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Preliminary Observations on Roman Landscape in *Moesia Inferior*

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Abstract: The arrival of the Romans at the Lower Danube and transforming this area into the Roman province of Moesia Inferior led to a radical change of the landscape. A wide space is occupied and organized by the army. The Romans slowly introduced their own model of territorial administration. It took them almost two centuries and required enormous military resources since the local population mounted fierce resistance. It is still difficult to assess accurately what effect the Roman conquest and the subsequent period of Roman occupation had on the development of the landscape. There can be emphasized few aspects in which the landscape was transformed under the Roman rule: changes in pattern of rural settlements, changes in the nature of land use and agrarian exploitation and changes in organizing the road network. Currently available data are unequal for various archaeological sites and issues outlined. Taking into account not only the position of Moesia – a province at the periphery of the Roman world, characterized by the coexistence of two important cultural patterns: Greek and Roman, without leaving aside the native element, but also the dimensions of its territory, we shall focus on few sites, better studied from the point of view of the Roman landscape and representative for the three sub-regions of Moesia Inferior: limes, the Greek coastal cities and the interior of the province.

Keywords: *Moesia Inferior*, Roman landscape, *Novae*, *Troesmis*, *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, *Tropaeum Traiani*, *Histria*

The study of the landscape has always been embedded in archaeological research, but the importance of its systematical study from the archaeological perspective begins to take shape only in the 70s of last century. The landscapes not only are constructs of human populations but they also are the milieu in which those populations survive and sustain themselves. A landscape approach provides cultural–historical frameworks to evaluate and interpret diverse observations about spatial and temporal variability in the structure and organization of material traces. Thus, landscape is a cultural process.¹

Although, there were in the past some studies analyzing the landscape, the interest for this kind of investigations in the Romanian scientific literature, is relatively new. Studies to be concerned with landscape reconstruction were performed for *Histria*, by which were investigated the relationships between the city and its territory, based on the position of the

¹ Anschuetz et al. 2001, 161-162, 173.

necropolis and roads and taking into account environmental changes.² Some others were focused on the prehistory time.³

Archaeological landscape should be perceived as the result of change in the environment as a consequence of social, economic and cultural opportunities or constraints caused by natural factors.⁴

Establishing a relationship of interdependence between man and space is determined by the existence of factors coming from both sides – natural and anthropogenic. Archaeological approach of them from an integrative and cumulative perspective represents the essence of what has to be understood by the concept of landscape archeology.

Any attempt to recreate the Roman landscape at the Lower Danube should follow the next steps: a comprehensive approach to value the existing literature with regard to the subject matter; an interdisciplinary analysis of the data from archeology and related disciplines (multiple sources – historic ancient narrative sources, epigraphy, cartography, aerial and satellite photography); a combinatory analysis of data mentioned above after which relations of relative chronology can be established between the various elements, which may provide clues to the dynamics of the landscape and the areas occupied by humans.

From the geographical point of view area of the Lower Danube consists of several separate units (Balkan Mountains, Dobruja Plateau, Danube Valley, and Delta etc.), real puzzle of ecosystems characterized by the variety of resources and forms of habitat.

The arrival of the Romans at the Lower Danube and transforming this whole area into the Roman province of Moesia Inferior lead to a radical change of the landscape. A sprawling space is occupied and organized by the army, resulting in an imperial province located by the border. The operation is carried out gradually – an expression of policy of „small steps” practiced by the Romans – over several stages, military organization, with all necessary infrastructure (fortifications, roads, *mansiones*, *mutationes*, points of customs stations) being doubled by civil measures to integrate in the new administrative body the local settlements and the Greek towns from the Black Sea Coast, to which are added the new founded Roman settlements.⁵

Moesia Inferior had been established as a Roman province already in the early first century AD. Significant civilian presence in inland Dobruja prior to the second century is

² Alexandrescu 1970; Alexandrescu 1971; Alexandrescu 1978; Alexandrescu 2001; Doruțiu-Boilă 1971; Ștefan 1974; Ștefan 1975; Ștefan 1976; Preoteasa et al. 2012; Preoteasa et al. 2013.

³ Nicolaescu 2013.

⁴ Heilen 2005, 20, 73, 74.

⁵ Panaite 2016a.

debatable based on extant evidence, but the cities of the Black Sea coast at least were closely connected to Rome from the time of Augustus. The new political reality brought important changes on the administrative, religious and social levels. The relative autonomy of the cities from the Hellenistic period ended. Regardless of their legal status – *civitates foederatae, liberae et immunes* or *stipendiariae* – the cities had to take into account Roman interests and demands. Step by step the social framework also changed, as more and more Romans became involved in the cities' trade and internal political life. In the same time, Roman citizenship was acquired by many of the cities' occupants.⁶

An intermediate stage in the organization and takeover of control over this territory is represented by the presence of strategies. There are traces of the Thracian *strategiae* in the area of the future Lower Moesia, and especially in *Scythia Minor*. Members of the aristocracy became *strategoi* under the Roman rule, which proves that up to Trajan–Hadrian the administration of the Lower Danube territory laid on the former aristocracy. Moreover, it seems that the system was not instantly abolished when this area was assigned to the province of *Moesia* after AD 46.⁷ Rome maintained the Thracian strategies for a long time because the loyal Thracian elites voluntarily adopted elements of Roman culture, frequently functioning as cultural intermediaries. On the other hand, the strategies represent the future *territoria* of the new founded Roman settlements.

