

THE DACIAN FORTRESS FROM COSTEȘTI-BLIDARU – RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH. THE TOWERS FROM LA VĂMI, POIANA LUI MIHU, PLATOUL FAERAGULUI (I)

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Abstract: The large number of isolated towers scattered in different spots of the hill on which the Dacian fortress at Blidaru was built intrigued the archaeologists right from the beginning of the excavations. In recent campaigns 4 of the 17 towers known until today were tested and some interesting construction details were observed. This paper presents an overview of the main results, a second one is meant to be soon published, dealing with the archaeology and history of the Blidaru fortress in the light of recent excavations. This first part comprises only a short presentation of the fortress itself, of the cisterns and of the temples found there during the excavations.

Keywords: *Dacians, fortress, towers, Costești-Blidaru, archaeology*

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The Dacian vestiges from Blidaru captured the specialists' attention in the Inter-war Period. During the field survey in the "Hunedoara Mountains", professor D. M. Teodorescu from Cluj noticed the presence of numerous limestone blocks scattered on the hill, in different points, and assumed the existence of some fortification elements and of a wide settlement, as well.¹ Two decades later, C. Daicoviciu briefly explored some structures, the results determining him to start, after the World War II, large systematic excavations in the fortress from Blidaru.²

At the moment, one can distinguish from four major categories of Dacian edifices unearthed over time on the Blidaru Hill: 1. *the fortification*; 2. *the water tanks*; 3. *the temples*; 4. *the towers*. To enrich the general perspective on the here mentioned ancient habitation, no less than 50 artificial terraces have to be added, placed especially on the eastern side of the hill, the sunnier and more accessible area compared to the rest of the slopes.³

In the next pages, the first three categories will be presented briefly,

¹ Teodorescu 1923, 10–12.

² The main results of the first archaeological campaigns conducted by C. Daicoviciu at Blidaru were presented in C. Daicoviciu *et alii* 1954, 124–147; Daicoviciu *et alii*, 1955, 219–228; Daicoviciu *et alii*, 1957, 263–270.

³ During the recent topographical survey, over 25 artificial terraces were mapped (the targeted areas were the fortification, the zone with the towers *La Vămi* and *Poiana lui Mihui*, and *Platoul*

followed by the archaeological data referring to the towers nominated in the title, recently researched.

1. The fortification

The Blidaru fortress is placed on a hummock with the maximum altitude of 690 m, connected to the rest of the hill by a narrow saddle⁴ (fig. 1). One of the reasons for which the Dacians have chosen this spot consists of its excellent position for visibility, towards North, reaching the Mureş Valley, and South as well, towards the area surrounding Sarmizegetusa Regia (illus. 1 / 1,2).

Archaeological excavations showed that we may distinguish two main phases in the evolution of the fortress, the first dated, probably, in the second half of the 1st century BC, and the other one at the end of the 1st – the beginning of the 2nd centuries AD.⁵

The major architectonic elements of the first fortification consist of a trapezoidal precinct and six towers (one on each corner of the enclosure, the dwelling-tower, laid out in a dominant position inside the precinct, and another tower placed c. 30 m outside the fortification) (fig. 2). The construction technique of the walls, both in the case of the fortress and the towers, is of Hellenistic inspiration, with two wall-faces of limestone blocks and a filling of earth and local stone.

The access inside the fortification was made through the south-western tower (T I), in the case of which the ancient architects brought in play an à chicane system, to ensure extra protection in case of an attack (illus. 2 / 1).⁶

In the second phase, the fortification extended considerably by building new wall portions and another tower (T V).⁷ Concurrently, on the northern and western sides, large rooms were laid out, delimited by walls build with limestone blocks, but also with mica schist slabs, fixed with clay⁸ (illus. 2/2). On the eastern side of the new precinct, another gate was built, without dismantling the initial one.⁹

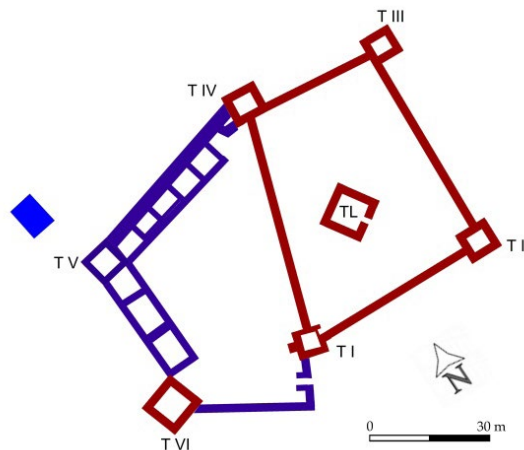


Fig. 2 – The plan of the fortress at Blidaru

2. The temples

C. Daicoviciu has mentioned since 1951 the presence of six limestone plinths on the Blidaru Hill, in the place called *Pietroasa lui Solomon*, without relating them to the existence of a religious edifice.¹⁰ Afterwards, the archaeological excavations from 1986 and 2002 have led to the discovery of the ruins of two temples of the column alignment type.¹¹ It is difficult to specify their complete plan, only few architectural pieces being found *in situ*.

In the landscape of the Dacian fortresses from the Orăştie Mountains, Blidaru represents, up to now, the only case in which the monumental cult edifices were located at a considerable distance from the fortification (c. 800 m) (fig. 3).

For the rest, the temples were built in the proximity of the fortresses, sometimes even inside the walls.



Fig. 1 – The location of the fortress at Blidaru (The Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetăţile Dacice din Munţii Orăştiei)

Faeragului). The total number of the terraces will be reported at the end of the topographical research.

⁴ In the bibliography, the Blidaru fortification is generally placed at an altitude of 705 m. The elevation in the present text resulted from the recent topographical survey and the value was recorded for the dwelling-tower’s area.

⁵ Glodariu 1983, 91 – 92.

⁶ Daicoviciu *et alii* 1954, 130.

⁷ One must not rule out the possibility that, perhaps, this tower was built during the first stage of the fortification; see Daicoviciu / Glodariu 1976, 74.

⁸ The walls of the Blidaru fortress present several distinctive characteristics, which will be discussed subsequently, in the context of some features observed for the towers.

⁹ The idea proposed by Al. S. Stefan, that the new gate might be associated with a tower, is plausible – Stefan 2005, 184.

¹⁰ Daicoviciu / Ferenczi 1951, 48 (on the topographical sketch published in the cited book, a possible sanctuary was marked at *Pietroasa lui Solomon*).

¹¹ Daicoviciu *et alii* 1997, nr. 56; Glodariu *et alii* 2003, nr. 65.



