



# JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Institute of Archeology and Art History of  
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca  
Technical University Of Cluj-Napoca



**JAHA**  
JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY  
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

# Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v8i4>

ISSN 2360 266x

ISSN-L 2360 266x



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JOURNALS

**No. 8.4 /2021**



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Design & layout:  
Petru Ureche





### MILESTONES FROM *CAPIDAVA* AND THE *TERRITORIUM* *CAPIDAVENSE*. AURELIAN'S WAR AGAINST THE *CARPI INTER CARSIVM ET* *SUCIDAVAM* IN A NEW LIGHT

**Abstract:** The article is focused on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century milestones recorded by archaeological excavations at *Capidava* and within a range not exceeding 15 miles, as the crow flies. Our inquiry pinpointed several finds from Dorobanțu, Seimenii Mari, *Capidava* and the nearby Topalu (10 pillars), set up on the occasion of the road construction works under emperors Hadrian (?), Antoninus Pius and Septimius Severus, Aurelian, by the Tetrachs and, finally, during Constantine. One should highlight the find cluster of Aurelian's *milliaria* in the area Topalu – *Capidava* (3 out of 10 referred *supra*, comparable in Moesia Inferior only to the situation from around *Sexaginta Prista*). Considering that unusual clustering, as well as all archaeological pieces of evidence we have for now on the beginning of the general reconstruction of the *castellum* at *Capidava* under Aurelian and Probus, at the end of the *bellum Scythicum*, one might rightly infer a local major event. To such an interpretation, a well-known building inscription (Bauinschrift, CIL III 12456 = ISM IV 88) from *Durostorum* honored Aurelian for bringing the city back to its former splendour (*in pristinam splendorem restituta*). The inscription was equally and prominently set into one wall to the memory of the war against the *Carpi*, somewhere *inter Carsium et Sucidavam*. But what if *Capidava* and the area around it had actually to do with those fierce battles?

**Keywords:** *Capidava*, *Topalu*, *milliarium*, *Moesia inferior*, *limes*, *Aurelian*, *Carpi*, *Scythia*, *Dobruja*.

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DOI: 10.14795/j.v8i4.694

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

An exceptional epigraphic find yielded during the systematic excavation season of 2011<sup>1</sup> offered us the perfect opportunity of resuming the discussion on the role of the *castellum* at *Capidava* within its Lower Danube *limes* sector. The fort is one of the most intensely investigated in the region and therefore regularly paradigmatic. It served not just its primary military function, but also watched over the local trading and communication hub. The strategic *via militaris* that followed the right bank of the river passed by the Roman *Capidava*. Since the *limes* road was locally well documented, in the following we shall tackle this major issue, i.e. when and why construction works, upgrading or repairs of the main local roads actually happened and

<sup>1</sup> OPRIȘ et alii 2012, *passim* (especially 31). See also recently OPRIȘ 2018a, where two new milestones dating back to the reign of Aurelian (*Capidava*, respectively *Topalu*) were published. The present study resumes and adds to most of the archaeological and historical issues briefly discussed on previous occasions.

how the latter integrated the rest of the road network of the province.

Almost one hundred years from the start of the archaeological excavations (in 1924), and with various finds at our disposal, we are actually in the situation to discern more or less the complex part *Capidava* played within the Roman defensive system of Moesia Inferior. According to the traditional historical thesis, the local fort belonged to the series of fortifications built most likely under Emperor Trajan by early 2nd century AD, during the large scale systematic organisation process of the Danubian *limes* occasioned by the *bellum Dacicum Traiani*. If taking into consideration the epigraphic evidence available, this major building enterprise may be (chrono)logically framed between the two Dacian expeditions<sup>2</sup>, as evidenced by the re-founding inscription of *Carsium* dated to AD 103<sup>3</sup> and the most ancient milestone discovered in Dobrudja, set up in the same year at *Sacidava* (Muzait Hill) by *cohors III Gallorum*<sup>4</sup>.

Confirmation for *Capidava* was missing until not long ago, although a funerary inscription and a stamped *tegula* belonging to *cohors I Ubiorum* vaguely pointed to its garrisoning there during the timeframe Nerva – early Trajan's reign<sup>5</sup>. A substantial answer emerged in 2015 baths' area of the early fort, at ca. 125 m the southern gate of the fort. That was, more precisely, a fragmentary tile bearing a precious early type stamp of legion *XI Claudia pia fidelis* (LEG XI CPF) in *tabula ansata*, dated most likely to the first decade of the 2nd century AD.<sup>6</sup> The above-mentioned stray find reinforced the former supposition regarding the construction of the *castellum* at *Capidava* within the context of the *bellum Dacicum*, possibly even during Trajan's preparations between his two *expeditiones*. Meanwhile, a thorough excavation from 2017, which aimed at completing the layout and architectural details of the bathhouse, allowed the most certain documenting of a first building phase dated precisely within that chronological framework.<sup>7</sup> Thus, on that occasion one could observe that the earliest wastewater drainage channel of the Roman ensemble was plated with bricks set horizontally and vertically of the said type - *Leg(ionis) XI C(laudiae) P(iae) F(idelis)*<sup>8</sup>.

Nonetheless, who was (or were) eventually the

builder(s) of the first fortification at *Capidava*? Until not long ago, alone the sparse ceramic building material without assured context, but displaying legionary stamps, could be referenced in order to support the early phase of the *castellum*. That must have happened by the beginning of the 2nd century AD, when one or several *Bauvexillationen* might have built it. One should stress that all pieces came from secondary contexts. That is the case of the stamps of *V Macedonica* of type/ types LEG V MAC (MA in ligature, discovered *extramuros* in 1957 by Grigore Florescu, just nearby the fort<sup>9</sup>. The same stamp type was equally identified during the 1988-1993 excavations of Valeriu Cheluță-Georgescu in the baths area for one of the building phases of the *balneum*.<sup>10</sup> It is impossible for now to accurately assign those carefully LEG V MAC stamped tiles and bricks either to the early 2nd century or to a subsequent phase, prior to the displacement to *Potaissa*. They could have very well belonged to an unspecified phase of enlargement or repairs of the *balneum* from *Capidava*, during its staying in the fortress at *Troesmis*, from Trajan to AD 168.

Material of the same type, this time yielded by the archaeological excavations conducted *intramuros*, in tower 1, was a fragmentary cartouche containing the stamp of legion *XI Claudia*.<sup>11</sup> Since it was found in the first stone phase of that tower and based on its thickness, Gr. Florescu inclined to associate the brick to the initial building phase. Such arguments could not be decisive, yet, as earlier mentioned, the Trajanic phase has been soundly documented archaeologically only recently, once the research of the bathhouse designed for the first auxiliary fort at *Capidava* resumed. Moreover, an actual presence of certain vexillations of the two legions undertaking the fortification works and building the *balneum* remains rather conjectural, while the transport of their ceramic material seems to have been more likely. Since the *castellum* is rebuilt *a fundamentis* in the second half of the 3rd century AD, and the supposed reconstruction started under Emperors Aurelian and Probus<sup>12</sup>, the chance of finding early phase Roman bricks *in situ* seems to me illusory. In line with this logic, the archaeological context of the first decade of the 2nd century AD - *balneum* proves even more valuable.

The Roman road system emerged and organically developed with the establishment and organisation of the province of Moesia. Thus, the great Danubian road started at *Singidunum*<sup>13</sup> and ran through the Iron Gates (Rom. Poștile de Fier), then descending to the Danube's mouths. The road

<sup>2</sup> OPRİȘ 2006.

<sup>3</sup> ISM V 94.

<sup>4</sup> RĂDULESCU/BĂRBULESCU 1981, 353-356, no. 1 = AE 1981, 745.

<sup>5</sup> ISM V 24; OPRİȘ 2006, 238-239, for the funerary monument of Marcus Cocceius Vitlus, former *signifer* of the cohort. For the *Coh(ortis) Ubior(um)* stamped brick, see OPRİȘ 1997. Latest approach on both finds, OPRİȘ 2018b, 151-152. A second brick restored *Coh(ortis) I [Germanorum]* by COVACEF 2000, most likely also reads *Coh(ortis) Ubior(um)*. One should finally add that the discussion on when and which auxiliary unit was first garrisoned at *Capidava* is way out of being settled. Some newly published military equipment belonging to auxiliary cavalry came from the barracks of the early fort and supplementary raised the hypothesis of an initial Flavian phase at *Capidava*, even before the emergence of Moesia Inferior in AD 86, see RAȚIU/OPRİȘ 2021, 182-184.

<sup>6</sup> For the typology of the early Moesian legionary stamps belonging to *XI Claudia*, the most important study was ZAHARIADE 1999. See also OPRİȘ 2018b, 147, 154 = fig. 1 (for the updated map of Trajanic stamps of *XI Claudia* north and south of the Danube); OPRİȘ/RAȚIU 2019, 265 and n. 7 (with bibliography).

<sup>7</sup> OPRİȘ/RAȚIU/POTĂRNICHE 2018, 6-7, 19 and fig. 3.1.

<sup>8</sup> For an improved form of the first archaeological report on the Trajanic *balneum* from *Capidava* (in English), see OPRİȘ/RAȚIU 2019, 265, 279 = Fig. 6.1.

<sup>9</sup> FLORESCU et al. 1959, 624, no. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> See recently also OPRİȘ/RAȚIU 2019, 265, 279 = fig. 6.4.

<sup>11</sup> ISM V 53. The brick is actually inaccessible (missing). According to Gr. Florescu, who found it (in *Capidava* I, 15, n. 1), the fragment preserved the initial X from numeral XI, and the text was in consequence restored *leg(ionis) X[I C(laudiae)]*. For a new, square stamped tile of the legion *XI Claudia* in a bathhouse context (C3 room), see OPRİȘ/RAȚIU/POTĂRNICHE 2018, 7 (and fig. 3.2), 18; OPRİȘ/RAȚIU 2019, 270, 279 = fig. 6.2.

<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, it might be surely safer to place it, sometime over the last three decades of the 3rd century AD. For arguments substantiating the Aurelian-Probus theory, *vide infra*.

<sup>13</sup> First records of road construction date to AD 33/34 (ILJug 57, 60), when the *III Scythica* and *V Macedonica* legions built the *limes* road in the Iron Gates area (Gospodin Vir). It would be refurbished later, under Claudius and Domitian, before known interventions in Trajan's time, for the preparations of his great *Bellum Dacicum*. See also recently KORAČ et alii 2014, 38.

changed direction, continuing along the Black Sea coastline towards Byzantium/Constantinople, starting at *Vallis Domitiana* (hypothetically identified at Agighiol) to *Sycas* (nowadays Galata, in Istanbul).<sup>14</sup> In its Moesia inferior section, the Black Sea strategic coast road started as a commercial trail, linking all Greek cities from Western Pontus.

A central south-north road, from *Marcianopolis* to *Noviodunum*, connected the two main communication and transport routes along the natural limits. Its existence is epigraphically attested for the very first time under Hadrian (Pl. I-II). Number of other roads (*viae publicae*) over shorter distances were added to a dense network, that was clearly adapted to local conditions and needs. At *Capidava* started secondary routes of access (*semitae*) from the *via militaris* along the river frontier, towards inland. Most certainly those were pathways already used in Hellenistic and Odrysian times. One road most likely split at Băltăgești, from where a ramification reached *Tomis* through *vicus Hi...* (Dorobanțu), yet other connections to *Ulmetum* and from there further on to reach *Histria* were equally available.

In the 4th century AD, these main routes were repaired and noticeably adjusted subsequent to the radical changes in the military organisation and logistical necessities. The supply needs of the army, on one hand, and the emergence of new urban centres (the late Roman *civitates*), on the other imposed a different approach. As such, in the time of the Tetrarchy, yet also later, under Anastasius and Justinian, the same unbroken concern of the imperial authorities for the Danube line is still noticeable. It continued to be manifest through both concern for road maintenance, as well as the restoration of former fortifications, followed by the construction of new ones. Compared to the Principate, the paucity of epigraphic records and especially the absolute absence of milestones after the 4th century<sup>15</sup> competed the few vague mentions about provincial roads in the literary sources of the 5th-6th centuries.

From a high limestone cliff, the *castellum* at *Capidava* watched over a nearby ford by the broad bend the river makes between the modern villages Dunărea and Topalu. Tabula Peutingeriana ascertains its ancient location, where accurate information on its position at equal distance (18.000 feet) from *Axiopolis* and *Carsium* was provided. Both distances coincide with those between the sites at Hinog - Capidava and Capidava - Hârșova (ancient *Carsium*). Several *in situ* milestones offered supplementary data to the famous ancient illustrated *itinerarium*: 6 miles (9 km) measured the distance between *Axiopolis* and the fort with its civil settlement from Seimenii Mari<sup>16</sup>. A distance of 4 and

5 miles<sup>17</sup>, respectively, stood between the fort at *Capidava* and the precious find spots of two pillars (from Aurelian and Septimius Severus), east of the modern village of Topalu, in the sector of limes road heading to *Carsium*. The discussion over those stones will be resumed below.

The road junction had its certain economic and military significance. In fact, at *Capidava* also converge the ranges of action of the two legions monitoring the northeastern part of Moesia Inferior in 2nd century AD. The sector north of *Capidava* to the Danube mouths was the control territory of V Macedonica garrisoned at *Troesmis* (and after AD 168 under the jurisdiction of I Italica), while that upstream was assigned to legion XI Claudia, quartered at *Durostorum*<sup>18</sup>. From the Danube line started *territorium Capidavense* (explicitly attested in ISM V 77), a considerable administrative unit of certain agricultural value, which bordered *regio Histriae* in the central part of Dobrudja. This territory included one important centre of a prosperous and eclectic community – *vicus Ulmetum*, hosting most likely a road station, as well. The latter had as specific role that of monitoring interior road from *Marcianopolis* to *Noviodunum*.

Beside its hub function within the road system of the province, the centre at *Capidava* also served as communication point with the territories over the border of the province, connecting the inhabitants from Dobrudja with communities from the Great Wallachian Plain. The local tradition preserved in fact the memory of a “stone bridge” in past times, most certainly with reference to the riverbed boulders exiting from the Danube in summertime, when river levels are very low. The effective existence of any manmade structures could not be archaeologically confirmed<sup>19</sup>. It is though certain that the connection with the Great Wallachian Plain and the Ialomița river valley, heading to the springs of the latter and the Carpathians’ passes, was made via a 10-15 km wide wetland called Balta Ialomiței. Between the local ford of the Danube at *Capidava* and the subsequent crossing of the Borcea arm at Bordușani stood a so-called *Melciș* or *La Melciș* (“Drumul Melcilor” – the Snails Road).<sup>20</sup> It was, beyond doubt, an anthropic structure presenting until recently remains of shell limestone. A further notable fact is the presence from the very beginning in relation with the auxiliary fort of a port facility operated by *classis Flavia Moesica*.<sup>21</sup> *Axiopolis* and *Carsium*, *Troesmis* or *Arrubium*, and foremost *Noviodunum* – the headquarters of the fleet<sup>22</sup>, must have been, for sure, *stationes* of greater strategic importance to the Danube border, serving both military and civil purposes.

