

## Research and Scientific Evaluation of the World Heritage “Frontiers of the Roman Empire” in Serbia

### ABSTRACT

“Frontiers of the Roman Empire” in Europe is an interstate serial property inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List based on three criteria *ii*, *iii* and *iv*. Part of the Limes in the Republic of Serbia belongs to the Eastern Segment of the Danube Limes (on the preliminary UNESCO list since 2015), for which the nomination file and management plan are being developed in cooperation with experts in Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania.

The Roman Limes on the territory of Serbia represents the line of defense of the Empire with a length of 450 km along the Danube River within the provinces of Pannonia and Upper Moesia. The research of this part of Limes began with a systematic inventory of Roman remains at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the first field archaeological excavations were carried out at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Second World War in the Socialist Republic of Serbia, with the establishment of several institutions responsible for research, protection and presentation of cultural heritage, there were new developments in the study of Roman Limes. A great stimulus for research on Upper Moesian Limes in Serbia occurred during the construction of two hydroelectric plants, Đerdap (Iron Gate) I and II.

During the construction of HPP Đerdap I, built at the 942<sup>nd</sup> kilometer of the Danube, works were carried out in the period 1964–1970. There was extensive protective research on over 30 ancient sites, while 18 localities were examined during the construction of HPP Đerdap II in the period 1979–1988. The exceptional results of these and later researches have not received their full scope and form in scientific valorization until today, nor is scientific research activity a priority task of Serbian archaeologists and conservators. The paper has analyzed how competent scientific valorization influences the creation of a declaration of universal value and the justification of the authenticity and integrity of the localities that have been preliminarily selected as future components of the world heritage of this complex nomination.

### KEYWORDS

Limes, Frontiers of the Roman Empire, UNESCO,  
Danube Limes in Serbia

## INTRODUCTION

The Roman Limes, i.e. the frontier of the former Roman Empire (1<sup>st</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century), is today seen as a cultural and historical heritage in 20 countries from the Atlantic Ocean, across Europe to the Black Sea, in the Middle East to the Red Sea, and from there in North Africa, along the edge of the Sahara to the Atlantic coast in Morocco, over 7,500 km long. An extremely large number of preserved remains bear witness to the structure of the Empire at that time, the conquering power and the architectural and construction skills of the builders.

Part of this heritage in Europe is the international serial property inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under the name “Frontiers of the Roman Empire”. The first component of this property was Hadrian’s Wall in Great Britain, which was inscribed in 1987. Hadrian’s Wall is the name of the rampart that the Roman army built at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, at the request of the emperor Hadrian, with the intention of protecting the territory of the province of Britain from the attacks of the unpacified people from the north.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, the inscription of the Upper German-Raetian Limes between the rivers Rhine and Danube in Germany, followed.<sup>2</sup> This was the frontier between the Empire and the surrounding unconquered Germanic tribes, which was built between AD 83 and AD 260. The Rhine and the Danube constituted a great natural obstacle as well as an ideal place for the construction of a fortified border. The third inscribed component is the Antonine Wall in Scotland in 2008.<sup>3</sup> The Antonine Wall is a fortification system in the far north of the Roman Empire, built from 142 to 144 by order of Emperor Antoninus Pius.

European countries, which share the same historical heritage of the frontier of the Roman Empire and which have expressed their intention to inscribe their part of the Roman frontier on the World Heritage List, gathered in the Bratislava Group, named after the city where the first meeting was held in March 2003. The group consists of representatives from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. The Bratislava Group acts as an advisory body dealing with the archaeological and scientific aspects of Limes.

The group proposed the following definition for the frontiers of the Roman Empire as a World Heritage site: “The frontiers of the Roman Empire of the World Heritage should follow the line(s) of the boundary at the height of the Empire, from Trajan to Septimius Severus (approximately AD 100–200) and military buildings from

---

1 Decision 11 COM VIIA – Hadrian’s Wall was inscribed on the List as part of the collective decision for 1987.

2 Decision 29 COM 8B.46: The World Heritage Committee approves the extension of Hadrian’s Wall (United Kingdom) to include the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Upper German-Raetian Limes (Germany) on the World Heritage List on the basis of the cultural criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv).

3 Decision 32 COM 8B.40: The World Heritage Committee approves the extension of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, United Kingdom and Germany, to include the Antonine Wall on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). These three combined nomination files are available on the page: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/430/documents/> (accessed April 2023).



Fig. 1

Acuminum –  
Stari Slankamen,  
the supposed  
location  
of a Roman  
military  
fortification

(nasleđe.gov.  
rs/2021)



Fig. 2

Viminacium  
– Kostolac,  
results of the  
research of the  
amphitheater  
and the camp in  
the period from  
2007 to 2022

(nasleđe.gov.  
rs/2021)

different periods located on that line. Buildings include fortresses, fortifications, towers, road along limes, artificial obstacles and related civil structures<sup>4</sup>.

Three special nominations, for properties under the same criteria and with content that represents the pinnacle of the military strategy of an era, encouraged the UNESCO World Heritage Center to launch the initiative of unified registration of one property under the same name *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* in 2010.<sup>5</sup> This was followed in 2017 by the preparation of a *Thematic Study and proposed World Heritage Nomination Strategy* based on the recommendation of Icomos experts, by which European countries adopted the dynamics of continuing the preparation of serial nominations by segments.

The result of the Thematic Study was the registration of two more components in 2021: The Lower German Limes (Germany and the Netherlands) and the Danube Limes – the Western Segment (Germany, Austria and Slovakia).<sup>6</sup>

Part of the limes in the Republic of Serbia belongs to the Eastern Segment of the Danube Limes. We share this territory with Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. This would be the fifth unit planned for inscription, while the sixth is on the territory of Romania and represents the border of the province of Dacia.

The parts of limes inscribed so far were evaluated based on three criteria. Although the criteria are the same, the explanation is similar but adapted to the inscribed property. Given that we share the heritage of the frontier on the same river – the Danube, we will refer to the explanation for the inscribed Western Segment<sup>7</sup> Criterion *ii* indicates that the infrastructure of the frontier of the Roman Empire – the Danube Limes changed the structure of the landscape and thus represents an important exchange of values. Criterion *iii* is determined by a cultural tradition that lasted and disappeared. In this regard, the explanation is that this kind of frontier system was an expression of the Roman imperial policy that the Empire dominates the conquered territories and that a unique way of life is established. Criterion *iv* testifies to exceptional construction projects. In this respect limes is an example of Roman military architecture and technical development over four centuries, during which standard skills were applied, built and adapted to different geographical and strategic conditions.

