

Book Reviews

Sorin Nemeti, Irina Nemeti (ed.), *Studii asupra granițelor romane din Dacia. Castrul legionar de la Potaissa. I. Centuriae din praetentura sinistra*. Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 279 p.

The monographic studies regarding the military installations of Dacia and their related issues have registered a severe decline in the past two decades, the main problem being, as F. Marcu remarked in the *Foreword* of the reviewed study, the lack of a coherent research direction.

The legionary fort of Potaissa/Turda is one of the best examples from Romania/Roman Dacia of a not only continuously researched archaeological objective in the past 50 years, but, more importantly, of an archaeological site which, through successive research teams, assured a constant publishing of monographs and several associated studies. Moreover, they focused on various aspects of the military *forma mentis* of the soldiers of the *legio V Macedonica*, translated in archaeological areas, from architecture to daily life.

The book presented in these pages belongs to the area of monographs, being the last but not least piece of work regarding the legionary fort of Potaissa, its focal point being an archaeological complex of military barracks-*centuriae*, from *praetentura sinistra*, investigated between 2012-2016 by a complex team of archaeologists led by Sorin Nemeti (Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca). The book was published under the auspices of the National Limes Commission, being part of a larger series of studies concerning the Roman frontiers of Dacia.

We want to underscore here that the older theory postulating the fact that the legionary fort of Potaissa is located in the vicinity of the frontier area is more and more confirmed after the large-scale field survey that took place in this area, within the frame of the *Limes-Frontier of the Roman Empire in Romania* National Project.

The book is split into several chapters covering all the archaeological aspects of the researched *centuriae* complex, from the technical data of the excavations to small finds and daily life of the soldiers reflected in the artefacts. The first chapter (by Sorin Nemeti) explains the excavation technique applied in order to achieve maximum of information. Thus, the excavation started in 2012 with a test trench of 234 x 1.5 m, the rest of the excavation being subsequently continued in order to uncover the rest of the *contubernia*. To summarize the information, the excavated area

consists of: S01 (234 x 1.5 m) C01 (10 x 4 m.), C02 (7 x 2 m.)/2012, S01 (15 x 3 m.), S02 (15 x 1 m.), S03-S06 (15 x 3 m.)/2013, S01 (15 x 3 m.), S02 (7 x 3 m.), S03 (10 x 3 m.), S04 (10 x 3 m.), S05 (15 x 3 m.), S06 (10 x 3 m.), S07 (10 x 3 m.), S08 (10 x 3 m.), S09 (6 x 3 m.), S10 (15 x 2 m.), S11 (15 x 3 m.), S12 (15 x 3 m.)/2014, S01 (15 x 3 m.), C01 (5.3 x 3.3 m.), S02 (11.5 x 3.5 m.), S03 (8 x 4 m.), S04 (8 x 4 m.)/2015 and S01 (15 x 3 m.), S02 (15 x 3 m.), S03 (9.2 x 3 m.), S04 (15 x 3 m.), S05 (6.5 x 2 m.)/2016, totalizing 0.14 ha, an equal of 0.6% of the total area of the legionary fort. For the relatively simple stratigraphy of the *centuriae* complex, a MoLA single context sheet for the archaeological features, a leveler and a total station for the contextual recording of the small finds were employed. The archaeological situation is further described in the chapter, both the 6 barracks and the related *contubernia* and the subsequent traces of late antique, medieval and modern interventions and destructions being detailed.

In the second chapter (by Dragoş Blaga), the analysis focuses on the architecture of the *centuriae*. The raw material seems to be local, Sănduleşti chalk, wood and clay for the walls and for the roof, and of course (a huge quantity!) of *tegulae* and *imbrices* of military provenience. As for the sculptural elements, there were identified several plinths, column bases and pillars, remains of the *centuriae* porticoes. Further, the author investigates the planimetry of the excavated structures, (the walls, the portico and the *contubernia*), calculating also the planimetric ratio of the chambers, in meters and *pedes*. It is clear from the text that we deal here with a standardized military structure built with local raw materials and obvious ad-hoc adaptation observed in the excavations. The chapter ends with a catalogue of the architectural elements (17).

The third chapter (by Mariana Andone-Rotaru – coins, Irina Nemeti – adornments, clothing accessories, medical instruments, sewing needles, iron objects and votive monuments, Florin Fodorean – lead and bronze small finds, Sorin Nemeti – iron small finds and military equipment, *tegulae* and *lucernae*, Luciana Nedelea – pottery, Fabian István – glass and Diana Bindea – archaeozoological analyses) is an exhaustive catalogue and analysis of all the finds identified within the barracks and constitutes the core of the study. The importance of this chapter is that the archaeological finds are published within their archaeological context, in an extensive way.

