

BATH AND BATHING IN DACIA (1). CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH OF THE *BALNEA*.

Abstract: Within this paper we publish a critical review of the state of research on the military bathhouses from Roman Dacia. Moreover, our aim is to also provide a broader regional survey. It comprises a short discussion of the history of research, emphasizing the importance of the essential contributions to the study of military baths in Dacia, as well as the importance of the regional studies and of the monographs of different archaeological sites. Therefore, we decided, to review and update our knowledge of the military bathhouses uncovered in the Dacian provinces. According to the current state of research, there are 39 *balnea* recorded, including baths located within the forts (*praetorium*), as well as *extra muros*, in the civilian settlements. Upon reviewing the evidence, the paper stresses the variety of the military *balnea* discovered and points out the differences between legionary and auxiliary baths, shedding light on some of the local features of these baths.

Keywords: *Roman Dacia, limes, fort, balnea, bathing suite.*

INTRODUCTION

This article is part of a series dedicated to the Roman baths discovered on the territory of the Roman province of Dacia (Fig. 1). The series should tackle the main aspects concerning the architecture and functioning of these buildings, as well as the phenomenon or solutions generated by the bathing process itself. This first paper is an overview of the most relevant data on the archaeological research of the Roman auxiliary military bathhouses (*balnea*) in the Dacia province. In addition to these, there are the Roman baths discovered in certain parts of present-day Romania, located outside of the former Roman province. The paper also provides an update on the archaeological research and interpretation of archaeological data carried out in the last 10 years¹. Owing to the massive accumulation of information over the last decades, an impressive amount of data is previously available, as well as recently uncovered bathing facilities.

The presence of these buildings in the archaeological repertoire of discoveries is constant². There are few examples of structures in Roman archeology that can be observed from so many different points of view like the Roman baths³. The typology of bathhouses is quite well-defined, as the ruins of these complexes are unmistakable in their recurrent elements such as a specific layout, a varied use of heating solutions and collective immersion pools⁴. Although ancient written sources offer a variety of information about

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¹ See ȚENȚEA 2010.

² DELAINE 1988, 11.

³ NOVOVIĆ *et alii* 2019, 24.

⁴ DELAINE/JOHNSTON 1991, 10 and REBUFFAT 1991, 11.

imperial public baths⁵, they neglect to mention, or discuss, life in the baths of the provinces, particularly in the *balnea*. Fortunately, several relatively recent publications started to develop an interest (contrary to a large bulk of former publications) in the bathing facilities found in the provinces⁶. It seems that the study of public baths, such as the imperial baths of Rome (*thermae*), or of similar facilities across the Italian peninsula, are no longer the frontrunners of bath-studies. Thus, the portrayed growing interest shown for the genre of *balnea*, i.e. smaller bathing facilities, commonly referred to as ‘*castellum* baths’, ‘*limes* baths’ or just simply ‘fort baths’ gives us ample reasons to review our knowledge on this subject regarding Dacia.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

In recent decades, European research has provided countless texts and monographs in Roman frontier studies⁷. The defense system of Roman Dacia, despite it being abundantly researched, pertains to several unknown aspects. The studies have so far focused on the identification of fortifications, civil settlements and more importantly their structure, and less so on the actual border and its different sectors⁸. As insightfully stated by F. Marcu in his work on forts in Dacia, the research of the border system located in the Dacia province is fragmentary especially because the results of many archaeological excavations remain unpublished⁹.

The long line of articles, monographic studies about Roman forts and the preliminary studies outlining the results of excavations conducted by Romanian archaeologists are unquestionably important and usually provide equally essential information on fort baths. In several cases, though, all efforts commence in small surface excavations or surveys in order to corroborate the initial hypothesis of location of the bath. Archaeological prospects seldomly extend to the whole extent of a bathhouse. These structures are massive in both dimensions and depth (due to the heating systems), have elaborate plans which usually undergo a multitude of changes and re-buildings, thus it takes considerable time to disentangle. Furthermore, identifying room functionality in conjunction with terminological issues also has its difficulties¹⁰. Customarily, scholars hinge on written accounts (ancient sources), already established typologies and on the correlation of room placement and the heating system of the baths¹¹. Only few studies take into consideration the finds. In the past, taking a look at the objects uncovered was mostly for illustrative purposes. Only recently these are also studied from a social perspective, the focus being on who used the baths¹². Considering the vastly and variety of published

material regarding the discovery of military baths, we have decided to list only the major works pertinent to the study of fort's baths, which handle the subject in a distinct manner.

