



Centre for Research on Settlements and Urbanism

## Journal of Settlements and Spatial Planning

Journal homepage: <http://jssp.reviste.ubbcluj.ro>



# Tourism and Archaeology: Back to Origins

**Cristina PĂTRAȘCU<sup>1</sup>, Florin FODOREAN<sup>2</sup>, Ioan FODOREAN<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of Geography, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA

<sup>2</sup> Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Cluj-Napoca, ROMANIA

E-mail: [cpatrascu@geografie.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:cpatrascu@geografie.ubbcluj.ro), [fodorean\\_f@yahoo.com](mailto:fodorean_f@yahoo.com), [fioan@geografie.ubbcluj.ro](mailto:fioan@geografie.ubbcluj.ro)

**Keywords:** *tourism, archaeology, Roman Dacia, patrimony*

## ABSTRACT

Archaeological tourism is an alternative form of cultural tourism that aims to promote the passion for history and the preservation of historical sites. Unfortunately, today, in Romania, there is not a real connection between archaeology and tourism and there are only few sites exploited for tourism. Due to the preservation and the capitalization of the historical remains the interests between archaeology and tourism generates in fact a sustainable form of tourism. From this point of view the attractiveness of sites is based on the idea of preserving the “spirit of place” by safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage. This is the most important aspect in the management of the Romanian rural space, as well. A fascinating subject related to archaeological tourism is the Roman archaeological remains. In this paper we make a classification of some Roman archaeological sites by the level of importance for tourism. All these sites are situated in the rural area: the milestone from the Roman period situated in Aiton Village, the rural settlement from the Roman era, the aqueduct and the Roman road from Copăceni and the Roman camp, the Roman road, the temples and the possibility for a touristic site museum from Tibiscum. Finally, the paper considers three sites near Cluj-Napoca: Dealul Lomb (a Roman villa), Polus Centre area (the remains preserved *in situ*) and the Săndulești settlement (Roman remains, near the spring of Copăceni, which was captured in the Roman era, too).

## 1. RESHAPING THE PAST: UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INHERITANCE

In an article recently published, Luciana Inés Repiso observes: “Tourism is increasingly being regarded as a positive force for the preservation of nature and culture; its contributions should bring about benefits for the host community and provide its members with significant resources and incentives to look after and maintain their Heritage. The strategic alliance between culture and tourism refers to the use of the concept of ‘Sustainability’ as a linking concept between these two areas in terms of planning and management. Based on this general concept, this paper adheres to the notion of Sustainable Tourism, regarded as a conceptual and operative basis that allows for a sustainable use of heritage assets. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2004) has set the guidelines for sustainable tourism development and sustainable

management practices based on social, economic and ecological aspects” [9].

The archaeological tourism developed so intensively in the last years. Between archaeology and tourism there are mutual interests, based on discovery, education, preservation and capitalization. It is quite obvious that today we are overwhelmed by a huge amount of information from various sources: internet, online books, TV, press etc.

In this era of technology, though, important things that can be found close to us, such as the archaeological resources, are present every day. Among them, one of the most fascinating subjects is related to Roman archaeological remains.

At the same time, the idea of preserving the “spirit of place” by safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage is an important issue in the management of rural space. An archaeological site induces respect and attracts through the mystery of collective memory.

In Romania, a lot of roman sites can be found in rural areas and can contribute to the local development. Most of them are not valued; the local communities don't understand the value for tourism of these sites.

Fortunately these sites cannot be moved from the rural area, but unfortunately they have been destroyed over time and the destruction continues today because of the non-involvement of local authorities.

The tourist interest for archaeological sites is multiple: they are very well integrated in the rural area to which they belong (that could be found above or buried in the ground), they are/should be considered protected areas (due to their unique and specific feature), they represent tourist attractions that generate

respect in the light of cultural identity, they are generally integrated in a natural area and they are subject of archaeological studies which generates useful information for their management.

All these elements generate attractiveness of the sites.

In this paper we want to make a classification by level of importance for tourism of these sites. First, we will take into consideration the area of Ilișua (with roman remains such as: a Roman camp, a rural settlement, and a roman road, Dej-Ilișua-Orheiul Bistriței-Brâncovenesti), Porolissum (a Roman camp, a Dacian Settlement, an amphitheatre, a very well preserved Roman road, temples, a civil settlement, an air aqueduct) and Brețcu (a Roman camp, Romans thermae and a guard tower) (fig. 1).