Fig. 3 – The position of the temples relative to the fortress (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)

3. The water tanks

In the literature regarding the Blidaru fortress, two water tanks are mentioned. The first, identified and excavated in 1943, was located on a terrace in the lower part of the massif, close to the Chișetoarei Stream. The water tank was represented by an almost square pit (2,95 m × 3,05 m), dug in the bedrock (at a depth of over 3 m). Its walls were coated with sessile oak boards. The wet environment favored the preservation of the entire wooden structure, therefore the archaeologists observed and recorded a series of important details, from the joining system of the boards with the massive corner beams to their carving and finishing techniques (illus. 3/1).¹²

The second water tank was discovered in the immediate vicinity of the fortification. The construction, unique up to this point in the Dacian world, consisted of a parallelepiped “chamber”, with an arch in the superior part (illus. 3/2). Its dimensions, measured on the inside, were 8 m in length, 6,2 m wide, and 4 m high, without taking in account the height of the arch. The outer walls, c. 2 m thick, were built with mortar bonded rocks. On the long sides, the walls were doubled with less thick abutments, made also with rocks and mortar, for sustaining the limestone blocks arch. Different successive layers of plaster were applied on the walls for ensuring the impermeability of the water tank. The ancient architects also paid special attention to the floor, composed of several layers as well.¹³

Both the water tanks were fed through pipes composed of terracotta tubes which, at least in the second case, must have had at least 100 m in length (the distance from the water tank to the nearest spring).¹⁴

¹² Daicoviciu / Ferenczi 1951, 24–25; Gheorghiu 1997–1998, 179–180.

¹³ Daicoviciu *et alii* 1954, 140–143.

¹⁴ Gheorghiu 1997–1998, 179–180.

Pipes designed for water supply were also identified at *Pietroasa lui Solomon*, *Poiana Perții* and the zone between *Curmătura Faeragului* and *Poiana Popii*.¹⁵ In this last spot, a pipe was discovered *in situ* for a distance of 8 m, and, hypothetically, it started from a spring close to the fortification (illus. 4/1).¹⁶ In this case, the entire route of the pipe would measure some hundred meters¹⁷, but it is also possible that the pipe was connected to a water reservoir, placed on a short distance *Curmătura Faeragului* and undiscovered so far.

Recently, during the topographical survey, a large pit was spotted below *Platoul Faeragului* (c. 10 m in diameter, 3 m deep), which probably indicates the presence of another water tank (illus. 4/2).

4. The towers

Initially, C. Daicoviciu estimated a number of 18–20 towers on the Blidaru Hill.¹⁸ Most of them were confirmed by previous and recent archaeological excavations. Yet in some cases, the existence of the towers was presumed just by taking in account the limestone blocks visible on the surface, whereas it was later observed that in fact these blocks were not *in situ*, but they were dislocated from other nearby towers.¹⁹

The documentation available at this moment allows the placing in plan of 17 towers, divided in three main groups: a. the towers scattered on *Culmea Faeragului* (including here the towers from *Poiana lui Mișu* and *La Vămi*); b. the towers

¹⁵ Iaroslavschi 1995, 136; Gheorghiu 2005, 93.

¹⁶ Iaroslavschi 1995, 136.

¹⁷ I. Glodariu estimated the ancient length of this pipe at 1,5 km – Glodariu 1983, 39.

¹⁸ Daicoviciu *et alii* 1954, 125.

¹⁹ For example, the possible tower mentioned near *Poiana lui Mișu* – Daicoviciu / Ferenczi 1951, 47, fig. 30.

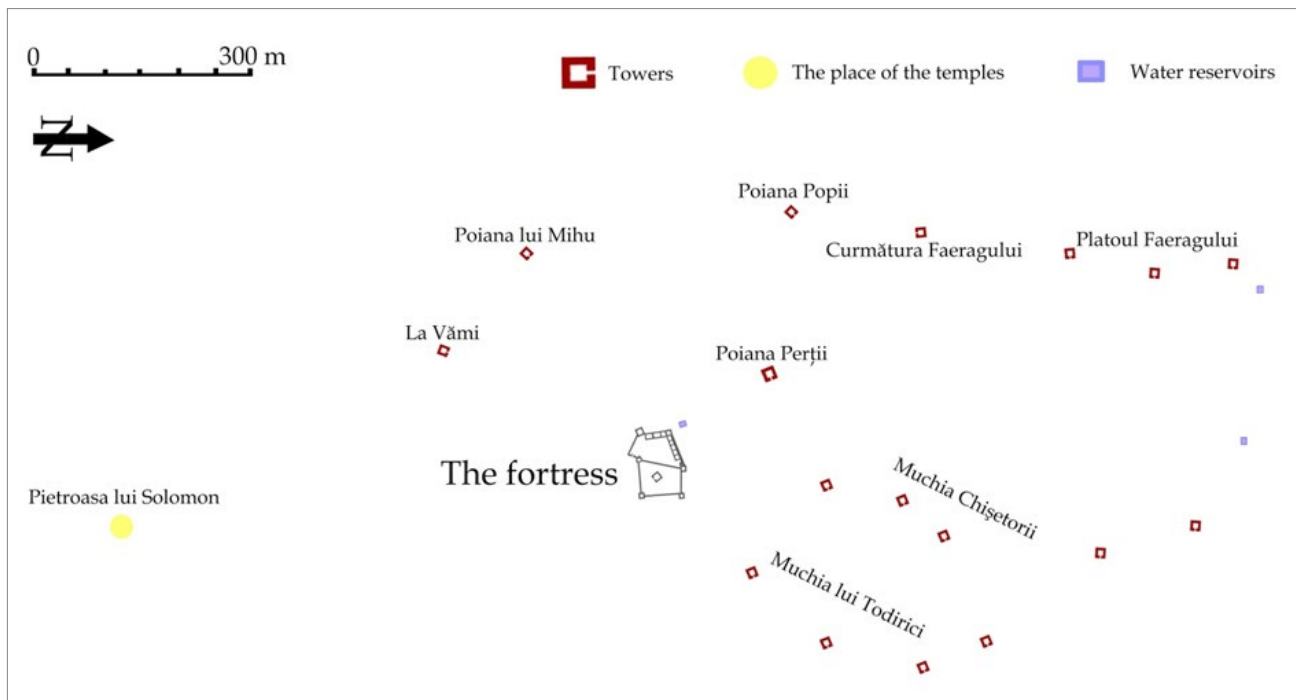


Fig. 4 – The position of the towers relative to the fortress of Blidaru

on Muchia Chișetoarei; c. the towers on Muchia lui Todirici (fig. 4). Their layout is not random, because portions of the ancient road were located in the mentioned areas. It appears that the main access route from Costești to the Blidaru fortress followed the Grădiște Valley for c. 500 m, after which went up the Muchia Chișetoarei.²⁰

The ancient road is still visible today on several segments, some of a few hundred meters long. Such a situation is present near the tower from *Poiana Popii*, where in the mica schist bedrock the track of the wagon wheels is still visible (fig. 5).

Since 2003, the archaeological investigations from Blidaru focused on four of the tower observed on *Culmea Faeragului*. Therefore, the excavations took place in the points known as *La Vămi*, *Poiana lui Mihu* and *Platoul Faeragului*.

La Vămi

The tower from *La Vămi* is an important point in the general topography of the Blidaru Hill, because it is the most southern element of the tower network from Blidaru and is placed at the highest altitude (727 m). Furthermore, the only access route towards *Pietrosa lui Solomon*, where the temples were placed, and the Luncani – Târsa plateau runs through this point. From here one may reach Grădiștea de Munte – Sarmizegetusa Regia following the mountain road, without any major difficulties.

The tower's terrace measures almost 500 m² and is located at c. 300 m away from the fortification (illus. 5).

The dimensions of the quadrilateral tower are: the exterior side measures 11,9 m, the interior side 6,8 m, and the wall's thickness is 2,6 m²¹. The building technique is of Hellenistic inspiration, with two wall-faces with of limestone blocks and, between them, a filling from earth mixed with

mica schist fragments (the local rock). The wall-faces were connected through wooden beams, the heads of which were placed in specially carved sockets in the limestone blocks.



