

# The Roman Fort at Grădiştea Muncelului (*Sarmizegetusa Regia*). Its Chronology and its Historical Meaning

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## 1. The Roman Fort at Grădiştea Muncelului

Among the numerous Roman *traces* found in the area of the Orăştie Mountains (South-West Transylvania) the most important are that which were uncovered on the Grădişte hill and its surroundings. Here was identified by archaeologists and historians the place of the Dacian royal residence, *Sarmizegetusa Regia* (Daicoviciu C., Ferenczi Al. 1951, p. 64). Today this hypothesis is accepted by the majority of the Romanian and foreign scholars unreservedly. The archaeological zone excavated during the last 50 years was divided into three main sectors: the military precincts, the holy zone and the residential area on the arranged terraces.

In this context we will examine only the military precincts. It was also called "the great citadel", or "the greatest stone wall fortification" (Daicoviciu, Ferenczi, Glodariu 1989, p. 83), being considered the central point protected by a whole defence system consisting of several citadels and strongholds located on a huge area of more than 200 square kilometers.

The first researchers who have dug at Grădiştea Muncelului, under the direction of O. Daicoviciu, considered the "military precincts" uncovered by them at Grădişte hill as a refugee type fortification, being a shelter for the civil population from the neighbourhood (Daicoviciu C. 1951, p. 125-126; Daicoviciu H. 1972, p. 140, pl. IV). I.H. Crişan, a member of the first scientific team, specified that because of the paucity of the Dacian archaeological traces inside the walled area the stone precincts from the Grădişte hill was not permanently inhabited, nor it was a "princely residence" (Crişan 1977, p. 355). For all that, none of the respectable historians and archaeologists named above did not give up to the identification of the "military precincts" at Grădişte hill with the Dacian royal residence. But it is obvious that if it was not a "princely" citadel, it is hard to believe that the epithet "royal" used by Ptolemy for *Sarmizegetusa* had any connection with the "military precincts". We must not forget that Ptolemy and other writers from the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. have taken the name "*Sarmizegetusa to basileion*" (= *regia*, very probable, directly from Trajan's Commentaries, the man who has seen the Dacian royal residence).

Today it is more and more accepted the correct interpretation that the "great citadel" from the Grădişte hill, with an area of 3 ha, is nothing else but a Roman fort, having an irregular shape because of the natural conditions (Diaconescu 1997; Protase 1997; Opreanu 1998) (fig. 1). Even I. Glodariu, the present director of the excavations at Grădiştea Muncelului, agrees. But he considers that it is about only of a Roman reconstruction of the former Dacian citadel. He thinks that initially existed a stone

Dacian enclosure, more restricted, walling only the highest zone of the Grădiște hill, having an inner surface of a little more than 1 ha (Glodariu 1993, p. 21). As not any archaeological evidence supporting this hypothesis was published, it is nothing but a theoretical explanation. We must stress that this hypothesis does not explain the type and the function of that supposed Dacian fortification. Placed in a “position which does not dominate over anything, but it is overlooked” (Daicoviciu H., Ferenczi, Glodariu 1989, p. 71), this supposed fortification was interior than the others of the Dacian defence system in the region. That means it is not possible to think to a strategical initiative when it was raised (Glodariu 1993, p. 21). Even we would accept Glodariu’s last hypothesis it is hard to agree that the “little precincts” can be identified with the “royal residence”. Its inner area looks uninhabited by the Dacians.

The hypothesis of the Roman reconstruction is not totally new. 25 years back, the same authors considered that the “great citadel” was twice reconstructed: once by the Dacians before the second Dacian war of A.D. 105, the second belonging to the Romans after its besieging and conquest in A.D. 106 (Daicoviciu, Glodariu 1976, p. 75). That means the authors of this hypothesis presumed three stages of building of the fortification: the original Dacian one, and the two reconstructions. It is important to emphasize that this stratigraphical sequence was not the conclusion of an archaeological excavation of the defence wall of the “citadel”, as one can suppose. It was established based on the general frame of all the excavations in the area and mainly on the known historical data. The real archaeological evidence is missing. The last historical hypothesis belonging to I. Glodariu, we have partially commented, is more complicate. He thinks that the first “little Dacian precincts” was partially (?) dismantled at A.D. 102, as the peace’s conditions obliged. Since this moment, in Glodariu’s opinion, would has been placed a Roman detachment belonging to the *legio III Flavia Felix*. It was retreated after Decebalus finished (few weeks 2) the dismantling action of the citadels (how does the author know 2) (Glodariu 1993, p. 22). Immediately after the Roman detachment left, the Dacians would have been in a hurry to reconstruct the “citadel” at Grădiște. Why? To be destroyed at A.D. 106 by the Romans after a difficult siege (most of the authors imagined everything only because they consider that the second Dacian war had the same aim like the first one, the conquest, for the second time, of Sarmizegetusa Regia at Grădiște hill, even there is no evidence to support this assumption). Continuing his hypothesis, Glodariu appreciated that immediately after the final siege detachments from the *legio III Flavia Felix*, *II Adliutrix* and *VI Fertrata* rebuilt the walls. Why 2 To prepare a garrison place for detachments of *III Flavia Felix*. This last vexillation would has been worked to the enlargement of the enclosure and this is the “citadel” uncovered by the archaeologists which can be seen today (Glodariu 1995, p. 126). This succession of assumptions is so complicate that became inconsistent. Summarizing this hypothesis it suggests that between A.D. 102-106 the massive stone walls of the “military precincts” at Grădiștea Muncelului were twice destroyed and twice reconstructed and also (when ?) the enclosed area was enlarged three times than the former Dacian “little citadel”.

