From antiquity, the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea known today as Dobrudja represented a geopolitical unity. Reflecting this fact, at the beginning of the Late Empire the Romans organized a province, Scythia Minor, whose borders almost correspond with those of Dobrudja. In the present study I will leave aside the southern extremity of Dobrudja and deal only with the main part of the region, the 15,485 sq km lying within the modern state of Romania.

The Roman army entered Scythia Minor for the first time as early as 72-71 BC, during the war against Mithridates when M. Terentius Varro Lucullus, proconsul of Macedonia, conquered the Greek towns of the coast. Yet, ten years later, the army of another governor of Macedonia, C. Antonius Hybrida, was destroyed by mutinous allies near Histria and the Roman control of the region was lost for about three decades. Not until the end of the civil wars did Rome have another army available to fight in this remote area. In 29-28 BC, M. Licinius Crassus, the Macedonian governor of the time, campaigned successfully in Dobrudja but the Romans annexed only the Greek towns of Histria, Tomis and Callatis, giving the rest of the country to the Thracian client kingdom. However, the praefectus in charge of the Greek cities also kept a military control of the Danube line.

When Claudius suppressed the Thracian state in AD 46, its part south of the Balkan mountains was organized into the province of Thracia, while the territory between the Balkans and the Danube was added to the province of Moesia but does not seem to have been garrisoned permanently for nearly a quarter of a century. Anyway, only after the reorganization of the Moesian limes by Vespasian – implying also the establishment of the classis Flavia Moesica – are the first Roman auxiliary military units stationed in Dobrudja attested. Even later, after the division of Moesia and creation of the two new provinces of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior by Domitian, and the occupation of Dacia by Trajan following the arduous wars of AD 101-102 and 105-106, the limes on the
Lower Danube acquired its definite shape which remained basically unaltered until the end of the Principate. Thus the Danubian frontier between Viminacium and Novae, heavily manned to resist the Dacian attacks, was abandoned and some of the military units previously quartered upstream from Novae were sent north of the Danube into the new province of Dacia and the part of the kingdom of Decebalus annexed to Moesia Inferior. The remaining units that were available to be quartered elsewhere were transferred eastward by Trajan to guard the Danube’s right bank as far as the river delta (Fig.1).

Now, at last, the legions were settled in Dobrudja: *legio XI Claudia* at Durostorum immediately beyond the present-day Romanian border and *legio V Macedonica* at Troesmis. Moreover, from the first half of the second century AD the garrison of Dobrudja certainly included the following auxiliary units: *ala I Vespasiana Dardanorum* at Arrubium, *ala II Hispanorum et Araucorum* at Carsium, *cohors I Cilicum milliaria sagittariorum* at Sacidava, *cohors I Germanorum* at Capidava, *cohors I Lusitanorum Cyrenaica* at Cius and until AD 144 at the latest, *cohors II Mattiacorum* at Dinogetia and Barboș. However, since on the *limes* between Durostorum and Dinogetia there were at least two other auxiliary forts at Sucidava and Carsium, it is probable that the number of auxiliary units permanently settled in Dobrudja was larger than attested so far. Besides, the northern sector of the frontier including the forts at Dinogetia, Noviodunum, Aegissus, Halmyris and the bridgeheads from Barboș and Aliobrix, was perhaps manned exclusively by *classis Flavia Moesica* after the removal of the *cohors II Mattiacorum*.

So from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius the garrison of Dobrudja consisted of c. 6000 soldiers from *legio V Macedonica*, 3,500-4,500 auxiliary cavalry and infantry, the bulk of the *classis Flavia Moesica* – whose number is hard to estimate, yet I believe could at least be of 2,000 sailors and soldiers – and probably small vexillations of *legio XI Claudia*; that is, a total amount of c. 12-13,000 troops.

After the transfer of *legio V Macedonica* to Dacia in AD 167-170, on its former sector of the *limes* one could meet detachments from *legio I Italica* based at Novae, sometimes in association with those of *legio XI Claudia*, but one couldn’t know if they were stationed here permanently or only temporarily. After the Marcomannic Wars the garrison strength of the north-eastern part of Moesia Inferior dropped to c. 8,000 troops and this number seems to have been maintained without major changes during the third century AD.