Fig. 5 – Detail of the ancient road leading to the fortress of Blidaru (Archive of the Archaeological Sites "Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei")

From the data collected from the majority of the wall segments, a maximum of five courses of limestone blocks were identified, from which only three were visible in Antiquity

²⁰ Daicoviciu et alii 1955, 227.

²¹ Glodariu et alii 2004, nr. 60.

(the foundation blocks were placed in a ditch dug in the bedrock). The courses had “headers”, placed relatively regularly, in the sense that after 3–4 “stretchers”, blocks laid longitudinally, came a block set perpendicularly (illus. 6/1).

The corner blocks had the common vertical nervures, present at almost all the towers in the area of the Dacian fortresses. Also at the tower’s corners, it was noted that massive blocks were placed in the emplecton, at their turn being crossed over by channels for fixing the wooden beams au (illus. 6/2). The discovery permitted to mark out a constructional detail, namely the fact that the blocks were at first fixed in the wall-faces and the gutters for the beams were executed afterwards.

The entrance, placed on the north-eastern side, presented a pavement of mica schist slabs (actually, the emplecton of that wall segment), covered with a very fine limestone chipping (illus. 7/1).²²

Inside the tower, at a distance of 2,15 m from the entrance, an almost circular fire installation was found, with the maximum diameter of 1,35–1,40 m (illus. 7/2).²³

*Poiana lui Mihi*²⁴

The denominated place is located at 160 m straight from *La Vămi* and c. 300 m south-west of the fortification (712 m in altitude). For building the tower, a platform of c. 450 m² was set up by leveling the bedrock.



Fig. 6 – General view of the tower at Poiana lui Mihi (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)

The archaeological excavations uncovered here a square tower with the following dimensions: the length of the

exterior side is 11,75 m, of the interior side is 6,15 m, and the wall’s thickness is 2,80 m, adding the fact that on some segments it reaches even 2,90 m. The entrance, set up on the north-eastern side, is 1,7 m wide (fig. 6).

The construction technique of the walls is, generally, similar to the one described for the *La Vămi* tower, but with series of particularities which will be highlighted below. Thus, it was observed that the wall was composed on almost all sides of four courses of limestone blocks. The base blocks were arranged in a ditch dug in the bedrock and stood out for 8–10 cm outside the line of the next course. On the south-eastern side, on the interior, it was noted that the wall did not have four courses on the whole length, but only near the corner (illus. 8/1, 2). As for the rest, the blocks were laid out directly on the previously leveled bedrock and on a bed of mica schist fragments.

Along the exterior and interior wall-faces, a ditch of 0,30 – 0,40 m wide and 0,15 – 0,20 m deep was dug in the bedrock, filled in Antiquity with limestone chipping and small fragments of mica schist.

The corner blocks present the same type of nervures observed at the *La Vămi* tower and the other towers from the area of the Dacian fortresses in the Orăștie Mountains. Among the analogies with other towers in the region lies the letter J, incised on one of the blocks (illus. 9/1).²⁵

On the south-eastern side of the tower, the emplecton was preserved very well, therefore it was possible to mark

out some important constructional details. The superior part of the emplecton was made from mica schist fragments compactly fixed with clay. The elaborated method for setting the stones and the high level of their stability indicate that, very likely, the clay was damped during the work on the emplecton.²⁶ The exceptional state of conservation enabled the identification of

the tracks of the transversal and longitudinal wooden beams (fig. 7). The longitudinal beams were 23–25cm wide and c. 10 cm thick, while the transversal ones measured 17–19 cm wide and 10 cm thick.

²² Pescaru / Pescaru / Bodó 2004, 49-50.

²³ Glodariu *et alii* 2006, nr. 126.

²⁴ The archaeological campaigns took place between 2007–2011.

²⁵ Regarding the Greek letters on the limestone blocks from several Dacian constructions, see Glodariu 1997, 65-84.

²⁶ A similar technique is mentioned at Căpâlna; see Glodariu / Moga 1989, 39.



Fig. 7 – South-eastern wall of the tower at Poiana lui Mihi – detail of the wooden beam structure (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)

Another detail refers to the fact that the blocks from the last course were partially covered by a layer of mica schist fragments fixed with clay. In other words, it is clear that the tower was built with limestone blocks only up to this level.²⁷ Most probably, its structure continued with a system of boxes from wooden beams and boards, filled with clay (illus. 9/2). The hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the elevated emblecton with 11–12 cm above the level of the limestone blocks, thus obtaining a “border” which helped fixing the beams from the base of the above mentioned structure (some of the blocks from the superior course had been specially tooled to have such a border) (illus. 10/1). This building technique is not unique in the area of the Blidaru fortress, being recorded until today for some segments of the fortification wall²⁸, and for the tower from *Poiana Perții* as well (illus. 10/2).²⁹

Inside, but mostly outside the edifice, numerous fragments of tiles (of “Greek type”) and ridge tiles were unearthed (illus. 11). Their identification on all sides points to the fact that, probably, the tower had a hipped roof.

²⁷ As pointed above, the tower’s walls were composed of four courses of blocks (with the exception of the south-eastern side, having a total height of c. 1,80 m (the height of the base blocks, laid in the ditch dug in the bedrock, can only be approximated). In Antiquity, they were visible only for the height of three courses.

²⁸ Glodariu 1983, 92; Daicovicu *et alii* 1954, 34, fig. 10, b.

²⁹ The author of the archaeological report regarding the tower from *Poiana Perții*, Ștefan Ferenczi, noted that this tower had only six courses of limestone blocks because “the last superior row, for an intact portion observed by us, up to the two margins of the exterior and interior faces, was covered with a layer of local stone slabs properly arranged. We must thus presume that the superior part of the tower was made of wood”. –Daicovicu *et alii* 1973, 73-74.

The archaeological investigation of the south-eastern side helped observing another curious, at first, aspect. On the outside, there is not a direct contact between the base blocks and the ones from the following course, but they are separated by a 6–10 cm space (illus.12/1,2). The same “anomaly” was visible for the interior as well, where some of the blocks do not lay straight on the bedrock, but are set on a distance of 3 cm up to 9 cm (illus. 8/1,2). It has to be pointed out that in the southern corner, some blocks had the beam-socket in the lower part, an unusual situation (illus. 9/1); also for this corner, it was observed that between the blocks from the first course and the ones from the next course, limestone slabs were slid in (illus. 13).

Of course, this case does not prove the casualness of the builders, but, very likely, the consequences of a seismic phenomenon.³⁰ The vertical dislocation of the blocks from their initial position was not very evident for the ancients, because it was below their ground level. In turn, the deterioration of the wall was visible in the corner, thus reparations took place, as demonstrated by the adding of the slabs and the repositioning of some blocks. We do not know how much the

tower was damaged, but its repairing and the reduced number of artifacts discovered inside (mostly incomplete ceramic vessels), prove that it was not abandoned after the natural phenomenon.

Fragments from six ceramic vessels were found inside the tower: an amphora, a pedestaled dish, two cooking jars and another two recipients in a conservation stage that did not permit to establish precisely their type (illus. 14 / 5–9).

