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EX INSTITUTIS HISTORIAE ANTIQUAE
ET ARCHAEOLOGIAE UNIVERSITATIS
QUINQUEECCLESIENSIS**

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A projekt az Európai Unió támogatásával, az Európai Szociális Alap társfinanszírozásával valósul meg.

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CORPUS LIMITIS IMPERII ROMANI (CLIR)*

ZSOLT VISY

The frontiers of the Roman Empire changed many times during the centuries as new territories were occupied and organized into provinces or were given up for a period of time or forever. The Roman army changed the position of its units accordingly, creating and constructing new lines of defence with new fortifications. The investigations have been on-going for more than a hundred years in almost every country that inherited a sector of the frontiers. They are at present ten countries in Europe and eight in Asia and Africa along the more than 5000 km long frontiers of the Roman Empire. At least 10 more countries have remains of the Roman military presence, and many others are interested in the research of the *limes Romanus* even though they have no claim to sharing the geography of the Empire.

Some sectors of the *limes Romanus* have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and since 2005 have been accorded in the Multinational World Heritage Site of the Frontiers of the Roman Empires. The three registered as such up to 2008¹ will be followed by nominations of other sectors. Two of them, the Hungarian and Slovakian nomination documentations were made by 2011, but they have not been sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Taking into account all the scientific work done, and considering the broad international interest on a synchronized and common effort and the systematic evaluation of all investigations of the Roman frontiers in the future, it had a high priority to create a common platform to prepare a scientific catalogue and evaluation of the *limes Romanus*. The best way to do so is to establish a corpus under the umbrella of the Union Académique Internationale, the *Corpus Limitis Imperii Romani* from Augustus to the end of the Western Roman Empire (ca. 500 AD). From the point of view of the *limes Romanus* not only the exact frontier line should be included –with its changes over time– but also the frontier provinces with all inner fortifications, military sites and installations. Roman military sites beyond the frontiers also belong to the subject.

The Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at Pécs, the Committee for philosophy, history and ethnography and the Department of Archaeology of University of Pécs, prepared and submitted a proposal for a new scientific program to UAI in 2010. The proposal has been adopted by the General Assembly of UAI in 2011 for the Danube region (the provinces Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia and Dacia) as its 79th international scientific program.

The main target of the project is to enhance international research of the *Limes Romanus* and to publish its elements on a common and coordinated base. To achieve these goals the followings are to be executed:

- to investigate all kind of sources for better knowledge of the military sites, buildings, civil settlements and towns of the Roman *limes*;
- to create an international database for proper organization of the material;
- to publish a series of monographs at national and international level on each sector of the Roman frontiers.

* Summary of the lecture given at the XXIIth *Limes* Congress, held in Russe, Bulgaria in 2012. The full text is forthcoming in the Proceedings *Limes XXII*.

¹ 1987 : Hadrian's Wall
2005 : Upper German and Raetian *Limes*
2008 : Antonine Wall.

The core of CLIR should concentrate on archaeological sources, first of all on the military sites and structures. The forts, fortlets and other military structures and sites with their civil settlements should be described fully in monographs. Other archaeological and numismatic finds, cemeteries, epigraphic and all other written sources should be taken into limited consideration according to the needs of interpretation.

CLIR is in close connection with some other UAI-programs, first of all with nr. 6a: Tabula Imperii Romani (TIR), nr. 48: Atlas of the Greek and Roman World, nr. 49: Greek and Latin inscriptions (Corpora, Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum and Corpus of amphora stamps). These and other corpora (inscriptions: CIL, IG, IGRR, CIG and those on national levels; RIC and other collections for the numismatique material, CSIR for the stone plastique material; the great number of monographs on archaeological material) and evaluations of the inscriptions and archaeological finds do not make it necessary to incorporate inscriptions and mobil archaeological finds into CLIR except in evaluation.

The list of the limes sites is to be prepared by the participating members/member institutes at the beginning of the project. New archaeological investigations (aerial reconnaissance, geophysics, any kind of field work, including excavation) are to be planned and executed on the level of their personal and financial abilities. International coordination and cooperation is needed.

There are several databases for the sectors of the limes Romanus, prepared both at national and international level. The Hungarian limes database, which was made earlier and has now been upgraded in accordance with the latest scientific demands and safeguards, will be available on the web soon. There is, however, at least one international database planned and partially made: that of the Bratislava Group as established in 2005-2008, for the European limes (extendable for the whole limes) with a multilingual thesaurus and with the possibility of providing a common platform for national limes databases. The international CLIR database will be bigger than the previous ones but will be harmonized with them.

While the international database will be enhanced and filled permanently, the about 50 volumes of the military sectors and sites of the Danubian provinces will provide a comprehensive work with all kind of archaeological sources with full evaluation in a given time.

The Hungarian CLIR program at its current level as created at the University of Pécs has extended partnerships on both the national and international levels; first of all with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A close connection and collaboration has also been established with several Romanian museums for common research on the Eastern frontier of province Dacia. There is a continuing cooperation with the Bratislava Group (international scientific board to enhance research and maintenance of the Roman limes) and with scientists and scientific institutions in Great Britain, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Croatia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, and from time to time with scholars of academies, universities, museums and research institutes of other countries.