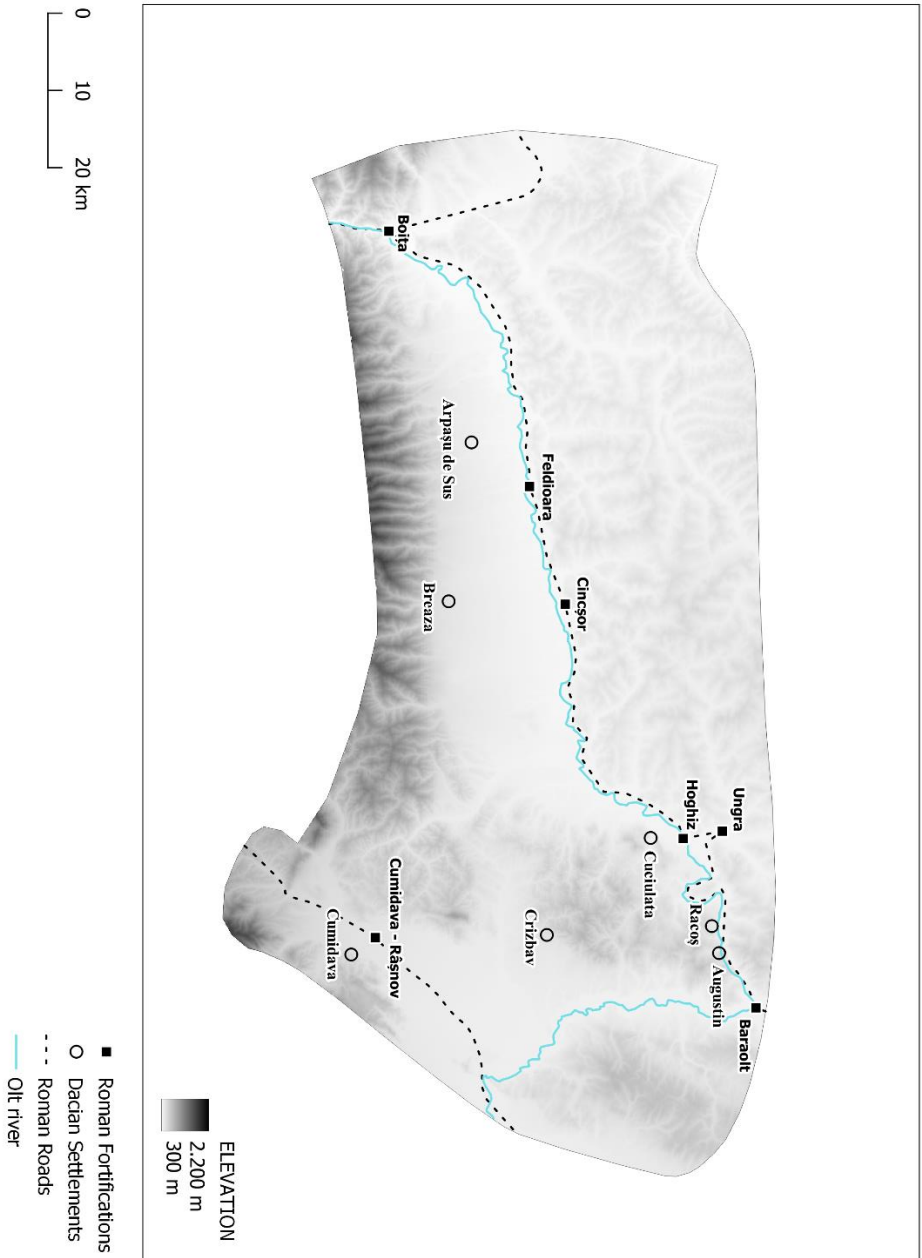
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Pl. I. Map of the Roman provinces of Dacia Inferior, Superior, Porolissensis, Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior.



Pl. II. The Roman forts and Dacian hillforts and settlements in the mid-Olt River area.

