The toponym Trimammium appears for the first time in the ancient written tradition with the fundamental treatise of Geography by Claudius Ptolemy (Cl. Ptol. *Geogr.* III 10, 5, ed. Müller). It is well known that his work was accomplished in the opening years of Emperor Marcus Aurelius’ reign and for sure before AD 167, the year of the author’s death (Lammert 1959, 1788-1791; Suceveanu, Barnea 1993, 161). The treatise lies upon grounds of profuse information rather authentic in its greater share and concerning the reciprocal location of many settlements and other peculiar sites, drawn mainly from peripli and itineraries. In chronological aspect, we can distinguish a couple of toponymic layers among the geographical nomenclature included in the text. Through recalculating the initial metric data, the exact location of any of the sites is pointed in the text together with geographical coordinates in degrees and minutes according to the then geo-astronomical concepts (Lennart Berggren, Jones 2000, 14-17). However, the studies in more recent time prove that the meridians of Ptolemy deviate significantly from the real ones while the geographical latitude of the enlisted sites is comparatively exact having in mind the technical potential of the time (Tsorlini 2009, 247-248). The analysis of the data on Moesia Inferior included in Chapter Ten of Book III of the treatise shows that the author has described the situation in this Roman province in the period after the Dacian Wars of Emperor Trajanic in late Trajanic or early Hadrianic days (Тачева 1994, 116, 120; Tacheva 1995, 428).

Trimammium appears in the surviving copies of Ptolemy’s work under the form of Τριμάμμιον and Τριμάνιον, its geographical location is fixed with the coordinates of 52°20’ and 44°50’, and is enlisted among the towns (πόλεις) of the province of Moesia Inferior set up along the Danube River. The nature of what Ptolemy has meant under πόλεις remains still unclear. We have not any data available that in those days the greater number of them had a town status of whatsoever rank. According to an assumption they probably were market places of the local people (fora rerum venalium) functioning as centres of independent village territories of the type of *territoria, regiones* and *civitates* known from the written sources (Геров 1980, 67-68). Despite the terminological variations, it is generally believed that under these denominations we have to understand administrative
and territorial subdivisions of quasimunicipal order virtually identical in organizational aspect but without any town centre, based upon older traditions of tribal division and still adapted to the Roman type of administration (Геров 1980, 65-101; Mrozewicz 1982, 71-75; Bogdan Cătănicu 1991, 62-63).

The record of Ptolemy, alongside various archaeological documents coming from the surrounding area are taken as an indication that an old Thracian settlement existed there attaining considerable economical and strategic significance even in this early age (Велков 1968, 6-7). According to the interpretation of the toponym proposed by V. Beshevliev, it displays Latin origins and is composed of the components of *tri-* (three) and *mamma* (bosom) meaning three-bosom as three neighbouring hills might have been called (Бешевлиев 1955, 287). The statement of Beshevliev that W. Tomaschek considers the name a Thracian one (*ibidem*) is not correct: the Austrian scholar mentions Trimammium indeed but only within his commentary on the toponym of Τρίφουλον, and only as an example illustrating the use of the prefix of Τρι- in the composition of local names (Tomaschek 1980, 76). A similar opinion belongs to D. Detschew alone (Detschew 1976, 527) but the rest of scholars exploring the language of the ancient Thracians do not support it (Дуриданов 1976, 51-53; Георгиев 1977, 252-253).

Trimammium as a station on the Danube Road is marked on two Roman itineraries known today – *Tabula Peutingeriana* and *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*. The data concerning the Lower Danube region they contain refer to 260s/early 270s and in general to initial third of the 4th c. respectively.

According to the standards of this kind of works both documents present the name of *Trimammium* in the ablative although in certain variations. In *Tabula Peutingeriana* it is *Trimamio* (Tab. Peut., VIII, 2, ed. Weber), and in the various copies of *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* – *Trimammio*3 and *Triamo*4 (Itin. Ant. Aug. 222, 1-3, ed. Cuntz). As far as the exact location of the station is concerned, in both itineraries it is fixed on XXV m. p. from *Novae* and on XII m. p. from *Sexaginta Prista*, as *Tabula Peutingeriana* points *Iatrus* as immediate neighbour of *Trimammium* in the south-east (*Latro*, on XVI m. p.), and *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti* – *Scaidava* (*Scaidava*, on VII m. p.).

The earliest information of Trimammium in entirely military context appeared not until the Late Roman Age. An epitaph of imprecise date in the 4th c. from Histria points to it in the ablative *T[r]iamamio* as a basic camp of the cavalry unit *vespillatio XII catafactariorum* (Popescu 1976, 149-150, No 110).

Once again as a military camp although of still another, infantry subdivision – *milites Constantini*, Trimammium (*Trimamio*) appears in *Notitia Dignitatum* (Not. Dign. Or. XL 20, ed. Seeck). According to the prevailing academic opinion, *Pars Orientis* of the document was compiled ca. AD 394-395, but it has been proved that the chapters dedicated to the provinces of Moesia Secunda and Scythia reflect the effectives and dislocation of the border troops along the Lower Danube about AD 378 in general (Zahariade 1988, 21-31, 181-185).

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2 On the date of the cited itineraries see: Торбатов 2002, 41-44; Торбатов 2004, 84-85.
3 In the manuscript of *Exsorales R II 18* from the 7th c.
4 In the manuscript of *Parisinus Regius 7230 A* from the 10th c.
The latest in date record of Trimammium comes with the Cosmography of the Anonymous author of Ravenna. Despite the later date of the compilation of this geographical compendium, the narrative is grounded upon the administrative order of the Roman Empire during the age of the Principate, and the information largely repeats the one of *Tabula Peutingeriana*. Probably the supplements have been drawn from a lost work of Libanius as the Anonymous author unambiguously points to him as his main source of data on the region and identified with the Late Roman rhetor Libanius who lived and wrote in the 4th c.\(^5\)

Trimammium, its name conveyed under the form of *Trimamion* (Rav. Anon. Cosmogr. IV 7, 5, ed. Schnetz), is mentioned among the “numerous towns (civitates) of Moesia [Inferior]”. Nevertheless, we have hardly to pay a special attention to this record as all the settlements mentioned in the Cosmography are defined synonymously as “towns”.

Judging from the distances marked on the Roman itineraries, Trimammium is sure located on the Danube bank, in the area of Stalpishte quarter about 3 km west-northwest of the village of Mechka, Ruse region. Its localization was firstly grounded in the academic literature in 1905, by two authors who worked independently to reach the same conclusions (Шкорпил 1905а, 454-455, 458; Ванков 1905, 557-559). The case is worth much more for the identification has been accomplished not only on the grounds of some abstract closet calculations but involved also a thorough terrain investigation to verify the written records by the archaeological realities\(^6\). Still another significant quality of the works cited above is the felicitous supplement of the information they contain.