The vivid economic activity rapidly taking shape in relation with both the fort and the *extra muros* civil settlement in Roman times is also evidenced by the existence at *Capidava* of a customs station over the 2nd – 3rd century. To

<sup>14</sup> PANAITE 2012, 134-135. See also BĂJENARU 2010, 27. According to *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Segm. IX, 1 and *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia* IV, 6; V, 12, *Sycas* was the terminus point of this Pontic route heading south to Bosphorus and Byzantium. Until reaching there, the Black Sea coast road passed through *Odessus*, *Mesembria*, *Anchialus* and *Apollonia*.

<sup>15</sup> The latest two milestones known in the area remain for now those discovered at Kipra (ca. 7 km NE of *Marcianopolis*) and *Zaldapa* (Abrut, Bulgaria). The first was dated AD 383-393, under Theodosius I and Arcadius, see SSIB 149. The milestone from *Zaldapa* (Abrut, Bulgaria), CIL III 14464 = SSIB 80, is in fact a palimpsest with inscription from Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius, while the dating is approximately similar to the former.

<sup>16</sup> FLORESCU 1924; AÊ 1980, 797 = ISM V 1. The Roman mile (*milia passuum*) meant 1000 paces = 1480 m. See, also Fig. 6, *infra*.

<sup>17</sup> The distance from *Capidava* to the find spots of the pillars is of ca. 5.9 and 7.4 km). See, also, Figs. 7, 9, *infra*.

<sup>18</sup> Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 59-61; DORUȚIU-BOILĂ 1972.

<sup>19</sup> Grigore Florescu, in *Capidava I*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU 2016, 92-93.

<sup>21</sup> For the literature, see OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU 2016, 90 and n. 2.

<sup>22</sup> OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU 2016, 91. On *classis Flavia Moesica* and its tile-stamps found on Lower Danube, from *Noviodunum* up to *Durostorum*, see, recently, OPRÎȘ 2020.



date it is in fact the only explicitly known *statio* downstream from *Durostorum*.<sup>23</sup> Two epigraphs from the 2nd century mention Titus Iulius Saturninus, a well-known *conductor Illyrici utriusque et Ripae Thracicae*,<sup>24</sup> during the late years of Antoninus Pius and an anonymous procurator watching over the customs district (*vectigalis ... Illyrici procuratori*) subsequent to the reforms under Marcus Aurelius<sup>25</sup>.

The existence of public roads was inseparably related to the troops who built, maintained and monitored them. For the period of the Principate, epigraphic sources record the successive presence of two auxiliary units of Germanic origin. The first, *cohors I Ubiorum equitata*,<sup>26</sup> is documented by COH VBIOR tile-stamps<sup>27</sup>, to which adds another epitaph over the grave of a veteran, former *signifer* of the cohort, M. Cocceius Vitlus<sup>28</sup>. The unit was transferred after the Dacian wars (on an unspecified date) in the territory of the newly established province of Dacia. It was replaced at *Capidava* by *cohors I Germanorum c(ivium) R(omanorum)*<sup>29</sup>, recorded by several inscriptions from the 2nd century AD.<sup>30</sup> The latter unit probably remained garrisoned at *Capidava* until the 3rd century AD, by, again, an unspecified date.

In close connection with the roads count the *beneficiarii consularis*<sup>31</sup>, sub-officers on the governor's staff, mainly charged with the security and maintenance of roads. According to the funerary stele set up by a brother, *optio* in legion *I Italica*, at *Capidava* died a certain Antonius Florus, *beneficiarius consularis*, who served in the army for 23 years until his passing<sup>32</sup>. The inscription dates after AD 168 when, subsequent to the displacement of legion *V Macedonica* to Dacia, the monitoring of this sector was transferred to *legio I Italica*.

During the late Roman period, cavalry units took the place of the former cohorts. The units recorded at *Capidava*. We are aware of a *cuneus equitum Solensium*, recorded by *Notitia Dignitatum*<sup>33</sup>. Epigraphic evidence showed that the fortification had also served as seat of a second cavalry unit - *equites scutarii, vexillatio Capidavensium*<sup>34</sup>, yet it is impossible to say with certainty whether it was a *Cuneus equitum scutarium*<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> For the latest thorough discussion on the 2nd – 3rd century customs station at *Capidava*, see OPRIȘ/RAȚIU 2016, 91-92.

<sup>24</sup> ISM V 10 = *Capidava* I 12.

<sup>25</sup> ISM V 12 = *Capidava* I 8.

<sup>26</sup> MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 213-215.

<sup>27</sup> OPRIȘ 1997, 277-278, fig. 1 = AE 1997, 1330. See also COVACEF 2000, 287-289. The latter (= AE 2001, 738) is deemed by C.C. Petolescu, in CEPR XIX-XX, 1999-2000, no. 906, to be a second tile-stamp of cohort *I Ubiorum* at *Capidava*, as the surviving half of the cartouche (the left side) is identical with that published by OPRIȘ 1997, see also CEPR XVII, no. 754 = AE 1997, 1330.

<sup>28</sup> AE 1950, 46 = AE 1960, 330 = ISM V 24 = CONRAD 2004, 190, no. 241.

<sup>29</sup> MATEI-POPESCU 2010, 235-236.

<sup>30</sup> ISM V 16, 36. It is very likely that a third epitaph was set up to a prefect (...*Celsus*) of the same unit, see OPRIȘ/POPESCU 1997 = CEPR XVII, 753. See, recently, OPRIȘ/RAȚIU 2017, 148-156, pl. 31-32.

<sup>31</sup> See PANAIT 2012, 136-138. For the *beneficiarii* recorded in Dobruja, see also Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 68-69.

<sup>32</sup> ISM V 41 = CIL III 14214 19 = *Capidava* I, 29.

<sup>33</sup> *Not.Dign., Or.*, XXXIX, 13. A homonymous unit is recorded in *Moesia Secunda*, at Belene (*Dimum*), see *Not.Dign., Or.*, XL, 12.

<sup>34</sup> IGLR 220-221; OPRIȘ 2004-2005.

<sup>35</sup> *Notitia Dignitatum* records the presence of this unit type in several forts of *Moesia Secunda*, at *Appiaria*, *Iatrus* and *Securisca* – *Or.*, XL, 11, 13, 16. In *Scythia*, the single garrison known for sure is at *Sacidava* (Dunăreni, Muzait) – *Or.*, XXXIX, 12. WILKES 2005, 200, 207, 212-214, 216, repertories the

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The *intramuros* archaeological excavations of season 2011 focused on *via principalis*, where several 5 by 5 m square surfaces were investigated (the R-S 71 and R-S 70; S-Ş 71 and S-Ş 70 labelled ones according to the general box-grid). On that occasion, several Middle Byzantine contexts<sup>36</sup> could be documented and later removed.

In square S-Ş 71, the aim of the research was to clear out the fillings from the defensive ditch of the late Roman fortlet.<sup>37</sup> Subsequent to the removal of the vegetal upper layer, a second Middle Byzantine layer consisting of a dark-grey coloured sediment, with sandy texture and containing small and average stone fragments could be observed. It precisely made up the infilling of the former defence ditch of the 7th century *castellum*. Amongst, was also noted the top side of a milestone in secondary position, broken up to provide building material in Early or Middle Byzantine times (Fig. 1; Pl. V-VI).<sup>38</sup>

The milestone was made of limestone and stood 0.56 m tall. The upper diameter measures 0.23 m, while that lower one is 0.30 m. The letter height for the first line is of cca 3 cm and 4 cm for lines 2 and 3.<sup>39</sup>

The inscription preserves the initial part of the abbreviated imperial title:

**Imp(eratori) Caes(ari)  
L(ucio) D(omitio) Aur[e]-  
lianus (sic)**

- - -

Unfortunately, the partially preserved stone contained no specific reference to the number of consulships, tribunician power, or provincial governor. As a consequence, one may offer no more than a vague chronological framework, between AD 270-275.

The analysis of the inscribed text reveals that we are dealing with a palimpsest, and the Aurelian's inscription was overlapping an older one, of which only two letters are still legible: ...s.....s. As we shall further see, besides lettering, style and spelling, the text contains an essential onomastic element in the nominative, a writing feature that is actually identical on both milestones of the emperor found 6 km away, at Topalu (found in 1980 and 2013).

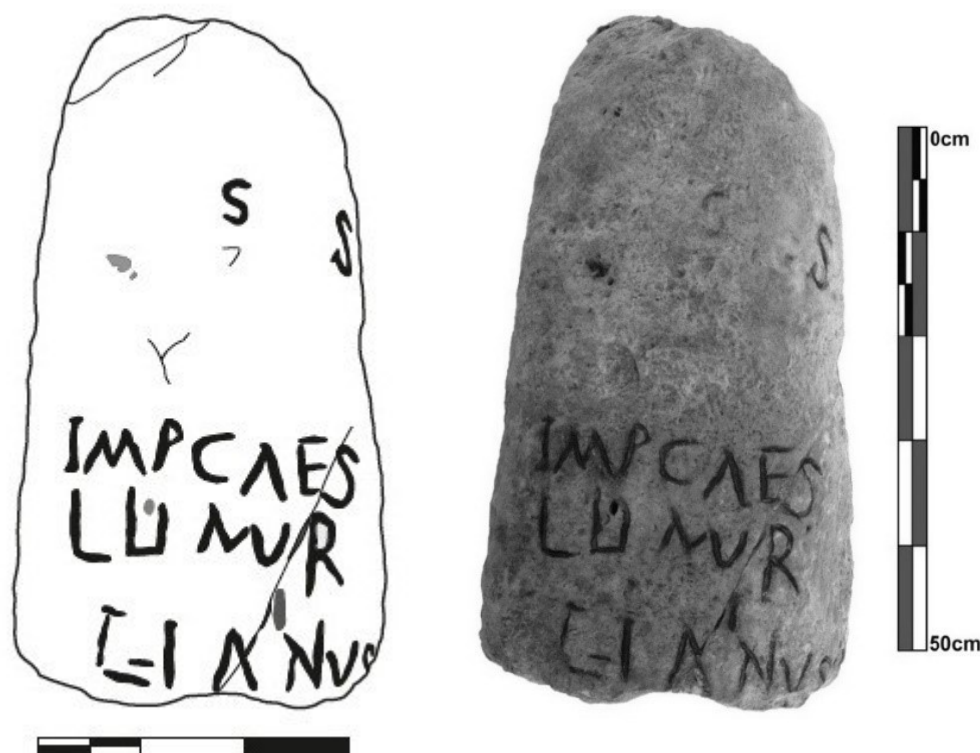
numerous units with identical name – *cuneus equitum scutarium* – on the border of the Mid and Lower Danube: at Esztergom (*Solva*) in the province of *Pannonia Valeria*, Sotin (*Cornacum*) in *Pannonia Secunda*, Gornji Cibăr (*Cebus*) in *Dacia Ripensis*, Cherkovitsa (*Securisca*), Krivina (*Iatrus*) in *Moesia Secunda*, lastly at Dunăreni (*Sacidava*) in *Scythia*. Another *cuneus equitum scutarium* is also known in *Dacia Ripensis* at *Egeta/ Aegeta*: GUDEA/ ZAHARIADE 2016, 35; *Not.Dign., Or.*, XLII, 20.

<sup>36</sup> A sunken dwelling and the cooking hearth of a second sunken-floored building from the 10th-11th century in trenches R-S 71, respectively a cluster of stones dating to the same Middle Byzantine period over the eastern embankment of the defensive ditch belonging to late 6th – early 7th century fortlet.

<sup>37</sup> On this last Roman defensive structure in the southern quarter of the former *castellum* from *Capidava*, see OPRIȘ/RAȚIU 2018.

<sup>38</sup> OPRIȘ et alii 2012, especially 31.

<sup>39</sup> The pillar is kept at the National Museum of History and Archaeology in Constanța (MINAC). I am grateful to T. Potârniche, for his precious help over the entire operation of cleaning, examining and documenting the pillar.



**Fig. 1.** Milestone of Aurelian (*Capidava*, 2011). Drawing and photo Al. Rațiu.

The second milestone discovered within the walled enclosure of the fort at *Capidava* surfaced during the excavation season of 1996, in the debris layer dated to the second half of the 6th century – early 7th century on the *via principalis* (Fig. 2; Pl. 5-6)<sup>40</sup>. Its secondary position, on the direct access road towards the main southern gate clearly expresses its reuse intentions as building material. Luckily, a reuse never took place, so that the milestone survived intact.

The pillar, of yellowish-white limestone, is 2.45 m high and has a diameter of 0.40 m. The shaft itself is 1.70 m high, while the parallelepipedic base is 0.75 m high, 0.4 m wide and 0.48 m long. An approximate weight of our "building stone" would be around 1200 kg.

The inscribed area lies within a coarsely finished frame sized 0.85 x 0.43m starts at 0.30 m from the top of the piece. The text reads:

- Imp(erator) • Caes(ar)**
- T(itus) • Aelius**
- Hadr(ianus) • An-**
- toninus**
- 5 Aug(ustus) Pius**
- p(ontifex) m(aximus) • t(ribunicia) p(otestate) XXII**
- co(n)s(ul) IIII • p(ater) p(atriciae)**
- Iulio • Severo**
- leg(ato) • Aug(usti) • pr(o) • pr(aetore)**
- 10 III (milia passuum)**

IMP·CAES  
T·AELI·VS  
HADR·AN  
TONIN·VS  
AVG·PII·S  
PM·TP XXII  
CCS IIII·PP  
IVLIO·SEVERO  
LEG·AVG·PR·PR  
III

**Fig. 2.** Milestone of Antoninus Pius/ Iulius Statilius Severus (*Capidava*, 1996). Drawing Cătălina Petolescu.

<sup>40</sup> OPRÎȘ/POPESCU 1996 = AE 1996, 1353.

The carving of the individual letters is rudimentary and the letter-outline is incomplete for N in line 4, for P, I, V in line 5, for the first X in line 6, for O in line 7 and R in line 8, respectively. This worn aspect could be due to the poor quality material and subsequent transportation from the original location along the road to the fort. The text starts large, to be reduced as the lines progress. The poor quality of the stone must have been the reason why the stonemason decreased letter sizes from 6 cm for the first lines to 5.5- 5 cm in lines 3-7 and 4 cm for lines 7-8.

Based on the tribunician power of Antoninus Pius (the number of times the emperor had held the power of a tribune, renewed annually), the pillar would date between 10 December 158 - 9 December 159, more certain in 159, since the mentioned governor was recorded in *Moesia Inferior* in AD 159-161/162<sup>41</sup>.

A third milestone fragment in secondary position was recorded in 1999 within the eastern *intramuros* sector, next to the southern main gate and curtain wall G. It was found inside room C10, at some 1.5 m from the entrance and served as building material for the foundation of a separating wall. The piece received the appearance of a 0.20 m thick plaque, after its thinning (Fig. 3; Pl. 5-6).<sup>42</sup> Its preserved height is of 0.67-0.70 m, the diameter of the shaft 0.33 m, while carved letters vary between 3.5-5 cm.



