The urban systems of the Balkan and Danube Provinces (2nd – 3rd c. AD)

Donev, D.

Chapter II: The genesis of the Roman settlement network in the Balkan provinces and on the Danube. The settlement chronology.

Introduction: the problem, its relevance and nature

As elaborated in the Introduction, the main goal of this study is the charting of the horizontal stratigraphy of the settlement map of the study-area: the distribution of size-categories, as well as the micro-locational and functional variations or the changing density of the network. Therefore, it is difficult to lose sight of one feature that manifests itself so blatantly in a number of aspects, cutting a sharp divide along the longitudinal, north-south axis of our study region. As its counterpart on an Empire-wide level, the settlement system in the Balkan provinces was a composite phenomenon. One portion was inherited from the urban or proto-urban societies encountered by the Late Republic, while the other portion was an entirely new undertaking, foreign to the lands conquered during the first century and a half of the Empire. The differences between these two "urbanisms" are not superficial. Their reflections can be found in the size and micro-location of the settlements, their micro-topography and layout, the intercity distances and in the settlement patterns in their hinterlands. This differentiation is also echoed in the social and ethnic composition of the population, the physical appearance of the settlements and the local institutions; aspects that go beyond the scope of this study. Indeed, in view of these differences, it is all the more surprising to discover that the system functioned under the aegis of the Roman Empire over a period of at least three or four centuries. It seems that in both segments of the network, settlements performed a similar range of functions, regardless of the differences caused by divergent history and traditions. Undeniably, it is possible to observe certain adjustments, particularly in the older, pre-Roman segment of the network that sometimes proved too dense for Roman standards of urbanization. But overall the two components worked in harmony, introducing only minor changes in the fabric and the way of life in the old central places.

While this dichotomy is obvious even to those superficially familiar with the subject of Roman urbanism, it has merely been acknowledged on a very general level.[53] Perhaps this is because most studies have focused on smaller regions, on provinces in which urbanism had been fully introduced by the Hellenistic period or on provinces in which ancient Mediterranean urbanism was non-existent prior to the conquest.[54] The combined Balkan and Danube provinces is one of those regions of the Empire in which the Roman and pre-Roman urban traditions met and were bound to complement each other. This circumstance allows us to chart the line of demarcation between the two zones and to study their differences in greater detail.

Ideally it should be possible to study the transformation of the settlement maps that plotted the course of the Roman conquest on a wider regional scale.[55] This is certainly a very promising line of inquiry but, given the size of the study area and the quality of the data, especially those relating to the towns and settlements of the pre-Roman era, this would be an uphill task. At best it is possible to

[53] Pounds 1969, 135-157; Woolf 1997, 1.
[54] Laurence, Esmond-Cleary, Sears 2011; Hanson 2011, 229-275.
[55] Alcock 1993, is a good example, albeit limited to a single province.

study the changes in the settlement pattern only in a few better researched regions. We have therefore set a more realistic goal, asking how much of the settlement network of the High Empire was inherited from the pre-conquest period. As with all data-sets with a spatial quality, this can be expressed in two different ways: histograms showing the chronological profile of the urban and town-like agglomerations in the study area and, thematic maps, revealing the spatial distribution of the different chronological categories of settlements. We shall begin by looking at the percentage of Roman settlements with and without direct continuity from the pre-conquest period, by individual provinces and overall. These data will then be mapped and the emergent patterns discussed.

On the surface this seems like a fairly simple research exercise, but in fact it was complicated by various practical difficulties and conceptual ambiguities that must be examined first. Although to many, it may appear as a rather basic point to enquire into, the question of continuity, much like the question of size, requires a well-thought-out and dedicated research programme. Unfortunately, the majority of the settlement sites included in this analysis have only seen rescue excavations under very difficult conditions or been subjected to brief, uncoordinated clearance campaigns. Often the imposing remains of later periods, particularly Late Antiquity, have prevented researchers from reaching the lower archaeological strata. At a number of sites, the thickness of the archaeological layers combined with high water table has had an identical effect. The opposite is true in the rarer instances in which the humbler archaeological traces from the Roman period were deposited on top of monumental, pre-conquest remains. Only at the sites that have been subjected to decades of systematic research or in which modern survey techniques have been applied can we hope to find a secure answer to this question. With these few excpetions, the issue of continuity will have to remain basically unresolved, although a careful weighing of the available evidence might help us to arrive at more intelligent conjectures.

In certain cases, these technical problems have been inadvertently compounded by modern scholarship. Conclusions based on a misinterpreted fragment from the ancient sources or born out of a sheer subjective conviction can sometimes assume the status of widely accepted facts. Often the result of an uncritical and automatic repetition in the relevant literature, these views have grown so powerful that they largely shape the reading of the newly discovered archaeological facts. It is not uncommon to encounter studies in which small quantities of residual material or conservative artefact categories have been taken as definitive proof of the existence of an earlier settlement. Finds of coinage dating to the pre-conquest period have likewise been used to support the continuity theses. Certainly, the evidence of residual finds has to be taken seriously, but only in circumstances in which a small area of the site has been excavated or in cases in which excavations have failed to reach virgin soil over large sections of the site.

The problem arises largely from the decision to operate with only two active categories: settlements with and without a pre-conquest phase. The factual reality is often far more nuanced and we feel compelled to explain under what circumstances a given settlement is defined as a pre-Roman or a green-field foundation. This is particularly apparent in cases in which it is argued that the newly established Roman settlement is the direct successor of a nearby pre-conquest settlement. Sometimes this argument is absolutely sound, for instance, when a new Roman agglomeration was founded at the foot of an earlier hill-top settlement, the latter being incorporated into the new urban tissue as a citadel or a sacred precinct. But we cannot accept the presence of any site category – for example, a fortified hillock or burial mounds – found within a radius of 2-3 km from the Roman

settlement as a sure proof of demographic or toponymical continuity.[56] The chances of finding an earlier site within a radius of 3 km of most Roman settlements are quite high, especially if all settlement categories, including the smallest hamlets or hill-forts are taken into account. This path might well lead us to the absurd conclusion that all, or nearly all, agglomerations from the Roman period have grown out of settlements established in the pre-conquest era. In fact, even a clear toponymical or demographic relationship were to exist between the Roman agglomeration and the pre-Roman central place, the lack of topical continuity or at least an immediate spatial relatedness must be given a priority. It can be argued that in these examples the toponymical continuity only serves to underscore the breach with the earlier tradition. Perhaps the most telling is the example of Sarmizegetusa. Although the Roman colony shamelessly inherited the name of the former Dacian capital, it was founded over 40 km to the west of the presumed location of Dacian Sarmizegetusa, the former capital and its wider hinterland having been left deserted and gradually falling into ruins.[57]

Continuity will be recognized only when a Roman agglomeration overlays or is in an immediate spatial relation to a pre-Roman central place. This excludes not only those cases in which the predecessor of the Roman settlement has been sought among the prehistoric sites in its hinterland, but also those scenarios in which a scatter of pre-conquest finds, unrelated to architectural features or to distinct archaeological layers has been interpreted as evidence of continuity. We are interested in examining the continuity of central places or large agglomerations and we must not be baffled when a small, pre-conquest hamlet or farmstead happens to precede the wave of Roman colonialism and urbanization. Unless appearing in larger quantities and over a larger portion of the excavated area, loose finds dated to the pre-Roman period will not be acknowledged as evidence of direct continuity.

This standpoint can be criticized on the grounds that it automatically excludes all settlement agglomerations that depart from the standards of the Classical Graeco-Roman urbanism from consideration and hence reinforces the view that continuity is to be found only in the narrow coastal zone of the Adriatic and the Black Sea, exposed to Greek influences centuries prior to the Roman conquest. It is true that this type of urbanism was unknown to the peoples who inhabited the Danube Valley or the Balkan interior, but the Thracian, Dacian and Dalmatian tribes had developed settlement hierarchies and their own central places. Although it is evident that these were not urban settlements in the Classical sense of the term, it cannot be denied that they were settlements of a higher rank, performing at least some of the functions exercised by the Classical Graeco-Roman town. The Liburnian hill-forts or the *oppida* in Upper Macedonia or Illyria were hardly more urban than the Dalmatian or the Dacian strongholds and yet, for some reason, many of the former were successfully transformed into Roman towns, while only a few or none of the latter were incorporated into the new settlement network. It would be difficult to come up with a general explanation for this pattern. In most cases it cannot be related to the character of the specific political relations at the time of the conquest or in its aftermath, although this factor sometimes certainly did play a significant role. As will be shown, the degree of continuity is among the highest on the territories ruled by some of the fiercest opponents of Rome in the region, such as Illyria or Macedonia.

The other challenge posed by the task of determining what proportion of the settlement map of the Early Empire was directly inherited from the pre-Roman period is more theoretical and its implications

[56] See, for instance, Gömöri 2003, 81-92, for the Late La Tène finds in the environs of Roman Scarbantia in Pannonia Superior.
[57] Oltean 2007.

reach far beyond the topic discussed in this chapter. Before meaningful statistics can be arrived at, the first essential step is to decide which settlement categories will be included in the analysis. Obviously, the town is the main subject of this research. However, as in many other complex societies, the urban-rural dichotomy cannot be readily applied to the period of the Roman Empire. In the introductory chapter it has been shown that, unless we are willing to limit the analysis to the autonomous central places, it will be necessary to adopt a broader, functional definition of the town. In order to account for these ambiguous settlement categories, our primary source for the reconstruction of the regional settlement maps has been the archaeological record. A use has also been made of the historical and epigraphic evidence, but these sources have been supplementary to the archaeology. Every site dating to the period of the High Empire that has exhibited the basic features of an agglomerated settlement larger than 5 ha - a larger cluster of residential buildings, streets or a settlement focus – or for which the epigraphic sources have attested to the presence of formal institutions has been included in the analysis. This approach is likely to lead to the inclusion of a small number of settlements that by all criteria belong to the rural sector. On the basis of the data available in publications, it is often impossible to decide if a settlement was a true agglomeration or a cluster of farms, let alone to decide if it belonged to the rural or the urban sector.

Taking a less jaundiced view, the number of archaeologically or historically attested settlements that fall in-between these abstract categories is too small to exert a major effect on our final statistics. This is hardly surprising given their limited extent and physical appearance. Obviously this does not mean that these settlements were an insignificant segment in the integral network. In order to avoid the false impression that their true number was small, they have been lumped into the category of uncertain entries, in which they join settlements whose foundation date remains controversial. Towards the end of this chapter, we shall turn briefly to the problem of continuity from the pre-Roman period in the rural sector. For some provinces in our study-region, the published data do allow us to venture briefly into this problem. Rather unexpectedly, the results of this enquiry only serve to underline the sharp discontinuity between the pre-Roman and Roman periods throughout most of the study-region.

Northern Macedonia and Epirus

This region covers the northern parts of the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Epirus, those falling outside the territory of modern Greece. It stretches over not more than 40, 000 sq. kilometres and, in terms of size, it is somewhat smaller than the provinces that entirely fall within the limits of the study-region. Urbanism was introduced into this region centuries prior to the Roman conquest. With the exception of the mountainous sections of the country, by the end of the third century BC, both the Illyrian and Macedonian kingdoms came to include - and rely upon - a number of semi-autonomous urban centres.[58] Although some episodes referred to in the historical record might suggest that relations between the towns and the central government were troubled, it would be unfair to describe the system as dysfunctional.[59] The Hellenistic dynasts who inherited the empire of Alexander the Great actively sought to encourage urbanism in an attempt to share at least a part of the burden of ruling a

[58] The character of the autonomy of these sites is controversial, *cf*. Ceka 1983, 135-192; Papazoglou 1988; Cabanes 1988, 480-487.

[59] The episode of the defection of the Macedonian garrison in Lychnidos during the First Roman-Macedonian war is exemplary of this tendency, Livy XXVII, 32, 9; Bitrakova-Grozdanova 1989.

large territorial state.[60] This is most plainly indicated by the relatively quick transition of the regional settlement network from the Hellenistic monarchies to the Roman Republic (figure II_1, Table II_1). The new conqueror deemed the introduction of radical changes in the existing network unnecessary.

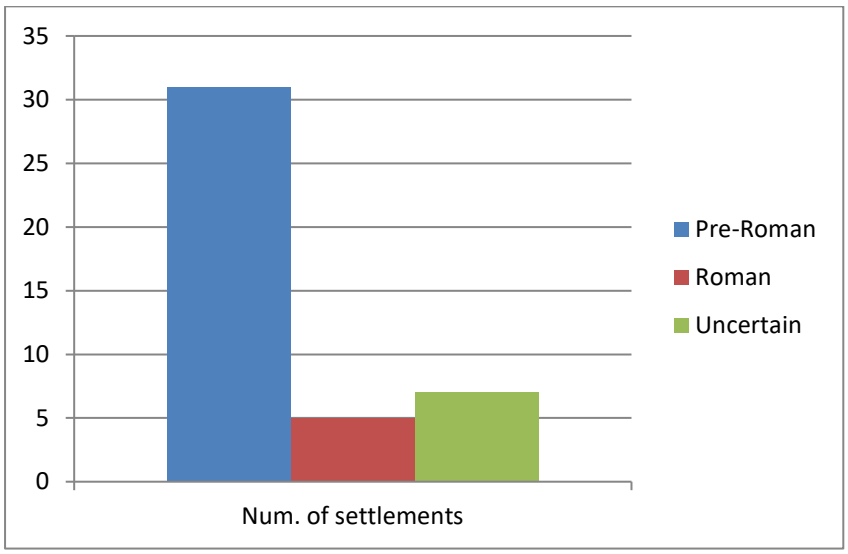

Figure II_1: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Roman Macedonia

About 70% of the towns and settlements in the area that continued to exist during the High Empire had already been founded by the Hellenistic period, at least half a century prior to the Roman conquest. Thirty-one out of forty-three agglomerations that existed under the High Empire show continuity from the pre-Roman period, only five were new foundations.[61] Nevertheless these figures do require some comment, as the small group of newly-founded settlements includes sites in which the phases dating to the High Empire are obscured by the remains of the Late Antique period. A good example is the road-side *vicus* of Ad Scampsa that had developed into a bishopric by the fourth century AD, the Late Antique fortified town completely obliterating the traces of the earlier settlement.[62] It is therefore impossible to characterize this agglomeration in the time period that is the focus of this study. The rest of the settlements that belong to this group pose a closely related challenge. All of these sites were included in the group of newly founded settlements, chiefly because of their micro-locations. Nearly all central places from the Hellenistic period occupied hill-tops, whereas these settlements occupied low-lying sites. Moreover, they do not have structural remains from the pre-Roman period and, should it be proven that they were occupied in the Hellenistic period, it is unlikely that they qualified as central places. They continued to function as subordinate settlements at least until Late Antiquity.[63]

It is possible that the share of the pre-Roman segment of the network was even higher than 70%, as among the group of uncertain sites are settlements that have not been located but that could very

[60] Cabanes 1976.
[61] The catalogue of sites includes settlements that were probably abandoned soon after the Roman conquest, *e.g.* Symize in the Korça Basin or the one near Tremnik in the middle Vardar Valley. Neapolis is identified with the hill-top settlement near Stari Grad that predates the Roman conquest. The list is far from exhaustive, but it includes all official towns and major agglomerations.
[62] Cerova 1997, 285-304.
[63] In addition to Ad Scampsa, this group of road-stations includes Castra-Parembole and possibly Tauriana. Neine was a *polis*, while the anonymous settlement near Vitolište has an unknown status.

well pre-date the Roman conquest. I am referring primarily to Pelagonia, a town that became a district capital immediately after the battle of Pydna. Opinions are divided about the location of Pelagonia, but the Hellenistic period is represented at all candidate sites.[64] Both the historical and archaeological sources suggest that Pelagonia was a pre-Roman town, although indisputable evidence has yet to be found. The obscure communities of the Dostonei or the Allantes present us with a similar dilemma, although admittedly the evidence for these communities is extremely scarce.[65] In a couple of cases there is even some archaeological evidence for pre-Roman occupation – Hadrianopolis and Onchesmos – although insufficient to claim a direct continuity from the Hellenistic period.[66] Understandably, only future archaeological research can finally settle the issue of the founding dates of these settlements. We should nonetheless point out the possibility that over one-half of the settlements classed as uncertain could also date to the pre-Roman period, increasing the percentage of this chronological category to almost 90% of the settlement network of Roman Macedonia.