Both works pay the main attention to the remains of a fortress significant in size the locals know as Kale or Kaleto. It is located on a plateau-like ridge close to the northern sector of an elongated hill enclosed within the Danube bank and the deep valley of the small Oreshe River\(^7\). During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 the Turks adjusted the spot to defence resulting in significant destruction of the archaeological substance surviving to those days. K. Škorpil and M. Vankov found the fortress wall almost entirely demolished. The description K. Škorpil proposes, accompanied by a situation plan and an eye-sketch of the site (fig. 1) is much more exact and informative. According to him, the fortification is shaped as irregular tetragon with bent sides. The length of the southern side

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\(^5\) A more detailed comment on the sources of the work and their dates in: Торбатов 2002, 43-44.

\(^6\) Devoid of personal terrain observations, K. Miller locates Trimammium near Pirgovo (in the text: Bergas) (Miller 1916, 505). Initially V. Velkov also takes up the same localization (Велков 1959, 279), but later on he corrects his view (Велков 1968, 5). The fortress on the Danube bank near Pirgovo quite certainly is identified with the Medieval town of Pyrgos (Куев 1981, 155-156), and most probably the Late Antiquity fortification of Mediolana, known from *Notitia Dignitatum* alone was located at the same spot (Торбатов 1991, 231-232). P. Zahariade and N. Gudea also locate Trimammium near Pirgovo although they have in mind exactly the ruins near Stalpishte (Dikili Tash) (Zahariade, Gudea 1997, 74; Gudea 2005, 427).

\(^7\) This name appears to be the most widespread one as we have it in most of the works (Кацаров 1926-1931, 147; Казаров 1938, 46; Oppermann 2006, 118; Varbanov, Dragoev, Rusev 2008, 160). K. Škorpil though refers to it as Kadadzhik Dere (Шкорпил 1905а, 454; Шكورпил 1914, 91, 155), and N. Stanev – Kurtandzhik Dere (Станев 1988, 39).
is judged as about 200 steps. In view of the easy accessible terrain, it has been strengthened better than the rest ones and a deep moat has been dug before its front. Škorpil did not detect any remains of towers, but presumes the existence of two gates – one at the eastern and one at the western sides (Шкорпил 1905а, 454 = Шкорпил 1914, 92). From the notes of M. Vankov we have to add that the fortress wall has been constructed of stone, mortar and broken bricks (Ванков 1905, 558). As far as the artifacts coming from the ruins are concerned, both authors report only of bricks with mirror stamps of RVMORID (Шкорпил 1905а, 455 = Шкорпил 1914, 92; Ванков 1905, 558).

The last coincidence in the reports of K. Škorpil and M. Vankov on the ruins in the region of Stalpishte concerns a small rock church cut into the lower sector of the rock formation along the right bank of Oreshe River (Шкорпил 1905а, 454 = Шкорпил 1914, 155; Ванков 1905, 558). Its date has not been specified, but most probably the church associates with the Bulgarian Middle Ages.

Furthermore K. Škorpil reports on the remains of a large unfortified settlement near the jaws of Oreshe River valley, at the northeastern foot of the hill with the fortress (Шкорпил 1905а, 454 = Шкорпил 1914, 91). He also mentions some tombs found in the same valley, constructed of slabs or flat tiles (Шкорпил 1905а, 455). In both cases he fails to notice any chronological attribution.

The information given above has escaped M. Vankov’s notice. Nevertheless, he discovered a relief representation cut into the rocks about 100 m east of the rock church. According to his description, the scene represents two horses running next to each other, one of them with a rein, and the other with a tail erect and a dog beneath its legs. The
relief is 0,40 m wide and 0,30 m high, and some survivals of a Latin inscription are to be noticed on the partially worn-out rock next to it, he has read as UVL…. . The record on the existence of a series of holes of artificial origins on the rock near-by is of interest as well (Ванков 1905, 558).

The terrain observations described above although quite unusual in nature, surprisingly did not stir up any reaction among the academic society.

Thirty years later, in 1932, V. Marinov reported on his sensational discovery of a rock relief representing the Thracian Rider near Stalpishte (Маринов 1932а; Маринов 1932б; Маринов 1933) (fig. 2). A bit later the relief became a subject of a special academic work by G. Kazarov (Кацаров 1926-1931, 147-149), and subsequently entered all the issued corpuses of the Thracian Rider, often accompanied by comments on its unique character (Kazarov 1938, 46, Nr. 178; CCET II, 2, 98-99, No 621; Oppermann 2006, 118). Judging from the issued data on its provenance, the relief discovered by V. Marinov seems to be the same already known to M. Vankov. Nevertheless, there are three at least solemn arguments to think of two different monuments:

- Entire lack of correspondence between the descriptions of the scene;
- Considerable difference in sizes (the upper half of the second one is broken, and the width of the trapezoid frame is ca. 1 m in its lower and ca. 0,85 m in its upper termination);
- Presence – and lack respectively, of accompanying inscription.

On the grounds of the facts adduced we can conclude that a rock sanctuary probably dedicated to the Thracian Rider functioned during the Roman Age on the right bank of Oreshe River, in the close vicinity of Trimammium. Unfortunately, nothing survived of it as the rock formation has been almost entirely destroyed along the stone quarries developed there until recently.

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8 Carried out in 1902.

9 In 1940 treasure hunters blew up the relief V. Marinov described (Дойков 1983, 12).
In 1965 under accidental circumstances, on the territory of Stalpishte a fractionally preserved stele with a Latin inscription was found set up in memory of the soldier of the legio I Italica Aurelius Mucianus, who died at the age of 20 training for a land surveyor (mensur). The initial issue dates the piece from the 2nd c., most probably its second half (Велков 1968, 4-7), but in a more recent work on the Roman grave stelae from Moesia Inferior it is credibly re-dated to the early 3rd c., possibly after AD 212 (Conrad 2004, 225, Nr. 368).

According to the information of local residents collected in 1982, until recently the mouth of Oreshe River was thick set with numerous fragments of building ceramics and architectural details testifying to the existence there of a building (buildings?) significant in size. During digging for a cable upon the high terrain north of the fisherman’s port they have found many ordinary and masonry graves containing inhumations and cremations. Some of them held more than one burial. The graves produced a sword and coins (Stanev 1988, 39-40).

The first attempt to systematize the vestiges known so far in the region of Stalpishte came with the Archaeological map of Ruse district released in 1983 (Дремсизова-Нелчинова, Иванов 1983, 46-47). The authors distinguish three sites, the first two of them – the fortress and the antique necropolis already known from the earlier works. The new data of them drawn from personal observations are of interest. For example, they talk about a sector of the northern fortress wall revealed in the course of 5-6 m and preserved up to 1.50 m in height, and describe the masonry: faces of roughly hewn blocks and emblecton of crush stone and mortar slightly mixed with broken brick. Concerning the necropolis, they particularize that it is at the site of Dervisha, and the locals know it under the name of Grobovete (the Graves). They also report that stone sarcophagi have been found there, as well as for two grave stelae brought to the Museum in Ruse. Burials performed in ordinary grave pits have been discovered also on the Danube bank the water eroded. The authors note down that they appear in two levels (some 0.50 m below the contemporary terrain, and the others – ca. 1 m below them), but their date has not been specified (Дремсизова-Нелчинова, Иванов 1983, 46-47, No 99-100).

