



EXCAVATIONS FROM THE MEDIEVAL CITY OF CARANSEBEȘ

Summary. Systematic archaeological research in the fortified medieval city of Caransebeș/Sebeș began in 2017. The fortified medieval city, attested for the first time in historical records in 1290 during the reign of Ladislaus IV of Hungary, belonged to an area of Byzantine influence in the 12th century, and later (most probably between 1186 and 1231-1232) fell under the influence of the second Vlach-Bulgarian Tsardom. Around 1231-1232 the discussed region (together with Caransebeș) became part of the Kingdom of Hungary. Both the city and the surrounding region had a predominantly Vlach population.

For archaeological research we had at our disposal several plans of the city dated to the 17th-18th centuries. Some time after the 1718 peace treaty signed in Požarevac (Passarowitz) between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, the Caransebeș fortress was destroyed. Currently, only a few fragments of the fortifications are preserved in its northern area, but further archaeological excavations are needed to establish their precise dating and context.

In the context of tensions between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, the border city underwent rapid transformations over short periods of time during the 17th-18th centuries. After 1551-1552, the region and implicitly the city of Caransebeș came under the authority of the Transylvanian princes. It was conquered by the Turks in 1658 and occupied by the Austrians in 1688, who proceeded to rearrange the Italian-style fortifications. The works were not completed, however, because the Ottoman Empire regained possession of the fortress in 1696 and held it until 1718.

Over the course of three research seasons, we identified remains of three fragments of structures and a fragment of a ravelin on the north side, two fragments of the stone-paved road that crossed the city, and two fragments of the inner city walls. In the central area west of the road, both medieval and modern houses, fragments of iron processing workshops, and a possible pharmacy or spice shop were partially excavated. Moreover, on the surface of the ground inside the inner fortification, traces of walls were discovered, while on its outside – human osteological remains, indicating the presence of a church, especially when we consider that the plans of the fortress dated to the end of the 17th century, and that a Polish coin issued in 1627 during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa (1587-1632), most likely resulting from a destroyed grave, was discovered *in situ*.

Overall, we can say that we were able to correlate cartographic, historical, and archaeological information in order to clarify the stages of the spatial development of the city, especially during the 16th–18th centuries. Based on historical sources, we were able to find out more about who its inhabitants were, their religions, and the transformations that took place from a religious and administrative point of view.

Keywords: fortification, town, workshop, tower, iron, cemetery, Romania, Caransebeș

The medieval city Caransebeș/Sebeș (Pl. 1), first attested in 1290, can be traced back to the 13th century.¹ Archaeological discoveries, however, have shown that previous settlements and necropolises existed on its territory dating to the 11th and 12th centuries (Pl. 2)² and even earlier.³

The area was under Byzantine influence (until 1186)⁴ and later under the influence of the second Vlach-Bulgarian Tsardom.⁵ Artefacts from necropolises in the area show a strong Balkan influence of Byzantine tradition in terms of funerary inventory items (Pl. 2/2–4).⁶

¹ *Documente privind Istoria României. Veacul 13, C. Transilvania, vol. 2: 1251–1300*, București 1952, doc. 359, p. 316.

² E. IAROSLAUSCHI, *O villa rustica la Caransebeș*, “Banatica” 1975, vol. 3, pp. 355–363; P. BONA, *Biserica medievală din Caransebeș*, Caransebeș 1993, p. 93; S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, *Câteva observații privind necropola de la Caransebeș-Centru, faza timpurie (secolele XI–XII)*, “Cercetări Arheologice” 2018, vol. 25, pp. 205–214.

³ A. ARDEȚ, *Dim colecția Muzeului Județean de Etnografie și al Regimentului de Graniță Caransebeș. Noi descoperiri arheologice*, “Tibiscum” 1993, vol. 8, pp. 339, 345, Pl. II/2.

⁴ *Vide:* S. OȚA, *Piese de orfevrărie de tradiție bizantină în spațiul nord-dunărean (secolul al XI-lea – începutul secolului al XIII-lea)*, [in:] *Între stepă și Imperiu. Studii în onoarea lui Radu Harhoiu*, eds. A. MĂGUREANU, E. GĂLL, București 2010, pp. 401–433; S. OȚA, *Rings Decorated with Anthropomorphic Representations (11th–12th centuries)*, [in:] *Representations, Signs and Symbols. Proceedings of the Symposium on Religion and Magic*, eds. I.V. FERENCZ, N.C. RIȘCUȚA, O. TUTILĂ BĂRBAT, Deva 2015, pp. 345–356; S. OȚA, *Brățări bizantine și post bizantine din metal și sticlă descoperite la nordul Dunării de Jos. Context, modele, cronologie (secolele XI–XII/începutul secolului al XIII-lea)*, “Cercetări Arheologice” 2019, vol. 26, pp. 219–242.

⁵ V. ACHIM, *O formațiune medievală de graniță în sud-estul Banatului: Craina*, [in:] *Banatul în evul mediu*, ed. V. Achim, București 2000, pp. 161–176.

⁶ S. OȚA, *Necropolele din orizontul sud-dunărean–2 de pe teritoriul Banatului (sfârșitul sec. al XI-lea sec. al XIII-lea)*, [in:] *Relații interetnice în Transilvania (secolele VI–XIII)*, eds. K.Z. PINTER, I.M. ȚIPLIC, M.E. ȚIPLIC, Sibiu 2005, pp. 171–215; S. OȚA, *The Mortuary Archaeology of the Medieval Banat (10th–14th Centuries)*, [in:] *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. 26, ed. FL. CURTA, Brill, Leiden/Boston 2014, pp. 191–192, 345, Pl. 113; S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Medieval cemeteries from the territory of the present-day city of Caransebeș*, [in:] *Life and death in medieval and early modern times. Proceedings of the 5th International Scientific Conference*

The area of Caransebeș (Sebeș), as a part of the Severin Banate,⁷ was first mentioned in documents in 1233 after the wars between the Hungarians and Vlach-Bulgarians (1231–1232). Since its creation in 1233, the borders of the Severin Banate changed several times during the Middle Ages – the discussed territory was controlled either by the Hungarian Kingdom⁸ or the rulers from Wallachia – and in the 16th century its part became the Banate of Lugoj–Caransebeș.

Since the 10th century, a pre-state political formation ruled by Duke Glad had existed between the Mureș, Tisza, and Danube rivers west of the Southern Carpathian mountains.⁹ The early 11th century ruler Achtum came into conflict with King Stephen I of Hungary (1000–1038) when Achtum began expanding northwards to the Criș River.¹⁰ Following several battles, the territory of Achtum's political formation (but very probably only the plains area) was absorbed by the Kingdom of Hungary,¹¹ but the population remained mostly Vlach, especially in its eastern part, and over time received many privileges from the kings of Hungary¹² due to military services rendered in relation to the defence of the southern borders of the Kingdom against the Ottoman Empire.¹³

of Mediaeval Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb, 6th and 7th June 2018, eds. S. KRZMAR, T.S. IVANČAN, J. BELAJ, T. TKALČEC, Zbornik Instituta za Arheologiju, Zagreb 2020, vol. 14, pp. 153–166 (154–157).