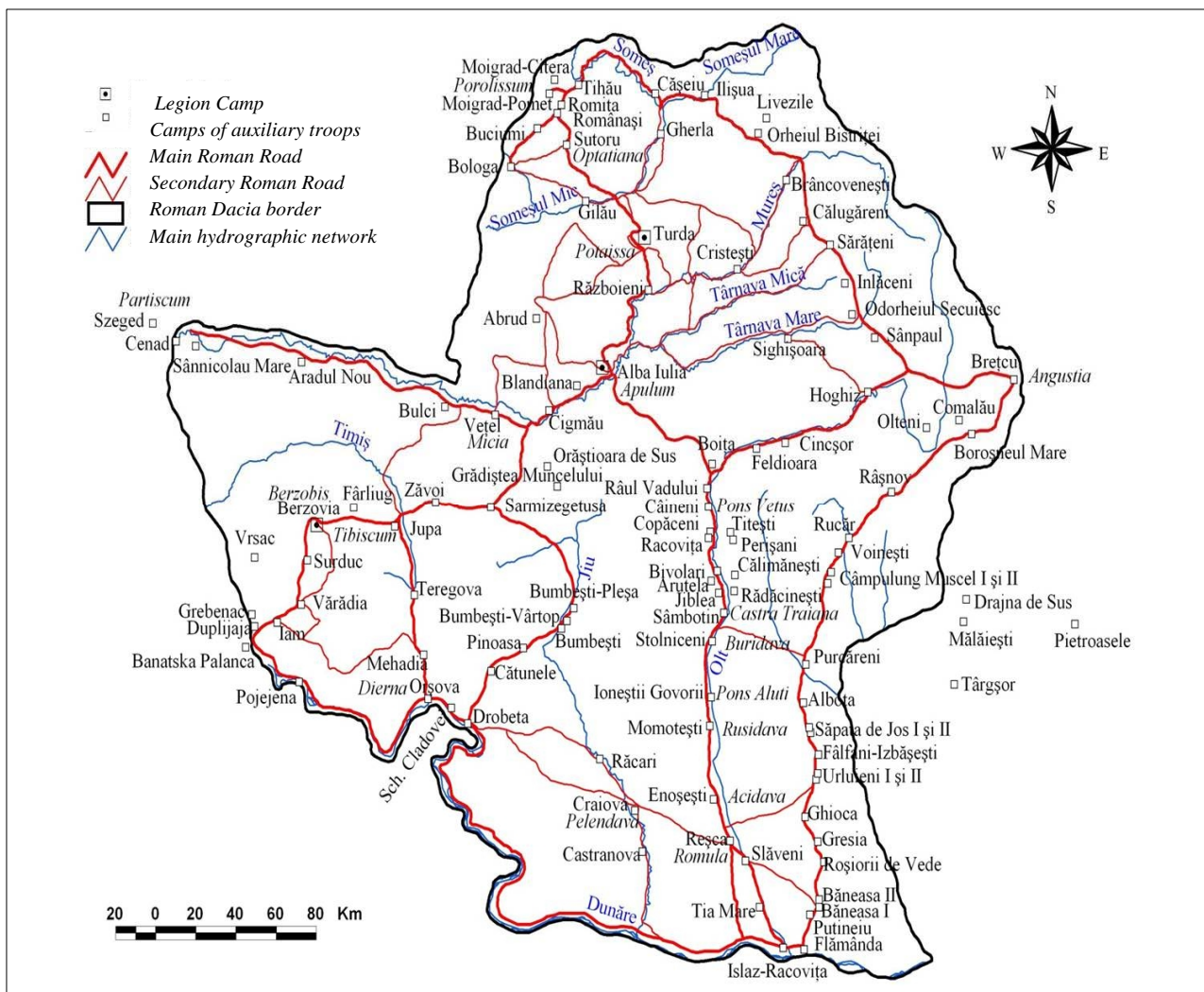


Fig. 1. Map of Roman Dacia.

Secondly, we will study Aiton (with its milestone from the Roman period), Copăceni (with a rural settlement from the Roman era, an aqueduct and a Roman road) and Tibiscum (a Roman camp, a Roman road, temples, possibility for a site museum).