The nomination “Frontiers of the Roman Empire” in Europe brought together numerous experts, researchers and other cultural workers in the mentioned countries. In this way, everyone committed to accept the agreed rules, to harmonize local legislation and urban planning and accordingly to carry out archaeological research, protection,

---

4 Koblenz Declaration – Nomination file 430ter, 427. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1608/documents/> (accessed April 2023).

5 Ittingen-Report 34 COM 9B: Report on serial nominations and properties <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2010/whc10-34Com-9Be.pdf> (accessed April 2023)

6 Decision 44 COM 8B.24: Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment) (Austria, Germany, Slovakia): <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7943> (accessed April 2023). The Western Segment also includes a part of limes on the territory of Hungary, but the components in this country were not included in the 2021 inscription.

7 Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment) (Austria, Germany, Slovakia): 3.1.b. Criteria under which inscription is proposed, 169–170.



Fig. 3

Đerdap Gorge – a Roman road cut into the rock, nowadays submerged by an accumulation lake

(Institute of Archaeology)



Fig. 4

Trajan's Tablet in its original position before being moved to a higher elevation

(Institute of Archaeology)

site management, presentation and interpretation of these cultural assets. In this way, the Roman frontier should be visible and understandable again as the single greatest monument of Roman civilization. The intention of the joint nomination is to show that the individual elements of the frontier are closely related and form an organic whole on a large expanse. Furthermore, the intention is to establish sustainable use in terms of ongoing protection, preservation and management and to determine and deepen the relationships among archaeologists and cultural heritage experts involved in the protection and management of the Roman frontier.

Experts in Serbia are actively involved in the nomination process of this asset and significantly contribute to decision-making regarding the preparation of a joint file. The most important obligation is the quality protection of the so far researched and established sites on the limes in Serbia, as well as their competent scientific valorization.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF LIMES IN SERBIA

The Roman Limes on the territory of today's Republic of Serbia represent the line of defense of the Empire with a length of 450 km along the Danube River. It belonged to two provinces - the southern parts of Pannonia and the northern parts of Upper Moesia, as well as the late antique provinces formed on their soil.

The territory of today's Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the Danube region (Srem and Bačka), inhabited by Pannonian and Illyrian tribes, was included in the Roman province of Pannonia in 9 AD. e., after the suppression of the Pannonian-Illyrian uprising (*Bellum Batoniarum*),<sup>8</sup> and with the division of the province in 106 into two parts, it became part of Lower Pannonia (*Pannonia Inferior*), with headquarters in Sirmium, today's Sremska Mitrovica. In late antiquity, after 333, the province of Second Pannonia (*Pannonia Secunda*) was organized in this area, within the western part of the Roman Empire.<sup>9</sup>

Along with the placement of the army in garrisons along the limes and logistic-operational centers in the hinterland, settlements were developed according to Roman patterns and standards. The frontier was defended by an army of legions and auxiliary troops, deployed in garrisons in Banoštor (*Bononia-Malata*), Petrovaradin (*Cusum*), Čortanovci (*Ad Herculem?*), Stari Slankamen (*Acumincum*) (fig. 1), Surduk (*Rittium*), Novi Banovci (*Burginae*) and Zemun (*Taurunum*), where the seat of the Pannonian fleet (*classis Flavia Pannonica*) was located at the same time.<sup>10</sup> Between the camps, a series of observation posts were placed at the foot of the slopes of Fruška Gora and at

---

8 P. Kovács, Some notes on the division of Illyricum, in *Die römischen Provinzen und ihre Anfänge*, Hrsg. I. Piso, Cluj-Napoca 2009, 243–253.

9 P. Kovács, Administrative changes in Pannonia under Diocletian and Constantine, in *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane. Atti del II Convegno internazionale, Ferrara 20–22 novembre 2013*, a cura di L. Zerbini, Bologna 2015, 287–292, 296.

10 About conquests and Roman troops along the Pannonian, v. P. Petrović, Rimski limes na Dunavu u Donjoj Panoniji, in *Fruška gora u antičko doba: Prilozi za staru istoriju i arheologiju*, (ed.) N. Tasić, Novi Sad 1995, 9–32; V. Dautova-Ruševljan, M. Vujović, *Rimska vojska u Sremu*, Novi Sad 2006, 4–27.



Fig. 5

Remains of the  
bridge near  
Pontes – Kostol  
on the left bank  
of the Danube

(Institute of  
Archaeology)



Fig. 6

Diana – Karataš,  
the remains of  
an auxiliary  
fortification  
on the middle  
Danube

(nasleđe.gov.  
rs/2021)

the mouths of the rivers that descended from its slopes, making the area vulnerable to incursions from unconquered areas.

The topography of the Roman era in this part of the Limes is little known, due to the small number of systematic researches, as well as the fact that a large number of sites are located below modern settlements. Research and reconnaissance have so far recorded 36 sites, of which 14 are military bases, 13 settlements and way stations, six necropolises and three localities with registered remains of roads.<sup>11</sup>

The Upper Moesian Limes on the territory of Serbia is traced from the confluence of the Sava and the Danube, from Singidunum to the confluence of the Timok and the Danube near Radujevac, downstream from the Roman settlement of Prahovo (*Aquae*), near the border with Bulgaria. At the time of the arrival of the Romans, the area was inhabited by tribes of Celtic, Illyrian and Dacian origin, among which was the eponymous Moesi tribe, settled between the Timok and Cibrica rivers. Roman rule in the province, established in the 1st century, was strengthened by the establishment of permanent legion camps in Singidunum (today's Belgrade), and Viminacium (village of Stari Kostolac) (fig. 2), created at the places where the rivers Sava and Mlava flow into the Danube. The settlements around the legion camps first acquired city, municipal status in the 2nd century, and in the 3rd century they were elevated to the rank of colonies. Viminacium was established as the capital of Upper Moesia, also of the late antique province of Moesia Prima. The premises of these two legion camps were examined on a smaller scale, while a little more data was obtained from the research of the remains of the settlements on their territories and city necropolises along the main roads.<sup>12</sup>

The success of the Roman army and economy rested primarily on the construction of a quality road network, which enabled the rapid movement of the army on the battlefields, as well as the safe and rapid flow of passengers, goods and raw materials. Along with the conquest of the inhospitable areas in Đerdap, opposite the Dacian territory, the construction of the land and river road network began, which represented a great challenge for Roman builders, and whose traces still bear witness to the feats that Roman engineering realized together with the army. Overcoming the bends, cutting the road into the rocks (fig. 3), repairing the road network in Gospođin Vir are immortalized by inscriptions in honor of the emperors Tiberius (14–37), Claudius (41–54), Domitian (81–96) and Trajan (98–117) (fig. 4). During the time of Emperor Trajan, a canal was built near the settlement of Diana (*statio cataractarum Dianae*) (today's Novi Sip), which regulated river navigation,<sup>13</sup> and with the construction of a 1,135 m span bridge between the present-day village of Kostol (*Pontes*) and Turnu Severin (*Drobeta*), the territories of Upper Moesia and the newly conquered province of Dacia were connected (fig. 5).