The coinage within the barracks' area ranges from Titus (79-80 AD) to Maximinus Thrax (235-236 AD). From the statistics we see that most of the coins are minted during the reign of Hadrian with a constant decline until Commodus and Crispina, an increase in the reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla and, after Severus Alexander, a sudden decrease

based on the economic crisis which intervenes after the fall of the Severan dynasty.

24 small finds are basically adornments and clothing accessories (as a small finds type). There were found 4 rings, one of them decorated with Leda and the swan, beads, hairpins, and brooches. For the brooches, the chronology indicates a general use starting with the second half of the second century. Some of the finds, the beads identified in the centurion's chamber and the hairpins could indicate a feminine presence within the barracks (a phenomenon encountered in many other cases within legionary and auxiliary forts). Daily care and medical care are also represented in the barracks by mirrors and medical instruments, as well as by utility objects: sewing needles, keys, furniture accessories, *tesserae*, hinges, hooks or iron nails, which altogether shed light on the military daily life and on the objects used by the soldiers in their daily activities in the barracks. The best represented category of artefacts is (normal situation in this case) the weapons, the military equipment and the harness parts (altogether 60 pieces), with clear analogies in the rest of the province. The chronology of the finds is, as we expected, overlaying the chronological span of the barracks.

The pottery section is well documented, Luciana Nedelea being a top researcher of these aspects. The batch of pottery consists of 1621 products, analyzed using the typology, the functionality and, where was possible, the chronology criteria. The types are split into two major categories: fine pottery (*terra sigillata* and local fine pottery) and pottery for common use (*vasa escaria*, *vasa potatoria*, *vasa conquinatoria*, storing and transporting vessels, *foculi* and *turibula*.)

The percentages indicate that 71% of the batch is composed of common-use pottery, whilst 29% is represented by fine pottery. The typology of the imported *terra sigillata* is best represented by the *Dragendorff* 37 type (bowls) followed immediately by the types *Dragendorff* 33 and 34. The percentage distribution of the provenance of the fine pottery is 30% from Rheinzabern, the rest of 70% being Pontic *sigillata*. The functionality criteria indicate that 78% of the *terra sigillata* (local and imported) belongs to the *vasa escaria* type (eating and drinking vessels).

The local *terra sigillata* is best represented in the barracks by *Dragendorff* 44 type. The percentage analysis of the common pottery indicates that 34% of the batch is represented by storing and transporting vessels, 22% by *foculi* and *turibula*, 21% by *vasa conquinatoria*, 16% by *vasa potatoria* and only 7% by *vasa escaria*, these aspects showing exactly the cooking and drinking habits of the soldiers. Lighting the *contubernia* was an important matter for the roman *milites*. As D. Petruț, M. Gui and H. Trâncă

have recently demonstrated, 4 or more *lucernae* were needed for a good illumination of a *contubernium*.¹ This fact explains perfectly the presence of the 45 examples of *lucernae* found in this excavation.

Further, the glass is analyzed by Fabian István who concentrated his study on the 82 glass fragments identified within the *contubernia*. Unfortunately, he only describes the types using no pie charts: glass, tray, bottle, *unguentaria*, cups and bowls. As I mentioned above, there was a huge quantity of *tegulae*, most of them stamped. Sorin Nemeti established that there were 44 different *signacula* types of *LVM*, none of them belonging to any other troops. The typology of the stamps contains 6 types with variations and distinct chronologies. As the author remarked in the study, the epithets *pia*, *pia fidelis* and *pia constans* did not appear before the Severan reign. They occurred later, together with the Imperial epithets *Antoniniana*, *Severiana* or *Gordiana* (attested until the reign of Gallienus). Among the sculptural monuments, an extraordinary find that caught our attention is the altar found in the portico area of a *centuria*, erected probably by the soldiers of that particular *centuria*:

Genio
Centur(iae)

Finally, the last part of the study is focused on the animal consumption pattern, by Diana Bindea, who analyzed the archaeozoologic samples, concluding that the percentage of the animal species consumed by the soldiers is dominated by *sus scrofa domesticus*, the domestic pig, followed by *bos taurus* (cattle), *ovis aries/capra hircus* (sheep and goats), the results being compared with the situation of other forts like Românași, Bologa or Brâncovenesti.

The volume has a rich and high-quality illustration at the end, with photos of archaeological features, aerial photos of the archaeological objectives, general and detailed archaeological plans, 3D photogrammetry and of course photos and drawings of the finds.

At the end of these presentation we can conclude that this monograph is a welcome study in the area of military daily life, being a step further in understanding the ordinary routine of the *milites caligati* of the *legio V Macedonica* near the frontier area. It is a high-quality work, accomplished by skilled archaeologists, and is mostly sure that it will remain a must-read.