Recently, Al Diaconescu has expressed his own opinion, based on the same evidence. Even he accepts Glodariu’s “first little citadel” hypothesis, he considers that at A.D 102 over the former Dacian structures was built a first Roman fort and a Roman garrison was stationed inside it (Diaconescu 1997, p. 18). It is an idea which is supported by Cassius Dio’s statement. Unfortunately, Diaconescu, as the previous scholars, is continuing his theory having in mind a second presence in A.D. 106 of Trajan to the same Grădiște hill (= Sarmizegetusa Regia). After him, the wall of the

first Roman fort was built by the *legio II Adiutrix* and the *VI Ferrata*. Then (probably in A.D. 104/105 ?) the Dacians attacked (no evidence !) and destroyed (how ?) this fort, to rebuild immediately the wall. Finally, after A.D. 106 (when the wall was demolished again during the last siege ?) the *legio III Flavia Felix* and *II Adiutrix* (not epigraphically attested) will raise a second fort, which can be seen today (Diaconescu 1997, p. 20).

After reviewing these two hypothesis it is the time to say that the ideas and the chronological sequences proposed were developed based on several Roman inscriptions and stone reliefs becoming visible in the precincts wall.

## 2. The inscriptions and stone reliefs found in the structure of the wall

The excavations made during the '50s at Grădiștea Muncelului uncovered a great part of the huge precincts wall of the "great citadel". We must remind some important observations made that time: the specific building technique of the "Dacian wall", identified all around in the close vicinity of the "great citadel", was not used to this wall (Daicoviciu, 1951. p. 102). The interim report is telling that "on the Western side, as on the Eastern and Northern ones the wall was built with blocks taken from the buildings of the holy zone" (Daicoviciu, 1951, p. 102). That means it was raised later than other buildings on the Grădiște hill. A logical question follows: if it was only a last Roman rebuilding at A.D. 106 why the builders take the stone from the neighbourhood and not used the stone from the previous wall destroyed (totally 2) during the Roman siege?

Concerning the excavations at Grădiștea Muncelului we must add that during the '50s the Roman traces were not considered very important, the uncovering of the unknown and fascinating Dacian civilization represented the main aim of the excavations. The difficulties of the place and the level of the techniques of excavation of that period in Romania were the most important reasons that not too many observations concerning the Roman layer were registered.

Another important moment in the history of researches, when was possible to be done observations upon the precincts wall, was the period of the '50s. That time when the communist's propaganda used the Dacian king Burebista as a symbol of the first "centralised and independent" state on the territory of Romania, Sarmizegetusa Regia, "the capital" of Burebista, was "helped" by the Party with a "restoration". That time the precincts wall was demolished and rebuilt in artificial stone (I) by the army (!!). It was that moment when some of the important inscriptions and stone reliefs were found (!!!). Nor this moment was happier for a careful research. That means the accurate position in the wall of the inscriptions and stone reliefs is not known exactly, because they did not come from an ordinary archaeological excavation. This fact is easy to check following the bibliography which mentions the inscriptions and reliefs, especially when the same authors indicate different positions (Table 1).

We insisted so much upon this problem, because the hypothesis we described earlier are based on the knowledge of the precise position in the wall of the inscriptions and stone reliefs. It is this the reason we consider both not very conclusive.