Finally, the paper will consider three sites near Cluj-Napoca: Dealul Lomb (a Roman villa), Polus

Centre area (the remains preserved *in situ*) and the Săndulești settlement (Roman remains, near the spring of Copăceni which was captured in the Roman era, too).

This classification is determined by the historical, archaeological and cultural aspects, wondering how to attract tourists in a rural area in Romania, based on capitalizing archaeological remains.



## 2. PROMOTING ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: ILIȘUA, POROLISSUM AND BREȚCU

The Roman fortress from Ilișua is positioned 22 km North-East from Dej, at the foothill called “Măgura” or “Cetate”, at about 500 m south of the centre of the village, on the left bank of the Ilișua valley (fig. 2). In the triangle formed in the western part by the Uriu village, in the north by Ilișua and in the southern part by Cristeștii Ciceului, numerous discoveries were mentioned during time. Most of them are present to the West of the Ilișua River. The Roman fortress is positioned south to the valley of Ilișua. From this point

there is a good visibility to south and west. The Roman fortress was known in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

K. Torma published a study related to this important strategic point on the northern frontier of Dacia. After that, the fortification was in the attention of the specialists all the time.

In 1997 the first general presentation of the fortress and the civilian settlement was published. Ilișua represents an important settlement in the northern part of Dacia.

The Roman *Arcobadara* developed around the fortress, built here rapidly after the conquest by soldiers from *legio XIII Gemina*.