---

11 A. Crnobrnja, *Jugoistočni deo Donje Panonije: Topografija i prostorna organizacija od I do IV veka*, Beograd 2020, map 1.

12 M. Popović, Antički Singidunum: dosadašnja otkrića i mogućnost daljih istraživanja, *Singidunum 1* (1997) 1–20; M. Korać, S. Golubović, N. Mrđić, Research of Viminacium and its suburban zones, in *Vivere militare est: From Populus to Emperors – Living on the Frontier*, Vol. II, (eds.) S. Golubović, N. Mrđić, Belgrade 2018, 46–64.

13 M. Mirković, *Rimljani na Đerdapu: Istorija i natpisi*, Zaječar 2015, 55–67.



The bridge near Pontes, from which only four coastal pillars on the Serbian side can be seen today, was considered the longest bridge of the Roman Empire and one of the greatest wonders of the world at that time until late antiquity.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in Upper Moesia, the massive construction of stone military camps began,<sup>15</sup> due to the need for more solid defense, especially from the frequent incursions of Dacian tribes on Roman soil. The wars against this tribe, which ended in the time of Trajan in 106 AD, led to the establishment of the province of Dacia, with which the Danube lost its role as the frontier of the Roman Empire for almost 170 years, until the time of Emperor Aurelian (270–275), who withdrew the Roman troops again on the Danube. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fortifications in Čezava (*Novae*), Boljetin (*Smorna*), Donji Milanovac (*Taliata*), Tekija (*Transdierna*), Karataš (*Diana*) (fig. 6) and Kostol (*Pontes*) were examined on a larger scale (fig. 7), of which only the last two mentioned are visible on the ground today, and which give a good insight into the appearance and arrangement of the Roman defense capacities in the middle Danube.

In the period of late antiquity, there were significant changes in Roman society. With the reorganization of the Roman army in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, it became mobile and required smaller garrisons to accommodate troops. From the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the units were massively supplemented by soldiers of barbarian origin (*limitanei*, *foederati*), who most often formed the crew of smaller fortifications with a central guard tower (so-called “tetrapylons”) (fig. 8), which are especially numerous in the area of Serbian parts of the province of Coastal Dacia (*Dacia Ripensis*).<sup>16</sup> The last major renovation of the limes was during the time of Justinian I (527–565),<sup>17</sup> from whose period at least twenty fortifications have been archaeologically documented or examined.<sup>18</sup> The Roman Limes in the Danube region, after more than 500 years of existence, was destroyed in Avaro-Slavic attacks and finally abandoned in the last decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, at a time that is considered to be the beginning of the early Middle Ages on Serbian soil.

## OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON LIMES IN SERBIA

In order to bring the cultural heritage of the Roman era on the Danube Limes closer to the general public, the most important segment, after field research and documentation, is its scientific processing and interpretation, which represents the basis for every

14 M. Mirković, *op. cit.* 29–31, with older literature.

15 M. Vasić, V. Kondić, Le limes romain et paléobyzantin des Portes de Fer, in *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms III. 13. Internationaler Limeskongress Aalen 1983. Vorträge*, Stuttgart 1986, 542–548.

16 E. Jęczmienowski, The fortifications of the Upper Moesian Limes. Topography, Forms, Garrison Sizes, *Światowit* 10(51)/A (2012) 46–49, figs. 13–15.

17 Procop., *De aedif.*, IV. 6.

18 V. Kondić, Les formes des fortifications protobyzantines dans la région des Portes de Fer, in *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome. Rome, 12–14 mai 1982*, Rome 1984, 131–161.

other superstructure – cultural, visual, artistic, touristic, gastronomic, etc. The study of limes is directly related to the development of Serbia's institutional capacities in the field of archaeology, musealization, protection, study and education, and is related to specific cultural and historical conditions and the development of archaeology on the soil of today's Serbia.

The first research is related to the relatively short period of expansion of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the territories south of the Sava and Danube, in the areas of central and southern Serbia, which were under Ottoman rule until then. At that time, the first systematic inventory of Roman remains in the Pannonian and Moesian parts of Limes was carried out, in which the Italian military engineer, Count Luigi F. Marsigli (1658–1730) had the key role. His extensive studies, published in 1726, more than two decades after field research, brought the first descriptions, plans and sketches of about 20 fortifications *ad ripas Danubii*, a detailed study of the remains of Trajan's bridge near Kostol and a corpus of discovered inscriptions from the Danube.<sup>19</sup> However, the first comprehensive and systematic study of archaeological remains in the area of limes is linked to the pioneering work of the Austrian travel writer and illustrator Felix Kanitz (1829–1904), who, in the period between 1860 and 1897, with the help of local authorities and collectors, succeeded to visit, describe and illustrate 98 sites from Singidunum to the confluence of the Timok and the Danube.<sup>20</sup>

In Serbia, still dependent on Ottoman rule, the first legal act on the protection of cultural monuments was passed in 1844,<sup>21</sup> and in the same year a national museum was founded,<sup>22</sup> which later became the basis from which other archaeological institutions developed. First, in 1884, the first scientific community was formed within the museum, in which Mihailo Valtrović (1839–1915), an architect by education, the first lecturer at the newly opened department of archeology at the University of Belgrade in 1881, played a particularly important role. Since 1899, Miloje M. Vasić (1869–1956), the first trained archaeologist in Serbia, taught at the department. In 1883, with the establishment of the Serbian Archaeological Society, the network of associate archaeologists-amateurs was expanded, and with the launch of the professional journal “Starinar” in the same year, the publication of papers began, which also included research on limes, especially

---

19 L. F. Marsigli, *Pannonico-Mysicus, observationibus geographicis, astronomicis, hydrographicis, historicis, physicis perlustratus et in sex tomos digestus*, Tomus II, Hagae, Amstelodami 1726; V. V. Mihajlović, L. F. Marsilji – prvi antikvar u Srbiji, *Etnoantropološki problemi* n. s. 10/3 (2015) 595–617.