## 2.1. The inscriptions

a. Since the last century it is known an inscription having the text written with letters in the shape of weapons. It is the name of the 4th legion Flavia Felix (IDR 111/3 269a, fig. 201) (fig. 2/3).

b. In the excavations from 1950 a limestone block was found in the outer face of the Western wall having the inscription *leg(io) III F (lavia) F(elix)* (Daicoviciu, 1951, p. 103. p1. V, nr. 18; IDR 111/3 269b. fig. 202) (fig. 2/1).

c. In 1963 it was found another limestone block with the same inscription, fallen down from the Eastern wall (Glodariu 1965, p. 129, fig. 8; IDR 111/3 269c, fig. 203) (fig. 2/2).

d. In 1980, when the wall was dismantled for restauration. other two different inscriptions were discovered

As we have shown in Table 1, their position in the wall is different presented in the bibliography. We consider that the most credible are the archaeological interim reports, having only technical information and no interpretation.

The first inscription is a limestone block taken from a former wall worked in "Dacian" technique. On one side there is the inscription *leg(io) II Ad(iutrix) P(ia) F(idellis)* (Daicoviciu, 1983. p. 233; IDR 111/3 268; Daicoviciu, Ferenczi, Rusu 1991 p. 45) in the North-East corner, probably on the outer face of the wall (fig. 3/1).

The second one is a limestone block having carved on one side a victory garland, in the middle with the inscription *vex(illatio) leg(ionis) VI Ferratae* (Daicoviciu, 1983, p. 233; ID 111/3 270; Daicoviciu H., Ferenczi, Rusu 1991, p. 46. It was discovered between the Western and the Southern gates, probably closer to the Southern one and not far from the South-East corner (fig. 3/2).

As we have seen there is no any indication in the interim report that they were coming from the *emplecton*, hence in a secondary position from antiquity, or, in other words, reused (as some later studies suggested). It is a trap, even Al. Diaconescu being tempted to it. That is the reason his hypothesis cannot be totally accepted (Diaconescu 1997, p. 20).

Taking into consideration only the reliable information, we reached the following conclusion:

1. The inscriptions with the name of the 4th legion Flavia Felix and of the vexillation of the 6th legion Ferrata were discovered on the Western, Eastern and Southern sides, in the part considered as enlarged by the Roman army.

2. The inscription of the 2nd legion Adiutrix was found in the Northern half of the precincts.

3. The only certitude acceptable concerning their position in the wall is that they were found inside the outer face of the wall, which consisted sometimes of two rows of blocks.

4. There is not enough information to consider that the inscriptions mentioning the three legions were placed in the wall in several periods.

5. It is sure they are proving the building of the defence wall of a Roman fort, being construction inscriptions.

6. It is not possible to determine which military unit stayed in garrison and for how long.

Having all these in mind and adding the literary evidence, we will try to establish a conclusion concerning the real meaning and chronology of the so-called "great citadel" from Grădișteța Muncelului. Cassius Dio (LXVIII, 9, 7) wrote, without any possibility of distortion, that after the peace of A.D. 102 was concluded, Trajan left troops at Sarmizegetusa Regia (the identification with Ulpia Traiana, cf. Daicoviciu, 1974, cannot be accepted). The "key" word in Cassius Dio's sentence is the Greek "*stratopedon*". H. Daicoviciu translated it by "legion", which he identified with the 4th legion Flavia Felix, attested by the tile stamps at Ulpia Traiana, where it is possible to have been its fortress between A.D. 102-108, before the setting up of the veteran colony (Daicoviciu H. 1974). N. Gostar considered that the same Greek word was used by Cassius Dio with the meaning of "occupation army" (Gostar 1976). More natural and believable is the conclusion of Al. Diaconescu. He thinks that the word means in this context "fort", or "garrison" (Diaconescu 1997, p. 18). That was the oldest meaning in Greek, "place for camp", known even from Herodotus (IV, 114). Cassius Dio used the word with the explicit, meaning of "fort" several times (XXXVI, 13, 2; XLIX, 12, 2; cf. Freyburger-Galland 1997, p. 186). Thus, the text of Cassius Dio is confirming the conclusion of the epigraphical analysis of the inscriptions known at Grădișteța Muncelului: there, since A.D. 102 it was established a Roman fort, which is obvious "the great citadel". It was built by the three legions which mentioned by inscriptions their work. It is not possible to demonstrate the existence of the two superposed forts, nor of a reconstruction made by the Dacians. In fact, all these stages presumed for the precincts wall have not any archaeological connection with the inner buildings, where there were not identified more layers.

## 2.2. The stone reliefs with paired Capricorns. Their symbolism and significance

A supplement to the epigraphical evidence can be added by interpretation of three stone reliefs with the image of paired Capricorns found in the same wall of the fort as the inscriptions.