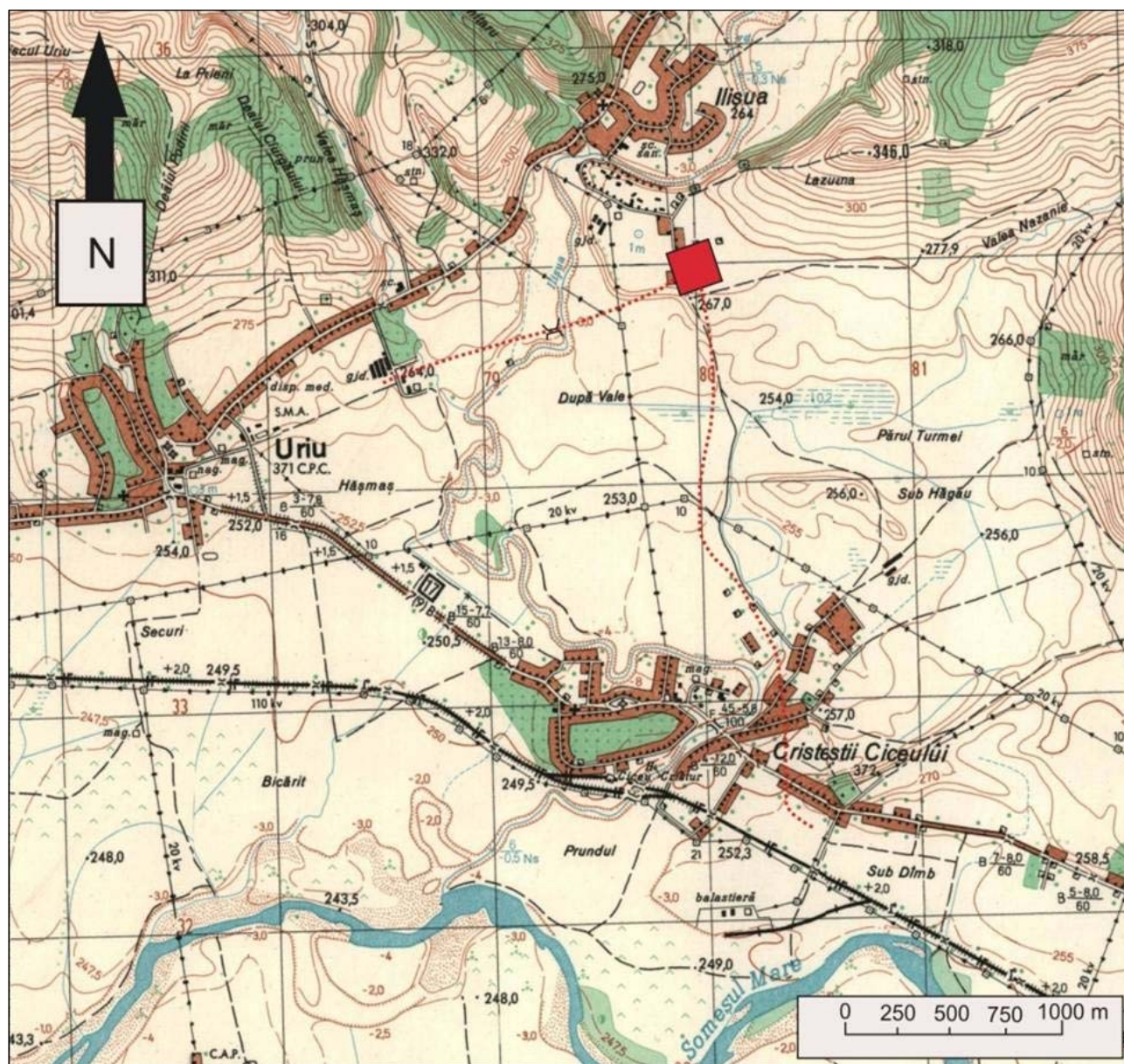


Fig. 2. Ilișua. The position of the Roman fortress.

The Roman settlement of Porolissum is to be found on the territory of villages of Moigrad (commune of Mirșid), Brebi, Viile Jacului, Jac (commune of Creaca) and of suburban settlement of Ortelec (falling

under the administration of Zalău municipality), following the morpho-tectonic contact between Meseș Mountains and Almaș - Agrij Depression (fig. 3).



From the point of view of petrography, the morpho-tectonic contact separates the magma rocks of Pomiet (502 m), Citera and Corniștea (493 m) – Moigrad (513.9 m) Knolls, represented by riodacites, from the Neogene deposits of the depression (sandstone, clay, marl, sands, conglomerates, limestone). Porolissum is the far northern Roman city of Dacia, situated on the north-western limes of the province. Its name comes from the one of the Dacian settlement of Porolissou, mentioned by the geographer Ptolemeu.

A *viscum militaris* appears around the two auxiliary fortresses build on “Măgura Moigrad” hill immediately after the conquest; the largest of them is on “Pomet” hill, and the smaller one on “Citera” hill.

Being set on Dacia’s border, the city was protected on the side of barbaricum by defensive walls, earth mounds, towers and burgs. It developed primarily along the Roman road that crossed the settlement and passed by the praetorian gate of the large Pomiet camp (fig. 3).