20 F. Kanitz, *Die römischen Funde in Serbien*, Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 36, Wien 1861, 195–203; idem, *Römische Studien in Serbien. Der Donau-Grenzwall, das Strassennetz, die Städte, Castelle, Denkmale, Thermen und Bergwerke zur Römerzeit im Königreiche Serbien* (1892), Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Classe 41/2, Wien 1893; Đ. S. Kostić, *Dunavski limes Feliksa Kanica*, Belgrade 2011.

21 *The Decree Prohibiting the Demolition of Old Cities and Their Ruins* from 1844 was one of the first documents protecting cultural heritage in 19th century Europe. v. [https://www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/istorija\\_zastite\\_u\\_srbiji.php](https://www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/istorija_zastite_u_srbiji.php) (accessed April 2023).

22 The first Serbian modern museum was *Muzeum serbski*, the forerunner of today's National Museum of Serbia. <http://www.narodnimuzej.rs/o-muzeju/istorijat-muzeja/> (accessed April 2023).



Fig. 7

Pontes – Kostol,  
the remains of an  
auxiliary fortification  
and a bridge on the  
middle Danube

(nasleđe.gov.rs/2021)



Fig. 8

Watchtower near  
Mihajlovac – Mora  
Vagei, an example of  
a tetrapylon  
on the middle course  
of the Danube

(Krajina Museum  
in Negotin, 2018)

discoveries in the area of the legion camps of Singidunum and Viminacium, which were also excavated by Valtrović and Vasić.<sup>23</sup>

Until the beginning of the Second World War, the study of Roman remains on limes was particularly intensive in the field of publishing epigraphic material, in which Nikola Vulić (1872–1945), one of the first modern classical philologists in Serbia, played a major role.<sup>24</sup> In the fall of 1937, the first international limes research project was realized in Upper Moesia, in cooperation between the Vienna and Serbian Academy of Sciences, under the leadership of the Austrian archaeologist and historian Erich Swoboda (1896–1964). The result of the project was a monograph, later criticized in academic circles for the lack of original field observations and out-of-date documentation, despite the researchers' stay in the field.<sup>25</sup>

After the Second World War, several institutions were established in the Socialist Republic of Serbia, whose competence included dealing with the cultural heritage of Roman Limes, among which the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia and the Institute of Archaeology, founded in 1947, were particularly prominent.<sup>26</sup> A great incentive for research in the Upper Moesian part of Limes in Serbia came in the 1960s, during the period of preparation for the construction of the Đerdap I hydroelectric power plant on the 942<sup>nd</sup> kilometer of the Danube, between Sip in Serbia and Gura Vaje in Romania. The construction of the dam and the creation of the storage lake predicted the submergence of a large number of locations along the Danube, especially in the section from Ram to Sip, which is why reconnaissance was carried out from 1956,<sup>27</sup> and then extensive protective research was carried out in the period 1964–1970. Research was conducted at over 30 Roman-period sites,<sup>28</sup> and a large number of archaeologists from Serbia and Yugoslavia, as well as a number of institutions, participated in the work, with the Institute of Archaeology as the immediate coordinator of the research.<sup>29</sup> Research in the area of Đerdap is

---

23 Among numerous reviews, see M. Valtrović, Otkopavanje u Kostolcu, *Starinar* 1/1–4 (1884) 3–14; 49–63; 89–104; 121–142; M. M. Vasić, Nekolike grobne konstrukcije iz Viminacijuma, *Starinar* 2 (1907) 66–98.

24 R. Marić, N. Vulić (1872–1945), *Starinar* n. s. 9–10 (1958–1959), 1959, XIII–XIV; *idem*, Bibliography of works by dr. Nikola Vulić, *Starinar* n. s. 9–10 (1958–1959), 1959, XV–XXIV.

25 E. Swoboda, *Forschungen am Obermoesischen Limes*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Schriften der Balkankommission, Antiquarische Abteilung X, Wien, Leipzig 1939. V. review: E. Birley, *The Journal of the Roman Studies* 37/1–2 (1947) 217–219.

26 During the 1950s, a large number of museums were founded, which in the 50s and 60s, within their territorial jurisdiction, began independent field research, that led to a significant influx of archaeological material into museum collections. During the 1960s, the process of forming regional and city institutes for the protection of cultural monuments was completed to a large extent, which strengthened the capacities of archaeology in Serbia for future tasks.

27 N. Mrđić, V. Bikić, D. Antonović, M. Radišić, S. Perić, Arheološka istraživanja u Đerdapu, in *Mnemosynon firmitatis: Sedamdeset godina Arheološkog instituta (1947–2017)*, (eds.) V. Bikić, J. Šarić, Belgrade 2017, 67–71, 79–89.

28 V. Kondić, Antički i srednjovekovni lokaliteti na Dunavu od Dubravice do Radujevca, *Arheološki pregled* 7 (1965) 70–89.

29 T. Cvjetičanin, Prekretnice i brane na rimskoj granici: institucionalni autoritet, rimsko nasleđe i projekat Đerdap, *Etnoantropološki problemi* n. s. 14/3 (2020) 717–744.

considered the largest protective excavation in socialist Yugoslavia and the wider region. Unfortunately, the scientific processing of data and materials, which flooded the museum depots, was largely absent.