There are not too many possible explanations for this tendency in the urban development of the province. The settlement network inherited from the Hellenistic monarchies offered a sufficient coverage and there was neither room nor need for new foundations. At the time, the Romans saw this part of the Balkan Peninsula merely as a stepping-stone in their conquest of the Aegean and Asia Minor. As long as the existing urban communities provided the infrastructure necessary for the levying of taxes, the garrisoning and transport of troops and supplies and the maintenance of internal order, the founding of new towns or the construction of permanent legionary camps was unnecessary.

However this does not mean that the conquest of this region proceeded without significant changes to the existent map of major agglomerations. The graph on figure 2.1 illustrates only one side of the process. If the number of high-ranking settlements in the Hellenistic and Roman periods in the south of Illyria and in northern Epirus are compared, the decline in the number of central places becomes obvious. The possible differences in the urban standards and the nature of the central place under the Hellenistic monarchies and the High Empire can do very little to diminish this observation (Table II_2).

[64] Papazoglou 1974, 271-297; Papazoglou 1988, 276-292; for the possible location, Mikulčić 1999, 83-84.
[65] Mikulčić 1999, 90, 91; Papazoglou 1988, 174-185.
[66] Hadrianopolis: Perna, Çondi 2011, 365-385; Perna, Çondi eds. 2012; Onchesmos: Lako 1986, 279-281.

Table II_2: The number of sites with monumental remains in northern Epirus and Illyria during the Hellenistic and Roman periods[67]

Hellenistic (all fortified sites)	Roman (all major agglomerations)	Hellenistic (towns)	Roman (official towns)
45	14	35	11

The two columns on the left compare the number of all fortified settlements or sites with monumental remains in the two periods. The second pair of columns is filtered for sites with a putatively non-residential function and sites that were possibly abandoned by the end of the second century AD. Both ways the contraction is more than apparent and it has been observed by a number of authors working on this region. In a recent article, S. Shpuza has claimed that of the 134 sites with Hellenistic remains, the Roman period is attested only at sixty-four.[68] Unfortunately the author does not specify which site-categories are actually compared nor does he try to estimate the number of newly founded sites. In our case, the ratio is closer to 3 to 1. Similar figures can be expected for the northern parts of ancient Macedon and Paeonia, although the urban settlements in these regions from the Hellenistic period have not been as thoroughly studied as those in modern Albania (Table II_3).

Table II_3: The number of archaeologically and historically attested towns in Macedonia and Paeonia during the Hellenistic and the Roman period

Hellenistic (Archaeological sources)	Roman (Archaeological sources)	Hellenistic (Historical sources)	Roman (Historical sources)
32	21	25	21

In the eastern parts of the province, the main difficulty in weighing the degree of centralization introduced by the Roman conquest is the uncertainty surrounding the nature and function of the Hellenistic *oppida*. The monumental ashlar walls that characterized the hill-forts in Illyria and Epirus and have been taken as sure indicators of the settlements' high rank are rarely encountered in Upper Macedonia and Paeonia, in which most of the Hellenistic *oppida* were difficult to distinguish from the Iron Age strongholds. Nonetheless, if the number of *oppida* with an ascertained Hellenistic phase and the number of major agglomerated settlements that were occupied during the Roman period, excluding the road-stations and sites that were possibly abandoned, are compared the decline is less

[67] The distinction between towns and lower-order settlements is even more elusive for the Hellenistic than for the Roman period. For the purposes of the present analysis, we include all hill-top settlements defended by massive ashlar walls, but we distinguish between larger agglomerations featuring other public buildings or mentioned as *poleis* in the written sources – isolated in the third column from the left – and minor forts, possibly with a predominantly military function – lumped together with the "towns" in the first column from the left. It is useful to draw attention to the level of sophistication of these walls. Their construction required a highly skilled labour force, special construction tools and a command of sizeable resources. They have therefore been used as a secure attribute of the high-ranking settlements in Hellenistic Epirus and Illyria.
[68] Shpuza 2009, 484.

drastic than that evidenced in Illyria. However, the contraction cannot be dismissed as insignificant. During the Late Republic and High Empire the number of major agglomerated settlements decreased by about 30% from those in the preceding era.

Turning briefly to the written sources, there is actually an explicit testimony that the regions of Paeonia and Upper Macedonia had been more urbanized in the pre-conquest period than they were during the Late Republic.[69] However, when we compare the number of settlements mentioned by the authors referring to the Hellenistic period - Livy or Strabo - with the number of towns and *civitates* mentioned by Pliny or on inscriptions from the Roman period the decrease is far less dramatic (Table II_3, the pair of columns on the right).[70] This skew between the archaeological and historical records can be partly explained by the spread of the epigraphic habit during the period of the High Empire. The epigraphic habit sheds light on a number of entities that are archaeologically invisible, *civitates* that most probably lacked a recognizable urban centre.[71] The decline becomes even more apparent once this category is excluded from the list. At least four communities from the period of the High Empire are attested solely on inscriptions, leaving behind no significant archaeological remains[72]. Nonetheless, the differences between the two historical regions of the province should not be underestimated. Despite the potential incongruities in our sources, the fact that two out of three newly attested settlements in Roman Macedonia belong to the east of the province inspires some confidence in the accuracy of the figures presented above.[73]

More differential developments can be observed within the group of securely attested *poleis*. Although technically speaking nearly all of the pre-Roman towns were self-governing communities with their own territory and laws, by the time of Caesar and Augustus some of these urban centres had been promoted to Roman colonies or *municipia*. Again there are differences between the western and eastern halves of the province, with no fewer than three colonies in Epirus and Illyria – Dyrrhachium, Bylis and Butrint – and only one *municipium* in Upper Macedonia, Stobi.[74] It is unclear how much weight should be given to this difference, especially in view of the fact that a number of towns in the east of the province were home to influential and sizeable communities of Roman citizens – Heraclea Lyncestis, Styberra, Neine, Pelagonia - but the *poleis* in which they lived remained peregrine communities. For the purposes of this chapter, these "romanized" towns are still treated as pre-Roman urban settlements, but the fact that they were "romanized" at a certain point of time must be acknowledged. Their status as Roman colonies expanded the horizons of local economic development. It allowed them to engage in a series of economic enterprises that were legally inaccessible to the

[69] Strabo VII 7.9, Papazoglou 1988, 442; Greece after the conquest was seen in a similar light, Alcock 1993; Karambinis, forthcoming.
[70] Papazoglou 1988, 444-465. Table 2.2 excludes the uncertain place-names mentioned in Livy and Polybius as well as the Late Roman sources.
[71] For the non-urban *civitates*, *politeiai or koina* of Upper Macedonia, see Papazoglou 1988. The terminology is confusing, some scholars assigning a much wider meaning for the word *koinon*, Hammond 1991, 183-192; Nigdelis, Souris 1997, 55-63.
[72] Dostonei, Mikulčić 1999, 90-91, has attempted to locate their central place, but the arguments are not very convincing; Allantes, Geneati, Euxini, the latter two known solely from a boundary inscription, Papazoglou ed. 1999, num. 162.
[73] See next footnote.
[74] Stobi: Papazoglou 1986b, 213-238; Dyrrhachion: Cabanes, Drini eds. 1995; Buthrotum and Bylis: Anamali, Ceka, Deniaux eds. 2007.

majority of the peregrine communities.[75] As will be shown in Chapter IV, five of these settlements ranked among the ten largest towns in the province. It is no wonder that local economic progress reflected in the construction of public monuments was largely confined to the towns that included substantial communities of Roman citizens. In the northern half of Roman Macedonia and Epirus about 30% of all official towns were either constituted under Roman law or included larger communities of Roman citizens.

The northern Adriatic and Dalmatia

This region includes the territory of the Roman province Dalmatia and the easternmost parts of Italy X, those belonging to modern Slovenia and Croatia. It is a much larger territorial unit than the part of Roman Macedonia discussed in the preceding section, stretching over the entire western half of the Balkan Peninsula and including the eastern Adriatic littoral. It measures over 100,000 sq. kms or twice the size of northern Macedonia and is the largest territorial unit in our study-area. Throughout history, the geographical specifics of the region have dictated a sharp dichotomy between the continental parts of the province and the narrow coastal zone. In conjunction with its large territory, this circumstance has resulted in a much more colourful pre-conquest history than in Epirus or Macedonia. Apart from the Greek colonies on the islands and their *emporia* on the coast, the region was occupied by the Illyrian kingdom in the south and the "proto-urban" societies of the Histri, Iapodes and Liburni in the north. The interior was dominated by the large tribal alliances of the Delmatae[76]. As a consequence of this kaleidoscope of social formations, the degree of urbanization in the area varied greatly at the time of the Roman conquest. Hence, the share of the Roman and pre-Roman segments of the network presents a more balanced picture compared to those in northern Macedonia, while the paths to urbanization were far more complex.

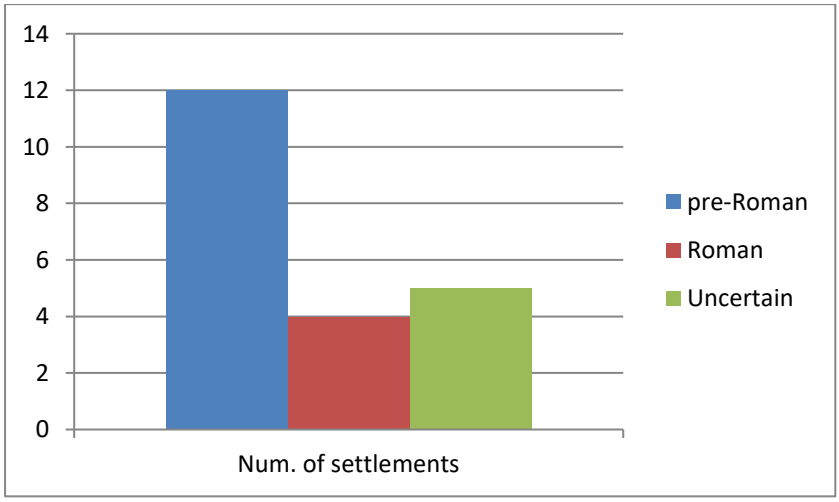

Figure II_2: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in the northern Adriatic

[75] Sherwin-White 1980.

[76] Wilkes 1969; Dzino 2010. It is questionable if there were any essential differences between the levels of socio-economic complexity of these societies prior to the Roman involvement in the region. The only certainty is that the urban development in the regions dominated by the Iapodes and Delmatae would take a different path than in the coastal areas after the Roman conquest.

We shall focus separately on the small part of Italy X that pertains to our study-region, the Istrian Peninsula, the Orca Pass and the Upper Sava Basin, plus Kvarner Bay in the northern Adriatic. The latter region already belongs to Dalmatia, but geographically it is closely connected to the Istrian Peninsula. Some of the Liburnian communities in this area enjoyed the *ius Italicum* and, from that perspective, their position was equal to the inhabitants of the Italian communities on the Istrian Peninsula. Following the administrative border between Italy and Dalmatia along the river Raša would have left us with only a handful of settlements on the western Istrian coast and in the Upper Sava Valley. The other option was to join the Istrian Peninsula and the Alpine passes to Dalmatia, but this would have obscured the specific place of the northern Adriatic in the history of conquest and urbanization of the wider area.

From a purely geographical point of view, the northern Adriatic and the coasts of Epirus and Illyria played a similar role in the history of Roman expansion on the Balkan Peninsula. They were the gates through which the Roman army and traders entered the study-area. With the exception of Liburnia, peacefully absorbed by Rome, the conquest of the Istrian Peninsula and the mountain passes between the Apennines and the Balkan Peninsula was preceded by a series of punitive campaigns and wars of conquest.[77] Despite the violent nature of Rome's expansion, much of the old settlement network survived the wars intact and was successfully integrated into the new settlement system. At least 60% of the settlements from the Roman period trace their roots to the pre-conquest era (Figure II_2, Table II_4 in Appendix 2). This is the very minimum. All of the five settlements classed uncertain in the figure above might also date to the pre-Roman period.[78] Indisputable archaeological evidence for continuity is lacking, but the fact that these settlements are mentioned alongside the rest of the Liburnian *oppida* in Pliny's list seems to suggest that they all had a similar background.[79] Adding these five settlements to the list of pre-Roman towns would increase their share in the settlement network from the Roman period to nearly 80%. As in Epirus and Macedonia, the prevalent tendency was to preserve and incorporate the existing settlement network.

The handful of newly founded settlements comprised about 20% of the total number of conurbations from the Roman period. Naturally, if future research at sites such as Fulfinum or Vegium proves that these were new foundations, the ratio between the two segments of the network could change considerably. Archaeological research on at least four sites has failed to discover remains from the pre-Roman period. These, include Argyruntum and Tarsatica, *oppida* that were also included in Pliny's description of the Dalmatian coast.[80] Hence, caution is advisable before claiming a pre-Roman origin for all of the *oppida* mentioned by Pliny. The region continued to attract Roman settlers, not only in the colonies on the western Istrian coast but also in the area of the Kvarner Bay.[81]

As we shall see in Chapter Three, the other two settlements founded after the Roman conquest were not autonomous towns and are characterized by relatively humble archaeological remains. It is impossible to be sure how many more sites of a similar character were founded by the Romans.

[77] The Istrian Peninsula: Jurkić 1987, 65-80; the Liburni and Iapodes: Wilkes 1969, 32-36; Dzino 2010, 44-79.
[78] These are Crexus, Fulfinum, Ortopla, Vegium and Aegida. See *infra* for references to the individual towns.
[79] Pliny *HN* 3.140.
[80] Argyruntum: Dubolnić 2007, 1-58; Tarsatica: Blečić 2001, 65-122; the author is indecisive, but recent rescue excavations have failed to locate pre-Roman layers at the site of the Late Roman fort, while the micro-location is hardly typical of the Iron Age *oppida*; Višnjić 2010, 457-461.
[81] Alföldy 1965; Medini 1978, 67-85; Starac 2006, 107-114

Although the Late Roman sources mention a series of establishments on the western Istrian coast, we cannot state with certainty that these were nucleated settlements in the period of the High Empire.[82]

Regardless of the uncertainties surrounding the founding date of some of the high-ranking settlements in the region, the persistence of the pre-Roman settlement network must be acknowledged. Moreover, it is possible to be fully confident that the category of pre-Roman sites includes the largest and most important settlements in the area. With a few exceptions, the new foundations in the northern Adriatic were comprised exclusively of small agglomerations, road-side *vici* and minor port-towns. All self-governing towns, including Emona located deep in the interior, were established at or near the sites of existing settlements.[83]

Unfortunately, we lack detailed data about the settlement pattern in this particular area during the century prior to the Roman conquest.[84] Some regions are simply under-researched and for the micro-regions for which data are available, caution is necessary because the category of pre-Roman *oppida* could include sites abandoned centuries prior to the arrival of the Romans. Unlike in Illyria, in which the construction technique is an infallible indicator of the Hellenistic age and the high rank of the conurbation, the technique of constructing hill-top settlements in the northern Adriatic evolved slowly in the centuries prior to the Roman conquest. As elsewhere in the Balkan interior, the true nature and function of these hill-forts remain problematic and were most probably extremely varied.[85] Therefore, in addition to the sites that were abandoned long before the Roman conquest, these estimates might easily include fortified sites that were not settled permanently, for example, tribal *refugia*. Nevertheless, when taken at their face value, the data do suggest developments along the same lines as in other regions, featuring a high degree of urbanization in the pre-conquest period. For example, in the area of modern Gorski Kotari in Croatia, historically a part of Liburnia, only five out of eighteen *oppida* survived the Roman conquest.[86] On the island of Rab or ancient Arba, only one out of five prehistoric centres retained its autonomous status and urban layout in the period of the High Empire.[87] Judging by the better researched *oppida* in the hinterland of Tergeste, the process of abandonment of the old hill-top settlements was gradual, the last *oppida* had been abandoned no later than the the middle of the second century AD.[88] It is unclear if this tendency towards centralization was actually introduced or alternatively caused by the expansion of Rome. Indeed, it is possible that in this case we are merely observing the final stages of a long process, that begun many centuries prior to the Roman conquest[89].

