
PUBLIC REPORT

regarding the implementation of the Project,
PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0652

*„Die römische Grenze im Osten der Provinz
Dakien / Granița romană în estul Provinciei
Dacia”*

December 2014 – November 2015

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November 2015

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Introduction

During the period December 2014 - November 2015, the activities within project PCE 2011-3-652 „*Die römische Grenze im Osten der Provinz Dakien / Granița romană în estul Provinciei Dacia*” were conducted as planned by the project manager in the grant proposal. A number of changes and adjustments were made due to the budget cuts in 2013, followed by the alteration of the work plan at the beginning of years 2014 and 2015. In this last period we worked on the planned activities related to verifying, norming and integrating all the data we have acquired during the past years in one, unique system. In the same time we begun interpreting the collected materials and drafting the first few paragraphs of the final scientific manuscript. The activities related to current management were carried out as planned, according to the three fundamental principles recommended by the National Scientific Research Council (NSRC) at the moment the contract was signed. These were: integration, dissemination, excellence.

Principles of activity: Integration

Repatriated in Romania for implementing this project, for me the principle of *integration* meant trying to adapt to and be accepted by a brand new work community and the Romanian academic community. They both have their own specificity and are quite different than those of the countries I have worked in before. Today I consider myself to be part of the work community of the National Museum of Eastern Carpathians from Sf. Gheorghe, where I was given responsibilities such as coordinating the redaction of the „Angustia” Journal or being the secretary of the Museum’s Scientific Council. In the same time I feel as being part of the local scientific and cultural community that faces the daily challenges of bilingualism, which is often misunderstood, but still manages to overcome these difficulties. A very eloquent indicator of my integration at a local level is the good work relation I have with the colleagues from the National Szekler Museum, the second Museum in the city with the same profile as ours, coordinated by the local authorities. In the same time I work together with the colleagues from the County Cultural Direction that is responsible for the protection of all movable and immovable archaeological heritage pieces in the County. The reciprocity of the contacts and the interest of collaboration with the colleagues from Sf. Gheorghe are based, in my opinion, not only on my own openness towards a two-way local cooperation but on the

specificity of the know-how that the members of the project I am coordinating are using to serve the local academic community.

The integration in the Romanian academic community took some time and manifests itself through the collaboration projects I have with organisations that are relevant at a national level, with the Archaeology Institutes of the Romanian Academy, with the National Museums in the country as well as with organisations that are not so visible culturally or scientifically on the Romanian cultural map, by their own choice. In this past year I initiated and maintained work connections with researchers from a large number of institutions in the country. These connections resulted in common research and valorisation projects of the Roman sites from the Eastern Carpathian Area and from outside this region.

I would like to underline in this report that I managed to tie good working relations not only with fellow archaeologists, but also with other citizens, that relate to the project's field of work in their daily life – with the Roman camps. We do speak here about the community of those who cherish the past, such as Mr. Vlad Totoianu (<http://www.artaintramuros.ro>) or the history teachers I collaborate with during my field researches or during the meetings with their pupils. I would like to mention here George Moldovan from Vâlcele, Constanța Balogh from Sf. Gheorghe, Adriana Bota from Covasna and Ramona Popovici from Ghimbav. I am very glad that I can collaborate with such dedicated professionals, who know very well the history of the area they live in, being able to work with them in the field of archaeology of the Roman time in south-east Transylvania.

And *last but not least*, I mention my nomination as vice-president of the National “Limes” Commission by the Romanian Ministry of Culture. This Commission will coordinate the drafting of the scientific documentation necessary to enrol on the UNESCO World Heritage List the immovable heritage objectives that were once part of the Roman Empire's Border found on the territory of Dacia Province. More than that, I was assigned to coordinate the works of the “Eastern” sector of the Limes of Roman Dacia. I consider this situation representative for my integration in the academic community of the Romanian Limes researchers, and I owe this to my activity in the Project I currently coordinate and hereby report.

Principles of activity: Dissemination

Based on the same recommendations of the NSRC I granted special attention to *disseminating* the project's results, on a local, national and international level, through the entire period of activity. In this context I have informed both the academic community and the interested public about the project's activities, the events we have organised, the major field researches and delegations taken during this last period. According to the request of the NSRC and UEFISCDI I permanently inform the public through the project's own website (<http://limes.rdsweb.ro>) that is technically maintained by Konstantin Kavruk. The texts and posts, both in Romanian and in English, are written by Andrea Chiricescu.

For disseminating the scientific result of the project I participated in different scientific meetings organised at regional, national and international level. Worth to be mentioned here are the presentations I prepared for Römisch-Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt/Main and Kommission für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Archäologie in Bonn. These two institutions are both part of the German Institute of Archaeology with its headquarters in Berlin. As a result of my good professional relationships with the colleagues from this institution, I have been chosen to be part of the select circle of external co-workers of the Institute, being invited to participate in joint researches in the so called "research groups" ("Forschungscluster") of the German Institute of Archaeology (www.dainst.org/forschung/netzwerke/forschungscluster/cluster-6/projekte). My research topic in this international context ("Ostdakischer Limes") is part of Cluster 6 "'Connecting Cultures'. Formen, Wege und Räume kultureller Interaktion", 2nd work team "Zonen der Interaktion". The annual meeting of this Forschungscluster takes place between the 2nd and 5th of December 2015, at the German Archaeology Institute in Rome. For this meeting I prepared a communication called "*Römische Stationen jenseits des Limes und die Frage der römisch-barbarischen Kulturkontakte beidseits der Ostkarpaten*".