Due to the research of the site in Đerdap, several working bodies were created, which in some cases overlapped in their work, and eventually led to conflicts within the small archaeological community in Serbia. At the end of the 1950s, the Committee for Limes was formed at the Archaeological Society of Yugoslavia<sup>30</sup> which in 1959 launched the journal “Arheološki pregled”, in which the reports from the protective research in Đerdap had their own special column.<sup>31</sup> The Archaeological Society organized a symposium on limes research in 1960,<sup>32</sup> and the following year the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts from Zagreb hosted the Fifth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies and published the related Proceedings.<sup>33</sup>

At the time of the start of protective research in Đerdap, with the aim of a more rational organization of work, in 1964, the Republic Committee for Scientific Research and Protection of Cultural and Natural Monuments in Đerdap was established, with a subcommittee for archaeological research.<sup>34</sup> Field work was improved, field documentation was standardized, new research methods were introduced, mainly with the involvement of foreign experts (geomagnetic surveys, anthropological, paleozoological and pollen analyses),<sup>35</sup> and two exhibitions, with accompanying catalogs, “Ancient Cultures in Đerdap” and “Archaeological Treasure of Đerdap” were organized in 1969 and 1978.

Due to the construction of the Đerdap II hydroelectric plant, in the present-day village of Dušanovac, 80 km downstream from the first plant, in the period 1979–1988 18 Roman-period sites were examined, which were threatened by the rising water level of the Danube. The coordination of the research was entrusted to the National Museum in Belgrade, which also organized a conservation workshop near Kladovo.<sup>36</sup> The research reports were published as part of the new serial publication “Đerdapske

30 M. Grbić, Nekoliko reči o rimskom limesu u našem Podunavlju, in *Limes u Jugoslaviji I. Zbornik radova sa simposiuma o limesu 1960. godine*, (ed.) M. Grbić, Belgrade 1961, 3.

31 *Arheološki pregled* 6 (1964) – 12 (1970). The Archaeological Society of Yugoslavia also published in 1968 the manuscript of Miroslava Mirković's (1933–2020) doctoral dissertation, “*Rimski gradovi na Dunavu u Gornjoj Meziji*”, which is considered one of the most significant historical reviews of the limes sites.

32 M. Grbić, Nekoliko reči o rimskom limesu u našem Podunavlju, in *Limes u Jugoslaviji I. Zbornik radova sa simposiuma o limesu 1960. godine*, (ed.) M. Grbić, Belgrade 1961, 3.

33 69 participants took part in the work of the Congress, 19 contributions were published in the acts of the Proceedings. V. *Quintus congressus internationalis limitis Romani studiosorum*, Acta et Dissertationes Archaeologicae III, (ed.) G. Novak, HAZU, Zagreb 1963.

34 The subcommittee was chaired by Vladimir Kondić (1932–1994). v. L. Trifunović, Đerdap 1961–1970., *Starinar* 33–34 (1982–1983), 1984, 1.

35 In addition to the reports in “Arheološki pregled”, the results of the research in the area of Đerdap I found their place in a special double issue of „Starinar” from 1984, Đ. Bošković, B. Jovanović (eds.) *Starinar* n. s. 33–34 (1982–1983) 1984.

36 N. Mrdić, V. Bikić, D. Antonović, M. Radišić, S. Perić, *op. cit.* 70–71.

sveske / Cahiers de Portes de Fer<sup>37</sup>,<sup>37</sup> and at the same time, an edition of special issues was launched, in which five monographs dedicated to the topics of the Roman Danube Limes have been published so far.<sup>38</sup>

During the 1990s and 2000s, the Romanian-Yugoslav Committee for the Study of Đerdap (Archaeological Department) organized a number of international conferences, two of which were dedicated to Roman Limes, and in 1993 the Institute of Archaeology organized a conference on the Eastern Segment of Danube Limes, bringing together researchers from Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland.<sup>39</sup> During the last thirty years, publications related to the research of Singidunum and Viminacium were launched, and a number of publications of national or regional protection institutions were published, which dealt with the topics of Roman Limes and cultural heritage in their territories. Among recent scientific events, for the second time in its history, the organization of the 24th Limes Congress (*24<sup>th</sup> Limes Congress, Serbia 02–09 September 2018, Belgrade – Viminacium*) stands out, in which over 360 scientists from a number of countries took part, presenting their papers within 27 sessions.<sup>40</sup> On the eve of the Congress, an exhibition was organized in the SASA Gallery, dedicated to Roman Limes and cities on the soil of Serbia, with which the accompanying catalog was issued.<sup>41</sup>

The rich archaeological material from the research of the sites along the Danube limes was the subject of 11 master's theses and eight doctoral dissertations at the University of Belgrade.<sup>42</sup> The largest number of topics related to the structure (material culture, remains of architecture, anthropological and zoological analyses) from Viminacium (total of nine theses), which is a consequence of the development of the scientific research project of this Upper Moesian metropolis. However, extensive archaeological material, as well as documentation from the research of Đerdap localities, remained

---

37 The publishers of the publication were the Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, the National Museum in Belgrade, the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, and the Serbian Archaeological Society in the case of the first volume (1980), while the three first-mentioned publishers continued publishing subsequent volumes: II (1982), III (1986) and IV (1987).

38 P. Petrović (ed.), *Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube*, Belgrade 1996; A. Cermanović-Kuzmanović, A. Jovanović, *Tekija*, Beograd 2004; G. Jeremić, *Saldum: Roman and Early Byzantine Fortification*, Belgrade 2009; P. Špehar, *Materijalna kultura iz ranovizantijskih utvrđenja u Đerdapu*, Beograd 2010; M. Korać, *Kasnoantička i ranovizantijska utvrđenja Ljubičevac i Ušće Slatinske reke*, Beograd 2018.

39 M. Garašanin, P. Roman, N. Tasić (eds.), *Die Archäologie und Geschichte der Region des Eisernen Tores zwischen 106–275 n. Chr., Kolloquium in Drobeta-Turnu Severin (1.–4. Oktober 2000)*, București 2001; R. Ardevan, M. Garašanin (eds.), *Die Archäologie und Geschichte der Region des Eisernen Tores zwischen 275–602 n. Chr., Kolloquium in Drobeta-Turnu Severin (2.–5. November 2001)*, Rumänisch-jugoslawische Kommission für die Erforschung der Region des Eisernen Tores, Archäologische Abteilung V, București 2003.

40 *24. Limes Congress. Serbia 02–09 September 2018, Belgrade – Viminacium, Book of Abstracts*, eds S. Golubović, N. Mrđić, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade 2018. About the congress itself and activities related to its organization, <http://limes2018.org/> (accessed April 2023). Event review: G. Jeremić, *Rimski limes na tlu Srbije u žiži svetske javnosti*, *Journal of Classical Studies of Matica srpska* 20 (2018) 2019 361–367.