The relatively limited strength of the Roman army in Dobrudja during the Principate was determined by the characteristics of its borders. In itself, the Lower Danube represented a difficult obstacle, and beyond the river bed proper there were plenty of marshes and lakes. Westward of Dobrudja the river divided itself creating two huge marshes known today under the names of “Ialomița bog” and “Brăila bog”; northward, there are numerous lakes, and further northeast the Danube Delta. Accordingly, in this region the Danube has only few fords at: Durostorum, Carsium, Dinogetia and Noviodunum. Of course, during the hard winter frost the river could be crossed on ice in
many places and in fact in the past the Dacians had often taken advantage of this situation.

It is clear that the Romans did not need too many troops to control the fords and the traffic on the Danube; indeed, that is all they did, following the principle of linear frontier defence which was the norm during the first three centuries AD. As for the seashore, there is no straightforward evidence that the Romans considered it as a real *limes* to be defended until the Gothic attacks of the third century. Consequently, all military units of this part of Moesia Inferior were stationed along the Danube.

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**Fig. 1. The Roman Dobrudja (first-third centuries AD), after Bărbulescu 2001 with modifications.**
The reorganization of the *limes Moesiae Inferioris* by Trajan accomplished the division of Dobrudja in three different parts: the bank of the Danube, the interior and the littoral. Each of these zones not only represented a geographical unit but at the same time developed administrative features and even ethnic characteristics.

As the Danube’s bank was a frontier area, it was organized as a military district and became the more Romanised region of Dobrudja. On public land the army erected *castra* where the military units were quartered, and nearby civilian settlements arose which were organized in Roman fashion as *canabae* or *vici*.

The origin of the soldiers making up these military units was widely different but during their service even those less romanised soldiers assimilated Roman civilization, including the Latin language.

Among the 16 military men of legio *V Macedonica*, most of those giving their *origo* in inscriptions found in Dobrudja came from the Orient: Ankyra (ISM V, 155; 135; 174; 183), Amastris (ISM V, 184; 186), Nikaisa (ISM V, 196), Hemesa (ISM V, 178), Laodikeia (ISM V, 179), Nikopolis (ISM V, 158). Besides, two others hailed from Oescus (ISM V, 188) and castris (ISM V, 160) respectively, and the c. 300 veterans discharged in AD 134 had true citizen names including rare Italic ones, yet very few with Greek *cognomina* (ISM V, 137). Irrespective of their origin, however, the legionaries and veterans from Troesmis erected only Latin inscriptions.

All the auxiliary units settled in Dobrudja except *cohors I Cilicum* were initially raised from European tribes, yet the bulk of the manpower of the fleet seems to have been drawn from the Orient. Since, with the passage of time, vacancies within these units were filled by recruitment within the region where they were quartered, they eventually lost some – if not most – “national” features. So they became typical Roman military units except that according to regulations, until the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in AD 212, they consisted of peregrines. Reflecting the progressive levelling process between citizen and peregrine soldiers, the inscriptions found so far in the auxiliary forts are similar in content to those of the legionaries, and likewise written in Latin.

The army was followed by the soldiers’ families and a lot of people who earned their lives by meeting the demands of military men: artisans, merchants, prostitutes. Thus, alongside every fort on the Danube bank civilian settlements soon appeared, two of which developed into towns with Roman status.