My observations are not in any way related to the content of the study but to the methodology used in the field work. Due to the fact that we deal here with a huge surface of research (the legionary fort and the

¹ Petruț *et al.* 2014.

canabae legionis), in my opinion the most suitable and fast way to acquire a comprehensive overview of the ancient remains (military and civil) is to apply a series of non-invasive methods. First of all, a Digital Surface Model of the archaeological complex (drone, topo field survey or LiDAR) is needed, also for the future excavations. Then, a large-scale geophysical survey (ERT, geo radar or magnetometry) to reveal the complete planimetry of the fort and the civil settlement, in order to focus the future excavation in key points, with highly precision.

References

- Petruț *et al.* 2014 D. Petruț, M. Gui, H. Trâncă, *Lighting Roman Military Barracks. An Interdisciplinary Approach Based on Evidence from Dacia*, *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 18, 2014, 3, 65-92.

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Koenraad Verboven, Christian Laes (eds.), *Work, Labour, and Professions in the Roman World*, Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2016, 353 p., ISBN 9789004331655, Hardback.

The present volume is part of the series *Impact of Empire: Roman Empire, c. 200 BC – AD 476*, being the second book resulted from the research programme *Factors of Production in the Roman World*. More precisely, it represents the proceedings of a conference bearing the same name, which was held between the 30th of May and the 1st of June 2013, in Ghent. The central focus is, as the title points out, the role played by the human resources in the Roman economy, and the sections of the conference were built accordingly, around four main topics: a) labour relations (the introduction and the following five articles), b) organization, specialization, skills and learning (articles 7 and 12), c) professional organizations (articles 9-11), and d) identities and ideologies (articles 8 and 13); this structure having been changed, in some aspects, in the printed version.

Tackling the subject through a variety of sub-topics, the volume is built around a „neo-institutionalist” framework (VII), which is understood

as a dynamic between the institutions as structural forces inside society, and the characteristic values of the society; the main goal being the assessment of the „driving forces of the development of Roman economic performance“.

The first article, by Koenraad Verboven and Christian Laes¹, is conceived as an introduction, contextualizing and setting the ground from a conceptual and terminological point of view. Its importance is given by the fact that it interlinks in a coherent and cohesive manner the papers, it explains the corresponding ancient and modern terminology, and it familiarizes the reader with biased ancient literary sources, as well as with the labour statuses which existed in the Roman times (p. 13: free independent and wage labour, slave labour, semi-dependent labour, debt-bondage, *corvée* labour, convict labour, military involvement). Not only the editors, but also the authors support the historiographical trend which developed in the last decades, which affirms the predominance of free workers, and not of slave workers. Lastly, the editors introduce key economic models, and concepts, from Moses Finley and up to New Institutional Economics.

Following the introduction, the next two papers examine the issue of semi-dependent labour, one focusing on the Roman world in general, and the other on Asia Minor in particular. Correspondingly, Arjan Zuiderhoek² brings the example of the labour market from Asia Minor, connecting the variety of labour statuses and the institutions, in order to point to the inexistence of a unified labour market in the local and wider Roman world. Cameron Hawkins³ focused on the artisanal firms, underlining the fact that inside them the labour of slaves and free men (both skilled and unskilled) was used, but due to the characteristics of the labour market, as well as to the transactional costs involved, and the coercion at hand, slave workers were preferred, these being trained by the artisans.

Next, a series of three articles bring to our attention wage labour, correlating it with the dependent and coerced labour. Seth G. Bernard⁴ brings as an example the building industry, where a variety of labour forces were in use (from slave labour to unskilled casual labour, forced labour, or contractual labour), all complementing each other, proving

¹ *Work, Labour, Professions. What's in a Name* (p. 1-19).

² *Sorting Out Labour in the Roman Provinces: Some Reflections on Labour and Institutions in Asia Minor* (p. 20-35).

³ *Contracts, Coercion, and the Boundaries of the Roman Artisanal Firm* (p. 36-61).

⁴ *Workers in the Roman Imperial Building Industry* (p. 62-86).

therefore the fact that the juridical status of the workers was not an issue. Claire Holleran⁵ shows that at least in Rome, despite the grain distributions and the labour of slaves, free men were an active component of the labour market. All these juridical categories could find out about work opportunities through „advertisement, congregation, networks, and clientelism” (p. 92). Next, starting with the analysis of Diocletian’s Prices Edict, Miriam J. Groen-Vallinga, and Laurens E. Tacoma⁶ ask „how labour is conceptualized” (p. 105) in it, and support the idea according to which the segmentation of the labour market was given by skills, and not by juridical status, which led to the „adaptive family economy” (p. 107, p. 119), respectively to the involvement of women and children in the work flow, and to the complementarity of the labour provided by slaves and free workers.