At approximately 1 m outside the south-eastern wall of the tower, a pit dug in the bedrock appeared, of almost rectangular shape with rounded corners (the side measured 1,10–1,15 m, the depth being 0,6 m). Inside, among tile and ridge-tile fragments, shards from a storage vessel and half of a dish were found (the dish bears graphic signs incised both before and after the firing, on the outside of the base) (illus. 15/1,2).

Ceramic material was also found on a terrace between the towers from *La Vămi* and *Poiana lui Mihi*, in the fill of a pit dug in the bedrock in (the pit had the shape of a square with the side measuring c. 1,7 m, having a circular extension on the south-eastern) (illus. 16). The shards come from three storage vessels (illus. 14 / 1, 2).

On the same terrace, another three pits were identified, also dug in the local rock, of quasi-circular form (the maximum diameter between 0,9–1 m), of 1–1,3 m deep. Their fill did not contain any kind of artifacts. Probably, they had the role of small sized “water tanks”, in which pluvial water was collected (illus. 17/1,2).

Also in the vicinity of the tower from *Poiana lui Mihi*, a

³⁰ Of course, the scenario of a massive landslide may be taken in consideration, all the more so since the geological structure of the area favours such a phenomenon, but this hypothesis is less plausible because the rock platform on which the tower was built did not present any cracks or other traces of this sort.



Fig. 8 – Faeragu plateau – view of the interior of tower nr. 1 (foto – Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)

fragmentary iron blade was discovered s-a aflat o lamă de fier, possibly from a *sica* type weapon (illus. 18/1).

The towers from Platoul Faeragului

The hence three towers were laid out almost collinearly on a plateau of c. 300 m long and 20 to 40 m wide, oriented approximately North-South. The maximum altitude, recorded in the middle of the plateau, is 563 m. Their position conferred optimum visibility towards the fortress from Costești and the Mureș Valley (illus. 18/2).

The first research, without being exhaustive, was undertaken in 1944 under the coordination of C. Daicoviciu.³¹ Therefore, the archaeological investigations restarted in 2013, focusing at first on the tower at the southern end (conventionally named TI) and the one in the middle of the plateau (TII).³² Because the investigations are at the beginning, the pages below will draw a general picture of the current results.

The southern tower is placed on a quasi-rectangular terrace, with the side of c. 15 m, situated just under the general level of the plateau. Three wall segments were identified here. Only three limestone blocks were preserved from the first one, placed in a ditch dug in the bedrock, belonging to the interior wall-face, and a part of the emplecton (illus. 19). In the north-western corner of the section traced in 2013,

³¹ C. Daicoviciu indicated the following dimensions for the towers: the southern tower had the exterior side of 11,4 m and the wall's thickness of 2,6 m; the middle tower had the exterior sides of 11,5 X 11,15 m and the wall's thickness of 2,6 m; the northern tower had the exterior side of 11,5 m and the wall's thickness of 2,6 m. Very likely, the data will be changed by the contemporary archaeological research.

³² Daicoviciu numbered the towers from *Platoul Faeragului* differently, meaning that the middle tower is in his texts and sketches TI (it occupies the dominant position), the southern one is TII, and the northern tower is TIII. In the context of recent archaeological investigations, it was preferred an ordered numbering, from south to north.

the remains of another wall segment were found (a part of the emplecton and a single limestone block from the interior wall-face), perpendicular on the above mentioned one. A third wall segment was discovered in the southern part of the section. Modern interventions strongly affected the area and, consequently, only a single limestone block remained *in situ*, also placed in a ditch dug in the bedrock.

Inside the surface delimited by the three wall segments, a floor was unearthed, consisting of a layer with mortar, tile fragments and pebbles. It did not cover the entire area, alternating with a layer of brown soil with tile fragments. Underneath, there were a compact layer of mica schist stones, and another one of clay resting on the native leveled bedrock (fig.8). Several fragments from a wall, with visible traces of paint, were fallen on the floor.

In the case of the tower numbered TII, the terrain has the shape of a large mound (the base diameter is 36 m, and in the superior part 15 m). During the recent archaeological research, a segment from the northern side of the tower was identified. The wall discovered here is 2,80–2,90 m wide. Between the two wall-faces, the emplecton was observed in very good condition on some portions (the track of the wooden beams which crossed over the emplecton could be determined both in length and in width).

It must be noted that the wall-faces differ in the execution method. If the interior wall-face is composed of limestone blocks laid alternatively, one on the long side, the other on wide side, the exterior wall-face I made exclusively with blocks placed on the long side. Therewith, the lines of the two wall-faces are not perfectly parallel (fig. 9).

Similar to the situation encountered for TI, here also was identified a mortar surface (c. 6 m²), in which numerous tile fragments were bound (*opus signinum*).

According to the archaeological data available so far, it is possible that both TI and TII from *Platoul Faeragului* would

bring into focus a new subject regarding the evolution of the tower network pertain to the Blidaru fortress. In the conditions in which only few blocks of the wall-faces have been discovered, and the inner structure of the emplecton had been preserved, indeed, for a greater height, it appears plausible the hypothesis that the two towers had two functional phases (to this idea point other details, such as the unusual position of the blocks in the exterior wall-face of TII and the obliqueness of this wall-face to the interior). Following this scenario, in the first phase, two towers with walls from limestone blocks, laid in several courses, were built, after which, in the second phase, they were partially dismantled and the interior space was laid out using mortar.

Dating the two phases is hard to determinate in the absence of a chronologically relevant archaeological inventory (the only artifacts found here are an iron key and a ceramic handle).

than considered up to this day. Their layout offer excellent visibility, in some cases at more than 20 km, but their purpose did not consist only in the observation and signalization of a potential danger. For some of them, their position offered both high visibility, but also great natural protection (for example *La Vămi*, *Poiana lui Mihi*, *Platoul Faeragului*, which are surrounded by steep slopes). By laying out two or three towers in such a place, a real “fortified area” could be obtained.

The link between the towers and the access paths was noticed since the debut of the archaeological research. Indeed, they seem to be placed in a manner that would offer control of the road towards the Blidaru fortress, and, not less importantly, to the temples. The complete topographical survey of the massif, marking the ancient routes and mapping all the towers should definitely lead to a better understanding of this subject.



Fig. 9 – Faeragu plateau – view of the masonry of the tower nr. 2 (foto – Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)

Generally, the chronology of the towers on the Blidaru Hill still represents a problem. They may be placed in a time span between the middle of the 1st century BC and the wars against the Romans from the beginning of the 2nd century AD, but the archaeological clues to refine this chronology are still lacking.

But chronology is just one of the many problematic aspects in interpreting the tower network around the fortification from Blidaru. Another persisting question mark refers to the reconstruction of the elevation and the interior space distribution. For example, in the case of the tower from *Poiana lui Mihi*, the very good state of conservation of a wall segment offered a series of details on the elevation, thus providing an exterior image of

the tower very close reality. However, the vertical space distribution may only be presumed.

At the same time, it is imperative a reevaluation of the reasons for which this dense network was created, because these towers illustrate a more complex military architecture

Another important chapter, for which there are scarce archaeological information so far, is represented by the way in which the towers were “inhabited” or, in other words, who were their residents and what were their “daily” activities? The discovery of ceramic and osseous material inside and outside the tower from *Poiana lui Mihi* opens the path for such an approach.³³

What is clear is that the evolution of the towers was not a linear one, actually a normal fact concerning a period of at least some decades of existence. The tower from *Poiana lui Mihi* presents evident elements of rebuilding after a natural phenomenon, while the towers T I and TII from *Platoul Faeragului* were, probably, partially dismantled at a specific point, without being definitely abandoned.