The third archaeological site registered in the vicinity of Stalpishte is an open settlement from the first millennium BC thus supporting the hypothesis of V. Velkov (Велков 1968, 6-7) that the Roman Trimammium had its immediate Thracian predecessor. The settlement lies over the high Danubian bank north of the quarter where some dugouts have been found in the solid terrain. Judging from the ceramic fragments, the settlement existed during the Early Iron Age, as well as during the Late

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10 During a terrain survey of the sector from the Lower Danube Limes between Novae and Transmarisca carried out according to a research project of the Institute of Thracology and St. Cyril and St. Methodius Veliko Tarnovo University in 1982-1983.
11 The data are presented in the chapter concerning Mechka village.
12 Despite this report, the depots of the Ruse Museum do not house any other grave stelae from Trimammium except the stele of Aurelius Mucianus mentioned above. Nevertheless, it keeps two sarcophagi lids without any inventory numbers presumably from the necropolis of Trimammium (Varbanov, Dragoev, Rusev 2008, 160).
Iron Age (Дремсизова-Нелчинова, Иванов 1983, 47, No 101). A hoard found all by accident and containing 418 imitations of tetradrachms of Philip II of Macedon, Philip III Arridaios and Thasos (second period) associates with it (Юрукова 1979, 4, 60)\(^\text{13}\).

The first archaeological excavations in the region of Stalpishte were conducted in 1983. The research had the nature of sondages, and the target was the antique necropolis at Dervisha site. The results have not been published. The rather laconic annotation only records that the necropolis had been destroyed in the past with cultivating the terrain, and that during the excavations they found thrown about human bones and fragments of stone sarcophagi (Станчев 1984, 90).

Still another necropolis from the Roman period has been registered over the neighbouring plateau-like hill immediately southwest of the fortress. There, during an attempt to plough up the terrain in 1980s they came across shallow buried stone sarcophagi as some fragments of them (one entirely preserved lid of a child’s sarcophagus including) were still to be seen on the ground in 1988\(^\text{14}\).

The report for terrain survey in the region of Stalpishte in the fall of 1999 tells about settlement ruins from the Roman period at four different spots presumably identified with villas, but their exact location is not point out (Вагалински, Станчев, Бюлов, Конрад 2001, 79). Two later works almost identical in content concerning the results of the same survey describe for the whole span of the 1\(^{st}\) – mid-5\(^{th}\) c. one vicus and three villas near Stalpishte (Conrad 2006, 319, fig. 8; 320, fig. 10), and only two open settlements already defined as vici (Conrad 2008, 72, Abb. 2; 73, Abb. 3) respectively.

Summarizing the facts presented above we can come to the conclusion that during the Roman Age around the military camp of Trimammium, similarly to the situation near the other castra and castella along the Lower Danube Limes, a settlement agglomeration impressive in size was developing (fig. 3). The juridical statute of the settlement near the camp covering a large area in the Oreshe River valley is not yet known. Nevertheless, the numerous elements of architectural decoration, fragments of sarcophagi in its necropolises, the presence of villas in the close vicinity and far from the least, the rock sanctuary of the Thracian Rider unique for the Bulgarian territories all testify in favour of its significance and of the well-being of its residents.

It seems quite probable the ruins of this settlement were still clearly distinguished on the terrain in the late 17\(^{th}\) c. and it was them Count Luigi Marsigli alluded to in his voluminous description of the River of Danube published in Amsterdam in 1726. There, within the sector between Nikopol and Ruse, there is only one point marked – Merlan, as the traveler

\(^{13}\) The work cited points incorrectly to the provenance of the hoard (Pirgovo). The correction has been made on the grounds of the information of its discoverer, the archaeologist Stoyan Yordanov, and of archive data in the Ruse Museum (Varbanov, Dragoev, Rusev 2008, 159-160). Still another coin hoard has been associated all by mistake with the same village. It contains 29 imitations of tetradrachms of Philip II of Macedon and Alexander III of Macedon (Дремсизова-Нелчинова, Иванов 1983, 47), and comes from the village of Mechka, Pleven region (Мушмов 1930-1931, 314).

\(^{14}\) Personal observations of the author.
sketched out near it “ruins of a Roman monument” (Димитров 1946-1947, 15, 31). In the later French edition of the work an editor’s elucidation of the figure is included telling about “vast ruins of constructions” lying “very close to the water” about 2 miles up the river course from Ruse (Димитров 1946-1947, 32). К. Škorpil identified this debris with the remains of the legion camp of Novae at Staklen site near Svishtov (Шкорпил 1905а, 456). The Bulgarian commentary of the text specifies that Merlan cannot be identified with a particular settlement on the Danube bank and obviously the word goes about a settlement that disappeared later on. However, the name often appears on geographical maps from

15 A geographical mile is equal to 5 Roman miles, i. e. ca. 7.5 km (Шишманов 1891, 344).
the 18th c. as it constantly lies east of Svishtov and of Yantra River (Димитров 1946-1947, 40-41, n. 18). The identification of Merlan with the later in time village of Dikili Tash (the older name of Stalpishtte till 1934) seems to be quite possible for the comparative similarity between the marked (about 15 km) and the real (21 km) distance from Ruse, as well as for the fact that on the Austrian pilot book for the Danube River from 1789 accomplished by Captain von Taufferer based upon the pilot book from 1779 by Captain von Lauterer, at the same spot we have marked remains (Rudera) from a settlement under the name of Dikalika already non-existing (Алекс 1984, N 45). The journey notes of Domenico Sestini from 1789 also contain some interesting records on the riverside sector of the Danube River right before Ruse upstream (Монеджикова 1930, 12-14). All the “remains of walls named as Delik Chaya, an island named as Kaolik, as well as still another place known as Deve Tashi, i. e. the Stone of the Camel” mentioned in his work we might presumably identify with the ruins and the natural phenomena in the region of Stalpishte (Дойков 1983, 12).

Beside the neighbouring military camp, a significant factor for the prosperity of the civil settlement of Trimammium proved to be its location next to one of the major communication lines in the Roman Empire – the Danube Road (Велков 1968, 7). The question of the bed of this road in the region of Trimammium, as well as in a series of other riverside sectors, has not been sufficiently cleared up in the academic literature. K. Škorpil for example had not seen any remains of it but gave “narratives” of local residents as according to them the road was not running along the swampy Danube bank but from the fortress by Stalpishte ran along the Ablanovsko upland towards Gorno Ablanovo to take to Krivina (Iatrus) crossing south of Batin (Шкорпил 1905а, 455). It is important to note that K. Škorpil did not take up a position on the information available but only included it correctly in his work. The text does not comment at all the sector north of Trimammium towards Pirgovo. Relying on the authority of Škorpil, the roadbed south of Trimammium has been described in an identical manner also in the latest study on the Roman roads in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, the author’s statement that the Czech scholar worked out his localizations “walking over the surviving traces of the pavement of the Danube Road” bewilders indeed (Маджаров 2009, 169).