The first scientific investigations targeting Roman bathhouses located in the vicinity of the forts and as well as in large urban areas were made during the 19th century, by pioneers of both Transylvanian and Romanian archeology K. Torma and B. Cserni, G. Téglás, G. Gh. Tocilescu and P. Polonic. Though the discipline and methods of Roman archeology developed up to the interwar period, considerable progress was made after the postwar period, beginning with the 1950s. N. Gudea was the first researcher who gathered and reviewed all available information about Roman bathhouses in Dacia. In 1983, the author provided the first gazetteer of the Roman bathhouses and other structures with floor heating, entitled “*Verzeichnis der Römerbäder und Bauwerke mit Hypokaust- Heizanlagen in Dakien*”¹³. N. Gudea's writings published between the years 1970-1990 regarded several auxiliary forts located on the northern and eastern borders of the Roman *limes*. The monographic works included the Inlăceni (1979) and Brețcu (1980) forts, respectively, preliminary reports about the fortifications from Porolissum (1989)¹⁴, Bologa and Buciumi (1997)¹⁵. All these also represent further valuable contributions to the study of Roman baths located within or near the forts. In the '90s, following a general incentive resulting in the development of Roman studies in Romania, various papers on the different aspects of the Roman fort baths were published. M. Bărbulescu and his team published in 1990 a monographic paper on the legionary fortress baths of Potaissa, following just three other such articles, published by Al. Bărcăcilă (1938), P. Popilian (1971) and by M. Tzony (1980)¹⁶. At the same time, we should also keep in mind authors L. Mărghitan and L. Țeposu-Marinescu and their important studies and preliminary reports published about the large bathing complex from Micia.¹⁷

Despite all the above, defining works treating the repertoire of fort baths of the province have appeared only relatively recently. Two studies are to be mentioned here, distinct due to the fact that they embrace different lines of investigation, target a large number of sites and theorize common and local aspects of military bathhouses in Dacia: P. Huszarik's PhD thesis (1999)¹⁸ and an essay drafted by one of the authors of this paper, O. Țentea (2010)¹⁹. The first work remained unfortunately unpublished. The author provided a general introduction into the study and architecture of the Roman baths, and a detailed discussion of 21 military bathhouses located in Dacia, accompanied by a set of valuable layouts. The second paper covered a more advanced stage of research, listing 33 bathing facilities and

⁵ DELAINE 1988, 12.

⁶ BAATZ 1978, BIDWELL 1979, ZIENKIEWICZ 1986, DELAINE 1988, REVELL 1997, NIELSEN 1999, SHOLZ 2002, DODT 2003, BIDWELL 2009, ÖLLERER 2012, JANKOVIĆ 2012, SCHOLZ 2018, NOVVIĆ *et alii* 2019.

⁷ PETRUȚ 2015, 396.

⁸ MARCU 2016, 6.

⁹ MARCU 2009, 11-12.

¹⁰ Mentioned also by FAGAN 1999, 28.

¹¹ HENDERSON 2007, 9 – ignoring the regional aspects of the baths.

¹² for example BĂRBULESCU 2019, BONDOC 2015 see for the case of general research DELAINE/JOHNSTON 1999, 9; for further see FAGAN 1999 and from the field of journalism see *Down the Drain: Lost Items Reveal Roman Bath Activities by Stephanie Pappas, Live Science Contributor*. Available from: <http://www.livescience.com/26202-drain-lost-items-roman-baths.html>

[January 11, 2013].

¹³ GUDEA 1983, 101-119.

¹⁴ GUDEA 1979, GUDEA 1980, GUDEA 1989.

¹⁵ GUDEA 1997A, GUDEA 1997B.

¹⁶ BĂRCĂCILĂ 1938, 41-53, POPILIAN 1971, 622-641, TZONY 1980, 348-350, BĂRBULESCU *et alii* 1999, 431-442.

¹⁷ MĂRGHITAN 142-133 ,1976; PETOLESCU/MĂRGHITAN -247 ,1974 258, MARINESCU/SION 224 ,1978; MARINESCU *et alii* 1984, 112-128; MARINESCU *et alii* 1986, 53-58 and MARINESCU *et alii* 1975, 217-229.