The Roman advance towards the eastern limits of the future *Moesia Inferior* was a slow process that started with AD 46. One of the key elements of this process was the establishment of a legion at Novae, in the literature there is the opinion that Augustus VIII built the first camp here. Recently this idea was challenged, the author of the new hypothesis bringing convincing arguments in support of the hypothesis that, in fact, the camp was built by the *I Italica* legion, the military unit being the only legion that stationed at this important point on the Danube limes until the end of antiquity⁸. This process ended only during Trajan's reign with the building of the fortresses and forts in the area of *Scythia Minor*.⁹

The impact on local settlement of the arrival of large numbers of Roman troops along the Danube appears now to have been less than was believed to be the case in the past, as archaeologists are now less willing to rely on simple external explanations for the end of this

⁶ Matei-Popescu 2014a.

⁷ Matei-Popescu 2018.

⁸ Lemke 2018.

⁹ Petculescu 2005; Oprea 2006.

or that settlement. This is all the more the case for the interior of the province where even the longer-term effects of being in the Empire for centuries are in some areas hard to detect.¹⁰

What now seems even clearer is that the Roman military cordon along the river was the core of a complex pattern of relationships based on settlements and installations on either side of the river. In that sense the river Danube was no longer a line of demarcation but rather the spine for a military and civil association that grew up in the second century and continued more or less intact until the later decades of the fourth century AD.¹¹

Implementation of Roman forms run parallel with measures for the integration in the empire. It is a well-known fact that along the borders (*limes*) near every military fortification there is always – at least one – civil settlement depending on it and working for its benefit. The Roman authorities will be concerned primarily of creating the infrastructure which ensures the cohesion of space, which became functional in terms of production and trade, administration and military.

Factors that determine the shape of space and the creation of a specific landscape have their origin in an element of necessity: water and food supply, the need for raw materials, defense and ability to respond quickly in case of attack, communication etc.¹² Romans will impose a new system of land ownership, of making agriculture and farming and will decisively influence the organization and distribution of rural settlements. Water provisioning and the access to raw materials primarily stone and clay create in the landscape aqueducts and quarries. Each settlement administrates a territory whose limits are visibly marked on land. They all were well connected by a network of land routes. As time is passing next to them appear the cemeteries, flat or barrow. All this is nothing else than the basic elements of a new reality: Roman provincial landscape.

The province of *Moesia Inferior* was crossed by important, long-distance, north-south and east-west routes. Because of its position, it was an important link between the Danube provinces, Orient and Upper Italy and there was a particular military need to allow the passage of large bodies of troops. Even if there are not so many preserved traces of them on the basis of milestones inscriptions, as the main source, a reconstruction of the roads network in the area was achieved. For the first time, *Moesia Inferior* saw properly constructed roads built with military precision; they represent the motorways of the Roman period, providing links between

¹⁰ Weaverdyck 2016.

¹¹ Tentea 2016.

¹² Aston 1985, 11-29.

settlements and allow quick movement within province, both for civilians and for the army, if needed (Fig. 1).¹³

The largest population that Romans meet at the Lower Danube is the Getae.¹⁴ Information about them appears in written sources, to which are added the archaeological information.¹⁵ Even so, reliable archaeological evidence is surprisingly limited.

Earlier scholars believed that large areas at the Lower Danube may have become almost unpopulated. This is increasingly refuted, but relatively few sites have produced evidence for continuous occupation even so. These are made harder to identify securely by the difficulties involved in dating later La Tène period finds, but there are still a number of sites where unbroken settlement is highly likely.

Historical and archaeological sources¹⁶ give data of a significant demographic development within the area inhabited, but the pattern of occupation and settlement of the territory is still unclear. The existence of significant variations within the types of Getae settlement is generally accepted and there are some studies dedicated to producing typologies of Getae settlement.¹⁷

Most part of these sites have somewhat stereotypical descriptions, most of the time mentioning the ceramic fragments and/or construction materials, when, in fact, these stereotypes relate to the methods of collection, interpretation and evaluation of the data for the whole territory. In addition, there is still a lack of systematic coverage of the territory and no unitary method of recording.

The local toponyms ending in *-dava*, *-sara*, *-upa* are linked with *Dacia* and *Moesia*, while those ending in *-mbria* / *-bria*, *-diza*, and *-para* were seen as related to Thrace. A specific geographical distribution of the endings has been observed, and it is possible that this reflects the language differences among the tribes living in those lands. Linguists have tried to find links between these suffixes and the function or origin of these settlements, but the variety and inconsequence of the toponyms indicate that it may not be an obvious relationship. Fortified settlements usually have the endings *-dava* / *-deva* or *-dova*, but other suffixes such as *-dina*, *-bria*, *-diza*, *-para* / *-bara*, and *-leba*, *-ora* / *-oros* / *-oron* may also apply to them. The fortified

¹³ Panaite 2015. See also Madzharov 2009.

¹⁴ Băltăc 2011, 28-35.

¹⁵ Irimia 1980; Irimia 1981; Irimia 1983; Irimia 2007; Irimia 2010.