The terrain information the notes of M. Vankov contain, and the conclusions drawn on the ground of it differ significantly from the ones in K. Škorpil’s work. Vankov reports meticulously that he has not seen anywhere road remains within the sector between Ruse and Svishtov but he supposes that the Roman road was running along the slope of the high bank. He also puts in the picture that the access from the north into the valley of Stalpishte passes through “an opening as before its mouth there is a mound on each of its left and right sides”. He believes that “the road must have been passing through this canal, and the mounds must have served as guide-posts” (Ванков 1905, 560-561)16. Even today the elder

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16 The artificial canals of this kind are specific engineering structures executed in the Roman road construction for an easier surmounting some sheer slopes and ridges. Similar ones (the locals call them kesiti) are known for example along the Roman roads in the close vicinity of the Late Antiquity town of Zaldapa in the province of Scythia (Шкорпил 1905а, 497; Торбатов 2000, 68). The direct association of some of the mounds registered
local residents identify the canal in question with remains of the Roman road\textsuperscript{17}. It is even more important that next to one of these mounds, on the “Roman chaussée”, a milestone has been found with two inscriptions of a different date – from the days of Gordian III (AD 236/7-238) and of Constantine I (AD 317-323) (Шкорпил 1914, 91).

On the grounds of particular terrain observations and inferences N. Stanev, summarizing the results of the terrain survey carried out in 1982 by a team from the Institute of Thracology and St. Cyril and St. Methodius Veliko Tarnovo University, came to a conclusion similar to M. Vankov’s one concerning the bed of the Roman Danube Road in the sector between Iatrus and Trimammium (Stanev 1988, 38-41).

Provoked by the treasure hunters’ activities quite intensive during the last two decades, the Regional Museum of History in Ruse undertook in 2006-2009 rescue archaeological excavations in the fortress near Stalpishte identified with the Roman and Late Roman castellum of Trimammium. For the quite limited financial resources, the studies concentrated mainly on Sondage A located in the southern half of the fortified area. In the course of four campaigns an area of ca. 225 m\textsuperscript{2} was explored to complete draining of the cultural layers (fig. 4). In 2009 a new trench was positioned – Sondage B, transversely to the southeastern fortress wall in order to clarify the nature and to produce artifacts to date the construction of the fortification system in this sector (fig. 5). The main results of the research concerning the stratigraphy of the site and the structures and contexts revealed have been released in a series of preliminary reports (Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев 2007, 262-263; Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев 2008, 346-348; Varbanov, Dragoev, Rusev 2008, 159-169; Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Димитров 2009, 426-430; Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Димитров 2010, 317-319). There are also a couple of works dedicated to particular artifacts and complexes (Върбанов 2009, 102-118; Върбанов forthcoming b; Торбатов 2011a; Торбатов 2010, 41-59; Торбатов 2011b).

According to the view prevailing in the academic literature, the Roman Empire began the effective military conquest of the sector of the Danube bank east of Yantra River under the Flavians (Велков 1961, 78; Геров 1980, 25; Sarnowski 1988, 41; Иванов 1999, 102; Генчева 2002, 8). There are rather solid arguments to hold that up to that time (after the fall of the Thracian Kingdom in AD 45 and annexation of the Thracian Danube riverside to Moesia) the defence of the easternmost segment of the Moesian frontier was a prerogative of a military prefecture especially established for this purpose and subordinate to the provincial governor. Its name has not been evidenced in written sources and yet we can presumably reconstruct it as praefectura ripae Thraciae/Histri/Danuvii having in mind a couple of ancient texts\textsuperscript{18} relevant to the theme as well as according to the personal preferences of

\textsuperscript{17} According to the information of Ass. Prof. Dr. Vassil Doykov from Angel Kantchev RD.

\textsuperscript{18} Ovid. \textit{Ex Ponto}, IV 9, 75-76 (ed. Wheeler); CIL XIV 3608; Tac. \textit{Ann.} IV 5, 3 (ed. Fisher); Iord. Get. 76 (ed. Mommsen).
the contemporary authors (Suceveanu 1979, 49; Sarnowski 1988, 27-28; Иванов 1999, 97-98; Bogdan 2004, 73-77). It is generally believed that it belonged to the type of *praefecturae riparum* representing a peculiar organizational structure for defence of the river frontiers of the Roman Empire preceding the establishment of a stationary linear defence of the kind of the classical *limes* and characteristic of the time till the reign of the Flavians (Suceveanu 1979, 58-59). Nevertheless, we have not any data available so far concerning the kind, the size and the dislocation of a military contingent allotted to the purpose. It is not yet known till when exactly the prefecture in question was active, but still it is certain that under Emperor Vespasianus, probably as early as the first half of his reign, the systematic positioning of the first permanent military garrisons along the Danube bank east of Yantra River began, and the fortification construction in progress at the same time set up the prototype of the Lower Danube Limes in this sector. This is sure supported by the military building inscription from *Appiaria* (Ryahovo, Ruse region), precisely dating from AD 76 (Бешевлиев 1952, 71-72, No 122)\textsuperscript{19}. Although on the grounds of indirect arguments and considerations in the most, the name of Vespasianus or the Flavian dynasty in general is associated with the establishment of a series of military camps in the frontier sector

\textsuperscript{19}The new thesis pointing out Emperor Domitian as the organizer of the Lower Danube Limes in the sector east of Novae (Gudea 2005, 339-341) does not seem credibly grounded and obviously contradicts this indisputable epigraphic document.
here discussed as among them the authors enlist Trimammium as well (Геров 1980, 25; Sarnowski 1988, 43; Иванов 1999, 102). We have also to take into consideration that there are two chronological phases in the course of construction of Lower Danube Limes infrastructure – an earth-and-timber, and a stone one (Иванов 1999, 156-157). The former one has been registered in a small number of sites so far. However, according to the instructions of the ancient military theoreticians, and the corresponding practice established in the Roman army, it seems sound to consent that such a phase might have existed in all of the military camps of earlier date. The time of change of the earth-and-timber fortifications with stone ones cannot be unified in chronological aspect. Obviously, the phenomenon relied on a complex of circumstances as the statute and the technical and financial resources of the particular military unit had far from trivial significance. The examples earliest in date come from late Flavian and/or early Trajanic time and include Ratiaria, Oescus and Novaе (Sarnowski 1983,

The attempt to associate the beginnings of stone fortification construction along the Limes of Moesia Inferior with the reign of Emperor Hadrian (so in: Gudea 2005, 351-359) seems unsuccessful as it plainly ignores the epigraphic evidence as well as the archaeological realities.

The date in the mid-1st c. the researcher proposes (“the time of Emperors Tiberius – Nero – Vespasian”?) for the early stone camp registered in Dimum (the most recent in: Митова-Джонова 2003, 39-55) seems absolutely provisory and is quite rightly contested in the academic literature. On the grounds of architectural parallels some other dates are also suggested – late 1st c. (Gudea 2005, 418) or in the days of Trajan in general (Иванов 1999, 163).
It is believed that the entire re-construction in stone of the military camps along the Moesia Inferior Limes was a fairly long-time process covering also the reign of Emperor Hadrianus (Иванов 1999, 170).

