

SHORT HISTORY

MEHADIA (PRAETORIUM) ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG SITE

Site description

The Mehadia archaeological site is located aprox. 3 km North of Mehadia (towards Plugova village), at the „Zidină” area, and includes the Roman fortification and its civilian settlement. The site occupies a strategic position at the entrance of the Timiș-Cerna corridor, in a low valley formed at the intersection of the Bolvașnița and Belareka rivers. WGS coordinates for the site’s centre are 44°56'8.98"N, 22°21'2.81"E.

The ancient ruins are first mentioned by A.F. Marsigli in the early 18th century. Later, the Dean of Hațeg and general Nicolae Cena started cataloging the ancient sites of the region. General N. Cena also undertook the first excavations within the site (1910-1911).

Coordinated by M. Macrea from the University of Cluj (Babeș-Bolyai University), the first sistematic excavations were carried out in 1942-1943 and 1948.

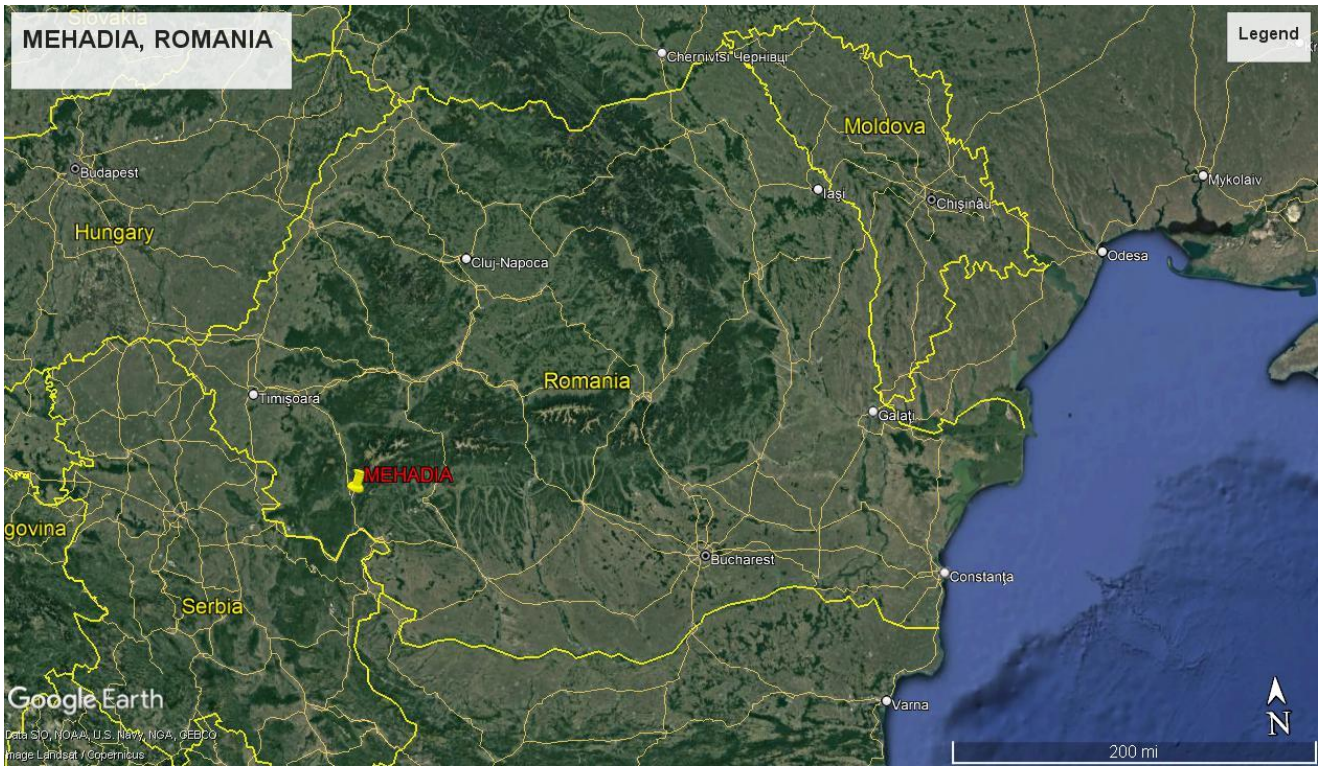
Begining in 2000, a collective led by prof. Doina Benea, from the West University of Timișoara, resumed excavations in the Mehadia *castrum* and *vicus*. The archaeological digs mainly investigated the exterior defenses, namely the rampart and perimeter wall, with the defense ditch/moat investigated on the western (in 2000, 2002) and eastern (in 2003) sides of the *castrum*, as well as the East, South and North gates (along with all identified 2nd-4th centuries modifications). Alongside the digs in the *castrum*, excavations were carried out in the civilian settlement as well, during which a temple was found.

General aim

Future digs will further investigate the castrum’s defenses. In 2022, excavations will be carried out within the castrum’s northern side, between the north-eastern corner tower and the *porta praetoria*, using trenches oriented north-south, perpendicular to the perimeter wall. Stratigraphic control units will be used between trenches, to be removed once all strata have been documented.