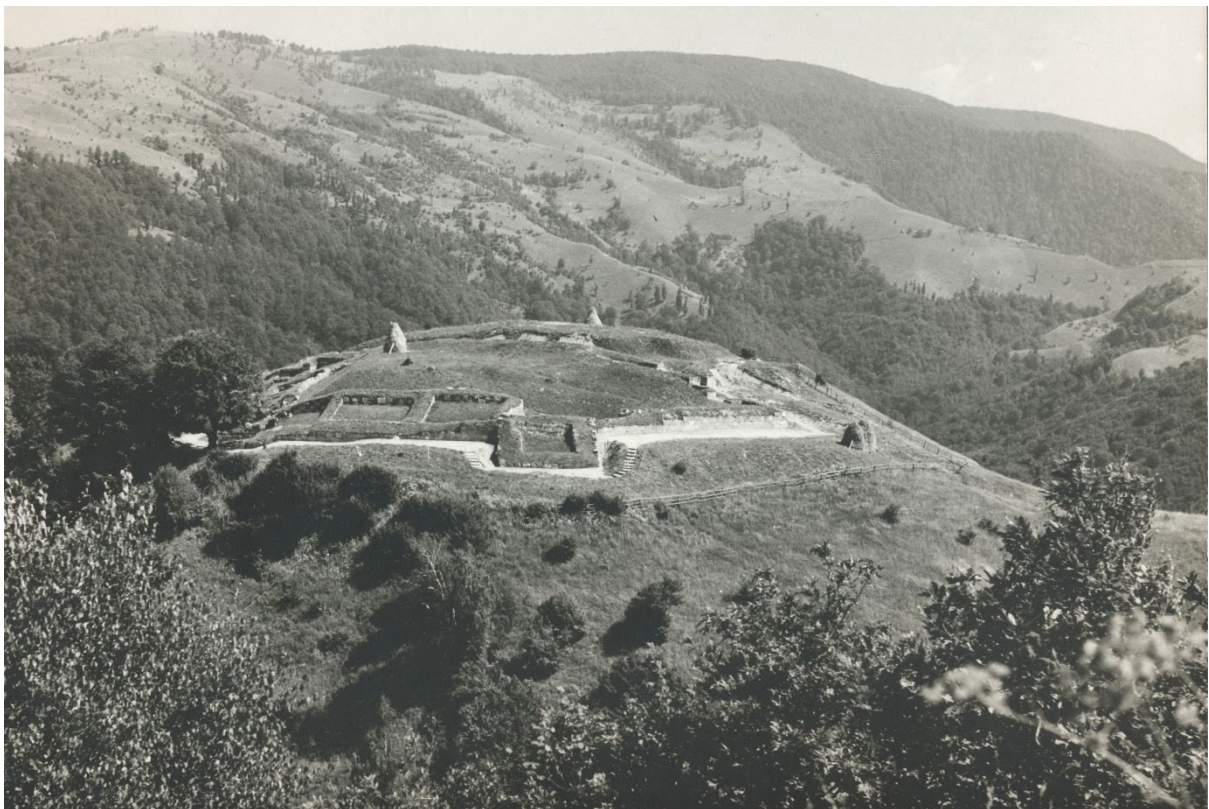
³³ For example, it may be observed that almost only ceramic fragments from cooking vessels and tableware were discovered inside the tower, while outside mainly from storage vessels (*dolia*).

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1



2

Illus. 1/ 1,2 – General view from the fortress hill of Blidaru (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)



1

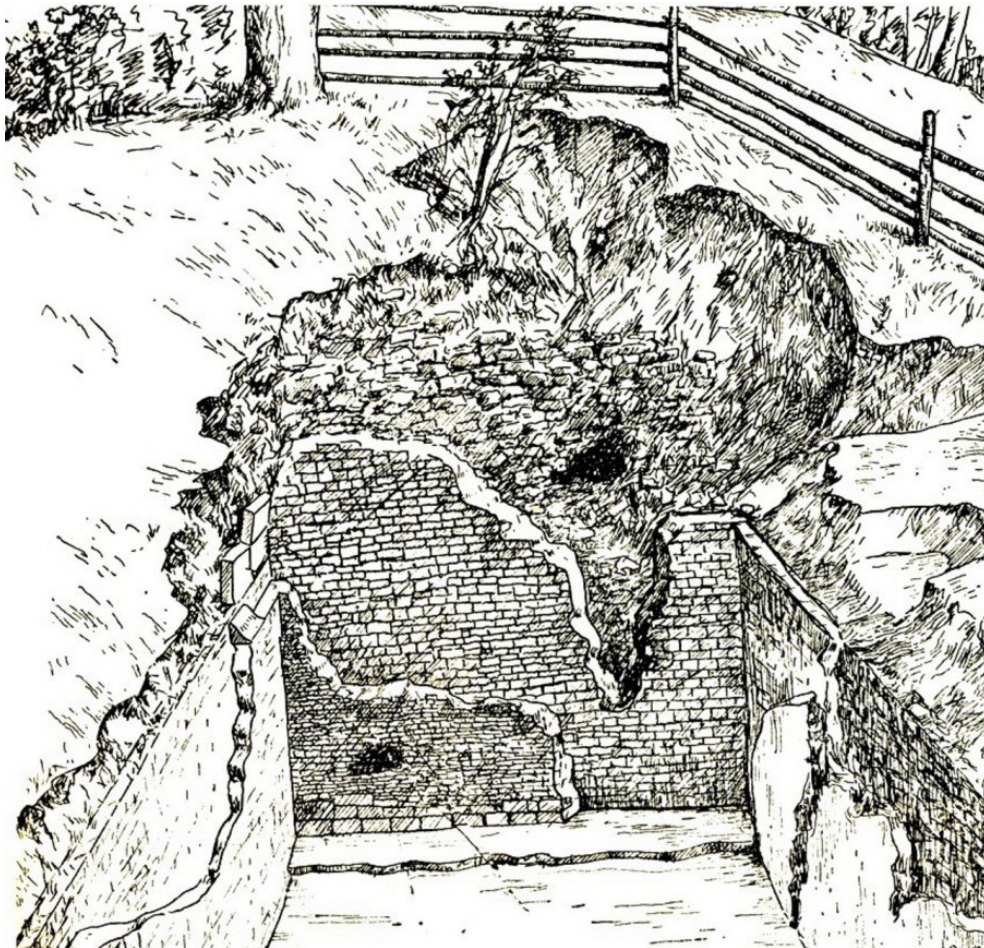


2

Illus. 2 / 1 – The gate of the fortress (first phase of construction); 2 – northern rampart of the fortress (second phase of construction) (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



1



2

Illus. 3 / 1 – The cistern at Muchea Chiștoarei; 2 – the cistern found in the fortress's vicinity (after C. Daicoviciu)



1



2

Illus. 4 / 1 – Terracotta water supply pipe (after C. Daicoviciu); *2* – hypothetical cistern near by the Faerag plateau (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



Illus. 5 – General view of the tower found at La Vămi (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