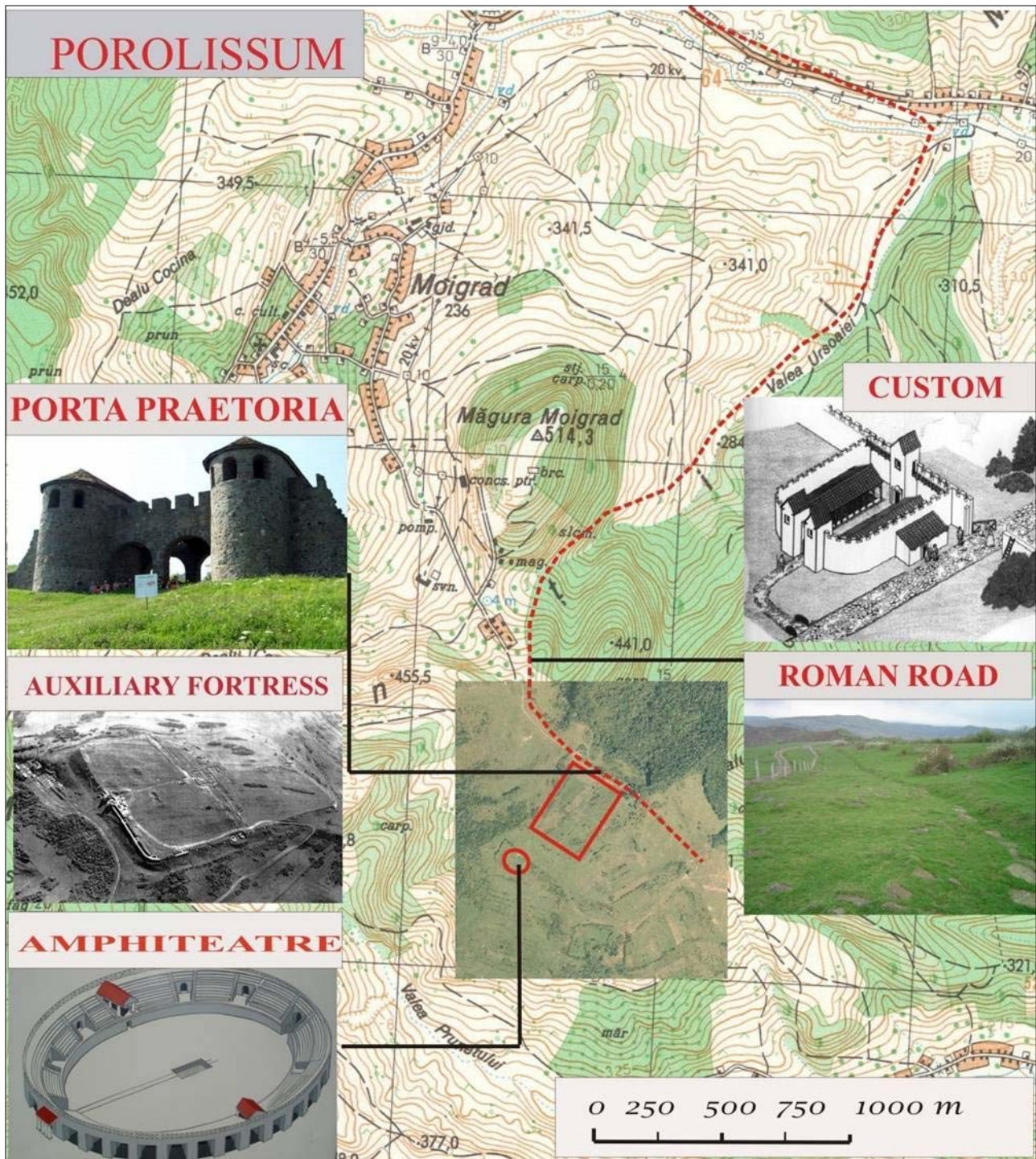


Fig. 3. Porolissum. The Roman archaeological site.



The southern limit of the city was set around the Roman customs area, 300 m south-west of the camp, and it was extended eastwards on a distance of about 100 m. A series of buildings were identified in this sector, north and eastwards of the camp: houses, shops, a temple dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus. Also, the terrace was founded southwards from porta decumana of Pomet camp, where civilian buildings and the amphitheatre were found, was intensely humanized. Archaeological diggings at Porolissum, led to the discovery of an important building, the custom house, of the large amphitheatrum castrense destroyed by the passing of time (vetustate dilapsus) and rebuilt in stone during Antonius Pius's reign in 157 A D, and of the two stone walled castra; temples of different Gods, an aerial aqueduct coming from Meseş, a large necropolis where both rituals of burial and cremation were performed, therms, and a series of public and private buildings were all researched here. Important archaeological material was thus brought to light, including inscriptions, coins, fibulae, tegular material etc.

The massive presence of troops involved a large number of citizens, especially during the municipium period, when the city's population, counting both military and civilians, could reach 20,000 – 25,000 people. Among the leaders of the city, besides the ordo decurionum, citizens gathering also played an important role, mentioned as respublica municipii Septimii Porolissensium on epigraphs. The direction of the Roman road within the military complex of Porolissum is SE-NW going round the military camp on Pomat Hill on its north-western side. Its existence was already mentioned in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; in 1859 A. Cosma was writing that "Traian's road at Pometu is still used today in most places; in the forest of Moigrad it passes by Brăiște". K Torma [10] mentioned that "...the road that links the villages, called by the population "Traian's road", can be seen southwards of Măgura". I. Martian [7] added: "that road that can be still seen today at Moigrad leads on one way to the top of Meseş up to Ciuta and on the other one up to Tihău... the above mentioned road called by the local people "Traian's road" leaves the vallum romanum at Moigrad and passes by the commune of Sacu (Jac)".