⁷ I would like to specify that what I shall hereinafter refer to the discussed region (covering parts of the present-day Romania, Serbia, and Hungary) as “Banat” – a name coined by the Austrians in the 18th century, as proposed by Eugene of Savoy (C. FENEȘAN, *Administrație și fiscalitate în Banatul Imperial 1716–1778*, Timișoara 1997, p. 16), to distinguish it from the names “Banat” or “Banate” referring to the geographical and historical region that changed its borders many times in the Middle Ages and in the early Modern Period.

⁸ M. HOLBAN, *Despre Țara Severinului și banatul de Severin în secolul al XIII-lea*, [in:] *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII–XIV*, ed. M. HOLBAN, București 1981, pp. 49–89; V. ACHIM, *O formațiune medievală de graniță...*, pp. 174, 176.

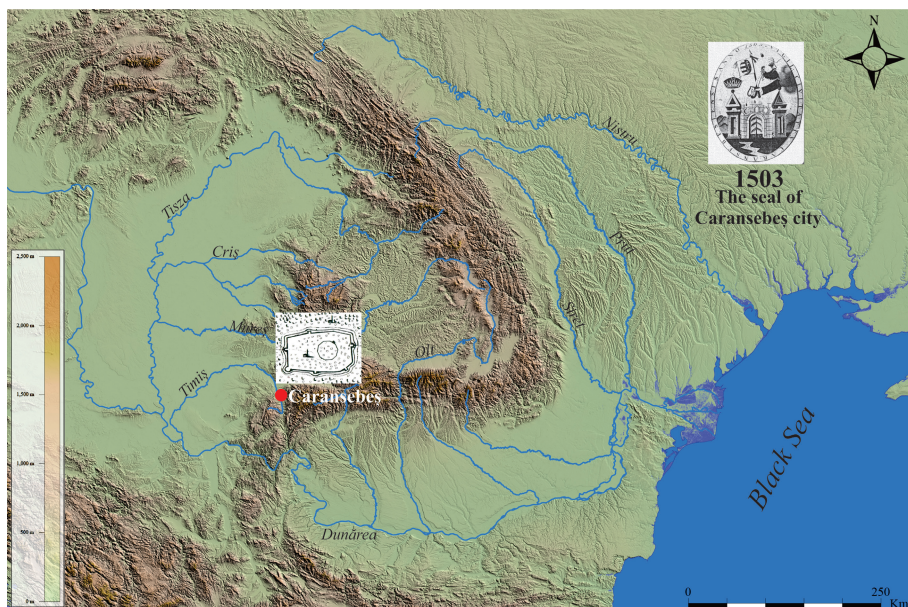
⁹ I.A. POP, *Românii și maghiarii în secolele IX–XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania*, Bibliotheca Rerum Transilvaniae, vol. 10, Cluj–Napoca 1996, pp. 112–120.

¹⁰ A. MADGEARU, *Contribuții privind datarea conflictului dintre ducele bănățean Achtum și regele Ștefan I al Ungariei*, “Banatica” 1993, vol. 12, II, pp. 5–12.

¹¹ S. OȚA, *Particularități funerare în zona graniței sudice a Regatului Ungariei în epoca bizantină (secolele XI–XIII). Studiu de caz: sudul Banatului și Vojvodina*, [in:] *Arheologia mileniului I p. Chr., IV, Autohtoni și migratori în mileniul I p. Chr.*, ed. B. CIUPERCĂ, Brăila 2015, pp. 525–553.

¹² C. FENEȘAN, *Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, “Banatica” 1973, vol. 2, pp. 157–163; A. MAGINA, *Reconfirmarea privilegiilor Caransebeșului în anul 1597*, “Revista Arhivelor” 2009, vol. 86, No. 1, pp. 100–105.

¹³ ȘT. PASCU, *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. 4, Cluj–Napoca 1989, pp. 40–62.



Pl. 1. Caransebeș town and the town's seal from the year 1503

At the same time, the hilly and mountainous eastern part of the discussed region belonged to the Vlach-Bulgarian Tsardom from 1186 until 1231–1232 (when the Banate of Severin was established), until its conquest by the Hungarian kingdom.¹⁴ For this reason, the material culture of the area remained of Byzantine and Balkan tradition (including, among other things, the Orthodox Church, customs, pottery, decorative art, the surviving Vlach legislation) for at least another four centuries.¹⁵

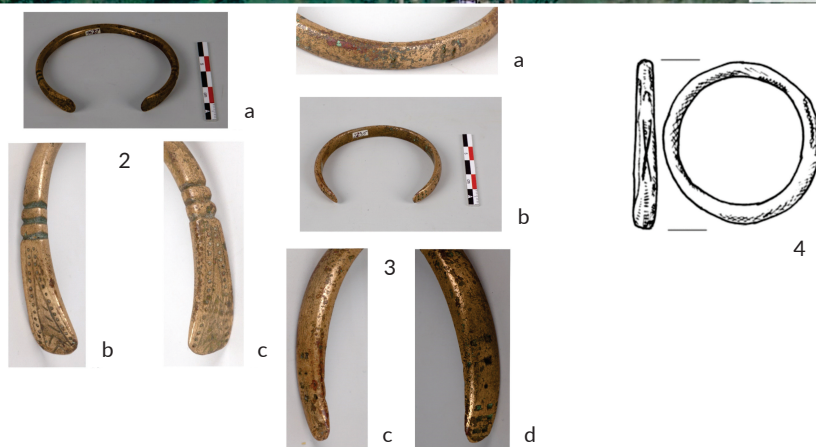
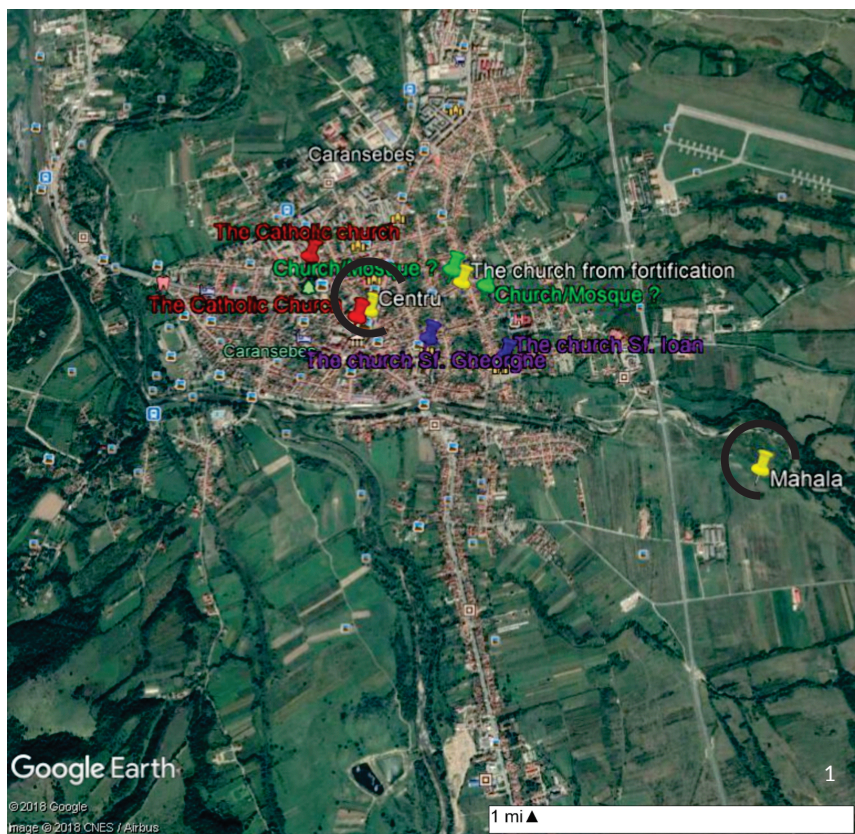
Until the 16th century, the area around modern-day Caransebeș is known to have been populated by Vlachs,¹⁶ and the city that emerged there was one of two cities in Hungary that belonged to the Vlach nobles.¹⁷