1



2

Illus. 6 / 1 – La Vămi, segment of the tower wall's masonry; 2 – limestone blocks in the wall's filling (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



1



2

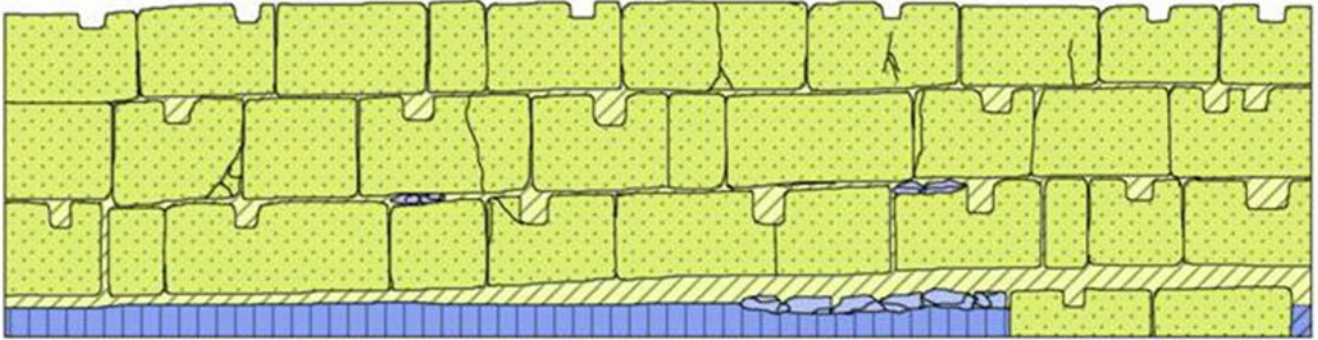
Illus. 7 / 1 – La Vămi, the tower's entrance; 2 hearth (Archive of the Archaeological Sites "Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)



1

Blidaru - Poiana lui Mihu 2010

S 1 / 2010 - profil SE



S 1 / 2010 - profil SV

2

Illus. 8 / 1,2 - La Vămi, south-eastern wall of the tower (Archive of the Archaeological Sites "Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)



1

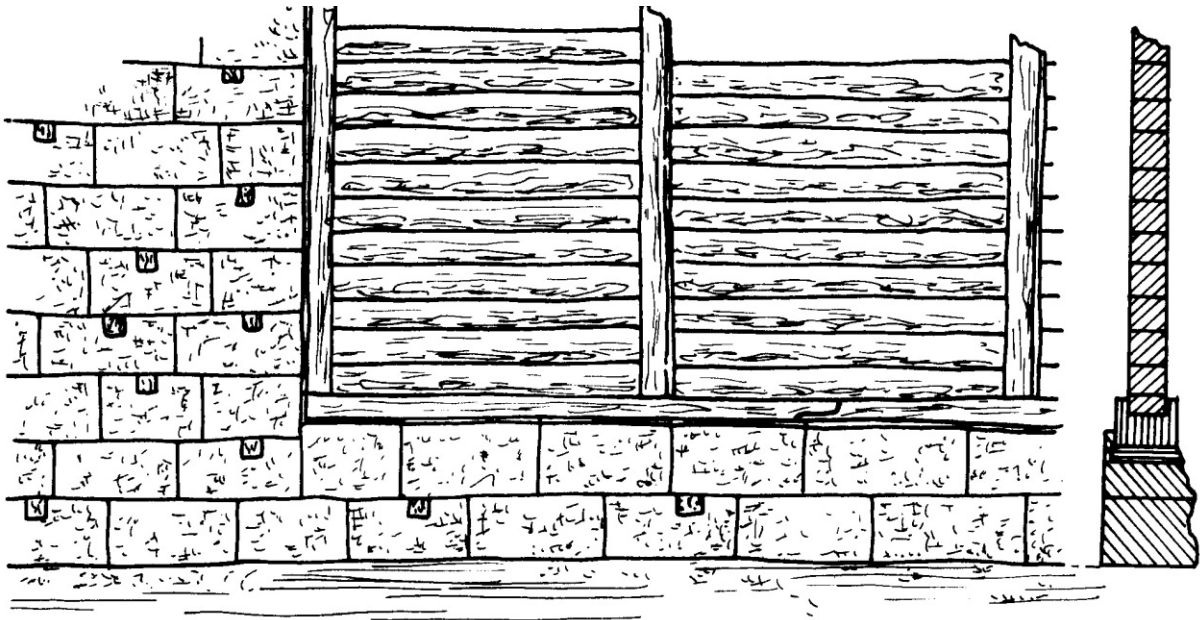


2

Illus. 9 / 1- The tower at *Poiana lui Mihai*: greek letter on a limestone block; 2 – virtual reconstruction of the building technique (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



1



2

Illus. 10 / 1- The tower at *Poiana lui Miḥu* – limestone block with an edging; *2* – possible reconstruction of the northern rampart of the Blidaru fortress (1 – Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei; 2 – after I. Glodariu)



1



2

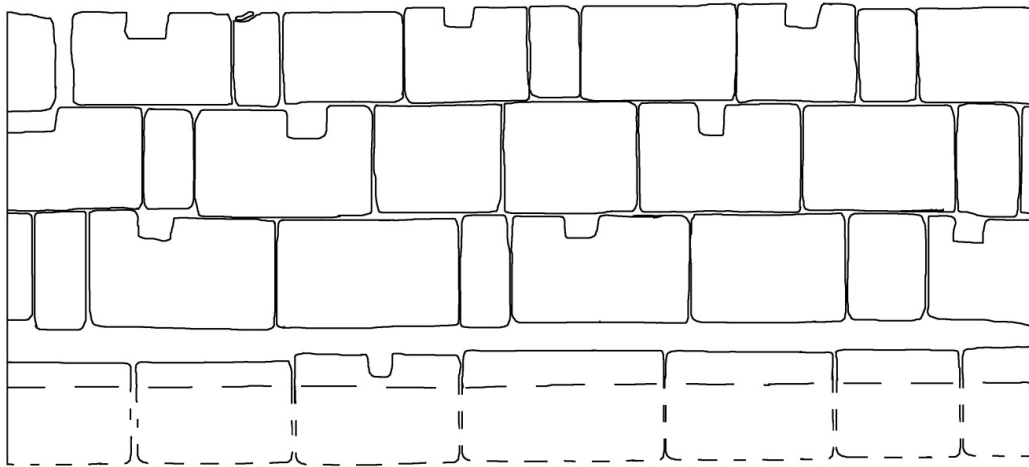
*Illus. 11 / 1- The tower at Poiana lui Mihiu – tile fragments found in situ; 2 – tile fragments
(Archive of the Archaeological Sites "Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)*




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
Bliḋaru - Poiana lui Miḥu 2011
S I - profil SE


0 1 m



Legendă:

 - pământ galben

 - blocuri de calcar

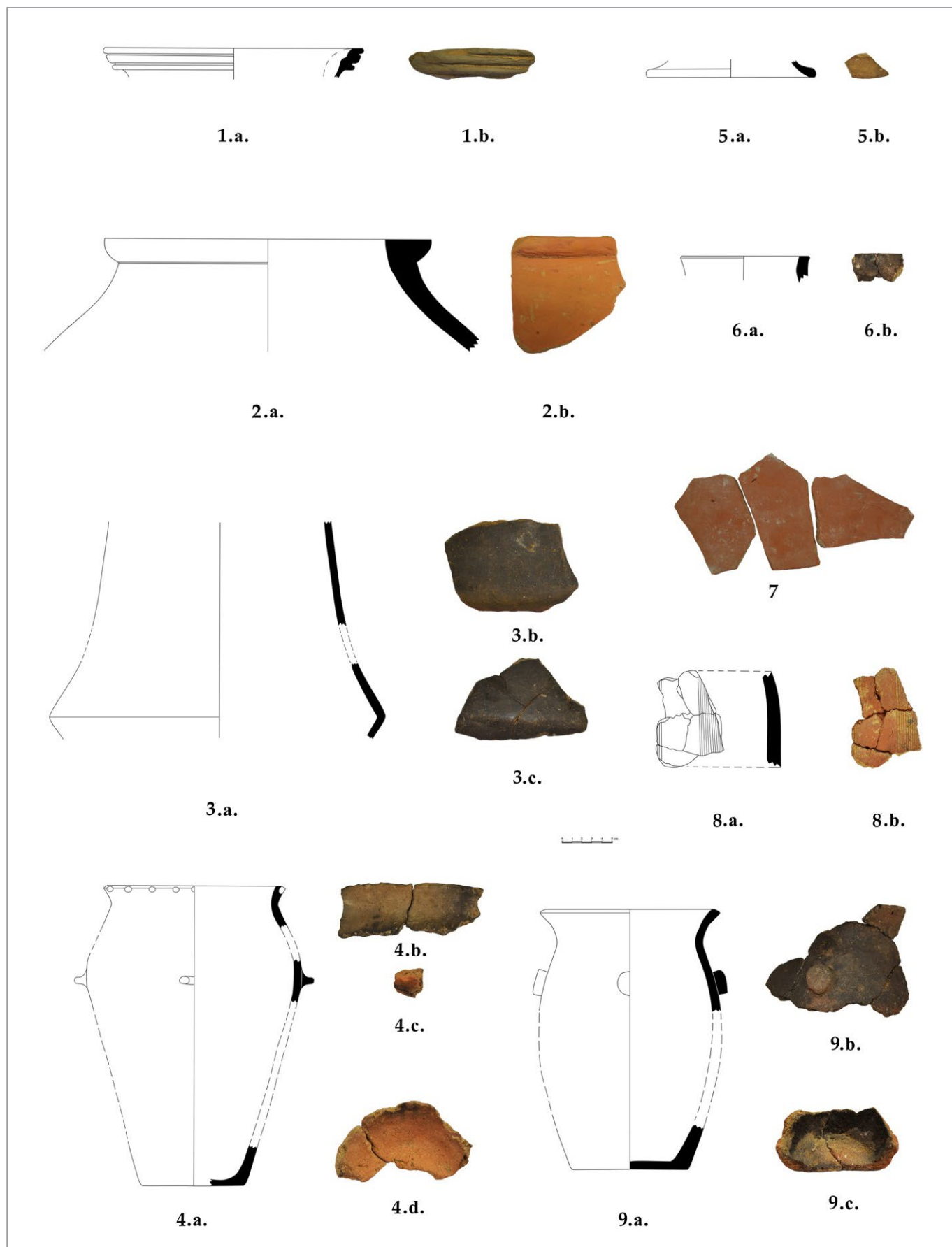
 - nivelul șanțului tăiat în stâncă

2

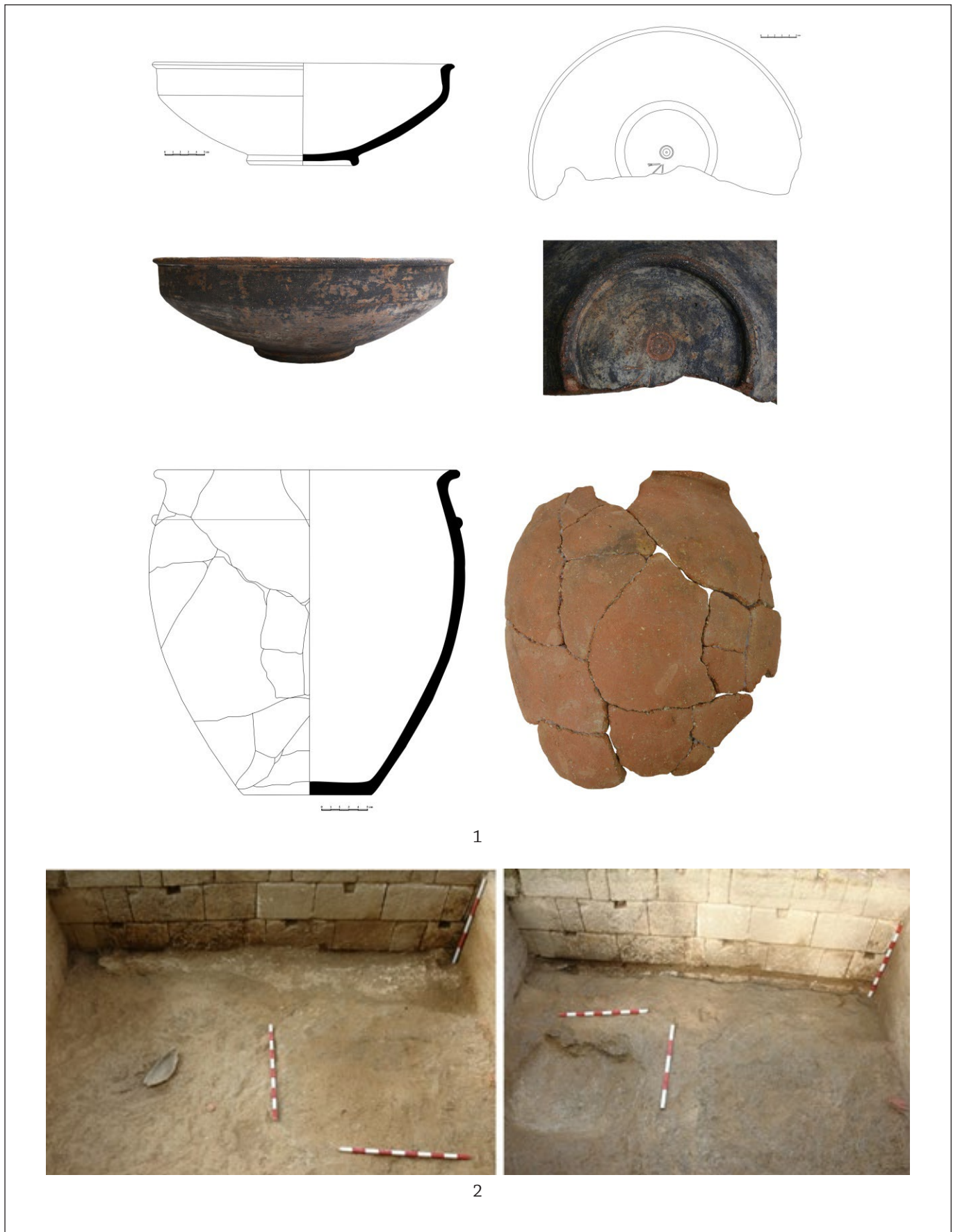
Illus. 12 / 1,2 – South-eastern wall of the tower at *Poiana lui Miḥu* (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