The first relief is a limestone plaque coming to light in 1962 at 13 m South to the Western gate (fig. 4/2). The two Capricorns are holding between their fore-pads a globe having on top a longish object (Daicoviciu, 1969, p. 167, pl. VII, fig. 1). On the central globe were identified the letters "P", "N", and in the left corner of the plaque an isolated "P" (IDR 111/3 271). The heavy corrosion of the limestone makes uncertain this possibility.

In 1980 together with the inscriptions there were found also two stone reliefs with the same image of paired Capricorns. One of them was discovered at 4.20 m of the Western gate (to the Southern one) in the inner row of the outer face of the wall. The second one was discovered at 7 m to the North of the Eastern gate in the outer face of the wall (Daicoviciu, 1983, p. 233) (see Table 1).

The three stone reliefs were found in the proximity of the Eastern and Western gates which could be interpreted that they were placed in the most visible part of the precincts. Having the same image, it is obvious they were placed in the wall at the same time, in the outer, visible side of it.

For a correct interpretation it is very important to understand the meaning of the image of paired Capricorns. A first hypothesis suggested that the paired Capricorns are connected with the symbol of the 1st legion Adiutrix (Glodariu 1965,

p. 130, footnote 41). Recently, I. Glodariu changed his previous opinion (Glodariu 1991, p. 23/24). Al. Diaconescu agrees Glodariu's old hypothesis (Diaconescu 1997, p. 19).

Those who considered that the image of paired Capricorns from the Roman fort at Grădiștea Muncelului proves the presence of a fourth legion, the *I Adiutrix*, believed that it was a *signum* of the legion. It is known that at least five legions had the Capricorn as a *signum* (Daicoviciu, 1969, p. 170). But it is also well-known that always *signa* were bronze statuettes (Toynbee-Wilkins 1982, p. 247) placed on top of a high rod. An example is the ram of the 1st legion Minervia, as showed on Trajan's Column (Rossi 1971, p. 108). That is why we think the models for the stone reliefs must have been the original bronze statuettes. These statuettes represented only one animal, real or mythological. As more legions had the same symbol, only the inscriptions were making possible the identification of a certain legion (Soproni 1965).

There are known also stone reliefs where two animals are represented. For example, at Benwell, in Britannia, exists a limestone plaque with a Capricorn and a Pegasus (Watson 1969, fig. 4); between them there is a *vexillum* with the inscription LEG II and on the lower part of the plaque the inscription LEG II AVG is added (CIL VII 517). That means the image was not at all enough to establish the identity of the military unit, even the Capricorn was the symbol of the *legio II Augusta*. The inscription was considered necessary.

The legions usually placed the stamped tiles and stone inscriptions with their names in the walls of the fort, or of the building they raised. At Grădiștea Muncelului it was the same: three legions inscribed their names on stone to remember that they built the wall of the fort. It would be strange that only *legio Adiutrix* to act quite opposite and on three blocks to "forget", or to avoid to write its name, letting just images to speak. At first sight it is possible to raise an objection to this demonstration. At Carnuntum it was found a construction plaque with the image of the paired Capricorns holding a disc between their fore-pads (fig. 4/1). Under the image there is the inscription LEG I ADI PF (Kandler 1991, p. 238, Abb. 43.2; 43.3). This relief with inscription was considered by Al. Diaconescu as a proof that the three reliefs with paired Capricorns at Grădiștea Muncelului (without having inscriptions) are the evidence of the presence of the 1st legion Adiutrix there (Diaconescu 1997, p. 19). We are not agreeing with this conclusion. First, because there are three blocks with this image. We think that the monument at Carnuntum comes to emphasize the conclusion we have stressed above: on the construction blocks the inscriptions with the name of the legion was absolutely necessary for the identification of a certain military unit, in antiquity, as well as today (Opreanu, 1999). At the Roman fort at Grădiștea Muncelului the inscriptions did not accompany the images of paired Capricorns because there were placed already in the walls of the fort construction blocks with the names of the legions which worked there. Thus, the images with paired Capricorns do not attest a fourth legion on the Grădiște hill, but they belong to the three (or only to one) legions epigraphically, documented.