¹⁴ S. OȚA, *Elite locale și centre de putere în Banat (sfârșitul secolului al IX-lea-începutul secolului al XI-lea)*, "Acta Mvsei Porolissensis" 2016, vol. 38, p. 436.

¹⁵ The whole area was still known at that time as the *Cisalpine Wallachia*.

¹⁶ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, eds. M. HOLBAN, M.M. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU, P. CERNOVODEANU, vol. 3, București 1971, p. 78.

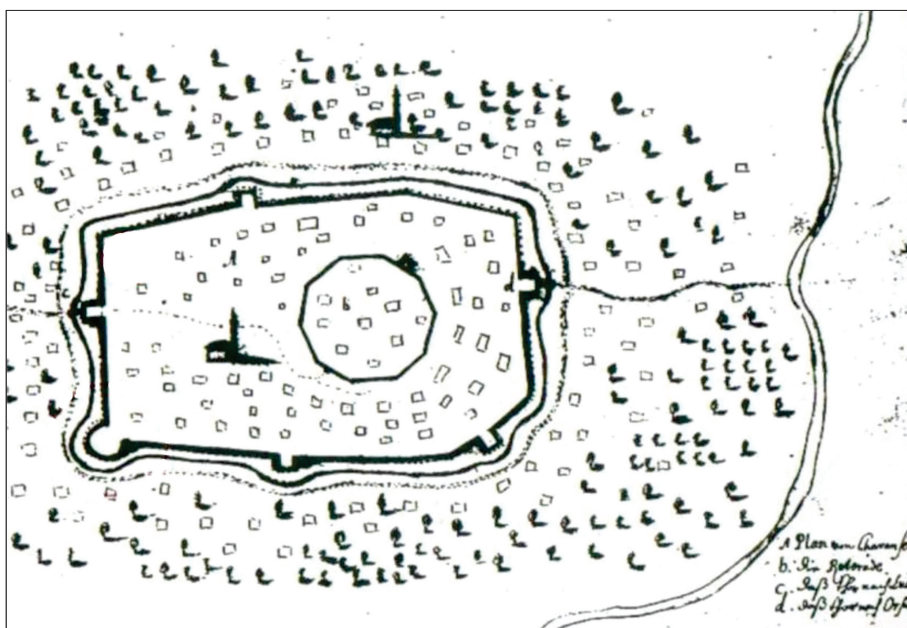
¹⁷ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, eds. M. HOLBAN, M.M. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU, P. CERNOVODEANU, vol. 2, București 1970, p. 557. For the list of noble families from Caransebeș in late middle ages *vide*: S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Medieval cemeteries...*, p. 153 and S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Archaeological research in the city of Caransebeș (2017 campaign)*.



PI. 2. 1. Cemeteries with Byzantine jewelleries from the Caransebeș town territory (capture Google Earth); 2/a-b, 3/a-d. bracelets from Caransebeș-Centru cemetery (according to Oța, Ardeț, Negrei 2020); 4. blue glass bracelet from Caransebeș-Măhala cemetery (according to Iaroslavschi 1975)



1



2

PI. 3. 1. Fragment from the fortification wall inside the medieval town;
 2. the map of Caransebeș town from the 17th century (according to Groza 1993)



3

Pl. 3. 3. fragment of the street arranged in the middle of the 16th century

Almost without exception,¹⁸ available historical information is in agreement on this point, regardless of by whom it was written – monks (Antonio Possevino),¹⁹ soldiers (Giovan Andrea Gromo),²⁰ or politicians (G.P. Campani, Jesuit monk and politician,²¹ Ferrante Capeci,²² Franco Sivori²³), of various ethnicities, whether in the service of the Catholic Church, the Habsburg Monarchy, or the Ottoman Empire.

Preliminary observations, [in:] *Volume of the International Conference Politics and Society in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (13th–16th Centuries)*, (Timișoara, România, 25th–27th, October 2017), ed. Z. IUSZTIN, Cluj–Napoca 2019, pp. 12–13.

¹⁸ *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, eds. M.M. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU, M.A. MEHMET, vol. 6, București 1976, p. 534.

¹⁹ *Călători străini...*, vol. 3, p. 121.

²⁰ *Călători străini...*; MARCUS KYNTSCH VON ZOBTEN, *Herzog Hans der Grausame von Sagan im Jahre 1488*, ed. A. STENZEL, *Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 4, Breslau 1850, p. 321.

²¹ *Călători străini...*, vol. 3, pp. 76–77.

²² *Călători străini...*, vol. 3, pp. 91–94.

²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 1–5.

