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Aspects Regarding Historical Sites Restoration

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***Abstract* – The purpose of this article is to identify the representative archeological sites in the Dobrogea area and to analyze their main characteristics: the period in which they were built, their positioning, the structure of the land in the areas where they were located, the geometry of the fortresses, materials used. Another point of interest is the time of their discovery and the conservation and restoration works done until now. The subject is all more interesting as, at present, more than 20 sites part of Roman limes are evaluated in order to be included in UNESCO World Heritage List.**

Keywords – ancient cities, archeological sites, conservation, Dobrogea, fortress, limes, resoration

1. INTRODUCTION

Dobrogea has a rich cultural heritage, being an intensely inhabited territory from the Stone Age to the present day, successive habitation layers being encountered during archeological research. The value of the heritage can be saved through tourism to the extends that the existing sites will be taken care of and restored. The stakes are even higher as some of theese sites could be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, fulfilling the basic criterion of exceptional universal value that transcends the boundaries of cultural and geographical space, as well as the criteria of integrity and authenticity.

The oldest traces of civilization date back to the Neolithic and have been represented by the *Hamangia Culture* and the *Gumelnița Culture* since the 6th millennium BC. The settlements of the Gumelnița culture were succeeded by the *Cernavoda Culture*. The Iron Age brings the *Babadag Culture*, which stands out through fortified settlements with ditches and earth waves, the maximum flowering period being between the 11th and 7th centuries BC.

2. THE ANCIENT GREEK CITIES

In the first millennium BC Greece is experiencing a strong development, supported by the increase in polpulation in a relative small territory, therefore they needed to find new sources of raw materials and new markets for the surplus of handicrafts.

Since the 7th century BC the Greeks established colonies on the shores of the Black Sea, an important point of attraction being the possibilities of developing trade using the waterways on the Danube. Among the fortresses they founded in Dobrogea are Tomis, Callatis, Istria, Aegysos, Halmyris and Argamum (Orgame).

For a long time it was believed that Histria was the first Greek settlement in Romania, but recent discoveries show that the first settlers founded the fortress of *Argamum*, a

generation before Histria, on an old settlement of Babadag Culture. The fortress is located on the rocky promontory of Cape Dolojman in Lake Razim. A testament to the development of the Greek period is the existence of two ceramic kilns that reflect prosperous economic life, political stability and cooperation with the indigenous world. No areas reserved for public life in the Greek period, agora or sanctuaries have been identified so far and it is assumed that, if they existed, they were remodeled in the Roman period.

After the conquest of the territories by the Roman Empire, in the 1st centuries of Roman rule, the exit to the Black Sea was blocked by the deposited sediments that led to the formation of Lake Razim. In the city we can identify the main elements of a Roman settlement: the main street, the squares and the basilicas. In the 4th century AD the Romans built a stone enclosure and two earth defense walls in the south and northwest.

The fortress has an area of 2.6 ha, a triangular shape with 8 towers, 6 bastions and gates, founded on the limestone layer.

Argamum was first located by the historian and archaeologist Vasile Pârvan in 1916, and the first excavations were made by Paul Nicorescu between 1926-1932. The archeological research of the site was resumed in 1965, under the leadership of Maria Coja (1965-1985). Archaeological research carried out in 1997-2001 intended to restore three sites (two early Christian basilicas and a section of enclosure).

The construction material from Argamum is a very friable limestone, which does not withstand much of the freeze-thaw cycle. The binder is a reddish-yellow soil, characterized by an adhesion to the stone and hardness similar to lime mortar.

Archaeological research is currently underway but the fortress is not included in a tourist circuit.