[82] Piranum, Silbo, Siparis, Humagum, Ruginium; Tassaux 2011, 431-440.
[83] Emona: Vičić 2003, 21-45; Gaspari 2010.
[84] Slapšak 2003, 243-257; Buršić-Matijašić 2007; Buršić-Matijašić 2011, 63-76.
[85] Chapman, Shiel, Batović eds. 1996.
[86] Dubolnić 2007, 1-58.
[87] Vrkljan-Lipovac, Šiljeg 2012, 5-34.
[88] Slapšak 2003, 254-257.
[89] Brusić 2010, 241-249, has suggested that the decline in the number of fortified sites can be traced throughout the first millennium BC.

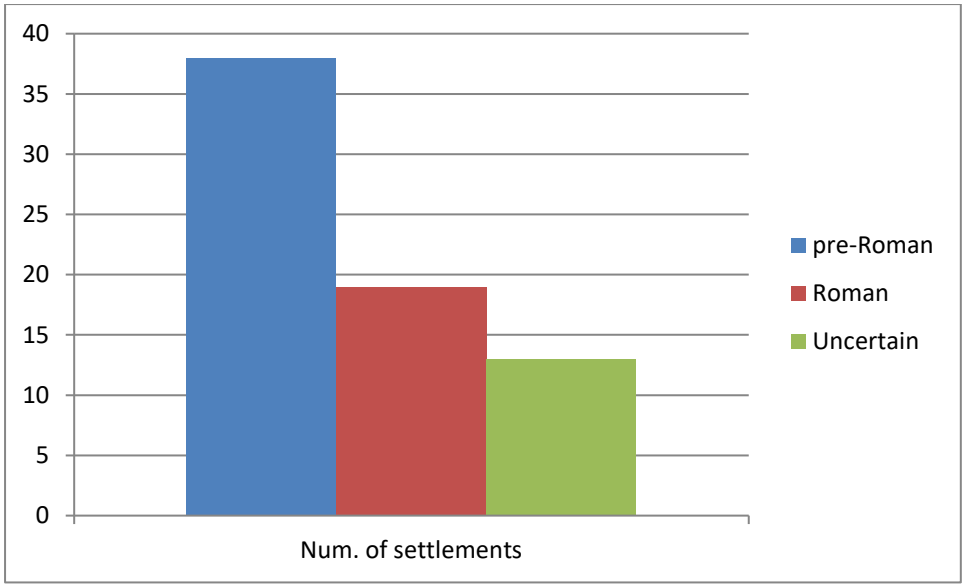

Figure II_3: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Roman Dalmatia

As anticipated at the beginning of this section, the number of newly founded settlements rises when we look at the chronology of the settlements in Dalmatia (figure II_3, table II_5 in Appendix 2). They were composed of at least nine self-governing towns and no fewer than seven secondary agglomerations or a minimum of 27% of all settlements included in this analysis. This count does not include the few *municipia* that are still archaeologically unattested, and above all, the poorly researched secondary agglomerations in the interior of the province and most of the road-side settlements. It is highly probable that the majority of these settlements were created only after the founding of Roman Dalmatia. Given the extent of the road-network in Dalmatia, the settlements that developed next to road-stations must have been quite numerous, despite the fact that the mountainous character of the land probably meant that a certain portion of these sites was only occupied seasonally. If we suppose that all major stations along the five principal roads that ran across the province were accompanied by nucleated settlements, the number of new foundations could increase by over 50% and equal the number of pre-Roman conurbations.[90]

This prominence of the group of newly founded settlements is somewhat moderated by the fact that at least a dozen sites are known solely from descriptive accounts. In most of these cases, it is impossible to ascertain the true nature of the site during the Roman period. However, as in Roman Macedonia, the micro-locations and layout of most of these settlements, and above all, the absence of earlier archaeological remains, make it unlikely that they grew up at the sites of earlier central places. Because the majority of these sites were discovered by scholars studying the road-network of the Dalmatian interior, it is possible that they were actually road-side *vici* that were not mentioned in the Late Roman itineraries.[91] Hence, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the Dalmatian interior

[90] The full bibliography on this topic can be found in Bojanovski 1974, that remains the principal source for the road network of continental Dalmatia. On the basis of this study between two and four stations can be reckoned per road, however not all stations would have been inhabited permanently and along certain roads they were located in or near the official towns.

[91] For example, the settlements near modern Ustikoline, Drenovik, Velečevo: Bojanovski 1978, 51-125; Bojanovski 1987, 63-174; Bojanovski 1988, 208-209. Ustikoline, however, has also been related to the mining

the breach with the pre-Roman tradition was as abrupt as on the Middle Danube. Outside the narrow coastal belt, nearly 100% of the major agglomerations from the Roman period were new foundations.

Nevertheless, mostly thanks to the high urban density in pre-Roman Liburnia, the pre-Roman segment of the settlement network prevailed. No fewer than thirty or nearly 43% of all settlements included in the analysis show continuity from the period prior to the Roman conquest. The number of settlements in this category could be slightly higher if the problematic examples like Setovia, Pharos or Haedum are added. In Figure II_3 they are included in the graph pre-Roman, but the character of the Roman phase at these sites is extremely dubious and it is possible that these pre-Roman *oppida* were abandoned by the early second century AD.[92] It is likely that some of the Greek colonies and *emporia* on the Adriatic coast experienced a similar fate after the Roman conquest, especially after the founding of the colony of Salona[93]. There have been claims that ancient Pharos was revived as an official town at an unknown point of time during the Principate, but little evidence to support this assertion has been found in the archaeological or epigraphic record.[94]

As in Italy X and Macedonia, the category of pre-Roman settlements comprises the largest and most important urban centres in the province, including the provincial capital Salona and the other three colonies on the Adriatic coast. Iader, Narona and Epidaurum were all located at the sites of earlier settlements.[95] Among the colonies, only Aequum and the poorly attested colony near modern Rogatica on the Drina were founded on virgin soil.[96] Although making up nearly one-third of all agglomerated settlements, in terms of wealth and importance, the newly founded towns lagged behind the old coastal centres. Even were we to focus solely on the official towns in the interior, their archaeological and epigraphic legacy is still rather humble compared to the older coastal towns.

Despite the conscious efforts to urbanize the Dalmatian interior during the period of the High Empire, the deeply rooted contrast between the coastal zone and the continental parts of the province persisted. In this respect Dalmatia seems to defy the overall pattern that characterizes our study-region. As will be shown in a later chapter, the new foundations usually surpassed the older pre-Roman towns in status, wealth and size. In the case of Dalmatia, this divergence can probably be attributed to their isolated position of the interior, but was also affected by the special character and function of some of the newly founded settlements. Finally in Dalmatia, as else where, wealth and

activities in the middle Drina, Škegro 2006, 149-173. Literally all data available in the literature come from I. Bojanovski's survey of the road-network in continental Dalmatia.

[92] The epigraphic evidence shows that a small garrison was stationed at Andetrium; the other two *oppida* were probably abandoned in the course of the first century AD; Andetrium: Bojanovski 1974, 131-132; Wilkes 2000, 327-341; Setovia: Bojanovski 1974, 130; Haedum: Bojanovski 1974, 184; Bojanovski 1988, 52.

[93] These are Tragurium and Epetium. Polyb. 32.9.1-2; Plin. *HN* 3.141-142. Suić 1976: 17-18, has seen both outposts as seats of separate *praefectures* in the territory of Salona, but this assumption is not supported by the archaeological evidence dating mostly to the period of Late Antiquity, Kovačić 1994, 51-69; Babić 2016, 291-303. Epetium: Faber 1983, 17-37; Ugarković, Neuhauser 2013, 55-58.

[94] Zaninović 1989, 35-49; is the main proponent of this theory. For the archaeological remains, see Jeličić-Radonić 2000, 77-82; Gaffney 2006, 89-106.

[95] Salona: Cambi 1991; Narona: Cambi 1978, 57-66; Epidaurum: Glavičić 2008, 43-62. See also Wilkes 2003, 233-241.

[96] Aequum: Suić 1976, 153-154, 238. Most scholars see a sixth Roman colony in the Middle Drina Valley, near modern Rogatica, Alföldy 1965, 149; Bojanovski 1988, 169-175, Mesihović 2009, 55-72. Far more convincing is the opinion expressed by Vittinghoff 1977, 18-19, who has argued that the settlement in question is Risinium on the coast rather than a new colony in the interior of Dalmatia.

prosperity were closely related to the juridical status of the population. Four out of five, possibly six, colonies are located on the coast and belong to the zone of pre-Roman urbanism. At this point, we need to make a finer distinction between the pre-Roman *poleis* that continued to exist as Roman colonies undergoing only minor changes in the urban topography and the coastal colonies in Dalmatia. Viewed from this angle, coastal Dalmatia differs from the Istrian Peninsula or Epirus, in which the Roman phase often respected the earlier urban grid. On the Dalmatian coast, as in some of the towns of Upper Macedonia, the construction that took place after the Roman conquest virtually erased the remains of the earlier phases at these sites. Consequently, although technically speaking the major Roman towns of Dalmatia display a topical continuity from the pre-Roman period, they were new centres of gravity in the region. The rank and status of the predecessors of the Roman towns on the Dalmatian coast are unknown, but it is possible that, prior to the Roman conquest, they differed little from the average *oppidum* in the continental part of the province. In fact, according to the conventional view, at least two of the colonies on the Dalmatian coast – Salona and Narona - were founded on the sites of Hellenistic *emporia*.[97] In other words, the new urban centres in the region emerged on the periphery of the earlier urban network. While the old Greek colonies on the Adriatic islands were abandoned or fell into decline, the towns that grew on the sites of their former *emporia* emerged as the most important players in the new urban geography of the province.[98] Taking this stand-point, Dalmatia does not depart from the overall pattern of urbanization in our study-area under the High Empire. Unless they were colonized or granted a municipal status, urban development was sluggish or so slow as to be imperceptible in the great majority of the old *poleis* in our study-region.

Outside the coastal zone, partly urbanized prior to the Roman conquest, the decrease in the number of sites between the Hellenistic and Roman periods is even more striking than in the northern Adriatic or in Roman Macedonia. In the few systematically researched regions, the Roman conquest introduced a radical reorganization of the regional settlement patterns. Surveys in the core of the Dalmatian tribal territory – the Duvanjsko Plateau – have demonstrated that only three or four out of forty-two fortifications show traces of a continuous occupation into the period of the High Empire.[99] As in other mountainous regions of the western Balkans, the Roman conquest brought an end to the highly developed fortification networks, usually enclosing geographically well-defined plateaus or high river-plains.[100] These settlement patterns had served the political interests and ideologies of the small introvert polities that dotted the wider region in the centuries prior to the Roman conquest. The Roman Empire had absolutely no interest in preserving these highly fragmented constellations.

The Pannonias

Both Pannonia Superior and Pannonia Inferior fall entirely within the limits of the study-region. When combined, the two provinces roughly equal Dalmatia in size. It was therefore surprising to discover

[97] Salona: Cambi 1991, 11-15; Narona: Cambi 1978, 60; Marin 2003, 11-12.
[98] For the Greek colonies off the Dalmatian coast and their *emporia* in the Roman period, see Wilkes 1969, 38-39, 229-230; Suić 1996, 269-282; Dzino 2010, 117-136.
[99] Benac 1985.
[100] For parallel processes in Epirus, see Cabanes 1976.

about fifty - including problematic sites - agglomerated settlements in Inferior and only thirty in Superior. Although its territory is almost twice as large, the number of conurbations in Pannonia Superior is only three quarters of the number of agglomerated settlements in northern Macedonia. Together, the two Pannonian provinces boast only a slightly greater number of agglomerated settlements than Dalmatia, mostly as a consequence of the dense network of auxiliary forts in Pannonia Inferior. The exclusion of the road-stations from the list - with the exception of the *Limes* road, on which auxiliary forts or the adjacent *vici* performed this function – is not enough to explain this disparity, because most road-stations have also been excluded from the lists of towns and town-like secondary agglomerations of Macedonia and Dalmatia. As for the latter two, the figures include a small group of sites whose character and chronology are not fully clear.

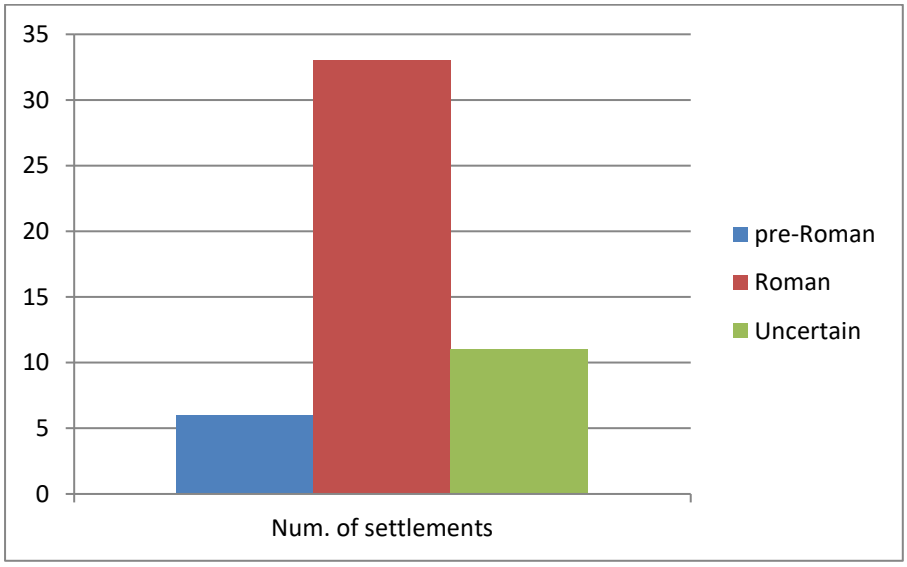

Figure II_4: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Pannonia Inferior

Once we leave the belt of provinces gravitating towards the Adriatic and Aegean, the figures that display the continuity of settlement prior to and after the Roman conquest are completely reversed. In the case of Pannonia Inferior, thirty-three out of fifty agglomerated settlements or over 65% have been securely determined as new foundations (Figure II_4, Table II_6 in Appendix 2). This percentage is almost certainly an underestimate as poorly researched sites have been treated as uncertain entries, while the majority of the historically attested road-stations are excluded from the total. In most of these cases, it is not the founding date that is problematic, but the character of the settlements at the time of the High Empire. If these sites were non-agrarian settlements rather than *villae* or ordinary villages during the period of the High Empire, the category of urban and urban-like sites founded after the Roman conquest represents slightly over 90% of all conurbations included in this analysis. In a complete contrast to the developments in ancient Illyria, Macedonia or coastal Dalmatia, the Romans created an entirely new settlement network in the Pannonian provinces. The pre-existing settlement pattern was almost entirely disregarded, albeit the names of the old ethnic units were often preserved in the newly established administrative nomenclature.[101]

[101] For the *civitates* of Pannonia see Dušanić 1967, 67-81; Mócsy 1974, 53-79; Fitz 1980, 141-159; Dzino 2010, table 2, 165-167; Colombo 2010, 171-202.