It is obvious that the image of paired Capricorns did not represent a military *signum*, which consisted always of a single Capricorn (Soproni 1965). But without an inscription it was impossible to know to which of the five legions put under the power of the Capricorn it belonged. Not even paired, a depicted *signum* of the Capricorn without inscription was not more intelligibly for the civilian population. In this case what was the meaning of the paired Capricorns? This image emerged at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. on antefixes, between the two Capricorns standing

Victoria, placed sometimes on a globe (Hölscher 1965, Taf. 16/4) and holding a trophy in her hand. This heraldic style was connected with the trophy-statue raised by Augustus in the new *curia*, after Actium (Hölscher 1985). As the great majority of these antefixes are coming from Roman private houses of central Italy, they are suggesting the adoption by the owners of the new propaganda of Augustus' time reminding the peace after Actium (Barton 1995, p. 50). The paired Capricorns exists also on anniversary coins as, for example, of those of Vespasianus (BMC II, p. 58, nr. 340). That is the proof that there is no connection between this image and the 1st legion *Adiutrix*. The same heraldic motif is depicted on a *lararium* from the Menander's house at Pompei, suggesting a relation with the imperial cult (Barton 1995, p. 50).

In conclusion, the heraldic image of paired Capricorns having a globe between their fore-pads can be linked with the army and with the House of the Emperor and with military gods and goddesses, as Victoria, or Pax. Victory was a dynastic divinity. The celebration of the emperor's victory was sending a strong political message. This propagandistic pattern was materialized by the building of characteristic monuments, like altars, arches, trophies, inscriptions, figurative representations and by ceremonies (Mac Cormick 1986, p. 4-25; Martin 1997, p. 383-384). H. Daicoviciu, when has analyzed the only relief of this type known that time at Grădiștea Muncelului reached to the conclusion that the image symbolized the Victory and it was not the *signum* of the 1st legion *Adiutrix* (Daicoviciu H. 1969, p. 172). We think this explanation is still valid today. We only want to add that this heraldic motif belonged to the military religious and propagandistic arsenal. The military artisans, not the artists, were those who carved it in stone. Plaques with the same heraldic image, without inscription are known even at Carnuntum (Kubitschek 1923, p. 74, nr. 36, Abb. 33), the garrison place of the 14th legion *Gemina*, which had also the Capricorn as a *signum* (Soproni 1965) and on the funerary monuments near the legionary fortresses of Gallia (Barton 1995, p. 50). The paired Capricorns symbolized the Victory, the peace and the tight links among them, the legions and the Emperor. At Grădiștea Muncelului all these elements existed in A.D. 102, as Cassius Dio tells us. That means the three legions epigraphically attested at Grădiște raised the blocks with paired Capricorns to commemorate the very special moment of A.D. 102.

The plaque with paired Capricorns and with the inscription of *legio I Adiutrix* from Carnuntum is nothing but a proof of the fidelity of this legion to the Emperor. It does not matter if this happened during the Marcomannic wars, in A.D. 193, or in Caracalla's time (Kandler 1991, p. 240), its meaning is the same. At Carnuntum the heraldic motif was only accidentally joined with the name of the *legio I Adiutrix*. The reason was the temporary interest of the detachment of this legion sent to Carnuntum. Another proof that the paired Capricorns are not related with the 1st legion is their missing at Brigetio, the permanently garrison of the legion starting with the beginning of Hadrian's reign when was withdrawn from Dacia (Opreanu, 1999).

Besides of unhandiness of the military artisans and the deterioration of the stone, it is obvious that on one of the reliefs the two Capricorns are holding between their fore-pads a globe on which the "longish leaf" (Daicoviciu, 1969, p. 167, fig. 1) would had been possible to be a Victoria, or a trophy (fig 4/2). The existence of a Victory monument somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Grădiște hill and the activity of the military artisans was supposed by M. Macrea since 1941 (Macrea 1941). C. Daicoviciu wrote also, in a footnote, the brilliant idea of the existence in the proximity of Grădiște hill, at "Sub Cunune". of a Roman shrine, or an altar (Daicoviciu, 1970, p. 241, footnote 15). Nor him, nor the others did not follow and

developed this hypothesis. It seems to us that it is very probable to exist a sanctuary at "Sub Cunune". In that place were found, by chance, during the years, important Roman traces. Among these there are two stone votive inscriptions raised by two governors of Dacia, after the middle of the 2nd century A.D. One of them was dedicated to Victoria Augusta (fig. 5) by the governor of Upper Dacia M. Statius Priscus, during Antoninus Pius reign, around A.D. 156/157 (CIL III 1415=IDR 111/3 276). The second one was raised for Apollo Augustus by the consular of the three provinces of Dacia, L. Aemilius Carus, in AD. 175, during Marcus Aurelius time (CIL III 1414=IDR III/3 275). These two inscriptions represent the main evidence that after the Dacian wars the region of the former Dacian royal residence was still inhabited. When the two governors were raising their inscriptions the Dacian "capital" and the last Dacian king have been disappeared for over 50 years. The isolated area of Grădiştea Muncelului was for a long time forgotten and not very easy to reach. The only valid explanation of the presence of the two governors and of the other Roman traces is the existence of a shrine, or of an altar built by Trajan after the defeat and the surrender of Decebalus, in A.D. 102, maybe dedicated to Victoria Augusta.

