



SARMIZEGETUSA ULPIA TRAIANA CAPITAL OF THE DACIAN PROVINCES

ROMAN IMPERIAL URBAN EXCAVATION

TRANSYLVANIA, ROMANIA

July 5 – August 8, 2015

Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana, the Roman Capital of the Dacian Provinces and first Roman city north of the Danube, is situated in the plains north of the Retezat Mountains, commanding several passes across the Carpathians. Its presence in the heartland of the Dacian kingdoms, a few kilometers away from Sarmizegetusa Regia, the civil and religious capital of the defeated Dacians, is a complex statement of Roman colonial strategies. It is at the same time a very dynamic, cultural, social, economic, religious and military center. With its massive fortified walls, an amphitheater and four Palmyrene temples (a unique feature outside of Rome itself), it is an extraordinary metropolis, channeling the riches of former Dacia (gold, iron, copper, etc.), and developing a very sophisticated cosmopolitan society.

We will continue the exploration and excavation of the structures surrounding the north gate of the imperial city and associated temples from the *aria sacra extra muros*. This extraordinary site and its associated monuments and material culture, combined with spectacular surrounding natural landscapes and beautiful Transylvanian churches and castles, guarantees all students and volunteers an extraordinary archaeological and cultural experience.

Duration: 5 weeks (2 weeks minimum)

Team size: 15

Costs: US\$1575 for 5 weeks (\$450/week for short stays).

It includes:

- excavation registration, taxes, fees and most gear
- housing in a newly renovated farm house, 25 min from the site
- full room and board Monday-Friday

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.archaeotek-archaeology.org

CONTACT US: archaeology@archaeotek.org

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Excavation Context

Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana, the Roman Capital of the Dacian Provinces and first Roman city north of the Danube, is situated in the plains north of the Retezat Mountains, Southern Transylvania, commanding several passes across the Carpathians. Its presence in the heartland of the Dacian Kingdoms, a few kilometers away from Sarmizegetusa Regia, the civil and religious capital of the defeated Dacians, is a complex statement of Roman colonial strategies. It is at the same time a very dynamic cultural, social, economic, religious and military center. With its massive fortified wall, an amphitheater and four Palmyrean Temples (unique feature outside Rome itself), it is an extraordinary metropolis, channeling the resources of former Dacia (gold, iron, copper) and developing a very sophisticated cosmopolitan society

This extraordinary city produced a plethora of beautiful monuments, quarried for 15 centuries both for artistic value and high quality limestone and marble. Medieval churches, such as the early medieval church of Densus, and castles display fragments from Roman Sarmizegetusa bas-reliefs and statues. The forum itself has been quarried for lime for at least one century, when the locals stopped building with brick and started using cement

The systematic excavation of the site has started in 1924 under the direction of Prof. C. Daicoviciu and continued until 1936. In 1973, the excavations have resumed under the expert leadership of Profs. H. Daicoviciu, D. Alicu, I. Piso and C. Ciongradi. At the present time, less than 15% of the site has been exposed, revealing a cosmopolitan and rich metropolis. Our excavation will continue the exploration of the structures surrounding the north gate of the imperial city as well as the associated temples of the *aria sacra extra muros*.



Project Description

Our project seeks to explore and understand the integration of all these imperial structures in the fabric of provincial landscapes. We will continue the exploration of the structures associated with the north gate of the city, including the gate itself with its ceremonial and military architectural elements and the architectonic organization of the buildings (such as the *Horreum* and *Domus Procuratoris*) as immediately bordering the *cardo maximus* near the gate. This extraordinary site with its associated monuments and material culture, combined with spectacular surrounding natural landscapes and beautiful Transylvanian churches and castles, guarantees all students and volunteers with an incredible archaeological and cultural experience.

This project is designed for a small team (15 people) and requires no previous field experience.

Objectives

1. To continue the excavation of the north gate, the *aria sacra* and the structures associated with the *cardo maximus*
2. To potentially locate domestic structures (*insula*) within and on the outskirts of the Roman city and evaluate the possibility of an exploratory excavation
3. To establish the relationship between the city and surrounding landscape
4. To investigate the processes of Roman occupation and the aftermath of the Dacian Wars as it is illustrated by the abundance and variety of artifacts present along the Imperial communication axes
5. To investigate the early medieval transformation of the site



Specialized Skills Taught

The project is designed to be an immersive and integrative archaeological experience. In addition to hands-on training with regular operation of excavation, recording and survey equipment (including geochemical processing and total station operation), a variety of lectures and guided site tours will be provided in order to broaden students' understanding of the archaeological process. Lectures will cover a range of topics from local culture and history to archaeological materials, methods and theories, Roman social history and archaeology. Visits to other sites and museums will put our work in context and bolster students' applicable background knowledge.