This striking fact has been observed by a number of scholars working in the two provinces.[102] Various explanations have been offered for the complete absence of continuity in the settlement locations, ranging from the nature of the native societies in the region and the lack of permanent central places, to the severe demographic decline in the area related to the Dacian invasions in the mid-first century BC and the subsequent wars of conquest.[103] We shall return to this issue towards the end of this chapter. For the moment, it is important to point out that the total discontinuity thesis was supported almost exclusively by the evidence coming from the Trans-Pannonian section of the *Limes*. The only site showing traces of continuity in this area is the auxiliary fort of Solva, near modern Esztergom and possibly Lugio, near modern Dunaszekcső.[104] Recently, the belated research on the Roman frontier in the southern half of the province has offered a somewhat different picture. Here orientation surveys and limited test-pit excavations have revealed the presence of material dating to the Late La Tène period at the sites of at least three auxiliary forts on the Danube *Limes*[105]. But continuity has also been attested at some of the civilian settlements in the southern part of the province. Rescue excavations in Cibalae have revealed that the Roman town was surrounded by three Late La Tène agglomerations, in some of which occupation continued into the Roman period.[106] In neighbouring Mursa, the pre-Roman *oppidum* was integrated into the urban tissue of the second century *municipium*.[107] In fact, the urban genesis of Mursa presents a close parallel to the developments in the vicinity of the auxiliary forts on the Danube *Limes*. The current hypothesis is that the town developed from an earlier *oppidum*, guarded by an auxiliary fort in the late first-early second century AD.[108]

In total, we only have five or possibly six sites, or only about 10%, with a direct continuity between the two periods. Nevertheless, this fact hints at a more complex scenario of conquest and urbanization of the area. These divergences from the prevalent pattern should not be simply dismissed or ignored, especially because they are limited mostly to the southern part of the province. Similar developments will also be observed along a short section of the Lower Danube *Limes*. It is tempting to relate them to special logistical considerations or the political relations between the Roman Empire and the native societies on the Middle Danube at the time of the conquest. The *oppida* of loyal tribes could have offered a ready-made base for the newly arrived troops, while the close surveillance of the native communities must have been of crucial importance, at least in the period immediately following the final pacification of the province. However, the validity of this hypothesis depends entirely on the chronology of Roman occupation of this section of the Danube *Limes*. At the majority of the excavated sites on the Middle Danube north of the Drava, permanent Roman occupation does not predate the Flavian period.[109] Given that the auxiliary forts south of the Drava were also established only in the

[102] Burghardt 1979, 1-20; Gabler 1991, 51-73.
[103] The much quoted passage from App. *Ill.* 4.22 or Dio, 49.37.1, stressing the rural character of the Pannonian tribes Domić-Kunić 2012, 29-69; for the impact of the Dacian invasion on the Carpathian Basin, I follow, Mócsy 1974, 19.
[104] Bónis 1971, 33-39; Gabler 1991, 51-73; the micro-topography of this site has been lost under the monumental castle from the Medieval period; Lugio: Gabler 1991, 55.
[105] Accumincum, Rittium and Burgenae. Dimitrijević 1959, 379-381; Pinterović 1968, 55-82; Piletić 1989, 79-101; given the poor technical documentation included in the publications, a certain reserve is warranted especially for Rittium and Burgenae. The reader is given no idea about the exact layout and micro-locations of these Roman forts.
[106] Iskra-Janošić 2004, 169-195.
[107] Pinterović 1978; Filipović 2004, 157-168.
[108] Filipović 2004, Figure 1.
[109] Gabler 1971, 83-91; Fitz 1980b, 125-140; Gabler 1999, 75-86.

second half of the first century AD, the idea that continuity in occupation on these sites was necessitated by the pressing security and logistical concerns in the early days of the occupation will have to be discarded. Yet importantly, the defence of the frontier was not the only possible role assigned to the army in this part of the province. It was also responsible for the maintenance of internal order and administration and its permanent presence in the areas occupied by predominantly peregrine communities is fully understandable. In this context, the earliest Roman occupation at Solva should be mentioned. This is one of the rare sites to the north of the Drava showing continuity from the pre-Roman period and has been dated to the reign of Claudius or perhaps even as early as Tiberius and there are also indications that the forts in the south of the province were occupied by the middle of the first century AD.[110]

Despite local variations, the Late La Tène *oppida* in the region of the Middle Danube were not integrated into the settlement network of the High Empire.[111] It is a strategy completely opposite to that adopted a century to a century and a half earlier during the conquest of the Adriatic coast and Macedonia, in which a maximum use was made of the existing urban infrastructure. Obviously the absence of an adequate pre-Roman urban infrastructure at the majority of these sites might have encouraged discontinuity, although this still does not explain the almost complete neglect of the pre-Roman settlement geography. Proper urban centres were probably non-existent, but the societies that inhabited the Middle and Lower Danube, as well as the Dacian and Balkan interior did possess their own central places and were gradually evolving into complex, proto-state societies by the time of the Roman conquest.[112] The problem is certainly not one-sided and, apart from purely practical or ideological considerations, the changing imperialistic strategies between the periods of the Late Republic and High Empire, during which direct rule was gradually replacing the semi-autonomous client kingdoms, has to be taken into account.

As in most other provinces in our study-region the category of native, nucleated settlements that featured monumental earthen ramparts or occupied strategic locations dwindled drastically after the Roman conquest. This is clearly evident even in the area of the Sava-Drava interfluve, in which we encounter a fairly high degree of continuity from the pre-Roman period (Map II_1). The few Late La Tène settlements on the Lower Sava that have seen more extensive excavation campaigns show signs of a gradual abandonment during the first century AD.[113] Even at sites at which the destruction layers date to the time of the conquest, there is sound evidence of reoccupation by the early decades of the first century AD. However, life in these settlements never returned to the pre-conquest level. By the time the Danube *Limes* was stabilized under the Flavian dynasty, most of the *oppida* from the area of the Lower Sava were situated in the territories of the official Roman towns of Sirmium and Cibalae and had either been abandoned or had lost the character of a nucleated settlement. A similar situation has been documented in the case of the Eraviscan *oppidum* on Mount Gellert, located only a few kilometres to the south of the legionary camp of Aquincum.[114] In contrast to its role in certain parts of

[110] Solva: Gabler 1999, Figure 1; Cuccium: Rendić-Miočević 2009, 79-103; although the fort has been dated to the late first-early second century, there is evidence of earlier military equipment from this site; Cornacum: Leleković, Ilkić 2011, 299-306; *sigillata* dated to the early to mid-first century AD.
[111] Gabler 1991, 52.
[112] For the complex settlement hierarchy among the eastern Celts and the Dacians, see Guštin, Jevtić eds. 2011; Lockyear 2004, 33-74.
[113] Majnarić-Panđić 1984, 23-34.
[114] Pető 1979, 271-285; Szabó, Guillaumet, Cserményi 1994, 107-126; Ottományi 2005, 67-131.

Epirus or Macedonia, the Roman army was not directly responsible for the demise of the old settlements. They simply failed to integrate into the new socio-economic reality caused by the Roman conquest.

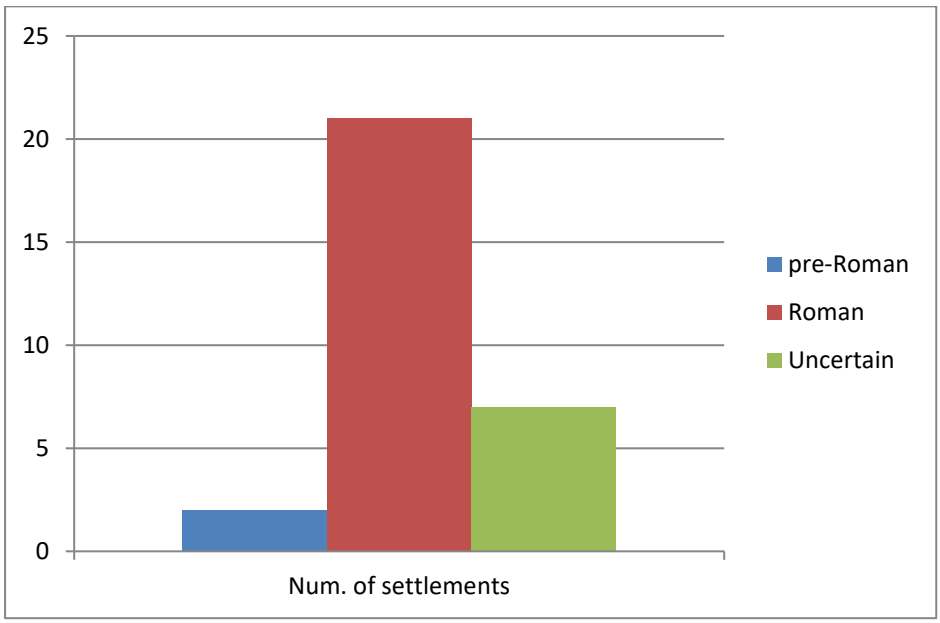

Figure II_5: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Pannonia Superior

The chronological profile of the Roman settlements in Pannonia Superior is almost identical to that of Inferior (Figure II_5, Table II_7 in Appendix 2). Twenty-one out of the thirty agglomerated settlements included in this study are green-field foundations. This amounts to over 70% of the total number of agglomerated settlements but, as in Pannonia Inferior, it is exclusive of the majority of the road-stations and a small group of settlements known only from extensive surveys. Pannonia Superior had a much more developed road network than Inferior and it can be safely posited that along the section of the Amber Road between Poetovio and Carnuntum and on the two Diagonal Roads alone, there were at least ten to twelve *mansiones* that might have attracted civilian settlements.[115] It is also important to recall that the inter-regional road along the old Drava *Limes* was conspicuously devoid of major urban foundations during the High Empire.[116] It is likely that the sparse urban network along this important inter-regional road was complemented by a number of town-like foundations that have been entered in the historical record as road-stations. The chances are that most sites belonging to this settlement category were founded after the Roman conquest and hence the true share of the newly founded agglomerations was probably much higher, including well over 90% of all corporate communities in Pannonia Superior during the period of the High Empire.

As in Pannonia Inferior, a small number of settlements included in the list present exceptions to the prevalent pattern. In the case of Superior, continuity has been ascertained at two, possibly three

[115] For a recently discovered station with an adjacent agglomerated settlement on the Amber Road near modern Nemescsó see Groh, Kiss, Sedlmayer 2010, 401-424.
[116] Gračanin 2010, 9-69. At least fifteen stations are recorded in the Pleiades Database along the Drava Road in the section between Poetovio and Mursa and, judging by the distances between these stations, it is possible that a few are missing. Ptol. *Geog.* 8.15.3, mentions at least eleven settlements in the interior of Pannonia Superior that cannot be identified with any of the settlements included in this study.

settlements that, again, amount to about 10% of the total number of entries. However, in contrast to Pannonia Inferior, these are not garrison settlements clustered along a short section of the *limes*. In Superior, rather surprisingly, continuity has been attested at sites that became important civilian centres in the province during the period of the High Empire. Siscia and Poetovio, the two towns that were founded next to pre-Roman *oppida*, were among the largest civilian settlements in Pannonia Superior. Both towns were founded as colonies and Poetovio, one of the largest agglomerations in our study-area, became the financial capital of the province and the centre of the Illyrian customs district. It is unfortunate that in neither of these cases has the extent and character of the pre-Roman settlement yet been determined, but the fact that a strong La Tène presence has been claimed by nearly all researchers who have worked at these sites makes it rather difficult to question their continuity.[117] In fact, in the case of Siscia, the presence of a Late La Tène settlement in the immediate vicinity or on the site of the later Roman colony is excplicitly testified to in the historical record.[118] Consequently, both Siscia and Poetovio join Emona in Italy X as colonies founded on or close to the sites of pre-Roman *oppida*. It seems that these settlements occupied locations that were strategically too important to be abandoned.[119]

Looking at the rest of the pre-Roman central places in the region, it has to be assumed that they were either completely abandoned or degraded to rural, sub-corporate communities. This development is exemplified by the cases of Velem-Szentvid and Heinberg, Late La Tène *oppida* on the Amber Road that were abandoned soon after the Roman conquest, and by the establishment of the new garrison and civilian outposts along this important corridor.[120] More examples have been found in the Raba Valley.[121] It is impossible to define the transformation between the two time periods in terms of contraction or expansion in the number of central places, but it is obvious that the urban geography of the region was thoroughly redrawn. The *civitates* mentioned by Pliny the Elder did retain the old tribal names, but their central places were new foundations that looked nothing like the old Iron Age settlements.

The Moesias

The two Moesian provinces, were like the Pannonias, located beyond the northern frontiers of the old Hellenistic kingdoms that dominated the south of the study-area. The peoples who inhabited this part of the Balkan Peninsula had had a reduced range of contacts with the Hellenistic world, limited to military campaigns and poorly understood trade relations. There is very little evidence of autonomous proto-urban developments in the pre-Roman period and the few settlements that did begin to show some signs of urbanization were abandoned long before the Roman conquest.[122] None of these proto-urban settlements was reoccupied after the incorporation of the area at the beginning of the High

[117] Poetovio: Horvat *et. al.* 2003, 153-189; Horvat, Vičič 2010; Siscia: Lolić 2003, 131-152. The continuity thesis for Aquae Balisae has not been substantiated by archaeological evidence, Schejbal 2004, 99-129.
[118] App. *Ill*. 22; Dio 49.37, 3-4. Hoti 1992, 133-163; the archaeological finds, however, do not suggest a full overlap between the two settlements, Lolić 2003, 138-141.
[119] Celeia, the Norican municipium, completes this group of pre-Roman *oppida* on the roads linking Italy and the Danube; Lazar 2002, 71-101.
[120] Szabó, Guillaumet, Cserményi 1994, 107-126; Kandler, Humer, Zabehlicky 2004, 11-66.
[121] Károlyi 1985, 391-419; see Bónis 1971, 33-39; Gabler 1991, 51-73, for brief overviews of this process.
[122] For example, the *oppidum* at Krševica, over 300 km to the north of the bay of Thessaloniki, Popović 2007, 411-417.

Empire. One possible cause of the divergent developments in the Balkan interior and the coastal zone might have simply been the lack of urban infrastructure in the former area. In this context, it should be borne in mind that the regions along the Lower Danube were conquered at roughly the same time as Pannonia, during the reign of Augustus, 150 years after the conquest of the Illyrian kingdom and Macedon and at least half a century after the Romans established a secure foothold on the Dalmatian coast. The driving forces and mechanisms of expansion during these time periods were not necessarily identical. These facts must be taken into account if we are to understand the almost complete absence of continuity in settlements and native institutions in the provinces along the Danube.

The two provinces are of average size, Moesia Superior occupied about 67,000 sq. kilometres, while Inferior was somewhat smaller occupying some 57,000 sq. kilometres. Although unaffected by the processes of pre-Roman urbanization along the Black Sea coast and in the south of the peninsula, the total number of agglomerated settlements from the Roman period is comparable to that encountered in Dalmatia and northern Macedonia. This has also been observed in the case of Pannonia Inferior and it has to be related to the dense network of auxiliary *vici* along the Lower Danube.