¹⁸ HUSZARIK 1999.

¹⁹ ȚENȚEA 2010.

addressing aspects related to the identification of different bathing areas, bath-prototypes and the placement of fort baths.

Of a more recent date are two large monographs concerning the small bath found in the fort of Cioroiu Nou and the legionary fortress baths of Potaissa. The research methodology, as well as the scientific discourse of these two works were defined by the research tendencies of the last decades and by concepts trending in the European archaeology. D. Bondoc's book about the fort baths of Cioroiu Nou, published in 2015, comprises the results of the fully researched facility, including an analysis of the artefacts and a discussion of several social aspects regarding the use of baths.²⁰ The second publication, drafted by M. Bărbulescu and several other collaborators, is an in-depth monograph regarding the legionary fortress baths of Potaissa. Published in 2019, it comprises the results of excavations performed in 1993, and 1995-2008 presenting the architecture of the baths, located in the *praetentura dextra* of the legionary fortress (namely the *palaestra*, the A-B-C-D edifices, the baths themselves and other installations pertaining to the bath), and also the archaeological material discovered (3116 recorded finds) with comments, illustrations and several catalogues of the discovered items²¹. It's a staple work regarding Roman Dacia, with no precedent.

THE FORT BATHHOUSES

The role and existence of these buildings are linked to the military environment and vary from the perspective of their environment (public, private, military, civilian etc). Taking into account the sectors of the Roman frontier system in Dacia²², it becomes evident how topographical features or the role played by a certain location or military base along the Dacian *limes* defines our knowledge of frontier bathhouses also, allowing us to interpret these structure differently²³. The research of provincial baths in Roman Dacia, as mentioned, began in the mid-19th century, differing in publication from one region to another, the picture being rather fragmentary²⁴. Specific *limes* segments characterized by extended and thorough research, like the western and northern sectors, provided ample data regarding the fort baths as well. On the other hand, we have certain frontier segments where extensive research is yet to be undertaken, i.e. the eastern segment²⁵, or conversely, regions where the field investigations came to an early standstill (segments of the Alutan or Transalutan *limes*)²⁶ and thus the accumulation of data has stagnated.

There are several aspects to consider when mapping the baths in Roman Dacia. We often have cases in which, old

and new sources, as well as systematic surveys, confirmed the existence of at least one bathhouse (*balnea*) in the area of the *vicus*: Mehadia (Caraș-Severin)²⁷, *Tibiscum*/Jupa (Caraș-Severin)²⁸, Bologa (Cluj)²⁹, *Certiae*/Romita -Brusturi (Sălaj)³⁰, Călugăreni (Mureș)³¹, Odorheiu Secuiesc (Harghita)³², Inlăceni (Harghita)³³, Brețcu (Covasna)³⁴, Hoghiz (Brașov)³⁵, Boița (Sibiu)³⁶, Rădăcinești (Vâlcea)³⁷, *Arutela*/Bivolari (Vâlcea)³⁸, *Praetorium I*/Copăceni (Vâlcea)³⁹, Slăveni (Olt)⁴⁰, Voinești (Argeș)⁴¹, Rucăr (Argeș)⁴², Săpata de Jos (Argeș)⁴³. We also have several forts located in the interior of the province, with *balnea* discovered at Bumbăști-Jiu "Vârtoș" (Gorj)⁴⁴, Bumbăști-Jiu "Gară" (Gorj)⁴⁵, Cătunele (Gorj)⁴⁶, Cioroiu Nou (Dolj)⁴⁷.

The fort baths which had a short period of functioning under Trajan, being abandoned at the latest under Hadrian, fall into a special category.⁴⁸ They were built by the armies of Moesia Inferior to the south-east of Dacia, which today corresponds to the area stretching over northwest Muntenia (Greater Wallachia)⁴⁹: Mălăiești (Prahova)⁵⁰, Târgșoru-Vechi (Prahova)⁵¹, Pietroasele (Buzău)⁵² and Voinești⁵³. The bathhouse and the fort from Pietroasele ought to be discussed separately, as the dating of the fort is uncertain and was the subject matter of several studies. The fort was initially dated to the 4th century⁵⁴, but recent studies proved the contrary. Based on the epigraphic analysis C.C. Petolescu set its construction to the beginning of the 3rd century.⁵⁵ Another recent analysis of the CBM discoveries (found also in the baths) showed that the fortification was probably built in the first decades of the 3rd century.⁵⁶ Analyzing all hypotheses, the author of the most recent article on the baths, Monica Mărgineanu-Cârstoiu, believes that the dating of the fortification is certain, but the beginnings of the baths are possibly related to the existence of another fortification,

²⁷ GUDEA 1975, 107-124.