41 M. Korać, S. Pop-Lazić (eds.), *Roman Limes and Cities in the Territory of Serbia*, Belgrade 2018.

42 The data is on the following pages: <https://sr.cobiss.net/>; <https://nardus.mpn.gov.rs/handle/123456789/30> and <https://uvidok.rcub.bg.ac.rs/handle/123456789/40> (accessed April 2023).

to a greater extent on the sidelines of scientific interests in Serbia. The lack of a clear scientific agenda in Serbian archaeology and the lack of institutional cooperation on a broader level have contributed to the marginalization of limes topics in the academic and university curriculum. This negative trend is supported by limited financial resources or often their absence, for the preparation of doctoral dissertations, as well as the absence of intersectoral cooperation of various ministries, primarily education, science, culture, tourism and youth, which would be stimulating in the co-financing of programs related to research projects of young scientists on these subjects.

### LIMES IN SERBIA AND UNESCO

The study of the Pannonian and Upper Moesian Limes on the soil of Serbia did not get its full scope and form until today, due to the confluence of different circumstances. Unlike the Pannonian Limes, the Upper Moesian Limes has been somewhat better explored due to the fact that both legion camps are located in locations that require intensive research – Singidunum, because it is under the remains of modern Belgrade, where construction works often take place, and Viminacium, a site threatened by the expansion of mines thermal power plant Kostolac. The chance that Serbian archaeology got during the investigation of the site in Đerdap, due to the construction of two hydroelectric plants, proved to be limiting in many elements. Due to the short deadline for research, unfavorable working conditions, it was not possible to examine in detail the wider zone of Roman fortifications, and in most cases, not even their interior, which irretrievably lost valuable information about life on the limes in Roman times in numerous details. Most of the sites were submerged after the research, which eliminated the possibility of revisional interdisciplinary examinations in the long term, if not permanently.

With the change of generations of researchers, archaeological topics related to limes, especially for research in Đerdap, have fallen into the background today. Working bodies, committees, centers, which took care of research and the scientific agenda of limes until about twenty years ago, are no longer active today, and the initiatives that appear in scientific academic circles are reduced to the individual interests. Defining scientific-academic goals, networking of scientific personnel, especially young scientists, selection of research topics, mentoring work and monitoring of results that would raise the level of scientific knowledge about the frontier of the Roman Empire on Serbian soil, is not a task that Serbian archaeology is currently dealing with.

Since the application of the Danube Limes in Serbia to the preliminary list of world heritage in 2015, the projects carried out in scientific institutions primarily aim at the promotion of the cultural heritage at the limes and sustainable use.<sup>43</sup> The first list of 60 sites was updated to the current 35 localities, eight of which

---

43 Ref.: M. Korać, S. Golubović, N. Mrđić, S. Pop-Lazić, G. Jeremić, *Roman Limes in Serbia*, Belgrade 2014, 35–36.

are submerged and inaccessible.<sup>44</sup> The revision of the number of components that reflect the authenticity and integrity of limes in Serbia was precisely due to the small number of reliable data based on scientific evaluation, but also the insufficiently known state of the remains in the field. The long stretch of limes that passes through the territory of Serbia reflects the uneven situation in all aspects: research, publication, protection and presentation. The experts in Serbia have the responsible task of preparing statements about each inscribed component according to several requested questions: how individual sites contribute to outstanding universal value (statement of significance), how complete and untouched they are, what is their visual-aesthetic integrity and how threatened they are due to numerous physical and social influences.

Proving authenticity is based on earlier research, which was not conducted systematically but in campaigns, which makes this data less reliable without visible indicators. However, on the territory of Serbia, there is unique architectural evidence to justify criterion *iv*, which testifies to exceptional construction projects. These are the road cut into the rock, tablets carved on the rock above the road (among which is Trajan's tablet) and Trajan's Bridge, objects that were built in the first decades of the establishment of military administration on the middle course of the Danube. However, many investigated sites, which are planned to be included in the World Heritage List, remained known only at the level of previous, preliminary reports, without more detailed scientific studies of topography, architecture or material culture, which often results in the citation and further dissemination of incomplete, sometimes inaccurate data from sparse excavation reports.

Another important statement relates to proving the integrity of the sites we propose for serial nomination. The Roman fortifications belonging to limes in Serbia, which have been partially explored, are not presented in a sufficiently high quality. There are only a small number of limes components that directly testify to the preservation of integrity. A characteristic example is the cross-border cooperation project *Danube Limes Brand* which was completed in 2015,<sup>45</sup> which aimed to encourage the registration procedure of the Frontier of the Roman Empire mainly through the promotion of cultural and tourist values. For this project, four localities were chosen as the best representatives in Serbia: Singidunum, Viminacium, Diana and Pontes, for which it was possible to claim that the integrity of the remains has been preserved to a sufficient extent to reflect the universal value of limes, and these sites will also represent the backbone of the future nomination file. In this regard, the scientific interest in limes in Serbia is shown in greater numbers by experts who deal with tourism and the economic aspects of the use of cultural heritage.<sup>46</sup> However, the results of a recent

---

44 The first list with the schedule of 60 sites was published on the website of the Institute [https://www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/radovi\\_i\\_aktivnosti\\_rimski\\_limes\\_u\\_srbiji\\_na\\_preliminarnoj\\_listi\\_svetske\\_bastine.php](https://www.heritage.gov.rs/cirilica/radovi_i_aktivnosti_rimski_limes_u_srbiji_na_preliminarnoj_listi_svetske_bastine.php). The updated number of sites has been reported to the 2020 preliminary list. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6475/> (accessed April 2023).

45 <http://danubelimesbrand.org/> (accessed April 2023).

46 J. Jovanović, M. Stojanović, T. Janković, S. Drobñjak, D. Đorđević, R. Banković, M. Radovanović, Lj.



study are not optimistic, the values that make up a quality tourist product are mostly not well evaluated, from access, content, offers in the environment, to the very accessibility of information about locations and their level of maintenance.

The state of limes in Serbia leads us to the conclusion that without a better study, and more reliable scientific data, there is no quality interpretation and reconstruction of life in the past, nor a better understanding of the ancient man who survived on the first line of defense of the Roman Empire during the five centuries of its existence. This brings us back to the observation by Miodrag Grbić, made on the occasion of the state of study of limes in Yugoslavia in 1960: “*We are late in exploring our limes. So far, in addition to countless articles, many books have been written about it on the Rhine, Upper and Middle Danube, which vividly depict the life and history of two worlds, ancient and barbarian, on the European frontier of the Roman Empire*”.<sup>47</sup> Roman Limes in the Serbian part of the Danube are waiting to be rediscovered and studied, in museum depots, documentation centers, or in the field itself. This is the basic prerequisite for a high-quality justification of the historical and cultural value of limes on the territory of Serbia in the process of preparing the nomination file.