At Troesmis, in the vicinity of the fortress of legio *V Macedonica* the *canabae legionis* and another civilian settlement (*vicus? civitas?*) are attested. The *canabae* (ISM V, 154; 141) were under the jurisdiction of the *legatus legionis* but had their own council named *curia* (ISM V, 155) and magistrates: *magistri* (ISM V, 154; 156), *quinquennalis* (ISM V, 155; 158), *aediles* (ISM V, 156). Here lived *veterani et cives Romani*. On the other side ruled by a council termed *ordo Troesmensium* (ISM V, 143-145) and two *magistri* (ISM V, 157), only *cives Ro-
mane Troesmi consistentes dwelled. After the transfer of the legion in AD 167 to Potaissa in Dacia, Marcus Aurelius or an emperor of the Severan dynasty promoted one of the Troesmis settlements to municipal status. The municipium had an ordo municipii Troesmensium (ISM V, 150; 152; 153; 165) and the usual magistrates and priests of a Roman town: duumviri (ISM V, 151; 163 et al.), quinquennales (ISM V, 148; 165), aediles (ISM V, 148), quaestores (ISM V, 148; 149), flamen, (ISM V, 163), pontifices (ISM V, 148), augures (ISM V, 166; 180). Nevertheless, I believe that the two sacerdotes provinciae (ISM V, 151; 194) known so far at Troesmis, certainly prove the importance of the town in providing priests of the imperial cult of the province, but do not necessarily prove that the provincial assembly met here.

At Noviodunum, located approximately at mid-distance between Novae and Crimea, that is, at the center of the sector of the naval frontier patrolled by the classis Flavia Moesica, was most likely the residence of the praefectus classis (ISM V, 281) and accordingly the main statio of the fleet. The extensive civilian settlement, probably a vicus, was administrated by a quinquennalis and two magistri (ISM V, 268). Sometimes later, perhaps around AD 200, Noviodunum was promoted to the rank of municipium.

Near the other auxiliary forts, civilian settlements of lower profile are attested. At Sacidava the site of the civilian settlement is not yet identified, but numerous inscriptions were found in the wall of the fort, set up by veterans who dwelled somewhere around. Six km north of Sacidava, in the neighborhood of the modern village of Rasova, a horreum of the military type was excavated. Since among the bricks used for this building some bear the stamps Leg. V Ma., Leg. XI Cl. P. F. and Leg. I Ital., it is certain that this was another settlement linked with military activity during the first half of the second century AD. Downstream of Rasova, Axioiopolis would seem by its name to have been a civitas of old Greek origin, without a military link, and in fact Ptolemaios mentions it among other poleis (Ptol. Geogr. 3.10.5).

The civilian site of Capidava is still not located, though some tumuli of the cemetery extending around the fort have been excavated. Nevertheless, an inscription informs us of a territorium Capidavensis ruled by a quinquennalis (ISM V, 77) that is, organized to reproduce, on a reduced scale, the municipal administration. At Cius a vicus Verg[ob]rittiani led by a magister who was veteranus legionis V Macedonicae (ISM V, 115) is attested. Unfortunately one cannot determine whether this was the proper civilian settlement of the followers of cohors I Lusitanorum, or merely a village inside the area subject to the jurisdiction of this military unit. Aegissus, originally a native fort, was garrisoned by the Romans quite early, during the first century AD (ISM V, 286). One inscription that probably should be dated to the second century AD mentions a territorium A[egyssensis] with an ordo decurionum, indicating a pseudo-municipal administration as for the territory of Capidava. Further southeast, at Murighiol, quite probably the antique Halmyris, beside the fort manned by the fleet a vicus classicorum sprang up, administrated by a
magister and inhabited by cives Romani who in this instance, were obviously veterans of the fleet.\textsuperscript{13}

At the end of this quick survey of the state of the Danubian frontier zone, some general remarks are required. As expected, the names of the sites of the forts and the civilian settlements related to them were overwhelmingly of pre-Roman origin, mostly Geto-Dacian. In the southern part of the frontier, there was a concentration of place-names ending in \textit{dava}, characteristic of the Geto-Dacian hill-forts, indicating that the Roman army on its arrival in this region found a lot of local tribes dwelling in fortified sites according to their traditional habits. In the \textit{limes} area, however, there is evidence only for a few, very small native sites surviving until the middle of the second century AD\textsuperscript{14} and for some Dacian individuals, who were in any case connected with the Roman army (\textit{IDRE} II, 332; 336; 338). On the other hand, all over the frontier region there was a compact, cosmopolitan population depending upon the soldiers, sharing the Roman civilization, speaking solely Latin (at least in official circumstances) and living in communities of varying Roman legal status, among which two of the three Roman towns of Dobrudja stood out. As mentioned above, the only exception to this rule seems to have been represented by Axiopolis – apparently a civil site without any military connection, probably founded by Greek-speaking people though so far the site has produced Latin inscriptions exclusively.\textsuperscript{15} Even in the cemeteries at Capidava and Noviodunum, the only ones on the \textit{limes} excavated to some extent, only graves of specific Roman provincial types were found including a few funeral assemblages containing military equipment, which was normal considering that some of the deceased were auxiliary soldiers.\textsuperscript{16}