²⁸ BENEĂ et alii 1998, BENEĂ et alii 2004; BENEĂ et alii 2005; BENEĂ et alii 2007.

²⁹ GUDEA 1997A, 17, 53-54, Abb. 28.

³⁰ MATEI/BAJUSZ 1997, 132-134.

³¹ MAN et alii 2015; MAN et alii 2016.

³² TĚGLÁS 1897, 257-268; ZĂGREANU/NYÁRÁDI 2011, 219-273.

³³ GUDEA 1979, 167-170.

³⁴ GUDEA 1980, 291-292.

³⁵ ȚENȚEA/POPA 2017, 137-143.

³⁶ LUPU 1960, 411-412; LUPU 2002, 79-81.

³⁷ POENARU-BORDEA/VLĂDESCU 1972, 453-454.

³⁸ TUDOR 1942, 146-147, Fig. 3, I and II; TUDOR et alii 1969-1970, 8-44.

³⁹ VLĂDESCU 1982, 55-65; TUDOR 1978, 316, Fig. 92.2, 320

⁴⁰ TUDOR et alii 2011, 51-53, vezi și POPILIAN 1971, 627-643.

⁴¹ PETOLESCU/MATEI-POPESCU/DUMITRESCU 2017.

⁴² BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU 1974, 277-288; TUDOR 1955, 87-97.

⁴³ CHRISTESCU 1938, 442-443, 445; TUDOR 1978, 323-324.

⁴⁴ MARINOIU 2005, 65-71; MARINOIU et alii 2002; MARINOIU et alii 2003; MARINOIU et alii 2005.

⁴⁵ TUDOR 1940, 18-33.

⁴⁶ TUDOR/DAVIDESCU 1976, 62-80.

⁴⁷ BONDOC 2015, BONDOC 2011, 107-116

⁴⁸ ȚENȚEA et alii 2018, 227.

⁴⁹ ȚENȚEA 2018, 135.

⁵⁰ ȚENȚEA et alii 2012; ȚENȚEA et alii 2013; ȚENȚEA et alii 2014; ȚENȚEA et alii 2015; ȚENȚEA et alii 2016.

⁵¹ MĂGUREANU et alii 2017, 103-117; TZONY/DIACONU 1979, 263-264.

⁵² MĂRGINEANU-CĂRSTOIU 2015, 91-120.

⁵³ PETOLESCU/MATEI-POPESCU/DUMITRESCU 2017

⁵⁴ DIACONU et alii 1979, 319-320.

⁵⁵ PETOLESCU 2005, 276-277.

⁵⁶ STĂICUȚ 2011, 97-98; TZONY 1980, 349.

²⁰ BONDOC 2015.

²¹ BĂRBULESCU et alii 2019.

²² MARCU 2016, 4-10.

²³ As argued in the case of Moesia Superior by M.A. Janković, attention must be paid to the different contexts in which baths were erected

²⁴ Different segments of *limes* have been subject of research more often than others, for example, the western and northern borders, the publications are many and thorough, whereas on the eastern borders, frequently we still have to rely on older published data, or in the case of *Limes Alutanus*, excavation data is not so abundant.

²⁵ BURKHARDT 2016, 383-404.

²⁶ See publications regarding Rădăcinești, Arutela, Copăceni, Rucăr, Săpata de Jos or the important Buridava, as well as Micia.

established earlier than the 3rd century, that has not been yet identified⁵⁷.

Concerning the eastern *limes*, as mentioned earlier, we only have incomplete data. Beside the baths mentioned above, investigations have been carried out at Brâncovenesti (Mureş), Sărăteni (Mureş), and Sânpaul (Harghita), indicating the location of a possible bath in the *vicus*⁵⁸. Last but not least, the separate area of Dobrogea provided research with additional important bathing sites: Histria⁵⁹, Dinogetia⁶⁰, Noviodunum⁶¹, Capidava⁶², Durostorum⁶³, but information is limited regarding the *thermae* of Murighiol, Camena or Tomis, only attested by inscriptions⁶⁴. It should be mentioned though, that the Roman fortifications of the Danube sector, in particular those west and north of Dobrogea, belonged to another province⁶⁵.