From available cartographic and documentary information (Pl. 3/2),²⁴ we know that initially there was probably a small fortress, around which the city developed, surrounded by walls (three rows) and defence towers (six). Around the fortifications of the city there were also suburbs with Orthodox²⁵ and Catholic churches,²⁶ and churches of various monastic orders²⁷ and orthodox priests.²⁸

At that time (in 1551–1552 – for two years), the area between the River Mureș, Tisza, Danube, and the Southern Carpathians was systematically destroyed by the Ottoman armies under the leadership of Pasha Mehmed Sokolu/Sokolević.²⁹ The area of the plain and the hills from the west of the Semenic Mountains became the newly established Timișoara's pashalik. In the 16th century, given the transformation of Hungary into a pashalik,³⁰ the area of Caransebeș together with a part of the former Severin Banate (now under the new name – the Lugoj-Caransebeș Banate) was taken over by the Transylvanian

²⁴ P. BONA, N. GUMĂ, L. GROZA, *Caransebeș. 700 de ani de atestare documentară. Contribuții monografice*, Caransebeș 1990, pp. 31, 32; L. GROZA, *Cetatea Caransebeș – Câteva precizări cronologice*, "Banatica" 1993, vol. 12, II, p. 91, Fig. 2.

²⁵ S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *The medieval cemeteries from the territory...*, p. 158; A. GHIDU, I. BĂLAN, *Monografia orașului Caransebeș*, Caransebeș 1909, pp. 22, 23, 32–33, concerning the Vlach churches (St. John the Baptist and St. George) and a Serb church (1579; D.L. ȚIGĂU, *Familia nobililor Peica de Caransebeș în secolele XVI–XVII*, "Banatica" 2005, vol. 17, p. 326).

²⁶ A. GHIDU, I. BĂLAN, *Monografia orașului...*, pp. 91–93; D. ȚEICU, *Geografia ecleziastică a Banatului medieval*, Cluj–Napoca 2007, pp. 150–151.

²⁷ V. ACHIM, *Ordinul Franciscan în Țările Române în secolele XIV–XV. Aspecte teritoriale*, "Revista Istorică" 1996, vol. 7, nr. 5–6, pp. 398, 399, 400; R. POPA, *Caransebeș și districtul său românesc în secolele X–XIV*, "SCIV(A)" 1989, vol. 40, 4, pp. 353–370; R. LOVASZ, *Conventul franciscan din Caransebeș în lumina unor documente inedite de sec. XVIII (1)*, "Studii de istorie ecleziastică" 2018, vol. 1, pp. 39–58; C. FENEȘAN, *Franciscanii din Banatul de Munte la sfârșitul celei de-a doua jumătăți și la începutul celei de-a treia stăpâniri habsburgice (1695–1701, 1716–1738)*, "Banatica" 2013, vol. 23, pp. 649–679; D. ȚEICU, *Geografia ecleziastică a Banatului...*, p. 151 (about Calvinist); A. GHIDU, I. BĂLAN, *Monografia orașului...*, pp. 93–94; for Protestants *vide: ibidem*, p. 94; for Jesuits *vide: ibidem*, p. 94, 95; A. MAGINA, *Legislație și toleranță. Statutul juridic al catolicilor din Caransebeș în prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea*, [in:] *Istoria culturii. Cultura istoriei. Omagiu profesorului Doru Radosav la 60 de ani*, eds. I. COSTEA, O. GHITTA, V. ORGA, I. POP, Cluj–Napoca 2010, p. 109 and P. BONA, *Biserica medievală...*, p. 27; S. OȚA, *Identificarea necropolelor și bisericilor medievale și moderne din orașul Caransebeș (secolele XI–XVIII)*, Sibiu [in print].

²⁸ *Călători străini...*, vol. 3, p. 120.

²⁹ CR. FENEȘAN, *Constituirea Principatului autonom Transilvaniei*, București 1997, pp. 147–151.

³⁰ D.L. ȚIGĂU, *Banii de Caransebeș și Lugoj. Considerații asupra atribuțiilor și competențelor acestora (II)*, "Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medievală" 1999, vol. 17, p. 243.

Principality (until 1658),³¹ and later for 30 years constituted a part of the Timișoara Pashalik administered by the Ottoman Empire.³²

After 1688³³ Caransebeș came under the Austrian rule until 1696,³⁴ when it was regained by the Turks until 1718 when it was transferred to the Austrians³⁵ under the peace treaty signed in Požarevac (Passarowitz) between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires).³⁶ It should be noted that according to the Požarevac peace terms, the fortifications of the city were to be completely destroyed;³⁷ however, the demolition was neither immediately nor completely carried out.³⁸

The plans of the city, although late (the oldest is most likely from the time of the Ottoman presence in the area), provide us with an idea of its size and shape from the previous period, at least from the 16th century. The city had an almost rectangular shape and was surrounded by external defensive walls with six towers (one of which was semicircular). A road ran through the city from the north, where the Transylvania gate was, to the south, where the Orșova gate was. The street passed near the small round fortress located in the centre of the town (Pl. 3/1–2), with another shorter road connecting the main street with the inner fortress, leading into its centre on a 30-step staircase.³⁹ After the occupation of the city by the Austrians, the entire Caransebeș fortress was

³¹ C. FENEȘAN, *Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului pînă la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, "Banatica" 1973, vol. 2, p. 160; L. BOLDEA, *O familie nobilă română a Banatului Montan în Epoca principatului: Mănticeni de Ohaba-Măntic*, [in:] *Itinerarii istoriografice. Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, eds. D. ȚEICU, R. GRĂF, Cluj–Napoca 2011, p. 267.

³² C. FENEȘAN, *Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului...*, p. 160; V.V. MUNTEAN, *Contribuții la istoria Banatului, Timișoara*, 1990, p. 112; C. FENEȘAN 1993, *Viața cotidiană la botarul osmano-transilvănean în secolul al XVII-lea – câteva documente inedite*, "Banatica" 1990, vol. 12, II, p. 78; D.L. ȚIGĂU, *Banii de Caransebeș și Lugoj. Considerații asupra atribuțiilor și competențelor acestora (I)*, "Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medievală" 1998, vol. 16, p. 227; C. FENEȘAN, *Diplomatarium Banaticum*, vol. 1, Cluj–Napoca 2016, p. 9.

³³ L. GROZA, *Cetatea Caransebeș...*, p. 92.

³⁴ An Austrian coin, issued in 1696, was found on the construction level of a building from the fortified town. Excavations from 2019.

³⁵ P. BONA, N. GUMĂ, L. GROZA, *Caransebeș. 700 de ani de atestare documentară...*, p. 52.

³⁶ C. FENEȘAN, *Administrație și fiscalitate...*, pp.14–15.

³⁷ L. GROZA, *Cetatea Caransebeș...*, p. 97.

³⁸ Between the years 1699 (the treaty of Karlowitz) and 1718 (the treaty of Passarowitz) there were various provisions in peace treaties for the destruction of the Caransebeș fortress.