**Fig. 3.** Milestone from the Eastern Sector (*Capidava*, 1999) – Tetrarchy. Photo MINAC.

<sup>41</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> IV/3, no. 570, 575, 588; FITZ 1966, 17-19; ALFÖLDY 1977, 167, 275-278.

<sup>42</sup> BĂRBULESCU/BUZOIANU/COVACEF 2008, 173-177, no. 3.

The text, which luckily extends over nine lines, has survived incomplete however, while lines 3 and 4-6 are entirely or just partially deleted. A series of letters were superficially engraved, worn, or even erased at a later stage. All these elements converge towards the idea of a palimpsest, with the last carving phase resulting in a Tetrarchic inscription.

The editors of this find ascribed the inscription to the reign of emperor Diocletian, based on the lettering and the general appearance of the inscription, but also taking into account preserved elements of the initial imperial name: [Au/re]l(io) Val[(erio)].

Four *hastae* can be read in line 8, followed by the well-known COS abbreviation. Based on all above elements and the comparative analysis of Tetrarchic epigraphs throughout the province of Scythia, the text can be restored to read:

**Imp(eratoribus) C[ae]s(aribus) C(aio) Au-  
[re]l(io) Val[(erio) Diocletiano]  
e[t M(arco) Aur(elio) Val(erio) Maximiano]  
P(iis) F(elicibus) Inv[ic]tis Aug(ustis)]  
5 [et M(arco) Fl(avio) Valerio]  
[Constantio et C(aio)]  
[G]a[le]ri[o Val(erio) Maximiano]  
III co(n)s(ulibus) [nob(ilissimis)]  
Caes(aribus)**

This inscription from *Capidava* adds to the well-represented assemblage of milestones erected in the Tetrarchic period within the province, found both in the *limes* area, as well as for marking the coastal road of the Black Sea and inland province roads<sup>43</sup>. In fact, between 293 and 305 the epigraphic production of this kind seems to have reached its peak.<sup>44</sup>

The mention of the fourth consulship of the two Caesars, M. Flavius Constantius and C. Galerius Valerius Maximianus date the inscription to AD 302. This period is in fact marked by an extensive building activity on the Scythian *limes*, as confirmed by both archaeology and epigraphy<sup>45</sup>.

The secondary inscription assumes parts of the previous. As an element of specificity, one should mention the absence of the abbreviated DD NN - “*Domini Nostri*” formula, yet this may also be due to the fragmentary state of the inscription:

<sup>43</sup> For the repertory of 22 milestones of the Tetrarchy discovered in the province of *Scythia*, see PANAITE/ALEXANDRESCU 2009. A second contribution related to this topic was published in the same volume; see BĂRBULESCU/CÎTEIA/WISOȘENȘCHI 2009, 414-417 (adding two Tetrarchic milestones from Mihail Kogălniceanu).

<sup>44</sup> PANAITE 2012, 136.

<sup>45</sup> See to this effect several so-called Bauinschriften recording the general reconstruction of the fortifications along the Danube, at *Sexaginta Prista* (AÉ 1966, 357), *Transmarisca* (ILS 641 = CIL III 6151), *Durostorum* (AÉ 1936, 10), *Seimeni* (IGLR 205 = CIL III 7487) and *Halmyris* (AÉ 1997, 1318), all from *Moesia Secunda* and *Scythia*. Upstream, another inscription is known at Donje Butorke/ *Zernes* (AÉ 1979, 519).

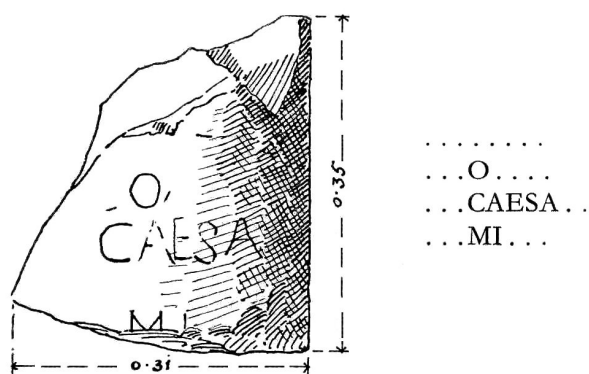


**Imp(eratores) C[ae(s)ares]  
C(aius) Fl(avius) Val(erius) Constantinus]  
e[st] Val(erius) Licin(ianus) Licinius]  
P(ii) F(elices) Inv[ic(t)us] Aug(usti) et Fl(avius)]  
5 [Val(erius) Crispus et Lici]-  
[nia]nus [Licinius Iun(ior) et  
Fl(avius) C[onstantinus]  
[nob(ilissimi)]  
Caes[ar]es]**

The mention of the three Caesars - Crispus, Licinius Iunior (II) and Constantinus II - enables a dating between 1 March 317 (when they were appointed *Caesares*) and 324, the year when Licinius is removed from power, after the battle of Chrysopolis.

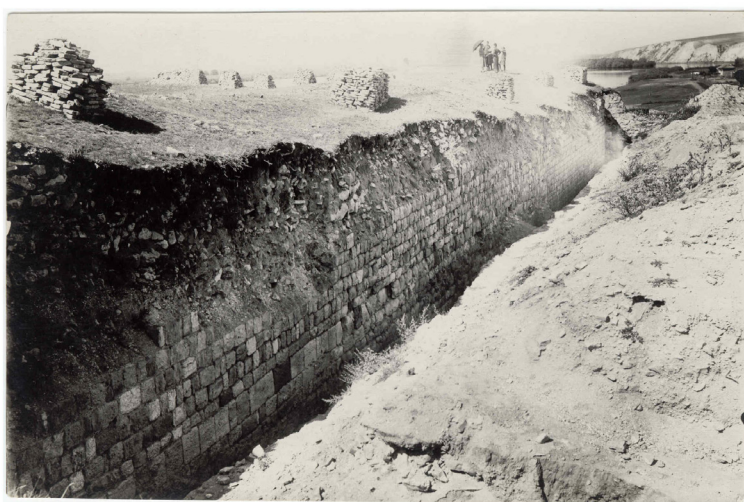
All three *intramuros* finds discussed above have been yielded by the systematic archaeological excavations of the last decades. Grigore Florescu discovered a fourth piece from the first stone phase of the enclosure walls of the fort in the 1920s (Figs. 4, 5)<sup>46</sup>. However, from the surviving fragment no significant information can be restored with certainty.

Except for the pieces directly associated with the fort and the limes road passing by, several other milestones surfaced from the considerable *territorium Capidavense* and those administratively adjacent. They mostly represented stray finds, than results of field archaeological research. Yet, they are by no means unexpected, as in the area we are aware of secondary routes of access, emerging from the strategic road along the Danube. Those *semitae* linked the frontier to the inland habitations but above all to the major Greek cities on the coastline (particularly *Tomis*, capital city, via Băltăgești, but also *Histria*, via Gălbiori and *Ulmetum*).



**Fig. 4.** 3rd century milestone (*Capidava*). ISM V 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Capidava*, I, 21 = ISM V 9. According to the excavator and its first editor, the piece was discovered in the lower level near curtain wall C of the fort. Its height and diameter are identical, 0.35 m. Only a few letters from three lines survived: ..... O...../ .....CAESA...../ ..... M P.... Starting from the surviving letters and their stylistic investigation, Grigore Florescu inferred a dating to the second half of the 2nd century AD, successively attributing the milestone to the reign of Septimius Severus and then to Antoninus Pius'. Two decades later, Emilia Doruțiu-Boilă (ISM V) extended the restoration possibilities of the text. She suggested *Augusti* and *Caesares* from the first half of the 3rd century AD, either Philip the Arab and his son, or Maximinus Thrax and his son, Verus, a restoration that can be attempted with caution.



**Fig. 5.** Curtains D and C (in the foreground/ background) of the *Capidava* fort during excavations of the enclosure walls (FLORESCU 1927-1932, 491, fig. 10).

In fact, the existence of inner *viae publicae* is mentioned right at *Ulmetum*; another public road is known within the neighbouring *regio Histriae*, next to the coastline, at Chora Dagei and Laikos Pyrgos.<sup>47</sup>

The governor mentioned by the last inscription somewhere south of *Histria* and the one supervising the road works at *Capidava* in AD 159 are one and the same, i.e. L. Iulius Statilius Severus. One year later, in AD 160, the same legate is attested by the oldest find of this kind coming from the village of Seimeni (ISM V 1), at some 12 miles south from *Capidava* (Fig. 6). The stone is the clear proof that the limes road works in its section between *Capidava* and *Axiopolis* went on for more than a year. The pillar measures 2.45 m in height and 0.45 m in diameter. The letters of the inscription are 5 cm high:

**Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) T(ito) Ael(io) Had(riano)  
Ant(onino) Aug(usto) Pio p(ontifici) m(aximo)  
trib(unicia) p(otestate) XXIII co(n)s(uli) IIII p(atri)  
p(atriciae)  
Iul(io) Statilio Severo  
5 leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)  
ab Axiu(poli) m(ilia) p(assuum)  
VI**

In fact, the minor investigations conducted in 1924 by Grigore Florescu south of the village Seimenii Mari identified a 20 x 20 m late Roman watchtower, built in a construction technique (*opus implectum*) similar to the enclosure of *Capidava*<sup>48</sup>. The strategic purpose of this minor fortification was most likely that to monitor the *via militaris* section between *Axiopolis* and *Capidava*, as well as other secondary inner roads.

Another piece, in that case a record from the *territorium Capidavense*, is the milestone found in the

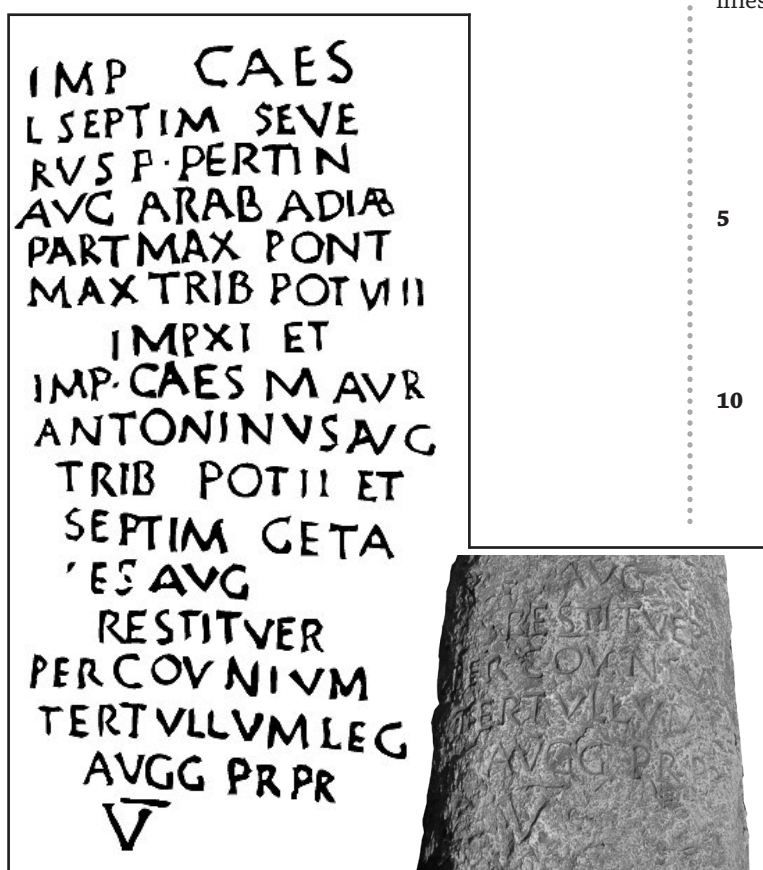
<sup>47</sup> ISM V 60 (*Ulmetum*); ISM I 378 (*Chora Dagei*).

<sup>48</sup> A Tetrarchic inscription of AD 293-305 (CIL III 7487 = IGLR 205 = ISM IV 246) was related to the construction of this fortification (*burgus/praesidium*?). Known parallels are several *Bauinschriften* at *Sexaginta Prista*, *Transmarisca*, *Durostorum* and *Halmyris*, as well as in *Moesia Prima*, at Donje Butorke, see n. 45 *supra*. See, recently, OPRIȘ 2019, 275-276, 278 for the *burgus/praesidium* at Seimenii Mari and 276-278, for the epigraphic finds.

IMPCAES TAEL HAD  
 ANT AVGPIO PM  
 TRIB PXX IIIOS IIIIPP  
 IVLSTA TILLOSEV Ro  
 LECAVC R R  
 ABAX IV MP  
 VI

**Fig. 6.** Milestone of Antoninus Pius/ Iulius Statilius Severus (Seimeni). Drawing ISM V 1.

Turkish cemetery from Dorobanțu. To be precise, it is about a palimpsest that bears two different inscriptions. The earliest, very fragmentary and uncertain, dates from the time of Hadrian, while the reuse belongs to the Tetrarchy<sup>49</sup>. The surviving dimensions of the piece are of 1.58 m in height and 0.40 m in diameter; the few preserved letters from line 1-2 are 6 cm high. Em. Popescu restored the text on eight lines, as follows:



**Fig. 7. 1-2.** Milestone of Septimius Severus, Caracalla/Caius Ovinius Tertullus (Topalu). Drawing BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 142, fig. 1c; photo MINAC.

<sup>49</sup> ISM V 5 = CIL III 12516 = IGLR 83. À vol d'oiseau the distance between *Capidava* and the subordinated *vicus* from Dorobanțu is of approx. 20 km.

D(ominis) n(ostris)  
 Cai(o) Aurel(io) Val(erio)  
 [Diocletiano]  
 [et M(arco) Aurel(io) Val]eri[o]  
 5 [Maximia]n[o et]  
 [Fl(avio) Val(erio) Constan-]  
 [tio et Galerio Valerio]  
 [Maximiano -----]

In the absence of supplementary dating elements regarding the Caesars in the unreadable lower section, one can largely frame the second inscription between AD 293-305.

A compact group of inscribed pillars and – as we shall see below – in direct connection to the most recent milestone discovered at *Capidava* was found nearby, at Topalu. The farming works carried out in the commune of Topalu (more precisely, in the local orchard work area, east of the village) revealed in 1980 two milestones. The distance between the find spots was of ca. 1.5 km. This would mean they stood one mile from each other, along the limes road.