Moreover, auxiliary forts equipped with multiple bathing facilities illustrate another remarkably interesting category of *balnea* in Dacia. The bathing areas are all located usually within the *vicus*, as is the case of Drobeta (two or three separate areas for bathing and interaction)⁶⁶, Micia (bathing complex with three baths and another possible facility)⁶⁷ and Arcobadara/Ilişua (two or more baths)⁶⁸. Additionally, the bath complex discovered at Buridava/Stolniceni (Vâlcea)⁶⁹ also belongs to this category. Particular are the cases where a bath has been identified in the *vicus militaris*, and another bathing complex/ building inside the *praetorium* of the auxiliary fort: *Tibiscum*/(Caraş-Severin)⁷⁰, Buciumi (Sălaj)⁷¹, *Porolissum*/Moigrad (Sălaj)⁷², Ilişua (Bistriţa-Năsăud)⁷³, possibly Hoghiz⁷⁴ and *Cumidava*/Râşnov (Braşov)⁷⁵.

In a few cases, we have data regarding a possible bathhouse located inside the fort, mostly in the fort interior or *praetorium* area *Tibiscum*/Jupa (Caraş-Severin)⁷⁶, Buciumi (Sălaj)⁷⁷, Tihău (Sălaj)⁷⁸, Căşeu (Cluj)⁷⁹, Orheiul Bistriţei

(Bistriţa-Năsăud)⁸⁰, Ilişua (Bistriţa-Năsăud)⁸¹, *Cumidava*/Râşnov (Braşov)⁸², Câmpulung-Jidova (Argeş)⁸³, Drajna de Sus (Prahova)⁸⁴ and probably Gilău (Cluj)⁸⁵. The cases of Cioroiu Nou and *Potaissa*/Turda represent a separate group of fort-interior baths, considering that both are associated with legionary troops (*legio VII Claudia* and *V Macedonica*), although the former belongs with all certainty to the category of *balnea*.

The research regarding this subject exemplifies how hard it is to identify a bath or facility located inside a fort. Often, even though there are heated rooms, maybe even remains of water pipes, the presence of water basins is undoubtedly the only indicator, apart from *instrumentum balnei* finds, that we are dealing with a bathhouse. The difficulties of identifying these bathing areas cannot be overlooked. The problem must be approached from the perspective of the layout of the Roman houses, given that the *praetorium* itself is the commander's house. A possible connection between the Roman dwellings of the Republic and the development of the first Roman baths is essential to the problem. The *balnearium* baths of the early Roman households consisted of two or three rooms lined up on an axis, located in the proximity of a heat source, usually the kitchen or attached directly to the kitchen⁸⁶. This trend is also observed in the *praetoria* of Dacia: the bathing area is located closer to the private quarters reserved for the family (heated rooms), but especially in the vicinity of a heat source: a kitchen or a metal recycling workshop. The most pertinent example is the *praetorium* from Căşeu. A reinterpretation of the available data showed that it incorporates a bath located near the kitchen area, situated perpendicular to the south wing, where the family's private quarters were located. Based on the archaeological reports, the authors of the excavations concluded that the *praetorium* consists of four zones with distinct destinations arranged around the inner courtyard⁸⁷. The entire wing on which the mentioned areas are placed has heating installations, and it is exactly here that we may locate the bathing facility too: on the wing of the heated spaces, near the heated rooms reserved for the family, in the immediate proximity of the kitchen. As observed by Anne Johnson, while reviewing the *praetoria* of the forts located in the western provinces (Britannia and Germania), the bathing area or bath suite inside the forts are smaller, with rooms for hot and cold bathing. Larger bathing facilities placed in the *praetentura* or *retentura* were built later during the 3rd century⁸⁸. A good example for the latter is the case of the fortress baths of the legionary fort of Potaissa as well as the *balneum* of Cioroiu Nou. Additionally, all *praetoria* bathing suite in Dacia are routinely dated to the 3rd century⁸⁹.

⁵⁷ MĂRGINEANU-CĂRSTOIU 2015, 112.