³⁹ *Călători străini...*, vol. 6, pp. 534–535, 690–691.

completely rebuilt and reorganized (Pl. 8/1, 4),⁴⁰ acquiring the appearance of an Italian-type fortress. However, the reconstruction works seem to have never been fully completed due to the short time (1688–1696, and after 1718 the situation was unclear, because the problem of demolishing the fortifications was raised).⁴¹

Systematic archaeological research in the city began in 2017 at the initiative of the National Museum of Romanian History.⁴² As much of the fortified city is covered by modern houses, research excavations were necessarily limited to the central western part of the medieval city, west of the small inner fortification.

The archaeological research and the field survey have revealed several important aspects. First of all, the research team found the main road indicated by the earliest surviving map of the city from during the Ottoman presence in Caransebeș (Pl. 3/3, Pl. 4/1–6).⁴³ This road was most likely created in 1552, when the Italian architect Alessandro Cavalini da Urbino⁴⁴ was sent to the city

⁴⁰ GH. SEBESTYEN, *Unele cetăți ale Banatului și desenele lui L.F. Marsigli*, "Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente istorice și de Artă" 1984, vol. 15, 1, pp. 41–44; L. GROZA, *Cetatea Caransebeș...*, pp. 89–99.

⁴¹ It can be noticed in the archaeological research carried out in the years 2017, 2018, and 2019 and the field survey that showed that the restoration works remained unfinished by the Austrians (for example, the Author's team found a ravelin only in the eastern part of the city). Moreover, the Josephine maps show that the fortress was demolished and the area was subsequently occupied by private houses and land after the middle of 18th century.

⁴² The research was carried out by a team composed of Silviu Oța (MNIR), Adrian Ardeș and Dimitrie Negrei (MJERG Caransebeș), in 2017, 2018 and 2019. S. OȚA, A. ARDEȘ, D. NEGREI, 7. *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș-Severin*, [in:] *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2017, A LII-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice, Cluj-Napoca, 15–17 noiembrie*, eds. F. MATEI-POPESCU, I.C. OPRÎȘ, O. ȚENȚEA, București 2018b, pp. 23–24; S. OȚA, A. ARDEȘ, D. NEGREI, 11. *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș-Severin, Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2018, A LIII-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice, Sibiu, 13–15 septembrie*, eds. I.C. OPRÎȘ, O. ȚENȚEA, București 2019, pp. 34–35; S. OȚA, A. ARDEȘ, D. NEGREI, 12. *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș-Severin, Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2018, A LIV-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice, Buzău, 25–27 noiembrie 2020*, eds. I. CÂNDEA, V. COTIUGĂ, F. DRAȘOVEAN, I.C. OPRÎȘ, M. ȚIPLIC, București 2020, p. 69.

⁴³ S. OȚA, *O stradă din Caransebeșul medieval (secolele XVI–XVII). Primele cercetări arheologice*, [in:] *Miscellanea Historica et Archaeologica in honorem Professoris Ionel Căndea septuagenarii*, ed. C. CROITORU, București–Brăila 2019, pp. 277–292. The map is not currently dated, but two mosques can be seen on it. This means that it was most likely made between 1658 and 1968.

⁴⁴ D.L. ȚIGĂU, *Banii de Caransebeș și Lugoj. Considerații... (I)*, p. 235; *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, ed. M. HOLBAN, M.M. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU, P. CERNOVODEANU, vol. 2, București 1970, p. 317.

from Sibiu by the imperial general Gian Battista Castaldo to strengthen the city against the Ottoman threat. This road was paved with stone, had a sidewalk to the west, and a ditch for draining water (Pl. 4/2). The houses of the city dwellers lined the western side.⁴⁵

Blacksmith workshops⁴⁶ and probably a pharmacy⁴⁷ or a spice shop have been identified nearby. From this area were recovered a scale weight (Pl. 6/7), a porcelain cup (possibly of a Chinese origin, Pl. 5/2),⁴⁸ fragments of small ceramic jars (Pl. 5/3, 4, 9, 10), two arrowheads (Pl. 6/4), and various ceramic fragments and fragments of tiles. A fragment of an exploded 17th-century grenade (Pl. 6/5) was also found in front of where a house once used to stand. After the said house (possibly from the second half of the 17th c., pre- 1688, dating yet to be confirmed) was demolished, its remains (probably with all the artefacts mixed up with the rubble from its destruction) were thrown on the surface of a disused medieval street (which was in use until 1688) to be levelled by the Austrians during the redevelopment of the fortress.

In the blacksmith workshops more installations were identified (Pl. 7/3; Pl. 7/4), with several hearths and fireplaces, indicating different types of iron processing/smelting performed at the said site, proof that the area had been used for this activity since at least the fourteenth century. The research excavations were carried out to a depth of almost two meters (Pl. 7/3), and in almost every level fragments of cast iron in different quantities were found (Pl. 7/1–2).

To the north of the small inner fortress there was a mosque⁴⁹ which most likely had been a Christian church that was later transformed. Similarly, outside the city walls there was another structure, probably originally a Christian church, then transformed into a mosque, and later reverted back into a church.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ S. OȚA, *O stradă în Caransebeșul medieval...*, p. 281.

⁴⁶ The archaeological research carried out during the 2017–2019 campaigns has shown the existence of blacksmith workshops located west of the road that crossed the Caransebeș fortress from north to south. These were identified on most ground levels, from the 14th–18th century. The archaeological material is currently being processed at the National Museum of Romanian History.

⁴⁷ S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Cercetări arheologice în orașul medieval fortificat Caransebeș, campaniile 2017–2019 (observații preliminare)*, “Tibiscvm” 2019, vol. 9, p. 133.

⁴⁸ N. DINU, *Ceramica de import*, [in:] *Timișoara în amurgul Evului mediu. Rezultatele cercetărilor arheologice preventive din centrul istoric*, ed. F. DRAȘOVEAN, Timișoara 2007, p. 139, Fig. 84, p. 140, Fig. 85, p. 141.

⁴⁹ The presence of a mosque can be seen on the oldest map of the city. L. GROZA, *Cetatea Caransebeș...*, p. 91, Fig. 2.

⁵⁰ FR. PESTY, *A Szörényi bánság és Szörény vármegye története*, vol. 2, Budapest 1878, p. 211; L. GROZA 1993, *Cetatea Caransebeș...*, p. 93.



Street (detail), S. 1/2017, middle of 16th Century (1551?), width 4,80 m



Channel, S. 1/2017



Cass. 2/2019

Pl. 4. 1-3. Stone sidewalk from the middle of the 16th century (1551?)



Cass. 1/2019



Cass. 1/2018



Cass. 2/2017

Pl. 4. 4–6. Stone sidewalk from the middle of the 16th century (1551?)