The Roman city was also identified on a surface of around 30 ha. The entire area of over 300 ha is free of modern buildings. The area is set with paths, signs and indicators that describe each monument in two languages (Romanian and English). Practically, Porolissum is an open air museum. The most attractive monument for the tourists is *porta praetorian* of the Pomet fort, fully reconstructed. Breţcu has also a great potential to be capitalized. It is positioned in a very beautiful natural landscape, on a terrace named "Stejar", in the North-West of the current village, in the

place called "Cetate". Recently, Muzeul Național al Carpaților Răsăriteni (MNCR) [*the National Museum of Eastern Carpathians*] started collaboration with the Archaeological Institute from Frankfurt and the Institute of Archaeology and History of Art in Cluj-Napoca. Non-destructive methods were used on the investigation of the Roman camp.

### 3. PROMOTING ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AT NATIONAL LEVEL: AITON, COPĂCENI AND TIBISCUM

Aiton is a special settlement positioned along the main Roman road of Dacia.

The whole sector between those two settlements was identified in the terrain, surveyed and mapped with the most care and exactness. In this particular sector, the Roman engineers proved again their amazing skills and knowledge in finding the perfect route for the road. They understood perfectly the geomorphology of the terrain and, as a consequence, the Roman road does not climb the big Feleac Hill, but it avoids it (fig. 4).

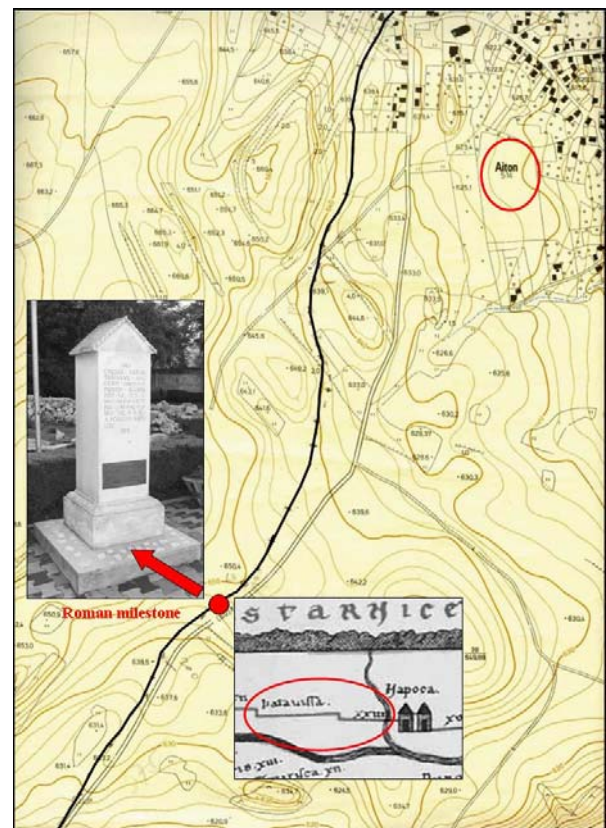


Fig. 4. The Roman milestone discovered at Aiton.

The engineers preferred to choose the simple, better route from Potaissa through the villages of Ceanu Mic, Aiton and Gheorghieni, until the road reached Napoca.

This way, the Roman road is 4 kilometres longer than the current road, but avoiding the hill to the

East, it presented a better, simple route. Along this road, at Aiton (Cluj county), exactly 10 miles (14,785 km) north from *Potaissa*, a Roman milestone was erected in 108 A.D., during Trajan.



Fig. 5. The area of Aiton.



Fig. 6. The Roman milestone. The archaeological site.

The monument was found in 1758. Unfortunately, now it is lost. The text is: IMP(erator) / CAESAR NERVA / TRAIANVS AVG(ustus) / GERM(anicus) DACICVS / PONTIF(ex) MAXIM(us) / (tribunicia) POT(estate) XII CO(n)S(ul) V (sic) / IMP(erator) VI P(ater) P(atriae) FECIT / PER COH(ortem) I FL(avia) VLP(ia) / HISP(anorum) MIL(liaria) C(ivium) R(omanorum) EQ(uitata) / A POTAISSA NAPOCAE / M(illia) P(assuum) X.