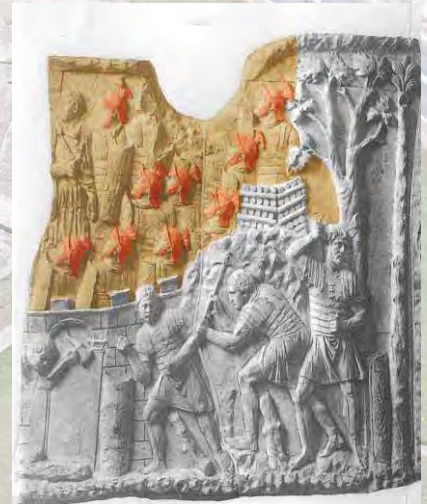
Additionally, our relationship with Romania's premier Daco-Roman reenactment group, Terra Dacica Aeterna offers students a glimpse of practices in experimental archaeology and an interactive experience with ancient customs, clothing, crafts, weapons and technology. We are seeking participants eager to engage actively with both the ancient context we are exploring and the immediate modern context within which we do our work.

Skill sets taught during the project:

Excavation: proper use of all excavating tools, proper excavation techniques as they are implemented in different environments for different purposes, profile management, stratigraphic column extraction for microstratigraphic analysis, sampling, artifact and sample packaging, recording, drawing.

Survey techniques as they apply to: GPS topographic survey, archaeological survey, soil and phosphate survey.

Laboratory: phosphate analysis, flotation, artifact processing, GIS mapping.



Tentative Lecture Series:

1. Regional Overview: Culture History of Transylvania and surrounding regions from Mesolithic to late Iron Age
2. Dacian Culture, Material and History: A synopsis of the late Iron Age in Transylvania, focused on the sociopolitical, religious and military aspects of the Daco-Getic societies that dominated the region until coming into conflict with the Roman Empire.
3. Imperial Life in the Provinces: Overview of Roman social, political and economic life in urban and rural settlements, with focus on provincial administration.
4. Roman Imperial Army: History of development and overview of structures, policy and social life of the Rome's standing professional army
5. Villa Life in Rural Dacia
6. Military Settlement in Roman Dacia: A close study of the deployment of forces in Southern Transylvania
7. History of the Amphitheater: Overview of Roman history of spectacles, and its social and political importance in both Rome and the provinces
8. Theoretical Topic: Interaction, its theoretical development and changing perspectives on Dacia and the Roman Empire

Guest Lectures:

- Dr. Alexandru Diaconescu: In-Depth Site Tour of Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana
- Dr. Ioana Oltean: Aerial Survey and Remote Sensing of Roman Dacia
- Dr. Gica Baestean, Director of Sarmizegetusa Museum: Tour of the Site Museum

Technical Lectures:

- Principles of Archaeological Survey: Mapping and remote sensing solutions, and detailed explication of total station operation and tutorial
- Sub-surface survey techniques: Principles of Magnetometry, Resistivity, GPR and Geochemical probing



Research Team

1. Scientific Director: Dr. Carmen Ciongradi (Expert Archaeologist, Director of the National Museum of History of Transylvania, Cluj Napoca, Romania)
2. Field Directors: Prof. Andre Gonciar (Archeological Techniques and Research Center, ArchaeoTek – Canada), Alexander Brown (ArchaeoTek)

Bibliography

- Alicu, D. Et al., 1994. *Small Finds from Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis 9, Cluj-Napoca.
- Alicu, D. & E. Nemeş, 1977. *Roman Lamps from Sarmizegetusa*. BAR IS 18, Oxford.
- Alicu, D. & C. Opreanu, 2000. *Les amphithéâtres de la Dacie romaine*. Cluj-Napoca.
- Alicu, D. & Adela Paki, 1995. *Town Planning and Population in Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*. BAR IS 605, Oxford.
- Daicoviciu, Constantin, 1945. *La Transylvanie dans l'antiquité*. Bucharest.
- Macrea, Mihai. 1969. *Life in Roman Dacia*. Bucharest.

Field reports from previous excavations (mostly in Romanian) can be found on:

<http://www.cimec.ro/scripts/ARH/RAn/sel.asp?com=1507&Lang=RO&crsl=2&csel=2&clst=1&lpag=20&campsel=com&ids=4>

(or use "Comuna" for *Alegeti criteriu* field and "Sarmizegetusa" for *Alegeti termenii de selectie* field)..