¹⁶ Irimia 1980, especially relevant is the map on the p. 115; Irimia 1983, especially relevant is the map on the p. 75.

¹⁷ Irimia 2007, 137-141.

settlements whose names are considered to be Celtic have suffixes which end in *-unum* / *-dunum*, as well as *-briga* / *-birga* and *-rate*.¹⁸

In southern part of the frontier, it was noticed a concentration of place-names ending in *-dava*, characteristic of the Geto-Dacian hill-forts, which is indicating that the Roman army on its arrival in this region found a lot of local tribes dwelling in fortified sites according to their traditional habits. In the limes area, however, there is evidence only for a few, very small native sites surviving until the middle of the second century AD.¹⁹

Extensive field research carried on both sides of the Danube, more extensive South of the Danube, between Svishtov and Krivina completes the data we have about the area in the pre-Roman period and offers a possible model for territorial organization. It was noted that the North and North-West region of Bjala (fortification located at South of Krivina and dated in the La Tène era) settlements occupy an area of about 10,000 square meters and are arranged like a network, the distance of approx. 4–5 km each other and on the valley South of Svishtov, each settlement occupies under 5000 sqm, and the access to water is lacking. From these settlements comes a small amount of pottery, which may be an indication for short periods of use or for their seasonal nature. Most of them date back to the Hallstatt and data for the next era are much less common.²⁰

Ancient sources provide information about two operations of transfers of population in the area, which according to sources would have been uninhabited. Performed during the first century, the two well-known operations belong to Aelius Catus²¹ and Silvanus Aelianus.²² Romanian historiography combats, with various arguments, archaeological included,²³ the interpretation that the area would have been deserted, while Bulgarian historiography supports the colonization of South Dobrudja with Thracian elements.²⁴

Very likely the area was depopulated after frequent clashes in the area, but not so, as to arrive at the idea of a desolate region. In the population transfers we have to see rather the imperial authorities' actions organizing and strengthening the area near the border, doubled by an economic interest.²⁵ This action was primarily of a fiscal nature, as is apparent from the inscription, which praises Tiberius Plautius Silvanus Aelianus: *ad praestanda tributa*, but also

¹⁸ Tomas 2016, 46–49.

¹⁹ Bărbulescu 2001, 286.

²⁰ Conrad, Stančev 2002; Conrad 2006, 312–14; Conrad 2008. See also Tomas 2009.

²¹ Strab., 7. 3. 10.

²² *CIL*, XIV, 3608.

²³ Suceveanu 1977, 20, 21, 31–34.

²⁴ Torbatov 1997.

²⁵ Mrozewicz 2013.

with immediate consequences: *primus ex ea provincia magno tritici modo annonam p(opuli) R(omani) adlevavit*.²⁶

The reorganization of the limes of the *Moesia Inferior* by Trajan accomplished the division of the territory of the province in three different parts: the bank of the Danube, the interior and the littoral. Each of these zones not only represented a geographical unit but at the same time developed administrative features and even ethnic characteristics. Even so, they mutually supplemented each other, ultimately composing a cohesive whole, with the Roman army playing a decisive role.²⁷

The Danube's bank was a frontier area, organized as a military district and became the most Romanised region of *Moesia Inferior*. Among the most investigated centers, together with the territories that belonged to them, which offer an image of the organized hinterland working for their benefit there are *Novae* and *Troesmis*.

Novae, the legionary camp and the Late Antique and Byzantine town, is among the most important limes sites. Excavation over the past 50 years²⁸ have confirmed the strategic position of the fort of the *legio I Italica* and the town of *Novae* in the Roman defense and settlements networks. The hinterland of the legionary base, to the south of the Danube, lies between the Osâm and Yantra rivers (Fig. 2).²⁹ Recently a few research projects were undertaken in order to investigate the territory controlled by the *legio I Italica*.³⁰ They perfectly fit into the topics trend of landscape archaeology.³¹

The intensive surface research of the last years offers us valuable information regarding the space occupation degree but also its organization. The large number of identified objectives dating back to Roman times indicates the intensity of the occupation of the area depended on the city. Most of it, divided into lots, was intended for the cultivation of the land, even if it may be evidence of small-scale agriculture. Certainly, animal husbandry was widely practiced, the soldiers' food being supplemented with other products, some even imported. The small pottery and building materials workshops were completed nearby, with the Butovo center producing mainly for the supply of the legion's camp.

An important role in the economic and craft activities in the area is also played by the veterans of the legion who remain in place or by veterans from the area, who return after

²⁶ *CIL*, XIV, 3608 (= *ILS*, 986); Panaite 2016a, 158; Tomas 2016, 48.

²⁷ Duch 2017.

²⁸ Dyczek, Kolendo, Sarnowski 2001; Kolendo 2008; Dyczek, Kolendo, Sarnowski 2008; Biernacki (ed.) 1995; Biernacki (ed.) 2006; Biernacki (ed.) 2008.

²⁹ Sarnowski 1988, 41-44.

³⁰ Conrad, Stančev 2002; Conrad 2006; Conrad 2008; Tomas 2013; Tomas 2014.