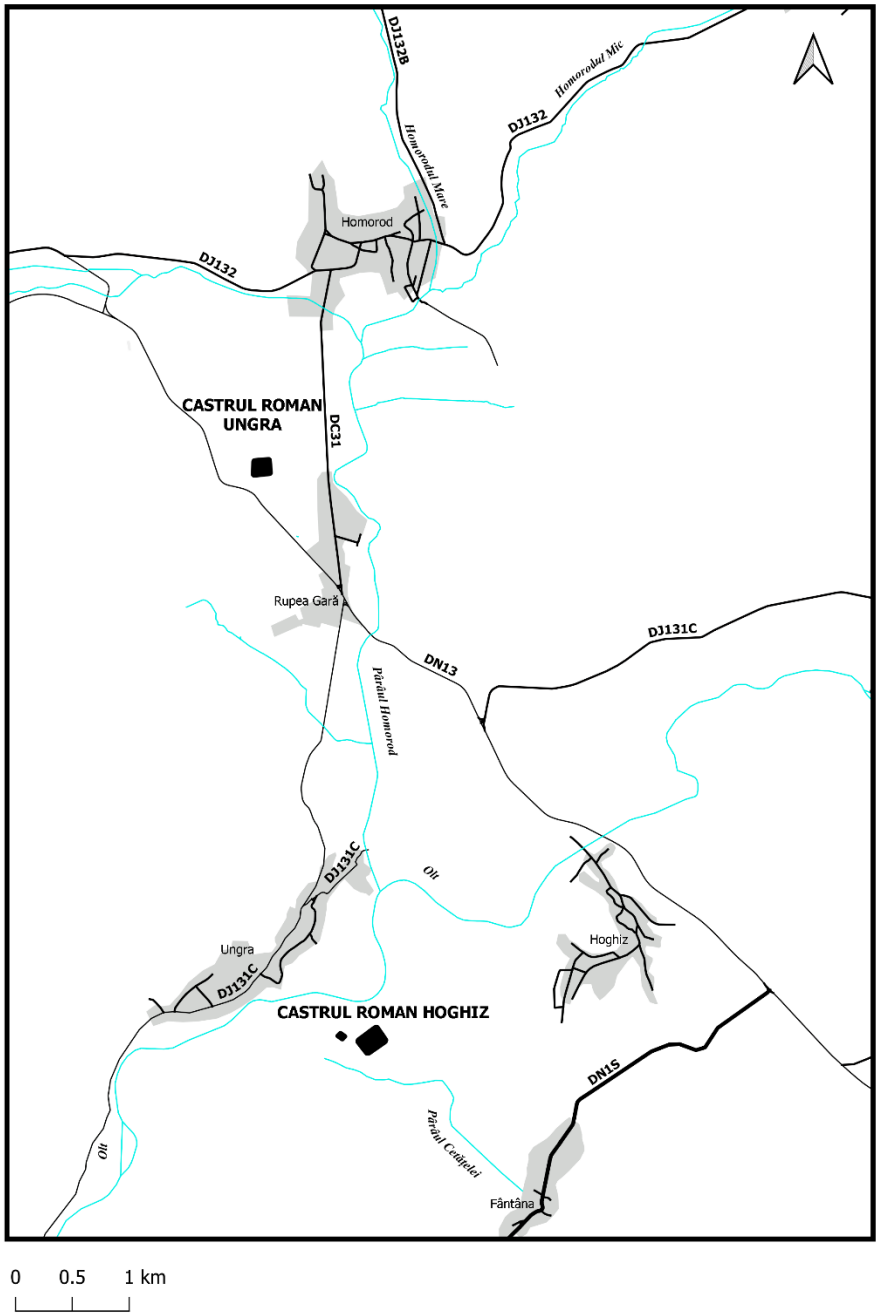


Fig. 1: 1 Location of the Ungra and Hoghiz Roman forts.



Fig. 2: Hoghiz, oblique drone photograph, southeast view (ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2019, 13 fig. 1.5).

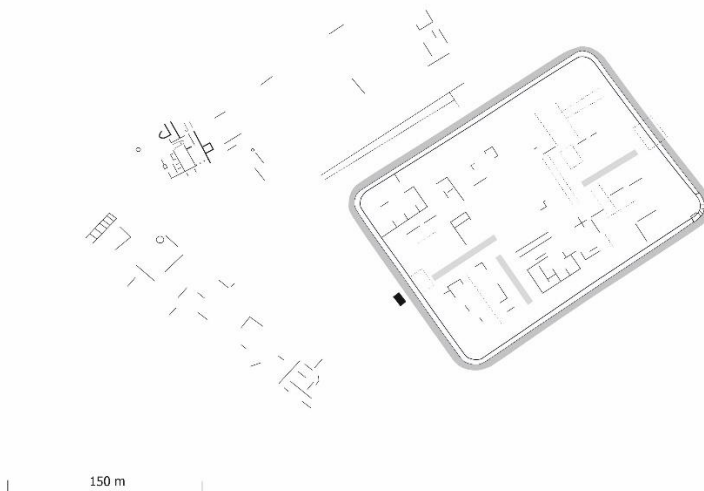


Fig. 3: Hoghiz, the fort and the civil settlement layout plan (updated after ȚENȚEA *et al.* 2019, 16, fig. 1.1).



Fig. 4: Ungra, the fort location, declassified 1968 Corona satellite photo (U.S. Geological Survey, 2008).