The first one (Fig. 7.1-2), preserved intact, was made of porous limestone and had the following sizes: the shaft was 1.32 m high and a diameter by the base of 0.40 m, decreasing to 0.35 to the top; the base was 0.50 m high.<sup>50</sup>

The inscribed text, surviving also complete, on 17 lines, with letters varying between 3.5-6 cm, reads as follows:

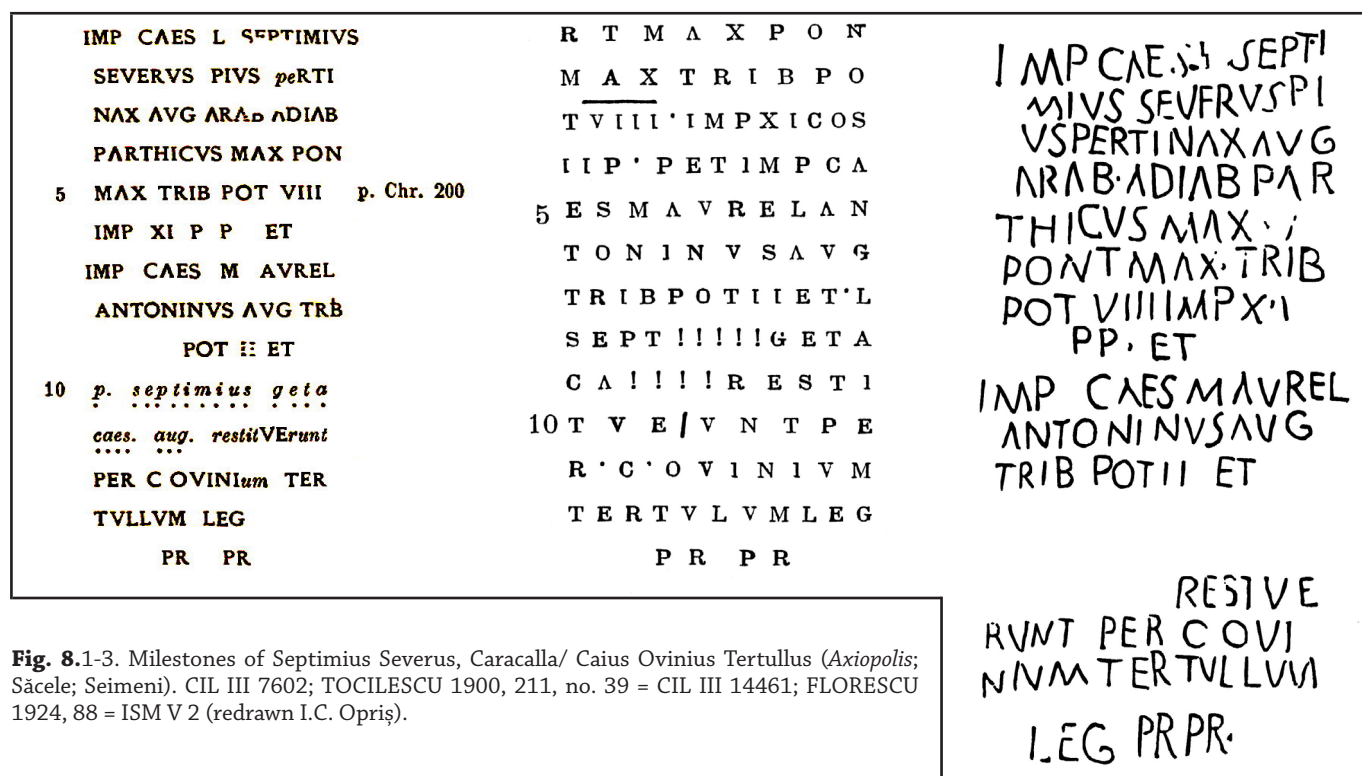
Imp(erator) Caes(ar)  
 L(ucius) Septim(ius) Seve-  
 rus P(ius) Pertin(ax)  
 Aug(ustus) Arab(icus) Adiab(enicus)  
 5 Part(hicus) max(imus) pont(ifex)  
 max(imus) trib(unicia) pot(estate) VIII  
 imp(erator) XI et  
 imp(erator) Caes(ar) M(arcus) Aur(elius)  
 Antoninus Aug(ustus)  
 10 trib(unicia) pot(estate) II et  
 [L(ucius)] Septim(ius) Geta  
 C]aes(ar) Aug(ustus)  
 restituer(unt)  
 per C(aium) Ov(i)nium  
 15 Tertullum leg(atum)  
 Aug(ustorum duorum) pr(o) pr(aetore)  
 V (milia passuum)

The inscription is stylistically noteworthy by the accurately carved letters, but one should also remark the presence of certain *apices* or ligatures in lines 4 (AB) and 9 (AV).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the 5.000 feet information from the last line that perfectly matches the distance to *Capidava*. It is very likely that the pillar stood actually *in situ*, precisely on the original spot on ancient public road along the

<sup>50</sup> BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 140-143; AE 1981 747.





**Fig. 8.1-3.** Milestones of Septimius Severus, Caracalla/ Caius Ovinus Tertullus (*Axiopolis*; Săcele; Seimeni). CIL III 7602; TOCILESCU 1900, 211, no. 39 = CIL III 14461; FLORESCU 1924, 88 = ISM V 2 (redrawn I.C. Opreș).

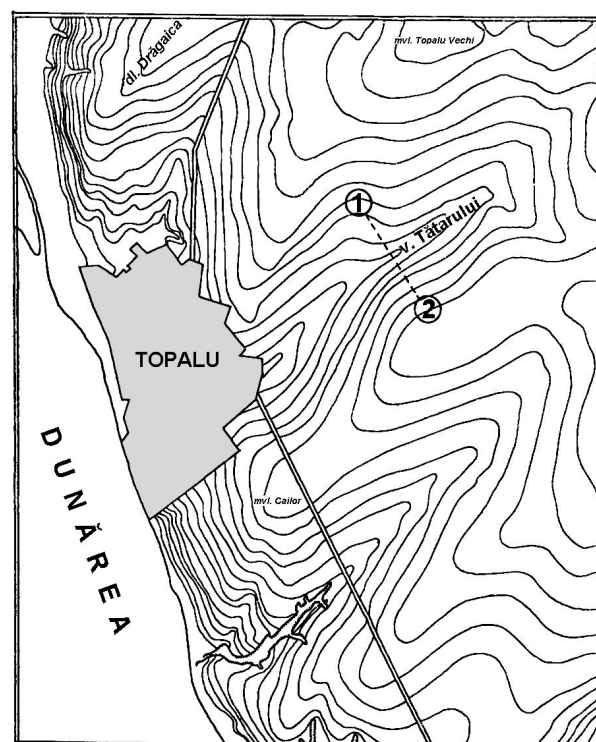
Danube. The latter crossed by the east of the modern village of Topalu.

In addition, the AVGG formula places the inscription in the time of the joint rule of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The epigraph at Topalu counts among a series of *milliaria* that unquestionably record massive repair of the *limes* road. These works on *via militaris*, following the Danube line, are well documented under governor Caius Ovinus Tertullus (Fig. 8.1-3; Pl. 3), at least for the section between *Axiopolis* and *Carsium*<sup>51</sup>. The same extensive maintenance works of the roads in his time is epigraphically attested for the coastline, as well as for other inland communication routes<sup>52</sup>.

As described above, at some 1.5 km south from the previous and along the same ancient road, a second milestone lied recumbent on the other side of what is locally known as

Valea Tătarului (Tatar's Valley)<sup>53</sup>. Made of yellowish-white limestone, this pillar was likewise well preserved. (Fig. 9) It was somewhat larger and measured 2 m in height; the shaft had a 0.32-0.25 m diameter, while the rectangular base was measuring 0.50 x 0.40 m.

The inscription text is set on 10 lines, has no ligatures, and the letter sizes are varying between 4.8-6.5 cm. Worthy



**Fig. 9.** Find spots of milestones east of Topalu (BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 154, fig. 6).

<sup>51</sup> *Axiopolis* (CIL III 7602), Seimenii Mari (FLORESCU 1924, 88 = ISM V 2), *Carsium* (CIL III 7603-7604). A milestone was long time ago wrongly identified by Grigore Tocilescu as coming from the river's mouths, from *Aegyssus* (TOCILESCU 1900, 211, no. 39). In fact, from BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1991, 125, n. 3 one can find out that the so-called pillar from *Aegyssus*, first published by Gr. Tocilescu, is one and the same with the CIL III 14461 milestone. The correct find spot of the latter was in fact at Săcele (Peletlia), some 80 km southward. It actually belonged to the littoral road, more precisely to a section between *Histria* and *Tomis*. For the list of milestones mentioning the legate's name in eastern part of Moesia Inferior, see BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1991, 125-126.

<sup>52</sup> Beside the above-mentioned milestone found at Săcele (CIL III 14461), see others at *Tomis* (R. Vulpe, in DID II, 192, n. 56; BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1991, no. 1, 123-126), *Odessos* (HOLLENSTEIN 1975, 31, no. 23-24), but also from Plopeni (BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, no. 3, 147-148). In Plopeni, in southern Dobrudja, there was a communication hub, where the roads starting from *Tomis* and *Callatis*, towards *Tropaeum Traiani* and *Durostorum*, or southwards, by *Zaldapa*, towards *Marcianopolis* (the inland imperial road), all met together: see BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 148. For the prodigious activity of C. Ovinus Tertullus between 198-201 AD, when he was *legatus Augusti pro praetore Moesiae Inferioris*, see R. Vulpe, in DID II, 191-197; BOTEVA 1996, 242.

<sup>53</sup> BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1993, 197-206, figs. 1-3 = AE 1994, 1532.

of special mention is a gap (equivalent to the height of two lines) between lines 6-7, right after the imperial title. One should add the stonecutter's carelessness in line 9, who abbreviated PA PR for *pr(o) pr(aetore)*, instead of the correct PR PR. The text analysis reveals two carving stages: noticeably erased, the initial imperial name still preserves four vertical *hastae*. The stone was reused at a later stage, with the name of the emperor in office added in the nominative - L(ucius) D(omitius) Aurelianus, in contrast to the original text, where the imperial title was in the dative case. (Fig. 10.1-2):

**Imp(eratori) Caes(ari)**  
**L(ucio) D(omitio) Aure-**  
**[////]lianus (sic)**  
**Pio, Felici,**  
**5 Invicto, Aug(usto)**  
**trib(unicia) pot(estate), p(atri) p(atriae)**  
**sub cura Sall-**  
**i(i) Aristaeneti**  
**leg(ati) Aug(usti) p<r>(o) pr(aetore)**  
**m(ilia) p(assuum)**

Closer inspection reveals details of the emperor's name which was deliberately erased: AUR in line 2 and N in line 3 are still visible. A plausible reading for this earlier imperial identity might be M. Aurelius Antoninus<sup>54</sup>. As regards, the chronological frame for the reuse of the pillar, respectively that from the reign of Aurelian, a closer dating might be possible, as well. With any numeral for the number of times he had held it, the tribunician power of the emperor may point to his first year of rule, starting in spring of 270.

The historical importance of the milestone discovered

IMPCAES  
 LD AURE  
 LIA NVS  
 PIO FELICI  
 INVICTO AVG  
 TRIB POT PP  
  
 SVBCVRASALL  
 IARISTAENETI  
 LEGAVSPAPR  
 MP



**Fig. 10.** Milestone of Aurelian/ Sallius Aristaenetus (Topalu, 1980): BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1993, 198, fig. 1 (drawing); MINAC no 54000 (photo)

<sup>54</sup> As it was, in fact, restored by C.C. Petolescu: see PETOLESCU 2014, 302, n. 51; OPRÎȘ 2018a, 162, n. 14.

in 1980 at Topalu resides in the fact that it records a new governor of *Moesia inferior*. Unmentioned by other sources until then, Sallius Aristaenetus was identified with a homonymous figure, governor of Thrace under Valerian and Gallienus<sup>55</sup>.

Things have become more consistent when (in October 2013) a third milestone was identified in the wall of a private property from the W-NW part of Topalu (Frunzelor Str. no. 103)<sup>56</sup>. Used as construction material, the surviving column stands 130 cm high; the maximum diameter measures 30 cm. The inscribed area (more precisely, lines 4-10) was strongly damaged of old. A longitudinal fracture of the piece, associated to its secondary use, affects additionally the text. The piece is kept in the collection of the National Museum of History and Archaeology of Constanța (MINAC) (Fig. 11.1-2).

Overall, the text looks identical to the previous one, which could imply that the milestones were made by the same *lapicida* and set up during the same repair of the Danubian road. To this answer also leads the carving technique, including the form of individual letters.

**Imp(eratori) Caes(ari)**  
**L(ucio) D(omitio) Aure-**  
**lianus (sic)**  
**[Pio, Felici,**  
**5 Invicto], Au[g(usto)]**  
**trib(unicia) pot(estate), p(atri) p(atriae)]**  
**[////]L V**  
**[sub cura Sall-**  
**i(i) A]r[ista]enet[i**  
**10 leg(ati) Aug(usti)] p<r>(o) pr(aetore)**  
**m(ilia) p(assuum)**

The writing is very similar to the previous, as well. Letter sizes vary between 4-6 cm (with an average of 5 cm), except for M and P in *mille* (or *milia*) *passuum* in the last line, which are longer (7, respectively 8 cm). Even though, in the middle part the letters are very worn and the text is illegible, one should mention that lines 9-10 preserve enough elements in order to read ... A]r[ista]enet[i / leg(ati) Aug(usti)] p<r>(o) pr(aetore).

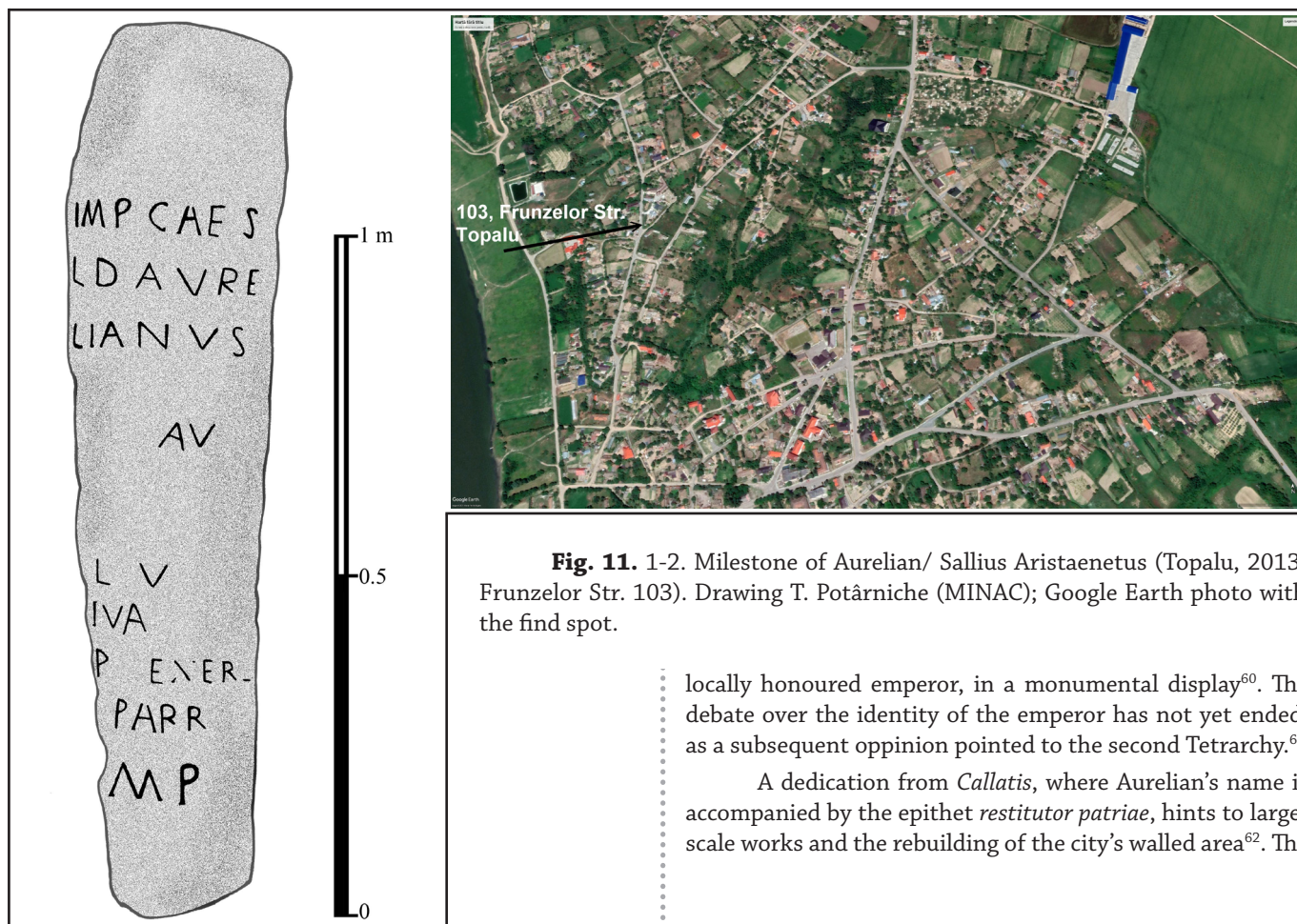
The milestone from *Capidava* – in fact the starting point for our extensive study – thus adds to the two specimens known insofar 6 km away at Topalu and to a third find from the capital city *Tomis*<sup>57</sup>. They all together strongly support the extensive activity of Aurelian on the Lower Danube. The general reconstruction of the frontier in the aftermath of the 30 years long *bellum Scythicum* started during the reign the emperor who practically put an end to the military anarchy, while traces are visible

<sup>55</sup> PETOLESCU 2014, 299-302. Until then, M. Aurelius Sebastianus was the only governor known in inscriptions from *Sexaginta Prista* and *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, see n. 79, *infra*.

