

THE DANUBE LIMES IN CROATIA



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BATINA 1970



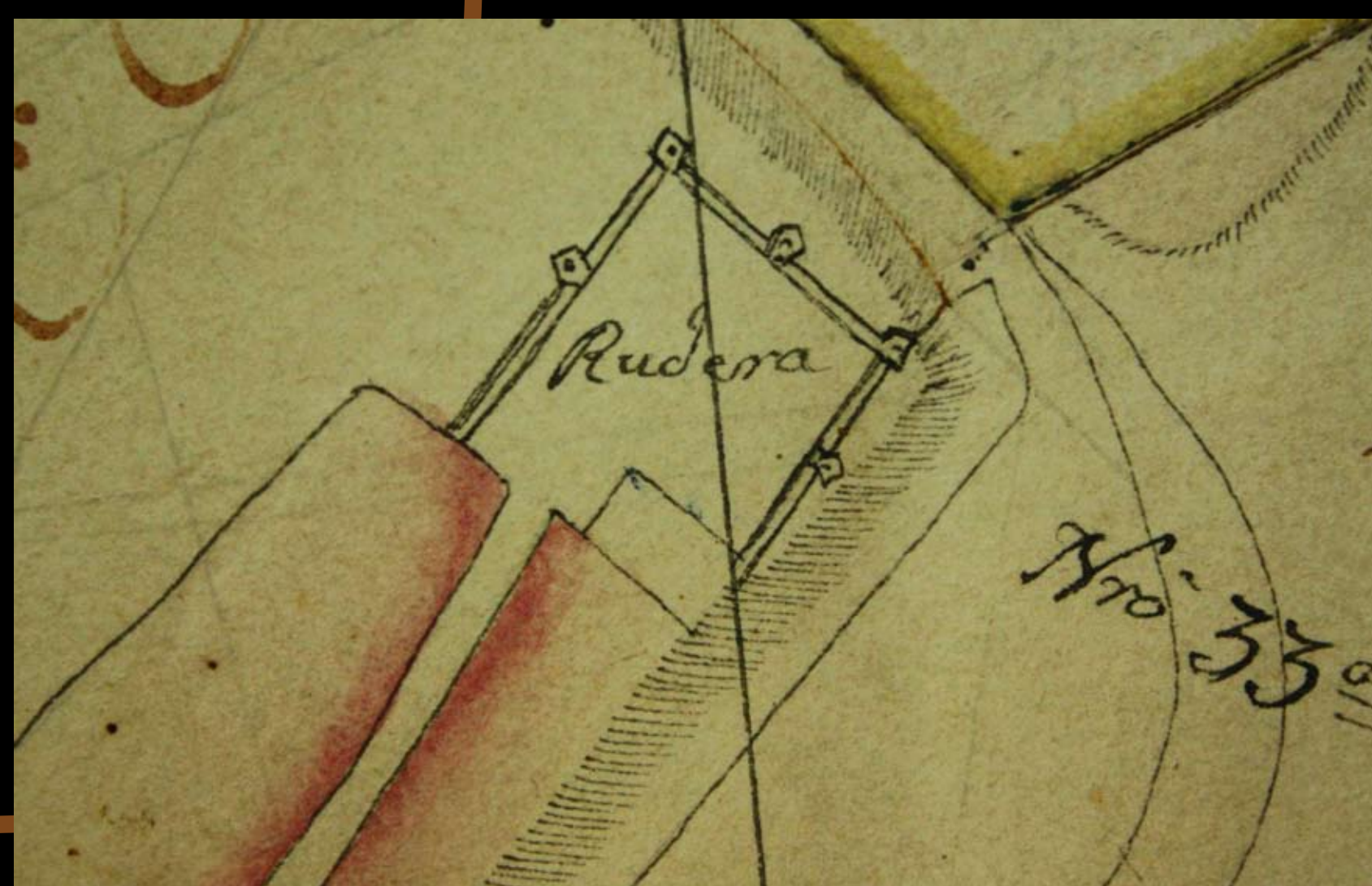
DRAGOJLOV BRIJEG 1987



ILOK 2007



LUG 1988



KOPAČEVO 1798

The photographs used in the making of this poster came from the archive of Archaeological Museum Osijek, Museum of Slavonia in Osijek, Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb and Conservation Department Osijek. They are grouped in the Limes Office photo data-base.