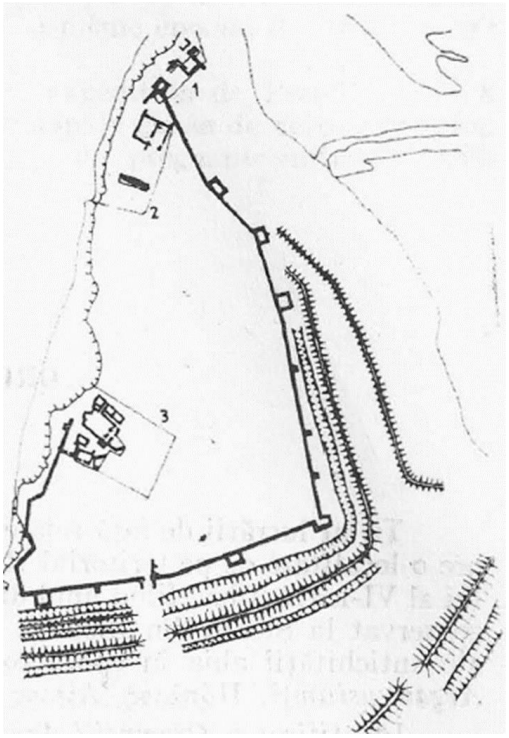

Fig. 1 Argamum (Orgame) site overview

3. ROMAN PERIOD

The Battle of *Adamclisi* was one of the bloodiest battles of the First Daco-Roman War, ending with the victory of the Roman armies. To mark this event and to discourage future intrusions into the territories of the Roman Empire, Emperor Trajan ordered the construction of a grand monument to be seen by those navigating the Danube and the establishment of a city, *Civitas Tropaensium*, on the site of an ancient Getae settlement to commemorate the battle.

The city lasted for 5 centuries, although it was built in a place without water sources, far from the sea or the Danube and without an important strategic position. The city is a testament to the economic and technical possibilities of the empire. Aqueducts were built to supply water to the fortress, which in some places crossed valleys and hilltops, these requiring difficult technical solutions. Outside the fortress were identified the ruins of a tank that stored the water transported by aqueducts.

The city experienced several periods of flourishing followed by others of destruction, such as those caused by the attacks of the Goths or the weakening of the defense of the limes in the region. The city became a Christian one in the 5th-6th centuries when it was an episcopal see. Many of the remains preserved in the city belong to this period. Starting with 7th century AD the city was gradually abandoned.

The surface of the enclosure is approx. 10ha and the fortress probably had a rectangular network of streets, with two main streets cardo and via pricipalis. Inside the enclosure are 5 basilicas, one of which, the "marble" basilica is considered an episcopal church.

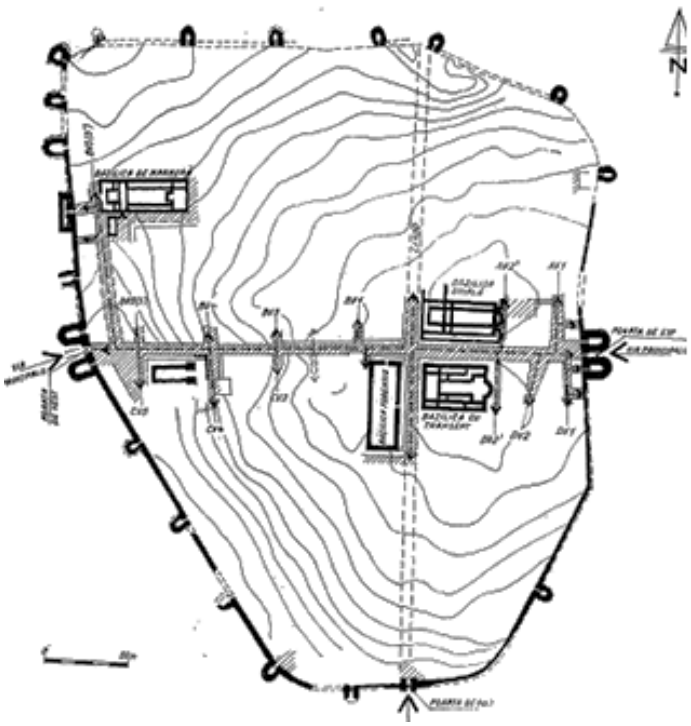

Fig. 2 Overview of the Tropaeum Traiani site with the 2 main streets

The city and the monument were noticed around 1837, the Prussian officer, K. von Vincke-Olbendorf. The excavations at the city were started by Grigore Tocilescu in 1891 and continued until 1909. The research was continued by V. Pârvan, G. Murnu, P. Nicorescu, I. Barnea and Al. Barnea, the last research being done in 1968-1975 period. Since 1993, the Adamclisi archeological site has become a school site.

The Adamclisi monument can be visited, but the fortress is not included in a tourist circuit.

4. THE ROMAN LIMES

Limes is the name of the fortified border of the Roman Empire that crosses Europe from Scotland (Hadrian's wall) to the Dniester and the Black Sea.

It was made of walls of earth and ditches, along which were built wooden palisades, stone towers, forts and fortresses in an attempt to protect the borders of the empire from the attack of barbarian peoples.