Besides the German Institute of Archaeology I had the possibility to disseminate the results of the research carried out on the Limes of Roman Dacia at the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Bonn, where I became "Privatdozent" (Associated Professor) at the Institute of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology, after defending my Habilitation Thesis in 2013. I am currently preparing a study visit for my students to the archaeological sites in Transylvania. A significant part of this study visit will be dedicated to the area of the roman Limes in Dacia and will

represent one of the best ways to disseminate at an international level the results obtained after implementing the activities of my project.

A similar study trip was already organised this past year, with the active support of the "Carpații Răsăriteni" Cultural and Scientific Association from Sf. Gheorghe, for a group of students and master degree students from the Republic of Moldova, studying at the Faculty of History and Geography within "Ion Creangă" Pedagogical State University - Chișinău. Thus, on 16th May 2015, I held a presentation called "The Roman Limes in Dacia" and then we visited together a number of roman camps from south-eastern Transylvania: Boroșneu Mare, Comălău/Reci, Olteni and Brețcu.

The dissemination of the project's research results was also possible through a series of participations at the European Project called "*Black Sea Unity and Diversity in the Roman Antiquity (BSUDRA)*". Based on the results of researching the roman camps in south-east Transylvania, at the events organised at Beşiktaş/Istanbul and Sulina I tried to make the first steps in connecting the issues dealt by the researches of the Limes in Roman Dacia and the ones dealt by the researches of the history of Pontus Euxinus.

Another scientific reunion that made possible an international dissemination of the project and its results was The First International Congress on the Anthropology of Salt. The Congress was organised in Iași, within "The ethno-archaeology of the salt springs and salt mountains from the extra-Carpathian areas of Romania" (CNCS UEFISCDI PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0825) Project, reuniting participants from more than 25 countries world-wide. In my opinion this was one of the most extraordinary opportunities to disseminate the project I am coordinating. As a result of my presentation, called "Salt vs. Limes in Roman Dacia" I received several proposals for future collaborations.

The international recognition and dissemination the project knows today is very well reflected by the invitation I received to participate at the Romanian-German round table, organised within CNCS UEFISCDI PCE 2012-4-0490 "The Other in Action. The Barbarization of Rome and the Romanisation of the World" Project. This event was dedicated to the issues of Romanisation, while the participants were a number of respectful colleagues from the German Archaeology Institute from Frankfurt/Main and the Institute of Archaeology in Iași.

Another way to disseminate the project is within the scientific colloquium called “The Romans and their Neighbours along the Oriental Carpathians”, organised as part of the Annual Symposium of the National Museum of Eastern Carpathians. This year the Symposium will take place on the 10th – 13th December, being entirely financed by the Museum. This already traditional meeting is perceived by the invited participants as the perfect opportunity to exchange opinions among colleagues that work on similar or relatively close subjects of the roman Limes in south-eastern Transylvania, as well as among representatives of different archaeology schools from Romania or different generations of archaeologists preoccupied by the history and archaeology of the borders of roman Dacia.

The non-formal “history lessons” that I sometimes coordinate for secondary and high-school pupils are a quite exquisite dissemination opportunity of the project at local level. Their number increases every year. The non-formal history lessons about the “Eastern border of Roman Dacia” were adapted to the needs of students of different ages and background, from the 5th to the 12th grades. Usually these lessons include information about the history of roman Province Dacia and the most important features of the project I am currently coordinating, as well as details regarding the research methods I use. The accent is focused on describing the use of modern technologies in archaeology that are applied in the field research of the roman Limes in south-east Transylvania. At the end of each lesson the pupils have the chance to ask questions. I find the results of these meetings astonishing, since I was able to identify a real interest and thirst of knowledge among the pupils, openness towards new technologies and wish to be involved in the process of acquiring knowledge, needs that I will surely rush to address in the future as well.

At the beginning of this last year I planned to reach a special target group during the dissemination activities: the students involved in higher education, especially the master degree and postgraduate students. My aim was to attract them and involve them in the project, or at least to bring them closer to the work opportunities the project offers and the perspectives of professional development in applied archaeology, in my attempt to tie them to this specific region of Covasna and Harghita counties. In the end I convinced myself that it takes more than a single UEFISCDI Project to accomplish this goal. Without a coherent national, regional and local policy the human resource in this area will remain one of the major risks of the projects similar to the one I currently coordinate.

In all above mentioned situations the project's dissemination has been done accordingly, by mentioning the financial support of the CNCȘ-UEFISCDI in all cases.