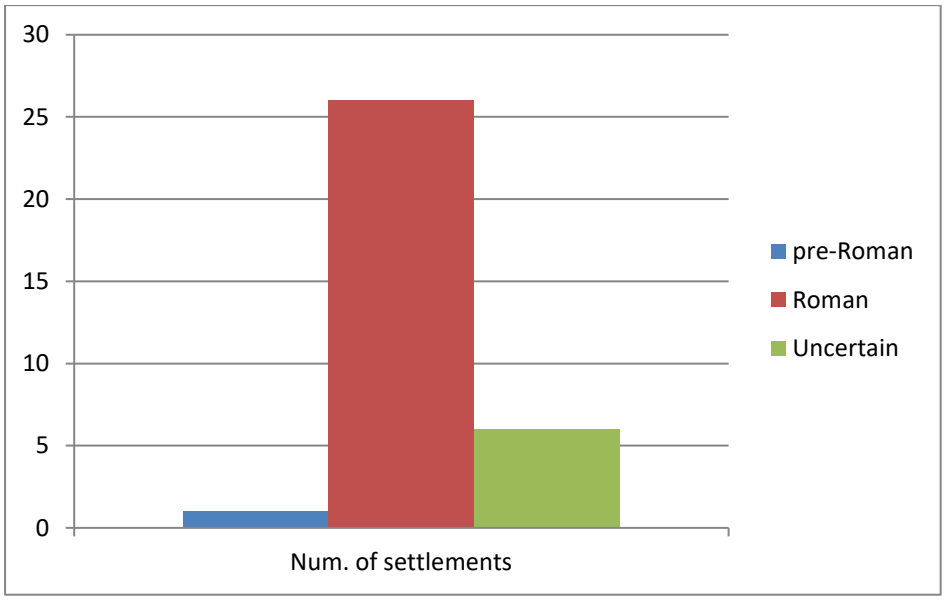

Figure II_6: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Moesia Superior

In the case of Moesia Superior, the discontinuity between the two periods is even more pronounced than in the Pannonian provinces (Figure II_6, Table II_8 in Appendix 2). The relatively limited archaeological research has so far failed to reveal any traces of a pre-conquest phase in twenty-six out of thirty-four settlements from the period of the High Empire. This amounts to almost 80% of the settlements included in this study, more than in any other province in our study area with the exception of Dacia. This is the minimum estimate. It is likely that most of the uncertain sites also post-date the Roman conquest. The systematic excavations at a small number of road-stations have shown that these agglomerations were founded centuries after the Roman conquest.[123] These examples suggest it is unlikely that the rest of the road-stations along the Lissus - Ratiaria and Viminacium - Scupi

[123] *Mansio* Idumum and *mansio* Municipium: Vasić, Milošević 2000; Timacum Maius: Petrović, Filipović 2008, 47-58; possibly Remesiana: Petrović ed. 1979, 51-57. For the Late Roman date of a number of road-stations, see the next chapter.

roads were built at the sites of earlier settlements. The majority of these sites bear Roman names and they are not mentioned in the sources referring to the pre-Roman period.[124] The settlements that survived the conquest must have been confined to the periphery of the Roman network, away from the main roads.[125] However, even this suggestion still awaits confirmation by archaeological research. At the few excavated mining settlements that belong to the peripheral segment of the settlement network, there are no remains of a pre-conquest phase, although there are traces of prehistoric mining in these areas.[126] The case of Moesia Superior only reinforces the impression that, as in the rest of the Danube provinces, the Roman conquest ushered in a radically different settlement pattern and hierarchy.

In fact, the only evidence of continuity from the Late La Tène period comes from the Danube Valley, the most urbanized segment of the provincial territory. Even there it has been documented only in one, possibly two agglomerations from the Roman period. These are Margum, a civilian, self-governing town located between the two legionary camps of Singidunum and Viminacium and possibly Tricornium, a smaller garrison settlement located 30 km to the west, on the same section of the Danube *Limes*.[127] They amount to negligible 5% of the settlement network in the Roman province and their survival into the period of the High Empire can hardly be taken as indicative of a conscious policy of urbanization, or even of purely logistical considerations dating to the time of the conquest. However, we shall see that both sites are located just across the border with Pannonia Inferior, close to an area in which continuity has been attested at a number of Late La Tène sites.

The fate of the native settlements after the Roman conquest remains unknown. The two Late La Tène *necropoleis*, located only a couple of kilometres to the east of the legionary base of Singidunum, were apparently abandoned shortly after the Roman conquest and certainly by the time the first permanent legionary camps were established under the Flavian emperors.[128] This parallels the developments attested in the hinterlands of Sirmium and Aquincum in Pannonia Inferior. As in Pannonia, the native settlements were abandoned in the course of the first century AD, the population either moving into the newly established agglomerations or retreating into the more remote sections of their hinterlands.[129] They did not have much choice as, at least in the cases of Singidunum and Viminacium, the close proximity of the legionary camps indicates that that their land would have been expropriated by the military. To the south, in the basin of the South Morava, archaeological research has likewise proven that a number of prehistoric forts were abandoned by the time of the Roman conquest.[130] The historical sources referring to the time before the conquest list the names of a few strongholds of the

[124] Mirković 2007, 12-17.
[125] *Cf*. Mladenović 2012, 24; for the process by which garrison sites attracted the native population, thereby changing the settlement geography of the province.
[126] Municipium DD: Čerškov 1970; Ulpiana: Parović-Pešikan 1981, 57-73; the fort near Stojnik: Mirković, Dušanić eds. 1976, 111-117. Prehistoric mining in the area of the Moesian mines: Čerškov 1969; for the role of the native communities in Roman mining, see Dušanić 1989, 148-156.
[127] Margum: Ivanišević, Bugarski 2012, 239-255; Roman Tricornium has yet to be located, although it has been associated to the prehistoric settlement near modern Ritopek: Mirković 1968, 95-97; Mirković, Dušanić eds. 1976.
[128] Todorović 1974.
[129] Jovanović 2008, 117-135.
[130] Although in this case, most of the chronology of the hill-top settlements is problematic, Petrović 1976; Fidanovski 1984, 35-43; Mirković 2007, 12-13.

people who inhabited this region, the Dardanians, but none of these toponyms appears in the sources from the period of the High Empire and none has been identified on the ground.[131]

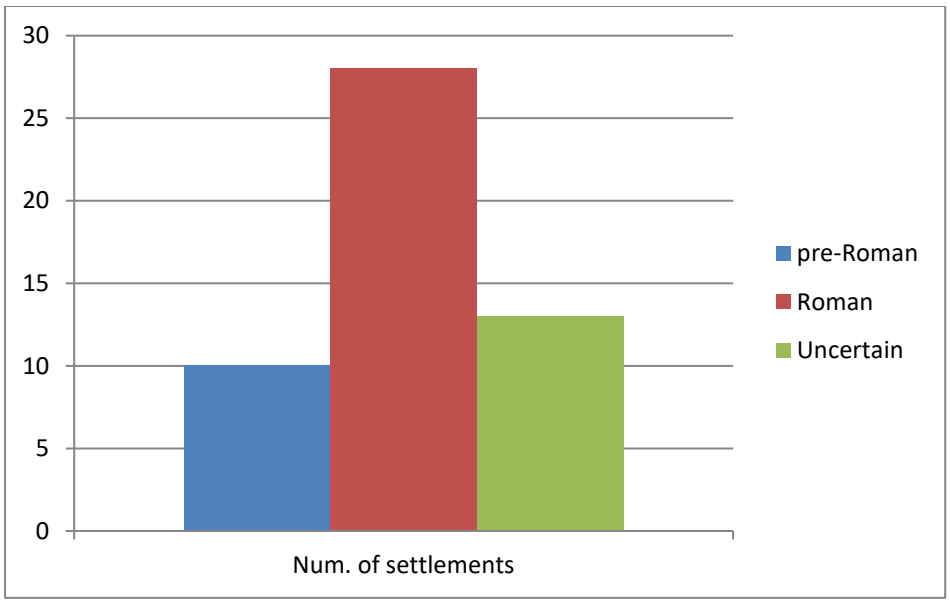

Figure II_7: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Moesia Inferior

In view of the chronological profile of its urban and urban-like settlements, Moesia Inferior differs slightly from the rest of the frontier provinces (Figure II_7, Table II_9 in Appendix 2). At least twenty-eight out of fifty-one agglomerated settlements, or about 56%, were founded after the conquest of the region and the creation of the province. The real percentage might have been higher because the settlements with uncertain chronology represent almost one-quarter of all agglomerated settlements in Moesia Inferior. One group consists of civilian and auxiliary *vici* whose exact location and character have yet to be determined.[132] Because there are no mentions of earlier remains at the putative sites of these settlements, the chances are that they also date to the period after the conquest. Far more problematic are the sites at which a pre-Roman phase has been supposed solely on the basis of isolated finds.[133] Even in the case of systematically excavated settlements, such as Tropaeum Traiani, one is reluctant to accept the interpretation of the settlement's stratigraphy[134]. Although it is prudent to remain sceptical about the date of these settlements, I am inclined to assign them to the group of newly founded sites. If future research confirms my intuitions, the number of new foundations in Moesia Inferior is likely to exceed 70% of all major agglomerations in this province.

Turning to the written sources, their percentage rises still higher. Because of their specialized function, the *stationes* and *emporia* along the main roads in the province must be taken into account. However, these were not always recorded in the itineraries and it is rather difficult to arrive at a safe estimate. Only six stations are mentioned in the itineraries on the roads between Oescus and Philippopolis,

[131] Papazoglou 1969.
[132] *E.g.* Camistrum: Gudea 2005, 411; Tautiomosis: Nikolov 1967, 216-235; Binev 2003, 160-182.
[133] *E.g.* Dimum: Mitova-Džonova 2003, 39-55; Axiopolis: Suceveanu, Barnea 1993, 159-179; Gudea 2005, 446.
[134] Barnea, Barnea *et al*. 1979.

Durostorum and Odessa and Melta and Odessa.[135] At least some of these *mansiones*, such as Melta and Sostra on the Oescus-Philippopolis road, attracted permanent civilian settlements.[136] The true number of road-stations that were transformed into small agglomerations was certainly higher, although it should not be overestimated as this category partly overlaps with the categories of *vici* and *emporia*. The fact that some of the excavated road-stations in the region date only to the Late Roman period should also be pointed out.

Emporium Piretensium, the only known *emporium* in Moesia Inferior prior to the late third century, has not yet been identified with a specific archaeological site but, given its Latin name and the fact that it was a dependency of Nicopolis ad Istrum – a city founded in the early second century by Emperor Trajan, - it was most probably a new foundation.[137] There are no mentions of other *emporia* in Moesia Inferior in the Severan period. If more settlements of this type did exist, the chances are that they also belonged to the group of new foundations.

Adding the historically recorded road-stations and *emporia* to the list of newly founded settlements in Moesia Inferior will increase their number by at least 25%. However, it is possible that even this is not the final figure. Moesia Inferior boasts the highest number of epigraphically attested *vici* in the study-area.[138] The majority of these sites remain unidentified. Only a few have been studied by means of extensive surveys and the absence of a pre-conquest phase has not been securely demonstrated. Nevertheless, judging by the fact that a number of these settlements had Latin names and local institutions, they were most likely new foundations.[139] Far more controversial are their size and socio-economic profile. There have been claims that some of these sites stretched over dozens of hectares, but this has not been satisfactorily documented.[140] Unless it is proven that these settlements differed substantially from the average village, it is better to discard them from the analysis. Nonetheless, if all *vici* that had annually elected magistrates or public buildings are added, the share of the newly founded segment of the settlement network will rise to almost 90%.

Despite the predominance of the newly founded sites, a sizeable segment of the settlement network of Moesia Inferior was inherited from the pre-conquest period. A Hellenistic phase has been proven at at least ten settlements and it is possible that another two or three will be added to the list after future archaeological research.[141] This amounts to about one-quarter of the settlements included in the analysis and it is visibly higher than the share of the pre-Roman settlements in Moesia Superior or Pannonia Superior. The great majority of these older settlements are the Greek colonies on the western Black Sea coast or their *emporia*. They were incorporated into the Late Republic after the

[135] Data are taken from http://omnesviae.org/; the Pleiades Database and Madžarov 2009.
[136] For Melta the evidence is mostly epigraphic CIL VI 2736, Gerov 1997, 23. The remains of the *mansio* and parts of the adjoining settlement at Sostra are clearly visible on Google Earth, Madžarov 2009, 201-215.
[137] Zawadzki 1964, 531-538; Gerov 1980, 204-208.
[138] Velkov ed. 1979, 286-296; Gerov 1980, 319-348; Doruţiu-Boilă ed. 1980; Poulter 1980, 729-744; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 45-46, 51; Avram 2007, 91-109.
[139] Doruţu-Boilă ed. 1980, num. 21, 117; Petculescu 2006, 31-41; on the other hand, Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, argue that the names of most of these *vici* are native.
[140] For example, Snyagovo: Torbatov 2007, 46-56; *vicus* Trullensium, from which the epigraphic evidence suggests local officials and craftsmen, CIL III 14409, 14412, 3; Gerov 1997, 84-85; Velkov 1958, 557-565.
[141] The problematic entries are Axiopolis, Dimum: see fn. 133; Transmarisca: Velkov ed. 1980, 49-54; Gudea 2005, 429; and Aegyssus: Gudea 2005, num. 52; Petculescu 2006, 35. The last mentioned is also among the settlements mentioned in Ovid's letters, *Ex Pont.* 1.8, 13. Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 23-26, 47; and this seems to be the main argument in support of the continuity of settlement at Aegyssus.

wars with Mithridates and were later added to Moesia Inferior, although they retained a higher degree of autonomy than the new foundations in the interior.[142] Settlement continuity has also been confirmed at Byzone, Argamum and possibly Halmyra, but the character of some of these settlements under the High Empire remains vague.[143]

As on the Adriatic coast, it is possible to observe a slight de-urbanization in comparison to the pre-Roman period. Two, possibly three, of the old Greek foundations declined during the Late Republic and Early Empire. These include Byzone, a town that according to the written testimonies suffered damage in an earthquake prior to the Roman conquest and was re-established as an autonomous town only in Late Antiquity, Tirizis and Karen Limen.[144] However this tendency is somewhat negated by the written sources from the Roman period that mention a number of hitherto unattested ports of call on the western Black Sea coast.[145] Like the great majority of road-stations, they remain archaeologically invisible and one can only speculate about their origins.

Having run through the chronology of the settlements in the western part of the peninsula, the survival of the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast in the Roman period is hardly a surprise. It was rather intriguing, however, to discover continuity on a number of sites on the Danube frontier. In the case of Halmyris, it has been proven that the first auxiliary fort was built on top of a settlement of the Getae after the end of the first Dacian Campaign, and this was certainly the case for Barboşi and possibly Aegyssus.[146] Topical continuity has also been claimed for Dimum, Sexaginta Prista, Transmarisca and Axiopolis, but only on the basis of isolated finds.[147] To this group we might even add Troesmis mentioned by Ovid at the beginning of the first century AD, although archaeological research has yet to discover pre-conquest phases at this site.[148] As on the Middle Danube, the forts with securely attested pre-Roman phases in Moesia Inferior are concentrated on a relatively short section of the Danube *Limes*, stretching between the last major bend in the river and the Black Sea (Map II_2). Understandably, if we accept the pre-Roman date of Dimum, Sexaginta Prista or Transmarisca, a second cluster will emerge in the area between the mouths of the rivers Olt and Argeş. Although these examples are by no means entirely exceptional, the fact remains that the majority of the auxiliary forts were new foundations.