The western segment of the Roman limes built on the territory of Austria, Germany and Slovakia has been inscribed as a cultural monument in the UNESCO World Heritage, and there are currently efforts to include the Danube limes. More than 20 of these sites are located in the Dobrogea area, including Axiopolis, Durustorum, Capidava, Sucidava, Sacidava, Halmyris, Aegyssus, Dinogeția and Noviodunum.

The city of Axiopolis was founded by Lysimachus, king of Thrace, in the 2nd century BC. In the 4th century AD the settlement was rebuilt by the Romans, under the leadership of Constantine the Great, becoming one of the most important fortresses on the Danube line.

The fortress is located on a triangular plateau, which climbs from north to south, where there are two valleys, maybe even former defense ditches. To the east, the fortress was protected by a deep valley, and to the west by the high bank of the Danube. Axiopolis has a special value for the history of Christianity. An inscription discovered in the fortress attests to the martyrdom of three Christians: Cyril, Chindeas and Dasius, probably during the persecutions launched by the Roman emperor Diocletian.

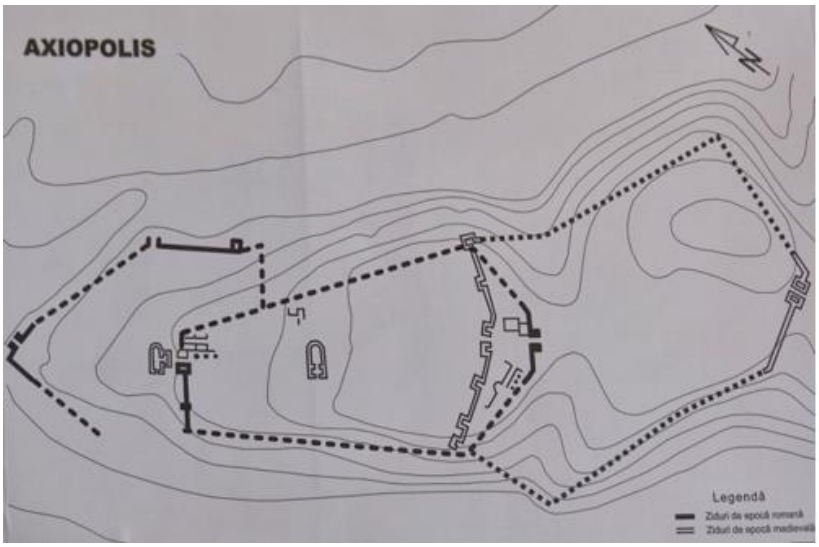

Fig. 3 Axiopolis site overview

The first excavations were carried out on the plateau by Pamfil Polonic in 1895-1896 and 1899, under the direction of Prof. Gr. Tocilescu. The fortress cannot be visited or researched because during the First World War, a military ammunition depot was set up in the area, and it is currently inside a military unit.

The fortress of *Dinogeția* is located on the left bank of the Danube, in the area where the Siret flows, on a hill. The archeological site includes a pre-Roman Getic settlement, a 2nd century Roman camp, a late Roman citadel (3rd - 7th century) and the Middle Age Byzantine fortress (dating from the 10th-12th centuries). The name of the fortress is of Getic origin, the Romans generally keeping the names of the localities before the Roman cities.

The late, trapezoidal Roman citadel, with an area of 1.2 ha, has a wall of 2.50 m thick, 14 towers (horseshoe-shaped and fan-shaped) is in very good condition, as well as the monumental gate from the E and the secondary ones, at N, V. How high was the level of civilization in this fortress is evidenced by the presence of the ruins of Roman baths (25x15m) and a house of the fort commander, very modern for the time?

Following the plan to dam the Danube and obtain the maximum possible agricultural terrain, the landscape of the area has been completely changed; the water is not surrounding the city any more.

Fig. 4 Dinogeția site overview

The ruins of the Roman fortification on the Bisericuța-Garvăn isle were pointed out in the 19th century by E. Desjardins and Gr. Tocilescu, the ancient name Dinogetia being known even before the beginning of the archeological researches. The first excavations began under the leadership of Gh. Ștefan and aimed at getting to know the site. Archaeological research has continued, with small interruptions to this day. The fortress is not included in a tourist circuit.

The name of the fortress *Noviodunum* located on the right bank of the Danube, near the town of Isaccea is of Celtic origin. The fortress played an important economic and strategic role on the Lower Danube, being mentioned by many ancient and Byzantine historians - Ptolemy, Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius of Caesarea, Jordanes and Constantine Porphyrogenitus. In Roman times, the Classis Flavia Moesica river fleet was

stationed here, its geographical position allowing the surveillance of the entire border, but this was also the road of great invasions: Sarmatians, Goths, Heruli, and Golden Horde.