---

Živković, T. Gajić, D. Demirović Bajrami, T. Treťiakova. J. Syromiatnikova, A Case Study of the Danube Limes in Serbia: Valorisation and Cartographic Analyses of Selected Tourism Products, *Sustainability* 14 (2022) 1480.

47 M. Grbić, *op. cit.*

## REFERENCES

- Ardevan R., Garašanin M. (eds.), *Die Archäologie und Geschichte der Region des Eisernen Tores zwischen 275–602 n.Chr., Kolloquium in Drobeta-Turnu Severin (2–5. November 2001)*, Rumänisch-jugoslawische Kommission für die Erforschung der Region des Eisernen Tores, Archäologische Abteilung V, București 2003.
- Birley E., Review: E. Swoboda, *Forschungen am Obermoesischen Limes*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Schriften der Balkankommission, Antiquarische Abteilung X, Wien, Leipzig 1939, *The Journal of the Roman Studies* 37/1–2 (1947).
- Bošković Đ., Jovanović B. (eds.), *Starinar* n. s. 33–34 (1982–1983), 1984.
- Cermanović-Kuzmanović A., Jovanović A., *Tekija*, Cahiers des Portes de Fer, Monographies 4, Archäologisches Institut, Nationalmuseum, Zentrum für archäologische Untersuchungen, Belgrade 2004.
- Crnobrnja A., *Jugoistočni deo Donje Panonije. Topografija i prostorna organizacija od I do IV veka*, Beograd 2020.
- Cvjetičanin T., *Prekretnice i brane na rimskoj granici: institucionalni autoritet, rimsko nasleđe i projekat Đerdap, Etnoantropološki problemi* n. s. 15/3 (2020).
- Dautova-Ruševljan V., Vujović M., *Rimska vojska u Sremu*, Novi Sad 2006.
- Garašanin M., Roman P., Tasić N. (eds.), *Die Archäologie und Geschichte der Region des Eisernen Tores zwischen 106-275 n.Chr., Kolloquium in Drobeta-Turnu Severin (1.-4. Oktober 2000)*, București 2001.
- Golubović S., Mrđić N., (eds.), *24. Limes Congress. Serbia 02 – 09 September 2018, Belgrade – Viminacium, Book of Abstracts*, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade 2018.
- Grbić M., *Nekoliko reči o rimskom limesu u našem Podunavlju*, in *Limes u Jugoslaviji I. Zbornik radova sa simposiuma o limesu 1960. godine*, (ed.) M. Grbić, Belgrade 1961.
- Grbić M. (ed.), *Limes u Jugoslaviji I. Zbornik radova sa simposiuma o limesu 1960. godine*, Belgrade 1961.
- Kanitz F., *Die römischen Funde in Serbien*, Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 36, Wien 1861.
- Kanitz F., *Römische Studien in Serbien. Der Donau-Grenzwahl, das Strassennetz, die Städte, Castelle, Denkmale, Thermen und Bergwerke zur Römerzeit im Königreiche Serbien (1892)*, Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Classe 41/2, Wien 1893.
- Kondić V., *Antički i srednjovekovni lokaliteti na Dunavu od Dubravnice do Radujevca, Arheološki pregled 7 (1965)*.
- Kondić V., *Les forms des fortifications protobyzantines dans la region des Portes de Fer*, in *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome. Rome, 12-14 mai 1982*, Rome 1984.
- Korać M., Golubović S., Mrđić N., Pop-Lazić S., Jeremić G., *Roman Limes in Serbia*, Belgrade 2014.
- Korać M., Pop-Lazić S. (eds.), *Roman Limes and Cities in the Territory of Serbia*, Belgrade 2018.
- Korać M., *Kasnoantička i ranovizantijska utvrđenja Ljubičevac i Ušće Slatinske reke*, Beograd 2018.
- Korać M., Golubović S., Mrđić N., *Research of Viminacium and its suburban zones, in Vivere militare est: From Populus to Emperors – Living on the Frontier*, Vol. II, eds S. Golubović, N. Mrđić, Belgrade 2018.
- Kostić Đ. S., *Dunavski limes Feliksa Kanica*, Belgrade 2011.
- Kovács P., *Some notes on the division of Illyricum*, in *Die römischen Provinzen und ihre Anfänge*, Hrsg. I. Piso, Cluj-Napoca 2009.
- Kovács P., *Administrative changes in Pannonia under Diocletian and Constantine*, in *Culti e religiosità nelle province danubiane. Atti del II Convegno internazionale, Ferrara 20–22 novembre 2013*, a cura di L. Zerbini, Bologna 2015.
- Jęczmienowski E., *The fortifications of the Upper Moesian Limes. Topography, Forms, Garrison Sizes, Światowit 10(51)/A (2012)*.
- Jeremić G., *Saldum: Roman and Early Byzantine Fortification*, Belgrade 2009.
- Jeremić G., *Rimski limes na tlu Srbije u žiži svetske javnosti, Zbornik Matice srpske za klasične studije 20 (2018)*.
- Jovanović J., Stojanović M., Janković T., Drobnjak S., Đorđević D., Banković R., Radovanović M., Živković Lj., Gajić T., Demirović Bajrami D., Tretiakova T., Syromiatnikova J., *A Case Study of the Danube Limes in Serbia: Valorisation and Cartographic Analyses of Selected Tourism Products, Sustainability 14 (2020)*.
- Marić R., *Nikola Vulić (1872–1945), Starinar* n. s. 9–10 (1958–1959), 1959.
- Marić R., *Bibliografija radova d-r Nikole Vulića, Starinar* n. s. 9–10 (1958–1959), 1959.
- Marsigli L. F., *Pannonico-Mysicus, observationibus geographicis, astronomicis, hydrographicis, historicis, physicis perlustratus et in sex tomos digestus*, Tomus II, Hagae, Amstelodami 1726.