³¹ Tomas 2016; Tomas 2017, 31-92.

completing military service. This is also the case with *Marcus Aurelius Statianus*. Born in the Nicopolitan territory, he performs his military service in the fleet of Ravenna, and after leaving the hearth he becomes an *actor* and deals with crafts in a rustic villa in the territory of Novae.³² As can be seen from the inscriptions, the population is made up of Roman citizens. Some of the soldiers mention about themselves the position held: *frumentarius*, *librarius*, etc.

After the end of the conflicts with the Dacians and the stabilization of the area, the *canabae* and the *vicus*, together with the settlements in the territory, go through a period of peace that favors them. An intense constructive activity is registered in the territory, many of the discovered bricks bearing the stamp of the *I Italica* legion. This is the period when the army is more of a „peace” one! The Novae center functions as a magnet not only for the local population but also for some high-ranking officials.

The important changes introduced by Septimius Severus, which allowed soldiers to live with their families, the diminishing importance of legal status, and perhaps the invasions of the mid-third century, are factors that will make the inhabitants of *vicus* to move closer by the walls of the camp. The construction of the civil annex Novae II will thus appear as a necessity. The result of these transformations will be the integration of the once clearly separated units (the fortification and the civil settlement next to it) into a *civitas*.

Located in the northwest of Dobrudja, Troesmis occupies a strategic key position on the Roman Danube limes, as the place where *legio V Macedonica* was quartered. The widespread area of the ruins that is dominated by two fortifications extends to the East of the Danube. The Western one is the place of the local *civitas* and the Eastern one represents the late Roman and Byzantine settlement.³³

Troesmis is a typical site for the areas located near the border, because there are epigraphically attested, and recently also archaeologically, the settlement of the local population *civitas*, the military settlement *canabae* and the *castrum* (Fig. 3). The three defensive walls are not contemporary and they defend an area of extra muros settlement, whose dimensions in time became smaller and smaller.³⁴ Although a very important site, it has never been systematically excavated except some rescue excavation.³⁵ Recently a research project has investigated the site,³⁶ focusing on the transformations undergone by settlements at the Lower Danube in Antiquity. By applying innovative archaeological documentation and evaluation

³² Tomas, Sarnowski 2007.

³³ Ștefan 1971.

³⁴ Bogdan-Cătănciu 1984, 47; 49.

³⁵ Simion et al., 1980.

³⁶ Alexandrescu, Gugl (eds.) 2014; Alexandrescu, Gugl 2015; Grabherr, Kainrath (eds.) 2016.

methods, the site of *Troesmis* was examined in order to serve as an example for the transformation of the settlement and habitat from the second to the early thirteenth century AD. The most important achievements until now are the location of both *canabae* and necropolis and most important, the fortification where *legio V Macedonica* was quartered.³⁷

The fortifications mentioned above represent the only two fortifications studied from the landscape point of view. The analyses of their territories allow as reconstructing how it was organized. The presence of the military units is the main feature of it, but inside there is also a strong civilian component which is active in direct connection to the army, as long as we are in a frontier area.

The creation of urban centers in the hinterland of the frontier formed part of a general reorganization of the Eastern Balkans, carried out on imperial instructions, following the conquest of Dacia. *Nicopolis ad Istrum* and *Tropaeum Traiani* are two of them.

Nicopolis ad Istrum – the City of Victory was founded by Emperor Trajan in 110 AD.³⁸ According to the latest investigations seems to be erected either on an earlier Thracian settlement, or a timber fort active for a short period of time and built during the military confrontations from the end of first century AD and early second century AD.³⁹ Beyond this, the town-plan of *Nicopolis* follows the Greek model. The citizens are mainly Greek speakers and the area was already, for a long period of time, under the Greek-Thracian influence.⁴⁰ The Romans, Latin speakers – according to epigraphical data, are instead, very active in the territory controlled by the city.⁴¹ Intensive surveys proved a very dense network of settlements and villas, especially on its Western part, while on the Eastern one could be an imperial estate.⁴² The Roman territory in relation to the Greek city makes *Nicopolis ad Istrum* a turning plate between the Greek culture in the south or overseas, and the Latin culture, closer to the limes area.

On the highest plateau from the Southern Dobrudja, near Adamclisi (Constanța County, Romania) there is a unique complex formed of three monuments a funerary altar, a tumulus and a triumphal monument.⁴³ Among the three of them, only the dating of the triumphal monument does not raise any questions. According to the dedicatory inscription it was inaugurated in 109 AD. The Triumphal Monument is considered to be built in honor of the Romans' victory over

³⁷ Alexandrescu, Gugl, Kainrath (eds.) 2016. See also Tomas 2017, 104-08.

³⁸ Iordanes (*Getica*, 101): [Nicopolis] *quae iuxta Iatrum fluvium est constituta notis-sima quam devictis Sarmatis Traianus et fabricavit et appellavit Victoriae civitatem*; Amm. XXXI. 5.16; Vulpe 2002, 49-51; Boteva 2014; Poulter 1986.

³⁹ Vladkova 2001; Vladkova 2002; Paunov, Topalilov 2013.

⁴⁰ Ruscu 2007a, 214-215; Ruscu 2007b.

⁴¹ Conrad 2002, 104-110, especially 110, table 1 and 111 fig. 1; Tomas 2009, 45 table 3.

⁴² Poulter 2002, 19; Poulter 1995.

⁴³ Sâmpetru 1984.