This milestone, discovered in 1758, is one of the most important, because it offers us an image of the rapid rhythm in which the Romans had built the roads of Dacia. The text of the inscription mentions that in the sector Potaissa – Napoca, belonging to the imperial Roman road, and built by the Roman auxiliary troop *cohors I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum miliaria civium Romanorum equitata*, this milestone was set down, at the distance of 10 *millia passuum* from Potaissa (14,785 km). So, according to the text of the milestone, this sector of road was already built in 108 A.D. The second aspect is the fact that the inscription of the milestone

from Aiton offers the first epigraphic mention of Potaissa. This piece of evidence has a threefold importance: 1. In the formula *a Potaissa Napocae* we find the first epigraphic evidence of *Potaissa* and *Napoca*; 2. This road sector was built by *cohors I Flavia Ulpia Hispanorum miliaria civium Romanorum equitata*. This unit is mentioned among the military forces used by Trajan's in the war against the Dacians. After the completion of its mission, it was garrisoned at Orheiul Bistriței, along the north-eastern frontier. Because it was *equitata*, we suspect the use of this cavalry unit for the recognition of the landscape of northern Dacia; 3. This particular case can be added to the list of the military units which built roads, even if Michael Rathmann proved that little evidence can be found today to demonstrate the individual existence of the term *via militaris* in Roman times.

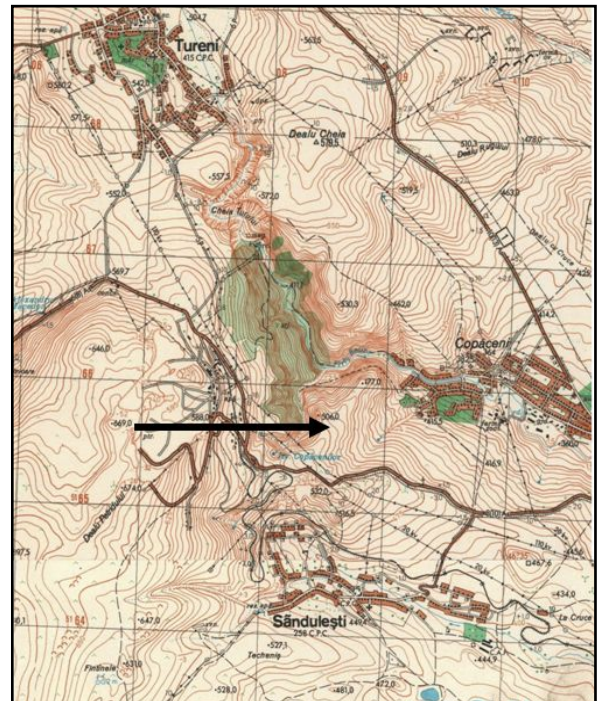


Fig. 7. The location of Copăceni-Săndulești site.



Fig. 8. The area of Săndulești.



In Aiton a sector of road was excavated. Nowadays it can be seen in the courtyard of the village school, together with a copy of the milestone. One should know, though, that the exact location of the milestone is not here, but south of the village, as the distance measured in the field proves.

In 2005 I had the chance to find a good preserved sector of this road, close to the village of Ceanu Mic. I have to also mention that on the territory of the Aiton village in several sites (private gardens of the inhabitants) there were recorded and excavated wall substructions, coins, ceramic fragments, all of them proving here the existence of a stopping point along the road, possible a *mansio*.

In Copăcenii a very important rural village functioned during the Roman era. Traces of the aqueduct which supplied the Roman city Potaissa were found on the territory of the current village.

Tibiscum was also one of the most important settlements in Roman Dacia and the archaeological discoveries can be easily valued. The archaeological investigations have led to the discovery of the military fortress, a sector of the road, temples.

#### **4. PROMOTING LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

Since 2008 the archaeological preventive researches close to Cluj-Napoca, on the Lomb Hill, have resulted in the discovery and the entire investigation of a Roman construction, possible a *villa rustica*, unknown until now. The poor conservation state of the construction and material discovered during researches leads to the conclusion that this villa functioned from the second half of the second century AD until the first half of the third century AD.

Although this area was subject of powerful terrain slides during time, we were able to identify and research the main spaces inside the Roman construction. The discovery made in the summer of 2008 is an extremely important one and happily completes the image we had until now concerning the Roman villas in Dacia, particularly those positioned north of Napoca. Today, we know three constructions of this kind. This proves the importance of the area situated in this part of Dacia Porolissensis.

The Lomb Hill is positioned quite close to Cluj-Napoca, and there is a possibility for the tourist to visit this site. West of the current Cluj-Napoca city, in an area where the archaeology recorded no traces whatsoever, in 2006 the preventive archaeological researches that began due to the construction of a commercial centre have resulted in the discovery of a very large area with archaeological traces.