The exposition above leads to the conclusion that in the castellum of Trimammium we have to expect traces of permanent military attendance from the last quarter of the 1st c. on at the latest, together with fortification infrastructure and organization of the defended space conforming to the time. Nevertheless, up to now we have not whatsoever remains of a settlement life during the Early Roman period registered on the territory of the site.

The stratigraphic picture revealed in the course of the archaeological research seems rather complicated. To some extent it is due to the numerous disturbances of the cultural layer in more recent time, but mainly to the intensive occupation of the terrain that continued till the late 14th c. (with a possible longer hiatus between 7th and 9th c.). The excavations in Sondage A showed that as early as the Roman period and the Late Antiquity the fortified area of Trimammium was repeatedly re-built.

The date of the earliest structures discovered so far (Building E and a fragment of a wall of stone fixed with mud in square I 3) is related generally to the 2nd c. only on the grounds of their stratigraphic position as their corresponding cultural layer was entirely scraped up in the course of some later construction and leveling activities at the same spot.

In the sector of Trimammium under investigation we have registered intensive building works under the Severan dynasty, not later than the opening decades of the 3rd c. According to the archaeological evidence, it was not provoked by some emergency circumstances and we have to interpret it as a repeated example of the large-scale campaign the Severi launched to restore and partly reconstruct the defensive infrastructure along the frontiers and in the interior of the Roman Empire. Within the programme of this campaign they erected in Trimammium Building B and a building still not localized but a part of its collapsed roof revealed in square I Б, and possibly Building C still not entirely unearthed. The building ceramics (bricks and tiles) employed in the structures of this time belong mainly to the production of two different military brickyards. One of them associates with the activities of an auxiliary infantry unit that obviously has to be identified with the garrison of the castellum, and the other one belongs to legio I Italica (fig. 6). Furthermore, in the constructions in Trimammium from the Severan time they also used building ceramics coming from private manufacturers testified by a fragment of a tegula (from the roof of Building B) with a stamp unknown so far, containing the abbreviation HZA (fig. 7 f).


Numerous stamps of private manufacturers of building ceramics from the Roman period are known from the Bulgarian territories. Most of them have not been definitely dated and are usually related to the 2nd – 3rd c. in general (Морфова 1959, 648; Ракева-Морфова 1970, 33-40; Морфова 1971, 25-31, Sarnowski 1985a, 50; Иванов 2006, 138).
We still do not know if the calamity endured at an unspecified moment in the 3rd c. (perhaps about the middle of the century) causing a significant reconstruction of Building B was of a local nature or distressed some other sectors of Trimammium as well. In any case, the situation became obviously stable again, and the life went on in its normal rhythm till about the 280s when Building B ceased to function, and a complex of ritual pits appeared in the space southwest of it and partly over its ruins.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{24} Two ritual pits dating from the first half of the 3rd c. have been also found there. It seems quite possible that the pits from both chronological groups were connected with sacrifices closely preceding the launch of some more significant building action.
The life in the sector under research recovered not later than the early 4\textsuperscript{th} c. There are considerable changes in the plan of the fortified area. Then Building A was constructed there \emph{a fundamentis} there, at a spot not built up before and most probably Building B was repaired. A tegula with a mirror stamp of AVXAN associates with this building period, discovered among the debris of a collapsed roof (?) in the eastern corner of Building A (fig. 7 2). Bricks and tegulae with such stamps registered in various variants have been known so far only from three other sites – Kovachevsko Kale near Popovo, Pliska and Madara (Шкорпил 1905b, 263; Дечев 1936, 13; Ракева-Морфова 1970, 25-26; Овчаров 1984, 36). In Pliska and Madara they were re-used in constructions from the time of the First Bulgarian Kingdom although it is not clear where exactly they were brought from. In Kovachevsko Kale though, lately identified with the Late Antiquity town (?) and episcopal centre of Zikideba (Оlteanu 2007, 87) the building ceramics stamped with AVXAN, as well as with numerous other stamps of private and imperial brickyards, appear in large number in the masonry of the fortification system and some of the buildings all of synchronous date (Rusev 2007, 137-139). According to the recent studies, the construction of the fortress is definitely related to the first quarter of the 4\textsuperscript{th} c. (Rusev 2007, 140) thus rejecting the date in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. proposed for these stamps up to now.

Routine repairs during the second half of the 4\textsuperscript{th} c. in Trimammium have been registered as well. Apparently we have to connect with them also the bricks with normal and mirror stamps of RVMORID found outside adequate context within the castellum. The notes of
K. Škorpil and M. Vankov also mention them (Шкорпил 1905а, 455; Ванков 1905, 558), and later D. Detschew published one entirely preserved piece (Дечев 1937-1939, 119) (fig. 7 5). Two more bricks were found during the excavations in 2007 and 2009 (fig. 7 3-4). Up to now all the researchers relate the stamps of this kind to Flavius Rumoridus who held the post of *dux* of province of Moesia Secunda in late 360s, and was closely involved in the large-scale building projects of Emperor Valens along the Lower Danube (Дечев 1937-1939, 119; Ракева-Морфова 1970, 39; Морфова 1971, 30; Sarnowski 1985b, 124-126; Sarnowski 1991, 21-22; Иванов 2002, 98; Иванов 2006, 174).

In the second half of the 5th c. if not even earlier, the buildings were out of use, and septic pits were dug into their ruins. Remains of houses from this time have not yet been discovered. It seems possible the drastic decline of the living standards was caused by the change of the ethnic characteristics of the residents of Trimammium.

In the 6th c. Building A was reconstructed and was in use till the end of the Late Antiquity. We might suggest the same for Building B as well.

The observations made in Sondage B support and partly precise the stratigraphic findings in Sondage A concerning the development of Trimammium in the course of the Roman period and Late Antiquity. Sectors of three fortress walls in superposition have been revealed there, displaying approximately the same orientation. The latest in date of them comes from the 11th – 12th c. Below it lie the remains of a fortress wall in its turn mounting the leveled destructions of an earlier one. On the grounds of numismatic material found within its context it is certainly dating from the years after AD 585. The earliest fortress wall registered in the sondage was constructed of well-hewn stone blocks arranged in regular courses and fixed by white mortar. A precisely shaped side face has been revealed in it as a part of an entrance to a tower or of a postern. The chronology of the wall has not been clarified completely, but having in mind some stratigraphic data, it is related to the late 3rd or 4th c.

The ruins of two buildings of different dates have been also revealed next to the fortress walls. The time of function of the earliest one fits to the period between the early and mid-5th c. The later one is dating from the 6th c., and was abandoned when the fortress wall from the last quarter of the 6th c. was in construction. This circumstance is interpreted as a sound argument that the earlier fortress wall was still in use in the course of the first half of the 6th c. as this circumstance well explains the absence of Trimammium among the fortresses Procopius enlists that were reconstructed under Emperor Justinian I.