Decebalus during the confrontations in the First Dacian War; but still, there are different opinions according to which it was constructed after the final victory over the Dacians and their allies and the transformation of Dacia into a Roman province.⁴⁴ In the immediate vicinity there are the ruins of *Tropaeum Traiani*, a city, also founded by Trajan, developed and directly related to these monuments.⁴⁵

The emergence of this settlement was influenced, in our opinion by the factors, related more to ideology and imperial propaganda than to pragmatism. A *municipium* from the very beginning,⁴⁶ probably founded on the site of a local settlement,⁴⁷ the city administrated a large territory where Roman settlements, inhabited by colonists and veterans, some aqueducts, stone *querries* and *villae* rusticate were identified and partially investigated.⁴⁸ Some Greek communities are also attested in the territory.⁴⁹ Old topographical map of the area⁵⁰ and mapping of the tumuli registered on the territory⁵¹ allows the reconstruction of the main features of the landscape. Based on them and on the study of the aerial photography the line of the roads connecting the settlements from the territory with the city of *Tropaeum Traiani* and further, to the rest of the province were identified (Fig. 4).⁵²

The two cities presented above are characterized by important territories. Their emergence is due to the political efforts of the Roman authorities in order to organize the area after conquering Dacia. Both have a civilian character and they are the model of organizing the hinterland of the province already experienced by the Romans in other parts of the empire.

At the beginning of the Christian era the old Greek colony of *Histria* became part of the Roman Empire.⁵³ The new political reality brought important changes on the administrative, religious and social levels. This new era was felt to be a second foundation of the city. Now it is built the early Roman city-wall.⁵⁴ During Roman times, *Histria* had a territory⁵⁵ divided into two separate administrative units: a territory which it was embedded in a wider area, a so-called “area of influence”. Within these limits, one should distinguish between the territory of the city itself – *chora*, where the lands belonged, divided into tribes, to

⁴⁴ Poulter 1986, 519; Matei-Popescu 2014b, 205 and n. 2.

⁴⁵ Barnea et al. 1979.

⁴⁶ Popescu 2013.

⁴⁷ Panaite 2016b.

⁴⁸ Panaite 2006; Băltăc 2011, 109.

⁴⁹ Barnea 1969.

⁵⁰ Panaite, Alexandrescu 2009, especially annex 2, 447-449.

⁵¹ Oltean 2013.

⁵² Panaite, Miu (Bem) 2016.

⁵³ Suceveanu 1990; Suceveanu 2010; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991.

⁵⁴ Histria I, 285-293; Alexandrescu 2001, 181-82.

⁵⁵ Avram 1990; Avram 2006.

the Greeks or Romanized Greeks citizens of the city and *regio Histriae*, much wider, which from the juridical point of view depends on the city, but where the real control was belonging to the civil and military Roman authorities.⁵⁶

Inside the *regio* elements of Roman colonization are predominant, while the Greek ones are concentrated in the *chora*. The *regio* is separated from the city and administered by its own magistrates. Besides the rural settlements already mentioned, in the *regio* there are typical Roman sites: *villae rusticae* and a *statio* for *beneficarii consulares*.⁵⁷ During Greek period the necropolis is situated between the city and the *chora*.⁵⁸ Space disposal of ancient tumuli indicates land area and its topography, which can also lead to some very interesting conclusions on the evolution of the relief at *Histria*.⁵⁹ During the Roman period the Greek necropolis maintains the same position, some of the tumuli being used for secondary burials. Analyzing the aerial photos, it was stated that from the very beginning a funerary area was established in direct correlation with streets, roads and plots.⁶⁰ There were also noticed two road systems, the first of roads oriented NS – EW, and the second of roads oriented NNW – SSE / ENE – WSW. Inside the necropolis those roads represent the limits of the burial plots.⁶¹ A wall in the NW marks the limit between the necropolis and the field for agriculture. The two superimposed roads systems could represent a second parceling of the necropolis, without being able to specify when exactly was done (Fig. 5).⁶²

Histria proves itself, a prevailing Greek city, in which Roman elements were identified at different levels: administrative, military, economic, social etc. During this period, *Histria* keeps its previous organization but gets a number of new features which are defining a new reality. The Romans preserved much of the existing planning elements of the city and territory and added to them new ones; new settlements and forms of organization and as an integrative element have developed a network of roads.

Based on the examples listed above one can assume that the landscape experienced substantive changes: the emergence of Roman-type urbanism, a large increase in settlement numbers and settlement density, diversification in the range and function of settlements, and probably also diversification in the organisation and division of the land itself.

⁵⁶ Matei-Popescu 2013.

⁵⁷ Panaite 2010; Panaite 2014.

⁵⁸ Alexandrescu 1966; Alexandrescu 1971, 28.

⁵⁹ Angelescu 2009.

⁶⁰ Doruțiu-Boilă 1971, 45.

⁶¹ Alexandrescu 1971, 31–32.

⁶² Alexandrescu 1971, 30–32; Alexandrescu 1978, 341.

The Roman settlement pattern in the study area reveals itself as largely pragmatic. The great majority of settlements are located within areas which would have had arable potential. The agriculture seems to be the main occupation, although the data at our disposal are more supposed than demonstrated. Villas and small towns represent the key-element of the settlement pattern. The location of rural settlement is influenced mostly by the major towns, in addition to their extensive extra-mural/sub-urban activity, but outside these centres a dense occupation has also been traced.