Illus. 13 – South-eastern corner of the tower at *Poiana lui Miḥu* (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



Illus. 14 – The tower at Poiana lui Mihi – pottery fragments

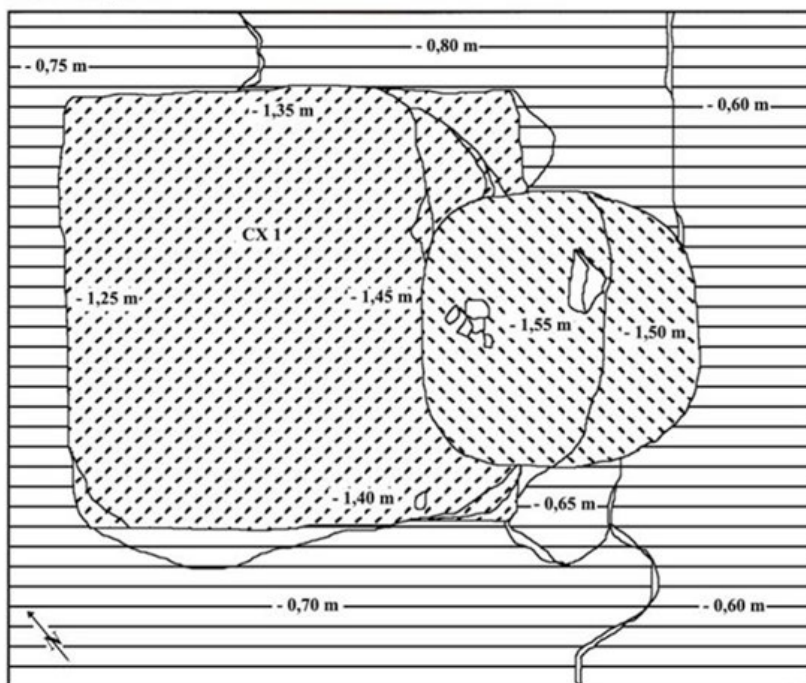


Illus. 15/1 – The tower at *Poiana lui Mihu* – pottery fragments; 2 – pit carved into the bedrock (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)

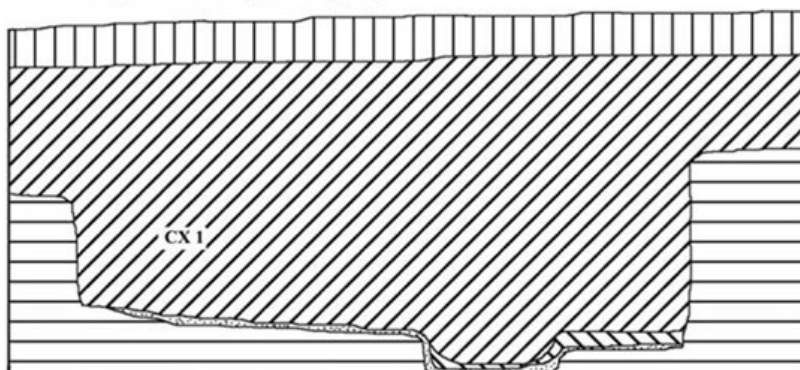


Blidaru - Poiana lui Mihu 2010

C I / 2010 - plan



C I / 2010 - profil NV-SE (prin complex)



Illus. 16 – The pit carved into the bedrock found between the towers at *La Vămi* and *Poiana lui Mihu*



1

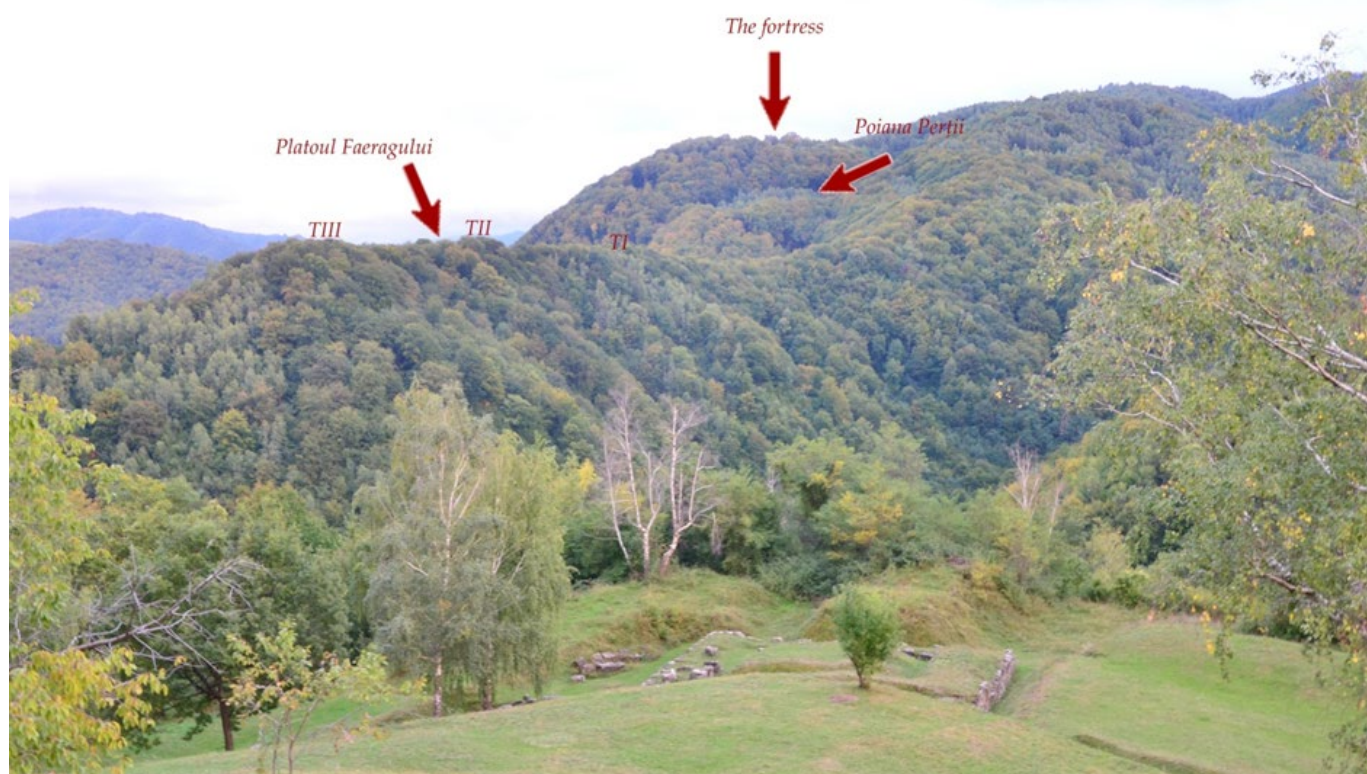


2

Illus. 17/1,2 – Pits carved into the bedrock found on an artificial terrace between the towers at La Vămi and Poiana lui Miḥu (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei)



1



2

Illus. 18/1 – Fragment of an iron blade; 2 – The *Faeragu* ridge, view from the fortress at Costești (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)



Illus. 19 – The *Faeragu* plateau – tower nr. 1 (Archive of the Archaeological Sites “Cetățile Dacice din Munții Orăștiei”)