According to the geodetic surveying carried out in 2008, the fortified area of Trimammium is estimated at about 2.4 ha (Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Димитров 2009, 426). Nevertheless, it is important to note that it consists of two parts clearly distinguished being obviously asynchronous and we have to mark them as I and II (fig. 8). K. Škorpil

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25 For discontinuance of the excavations the cultural layers in the sondage have not been drained out. In chronological aspect, the maximum layer reached is dating from the early 5th c. (Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Димитров 2010, 318-319; Драгоев 2009, 51-58).

26 Personal observations of the author in the fall of 2007.
identified on the terrain and sketched out the remains of Trimammium I alone as its area figures out at about 1.7 ha. The fortification system of Trimammium I encircles the plateau-shaped ridge of the hill and includes two terraces arranged step-like smoothly inclined to north-northeast (fig. 9). Trimammium II comes as a later appendix to extend the defended area with ca. 0.7 ha to the north, over the steep slope of the hill. In contrast to all the rest of the fortress walls the ruins of the northeastern wall of Trimammium II are still well visible on the terrain and it seems that the authors of the archaeological map of Ruse region have exactly them described in their notes cited above (Дремизова-Нелчинова, Иванов 1983, 47).

The data of the results of the studies so far presented above undoubtedly show that we have to identify Trimammium I with the military camp from the Roman period and the Late Roman period. Its fortified area matches completely the standards of size of the castra of auxiliary infantry units from the age of the Principate (Johnson 1987, 41-42).

The known literary and epigraphic evidence as well as a series of important findings from the recent archaeological research give the opportunity to clarify to some extent still another significant question – the one concerning the garrison of castellum Trimammium in the course of 2nd – 5th c.
Till the radical military reforms of Emperors Diocletian and Constantine I, Trimammium and its garrison were under operatively subordination of *legio I Italica* whose frontier sector during 2nd – 3rd c. extended initially from the mouth of Olt River and castellum *Dimum* to *Tegra* including, and after *legio V Macedonica* withdrew from *Troesmis* in AD 167-168 – from *Capidava* to the mouth of the Danube, too (Sarnowski 1988, 90).

As early as the opening of the 20th c. M. Vankov – in spite of lack in those days of whatever evidence and general studies in this field, suggested that probably in Trimammium was encamped an outfit of the legion from Novae (Ванков 1905, 559). A similar opinion appears also in some later works (Велков 1968, 7; Zahariade, Gudea 1997, 74), already grounded on the text on the stele of Aurelius Mucianus from the Trimammium necropolis. The inscription comes as an authentic document for the presence of a contingent from the staff of *legio I Italica* in Trimammium in Severan time, although the text does not at all prove that it has to be identified with a garrison. The very peculiar military profession of the mentioned Aurelius Mucianus who met his death during the process of his training for land surveyor (*discens mensor*) bears witness rather for something else – for temporary location of an expert *vexillatio* of the legion most probably charged with the accomplishment of some construction works that required the presence of profiled specialists. It is well known that the territorial and tactical connection of the legions with the auxiliary units subordinated to them expressed to a great extent, and especially in periods of peace, in the participation of the legions in construction of auxiliary castra close to their camps (Doruţiu-Boilă 1972, 49). In this aspect the information coming from the inscription in question quite well correlates with the construction activities archaeologically evidenced on the Trimammium

*Fig. 9. Topographic features of the fortification structures of Trimammium (after Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Димитров 2009, 426, fig. 1)*
territory under the Severi. This might also explain the plentiful employment of building ceramics with stamps of *legio I Italica* in the constructions from this period. The reversed employment of the tools normally used to stamp bricks or tiles respectively comes as a cogent evidence that in this case the production was manufactured in situ rather than imported from Novae (Торбатов 2010, 45-46, 55-56).

Most of the authors, confidently or rather not so much, enlist Trimammium between the castra sheltering auxiliary units from the strength of Moesia Inferior army (Геров 1980, 25; Sarnowski 1988, 43; Иванов 1999, 102; Gudea 2005, 427). Until recently there were not any proofs of that available, and only in one of the works the author presumes as a hypothesis that *cohors II Mattiacorum* might have camped for a certain period of time in the course of the 2nd c. in Trimammium (Иванов 1999, 108). This does not seem likely, as building ceramics with stamps of the cohort of this frontier sector is known up to now only from *Sexaginta Prista*, and some authors believe the town was its base camp about the mid-2nd c. and probably as early as the end of the Dacian Wars of Emperor Trajan (Sarnowski 1988, 181; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 220).

In the course of the archaeological excavations in Trimammium in 2006 – 2009 a large amount of bricks and tiles was found with the stamp of CORTISIBRA appearing in 4 variants (fig. 10). They are associated with the production of a military brickyard. The greatest number of them comes from structures and contexts of clear nature and date within the 3rd c. However, a part of this stamped building ceramics (filling in the hypocaust of Building B and in the ritual pits Nos 1, 3 and 5) has not any chronological value as it comes together with other artifacts of a broader date within the 3rd c., and regarding the pits the broken tiles brought from somewhere else have been employed to cover them. As far as the rest of the structures and contexts are concerned (a collapsed roof construction in square I B from a building still unrevealed; a collapsed roof in the central room of Building B; blocking-up the southern gate in the dividing wall between the central and the eastern rooms of Building B), we have registered concurrent employment of bricks and tiles with stamps of the type of CORTISIBRA (in different variants), as well as of *legio I Italica* of sure date from the first quarter of the 3rd c. thus testifying to their synchronous production. It is even more noteworthy that production stamped with CORTISIBRA has been employed in the construction as well as during the reconstruction of Building B. This circumstance comes as a proof of stable work of the military brickyard producing them in the course of a couple of decades in the 3rd c., as well as of a permanent presence of the military unit that maintained it in Trimammium. The unit in question is certainly identified with *cohors I Bracarorum* (Торбатов 2011b).27

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27 The “First Pannonian cohort” appears in one of the reports (Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев 2007, 262) because of the fragmentary state of two of the stamps then found, allowing a probable reconstruction of the last surviving character as B or P. In most of the works so far the auxiliary military unit on the stamps from Trimammium has been incorrectly identified with cohors I Bracaragustanorum (Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев 2007, 262; Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев 2008, 347; Варбанов, Драгоеv, Русев 2008, 161; Върбанов, Драгоев, Русев, Дмитров 2010, 317). This is due to a pointless overtrust of the authors in J. Spaul as in his work all the data of military units with a numerical symbol of I and with names containing the enthonymic component of Brac are mechanically unified in a single entry associated with cohors I Bracaragustanorum (Spaul 2000,
As a matter of fact, there are two different cohorts of similar names, and we can associate the stamps from Trimammium with the latter of them alone – cohors i bracarorum civium romanorum. The work cited in the text (Торбатов 2011) presents in full the entire discussion on this problem together with detailed bibliographical notes.