Principles of activity: Excellence

During the entire period of the project a special focus was laid upon its national and international visibility. Thus the principle of *excellence* finds its place accordingly in the activities that have been carried out so far, including this last year. We do need to highlight the fact that the project's results cannot be quantified just yet, according to the current methodology of quality management as it is understood in the frame of Romanian scientific research, since the final and main result of this project will be a scientific monograph about "The Eastern border of roman Dacia". Under such circumstances the amount of preliminary results of the researches I can publish so far is not relevant enough for it to be accepted in prestigious Journals. To have permanent *feed-back* from both the national and international academic community upon the results of my scientific researches, I presented them within the scientific events mentioned above. But I avoided publishing significant information related to these researches, limiting myself to publish only some preliminary results of the latest activities.

Nevertheless there are some elements of novelty of our researches that I would like to mention in this report. The first one concerns the configuration of the Limes in the Baraolt area, in Covasna County. The Hungarian literature up to the middle of the 20th century placed a roman camp in this area. As researches evolved after the Second World War this hypothesis was denied. For clarifying this ambiguous situation I conducted several field researches and magnetometric prospections. These have revealed a series of important results, highlighting a consistent inhabitancy on the mentioned promontory, most probably a roman fortification. Still, we do consider that it is too early to state whether we deal with a military fortification (roman camp?) or with a civil inhabitancy (statio? mansion?). Future investigations are to reveal this answer.

Another important find for understanding the way the roman Limes functioned in the Eastern Carpathians was revealed near Hoghiz. The primary literature for the structure of the Limes mentions the existence in this area of a camp inside the so called inner "ring" of the Limes. Based on the interdisciplinary researches we have conducted in the area, we were able to

establish the inner structure of at least half of this camp. The image we obtained – that reveals a so called “double-walled” precinct camp – leads us to believe that the camp at Hoghiz could have been found on the exterior line of the border of roman Dacia, being connected through the Olt gorge with the presumed fortification at Baraolt, described above.

Another element of novelty was found in the roman camp at Olteni. Here we revealed (magnetic!) traces of three soldier’s barracks, which could signal a place still preserved underground inside this camp found on the bank of Olt River. Thus, here we have real perspectives for future archaeological researches.

These are only three examples that come to illustrate the elements of novelty and scientific excellence brought in this last year by the project that I have the honour to coordinate.

In parallel with these field researches I have continued the documentation in the archives and libraries from Frankfurt/Main, Bonn, Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Sibiu etc. I have also continued completing and verifying the information acquired during previous years, before 2015.

Among these activities we could highlight the continuous documentation of the still unknown/unpublished archaeological materials found in the archive and storage of the National Szekler Museum. Here we make reference to the finds from Comălău and Olteni, two sites that were archaeologically dug and investigated in the past by Székely Zoltán. An element of novelty in this context was to find in the archives Székely Zoltán’s field journal written in 22.06-11.07.1942, that brings some light upon the lack of archaeological finds in the collections of the Sf. Gheorghe Museum resulted after the diggings. The explanation is quite simple. The diggings were conducted by J. Szilagyi from the Museum of Aquincum, thus the materials should be found in this Museum in Budapest. We will try to trace them in the near future. Both Comălău and Olteni, along with Boroșneu Mare, will have special compartments in the future work of reference, the monograph of “The south-eastern border of roman Dacia”.

Another very important sign that speaks about the recognition of the project that I am coordinating and its activities is, in my humble opinion, the inclusion of the roman Limes in the city’s cultural strategy. In the same time, we are proud to mention that the Project and the Limes have been included in the bid book for the European Capital of Culture 2021 Title, for which Sf. Gheorghe is competing in the name of the entire “Szekler Region”. This small

chapter dedicated to the Limes was drafted based on the information provided by myself and my team, though the project I am coordinating. It is entirely the project team's accomplishment and that of the institution within this project functions. We consider that through this step we considerably shortened the path that information takes, from the moment it is generated by science to the moment it reaches as many and diverse target groups as possible!

Summary

To synthesise all that was mentioned above, I consider that the project's activities were carried out in accordance with the initial plan and all the additional documents that were signed with the financing Authority. Throughout the activities we have aimed at reaching and accomplishing the three fundamental principles recommended by the National Scientific Research Council (NSRC) at the moment the contract was signed, which were: integration, dissemination, excellence. In my opinion this statement means that I have managed to successfully integrate in the Romanian academic environment and in the Project's host institution. In the same time we may ascertain that we have accomplished a successful dissemination of the Project's activities and preliminary results on more than one level, both locally, nationally and internationally, this being one of the main objectives of the research team. I do consider that the excellence of the researches conducted within the project is proved both through international recognition of the results obtained so far, of the novelty and level of innovation of the applied research methods, as well as through the permanent upgrades the team's members have implemented. And we cannot forget the national and international partnerships we signed, to implement this research method in similar researches both in Romania and abroad. It is only obvious that the possibilities to multilaterally use the project's results in related fields, as archaeological heritage management, education or durable development of a region come to further sustain the irrefutable proofs of excellence.

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