

Christianization of the Lower Danube: The Case of Dacia Ripensis

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The Danubian provinces of the Later Roman Empire (the area between present day eastern Bavaria and the Romanian Dobruja) are not well known, due to the paucity of literary sources from or about that region, even if many emperors were born in this region. The use of archaeological sources is therefore more than necessary to understand its history, especially that of its Christianization. In order to provide answers to that important historical issue, an international archaeological and historical research programme was developed at the University of Lille in France, by associate professor Dominic Moreau.

Entitled DANUBIUS, that research programme will reconsider the question in the light of the scientific advances made in the last hundred years, both in terms of archaeology and history, for the period between the 3rd century and the 8th century, with the aim to propose better understanding of the simultaneous evolution of ecclesiastical organization and Christian topography. To do so, it has been decided to develop a geographic information system (GIS) model of the episcopal sees and other Christian sites, structured around three axes consisting into : two databases and archaeological exploration of Zaladapa (Bulgaria).

This paper will present you the research programme, as well as a completely new PhD project which is part of it and which is proposing an in-depth investigation on the conditions of the Christianization of Dacia Ripensis during Late Antiquity. That dissertation will endeavour to analyze and highlight all the textual and archaeological evidence of the Christian community, especially that of cities, particularly in order to provide elements of understanding for the passage from a classical Roman topography, to an early Byzantine Christian topography.