Another factor influencing the location of the settlement is the local road network. Next to the main roads, as for example the limes road, there is a dense network of local roads, connecting villages and villas with major cities.

The location of sites with industrial activity is dictated by various factors, such as the location of resources or of the markets for products. The availability of limestone and sandstone was widespread and, therefore, the quarries seem to be located near major centres of demand. In most cases they are clearly connected to the transportation network. The same is the case of the pottery centres.

The elements presented above allow us a first attempt to reconstruct the provincial landscape at the Lower Danube. In order to produce some general conclusions, all the information has been brought together into a coherent system to facilitate both area-wide and detailed on-site analysis, and permit its evaluation as a whole.

It is still difficult to assess accurately what effect the Roman conquest and the subsequent period of Roman occupation had on the development of the landscape. Clearly, large numbers of new features were introduced, new types of settlement were constructed and new activities were carried out.

Three main ways in which the landscape was transformed under the roman rule changes in pattern of rural settlements, changes in the nature of land use and agrarian exploitation and changes in the ways in which the inhabitants perceived and thought about their world.

Roman elements were identified at different levels: administrative, military, economic, social and so on. During this period this area gets a number of new features which are defining a new reality. The Romans preserved some of the existing elements and added to them new ones; new settlements and forms of organization and as an integrative element have developed a road network.

Topography and the water courses are the major factors in determining the access network throughout the area. The main trade and communication routes give more structure than ever before to the organisation of the landscape and the emergence of settlement. This

influenced the location of the military bases (there was a massive Roman military presence in *Moesia Inferior*), which in turn influenced the construction of the road network. The Roman army was clearly an important factor in *Moesia Inferior*. Military sites are associated with the emergence of Romanised settlements, *canabae* and *vici*, which played an important role in the urbanisation of the province. Many army veterans were colonised the province as landowners (legionary veterans) or as the inhabitants of towns and some of them became active in local municipal administration.

Vici as well as the *canabae* provided important centres for a large number of activities and services directed at both the army and the civilians, including industry, trade, transport and religious activities. Through their functions these sites had a huge impact and contributed to the rapid Romanization of the territory. More than in terms of administration or markets, the Roman army crucially influenced the development of the rural landscape through the construction and maintenance of the communication system. This influenced the location of settlements and ultimately made the whole landscape mechanism work.

Roman rule affected the native population, as well as the whole landscape in the conquered territories. The emergence of Roman-type towns, the broad diversification of the range and function of settlements, and the particular way of organizing space probably had a more significant impact on the pre-existing system than any other previous changes during prehistory.

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List of figures:

Fig. 1 – Roman roads in *Moesia Inferior*

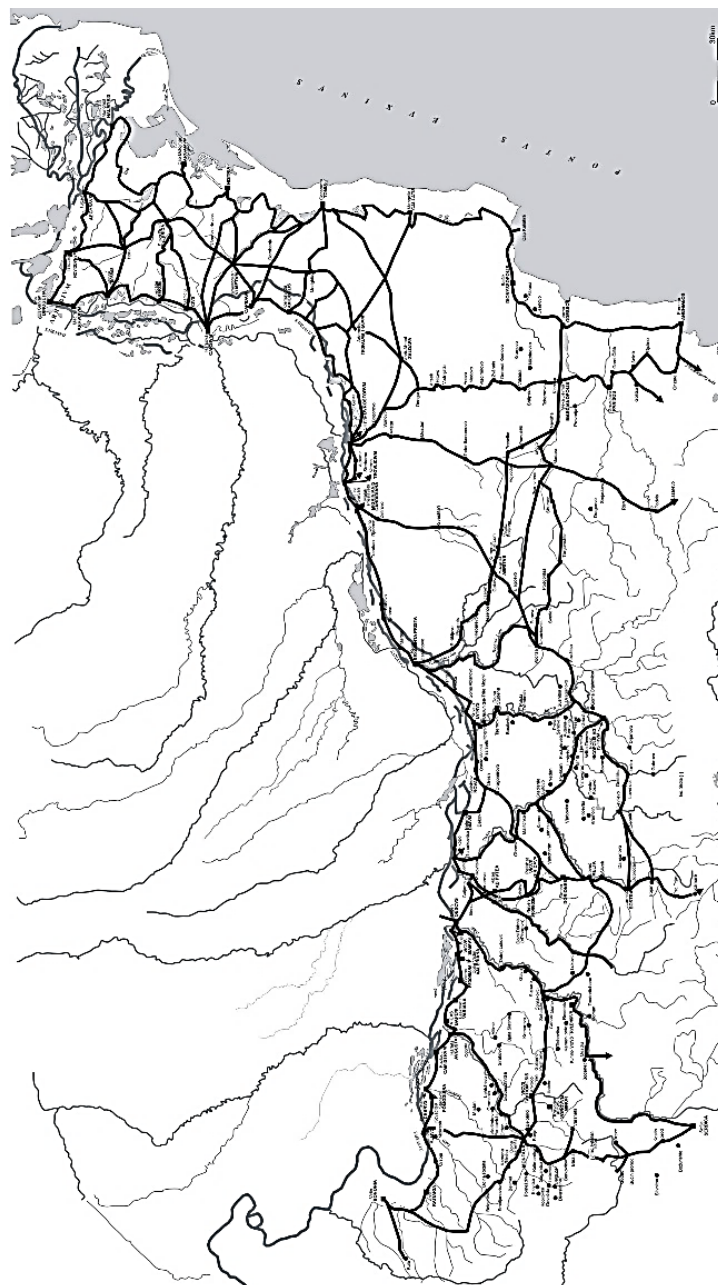
Fig. 2 – *Novae* and the surrounding territory (after Sarnowski in Dyczek et al. 2008)

