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PHD THESIS

*The castra of Dacia subsequent their abandonment by
the Roman Army*
– *abstract* –

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We believe that a complete research on the *castra* must regard not only the period in which they properly functioned as garrisons of the Roman troops, but also those times subsequent their abandonment by the soldiers. With their grandiose look, with the constructions and utilities they have, they could draw attention after their abandonment, attracting for a shorter or longer settling within. No matter who were the new inhabitants or individuals with a short presence, they must have left some traces of material culture.

Then, we could detect which was the destiny of a typical element of Roman civilisation the *castrum* was in the centuries after the ceasing of its original purpose and how the passing of these centuries left its mark on its existence. Partial reuse of the curtain (together with the bastions, gates and adjacent towers) or of the inner constructions, or various alterations more or less modest with the purpose of a longer or shorter inhabitation along The Migration and Medieval Times, cannot be of interest just for those interested of Roman Antiquity, as they are a proof of a special inhabitation within those mentioned periods of time. Even the simple recovery of the lithic material from the structures of the *castra* in Medieval Time's constructions, it's of special interest in this context.

The issue of *castra*'s reuse was followed for the both chronological sequences: the reuse still in the Roman Epoch, as also that one in the „Postroman” times.

The superior chronological limit of the Postroman times is given by the praeue till the possibility of reusing for inhabitation of the construction within the *castra* and of the curtains with their elements (bastions, towers, gates), exists – that is to say the state of preservation for those structures. But it is palpable given by the praeue till which are clearly attested the reuses themselves. The latest reuses for inhabitation of a structures belonging to the *castra* are touching the 11th century (being documented in the ex-fortress from Alba Iulia). This is the superior temporal limit, of course relatively, till which we are following the Postroman life in the *castra*. It was not arbitrarily established, but fixed by the very reality offered by the archaeological researches.

A civilian reuse of the *castra* abandoned within the Roman Epoch remains an issue to follow – wishing that to be with more interest – in the years to come, as in this matter our knowledge are all but satisfactory and uncertain. Civilian reuses of some surfaces of abandoned

castra by the military are attested for the Dacian provincial space (or, at least under close control). Still, reuses for the civil inhabitation of some abandoned *castra*'s structures are not clearly documented. This kind of cases from other provinces are bringing testimony for the phenomenon and we don't see why in *Dacia* situations like this not to be put into light in the future.

But their putting into light demands delicate archaeological researches and foresight coming from the archaeologist that these kind of situations can occur, so that they will not represent „surprises” (that might be overlooked during the impetuosity of the excavation).

The reuse of the former *castra*'s structures subsequent the province's evacuation and inhabitation within the *castra*, were attested in a number of cases which were not few. Those reuses, relatively appreciated, are no more and no less than in other provinces of the Empire. It cannot be affirmed in this moment that the *castra* bore a special interest for reuse in the period closely next after the province's evacuation, The Migration Epoch and The Early Medieval one face to the former civilian settlements (with the remark that these are much more less archaeologically known).

The „safety” given by the curtain walls of the former *castra* in the mentioned periods appear to be rather a cliché. The Roman individuals were probably aware that this „safety” was an unrealistic one, the barbarians from around the former province were not or were not anymore familiarized with a „safety” like this and the migratory groups didn't need it.

In the „fully” and Late Middle Age inhabitations of large intensity on the surface of former Dacian *castra* are few. The cases of Alba Iulia, Odorheiu Secuiesc and maybe Drobeta-Turnu Severin are rather exceptions. The difference face to the German space, better known to the author of the thesis, is obvious in this matter. Of course, the fact that in the 15th century the whole curtain wall of the Roman legionary fortress from Alba Iulia represent the curtain wall of the medieval fortification can be seen as unusual not just for the territory of the former province of *Dacia*. But it remains singular, as it is not clear the situation of that quadrangle „Saxonivara” from Turda, suspected to be the very former Roman legionary fortress from here. If the „Banat of Severin” had its centre in the former Late Roman/Byzantine fortification from Drobeta-Turnu Severin (this one's curtain wall representing to a large extent the curtain of the province's time fort), remains to be confirmed.

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