It is not easy to come up with an explanation for the departure from the predominant pattern in the frontier zone. At present we know too little about the history and topography of these settlements to address the problem. One possible explanation lies in the importance of these *oppida* to the control of the river traffic on the Danube. The fact that in its lower course the river can only be crossed at a

[142] Pippidi ed. 1975, 159-171; Velkov ed. 1979, 307-308; Grammenos, Petropoulos eds. 2007.
[143] Byzone: Mihailov ed. 1970, 35-37; Argamum: Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 47; Avram 2006, 59-67; Halmyris: Suceveanu, Angelescu 1988, 145-150; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 47.
[144] Byzone: Strabo 7.6.1; Pliny *HN* 4.11. 44; Mihailov ed. 1970, 35; Mirčev, Tončeva, Dimitrov 1962, 21-109; Tirizis: Strabo *Geography* VII 6.1, Mihailov ed. 1970, 42-44; Balkanska 1980, 27-45; Karon Limen: Pomponius Mela, 2, 22, Mihailov ed. 1970. 29-31;
[145] For example Erite or Aristaeum, Pliny *Hist. Nat.* IV 11.45, Mihailov ed. 1970, 253-254.
[146] See fn. 141; Halmyris: Zahariade 1997, 128-136; Aegyssus: Nuţu, Costea 2010, 147-162; Barboşi: Ţentea, Oltean 2009, 1515-1523.
[147] For Dimum and Axiopolis, see. fn. 133, for Transmarisca fn. 141; Sexaginta Prista was a pit-sanctuary, but not a settlement: Stančev 2003, 56-62, Hawthorne, Varbanov, Dragoev 2011, 59-83.
[148] Ovid *Ex Pont.* 4.9.79; Suceveanu, Barnea 1993, 164; for the latest archaeological research at this site, see, Alexandrescu, Gugl 2014, 289-306.

limited number of points is also a possible factor.[149] The Roman army surely made full use of the existing river-ports and bridge-heads, even prior to the full incorporation of the area in the Empire under Claudius. If this assumption is correct, it implies that the settlement network in this region was highly developed on the eve of the Roman conquest, leaving little room for new foundations. However, paradoxically, the evidence coming from other Getic *oppida* on both banks of the Danube suggests the abandonment or at least severe contraction at most of these sites.[150] Only the narrow *limes* zone was exempted from this trend, stressing the importance of this segment of the Danube Valley many decades prior to the final establishment of the *limes*.

If future research confirms the pre-Roman phase at some of these garrison settlements, it will change our perception of the origin of the settlement network in Moesia Inferior dramatically. The share between the two chronological groups will be better balanced than that projected in this study. Perhaps most striking of all is the difference that will emerge between the Middle and Lower Danube *Limes*, both created at roughly the same time. For the moment we remain sceptical about this possibility, accepting the continuity only along short sections of the *limes*.

Thrace

Like Macedonia, only the northern part of Roman Thrace is included in this study. This is the part of the Roman province that lies in the territory of modern Bulgaria. Hence, a number of very important and large towns have been left out of the analysis. As most of these were ancient Greek colonies, the adjustment will probably reduce the true share of settlements with a pre-conquest phase. The northern frontier of Thrace was modified several times in the course of the second century AD.[151] In this study we follow the border-line established under Septimius Severus, roughly coinciding with the central ridge of the Haemus Mountains. To some extent, this modification will balance the exclusion of the Greek colonies on the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara, because it leaves out of consideration two new foundations that belonged to Thrace during the second century AD.

The part of Roman Thrace included in this analysis extended over an area of 65,000 sq. kilometres. This is very close to the size of the Pannonias and Moesias, although in its entirety Thrace was considerably larger, approaching or even exceeding Roman Dalmatia in size. Moving to the south of the Haemus Mountains, we return to an area that maintained close contacts with the Mediterranean world for centuries prior to the arrival of Rome. Urbanizing impulses had been sent out by the Greek colonies on the northern Aegean coast and in the Propontis and, commencing from the Hellenistic period, from ancient Macedon.[152] Nonetheless, the interior of the country remained desperately under-urbanized compared to Illyria and Macedonia. Apart from a few key-points along the major roads in the interior - Seuthopolis, Pistiros, Cabyle - the urbanism of the pre-Roman period was limited to the narrow coastal belt.[153] There was a close resemblance between Thrace, Dalmatia and Moesia

[149] Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 19-21; Sarnowski 2007, 15-22.
[150] Babeş 1975, 125-136; Conovici 1980, 43-54; Turcu 1981, 65-87; a similar break has been observed in the hinterlands of the Pontic colonies; Avram 1991, 103-137; Avram 2006, 59-67.
[151] Gerov 1998, 437-467; Tačeva ed. 2004, 58-78.
[152] Velkov ed. 1979, 168-175; Valeva, Nankov, Graninger, eds. 2015.
[153] Fol 1965, 309-317; Velkov ed. 1982; Bouzek 2005, 1-7.

Inferior. In all three provinces the coastal areas were poorly integrated with their interiors, despite the archaeologically and historically attested political and economic contacts between the two zones.

Thrace became a Roman province only in AD 45, several decades after the conquest and final pacification of the Pannonias and Moesias. In the preceding century, the area had been governed by a client kingdom.[154] This arrangement was maintained as long as the kingdom was politically stable and guaranteed security on the land routes between Asia Minor and the Balkan interior. In this respect the region differed from the Danube provinces and, despite the low rate of urbanization, a higher degree of settlement continuity was visible in Roman Thrace. Thrace was situated on the main inter-continental corridor between Europe and Asia Minor and its geostrategic role was reminiscent of Epirus and Macedonia, but the internal conditions in the centuries prior to the Roman conquest differed decisively between the provinces along the Via Egnatia.

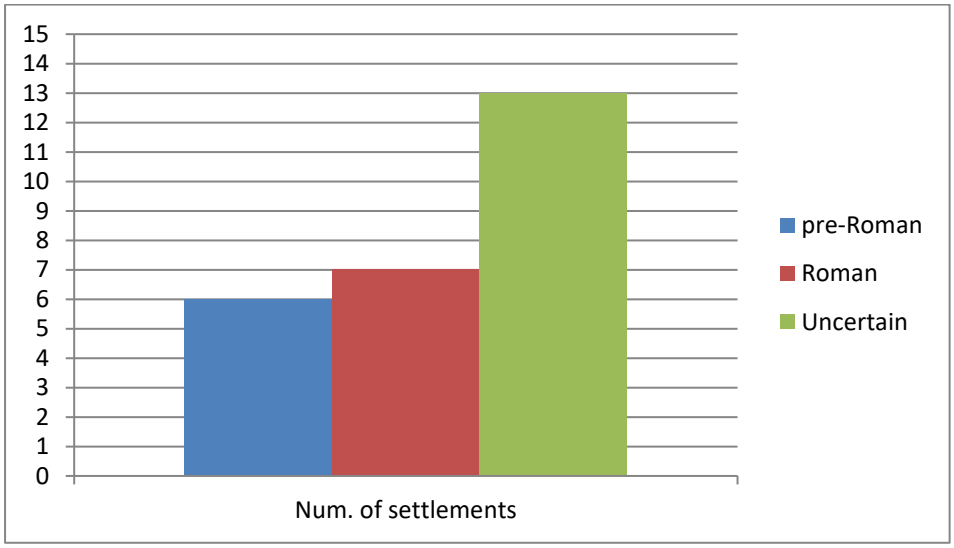

Figure II_8: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Thrace

Perhaps the most striking feature of Figure II_8 is the relatively small number of entries (for the individual entries see, Table II_10 in Appendix 2). Only twenty-six towns and town-like subordinate settlements from the period of the High Empire were located in the northern part of Roman Thrace. Moreover, it is likely that this is an overestimate, because the list includes at least eight sites whose status at the time of the High Empire has not been clearly established and four or five *emporia* or road-stations that were not necessarily larger than the average *vicus* in Roman Thrace. This statistic is a blunt indicator of the predominantly rural character of the province during the period of the High Empire. Outside the small category of self-governing towns, there are no clearly perceptible urbanizing tendencies. Whether compared to the frontier provinces on the Danube or the demilitarized provinces in the western Balkans, the degree of urbanization in Roman Thrace is surprisingly low. Given the abundant fertility of the land along the Maritza and Toundja and its role in the trans-continental road-network,[155] it is unlikely that this was a simple side-effect of the omission of the highly urbanized coastal zone.

[154] Gerov 1997, 3-84; Velkov 1981, 473-483.
[155] The Naval Intelligence Division 1920, 28.

Archaeological research has confirmed a continuous occupation at six settlements or slightly less than one-quarter of all agglomerations included in the analysis. Their number could increase to eight if we take the scattered residual remains from Serdica and Pautalia in the northwest of the province as a definitive proof for a pre-conquest urban phase.[156] Continuity has also been claimed for the port station of Templum Iovis, known from Late Roman itineraries and identified with Naulochos mentioned by Strabo as an *emporium* of Messembria.[157] Finally in two cases, Anchialos and Augusta Trajana, the prevalent view is that the Roman towns were located in the immediate vicinity of the pre-Roman urban settlements, thereby implying a quasi-topical continuity. It has to be stressed that in neither of these cases has the Hellenistic settlement been identified or researched.[158] It is possible that the hill-top settlement near modern Pernik also belonged to this group, but the remains from the Roman period at this site have been interpreted as the vestiges of a villa or farmstead[159].

It is difficult to evaluate the impact of the annexation of the kingdom by Rome on the existing settlement patterns in Thrace. Traditionally, Bulgarian scholarship has observed an urban decline in the third and second century BC, relating it to the Celtic invasions and "the general political and economic crisis of the Hellenistic world", rather than to the arrival of the Romans.[160] Indeed some of the pre-Roman urban or proto-urban centres, like Seuthopolis or the *emporium* of Pistyros, were abandoned long before the Roman legions advanced into Thrace.[161] As in Dalmatia and in other parts of our study-area, it seems that the number of pre-Roman *oppida* was many times higher than the number of settlements established after the conquest. However, neither the chronology nor the precise character of these settlements is fully understood.[162]

The number of settlements founded after the Roman conquest is slightly higher than those dating to the pre-conquest period. At least seven major settlements were founded after the annexation of the Thracian kingdom, including a Roman colony at Deultum[163]. These include the problematic case of Augusta Trajana, as well as Diocletianopolis and Germania that were possible Late Roman foundations.[164] However, as in the rest of the provinces in our study-region, the number of new foundations must have been much higher. The limited archaeological research at the supposed sites of road-stations has often revealed nucleated civilian settlements, such as Scretisca, Burgaraca, Sub-Radices or Cilis, located along the main road between Naissus and Byzantion and on the road between Oescus and Philippopolis.[165] About a dozen and a half road-stations have been recorded in the itineraries on the Diagonal Road alone, on the section between *mansio Turres* and Hadrianopolis, and their number will probably increase to a couple of dozens if the roads between Philippopolis and

[156] Pautalia: Spasov, Vandova, 2002, 171-177; Serdica: Stančeva 1966, 230-235; the pre-Roman layers at Serdica have lately been disputed; Ivanov 2012, 76-81.
[157] Strabo 7.6.1; Mihailov ed. 1970, 252-253; Venedikov *et al*. 1969.
[158] Augusta Trajana: Nikolov 1987, 96-107; in this case, the only indication of a pre-Roman origin is the Late Antique name of the town, Beroe, relating it to the colonizing activities of Philip II; Velkov ed. 1979, 203-211; Tačeva 1987, 129-147. Anchialus: Stojanov 1993, 17-25.
[159] Čangova *et al*. 1981.
[160] Velkov ed. 1979, 211-217; Mihailov 1979, 263-271.
[161] Dimitrov, Chichikova 1978; Bouzek, Domaradzki, Archibald eds. 1996.
[162] Panayotov 1978, 306-314; Milanov 1980, 195-197; Milčev 1980, 343-364; Bouzek, Domaradzka eds. 2005.
[163] Gerov 1980, 83-92.
[164] Diocletianopolis: Madžarov 1993; Germania: Stajkova-Aleksandrova, Stajkova 2003, 202-214. For Augusta Trajana see fn. 158.
[165] Scretisca: Božilova 1987, 76-81; Dinčev 2008, 123-133; Burgaraca: Gerov 1998, 78-80; Madžarov 2009, 201-215.

Anchialus and Oescus and Philippopolis are included.[166] A note of caution is necessary however, as in some cases, the archaeological remains do not predate the Late Roman period, as at Scretisca for example. But even if only half of these establishments developed into permanent settlements under the High Empire, it will still increase the number of new foundations by about 150%.

Discussing the chronology of the settlement pattern in Moesia Inferior, it was pointed out that a considerable proportion of the rural settlements were also founded after the conquest of the region. This category is even more prominent in Thrace than in Moesia Inferior, the former including over half of the rural settlements mentioned in the epigraphic record of the Eastern Balkans.[167] None of these communities can be qualified as urban or urban-like. In contrast to Moesia Inferior, the great majority of the Thracian *komai* are mentioned only indirectly, as the places of origin of veteran soldiers or in official decrees issued by the provincial government.[168] Epigraphic evidence of local magistrates is lacking, while their names are purely Thracian. Thousands of these small hamlets can be postulated in Roman Thrace alone, sheer numbers making it technically impossible to include this segment of the settlement network in the analysis. Finally, the character of the data related to the supposed sites of some of these rural settlements does not allow us to decide if they were newly founded or if they had been in existence at the time of the Roman conquest.

Because of the uncertain chronology of so many of its large, autonomous towns, it is prudent to refrain from jumping to conclusions about the formation of the settlement map of Roman Thrace. Four out of six pre-Roman settlements were autonomous towns that inherited their status from the pre-conquest era. However, most of these towns were Greek colonies that essentially belonged to a different urban system. Although numerically superior, the list of newly founded settlements includes at least three or four sites that were either not autonomous towns or grew in importance only in the Late Roman period. Nevertheless, even if we exclude the towns whose founding dates are uncertain, the Roman period introduced at least 30-40% of the urban map of the province. Whether the newly founded settlements were still merely a complement to the existing urban network or the predominant element in the new urban map of Roman Thrace can only be decided by future research on the towns in western Thrace.

Dacia

Although officially made up of three separate provinces, Dacia shall be treated as a single territorial unit. With a few exceptions, all of the larger civilian settlements were located in *Dacia Apulensis*, the central and largest part of the region. The other two provinces represented little more than military zones, buffers between the *Barbaricum* and the urbanized core of the province. Their combined territories cover roughly 95,000 sq. kilometres, approaching the size of Dalmatia. This was the last province in this study-region that was incorporated into the Empire. It was also the first province evacuated, as early as the second half of the third century, and therefore it offers a much clearer insight into the original pattern of urbanization than the rest of the provinces in which the Late Roman

[166] The data are taken from www.omnesviae.org and the Pleiades Database; Mihailov ed. 1961; Mihailov ed. 1964.
[167] Martemianov 2012, 40-52.
[168] Recently Mihailescu-Bîrliba, Răileanu 2014, 193-205, have collected a number of examples from the territory of Nicopolis ad Istrum and elsewhere in Thrace.

period introduced significant alterations in the topography of individual towns and in the overall settlement pattern.

The pace of settlement foundation in Dacia is mind-boggling: between sixty-two and seventy-six newly founded settlements – including garrison sites - were established within a single century! The fact is even more astonishing set against the known historical background of the Roman conquest.[169] Although apparently not uncontroversial, all historical and archaeological evidence supports the view that the conquest of Dacia was a ruthless and systematic campaign of extermination.[170] In no other province in this part of the Empire did the war of conquest leave such a powerful impact on the ethnic and social composition of the urban population. Despite the disruption, when it comes to the discontinuity in the settlement patterns between the pre-Roman and Roman periods, Dacia does not differ substantially from the rest of the Danube provinces. It merely offers a more extreme manifestation of the general tendency observed in the regions along the Danube. In order to appreciate the level of disruption introduced by the Roman conquest of Dacia, a look at the integral corpus of archaeological and epigraphic material is essential.