Raised to the rank of *municipium*, the Roman fortification is surrounded by several earth walls and ditches. The northern precinct, on a length of 200m, with the walls having a thickness of 3m and 7 semicircular towers is today under the waters of the Danube. The southern precinct is the most visible, having excavated three towers, one corner, fan-shaped, one intermediate, horseshoe-shaped, and the middle, a rectangular bastion of impressive size. The site is superimposed by the medieval fortifications of Isaac, of which the most visible is the Ottoman fortification.

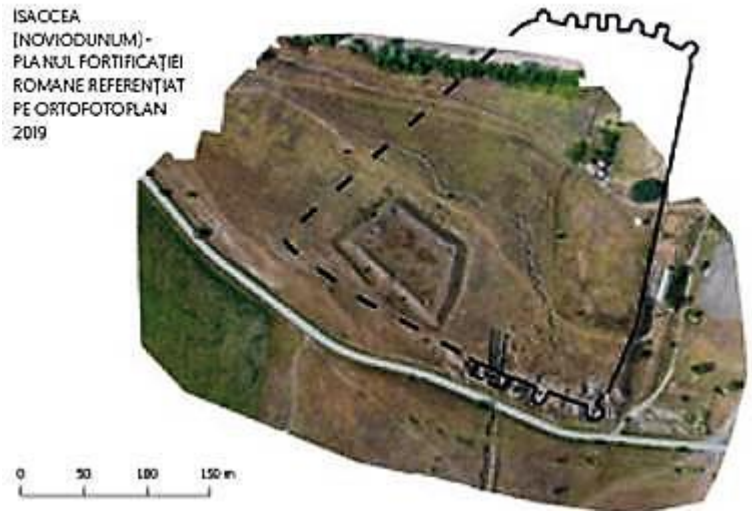

Fig. 5 Noviodunum site overview

The first archeological researches were started in 1953 by prof. Gh. Stefan. The aim was to identify the medieval settlement. In 1955 a team made up of I. Barnea, Bucur Mitrea and N. Angelescu carried out the first rescue excavation along the flooded beach of the Danube, at the ruins of the port facilities from the Roman era. The team also conducted surveys on the east, south and west sides in 1964-1971. The U-shaped towers of the north side were brought to light, two of which framed the North Gate, an apse-shaped building called the "Basilica".

At the moment, a project has been started for the restoration and enhancement of the archeological site. The project includes works to preserve the existing walls and the construction of protection structures for the discovered historical vestiges such as the Great Tower, the Crypt or the Oven.

It is also intended to remodel the existing modern buildings on the site so that they can be transformed into museums, warehouses and offices to help future archaeological studies, and accommodate visitors. All these will be completed by the landscaping of the site.

5. MEDIEVAL CITIES

After the division of the Roman Empire (395 AD), Dobrogea became part of the Byzantine Empire. Existing fortresses have been restored and strengthened, but during the invasions of migrant peoples many forts and fortresses are abandoned.

Other medieval fortresses were built during the Ottoman domination, in order to protect the empire's border. Few remnants of them remain due to the fact that many of them were built of earth and wood, and others were blown up by the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, concluded at the end of the Russo-Turkish War. Efforts have been made to identify them in order to start conservation work; the materials used are not durable over time.

The only fortress built in the medieval period whose ruins can still be seen today is a fortress built in the 14th century by Genoese merchants, the *Enisala* fortress, also known as *Heracleea – Bambola – Pampulo – Yeni-Sale – Eracri-Kupei*.

The fortress is located on Gras Hill, near Razim and Babadag Lakes and was built over an early Iron Age settlement (Babadag Culture) and a medieval one. The fortress was part of the defensive system of Mircea cel Batrân and the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of Dobrogea by the Turks in 1419-1420. It is abandoned after the sandbanks that separate Lake Razim from the sea are formed.