Pl. 5. 1. Fragments of a glass rod; 2. Chinese cup; 3, 4, 9, 10. fragments from small recipes; 5–6. serrated blades from clasp-knives; 7–8. footwear heel fittings; 11/a-b. Polish coin issued in 1627, during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632)

None of these structures – blacksmith workshops or places of worship – are currently preserved. In the small fortress where the commander of the Ottoman garrison resided during 1658–1688, a church functioned, which was most likely either destroyed or converted into a military or civil building. Remains of the foundation are still preserved on the surface of the ground, and outside the small fortress were found remains of human skeletons⁵¹ and one Polish coin (Pl. 5/11a-b) issued in 1627 during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa (1587–1632).⁵²

The buildings along the road were demolished by the Austrians during the redevelopment of Caransebeș in 1688–1696, as the medieval fortified town was outdated and not fit for military purposes of the 17th-century army. Caransebeș residents were partially relocated to the suburbs and most of the historic structures destroyed to create a modern Italian-style fortification. However, the Austrians preserved the main road itself (at least part of it was disused and was no longer visible after 1688), over which they scattered rubble from the demolished houses, in order to create a straight base to arrange the various necessary buildings, most probably the garrison.⁵³ The plan proposed by General Friedrich von Veterani (Pl. 8/2, 3) led to the change in the location of the place of access to the Transylvania gate. The place of access was moved a few meters to the west, where a ravelin was also built.⁵⁴ The old road, which came from the north, from outside the city, and which led to the medieval gate, was abandoned. Another one was arranged further west, outside the walls, which bypassed the newly built ravelin and led to the gate tower of the old fortress (Pl. 8/4). The old gate tower, namely the medieval one, was preserved (if we consider the Austrian maps), but its importance was considerably diminished (Pl. 8/4).⁵⁵

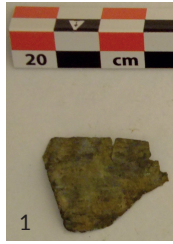
⁵¹ S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Cercetări arheologice în orașul medieval...*, pp. 132, 138, Pl. 4/5.a, 5.b.

⁵² Thank you to our colleague Tudor Martin for identifying the coin.

⁵³ When we compare the earliest surviving map of the city, probably from 1655–1688 (because we have two mosques represented on it) with maps from the end of the 17th century (after 1690 or later), it can be seen that the city underwent major changes both in terms of the defence walls and in terms of organization of the interior buildings.

⁵⁴ S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, D. NEGREI, *Archaeological research in the fortification of Caransebeș*, presentation held at International Conference *Relații Interetnice în Transilvania. Patrimoniul medieval și istoria Europei centrale și sud-estice*, Sibiu, 18th–21st October 2018; S. OȚA, A. ARDEȚ, *Câteva date asupra fortificațiilor de la Caransebeș*, presentation held at International Conference *Pontica, Ediția 52: Istorie și Arheologie în Spațiul Vest-Pontic*, Constanța, 2nd–4th October 2019.

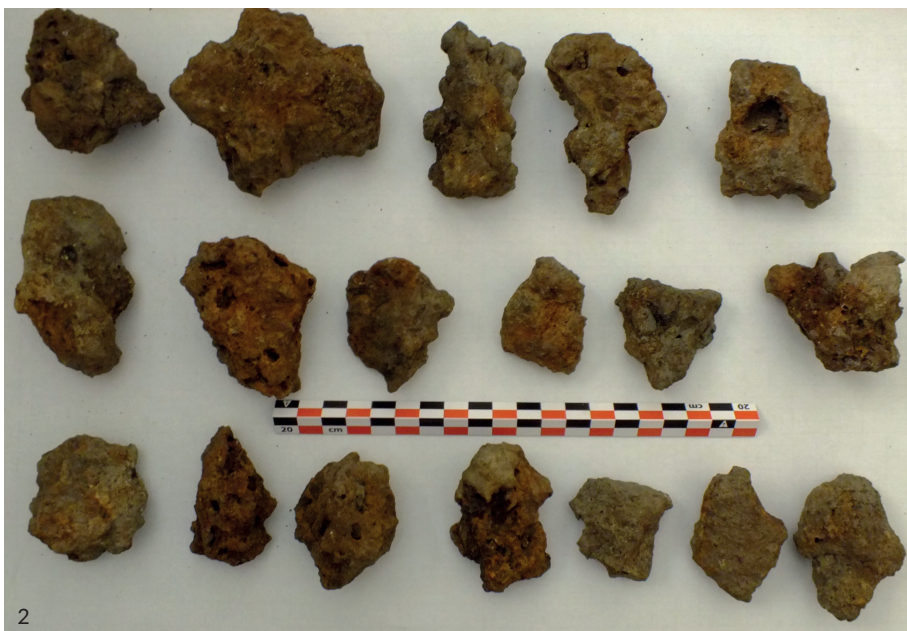
⁵⁵ This is due to the change of the route of the road that reached the fortress from the north. Near the fortified city, it had a changed route and was bifurcated, thus having a new route to the west bypassing the ravelin, then passing behind it and returning to the old entrance. The old road led directly to this tower.



Pl. 6. 1. Silver plate (?); 2-3. nails



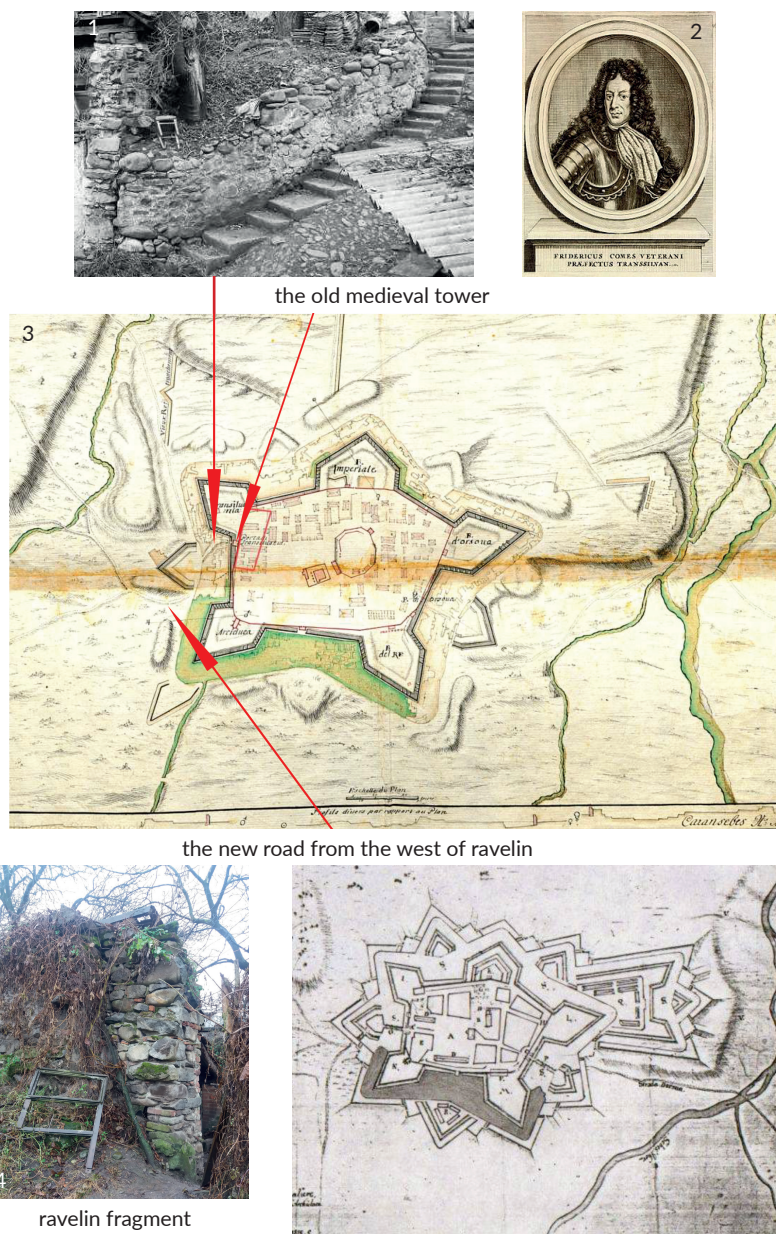
Pl. 6. 4. arrowhead; 5. fragment of grenade; 6. buckle; 7. weight; 8. Jew's harp