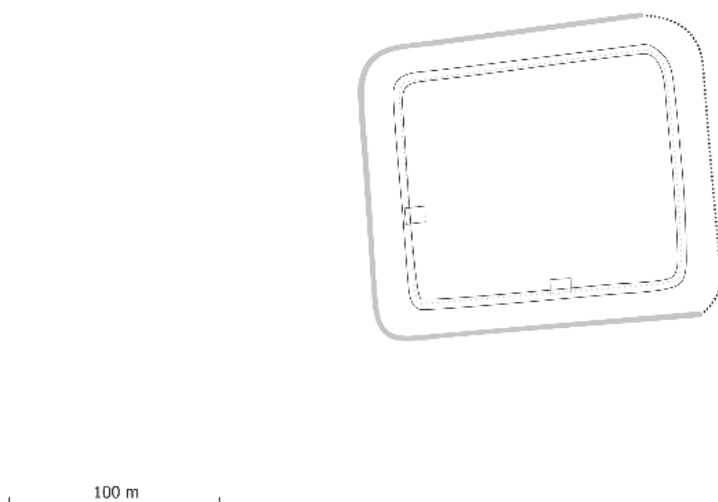
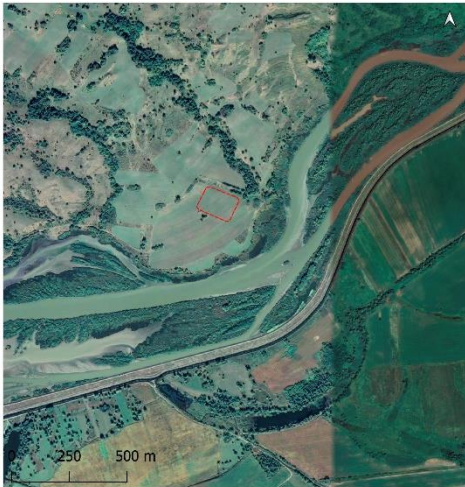


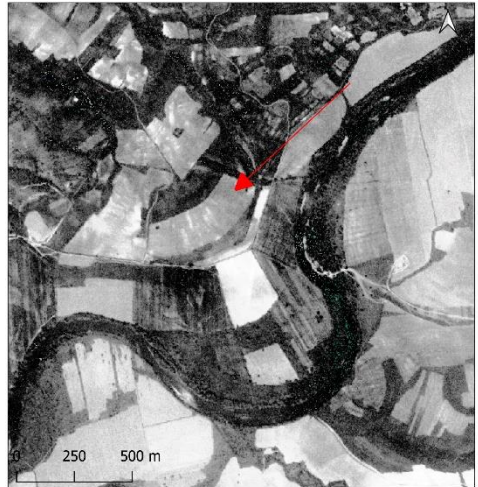
Fig. 5: Ungra, layout plan (drawn after GRIDAN, URDEA, HEGYI 2017, 861, fig. 9).



Fig. 6: Cincșor, oblique drone photograph, southeast view
(ȚENȚEA *at al.* 2019, 21 fig. 3.5).



a. Castrul roman Cincșor. Google Earth Satellite 2021



b. Castrul roman Cincșor. Fotografică declassificată satelit Corona 1968 (U.S. Geological Survey, 2008)

Fig. 7: Cincșor, a, the fort location on orthophotoplan. (Google Earth 2021);
b. declassified 1968 Corona satellite photograph

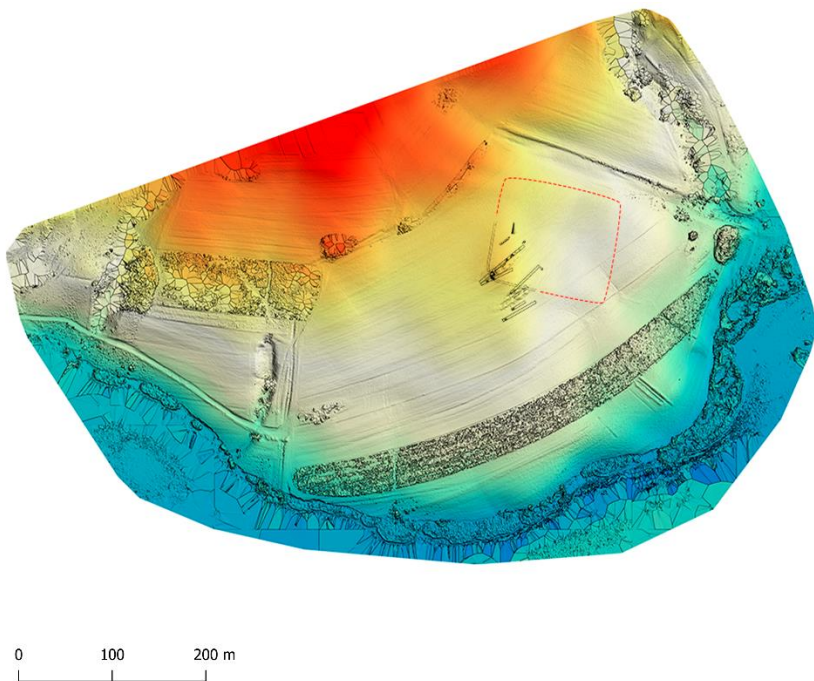


Fig. 8: Cincșor, layout plan (after ȚENȚEA et al. 2019, 22 fig. 3.8), overlaid on the digital terrain model.