<sup>56</sup> My sincere thanks to Tiberiu Potârniche (MINAC), who actually identified the milestone at Topalu in 2013 and kindly offered it to me for publication, see OPRÎȘ 2018a, 162-163, fig. 7.

<sup>57</sup> For *Tomis*: ISM II 109 (75) = CIL III 12517; for the two pieces of Topalu, see BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1993, respectively OPRÎȘ 2018a, 159-160.





**Fig. 11.** 1-2. Milestone of Aurelian/ Sallius Aristaenetus (Topalu, 2013, Frunzelor Str. 103). Drawing T. Potârniche (MINAC); Google Earth photo with the find spot.

both epigraphically and archaeologically. It is he whom the successful military campaigns against the Carpi and the Goths and the restoration of peace are owed to, after the subdual of the raiders. As subsequent action one should mention extant information concerning the reconstruction of the heavily ravaged fortifications in Dobrudja during the preceding decades, namely *Histria*, *Callatis*, *Tomis* and *Halmyris*, possibly also *Dinogetia*, *Tropaeum Traiani* or *Capidava*, implicitly of the roads ensuring mobility to the army<sup>58</sup>.

It is during his short reign when the fortress at *Durostorum* was also brought back to its former splendour (in *pristinam splendorem restituta*), as we find from a *Bauinschrift*(?) offered by the inhabitants to the emperor (Fig. 12)<sup>59</sup>. Still from *Durostorum* and possibly even in relation with the latter, came a marble statue head (kept at the National Museum of Antiquities of the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest – IAB, Fig. 13), which would have belonged, according to some interpretations, to the same

locally honoured emperor, in a monumental display<sup>60</sup>. The debate over the identity of the emperor has not yet ended, as a subsequent opinion pointed to the second Tetrarchy.<sup>61</sup>

A dedication from *Callatis*, where Aurelian's name is accompanied by the epithet *restitutor patriae*, hints to large-scale works and the rebuilding of the city's walled area<sup>62</sup>. The



**Fig. 12.** Dedication to emperor Aurelian (*Durostorum*). CIL III 12456 = ISM IV 88. National Museum of Antiquities/ Archive of the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest.

<sup>58</sup> For the presentation of the archaeological arguments on the reconstruction works initiated under Aurelian and Probus, see SUCEVEANU 1977, 29-30; Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 34, 121-122.

<sup>59</sup> CIL III 12456 = ISM IV 88. I am grateful for the high quality photo to Florian Matei Popescu ("Vasile Pârvan" Institute of Archaeology of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest). ... in *pristinam splendorem restituta*, oder etwas ähnliches, as suggested by Gr. Tocilescu, in *Einverständnis mit Herrn Professor v. Domaszewski* (see ISM IV 88, 218), is a conjectural restoration with plausible parallels (CIL VI 1750). Later repeatedly resumed as certainty, the formula does not actually seem to be sustained by what is legible in the last line.

<sup>60</sup> DID II, 275, n. 21; 341, fig. 54; COVACEF 2002, 61-63, no. 8-9 (especially no. 8).

<sup>61</sup> *Contra*, M. ALEXANDRESCU VIANU 1995, 338-340, fig. 35 a-c, especially 338: "... Les traits de ce portrait relèvent partiellement de la période de la première Tétrarchie, mais des éléments subsistent aussi qui le différencient, le rapprochant du style de la seconde Tétrarchie, tels, par exemple, un certain idéalisme de la figure, l'équilibre des formes, quelques détails techniques comme l'atténuation des plis sillonnant le visage et de l'asymétrie, la pupille en forme de pastille".

<sup>62</sup> CIL III 7586 = ISM III 96, 416-419; SUCEVEANU 1977, 30.



same may be also considered for *Tomis*, where the massive reconstruction practically doubled inner space compared to the Hellenistic times<sup>63</sup>. Concurrently, the building of the late Roman enclosure at *Histria* starts under emperors Aurelian and Probus<sup>64</sup>. It is difficult to establish whether the inscription set up by *ordo splendidissima (sic) municipii Tropaei*<sup>65</sup> - introducing the Latin equivalent for *λαμπροτάτη*, known in several epigraphic cases from the Left Pontus in association to the name of the Greek cities - can be dated to this time or, possibly, earlier<sup>66</sup>. If genuine, it would bear the local witness to major urban changes; however, one should say that relevant archaeological contexts for Aurelian's period are not effectively available for now<sup>67</sup>.

Even if fine dating attempts are inapplicable, circumstances on the Lower Danube limes are somewhat similar: it is very possible that the rebuilding *a fundamentis* had started right at this time at *Capidava*, as we shall see below; major building activities are though documented at *Halmyris* (dating of building phase 5), to a greater extent<sup>68</sup>.



**Fig. 13.** Marble head of an emperor. Aurelian(?) or Tetrarch(?). MNA L 632, from *Tomis*. National Museum of Antiquities/ Archive of the Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest).

Mentioned on several occasions by Roman to Byzantine itineraries and literary sources<sup>69</sup>, *Capidava* exposed its strategic importance by the authorities' constant involvement in the maintenance and repair of roads, port installation and fortification elements throughout the Roman period.

<sup>63</sup> SUCEVEANU 1977, 29-30; Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 34; BĂRBULESCU/BUZOIANU 2012, 50.

<sup>64</sup> Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 121.

<sup>65</sup> ISM IV 13.

<sup>66</sup> See complete discussion in ISM IV, 104-105.

<sup>67</sup> MĂRGINEANU CĂRSTOIU/APOSTOL 2016, especially 36, 77 = fig. 37, respectively 80.

<sup>68</sup> Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU *et alii* 2003, 98-99; Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 34, 122; ZAHARIADE/ALEXANDRESCU 2011, 24. See also recently MĂRGINEANU CĂRSTOIU/APOSTOL 2015, 59, 69: according to the latter, phase 3 of the west gate dated under emperors Aurelian/Probus, and the rebuilding brought fundamental changes in both layout and size; a similar approach was recorded for the northern gate at *Halmyris* (phase 5/ period C).

<sup>69</sup> *Capidava* in *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* (224, 3), *Calidava* on *Tabula Peutingeriana* (VIII, 3), *Cappidava* or *Capidapa* at the *Ravenna cosmographer* (179, 3 and 186, 15), *Capidava* in *Notitia Dignitatum* (Or., XXXIX, 13), *Καρίδαβα* in *Synecdemus* of Hierokles (437, 10) and later, at Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (*De thematibus*, 47, 15).

Systematic archaeological excavations conducted in the *castellum* as early as 1924, but also investigations within the large rural *territorium* controlled from the fort, revealed most valuable epigraphic records. Some of them are indeed helpful to clarify the relation between the successive building phases of the military enclosure and the associated key moments when building or repair works of the road system actually happened.

The tangible beginnings of the Roman *castellum* at *Capidava* are linked to the great building effort stemming from *bellum Dacicum Traiani*, when also dates the earliest milestone discovered in Dobrudja, at *Sacidava* (AD 103) (Pl. II). It doesn't actually mean that the *via militaris* was built under Trajan. In Britain, for instance, the earliest milestone to survive is from the reign of Hadrian.<sup>70</sup> After the completion of the defensive system and limes road at the time, inland roads construction and the maintenance or rebuilding of the road network of the province occurred in the subsequent stage. Thus, the oldest milestone from *territorium Capidavense*, ascribed to the rule of Hadrian, was recorded in Dorobanțu (and was most likely erected along the imperial road heading from *Marcianopolis* to *Noviodunum*).<sup>71</sup> Such an assumption might be surely valid, if the stone did not actually come from the coastline, first to Danichioi (Nicolae Bălcescu) and finally to the Turkish cemetery in Dorobanțu, as it was previously suggested.<sup>72</sup> Either way, the find may also be correlated with other two stone pillars indicating road-building activities under the same emperor, coming though from the seashore line.<sup>73</sup> The latter confirm that provincial authorities under Hadrian focused their attention on maintaining the coastal road as well (Pl. II), after having organised communication on inland routes, directly linking *Marcianopolis*, through *Zaldapa* and *Ulmetum*, with *Noviodunum*, to the north.<sup>74</sup>

For *territorium Capidavense* and its neighbouring territories of the major forts at *Axiopolis* and *Carsium* efforts much more visible and implicitly epigraphically recorded on larger scale emerge though after mid-2nd century AD. The first moment dates to the time of governor L. Iulius Statilius Severus, in AD 160 (Pl. II), documented by two milestone finds from *Seimenii Mari* and *Capidava*<sup>75</sup>. A subsequent repair

<sup>70</sup> A milestone kept in the British Museum and found at Llanfairfechan, along a road to Caernarfon from the fort at Caerhun (*Kanovium*), see RIB I 2265.

<sup>71</sup> CIL III 14464 is one other milestone from the reign of Hadrian (probably set up in AD 118) along this inner road was known for long at *Zaldapa* (Abrit, Bulgaria). It was reused/ reinscribed during the late 4th century (AD 383-392), see SSIB, 54, no. 80.

<sup>72</sup> See the comments in this respect, in CIL III 12516 and ISM V 5.

<sup>73</sup> ISM II 49 (15) = CIL III 7615 (*Tomis*). The second piece, found by Gr. Tocilescu in 1883 at Constanța (but without known findspot), raises supplementary questions related to the topographic location of *Tres Protomae*: ISM II 53 (19) = CIL III 7613. See also R. Vulpe, in DID II, 137, n. 83.

<sup>74</sup> PANAIT 2012, 136.

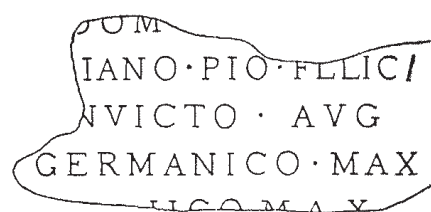
<sup>75</sup> Known parallels come from the Pontic littoral, more precisely from *Histria* and *Sinoe*, where two milestones from Antoninus Pius were recorded: ISM I 316 (*Histria*); ISM I 317 (*Sinoe*). On the other hand, for the reign of Marcus Aurelius circumstances are sensibly different. Three pillars are known in north Dobrudja, at *Dinogetia* (ISM V 256-258, among which the first two definitely came from this site); another piece found at Cheia, unless not *pierre errante*, was erected along an inland road between *Capidava* and *Histria* (?) (BĂRBULESCU/BUZOIANU/COVACEF 2008, no. 1, 169-171). No less than 8 *milliaria* (!) came from the road along the west-

stage, of even larger scale, happened around AD 200, when under the supervision of the governor C. Ovinus Tertullus, the road along the Danubian limes is repaired on the entire 36 miles section between *Axiopolis* and *Carsium* (Pl. III).

The epigraphic file of the 3rd century AD, comprising a few *milliaria* from the area discussed hereby, at *Capidava* and its environs, but especially at *Carsium*<sup>76</sup>, enabled us to recognize the key moments when provincial authority substantially intervened on the road network<sup>77</sup>.

Remained in posterity as a successful administrator, Aurelian would also direct his attention to this corner of the empire. The magnitude of the repairs of the road network in Moesia Inferior and above all of the *via militaris* along the river during his reign appears now in the proper light. Except for an isolate piece from *Tomis* (Fig. 14), which records the same concern for the coastal roads around the province capital,<sup>78</sup> the finds come all from the right bank of the Danube. The list includes almost symmetrically the recent find from *Capidava*, along with the two nearby milestones from *Topalu*, as well as a compact cluster from near *Sexaginta Prista*<sup>79</sup>, along the same strategic road. The latter represents so far the greatest assemblage of (4) milestones from Aurelian's reign time for the entire province (Pl. IV). The distance between the two concentration areas, over 200 km, remains though appreciable. Moreover, no historical sources can be associated to the latter road segment.

At least to date, one can recognize a compact distribution of stone pillars in the *Topalu - Capidava* area, so unique in the region and which may justly associate with epic moments during emperor Aurelian's rule. All this road reconstruction works or the aforementioned large scale building policy in forts and fortresses on the Lower Danube limes (*Halmyris* or *Durostorum*, *Dinogetia* or, possibly, *Capidava*), beside other important Greek towns (*Histria*,



**Fig. 14.** Milestone of Aurelian (*Tomis*).  
CIL III 12517 = ISM II 109 (75).

*Callatis*, possibly *Tropaeum Traiani*) and even the province capital, *Tomis*, must have been the direct result of the unprecedented large-scale barbarian attacks during the 260s.

*Capidava* is, undeniably, not only the most extensively investigated among these fortifications, but also the place where, on several occasions, the archaeological information turned out to be paradigmatic for this limes sector. To the rule of Aurelian and/or his successor, Probus (AD 276-282), may be ascribed the second building phase, or, to be more precisely, its commencement (Fig. 15). It all began with the reconstruction of the enclosure walls and of at least three towers identified so far. Those intermediary U-shaped towers developed here and elsewhere subsequent the Gothic destruction occurring sometime by mid-3rd century AD.<sup>80</sup> Based upon the study of the facings and the building material composing the curtain walls (*caementa* and specific mortar), Grigore Florescu long ago suggested a dating during the "the last three decades of the 3rd century AD"<sup>81</sup>.