Pl. 7. 1. Iron fragments; 2. scoria/dross fragments



Pl. 7. 3. Cass. (trench) 2/2017, western profile;
4. fireplace (I and II) with iron fragments from S. 2/2018



Pl. 8. 1. The new road from the end of 17th Century (according to Olimpia Onci, https://issuu.com/piaonci/docs/podrumul_lui_homolka; access: 16 V 2019); 2. the general Friedrich von Veterani; 3. map of Caransebeș (1690 or 1710, according to Olimpia Onci, https://issuu.com/piaonci/docs/podrumul_lui_homolka; access: 16 V 2019); 4. ravelin fragment near fortification wall (No. 3); 5. reconstruction plan proposed by general Friedrich von Veterani (1689)

The new road providing access to Transylvania gate and few fragments from the walls from north and a fragment of a stone ravelin are presently the only parts of the whole fortress observable on the surface of the ground. Some remnants of earthen ravelins were discovered on the eastern side of the fortified town. The ravelin from north (Pl. 8/5) was connected with the fortress with a footbridge, while another road paved with stone was arranged below it, Pl. 8/1, passing by the old northern precincts of the city and leading to the Transylvania gate.

Weapons and artillery items mentioned in documents from the 16th–17th centuries were used for defence, including various types of cannons and firearms. Two such cannons are still preserved in one of the existing houses, built into the wall as a protection of the gate pillars against possible accidents caused by the entry of carts in the yard.

We can say that from the middle of the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century, the city was undergoing continuous urban and administrative transformation, which culminated with the almost total destruction of the medieval fortress, and later with the destruction of the Italian-type fortress.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed primary sources

Documente privind Istoria României, veacul 13, C. Transilvania, vol. 2: 1251–1300, București 1952.

Călători străini despre Țările Române, eds. M. HOLBAN, M.M. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU, P. CERNOVODEANU, vol. 2–3, 4, București 1970–1976.

Secondary sources

ACHIM V., *O formațiune medievală de graniță în sud-estul Banatului: Craina*, [in:] *Banatul în evul mediu*, ed. IDEM, București 2000, pp. 161–176.

ACHIM V., *Ordinul Franciscan în Țările Române în secolele XIV–XV. Aspecte teritoriale*, “Revista Istorică” 1996, vol. 7, No. 5–6, pp. 391–410.

ARDEȚ A., *Din colecția Muzeului Județean de Etnografie și al Regimentului de Graniță Caransebeș. Noi descoperiri arheologice*, “Tibiscum” 1993, vol. 8, pp. 339–357.

- BOLDEA L., *O familie nobilă română a Banatului Montan în Epoca principatului: Măntănceni de Obaba-Măntic*, [in:] *Itinerarii istoriografice. Studii în onoarea istoricului Costin Feneșan*, eds. D. ȚICU, R. GRĂF, Cluj-Napoca 2011, pp. 235–269.
- BONA P., *Biserica medievală din Caransebeș*, Caransebeș 1993.
- BONA P., GUMĂ N., GROZA L., *Caransebeș. 700 de ani de atestare documentară. Contribuții monografice*, Caransebeș 1990.
- DINU N., *Ceramica de import*, [in:] *Timișoara în amurgul Evului mediu. Rezultatele cercetărilor arheologice preventive din centrul istoric*, ed. F. DRAȘOVEAN, Timișoara 2007, pp. 127–141.
- FENEȘAN C., *Administrație și fiscalitate în Banatul Imperial 1716–1778*, Timișoara 1997.
- FENEȘAN C., *Constituirea Principatului autonom Transilvaniei*, București 1997.
- FENEȘAN C., *Despre privilegiile Caransebeșului pînă la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea*, “Banatica” 1973, vol. 2, pp. 157–163.
- FENEȘAN C., *Diplomatarium Banaticum*, vol. 1, Cluj-Napoca 2016.
- FENEȘAN C., *Franciscanii din Banatul de Munte la sfârșitul celei de-a doua jumătăți și la începutul celei de-a treia stăpîniri habsburgice (1695–1701, 1716–1738)*, “Banatica” 2013, vol. 23, pp. 649–679.
- FENEȘAN C., *Viața cotidiană la hotarul osmano-transilvănean în secolul al XVII-lea – câteva documente inedite*, “Banatica” 1993, vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 75–88.
- GHIDU A., BĂLAN I., *Monografia orașului Caransebeș*, Caransebeș 1909.
- GROZA L., *Cetatea Caransebeș – Câteva precizări cronologice*, “Banatica” 1993, vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 89–99.
- HOLBAN M., *Din cronică relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII–XIV*, București 1981, pp. 49–89.
- IAROSLAVSCHI E., *O villa rustica la Caransebeș*, “Banatica” 1975, vol. 3, pp. 355–363.
- LOVASZ R., *Conventul franciscan din Caransebeș în lumina unor documente inedite de sec. XVIII (I)*, “Studi de istorie ecleziastică” 2018, vol. 1, pp. 39–58.
- MADGEARU A., *Contribuții privind datarea conflictului dintre ducele bănățean Ahtum și regele Ștefan I al Ungariei*, “Banatica” 1993, vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 5–12.
- MAGINA A., *Legislație și toleranță. Statutul juridic al catolicilor din Caransebeș în prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea*, [in:] *Istoria culturii. Cultura istoriei. Omagiu profesorului Doru Radosav la 60 de ani*, eds. I. COSTEA, O. GHITTA, V. ORGA, I. POP, Cluj-Napoca 2010, pp. 102–115.
- MAGINA A., *Reconfirmarea privilegiilor Caransebeșului în anul 1597*, “Revista Arhivelor” 2009, vol. 86, No. 1, pp. 100–105.
- MUNTEAN V.V., *Contribuții la istoria Banatului*, Timișoara 1990.
- OȚA S., *Brățări bizantine și post bizantine din metal și sticlă descoperite la nordul Dunării de Jos. Context, modele, cronologie (secolele XI–XII/începutul secolului al XIII-lea)*, “Cercetări Arheologice” 2019, vol. 26, pp. 219–242.