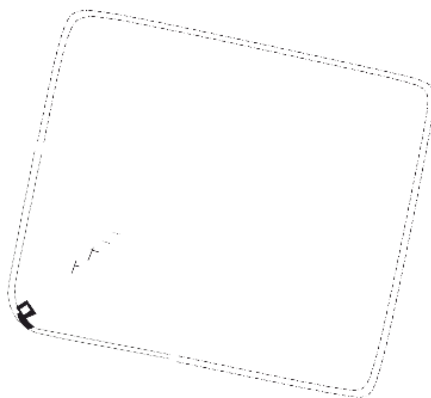


Fig. 9: Cincșor, layout plan (drawn after ISAC, ISAC 1994, 105, fig. 2).



Fig. 10: Feldioara, layout plan (drawn after GUDEA 1997, 69, nr. 45), overlaid on the digital terrain model.



Fig. 11: Boița, oblique drone photograph, south view (after ȚENȚEA *at al.* 2019, 27 fig. 5.4).

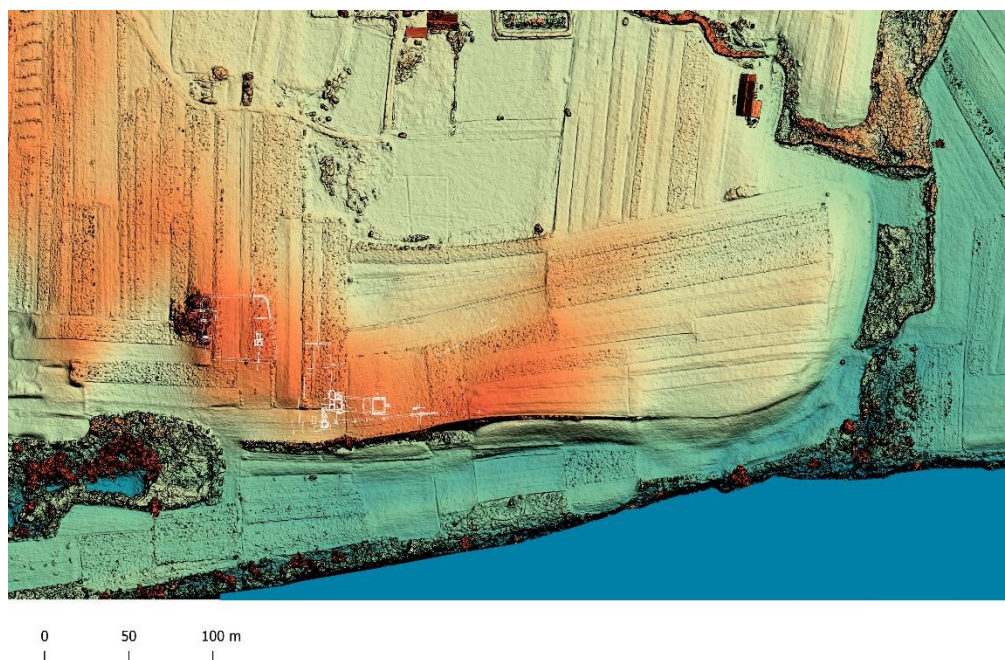


Fig. 12: Boița, layout plan (after BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU 1981, fig. 53), overlaid on the digital terrain model.

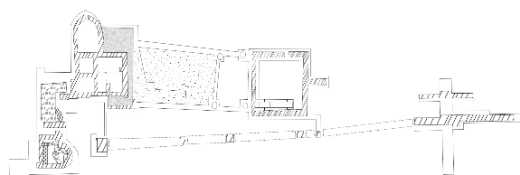
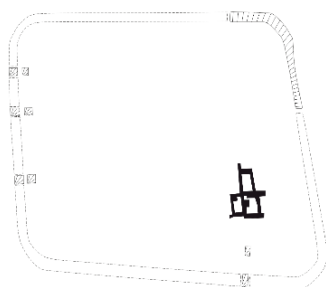


Fig. 13: Boița, layout plan (drawn after BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU 1981, fig. 53).