Fig. 10. Stamps of cohors I Bracarorum on building ceramics from castellum Trimammium (after Торбатов 2011b, обр. 4)
The precise time *cohors I Bracarorum civium Romanorum* moved from Mauretania Tingitana to Moesia Inferior is not yet known but most probably it happened at the very beginning of the reign of Hadrianus in connection with the administrative and military reforms the emperor initiated in the Lower Danube region. Rather illustrative of the circumstances of this pre-dislocation comes to be the inference that when the province of Dacia was established after the wars of Trajan not a single military unit from the Moesia Inferior army entered its garrison, while with the establishment of Dacia Inferior in AD 118 its garrison was recruited almost entirely (with two exceptions only) of the Moesia Inferior former army (Герасимова 1969, 8-9). The appearance of *cohors I Bracarorum civium Romanorum* on the Lower Danube, where it is evidenced for the first time in 125 (RMD IV 235), obviously has to be considered as one of the compensations aiming to strengthen the fighting capacity of the Moesia Inferior army for successful execution of the tasks before it. The presence of the cohort in Moesia Inferior in the 2nd c. has been registered in a series of military diplomas\(^{28}\), as the latest one of them is from the time of Marcus Aurelius and dates from AD 152-154 (157?) (RMD I 50). It is noteworthy that the component *civium Romanorum* has been omitted from the name of the unit, and its ethnonym has been conveyed by the abbreviation of BRAC missing in the diplomas of earlier dates. The association of the cohort with the auxiliary units of *legio XI Claudia* does not rest on solid arguments\(^{29}\).

The stele of the soldier Marcus Maecilius from the Tauric Chersonese is also to be associated with *cohors I Bracarorum* rather than with *cohors I Bracaraugustanorum* (ILS III 9160)\(^{30}\). The mission of part of the cohort sure including at least the *centuria* of Bicanus mentioned in the text, most probably took place in the second half of the 2nd c., when *vexillatio exercitus Moesiae inferiors* located in Taurica was under the command of superior officers from *legio I Italica* (Торбатов 2011b).

The Greek inscription on the grave stele from Gorna Beshovitsa, Vratsa region (IGBulg. V 5180), dated in general from the second half to late 3rd c. (Иванов 1962, 47; Conrad 2004, 264), has been interpreted as a sure proof that *cohors I Bracarorum* remained a unit from the garrison of Moesia Inferior during the 3rd c., perhaps till the reforms under Diocletian (Иванов 1962, 45; Beneš 1978, 20; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 195). On the grounds of the provenance of the stele a supposition has been also proposed that in those days the cohort camped somewhere in the vicinity of Montana (Beneš 1978, 20; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002,

\(^{28}\) August 20 127 (RMD IV 241); April 2 AD 134 (CIL XVI 78); (after January 1) AD 145 (Petolescu, Popescu 2007, 149-151, N 2); April 7 AD 145 (RMD III 165; RMD V 399/165); December 10 AD 145/ December 9 146 (RMD IV 270). Two works (Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 194; Matei-Popescu 2005, 315) mention two more unpublished diplomas of the last constitution. I do not know if they are already published.

\(^{29}\) J. Beneš was the first to formulate such a supposition only on the grounds of the military diploma from Brestovene, Kubrat region (Beneš 1978, 20). Later V. Zubar held a similar opinion too (Зубарь 2001-2002, 65, 122) as he based his arguments on the long since obsolete work by H. van de Weerd from 1907 (Weerd 1907, 284), although it is *cohors I Bracaraugustanorum* discussed there rather than *cohors I Bracarorum civium Romanorum* for in those days there was not yet any knowledge of the latter.

\(^{30}\) The theses in the academic literature concerning the date of the stele and the identification of the military unit mentioned there are presented in detail and reviewed in: Торбатов 2011b.
We have to note, however, that the piece in question does not contain arguments in favour of any of both theses. The text of the inscription proposes only the conclusion that about the middle or in the second half of the 3rd c. *cohors I Bracarorum* was still in existence and actively was taking part in military operations against unknown enemy, when its soldier Aurelius Valerianus, of Thracian origin died. Concerning the dislocation of the cohort, as well as its provincial affiliation in that time, the inscription does not give any information (Торбатов 2011b).

The great amount of building ceramics of *cohors I Bracarorum* appearing in various contexts in Trimammium gives grounds to conclude that it formed the garrison of the castellum in the 3rd c. Although we have not yet any evidence available, it seems rather probable that it was stationed there right after it came to Moesia Inferior.

In the course of excavations in Trimammium they discovered 6 fragments of tegulae with stamps of CIB inserted in *planta caligaris* of unusually great size (fig. 11). They come from contexts also producing building ceramics of *legio I Italica* and *cohors I Bracarorum* (*ritual pit No 1 and among the remains of a collapsed roof construction in square I Б*). They are dated to the time of the Severi (Торбатов 2011b).

Stamps with an inscription CIB have not been found so far along the Lower Danube Limes and in its hinterland, but they are known from the territories north of the river. For the whole span from the reign of Emperor Hadrian till the reforms of Diocletian, in the garrison of Moesia Inferior we have not yet found out a presence of any other cohort save *cohors I Bracarorum* that could have used the abbreviation of CIB to stamp its ceramic production. Nevertheless, the identification of the stamps of CIB with a

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31 They come from two sites far removed from one another, lying in the provinces of Dacia Inferior and Dacia Porolissensis, namely the castra near Slăveni and Câșeii, the latter one identified with the ancient Samum. All the authors unanimously think they were military ones, but the views concerning the identification of the military unit are considerably various. The discussion has been presented in detail in: Торбатов 2011b.
second type of signature on building ceramics of *cohors I Bracarorum* seems unacceptable for the proven synchroyny of the production of both kinds and their entirely different technological parameters. In an entirely hypothetical aspect, we might assign the stamps from Trimammium to *cohors I Augusta Nervia Pacensis Brittonum milliaria*. The information about it is particularly poor, and its residence and duration of its stay in Dacia Inferior are not yet specified. However, in case the identification of *cohors I F M Bryttonum Malvensis* from an epitaph from Thessalonike (CIL III 13704) with this unit is true, then it continued to be on the list of the provincial garrison strength during the 3rd c. as well (Petolesc 1995, 245). Things being so, the participation of *vexillatio* from the cohort in the building works in Trimammium, as this has been established for *legio I Italica*, seems almost incredible for a similar practice of ex-provincial exchange is not known in the Roman Empire. Still another possibility for interpretation of the stamps of CIB from Trimammium is if they have belonged to a private manufacturer. Obviously for all the information we have now available, the question has to remain open (Торбатов 2011b).

A fragment of an ara with a partly surviving inscription in Latin was also discovered during the 2006 excavation in Trimammium. Reconstructed, the text reads (fig. 12):

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cob(ors)…
Seve[riana]
sub L(ucio) A[nn(io) Italico]
leg(ato) [Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)]
cur(ante) […]
praef(ecto) cob(ortis)
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The formulation of the inscription and the appearance of the monument clearly show it is a dedication in honour of an active emperor or for a deity. The dedication is on behalf of an infantry auxiliary military unit (*cohors*) conferred with the honorary title of *Severiana* apparently camping in the castellum at that time. The epithet restrains the possible date of the piece within the years of Emperor Severus Alexander’ reign (AD 222-235), and the sure identification of the provincial governor on line 3 – Lucius Annius Italicus allows a chronological precision to AD 224 (Торбатов 2011a). Unfortunately, the name of the cohort has not survived although the military rank of its commander (*praefectus*) suggests it belonged to the category of *quingenaria*. Having in mind the identification of the garrison of Trimammium in the 3rd c. with *cohors I Bracarorum* grounded above, it seems that it is its name that we have to supplement to the lacuna in the first line of the inscription here discussed (fig. 13).