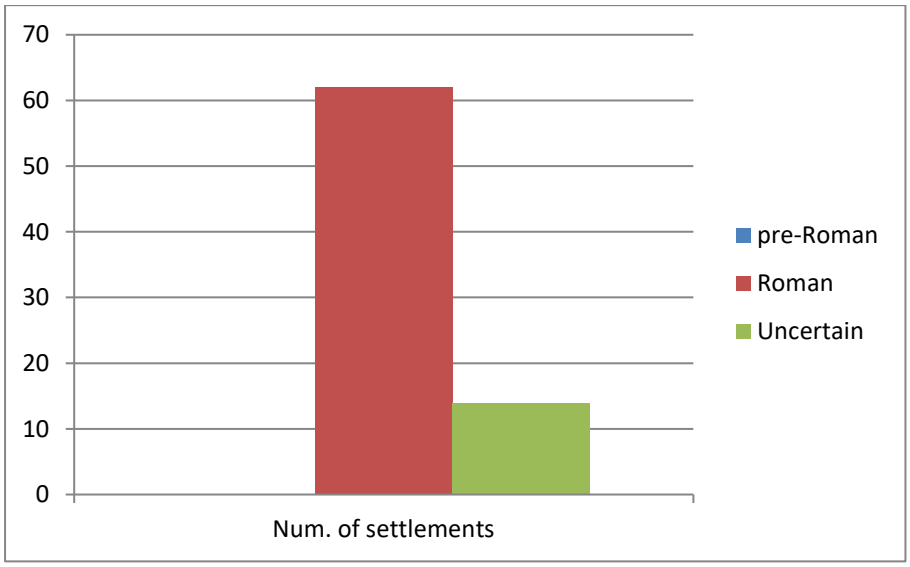

Figure II_9: The chronological profile of the major agglomerations in Dacia

Virtually all major agglomerated settlements in Roman Dacia were established after the conquest of the province (Figure II_9, Table II_11 in Appendix 2). The list of settlements contains ten to eleven self-governing towns; the rest being *vici* that developed around auxiliary forts and road-side settlements – hence, the very high number of settlements in comparison to some of the demilitarized provinces. Comparatively speaking, Dacia boasts a satisfactory degree of research on both the urban centres and especially on the auxiliary forts. Although until recently scholars were still hesitant about the possible Dacian origins of Apulum or Napoca, recent excavations have shown that all major towns in Roman Dacia are green-field foundations, dating back to the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian.[171] No earlier levels have been found and, therefore, it would seem that the continuity thesis has largely been based on

[169] Hanson, Haynes eds. 2004; Strobel 2006, 105-114; Oltean 2007.
[170] Ruscu 2004, 76-87; provides a concise examination of the epigraphic, historical and archaeological evidence. For a more moderate view, see, Nemeti 2006, 86-98.
[171] Diaconescu 2004, 87-142.

the toponyms or the persistence of certain artefact types, like Dacian hand-made pottery, into the Roman period. Although concrete evidence is often lacking, the same can be assumed for the auxiliary camps. In a large number of cases, the earliest earth-and-timber levels have been reached and there has been no mention of earlier, pre-Roman layers.[172]

The group of uncertain entries – fourteen or nearly 20% of the total - includes road-stations and mining camps known only from historical sources, and the supposed sites of auxiliary forts whose remains cannot be located or that were possibly abandoned. Although it can be safely assumed that most sites of the latter category did not have a pre-conquest phase, the discovery of a handful of auxiliary forts at the sites of pre-Roman *oppida* on the Middle and Lower Danube sends out some warning signals that such developments are not inconceivable.[173] On the basis of what is known from the rest of the provinces in the study-region, the same can be assumed for most of the road-stations and mining camps in Roman Dacia.

The Dacian experience poses a weighty argument against the claims that the lack of continuity in the central places in the provinces along the Danube is the result of the somewhat simplified view that the native societies lacked the necessary degree of complexity and urbanization. Nobody will deny that pre-conquest Dacia was a proto-state society with developed institutions and priestly and warrior classes.[174] The settlement hierarchy of pre-conquest Dacia was anything but simple. At least four different settlement types have been recognized by archaeologists working in this region, all existing contemporaneously during the two centuries prior to the Roman conquest.[175] These range from small, open hamlets to fortified hilltop settlements, sometimes surrounded by monumental walls that are no less sophisticated than those of the Hellenistic foundations in Epirus or Illyria. In addition, there is a clear evidence for specialized, industrial activities at some of these sites, the smelting of iron-ore in particular.[176] Finally the literary evidence points unambiguously to the presence of a Dacian capital, a supra-regional centre at Sarmizegetusa Regia.

The new provincial government retained none of the old Dacian central places. Not only were the dozen hill-forts and settlements built on terraces in the Oraştie Mountains abandoned, this entire region was simply relinquished. In fact, there is very little evidence of any kind of settlement in this area after the demise of the Dacian kingdom. Evidence of the systematic and thorough-going destruction of temples and sanctuaries is plentiful and it certainly points to a policy of methodical eradication of everything that could be associated with the Dacian past. Nevertheless, it is difficult to explain why the pragmatic Roman conqueror avoided the area so determinedly, despite the fact it was known to be rich in iron-ore and other resources.[177] Apart from sheer ideological reasons, the difficult terrain and its remoteness from the main corridor along the Mureş, were probably also major deterrents.

[172] Gudea 1997.
[173] For example, this claim has been made for Sucidava, in which indeed, the micro-topographic unit occupied by the Late Roman fort does have the appearance of a typical *oppidum* of the Getae, but the archaeological period dating to the Late La Tène is scarce and no evidence has been provided for the location of the camp under the High Empire; Tudor 1965.
[174] Crişan 1978; Daicoviciu ed. 1981; Oltean 2007, 47-53.
[175] Lockyear 2004, 33-74.
[176] Moga 1981, 103-116; Oltean 2007, 60-118.
[177] Oltean 2007, 101-07.

The programmatic interest of Romanian archaeologists in the Classical Dacian period was rewarded by the discovery of a number of traditional rural settlements that survived the Roman conquest.[178] These findings offered undeniable evidence that the Roman conquest did not result in a complete genocide of the Dacian people. The Dacian peasants continued to live as they had done for centuries before, in small farmsteads or hamlets, but the social elite, the Dacian aristocracy, was definitely removed and it played no role in the formation of the new provincial aristocracy. However, the case studies from the rural sectors of Moesia Inferior and Thrace demonstrate that it would be wrong to imagine the rural sector as completely static, undisturbed by the conquest and subsequent colonization. In Dacia, the epigraphic evidence has so far only revealed a few names of possible *vici*, and it is possible that these refer to the special-purpose settlements in the mining districts of the province rather than to purely agrarian settlements.[179] In order to consider the degree of continuity in the Dacian countryside, it is necessary to turn to the archaeological evidence. Fortunately a relatively large number of rural settlements in Dacia have been subjected to some form of archaeological research, including excavations. This allows us to look into their origins, size and structure.[180]

Table II_12: the number of old and newly founded rural settlements in Dacia

Roman	Pre-Roman	Uncertain
12	7	37

According to some estimates, the total number of rural sites in Roman Dacia, including *villae*, is between 700 and 800. Of these, 226 have been defined as rural agglomerations or hamlets and villages.[181] Their true number is probably much higher but, even if we assume that there were twice as many rural settlements in Roman Dacia, our sample of fifty-six settlements is still fairly representative. Unsurprisingly most of these sites have been subjected only to unsystematic studies of the surface material and their chronology is uncertain. However, where excavations have been carried out, the results echo the situation in the rural sector of Moesia Inferior. In fact, at the majority of the excavated sites, there is no evidence of pre-Roman layers. Furthermore, the number of sites that continued from the pre-Roman period includes problematic cases, possibly abandoned soon after the conquest or with a Middle La Tène but without a Classical Dacian phase. Therefore, although the level of change in life-style and material culture in the Dacian countryside remains debatable,[182] a considerable proportion of the rural settlements show no evidence of a topical continuity. This certainly does not challenge the thesis of an overall demographic continuity, but it does point to significant population movements within the borders of the province in the aftermath of the Roman

[178] Glodariu 1981; Oltean 2007, 143-150.
[179] CIL III 8060; AÉ 2012: 1237.
[180] Most of the data come from Protase 1980b, 43-85, complemented by Gudea 2009, 187-319. The main trouble with these sources is the confused criteria used to distinguish traditional hamlets and villages from Roman *villae*. Table II_12 includes only those settlements in which the archaeological evidence indicates the existence of an agglomerated settlement with traditional houses with sunken floors. For a synthesis, see Oltean 2007, 143-150.
[181] Gudea 2009, 197-199.
[182] In contrast to earlier scholars, Gudea 2009, 194-196, has stressed the high degree of romanization in the Dacian countryside.

conquest.[183] Seen in the context of the radical changes in the urban geography of the province and the accompanying redistribution of the acquired territory between the Roman colonists, the army and imperial government, these developments are readily understandable.

Conclusions: the overall distribution and the spatial aspect

From the totals, it is clear that the Roman period had by far the greater share in the creation of the settlement network in the study-region (Figure II_10). 205 out of 400 agglomerations included in this analysis were certainly founded after the Roman conquest. Their numbers will rise if we allow that at least half of the sites classed as uncertain also lacked a pre-conquest phase; a reasonable assumption in view of the fact that the majority of the uncertain sites are made up of auxiliary *vici* and road-stations. These categories of special-purpose sites were unknown to the native societies in our study-region. Although this fact does not exclude topical continuity, it is obvious that the central places of the pre-Roman societies occupied very different types of micro-locations to those normally associated with a Roman auxiliary fort or a road-station. Although it is impossible to be too certain about the group of poorly documented settlement-sites encountered in the countryside or in the mining districts, it is symptomatic that at none of these sites do the archaeological reports refer to earlier phases. In this context it is interesting to mention that, despite the overall prevalence of the newly founded settlements, over half of the autonomous towns in these provinces were still inherited from the pre-Roman period. This figure demonstrates that most of the newly founded segment of the settlement network consisted of subordinate central places. As we shall see below, however, this is an estimate that requires a more explicit elucidation.

Only a very small number of uncertain sites are likely to join the category of pre-Roman foundations. These are those at which the earlier phase has been attested only by individual finds or at which it is unclear if the settlement truly continued to exist after the Roman conquest. Consequently, it is possible that over two thirds of the total number of agglomerated settlements were founded after the Roman conquest, not taking into account all major road-stations attested in the itineraries. It is difficult to arrive at a more precise estimate, not because of the vexed chronology of these site-categories, but because of their uncertain nature during the period of the High Empire. The chief difference is made by the road-stations or military outposts that experienced urban growth only in the period of Late Antiquity. If these sites grew into real agglomerations only under the Late Empire, the percentage of the newly-founded settlements will decrease to slightly over 50%. But this dilemma is more relevant to the degree of urbanization in the period of the High Empire than to the issue of continuity from the pre-conquest period.

[183] Protase 1980, 82-83, has arrived at a similar conclusion.

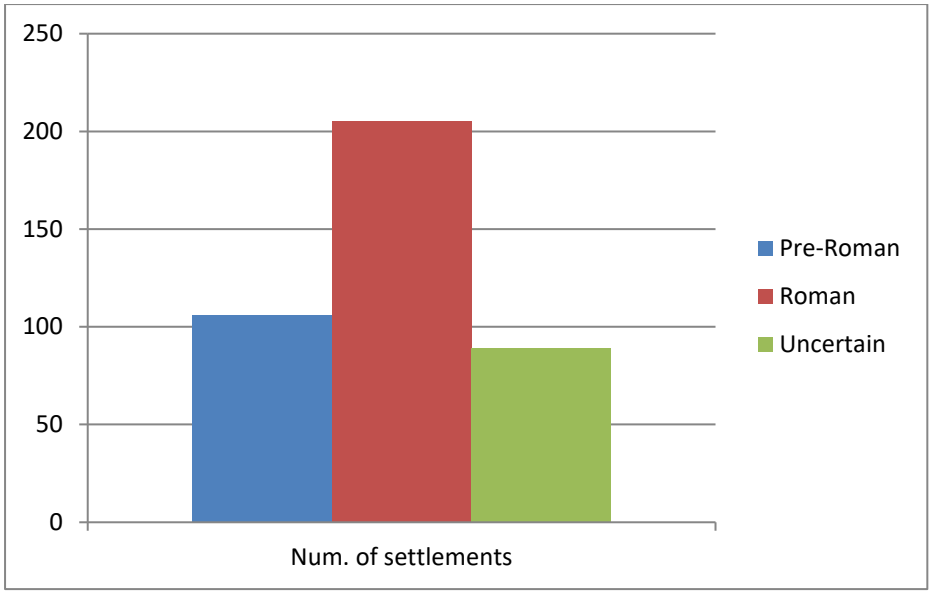

Figure II_10: The chronological profile of all Roman settlements in the study-region

Less than 30% of the settlements included in this analysis were inherited from the pre-conquest period, even if we add the problematic cases to the count. This is a significant percentage, but it can hardly challenge the observation that the Roman urbanism in the Balkan Peninsula and on the Danube was a new phenomenon and it often disregarded the settlement patterns encountered at the time of the conquest. In fact, the input from the pre-conquest period should actually be downplayed, as the majority of the Roman towns inherited only the location of their predecessors. Nothing or very little is known about the topography of these settlements during the Hellenistic period. Almost nothing survives of Hellenistic Salona or Iader, and only very small segments of the topography of Stobi and Philippopolis can be dated to the Hellenistic period. Nearly all public monuments, the private houses and much of the infrastructure were constructed during the period of the High Empire. This is probably true of over half of the sites dating to the pre-conquest period. The Roman character of these towns can hardly be questioned, even when much of the population, the name and institutions survived the period of conquest and incorporation. Only at a small number of sites in the northern Adriatic, in southern Illyria, northern Epirus and Macedonia do we find the Roman town continuing its existence in the discarded shell of its Hellenistic predecessor. These towns amount to no more than 7-8% of the total number of agglomerated settlements during the period of the High Empire.

The chronological profile of the Roman settlements in the provinces of our study-region reveals only one aspect of the issue. Indubitably, it has helped us determine the proportion of the settlement network founded after the conquest of the area, but it does not say anything about their spatial distribution. From the very outset of this study, it has been clear that the new foundations are not evenly distributed across the study-region, but we had only a vague idea of the extent and distribution of the two segments of the network. It is now possible to draw a more concrete boundary between the two zones and examine the areas in which the two chronological groups are interspersed. It has to be borne in mind that the stages of conquest of the region will contribute to a better understanding of the evolution of the entire network.

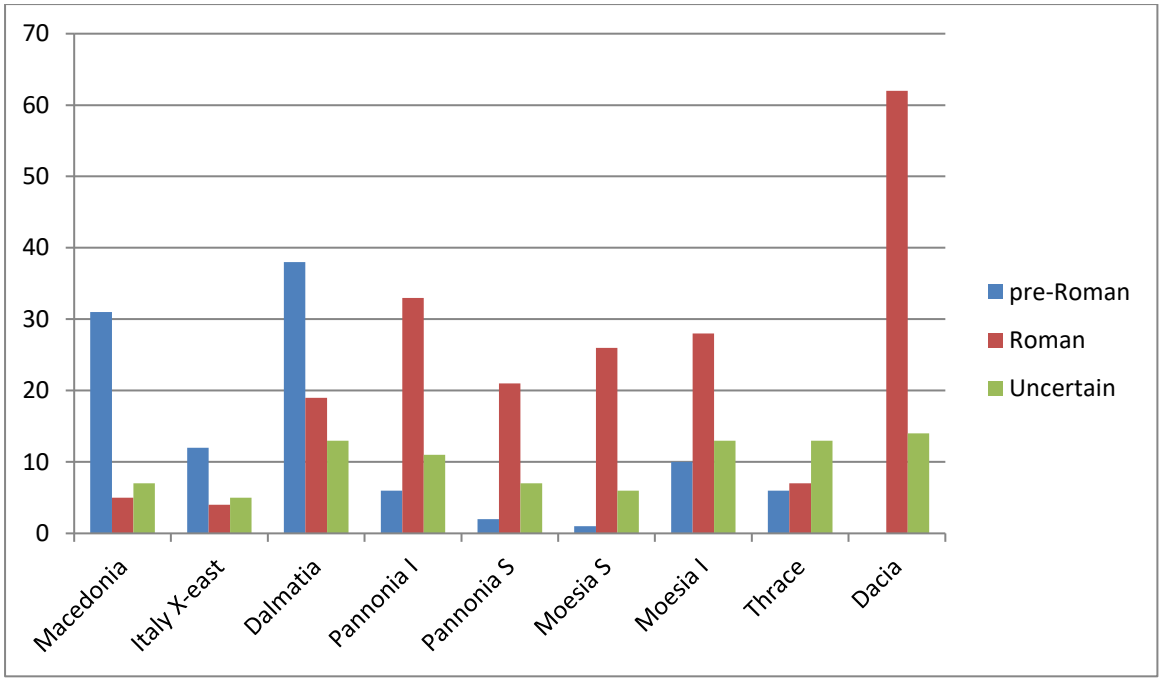

Figure II_11: The chronological profile of the Roman settlements by provinces

The zone of pre-Roman settlement largely coincides with the western coast of the Balkan Peninsula and the northern Aegean (Figure II_11). These are the parts of the Roman provinces of Macedonia, and Italy X included in our study-region and the coastal section of Dalmatia. Nearly 80% of all settlements with a pre-conquest phase are limited to the western and southern peripheries of the study-region. These are the towns in which the first communities of Roman citizens were established after the final conquest and pacification of the region.[184] The high urban density inherited from the pre-conquest period made the construction of military forts or new civilian colonies unnecessary. However, the development was not uniform in the zone of pre-Roman settlement and, by the time of the High Empire, some of the old towns had been granted a Latin charter.