On the seashore the old Greek city-states of Callatis, Tomis, Histria were already established. Another much smaller Greek town was probably Argamum, mentioned in the \textit{horotesia} of Histria (\textit{ISM} I, 67-68) and located at Capul Dolojman, but the shortage of evidence prevents any further comments on it.

During the first-third centuries AD, the three major Greek towns of the Dobrudja were \textit{civitates peregrinae}, i.e. self-governing communities without Roman status. Since the \textit{foedus} between Rome and Callatis that has been partly preserved attests that the latter was a \textit{civitas foederata} (\textit{ISM} III, 1), for the other two cities one has also to consider every alternative status: \textit{civitates stipendiariae} or \textit{civitates liberae et immunes}. Nevertheless, the specific juridical status of each city-state was not of paramount importance as in practice the differences between distinct categories of \textit{civitates peregrinae} had already begun to fade away from the first century AD.\textsuperscript{17}

In Callatis, all the inscriptions set by individual inhabitants are in Greek except one Latin dedication to Trajan and \textit{cives Romani consistentes Callatis} led by a \textit{quinquennalis perpetuus} (\textit{ISM} III, 83). According to the epigraphic evidence, at Tomis and Histria the population still spoke predominantly Greek, but in each of them one encountered a tribe of the Romans (\textit{ISM} II, 256; I, 142). A considerable part of these Roman citizens, some of them Latin speakers,
were veterans. And in both these towns are attested a lot of Latin speaking soldiers on duty or buried in the place of their residence or origin. As Tomis was the largest coastal Greek city of Moesia Inferior, it is no surprise that it produced a far larger number of army-related persons than Histria. It may be concluded that among the three Greek city-states of Dobrudja, Callatis best preserved its heritage and was at the same time free of any significant Roman military presence. The special situation of Callatis could derive from its privileged juridical status, from a traditional behavior characteristic of the Dorian colonists or even from its lack of importance to the Romans due to its reduced size and/or remote location. Given the meagre surviving evidence it is impossible to be more specific on this issue.

The inner part of Dobrudja was predominantly a rural area divided into the territories of the military settlements and Roman towns along the Danube frontier and of the Greek cities on the Black Sea shore (Fig. 1). It was only in the extreme south of this zone that Tropaeum Traiani developed, the third town of Dobrudja with Roman status. The Roman settlement near the Adamklissi tropeaem sprang up contemporarily with/or immediately after the inauguration of the monument in AD 109, as attested by a dedication to the emperor by Traianenses Tropaeenses in AD 116/117 (CIL III, 12470). Several mixed vexillations were composed of soldiers from both legions I Italica and V Macedonica (CIL III, 14214; CIL III, 14433) among which the largest, 1500 troops strong, probably worked on the construction of the monument and possibly also the settlement. Later, during the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, officers of legio XI Claudia offered dedications at Adamklissi which, together with other undated inscriptions set up by soldiers, prove a continual military activity on the spot (CIL III, 7483; 14214; 14214). Sometimes before AD 170, Tropaeum Traiani was promoted to municipal status (IDRE II, 337). The town had an ordo decurionum municipii Tropaei (CIL III, 7484 = 12461; III, 14214) and the usual series of municipal magistrates and priests: duumviri (CIL III, 14214; 14214 et al.), duumviri quinquennales (CIL III, 14437 = 12462), aediles, quaestores, sacerdotes.

In the remaining inner part of Dobrudja, one met only rural administrative units, most of them of Roman type: vici and villae rusticae. So, according to recent statistics of all the settlements of the Dobrudja, except the towns, 26 + 2(? )vici are attested, compared with 4 +6(? )komai and 2 pyrgoi + 2 turres (one turned into a vicus). In addition, there are at least 68 villae rusticae, 27 cemeteries and 74 isolated graves.