Fig. 3 – *Troesmis* – castrum and the surrounding territory

Fig. 4 – *Tropaeum Traiani* – Roman roads near the fortification

Fig. 5 – *Histria* – Roman roads and funerary plots

Fig. 1 – Roman roads in *Moesia Inferior*



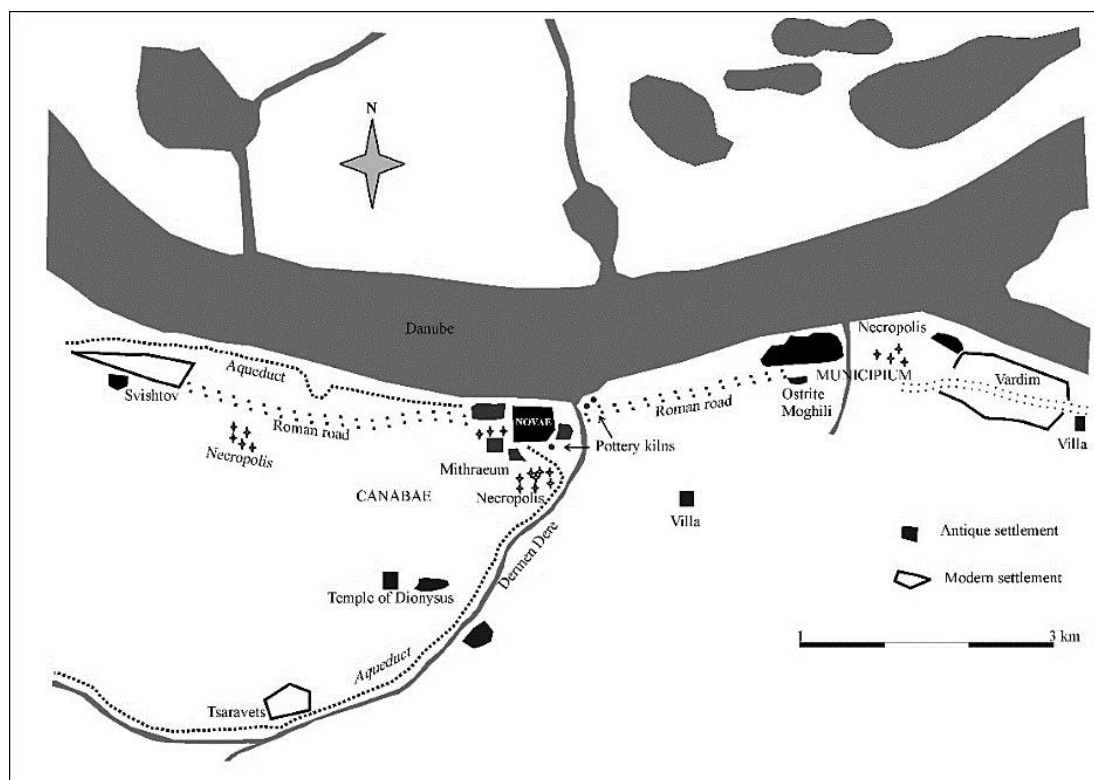


Fig. 2 – Novae and the surrounding territory (after Sarnowski in Dyczek et al. 2008)