In the north, the line that separates the zone of old and new settlement is primarily a physical and climatic one. It basically coincides with the main ridge of the Dinaric Alps that acted as both a political and ethnic frontier (Map II_3). The areas beyond the coastal zone, with the possible exception of that of the Iapodes on the Amber Road, underwent profound changes in their settlement pattern after the Roman conquest. In the south, the border was principally political and it roughly followed the western and northern frontiers of the Illyrian and Macedonian kingdoms (Map II_4). On the western and northern peripheries of these kingdoms – the areas in which the sovereignty of the monarchs was challenged by the neighbouring polities – urbanization failed to take hold and they remained thinly urbanized throughout the Principate.[185] Only in the core of the two kingdoms do we see real continuity in the urban network.

A fairly wide under-urbanized belt can also be observed along the contact zone between the two segments of the settlement network along the northern and western peripheries of the ancient

[184] Wilkes 1969, 36, 57, 192-219.
[185] Papazoglou 1969, provides a detailed account of the wars between the Macedonian kingdom and the Dardanians and the Dardanian incursions into the Roman province of Macedonia.

Macedonian and Illyrian kingdoms (Map II_4). Here the distances between the peripheral settlements in the zone of pre-Roman urbanism and the nearest newly founded settlements are rarely less than 80 km. In contrast to this, the distances between neighbouring settlements in the central parts of the zone of pre-Roman urbanism do not exceed 30-40 km and, in some micro-regions, they drop to as few as 10 to 15 kilometres. With the exception of the Istrian Peninsula and the Kvarner Bay area, in the northern half of the pre-Roman urban belt this lacuna is barely evident (Map II_3). Along the Dalmatian coast, the new foundations were often located close to the coastal zone, separated by distances no greater than 30 km (Map II_5). The possible continuity at some agglomerated settlements in the interior of Dalmatia blurs the line of demarcation between the two zones even more.[186]

Only about 15% of the pre-Roman towns that were integrated into the Roman settlement network are located in the eastern half of the peninsula. They are limited to the Black Sea coast and the central parts of continental Thrace (Map II_6). Although geographically it belongs to the belt of pre-Roman settlement, Thrace differs decisively from the highly urbanized provinces in the west of the peninsula and, two centuries after the incorporation of the area into the Empire, it still remained relatively under-urbanized. In contrast to the intercity distances in the belt of pre-Roman urbanism in the western Balkan provinces, the Thracian settlements are spaced at distances of more than 70-80 kilometres. The remaining pre-Roman settlements in the eastern half of the peninsula were made up of the string of Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast. With inter-city distances of less than 50 kilometres, they conform more closely to the pre-Roman standard of urbanization (Map II_7). Although the western Black Sea coast was not as isolated from the interior as the eastern Adriatic, the interiors of Thrace and especially of Moesia Inferior, remained predominantly rural in the Early Roman period. The reduced impact of the Greek colonies is reflected in the relatively short distances that separated them from the newly founded settlements in the interior.[187] This same factor, in conjunction with the Dinaric Alps, was the underlying reason behind the short intercity distances along the edges of the two zones in the western Balkans.

We have seen that only a segment of the pre-conquest settlement network survived the Roman conquest and this was especially evident in the western Balkan provinces. There was an apparent contraction in the number of major fortified settlements in all highly urbanized areas along the eastern Adriatic and in Upper Macedonia in the period between the conquest of the region and the High Empire. If the maps of settlements with monumental remains – city-walls, temples, urban residences - from the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods are compared, a fairly strongly defined and widespread pattern can be observed. Whether we look at the developments in Illyria, Macedon or Liburnia, there is a prevalent tendency towards de-urbanization in the regions off the main interregional roads. The proto-urban centres that developed on the high alluvial plains in northern Epirus and Macedonia or those located in the secondary synclines in Liburnia were either abandoned or were slowly declining (Maps II_8, II_9). On the other hand, the towns that became Roman colonies and *municipia* or that attracted sizeable communities of Roman citizens are nearly always located near good natural ports or at major crossroads in the interior. Even along the major highways, like the Via Egnatia or the road along the Vardar Valley, linking the Aegean to the Middle Danube, the network of

[186] Bižić-Drechsler 1975, 167-168; Bižić-Drechsler 1986, 107-127; Bojanovski 1974, 184. It is possible that at least in some of these *oppida* the Roman period was actually a phase of gradual abandonment, *cf*. the better researched *oppida* in Pannonia, often showing continuous occupation throughout the first century AD; Jovanović, Jovanović 1988; Majnarić-Panđić 1984, 23-34.
[187] Gerov 1998, 450-451; Velkov ed. 1979, 304.

high-ranking settlements grew sparser under the High Empire, as some of the earlier strongholds were replaced by road-stations. In general, what we see is a transformation of a series of inward-looking, regional systems into a sparse corridor pattern, with central places distributed at considerable distances along the main lines of communication; hence perhaps, the high degree of investment in the development of the road-network in the later Principate. It is a tendency parallelled in other instances of imperial expansion, wherever small regional units were incorporated into a large territorial state.[188]

It is unclear if the Roman conquest was the sole external factor that contributed to the urban contraction. Indeed, in some regions of our study-area, it has been observed that the process of progressive decline in the number of strongholds spans the entire first millennium BC. Unfortunately, nearly all case studies fail to specify precisely which settlement categories have been included in these analyses. Most commonly, one is presented with the total number of sites dating to a certain time period and this is a rather poor basis for the understanding of the actual processes of dispersal or centralization. However, even if the Roman period was only the final stage in a long-term process of centralization, it cannot be claimed that the trajectories of regional urban development were unaffected by the act of political incorporation into the Empire.

Less than 5% of the pre-Roman settlement network falls outside the narrow coastal zone of the study-region. These include two clusters of auxiliary *vici* on the Danube *Limes*: one in Pannonia Inferior, between the mouths of the Sava and Drava, the other on the Lower Danube, principally concentrated on the northern frontier of the Late Roman province of Scythia Minor (Map II_10, II_6). In addition, continuity has been observed at a small number of settlements scattered in the Pannonian interior and possibly in Dalmatia (Map II_10). In all of these cases, the continuity is merely topical, perhaps partly demographic. These sites were radically transformed during the period of the High Empire and very little survives of the pre-conquest phase. Nonetheless, in contrast to the rest of the Balkan interior and the lands along the Danube, for some reason the pre-Roman geography in these particular micro-regions was respected.

It is impossible to offer a general explanation. Some of the isolated examples on the Lower Danube are particularly perplexing and it is not beyond the bounds of probability that future research will either reveal other settlements with pre-Roman phases in these micro-regions or refute the claims of pre-Roman origins. It is likely that the continuity attested at a few sites in the Dalmatian interior was actually a phase of gradual abandonment, similar to that evidenced in the pre-Roman *oppida* in Pannonia. But when it comes to the small clusters of pre-Roman settlements in the southern parts of Pannonia Superior and Pannonia Inferior or in Scythia Minor, it is tempting to see a relict surviving from the time of the final conquest of the area. The historical sources that inform us about the Roman conquest of Pannonia indicate that, at least in some cases, the Romans garrisoned their troops near or inside the strongholds of the native populations.[189] This was also true in Epirus, Illyria and Macedonia. Where available, maximum use was made of the existing infrastructure. The control of the key communication nodes was crucial in the aftermath of the wars of conquest, and not just for purely military reasons. The few towns in inland Thrace or Pannonia – Philipoppolis, Siscia, Cabyle,

[188] Burghard 1979, 1-20.

[189] Siscia in southern Pannonia is the best-documented example: Appian *Illyrike* 22-24; Hoti 1992, 137, 140; Šašel-Kos 2005; Dzino 2010, 111. After the quelling of this rebellion, the IX Hispanica was garrisoned in Siscia, Lolić 2003, 133-135. See Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 23-24, for parallels from the Black Sea littoral.

Poetovio – that show continuity from the previous era occupy highly strategic locations. The fact that these sites had originally been occupied by the natives only serves to underline their strategic importance and also perhaps the growing complexity of the Balkan tribal societies on the eve of the Roman conquest.

The relatively large concentration of Roman settlements with pre-Roman remains in the area between the lower courses of the Drava and Sava in Pannonia Inferior must be seen in a similar light. The pre-Roman settlement pattern in this area differs little from that attested in the other micro-regions in the northern Balkans and Pannonia. The only distinctive aspect of these settlements is that they were located in a strategically sensitive area, in which a number of regional and inter-regional roads joined the Danube corridor. The importance of the area between the lower courses of the Sava and Danube only expanded once it had become a part of the Roman Empire. A similar explanation can be offered for the second cluster of auxiliary forts that occupied pre-Roman *oppida* on the Lower Danube. Nearly all of the sites that show continuity from the pre-Roman period are located in the vicinity of good river-ports or bridge-heads. These points were crucial to the normal flow of the river traffic and the control of movement across the river.

Perhaps the fact that at least some of the peoples who inhabited these regions were Roman allies at the time of the conquest would also have contributed to the continuous occupation of the pre-Roman *oppida*.[190] This situation provided the Romans with ready-made military bases and secure supply lines. However, this thesis is undermined by the late chronology of some of the auxiliary forts, especially those on the Lower Danube.[191] It is conceivable that, at the time of the conquest and the subsequent pacification of the province, the campaigning units were temporarily garrisoned in the existing settlements. But it is far more difficult to account for the continuous occupation of these sites - or their re-occupation - decades after the final incorporation of the province.

Generally speaking, whether the focus falls on the belt of pre-conquest settlements or on the tiny enclaves or individual examples dispersed across the zone of newly founded settlements, it seems that one of the crucial criteria for the survival of the pre-conquest town was its situation and role in the road-network of the wider region. The small, micro-regional centres, even those with developed infrastructure and rich hinterlands, were abandoned or declined unless they happened to be located on the large inter-regional arteries that linked the Adriatic with Central Europe, the Aegean or the Black Sea.[192] In certain cases, even a favourable location was not enough and true continuity is discovered only at sites located at the crossing of at least two major interregional roads. Siscia, Poetovio, Mursa, Margum and the unknown fort at Barboşi are all situated at highly important crossroads.

The newly founded component of the Roman urban network was not entirely confined to the Balkan interior and the Danube provinces. Nearly 10% of all new foundations are located in the western Balkan provinces or in Thrace, to the south of the Haemus Mountains (Maps II_10 and II_6). Excluding those Thracian towns whose chronology is not entirely clear, only about a dozen of the new

[190] The Getae: Gerov 1997; Velkov 1981, 473-475; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 25-28; the Scordisci: Dio, 54.31.3; Suet. *Tib.* 9; Dzino 2010, 128-129.
[191] Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, 25; Gudea 2005, 440-464, suggests an even later date for this segment of the Moesian *Limes*.
[192] *Cf*. Hanson 2011, 229-275.

foundations in this zone were self-governing towns. Apart from the towns along the Dalmatian *Limes* and in continental Thrace, the group also includes the newly founded *politeiai* in Upper Macedonia. Although historically these areas belonged to the zone of old settlement, they were sparsely urbanized at the time of the conquest and, judging by the properties of the settlement system in these regions, they were indistinguishable from the zone of new urbanism. There are no major enclaves of newly founded settlements in the zone of pre-Roman urbanism and this is yet another indicator of the relative impact of the two phases on the urbanization of the area. Despite the local departures from the prevalent pattern, both the old and newly-founded segment in the network formed continuous, clearly delimited zones.

The bulk of the new foundations in the zone of pre-Roman settlement are represented by the secondary town-like settlements that grew around road-stations, *emporia* and port-towns and these only reinforce the pattern established by the selective integration of the pre-Roman settlement network. Like the pre-Roman towns that survived the Roman conquest and flourished under the High Empire, they can be found along the major provincial roads. Their distribution is therefore fairly even and does not show signs of major clustering. The relatively large inter-city distances along certain sections of the major continental arteries opened room for the development of secondary central places around these newly established facilities. However, in the next chapter, we shall see that these developments were rather limited and late.

The emergence of new agglomerations around harbours, particularly prominent in the northern Adriatic and on the Epirote coast, also deserves a special mention. This trend certainly indicates the intensification of maritime traffic across the Adriatic (map II_11). In the northern Adriatic, these coastal settlements regularly appear in regions featuring a very high density of Roman *villae* and must have been related to the increase in specialized agricultural production destined for export. It is unfortunate that there is very little positive evidence of the genesis of some of these settlements. The few systematically studied examples suggest spontaneous, organic growth.[193] The genesis of these settlements was simulated by the presence of natural harbours, a resource that was crucial to the development and the economic integration of the northern Adriatic islands or the small coastal plains of northern Epirus. Both regions were isolated from the main continental roads and offered a very limited range of natural resources. These developments were not parallelled on the Black Sea coast (Map II_7). The simpler geography of the western Pontic shoreline, offering fewer natural harbours, was surely a restraining factor, but we would also like to point out the peripheral location of the Black Sea to Italy. The fortunes of this region improved considerably after the establishment of the new imperial capital on the Bosporus, underlining the importance of the wider urban constellation to the local and regional developments.[194]

The patterns emerging from this survey are relatively simple and to some extent not unexpected. The pre-Roman segment of the settlement network was limited to the Adriatic and Black Sea coasts, extending into the interior only in areas that had been dominated by fully developed state societies, namely: the Illyrian and Macedonian kingdoms or Liburnia and some of Thrace. Outside the zones of Greek colonization and beyond the territories controlled by the Hellenistic dynasts, the urbanism of the High Empire was a new phenomenon. Most of the central places of the tribes who inhabited the

[193] Kurilić 2008, 368-369; Lako 1986, 279-281.
[194] For a similar observation on Roman urbanism on the southern Black Sea coast, see Hanson 2011, 229-275.

interior of the Balkan Peninsula and the plains along the Danube and Transylvania were abandoned or were gradually demoted to the status of *vici* or even isolated farms. A number of factors must have contributed to these divergent developments. The absence of a proper urban infrastructure in the pre-Roman period was certainly an important determinant, as it must be presumed to have conditioned the differential in timing of the conquest of the coastal areas and Macedon and the Balkan Interior. Certain segments of the zone of pre-Roman settlement were conquered centuries before Rome ever set foot in the Balkan interior. The mechanisms and goals of successive economic and military expansions must have evolved considerably in the period between the Roman-Macedonian wars and the conquest of Pannonia.[195] At the same time, we have to acknowledge the differences between the Greek and Hellenistic *poleis* and tribal *oppida*, even if both settlement-types did perform a range of overlapping functions. While the former presented self-governing units with an autonomous sector of production, the latter were little more than strongholds of the tribal or regional leaders. Given this circumstance, the fate of the tribal *oppida* and strongholds was far more sensitive to changes in the political environment.

[195] Dzino 2010.