The vici had the standard Roman organization, i.e. they were led by one or usually two annually elected magistri, and when of larger size they also had a quaestor. Characteristically, most of them had Roman names: Quinctionis (ISM I, 324-341), Secundini (ISM I, 342-349), Casiani (ISM I, 369-370), Celeris (ISM I, 351-352), Clementianenses (ISM II, 134; 136; 191), Narcissiani (ISM II, 133), Nov…(ISM V, 233), Petra (ISM V, 240), Ulmetum (ISM V, 62; 63; 69), Tres Protomae (ISM II, 53), Sc[apt]ia (ISM II, 137), I Urb…(CIL III, 14441), Urbin….
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Rami… (ISM V, 117). Even more significant is the presence of \textit{veterani et cives Romani consistentes} in the \textit{vici}: Quinctionis, Nov..., Bad...\textsuperscript{24}, V... (CIL III, 14442), ...stro (ISM I, 138). In addition, the site of \textit{vicus classicorum} obviously settled by veterans of the fleet, but where there are only \textit{cives Romani} attested proves that one has to consider the presence of the veterans also in other settlements or at least in the sites producing evidence for Roman citizens as the \textit{vici}: Secundini, I Urb..., Turris Muca (ISM II, 141) and Ulmetum.

The \textit{vici} settled by \textit{veterani et cives Romani}, are known mostly in \textit{regio Histriae}, which is partly due to the existence of better evidence for the rural sites of this area. However it is hard to see the concentration of all the inscriptions specifying veteran communities in the northern part of Dobrudja as purely casual. Therefore it results in one having to consider this region as having been extensively populated by the Roman administration, partly with veterans. An additional proof of the systematic politics of colonization of this area is that in \textit{vici} Quinctionis and Ulmetum there were, besides the Roman citizens, also attested \textit{Bessi consistentes}. And if \textit{Lai consistentes} from \textit{vici} Secundini and Turris Muca were in fact, like the Bessi, other Thracian colonists and not simply \textit{laoi}, it means that in this part of Moesia Inferior it was common for people of different origins and social status to settle in the same \textit{vicus}. The reason for using such a procedure consisted probably in the limited number of men available for colonization during the short period of time assigned by the Roman authorities for the development of the land.

A completely different situation is to be found in the territory of Callatis where neither communities of Roman citizens nor even rural settlements of Roman type were known except perhaps Amlaidina, if its designation as \textit{vicus} in a single, funerary Latin, inscription was correct (ISM III, 237). So one can infer that the peculiarity of the proper town of Callatis succeeded in keeping its traditional Greek character all over its rural territory.

Everywhere in the Empire the Romans built roads in order to facilitate the military traffic and the running of the imperial post \textit{cursus publicus}. Hence it must not have been pure chance that the series of milestones known so far in Dobrudja begins in Trajan’s reign when the number of troops quartered in the region dramatically increased and the \textit{limes} was thoroughly refurbished by the erection of several new fortifications along the Danube.

Determined by the natural conditions, the network system completed by Trajan consisted of three main roads, one along the seashore, another along the Danube bank and the third running from south to the north through the middle of the land, linked together by secondary transversal roads (Fig. 2). Built by the soldiers for meeting the demands of the army and the state administration, the roads were naturally used also for the transportation of civil goods and persons and greatly promoted the economic development of the country to which they came. So it is no surprise that all the settlements of some importance were placed on the main roads, especially where they crossed with other roads. However the impact of the famous Roman roads
on the local population was not always positive. On the contrary, we know about the complaints of the people from Laikos Pyrgos and Chora Dagei in regio Histriae, who asked the governors of Moesia Inferior in AD 137-141 and 160 respectively, to be spared from the abuses they were subjected to by the cursus publicus administration, otherwise they were on the point of leaving their villages and moving away from the roads (ISM I, 378). Anyway, as proved by the milestones and some of the beneficiarii inscriptions, the network system of Dobrudja was constantly maintained in good condition and guarded by the army, even during the terrible crisis of the third
century AD, and was entirely restored during the Tetrarchy and House of Constantine.