Up to now the epithet of *Severiana* has been evidenced in Moesia Inferior only in reference to two military units from the strength of its numerous garrison – *Legio I Italica* (Fitz 1983, 114, NN 459-463; IGBulg 205) and *ala I Atectorum*32 (Fitz 1983, 115, N 464). The

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32 *Ala I Atectorum Severiana* known under the same name from only one inscription from *Tomis* (CIL III 6154) has been identified with *ala I Gallorum Atectorigiana* on all recent studies on these problems (Aricescu 1977, 53; Beneš 1978, 8, N 15; Spaul 1994, 48-49; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 183-185, No 4).
only one infantry unit among the Moesia Inferior auxilia known to have an imperial epithet from the time of Severus Alexander is cohors II Flavia Brittonum. However, the epithet itself reads Alexandriana, and the epigraphic document for that is a single milestone from the Roman Danube Road (CIL III 7473), precisely dated to AD 230. It is noteworthy that from the mid-2nd c. at the latest till the end of the reign of Emperor Aurelian (AD 270-275) at least, this cohort was undoubtedly stationed in Sexaginta Prista – the castellum neighbouring Trimammium downstream the Danube River (Wagner 1938, 111; Aricescu 1977, 48-49; Beneš 1978, 21-22, Nr. 60/23; Spaul 2000, 199-200; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 196-197, No 15). The emerging concentration of military units with honorary titles from the time of Severus Alexander in a clearly distinguished sector of the Lower Danube frontier of the Roman Empire covering the river bank between Novae and Durostorum33 hardly might

33 Legio XI Claudia camping in Durostorum also bore the epithet of Alexandriana at that time (Fitz 1983, 114, N 463a). As far as the fifth known unit from the Moesia Inferior garrison with a synchronous honorary title is concerned – the already mentioned ala I Atectorum (= ala I Gallorum Atectorigiana), its permanent camp has not been certainly determined. We have solid grounds to suggest that in the course of 2nd – 3rd c. it was in the frontier castellum of Appiaria, between Sexaginta Prista and Durostorum (Wagner 1938, 13; Aricescu 1977, 53; Beneš 1978, 8; Zahariade, Gudea 1997, 75). It seems possible though that about AD 224 it temporarily was camping in the provincial capital city of Tomis or somewhere in its vicinity (Aricescu 1977, 53; Matei-Popescu 2001-2002, 184).
have been a mere chance. The analysis of the epithets in general imperial aspect shows that this award did not required participation in some large-scale military campaigns. However, we cannot exclude the possibility of activities of local nature provoked by problems yet unknown along the frontiers of any of the provinces to be a reason for such an epithet (Fitz 1983, 135-138). It seems rather likely the example of Moesia Inferior to illustrate a similar situation. We have to emphasize that during the intensive Gothic raids in the course of the following couple of decades the sector of the Danube frontier outlined above became one of the most neuralgic points of defense of the Balkan territories of the Roman Empire. Here is the place to point that the contemporary state of the archaeological investigations and re-interpretation of the coin hoards from Central Northern Bulgaria convincingly testify that the prelude to the devastating invasions from the mid 3rd c. have not to be related to 238 as it is usually thought (Gerov 1977, 126) but rather to the reign of Severus Alexander 34.

The fate of cohors I Bracarorum as well as of the vast number of the Roman auxilia from the preceding period is not known after the military reforms of Emperor Diocletian. Nevertheless, it is certain that in the end of the 3rd and early 4th c. Trimammium was already a base camp of entirely different military unit – vexillatio XII catafractariorum (Popescu 1976, 149-150, No 110; Zahariade 1988, 109).

34 On these problems see Върбанов forthcoming a (I do thank the author for the opportunity to read the text of his work in typescript).
It is known that the cavalry units of the type of *vexillatio equitum* are peculiar of the time of the First and Second Tetrarchy, and with the reforms of Constantine I began their substitution with *cunei equitum* (Zahariade 1988, 77). The origin of these subdivisions has been derived from the equestrian units of the legions withdrawn under Emperor Gallienus, hence their name. Under Diocletian at the latest, *vexillationes* became permanent military units mentioned on a level with the legions in the written sources. *Notitia Dignitatum* describes them mainly as cavalry units (Grosse 1920, 49-50). According to John the Lydian, the strength of any such unit is 500 men, and an officer of the rank of tribune carries out the command (Ioan. Lyd. De mag. I 46, ed. Wünsch).

The fact that *vexillatio XII catafractariorum*, whose permanent camp was in Trimammium, has been registered in Histria on the grave stele of one of its officers (*circitor*) who died in the course of his duties testifies to a maneuver nature of the units of this kind and shows they were in operation along the *limes* as well as inland (Zahariade 1988, 81). According to D. Hoffmann, it is possible that *vexillatio XII catafractariorum* mentioned in the inscription from Histria (or any other similar unit) was later reorganized into the *cuneus equitum catafractorum* (Hoffmann 1969, 484-485) described in *Notitia Dignitatum* as garrison of the castellum of *Arribium* in the province of Scythia (Not. Dign. Or. XXXIX 16, ed. Seeck).

About AD 378 or the time the data of *Notitia Dignitatum* on the state and dislocation of the army along the Lower Danube Limes in Moesia Secunda relate to, an infantry military unit was camping in Trimammium, denoted as *milites Constantini* (Not. Dign. Or. XL 20, ed. Seeck).

Emperor Constantine I is pointed out as the main initiator of the units of the type of *milites* (Zahariade 1988, 85). It is believed that some of them derive from transformed subdivisions of the frontier legions, and others – from former infantry *auxilia* of various kinds. They are commanded by officers of the rank of *praefectus* or *praepositus*, and their military effectives are estimated at about 300-500 men (Grosse 1920, 29, 54; Nischer 1923, 30; Varady 1961, 362-385). In contrast to some other provinces where *milites* figure in the category of *item legiones*, in Moesia Secunda they are included in the auxiliary troops (*auxiliares*) (Zahariade 1988, 84-86).

With the collapse of the Late Roman model of military organization about the late 4th and in early 5th c. the military camps underwent a significant functional and typological transformation to evolve as simple fortified settlements. The service men living in them gradually lost their martial nature and acquired the quality of a local militia (Торбатов 2002, 402). Similarly to the other castra along the Lower Danube Limes, the fortune of Trimammium might have been the same. Although we have no particular data so far, the extension of the fortified space via addition of Trimammium II relates to the 6th c. in general when the final massive reconstruction and new building works in the Late Antiquity have been registered in the site territory.
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