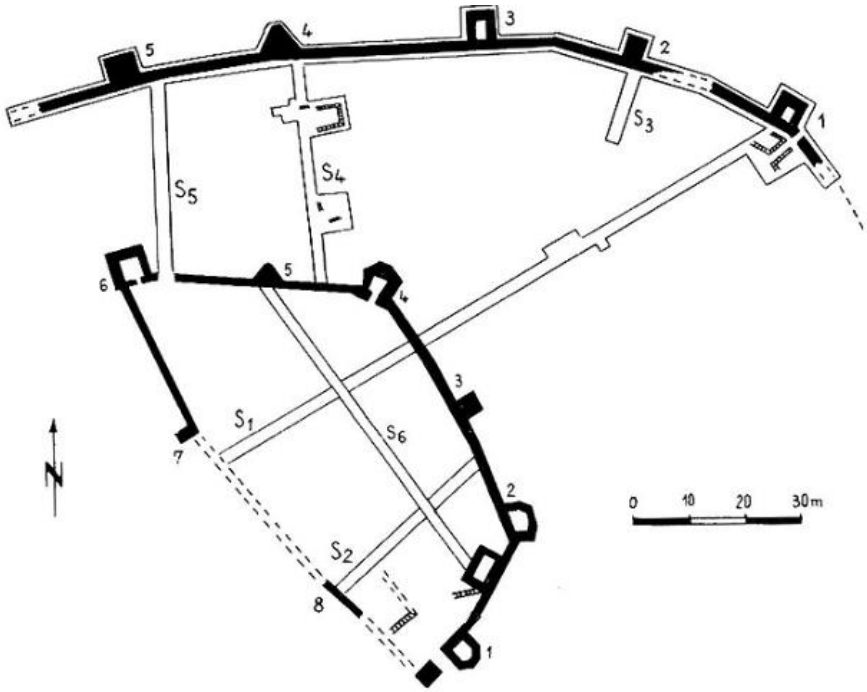

Fig. 6 Enisala site overview

Gras Hill is made of Cretaceous limestone and has an altitude of 110m, being the highest and best positioned hill on the shores of Lake Razim. The base of the enclosure is of irregular polygon following the sinuosities of the natural terrain, its dimensions being approximately 50x100m. There is a second enclosure on the edge of the smoother slope of the promontory with five square towers and a triangular one. The thickness of the walls varies between 1.5m and 3m, with a height that once reached 5-10 m. The fortress is built of masonry of limestone blocks of relatively small size, with lime binder and sand. The blocks are poorly shaped or unprocessed and are arranged in almost regular assizes. The rocks from which the walls are made are Cenomanian limestones (63% - Golovăr hill), encrinitic limestones (4%), Turonian limestones and sandstones (16% -Visterna), gray

Triassic limestones (8% - Sinispetcu hill) and reddish (1%) and exotic blocks (3%). The binder between the blocks is a white lime mortar with sand and red-brown quartz gravel taken from the beach between Capul Iancilă and Călugăra hill, 8-10km from Enisala. Remains of mussel shells are also present. The composition of the mortar is 53% quartz sand, the rest being lime and fragments of shells. The mortar is very brittle and in areas exposed for a long time to the attack of atmospheric agents, it suffered a selective abrasion.

The fortress is distinguished by special architectural elements, such as the large tower having a trapezoidal plan, with a monumental entrance gate with a masonry slit that allowed vertical defense of access, the cistern of the fortress, a rectangular basin protected by water-repellent mortar in which rainwater was stored, or maybe water brought from outside the fortress and the main gate bastion with a double arch, with an arch in the central area called the blind arch. This last architectural element is of oriental origins but also appears at the Neamț Fortress, at the churches founded by Ștefan cel Mare, at the church of St. Nicolae Domnesc from Curtea de Argeș.

The first archeological excavations at the fortress of Enisala were led by Grigore Avachian between 1938-1939. The research was resumed in 1963-1964 by Ion Barnea and I.T. Dragomir, with the remarkable result of the discovery of the second fortified enclosure of the fortress. Since 1976, proposals have been made to restore the fortress and research has been resumed by Gh. I. Cantacuzino and Silvia Baraschi, and since 1991 by a team of Raluca and Sergiu Iosipescu and Oana Damian.

The fortress was partially restored in 1992-1998. The bastion of the entrance was rebuilt and the walls on the west side were rebuilt. Metal walkways have been installed for public access to the fortress, and currently there are proposals for the continuation of rehabilitation works.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Writing this articol I noticed that the interest for identifying and studying historical sites is amplifying at the end of the 19th century, Romania being part of the existing European current. Research and conservation have been carried out in stages using more or less appropriate methods.

The research of historical sites has been amplified in recent years, the Minister of Culture annually funding from the state budget, extensive research with the role of identifying, specifying boundaries and evaluating sites, introducing all the results gathered so far in a systematized database in relation to the requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Listing file.

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