Due to the shortage of manpower in the provincial administration, the Roman authorities resorted to the army, which supplied the necessary substitutes, who had the great advantage of not demanding additional expenses. If the procedure of giving soldiers administrative tasks appeared as early as the beginning of the Principate, it developed gradually until the end of the third century AD according to the strengthening of the imperial power and the decreasing of the prerogatives of the self-governing provincial communities. Not surprisingly, this process is to be found also in Dobrudja where, apart from the presence of a lot of beneficiarii, some of them acting as a police force, the direct involvement of the army is attested in the regulation of boundary disputes. Thus, in AD 177-178 landmarks were put in by the tribunus cohortis I Cilicum between civitas Ausdecensium and a Dacian community (IDRE II, 338); in AD 198-202 by the commander-in-chief of the Moesian fleet, praefectus classis, between the villa of Messia Pudentilla and vicani Buteridavenses (ISM I, 359-360); and in AD 229, inside the territory of Capidava by one legionary centurion (ISM V, 8: 57-58). It seems obvious that the use of the army for marking the controversial limits of communal and private estates, or of the individual plots, was due both to its capacity of imposing the observance of the dispositions taken in the name of the governors and to the technical expertise on making measurements of the land.

At the end of this survey it is worth emphasizing the main aspects of the impact of the Roman army on the local societies in the northeastern part of Moesia Inferior. From the beginning of the second century AD the presence of nearly 15,000 troops together with their followers in a small rather scarcely populated region, except for the seashore with its three Greek towns, profoundly influenced the subsequent development of the country. As all the military units were quartered along the Danube frontier, this part of Dobrudja was completely Romanised. Nevertheless the role of the army extended far beyond its forts and the civil settlements developed near them in the inner part of the region, where numerous rural settlements organized in Roman manner are attested. Even in the territories of the Greek towns of Histria and Tomis there are numerous vici settled at least partially by veterani et cives Romani, led by magistrī and using Latin. And, significantly, if in the old Greek colonies of Histria, Tomis and Callatis the population still predominantly spoke Greek, one met in each of them a conventus c. R. or a tribe of the Romans. A large part of these Roman citizens were veterans and Latin speakers.

In conclusion, with the exception of the Greek towns, which kept their traditions despite the strong influence of the Roman civilization, the rest of the territory of Dobrudja was thoroughly Romanised during the Early Empire, especially as a result of the presence of a considerable number of troops.
Notes

1 For the Roman military activity until the inclusion of Dobrudja in the province of Moesia see Vulpe 1968, 13-48; Suceveanu 1991, 23-26 with bibliography.

2 See Kolendo 1998. At variance with the traditional opinion, Suceveanu repeatedly asserts that Dobrudja was not annexed to the province of Moesia before the time of Vespasian, when the first Roman military units are attested to have settled in the region (Suceveanu 1991 a, 28-29; Suceveanu 1991 b.). Yet the horotesia of Laberius Maximus (ISM V, 67-68) mention in AD 47 the first defining of the borders of Histria by a legatus of Moesia.

3 For the Roman army in Dobrudja during the Principate, see especially Aricescu 1977 and Matei-Popescu 2001-2002.

4 Doruțiu-Boiță 1974, 8.
6 Vulpe 1968, 167.
8 Barnea 1988, 53-60.
9 Scorpan 1977.
11 Cheluță-Georgescu 1979, 179-182.
12 Baumann 1983, 156, no.20.
15 Tudor 1956, 572-577, nos. 28-43 and CIL III 7485; 14214.
17 De Martino 1965, 717.
18 See for Tomis indices of ISM II, p. 397 and for Histria, indices of ISM I, p. 537.
19 Unpublished lecture by the author at the annual Symposium of Constanța Museum in 1983.
20 Bârbulescu 2001, 120.
22 Bârbulescu 2001, 283.
23 Baumann 1983, no. 20.
24 Bârbulescu 2001, 94.
25 For the utilisation of the Roman army in the administration, see Zwicky 1944.