- Mihajlović V. V., L. F. Marsilji – prvi antikvar u Srbiji, *Etnoantropološki problemi* n. s. 10–3 (2015).
- Mirković M., *Rimljani na Đerdapu. Istorija i natpisi*, Zaječar 2015.
- Mrđić N., Bikić V., Antonović D., Radišić M., Perić S., Arheološka istraživanja u Đerdapu, u *Mnemosynon firmitatis. Sedamdeset godina Arheološkog instituta (1947–2017)*, (eds.) V. Bikić, J. Šarić, Belgrade 2017.
- Novak G., (ed.), *Quintus congressus internationalis limitis Romani studiosorum*, Acta et Dissertationes Archaeologicae III, HAZU, Zagreb 1963.
- Petrović P., Rimski limes na Dunavu u Donjoj Panoniji, in *Fruška gora u antičko doba: Prilozi za staru istoriju i arheologiju*, (ed.) N. Tasić, Novi Sad 1995.
- Petrović P., (ed.), *Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube*, Belgrade 1996.
- Ployer R., Polak M., Schmidt R., *The Frontiers of the Roman Empire. A Thematic Study and proposed World Heritage Nomination Strategy advised by ICOMOS-International and commissioned by the Intergovernmental Committee of the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' World Heritage Site (UK, DE) and the Bratislava Group (Vienna/Nijmegen/Munich 2017)*.
- Popović M., Antički Singidunum: dosadašnja otkrića i mogućnost daljih istraživanja, *Singidunum* 1 (1997).
- Trifunović L., Đerdap 1961–1970., *Starinar* n. s. 33–34 (1982–1983), 1984.
- Swoboda E., *Forschungen am Obermoesischen Limes*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Schriften der Balkankommission, Antiquarische Abteilung X, Wien, Leipzig 1939.
- Špehar P., *Materijalna kultura iz ranovizantijskih utvrđenja u Đerdapu*, Beograd 2010.
- Valtrović M., Otkopavanje u Kostolcu, *Starinar* 1/1–4 (1884).
- Vasić M. M., Nekolike grobne konstrukcije iz Viminacijuma, *Starinar* 2 (1907).
- Vasić M., Kondić V., Le limes romain et paléobyzantin des Portes de Fer, in *Studien zu den Militärgrenzen Roms III. 13. Internationaler Limeskongress Aalen 1983. Vorträge*, Stuttgart 1986.

## SOURCES

Procopii Caesarensis, *De aedificiis*, éd. J. Haury, Leipzig 1913.

---

ГОРДАНА Д. ЈЕРЕМИЋ

Археолошки институт, Београд

МАЈА М. ЂОРЂЕВИЋ

Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе, Београд

## ИСТРАЖИВАЊЕ И НАУЧНО ВРЕДНОВАЊЕ СВЕТСКЕ БАШТИНЕ „ГРАНИЦЕ РИМСКОГ ЦАРСТВА“ У СРБИЈИ

Граница некадашњег Римског царства (1–4. век), данас се као културно и историјско наслеђе сагледава у 20 држава од Атлантског океана, преко Европе до Црног мора, на Блиском истоку до Црвеног мора, а одатле у Северној Африци, ивицом Сахаре до обале Атлантика у Мароку, у дужини преко 7500 km. Део овог наслеђа у Европи је међудржавно серијско добро уписано на Унескову Листу светске баштине под називом „Границе Римског царства“ (The Frontiers of the Roman Empire). До сада су уписани Хадријанов зид у Великој Британији (1987), Горњогерманско-рецијски

лимес (2005) између река Рајне и Дунава у Немачкој, Антонинов зид у Шкотској (2008), Горњогермански лимес у Немачкој и Холандији (2021) и Дунавски лимес – западни сектор у Немачкој, Аустрији и Словачкој (2021). На основу међудржавног договора чланица Братиславске групе за нове уписе на Листу светске баштине предвиђени су источни сектор Дунавског лимеса на територији Хрватске, Србије, Бугарске и Румуније и граница провинције Дакије у Румунији.

Римски лимес на тлу данашње Републике Србије представља линију одбра-не Царства у дужини 450 km уз реку Дунав. Припадао је двома провинцијама – јужним деловима Паноније и северним деловима Горње Мезије, као и касно-античким провинцијама насталим на њиховом тлу.

Прва систематска пописивања римских остатака у панонском и мезијском делу лимеса обављена су у 18. и 19. веку. Након Другог светског рата основано је више институција, у чијој су надлежности је било и бављење културном баштином римског лимеса, међу којима значајно место заузимају Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе и Археолошки институт, основни 1947. године. Велики подстицај за истраживања горњомезијског дела лимеса у Србији дошао је 60-их година 20. века, у периоду припреми изградње хидроелектране Ђердап I на 942. километру Дунава, између Сипа у Србији и Гура Ваје у Румунији. Обимна заштитна истраживања у периоду 1964–1970. су спроведена на преко 30 античких налазишта, а у радовима је учествовао велики број археолога из Србије и Југо-славије, као и низ институција, са Археолошким институтом као непосредним координатором истраживања. Због изградње хидроелектране Ђердап II, у периоду 1979–1988. године, испитано је 18 античких локалитета, који су били угрожени подизањем нивоа водостаја Дунава. Последњих тридесетак година покренуте су публикације везане за истраживања Сингидунума и Виминацијума, објављен је низ публикација националних или регионалних институција заштите, које су третирале теме римског лимеса и културног наслеђа на својим територијама.

Богата археолошка грађа са истраживања налазишта дуж дунавског лимеса била је предмет и 11 магистарских теза и осам докторских дисертација на Београдском универзитету. Највећи број тема односио се на грађу (материјална култура, остаци архитектуре, антрополошке и зоолошке анализе) са Виминацијума (укупно девет теза), што је последица развоја научно-истраживачког пројекта ове горњомезијске метрополе.

Међутим, обимни археолошки материјал, као и документарна грађа са истраживања ђердапских локалитета, остали су у већој мери по страни научних интересовања у Србији. Дефинисање научно-академских циљева, умрежавање научног кадра, нарочито научног подмлатка, избор истраживачких тема, менторски рад и мониторинг резултата којима би се подигао ниво научних сазнања о граници Римског царства на тлу Србије, није задатак којим се српска археологија тренутно бави. Од тренутка пријаве Дунавског лимеса у Србији, 2015. године, на прелиминарну Листу светске баштине Унеска, пројекти који се спроводе у научним институцијама првенствено имају за циљ промоцију културног наслеђа на лимесу и одрживо коришћење.