- OȚA S., *Elite locale și centre de putere în Banat (sfârșitul secolului al IX-lea-începutul secolului al XI-lea)*, "Acta Mvsei Porolissensis" 2016, vol. 38, pp. 433–458.
- OȚA S., *Identificarea necropolelor și bisericilor medievale și moderne din orașul Caransebeș (secolele XI–XVIII)*, Sibiu, Forthcoming.
- OȚA S., *Necropolele din orizontul sud-dunărean–2 de pe teritoriul Banatului (sfârșitul sec. al XI-lea sec. al XIII-lea)*, [in:] *Relații interetnice în Transilvania (secolele VI–XIII)*, eds. K.Z. PINTER, I. M. ȚIPLIC, M.E. ȚIPLIC, Sibiu 2005, pp. 171–215.
- OȚA S., *O stradă din Caransebeșul medieval (secolele XVI–XVII). Primele cercetări arheologice*, [in:] *Miscellanea Historica et Archaeologica in honorem Professoris Ionel Căndea septuagenarii*, ed. COSTIN CROITORU, București–Brăila 2019, pp. 277–292.
- OȚA S., *Particularități funerare în zona graniței sudice a regatului Ungariei în epoca bizantină (secolele XI–XIII). Studiu de caz: sudul Banatului și Vojvodina*, [in:] *Arheologia mileniului I p. Chr., IV. Nomazi și autohtoni în mileniul I p. Chr.*, ed. B. CIUPERCĂ, Ploiești 2015, pp. 525–553.
- OȚA S., *Piese de orfevrărie de tradiție bizantină în spațiul nord-dunărean (secolul al XI-lea – începutul secolului al XIII-lea)*, [in:] *Între stepă și Imperiu. Studii în onoarea lui Radu Harhoiu*, eds. A. MĂGUREANU, E. GÁLL, București, 2010, pp. 401–433.
- OȚA S., *Rings Decorated with Anthropomorphic Representations (11th–12th centuries)*, [in:] *Representations, signs and symbols. Proceedings of the Symposium on Religion and magic*, eds.: N.C. RIȘCUȚA, I.V., FERENCZ, O.T. BĂRBAT, Cluj–Napoca 2015, pp. 345–356.
- OȚA S., *The Mortuary Archaeology of the Medieval Banat (10th–14th Centuries)*, [in:] *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. 26, Leiden–Boston 2014.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., *Câteva observații privind necropola de la Caransebeș–Centru, faza timpurie (secolele XI–XII)*, "Cercetări Arheologice" 2018, vol. 25, pp. 205–214.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Archaeological research in the city of Caransebeș (2017 campaign). Preliminary observations*, [in:] *Volume of the International Conference Politics and Society in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (13th–16th Centuries)*, (Timișoara, România, 25th–27th, October 2017), ed. Z. IUSZTIN, Cluj–Napoca 2019, pp. 11–31.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș–Severin*, [in:] *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2017, A LII-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice*, Cluj–Napoca, 15–17 noiembrie, eds. FL. MATEI-POPESCU, I.C. OPRIȘ, O. ȚENȚEA, București 2018, pp. 23–24.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș–Severin*, [in:] *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2018, A LIII-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice, Sibiu, 13–15 septembrie*, eds. I.C. OPRIȘ, O. ȚENȚEA, București 2019, pp. 34–35.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Caransebeș, jud. Caraș–Severin*, [in:] *Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Campania 2018, A LIV-a Sesiune Națională de Rapoarte Arheologice, Buzău, 25–27 noiembrie 2020*, eds. I. CÂNDEA, V. COTIUGĂ, F. DRAȘOVEAN, I.C. OPRIȘ, M. ȚIPLIC, București 2020, p. 69.

- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Cercetări arheologice în orașul medieval fortificat Caransebeș, campaniile 2017–2019 (observații preliminare)*, “Tibiscvm” 2019, vol. 9, pp. 131–143.
- OȚA S., ARDEȚ A., NEGREI D., *Medieval cemeteries from the territory of the present-day city of Caransebeș*, [in:] *Zbornik Instituta za Arheologiju Serta Instituti Archaeologici Knjiga/vol. 14, Life and Death in Medieval and Early Modern Times, Proceedings of the 5th International Scientific Conference of Mediaeval Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology Zagreb, 6th and 7th June 2018*, eds. S.K. TAJANA, S. IVANČAN, J. BELAJ, T. TKALČEC, Zagreb 2020, pp. 153–166.
- PASCU, ȘT., *Voievodatul Transilvaniei*, vol. 4, Cluj–Napoca 1989.
- PESTY FR., *A Szörényi bánság és Szörény vármegye története*, vol. 2, Budapest 1878.
- POP I.A., *România și maghiarii în secolele IX–XIV. Geneza statului medieval în Transilvania*, Bibliotheca Rerum Transsilvaniae, vol. 10, Cluj–Napoca 1996.
- POPA R., *Caransebeș și districtul său românesc în secolele X–XIV*, “SCIV(A)” 1989, vol. 40, No. 4, pp. 353–370.
- SEBESTYEN G., *Unele cetăți ale Banatului și desenele lui L.F. Marsigli*, “Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor. Monumente Istorice și de Artă” 1984, vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 41–49.
- ȚEICU D., *Geografia ecleziastică a Banatului medieval*, Cluj–Napoca 2007.
- ȚIGĂU D.L., *Banii de Caransebeș și Lugoj. Considerații asupra atribuțiilor și competențelor acestora (I)*, “Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medievală” 1998, vol. 16, pp. 225–241.
- ȚIGĂU D.L., *Banii de Caransebeș și Lugoj. Considerații asupra atribuțiilor și competențelor acestora (II)*, “Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medievală” 1999, vol. 17, pp. 237–251.
- ȚIGĂU D.L., *Familia nobililor Peica de Caransebeș în secolele XVI–XVII*, “Banatica” 2005, vol. 17, pp. 323–353.