

This is the first page only. On how to acquire the full article please click this link.

In memoriam J.-K. Haalebos (†06-iii-2001)

The *cohors equitata* fort at Tihău-Cetate, Romania: the results of geophysical survey and other research

Julian Bennett

This paper considers the evidence provided by a resistivity and magnetometer survey of the Roman fort at Tihău-Cetate, located in Sălaj province in the north of modern Romania, 1 km north-east of the village of Tihău, and 500 m south-west of the village of Surduc (figs. 1-2). The survey produced exceptional images for the internal layout of a stone-built fort, revealing for the first time the full plan of such a structure in Dacia. When considered alongside information recovered from earlier small-scale excavations, the geophysical imagery permits an assessment of the site's history and provides support for recent arguments concerning the structural arrangements to be expected in a fort built for a *cohors quingenaria equitata*.

The historical context

The two Dacian Wars of Trajan culminated in A.D. 106 with annexation of the territory ruled by Decebalus. That part of his kingdom represented today by Eastern Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia was assigned to the existing province of *Moesia Inferior*, while the remainder, modern Banat and the Siebenbürgen, was made into a new consular province of *Dacia*.¹ It is generally believed that at the same time, while Trajan was in the province, the decision was made to define the formal N boundary of the new province with a series of permanent auxiliary forts, among them Tihău-Cetate and its closest neighbours, *Porolissum* (Moigrad), 15 km to the west, and *Samum* (Cășeiu), 50 km to the east (fig. 1).² It also generally accepted that the majority, if not all, of these 'conquest-period' forts were built in the 'Holz-Erde' method, with earth and timber defences and wooden internal buildings.³ Finally, it is usually assumed that the major work of creating this frontier system was completed by 110/112, since by then all the legions involved in Trajan's conquest of Dacia had been sent elsewhere, except for *Legio XIII Gemina*, now given a permanent base at *Apulum* (Alba Julia).

The beginning of Hadrian's reign saw these arrangements changed in several ways. In 118, for example, Muntenia and Moldavia were abandoned as part of a revised treaty with the Roxolani, while Oltenia was detached from *Moesia Inferior* to become the new procuratorial province of *Dacia Inferior*, the original province of *Dacia* being renamed *Dacia Superior*.⁴ Then, sometime before 123, this administrative scheme too was modified, for the part of *Dacia Superior* north of the confluence of the Mureș-Arieș (thus including the fort at Tihău-Cetate) was separated from *Dacia Superior* to form yet another new procuratorial province, *Dacia Porolissensis*.⁵ In addition, the latter part of Hadrian's reign saw some of the 'Holz-Erde' forts in the three Dacian provinces rebuilt in stone, notably Hoghiz, Gilău, Ilișua, Rădăcinești, Bivolari-*Arutela*, and Copăceni, all of which have produced inscriptions testifying to the fact.

The reigns of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius saw further changes to the Dacian provinces. In about 159, even though there was no change in the administrative structure, *Dacia Superior* was renamed *Dacia Apulensis*, and *Dacia Inferior* became *Dacia Malvensis*, with only

-
- 1 Gudea 1997, 6-7; for a summary of the Dacian Wars and the process of provincialisation, Bennett 2002, 85-103 and 163-72; for an introduction to Iron Age and Roman Dacia, Haynes and Hanson 2004; for a full account of Dacia and Rome in the years leading up to the end of Trajan's Dacian Wars, Stefan 2005.
 - 2 Cf. Gudea 1997, 7; Haynes and Hanson 2004, 18 and Stefan 2005, 666-67, with fig. 276. The ancient name of the Tihău-Cetate site is unknown, but *Triphulum* (Ptol., *Geog.* 3.8) is one possibility: cf. Bogdan Cătănciu, 2002, fig. 1.
 - 3 Gudea 1997, 8 and 12. On the 'Holz-Erde' method of construction, cf. Johnson 1983, 56-66, esp. 61-62.
 - 4 Cf. *HA Hadr.* 6.6-7 and Birley 1997, 95.
 - 5 Birley 1997, 95-96.