The issue of material working conditions is also touched upon, and this through the lenses of the relations which were developed between the workers. As such, Elizabeth A. Murphy⁷ combined archaeological data interpretation with sociological analysis, in order to show the relational entanglement of the workers from two pottery workshops (La Graufesenque, Gaul and Scoppieto, Italy), and the importance of the workshops as social units, which, according to the author, is best explained through the concept of „workgroups”. Overall attention is drawn to the fact that the organization of labour is directly proportionate with the social organization of these „workgroups”. Miko Flohr⁸ addresses the issue of occupational social identity, as influenced by the space of the workplace (p. 149-150: represented by the *taberna*, medium-sized domestic workshops, and large-scale production halls), coming to the conclusion that open-spaced workplaces, like the *tabernae*, were more likely to enhance occupational identity than domestic workshops and work halls, and this based on the interaction with the professional network of the workers (p. 150-151: the network comprising the work group itself, the clients and customers, the social superiors, and the outside urban community).

A different approach is taken by Koenraad Verboven,⁹ Jinyu Liu¹⁰ and Sarah Bond¹¹, who take into consideration the professional associations

⁵ *Getting a Job: Finding Work in the City of Rome* (p. 87-103).

⁶ *The Value of Labour: Diocletian’s Prices Edict* (p. 104-132).

⁷ *Roman Workers and Their Workplaces: Some Archaeological Thoughts on the Organization of Workshop Labour in Ceramic Production* (p. 133-146).

⁸ *Constructing Occupational Identities in the Roman World* (p. 147-172).

⁹ *Guilds and the Organisation of Urban Populations During the Principate* (p. 173-202).

¹⁰ *Group Membership, Trust Networks, and Social Capital: A Critical Analysis* (p. 203-226).

¹¹ *Currency and Control: Mint Workers in the Later Roman Empire* (p. 227-245).

of the Roman world and their part in the economy. On the one hand, Koenraad Verboven maintains the important role of some professional associations in structuring the urban populations and in assuming a secondary position in public life through their professional activity, which was often recognized and established by the imperial authorities. On the other hand, Jinyu Liu suggests that although the advantages of becoming a member of an association were real, and in some cases, they brought significant prestige and economic benefits, forming an association could bring along also „negative” outcomes, such as exclusion and lack of development of trust networks or social capital. Lastly, Sarah Bond¹² discusses the status of the mine workers of imperial mints in Late Antiquity, which apparently changed from the Principate, when slaves were used. In Late Antiquity, among the workers we have free individuals, who were interested in acquiring social capital and privileges, even though the profession *per se* also brought stigma for them. The technique of granting privileges to mint workers „served to reinforce the message of legitimacy, stability, and continuity that Roman coinage itself intended to advertise” (p. 229).

Finally, the last two articles complete the outlook on the subject by addressing a key issue, more precisely the role of professions as enhancer of social status. As such, Nicolas Tran¹³ suggests that the self-perception of skilled workers as *artifices* was a reason of pride for themselves, and that due to the fact that knowledge, talent, and the transmission of knowledge was attached to them, they were perceived in a positive manner both by the lower classes and by the elite. Closing the volume, Catharina Lis, and Hugo Soly¹⁴ provide a comparative outlook on the ancient and mediaeval perceptions on work, and professional identity. The authors establish the fact that the coagulation and display of a professional identity and pride was more specific for antiquity and less for the middle ages, due to the characteristic cultural and social values.

Certainly, the papers encompass only some aspects out of such a wide range of possible angles, being however comprehensive. Three papers presented at the conference, namely that of Walter Scheidel, *Slavery and forced labor in ancient China and the ancient Mediterranean*, George Grantham, *A search equilibrium model for specialization and trade*, and Christian Laes, *Educators in Christian inscriptions*, are not included in the volume, but they

¹² *Currency and Control: Mint Workers in the Later Roman Empire* (p. 227-245).

¹³ *Ars and Doctrina: The Socioeconomic Identity of Roman Skilled Workers (First Century BC-Third Century AD)* (p. 246-261).

¹⁴ *Work, Identity and Self-Representation in the Roman Empire and the West-European Middle Ages: Different Interplays between the Social and the Cultural* (p. 262-289).

would have fit in very well by bringing examples from other geographical areas and time frames.

Besides the 13 articles, the volume includes as annexes a very useful index of subjects, of places and geographical names, as well as of personal names.

To conclude, the present collective volume brings a new perspective on a generous topic which has been more and more researched in the past years, the volume deserving through its clarity, variety and approach, our full attention.

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¹⁵ This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2016-0279.