⁵⁸ All data gathered in BURKHARDT 2016, 383-404.

⁵⁹ FLORESCU 1952, 131-154; SUCEVEANU 1982.

⁶⁰ BARNEA 1967, 225-252.

⁶¹ BARNEA *et alii* 1957, 162-165; BARNEA/BARNEA 1984, 97-101.

⁶² OPRİŞ/RAŢIU/POTĂRNICHE 2018.

⁶³ DAMIAN/BĂLTĂC 2007, 66.

⁶⁴ RĂDULESCU 1968, 325-329.

⁶⁵ MARCU 2016, 10.

⁶⁶ BĂRCĂCILĂ 1938.

⁶⁷ MARINESCU *et alii* 1979, 106-108, Fig. 1-2; MARINESCU *et alii* 1975, 217-221; PETCULESCU/MITAR 2018, 95-101.

⁶⁸ TORMA 1864-1865, 10-67; GĂZDAC *et alii* 2011, 5-6, Fig.7.

⁶⁹ BICHIR 1982, 45, 47, 50-55, Fig.1, 1-8; FIG.2.1-8; BICHIR *et alii* 1983, 256.

⁷⁰ BENEĂ *et alii* 1996; BENEĂ *et alii* 1998; BENEĂ *et alii* 2004; BENEĂ *et alii* 2007.

⁷¹ MARCU 2009, 52; GUDEA1997B, 31, 63-64; OPREANU/LĂZĂRESCU 2016, 67, Fig. 20/B.

⁷² GUDEA 1989, 117, 123-128; ISAC *et alii* 1994, Abb. 9. Therewith it seems the exact location of the baths in the *vicus* were identified near the area J by AL. MATEI, but the results of the small survey remain unpublished.

⁷³ TORMA 1864-5, 10-67; For the bath in the *praetorium* area see TORMA 1864-1865, 16-17; ISAC *et alii* 1994, 49, Abb.13.

⁷⁴ With a basin being signaled inside the *praetorium*, see MARCU 2009, 203.

⁷⁵ ŢENŢEA *et alii* 2017, 148. Magnetometric prospections carried out in 2016 reported a rectangular structure with dimensions of about 11 × 6 m and a circular anomaly on a southern side, located on the territory of the settlement, north of the fort.

⁷⁶ BENEĂ *et alii* 1980, 298-303

⁷⁷ MARCU 2009, 52; GUDEA 1997B, 31.

⁷⁸ ISAC *et alii* 1994, 47 Abb. 10-11; BENNETT 2006, 278-299.

⁷⁹ ISAC *et alii* 1994, 49, Abb.13; MARCU 2009, 59-60.

⁸⁰ PROTASE 2007, 98-100, 110.

⁸¹ TORMA 1864-1865,16-18; ISAC *et alii* 1994, 49, ABB.13

⁸² MARCU 2018, 205-226, 225, pl. IV, GUDEA/POP 1973.

⁸³ MATEI-POPESCU/DUMITRESCU 2018, 23-24. See also POPESCU/POPESCU 1970, 257, Fig. 1.

⁸⁴ MARCU 2009, 198; ŞTEFAN 1948, 141-142; ZAHARIADE *et alii* 2012; ZAHARIADE 1996.

⁸⁵ GĂZDAC/ISAC 2007.

⁸⁶ MEUSEL 1960, 6- 7; FAGAN 2001, 418-419; see also FABBRICOTTI 1976, 31-41.

⁸⁷ ISAC *et alii* 1994, Abb. 27.

⁸⁸ JOHNSON 1983, JOHNSON 1987, 213-4.

⁸⁹ MARCU 2009, 41, 116; MARCU 2018, 213-214, CHIRILĂ *et alii* 1972, 29;

