

Roman defensive system from north-western part of Dacia.  
field researches at Supuru de Sus (Satu Mare County)  
and literature sources.

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- abstract -

A *vallum* with the ditch oriented towards West, against the enemy who came from West and North from the Pannonian fields was discovered in *Barbaricum*, 50 km West from the well known *limes Porolissensis*, organized by the Romans on the Meseş Mountains, *limes* which marked the North-Western limit of the Roman province *Dacia Porolissensis*, at the exit of the Crasna river valley, towards the Western Hills of Sălaj county, in the area of the Supuru de Sus village (Satu Mare county).

The *vallum* and the ditch blocked and controlled the access through the valleys of Crasna and Zalău rivers, 50 km in the front of the Roman Dacia province, towards the *limes Porolissensis* and the Roman city *Porolissum*. This earth *vallum* was identified on a distance of 5 km (until now), the research still continuing. Until now the ends of this earth-timber defensive system were not found. The *vallum* was researched in several points, by many trenches. The ditch is approximately 2-2.5 m deep, and 3 to 4.5 m wide, but the *vallum* is very flattened because of the centuries of agricultural activities.

Therefore, the *vallum* is 4-5 m wide at the base. The archaeological research undertaken on the fields of Supuru de Sus village, Dealul Șoarecelui (Mouse Hill), identified to the Western part of the *vallum* one rectangular fortress attached to it (*vallum*), making common body with it.

The fortress has a ditch and the earth *vallum* type is made as *murus caespitiarius*. The fortress is 210 m long and 140 m wide.

The ditch and the *vallum* cross the “Mouse valley” and continue on the next hill, named “Soldubița”. Another Roman rectangular and linear defensive system, around 700 m, was found here, but the ends of these earth fortifications and the directions where they continue weren’t found yet.

At this moment we don't know where the *vallum* and the ditch will end. In fact in this part of “Soldubița Hill”, the *vallum* is the elongation of the Western side of the fortress discovered at “Mouse Hill”. As a matter of fact, in the place where the *vallum* is changing with its direction 60°, attached to the *vallum* was built the fortress at the “Mouse Hill”. Also, on the Western side of the fortress it was identified an entrance “*a la chicane*”-type. This fortress, made of earth, was built, we suppose, as a checking point necessary to monitor the circulation to/from *Porolissum* (*Dacia Porolissensis*), through the valley of Crasna and Zalău rivers, surely a trespassing point on *Porolissum*-Aquincum road, mentioned in the antique sources. And it is a Roman fortification belonging to a possible much earlier *limes* of Roman province Dacia. The attached maps show the line of one Roman earlier *limes*, which was identified with the help of literary sources, published right at the end of eighteenth century in Romanian and Hungarian local monographies (Torma, 1880; V. Russu 1890). Part of this *limes* was identified and archaeological researched in the basin of Crasna Valley at the “Mouse Hill” and “Soldubița Hill” from the area of Supuru de Sus village, Satu Mare County, Romania, and was presented in this article. But a very similar *vallum* and ditch, partly archaeologically researched, was found at the north of Criș River up to the Tisa River in Hungary (Patay, 1969). This *vallum* has its ditch in the North side of it, entering Romania in the area of

Oradea, Episcopia Bihorului, Bihor County, and similar to Supuru de Sus discovered *vallum*, was built against the enemies which attacked Dacia province from the north and the west. The literary sources give information regarding the possibility that this Criş *vallum* and the ditch to continue and to make the connection with the *vallum* discovered in Crasna Valley and Supuru de Sus, earth Roman linear and rectangular fortifications. A very interesting and most important literary data was offered regarding the existence of one long “*paganus* work as *vallum*”, longer than 50 km, discovered in the Bereg County, now in Ucraina country. This *vallum* blocked the area from Tisa River at one corner of the Forests Carpatians Mountains (Lehoczky, 1888), one large area beginning nearly in front of one of the strongest and most important preroman Dacian centre-fortress in this area, the fortress from Malaja Kopania, and in the interior of the region the fortress from Solotvino (Ucraina) and Onceşti (county Maramureş, Romania).

An important conclusion of this study is that, in fact, this possibly newly discovered (archaeological and literary sources) line of one earlier Roman *limes*, as is presented on the attached maps (plates III-V), surround the *territorium*, the lands, which here in the western area clearly belong to the Dacian kingdom of the last king Decebal.

The fortress, the *vallum* and the ditch (unknown until now), identified at Supuru de Sus, and all these hundreds of kilometers of possible western *vallum*, were built against the *yasiges*, *sarmats*, germanic populations, free dacians or others barbarians who wanted to attack Roman province Dacia from north or west.

Perhaps we have discovered here the beginning of the construction works for the borders (*limes*) of Dacia province, set up by the Roman emperor Traianus, immediately after the end of the second Dacian-Roman war in 106 AD. Obviously this very important idea must be covered with future archaeological research concerning all these very long lasting and interesting monuments of Roman world.