The exhaustive excavations of the Late Roman Headquarters (*principia*) inside the fort at *Capidava* could possibly bring some help to this assumption.<sup>82</sup> Both the official building, and a large *horreum* next to the southern main gate and curtain wall H, must have been erected during the same major building phase and we have reasons to believe that it actually happened within the above period. Moreover, outside the Headquarters, specifically in its NE corner (Fig. 16.a-c), on a brick and mortar carefully layed pavement was found a coin dating back to the reign of Probus (276-282).<sup>83</sup> The elevation of the pavement is perfectly matching that of the (rectangular brick and mortar) floor inside the *principia* building. Presenting a coherent construction technique, both surely belonged to the same late 3rd century major architectural developments.

Greater precision is impossible to acquire for now and we may wonder whether large-scale operations, such as a *fundamentis* rebuilding of the fortresses on the *limes Scythicus* shouldn't be extended over larger time spans (possibly,

Pontic coastline. They make up in fact the largest cluster of milestone during the Principate for this communication route: see PANAITTE 2015, 594 (= fig. 1), 596.

<sup>76</sup> ISM V 97 (Maximinus Thrax and his son, Verus Maximus); ISM V 98 (Gordianus III); ISM V 99 (uncertain, 3rd century AD); ISM V 100 (Valerian and Gallienus). For ISM V 99, see the discussion resumed by BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1991, 126-132.

<sup>77</sup> Prior the reign of Aurelian, repair works of the roads were also recorded under Valerian and Gallienus, then under Claudius II: see ISM V, 100, at *Carsium* (Valerian and Gallienus). Three pieces are known for *Tomis*: ISM VI.2, 615-617; BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 148-151, no. 4; BĂRBULESCU/RĂDULESCU 1991, 132-141, nos. 3-4. South of *Tomis* were erected two other pieces, dating to Valerian and Gallienus, along the road *Odessos-Marcianopolis*, see BĂRBULESCU-MUNTEANU/RĂDULESCU 1980, 150, n. 26.

<sup>78</sup> CIL III 12517 = ISM II 109 (75).

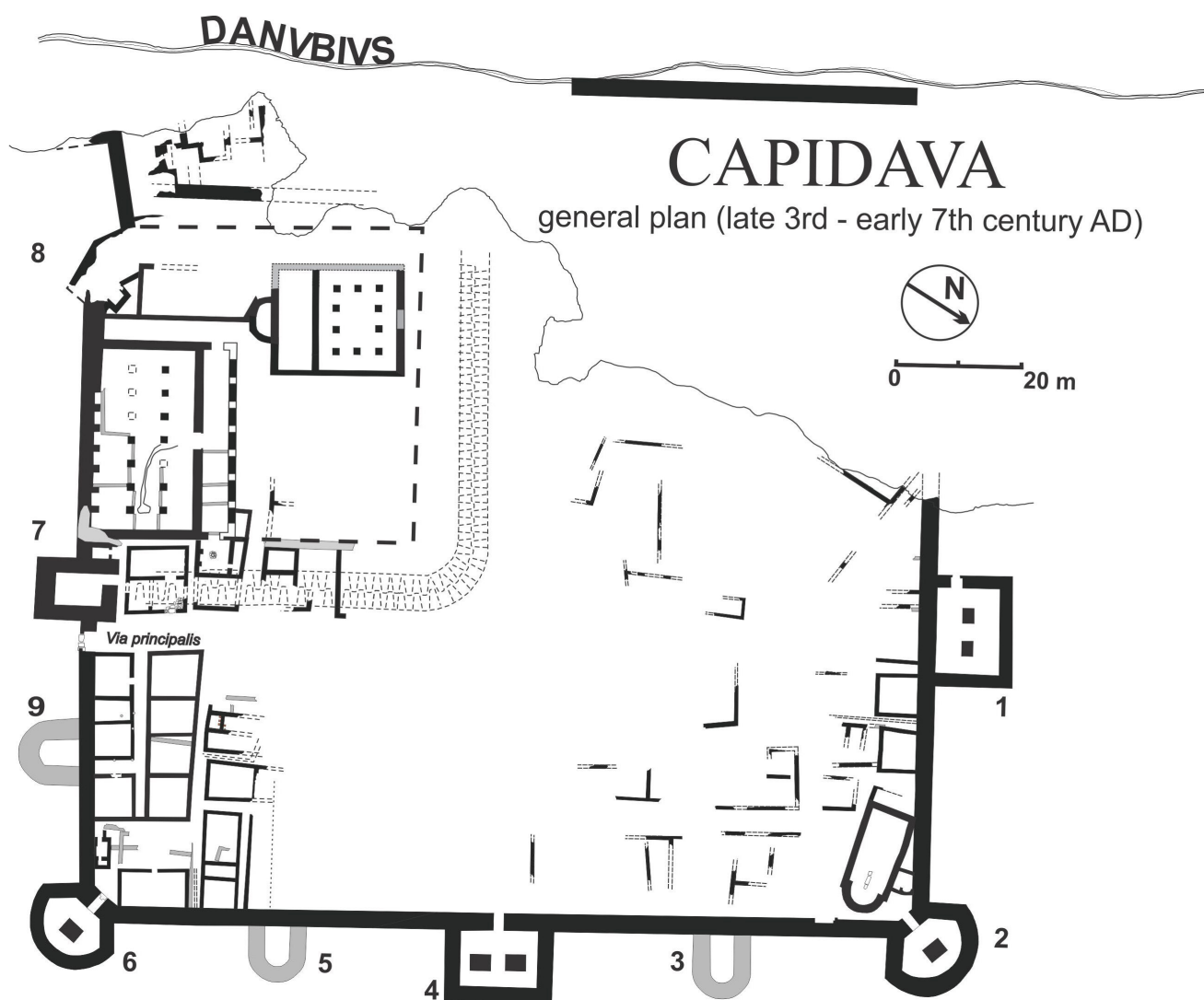
<sup>79</sup> CIL III 14460 (Dolapite, west of Ruse); CIL III 6238, 14559 (Marten, downstream the town, along the Danube bank), with suggested dating 274 AD. Two further pillars were discovered in the immediate neighbouring area of the modern town ("Donaustrasse - Raum") and should be also mentioned, even if the second certainly raises some dating problems due its state of conservation, see HOLLENSTEIN 1975, 36-37, nos 51-52. One should add that no 51 records a second provincial governor known under Aurelian, M. Aurelius Sebastianus, see PIR<sup>2</sup> A 1605; PLRE I 813; THOMASSON, *Laterculi*<sup>2</sup>, 20: 149. M. Aurelius Sebastianus is equally mentioned at *Nicopolis ad Istrum*, see also IGR I 591 (= 1432); STEIN, Legaten, 106-107; FITZ 1966, 38. See, also, latest comments on both M. Aurelius Sebastianus and Sallius Aristaenetus in ISM III, 96; PETOLESCU 2014, 299-302. Another governor of the province from the early reign of Aurelian remains at this stage anonymous, see GERHARDT/HARTMANN 2008, 1149, Moes. inf. 20 (CIL III 14460; PLRE I 1023 a. 114).

<sup>80</sup> Gr. Florescu, in *Capidava* I, 14; 63, 66-67, for phase II of the fort (curtain walls and towers 3 and 5, respectively); for the U-shaped tower 9, discovered in 2015, see PINTER/URDUZIA 2016.

<sup>81</sup> Gr. Florescu, in *Capidava* I, 14.

<sup>82</sup> OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU/DUCA 2014, 35-36. After the start of systematic excavations in 2013 in the 7th inner sector of the fort, five subsequent seasons followed in 2014 and in 2016-2019: OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU/DUCA 2015; OPRÎȘ/RAȚIU/DUCA 2017; RAȚIU/OPRÎȘ/POPESCU 2018; RAȚIU *et alii* 2019; RAȚIU *et alii* 2020.

<sup>83</sup> Courtesy of Al. Rațiu (National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest). The identification of the well preserved coin belonged to Mihai Dima (National Bank of Romania): Obv. IMP C M AVR PROBVS P F AVG, radiate and mantled bust left, holding eagle-tipped scepter. Rev. SO - LI INVICT - O / CM // XXIV. Sol in facing quadriga, right hand raised, holding globe and whip in the left hand.



**Fig. 15.** Capidava – general plan. Late 3rd – early 7th century AD. (enclosure walls and towers 3, 5, 9 were built in phase II, dated under Aurelian/Probus?).

even decades?). A two-phase reconstruction, with some foundations continued later, was inferred for the enclosure walls at *Tropaeum Traiani*<sup>84</sup>, similarly also for *Halmyris*<sup>85</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that phase II from *Capidava* belongs to a regional building programme, which most likely grouped more than a dozen Lower Danube and interior enclosure walls featuring U-shaped towers. Amongst, eight (it is also the case of *Capidava*, beside *Abrittus*, (*L*)*Ibida*, *Tropaeum Traiani*, *Iatrus*, *Troesmis*, possibly also *Noviodunum*, lastly *Halmyris*) are provided with U-shaped towers flanking a rectangular bastion (*phrourion*).<sup>86</sup> At this stage it seems

<sup>84</sup> See MĂRGINEANU CĂRSTOIU/APOSTOL 2016, 36-37, 80.

<sup>85</sup> Al. Suceveanu, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 122, 190. See also the description of phase (level) 5, by Al. Suceveanu, M. Zahariade, F. Topoleanu, *Stratigrafia* (IIIrd chapter), in SUCEVEANU et alii 2003, 33-34. The proposed dating of the authors was cca 270/275 – 295 AD.

<sup>86</sup> LANDER 1984, 217-223, who obviously could not include at that time *Halmyris* in his list (the first excavations started in 1981). For the most recent and accurate plan of the fort of *Halmyris*, see MĂRGINEANU CĂRSTOIU/APOSTOL 2015, 38, fig. 1 (more precisely the southern side of the fortification). See, also, MĂRGINEANU CĂRSTOIU/APOSTOL 2016, 34 (= fig. 1) for *Tropaeum Traiani*; ȚENTEȚA et alii 2019, 57-60 for *Noviodunum*; CARRIÉ/MOREAU 2015, for *Abrittus*. If compared to the synthesis of TORBATOV 2002, p. 318-337, the knowledge of the enclosure walls at *Zaldapa* (Krushari, Bulgaria) got better. The U-shaped towers are in

plausible that the prototype had been precisely the N side of the eastern fortress from *Troesmis*<sup>87</sup>, where legion *II Herculia* was accommodated, and the defensive formula applied for the Tetrarchic legion would have had directly inspired the builders of *Capidava* and *Halmyris*. In brief, both comparative study and available dating tip the scales at this time towards a Tetrarchic-Constantinian dating of the entire programme and this would basically complicate the association of building phase II at *Capidava* with Aurelian.

Both literary sources and inscriptions were strongly encomiastic towards the emperor, honouring him throughout the empire. At Rome and in the provinces, epigraphically preserved honorific epithets convey the gratitude of the inhabitants. The latter regain their confidence on seeing

the majority there. New archaeological investigations brought an accurate plan, see MOREAU/ATANASOV/BEAUDRY 2020, 40, fig. 2c. Nevertheless, an alternance with bastions has yet to be substantiated. Finally, one should record other new U-shaped towers in the Lower Moesian area, on the occasion of excavations at *Transmarisca* (Tutrakan) and Kovachevsko Kale, see VAGALINSKI/PETKOV 2006; АЛЕКСАНДРОВ 2017, especially 56-57, 67 (= Figs. 1-3, 21).

<sup>87</sup> ALEXANDRESCU/GUGL/KAINRATH 2016, 126, Abb. 74 (and the complete section 6.3: *Auswertung der Baudry-Unterrlagen*, signed by Cr.-G. Alexandrescu and C. Gugl, 118-127).



the tangible results of the “revival”<sup>88</sup>: *Restitutor Patriae*<sup>89</sup> or *Conservator Orbis*<sup>90</sup>, in the publicly displayed monumental dedications, point to the providential man, who brought public relief. The emperor is designated in praising terms on inscriptions, with epithets like *Magnus et invictus*,<sup>91</sup> *Victoriosissimus*<sup>92</sup>. He was awarded the title *Restitutor Orbis* in AD 272, after that of *Restitutor Orientis*<sup>93</sup> – both previously assumed by Valerian and Gallienus. The same rhetoric of success is to be found on coins (with, again, the formula *Restitutor Orbis*, that seems a novelty in the field); the effigy of the victorious emperor is further accompanied by honorific epithets as *Restitutor Exerciti*, *Restitutor Gentis* or *Restitutor Saeculi*<sup>94</sup>. After the defeat of Tetricus, the emperor is quickly hailed as *Restitutor Galliarum* and *Restitutor libertatis* on local inscriptions, and also *Pacator et Restitutor Orbis*, rhetoric promptly assumed on coin issues in AD 274<sup>95</sup>. Lastly, known inscriptions from North Africa – and that is an absolute innovation – honour him with the title *Pacatissimus Imperator*<sup>96</sup>.

Among the *cognomina victoriarum* of interest here is precisely that of *Carpicus Maximus*, resulted from the emperor’s war against the Carpi<sup>97</sup>. This war was fought during AD 272, if not in 273 (according to *Vita Aureliani*, 30, 4, the imperial biography from *Historia Augusta*)<sup>98</sup>, accompanied by the colonisation within the empire of the survivors (Amm.Marc., XXVII, 5, 5). We know also the emperor’s ironic reaction at the news of being awarded the title *Carpicus Maximus* from the anecdotic of his pretended biographer from *Historia Augusta* – Flavius Vopiscus<sup>99</sup>. This is undoubtedly a reflection of the smaller scale of the conflict, unless even of the significance that the emperor himself granted it, in the succession of his victories. In fact, these events occur upon the return from the East, after the defeat of Zenobia! Regardless, he defeats the Carpi invaders *inter Carsium et Sucidavam*, as we find out from the inscription honouring him at *Durostorum* (CIL III 12456). The distance between the two fortifications on the right bank of the river indicated by the inscription is a little less than 100 km along the Danube. Besides, the very wording may suggest a first (major?) clash, subsequently followed by the enemy’s elimination through successive battles, of descending scale<sup>100</sup>. Where might have taken place the most important of the clashes between the Roman army and the Barbarians? Based on the examination of the epigraphic information treated here and the archaeological data compiled for almost one century of archaeological research

at Capidava, the possibility that these events had taken place within the limit of the 18.000 feet between *Capidava* and *Carsium* could be a logical result. A latter yet precious indication for possibly mapping some of those dramatic clashes may be that offered by Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res gestae*, XXVIII, 5, 5), one century after the events. In AD 368, emperor Valens stopped near a village of those barbarians colonised after the battles (*vicus Carporum* – commonly identified at Ghindărești, Constanța county), deferred in his pursuit of the Goths, past the Danube, through the Great Wallachian Plain, by floods.<sup>101</sup> One should not lose sight of the numismatic evidence available. The latter come from the southern part from Dobrudja. Two hoards (Onogur I and Zafirovo) with last coins dated 268/270 and 271-272 were concealed in the area next to *Tropaeum Traiani* and *Zaldapa*, and west of *Durostorum*, respectively.<sup>102</sup> At least the Zafirovo hoard, assumedly composed of cca 500 antoniniani, was definitely a result of unnamed dramatic events from the reign of Aurelian.