The continuity in the concept of fort baths throughout the period of Roman occupation demonstrates that there was no considerable increase in the frequency of the baths located near auxiliary forts, but they represented a constant aspect of the Roman culture in the province. The possible differences, which existed between auxiliary and legionary fortress baths in Dacia, are and can only be showcased by the findings of the imposing legionary fortress baths of Potaissa (singular site). D. Zienkiewicz together with P. Bidwell launched the hypothesis that legionary fortress bathhouses represent a separate stage of the development of the typical Roman bath: these are the prototypes of the great imperial baths from Rome⁹⁰. These are located inside the fortifications, cover a relatively large area and have the bathing spaces arranged linearly and represent true monumental structures⁹¹. The differences between the two types of military bathhouses (legionary and auxiliary fort baths) are related to the whole formation process of the Roman bath. According to Louise Revell, it is obvious that the architects had different priorities when composing the plan of the auxiliary baths compared to the those located in legionary fortresses⁹². These differences are illustrated by the dimensions of the building, architectural elaboration, the complexity of layout⁹³, the number of rooms, the presence of one or more bathing circuits⁹⁴, of one or a couple of principle bathing areas accompanied by a secondary suite of adjacent rooms, providing a more complex range of activities⁹⁵.

Nonetheless, contrary to earlier beliefs, upon reviewing a few auxiliary military baths adapted to civil use like the example of Drobeta, Micia, and Buridava, we can conclude that the hypothesis regarding the difference in the attitude of the Roman authorities towards the needs of the legionary soldiers, who were Roman citizens and the auxiliary soldiers, non-citizens, has its limitations. Among the differences registered between the legionary baths and the auxiliary baths, the most important seems to be their location, namely the legionary baths (*thermae legionis*) were built inside the fort⁹⁶ and were free of charge, whilst the baths to which the auxiliary soldiers had access to (*balnea*) were built outside of the fort, and bathing (presumably for civilians) was possible by paying a toll⁹⁷.

In the neighboring province of Moesia, scholars argue that baths appear usually within a military and civil settlement predominantly in the 3rd–4th century when urbanization reached high level in the province⁹⁸; we see transference of models from Roman soldiers to the civilians, an indication of the profitable relationship between the

fort and the vicus⁹⁹. The presence of these bath buildings – which are true examples of the Roman imperial bath model – in the *canabae* type settlements demonstrate that this model (*thermae*) is successfully integrated in the province. Obviously, this reality does not apply in the case of Dacia, the two provinces have different constitution and administrative structures. While the baths in Moesia Superior are included in the category of civil baths, in Dacia, a frontier province, the involvement of the army in the organization and control of the province is strongly felt. This is demonstrated by the fact that in the province of Dacia we do not have examples of imposing bathing structures integrated in ‘palaces’¹⁰⁰ such as Mediana, Nerodimlje and Scupi in Upper Moesia, the only monumental bath associated with an elite residence are baths of the *praetorium consularis* in Apulum and those at the *praetorium procuratoris* at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa. The majority of baths in Dacia are modest and relatively early¹⁰¹ structures, built during the 2nd century and after in the first half of the 3rd century. They are located in the *vici* beside the forts, or in the *praetoria* of the auxiliary forts. The single legionary fortress baths identified are situated inside the fort¹⁰², contrary to the legionary military bases of Moesia Superior, which are located on the territory of the *canabae*¹⁰³.

In conclusion, the widespread models of fortress baths, similarly to other provinces, are showcased by ample examples in Dacia. Broadly speaking, we can conclude that the baths of the auxiliary troops in Dacia are simple buildings, with a number of rooms reserved for pools with water for bathing and as we found, the areas reserved for collective interaction are few in number, but still present. The variety of the military *balneum* genre is evident, it incorporates examples pertaining to private and public social spheres, servicing small to large groups of people, as shown above. In a few cases the elaboration or extension of the simple, functional bath model is linked to the larger settlements and ‘economic centers’ characterized by a greater flow of people. Multiple baths or elaborated layouts of baths develop in these areas and the most pertinent examples being Drobeta, Micia, and Buridava, but also Boița. These facilities provide a more complex range of activities.

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⁹⁰ BIDWELL 1988, 536.

⁹¹ REVELL 2007, 231.

⁹² REVELL 2007, 234.

⁹³ REVELL 2007, 231.

⁹⁴ REVELL 2007, 233.

⁹⁵ REVELL 2007, 234.

⁹⁶ BĂRBULESCU *et alii* 2019, 15-17. see for a discussion of forts inside legionary camps and complete list.

⁹⁷ See discussion on how baths were a business or investment in HOOS 2018, 52-53.

⁹⁸ JANKOVIČ 2012, 29, 31-34.

⁹⁹ NOVOVIČ *et alii* 2019, 24-44.

¹⁰⁰ JANKOVIČ 2012, 32-33, Fig.3.