The wall, built by quarried stone, currently survives to a height of about 60 cm (reaching 120 cm in some areas). Primary preservation of the perimeter wall will be carried out for areas that require preservation and stabilization, with repairs using material (stone from debris, sand) recovered during excavation. If required, experts from the Ministry of Culture will propose further interventions: use of biocides, consolidations of at risk areas. Every intervention will use materials compatible with the original, ancient materials and following the mortar composition/recipe discovered during investigations by the experts. All primary preservation and conservation efforts will be coordinated by a stone conservation/restoration Ministry of Culture expert, assisted by the National Heritage Institute.

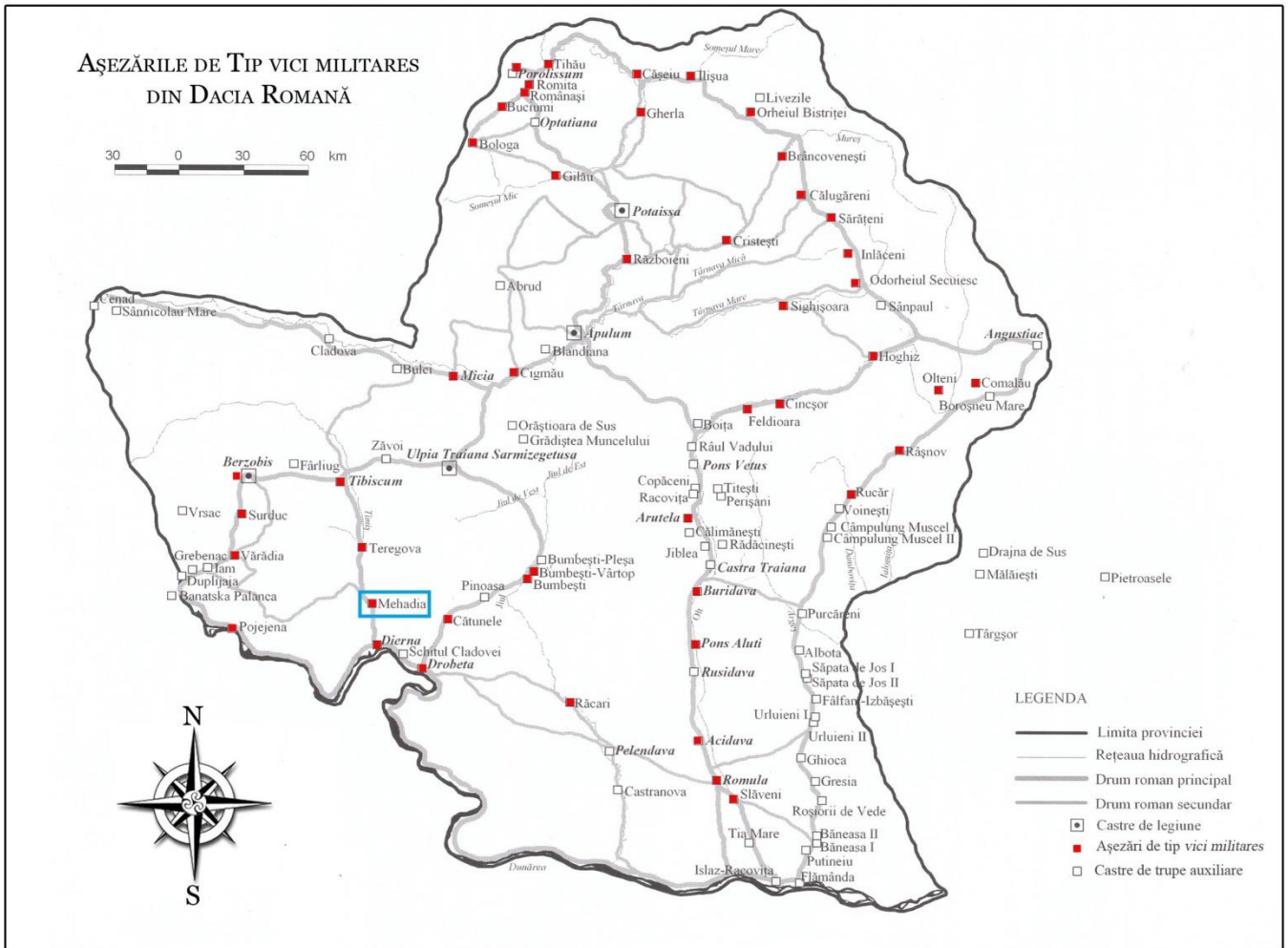
Research team: The research team is from the West University of Timișoara (Simona Regep, PhD, the scientific coordinator), the Timiș County Directorate for Culture (Victor Bunoiu, PhD) and the County Museum of Ethnography and Border Regiment Caransebeș (Dacian Rancu, PhD), students, MA students.



MEHADIA. ROMANIA



DACIA IN ROMAN FRONTIER



MEHADIA (PRAETORIUM) IN ROMAN DACIA



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF MEHADIA