

## Early setup of the Roman fort from Răcari

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- abstract -

The Roman camp from Răcari was in the archaeologists' attention as soon as the late XIXth century. Extended diggings were carried out by different teams along time, but for two campaigns only (Tocilescu-Polonic 1897-98, Gr. Florescu 1928 and 1930, C.M. Vlădescu 1991-92). Excepting latter, which crossed the camp with two sections, old archaeologists focused, as usual, around the main stone objectives (principia, the gates, corner-towers, the curtain, one horreum).

In spite of extended diggings, an early stage, eventually due to Trajan, was just guessed, only because it would make sense like that; as far as I know, Tocilescu, Polonic, and Florescu did not produce any stratigraphic evidence to prove it. Nevertheless, the numismatic evidence was quite obvious to support the hypothesis. One denarius from Domitian and two denarii from Trajanus, popped-up from Polonic's field research, were already a good suggestion; another copper coin minted for Trajan was uncovered by Gr. Florescu. That wouldn't be quite enough, comparing with other Roman camps on study, but another fact is going to make things clearer: there are only three copper coins from the next two decades after Trajanus; one of them, found in 2004, is extremely blunt, lost long time after minting, and its position on the layer obviously recommends a later position, after the large earth fortification was done, not before 157. In conclusion, the Roman army presence in the area was quite faint, for the generation after the conquest, so, the first Roman camp from Racari couldn't be Hadrianic.

The second hint for a trajanic chronology of the first fort made here is a tegular stamp from Legio V Macedonica, resulted also from old diggings, present in the area only untill 107 AD.

The first context attributed to Trajanic fortification came up from 1991 diggings, when the team led by C. Vlădescu intersected a large ditch in the rear of the western stone curtain, 5 m wide and 1.7 m deep; some stratigraphical clues point out a 3.5 m "berma". The shape of the ditch could also be slightly different, as recommended by analogies and, also, by our recent diggings.

In 2004 and 2005 a similar ditch was studied inside the eastern curtain, this time more distanced by later enclosure. It is 5.65 m wide and 1.96 deep, with a 2.9 m berma, well delimited inside by a post hole of the palisade. Due to the fact that the proposed objective of our campaigns, until now, was restrained to make clear the main fortification elements and their chronology, there is no recent research inside the palisade of Trajanic age.

The last campaign, just finished, from 2006, concluded the job, unearthing the northern and the southern ditches, both in the touch with the rear of the stone defences made later; the latter is the largest and the deepest, rising the question why the south flank was considered the most endangered. The Trajanic fort is 136 m long on 119 m width, a rather large one from the first generation. The ratio between sides is 1.15, and the surface is 1.64 hectares, similar to *Drobeta* (closest), Bumbesti, or Gilău from the same time.