¹⁰¹ Considering when bathing in heated communal immersion pools became popular in the provinces and among the army (1st century).

¹⁰² Also see the case of Cioroiu Nou, a *balnea* located inside the fort. TUDOR 1965, 109; BONDOC 2015, 22.

¹⁰³ JANKOVIČ, 2012, 33.

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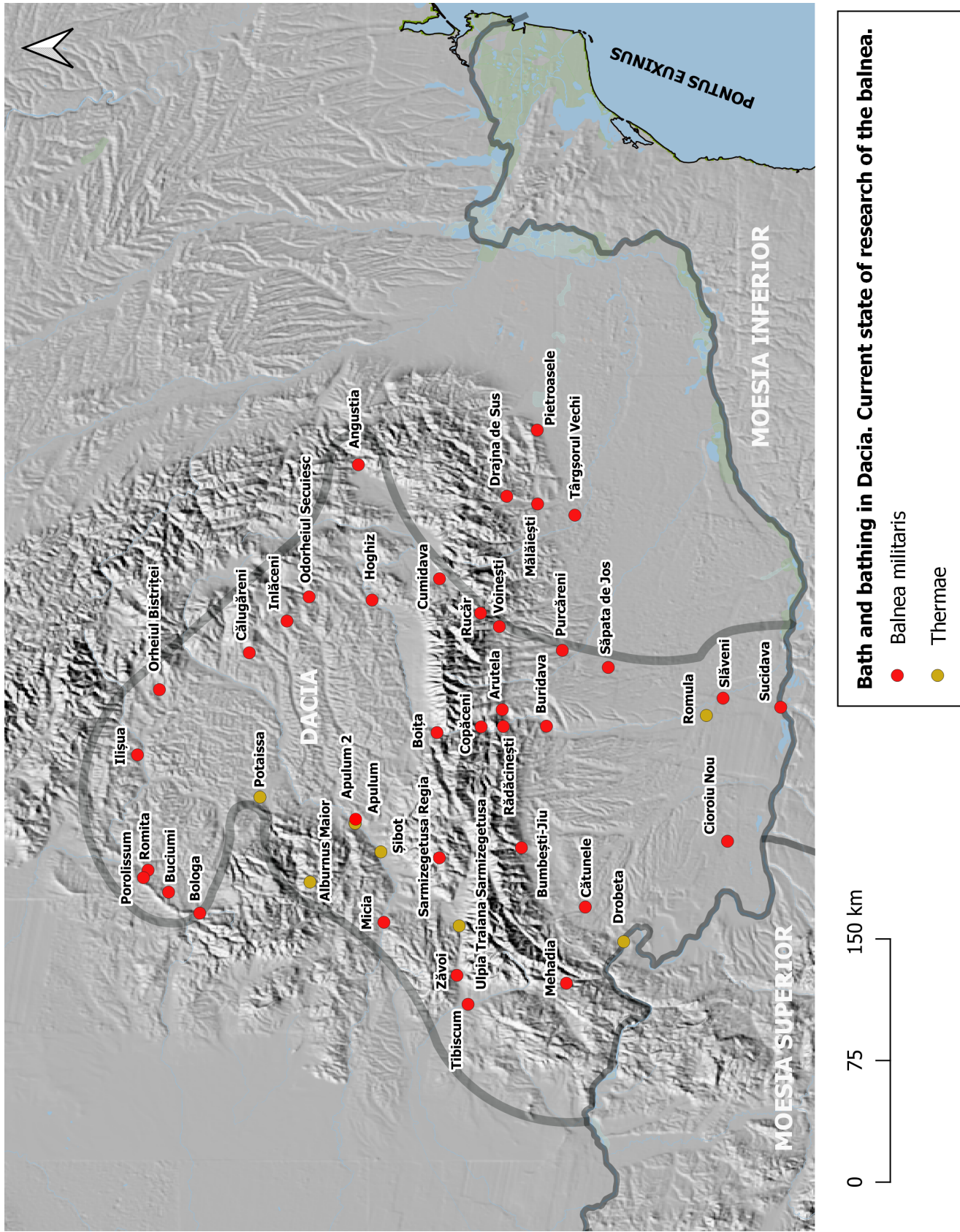


Fig. 1. Bath and bathing in Dacia. Current state of research of the balnea.