Numerous *milliaria* were set up in the area also after Aurelian’s battles against the Carpi. Respective specimens are chronologically ascribed to the Tetrarchy and then to the reign of Constantine the Great. From the nearby area, beside the piece from *Capidava*, we mention several pieces discovered at *Carsium*; it is also the milestone from Dorobanțu, discussed above, that bears an inscription precisely attesting a late reuse of the piece<sup>103</sup>.

We should note, by the end of the inquiry, precisely the richness of the available epigraphic material at our disposal. A simple comparison between provinces is expressive enough: this class of epigraphic evidence in Dacia counts only 8 such stone pillars.<sup>104</sup> A ninth milestone is Constantinian, namely from a time when past the Danube a new bridge was built (in AD 328) and the road repaired from *Sucidava* to *Romula*, in the north-Danubian territory controlled by the Empire.<sup>105</sup>

*Last, but not least*, Ioan Piso’s question on the inexplicable paucity of milestones in more than one and a half century of provincial life in Dacia remains legitimate, in the pursuit of a much-awaited answer.<sup>106</sup> At a time when

<sup>88</sup> WATSON 1999, 174.

<sup>89</sup> At *Callatis*, in *Moesia Inferior*, CIL III 7586 = ISM III 96.

<sup>90</sup> In Italy, Regio X, at *Brixia*/Brescia, CIL V 4319.

<sup>91</sup> In Rome (CIL VI 1116); on a milestone from *Gallia* (CIL XIII 8997).

<sup>92</sup> CIL XI 3878 (Italy). The list is long enough, with some of the inscriptions found in Africa, see WATSON 1999, 174, n. 54.

<sup>93</sup> WATSON 1999, 174, n. 55-56.

<sup>94</sup> WATSON 1999, 174, n. 58.

<sup>95</sup> WATSON 1999, 174; KIENAST/ECK/HEIL 2017, 226.

<sup>96</sup> WATSON 1999, 174, n. 62.

<sup>97</sup> For the epithets conferred to Aurelian, subsequent to victorious battles fought by the emperor, see CIZEK 1994, 113, 233-234; WATSON 1999, 175.

<sup>98</sup> KIENAST/ECK/HEIL 2017, 225-226 (*Carpicus Maximus* in 273).

<sup>99</sup> *Vita Aureliani*, 30, 4: *Superest, patres conscripti, ut me etiam Carpiculum vocetis* (“It now only remains for you, Conscript Fathers, to call me *Carpisculum* also” – for it is well known that *carpisculum* is a kind of boot....).

<sup>100</sup> R. Vulpe, in DID II, 274.

<sup>101</sup> Al. Barnea, in SUCEVEANU/BARNEA 1991, 51, 81, 110, 164, 166. Along the Danube, the distance between *Carsium* and Ghindărești is of cca 10 km.

<sup>102</sup> CUSTUREA/TALMAȚCHI 2011, 62, 293-294 (Onogur I, no 105); 62, 384-385 (Zafirovo, no 177).

<sup>103</sup> This topic exceeds by scale the theme herein. We contend ourselves to mention the most recent bibliography on late 3rd – 4th century milestones from the limes (Rasova, *Capidava*, *Carsium*, *Arrubium*, *Dinogetia*), together with those set on inland roads: see BĂRBULESCU/BUZOIANU/COVACEF 2008, especially 175, n. 40-44; BĂRBULESCU/CÎTEIA/WISOȘENSCHI 2009; PANAITE/ALEXANDRESCU 2009, who collect in their gazetteer no less than 22 pieces. See, slightly later, also PANAITE 2012, 136; PANAITE/MIU 2016; OPRIȘ 2021.

<sup>104</sup> PISO 2011. I want to express my gratitude to Ioan Piso, who generously shared his manuscript, prior the issue in CIL XVII, *Miliaria Imperii Romani* (*Les bornes milliaires de Dacie*), forthcoming. It deals with all the nine milestones known to date from the north of the Danube for the period of the 2nd - 4th century AD. Three come from *Dacia Porolissensis*: Aiton, CIL III 1627; Mera – PISO 2011, 321-323, no 1, fig. 1-2 = AE 2011, 1075, a-b; Almașu Mare, CIL III 8060 = AE 2011, 1076. Other two stone pillars were found within the limits of *Dacia Apulensis*: Micia, CIL III 8061 = IDR III/3, 50 = AE 2011, 1081; Lăpușnicel – PISO 2011, 326-328, no 4, fig. 5-6. Finally, three milestones were found in *Dacia Malvensis*, on the Olt river line: Băbiciu de Sus, CIL III 13802 = IDR II 493; Gostavățu, CIL III 14216, 18 = IDR II 494; *Praetorium* (Copăceni), CIL III 14216, 19 = IDR II 589.

<sup>105</sup> IGLR 278; most recently see PISO 2011, 328-329, n° 5, fig. 7-8.

<sup>106</sup> PISO 2011, p. 321.





**Fig. 16.** a-c. a. Late Roman headquarters (*principia*), built in late 3rd – early 4th century AD, vertical aerial photo (drone); b. Bronze coin issued by Probus (276-282), obverse/reverse; c. Brick pavement and storage pits outside the official building, next to its northern corner, with find spot of the Probus' coin (photos by D. Costea, M. Dima, Al. Rațiu).

*Dacia, quae a Traiano ultra Danubium fuerat adiecta, amissa est* (Eutropius, IX, 8, 2), the strategic defensive programme in the riparian provinces, re-launched with much vigour by the *Restitutor Orbis* on the right bank, looks rather clear.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> For the literary and archaeological sources concerning the abandonment

of *Dacia*, see especially RUSCU 1998; HÜGEL 2003, PETOLESCU 2010, 278-292. In spite of the official abandonment, archaeological evidence documenting the strategic strongholds on the left bank of the river (such as *Drobeta*, or *Sucidava*) in the time of Aurelian is available, see BONDOC 2009, 30 (and n. 30), 62-64, 96, with bibliography.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My very special thanks go to Florian Matei-Popescu (Bucharest) for his valuable epigraphic remarks and to Alina Rațiu (Bucharest) for the final proofreading. This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, CNCS - UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-0383, within PNCID III.

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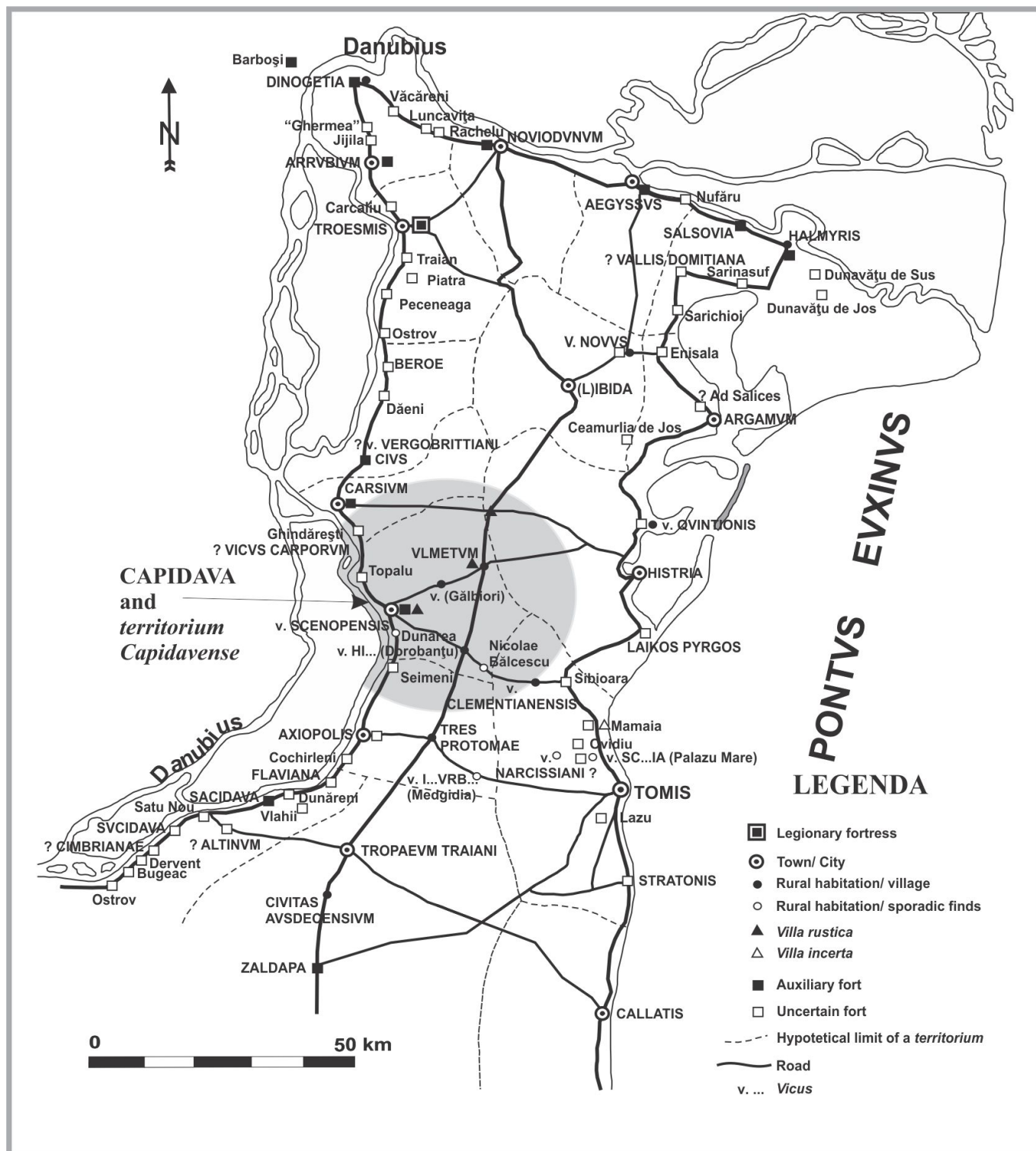
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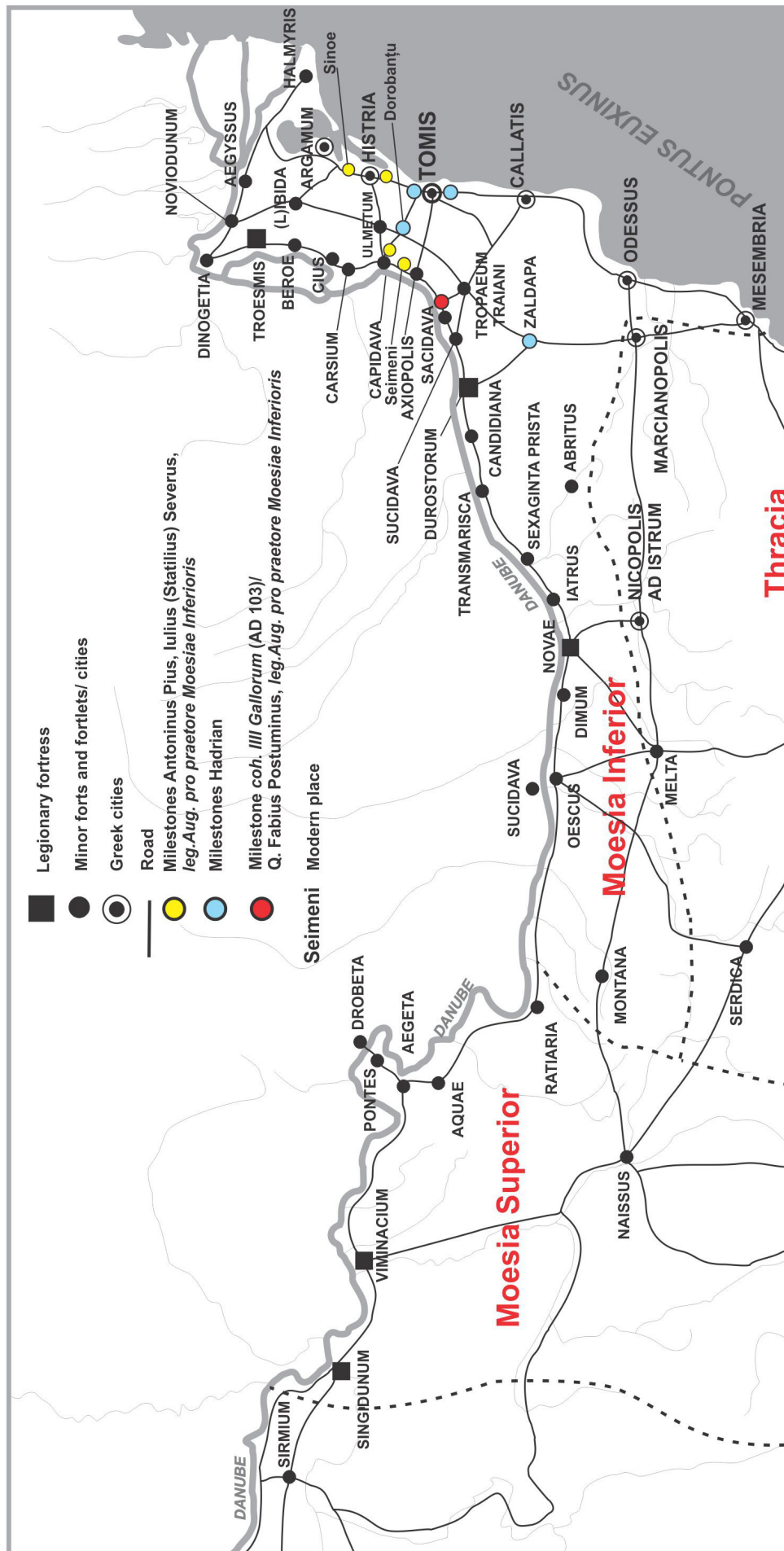
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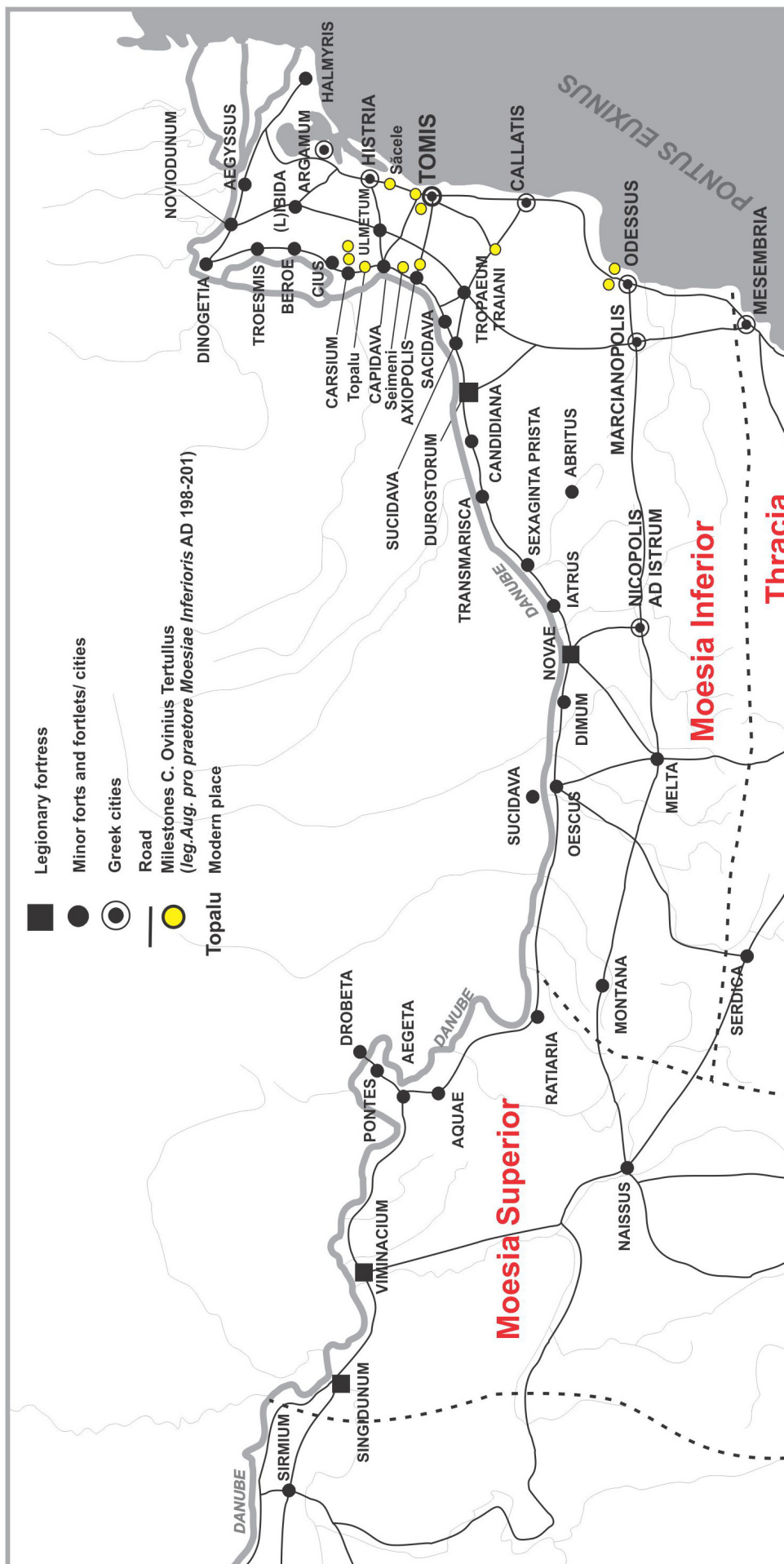