The ceremony of *deditio* of the Dacian king has been taken place, very probable, in the fort which was Trajan's headquarters before the end of the first war. That is why we think it was not very far from Sarmizegetusa Regia. The site of "Sub Cunune", being placed only at a few kilometers away to the Grădişte hill, we must take it into consideration first of all (Opreanu 2000a).

This hypothesis obliges us to mention the information of Cassius Dio that Trajan raised during the first war an altar where he ordered to be organized sacrifices yearly (Cassius Dio, LXVIII, 8). Initially it was hypothetically identified at Tapae, to the "Iron gates of Transylvania", not far from Caransebeş (Daicovicu, 1972). But in that place there is not known any trace of life coming from the Roman period. We think an altar and a shrine dedicated to the Victory of A.D. 102 are more plausible to be presumed closer to Sarmizegetusa Regia, to the place called "Sub Cunune", even we accept that it is not necessary the same with that mentioned by Cassius Dio. I. Glodariu (Glodariu 1981. p. 55) supposed, based on his general hypothesis concerning the topography of the Dacian wars, that at "Sub Cunune" can be placed the famous *Ranisstorum* mentioned in the funerary tomb of T. Claudius Maximus found at Grammeni (Speidel 1970), the place where above mention Roman soldier would have brought to Trajan the head of Decebalus. We can ask if it is not about of the place where Decebalus made suicide and the meaning of "*Ranisstoro*" in the inscription is "from *Ranisstorum*", not "to *Ranisstorum*" Anyway, M. Speidel identified the place with *Apulum*, North to the Mures valley (Speidel 1970).

Recently, J. Bennett (Bennett 1997, p. 101) considered that *Ranisstorum* have to be looked for at Piatra Craivii, which is in fact the same idea as that of M. Speidel. Both agree that at A.D. 106 Decebalus was trying to escape from Sarmizegetusa Regia. The same idea, but another variant belongs to W. Schindler (Schindler 1981). As we have already shown we do not agree these hypothesis because of our different reconstruction of the topography of the Dacian wars (Opreanu 2000a; Opreanu 2000b).



### 3. The historical meaning of the Roman fort

As we mentioned at the beginning of this study, Sarmizegetusa "to *basileion*" (= *regia*) attested by the literary sources was identified by modern historiography with the archaeological site uncovered on the Grădiște hill. The lack of an inscription containing the same name as that from the written sources makes this identification a hypothetical one. As the name Sarmizegetusa is known from Latin inscriptions at Ulpia Traiana, more than 100 km away, in Hațeg Depression, it was advanced the hypothesis that the Dacian royal residence was situated in the same place as the future veteran colony (Schindler 1977). The excavations at Ulpia Traiana declined this idea, not any Dacian origin artifact or structure being found.

We tried to demonstrate that the so-called "great citadel" from Grădiște hill was a Roman fort. At first sight, this changing cancels the identification of Sarmizegetusa Regia on the Grădiște hill. In fact, the situation is quite opposite: the presence of the Roman fort emphasizes and makes more believable the old identification. During the history of Rome it is well-known the tradition of military occupation by the Romans of the "power centers" of the defeated, or conquered populations. Titus Livius shows that this tradition was not connected with the strategical importance of the conquered sites (38, 18, 5; 18, 11, 14; 24, 2). Some examples support this idea. In 57 B.C., Galba, Caesar's legate, camped his troops in a part of not fortified Celtic settlement Octodurus, which later he fortified, after he sent away the native inhabitants (Whightman 1977, p. 112). The same happened during Octavianus Illyrian campaign. He placed two legions in a special fortified part of Siscia, because the natives refused to offer hostages, but accepted the Roman garrison (App., *Illyr.*, 22, 24). The same, on Grădiște hill, an inferior strategically position, the meaning of the building of a fort was mainly the result of this tradition. Even the symbolism of the stone blocks with the image of paired Capricorns supports this idea. This fort (fig. 1), raised at A.D. 102 on the place of the Dacian main "power center" after the defeating of the king Decebalus, was not occupied by a Roman garrison too long after the setting up of the province of Dacia (A.D. 106) From that on its significance ceased to exist.