A large Roman building was investigated, together with traces from the Bronze Age and the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Nowadays some of these remains were

preserved and publicly exposed inside the "Polus" commercial centre.

In Săndulești (fig. 8), close to Turda town, the preventive archaeological researches had resulted in the discovery of an important Bronze Age settlement, together with Roman traces.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The first three settlements have great potential and can be included as archaeological settlements in international tourist circuits. Ilișua is positioned along the current road which connects Dej and Bistrița towns. Porolissum is already intensively visited by tourist and Brețcu also has the potential to become an important site on the map of tourist attractions in Eastern Transylvania. The second category includes sites which can be promoted at a national level. Aiton is reachable from the current road between Turda and Cluj.

In fact, a copy of the Roman milestone can be seen here, in the courtyard of the local school. Also, traces of the former most important Roman road of Dacia can be still identified in the field. Aiton was intensively researched in the 70's of the last century, when a very passionate professor even succeeded to create a local museum. Copăcenii has also this kind of potential, since the Roman settlement was an important one. Tibiscum can also become a centre of attraction on this level.

Finally, the sites included here in the third category have all the elements to be developed as local archaeological tourist attractions.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] **Ardeț, A., Aredet, L. C.** (2007), *Tibiscum. Așezările romane*, Ed. Nereamia Napocae, Cluj-Napoca.
- [2] **Bărbulescu, M. (coord.), Bărbulescu, C., Fodorean, I., Fodorean, F., Husar, A., Mihăilă, C., Nemeth, E., Nemeti, I., Nemeti, S., Pîslaru, M., Sălășan, M., Zotic, V.** (2005), *Atlas-dicționar al Daciei romane* [Publicațiile Institutului de Studii Clasice. 6], Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Tribuna, 2005, s.v. Porolissum.
- [3] **Fodorean, F.** (2006), *Drumurile din Dacia romană*, Napoca Star, Cluj-Napoca.
- [4] **Gudea, N.** (1989), *Porolissum. Un complex arheologic daco-roman la marginea de nord a Imperiului Roman*. Volumul I (Cercetări și descoperiri arheologice până în anul 1977), ActaMP 13.
- [5] **Gudea, N.** (1996), *Porolissum. Un complex daco-roman la marginea de nord a Imperiului Roman. II. Vama romană. Monografie arheologică*. Contribuții la cunoașterea sistemului vamal din provinciile dacice, Cluj-Napoca.

- [6] **Gudea, N.** (1997), *Der dakische Limes. Materialien zu seiner Geschichte*, Mainz.
- [7] **Martian, I.** (1920), *Repertoriu arheologic pentru Ardeal*, Bistrița.
- [8] **Protase, D., Gaiu, C., Marinescu, G.** (1996-1997), *Castrul roman și așezarea civilă de la Ilișua (jud. Bistrița Năsăud)*, în *Revista Bistriței* 10–11, 27–110.
- [9] **Repiso, Luciana Inés.** *Heritage, Tourism and Sustainability: An Archaeological Park as a Tool for Local Sustainable Development*, <http://www.holcimfoundation.org/portals/1/docs/fo7/wk-tour/fo7-wk-tour-repiso02.pdf>
- [10] **Torma, K.** (1980), *Adalékok Dácia fold és helyiratához*, în *ArchÉrt* 14, p.101-117.
- [11] **Ursuț, D., Petrică, P., Winkler, I.** (1980), *Câteva considerații geotopografice privind traseul drumului roman Potaissa-Napoca în sectorul Cluj-Napoca – Aiton*, în *Acta Musei Napocensis* 17, 1980, 441-446.
- [12] **Ursuț, D.** (1994), *Drumul roman imperial din sectorul Aiton-Tureni. Caracteristici geografice și topometrice*, în *Acta Musei Napocensis* 31, 1, 209-214.
- Winkler, I.** (1982). *Drumul roman Napoca-Potaissa. II*, în *Acta Musei Napocensis* 19, 587-589.
- [13] **Winkler, I., Blăjan, M., Cerghi, T.** (1980), *Drumul roman Napoca-Potaissa. I*, în *Potaissa. Studii și comunicări* 2, 63-73.
- [14] \*\*\* (1992), *Repertoriul arheologic al județului Cluj*. (Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, V). Cluj-Napoca.