Pl. I. Roads in Roman Dobrudja (2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD). I.C. Opreș.



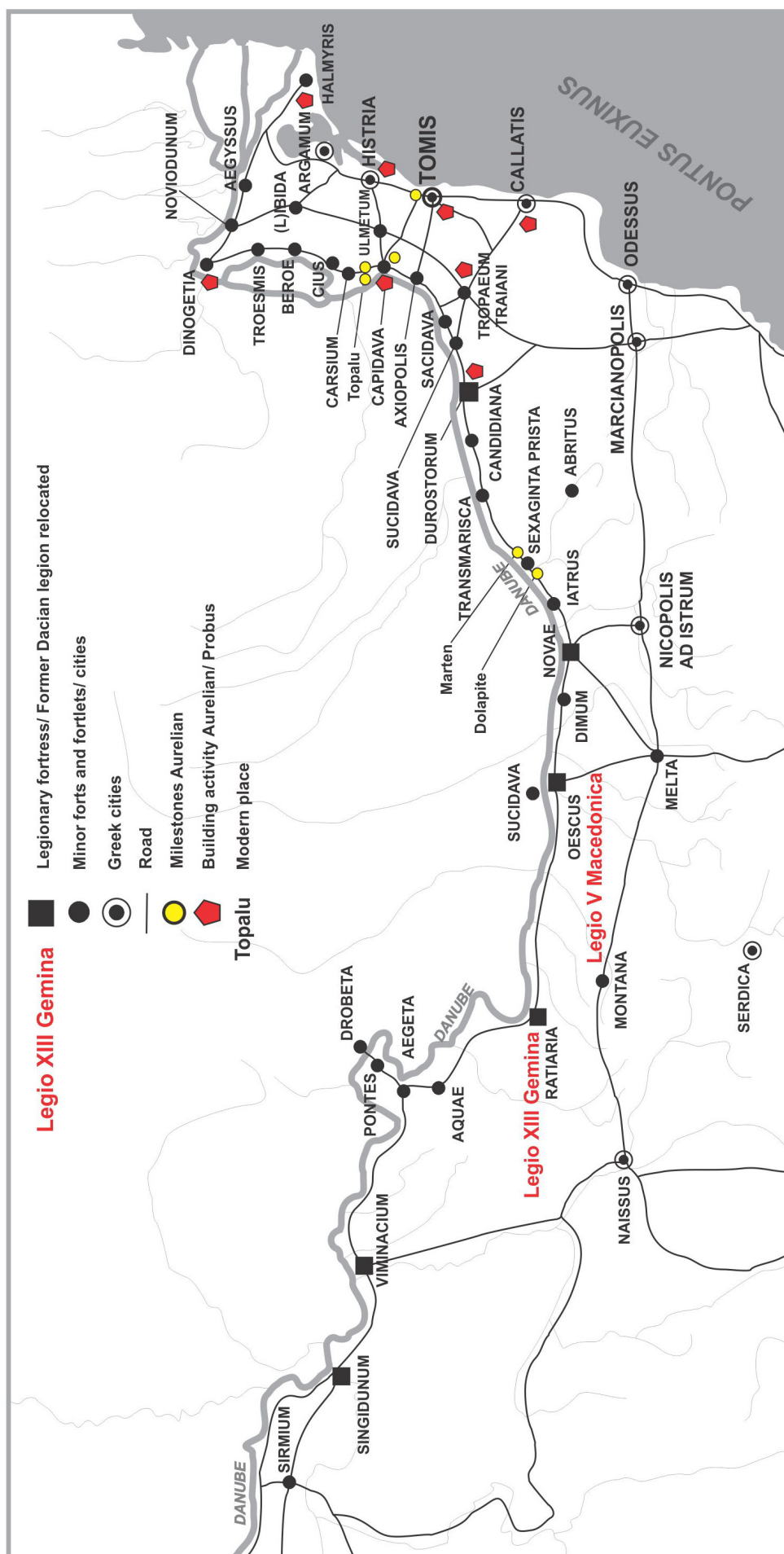
**Pl. II.** The Lower Danube and the Roman Frontier Provinces. Milestones of Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. I.C. Opris.





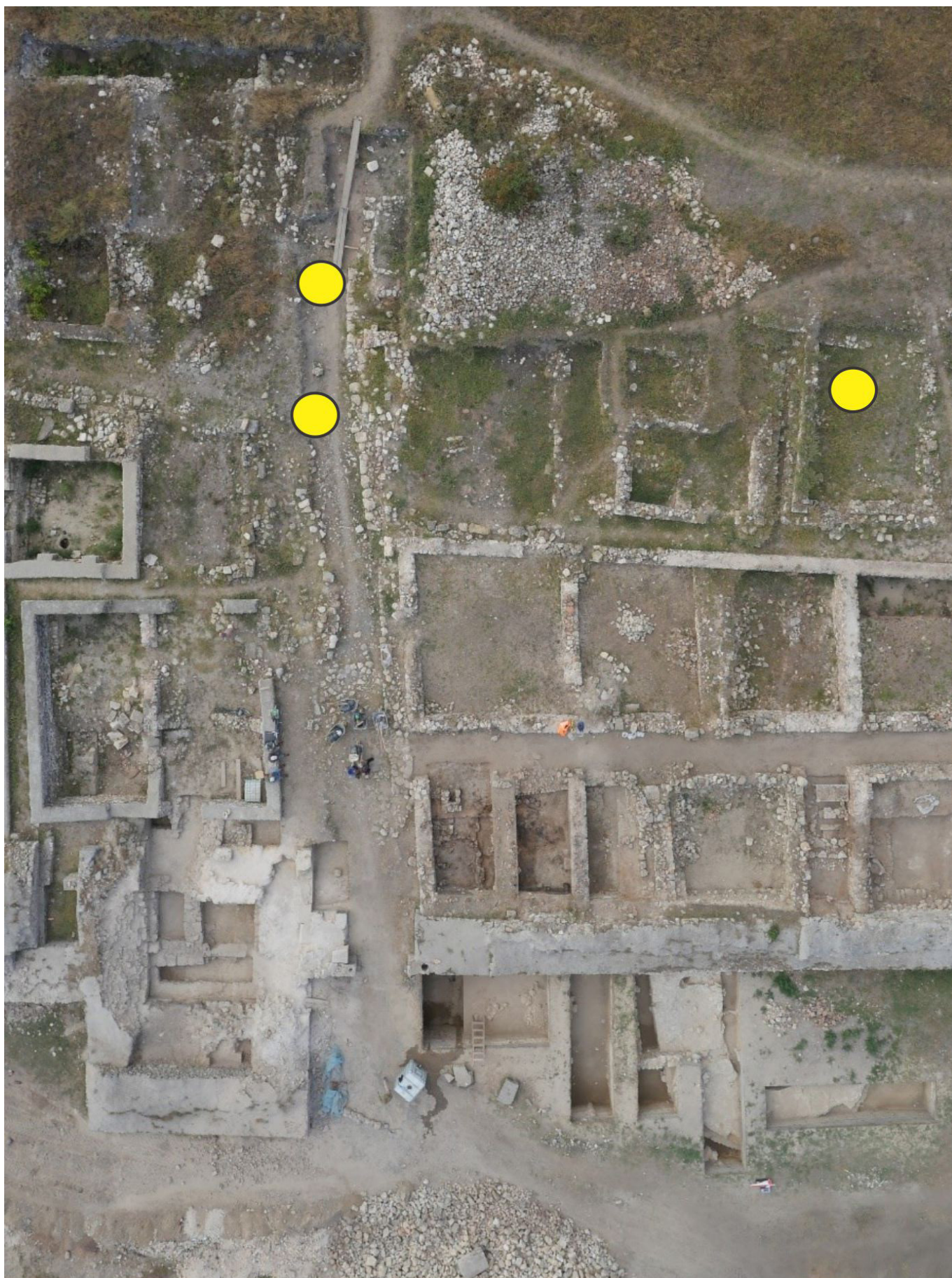
**Pl. III.** The Lower Danube and the Roman Frontier Provinces. Milestones of C. Ovinus Tertullus, *leg. Aug. pr. praetore Moesiae Inferioris* (AD 198-201). I.C. Opris.





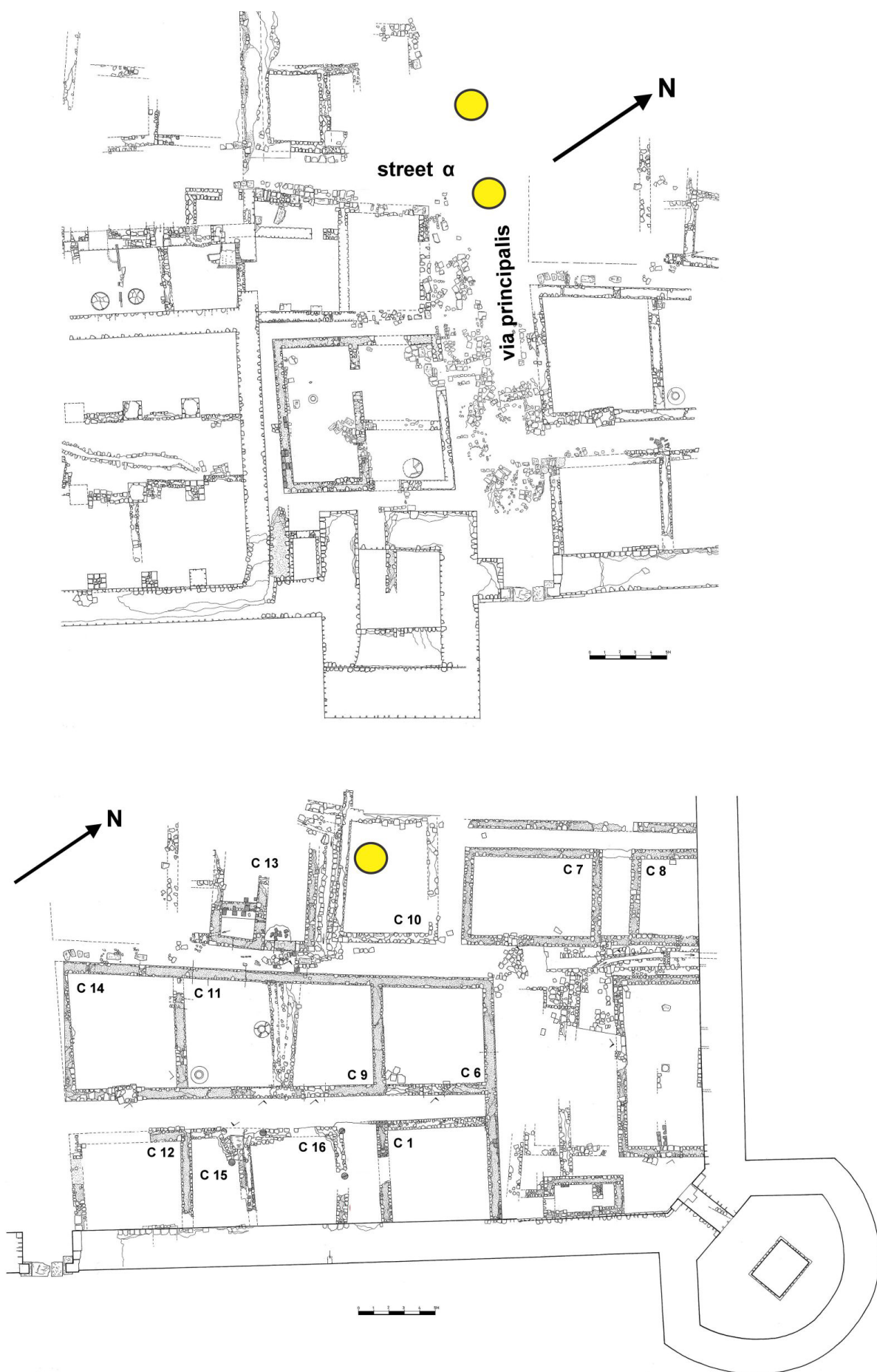
**P1. IV.** The Lower Danube and the Roman Frontier Provinces. Milestones of Aurelian/ major constructive activity under Aurelian and Probus. I.C. Opreș.





**Pl. V.** *Capidava*. Orthophoto (Dan Costea, 2015). Milestones found on *via principalis* and in the Eastern sector.





**Pl. VI.1-2.** *Capidava*. Milestones on the Main Street and in the Eastern Sector (site plans by Arch. A. Sion).