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The Frontiers of the Roman Empire is the first transnational, serial World Heritage Site created by UNESCO in 2005. That monument currently includes Hadrian's Wall and Antonine Wall in Great Britain and Upper German-Raetian Limes in Germany. Sections of Roman frontiers in other countries also have an opportunity to join. That is the purpose why the Danube Limes in Croatia is registered on UNESCO tentative list.

Once serving as the natural barrier on the frontier of the Roman Empire, Danube river today marks the Croatian border towards Hungary and Serbia. Limes in Croatia has been said to follow the course of the Danube, but due to geomorphological conditions it deviated from the river in several places, for example throughout the entire region called Baranja. The northernmost Roman fort in the region was Ad Militare (Batina). The Limes road connected it with the fort named Ad Novas (Zmajevac). However, the exact line of the road is not known. Along the edge of the Danube diluvial terrace, it had to descend to forts situated in present day Dragojlov brijeg, Lug and Kopačevo. As a result of deficiency in research, their Latin names are not known. The road further led towards Mursa (Osijek) and/or Ad Labores (Nemetin?). Then the road cut the area of the Danube bend in Slavonia and continued to the forts Teutoburgium (Dalj), Cornacum (Sotin) and Cuccium (Ilok). The area of alluvial territory on the opposite bank of the Danube could be observed from that higher ground.

The real Roman frontier line in Croatia was the system which comprised roads, forts and watchtowers on the right shore of the Danube. For many of them there is no information available. However there are some hints on the position of a few watchtowers in the records from the early 20th century. Those were probably situated in what is today Veliko Renovo, Sarengrad and Turska skela. The other notorious watchtower site is Zlopolje and two possible positions in Vukovar. Some have disappeared due to erosion, others by rebuilding in the Middle Ages. Potentially the first watchtower north of the Drava river has recently been located on the site Zmajevac-Grovišće 2.

While Limes studies in Middle European countries represent the core of archaeological research for the past several decades, these have in Croatia long been neglected. Research was not as common on local Limes sites, so there is nice excavation potential. In 2008 the Limes Office was opened in the Archaeological Museum Osijek to intensify the National Limes studies. Its objective is to create a scientific database by collecting documents, photographs, publications, new and archive materials as well as to direct archaeological research along the Limes in Croatia. Consequently, non-destructive geophysical and geoelectrical methods of research were conducted on the central part of the Roman fort in Batina. The result is the conversance of the first complete ground plan of several military buildings along the entire Croatian Limes. By virtue of modern achievements like satellite technology, airborne laser scanning and air photography more progress could be accomplished soon. Hitherto, a web-site for the Danube Limes in Croatia has been developed on <http://www.dunavskilimes-amu.com.hr/>. Also, the Archaeological Museum in Osijek in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology and the Section for Archaeology of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences started a project named Archaeological heritage of Baranja. The program aims to detect, register and protect the new, and to document the state of various archaeological sites in northeastern Croatia. That will be followed by excavation.

Many current urban centers on the Danube coast have been developed above Roman sites. Therefore, most of the archaeological research in Baranja and Slavonia is rescue excavation and is being driven by clearing an area for construction. A future challenge is to prepare an adequately in situ presented Roman monument, because there are still none along the Limes in Croatia. Some Roman sites in the hinterland such as Antianae, Mons Aureus and Mursella and Limes sites Albanum, Donatianae and Ad Labores referred to in Roman itineraries have not been identified on the ground. Due to intermission of research continuity during the World War I, World War II and the Homeland War, the scanty archive documentation and few Roman military inscriptions have disappeared. With the establishment of Archaeological Museum Osijek and its Limes Office a new era in the study of the Danube Limes in Croatia has recently begun. From the beginning the emphasis has been put on communication with interested population. It is as important as using the highest standards in research and in the written revelation of sites.



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