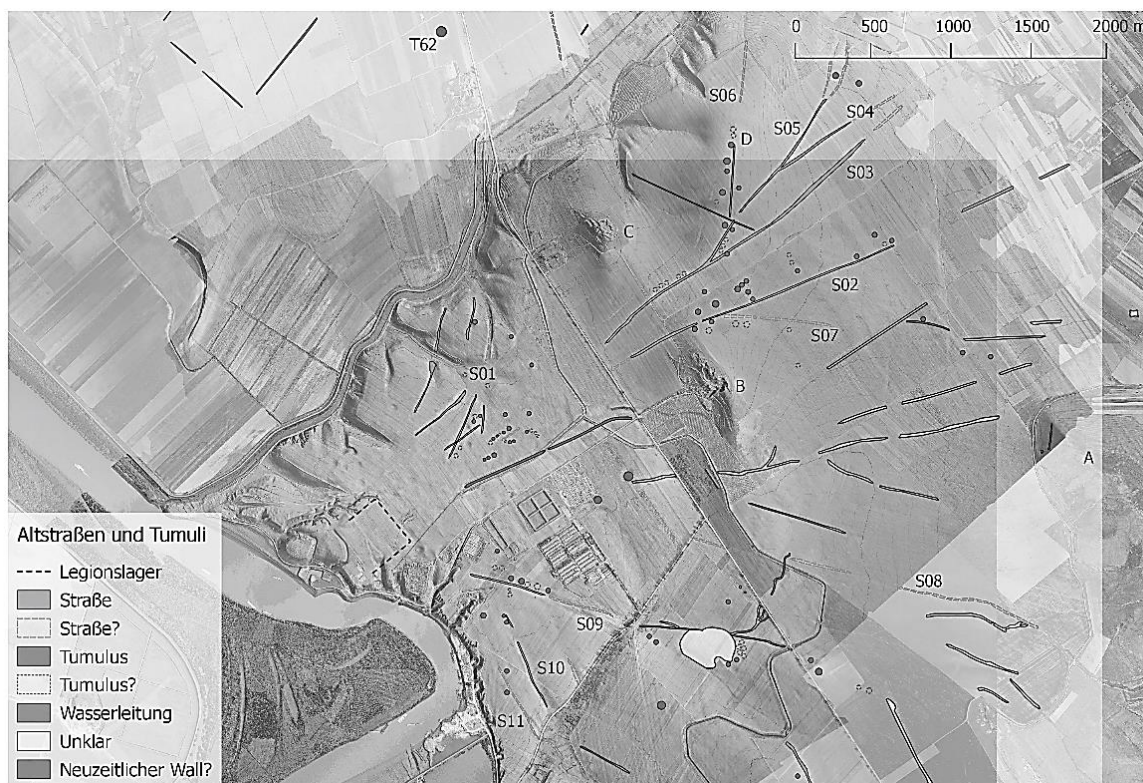


Fig. 3 – Troesmis – castrum and the surrounding territory

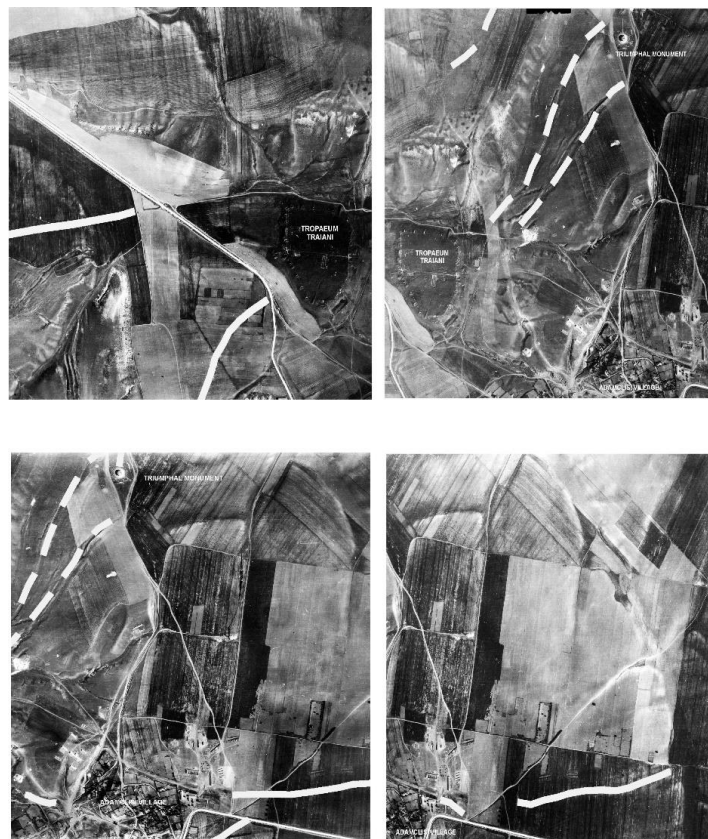


Fig. 4 – *Tropaeum Traiani* – Roman roads near the fortification

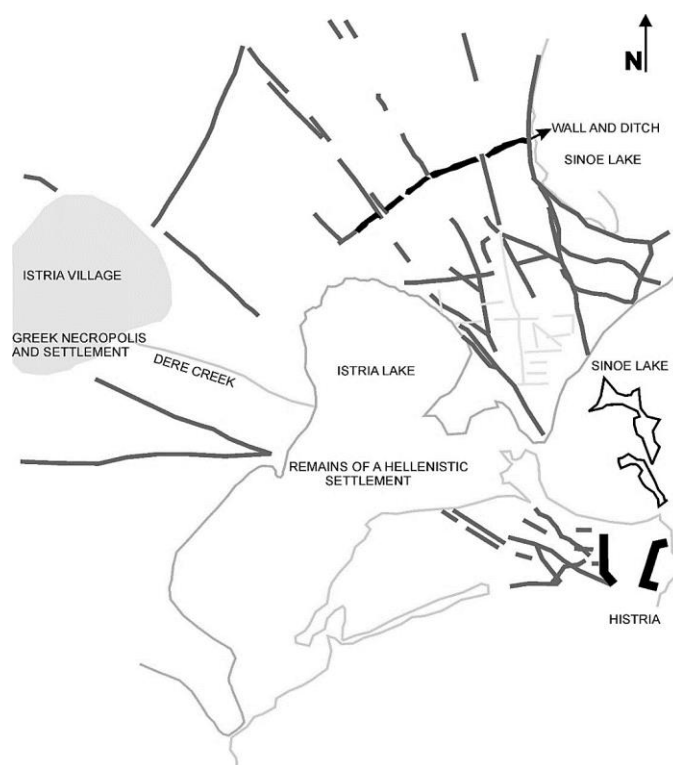


Fig. 5 – *Histria* – Roman roads and funerary plots