In conclusion, it is very probable that Sarmizegetusa Regia can be identified on the Grădiște hill, but in the very proximity of the Roman fort. That means the "holy zone" and other terraces investigated, or unknown yet, are the most probable areas where can be identified Sarmizegetusa Regia. We want to remind that the "holy zone", generally considered unfortified, it is not so sure not walled, as I.H. Crișan said after he excavated partially that wall (Crișan 1977). His finding, which was rejected by C. Daicoviciu from reasons unknown to us, could be easily checked by future excavation.

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## TABLE I

### THE POSITION IN THE WALL OF THE INSCRIPTIONS AND STONE RELIEFS AS SHOWN IN THE ROMANIAN LITERATURE

#### A. LEG II AD (1980)

1. North-Eastern corner (Daicoviciu H 1983, p. 233)
2. North-Eastern corner, exterior side (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczi, Rusu 1991, p. 45)
3. In the 'emplecton' of the wall (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczi, Glodariu 1989, p. 168-I. Glodariu)
4. Southern gate (IDR 111/3 268-I!. Russu)
5. The interior row of the exterior side and "emplecton" (Glodariu 1993, p. 24)

#### B. VEX LEG VI FERR (1980)

1. Between the Western and the Southern gates (Daicoviciu H 1983, p. 233)
2. Between the Western and the Southern gates, closer to the Southern one near the Smith-Eastern corner (Daicoviciu H 1991, p. 45)
3. In the "emplecton" of the wall (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczr, Glodariu 1989, p. 168 - I. Glodariu)
4. Southern gate (IDR 111/3 268-II. Russu)
5. The interior row of the exterior side and 'emplecton' (Glodariu 1993, p. 24)

#### C. PAIRED CAPRICORNS NO. 1 (1980)

1. At 4.20 m from the Western gate to the Southern gate in the interior row of the exterior side (Daicoviciu 1983, p. 232)
2. -
3. In the "emplecton" (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczi, Glodariu 1989-I. Glodariu)
4. Southern gate (IDR 111/3)
5. The visible row (=outer row of the exterior side) (Glodariu 1993, p. 24)

#### D. PAIRED CAPRICORNS NO. 2 (1980)

1. At 7 m to the North from the Eastern gate in the exterior side (Daicoviciu H 1983)
2. On the Northern side (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczi, Rusu 1991)
3. -
4. -
5. The visible row (=outer row of the exterior side) (Glodariu 1993)

#### E. PAIRED CAPRICORNS NO. 3 (1962)

1. To the South from the Western gate (Daicoviciu H 1969, p. 167)
2. To the South from the Western gate, in the interior row (Daicoviciu H, Ferenczi, Glodariu, 1989, p. 160)

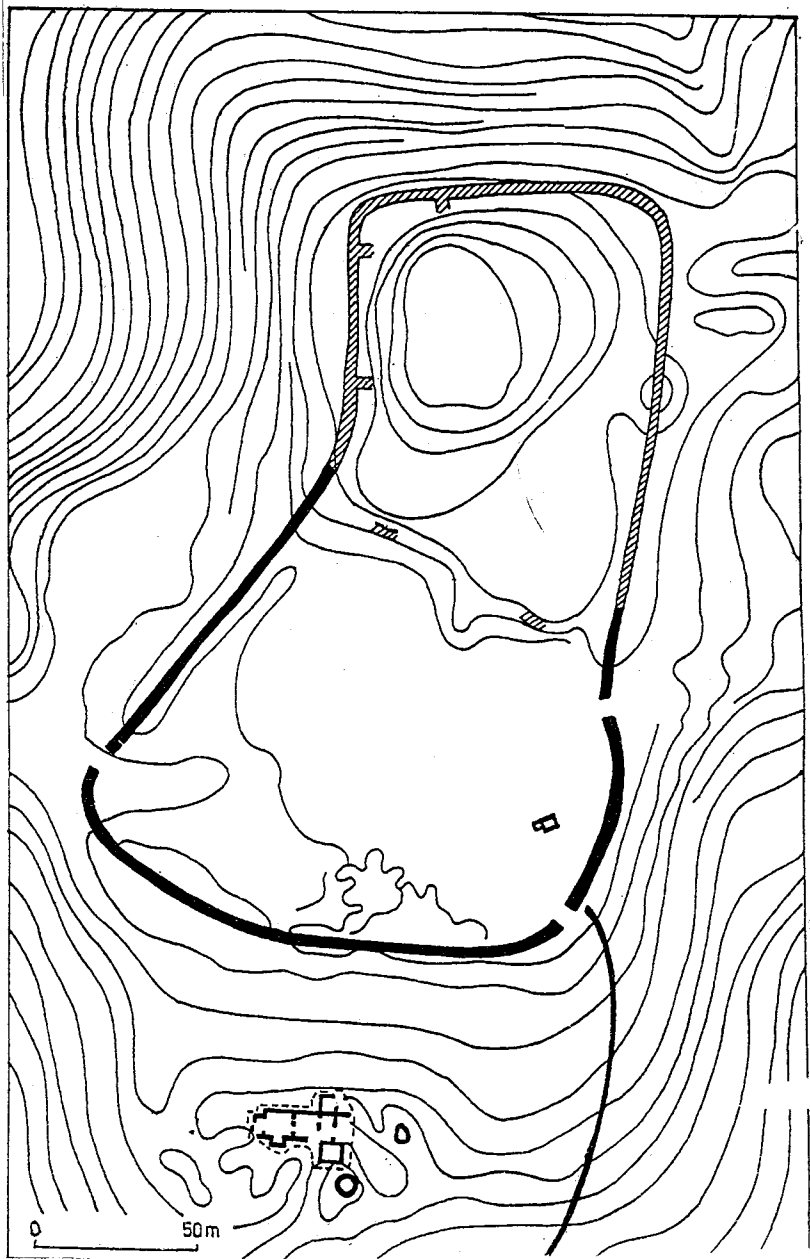


Fig. 1

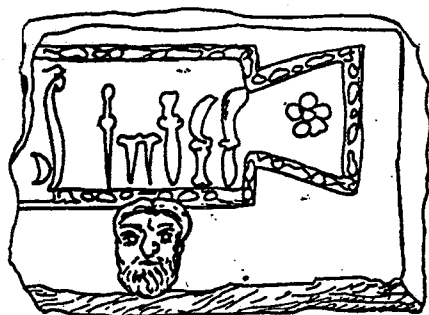


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



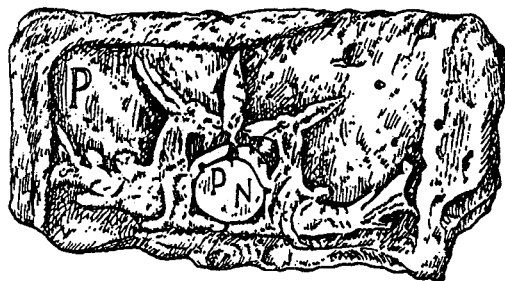
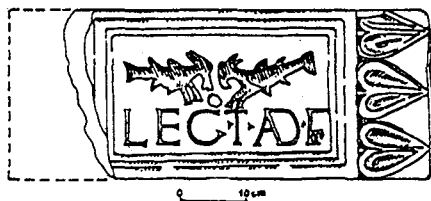


Fig. 4

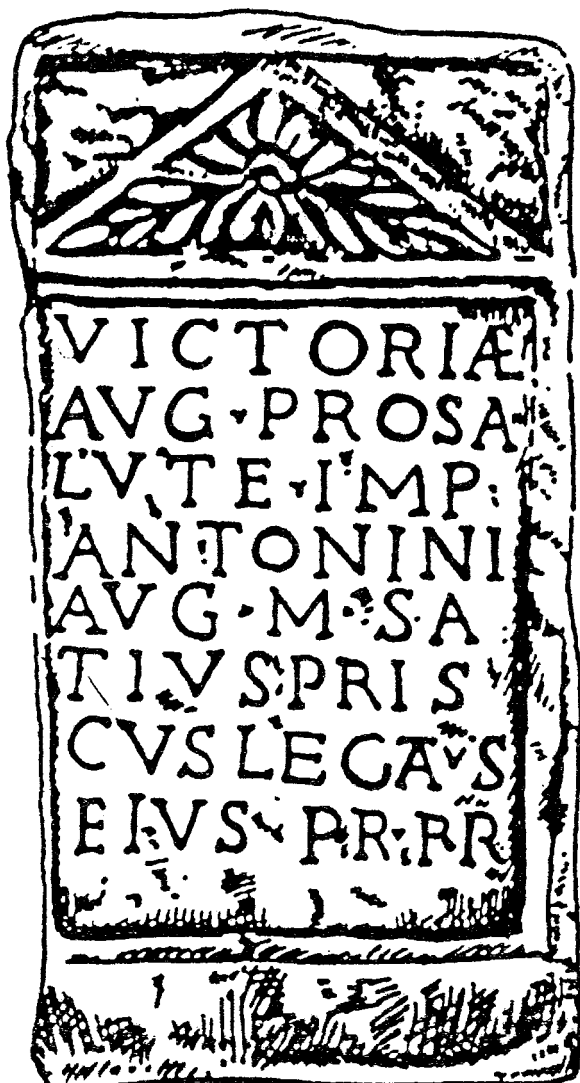


Fig. 5